

## The Birth Of The Royal Hotel & Waterloo



Prior to the Battle of Waterloo on 18th June 1815, the hotel was to be called "The Crosby Seabank Hotel". The title deeds of 22 Marine Terrace describe how the name of Waterloo was instituted. In 1815 it was planned to build the Crosby Seabank Hotel, however in 1817 there was a proposal to buy the land on which the Hotel and cottages were already built. However, by 1816 the battle of Waterloo was already well known and on the first anniversary of the battle, the great victory was celebrated with quality food and fine wines with the opening of The Royal Waterloo Hotel. It was later decided to hold an annual dinner to celebrate. A Gentleman, George Irlam was president and the Vice President was one John Gladstone, father of the future Prime Minister, William Gladstone. The grounds to the front of the hotel are now the marine Gardens. Cattle used to graze on the grass.

In 1824, there was a coach that ran from the hotel to Liverpool at 9am and returning at 6.00pm. The Royal Waterloo hotel was in use up to 1875 when it became The Royal Hotel. There is no doubt that the area around the hotel, which was unnamed, became known as Waterloo due to it's association with The Royal Waterloo Hotel. And so, the hotel gave it's name to the area of Waterloo.

In 1821, there was a great controversy between the Crosby Seabank Company and Lord Blundell, Lord of the Manor about the use of Bathing Machine (essentially a covered cart wheeled to the waters edge. He had complained about the use of these machines. In 1823, Lord Blundell finally gave consent for the bathing machines for a nominal rent. In 1828, The Royal Waterloo Hotel was given permission to run it's own bathing machines. The bathing machines remained in operation until after Queen Victoria's reign and were finally removed in 1911. The Picture below is of the sands at Waterloo and of a bathing machine.

The seafront was a major tourist attraction. In 1841 the Royal Hotel was mentioned by



A.B.Granville in his guide "Spas of England". He wrote

"The Waterloo Hotel, a building with somewhat more of architectural style about it than the rest, being two stories high, forms the head of or entrance into the village from the Liverpool Road. Like the other and contiguous buildings, it had between it and the beach, a large expanse of sandy soil, barely covered with short grass. Below it the sands slope gently down to the margin of the sea, and on these are seen several bathing machines arranged in a row".

He goes on to say, "I examined the beds and sitting rooms of the Waterloo, and received a card of their terms which are very reasonable. For two pounds sixteen shillings a week, a single person may board and lodge at this house, which in every way resembles some of the best appointed hotels at other and more fashionable sea bathing places. The coffee room is airy and neatly appointed; the bedrooms are of moderate size, and all those on the second floor look over the sands, and are consequently preferred. Everything in the house looks clean, including the landlady, who seems moreover a quiet and pleasing person. The means of communication with Liverpool are frequent, omnibuses come and depart every hour in the day, at the moderate fare of one shilling.

### **The Royal Hotel & The American Civil War**

The Following information is taken from a letter from Local Historian Bob Jones. Many thanks to Bob for all his work.

The Royal Hotel has some connections with the American Civil War. First one was the deaths of the two little Wyly sisters from Atlanta, Georgia (CSA) in Waterloo in may 1864, just ten days apart from diphtheria. The eldest girl, Linda was seven years old and died late on the 5 May 1864, at the Victoria Hotel on the opposite corner of Bath street. You can imagine the concerns of the management and the desire to get the Wyly family out of the rooms and fumigate them. But it meant finding other accommodation. Fortunately the two hotels belonged to the same people and were at that time part of the estate of the owner who had recently died. The Wyly family were promptly move to the Royal Hotel.

It was here that the youngest girl, Mary Troup Wyly took ill and also died of diphtheria ten days later on the 16 May 1864. These two little girls are buried together in a single grave in Sefton Parish churchyard.

What was the reason for the Wyly family to visit Liverpool at this time? I can really only speculate here. Augustine Clayton Wyly was a partner with his cousin Ben Wyly, in the Wyly Wholesale Emporium on the corner of Peachtree and Prior in downtown Atlanta.

Living in the Southern States it was not surprising to learn that the Wyly family supported the secession of the Confederacy in 1861. Augustine was an ardent supporter of the rebels and when a local councillor resigned he was co-opted onto the council. When General Nathan Bedford forest visited the city Wyly was apart of the welcoming committee who presented a full set of horse tackle to General Forest.

The warehouse back room was used by the local Confederates as offices, and outside was a store for munitions and war materials.

On the death certificates there is the name of Edmiston. Archibald Edmiston was a ship owner and merchant who lived at Litherland Park, Litherland. He was present at the death of Mary Troup Wyly at the Royal Hotel on the 16 May.

I got in touch with the Wyly family genealogist in Texas, Charles Augustine Wyly who provided me

with the family tree, and on it were two names of Edmiston. So it would appear that there was a family reunion of sorts taking place. But on checking through the Official Naval Records of the War of the Rebellion, I found a reference from Commander James Dunwoody Bulloch stating that he had given 8% cotton bonds for a gentleman in the Southern States to the Archibald Edmiston Co. to pass on to this man. It seemed that getting agents to travel between Britain and the South with what was deemed to be contraband of war was nigh impossible. It was down to loyal citizens to offer their service in the only way they could. Hence my view that Wyly was acting as a courier under the guise of visiting his relatives in Liverpool for a vacation.

I believe there are at least two other connections between the Royal Hotel and the American Civil War, but my memory is not that good now and I do need to reference the information on Captain John Newland Maffitt, CSN, who is reputed to have stayed at the Royal Hotel after giving up command of the CSS Florida at Brest in France due to a heart attack. He made his way to Liverpool and was planning on returning to the South but would have been dissuaded by Commander James D. Bulloch not to endure such a rigorous journey until he was completely well enough to run the blockade of Southern ports by the Federal navy.

The other connection which was intimated to me was that James Iredell Waddell, CSN also recuperated at the Royal Hotel after her 'surrendered' his ship, CSS Shenandoah to the British authorities on 7 November 1865, about six months after the Confederate army under General Robert E Lee had surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appotomax court house in April 1865.

The Shenandoah had sailed around the world and had returned to Britain with her guns stowed below decks, easy prey for the Union gunboats that were on the lookout for her.

After handing over his ship to Captain Paynter, RN, he left the vessel and visited James D. Bulloch and whilst in Liverpool he suffered what can only be described as blood clots (i.e. a mild form of stroke I assume) and was also advised by James Bulloch to recuperate at the Royal Hotel.

There are more connections to the American Civil War on Merseyside than any where else in the world outside of America.

On the staircase of The Royal Hotel is a painting of the CSS Alabama, built in Liverpool. The docks can be seen from the hotel.

[http://www.csa-dixie.com/liverpool\\_dixie/trail.htm](http://www.csa-dixie.com/liverpool_dixie/trail.htm) Offers pictures and lots of information about Liverpool and the American Civil War. There is also a picture of the Wyly Grave.

[bob\\_jones\\_liverpool@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:bob_jones_liverpool@blueyonder.co.uk) a valuable contact for The American Civil War In Liverpool

### **The Titanic Connections**

Liverpool, the home port of the Titanic, has many connections. Indeed, a large proportion of the crew were from Liverpool including Captain Smith who lived a stones throw away from the Royal Hotel at 17 Marine Crescent. His widow, Sarah was left a probate of £3,186.4.6d after the disaster. We like to think that Captain Smith enjoyed a drink at the hotel when he was home, obviously, without the Ice! The house of Captain Smith is now open to the public.