

A SCHOOL FOR NURSES FOUNDED IN LIVERPOOL IN 1829

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*Nor were the rich deficient in charity. There is no country in the world where money is so willingly given for public purposes of acknowledged utility.*¹
(Robert Southey)

Liverpool in 1829 – a snapshot of the town as reported in the newspapers of the day

During the period relevant to this paper, the town of Liverpool was throbbing with economic and financial activity, based on the port rather than the factory. This was set against a background of abject, grinding poverty, together with areas of ‘respectability’ and pockets of extreme wealth. Because the poor often lived in cellars and courts, they tended to be hidden from view. Progress in Parliamentary reform, child labour legislation (still opposed by the mill owners) and Catholic emancipation was regularly reported.

The population of Liverpool and the surrounding townships in 1831 was 165,221, with a clear excess of females. The citizens were ever watchful to prevent either local or national public waste or even perceived extravagance. Fathers were made liable for the support of their children, the money to be given to help relieve the Poor Rate and not to the mothers. Citizens were even prepared to complain about the expense of repairing Windsor Castle and Buckingham House, when the Monarch possessed over a million pounds!²

The steam train was now accepted to be superior to the stagecoach, and

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1 Robert Southey, *Letters from England* (London: Cresset Press, 1951), pp. 146, 223.

2 *Gore’s Liverpool Directory*, 1850; *Liverpool Mercury*, 27 June 1834; *Liverpool Chronicle*, 1828, p. 174. **HAVE CHANGED ALL Mercury (Liverpool) AND Chronicle (Liverpool) TO Liverpool Mercury AND Liverpool Chronicle IS THAT OK?**

the horse-drawn omnibus was about to be introduced into Liverpool.³ After points had been interfered with, which resulted in a fatal crash on the Liverpool-Manchester railway, the Company offered a reward of two hundred guineas to catch the culprit.⁴ The penny post was introduced,⁵ and a Liverpoolian invented a life jacket, which remained buoyant even if you fell in the water fully clothed with a considerable weight of money in your pockets.⁶ A method to manufacture sugar from rags was also reported.⁷

The public were curious about the world around them, and non-subscribers to the Zoological Gardens paid one shilling (1/20th of £1) to see a rhinoceros that had, 'at immense cost', recently arrived.⁸ The scientifically-inclined demanded that Liverpool had its own observatory,⁹ and the new Botanic Garden was reported to have an unsightly frontage.¹⁰ Toxteth Park was declared to be unruly, subjected to the 'depredations of the basest set of ruffians in existence'.¹¹ A ten-year-old boy was transported for seven years, and a twelve-year-old 'simple looking girl', with money and other articles found in her possession, for fourteen.¹² A fourteen-year-old boy was also transported for fourteen years for stealing a shawl. Such draconian sentences disposed of local problems and, it could be argued, might take the offender out of his/her criminal environment and give them a chance to make a fresh start. Another ten-year-old was ordered to be severely whipped and kept in solitary confinement. The paper was pleased that the magistrates were acting with greater severity.¹³ A woman who passed a counterfeit sixpence (1/40th of £1) was sentenced to

3 *Gore's Weekly Advertiser, Liverpool* (hereafter *Gore's Weekly Advertiser*), 19 November 1828; *Liverpool Directory*, 1834.

4 *Liverpool Chronicle*, 14 September 1830.

5 *Liverpool Mercury*, 27 June 1828.

6 *Ibid.*, 27 January 1832.

7 *Gore's Weekly Advertiser*, 26 February 1828.

8 *Liverpool Mercury*, 20 June 1834.

9 *Ibid.*, 20 June 1828.

10 *Ibid.*, 20 January 1832.

11 *Ibid.*, 4 July 1834.

12 *Liverpool Chronicle*, 3 January 1829; *Gore's General Advertiser, Liverpool* (hereafter *Gore's General Advertiser*), 10 September 1829.

13 *Gore's General Advertiser*, 12 February 1828.

death, as it was her second conviction.¹⁴

The justice system could show mercy: a starving girl who had not eaten for two days was charged with stealing bread – Mr Culling declined to prosecute, and the magistrate ordered her to be given a bed. She was given a shilling when she promised to return to her friends in Wiltshire, thus relieving Liverpool of the cost of her maintenance.¹⁵ Because of her age, the prosecutor also refused to proceed when a fifteen-year-old servant girl confessed to stealing eight guineas from her employer – a capital offence.¹⁶ A man who stole £1,239 was, at the employer's request, found guilty of stealing £4 19s and was sentenced to fourteen years transportation.¹⁷ Stealing the larger sum would have triggered the death penalty.

Like the justice system, health care also had both rough and smooth edges. A starving woman was refused admission to hospital,¹⁸ and, at the same time, the Ladies' Committee were providing lymph to permit free vaccination to be offered to the poor.¹⁹ Many families, called 'Conscientious Objectors' refused to participate,²⁰ and, perhaps as a result, twenty-five cases of smallpox were later reported.²¹ With the absence of anything but the most basic social support, a man even expressed gratitude because his family had been admitted to the workhouse.²²

Following a visit to Liverpool, Robert Southey (1774-1843), the poet laureate since 1813, noted the:²³

Princely liberality in its merchants, which even in London is not rivalled. Let anything be proposed for the advantage and ornament, or honour of the town, however little akin it may be to their own pursuits, habits, and feelings, they are ready with subscriptions to any amount.

14 *Gore's Weekly Advertiser*, 2 September 1830.

15 *Liverpool Chronicle*, 21 August 1830.

16 *Ibid.*, 21 June 1828.

17 *Liverpool Saturday Advertiser*, 28 February 1829.

18 *Liverpool Chronicle*, 13 June 1829.

19 *Gore's Weekly Advertiser*, 11 February 1830.

20 *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 June 1828.

21 *Liverpool Chronicle*, 19 December 1829.

22 *Gore's General Advertiser*, 26 January 1826.

23 Southey, *Letters from England*.

The newspapers of this time give much space to reporting the bustling activity of the numerous charities at work in the city. The great majority of these supported hospitals, dispensaries, schools, night shelters, soup kitchens and religious activity, but more specialised good causes, such as providing a library for mechanics' apprentices and female apprentices are also featured.²⁴ Funds were raised by many means. It was a rarity for a newspaper not to be advertising a grand event, such as a ball, bazaar or concert in aid of a charity. Public collections were undertaken and large sums were left in wills. Not all fund raising was successful: although the first stone for Bishop West's church in Soho Street had been laid, the project was abandoned in 1832 for lack of funds.²⁵

The dispensaries were the keystone for the delivery of health care for the poor, providing a service equivalent to that given by the 'Group Practice' of today. The dispensaries in the town (North, South and Central, with a fourth added later) collectively saw as many as forty-four thousand distressed and poor patients in a year.²⁶ They provided advice, free medicines and, if necessary, home visits. Such a major service proved too heavy a financial drain to rely solely on charitable donations and required official financial assistance. For example, the dispensaries received five hundred pounds from the Council when the new North Dispensary was being constructed in 1826, and £525 from the Poor Rate for running costs for 1827.²⁷ In 1829, the Liverpool Royal Infirmary was reported to be in debt.²⁸ Presumably, in at least some of the years that followed, these major health facilities would have had to be subsidised, a situation that continued until the birth of the National Health Service.

Each dispensary was staffed by six apprentices, one house/assistant surgeon, and three physicians and surgeons.²⁹ Despite a good career prospect, it proved difficult to recruit the apprentices, who were responsible for the home visits. The resident house surgeon, who must be a Licentiate of Apothecaries' Hall as well as having a Diploma in Surgery from Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow or London, was paid seventy guineas (£73 10s) per annum with coals and

24 *Ibid.*, p. 222; *Liverpool Mercury*, 27 January 1832; *Liverpool Albion*, 1830, p. 110. **HAVE CHANGED ALL Albion (Liverpool) TO Liverpool Albion**

25 *Liverpool Directory*, 1832.

26 *Liverpool Saturday Advertiser*, 12 September 1829.

27 *Liverpool Advertiser*, 28 January 1826.

28 *Gore's General Advertiser*, 26 April 1827.

29 *Liverpool Saturday Advertiser*, 1829, pp. 44, 48; *Liverpool Albion*, 1829, p. 304; *Liverpool Albion*, 1830, p. 44.

candles.³⁰ As a post in one of the dispensaries was the recognised first step to being 'on' at the Infirmary, with access to a lucrative private practice, there was no shortage of applicants for positions that required a medical qualification. The candidates, after advertisements in the papers describing their suitability, would be selected by election, the results being subsequently published.³¹ The normal progression was from the dispensary to the workhouse and contiguous fever hospital, where the surgeon would earn two hundred pounds per annum. To be appointed a workhouse physician was 'an object of desire in the profession'.³² The next promotion, before the Infirmary was finally reached, was from the workhouse to the Lunatic Asylum, which was later built alongside the Liverpool Royal Infirmary. This staging was not universally accepted, a physician at the Asylum claiming he already had equal status to a physician at the Infirmary.³³

In 1829, there were 3,028 boys and 2,249 girls attending the charity schools of Liverpool, a small fraction of the total number of children.³⁴ As each school appeared to have its own charity, many donors shared the heavy financial burden for their upkeep. Blind (mainly caused by smallpox) and deaf and dumb children were specifically catered for. Finally, the Liverpool readership was warned that the world would end in 1832 following a collision with a comet.³⁵ A similar prediction in France had caused panic, with priests taking the opportunity to make a fortune by selling places in Paradise.

It is in this maelstrom of injustice and reform, poverty and hectic if not frenzied charitable activity, that two wealthy men, one a cleric (Rev. Hornby) and the other a banker (Mr Hodgson), recognised and wished to fill a neglected 'niche' in the care of the sick. They established, at their own expense, the school for nurses described in this paper.

Elizabeth Fry in Liverpool

Foremost amongst those seeking nursing reform in the first half of Queen Victoria's reign was the penal reformer Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845), whose central, perhaps even coordinating role in the reform of nursing can no longer

30 *Liverpool Chronicle*, 14 August 1830; *Liverpool Albion*, 16 August 1830.

31 *Liverpool Saturday Advertiser*, 24 October 1829.

32 *Liverpool Saturday Advertiser*, 1829, Sept. 12, 19 – **IS THIS MEANT TO BE 12 September 1829, p. 19 OR 12 September AND 19 September 1829?**

33 *Liverpool Saturday Advertiser*, 19 September 1829; *Liverpool Chronicle*, 1829, pp. 278, 296; *Liverpool Directory*, 1829.

34 *Liverpool Saturday Advertiser*, 20 June 1829.

35 *Liverpool Chronicle*, 14 June 1828.

be ignored. The major impact of the Institution of Nursing Sisters, which she founded towards the end of her life in 1840, has been recently reviewed.³⁶

It is recorded that Elizabeth Fry visited Liverpool on a number of occasions. Returning from Scotland, she visited in 1818, where she held a large public meeting in which she 'hardly dared to raise my eyes because of the feathers and ribbons before me'. However, she added, 'truth appeared to be in great dominion'.³⁷ During this visit she had a 'sweet uniting time with the Benson family', and on her way home, having received a pressing invitation from Lady Derby, she stayed at Knowsley, the seat of the Earl of Derby, who was also the patron of the Rev. Hornby's living of Winwick. It is probable that the Rev. Hornby, wealthy and related to the Derbys, would have been invited to meet this well-respected religious visitor. During 1820 she visited numerous prisons in the North of England, including Liverpool. In many, as was her habit, she left a Ladies' Committee to visit the female prisoners after she had left.³⁸ Her example must have inspired the ladies of Liverpool, because in 1824 a refuge for discharged female prisoners, a project close to Elizabeth Fry's heart, was opened in the city.³⁹ Also, a letter was written in 1829 to a Liverpool newspaper demanding that female prisoners should be taught knitting, at that time a useful trade, instead of being 'put on the useless and disgusting tread wheel, some service might be rendered them'.⁴⁰

In 1828 she accompanied her husband into the North of England 'where he went on account of some business transactions', and again visited Liverpool. She received,⁴¹

As she had frequently done before, very great kindness from her valued friends, the Benson family. Nor was theirs the friendship that existed only in the day of sunshine. So when so soon afterwards the storm arose [i.e. the bankruptcy of her husband's business], and adversity prevailed, they were among those whose efficient kindness was singularly manifested.

36 R.G. Huntsman, Mary Bruin and Deborah Holtum, 'Twixt candle and lamp: the contribution of Elizabeth Fry and the Institution of Nursing Sisters to nursing reform', *Medical History*, 46 (2002), 351-80.

37 Katherine Fry and Rachel Elizabeth Cresswell, *Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry with extracts from her journals and letters*, Series in Criminology, Law Enforcement and Social Problems, 187, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: John Hatchard and Son, 1848; repr. Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith Publishing Corporation, 1974), I, 328.

38 *Ibid.*, I, 367.

39 *Ibid.*, I, 448.

40 'Useful Employment' (Correspondence), *Liverpool Chronicle*, 28 February 1829.

41 Fry and Cresswell, II, 31.

One of Elizabeth Fry's special interests was the establishment of District Provident Societies, which she had launched when she was in Brighton suffering from suspected pulmonary tuberculosis, a disease which severely afflicted her family.⁴² Collectors for these organisations encouraged the poor to save, perhaps only a few pence a week, by offering generous incentives. Elizabeth Fry believed such a system avoided the degradation associated with receiving charity. The Liverpool papers record that she returned to Liverpool in the autumn of 1829, where a meeting was held on this subject.⁴³ She communicated her ideas to a number of gentlemen, including clergymen and members of the Society of Friends. In Brighton, one collector was required for thirty to forty families. It was suggested that Liverpool might be divided into twenty-one districts, which would require a total of 870 collectors. The money saved could only be withdrawn for purchases (e.g. food, clothing, scriptures, housing, education) approved by the Society. A premium of six pence (2½p) would be given for every ten shillings (50p, perhaps £30 today) invested, provided the collector approved. To raise the required funds, it was suggested that money should no longer be given to beggars, but to the newly-formed Liverpool District Provident Society. The resources required could be reduced if vagrants were returned to their parish of origin and the money saved channelled into the Society.⁴⁴ By the end of 1830, a Hebrew Philanthropic Society, presumably based on the principles advanced by Elizabeth Fry, had been formed.⁴⁵

The first annual meeting of the (Liverpool) District Provident Society, which was poorly attended, was held in 1831, when it was reported that the poor had saved £499. It was suggested that itinerant Irish labourers, who worked in the brickfields in the summer, should be encouraged to save. No beggars were allowed to participate. At that time, money was only paid out for winter clothing and food. It was now felt necessary to also include the purchase of a bible, paying rent and the care for a woman lying-in. They must borrow from a friend if it was to be spent on a sudden 'freak'. Members of the Society could still receive relief, suggesting that fear of losing benefit might have resulted in a resistance to joining. The banker Adam Hodgson, co-founder of the 1829 nursing school, joined the General Committee at that time.⁴⁶ It is probable that

42 *Ibid.*, I, 465.

43 *Liverpool Chronicle*, 1829, p. 407.

44 *Liverpool Saturday Advertiser*, 21 November 1829.

45 *Liverpool Albion*, 27 December 1830.

46 *Liverpool Chronicle*, 21 May 1831; *Gore's Weekly Advertiser*, 19 May 1831.

Elizabeth Fry met both the Rev. Hornby and Adam Hodgson as a result of the considerable local interest resulting from the establishment of the Provident Society in their town. Both their names frequently occur in the local papers associated with many other charitable causes.⁴⁷ For example, both were on the committee for the Grand Music Festival for Charities.

Elizabeth Fry's last recorded visit to Liverpool was in 1837,⁴⁸ when she saw her brother Joseph John leave for America. Her visits may have been even more numerous than the available records indicate. During one or more of these visits, it appears highly likely that she would have met the Quaker Rathbone family. William Rathbone (1819-1902), who, after his father severed his connection with the Quakers, became a Unitarian when he was four years old, is credited with founding the first district nursing service in 1859, although such a service had been established by the Institution of Nursing Sisters in London by 1851.⁴⁹

Amongst others interested in nursing reform at that time was Robert Southey. He is best remembered today not for the copious prose and poetry he wrote, but because of his friendship with Coleridge (they were related by marriage) and his intense dislike of Byron. Southey ended his days living with the Coleridge family at Greta Hall, Keswick, enjoying the company of his near neighbour Wordsworth.

In 1816, a year after Waterloo, Southey visited the battlefield. He was impressed with the Beguines, Catholic nurses working in the Low Countries who took no vows.⁵⁰ From that time, nursing reform became an interest that lasted his whole life. Robert Southey corresponded with the Rev. Hornby both on Methodism and also on the latter's scheme 'for directing the personal charity of females to hospitals rather than prisons; to the sick rather than the profligate'.⁵¹ Although he was not well enough to be personally involved, Robert Southey confirmed (in 1829) that the Rev. Hornby now offered his purse and his personal exertions to promote hospital reform. Several letters passed between them 'chiefly upon the plan of educating a better order of persons as nurses for the poor; and through the exertions of the latter, a beginning was

47 *Liverpool Chronicle*, 25 July 1829; *Liverpool Mercury*, 27 June 1828; *Liverpool Saturday Advertiser*, 25 July 1829; *Liverpool Albion*, 1829, p. 221; *Gore's General Advertiser*, 12 April 1827.

48 Fry and Cresswell, II, , p. 216.

49 Huntsman, Bruin and Holttum, p. 377.

50 J.S. Howson, *Deaconesses; or the Official help of Women in Parochial Work and in Charitable Institutions* (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1862), p. 29.

51 Rev. C.C. Southey, *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, 6 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1850), V, 52.

made, which unfortunately was prevented by untoward circumstances from producing any permanent results'.⁵² In the only letter to Rev. Hornby to be preserved, Robert Southey writes at length about Methodism, touching only briefly on what his biographer earlier refers to as Rev. Hornby's 'lively and active interest' in female hospital nurses. Robert Southey felt the discipline of Methodism might be harnessed to this cause.⁵³

The Rev. Howson, the Principal of the Liverpool Collegiate Institution, was also interested in promoting the employment of Protestant women in this country, both in a voluntary and paid capacity, in a role other than that of a domestic servant or a help to their husbands. He had in mind nursing, both in the hospital and the home. This would 'balance' the continuing charitable and potentially proselytizing work of the French *Filles de Charité* (Sisters of Charity) on the Continent. It is to him that we owe much of our knowledge of the two early schools of nursing established in 1829 and 1855 in Liverpool.⁵⁴

Training school for nurses established in Liverpool in 1829

It should be noted that this early school (perhaps the first in England) was founded thirty years before the Nightingale school at St Thomas Hospital, and eleven years before Elizabeth Fry launched her pioneering Institution of Nursing Sisters in 1840. The operation of the Liverpool school and Mrs Fry's organisation was basically similar. They wished to supply respectable nurses, and both relied on outside hospitals to train them.⁵⁵ For many years, Elizabeth Fry's Institution concentrated on nursing rich private families. The rich did not use hospitals at this time, but were treated in their homes. In contrast, the Rev. Hornby specifically also included the provision of hospital nurses.⁵⁶ The importance of the short-lived Liverpool school lay not in its achievements, but in the recognition of its fundamental flaw – its failure to retain trained nurses – and the attempts to rectify this problem by the nursing reformers who followed.

Viewed against the problems existing between Catholics and Protestants at that time, it is surprising that enrolment in the Liverpool school was 'open to Christians of all denominations'. Could this be interpreted as open to all

52 *Ibid.*, VI, 71.

53 *Ibid.*, VI, 60-65.

54 Rev. J.S. Howson, 'Liverpool Institution for the Training and Employment of Nurses', *English Woman's Journal*, 3 (1859), 20-26.

55 Huntsman, Bruin and Holttum, p. 358.

56 John Wood Warter, *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, 4 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1856), IV, 164.

Protestant denominations, the Catholics being beyond the pale – as was the case with Mrs Fry’s Institution?⁵⁷ The Rev. Hornby was an influential Anglican priest and Mr Hodgson was the Treasurer of the Society for Promoting Religious Principles of the Reformation, which suggests at least the latter held rigid Protestant views and would likely oppose a Catholic presence.⁵⁸ The alternative view is that realism, in the shape of a large number of Irish people in Liverpool, made the inclusion of Catholic trainee nurses essential.

In 1859, the Rev. Howson, Principal of the Liverpool Collegiate Institution, gave a paper entitled: ‘The Liverpool Institution for the Training and Employment of Nurses’.⁵⁹ He quotes verbatim a leaflet *Society for the Education of Nurses*, which ‘must have been circulated about 30 years ago’, outlining the founding of the 1829 nurses school. He thought it ‘due to those who pointed out the road which has now been followed, to mention the document with this particularity’. Its contents are as follows:

It has long been a subject of regret to those who are conversant with the details of sickness, that a most inadequate or unfit provision is made for the necessary attendance on the sufferer, the administration of remedies, and such alleviation of pain as may result from care and tenderness directed by experienced skill. The poor are entirely without professed nurses; even the rich are, in many instances, consigned to the negligence of an ignorant or unfeeling nurse. The amount of misery which is thus occasioned is such as would astonish if it were known.

That the misery is not irremediable may be made evident; and by those to whom it has been so evidenced it is believed that a practical remedy may be obtained: that remedy they are now seeking to find and supply.

An association is formed, whose object is to provide nurses in every way qualified to minister to the comforts of the sick. These will be persons of religious principle and habits, carefully selected from Christians of all denominations, holding the fundamentals of Christianity. They will be educated in the hospitals; during the course of such education they will be resident in a house belonging to the association, under the control of a matron and a visiting committee. They will carry out testimonials renewable by actual examination from time to time, and their conduct in the various scenes of their future employment will be subject to the inspection or inquiry of the committee who recommend them.

The design of this association is to extend itself so that in time its objects may be obtained generally throughout the kingdom: with which view subscriptions will be sought generally from the first. Its actual operations will commence in Liverpool, under the auspices of the Public Infirmary (and other medical establishments) of that town.

57 Huntsman, Bruin and Holttum, p. 358.

58 *Liverpool Albion*, 1829, p. 221.

59 Published that year in the *English Woman’s Journal* [see ref. 54 above].

The purport of the present notice is to solicit the attention of individuals to the subject thus brought before them, to request their support by pecuniary assistance if the plan be such as they shall approve, and to invite them to the first general meeting of the friends of the Institution, on Wednesday, the 25th instant, at the Savings' Bank, Bold Street, at 12 o'clock, when the executive details of the measure will be arranged.

The names of the gentlemen who have attended at meetings already held for the purpose of preliminary arrangements are – Dr. Renwick, Dr. Briggs, Dr. Brandreth, Dr. Trail, Mr. Bickersteth, Mr. Batty, Rev. A. Campbell, Rev. R.P. Buddicom, Rev. W. Rawson, Rev. C.J. Swainson, Rev. Josh. J. Hornby, Chas. Lawrence Esq., Jas. Cropper Esq., John Moss Esq., Adam Hodgson Esq., Wm. Jones Esq.

Rev. Howson believed that Mr Bickersteth, one of the promoters, 'whose professional skill and Christian excellence will long be remembered' was the author of the document.⁶⁰

The year of the opening has been variously given as 1829,⁶¹ or a year or two later.⁶² Despite laborious searching of numerous Liverpool newspapers during the years surrounding 1829, no trace was found of either the above notice or any mention of the opening of the training school. The nature of the numerous weekly newspapers of the time suggests that, unless the opening was associated with politics, shipping, a criminal act such as a riot, or the unexpected death of a notable citizen, it may well not have been recorded. The available numbers of the *Gore's Liverpool Directory* (1829, 1832, 1834) also yielded no evidence.

The fate of the training school is described by one of Southey's biographers:⁶³

It appears that Mr. Hornby, in concert with Adam Hodgson, Esq. of Liverpool, undertook to set on foot an institution for this purpose as an experiment, and to maintain it for two years. They hired a house, engaged a matron, received a number of inmates, and had educated and sent out some few as nurses. Other individuals now became anxious to join them in the responsibility and superintendence; and there not being a sufficient unity of purpose among all the managers, the scheme, which was prospering admirably, fell to the ground. As soon as it appeared that they were educating a valuable class of persons, it was sought to make them available to the upper classes as monthly nurses; and this being an entire perversion of the original plan, Mr. Hornby and Mr. Hodgson withdrew at the end of the two years, and the whole scheme quickly fell to the ground.

60 *Ibid.*

61 Howson, *Deaconesses*, p. 30.

62 Rev. C.C. Southey, *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, IV, 163-64.

63 *Ibid.*, VI, 72.

References above to repeated examinations and enquiries about conduct suggest it was intended, as with Elizabeth Fry's Institution, that the trained nurses would be permanently attached to their training school.⁶⁴ This is confirmed by the second biographer of Robert Southey, who states that it was intended to use the home as 'an abode in the intervals of their engagements', as was later the case when Mrs Fry opened her Institution. The issue of who had overall responsibility for a nurse when working in a hospital was a problem with Mrs Fry's Institution, and would have proved the same with the earlier Liverpool school.⁶⁵ The second biographer also added, 'persons of good character and religious principles will be only ever admitted; and the intent is to get as near the Beguines or the Sisters of Charity as our institutions and manners will admit'.⁶⁶ Sidney Herbert, the Minister at War during the Crimean War, considered St John's House, a nursing institution founded by the Rev. Pusey, to be verging on Tractarianism (high church practices), and, with objectives like the above, the Liverpool school stood to have the same charge levelled against it.⁶⁷ The easy alternative, the employment of women from the workhouse as nurses, appeared to be unacceptable. It was also rejected by both Elizabeth Fry's Institution,⁶⁸ and Florence Nightingale.⁶⁹

The site of the house selected by the Rev. Hornby and Mr Hodgson for their nurses' home is not known. It may well be that, after the Rev. Hornby and Mr Hodgson withdrew, the nurses' school did not close but merely bent in the prevailing wind. Having established that there was a pressing need for respectable private nurses, others involved may well have decided such nurses could continue to be provided without the participation of the two founders. The 1857 *Gore's Liverpool Directory* reports Brown, Sarah, Nurses Institution, and St Elizabeth's Institute at 20 and 22 Soho Street respectively. A book published in 1865, *The Organisation of Nursing in a Large Town*, mentions a Nurses Institute in Soho Street for private nurses which cannot supply the

64 Huntsman, Bruin and Holttum, p. 362.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 374.

66 Warter.

67 Lord Stanmore, *Sidney Herbert: Lord Herbert of Lea*, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1906), I, 342.

68 London, Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine (hereafter WLHUM), Minutes of the Ladies' Committee, Institution of Nursing Sisters, 24 November 1848.

69 Baroness Frances Bunsen, *A Memoir of Baron Bunsen*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1868), II, 22-23.

demand:⁷⁰

We have been asked in what relation we shall stand to the Nurses Institute in Soho Street. The present plan embraces the hospital and district nursing, in addition to the private nursing of that valuable institution.

Could Soho Street have been the site? A newspaper of 1829 reported that ‘on Saturday morning, the body of a new-born female child was found wrapped up in some clothes in some new buildings in Soho Street’, confirming that at that time new building was taking place in the area.⁷¹

In the 1849 and 1853 Liverpool directories, numbers 20 and 22 are occupied by neither the Nurses Institution nor St Elizabeth’s Institution, suggesting they were established later with no direct continuity with the 1829 school on that site. The need to establish a second Liverpool nursing school in 1855 suggests that the 1829 school may well have totally disappeared.

With the close association already established by the Rev. Hornby, the primary hospital responsible for training nurses for the new institution would reasonably be expected to be the Infirmary. However the initial notice, which refers to ‘hospitals’ when describing the training of their new staff, suggests that more than one may have been involved. The Brownlow Hill Hospital may have been one of several sites. A book presented to Neville Chamberlain when he visited Liverpool in 1925 to view the West Derby Union, shows a picture of the Brownlow Hill institution with the claim that it was the first training school for nurses.⁷²

The length of hospital training for the nurses in Mrs Fry’s Institution was three months,⁷³ whereas for the Liverpool school that was established in 1855 it was two months.⁷⁴ The period of hospital training for the 1829 school would therefore most likely have been two months. Mrs Fry’s Institution was aware that the training period of three months was too short, but found it difficult to persuade hospitals to train her nurses for more than two months. The first Liverpool school is likely therefore to have been in the same position. Even with this shorter time, the institution still found it difficult to find hospitals

70 Member of the Committee of the Home and Training School, with an Introduction and Notes by Florence Nightingale, *The Organisation of Nursing in a Large Town* (Liverpool and London: A. Holden and Longman, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1865), p. 31.

71 *Gore’s General Advertiser*, 3 December 1829.

72 Liverpool Record Office, *West Derby Union, An Outline of the Main Features, 1925*, commemorative book presented to the Rt Hon. Neville Chamberlain MP, published by N.K.

73 Huntsman, Bruin and Holttum, pp. 365-66.

74 Howson, ‘Liverpool Institution for the Training and Employment of Nurses’, p. 24.

willing to train their nurses.

The faults and the lessons learnt

The Liverpool training school for nurses had to accept the bad reputation and poor working conditions of hospital nurses, as well as the problems associated with nursing the very poor. Hospital nursing consisted of much floor scrubbing and food preparation. They expected the nurses they recruited to be willing to be drafted, after a short period of hospital training, into whatever work the administration decided for them. It would appear that, unlike Mrs Fry's Institution, training the private 'monthly nurse' was not an acceptable option.

The unpopularity of hospital work at that time is reinforced by the experience of Admiral Parry, the arctic explorer, who was related by marriage to Mrs Fry. In 1847, seven years after Mrs Fry had founded her Institution of Nursing Sisters, he sought three or four respectable Christian women to undergo hospital training under the deaconesses of Kaiserswerth in Germany, founded in 1836 by Pastor Fliedner. They would take no vows, but would agree to work at Haslar Naval Hospital in Gosport near Portsmouth for at least four years. Despite a widespread appeal, not a person volunteered.⁷⁵

At that time, domestic work and nursing were not clearly separated, and women like the 'Balaclava Nurse' Elizabeth Davis, a somewhat 'rough diamond', tended to drift from one to the other. Having experienced both, she 'did not like nursing so well as being in service'.⁷⁶ As late as 1855, a doctor reported that hospital nurses were engaged without a character reference 'as no respectable person would undertake so disagreeable an office'.⁷⁷ When Florence Nightingale announced to her startled parents that she would like to nurse in Salisbury Hospital, they correctly likened her ambition to wanting to be a kitchen maid.⁷⁸ When she eventually entered Kaiserswerth, which customarily employed peasant girls as nurses,⁷⁹ there was concern about her high social status. Pastor Fliedner is said to have made her scrub a floor before

75 *Hospitals and Sisterhoods*, 2nd edn, attributed to Mary Stanley (London: John Murray, 1855), pp. 38-41.

76 Elizabeth Davis, *The Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis, a Balaclava Nurse, Daughter of Daffyd Cadwaladyr*, ed. by Jane Williams, 2 vols (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1857), II, pp. 86, 109.

77 *Hospitals and Sisterhoods*, pp. 21-23.

78 Sir Edward Cook, *The Life of Florence Nightingale*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan and Co., 1913), I, 60.

79 *Ibid.*, I, 113.

she was admitted.⁸⁰

In London, in 1874, an editorial in the *British Medical Journal* remarked that ‘the majority of nurses will not stop longer than they can help at hospital work, and if they are not put to private nursing by the sisters, they will take to it on their own account’.⁸¹ In 1865, the training school for nurses founded in Liverpool stated the opposite, that ‘nurses generally prefer the duties of the hospital to either district or private nursing’.⁸² If factual, the preference for hospital over private nursing is a remarkable reversal of attitudes previously held in Liverpool.

At that time, the care of the sick poor was equally unattractive to nurses. In 1857, Mrs Fry’s Institution admitted that great difficulties arose in most cases when nurses were sent to the very poor. They specifically selected recruits prepared to do this work.⁸³ Such problems were not confined to London. A few years later, in 1859, the nurse appointed to care for the poor of Liverpool by Mr Rathbone wished to resign only a month after taking up her appointment, ‘because she could not endure the sight of the misery which she had encountered among the poor’. She had to be persuaded to continue, but after three months ‘she begged to be allowed to devote herself entirely to nursing the poor, in the place of nursing in wealthy families’.⁸⁴

Subsequently, there were a number of solutions to the difficulty faced by the Rev. Hornby and Mr Hodgson in retaining their trained staff. The Institution of Nursing Sisters opted out of the problem by not forcing nurses to undertake hospital and district work. This resulted in the great majority of Mrs Fry’s nurses working for wealthy families, including Royalty.⁸⁵ Nurse Agnes Elizabeth Jones, the Liverpool matron, reported that this had drawn criticism

80 M.A. Nutting and L.L. Dock, *A History of Nursing*, 2 vols (New York and London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1907), II, 29-30.

81 Editorial (Special Commissioner), *British Medical Journal*, 1 (1874), 357-58.

82 Member of the Committee of the Home and Training School, with an Introduction and Notes by Florence Nightingale, *Organisation of Nursing: An account of the Liverpool Nurses’ Training School, Its Foundation, Progress, and Operation in Hospital, District and Private Nursing* (Liverpool and London: A. Holden and Longman, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1865), p. 19.

83 WLHUM, Min. Ladies’ Cttee, 13 November 1857; Huntsman, Bruin and Holttum, pp. 364-65.

84 William Rathbone MP, with an Introduction by Florence Nightingale, *Sketch of the History and Progress of District Nursing from its Commencement in the Year 1859 to the Present Day* (London and New York: Macmillan and Co., 1890), p. 17.

85 WLHUM, Correspondence, 4 October 1849, w.6/1, SA/QNI.

from Pastor Fliedner, who regarded their scope as too limited.⁸⁶ To retain staff, Elizabeth Fry also introduced a three-year contract, which, if broken by a nurse, or if a nurse was dismissed, resulted in a fine of three pounds, with five pounds deducted for the cost of the uniform. As a nurse's salary was in the region of twenty pounds per annum, this was a considerable additional deterrent.⁸⁷ At the same time, to make hospital work more attractive to her nurses, she began to separate domestic work from nursing by refusing to send a nurse to a hospital if her duties would include scouring the ward.⁸⁸ In 1853, the Institution of Nursing Sisters also introduced domestic help for their nurses working on the district.⁸⁹ Because the pay of the domestic was lower than the nurse, removing rough unskilled work such as floor scrubbing from a nurse's duties resulted in a financial saving, which encouraged the widespread introduction of the ward-maid into English hospitals. Although welcomed by administrators, this 'upgrading' of a nurse did not meet with universal approval, especially from doctors.⁹⁰

Because Kaiserswerth had its own hospital to receive trainee nurses, Pastor Fliedner could afford to introduce a long period of training before qualification, unlike both the 1829 Liverpool school and Mrs Fry's Institution which relied on other hospitals to train their nurses. About half the nurses left during this time of training or 'indentured service', many to get married. The long training ensured 'a vast amount of useful service', during which time the trainees, if they chose to leave, were denied the accolade of 'nurse'. It also ensured that the finally-qualified deaconess was less likely to leave to get married!⁹¹

In 1829, one could not criticise a nurse who, having completed her few months training, left to avoid being drafted into hospital or district work. In private work, she would have her own room with a coal fire and a junior domestic servant to wait on her, just as Sarah Gamp was waited on by the hotel maid in Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The nursing reformers that followed did their best to plug the loophole that permitted this escape to occur, as well as

86 [J. Jones(?)], *Memorials of Agnes Elizabeth Jones by Her Sister, with an Introduction by Florence Nightingale* (London, Strahan and Co., 1871), pp. 134-35.

87 Huntsman, Bruin and Holttum, pp. 358-59, 361.

88 WLHUM, Min. Ladies' Cttee, 16 July 1843.

89 *Ibid.*, 2 September 1853.

90 Nutting and Dock, II, 303.

91 Howson, *Deaconesses*, p. 167; Louisa Twining, 'Deaconesses for the Church of England: also a paper on the supervision and training of workhouse girls', *Quarterly Review*, 216 (1860), 364.

endeavouring to make hospital and district work more attractive.

Conclusion

There is every reason to believe that Elizabeth Fry was aware of the Liverpool school for nurses. In a letter dated 12 December 1829 to Amelia Opie, the Norfolk authoress interested in nursing reform, Mrs Fry wrote, 'I think what has been accomplished in Liverpool is very important'. To overcome the Liverpool problem of nurses leaving, Mrs Fry introduced a financial penalty and also did not make district or hospital work compulsory. Paster Fliedner collaborated closely with Mrs Fry on both penal and nursing reform, and Florence Nightingale contributed to the funds of the Institution of Nursing Sisters. Both would have taken precautions not to adopt the failed Liverpool model, of which they would have been aware.

The model devised at Kaiserswerth in 1836 by Pastor Fliedner, of subjecting your own nurses to a lengthy period of training and cheap labour in your own hospital, would be his reaction to the earlier 'failure' of the 1829 Liverpool school. After the Crimean War (1854-56), this model was then utilised by the 'Nightingale' nursing school at St Thomas Hospital, and was finally adopted as the preferred method for the major hospitals in this country. It would appear that the short-lived 1829 Liverpool school had a profound and permanent impact on the subsequent training of nurses in this country.

APPENDIX

Rev. J.J. Hornby

The Rev. James John Hornby was the second son of the Rev. Geoffrey Hornby, who was himself the previous Rector of Winwick.⁹² By marrying the Honourable Lucy, the sister of the Earl of Derby who was the patron of the living, his father increased the prospects of his son who, in 1812, at the age of thirty-five, successfully succeeded him 'to the richest rectory in the Kingdom'.⁹³

James John Hornby was born in 1777, and educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, thereby following the traditional path of a young aristocrat of his day. Recognised as a diligent student, he obtained the degree of Master of Arts in 1802. After he took Holy Orders he accepted, for a short period, a cure in 'a small place' in rural Norfolk, where he earned the reputation of being a fine preacher. On the death of his father he became Rector of Winwick, being presented to the living by his uncle, Edward, Earl of Derby. The Rev. Hornby 'had the rare faculty of reading character with ease [...] When he lost a friend, he had always a melancholy satisfaction in doing full justice to his memory'. Thus he gained the reputation of writing fine epitaphs, which, 'though always giving the discriminative shades of the deceased's character, may be censured as being too long'. By writing a

92 William Beamont, *Winwick: Its History and Antiquities*, 2nd edn (Warrington: Percival Pearse, [1879(?)]), pp. 70-80; William Farrer and John Brownbill, *Victoria History of the County of Lancashire*, 8 vols (London: J. Street, [1907(?)]), IV, 128-29. Unless otherwise stated, the material in this section is derived from these two sources.

93 *Liverpool Mercury*, 21 September 1855.

biography of Alexander Knox, the Rev. Hornby demonstrated that he was both 'a scholar and a Christian gentleman'.

Winwick was a vast parish, consisting of four chapelries with their own curates and nine townships, each larger than a normal parish in the South of England. Not surprisingly, the Rector of Winwick was viewed as a suffragan bishop. The Rev. Hornby's obituary described him as a man of considerable financial resources, not only through his family but also through his profession. His residence was at Winwick Hall, Lancashire.

During his tenure as Rector, with the consent of the Patron and by Acts of Parliament, the Rev. Hornby, in an unselfish act, divided the parish of Winwick into separate parishes: Croft, Newton, Culcheth (since called Newchurch), Lowton, Golborne and Ashton, each endowed with its tithes, with appropriate churches, parsonages and schools, built in some cases from the purse of the Rev. Hornby. In addition to the above, two other chapelries were founded. The original parish of Winwick was thus converted into eight separate parishes and chapelries. The number of parishes created gives a good indication of the size of the original. By losing the endowments that now went to the newly created parishes, this was a major financial sacrifice. During his lifetime, he also rebuilt the fourteenth century chancel of Winwick Church at a cost of six thousand pounds, and provided the large stained-glass window at the west end of the church at Ambleside, where he possessed a property. A tablet in the south aisle of Winwick Church records his death on 14 September 1855. Although the Rev. Hornby, the principal founder of the 1829 school for nurses, was active in many and varied charitable works in the city of Liverpool, his special and lasting interest in health care is demonstrated by his willingness to preach in his own parish for the benefit of the new Infirmary. He also preached on 27 July 1821 at St Peter's Church on the laying of the foundation stone.

Mr Adam Hodgson

The partner in this venture with the Rev. Hornby was Mr Adam Hodgson, who was described in the Liverpool directories of 1829, 1832, 1834 and 1862 as a merchant and a partner in the cotton-broking firm, Hornby and Ryley, with premises at Liverpool and London Chambers. He lived at Breckfield Cottage (**LODGE**), Breck Lane, Everton, becoming a director of the Bank of Liverpool, which was later incorporated into Martins Bank. His financial support of the Infirmary was noted. He was Treasurer of Liverpool and West Lancashire branch of the Church Missionary Association for Africa and the East and the Liverpool Christian Instruction Society. His numerous other philanthropic activities included the Provident Society, which had been established with the support of Mrs Fry,⁹⁴ and the Mariners' Church Society.⁹⁵ He was active on other committees, for example sharing with the Rev. Hornby membership of the committee for the Northern Hospital in Liverpool in 1834. He addressed, as Treasurer, the Liverpool Auxiliary Church Missionary Society, reporting a revenue of £1,120, with four hundred pounds raised by the Ladies' Bazaar.⁹⁶

Sadly, not all his philanthropic activities gave him the respect he probably felt he deserved. When Adam Hodgson was in the chair at a meeting of the British and Foreign Students Society, a Mr Falvey asked why they were sending money abroad to educate foreigners when only one in sixteen poor children in England were educated. The question was greeted by great uproar, cheers and hisses. After failing to regain control, Mr Hodgson and his friends were forced to abandon the meeting.⁹⁷

Formerly resident in the city, he retired to Scarthwaite near Lancaster and died on 28

94 *Liverpool Albion*, 1829, pp. 221, 225.

95 *Liverpool Saturday Advertiser*, 24 January 1829.

96 *Liverpool Mercury*, 27 June 1828.

97 *Ibid.*, 27 July 1832.

December 1862.⁹⁸ After combining Mr Hodgson's resources with those of the Rev. Hornby, there would appear to have been more than adequate financial support for the launching of their joint, short-lived venture into nursing reform.