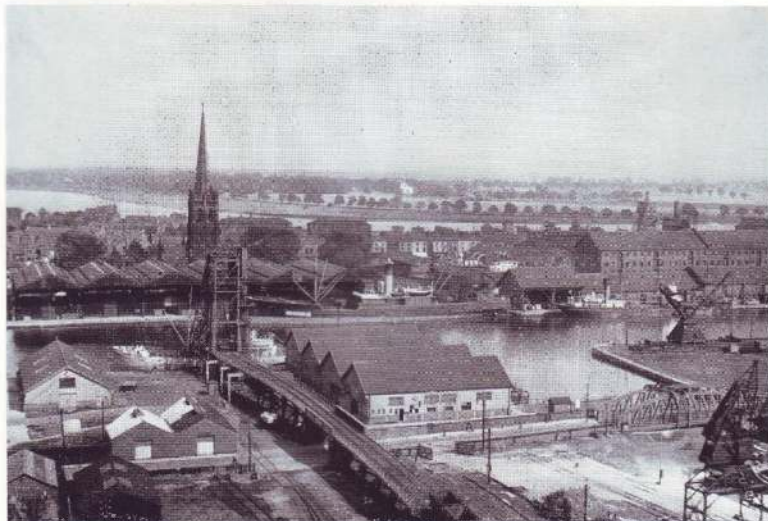


THE STORY OF GOOLE

Yorkshire's inland port 50 miles from the sea

By WILLIAM LANG

Foreword by the MAYOR OF GOOLE, ALDERMAN RICHARD JOLLEY



Photos: H. Greenfield

GOOLE CHURCH LIES CLOSE TO THE DOCKS

I AM gratified that you are to tell your readers the story of Goole which rather more than a century ago, was "an inconsiderable and undistinguished hamlet" situate on the River Ouse, and is now, on the published figures of H.M. Customs and Excise, rated as the tenth port in the United Kingdom. Our town has a personality and character of its own, being both an inland port 50 miles from the sea—the only port in the West Riding—and a pleasant market town in the Yorkshire agricultural area.

For the stranger, the chief fascination centres on the

river and docks, upon the movement of ships, "dirty British coasters" and those flying foreign flags, bound for coastal and Continental ports. Behind the fascination and the perpetual movement lie the import of food and raw materials and the export and shipment of coal from the Yorkshire Coalfields, both so vital to England's economic well-being and Goole's prosperity. The port's coaling appliances which, happily, are being increasingly used and the train of laden compartment boats on the canal are without parallel in this country.

I have pleasure, therefore, in concluding this brief Foreword with the hope that your story will prompt your readers to visit us in Goole where a very warm welcome awaits them.

A FEW weeks ago, I began one of my pleasantest Yorkshire journeys, when I boarded the 'bus at Selby for Goole, Yorkshire's inland port, 50 miles from the sea. The route lay through flat, rich agricultural land, old world villages, and finally along Boothferry Road, a lovely mile of trees, which, to my mind, is one of the finest approach roads to any Yorkshire town.

At Goole Railway Crossings we came to a sudden stop "The gates are always against us," said the conductor. "There's a train across every couple of minutes."

Beyond the crossing on the docks, ships' funnels and masts rose above tall buildings, and giant cranes swung crates of export goods into the holds. Another landmark was the tall spire of the nineteenth-century Parish Church of St. John hard by the busy railway sidings—a church in the very centre of the busy, bustling life of the port.

No-one would think of spending a holiday in Goole by choice, and few would go there on a day trip, other than to a football match, for the local team is now well placed



THE MARKET PLACE

YORKSHIRE LIFE

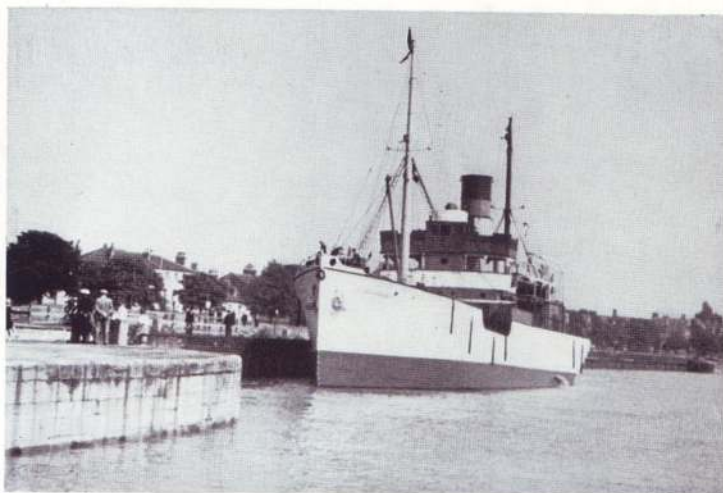
in the Midland League. Goole exemplifies workaday Yorkshire—Yorkshire with its sleeves rolled up, and because of the port's situation it is county and cosmopolitan combined, as West Riding accents mix with snatches of Dutch and Scandinavian in the dockside snack bars. Dwarfed by its giant neighbour, Hull, 30 miles down river, it maintains a healthy independence as the youngest Borough in the West Riding, and has now risen from the 11th to the 10th port in the Kingdom.

In Goole, it is possible to obtain a good idea of how Great Britain is going to fare in the export drive and the economic field during the coming year. In spite of so much short-time working in the West Riding textile industry, people in Goole see a brighter future for this country.

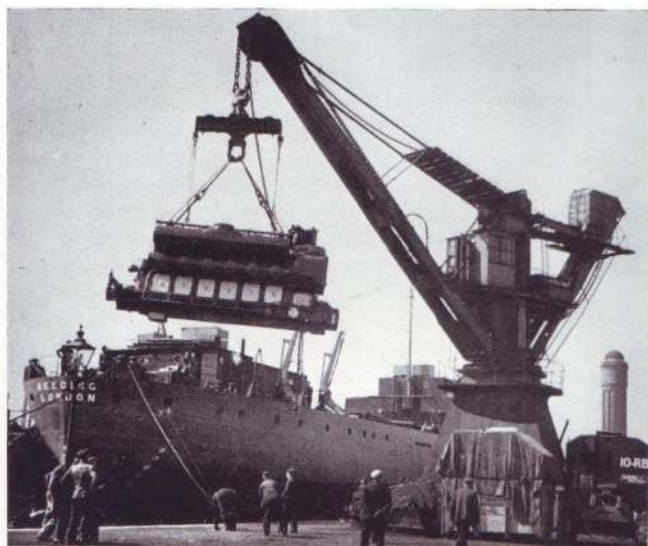
Things are definitely improving," said Mr. G. D. Halton, as we talked in the offices of the Inland Waterways Board which now administers the Docks. When

it, and our coal export figures are improving tremendously."

Through the window we watched the dockers unloading return traffic. "The Don", an Associated Humber Lines ship just arrived from Copenhagen, had brought



THE WATERFRONT



LOADING MACHINERY AT THE DOCKS

he started there as a young man, they were under railway control, and for many years now Mr. Halton has had his finger on the pulse of the port, for he prepares the statistics.

"Without a lot of fuss and publicity," Mr. Halton continued, "the miners are really putting their backs into

in a heavy cargo of butter, bacon and eggs for British tables. That is the kind of load the dockers prefer, though they have to be versatile. The other week, a complete circus with lions, tigers and giraffes was shipped from Hamburg through Goole, to its destination at Blackpool for the delight of holidaymakers and their children this summer.

The growth of the town has been spectacular. Although the names of nearby villages like Swinefleet and Aldingfleet are evidence that marauding Danes penetrated far up the River Humber, Goole was unknown at the time of the Domesday Survey. For many years, until 1820, it was a mere hamlet of 12 houses in the Parish of Snaith.

During the sixteenth century, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the first scheme for draining the morass of Hatfield Chase was put forward, while in 1616 there was a plan to build a canal from Blacktoft on the Humber, to Water Fulford near York.

Five years later, James I sought the advice of Cornelius Vermuyden, the Dutch engineer, who brought over a number of his fellow-countrymen and French refugees to begin the work of draining Hatfield Chase. Vermuyden

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obtained a concession of one third of all the land reclaimed.

Unfortunately, reclamation in one place resulted in flooding near Sykehouse and Pollington, and so the cut known as the Dutch River was constructed to drain off the flood water, and also to put an end to the riots and fights which took place between the local farmers and the foreigners.

About this time the first Bill was introduced into Parliament by the West Riding woollen merchants to make possible navigation up the Calder as far as Wakefield, but it was not until the end of the seventeenth century that powers were finally obtained which brought into being the Aire and Calder Navigations. The great impetus came in 1826, with the completion of the canal from Knottingley to Goole, which gave passage from the Aire at Ferrybridge to the Humber, and opened up an export trade for the rich Yorkshire coalfield.

By 1823, construction work had swollen the population of Goole to 500 people, an amazing expansion from the viewpoint of the other little villages in the Parish of Snaith. Today, 20,000 people live in Goole. In the wake of such rapid growth, it is often difficult to define a tradition or find people with a real sense of community.

There is a great community spirit in the town, and the man who does much to foster it is Mr. T. E. Long, editor of the local newspaper, which, incidentally runs editions for the much older towns of Selby and Howden. Mr. Long has spent much of his working life on big city newspapers in Yorkshire, but he finds great happiness and satisfaction in editing the *Goole Times*.

"Everyone here is a friend," he says. "We don't go out looking for news. It comes to us." He is very interested in Civics and the development of a tradition, both important considerations for a town which was incorporated as a Borough as recently as 1933.

Goole's motto—"Advance"—is very appropriate, for the town is one of the most progressive in Yorkshire. Is there another one where two fine schools face each other directly across the road? That is the case at Goole, where, on one side of Boothferry Road is the Grammar School built in 1909, and directly opposite is Goole Secondary Modern School opened in 1936.

The Grammar School was originally planned for 250 pupils, then extended for 500, and now 700 scholars are enrolled, with the possibility of further extension. At the Modern School there are over 1,000 students,



THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
where 700 scholars are enrolled

with crafts and rural science taking a special place. How this would have delighted Romany, even in the days before Raq. came into the picture, for at the end of the First World War, Rev. G. Bramwell Evans was Minister of a local Methodist Church.

Complementary to the traffic of the port, the building of ships has always been an important industry in the town. The main firm employed on this work has launched over 430 ships since its foundation in 1907.

However, while the docks and shipping will always be the focal point of Goole's life and work, great efforts have been made to attract alternative industry to the Rawcliffe Road Industrial Estate.

"What we want is a bit of variety!" says Mr. K. H. Chorlton, Goole's vigorous Town Clerk. "Then we can keep even more men in the town, instead of those which the docks cannot absorb having to travel long distances by 'bus every day."

At the moment a large clothing factory on the Estate is providing employment for 600 women, while close by is a building peculiar to the port. In it, cars from factories all over the country are crated for export before being delivered to the docks.

Mr. Chorlton's main concern for the future is to obtain even more variety of employment, and that the excellent housing progress as shown in the Western Road Estate, and the pleasant bungalows specially built for elderly people shall continue. As a product in part, of the Industrial Revolution, Goole is very fortunate. It has all the facilities of industry, without the grime and the slums. Since 1946, 262 houses and 56 flats have been built in the town.

Sailors nicknamed Goole "Sleepy Hollow" and until 1929, it was regarded by most Yorkshire folk as quite off the beaten track. In that year, the fine bridge over the

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Ouse at Boothferry was completed, giving direct access to towns in the East Riding, and reducing the distance by road by some 28 miles. Now many holidaymakers find Goole useful, for one of the most popular Continental passenger services operates from the dock to Rotterdam, and the fare is only £6 10s. od. return!

The dockers themselves are a happy crowd, with no worries about the future of Goole as a port. Ken Stevens is typical of these grand men, who in addition to being good workers, are West Riding to the core, in spite of their many contacts with foreign seamen. Ken is a local lad, who has lived in Goole all his life, and he has worked on the docks for 12 months. As he deftly wheeled a

heavy sack under a crane to be dropped into the depths of the "Holderness" he told me: "This is a good job now, and just nice going once you know the knack of handling the heavy stuff. We work from 8 a.m. in the morning till 5 p.m. at night, with sometimes a bit of overtime at week-ends."

Some of the finest land in Yorkshire can be found in the vicinity of Goole, and the continuing importance of agriculture in the life of the town can be seen, particularly on Wednesdays and Saturdays. There has been a Market in the town since the first ship left for the Continent in 1826. Fifty years later a very imposing building was erected but it was completely destroyed by fire in 1891.

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The Story of Goole

(Continued from page 11)

Goole Market, in 1952, accommodates 104 stalls.

Should you travel on the cross-country train between Hull and Leeds, or from Hull to London, look for a new fleet on the River Humber, flying the "light blue duster" of the British Electricity Authority, and carrying coal to the country's new Power Stations. The ships are based on Goole, the nearest point to the South Yorkshire coalfields, and the only West Riding port. They are a symbol of Goole's continued prosperity in the future and the increasing importance of this Yorkshire shipping town 50 miles from the sea.