

## The Grand Quays

In just a few weeks time, the Waterford Quay will once again be the centre of 'universe' as many thousands flock there in even greater numbers than last time to marvel at all the Tall Ships which will be gathered there. 150 years ago, it would not have been uncommon to see up to 60 sailing trading ships in the harbour. It also became an important ship building port that rivalled any other in Ireland. Last week we brought you the story of one of them, the admirable Lord Nelson. This week as part of the build-up, I thought it appropriate to bring you some of the history associated with the quay or quays of Waterford.

The Quay/s define Waterford in its physical shape, character and history. From the earliest of recorded time both sea and river craft have plied these waters. Its origins grew from those who came in their long boats and found safe haven here. These Vikings first drew up their boats into the sally ports along the mouth of the Pill where now runs the Mall. The first arrivals were as early as 795 to raid and plunder but within 50 years or so they began to over winter here. Though the year 900 or so saw a withdrawal for a period Vadre Fiord was back on the map as a definite settlement of Ostmen by the year 914. Indeed it was here that the Vikings regained a foothold in Ireland. The settlement was first clustered around Dundory, the site where Reginald's (Ring) Tower was later built and has since stood sentinel while serving many diverse purposes over many centuries. Of course, the unearthing of the Viking site at Woodstown has opened a whole new debate as to the true chronology of settlements in the whole area.

### A Waterford Mile

Once again, an essential port of call, when seeking to write about Waterford's history and stories of its streets and thoroughfares Past and Present, is that wonderful work of Daniel Dowling. I begin with his introduction to the Quay's story.

" The longest street in the city with deep berthage along its entire length, capable of accommodating large ocean- going ships and vessels. At its greatest length it extended from Adelphi Lane at its eastern end to its western termination at the junction with the Bilberry Road. This was the last extension to the continuous line of quay which was opened in 1872, when Bridge Street was connected along the waterfront as far as the western end of Bilberry road, adjacent to the premises of Strangman's Brewery (Cheery's). Since the Adelphi Quay development of 1993-5, the line of the quay now terminates at Rose Lane - this distance being about a mile in length."

We go on to learn that one of the earliest references to the quay or quays was as far back as 1377 when Edward III granted to the Mayor and bailiffs of the city the 'cocket customs' of the port for a period of 10 years which was in response to a plea for funds for the repair of city walls. This probably featured in the Great Charter Roll shown so proudly to Queen Elizabeth II during her visit. We further learn that " The quay at this time appears to have been exposed and unfortified, either through the collapse and decay of an earlier defensive wall, or that such a fortified structure along the river had yet to be built. This was a period when the city was subject to periodic attack from the river by the Spanish and other enemies. The grant made provision for both the enclosure of the quay and repair of the walls". We will bring you Part Two of the story of our grand Quays, next week.

### All Hands on Deck

Don't forget the Lord Nelson/Steve Canavan Pub Quiz in the Showboat this Thursday night (9th), all welcome on board.