

# Charles Roscoe of Neston: a Remarkable True Tale of Tragedy at Sea and Divided Love

- Anthony Annakin-Smith -

There are many interesting gravestones in Neston churchyard but one that is particularly unusual is that of Charles Roscoe – it bears what is probably the most detailed image to mark any grave there. The image, cast from a mould, is of a ship and is still fine in every detail. Around it are the words:

*In Affectionate Remembrance of  
my dearly beloved husband  
CHARLES ROSCOE  
who lost his life at sea Oct: 7<sup>th</sup> 1889  
aged 34 years.*

The gravestone (*Figure 1*) is also unusual in marking the single burial plot of a woman and both of her husbands – and, even more oddly, all three have the same surname.

The story behind the gravestone, which is edged with the pattern of a ship's rope, is one of tragedy for Charles Roscoe when his ship, the *Primus*, sank during a terrible storm in 1889. This article looks at the circumstances of his death and reveals how, after some surprising twists in the tale including the occurrence of an illicit marriage, he came to share his resting place with another man – one with an unexpected identity. This account also introduces a Parkgate figure whose previous distinguished service overseas has been largely unrecognised locally.



**Figure 1: Charles Roscoe's gravestone in Neston churchyard.** He was buried in 1889. It also marks the burial place of Zebby Roscoe (1926) and Thomas Roscoe (1939).

*A larger version of this image, and a full transcript of the wording, is given at the end of this article.*

## **Charles Roscoe – from Parkgate Servant to Mariner**

Charles Roscoe did not come from a seafaring background. His father, John, was described as a labourer in Willaston, Cheshire on his marriage in 1852.<sup>1</sup> He may have moved to his wife Frances's home village of Treuddyn in inland Flintshire for a while where Charles was born in 1855 as well as an elder brother.<sup>2</sup> By 1861 the family was living at Pemberton's Green, off Mill St., in Neston where John was still a labourer.<sup>3</sup> Charles's first known job, aged 16, was as a servant living in Parkgate in the employment of an elderly landowner Elizabeth Holbrook.<sup>4</sup> She occupied Talbot House on the front at Parkgate (*Figure 2*; still standing, at the south end of The Parade, Grade II listed). While working there it appears Charles also met her son Henry – a successful merchant and political leader in Canada who plays an important later role in this story.<sup>5</sup> Charles may also have worked directly for him for a while.<sup>6</sup>



***Figure 2: Talbot House, Parkgate, where Charles Roscoe is first known to have worked.***

It may well have been while working at Talbot House that Charles developed a yearning for the sea. Parkgate was well past its heyday as a port but the tide still came in regularly and there was a large fishing community which he would have seen at work daily. Whatever his motivation, it was in 1873 – the same year that Elizabeth Holbrook died and thus when his role as a servant at Talbot House seems to have ended – that Charles is first recorded as mariner, crewing the Chester-registered sailing ship *Imperial*.<sup>7</sup> Over the following fifteen years he crewed on at least seven other Chester vessels gaining experience of British and European waters.<sup>8</sup>

In 1885 Charles married Hephzibah Campion, the daughter of one of Parkgate's fisherman who lived in nearby Mostyn Place – they had probably known each other for years.<sup>9</sup> There is no record of her biblical Christian name ever being used by her or her family. In the 1871 census, when she was aged 10, it had already been shortened to 'Zebby' – the name which she also used on her marriages and which would be carved on the shared gravestone when she died in 1926. Like Charles, she had first become a domestic servant, adopting the name Sarah while working in the household of a senior solicitor in Toxteth, south of Liverpool.<sup>10</sup> It was in the church there that she married Charles Roscoe who gave his occupation as mariner.

## **The Schooner Primus**

After fifteen years as a crew-member, in 1888 Charles was given command of a sailing ship – the *Primus*.<sup>11</sup> The wooden, carvel-built schooner had been constructed in Truro, Cornwall in 1859. She had a single deck, two masts (the forward one shorter than the rear one which was characteristic of schooners) and a fixed bowsprit. Her length was 64 feet (19.5 metres) and she had a registered tonnage (based on capacity) of 60 tons (61 tonnes).<sup>12</sup> Her description is a good fit with the vessel

depicted on the gravestone (*Figure 3*) with a couple of small differences: while the *Primus* had been built as a schooner and was described as such in newspaper reports of her loss, the pictured vessel appears to be a 'schooner brig' with square sails, as opposed to fore-and-aft ones, on the foremast; and there is no sign of the *Primus*'s figurehead of a busty female – perhaps too indelicate for including on a gravestone!



**Figure 3: The *Primus* as depicted on Charles Roscoe's gravestone**

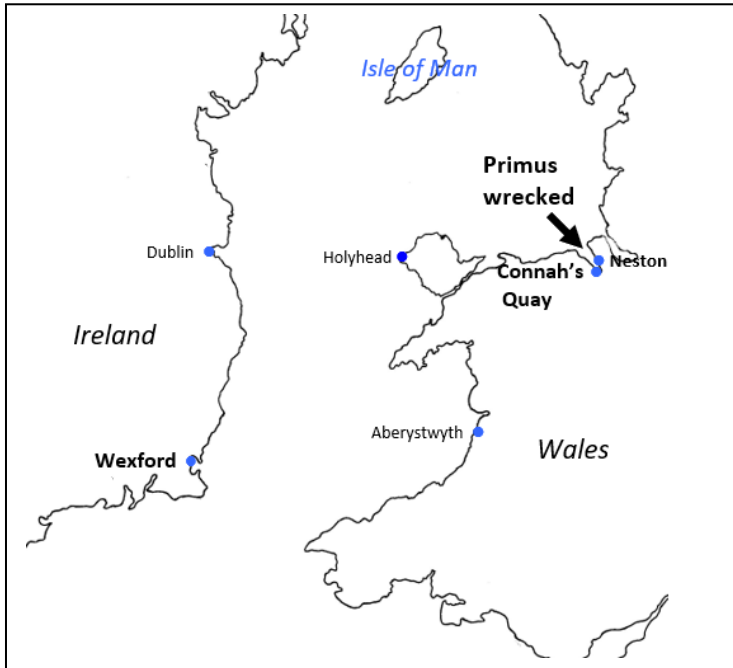
Probably due to her relatively small size and her master's inexperience, the *Primus* did not venture into the waters of mainland Europe, instead largely operating on the western coasts of Britain, from south Devon to Glasgow, and sometimes across to Ireland.<sup>13</sup> Her registration had been transferred from Truro to Chester in 1872 and various individuals had shares in her over time including two church ministers and a Scottish commercial traveller.<sup>14</sup> The 'managing shareholder' at the time the *Primus* was lost was Richard Ferguson, a shipbuilder of Connah's Quay, Flints.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Wrecking of the *Primus***

The night of Sunday 6 October 1889 brought a violent storm to Britain.<sup>16</sup> Rated at force 11 on the Beaufort Scale, winds reached around 70 mph (about 32 metres per second). The west coast of Britain was particularly badly affected, especially from the Bristol Channel to Lancashire. The *Primus* had left Wexford on the Sunday morning to cross the Irish sea to her home port of Connah's Quay where Charles Roscoe lived (*Figure 4*).<sup>17</sup> The small vessel was in ballast and had just two crew besides Charles – a man and an inexperienced 19-year-old.<sup>18</sup>

Falling barometer readings in London around midday on Sunday indicated that bad weather was on the way but it was not until 6 p.m. that the Meteorological Office issued an official warning by telegraph to coastal stations.<sup>19</sup> The warning system had been in place since 1861, following the loss of the Sandycroft-built *Royal Charter* off Anglesey with about 450 lives.<sup>20</sup> Observation stations around Britain were advised to display a 'south cone' warning signal, the second highest level available.<sup>21</sup> The highest level would have been more appropriate; it was later reported from Dublin that 'the most violent storm for twenty years commenced to blow from the south-west on Sunday night and continued with almost the fierceness of a hurricane up to 10 o'clock [on Monday] morning'.<sup>22</sup> As well as heavy seas there were 'blinding storms of hail and rain'.

The *Primus* had probably reached the North Wales coast by the time the warning signals were posted. It seems, though, that Charles Roscoe missed them in the poor visibility (despite illuminated signals being used at night) or chose to ignore them, spurning shelter for his vessel and crew.



**Figure 4: The *Primus* had almost completed its 175-mile journey from Wexford to Connah's Quay when it was lost.**

No one saw what happened to the *Primus* in the middle of that autumn night but the hull of the wrecked vessel, with some of her rigging, was discovered three days after the storm. It was bottom-up on West Hoyle Bank, a large sandbank near the mouth of the Dee Estuary which had claimed many ships and lives over the years.<sup>23</sup> It appears that she had struck the sandbank and capsized. It is probable that the three men on board took to the small boat the ship carried which, itself, was then overwhelmed by the mountainous seas. This small boat, bearing the name *Primus*, was found upturned on the shore of nearby Hilbre Island.<sup>24</sup> The ship's figurehead was also recovered.<sup>25</sup> There was, though, no sign of the men.

### **The Aftermath of the Storm**

The storm took a terrible toll on vessels along Britain's west coast. Many lifeboats were launched and there were numerous reports of ships lost or damaged. At Parkgate, several boats were lifted onto the sea wall before being dashed to pieces: 23 were lost in total including four 'trawling boats'.<sup>26</sup> In an unusual turn of phrase one report stated that 'Three boats ... committed suicide at the bastion or donkey stand together, and the spectators could do nothing to save them'. One of those who lost a boat was William Campion, a Parkgate fisherman and probably a distant relative of Zebby. Little compensation was payable to those who lost boats or equipment. Many seafront houses were flooded too.

There was initially confusion over fatalities in the storm. The body of a young man with some money in his pocket was found by three Parkgate fishermen not far from the wreck site on the Thursday after the *Primus's* loss; it was taken to Parkgate for an inquest.<sup>27</sup> It was widely reported that this was Charles Roscoe but it soon became apparent that this was incorrect and the body was buried at Neston, simply recorded as 'A man unknown found drowned, years 23 (above)' (*sic*).<sup>28</sup>

It would take several weeks for the sea to relinquish the bodies of known victims from the *Primus*. On 5 December it was reported that an inquest had been held at West Kirby Hotel on the body of the youngest crew member, Thomas Hughes; it had been washed up on the shore near Hoylake.<sup>29</sup> His

burial was at West Kirby but, sadly, his family in Bagillt, Flints. found out too late to attend. The same report stated that ‘a short time previously’ the body of the other crewman, whose name was not given, had been found. However, there is no record of any burials of likely males on the west coast of Wirral around that time.<sup>30</sup> It is possible that the ‘unknown’ man buried at Neston in October was that individual.

It was to be later in December before, as one report put it, Charles Roscoe was finally ‘removed from his quiet bed under the sands and he “came ashore” ‘.<sup>31</sup> The body, badly decomposed, was found by a girl at Thurstaston and brought to Neston where somehow it was identified.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Charles Roscoe was buried in Neston on 23 December 1889, aged 34.<sup>33</sup>

Whether Zebby Roscoe received any financial help on Charles’s death is unknown. The Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners’ Royal Benevolent Society had been founded in 1839 to help, amongst others, widows of lost seamen.<sup>34</sup> However, it was a subscription-based scheme and Charles may or may not have been a member. The Victorian Poor Law system of support was also in place but the benefits from this or any other scheme would have been minimal for Zebby who was relatively young and also childless. Given all this it is hard to believe that, however much she loved Charles, an unusual and expensive gravestone was high on her list of financial priorities. Maybe someone else helped pay for it, or maybe Zebby installed it when her fortunes had turned for the better – both of which, as we shall see shortly, are possibilities.

In any event, as well as the words quoted at the start of this article, the following stoical lines were included on the gravestone, alluding to Charles’s maritime background and watery end:

*Weep not: the change was wrought for good  
The bitter pains of Death with him are o’er  
No more he’ll battle with life’s stormy flood,  
His anchor’s safely cast on Canaan’s shore  
Thy will be done.*

### **Zebby Roscoe – a Remarkable Postscript**

The story of Zebby Roscoe after Charles’s death throws up some major surprises; it also sheds light on a distinguished but little-known Parkgate figure.

The social mores around widowhood in Victorian times were very strict. Widows were expected to be in deep mourning for some time and to wear forms of mourning dress for a full two years.<sup>35</sup> We do not know how closely Zebby observed these customs but she returned to Parkgate to become a one of four servants at the popular Union Hotel, now The Ship.<sup>36</sup> The job would not have been well paid; nevertheless, six days before the second anniversary of Charles’s death, Zebby was boarding a steam ship, the *Circassian*, in Liverpool (*Figure 5*).<sup>37</sup> The vessel was bound for Quebec on Canada’s east coast and Zebby was described as a ‘wife’, not a ‘widow’ on the passenger lists.

Arriving at Quebec on 13 October, Zebby took a connecting steamer to Montreal and then the recently-built transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway for the 2,400-mile crossing to British Columbia (B.C.) on the west coast; overall the journey from Quebec would have taken several days. It was in B.C. that, remarkably, on 21 October 1891 – probably just a day or so after arriving – she remarried.<sup>38</sup> Equally remarkably, the man she married was Thomas Roscoe, the younger brother of her former husband Charles, who had been born in Parkgate in 1861 a few months after Zebby.<sup>39</sup>



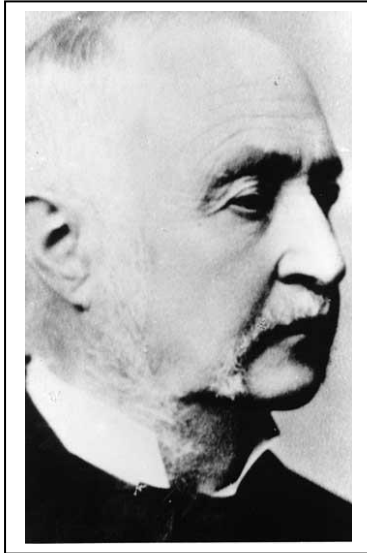
**Figure 5: The steam ship Circassian, on which Zebby Roscoe emigrated to Canada. The vessel, launched in 1872, was owned by the Allan Line Steamship Co. of Glasgow.**

It seems clear that the marriage was well-planned but we may never know when and how Zebby, who had buried her first husband rather less than two years previously, and Thomas, a Salvation Army member, fell in love and made their plans.<sup>40</sup> The records show, though, that Zebby travelled to Canada alone so he must have preceded her to B.C., apparently in the year they married or the year before.<sup>41</sup>

It would be interesting to know how much their family and friends knew of the relationship as it developed during the usual mourning period and, if they knew, to what extent they approved of it. Furthermore, was anyone concerned that, if Zebby and Thomas chose to marry, it would actually be illegal? At the time, both statute law and canon law (i.e. in the rules of the Anglican Church) prohibited marriage by an individual to a sibling of his or her deceased spouse.<sup>42</sup> Some couples chose to ignore this but there appears to have been more social acceptance of marriage to a deceased wife's sister than marriage to a deceased husband's brother as applied to the Roscoes; such marriages were very uncommon.<sup>43</sup> If they could afford it some couples took the option of fleeing to Scotland or overseas when faced with these legal challenges.<sup>44</sup> However, for Zebby and Thomas, the same laws applied in Canada as in England.<sup>45</sup> There was much debate about the issue in both countries at the time, not least in the Church, and it is possible that the couple found a sympathetic ear in the Wesleyan Methodist minister who married them.<sup>46</sup> Technically, though, their marriage was invalid.

Whatever the background to their union, there is good evidence for why Zebby and Thomas chose western Canada as the place to settle. At the time their relationship was growing, Cheshire-born Henry Holbrook (*Figure 6*) was living at Talbot House, Parkgate, the household where Charles Roscoe had once worked. Holbrook had been a merchant in B.C. for decades.<sup>47</sup> He aided its commercial development as well as becoming a leading local political figure. He was mayor for several years of what had until recently been its capital, New Westminster; this earned him the title by which he was known for the rest of his life, the 'Honourable Henry Holbrook'.<sup>48</sup> If anyone knew the opportunities B.C could offer, it was him – and it was New Westminster, B.C. that Zebby and Thomas headed for and where they married.

British Columbia had been booming in the decades after an 1858 gold rush which was the reason Henry Holbrook first went there; he later adopted Canadian citizenship. He retired to his deceased mother's home in Parkgate in 1880 due to ill-health but was recognised as a great advocate of B.C. after his return, actively encouraging Britons to go and settle in that 'terrestrial paradise' (a term he used in a speech he gave in Chester just three days before Charles Roscoe's body was found).<sup>49</sup> Maybe it was even initially *Charles* and Zebby who had the dream to go there after hearing about it from Holbrook. Henry took great interest in the fishing industry in Canada and England and was a caring and popular figure, being described in his obituary as 'a staunch friend of the fishermen of the Dee Estuary'.<sup>50</sup> Only a few months before Charles's death he had attended a meeting in Parkgate of the



**Figure 6: Henry Holbrook of British Columbia (Canada) and Parkgate: businessman, politician, mayor and friend to mariners.**

Shipwrecked Mariners' Society and expressed concern at changes to rules which disadvantaged subscribers.<sup>51</sup> He would inevitably have heard of mariner Charles's demise and would have come across Zebby in her work at the Union Hotel where, amongst other things, Holbrook attended Masonic meetings of the Dee Lodge.<sup>52</sup> It is conceivable that, out of sympathy, he helped fund the gravestone; maybe, if he had no concerns about social impropriety in her behaviour, he also helped pay for Zebby's passage to Canada.

Zebby and her new husband were in Canada for many years and adopted Canadian citizenship; they did, however, return to England from time to time.<sup>53</sup> Thomas was described as a 'painter' when they married, and a 'carpenter' in the 1901 and 1921 Canadian censuses. They were in Neston, though, in 1911 when Thomas described himself as a 'retired builder' having 'private means' (i.e. being sufficiently well-off not to work). This suggests they had managed to do well from the opportunities B.C. presented. They gave their address in Neston as 'Vancouver, Lughton Road' (*sic*), naming the house after what had recently become the largest city in B.C.

The census shows, then, that the couple, both 60 years old, were in Canada in 1921 (with an 11-month-old daughter, presumably adopted) but some time in the following few years Zebby returned to Neston. She died there in 1926, aged 65.<sup>54</sup> She was buried in the same grave as her drowned husband Charles Roscoe. It seems, though, that she was inseparable from *both* husbands. Although Thomas Roscoe remarried within 15 months of Zebby's death, when he died aged 77, on the eve of the second world war, his body was placed in the same Neston grave as his wife and brother Charles.<sup>55</sup> The wording on the gravestone uses the word 'beloved' in connection with the relationship between Zebby and each spouse but it is probably telling that the words make no reference to any fraternal love or, indeed, to the fact that Charles and Thomas were brothers at all.

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Research shows that most of the early Roscoes in Neston came to work at the newly-opened Ness Colliery in the 1760s, probably from Lancashire where the name is relatively common. Roscoes have been in the area ever since. It would be interesting to know if anyone can shed more light on the stories of Charles, Zebby and Thomas; maybe even a photo of one or more of them exists.

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<sup>1</sup> Marriage register of St Michael, Shotwick, 14 November 1852: John Roscow (*sic*) and Frances Elizabeth Edwards. Both signed 'X'. The 1861 census shows she was 11 years older than him.

<sup>2</sup> Census, Neston 1861. Robert, 8, and Charles, 6, both born 'Triden'; Elizabeth, 4, and Mary, 2, both born Little Neston. It is also possible that, for the Treuddyn births, John was still on the Wirral while his wife spent her 'lying in' with her mother.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Census, Neston 1871.

<sup>5</sup> Holbrook was also listed at Talbot House in the 1871 census. He was very active in business and politics in Canada at this time so his census registration was presumably during a brief visit to his mother, perhaps after visiting Ottawa in the east of the country where he was representing New Westminster's interests to Canadian parliamentarians. For an excellent short biography of Holbrook, from which the details here have been taken, see Jacqueline Gresko, "Holbrook, Henry" in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 13, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003 available at [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/holbrook\\_henry\\_13E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/holbrook_henry_13E.html)

<sup>6</sup> Newspaper reports (e.g. *Cheshire Observer*, 12 October 1889) stated that Charles had worked for Henry Holbrook. This may simply be due to confusion over members of the Holbrook household given that Elizabeth Holbrook was long dead and Henry was now living there. However, there are apparent gaps in Charles merchant navy crewing record, not least 1881-1883, just after Henry returned from Canada, and it is possible that Charles was working for him for all or part of this time. He was not, however, recorded in the household in the 1881 census.

<sup>7</sup> FRO, Merchant Navy Crew Lists (Chester), 1861-1913.

<sup>8</sup> For example, the *William George* on which he was serving in 1880 visited Bordeaux and Santander (*Lloyd's List*, 28 May and 26 June).

<sup>9</sup> Toxteth Park, St John the Baptist Marriage Register, 20 March 1885; census, Neston 1881. Her baptism was recorded in NPR, 2 December 1860.

<sup>10</sup> Census, Toxteth Park, 1881.

<sup>11</sup> FRO, Merchant Navy Crew Lists (Chester), 1861-1913.

<sup>12</sup> <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271055/details/primus>. It should be recognised that the tonnage was based on a standardised national formula at that time and that the metric 'equivalent' should be treated as indicative only. Carvel-built vessels had the planking of the hull laid edge-to-edge on a robust frame rather than overlapping.

<sup>13</sup> There are at least fifteen entries for her in *Lloyd's List* from 14 June 1888 to 2 October 1889 covering ports from the River Yealm in Devon to Glasgow and, in Ireland, New Ross to Belfast.

<sup>14</sup> <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/271055/details/primus>

<sup>15</sup> *Lloyd's List*, 19 October 1889.

<sup>16</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 8 October 1889.

<sup>17</sup> *Lloyd's List*, 19 October 1889.

<sup>18</sup> *Flintshire Observer*, 5 December 1889. The newspaper reported that he was aged 20 but the official death registration and church burial register stated 19.

<sup>19</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 8 October 1889.

<sup>20</sup> Meteorological Office, Fact Sheet 8 'The Shipping forecast' (2015), p.3.

<sup>21</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 8 October 1889.

<sup>22</sup> The severest storms were signalled by a cone and a drum. Dublin: *London Evening Standard*, 8 October 1889.

<sup>23</sup> *Lloyd's List*, 19 October 1889; OS one-inch map, sheet LXXIX, c.1881. An early example of a loss at West Hoyle was the *Neptune* which sank in January 1748 with over 100 drowned.

<sup>24</sup> *Lloyd's List*, 8 October 1889.

<sup>25</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 12 October 1889

<sup>26</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 12 October 1889.

<sup>27</sup> *Lloyd's List*, 11 October 1889.

<sup>28</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 12 October 1889 and many others – he was said to have had 12s 6d (62.5p) in a purse in a pocket; NPR, 14 October 1889.

<sup>29</sup> *Flintshire Observer*, 5 December 1889; Burial Register, St Bridget, West Kirby, 28 November 1889. Recorded as 'Found drowned'.

<sup>30</sup> Based on a review of burial registers at West Kirby, Heswall and Neston.

<sup>31</sup> *Chester Courant*, 13 May 1903.

<sup>32</sup> *Flintshire Observer*, 26 December 1889. Reports early the next century stated that there was 'a sum of money' or even 'a considerable amount of gold' found in Charles's pocket (*Chester Courant*, 13 May 1903 and *Cheshire*



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*Observer*, 7 May 1904). There were no such observations at the time, though, and it may be that they were confused by reports concerning the body found in October and initially thought to have been Charles.

<sup>33</sup> NPR, Burial Register.

<sup>34</sup> <https://shipwreckedmariners.org.uk/who-we-are/our-history>

<sup>35</sup> Patricia Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (OUP, 1996) p.300.

<sup>36</sup> Census, Neston 1891.

<sup>37</sup> TNA, BT27: Outward Passenger Lists, Liverpool, *Circassian*, 1 October 1891; Library & Archives Canada, item 699600: Passenger List for Quebec, *Circassian*, arr. 13 October 1891.

<sup>38</sup> British Columbia Marriage Register, 21 October 1891.

<sup>39</sup> England and Wales Birth Registrations, second quarter 1861; no known baptism record.

<sup>40</sup> His religious denomination on the Marriage Certificate was 'Salvation Army'; hers was 'Episcopalian'.

<sup>41</sup> The Census for Burrard, B.C., Canada, 31 March 1901 records the presence of Zebby and Thomas, stating their 'Immigration Year' as 1890 and giving their nationality as Canadian. The immigration year was evidently wrong for Zebby and may or may not have been wrong for Thomas, for whom no voyage record has yet been found. Her date of birth was recorded in the census as 26 October 1860 but his was for some reason incorrectly recorded as 26 April 1860 i.e. one year early. It has not been possible to trace Thomas in the 1891 censuses in Britain or Canada.

<sup>42</sup> Anne D. Wallace, *On the Deceased Wife's Sister Controversy, 1835-1907* (Branch, n.d.) available at [http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps\\_articles=anne-d-wallace-on-the-deceased-wifes-sister-controversy-1835-1907](http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=anne-d-wallace-on-the-deceased-wifes-sister-controversy-1835-1907)

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* The 'Deceased Wife's Sister' issue was debated throughout Victorian times, with various attempts made to change the law to allow such 'affinity marriages'. However, there was much less debate about widow's marrying their deceased husband's brother – this was generally viewed as being unacceptable and the law did not change until 1921 (the 'Deceased Wife's Sister' change had come in 1907). In 1891 it was reckoned that for every 100 such marriage by widowers there were just four by widows (*The Times*, 12 February); absolute numbers were thought to be very small. Stella Young, who first brought this matter to my attention, has given a local example of a widow's remarriage to the brother of her deceased husband (Anne Peers, married 1901 and 1906).

<sup>44</sup> C. F. Behrman, 'The Annual Blister: A Sidelight on Victorian Social and Parliamentary History', *Victorian Studies*, 11 (4), June 1968, p.493.

<sup>45</sup> *Marriage Law in Canada – an Outline*, (Diocese Qu'Appelle, 2016), p.9. Available at [https://www.quappelle.anglican.ca/assets/docs/Marriage\\_Law\\_in\\_Canada\\_An\\_Outline.pdf](https://www.quappelle.anglican.ca/assets/docs/Marriage_Law_in_Canada_An_Outline.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Peter Bush, 'Debating Marriage: Marrying the Sister of a Deceased Wife and the Presbyterian Church in Canada', *Fides et Historia*, 41 (2), Summer 2009, pp.31-49. The couple's marriage certificate states they were married by Ebenezer Robson D.D. See <https://krassoc.wordpress.com/2013/02/02/ebenezer-robson-d-d-wesleyan-methodist-minister/>

<sup>47</sup> Sources this paragraph – see note 5.

<sup>48</sup> He was mayor in 1862-3, 1867-9 and 1878. On hearing of his death in Parkgate in 1902, New Westminster lowered its flags to half-mast in recognition of his contribution to the community there.

<sup>49</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 14 August 1886, 5 March 1887 and 21 December 1889. The speech was on 18 December; the body found 21 December.

<sup>50</sup> For example, Holbrook championed the rights of the indigenous minority population in Canada. The *Cheshire Observer*, 31 December 1887, recounts how he received a personal rendition of carols from Parkgate's choir in recognition of 'their respect and esteem for him'. Obituary: *Cheshire Observer*, 17 May 1902. Interestingly, Henry Holbrook would have known another Parkgate family with strong Canadian connections, the Grenfells of Mostyn House School. Wilfred Grenfell (1865–1940) became famous as a medical missionary to Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada from 1892.

<sup>51</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 24 November 1888.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, *Cheshire Observer* 28 March 1885 and 2 August 1890.

<sup>53</sup> See references in this article. Also Canada Passenger Lists, September 1907, immigration of Thomas and Zebby Roscoe, Liverpool to Quebec on the *Empress of Ireland*.

<sup>54</sup> England & Wales Death Registrations, second quarter, 1926; date on gravestone 27 May 1926.

<sup>55</sup> Marriage of Thomas Roscoe, 66, and Annie Elizabeth Hough, 54, on 6 August 1927 at St Catherine, Tranmere; Civil Deaths Register and gravestone information, 12 March 1939; address 56, Bedford Road, Rock Ferry.



In Affectionate Remembrance of



MY DEARLY BELOVED HUSBAND  
**CHARLES ROSCOE,**  
WHO LOST HIS LIFE AT SEA, OCT: 7TH 1889,  
AGED 34 YEARS.

*WEEP NOT; THE CHANGE WAS WROUGHT FOR GOOD  
THE BITTER PAINS OF DEATH WITH HIM ARE OVER.  
NO MORE HE'LL BATTLE WITH LIFE'S STORMY FLOOD,  
HIS ANCHOR'S SAFELY CAST ON CANAAN'S SHORE,  
THY WILL BE DONE.*

ALSO ZEBBY.

THE BELOVED WIFE OF THOMAS ROSCOE,  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE MAY 27TH 1926,  
AGED 55 YEARS.

*"HER END WAS PEACE"*

ALSO OF THE ABOVE  
**THOMAS ROSCOE,**  
DIED 12TH MARCH 1936, AGED 77 YEARS.  
*"AT REST"*

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### Transcript of Gravestone Wording

*In Affectionate Remembrance of  
my dearly beloved husband  
CHARLES ROSCOE  
who lost his life at sea Oct: 7<sup>th</sup> 1889  
aged 34 years.*

*Weep not: the change was wrought for good  
The bitter pains of Death with him are o'er  
No more he'll battle with life's stormy flood,  
His anchor's safely cast on Canaan's shore  
Thy will be done.*

— \* —

*Also Zebby the beloved wife of Thomas Roscoe,  
Who departed this life May 27<sup>th</sup> 1926,  
Aged 65 years.  
"Her end was peace"  
Also of the above Thomas Roscoe  
Died 12<sup>th</sup> March 1939, Aged 77 years  
"At rest"*

### Gravestone Decoration

Small anchor and rope in circle above  
Main image: schooner (or schooner brig) under sail on a boisterous sea  
Edged in rope pattern

### Location

The grave is located in the north-western section of the graveyard of the parish church of St. Mary and St. Helen, Neston. It is the second grave towards the black railings in one of the rows adjoining the asphalt path.