"observers regarded Liverpool as one of the healthiest towns in the Kingdom, renowned for the salutary effects of her brisk breezes and pure air. By the mid nineteenth century ... the tremendous growth of Liverpool's population due to her increased trade and the arrival of thousands of people fleeing from the great Irish Famine" had led to the inner city problems described earlier. Liverpool, then as now, had inner city problems. The series of riots in the Toxteth area of Liverpool in July 1981 "branded this area of Liverpool on the nation's memory. CS gas was used in mainland Britain for the first time".(30) The "Granby Triangle" of Toxteth is a small, triangular-shaped, area divided by Granby Street, and is unmistakably black; the white area of Lodge Lane nearby is still mainly Irish". Yet in the height of Liverpool's Victorian Splendour soon after 1880

> "... when Liverpool was granted city status by the creation of the diocese of Liverpool, it was known as the second city of the Empire, the basis of her prosperity being her port and her trade. Liverpool had grown in response to the demands of industrial Lancashire for a port to handle both the imports of raw cotton and the export of the finished goods. It grew with cotton and remained a commercial rather than industrial town. ..... Liverpool was also the main passenger port of the United Kingdom".(31)

In 1983 the population was 588,600 and the commercial prosperity had diminished. Raw cotton imports and the export of finished goods are undeniably reduced. The days when "the flower of all England's shipping belonged in Liverpool, the river and docks ... always busy with the best ships of the time ... (when) for beauty, interest and variety no scene on earth could compare with the river in which we lived" (John Masefield, 1933) are lost. Liverpool is, however, a city which "today (is as) impressive and solid, as well as friendly, colourful and intimate. It is a city in which the inhabitants, then as today, have intense pride".(32)

Conclusion

As Newby has so rightly argued, the history of sick children's nursing is still very much a closed book. This study, an overview of the institutional provision for the care of sick children in one of the largest provincial cities, shows that light may be thrown on this part of nursing's past by diligent and patient searching through archives. There have been no 'histories' written of either the Royal Liverpool Children's Hospital or Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Those archival sources which do exist often fail to provide details of the nurses who worked in the two institutions, although a small collection are available for Alder Hey. The history of sick children's nursing has to be very much the reconstruction of the past from a wide variety of primary sources rather than a single data set. Not only the minutes books and registers, but the imagination of the researcher looking at the structures and buildings are needed to piece together this part of nursing's past.

NOTES

(1) Newby, Malcolm (1983) 'The Victorian Origins of Children's Hospital Nursing', Bulletin of the History of Nursing, 1, Spring, p.8