

OBITUARY

Neville Carrick, 1927–2002

Neville Carrick, former Liverpool city librarian, former President of the Historic Society and long-serving member of Council, died on 5 August 2002. He was born in Derbyshire, served in the Royal Navy and worked for ICI before going on to study history at Sheffield University. He trained as a librarian at Manchester. He worked at the Harris Library in Preston from 1952, where he met and married Marjorie Jones, a fellow Lancashire librarian, and moved to Liverpool Public Libraries in 1954 when George Chandler was city librarian. After periods in charge of the Hornby Library from 1955 and the Art Library from 1958, he became archivist of Liverpool Record Office in 1963. He became principal reference librarian in 1971, senior assistant city librarian in 1976, and finally acting city librarian in 1984 and city librarian soon after. His promotion to control of the library coincided with Militant's tenure of office in the city. It must have been no easy task to run the library under a political administration with other priorities. At one time a six-month moratorium on purchasing library materials was imposed. Under a subsequent Labour council Neville's role was broadened as Director of Libraries and Arts. He negotiated the incorporation of the Merseyside Record Office into the library on the demise of Merseyside County Council, and presided over the introduction of many new initiatives: computerisation, the Liverpool Film Office, and multi-racial, European information and small business information library units. Political and diplomatic skills of a high order were needed to survive and steer the library in a forward direction in such testing times.

The Historic Society benefited in many ways from Neville's long membership. He brought to the Council insight into the political realities of life in the city in the 1980s. His knowledge of local

archives and collections was of considerable help and he continued the tradition of close association between the Society and the library, in particular our practice of holding lecture meetings in the library and the storage of back numbers of *Transactions* in the record office. His dry sense of humour was always a delight to members of Council, and from 1974 to 1976 he brought his experience as a senior member of the library to the role of president. Throughout his membership of Council he showed unfailing courtesy and humour, qualities which made him an amiable colleague. When he retired from Council in 1999 after thirty-five years, a remarkable record, a large gathering of members of Council and friends attended a farewell dinner for him, one of the most memorable and pleasurable meetings of the Society in recent years.

In a busy career, Neville continued to pursue his own intellectual interests. His formidable knowledge of bibliography enabled him to publish *How to find out about the Arts* for the Library association in 1965. He took an MA in Local History at the University of Liverpool after he retired from the library in 1992, writing a thesis on the Liverpool Lyceum Library in the eighteenth century which I greatly enjoyed supervising. He was a proprietor of the Liverpool Athenaeum, co-authoring a bi-centenary history of the institution in 1997. He wrote a history of his parish church of St Peter, Formby. His interest in both the history and current functioning of the community at several levels made him an ideal member of the Society, a colleague who was both committed and informed.

Michael Power