

Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire

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August 2012

Reg. Charity No. 224825

Coming society event – Wednesday 12th September 2pm

The month for the HSLC's next event was accidentally edited out of the programme – please note that it takes place in September, and book now if you want to attend.

Toxteth Ancient Chapel

Paul Booth, Honorary Senior Research Fellow in Medieval History, University of Liverpool.

The Chapel, built in the early 17th century, was licensed as a Presbyterian meeting house in 1672, and is now Unitarian. In its early days it would have served the rural community of Toxteth, and has subsequently been swamped by the expansion of Liverpool. The Chapel gained its 'Ancient' title around the 1830s.

The building has been altered and added-to as generations of worshippers have used it, but it retains its original galleried form. Early box pews, brass monuments, and monuments are features of the building.

Payment of £2 will be collected on the day. Refreshments included.

Booking form already circulated or book on line - please return by 31st August.

Future 2012 HSLC lectures

(2pm, Education room 2, Museum of Liverpool, Pier head)

Wednesday 17th October Lecture: **Mapping Memory on the Liverpool Waterfront** Rachel Mulhearn, Director Merseyside Maritime Museum.

Wednesday 14th November Lecture: **The Cathedral That Never Was? Lutyens Cathedral in 1930s Liverpool** Dr. Charlotte Wildman, lecturer in Modern British History, University of Manchester.

2012 Subscriptions

Have you paid your 2012 Subscription? – if not please send a cheque to our new membership secretary, Janet Hollinshead, whose details are on page four of this newsletter.

2012 Catalogue.

If your membership 'Welcome pack' is a distant memory or if you would like to know the currently available HSLC stock of past publications, please consult the website. **Members** without internet access may apply to the address below for a copy of the catalogue to be sent by post.

DE Ascott, School of History, University of Liverpool, 9Abercromby Square, L69 7WZ

Reports on Society lectures and visits

Lecture: Dr Laurence Brown: 'Mapping Migration and the Transformation of Moss Side, Manchester, 1945-1981', Wednesday 25th April, 2012. - Report by Zoe Alker

Dr Laurence Brown, a lecturer in Migration History at the University of Manchester, presented an engaging and thought-provoking paper on the experiences of immigrant Caribbean communities in late twentieth century Manchester.

Brown's talk examined the life courses and spatial mobilities of Caribbean migrants in the heavily-populated area of Moss Side. Drawing upon a varied source range which included interviews, newspapers and census returns, Dr Brown also made use of sophisticated digital mapping techniques to consider the socio-economic hardship experienced by a marginalised community. This approach exposed the ways in which these communities drew upon the local cultural economy, such as community centres, dwelling places and churches, to construct and negotiate their generational and ethnic identities in the context of social and economic changes and migration flows.

A particularly interesting part of the presentation was his discussion of the Moss Side riot in 1981. Fuelled by police brutality and economic tensions brought about by mass unemployment, the riots were portrayed in the local and national press as evidence that ethnic minorities were inherently criminal. Brown used previously unseen images of the riots to look behind this myth and discovered that the reality was far more complex than media representations.

Williamson Tunnels, Saturday 16th June – Report by Liz Stewart

Society members delved underground for our June visit – exploring the weird and wonderful world of the Williamson Tunnels. These tunnels in Liverpool were originally dug in the early nineteenth century, and are gradually being revealed by volunteers excavating through the material dumped into them for over a century.

The reasons for the creation of the tunnels are somewhat unclear, and it seems that their sponsor Joseph Williamson, the 'king of Edge Hill' or 'mole of Edge Hill' used them as a means to employ men returning from the Napoleonic Wars, teaching them construction skills as they created grand brick arches underground. Sandstone excavated was donated to church building projects.

It seems that Williamson didn't do things by halves, and the tour guides at the tunnels recounted the tale that his wife's request for a fashionable rockery left her with a heap of sandstone in her garden so large that it restricted light to the house!

But whatever drove Williamson's tunnel building his investment of time, energies and money was considerable – the latter totalling over £100,000, around £3 million in modern terms. The tunnels are a bizarre and fascinating legacy to him, which made an enjoyable and interesting visit.

Stretton Watermill, Saturday 14th July – Report by Liz Stewart

We chose one of the sunnier days of summer 2012 to make a visit to Stretton Watermill. This picturesque site is one of several mills which made use of the natural power of tributaries to the River Dee in Cheshire. Stretton has a long and complex history, frequently being reinvented to capitalize output. The original medieval building was rebuilt around 1630. It now has four working millstones driven by two waterwheels, but originally it ran from just one waterwheel fed from the dammed millpond behind. Members were able to watch as millers brought the millwheels into action, and ground flour.

On the first floor of the mill the alterations to the structure were clear – the original box frame having additional beams lain over the wall plate to raise roof and allow more space for sifting equipment.

The original wattle and daub infill between the timbers has been replaced at upper level by weatherboarding, modernising the character of the building. The alterations to the mill continued into the nineteenth century, when a new area was added to the rear to serve as an office.

Thanks to the millers for an interesting tour.

Reports of other Local History events

North West History Festival, 23rd June, UCLAN - Report by Roger Hull

The Society attended the above event held in Preston at the University of Central Lancashire, organised by our own Editor, Dr Andy Gritt. 2012, is, of course, time for another Preston Guild.

It was held in the Foster Building and there were red tea-shirted student ambassadors at strategic points along Corporation Street as look-outs for those visiting the fair. The location was a bit hidden but there was good signage to it. Over thirty organisations were represented and even if there was not an overwhelming public presence, the day was good for networking with other organisations.

Many people at our table seemed automatically to think we MUST be a family history society until disabused. The publicity material we had went well, particularly the book marks, though I found I had brought more with the Cheshire than the Lancashire map on them. Unfortunately with our recent change of officers some of our other material was now out of date.

The venue was spacious and the canteen, alongside where our table was located, well provided with both hot and cold food. There were guest speakers at the event: Dr Nick Barrett (of Who Do You think You Are fame) who spoke on family history and the media, Dr Nick Mansfield on the Great War and Chris Pomery on DNA and family history. There were also some screenings of films including the Preston Guild 1902-1992.

Thanks should be given to Dr Gritt and his teams for organising this enjoyable event. I heard rumours it could be repeated!

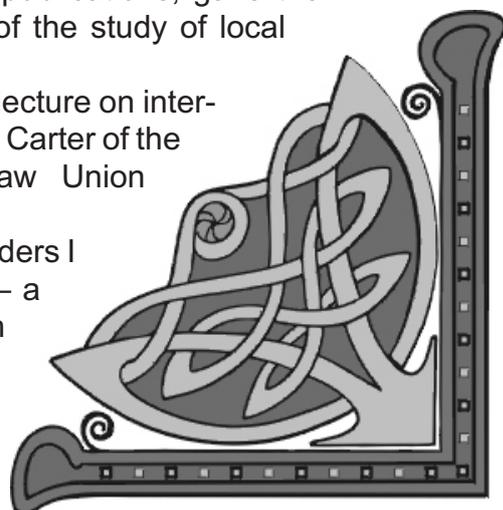
British Association for Local History AGM, 16th June – report from Chris Jones

In June, for the first time, the British Association for Local History (BALH) held its AGM out of London at the Friends' Meeting House in Manchester. I took the chance to go along and find out what it was all about.

A key note lecture, a practical introduction to an electronic archive, and the awards presentation where the three main components of the day. The awards ceremony possibly drew the biggest part of the 80 strong audience as presenters or recipients. The wide array of awards for society newsletters, individual contributions to local history and publications, gave the presenters the chance to outline the diverse voluntary aspects of the study of local history, and the depth and quality of some of the writing.

Professor Karen Hunt of Keele University presented a stimulating lecture on inter-war women's political activity at a personal and local level. Dr. Paul Carter of the National Archive gave a lively introduction to the Poor Law Union correspondence held at Kew.

While the conference appeared to be viewed as a success by attenders I suspect that it won't be coming out of London again for a while – a reflection of the time and costs of travel, and other factors, which normally make many 'national' events London and South East ones.



Exhibition

Demon Drink? Temperance and the Working Class

Until Sunday 24 February 2013

The next changing exhibition at the People's History Museum, Manchester, is about the temperance movement. The Temperance Movement, in which people took the pledge not to drink alcohol, effectively began in the North West and temperance played an important part in the lives of many people in the region. Despite this, it is a little remembered aspect of our history.

Demon Drink? will focus on the everyday experiences and concerns of working people and their families regarding drink and abstinence. It will provide an opportunity to showcase some of the museum's temperance collections and the University of Central Lancashire's Livesey Collection, as well as drawing on local and national collections to uncover this history.

The exhibition is part of a Heritage Lottery Funded project led by Dr Annemarie McAllister from UCLan, who is working in partnership with the museum. The project will bring back to life a largely forgotten public movement which still influences our lives today. The displays will combine unique historical artefacts such as Joseph Livesey's rattle, archive film footage of temperance processions and oral histories collected from local communities whose families were involved in the movement.

Thematic displays will explore the perceived need for the Temperance Movement, how society viewed it, its key messages and how people were encouraged to join. The exhibition will highlight the importance of children and social activities in promoting the movement's message. It will look at alternatives to the public house such as temperance sporting events, parades, lessons, games, quizzes and children's entertainments.

The exhibition will also be accompanied by a virtual exhibition that will be available for the public to access via the internet at www.demondrink.co.uk



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To: JE Hollinshead, 28 Tewkesbury Close, Liverpool, L25 9RY e-mail: jhollinshead@btinternet.com

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