

Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire

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www.hslc.org.uk

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Society Events

Saturday 11th May 2013 - visit and talk at St Georges Church, Everton, 2pm.

Saturday 8th June 2013 - Village Histories Study Day, Village Hall, Great Budworth, 10am - 4pm.

Details and booking forms enclosed with this mailing and available on line. Booking essential for the study day.

HSLC *Transactions*

Andy Gritt, Editor

I became editor of *Transactions* in Spring 2012 with Zoe Aker, of Liverpool John Moores University, taking over my previous role as Reviews Editor. I am very grateful to Zoe and I am honoured to fulfil the role of editor. My term of office begins at a challenging time for societies such as ours, and heralds some changes in the way that *Transactions* will be produced. By the time you receive this newsletter members should have received a copy of volume 161. This is a slimmer volume than some of recent years, but this is something we are taking steps to prevent in the future. One of the ways in which *Transactions* will aim to serve the membership is by providing access to scholarship that can be difficult to access. The review of post graduate work in the current volume is one such innovation which will hopefully become a regular feature. Other regular features are planned for the future.

Volume 161 of *Transactions* was the last to be produced by a small editorial team from within the Council. Early in 2013 I convened an editorial board of scholars who will take an active part in developing *Transactions* in the coming years. *Transactions* will continue to be a refereed journal and we welcome unsolicited submissions. However the editorial board will actively commission articles, and seek to promote *Transactions* as an outlet for scholarship. The editorial board will also oversee the production of some new regular features. I will introduce the new editorial board in subsequent newsletters and details will be posted on the Society's website. The Council and Editorial Board are currently investigating changing the format of *Transactions*. This is not something that we take lightly and there will have to be tangible benefits to the Society for changing a format that has endured for over 150 years. One significant factor is financial, but alternative page sizes will also allow us more flexibility with layout and the use of illustrations. I should stress that no decisions have yet been made.

If members have any comments, or indeed any ideas on how we could develop *Transactions* and the publications of the society, I would be glad to receive them at AJGritt1@uclan.ac.uk

Non-Society Events

Conference: Who's History is it Anyway? 'Public history' in Perspective.

University of Central Lancashire, Preston, 5-6th September 2013.

This international conference brings together historians, curators, archivists, film makers, funding bodies, policy makers and media professionals to look at various aspects of public history. For further information see: <http://www.uclan.ac.uk> (search for public history). All welcome, booking essential.

Conference: Treasures from the archives: a Celebration of North West archives

North West Archives Network, University of Central Lancashire, Preston. 21st September 2013.

This conference brings together archivists and historians from Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire to showcase some of the highlights of archives across the region. All are welcome, booking essential. For further info please e-mail LFHistory@uclan.ac.uk

Liverpool's New Central Library – Roger Hull, HSLC Council secretary

17th May 2013 should see the opening of a new and dynamic era in the development of Liverpool Libraries. Opened with the Museum in 1860 owing to the philanthropy of William Brown, MP for South Lancashire, and a millionaire (in modern day terms) who paid for the whole structure. The facade was classically inspired to fit in with the presence of St George's Hall on the other side of the road. The Library housed the material collected by the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire (founded 1848).

Disaster struck with a direct hit during the German bombing campaign in 1941 and the Brown Library behind the façade was obliterated, though fortunately this was concealed as the frontage remained standing. Ever since there has been a slow process of growth back to a new normality with various extensions to the rear of the building. The opportunity in 2009 to make use of a PFI project to transform the rear of the facade into a 21st century building with proper archival storage was taken. This meant that the earlier extensions were demolished and the Picton, Hornby and Oak Rooms re-vitalised - a major undertaking as all stock had to be moved out to temporary premises.

The new library utterly can be said to have the “wow” factor and has to be seen to be believed. As Liverpool Council's cabinet member for culture and tourism, Wendy Simon, said: “To see the building transformed from a tired, dark venue into a stunning, welcoming library has been wonderful. The intricate work which has been undertaken has had magnificent results and there is already a buzz across the city about the re-opening in May, with many people keen to see the new-look Central Library. It's a real credit to all those involved that Liverpool now has one of the most modern, attractive and user-friendly libraries and record offices in the UK.”

The new-build library has four floors: Read, Enquire, Archive and Meet; a café and roof terrace; a superb children's library; a separate repository which meets the exacting standards for storage, preservation and access to archives. It is hoped that soon the Society will meet in the new building where its library will be maintained for present and future members and the general public to browse and use as reference material.



The Society's Library – CB Phillips, Chair HSLC Library Committee

The Society's library will re-open on 17 May 2013, within the new Central library. Our open access collection will be housed in the secure area of the Liverpool Record Office, on the Archive floor of the new building. The Society's books will be available for reference use by members and the public.

The library is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 8pm; Saturday 9am to 5pm; Sunday 10am to 5pm. The secure area will be closed on Sundays, but otherwise opens from 9-30am to 6pm, except Wednesday (8pm) and Saturday (5PM). The Record Office has its own admission ticket system (so, for example, CARN tickets are not acceptable). HSLC members will be able to use their old yellow Liverpool Record Office tickets, or to get a new ticket. Members who do not live in the City of Liverpool will also be able to get a ticket which will allow them to borrow from the Central Library's lending stock.

Council has bought some new books while the Library has been closed, and will be continuing to add books and periodicals to the collection. We concentrate on buying material relating to Lancashire and Cheshire outside the Merseyside area, while the Central Library concentrates on the Merseyside area. HSLC will also resume its programme of re-binding its holdings to combat wear and tear, and hopes to up-date its online Library catalogue at www.hslc.org

The library as an important element in the Society's work, hopefully members and the public alike will continue to benefit from this collection, and we look forward to maintaining our co-operation with Liverpool City Library in the City's exciting new building.

Library website is <http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/>

Record Office phone number will be 0151-233-5817

Address: Liverpool City Council, Central Library, William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EW

Fear and Loathing in Liverpool: Popular Local Reaction to the IRA's 1939 Bombing Campaign

Dr Bryce Evans, Lecturer in History, Liverpool Hope University 20th March 2013

This fascinating talk explored a widely forgotten period of British history, focussing on the Liverpool experience of the 1939 IRA bombing campaign. Drawing on literary interpretations, newspaper reports, legal records and official documents, Dr Evans sought to recreate something of the atmosphere of 'fear and loathing' which this spate of terrorist activity created in Liverpool and elsewhere. The 'S' plan, as it was initially known, was first aimed at infrastructure, and attacks on electricity substations brought blackouts in Liverpool as well as London and Manchester.

However, the IRA soon moved to more direct targets such as shops, businesses, cinemas and army barracks. Despite their attacks taking relatively few casualties, press and public opinion veered against the IRA, and the Irish more broadly, and this was especially accentuated in Liverpool where there was such a significant Irish population. Dr Evans drew heavily on newspaper reports which used noirish imagery in describing characters like the 'mystery Irishman' who was questioned by police then released in April 1939; and the 'mysterious young woman' a *femme fatale* figure associated with the cinema teargas attacks in May 1939. Dr Evans even used some artistic licence of his own to illustrate the talk with shadowy cinematic photographs – to great effect!

These terrorist attacks were, in some cases, deadly: the worst attack killing 5 people in Coventry in August 1939, and Dr Evans was able to use Crown Court records of convictions to explore the backgrounds of a number of those involved in the various attacks. Building on this he was further able to identify some of the nuances of feeling against the IRA, identifying, for example, the fear within Irish communities in Liverpool of becoming associated with the attacks.

One argument of the lecture was that there was a balance to be redressed in our historical memory of this series of events – now so overshadowed by the Second World War, and commonly forgotten. In questions and discussions society members attending the lecture who remembered the period reinforced the notion of a popular amnesia on the subject, but were very interested by this evocative analysis of this era's hidden history.

Reviewed by Liz Stewart

Arley Hall Archives website (www.arleyhallarchives.co.uk)

This website provides an unusual source of original material for historians. It illuminates life and work in rural Cheshire in the period 1750–1790 by making available some of the extraordinarily detailed invoices, accounts and documents that survive at Arley Hall. Over six thousand original receipted invoices of that period have been scanned and fully indexed to show the names and occupations of suppliers, the goods or services provided and either the person or the place where the work was done.

The invoices detail everything that was bought by the Estate - food and clothes, plants and tools for the gardens, animals, equipment and supplies of all kinds for the demesne farm and the estate. The index on the database enables the reader to search by location, supplier, goods or trade and then to look at the original invoices. As well as the invoices, there are additional resources on other topics - the rents paid, farming, milling, the staff, taxes and the poor. The original documents are often very small and difficult to read but as they are now displayed on a screen they can be enlarged so as to make them very much more accessible.

Website Update

Work on the Society's website is underway and is looking attractive, user-friendly and, importantly, appealing to potential new members. It will include all the elements of the current website, but in addition will allow members to download the newsletter, pay their subscriptions on line, post short articles and respond to questions.

Mike Stammers [1943-2013] - Di Ascott

Michael Stammers, Keeper Emeritus of Merseyside Maritime Museum, died on 30 January 2013. To HSLC he was a member of Council, an interesting speaker who also wrote for *Transactions*, and in all things a contributor. This was fundamental to Mike in his numerous committee memberships, institutional affiliations, professional and personal contacts. He was unfailingly generous and modest in sharing his knowledge.

His publication record was remarkable, including 'definitive works of international scholarship in maritime history and nautical archaeology' as well as short articles on related topics and local history. Mike grew up in Norwich where his maritime interest stemmed from watching craft on the Yare. After Bristol University and Warwick Museum, he came to Liverpool Museum and from here his interests and connections beyond the day job ranged from local, e.g. wide boat preservation on the Leeds-Liverpool canal in 1970s, to international, e.g. research on wrecks in the Falklands ultimately with a Shackleton Foundation Scholarship in 2002.

The 2003 Desmond Western Media award, 'in recognition of his outstanding writing, broadcasting and curatorial skills, culminating ... in his contribution to the Battle of the Atlantic anniversary commemoration', does not say it all but gives an indication. He was a scholar who could communicate his knowledge to professional and amateur alike. There is much more but we will only add our respect and affection.

MIKE STAMMERS – a personal note from John Tiernan

I first met Mike in the late 1960s after he succeeded Edward Paget-Tomlinson as Keeper of Shipping in Liverpool Museum. He became a regular user in the Liverpool Record Office, where I then worked. He was very pleasant and obviously clued-up. We struck up an amicable professional relationship. In the late 1970s when I was the librarian in charge of Liverpool Libraries' Municipal Research Service Mike was a regular enquirer on behalf of Merseyside Museums and the nascent Maritime Museum and I had the pleasure of co-operating with him by researching many enquiries on his behalf.

Later, after the Merseyside Maritime Museum was fully established, (thanks to Mike's obvious diligence and determination) I also knew him as a convivial fellow Proprietor of the Liverpool Athenaeum and later a member of the Council of the Historic Society, where we both served for several years on Fiona Pogson's meetings organization group.

Mike was always a courteous and friendly colleague. He was a scholar, a historian completely without intellectual arrogance, able to communicate his knowledge to professional and amateur alike. When he retired from Council it was a loss. He was an exemplar of the academic historian who could explain his subject easily, and blessedly without waffle.

Message from the Membership Secretary

The Society is grateful to those members who are receiving this newsletter by electronic means. It is one way of keeping down the running costs of the Society. Should any other member be prepared to adopt this method please email me. I can get in touch with members this way only when I do have contact details.

Subscriptions of £16 (\$22 overseas) are due now for 2013, if you have not already paid.

Janet Hollinshead (jhollinshead558@btinternet.com)



Join *The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* - enjoy the benefits of the annual Transactions, lectures, events, access to our extensive library and three free society offprints.

To: JE Hollinshead, 28 Tewkesbury Close, Liverpool, L25 9RY e-mail: jhollinshead558@btinternet.com

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