

ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES

The barony of Malpas in the twelfth century

Peter Cotgreave

Although at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 the Cheshire barony of Malpas was in the hands of Robert fitzHugh, by the late twelfth century it had been divided in two and the moieties were held by separate families, the Patrics and the Belwards. This article not only reviews the various theories advanced by earlier antiquarians and historians to explain this division of the barony and its descent during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries but also reassesses the surviving contemporary and near contemporary evidence in an attempt to resolve the issue. While the evidence is complex and incomplete and so firm conclusions remain elusive, various earlier theories are shown to be incorrect and instead an alternative line of descent is advanced, with the barony revived by Henry II but divided between the sons-in-law – that is, the husbands of the two surviving daughters and co-heirs – of the previous holder of the barony, Ralph ab Einion.

Population trends in Lancashire, 1548-1563

John S. Moore

This article sets out to re-examine the impact of the harvest failures and epidemics of the 1550s upon the mid sixteenth-century population of the county of Lancashire. Resting heavily upon the demographic information for various Lancashire parishes provided by the surviving chantry certificates of 1546-48 and diocesan returns of 1563 and seeking to refine that raw data not only to correct errors and inconsistencies but also to convert those communicant and household numbers into figures for the overall population, it is argued that in these parishes and, by extension, in

the county as a whole, the population level fell by around or a little over one fifth between 1548 and 1563. This research therefore confirms that Lancashire endured a major demographic crisis in the mid sixteenth century, its population loss broadly consistent with that found in other English counties and regions.

William Blundell and the ‘horned monster’ of Cheshire:
A Catholic gentleman’s approach to a medical anomaly
Geoff Baker

This short article explores the evidence for, and contemporary interpretations of, early modern human horns and other bodily abnormalities. It focuses upon the case of Mary Davies, a horned woman who lived in Saughall in Cheshire in the latter half of the seventeenth century, and upon the interest taken in it by William Blundell, a Catholic of Little Crosby in Lancashire; Blundell’s account of Davies and her horn, published in London in 1668, is transcribed and reproduced in full. It is suggested that Blundell’s own approach owed much to the work of Francis Bacon as well as to the wider early modern interest in individual disability or deformity, spawning the so called monster literature of the period.

Businessmen and benefactors: The Macclesfield
silk manufacturers and their support for the
town’s charitable institutions, 1750-1900
Sarah Griffiths

Drawing upon contemporary newspaper accounts and the surviving archives relating to the establishment and operation of the town’s charitable and voluntary organisations, this article explores the philanthropic work of the wealthy silk manufacturers of Macclesfield between the mid eighteenth and the end of the nineteenth century. Building particularly upon two case studies, of a Methodist chapel and of the ragged and industrial school, but ranging more widely across the entire charitable and voluntary

sector in Macclesfield, the article assesses the extent and results of the involvement of the silk manufacturers in the town's charitable institutions, as well as attempting to discern and to reconstruct their motivation and the reasons why they involved themselves in such work. The latter, it is suggested, ranged from altruism and religious conviction, through self-interest and ensuring the continued availability of an educated, healthy and grateful workforce, to self-promotion and cementing their own status.

Political satire: Nineteenth-century
comic histories of Liverpool

John Davies

Grounded in the nineteenth-century popularity of comic histories, this article looks in detail at three such histories of Liverpool, by William Shepherd published in the 1820s and 1830s, by Hugh Shimmin published in the 1860s and 1870s and by the *Liverpool review* published in the early 1880s. Although all were part of the broader national context of comic histories of the period and all shared certain common traits in their portrayal of Liverpool – such as an outspoken condemnation of slavery and a sometimes biting critique of contemporary politics thinly disguised in a historical and (at times) comic format – the differences between the three accounts are also highlighted – differences in tone and style, in the lengths to which contemporary political causes were pursued and in the degree to which they were promoted via light-hearted comedy, biting sarcasm or barely comic campaigning journalism.

Hard work but a fair reward:
The farming life of John Byram, 1831-1871

Stephen Matthews

This shorter article analyses the surviving financial accounts of a Wirral farmer, John Byram, during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. His cash accounts, reproduced in tabulated form as an appendix, are assessed in order to discern something of

his farming life and practices, to reconstruct his gross and net profits and to compare those profits to the rent due on his 220-acre, mixed dairy and arable farm. It is shown that the farm was profitable and that by the time of his retirement Byram had achieved a fair level of prosperity.

Liverpool, Manchester and market power:
The Ship Canal and the North West business
landscape in the late nineteenth century

Graeme J. Milne

This reassessment of the opening years and early fortunes of the Manchester Ship Canal focuses on three main aspects of the early economic history of the canal – attempts to attract business and new or existing commercial routes, attempts to break into the lucrative cotton trade and attempts to promote civil pride and patriotism in the canal and thus local business loyalty to the canal amongst Mancunians. In all three areas, it is shown that the canal and its promoters met with mixed fortunes, finding it very difficult both to realign existing economic and business connections and to break the well-established and entrenched position of Liverpool – in the longer-term, it is suggested, perhaps as much to the detriment of Liverpool as to Manchester and its Ship Canal.

Lancaster becomes a city, 1937

John Beckett

This short article examines how, very much on the initiative of a local alderman and, despite failing to qualify under Home Office rules, as a favour from the new monarch and in consideration of the crown's historic links with the town, Lancaster was raised to city status in June 1937 at the coronation of George VI. The successful negotiations which led to this honour and the local celebrations which followed its award are explored and the Lancaster case is placed in the wider context of other towns raised to city status in the course of the twentieth century.