



THE HISTORIC
SOCIETY OF
LANCASHIRE &
CHESHIRE
Newsletter

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Please do not hesitate to get in touch with ideas, reviews, and research projects for the newsletter via email (newsletter@hslc.org.uk)

Interested in joining Council??

The Council of the Society needs new members to assist with the day-to-day running of the Society and to help co-ordinate events, newsletters, speakers and so on..

We have added the details of Council meetings to the diary of events for 2024 so that any members who may be considering standing for election to Council (new members are always welcome, and there is no need to stand for a named position) are aware of the time commitment – just four meetings per year.

SOCIETY'S NEXT SPEAKER MEETING

29 NOVEMBER 2PM.

Lecture Online

'Joan Thirsk and the porous frontiers of English local and regional history'
Professor RC Richardson, University of Winchester

Order your ticket to this online event by using the link: (you may need to copy and paste it)

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/joan-thirsk-and-the-porous-frontiers-of-english-regional-and-local-history-tickets-731267038397?aff=oddttdtcreator\[eventbrite.co.uk\]](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/joan-thirsk-and-the-porous-frontiers-of-english-regional-and-local-history-tickets-731267038397?aff=oddttdtcreator[eventbrite.co.uk])



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Book Review

Periodically, we receive additional book reviews to those that appear in *Transactions*.

Holden, William Lloyd. *The Diaries of William Lloyd Holden, 1829 and 1830*. Edited by Jonathan Pepler. Vol. 155. Liverpool: Record Society of Lancashire & Cheshire, 2018. £30.00

You have probably seen William Andrewes Bryant's 1831 map of Cheshire on many a wall. The originals go for around £3,000. But the legwork in surveying for this map was done by a young man, William Lloyd Holden, aged 23 when he began this diary on New Year's Day 1829, the day before he arrived in Chester to begin surveying for the map.

The two years of diaries have been transcribed and ably edited by Jonathan Pepler, with a helpful introduction and well researched footnotes, providing the right amount of information to illuminate the diary entries.

Pepler argues that the diaries are significant in two ways (p. 2), for their insights into Bryant the map-maker, his working methods and character, and for their 'unique evidence' of how nineteenth-century topographical surveys were done. Surprisingly, Holden does very little surveying; instead, he borrows scores of local maps from landowners and agents and copies them. He also chats to everyone, from barmaids to farmers to merchants, and extracts from them place names and other topographical details.

I would argue that they are also valuable social history, about masculinity, travel (he walks 48 miles from Hollingworth to Nantwich in 12 hours), hospitality, local and regional differences, and middle-class credit and trust, among many other topics. They are often amusing, as when Holden dismisses the inhabitants of entire counties and towns for their poor manners (the people of Frankby, Greasby and Ireby 'are exceedingly boorish and inhospitable', 5 May 1829, while Hollingworth 'is without exception the vilest neighbourhood' he had ever lived in, 18 June 1830).

They can be touching, when he misses home and family, or is unlucky in love. And they are full of descriptions of Chester ('an unsociable place', 2 August 1829), the Wirral, Macclesfield and other parts of east Cheshire. His surveyor's eye makes for evocative descriptions of landscape, buildings and townscapes.

Andrew Hobbs

Andrew Hobbs
University of Central Lancaster

Transactions 2023, 2024, 2025

The 2023 edition of *Transactions* should now be with members. It is, once again, a very full issue.

Both the 2024 and 2025 editions are now being compiled with a goodly number of draft submissions having been received.

Further details on both will follow in the January 2024 newsletter.

Submissions to *Transactions*

Submission of articles in the field of Lancashire and Cheshire to appear in *Transactions* is always welcome.

In advance of doing so, however, it clearly makes sense if intending authors check the Society's *Guidelines* to ensure that their submissions conform to the expected length and the journal's standard house-style. Additionally, it speeds things up enormously if authors first have their article read and commented on by one or two experts so that the benefit of their advice can be carefully pondered and incorporated. If the author is a graduate student then asking supervisors to read a preliminary draft is an obvious strategy. Acknowledgement of such help should be made in the first footnote.

REPORT ON 21ST JUNE LECTURE

The Society was fortunate in having as its guest speaker today Alan Crosby reflecting on its foundation 175 years ago. Alan, editor of *The Local Historian*, prolific author, and much respected university teacher, obviously needs no introduction and he has already written extensively on other NW institutions such as the Chetham Society and Chester Archaeological Society.

Dividing the lecture into two principal parts the first, dealing with context, stressed that the origins of the Historic Society were firmly grounded in the rapidly changing times of mid nineteenth century England in which unstoppable industrialisation, a transport revolution, urbanisation, and a fundamental re-shaping of the demographics and structure of society, a re-distribution of wealth, and the growth of civic pride were all unmissable features. The Historic Society offered a kind of anchoring in unstable times with their swiftly moving and uncertain currents, a counterblast to the worship of the new and modern and the demolition of much that was physically old. It was stridently a corrective.

The second part of the lecture addressed questions relating to the nature and ambitions of the Society. Though not the first of its type – the Surtees Society got there two decades earlier and the Chetham Society twelve years earlier – the foundation of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire was still a powerfully assertive statement, an expression of the perceived need for self awareness, and the urgent need to respect, not disregard, the past. In that sense there was a fundamental inbuilt conservatism in the Society's agenda. Much of this past, was of course, rural, and studying it shifted attention away from the early Victorian dominance of industrial and commercial towns. With change most conspicuously evidenced in towns, the county was an entirely appropriate unit for investigation of a very different past, as it had been for Elizabethan and Stuart topographers. In what was still emphatically a man's world, the Society, Dr Crosby went on to make clear, had no female members at the start. Furthermore, though its early membership profile might have been ornamentally adorned with the names of aristocrats, the workhorses and rank and file of the Society were drawn overwhelmingly from the middle classes. Many of its members, significantly, were still relatively young; the Society offered a new outlet for their energies and interests. Few members lived outside the two counties; the Society was unapologetically inward-looking. Its members were laying claim to *their own* past. Though rejecting an urban fixation, however, such a society still needed to have a principal town as its hub, and that Liverpool was selected was simply a recognition of its greater size and longer political history than Manchester, as well as the geographical distribution of its leading figures and members.

This relatively bald summary probably does scant justice to the densely detailed and well-argued lecture which those present enjoyed. Some lively questioning at the end opened other perspectives and raised the likely prospect of an article on this topic appearing in a future number of *Transactions*.

R.C. Richardson,
President

2023 and 2024 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS, EVENTS, and PUBLICATIONS

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29 NOVEMBER 2PM. Lecture Online (Eventbrite link on the front cover)

‘Joan Thirsk and the porous frontiers of English local and regional history’
Professor RC Richardson, University of Winchester

January 2024 Newsletter 82 published and sent to members along with official notification of March’s AGM. This newsletter will also contain the details of the other lectures for 2024.

14 FEBRUARY 2024 2PM Council Meeting

21 FEBRUARY 2024 Lecture Online

In Search of Roman Rural Settlement’
Dr Caroline Pudney, Senior Lecturer in Archaeology, University of Chester

13 MARCH 2024 2PM AGM and Lecture. In person venue TBC.

‘Lancastrians: Mills, Mines and Minarets: A landmark new history of the great English county of Lancashire, exploring its people’s impact on Britain and beyond’. Dr Paul Salvesson, visiting Professor, Universities of Bolton, and Huddersfield

24 April 2024 2PM. Council Meeting Online

April 2024 *Transactions 2024* sent to publishers

MAY 2024 Mike Stammer’s Memorial Lecture. Date and Venue TBC

19 JUNE 2024 2PM Lecture Online

‘Cheshire Surnames’, Dr Harry Parkin, Senior Lecturer in English Language, University of Chester

May 2024 Newsletter 83 published and sent to members.

September 2024 *Transactions 173* dispatched by LUP to members

September 2024 Newsletter 84 published and sent to members.

18 SEPTEMBER 2024 2PM Lecture Online

Title and Speaker to be confirmed

16 OCTOBER 2PM. Council Meeting Online

20 NOVEMBER 2PM Lecture Online

Title and Speaker to be confirmed.