

LIVERPOOL

NEWSLETTER No 13

SUMMER 2005



Reg Charity

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HISTORY SOCIETY

**MINUTES OF THE 4th A.G.M. OF THE LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY
HELD ON 15th MAY 2005
IN THE GRACE ROOM, CORNERSTONE BUILDING, HOPE AT EVERTON,
LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.**

PRESENT: John Tiernan, Chairman, (in the Chair), and about forty members

After John had opened the proceedings by welcoming those present, and apologising for the late start,

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from: Sheila Binks, Margaret Cox, Jo.Cottrell, Bernard Dixon, Mary Harrison, Margaret Hochter, Jo McCann, Marie McDonald, Cliff Peters, and Marie Richards

MINUTES OF 3rd AGM

These had been published in Newsletter No 10, and, no observations or corrections having been notified, were taken as read. There were no Matters Arising.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

John Tiernan said it had generally been a good year for the Society with the highlight being the hosting of the 'At Home' for the constituent societies of the Lancashire Local History Federation . This had been most successful and the Society had received many compliments. Especial thanks were due to the main organisers of the event, Jo McCann and Neville King, and to the team of volunteers that had worked so hard behind the scenes.

The regular monthly Meetings had been well attended and a wide range of talks appreciated by the members.

The committee had met regularly & benefited from the enthusiasm of new members Mary Harrison & Netta Dixon.

Fred Forrest had resigned from the committee and as editor and his contribution to the 2004 journal was acknowledged. The Publications Sub-committee, co-ordinated by Neville King had produced this year's edition, now in the hands of those present, and thanks were due to them for their efforts.

Thanks were also paid to Brian Coghlan for again examining the Society's Accounts, and to Bro Ken Vance, SJ, for continuing to make the Shaw Room at SFX Church available, at nil cost, for meetings of the Committee.

SECRETARY'S REPORT (read by the Chairman, in the absence of Jo McCann)

A varied programme had been arranged for meetings throughout the year.

The 'At Home' at the Cathedral had taken place as planned, and a number of complimentary letters had been received, praising the event, its speakers, walks and catering arrangements.

The equipment bought with the National Lottery 'Awards for All' Grant was now being regularly put to good use. A number of contributions to the WWII Memories Project had been received, and a foretaste of this could be found in the new Journal. The closing date for further contributions was 19th September, at our meeting entitled "The last weekend of Peace and the first weekend of War".

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mike Brian reported that despite 12 losses, mostly due to non-payment of subs., membership now stood at 162, a net increase of 25 over last year. Some members had yet to pay current year's subs.

EDITORS' REPORTS

Neville King reported that this year's Journal had been successfully prepared by an editorial sub-committee, and that for the time being, no decision was being made regarding the appointment of a new editor.

Also briefly mentioned were the Newsletter and the inclusion of reports on Meetings, the proposed WWII

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Acknowledging with thanks the various generous donations of items for the Library, Cynthia Stonall said that at present the collection still remained at her home but hoped that it would eventually be transferred to the Shaw Room at SFX Church. Meanwhile, an updated list was available at each meeting and would perhaps be displayed on the Society's website in due course.

Members wishing to borrow books were invited to contact her, and it was suggested that a small charge might be levied for the late return of items borrowed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Saying that the certified accounts were now available for examination at the back of the room, Neville King commented on the most significant items of income and expenditure during the past year:

- While overall expenditure for the 'At Home' in October had amounted to £1696, receipts, including a grant of £500 from the Liverpool Culture Company, had been £1949, giving a net profit of £253.
- About £240 of the Lottery Grant remained after purchasing the computer equipment and other items.
- Gift Aid refund amounted to £273 last year.
- Income from Journal sales had dropped but a less expensive cover had saved £140 in production costs.
- Hire charges for the meeting room had increased considerably, but a substantial reduction had been negotiated, and by reducing, by two, the number of indoor meetings, and making the June one a 'visit', a saving of £440 had been achieved. We now have a fixed charge contract until December 2005.
- The increase in refreshment costs had recovered the previous year's loss of £150 & produced £30 surplus.
- Donations from visitors amounted to £67.
- Assets in equipment, books and Journals at end of March were valued at £1890.00.

Neville thanked Brian Coghlan for again examining the Society's accounts, and proposed that he be invited to do so next year. Seconded by Brenda Murray, this proposal was unanimously agreed.

The Meeting agreed unanimously to accept the Accounts.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

Having completed three years, Cynthia Stonall's term of office had now expired, and with the resignation of Fred Forrest, there were two vacancies to be filled. Cynthia had however kindly agreed to serve again, and Dr Jon Murden had also agreed to stand for election. There having been no other nominations to these two vacancies, Cynthia and Jon were returned unopposed.

A vote of thanks was called from the floor for all the committee members.

AOB

One member questioned the quality of some of the speakers booked and asked for further comments. The chairman ruled that as this item had not been previously submitted in writing, it would not be discussed at the AGM, but at the proposal of Netta Dixon, seconded by Brenda Murray, it was agreed that the matter should be fully discussed by the Committee.

Mike Kelly drew the attention of the meeting to a recent interesting article in the Liverpool Daily Post about the local artist, James William Carling. [See also page 4]

There being no further business the Meeting was closed at approx 2.15pm

[Our thanks once again to Joyce Culling for her help in preparing the above report]

PROGRAMME TO DECEMBER 2005

**All meetings on Sundays at the Cornerstone Building, Hope at Everton, Shaw St, Liverpool.
Doors open 1.30 pm for 2.00 pm start**

September 18**‘The Last Weekend of Peace & the First Weekend of War’****Geoff Scargill**

Those people who, at a few minutes past eleven-o-clock on the morning of Sunday, 3rd September, 1939, did not hear Neville Chamberlain utter the words “*I have to tell you that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany*” can only imagine the chill that it must have sent down the spines of those who did. This year, as we remember, with a mixture of emotions, the sixtieth anniversary of the ends, in Europe and Japan, of the war that Chamberlain’s words announced, it is perhaps appropriate to hear how it all began, and a little of what it was like for those who were there.

**October 16****‘Hengler’s Circus – The Liverpool Connection’****John Turner**

Circus has a long tradition in the UK, and has been largely dominated by a number of families whose names were, in time past, very well known. One of these was the Hengler family, whose involvement with the art extended back to the late 18th century.



To summarise their activities and importance in a dozen lines is impossible, but one of them, John Michael Hengler, has very strong local connections. Born in Lambeth in 1831, he grew up to be a most accomplished tight rope artiste, being billed in 1851 as the ‘Prince of Tight Rope Artistes’, by which style he was known for many years. He travelled widely, and in 1865, married a Liverpool girl, by whom he had six children. He continued to perform until about 1882, and although in the 1891 census he is described as a “Professor of Equitations”, he also managed a circus in London, and was apparently a ship owner and a local politician. He died at Hoylake in 1919 and is buried in Flaybrick Cemetery.

A fount of knowledge on the history of circuses, John Turner has been interested in the Henglers for many years and will tell us much more about John and the rest of this fascinating circus family.

November 20**‘My Life at Speke Hall’****Tom Whatmore**

Built largely between 1530 and 1600, Speke Hall (shown, right, circa 1831) is now surrounded by housing estates, light industrial and retail parks and, of course, Liverpool’s increasingly important John Lennon Airport. Its “arcadian setting” now gone, it is today cared for by the National Trust, and, if anywhere else, would probably be one of their most visited properties.



However often we may have visited the Hall or its remaining grounds, few of us are likely to be able to claim so intimate a knowledge of them as our speaker. As the son of the last butler who stayed on as caretaker when the NT took it over, Tom Whatmore was brought up on the site, living with his parents in a house in the grounds. His memories and slide show will surely provide a fascinating insight into the public and “behind the scenes” history of this precious Merseyside gem.

**December 18****Arlene Wilson****‘Early Liverpool Clubs & Societies’**

Since 1748, when the Ugly Face Club seems first to have seen the light of day, to February 2001, when the LHS was inaugurated, and probably beyond, Liverpool has seen the advent, and sadly, the demise of many clubs and societies. The *raisons d’être* of these bodies have been many and various, from general conviviality to serious cultural pursuits, and the provision of opportunity for what today might be called “net-working”. One that does both, and more, and is still “going strong” is Liverpool’s Athenaeum, founded in 1797, & our illustration (left) shows its old home in Church St.

Our speaker, who in 1997 was awarded a PhD for her study of “Commerce & Culture, the Liverpool merchant élite, 1790-1850”, will tell us more of their rise and fall, and the place they have played, and in a few cases,

James William Carling, (1857-1887)

At the end of May’s AGM, Mick Kelly drew our attention to an article by David Charters’ in the Daily Post of May 11 2005 entitled *Macabre-legacy-of-the-little-urchin*, and the efforts being made to increase awareness of the short life and work of the largely forgotten Liverpool artist, James William Carling. As many of our readers were not at the AGM, and may not be aware of the account of Carling in chapter 13 of Mike’s book *Liverpool: The Irish Connection*, (see also http://uk.geocities.com/liverpool_monuments/carlingstory.htm), the following paragraphs are provided to echo what he said.

Carling was born at 38 Addison St (now L3, just south of the eastern end of Leeds St) in 1857. The son of a blacking maker, his mother died when he was seven, and his new step-mother seems to have had little love for him. To raise a few pennies, he and some of his brothers developed naïve skills as pavement artists, but aged 8 he was put into the care of Fr Nugent’s St George’s Industrial School. After six years there, he was taken in 1871 to Philadelphia, USA by his older brother Henry. Here again he earned a living as a sidewalk artist (he even signed pictures using that description), until his story was featured in a local paper This led to his being taken on as a caricaturist with a vaudeville troupe, with whom he travelled throughout the US, and honed his skills.

In 1880, Carling entered a competition to illustrate a new edition of Edgar Allen Poe’s *The Raven*. Although in the end rejected in favour of more traditional work by the better known Gustave Doré, his paintings survived, thanks to his brother Henry and his descendants, and they are now preserved at the Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia, with photographic reproductions on public display, to protect the fragile originals.

James William Carling returned to Liverpool in 1887, with a view to studying at the National School of Art but became ill instead. On 17th June of that year, he was admitted to the Brownlow Hill Workhouse, and died there three weeks later. Friendless and penniless, he was buried at Walton Park Cemetery in an unmarked pauper’s grave, and it was not until 1984 that a simple memorial was erected to mark the spot.

The one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his birth in two years time would indeed provide an ideal opportunity to celebrate his work further. Let’s hope that, amidst the City’s 800th birthday celebrations, we don’t forget him!

Northern History

We are pleased to include with this Newsletter a “flyer” for the academic journal “Northern History” Of very high quality, it is produced at the University of Leeds and covers much of the north of England (including, of course Lancashire and modern Merseyside) and the Borders, and is recommended reading for any serious enthusiast for the history of the area.

The March, 2005 edition, now in our Library) includes a very interesting article by Paul Booth of Liverpool University, touching on the story of the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire, to which body a number of our members belong, and also on the sad divide between academic and amateur historians. The final sentence of his article “The past is our common past, and exploring it should be open to all who will take the trouble” merits serious consideration and action

.Web-Master

It is with regret that we announce that with effect from 16 June 2005 Kirt Barooah has resigned, from the LHS Committee and the position of Webmaster, due to personal circumstances. Kirt designed the Society’s main web-site, and has run it on our behalf since the beginning of 2004. Although it has fallen somewhat behind in recent months, it has nevertheless been a very effective “shop-window” to the outside world, and numerous compliments have been received about it, and a number of new members recruited. Kirt’s valued contribution will be much missed, and we thank him for all he has done for us.

At the time of writing, no firm decisions as to the way forward have been made, but, as a temporary measure, the main site may well be withdrawn, pending redevelopment. The reserve site (address below) continues to give

The Society’s Officers & Committee, 2005 –2006			
Officers			
Chairman: John Tiernan (2006)	Administration Secretary: Jo McCann (P) (2007)		
Treasurer: Neville King (P) (2006)	Membership Secretary: Michael Brian (P) (2007)		
Committee			
Charles Collier (2007)	Joyce Culling (2006)	Netta Dixon (2007)	Mary Harrison (2007) Jon
Murden (2008)	Brenda Murray (2007)	Cynthia Stonall (2005)	Marie McQuade (P,C)
NB (P) & (C) denote member of Publications Sub-Committee & Co-opted respectively, and the year is when current term of office ends)			
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