

LIVERPOOL

NEWSLETTER No 16

SUMMER 2006



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HISTORY SOCIETY

Liverpool's Octo-Centenary

With all the excitement about Liverpool being awarded the title of European Capital of Culture in 2008, and all that we have so-far seen and heard regarding the preparations for that special year, it is perhaps not surprising that fears have been expressed that the previous year's commemoration of the 800th anniversary of the granting of Liverpool's first "charter" would be neglected. While we would not wish to minimise the value and importance of celebrating all the different aspects of this City's cultural riches – Popular and High, Ethnic and Indigenous, Pop and Classical, Christian and Non-Christian (this list of contrasting aspects could go on and on), - it is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that there could well have been no Liverpool in which to celebrate them, had King John not visited Lancashire in 1206, and the following year, on 28th August, 1207, exchanged certain lands with Henry Fitzwarine, and, by letters patent, promised **"to all who shall take burgages in Liverpool, that they shall have all liberties and free customs which any free borough on the sea hath in our land."**

However much we may deplore the recent demise of the Museum of Liverpool Life, and the imminent closure of the Central Library and Records Office (just what is happening, and what alternative provisions are being planned, we ask), it does at last appear that the big birthday is not going to pass by unmarked.



On the morning of 14th July 2006, Liverpool's Lord Mayor, Councillor Joan Lang, Councillor Mike Storey, CBE, former Leader of the City Council, and now Executive Member for Special Initiatives, Jason Harborow (Chief Executive of Liverpool Culture Company and Andrew Pearce, Chairman of Liverpool Heritage Forum, together announced details of some of the more significant ways in which this major anniversary is to be observed. In the magnificent surroundings of the newly re-furbished Small Concert Hall of St George's Hall (see left) they described some of the events planned for this most significant of years, as well as giving the initial screening of



the new Liverpool promotional film, featuring, amongst other things, some of the earliest film footage of the city, and unveiling the new Liverpool 2007 logo (above, right).

While its clever design, combining our famous Liverbird with the number 800 may not perhaps be to everyone's taste, a licence to use it on appropriate material is (unlike that for 2008) freely available, and the LHS has already applied to do so. (Hopefully we may be forgiven for anticipating approval of our application!)

The 51 A4 side Press Pack from the Launch gave information about what the City (through its Culture Company), the surrounding Metropolitan Boroughs, and numerous other local organisations are planning. With the Media Release's bold headline

LIVERPOOL TO BE PARTY CAPITAL IN 07,

and its declaration that the centrepiece of the 800th anniversary would be "a four-day party extravaganza", culminating in "one of the world's biggest firework displays", one might be tempted to fear that all would be "froth and bubble", with no tangible and lasting benefits. Closer examination, however, suggests that it will not just be memories that we will take forward into 2008 and beyond, and while space prevents more than a few highlights being reported here, brief details of some of what your Editor believes to be the most significant for those with an historical bent, appear overleaf.

Editor's Choice: For some, the centrepiece of the Year of Heritage celebrations will be the publication, in **September 2006** of the new book

‘Liverpool 800 – Culture Character and History’

written by the foremost experts in the City's history, and edited by Professor John Belchem from the University of Liverpool's School of History. With over 300 illustrations, this ground breaking biography of the city, tracing its society, politics, economy & culture over eight centuries, will be available in both paper- and hardback editions, at £14.95 and £35.00 respectively, and will make a welcome present to all Liverphiles.

Other significant events scheduled for 2007 include:

27 Jan to 22 April 2007 The Cathedral That Never Was Walker Art Gallery

Following major conservation work (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund), the intricate architect's model of Lutyens' unbuilt Liverpool's RC cathedral enlivens the story of this amazing and over-ambitious 1930's project of which only the crypt was ever built. As well as interpreting the model and its construction, the exhibition will describe the fascinating context and background to Lutyens' architectural commission.

Feb-June 2007 City Charters Exhibition Liverpool Central Library

The original 1207 letters patent and some of the 23 royal charters granted to Liverpool from medieval times onwards, will be on display in the Picton Reading Room, together with medieval deeds, 18th century maps, the city's first directory of 1766, Bank of Liverpool bank notes from the 1790s, watercolours and photographs.

23 April 2007 Gala re-opening St George's Hall

During a day of celebration to mark the completion of the £23m refurbishment of one of the world's finest neo-classical buildings, the stunning Small Concert Room will be returned to operation for the first time since World War II, and a new Visitor Centre opened.

Spring 2007 Sudley House reopens Sudley House, Mossley Hill

Closed since April 2005 for external repair and redecoration and to enable the execution of a £700,000 project to provide improved conditions for its many valuable works of art, space for additional and new displays, and better visitor facilities (including a lift to the upper floor), Sudley House, the red sandstone former family home of Liverpool merchant George Holt, is scheduled to reopen during Spring 2007.

July 2007 to May 2008 Magical History Tour Maritime Museum Albert Dock

Perhaps by way of compensation for the loss of the Museum of Liverpool Life, a major exhibition developed in collaboration with the Liverpool Culture Company and Liverpool University will document how the town and city has changed and evolved over the last 800 years, and how its population has grown and diversified, this gripping story will be told through the lives of ordinary people, famous and infamous, and will also look forward to the Liverpool of the future.

23 August 2007 Slavery Remembrance Day Maritime Museum Albert Dock

As well as being our 800th "birthday", 2007 is also the bi-centenary of the abolition of the British slave trade, upon which, we shamedly have to accept, so much of Liverpool's growth and prosperity was originally built. Marking this other most significant anniversary, and as the first phase of a brand new International Slavery Museum and Research Institute, due for completion in 2010, the new and enlarged Transatlantic Slavery gallery (it will be more than double its present size) will reopen on the third floor of the Maritime Museum..

28 August 2007 Liverpool 800 Day Various locations

While Street parties, and what is claimed will be Europe's largest ever firework display may or may not be your "thing", a Service of Thanksgiving (presumably Interfaith) and a civic and community procession, will mark the "birthday" itself. One wonders how the procession will compare with the pageant of 1907, which was apparently notable for its many historical anachronisms!

14 -16 September 2007 History Alive! St George's Hall

In a rare attempt to bridge the gulf that sometimes seems to divide historians, (academic, amateur, local, family etc, etc), a three day event, organised in partnership with BBC Radio Merseyside and University of Liverpool, will be in the Great Hall to showcase Liverpool's history and the work of its historical societies. The Small Concert Room will at the same time host a conference - entitled '**Liverpool: a sense of time and place**' - when leading academics will examine the competing and contested images and representations of the city.

Mike Brian, Editor

PROGRAMME TO DECEMBER 2006

All meetings are on Sundays at the Cornerstone Building, Hope at Everton, Shaw St, Liverpool.

Doors open 1.30 pm for 2.00 pm start

September 17

**Liverpool & the American Civil War -
‘Exploring the “Gone with the Wind” Connexion**

Jerry Williams



If a careful reader looks in Margaret Mitchell’s famous novel for the equivalent of the film scene where the imprisoned Rhett Butler refuses Scarlett’s request for \$300.00 saying “I couldn’t give you the money if I wanted to. My funds are in Liverpool, not in Atlanta”, they will not find it in that exact form. However, the half dozen appearances in the book of the name Liverpool clearly reflect one aspect of how its fortunes, and indeed, much of that of the the NW of England were bound up with the Confederate States of America. It was the largely enslaved workforce of the Southern States that grew the cotton that Liverpool merchants imported and Lancashire’s mills spun into cloth, and the North’s blockade resulted in great hardship on both sides of the Atlantic. Cotton was not the only link, however, and there should be few in Liverpool who are not, at least, aware of the story of the *Alabama*, and of its repercussions.

Jerry Williams talk will hopefully examine these and other links more deeply, and perhaps introduce us to some of the characters involved, and tell us where tangible relics of those events can still be found on Merseyside.

October 15

Mrs Tinne’s Wardrobe

Pauline Rushton

During May to July 2006, visitors to the Walker Art Gallery have had the opportunity to examine just a small part of what is probably Britain’s largest surviving collection of period clothing from one person’s wardrobe. Featuring day and evening wear, coats, swimwear and accessories such as hats, shoes and jewellery, these 130 items from a collection of over 700 all once belonged to Mrs Emily Tinne (pictured right) and her children, and date from between 1910 and 1940, .



With the accompanying text and grainy black and white images of Liverpool streets of the period, atmospherically flickering on a nearby screen, the exhibition was fascinating to visitors of either gender, and it is sad to think that it may be a very long time before it can be seen again. As well as telling us about who Emily Tinne (née McCulloch) was, and how the collection came into the Museum’s possession, perhaps our speaker, Pauline Rushton, who is the Walker’s Curator of Costume & Textiles, will have better news in this regard.

November 19

The Pictures are better on the Radio

Angela Heslop



Broadcasting on Merseyside began as early as 1924 with the opening of the “crystal-set era” station, 6LV. With a studio above a cafe in Lord Street, and its transmitter and engineers near Smithdown Rd, this early radio-station closed in 1931.

As BBC Local Radio approaches its 40th year, Angela Heslop looks back at its history, focusing on BBC Radio Merseyside which was one of the first local radio stations. She also assesses its impact on the local community and goes behind the

December 17

“Benevolent Patronage” - Libraries in Liverpool

John Tiernan

Liverpool has played a proud part in the development of libraries (institutional, educational and, particularly, public) from the eighteenth century onwards. One such was the Union News Room, Duke St founded 1st Jan, 1800, (illustrated right, from *The Stranger in Liverpool, 1829 ed*)



In this illustrated talk LHS Chairman John Tiernan, who is a retired public librarian and library historian, relates the interesting story behind this important social and cultural service and covers its history, personalities and buildings.

As is our custom, this final talk of the calendar year will be followed by appropriate seasonal “goodies”

Liverpool Heritage Forum

The Liverpool Heritage Forum, mentioned on page one, is a networking organisation of more than 50 local voluntary societies actively interested in Liverpool’s culture and heritage, especially in the realms of history, archaeology, architecture, and the performing and fine arts.

Founded in January 2005, it is made up of representatives of these various organisations and its primary objective is to improve contact between them., enabling them to meet together to share ideas and to establish useful contacts with the public authorities. While it is fully independent, it is a recognised link with the Liverpool Culture Company, representatives of which regularly attend its steering group and plenary meetings.

Assisted by the Culture Company, the LHF also seeks to publicise collectively the activities of individual societies, at present by means of a monthly electronic newsletter, and very shortly by a new and improved Website. To save both time and money, LHF Newsletters are not issued in paper format, but copies of numbers 1 – 15 can be found at <http://www.liverpool-heritage.org.uk>. Any member of the Liverpool History Society wishing to receive future issues by email is invited to contact our Librarian, Cynthia Stonall, who has kindly agreed to act as a ‘forwarding agent’ Her email address is: cynth@newbrightonbravo.freeseve.co.uk

The Tattooed Sailor

The following curious undated letter is copied *verbatim* from the second of the two volumes of Henry Roscoe’s *Life of William Roscoe*, published in 1833, which were recently included in another very generous donation to the LHS Library by member, Mrs Veronica Gibson:

Kind Sir

I take this oportunity of wrighting to you being advised by a Ladey of Liverpool to do so in order to tell you I am a Brittich Sailor that has Lateley arived in England after aving maid moy escaape from the Cost of New Zealand ware I was ten years a prisner and is Most beautifull tatued over the face and bodey, and as wrote a manuscript of every think Concerning the interior of New Zeland, the wars, Mariges, Berings, and the Discriptions of every Animals of Birds Beasts and Reptiles and Menney others of the South Sceas, the Manuscript is envaluable and wold make a Book of 200 Pages if wrote by a good Editor being such enformation as Never yet being in print nor aving the menes of printing it moy Self I wish to dispose of it and being advised to wright to you Concerning it I shold wish for you to send me a note wether I must attend at your house or whether you will whiat on me at Mr Calvert’s Exhibition in the Market Liverpool where the are exhibiting me as a curiosity your obedunt Sirvent

John Rotherfoot



Amusing for its spelling and lack of punctuation, the letter raises a number of interesting questions. Although there had been visits and some settlement by whalers operating in southern waters, and a few Christian missionaries had been there from about 1814, there was little European migration to New Zealand before it was opened up as a British colony in 1839. One must wonder, therefore, not only why, but also where and by whom Rotherfoot had been held prisoner. Rotherfoot’s tattoos were presumably like the Maori Ta Moko, and may have looked something like the image to the left of this paragraph. It would be interesting to know just how and why he came to acquire them.

Perhaps of greater interest to us locally is how did Rotherfoot come to be in Liverpool, and just what and in which market was Mr Calvert’s Exhibition?. The local papers of the period, and the Roscoe Archive (did William ever respond to the letter?) may provide some of the answers, and it is hoped that this short piece may spur one or more of our members to do some research and report back in a future Newsletter or Journal.

The Society’s Officers & Committee, 2006-2007

Officers

Chairman:	John Tiernan	(2009)	Administration Secretary:	Jo McCann (P)	(2007)
Treasurer:	Mike Brian (P)	(2009)	Membership Secretary:	Jon Murden	(2009)

Committee

Sheila Binks	(2009)	Charles Collier	(2007)	Joyce Culling	(2006)	Netta Dixon	(2007)
Mary Harrison	(2007) (P)	Marie McQuade	(2009) (P)	Brenda Murray	(2007)	Cynthia Stonall	(2008)

NB (P) denotes member of Publications Sub-Committee & and the year is when current term of office ends

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MINUTES OF THE 5th A.G.M. OF THE LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY**HELD ON 21 MAY 2006 IN THE GRACE ROOM, LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY, EVERTON****PRESENT** Chairman John Tiernan, the Committee and about forty members.**APOLOGIES** Brian Coghlan and Jon Murden**1 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME, INTRODUCTION & REPORT**

John Tiernan welcomed members and reviewed the preceding year's successful programme of talks, our visit to Walton Church, and our 5th Birthday 'Bash'. He paid tribute to his committee colleagues, and thanked Father Patrick Connors & Brother Ken Vance for allowing the committee to meet at S.F.X. Church.

2 MINUTES OF 4th AGM, 15th May 2005

These had been published in Newsletter 13, and no comments having been notified, were taken as read. There were no matters arising.

3 REPORTS

SECRETARY. Jo McCann agreed that the Society had enjoyed a varied series of talks. She mentioned a proposed joint expedition with Knowsley History Soc. She also referred to the Liverpool Heritage Forum, the meetings of which had had been attended by three members of L.H.S Committee, and through which invitations & information continued to be exchanged with other Societies. Jo reminded members that our June meeting would be a visit to S.F.X. Church, with a talk by Brother Ken Vance, and that there would then be no further meetings until 17th September 2006

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Mike Brian reported that of the 30 founder members, 23 still belonged to the Society, and that our membership now stood at 177. However, 38 persons had not yet paid this year's subs. This, he thought, was a pity, as on the paid up subscriptions, he had been able to claim £306. 03 in Gift Aid. During 2005/06, we had gained 26 new members, but lost 14, chiefly through non payment of 2004/05 subs.

NEWSLETTERS These continued to be produced at the rate of three per year, usually with a supplement containing accounts of talks given at meetings, and he thanked Netta Dixon & Mary Harrison for their help in preparing these. Extra copies of the Newsletter for free distribution to prospective members were available on request.

WEB SITE This had at last been resurrected and was growing. Although less sophisticated than its predecessor, it had nevertheless already been the means of attracting a number of new members.

JOURNAL Neville King thanked the publication committee for all its work in producing the 2006 Journal, which was now available for collection. He also thanked John Tiernan for proof reading it, at which John confessed that he had just noticed one spelling error in Mary Harrison's article. Sales of last year's edition, through limited commercial outlets supplemented by others generated by the Website and the regular advertisement in the FHS quarterly, had recouped production costs. Limited quantities of back numbers of Journal 2-4 continue to be available at £2.00 each, plus p&p. Work had already started on the 2007 edition, which would be larger than usual, and several invited articles for inclusion had already been delivered

Our additional publication, "Memories of World War 2," masterminded by Jo. McCann, had made an unexpected profit after proving so popular that it required a reprint.

Neville then announced that the 2006 Journal would be the last with which he would be involved. He had enjoyed his involvement, and wishing his successors well, recommended to members the satisfaction of getting more involved in the Society. The new sub-committee would be chaired by Mike Brian, with Jo McCann and Marie McQuade as joint editors, assisted by Mary Harrison.

LIBRARY Cynthia Stonall reported that arrangements had now been made to transfer the Society's Library collection from her home to a locked cupboard in the Shaw Room of S.F.X. Church. Offers of further donations would be welcomed, but, because of space limitations, these would need to be of a modest size. A frequently up-dated list of books, papers, journals and periodicals was made available at Sunday meetings and was also on our web-site. Details of new acquisitions would continue to be published in our Newsletter. Cynthia reminded members of the agreed conditions and procedures under which members might borrow items from our library

On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Netta Dixon, these six reports were accepted, nem con.

4 TREASURER'S REPORT & PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS

Neville King reminded members that a summary of our income and expenditure for 2005/06 had been included in Newsletter 15 and that the full accounts, certified by Brian Coghlan, were available for inspection.

He explained that the Society's reserves had increased by £285.00 leaving us with a total balance of £4639.61. Reasons for this included a small increase in membership; recovery of Gift Aid up by £20; change in banking arrangements resulting in £112 in interest; a re-negotiation & reduction by £100 of the room hire charge, the profit on sales of Journal and WW2 booklet; and profit on sales of refreshments. By contrast, outlay on refreshments for the two special events cost an additional £104.

The year's major capital purchase had been the P.A. System, funded by the balance of the 'Awards for All' grant.

Neville said that in his opinion, the society was, overall, in a healthy financial position, and that no increase in subscriptions seemed necessary at this time. In answer to a question from the floor the Chairman and Neville agreed that this, or the introduction of a meeting payment, could be considered if the need were to arise in the future.

Neville thanked Brian Coghlan for again examining and certifying our accounts, and for agreeing to stand as auditor for the coming year. At the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Peter Jones, this offer was gratefully accepted. [Agenda Item 5]

On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Andrew Pearce, the 2005/06 Accounts and Treasurer's Report were accepted, nem con.

NEVILLE KING

At this point John Tiernan departed from the published agenda to pay tribute to Neville, and to ask the members to approve a Committee recommendation that, as allowed for in the Society's Constitution, he be made an Honorary Life Member of the Society in recognition of all the work he has done for the Society, as Treasurer, Editor and Committee member over five years. This having been agreed by acclamation, he then presented Neville with a framed certificate to that effect, and informed him that the Committee intended to make him a personal gift, as soon as it become available, of a copy of the forthcoming book *Liverpool 800*, edited by Professor John Belchem. In response, Neville expressed both surprise and pleasure in accepting Honorary Life Membership, and the very kind words of the Chairman and membership.



6 ELECTION OF OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

The Chairman announced that in consequence of Neville's decision not to stand for re-election to office within the Society, and there having been no other volunteers or nominations, it was the recommendation of the Committee that offers by Mike Brian to assume the duties of Treasurer, and Jon Murden those of Membership Secretary, be accepted. Seconded by Brenda Murray, this proposal was accepted, nem con.

John Tiernan then handed temporary control of the meeting to Mike Brian who explained that John and Joyce Culling had now come to the end of their three year terms of office, but had agreed to stand for re-election. In addition to these and the consequential vacancy arising from Neville's decision not to seek re-election, there was also a place unfilled from AGM 2005, making a total of four in all. Again, there had been no members' nominations for any of these vacancies, and the Committee therefore recommended that Sheila Binks, Joyce Culling, Marie McQuade and John Tiernan be elected to serve on the Committee for a period of three years (to May 2009) and that John Tiernan be invited to continue as Chairman of the Society. Proposed by Jo McCann and seconded by Agnes Dean, this recommendation was unanimously agreed.

Thanking the meeting for asking him to do so, and agreeing to serve for a further term as Chairman, John Tiernan then resumed control of the AGM.

7 MATTERS PREVIOUSLY RAISED BY MEMBERS

No such matters had been received.

Reserving his right of discretion, the Chairman invited questions and suggestions from the meeting

Cynthia Stonall invited members to consider the possibility of a MOTTO for the Society.

Proposed by Brenda Murray, Joyce Culling was thanked for acting as AGM Minutes Secretary for the past four years.

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the AGM closed at approx 2.45pm and invited members to enjoy a tea or coffee before listening to our Speaker, Roger Hull, who had kindly come at short notice, following the sudden death of the scheduled speaker, Dr. Geoffrey Place, to whose widow Jo McCann had sent an expression of the Society's condolences. (A report of the talk appears below)

RECENT TALKS

23rd April, 2006

LEAGUE OF WELLDORS

Lesley Black

Lesley Black, General Manager of the League, introduced a fascinating power point presentation of the history and work of this organization. Its founder, Herbert Lee Jackson Jones, was born in 1870, according to his passport, but his birth certificate says 1868. It had been assumed that his middle names were a tribute to the Confederate generals, but even more romantically the Jackson comes from his mother. She was born on a ship sailing from South America which survived a bad storm, and the Captain, regarding her as a lucky charm, asked her parents to name her after his ship, the "Mary Jackson."

Lee Jones, as he was known, was educated at Liverpool College. As he grew up he observed the chronic poverty and hunger of countless Liverpool children and felt he had to do something to help, and on May 23rd. 1893 he founded "The Liverpool Food Association" to supply food to poor children in Vauxhall. He was a keen photographer and recorded scenes of the crowded courts in which poor people lived, with just one water pump for all their needs, and took pictures of the ragged children without shoes. The League has a telling collection of Lee Jones' pictures, taken by him up to his death in 1936, and subsequently by his successors.

His organization served hot meals for 1/2d. to 200,000 underfed school children in 22 schools. He was careful not to destroy the dignity of parents who could afford to pay the 1/2d, but children who could not pay were fed free. The depot where the food was cooked was an old cotton warehouse in Limekiln Lane. Lee Jones lived in this building together with his staff, as he thought it not right to go home to comfortable homes and leave the poor people behind. He used his own money and any he could persuade people to donate. The story goes that he asked his mother for help so often that she eventually said "this is the last 10 shillings" and he framed the note.

In 1894 he started sending meals of soup and bread & jam to sick, housebound people. The lady attendants wore uniforms, like nurses, and carried the food in felt lined containers. They delivered 4 nights a week at a charge of 1/2d. The Association accepted clothing and gifts to help with their work and each season clothed its children. Lee Jones opened a Shelter opposite the cooking depot for homeless children. By 1898 he owed £1000, and when the next year a Charity Bazaar was held and raised £1350, while he accepted some of this towards his debts, most was spent on reconstruction of the premises. They had a horse, called Chilton, which was dearly loved by the children.

In 1899, 200 of the poorest paid group of workmen, Sandwich board men, were invited to the first annual Christmas dinner. The following year, 1900, Lee Jones refused to pay £14 rates, and the Council sent the bailiffs to remove all assets, including Chilton. Eventually Lee Jones won his case, and the League did not have to pay the tax.

The name was changed to "Liverpool Food and Betterment Association," in 1898, and to the "League of Welldoers" in 1909. Activities continued to proliferate; open air concerts were held in the narrow courts, a 1d. Newspaper was published, refugees and widows were helped during the 1914/1918 war, food parcels were distributed during the Police Strike in 1926, old people, poorly paid women rag pickers and children were taken on trips to the seaside, at New Brighton. Christmas parties were held and New year gifts given. Many of these events were recorded on film, and the League is planning to display them in their much enlarged headquarters, which is still in Limekiln Lane.

After Lee Jones's death on 4th October 1936, Bill Horn was took over as Warden, assisted by Anne Horn, and business continued as usual. The 1939/45 war saw service families once more receiving assistance. After the war with the establishment of the Welfare State, living conditions improved, and priorities changed. Boy's and girl's clubs were started, and tournaments organized for football, boxing and gymnastics. The girl's clubs provided "quiet rooms for sewing and reading"!!! Benefit concerts were supported by the stars of the day, including George Robey, George Formby, Norman Wisdom, Ken Dodd and many others.

Today the work continues, with events and holidays for pensioners, children's Christmas parties, "nearly new" shops, and Concerts. Lesley's presentation was warmly received and she answered members' questions, and was delighted to hear from one of our members that he had attended and enjoyed two of the Welldoers' parties when he was a young

boy.

21st MAY 2006
Hull

A PICTURE POSTCARD HISTORY OF LIVERPOOL

Roger

Roger, who is Secretary of the Council of the HSLC, began by telling us that post cards were only introduced about 1890, and not accepted by the Post Office until 1900, when postage was ½d. He felt that the earlier examples showed the better side of Liverpool, avoiding “the sweat, grime & violence” of the time.

The first slide showed a plate manufactured in The Herculaneum Pottery, which reminded us that in the eighteenth century Liverpool was not just a port, but also a number of famous potters in Liverpool some of whom rivaled Josiah Wedgwood. Liverpool’s clock making industry was also famous, and held to be second only to London’s. We were reminded of its then growing prosperity by pictures of its demolished Georgian churches, and St. George’s Hall with the grand flight of stairs at the south end which also no longer exist.

Statues of “The Drummer boy” memorial of the last battle led by any of our reigning kings, George II, and Nelson’s memorial, display popular sentiments of the time. Several postcards of the Pier Head area prompted vivid memories in the members, who gave Roger some interesting information. While the horse buses in Church Street, and the pictures of the first two Adelphi hotels were rather before our time, a postcard of a gleaming tram also inspired some comment. People remembered The David Lewis Hospital and the Hostel for “worthy poor men”, which was demolished in 1976. A fascinating series of pictures by a famous photographer showed scenes of Liverpool life in the early 20th. Century, provoked strong emotions, so it was lucky that the talk finished with a strange postcard showing a figure from the Reynolds Wax museum, a negress about 7 feet tall overshadowing a small Caucasian male.

We all enjoyed the pictures, the memories and the discussions, and John thanked Roger for a most interesting illustration of Liverpool’s fairly recent past, the members showing their appreciation with warm applause.

18th JUNE 2006

VISIT TO ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH

Bro Ken Vance, SJ

This last meeting before the summer break was hosted by Brother Ken Vance, of the Society of Jesus. A great friend to our Society, Ken grew up in SFX parish, served at the altar, and after entering the Society, worked in Scotland, Worcester and London before returning to Liverpool about ten years ago.

He entertained us with a brief history of the Order and the church, interspersed with amusing anecdotes which had us rocking with laughter. St. Francis Xavier was one of the first followers of St. Ignatius Loyola the founder of the Company or Society of Jesus, approved by Pope Paul III in 1540. One of the first Orders to return to Liverpool after the Reformation, the Jesuits had been built a small chapel there in 1712. A second, larger chapel, built in 1736, was destroyed by a mob in 1738, but rebuilt, disguised as a warehouse. In 1783, after the suppression of the Jesuit Order, the parish of St. Mary was handed over to the Benedictines who ran it until that church closed in 1999

In contrast to former years when up to 38 priests serving a parish of about 13,000 Catholics, SFX is staffed by just two Jesuits, the Parish Priest and himself. Meeting in a local pub in 1840 eight Catholic businessmen formed a committee with a view to erecting a church, and founding a Catholic school for boys, under the jurisdiction of the President of Stonyhurst College, who was the Jesuit Provincial. Papal permission was given and the college opened in 1843. followed in 1848 by this beautiful church. Designed by J.J. Scholes to hold 1000 people, it was soon found to be too small for its congregations, and Edmund Kirby’s exquisite Lady Chapel was added. The Poor Schools of the parish were founded in 1853, and two later notable pupils were Charlie Chaplin, and Jimmy McGovern.

Bro. Vance then gave us a detailed and fascinating tour of the Grade 2* listed church, explaining that its slender, limestone pillars were deliberately designed to give an uninterrupted view of the High Altar and Tabernacle. Changes in liturgy after “Vatican 2” required alterations, but as by this time the area was no longer thriving, there was not enough money to make drastic changes, with the fortunate result that the 19th century altar and furniture remain in place. The wooden rood was made in Dublin in 1865 and installed by workers who, being allowed a pint of porter a day, initially did so in a far from satisfactory manner. We admired the side altars and many beautiful sculptures, the reader’s Lectern made by Bro.Vance’s father, and were told that the impressive pulpit is on the “wrong” side of the church, the “south” side being usually reserved for cathedrals. Many famous preachers have been occupied it, including. Thomas Roberts, later Archbishop of Bombay, and Gerald Manley Hopkins, who during his two unhappy years in the parish, wrote practically no poetry. We also enjoyed explanations of the stained glass windows, including the new Window of the Hidden Saints commemorating the new millennium and depicting notable events & personalities in the parish’s history.

In 2001, The Lady or Sodality Chapel was renamed as The Chapel of St. Mary of the Angels and St. Joseph, to commemorate two neighbouring parishes, now incorporated into S.F.X. At its western end is a most unusual Bona Mors, (happy death) altar, given by Elizabeth Welch in 1895, when she believed she had been cured of Cancer. Sadly only in remission, she died very soon after.

In the Sacristy Bro Vance awed us with some of the treasured vestments, and a number of the solid silver chalices and monstrances, each with a story. He also showed us various relics, including the eye of Bl. Edmund Oldcorne, hung,

drawn & quartered in 1606. Our reaction to that grisly relic can easily be imagined, but all present heartily endorsed John's sincere vote of thanks to Bro Vance for his warm hospitality and humour in a rewarding and fascinating tour

[Our thanks to Mary Harrison for preparing these reports, which for space reasons have been very much edited]