

# LIVERPOOL

NEWSLETTER No 24



SPRING 2009

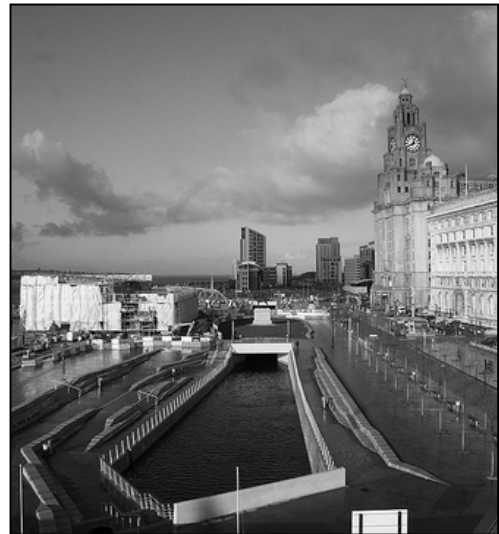
We would like to thank Mike Brian for all the many times he has produced this newsletter. Unfortunately all good things come to an end and so, for the time being, the newsletter will be compiled by the rest of Communication Committee. Thank you Mike.

## ON THE WATERFRONT

Just a couple of weeks ago the first, official, boat progressed up the newly dug extension to the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and then on the 25<sup>th</sup> March it was officially opened. It is hoped this summer will see many more boats, narrow and otherwise, making their way into the Albert Dock via this route.

Work is also moving fast on the Museum of Liverpool and it is on schedule to be handed over later this year. Large objects, such as a Liverpool Overhead Railway carriage will, of course, need to be lifted in before it is completed. The carriage will be displayed, along with other relevant artifacts, in an area which will be known as 'Port City'. Here subjects such as Liverpool's early canals, railways, and dock system will be explored.

We hope to give whatever her insights as we are able in the coming newsletters.



## ST. JAMES CHURCH

For some while there has been uncertainty as to the future of St James church, which stands out at the junction of Upper Parliament Street and Park Place. Now, however, start-up grants have been secured and these will enable groups involved to press ahead and appoint a project manager and progress with archaeological surveys of the site.

Built in 1775, it is one of the earliest buildings still extant in Liverpool and its records date back to the foundation of the church.

## LIVERPOOL CENTRAL LIBRARY AND RECORD OFFICE

As most of you will be aware a team of staff have been working hard for some years now to secure funding for Liverpool Central Library and Record Office. This funding will enable them to conserve the historic parts of the building and to completely rebuild other areas, bringing facilities and services into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This means that in the near future the task of emptying the building for the duration of the work will need to be addressed.

To this end, the last two years have been spent doing a great deal of work behind scenes. The majority of this work has been in repackaging archive collections to ensure they come to no harm in transit. In this the library has been fortunate to have had the help of Mary Harrison and Sheila Binks who have spent long hours working in the repositories, with Conservation staff, labeling and tying volumes with white cotton tape. They have also done a great deal of work in the Conservation Department on part of our City Engineer's photographic collection. This saw them inserting thousands of photographs into custom made sleeves, labeling them and re-housing them in their new location in the repository. Since our February meeting, when Mary appealed for more volunteers, they have been joined by another six members.

## Recent Talks

Courtesy of Mary Harrison and Netta Dixon

December 2008

TRADITIONAL LIVERPOOL MUSIC

Kevin Bargaen

Our Christmas meeting was spent in the delightful company of the very popular folk musician, Kevin Bargaen. Kevin first told us some of his family history. His great-grandfather, (and his surname), came to England from Switzerland in 1843. Kevin's father served in the British army in Ireland, where he met his wife, just before the start of WW2. They were then based in Formby, where Kevin and his sister were born. In 1939, father was sent off to war, and Kevin said he was 'deported' to Cork with his mother and sister. In Ireland Kevin learnt to play the mouth organ and fiddle. In 1948 he sailed on the *Aquitania*, and a year later he returned to England, where he lived in a repatriation camp for German P.O.W's: Camp 678, Fort Crosby, Hightown. Here a German clockmaker made a ukulele-mandolin for him. In 1959 he started work for I.C.I.

He soon started singing and playing in pubs and clubs and in 1968 he and some friends started a group. They were one of the first skiffle groups, and were involved in the folk boom and met Sam Wanamaker, who wanted them to sing Irish music in the Shakespeare Theatre. They registered the name of their group as 'The Travelling People' and played in The Irish Centre, in the Wellington Rooms, Mount Pleasant, from 1965 until it closed in 1997.

As a Liverpool group they were aware of songs of the seamen and enjoyed singing sea shanties. On merchant ships, these were work songs, which helped the sailors perform difficult tasks in co-ordination with each other; songs to remind them of home; songs about whaling and dangerous trips; and maritime hymns. The group performed in Atlantic House and the Anglican Mission to Seamen.



After enlightening us about the difference between the Irish Ceili, featuring fiddles and flutes, and the Scottish Ceilidh, with accordion, piano and drum, Kevin went on to play some of his instruments. He played some delightful Irish tunes on his melodian, and an old very special banjo. He kept us laughing about exciting engagements in the 70s and 80s, when the group were competitors of 'The Spinners'. In 2002 they were engaged as a 'prestigious Irish group' to grace the Dublin Float in a parade past the Queen on the balcony of Liverpool Town Hall.

Our Chairman, John, proposed a vote of thanks and led the warm applause. The answers to Brenda's and Charlie's

annual Liverpool quiz were then read out, and the prizes presented. John then had the very pleasant duty of congratulating Charles Collier on reaching his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. A cake to mark the occasion had been decorated by Sheila Binks, (**shown on the right, with Mary Harrison left, and Netta Dixon in above picture**) which was the centre-piece of the attractive table of Christmas goodies provided by Netta. We all enjoyed a sumptuous repast before dispersing to the sound of Christmas good wishes.

**22nd February 2009**

## **LOVE LANE LIVES**

**Ron Noon**

Ron Noon briefly touched on the early small scale production of sugar from cane, starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Although the import of cane increased rapidly during the years of the slave trade, its abolition, in 1807, did not halt the growth of the industry. In 1872, a Liverpool grocer, Henry Tate, built a new refinery, in Love Lane and over the next 50 years, (after amalgamating with a Scottish firm, Lyles), the world famous company was created.

But the story Ron wanted to tell was of a local community, devastated and then inspired, by the closure of Love Lane in 1981. Ron had invited Albert E [Tod] Sloane, a leading employee of the company, who fought against this. He and many other 'boys and girls from the whitestuff' had made a film, with Ron, in which they showed how Tate and Lyles' had been the centre of family lives in the Vauxhall area. They spoke movingly of their work and one lady told that she had packed Mr. Cube cubes. They had an annual dinner at the Adelphi.

By the 1960s there was a surplus capacity caused by the E.E.C.'s Common Agricultural Policy, which heavily subsidised sugar beet in preference to sugar cane. In 1971 the company recommended closing down the Love Lane factory and the transference of operations to the Thames, to link up with continental sugar beet imports. The resulting public outcry resulted in the decision being postponed for 10 years. But in January 1981 ninety day redundancy notices were issued to 1500 workers. But the community spirit refused to die.

Long negotiations eventually secured a £6.4m grant to build the Eldonian Village on the site. By 1989, 145 houses had been built, with 150 more to follow.

The web link to the film, 'Love Lane Lives', can be found on Liverpool History Society web site.

## **15th March 2009 'LIVERPOOL IN THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY Janet E. Hollinshead A small Tudor Town'**

Janet Hollinshead showed us three maps. These illustrated the very small size of Liverpool until Tudor times. Its population was about 1,000. Epidemics: typhus, smallpox, etc. kept numbers low. It was just a small part of the parish of Walton on the Hill. It was a medieval town of timber framed houses, surrounded by a rural area of town fields and wasteland - a patriarchal society, in which most of the male inhabitants were freemen and the leading townsmen, about twenty in number, merchants.

The Civic year began, in Liverpool, on St. Luke's Day, October 18<sup>th</sup>. On that day the freemen assembled and elected a Mayor, for a 12 month period, as well as other necessary officers. The town income, at this time, seems to have been about £5. They had no taxes or rates and if anything important was needed they had a special collection. This happened in 1559 when something daring and unusual happened----- they tried to get Ralph Seckerston, elected to Parliament. They were unsuccessful but two years later they succeeded.

Ralph Seckerston attended Parliament, when called upon, over the next 15 years. The town would take a collection to support him over his, often, eight to ten week stay in the capital.

While there, he served on several committees and even managed to present a Private Members Bill to make Liverpool a parish. It failed. Ralph died in the mid 1570's. Things reverted to what they had been before: Lord Derby sent his representative and The Duchy of Lancaster, whose place had been usurped, sent theirs. It would be another twenty years before another Liverpool merchant sat in Parliament.

The above named book, published by Carnegie, can be obtained through all the usual outlets.

## PROGRAMME – APRIL TO JUNE 2009

- April 19<sup>th</sup>**     **William Ewart Gladstone – a 200<sup>th</sup> Birth year tribute.**     **Mike Brian**
- May 17<sup>th</sup>**             **8<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting** (followed. at approx. 2.15pm by)  
**1.45pm     Did Hitler come to Liverpool?**             **Mike Royden**
- June 21<sup>st</sup>**             **Visit to Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool**  
**1.45 for 2pm.** with guided walk and talk
- July and August**                     Summer Break -----No Meetings

### St Francis Xaviour's Church---Salisbury St. Liverpool.

Following on from their excellent exhibition in 2008, St Francis Xaviour Church is again exhibiting material normally, held in trust, at Stoneyhurst College. This will commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Henry V 111's accession to the throne in 1509. Among the artefacts on display will be a copy of Henry's Defence of the Seven Sacraments, for which he was awarded the title, 'Defender of the Faith'. These sentiments are still retained on our coins today: D G REG. F D. Also among the exhibits will be Thomas More's gold and enamel cross and John Fisher's signet ring.

The exhibition opens Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> September and closes Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> September. Times of opening: 10am - 4pm, with tour of the church at 2pm each day.

### British Association for Local History

We have been asked by above society, to advise our members that they would be welcome at any events that they organize. Events are advertised and can be organized and booked on their website: [www.balh.co.uk](http://www.balh.co.uk) (phone 01283 585947) For anyone who is not on line first two are:

22<sup>nd</sup> April: guided visit to Nottingham Uni. Dept. of manuscripts & Special Collections.  
13 May, guided visit to St Alban's Cathedral and Museum.

Liverpool University are again holding weekly lunchtime lectures in Liverpool Cathedral. The first: 1pm Wed. April 23. 'Celebrating Liverpool Writers' Brian Nellist.

Finally, we would like to thank Mr. Alex Noel Tod, of Norfolk, for his kind donation of 1907 Liverpool 700<sup>th</sup> Programme.

## **The Society's Officers & Committee, 2008-09**

### **Officers**

Chairman: John Tiernan (2009)     Administration Secretary: Jo McCann (P) (2010)  
Treasurer & acting Membership Secretary: Michael Brian (P) (2010)  
Programme Secretary & Webmaster: Robert Ainsworth (P) (2010)

### **Committee**

Sheila Binks (2008) Charles Collier (2010) Joyce Culling (2009) Netta Dixon (2010)  
Mary Harrison (2010) Brenda Murray (2010) Cynthia Stonall (2008) Marie McQuade (P) 2009  
NB (P) denotes membership of Publications Sub-Committee, and the year is when current term of office ends

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