



HISTORY SOCIETY

SUMMER 2009

AGM and Annual Accounts

Enclosed with this Newsletter, as separate documents, are the Minutes of the Society's Annual General Meeting held on 17 May 2009, together with the Audited Summary of Accounts.

Calling all Wordsmiths!

The next edition of the Society's Journal is being put together by co-editors Marie McQuade and Jo McCann who are keen to hear from any members able to submit articles for inclusion. Major articles normally stretch to 8/9 pages and comprise about 3,000 words plus images. Shorter articles of about 1,000 words are also needed. Contact Jo at: sloey2@hotmail.com or Marie at: isthenameof@yahoo.co.uk

The Bluecoat: Volunteer Heritage Tour Guides required

The Bluecoat wishes to share more about their fascinating heritage with the public, especially tourists over the summer period. They are looking for a confident and committed group of volunteers to deliver short tours of the building to the public. These will take place between 12 and 4pm every afternoon in August and then at weekends from September onwards.

If you have a talent for engaging people and an interest in local history then they would love to hear from you. Training will be given. For more information please contact Laura Pilgrim, Participation Assistant, at – laura.pilgrim@thebluecoat.org.uk or 'phone 0151 702 7761.

History that Puts Woman in Her Place

For those of you interested in the place of women in history, (and who isn't?) check out an excellent new national magazine which is being produced right here on Merseyside. Entitled *HerStoria* it is published quarterly by Jones5 Publishing Limited, Birkenhead, and is sold on subscription or from News From Nowhere, Bold Street, Liverpool. Full details can be found on the magazine's website: www.herstoria.com

Of particular interest to members of the Liverpool History Society, the current issue features a fascinating Women's History Walk around Liverpool produced by its editor, Claire Jones. This nine-page article, illustrated with photographs and a double-page trail map, takes the form of a circular self-guiding city centre trail which includes 24 stopping points. Claire has generously agreed that you can print out or download a PDF of the walk from: www.visitliverpool.com/site/what-to-do/tours-and-transportation/womens-history-walk

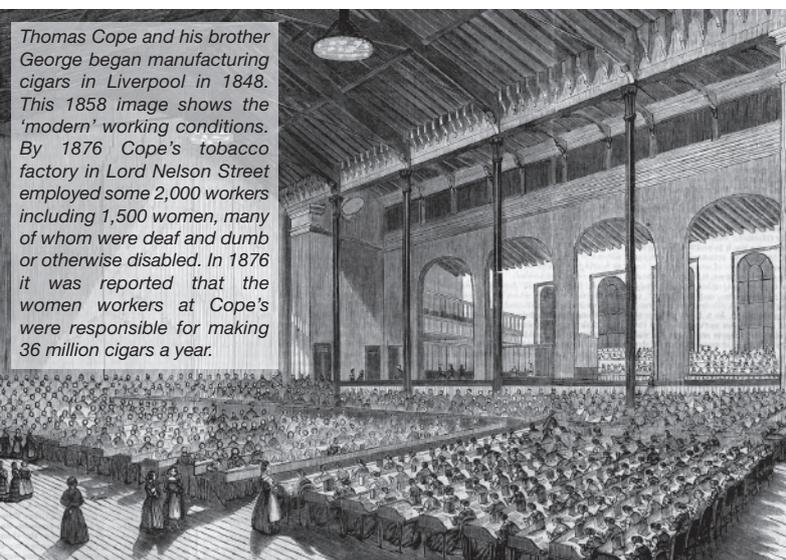


Image: Harper's Weekly USA., 14 August, 1858. (Collection: Ron Jones)

Liverpool Bookshelf

With the centenary of the sinking of the *Titanic* looming on the horizon, we can expect a rash of new books about the ill-fated Liverpool-registered ship. Perhaps of more interest to LHS members, will be *Titanic and Liverpool* by Alan Scarth, Curator of Ship Models at Liverpool Maritime Museum – the museum has on permanent display the breathtaking 20ft builder's model of *Titanic*. The book, a 192pp paperback, price £9.99, will be published by Liverpool University Press at the end of September 2009. Here are some tidbits from the book:

Did you know?

- ◆ About one in 10 of the crew were either from Liverpool or had strong connections with the city.
- ◆ Captain Smith of the *Titanic* lived on Merseyside for 40 years.
- ◆ The long passageway connecting the crew's quarters deep below on *Titanic* was called 'Scotland Road'.
- ◆ The Liverpool-based *Carpathia* rescued all 705 survivors.
- ◆ Fred Fleet, who first spotted the iceberg, was from Liverpool.

WILLIAM E GLADSTONE 1809-1898 – A 200th BIRTH YEAR TRIBUTE

As a tribute to William Ewart Gladstone, Michael Brian gave us a lecture on the eminent 19th century Liverpool-born politician whose political career stretched from 1833 to the 1890s.

Although Gladstone was born at 62 Rodney Street, his forefathers came from Scotland but his father left at the end of the 18th C. to come to Liverpool where he traded in grain and tobacco; he was worth £40,000 by 1799. William Gladstone was the 4th son in a family of six children. After 1811, the main family home was Seaforth House which his father built and which was eventually demolished in the 1880s.

Michael focused on the seven Fs in Gladstone's life: his family and background; his formation, his faith, the females in his life, his fulfilment and major offices of state, his failure on dealing with the Irish problem and his final years.

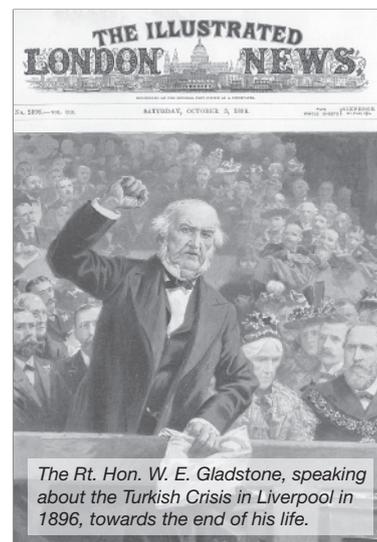
His formation: From Eton (1821 to 1827) Gladstone went from 1828 to 1831 to Christ Church College, Oxford where he gained a double first in Classics and Maths, and was involved in the Oxford Union. There he met Lord Lincoln, son of the Duke of Newcastle under Lyme who invited William to sit for Newark, a 'pocket borough' where there were seven electors in total under a local landlord. William stood for election in 1832 and made his maiden speech on the 3rd June 1833 in the first session of Parliament after the great Reform Act. In this speech William defended his father, a plantation owner, who had been attacked by Lord Howick when he spoke in the House in favour of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. Gladstone, a Tory at this time, became a member of Peel's cabinet.

The females in his life: After a few unsuccessful courtships Gladstone married Catherine Glynn a daughter of the owner of Hawarden Castle which became William's home and where his eight children were born. It is well known that Gladstone, with his wife's support, undertook 'night walks' when he stopped to talk to 'Ladies of the Night' in an attempt to rescue them or send them to an Anglican nunnery. After the walks, he often flagellated himself.

His fulfilment: Gladstone supported Peel in the Corn Law Crisis when he and other politicians wanted to alleviate hunger and hardship by repealing the laws that prevented the import of cheap foreign corn. Consequently, Gladstone was forced to look for another seat as he lost the support of the Duke of Newcastle; eventually he became a member for Oxford University.

Gladstone was to become Prime Minister four times and was Chancellor of the Exchequer for 13 years. He played a major part in the history of Ireland and according to Mathias McDonnell Bodkin – "...he was the best friend Ireland ever had." Gladstone had a state funeral and was buried in Westminster Abbey. He gave his books to St. Deiniol's Library in Hawarden; this became the only residential library in the country.

Unfortunately Michael did not have time to finish his talk but he hopes to tell us more about Gladstone's political career, his failure in Ireland and his final years in a future lecture.



(Collection: Ron Jones)

DID HITLER COME TO LIVERPOOL?

After the A.G.M. Mike Royden delighted us with a close look at the myth which suggested that the 23-year old Adolf Hitler lived in Liverpool for nearly six months during 1912/1913. Mike, having first proved that his car had broken down when he was en route to tell us the story two years ago, and apologised, went on to explain how he had come to research the subject. He had been interviewed for Radio 4's programme, 'Making History' following enquiries from Liverpool listeners.

In 1942 Adolf Hitler said he had no family, "I belong only to my people." However, in 1972 a manuscript by Bridget Hitler, wife of Alois Hitler, Adolph's half-brother, who had lived in Liverpool in the early 1900s, was discovered in New York Public Library by Robert Payne who wrote *The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler* (1973). This eventually gave rise to Beryl Bainbridge's book, *Young Adolf* (1978) and David Gardner's *Last of the Hitlers* (2001). The latter suggests that Adolf used to drink in The Post House pub in Cumberland Street, a claim still held by some of the locals ("Oh yeah, Adolph used to drink in 'ere all the time.")

Mike illustrated the Hitler family tree beginning with Adolph's father, Alois Schicklgruber who, when he was 39, changed his name to Heidler. When the name change was officially registered it was transcribed as 'Hitler'. Alois married three times, the last being to Klara Poelzl. That marriage produced five children, one of whom, born on 20 April 1889, was Adolph.

In 1903 Adolph's half-brother, Alois junior, left home after their father's death. He served two prison sentences for theft, went to Paris, then to London to work in the catering industry. He moved to Dublin in 1908, where he met and married Bridget Dowling in 1910. They moved to Liverpool and ran a boarding house in Upper Parliament Street. Their son William Patrick Hitler (Mike referred to him as 'Billy Hitler'!) was born 12 March 1911 at 102 Upper Stanhope Street, Toxteth. Alois was reputed to work in Leemings Restaurant in Dale Street circa 1910.

Adolf is known to have been in Vienna from 1908. He wanted to train as an architect, but was unable to secure a place at the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts. He took menial jobs, and there is a gap (1912-1914) when his whereabouts were unknown. He may have been avoiding the draft into the Austrian army.

In 1979 the Liverpool Daily Post ran a series, *The Memoirs of Bridget Hitler*. It appears that Alois was working as a salesman of disposable razors. He sent money to his half sister, Angela, one of Adolf's siblings. She and her husband were invited to visit Bridget and Alois, but it seems Adolf came instead. Bridget describes the half-brothers rowing and studying maps, of where she did not say. There is no other evidence of Adolph's alleged visit between November 1912 and April 1913.

In 1914 Alois returned to Austria, was called up to the army and in 1924 made a bigamous marriage. He was prosecuted but not convicted. Bridget defended him. In 1934 he ran a restaurant in Berlin. After the war he became a right wing politician. He was arrested by the British. In the 1950s he was known to be signing photographs of Adolf. He died in 1956. His son, the Liverpool-born William Patrick, went to Germany and is said to have met Adolf during the 1930s but was rejected by him. William returned to Liverpool then he and Bridget moved to America. He changed his name to William Patrick Stewart-Houston and was allowed to sign on with the U.S. Navy. He married a German girl and had four sons. Alexander Adolf, Brian, Louis and Howard. He died in 1987. Bridget died in 1969. The three surviving sons still live in New York. They have a very private agreement not to marry or have children.

Mike told us about broadcasting on Radio Merseyside about the myth and the family, and being interviewed for Dutch TV, by Katya Schurman in The Picton Library. He has written a book, *Tracing Your Liverpool Ancestors* due for publication Autumn 2009/early 2010. Mike has an excellent website where you will find the full story of the Hitler family's links with Liverpool – (<http://www.btinternet.com/~m.royden/mrlhp/index.html>).

We all thoroughly enjoyed Mike's exposition of our links with Hitler and his family and warmly applauded John's vote of thanks.



Hitler in 1938 looking very different to the 23-year old 'down and out' said to have lived in Toxteth during 1912/3. (Wikimedia Commons)

VISIT TO THE BLUECOAT – 21 JUNE 2009

Society members enjoyed a visit and guided tour of the Bluecoat conducted by Bec Fearon. Here is just some of the fascinating information we learned about this Grade One Listed building, the oldest in Liverpool City Centre:

- The Bluecoat began life as a charity school. In 1708, Rev. Robert Styth, rector of Liverpool, and master mariner together with slave trader, Bryan Blundell, founded the Liverpool Blue Coat School for poor children who had lost at least one parent. The original school was a modest building costing £35. The Bluecoat was very close to Paradise Street and the original docklands area.
- The Latin inscription running across the front facade reads: *Established to instruct children in the principles and doctrines of the Anglican Church, in the year of salvation 1717*. Actually, building work began in 1716 and the school opened in 1718 although work was not completed until 1725.
- The school was successful but the children were prone to distraction by the lives they led outside of lesson time, in a city which was by then a busy seaport with a reputation for being rowdy and fun-filled. Money was raised for a larger building where the children could live as well as study. In 1906 the school finally outgrew the building and relocated to Wavertree where it remains to this day. The Bluecoat then took on a new role as a centre for the arts. However, during the 20th century, the Bluecoat had a very stormy history which included financial insecurity, 2nd World War bomb damage and even threat of demolition.
- The one-handed clock is a unique feature. A second hand isn't missing - time has always been calculated by measuring the position of the hand between the hour numerals. Also in the courtyard are four Liver Birds including one cast in iron on the front gate, two above the central doors of the wings facing each other and, the most recent, an ornamental one above the main entrance. This 'cartouche' was completed as part of post war restoration. The other three are believed to be the oldest sculptural examples of Liverpool's mythical symbol.
- The Hub is the new heart of the Bluecoat which recently underwent a multi-million pound redevelopment in time for Capital of Culture year. In the Hub you can buy food and drink to consume there or in the garden or courtyard. You can also buy tickets for performances and events and get information. The Hub is also the site of the old school refectory. The recent redevelopment has returned it to the 19th century layout, revealing features including wooden beams and cast iron pillars which had been hidden for decades.
- The south east wing, obliterated during the war, has been completely re-built and now houses four gallery spaces. The Bluecoat is also home to over 30 creative concerns including artists, graphic designers, small arts organisations, craftspeople and retailers, the longest standing of which is the Bluecoat Display Centre which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

LHS PROGRAMME – SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2009

20 September	Living over the shop: home and business in Liverpool 1760-1820	Hannah Barker
18 October	Merchant Palaces	Joseph Sharples
15 November	A paddle in the pool of life: The story of Liverpool with music and caricatures	John Minnion
13 December	The new Museum of Liverpool: A progress report	Helen Robinson

All meetings will take place in the Grace Room, First Floor, Hope at Everton, Shaw Street, Liverpool (entrance via Salisbury Street). This is the former St Francis Xavier College building. All meetings start at 2pm (doors open 1.30pm).

More dates for your diary

● St Francis Xavier – Heritage Open Days

Friday 11 – Sunday 20 September 2009

9am - 4pm. Refreshments on sale.

Amongst items on display will be Henry the VIII's copy of the Defence of the Seven Sacraments, Sir/St. Thomas More's Gold Cross, St John Fisher's signet ring and SFX's church plate.

● Heritage Open Days – Liverpool & Merseyside

The Heritage Open Days programme now comes under the wing of English Heritage. This year's Heritage Open Days will take place from 10 - 13 September. Details of the 30 plus properties on Merseyside taking part can be found at www.heritageopendays.org.uk

● Liverpool History Society Visit to Imperial War Museum, Salford

Liverpool History Society members will be visiting the Imperial War Museum on Wednesday, 21 October 2009. The cost is £10. The coach will leave Lime Street (in front of St. George's Plateau) at 10.30am, returning from Salford at approx. 4.30pm and arriving back in Lime Street at

approx. 6pm. There is also an exhibition about prisoners of war and there will be time to visit The Lowry and shopping outlet mall. There are still some places – for details contact Jo McCann (sloey2@hotmail.com).

● Family History Fair

St. Georges Hall, Saturday, 24th October. The theme for the next family history fair is *Finding Founding Fathers – Fables and Facts*. It is being run by the N.W. Group of Family History Societies and is open from 10am to 4pm. The Liverpool History Society will be having a stand at this event.

● Roscoe Lecture – Professor Lord Alton of Liverpool Gladstone - Son of Liverpool, Scourge of Tyrants.

St George's Hall, 27 October 2009. Free but by ticket only. To reserve your tickets, please contact LJMU's Conference and Event Services team on 0151 231 3668 or email RoscoeLectures@ljmu.ac.uk.

● Roscoe Lecture – Richard Stilgoe OBE Music and Citizenship.

St George's Hall, 3 November 2009. Free but by ticket only. See above for details.

THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS & COMMITTEE 2009-10

Officers

Chairman: John Tiernan (2012)

Administration Secretary: Jo McCann (P) (2010)

Treasurer/Acting Membership Secretary: Michael Brian (P) (2010)

Programme Secretary & Webmaster: Rob Ainsworth (P) (2010)

Committee

Sheila Binks (2012) Joyce Culling (2012) Netta Dixon (2010) Mary Harrison (2010) Brenda Murray (2010) Cynthia Stonall (2012) Marie McQuade (P) (2012)

N.B. (P) denotes membership of Publications Sub-Committee, and the year is when current term of office ends.

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The Liverpool History Society is registered as a charity – Number 1093736