



HISTORY SOCIETY

AUTUMN 2010

**Temporary archive service hit by delays**

Access to the vital local archive service, housed in the Central Library which closed for redevelopment in July, and which was due to be temporarily rehoused on a business park at Sandhills, has suffered a setback. Rumour has it that it could now be the New Year before it comes into operation.

Officially known as 'the temporary city satellite service', it will be based two miles north of the city centre in Unit 33, Wellington Employment Park South, Dunes Way (off Sandhills Lane - near Sandhills station). Access will be by appointment only between 9am and 5pm Tuesday to Saturday. A minimum of 24 hours notice is required; some archives may need longer notice.

Contact details for the Liverpool Record Office are:

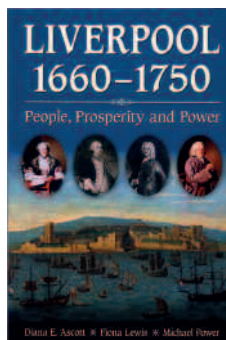
Tel: 0151 233 5817 / email: archives@liverpool.gov.uk

Another temporary service is already operating from the 2nd Floor, World Museum, William Brown Street between 10am and 5pm daily. Amongst other services, it offers family history and local studies sources on microfilm and microfiche including census returns, local newspapers, street directories, cemetery registers, parish and electoral registers, national birth, marriage and death indexes and national probate index volumes.

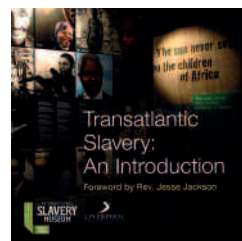


**Bookshelf** *Our friends at the Liverpool University Press have been busy of late and have published these four titles to add to their growing catalogue of local interest books:*

**Liverpool 1660–1750, People, Prosperity and Power** by Diana Ascot, Fiona Lewis and Michael Power. 244pp paperback. £16.99. ISBN 978-1-84631-503-9. This is a detailed academic study of how, from an insignificant mid-17th century town dependent on agriculture, fishing and limited trade with Ireland became, in less than 100 years, an important Atlantic port poised soon to overtake other major British ports. The book also provides an interesting insight into the lives and social structure of the people of Liverpool at a crucial stage in the town's transformation from a tiny medieval village into, eventually, the second most important port in the British Empire.



**Transatlantic Slavery: An Introduction** Published jointly by National Museums Liverpool and Liverpool University Press. 96pp paperback. £9.99. ISBN 978-1-84631-639-5.



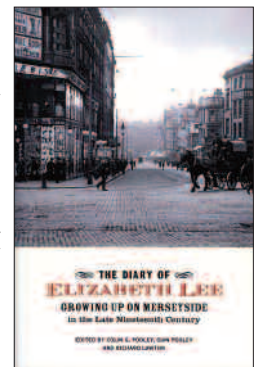
With a foreword by the Reverend Jesse Jackson, this lavishly illustrated book is, as its title indicates, basically an introduction to slavery and is no doubt aimed at a young readership. However, this is a very accessible book that should be read by people of all ages. Not surprisingly, with the International Slavery Museum being located in the city, the book is very much grounded in Liverpool – after all did not some 40% of the world's slave trade pass through Liverpool docks? A very worthwhile addition to your bookshelf.

**The Beat Goes On, Liverpool, Popular Music and the Changing City** Edited by Marion Leonard and Robert Strachan. 193pp paperback. £16.95. ISBN 978184631190-1.



Edited by two lecturers at Liverpool University's School of Music, this book is a collection of essays which expand on the research that went into National Museums Liverpool's exhibition *The Beat Goes On*, one of the highlights of the city's year as European Capital of Culture. As expected, there is a chapter, by Spencer Leigh, on the Beatles in the context of the city of their birth. Lita Roza was not only the first female to top the UK hit parade but was also the first Liverpoolian chart-topper. Fitting therefore that a chapter is devoted to female music makers. A fascinating look at the music-making talents of a city recognised by the Guinness Book of Records as the 'City of Pop'.

**The Diary of Elizabeth Lee, Growing up on Merseyside in the late 19th Century** Edited by Colin Pooley, Sian Pooley and Richard Lawton. 482pp hardback. £50.00. ISBN 978184631141-3.



Apart from the substantial introduction which sets the context for the diary, this book comprises the unbroken day by day diary entries of Elizabeth Lee between 1884 when she was 16 to 1892 when she was 25. The middle-class daughter of a draper and outfitter with shops in Birkenhead, Elizabeth lived with her family in Prenton, then a semi-rural suburb of Birkenhead. The diary of Elizabeth's busy life to-ing and fro-ing across the Mersey provides a unique and truly fascinating insight into the period when Merseyside was reaching the peak of its Victorian greatness. Contrast 16-year-olds today with Elizabeth. She delights at playing tick, being pushed on a swing and getting up to high jinks with her young brother... "Arthur and I had a sham fight in the dining room, before he went to school. He nearly pulled my ears off and I nearly pulled his off". Utterly charming!

18 April 2010 – Chris Dawson

## A JOURNEY THROUGH LANCASHIRE

Most of us were intrigued to hear how much the “real Lancashire” was altered on the 1st April 1974 when the Local Government Act created new counties for administrative purposes only, but stated that they were only administrative areas and that the boundaries of the traditional counties had not been altered. Nevertheless, since 1974 the Ordnance Survey has chosen to interpret the Act of 1841 to mean that they only have to show administrative areas on maps; this means that we tend to forget that the Furness area, Grange over Sands and Hawkshead in the North and Warrington and Widnes in the South were once traditional Lancashire areas. Chris reminded us that administrative boundaries are always changing and that some signs have been erected to show the traditional boundaries.

Then Chris took us on a tour of Lancashire to show us some of its many treasures. He started in Hale where we saw the small house where the famous ‘Giant of Hale’, who was 9ft 3inches tall, lived in the 17th Century. In the village of Sefton we saw the 16th C. Gothic Perpendicular Church with its traces of 12th C. architecture, its beautiful carved woodwork and the effigy of the Molyneux who went to the Crusades in 1270; in the Church we can find the Mock Corporation pew, a reminder of the business men who played bowls and had a meal in the ‘Punch Bowl’ the nearby pub before attending Church. Close by is the village of Little Crosby, where we saw the Priest’s House, once the home of Mr. Aldred who secretly administered Mass to the diarist Nicholas Blundell and his family in the early 18th C. In St. Luke’s Church, Formby, we saw an unusual stone about 3ft high, bearing the carved symbol of a cross, round which the coffin was carried three times before the burial itself took place. Another curiosity of SW Lancs is the Lathom Chapel with its almshouses built by Lord Stanley to commemorate the successful outcome of the Battle of Bosworth in 1485; nearby was Lathom Hall, now demolished, a Royalist stronghold which was stoutly defended in the Civil War during a siege by Charlotte Lady Derby. We moved to Rufford Old Hall, home of the Heskeths, with its 15th C. Great Hall where Shakespeare is said to have performed and then on to Carr House where Jeremiah Horrocks, curate of Much Hoole Church, observed the passage of Venus across the sun in 1639.

In the Ribble Valley we visited the small town of Ribchester, once a Roman fort, where a schoolboy found a Roman helmet which is now in the British Museum; we saw the Stydd almshouses built by the Shireburns of Stonyhurst for 5 old people. At Whalley Abbey we saw the 14th C. Gatehouse, and heard how Abbot Paslew was tried and executed for his part in the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace. The Church of St. Mary and All Saints in Whalley dates from the 13th C. and is older than the Abbey; its 14th C. choir stalls with their richly carved misericord seats were moved from the Abbey at the time of the Dissolution of the monasteries. Nearby is Stonyhurst the 16th C. home of the Shireburns which was offered to the Jesuits as a school in 1794; in its library are many treasures including a 7th C. copy of St. John’s Gospel and Mary Queen of Scots’ Book of Hours. In this area we saw the 12th C Clitheroe Castle where Prince Rupert lodged in the Civil War and the picturesque village of Downham where they shot the film *Whistle Down the Wind*. This area is dominated by Pendle Hill which is forever associated with the Witches who were tried and executed in Lancaster Castle in 1612; recent research suggests that they may have been muttering illegal Catholic oaths.

Our tour finished in Lancaster where we saw the Castle, its prison, Shire Hall and Criminal Court, and we saw the tapestries in the Priory Church; the final slide showed the imposing white Ashton Memorial in Williamson Park which is visible from miles around.

We were reminded the Queen is the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire and that every year on the 27th November a loyal toast is drunk to her to commemorate Lancaster Day when Edward I summoned elected members to Westminster. Hence the importance of Lancashire!

Meeting report: Netta Dixon

16 May 2010 – Dr Adrian Jarvis

## WHAT WAS THE LIVERPOOL & MANCHESTER RAILWAY REALLY FOR?

Adrian Jarvis, former curator of the Maritime Museum, Director of the Liverpool Mercantile Project at the University of Liverpool, and author of *Lion: the Story of the Oldest Working Locomotive in the World* explained to us that the railway was designed principally for freight transport but, in the early years, was mainly used to transport passengers.

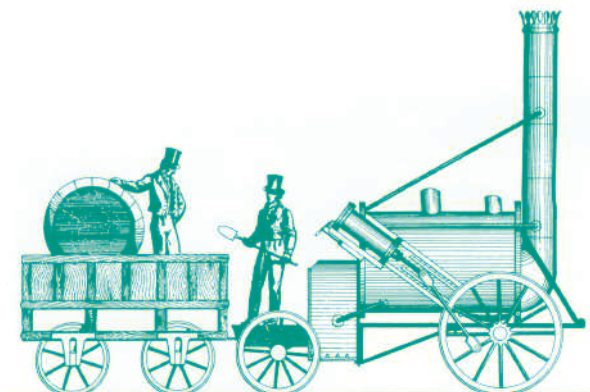
We often refer to the Liverpool & Manchester Railway as the first in the world, which is not quite true; however, it was the first to be steam hauled with a double track, junctions and signals and was part of a system. In other words, it was the first ‘proper’ railway.

The railway was urgently needed to replace the canal system which had coped very well in the 18th century with the growing trade in cotton, timber and corn, but was beginning to creak a bit in the early 19th century when trade was expanding rapidly. Road haulage was also inadequate. Many solutions were proposed including, in 1815, the Stockton to Darlington Railway but this was only a primitive horse drawn tram road, doing six miles an hour. It was then decided to improve the canal system, including the construction of the Duke’s Dock in Liverpool, the Runcorn Basin and the Irwell Navigation. William James, an accomplished surveyor who had been in a debtors’ prison three times, planned a new system. Then William Moss a banker and Joseph Saunders, who had a link with George and Robert Stephenson, presented a Bill to Parliament and in the process spent 12 days criticising the canal system! Saunders recommended a 10 mph engine for freight. The first Bill was defeated in Parliament, probably because of George Stephenson’s inadequate surveying skills. The second Bill, which mentioned the possibility of passengers, was passed probably because people said that land transport was too expensive.

The opening day, the 15th September 1830, was a bit of a shambles and, famously, William Huskisson was killed, becoming the world’s first railway fatality. Nevertheless, it was also a triumph as the technology was successful and worked according to plan.



The locos did not fail and there were 700 guests in 35 carriages carrying passengers at 24mph. Passenger receipts were estimated at £10,000 but in fact they were actually £101,000; it was estimated that there would be 11 trains a day each way. However, freight capacity was ignored at first, although this was the original objective of the railway. All the locos were designed with single driving axles and small wheels for passengers, not for freight or for hauling great weights. The "Rocket" was clearly named as a symbol of speed – it could travel at 30mph – to impress passengers rather than the haulage of heavy goods traffic.



However local merchants were paying for the railway; the Manchester industrialists contributed less than the Liverpool merchants - 'the Liverpool gentlemen', for whom appearances were important as well as speed and the movement of people and samples; it was necessary to receive samples in Manchester before a load of cotton arrived by sea at Liverpool. At this time tonnage on the canal remained about the same as that on the rail. However the railway could carry passengers at double the speed of the fastest stagecoach.

In 1899 the construction of an electric railway between Liverpool and Manchester to enable an estimated 4,000 passengers a day brokers to go to and fro at 110 miles an hour was proposed; it was planned to knock down the Bluecoat Chambers to make way for the railway line! This railway was never built as money was needed for the Boer War.

Adrian stressed that the Liverpool & Manchester Railway was essentially a passenger railway in the early years, and it took a long time for it to overtake the canals for freight haulage; then they ran freight trains at night. Initially the Liverpool & Manchester Railway was planned for freight transport but proved to be very successful in conveying passengers between Liverpool and Manchester before it eventually replaced the canal network for all purposes.

*Meeting report: Netta Dixon*

**20 June 2010 – John Tiernan**

## MRS GASKELL – LIVERPOOL, WIRRAL & THE HOLLAND FAMILY CONNECTION

John's talk described Elizabeth Gaskell's Merseyside kinsmen, the Hollands, a merchant family who played an important role in 18th & 19th C Liverpool.

Elizabeth Gaskell, the eminent novelist, was born in Knutsford in 1810; her mother was Elizabeth Holland and her sister-in-law, another Elizabeth Gaskell, married a Holland; like the Hollands Elizabeth Gaskell was a Unitarian married to a Unitarian minister in Manchester. In her novel *Mary Barton* she gave a realistic picture of Liverpool.

At this time Liverpool was enjoying a period of expansion and prosperity. Before 1699, when it became a parish, it had been a small port which was gradually acquiring more trade thanks to the decline of Chester as a port and the silting up of the River Dee. Liverpool grew rapidly in the 18th century from a population of 5,145 in 1700 to 34,407 in 1773 when it was bigger than Manchester, Norwich and Birmingham. This development continued into the 19th century; there were already 12 docks when the Albert Dock was opened in 1845. William Enfield's *History of Liverpool 1773*, describes how, as well as many being involved in the slave trade, Liverpool merchants were also engaged in porcelain, watch making, roperies, ironworks, brewing and other trades.

The Holland family originated in Upholland in the late 13th century. In the 18th century and early 19th century, Elizabeth Gaskell's relatives Samuel (1768-1851) and Charles Holland (1799-1870) were Liverpool merchants. Samuel acquired the Herculaneum Pottery (on the site of a copper works) in 1794 and produced green-tinted pottery with his business associates Humble, Hurry and Worthington; they were also involved in shipbuilding and slate, lead and copper mining. Samuel and his associates were among the 500 founder members of the learned Athenaeum Club in 1897. Samuel moved from 5 York Street, off Duke Street, to Wellington Road, Toxteth Park, on the fringes of Liverpool, before retiring to Merionethshire. His son Charles, who had married Elizabeth Gaskell's sister-in law, had been involved in swashbuckling adventures in the Mediterranean and South America and was described as a merchant in the 1829 Gore's Directory. Like many businessmen of his day, Charles moved out of the centre of the town first to the outer suburbs, and then in 1847 to Liscard Vale on the east shore of the Wirral Peninsula; the family with nine children moved into Vale House which Mrs. Gaskell mentioned in a letter to her daughter. Charles filled the grounds with trees and shrubs; his wife was well known locally for her readings. The steam ferry boat in 1820 made commuting easier between Wirral and Liverpool; then in 1840 Laird's shipbuilding and boiler making contributed to the increasing prosperity of Birkenhead which only had a population of 110 in 1800. Charles Holland died in Rome in 1870. From his obituaries we learn that he was a reputable businessman who took an interest in the condition of the town and its inhabitants. Although he was defeated in an election to the Town Council as a Liberal, he chaired the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, joined the Liverpool Finance Reform Association and promoted public measures such as railways. He held views in advance of his day on free trade and taxation and supported the repeal of the Corn Laws. On his death, his estate was worth £200,000 (£10 million today). Some Holland family members are buried with other Unitarians in the grounds of the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth.

John gave us an interesting insight into the lives of Elizabeth Gaskell's relatives, the Hollands. Like her, they were Unitarians and were aware of social problems. We do not know, however, if they supported William Roscoe and other Unitarians in their campaign against the slave trade, although it is likely that they were abolitionists. However, in addition to this important but relatively unknown family, we also learned a lot about the lives of Liverpool merchants at this time.

*Meeting report: Netta Dixon*

## THE ANCIENT MAGHULL CHAPEL

Eileen is the devoted Treasurer of the Chapel and she treated us to a fascinating, beautifully illustrated history of the chapel. No one knows its age, but possibly, there was a wooden building there before the stone Chapel was built during the 13th. Century. Maghull is mentioned in The Domesday Book, but the name was spelt differently, possibly Magele. Ancient documents show many different spellings, from Maghalepul to Male between 1086 and 1615. It was part of the Archdiocese of Lichfield.

The Chapel was probably built as a chapel-of-ease for the parish of Halsall. Burials would have been at Halsall, and there were three Crosses en route where mourners could rest with their coffins. The earliest known record of the Chapel is dated 1367, when Thomas de Maghull stated that “He dare not go to church or visit anyone in the town without protection”, following an attack on him with bow and arrow by John the Mercer and others. In 1411 Lawrence Hulme was baptised in the Chapel. The first known priest of the Chapel was John de Maghull, recorded as ‘capellanus de Mayle’ in 1461.

Latin Mass would have been celebrated there until replaced by the First Prayer Book of King Edward VI in 1549. The subsequent years would see the religious changes under Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth and records were kept of recusant families such as the Lord of the Manor, Edward and Ellen Hulme. In 1550 Lancashire was separated from Lichfield and in that same year the Chapel was valued at 30 shillings. From 1590 to 1609 there was no preacher at Maghull, but about 1610 the Curate of the chapel-of-ease at Melling, Richard Vaudrey, was known as the curate of Melling and Maghull.

At the time of the Commonwealth Presbyterianism prevailed and one minister, William Aspinall, was described as “a painful and godly minister”. Later records reveal church expenditure; in 1704 the Church Bible was bought; a Book of Homilies, 12s.6d and a book in which baptisms and marriages were recorded, 4s.6d. (22.5p) were bought in 1729 from Thomas Grice of Ormskirk, and in 1711 a gallery was built costing £3.5s.0d. In 1753 the roof was re-slatted for £7.0.0, and dog whippers were paid 1s in 1729. In the marriage register there is a record of the marriage of William Martin and Mary Hesketh “in the parochial Chapel of St. Andrew’s Maghull”, the first use of the saint’s name in connection with the chapel. Money was spent on celebrating the ‘gunpowder plot’ for many years, in 1704, 1 shilling; in 1730, 11s; and in 1815, £4.16.6.

During the 19th century the population of Maghull grew and it was made a parish in 1869. The new vicar raised funds for a new building, which was consecrated in 1880. The next year it was proposed that the old chapel should be demolished but after much argument it was decided to keep the Chancel and the Unsworth Chapel, and this is what remains today.

Eileen showed us pictures of the ancient stones and artifacts which remain in the Old Chapel and told us some of their history. One interesting memorial is to Frank Hornby, M.P., the inventor of Meccano, Hornby Trains, and Dinky toys. She revealed that the chapel had gradually come to be used as a store room and allowed to fall into disrepair until the present Friends of Maghull Chapel ([www.ancientchapelmaghull.co.uk](http://www.ancientchapelmaghull.co.uk)) took it in hand. Recently they raised £20k for repairs and the roof has only just been replaced.

*Meeting report: Mary Harrison*

## LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY – 2010 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

|        |  |              |
|--------|--|--------------|
| 21 Nov | ‘Modernise Everything’: Thomas Shelmerdine,<br>Liverpool Architect (Joint LHS/Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire meeting) | John Tiernan |
| 19 Dec | Curiosities of Liverpool   | Ken Pye      |

*Both meetings will take place in the Grace Room, 1st Floor, Hope at Everton, Shaw Street, Liverpool. This is the former St. Francis Xavier College building. Meetings start at 2pm (doors open 1.30pm).*

### THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS



**Liverpool  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

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Chairman: John Tiernan (2012)  
Administration Secretary: Fred Forrest (2012)  
Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Michael Brian (2010)  
Programme Secretary: Brenda Murray (2010)  
Webmaster: Rob Ainsworth (P) (2010)

#### Committee

Sheila Binks (2012) Joyce Culling (2012)  
Netta Dixon (2010) Betty Gamble (2012)  
Mary Harrison (2010) Ron Jones (2012)  
Brenda Murray (2010) Cynthia Stonall (Librarian) (2012)

*N.B. ( ) denotes end of current term of office.*

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LHS Questions Blog –

<http://liverpoolhistorysocietyquestions.blogspot.com>

LHS Requests –

<http://liverpoolhistorysocietyrequests.blogspot.com>

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