



HISTORY SOCIETY

SUMMER / AUTUMN 2012

Robert Ainsworth – "Heritage Warrior" 1955 – 2012



Rob was born and brought up in the Dingle, one of six siblings. He attended Matthew Arnold Primary and Dingle Vale Secondary Modern, becoming Head Boy in his final year. Whilst at school he saved up

his newspaper delivery round wages for several weeks to buy the seminal book – "Seaport: Architecture & Townscape in Liverpool" by Quentin Hughes which awakened his latent interest in history, architecture and Liverpool's heritage.

In 1972 he started his Electrical Technician apprenticeship with Liverpool City Council; after qualifying he continued to work for LCC until 1993 when he branched out into contract work. In 1998 his career took a new direction – in training and employment with the Civil Service where he eventually became an Executive Officer. In 2007 he took early retirement due to physical health issues.

Rob enjoyed academic life but, amongst other things, he qualified as a Yacht Master and, between 1998 and 2001, attended Liverpool John Moores University where he attained an HND in Marine Operations.

In the early 1990s he 'rescued' Galkoff's, a derelict kosher butcher's shop threatened with demolition. Established in 1907 in Pembroke Place, Galkoff's served the

Jewish community at home and even abroad – its products were preserved for shipment. Rob helped in getting it Grade II Listed status in 2007. The constant challenge with various authorities to protect it was not achieved without personal sacrifice to his health and Galkoff's future is still to be secured. It was during this period that he was introduced to the Athenaeum, subsequently becoming a 'Proprietor', of which he felt truly honoured. Rob also helped set up the Liverpool Cultural Heritage Forum, supporting the principles of conservation and recognition of Liverpool's culture.

Rob was involved with other heritage campaigns and societies, gaining recognition throughout the city for his efforts. He was constantly reading up on conservation principles and cases presented in English Law and became a formidable champion of just causes, researching similar case studies that he felt had resonance before presenting his defence to various official bodies and winning through each time.

As well as Galkoff's, he helped the Liverpool Carters Association in fundraising and obtaining grant aid to erect the carthorse statue 'Waiting', located outside the Museum of Liverpool. He helped preserve the ancient wall surrounding St James' church in Upper Parliament Street and was instrumental in preventing the demolition of St John the Divine church in Holly Road, Fairfield. Rob

brought into focus the need for the restoration of Deane Road Jewish Cemetery and more recently concentrated his efforts in trying to prevent the desecration of graves now under threat from modern development at All Saints Parish Church, Childwall. He was also the resident historian on the Simon O'Brien Saturday morning show on Citytalk Radio.

Rob made a truly miraculous recovery from a series of operations towards the end of last year but, sadly, following further major vascular surgery towards the end of July, it was discovered that vascular repair was no longer an option. He passed away on the 4th August surrounded by those he held dear. His funeral took place on the 16th August at the Anglican Cathedral and was attended by a large number of people including staff from the Royal Liverpool Hospital. A "Robert Ainsworth Memorial Fund" has been set up and will be used to present an annual award in the field of heritage conservation and to support projects that were close to his heart.

The Liverpool History Society is very proud of Rob's many achievements and grateful for the pivotal roles he held within its organisation, including Programme Secretary and Treasurer. As the Society's Webmaster, he developed a much-visited, award-winning website which continues to aid historical research and debate.

Cynthia Stonall, Hon. Librarian, Liverpool History Society, and friend.

Sandhills archive to close on 3rd November

Excellent progress continues to be made on the Central Library & Archive Redevelopment. Extensive and detailed restoration and conservation works have almost been completed on the historic fabric inside and out and very good progress is being made with the new building, which is now at the internal fitting-out stage. It is hoped that the contractors will hand over the building towards the end of this year.

In the meantime the Sandhills temporary archive will close on 3rd November to enable staff to get everything ready for the opening of the new Central Library & Archive scheduled for Spring 2013. The library's microfilm and computer facility currently at the World Museum Liverpool is likely to continue to around next February.

Victorian Society Exhibition

A photographic exhibition celebrating the work of the Victorian Society nationally will be staged between 1st and 31st October at the Art & Design Academy of Liverpool John Moores University, Duckinfield Street (off Mount Pleasant). Admission free. Opening hours are Mon-Fri 8am – 6pm. Café hours are 9am – 4pm.

Correction

Our report in the last Newsletter of the talk given by Kay Parrott on the Liverpool Workhouse Project contained an error. It stated that Queen Mary II survived a smallpox attack. She didn't, she succumbed.

15 April 2012 – Ray Hulley

JOHN HULLEY: FOUNDER OF THE BRITISH OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

Meeting report:
Netta Dixon

John introduced Ray Hulley, a family historian who has researched John Hulley's family for 30 years. John Hulley is the forgotten man of the Olympic movement, which started in Liverpool and where six Olympic festivals were organised by him in the 1860s. Liverpool can thus claim the strongest links in the UK to the modern Olympic games.

John Hulley was born in Liverpool in Gloucester Street (formerly at the top of Copperas Hill) on 19th February 1832. Hulley's father was a surgeon born in Frodsham where his uncle James Ridley was a chemist and druggist. His grandfather Thomas Boydeley Hulley was also a surgeon, as was his great grandfather who in 1750 was a surgeon in Macclesfield where the family had lived in the same house since the 15th C. Between 1844 and 1850 John Hulley had studied at the Liverpool Collegiate, Shaw Street. In both the 1851 and 1861 census he is recorded as living with an uncle at Huyton.

Hulley called himself a Liverpool 'Gymnasiarch' and studied with Louis Huguenin, a famous Swiss gymnast who had settled in Liverpool as a teacher of gymnastics. In 1861 Hulley organised an *Assault-at-Arms* display at the Theatre Royal, Williamson Square. In 1862 he was director of the Rotunda Gymnasium in Bold Street in partnership with Samuel Wylde Ackerley, but only for 18 months as the partnership was dissolved by Ackerley. However, thanks to the efforts of the philanthropist Charles P. Melly, Hulley was again involved in the physical education arena. With Melly as prime mover, Joseph Mayer as President and other eminent businessmen, a company was formed to purchase premises suitable for a gymnasium. The management of the Liverpool Athletic Club (motto: *Mens Sana in Corpore Sano* – 'A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body') was placed in the hands of Hulley.

Hulley organised the 1st Grand Olympic Festival, held on 14th June 1862 at the Mount Vernon Parade Ground when 10,000 spectators turned up to watch the track, road and field events, disc throwing, wrestling and fencing. A 2nd Olympic Festival was held at Mount Vernon on 13th June 1863 and a 3rd on July 2nd 1864 at the Zoological Gardens. A 4th Olympic Festival was held at Llandudno on Saturday 22nd July and Monday 24th July 1865.

The 5th Olympic Festival was again at Llandudno on the 25th and 26th June 1866; the 6th Olympic Festival was held in 1867 at Myrtle Street and Sheil Park on the 28th and 29th June respectively; there was a ladies-only display of gymnastics in December 1867.



The new Liverpool Gymnasium in Myrtle Street, pictured left, was opened by Lord Stanley in 1865 who remarked – "I congratulate the managers upon having in Mr Hulley, a director who is working out a very real and enthusiastic interest in the business which he is employed to do." On that same day, Hulley chaired the very first meeting in Liverpool of the National Olympian Association; this meeting was the forerunner of the modern British Olympic Association, and was formed by the efforts of John Hulley, Dr. William Penny Brooks of Much Wenlock and Ernst Ravenstein of the German Gymnastics Association in London. The first National Olympian Games were held on the Thames at Teddington on the 31st July 1866.

In 1867 Hulley wrote *A Handbook of Gymnastics and Athletics*. Two years later he introduced to Liverpool the very first 'velocipede' (a 'Penny Farthing' bicycle), specially shipped in from Paris, and organised a Velocipede Club at the Liverpool Gymnasium. Later that same year, on 15th

July, Hulley married Georgiana Bolton, daughter of a wealthy Liverpool merchant. Her family were against the marriage and, in a bid to stop it going ahead, locked her in her bedroom. She escaped and the next day married Hulley in the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth in Park Road. In the 1871 census he is with his wife and new daughter, also named Georgiana, at 91 Grove Street, but little is known about him from then until he died of emphysema and a lung complaint at the age of 42 at that address on 6th January 1875. He was buried in Smithdown Road Cemetery where Ray Hulley found the grave in 2008. He set up a memorial fund and received generous donations from the International and British Olympic Committees, enabling the white Italian marble grave to be refurbished and dedicated in 2009. Future plans include the creation of a lasting sporting memorial to John Hulley and to have his achievements listed in the National Dictionary of Biography. A website has been created at www.johnhulley-olympics.co.uk.

During Question Time, Brenda Murray told us more about Charles Pierre Melly, the philanthropist (and ancestor of musician and entertainer George Melly) who installed 52 drinking fountains in Liverpool. He had worked with children as early as 1852 and set up a second gymnasium in Wavertree Park. Melly became President, and Hulley Secretary, of the Olympic Association.

20 May 2012 – Gervais Stringer

LIVERPOOL AND TITANIC

Meeting report:
Mary Harrison

Our talk on the sinking of the White Star *Titanic* was given by Gervais Stringer, a retired lecturer who has been interested in ships and shipping for many years. He started by saying that as we have all "read the books and seen the films" he would not take us through the event of the sinking, but tell us the story of the ship from its beginning. He then expounded his very personal, and original, theory about why *Titanic* sank, and challenged us to weigh up his evidence and reach our own verdicts.

He is strongly of the opinion that the accident was the result of certain people's obsession with greed and speed. He introduced us to a ruthless American entrepreneur, John Pierpoint Morgan who, having gained monopoly control of railroads in America through price cutting and take-overs, had set his sights on control of the North Atlantic shipping companies carrying emigrants to America. J. Bruce Ismay, the owner of the Liverpool shipping company, White Star Line, was pressured into joining Morgan's International Mercantile Marine (IMM). Morgan tried to bring the Cunard Line into the cartel, but the British Government, intent on having strong, fast ships in case of war, stepped in with grants which scuppered his plans. White Star, as part of IMM, then decided to settle for luxury liners, but planned to keep prices low to fill the ships.

Gervais thought that they cut corners in the trials. They appointed a Captain he believed was not fully competent to command the

huge ship, and they probably always intended to attempt a very fast, first voyage, in competition with the Cunard liners. They apparently ignored warnings of icebergs ahead and there are conflicting eye-witness reports of the sinking from the Leyland Line ship, *Californian*, whose lookout thought the distress rockets were part of a firework display. Gervais is quite determined that "The iceberg did not sink *Titanic*", that she was travelling very fast, unnecessarily, and there seemed to have been errors in navigation which may have caused pressure which opened the ship's plates. He thinks that *Titanic* was "the ship that sank itself".

There was an Enquiry, but Gervais condemns it as a cover up – none of the witnesses were allowed to give clear evidence. The Government did not want White Star to go out of business. No compensation was paid.

Gervais finished by asking: "What do you think?"

17 June 2012 – Visit

ULLET ROAD UNITARIAN CHURCH

Meeting report:
Netta Dixon



There was a good attendance for our summer outing to Ullet Road Unitarian Church, where we were welcomed by Annette Butler a member both of the church and LHS. Annette gave us a guided tour of this Grade I Listed church which was built for the congregation of the Renshaw Street Chapel in 1899, the Hall and Cloisters being added later in 1902. The church, library, cloisters and hall are all Grade I Listed buildings. The architects, Thomas Worthington and Sons of Manchester, chose an elaborate Gothic Revival style for the church, while the cloisters and hall combine elements of Art Nouveau and medieval design. Money was no object, as the wealthy patrons of the church, the Rathbone, Holt, Brunner and Tate families, wanted to impress with a splendid chapel, unlike many plain Dissenter Meeting Houses.

Annette told us that the exteriors of the buildings are in red pressed Ruabon brick with Runcorn red sandstone dressings; the buildings are grouped round three sides of a central garden, giving a collegiate feel. In the gable niche above the entrance, there is a statue of Christ by Thorwaldsen. Three magnificent doors of beaten copper by Richard Llewellyn Rathbone lead into a spacious lobby. The inside of

the church is very impressive in ashlar (paid for by Mrs. Holt) with a long nave full of wooden pews, aisles and a separate chancel, where we saw a wooden reredos, carved by H.H. Martyn of Cheltenham, the central panel being a representation of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper. There is also a Communion table, as the first Minister Louis Leopold Klein was formerly a Catholic priest. On each side of the chancel are choir stalls with finely carved motifs and above the south choir stall is a magnificent wooden canopy designed by Charles John Allen, a famous sculptor at Liverpool's School of Applied Art. In the church we were very impressed by the Burne-Jones/William Morris-style stained glass windows and three lighter windows, commissioned later, one to Emma Holt and another to Sir Sydney Jones. The beautiful rose window at the rear of the church and the chancel window are original to the design of the building. Mrs George Holt commissioned a movable font in 1906. The light fittings in the church are in the Arts and Crafts style.

We then went through the vestry to the library to admire the elaborate *Allegory of the Triumph* painted on the barrel-vaulted ceiling and murals of great philosophers, writers, scientists, artists, etc., commissioned by Sir John Brunner MP and executed by Gerald Moira.

In the adjoining cloisters there is a monument from the Renshaw Street Chapel of William Roscoe, the poet, philanthropist, botanist, banker and slave trade abolitionist; there are also memorials to some of Roscoe's children, George Melly's aunt Mary Eveline Melly, William Rathbone, Charles Holland, a relation of Elizabeth Gaskell, and other famous Unitarians.

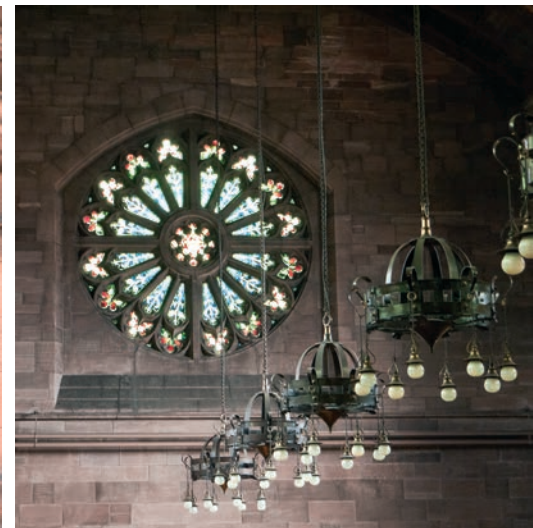
Annette told us a little about the Unitarians. The Ullet Road Congregation traces its origins to a gathering of Presbyterians worshipping in a Meeting House in Castle Hey (now Harrington Street) in the early 18th C; from there, the congregation moved in 1727 to a new chapel in Benn's Gardens; in 1811 they moved to the Renshaw Street Chapel, by which time they were Unitarians, rejecting the Trinity and believing that God is One and Jesus a prophet to be followed. After 1828, Unitarians were allowed to join in the civic life of the country: William Rathbone in 1837-8 and Robert Dunning Holt in 1892-3 were Mayors of Liverpool. In 1929, Sir Sydney Jones was appointed High Sheriff of Lancaster and his chaplain the Rev. Lawrence Redfern preached in the Anglican Cathedral in 1931.

Annette told us that unfortunately today there is only a very small congregation and no millionaires among its members, so the church has to rely on the Heritage Lottery Fund for repairs to its Listed buildings.

We then went into the church hall for tea and biscuits. The hall is built in a medieval style with its steep, sloping Tudor ceiling; the fireplace and inglenook are in Jacobean style with coats-of-arms of the donors.

Information from: Annette Butler, Len Mooney's *A Guide to the Church*, and Pevsner's *Architectural Guide of Liverpool* by Joseph Sharples.

Top: Chancel; Right: Copper main entrance doors; Far right: Rose window and Arts and Crafts lights. Photographs: ©Ron Jones.



LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY – 2012 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

21 October	Liverpool and the American Civil War	Dr Tom Sebrell
18 November	Chinese People in the Blitz	Francesca Aiken
16 December	The Unique Overhead Railway	Michael Murphy

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

Bookshelf *Reviews in brief*

The Killing of Julia Wallace. Liverpool's most enigmatic and brutal murder finally solved. John Gannon, 2012. Amberley Publishing, Stroud. 216 pages, 47 b&w photos, maps, documents, diagrams etc. Paperback. ISBN 978 1 4456 0506 7. £16.99. Well, did he do it? Another book about this internationally infamous murder, but this time one that has the benefit of all the extant police documents. The writer uses all the evidence to suggest that there was a conspiracy between Wallace and two others to murder Julia, but will it convince you? In our C.S.I. age, readers will be appalled at how the police mistreated the crime scene and apparently did not follow up alibi evidence thoroughly. The possibility of police corruption is also mooted in some detail. The book has a few weaknesses, a minor one being that the 47 centrally placed and well-chosen illustrations are not directly referred to in the text, although easily followed by the careful reader. The main weakness, however, is that the author has a strong predilection for detailing the family trees of many characters, both major and minor, which might prevent some readers from 'seeing the wood for the trees' in parts. Personally, I enjoyed this genealogy. For the local reader, however, the book has the unintended by-product of presenting an interesting and atmospheric socio-economic picture of some of the Liverpool suburbs in the early 1930s, right down to the trams and the domestic gas lighting. Will you, however, be more or less convinced about Wallace's innocence or guilt after reading it? Perhaps expensive but well worth a read.

(Fred Forrest)

Liverpool Docks Through Time. Ian Collard, Amberley Publishing 2011 ISBN 978-1-4456-0414-5. 96 pages; paperback £14.99

The Liverpool dock system provides the most vivid visual evidence of the decline of the port as a centre for handling general cargo. In 1874, nearly 20,000 ships carried

just less than seven million tons of cargo, across over 30 docks. Ironically, by 1984, nine million tonnes of cargo was carried on far fewer ships and concentrated in the Seaforth Container Terminal.

This transformation in the use of the Liverpool docks is visually captured by Ian Collard in this book. In his introduction, he charts the history of the port from King John to the impending upgrade of the Seaforth Container Terminal. The rest of the book is devoted to a photographic comparison (two to a page) of each of the major docks in their heyday and how they look now. The bulk of the historical shots are taken from the 1960's and the author devotes most of the captions to the history of the ships that appear in them. Although this work purports to chart 'the early years through the massive expansion of the nineteenth century', its photographic account is in geographic rather than historical sequence, beginning with the Gladstone Dock in the north (why not Seaforth?), to the Herculaneum Dock in the south.

As a visual record of cargo ships of the sixties in vibrant docks that are now largely redundant, this book makes a valid point. It is more difficult to establish what else the author is trying to say. The images capture a particular phase of dock use and not its broader history. The photographs are undated and are not organised in chapters. There are other limitations. The development of the dock system; the concentration of specific shipping lines to particular docks; the geographic zoning of certain types of cargo; the sequencing of dock images in chronological sequence; these aspects would have made the subject much more intelligible to the general reader.

(Tony Melling)

Finding Margaret: The Elusive Margaret Bernardine Hall. John Hussey, 2011. Countyvise Ltd ISBN 978 1 906823 55 9. 127 pages; paperback £12.50.

The life and art of Margaret Bernardine Hall fully deserves a specialised study in its own right. Born in Wavertree in 1863 as the eldest daughter to a successful Liverpool merchant,

politician and philanthropist, Bernard Hall and his wife Margaret Calrow, Margaret was educated at home and determined to become a successful painter. When the family moved to London in 1882, she travelled to Paris to study art for five years, when Impressionism was active, but opportunities for female artists were slim. Despite this, Margaret exhibited *Les Abandonnées* in 1885 and *Fantine*, her most famous work, in 1886. The tragic death in Paris of her sister and artistic companion, Florence, in 1887, was commemorated by her father in the opening of the Florence Institute in 1889. After travelling widely, Margaret settled at the home of London playwright George Calderon and his wife and died there at the premature age of 47, in 1910.



Regular visitors to the Walker Art Gallery will be familiar with the magical aura of *Fantine*, hung near the entrance and inspired by the tragic heroine in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. The subject stares despairingly out of the canvas and bears a close resemblance to the artist herself. John Hussey deserves credit for focusing light on the forgotten enigma of Margaret Bernardine Hall.

The life whose talent is revealed in *Fantine* has been sadly buried by the absence of documentation, correspondence, or personal memoirs. Whilst this account tries to place Margaret in her social, artistic and domestic context, it has its limitations. Far too much is spent on buildings, biographies, and works of art which have only a peripheral relevance to Hall's life. The book lacks a coherent structure, almost immersing the heroine in other topics and fragmenting the narrative thread as a result. It would also repay a rigorous proof-read, to pare down the complex prose and address flaws in punctuation.

(Tony Melling)



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