

LIVERPOOL

NEWSLETTER No 7



SUMMER 2003

Reg Charity

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HISTORY SOCIETY

Editorial

As your Editor attempts to assemble the material for this seventh Newsletter, many of Liverpool's residents and friends are still enjoying the euphoria of the City's having been chosen as European Capital of Culture, 2008, and those who were present will remember how we drank a toast to its success after the Society's June meeting.

While it is easy to understand the disappointment felt in the other contending locations, it is less easy to comprehend why, sadly, there are, even within Merseyside, some sceptics who question why this prestigious title should have come to us. They cite any number of reasons why they think it should not, and, amidst our joy, we might do well to consider why this should be.

It may stem from a restricted or outdated view of what culture is. Within the memory of most of our membership, "culture" would have meant "the training, development, and refinement of mind, tastes, and manners" (OED) or, as cynics might have put it 'those aspects of the Arts that the so-called Upper Classes were believed to appreciate and which the more well meaning among them sought to introduce to their inferiors, in order to improve them.'

Here in Liverpool, we are indeed fortunate to have some of the best libraries, museums and galleries in the country, partly thanks to the actions of past citizens. While their motives or the source of their wealth may not always now be considered politically or ethically acceptable, the quality of much of what they gave us is of the highest, and is to be treasured. These past benefactions, however, represent only a small segment of the whole. More recent visual acquisitions, of a very different style, now grace our city and enrich the lives of others. While perhaps not always to our own personal taste, we should not decry nor despise them.

Similarly with music or the theatre. We have, and value greatly, the music of the Phil, our two Cathedrals, and opera and ballet at the Empire and elsewhere, but we must remember that is not all there is. Even the Beatles, who started as part of the youth culture of the 1960s, began in a small way, but who needs to be reminded of their contribution to Liverpool's fame? Others today, no doubt, are doing, trying to do, or will do likewise.

Thanks to social scientists, anthropologists etc, the meaning of the term "culture" has, in recent years, developed well beyond that given above, and now seems to embrace almost the whole way of life. It is even claimed by some that "fly-posting" is part of our modern culture, but it is suggested that this, and the ubiquitous litter (even though we accept that ours is a windy riverside city) does much to diminish Liverpool's outward appearance.

Liverpool rightly claims to be "the world in one city", and over the past two years, the LHS has enjoyed talks from members of several of the different groups that constitute that city's rich mixture, and we plan to continue to do so. Each group, be it racial, religious or otherwise, has its own culture, and rightly treasures it, and while none would wish to lose, dilute or compromise their own, by sympathetically learning about the culture of others, and, metaphorically, "walking a mile in their shoes", we can hopefully grow in mutual understanding, and reduce the risk of any recurrence of the wounding confrontations that have, from time to time, marred our past history.

It is in this spirit, perhaps, that the title **European Capital of Culture 2008** is to be welcomed.

On the subject of titles, some of you may have recently read that Liverpool's Waterfront & Commercial Centre were to be the UK Government's sole 2003 nomination as a **World Heritage Site**, and then become confused when you later heard on the News that London's magnificent Kew Gardens had apparently been named instead.

A request to the Dept of Culture, Media & Sport for clarification elicited this encouraging reply:

The UK Government is currently allowed to put forward one nomination for World Heritage Site status per year. The process of becoming a WH site takes approx 18 months. The UK put forward Kew Gardens as the 2002 nomination and as you have heard was considered by the WH Committee last week in Paris and inscribed onto the World Heritage List.

Liverpool Commercial Centre and Waterfront was the Government's 2003 nomination and will be considered by the WH Committee next year for inscription onto the WH List.

For further information, please have a look at the DCMS website. (www.culture.gov.uk).

So it appears that yet another well deserved feather for Liverpool's already bristling cap is on its way, after all!

REPORT OF 2nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, HELD ON 18th MAY 2003

Forty people attended, with apologies received from Jo McCann, Veronica Gibson and Mike Kelly

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman, Frank Boyce, thanked members for attending and the Committee for all their work for the Society. He said that he was stepping down as Chairman and was proud to have been associated with the Society since its inception. Meetings had been well attended, the newsletter well produced and well received, and the publication of Journal 2002 had been very successful, with good reviews and the need for a reprint. Journals and newsletters had been exchanged with some other Local History Societies and with donated books these now formed the basis of the Society's Library. The Lancashire Local History Federation had invited the LHS to host the LLHF Annual "At Home" in 2004, and the committee were already planning this.

A Vote of Thanks to Frank Boyce for the Report and his time as chairman, proposed by Cynthia Stonall, and seconded by Neville King, was agreed unanimously.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

In the absence of Jo McCann, Admin Secretary, the Chairman reviewed the variety of talks presented during the past year and thanked her for arranging the meetings. Next year's programme would continue with the chronological exploration of Liverpool history.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Joyce Culling reported that the Annual Accounts for 2002-2003, examined and certified by Brian Coughlan were, at that very moment, being brought to the Meeting by Mike Brian for inspection by members.

Copies of a Summary of the Provisional Accounts had been circulated to members in Newsletter No 6, and these showed a healthy Bank Balance of £1874.50 on 31st March and Cash in Hand of £32.51. While the biggest outlay had been in printing costs, those for the journal had been more than recouped by sales. The increase in Subscription Expenditure was accounted for by cost of Public Liability Insurance included in membership of British Association for Local History for two calendar years. It was noted that the Accounts presented last year had covered the seventeen months November 2000 to March 2002.

Mr Coughlan confirmed that the figures given in the published Summary of the Provisional Accounts, tallied exactly with those certified by him, and that they should now be regarded as Final. This being the case, it was proposed by Frank Boyce, and seconded by Brenda Murray that the Treasurer's Report and the Accounts to which it related be formally adopted by the Meeting. This was carried, *nem con*. [At the end of the lecture that followed the AGM, the Certified Accounts were laid before the meeting for inspection by members].

Thanks were given to Joyce Culling for her two year's work as Treasurer, and to Brian Coughlan for his examination of the 2002/03 accounts, and for his agreement to continue as Examiner for a further year.

JOURNAL REPORT

Neville King reported that all members had received Journal 2002 and an additional 270 copies had been sold, making some £250 profit overall.

He thanked all those who had contributed to the production and publication of the multi-coloured covered Journal 2003, copies of which were now ready for distribution to members.

The Chairman thanked Mr King for his report and his hard work in producing the Journals for 2002 & 2003.

LIBRARY

Cynthia Stonall said she had volunteered to be responsible for the various books and journals acquired by the Society, and while it remained practical, these would be brought to meetings for members to borrow. A list of the various titles held, updated as necessary, would be available.

The Committee had agreed that only paid-up members would be allowed to borrow items. It was suggested that Liverpool Central Library should be given a list of holdings in view of donated books.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

As Frank Boyce was resigning both as chairman and as a committee member, a new chairman had to be elected. John Tiernan had been nominated by the committee and had agreed to stand for election. There being no other nominations for the office, it was proposed, *in absentia*, by Jo McCann, and seconded by Brenda Murray, that John Tiernan be elected chairman, and this was agreed, *nem con*.

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Our Autumn Programme

28th September

NB Change of Date



James Irving & the Liverpool Slave Trade Dr Suzanne Schwarz

Whatever their individual feelings and beliefs about Liverpool's involvement in the Slave trade, no thinking person living on Merseyside can fail to recognise the part it played in the town's development. Knowledge about those who took part in it is relatively limited as few personal accounts seem to have survived. One that has is that of James Irving, and Dr Suzanne Schwarz, of Liverpool Hope UC, and current President of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire will explain something of its importance to students of this controversial but important subject.

Our illustration shows a modern Wedgwood reproduction of an 18th century anti-slavery protest piece, with the rim-inscription "Am I not a Man and a Brother?"

19th October

Liverpool Castle

**Sarah-Jane Farr,
Merseyside Field Archeological Service**

Replaced by St George's Church (itself later demolished) and then by Queen Victoria's Memorial and the Crown Courts, Liverpool's Castle once stood guardian over the Pool whence our City's prosperity began.

Nothing now remains to be seen, and images of how it looked, such as that alongside, and the so-called scaled down replica at Rivington, are probably largely conjectural. Research however continues, and our speaker will describe current work in connection with this important but almost forgotten piece of our history.



16th November

William Gawin Herdman

Colin Simpson

Although the bi-centenary of his birth is still some months away, it seems appropriate that we should in the meantime learn something of life and work of the locally born artist **William Gawin Herdman, 1805-1882.**



His characteristic paintings and drawings provide some idea of what Liverpool looked like before Hitler's bombs, shameful neglect and the developers' bulldozers changed, and continue to change, much of our "Cityscape" beyond all recognition, and have made him an invaluable asset to local historians. Part of his drawing of the Bluecoat School, later bombed but thankfully restored, is shown here.

However, comparatively little of his work seems to be currently on public view, and it is hoped that this talk, by the Curator of Birkenhead's Williamson Art Gallery, where the MDH Board's Jackson collection of Herdman's work is now held, will serve to encourage them, the LRO and others to exhibit their holdings as a "birthday tribute"

14th December 'The Streetes are Faire & Longe': Liverpool as seen by Writers"

John Tiernan

Daniel Defoe's claim that "**no town in England, London excepted, can equal Liverpool for the fineness of the streets and the beauty of the building**" and Adrian Henri's less known description of the City's Metropolitan (RC) Cathedral as "ex-government surplus from Cape Kennedy", are just two extremes of the many word pictures produced over the last 300 years to describe our City.

Not just the subject of description, the City and its environs have also produced a number of noted contributors to the literary scene, and as part of our traditional Yuletide meeting, our new Chairman will give us a light-hearted introduction to some of them

The afternoon will include the usual quiz (with prizes) and appropriate seasonal goodies.



*Daniel Defoe
1660-1731*

[AGM Report, cont from page 2]

Although she would continue as Minutes Secretary, Joyce Culling was resigning as Treasurer, and Neville King had been nominated by the committee to succeed her. In the absence of other nominations for the office, and on the proposal of Mrs Culling, seconded by Brenda Downey, this was also agreed, nem con.

There had been no prior nominations for membership of the committee, and none were forthcoming from the floor. The Chairman therefore declared that Fred Forrest, formerly a co-opted member, was duly appointed to the committee and that he had agreed to take over from Neville King as Editor of the Journal. One vacancy on the committee therefore remained unfilled.

A.O.B.

It was agreed that the following matters raised by members should be further discussed by the committee:

- Has the history of the Cotton Exchange been written? If not, it should be.
- How would we be involved in the City Council’s designated “special” years in the run up to 2008 ?
- Re lending of books to members only; a donated item might offer rare opportunity to a researcher.

There being no further business the Meeting closed at approximately 2.00pm and was followed by a talk on Nicholas Blundell by Brenda Murray, made particularly relevant by the presence of Mark Blundell, the diarist’s direct descendant, who joined in the discussion afterwards.



A message from the new Editor of the Society’s Journal

Have you always wanted to see your name in print? Then why not submit an article for our next Journal? It could be about a part of Merseyside where you live or once lived or perhaps about a school you attended or somewhere you worked. Is there an old diary in your family that could be of interest to others? Perhaps you know something unusual about an otherwise well-known topic?

Don't worry if you're not "into" computers as I can sort out the typing. Jo McCann and I are more than happy to discuss your ideas with you and perhaps suggest ways you could expand and enrich these by using sources in the local record offices.

This is your Society and the Committee is keen to encourage all members to participate. Why not "give it a go" as part of your efforts to make Liverpool a worthy Capital of Culture? The deadline for completed articles, which, ideally, should be between 500 and 3000 words, is the end of January 2004 but please let me know of your interest soonest so that I can reserve space for you. Thank you.

Fred Forrest, 32 Rugby Drive, Aintree Village, Liverpool, L10 8JU

Tel: 0151-474-6561 eMail: fred_forrest@hotmail.com



Liverpool History Society on the World Wide Web

The Society’s web-site was updated on 11th August and now gives details of talks etc for the rest of 2003.

We hope to develop the site to beyond its present single page, in order to do more than just give the barest of information about ourselves. There was a time when this would have required special training or the use of a special computer “language”, but there are now ways round this. However, even with this new technology, it takes time and patience to produce a web-site that does not look laughably amateurish. Although retired, your Editor at present seems to have little of either, and he asks whether there any Member with the right skills who can help him in this worthwhile venture? Offers to Membership Secretary, please.



The Society’s Officers & Committee, 2003-4

Chairman:	John Tiernan	Officers	
Treasurer:	Neville King	Administration Secretary:	Jo McCann (P)
		Membership Secretary:	Michael Brian (P)

Committee

NB (C) & (P) denote Co-opted Member and member of Publications Sub-Committee, respectively)			
Charles Collier	Brenda Downey (P)	Fred Forrest (P)	Marie McQuade (C,P)
	Brenda Murray	Cynthia Stonall	

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