



HISTORY SOCIETY

SPRING 2014

A New Home and New Librarian for Society's Library



We are delighted to be able to tell LHS members that, following talks with City Council staff, it has been agreed that the Society's library, currently over 400 titles and growing, is now housed in the Search Room on the 3rd floor of the new Central Library, William Brown Street. The new arrangements will be fully in place by the end of April this year.

The LHS library will be much more accessible to members than previously and the good news is that, unlike members of the public, no prior appointment needs to be made to access the Search Room. LHS members should simply show their current Membership / Programme Card to gain access.

For security reasons, members will have to leave their coats and bags in the lockers outside the Search Room. Within the Search Room, members will have access to a photocopier (charges apply), and scanners, computers and microfilm machines (free). If members wish to borrow a book all they need do is to email the

Hon. Librarian at – librarian@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk requesting the loan of the book. She will respond with an email authorising the loan and the period of the loan, normally four weeks. Members then shows a printout of that email to the Search Room staff who will allow them to take the book away. At the end of the loan period the member returns the book to the shelves of the Search Room and emails the Hon Librarian that they have done so. Valuable/fragile books will be 'reference only'.

From the end of April, a bibliography of all LHS books will be available on the LHS website in PDF form for you to consult or download.

Finally, we are delighted to tell you that one of our longest serving members, Mrs Josie McCann, has agreed to take on the role of Hon Librarian in place of Cynthia Stonall who will shortly be leaving for an extended stay in Australia. Our warm thanks go to Cynthia for so kindly looking after the LHS library for many years.

An Appeal

A potential crisis in the Society's administration caused by the intended resignations of Graham Jones (Membership Secretary), Tony Melling (Programme Secretary) and Cynthia Stonall (Hon. Librarian), has been partially averted by the willingness of David Hearn and Josephine McCann to stand as Programme Secretary and Hon. Librarian respectively.

However, the vital post of Membership Secretary has still to be filled and your Chairman, John Tiernan, now appeals for a volunteer amongst our membership to step forward.

On the horizon...

- An exhibition *Sail Away: Liverpool Shipping Posters*, due to open on 16th May at the Maritime Museum, will show how Liverpool shipping companies once promoted themselves to the world. This year Liverpool will welcome 48 cruise ships and 64,000 passengers, sign of a re-birth of the port's halcyon days as a major destination for liners?

- A reminder that 23-27 July 2014 will see the return of 'the giants' to mark the centenary of the start of the First World War. Few will forget the impact that the giants made on the city during the *Titanic* centenary celebrations in 2012. For further details log on to www.giantspectacular.com



15 December 2013 – Ken Pye

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS OF LIVERPOOL

Meeting report:
Ron Jones

The tone for our December talk was set when our speaker, LHS member Ken Pye, with a great flourish, whipped off his topcoat to reveal a colourful Father Christmas jumper!

More than half his presentation was spent explaining, in a light-hearted and entertaining way, the origins of various matters relating to Christmas, such as Father Christmas, Christmas trees, robins, holly, and a variety of other festive flora and fauna.



By far the most interesting part of Ken's talk came when he spoke, all too briefly, about Liverpool's Christmas traditions. We learnt that David Lewis, of Lewis's store fame, introduced the world's first Christmas grotto in 1879 at his Bon Marché store on the corner of Church Street and Parker Street (pictured left, courtesy of English Heritage). Built the previous year, it was the first and largest purpose-built department store in the north of England and was modelled on the Bon Marché in Paris. The grotto featured an ice cave that twisted and turned, with painted scenes from fairy tales and a Father Christmas seated on a golden throne. A toy fair took up an entire floor.

A rival store, the late lamented Blackler's (closed in 1988), came up with the idea of an animated grotto with moving figures bringing to life stories such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. It proved very popular and was visited by 10,000 people each week. Lewis's hit back with its Santa's Parade (another world first) which started off in Pembroke Place and wound its way past its rivals' stores, with people following in its wake until, no doubt with a great fanfare, it ended at its own store.

Post-World War II, in a bid to trump the competition at that time, TJ Hughes came up with the idea of staging shows in its basement. Spellbound children would troop to the Grotto Theatre to watch shows such as *Pinky and Perky* and be mesmerised by the colourful *Dancing Waters*. Ken stirred up memories when mentioning the giant parrot and life-size rocking horse, Polly and Blackie respectively, that were much-loved features of Blacklers. Blackie was donated to Alder Hey until, for 'health and safety' reasons, it was permanently stabled in the Museum of Liverpool. There was also a huge Father Christmas which, fittingly, is now domiciled in the still functioning workshop of the man who originally made it.

Ken reminisced about his childhood in the 50s and 60s recalling Christmas at his school when they had to take their own plates into school to be 'treated' to a feast of fish paste sandwiches and jelly (made by the parents) with the school caretaker assuming the role of Santa Claus. He even brought a tear to the eye when he sang, with not a bum note, *The Little Boy Who Santa Claus Forgot* and, for a finale, gave a spirited rendition of a *Scouse Christmas* poem.

16 February 2014 – Dr. Charlotte Wildman

THE CATHEDRAL THAT NEVER WAS

Meeting report:
Netta Dixon

Dr. Charlotte Wildman spoke to us about her PhD project, the attempt to build a Catholic Cathedral in Liverpool in the 1930s, destined to be the biggest cathedral in the world after St. Peter's, Rome. She told us how Archbishop Richard Downey (1881-1953) commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) to design a cathedral that would cost £3 million (£150 million today). Charlotte also told us about the Catholic community in Liverpool, the hardship it endured in the 19th and early 20th century, and the effort made by the community to raise money for the project, which raised the profile of the Catholic community but triggered anti-Catholic feeling.

In 1929 when Liverpool celebrated the Anniversary of Catholic Emancipation, there were great expectations from the Catholic community, so Archbishop Downey commissioned Lutyens to design the cathedral and the fundraising campaign began. The building of the crypt started on the 5th June 1933 but work was halted on the outbreak of war in 1939. Sadly, the entire project was abandoned completely in 1954, as post-war inflation meant £27 million pounds (over £1 billion at today's values) was needed to complete the building. The crypt was finally opened in 1958. Frederick Gibberd's design, affectionately nicknamed 'The Mersey Funnel' and 'Paddy's Wigwam' was accepted in 1962 and completed in 1967; it was half the size of the planned 1930s cathedral.

We have to understand the situation of the Catholic community in Liverpool; and the strong anti-Catholic feeling in the city. The Catholic diocese was founded in 1850, and in 1934, 400,000 Catholics encompassed one third of the local population, of whom 75,000 lived in the Scotland Road area. Although there was a strong support network, they suffered from poverty, crowded accommodation, unemployment and a lack of sanitary provision. Unlike non-Catholics, they could not afford to move away from Scotland Road. Nevertheless, in spite of sectarianism, violence was less after the First World War.

Archbishop Downey was ambitious and competitive; he refused an invitation to attend an ecumenical service held by the Anglican Bishop and even upset the Archbishop of Westminster. He preferred to work without other Catholic bishops and said, "I rule the North". In 1919 there were violent race riots, unemployment in the Docks and economic depression, and Catholics were blamed for the city's problems. Downey wanted to improve the impression which the Catholic community made in the town. At a Centenary Celebration of Catholic Emancipation in 1929, when 400,000 Catholics celebrated Mass, plans were announced for the building of a Byzantine-style cathedral, which would dwarf the gothic Anglican Cathedral, construction of which had begun in 1901.

When the workhouse at the top of Mount Pleasant came up for sale, Downey purchased the site, much to the chagrin of the Anglican authorities, and commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens to provide a design for a Catholic cathedral which would be an appropriate response to Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's Anglican cathedral. There would be room for 10,000 worshippers, and he made plans for a figure of Christ which would be visible to ships arriving in the Mersey. It would be twice the size of the Anglican cathedral and 200ft higher than the Royal Liver Building. It would have been even taller than Rome's St Peter's Basilica. Lutyens wanted it to mirror the impact of the New York skyline, and Professor Riley was sure that, from its position at the top of Mount Pleasant, the cathedral would dominate the city. It became a place of pilgrimage even *before* construction began. In 1933, the Archdiocese held a ceremony (at which one of our members, Brenda Murray, was present) to commemorate the dedication of the site and the laying of the foundation

stone. Half a million people came into the city for the event, including 1,000 priests. In 1934, 15,000 children visited the site. The crypt was completed in 1937 when 30,000 people turned up to what was in effect still a building site.

The Catholic authorities were brilliant at public relations and fundraising. Working class people contributed the most. Besides filling collection boxes, they helped by buying Cathedral-brand cigarettes and tea. The famous store, Coopers, issued special vouchers to Catholic customers. People donated their jewellery to the fund and one woman from the Scotland Road area raised £200 by collecting jam jars. Catholic women raised another £60,000 for the Lady Chapel.

We were impressed by Charlotte's images of the city as it would have looked had this magnificent building dominated the skyline. Although the grandiose plan was not completed, it had a tremendous impact on the city and its inhabitants, and showed how far reaching and influential Catholicism was in Liverpool at the time. Lutyens' crypt is still in use for concerts, exhibitions ...and an annual sell-out Beer Festival! There can be little doubt that it would have been one of the most wonderful cathedrals in the world. Today, all we are left with is the crypt and a model of 'The cathedral that never was', pictured above, in the Museum of Liverpool.



©Photo: Ron Jones

16 March 2014 – Marie MacQuade

LIVERPOOL'S 'BIG SOCIETY' DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Meeting report:
Mary Harrison

Marie, LHS member and Editor of the Society's 2014 Journal, painted a very vivid picture of life in Liverpool during the 1914/1918 War. The people of Liverpool responded valiantly to the shortcomings which quickly became apparent – "...the last great flowering of grand-scale charity". But Liverpudlians did not count their efforts as 'charity', rather as repaying the sacrifices of the men who fought and died in the trenches. Military resources relied on volunteers and they unstintingly provided hospitals, food for prisoners, support for families left with no income, and a myriad of other needs.

The first overseas patients arrived in September 1914 and there was no real provision for their care. The first military hospital in Liverpool was in Fazakerley, known as 'First Western General Hospital'. There, specialist treatment for the wounded soldiers was set up and more than 26,400 were treated. In 1915 the workhouses were called into service. But voluntary hospitals were vital. Liverpool philanthropists donated their homes and paid the cost of running them, and we saw photographs of many of them. Holt House, at 54 Ullet Road, was an early example. Marie had discovered that this family was able to resume life in the house after the war, though many families did not. A Belgian merchant, August Dimitri Galatti, set up Woolton Hydro, Druids Cross, Calderstones, and The Towers at 44 Ullet Road, and he was awarded a medal by the King of Belgium. Cotton brokers and ship owners and their families joined in providing buildings to serve as hospitals, together with funds to run them. Many volunteers trained as nurses and orderlies to care for the men, often also working full-time in their normal jobs.

The families left at home were also suffering. There was no provision made for them in the early days of the war. Eleanor Rathbone organised 'The Soldiers and Sailors Families Relief Organisation' and aimed to support them with 75% of pre-war wages. This was *not* charity, but a fundamental right. It was not until 1917 that the government provided the necessary funds. Eleanor Rathbone and her volunteers organised distribution and supervision, with 'Lady Visitors' calling on families and widows every week. They also provided dependent children with free school meals; £20,000 of the funds to pay for these services came from the "Liverpool Fund" of £50,000 overseen by Eleanor's cousin, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool. Apparently there was friction over this fund and Lord Derby and the rest of the Committee resigned.

There were numerous committees and organisations and Marie had researched them well. She listed many, including The Officers' Fund, The Million Shillings Fund, (prize – £1 per week for life), The Silver Badge Fund (given to returning wounded soldiers), The Red Cross, Officers' Families Fund, Roll of Honour Fund, and Liverpool Womens' War Service Bureau. This last organisation was formed specially to assist the volunteers. Their aims were to collect and distribute aid and help prisoners of war. They set up a depot in Bold Street, where they packed parcels being sent to serving men and POWs. Then the cost of sending a parcel was more than the average wage. The families could give verbal instructions about what to send, but were not allowed to touch the parcels. £7,000,000 was spent sending more than 4,000,000 articles, including 1,000,000 dressings, to the fronts. They also sent candles, which were much appreciated by the soldiers in the trenches, and they sent parcels to men who had no families.

Marie told us of many more people and organisations who worked hard and donated funds. No doubt the people of other towns and cities did the same, but Marie made us feel proud of the efforts of the people of Liverpool during 'The Great War'.

Detail from Cenotaph, St George's Plateau ©Photo: Ron Jones



AND THE VICTORY THAT DAY WAS TURNED INTO MOURNING UNTO ALL THE PEOPLE

LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY: MAY & JUNE 2014

*18 May	1.30 for 2.00pm. At the Museum of Liverpool: King's Liverpool Regiment & WW1	Karen O'Rourke
*8 June	1.30pm AGM followed by a talk: The achievements of Jesse Hartley	David Hearn
July / August	No meetings – Summer break	

***N.B.1: the May talk will take place at the Museum of Liverpool.** Members can then visit the King's Lpl Regt exhibition.

***N.B.2: The June AGM starts promptly at 1.30pm with doors open from 1.00pm.** Venue: the Grace Room, 1st Floor, Hope at Everton, Shaw Street.

Bookshelf

Sugar for the House Mona Duggan, 2013. Fonthill Media. 175 pages, 83 b&w illustrations. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-78155-040-3. £12.99 (£8.50 incl p&p from Amazon).

LHS member Mona Duggan, known affectionately as 'Ormskirk's History Woman', sadly passed away at the age of 87 last January. But not before her last book, a history of early sugar refining in the North West, had been published.

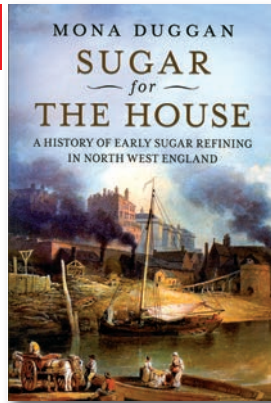
Not surprisingly, Mona's journey began with her discovery that cane sugar had been refined in an Ormskirk cottage in the 1680s. Intrigued, she then went on to conduct research throughout the North West. The book begins with interesting accounts of the birth of the sugar industry and the process of making sugar. Liverpool then takes up the major part of her account whilst other chapters deal with Chester and the south and north of the region.

In the wake of the Great Fire of London in 1666, Alleyn Smith, decided to relocate his sugar refinery to a site in Red Cross Street, off Pool Lane, thus marking the start of Liverpool's sugar refining industry, which was to last another 300 plus years ending with the closure of Tate & Lyle in 1981. An idea of the size of the industry can be gauged by the amount of sugar imported into Liverpool: 760 tons in 1704; 46,000 tons in 1810.

Mona's study has been painstakingly undertaken and she clearly spent a lot of time pouring over old maps and directories. She admits that whilst she was able to track down the location and ownership of many 18th century refineries, there were virtually no records of their output. "

Perhaps it was this absence of hard facts that led to her claim (surely overstated?) that, "...it was to supply the needs of the sugar industry that the first docks were constructed in Liverpool, the Mersey was made navigable to serve Warrington and the Irwell was cleared to serve Manchester. The roads of the region were also upgraded to enable sugar and coal to be transported to the refineries,..." According to port historian Dr Adrian Jarvis, "Liverpool's Old Dock was primarily geared to the Irish and coastwise trades and Salthouse did what it said on the packet." That apart, Mona's book sheds new light on the early days of Liverpool's sugar industry and can certainly be recommended.

Ron Jones



Liverpool It All Came Tumbling Down (updated edition) Freddy O'Connor, 2013. Countywise. 244 pages, 500+ black & white photos and maps. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-906823-70-2. £14.95.

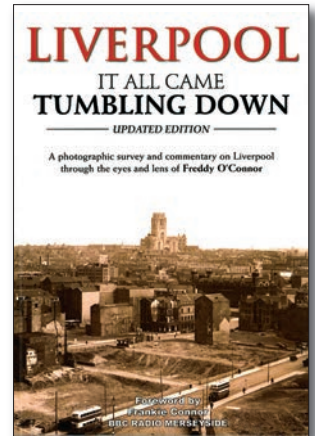
Many LHS members will recall the modest little book of the same name that came out in 1986. I certainly do. One of my roles in those days was running Liverpool's Tourist Information Centres. Freddy's book of Box Brownie snapshots of streets levelled during the great slum clearance drive of the 60s and 70s touched the nostalgia sweetspot and we sold it like the proverbial hot cakes.

Fast forward 37 years and Freddy and his Radio Merseyside DJ brother Frankie have produced this worthy large format update that will no doubt have a similar appeal.

This time round, Freddy's images, many shown here for the first time, have been supplemented by others from outside sources, including the Liverpool Record Office. The text too has been greatly expanded and brought up to date.

It's a big book, A4 in size with over 500 photographs and maps covering the length of the dock road as well as Liverpool's inner city areas. There are reasons aplenty for getting your hands on this book one of which will be to gaze fondly at long-gone Liverpool streets and buildings familiar to you in your salad days!

Ron Jones



Liverpool – an Alternative Guide

A new member of the Society, Bel Shaw, has offered to make her book available to members at a discount of 40% on the cover price of £9.99. Published in 2012, it is a pocket-sized paperback guidebook of 124 pages with 120 illustrations, and can be bought for £6 at Society meetings or by sending a cheque payable to Blue Moon Publishing Ltd., 9 Elm Road, Ewell Village, Epsom, Surrey KT17 2EU.



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