

HISTORY SOCIETY

WINTER 2014

**First Joint Study Day a Great Success**

Sunday, 26 October saw the staging of the Liverpool History Society's and the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire's first Joint Study Day: *Prosperity and Private Philanthropy – How important was social welfare to the merchant community in Victorian Liverpool?* And, despite some initial misgivings, it turned out to be a big success with an excellent turnout to hear

our four expert speakers (the fifth was a 'no show'!). It seems highly likely that the event will be held again, probably in 2016. So, if you have any particular theme that you would like to see explored, email: [programmesecretary@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk](mailto:programmesecretary@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk) In the meantime, here is a very brief résumé of the topics covered during the Study Day.

**The Liverpool trading community 1750-1815: Networks near and far.** Sheryllyne Haggerty set the scene for the day discussing 18th century traders establishing themselves in Liverpool, and the ways in which they built up and used business, social and family networks to enhance their trade and standing.

Sheryllyne described the intangible nature of much of mercantile activity – flimsy paper cheques represented much economic activity, and the system was held together by trust, reputation and awareness of risk. The networks of merchants, illustrated by ever-increasingly complicated network diagrams, provided access to knowledge, credit, and opportunities. These personal links were crucial to merchants.

Sheryllyne illustrated her ideas about the role of networks through the examples of a number of individuals, and she analysed their relationships. These well-selected personal stories represented an elite family; a lower level of mercantile trader; and an individual whose personal networks were forced to change. The last example, that of Samuel Rainford of Bidston, demonstrated the importance of networks, when one collapsed this merchant started over rebuilding connections and re-establishing his business.

Sheryllyne touched on the role of social relationships in these networks, and the extent to which gentlemen's clubs, the town council, and charity and philanthropic events would have been important forums for these individuals. *(Liz Stewart)*

**The mercantile culture of the late nineteenth century** Graeme Milne considered the different individuals who made up the trading community of Liverpool in the mid-19th century. His paper touched on the elite 'merchant princes', ship-owners, business people running small firms, and the role of women in a male-dominated world.

Graeme painted a picture of a lifestyle which focussed on public display – lived in the view of peers. This was considered in the context of religious links and activities, the religious drive for philanthropy, social activity, and inter-reliance.

The attendance at church, balls, social events, and the ongoing



*Richard Gildart (1671-1770), wonderfully portrayed by Joseph Wright of Derby in 1768, was featured as one very well-connected Liverpool merchant: he was a three-time Mayor of the town, an MP, brother-in-law of Sir Thomas Johnson and a prominent slave trader.*  
©National Museums Liverpool.

correspondence with peers was cited as evidence for this reinforcement of status through social activity.

The importance of being seen to conform to society's demands was strong, and was a driver in much of the philanthropic work undertaken in the mid-19th century. This social and cultural context to the work of the specific individuals: Rathbones and Mellys, provided an important context to their motivation. *(Liz Stewart)*

**'The Contribution of William and Eleanor Rathbone.** Brenda Murray spoke of the contribution of William and Eleanor Rathbone to Liverpool. In the 19thC, this family were perfect examples of the relationship between private prosperity and social welfare. Several members of the family were wealthy businessmen who used their wealth to alleviate poverty in the city, while in the early 20thC Eleanor Rathbone, known as the Philosopher, worked for the Suffragettes and the rights of women.

Brenda's talk began with the life of William the 6th (1819-1902). He married a Unitarian and made a fortune, using it to help the poor in their homes after he saw the poverty in the slums. He encouraged people to save for their medical needs in a District Provident Society. He corresponded with Florence Nightingale and built a training school for nurses. He also helped to set up Liverpool University College and was an MP. His daughter, Eleanor (1872-1946), went to Somerville College, Oxford. She was aware of the problems of the wives and children of soldiers in World War One. In 1909 Eleanor was a Councillor for Granby Ward and in 1929 an Independent MP for the Combined Universities. She was still an MP when she died on 1st January 1946. As well as her domestic causes, Eleanor was sympathetic to the Jews, helped refugees from Spain and Indian women to protect their daughters from circumcision. At home she worked on the problem of child allowances and in December 1945 Parliament passed an Act establishing family allowances. *(Netta Dixon)*

*N.B: 1) Unfortunately, the note about Liz Stewart's presentation on the work of the Melly family in the 19thC had not been received at the time of going to print.*

*N.B: 2) A very big "thank you" to LHS's Tony Melling, upon whose shoulders the task of organising the study day largely fell, and, of course, Liz Stewart.*

21 September 2014 – Ken Rogers

## VISIT TO ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, EVERTON, FOLLOWED BY TALK

Meeting report:  
Ron Jones



©Photo: Ron Jones

Celebrating its 200th anniversary this year, St George's, bathed in late summer sunshine, looked stunning for our visit. LHS members were free to explore the building and browse through the church's archives before Ken Rogers gave his talk on the history of the church and Everton.

Ken Rogers was known to most of us as an *Echo* journalist of some 40 years and author of the popular books, *The Lost Tribe of Everton and Scottie Road* and *Lost Tribe: The People's Memories*. He also pens a weekly 'Lost Tribes' column in Saturday's *Echo*.

He told us that, around 1770, Everton was just heath, gorse and weeds and generally 'displeasing to the eye'. By 1800 it had become a pretty village with great views, especially at sunset, and that by 1830 it had reached the peak of its loveliness. After that it was all downhill as over-development took a grip and by 1855 it was looking rather shabby and second rate. Wealthy merchants who lived in the great mansions began to move out especially after one of them, James Atherton, bought a large area of land on the opposite shore and developed what we now call New Brighton.

At one time in its history Everton became, in Ken's words, "...probably the most populous parish in the country." By the late 1950s the spectre of slum clearance began to appear. But what to do with all the people? There was even talk of temporarily rehousing the locals on ships moored in the Mersey whilst their new homes were being built! Instead, they were shipped out to Cantril Farm and beyond. The Council's new 'housing heaven' turned out to be a high rise hell – remember the infamous Piggeries?: the former proud, close-knit Everton community was decimated.

Apart from the windows, most of which were destroyed in WW2, Ken explained that little had changed in the appearance of St George's in 200 years. The prime mover behind the church was James Atherton who donated the land. Money for construction was raised by 'selling' the seats and pews to the highest bidders by way of 110 x £100 shares. Surplus profit was returned to the subscribers who did well out of their investment.

The church was built by John Cragg of the Merseyside Iron Foundry, Tithebarn Street, and the architect was Thomas Rickman. They were chalk and cheese, a real clash of personalities. Cragg, a member of the Athenaeum, was 'difficult' but very competent. Rickman, a Quaker, former grocer and bankrupt who had reinvented himself as a church architect, was not even invited to the official opening of St George's! Known as 'The Iron Church', and a Grade 1 Listed building, it was a world first, claimed Ken, and because of its innovative prefabricated cast iron structure, provided a blueprint for the skyscrapers of the future, a claim that has also been made for Peter Ellis's Oriel Chambers. Despite their differences Cragg and Rickman went on to build another two cast iron churches together – St Michael's in the Hamlet, Aigburth, and St Philip's, Hardman Street (since demolished).

At the time it was built, St George's was the highest point in Liverpool – 243 ft above sea level; it was usurped by St Peter's Woolton in 1887 the top of whose 90 ft high bell tower then became the highest point in the city.

Ken mentioned that the churchyard contains the graves of a number of former black slaves who were servants living in Everton. The baptismal records include Charles Wallace, late of Brazil (baptised 1817), Nicodemus John Nicholas, born in Santa Cruz (baptised 1818), Samuel Barnes, born a slave in Antigua (baptised 1818) and 'Charles', late of Buenos Aires, (baptised 1824). He said that nobody knows what happened to these men.

Ken ended his talk with a light-hearted 'Lost Tribes' quiz, the answers to which would have been known to many of our members who are of 'a certain age' – the outside toilet in the back yard (unheated, unlit and often with 'last night's Echo' in lieu of a loo roll), lamp posts pressed into service for children's rope games, the back jigger, bathtimes in the tin bath in front of a coal fire etc.

16 November 2014 – David Harrison

## THE LIVERPOOL MASONIC REBELLION

Meeting report:  
Ron Jones

David told us that there were ten lodges in Liverpool during the 18th century. One of them, the Merchants' Lodge, was formed in 1780. One of its founding members, Thomas Golightly, Mayor of Liverpool in 1772-3 and a slave trader. This was a big, important lodge with many prominent merchants, politicians etc. In fact, for a time, the freemasonry movement in Liverpool even rivalled that of London where the Grand Lodge was originally founded as a secret society. Because of our transatlantic links, Liverpool's lodges were also connected to a number of American lodges such as those in Boston, New York and Virginia.

Liverpool had Ancient and Modern Grand Lodges which, following bickering and fallings out, combined into a United Grand Lodge in 1813. There were also maritime-related lodges such as the Mariners Lodge and the Sea Captains Lodge. David relayed the tale of James Broadhurst a watchmaker from Great Sankey who moved to Liverpool, enrolled (or was press-ganged) in the Royal Navy in 1795, served under Lord Nelson and became a naval hero with the medal to prove it. He also became a freemason, serving as a Worshipful Master of the Ancient Union Lodge and becoming one of the leaders of the Liverpool Masonic Rebellion.

The Duke of Sussex was Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England and sought to bring the Ancient and Modern lodges

together. He was a bit of a tyrant and dealt very harshly with any criticism of his reforms. For example, Dr George Oliver made a complaint and was dismissed from his provincial office in Lincolnshire. Many Liverpool freemasons were unhappy with the changes the Earl was bringing in. Previously, the older the lodge, the higher up the pecking order it was but under the new system all that changed and lodge fees were also raised, to pay for the expensive upgrading of the London lodge claimed the dissenters. Noses were put out of joint and a letter of complaint was written to the Earl. One year later they were still waiting for a reply! This sparked the start of the Liverpool rebellion.

The first official meeting of the rebel Grand Lodge took place in December 1823 in the old Shakespeare Tavern on Williamson Square.

The prime mover was Michael Alexander Gage, at that time a tailor, but known to many of us as maker in 1836 of the superb trigonometrical map of Liverpool which he modestly, but accurately, described as 'the most perfect map'. In his beautiful trademark copperplate handwriting, he drafted the groundbreaking 'Magna Charter of Freemasonry' and was instrumental in forming the 'Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of England According to the Old Constitutions'. But it was all to end in tears when financial jiggery pokery caused a rift between the rebel Liverpool lodge and the Wigan lodge to which it was closely affiliated. Wigan decided that the Liverpool lodge could not be trusted and broke away.

Gage and Broadhurst were devastated. Broadhurst asked the Earl of Sussex if Liverpool could be reunited with the United Grand Lodge and Gage never attended another lodge meeting thereafter. He gave up tailoring and became a civil engineer and cartographer (as you did in those times!) and, before the groundbreaking Albert Dock was built, had discussions with the corporation about building fireproof brick warehouses. Always a rebel with a cause, Gage next locked horns with the corporation over its plans to pipe water via reservoirs near Rivington Pike to Liverpool. Engaged as a consultant by the Corporation he proved, at least to himself and his supporters, that there were sufficient local wells to supply the town's needs and that the Corporation's 'pet scheme' was unnecessary and wildly expensive. Gage became a leading 'anti-pikist' but was convicted of fraud for doctoring a petition to Parliament showing large numbers of Liverpool ratepayers were against the scheme. Curiously, thousands of signatures had been signed at the same time and in the same hand! Gage was briefly jailed and he subsequently found himself in a debtors' prison.

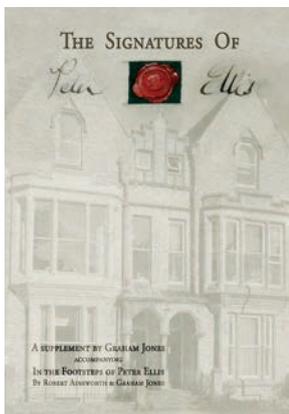
David made many references to the Wigan lodges which included lodges of Sincerity, Integrity and Antiquity as well as Liverpool Lodge No. 2 and lodges in Ashton-in-Makerfield, Warrington, Blackburn and Barnsley. He showed us a slide of St Mary's Church, Wigan, where there had been a Masonic foundation stone laying ceremony in 1818, unusual as it was a Roman Catholic church.

During the question and answer session, David remarked that there was much intercourse between the Liverpool and US lodges and indeed with lodges all over the world; that there is women's freemasonry but it is not recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England; there was definitely a 'tension' between Roman Catholics and Protestants in the lodge movement and that, until recently, Roman Catholics faced excommunication if they become freemasons; and many lodges donated money to charitable, social and community projects over the years, e.g. support for the Mechanics Institution, Liverpool.



Above left: the Masonic Hall at 22 Hope Street dates from 1874 and replaced the original 'House in the Garden' masonic hall, opened in 1858. Above right: The Masonic Hall as it is today. In 1932 the original grand entrance was removed and an extension with a new entrance was added. ©Photos: Ron Jones.

## Peter Ellis Book Update



A supplement to the book *In the Footsteps of Peter Ellis* has been produced by Graham Jones following research carried out since the book went for printing in 2013. Entitled *The Signatures of Peter Ellis*, it is now on the Society's website in the form of a 70-page pdf, available as a free download. Profusely illustrated and with frequent cross-referencing to *Footsteps*, it will be of most relevance to those members who have a copy of the book. Perhaps of greatest interest to Peter Ellis fans will be the histories of two

houses in Catharine Street (constructed ca. 1864), a building in Upper Parliament Street (ca. 1871) and one in Upper Duke Street (ca. 1873) all of which exhibit Peter Ellis's architectural 'signatures'. Those who regard his famous office buildings as anticipating the American skyscrapers that later arose will be interested in the evidence that John Wellborn Root revisited Liverpool two years before his Chicago Rookery was completed.

## On their own: Britain's child migrants...

...is the title of a most interesting special exhibition on the ground floor of the Merseyside Maritime Museum until the beginning of October 2015. It tells the little-known and often heartbreaking story of the 100,000 or so British children who were shipped off to Canada, Australia, and other Commonwealth countries between 1860 and 1960. Liverpool was one of the main departure points and many of the city's children who were orphaned, destitute, homeless or living in the workhouse were among those transported. Physically and morally, child migration was seen as preferable to the evils of life in the inner city.

Back then it was all done by religious and charitable institutions with the best intentions, supported by the UK government and the governments of the receiving countries, grateful for the much needed employment and population boost. Many children did well, others were damaged by their experiences.



Former Sheltering Home for Destitute Children, Myrtle Street.

©Photo: Ron Jones.

**Another Appeal!** Here we go again! It seems as though every Newsletter contains an appeal for volunteers to step forward to help fill a vacancy to enable the Society to function properly. This edition is no different. This time round we are in need of the following: 1) Somebody to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Joyce Hughes as Membership Secretary, a job that is not too demanding. 2) We are also looking for someone with web skills to act as Webmaster and help develop the Society's website and keep it up to date. 3) Netta and Mary who have organised refreshments following our monthly talks over the past 10 years quite rightly feel that it is time for others to take over the task. In particular somebody with transport is needed to bring in the tea, coffee, biscuits etc. If no volunteer(s) step forward, we shall cease serving refreshments which would be a pity; 4) We need enthusiastic members to fill a number of vacancies on the executive committee that runs the Society's business. It meets eight times per year, on the Wednesday morning preceding our Sunday talk and, finally! 5) John Tiernan is retiring as Chairman next May so that is another office that needs filling.

**If you feel you could help by filling any of the above roles, please have a word with John Tiernan, Fred Forrest or Ron Jones, or email us – see below for details.**

## LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY – 2015 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

15 February	The sinking of RMS <i>Tayleur</i>	Gill Hoffs
15 March	Monsignor Nugent: guardian of the streets of Liverpool	Brenda Murray
12 April	Dandy rats at play: going racing at Aintree from the 19c to present day	John Pinfold
10 May	Annual General Meeting followed by talk about Liverpool and the Beatles: TUNE IN: The Beatles – who, how, and from where. Details to be announced.	Mark Lewisohn
7 June	Visit / guided tour of the Grade 1 Listed Anglican Cathedral of Liverpool Details to be announced.	
<b>July and August...Summer recess – no meetings</b>		
13 September	Americans in wartime Liverpool	Lee Ruddin
11 October	Court housing in Liverpool	Liz Stewart
8 November	George Stubbs, Liverpool master	Julie Robson
6 December	The Pugin heritage in the Merseyside area: churches and homes	John Tiernan

*With the exception of May & June (details will be announced in a future Newsletter and on the Society's website), 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).*

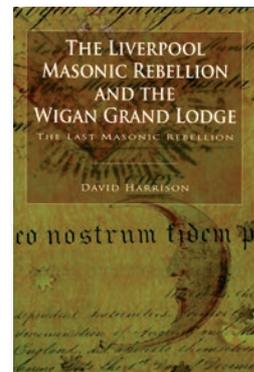
## Bookshelf

**he Liverpool Masonic Rebellion and the Wigan Grand Lodge**  
David Harrison, 2012. Arima Publishing. 113 pages, 32 b&w illustrations. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-84549-561-9. £9.99.

This is the third in a series by Masonic historian Dr Harrison concerning aspects of the history of English Freemasonry. As the text on the back cover comments, the book traces 'the strange tale of the last great Masonic rebellion in England which occurred in 1823. The rebellion which started in Liverpool, sent shock waves through Freemasonry...and the book reveals a story full of Dickensian intrigue and skulduggery...' Organised into five chapters (The beginning of the rebellion, The rebel Grand Lodge in Liverpool, The Wigan Grand Lodge, The end of the 'Antients', Life after the rebellion) the account is seen by the author as 'a story of a clash of ideas; the old and the new coming into conflict, but it can also be seen as a story displaying emerging class distinctions, reflecting the anger and frustrations of men from industrial towns who felt that they were not being listened to in a newly united society which was now dominated by a London based aristocracy.'

Although much of the detailed narrative, appendices and illustrations will be of limited interest to non-freemasons, those LHS members who have read with interest the author's article in the 2014 Journal ('Michael Alexander Gage; The Masonic Rebel and the Liverpool Waterworks Bill') will find that this book provides a context for the man who was a 'tempestuous' and 'turbulent' tailor at the outset of the rebellion, later becoming a land surveyor. Gage is best known to historians today for his highly detailed 'trigonometrical plan' of Liverpool which he surveyed in 1835 (not the much simplified version illustrated in the book) and of which valuable use has been made in various accounts of Liverpool including two of the Society's own.

Graham Jones



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● **Programme Secretary:** David Hearn (programmesecretary@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk) ● **Treasurer:** Tony Melling (treasurer@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk) ● **Newsletter Editor:** Ron Jones (ron@rja-mpl.com) ● **Hon. Librarian:** Josie McCann (librarian@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk) ● **Postal Correspondence:** Fred Forrest. LHS Administration Secretary, 32 Rugby Drive, Aintree Village, Liverpool L10 8JU. ● **LHS Email:** enquiries@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk

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