



HISTORY SOCIETY

SPRING 2015

Remember the Lusitania!



To mark 2015's 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Lusitania (at the time of her maiden voyage from Liverpool to New York in September 1907, the world's biggest, fastest and most luxurious liner), National Museums Liverpool (NML) is staging a splendid commemorative exhibition on the first floor of the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock.

Whilst not on the same scale as the superb Titanic exhibition (still running), it is well worth making a special trip to see it. Among the items on display are various artefacts from the doomed ship including a lifebuoy and a lifejacket and a full set of the infamous German medals struck to celebrate her destruction by U-boat 20.



Waterline model of the Lusitania made from a damaged teak handrail by James McKee, a carpenter on board from 1908-1914.

For full details of the exhibition and information about the Lusitania, a visit to NML's website is highly recommended:
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/visit/floor-plan/lusitania/

Not to be missed – Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!

This year's AGM and May meeting, to be held on Sunday, 10th May, should not be missed on a number of counts, especially as our guest speaker will be Mark Lewisohn, the world's foremost authority on The Beatles. Mark's talk *TUNE IN: The Beatles – who, how and from where?* will concentrate on the Liverpool elements of the history of The Beatles.

This is likely to be a popular talk so we have arranged for it to be given in the larger-capacity Lecture Theatre at Hope Everton. We are also arranging for the talk to be given to members of the public in the morning prior to our meeting at a ticket price of £6. If you know of anybody who may be interested in buying tickets ask them to contact Emma Bennett (elbennett2014@gmail.com).

Hola!

Kirsty Hooper, Reader in Hispanic Studies at Warwick University, has asked that LHS members be made aware of its website:

www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/hispanic/research/hispanicliverpool

This will be of special relevance to people interested in exploring the city's Hispanic history – especially during the 19th century – as well as family historians. In fact, even if you don't have a particular interest in things Hispanic, the website is well worth exploring from an historical Liverpool point of view.

One sell-out Hispanic event has already been held at the Central Library and Kirsty plans other events in Liverpool during 2015.

Your Library Needs You!

Josephine McCann had decided that she no longer wishes to remain as Hon Librarian so we are looking for a volunteer to take over a.s.a.p.

To be brutally honest the role involves very little work since, although the Society has a good library housed in the Search Room on the third floor of Liverpool Central Library, our members make virtually no use of it! As well as this being puzzling, it is also a great pity as, apart from the ability to borrow books, the library staff have made available a range of exclusive benefits to LHS members, such as not having to make an appointment to access the Search Room or any of the material on display there: all you need do is to produce your current LHS membership card to the member of staff on duty. You can also use a range of equipment in the Search Room such as the photocopier which includes a scanner and you can also use a state-of-the-art digital scanner, the latter at no charge (but bring your own USB memory stick on which to store the scans) and you can also use the computers and microfilm machines in the Search Room – the library staff will even bring the reels to you!

What is required of the LHS librarian? Simply to keep the Society's bibliography up to date (a copy can be accessed on the LHS website), deposit any new titles donated to the Society in the library and handle (solely by email) any book loans to LHS members. Interested? – contact Ron Jones (ron@rja-mpl.com)

14 December 2014 – Saul Marks

DEANE ROAD JEWISH CEMETERY

Meeting report:
Ron Jones



Above: Saul Marks pictured in Deane Road Cemetery. Photo: Ron Jones.

Saul, who is Chairman of the Deane Road Cemetery Committee, began his talk by giving a brief account of the early history of Jews in Britain, from 1066, before moving on to their first appearance in Liverpool in the early 1740s. The site of the Met Quarter was the location of the first synagogue before a move to a house in Turton Street and then, in 1789, to premises in Upper Frederick Street. Here there was a synagogue and meeting room together with a ritual bath in the basement and a burial ground in the garden!

The Jewish community eventually outgrew these premises and moved to a purpose-built synagogue in Seel Street in 1808. Jews in 19th century Liverpool fared quite well and tended to be educated, smartly dressed, 'professional' types such as bankers and watchmakers. In 1838 a group broke away and formed themselves into the Liverpool New Hebrew Congregation. From then on the Seel Street community became known as the Liverpool *Old* Hebrew Congregation; in 1874 they moved to the magnificent synagogue which stands in Princes Road opposite the equally magnificent Greek church.

Saul then took us on an illustrated tour of the cemetery highlighting some of its notable 'inhabitants'. First was Israel Barsed (1777-1858) who became a wealthy banker after an initial career as a watchmaker and goldsmith. He was chairman of the committee charged with the task of establishing the Deane Road cemetery and took the advice of Jesse Hartley that the site – open fields at the time – was perfect. Barsed's Buildings in Sweeting Street forms part of his legacy. Samuel Rowland, buried 'somewhere' in the graveyard, was the architect of the cemetery, the most striking feature of which is the Grade II Listed entrance façade. He was also the architect of St Bride's Church, Percy Street.

Moses Samuel was a watchmaker and silversmith by profession but preferred the life of a scholar and correspondent. When he died, almost bankrupt, his business was taken over by his daughter. She moved it to Manchester where it prospered, becoming the 'H. Samuel The Jeweller' that we know today. Sigismund Lewis (1820-1899) was a German doctor who came to Liverpool and made quite a name for himself as physician to the Cunard Line and to Jewish schools in Liverpool as well as devoting much of his time improving the lot of the Jewish poor in the city. Another Lewis is still fondly remembered in Liverpool. He is David Lewis (1823-1885) founder of the well-known nationwide Lewis's stores which at one time included Selfridge. The twin tombstones of David and his wife Bertha are most impressive. Charles Mozley (1797-1881) is notable for being the very first Jew to be elected to the office of Mayor of Liverpool, in 1863. He was a member of the Mozley family which had dominated Liverpool Jewry for 90 years. A Liberal and wealthy banker his bank crashed with debts of £3.5m during the American Civil War when the cotton trade collapsed.

The grandest of all the memorials in the cemetery is the mausoleum of Liverpool-born Baroness Miriam de Menasce (1851-1890). She married Joseph Levi de Menasce a Sephardi Jew who ran the Liverpool branch of the family's merchant banking business. When it closed down they moved to London and eventually to Cairo. After her husband's death aged 39 she moved to Paris but soon died herself, also aged 39. She wanted to be buried in Liverpool so her body was interred at Deane Road at a large society funeral. Saul gave us potted histories of a number of other people prominent in the Jewish community including Rev Prof Jacob Prag, Abraham Saqui, Dr Joshua Van Oven, David Jacobs Jackson and John Raphael Isaac known to local historians as the lithographer of the famous 'Liverpool from the air' illustration of 1859.

The cemetery opened in 1837 with the last recorded burial taking place in 1929. In all, some 800 adults and 900 children are interred in the cemetery. It became increasingly derelict during the 19th century and was a magnet for fly-tipping. The prayer hall and caretaker's cottage became derelict and were demolished in 1952. An attempt in the late 1970s came to nothing as did another attempt in 1995. By then it had become totally derelict and infested with Japanese knotweed, with ivy 6ft out from its walls and much graffiti. The restoration of Deane Road really started in earnest in 2002 with Ruth Webster of the Groundwork Trust. Subsequently, Saul got involved and, due to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £494k topped up by private donations, the revamped cemetery was eventually restored and reconsecrated. There is still much work to be done – many of the 179 tombstones need restoration to say nothing of the ongoing task of maintaining the cemetery grounds. And, like many voluntary organisations, they are always short of funds...and willing volunteers! Further information: www.deaneroadcemetery.com.

15 February 2015 – Gill Hoffs

THE SINKING OF THE RMS TAYLEUR

Meeting report:
Netta Dixon

Gill is the author of the book *The Sinking of RMS Tayleur: The Lost Story of the Victorian Titanic* published last year.

Gill told us the little-known story of the sinking of RMS *Tayleur*. On 21st January 1854, just 48 hours after she started on her maiden voyage from Liverpool to Australia, she was wrecked off Lambay Island near Dublin with some 700 people on board, of whom only 290 survived.

The *Tayleur*, a large new iron-hulled clipper ship of 1,979 tons, was built in Warrington during the days when the town could boast a shipbuilding industry and was launched there on the 3rd October 1853 before going downstream towards Runcorn and then to Bramley-Moore Dock to be fitted out. She then went to Salthouse Dock where she embarked passengers and began her maiden voyage on 19th January 1854. The ship belonged to the White Star Line, but not the same White Star Line of *Titanic* fame. She was supposed to be the fastest, most luxurious and safest ship of her time on the Australia run. However, the *Tayleur's* seven lifeboats were nowhere near sufficient for the number of people on board and whilst there were a number of compasses around the vessel,



none of them agreed with each other, a problem jointly caused by her metal hull and the fact that the compasses were set *after* the ship had been loaded. Among the ship's other shortcomings was the rigging which had not been seasoned, weak anchor chains and anchors that were too small – when the captain ordered the anchors to be dropped during the fatal storm, they both snapped off. Two engines which were originally to have been fitted never were.

Before the passengers started on their long voyage (which could take up to 160 days), they had to undergo a medical inspection at Liverpool to check for typhus and smallpox; one child with chicken pox was not allowed to embark. There were also five stowaways on board. Many passengers were trying to escape from extreme poverty at home and hoped to make their fortunes in the great days of the 'Australian Gold Rush'. Some took crockery with them to sell out there and there were also blank tombstones on board to be sold on arrival.

Whilst Captain Noble and his crew thought they were heading south, in fact (due to faulty compass readings) they were going west towards the rocky coast of Ireland. During a storm they were driven onto rocks of Lambay Island (an island of many shipwrecks near Dublin) which tore a large hole in the hull. Within 30 minutes the ship had sunk. Some survivors climbed up cliffs, many naked and in shock; many women sank under the weight of their voluminous, heavy clothing. One woman reputedly had a veritable fortune sewn into her corsets. Of the seventy under-twelves on board, only three survived. One survivor clung to the rigging for 14 hours.

Captain Noble, probably the last man to leave the ship, survived but was blamed for the tragedy, unfairly thought Gill who also thought that the inquiry was a cover-up. His wife left him and he married again, twice. However, he took to drink and died aged 35 in 1861; he is buried in Toxteth Cemetery. Most of the crew, many of whom were untrained, foreign and could not speak English, survived the shipwreck and were also blamed but Noble loyally stood by them.

15 March 2015 – Brenda Murray

FATHER NUGENT: GUARDIAN OF THE STREETS OF LIVERPOOL

Meeting report:
Ron Jones

Now largely forgotten by Liverpoolians, despite his statue in St John's Gardens (right), Father James Nugent (1822-1905) was a household name in his day. The first of nine children he was born in Hunter Street into a comfortable Catholic family – his father had a fruit and veg shop and a stall in St John's Market.

There were no Catholic schools in Liverpool at that time so he had a non-Catholic education until he was 12 or 13. The headmaster recognised his intelligence and suggested that he train as a Catholic priest. He was given a very good education at Ushaw Catholic college, especially in public speaking, elocution and drama. After training he spent less than a year in a Blackburn parish before returning to Liverpool where he served at St Nicholas Church, Copperas Hill, his local church.

By 1851, over 22% of the town's population of 376,000 was Irish, boosted by a huge influx of poor Irish immigrants resulting from the Great (Potato) Famine which began in 1845. The Corporation was swamped by the problem and took little responsibility. Ragged, barefoot and starving, many children lived on the streets. Housing conditions among the poor were atrocious. Much of it was court housing, one up, one down, with little sanitation – earth closets, the contents of which were carted away by the night soil men.

Enter Father Nugent who listened to their problems and talked to the children on the streets. He used his formidable speaking powers to address audiences of all sizes, from street corner groups to those that filled St George's Hall, and persuaded them to put their hands in their pockets to help the poor, on one occasion raising £1,000. He became the focus of Catholic life in Liverpool and was behind every Catholic institution in the city. He instilled in the young the importance of a good appearance and being able to talk and communicate effectively, vital when applying for hard-to-find jobs.

Although Bishop Brown encouraged Father Nugent in his mission, he didn't give him any funding. Father Nugent had to use his powers of communication to raise funds: to do this he came up with effective slogans such as 'Nobody's Children' and 'Save the Boy'. He kept a full account of his work and in 1867 calculated that over the previous 20 years he had supplied 49,000 suppers and 3,000 nights' lodging. He started The Boys' Guild and encouraged them to learn music, speaking and acting. Some of them even learnt Shakespeare and went out entertaining people with extracts from the Great Bard.

In the 1850s St Francis Xavier's and St Edward's Colleges were set up but Father Nugent recognised the need for 'middle schools' that would give pupils a commercial education – there were no State schools until 1870. He set up a middle school and supplied the pupils with their most basic needs – a wash, 1/2lb of bread and a bowl of coffee each day. His work inspired others to join in e.g. different orders of nuns such as the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Notre Dame who set up a Demonstration School, Infants School, Grammar School and a Teacher Training College in premises in Mount Pleasant (now part of Liverpool JMU).

In 1860 he was appointed Chaplain to Walton Prison where 60% of prisoners were Catholic. He held the job for 28 years and was extremely effective at it. Prostitutes were another of his concerns. He helped educate them so that they could apply for jobs as domestic servants. He even set up a refuge for 'fallen women' and mother and baby homes at Ford and West Dingle.

Brenda told us much more about this amazing man such as his work in overcoming prejudice against Catholics, winning over the trade unions, educating and raising standards among the poor so that they could help themselves, giving orphaned children a new start in life in Canada, promoting the cause of total abstinence, starting *The Catholic Times*...the list went on, and on. It seems to me that if ever there should be a candidate for canonisation, it is Liverpool's Father Nugent!



Photo: Ron Jones.

LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY – 2015 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

10 May	1.30pm prompt in the Ground Floor Lecture Theatre of Hope at Everton Annual General Meeting followed by talk about Liverpool and the Beatles: TUNE IN: The Beatles – who, how, what and when?	Mark Lewisohn
7 June	Meet at 1.30pm at Anglican Cathedral, Liverpool, for guided tour of this Grade 1 Listed building.	
July and August...Summer recess – no meetings		
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 (see above) 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).

Legless in Liverpool

What could this photograph of limbless American Civil War soldiers possibly have to do with Liverpool? Quite a lot as it turns out. First, it is from an exhibition *Life and Limb: the Toll of the American Civil War* that opens in Liverpool on 16th April and runs until 20th June 2015. It will be the first time it has been seen in the UK following its showing at 60 locations in America. The venue for its British debut is very apt too: 19 Abercromby Square. This was once the home of Charles Kuhn Prioleau, senior partner in the Liverpool firm of Fraser Trenholm & Co., Rumford Place, foremost Confederate financiers in the UK who raised funds for building the infamous CSS *Alabama*, *Florida* and many Mersey-built blockade runners. Prioleau, along with his Liverpoolian wife Mary (formerly of



Allerton Hall), organised a Confederate Bazaar at St George's Hall in October 1864 which, over a five-day period, raised £17,000 (nearly £2m at today's values) for the aid of wounded and imprisoned Confederate soldiers.

And there's more: William H. Bell is best remembered for photographing diseases and combat injuries during the Civil War. Many were published in the book *Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion*. After the war he became chief photographer of the Army Medical Museum in Washington. He was born in Liverpool in 1830 and emigrated to America with his parents as a young child. Finally, it's a rare opportunity to see inside 19 Abercromby Square. *Further info:*

<http://news.liv.ac.uk/2015/03/27/us-life-and-limb-exhibition-stops-at-19-abercromby-square/>

Bookshelf

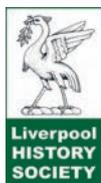
Archaeology at the Waterfront 1: Investigating Liverpool's Historic Docks Richard Gregory *et al*, 2014. Lancaster Imprints. 284 pages, 300 colour and black & white photographs, maps, illustrations and tables. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-907686-18-4. £20.00.

This highly recommended book showcases the work carried out in Liverpool's Historic Waterfront by Oxford Archaeology North and National Museums Liverpool between 2006 and 2008. LHS members may recall that this major archaeological dig was brought to life in Tony Robinson's excellent Time Team TV Special – *The Lost Dock of Liverpool* in 2008 (you can watch it on YouTube).

It is apt that it has been published on the 300th anniversary of the opening of the Old Dock. Packed with well-researched information, it is lavishly illustrated, not only from the archives of the Liverpool Record Office, National Museums Liverpool, the University of Liverpool etc., but by scores of revealing images of "what lies beneath". For this was the biggest archaeological dig that has ever been undertaken in Liverpool's docklands. The spur was the construction of the Liverpool One Shopping Development, the redevelopment of the former Mann Island / Nova Scotia area for the new Museum of Liverpool and commercial offices and apartments and the construction of a new Canal Link between Stanley Dock and Salthouse Dock.

However, this book is much more than the story of an archaeological dig under the streets of old Liverpool, enormous undertaking though it was; it is also a well-researched 'history lesson' into Liverpool's past and tells the story of the unprecedented rise of a medieval fishing village to arguably the most important global port city of the British Empire.

Ron Jones



Chairman: John Tiernan (tiernan_john@hotmail.com) ● **Administration Secretary:** Fred Forrest (fred_forrest@hotmail.com) ● **Membership Secretary:** Emma Bennett (membershipssecretary@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk) ● **Programme Secretary:** James Sambrook (programmesecretary@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk) ● **Treasurer:** Tony Melling (treasurer@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk) ● **Newsletter Editor:** Ron Jones (ron@rja-mpl.com) ● **Hon. Librarian:** Post vacant – volunteer needed! ● **Postal Correspondence:** Fred Forrest. LHS Administration Secretary, 32 Rugby Drive, Aintree Village, Liverpool L10 8JU. ● **LHS Email:** enquiries@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk

LHS would like to thank C3imaging, Liverpool, for generously printing this issue of the newsletter at a reduced cost to the Society. Visit the company's website for full details of the wide range of photographic, digital printing, exhibition, display and signage services it offers – www.c3imaging.com

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Bookshelf (continued)

Christianity, community and social concern: a history of the Liverpool Domestic Mission Society from 1836. R J Ash, 2011. Wordscapes. 182 pages, 17 b&w illustrations. Hardback. ISBN 978-0-9566344-0-5. Unpriced.

Using information gleaned from the Society’s annual reports to structure the narrative, the author offers a glimpse of the social history of the south docklands area during the 19th and 20th centuries. Founded in Toxteth by a group of prominent Unitarians who were concerned to ‘help ameliorate the poverty blighting the lives of those living in the squalid housing,’ following the closure of the Society in 2010 the account looks back over the 175 years of its life and ‘ponders the mission’s intrinsic tensions and contradictions: the central dilemma of how to serve both community and congregation,’ within a context in which the wealth from the middle, manufacturing and upper classes ‘was applied strategically as much for the preservation of social order as for the betterment of the poor.’

The recurrent 19th century themes of casual dockside employment, insanitary courts, the ‘evils of drink’, ‘fallen women’ and ‘keeping the lid on the pressure cooker of discontent’ were addressed by the Mission in parallel with ‘presenting the Gospel of Christ’ and seeking ‘working-class redemption’ as the work developed from the original building in Greenland Street, via the High Park Street and Beaufort Street premises to the Mill Street home of 1892. Entering the 20th century the Society found itself working within a period of industrial unrest, strikes, two world wars, class shifts and riots, and by 1966 the Mission had already become ‘a focus for community action rather than a congregational gathering venue.’

This is an interesting, informative and commendably honest account, faithfully recording the tensions between ministers and assistants, and between them and the committee to whom they reported annually, as they sought to balance the shifting and conflicting needs of social relief and congregationalism. This together with an accompanying book, *Changes and Challenges: a personal history of the Liverpool Domestic Mission Society from 1964 – 2014*, by the same author are obtainable for £10 from Annette Butler at Ullet Road Church – the final home of the Society (pictured right).

Graham Jones

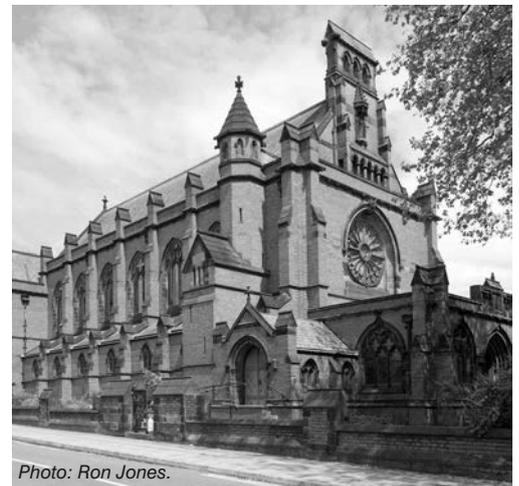
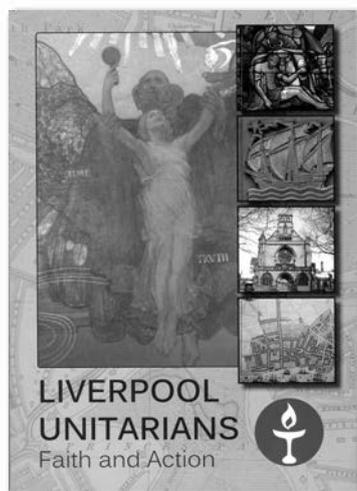


Photo: Ron Jones.

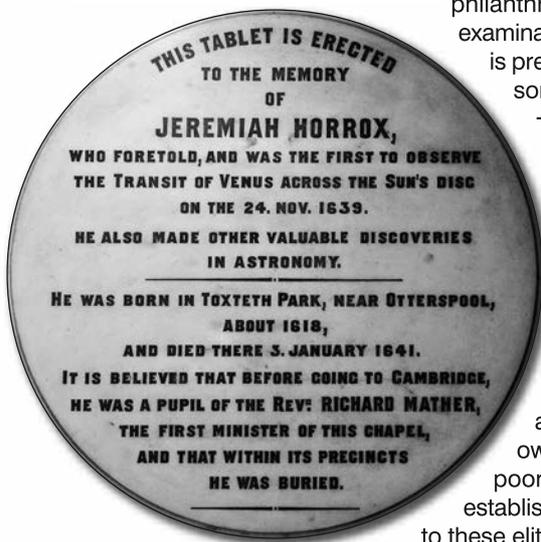


Liverpool Unitarians: Faith and Action, Essays exploring the lives and contributions to society of notable figures in Liverpool Unitarian history. Edited by Daphne Roberts and David Steers. 2014. The Merseyside and District Missionary Association. 128 pages. 52 black and white photographs. Paperback. ISBN 978-0-9929031-0-7. Cover price is £10 although not available in retail outlets. Concessionary price to LHS members £8: contact Annette Butler on 0151 728 8028 or at chrisbutler100@hotmail.com. Postage is £2.20, but can also be obtained from regular monthly meetings at Ullet Road Unitarian Church.

‘The Unitarian churches on Merseyside have an unbroken history that stretches back over four hundred years. In that time they have included in their number many people who have made remarkable contributions to the life of Liverpool....whether in industry and commerce, in education and the arts or in responding to the needs of society, particularly the poor and marginalised.’ So the back cover of this book proclaims about the mark left on history by some notable Liverpool Unitarians. The evidence for this becomes clear when one reads the personal backgrounds and achievements of the subjects featured. Of the 17 essays, 13 are brief biographies of dissenters with Liverpool connections, from the truly local William Roscoe, Charles Pierre Melly, Sir Henry Tate, and Sir John Brunner, to the transient but still influential Noah Jones, John Johns, and William Channing. Two families who contributed commercially and philanthropically on a dynastic scale are also discussed: the Rathbones and the Holts. An examination of some of the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth’s fascinating monuments and gravestones is presented by Bernard Cliffe, its caretaker who also concludes this collection of essays with some interesting examples from its Visitors’ Book.

The legitimacy of this collection derives from the fact that all nine contributors are active Unitarians, several of whom are, or have been, ministers and pastoral activists. They describe these outstanding achievers from an informed perspective of religious faith and moral values. For example, the Unitarian emphasis on universal education and its support for liberalism and political radicalism derive from spiritual principle. David Steers in his essay on William Roscoe, quotes from his subject’s House of Commons speech condemning slavery to a very hostile reception: “...and I consider it the greatest happiness of my life to lift up my voice on this occasion against it, with the friends of justice and humanity.”

This collection does not attempt to chart the history of Liverpool Unitarianism, nor to analyse it as a movement. What it faithfully reveals is the historic debt that Liverpool owes to individuals inspired by their faith to improve the conditions and prospects of its poorest inhabitants. Unitarians were placed apart from the religious and political establishment of the Liverpool of their day. Despite this disadvantage, they set a moral example to these elites, often anonymously, in ‘making a difference’ to its communities’ lives.



Above: memorial to Jeremiah Horrox (Horrocks) at the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth. Photo: Ron Jones.

Tony Melling

Merseyside at War. Anthony Hogan, 2014. Amberley Publishing. 128 pages, 47 b&w illustrations. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-4456 3760 0. £12.99 but available from amazon.co.uk from £8.75, Kindle edition £7.80.

It is clear that this book, put together by local author Anthony Hogan, is a labour of love. In 2009 he created the *Liverpool and Merseyside Remembered* website (www.liverpoolremembrance.weebly.com) which is an excellent resource and which I recommend you explore.

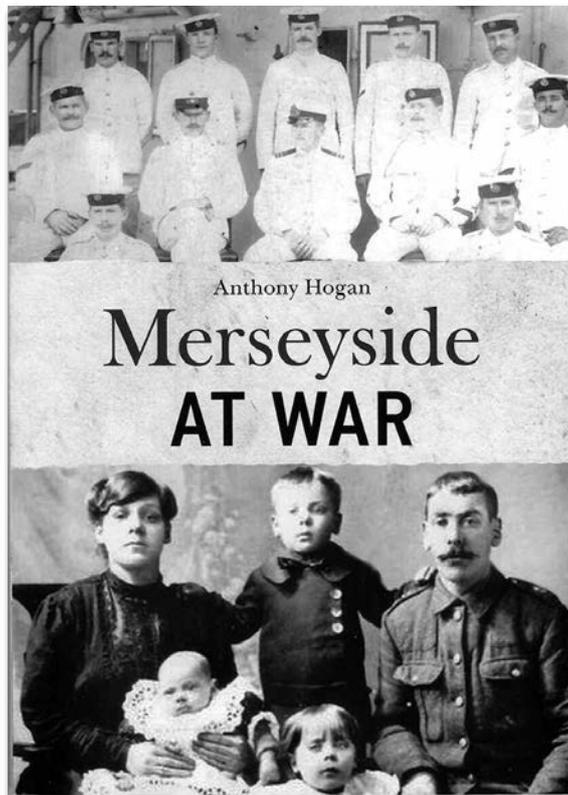
This book is largely 'the book of the website', or rather a distillation of it since the website covers a lot more ground.

Although its title is *Merseyside at War*, I think a more accurate one would be *Merseysiders at War* for the book is a very personalised account of the often short lives of a selection of Merseyside servicemen in both World Wars.

There is a chapter on local regiments in which Hogan tells us that, at the outbreak of the First World War, Liverpool was home to ten battalions of the King's Liverpool Regiment. This chapter is largely illustrated by large photographs of derelict buildings and featureless sites, once former military headquarters and barracks.

The *Lusitania* disaster is covered principally by a re-telling of the account of anti-German rioting in the city. Another short WW1 chapter raises the injustice of soldiers who were executed for cowardice, giving the example of Irishman Bernard McGeehan whose only connection with the area seems to be that he came to the city to enrol with the King's Liverpool Regiment – I was left wondering "Did no *Merseyside* soldier get dragged from his bed and shot at dawn?"

The exploits of the Hogan / Owens family through two World Wars is given its own chapter but was the author, Anthony Hogan, a member of that same Hogan family? Presumably, but we are not told.



A short chapter is awarded to Liverpool's Italian community, centered around the Christian Street / Hunter Street area. At the outbreak of the Second World War, many men from the city's 'Little Italy' were rounded up as aliens and taken to camps around Lancashire including one in Huyton. One of my aunts was rehoused from Lodge Lane to Longview Lane so I knew about the Italians, and the German POWs, who once lived across the road. Early in the war, the decision was taken to deport many Italian and German aliens to Canada. This led to the great maritime tragedy of the sinking in 1940 by a U-boat of the *Arandora Star* en route from Liverpool to Newfoundland with the loss of some 800 people, mainly interned Italians and Germans.

The Second World War is also featured in chapters about Liverpool-born Samuel Spears, a Japanese prisoner of war, the Blitz, and a Greek by the name of George Rodocanichi, who left Liverpool when he was a young child, went on to become a doctor in France and emerged in his mid-60s as a real hero in the fight against the Nazis before finally perishing in Buchenwald.

I have to confess that I found it a rather odd book which didn't seem to have a proper structure and which ping-ponged between the first and second world war. What is almost totally missing here is the bigger picture of Merseyside's role in both wars. For that omission I think the publishers are largely to blame. What was needed here was strong editorial direction as well as a good proofreader.

But people's tastes in books, like food or wine, are highly personal and it's very much a case of "one man's meat is another man's poison". So, please make up your own mind – a copy of *Merseyside at War* has been deposited in the Society's library in the Search Room on the 3rd floor of Liverpool Central Library. For details about borrowing books from the library, see the Society's website (www.liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk).