

## HISTORY SOCIETY

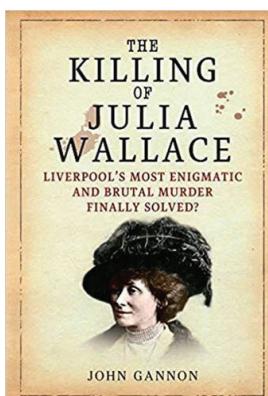
SUMMER 2019

#55

### THE WALLACE MURDER – A NEW POSSIBLE MOTIVE

BY FRED FORREST

William Herbert Wallace was convicted in 1931 of the murder of his wife Julia in their home in Wolverton St. in Liverpool's Anfield district. His conviction was overturned by Court of Criminal Appeal, the first instance in British legal history where an appeal had been allowed after a re-examination of evidence. The case, with its strange background, has long been the subject of speculation and had generated many books, being regarded internationally as a classic murder mystery, with opinion very divided as to Wallace's guilt or otherwise.



LHS received the following correspondence via its website from an American named Todd Winslow:-

"My father was born in Liverpool in 1910. During the years of 1927-31 he worked at the Prudential Assurance Company on Dale Street. He was not only co-

worker to William Herbert Wallace, but also an intimate friend and frequent guest at the Wallace's house on Wolverton (sic) Street. He was also acquainted with Gordy Parry and Lily Loyd – although he knew Gordy much better than he knew Lily. My father left the Prudential Assurance Company in March of 1931 and in May of the same year relocated to Boston, Massachusetts, where he eventually met and married my mother. I am the second son and fifth child (of seven) born to my parents in 1949. My father first told me about the murder of Julia Wallace when I was a teenager, at which time he also told me about his friendship with William Herbert Wallace. Over passing years my father and I had many conversations about the murder of Julia Wallace – the last conversation

being just before he passed away in 1974 and at which time he told me that William Herbert Wallace was a homosexual who quite regularly paid young men to have sex with him (my father and Gordy Parry being two of those young men) and when Julia Wallace discovered the true nature of her husband's relationships with young men, she threatened him with exposure and divorce. And THAT in my father's opinion was the reason she was murdered. My father was also convinced that William Herbert Wallace and Gordy Parry were BOTH inside the Wolverton (sic) house when Julia was murdered. It's quite possible that Gordy had returned to the Wolverton (sic) house with William earlier that afternoon or that either William or Julia had welcomed him inside BEFORE William had left on his search for the mysterious R.M. Qualtrough, who in all probability was Gordy Parry".

The same message was sent via snail mail from the USA to the publisher in London of a book on the Wallace murder by local writer (and LHS member) John Gannon. Unfortunately neither of us has been able to make contact with the writer or find any records in respect of his father but we have not given up!

On the face of it, this seems to me as plausible a motive for the murder of Julia Wallace as any advanced to date. Male homosexuality was treated as a serious criminal offence until the late 1960s and could lead to imprisonment as well as financial and social ruin. Wallace would no doubt remember well from his youth the downfall and early death of Oscar Wilde. Although the gravestone at Anfield Cemetery suggests that Julia Wallace was a similar age to her husband, there is now compelling evidence unearthed by locally born writer James Murphy to suggest that Julia was in fact born near Knaresborough seventeen years before him and was about 53 when they married. If Wallace knew this, he kept up the pretence right up to his wife's burial and it could be that he was using her as what in modern parlance is termed a "beard",

a woman that a homosexual male dates or marries as a cover for his true sexuality. Todd Winslow's father's resignation from the Prudential Assurance in March 1931 and his departure for the USA a few months later, at about the time of Wallace's reprieve, can be seen as the actions of a scared young man. It could be that Winslow is a new name he took up in case he was implicated after further investigation.

Every time I look into the Wallace murder, I discover new things. This time I found out that the person who delivered their newspaper on the night of the murder was one David Jones, the grandfather of a friend of mine. David was very much an adult and was working at several jobs in those poverty-stricken times. Julia was buried a mere five days after the murder; unthinkable today. Also, one neighbour described the couple as "strange, queer". As well as collecting insurance, Wallace lectured part-time in Chemistry and other hobbies were Botany and Chess. He also learnt to play the piano to accompany his wife, an accomplished violinist. These facts would not, however, have necessarily made them stand out as the 1935 Kelly's Directory shows that neighbours in Wolverton St., then only 20 years old, included two music teachers, a school teacher, a police sergeant and at least ten white collar workers. Nobody is shown as living at number 29, the Wallaces' former house!



### ARTICLE REQUESTS

The LHS newsletter has different sections that can see the presentation of contributions from our members. The front page is for 'feature' articles of about 600 words in length. Pages two and three are dedicated to meeting reports and feedback of our walking tours and the final page presents articles of varying length under the heading of 'Books, Events & Other'. All articles can come with an image or two and please send any contributions to the editor at [journal@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk](mailto:journal@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk).

# LIVERPOOL SCHOOLS HISTORY COMPETITION

EDDY ESTLIN & GLYN WILLIAMS



**The Liverpool Schools History Competition**  
2018-19

School Improvement Liverpool

Liverpool HISTORY SOCIETY

The Liverpool Schools Essay Competition Project idea was developed in 2017 to honour money and materials gifted posthumously to the society by the late Russell Molyneux-Johnson, Veronica Gibson and founder member Brenda Murray. The 2018-19 competition, the first in the city, enabled school pupils from the ages of 7 to 18 to showcase their historical research and writing skills and capture and celebrate part of the city's achievements.

We have been both greatly impressed and encouraged by this start to what we hope will be a sustainable annual event. The involvement of School Improvement

Liverpool in the competition has been of critical importance and the beginnings of a very productive relationship have been formed.

All the schools of Liverpool were asked to take part, with a request that teachers would proffer the best three essays for their respective Key Stage entries. Sixteen schools participated as follows:

Alsop High School  
Broadgreen International School  
Calderstones School  
Fazakerley High School  
Kirkdale St Lawrence C of E Primary School  
Liverpool Life Sciences UTC  
Mab Lane Primary School  
Northway Primary and Nursery School  
Notre Dame Catholic College  
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School  
St Ambrose Catholic Primary School  
St Finbar's Catholic Primary School  
St Francis de Sales Catholic Junior School  
St Oswald's Catholic Primary School  
The De la Salle Academy  
The Studio School

We do not know the total numbers of pupils who actually presented essays to their teachers for entry, but in some cases we have learned that these could be by an entire class. Judging the merits of the essays that we received were a very difficult task – the overall standard was high, the originality impressive and the effort put in was obvious. However, we were able to award Gold, Silver and Bronze certificates for the following essays according to educational Key Stage:

## Key Stage 2 winners

Kindertransport  
62, Falkner Street  
The History of the Albert Dock

## Key Stage 3 winners

The Beatles: A Moment in Liverpool History  
William Roscoe  
The Brave Women Who Fought For Our Rights: The Liverpool Suffragettes

## Key Stage 4 winners

How the Civil War between King Charles and Parliament affected Liverpool  
Liverpool's role in the Slave Trade  
Sir Robert Shields: The Surgeon who left behind a legacy of healthcare in Liverpool

## Key Stage 5 winner

Does Liverpool deserve the title 'Capital of Slavery'?

The prizewinners also received a family pass to a local venue of historical interest (via our sponsors The Anglican Cathedral; The Beatles Experience; British Music Experience; Everton Football Club; The Liverpool Medical Institution; Speke Hall and Western Approaches). School Improvement Liverpool also provided book tokens for all winners and the 'Horrible History' textbooks for the Key Stage 2 awards. Certificates were given to all participating schools and for each child who submitted an entry to the competition, but who did not win a prize. The LHS also commissioned the production of a special journal that features the prizewinning essays. Copies of these were given to the schools and the prizewinners and copies will be available to see/purchase at the next meetings of the LHS.

For this inaugural competition, we have attended the school assembly or classroom presentations for the winners. This has been an absolute joy to be involved in, but for next year's competition, we intend to host a single presentation ceremony for all of our winners. We will keep you updated about this.

**19<sup>TH</sup> MAY JAMES CROSSLAND**

## LIVERPOOL AFRAID? MERSEYSIDE AND THE FRENCH THREAT, 1803-60

MEETING REPORT BY GLYN WILLIAMS



NAPOLEON III  
SOURCE: NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Dr James Crossland works as a Senior Lecturer in International History at the Liverpool John Moores University. His talk focused on rumours of two 'Napoleonic' threats levelled at Liverpool and the River Mersey during the 19th century: one in the time of Napoleon Bonaparte and the other during the reign of Bonaparte's nephew Emperor Napoleon III. Karl Marx summed up the contrasting careers of these two men with the words, 'History repeats itself: first as tragedy, second as farce.'

The first threat followed the Battle of Fishguard in February 1797. This turned out to be an Irish/American plot. British forces won, but the Government realised that something had to be

done to avoid the likelihood of future invasions. Six hundred thousand militia volunteers were recruited nationwide and large numbers of Martello towers (modelled on earlier Italian fortifications) commissioned. Over a hundred towers were built in the UK, but not on the Mersey. Liverpool Castle was used to imprison hundreds of prisoners of war and local militiamen guarded the docks.

A year after Trafalgar and two years before Waterloo, the commissioning of Perch Rock in 1813 was too late for immediate use. The work was not completed until 1829, and its main purpose was not so much to repel invaders as to guard the estuary against organised smuggling.

Perch Rock's garrison featured a small battery and hundred-plus men. The cost of £27,000 was shared between the Government and the town's ship owners.



PERCH ROCK FORT, NEW BRIGHTON, WIRRAL BY HENRY EDWARD LOCKE (1862-1925). ATKINSON ART GALLERY COLLECTION. CC BY NC SA.

The second threat was initiated by an assassination attempt on Napoleon III in Paris in January 1856. The perpetrators were Italian nationalists. Rumours that they were trained in Birmingham were enough for the French to believe that the incident was sponsored by Britain. This was an era of sea-warfare and the Government in London was only too aware that in 1859 the French navy had equipped itself with a state-of-the-art ironclad warship called *La Gloire*, followed two years later by a pair of similarly potent vessels (*Magenta* and *Solferino*). The wooden ships of the Royal Navy were in serious danger of being outclassed – hence Britain launching its first ironclad ship HMS *Warrior* in 1861.

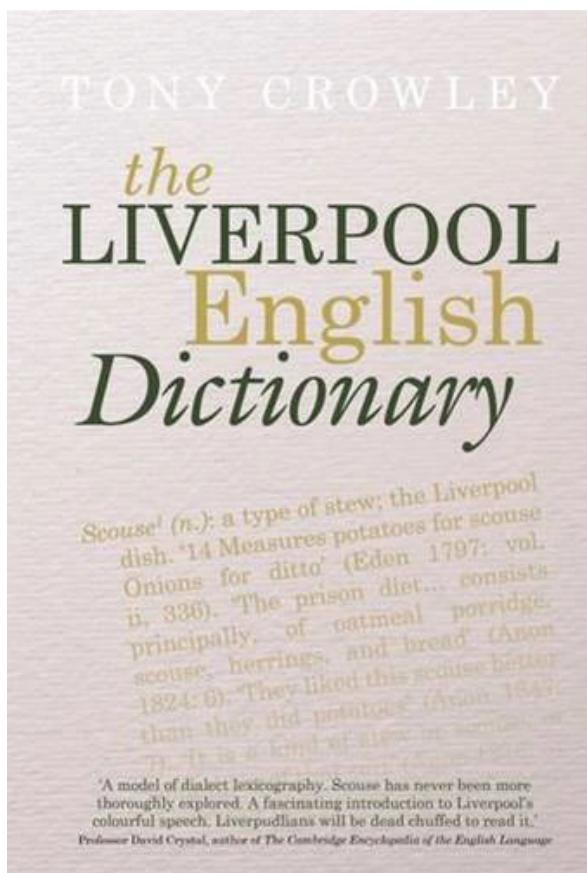
The 1850s were opulent times for Liverpool. Commerce flourished, as can be seen in St George's Hall (opened in 1854) and the magnificent buildings adorning William Brown Street and elsewhere. There was much to be protected as a second threat of French raids reared its ugly head. A battery at Liscard, intended to police water-borne incursions, was built between 1855 and 1858. This was followed some time later by similar fortifications at Seaforth (1870) and Crosby (1906), the latter focusing on threats from Germany. The port's ship owners drove the concern for a defensive strategy in the late 1850s. In May 1859, a meeting at the town hall demanded the militarisation of the docks. Ships were equipped with cannon and the docks with a generous complement of militiamen. Some guarded the docks in general, others just their owner's property.

The region's ports inevitably supported militarisation. The Lancashire hinterland (places like Rochdale and Manchester), on the other hand, was far less supportive, believing that the scare was largely unfounded and caused unwarranted panic and hysteria. Prime Minister Lord Palmerston called for more Martello towers (by now called 'Palmerston Forts') but, once again, not for Liverpool. The invasion scare lasted until 1861, after which people accepted that Liverpool and the Mersey were not a strategic priority compared to the south and east coasts.

10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH PROFESSOR TONY CROWLEY

## THE LIVERPOOL ENGLISH DICTIONARY

MEETING REPORT BY MARTIN STRAUSS



That Professor Crowley was the ideal person to talk on this subject became clear when he revealed that he was born in the Dingle and was Professor of English Language at Leeds University. His career has been devoted to language and its origins; as he put it: "language shows where you were born and bred and have been". What is a 'Liverpool word?', he asked. Is it derived from the local community and dialect? Or has it been borrowed and assimilated from elsewhere? Answers to these questions can be found in long-lost Liverpool novels and in the writings of those who came to Liverpool in the past.

The traditional version of the origin of the 'scouse' dialect is that it derived from the local Lancashire accent up to about 1830 and was then influenced by Anglo-Irish immigrants in the 1840s. Professor Crowley doubts this interpretation. If this is true, why is the accent not prevalent in Manchester, which underwent a similar growth of immigration in the same period? Part of the real answer lies in the volume of immigration into Liverpool and in the huge variety of countries from which these migrants came. The city grew from 77,000 in 1801 to 684,000 in 1901. Contemporaries, such as William Enfield for instance, noted the 'influx of strangers'. By 1841, forty-five percent of the city's population were immigrants; many were Irish, but as Professor Crowley pointed

out, spoken English differed throughout Ireland and many of the arrivals were not educated.

In reality, Liverpool's language is multi-cultural, a 'contact language'. Amongst others, Thomas de Quincey and Elizabeth Gaskell noted the variety of languages spoken in Liverpool. Apart from an Irish influence, scouse words come from Chinese, Cornish, Dutch, Welsh, Persian, Turkish, Italian, French, Danish, Spanish, Gaelic, Hindi, Portuguese, Romany and the slang of the armed forces (including Polari, the slang of the seamen of the Mediterranean). Liverpool's trade and maritime expansion brought many nationalities to the city, which influenced the local language. Other influences include the growth of education and literacy, the development of the railways and newspapers.

Turning to other aspects of 'scouse', Professor Crowley noted that Frank Shaw's 1966 publication of 'Lern Yerself Scouse', was widely criticised for its focus on 'South-end scouse' to the exclusion of the 'North-end' of Liverpool. The first mention of 'Lobsouse' dates from 1708: a stew of onions, potatoes and oatmeal. A recipe of 1797 suggests Baltic/Nordic origins – the food eaten on ships, perhaps from the Latvian 'labs'. A 'scouser' is one who eats 'scouse'; perhaps it is a naval nickname. The nature of scouse after decades of multicultural influences seems to be fixed from the 1950s.

Professor Crowley gave some specific examples and their language of origin: 'cushy', (19th century Urdu); 'scoff', (Dutch); 'dekkō', (Hindi); 'buckshee', (Persian, a gratuity); 'gansey', (Irish English, a jersey); 'debby', (French, debris); 'scallywag', (US English, an unwilling worker); 'gobshite' (Irish English); 'scran' (18th Cant). 'Whack', or pal, involves the idea of sharing among friends, perhaps the crew of a ship, where each gets a 'fair whack'. So, many words have 18th century origins, being then nourished in the 19th century by the development of trade, and the arrival in Liverpool of thousands of new migrants seeking employment, escaping persecution or famine or sensing that a fortune could be made in the new opportunities offered in the city. Linguists may distinguish between language and accent, but both go together. 'Scouse' is distinctive of Liverpool; it is the accent and the local language used by a 'scouser', the origins of which go back two hundred years.

# LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY

– 2019 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

LIVERPOOL AS A WHALING PORT 1750 - 1823

DR. SIMON HILL

17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER

LIVERPOOL LIVES AT THE TURN OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

HUGH GAULT

8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

THE HEALTH OF LIVERPOOL CHILDREN DURING THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

DR. EDDY ESTLIN

## Books, EVENTS & OTHER

### FROM THE EDITOR

For this and future editions, we have made some minor changes to the format of our newsletter. We will look to include 'Feature' articles on the front page and have introduced a new final section that we'd like to use to include miscellaneous contributions from our Membership, such as book reviews and the flagging up of forthcoming exhibitions, and also television, film and radio items which are connected to Merseyside's social and economic history.

In addition, the LHS Committee is looking at other ways in which we might engage our Members in other activities as well as our Sunday talks Programme. Ideas such as a social forum, discussion groups and our reaching out to other organisations were brought forward. However, in order to do this, our Society would need to harness the ideas and energy of members who could play an active part in the realisation of such aspirations. With this in mind, we (the Committee) would ask members who could play an active part to submit their ideas to help the core aims and objectives of the LHS Constitution. Submissions can be emailed to either to the Fred Forrest or Eddy Estlin.

### EVENTS

There are three exhibitions of interest as follows:

#### 6 VESSELS

(Until 22nd September)

Williamson Art Gallery and Museum,  
Slatey Rd, Birkenhead CH43 4UE

This exhibition explores the legacy of Cammell Laird Ship Builders through exhibits relating to the following ships: HMS Birkenhead (1847), Ma Roberts (1852), CSS Alabama (1862), HMT Leasowe Castle (1917), HMS Ark Royal (1937) and RMS Mauretania (1938)

#### BLITZED – LIVERPOOL LIVES

(Until Summer 2021)

Museum of Liverpool,  
Pier Head, Liverpool Waterfront, Liverpool L3 1DG

This exhibition is a collection of photographs and personal accounts of the bombing raids and their impact between 1940-41.

#### TIDE AND TIME EXHIBITION

(ongoing but with time/date limited access)

The National Oceanography Centre,  
Joseph Proudman Building,  
6 Brownlow Hill, L3 5DA

Usual opening one day each month on the 1st Tuesday 3-4 pm but phone 0151 794 4800 to check Liverpool is the birthplace of sea level science and this exhibition showcases 2 of

its mechanical computers originally installed at Bidston Observatory, which provided the tidal predictions for the D-Day landings.

Kim Rawlinson

#### TOUR OF THE WILLIS WORKSHOP

Peter Elson of the Bluecoat School is offering to organise tours of the Willis Workshop (an internationally renowned organ building company that specialises in restoration works) for LHS Members. For further details please contact Peter at: p.elson@bluecoatschool.org.uk



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