

LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY – 2018 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

21 October**	Liverpool on Film 1897 - 1970	Prof. Julia Hallam
18 November	The Liverpool Irish. Migration and its Consequences	Greg Quiry
9 December	The Life and Work of Thomas Brassey 1805 – 1870 (Railway Engineer)	David Casement

Meetings take place at 2pm (doors open at 1.30pm). **The October meeting will be at the Liverpool Cricket Club on Riversdale Road, L19 3QF. The November and December meetings will be in the Grace Room, first floor, Cornerstone Building, Hope at Everton, Shaw Street, L3 8QB (the former St Francis Xavier College building).

This celebration of the power and majesty of the city's horses saw cash prizes for the cleanest and neatest, best turned out and best decorated horses as well as pulling power competitions to exhibit the immense strength of these magnificent animals. World War One saw large numbers of the city's horses taken into service, their renowned strength being seen as ideal for the Western Front. After being sent to Lathom Hall to be conditioned for war work those that passed the test were sent to France.

Tragically many did not return, falling victim to disease, hoof rot or suffering heart attacks as the trauma of being slung off a ship proved too much. Many of the carters signed up to stay with their horse, such was their dedication to the animals. World War Two saw the horses remain in Liverpool and carters kept vital supply lines open between the docks and the wider region, and carters over 25 were also exempt from conscription due to their vital role on the home front. Petrol rationing saw a renewed appreciation for horse drawn wagons and the dip in work seen in the depression of the 1930s was temporarily forgotten.

But by the late sixties very few horses were still working, tarmac roads were not horse shoe friendly and the last of the carters were forced to swap their reins for ignition keys. Their loading skills were still in great demand but the passion for the job was gone. The life of a carter meant being out in all weathers, often working well into their sixties and seventies in what was a heavy, dirty job. But for most they considered it a privilege and Liverpool could not have become the city it is today without them.

Online access to ancestry and archives

A long-term project to digitise carefully and accurately all of the electoral registers for the City of Liverpool from 1832 to 1970 held by Liverpool Record Office has come to fruition. Over 670,000 high quality images and more than 8 million records can be searched for the first time via the Ancestry website. Previously, people researching their family tree would have had to visit the Record Office in person and consult the fragile originals. They would also have needed to know the addresses where their ancestors lived and then look up the relevant polling district which changed frequently through time. Restrictive property requirements denied the vote to much of the population for many years. In 1918 the restrictions were removed for men over the age of 21 and some women over 30, and in 1928 the voting age was made 21 for both men and women. The simple search is now possible online and is free at all of Liverpool's public libraries as well as Central Library. It opens up the opportunity to make interesting discoveries and connections which previously would have been difficult and time-consuming if not impossible. The originals will be preserved permanently in the state-of-the-art repository of Liverpool Record Office under the expert care of the Conservation team.

Liverpool Unique Images from the Archives of Historic England

In recent years several pictorial books about the Merseyside area have been published and this one by LHS member Hugh Hollinghurst is somewhat similar but can boast sourcing most of its pictures from the archives of Historic England and all, whatever the source, are of excellent quality. These pictures, a good number of which are not the standard fare, cover a wide range of topics - Docks, Waterfront, Transport, Business and Commerce, Culture, Homes (grand and not so grand), Leisure - and the book is split up along these lines. Much thought and research has obviously gone into the text accompanying each of the pictures, often bringing out unusual facts. All in all, an interesting book even for those who know a lot about Liverpool's history. A copy is in the Society's library.

Fred Forrest

Liverpool Unique Images from the Archives of Historic England by Hugh Hollinghurst and Contributions by Historic England. Amberley, 2018. ISBN 978-1-4456-8123-8. 96 pages, 160 illustrations, many in colour. £14.99 softback & e-book.

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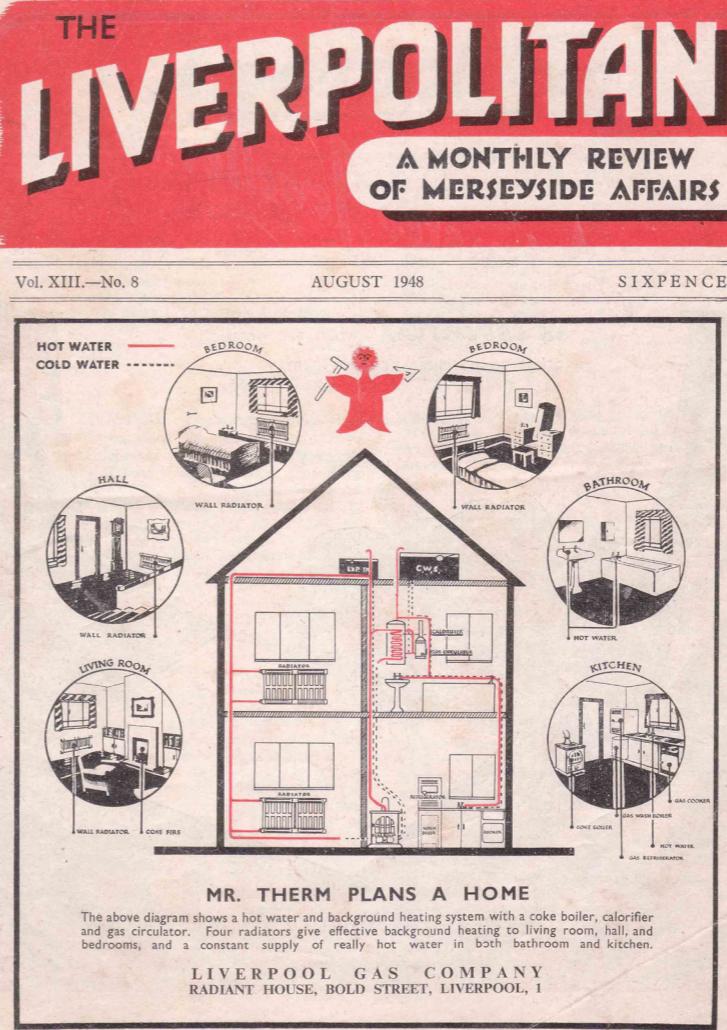
SUMMER 2018

#52

70 Years Ago: Nationalisations recalled

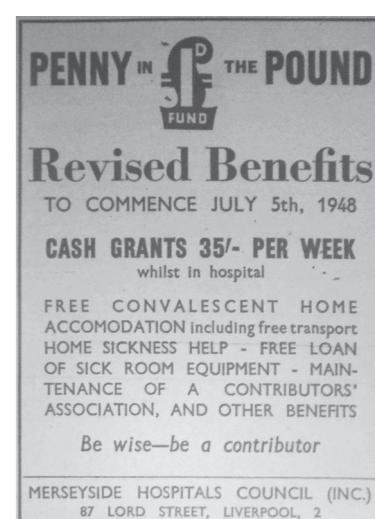
1948-49 were years of historic nationalisations, and the January 1948 edition of *The Liverpolitan* contained a review of 'A History of The Cheshire Lines Railway, 1863-1947'. It was a timely publication, for that railway had just lost its independence, having been merged on January 1st into the London Midland Region of the recently created British Railways. The original Cheshire Lines Committee name (as more correctly known) had survived through the years, despite more than half the track eventually being in Lancashire and with its headquarters at Central Station.

From March advertisements began to appear for revised benefits for the *Penny in the £ Fund*, to take effect on 5th July – the day that the National Health Service would come into existence. Government leaflets were delivered to every house in the country promising that the NHS 'will provide you with all medical, dental, and nursing care. Everyone – rich or poor, man, woman or child – can use it or any part of it. There are no charges, except for a few special items. There are no insurance qualifications. But it is not a "charity". You are all paying for it, mainly as taxpayers, and it will relieve your money worries in time of illness.'



Before the great day had arrived, however, the June edition was already focusing upon 'The Need for more Nurses... Today, in Liverpool, there are a number of empty wards simply because there are not sufficient nurses to go round, and, indeed, it has only been possible to maintain the large number of beds in use by subjecting our nursing staff to a prolonged period of strain'. Then, with 5th July barely gone, the August edition carried an article by a city councillor on 'Second Thoughts on State Medicine', with a claim that 'there have already been reports of abuses and malpractice and stories of exploitation in many ways' (whilst failing to provide examples).

Graham Jones



18 March 2018 – Dr Nicholas Wong

THE RUSHWORTHS OF LIVERPOOL

Meeting report:
Glyn Williams

The firm was founded by William Rushworth (1807-74), a cabinet maker originally from Huddersfield who set up shop as an organ builder in Liverpool in 1828. His aim was no doubt to service Liverpool's growing population and concomitant church-building programme. By 1857 William's business was located at 11 Islington. Two years later in 1859 it went bankrupt, with ownership passing to his sons Walter Rushworth (1832-1903), who specialised in organ-building, and Edwin Rushworth (1836-1911), who developed the retail side of the enterprise. The firm later opened a music shop next door at No.13 and eventually occupied Nos. 15 and 17 as well.



13 Islington c.1900

The third generation comprised Edwin's son William Rushworth II (1869-1944) and his cousin and near-contemporary Walter Maynard Rushworth (1870-1945), who was Walter's son. Both men made a major contribution to organ-building and music retailing. William II was noted for tempering business acumen with a sense of civic responsibility, for which efforts he was awarded an MBE in 1931 and an Hon. MA from the University of Liverpool in 1941.



Back in 1897, William II and Walter Maynard had consolidated their business ties with a new partnership agreement. Five years later, in 1902, they diversified into piano making, buying out a local firm established over sixty years earlier by William Porter Dreaper (1804-82).

The name of the shop in Islington was changed soon after to '*Rushworth and Dreaper's Music House*'. In its heyday the business was reputed to have 400 pianos in stock at any one time and supplied instruments for luxury liners like the *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*.

The fourth Rushworth generation was spearheaded by William II's son James Rushworth (1913-2002), who took over the firm in 1944. He was largely responsible for moving the shop to Whitechapel in 1960. He also established the William Rushworth Trust, a scheme to give financial assistance to aspiring young musicians. In addition to serving as a JP, he followed in his father's footsteps with an OBE and an Hon. MA from the University of Liverpool. His bit for World War Two was converting the piano and organ workshop for the production of aeroplane wings. James maintained the family tradition of focusing on both organ building and retail – and of producing sons to continue the family business.

The fifth generation featured the business flair of David Rushworth (born 1943) and the last of the great family organ builders Alastair Rushworth (1945-2016). The Rushworths were much more than organ builders and shopkeepers.

They recognised the importance of music as a civilising influence on Liverpool's growing middle class. With an after-sales policy no doubt inspired by William II's researches in the USA, the shop offered instrumental tuition. It also provided guidance for music teachers in '*The R&D Concert and Entertainment Calendar and Music Teachers' Directory*', published annually between 1906 and 1970. It opened its own concert hall in Islington and between 1941 and 1968 organised an annual Festival of Music and Verse.

The firm went bankrupt for the second and final time in 2002 – due largely to the rise of inexpensive electronic keyboards. It was the end of an era that had lasted 174 years and made a major contribution to the city's cultural life.

15 April 2018 – Sharon Brown

LIVERPOOL CARTERS AND THEIR HORSES

Once described as the 'finest in the land' with a 'striking peculiarity', the thousands of horse and cart teams which once swarmed the city are now a distant childhood memory for some, for others just another piece of this city's rich history. In their heyday these essential men were known throughout the land for both their immense skill and the elaborate, decorative presentation of their much loved horses. Generations of men took immense pride in their work despite being unfairly regarded as 'unskilled labour', and for the last few the inevitable transfer to motorised vehicles was a very sad day indeed.

Once over 20,000 horses transported goods from the bustling docks across the city; in just over 60 years the amount grew from 4 million tons in 1850 to a whopping 19 million by 1914. Liverpool boasted the most horses anywhere outside of London. Employing thousands of boys, men (and a handful of women), the carting industry formed one of the largest employers of the city. 'Carter's Corners' (Hopwood Street and Warwick Street) offered the chance to pick up casual carting work, or a permanent position for the lucky few. There were also many support industries - wheelwrights, barrel makers, coach painters, carpenters, manufacturers of horse feed and saddle makers, one of the most successful being R. Lunt who made the distinctive 'cockle shell' blinker to illustrate Liverpool's link with the sea. In addition many horse keepers were employed and housed at the stables and were often seen running about the streets in their night attire chasing a runaway horse!

The long working day started at 5.30 am at the stables to feed and groom the horse, who was also often given a bucket of beer, before hitching to the wagon to carry out assigned jobs or to be ready for whatever the company runners gave them. It was a six-day week with a Sunday rota as horses still needed feeding and cleaning. Whatever the day had in store the 'Carter's Code' meant anyone in difficulty, whether it was unfamiliarity with the area, a broken chain or a run-away horse, could rely on the support and camaraderie of his fellow carters, regardless of who they worked for. Many began their long working careers as a stable boys under the watchful eye of older carters. They were charged with keeping the stables scrupulously clean as well as taking the horses to be shod at one of the many blacksmiths about the city. A carter always knew where his horse had been shod and woe betide any lad who took a horse to a different smithy!



Albert Hilton

In 1867 the city's corporation decided it would be more economical to breed and keep its own horses rather than rely on private contractors. Smithdown Lane stables was built to accommodate 50 horses from ponies to shires. Each horse had a name and number to show how many years it had been in service: names such as Daredevil, Expert, Imperial reflected the symbolic characteristics each horse possessed. However in 1901 the corporation took the somewhat questionable decision to name the horses alphabetically leading to names such as 'Barn Owl', 'Zoo' and 'Camp-Bed'. The building was still in operation until the 1960s when the demise of the horse and cart meant it fell into disrepair before finally being sold off in 1993. Once vilified in the 1813 local press as '*ruffians notorious for their intoxication, coarse language and reckless driving habits*', by 1875 the Christian Carters' Association boasted a sober, god-fearing membership and took credit for transforming many previous 'drunken wastrels'. But drink was not the only danger: travelling across the Mersey via the floating roadway with a cart weighing over 5 tons meant it was not uncommon for carter, horse and load all to be lost to a watery grave.

The dangers of the job meant the formation of a strong union was a godsend to many. Low pay, long hours and poor working conditions were addressed and a set wage of 29 shillings for a team and 26 shillings for a single carter per week, a 48 hour working week along with a week's paid holiday after a year and sick pay were all established at the start of the 20th century. Since the 1840s the May Day Parade was a significant event in a carter's calendar: horses would be highly decorated with colourful paper flowers made by the carter's family, highly polished brasses passed down through the family and saddles would be blackened with secret recipes.

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13 May 2018 – David Hearn

LIVERPOOL'S LINKS WITH AMERICA

David Hearn's talk on Atlantic links over recent centuries began with Christopher Columbus, whose effigy appears on the Racquet Club's façade in Chapel Street. The merchant, Robert Morris (1734-1806) joined the revolutionaries in the War of Independence, financing much of their campaign by paying soldiers and providing musket balls. The first to use the '\$-sign' formally, his signature is on the Declaration of Independence. He has a plaque in Dale Street.



Robert Morris on an 1878 \$10 silver certificate.
Wikimedia Commons.

Banastre Tarleton has a plaque in Fenwick Street. After extravagant spending in his youth, he purchased a cornet's commission in the army and proved himself a capable cavalry leader. He led the British Legion of American Loyalists against the rebels. By 1809, he was a General and a possible rival to Wellington to lead the British army in Spain.

The S.S. *Savannah*, the first steam ship to cross the Atlantic, arrived in 1819, though the weight of her engine and the fuel required made her commercial use unviable. A merchant in timber and coal, Samuel Cunard fought in the War of 1812. Once his shipping line was established, he set up his principal European offices in Water Street.

In 1826, John James Audubon arrived in search of a publisher for his pictures. With an introduction to the Rathbone family and with the support of many local grandees, Audubon found a publisher and his *Birds of America* became a celebrated volume. Our Library's copy was bought with money from Joseph Shipley, business partner of Sir William Brown.

James Maury (1746-1840) was the United States Consul in Britain, living in Rodney Street before retiring to Seacombe. The author, Washington Irving, spent time in Liverpool where his brother's business was located. The author, Nathaniel Hawthorn, was American Consul in Liverpool from 1853 to 1857 and made a fortune while in post.

The first Woolworth's store outside North America was opened in Liverpool in the 1909. In WWI, General Pershing arrived en route to France to command American troops. In WWII, tens of thousands of American aircraft and over one million American troops passed through Liverpool in transit to Europe, and the headquarters for The Battle of the Atlantic was in Rumford Street.

David Hearn ended his interesting and enlightening talk by noting that the Marks and Spencer building carries a carving of two Liver Birds supporting an American Bald Eagle, a permanent reminder of the links between Liverpool and the United States.

Meeting report:
Martin Strauss



George Francis Train (1829-1904) offered to establish a tram system in Liverpool. When this was rejected, Birkenhead invited him to build a track from the town centre to Woodside. He has a plaque in Lord Street.

G F Train.
Wikimedia Commons.