

LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY – 2018 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

18 February	Social & Economic Origins of the Liverpool Territorials 1908-1918: the Original Liverpool Pals	Major Paul Knight
18 March	Rushworths of Liverpool – A Family Music Business: Commerce, Culture and the City, 1840-2002	Dr Nicholas Wong
15 April	The Finest in the Kingdom – Liverpool Carters and their Horses	Sharon Brown

Meetings will take place at 2pm in the Grace Room, 1st Floor, Cornerstone Building, Hope at Everton, Shaw Street, L3 8QB (the former St Francis Xavier College building). Doors open at 1.30pm.

Victorian recycling with a connection to Admiral Nelson

The LHS website received an enquiry from an Anfield resident who lives in Bodley St off Sleepers Hill and who had found a roughly built, sandstone wall when removing plaster on a chimney breast in her brick built, late Victorian terraced house (fig below-right). Before these houses were built, the area bounded by Sleepers Hill, Anfield Rd, Walton Lane and Everton Valley was the estate of Samuel Woodhouse who, according to James Picton, had bought it in about 1813 from Samuel Barton and had erected a mansion called *Bronte House* on it (fig below), replacing a house called *The Pilgrim*.



A detail from Bennison's 1835 survey.
Courtesy of the Athenaeum.

The Woodhouse family had long possessed an estate in Sicily and had grown grapes there for Marsala wine, but Bronte is elsewhere on the island and was the name of an estate owned by Nelson. Picton also tells us that, when Nelson was in the area about 1804, he ordered 500 pipes of Marsala from Woodhouse for the use of his fleet and a few for friends at home. A pipe, incidentally, equates to 105 gallons so that's 52,500 gallons! Nelson also asked for the wine to be called Bronte.

Writing in 1875, Picton says that the Woodhouse family was still there, that the estate 'still preserves much of its amenity' and that 'the recent formation of Stanley Park, adjoining, has in this respect done good service in rescuing Bronte from the hands of the Philistines in the garb of builders'. A few years later, however, the Philistines inevitably won the battle and the estate was covered with five streets named after prominent Victorian architects and containing hundreds of houses.

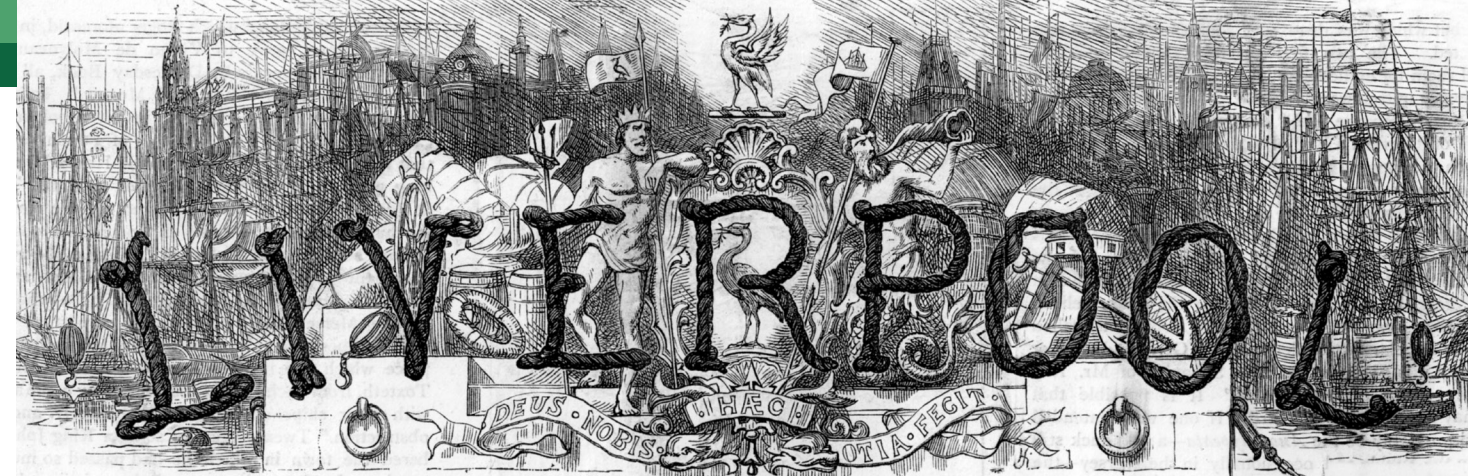


Rough sandstone chimney breast.

The Merseyside area is a rich source of sandstone, and quarries were opened across the area as it was built up, most now long gone. It seems likely that the source of the stone for Bronte House was what is shown on the 1906 O.S. map as *Cobb's Quarry* at the bottom of St Domingo Rd (then Lane), which eventually became a council depot. It could even be, of course, that some of the stone used in Bronte House and its outbuildings had been recycled from the house it replaced. Of the five streets built on the former Woodhouse estate, Bronte House was sited closest to Bodley and Butterfield Streets, where the biggest houses were built, so the use of the surplus sandstone there would have required minimal movement of it.

If the rough sandstone found hidden away in one of the terraced houses on the site of the Bronte estate is not from *Bronte House*, one wonders why it was used and buried under plaster when common brick would have been much cheaper. It is also notable that there are sandstone quoins and decorations on the Breeze Hill end of Bodley and Butterfield Streets. The Woodhouse name was preserved as the name of a street on the other side of Walton Lane, now gone, but there is a Close of the same name nearby. The house owner, incidentally, is hoping to make a feature of the wall.

Fred Forrest



HISTORY SOCIETY

WINTER 2017

Newsletter

#50

Galkoff's and the Secret Life of Pembroke Place

The project is a partnership between Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) and National Museums Liverpool, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). A team of 24 volunteers has been researching the history of the area through census, street directory and newspaper research, uncovering fascinating stories from this vibrant street from the 19th century to the present, such as the site of a former zoo, roller skating Victorians and grizzly murders. The project focuses on two main heritage assets on the site: Liverpool's last surviving example of courtyard housing and P Galkoff's kosher butchers shop.



June 1990, left to right, 25-31 Pembroke Place.
Rob Ainsworth's photo.



March 1995, Galkoff's clings to existence between the LSTM and the planned demolition of 31.
Rob Ainsworth's photo.

Court housing, providing accommodation for around half the working class population of Liverpool in the mid 19th century, was systematically demolished and better quality homes built during the first half of the twentieth century. Three houses remain, converted into back rooms of shops, which are testament to the small, dark, damp living conditions endured by thousands in Victorian Liverpool. Using information obtained from geophysical surveys, an archaeological excavation will be conducted in 2018 to uncover more remnants of the housing and understand more about people's lives there.

Erected in the 1820s, Galkoff's started its life as a house, then a greengrocers, followed by a furniture shop and was eventually turned into a kosher butchers in 1907. The sole remnant of a once thriving Jewish community in the area, its tiled façade was added in 1933. Thanks to the support of HLF, work can now go ahead to preserve this legacy of Liverpool's Jewish history, the culmination of which will be the recreation of the tiled frontage of P. Galkoff's, returned to its original finery, at the Museum of Liverpool as part of an exhibition which will reveal the *Secret Life of Pembroke Place*. Removal of the façade is due to commence in late 2017, with the exhibition – due to open in October 2018 – bringing stories of this part of the city to life.

Community engagement has been a key element of this project so far, with the project team having worked with over 500 people, aged 3-93. At this stage the team would be delighted to work with LHS members and other local historians who are familiar with the area or who are actively undertaking research relevant to Pembroke Place in order to explore and share the stories yet to be uncovered.

For more information visit:
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/galkoff
For enquiries e-mail:
poppy.learman@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk
Or phone Poppy on: 0151 478 4573

This project is of particular interest to the Society because P Galkoff's, 29 Pembroke Place, was purchased in 1990 by the late Rob Ainsworth (see his account in LHS Journal 07, 2008, p 88 and the Society's tribute to him in newsletter 34) with the intention of refurbishing the property and bringing the building back into use as a small business with living accommodation above the retail area. In his bid to retain its main heritage features, and after getting planning permission, Rob had to challenge the reversal of protective covenants due to subsequent development plans for the area including demolition of neighbouring shops. In the proposed plan, destruction of no. 31 would directly have compromised the structural stability of no. 29 (bolted to it). The city council's Property Services Department intervened and prevented the development agency from carrying out the demolition (to provide space for the LSTM car park), and from 1995 there was no activity threatening the site. In December 2004 the properties were inspected by Liverpool's conservation officer and the remaining properties 29 to 41 Pembroke Place identified as Georgian, built around 1820. At the same time Galkoff's was referred to English Heritage, and in April 2007 it was Grade II listed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport with the support, co-operation and assistance of Liverpool's Conservation Team, English Heritage (North West) and many Merseyside heritage and history societies/groups. After Rob's death, the site was purchased from his executors by LSTM.

Cynthia Stonall and Poppy Learman

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BLUECOAT 300TH ANNIVERSARYMeeting report:
Keith Lloyd

The tour started at the main gateway where Bryan explained that the building is the oldest surviving structure in Liverpool city centre. The school was founded in 1708 by the Reverend Robert Styth (rector of Liverpool, died 1713), and Bryan Blundell (a sea captain, slave trader, the school's principal benefactor and later twice Mayor of Liverpool in 1721–22 and 1728–29). With construction having started in 1716–17 by Thomas Steers and Edward Litherland, the same engineers that built the old dock, the building was extended and partially opened in 1718 as a boarding school, the *Liverpool Blue Coat School for Orphaned Children* (blue being the colour for charity). By the following year it had 50 children, with room for 100 more, and construction was finally completed in 1725.

A charity school supported by various Liverpool traders, it was owned by St Peter's church, teaching the values of the Anglican faith. Our guide showed us what may be the oldest known graffiti in Liverpool: carved initials in the stonework presumed to be made by the school children of the day. The school moved to a new site in Wavertree in 1906.

On 3 May 1941, during the Liverpool Blitz, the concert hall and adjoining rooms were severely damaged by an incendiary bomb, and during the following night the rear wing was destroyed by a bomb blast. Herbert Tyson Smith, an artist famous for his sculptures around Liverpool and who had a workshop there, raised the alarm to the fire brigade and personally rescued many works of art from the destruction. Restoration took place after the war, being completed by 1951, and the building was recorded on 28 June 1952 in the National Heritage List for England as Grade I.



Bryan's commentary on a beautifully sunny afternoon



The Bluecoat is built in brick with painted stone dressings and a slate roof, H-shaped in plan. Bryan took us into the court yard garden area and explained that originally the rear of the school resembled the front but in 1821 it was remodelled to give it a convex elevation. The front encloses three sides of a quadrangle and is separated from School Lane by a low wall with railings and gate piers. The central block of five bays has two storeys with round-arched windows, whilst the central three bays project forwards under a pediment containing a clock.

The Bluecoat Display Centre, a contemporary craft gallery, opened in the rear courtyard in 1959, being known as the Bluecoat Arts Centre from the 1980s, and now simply The Bluecoat since 2007. The 2005–2008 renovation at a cost of £14 million included a new 2250 square meter extension, built mainly in brick to link with the old building, with a copper roof and more modern materials internally. This new wing houses a flexible performance area and four art galleries. The Bluecoat was reopened on 15 March 2008, during Liverpool's year as the European Capital of Culture, with an exhibition entitled *Now Then*, showing work by five artists including Yoko Ono. During the early summer a display entitled *Mr Roscoe's Garden*, comprising part of Liverpool's Botanic Collection, was held. On 13 May a fire broke out in a kitchen on the first floor of the west wing causing significant damage.

In addition to the performance areas and art galleries, the complex now provides studios for artists and craftspeople, a restaurant and café, and a number of retail outlets. The tour finished in the old chapel section of the Bluecoat which, having been used as a concert room, has now been converted into a bar after being closed for some time due to the fire in 2008. We left via a dark wooden staircase, the oldest in the building and possibly original.

WHY NOT DROWN LIVERPOOL?

Meeting report:
Veronica Maguire

Our new season opened with an impassioned talk, subtitled *Welsh water for an English city*, by one of our own members regarding the sacrifice of a Welsh community in the mid-20th century.

Following a summary of 19th century work to provide reservoirs at Rivington and Vyrnwy, the talk moved to the end of WWII and Liverpool's need to provide new employment, for which an essential element was more water to supply new industries. Four days before Christmas 1955, the Daily Post announced the proposed damming of the Tryweryn valley in Merionethshire to provide a £16 million reservoir. A Capel Celyn Defence Committee was formed, electing prominent locals Dafydd Roberts as chairman and Elizabeth Watkin Jones as secretary. Plaid Cymru arranged a rally at Bala where their President, Gwynfor Evans, argued that 'if Wales had a political existence, actions of this kind would be unthinkable.'

With Liverpool's Council having repeatedly refused to meet the Defence Committee, in November 1956, Tudor Jones, Gwynfor Evans and Dafydd Roberts attended a meeting of Liverpool City Council scheduled to discuss Tryweryn. As Gwynfor Evans rose to address the meeting, none other than Mrs. Bessie Braddock commenced shouting and banging her desk lid, an action echoed by her compatriots, and the police were called to remove the visitors. Having been rebuffed again by Liverpool's Council, the residents of Capel Celyn came to Liverpool a fortnight later and marched to the Town Hall on the day of the Council's vote. Gwynfor Evans was granted a 15 minute address but despite his eloquence and persuasiveness the councillors voted to promote the Bill. A second meeting was required to confirm that Liverpool's citizens were also in support of the scheme and when John Braddock realised the opposing Welsh were in a majority, he delayed the meeting to allow an influx of Council employees to ensure that the vote was in favour of the scheme. The Bill had quite a bumpy ride through Parliament, but was passed on 31 July 1957.

The Daily Post had regularly reported on the Tryweryn scheme, and readers were informed that another scheme, prior to the dam announcement, had progressed almost unnoticed. The Telford sluices at Bala Lake had been removed with new ones constructed downstream to enable floodwater from a diverted Afon Tryweryn to top up Bala Lake. With the combined supply flowing for free along the River Dee to Huntington, where only a much shorter pipeline to Liverpool would then be required, the Cwm Tryweryn community realised that it was this action that had sealed their fate.

Work soon commenced with roads being closed, diversions created, a rail link closed, and a coffer dam constructed to facilitate work on the main dam. Two tunnels were dug, one carrying the River Tryweryn under the dam site to continue its course to Bala and the other for receiving overflow from the spillway. In 1963 the time had come to close the school on 25 July and, as a final act of dissolution, to remove the Welsh Bible from Capel Celyn Chapel on 28 September. The diversion tunnel was plugged on 1 September 1964 and it took a year to fill the reservoir, submerging all previous life therein. It was named Llyn Celyn in memory of the lost community. Liverpool Corporation's opening ceremony was a public relations disaster, and it was not until 2005 that Liverpool City Council finally apologised for the actions of its predecessor Council.

The whole talk together with over 100 images can be found on the LHS website as a pdf under *Local History, Articles*.



Capel Celyn's residents in Liverpool, 21 Nov 1956

LEWIS'S DEPARTMENT STORES

Meeting report:
John Cowell

Arnold Lewis presented his talk with slides and documents illustrating aspects of the Lewis's story. He took us back to when David Lewis (né David Lewis Levy) came to Liverpool from London, seeking his fortune. A bright and astute 16-year-old, he was apprenticed to the outfitters, Benjamin Hyam & Co., and was eventually promoted to a senior position opening new branches in other towns. In 1854 he married Bertha Cohen of Dover. David opened his own store at 44 Ranelagh Street in 1856, manufacturing and selling clothes for boys. His new venture thrived through innovative and extensive advertising combined with the provision of goods of exceptional quality.

The business traded ethically, offering money back guarantees as long as purchases had not been kept for more than three months and were not worn or damaged. Lewis's aim was for small unit profit to be compensated for by high unit turnover. The business grew rapidly: soon Lewis diversified into selling wide ranges of clothing and associated accessories.

The existing Ranelagh Street premises grew into an impressive 6-floor emporium with decorative spires and a clock tower. New stores were established first in Bold Street as Bon Marché – later in Basnett Street – then in other cities. He was a consummate showman who believed that shopping should be an enjoyable experience. He established the world's first Christmas Fairyland and Grotto and arranged for spectacular events to take place at each of his stores.

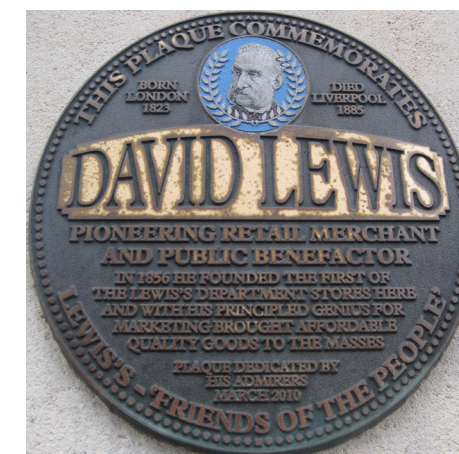
Lewis's slogan was *Friends of the people*. At its height in the 1950s Lewis's empire had nine stores – including Selfridges in London – employing over 14,000 staff. David Lewis and his wife were childless, so to continue running the expanding business David drafted in his Australian relatives. A nephew by marriage, Louis Samuel Cohen, eventually became his successor, and Liverpool's first Jewish Lord Mayor in 1899.

Besides introducing hardware, tobacco, patent medicines, stationery and literature into their stock, Lewis's had a huge impact on the nation's beverage consumption when they began selling tea at half its previous price, and promoted its consumption. It was advertised by means of a catchy vocal waltz entitled *Lewis's Beautiful Tea*, and Arnold delighted his audience by playing a recording.

Before David Lewis died in 1885, he instructed his partner Louis Cohen to acquire Brunel's neglected *Great Eastern* steamship. It was transformed into a floating bazaar and entertainment palace and sailed to the River Mersey in time for the 1886 International Exhibition of Navigation, Trade & Commerce in Liverpool that year. The ship, with a 1000-seat theatre, restaurants and various entertainments, was anchored in mid-Mersey from April to September, and over 560,000 people paid a shilling each to be ferried to it for a great day's fun. When the ship was later sold for scrap one of its masts ended up as a flagpole outside the Kop of Liverpool's football ground (*Ed: see LHS Journal 13, 2014, p67*).

Lewis's store in Liverpool was severely damaged and rebuilt twice, first from a fire in late 1886 and then in 1941 during the May Blitz. Lewis's became a public company in 1924. Sadly, in the past 50 years the store declined, a victim of asset-stripping, bankruptcy and changes of ownership. The former store building is now listed, accommodating a hotel, a gymnasium and other businesses.

The legacy of David Lewis himself survives through his philanthropy. Generous during his lifetime, he bequeathed his wealth to be used for the benefit of the working classes of Liverpool and Manchester: hospitals, libraries, playgrounds, a workmen's hostel and club resulted. The David Lewis Centre in Warford, Alderley Edge has provided residential, medical and therapeutic support for people with learning disabilities, epilepsy and autism for well over a century – probably the best memorial to David's philanthropy.



The plaque on the Ranelagh St face of the now-converted Lewis's