

Extract from Ordnance Survey map Lancashire CVI.10 (25"), revised 1906, published 1908.
Image courtesy of Liverpool Central Library.

1900 Liverpool Lives

Blackstock Street, Vauxhall between Vauxhall Road and Bevington Bush

Do you have family or friends who lived in Blackstock Street in 1900? Do you know of anyone who worked there at that time? In either case a writer working on a book about the street would be very keen to hear your stories and memories of them.

A little while ago Pat Ayers recorded people's memories of Athol Street, half a mile north of Blackstock Street up the Vauxhall Road, as part of the Liverpool Docklands History Project funded by the Leverhulme Trust. She produced a book in 1988 that you can still buy. More recently, Graeme Milne and Laura Balderstone (University of Liverpool) have worked with some of the Liverpool museums to map memories of the waterfront in the 1950s to 1970s. The website, including a film on the project, is at:

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/research/mappingmemory/index.html

Hugh Gault is looking further back to Blackstock Street in 1900. The street still exists today, as does the Eagle pub at the Vauxhall Road end. Everything else has changed.

The 1901 census gives some details of the people and families who lived there. Many of the houses on the street were shared and there were five courts as well, backed up against the factories. These included the soap makers Wm Gossage & Sons and Tyson, Richmond & Jones (both part of Lever Bros in later years); some others were Palatine Engineering, Liverpool Vesta Cake (who made cattle cake), the rice millers Irving Son & Jones, Liverpool Saccharine and Smyth Bros tanners. There was a Board School at one end and another pub the Green Flag on the opposite corner to the Eagle. The Green Flag was demolished in the 1920s to make way for council housing at Blackstock Gardens - which itself has now gone.

So, if you have stories or memories about family or friends who lived or worked in Blackstock Street in 1900, you can get in touch by leaving your contact details on:

hugh.gault@googlemail.com
or by text on: 07981 549737.

You will receive a reply as soon as possible.

Articles for the Newsletters and Journals

Do you have stories or memories of an area of Liverpool which is important to you? If so, why not write a short article for a future newsletter?

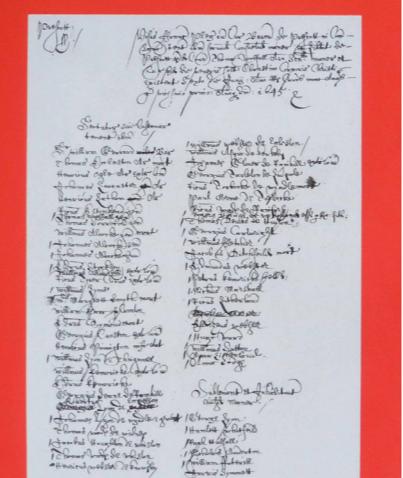
Better still, why not write a longer article for next year's Journal – you have until 31st Jan 2019 at the latest, but earlier is preferable!

AFFRAYS, TUSSLES AND BLOODWIPES

In a humorous introduction to *Affrays, Tussles and Bloodwipes: Prescot in the Civil War, 1640-1649*, Mr Gilmour promised a traditional lecture, without slides or Powerpoint presentation, inviting members to leave if they found his talk less than gripping. He himself had chanced upon his topic while attending a lecture in the Library of the Athenaeum. Not finding it engrossing, his attention had been drawn to a book in the shelves published by the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire. As a retired barrister and judge, he quickly realised he had material for a talk of his own, based on the legal records.

From 1642 – 1645 there were sieges, battles and skirmishes at Preston, Manchester, Wigan, Warrington and Liverpool (famously bombarded by Prince Rupert), with these towns frequently changing hands. When the Parliamentarians occupied Prescot they appointed eight men to sequester the property of local Catholic families loyal to the King. The Court records suggest that soldiers were not welcome in Prescot, but show that the residents managed to carry on some sort of normal life, keeping the community of 600-700 souls together and continuing to punish offenders. Between 1640 and 1649, 927 offences were recorded and 183 individuals arrested; this might suggest some unruly citizens and indeed most of the arrests were for 'affray' or 'tussle', charges we would recognize today, and 'bloodwipes' - an assault where blood is drawn by the assailant. War returned in 1648, when the Royalists were beaten at Preston.

THE COURT RECORDS OF PRESCOT 1640-1649



The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire

LIVERPOOL TERRITORIALS

Meeting report:
Martin Strauss

Prescot formed part of the estates of King's College, Cambridge. When Henry VI founded the College in the 1440s, he built up its landholdings in England; Prescot was added in 1447, along with various rights and freedoms to hold courts, handle land transactions, regulate food standards and hold markets. Those appearing before the courts included tanners, bakers, butchers, clothiers, farriers, colliers, carpenters, thatchers and (with an ale-house for every 17 residents) ale-house keepers.

For many years the town and manor had been leased from the College by the Earls of Derby. A Deputy-Steward exercised the Earl's authority, with the Baronial Court representing the Lord of the Manor and primarily involved in land leases and disputes. The Leet Court was an annual manorial or borough court, acting in the name of the King and dispensing local justice. It had a wide remit to direct life in the community, appointing a court clerk, coroners, constables, ale-tasters, 'burly-men' and 'street-lookers'. The latter were charged with reporting 'anti-social behaviour', such as people failing to clear ditches and water-courses or allowing dung to foul footpaths. 'Burly-men' kept an eye on hedges in the area and made sure all pigs had a ring through the nose to prevent them running wild and destroying crops and property. The Court maintained the stocks, the pillory and the ducking-stool. However the chief punishment seems to have been to fine culprits (3s 4d at the lower end of the scale). Failure to pay meant a period in the stocks or loss of livestock.

On court days, the twelve jurors, who had to be tenants of King's College, could question the accused. In addition to the punishments mentioned above, the court had the power to banish individuals from Prescot. In 1646, this happened to the Hoole family after many warnings, incidents and crimes, including affray and bloodwipes. The family were also fined when they were found to be still in the town, and so were the family who had sheltered them. The records show that by 1644, the courts were not functioning properly. Few did, one suspects, in the chaos of the Civil War.

Mr Gilmour will have been pleased that no member left during his talk. Indeed we were all engrossed in the vignettes he presented of life in Prescot in a time of great upheaval, which divided families, regions, religions and friends.

The Territorial Force (TF), created 1 April 1908, built upon a longer tradition of voluntary part-time military service with a continuous link going back to 1859 (the Volunteer Rifle Movement) or, in the case of the Yeomanry, to the 1790s. Both of these dates represented French threats, setting the need for these volunteer soldiers to defend their homes against foreign invasion. As part of the Army's deep reaching review of its less than exemplary performance during the Second Boer War, the purpose of the Volunteers and Yeomanry was examined and the result was the TF.

The reforms created the West Lancashire Division (headquartered in Liverpool) having about two-thirds of its strength coming from the city. This was a self-contained formation with only a handful of Regular Army personnel. Liverpool was also the home of the 1st (Western) General Hospital taking casualties off the hospital ships berthing at the dockside. They provided gunners and engineers to defend the port, and signallers for the regional headquarters which would coordinate the response to an invasion.

Despite the War Office's reforms, Liverpool's volunteer soldiers continued with the peculiarities which mark out the city. Two of the six infantry battalions had, in theory, ethnicity requirements for their recruits. The extent to which they were ever enforced is debatable, but they fostered an ethos which would prove its worth in the First World War. Two of the battalions did enforce middle class entry requirements, even giving eligibility to become a private soldier, and this was enforced, complete with subscriptions, until the introduction of conscription in 1916. Ironically, some of these Liverpool soldiers actually paid for the privilege of being shot at by the Kaiser's soldiers, much to the amazement of the Regular Army.

Indeed the TF as a whole was a strongly middle class organisation, built on 'muscular Christianity' of late-Victorian and early-Edwardian Britain, and mirrored the self-confidence of imperial pre-eminence, and pride in their home city. Most working class men worked a six-day week and would have struggled to find enough leave for the fortnight's annual camp unless allowed by a benevolent employer.

Meeting report:
Cynthia Stonall

Fortunately, as with the Army Reserve today, soldiers working in a particular field joined units where their expertise was in demand, especially in medicine, logistics, engineering and communications. The first of Liverpool's Territorials to deploy overseas after the outbreak of the First World War were signallers whose peacetime employment training had been on the railways or with the GPO, for they were now needed on the Western Front. This sounds as though Lord Derby's rationale for the 'Pals' was a belief that those who already worked together, and were prepared to join up and serve together, already possessed a camaraderie that would naturally demonstrate allegiance to one another, thereby making a cohesive group of soldiers.

Sadly, the mortality of military action on the battlefield also had alarming results on whole workplaces in the Northern industrial towns which these brave men had left. Many never returned to their wives, girlfriends, children and families as a consequence. Those that did in the main were extremely disabled and debilitated.

Major Paul Knight enlisted in the Territorial Army (since 2014, the Army Reserve) in 1993 when he started a History degree at Lancaster University and joined Liverpool University Officers' Training Corps – the only UOTC to wear the cap badge of an infantry regiment, The King's (Liverpool Regiment). He was commissioned in 1997 into the Royal Signals and now commands 33rd Signal Squadron in Liverpool. He is author of *'The Liverpool Territorial in the Great War'* and, is now editing *'Lessons from the Mud, 55th (West Lancashire) Division at the Third Battle of Ypres'*.

