

LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY – 2018 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

13 May	AGM followed by Liverpool's Links with America	David Hearn
10 June	Visit to the Blue Coat School	led by Peter Elson
July & August	Summer break, no meetings	
16 September	Galkoffs and the Secret Life of Pembroke Place	Poppy Learman & Liz Stewart

IMPORTANT: please note: 1) the May talk will take place at 2pm in the Cornerstone Building, Hope University, Shaw Street, L3 8QB (the former St Francis Xavier College building). It will be preceded by the AGM at 1.30pm (doors open 1pm); 2) all places for the June visit have now been filled; and 3) the September talk will now take place in Education Area 3, 1st Floor, Museum of Liverpool, Pier Head, at 2pm (doors open 1.30pm).

The 1874 Blue Coat Organ

Those members who came last June to the Society's guided tour of the Bluecoat Arts Centre (formerly the Blue Coat School) may remember the inclusion of the restaurant during the visit (see meeting report in newsletter #50). In that room nearly 150 years ago the Blue Coat School installed a Father Willis pipe organ for use in school assemblies, as the late 19th century photo shows. In 1908 the school moved to Wavertree, the organ having preceded it in 1906.

Now, another century later, the school has received a Heritage Lottery Fund initial grant towards the restoration of this historic organ and to provide public access to the school for concerts and events in its assembly hall. The school must raise a further £25,000 itself towards the project, and Peter Elson, the school's Development Officer, will be delighted to provide further information: email: p.elson@bluecoatschool.org.uk tel: 0151 733 1407 ext. 207



From 'The Queen's Empire', Cassell, 1897, p60. Author's collection.

The Liverpool English Dictionary

To the author, a Liverpudlian, a Professor of English at the University of Leeds and LHS member, this book, written over 35 years, has no doubt been a labour of love. It records the rich vocabulary that has evolved over the past century and a half, as part of the complex stratified, multi-faceted and changing culture of Liverpool with over 2000 entries from Abbadabba to Z-Cars. The roots / routes, meanings and histories of these words are presented with sources quoted. Unavoidably this comprehensive dictionary contains words which are derogatory or which

some will find offensive but they are dealt with by accepted lexicographical methods. Unlike most dictionaries, this is most definitely one that you can dip into and enjoy reading like a book. A copy is in the Society's library.

Fred Forrest

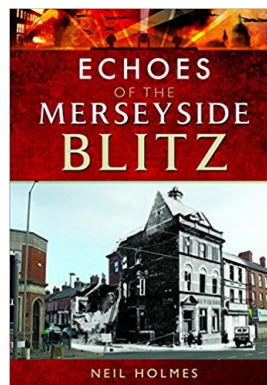
The Liverpool English Dictionary. A Record of the Language of Liverpool 1850-2015 on Historical Principles by Tony Crowley. Liverpool University Press, 2017. ISBN 978-1-78694-061-2. 268 pages, no pictures. £20 hardback and e-book.

Echoes of the Merseyside Blitz

This is the writer's third book on the same subject with, as he admits, unavoidable overlap. It does, however, cover the whole of Merseyside and leaves the reader in no doubt that the Blitz seriously affected local places other than Liverpool. The subject is dealt with chronologically and the author has been able to use recently discovered sources of information. It is a surprisingly colourful book because the author has adopted a new method to present the damage, using modern colour photographs and superimposing black and white ones of the damaged properties onto them, so called ghost photographs. It was certainly worth the effort as it seems to bring the past into the present and helps to put us into the shoes of our ancestors. If you have not read a book about Blitz damage, this is well worth looking at. A copy is in the Society's library.

Fred Forrest

Echoes of the Merseyside Blitz by Neil Holmes. Pen & Sword, 2017. ISBN 978-1-52670-258-6. 170 pages, over 200 photos, mostly colour. £14-99 softback.



HISTORY SOCIETY

SPRING 2018

John Masfield, HMS Conway and the MMSA

Shortly after the Mercantile Marine Service Association (MMSA) was founded in Liverpool in 1857, its committee moved 'that measures be at once taken to obtain from the Government a ship or vessel to be stationed in the Mersey' to provide for the training and education of young men for the Merchant Service. In 1859 the frigate *Conway*, a sixth-rate man-of-war, after fitting and re-rigging, was towed from Devonport and moored in the Sloyne off the Rock Ferry slip, and on May 19th the *Liverpool Mercury* reported that 'denuded of her twenty-six guns, and deserted by fighting seamen, the *Conway* rides at anchor, ready for active service in the cause of youthful education and civilising commerce instead of naval warfare'. Within two years it was clear that a larger vessel was required and so the fourth-rate 60-gun ship *Winchester* exchanged names and became the second *Conway*. This was the period of the American Civil War, and the cadets would have become familiar with two Laird's-built vessels that were moored close to the *Conway*, not knowing that they were intended for the Southern States as armed raiders. Then, in 1876, the refitted 91-gun line-of-battle ship *Nile* arrived at Rock Ferry to be renamed the third *Conway*, and it is on this training ship that John Masfield (1878-1967) served as a cadet between 1891 and 1893. It was an experience that deeply influenced him:



Undated postcard.

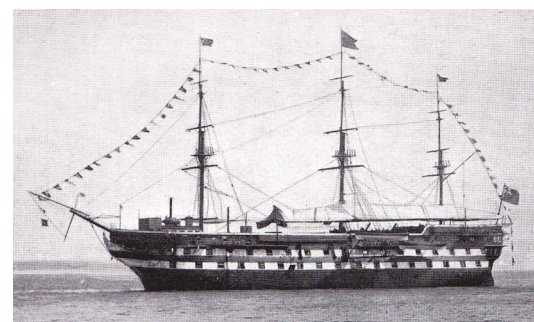
'At all seasons, at all states, the River is beautiful. At dead low water, when great sandbanks were laid bare to draw multitudes of gulls; when the ships stood still above their shadows; in storm, when the ferries beat by, shipping sprays; and at full flood, when shipping put out and came in, the River was a wonder to me. Sometimes, as I sat aloft in the cross-trees in those early days, I thought how marvellous it was, to have this ever-changing miracle about me with mountains, smoky, glittering cities, the clang of hammers, the roar or hoot of sirens; the miles of docks, the ships and attendant ships, all there for me, seemingly only noticed by me; everybody else seemed to be used to it by this time, or to have other things to do'.

In WWII the cadets dealt with incendiary bombs by scooping them up on shovels and tossing them over the side, and they had cause to abandon ship when magnetic mines landed in the water close to the ship's mooring and that of the nearby *Tacoma City* which subsequently exploded and sank. Two weeks after the May Blitz the *Conway* was towed to the Menai Straits and to moorings off Bangor where it remained until 1949 when, at great risk, it was successfully towed through the notoriously dangerous Swellies to new moorings.

However, in 1953, with a refit needed at Birkenhead, the *Conway* was called upon to make the perilous journey through the Swellies once again. It was a passage that sealed its fate, and those LHS members who are also members of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society may recall Ron Grisdale's detailed account in the LNRS September 2016 Bulletin of the ship's unsuccessful transit. John Masfield would have been immensely saddened by news of the loss, and in his 1953 revision of *The Conway* he wrote that, 'As this history goes to press, news comes that the ship of our memory and affection is now no more'.

Graham Jones

In 1902 he wrote *Sea Fever* ('I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky...') and went on to become Poet Laureate in 1930. Drawing upon correspondence with generations of *Old Conway* cadets and information in *The Cadet* (the School-ship's magazine, published quarterly at the MMSA offices in Tower Building, Water Street) he subsequently published *The Conway* (Heinemann, 1933), a chronological account of life aboard the three ships.



At Rock Ferry, 1906. City of Liverpool Official Handbook.



HMS Conway aground at Menai, 1953. Author's Collection.



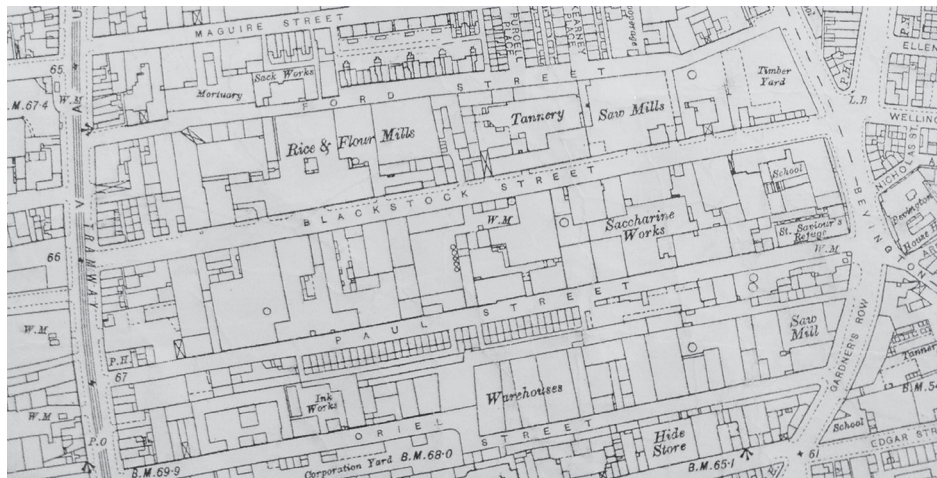
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LHS would like to thank C3imaging, Liverpool, for generously printing this issue at a reduced cost to the Society. Visit the company's website for full details of the wide range of photographic, digital printing, exhibition, display and signage services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

www.c3imaging.com



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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!

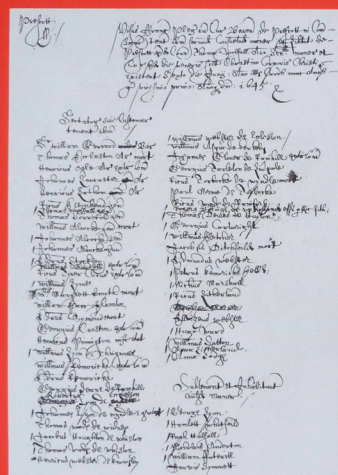
AFFRAYS, TUSSLES AND BLOODWIPES

Meeting report:
Martin Strauss

In a humorous introduction to *Affrays, Tussles and Bloodwipes: Prescott 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 Prescott they appointed eight men to sequesterate the property of local Catholic families loyal to the King. The Court records suggest that soldiers were not welcome in Prescott, 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



EDITED BY WALTER J. KING

The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire

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; Prescott 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 Prescott. 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 Prescott in a time of great upheaval, which divided families, regions, religions and friends.

LIVERPOOL TERRITORIALS

Meeting report:
Cynthia Stonall

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.

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*.

