

LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY – 2019 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

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|-------------|--|---------------------|
| 17 February | The Forgotten Boys of the Sea | Dr Caroline Withall |
| 10 March | The Liverpool English Dictionary | Prof. Tony Crowley |
| 14 April | Life after Death. The Will of the Shipowner Sir Alfred Lewis Jones | Dr Graham Jones |

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.

Liverpool Schools Essay Competition 2019

Members who received the Spring 2017 newsletter may recall a brief mention of the Society's intention, in memory of Veronica Gibson, Brenda Murray and Russell Molyneux-Johnson, to organise a Liverpool schools competition, awarding prizes to school children for writing essays on the history of Liverpool.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of LHS members Eddy Estlin and Glyn Williams, and Stephanie Wells and Su Barker of Liverpool Schools Improvement (LSI), the competition has now been launched.

Invitations have already gone out to Liverpool's 115 primary schools, 29 secondary schools and 12 schools for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Eddy and Glyn have been impressed by the willingness of Liverpool Schools Improvement to take this project forward, Stephanie and Su providing excellent support with publicity plus valuable educational and subject-based advice.

One of the competition's objectives is that the essay prize will form part of the History and Literacy curricula activities for children and young people. The Competition will cover any subject of interest to local school children and must be based on Liverpool up to 1970. This is an arbitrary date, perhaps, but ideal if entrants wish to make use of oral documentation from members of their families: a compelling source if complemented by written material.

The themes can include people, buildings, events and organisations, with primary sources and illustrations encouraged.

A 500-word limit will apply for entries from Key Stage 2 (primary) and SEN, 1000 words for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (senior) and 3000 words for Key Stage 5 (Years 12 and 13).

Flyers have been circulated to schools via teacher forums and direct mailshots, and it is hoped that by the October half-term schools will have expressed their interest.

The deadline for submission of essays will be 31st January 2019. The schools' history teachers who, by the end of February, will submit what they consider to be the best three essays in each category entered, will mark the essays initially.

Judging will be carried out by LHS and LSI members and completed by the end of February, with gold, silver and bronze awards for the winners of the five categories (fifteen prizes in total).

Results will be announced in March 2019 and presentations made on Friday, 3rd May. We hope to engage an appropriate celebrity for the occasion (suggestions welcome!). All participating schools will receive a certificate and the winners will receive not only certificates but also family vouchers for venues of historic interest in Liverpool.



Certificates of recognition will also be awarded to all the other children and young people who enter the competition.

We have already been promised family tickets for the Everton FC Stadium Tour, The Beatles Story and the Western Approaches War Rooms. Eddy and Glyn are working hard on acquiring more, so that we will hopefully meet our target of a prize for each of the 15 winners!

The fifteen winning essays will be published in a special booklet published by the LHS.

The Competition is an excellent opportunity for the LHS and LSI to promote the interest of school children in aspects of Liverpool history. We also hope it might spread interest in the Society among school students and their parents.

Please contact Eddy or Glyn via the LHS website 'Contact Us' page if you would like to know more.

Eddy Estlin & Glyn Williams

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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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HISTORY SOCIETY

WINTER 2018

America Opens Her Doors

(from the May 1951 edition of *The Liverpoolian*)

At a casual glance it looks much like any other house in Huskisson Street; perhaps a little less dilapidated, a little brighter-looking, but otherwise much the same. It is only the polished brass-plates on the door that give any revelation of its identity:

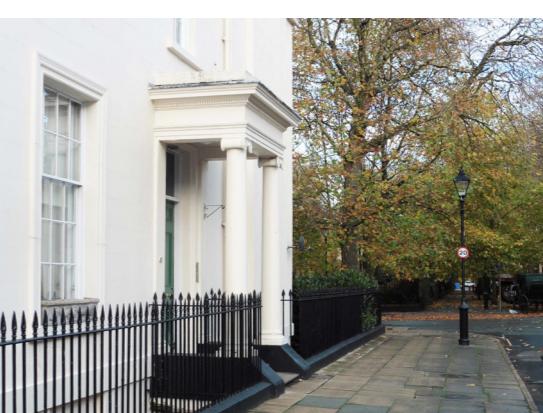
Consulate of The United States of America.
Polish Veterans and
D. P. Visa Immigration Section

Here, unknown to the vast majority of Liverpolitans, is carried on a work of great social importance, quietly and unobtrusively; a work whose value deserves far higher recognition. It is from here that arrangements are made for Polish Veterans of World War II – now displaced persons without proper home and country – to take up a new life in the United States, where a ready welcome awaits them.



(Photo by T. A. Burke)
Swearing to the statements in the application form. Photo shows the Vice-Consul, Mr. Paul Plenni, with one of the Veterans.

One of the photos by T A Burke which accompanied the article.



53 Huskisson Street at the junction with Sandon Street and Falkner Square.

Many of these veterans have spent time in concentration camps and all have had a rough time. When the war ended... the Russians were in occupation of their own country and few felt any desire to return behind the iron curtain of communism. In 1946 England offered them asylum, and here they have remained, seeking security in a land already over-populated. The Government of the United States recognised their plight, and on June 16th, 1950, Congress amended the Displaced Persons Act (of 1948) to allow for the immigration into America of up to 18,000 Polish war veterans.

In September 1950, No. 53 Huskisson Street became Liverpool's office for the Consul and Vice-Consul, an American doctor, a Polish interpreter, and locally recruited staff to implement the programme for the North of England. It was estimated that 6,000 displaced persons would be processed through Liverpool, although a number subsequently chose to settle in England.

The would-be immigrant first applies by mail for his visa and himself receives a circular letter... he must assemble his documents, which include birth certificates for himself and each member of his family, marriage certificates, police or good conduct record, photographs and travel documents (the equivalent of a passport issued to displaced persons by H. M. Government). Most important of all, perhaps, is the Affidavit of Support from some individual or approved agency in the United States.

With many coming from concentration camps, proof of identity cannot have been straightforward. Once the documents had been received and checked, the would-be immigrant visited No. 53 Huskisson Street to fill in the immigration application form dealing with his life history ('There is a long list of those ineligible, ranging from imbeciles to anarchists, and Communists to common-or-garden criminals'), had his finger-prints added to the form, received a medical examination, had an interview with the Consul or Vice-Consul (during which a visa might still be refused), swore the truthfulness of the statements on the form and, if successful, handed over £3 15s 4d (worth \$10 in those days!) for a visa to the Land of the Free.

Graham Jones

Article Requests

Each edition of this newsletter requires a front page article and sometimes, as in this issue, a back page article as well. Contributions of historical interest from the Society's members are therefore always welcome. So, if you have a topic which is not long enough for a Journal article, why not offer it for use in the newsletter?

Anything from 400 to 700 words is ideal, preferably with an appropriate image or two. Please send your contributions to the editor (who is also in need of additional meeting report writers and proof-readers).

newsletters@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk



9 June 2018

BLUE COAT SCHOOL VISIT



Members were welcomed by Peter Elson, the School's development officer, who provided an interesting talk and tour of the school.

Following the move from the city centre to an 'English Renaissance / baroque style' building in 1906, it continued for many years to be known as the Blue Coat Hospital. Amongst a variety of pupils that Peter mentioned were Alfred and Edith Lennon (father and aunt of John) who were boarders in the 1920s. In the late 1940s the traditional uniform was changed into a more contemporary one, the school became boys only, and the status changed from being an independent school 'for orphans and disadvantaged' to voluntary aided day and boarding.

15 July 2018

WESTERN APPROACHES VISIT



Issued with a *Permit to Enter Protected Places as defined in the Defence Regulations*, reproduced from a WWII permit, we enjoyed a self-guided tour of this fascinating museum.

See newsletter 49 for Ann Clayton's article on the history of this top secret bunker where the *Battle of the Atlantic* was coordinated to counter the German U-boat menace.

Editor

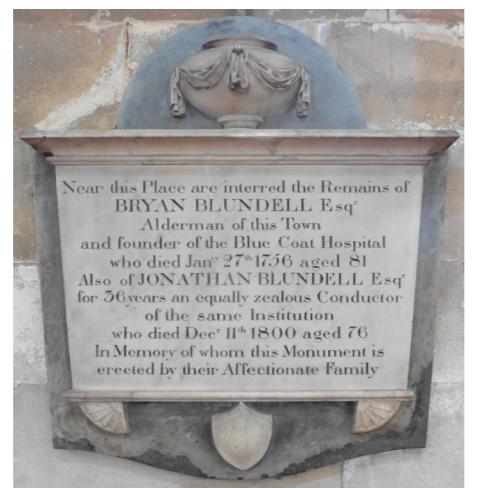
16 September 2018 – Liz Stewart & Poppy Learman

THE SECRET LIFE OF PEMBROKE PLACE



Peter Elson's presentation in the Shirley Hall.

In 1984 Liverpool's Militant Council proposed a 'cease to maintain' order which was overruled the following year by the Education Secretary. In 1989 the boarding school closed and, in the same year, girls were readmitted to the 6th form, followed by year 7 girls in 2002. Our tours of the Shirley Hall and Chapel included excellent demonstrations of the capabilities of the *Father Willis* and *Walker* organs.



A memorial plaque to Bryan Blundell, founder of the original Blue Coat Hospital (now the Bluecoat Arts Centre). Originally in the church of St Nicholas, following WWII bombing of that building, the plaque was rescued and moved to the school's chapel in 1943.

LHS members assembled at the Museum of Liverpool for a presentation of a new exhibition called *The Secret Life of Pembroke Place* (see newsletter 50). The presentation was given by the curators who focused on the preparatory work and discoveries made while researching the history of the area. This is a partnership project between the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and National Museums Liverpool with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The two key heritage sites involved are Galkoff's Kosher butcher shop and Watkinson Terrace court housing.

The earliest records of a Jewish community in Liverpool can be traced back to the 1750s. In 1752 there was a *Synagogue Court* off Stanley Street, and the area between Islington and Brownlow Hill became a centre for the community in the 19th century. Watkinson Terrace is the last surviving example of a court in Liverpool. This type of housing along with the cellars within the courts was home to around 40% of Liverpool's population in the early 19th century. Courts were famously 'insanitary' and most were demolished in 'slum clearance' projects in the early 20th century.

Pembroke Place had furniture stores, the *Llama Bedding Co.* and *Globe Furnishing* being two examples. The fashion store *Auger's Ostrich Feather Cleaner* indicates that there were people in the area wealthy enough to own and need their ostrich feathers cleaning! As well as butchers shops there were cocoa houses and grocers shops. Furniture, upholstery and tailoring were common in this area, and today there are still fabric shops, clothing printers, hat makers and furniture shops. The area is currently undergoing regeneration as the 'Fabric District'.

Surprising finds made by Liz and Poppy were the existence of a zoo around 1835, which contained exotic animals, and a Victorian roller skating rink between the 1870s and 1880s. A local musician Jesse Banning even wrote the 'Pembroke Waltz' for people to skate to.

Percy Galkoff set up his shop around 1907. The iconic green tiles were added in the 1930s, possibly 1933. The centrepiece of the museum's display is the completely refurbished tiled frontage of Galkoff's Kosher Butcher's shop, owned for many years by an active LHS member, the late Rob Ainsworth (see newsletter 34), who saw the value in preserving the tiled frontage one way or another.

Meeting report:
Kevin Aspinall

He was successful in getting the building Grade II Listed, and I think he would be happy that his efforts have been rewarded in the creation of this exhibition.

The tiles were carefully removed from the building in December 2017 and have been restored by Edge Conservation & Restoration Services in Crosby. The exhibition opened at the Museum of Liverpool on 26th October 2018.



Tiles in preparation for shop front reconstruction.
Reporter's image.



At the museum.
Editor's image.

21 October 2018 – Professor Julia Hallam

LIVERPOOL ON FILM

Meeting report:
Martin Strauss

Professor Hallam gave a very interesting talk on the 'Mapping the City in Film' project (2008-10) as part of the Capital of Culture celebrations, and run by the University of Liverpool's Department of Communication and Media.

The department holds some 1700 films in their archives, covering the period from 1897 to the 1980s, including newsreels, travelogues, documentaries, promotional and municipal films and amateur footage.

The project seeks to find out how film-makers over the years have sought to portray Liverpool and which aspects of city life have been the focus of these film investigations.

Categories include specific events in the city's history (e.g. the opening of the Queensway Tunnel in 1934); the architecture of the city, from major public and civic buildings to social housing and other urban developments; commercial, industrial and maritime activities; and transport and leisure. These were illustrated with four examples.

In 1897, Alexandre Promio, one of the Lumière Brothers' photographers, filmed some of Liverpool's major sights around St George's Plateau and St Peter's Churchyard, together with footage of the docks taken from a carriage on the Overhead Railway, now regarded as probably the first ever 'tracking' shot.

In 1904, Field Marshal Roberts came to Liverpool to award medals to volunteers from the recent Boer War. Huge crowds gathered on St George's Plateau, where two of Mitchell and Kenyon's cameras had been set up at selected vantage points.

In 1934, King George V opened the Queensway Tunnel and the excitement of the huge crowds that turned out for the occasion was likewise captured, and it was clear by then that film-makers had much improved their techniques, with multiple camera angles and 'panning'.

Over the course of time various individuals have added to the archive, and the department has worked closely with the North-West Film Archive and the British Film Institute in preserving film history. The City Council has commissioned films whilst many locations have been used for feature films.

Maps compiled from studying the archive show that film-makers have paid most attention to the area between Queen's Drive and the waterfront. Just as visitors today are recommended to see certain sights, the films often concentrated on the waterfront, the Dock Railway, the two Cathedrals, the three Graces and the Neo-Classical buildings around William Brown Street, although parks, recreation grounds, churches, cinemas, theatres, shops, galleries and Chinatown are also represented.

Professor Hallam gave much credit to Angus Tilstion whose tireless work in collecting and protecting the work of the amateur cine clubs on Merseyside was the initial spark for this project. His analysis has revealed the difference between the techniques of amateur and professional film-makers, with the former often giving a more intimate feel of the city and showing care in recording its historical sites.

A 1961 amateur film by Jim Gonzalez took us on a tour of the city's commercial district, from the Liver Building, past the Town Hall, through Queen Square to Lime Street and then focused on the old St John's Market, carefully including street names to give viewers their bearings. Film buffs in the audience will have noted that the films in the archive used either 35mm, 16mm (increasingly from the 1950s) or 9.5mm, together with VHS format.

The talk gave rise to several questions and reminiscences from the audience which added to our knowledge of our City's history. One member was able to tell us that one piece of film had shown a then-surviving stretch of cobbled street with the old rails used by horse-drawn trams.

The informative talk served to remind the audience that many film records of Liverpool survive for posterity and help us to understand how Liverpool has developed since the nineteenth century.

The project can be explored in detail at: www.liverpool.ac.uk/communication-and-media/research/groups/cityfilm

Editor: To see a variety of these films, go to the LHS website under 'Local History', 'Links', where Ron Jones has kindly put together a 'Liverpool in Film' collection of links.