

RUNCORN & DISTRICT  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER No. 1 – MAY 2006



## Chairman's Welcome

### Current Meetings Programme

Meetings are held at St John's Church Hall in Weston Village on the first Friday of every month at 7.30pm prompt.

5th May 2006

**"Liverpool and Sugar**

*Ron Noon*

2nd June 2006

Lewis Carroll

*Irene Rutter*

7th July 2006

**"Lord Leverhulme, his  
life and Residences—  
Part II"**

*John Edwards*

19th August 2006

**Annual outing—please  
see article in newsletter**

1st September 2006

**"The Development of  
Weston Point School  
from 1856"**

*Kate Cawley*

6th October 2006

**"The Life and Work of  
John Douglas"**

*Graham Fisher*

3rd November 2006

**"Cheshire's Early Chris-  
tian Heritage"**

*Rev Gordon G Roxby*

1st December 2006

**"Social Evening"**

Speaker to be announced

5th January 2007

**"Members Evening"**

2nd February 2007

**"Crystal Palace and the  
Great Exhibition"**

*David Hill*

2nd March 2007

**Annual General Meeting**

Welcome to the Society's first Newsletter. Congratulations to Diane Stanley and her team for producing it. This is the first new venture of the Society this year and there are even more projects in the pipeline. These will include a Journal, which will be produced by the same team, and the start of our Oral History Project. As most of you know we have now purchased state-of-the-art recording and transcribing equipment for this project. It was used to record Bert

Starkey's recent talk and I can report that we have a very clear recording of that talk. The last gap in this year's programme has now been filled and we owe many thanks to Jackie Cawte for arranging this and the other monthly meetings. I hope you find this Newsletter interesting and informative and I am looking forward to a busy and enjoyable year for our Society.

Peter Vardy  
Chairman

## The Society Archive

The Society Archive has been growing significantly over the last year with many and varied acquisitions.

We have been fortunate only to have to purchase one item, "The *New Historical Atlas of Cheshire*", as many members and others have donated items ranging from a series of photographs and plans of the Old Quay Workshops to a copy of Nickson's "History of Runcorn" published in 1888.

The Archive currently consists of about 800 items, 300 of

which are photographs, and is now housed in our own steel cabinet in the Meeting Room at Egerton Street Library. From 20th May 2006 it will be accessible to all members and to non-members researching topics. This will be by application to the counter staff at the Library.

The Archive list has been on the Website for some months and is about to be changed from the present chronological order in which we received items to a subject based list so that, for

example, if someone wished to research the Mersey crossings they would see a list of some 60 items. All items now have a unique reference number and the librarian will have a location list.

I am delighted that the collection is continuing to grow and to receive more items, especially now that I do not have to house them at home! Keep them coming and do please make use of them.

Alex Cowan  
Archivist

### CHESHIRE ANNUAL HISTORY DAY - Saturday 21st October 2006

This year's theme will be "Getting About *in Cheshire*". For full information and an application form please contact Cheshire Local History Association on 01244 602559, or e-mail to [recordoffice@cheshire.gov.uk](mailto:recordoffice@cheshire.gov.uk), or visit [www.cheshirehistory.org.uk](http://www.cheshirehistory.org.uk)



## RUNCORN LOCKS

### RESTORATION SOCIETY

The Runcorn Locks Restoration Society believes that valuable benefits will be derived from restoring the first of the two lines of locks which were constructed in Runcorn to connect the Bridgewater Canal originally to the River Mersey and later to the Manchester Ship Canal

Anyone interested in the Society can either visit the Website :

[www.runcornlocks.org.uk](http://www.runcornlocks.org.uk)

or contact Sue Bridge,  
Membership Secretary, on  
01925 491743.



## ANNUAL

### SOCIETY JOURNAL

The Journal Sub-Committee (Alex Cowan, Ray Miller, Diane Stanley, Dianne Jackson and Peggy Thorniley) is busy working on the first annual journal for the Society. We will keep members regularly updated on progress and are happy to consider any articles members may have for inclusion in the journals. Please feel free to contact any of the Journal Sub-Committee to discuss an idea, or to give them your article. Watch this space for further details!

## Website Report ([www.runcornhistsoc.org.uk](http://www.runcornhistsoc.org.uk))

Some 12 months ago we launched our website with the aim of providing in-depth information about the history of Runcorn and its surroundings to the world at large. Initially it contained about four pages and a couple of images (pictures). Today it consists of 243 Web pages and some 454 image files. The majority of these Web pages are quite small, but several do contain large numbers of written detail. Fortunately other Society members have provided these large amounts of written detail and the integration of these into Web pages has been the least difficult part of it.

There has been a lot of worldwide interest in our website and each month the maximum number of 'visitors' which we have are from the USA with Great Britain corn-

ing second. Between May and December 2005, 8,000 people visited the website and so far this year a further 6,000 have visited.

We have had quite large number of requests for historical information about Runcorn and about people who lived here in the past. These latter requests are usually handed on to the Runcorn Family History Society for their expertise, for which we are truly thankful.

Over the past winter a large number of old Runcorn postcards were placed on the Web, which largely accounts for the vast number of pages and images noted above. One new feature over the next few months will be to show modern views of Runcorn taken from the same viewpoint as appears on the postcards. Other items of

Runcorn's history will also be put on to Web if and when the articles have been prepared.

One question often asked is "Why do we need paper records when we now have 'The Worldwide Web'". The "WWW" has only been in existence for a little over 10 years, whereas paper records have been kept for hundreds of years.

The Web is a new phenomenon and is changing rapidly, too rapidly to be relied upon at present to archive material for many years to come. We can use it to spread our knowledge around the world, but for the moment our old tried-and-tested methods, basically paper and pencil, must be rigorously maintained.

Ross Bullock  
Secretary & Web-Master

## Society Annual Outing

This year the Society's 'annual outing' will take place on Saturday 19th August 2006. We will be leaving Runcorn to firstly visit the Roman site at Wroxeter in the morning, then on to visit the historical town of Shrewsbury. Once in Shrewsbury you will be able to lunch and then 'do as you please' (be a tourist and sightsee, or shop until you drop!) for the afternoon, before returning home

to Runcorn. We are hoping to arrange for a guided tour in Shrewsbury for anyone interested.

The admittance charge at Wroxeter will be included in the ticket price, but there will be an extra charge for the guided tour in Shrewsbury.

At the moment Les Brown, Diane Stanley and Dianne Jackson are working on the details and prices for the

day and will let members know as soon as they have firm details. However, anyone interested in joining the outing should speak to Les, Diane, or Dianne so that they can be added to the list. Also, if you are interested in going on a guided tour of Shrewsbury it would be helpful to let us know, so that we can work out costs accordingly.

## Society Committee

**Dr Peter Vardy :**  
Chairman

**Peter Johnson :**  
*Vice Chairman*

**Ross Bullock :**  
*Secretary & Web Master*

**Diane Stanley :**  
Treasurer

**Alex Cowan :**  
*Archivist*

**Jackie Cawte :**  
*Meetings Secretary*

**Les Brown**

**Ray Miller**

**Dianne Jackson :**  
Membership

**Cllr Sue Blackmore**