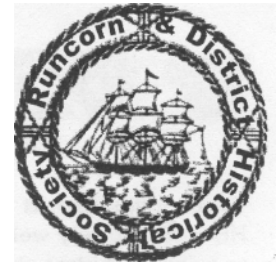


# RUNCORN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER No. 3 - JANUARY 2007



## 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.

2nd February 2007

### "Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition"

David Hill

2nd March 2007

### Annual General Meeting

#### "The Irish Potato

Famine" Dr Ian  
McKeane

13th April 2007

### "Chester Amphitheatre

#### Excavations"

4th May 2007

### "Lancashire Witches"

John Doughty

1st June 2007

### "Boat Building in Chester"

Jeff Taylor

6th July 2007

### "Salt, Sales and Sabbath"

David Burkhill-Howarth

August 2007

### "Annual Outing"

Details to be announced  
nearer the date

7th September 2007

### "Macclesfield Forest"

Paul Booth

5th October 2007

### "Widnes Past and Present"

Bob Martindale

2nd November 2007

### "English

#### Cathedrals"

Norman Wood

7th December 2007

### "Christmas Party"

This will be as usual—a glass of wine on arrival, a short talk by a guest speaker followed by a buffet supper. (Members only).

## Chairman's Update

A Happy New Year to all our readers, members and non-members! New Year is a time for reflection and anticipation. Looking back on 2006 I think we can be reasonably pleased with the activities of the Society. Our membership has remained at its previous high level and attendance at meetings has been consistently good with the usual lively atmosphere. With one notable exception, the presentations have ranged from good to excellent. Apart from the weather, the August trip was enjoyed by all and our guided visits to the Town Hall have been much appreciated. The website has received a record number of visits during the year. Our

new venture of the year, the Newsletter, has been well received and has raised the profile of the Society. The first edition of our Journal, our next new venture, should be ready by the time of the Annual General Meeting in March. Progress has been slower on the Oral History Project and the Historical Walks, but we hope to do better this year. The programme for 2007-08 is almost complete. Together with the rest of the Committee, I look forward to an interesting, even exciting, time for the Society in 2007.

Peter Vardy  
Chairman

## Society Annual Social Evening

Society members were treated to an early Christmas 'do' last year. Our December gathering started with a witty talk on "Cheshire Dialect and Sayings", given by Mr Mark Newbrook. Then with a change to our usual meeting format, the festivities continued with a splendid seasonal buffet, complete with a choice of wines—all

agreed it was a thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining evening, which also gave everyone the opportunity to relax and chat, catch up with news, and reflect on the Society activities of the past year.

Thanks go to Dianne Jackson for organizing the catering, and to Alex Cowan for organizing and serving the drinks, and not least to all

the volunteers who turned up on the following morning to 'spring clean' the hall! We will all look forward to this year's Social, and if anyone has any suggestions for a speaker who could give us an amusing half hour talk next December on 'matters local' please inform Jackie Cawte, or any Committee member.

Diane Stanley

## Web Site Report

During the period September to December 2006 we have had some 2,058 'visitors' to our website. November saw our maximum monthly visitors yet, with 2,250 visits to it. There has been only one major addition to the site in the period under review. This was a list of buildings known, or thought, to contain Runcorn sandstone. It is quite an impressive list.

Requests for information during the period have continued to arrive, many of these are to do with family history, and we are indebted once more to members Maurice Littlemore and Linda Wilding-Finnigan, who are also members of the Runcorn Family History Society, for their help with these requests.

Other help has been sought on :

- The translation of the inscription around the top of the Norton Water Tower
- Pictures of the old Runcorn Workhouse at Dutton
- Information on Zion Place in Runcorn.



### USEFUL LINKS

**Runcorn and District Historical Society** website  
[www.runcornhistsoc.org.uk](http://www.runcornhistsoc.org.uk)

**Runcorn Locks Restoration Society** website :  
[www.runcornlocks.org.uk](http://www.runcornlocks.org.uk)

**Norton Priory Museum and Gardens** website  
[www.nortonpriory.org.uk](http://www.nortonpriory.org.uk)



### DID YOU KNOW ?

#### SPRING VAULTS

##### 19 Ellesmere Street

At the top of Ellesmere Street in Runcorn there was a spring which served Sprinch Brook and the pub may have taken its name from this connection.

Owned in 1879 by James Bailey and in 1880 by the Executors of Enoch Sharrott, it remained in the family ownership until forced to close in 1910.

The owners received £490; Greenall, the lessees, £30, and the last licensee £30, in compensation.

Licenses were :

Samual Jackson (1869-1874)

Samuel Garrett (1876-1896)

Henry Davies (1900-1906)

William Tatlock (1910)

#### BRICKLAYERS ARMS

Unless this was an earlier name for the Spring Vaults, this beerhouse is otherwise unknown.

Taken from a *Weekly News*  
 Article by Ray Miller in  
 2003

## The Society Archive

Thanks to all who have contributed to the Archive during 2006—there have been many interesting items! Keep the flow going during 2007. I am sure that there are many more items tucked away in your houses, or relative / friends houses that need to see the light of day. We are happy just to borrow them and copy, if appropriate (long johns are an exception!), if you don't want to donate them

In conjunction with Halton Lea Library we are mounting an exhibition in the first floor display case during the month of April, on the leather and tanning activities in Runcorn. Please spread the word as we still need some material, but more particularly, to get lots of people to go and view it (and tell

the library staff how wonderful it is!).

I am sure that there are a number of you out there with computers who could help with another project, even if only for an hour a week—we have a lot of manuscript and typewritten material which I would like to see computerized, so that we can make it more widely available both locally and on our website. Examples are :

- The Runcorn Licensed Victuallers Association minutes around 1900 period (manuscript)
- The Doctor's Bridge Committee minutes 1860s (typescript)

Offers of help to Alex please.

Alex Cowan  
 Archivist

## Norton Priory Museum and Gardens

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Claire McDade, who joined the team at Norton Priory as Director, in September 2006. We look forward to the many events that Claire and the team will be organising over the coming months.

The Priory is a very interesting and varied site for all age groups to visit, with the museum walled garden, woodlands, walks, etc. There are also various activities held throughout the year.

Contact details for Norton Priory are as follows :

Telephone : 01928 569895

E-mail : [info@nortonpriory.org.uk](mailto:info@nortonpriory.org.uk)

Web : [www.nortonpriory.org.uk](http://www.nortonpriory.org.uk)

#### CHESHIRE ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGY DAY - Saturday 21 st April 2007

This year's Cheshire Annual Archaeology Day will be held on Saturday 21st April 2007 at Northwich Memorial Hall. For further details via e-mail [pamrutherford@cheshire.gov.uk](mailto:pamrutherford@cheshire.gov.uk), or alternatively via the web : [www.cheshire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshire.gov.uk) and look under 'archaeology'.

## Society Committee

Anyone wishing to join the Society can do so either by following the instructions found on the Society Website, or by writing to Dianne Jackson , 22 Balfour Street, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4PH, or by attending one of the monthly meetings and join on the night. Subscriptions are £6.00 per person for per year (usually renewed at the Annual General Meeting in March). Visitors are welcome to join us at any of the meetings for just a £1.00 per visit.

**Dr Peter Vardy :**

*Chairman*

**Peter Johnson :**

*Vice Chairman*

**Ross Bullock :**

*Secretary & Web Master*

**Diane Stanley :**

*Treasurer*

**Alex Cowan :**

*Archivist*

**Jackie Cawte :**

*Meetings Secretary*

**Dianne Jackson :**

*Membership*

**Les Brown**

**Ray Miller**

**CIIR Sue Blackmore**