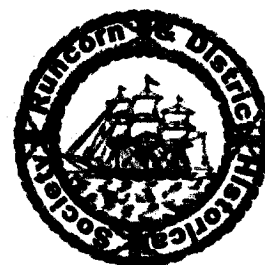


# RUNCORN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER No. 4 – MAY 2007



## 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.

1st June 2007  
"Boat Building in Chester"  
Geoff Taylor

6th July 2007  
"Salt, Sails and Sabbath"  
David Burkhill-Howarth

Saturday 11th August 2007  
"Annual Outing"  
Conway and Betws-y-Coed  
Details to be announced

7th September 2007  
"The Black Prince's Cattle  
in Macclesfield Forest"  
Paul Booth

5th October 2007  
"Widnes Past and Present"  
Bob Martindale

2nd November 2007  
"Chester Amphitheatre  
Excavations"  
Mike Nevill  
- To be confirmed -

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).

4th January 2008  
"Members Evening"  
Details to be announced nearer the date

1st February 2008  
"Savage Fortune"  
The story of our local aristocrats in the early 17th century  
Lyn Boothman

7th March 2008  
Annual General Meeting

## Chairman's Update

Thank you to the members of the Society for re-electing me as chairman for my third year in that office. Indeed you re-elected all the previous members of the committee and we take that as a considerable vote of confidence in what we are doing on your behalf.

The Annual General Meeting was certainly something special. It is the first time that such a meeting has been attended by the Mayor and Mayoress. And we had a record attendance for an Annual General Meeting. Thanks also to the membership for agreeing to the proposed changes to

the constitution—and to unanimously agreeing to a rise in the annual subscription (that must be something unique in the history of institutions!). The talk by Dr Ian McKeane was excellent and brought a successful meeting to a good close.

We hope you like the topics chosen for our forthcoming monthly talks and that as many of you as possible will join in the other projects we are planning for the year ahead.

Peter Vardy  
Chairman

## Society Outings

The Society annual summer trip will be on Saturday 11th August this year. We will leave Runcorn around 08.45am, and our first stop will be at Conway, where we can explore the medieval town before taking a break for lunch. In the afternoon we plan to go on to Betws-y-Coed to enjoy the scenery and afternoon tea, before our return journey in the early evening. After the warmest April on record, let's hope we will still be enjoying the weather in August—maybe it will be third time lucky for us this year, as our last

two summer trips were a trifle damp! This year the Society is also planning to run some shorter excursions closer to home. The first of these will be on Saturday 2nd June. Following a fascinating talk to Society members on the Irish Potato Famine by Dr Ian McKeane in March, he has kindly offered to lead our members on a conducted walk around Liverpool to see the locations he talked about. We will leave Runcorn at 9.15am with time for coffee on our arrival, and will return

home around lunchtime. In July (date yet to be confirmed), we hope to have an evening walk along the Chester Canal, which should last about two hours, and will be led by Geoff Taylor. Further updates will be given at Society meetings, where you can book your places, and we would also welcome your ideas for any other 'local' places you would like to visit—just let any Committee member have your suggestions.

Diane Stanley  
Treasurer

## CHESHIRE ANNUAL HISTORY DAY - Saturday 27th October 2007

This year's theme will be "Cheshire Invaded? From Roman Occupation to Norman Conquest" with various speakers. 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)



## Diary Dates at Norton Priory

### Bank Holiday

#### Monday 7th May

Traditional May Day

Family Activities

1.00—4.00pm

Blossom Day Walk

2.30pm

#### Saturday 26th and

#### Sunday 27th May

Flowers in the Undercroft

### Bank Holiday

#### Monday 28th May

Identi-Kit Family Activities

in the Museum

#### Saturday 2nd June

Volunteers Day

1.30—4.00pm

At the Walled Garden

#### Saturday 2nd June

Open Day at the Walled  
Garden

#### Sunday 3rd June

Plant Hunter's Fair

12 noon—4.00pm

Next to the Walled  
Garden

#### Saturday 23rd June

1.00-4.0pm

Victorian Tea Party



## 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)

## Archive Report

This has been a very busy period for the archive with about 120 individual items and some 85 extracts from newspapers on a wide variety of topics being received this year.

The archive now consists of :

- 122 books and journals
- 64 newspapers (the earliest being January 1869)
- 194 extracts from newspapers
- 194 miscellaneous items
- 18 postcards
- 449 photographs and slides, plus three CDs with a further 1,274 photographs of Runcorn, Widnes and Frodsham
- 16 cine films (8mm)

We now have 15 issues of the 'Runcornian' and one of 'Balfourian' and would be delighted to receive further issues in the hope that we can have a complete set of

these school magazines. If anyone has even one copy, please let me know (01928 572504) and we can arrange to collect it, or leave it for the Society at the desk in Egerton Street Library.

We have mounted an exhibition in the main display case at Halton Lea Library for the whole of April 2007 relating to the tanning industry and samples of leather. The exhibits are almost entirely from the Society archive. If you have anything that relates to Runcorn, in any way, that you were thinking of throwing out, pass it to the Society and if it is not relevant we will dispose of it for you. The updated archive will appear on the Society website by the time this newsletter is circulated.

We have also helped a number of people with information or copies of our archival material and are pleased to receive any further inquiries.

Alex Cowan  
Hon. Archivist

## Web Site Report

During the period January to March 2007 we have averaged over 3,000 'visitors' to the web site, roughly twice the figure in the same period last year. The highest 'visitor month' was March, when 3,352 visitors were logged.

There has been little change to the content of the site itself in this period, but we are in the process of putting pictures and descriptions / history (where possible and known) of the listed and other historic (but unlisted) building in our area.

The number of requests for information has tailed off during the period, after a hectic time in the final quarter of last year.

Ross Bullock  
Secretary and Web Master

## 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**

**Clr Sue Blackmore**