

RUNCORN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 6 – JANUARY 2008



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.

4th January 2008

"Members Evening"

This will be a variety of offerings ranging from displays to a film of Runcorn taken in the 1960s.

1st February 2008

"Savage Fortune"

The story of our local aristocrats in the early 17th century

Lyn Boothman

7th March 2008

Annual General Meeting

Election of committee followed by a talk about his year in office, by Mike Hodgkinson, Mayor of Halton.

4th April 2008

"Where are the Boys From the Village Tonight?"

Life in times of war

Joy Braverton

The future programme is currently being put together and full details of all the meetings will be included in the next newsletter.

Wanted Corner!

The Publications sub-committee are always on the look out for further articles to include in future issues of 'Runcova' and will be happy to take a look at items that society members think may be suitable for publication.

If you have anything you'd like us to look at please contact either Diane Stanley, Alex Cowan, Ray Miller, Peggy Thorniley, or Dianne Jackson.

Chairman's Update

Another year has passed and it is time to say Happy New Year to all readers. I think you will all agree that 2007 was another good year for the Society. The membership remained at virtually the same level as in previous years and the attendance at meetings has been as high, if not higher, than previously. The quality of the Friday evening presentations has ranged from good to excellent, the most recent one being at the December Social Evening when "Dame" Roy Hayes entertained us with a scholarly illustrated talk on the *History of Pantomime*. Since the last Newsletter the first edition of our Journal *Runcova* has appeared. This has proved to be very popular and the demand

for it has at times exceeded our ability to deliver it. We look forward to the Society's activities in 2008. Planning is well advanced for a programme of talks and other events during the year.

This will be the last time I shall be contributing to the Newsletter as chairman because my term of office will come to an end in March. Thank you for all the support and encouragement you have given me during the last three years. I know you will support the new chairman as well as you have supported me.

Peter Vardy

Chairman

'Runcova'

The Society and the Publications sub-committee are very pleased to announce the publication of our very first journal, 'Runcova'. The title is an inspired suggestion made by Peggy Thorniley, who mixed together some of the many names by which Runcorn was known in the past.

This first volume is a collection of illustrated articles and anecdotes,

some are drawn from our society archives, some from transcriptions of century old local newspaper reports, and others specially written for the journal. Together they form an exciting mix which makes for a thoroughly enjoyable read, bringing memories for many, but also giving new and unexpected insights into the often colourful, but mostly unknown history of our town.

Advance sales to our members were brisk at the society's November and December meetings, and in December we also 'went public', with copies now on sale to everyone, obtainable from The Curiosity Book Shop in High Street, Owens Newsagents in Balfour Street, and the reception shop at Norton Priory Museum and Gardens.

Diane Stanley

Treasurer

Web Site Report

The number of visitors to our website has been lower over the past quarter, averaging 2,770 per month, but still not bad for a Historical Society website. We have not added anything substantial to the website in the period except for a one-and-a-half minute 'clip' of the transporter bridge in operation in the 1950s. Some two-per-week requests for help with historic information are being received, and my thanks to the Runcorn Family History group for their help with these on many occasions. Interesting amongst these have been a request for information about the ship 'James Brundrit', another as to the whereabouts of Weaver Cottages, Weston Point (and incidentally, how many of these were there?), and where was / is 'Brindley House'.

Ross Bullock

Secretary and Web Master

Alleged Theft of a Chain

A waterman named Joseph Woods, was charged with having, between the 9th and 21st April, stolen a chain, value 10s, the property of Frank Allaby. The Prosecutor said he [Allaby] was a waterman and resided at 44 Wellington Street. He was the owner of the fishing smack 'Black Bess', which he bought to repair. He had not been out fishing in it. The boat had been moored at the Old Quay, near Wiggs Works, on the beach. The chain produced was similar to the one that he had on board his boat. He saw it safe on 9th April and missed it on the 20th. There was no distinguishing mark on the chain. It was corroded, and he kept his eye on it because he had missed other articles. It lay at the bottom of the boat. He had had it about seven or eight months. A man named Kirby gave it to him. He [Kirby] was the captain of a flat. The prisoner was a shrimp fisher, his boat being moored in the vicinity of the witness's.

Runcorn Weekly News
3rd May 1902

Society Annual Social Evening

Society Members enjoyed our annual December Christmas Social with an evening of seasonal entertainment.

This year, our speaker was one of our own members, a well known personality on the local amateur dramatics scene, 'Dame' Roy Hayes. He enlightened and amused us all with his illustrated talk on 'The History of Pantomime'.

This was followed by a splendid buffet supper and drinks, and the opportunity to chat and catch up with old friends, which rounded off the evening very nicely.

Thanks to Dianne Jackson for organising the food, and to Alex Cowan and Peter Vardy for arranging the drinks. Thanks also to our brave team of 'morning after' clean-up volunteers—well done everyone!

Diane Stanley
Treasurer

**Greetings and Best Wishes
for the New Year to
all our society members
from the Executive Committee**

Archive Report

I would be grateful if anyone with any further information on the 'Runcova' articles would like to contact me please. I have included an interesting example below regarding the "William Rowland" article.

Mr Rowland applied for building permission for three houses in Moughland Lane, and approval from the Improvement Commissioners was received on April 5th, 1894. These were then run by ICI as Lawson House, which has now been sold to a property developer and are currently being converted into apartments.

Alex Cowan

Hon. Archivist

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

Cllr Sue Blackmore

USEFUL LINKS

**Runcorn and District
Historical Society**
website :

www.runcornhistsoc.org.uk

**Runcorn Locks
Restoration Society**
website :

www.runcornlocks.org.uk

**Norton Priory Museum
and Gardens** website :

www.nortonpriory.org.uk

Halton Castle website :

www.haltoncastle.org

Ross Bullock website :

www.rossbullock.co.uk

Cheshire Records Office

website :

[www.cheshire.gov.uk/
recoff](http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/recoff)

**Family History Society of
Cheshire** website :

www.fhsc.org.uk