

# RUNCORN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER NO. 7 MAY 2008



## LOCAL HISTORY EXHIBITION

### 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.

6th June 2008  
"Widnes Giants—the  
Pioneers of the Chemical  
Industry"

Peter Vardy

4th July 2008  
"Hilbre Island"

Sue Craggs

August 2008

No meeting this month. Instead the members can join the annual outing to Crich to see the Tramway village

5th September 2008  
"Cheshire in 1745"

Tony Barratt

3rd October 2008  
The Daniel Adamson—A  
Great Survivor"

Tony Hirst

7th November 2008  
"The Viking Kingdom of the  
Wirral"

Gordon Roxby

5th December 2008  
Social Evening—details to  
be announced

January 2009  
Members Evening—details  
to be announced

6th February 2009  
"The IRA and Liverpool"

Ian McKeane

6th March 2009  
Annual General Meeting

The Society put on a Local History Exhibition at the Heath Methodist Church from Friday 4th to Sunday 6th April 2008 to assist the Church with fund raising for their replacement windows. Over 40 topics were covered and nearly 500 people attended the exhibition, several coming more than once. Many of them stayed for up to two hours viewing items from the Society archives (with about 20% loaned from other sources).

The Society, and the Church, are very pleased with the interest shown—not really

surprising as this is the first exhibition in the town since 1956! Another exhibition is planned for the autumn in Weston, again as a fund raiser, and will deal with the history of Weston and Weston Point—details in the next newsletter. The exhibition also received donations of a number of interesting items to the Society, one of which proved conclusively that the chairs in the Church of St John at Weston are the original ones dating from the opening in 1898—things don't last do they?

Alex Cown  
Archivist

## SOCIETY ANNUAL OUTING

### Saturday 16th August 2008

Now for a little bit of future news! This summer, we are planning to go to the Peak District for our Society annual summer outing.

As in previous years, we will have an historical theme to our destination, starting off the day at Crich Tramway Museum. We will be able to not only see the collection of old trams, but enjoy unlimited rides on them too, in their beautifully reconstructed street setting. Also for our enjoyment, we

will be able to browse around the old-fashioned shops, and perhaps make a purchase or two from a grand selection of confectionery and gifts, guaranteed to bring back childhood memories for us all. We can then take lunch at one of the Crich cafes, or if we have good weather, there is a woodland walk and picnic facilities too. In the afternoon, we will travel on for the short journey back to Matlock Bath, where for the rest of the day we will be free to

wander around the local museums and shops, indulge in afternoon tea, or simply enjoy the spectacular scenery, before our return home to Runcorn. Tickets for the day will be on sale at our Society meetings in June and July, and as usual will be inclusive of return coach travel, admission to the Crich site, and entry into our free raffle, which will be drawn on our homeward journey.

Diane Stanley  
Treasurer

## CD BOOKS OF RUNCORN HISTORY

Whilst work on the website was quiet, we have been busy producing a CD of digital books of Runcorn history written over the past 200 years by Greswell, Fowler, Nickson and our own Vice President, Bert Starkey, plus some articles from Ormerod's 'History of Cheshire'. After a hectic last rush, we managed to get the first discs ready for the recent display of our archive material at the Heath Church. The CDs can be obtained from me (telephone 01928 566163), or at one of our meetings, or from Curiosity Book Shop, High Street, Runcorn. The cost is £12.00 (or £10.00 to Society members). The 'books' are in Adobe PDF format and are fully searchable by word or phrases.

Ross Bullock  
Secretary and Web Master

## PUBLICATIONS

The Publications Committee are still hard at work following the successful production of 'Runcova' Volume 1. To date, over 300 copies have been sold. Diane Stanley, Dianne Jackson, Alex Cowan, Ray Miller and Peggy Thorniley are now working on putting together 'Runcova' Volume 2, which will be published later in the autumn.

'Runcova' Volume 1 is still available at meetings (£5.00, or £3.00 for members), and also at the Curiosity Book Shop, High Street, Runcorn, Owens Newsagents, Balfour Street, Runcorn, and Norton Priory Museum shop for anyone still requiring a copy or two.

We also hope to bring you our first Society calendar for 2009. Watch this space for more details.....

*Dianne Jackson*

Membership

## WEB SITE REPORT

The number of visitors to our website has recovered after falling over the last few months of 2007, and with two days to the end of April (at the time of writing) this could be our best yet with over 3,500 visitors to date. There has not been any major changes to the website, but some pages have been updated / added including :

1. Buildings made from Runcorn stone
2. A list of past and present churches and chapels in the area (so many have disappeared)
3. A list of publications for sale and how to acquire them

We are still receiving requests for information and among the questions which we have received have been :

1. Where was the Runcorn Post Office in 1830? (Old Quay)
2. Who played the organ and in the band at the Scala?
3. Who was the gentleman who played the piano in "La Scala" for the silent movies? (Jock ??? Has been suggested)

I still require the answers to the questions regarding the Scala. Can anyone help, please?

*Ross Bullock*  
Secretary and Web Master

## MAY DAY MEMORIES

The annual parade of horses, etc., under the auspices of the Runcorn Co-operative Society, took place on May Day. There were 16 turn-outs connected with the Society, which were divided into three classes, viz. groceries, milk and cheese.

A start was made from Church Street. The principal thoroughfares in the town were paraded, the fine appearance of the horses being admired by crowds of spectators. Two well-dressed vehicles belonging to the Urban Council joined at the end of the procession. The judges (Messrs. J W Bate M.R.C.V.S and Robert Shepherd, Parkside Farm, Aston) awarded prizes to the following : 1. J Leach, 2. J Dutton and 3. G Clarke.

*Article as published by one of the local newspapers about 100 years ago*

### USEFUL LINKS

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

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

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

**Halton Castle** website :  
[www.haltoncastle.org](http://www.haltoncastle.org)

**Ross Bullock** website :  
[www.rossbullock.co.uk](http://www.rossbullock.co.uk)

**Cheshire Records Office** website :  
[www.cheshire.gov.uk/](http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/)  
recoff

**Family History Society of Cheshire** website :  
[www.fhsc.org.uk](http://www.fhsc.org.uk)

## 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 £7.00 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.

Chair : *Vacant*

**Peter Johnson:** *Vice Chairman*

**Ross Bullock :**  
Secretary & Web Master  
**Diane Stanley :**  
*Treasurer*

**Alex Cowan :**  
*Archivist*

**Jackie Cawte :**  
*Meetings Secretary*

**Dianne Jackson :**  
*Membership*

**Ray Miller**

**Cllr Sue Blackmore**

**Cllr Pete Blackmore**