

**RUNCORN & DISTRICT  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER No. 9 – JANUARY 2009**



## VICE-CHAIR REPORT

### 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 February 2009

"The IRA and Liverpool"  
*Ian McKeane*

#### 6th March 2009

Annual General Meeting

#### 3rd April 2009

"Ethelfreda"  
*Mike Hodgkinson*

#### 1st May 2009

"Salt Making at Nantwich"  
*Mike Neville*

#### 5th June 2009

"Cheshire in 1745"  
*Tony Barratt*

#### 3rd July 2009

The details for this meeting will be announced at a future meeting

#### August 2009

There is no meeting in August as it is our 'Annual Outing' month. If anyone has suggestions of where to visit this year, please let anyone on the Committee have the details. The date and details of the trip will be announced at a future meeting.

The programme of speakers for our meetings is put together by Meetings Secretary, Jackie Cawte, who can be contacted on: 01928 561942

I've enjoyed keeping the Society's 'Chair' warm for the past few months and look forward to the March Annual General Meeting when members will appoint someone else to occupy it as Chairman (many, even, Chair-lady?). What has struck me is the friendly commitment of all the Society members in the way they attend our meetings and, too, in the hard work, behind the scenes, of the committee

whose efforts keep the Society functioning.

The name 'Historical Society' gives no clue to people outside that this is a coming-together of people who are in themselves 'interesting', an warmly welcoming and who also share a common interest in the history of our area. It has been—and remains—a privilege and pleasure to be part of it all.

*Peter Johnson*  
Vice-Chair

## ARCHIVE REPORT

New acquisitions for the archives have slowed down but the archive has now been re-catalogued to take account of the 150+ photographs we were given back in the summer. The revised version is now on our website.

We are being consulted about the establishment of the new Community Studies area in the re-organized Halton Lea Library. There

will be a defined area (where the present café was) with a mixture of open shelves and some closed for security of unique items. There will be better equipment and more of it and proper areas in which to be able to do research and study. It is intended that all the local items, previously inaccessible in the basement, will be brought

out and catalogued on the computer so that visitors should be able to know what the library has. Help will be needed with the cataloguing—anyone interested in helping please have a word with me—it will not be before June 2009.

*Alex Cowan*  
Archivist

## STOP PRESS !

Provisional date for your diary :

**Saturday 5th April 2009**—one day local history exhibition at Heath Methodist Church, probably 10.00am to 4.30pm. Most of what will be on show will be new material, so if you came last year, you need to come again and bring many friends with you. Further details will be confirmed at the February 2009 meeting.

*Alex Cowan*  
Archivist

*Greetings and best wishes for the New Year  
To all our society members from the Society Committee*

## CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

The Society held its usual seasonal celebrations again this year, although a little later than planned (courtesy of the Christmas Tree Festival at St John's Church), this time on the second Friday of the month, the 12th. We were treated to the reminiscences of our very own 'Superannuated Santa', in the form of our erstwhile Vice-Chairman Peter Johnson, who entertained us all most grandly with tales of his 'Santa' days in years gone by. We watched transfixed as he changed before our very eyes into the chap who has delighted boys & girls of all ages, although his little helpers didn't supply him with a sack full of exciting toys for us! But we didn't miss out on our Xmas treat - the show was followed by a splendid seasonal buffet, complete with a suitable selection of drinks. We had a good turn-out,

and everyone had a very enjoyable evening. Thanks to Dianne Jackson for organising the food, to Peter & Trish Vardy for the drinks, and of course to Alex Cowan, assisted by Ross Bullock, who both made sure the hall was set out beautifully to welcome everyone.

An added bonus on the night, and a proud moment for the Society, was the launch of our 2009 Calendar, put together by the Publications Sub-committee, which finally went on sale to our members. After a nightmare trying to sort out a reliable printer, Alex came up trumps for us yet again, bringing supplies literally hot off the press. We have a just few copies left, maybe Curiosity Bookshop still have some too, so don't miss out!

*Diane Stanley*  
Treasurer

## WEBSITE REPORT

Another milestone was reached in November when our visitor figures reached 5,000 for the first time. We have updated the Society archive list, thanks again to Alex, and at last a picture of the last pinnacle of rock left standing at Rocksavage has been put on the website, thanks to Tom Booth.

Enquiries have been answered about Stonehills House, Crescent Row and Company's Row. One interesting e-mail asked if we knew that the 1901 census for Runcorn disclosed that one Captain Edwards J Smith, later to be captain of the Titanic, was staying at No. 32 Leinster Gardens at that time, staying with his friend Mr Jones.

*Ross Bullock*  
Webmaster & Secretary

## CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

We have been involved with the Christmas Tree Festival at St John's, Weston the first weekend in December. There were a total of 28 trees decorated by various organisations, traders, and others.

The Society tree was well sited by the Font and excited much interest. It was decorated with blue lights (all the others were white!) and label sized photographs of various locations / buildings of historical interest. There was also a tickertape wound through the tree, listing the names of all the churches and chapels that are, or were in Runcorn. The Festival was very well attended and gained good publicity for the Society.

*Alex Cowan*  
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 £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.

### 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)

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

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

*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 Peter Blackmore**  
**Peggy Thorniley**

*If anyone is interested in becoming a committee member, please do contact anyone on the committee.*