

## LIVERPOOL HISTORY SOCIETY – 2016 MEETINGS PROGRAM

16 Oct	History of Speke Airport	Dr Tony Gilbertson
20 Nov	Shedding a Little Light on Liverpool: 400 Years of Street Lighting	Austin Varney
11 Dec	Images of Liverpool: a Glimpse into Bygone Times	Colin Wilkinson (Bluecoat Press)

All meetings will take place in the Grace Room, 1st Floor, Hope at Everton, Shaw Street, L3 8QB. This is the former St Francis Xavier College building. All talks start at 2pm (doors open at 1.30pm).

### Book Review: *Liverpool VCs*

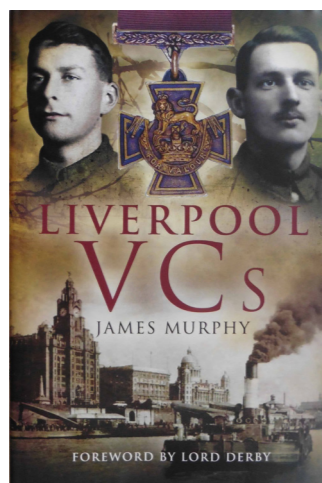
At a time when there appears to be a constant flow of stories in the media about the consequences of war and conflict for both the participant and the civilian, this book, by an exiled Merseysider, about the life stories of twenty three men who were either born or died on Merseyside and had conferred upon them Britain's highest honour for gallantry is a particularly apt one to review. It should be emphasised that, where the information is available, this is a book about the life stories of the VC winners and not just about the actions that led to the award of the medal; indeed the author sometimes delves into the lives of the children and other relatives of the VC winners. This genealogical journey will not be to everyone's taste but it often reveals some fascinating facts and adds colour to the story being told.

He is always sympathetic to those he writes about but also unflinchingly honest. Although the early lives of some of the earlier VC winners are thin on detail, mainly because of the lack of written records for the ordinary man at the time, none failed to fascinate this reviewer.

A copy of this very well-written and hugely enjoyable book is available to loan from the LHS library.

Fred Forrest

*Liverpool VCs* by James Murphy, 2008. Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 243 pages, 36 black & white photos and 3 maps. Hardback. ISBN 978-1-84415-780-8. £19.99.



Of the twenty three, eighteen were born in Liverpool and five settled and died there. The criterion for inclusion means that the story of Noel Chavasse, who was neither born nor died in Liverpool, is not told in the book but his story is already well known to Merseysiders. Two others, Patrick Mylott and Charles Anderson, were also excluded because of doubts (fully explained) about their Merseyside provenance. This latter is a good example of the author's meticulous research.

### LHS Group Walking Tours

The Society is now delivering a range of Heritage walking tours. Led by experienced LHS guides, these are available for group bookings only. For more information please visit the LHS website and click on the tab on the home page or email your enquiry to: [groupstours@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk](mailto:groupstours@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk)

### Liverpool Civic Service League

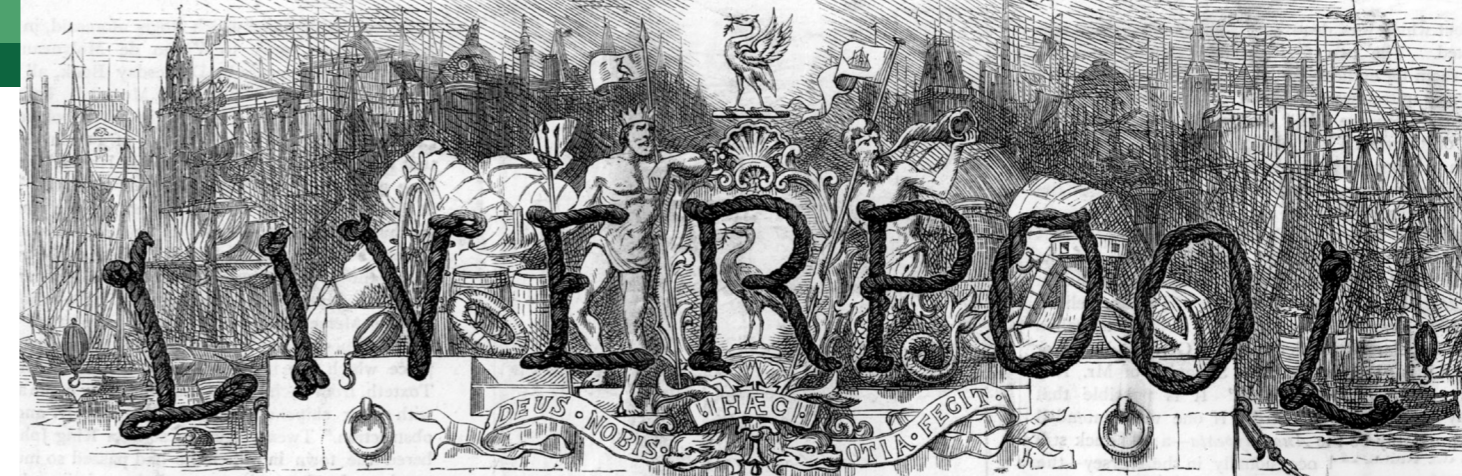
Researchers at the Athenaeum have discovered a large collection of papers concerning an organisation which was established three years prior to WWI in response to the 1911 General Transport Strike and went on to provide valuable help to the community throughout the war. The papers offer a glimpse into the solidarity of a city which pulled together despite enormous external pressure. To learn more about the collection please contact the Athenaeum archivist at: [archivist@theathenaeum.org.uk](mailto:archivist@theathenaeum.org.uk)

### In Safe Hands

The Liverpool Pilotage Service is the second oldest institution in Liverpool, and Liverpool waters are some of the toughest in the world to navigate.

Celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Service in 2016, an exhibition at the Merseyside Maritime Museum (until 4th June 2017) tells the story of the vital role and bravery of the Liverpool Pilots through the centuries in navigating ships in and out of the Port of Liverpool.

[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime)



HISTORY SOCIETY

SUMMER 2016

Newsletter

#46

Our thanks go to Richard MacDonald for his interesting guided tour of Calderstones – the main feature for this issue – and who, despite commencing his talk on an overcast day and ending 90 minutes later in pouring rain, kept our spirits high to the very end.

Thanks also to Jo Crist who arranged for members of the Friends of Anfield Cemetery to provide fascinating walking tours for small groups in July and August, and to David Harrison who stepped in at the very last minute to provide an alternative May talk when the scheduled speaker was suddenly admitted to hospital.



The visit to Anfield Cemetery in July.

19 June 2016 – Richard MacDonald

### CALDERSTONES TO CUNARD: A HISTORY WALK

Meeting report:  
Keith Lloyd

Richard's talk began outside the Calderstones Mansion House where he explained that the park was never intended to be a public park like other Liverpool parks or even a private park like Princes Park, but was the result of the council acquiring land from wealthy families finding it difficult to maintain such large estates. Evidence of this can still be seen in the survival of the old stable block, the walled garden (originally the kitchen garden) and the ha-ha (a sunken brick wall and ditch designed to separate the lawns from the rest of the estate and to keep grazing animals from coming right up to the mansion house but without obscuring the idyllic views from the house itself).

Calderstones Park was originally part of the ancient manor of Allerton and is recorded in the Domesday Book as Alretune. The land was originally owned by the Percival family of Allerton Hall. The Mansion House was built in 1828 by merchant Joseph Need Walker, a lead shot manufacturer who made his money during the Napoleonic wars selling it to the British army and navy. The house is now a Grade II Listed building, described by Nikolaus Pevsner in his guide book as a 'restrained neo-classical mansion' (a polite way of saying 'architecturally plain'). The house is of three floors with a separate and extensive stable yard and coach-house, set in 93 acres of estate.

In 1875 Calderstones was acquired by Charles MacIver, a Glasgow-Liverpool shipowner. His uncle, John MacIver, was a privateer sailing out of Liverpool in the late 1700s. Charles and his brother David ran a coastal service sailing from Liverpool to Glasgow.

In 1839 they were approached by Samuel Cunard to help establish a transatlantic passenger service which they collectively called The British and North American Royal Mail Steamship Company, which later became the Cunard Line.

In 1902 the MacIver family sold the estate to Liverpool Corporation which, soon after, also acquired the Harthill Estate home of the Bibby family, and in 1905 the current 126 acre park that we know today was established. The Mansion House became the offices of the Parks and Gardens in the 1940s and part of the house was transformed into a self contained flat for the assistant head gardener. An Art Deco open air theatre was constructed at the back of the house in the late 1940s, probably designed by Sir Lancelot Keay. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the house was used as a tea-room and café and was used regularly for wedding receptions, parties and other functions.

In the mid-1970s it became council offices and remained that way until 2012 when the council put the lease for the property out for tender. The Reader Organisation was awarded the Preferred Bidder Status in January 2013 and in 2014 acquired the full lease of the Mansion for 125 years.

On the route to the Allerton Oak we passed a gravestone at the side of the pathway, marking the grave of three of the Walker family's horses and ponies, at least one of which was shot, probably due to ill health. It was sobering to think that at the same time that the urban poor of Liverpool were being buried in mass paupers graves, the wealthy were erecting headstones to their pets.



The ha-ha which is invisible from the house.



1940s Art Deco theatre.



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LHS would like to thank C3imaging, Liverpool, for generously printing this issue at a reduced cost to the Society. Visit the company's website for full details of the wide range of photographic, digital printing, exhibition, display and signage services it offers. [www.c3imaging.com](http://www.c3imaging.com)



The Liverpool History Society is a registered charity - Number 1093746



The ancient Allerton Oak.

The Allerton Oak is one of the park's most ancient features, loosely estimated at 1000 years old and, according to folklore and legend, beneath the branches of which the ancient local Hundred Court sat. Allegedly in 1864 it was damaged by the explosion of the gunpowder ship Lottie Sleigh on the river Mersey although this is unlikely. It is recorded that during WWII pressed leaves from the Allerton Oak were sent in Christmas cards to Parks and Gardens workers who had signed up to the army.

On the way to the Calderstones we called in to the Ornamental Gardens to see the resting place of a Liverpool hero, Jet of Iada. This was a pedigree Alsatian dog who was one of the first search and rescue animals used to seek out people trapped under blitzed buildings. For his efforts and loyalty he was awarded the Dickin Medal and the RSPCA's Medallion of Valour. Born in Liverpool 21 July 1942 in the Iada kennels, he was responsible for saving over 150 trapped people.

Jet was called into service again on 15 August 1947 for a rescue operation at William Pit in Whitehaven, Cumbria where an explosion had taken place; again Jet saved his handlers' lives by warning them of further explosions.



Memorial to 'Jet'.

17 April 2016 – Steve Smith

## THE JAPANESE CONSUL: A LIVERPOOL FIRST

Meeting report:  
Glyn Williams

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed cultural links between Europe and Japan on an unprecedented scale. The first Japanese Embassy was led by Takenouchi Yasunori and visited Europe in 1862. The businessmen it met in Liverpool no doubt included local wool merchant John Bowes. What Bowes made of Japanese culture is not known, but the occasion proved life-changing for his younger brother James Lord Bowes (1834-99), who in the course of the ensuing 35 years became one of the world's foremost collectors of Japanese art.



Streatlam Cottage, Woolton

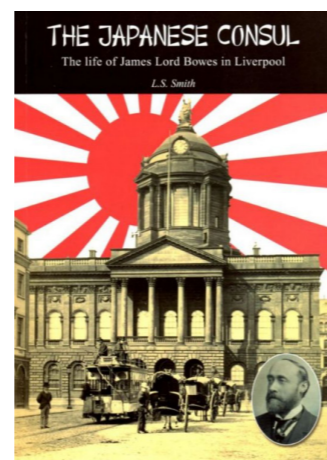
Steve Smith, who worked at Liverpool Museum between 1990 and 2005, based the talk to a large gathering of LHS members on his book *The Japanese Consul: The life of James Lord Bowes in Liverpool*. He explained that Bowes had been born in Leeds but moved to Liverpool with his mother and siblings following the death of his father in the 1840s. The family lived in Canterbury Street off Islington and James attended the nearby Collegiate School. After completing his education James eventually joined the family firm of John Bowes and Brother of Queen's Building, Dale Street. Business was good, enabling James to buy Streatlam Cottage on Beaconsfield Road, Woolton, when he was 27 in 1861. His interior decorator was close friend George Audsley (1838-1925) who went on to be an accomplished architect, artist, writer and organ builder. James's passion for Japanese art accelerated when he and Audsley attended the 1867 Paris Exposition. The owners of Japan's Satsuma Region were keen to adopt Western influences, and James reciprocated by buying ceramics, Japanese furniture and examples of Satsuma pottery.

In 1871 James married Charlotte Vicary Adam. It was soon evident that Streatlam Cottage was not big enough for a growing family and James's burgeoning collection, so a new house, Streatlam Tower, was built on Princes Road. The architect was George Audsley, who with his brother William designed the synagogue next door. Both buildings are still standing. Between 1875 and 1895 James produced eight books on topics ranging from lacquer ware and ceramics to marks and seals, enamels, pottery and gardens. Recognition of his work arrived in 1882 in the shape of two vases from the Emperor of Japan. One remains, the other later mysteriously disappearing from the Athenaeum! Further recognition followed in 1888 when James was appointed first-ever foreign-born Japanese Consul.

In June 1890 James turned his Streatlam Tower garden into a small exhibition hall and opened its doors to the public. The show attracted over 11,000 visitors and raised £561 for charity. A sequel in April 1891 was even bigger, attracting 20,000 visitors and

raising £5,290 for charity. That same year the Emperor awarded James the Order of the Sacred Treasure, 4<sup>th</sup> Class, upgraded to 3<sup>rd</sup> Class in 1897.

James died from a seizure in October 1899 at the age of 65. His collection, house and contents were sold at auction in 1901. The sale embraced 1,959 items and raised £10,000 (£1.1m today). Sadly, with local museums uninterested, the collection was dispersed, although a fine bronze dragon is somewhere in the Liverpool Museum but currently mislaid. A large sedan chair bought by James in Paris in 1867 has fared better and takes pride of place in Manchester Museum. There is a fine cloisonné bowl in the V&A and many items are scattered across the USA. The ultimate tribute to James came in 1901 when Charlotte received two more vases from the Emperor. As Steve Smith remarked, this was 'a remarkable gift for a woman', reflecting her husband's esteem in Japan.



Published by Liverpool History Press, 2013  
(see review in newsletter 37)

Richard's tour concluded with a visit to the Calderstones, six sandstone megaliths which remain from a Neolithic passage grave. They are about 5000 years old and are amongst the earliest known evidence of human construction in the Liverpool area. The stones are covered in petroglyphs containing cup marks, spiral marks, concentric circles and even very rare footprints, together with a recently discovered 'medieval' bird. There is also a neatly carved 'JL' in one of the stones, but no

confirmed connection to John Lennon can be found, although he did live in the area. These same marks can be found elsewhere, for example in Anglesey and Ireland, indicating that people of the Neolithic period had connections with other communities across the Irish Sea. In 1825 it was reported that urns made of the coarsest clay and containing human dust and bones were found. Unfortunately the contents were later sent for recycling as fertiliser, so valuable DNA and carbon dating materials

have been lost forever. In 1845 Joseph Need Walker decided to dig up this pile of stones and place them in a pre-constructed circle at the entrance to the park. There they remained until 1954 when they were removed and put into storage and then, in the 1960s, placed in a specially built greenhouse to protect them. However the stones are deteriorating due to efflorescence (the stones act like a giant wick soaking up salt water from the soil; the salt then crystallizes and damages the surface of the stone).

So they are soon to be removed again, consolidated, restored and returned to the park in a more prominent and protected environment.



Richard concluding his comments to Society members.

15 May 2016 – David Harrison

## CHRISTOPHER RAWDON : A FORGOTTEN PHILANTHROPIST

Meeting report:  
Martin Strauss

Christopher Rawdon (1780-1858), born at Halifax, was a member of a wealthy Unitarian Yorkshire family and the eldest son of Christopher Rawdon (d. 1822). Although he is not as well-remembered as his Unitarian contemporaries, the Rathbones, the Holts and the Mellys for example, he left a fine legacy to the Anfield area of the city and is perhaps typical of many such businessmen who took their philanthropic responsibilities seriously in a city with growing social problems.

The Rawdon family had established an important woollen business in Hebden Bridge in the mid-eighteenth century, had built Underbank Hall in 1788 on land bought from the Horsfall family, and in time owned mills, warehouses, dyehouses and much of nearby Charlestown. They took a keen interest in the development of canals and railways as they came to be of great benefit to the woollen industry.

The ambition to develop his interests led Christopher junior to move to Liverpool and to settle in Anfield, where he built Elm House and immersed himself in local politics, education, the commercial activities of the city and the Unitarian community. Christopher and his brothers James and Joshua, all of whom worked in the family business from offices in Old Hall Street, traded in wool with Portugal, Argentina and Brazil.

In 1821 Christopher married Charlotte Briggs, the daughter of a Halifax banker. They both promoted education in Liverpool, he notably with Pleasant Street School and she with girls education. When the Unitarians could no longer benefit from the Hewley Trust,

and with their business fortunes behind them, in 1853 Christopher and James established a fund to support Unitarian charities, especially education. It was increased by donations from other staunch Unitarians and became known as the Rawdon Fund.

Christopher died in 1858 and Charlotte later gave gifts of land and a recreation ground to the community in Anfield. In his memory a fountain, with a horse trough for passing travellers, was erected outside Elm House and a drinking fountain outside Holy Trinity Church close by. The 1908 OS map shows the latter still in place; in spite of the demolition of Elm House by this time, the trough is also marked on the map.

The Rawdon Trust became The Anfield Delph Trust and under this name was transferred to the City Council in 1903. In October 1905, The Rawdon Reading Room was opened on Breck Road to the design of Thomas Shelmerdine, near the church and close to the site of Elm House. This memorial to Christopher became a lending library in 1910 and survives today as 'The Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries International'.

Rawdon was buried in Toxteth Park Chapel and a memorial erected in Renshaw Street Chapel, later moved to Ullet Road Unitarian Church. The site of Elm House, now 'the Triang', can be found at the junction of Breck Road and Lower Breck Road in Anfield. The recreation ground is still there, along with the library and fountains. During his talk, David Harrison was supported by Fred Crebbin, his research assistant, who added a number of interesting points.

They concluded their remarks by suggesting the reason that Christopher has been forgotten, when some of his contemporary Unitarians have not, lies in the fact that there were no children of the marriage, that Charlotte left Anfield in the late 1860s, moving, via the Wirral for a short time, to Torquay, that Elm House had been demolished by 1908, and that the Rawdon Fund was renamed. However, memorials to Christopher Rawdon do still exist as reminders of his presence and of his concern for his community and his city.



ANFIELD DELPH TRUST  
THIS PROPERTY  
COMPRISING PLAYGROUND AND FOUNTAIN  
AND THE COTTAGES ADJOINING  
IS GIVEN  
IN MEMORY OF THE LATE  
CHRISTOPHER RAWDON  
OF ELM HOUSE ANFIELD  
BY HIS WIDOW  
FOR THE BENEFIT OF  
THE INHABITANTS OF ANFIELD  
29 APRIL 1863