



ALTRINCHAM HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 27 February 2023

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Hello everyone,

Welcome to a new year and a change in the History Society.

We have had some doubts about holding future meetings at **Altrincham Town Hall**. We have been told that we can't book anything beyond August 2023, as the Town Hall may be leased out for commercial purposes.

We've been looking at alternative venues that can provide the right size of room, with accessibility and (hopefully) parking, and reasonable for public transport. It's proving to be a difficult job finding availability. We have been checking out church halls and other meeting rooms round about, to see if our Tuesday evening is available, but we are competing with Yoga classes, Brownies and parish meetings etc etc. In one place the other evenings are free but not Tuesday! We have also considered if we would need to change the evening on which we meet, and wish to avoid that if possible.

I have found an alternative venue in Timperley available on Tuesday evenings. It is not too far from Timperley Metrolink station (only a bit further than from Altrincham Station to the Town Hall), and with parking, and on a (round-the-houses-a-bit) bus route from Altrincham. It is on the ground floor with comfy chairs, and we could have refreshments.

And I've **just heard** that Altrincham Town Hall **has been let** on a 25 year contract to the children's nursery that already occupies the other half of the building. So I will confirm the alternative venue for the next season from September 2023. More information to come.

Events:

Chester Society for Landscape History

- monthly lectures at St Columba's Church Hall, Plas Newton Lane, Chester, CH2 1PL Lots of parking
Members: free. Visitors: £4. Student visitors: £2.

Saturday 25 February 2023, 1.30pm AGM (1.30pm) followed at 2pm by **Canals and the Landscape**
Lecture by Peter Brown

And further ahead :

Saturday 25th March 2pm *Placenames and Landscape of Medieval Cheshire* *Lecture by Alan Crosby*

Saturday 22nd April 2pm *Thomas Pennant* *Lecture by Paul Evans.*

Events at Grosvenor Museum, Chester - FREE

Object of the Month

9 February, 1 – 1.30pm

9 March, 1 – 1.30pm

6 April, 1 – 1.30pm

For February, our lunchtime talk will focus on some of the more romantic objects in our collections. Drop in. Free.
For March's talk, we'll be joined by students from the University of Chester who'll be presenting their research on some of our newest treasure acquisitions. Drop in. Free

April's talk will explore the history of the women's rights movement in Britain, through the lens of a satirical handkerchief from the Grosvenor Museum's collection. Inscribed 'WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND WHAT CAME OF IT "1981"', the handkerchief depicts Victorian imaginings of what society might look like in 100 years if women were given the vote. Drop in. Free.

News from Cheshire Archives & Local Studies

Cheshire Railways: Third stop - maps and plans

We have reached the end of the line with our series of blogs about Cheshire Railways with the publication of the third and final part of our Cheshire Railways series. Following on from the history of the railways and employee records, we discuss the different types of maps and plans held in our collections. They cover plans of railway lines, stations, tunnels and bridges as well as other related buildings such as goods yards, waiting rooms and engine sheds.

Details are included that may not be found from Ordnance Survey maps, the census or other well-used family and local history records.

We have loaned several items from our Local Studies Collection to the Grosvenor Museum as part of their current exhibition, 'On Another Level: Exploring the Unique Rows of Chester'. The exhibition runs until 30 April 2023.

For more info about this and other Cheshire Museums events - their latest leaflet is here -

https://apps.talktalk.co.uk/appsuite/api/mail/E%26E%20A3_leaflet%20-Jan-May%202023.pdf?action=attachment&folder=default0%2FINBOX&id=55133&attachment=2&user=3&content=98456&decrypt=&sequence=1&delivery=view

Trafford Local Studies display for Holocaust Memorial Day - online

https://exploringtraffordsheritage.omeka.net/exhibits/show/holocaust-memorial-day/holocaust-memorial-day?fbclid=IwAR1_MwqEZK4wutuHL50Od1ofD_ptys4OGVe7rMm_rFMHIPjMbbOSmjEDATY

YouTube items:

'Spoonley Wood Roman Villa - the mystery of the missing mosaics', interesting video by Matthias Messer, 13 minutes.. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPMqxmmEStg>

"The industrial place you never knew about?" - very good video by Martin Zero - 28 minutes, about the Derwent Valley and the Cromford Mills - exploring the control and use of water power. Also glimpses of nearby lead mines and a rail incline, and Leawood Pumping Station.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPZt611eQq4>

"Opening the Medieval Stone Coffin found at the Richard III burial site" by Univ. of Leicester. 5 mins - skeleton remains. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXvvV9WQ_1c

'The best Medieval city in England - Origins of Norwich' - a 27 minutes video by 'Alex the History Guy'. Not just about Norwich, as it has background info from prehistoric - starts with Grimes Graves flint mines, and strays across to Roman forts on the coast of East Anglia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nlU7QE5w1E>

London's Roman Wall - I found some videos about the remains of the Roman wall round London. I watched them in this order, all have something to contribute. (I remember finding the Barbican stretch, but that was 40+ years ago.)

First is by Dr Ian Stone, 'Walking London's Walls' with history and maps, 27 minutes..

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTY92M47UEw>

The next one, posted by 'Look Up London', is 9 minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdh7h28fKGc>

There is also more information from the same presenter here: <https://lookup.london/roman-wall-car-park/>

Last is a longer video by John Rogers, walking the route: 'Walking London's Roman Wall'. 34 minutes.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e36qVg_8Ujk

Local War Memorials.

While searching for alternative meeting venues, I discovered that the Woodlands United Reformed Church on Woodlands Parkway in Timperley was closing and is to be replaced by housing. From previous visits I know that a war memorial is housed there, which came from Broadheath Congregational Church when that was demolished. It records Broadheath men who served, as well as those who died, and also four dead from WW2.

It now will need a new 'home', but where can that be?



Also, what will happen to the memorials that are in **Altrincham Town Hall**?

There are four there, including the Roll of Honour from Chapel Street.

Will they have to be removed?

If so, where can they go?

Next time you are in the Town Hall, look along the ground floor corridor for the Chapel Street memorial, and look for the other three.



Women's Land Army Index Cards go online. - News from The National Archives.

Although the Women's Land Army is often associated with the Second World War, it was first formed in 1917 by the Board of Agriculture, and then disbanded until June 1939. The government initially asked for volunteers, but later moved to conscripting women. The Land Army was to be disbanded for the final time in 1950.

https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/our-women-on-the-land-womens-land-army-index-cards-go-online/?utm_source=emailmarketing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=weekly_mailer_22_sep_22&utm_content=2022-12-21

Despite the huge numbers of women involved, original service records of the Women's Land Army have not survived. What has survived are microfiche copies of alphabetical index cards from 1939 to 1945. Ancestry has just provided digital access to these records.

The index cards only contain information about those individuals who participated in the Land Army in the Second World War. The online images and indexes exclude individuals born less than 100 years ago.

What can these WLA Index Cards tell us?

The index cards in the collection have the potential to include all, or some, of the following information:-

Name, Maiden name, Address, County of employment, Place of employment

Birth date, Age at enrolment, Date of enrolment

Occupation, Date of employment, Date of release, WLA membership number.

Although the information on the cards is very brief – certainly more so than on a conventional service record – each of these small insights can start to build a picture of someone's life and wartime service.

Working Class Movement Library

Friday afternoon tours of the Library. Fridays at 2pm - 3pm. Free.

Come and learn more about the library building, Jubilee House, the library's founders and our fantastic collection on a library tour. Our Library Manager, Belinda, will take you on a tour of all levels of the building to get a behind the scenes look at the library. Places on each tour are limited so please book in advance by email at enquiries@wcml.org.uk. Group tours are also available on request.

New book on local history which may interest some of you.

'Carnivals, Contests and Coronations – a Social History of Morris Dancing in Trafford before the Second World War'. It should be stressed that this is a book about much more than morris dancing. It considers the contexts in which such dancing was performed, the people who organised and trained the dancers and the social background of those who danced. Whilst the evidence for morris dancing before the twentieth century is chronicled, the main emphasis of the book is on the huge carnivals that were staged in Trafford between the two world wars at Altrincham, Sale, Stretford and Urmston.

It is the product of almost four years of research at Trafford Local Studies and other archives in the area and has drawn on the resources of the North West Film Archive. 435 pages, 95 illustrations, fully referenced and indexed. Its production has been sponsored by the Morris Federation. Feedback

The book is supported by a website, www.shuffleback.co.uk on which updates to research will be published in a blog as new digital resources are released. It can be purchased from YPD Books

<https://www.ypdbooks.com/history/2110-carnivals-contests-and-coronations.html>, Amazon and Waterstones.

Also available in the Abacus Books, Regent Road, Altrincham and Trafford Local Studies at Sale Waterside.



I remember these from our local Rose Queen Festivals in the 1960s, as well as the Bollin Morris with their 'tatters' and sticks at various recent events. [Photo F.I.Sant.]

A Dunham connection?

Seen in the current *Cross and Cockade* Journal - Captain Seaton Dunham Massy (not an error!). He was of Anglo-Irish descent born in Tipperary. Searches brought up a few items

<http://www.theaerodrome.com/forum/showthread.php?t=73047>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Massy

There seems to be no links to our Dunham Massey.

I had a quick look at both items, and I'm wondering if his parents just added the Dunham, maybe to make it look like he was connected with the Earls of Stamford ?? Or maybe they had visited there?

Found this in the online British Newspaper Archive -

MASSY - In London on the 10th May, 1922, Major Seaton Dunham Massy, D.S.O., late of the 29th Punjabis. Deeply regretted by all ranks of the regiment . . . [Civil & Military Gazette (Lahore), June 1922.]

Looking forward to warmer weather - my crocus are out, and one daisy on the front lawn.

See you soon Hazel