

The Record Society
of
Lancashire and Cheshire



Official Newsletter

No. 5 2024

Welcome from the RSLC

Thank you for reading the latest *Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire Newsletter*, and for your interest in our Society. The RSLC – established in 1878 – is a registered charity which aims to promote understanding of, and public interest in, the history of Lancashire and Cheshire – including Manchester, Liverpool, Chester and Preston – through the publication of editions of historical records and other activities.

If you are a member of the Society, we are very grateful for your support. If not, you can find out more about the RSLC, including details about how to join (and receive our annual volumes in return for your £20 subscription), at <http://rslc.org.uk/>. Alternatively, you can write to Diana Dunn at East Manley Hall, Manley Lane, Manley, Frodsham, WA6 9JE or d.dunn@chester.ac.uk

Inside this issue:

<i>Welcome from the RSLC</i>	1
<i>The RSLC in 2023</i>	1
<i>Annual General Meeting 2024</i>	2
<i>Upcoming RSLC Publications!</i>	2
<i>Dr Paul Booth interview</i>	3
<i>Oliver Mumford: Liverpool Hope University and the Imperial Past</i>	6

The RSLC in 2023

This year was a relatively calm one for the society. Although we did not publish a volume in 2023, owing to a delay with our latest edition, we are expecting a fruitful 2024 with two new editions due for publication. Details of some of our upcoming volumes can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

The highlight of this year was Stephen Roberts' entertaining and illuminating Colin Phillips Memorial Lecture, "Welfare, Riot and Bereavement: The Great War through the Eyes of the McGuire Family of Wallasey, 1914–1919", delivered at the Society's AGM in April. We were also delighted to welcome three new colleagues on to the RSLC Council: Dr Paul Booth (a long-standing friend of the Society: see page 3 below), Alex Miller (Archives & Resource Manager, Lancashire Archives), and Professor Peter Shapely (University of Bangor).

Annual General Meeting 2024

The society's AGM will be taking place on **Wednesday 27 March**, in the Liverpool Central Library (Meeting Rooms 1-2) starting at 1.45pm. It will be followed at 2.00pm by the **Colin Phillips Memorial Lecture**, which will this year be given by Professor Martin Heale on "**Robin Hood in the Medieval and Early Modern North-West**".

Martin Heale is Professor of Late Medieval and Reformation History at the University of Liverpool, and President of the Society. He has published widely on church and society in late medieval and sixteenth-century England, including books on *Monasticism in Late Medieval England, c.1300–1535* and *The Abbots and Priors of Late Medieval and Reformation England*. He has recently written a chapter on piety and anticlericalism in the medieval Robin Hood stories, to be published later this year in a volume entitled *Historians on Robin Hood*, edited by Stephen H. Rigby

ALL ARE WELCOME! Our AGM and public lecture will also be livestreamed via Zoom, for those who would like to join us online. To register for the AGM and lecture, please contact Diana Dunn (d.dunn@chester.ac.uk) in advance of the meeting, providing your email address and confirming whether you would like to attend in person or online.

The Society's Annual Report and financial accounts will be made available on our website (<http://rslc.org.uk/>) in advance of the AGM.

Upcoming RSLC Publications!

We have an exciting list of upcoming publications, spanning a wide variety of topics and periods. Following the publication of volume 159, *Prisoners of the Fifteen* (for which, see RSLC Newsletter no. 4) in the first part of 2024, other volumes in the pipeline include:

- *Cheshire Motor Vehicle Registration Records, 1908–11*, ed. Craig Horner: a second (and concluding) edition of early registration records, charting car ownership in early twentieth-century Cheshire;
- *Realities of Reorganisation: Manchester City Labour Group's Experience of Reformed Local Government, 1973–1977*, ed. Dr Marc Collinson and Dr Bertie Dockerill, with Prof. Peter Shapely: the minutes of the Labour Group on Manchester City Council, providing rich insight into the development of local government policy;
- *Delamere and Macclesfield Forest Eyre Roll, 1357–61*, ed. members of the Ranulf Higden Society: an edition of legal records, shedding light on daily life and crime in mid fourteenth-century Cheshire;
- *A Family at War: The McGuire Family of Wallasey during the Great War 1914–1918*, ed. Stephen Roberts: the correspondence of four sisters living in Wirral during World War I, covering family and local affairs, politics, religion and education;
- *The Letter-Book of Daniel Peck, Merchant of Chester, 1702–1704*, ed. Siobhan Talbott and Sophie H. Jones: detailing the affairs of a Chester merchant, trading in a range of goods to British and European ports at a time of war and disruption.



DR PAUL BOOTH, member of the RSLC Council and editor of multiple volumes relating to the history of Lancashire and Cheshire, tells us about his long and productive career as a historian of the medieval and early modern north-west of England - and about the challenges and benefits of editing historical records.

How many RLSC editions have you published or been involved with?

Four. The first was *Chester Chamberlain's Accounts, 1361–2* (RSLC vol. 125, 1991), edited jointly with Tony Carr of Bangor - he dealt with the Flintshire parts; the second was the *Accounts of the Manor and Hundred of Macclesfield, 1361–62* (RSLC vol. 138, 2003). I have also contributed to two other editions in a subordinate role: *The Extent of Longdendale 1360*, edited by John Harrop, with Paul Booth and Sylvia Harrop (RSLC vol. 140, 2005); and *Cheshire Forest Eyre Roll 1357: Part One, the Forest of Wirral*, edited by P. M. Hill and J. Heery (RSLC vol. 151, 2015).

What first drew you to editing historical records?

It was the research for my M.A. thesis, presented in 1974. This was an M.A. awarded for two years full-time research, supported by a Major State Studentship under the supervision of Professor Alec Myers of the Department of Medieval History, University of Liverpool. It alerted me to the signal importance of the records of the so-called Palatinate of Chester in the Public Record Office. The thesis concluded with an edition of the text of the Chamberlain's Account for 1361–2, and the body of the thesis, revised, was published by the Chetham Society in 1981. This was my first essay in editing.

What did you find most challenging when you began editing records? And what advice would you pass on to those taking up editing?

Fortunately I had been taught medieval palaeography by Dr Dorothea Oschinsky of the University of Liverpool and had taken A-level Latin at my secondary school in 1964, when it was still a demanding subject. This gave me something of a head start in the critical (in the proper sense) study of later medieval records. During my teaching of medieval palaeography on Liverpool's Masters in Archives and Records Management (MARM) course, it became clear to me that it was Latin grammar and syntax that formed the biggest obstacle to the initiation of novices into the craft of reading medieval documents. The challenges that remained for me were such as putting the document or record in an historical context, and learning the techniques of the editorial craft. I would advise others, therefore, to read, learn, and inwardly digest Roy Hunnisett's *Editing Records for Publication* (1977), and to familiarise themselves with the best examples of editions, such as the RSLC's *The Crown Pleas of*

the Lancashire Eyre of 1292, published in three volumes in 2014 and 2015 (vols 148–50). I would also advise would-be editors to aim for 100% accuracy in transcription and, if necessary, translation, while recognising that such cannot be achieved in a fallen world.

Why have you devoted so much of your career to editing historical records?

My advice to former students, should it be asked for, was always ‘Do what you love, because that is what you will be best at’. I was brought up on a Wirral mixed farm, and as a child was taken to the Chester cattle market on Tuesday afternoons, when it was still held in the city centre at Gorse Stacks. When I was working on the Macclesfield manorial estate accounts for my M.A. thesis I was delighted to come across the word ‘esshen’ (a large bucket) as that was the word used by my father for the same implement in the 1950s. Historic Cheshire is my home, and I have always felt a great love for it and its medieval and early modern history. As Horace put it: ‘Ille terrarum mihi praeter omnis angulus ridet’ [Translated from the Odes of Horace by the great W.G. Hoskins as ‘It is that corner of the world above all others that has a smile for me.']. Needless to say, perhaps, confrontation with Cheshire’s legal records is healthy proof against any uncritical sentimentality in this area. As I’ve already mentioned, I became aware early on in my research that Cheshire’s medieval records were the finest for any English county, and that publication of editions of those records would be a way of making them more widely available.

How have you gone about choosing which documents to edit and publish?

The Cheshire part of my research career has entailed the study and publication of as wide a range of material as possible. So far that has encompassed financial records, and more recently legal records. First was a translation of the Cheshire Trailbaston Roll for 1353, published informally in serial form in the journal *Cheshire History*. The most recent consists of *The Chester County Court Indictment Roll 1354–1377*, published by the Chetham Society in 2019, for which I corrected the text and translation produced by my late student, Phyllis Hill, and wrote a wholly new introduction. For a later period, I have been publishing a summary of the records in English in the Cheshire Quarter Sessions Files from 1571 onwards in *Cheshire History*. This has so far reached 1609.

As far as Lancashire is concerned, an edition of two short documents has been published in ‘Sir George Middleton of Leighton, a Lancashire Penruddock?: documents on preparations for a failed royalist rising in north Lancashire, 1655’ *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 91 (1995), for which my former student, Malcolm Gratton, furnished the introduction. This arose out of a

Local History group I had been teaching for the University in Warton in north Lancashire.

Occasionally, things almost demand publication, and my own example of this was the very short item: 'An early fourteenth-century use of the F-word in Cheshire, 1310–11', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 164 (2015).

Finally, the ability to obtain large-scale funding enabled my involvement with the Gascon Rolls project, 1317 to 1467, the records of English government in south-western France during that period. It resulted in the largest grant to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Liverpool in its history, and my main contribution, from 2007 to 2013, was the devising of a calendaring system for this intricate series of records so that they could be published online. The project was completed in 2019: www.gasconrolls.org

Are there any fascinating unpublished documents that you've encountered which would make an excellent edition?

One I can think of is the series of seventeenth-century Easter Books for the ancient parish of Warton in north Lancashire. They are to be found in the Towneley Papers in Lancashire Archives and Record Office. They are unusually detailed, and contain references to small tithes that enable the reconstruction of not just the parish's population but also its agriculture. For example, they list the possession of bee-hives. Our former president, Dr Colin Phillips, read a paper entitled 'Who lived in Stockport in the 1620s? The Stockport Easter books 1619–1629' to the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire in 2016. Although of great interest, the Stockport books contain much less detail than do those of Warton.

What current projects are you working on, and what will they add to our knowledge of the north west?

At the moment I am concentrating on helping to bring the Delamere and Macclesfield forest sections of the Cheshire Forest Eyre Roll for 1357 to completion by the RSLC. It has been held up by both the deaths and serious illnesses of some of those participating in the editorial work. I will also carry on with publishing records from the Cheshire Quarter Sessions Files. In addition, I have been working on a calendar of the pleas for the reign of Edward II in the Chester county court plea rolls (TNA/PRO CHES 29) that has now reached 1326.

'The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne'. - Chaucer



OLIVER MUMFORD, PhD student at Liverpool Hope University, introduces his fascinating doctoral research project *'Liverpool Hope University and the Imperial Past'*, and details some of documentation he has uncovered about the colonial connections of the teacher training colleges from which it was founded.

Liverpool Hope University was founded from the amalgamation of three religious teacher training colleges in the city: St Katharine's, Notre Dame, and Christ's College. My doctoral research examines the ways in which the imperial past impacted on, and influenced, these institutions, drawing upon the university's institutional archives held in Liverpool Hope University's Archives and Special Collections.

St Katharine's College, established as Warrington Training College in 1844, was an Anglican institution educating women as elementary school teachers, which by 1879 became the second largest Church of England training college in England. The Sisters of Notre Dame established Our Lady's Training College in Mount Pleasant in 1856 to train Catholic women as elementary teachers. Christ's College was founded in 1964 as a Catholic co-educational training college. Through the extensive source materials held in Special Collections, ranging from financial records to staff and student logs, and college magazines, it can be seen how each of these institutions were shaped by, and contributed to shaping, the colonial world and networks around them.

The first strand of my research has focused on Warrington Training College. The college log books between 1907 and 1957 record the education, grades, and postings of students. They paint a picture of a large college training teachers for local posts. A handful of students are recorded as taking employment overseas following graduation, while the vast majority settled to work in the northwest, suggesting a domestic outlook amongst most students. However, the pages of the college magazine emphasised the experiences of alumni and students working overseas in the colonial world.

In 1889 the Reverend Morley Stevenson, principal of the college, established the St Katharine's Guild, an alumni association. For two shillings per annum, membership of the guild also included a subscription to the annual college magazine. Engagement and membership were extensive: over 1,000 alumni attended a reunion in 1923. Branches were organised around the country, and correspondence was sent from around the world. From the magazine, written by students with contributions from alumni and staff, it is possible to develop an understanding of the myriad ways in which the college was impacted by the imperial past.

Advertisements for teaching posts in the Transvaal or Hong Kong, as well as texts of speeches and guest lectures from visiting missionaries and bishops stationed in British colonies make appearances in the magazine. A report from the college's branch association of the Universities Mission to Central Africa is found in almost every edition from the first one in 1889. Alumni wrote back from the empire with details of their work in India, Labrador, Saskatchewan, Tasmania, and the Transvaal. Alumni in Grahamstown, Labrador, and India contributed extensive letters from mission schools, filled with the paternalistic, racialised language of the nineteenth-century civilising mission.

The narratives found in the college magazine present a curated image of the college, differing from the lives or interests of many of its students. The magazine does, however, offer insights into how students lived, worked, and learned in an environment shaped, connected, and influenced by the wider connections and experiences of the British Empire. This is most notable during the period of 'New Imperialism' in the late nineteenth century and the inter-war years, when the British world system reached its apogee. Whilst not necessarily a dominant feature in the lives of staff and students at Warrington Training college, it is, however, clear that the imperial past was a recurring thread, interwoven with daily life and experience at the college.



Warrington
Training College,
c.1900, reproduced
by kind permission
of Liverpool Hope
University.