

## West Derby Society

# NEWSLETTER

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### Village Plans Studied

Following lobbying by the West Derby Society (WDS) over several years, the city council has drawn up draft plans for improving traffic management in West Derby Village. It is stressed that



these plans are based on initial suggestions and are subject to change.

Most of the Village is made up of listed buildings and structures and the plans will help to create a better environment for visitors, residents and businesses.

The first draft (pictured above and right) includes several improvements suggested by local councillors, WDS and others.

The Grade II\*-listed Tudor courthouse would be protected from passing vehicles and vandals by the pavement being built out and a row of metal bollards erected.

The bus stop could be moved from outside the Courthouse and re-sited by the Co-op supermarket.

A Stop sign is planned for the end of Meadow Lane and parking bays marked out around the Village. The taxi rank may be moved to outside the Sefton Arms.

A meeting of the Village Task Force, chaired by Stephen Twigg MP, discussed the draft plans on 2 March. The

meeting, attended by your chairman, made several suggested amendments including some from WDS members.



These included putting the Stop sign by the West Derby pub rather than next to the monument, a different location for the taxi rank and possibly moving the pedestrian crossing so that the bus stop could be nearer the Village centre. Council officers are now revising the proposals for further discussion.

## The King's Peace

**Alastair Caird** concludes the story of Britain's police systems ...

For a week in June 1780 the London mob rioted in support of the repeal of the Saville Act, which had been passed to relieve the most oppressive of the restrictions placed on Roman Catholics. Eventually, as no other means of quelling the disturbances - led by Lord George Gordon MP - was effective, the military was called out and ordered to use the utmost force. By the time peace was restored, more than 500 people had been killed, 72 private houses and four goals destroyed. About £1 million worth of damage had been done. Throughout all of this the peace officers had been of no use at all.

### Loud

Denunciation of the police system was loud and sharp, yet nothing was done to improve the situation for another five years. In 1785 a Bill was introduced in which it was proposed that the cities of London and Westminster plus adjacent parts of Middlesex and Surrey formed a single police district. The power of the police would be in the hands of three commissioners, who commanded all existing constables, beadles and watchmen, together with a paid force of 225 patrols under nine superintendents.

Nine more public offices – later known as police courts – were proposed on the Bow St model, under the supervision of the commissioners. This Bill, which would have made a good beginning, was opposed strongly by the justices, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London. After much debate it was rejected.

In 1792, however, an Act was passed reforming public offices. Up to this time the justices had not received a salary but had made what they could out of fines - the dirtiest money on earth, Henry Fielding called it. A receiver was appointed who collected all fines to defray the expenses of the public offices. Magistrates were put on fixed salaries of £400 per year, a move which helped more than anything else to remove corruption. Seven new public offices were set up, each with three magistrates and six constables who were paid 12 shillings a week and had summary powers of arrest. (All these reforms were based on Fielding's reforms at Bow St.) Eventually the public office became known as the Police Office and then the Police Court. The number of constables was increased from time to time. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century London outside the City had begun to expand rapidly. This metropolis was in a strange position as it had no legal being as it was a collection of townships, manors and parishes that had no common ruler save the monarch and Parliament.

### Officers

In this strange conglomerate there were no fewer than 3,084 peace officers, watchmen and patrols. This number was totally inadequate to deal with the volume of crime and disorder committed in the metropolitan area. One of the main reasons for this was the fact that the metropolitan magistrates had no powers permitting them to pursue wrongdoers who fled from their jurisdiction into the City of London and the converse was true of the City magistrates.

As time passed, however, small bodies of runners were established at some of the new public offices. The number of paid constables was increased and their salaries raised but they were still totally inadequate. In fact the lawlessness of the great mass of the people was so considerable by the 1820s that Parliament could no longer ignore the extremely serious situation. In 1828 the Home Secretary, Robert Peel, set up a House of Commons committee to inquire into it.

The committee worked quickly and on its recommendations the 1829 Police Bill was passed. An entirely new system of policing was introduced in the metropolis, a system which soon spread throughout the country.

The forces for policing the country and the metropolis existing at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century applied to the whole of England. Parish constables were elected annually and served unpaid. Their deputies served for a wage voluntarily paid by the parish constables.

Peculiar to London and the immediate neighbourhood, in addition to the parish constables, were the salaried Bow Street officers and patrols specifically charged with the suppression of highwaymen and footpads. Secondly, the stipendiary police constables were attached to the public offices established by the Middlesex Justices Act of 1792. Thirdly, the stipendiary water police were attached to the Thames Office, as set up by the 1798 Act. Justices of the Peace were still functioning in rural areas but the system was soon to adapt itself by degrees to the new conditions.



Besides these five different types of peace officer there was a sixth. Charles II was faced with the threat of disturbances arising out of attempts to enforce religious conformity in a 1673 Act. This instituted the parish watchmen – known as Charleys – and laid down that any citizen might be sworn in as temporary peace officers on specific occasions, particularly when there was a threat of great disorder. In instituting these special constables he was, of course, reiterating the old Anglo Saxon principle of mutual responsibility for the preservation of the peace. Any citizen could be summoned before the magistrates and sworn in as a special constable and if he refused to obey, he was liable to a heavy fine. Though this law had never been repealed, little or no use had been made of it in the South of England and never in London or the metropolis. It could have been invoked during the Gordon Riots, but was not.

The 1829 Police Act set up a permanent paid Police Force in only the metropolis. Despite serious initial opposition, however, the idea and the men soon proved their worth and within 10 years an almost miraculous transformation in the policing of the whole country had taken place.

### **Municipal**

The first partial step in this direction was provided by the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act. This put municipal government on a popular basis by giving ratepayers the right to elect members to form a town council to govern the community. A clause of this very important measure enabled a town council, if it wished, to appoint a body of paid constables under the direction of a council committee called a Watch Committee. A number of local authorities did appoint such paid constables but, while doing good work, these constables did not constitute a force powerful enough to deal effectively with the policing problems of a large city, for example. This led to a further development for it was natural, when other large cities saw the success achieved by the Metropolitan Police Force, that they would be eager to adopt similar police forces of their own. The City of London had a paid police force from 1737. It was this body which probably inspired Peel to set up his Metropolitan Force which was remodelled in 1839 under the City of London Police Act. Soon a number of provincial authorities wanted to follow. The atrocious state of criminality led to the setting up of a Royal Commission in 1839, one result of which was the passing of the first Rural Police Act. This is usually referred to as the Permissive Act, which enabled a majority of justices at Quarter Sessions to raise and equip a paid police force for the protection of their county.

**Essex was the first county to take advantage and by May 1855 22 counties had adopted it fully along with seven counties partially. In 1856, however, another Rural Police Act was introduced.**

Commonly called the Obligatory Act, it compelled magistrates to establish a police force for the whole or residue of any county not yet possessing a new constabulary force.

The policing of the country now advanced enormously in efficiency.

The 1888 Local Government Act transferred the control of the rural police to Standing Joint Committees composed of justices in Quarter Sessions and members of the County Council.

### **Boroughs**

In the same year all boroughs with populations of less than 10,000 were amalgamated with the county force.

County Boroughs, which were either counties in themselves or had a population of more than 50,000, received a greater measure of autonomy.

Since the 1900s there have been further developments to keep pace with changing circumstances and new ways of combating crime have also been introduced.

In Scotland the police system has developed along more or less parallel lines.

### **Regular**

The introduction of a regular paid force automatically changed the basic concept of mutual responsibility on which the preservation of the King's Peace had rested for so many centuries.

**Indeed though our law still places upon the individual citizen a duty to assist the police in preserving the Peace, the ancient principle would have disappeared for all time but for one thing – the special constable.**

**He or she alone among those now responsible for guarding law and order is in direct descent from the Anglo Saxon *headborough* and *tythingman*.**

## **Annual General Meeting**

The West Derby Society Annual General Meeting was held in *Lowlands* on Wednesday 18 January 2012.

The Chairman, Stephen Guy opened the meeting at 7.40pm.

**Apologies** were received from Cllr Daniel Barrington, Tony Green and deputy chairman Andy Richardson.

**Minutes of the last AGM** held 19 January 2011: Stephen read the Minutes of the last AGM to the members present.

**Matters Arising:** There were no Matters Arising.

### **Chairman's Report**

This is my 14<sup>th</sup> yearly report since becoming chairman in 1999 and once again we look back at an exciting year covering many subjects and activities associated with our historic area.

Our speakers in 2011 covered a wide range of themes. First, the Ince Blundell statues are in the news after the religious order at Ince Blundell Hall announced controversial plans that could lead to their sale. Back in February Gina Muskett, from World Museum, gave us a fascinating insight into the statues in the National Museum Liverpool's own Ince Blundell collection, secured for Liverpool in 1959.

Our next two speakers told us about the Brocklebank tug and Liverpool's diverse public parks. In May we had a visit from Mark Coleman, the Rector of West Derby, to hear about his research into farming and food production in the past.

Steve Butler brought a remarkable collection of items seized by Customs and now in the care of Merseyside Maritime Museum. I was particularly moved by the shawl illegally made from an endangered Tibetan deer which graphically illustrated how human beings destroy rare wildlife in the name of fashion.

Barbara Tasker brought her Liverpool childhood to life with family photographs and anecdotes about her diverse ancestors. Ken Pye was the next speaker and also ably demonstrated his skills at holding his audience spellbound.

Our evening mystery tour in June took us to Hawarden in North Wales where we looked around this historic village still dominated by the austere presence of the great Victorian Prime Minister, William Gladstone. We toasted his memory in the local pub where his portrait glares in the entrance.

In July we spent an enjoyable day in Conwy – the journey went quickly and smoothly unlike the huge hold-ups road travellers had to endure until about 20 years ago. There was lots going on but for me Conwy is about the ancient castle and town walls.

This year's evening trip is on Wednesday 20 June and the day trip on Saturday 7 July **[to Buxton]**. Please put these dates in your diaries and make an effort to come. Both trips were quite poorly supported in 2011 and we would like to see full coaches in 2012.

Looking at planning issues, we await developments at Alder Hey in particular. The West Derby Society welcomes the redevelopment of this leading children's hospital. However, we have voiced concerns about the relocation of the Grade II-listed Nelson monument.

The Society has suggested two alternative sites for the landmark and awaits details of any proposed move.

We are awaiting an imminent announcement on the future of the ancient footpath between Leyfield Rd and Aspes Rd. Liverpool City Council supported by the MP and some residents want to close it but the Society, other residents and the Peak and Northern Footpath Society are opposing any closure.

The West Derby Courthouse had nearly 1,000 visitors in 2011 and reopens again on 1 April. This would not be possible without the sterling support of West Derby Society volunteers – well done everyone.

I have very much enjoyed 2011 as chairman. In December I started a new weekly column in Saturday's Liverpool Echo called *Merseyside Tales*. This is a vehicle to publicise not only the West Derby Society but also *Lowlands*, Croxteth Hall and the museums. My articles in the monthly *West Derby Link* have a similar role.

I will end by thanking members of the committee for their work in the past year and all those Society members who have helped and volunteered.

This year marks the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our Society and we look forward to another 12 months celebrating and supporting the history and environment of West Derby and district. Thank you.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

<b>INCOMING</b>	<b>£</b>
Subscriptions	700.00
Misc	52.30
Donations	126.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>878 .30</b>

<b>OUT-GOING</b>	
Hire of Hall	180.00
Speakers	150.00
Print / Post / Stationery	30.24
Misc	368.32
Donations	13.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>741.56</b>

WDS had a good financial year so we were able to have some leaflets printed as this would help us recruit new members. This seemed to work. We also had another good year selling our books and magazines – thank you.

I transferred £498.04 in July from the Community Account into Santander to make it up to £3,000 - again we made low interest of £2.35.

The coach trips together cost £700 and we made a loss of £269 as both coaches were just over half full. We had a raffle which made £53 therefore reducing the loss to £216 which is still quite high. Let's hope we can all make the trips this year.

Community Account balance year ending 2011:	<b>£607.93</b>
Santander balance year ending 2011:	<b>£3,002.35</b>
<b>Giving WDS a grand total of</b>	<b><u>£3,610.28</u></b>

Thank you.

Stephanie Grogan

Hon Treasurer

**Election of Officers** : All Officers stood down and offered themselves for re-election. All were re-elected unanimously.

**Any Other Business**: There was no Other Business.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

*There followed the Chairman's Talk which on this occasion was an illustrated mystery tour of the general Liverpool area, where great local knowledge was produced by members guessing the locations displayed.*

### **FARMERS' MARKET**

**A** farmer's market is planned in the Sefton Arms car park on Saturday 2 June 2012. This is a new venture and if successful will be followed by similar events. WDS has been involved in the planning and your chairman intends taking visitors on tours of the Village and surrounding area looking at the history of our ancient community.

### **FOOTPATH UPDATE**

**Eleven** objections have been lodged to the proposed closure of the ancient footpath running from Leyfield Rd between the golf course and rugby club to Aspes Rd.

WDS, the Peak and Northern Footpath Society, Ramblers Association and local residents have lodged objections. The city council wants to close this public amenity, enjoyed by generations of walkers, because it claims the path is not needed and is under-used. It is now organising consultation meetings in a bid to breach the impasse.

WDS is advised that the only grounds for closing a path are if there is an alternative or if the existing path serves no useful purpose – neither of which applies in this case.

### **Chairman's Comments**

**I** am currently doing a series of talks called *Paths in Time* for Andy Ball's Saturday morning Radio Merseyside show.

The idea is for people to take time to walk around their environment and become engaged in their surroundings.

We can look at a landscape or townscape in a number of ways – the architecture, plants, trees and perspectives, for example.

What I am trying to do is take people back, in their minds, to earlier times that shaped the appearance of areas as they appear today.

I've noticed that an increasing number of people on the streets (and elsewhere) are not engaged with their surroundings.

### **Phones**

This is because they are operating their mobile phones or ipods. I use Twitter and Facebook and can understand how some people can become almost obsessed.

There is already an identifiable condition called FAD – Facebook Addiction Disorder.

The sufferer cannot spend more than 10 minutes away from their computer for fear of missing something.

The *Sunday Post* carried a story about a 31-year-old man who neglected his family and himself because of FAD.

Facebook is a fun way to keep in touch (WDS and *Lowlands* are on it) but the site is not the be-all and end-all.

It is a wonderful world out there and we should all get out and enjoy our environments.

Liverpool is a major city with the greatest number of trees within its boundaries – just think of Croxteth Country Park, Calderstones and the south Liverpool greenbelt.

We know from recent experience that there are people who want to close some time-honoured rights of way.

For every footpath or bridlepath that is shut down, a corresponding proportion of our quality of life goes with it. **Stephen Guy**

