

West Derby Society

# NEWSLETTER

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New Year 2011

## Slipping and Sliding

West Derby froze throughout most of December with Christmas Day the coldest most people could remember.

Liverpool usually escapes extremes of weather – but not this time.

The month started with very cold temperatures and heavy frosts and snow.



Here Sefton Rugby Club ground lies under heavy hoar frost.

Heavy snow fell on Friday 17 December and lay until the thaw set in two days after Christmas. It may have been uncomfortably cold but the snow transformed familiar places into a magical world.



This is Eaton Road North with the bank on the right.



A few intrepid dog walkers can be seen on the Walker field in Sandfield Park.



The snow and ice brought out our beautiful buildings in stark relief – this is the refurbished Kiln Hey mansion.



It was satisfying to be able to see *Eddesbury* the former Margaret Bevan School which is normally hidden behind a thick screen of summer foliage.

### **Berries and Births**

Many of us doubtless enhanced our Christmas celebrations with holly, **writes Alastair Caird.**

Holly is a genus of approximately 600 species of flowering plants in the *Aquifoliaceae* family – they are mainly dioecious i.e. most forms have male flowers on one plant and female on another. Most females produce berries whereas most males do not.

In the West Derby area the common holly grows well in the generally acidic soil. It is a very useful tree or shrub that can also make excellent hedging.

There are many hollies with tree preservation orders on them, including those in West Derby stocks.

Look out also for the small, slow-growing silver hedgehog holly *ilex auqifolium* or *Ferox Argentea*. This is a male silver and green holly reaching more than three feet in height with a very aggressive prickled leaf surface. There is a very attractive golden male form called *ferox aurea*.

## **Households**

The 2011 census is due to take place on Sunday 27 March when all residential households will be required to take part.

Since 1801 a day has been chosen every 10 years for this purpose, except in 1941 during the war. The census provides an excellent source of information about the population. This enables central and local government, health authorities and many other organisations to identify the need for housing, education, health and transport services for years to come.

## **Foods**

Even supermarkets use the census to work out the kinds of foods they need to sell to keep local communities stocked up with their favourites.

Water companies use the census data to plan the pipes for clean and waste water, making sure there is enough for everyone now and in the future.

Fire and police services use data to help communities by putting fire alarms and crime prevention measures in specific areas. The benefits can be far-reaching.

Statistics also feed into the allocation of funding for local authorities and play a major part in identifying needs for local services in communities. It is crucial that the population estimate is as accurate as possible.

## **Past**

Aside from many present and future benefits, the census has the power to unlock the past. Once records are made public after 100 years they mark the beginnings of journeys for many thousands of people wanting to discover the lives, loves and lifestyles of their ancestors.

Along the way there are numerous opportunities to swap stories and ideas with other family historians. Today, particularly with the Internet, it has never been easier.

The 2011 census for England and Wales has prompted a family history group on Facebook, helping people track family histories and find their roots.

Every search tells its own story, revealing many surprising facts and in some cases restoring family connections.

## **Historic**

The setting to a historic building, conservation area or monument has long been considered important and affects our decisions relating to these assets.

It is the duty of the local planning authority, under the Planning Act 1990, to consider how any development may affect the setting to a listed building.

Previous guidance on this matter suggested that local authorities should not interpret the setting too narrowly and should err on the side of caution.

New guidance (contained in document PPS 5) states that authorities should weigh up any harm to a structure's setting against any wider benefits.

Opportunities should be identified to improve the settings of listed buildings.

The setting is important and can extend well beyond its garden or immediate curtilage.

It often provides the backdrop to the building including other structures and open land.

Views of a building can be an important aspect when considering the impact of development on the setting.

## **Newsletter**

I was looking through my back editions of the ~~Society~~ *Newsletter* and discovered the oldest dating from November 1982 – five years after the Society was founded. In those days it was just one page. Both Mary Riddoch and Jack Cooper, mentioned in the reports, went on to be life members of the Society.

I finish with a rather nice picture of the Southport-bound train leaving West Derby Station in a cloud of steam. The exact date is unknown but it is probably in the 1950s.



## **Annual General Meeting 2011**

The annual general meeting (AGM) of the West Derby Society takes place in *Lowlands* at 7.30 pm on Wednesday **19 January 2011**.

**Subscription forms are attached to this ~~Newsletter~~ to bring to the meeting or post. Cheques or postal orders should be made out to West Derby Society.**

Once again the annual subscription is £10 each. Under 18s are free but still need to fill in a form. The AGM will feature a talk by deputy chairman Andrew Richardson.

Dates of 2011 meetings and subjects of speakers are as follows:

**16 February** – *The Ince Blundell Statues.*

**16 March** - *Brocklebank and Other Liverpool Tugs.*

**20 April** – *Liverpool's Parks.*

**18 May** – *Feeding West Derby.*

**15 June** – Evening Outing.

**Saturday 2 July** – Day Trip.

**August** – NO MEETINGS.

**21 September** – *Smuggling Past and Present.*

**19 October** – *Liverpool Lives.*

**16 November** – *Liverpool's Lost Villages.*

**21 December** – Christmas Cheer and Quiz.

## **Sefton Arms**



The Sefton Arms in West Derby Village now sports this splendid traditional double-sided inn sign. It depicts one of the Earls of Sefton who lived at Croxteth Hall. Sadly there are no longer any members of the Molyneux family but this colourful sign keeps their memory alive in the Village. Traditional inn signs are thought to be disappearing in parts of the country so it is reassuring to see this excellent modern example.

### **Exciting Times at *Lowlands***

Here are the dates for West Derby Community Association (WDCA) events and meetings at *Lowlands* in 2011.

West Derby Society members and other *Lowlands* supporters are invited to attend the WDCA **management committee meetings** that are held roughly every six weeks on Mondays.

The meetings, which start at 7 pm and last about 90 minutes, discuss activities at the Grade II-listed community centre. Input from our volunteers, users and supporters is welcome.

The 2011 dates are:

**17 January, 28 February, 11 April, 23 May (inc WDCA AGM), 4 July, 5 September, 17 October and 28 November.**

*Lowlands* costs about £1,500 a month just to run and the following fund-raising events will be staged in 2011.

A **Burns Night** is being held at 7.30 pm on Saturday 22 January – tickets cost £10 each from *Lowlands*, 13 Haymans Green, Liverpool L12 7JG. Tel: 0151 226 5352 or e-mail

[office@lowlands.org.uk](mailto:office@lowlands.org.uk)

Please make out cheques / postal orders to WDCA Ltd.

Other dates for your 2011 diaries:

Friday 6 May – **Quiz Night**.

Saturday 18 June – **Garden Fete**.

Sunday 25 September – **Open Day**.

Saturday 29 October – **Halloween Party**.

Saturday 3 December – **Christmas Fayre**.

In addition there are regular activities at *Lowlands* which people are welcome to join (not forgetting the West Derby Society).

**Line dancing** 1 pm to 3 pm Mondays.

**Yoga** 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm Mondays.

**Tai Chi** 10.30 am to 11.30 am Tuesdays.

**Lowlands Ladies' Club** 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm Tuesdays.

**Children's Dance Class** 5pm to 8 pm Wednesdays, 9.30 am to 11.30 pm Saturdays.

**National Association of Women's Clubs** 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm Thursdays.

The celebrated **Lowlands Jujitsu Club** meets early evenings Mondays and Wednesdays and other dates. Details from Prof Kenneth Blundell 07715 131977.

### **New**

In December the *Lowlands* car park was resurfaced and parking bays – including two for disabled visitors – marked out.

Rooms on the top and rear floors were decorated and carpeted.



Andy Sinnott, *Lowlands* Renewal Project site manager, is pictured wallpapering the period room on the top floor.



The work has now been completed and Society members were taken on a tour at the December meeting.

The period room will be furnished in late Victorian style when it may have been occupied by a governess, housekeeper or lady's maid.

WDCA is looking for an iron bedstead, dressing table, chairs, ornaments etc.

### ***Chairman's Comments***

The freezing weather begs the question: how on earth did they cope with the cold in days gone by?

In Victorian times very few people enjoyed central heating or double glazing – only a few public buildings had it.

Virtually everybody, rich and poor, had to cope with open fires and stoves to keep warm.

December 2010 is said to have been the coldest December since records began in 1890 so we have had a taste of what our ancestors endured.

However, they had to light fires rather than throw a switch so things were much more difficult.

I have delved into the Society's archive of glass slides taken by West Derby postmistress Marion Fergie in the 1890s and 1900s.

Here are some featuring lots of snow. I think the first two were taken in Cartmel, South Lakes, perhaps during the Christmas period.



This formidable lady is pursuing a timeless task – clearing the path. There appears to have been about two foot of snow. This looks like a back yard so chances are she is clearing the way to the outside loo. Older members will recall what an ordeal it was to brave the elements to answer a call of

nature! Oil lamps were sometimes used to provide some warmth.



This girl has popped outside without her hat and coat for a snowball fight. Even so, she has many layers of clothing including a thick ankle-length skirt. These were devils to keep clean. My grandmother Lillian Potter (born 1885) told me they used to scrape mud and soil off the hems

using a penny. Perhaps they did the same with snow and ice.



This picture may have been taken in West Derby, possibly the cottages that still stand in Mill Lane by the Halton Castle. They have done an excellent job clearing the front path.

There were virtually no cars in those days – every vehicle on the roads was horse-drawn. Horses were pretty good in snow and most carts and wagons would have got through. Trains and ships were likewise rarely stopped.

Problems started when motors became much more common.

***Stephen Guy***



