

NEWSLETTER

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New Year 2010

Miss Fergie's Photos

The 156 glass plate negatives donated recently to the West Derby Society have now been digitalised, revealing a wealth of important detail about Edwardian England. They were taken in the 1900 – 1910 period in West Derby and Cartmel, where Marion Fergie spent her holidays.

Miss Fergie (1869 – 1961) was a well-known personality who was a keen amateur photographer at a time when few women took pictures.

She worked as postmistress and assistant chemist in Mill Lane and also had an unofficial role as wise-woman or counsellor who would give advice when asked.

Only two images from this remarkable collection have been published before and we include just a few in this issue.

Unfortunately, we do not have any information about the subjects of the studies and can only guess at their locations.

For example, this young lady taking a stroll



50p to non-members
on an icy day could be at several locations – the high sandstone wall may be in Mill Lane or Croxteth Hall Lane.

Miss Fergie's subjects include her many friends, relatives or acquaintances – she knew virtually everybody in West Derby. This group (below) was probably taken at The Barracks, a group of tenements behind the Courthouse.

It is most likely a wedding, with the bride and groom in the centre – these people would have been in service at large houses such as *Lowlands*, *Holly Lodge* and *Broughton Hall*.



A young nanny and her charge are pictured outside Miss Fergie's shop in Mill Lane.



The collection gives a strongly female insight into daily life with emphases on fashions, children and handsome men in uniforms such as these chaps enjoying afternoon tea.



This distinguished-looking military man proudly poses wearing his medals.



There are lots of happy family groups – often in their Sunday best or pictured at social events. Most of the studies are taken outdoors in gardens or in front of houses and cottages.

There are clues to the locations in the surroundings. The pictures with buildings made of brick and sandstone were probably taken in West Derby while the others are around Cartmel or elsewhere.

Other indicators are in the lie of the land, hilly wooded landscapes being in the Lake District with flat lands closer to home.

There follow some charming studies of family groups with delightful Edwardian fashions.



The boy on the right (below), like several people in the photographs, is wearing clogs



... while this young dandy has an Eton collar and knickerbockers.



It is hoped to stage an exhibition of these remarkable images along with a book.

The Name Game

What's in a street name? If your address happens to be Coal Pit Lane or Liverpool Rd it doesn't take a genius to work out how it got its name, *writes Alastair Caird*.

But what about Cat Tail Lane, Hedbolt Lane, Toogood Lane or Cardiff St?

Many of the thousands of street names are a rich source of local history, dating from a time when they were nearly always based on local connections.

When Eaton House was built in West Derby, Back Lane was transformed into Eaton Rd. Jack Lane was gentrified to Alder Rd when Alder Hey mansion was constructed.

Then in the 20th century came the idea that naming roads after flowers, trees or lakes added to the saleability of properties. Local connections were lost in favour of a pleasant-sounding address.

Tradition

It would be good if the tradition of naming new roads after local associations could be revived, avoiding names like The Green or The Close.

Any history of the site in question should be considered. If street names had a local connection with history and geography, future local historians doing research could find out why a name was chosen.

Changing house numbers and names can be contentious. People give their house a name but usually it is not part of the official address and cannot replace the number. A number is a vital indicator of where a house is – police, fire and ambulance need to be able to find it quickly. With just a name there is no indication of a property's exact location although this still applies in many, mostly rural, communities.

Sometimes there is no number 13 in a road because of superstition.

Councils are responsible for naming and numbering all roads, homes and other properties although Royal Mail allocates the postcodes.

Modern plastic street nameplates are often made out of recycled plastic carrier bags. Once the local authority has allocated a name or number to a property, the owner is legally obliged to display it.

Councils are creating a single database of all addresses. It is part of a national land and property gazetteer designed to ensure that every house, building and business premises is numbered in a consistent way.

The new system is already working with emergency services using the database. As the system holds mapping information and grid co-ordinates, teams can go directly to correct addresses – saving time and possibly lives in an emergency.

Historic Environment Policy

The Government has recently published new draft planning policy statement PPS15 relating to planning for the historic environment.

The new PPS is set to replace the old guidelines published in 1990 and 1994 and is part of the Government's ongoing programme of heritage protection reform.

For the first time, planning advice on building heritage and archaeology will be put together in one document. The draft PPS aims to redefine listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments as heritage assets. It seeks, through a Heritage Bill, to have all these assets recorded in a single register.

The main change for owners of historic buildings is a greater emphasis on having a bigger understanding of the building's importance, especially when considering any alterations or extensions.

Orchards and Wildlife

Local apples and forgotten pears – traditional orchards and their associated habitats such as grasslands, walls, ponds and hedges support a variety of wildlife.

Recent research has indicated that the richness of species that orchards support and the status of the habitat are becoming increasingly rare. ►

Since August 2007 these orchards have been listed as priority habitats in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Traditional orchards have declined by almost 60% in the last 50 years. With this loss of habitat we also face losing rare English fruit varieties, traditions, customs and knowledge. This is not to mention the genetic diversity represented by at least 1,800 species that are associated with traditional orchards.

Within old North West orchards and gardens there may be local or missing varieties of apples and pears.

There are more than 30 lost northern apple varieties which were around in late Victorian times.

These included Scarlett Tiffing, Royal Shepherd, Trumpeter, Pomeroy of Lancashire and Lady Pilkington – the latter was introduced from Southport Botanic Gardens in 1900.

Start

A Northern Fruit Group (NFG) project is starting this year in the North West and will eventually be extended to the rest of the country.

A local apple register will help to locate, record and preserve living specimens of local varieties for posterity – and hopefully locate missing ones. They are part of the cultural and historic heritage of local communities. West Derby's own Florence Bennett apple, which originated in Crosby Green, is grown in some orchards.

Ancient fruit trees still thrive in the walled garden at Croxteth Hall. Delicious russet apples grow wild in Croxteth Country Park where they make ideal refreshments on an afternoon walk.

Map

The People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) is co-ordinating a project with NFG to map England's traditional orchards. Following the launch of the Lancashire Orchard Survey, both groups are pooling relevant information. Orchard biodiversity hotspots support many species that are nationally rare including the

chaffer beetle.

Even locating traditional orchards can sometimes be difficult. Ordnance Survey maps give no indication of the age or condition of plantations and some remnant orchard sites may have been overlooked altogether.

Support

The aim of the project is to create an inventory of traditional orchards in England which will support the habitat action plan and form a baseline to guide future conservation work.

PTES is calling on hundreds of volunteers to help both locate and survey these orchards.

A typical orchard survey will record the species, number and condition of fruit trees.

This can be carried out at any time of the year. On completion, the inventory will be published on the Internet.

West Derby once had many orchards, particularly around the Blackmoor estate, and some original trees may survive.

This may also apply to older properties where remnants of larger gardens could contain historic fruit trees.

We close with this archive advertisement for Liverpool's much-missed Owen Owen store beloved by generations of shoppers.



Lusitania Memorial Unveiled

A stunning glass war memorial featuring the doomed liner *Lusitania* has been conserved and restored following a 10-year campaign. The unique tribute to the dead of two world wars at St James' Church, Mill Lane, West Derby, shows the Cunard vessel steaming at full speed with smoke billowing from her four funnels.

She was heading for Liverpool from New York when she was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat submarine off the Irish coast on 7 May 1915 with the loss of nearly 1,200 lives.

An image of the *Lusitania* (below) was probably incorporated in the First World War memorial because she was a popular Liverpool ship and many crew members from the city died in the sinking.



© Edge Conservation and Restoration Services

The six foot by four foot wall-mounted memorial inside the church is made up of nearly 3,000 pieces of colourful glass embedded into mortar. It is constructed using the *opus sectile* (Latin for 'cut work') art technique originally popularised in ancient Rome.

The monument is one of only three church war memorials in England made using this method. It was later given a sandstone surround which commemorates the dead of the Second World War.

Rowena Cain, a member of St James' congregation who organised the campaign to raise £20,000 for the work, said: "This beautiful memorial has been preserved for future generations thanks to the generosity of charities and individuals."

The memorial had been affected by damp

and was removed from the wall by a team from Liverpool's National Conservation Centre while fund-raising continued.

Specialist glass and ceramics conservator Lynne Edge painstakingly dismantled the memorial before reassembling it.

Lynne, of Edge Conservation and Restoration Services, said: "The original pencil sketch used to assemble the memorial was revealed when the glass pieces were removed."



Lynne, pictured giving the memorial the once-over before its unveiling, will be one of our Society guest speakers this year.

The West Derby Society's 2010 programme is as follows:

20 Jan – Annual General Meeting and deputy chairman's talk. 17 Feb – West Derby and the Jewish community. 17 March – Hatches, matches and despatches – memories of a registrar. 21 April – What was the Liver Bird? 19 May – The Mimosa and Liverpool Welsh emigrants to Patagonia. 16 June – Evening outing. 3 July – Day trip. August – No meetings. 15 Sept – West Derby's volunteer fire brigade. 20 Oct – Conserving the West Derby Lusitania memorial. 17 Nov – The Cunard Archive, Liverpool University. 15 Dec – Christmas event.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS CAN BE PAID AT THE AGM ON 20 JANUARY – SEE ATTACHED RENEWAL FORM. YOU CAN ALSO POST CHEQUES / POSTAL ORDERSTO THE WEST DERBY SOCIETY C/O LOWLANDS, 13 HAYMANS GREEN, WEST DERBY, LIVERPOOL L12 7JG.

Chairman's Comments

I took a long walk around Croxteth Country Park on New Year's Day and reflected on this wonderful asset.

The park is part of West Derby and contains our district's only remaining working farm – the Home Farm on Croxteth Hal Lane.

When I was young all this was called Lord Sefton's Estate and I remember meeting his lordship when our walking with my father.

The Earl of Sefton was a giant of man – about 6 ft 5 inches – and he was an unmistakable figure striding out with his dogs. I remember stroking these pedigrees while Dad exchanged a few polite words.

Lord Sefton, the last of his line, died in 1972 and this was followed by a period of uncertainty.

My way led down the footpath (below) between Sefton Rugby Club and West Derby Golf Club.



This can be a quagmire in places at any time but everywhere was frozen solid. Dad used to go down here hunting butterflies in the 1920s. I remember cuckoos calling in the 1960s. The bottom of Deysbrook Lane has been built up since the 1980s but it still peters out into a path leading out into open country.

It had been about 35 years since I had been this way but little had changed.

However, the land is no longer used for crops.

This was once a vast Victorian rubbish tip and I can remember seeing ancient crockery and thick glass bottles unearthed when the land was ploughed.

Further on houses now cover the former route of the footpath and I was diverted into

the woods.



Once out of the trees there are several interesting estate buildings lining the path.



Finally, Croxteth Hall is reached at the heart of the park.



This is Liverpool's own stately home, bequeathed to the people of the city by Lord Sefton for use as an educational resource. I am sure he would have been proud of how his former family home remains so popular with those it now serves. I was pleased to see that Farm Lodge on Croxteth Hall Lane is being refurbished.

Stephen Guy