



# St Helens Townships Family History Society

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Founder And President-Richard Waring

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**COMMITTEE** Chair:Margaret Crosbie, Vice Chair:Tom McKenna, Secretary/Treasurer: Pauline Hurst,  
Programme Secretary: Geoff Hall

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter

## TOWNSHIPS FHS—CAMPAIGN TO SAVE THE ARCHIVES

**Members** may have heard or read in the press that there are to be changes to the Local History and Archives section of the Central Library. Our Society has serious concerns over this issue and we therefore decided to take action. As the proposals came to light just before Christmas, immediate initiative was required. **A letter** setting out our concerns was sent to every town councillor, including the chief executive and both of our members of parliament. **Some 20 members of our group** attended a Council Cabinet meeting in the Town Hall on 4th of January (outnumbering the council members). **30 members** of our Society attended a full Council meeting in the World of Glass on 11th of January at which our secretary Pauline asked a question, this received a non committal reply. However the good news is that the Council and our Members of Parliament now know who we are. They have listened to our concerns and in future our opinions will be taken in to account through a regular discussion process. Our sincere thanks go out to all those who supported us in this action

Our Society Were involved in **St Helens Heritage Weekend**  
on Saturday 10th September and Sunday 11th September.

We were fortunate to be able to use Room 9 at St Helens Town Hall. We had used this room last year and found the facilities suited our needs.

The Theme for the weekend was "World War 2" and as can be seen from the picture, some of us dressed appropriately ( Hats too big, too small and just right)

We had considerable success, interviewing over 50 local people most of whom, we were able to help in their family history research.



Our President Richard Waring manned a Military History research desk and was instrumental in helping many people obtain information on their uniformed ancestors. Richard is heavily involved with the World War One project, See Page 3



In 2010 Geoff Stanford gave a talk to our Society on his favourite subject "The trolley busses of St Helens". Geoff as a retired St Helens police officer has a deep affection for the town. After he had finished this particular subject showing many old photographs of St Helens of yesteryear. Geoff told us that he had acquired a hoard of local historic photographs, and proceeded to show some of them, as he put it "in no particular order". By this time he had the audience gripped in the misty aura of nostalgia and of course quickly ran out of time. SO he promised to return with a talk based on "Old St Helens Photographs" which he did on 24th November 2011. However such was the interest of the assembled "Aude Sint Elensers" Lively discussions took place as the members of the audience remembered and recognised (or thought they did) each scene depicted. Considerable light hearted banter was observed by your editor who couldn't understand a word of it because he is not from round 'ere and even after 30 years living in the area is not fully conversant with the lingo. The result was that Geoff, when only part way through the collection, once again ran out of time.

When asked would he return in 2012 to continue to show the rest of the collection he agreed and asked us to remember which picture we were up to. I am informed by one person that it was Photograph Number 562 and by another that it was 252, but unusually for me, I found my note taken at the time it was Number **276** So when Geoff returns on Thursday 26th January 2012 in the Town Hall, Room 8 at 6:45 for a 7:00 start. Picture number 277 will be his starting point.

On 22nd September 2011 our Guest Speaker was Stephen Nulty who's subject was "**Prescot Roll of Honour**". Stephen has compiled a record of Prescot residents who fought and perished in the first world war, he has acquired the information from various sources, providing stories of ordinary people who wanted to "do their bit". His talk culminated in a power point presentation showing many pictures of the soldiers accompanied by music which was appropriate to the subject. This provided a very moving conclusion to the talk which affected us all and reminded us of the sacrifices of our forefathers. For further information see the comprehensive website [www.prescot-rollofhonour.info/](http://www.prescot-rollofhonour.info/)

Do you have a family history tale to tell ? We are always looking for stories to include in the Newsletter, up to about 300 words would be enough. If you can help contact Editor Peter through the email address [townshipsfhs@gmail.com](mailto:townshipsfhs@gmail.com)

**On Thursday 27th October** At our Town Hall meeting, at the appointed time of 7:00 pm The members



Pictured on 27th October is Our Speaker Mr Ray Irvine whose subject was the Wives of Henry VIII

Did Henry really only have six wives ? Judging by the expressions on the faces of our Chair and Secretary, It could have easily been eight

were sitting supping tea, chatting and catching up with gossip as usual. Their chit chat was suddenly interrupted by the command " Please be upstanding for his majesty the King". The startled company as one, did as they were commanded, all heads turned to see the reason for the interruption and there filling the doorway, was the imposing figure of Henry VIII, dressed in full regalia just as if he had stepped out of the Holbein portrait which is the image we have of him.

Well of course it couldn't be bluff King Hal he would be 500 years old, if a day by now. This Henry was portrayed by Ray Irvine Who proceeded to entertain us with a first person account of his life. He gave us a live history lesson, dispelling various long held myths about his marriages, his six wives, his part in the creation of the Church of England and the subsequent dissolution of the monasteries. Ray travels around the world bringing to life the character of Henry VIII, The members agreed that if history lessons at school were conducted in this manner, we would no longer regard the subject as dry

and uninteresting, and would all have A Level plus in the subject.

**Pictured is St Helens Deputy Council Leader Barry Grunewald** presenting a cheque for £40,000 which is a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to our Society for the "St Helens Pals" project. Accepting the cheque on behalf of the Society was Our President Richard Waring along with Project leader Peter Harvey, David Risley and Chairperson Margaret Crosbie,

The success of the grant award means that the Project can go ahead to document the story of the St Helens people who served in the first world war, with particular reference to the 11th Battalion South Lancs Regiment, known as the St Helens Pals.

Data will be obtained and collated from a number of different sources e.g. The National Archives, St Helens Newspapers, 1911 census, and War Memorial Inscriptions. A wealth of stories and anecdotes has already come to light but more is needed. If any of our members have documents, photographs, or word of mouth stories, we would be pleased to receive them. Volunteers are needed to help with research and the transcription of military documents, if you are able and willing to help Contact by email [pals@sthelens townshipsfhs.org.uk](mailto:pals@sthelens townshipsfhs.org.uk) or by contacting St Helens Local History and Archives Library 01744 676952



Our **Annual General Meeting** took place in the Town Hall on Thursday 15th December 2011

The minutes of 2010 meeting were read and accepted and the entire committee was re-elected unopposed. Our secretary/Treasurer presented a healthy financial report in an efficient manner which was accepted unanimously. We enjoyed a festive buffet and family history quiz, this was followed by a lighted hearted t.v. theme tune quiz. The Society is in good shape, membership levels are being maintained and we thank you all for your support and look forward to another successful year in 2012

## Meetings

Monthly meetings are held at St. Helens Town Hall, 6.45 for a 7pm start. You do not have to be a member to attend.

### 2012 Programme

26 Jan:	Old St. Helens Photos, with Geoff Sandford
23 Feb:	Titanic Disaster, with Paul Jones
22 Mar:	A History of St. Helens Hospital, with Pauline Hurst
26 Apr:	Micklehead Green, with John Roscoe
24 May:	Visit to Prescott Parish Church (members only)
28 Jun:	Last Lighthouse Keeper, with Gordon Medlicot
26 Jul:	The Leyland Family & Speke Hall, with Peter Herriman
23 Aug:	Members Evening
27 Sep:	A Guinea A Box the Beecham Story, with Pauline Hurst
25 Oct:	Music Halls & Theatres in St. Helens, with Tom Preston
24 Nov:	St. Helens Pals, with Dave Risley
13 Dec:	AGM (members only)

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