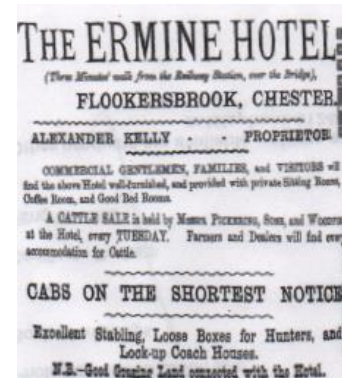


## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2017

During 2017 the Society's activities have covered many diverse topics, in the course of which a lot of new information and, excitingly, previously unseen illustrations of the area have emerged.

In January your Chairman continued the history of The Ermine Hotel revealing the details of its landlords since 1636, which led to accounts of the local landowners and properties in Flookersbrook: John Anderson and Folly House; the Lightfoot and Walker families, and their breweries and tan yard (the four times great grand daughter of John Lightfoot was present at the meeting); Patterson Ellames and Charles Brown. Activities which took place at The Ermine helped to paint a picture of social life in the area in Victorian times.



*Advertisement for The Ermine Hotel 1881*

2017 was the centenary of the opening of the allotments behind Canadian Avenue and Linda Webb described to us how Hoole Urban District Council, already considering provision,



responded to the emerging food crisis resulting from the First World War, and to various government legislation which was being put in place. The timescale of the acquisition of lands which had been part of the Hoole House Estate from various owners was related, and how the resultant growth of produce and subsequent demand for growing space led to the compulsory purchase of the allotment site which we know today.

*Approach road to the allotments 1913*

2017 was also the centenary of the founding of the Hammond School which employed a professional researcher who was able to look into the history of Hoole Bank House which had many interesting changes in ownership and use since its earliest record in 1785. The grand family house built in 1860 became an auxiliary hospital during World War I; a national respite home for the blind; the headquarters for American soldiers and an outpost of Western command during World War II; and then a YMCA. It became a private school in 1962 and was purchased by the Hammond School in 1969.



*Hoole Bank House built in 1860*

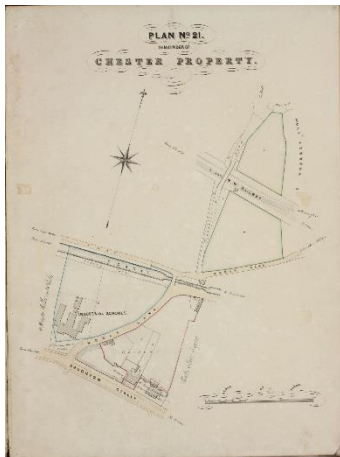
In April football was our topic and local boy John “Basher” Evans told the story of his playing career with Chester F.C. in the course of which he produced some unique photographs of Hoole’s football teams in the 1950’s.

His subsequent memories as an electrician gave an interesting insight into some local properties and their residents. In an article in Hoole Roundabout we were able to recall that in the 1890’s Chester F.C. had grounds in Hoole; and also that local boy Thomas Carline who lost his life in World War I had been their goalkeeper.

*Hoole Juniors F.C. 1957*



Thomas Brassey was the subject of our May meeting and Douglas Haynes BEM related the story of his life, how he became probably the world’s greatest railway engineer, responsible for building a third of the railways in Britain and one in every 20 miles in the world. It was suggested that his wealth exceeded that of the Duke of Westminster and his legacy here is the Chester General Railway Station which opened in 1848.

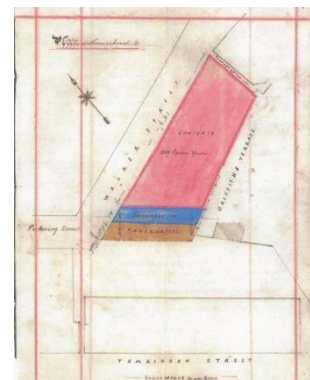


Members of the Society assembled at the end of Hoole Lane in Boughton in June. Phil Cook pointed out that land which may have provided a different railway scenario for Chester had housed the Ragged School, the local infrastructure including Boughton Church, John Douglas’s building for the Co-op at the junction of the Tarvin and Christleton Roads, Dee Hills House and the tramway into Chester. In Hoole Lane the history of the Canal and a planned one to Ellesmere Port were detailed, and at Westminster Road Bridge the railway lines into the Station originally built with a ticket platform were observed.

*Map of Hoole Lane End in Boughton – 1870*

In September a talk by Tom Welsh on Dee House illustrated the difficulty of identifying the original building, outlined its occupants and users, and brought members up to date with the current situation and tensions with Historic England over its preservation.

Bob Thompson gave us a well-researched account in October of the early years of Chester Co-operative Society which was founded in 1884, and how local employers Chester Hydraulics and the Leadworks were significantly involved in its development. 80 members initially increased to 320 in 4 years and their quarterly meetings always had a social element. We learnt of its first shop in Newtown and the resistance to it becoming a presence in St. Werburgh Street. The Society was not just a retailer with high standards; it provided rooms and support for education, a benevolent fund and sport and social activities. The history was even more pertinent because of the imminent closure of the building in Walker Street which has served Hoole since 1906.



*Site plan of Hoole Co-op 1906*

Since its inception our Society has always given prominence to the implications locally of World War I and in November Dave Rees presented the histories of the three auxiliary hospitals at Hoole Bank House, Hoole House and the site of the Workhouse on Hoole Lane. The volume of casualties, how they were cared for and local involvement were all well illustrated.



*Chester War Hospital (Hoole Lane Workhouse)*  
*(CC-BY-NC) Army Medical Services Museum Keogh Barracks*

Sadly, during the year, we have lost two founder members, Gordon Smith and David Hull who were great supporters of the Society; they undertook each year to ensure that the citizens of Hoole and Newton could attend a ceremony at the War Memorial on Armistice Day to pay their respects to the fallen. Your Committee has agreed that this tradition must be continued and is endeavouring to ensure that 2018 in particular will be a significant event. We were pleased that we could be involved in the family service to mark the centenary of the death of Private James Edward Bowe in September. We have also liaised with the National War Memorials Project.

When it was formed 5 years ago, the Society included 'Heritage' in its title being aware that as a suburb of Chester and lacking a local council, the area had not been given the opportunity to put forward its ideas and wishes for local conservation. Recent changes in planning legislation mean that the neighbourhood has been given a chance to list its architectural assets and a meeting of members in July made a start on what will be a considerable task. Individual members have expressed an interest in looking at particular areas. The Society is a part of CWAC's Heritage Forum arrangements and is working with the Chester Civic Trust re-development and conservation issues in Hoole.

Articles about the area have continued to appear monthly in Hoole Roundabout and the response indicates that these are greatly appreciated and widely read. They have resulted in more information being provided by readers e.g. photographs of Moor House and the filling station which replaced it, Hoole House and its environs and documentation about the re-numbering of Faulkner Street.



*Moor House built 1850 front view 1950s*



*Moor House built 1850 rear view 1950s*



The articles appearing in Hoole Roundabout are now shortened versions of larger ones appearing on the Society's website which enable more text and illustrations to be shown. Thanks largely to Peter Addison, our website has undergone a complete revamp and has been significantly enlarged during 2017; news information of interest to members is being highlighted and new material is constantly being added; members are encouraged to make regular use of the site.

During the year, descendants of four former long-established family businesses made contact with the Society. Information and photographs provided by the Baldwin family enabled a well-researched article on their greengrocery business in Charles Street to be produced, which in turn led to more information about the locality being forthcoming. We await further contact from the families of Jack and Bill Smith (shoe shop and motorcycles), Cecil Bowen (financial services) and Peters Electrical (TV's and electrical goods).

Talks to outside bodies have included:

- March 15<sup>th</sup> Society of Retired Nurses - The Workhouse & City Hospital (Linda Webb)
- April 28<sup>th</sup> Eaton Lodge, Hoole Road - Photographs by James Hampson Spencer (Linda Webb)
- Aug 11<sup>th</sup> Aldford Silver & Gold Club – James Hampson Spencer's Photographs: Westminster Estate connections (Linda Webb)

Two of our founder Committee Members gave up their posts during the year, Gerald Kelly as Secretary and Dave Rees as Treasurer. We are very grateful to them for getting the Society underway and for setting the foundations for its continuing existence and success. Our thanks also to Ruth Ludgate for taking on the role of Secretary for most of the year. Monty Mercer has continued his invaluable role as our audio-visual manager, helping speakers to prepare their presentations and ensuring the optimum projection at each of our society's talks, including those given to outside bodies. On many occasions he has been assisted by Derek Stanley. Our thanks to both. Derek also had his new book "Unseen Chester" published, marked with a book signing event in Waterstones.

Membership of the Society as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017: Individual – 36; Family – 33; Business – 8; Group – 3; TOTAL – 80.

The Society has endeavoured over the 5 years of its existence to continually involve members in its organisation and activities; our meetings are regularly attended by over 40 people. Their interest, suggestions and support have made 2017 another very successful year.



*The Filling Station on Hoole Road before its opening in 1963*