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LIVERPOOL SHIPWRECK AND HUMANE SOCIETY

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LIVERPOOL SHIPWRECK AND HUMANE SOCIETY

Introduction

At the beginning of 1839 there were no specific charitable funds in Liverpool, for the relief of sufferers from shipwreck. However, on the 7th and 8th of January that year, there occurred a hurricane which wrought havoc in the river and town, causing great damage to vessels moored in the Mersey and claiming many lives.

A number of liberal minded citizens of the town set about relieving the sufferers, most of whom were strangers passing through the port, and had lost most of their possessions and means of support. On 9 January a public meeting was called and held in the Underwriter's Room, "to concert measures for rewarding the intrepid persons who have been instrumental in saving ...... lives". James Aiken, merchant and shipbroker, proposed that a subscription fund and a permanent committee be established and be ready to act at a moments notice, as well as to relieve those recently saved from the wrecks. Many of the survivors were assisted and enabled to return to their homes in Canada and America, the Society funding their passage.

At the first annual general meeting of the Society on 15th January 1840, it was resolved that the Society should be called the "Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society", and it granted the first gold medal to Captain Clegg of the *Huddersfield*, who rescued 93 people on 12 January 1840 from the *William Huskisson* off Holyhead. Other notable awards include one to Matthew Webb, the Channel swimmer.

In 1884, the question arose of whether the Society should extend its responsibilities to providing relief to widows and children of mariners lost at sea. However, it was decided that its own funds needed to be reserved for relieving the widows and orphans of those who perished while attempting to save the lives of others.

The collection contains 7 minute books, 1839-1975, and printed annual reports, 1901 to date.

Some examples of the certificates awarded by the Society are held by the Maritime Archives & Library in the SAS and DX collections. A published history of the Society, 1839-1939, is available in the Maritime Library, reference 340.JEF.

A complete set of annual reports is held by the Society's office, Room 19, Tower Building, 22 Water Street, Liverpool, L3 1BA. Copies of some annual reports are also held in the Local Studies Collection at Liverpool Record Office: 1876/1877, 1900/01-1913/14, 1923/24-1925/26, 1930/31-1938/39, 1972/73 to date, reference H614.868SHI.

The bulk of the collection was deposited in 1977. A brief annual report is donated each year. A bound volume of collected annual reports, including descriptions of the events for which awards are made, is donated every 10 years.

The collection is accessible to any reader within the Maritime Archives & Library Searchroom, Merseyside Maritime Museum.

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Item No.	Description	Date(s)
D/LS/1/1 - 7	**MINUTE BOOKS**	**1839 - 1975**
1	Minute Book.	10 Jan 1839 - 17 Jul 1868
2	Minute Book.	25 Jul 1868 - 26 Jul 1878
3	Minute Book.	26 Jul 1878 - 12 Jan 1893
4	Minute Book.	26 Jan 1893 - 20 Dec 1906
5	Minute Book.	31 Jan 1907 - 7 Jul 1926
6	Minute Book.	28 Jul 1926 - 22 Jul 1953
7	Minute Book.	2 Sept 1953 - 3 Sept 1975

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Item No.	Description	Date(s)
D/LS/2/1 - 19	**ANNUAL REPORTS** Copies of single annual reports are received annually and catalogued as D/LS 2/a, 2/b, etc. These are replaced when a bound copy of a decade's extended annual report is received and the numbering (2/a, 2/b ...) starts again with the next year's single annual report. The bound volumes of 10 years' collected annual reports are catalogued with a running number, 2/1 onwards.	**1901 - to date**
1	Annual Reports.	1901 - 1904
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18	Annual Reports.	1981 - 1990
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g	Annual Report.	2006 - 2007

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Item No.	Description	Date(s)
D/LS/3/1	**PUBLICATIONS**	**1989**
1	*The Society's Third Half-Century, 1939 to 1989.*	1989