

Slaley, Healey & Minsteracres Local History Group

The dates for the 2019 Local History Group meetings held on the fourth Monday are:

October Monday 28th

November Monday 25th

The meetings will be held in Slaley Commemoration Hall from 7.30 p.m. – 9 p.m. with an admission cost of £2 per adult or 50p for anyone in full time education.

Monday October 28th Newcastle City Hall By Peter Brennan

Newcastle architect, John Dobson, built private baths in 1838 at a cost of £9,500. By the 1920's the need to replace the almost 100-year old baths was acute and competitions for the best architects designs for the pool complex and city hall were organised. Won by Charles Nicholas & Edward Dixon-Spain who had recently redeveloped London's famous Pavilion at Piccadilly Circus.

Opened in 1927 with a seating capacity of 2,135, the Newcastle City Hall was built as part of a development which included the adjacent City Pool & Turkish Baths. In 1928, a Harrison and Harrison organ was built inside the Hall, this organ was a concert instrument, as opposed to a cathedral organ. It has 4,274 pipes, with a number of unique stops and had been described as "a Rolls -Royce" of organs. Although in a poor state of repair, the instrument is probably the last and largest example of a Harrison tubular-pneumatic action organ. The British Institute of Organ Studies awarded it a Grade 1 Historic Organ Certificate in 2003, and it is classified as part of the Hall's Grade 11 status.

Newcastle City Hall has hosted many popular & classical acts throughout the years as well as standup & comedy acts. In July 1970, Lindisfarne made their debut appearance at Newcastle City Hall – in December 1976, Lindisfarne played three sell-out concerts in the City Hall, repeated in the following years with 132 shows in total at the venue. Other well-known groups include "The Byrds"; "Motorhead"; "Slade"; "The Animals"; and "Rammstein".

We know that Newcastle's Mayfair Ballroom, which opened in 1961 at the junction of Newgate Street and Low Friar Street and could accommodate 1,500 people, hosted some of rock's biggest acts in the 70s and 80s; closed in 1999 and was bulldozed to make way for a new leisure complex called The Gate. Further down Low Friar Street was the La Dolce Vita nightclub. Opened in 1963, it attracted some of the biggest names in showbusiness until the Gaming Act came into force in 1968 forcing entertainment to be separated from gaming, the club could no longer afford to pay for top acts, after several refurbishing and renaming it finally closed November 15th 2002 and was rebuilt into luxury flats.

What made Newcastle City Hall survive? To answer that question; we look forward to Peter Brennan's talk.

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