

## Thomas Rickman's Liverpool (Liverpool, 19–20 May 17)

Liverpool, May 19–20, 2017

Registration deadline: May 12, 2017

[www.thomasrickman.org/content/?page\\_id=21](http://www.thomasrickman.org/content/?page_id=21).

Alex Buchanan

### Thomas Rickman's Liverpool

2017 marks the bicentenary of the printing (in Liverpool) of Thomas Rickman's ground-breaking book "An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture". This best-seller of its day popularised the visual analysis of architecture, dating by style and the terms still used to identify the different modes of English medieval architecture: Norman, Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular. The publication is being celebrated by exhibitions at Liverpool's Central Library and the University of Liverpool's Archives and Special Collections, and with walks and talks. To coincide with these events, a two-day conference will be held in association with the University of Liverpool's Eighteenth-Century Worlds Research Centre.

The aim of the conference is to critically evaluate Rickman's book and its influence in the context of the town where he lived and worked, where he discovered architecture and underwent the transformation from insurance clerk to professional architect. The conference is centred upon Rickman but seeks to encourage a deeper understanding of Liverpool, and its social and architectural environment during the period of his residence (1808-c.1821). Contemporary Liverpool was the ideal setting for a young man interested in buildings and eager for self-improvement: he arrived soon after the passing of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act (1807) which transformed Liverpool's international trade and was an early member of the revived Literary and Philosophical Society (1812) where he honed his skills as a lecturer on architectural topics. He became involved with local building projects, notably the constructionally-innovative churches of local ironmaster John Cragg and built up a network of fellow enthusiasts and potential clients.

### PROGRAMME

Day 1: Friday 19 May 2017

In the morning delegates can take the opportunity to visit the Rickman exhibition in the Special Collections area of the Sydney Jones Library.

12.45: Registration

13.00-14.00: Keynote – Megan Aldrich: 'Thomas Rickman (1776-1841): a Nonconformist Life in Architecture'

Session 1: Merchants and Shops in Liverpool c.1800

14.00-14.20: Sheryllyne Haggerty – ‘Liverpool's Trade and Traders in the Atlantic World’

14.20-14.40: Jon Stobart – ‘Geographies of shopping and leisure in Georgian Liverpool’

14.40-14.50: Questions

14.50-15.05: Break

Session 2: Liverpool – Space, Place and Culture

15.05-15.25: Katy Layton-Jones - ‘Rickman in Context: the changing landscape of Rickman's England’

15.25-15.45: Hugh Hollinghurst – ‘Rickman, St Luke's Church and the John Fosters, Senior and Junior’

15.45-16.05: David Brazendale/Mark Towsey - ‘"To the convenience of men of business as well as men of leisure": Reading, Community and Library Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain’

16.05-16.15: Questions

16.15-16.45: Walk to the Liverpool Athenaeum (directions will be provided)

16.45-17.30: Tea and exhibition at the Athenaeum

17.30-18.30: Keynote 2 – Joseph Sharples - ‘Improvement and embellishment united’: The Architectural Scene in Thomas Rickman's Liverpool

After the paper there will be an opportunity to return to the University to view the Rickman exhibition in Special Collections or to participate in ‘Light Night’ in Liverpool (including a self-guided Rickman walk).

Day 2: Saturday 20 May 2017

9.45: Registration

10.00-11.00: Keynote 3 – Rosemary Sweet: ‘Thomas Rickman – A Modern Antiquary’

11.00-11.15: Coffee

Session 3: Contemporary Writings

11.15-11.35: Peter Lindfield – ‘Gothic Prevision: William Porden's Architectural Awareness’

11.35-11.55: Stephen Clarke – ‘Hints to some Churchwardens and the Pleasures of Churchwardens' Gothic’

11.55-12.05: Questions

Session 4: Rickman's Readers

12.05-12.25: Alex Buchanan – ‘Attempting to Discriminate: Thomas Rickman’s Readers’

12.25-12.45: Will Ashworth – title t.b.c.

12.45-13.05: Geoff Brandwood - 'Lancaster to Lyons: Edmund Sharpe, Thomas Rickman and Travellers' Tales'

13.05-13.15: Questions

13.15-14.00: Lunch

#### Session 5: Religious Architecture

14.00-14.20: Johanna Roethe - 'Quaker Meeting Houses and their Architects'

14.20-14.40: Bill Walker – ‘“Meeting Our Waterloos”. The Lancashire Commissioners’ Churches’

14.40-15.00: Christopher Webster – ‘Northern Church Building c.1810-20: An Important Episode in the Gothic Revival’

15.00-15.10: Questions

15.10-15.25: Tea

#### Session 6: Rickman’s Architecture

15.25-15.45: Mark Baker – ‘Thomas Rickman in Wales: Gwrych Castle and the creation of a gothic fantasy’

15.45-16.05: Frank Salmon – ‘Following “as nearly as may be”: Rickman’s New Court at St John’s College, Cambridge’

16.05-16.15: Questions

16.15-17.15: Keynote 4 - Rosemary Hill: ‘Styles and Principles – Rickman, Pugin and the Gothic Revival’

#### Reference:

CONF: Thomas Rickman's Liverpool (Liverpool, 19-20 May 17). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 5, 2017 (accessed May 21, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/15073>>.