

Re Reduction of Rent.

TEL. OLD SWAN 44.

Dec. 8th 1915

BASIL CRANCE,
WEST DERBY,
LIVERPOOL.

To Sir William Lever Bart.

Dear Sir William,

Thankyou very much for your kind letter about our artist tenants. I will see the treasurer at once and send you the details of their position in a few days

Yours Sincerely
J D Hamel Calder.

THE HILL,

HAMPSTEAD HEATH,
NORTH END,
LONDON N.W.

1st February, 1916.

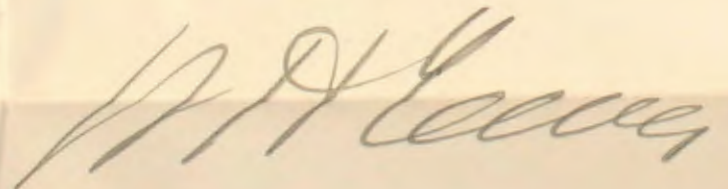
Mrs. Hamel Calder,
Basil Grange,
West Berby,
Liverpool.

Dear Mrs. Calder,

I am obliged for yours of the 29th.

The difficulties you are in with regard to tenants for rent does not seem to be any more than might be usual at this time and not to call for any such serious and drastic measures as you had proposed. I think you will be well able to manage now that you have been able to sublet to Mr. Thompson as arranged.

Yours faithfully,



Draft - Carbon -

Nov. 9th. 1915
Basil Grange,
West Ferry

Dear Sir William,

As you are now the owner of Liberty Buildings, I am going to venture to write to you about the business side of the tenancy of the Sardon Studios Society there

They are now paying \$24 a year to you, and ~~50~~ a year for the back rooms and \$50 a year to the University for the ground floor of the west wing.

Now, however, I suppose that the University is no longer in the position of being our landlord, but is itself your tenant, and owing to your kindness is allowed to occupy the premises rent free.

I wonder whether you would the question of treating the Sardon Studios Society on the same footing as the University, that is say as a body which has done and is doing useful and valuable work for the City of Liverpool, and therefore worthy of being housed in Liberty Buildings on the same basis.

I venture this partly because, as you will no doubt remember, it was proposed to use the Sardon Society as a nucleus for your great scheme the Lancashire Society of Arts, and they would, in that case, be closely with the future of the building. Of this I am aware as I

I am aware of that as being one the committee which help-
to draft the scheme, but your self is only known to such
members of the Sardon Society as happened to be on that
committee. That is why I am writing this in my private
capacity, and not as secretary of the Sardon Society.

It is ^{also} as a private individual that I can remind you
of the unique place that the Society occupies in the town.
In its early days on Sardon Terrace, it kept alive and hand-
-ed down the fine traditions in Art of the old University
School of Architecture and Applied Arts. Also it was the
~~seed-bed of the Society~~ also in the days when the Old Blue-
-coat Hospital was derelict and threatened ~~and~~ with des-
-truction it was the action of the Sardon Society in taking
~~it-it-attending~~ it, and showing its value for artistic pur-
-poses which first drew the attention of members of the
iversity and other influential people to the beauty and in-
-terest of the old building and so paved the way for its
permanent rescue by your own generous action last year.

The Sardon Club is ~~the-only-institution~~ where-- also
a great factor in the artistic life of Liverpool. It is the
only institution where the artist element meets on equal
terms with the society element and this has been of great
mutual value. That the poor artist, whether painter, music-
-ian, writer, architect or designer, should meet the wealthy
man of business as a friend has in many cases opened a new
outlook to both.

It would be difficult to overestimate what the Society has meant to some struggling artists, who have used the club-rooms almost as a home, have had cheap meals, studios at nominal rents, a life-class for study, a piano for the musicians. In bad times they have never been pressed for either subscriptions or rents, and they could always find in the club the best atmosphere of friendliness and comfort.

Like all similar institutions, the Society has been hard hit by the war, for a large proportion of its members have gone to the front, either nursing or fighting, of these three are killed, and several are missing. All who are on War work are excused from paying their subscriptions, and with the loss also of those of the poorer members who cannot be pressed for theirs in these bad times the Society finds it difficult to make to make ends meet and would be thankful to be released from some of its larger liabilities.

Something
waited here.



TELEPHONE ROYAL 1322.

FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR
THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

15th November 1915.

Dear Mrs. Calder,

Sandon Studios.

The case is not as simple as it seems; for we have to account to Sir William Lever for all rents that we receive from tenants in Liberty Buildings. I will, however, lay your letter before our Finance Committee at their next meeting.

Believe me, yours very truly,

Alfred Davis

Mrs. Hamel Calder.

F.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

TELEPHONES

ROYAL 368
ROYAL 2540



FROM THE REGISTRAR

24 November, 1915.

Dear Mrs. Calder,

The Vice-Chancellor has handed me your letter to him of November 13, with reference to the payment of rent by the Sandon Studios Society for accommodation in Liberty Buildings.

Your letter was considered by the Finance Committee at its meeting held yesterday, and I was instructed to inform you that the University has now to account to Sir William Lever for all rents received from its sub-tenants at Liberty Buildings, and therefore any application for remission of rent should be addressed to Sir William Lever, and not to the University.

Yours truly,

Edward Carey

Mrs. Calder,
Basil Grange,
West Derby.

TEL. OLD SWAN 44.

Draft .

Nov. 12th 1915.

BASIL GRANGE,
WEST DERBY,
LIVERPOOL.

To the Vice-Chancellor

Dear Sir Alfred,

Like all similar institutions the Sandon Studios Society has been hard hit by the war. A large proportion of our members have gone to the front, either nursing or fighting, and they are all excused subscriptions, which means a considerable reduction in revenue, at a time when other expenses increase.

Our Committee, knowing that Sir William Lever is now the owner of Liberty Buildings, have asked me write to him to ask if he would consider the question of putting the Sandon Society on the same footing as the University, that is to say, to give us free quarters in the building, on the ground that the Society, though in a smaller degree, also fills a useful and valuable place in the town.

I ^{am} ~~have~~ written in this sense to Sir William, ^{explaining all the circumstances} ~~but do~~ not send it without letting you know, as we should not like you to think we are doing anything underhand.

We know the rent we have paid ^{to you} is moderate, and as long as you were yourselves paying rent to the trustees of the

x asking him to forego the rent we are paying him for the back part of the building.

TEL. OLD SWAN 44

BASIL GRANCE,
WEST DERBY,
LIVERPOOL.

Bluecoat School, we recognised your kindness in letting us pay a moderate share only; now that Sir William is the owner and you do not pay him rent, it seems to us ~~that~~ ^{x (below)} without unfairness to you, ~~we can~~ ask for free quarters too, but we dont want to ~~be~~ ^{ask anything} unfair or ^{to be} ungrateful in any way to the University. *but times are hard and we have no public funds behind us*. With kind regards

Sincerely Yours

J D James Calder.

x not unreasonable to ask the Univy to allow us to pay no Rent, thus putting us on the same footing with regard to them on which they stand with regard to Sir W. dever.

Mrs James Calder.

I

Basil Grange
West Derby
nov. 12 1915

To Sir William Lever Bart.

Dear Sir William,

As you are now the owner of Liberty Buildings, I am going to venture to write to you about the business side of the tenancy of the Sandon Studios Society

They are now paying 24 a year for the back rooms, and £50 a year to the University for the ground floor of the westwing.

Now, however, I suppose that the University is no longer in the position of being our landlord but is itself your tenant, and owing to your kindness is allowed to occupy the premises rent free.

I wonder whether you would consider the question of treating the Sandon Studios Society on the same footing as the University as the University, that is to say as a body which has done and is doing useful ~~work-in-the~~ and valuable work for the City of Liverpool, and ~~is~~ therefore worthy of being housed in Liberty Buildings on the same basis.

I venture to suggest this partly because, as you will no doubt remember, it was proposed to use the Sandon Society as a nucleus for the social section of your great scheme the Lancashire Society of Arts, and they would in that case be closely associated with the future of the building. I am aware of that as being one of the committees which helped to draft the scheme, but your scheme itself is only known to such members of the Sandon Society as happened to be on that committee. That is why I am writing this ^{more} as a private ~~indi-~~
~~vidual and also as a~~ capacity and not as secretary of the Sandon Society.

It is also as a private individual that I can remind you of the unique place that the Society occupies in the town. In its early days of in Sandon Terrace it kept alive and handed down the fine traditions in art of the old University School of Architecture and Applied Arts. Also in the days when the old Bluecoat Hospital was derelict and threatened with destruction it was the action of the Sandon Society in taking it and shewing its value for artistic purposes which first drew the ~~at-~~
~~tention~~

x I have mislaid or destroyed ^{by} mistake the correct
carbon, but there was a sentence in a letter
saying that I have also written to ~~Sir Alfred~~
The Vice Chancellor asking to be excused ~~from~~
the rent we pay them.

the attention of members of the University and other influential persons to the beauty and interest of the old building, and so paved the way for its permanent rescue by your own generous action in 1913.

When I think of how the University practically dis-sociated themselves from the old building and its future by their decision that year, I feel it rather an anomaly that they should now be making money out of its use from the little society which has made such efforts to save it.

See back

The Sandon is also a great factor in the artistic life of Liverpool. It is the only institution where the artist element meets on equal terms with the society element, and this has been of great mutual value. That the poor artist, whether painter, musician, writer, architect or designer, should meet the wealthy man of business as a friend has in many cases opened a new outlook to both.

It would ^{be} difficult to over-estimate what the Society has meant to some struggling artists, who have used the club-rooms almost as a home; they have had cheap meals, studios at nominal rents, a life-class for study, a piano for musicians. They have never been pressed in bad times for either subscriptions or rents, and they could always

x If you agree with me about this perhaps
you would put in a word for us with
the University to persuade them to
forgo the rent which we are at
present paying them.

find in the club the best possible atmosphere of friend-
-liness and comfort.

Like all similar institutions, the Society has been
hard hit by the war, for a large proportion of its mem-
-bers have gone to the front, either nursing, ^{or fighting} of these 3
are killed and several are missing. All who are on war-
work are excused paying their subscriptions, and with the
loss of these, and also of those of the poorer members
who cannot be pressed for money in these bad times, the
Society finds it difficult to make ends meet, and would
for be thankful to be released from some of its larger
liabilities.

With apologies for troubling you with so small a
matter in these busy days

Believe me

Sincerely yours

J D Hamel Calder.

Mrs James Calder

Jan. 30th 1913

To Sir William Lever Bart.

Dear Sir William,

Thankyou for your letter received this morning,
kind permission for us to take Mr Thompson as tenant and
to allow him to made the alterations he wishes.

I see him and arrange about the deposit. He will ne,
as all our tenants are, on three month's notice.

Should there be any changes among them in future I
will see that you are informed at once.

With thanks

Believe me

Sincerely yours

Jan. 29th 1918

To

To Sir V.H.Lever Bart.

Dear Sir William,

I am now in a position to give you the details that you asked you asked for with regard our tenants.

You may remember that in a letter of December 4th I asked for a reduction of rent on the ground that the Club was losing about 50 a year in the subscriptions of members who have to the Front, and that our tenants are also feeling the pinch of the war and asking for consideration.

I find that Miss Page, artist and teacher of painting, pays us 20 for the largest and best studio. She has always paid regularly, and now asks for a temporary reduction as she has lost nearly all her pupils. We are going to reduce her to 15. The other tenant is I.Carter Preston, a clever and hard-working artist, whose work you probably know. He pays 8 for a good sized but not very well lighted room at the back, but he is in bad health and hard up and we have not collected any rent from him for over two years. We know he will pay when he can.

Both these people have been our tenants since 1908. There is another small room let at 5 a year, and that is

all our rent-roll.

I hope you will kindly treat the above information as confidential as I should not like to make public the financial difficulties of my friends and tenants, but I want to be quite frank with you personally, as far as you care to be troubled with our small affairs.

If you do not object to our keeping the new proposed tenant, Mr Thompson, we should be able to reduce Miss Page's rent and still be a little to the good, even if you do not see your way to making any temporary reduction to us.

Sincerely Yours

Jan. 27th 1916

To Sir W.W. Lever Bart.

Dear Sir William,

Your letter this morning has quite distressed me. It is dreadful that you should think us guilty of any want of consideration towards you, who have always been so kind to us.

It never occurred to me to write to you on the subject of sub-letting of Liberty Buildings, because, as you know, The Sardon Studios were tenants of the buildings before the University came there at all and we have always let and sub-let our own part of the premises.

Originally, as I told you, we took over the old place at a low rent from the Old Bluecoat Trustees, and our chief source of income then was from rents. Asked at the time what our position was as to sub-letting and was told that if there was no stipulation to the contrary in the agreement the tenant had was free to sublet.

We began by taking one wing at £50, did up a few of the rooms and let them as studios; then we took the other wing for another £50 and did the same, and finally took over the back part for £24. Our plan was to do up each room as it was let, since we had no money to do it all up at once, and the rents with some subscriptions gave us enough to pay our own rent, rates and taxes and to run the Society on very inexpensive lines. The Trustees never bothered about us so long as we paid. The only exceptions to this arrangement were the two large in the centre which were not included in our tenancy, and which we hired if we wanted

either of them. If we were able to let them the Trustees allows a share of the proceeds. As regards the other rooms we have always let them if we could, chiefly to our members, collected rent if the tenant if the tenant could pay and reduced or foregone it if couldn't.

When, in 1910 you enabled the University to take the main part of the building, we rented the ground of the west wing from them at 750 and still held the back part from the Trustees as before for 424. We continued to let our rooms as we liked without referring to the Trustees or to the University, but our agreements with tenants were as they always have been subjects a three month's notice. We have on many occasions consulted the University as to the desirability of a tenant, and they often write confidentially to us to ask if we know anything for or against an applicant who may be unknown to them, but that is fair play a different, and we have very few chances of tenants.

This is, I think, the first time a new tenant has offered for any of the rooms since you bought the building and we made the arrangements with him as we have been in the habit of doing, (he is indeed one of our own members,) but when I found it was a question of advertisements of course asked your permission.

This is a long statement, but it is only by being perfectly with you that I can explain how we were only acting as we had always done, and nothing was further from our thoughts than that it was in any way discourteous towards you, and I very much troubled that it should have seemed so.

either of them. If we were able to let them the Trustees allowed us a share of the proceeds. As regards the other rooms we have always let them if we could, chiefly to our own members, collected rent if the tenant could pay, and reduced or foregone it if he couldn't.

Then, in 1910, you enabled the University to take the main part of the building, we rented the ground-floor of the west wing from them at 150 and held the back part from the Trustees as before for 104. We continued to let our rooms as we liked without either to Trustees or to the University. But our Agreements with tenants were, as they have always been, subject to three month's notice.

We have sometimes consulted the University as to the desirability of a tenant, and often write confidentially to us asking if we know anything about an applicant who may be unknown to them, but that is rather a different matter, and we have very few changes of tenants.

This is I think, the first time a new tenant has offered for any of the rooms since you bought the building and we made the arrangement with him as we have been in the habit of doing, (he is indeed one of our own members) but I found it was a question of alterations I wrote to you to ask permission.

This is a long statement, but it is only by being quite frank with you as to our past customs that I can explain that we were only acting as we always had done, and that nothing was further from our thoughts than that it was in any way

d
dis-courteous towards you, and I am very much troubled
that it should have seemed so to you.

If you wish Mr Thompson's agreement to be cancelled
please let me know and I will see him about it

Believe me, with sincere regret

Yours sincerely

Jan. 24th 1918

To Sir W.H.Lever Bart.

Dear Sir William,

The Sandon Studios Society have arranged to let two of the sheds at the back of Liberty Buildings to Mr. E. Thompson for the storage of some machinery. These sheds are part of the back premises which we originally rented from the Old Bluecoat Trustees, and later from you. They are in very bad repair and we have only used them for storing things. Mr Thompson is going to repair them as far as is necessary for his purpose, at his own expense.

He would find it great convenience to him if he might make a doorway through into College Lane, so as to have separate access. Should you object to his doing this, if he will undertake to brick it up again if required at the end of his tenancy?

I have wanted to write to you with the particulars you asked me for about our rent and our tenants, but the fact is that Mr. Bacon is giving up the Hon. Treasurership as he is now so shorthanded in his business that he has not time for it, and he has been so busy lately that he

Jan 24 1918

Mr. E. J. ...

has not been able yet either to meet me to hand over the books, or to furnish me with the details that I asked for.

I expect and hope that he will be able to look into it soon.

With kind regards,

Sincerely Yours

F.D. Manel Calder

Dec. 4th 1915

To Sir William Lever Bart.

Dear Sir William,

I should have acknowledged before your kind letter about the Pent of Liberty Buildings, but have been laid up for a few days with a chill.

I quite see your position as to the future maintenance of the buildings. The future to which I was looking forward that outlined in the Scheme of the Lancashire Society of Arts with an endowment fund raised by public subscription from all over the County. The War has changed and I fear that is far off in the future. Till that fair vision materialises it is only reasonable that the building should make what it can towards its own maintenance, and I realise that we must not expect permanent free quarters.

For the moment, however, things are difficult for us. Two good artist tenants who live by teaching have asked us to reduce their rents temporarily, on the ground of loss of pupils, so would it be too much to ask you if you would also let us pay less for the duration of the War?

I do hate asking you, but the little club does good work and has always paid its way, and it would be very kind of you to make some concession if you will

Yours sincerely

H/T/S

THORNTON MANOR,
THORNTON HOUGH,
CHESHIRE.

January 29th 1916.

Mrs Hamel Calder,
Basil Grange,
West Derby, LIVERPOOL.

Dear Mrs Calder,

I am obliged for yours of the 27th inst.

It is possible that there may have been a little laxity in following ordinary business rules previously, but I should be obliged if you would make just a formal application for any sub-tenants. I have to make this rule with my Secretaries and it would be difficult for me to make an exception although I am certain in your case you would not accept any tenants who were not likely to be satisfactory.

With reference to the alterations, I am quite agreeable to these being made provided Mr Thompson deposits in the Bank a sum of money sufficient to restore the property when his tenancy ceases; the money to be deposited in the Bank to be in the names of the Sandon studios and myself or yourself and myself, as a matter of fact you being the tenants would be responsible to me for the restoration

2.

of the premises, and I think in the interest of both of us this money should be deposited to ensure the restoration being made when his tenancy expires. Of course Mr Thompson's conditions of tenancy are subject to whatever the Sandon Studios at present occupy the premises on.

Yours faithfully,

A. J. C. C. C.

THORNTON MANOR,
THORNTON HOUGH,
CHESHIRE.

26th January, 1916.

Mrs. Hamel Calder,
Basil Grange,
West Derby,
Liverpool.

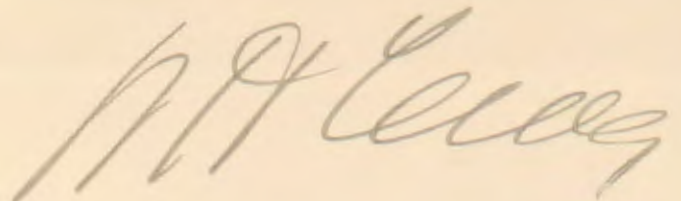
Dear Mrs. Hamel Calder,

Your typewritten letter unsigned but with your name typed on it but not marked that it was dictated by you is to hand, and has, I presume, your approval and that you endorse what this letter contains.

I know nothing of the matter referred to: certainly I ought to have been advised before any subletting was undertaken. I scarcely think you are treating me courteously in the matter.

I am asking my secretary to visit Liberty Building to-morrow and report to me upon the matter.

Yours faithfully,



THE HILL,

HAMPSTEAD HEATH,
NORTH END,
LONDON N.W.

December 6th, 1915.

Mrs. J. D. Hamel Calder,
Basil Grange,
West Derby,
Liverpool.

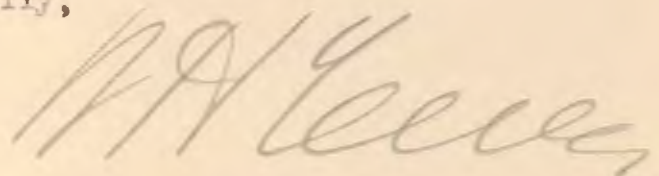
Dear Mrs. Calder,

I am obliged for yours of the 4th inst. from which I gather there are some few exceptional cases which may want exceptional treatment with regard to the rents now being paid by existing tenants in Liberty Buildings.

I would suggest in the first case that you send me a report on each of these cases, using a letter instead of the name of the tenant. If after the perusal of the report I consider an exemption should be made, then you could supply me with the name of the tenant, and I think I would like to interview the tenant to hear further upon the matter, but in the event of my not thinking that the circumstances are such as to require any intervention from myself in the way of abatement of rent during the War, then the identity of the tenant would never be disclosed to me as the matter would not be proceeded with any further.

Hoping this suggestion will meet the difficulty,

Yours faithfully,



THORNTON MANOR,
THORNTON HOUGH,
CHESHIRE.

November 17th, 1915.

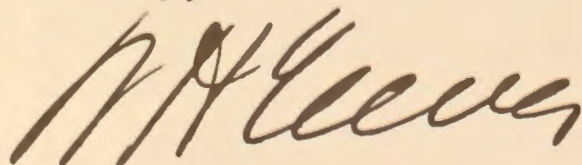
Mrs. Hamel Calder,
Basil Grange,
West Derby,
Liverpool.

Dear Mrs. Calder,

With further reference to your letter of the 12th inst., I have heard from my secretary that the rents that used to be paid to the Liverpool University are now paid to myself, but as you would gather from my letter these rents must continue to be paid otherwise Liberty Buildings would be, as I pointed out to you in my letter, without income from any source.

I cannot say that I regret being unable to accede to your request, although I am very anxious to assist you, but I feel that assistance in this way would be unsound and disastrous. I believe the assistance I have rendered in purchasing Liberty Buildings and preventing it being pulled down, while much more costly to myself, is on sounder lines and more enduring.

Yours faithfully,



THE HILL,

HAMPSTEAD HEATH,
NORTH END,
LONDON N.W.

15th November, 1915.

Mrs. James Hamel Calder,
Basil Grange,
West Derby,
Liverpool.

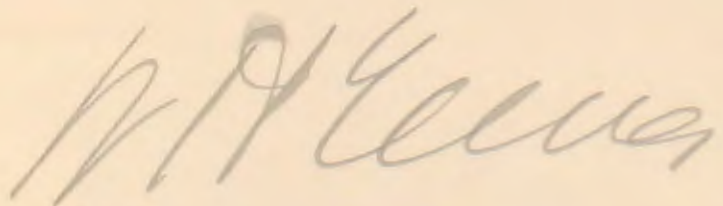
Dear Mrs. Calder,

I am obliged for yours of the 12th.

I am not clear in my mind what is the arrangement with regard to the tenancy at Liberty Buildings, but I am writing to my Secretary at Port Sunlight to report to me on the matter.

In the meantime I cannot in any way accede to the request that the Sandon Studios should remain rent free. This was never the intention: in fact if I created a precedent now for such a policy in the future then Liberty Buildings would be entirely without income from any source, and I do not see how the future of Liberty Buildings could be other than full of risk and danger.

Yours faithfully,



Bluecoat Chambers
Alteration



William C. Penn, Esq., M.C. R.O.I.,
"Springfield",
Caroline Place,
BIRKENHEAD.

ART IN LIVERPOOL

Sir,—I read your article headed "No Need for Artists' Alarm" in Friday's issue. I do not think that Colonel Cotton's assurances will do much to allay the anxiety of artists until they know that the trustees of the Bluecoat Society of Arts have rejected his suggestion to transfer the old Blue Coat School to the custody of the Liverpool Corporation.

It was plainly the intention of the donors who subscribed the money to purchase the building that it should be the home of the arts in Liverpool—in other words, the home of artists who practise those arts mentioned in the deed. If this be so, it seems curious that Colonel Cotton, as both chairman of the Arts and Libraries Committee and member of the executive committee of the Bluecoat Society of Arts Trustees, should not consult any of the artists whose home he is proposing to build on, as to whether they would desire "a series of period rooms" in their home. According to your report, Colonel Cotton says: "It was only a suggestion" kept secret because he did not wish to "run the risk of being held to ransom." It would appear that the transfer was to be concluded before the artists heard anything about it, and that the part to be played by the trustees who were not on the executive committee was to sign on the dotted line under the belief that they were doing what artists would wish, since there had not been one word of objection from the victims who knew nothing whatever about it. A brilliant example of the freedom art would experience under Corporation guidance.

Colonel Cotton says: "The point of the artists' circular is cut away by the fact that the Arts Committee memorandum states" after the mention of "period rooms" that "accommodation should be provided for such societies connected with the arts as are now accommodated in the Bluecoat Building or may wish to be accommodated in the new building." Artists are very simple people, but while they do not for a moment doubt the sincerity of Colonel Cotton, they do doubt that a paragraph in a memorandum on "a suggestion" of the Arts Committee would be held binding by the Liverpool Corporation if they procured the site, and in ten or more years' time came to build on it. What guarantee can the Colonel give that the Corporation of that date will share the generous sentiments that he now expresses?

Artists would like to know what Colonel Cotton's plans are for music, the drama, the film, and the ballet? All these are arts that it was the intention of the Bluecoat Society of Arts to foster. True, they did little, and yet that little was more than happened in any other building in Liverpool.

We all hope that the facade of the old Blue Coat School will be preserved, not as an emblem of a lost cause, but as a token of living art where happy men and women are glorying in the work of their own hands and helping Liverpool to a fuller and happier life.—Yours, &c., CHAS. W. SHARPE.

ATOMIC FORCES

A LIVERPOOL ART CENTRE

Sir,—As chairman of the Sandon Studios Society, perhaps I may be allowed to give some idea of its activities.

Among its duties to Liverpool art and its public, the Sandon used to consider it essential to sponsor shows of the more advanced type of paintings, but in recent years, owing to the present enlightenment of the Arts Committee and its director, this work has been done by the city authorities.

Frequent exhibitions of members' work are held and studios for music and painting are maintained. The war has curtailed much of the work of the architectural and musical groups because, like your correspondent "Captain," they have been doing other work abroad. I am hopeful that in the course of the next twelve months, with our younger members returning, we shall be getting back to greater activities.

The Sandon Studios in its present condition is too small to function as a complete art centre. We have no stage or suitable gallery for exhibitions, neither are there any studios to let for the younger artists returning from overseas. We are anxious that the trustees of Bluecoat Chambers, our landlords, will do the wise thing at the present juncture, by taking counsel and planning such a centre, because we believe that to come under the aegis of the Corporation would be fatal.

For the arts to flourish we need the sympathetic help of those who understand, but few will say from past experience of a city art management that we could be sure of a continued cultural directorate for an arts centre if our landlords handed over their trust.—Yours, &c., W. B. BURDEN.

Bluecoat Chambers, Liverpool, 1.

"ATOMISATION OF

DAILY POST, FRIDAY, DECEMBER

NO NEED FOR ARTISTS' ALARM
Colonel Cotton Explains Bluecoat Chambers Proposal

A REPORT that a proposal had been made to use the Bluecoat Chambers as a new Municipal Art Gallery to house the Permanent Collection has aroused alarm among architects, painters, sculptors and musicians in the city.

In a letter to the trustees of the Bluecoat Society of Arts, they recognise the importance of the Permanent Collection for educational purposes, but stress the necessity to them of having a place "where we can live together, work and exhibit."

Otherwise, they consider, "there will soon be no practising artists in Liverpool to benefit, however much the standard of public taste may be raised" by such a gallery.

Plea For Young Artists

"We feel that to divert the Bluecoat Society of Arts, from serving living creative art, to housing that which has been mainly produced by deceased artists would be a disaster. . . . Modern housing allows little scope for art of any sort being practised at home. The young artist must be able to procure a studio at a nominal rent. He must have companionship of his own kind. There should also be some organisation to bring his work continually before the public."

Yesterday a Daily Post representative, inquiring into this subject, interviewed Colonel Vere E. Cotton, chairman of the Liverpool Corporation Libraries,

Museums and Arts Committee, who said he had known nothing about the preparation of such a petition, and that there was quite evidently a misunderstanding.

"Some time ago," he explained, "I dare say it was a year or more, the Arts Committee were asked to formulate their ideas for the future in connection with post-war planning. They made certain suggestions to the Planning Committee regarding the restoration of the (blighted) Bluecoat building and its development as an art gallery where there might be not only permanent exhibitions but where we could have temporary exhibitions similar to those we have been running there during the war, only better."

"To Preserve And Improve"

"It was only a suggestion, and it was not published because, if you announced that you are going to build or do anything, you run the risk of being held to ransom."

"The point of the artists' circular is cut away by the fact that the Arts Committee's memorandum stated the ground floor should be used for a series of period rooms, a refreshment room, a lecture room, a storage space, and administrative offices, and that accommodation should be provided for such societies, connected with the arts and music, as are now accommodated in the Bluecoat building, or may wish to be accommodated in the new building. The proposal would, in fact, increase their facilities. It was not to demolish, but to preserve and improve, the building, one wing of which incidentally has never been much used."

SHIP-REPAIRING & NEW POLICE

ONE TO A COLONEL.

Tell us, good Colonel Cotton,
What projects have you got on?
What measures undertaken
Where "i's" but need the dot on?
Unless we are mistaken
Your recent "explanation"
Has been a revelation.

And whence this novel diction
That makes a plain eviction,
Uncomfortably muttered,
Sound like a benediction
In pious phrases uttered?
Scant tribute you dispense
To artists' commonsense.

"A year ago or more"
You knew what was in store,
But never breathed a word
To us of plans that bore
The Damocletian sword.
If fears you would allay,
Was that the surest way?

And, pray, what do we care,
Who do not live on air,
About your good intention?
It's neither here nor there.
Permit us then to mention
That living must be found
Upon more solid ground.

When you would pay the dead
In tribute with the bread
That's needed for the living,
Let it be plainly said
There's cause for our misgiving.
No, Colonel, you and we
Eye to eye do not see,

As for the coruscations
Of civic corporations
We fear we're not impressed;
And for their ministrations
Show not the slightest zest.
Art is a circle closed
And not to be bulldozed.

And so let this be said
Of enterprise misled,
That schemes you burn most hot on
Make us go cold instead.
We feel, good Colonel Cotton,
That if you got your head
We'd hang upon a thread.

Anonymous verses recently discovered in the blitzed portion of the Bluecoat Chambers. Archeologists have brought forward evidence to suggest that they relate to artists of the Sandon Club, for whom they are accordingly reproduced.

BLUECOAT CHAMBERS LIVERPOOL
MEMORANDUM OF DISCUSSIONS, FEBRUARY 1946.

An appeal for help has been received by the Arts Council from the Trustees of the Bluecoat Society of Arts. The Society is burdened with a pre-war debt of £14,000 to which must be added a further £4,100 due to lost revenue to date since the bombing of the building. It estimates a further net loss of £4,000 over the next five years, together with some expenditure on improvements to the building, after war damage payment has been claimed.

The Society has also appealed for help to the Liverpool Corporation who have received it sympathetically and are prepared to consider a scheme put up to them by the Chairman of the Museums and Galleries Committee for assuming full responsibility and running the building as an additional art gallery and museum, at the same time preserving the functions of the existing Trust by letting certain rooms to practising artists and ensuring that "live", activities were carried on there.

As a result of conversations among the Bluecoat Trustees, members of the Sandon Studio Society, the Chairman of the Museums Committee, the Arts Council Regional Director and myself on February 27th and 28th, 1946, I should like to make the following comments:-

(a) I do not think that the Arts Council would make a grant or loan to the Bluecoat Society for the sole purpose of reducing the debt.

(b) If the Liverpool Corporation answers the Society's appeal by "taking over", the Arts Council's FINANCIAL help would not be required. In any case, it could not be given as a contribution to municipal funds.

(c) Before offering financial help of any kind, the Arts Council would therefore wish to be assured: (i) that the body receiving it was capable of functioning as an economic unit for purposes in which the Council would be interested; (ii) that the Council was not running in competition with the Corporation, should the Corporation wish to acquire the building; and (iii) that, nevertheless, the Corporation was in some degree interested in saving the building and in carrying on activities connected with the PRACTICE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS IN LIVERPOOL.

One possibility which I think would interest the Arts Council (if its help were still required) is that a new body of Trustees might be set up with strictly defined powers under the Charity Commission and that its members might include representatives of the Corporation. The purpose of such an arrangement would be to enable the Trustees to receive contributions from voluntary sources, from the Corporation and from the Arts Council, while continuing to function as an independent unit which would ultimately become self-supporting.

(d) In general, the Arts Council would probably always wish to co-operate with the owners of the Bluecoat Chambers over current activities, music, exhibitions and so on. This would apply equally to the Corporation or to any body of Trustees which might be in control.

M.C.G. 28,2.46.

COPY OF LETTER FROM SANDON STUDIOS SOCIETY

1st. October, 1941

Dear Mr. MacCunn,

Emergency Repairs.

The Executive Committee of the Sandon Studios Society are very concerned about the deterioration to which the fabric of the building is exposed in the dining room and kitchens following damage from enemy action.

They also feel that the use of the dining room and its rent and rates earning capacity are being lost to all concerned for want of a comparatively slight expenditure to salve it. The requirements for clearing of dirt and rubbish from the roof, guttering and the floor and temporary covering would appear to be small compared to remedying the wide deterioration of the fabric, including inside walls, which will be well on its way as the autumn rains begin.

The rejoining of the main water supply to the scullery, the clearing of debris from the yard and the temporary roofing of the scullery (and the kitchen for a passage way) seem also to call for small effort compared to potential liabilities on the one hand and rental value on the other.

In this connection one has in mind that if damage to property is increased because proper steps are not taken to preserve the property after damage, the amount of compensation payable under the War Damage Act may be reduced.

It is appreciated that the difficulty of the Trustees is mainly one of money and in this connection, in case you have not one, I enclose a copy of the Government Form C I A on the War Damage Act, 1941, Part I. The following possible courses of action have occurred to me :-

COPY OF LETTER FROM SANDON STUDIOS SOCIETY

-2-

1. Is it not possible to persuade the Local Authority to carry out clearance of debris and temporary repairs forthwith ? They have already shown great interest in staying demolition and were also interested in the building as tenants, apart from its historical value to the City.
2. Failing this, cannot a special appeal be made to the War Damage Commission, Regional Office, Lancaster House, Whitworth Street Manchester ? A very good plea could be presented. Provision is made in the Act for payments in advance to a person who has an established claim, and is in need of funds for securing premises for carrying on a trade or business where the claimant was carrying on that trade or business in the damaged property immediately before the damage. Further, the Commission is empowered to pay for any temporary repairs (Temporary Works Payment) of an urgent nature which have been carried out or may be arranged.
3. Cost of Works Payments, to the person who has had the work carried out and has either paid for it or made himself liable for it, will be made after the completion of the work, as soon as the Commission has satisfied itself that the cost of the work is reasonable.
4. The Act makes special provision with regard to properties held for charitable purposes, public utilities, etc; there are also a number of detailed provisions for special classes of property. Expert advice might be able to indicate a relative provision specially having regard to the pro bono publico office held by the Trustees.
5. Is there any possibility of aid from the National Trust, Office of Works, or similar body interested in historical buildings ?
6. Can the interest of the R.I.B.A. or Lord Reith be solicited ?

8

COPY OF LETTER FROM SANDON STUDIOS SOCIETY

-3-

My Committee have no doubt that when the War is over, support will be found for the restoration of the building, but, if the clearance of debris and exclusion of weather does not receive immediate attention, they fear pounds will have to be spent where pennies would now suffice.

I would be indebted if you would bring these views to the notice of the Trustees.

Thanking you for your courtesy and with sympathy for the stupendous task with which you are confronted.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,



Hon. Treasurer.

Wm. MacCunn Esq.,
Secretary to the Trustees of the
Bluecoat Society of Arts,
Bluecoat Chambers,
School Lane,
Liverpool 1.

COPY.

THE BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS

BLUECOAT CHAMBERS, SCHOOL LANE,

LIVERPOOL, 1.

Hon. Treasurer, J. M. Furniss
Martins Bank Limited,
Water Street, Liverpool, 2.

General Secretary
W. S. MacCunn.
Telephone Royal 5297.

D. Lynch, Esq.,
Sandon Studios Society,
Bluecoat Chambers.

Dear Mr. Lynch,

Rent. My Committee considered your letter of 8th August, and agree to your Committee's suggestion that the rent of the Sandon Studios Society should be reduced from £140 per annum to £80 per annum from 6th May, to such time as the repairs to the north-west wing are completed.

Repairs. My Committee instruct me to thank you for your full and helpful letter of 1st October. You will be glad to know that, in spite of the precarious financial position outlined in my letter of 3rd October, they have decided to put the repairs in hand to the north-west wing and to the centre block, subject to the permission of the appropriate Government departments.

An appeal for funds will shortly be launched, in order that we may be able to make up the loss caused by the falling off of rents, due to the air raid damage, and so have a reasonable prospect of meeting our annual deficits until such time as the whole building can be reconditioned and capable of earning an adequate income. I will communicate with you again shortly on the question of this appeal, as we hope for the help and support of your members.

Yours faithfully,

SIGNED

W. S. MacCUNN.

Secretary.

15th October, 1941.

Dear Mr. MacCunn,

Rent.

My Committee wish to convey their thanks and appreciation for the reduction in rent to which the Trustees have agreed.

Repairs.

With regard to the last paragraph of your letter, intimating that an appeal for funds will shortly be launched and expressing the hope for the help and support of our members, I am instructed to suggest that perhaps the Trustees would consider meeting the Chairman and Hon. Treasurer of the Sandon to explore the best ways and means of making the appeal a success.

Yours faithfully,



Hon. Treasurer.

W. S. MacCunn, Esq.,
Secretary to the Trustees of the Bluecoat Society of Arts,
Bluecoat Chambers,
School Lane,
LIVERPOOL, 1.

THE OLD BLUECOAT BUILDING.

Air Raid Damage. Proposed second mortgage of £4,000.

The old Bluecoat building has suffered severe damage from enemy action, but, if certain first aid repairs are carried out, its beauty can be preserved and, after the war, the damage can be made good.

About £1,000 is needed to pay the cost of these repairs. This sum is recoverable from the War Damage Commission, on the completion of the repairs.

The serious difficulty facing the Trustees is to defray the unavoidable annual expenditure of the Trust, pending the eventual restoration of the building to an income earning condition. Before the war, the income was about £2,000 a year. It is now about £400 a year.

There is a present mortgage of £14,000 on the building and site. Interest on this is £700 a year. Annual expenditure on upkeep and running expenses, after all possible economies have been made, will be about £900 a year, including the heavy cost of fire-watching. Therefore the annual expenditure will be about £1,600 and the annual deficit about £1,200.

To finance the first aid repairs (pending recovery of the amount from the War Damage Commission) and to meet the annual deficit for the next few years, it is proposed to borrow £4,000 on the security of a second mortgage carrying interest at the rate of 3% per annum.

The security is unquestionably good. The city contains over 4,000 square yards and is in a very valuable part of the city, and is clearly worth far more than £18,000, the amount of the existing mortgage and the proposed second mortgage (£14,000 and £4,000).

The total amount of the claim being made under the War Damage Act 1941, in respect of the damage done to the building is £32,000.

The rate of interest on the proposed loan, 3%, is low. This is because the appeal for subscriptions is based not on commercial considerations but on the widely felt desire to carry over to the new Liverpool that will be built after the war the finest piece of architect that remains of the old Liverpool.

If the needed £4,000 cannot be raised quickly, the Trustees will have no alternative but to apply to the Court to be relieved of their duties under the Trust Deed and to be permitted to sell the buildings and site, and so the last fine old building in Liverpool will be lost to the City, not because of the damage inflicted by the enemy, but because sufficient money is not forthcoming to keep it in existence until the time comes when it can be reconditioned.

16th September, 1941.

W. S. MacCunn,
Secretary, Bluecoat Society of Arts.

1. I would it is not further damaged, which may happen any night until the end of the war.

£1000 first cost repairs, recoverable on completion of repairs.

"unavoidable annual expenditure"
details?

Income pre-war
2000 p.a

Income now
400

Losses?

1st cost. £40000 bldg. + site Interest - £700 p.a = 5%

Exp. "after all possible economies" - will be £900 p.a
on upkeep + running,
i.e. firewatching.

1600

Annual def. 1200.

How does one justify expenditure of £900 to bring it to £1000?
These apparently bankrupt.
What was expenditure pre-war?

£1000 borrowed @ 3% to meet first cost repairs
justified by quick repayment by War Commission.
Improved premises should bring in more
rent to meet interest £30.

£3000 borrowed to meet a deficit with no loss of
further economies is suicidal.

It will last a little over 2 years. def. 2400 - 2 yrs
3 months + int 180

3 months def. 2580
+ int 420
3000

Security: Site value - not transferable
under War Damage Act. as a new mortgagee?

War Damage Claim: £32000 - Value payment a cost of works?
Is it agreed by Commission?
Equity side cannot be sold?

THE BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS

BLUECOAT CHAMBERS, SCHOOL LANE,

LIVERPOOL, 1

HON. TREASURER, J. M. FURNISS
MARTINS BANK LIMITED
WATER STREET, LIVERPOOL, 2

GENERAL SECRETARY
W. S. MacCUNN
TELEPHONE ROYAL 5297

D. Lynch Esq:
Sandon Studios Society,
Bluecoat Chambers.

1st October 1943

Dear Mr Lynch,

At a meeting on 29th September 1943 my Committee confirmed the letting of Nos 22A and 22B to the Sandon Studios Society at a rent of £ 20 per year, exclusive of rates, lighting and heating.

Shortly I will submit a tenancy agreement for your signature. This will be the usual form of lease that we have always used, except that the clause prohibiting sub-letting will be deleted, as we understand that you are renting these rooms in order to provide studios for some of your members. You will, of course, make your own agreements with your tenants, but my Committee would appreciate your action if you laid down a condition that the tenant must have his windows cleaned at least once in every four weeks. As these two rooms face the front court it is important that they should in no way detract from the cared for appearance of the occupied part of the building, and dirty windows are a very noticeable blemish.

Yours faithfully,

W. S. MacCunn
Secretary.

ack'd verbally 1/10/43