



## **NEWSLETTER**

**29 July 2005**

### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

● **Heritage Open Days** nationally are 8-11 September. See the website [www.heritageopendays.org.uk/](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/). Numerous churches and other noteworthy buildings which are not normally open to the public are yours to visit. These will include the **Athenaeum** in Church Alley on Sunday (11 Sept) and **Christchurch, Waterloo**, a fine Victorian building no longer used as a church (10 and 11 September, 10 – 4, when there will also be crafts and history displays).

The **Heswall Society** has a Heritage Open Day on 10 September, 10 am to 4 pm. St Peter's Church, a smugglers' cave and a former windmill are among buildings which will be open to the public. Info: 342 5066.

● The **Friends of St Georges Hall** announce that there will be tours of the Hall from Monday 15 to Saturday 21 August, 1130-1230 and 1330-1500. Book on 233 2008. Price : £4.50

● **"The Travelling People"** folk group will perform at the RNLI Open Day at Hoylake on Bank Holiday, Mon 29th Aug, and at the HM Coastguards Open Day at Crosby on Sat 3rd Sept. They will also appear at the League of Welldoers Concert at the Phil on Wed 14th Sept, starting at 2.00pm. Tickets from the Phil Box Office. (The Travelling People played at the Celebration of the Sea at the Metropolitan Cathedral on 10 July, "Sea Sunday". The Orphic Singers, a girls choir from Formby, also sang).

● The tiny **Ancient Chapel of Maghull**, just off the A59 by St Andrew's church, will be open to the public from 11am to 4 pm on October 1, with talks at 11.15 and 2.15. The chapel has early medieval features, including pillars in the Norman style, and traces of ancient wall-painting but has been much altered over the years. Records speak of the dangers of travelling from there to "town" - which in medieval times would probably have been Walton rather than Liverpool, Walton then being more important.

**Frank Hornby**, inventor of Hornby trains and Meccano lived in Maghull for much of his life. There is talk of a museum in his honour being set up in Maghull and his work will no doubt feature in the proposed Museum of Liverpool at the Pier Head (for which the North West Development Agency has recently announced a grant of £32m). There is a small blue plaque on a house where Frank Hornby opposite the Great Mogul pub by the station. Is there mention of him at Binns Road where his factory was?

●The **Friends of Liverpool Cathedral** have a trip to Beverley Minister on 24 September.

●The **English Speaking Union** welcomes Mrs. Sheila Dean, a member of the English Speaking Union Board on Friday 16 Sept at 7.00pm. She will speak about people with Special Educational Needs: "Give them time to speak".

The ESU Branches Conference will be held at the Adelphi from Friday 30 Sept to Sunday 2 Oct. On the Friday evening there is a reception at the Town Hall, followed by Dinner with entertainment by Birkenhead Operatic Society. On the Saturday morning there will be various presentations, followed by a Buffet Lunch. After optional excursions in the afternoon and a trip on the Mersey, Lord Watson of Richmond, Chairman of the ESU, will be guest speaker at a Gala Dinner. Sunday morning's session includes Question and Answer Time, followed by Farewell Buffet Lunch. Phone 020 7539 1550 or Email: [meriel\\_talbot@esu.org](mailto:meriel_talbot@esu.org) for further info and bookings.

●**Liverpool History Society** has a talk on "The last weekend of peace and the first weekend of war" by Geoff Scargill at 1.30 pm for 2 pm on 18 September at Hope University in Shaw Street, Everton.

●**Wirral Society** AGM at Heswall Civic Centre on 6 October will be followed by a talk on "Trees of Wirral".

●**Cheshire Family History Society** has its AGM at Alderley Edge Festival Hall on 22 October at 2 pm.

●**Liverpool Parish Church** (St Nicholas) – buildings, gardens and resources - will be available for use for exhibitions and performances for any group during 2008. Minimal charges will be made. The Church reserves the right to vet suggested activities. Applications to Arts Festival Committee, Liverpool Parish Church, Old Churchyard, Liverpool L2 8TZ. Or fax 236 4118 or e-mail to [jeanwynne@livpc.co.uk](mailto:jeanwynne@livpc.co.uk).

On 20 August 2005, Lormac Productions are staging a sing along performance of '**Trial by Jury**' at 1.30, 2.30 and 3.30. Admission free. A collection will be made in aid of the Landmark Tower Appeal for the restoration of the church tower and its rededication as a memorial to all Liverpool sailors.

#### **CORRECTION**

Michael Corfe is giving a talk entitled "**Emma, Lady Hamilton**" at Liverpool Parish Church at 7.30 on 22 October, NOT 22 September as stated in the last Newsletter. This is to support the 'landmark trust' which is for the refurbishment of the St Nicholas' church tower. Tickets £5 from the church.

●**Merseyside Civic Society** has a Civic Design presentation on Tuesday, 9 August (1800 for 1830 start). Representatives of Langtree McLean will describe their plans for development on the former garden festival site.

## AROUND THE CITY THIS LAST MONTH

- Some 70 people attended a **Reception for Liverpool Heritage Forum** at Liverpool Town Hall on 22 July. City Council Leader Mike Storey, Capital of Culture Chief Operating Officer Jason Harborow and LHF Chairman Andrew Pearce spoke. As well as being an enjoyable opportunity to exchanges ideas, it was a valuable recognition by the City of the work of the various societies and of its wish to co-operate with them.

In the lead up to Capital of Culture Year, we are now seeing a realisation of some of the hopes and visions of the past. A visiting Italian politician in the 1980s referred to the Town Hall as “antiquità splendida”. The late Fritz Spiegel and others spoke in the 1970s of Liverpool’s potential as the “Venice of the North”. William Roscoe, one of the greatest cultural figures in Liverpool’s history, compared the city’s potential with ancient Florence, a city of great wealth and culture. We must make the wonders of our city better known locally, nationally and internationally. 2008 is a wonderful opportunity to do that.

- Hope Street Association (HOPES)** is delighted at the recent announcement of a nine-month £2.9m scheme to repave the space outside the Phil, to provide bronze benches there and to make other improvements. Hilary Burrage of HOPES says that the project will improve facilities for local people and increase business opportunities.

- Derek Seber, vicar of Thornton Hough, reports that the parish had a fantastic Flower Festival, Songs of Praise and the biggest **Scarecrow Festival** yet in the village. People who did not know about the Scarecrow Festival must have been startled indeed to see the lifelike “creatures” sitting by the roadside. Bigger and better next year?

- The **Friends of Williamson Art Gallery** in Birkenhead supported an exhibition of British impressionist paintings, mainly by Samuel John Birch. Birch was born in Egremont (Wallasey) and took “Lamorna”, the name of his favourite Cornish sea-cove, as an additional forename. He lived from 1869 to 1955 and was regarded as the father-figure of the “Newlyn” group of artists. His work “Sea Urchins on the coast at Newlyn” was exhibited at The Walker in 1903.

- The **Friends of National Museums Liverpool** have given £74,000 to the museums over the last year, including £40,000 for improvements at Sudley House, in south Liverpool. The house, currently closed while the work takes place, was originally the home of George Holt, the Liverpool ship owner.

The tug “Brocklebank”, owned by a sister organisation of the Friends and normally moored by Albert Dock, was the star turn at the International Festival of the Sea at Portsmouth on the first three days of July. Carrying a large banner marked “Merseyside Maritime Museum”, it was taken over by “pirates” whose “hostage” was rescued by Royal Marines in six helicopters, to the

accompaniment of loud explosions and gunfire! Harbour officials said that 50,000 people watched the display on each of the three days.

A growing number of “Friends Volunteers” are helping with visitor care at World Museum Liverpool (formerly Liverpool Museum) and at other galleries. More volunteers are needed. Info: 478 4485.

- The **National Exhibition of Wildlife Art** continues till 31 July at Gordale Garden Centre at Burton, South Wirral. This is the exhibition which used to be held in a car showroom at Mann Island.

- A group called “**Regeneration**” is trying to set up an arts village in St Mary’s Road, the main street of Garston. The idea is to attract professionals such as architects to set up there, out of the city centre and close to each other. Info: team@prescottassociates.co.uk

- Tonight St Brides in Catherine Street has an “**Opera Feast**”. This building is available for hire for concerts, talks etc “at very reasonable rates”. Contact: stbridescentre@yahoo.co.uk

- At the AGM on 17 July of the **Friends of Liverpool Cathedral**, the Dean explained plans, which are now likely to ahead, for an enlarged visitor centre inside the Cathedral. Friends info: 709 6271. I talked to someone at the AGM about the campaign to save **Thingwall Hall** at Knotty Ash. Does anyone have contact details?

- Merseyside Civic Society’s** AGM was on 19 July at St Bride’s Church, Catherine Street. Peter de Figueiredo of English Heritage spoke about some of the city’s fine architecture. English Heritage is going to publish a number of books or booklets about the city. See photos on the English Heritage website <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>

Part of the discussion was about the dungeons of **Liverpool Castle**, said to survive under Trials Hotel at the end of Castle street. This provokes thought about what other traces exist of Liverpool before the Old Dock was built in 1715? Speke Hall is of course wonderfully preserved. St Nicholas, Walton and Childwall churches are there but little of the ancient fabric survives in two of them. Lengths of Roman paved road were said to have been uncovered at Grassendale and Otterspool in the nineteenth century: is there any sign of them now? Park Lodge near Sefton Park, referred to in “The history of the royal and ancient park of Toxteth Liverpool” by Robert Griffiths, published in 1907, was said to have three feet thick internal walls complete with secret cupboards and two fireplaces identical with those in Queen Elizabeth’s Keep at Kenilworth. The modern gate of this property bears the symbol “1208”. The theory is that this was originally a hunting lodge in King John’s deer park. Has anyone information?

Where we have information, should there not be descriptive plaques in the street, such as where St Peter’s church used to be in Church Street, where a medieval bridge over the Pool was found under what is now McDonald’s in

Lord Street and where the chapel of St Mary del Quay stood beside St Nicholas' church? There are already plaques where St Patrick is said to have preached in AD 432 off Great Crosshall Street and on the Tower Building in Water Street, Lord Derby's stronghold rivalling the Castle. (Of modern history, there is of course a descriptive panel on Martins Bank building where Britain's gold reserves were kept for some weeks during World War II)

As 2007 approaches, local people should know more about their city's story. That story should be also told to the increasing number of visitors coming here.

- For anyone needing somewhere to hold an event, we hear that The Pig & Whistle in Covent Garden, off Water Street, has a function room, available without charge. (236 4760)

- THE Liverpool Record Office (233 5817) can be contacted by anyone wishing to deposit historical records.

***Liverpool Heritage Forum would like societies to copy this newsletter, by e-mail or on paper, to their own members, or at least to their own committee members. We invite information about societies' events, giving contact details and indicating the ticket price, if any. For events for members only, a contact point for membership should be given.***

*(The Editor reserves the right to select material for the Newsletter and is not responsible for errors or omissions).*

Andrew Pearce, Editor.