



NEWSLETTER

27 August 2005

- All societies will be invited to a meeting at 6 p.m. at the Athenaeum on Thursday 22 September. Main discussion will be about events for 2007 and 2008. Details later.

- Florence Gersten of Save Our City Campaign is appealing for help with the planning enquiry starting 11 Oct on the Edge Lane (West) Pathfinder scheme. (demolition and replacement of houses). Volunteers with legal expertise and knowledge of architecture and civic design are urgently needed. Contact Elizabeth Pascoe on 0151 707 95765 or Dai Wynne on 0151 707 4300 (day) or 0151 260 0638 (evening)

- **Heritage Open Days**, when many buildings which the public cannot normally go into will be open to the public, are 8-11 September. The full list is available on www.heritageopendays.org The Civic Trust which manages this operation (but not each individual opening) has an office in Gostins Building in Hanover Street (0151 709 1969). Thirty one buildings in Liverpool will be open. One is the Wavertree Lock-up where drunks were kept overnight to sober up (open midday to 4 p.m. on the Sunday), St Bride's Church in Percy Street, (there will be an art exhibition) and the Athenaeum, by the Blue Coat School, with its famous library. Openings elsewhere in Merseyside include St Peter's Church in Heswall, Prescott Parish Church and St Helens and Wallasey Town Halls.

- On September 28th **Liverpool Opera Circle** has a musically illustrated talk by Anthony Arblaster (Reader in Politics at the University of Sheffield; author of many books including 'Viva La Liberta! Politics in Opera' on politics in opera, especially linked with Verdi's Don Carlo ahead of the Welsh National Opera visit to Liverpool in December.

On 26 October, John Petit (Author & General Administrator of the Maria Callas International Club) will speak on 'The timeless Art of Maria Callas'. Both these meetings are at 7 p.m. for 7.30 at the Athenaeum, Church Alley. Contact Miss P.R.Brooks 0151 428 8932.

- **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 be appearing at the League of Welldoers Concert at the Philharmonic Hall on Wed 14th Sept. This afternoon concert starts at 2.00pm and tickets are available from the Philharmonic Box Office.

●(Reminder) **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 0151 236 4118 or e-mail to jeanwynne@livpc.co.uk.

● **Liverpool Network Theatre** (a city-centre based amateur theatre company) holds regular Tuesday open workshops offering a friendly introduction to acting and improvisation. All are welcome. No experience necessary. Contact Steve Dickson on 07946 673243.

● The Liverpool Culture Company has opened a public information office called **08 Place** in Whitechapel opposite Stanley Street to publicise events in the run-up to 2008. It has hi-tec electronic presentations of Liverpool life.

● The **Friends of the Historic Warships at Birkenhead** report that the *Bronington's* deck is in poor condition and that the ship has therefore had to be closed to the public. It is also reported that the planned conversion of nearby warehouses into apartments may mean that the warships may have to be relocated elsewhere in the Birkenhead dock system. Support for the collection is welcome. Contact John Lawton on 01978 661055.

● The **English-Speaking Union's** national conference is at the Adelphi 30 Sept-2 Oct. Costs and information from lynadamson1@hotmail.co.uk . ESU also has a lunch followed by a talk on "Landmarks of Britain" at the Athenaeum on 2 November. (£15).

●The **Friends of the Phil** have the Valrhona Quartet playing at the Williamson Art Gallery (Slatey Road, Birkenhead) on 7 October at 7.30. Pianist Simon Ellis. Fauré quintet. Tickets £8. Info: 0151 652 4177.

AROUND TOWN

●**Oriel Chambers** is to have a £100,000 facelift. It was built in 1864 and "was reviled in its day but elevated to the status of a Modernist icon after bomb damage in 1941 revealed its cast iron frame.... The dominant motif is the relentlessly repeated oriel window.... Desks positioned in the projecting windows receive light from the top and the sides as well as in front." (Quotes from Joseph Sharples' "Liverpool: Pevsner architectural guides".)

●Historian Harold Williams is shortly to publish a book called "Curiosities of Merseyside". One of these is the **Sanctuary Stone**, now flush with the surface of Castle Street, which marked the limits of the city's medieval fairs. A plaque on the NatWest bank building shows you where to see it.

●Something could be done to draw the attention of foreign visitors to matters concerning their compatriots. One such is the **French plaque** in St John's Garden saying "To her sons who died in captivity in Liverpool 1772-1803 and

whose bodies lie here in the old cemetery of St John the Baptist - France for ever grateful". I suppose the cemetery belonged to the Church of St John which formerly stood there, right next to where St George's Hall was later built. Which conflict do these dates refer to? I recall hearing that some of the walls along the Dock Road were built by French prisoners.

- The ***Friends of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral*** have been left £5,000 in the will of Mabel Mary Longmire, of Liverpool.

- The ***Civic Trust*** (info: 0151 709 1969) gives Green Flags for good quality public parks (10 in Liverpool). It gives Green Pennants for good quality open spaces run by voluntary groups. Sefton Park Palm House Preservation Trust got one. Info: 0151 726 9304.

SOME POINTS RAISED BY FLORENCE GERSTEN OF "SAVE OUR CITY" CAMPAIGN

- A recent television programme repeated the myth that St Nicholas' church bears three symbols of slavery above the door. In fact, none are symbols of slavery: the ship (soon to be regilded) is of a type never used for slavery, the lily represents the Virgin Mary and is of a type never grown in the Bahamas, and the bag of coins is for the acts of charity by St Nicholas. The symbols date from the 1950s following the blitz. It is unthinkable that the church would have used symbols of slavery at that date.

- The Grosvenor development entails the demolition of 19 Hanover Street, nearly 300 years old. There is said to be a room beneath it with chains on the wall and a passage to Duke Street. Should this be investigated?

- The list of structures surviving from before the construction of the Old Dock includes a 17th century gravestone in St Nicholas churchyard, Wavertree's 15th century Monk's Well, Tuebrook House (17th century), cottages at Old Swan, Oak Farm in Woolton, Walton old schools and parts of Childwall church. Is all this recorded in accessible form somewhere?

- A possible candidate for a blue plaque is the new building in Commutation Row where once stood the School for the Blind, the first in the country.

- Last time I mentioned the story that the remains of a medieval bridge were found under McDonalds in Lord Street after the blitz. It is also said that the remains of a boat were found there. Both true, one or other true or neither?

- Several buildings which contributed to the Georgian and Victorian character of parts of the city are being demolished to make way for new developments. There is surely a case for an overall view of this to be undertaken.

Andrew Pearce
Editor