



LIVERPOOL HERITAGE FORUM

HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY, PERFORMING ARTS, ARCHITECTURE, FINE ARTS

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A networking organisation of over forty voluntary cultural societies in the Liverpool area.

NEWSLETTER

30 September 2005

Organisations are invited to send in dates of future events for publication in this newsletter and to re-circulate this newsletter via their own e-mail or distribution systems. We all benefit from making our activities more widely known.

Forum meeting on 22 September (courtesy of the Athenaeum)

Joseph Sharples gave an excellent talk entitled “**Palaces for Merchant Princes**” about the houses of the city’s wealthy merchants in Victorian times.

There followed a discussion about events planned for **2007**, in three groups on Performances, Places and People. The steering group will shortly meet to suggest ways for societies to work together if they wish to do so (notably as regards publicity). Initially, the Performances group decided to work on a schedule of musical and drama events during 2007, avoiding clashes of dates and possibly collaborating with each other or with other arts groups in some of the performances; the Places group discussed plans being made by the Geological Society and the Friends of Liverpool Monuments and for possible collaboration between them on certain aspects of these; the People group will establish contacts between the various local history societies. There was talk of an exhibition and/or a pageant.

There was a general feeling that there should be more attention to Liverpool’s 800th birthday in 2007 as well as to Capital of Culture Year, 2008.

Forthcoming events

On 22 October at 7.30 as part of the Trafalgar 200 celebrations and to support the Landmark Tower Appeal, John Michael Corfe is giving a talk ‘**Emma - Lady Hamilton** a Re-assessment’ at St Nicholas church. Tickets available from the Church Office or at the door £5 including refreshments

Liverpool 800 at the University of Liverpool has a lecture on 5 October by Paul du Noyer on “**The importance of music to the history, identity and future of Liverpool.**” 6 p.m. at LIPA, Mount Street. Book on website liv800@liverpool.ac.uk Their following event is on 18 January: Tom Bloxham, Chairman of Urban Splash.

. The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire has a conference on “Liverpool & **transatlantic slavery**” at the Maritime Museum on 13-15 October. The Thursday evening lecture is free but there are charges for the 14th and 15th. Contact Dr D. E. Ascott, School of History, University of Liverpool L69 7WZ

The Wavertree Society has its AGM at 2.15 on 23 October at Our Lady’s Parish Centre. Chestnut Grove, L15. Moves are afoot to display a plaque on 19 Cretan Road, Wavertree where the actor **Leonard Rossiter** was born on 21 October 1926. The Society’s address is PO Box 100, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 5DQ

Liverpool History Society has talks by John Turner on “**Hengler’s Circus** – the Liverpool Connection” (16 October) and by Tom Whatmore on “My life at **Speke Hall**”, (20 November). Hengler married a Liverpool girl, described himself as a “Professor of Equitation” and was buried in Flaybrick Cemetery in 1919.

The **Jewish Music Institute** at SOAS (University of London) is initiating a project to create a new museum in Liverpool, the first dedicated world museum of Jewish Music and a celebration of Liverpool’s position as the gateway to freedom for the many faiths and cultures from around the world. Letters of support for the project will be welcome.

Information request

Thomas Bentley, Partner of Josiah Wedgwood and arguably the man who invented shops in the modern sense, mail-order and the concept of marketing, was apparently born in Paradise St. Anyone know where? Info please to: Bernard.martin@team-uk.org

Function Rooms

Several societies have had difficulty in finding meeting rooms. James Mansell has kindly provided this list of free or low-cost places. Up to you to check availability and prices.

- FACT, 88 Wood Street L1 4DQ: meeting rooms for groups of 4 to 30 people. Cinema (room) for a large meeting. Info from: 0151 707 4406, fax: 707 4445 e-mail: moore@fact.co.uk
- The Pig & Whistle, Chapel Street - meeting room for 30 people. Info from 0151 236 4760
- Racquets Club, Chapel Street - meeting room for up to 120 people. Tel: 0151 236 6676 E-mail: info@racquetsclub.org.uk
- The Head of Steam, next to Lime Street Station - meeting Room for 4 to 100 people. Info from Rob McNeill. Web site: www.theheadofsteam.co.uk

Liverpool Parish church - St Nicholas at the Pier Head - reminds us that it is anxious to provide the following facilities at very economic charges details from 0151 236 5287:

- 1 The Church with organ and two grand pianos, PA system, can accommodate 300
- 2 The large entrance porch available for exhibitions
- 3 The Refectory. A large rectangular room able to seat 40 - 60 people - with kitchen and refreshment facilities attached.
- 4 The Alexandra Room A basement room able to accommodate 20 people. Pantry and refreshment facilities attached.

Heritage Open Days (8 – 11 September)

Congratulations to the Civic Trust which organised this nationally and locally, and to the large number of volunteers who welcomed visitors at the various locations. The event went generally very well, despite a number of comments that while local radio “did it proud” there were problems with the contents and distribution of the promotional leaflets. There is clearly a lot of public interest in seeing inside these buildings which are mostly not normally open to the public. It was sad to see at both the Martins Bank building and the Liver Building people being told that the tour was full and that the next chance to visit would be next June!

Some of the locations had prominent banners outside advertising the event. Heswall organised a minibus to take people round their six locations. "Queen Victoria" visited Holy Trinity, Wavertree; she graciously extended her hand to subjects to be kissed!

At Wavertree Lock-up - a little hexagonal building originally for locking up drunks, just along from the Picton Clock - Mike Chitty's booklet "Discovering Historic Wavertree" was on sale. This is a very thorough description of what was at one time a village outside Liverpool. (Sir James Picton, born 1805, was a Liverpool merchant, Chairman of Liverpool Libraries Committee, Chairman of Wavertree Board of Health. The Picton reading room at Liverpool Central Library, was named after him as well as the clock.)

All Saints parish church in Childwall, one of the Open Days sites, has a framed royal coat of arms of 1660 bearing the initials "CR". Many churches have coats of arms of the designs of the monarchs of the times when they were built. These were initially insisted on by Henry VIII, to demonstrate loyalty to the new Church of England. Cromwell ordered them to be taken down but some churches kept them hidden and put them up again after the restoration. It was then made and still is a requirement that churches display the coat of arms.

Around town

The Friends of Liverpool Monuments are opposing the removal and relocation of the Byrom Street **Melly drinking fountain**. See Scottie Press web site: <http://www.scottiepress.org.uk/main.htm> Patrick Neill, the Chairman thinks it would be better to re-site the Great Howard Street Melly drinking fountain, as it has no damage, also it is not in its original location.

See: <http://www.liverpoolmonuments.co.uk/gthoward.html>

I am told that the actor **Rex Harrison** (nicknamed 'Sexy Remy', being much-married) was buried in Maghull in 1990. He was born in 1908 in Huyton, (described as being in Cheshire on one Google reference!). He made his stage debut in 1924 in *Thirty Minutes in a Street* for the Liverpool Rep and later won an Oscar for his part in *My Fair Lady* (1964). Another great Liverpoolian.

At the "100% Cotton" exhibition at the Maritime Museum, there is a picture of the Albany in Old Hall Street. It was built as offices, especially for cotton brokers, by Richard Naylor in 1856, a wealthy banker and philanthropist. and designed by J. K. Colling who later designed the National Portrait Gallery in London. Grade II* listed. It is being converted into apartments (with a concierge!). A show apartment is open to view. It will no doubt be a nice place to live for city-lovers.

The Friends of Liverpool Monuments have just opened a new section of their website dedicated to **classical Liverpool**. See:

<http://www.liverpoolmonuments.co.uk/classical.html>

While parking in Dingle Lane prior to visiting the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth (very much worth visiting) I saw a plaque on the wall of an earlier building stating that **Mathew Arnold**, the poet, had lived in a building on this site. The trouble is that the plaque is too far from the road to be read without great difficulty. Maybe our plaques should be surveyed for accessibility and clarity. (It was Mathew Arnold who brought the word "philistine" into current English, meaning someone who was ignorant of or opposed culture, the word originally having referred to a tribe in south-west Israel.)

The Williamson in Birkenhead has a permanent collection of paintings by the Victorian artist **Philip Wilson Steer**, one of whose other paintings is in the Lady Lever. The Williamson also has a large collection of **Liverpool porcelain** and about thirty models of ships. The removal a few years ago of many of the Maritime Museum's ship models is still controversial.

Edward Patey, who was Anglican Dean of Liverpool for 18 years from 1964 died on 5 September 2005. He presided over the completion of the cathedral and played a leading role in creating better relations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics in the city.

Editorial musings

While Georgian and Victorian splendour (at the expense of poverty for many) is Liverpool heritage's central feature, it is interesting to devote a little of our time to the city's earlier history. In the beginning, there were the Calder Stones. Then there was Liverpool Castle (the dungeons of which are said to be still there under Trials Hotel) and King John's deer park, where, some claim, elements or a very ancient hunting lodge remain.

But what about the Romans? Were they here? Ptolemy's map of the coast in Roman times ignores the Mersey altogether. There was no Roman camp here. But various traces of the Romans are claimed in Merseyside. In Wirral, they had a base at Meols and used Storeton quarry. There are Victorian reports of the remains of a big Roman bridge under central Birkenhead. On the Liverpool side there were excavations in 1996/7 of a Romano-British settlement at Halewood. The site was first occupied during the late 1st or 2nd century AD when a set of rectangular fields were established. The only building dated to this period is a small round or elliptical structure at the centre of the site, which was largely destroyed by the construction of later buildings. In 1993 archaeologists examined several Roman sites close to the M62 Tarbock interchange believed to have been occupied in the 2nd century AD. Tiles bearing legionary stamps of the Roman army's 20th legion, based in Chester, were found. In Victorian times, there were references to a Roman pavement being found at Otterspool.

These facts and theories are culled from the vast quantity of existing data on the city's history. I see a problem in knowing how to find what is there and how to relate one piece of information with another, simply and briefly. Is there scope for a data base which points enquirers in the direction of the information they seek or provides it itself in summary form? As a test, can readers confirm or deny these snippets of information about the Romans? Can they add more? I would be pleased to receive comments.

Andrew Pearce