



NEWSLETTER

5 November 2005

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

Forthcoming events

Liverpool History Society has talks on "My life at Speke Hall" by Tom Whatmore on 20 November and on "Early Liverpool Clubs and Societies" by Arlene Wilson on 18 December, in both cases at Hope University, Shaw Street, 1.30 pm for 2 pm.

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The Friends of St George's Hall have a Dickensian Fayre at the Hall on 4 December, 2 pm to 6 pm. Entertainment, Victorian garb and things to buy. (Tel: 0151 428 2631 or 0151 327 6747). A Volunteers Meeting will be held on 28 November. (Contact: 0151 428 2631).

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In giving a talk to the Athenaeum History Group on 4 November Anne Walton (a Blue Badge Guide) referred to the many activities being planned for St George's Hall in coming months, including celebrations of St George's Day, 23 April. (There seems to be growing interest in celebrating England's national saint, even though he was an Armenian or a Turk.) A talk on Stradivarius is booked for 2 December. The Group's events are open to non-members - contact Michael Corfe on 0151 625 7538.

Plans for 2007

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As requested at the last general meeting of the Forum, I wrote to Professor Drummond Bone, Chairman of the Liverpool Culture Company, to say that there was widespread feeling that much more should be done to promote 2007 as Liverpool's 800th birthday as well as 2008. He did not reply to me himself but referred my letter to Jason Harborow, Chief Operating Officer of the Culture Company. Jason said to me, in replying on Professor Bone's behalf, that the Business Plan for 2007 and 2008 can be found on www.liverpool08.com and that more information would be made available soon. In fact, a draft outline of major events for 2007 does exist. It is expected that parts of it at least will be made known shortly.

The Steering Group of Liverpool Heritage Forum is itself preparing an outline programme of events for 2007, to be ready by the end of this year. The hope is that a programme for 2007 can be finalised in October of next year for publication at the start of 2007. (An update would be necessary in mid 2007). The events will be those which individual or groups of societies wish to lay on.

The Forum's role will be to point out overlaps and underlaps and to undertake publicity beyond that which individual societies can generate. If societies wish to celebrate 2007, it is now time to be making preparations. The Forum's discussions are divided into activities relating to People, Places and Performances.

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Regarding "People", members of Liverpool History Society have been active in contacting about 20 societies concerned with particular aspects of the city's history so that they can be brought within the information network which the Forum provides and can, if they wish, collaborate in constructing events for 2007.

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The "Places" group expect that there will be new publications in celebration of the 800th anniversary from the Liverpool Geological Society, the Liverpool Museum, the Friends of Liverpool Monuments, the University of Liverpool and the 20th Century Society. Means will be sought to indicate on the spot where the Castle, the Exchange, the Pool and the original seven streets of the city were located. (A temporary information panel has been put up on a wire fence beside the Nelson monument on the Flags.) It is hoped that a continuing education course on Building and Decorative Stones in Liverpool could be set up.

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On "Performances", a programme of musical events by different societies across the year is being put together. More input in dram is needed.

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A meeting took place on 2 October between The Friends of Liverpool Monuments, United Utilities and the public authorities about plans to have some of the city's drinking fountains in operation again. Some of these were originally installed by Melly in order that thirsty port workers requiring liquid refreshment would have an alternative to the horse trough and the pub.

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Work has started to collect one-page fiches (file notes) of notable people, place and events in Liverpool's history with a view to creating an easy-access data base for such info.

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The Athenaeum is compiling a list of Liverpool's "Greats", people of great note. Any suggestions to Mike Corfe on 0151 625 7538.

Around Town

I hear that the Athenaeum (and maybe other people) has a full list of blue plaques in the city. There is a need to review the plaques that exist, note whether they are in good condition and readable and fill in the gaps. In one part of Brussels, the streets are named after famous Belgians. Each street sign has a couple of lines about what this person did. This is another way to tell people about a city, relating historical information to where a person is walking or driving.

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The Friends of Liverpool Monuments held an exhibition at "Editions" in Cook Street on 21 October to promote the name of the artist James William Carling. For over 4 years the Scottie Press Community Newspaper and Web Site have

been supporting efforts by Mike Kelly to gain greater recognition locally for James William Carling who was born in Addison Street, Liverpool 3, in 1857. Carling died in 1887 and is buried in a pauper's grave in Walton Park Cemetery, Liverpool 9. Carling is better known in America than here since copies of his illustrations for Edgar Allen Poe's poem 'The Raven' are on display in The Raven Room at the Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia.

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There have been discussions about making better known the fact that part of Liverpool city centre is a World Heritage site. Information panels around the city might help. I note that another Wall World Heritage site, Hadrian's Wall, has its own newsletter.

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The Civic Trust's Liverpool office, which is where the national Green Flag award scheme for public parks is run from as well as being the Trust's regional office, has moved to Century Buildings, 31 North John Street, Liverpool L2 6RG (tel: 0151 231 6900, email info@greenflagaward.org.uk).

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An "Old Dock Interpretation Centre" is to be created in Canning Place. This is the site to which Liverpool owes its existence: the creek which gave the town its being and its name. It has not been seen, until now, by anyone living. The "Save our City" campaign is lobbying for part of the site to be left open to the sky, even for it to become a water feature. Surely an idea that deserves support. Those of us who do support this lobbying should write in to the City Council to say so - Mr Burchnall of Planning Services at Millennium House, Victoria Street, Liverpool L1 6JD.

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Lesley Williams operates the City Council's volunteering system. (0151 233 5407). One event at which volunteers assisted was the "Walk in Space and Time" supported by the Friends of St James' Gardens and the Culture Company. This involved walking through St James' Garden (behind the Anglican Cathedral) in the dusk with lanterns and hearing short descriptions of the history of the Gardens and of some of the 57,000 graves which it contains. The event was well supported - nearly two hundred people on each of the two nights, 18/19 October. There is a small spring in the garden from which what used to be known as Liverpool Spa Water emerges. It was said to be safe to drink so I drank some - and am still here to write about it! On the same nights there was a stunning labyrinth of 600 little candles created in the well of the cathedral. I think that visitors and tourists would flock to this in great numbers if arrangements could be made to publicise and organise it. It was useful that Unity Theatre acted as a distribution point for tickets.

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There is controversy about plans of John Moores University to sell four buildings in Hope Street, including the renowned Art School, the oldest purpose built art school in Britain outside London. Critics of the plan say that Liverpool's status as a centre of the arts may be affected. It's one example of the clash between guardians of heritage and urban planners, both of whom have perfectly legitimate jobs to do

Was St Patrick here?

A cutting from the Liverpool Echo of 16 March 1940.....

It is interesting to note that Liverpool used to possess an ancient monument known as St Patrick's Cross. This stood at the present junction of Great Crosshall Street with Hatton Garden. The portion of Tithebarn Street between Hatton Garden and Cheapside was known, too, as Patrick's Hill.

St Patrick's Cross was of unknown antiquity. Some residents believed that it commemorated the departure of St Patrick from Liverpool. It is marked on Perry's celebrated map of Liverpool in 1769 but by then must have fallen into ruins and about 1775 it disappeared.

Some claim that St Patrick preached on this spot in AD 432 before sailing for Ireland. Holy Cross church, recently demolished, was founded in 1849 near the spot. Parishioners erected on the site of the cross itself a fountain in honour of Hannah May Thom, a nurse who had done tremendous work among them during the cholera outbreak. It has been said by a certain Harry McHugh of West Kirby that the Cross was removed in the course of the laying of water mains and that the local Catholic population were unwilling to make a protest about this because of ant-Catholic sentiment at the time of the Gordon riots in London. There were three other crosses in Liverpool at one time, the White Cross, the High Cross and the Red Cross.

SOCIETY SECRETARIES - Please let me have the dates of your events for publication here.

Andrew Pearce
Editor