



LIVERPOOL HERITAGE FORUM

HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY, PERFORMING ARTS, ARCHITECTURE, FINE ARTS

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

Please send in news of your activities and copy this Newsletter to your members

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Planning to celebrate Liverpool's 800th birthday in 2007

The steering group has discussed the progress of plans for 2007, an opportunity not to be missed to tell local people and the world about Liverpool's story. The Forum, working with Liverpool Culture Company, can generate better publicity of societies' activities than individual societies working on their own - provided that plans are well advanced by the autumn of 2006.

The steering group is looking for locations in which heritage and culture societies can display their work and for public lectures on heritage and culture. Local people and visitors are the target audiences for both of these projects. Progress is being made. Member societies can obtain more information about these plans by emailing us.

Asda is co-operating with the Forum and with Liverpool Culture Company in plans to train "meeters and greeters". These will be volunteers who will help visitors to Liverpool to find their way about and to learn something about the city.

There is a possibility of making use of a big screen in the city for promotional material. The steering group would be pleased to hear from any society which has such material (good quality videos etc).

Work to prepare a new official website for Liverpool Heritage Forum continues. We have noticed that a website entitled "liverpoolheritageforum.com" has appeared on the web. This has no connection with Liverpool Heritage Forum, whose Newsletter you are now reading. The name of the Forum's own site will be announced in due course.

It has been decided that one of the items to be put on this site is a list of the one hundred most noteworthy Liverpoolians of yesteryear. This will be cross-referenced with Liverpool Record Office's Mersey-Gateway data base, in which some but not all of these people feature. The draft list of names will be circulated in due course for comment.

The steering group wishes the Forum to hold further general meetings in May/June, September and December. A main item for discussion will be preparations for 2007. Volunteers to present their plans and suggestions for other content will be welcome.

Forthcoming events

The Peter Davies Honorary Lecture on "The Coastal Trade", open to all, takes place at the Maritime Museum on Thursday 27 April at 7.15.

Liverpool History Society has a talk on "The history of the league of well-doers" by Lesley Black at 2pm on Sunday 23 April at Hope at Everton, Shaw Street. Email: liverpoolhistsoc@merseymail.com Voluntary charitable organisations had a key social role in Victorian England. Some still have, despite the expansion of state provision. Liverpool played a leading part in the development of some of them and they are part of our heritage.

Professor John Hume, Chair of the Royal Commission of the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland, speaks on "Glasgow and Liverpool: a comparison of the built environments on the late 19th century" at the Maritime Museum on Thursday 20 April at 7.15. All welcome: free admission.

John Michael Corfe speaks to the Athenaeum History Society on "Napoleon and I" at 2 pm on 5 May (the anniversary of Napoleon's death). Proprietors (members) of the Athenaeum are welcome to bring along guests.

Margaret Donnelly launches her book "My parish Holy Cross" at 11 am on Monday 10 April at Holy Cross School, Fontenoy Street. (Contact 207 0794). On the wall of nearby Holy Cross Church, there used to be a plaque saying that St Patrick preached near there in AD 432 (the same year as he is said to have blessed a well in Bromborough). When the church was demolished, the plaque was removed to an adjacent memorial garden. Bob Parry, former MP for the area, was involved in the plaque being put up. He told that mother had ran the pub across the street at one time.

There is a Titanic exhibition at the Adelphi on Saturday 22 April, 9 till 4. Artefacts from this and other ships will be on display. £2 entrance fee.

Members and non-members of the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire are welcome, subject to booking in advance, to join its visit to St Helen's Church, Sefton on Saturday 20 May. Geoffrey Baker will speak there on "William Blundell, a 17th century Catholic Gentleman". Info: hslc.org.uk

Sefton one of the twelve ancient parishes out of which the diocese of Liverpool was formed. The locality was chosen as the chief abode of Guiliam Des-molines (Molyneux) who came to England with William the Conqueror. The Molyneux family moved from there to Croxteth in the early 1700s and became Earls of Sefton in 1770. Members of the family were Constables of Liverpool Castle in the Middle Ages. The second Earl was the founder of the Grand National. The death of the 7th Earl in 1972 marked the end of the line.

The church, dating back to 1170 was altered several times and now stands as a wonderful example of perpendicular architecture, with a marvellous wealth of fittings.

The east window, installed in the church in 1870, shows St Helen's discovery of the True Cross and Constantine's Vision of the Cross. St Helen is believed to have lived from about 250 to 330 AD. She was the concubine of Constantius Chlorus, a leading Roman. The couple's son was Constantine, born about 272 AD. He was proclaimed Emperor by troops at York in 306 AD. He later founded Constantinople and caused the Roman Empire to accept Christianity. Helena converted to Christianity and went to Jerusalem in search of the Holy Cross. She was told there at first that there was no cross but later met a man called Judas who went to pray in a temple, from which smoke began to rise. Helen had the temple torn down and found three crosses underneath. One was proved to be that on which Jesus was crucified because a dead man who was touched by it was brought back to life.

Sefton is a name with many Merseyside connotations. Sefton Street is part of the dock road. Sefton Park was formed from the hunting terrain created by Edward I from the former settlements of Toxteth and Smithdown. The deer park was sold by the Crown in 1592 to the Earl of Derby who turned it over as farmland to Sir Richard Molyneux of Sefton, A section of it was purchased through parliamentary powers in 1864 and turned into a public park, which was designed by Edouard André, designer of the Tuileries Gardens in Paris, and Louis Hornblower, who had previously designed gates, bridges and buildings in Birkenhead Park.

www.merseyworld.com/seftonchurch/email:101456.77@compuserve.com
www.seftonparkliverpool.info/History.htm

Liverpool Chamber of Commerce members are invited to a lunch time talk by Robyn Archer, Artistic Director of Liverpool Culture Company on 3 May. (Contact 227 1234). Robyn is in charge of the programme of events for 2006 and 2007. Her website (www.robynarcher.com)

describes her career in Australia and internationally, referring to her as one of the world's foremost and respected festival directors. She is also described as a singer (with an eclectic repertoire including country, standards and her own songs) and a writer.

Drinking fountains, jazz and Sudley House

In the last edition I confused Charles Pierre Melly with George Melly. It was Charles Pierre Melly who created drinking fountains around the city in the 19th century and whose work is the focus of much current activity by the Friends of Liverpool Monuments (which, incidentally, has become a Civic Society). It is hoped that some of the fountains will be brought back into operation.

George Melly, born in 1926, is a jazz and blues singer and a wit and is descended from George Melly, the brother of Charles Pierre. He is distantly related to the Holts, whose home was Sudley House in Aigburth. The house is currently closed for refurbishment. It is due to reopen next year. In 2001 George Melly featured in a concert at Combermere Abbey to raised funds for Liverpool's museums.

Around Town

The House of Commons Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport visited Liverpool on 20 March. They heard the views of various bodies concerned with heritage and then had dinner with a number of heritage supporters at the Alma de Cuba restaurant in Seel Street. This was formerly St Peter's church. The altar is still in place, although the church is not used for worship.

There was a Stop-the-Rot meeting at the Echo chaired by the Bishop of Liverpool on 8 March.

The Historic Warships Trust in Birkenhead is in voluntary liquidation, not bankrupt as reported in the last edition of this Newsletter. It is understood that the contents have been sold to a private individual and that the liquidator has disclaimed the ships, which means that they are now Crown property.

The visit of Condoleezza Rice to the Maritime museum on 1 April brought new attention to the Transatlantic Slavery gallery there and the plans for a new International National Slavery Museum in the adjoining former Granada TV building. The first stage of the new museum is due to open in 2007, coinciding with the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the British slave trade. It will tell the story of the slave trade triangle that linked the UK with Africa and America. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Liverpool controlled up to 60% of the British slave trade, which involved taking manufactured goods to Africa, slaves to the Americas and cotton and sugar back to England. The story is one of profitable commerce built on terrible human suffering. It changed the ethnic geography of the world.

Local artist Colin Holmes has won an art competition in Walton which was set up to plough back into art insurance money received after the theft of two watercolours stolen from the Old Grammar School. Colin produced a detailed charcoal drawing of St Mary's church, Walton, which can be seen in the church.

I picked up a brochure entitled "2006 John Smith's Grand National" apparently produced by something called "englandsnorthwest". I was delighted to read in it that Liverpool Town Hall is "Open 10.30 to 3.30 every half hour" for guided tours at a cost of £3.50. I rang the Town Hall to ask what dates this applied to. "Oh, that's only two weeks in August, apart from group visits booked in advance. The brochure must be wrong". Isn't it a pity that this wonderful building cannot be opened to the public more frequently?

Andrew Pearce
Editor