



LIVERPOOL HERITAGE FORUM

HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY, PERFORMING ARTS, ARCHITECTURE, FINE ARTS

www.liverpool-heritage.org.uk

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

NEWSLETTER No 14

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Societies 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.
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On 14 July, Liverpool Culture Company will announce plans to celebrate Liverpool's 800th anniversary. Liverpool Heritage Forum is gathering information about the plans of voluntary cultural societies to join in these celebrations. Societies are invited to send in information to the email address given above. About ten have already done so. Details about dates and venues can be sent later.

NEW PUBLICATION

■ In September, "Liverpool 800: Culture, Character & History" edited by Professor John Belchem of the University of Liverpool, will be published. Paperback, hardback and limited edition copies will be on sale for £14.95, £35.00 and £100 respectively and can be ordered from Liverpool University Press, 4 Cambridge Street, Liverpool L69 7ZU, tel: 0151 2233, email lup@liv.ac.uk. See website www.liverpool-unipress.co.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 6 July: Three Liverpool buskers will tour streets from Berry Street to Derby Square on a horse-drawn cart. Meet at Wolstenholme Square at 16.30. Last one hour. Info from 08 Place.
- 19 July : 'Cosmopolitan Liverpool' - still the world in one city?'. Loyd Grossman will be in conversation with Professor John Belchem at 6pm in the magnificent setting of Princes Road Synagogue, Liverpool 8. Contact: Dave Wibberley, University of Liverpool, tel: 0151 794 8384
- 22 July – 6 August: Brouhaha International Festival on 29 – 30 July On 5 August, the region's largest multicultural carnival takes over the streets with 2000 costumed participants. There will be international dance, fireworks and fountains spectacle on the steps of the Metropolitan Cathedral inspired by Bollywood films.
- 26 July: Ursula Hamilton will give a presentation to Liverpool Opera Circle entitled "Religion – a Force in Opera" about the element of religion in opera with its resulting conflicts, confrontations and dilemmas at 7.30 pm at The Athenaeum. Contact 01625 574 938 or Ursula.hamilton@btinternet.com
- 2 August: Liverpool Children's Festival, organised by Liverpool Young Culture Action Group, which gives children the chance to join in arts and culture activities, has an event around St George's Hall between 11.00 and 16.00.
- 12 August: A 3-hour "City in transition" walk entitled "Liverpool between the wars" a tour around the city centre focusing on the work of architect Herbert Rowse. Starts at the Phil at 10.30. Info: 0151 233 2008

■ 19 August: another “City in transition” walk around the University precinct. Starts 10.30. Info: 0151 233 2008.

■ Lesley Williamson of Liverpool Culture Company wants to hear from organisations willing to help celebrate “20/08” Day. This might consist of a special event of some kind. Contact: lesley.williamson@liverpool.gov.uk, tel: 0151 233 5407.

AROUND AND ABOUT

■ A national conference entitled “Heritage Protection, Heritage Promotion”, promoted by Liverpool Culture Company was held in London in June. Planners and heritage officials of local authorities and top-level representatives of English Heritage, the Civic Trust, the Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the Museums Libraries and Archives Council and the Historic Environment Local Management project (HELM) attended. It was chaired by Loyd Grossman, Chairmen of the Trustees of National Museums Liverpool and Deputy Chairman of Liverpool Culture Company. Positive accounts of what is being achieved in Liverpool were given with splendid photos of the city’s buildings. Heritage receives 4.67p of every pound spent on lottery tickets, 16.6% of the total, the same as for Arts and for Sports. The other half of the fund goes to the Community Fund and & New Opportunities Fund.

Deborah Porter, who is in charge of English Heritage’s “Listing” operation said that the present separate lists for sites, parks, gardens buildings, battlefields and World Heritage sites are being unified and will include ships and trains. She spoke of local partnership agreements to plan what should be done with heritage buildings in advance of proposals for redevelopment. It would be interesting if such partnerships include buildings which do not qualify for listed building status but are nevertheless of interest in the local context.

■ The Conservation Centre in Whitechapel, part of National Museums Liverpool, reopened on 14 June after improvements. It is now the National Conservation Centre.

■ Merseyside Civic Society had an excellent “Walk” around St George’s plateau and St John’ Garden on 14 June. The Garden opened to the public in 1904 on the site of St John’s Church. (The latter was built in 1783 and therefore predated St George’s Hall, which was built very close to it.) The plaque in the Gardens is in memory of French prisoners at the time of the privateer wars (late eighteenth century). It was sandblasted some years ago, taking away the sharpness of the lettering. The Garden is a attraction in its own right, not just a way to the Museum. Should there not be notices outside it to attract people to view its splendid statues and to learn about the stories they tell?

■ Also in 14 June, a small exhibition was held in the atrium of the Royal Liver Building to show paintings by Chris Vine of a liver bird constructed of Meccano.

■ Liverpool and South West Lancs Family History Society journal reminds us that Charles Dickens was made an Honorary Member of the Literary & Philosophical Society here in 1860. Our three universities make links with distinguished people through the award of honorary degrees. Are there other ways in which VIPs in the arts world can now be linked with the city?

■ Liverpool Vision reports that The Mersey Partnership offers training to local tourist related businesses. Centre-Island, the owners of Trials Hotel (which sits on the site of the Castle), has adopted the scheme’s Welcome Host Plus programme. There is surely a case for hotel staff to be made aware of the city’s heritage. Local voluntary organisations such as those in Liverpool heritage Forum could help with this.

■ The Liverpool Culture Company is still recruiting volunteers for it 08 Ambassador programme. Find out more at contact@liverpool08.com

■ An information leaflet entitled “Liverpool Firsts” by Paul Dunkerley is now available at tourist offices. Among the “greats” mentioned are the Albert Dock (the largest group of Grade I listed buildings in the country), the Stanley Dock tobacco warehouse and the world’s first enclose dock, a corner of which was recently revealed in the construction of Grosvenor’s “Liverpool

One” shopping development. These are all reminders of the city’s commercial power. The tower of the Anglican Cathedral was paid for by money raised from trade in meat. In most European cities with architecture as good as ours, the buildings were mainly paid for by kings or governments. The profits from commerce paid for most of ours.

■ The Bishop of Liverpool chaired a meeting of the Echo’s Stop-the-Rot campaign on 8 June. This consisted of on-the-record discussions between property developers, officials of the City Council, Liverpool Vision and English Heritage and heritage campaigners, including Florence Gersten of the Save Our City group. The meeting focussed on a list of eighteen derelict buildings* in the city which are eyesores and which risk being torn down (unless protected by “listed” status) or becoming unsafe through neglect.

*Florence institute, Wellington Rooms, St Andrew’s Church, St Luke’s Church, Welsh Presbyterian Church, Exchange Flags, Buddleia Building, tobacco warehouse, White House pub, 30 Slater St, 64-72 Seel St, Duke Street terraces, 99-102 Wavertree High St, Newsham Park Hospital, Royal Insurance Building, Scandinavia Hotel, Cheapside.

Once developers are prevented from knocking down buildings of historical or architectural interest willy nilly, the task is to find a new use for them which can justify the cost of refurbishment and provide income for their future upkeep. The Council’s task of safeguarding our built heritage and dealing with eyesores is not an easy one but to the outside observer a good banging together of heads might get round some of the less meritorious reasons why “nothing can be done” and overcome turf wars between different bureaucracies. This is what the Stop-the-Rot campaign seeks to do. It is making progress.

■ In times of falling church attendance, many churches are threatened with closure or faced with repair bills that they cannot pay. English Heritage sometimes meets 60% or more of repair costs, on advice from, as regards Anglican churches, the Diocesan Advisory Committee. (Contact: Beverley.mills@liverpool.anglican.org or tel: 0151 705 2122.) Church authorities are anxious to preserve architectural heritage but the naturally work on the basis that the promotion of their faith is their priority.

■ We are not organ specialists but we hear that the Anglican Cathedral’s organ was until recently the largest in the UK with 9,765 pipes. The organ in St George’s Hall has 7,737. The newly refurbished and enlarged organ in The Royal Albert Hall in London has 9,999 pipes, thus overtaking Liverpool’s. Would it be philistine to ask for a few more pipes to be tacked on to the Liverpool organ so that it regains its rightful place as Britain’s biggest? (A well-travelled purist might point out that several organs in the United States are a good deal bigger than ours and that St Stephen’s at Passau in Germany has a 17,774 pipe machine. Is this OTT?)

■ A small group of people will campaign to raise awareness of Liverpool having had a medieval castle (where the Queen Victoria monument is at the top of Lord Street). National Museums Liverpool is going to “disinter” a model of it, currently in its storehouse.

■ The rapid increase in new property developments, while generally welcomed as a sign of the city’s new vitality, has at least one down side. Buildings used for performing and visual arts risk being demolished, being converted to other uses or having their rents greatly increased. A battle has been fought to save the studios in Parr Street. The Picket music venue in Hardman Street (in what was originally the Deaf School) has been turned to other uses and the musicians have had to move to a new venue in Jordan Street (below the Anglican Cathedral). Some of the artists’ in the Arena building in Duke Street are also moving to this area. This is near the Buddleia Building (it’s got buddleias growing out of it!) which the Novas Charity is restoring and converting for use by voluntary organisations to encourage the talents of the city’s black and ethnic minority communities.

It is very important that Liverpool has a place where creative artists - painters, sculptors, musicians - can operate even if they cannot pay much rent. They contribute to the cultural “feel” of the city which tourists enjoy and have produced a heritage which has brought fame to the city. When the Art School in Hope Street was sold off by John Moores University for conversion to other uses, the public authorities showed little concern for the damage this

would do to the so-called arts quarter around Hope Street. Developers must not again be allowed to deface our heritage. There are plenty of other sites for them.

Contact about The Picket: hayesoreilly@merseymail.com

■ Patrick Neill of the Friends of Liverpool Monuments organised a walking tour around the city centre on 14 June to view works by local sculptor Tyson Smith (1883-1972). One visit was to an exquisite statue (or to be precise half a statue!) inside the new Met Quarter shopping centre in Whitechapel. It is a female figure in Greek garb mourning postal workers killed in the World Wars. Full marks to Ron Taylor and the developers for preserving this sculpture, which was previously on the old General Post Office building on the same site. Other Tyson Smith work viewed was over the door of The Athenaeum, on Littlewoods building and on the bank on the corner of Church Street and Williamson Street. Website www.liverpoolmonuments.co.uk

■ National Museums Liverpool and the University of Liverpool have received £9,860 of public money to help researchers share information about the arts in the city. This will feed information into the development of the new Museum of Liverpool at the Pier Head and the International Slavery Museum.

■ There's still time (till 30 July) to see the George Stubbs exhibition at The Walker. He is Liverpool's greatest painter and yet another Liverpool "great" whose birth place deserves to be marked with a plaque.

■ In "Liverpool Colonnade" by Richard Whittington-Egan, published by Philip, Son and Nephew in 1955, reference is made to several medical "firsts" in Liverpool. Hugh Owen Thomas, born 1834, was a pioneer of British orthopaedics at his surgery at 11 Nelson Street. "Thomas's splint", used in fracture cases, became well known. He passed his know-how to his nephew Robert Jones, born 1858. In his surgery Jones would do 26 operations between lunch and 9 pm. The first x-ray ever taken in this country was taken in this building.

Anaesthesia by various means was long practised but it was Robert James Minnitt who, at Liverpool Maternity Hospital in 1933, hit upon the technique of combining nitrous oxide and air in such proportions that it would produce analgesia (freedom from pain) without anaesthesia (lack of consciousness).

■ Talking of Nelson Street, your editor was told that Sun Yat Sen, first President of China after Mandarin rule, was arrested at the behest of the Qing dynasty in the Freemasons' building beside the Chinese Arch there.

■ The Forum has made contact with the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in the city to see how people in parishes with historic churches can be in contact with the Forum. Anglican Archdeacon, Ricky Panter and Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop Tom Williams have both kindly agreed to circulate information about the Forum's work to their parishes.

POST SCRIPT

The editor hopes you find these jottings interesting. What we are today is built on our heritage. Heritage is a kind of glue which binds people in a community together and increases their sense of belonging and involvement.

Andrew Pearce, Editor