



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

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Preparing for 2007 and beyond

■ At a recent meeting between a representative of the Forum and City officials, there was discussion about compiling a local list of buildings which may merit conservation but do not qualify for official English Heritage Listing (which is being reviewed currently, an opportunity for lobbying). Local listing would not guarantee that a building would be saved from demolition or alteration but it would ensure that, in considering planning applications, possible alternative uses would be considered. The Forum proposes to suggest buildings for this local list starting with a couple of buildings in each suburb and a couple of dozen in the city centre. Suggestions please. Discussion also took place about erecting information panels in the area of the original seven streets of the city (including the area where the Castle was), explaining how today's street plan developed from that laid out in King John's time.

■ Liverpool Culture Company will open a visitor centre in St Georges's Hall (entrance on St John's Lane) in 2007.

■ The Forum is arranging for notices of voluntary groups' events to be displayed next year at 08 Place in Whitechapel. It is best, initially at least, if these come through the Forum so that duplication is avoided and that there is balance between different kinds of activities. Thin cards one third A4 size will be used, perhaps combining several events on one card.

■ On 14 July, plans for 2007 were announced by Liverpool Culture Company. These include events being staged by societies which participate in the Forum. It is hoped that many more societies will send in details of their plans. Putting them on this list will achieve more publicity than most societies could obtain by their own means. Liverpool History Society is one of the first societies locally to announce a programme of meetings through 2007. The Nugent Society, Liverpool Ferries, St Nicholas Church, Nathaniel Hawthorne (the American Consul who lived in Rock Ferry) and whether Adolf Hitler was in Liverpool, are on the programme.

Events in the next few months

■ Heritage Open Days are here again: 7 – 17 September. One of the venues will be St Francis Xavier's church in Langsdale Street at the top of Islington. Helpers from NADFAS, the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, will be displaying vestments and other treasures. (Info: 0151 709 9222 ext 239). English Heritage has events in Birkenhead Park on 9 September at (2 pm) and 10 September (11 am and 2 pm). Info: 0151 652 5197.

■ There will be a meeting for organisations participating in the Forum on Thursday 14 September at which there will be an update on 2007 and a talk on sculpture. Details later.

■ "Liverpool 800: Culture, Character & History" will be launched in September, a major work produced by Liverpool University Press for the anniversary year. Prices are £14.95, £35.00 or £100, for paperback, hard back and specially bound copies.). It has 500 pages and 300 illustrations.

■ Published recently by the University Press was "Liverpool 1660-1750: People, Prosperity and Power" by Diana Ascott, Fiona Lewis and Michael Power (Info: 0151 794 2233). Based on studies of parish registers, probate documents and municipal records, the book depicts Liverpool's early and precocious eighteenth century growth. It is understood that the price is £50 but it is to be hoped that LUP will see the need for a version at a price that we ordinary folk can afford.

■ Liverpool Metropolitan Opera presents “Viva Verdi”, a dramatised celebration of the composer’s life and works on 16 September at Southport Arts Centre, 20 September at Pacific Road Arts Centre, Birkenhead and 22 September at the Gladstone Theatre, Port Sunlight. Tickets from the venues or from Viv Sharpe on 07970 938 661 or David Palmer on 07971 7575555. In February 2007, Liverpool Metropolitan opera will present La Traviata.

■ The Mersey Sound is a major feature of Liverpool’s recent culture. Gerry Marsden and the Pacemakers are to perform at the Pier Head on 26 August as part of the Mathew Street Festival. (Info: 0151 233 2998) In October 1963 the band recorded “You’ll never walk alone” (composed by Rodgers and Hammerstein for “Carousel” in 1945.) It was immediately adopted as the anthem of Anfield’s Kop and is used by soccer fans in Holland, Greece and Japan and was heard during Germany’s games in the recent World Cup. Sadly, there are few places where the Mersey Sound now can be heard year-round in the city.

■ A small group of heritage enthusiasts continues to research the origins of Liverpool Castle (where Derby Square now is). It is hoped that a small part of the tunnels which apparently remain below pavement level could be made visible.

■ The Friends of Liverpool Cathedral visit Lincoln Cathedral on 23 September. Info: 0151 709 6271.

■ Liverpool John Moores University’s Roscoe Lectures begin again. The first, on 18 September, is on the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. Info: 0151 231 3852.

■ 20 August (“20/08”) is designated by Liverpool Culture Company as a day to celebrate the city, leading up to 2007 and 2008. Many activities are planned (Info: 0151 233 5407).

■ The rescheduled Hope Street Association event takes place on 17 September. There will be music and festivities. (Contact hilary.burrage@btconnect.com).

Gleanings from documents crossing the editor’s desk

■ “Liverpool’s Melly Drinking Fountains” by Patrick Neill (0161 761 5522) is an authoritative work describing the fountains installed by Charles Pierre Melly (1829-1888), the first person to erect such fountains in England (in 1854). Melly saw a need for a means for dockworkers to quench their thirst without going into pubs. Some of the fountains are to be brought back into operation for 2007.

■ “The Atlantic crossing” by Melvin Maddocks published in 1981 carried an essay about “Liverpool – the pacesetter among ports”. It records an American novelist, Herman Melville, saying, in 1839, that “Sailors love this Liverpool” and “Here they find paradise”. Brothels and dance halls beckoned on all sides and gin palaces specialised in putting on lewd shows known as “free-and-easies”. Melville himself viewed the city as infested with “land-sharks, land-rats and other vermin which make the hapless mariner their prey”. He went on to say that though most of the city’s improvements were designed to assist trade, by the middle of the nineteenth century social reformers had begun to build hostels and churches for sailors. But there were still 2,000 drinking dens in the city in 1840.

■ Liverpool Hope University kindly sent to me “The History of Mount Pleasant Teacher Training College – Celebrating 150 years”. The College opened in 1856 with 21 resident students. In 1980, Notre Dame, an all-female college, joined the Liverpool Institute of Higher Education in Childwall. LIHE, in which Christ’s, a co-educational Catholic training college and St Katharine’s, an Anglican teacher training college were also combined, became Liverpool Hope University in 2005. (Contact: notredame150@hope.ac.uk)

■ The Woolworths retail chain has a “Virtual Museum” (<http://museum.woolworths.co.uk>) outlining its history, including reference to its first British store which was in Church Street in Liverpool and opened in 1910. It would be nice if all major firms with a presence in Liverpool had such sites.

Around town

■ The “LoveLiverpool” website (contact: hayesoreilly@merseymail.com) reports that Parr Street studios have been saved and will be expanded and refurbished. This is important because the structure and/or use of several heritage/culture buildings in the city have been converted to other uses or the buildings destroyed. “Listing” protects the fabric but not the usage which is often what makes a building important (e.g. The Art School building in Hope Street is protected because it is a “listed” property but if it is converted into flats the “atmosphere” which it has contributed to Hope Street will be lost). The threat of redevelopment applies also to old buildings housing small specialist shops which are now being driven out by increased rents and redevelopment. A city having small, specialist shops is a means of attracting tourists? “The Lanes” in Brighton is an example of this.

■ The Community Foundation for Merseyside offers grants of £500 to £5,000 for projects about the changing face of the city and its heritage. Info: 0151 966 4604.

■ The National Trust has four properties in Liverpool, Speke Hall, “Mendips”, 20 Forthlin Road and 59 Rodney Street (which contains 142,000 of E. Chambré Hardmans’ photographs.) 93,000 people visited the four properties last year. The Trust has 200 volunteers in Liverpool. (Info: 0870 458 4000). The Trust has links with Europa Nostra, a European federation of two hundred national heritage organisations, based in Holland. (Info: 0031 70 302 40 52).

■ The Open golf championship at Royal Liverpool (Hoylake) was a great success. The club was founded in 1869 following the opening of an earlier course at West Kirby in 1852 by expatriate Scots. The first international golf match was at Hoylake in 1902: Scotland v Hoylake. The first match between Great Britain and the USA was at Hoylake in 1921. There are nine courses, all links courses, at which The Open is played in turn, including four in Scotland and the courses at Birkdale and Hoylake. “Links” come from the old English word *hlinc* meaning a low ridge of sandy ground between the shore and agricultural land.

■ Someone sent me a photo of a road sign bearing the words “Heritage Road - Cul de Sac”. We do not agree with the idea that heritage leads nowhere! A study of local heritage is an ideal way forward to increase our understanding of the present.

■ A local group is promoting interest in the heritage of the Vauxhall and Scotland Road areas. Ron Formby (ronformby@scottiepress.org) has a plan for a heritage centre on Scotland Road (linking with St Anthony’s Visitor Centre). Few places in Europe saw such overcrowding as did the Scotland Road area in the mid-nineteenth century.

■ Conservationists are delighted that the scheme to build a Morrison’s supermarket and flats in New Brighton blocking the view of Fort Perch Rock has been thrown out by Whitehall. Given the small number of heritage buildings in Wirral, one might expect the Council to protect what it has. Plenty of other sites for development are available.

■ The Culture Media and Sport Select Committee of the House of Commons published a report on 20 July on the Pathfinder proposals (such as for the Welsh streets) to demolish a considerable number of houses in Liverpool, which many of the residents do not favour. “*The former ODPM (John Prescott’s former bailiwick) Housing Market Renewal policy, designed to address apparent market failure in urban areas, has not taken sufficient account of the value local residents attach to heritage within their communities.....There have been excellent examples of imaginative conversions, in particular of Victorian terraces which have combined a retention of heritage with modern housing needs*”. (Contact: jonathan.irjbrown@gmail.com for comment.)

■ An English Heritage brochure entitled “Regeneration and the Historic Environment”, seems to agree with the above report. It says: “*Re-using existing buildings is a simple way of achieving sustainability. Recent research in the North West of England by English Heritage found that... the cost of repairing a typical Victorian terraced house was between 40 and 60% cheaper (depending on the level of refurbishment) than replacing it with a new home. Re-using buildings saves waste and reduces the need for new building materials. Demolition and construction account for 24% of the total annual waste produced in the UK*”.

■ We have competition in 2008! Liverpool in Nova Scotia, Canada, is having an international Theatre Festival that year, celebrating the riches of amateur theatre worldwide.

■ Liverpool City Council will lift the brass cross in the pavement outside Top Shop commemorating the site of St Peter's Church, store it and replace it when the repaving of the street is finished.

Brook, Brooks and Brookes – snippets of history gleaned by studying the index of a book

Researching my ancestors, I read in "Liverpool Privateers and the Slave Trade" by G. Williams, written in 1897, that on 19 February 1779, the *Enterprise*, 250 tons, 20 guns and 70 men, belonging to Messrs. Brooks and Co. and commanded by Captain Pearce, took the *Paulina*, 450 tons burthen, on its way from Cape Francois to Bordeaux, with upwards of 500 hogsheads of sugar, besides indigo, coffee etc. The ship was pierced for 22 guns. On the 23rd of the same month, Captain Pearce captured *L'Hostilité*, bound from Bordeaux to Port au Prince (Haïti) laden with provisions etc. Both prizes arrived safely in Liverpool. Such was privateering!

Wondering who Brooks & Co were, I consulted the index of "Liverpool as it was during the last quarter of the eighteenth century 1775 to 1800", published by Richard Brooke in 1853. The index led me to a certain Joseph Brooks, who had a house in Hanover Street with an adjoining orchard alongside Church Street. Joseph Brooks retired from business with, we are told, "an affluent fortune and was indefatigable in his attentions to the health and comforts of the parish poor". He died in 1788. Was this Joseph Brooks the proprietor of the Brooks & Co who owned the *Enterprise*?

The Brooke's book's index then led me to the Venerable Archdeacon of Liverpool around 1850, the Rev Jonathan Brooks, who was the great nephew of Joseph Brooks. The Archdeacon was also Rector of the Church of Our Lady and St Nicholas, "St Nick's". (Most of the early Rectors of Liverpool were first incumbents of St George's Church, built on the site of Liverpool Castle, and then moved up to be incumbents of St Nick's. By an Act of Parliament of 1699, Liverpool had been split off from the parish of Walton and made a distinct parish. Under the Act there were to be two Rectors, one in charge of St Nick's, the other of a new Church, St Peter's in Church Street, which was consecrated 1704 and demolished 1922.

Looking further in the index of Brooke's book, I read of author's father, also Richard Brooke, (1761 - 1852). He was a member of the committee of the Liverpool Library which had origins as far back as 1715 and became more formalised in 1758 when its first catalogue listed 177 works and 48 pamphlets, 450 volumes in all. There were then 109 subscribers.

The index finally took me to The Brook, which was the name of the stream which flowed into the top of the Pool of Liverpool at modern Byrom Street. It drained the swampy land called the Mosslakes, where modern Falkner Square and Abercromby Square are now situated.

Enough! I can brook no more of this! I am researchnig Pearces, not Brook(e)s. (Courtesy prevents me from referring to the present Rector of Liverpool, the Rev.....)

Andrew Pearce, Editor