



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

## **NEWSLETTER No 16**

**1 September 2006**

### **Forum meeting**

The Forum will have a meeting at 5.30 for 6 pm at **The Athenaeum in Church Alley** on Thursday 21 September. There will be a talk by Robin Riley, sculptor, historian, broadcaster and double-plus heritage enthusiast entitled "Unfinished Business" about 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture and sculpture in Liverpool. There will also be an update of plans for 2007 by both **Liverpool Culture Company** officers and societies' representatives. Participating organisations are urged to send representatives to this meeting. Interested individuals are also welcome.

### **Heritage Open Days**

Heritage Open Days are here during the period 7 – 17 September, but it should be noted that many of the buildings are only open to the public on particular days. Outside Liverpool, many properties are only open during the period 7 – 10 September. This includes many properties elsewhere in Merseyside. See websites [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk) and [www.liverpool08.com](http://www.liverpool08.com) for details. Among less well-known sites are West Derby Courthouse, the George's Dock ventilating shaft for the Mersey tunnel, The Athenaeum, Martins Bank building, Society Night Club, Toxteth Town Hall, the Cunard Building, Gateacre Unitarian Church and St Christopher's Church Norris Green. What a feast. To be noted - not all the venues are in the city centre. It is important that heritage in the suburbs is recognised as well as that in the city centre.

During this period (14 – 16 September to be exact) there will be an event to showcase Liverpool's history and the work of its historical societies. There will also be a conference entitled "Liverpool a sense of time and place", when leading academics will examine images and representations of the city. Both of these are at St George's Hall. Info: [enquiries@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk)

At 10 am on 7 and 8 September a heritage tour of Vauxhall will depart from the Conservation Centre. Booking via Tourism in Vauxhall webpage or [ronformby@scottiepress.org](mailto:ronformby@scottiepress.org). This is part of a highly commendable project to grow tourism in the Vauxhall area, contributing to the renaissance of the area.

### **Other forthcoming events**

- The **English Speaking Union** has meetings on 15 September (a talk by Judge Hamilton on "The Art of the Story Teller" and on 29 September (a celebration of Michaelmas at Poulton Hall Gardens. Info 0151 342 6157 or 0151 638 5512)
- **Hope Street Association** are organising celebrations on 17 September. Info: [hilary.burrage@btconnect.com](mailto:hilary.burrage@btconnect.com)
- The Friends of Liverpool Cathedral have a trip to Lincoln Cathedral on 23 September. Info 0151 709 6271.

- **Liverpool Italian Opera** presents “Viva Verdi” on 16 September at Southport Arts Centre (01704 540011), on 20 September at Pacific Road Arts Centre, Birkenhead (0151 647 0752) and at the Gladstone Theatre, Port Sunlight, on 22 September (0151 643 8757),

### Messages for participating organisations

You are asked to look at the Forum's new website: <http://www.liverpoolheritageforum.org.uk/>

This is far from complete. It needs your help to make it really useful. It offers a way into the work of voluntary heritage and cultural societies interested in Liverpool's past and present and provides a summary of the points of interest in the matters they deal with.

1. **Please send to the LHF email address information about your society and its website link and any other information you think should be shown.**
2. Please send in further information about you events open to the public planned for 2007. These will include in wider publicity. This will help recognition of what your society does. This newsletter is now reaching over 300 people, almost all of whom are directly concerned in culture and heritage.
3. If you know of buildings which merit inclusion in a local list of buildings, other than those already officially “listed”, whose importance from a heritage point of view should be fully considered before developers are allowed to alter or destroy them, please send them in the Forum. We are looking for two or three in each suburban area. We will seek the help of local Councillors in this. Old buildings may not at first sight sound good for votes but proudly putting forward the attractions of one's own part of the city can do no harm in electors' eyes.
4. **08 Place** (the Tourist Office in Whitechapel) has agreed to display on limited basis information on societies' events in 2007. You are invited to think how you could make use of this offer. At the time of writing, the prospect of using the Town Hall for lectures organised by voluntary societies is still “in the pipe line”.

### Around town

- **National Museums Liverpool** will soon be starting a Museum on the Road project by which artefacts not otherwise on display in the museums and galleries will be shown in certain retail and hotel premises in the city. NML has some wonderful material, which seldom sees the light of day owing to lack of exhibition space despite efforts to rotate what is on show. The greatest regret concerns the “Large Objects” which were formerly on display at Princes Dock, a wonderful collection of public transport vehicles, fire engines and other machines. Some, but not many of these will go into the new Museum Of Liverpool but not till the end of 2008 at the earliest.
- **HELP (The Historic Environment of Liverpool Project)** newsletter of August published by English Heritage (**info: 0161 242 1400**) features the Yellow House Project that sent out 20 young people to photograph Liverpool's wonderful buildings with a particular message that you need to look up to see the finest work. Not only were the buildings designed with the finest features and sculpture at the higher levels but modern shop fronts have obliterated whatever charm there ever was at eye level. Walk along Castle Street and see for yourself.
- The **magazine “Citywise”** (published with support from the European Regional Development Fund, has a feature on Heritage Pubs, of which there are eight in the Liverpool area including the Philharmonic, the Crown on Lime Street, the Belvedere on Faulkner Street and the Prince Arthur in Walton. The scheme is supported by the Campaign for Real Ale, presumably thinking that “Citywise” also features Hope Street where the “suitcases

sculpture” (“A Case History to give it its proper title) may be seen. It shows 27 suitcases and bags with luggage labels bearing the names of famous Liverpoolians who have left the city. The magazine describes Hope Street as eth bohemian district of Liverpool. It’s a matter of opinion whether it really looks bohemian now and when John Moores University quits its four buildings in the street in 2008, only the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts will remind us of its cultural claims.

- **Green Flag Awards 2006/7** (for high quality public parks) have been awarded to a number of public parks in Liverpool. A Green Pennant Award, similar but for voluntary and community organisations, has been awarded to Sefton Park Palm House Preservation Trust. ,
- National Museums will have a **Museum of Liverpool Life On The Road**” exercise in the near future. This will involve exhibits from the museum being on show in commercial and retail premises around the city for a limited time.
- In the last edition, we rejoiced in the defeat of the developers who wanted to block the view of Fort Perch Rock at New Brighton with a supermarket and some flats. As I foresaw, the developers are back with a new schema. It may be satisfactory or not, we don’t know. It is impressive how determined **Wirral Council’s** so-called “preferred developers” are. Or is it, when big money is at stake?

### **Slavery remembered**

- It is sometimes said that in the Water Street part of Liverpool rings have been seen in basement walls where slaves were once imprisoned. There is no doubt that Liverpool played a major role in the vile trade of shipping Africans in slavery to the Americas, with a first transport of slaves in 1699. This triangular trade (politely called at the time the “African Trade”) took cargoes of manufactured goods on the outward leg from Liverpool to Africa and loads of sugar, rum and cotton on the way back to Liverpool. According to **“Black Liverpool by Ray Costello**, published in 2001, by 1795, Liverpool had the monopoly of five eighths of the European Slave trade
- It is however uncertain whether slaves were brought to Liverpool. Certainly a number of Africans were brought to the city as servants (it was fashionable to have a black slave). The conditions of these people would not have been good but they were not slaves. Possibly some slaves were held captive in transit to other destinations but whether large numbers were held in the city is open to doubt.
- As early as 1706, **Chief Justice Holt** gave a judgement that slaves could not be traded like goods and a little later claimed that a slave was free as soon as he arrived in England. There were some reverses of this ruling but the Mansfield judgment of 1772, disallowing slaves to be taken from England against their will, was a major step towards abolition by Parliament of the British slave trade in 1807. The use of slavery was banned in British colonies in 1834 but lingered on in the United States until the 1860s and in Brazil till 1888. Slavery still exists today in some parts of Africa and a feature on Liverpool’s remembrance of the trade, which once flourished here, is to signal the need for more efforts to rid the world entirely of this trade.
- Liverpool has a remarkable record in recent decades in promoting harmony between different parts of the Christian religion and between different faiths. In this context, there will be **Walk of faiths** on Sunday 10 September starting at 1.30 pm at **the Metropolitan Cathedral** and including the **Hindu Temple**, **Sikh Gurdwara**, the **Bahai Centre**, **Al-Rahma Mosque**, **Princes Road Synagogue** and Hope Street where the Lord Mayor will join for the last stretch to the **Anglican Cathedral**.

- **Slavery Remembrance Day** (23 August) was celebrated with a multi-faith service in St Nicholas Church and a public lecture by Ekow Eshun the previous evening in the Town Hall and a commemoration ceremony at Otterspool. Liverpool ships played a large part in the slave trade and some of its politicians in the abolition of the trade. The city's early wealth came mainly from it but of course its emergence as the second city of the British Empire, its growth as a massive port and ship-owning city, city of art, architecture and music and the suffering of many of the people from far and wide who settled in the city came decades after the slave trade was abolished in 1807. The new Slavery Museum will commemorate Liverpool, role in the trade and hopefully enable the city to play a supportive role in ridding the world of the slavery, which still exists on quite a large scale in a number of developing countries. This can be an example of heritage being the basis of current action.
- **The magazine "Archaeology"** reports that improving the presentation of the Roman arena there will bring in an additional 40,000 tourists a year, adding £5 million to the local economy – which tends to prove that support for from public funds heritage is an economic policy, not just amusements for culture-buffs.

### **This green and pleasant land (?)**

It is good when tourists come to our city. They bring in money, cause new jobs to be created and maybe help the city to attract new investment. A truism but one apparently not understood by all of the public authorities that what counts is the visitor's total experience. The works of art, the architecture or the theatre performances and the music he or she came to enjoy may have been wonderful but if the hotel service was poor, the streets dirty, the toilets in pubs, restaurants and public places filthy or if his car is broken into, that is what forms his overall view and he will think badly of the city.

**Liverpool City Council** can do things well - sometimes. It was praised for dealing with litter after the Mathew Street Festival. The flowers in St John's Gardens have been lovely. But....

Walk from the wonderful Queen Victoria memorial in Derby Square, down the slope to the Dock Road. You pass a weed bed in front of the Law Courts and piles of rubbish behind the government buildings (Home Office and Revenue) to the right. At the bottom, look left at the weed and litter strewn "garden" of the Halifax Bank. Then turn round and go back to the rear of what used to be Coopers pub. There are piles of rubbish either side of the staircase that leads back up to Derby Square. The steps are covered with broken glass and rubbish of all kinds.

If that isn't enough to convince our leaders that there is a problem, they should go to the corner of Hardman Street and Rodney Street (near the Phil, one of our major cultural venues). Here there is a door with a permanently closed iron gate in front of it. The space between the two has a great deal of litter on view behind it. This is the side door of a house in Rodney Street (a street of supposedly proud people who have an association to protect their interests).

I drew such matters to the attention of a High Person in the City Council. He didn't reply. The only reaction I have been able to see is that the weed-strewn flower tubs in front of the Liver Building (in the centre of the World Heritage Site), which I had referred to, had been simply taken away!

Many Merseysiders are ashamed of the state of their city. If only the relevant Council staff did what they are paid to do! Bill Bryson, on a visit, described Liverpool as a city having a festival of litter. Isn't it time we started to prove him wrong? There is an Act of Parliament, which allows local Councils to oblige firms (and public bodies) to keep their frontages clean.