



Web site: www.liverpool-heritage.org.uk

Contact: email@liverpool-heritage.org.uk

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

NEWSLETTER No 19

5 December 2006

Forthcoming events

- A number of societies (though neither the Forum nor the Friends of National Museums Liverpool!) have received invitation to an update meeting arranged by Liverpool Culture Company between 6.30 and 7.45 pm on Tuesday 12 December at St George's Hall. Places can be reserve by email: rsvp@liverpool.gov.uk or calling 0151 233 2008. Since I am sure that the Culture Company wants to keep the largest number of people informed (and mitigate the widespread feeling that "nobody tells us what is happening") and since the last such meeting was only half full, you may care to book a place - or just turn up - whether you received an invitation or not. Deadline for applications is stated as Friday 5 December. (Friday is actually the 8 December).
- Speke Hall has a traditional Christmas Evening on 9 December. (Info: 0151 427 7231)
- The Dante Alighieri Society has its AGM on 23 January (Info: 0151 342 6749).
- The Williamson Gallery in Birkenhead has an exhibition of Della Robbia pottery from 12 December to 25 February. It was made in Price Street, Birkenhead. (Info: 0151 652 4177).
- The Friends of Liverpool Cathedral have a talk by Rosemary Hawley on her year as High Sheriff of Merseyside on 20 February. (Info: Events Organiser at the Cathedral, L1 7AZ.
- Merseyside Civic Society has a presentation by Peel Holdings (Wirral Waters) on 12 December.(Info: 0151 794 3122). This is the same date as the Maritime Carol Service at St Nicholas, which brings together many people interested in Liverpool's nautical past (Tickets required).
- The Friends of St John's Garden has a committee meeting on 15 January. (Info: Nigel Sharp on 0151 225 4876). This public park ought to be seen as a cultural site in its own right - fine statues and much about Liverpool's history.
- Liverpool History Society has talk by John Tiernan on 17 December at 2 pm at Hope at Everton, Shaw Street, on "Benevolent Patronage" – Libraries in Liverpool.
- The English Speaking Union has a Christmas Dinner at the Cathedral on 15 December. (Info: 0151 342 6157).

The Editor around town

■ Ken Dodd was 79 on 11 November. Those attending his shows this year are told: "His shows are not known for being short, so bring your breakfast." I hope to be out by midnight when I go. As well as stage and television, Ken is a strong supporter of Liverpool, is to be seen from time to time at the Anglican Cathedral and fought to save Thingwall Hall at Knotty Ash.

■ A team from UNESCO visited Liverpool on 24 October, regarding the controversy about whether the new Museum of Liverpool will spoil the view of the waterfront. Their preliminary report said that the City Council should be cautious about new buildings on the waterfront, should improve its management of new developments in and near to the World Heritage site and should ensure that developers and the public are better informed about why the waterfront and other sites covered by the World Heritage award were so designated. It stopped short of condemning the development proposals. The final report is due before 15 December.

Interested parties have to consider whether World Heritage designation means that further developments in contemporary style should be banned and what other economically viable uses could be found for the site, and the value in terms of jobs, revenues and esteem will flow from the new Museum of Liverpool if built.

The report is in error is saying: "Liverpool became the major port for the mass movement of people, e.g. slaves and emigrants from northern Europe to America. In fact very few slaves ever came to or through Liverpool. Liverpool slave traders bought slaves from African leaders who had captured them, took them across the Atlantic in appalling conditions and sold them in the West Indies and in what became the USA. Many Merseysiders agree that the story of slavery should be told but be told with balance and accuracy - which is not always the case at present.

■ FACT in Wood Street has received a grant of £5,620 to develop work with young people with disabilities.

■ The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire gives grants of up to £300 for research and education projects and up to £1,000 for publications. The applications date for this year has passed but as the scheme is an annual one, interested parties could plan early to apply for next year. (Info; Dr D E Ascott, School of History, 9 Abercromby Square, Liverpool L69 7WZ).

■ The Victorian Society has its annual meeting on 27 January followed by a talk by Edward Kitchen, Northern Architectural Advisor of the Society. At Ullet Road Unitarian Church. (Info: dianagoodier@hotmail.com)

■ Birkenhead History Society has a talk on "The Great Mersey" by Mike Jones on 21 December. (Info: 0151 644 9033).

■ Readers may not have heard of Culture North-West - sadly, because it spends public money and helps to shape the policies followed by other public bodies. It has a regional strategy to conduct research, arrange conferences, create networks, foster partnerships, signpost partners, influence government policy and pursue an active public relations policy and advocacy. Does it, like so many of the quangos, do its consulting mainly

among other quangos or does it get out among ordinary people? We would be interested to hear.

■ We are challenged by a resident of Formby regarding our comments in the last Newsletter on Sefton Council's inability to foresee the public interest in the iron men on Crosby shore. Yes, no doubt the iron men and visitors do pose problems for other beach users and in terms of traffic and parking. This is typical Nymby situation and most of us would be nymbies if directly affected by a project. Perhaps if Sefton Council had understood the issues earlier, a compromise means of keeping this contribution to local art and heritage with at least partial minimisation of inconvenience to local people might have been found.

■ Liverpool University Press has a new book list. Orders by 12 December will have free postage and packing and participation in a prize draw. (Info: 0151 794 2233.)

■ In the lobby of the Municipal Offices in Dale Street is a panel which says: "On this site stood the Saracens' Head, the most famous of Liverpool's coaching inns 1810-1853." An excellent idea which other office buildings could copy. Dale Street had several inns and departure points for coaches at that time. It was the main way out of the town centre for most directions, notably to Prescot and beyond to Warrington, Manchester and London.

■ Among venues for outstanding musical performances (but ones which cannot afford lavish publicity) are the two Cathedrals. Naturally, these have a base in Christian belief but over and above that, music of the highest quality is produced. (Info: www.Liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk and www.Liverpoolcathedral.org.uk)

■ St Bridget's, West Kirby, is home to the Charles Dawson Brown Museum, which has stone relics from Celtic and Viking days. (Info: 0151 625 7959).

■ This month is the 30th anniversary of the founding of Liverpool and SW Lancashire Family History Society by Harold and Joyce Culling. Many people owe a big debt of gratitude to them. (Info: www.liverpool-genealogy.org.uk)

■ The City Council now has a Select Committee on Green Environment, and Heritage. Heritage matters have been dealt with by a number of different parts of the City Council. It is to be hoped that the various strands - conservation, information, education, accessibility and the raising of civic pride can be brought together when necessary. The committee's meetings are in public. The Executive member responsible for the matters dealt with attends. Members of the public can put down questions to be answered during the meetings by giving prior notice. (Info: 0151 225 2564).

The committee has been told of attempts to create a list of buildings which do not qualify for official "Listing" and are not in Conservation Areas but which nevertheless merit proper consideration when development proposals are made. This proposal, if adopted, would not guarantee preservation of all buildings listed (the economic aspects have to be taken into account) but it could mitigate the situation where historic buildings are swept away without any sign of the powers-that-be even being aware of their heritage qualities. Two lists of buildings for possible inclusion are being considered by members of the Forum and Merseyside Civic Society.

■ The Friends of Liverpool Monuments have added some pictures of Harold Wilson's statue to their website.

■ Walton church was severely bombed in World War II but still possesses a Norman font, a six foot Saxon cross shaft and the communion plate formerly in St George's Church, which stood where the Queen Victoria monument now is. The former Grammar School built in 1613 on the site of an earlier building - and one of the oldest buildings in Liverpool - is to have a facelift so that it can be better used for visitors and meetings..

■ 16 January is the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Cavern Club.

Report of Forum meeting on 30 November

Henry Owen-John of English Heritage gave an interesting and informative speech about the work of his organisation. It is hoped to circulate a summary of this later.

It was reported that the Forum is now in contact with a couple of dozen music and drama societies and will seek to provide publicity about their activities in the Newsletter in the future.

The Forum has received agreement from the authorities to hold a small numbers of public meetings in the Town Hall on heritage matters during 2007. Plans for dates and topics are under discussion.

The City Council and Liverpool Culture Company are discussing means to indicate on-the-spot and in the form of documentation the position where the castle stood and which of today's streets were the seven original streets of Liverpool, back in King John's time.

A campaign for clean streets

Keeping Liverpool free from litter is not, in itself, the Forum's business. However, we want people who come to see our fine buildings and streets to enjoy themselves, to speak well of the city and to come again. Representations about this were made to a senior Councillor in July, raising specific examples: Plant tubs in front of the three Graces were not planted or weeded this year. Result: the tubs have been removed. The shrub beds in front of the Halifax bank on Wapping are weed and litter strewn. Result: no change. (With the money the Halifax has, it has no right to disfigure our city like this). Flower beds in front of the QEII courts have only weeds and litter. Result: the weeds have died back leaving their stalks and muddy litter behind. The tunnels leading to Lime Street station need a thorough team cleaning. Result: a major refit of the station is to be carried out, presumably including these tunnels. The stocks in West Derby Village were covered in weeds and litter. Result: this small site has been cleaned up but will need further attention in the spring and regular litter picking.

A litter and glass strewn staircase behind Graeme House has been boarded off but the "wells" below the facades of Graeme House have piles of litter in them. There is grass growing on the steps of the beautiful Queen Victoria monument. A house on the corner of Rodney Street and Hardman Street has accumulated litter behind a large entrance gate. Many people going to the Phil comment on this.

There were lovely flower displays in the city this summer. Why cannot the City do its litter picking job as well as its flower tending job? Will it take action against owners of private property close to streets (like Halifax Bank) which damage the impression given to visitors?

Andrew Pearce, Editor.

Out and about

The Scouse-Italian reunion night held at the Via Veneto Restaurant in Old Hall Street, Liverpool on the 1st December and organised by the hard working Ron Formby of the Scottie Road Press was an extraordinarily successful and informative event that I hope will become a regular occasion in Liverpool. The evening was attended by Louise Ellman MP, Cllr Flo Clucas and Nunzia Bertali (Italian Consul Merseyside) was a feature packed event including some of the best musical talent Merseyside has to offer.

The night began with the wonderful Wirral Mandoliers followed by a six course meal during which Una Voce operatic singers including a solo by Johnny Kennedy singing "Santa Lucia" pleased everyone with their faultless performance of a selection of operatic favourites. There was also a screening of a short film made by Andrew Smith about the Legendary Liverpool-Italian Boxer, Dom Volante.

The evening ended with the screening of Paul Sudbury's evocative, moving and socially important film about Gerard Gardens/Hunter Street and the Scotland Road community blighted by misguided and inconsiderate road developments in the 1970's that isolated this proud and remarkable inner city community from their neighbouring communities.

This celebration of Liverpool's Italian links was the highlight of 2006 for many who were fortunate to have attended and recognised the overlooked history, heritage and culture of what was known as Liverpool's 'Little Italy'. Many thanks to Ron Formby for organising this truly original and inspirational heritage event and an evening to remember.

If you have any information or photographs relating to Liverpool's Italian community you would like to share please contact either the [Liverpool Heritage Forum](#) or [Ron Formby](#). Please click the above web link too learn more about Liverpool's Italian community.

EVENT

Liverpool author Michael Kelly is launching his latest and long awaited book **LIVERPOOL'S IRISH CONNECTION** at **Editions, 16 Cooke on 19th December, 11am-2pm**. Some of the people featured in his book are also briefly mentioned in the [Liverpool Notables](#) on the Forum's web site.

If you would like to suggest your favourite Liverpool notable or provide a brief article on them that will be included on the forum's web site please send it to [Andrew Pearce](#) or to the email address at the top of this newsletter.

Rob Ainsworth