



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 29

15 June 2007

Consultation

There has been a good deal of comment about the planning, publicity and consultation for the celebrations of Liverpool's 800th anniversary in 2007 and the city's year as European Capital of Culture in 2008. In order to ascertain what the public think about the situation a web-based discussion platform has been launched on which anybody can give their opinions. You are urged to take advantage of this. See www.appearance50.com

Editorial

You may have seen Loyd Grossman, Deputy Chairman of the Liverpool, Culture Company on BBC 1 on 18 June. He questioned how well Liverpool was meeting the challenge of producing high class architecture and interviewed experts commenting on the need for better leadership to produce in this generation the quality of new buildings which earlier generations have bequeathed to us. He questioned whether Liverpool's new skyline would match, in quality, those of New York and Shanghai.

The skyline of Shanghai's "Bund" has been compared with Liverpool's Three Graces. It has about a dozen splendid buildings built by Europeans in the early years of the twentieth century. Some of these are comparable not only with the Three Graces but also with India Buildings, Oriel Chambers, the Adelphi and other Liverpool "greats". In Mao's time, the fine buildings of Shanghai were allowed to deteriorate. Some were desecrated - the Catholic cathedral had its spires knocked off, for example. More recently, the Chinese government has realised the value of heritage both as a tourist attraction and as part of national history as seen by its own population alongside the staggering new skyscraper developments (which make what is planned for Liverpool look very small beer). Most of the buildings on The Bund have been renovated and all are clearly marked, in English, with short statements of their history.

Also of interest to tourists in Shanghai is an electric "stored value" card, with which you can pay not only for metro rides but also for bus and taxi trips. An innovation in one of the museums there for the display of artifacts sensitive to light are lamps which are activated by sensors and "fade-up" when someone is looking at the particular showcases, and "fade down" again afterwards.

Liverpool has two university presences in Shanghai. One is a university jointly established by a leading Chinese university and the University of Liverpool. Liverpool's Vice Chancellor, Prof, Drummond Bone, who is also Chairman of Liverpool Culture Company, attended its first anniversary celebrations at the end of May. The other is a partnership between another Chinese College and nine North of England universities including Liverpool John Moores.

Preparations for 2008

♣♣ Liverpool Culture Company has been running a number of 2008 Welcome Seminars for those across the city who will be welcoming visitors. Two have been held in the Anglican Cathedral and more are planned.

♣♣ The 08 Roadshow is continuing to reach new audiences across Liverpool – nearly 8,000 people have paid a visit to the bus since its launch in March.

♣♣ The cruise liner terminal opens in September. There will be space for 16 coaches alongside it. It is to be hoped that coach tours of Liverpool will be organized, not just, as some people warn, to Manchester and the Lake District. We have plenty of fine things to show people here, despite the dereliction of some of the dock areas. Seven vessels will call at the terminal this year.

♣♣ Liverpool's 08 Volunteers will be decked out in environmentally-friendly uniforms thanks to a deal with retailer Ethel Austin. As an Official Supplier, Ethel Austin will provide a range of uniform items for volunteers, including a fleece made from recycled plastic bottles. Click [here](#) for the full story.

♣♣ The Friends of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, a former Victorian Cemetery in Birkenhead, whose President is Professor John Tarn, former head of Liverpool's School of Architecture and Chair of Riverside Housing, will host the European Cemeteries' Conference next year starting on 18 September. Up to 200 delegates from every European country are expected.

♣♣ The historic Bluecoat Arts Centre is on schedule to re-open at the end of the year after a major three-year restoration project costing £12.5 million.

♣♣ Members of the Heritage Forum have had extensive discussions with the Culture Company and the City Council about putting up plaques or information panels to show where Liverpool castle stood and which were the original seven streets of old Liverpool. Reports of progress on this are eagerly awaited. This is one of those low-cost projects which could have a considerable and lasting impact on citizens and visitors to the city which somehow seem to fall out of the Culture Company's list of priorities. Action please!

♣♣ It's worth reminding people of an important recognition of Liverpool's culture. The Turner Prize 2007, the ever debate-provoking contemporary art award, is coming to Liverpool as a curtain raiser for the city's reign as European Capital of Culture in 2008. The exhibition will take place at Tate Liverpool between 19th October 2007 – 13th January 2008 and the winner will be announced on 3rd December 2007.

♣♣ Readers may have seen in the press last month that Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell said there would be no more money coming from her department for Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture. Then House of Lords was told the government was also refusing to hand over any money towards extra policing costs. Home Office minister Baroness Scotland said bluntly: "Liverpool asked for this honour and you are lucky enough to get it." Yet apparently unlimited funds are being poured into the London Olympics. It seems there is in Westminster and Whitehall one law for London and another for all other parts of England.

♣♣ The Victorian Society's magazine surveys the achievements and failures of Liverpool's architectural development. While acknowledging the several successes of recent years, it regrets, among other things, the lack of progress to find a new use for the tobacco warehouse, the largest brick building in the world, made of 27 million bricks and the lack of progress to preserve the Welsh Presbyterian church on Princes Road.

♣♣ Sayers, the bakers who are one of the official Capital of Culture sponsors, are now selling scouse pies. Your editor is having sleepless nights worrying about what scouse should be made of and in particular why it has to be made in a pan and not in the oven. Any advice?

Around town

♣♣ Canon Justin Welby, Sub-Dean of Coventry Cathedral has been appointed as the new Dean of the Anglican Cathedral. The role of the previous Dean, Rupert Hoare, in the cultural life of the city, especially for the successful Year of Faith, 2004, will be recalled by many.

♣♣ What has the Rose & Crown pub in Liverpool got to do with what, in the nineteen thirties, was the largest Catholic parish in England? It was at that pub that in 1840 that eight Catholic businessmen met and resolved to erect a Catholic church in the city. St Francis Xavier's in Shaw street opened its doors in 4th December 1848 as a result. By the inter war years of the 20th century 13,000 people lived in its parish. The church had been enlarged accordingly. SFX now houses part of Hope University, England's only joint Catholic/Anglican university. The roof has just been replaced at a cost of £980,000, for which gifts are needed. (contact 0151 298 1911).

♣♣ Prof. Ian Tracey, organist at the Anglican Cathedral, flew the flag for Liverpool in Devon on 13 June. He played at the parish church of Ottery St Mary.

♣♣ The Liverpool Family History Group (part of the Liverpool & South West Lancashire Family History Society) hold their last meeting at St. Nicholas Parish Church in June. They move in September to the new premises of the Quakers Friends Meeting House, 22 School Lane. They next meet, at the new venue, on September 11th, a Members' evening.

♣♣ The Paradise (Grosvenor) project continues skywards. For the record, it covers 42 acres and will comprise 160 new shops, two new hotels a 14-screen cinema and over 600 residential units.

♣♣ Wirral Footpaths Society continues its successful negotiation with the Council there about the footpath alongside the Mersey. The section of path from where the One O'clock gun used to be fired every day to the southern boundary of the Ferry terminal was opened some months ago and work on further stretches was due to be finished in May.

♣♣ The row over the demolition of the former Education offices in Sir Thomas Street made it into the columns of Private Eye. The City Council gave planning permission for the building to be demolished to make way for a new hotel. Subsequent efforts to have the building "listed" failed because of damage already caused to it by rapid action. The building is across the street from Council Leader Warren Bradley's office in the Municipal Building. Why can't Liverpool have a joined-up policy on heritage and planning? Either it wants to be a city that people will want to visit (and spend money in) to enjoy the city's heritage or it can happily knock it all down and end up like Milton Keynes.

♣♣ Many of you will have already visited St George's Hall since the visitor facilities were opened in July. This is a first class addition to the sites-to-see in Liverpool (entrance in St John's Lane). So far at least, it has only a very small notice outside the door to say what it is and needs something better. The street name further down the side of the hall is scruffy and has a graffito on it, which should be removed. It's this sort of little detail that lets the city down. Now if senior Council officials were to WALK around the city and see what visitors see.....!

♣♣ Night time tours around the city centre are to be run so that people can appreciate the buildings which have improved lighting. Under the Council's programme for this more than 60 buildings have been dealt with.

♣♣ On 17 June David Brazendale gave members of Liverpool History Society a tour of the Church of our Lady and St Mary, usually known as St Nick's. Although most of the building only dates from the rebuilding after severe bomb damage in World War II, the origins of the church go back to the early Middle Ages when the river lapped the walls of the churchyard of the little chapel of St Mary del Key, which lay just in front of the present church. St Nicholas is well-known as the patron saint of sailors. He was also the patron saint of burglars, prostitutes and children. The last of these categories is represented in front of the church by a statue of the children of the blitz. The church is open every day.

♣♣ Liverpool History Society's Spring newsletter reports on an interesting talk by John Tieman on the growth of public libraries in Liverpool. St Peter's parish church in Liverpool (where Top Shop now stands) had a theological library from 1715. The town (Liverpool was not a city until 1880) had its first subscription library in 1758 which later moved into the Lyceum, designed by Thomas Harrison, in Bold Street (where it still stands though no longer as a library). William Roscoe, opponent of the slave trade, and friends set up the a library in the Athenaeum, then in Church Street.

Liverpool's first public library opened soon after the city produced its own Act of Parliament in 1852. William Brown paid for part of the cost of it in what is now William Brown Street. Although heavily bombed in World War II, the Central Library remains today one of Britain's finest public libraries and is well worth a visit even if you don't want to borrow a book.

The meeting was also told about Carl Bernard Bartels, born on Stuttgart in 1866, who designed the Liver Birds on the Liver Building. He was interned in the Isle of Man during World War II, then repatriated to Germany the allowed to live here again. During the war he designed limbs for wounded servicemen. (The Liver Building has the largest clock faces in Britain).

♣♣ One of Wirral's oldest schools is to close next month due to insufficient numbers of children and a poor OFSTED rating. The school was set up in the 1850s under a parliamentary measure and was to conform to the acts and designs of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church Throughout England and Wales. This is often known simply as The National Society and is allowed to call itself that because it was the first society of any kind to be national. Only children of manufacturing, labouring and other poorer classes were to be taught there.

♣♣ Applications are invited for the Lever Prize, an annual award for world-class arts organisations in the North West. The prizewinner receives a £10,000 cash prize. See: <http://www.nwblt.com/prleverprize.asp>.

♣♣ Liverpool John Moores University is currently looking for visionary and self aware people to join their MA Cultural Leadership programme. The course is more leadership focused than an arts management programme and offers a range of pathways for the emerging leader wishing to develop knowledge, skills and confidence.

♣♣ Friends of National Museums Liverpool handled 400 enquiries from visitors on 16 June and again on 17 June at their information office at Mermaid House on the Albert Dock.

♣♣ Mike Storey was today put in charge of Liverpool's regeneration. The former leader of the city council takes over the key role seven months before Capital of Culture as part of a reshuffle of the town hall's top table.

♣♣ Mike Stubbs is the new Director of FACT.

Spreading the word

This newsletter is sent directly to over 600 people free-of-charge and probably reaches twice that number. It can also be seen on our website, which was accessed by 15,000 people last month. We publish information about cultural and heritage events known to us, mostly those of a non-commercial nature. (**Do let us now about YOUR events**), but we are not beholden either to advertisers or the public authorities and therefore retain freedom to comment, favourably or otherwise, on current activities in our sphere of interest.

Liverpool Culture Company publishes a full guide of events. Copies are distributed at the Tourist office (08 Place in Whitechapel) and at various retail and entertainment outlets. (contacts www.liverpool.com or 233 2008).