



Web site: www.liverpoolheritageforum.org.uk

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A networking organisation of voluntary cultural societies in the Liverpool area. Please send information about your activities to the above email address. Do look at our website.

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GETTING 2008 RIGHT

Ø Jason Harborow is back at work, after a period of sick leave, as Chief Executive of the Culture Company and therefore head of the preparations for 2008. We wish him well but have to say that if he is to regain the confidence of the people of Liverpool he will have to do better than previously. It's not just about the cancellation of the Mathew Street Festival. It's also about what I have heard described by several insiders as "the mess" in Millennium House, the failure to answer letters and the failure to really capture the enthusiasm of the people so as to get the city as a whole, not just officials, ready to make 2008 the splendid show which it deserves to be. We are constantly exhorted by people in high places to be positive and supportive. They should not need to be told that the most of the people are eager to be supportive and will be supportive - once they can see something to be supportive of! The programme of events has some wonderful events in it. We are optimistic that Phil Redmond will make this come right. What is now needed is for the city to look clean and "en fête" - there is some distance to go to get this right.

Ø BBC Manchester has confirmed that a planned programme investigating Liverpool Culture Company's handling of 2008 has been dropped. The Panorama programme was originally understood to be scheduled to go on air before the end of the year and the ongoing BBC investigation had led to a variety of rumours about the programme's possibly damaging content. No reason for the abrupt cancellation has been given, although a BBC spokesperson did suggest that programme may be revived later.

Suggestions that the programme may have criticised the management of the city's efforts had created anxiety among the city's businesses and other stakeholders who hoped to profit from the PR boost which 2008 should provide. It was feared that adverse publicity may damage the prestige of the city and the event.

(Ed: Liverpool needs to sort out its problems itself and does not need sniping at by the BBC, which although notionally a national service mainly looks at things from a London point of view. Now, if we had a tithe of the public money being lavished on the London Olympics, things would be different!).

Ø The Chamber of Commerce has been active in promoting 2008 in its magazine, on its website and in talks by its officers. It has succeeded in attracting the British Chambers of Commerce national conference to the city in 2008, the first time it has been out of London for many years. Keynote speakers will be Lord Digby Jones, Sir Terence Leahy and one or possibly more senior Ministers and their opposition counterparts. This is certainly putting Liverpool on the map.

There remains the question of whose responsibility it is to “dress” the city and make it tourist friendly - flags, flowers, “welcome” signs, facilities for using euros and dollars, continuing the improvement in street cleaning until acceptable standards are reached and dealing with dereliction and dirt on private as well as public properties. While the prime responsibility for this is with Liverpool Culture Company, individual retailers, banks, restaurants, bars and other businesses have a duty to the city and to their own profit and loss accounts to play an active part in this. I went into a retailer in Church Street the other day and asked what contact the manager had received about preparing for 2008. The answer: “none” - but he made a note in his diary to do something. What is the Culture Company doing? It is to be hoped that the Chamber of Commerce will continue to nag them into action.

“What has all this to do with Liverpool Heritage Forum?”, you may ask. The answer is that we want visitors to enjoy our heritage and culture so that they will return and encourage other visitors to come here. This will be good for the city’s economy and employment market generally and should increase the funding available to conserving and displaying our heritage and culture. A stay in a city is judged by all aspects of the visit, not just the museums or the concerts.

Ø The Forum hears that passengers arriving in Liverpool on cruise ships are often taken straight off on visits to Manchester and Chester. This is very sad from Liverpool’s point of view. The Forum is therefore working on a simple guide to Liverpool from the heritage point of view and a walking tour which the tourists could undertake if they so desire. The number of people on cruise ships coming here will increase greatly in 2008.

AT THE TOP END OF TOWN

Ø The area where Abercromby Square and Falkner Square are situated were once there was an area of marshy ground called the Moss Lake, which drained into the inland end of the Pool of Liverpool behind World Museum Liverpool. The most important present occupants of this site are the University of Liverpool and the Metropolitan (Roman Catholic) Cathedral.

Ø The University of Liverpool has a programme of celebrations for 2008, which are shown on its website. The centrepiece will be the opening in July 2008 of the Victoria Gallery and Museum which will see the opening to the public of the iconic Victoria Building. The building, in Brownlow Hill, was designed by Alfred Waterhouse. Decorations were by Brindley & Farmer, a London firm of decorative craftsmen. This was the original red brick university and demonstrated Waterhouse’s “high gothic” that saw him dubbed ‘Slaughterhouse Waterhouse’. The landmark clocktower (with chimes) was paid for by public subscription to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887, though the building was completed only in 1892. William Farmer (1823–79) and

William Brindley (1832-1919), produced much of the carving for Sir George Gilbert Scott, Giles Gilbert Scott's grandfather, including his Albert Memorial, London (1875).

Ø At the Metropolitan Cathedral a lift and passage are being put in to enable people to get from the main (1960s) building to the Lutyens Lady Chapel without going out of doors. The Lady Chapel was the only part of the grand design of Lutyens which would have seen a vast cathedral built, a project abandoned for reasons of cost and replaced by the more modest but still monumental concrete building that we now enjoy.

Ø Also in the area of the Moss Lake and today near the south east corner of Abercromby Square and its junction with Chatham Street is a hexagonal pillar box of the 1866 design by John Penfold, cast by Cochrane, Grove & Company of Dudley. A nationally uniform pillar box was first introduced in 1859, later a more attractive design was sought and the Penfold was introduced in 1866. It is hexagonal with acanthus decoration and is surmounted by an acorn. It came in three sizes and would at first have been painted green. From 1874 onwards all post boxes, old & new, were painted red. More recently, from 1989 onwards, replicas of this design have sometimes been placed in appropriate or historically sensitive sites but this is an original.

Ø At the other end of Hope Street, a small drama has been played out as regards the organ of the Anglican Cathedral. Some months ago the organ in London's Albert Hall was re-opened after a period of refurbishment - and enlargement, making it larger than the organ in Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral, up to then the largest in Britain. This Newsletter forecast that the Liverpool Cathedral authorities were unlikely to be comfortable with this development. On 4 December this year the New Dean (Justin Welby) at his service of installation said that additional pipes had been added to the Liverpool organ and that it was now once again the biggest in the land. What a pity that the biggest of Liverpool Cathedral's bells is second to the biggest bell in London's St Paul's Cathedral. Could anything be done about this? Probably not!

CAMPAIGNING

Ø A website has been set up for the 'Friends of Anfield Cemetery'.

Ø A campaign continues to emphasise that Liverpool is in Lancashire. No legislation has ever altered the boundaries of England's traditional counties, only administrative counties were affected by the changes to local government areas in 1974. Lancashire Day November 27th is celebrated each year to commemorate the date in 1295 when the first elected representatives from Lancashire were summoned to Westminster by Edward I. The representatives for the Borough of Liverpool were Adam fil' Ricardi and Robertus Pynklowe. The day is also celebrated to remind people that Lancashire still stretches from the River Mersey in the south to the River Duddon and the west bank of Windermere in the north. It is still the custom at all official dinners in Liverpool to make the Loyal Toast to "The Queen, Duke of Lancaster", thereby acknowledging Liverpool's identity as a part of the traditional, historic and geographical county of Lancashire. See website www.forl.co.uk or telephone 0151 928 2770.

Ø Plans are afoot to fit bronze heads to some of the Melly drinking fountains. These are a particular feature of Liverpool, especially in the dock area of the city. Melly sought to offer dockers and others a source of liquid refreshment other than beer and the water in

horse troughs. Contributions will be welcomed by the Friends of Liverpool Monuments. (See their website).

CONSTRUCTIONS

Ø St John's market, established as a result of King John's charter of 1207 is to be moved to a new site within the St John's Centre and close to Williamson Square. A little while ago, the council's planning committee approved what will be the UK's biggest media wall, 90 metres by 11 metres, which will have a screen on which adverts will be the blank Lime Street end of the Centre.

Ø The Echo Arena, Liverpool and Liverpool Culture Company has issued an invitation to a special event taking place at the new arena on Friday 4th January 2008. The invitation will provide an opportunity to be amongst the first to step inside the new Echo Arena on the Liverpool waterfront - one of the most impressive new entertainment venues in Europe. The event will start at 6.00 p.m, will run for approximately 1 hour and doors will open at 4.30 p.m. Ask for complementary tickets from the ACC Liverpool Box Office on 0844 8000 400 and quote AMB08 or book online at www.accliverpool.com/whatson/amb08.

Ø The Superlambanana is to be moved from Wapping (the Dock Road) to a new site in Tithebarn Street outside the Avril Roberts Learning Centre (part of John Moores University). During 2008 a competition will be organised in all art forms - from painting to mosaics, sound and video and poetry to photography. Whatever the medium, participation is invited from professional artists and enthusiastic amateurs, artist groups, young people, set designers, photographers. The event will take place over the ten-week period from 16th June to 25th August 2008 and is expected to attract thousands of visitors as well as encourage residents to become 'tourists in their own city'. After the event many of the Superlambananas will be auctioned with 75% of the proceeds going to the Lord Mayor's Charity Appeal for 2008/9. Contact Vanessa@wildinart.co.uk

Ø Submissions for the John Moores exhibition at The Walker are due in February. Top prize is £25,000.

PUBLICATIONS

Ø Works about the Liverpool Scottish Regiment are available Major I.L. Riley at The Shambles, 51a Common Lane, Culcheth, Warrington WA3 4EY. These include a softback reprint of the original (1930) regimental history "The Liverpool Scottish 1900-1919" by Colonel AM McGilchrist (£15 plus £3 postage and packing in the UK), a 48 page A5 format "Brief History of the Liverpool Scottish 1859-2006" by Dennis Reeves (£6 by post.) and 'Special Service of a Hazardous Nature: The Story of the Liverpool Scottish Involvement in Special Operations in WW2' compiled by Dennis Reeves (£12.49 inc p&p). Cheques payable to Liverpool Scottish Museum Trust.

Andrew Pearce, Editor