



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

Notices of forthcoming events should be sent to us on zoom2222@btinternet.com.

Previous editions of our Newsletter can be seen on our web site: www.liverpoolheritageforum.org.uk

NEWSLETTER

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THE CITY GOES FESTIVE

☰☪☰ Midsummer is upon us and at last the city is looking as though something important is taking place. Large crowds welcomed the opening of the Liverpool One shopping complex. There are banners in several places - particularly effective outside the Roman Catholic Cathedral - and several large unused buildings are wrapped in decorative "08" jackets. There are some good flower displays. Merseyrail has four trains wrapped in exotic "08" vinyl and the "08" symbol is displayed on several more. The crazy lambananas are all over the city. Lime Street station bids visitors welcome and there are big farewell signs on the Wallasey Tunnel. There continues to be a very full series of "08" events at the Cathedrals and other venues and these are well supported. There has been a large amount of publicity about Liverpool in the media. The Klimt exhibition was advertised in the principal newspaper in Barcelona and the city has featured in journals such as "Modern Railways" and the members' periodical of the Mensa Society.

☰☪☰ There are still a few small but very noticeable blemishes. The pedestrian tunnel under Lime Street desperately needs spring cleaning. The carpet in the enquiry office at Lime Street station is torn and dirty. And why have the city's shops and offices done virtually nothing to look festive?

☰☪☰ Congratulations to those who have put on the events and spruced up much of the city. And to those who could have helped but haven't: "Come on!. Do your bit!"

☰☪☰ We hear more and more complaints about the negative comments made by showbiz people who were born in Liverpool and trade off the fact but who go on mocking the city as though we were still in the dark days of the 1970s and 1980s. Jimmy Tarbuck and Ringo Starr come to mind. Alexei Sayle has now joined this unloved crew. Why can't they join in the new resurgent spirit in the city? Les Dennis in his television interview was positive. Let's hope that Cilla Black can strike the right note in her pantomime at the Empire later on. Nobody pretends that all of the city's problems are over, especially given the credit crunch and all that, but much has changed and it has changed for the better.

AROUND TOWN

☰☪☰ The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, Patrick Kelly, complete with crook and wearing a fluorescent yellow jerkin, led a walk from St Nicholas Church to his Cathedral via the statue of Father Nugent (1822-1905), the Liverpoolian who founded the Nugent Care Society. The walk passed by the site in Copperas Hill where

Liverpool's first Roman Catholic Cathedral (pro-Cathedral to give it its proper title) was located. A plaque fixed to the Royal Mail building there marks the location.

≡08≡ The Victorian Society is preparing a list of the top ten most endangered Victorian and Edwardian buildings in England and Wales. This will be published in the autumn as a powerful way of directing the spotlight on major buildings under serious threat, and of planning our own campaigns. They welcome suggestions, with photographs if possible, at community@victoriansociety.org.uk or by telephone on 020 8747 5897.

≡08≡ A BBC producer (charlotte.evans@bbc.co.uk or 02920 323 232) is seeking information about family links between Wales and Liverpool.

≡08≡ We have been asked whether there any plans to reprint "Buildings of Liverpool" by the Heritage Bureau. Any answers?

≡08≡ We referred recently to a version of the Liverpool coat of arms displayed on a building in New York. A reader draws attention to Liverpool (Anglican) diocesan coat of arms, slightly different again. We wonder how many versions of the Liver Bird there are around. There seems to have been a flock of them!

≡08≡ Pauline Gashinski has sent in some information about Randall Kay Williams (1846-1898). He was born at 54 St Martin Street, Liverpool. He was the proprietor of a Ghost Illusion Show for twenty three years before becoming the first travelling showman to present moving pictures in a fairground show, in late 1896. He presented "Pepper's Ghost" at the 1897 Victorian Era Exhibition, Earl's Court, London for the summer season. Liverpool venues included his appearance in December 1874 at the opening of Pembroke Hall.

≡08≡ Liverpool Central Library has unveiled a multimillion pound plan to extensively refurbish the 158-year-old building. Council officials say that they have struggled to find builders prepared to undertake the complicated task of remodeling the grade II*-listed library leaving the scheme in limbo. Now they have gone back to the drawing board and come up with a project which will mean much of the city centre premises being demolished and rebuilt, instead of just being renovated. Extensions at the back of the library, built in the 1950s and 1970s, will be bulldozed and replaced with modern reading, lending, computing and audio areas. The city's priceless archives will be moved into a purpose-built genealogy centre, called Liverpool Memories, making it more accessible than ever. The Picton reading room and mothballed international library will be refurbished. Liverpool's library, the older part at least, is worthy of recognition as a tourist attraction in its own right.

≡08≡ This newsletter has referred in the past to the rumour that Hitler lived in Liverpool from November 1912 to April 1913, around the time he moved from Vienna to Munich. The experts say the story is incorrect but it persists. A reader of this newsletter, Peter Miller (peterclare35@aol.com) now asks whether it is true that Hitler studied at Liverpool College. We don't know but think that if there is any truth in the story that Hitler was ever

in Liverpool, it is more likely that he was at Liverpool Art School. He aspired after all to be an artist (not a house painter). In 2006, 21 works "attributed" to Hitler were sold at auction for £118,000, having been found in a Belgian attic. The BBC Liverpool website now reports (4 July 2008) that a play entitled "Little Willy" by Mark Kassen, first shown in New York two years ago, is to appear in London's West End. It's about Hitler's nephew William Patrick Hitler who grew up in Toxteth in the early 20th century, living at 102 Upper Stanhope Street (which was bombed in World War II). William's father Alois Hitler, the half-brother of Adolf, had married an Irish girl called Bridget Dowling. Alois and Bridget had met at a horse fair in Ireland before eloping to London and marrying and finally settled in Liverpool. The Liverpool branch of the Hitler family ran different businesses including a boarding house and a restaurant. The couple had one child, William Patrick Hitler born on March 12th 1911. When his uncle rose to power in Germany, William moved to this country and later to America. Local legend has it that Hitler drank in the Poste House pub in Cumberland Street in Liverpool. Your Editor visited this establishment late one afternoon in the cause of historical research and was shown the corner seat which Hitler is said to have occupied. But it has to be admitted that even if there is any truth in the rest of the story, this part of it should be put down to good ale and scouse humour rather than hard fact! Has anyone any info about all this?

PRIDE OR SELF CRITICISM?

☰☰ Controversy has continued about words in this newsletter and elsewhere about the way Liverpool's history as a major slave trading port is portrayed. Laurence Westgaph and Ron Noon have taken up the cudgels in the newspapers, reinforcing the public memory about the evils perpetrated by some of our ancestors two hundred years ago. They are entitled to their views and their condemnation of what was done to Africans is shared by all right-thinking people. The point made here is that the two celebratory years, 2007 and 2008, are a once-off opportunity to give the outside world a better impression of the city than it has had in recent years. This is working and will, within the context of the national economic situation, help to bring jobs and prosperity to the city. So, while not trying to hide anything in our history, let us show pride in the good things in the city's past - there are many of them - and cut down on the self criticism. There are many aspects of Liverpool's wealth of outstanding people and achievements that receive remarkably little acclaim in the city. Roscoe, Nugent, Wilkinson, Gladstone, Frank Hornby and many others, if they had lived elsewhere, would have been given a much higher profile than they have here. Let's hope that in the forthcoming Cultural Strategy for post 2008, these matters receive attention.

Andrew Pearce, Edition