



LIVERPOOL HERITAGE FORUM

A network of voluntary cultural societies in the Liverpool area.

Email address: info@liverpoolheritageforum.org.uk Website: www.liverpoolheritageforum.org.uk

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NEWSLETTER

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THE FORUM

The Forum is preparing to adopt a formal structure. A constitution is being drafted and steps are in hand to hold an inaugural general meeting in October at which the constitution would be adopted, officers elected and the (very modest) level of subscriptions decided. The proposal means that the Forum, to be known as Liverpool Cultural Heritage Forum, would be run according to the wishes of the societies and individuals paying subscriptions. The Newsletter and, of course, the website, would continue to be available free of charge to anyone with a computer. These preparations are being made in full consultation with the City Council and taking advice from Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services and the Charity Commission.

NEWS

~~ The Civic Trust which, among other things, ran the Heritage Open Days, has gone into administration, after losing the contract to run the Green Flag Award scheme for parks. While, thankfully, English Heritage has taken on the job of organising Heritage Open Days, what will happen to the Trust's other functions is not clear, there being, to our knowledge, at least two bodies seeking to fill the gap, both of them being in North West England. It is important that any successor body provides services which are in reality useful and that its activities are not dominated by or confined to the London area.

~~ We were pleased to hear that on the recent Armed Forces Day, Liverpool displayed the red ensign, (the flag of the merchant navy) as well as the Royal Navy's white ensign, in recognition of the large number of Merseysiders who lost their lives in World War II.

~~ Liverpool Biennial announce that its 2008 Festival demonstrated its place as the UK's largest international contemporary visual arts festival by attracting 451,000 visitors creating an economic impact of £26.6m.

~~ You may have seen in the paper about the theft of a bust of Lord Leverhulme from the United Reformed Church in Port Sunlight. This followed the recent total smashing of a monument nearby. It is sad to have to say it but those who care for treasures which are not inside buildings are going to have to take additional steps to protect those of their treasures which are not inside buildings against both vandals and thieves. This, among other things, makes the work of those seeking to make churches open to the public for both religious and heritage reasons (such as the North West Multi Faith Tourism Association and the new Culture Heritage, Arts and Tourism Group set up in Liverpool Anglican Diocese), all the more difficult.¹

~~ The new departure lounges on platform 7 at Lime Street station, for passengers on Virgin trains, war opened a few weeks ago. Statues of Ken Dodd and Bessy Braddock, the formidable Labour party campaigner of the 1940s were unveiled on the concourse. Highly commendable but the statues are a little but *diddy*.

THE EDITOR WRITES

~~ *We hear that Hamilton Square in Birkenhead is on English Heritage's list of "Listed" buildings at risk. Does Wirral Council, which now, according to the press, apparently recognises the drawing power of Liverpool's cultural heritage, want to preserve its heritage or not? We would love to be told. We would print a short statement on this form the Council if they send us one.*

~~ *We do not usually "plug" purely commercial events but, given the paucity of opera in Liverpool, we draw attention to the performance by Welsh National Opera of Verdi's La Traviata on 21 October at the Empire. As*

¹ Those who protect our Churches against normal decay, theft and vandalism also have to contend with lightning strikes. St Michael's, Aughton, was struck by lightning the other day, putting its phone out of action. We were told the building's lightning conductor saved it from substantial .

they say, “use it or lose it”. Also advertised is the Opera Gala on 14 November at Clonter Opera near Congleton (info: 01260 224514)

~~ We reported earlier that there is a proposal to locate a branch of Covent Garden Opera in Manchester. Better for us than having to go to London! Now we hear that there is discontent about this within the Manchester political world, something to do with competition for Salford Quays. Well now, Manchester, if you don't want it, we'll have here!

~~ Rob Ainsworth, our IT man who sends out the Newsletter and maintains our website, has had problems with his beloved (?) computer. He tells me of Putt's law which says “Technology is dominated by two type of people: those who understand what they do not manage and those who manage what they do not understand”. There's a lot to be said for good old fashioned paper isn't there? Except that of course there would be no free Liverpool Heritage Forum Newsletter if it were not for email.

THIS AND THAT

~~ Most Christian churches lie east to west, with the main altar at the eastern end. The thinking behind this is that sunrise is a daily reminder of Christ's resurrection. Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral is an exception to this, due to the lie of the rocky outcrops on which it is built. It was the tradition that the direction of the first rays of the sun at dawn on the day of the saint to whom a church was dedicated were noted as the east – west line to be followed in building the church. A related tradition is that at funerals the coffin is placed with the foot facing the west door, except in the case of clergy where the foot faces east. Many churches have lichgates at the entrance of the church yard. Tradition required that coffin bearers should not enter the church year until the priest came to meet them. The lichgate was provided as a shelter while they waited for the vicar.

~~ Lovers of silver should visit the crypt of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, which now displays magnificent examples of Church silver. Entrance via the main Cathedral.

~~ The Cheshire Ancestor, journal of Cheshire Family History Society (which covers Wirral) had an article about the somewhat bewildering laws governing the sale of alcohol. (Info: mandnicholls@waitrose.com) Your editor has a dim memory that music was banned in Liverpool pubs during World War II and that musical drinkers went outside the city limits to carousers. The ending if the ban coincided with (caused?) the flourishing of music in city pubs in the Beatles era. Have you any information about this?

~~ The summer of 2010 sees the 150th anniversary of the opening of Europe's first tramway, in Birkenhead, by the American entrepreneur George Francis Train. A series of events to mark this is being planned by Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society (info: 0151 708 5939 or 0151 6399 0547)

~~ Some people may be surprised at the varied uses to which the Anglican Cathedral is put, which include fashion shows, student registration and now corporate dining. But the tradition is not new. Worship of Christ has always been focused in the chancel, the part of the building nearest the altar. The nave in medieval cathedrals was often blocked off from the chancel by a large stone or wooden “rood” screen, carrying a cross or crucifix and was traditionally used for wider and more general purposes. In Old St Paul's Cathedral in London, this included not only the sale but the brewing of beer. I am sure we will resist such undesirable London customs up here.

~~ Did you now that local authorities have a duty to ensure that places of special architectural or historical interest are protected? This includes the designation of Conservation Areas. English Heritage and Civic Societies or Civic Trusts are involved in the consultations which arise.

~~ The North West Development Agency has appointed a new Director Tourism, Nick Brooks-Sykes

MERSEYSIDE IN WRITING

~~ We wrote recently of renewed interest in John Laird, Birkenhead shipbuilder. We now find a poem which reads “John Laird is dead. He lies in his grave. His shipyard's dying for want of the brave. Sing again, chime again, for England's renown, for King was John Laird in our town. (Is it true that the term “whacker” refers to Birkenhead men, derived from whacking rivets into the hulls of ships built there? Any other versions?)

~~ National Museums Liverpool are selling copies of the annual bulletin and report for 1975-76 at the very reasonable price of 50p. (Though maybe not so reasonable bearing in mind the fall in the value of money since then). It includes photos of the paintings by Whistler, the American artist, of Speke Hall, by Joseph Nash of the Great Chamber at Speke Hall, of Mr Tate of Toxteth Hall (said to be by William Tate), of the Waterloo Cup by Richard Ansdell and "photos of photos" of the 1888 Liverpool Autumn Exhibition including *Captive Andromeda* by Lord Leighton and of the Hanging Committees for the Autumn Exhibitions of 1877 and 1891. (For hanging the pictures not the management of the gallery!)

~~ "The Liverpool Magazine" of January 1816 had a piece about a certain Hildebrand Hotspur who had inherited a lot of money from a deceased relative. Its introduction waxed lyrical about the town (not a city until 1880). "It was midnight and most of the inhabitants of the busy town of Liverpool had retired to repose. I do not mean to insinuate that in this good and loyal town the nocturnal rites of either Bacchus or the Cyprian Divinity were neglected. Many a tavern parlour was still clouded with the smoke of the Virginian herb and many a wandering beauty ready to direct the steps of the staggering passenger." Sounds a bit like Lime Street on a Saturday night in 2009 apart from today's ban on smoking - though more elegantly expressed than most of today's' journalists could manage.

~~ John Kerrigan has written a book called *A Bowl of Scouse*. Twenty five separate stories as varied and fascinating as the City of Liverpool itself. Info: john-kerrigan@blueyonder.co.uk or www.bowlofscouse.co.uk Price: £7.99

~~ Liverpool Vision produces a glossy periodical of building developments in the city. Among current plans are an 18 storey office block in Pall Mall (there are hopes of attracting a major government department as a tenant) and the £160m Central Village over Central station for which planning permission has been given. Whether Network Rail will go ahead with their revamp of the train station remains to be seen.

EVENTS

~~ We do not yet have full information about this year's Heritage Open Days but we do know that St Francis Xavier's Church, off Shaw Street in Everton will be open daily from 9am until 4pm from Friday 11th – Sunday 20th September. Vestments and church plate from their fine collections will be on display. Stonyhurst College's copy of Henry VIII's Defence of the Seven Sacraments, St Thomas More's cross and St John Fisher's signet ring will also displayed. Refreshments will be available. Further details from: www.sfxchurchliverpool.com

~~ The Merchant Navy Day service on Sunday 6th September at ST Nicholas Church is at 12 noon followed at 1.p.m. at the memorial at Pier Head (not at 1.15 as we stated in an earlier News letter).

~~ The Friends of Liverpool University have their AGM at 5.30 on Saturday 5 September. A bus tour of the city for alumni has been arranged for that day. The Liverpool Dental Alumni Association have their annual dinner on Saturday 3 October.

~~ Liverpool Geological Society (lgsjoecrossley@hotmail.com) has a presidential address on 6 October and a talk by Peter Crimes on 20 November on "Early life on earth".

~~ The 5th National Conference on the future of culture and sport takes place in London on 17 September (Contact 0207 324 4330). Many big names will be present. Attendance costs £599 but there is a special rate for voluntary organisations of £276.

~~ The Centenary Exhibition of the School of Civic Design at the Victoria Gallery opened on 3 July and remains open until the end of November. This was the first such school in the world and was opened with the support of William Lever and Charles Reilly, Professor of Architecture.

~~ You are cordially invited to the "From Oakfiends to Iron Men" film premiere being held at FACT, Liverpool, on the 17th July 2009. The red carpeted premiere which will begin at 9:30am, will showcase a "Dr Who" inspired animation produced by a group of learners from the Oakfield Day Centre, Liverpool. The group of adults who have a range of disabilities will become "film stars" for the day after participating in the Culture Of Arts project run by the WEA Northwest Region. There will also be an opportunity to network with the learners and partners through an exhibition, which was produced during the project to showcase the learners' work. The project was in partnership with Merseytravel and supported by Radio Merseyside and the Liverpool Culture

Company. More information on the 'Culture Of Arts' project on website www.cultureofarts.co.uk. Info/booking: Alex Whittle on 0151 243 5353, awhittle@wea.org.uk.

TITBITS

~~ Plenty of information about the origin of Liverpool street names is available. Here are just a few, to whet your appetite. Athol Street was named after the Duke of Athol, on whom an Honorary Freedom was conferred by the Town Council. Bankhall Street was named after the second home of the Moore family, nearby. Bath Street's name derives from the sea-water baths erected about 1765 and demolished in 1817 to make way for Princes Dock.

~~ We are asked to note that the correct means of contact with the Liverpool & SW Lancs Family History Society is <http://www.liverpool-genealogy.org.uk/info.htm>

~~ Other new or revised links are:

<http://www.liverpooltelly.com/>, which features contemporary popular culture.

<http://wirralheritage.org.uk/> Wirral History and Heritage Association.

~~ We have been asked who was with William Huskisson on his visit to the Liverpool & Manchester Railway in 1830 when he was killed. We now that Prince Esterhazy, the Austrian Ambassador and Earls Gower and Brecknock were there. We also know that Bamber Gascoyne, MP for Liverpool and ancestor of the man of the same name who featured on University Challenge was in the carriage with Huskisson and that when Huskisson saw the Duke of Wellington he rose to leave the carriage to greet him. Gascoyne out of politeness opened the carriage door for him and said "After you, Sir". Huskisson obliged, stepped down on to the track and was hit by "Rocket" locomotive. (Info from the National Railway Museum and Rob Ainsworth).

~~ An American reader tells us that when he was a child in Liverpool, one of the city's largest stores boasted a very large parrot hanging from its glass ceiling. He would like to know the name of the store. If you know, please email us the answer.

Andrew Pearce, Editor