

Liverpool Cultural Heritage Forum

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NEWSLETTER NO 4

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NEWS

+^+ Angus Tilston of Bebington has received an MBE for services to the historical film industry.

+^+ Councillor Bernie Turner, Liverpool City Council's cabinet member for appeared on BBC's Mastermind on 20 November. She answered questions about the Twilight novels of Stephanie Meyer. Although Bernie did not get through to the next round, it was a good effort and nice to see Liverpool represented in such a context.

+^+ At a recent Roscoe lecture in St George's Hall (1,000 people present) Colonel Paddy Bryson, 96, was presented with a Good Citizen Award by Liverpool John Moores University. He used to be a judge and was the only British judge to be shot in his own court room. Sir Michael Jackson gave the lecture itself on the current needs and achievements of the British army.

+^+ Last month we made critical reference to a conference on heritage with a cut price(!) charge of £200 a ticket for private individuals. The conference was subsequently cancelled!

+^+ St James Church in Upper Parliament Street has, in response to public debate, changed plans to build a new building over old graves. The church is being brought back into regular use after being out of commission for 30 years. Services currently take place in a marquee inside the church, protecting the heads of worshippers from water or plaster dropping from the ceiling.

+^+ Giant coloured glass panels are to be erected outside the Metropolitan Cathedral to designate the space around the building, in completion of a decade of improvements such as the external steps and the piazza.

+^+ Liverpool Shakespeare Festival is looking for serious sponsorship of its performance this summer. Info: <http://tlsf.blogspot.com>

+^+ St Helens now counts as a town which attracts day visitors and is looking to develop its appeal alongside the now considerable tourist appeal of Liverpool. Liverpool's success helps the cultural ambitions of Liverpool's neighbours and their success helps Liverpool.

+^+ A strategy paper for the visitor economy of Liverpool City Region puts the area's ambition and achievements forward strongly. It is published by The Mersey Partnership (0151 227 2727).

+^+ After several years when cruise ships could call at Liverpool but cruises could not start from the city, it is good to see that Newmarket Travel are advertising cruises (to Norway and round the British Isles) which can be boarded at Liverpool.

+^+ You can adopt an organ pipe at Liverpool Cathedral for between £2 and £50. Which pipe you adopt, or rather the sound that it makes, is something of a test of how you view yourself – are you a trumpet-like person, a vibrato person, a deep bass or a shrill piccolo person?

+^+ Merseyside Civic Society is considering plans submitted for the ambitious redevelopment of the area above and behind the train tracks at Central Station. There are separate plans for the areas specifically used by the trains and their passengers.

+^+ “John Foster & Sons: Kings of Liverpool” by Hugh Hollinghurst (published by Liverpool History Society) details the impact which this family had on the city and how their output of John Junior was influenced by his visits to the ruins of ancient Greece. John Foster Senior and his son John held the office of Surveyor of Liverpool Corporation for 47 years continuously. They were involved in engineering, public administration, manufacturing and the law as well as designing buildings. John Senior was so powerful that he was known as the King of Liverpool and had a virtual stranglehold on the approval and financing of many building projects in the city. St Luke’s and St Andrew’s Churches, the Oratory by the Cathedral, and various monuments in St James’ Gardens were by John Junior and the Rotunda in Abercromby Square by John Senior.

+^+ It seems that the refurbishment and alteration of the Grade II Central Library building is to go ahead. The building and its contents are more than a place to borrow books but a major information resource and a monument to Victorian municipal and philanthropic achievement.

+^+ The rector of St Nicholas Church, by the Pier Head, has exhibited a Victorian gold leaf plaque commemorating a 19th century Liverpool clergyman, Jonathan Brooks, and signed by every vicar in the area. It is back in the city after being found in an antique shop in Sussex.

+^+ A recent BBC2 show recalled that two battle ships were stationed in the Mersey and two battalions of troops paraded through the streets of Liverpool during the general strike of 1926, in an effort to deter militant strikers following Britain’s resumption of the gold standard and the unemployment which followed it.

COMING EVENTS

+^+ Sefton Park Palm House’s events:

- Tues 9 Feb (2 pm). Tea Dance. £3.50 on the door or on 0151 726 9304.
- Fri 12 Feb (1.15). Liverpool College Lunchtime Concert ‘My Favourite Things’. Free.
- Sun 14 Feb (2 pm). Valentine’s Concert. Met Cathedral Cantata Choir. Free.
- Sun 7 Mar (2 pm). Maghull Wind Orchestra concert of music from stage and screen. Free. Refreshments on sale.
- Tues 9 Mar (2 pm). Tea Dance amidst the Palms. £3.50 admission on the door but better to book on 0151 726 9304
- Fri 12 Mar (7 pm). Salsa Dancing Evening - the Latin Experience. £7. Book on 0151 726 9304 or www.wegotickets.com/event/67845

+^+ Birkenhead Park News, (glossy and paid for by public funds, unlike this Newsletter!) advertises a range of events in the Park. Info birkenheadpark@wirral.gov.uk

+^+ At the Walker: The Rise of Women Artists (Until 14 March). The work of pioneering women artists, featuring work by Lavinia Fontana, Fiona Rae and Paula Rego.

+^+ A Conference on Commemorative Plaques will be held at RIBA in London 18 – 19 Feb. It will bring together many different types of organisations all involved in putting up plaques. Speakers and panellists from Manchester, Bath, Coventry, Newcastle, Brighton, Norwich, Liverpool, Leeds and London will be there. The full two-day conference costs £95 per person. Info: email conference@sam-culture.com or call 01273 882112.

+^+ There will be a seminar on Liverpool internships in the Cultural sector on 13th Jan 2010, 4:30-6:00pm. Info: kerrypickard@cityoflearning.org.uk or Kush.Thakar@liverpoolchamber.org.uk
This is part of efforts by Culture Campus Liverpool to attract and retain young talent in the city.

+^+ The Friends of the Anglican Cathedral have two trips this summer, to Cartmel Priory in June to Ripon Cathedral in September. The Friends have been helping with the cataloguing of thousands of documents and drawings about the construction of the Cathedral.

+^+ The “Two Rivers” festival continues at Birkenhead School. A piano concert (5 February) and organ and bass solo pieces by Bach, Handel and Purcell (2 March) are planned.

+^+ Clonter Opera (near Congleton) has an “Opera Showcase for Emerging Artists” on 17 April. (Info:01260 224514). (*This is far away from Liverpool but there is so little opera inside Liverpool, thanks to the way the public subsidies work, that we think it deserves mention.. Ed*)

NEWSHAM PARK

The Royal Seaman’s Orphanage on Newsham Park has been derelict for over 20 years. It had strong links with the maritime industry. With the Pier Head, the focal point of the city’s maritime history, now being a World Heritage Site, action should be taken to safeguard and refurbish this magnificent building. An Association has been set up to bring this about and an Action Plan has been prepared.

In April 1870, Liverpool City Council gave a plot of land in the north east of Newsham Park for an orphanage. On 11 September 1871, the foundation stone was laid by Ralph Brocklebank and in 1874, 114 children moved into the new orphanage which was opened by Queen Victoria’s fourth son, the Duke of Edinburgh.

On 12th May 1886, Queen Victoria visited the Orphanage in 1886 and became its Patron, as a result of which it was granted the title “Royal”. In World War Two, the children were evacuated. It was decided in 1949 that the orphanage no longer served a current need and it was closed but in 1951 it became a hospital, retaining this role till 1988, since when it has been unused.

Newsham Park itself was one of the first Victorian Parks in Liverpool and was based on designs by Edward Kemp. It had an aviary of exotic birds until the 1930’s and also a band stand, a boating lake, a fishing lake, five fountains and three bowling greens. It has two listed buildings in it, Newsham House and the Seaman’s Orphanage. Newsham House was built at the end of the 18th century by Thomas Molyneux. In 1868, it was bought by Liverpool Corporation for £80,000 to become the lodgings for judges visiting Liverpool. Queen Victoria stayed there in 1886.

This Landmark site would require Major capital funding just to bring it in line with health and safety standards. The premises could provide for a number of local social and cultural groups. Steve Corcoran (07874 893 431 stevencorcoran@live.co.uk) appeals for support for this project. Thanks to him for the info on which this article is based.

MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES: AN EDITORIAL VIEW

+^+ What exactly is the mission of National Museums Liverpool? The Museums Association website publishes a 1998 definition of a museum as follows: “*Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society*” This definition includes art galleries with collections of works of art as well as museums with historical collections of objects”.

National Museums Liverpool’s website declares: “*We believe that museums are fundamentally educational in purpose*”. It goes on:

“*When it comes to the Museums and Galleries sector we have four main priorities:*

- *Ensuring that children have the opportunity to enjoy a vibrant cultural and sporting life*
- *Opening institutions to the widest possible cross section of people*
- *Ensuring that the creative, leisure and tourist industries provide the maximum possible benefit to the economy*
- *Ensuring our museums and galleries are exciting, modern and provide real value for money*”.

By focusing on these objectives we aim to improve education, social cohesion, regional regeneration, the quality of our institutions and our cultural life”.

The website also describes NML’s mission as follows: “*Our mission: Using all our assets - staff, collections and buildings - NML enables millions of people, from all backgrounds, from the locality and from further afield, to enjoy the benefits of engagement with a world-class museum service.*”

It quotes its values as follows:

- *We believe that museums are fundamentally educational in purpose.*
- *We believe that museums are places for ideas and dialogue that use collections to inspire people.*
- *We are a democratic museum service and we believe in the concept of social justice: we are funded by the whole of the public and in return we strive to provide an excellent service to the whole of the public.*
- *We believe in the power of museums to help promote good and active citizenship, and to act as agents of social change.*
- *We believe in seeking out new opportunities and innovative ways of working, so as to keep our public offer fresh, relevant, challenging and competitive.*

How does the collection and safeguarding of artefacts fit into all this?

+^+ In the past 10 years NML won 17 national awards for education, tourism, architecture and scholarship.

+^+ When the independent Friends of National Museums Liverpool were obliged to wind themselves up, following the withdrawal of co-operation by the management, there were nearly 1,800 Friends. The replacement Members scheme, under the management’s direct control, which NML set up in place of the Friends has so far attracted 778 people to join.

+^+ We are wondering whether the “Lion” steam locomotive which featured in the film “The Titfield Thunderbolt” will be put back in steam for the opening of the new Museum of Liverpool later this year. What a splendid sight it would be. It belongs to National Museums Liverpool but had been in Manchester for many years.

EDITORIAL JOTTINGS

+^+ The New Year’s Day Prom at the Phil had a splendid finale with the bass and tenor soloists clad in Union Flags for the singing of “Land of Hope and Glory”. (The first two of Elgar’s “Pomp and Circumstance” marches had their first performance in Liverpool 1901. London had its first performance of them three days later.) The audience waved Union flags, St George’s flags, a Welsh flag and one Stars and Stripes. (Someone must have misunderstood this display of British patriotism!). No politically correct self restraint here!

+^+ A major milestone in Liverpool’s economic rebirth will be its pavilion at the World Expo in Shanghai this summer. Liverpool will be the only UK city to have its own pavilion. This event is major opportunity to attract investment and tourists to the city. Culture and heritage will feature.

+^+ An editorial visit to Iceland (the land of bankrupt bankers, not the frozen food store) did not produce much evidence of contacts with Merseyside. But there was a vertical laser, the “Imagine Peace Tower”, pointing up into the sky near to Reykjavik in honour of John Lennon.

+^+ Having lustily if tunelessly sung “Hark the herald angels sing” several times over Christmas at the Phil and in the Cathedral, it occurred to me to wonder who wrote it. The words are by the ubiquitous Charles Wesley but the tune is by none other than Felix Mendelssohn.

Andrew Pearce, Editor