

Liverpool Cultural Heritage Forum

Web Site: www.liverpoolheritageforum.org.uk

Email: info@liverpoolheritage.org.uk

NEWSLETTER NO 2

6 November 2009

This is the second issue of the Newsletter since Liverpool Heritage Forum became Liverpool Heritage Forum with a formal constitution and strengthened links with Liverpool City Council. The LCHF Newsletter, issued approximately monthly, continues on the same lines as the earlier 68 editions of the LHF Newsletter. It has an important role. The local weekly free sheets do not cover the sort of ground we cover. The Liverpool edition of the Daily Post has lost 18% of its circulation over the last year now only has a daily circulation of under 12,000. (The Welsh edition, now a separate paper, prints nearly 40,000). The Echo prints nearly 100,000 copies, aimed at an audience which is different from the Post's and our own. Part of the fall in circulation of the Post and other papers is due to the growth of news publishing by internet. Speculation that the Birmingham Post, comparable to the Liverpool Post, may become a weekly instead of a daily paper, may be of interest.

This Newsletter is sent by email to over 1,800 people. Recipients include local Councillors and a few other key people, the rest being people who have expressed interest in the Forum's activities. We are aware that some of the recipients circulate the Newsletter round their address lists, a practice which we encourage. Email us for extra copies.

What we put in the Newsletter is based on what we know. Some societies send us details of their activities. For the most part we search for such information by our own means. Some of the public bodies whom one might expect to want to share information about their activities do so, some do not. The publication of this Newsletter is done by amateurs with limited resources. We can only pass on the information which is available to us.

We are considering publishing, in edited form, selected information about forthcoming activities in the public commercial providers of arts events in the city - not because we have an obligation to do what their own paid staff are able to do but because we realise that a number of people who would patronise events do not receive the necessary information.

SOCIETIES

The Forum will hold a meeting at 6 pm on 30 November in the Byrom Street campus of Liverpool John Moores University at which members of societies will invited to give short presentations of their activities. Such an exchange a couple of years ago proved useful. All are welcome. More details later.
--

Caroline Shipton will sing Spanish songs at St Agnes & St Pancras church in Ullet Road at 7.30 pm on 8 November.

The French club of Liverpool meets at 6 pm on Tuesdays at the Brew Tea Bar in St Paul's Square.

Auditions for "Oliver" are being held at he Gladstone Theatre, Port Sunlight on 8 and 15 November. The performance is in March.

The Liverpool String Orchestra "makes music". Call: 0151 427 3791.

The Friends of the Ancient Chapel of Maghull, next to St Andrew's Church by the A 59, now have a website: www.ancientchapelmaghull.co.uk

Following the demise of the Civic Trust, which used to run heritage open days amongst other things, an organisation called NW ACTS (North West Association of Civic Trusts) has joined Heritage Link which brings together information about what civic societies around the country are doing and maintains contact with relevant government departments about heritage issues. Contact via Merseyside Civic Society or email kate.jones@heritagelink.org.uk

The Gateacre Society has a newsletter and a programme of meetings and organised a number of activities on the recent heritage open days. The society plays an important part in ensuring that the heritage story of Liverpool is not confined to the city centre and recognises the architecture and the history of suburban centres. Contact Rosemary Doman on 0151 722 6368 for general information or Beryl Plent on 428 5379 about local history. See: <http://www.garstonhistoricalsociety.org.uk>

The Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society holds its Santa Special event at Taylor Street, Birkenhead on 19 December. The last tram is at 2.45 pm. This may turn out to be the last such event in view of the cloud hanging over museums in Wirral, where municipal support for culture and tourism - and the jobs they can generate - has a big question mark over it.

The Friends of Real Lancashire are celebrating Lancashire Day on 27th November 2009. A Proclamation will be read out in the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool, at 1.00pm after which it will be read out from the top of Blackpool Tower, weather permitting, by Barry McQueen the Town Crier. As well as quite properly boasting the merits and heritage of the Red Rose County, the Friends chide us when we refer to Merseyside, which we sometimes do when wishing to include Wirral in our comments. The Friends now have another title to combat: Liverpool City Region. If the present government has its way, this City Region, taking in the old Merseyside County, Halton and, in the opinions of some, south west Lancashire and north western Cheshire, may be the basis of future public spending on culture and heritage. Strangely, as far as Merseyside is concerned, there appear to be no public Lancashire Day events in Liverpool and only readings of the day's proclamation, (on 27 November) in Southport (1 pm Scarisbrick Hotel), Formby (3 pm Chapel Lane).

The Daniel Adamson Preservation Society are looking for members to help to preserve this unique vessel which is a tug fitted out with opulent saloons for passengers. Email membership@danieladamson.co.uk This vessel was originally called the *Ralph Brocklebank* but was renamed *Daniel Adamson* in 1936. It is not to be confused with the tug *Brocklebank* elsewhere at Albert Dock.

A recent conference of the British Association of Friends of Museums in York debated the purpose of museums. A write, Kathy Brewis, said "Museums are losing their mystery to gizmos and gimmicks". Referring to a museum in Oxford, she said "it would have a rooftop restaurant and themed galleries. How depressing if another perfectly good institution has succumbed to the trendy trick". Maybe we in Liverpool should keep an eye out for this sort of thing in our own museums.

Stretching "heritage" a little far, we are pleased to note the Daily Post's report of an underwear calendar being sold to support conservation of (wait for it) bears (!) in Canada. An organiser said they had a couple of hiccups during the shooting. Well, that's one reaction to such a display of beauty. Rufford Veterinary Group and the Lancashire Animals Support Group were responsible.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The government (DCMS) website lists the museums under its control. The description of National Museums Liverpool is: "England's only national collection based entirely outside London. Eight unique venues cover everything from social history to space travel, entomology to ethnology, dinosaurs to docks." Whatever happened to the Walker and the Lady Lever?

David Fleming, Director of National Museums Liverpool is President of INTERCOM: International Committee on Management, a cultural organisation. Its website says he has published extensively and lectures on museum management around the world. In July this year he spoke at a conference of the Baltic Museology School in Lithuania. His topics included Managing Change in Museums and Social Inclusion in Museums (Practical Examples from National Museums Liverpool). On 11 November this year he hosts the Stephen Weil Memorial breakfast at a congress at Torr on in Mexico. In 2008 he gave the keynote speech at Rotorua, New Zealand, on Slavery, racism and the abuse of human rights – a fit subject for tourism? In 2007 he spoke at the INTERCOM meeting in Vienna, on Leading creativity, using Liverpool's International Slavery Museum as a case study. In 2006 he was in Vienna, in 2004 in Korea, in 2005 in Prague.

A conference is to take place in Liverpool on 3 December on "Beyond Capital of Culture: A New Dawn for Tourism in Liverpool". Topics include the impact Capital of Culture year has had on increasing tourism in the city, the contribution of tourism to the city and the wider region and the new tourism strategy to promote the city post Capital of Culture, maintaining tourism through the economic downturn and enhancing transport links to Liverpool including the new cruise liner facilities. This is a real "top brass" event. Confirmed speakers are Cllr. Dowd, Chairman Merseytravel, David Fleming, Director of NML, Pam Wilsher, Acting Director Merseyside Tourist Board (TMP), Richard Baker, Liverpool Manager of Virgin Trains, Cllr. Gary Millar, Executive Member for tourism on Liverpool City Council, Claire McColgan, Head of Culture in Culture

Liverpool. Neil Scales CEO of Merseytravel. will be preside. The fee is £401.35 (including VAT). Discount tickets for voluntary organisations £228.85. What kind of a world do these people live in? What voluntary organisations are going to spend their hard earned money on things like this? How many of the volunteers can afford this kind of money. Have the organisers no idea of the contribution made by volunteers? Still, there's probably a good lunch thrown in so maybe the price isn't so bad after all.

The University of Liverpool is set to lose up to £1m a year in funding to maintain some of the city's most iconic buildings. The annual government money is used to ensure 48 of the university's listed sites including the Victoria Building and the former Royal Liverpool Infirmary are safe and their condition does not deteriorate. Meanwhile, The Times (23 October) stated that the University provided dinner and a ticket for a Phil concert to an official of the Government Office for the North West (which helps to oversee public spending on higher education). As this is by no means what we pay our taxes for, it may be possible to save a little money by cutting down on this type of largesse.

The City Council's regeneration committee held a discussion about the renewal of north Liverpool. The Peel Holdings plan to build apartments along the north docks could result in creating a residential area physically separated from the adjacent areas by the dock wall. The idea of making new entrances into the dock estate was discussed. The area is already "cut-off" by the Leeds Street dual carriageway and the "motorway" that part of Scotland Road has become, thanks to 1960s planning decision putting the needs of the car ahead of the needs of residents. The committee meeting was attended by some Chinese students of the University of Liverpool and two five foot tall white plastic penguins. The penguins are part of a consignment 145 which will shortly grace parts of the city together with 115 smaller ones mainly for schools. These follow the very popular lambananas which remain one of the most talked-about features of the Year of Culture. In a discussion on City finances, the proportion of houses in the A and B community charge brackets in Liverpool, higher than in many cities, is one reason for strain in the municipal budget and a matter to be addressed in the planning of new residential areas. An officer made the point that to attract jobs and income into the city (and to stem what may or may not be a population which fails to grow in line with that of other cities, depending on which experts you listen to) making the city an attractive place to live and work in is a key point.

The first week of November saw a Core Cities conference on Liverpool. The city is one of eight major provincial cities which, among other things, campaign for better treatment in terms of public finance compared with London, which continues to gobble up a large share of the public money spent on the arts.

NEWS

The Liverpool Empire (and several other theatres owned by the same company) have been sold to the Ambassador Theatre Group. No big changes in the Empire's activities are foreseen.

The Finzi Trust awards scholarships for broadening the horizons of artists and musicians. See www.geraldfinzi.org

There will be an international Music Competition in Munich next year for flute, violoncello, French horn and piano duet players. See: www.ard-musikwettbewerb.de

The Phil has a glossary of musical terms. If you are in need of knowing what "rubato" (played in a flexible and expressive style), "ostinato" (a repeated rhythmic pattern) , "Ländler" (a slow waltz-like Austrian dance) or such like mean, you could ask for a copy.

The Royal Court Theatre Trust was set up in April to help with regenerating the building, beloved of theatre-goers over the years. The public was invited to comment on seven shortlisted architects' proposals and Allford Hall Monaghan Morris was selected. Paul Monaghan was born in Liverpool and educated at St Edward's College. A ten million pound scheme to modernise the building has been initiated. This will involve better access for everyone, including the disabled, improved toilets and catering facilities, better signage and improved movement spaces within the building. The building will remain open during the works, which will be carried out in phases as funds become available.

The tower of the Anglican cathedral will be open from 5 pm on 12, 19 and 26 November, enabling the view over the city in the evening to be enjoyed.

"The Artifice of Eternity: The Byzantine-Romanesque Revival in Catholic Lancashire" by J.A.Hilton is now available from the North West Catholic History Society at 11 Tower Hill, Ormskirk L39 2EE. The University of Liverpool Press (0151 794 2233) is circulating a list of current titles, including works about the Titanic, British Watercolours in the Lady Lever, and Lewis's department store.

Now that Edge Hill station, the world's oldest surviving one, has been turned into a heritage centre, suggestions are being made to do something similar in the underground terminal of the Overhead Railway at the Dingle.

Files released by MI5 show how the theatre producer Sam Wanamaker was suspected of left wing tendencies during the McCarthy persecution era in the 1950s. Sam was for a time Director of the New Shakespeare theatre in Liverpool. His daughter, Zoë, is well known on television.

Merseyside Civic Society launched a campaign to make Leece Street a Conservation area and to protect the distinctive buildings there following the move of Rapid Hardware to the old John Lewis building in the city centre.

Members of the South Liverpool Art Group continue to produce paintings of the city. Pictures of the Overhead, the QE2, the QM2 and the Gormley statues were among works recently on show in the Anglican cathedral

Lord Alton, founder of the Roscoe Lectures which are run by Liverpool John Moores University, gave a learned talk on William Gladstone, who was born in Hope Street on 22 December 1809. There will be a commemorative ceremony at his statue in St John's Gardens on the anniversary. Sir John Gladstone of Hawarden, the former Prime Minister's great grandson, was present. The "Grand Old Man" (or "God's Only Mistake" as some had it) made his last speech in Hengler's Circus in Low Hill.

The Phil's AGM heard a glowing report of what everyone knows has been an outstanding year for the orchestra, its conductor Vasily Petrenko and for the management of the hall. Vasily will be conducting several times in the USA in 2010 and 2011 and tours by the orchestra are being arranged. A point raised was whether the Phil could help to answer the relative dearth of opera in the city. As it happens 2013 is the anniversary of the birth of both Verdi and Wagner so maybe the supply of opera will be improved then if not earlier. That of course begs the question about whether Merseysiders want opera. While attendances at the Phil are at record levels, the first two nights of the Welsh National Opera's visit to the Empire drew only half full houses. Disappointing for excellent performances of La Traviata and Madam Butterfly - at remarkably reasonable prices. Arts Council cuts have meant that WNO only comes to Liverpool once a year now, instead of twice a few years ago. Opera is the one art form in which Liverpool is underprovided. By contrast, English National Ballet's "Giselle", also at the Empire, was well patronised. (On a trip to Theatre Clwyd we heard that students can see a play for £1 on the night if there are unsold seats. We trust that Liverpool venues all have schemes to let the young adopt the theatre habit.)

Fenella Billington spoke to the Friends of the Metropolitan Cathedral on the architect Palladio, who was active in the 1500s. Palladio pioneered the addition of colonnaded porches to large dwelling houses. His style became a hall mark of classical architecture in his Italy, in England and elsewhere. One wit present suggested that the Friends save up to add a colonnaded porch to the Met Cathedral. (Don't worry! It was a joke!)

Andrew Pearce, Editor