

Liverpool Cultural Heritage Forum

Rob Ainsworth, Editor

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NEWSLETTER NO 22

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During the last posting of edition 21 of the LCHF newsletter a large number of emails were returned as recipient unknown. If you did not receive a copy of last month's newsletter (Ed 21) please let me know by and I will ensure a copy is emailed to you.

New Williamson Tunnel

A LCHF committee members Dave Head and Norma White, recently sent me some fascinating photographs of the archaeological survey currently being conducted on the site of the Lord Mayor's stables in Smithdown Lane. Although it was sad to hear that the stables may be demolished, the subsequent survey has resulted in the unearthing of a previously unknown tunnel by Joseph Williamson. The previously unknown Williamson tunnel sparked a row over plans to build student flats at the historic site. Local historians fear the proposed flats, at an area of the tunnels on Smithdown Lane, Edge Hill, could do more damage to the newly uncovered tunnel. Site owners Goldcrest Finance insist that they will protect the discoveries. Dave Head, said: "This whole site is a very important part of Liverpool's heritage. Unfortunately, the tunnel was badly damaged sometime in the past, probably in the late 1860s when the Corporation Central Stables was built on Williamson's former work yard. It would now appear that, with the condition that the tunnel is in, it might never be opened up as part of the tunnel experience." FoWT said the survey had also uncovered some foundations of former stable buildings."



Liverpool Military Show

Liverpool's biggest military show is being scrapped after failing to win council support. Organisers of the Liverpool Military Show were bitterly disappointed. The popular show was first cancelled in 2010 after the city refused a grant, as the event did not qualify for arts and culture funding. Organisers planned to bring the back event in 2011, at Walton Hall Park. But the show has once again been refused funding by the council. The show's chairman, Ken Orme, said: "The council confirmed it would not be supporting the military event because it doesn't fit with their ideas for culture in the city, or equality or diversity." After initially refusing to fund the event in 2010, council chiefs changed their minds and offered around £6,000 for the event, which included a memorial service for fallen heroes. But organisers said it was too late and cancelled the show. Now in what would have been its ninth year, the event aimed to showcase all three branches of the armed.

Woolton Baths



It was lamentable to hear Woolton Baths is under threat of closure sparking a campaign to save a swimming pool led by a nine year old boy from Bishop Marten school, Elian McClements. He enlisted the help of TV presenter and actor Simon O'Brien. Elian recently staged a protest at Liverpool town hall. Although the council has not confirmed any plans for the pool residents fear it will face the axe as the city tries to save tens of millions of pounds in the face of Government grant cuts. The council state the baths closed because of a problem with the filtration system and there are also other issues with the condition of the building because it is over a century old and parts of the infrastructure are in need of work. Simon O'Brien said "Everyone is very keen to save our baths. It's got historical significance as well and John Lennon used to go there when he was young and his son Julian was here before Christmas". The pool was opened in 1892.

Florence Institute

I was delighted to hear that work could begin as early as April on the restoration of the Florence Institute my former boys club, which has received £3.7 million restoration money from the Heritage Lottery Fund. £6.6m has already been raised by the Florence Institute Trust, but the new money will allow the construction of exhibition and performance space, activities for young people and the elderly, an indoor/outdoor sport area, childcare facilities, workspaces for local business and a Heritage Resource Centre. An additional £1.7m may be granted by the North West Regional Development Agency. The building fell into disrepair and suffered from vandalism and water damage. In 1999 there was a fire which destroyed the roof.



The grade II listed Florence Institute began life as a boys' club in 1890 and is believed to be the first purpose built boys' youth club in the country. It was funded by Alderman Sir Bernard Hall and named in memory of his daughter Florence who had died at the age of 22. The building in Mill Street, Dingle, built in a Jacobean style, was central to the area's youth culture for 100 years, providing a venue for a variety of sports such as boxing, football and gymnastics and holding weekend dances. As a 14 year old I recall being introduced to the skills of joinery in the boys club workshops although I can no longer joiner any timber other than uses large nails. The "Florrie" also arranged weekends in Heswall and summer camps in the Lake District. Funding dried up in the 1980s and the building, which was taken over by the Duchy of Lancaster and therefore technically into the ownership of the Queen.

Liverpool Waters



English Heritage is refusing to support the multi-billion pound Liverpool Waters scheme because of its potential impact on the World Heritage Site (WHS). Peel Holdings wants to regenerate the city's northern docklands with a series of skyscrapers, creating more than 25,000 jobs and 14,000 apartments in a £5.5bn development. English Heritage said information in the planning application for the scheme "does not allow the effect of the development on historic buildings to be assessed accurately". EH also concerned that the construction of underground car parks would remove historic remains. Peel Holdings compromised,

by removing a number of skyscrapers and agreeing that no buildings directly on the Mersey waterfront, north of Princes Dock, would be higher than 15 storeys. It also pledged no heritage structures would be demolished. Failure to reach agreement between Peel and English Heritage will dramatically increase the chance of a public inquiry.

9 Madryn Street

Just weeks after Housing Minister Grant Shapps stepped in to grant a reprieve to Ringo's childhood home at 9 Madryn Street and following on from last month's LCHF article on the birthplace of former Beatle Ringo Starr it now appears it may not be demolished if an ambitious new renovation scheme is accepted by Liverpool council. Housing renovation firm Regeneration Express Ltd have held talks with council officials, and have a blueprint on how derelict homes can be turned into desirable properties. Managing Director, Ian Robinson is a recognised expert in the field and himself a former Liverpool housing officer was given seven days in which to submit an outline. The Welsh Streets Home Group views are those living close to the empty homes are opposed to the bulldozers moving-in. There are a handful of people remaining on the Welsh Streets who want to stay, and see as many homes as possible refurbished. Beatles fans said they were now optimistic that Ringo's birthplace would be preserved for posterity as thousands of visitors come to see Number 9 Madryn Street every month

Liverpool Planning and Conservation Teams

It was encouraging to hear that Liverpool Planning and Conservation Teams has been recognise in helping to protect and revitalise an historic conservation area and has earned praise for Liverpool in a good practice guide published by English Heritage. The publication – Valuing Places: Good Practice

in Conservation Areas – says that many conservation areas in England are benefiting from the voluntary efforts of local people, working closely with local councils and supported by English Heritage. Liverpool is singled out as making dramatic improvements to its historic environment, providing other areas with a benchmark of success. The report follows the publication of English Heritage's Heritage at Risk Register in July 2010 which revealed that 64 conservation areas in the North West are threatened by neglect, decline or inappropriate change. The most recent figures also suggest that around 45% of the region's conservation areas do not have an up-to-date character appraisal – an essential step in developing management plans which are vital if communities are going to use their historic character as a basis for regeneration.

Henry Owen-John, English Heritage Regional Director, said: "The report aims to inspire councils, civic societies and community groups to replicate the methods and success achieved by others, as highlighted in a series of powerful case studies. Conservation areas offer a golden opportunity for people to take heritage into their own hands and to decide what they value and how they want to protect and enhance it. These are places where people live, work and play – whether or not they are well cared for has a huge affect on our quality of life.

The Liverpool ropewalks are highlighted as a good example of how concerted statutory action by the local authority, combined with financial incentives and grant aid, can breathe new life into a previously neglected area. The ropewalks, a central district of 18th century merchants' houses and business premises in Duke Street, suffered years of dereliction before intensive public investment re-started in 1989. Twenty buildings have now benefited from £1.4m in grants from the Heritage Lottery fund, the North West Regional Development Agency, Liverpool City Council and English Heritage. Urgent works notices have also been served on the owners of many buildings to encourage them to make repairs.

SUCCESS AT THE ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL

One of Liverpool's successful Friends group is that of the Anglican Cathedral. In the last two years it contributed £28,783 for a *cherry-picker* (a mobile platform for building maintenance of at high levels), £4,000 for display screens, £6,000 flower displays, £2,500 for new heads for figures in the Christmas crib, £850 for Christmas tree lights, £6,000 for furnishing the archives and several tens of thousands of pounds for other purposes. The Friends, which began as *The Cathedral Builders*, claims to be the oldest such organisation in the country.

Events

Birkenhead Park Photography Exhibition

Entries are invited for the Friends of Birkenhead Park Photography Exhibition in April 2011 on the theme: Wirral's Industrial Heritage 2009. For competition rules and entry forms please contact Birkenhead Park Visitor Centre. Closing date 21st March. Photography workshops on the theme Wirral's Industrial Heritage will be held on: Saturday 19th February 10am to 12 noon. The workshops will give practical training on taking images and mounting images for the exhibition in the Gallery of the Visitor Centre in April 2011. Cost: £3 for each workshop. Please book for the above workshops at the Visitor Centre, Birkenhead Park, Park Drive, Birkenhead CH41 4HY, by email to birkenheadpark@wirral.gov.uk or telephone 0151 652 5197

The Waterloo Flea Market [Old Christ Church](#), Waterloo Road, Waterloo, L22 1RF

Date(s): Saturday - 5th March; 2nd April; 7th May; 4th June; 3rd September; 1st October; 5th November; 3rd December. Times open: 9.30am to 1pm. Cost of entry: 30 pence. An all-indoor market with up to 80 stalls selling a variety of products. **Contact:** Larry Goodband. Mobile: 07855748586 or Marie Curtis Tel: 0151 933 0132.

The Waterloo Farmers Market and Food Fayre [Old Christ Church](#), Waterloo Road, Waterloo,

Date(s): Friday - 11th March; 8th April; 13th May; 10th June; 8th July; 19th August; 9th September*; 14^h October; 11th November; 9th December. Times open: 10.30am to 3pm Cost of entry: Free An all-indoor market with stalls selling a variety of products from farms and other traders located in Lancashire, Cheshire, Cumbria, Wales and elsewhere.

Contact :Kevin Murray Tel: 0151 649 0401 to book a stall. Other information from John Bramham; Tel 0151 924 5738 e-mail: johnbramham@uwclub.net

Nearly New Sale [Old Christ Church](#), Waterloo Road, Waterloo, L22 1RF

Date(s):Saturday 19th March Times open:11am to 1.30pm. Cost of entry: £1 in aid of charity A sale of baby's, children's and maternity clothes, toys, books, nursery equipment, prams and more.

Contact: Liz Sinker. Tel: 0151 476 4211 e-mail: alsinker@hotmail.com

Liverpool Firsts

1845 Liverpool is the destination of the first package tour

1848 Albert Dock, the first non-combustible warehousing system in the world

1848 Albert Dock, the world's first warehouses to use hydraulic hoists.

1857 Liverpool Rugby Club is the world's first open club.

1857 Liverpool starts Britain's first chess club.

1864 The world's first metal framed glass curtain walled building – Oriel Chambers, Water Street.

Rob Ainsworth

King John Around Town

COLONEL BRYSON AND NO. 626 HEAVY ANTI AIRCRAFT REGIMENT – [THE LIVERPOOL IRISH](#)

Some readers of this Newsletter may not have seen the publicity about “Paddy” Bryson’s recent birthday. Paddy (Col. Graeme Bryson, to give him his proper name) was 98 on 4 February. His life has been interwoven with many aspects of Liverpool life. Paddy fought in World War Two and went on to become commanding officer of the 626 (Liverpool Irish) Heavy Anti–Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery. His career has ranged from soldier to lawyer, judge, academic author and prominent Roman Catholic. He studied law at Liverpool University and was later President of Liverpool Law Society, was the only judge to be shot at in court (1960) - by a night club owner in court over bankruptcy; (Paddy seized the man’s pistol and was honoured by the Queen for brave conduct), was made a *Citizen Of Honour* of Liverpool in 2010, was solicitor for Everton Football Club and was President of the North West Cancer Research Fund and County Life President of the Royal British Legion.

His regiment, the Liverpool Irish (626) Regiment, is a Territorial unit, which was created in 1860 as a volunteer corps of infantry raised in response to heightened tension with France. An advertisement in the Liverpool Daily Post on 5 December 1859 appealed for men in Liverpool's Irish community to assemble at the London Inn, Clayton Square. During the next month its first drill took place at the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street. The "Liverpool Irish" designation was formally granted to the corps in 1864. It adopted a uniform similar in appearance to the Royal Irish Rifles and eventually wore the caubeen headdress with red and blue hackle.

In army reforms a few years later, the Liverpool Irish became the 5th (Irish) Volunteer Battalion of the King's Liverpool Regiment. After fighting in the second Boer War, the unit marched to St George's Hall to be greeted by the Lord Mayor and relatives. It fought in the First World War, sustaining thousands of casualties in numerous battles including Givenchy, Guillemont, Ypres, and the Hundred Days Offensive. One fatality was Second-Lieutenant Edward Felix Baxter, who was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. Under later reforms the 8th (Irish) maintained a company of bicycle infantry. The battalion had headquarters at Shaw Street.

The Liverpool Irish was disbanded in 1922 but re-formed in March 1939 with headquarters at the Embassy Rooms, Mount Pleasant. As the war in the Far East progressed, Brigadier Orde Wingate raised a force which became known as the Chindits brigade - from the Burmese word for lion (*Chinthe*). The Chindits moved behind the Japanese lines in Burma destroying their supply lines, railway systems and ammunition depots. The 13th Battalion Kings Regiment (Liverpool) was a major part of the Chindits. It was made up largely of Liverpool dock workers, nearly all them married and with an average age of thirty-three. The column’s machine-guns, mortars, ammunition, food and radios were carried by mules. Fresh supplies came weekly by plane. The columns had moved about 300 miles into enemy territory and took on vastly superior numbers of Japanese troops, causing chaos and destroying enemy supply lines. The mission was hailed a success but the losses were high with only 2,000 men from the original 3,200 eventually returning to India and home, around 600 of them so ill they never fought again.

As Allied plans to invade occupied France developed in 1943, the Liverpool Irish was selected to form the nucleus of the 7th Beach Group that landed at Juno Beach on 6 June 1944. Liverpool Irish troops embarked in May 1944 for Normandy. Some were on the *Ulster Monarch*, formerly a passenger ship on the Belfast-Liverpool line.

The Liverpool Irish was converted into No 626 Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiment in 1947. Its regimental status ended in 1955 upon reduction to a battery. Since 1967, the lineage of the Liverpool Irish has been perpetuated by "A" Troop, in 208 (3rd West Lancashire) Battery, 103rd (Lancashire Artillery Volunteers) Regiment. It operates from the territorial centre in Aigburth Road. It has provided reinforcements to regular artillery regiments on active operations in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq.

King John