THE FORUM’S CONFERENCE
Over 120 people attending the Forum’s conference on “Heritage for everyone” in the Anglican Cathedral on 24 May heard demands for a bigger role for voluntary groups in improving and promoting the city’s heritage and for general strengthening of the interest in heritage shown by local public sector organisations and the business community. The Forum’s Chairman, Andrew Pearce, who chaired the conference, said: “Interest in and promotion of the city’s inheritance of wonderful buildings and traditions in music and the visual and performing arts has grown apace. The city has done well. It can do still better”.

Local historian Ken Pye chaired a debate on how voluntary societies can help to raise consciousness among elected politicians, officials and the public about the importance of heritage as a means of enhancing the pride that people have in the city and of increasing tourism and the revenues and jobs which this brings. Delegates called for strengthening of the means of contact between voluntary societies and the public authorities, building on the achievements of the Capital of Culture year.

Earlier, the Deans of both of Liverpool’s cathedrals spoke on “taking heritage out into the city”. The meeting was also addressed by Councillor Gary Millar, previously spokesman on heritage on Liverpool City Council, Joe Riley of the Liverpool Echo and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, The Mersey Partnership and LARC (Liverpool Arts & Regeneration Consortium). The Open Culture website was demonstrated. A report of the conference will appear on our website.

EVENTS
30 August (Bank Holiday) is the 150th anniversary of the first trams in Europe at Birkenhead. Mersey tramway Preservation Society will have an event at Woodside to mark the date. It continues with plans, in collaboration with Merseytravel, to turn the Taylor Street, Birkenhead Tram Museum into a viable and well-recognised attraction.

Liverpool Chamber of Commerce is celebrating its 160th anniversary in style on Friday 16 July by hosting a glittering birthday barbecue at the Isla Gladstone Conservatory in Stanley Park. Contact: 0151 227 134. The Chamber would like to hear any stories of about its history. Email jenny.stewart@liverpoolchamber.org.uk

A seldom-seen oil painting of the Waterloo Docks, Liverpool, by “matchstick” people artist LS Lowry is on display at the Walker. The artist created the work in 1962 – and left a mystery. It is unclear what part of the docks, opened in 1834, is depicted. Waterloo Docks may show part of the west dockside with the River Mersey on the left. Lowry painted a small number of Liverpool scenes including views of the River Mersey and Liver Building.

The tower of the Anglican Cathedral is open every Thursday evening until 28 October. £5 for adults. See the Elizabeth Hoare Embroidery Gallery while you are there.

Tours of the Old Dock are on Tuesdays at 11 a.m. 1 pm and 2.30 and on Wednesdays at 10.30 and noon. Book on 0151 478 4296.

Liverpool Waterfront Architectural Festival 15 – 26 June. See: www.liverpoolarchitecture.com/walk_the_front for the program of general and specialised tours.
CAMPAIGNS

Deane Road Cemetery: In the 19th century, a community of Jewish businessmen belonging to the Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation changed the face of Liverpool's economy. Amongst these men and women were watchmakers, silversmiths, bankers, entrepreneurs, clerics, artists, politicians, medics and musicians. Their combined resourcefulness and wealth added significantly to the development of Liverpool as one of the most thriving cities of the Victorian age. For years, their graves have stood desolate, obscured by trees, choked by poisonous plants, vandalised with graffiti and surrounded by refuse. Deane Road Cemetery, their final resting place, has been derelict for a century. The generosity of these men and women in terms of time, wealth and status is something which should be commemorated. The Deane Road Cemetery Committee is dedicated to restoring the cemetery and making it an exciting and interesting stop on the heritage trail, a vital educational resource for local children and something for the local community to embrace and be proud of. For more information go to www.deaneroadcemetery.com or call 07774 786532

Gladstone memorial: Brenda Murray has a project to erect a Gladstone memorial in Seaforth, where William Ewart Gladstone lived for 17 years, having been born in Rodney St, Liverpool, in 1809. His father, John, a rich merchant, bought 100 acres of land in Litherland, where he built Seaforth House in 1813, thus creating the name of the village which grew and prospered. A handsome memorial, a stone column supporting a bronze bust of William E. Gladstone, the only man who has been 4 times Prime Minister, and also Chancellor of the Exchequer, would provide a tourist attraction to raise the spirits of Seaforth village, just half a mile away from the Gormley Iron Men, being visited by thousands of world tourists. Info: 0151 924 2541.

Edmund Morel (1873 – 1924): Morel led a campaign against slavery in the Congo Free State, working with H.M. Stanley (of “Dr Livingstone, I presume?” fame), Roger Casement (who was hanged for seeking German support for Irish nationalism) and Joseph Conrad, the novelist. Morel was born in Paris, his father being a French civil servant; his mother from an English Quaker family. In 1891 he obtained a clerkship with Elder Dempster, a Liverpool shipping firm. While working there he learned that the ships leaving Belgium for the Congo carried only guns, chains, ordnance and explosives, but no commercial goods, while ships arriving from the colony came back full of valuable products such as raw rubber and ivory. The Congo had been the private property of the King of the Belgians, who tolerated (encouraged?) appalling conditions for the indigenous people there – and received enormous income from doing so. In 1905 Morel’s campaign won a victory when a Commission of Enquiry confirmed the accusations made about the colonial administration. In 1908 the Congo was annexed to the Belgian state (instead of being personally owned by the King) and conditions slowly began to improve. Morel became involved in left-of-centre politics and was elected as Independent Labour Party MP for Dundee, unseating Winston Churchill. There will be a public consultation at Liverpool Hope University (Taggart Avenue) at 5 pm on 5 July about raising public consciousness of Morel (Info: martinpinder7@hotmail.com)

St Luke’s Church: There is a campaign to create a Liverpool Peace Centre in St Luke’s Church (which was destroyed by German bombing in World War II. The Liverpool branch of the United Nations Association has a proposal for a centre there to house cultural activities such as music drama and exhibitions. Info: 0151 707 9399

Newsham Park: A campaign is running to bring Newsham Park alive once more, creating again the facilities for sport including cricket for which it was once well known.

CASTLES

Suggestions have been made in the press recently that the site of Liverpool Castle in Derby Square (where the Queen Victoria memorial stands) should be marked out. In fact the Forum campaigned from 2006 and were assured that the City Council would have the outline of the castle traced out on the site - in 2009, missing, as the Forum pointed out, the Year of Heritage, 2007! There is reference to the castle on a modern information panel in Derby Square and there is a plaque on the Queen Victoria memorial itself but apparently nothing else. True, there are different coloured paving stones but they do not seem to convey any particular shape or meaning. Unless we are missing something, this looks like a breach of faith by the City Council. There would have been little extra cost if the castle’s outline had been marked while the rest of the paving work was being done. Was this an oversight or a conscious change of mind?
Lord Leverhulme had no such hesitations when he built the replica of the ruin of Liverpool castle at Rivington near Bolton, where it can be visited today. The replica was completed in 1925 after Lever’s death.

Another castle with Lever connections is that at Stornoway in the Hebrides. This Victorian building (on the site of a much older castle) was bought by Lever in 1918. Lever at the time was trying to uplift the living standards of the islanders and created the MacFisheries chain of shops to improve the marketing of Scottish fish catches. He sold the land he had bought of the island soon afterwards in a dispute with the authorities who wanted to establish crofts for returning soldiers rather than the improved sheep rearing which Lever favoured.

William Lever (whose company expanded world-wide to produce Surf, Lux, Hellman’s and Walls Ice cream among other household names) is commemorated in Wirral by the Lady Lever gallery in Port Sunlight (built in memory of his wife who predeceased him), the mock-medieval of village of Thornton Hough and his house at Thornton Manor, now available for functions.

A REMINDER OF THE LUSITANIA

A beautiful gold pocket watch belonging to the captain of the Lusitania who survived when the luxury liner sank with the loss of 1,200 lives has been donated to Merseyside Maritime Museum. Everton-born Captain William Turner remained on board the stricken liner but miraculously survived after he was swept off the bridge. The box containing the watch carries the name Penlington and Batty of St George’s Crescent, Lord Street, Liverpool. The Lusitania, launched in 1907, was Liverpool’s favourite liner and many people from the city were among her crews. The sinking of the Lusitania by a German U-boat submarine off Kinsale on 7 May 1915 sent shockwaves around the world. The British Government tried to blame Captain Turner but he was eventually exonerated. History repeated itself when the Ivernia, a later command of Captain Turner, was torpedoed and sunk on New Year's Day 1917. Once again Captain Turner survived. He was awarded the OBE and died at his home at 50 De Villiers Avenue, Crosby in 1933.

HERE AND THERE

Civic Voice, the body which replaced the defunct Civic Trust, now links local civic societies which have over 40,000 members. It is looking for volunteers for a variety of tasks. Contact Ian Harvey on ian.harvey@civicvoice.org.uk or on 0151 708 9920 to find out more. It is proposing a National Civic day in 2011 to highlight the work of civic societies up and down the country.

The Mersey Partnership has responsibility for promotion of tourism in the Liverpool city region (as well as for attracting firms to invest here. It is currently running an advertising campaign on the London Underground and in a number if prestige newspapers and magazines. Success is such that in 2008, Tate Liverpool and the Maritime Museum had just over a million visitors each, World Museum three quarters of a million, the Anglican Cathedral half a million and the International Slavery Museum, the Walker, the Metropolitan Cathedral over 300,000 each.

The Florrie News announces that funds have been approved for an immediate restart on restoring Toxteth Town Hall. 15 High Park Street - an excellent example of what can be achieved by volunteers working with public support. Tourism planners please note.

Friends of Liverpool Monuments (info: patricia.nalder@tiscali.co.uk) are organising a walk on Sunday (6 June). Meet at Birkenhead Priory at 10 a.m. and afterwards, travel to the Lady Lever Art gallery. The nearest train station to the priory is Hamilton Square and there is parking on site. The nearest station to the Lady Lever gallery is Bebington and parking is also available there. There is a also a visit on 4 July to the Metropolitan Cathedral. (Contact Rob on 0151 709 3784)

Work is to start this summer on a £37m project to refurbish the Lewis’s building.

Liverpool History Society’s Journal gets bigger and better with each edition. Contact enquiries@www.liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk Included are articles about Liverpool privateers, the city’s Victorian economy, the Liverpool to Prescot turnpike...........

We all know Birkenhead as a great shipbuilding centre over the years but Liverpool’s history in the building of ships is less well known. Birkenhead History Society’s Newsletter feature the Roydens of Frankby, one of whom, Thomas (1792 – 1868), set up a shipyard near Queens dock in Liverpool in
1818, while living in Harrington Street (off Castle Street). He represented Great George ward and later North Toxteth ward on the Town Council. One of his granddaughters, Agnes, began a campaign for the ordination of women and was the first woman to preach in the Anglican Cathedral. His second son, Sir Ernest, went to live at Bidston Court in Noctorum (over the hill from Birkenhead) in a house built for Robert Hudson, the soap manufacturer. This mock-Elizabethan house was inspired by Little Moreton Hall in Cheshire (as was the Cecilienhof Palace in Potsdam where the great conference was held in 1945 (attended by Churchill and Attlee, Stalin and Truman at the end of World War II). Sir Ernest’s wife’s family owned land at Frankby, near West Kirby and had the Bidston house moved brick by brick, timber by timber to Frankby. The building is now a hotel.

Museums, arts, galleries and heritage are to lose £46m under the recent national budget cuts. One wonders whether the government sees the difference between provision for the arts because they are good for the soul (a social policy) and provision for the arts because they bring in tourists and create jobs income (an economic policy).

Liverpool Parks Friends Forum published a calendar for 2010, with support from Liverpool NHS Primary Care Trust, and the City Council. (We only obtained a copy recently). This has some wonderful photography of the city’s parks. It deserves to be more widely known both within the city and elsewhere.

We notice that both Birkenhead and Greasby public libraries have active Friends groups. Do any libraries in Liverpool have such groups?

**BY THE EDITOR, PERSONALLY**

We have to ask whether the City’s planning and tourist authorities ever get together. If we want tourists to come here (and spend money and create jobs) we have to have things for them to see and do. Yet there seems to be little regard for this when it comes to saving some of our wonderful buildings. The shameful case of the Josephine Butler building opposite the Phil, first stripped of its stone cladding and then totally demolished, comes to mind. Now we hear that the Welsh Methodist church at the top of Penny Lane, is facing demolition, its congregation having declined and its fabric being in poor condition. Tourist buses regularly visit the location because of its Beatles fame. Why knock down part of what they have come to see? Although we have the two Beatles museums, why do we tolerate the destruction of other poignant reminders of them such as the Penny Lane area? Going beyond the Beatles, Liverpool has a quite extraordinary history of remarkable people. Josephine Butler, for example, led a successful campaign to scrap a cruel law which caused innocent women to be imprisoned for prostitution. Hopefully the new Museum for Liverpool when it opens next year will show the work of some of Liverpool’s philanthropic heroes and heroines. More still should be done, including provision and maintenance of visual reminders of who these people were and what they did. Why, for instance, can we not have a visual reminder of Frank Hornby, creator of Dinky toys and Hornby trains? Would Councillors who want to create jobs for Liverpool people kindly speak with the planners who allow iconic buildings to be knocked down?

Liverpool’s universities have produced over the years a fair number of people gifted in the arts and sciences. So it is sad to see the University of Liverpool in only 28th place in The Times “Good University Guide” and Liverpool John Moores University at number 98. (Edge Hill University is at number 76 and Chester at number 83. Liverpool Hope University declined to supply data for the exercise). It may be true that the Guide does not fully compare like with like but the ranking is nevertheless disappointing. An outsider may be tempted to judge an organisation by the way it portrays itself. It is therefore discouraging to see that LJMU still displays on its Tranmere site a banner advertising an event in March. It is beyond a joke that the railings outside Liverpool University’s School of Music still carry a poster for events to take place in 2008!

Some of us in the Liverpool area speak with a scouse accent, some don’t. There can be no objection to either approach. I myself don’t. I am weary of Londoners who upon hearing that I am from the Liverpool area say: “Oh, but you don’t have the accent!”? I like to reply: “You live in London but you don’t have a cockney accent. What’s the difference?” In similar vein someone in the capital asked me the other day whether I lived “in central London or the suburbs”. I replied: “The suburbs of which city are you referring to?” Something should be done to lighten the darkness of these people that civilisation does not end at Watford Junction. I know which side of Watford it I would rather live!

Andrew Pearce, Editor.