

Featuring:
FACT,
Liverpool Biennial,
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John Belchem,
Homebaked,
Static Gallery
and more

The Unlimited Edition

ISSUE VII

CRUISE LINERS COME HOME TO LIVERPOOL

Jonathan Brown, Share the City

Liverpool invented and perfected the luxury liner – and then saw them depart, apparently forever. Now, like migrating birds, they are back. In the 10th anniversary year of the new Cruise Liverpool terminal, Jonathan Brown reflects on their return, and its meaning for the city.

Liverpool's mythic 'Liver Birds' (pronounced Lyver), perched 330ft above the waterfront cruise terminal, overlook all arrivals by land and sea, the city's shamanic protectors. As with the ravens at the Tower of London, tour guides claim the city will fall if these exotic birds should ever take flight.

That seems unlikely given that Liverpool's giant cormorants are made of gilded copper, and chained fast to concrete domes. Nowadays, as they watch over crowds swirling happily across the Pier Head for selfies with the Beatles statues, and punters queuing far below for Mersey ferries and funfair rides, a civic fall seems happily distant.

But not so very long ago, from the early 1970s into the new millennium,

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LIVERPOOL

THE UNLIMITED EDITION is a newspaper exploring, celebrating and speculating about the future of particular places. Each issue is place-based, delving into key themes, which shape our cities including places of work, cultural spaces, food networks and development legacies. The paper invites guest writers, policy-makers, artists, architects and community members to contribute creative snapshots of each place. Previously, Issues I–V celebrated the London neighbourhoods of Whitechapel and Bermondsey and Issue VI explored Aarhus in Denmark. Issue VII travels to Liverpool. The Unlimited Edition is curated by We Made That. Digital versions of all issues of the paper are available for free at www.wemadethat.co.uk.



Disney Magic at the Cruise Liverpool terminal, viewed from an unphased Mersey Ferry, May 2016

Image courtesy of Akhethethy/Ororo

Liverpool an edge that was to cut through most explosively in the Beat era, as the fashion and music tastes of young 'Cunard Yanks' reverberated back across the Atlantic.

Since the 1980s Liverpool has fought a spirited battle to reinvent itself as a centre of culture, tourism, shopping and higher education, salvaging the Albert Dock, building a superb shopping centre and cleaning up the river, but the scarcity of great passenger ships on the Mersey continued to corrode its essential identity.

Sporadic false starts were made to entice them back. Like rare sightings of migrating birds blown off course, a handful of cruise ships occasionally chanced a stop, as if visiting the wreck of their former flagship.

The trickle of annual visits by occasional cruise ships continued through the 1990s into the new millennium, the returning pioneers building a precarious crow's nest from which to seek sustenance among the cliffs of rusting iron.

Fred Olsen was the first blue-chip shipping line to seriously commit to re-establishing a permanent cruise base in Liverpool, and should also be credited with stirring – perhaps shaming – the city into investing in a proper landing stage and then turnaround facilities at the Pier Head. The cruise operation of the established Norwegian firm is a UK company based in Ipswich, and in 2004 launched regular Liverpool sailings, and quickly built a loyal following of repeat passengers, proving the business case.

Olsen's success, and a growing sense of civic self-confidence as Liverpool approached its year as 'European Capital of Culture' in 2008, spurred the opening in September 2007 of a new £19m floating landing stage, designed to reinstate the 'in river' infrastructure removed 35 years earlier, and thereby allow the biggest passenger ships in the world to once more tie up alongside the now UNESCO protected Pier Head World Heritage Site.

After 40 years, Liverpool was a true cruise line port once more. In the short

time since, Liverpool has established itself as Britain's favourite port of call for the influential 'Cruise Critic' editors, and is rated one of Europe's most desirable destinations by passengers, who enjoy being able to board and step ashore in the heart of the city's historic centre. Now it is again becoming familiar, though no less wonderful, to see a fully sold out passenger 'megaship' arriving on the Mersey from Cape Canaveral in Florida, or calling on a regular 12-day circumnavigation of the British Isles during summer.

With around 60 cruise ships arriving this year, and a mayoral target of 100, Liverpool is some way off Southampton's 300 departures, and of course great passenger ships are no longer built and crewed on the Mersey, Thames, Lagan, Clyde or Tyne. Yet growth and customer satisfaction levels have been sufficiently high to commit the city to building a proper terminal to replace the cheerful marquee that currently greets passengers, hoping to evoke still more of the glamorous spirit of the heyday. Also, Peel Holdings' much-awaited Liverpool Waters project may yet see a second landing stage and terminal installed by the central docks, where a new stadium for Everton FC is also proposed.

The psychological and spending power of liners bringing thousands of passengers from across the Atlantic, with dozens of coaches dispersing day-trip shore excursions to the castles of North Wales, the Roman walls of Chester and the mountains of the Lake District via Beatles Liverpool, is profound for a place that for two generations had feared its best seafaring days were behind it, and faced a future of perpetual decline.

Now the Liver Birds are again seen from the tidal waters by passengers visiting Britain from across the western hemisphere, and watch over Britons leaving to see the world from Liverpool. Their shamanic spirits must delight that the stately seabirds once thought extinct on these shores have returned, importing good fortune, and exporting happy memories.

A CULTURAL LEGACY BEYOND BUILDINGS

Claire McColgan MBE, Director of Culture, Liverpool

Cultural cities are defined in the global consciousness by the buildings which they boast. From the Louvre to the Natural History Museum, MoMA to the Guggenheim, the buildings (and the institutions they house) are what gives these cities their cultural credentials.

Liverpool punches above its weight in this field – with extraordinary buildings and institutions from Tate Liverpool in the iconic Albert Dock, its seven national museums, the Bluecoat and the Art Deco majesty of the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall to name but a few.

Add to that in the last decade the RIBA Sterling Prize winning Everyman Theatre, the stunning Museum of Liverpool and the growth of new digital and creative hubs in first the Baltic Triangle and now the North Docks area of the city spearheaded by The Invisible Wind Factory, and you see a city bursting at the seams with 'cultural infrastructure'.

An impressive funding and support framework has grown up around these buildings.

An advanced network of groups bring the creative and cultural sector together regularly to encourage and enable collaboration. A funding structure has been created which bridges the public and private sector, dedicated roles engage the education sector and local communities in opportunities, and a pipeline of talent from the city's four major universities ensures a fresh and vibrant injection of ideas every year.

This infrastructure has not emerged by magic. Lots of brilliant work has been undertaken by cultural organisations across the city, there has been brave and unwavering political support, cash investment by the Mayor of Liverpool has been maintained at a level unmatched outside of London – even with the backdrop of cuts and austerity. There has, and continues to be, a real willingness to take culture seriously and to recognise its value socially and economically.

In 2018, Liverpool marks the 10th anniversary of being European Capital of Culture with another big year of programming, which is made possible by the fact that this infrastructure exists and is in such good health. The investment, support and passion of all aspects of the city over the last

decade are all crucial factors enabling the extraordinary transformation we have seen.

But personally, I think the most important legacy of 2008 is not the physical or built environment, but the emotional infrastructure which has been created.

Capital of Culture gave this city a new energy, a renewed sense of self and importance in the world. The audiences of Liverpool have repaid this with a new commitment, acceptance and understanding of arts and culture. They are willing to try new things, to be challenged and stretched and to embrace creative ambition and innovation.

They have become voracious consumers. They turn out in their hundreds of thousands for free major events, they head to music and art shows in locations across the city and throughout the year. They embrace big international names and nurture emerging home-grown talent.

They are sophisticated but not pretentious. Vocal but constructive. Accepting of the new, and proud of the old. And importantly, they rightly demand excellence.



Image courtesy of Culture Liverpool

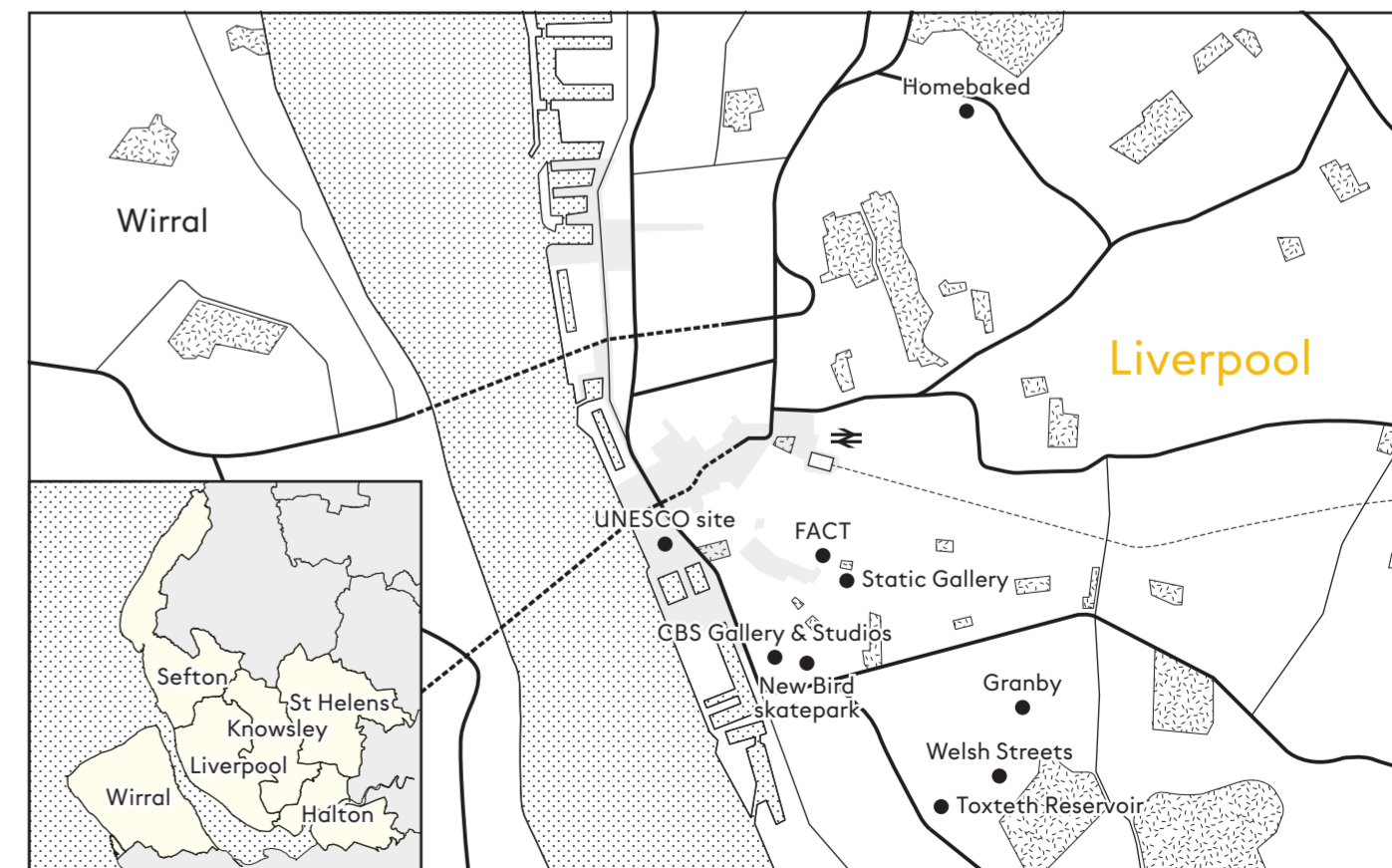
Marionette from 'Sea Odyssey: Giant Spectacular', 2012

Liverpool is not a monetarily rich city. But a diverse opinionated audience, where three generations of a family will come together to create memories, want to be engaged and want to be part of a city wide democratic conversation.

Without an audience who want what is being created, the breadth and depth of your infrastructure is irrelevant. In a world of on-demand and free content, where traditional business models are going out of the window and where maintaining the status quo is becoming a challenge, the ability to draw a crowd is going to become one of the most essential things we do as a society.

As we march into an uncertain future, where there are threats to funding, to the ease of international co-operation and where the level of competition for audience's attention is only going to increase, I believe the engagement, equality, passion and emotional infrastructure which we have been able to foster in this city is what will allow us to face these challenges head on.

We will continue to grow and build over the next decade – our ambition has no expiry date. There are still more boundaries to be pushed and audiences to captivate. Liverpool's creative appetite remains insatiable and that is the infrastructure which will serve us well.



Neighbourhoods, sites and places explored in this issue of The Unlimited Edition

(Continued from front cover...)

it felt perhaps that Liverpool would fall – indeed, had fallen – shaken to its soul by the sudden, and seemingly final, departure of another exotic breed of metal sea bird, the ocean liner.

With air travel now so fast and affordable, Cunard's Queen Mary 2 is the world's only remaining true passenger ocean liner, and even she is really a hybrid cruiser, but there are of course still innumerable cargo and ferry lines criss-crossing the seven seas. Prior to the jet airliner's rapid ascendancy in the 1960s, Liverpool was the world's premier ocean liner port, the Heathrow, JFK or Schiphol of the seas, with more scheduled services, and a larger, faster and more modern fleet than any harbour on earth. Liverpool held its top position for some 200 years, and although Southampton took much of its trans-Atlantic traffic as the 20th century progressed, Britain's most prestigious liners continued to be registered and crewed on the River Mersey.

Liverpool ships and crews were utterly integral to allied victory in World War II. The merchant marine convoys, with naval and air support, broke the six year axis U-boat and air bombing blockade to supply the besieged British Isles (and Soviets) with over 1m tonnes of supplies a week from Canada and the USA.

The post-war years saw a return to the golden era of captain's dinners, balloon parties and promenades on deck, and a new generation of Liverpool

crews stewarding wealthy passengers and 'ten pound Poms' on voyages across the seas, assimilating the cultures and pleasures of distant port cities.

But as the swinging 1960s segued into the oil-shocked 1970s, Liverpool was hit by a perfect storm of air travel, containerisation, the decline of northern manufacturing, and Britain's turn towards Europe and away from its Atlantic, African and Asiatic Commonwealth. Most cargo lines switched to container ports along England's continental seaboard, or the European mainland, and for miles along the Mersey, the most extensive dock system ever built was increasingly left to the seagulls and silt. Liverpool's sublime granite seawalls fell silent.

Massive external economic forces were compounded by some terrible local decisions, most culpably a traumatic mass population clearance from the waterside working class communities that still scars the inner city to this day. Depopulated and without big ships, the empty seaport was bereft, the mausoleum of Britain's lost maritime empire. Between World War II and the millennium, Liverpool's core population halved, and the UK government planned secretly for 'managed decline', a staged abandonment of the city.

A vast economic infrastructure was built round the sea. Liverpool had pioneered the first railways in order to distribute cargoes and people, and developed mighty networks both sides of the river. Culturally, the daily trans-shipment of ideas across oceans gave

THE FUTURE OF LIVERPOOL

Does the great port city still face out to sea?

Ian Cobain

Liverpool is a city that has a face, but to gaze upon it you must either be aboard a ship on the Mersey, or looking across the water from Wirral. The city directs its face towards Dublin and New York, Buenos Aires and Cape Town, and the magnificent Edwardian buildings that line the river all look out to sea.

To Manchester and the rest of Britain, the city has always pointed its backside, quite literally.

When UNESCO designated Liverpool's waterfront a World Heritage Site, it declared it to be 'an exceptional testimony to the development of maritime mercantile culture in the 18th and 19th centuries', a culture that had been critical to the building of empire.

Waves of immigration from that empire, and particularly from Ireland, had turned it into a rapidly growing, polyglot city: 'the Marseilles of England', according to the Victorian writer Thomas Escott. Writing 120 years later, the rock journalist Paul Du Noyer described it as 'a sort of sunless Marseilles that operates on different principles to the rest of Britain'.

Those different principles – reaching out to the world while feigning to ignore its hinterland – meant that it never saw itself as a provincial city. Instead, as Du Noyer observes, it sees itself as 'the Capital of Itself'. For generations, many of the city's sons either worked on the docks or became seafarers, and after months away would return bearing not only tales of the world, but its music, its recipes and its crafts.

My great-grandfather's letters home to Liverpool, written during the late 19th and early 20th century, show that he was familiar with countless ports along the east coast of the Americas, from Para in Brazil to Nova Scotia in Canada. He came to know all the dives of Nassau, New Orleans and Norfolk Virginia; by the time he was buried in New York in 1913, the city had become his second home.

After the Panama Canal was opened the following year, his son came to know all of these places, and San Francisco and Valparaíso, too. But it is not clear that either of them ever went to Manchester. Why would they?

During the second half of the 20th century, however – and particularly following the UK's entry into the European Common Market in 1973 –

Liverpool seemed at times to be a great port city that was languishing in the wrong place at the wrong time: containerised shipping continued to flourish, but provided few jobs, and it was the ports on the other side of the country that seized the lion's share of the modern shipping trade.

Liverpool's economic decline during the 70s and 80s was sharp, and painfully well-documented, and its population fell from almost a million on the eve of World War II to around 440,000 by the turn of the century. Seeds of revival were planted first by Michael Heseltine, the city's great champion in Margaret Thatcher's cabinet, and then nurtured this century via hundreds of millions of pounds worth of EU regional development funds. But there have been occasions over the last few decades when Liverpool could have been forgiven for asking itself the question: 'What am I for?'

That is the question that is being asked following the election of the Liverpool City Region's new mayor Steve Rotheram and the creation of a new combined city region authority.

It is one of seven regions that are electing so-called Metro Mayors, who chair a combined authority made up of leaders of borough councils within their regions. Together, the mayor and cabinet are empowered to make strategic decisions concerning transport, land use, apprenticeships and adult skills, in some cases housing and business support and, in Greater Manchester, healthcare and policing.

Liverpool's region comprises the city council area, the four other boroughs of Merseyside, plus Halton, a local authority area 12 miles to the east.

The economic potential of the region is considerable. While Liverpool was never an industrial city, being concerned more with commerce and distribution, the wider region is home to ship repair yards, chemical plants, glassmaking, pharmaceuticals, motor manufacture and light industry.

The city, meanwhile, has three universities, a teaching hospital, a science park, a school of tropical medicine, a performing arts institute and an oceanography centre: education and the growing commercialisation of knowledge accounts for around

15% of the goods and services it produces. The city's restaurants, bars and hotels, meanwhile, are frequently brimming with tourists and visiting football fans.

One of Rotheram's first challenges will be to ensure that he has the support of the rest of his cabinet: the leaders of the six boroughs, plus a business representative. Although the politicians all hail from the same party there is already talk in the city of personal and political rivalries beginning to emerge.

Rotheram will also need to address the concerns in some of the peripheral areas of the region that the centre will dominate. One of his campaign slogans was 'No Borough Left Behind'. Despite this – or perhaps because of it – some are worried that that is exactly what will happen.

In part, this is because the Capital of Itself has long had a tendency to look down upon – pity, even – those who were not born or raised within it, and its inhabitants' greatest disdain has seemed at times to be reserved for those who live and work just beyond its boundaries.

Rotheram's next problem will be to locate the levers that will allow him to generate economic growth.

Ged Fitzgerald, the chief executive of the city council and interim head of the new combined authority, who played a key role in negotiating Liverpool's devolution deal with Whitehall, could not be clearer: 'The new mayor role is more about economic growth than services and governance. The combined authority isn't in itself an organ of government, it is an organ of growth.'

While some Tory champions of devolution have believed passionately in the need to rebalance the north and south of England, devolution is being implemented at a time with an austerity agenda, with the government insisting that local authorities are self-sufficient by 2020.

Under these circumstances, there is a realpolitik in the minds of people like Rotheram and Fitzgerald, who can see the sense of taking the devolution investment that is on offer, and taking responsibility for the future economic wellbeing of the region.

The amount that Liverpool has secured from Whitehall, per head of population amounts to £590, with only Tees Valley, with £674 per head, obtaining a better deal from London.

However, it does not meet the amount that has been stripped out of the region's local authority budgets: over the decade from 2010, Liverpool City Council alone is set to lose £420m.

So Rotheram's ability to generate economic growth will define his success or failure as the city region mayor. And key to this, it seems, will be his ability to answer the question: what is the city region for?

His manifesto talked about creating a 'high-skill, high value economy', removing barriers 'and expanding

opportunities for all', and creating a region that is 'ambitious, fair, green, connected and together'. But what does he need to do?

John Flamson, who oversaw the huge European investments in Liverpool and who has been involved in every regeneration initiative in the city for 35 years, suggests Rotheram should ask himself: 'What am I not going to get involved in?' He could then focus on a small number of targets, such as attracting investment, dealing with Whitehall and key business, and improving the transport infrastructure.

Jon Egan, a former Labour party regional organiser, city council chief of staff, Halton councillor – and self-confessed grumpy old man, says Rotheram will need to think hard about the way in which the city presents itself. 'The narrative about Liverpool is still in the past tense: 'Come and see our architecture and our musical heritage.' The city markets itself as if it was Pompeii. We need to look to the future.'

Mike Emmerich, founding director of Metro Dynamics and a former Downing Street policy adviser, says Rotheram needs to quickly surround himself with a highly capable team and make sure his cabinet colleagues work as a single unit.

But all three agree on a trio of points: the need to learn from Manchester, which has seduced Whitehall into accepting that it can make efficient use of devolved powers, and the money that goes with them; the need for faster transport links with Manchester, and the importance of Liverpool's newly developed port.

As part of its wider plans for the north-west, Peel Group, a property and transport company, has led a consortium that has spent upwards of £400m dredging the Mersey and building a new container terminal on reclaimed land at Seaforth in Sefton, four miles downstream from the city centre.

Known as Liverpool2, the new terminal is one of the most advanced in northern Europe and can accommodate the massive ships that have been known as Post-Panamax vessels following the widening of the Panama Canal in 2015.

At a time when the British government is desperately trying to make sure Brexit works well, and attempting to secure new trade deals with countries around the globe, Liverpool2 offers British businesses a competitive new route to international markets.

It seems that Liverpool's face is not about to turn away from the sea for many years to come.

A version of this piece was previously published by Guardian Cities (www.theguardian.com/cities) on 27 April 2017.

CBS GALLERY & STUDIOS

Theo Vass, Joseph Hulme and Liam Peacock



Installation view, Jake Kent and Alfie Strong, 'Dormant Parasite', 2017

Established in 2015 to provide affordable studio space in Liverpool's city centre, CBS also presents a programme of exhibitions, talks and events showcasing the work of emerging artists from across the UK. Set up by graduates from Liverpool John Moores BA Fine Art course, the space aimed to fill a distinct gap in the artist-led activity in the city. That is to say, despite the perfect conditions in terms of low rent and available property, few graduates were staying in the city to set up new spaces or initiatives with a public facing exhibition programme.

The original site in the Crown Buildings on Victoria Street was a few minutes walk from the city centre and Lime Street Station, which made for busy openings and provided an alternative to the affordable artist studios that were often pushed to the outskirts of the city. Within the same building A Small Cinema set up on the ground floor, opening a community-run cinema. Between the two, this created a hub of grassroots cultural activity in a location that was accessible for residents and people visiting the city.

Unfortunately the studio's central location turned out to be too good to be true. At the beginning of 2017 the Crown Buildings along with neighbouring Grade II listed properties, the Jerome and Carlisle Buildings, were purchased by developers Signature Living with planning permission granted for a Luxury Hotel to compliment the one they built on the opposite side of the street the year before. A decade on from the European Capital of Culture award, increased investment and redevelopment of the city centre has called for new areas to emerge that



Karanjit Panesar, 'Untitled (gloopy clay)', 2017



Installation view, Perce Jerrom & Josh Whitaker, 'Mayhem Totes, Michaelangelo, Serge de Nimes...', 2016

allow for start-ups and grassroots initiatives. While this marginalisation of creative spaces from the city's centre has its negatives, it has also assisted in creating more concentrated creative communities in areas like the Baltic Triangle, where CBS moved to in March 2017.

For CBS the move provided a welcome point of renewal. The new location on Blundell Street in an old dock warehouse had the space needed to house a workshop, enabling sculptural production and picture framing services in-house to create greater financial flexibility independent of public funding. The success of which has been enhanced by the studio's integration in the local community of the Baltic Triangle and its proximity to a wider range of creative amenities.

As well as larger production space the new location offers a more generous gallery for the exhibition programme. The gallery acts as a space for the directors and studio holders to host a range of artistic projects, curatorial

experiments and residency exhibitions. The continued advocacy of artists is the underpinning aim of the gallery's activity. Artists who have previously exhibited are invited to submit artists' editions to be sold via an online shop, providing support to the participating artists and the opportunity for people to collect the work of emerging artists.

Around the same time that CBS was founded Rory MacBeth was appointed as the new head of the art school at LJMU. This marked a new outward facing approach to the Fine Art course. Establishing graduate residencies with local artist-led studios as well as points throughout the three years of the course to collaborate and work with local art communities. In its second year at CBS the graduate residency is providing a crucial platform for graduates looking to stay in the city and continue working, contributing to the growth of the artist-led network in the city and further afield.

THINGS WE'VE LEARNT (BUT NOT NECESSARILY IMPLEMENTED)

Always try and negotiate in kind at the beginning of your tenancy to allow time to build studios and a gallery without the financial pressure from your landlord.

Get larger galleries and institutions to donate their second-hand building materials to you.

Find out what funding you are eligible for and apply for all of it.

Be as transparent as possible with your studio members and put their issues first. They are the backbone of any good artist-led studios and their needs are paramount.

Stay connected with the universities and try to engage students and graduates as much as possible.

Provide snacks at exhibition openings, or even better Scouse, people get ratty when they are hungry.

Never underestimate how much drink will be drunk.

Seek the company of people with varied practices, and learn from them.

Support and promote other artist-led activity.

Always buy the same white paint.



CBS Logo redesigned by Jake Kent, 2017

LIVERPOOL: HERITAGE, CULTURE AND UNESCO

Professor John Belchem

Confronted by the prospect of yet more reputational damage and stigma for the city through the loss of UNESCO World Heritage status, Liverpoolians are beginning to eschew polarised and counterproductive opposition between redevelopment and heritage. There is an emerging consensus of the value of heritage and culture in regeneration, the latest twist in the complex and at times ironic history of these urban assets. A proverbial place apart, Liverpool does not conform to conventional historical narratives. After 'long centuries of small things', Liverpool underwent exponential growth in the 18th century, unencumbered by medieval tradition and restriction. 'The history of a place which has lately emerged from obscurity, and which owes, if not its being, at least its consequence to the commercial and enterprising spirit of modern times, cannot be supposed to afford many materials for the entertainment of the curious antiquarian', William Enfield explained in his 1773 guide. Other critics bemoaned the lack of civilised culture in materialist Liverpool, 'the slaving capital of the world'. In the rebranding exercise after abolition of the slave trade in the early 19th century, architecture and the arts came briefly

to the fore in 'Liverpolis', the would-be Florence of the north: symbolised by the magnificent St George's Hall with its inscription, 'Artibus, Legibus, Consiliis' ['Arts, Law, Counsel'], culture served to provide legitimacy and pride, to counteract the otherwise philistine, mercenary and squalid aspects of the great seaport's commercial success. Commercial enterprise, however, remained the dynamic force: by the late-Victorian period Liverpool was hailed, even in the London press, as 'the New York of Europe, a world-city rather than merely British provincial'. To maintain such global status required constant innovation and redevelopment, demolishing the obsolete and redundant to make way for the new. The most prestigious Edwardian development project, the Pier Head, was on land reclaimed from the obsolete George's Dock, a new waterfront location suitable for the 'palaces of trade' which attested to Liverpool's commercial pre-eminence, the famous three graces which still stand at the epicentre of the World Heritage Site.

After the Edwardian climacteric, Liverpool slid down the urban hierarchy, transmogrifying from proud second city of empire into the shock city of late 20th

century post-industrial, post-colonial Britain. Without sufficient means for major redevelopment (and attendant demolition), a remarkable architectural legacy remained, duly recognised by UNESCO as 'the supreme example of a commercial port at the time of Britain's greatest global influence.' Where the priority in most other World Heritage Sites has been tourist control and planning restriction to protect and preserve antique assets, the Liverpool case for inscription, strongly supported by the North West Development Agency, was markedly different but no less compelling. The prized status was to serve as catalyst to promote long-needed regeneration, cultural tourism and sympathetic development throughout the 'Maritime Mercantile City'.

From the outset, however, UNESCO inscription was overshadowed by the award of another prize: European Capital of Culture in 2008. Having been used to condemn commercial Liverpool and later to sanitise and embellish its commercial wealth, culture in the new 'Livercool' of the 21st century became the commerce of the city itself, a key driver in much-needed economic regeneration. Following the undoubted success of 2008, Liverpool – ever the party city – has invested in spectacular events and festivals with little long-term addition to the city's cultural infrastructure. In this respect, the World Heritage Site – provided it remains – offers a more permanent and sustainable means of enhancing the visitor economy and Liverpool's distinctive sense of place. Since inscription in 2004, there has been a significant reduction in the number of buildings at risk throughout the city, now well below the national average. There has been sympathetic conservation and conversion within the WHS itself of such challenging sites as the Stanley Dock and the massive Tobacco Warehouse. Liverpool's comparatively good record in the re-use and redevelopment of historic properties has been recognised by inclusion in a number of European

'heritage as opportunity' projects: indeed, in the forthcoming Horizon 2020 ROCK (Renewable Heritage in Creative and Knowledge Economies), Liverpool has been accorded 'role model' status. By historical irony then, it seems that Liverpool has become better at heritage – conservation and conversion of buildings – than at forward-looking new development.

Given the city's economic plight, forward-looking strategic planning has given way to opportunist reaction to speculative proposals: there has been a tendency to approve any development irrespective of quality. The consequences are clearly visible in the buffer zone of the World Heritage Site, an area now blighted by a surfeit of poorly designed (if that is the appropriate term) student accommodation and apart-hotels. The absence of proper height restriction and design requirements here has harmed the overall townscape character of Liverpool and impacted upon the World Heritage Site. What worries UNESCO, however, is a far more serious threat to the authenticity and integrity of the site and its outstanding universal value: the proposed Liverpool Waters development. There is an urgent need for regeneration of the central docks and north Liverpool, but this needs to be done in a sympathetic and strategic manner, respecting the integrity and authenticity of the area. To be fair to the local authority, there is a structural planning issue here which Liverpool alone will not be able to address: it will require co-ordination with government departments, notably DCMS and Communities and Local Government to redress what UNESCO has categorised as 'inadequate governance systems and planning mechanisms that undermine protection and management and therefore fail to sustain the OUV of the property'. By due attention to culture and heritage, Liverpool Waters could be an exciting development of high quality site-specific waterfront buildings, the proud heritage of the future which UNESCO and Liverpoolians would like to see. Peel Holdings please take note.

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE: PLACES & SPACES FOR CULTURE

Collated by Melissa Meyer



Toxteth Reservoir interior space, to be reimagined as part of FACT's Rewire project, 2018

Prompted by the 10-year anniversary of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture (ECoC) title, The Unlimited Edition takes a look at the subject of cultural infrastructure in the city and how this landscape has changed over the past decade. Cultural infrastructure can be understood as spaces and facilities for culture. Crucially, the term tries to capture both sides of cultural activity in a given place – the 'back of house' activities of rehearsal, production and creation, as well as the 'front of house' activities of display, performance and consumption.

With responses from:

MIKE STUBBS
Director / CEO, FACT

PAUL SULLIVAN
Director, Static Gallery

SALLY TALLANT
Director, Liverpool Biennial

How do you see the current provision of infrastructure for culture in Liverpool?

SALLY TALLANT

In terms of the wider cultural ecology, I think we have a really good spread of spaces that support artists at different levels in their careers and practices. For example, in the visual arts, we have a number of artist studio groups including The Royal Standard, Crown Studios and various others – and they're really important because they continue to feed into the creative ecology within the city.

Then going up a little bit, we have some smaller spaces, like Cactus Gallery, which I think are really important to maintain a healthy infrastructure – we are trying to encourage more grassroots galleries like these to pop up. In the next layer up, we have practice- or media-specific institutions, all of which have a different remit. It's a really healthy ecology of institutions

– we have Open Eye Gallery which deals specifically with lens-based media and photography, then we have FACT whose remit is to engage with new technologies, and also have a cinema so they do quite a lot of media and film-based practices there. Then we have the Bluecoat which is a community-arts centre model and works across artforms – they have a really good performance space and studios including dance studios. And then we come to the museums! Liverpool has the second largest number of museums after London, including the Tate of the North.

And then of course we have the Biennial. We deliver an ambitious year-round programme where we bring international artists and practices in conversation to other organisations in the city and we do a lot of talent development on the ground as well.

MIKE STUBBS

Liverpool is undeniably in a much better place than before the Capital of Culture accolade. It has become a city where it's more acceptable to do art, to be an artist, and make a living as a creative. Liverpool City Council has made a concerted effort to continue to invest in the arts and culture where other cities have not. This has enabled an ongoing confidence in art and culture as being a core part of the strategy to develop and improve everyone's quality of life. It's about the people as much as it is about the physical resources. That said, Liverpool has great venues and resources which, through collaborative working, fortunately get shared well. Over the last 10 years, Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC) and Creative Organisations of Liverpool (COOL) have brought together the larger and smaller arts organisations from across the region to work collaboratively on projects and really make the most of opportunities.

PAUL SULLIVAN

For STATIC, which mainly operates outside of public funding – having designed the structure of its business and architecture to develop a variety of income streams from commissions, to space hires, studio rentals, event sales, food sales and art/music sales (the latter two via associated concerns KIMCHI HUMAN and PRODUCT RECORDS) – the landscape is pretty much consistent. The STATIC space acts as a 1:1 scale physical space and organisational entity that allows us to continually operate and examine issues and subjects that interest us. The structure was designed to allow autonomy.

Are there particular forms of cultural infrastructure that are thriving or under threat?

PAUL SULLIVAN

STATIC, along with many other venues in the city, has been the recipient of a city council Noise Abatement Notice (2011) which has put on hold the use of the venue for any event with 'loud amplified noise'. STATIC was able to reconfigure its activities and income streams but other venues are either still under threat or have ceased to exist.

The local and national debate around noise in the city is still urgent, particularly in cities like Liverpool where the proliferation of large-scale private housing and retail development coupled with a strong resident and commercial lobby has successfully brought local politicians and council enforcement departments outside. In many cases, the interests of new residents and businesses, many attracted by the 'cultural vibe' of the city, has taken precedent over the interests of the long-established venues, many of which programme live music as just one of their activities, but one activity that is crucial to its financial stability.

MIKE STUBBS

As parts of the city were regenerated, some of the smaller, grungier spaces such as Mello Mello and Wolstenholme Square inevitably became victim to property developers. However that said, the Ten Streets project in the North Docks has accommodated some of those interesting displaced groups, the best example of which is Kazimier. Now situated at the Invisible Wind Factory, they've really risen to the challenge of occupying a larger, more ambitious space with their new focus on production. I see the role of the emergent artists and groups to occupy these types of spaces, and artists/creatives are generally pretty good at that and really without this activity the larger venues will suffer for lack of talent.

SALLY TALLANT

The ecosystem laid out in the visual arts is also echoed in theatre, and in music. We have a really strong music scene in the city, including lots of great independent music producers who are doing some quite experimental and interesting stuff, from Andrew Ellis up to the Philharmonic. We're very strong

REWIRE

Mike Stubbs

Let's imagine what Liverpool would be like now, had the European Capital of Culture not taken place in the city in 2008.

Then again best not, it's simply too dismal a picture.

But happen it did and 2018 marks the 10th anniversary of that fact but the year is not just about looking back but towards the future. My organisation, FACT will welcome international artists and Leeds-based Invisible Flock to

collaborate on the creation of an ambitious new project Rewire, for September 2018. FACT will work with Culture Liverpool, Invisible Flock and Dingle 2000 to explore some of the most prescient issues for our next 10 years.

Rewire is a meditation on water and the future, an epic, sonic, spatial, elemental work made for the iconic Toxteth Reservoir in Liverpool, built in 1845 to hold and supply 2 million gallons of water to the people of Liverpool.

Using bleeding edge technologies to conjure kinetic and digital landscapes that explore the human body in space and nature,

technology and magic will become indistinguishable.

Rewire will explore and bring to life a global world of water from those living at the forefront of climate change, from the monsoons of India to the disappearing islands of Indonesia. The event will directly invite audiences to experiment, play and imagine the future of water both here in Liverpool and around the world.

The Reservoir, an innovation in its day, distributed clean water to a burgeoning population in Liverpool as the city struggled with migrants from Ireland and Wales looking for food and work.

At the time of the reservoir's construction, the city had to reimagine its scale and modus operandi in relation to the rest of the world. And now, within an environment of potential mass migration, water shortages and disruption across most forms of society, can the people of Liverpool re-think what a city can be and how to be part of it?

As we clamour for Industrial Revolution.4, will we be able to see beyond the economic benefits, the fat cables and the smart technologies? Or is that in fact exactly what we need to keep our heads above water (pun intended)?

in visual arts – if I compare what we're doing to say Manchester or Leeds, I think we have quite a lot of artists in the city and I think there's a strong ecology and infrastructure that can support their development and bring an international dialogue to the table.

I think the artform that lacks infrastructure in the city is dance. There's MDI (Merseyside Dance Initiative) and there's LIC (Liverpool Improvisation Collective) at the Bluecoat, but I don't see much contemporary dance coming through the city. When I do present dance, people do come, but you need to build audiences, you can't just expect them to come regardless – you have to build their appetite and their interest.

What is the best way to 'build in' spaces for culture in the city?

SALLY TALLANT

It's possible but it's complicated. We have an organisation and we meet every two weeks called LARC (Liverpool Arts and Regeneration Consortium). It's made up of the chief executives of a number of bigger organisations and we have the smaller organisations represented in the group, and we try to lobby at a strategic level and work closely with the Liverpool City Council's culture team to think about how we can better embed a cultural strategy at the heart of the city's thinking and planning for the future. This all sounds marvellous and there's definitely a goodwill around the table – not only from the organisations but also from the city and the wider city region, including our mayor, Joe Anderson and our city region mayor, Steve Rotherham.

I think that the role of arts and culture has been understood and is welcome, because at this moment in late Capitalism there's a real need to re-invent what these post-industrial, post-manufacturing and post-port cities can do into the future. We have to think about what kind of jobs and employment people will have into the future and what the world of the creative industries will be. The population of Liverpool has declined since the 1930s from around 800,000 to under 500,000. It's growing now, but there's still a need for more people to move to the city.

Liverpool does have a desire to make itself a city where artists can live and thrive and not just where artwork is presented, but where artists can develop. We've had all kinds of fantasy conversations – can we give housing to artists?, can we create opportunities that give them long-term residencies?, can we support the desire we all have for people to grow in the city and to

show to our various platforms that it's not necessary to leave to be successful?, because I think that's a mistake.

So yes there are lots of things that can be done, but the number of stakeholders involved in making those things happen is complicated.

MIKE STUBBS

The best way is with people. With time, communities can make things happen. FACT itself came about from decades of development through Video Positive Festival and Moviola, a deep engagement programme and a lot of passion from the founders and surrounding audiences. And now, we're celebrating 15 years of the purpose-built FACT building on Friday 13 April and you're all invited.

PAUL SULLIVAN

It depends on what you mean by culture. In the context of the 2008 Capital of Culture title, in the bidding process the debate around what culture actually is in the city was largely closed down. Instead of looking in detail at what this could mean, how to engage with it or how to enable new projects, the successful bid reinforced the idea that the understanding, production and dissemination of culture could only be carried out by the existing funded 'arts organisations'. Although there was small-scale funding for smaller 'community' based projects, the majority of the funding went to the already established arts organisations and the newly formed Capital of Culture company.

In this scenario, cultural product is carefully controlled, selected and marketed for the benefit of the city's key agenda of developing commercial tourism. This essentially means that culture is ring-fenced for those who can receive funding in order to disperse it, and also ring-fenced geographically, ensuring that the majority of funding is prioritised to the city centre. Therefore, it is of course possible to 'hardwire' culture into a place, but again, it depends on what that culture is, or what that cultural product is.

How has the legacy of Liverpool's 'Capital of Culture' title impacted spaces for culture?

MIKE STUBBS

One of the legacies of the Capital of Culture accolade has been the development of cultural spaces in all sorts of places. For the more formal arts venues, that has meant continued investment to keep them open and in some cases redeveloped, such as the

Liverpool Philharmonic and Everyman Playhouse. FACT has used its own resources and fundraised to create an emphasis on residency opportunities and improved space for production such as FACTLab in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University.

At the other end of the spectrum, we have new spaces like The Royal Standard Gallery & Studios and Cactus Gallery popping up and growing stronger and stronger, transforming the surroundings of an old abandoned brewery into a vibrant place where artists can develop and exhibit their work.

SALLY TALLANT

In my opinion it's regrettable that we will be the last British city to host the Capital of Culture. 10 years on from when Liverpool was Capital of Culture, the city has radically changed and I think it's clear that the impacts were multiple. On one level, it was the confidence that came with that which gave the city a boost. Then you have the possibility of infrastructural development and change and I think that the actual fabric of the city has been changed since that time.

Furthermore, the city has to work together in a way that perhaps it hasn't done very efficiently before. Suddenly you are under enormous pressure to deliver a coherent, ambitious and 'world-class' programme and if organisations don't figure out how to work together, it would be a massive strain because there would be a competitiveness. So I think that the city learnt how to work strategically together across its different strands. LARC, for example, is a direct result of 2008 – we realised that we had to do it ourselves if it was going to be something we wanted and owned. There is also an understanding that we have to work hand-in-hand with all of the other parties including the city, and the LEP, and the developers and the others in order for us to make the wider city region argument. We learnt that from the Capital of Culture process.

How wide-reaching and accessible is culture in Liverpool?

MIKE STUBBS

Many arts organisations (especially those based in the city centre) recognise the need to work across the Liverpool City Region and build partnerships in areas of greater social deprivation. And with the new Liverpool Learning Partnership initiative, there is a cohesive effort to address some of these issues through local schools and arts organisations from across

the region. There is a lot to do but we can also see initiatives such as Heart of Glass in St Helens, which previously might not have had the confidence to push past conservatism and prove the value of culture to everyone.

SALLY TALLANT

I'd say that there's quite a lot of large-scale cultural infrastructure in the city centre – that's where the museums are, that's where people travel to – and I think a lot of those organisations already feel that they serve not only all of the city region but also a more broad Northern region and national remit in some cases. We've just been through a transition where we've moved to a metro-region mayoral model. What that actually means on the ground is that various local authorities that used to operate autonomously now have to collaborate and share various pots of money. This means that when money is spent, the desire is to see that delivered across the wider city region.

There are opportunities now to think about how we can have a more dispersed approach to where work is placed. The reason that it's been more centralised is very simple, and it is because Liverpool City Council continued to fund culture where the other local authorities didn't put the same level of funding. So it's often related quite straightforwardly to where the money comes from. And this is taxpayers money, so if I'm taking money from Liverpool City Council but doing all my activity on the Wirral, quite rightly people would expect to see the Wirral putting their cash on the table as well.

The city region has also received a city devolution deal from central government, which meant a certain amount of money was given to spend on cultural activity and infrastructure. Some of that is for trains, roads and housing, but some of the money is for culture and culture is cited in the devolution deal. We're moving to a time quite rapidly, and it's quite noticeable now, where in nearly everything we do we need to talk not just about how it benefits Liverpool but the wider city region too. That's definitely at the heart of how we're all thinking about how we can work, either in partnership or in identifying what you might call 'cold spots' for cultural activity, and thinking about how we can help or lend our resources and expertise to enable those areas to develop their own cultural offer or work in partnership with them to extend our own.



BOLD PLACE



ROSCOE LANE



KNIGHT STREET



UPPER DUKE STREET

A WALKING CIRCLE THROUGH ST HELENS

Karen Smith, critical friend of Heart of Glass and Patrick Fox, Director, Heart of Glass



Situating the practice and partnerships of Heart of Glass, drawing by Karen Smith

Heart of Glass is an agency for collaborative and social arts practice. We have iteratively built a programme in St Helens, changing ways of working in public spaces. Sometimes the evolving practice has emerged from oddity and disruption. Civic engagement with public space in this way was rare until Heart of Glass appeared in St Helens – during the original 2015 programme, we were often stopped because of the way we were moving people through the town. As the practice has become more embedded in the town, people are starting to see it as ‘a Heart of Glass thing’.

1) **BEECHAM BUILDING**
Heart of Glass work from Beecham Building. Part of Arts Council England Funded Creative People and Places programme, from 2018 we have achieved Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation funding and investment from St Helens Council.

2) **THE ROCKS**
Marking a car park boundary of ‘The Range’ retail store, The Rocks were moulded in fabric for ‘Silent Night’ one of our earliest productions with artist Rhona Byrne and local students in December 2014.

3) **THE HOTTIES, SANKEY CANAL**
Adjacent to the doors of ‘The Range’, the canal water of the Hotties disappears under tarmac. On a Saturday afternoon in November 2015, Marcia Farquar

began her perambulatory tour ‘A Song for St Helens’ here, on the railings, in a swimsuit and swimcap. Forming part of the ‘Through the Looking Glass’ weekend of events in partnership with Live Art Development Agency, the previous evening had seen ‘Duckie’ with Ursula Martinez at The Citadel, for which Heart of Glass had requested a (declined) nudity licence.

Three police squad cars pulled up. The police had been called by a ‘concerned member of the public’ who said there was a woman on the canal, taking her clothes off, and she was going to kill herself. Startled, we observed that Marcia was wearing a swimsuit, was not nude and was not undressing. A farcical conversation ensued which jumbled the previous night’s artists and events with the afternoon’s plans.

The kerfuffle caused by 15 people congregating, warranting three police squad cars was an interesting turning point. The use of heterotopic spaces has increased and from challenging beginnings, a solid relationship with the police has also evolved.

Artist Mark Storor has committed to working with us for 12 years on ‘Baa Baa Baric’. Two years into this artistic partnership, Storor’s project across the town in September 2017 marked the change in police relations. The police ran a chip shop for the day and police horses garlanded with flowers surrounded young people and the artist to question long-held assumptions of the town.

At World of Glass just along from the Hotties, Marisa Carnesky’s ‘Haunted Furnace’ took place. The history of glass making in the town has created venue, narrative and subject for Heart of Glass. World of Glass and the former Pilkington Glass Headquarters have been used for happenings from ‘Haunted Furnace’ in October 2015 to ‘Rear Window’ in November 2016.

4) **CHALON WAY MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK**
Across The Range carpark, the landmark Chalon Way Multi-Storey became one of the lead images for ‘Brass Calls’ with Artists French & Mottershead in collaboration with Haydock Brass Band. At the opposite entrance to Chalon Way carpark, artists Heather and Ivan Morrison are working to create a part-art work, part-civic space Skate Park with St Helens Skate community. As a partnership with police using police commissioners fund income and the council, public space will be reimagined. Skateboarders who are persistently moved on from Church Square will be able to reposition themselves literally and metaphorically.

5) **ST MARY’S MARKET**
St Mary’s Market hosts Platform Artists Studios and Heart of Glass popular weekly Family Art Club.

6) **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
Chamber of Commerce have agreed to acknowledge artistic practice as a contribution to workforce economy, and we’re continuing to develop connections with local businesses, including piloting an arts skills development course. We’ve also established an artist on St Helens Economy Board.

7) **VERA PAGE PARK**
At the opposite end of the Sankey Canal is Vera Page Park. Three signs demarcate the park, renamed via working with artist Joshua Sofaer on ‘Your Name Here’ in 2015.

This location forms the hub of council regeneration plans for a new town centre. Long-term, we’re working on St Helens becoming a centre for collaborative practice. St Helens Council is on the journey with us. Focused on culture, education and opportunity, we are working with the council on embedding a culture of production into the town. Built around culture, not retail. 2018 is St Helens’ 150th anniversary.

Vera Page Park is also a site for a proposed Pavilions project, and we’d like to see voluntary groups in St Helens work with Heather and Ivan Morrison to build structures that allow or create points of visibility for local creative communities.

8) **ST HELENS RFC**
Initially we were based at St Helens RFC. The partnership continues; on match days, pre-match and at half time we curate artists’ video screenings

in partnership with Abandon Normal Devices and FACT reaching a potential audience of 15,000.

9) **QUAKER LODGE (FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE)**
Quaker Lodge is St Helens’ oldest building. We partnered with The Quakers on Verity Standen’s ‘Refrain’ and held our second ‘WithForAbout’ conference here in May 2017.

As part of Takeover fest with Scottee in 2015, older people’s groups from across St Helens knitbombed Friends Park on Shaw Street. Installed on a Saturday, knitting covered most surfaces. By 10am on Sunday morning it had gone. Despite having permissions, the council ‘Clean Up team’ had been, not checked who had creatively dressed the space, and took it all away. Similarly, to the Marcia Farquar incident, we learnt an interesting lesson: in 2015 when the strange was encountered in St Helens, it was tidied away as speedily as possible. The veneer of cleanliness runs strong and inspired us to question ‘Where are we directing our attention?’ Skateboarders are ostracised after the town shuts down at 6pm and perceived as ‘anti-social’. Knitting is perceived as ‘mess’. With the council our aim is to reimagine and mobilise the energy of tidying away for more collectively positive ends.

Most projects at a point unearth some sort of democratic deficit. How do we make use of that knowledge well? ‘WithForAbout’ and other encounters create opportunities to have challenging conversations and share learning. Huge trust has been put in our programming. Tensions can exist in a project and we need to allow them to be there, to be part of learning and connecting with each other.

10) **GEORGE STREET QUARTER AND THE GEORGE PUB**
In October 2017 the Idle Women Institute was opened on Haydock Street, achieved with Arts Council Ambition for Excellence funding.

Verity Standen’s ‘Refrain’ featured a non-verbal male choir promenading around George Street in May 2017. ‘Refrain’ told the story of Ernest Everett; a school teacher in St Helens who was prosecuted as the UK’s first Conscientious Objector. The George Pub hosts many meetups for Heart of Glass and formed one of the locations for the choir.

11) **THE HARDSHAW SHOPPING CENTRE**
Artists’ collective The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent supported the re-instigation of benches outside the shopping centre. The shopping centre had removed all the benches, which were primarily used by pensioners. Many protests by older people’s groups had taken place. Forming part of our Live Art Weekender, the Institute dragged a bench into the shopping centre, utilised a megaphone, and refused to move.

12) **CHURCH SQUARE**
Church Square forms a congregation point in the town centre. In 2015 ‘Brass Calls’ was sounded here with composer Adam D J Taylor. Calls were created from personal tales and local phrases, and turned into musical scores performed and recorded by The Haydock Band. In 2017 the square hosted Candy Chang’s ‘Before I Die’. A project inviting people to contemplate death, reflect on life, and share their personal aspirations in public on chalkboard. We had to wipe our chalkboard six times a day, the level of interaction was so engaged.

13) **ST HELENS STAR HEADQUARTERS**
‘Your Name Here’ programme announcements were distributed free with the Star and reached 70,000 homes.

14) **THE TOWN HALL**
In May 2015 a three metre neon sign of the words ‘Your Name Here’ illuminated

the front of the Town Hall. Heart of Glass heads to the Town Hall most weeks to meet with council representatives ranging from the Chief Executive to Regeneration to Public Health.

15) **YOUNG CARERS CENTRE**
St Helens has a strikingly high population of young carers (over 2,500 under-18s). Mark Storor’s ‘Baa Baa Baric’ project is working with young carers as part of his 12-year commitment to Heart of Glass and St Helens.

BACK AT BEECHAM BUILDING COMPLETING THE CIRCLE
As Cultural Geographer Tim Cresswell observes, spaces are transformed into places when meaning is attached. Culture drives our place-based journey with all our partners. We are demonstrating that we can change thinking around cultural production and economy and fit the need to create new thinking and fit-for-purpose capital development in the town. We hope that development can speak to

ART AS A MEANS TO THE TRUTH

Alison McGovern, MP for Wirral South

It may be 10 years since Liverpool was European Capital of Culture, and 20 years since the planning for the Liverpool Biennial kicked off, but it is the 30-year anniversary – 1988 – to which my mind wanders when I think about the difference that art makes. In 1988, I was eight years old. Like any child, I was aware but not conscious of the political arguments of the day.

And it was in 1988 – when the prospects of the city of Liverpool otherwise were grim – that it was decided that the Tate of the North, a new modern art gallery outside London, would be housed in a warehouse on the banks of the Mersey. The path to Capital of Culture was laid. The outlook seemed dire, but artists set up camp in the most unlikely spot. As so often, artists found diamonds in our dirt. We did not know it back in 1988, but it had changed everything.

A year later, politics came crashing into my life. The Hillsborough disaster, and its needless, preventable crushing of Liverpool fans, was as confusing to me as an eight-year-old as it was devastating for the adults around me. The prime minister of the day

did not give me the impression of being very sympathetic to the situation. We wondered how people could be treated this way. We wondered how they could not be heard. This horrific event – the hiding of the truth – would define our city for years to come.

But though we did not know it, the twin tracks of the political fight of our lives, and a determination to tell our true story would save Liverpool. In 2018, as we look backwards through the emergence then explosion of Liverpool’s cultural life, it is this interplay between art and politics that I think has made culture and the arts so important to the people of Merseyside.

As a place to grow up, Liverpool and the region around it did not always offer young people of my generation the opportunities that other parts of the UK could. The population shrank as career prospects looked slim. The one thing that we did have was cultural infrastructure. The ‘Phil’ as everyone called the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and their wonderful hall. The Everyman, our crazy theatre-in-the-round with well-worn seats. The Tate. The Bluecoat. Art.

real community need, as the effects of austerity and a crumbling community development sector continue to be felt. Utilising existing venues and public space in St Helens and co-opting any new capital spaces might eclipse the allure of new, less communal

distractions. Our 2018 programme of work shares this long-term ambition with the local authority and with Arts Council England. St Helens Council have invested substantially in our 2018 programme as the transformation of St Helens continues.



‘Baa Baa Army of Beauty’, part of Mark Storor’s ‘Baa Baa Baric’ residency

These things kept us going through the bad days. Our backs may have been against the wall financially, but I saw Lichtenstein in the Albert Dock. Brecht on Hope Street. Simon Rattle guesting at the Phil. These things kept us believing in ourselves. They helped us tell a story that this wasn’t the place you had heard of. Our culture was good. This wasn’t the place The Sun newspaper told you about. Whatever the poverty, we had our riches. We had a place to be proud of.

And then, slowly but surely, came the new Liverpool. The expansion of our universities in the 1990s brought students from all over. The students brought their money, and they spent their money. This meant our city centre had a proper night-time economy again. Liverpool Biennial pushed the boundaries when in first took over the city in 1999. FACT – our arthouse home of film – opened in 2003. There was a hunger for culture, a demand. And right at this point came the decision that we would be European Capital of Culture. Somewhere, someone was looking out for us. And as if by magic in 2005, Liverpool FC won the European Cup. Against all the odds, we were back. Something was in the air.

And all at once, the most important moment for Liverpool’s cultural scene happened: 2008. All of this work had been leading up to a moment when we would get to tell our story. And in 2008 it came. Bang. Opinion about Liverpool changed overnight. Gone were the pitiful looks from those in power. Gone were the sneers. Gone were the nay-sayers, the doom-mongers, the cynics, the hate. Bang. Everyone loved it. Bang. Everyone had a ball. Lots of people will write about how the magic happened. I just say this: we were determined and

proud. After decades of sadness and anger, we were determined to be proud.

And that has been Liverpool since. Loving art, having a ball. Proud. Meanwhile, the year after – 2009 – we got to tell our story. And though from that horrific day to this it has taken us nearly 30 years, we made sure the truth of our city – of Hillsborough – was heard. Helped along the way by artists and playwrights, sculptors and writers, singers and composers, we finally recorded the truth of that terrible offence against people who had just gone to a football game to have a good time. The strength of our culture – our identity – turned out to be our salvation in more ways than one.

But now we have a new agenda. We have to reach out. Our city centre is not enough. The towns around it, Birkenhead, Huyton, Southport, New Brighton, St Helens, they have their story to tell as well. They are places we should be proud of, and that will take investment in their cultural infrastructure – from the Williamson Art Gallery, to the seafront promenades and the industrial landscapes that hold so much history.

This is a serious challenge. Finances are a problem once more, and whereas the public sector worked with the private sector to help rebuild the city for 2008, the functions of the state in Merseyside are again hamstringed by cuts from a government in London. This will have to change over the decade to come. We are not content with the inner city thriving and outer towns failing. It is not good enough. We need to rebuild again.

There is another challenge ahead. Young people of my generation once felt they had to leave the city to do well. That is no longer true. Not only

has the population of the centre of the city doubled in the past decade, but people now are doing their own thing economically. Rather than moving away, they are congregating in Liverpool's Baltic quarter where start-ups and social enterprises are not just using new technology, but are rewriting the rules of business and enterprise. It is a wholesale regeneration of ambition, as much as it has brought old buildings back into use.

This is also true for the night-time economy. The visitor trade that came in 2008 has never left, giving rise to

plenty of new bars and restaurants and a whole new aspect of our culture. Even better, places like The Brink and The Florrie create night-time environments that design in social inclusion. Regeneration of the soul of our city, as well as its economy.

But this regeneration brings risks and rewards.

Liverpool and Merseyside must be allowed to choose our own path that keeps our city true to itself. We do not want design – of buildings or of culture – planted in from elsewhere but rather, grown up from our own roots.

I would rather live in a place at risk of overdevelopment, than falling apart from under investment, but nonetheless, we must be careful that we keep the best of the old while we build the new. City centre residences cannot push out space for music and art, and we have to balance our gratitude to those who wish to now invest with a serious requirement that they do not fundamentally change the character of our culture that has kept us strong.

The cultural infrastructure built, not just over the past 10 years, but over the past 30 years, has allowed

Liverpool and the city region to have its say. We are a place that is full of stories. A city that loves a tall tale but hates the injustice of lies. There are few places where art and culture thrive with public support in the manner that it does in Merseyside because of what art and culture has given us: a sense of ourselves.

Art is truth, so they say. Well, over the past 30 years, art was the means to truth. For the city I love, anyway.

PASS THE PARCEL

Art, Agency, Culture and Community

Nina Edge



Warming up for the Brouhaha International Festival on the corner of Kelvin Grove, 2013

Photograph by Nina Edge



Contravision: Repeat patterns for Condemned Housing, Liverpool Biennial Fringe, 2016

Photograph by Tom Lea

The following is an excerpt from the Liverpool Biennial's 'Stages' #5.

Community arts is an area of work that at its best, catalyses creative action – and at its worst, exploits and makes fools of us all. The most successful and admired work I've made in the field falls outside the existing frameworks and expectations of community art. Its scope, longevity and ambition went beyond anything facilitated by arts administrators and well beyond anything I imagined possible.

GATECRASHERS

As well as commissioning permanent public realm and rebranding artworks, regeneration companies routinely hire community artists for targeted direct contact with communities where regeneration plans are afoot. Artists are brought in to aid goodwill, engender trust, involve people, and mediate change, as much as to make art. The kind of art that might change perceptions of an area, adorn the pages of an annual report, be used in a public inquiry or add value to property development. Artist's residencies on regeneration projects have documented environments destined for destruction, used demolition spoil for building artwork, and collected The Hopes of a neighbourhood. The Fears though? Not so much. The creative agenda for community art projects funded by the regenerator will likely differ from that of the local artists or residents. One

is primarily concerned with promoting a Promised Land, the other is focused on surviving the external investment, and the social cleansing or gentrification that might come with it.

The task of shining a light on the displacement and dismay of the people designed out of post-demolition development is not going to be supported by the developers and regeneration officials. Such visions run contrary to the interests of the development partnerships. By chance, I joined one of many communities destined for demolition in 2004, when my home and neighbourhood in Liverpool were scheduled for destruction. I translated my experience as a piece of human spoil into an artwork that was appreciated by the local community and others like it. It was reviewed in the art press, covered in the academic press and was toured in a North of England textile exhibition. The work 'Nothing Is Private' – a net curtain with audience-activated security lighting was shown and promoted as part of Liverpool Independents Biennial in 2006. So it straddled many communities and resonated in multiple contexts. It was shown in the front window of my home. I live over the road from Granby in an area similarly blighted by failed regeneration schemes and where another grassroots campaign has succeeded in rescuing homes from the bulldozers.

When my home and studio in Liverpool's Welsh Streets was threatened with demolition in a regeneration area, the Compulsory Purchase Orders did

actually come with the sweetener of an official artist-in-residence, Moira Kenny, who came and worked in an empty house in Powis Street for a number of weeks in June 2006. The residency, funded by the local Housing Market Renewal (HMR) company New Heartlands and their partners Plus Dane, took place in an empty corner shop on the contested site. Applications for the post were filtered. I was forbidden from tendering for the official Welsh Streets residency, despite being a Welsh Streets resident and an artist. As secretary and spokesperson for the local campaign group seeking alternatives to demolition, I had a national media profile, my opinions were known, and the protagonists

of the scheme presumably needed to prevent me from articulating dissent amongst a local audience. In protest, a reputable local community art group refused to apply for it themselves as a response to my exclusion. So they filtered themselves out in solidarity.

A closed tender process selected an artist from outside the area, but inside the arts community, who came and made artwork in Powis Street. I showed my work concurrently with her official Welsh Streets residency work as part of Liverpool Independents Biennial 2006. I suppose I effectively infiltrated the programme of creative work visible in the district, made a local dimension available and overcame the ban by simply being a) a resident and

b) an artist. The work – the net curtain – received critical acclaim expounding the loss of privacy and personal autonomy faced by the little people when confronted with big plans. Its performative aspect (the work exposed the household to the street by lighting them) was as uncomfortable for the viewer as it was for the viewed. Rather than sit by and become the invisible Welsh Streets resident artist passed over by powerful external interests, I created a piece that engineered super visibility. Without a doubt I was emboldened by the support of my community.

The 'Nothing is Private' net was made and toured as part of the 'Mechanical Drawing' exhibition produced by the Embroidery Department at Manchester Metropolitan University. So it was enabled by another community: the embroiderers, textile makers, lace workers and academics in the North West who view me as a radical textile artist, and a bona fide member of their community. So they visited too, travelling to the Welsh Streets mostly from the North. I put out a visitor's book and people wrote in it, thus becoming part of the archive of commentary about the streets, the houses. A new dimension was added to the cultural tourism package that Liverpool is so proud of: the ghetto tourism of the tinned-up terraces.

They were followed by Heritage tourists, UNESCO walking tours, Jane's Walk town planners, law and social science departments, urbanists, artists, drama, art and composition students, historians, archivists, architects and journalists, TV crews and animators. All visited the Welsh Streets and as campaign spokesperson I spoke with

them all. In 2016, Samson Kambalu filmed in the Welsh Streets for a new commission that was presented as part of Liverpool Biennial 2016. He walks in the footsteps of numerous photographers, among them Mark Loudon & Sandy Volz (commissioned by Welsh Streets Home Group), Rob Bremner, Peter Carr, Peter Haggerty and Ciara Leeming, who included us in her comprehensive photographic journal of the HMR process. Kambalu will join countless press photographers, TV cameramen and bloggers. All welcome, all walking the wasted Welshies, pointing cameras at our homes while we twitch our nets.

And me, I've taken thousands of photographs here too, because as campaign spokesperson, I found that a picture speaks a thousand tears. The net curtain 'Nothing Is Private' is a direct action that harnessed art as both a shield and a decoder in a war of information. It can be contextualised among other cultural resistances that renegotiate imposed narratives. Here the flimsiest, lowliest media articulated the experience of dread and degradation experienced by communities in clearance zones and became a testimony to that experience. It was documented in art and academic publications. Could it have been commissioned by a community arts organisation? None that I know of. Community art tends to avoid controversy. The work toured Northern cities where large-scale demolition was also being unrolled, by coincidence of economic history and the demise of textile production in the region. The regeneration consortia have a commissioning agenda and PR

budget focused on the need to mediate the developer's aspirations. Anything else the community produces – well, the community will pay for. And pay they did.

AFTER PARTIES

Cultural output from the broader community followed the net curtain. There was an extraordinary outbreak of unsolicited, unfunded and sometimes un-legal cultural intervention in and around the contested Welsh Streets. Playwrights, community theatre groups, poets, photographers, graffiti mongers, choirs, bands, filmmakers, animators, stitchers, photographers, seed-sowers and yarn bombers passed through the Welsh Streets each leaving a small mark. Mark of respect maybe. To residents each small work marked a small survival. Morale was super-boosted with every contribution. It blew over the road into Granby Four Streets, who were, according to them, quite sparked up by the Welsh Streets tin sheet drawings and daffodil planting. They were to go creative in grand style – with paintings and planters that far exceeded our Welshie productions in scale and quality.

The genius Granby neighbourhood campaigners founded a community market that included music, art, food and stalls. That meant a financial, social and cultural exchange mechanism was operating across two clearance sites, one on either side of Princes Avenue. It was a community, and it was art – but unique, self-directed and un-administered. We (that is, the Welsh Streets Home Group or WSHG) swapped campaign news, traded ideas

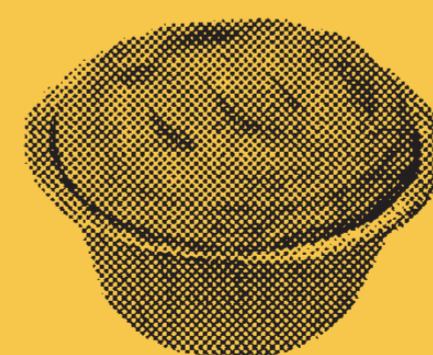
and ran campaign events on stalls at the Granby Four Streets Market, at carnival, in Toxteth Town Hall, Toxteth TV and in the local shops and chippies. We had received local and national press for years, but nothing glued us together and drew us out and drew us together as well as culture did. A community of supporters had made themselves visible independently, creatively and repeatedly. The media coverage of threatened communities and their homes in the Welsh Streets was unabated; four TV features supplemented considerable print and radio coverage.

Liverpool Biennial began projects in Anfield and Bootle, both areas stalked by the bulldozers. As the renowned Homebaked Anfield project went from strength to strength, TV foodie Jay Rayner arrived to judge a baking contest. I entered a loaf of bread in the bake-off, for which I made special commemorative packaging. It was a throwaway thing. Merchandising survival. The wrapper read 'RISE UP ANFIELD' in red and 'Greetings from the Welsh Streets' in green. I took a picture and tweeted it. It pinged – appearing in ghost form when Liverpool Football Club used a similar wolverly red text to repeat my slogan on a 12 x 24 ft hoarding outside the ground, opposite the Homebaked bakery. So 'RISE UP' left the bread wrapper, travelled via social media and landed on the hoarding of (one of) our famous football club(s). You're welcome LFC.

The full piece originally appeared in the Liverpool Biennial online journal 'Stages' #5 titled 'Community Arts? Learning from the Legacy of Artists' Social Initiatives'.

SHANKLEY PIE

Homebaked Chefs



INGREDIENTS (Makes 10 pies)

For Filling: 1kg Braising Steak, 500g Steak Mince, 200g Smoked Bacon (cubed), 180g Shallots/Onions (peeled and finely chopped), 180g Button/Chestnut Mushrooms

(finely chopped), 1 small bunch fresh Tarragon, 1.5 tbsp Vegetable Oil, 500ml Beef Stock, Cornflour to thicken, Seasoning to taste.

For Pastry: 650g Plain Flour, 125g Margarine, 125g Shortening, generous pinch of Salt, 200ml Water

METHOD

1. In a hot pan seal off the pieces of braising steak and set aside in a large casserole or baking dish.
2. In another pan, fry off the bacon until crispy, add chopped onions and fry until tender.
3. Add chopped mushrooms to onion/bacon mix.
4. When all beef is sealed, add veg/bacon mix to the casserole.
5. Add steak mince and stock.
6. Cover with foil and bake in oven at 180C for two hours and 150C for a further four hours.

7. For the pastry put the flour and salt in a large bowl and add margarine and shortening. Use your fingertips to rub margarine and shortening into the flour until you have a mixture that resembles coarse breadcrumbs with no large lumps of butter remaining. Try to work quickly so that it does not become greasy.
8. Using a knife, stir in just enough of the cold water to bind the dough together.
9. Alternatively using a food processor, put the flour, margarine, shortening and salt in the food processor and pulse until the fat is rubbed into the flour. With the motor running, gradually add the water through the funnel until the dough comes together. Only add enough water to bind it and then stop.
10. Wrap the dough in cling film as before and chill for 1hr before using. The pastry can be made up to two days ahead and kept in the fridge or frozen for up to a month.

11. Roll out the dough to the thickness of a one pound coin and cut out round pieces, for example using a saucer or pie cutter as template. The size is dependent on pie case you use. After you fill out the case there should be a small rim hanging over the sides.
12. Roll out the leftovers to make pie lids with a smaller pie cutter.
13. Fill the pies with your filling, then use egg wash to seal the lid on. Trim the excess and crimp the edges.
14. Cook pies in a preheated oven at 220C/200C fan/gas mark 7 and place a flat baking tray in the oven. Make a few little slits in the centre of the pie, place on the hot baking tray, then bake for 40 minutes until golden. Leave the pie to rest for 10 minutes.

This piece originally appeared in the Liverpool Biennial online journal 'Stages' #2 titled Homebaked: A Perfect Recipe.

TRADING VALUE(S)

The Locations and Dislocations of a World Heritage Site

Tamara West
Institute of Cultural Capital

In 2004 Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City was listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site (WHS). The six areas and associated buildings that make up the site are spread across the city, stretching from the Pier Head and the world famous waterfront buildings, the Stanley and Albert Dock areas, Lower Duke Street and the Rope Walks area, Castle Street and the historic commercial district, through to William Brown Street and the cultural quarter. To get from one part of the WHS to the other you walk through and see the different layers of the city in which they are embedded.

The site was judged by UNESCO to be of 'outstanding universal value' (OUV) due to Liverpool's role as a major world trading centre of the British Empire in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. The OUV is something that transcends

national boundaries and because of this is of importance to all peoples worldwide. For a site to be included on the list it must meet several criteria, demonstrating its outstanding and unique nature, and provide details of how the site will be protected alongside an in-depth management plan. World Heritage status therefore brings with it a responsibility to preserve and protect the site for current and future generations, and with this to communicate the meaning(s) of the OUV both locally and globally. Liverpool's buildings and innovations tell complex stories of Empire, colonialism and slavery and the multitudes of people and goods arriving and departing through the port and the wider city. They also tell of creativity, innovation, and of local people's everyday lives, movements and practices, reflecting the fortunes

of a city that has felt the impacts of global, national and local social, political and economic change.

Heritage is on the one hand often exalted as an economic driver, used in city planning and marketing brochures as a driver for investment, tourism, or global brand creation. Other times heritage is portrayed as an obstacle, standing in the way of aspirations of progress and development. The two issues of development or preservation are not, as is sometimes presented, simply two flip sides of a coin. They are interlinked, addressing the fundamental question of how we want the spaces in which we live to look, to function, and to bridge across our pasts and our futures. Most importantly they both force us to ask who the city and any heritage or new developments within it belongs to and benefits. Planning and conservation are also two areas and processes which people can increasingly feel alienated from, even though they affect our everyday lives today and in the future.

Conflicts arising in heritage sites are often due to dislocations between how the sites are presented globally as opposed to how they are experienced or communicated locally. People, for varying reasons, may often not see their own concerns or narratives encompassed within the heritage dialogue. As a report into the impact of losing WHS status undertaken here at the Institute of Cultural Capital in 2013 demonstrated, there has often been an unnecessary binary

in discussions around the WHS and a lack of communication locally of the diverse values and meanings of it. Recent debate has at least served to bring these issues into the foreground and foster a wider discussion.

It would be a shame for so many reasons if Liverpool lost its WHS status. That the buildings will survive and still form a vital part of the city beyond UNESCO de-listing is not the issue. World heritage status is not only the maintenance of a particular set of buildings or a specific vista. It is a link across geographies and generations and the recognition and upholding of a set of shared responsibilities. It is about inviting – and in some cases re-inviting – the local and the global to explore how lives, histories and practices intersect and progress within a certain place. Just as the physical nature of heritage sites can be in danger, so too can the spaces and practices that exist around them. The everyday things such as memories, stories, interactions and activities that anchor heritage to place and people to heritage can often become fragile or overlooked. The fate of a world heritage city is as such no different from the fate of a city itself. The same questions of what is valued, how, and by whom have to be asked. The sharing of, education around, and the importance of finding ways of listening to and negotiating a balance for sometimes necessarily contesting narratives help ensure heritage – and cities themselves – live and survive as something that is vital and that belongs to everyone.

A CREATIVE CARE-TAKING OF SPACE

Hannah Martin in conversation with Eleanor Lee, Granby 4 Streets CLT

Eleanor Lee has been a resident of Granby since 1976 and was one of the founding members of Granby Four Streets Community Land Trust (CLT), set up in 2011. For well over a decade, Eleanor and her neighbours have been devoted to keeping these vacant streets of Granby alive with guerilla gardening – planting flowers, fruit trees, herbs, vegetables and climbers in the midst of boarded-up properties. Initially, their work was an attempt, as they describe it, to create green links connecting the houses of handful of remaining neighbours – but this spread to the whole street, moved into the adjacent

ones and then whole families turned out to create a wildflower meadow on the vacant land where houses had been demolished.

Today as new residents begin to inhabit the previously vacant properties, and with the Turner Prize firmly under their belt, the Granby CLT and architecture and art collective Assemble are continuing to work together to develop a winter garden for Granby, with the help of members of the community, and artists from Liverpool and beyond.

Hello... tell us about the Winter Garden in Granby

The Winter Garden is just the most brilliant project. It creates an amazing set of spaces from two-up two-down Victorian terraces on Cairns Street – properties which were utterly derelict. They were originally due to be refurbished as houses by the CLT, but they were in such poor condition it was just not financially viable to do so. So they have been reimagined. One house becomes a public indoor garden, that stretches right up to a glass roof – it'll be a green and peaceful space as well as a resource for the garden, and street planting that takes place all around. The other house will become a combined community and creative space. It will house an artist residency space for about six months of the year and an Airbnb for the other six months, to make it financially self-sustaining – and all year round it will be a community meeting place – a social and skill-sharing resource.

Most of the meetings which made things happen on our streets, were not the big public meetings – but lots of little ones in between them – where three, four and five of us got together. The Winter Garden will be a sustainable community owned and managed resource and a driving force for community creativity and activities.

What is the artist in residency programme?

The arts development programme started in October – and combines a horticultural commission to design the indoor garden, and a pre-launch arts development programme – and they're running alongside each other. Nina Edge is our first artist in residence who is working collaboratively on designing the garden and also creating an artwork for the garden itself.

The arts programme is a test bed for us – to experiment and embrace a range of art forms working with local, national and international artists. The first workshop was by Eva Savajic and Corinne Silva from London who work on a project called The People's Bureau in the Elephant and Castle – they created lovely cyanotype prints using sunlight, plants and flowers from Granby. We've also had spoken word poetry workshops led by the brilliant Amina Atiq and Levi Tafari, and Karen Guthrie from Grizedale Arts who ran a hydrosols workshop – making flowered waters from plants, which was extraordinary. Vicki Opumo ran a fantastic workshop producing marbled paper and bookmaking – and Sandi Hughes and Michelle Peterkin-Walker ran a brilliant film-making one

on the 'Politics of Plants' – exploring political themes about land, resistance, survival, knowledge.

Why is the Winter Garden important to Granby?

In this area, over the last few decades, the focus has always had to be on housing – which isn't really surprising because we've been under threat of demolition for over 20 years! But alongside the loss of houses, there has been asset-stripping of a whole infrastructure of shops, social/meeting places etc, community organisations have disappeared, and those who have hung on, on the whole are hugely underfunded. There used to be about 80 shops in Granby when I first moved here – and now there is a handful at either end. Houses alone are not going to rebuild a community. If you look at what it takes to rebuild areas and local infrastructures – it doesn't happen all at once, it happens gradually and different levels and forms of investment build

up their impact. As of yet there hasn't been any investment in strengthening and rebuilding the infrastructure in this neighbourhood.

The Winter Garden alone isn't going to resolve this – but it will provide a unique practical and beautiful space, which will be sustainable and community-owned. I think you can use creativity to make things that are useful and beautiful – and there's a real shortage of that. It can link up with Granby Street Market and Granby Workshop – and can be part of creatively building this area. It's just one aspect of thinking big for the vision but thinking smaller and smarter for ways to achieve it.

What is the CLT's role in rebuilding Granby's infrastructure?

The housing associations have refurbished houses – but in terms of investing in people and infrastructure, so far they just haven't done so. I see the CLT as being able to access funding

from a wide range of sources that they and the council can't. It's also ideally placed to be more imaginative, try out new things, experiment, take risks.

What have been your motivations behind the street gardening?

It's always hard to answer – I think in the very beginning it was a reaction to years and years of inaction while living in such an incredibly degraded and neglected physical environment. I think it just enraged me that the community was so dispensable, of so little value. It was as if we didn't exist – as if no one still lived here. But I've learnt that taking care of and ownership of public space is incredibly important. It affects the whole atmosphere in a street – turning rather haunting, derelict streets into green, safe, sociable places, not threatening ones. People thought to plant in this

way would be impossible, when we first started. All our planting is out in the open, not behind high fences and locked gates – and people thought it would just be vandalised and/or robbed. And although this has happened, it hasn't done to the extent that was predicted – and it's always been manageable. So our planting has gone from strength to strength.

The gardening and reclaiming of the streets have been mainly, though not completely, carried out by women. It has been a process of moving out of interior domestic space into external communal space – a creative care-taking of space that has also made it a woman-friendly street, where women and kids can and do, sit and chat. So from being a place that was demonised and nearly destroyed, it's now a place where you can imagine bringing up children, putting down roots, helping to rebuild and recreate a great place to live.

GRANBY HERBARIUM OF RESILIENT PLANTS OF RESISTANCE WORKSHOP

Led by artists Corinne Silva and Eva Savajic



Photograph by Silve Savajic

On 14 October 2017, we led a one-day workshop with Granby Four Streets CLT for local participants of all ages, with the intention of creating a Granby Herbarium of Resilient Plants of Resistance. Walking in the local area, we took cuttings of plants, many of which were planted by community activists in the campaign to save Granby. The cuttings were brought back to the workshop and pressed onto paper and fabric to create cyanotypes. During the day, participants shared

stories, memories and knowledge around the plants gathered. While the fabric cyanotypes were taken home by participants, those on paper have been bound into a book available for visitors to the Granby Winter Garden.

Our long-term aim is to further develop this herbarium by including personal and collective narratives and knowledge around each plant included. As Granby grows, it will also make links between more established and newer residents, their homes and gardens.



THE MAKING OF NEW BIRD DIY SKATEPARK

Craig Williams

Before we started building at New Bird, there was only a big block of concrete there that had been a barrier of some kind once upon a time. The rest of the site was a fly-tipping spot, pretty much everything the tip wouldn't take was there; like old toilets, bags of women's clothes, builders refuse, tyres – it was a real mess. So we thought why don't we just clean it up and use it to skate. We had no permission to build so three of us just went to the site wearing high-vis attempting to look like council workers! We put down the first concrete skateboard obstacle – it was terrible!

What drew us to that part of town was that it was all totally derelict. The bylaw that made it illegal to skate anywhere in the city centre had just been passed and it was being over zealously enforced! The only people down there on the site were gangsters and they left us alone.

There had however (luckily for us) been an urban beach-themed art exhibition on the site resulting in about 10 tonnes of sand being left there, which we ended up using to build the park's earliest bits. We had a collection tin in the skate shop Lost Art and anyone who was around on a summer's day, when there was building going on, would go and help. We had 10-year-old kids with trowels in their hands helping us and we'd tell them 'just make a little bit and it's yours'. There'd be 10 or 12 kids down there everyday helping to build it purely because they wanted to skate it when it was finished.

Initially the only people we had to speak to were the 'ice cream mafia' – they owned the land, but weren't using it at the time. One day this big blacked out Mercedes pulled up, the window rolls down and this guy starts beckoning us over, so we went over to speak to the

guy, who turned out to be cool once we explained what and why we were building. We came to an agreement that if we didn't build against the walls of the existing building, and compromise the damp course, and we would agree to buy ice cream every time the van came past, that we could do whatever else we wanted! Since then the land has had a few owners, firstly Co-operative Bank, who put fences up around it – they were scared about insurance and someone suing them if they hurt themselves. No one knew it had changed hands so we just turned up to skate and

suddenly there was a 3ft green wall all around it. A couple of us spoke to the radio and the newspapers – the Biennial sorted it out in the end and paid the bank a year's worth of insurance for the land, we didn't ask them to, they just did!

The council purchased the land from the bank and guaranteed for it to be used as a skatepark for at least five years. The council were amazingly very supportive – they paid for the original fence, and dropped off tonnes of surplus concrete from a council project for us to build the first big area of the skatepark.

As more and more skaters got involved and started going down there, the area started to get better, the shop over the road flourished, the CUC (Contemporary Urban Centre) opened up and more arty types were exposed to what was going on at the park – the area definitely had a buzz starting around it. I think the park being there contributed a lot to the area, financially

for the little shop it was great, and for the businesses popping up like Constellations, it was good to have a load of friendly people, on the same wavelength around. Sadly someone shot a gentrification gun all over the place, and in came the people we were trying to escape, club nights spilling out into the park, smashed glass bottles every weekend. It's still just left to us to clean up and maintain in our time, with our own pooled money and donations from the odd skate company. There is a bit of conflict arising with new businesses coming in as they tend to think New Bird is a dangerous eyesore! As a result a few businesses have got a few grand together for a new fence.

Hopefully we're here to stay, god knows how long we can get away with it though! And if the best thing that comes from it is the council committing to something being built to replace it if the site is redeveloped, then our job has been worth it.



Photographs by Ash Wilson



CONTRIBUTORS TO ISSUE VII

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The headline typeface used in this issue is Quick Brush by Out of the Dark, which imitates the characteristics of a brush with its variable stroke widths and is influenced by sign painting and graffiti