

Dover Society Trip to Liverpool

Friday 14th to Monday 17th September 2018

Introduction

Sheila Cope

The fact that this trip took place at all is due to Patricia's sheer determination and perseverance as, together with Patrick's support, she gradually found more participants, even beyond the deadline, so that the event could go ahead without incurring a loss to The Society. I trust that the great success of the venture justified Pat's efforts in the end and those of us who were able to go owe her a real debt of gratitude for providing such an interesting and enjoyable experience.



Albert Dock Liverpool

We have found the coach firm of Leo's Pride reliable and efficient on previous occasions. Janet was our driver this time. One would never have guessed that she had not driven on this particular trip before, yet we were able to relax, feeling assured that we were in safe hands. Janet's skill in manoeuvring such a large coach around Liverpool and Chester at the bidding of the City Guides on board was most admirable.

Our hotel was comfortable with helpful staff who remedied our minor problems. Nothing is ever perfect. The journey there



National Memorial Arboretum © Derek Donnelly

was a little tedious due to heavy traffic and the homeward journey was delayed by an accident on the M25, but these were mere blips which only served to emphasise how trouble-free and pleasurable the whole trip had been. And what excellent value for money! There was even an extra bonus for four members who were able to meet up with their grandchildren.

National Memorial Arboretum

Friday 14th

Rodney Stone

The trip to Chester took in a visit to the Arboretum in Staffordshire. Now woodland on old gravel pits, this contains memorials of more than 360 organisations who wish to remember the service and sacrifice, often death, that people and one ship's cat! gave to this country. In 1994 PM, John Major, launched a fund-raising appeal, and it opened in 2001. The response for finance and volunteer support, from parts of government, the Services and civilian groups, has been enormous, and

organisations are still acquiring pieces of land there to commemorate people who remain dear to them.

While we were there the Royal Army Dental Corps were remembering lost colleagues, and there are many groups, serving and retired, who come regularly. There are major gatherings on Remembrance Day and other anniversaries. Memorials range from a simple plaque to elaborate sculpture, but all have meaning to those who install and attend. Among the most poignant is that to 306 soldiers shot at dawn in WW1. In many cases it is now acknowledged that the battlefield was just too much for them to handle, not that they were cowards. One salutary memorial is that to the 16,000, yes 16,000, service personnel who have died to protect us since WW2. Of interest to Dover are the major memorials to the Merchant and Royal Navies, fighter pilots, and anti-aircraft gunners, but there were many others in service and civilian roles who served, and died, alongside them. Think of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Boys' Brigade among so many. To go with our Dover Patrol at St. Margaret's and memorials on the seafront, the Arboretum has for the Merchant Navy a forest of trees, one for each of the 2,000 and more merchant ships lost in WW2.

The visit is humbling but inspiring. All those people and all that they did for us, and praise to those who keep the memories alive.

Terracotta Warriors' Exhibition

Saturday 15th, Morning

Jeremy Cope

Without any preliminary research I went into the exhibition imagining we would be learning about an emperor's tomb with its very impressive grave goods. The exhibition was very much more. It told of the formation of China and gave us an

insight into its world. It was a story, probably greater in scope than the creation of Rome and its Empire.

The first Emperor of China Ying Zheng was born in 259 BC, became King of the Qin Kingdom in 246 BC and through conquest became Emperor and unifier of China in 221 BC, dying in 210 BC. He was a ruthless tyrant who laid the foundations of the system of imperial administration and through that administration created a road network and constructed a canal which cut through mountain ranges, set quality standards of manufactured objects, built the Great Wall and standardised written characters, coins weights and measures.

The Emperor feared death and searched for an elixir to give him immortality. However the elixir he used contained mercury which led to his death on a tour of his empire aged only 49. This did not stop him building a mausoleum, and following burial traditions, planned it from his early days as King. The exhibition is the merest sample of the contents of the tomb but even so the quality of the examples including 12 life sized warriors in different poses, horses, carriages and ornaments, greatly impresses but the



Terracotta Warriors © Derek Donnelly

creation of the whole mausoleum including 6,000 warriors is mind boggling. The construction of this huge mausoleum needs to be set against a background of laying the foundations for the Chinese empire and building large palaces to impress and demonstrate his power and the skills of his empire. The exhibition also informs about the huge numbers who slaved on these schemes and of childless concubines buried alive with the Emperor - little wonder as to his reputation as a cruel tyrant.

The huge drive and effort to achieve all of this must have caused exhaustion and have contributed to the rapid decline of the Qin dynasty. The Qin were succeeded by the Han dynasty. The exhibition contains examples of Han grave goods but nothing as impressive.

I have only scratched the surface of this exhibition and its story. A most worthwhile visit to be thoroughly recommended. A further thought, I left wondering about all the administrators, craftsmen and artists who created such wonders and the technical revolution it would have engendered.

***Coach tour Around Central
Liverpool
Saturday 15th, Early Afternoon
Sheila Cope***

Our efficient guide first pointed out the Yellow Superlambanana (cross between lamb and banana) now located in Tithebarn Street and created for the 1998 ArtTransPennine Exhibition, partly as a comment on the dangers of genetic engineering but also to mark some of the historic cargoes handled by Liverpool Docks. 125 mini replicas in different colours were placed around the City to mark the 2008 City of Culture events. Some of the notable buildings passed included an impressive art deco building which proved



Liver Building Liverpool © Jean Duggan



Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral © Derek Donnelly

to be just a ventilator for one of the Mersey tunnels, the City Hall and of course the iconic Liver Building crowned with its two Liver Birds, the female facing out to sea and awaiting returning mariners and the male at the rear scanning the city for pubs, so we were told.

After touring the Georgian district, once the residence of Liverpool's professional classes, we arrived at the Anglican Cathedral, Britain's largest, sandstone covered and rectangular with its immense central tower. Gilbert Scott, a novice aged 22, won the competition for its design in 1902. In spite of its massive size the interior was in no way forbidding, feeling warm and rich. As a centre of Christian worship and mission, and free to enter, one felt that it serves its community. The famous Metropolitan or Roman Catholic cathedral, circular and in Portland stone surmounted by its lantern and crown of pinnacles and opened in 1967, is only a short distance away and a complete contrast to the Anglican cathedral. Both cathedrals occupy high ground and may be clearly seen from the Mersey.

Our tour ended on the Waterfront near the famous Beatles statue and the Museum of Liverpool. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, how different it must be from the days when 9 million emigrants sailed from the port.

Mersey Ferry Experience

Saturday 15th, Late Afternoon

Mike Weston

Our first sight of the Mersey Ferry we were to sail on made one look twice. The vessel 'Snowdrop' was painted in various colours in what appeared to be a haphazard design. This turned out to be a First World War commemoration in honour of the patterns that were first used on vessels in World War One. They worked by making it hard from a distance to make out, type, size and course of a vessel painted with this 'dazzle design'. Setting sail from the ferry landing stage in Liverpool on our fifty minute trip, three iconic buildings straight away cannot be missed. They dominate this part of Liverpool. "The Three Graces" as they are known, are the Cunard Building, The Port of Liverpool Building and the Royal Liver Building with its two Liver Birds atop. Heading downstream the Liverpool cruise terminal is soon passed and coming into view was a long stretch of the Mersey. On the right could be seen the many docks which over the years have been used by many thousands of cargo vessels from all over the world. Sadly most of these docks are hardly being used as ships have become bigger and the docks are therefore not suitable and a lot have fallen into decay. However on the horizon could be seen the Gladstone Docks and the Seaforth Terminal, both of which are much used today, especially by very large container ships.



Snowdrop Mersey Ferry Experience

After passing the Princes Half Tide Dock a turn was made towards the Wirral Peninsula on the opposite side of the River from Liverpool. As we turned a good view down the river of New Brighton could be seen at the tip of the

Wirral Peninsula. Seacombe Landing Stage was soon reached which is the disembarking point for those wishing to visit Spaceport. A few minutes alongside then off again upstream towards Woodside Ferry Terminal, the landing for those passengers living at or visiting Birkenhead. Woodside Terminal is also the landing point for visitors to the U-Boat story museum which occupies a site alongside the landing. On the way to Woodside Terminal, the Birkenhead cargo and passenger ferry terminal was passed where ferries between North and South Ireland sail. Leaving Woodside Terminal 'Snowdrop' continued upstream passing Cammel Laird's famous shipyard where many illustrious ships were built including Cunard's 'Mauretania' and the aircraft carrier 'Ark Royal', before turning towards the Liverpool side of the Mersey. Crossing the river fine views of the city skyline with its two great cathedrals were observed. Nearing the north shoreline the refurbished dock area around the very popular Albert Dock area with its old and new buildings were clearly seen. Approaching the Liverpool ferry terminal we passed just ahead of the cruise liner 'Black Watch' which was just leaving the cruise terminal.

I am sure all who took part found the fifty minutes on the 'Snowdrop' a very interesting experience.

Visit to Chester ***Sunday 16th***

The whole day was given up to a most pleasant outing to Chester.

The Story of the Band That Changed the World ***Monday 17th***

Pat Hooper-Sherratt

Monday 17th September. We left our hotel at 9.30 for our journey home, but not without first visiting 'The Beatles

Experience'. The magical 'history' tour was about to begin.

John Lennon was a great fan of Lonnie Donegan. At the age of 15 he formed a skiffle group called The Quarrymen, named after Quarry Bank High School. Paul McCartney attended their concert at a garden fete; he was impressed by what he saw, so introduced himself to John, and from there the others followed.

On arrival, we were issued with digital handsets, to guide us around, while telling the story, which lasted about 2½ hours. The handsets were quite confusing for most of us, and others; we seemed to be in the wrong part, sometimes the recording wasn't always matching with the talk we were hearing! However, it was all displayed in large writing on the walls. I felt I would have liked more time there, in order to read the story thoroughly. As you can IMAGINE (the last song being played on exit).

It was wonderful to see younger generations caught up in the atmosphere. The Beatles will not be forgotten for a very long time.

I have to say a great thank you to our driver Janet, we had traffic hold-ups on the outward journey and even longer hold-ups homeward bound. She did a sterling job.



The Beatles statue at the Pier Head, Liverpool