

from the forces of evil; some striking carved capitals from Winchester and Old Sarum; and an extraordinary Keynsham keystone, showing Samson killing the lion, but looking more like an elegant and well dressed woman opening the beast's mouth.

Perhaps the most important part of the exhibition is of written and illustrated manuscripts. They are not immediately as striking as the sculpture and the other carvings. This is partly because the language in the writings is almost entirely Latin and the illustrations are on a small scale compared with the sculpture. The subject matter is largely concerned with Biblical texts, homilies, lives of saints, church liturgy, monastic chronicles and cartularies and so on. There are other more unusual topics – comedies by the classical Latin writer Terence, from the Benedictine Abbey of St Albans, astrological, scientific and astrological treatises, herbals, mostly again from monastic libraries; a book on canon (that is, church) law from Canterbury Cathedral. Almost all of these texts are illustrated, vividly, with both plain line drawings and paintings. The subject matter is mostly religious, as one would expect illustrating various Biblical episodes. One of the most effective is an illustration of the betrayal and flagellation of Christ, from a Winchester psalter, a depiction of sadistic expression on the faces of Christ's persecutors which the artist must have seen in his own time. Another is an illustration in a Worcester cathedral chronicle of King Henry I dreaming about being visited by angry peasants, knights and bishops (in separate delegations, of course) all complaining about heavy taxation. The execution of all these drawings and paintings is of the most

precise and meticulous quality, combined, where relevant, with extremely vivid paint-work.

Much of this writing and manuscript illustration carried on a pre-conquest tradition. It must be said again that it represents a cultural and intellectual efflorescence which was not due to conquest but to the great forward movement of feudal civilisation in Europe as a whole. It was necessarily a narrowly based culture. The vast majority of the population was illiterate, especially those whose toil made possible the creation of these artifacts. At this time, the only way to literacy and to learning was through the church. All scribes would at least be in minor orders. Many would be monks, some nuns. The clergy and especially those in the monasteries, were recruited almost entirely from the landowning class. Nevertheless, this period, especially after 1100, was one in which important intellectual foundations were laid for the future. Although not represented in the exhibition, this period saw the beginning of those schools which eventually became the universities, the home then of a critical scholastic philosophy whose constricting role was yet to come. It is not a negligible period in our history, though perhaps for other reasons than those which appear in the textbooks.

A prominent feature of the exhibition is something which is both familiar and unfamiliar – a reproduction of the misnamed Bayeux tapestry. The original is under glass in the Bayeux municipal museum and understandably could not be borrowed because of its fragility. It is 70 metres long and 50 centimetres wide and is not, in fact, a tapestry, but a series of embroidered themes on a linen back-

ground. It is generally accepted that it was made in England by English embroideresses commissioned by Odo, bishop of Bayeux, brother of William the Conqueror (also known contemporaneously as William the Bastard). It is beautiful to look at, with its still vivid colours and its striking manipulation, alternately, of crowd scenes and depictions of individuals, not to speak of grotesqueries, occasionally bawdy, in the margins, which recall other minor aspects of Anglo-Norman art. It is also a manipulation in another sense, a heavily slanted justification of the Norman invasion. No doubt the embroideresses did not know the real facts behind the story. It begins a fairly consistent pattern of historiographical justification for the events of 1066. We do not now have to pass moral judgements either way. Feudal society can certainly be interpreted as one organised for war and plunder by the few at the expense of the many. This exhibition shows that there was more to it than that (or, as well as that). Even out of an oppressive society a satisfying art can emerge.

Whatever its deficiencies, avoidable or unavoidable, this is an exhibition worth visiting, both for the interest and beauty of individual items and for the light which it throws on a remote and often misunderstood period in English history. Those who visit it and have not yet looked at Romanesque churches, great or small, either from the inside or the outside are urged to do so, so as to put much of the exhibition into context. And for those who can afford holidays abroad, a visit to Normandy, to Bayeux and the little Romanesque churches around, might be more interesting, and possibly cheaper than to the Costa Brava.

'The most exciting inner-city reclamation scheme this century' is how Michael Heseltine, former 'Minister for Merseyside', describes the International Garden Festival currently being held in Liverpool. His enthusiasm is typical of those people – and there are many of them – who are fascinated by the transformation of a piece of wasteland by the Mersey into the site of the biggest garden festival being held anywhere in the world this year.

Publicity statistics and information abound. Thousands of bulbs planted here . . . half a million trees planted there . . . designers flown in from as far away as China to construct the different 'national' and 'theme' gardens on display.

LIVERPOOL'S GARDEN FESTIVAL

Bob Dent

Undoubtedly, for garden-lovers and horticulturists everywhere the Liverpool festival is *the* place to visit this year. Even before the official opening last month nearly 50 jumbo jets had been booked to bring enthusiasts from America. But what of Merseyside and its people? What effect is this, the biggest event of its kind since the

Festival of Britain in 1951, going to have locally? The idea of a Garden Festival was mooted back in 1979. But the decision to hold it in Liverpool was taken in September 1981, just a few months after the riots in that city. It is officially denied that the decision was taken because of the riots but nevertheless it was agreed all round that the Garden Festival would do something to alleviate Liverpool's appalling problems.

In early 1982 Sir John Gueon, the former chair of the Festival, was predicting that 4,000 jobs would be created. The fact is that the Festival construction never employed more than 500 people and the extra hundred or so taken on to service visitors amounts to a pinprick in the total

Channel Five

of 92,000 unemployed locally. Fears that the majority of jobs on the site would not go to Merseysiders have proved incorrect but it is not clear just how many were taken off the dole to work there.

It is also not clear whether the bulk of Merseyside's unemployed will actually be able to afford to view the pleasures of the Festival. The basic adult entrance fee of £3.50 will exclude many and even the 'cheap' family ticket, for two adults and three children, runs to £9. Local criticism forced the organisers to introduce a special 'End of Day Merseyside Community Ticket' costing £1 for the last two hours. But the whole thing rather smells of letting the locals in after the richer guests have departed and has led Liberal MP David Alton to talk of 'cocooning the visitors in a festival fantasy world and not letting them rub shoulders with the legions of Liverpool jobless.'

The defensive approach now is less in terms of job-creation and more in terms of improving the environment. Heseltine went on television at the end of April and extolled the whole project as a model of inner-city improvement, a task which was just as important as job-creation. But it has to be pointed out that the area of the Festival site was not an inner-city area as such. Nobody lived there, nobody worked there. It was an out-of-the way derelict area down by the river. True, when the gardens have gone, that part of the riverside will be very pleasant. But Merseysiders will have to make a special trip to go there to walk, relax, picnic or whatever, just as they do already at the neighbouring Otterspool Promenade. Nothing wrong with this. But the point is that it's a different type of investment than the millions which were spent improving Upper Parliament Street and Princess Boulevard in Liverpool 8 following the riots there. Even if you think all that was just tokenism, at least it did slightly improve the area where people already lived or passed through as part of their everyday life. The £30m spent on the Garden Festival site has done no such thing.

To be fair, parts of the city are getting a facelift and not just down on the Garden site. British Rail have spent £10m modernising Lime Street station. Matthew Street has been transformed ready to receive the tourists and the new 'Beatles City' museum there was opened in time for the festival. Merseyside County Council has spent a small fortune improving roads, roundabouts and traffic junctions.

All this points to one thing – that the main benefit to Merseyside will come from one area, tourism. At least that's the hope. £1m was allocated for advertising the Festival, although some people thought that was too little! By the end of the summer, what with leaflets being distributed free by British Telecom, Barclaycard and Woolworth, mass mailings to all clubs and societies even remotely connected with gardening, plus the usual TV and press advertising, there shouldn't be a person in the country who hasn't at least heard of the Festival. The forecasters say that over three million people will visit the Festival. They could be right. A similar Garden Festival in Munich last year attracted eleven million visitors. British Rail stand to gain from the thousands of visitors they bring to Liverpool as do hundreds of coach operators scattered throughout the country. In the city itself you stand to make money if you own a hotel.

Pam Stapler of Merseyside Tourist Office reckons that 50% of visitors will spend at least one night somewhere in the Merseyside region. She's even got a 'bed bank' list of 200 private individuals prepared to accommodate any overspill from hotels. Certainly there's plenty going on in the city to keep visitors there once they've decided to visit the Garden Festival. Some of the events, like the only northern performance of the Moscow Classical Ballet, may have happened anyway. But others were deliberately timed to coincide with

the Festival, like the finish of this year's Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race in August.

Inevitably this influx of tourists, unprecedented for Merseyside, will have an economic effect as money trickles down to shopkeepers, ice-cream sellers, street performers and the like. Even 'News From Nowhere', the radical bookshop, has increased its stocks on organic gardening! But at the end of the day the result is likely to have been a trickle rather than a boom.

It is considerations like this which make many Merseysiders not a little cynical about the whole Festival project, and sometimes even quite angry. Some months ago several coaches were laid on to transport pensioners and others to the site for a sneak preview of the Festival grounds. Angry residents from a nearby estate, annoyed at the lack of resources for housing while millions were being spent on the gardens, picketed the entrance and turned back some of the coaches.

Generally, though, the response has been one of critical acceptance, peppered with scepticism. John Hamilton, Labour Leader on the City Council, puts it like this . . . 'We are not against the Festival. But at the same time we are not doing anything for it. The overall effect is likely to be minimal. It will be a splash for six months, with the visitors and all the rest of it. But at the end of the day we'll be picking up the bill for maintaining the site. Basically, I don't think it's going to do a great deal for Liverpool.'

John Clinch's sunbathers at the Marine Esplanade, International Garden Festival, Liverpool



FANZINES

Paul Mathur

The titles will scream out at you from the roughly stapled, cheaply printed (or photocopied) magazines — *Kill Your Pet Puppy*, *Search And Destroy*, *Love And A Molotov Cocktail*. Dig deep and you might even find a copy of *No More Masterpieces*, my own two year contribution to the fanzine scene, from 1979/80.

The 'zines vary in content (ranging from anarcho-political tirades, to pages and pages of live reviews); in articulation (from powerfully convincing arguments about the musical scheme of things to monosyllabic grunts about what Crass did for an encore); and in form (handwritten scrawl to neatly typed pseudo-*New Musical Express* regularity. It is not easy to classify fanzines in terms of appearance, and it is even harder to do so in terms of history, for although fanzines are central to an understanding and an historical account of pop music since 1976, it's very difficult to attribute any date to the birth of the music media's bastard child.

There probably isn't such a thing as the first fanzine (literally 'fan magazine') in the strictest sense of the word, although the likes of *Oz* and more specifically *Rolling Stone*, were instrumental in both presenting a radical message about the role of pop in youth culture and also publicising and organising the Underground Press Syndicate, a similar system to which is vital to the publicity and distribution structure of post-76 fanzines in Britain.

Rolling Stone, taking the lead from yet earlier Underground pop papers such as Copenhagen's *Superlove*, was launched towards the end of 1967 by Jan Wenner, a 22 year old who at the time took much from *Superlove*'s ideas and forms. It is easy to see now where his heart really lay. *Rolling Stone* is perhaps the least contentious, most boring music paper in the Western world, as much a part of the capitalist music machine as CBS or EMI. The turnabout from radical champion of a burgeoning youth culture, to reactionary upholder of desperately conservative values, is one that almost every fanzine is in danger of going through, but which the pre-punk 'zines were most obviously susceptible to.

From reading a fairly large sample of these 60s and early 70s fanzines, particularly those primarily concerned with

music, the most striking aspect is their deeply ingrained, and often barely concealed RESPECT for the music business. *Hot Wacks*, *Fat Angel*, *Who Put The Bomp*, *Zig Zag*, they all appear to want to play at being a sort of *Melody Maker* Meets Zen And The Art Of The Guitar Solo. *Fat Angel* for example, opens up with a bit of vaguely mystical hokum, then launches into a series of LP reviews, going so far as to give the serial number of each record. There's no swearing, no feeling of any attempt to really communicate to the reader, no notion of the role of the fanzine as being anything more than an inferior version of its mainstream peers.

These 'zines do succeed when they openly acknowledge their attitudes to the role of the alternative press, and where rather than churning out sub-standard music press copy, they attempt to cater for people who want something different from the music press. The form remains boring but the content changes, and the magazines start to run features on, for example, collectors' records.

Who Put The Bomp and early *Zig Zag* both made their names and reputations as collectors' magazines rather than as fanzines, and it is in magazines such as those that the power of the 60s/early 70s alternative press lies.

In 1976, along came punk with its attendant ethics, and suddenly the fanzine became a whole new form. The first (and most notorious) of the 'zines to reject most of the old traditions, preferring a passionate, emotive, wholly personal slapdash POW! to a merely shoddy attempt to be like the big boys, was *Sniffin' Glue*, started by Mark P, and it remains the most perceptive contemporary account of the early days of punk yet seen.

In a typical issue Lou Reed is written off in four lines, interviews are printed verbatim, captions handwritten, the whole lot photocopied and stapled together, then 'sold' outside gigs in a tone you wouldn't want to refuse if you valued your teeth. 1977 and the walls were falling down everywhere. Thousands took Mark P's advice and started their own fanzines, at last having to face up to the logistics of the affair.

I was lucky, my Dad got mine printed for me at work, but for many others it was a case of trying to get them done on the sly in the school printroom, or failing that, looking for the cheapest printer in the yellow pages. Community printers are a great help, as they tend to be fairly cheap,



Remember that old chestnut The Day Punk Rock Arrived? In a hail of gob and a parade of One Chord Wonders, the message was sent that ANYONE can be a star, and without selling one's soul to the big companies. The Independent Ethic, hitherto only widespread among the 60s US garage bands, was reborn and flourished, most successfully in the form of Zoo Records from Liverpool, Factory from Manchester and Rough Trade in London. Rough Trade even took things a step further, and set up a nationwide distribution network, centred around their shop in W11. Seven years later, and the company and shop remain. Go in there now, and you'll find amongst the inevitably massive collection of independent records, an equally inevitable piece of post-punk product, The Fanzine.