

## EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

# Liverpool

La città dei Beatles è diventata grande. E bellissima. Quest'anno è d'obbligo un viaggio a Liverpool, Capitale della Cultura 2008. Parola di Ringo Starr, che le ha dedicato un CD.

The "European Capital of Culture" was launched in 1985 by the Council of Ministers of the European Union (then known as the "European Community"). The declared aim of these cultural celebrations was "to bring the citizens of Europe closer together."

### PRETTY CITIES

Athens was chosen for the first year and was followed by Florence, Amsterdam, West Berlin and Paris. London has yet to feature, but other cities in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland have, such as Glasgow (1990), Dublin (1991) and Cork (2005). Italy hasn't done badly either, with Bologna (which shared the honours with eight other European cities in 2000), and Genoa (which shared with Lille in 2004).

This year European Capital of Culture title will be shared by two Norwegian



## Where to go

The City of Liverpool has unveiled a spectacular programme of events for its year as European Capital of Culture in 2008.

Liverpool, the city at the heart of the Merseyside region, is establishing itself as one of Europe's most exciting city-break destinations, with a range of outstanding<sup>1</sup> attractions, an unrivalled mix of music, distinctive shopping, electric nightlife and unique maritime heritage<sup>2</sup>.

**The Walker Art Gallery,**  
William Brown Street  
[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker)  
The "national gallery of the north" holds one of the finest collections of fine and decorative art in Europe.

**World Museum Liverpool,**  
William Brown Street  
[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml)  
The museum features the World Cultures gallery, the Bug House where visitors will encounter giant model insects, new Aquarium, Clore Natural History Centre and Treasure House Theatre.

**Tate Liverpool,**  
Albert Dock  
[www.tate.org.uk/liverpool](http://www.tate.org.uk/liverpool)  
One of the largest galleries of modern and contemporary art outside London.

**The Beatles Story,**  
Albert Dock  
[www.beatlesstory.com](http://www.beatlesstory.com)  
Situated in Liverpool's Albert Dock, this Beatles museum is an evocative exhibition charting<sup>3</sup> the lives and times of the Fab Four, from the early days, to the Cavern, Beatlemania and flower power, the break-up<sup>4</sup> and their solo careers.

**Magical Mystery Tour,**  
[www.caverncitytours.com](http://www.caverncitytours.com)  
departure from Albert Dock  
The two-hour tour will introduce you to the lives of The Beatles, their homes, schools, birthplaces, Penny Lane, Strawberry Field and many other landmarks<sup>5</sup>, finishing at the world famous Cavern Club.

**FACT (Foundation for Art & Creative Technology),**  
88 Wood Street  
[www.fact.co.uk](http://www.fact.co.uk)  
FACT is one of Europe's leading arts organisations specialising in film, video and new media art.

**Hope Street**  
Home to two of the city's most recognizable landmarks, Hope Street is rich in history and culture.

**Liverpool Cathedral** is twice as big as St Paul's in London, it is the largest Anglican Cathedral in Europe and is home to the world's largest church organ.

**Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King**  
This modern cathedral boasts<sup>6</sup> the world's largest stained glass window<sup>7</sup> and is affectionately known as 'Paddy's Wigwam.'

**Albert Dock**  
Enter the Britannia Pavilion entrance and follow the walkway<sup>8</sup> around to the left, passing the Tate Liverpool.

**Museum of Liverpool**  
Life tells the story of the people of Liverpool, their culture and contribution to national life.

There's no better way to experience Liverpool & Merseyside than from the deck<sup>9</sup> of the famous Mersey Ferry.



Life in Liverpool. Left: fireworks over the Liver Building, part of the "Merseyside" waterfront. Below: some key cultural figures, including Sir Paul McCartney and the conductor, Sir Simon Rattle.



### Glossary

- outstanding** - straordinaria.
- heritage** ['herɪtɪdʒ] tradizione.
- charting** - che passa in rassegna.
- break-up** - separazione.
- landmarks** - luoghi storici.
- boasts** [bəʊst] vanta.
- stained glass window** - vetrata istoriata.
- walkway** - passaggio pedonale.
- deck** - ponte.

# Facts about Liverpool

- 1 The city celebrated its 800th birthday in 2007. Liverpool was granted city status by King John in 1207.
- 2 Liverpool holds the Guinness Book of Records for being the Capital of Pop – more Liverpool artists have had a number-one hit than any other town or city. 56 no 1's to date!
- 3 The annual Mathew Street Music Festival held every August Bank Holiday is the largest city centre-based free music festival in Europe.
- 4 An estimated 600,000 visit Liverpool for the Beatles each year and they spend some £21 million.
- 5 The Walker Art Gallery is the national gallery of the North and houses one of the most comprehensive collections of art outside of London.
- 6 Liverpool is a World Heritage City – designated by UNESCO in July 2004, placing the city's Pier Head alongside Stonehenge and the Great Wall of China as one of the world's most important places.
- 8 Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral is the largest cathedral in Britain and the fifth largest in the world.
- 9 Liverpool carried out and financed the first ever Atlantic telegraph cable in 1886.
- 10 Liverpool is home to the oldest Chinese and African communities in Europe, and the city's Chinatown boasts the biggest Chinese arch outside mainland China.
- 11 More than 60 languages are spoken in the city today.
- 12 Football nets were invented by John Alexander Brodie, Liverpool's municipal engineer, in 1892.
- 13 Liverpool Football Club is the most successful club in the history of English football, having won 18 league championships, 5 European Cups, 3 UEFA Cups, 7 FA Cups and 7 league cups.



Liverpool landmarks. The Albert Docks and (above) the Walker Gallery. Top right: Anfield.



# Events 2008

The City of Liverpool has unveiled an impressive programme of events for its year as European Capital of Culture in 2008.

## THE LIVERPOOL SOUND

The other surviving Beatle, Sir Paul McCartney, will also return to his native city this year. He will headline "The Liverpool Sound" concert at Anfield Stadium on June 1. The concert will celebrate Liverpool's unrivalled status as the World's Capital of pop, rock and contemporary music will be a global event. It will be a multi-artist concert in front of 35,000 people at the world-famous home of Liverpool Football Club (the team will in fact soon be relocating to another stadium). The concert will also feature a series of major pop stars whose names will be announced at a later date. The entire show will be broadcast live to a worldwide audience. "The Liverpool scene" has been inspiration to musicians the world over and this global concert marks a "coming home."

## MTV EUROPE MUSIC AWARDS

Liverpool is to host the MTV Europe Music Awards in 2008. The EMAs will be held at the Echo Arena Liverpool on November 6. This will be the third time that the UK has hosted the Awards. Previously the event has been held in London (1996) and Edinburgh (2003).

## FREE EVENTS

Much of the 2008 programme is made up of FREE events. For more

than 12 months, public art will animate parks, plazas, pavilions and transport. Impossible to miss, this will work in tandem with a programme of local and international street theatre.

**PAVILIONS** are at the forefront of the public interventions programme, reflecting Liverpool's cultural life and its varied communities, including the city centre's surrounding neighbourhoods. Three specially commissioned and spectacular pavilions are planned, launching between March and May 2008.

**IN MAY**, Liverpool Streets Ahead will bring a weekend of street entertainment, visual installations, circus and music of the highest calibre, brought to the city by the internationally renowned MIA.

**IN JUNE** up to 100 Superlambananas, specially designed by local artists, will animate the city for a free ten-week public art event. Go Superlambananas! will involve businesses and communities from around the region.

Liverpool will also host a series of special classical music events and art exhibitions in 2008. For more information, visit: [www.liverpool08.com](http://www.liverpool08.com) and [www.inghilterradelnord.com](http://www.inghilterradelnord.com)



cities, Stavanger and Sandnes, and Liverpool. Geographically, Liverpool is in England, but its rich mix of Welsh<sup>1</sup>, Irish and Scottish immigrants means that it is more of a "Celtic" city. Liverpool is a port and this would help explain why it has Europe's oldest Chinese and African communities.

## THE MERSEY BEAT

Liverpool's maritime background also helps explain one of its most important cultural contributions: music. Sailors<sup>2</sup> would return to Liverpool from their travels and, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, they would bring records back from the USA. This is why young men like John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr got to hear American music before youngsters in other British cities. The "Fabulous Four" were, of course, to write musical history. Sadly, John and George are no longer with us, but the two surviving Beatles, Paul and Ringo, both feature prominently in this year's programme of events. Paul will headline a massive concert on June 1st (see box) at Anfield, home of another of the city's great institutions: Liverpool F.C., while Ringo has released a new album, *Liverpool 8* (see interview). The title cleverly combines the name of the neighborhood<sup>3</sup> where he grew up with that of the city's 2008 celebrations.



## Glossary

- 1 Welsh - gallese.
- 2 sailors - marinai.
- 3 neighborhood - quartiere.

LANGUAGE LEVEL  
**ADVANCED**

Track **6**

Speaker: Justin Ratcliffe  
(Standard British accent)

## The Return of Ringo

This year Liverpool is a European Capital of Culture. In order to celebrate, one of the world's most famous living Liverpudlians, former Beatle Ringo Starr, has released a new album: *Liverpool 8*. Promoting the album also meant that last month Ringo, who is now 67, returned to his native city for the first time in 11 years. As he explains in this interview, "Liverpool 8" was the name of the rough neighborhood<sup>1</sup> in which he grew up:

**Ringo Starr**

(Liverpudlian accent)

*Well, the record, Liverpool 8 is the area I was born in, that's where I come from. I come from Liverpool, but that area is Liverpool 8. So the first verse is about "I was a sailor<sup>2</sup> first" – 'cause I was – and then I worked in a factory<sup>3</sup> and then I became a musician, I played in Butlin's camp<sup>4</sup> with Rory Storm<sup>5</sup>, and that's when I became a professional musician. The point of Liverpool is "Liverpool, I left you," because we went to London, we went worldwide, "but I never let you down<sup>6</sup>" and we incorporate, from the Liverpool football team, their chant<sup>7</sup>, which is: "Liverpool!"*

### PEACE AND LOVE

The album project involved working closely with Dave Stewart, who is best known for having formed The Eurythmics with Annie Lennox. "Liverpool 8" is one of the album's 12 tracks. In another, "RU Ready," Ringo gets spiritual. This didn't surprise Dave Stewart:



**Dave Stewart:**

*He's got this kind of street wisdom<sup>8</sup>, mixed with sort of... a very sort of... aware universal kind of wisdom that he's probably searched for, throughout his life, and he's got this strange marriage of like street Liverpool boy with a love and peace kind of wisdom that he's achieved as he's got older.*

Indeed Ringo admits that he is as much a child of the 1960s as he is of his native Liverpool:

**Ringo Starr:**

*Peace and love is something I... it's been a mindset<sup>9</sup> since the '60s and I'm still out there<sup>10</sup>, "peace and loving," 'cause I still think there can be nothing wrong with that.*

### The CD



Ringo Starr's album *Liverpool 8* was released on January 14th by EMI. For the occasion Ringo (above) returned to his native city for the first time in 11 years.

### Glossary

- 1 **rough neighborhood** - quartiere malfamato.
- 2 **sailor** - marinaio.
- 3 **factory** - fabbrica.
- 4 **Butlin's Camp** - luoghi di villeggiatura economici in voga negli anni 50-60.
- 5 **Rory Storm** - nome d'arte di Alan Caldwell, cantante di Liverpool molto famoso ai tempi dei Beatles.
- 6 **I never let you down** - non ti ho mai tradito.
- 7 **chant** - coro.
- 8 **street wisdom** - sicurezza tipica della persona cresciuta in strada.
- 9 **mindset** - mentalità, modo di pensare.
- 10 **I'm still out there** - sono ancora così.

Richard Skidmore 2007

# Yellow Submarine

LANGUAGE LEVEL  
**INTERMEDIATE**

Track **7**

Speaker: Justin Ratcliffe  
(Standard British accent)

Ringo Starr's best known vocal performance is undoubtedly "Yellow Submarine." Paul McCartney was the main songwriter (although most Beatles' songs were credited to Lennon-McCartney) and explained in a 1984 interview: "I wrote that in bed one night as a kid's story. And then we thought it would be good for Ringo to do."

The first lines of the song are about a sailor<sup>1</sup> (a man who sailed to sea) from Liverpool, talking about his life in the deep seas (in the land of submarines). The band decide to sail away<sup>2</sup> to the sea of green, living underwater (beneath the waves) in a yellow submarine.

### Glossary

- 1 **sailor** - marinaio.
- 2 **to sail away** - partire per nave, salpare.
- 3 **neighbours** - vicini.
- 4 **ease** - agio.
- 5 **Blue Meanies** - creature di fantasia che nel film cercano di distruggere la musica.
- 6 **discounted this** - negò tutto questo.

There is a party atmosphere (our friends are all aboard), with even their good friends being neighbours<sup>3</sup>. At the time Paul McCartney lived next door to folk singer Donovan, whose hits included "Colours." It is there-

Oltre a suonare la batteria, Ringo Starr diede anche la sua inconfondibile voce a numerosi successi dei Beatles. "Yellow Submarine", del 1966, è rimasta un classico.

fore appropriate that Donovan contributed the line "sky of blue, sea of green" to "Yellow Submarine."

The final verse tells us that life is not difficult (we live a life of ease<sup>4</sup>), and everyone is happy (has all we need) – you can hear how much fun the Beatles had recording this song, and in fact the session concluded with everyone dancing around the Abbey Road studios, conga-style, singing "we all live in a Yellow Submarine."

The song became the inspiration for and title of the 1967 film, a cartoon with actors' voices portraying the Beatles travelling to Pepperland to stop the Blue Meanies<sup>5</sup> from destroying music.

Various theories suggest the lyrics of the song are about drugs, death or just a reflection of the Beatles' lifestyle at the time, but in a 1966 interview Paul McCartney discounted this<sup>6</sup>: "It's a happy place, that's all. We were trying to write a children's song. That was the basic idea. And there's nothing more to be read into it than there is in the lyrics of any children's song."

This recording features a brief excerpt from The Beatles' 1966 song, "Yellow Submarine" (Lennon-McCartney). To see the lyrics, visit [www.speakuponline.it](http://www.speakuponline.it)

### English Through Music...

Fergal Kavanagh, the author of this article, runs the website [www.tuneintoenglish.com](http://www.tuneintoenglish.com). The Students' Area features activities for learning English through pop music.

