



## Artist unveils portraits of his love – for Liverpool people

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**From a city with many great people, Anthony Brown paints 100. Alan Weston reports**

by Alan Weston, Liverpool Daily Post



THE first of a series of exhibitions featuring portraits of famous and not-so-famous Merseyside people goes on display to the public today.

They were commissioned to celebrate Liverpool's 800th birthday and are the work of professional Wirral-based artist Anthony Brown, who is creating 100 portraits which will be unveiled at St George's Hall later this year.

But members of the public can now see the first 65 in the series at the Old Hall Street atrium.

As well as personalities such as Mike McCartney, Roger McGough and Alan Bleasdale, lesser-known figures who have nevertheless made an important contribution in their chosen field and to the city are included.

Each of the portraits also include memorabilia from their lives such as newspaper cuttings and old photographs.

Much of the newsprint used in the works was taken from the Liverpool Daily Post and Echo and a number of the papers' writers and photographers are also featured.

The project has been a labour of love for Mr Brown, who chose the subjects and spent more than a year working on the portraits.

He said: "This is a cross-section of Liverpool life that has never been seen before, and hopefully it will be remembered for a long time. I have met some wonderfully exciting people and it's been a pleasure to learn about their lives.

"As well as painting them, I asked for images to portray their lives which I used as a backdrop to the painting.

"It means that, while there are 100 individual portraits, there



are 800 lives represented in them. All the portraits are of people who I either know personally or have been inspired by, such as Alan Bleasdale. It's not a list of the 100 most famous Liverpudlians, but of people who are good at what they do in all their different occupations.

"I wanted as many people as possible to see the work, which is why it is going on tour before the grand unveiling at St George's Hall in August."

Among those attending last night's preview were portrait subjects Mike McCartney and former Brookside actor Dean Sullivan, who each said they were delighted with the artist's results.

Mr McCartney's portrait includes a childhood photograph taken with his brother Paul, as well as objects relating to his days with The Scaffold.

He said: "It takes me back to the 1960s when these kind of mixed media images were very popular."

Mr Sullivan, whose portrait includes photographs of him meeting Princess Diana, said: "The great thing that Tony Brown has done with all the portraits is to show the detail of each of his subjects' lives."

Liverpool Culture Company chief executive Jason Harborow, whose portrait is also included in the show, said: "This is a superb project for 2007 and enables us to celebrate the city and the people who have contributed to the city."

THE exhibition, 100 Heads Thinking as One, continues at Old Hall Street until February 28.

It then visits the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral (March 3 - 30), the Williamson Art Gallery, Birkenhead (May 6 - June 10), and St George's Hall (August 9 - 31).

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