

ECHO



SIEGE AFTER THREAT TO BLOW UP HOUSE



Page 7

02 NORTH WEST NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

41,081 MAIN

Monday, January 14, 2013 55p

Becoming a McCartney...by Paul's step-mum Angie

Pages 10&11



Downing: We showed them too much respect

Back Page



Coleman rues Blues' lack of cutting edge

Back Page



GET YOUR BILLS PAID FOR A MONTH

£2,000 to be won
- Page 27

SWEENEY TO WED Page 3 MARCH H'BORO INQUEST HOPE Page 2

FOOTBALL GUN HORROR

GUARD: Police at the Simpson Playing Fields, Woolton, where the shooting took place Full story - Page 5



Plus: Shots fired outside city pub - Page 2

Player shot as he warms up on pitch



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Time to map out tolls plan

THE chances of the Government taking over the Mersey Tunnels – whose current debt exceeds £58m – look somewhere between remote and “You must be joking!”

But there is some merit in the tunnel committee of transport authority Merseytravel making the request, even if it already knows the highly-likely outcome.

It's imperative that the whole subject of our tunnels and their tolls is kept in the public eye, and there is dialogue about what will happen in the short, medium and long term.

Merseysiders long for the days when they will be able to drive through the tunnels without having to pay. But one of the reasons the Government is unlikely to give Merseytravel a sympathetic hearing is because it appears to favour introducing more tolled roads, rather than removing fees.

In addition, the planned £600m second bridge across the Mersey between Runcorn and Widnes is expected to charge similar tolls to the tunnels.

The tunnels' debt is set to be virtually paid-off by 2026 – which suggests commuters and businesses, as well as visitors, will have to continue paying up and being patient.

But, with a possible increase in tolls looming, it would be helpful to hear the Government's intentions, or lack of them, as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the public will no doubt continue to respond to the ECHO's recent revelation that half the annual £37m collected in tunnel tolls is diverted away from their staffing and maintenance – with more than a quarter still being used to pay off the historic debts.

Hoping for a quick solution to the ongoing tunnel tolls headache? Sorry, it looks like there will be plenty more pain to come – but at least let's map out a clear way forward.

The Voice of Liverpool since 1879

Liverpool Unites

Liverpool Unites, the ECHO's charity, has a fundraising target of £500,000 for Alder Hey Children's Hospital. All money will be used to build play areas in the New Children's Health Park due to be completed in 2014. liverpoolecho.co.uk/unites

Quick Quiz

1. Which Celebrity Big Brother 2013 contestant played Kathy Beale in EastEnders?
2. Who was the first housemate voted out?
3. David Attenborough presents which new BBC series?
4. This year marks 60 years since whose Coronation?
5. Who hosts the Radio 2 breakfast show?
6. For which movie is Daniel Day-Lewis nominated for an Oscar this year?
7. Which Prime Minister left office in 1997?
8. Who was Fred Flintstone's best friend?
9. Who wrote the book Les Misérables?
10. Which British Prime Minister had a size of cigar named after him?

1. Gillian Taverne; 2. Paula Hamilton; 3. Archie; 4. Elizabeth II; 5. Chris Evans; 6. Lincoln; 7. John Major; 8. Barney Rubble; 9. Victor Hugo; 10. Winston Churchill.

Jade Wright talks to the Beatle's stepmum, Angie, about life just outside the spotlight

Macca, me and my mum's marzipan butties

BACK in 1964, Merseyside – and the world – was gripped by Beatlemania. Fans would wait hours for just a glimpse of the Fab Four, screaming and fainting at their concerts. Reporters and photographers followed the band's every move.

But, away from the spotlight, Paul McCartney would sneak back to the Wirral, where his dad Jim and his stepmum Angie and her daughter Ruth shared a modest four-bedroomed house.

“We lived quite a quiet life, when I think about it,” says Angie, 83. “Jim was a quiet conservative man who didn't like a fuss. Yes, we used to have photographers and reporters outside, but inside it was all very simple.”

Angie had been introduced to Jim by a mutual friend after her first husband, Eddie, sadly died.

“I grew up in Liverpool, in Norris Green, and in those days everyone knew everybody's business. I was a widow and it was just me and Ruth.

“One day, my sister Joan ran into Mike Robbins, in the newsgagents near us in Norris Green. We had known him from when we'd been to Butlin's – he was a redcoat and he'd married my friend Bette. Well, Bette called me, we got together, and unbeknown to me she put her matchmaker hat on.

“We went over to the Wirral one day and she had arranged for us to visit her lonely uncle Jim at his home, Rembrandt. I didn't think anything of it. We travelled there together, and as Jim opened the front door to greet us, it was like a flash of lightning. I know it sounds corny, but I immediately thought, ‘I'm going to marry him.’”

Later that year, she did.

“We talked a lot about our lives, our loneliness, our need to take the next steps, and eventually, while I was playing the piano, Jim came behind me, put his hands on my shoulders and said: ‘I want to ask you something.’”

“I looked up at him and said, ‘The answer's yes,’ and he laughed and said, ‘I haven't even asked you the question yet!’ He said ‘We both know we need to do something, but what would you like to do? Do you want to be my housekeeper, do you want us to live together, or do you want to get married?’ I said I would only want to consider getting married, as I was concerned about little Ruth growing up with a mother who was living with a man that she wasn't married to. I was pretty old-fashioned in those days and I would never have lived over the brush.

“Jim was pleased, I think, and he said he'd ring Paul and let him know. I think Mike was away on tour at the time with The Scaffold.”

Angie's first meeting with Paul took place that night.

“Ruth was tucked up in bed at Rembrandt, the house in Heswall that Paul had bought for Jim. It was a modest four-bedroomed house – with only one bathroom – but in a very nice neighbourhood and certainly more posh than I was used to.

“Paul said he was going to jump in the car and drive up. When Jim heard the Aston Martin coming up the noisy gravel driveway, he nipped through the kitchen to open the garage doors so he could drive straight in, douse the lights, and come into the house

through the back kitchen. I was washing teacups when he came in, and put the kettle on again. We chatted and then he asked me to get Ruth. She was in her little pink flannel-ette pyjamas. I sat her on his knee, she was rubbing her eyes, and when the penny dropped, she said, ‘I know who you are! You're on my cousin's wallpaper.’ I was mortified.”

“Ruth showed him her scar where she had had her kidney removed just five months earlier. Paul told her that Ringo had appendix scars, too, and, in no time, it was like we had all known each other forever. It was a surreal moment in time to watch my four-year-old chatting away with a world-famous person as if she somehow knew we all just put our pants on one leg at a time. She's still the same to this day.

“Jim and I planned our nuptials promptly, and the next day, Jim sent a car through the Mersey Tunnel for my mum to come and stay with us as a chaperone for a while. Paul had to get back to London and while we were finishing his laundry and he was packing his things, my mum made him some butties and a flask of tea for the journey.

“A couple of hours after he left, he called from a payphone in Brownhills, in the West Midlands, in the days before the M6 and the M1 used to actually connect, and asked to speak to

my mum. He thanked her – for the marzipan butties! She didn't have her glasses on when she'd whipped them up, and had thought it was cream cheese.

On our wedding day a few weeks later, he sent us a telegram which read: ‘Wishing you long life and happiness . . . and lots of marzipan butties.’”

Angie, Jim and Paul lived happily in the house with Mike, too, until he married.

“Mike is such a lovely man,” she says. “He's such a gentle soul. Paul, too. We try to keep in touch.”

Paul and Linda were regular visitors to Rembrandt.

“I would take Heather, Mary and Stella to the local Heswall shops. Stella used to beg for ‘fokkits’ which were chocolates, and ‘peggins’ which were gloves or mittens. She obviously had an eye for fashion even in those days. Heather lived for horses and drew me a picture captioned ‘Horses, horses, where would we be without horses?’”

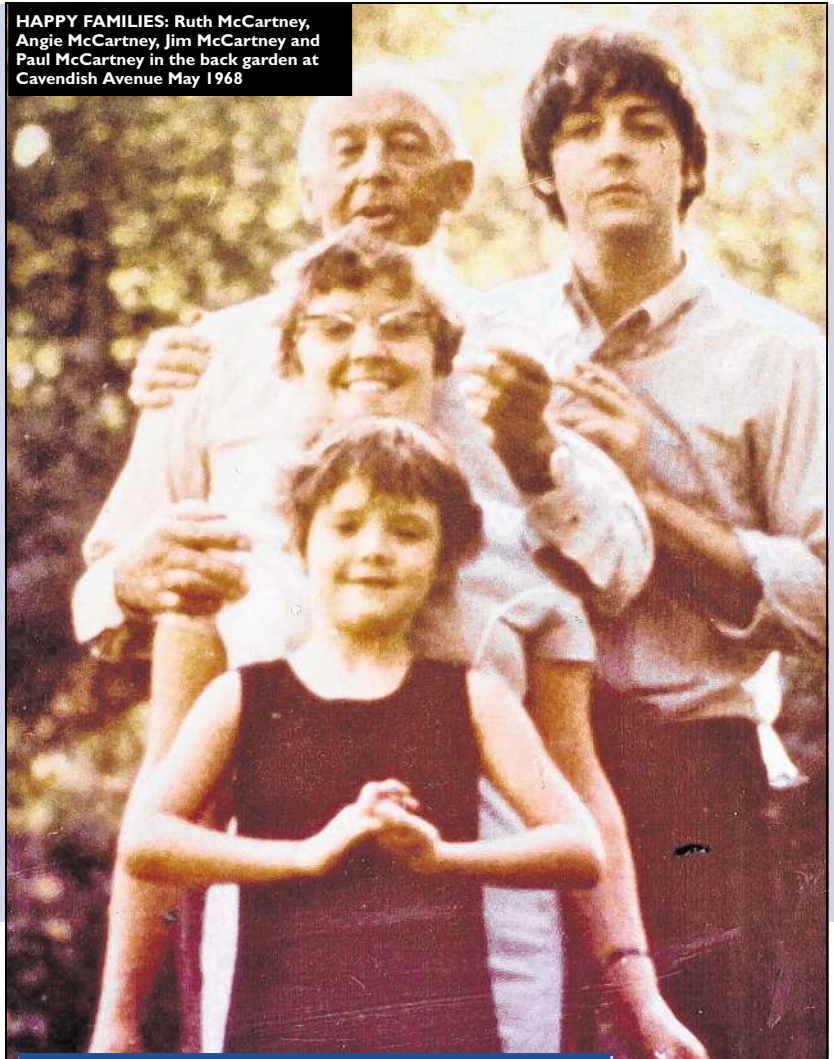
“Mary used to follow her mum around when she was taking photographs, looking up intently at what she was doing. That yearning certainly stayed with her through life and she's obviously inherited her mum's talent in that regard.”

Jim died at home in 1976, and Angie and Ruth now live in California.

Angie has now written her autobiography, My Long and Winding Road, and is launching it with two nights of music and entertainment celebrating The Beatles at the Philharmonic Hall, hosted by ECHO columnist Pete Price, and featuring appearances from former Brian Epstein assistant and Beatles Fan Club Secretary Freda Kelly and The Fourmost's Billy Hatton.

“I'm so excited to be coming back to Liverpool,” she says. “I have missed the Liverpool sense of humour so much – that and proper fish and chips. I can't wait to be back.”

◆ Angie's Beatles Celebration will take place at the Philharmonic Hall on January 30 and 31. Tickets are £25, including £5 off the book, from www.liverpoolphil.com. My Long And Winding Road is published by ROK, priced at £14.99



HAPPY FAMILIES: Ruth McCartney, Angie McCartney, Jim McCartney and Paul McCartney in the back garden at Cavendish Avenue May 1968

FROM NORRIS GREEN TO CALIFORNIA

ANGIE now lives with her daughter, Ruth, and son-in-law Martin in California, where she has started her own venture, McCartney Multimedia, Inc. a creative digital agency in Los Angeles, and her own thriving online organic tea business, MrsMcCartneysTeas.com with a percentage of the profits going to the Linda McCartney Centre and their breast cancer research team in Liverpool.

Angie is also an ordained Minister of Religion, licensed to perform weddings in all 50 States of America. She appears in a live chat with Pete Price on Radio City every Wednesday at 1am.



THOSE WERE THE DAYS: Angie, Jim, Jane Asher and Paul in the garden at Rembrandt, after Mike McCartney's wedding to Angela Fishwick, in June, 1968. Right: Angie today



Time Off

The family entertainment guide

Win a ticket to see Swan Lake

ONE of the most popular and beautiful ballets returns to the Liverpool Empire next month.

The Russian State Ballet and Orchestra of Siberia will perform a number of productions in a three-day tour, concluding on February 6 with Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake.

An immortal love story filled with emotion and beauty, and, of course, Tchaikovsky's magical score, it creates a unforgettable dance experience.

Prince Siegfried chases upon a flock of swans while out hunting.

When one of the swans turns into a beautiful woman, he is instantly captivated – but will his love prove strong enough to break the evil spell that she is under?

On February 4, the company will perform La Fille Mal Gardée, or the Wayward Daughter, a ballet inspired by Pierre-Antoine Baudouin's 1789 painting, La réprimande/Une jeune fille querellée par sa mère.

A tale of love thwarted, unrequited and found, it's described as a comic masterpiece, where a farm boy woos a farmer's flirty daughter and they find inventive ways to avoid

her mother. On February 5, the company presents Coppélia.

Formed in 1981, The Russian State Ballet of Siberia, below, has quickly established itself as one of Russia's leading ballet companies and has built an international reputation for delivering performances of quality and depth. The soloists and corps de ballet are superb and never fail to delight audiences with their breathtaking physical ability and dazzling costumes.

Time Off has teamed up with the Liverpool Empire Theatre and the Russian State Ballet to offer you to chance to enjoy the beauty of Swan Lake for yourself, with a family ticket to give away. Just tell us what a baby swan is called and send your entries with your name, address and daytime phone number on a postcard, by January 21, to: Time Off/Swan Lake Competition, c/o Janet Tansley, Liverpool Echo, PO Box 48, Old Hall Street, Liverpool L69 3EB.

The first correct entry out of the hat will win. Usual ECHO competition rules apply.



Time to visit mummy

THERE'S always so much to see in the city's museums and galleries, but if ever there was a time to re-visit the World Museum Liverpool, now is it.

And it there is one gallery that you must step inside, it's the one which spotlights the wonders of Egypt.

Recently refurbished, it looks at the world of the Pharaohs and the remarkable culture that built the Pyramids and the Sphinx, right.

Ancient Egypt contains 1,500 exhibits from the museum's world-class collections – indeed, one of its great treasures, the vividly-coloured belt of Ramesses III, is on display for the first time since before the Second World War.

Dating from 1180 BC, the monarch probably wore it in battle while riding his chariot and this is a unique surviving relic from the ancient world.

Also among the items is the mummy said to have inspired H Rider Haggard's adventure, She, about a beautiful queen who lives 2,000 years waiting for her lost love before shrivelling up into a pile of dust. Visitors can “unwrap” a mummy without it being touched, using a computer interactive. And Ancient Egypt looks at the legacy of Ramesses III, is on display for the first time since before the Second World War.



Meet Robot with No-Bot

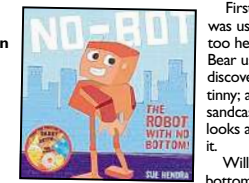
No-Bot, the Robot with No Bottom by Sue Hendra, £10.99 h/b (Simon and Schuster)

MEET Bernard. He's a robot with a very unusual problem.

Have you ever seen a No-Bot? You haven't? Well you're about to in this fabulously funny and wonderfully warm picture book by Sue Hendra.

The adventure begins when Bernard the Robot, above, loses his bottom on the park swing, and sets off to find it . . . with hilarious consequences.

Every time he gets close to it, it disappears again!



First, he discovers that Bird was using it as a nest, but it was too heavy so he got rid of it. Bear used it in his drum kit, but discovered the sound was far too tinny; and then the squirrels built sandcastles with it . . . and now it looks as if they're sailing away in it.

Will Bernard EVER get his bottom back?

There are many people who would love to lose their bottom, but Bernard clearly isn't one of them and his quest to trace his derriere is lovable and truly funny.

Bernard is a fantastic new friend, created by Sue Hendra for all her fans to fall in love with . . . and they will!

By JANET TANSLEY