



Reade all about it!

Daily Mirror columnist and Liverpool lad Brian Reade takes an irreverent look-back on '08...

IF proof were needed that mankind hasn't a clue what lies around the corner, Capital of Culture provided it in spades.

Who'd have believed a couple of years ago, that 50,000 would congregate in Lime Street on a cold January night, to see Ringo Starr sat in a crate above St George's Hall droning on about leaving Liverpool but never letting it down (give it a couple of weeks eh Ringo)? Who'd have thought the year would end with 10,000 Scousers sat in a huge arena in the King's Dock giving a standing ovation to Mr Manchester himself, Bobby Charlton? (I refuse to knight him until Bob Paisley gets a posthumous one).

And look what happened in between. Middle-aged men in pubs, whose normal conversation centred on the runners in the 3.45 at Ripon asking if "that Klimt thing's any cop?" while discussing their favourite lamb-banana shaped piece of modern art.

It would take too long to name-check every individual success, although special mention must go to Hope Street-based Hurricane Films for blowing Cannes away with their film *Of Time And The City*, and Shaun Duggan's brilliant play *Drama Queen* at the Unity.

But the top event had to be the French-born but very Liverpudlian *La Princess* ("La" being used to greet every Scouse male and "Princess" every school-age female).



"I can't make it in today because I've come down with arachnophobia."

It not only made world-class art accessible to all, it gave more than one wag (not Coleen or Alex) the excuse to phone their city centre workplace and say "I can't make it in today because I've come down with arachnophobia."

Which showcased more than any other cultural initiative, the native wit, audacity and creative genius of our city's inhabitants. Which, when you think about it, was all 2008 was really about.



"Liverpool is a city like no other. It has a fantastic sporting, artistic and cultural heritage and was a worthy recipient of the 2008 European Capital of Culture title.



I'm very happy Liverpool has been able to show all of this to the world over the past year and I hope the city's success continues in 2009, both on and off the pitch."

Rafael Benitez
Manager, Liverpool Football Club

On behalf of all the staff and players here at Everton Football Club I'd like to congratulate everyone involved in the Capital of Culture year.



Having staged a great '08 it is now up to everyone who lives and works in the city to make sure that Liverpool continues to move forward. Glasgow, my home city, benefited greatly from being the European Capital of Culture and I am sure Liverpool will do the same.

David Moyes
Manager, Everton Football Club