

Liverpool City Region Festival (UK) at the 837. HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY
8th – 10th May 2026
By Michael Wendt

Thank you, everybody, for the very successful presentation of Liverpool/Liverpool City Region within the 837th HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY in May 2026! Its success is closely connected with all the wonderful people supporting this event. Reviewing the events, allow me to name supporters individually to show my appreciation for their contribution:

Liverpool in November 2024

In November 2024, **Corinna Nienstedt** (Senate Chancellery Hamburg) had the wonderful idea to invite me coming along with the Hamburg delegation to Liverpool.



Liverpool Waterfront from the Mersey Ferry



This opportunity allowed me to present the concept of HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY country/city partnership. Her UK

representative colleague, **Ole Werner**, supported this cooperation and we developed the Liverpool/Hamburg exhibition in the Rathaus Diele (entrance hall) of the Hamburg city hall.

When the partnership was starting to form, **Kirsty MacLean** (LCRCA) invited me to present to a larger audience in City Hall, Liverpool. Her team members, **Pernille Kousgard** and **Ellie Stanborough**, established the regular virtual meetings which enabled us to exchange ideas and make decisions. Pernille's successor **Michaela Throup** upheld these helpful meetings.



View from the MetroMayor's office

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Hamburg in May 2025

I would also like to thank the **Liverpool City Region delegation** who joined us for the *Austria Burgenland Festival in May 2025* as part of the 836. HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY. This delegation connected our project with Hamburg's Honorary Consul of the UK, **Nicholas Teller**, who generously welcomed and assisted this German British city partnership from now on.

Berlin in October 2025

On Oktober 16, 2025 we had the *Kick Off* for the "Liverpool City Region Festival at the 837. HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY 2026 in the Hamburg State Representation in Berlin.

Speakers



Liv Assmann State Secretary of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg



Steve Rotheram, MetroMayor, Liverpool City Region Combined Authorities



H.E. Andrew Mitchell, British Ambassador in Germany and Stefanie Hempel listening



Michael Wendt, appointed by the City of Hamburg to organise the partner country festival at the annual HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARIES



Stefanie Hempel

About 120 VIP guest in Berlin have been invited – among the Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania, **H.E. Giedrius Puodziunas**, for Lithuania as partner country in 2027.

It was a very nice, enchanting event, topped by THE Beatles Expert from Hamburg, **Stefanie Hempel** and her wonderful Beatles-song interpretations. Stefanie made us all – including the State Secretary, MetroMayor and the Ambassador – singalong with her many of the great Beatles hits. Unforgettable!

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Liverpool in December 2025

In December 2025 again I was invited to Liverpool – and – besides many meetings - enjoyed the match FC Liverpool vs Brighton and Howe and the very emotional atmosphere in the stadium thankfully invited as a guest of **Tom Cassidy** (Director of tourism for Liverpool FC).



No comment!



"You never walk alone!"

I also had the great pleasure meeting **Mike Doran** (LCRCA) exchanging initial ideas about the comparable history and solutions between Liverpool and Hamburg to develop the former “bulk port sites” into modern and efficient new life quarters:

- Liverpool with the entertainment parts, the docks, the museum and many more attractions.
- Hamburg with the Speicherstadt and HafenCity and much more. **Paula Lüde** and **Sebastian Schmitz** (Senate Chancellery Hamburg) took over from Ole Werner.



*Exhibition in the Rathaus
Diele*



*Traum Quartett /
Dream Quartet*



*Kevin Keagan in Hamburg
(HSV)*

“The exhibition "Port Cities: Stages of the World" is being presented in the Main Hall of Hamburg City Hall as part of the Hamburg Port Anniversary. It highlights the historical connection between Liverpool and Hamburg and, until May 26, showcases—for the first time—never-before-seen letters from the five original members of the Beatles”.

Thankfully Mike Doran developed the ideas with patience, great knowledge and true heart-blood together with Paula Lüde and Sebastian Schmitz in a wonderful collaboration to an outstanding Exhibition.

There is a plan the exhibition shall move to Liverpool afterwards.

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In December 2025 I also met

- **Kate Gilston & Chloe Gebhardt** who were working successfully to bring a Liverpool-like music program on the big stage giving young artists the chance of performing in Hamburg.
- **Rhiannon Newman** who took care of the legal and financial responsibilities.
- **James Wood** who organised the 8 stands from Liverpool City Region presenting the region on our festival.

During this visit in Liverpool Pernille Kousgard unfortunately informed me that she will not be able to attend the festival in Hamburg because retiring during the following week. We all have regretted this decision because Pernille was the first person the delegation met in Liverpool at the first visit. She was both, “heart and face” of the planned event in Hamburg.

Thank fully a month later Michaela Throup took over to replace Pernille and go ahead.

The work went forward and it was time to show the Liverpool-professionals the event site and location.

Hamburg February 2026

On Tuesday, 24th February 2026 a Liverpool delegation visited Hamburg, inspecting the venue, the St, Michel church, the Rickmer Rickmers (Opening of the HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY) and many more sites.

In the evening Corinna Nienstedt and Nick Teller invited representatives of the British community in Hamburg to a “Kick Off in Hamburg” into the most impressive Kaisersaal (Emperors Hall) in the City Hall.

Speakers



*Corinna Nienstedt –
Leader of the State
Office for Protocol
within the Senate
Chancellery.*



*Michaela Throup, Lead
Officer - International
Relations – Liverpool
City Region*



*Nick Teller, British
Honorary Consul in
Hamburg*



*Sören Lemke, Head of
the HAMBURG PORT
ANNIVERSARY*



*Michael Wendt,
appointed by the City
of Hamburg to
organise the Liverpool
City Region Festival at
the 837th HAMBURG
PORT ANNIVERSARY*

Afterwards everybody enjoyed meeting other interesting people from Liverpool and Hamburg

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Preparations

In the meantime, important issues had to be followed to make our guests from Liverpool feel very much welcome: **Carsten Schmidt**, Head of Protocol HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY, **Diana Eckert** (Protocol of Hamburg Fair and Congress) and her colleagues prepared the invitations for the delegation to be headed by the MetroMayor for the international Ecumenical Service in Hamburg's Main Church (Hamburg's landmark) St. Michel followed by the Official Opening of the HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY on the museum-vessel Rickmer Rickmers on Friday. And the traditional Captain's Dinner on the Rickmer Rickmers on Saturday.

The media department of Hamburg Fair and Congress became busier coming closer to the event: **Christian Freitag**, **Andrea Heyden** and **Olga Lehnert** presented the HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY and the "Liverpool City Region Festival" media wise to the public excellently. "Liverpool" became one of THE topics now.

Tasting Liverpool Lager at Gröninger



*From left: Nick Teller, Jens Stacklies, Michael Wendt, Sören Lenke, Felix Stacklies
@ Hamburg Messe und Congress/Romanus Fuhrmann*

On Wednesday 29th April 2026 the British Honorary Consul Nick Teller, Sören Lemke (Head of HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY) and Michael Wendt as organiser, had the "responsible task" to taste the "Liverpool Lager" brewed by the famous Gröninger Brewery in Hamburg according to a Liverpool recipe. This was necessary because exporting Liverpool beer to Hamburg would be nearly impossible due to customs and delivery. **Jens Stacklies** and his brewer initiated the "Liverpool Lager" which was delicious (and had been totally sold out at the end of the Festival).

Visit of HMS Sutherland

On Wednesday 6th May 2026 the British frigate "HMS Sutherland" docked at the *Überseebrücke* as part of Liverpool's partnership of the 837th HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY. She offered an "Open ship". Many interested guests of the Port Anniversary visited the vessel. Our thank you goes to **Phil Tilden**, Captain Royal Navy UK and Commander **James Wallington-Smith**.



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Tourism and Investment event

On Thursday, 7th May 2026 **Rob March** and **James Wood** – together with **Holger Lenz**, Manager Central Europe & Nordics VisitBritain - invited interested Tour Operators and Investment seekers to the exciting **British Honorary Consulate in Hamburg**.

The following entities from Liverpool presented the tourist highlights of the City and region:

- Liverpool FC
- Mersey Ferries
- Cavern Club
- Beatles Story
- Royal Liver Building 360
- The Bluecoat
- Western Approaches
- Hard Days Night Hotel

The event was totally booked out. Another great success for the partner region, another great Liverpool evening in Hamburg.



Plan of the 837th HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY on "our" LED-Trailer

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The Liverpool City Region Festival on Kajen

During this event in the Honorary Consulate, we started mounting the Festival's stands and stage on "Kajen at the Hamburg Inner Harbour".

The Liverpool City Region Festival started on Friday 8th May 2026 at 11:00 am and ran until the night.

Openings



Senior Pastor Alexander Röder
@Hamburg Messe and Congress/Romanus Fuhrmann

The official parts of the 837th PORT ANNIVERSARY HAMBURG started on Friday 8th May at 11:30 am with the International Ecumenical Service "Hafengeburtstag Hamburg". **Senior Pastor Alexander Röder**, together with **Rosi Sheridan** delivered a dialogue sermon on what connects Hamburg and Liverpool. The "Bach-organ" in St. Michel played "Let it be!".



Rosi Sheridan spoke about her time with the Beatles in Hamburg

Rosi Sheridan wife of late Tony Sheridan, who performed with the Beatles for a first record "My Bonnie is over the ocean" – Tony was the famous artist in Hamburg, the Beatles were named "Beat Brothers". As everybody knows, this has changed later.

The Parade

Afterwards **Senator Dr. Leonhard** and **MetroMayor Rotheram** started the so called "Parade" from the "Michel" to the museum ship "Rickmer Rickmers" for the official Opening of the HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY followed by the Reception onboard watching the most famous and traditional **Incoming Parade** of about 250 ships.



3 sailors from the frigate carried the flags of the UK, Liverpool City Region and HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY followed by the Senator and Metro Mayor
@ Hamburg Messe und Congress/Romanus Fuhrmann

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Ringing the bell

At 13:50 h **Senator Dr. Melanie Leonhard & Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram** were “ringing the bell” to open the 837th HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY. Both gave a short speech to the public of around half a million people on the shore and North German Television.



*Steve Rotheram and Dr. Melanie Leonhard ringing the bell
@Hamburg Messe and Congress/Romanus Furhmann*



*MetroMayor Steve Rotheram at the Rickmer Rickmers
@Hamburg Messe and Congress/Romanus Furhmann*



*MetroMayor Steve Rotheram during the
interview of the NDR
@Hamburg Messe and Congress/Romanus Furhmann*



*About 700 VIP guests enjoyed the Incoming Parade of about 250 vessels along the Elbe River
@Hamburg Messe and Congress/Romanus Furhmann*

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Opening of the Liverpool City Region Festival (UK)

At 13:45 h the Liverpool Delegation and guests boarded the Elbe barge “Diplomat” to the jetty “Hamburger Binnenhafen” with a short walk to the Festival.

The official Opening on the Liverpool Stage was visited by many interested guests and viewers at around 15:10 h hosted by **Norman Müller**.

Speakers

- Dr. Melanie Leonhard, Senator for Economic Affairs in Hamburg
- Steve Rotheram, MetroMayor of LCRCA
- H.E. Andrew Mitchell, Ambassador of the UK in Germany
- Nicholas Teller, British Honorary Consul in Hamburg

At the end the exchange of gifts between Senator Dr. Leonhard & Metro Mayor Rotheram



Beginning his speech MetroMayor Steve Rotheram presented a great drum solo on stage

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The Liverpool City Region Festival (UK)

During the three days thousands of guests enjoyed the offered food and drinks:



Fish & Chips, Scouse and Vegan British sausage offered by Jürgen Tietjen and his crew



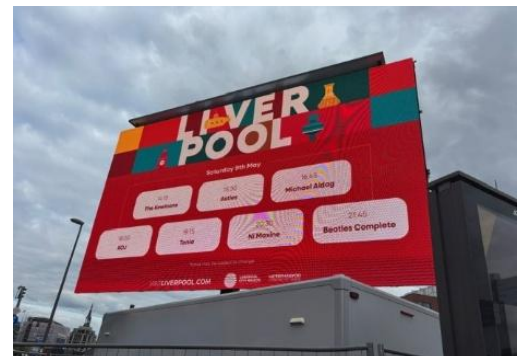
Tea and Scones as well as Coffee, by Oliver Griffel and Giovanni Mafri



Liverpool Lager, Gröninger Private Brewery, Rudolf Sobitschka.

The stage program with young promising artists

- Michael Aldag
- The Kowloons
- Tonia
- Astles
- Ni Maxine
- KOJ
- Beatles complete



The huge LED-Monitor showing the way to the Liverpool City Region Festival



The LCR-Stage – with the performance of the KOWLOONS



Great atmosphere by night



Liverpool City Region Festival (UK) at the 837. HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY

The stands from Liverpool and Liverpool Tourism



Liverpool City Region



Hard Days Night Hotel



Beatles Story



Be a Beatle using the virtual mask
@Hamburg Messe und Congress/Jan Wagner



Bluecoat



Mersey Ferries



Royal Liver Building 360



Western Approaches

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@Hamburg Messe und Congress/Jan Wagner



The shows of Liverpool's most famous "Cavern Club" during the intervals on stage the fantastic **Clark Gilmour** and **Paul Jones** along with **Victoria McDermott** and **Alina Ritter** entertained the audience in front of the stand of the world-famous Cavern Club in Liverpool. Between 1961 and 1963 the Fab Four performed there 292 times.

The weather was outstanding: much sun, no rain, some clouds, not too cold, not too hot.

The HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY reported 1,2 million visitors.



Sunday, May 10th, 2026, in the afternoon, the traditional Tug-boat ballet performed to the music of "**You'll never walk alone!**"
@Hamburg Messe und Congress/Jan Wagner

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On Friday, during the afternoon and evening MetroMayor Steve Rotheram and his delegation – together with British Honorary Consul, Nick Teller, joined the Reception on the German Tender RHEIN alongside the HMS Sutherland at the *Überseebrücke*, hosted by the **Hamburg Regional Command** with the Opening of the buffet by **Captain Behr**, Commander of the tender RHEIN

On Saturday 9th May 2026 there were additional important events with our Liverpool guests in Hamburg

- The visit of MetroMayor Steve Rotheram and his delegation accompanied by **State Councillor for Sport, Christoph Holstein** at the Exhibition in the City Hall
And the meeting with the actors of the BBC production Beatles in Hamburg.
- Signing the MoU between both Mayors for the deepening of collaboration between Hamburg and Liverpool City Region.
- The Captains Dinner on the Rickmer Rickmers hosted by Hamburg Fair and Congress. CEOs **Heiko Stutzinger** and **Uwe Fischer** welcomed the “Who is who in Hamburg and the Port with spouses”. MetroMayor Steve Rotheram and **Hamburg First Mayor Dr. Peter Tschentscher** had a lot to talk sitting together at the Head table.
They could follow the famous “*Elbe in Concert*” excellently. This is the very attractive Concert on jetties swimming on the water of the Elbe River.



One of THE highlights of the Festival was the final concert of the **Beatles Complete** in front of an emotional public audience.



George Harrison's psychedelic Mini made a big impression to the visitors. “Everybody made photos or selfies – everybody!”. The Mini was brought by Dean Paton, big heritage.

@Hamburg Messe und Congress/Jan Wagner

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Both events, the 837th HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY and the “Liverpool City Region Festival” closed on Sunday at 08:00 pm.



@Hamburg Messe und Congress/Jan Wagner

20 flags, United Kingdom and Liverpool City Region, were flying in the wind



Good bye and thank you Hamburg!



And now the lovely festival location “Kajen” has been turned back into a parking lot and sand under the U3-bridge

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Last but not at least:

Our “**Thank you / Herzlichen Dank**” goes to all those wonderful people on both sides of the Channel! We could not mention everybody who supported the Liverpool City Region Festival since October 2024.

Besides the people mentioned already in this report we deeply thank:

- The whole team of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authorities (LCRCA),
- The team of the *Beatles Story* in Liverpool,
- The teams of all stands,
- The artists on stage,
- The logistic supporters around Lee Koster (Mersey forwarding) in Liverpool and Lisa Wozniak (Scan Shipping in Hamburg),
- The team in the *British Embassy* in Berlin,
- The team in the *British Honorary Consulate* in Hamburg,
- The team of the *Authority for Economy, Labor, and Innovation* in Hamburg (BWA) responsible for the 837. HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY, led by Sören Lemke,
- The teams of the *Hamburg Senate Chancellery* and the *Hamburg City Hall*, led by Markus Heilig,
- The wonderful team of *Hamburg Fair and Congress* responsible for the entire planning, organization, and implementation of the 837th HAMBURG PORT ANNIVERSARY, led by Sonja Tegtmeyer
- The *Elbgraphen* – Stefan Klug and his staff
- *eXtra Verleih* – Rolf Paulsen and his staff
- *ESE* – Jens Rau and his staff
- *Chrome Security* – Heiko Krenz & Marvin Meyer and their team
- *HEG* – Oliver Kienitz and his colleagues
- Rainer Schmidt and his colleagues
- Andreas Priefer and his colleagues
- Wolfgang Tepel, Sven Feddern and Tobias Roesenberger
- My Deputy Joachim Grell

Photos:

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