**Merseyside Civic Society**

**Registered Charity No: 221700**

**RITA CHEESMAN HERITAGE INTERPRETATION AWARDS 2023**

**CITATION FOR EMMA COPESTAKE**

Some fifty years ago local government across the City Region was

undergoing wholesale re-organisation. A new Merseyside County

Council emerged, covering functions across the metropolitan area,

although it did not last long. With the exception of Liverpool, which

remained within its inherited boundaries, the other local authorities

were grouped together into four new Metropolitan Boroughs. It was

difficult at first for them to establish their identities. It was also difficult

for the localities and their residents to retain their historic identities.

 Today we are gathered to celebrate a remarkable, innovative

project of heritage interpretation, which brought together contributions

at both the Borough and localities levels, has been supported by

national funding, and, was designed to involve individuals,

communities and interest groups –- the clue is in the project title:

“Community within communities: Our Voices to be Heard”. The project

is also distinctive for the leadership displayed by **Sefton Council for**

**Voluntary Service,** with all its local insight and knowledge of working

across the borough – including with **Sefton Council** -- with diverse

groups, and, those often often overlooked in terms of heritage. They

were supported with essential financial resources and experience by

**The National Lottery Heritage Fund**, and with the ‘**Voices**

**to be Heard’** of local residents, volunteers and many more besides.

At the heart of the active, practical management of the project we

recognise today its Heritage Development Officer, **Emma Copestake**.

Emma is not a typical bureaucrat, however, and brought the outlook,

techniques and experience of her Liverpool University PhD studies on

the impact of containerisation on dock workers and their families to the

Sefton project. These helped her to understand community history,

culture and identity in reaching out to and working with many

individuals and diverse social groups across the Borough.

 It is impossible here to describe the details of the stimulating

Small Grants Scheme which had to be administered; the activities

organised to build heritage capacity and provide training; the

preparation of a ‘Heritage Toolkit’ to extend the working of the project

beyond its years; and, the ‘Nine Townships of Sefton’ programme for

volunteers to research and design the banners we see exhibited around

us. To get the full flavour of the project, and Emma’s contribution as

Development Officer, you simply have to go digital:

[www.seftoncvs.org.uk/project/heritageproject/](http://www.seftoncvs.org.uk/project/heritageproject/)

In recognising her individual contribution among the many

institutional, financial and volunteer contributions which came together

to produce Sefton’s “Community within communities: Our Voices to be

Heard” project, MCS is pleased to nominate **Emma Copestake** for a

Tenth Anniversary Rita Cheesman Heritage Interpretation Award 2023.