



SAMPLE PAGES

The 80-page, A4 handbook for Manchester's Heritage, with text, photographs, maps and a reading list, is available for purchase, price £15.00 including postage and packing.

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Manchester's Heritage

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interesting breaks with interesting people

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**Castlefield:
reconstructed Roman fort and Great Northern viaduct**

...the boat glided along in a most noiseless and dreamlike manner amidst the cheers of the people.

– and either ignored or did not notice that at one point one of the towing horses fell into the canal.

Lord Ellesmere was the sponsor of **St Mark's Church** (George Gilbert Scott, 1846), the early black-and-white revival **Court House** (1849) and also in 1849 the black-and-white wing of the **Packet House**, from which passenger boats departed for Manchester. The Green and many of the buildings around it is later, c1907, built after the clearance of less picturesque industrial sites near the canal.

The **Barton Aqueduct** was the crucial enterprise that enabled the Bridgewater Canal to terminate on the east bank of the Irwell, a sturdy masonry structure, its water-channel lined with puddled clay,, by which for the first time boats floated above thin air "...over a navigable river, without communicating with its waters". The Duke himself, with a party of guests, came to see the first boat float across:

As soon as the water had risen to the level of the Canal a large boat carrying upwards of 50 tons was towed...over arches over the River Irwell which were so firm, secure and compact that not a single drop of water could be perceived to ouze thro' any of them, although the surface of the Canal is 38 feet above the navigable river under it.

The construction of the Manchester Ship Canal along the course of the Mersey & Irwell Navigation required the demolition of Brindley's structure: the present hydraulic swing-aqueduct and its accompanying road-bridge were designed by Edward Leader Williams and opened in 1893.

Castlefield Basin, which was fed by the water of the River Medlock, came into use by August 1765. It initially had two warehouses, now destroyed, known originally as the Duke's and Henshall, Gilbert & Co's (operated jointly by the Trent & Mersey Canal and John Gilbert Jnr, the son of the Duke's land-agent).

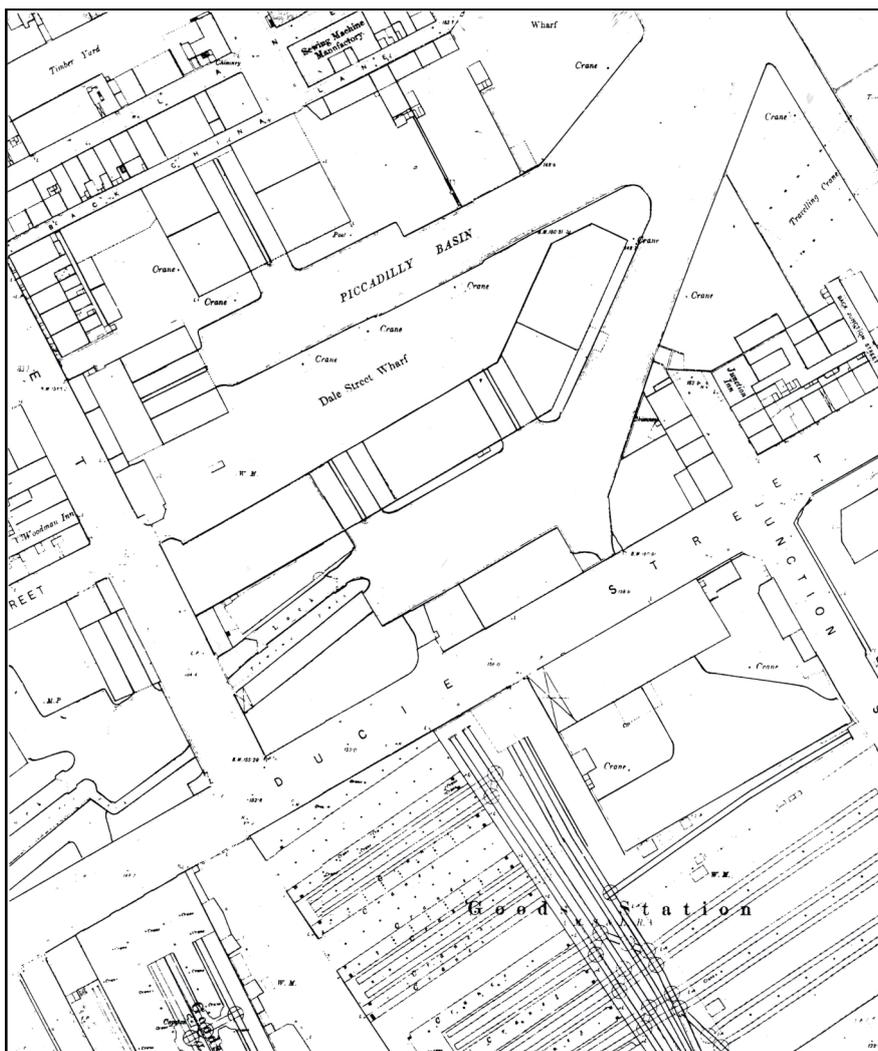
Castlefield became a thriving and varied industrial area, manufacturing and dealing not only in coal and cotton, but also dyestuffs, stone, flour, potatoes, vitriol, salt, corn and timber. Coal was delivered by barge into a tunnel behind Henshall, Gilbert & Co's warehouse, opened in 1765, from which it was hoisted 47 feet to street-level for sale in Castle Street: the same narrow-gauge boats were used here that were designed for the mine-tunnels at Worsley, loaded with containers already filled with coal. Derek Brumhead & Terry Wyke quote a contemporary account of this operation (dated 1771) by Arthur Young:

The latest contribution to this heritage of engineering structures is the pedestrian **Merchants' Bridge**, otherwise known as the **Catalan Bridge**, designed and constructed in 1995 by the structural engineers Whitby & Bird. The design-brief specifically required it to be –

...unambiguously a design representative of the late 20th century which will contribute another stratum to the historic layering which is a feature of Castlefield...

The footbridge is 65 metres long and spans 38.2 metres. It cost £416,000 excluding fees. Its elegant, gravity-defying shape is entirely expressive of its construction, as designer Mark Whitby explains,–

Using the deck as a torsion structure, it was possible to support the bridge from a single arch, which is itself supported by the deck...



**Rochdale Canal
Basin, Dale Street
Wharf [OS 25in
map c1922]**

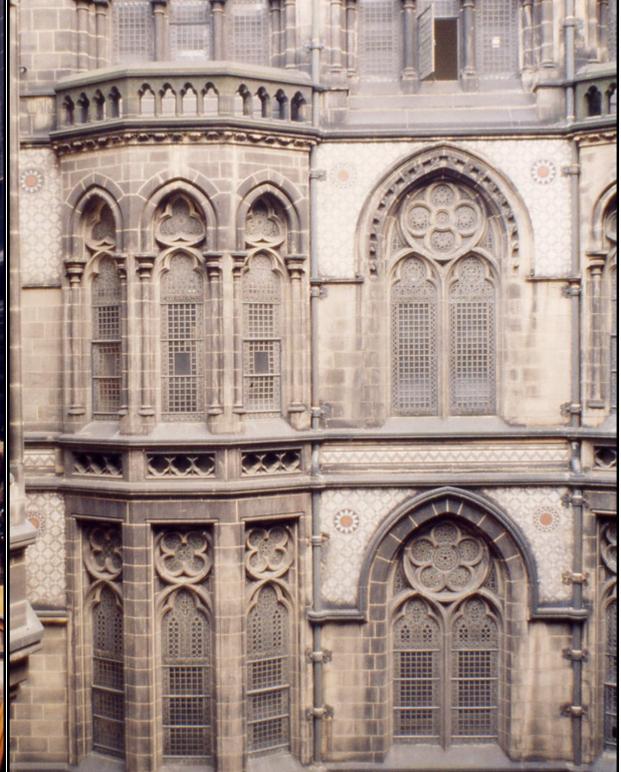
The Great Hall with its hammerbeam roof and huge Cavallé-Coll organ is celebrated for the mural paintings of Ford Madox Brown, executed 1876-88, depicting episodes from the building of the Roman fort to John Dalton, the “father of modern chemistry”, collecting marsh gas, but notably omitting Peterloo. The Mayor’s Suite of reception-rooms is treated in an elaborate Gothic style; the main axial corridors are vaulted and tiled in grand style and the spiral subsidiary stairs, named English, Scotch and Irish from the origin of the granite used in each, wind around unobtrusive heating and ventilation flues, designed by the heating engineer, G N Haden. On the Princess Street side of the building was the Mayor’s Private Apartment, which could “become at once completely cut off from the remainder of the building and yet...be entered from the street, thus obtaining all the advantages and conveniences of a private residence”.

Outside the Town Hall is the **Albert Memorial**, designed by Thomas Worthington in 1862, and predating the more famous memorial by George Gilbert Scott in Hyde Park.

The unenviable task of enlarging Waterhouse’s magnificent building eventually passed to Vincent Harris, who was commissioned in 1925 to design the circular classical **Central Library**, adjacent but facing on to St Peter’s Square, completed in 1934, and a **Town Hall Extension** on the intervening plot. His tall, steep-gabled Town Hall Extension in Darley Dale stone, opened in 1938, complements the Spinkwell stone of the Victorian Town Hall to which it is linked by two-storey footbridges, and sets off the Portland stone of the Library. Though not universally accepted when first completed, time has shown that Harris’ group form a far more inspired and respectful piece of civic planning than most twentieth-century public architecture.



Manchester Town Hall: Great Hall



Manchester Town Hall: exterior, interior & courtyard



Imperial War Museum North

Imperial War Museum North

I wrapped a ceramic teapot in a plastic bag and dropped it from my window, and I saw that I could select three pieces that would be enough to suggest the entire curvature of the universe.

Daniel Libeskind, QUOTED IN Tim Adams, 'May the North be with you', *The Observer*, July 28th 2002

The Imperial War Museum North is the first British architectural commission by Daniel Libeskind (b 1946). His disconcerting building, consisting of three “shards”, Earth, Water and Air, representing the curvature of smashed sections of the earth’s globe, gives a feeling of restriction approaching claustrophobia, of hardness and being overpowered. Access to the viewing platform at the top of the 55-foot high Air Shard is deliberately contrived to give a feeling of vertigo and physical risk.

The exterior, of gleaming aluminium, echoes the quirky elegance of the Lowry Centre (Michael Wilford & Partner 2000) opposite: its fragmented forms seem to float beside the Ship Canal, waymarked from a distance by the shrapnel-point of the Air Shard tower. The jagged access path leads the visitor awkwardly to the entrance: within is neither interior nor exterior, but simply a clad space exposed to the elements, its structural girder-work bare and angular, distractingly at variance with the vertical concrete staircase-tower.

L T C Rolt, *George & Robert Stephenson* (Pelican 1978)

Dennis Sharp (ed), *Manchester* (Studio Vista 1969)

Cecil Stewart, *The Stones of Manchester* (Edward Arnold 1956)

Simon Taylor, Malcolm Cooper & P S Barnwell, *Manchester: the warehouse legacy* (English Heritage 2002)

Philip Thomas, *Built to Music: the making of the Bridgewater Hall* (Manchester City Council 1996)

Mike Williams & Douglas A Farnie, *Cotton mills in Greater Manchester* (Carnegie 1993)

Prue Williams, *Victoria Baths: Manchester's Water Palace* (Spire 2004)

Ian Yearsley & Philip Groves, *The Manchester Tramways* (Transport Publishing 1988)



The Old Shambles (2009)

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