



SAMPLE PAGES

The 68-page, A4 handbook for Liverpool's Heritage, with text, photographs, maps, a chronology and a reading list, is available for purchase, price £15.00 including postage and packing.

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Liverpool's Heritage

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Monday October 17th-Friday October 21st 2011

interesting breaks with interesting people

Contents

Places to eat in central Liverpool	6
Bus-service information.....	7
Liverpool city-centre museums and galleries	8
Liverpool city-centre entertainment venues	9
Introduction	11
Liverpool Docks	12
The Mersey crossings	23
Pier Head.....	31
Town Hall area	32
St George's Hall.....	34
Lime Street area.....	41
Anglican Cathedral	47
Catholic Cathedral.....	51
Sefton Park area.....	54
Background reading	66



Above: Former Great George Street Congregational Church (1979)



Albert Dock warehouses: *top*: (1983); *bottom*: (1990)

In the eighteenth century coach-services from Chester operated to Woodside to connect with ferries to Liverpool. The mail contract was transferred from Tranmere to Woodside in 1808.

The first steam-powered ferry-boat on the Mersey, the *Etna*, began operating between Liverpool and Tranmere on April 17th 1817. A further steam-ferry began in 1820, using a boat named *Birkenhead*, between Liverpool and Birkenhead, and in 1822 the steam-powered *Countess of Bridgewater* began to operate from Woodside.

The New Brighton ferry was established in 1833 to serve the ambitious new resort, founded three years earlier. A further service from Monks Ferry operated from 1837 until 1878.

Powers were granted in the Birkenhead Improvement Acts of 1842 to take over the various up-river ferries, apart from the Eastham service, though the Woodside, North Birkenhead and Liverpool Steam Ferry Company continued to operate until 1858. Birkenhead Corporation ferries, distinguished by their red funnels, carried the names of Wirral and Lancashire places.

The down-river ferries between Liverpool and Seacombe, Egremont and New Brighton, all of which were owned by the Coulbourn brothers, were taken over by the Wallasey Local Government Board in 1861-3. Wallasey Corporation vessels had white funnels, and were generally named after flowers or, on occasions, locations (Wallasey and Seacombe) or chairmen of the Corporation Ferry Committee.

The full range of Mersey ferry services, in chronological order of closure, is –

Liverpool to –	Opened	Closed
Ellesmere Port & Runcorn	12th century	Mid-1850s
Old Birkenhead	1820	1870
Monks Ferry	1837	1878
Tranmere	By 1586	1897
New Ferry	1774	1922
Eastham	1357	1929
Rock Ferry	By 1709	1939
Egremont	c1830	1941
New Brighton	1833	1971
Otterspool Festival	1984	1985
Birkenhead (Woodside)	Late 12th century?	-
Wallasey (Seacombe)	1086	-

The thirty-foot tidal fall on the Mersey creates inevitable obstacles to landing passengers and freight. On the Liverpool side the Great Landing Stage, built of iron and floating on iron pontoons, was opened in 1847. Originally 508 feet long, it was rebuilt in 1876 and further lengthened in 1921. In that form it served passenger and vehicle ferries across the Mersey, North Wales and Isle of Man steamers and ocean-going liners. In 1973 it was replaced by a much shorter, concrete stage which served the Mersey and Isle of Man ferries and the Mersey pilots until it partly sank as a result of storm damage in January 2005. The ferry terminal dating from 1990 was replaced by a post-modern structure by Hamilton Architects of Belfast, which won the Carbuncle Cup, 2009.

Town Hall area

A short walk up Water Street from Pier Head stands arguably the most astonishing building in Liverpool. **Oriel Chambers** is a tall, elegant office-block, its framework picked out in nail-headed stone mullions which frame the delicate cast-iron windows which give it its name. Its appearance is such that it would do credit to an architect of the present generation: its materials – and the date high in the central gable – give away the fact that it was completed in 1864 by a virtually unknown architect, Peter Ellis Jnr (1804-1884). Its inner courtyard (inaccessible to the public), faced with cantilevered iron cladding, even more uncompromisingly anticipates the Modern Movement, and serves to explain why, except for one other framed building a couple of streets away, **16 Cook Street** (1866), Ellis built hardly anywhere else, having been roundly condemned by contemporary critics:

The plainest brick warehouse in town is infinitely superior as a building to that large agglomeration of protruding plate-glass bubbles in Water Street termed Oriel Chambers. Did we not see this vast abortion – which would be depressing were it not ludicrous – with our own eyes, we should have doubted the possibility of its existence. Where and in what are their beauties [*sic*] supposed to lie?

The Builder, June 22nd 1866, quoted in Quentin Hughes, *Seaport: architecture and townscape in Liverpool* (Lund Humphries 1964), p 62.

Ellis' obituary in the *Liverpool Daily Post* (October 24th 1884) describes him as an architect and surveyor "held in high esteem by the members of his own profession" without mentioning a single building or design.

The **Town Hall**, Liverpool's third, was initially designed by the Bath architect, John Wood the Elder (1749-54): like Wood's equivalent building in Bristol, it was initially intended as an Exchange, but with municipal



Above: Oriel Chambers; *Opposite:* 16 Cook Street



Above: St Margaret's Church, Princes Road

timber bellcote with a fleche located on the uninterrupted roofline directly above the chancel arch. G E Street later contributed the memorial brass of 1881 in the chancel floor to Robert Horsfall, based on a design he had previously used for the brass to Sir George Gilbert Scott in Westminster Abbey.

The interior walls, however, were embellished with painted decoration that is attributed mainly to Maddox & Pearce, with some initial contributions from Clayton & Bell, who also designed much of the stained glass. Most of the paintings are now in a decayed condition, and some of the glass was lost in the blitz. The sanctuary gates and possibly the font cover are by Skidmore, and there is a fine carved pulpit with bust of saints in gilded wood. The organ, now derelict, is by "Father" Willis.

The pivotal position of St Margaret's in the ritualistic controversies of the time is explicit in the activities of its early incumbents. The first vicar, Rev Charles Parnell, had been the priest in charge at Robert Horsfall's earlier chapel of ease, St James the Less, Stanley Road: his first sermon was based on 1 Samuel 16, 4-5:

...When [Samuel] arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me."

The diocese of Liverpool was created in 1880 at the instigation of the Liverpool-born Prime Minister, W E Gladstone, precisely to create an evangelical enclave out of the predominantly Anglo-Catholic diocese of Chester. The second vicar, Rev James Bell Cox, quickly fell into dispute with the first Bishop of Liverpool, the Evangelical J C Ryle, to the point where he was committed to Walton Gaol for contempt of court.

by John Hughes, *Port in a Storm: the air attacks on Liverpool and its shipping in the Second World War* (Merseyside Port Folios 1993), which is instructive to anyone who remembers or is interested in the effects of aerial bombardment on British cities in the Second World War.

There is a superbly illustrated guide of **St George's Hall** by Loraine Knowles, *St George's Hall, Liverpool* (with a contribution by Edward Morris, National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside 1988).

There are two complementary published histories of the **Anglican Cathedral** – Joe Riley, *Today's Cathedral: the Cathedral Church of Christ, Liverpool* (SPCK 1978), and Peter Kennerley's *The Building of Liverpool Cathedral* (Carnegie 1991), which is the result of the first comprehensive exploration of the archival sources, including a range of photographs of construction from the digging of the foundations onwards. Of the various journal-articles commemorating the completion, Peter Marsh, 'Building the old fashioned way', *New Scientist*, October 19th 1978, pp 160-3, remains of particular interest.

The most detailed description of the **Catholic Cathedral** is Sir Frederick Gibberd, *The Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool* (Architectural Press 1968). A contemporary appreciation can be found in Michael Webb, 'A second crown for Liverpool', *Country Life*, Vol 141 (1967), pp 1218-20.



Above: Mersey Tunnel boundary marker