

Stories from the sea



A self-guided walk in Liverpool

www.discoveringbritain.org

**the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks**





Contents

Introduction	3
Practical information	4
Route maps	6
Commentary	9
Credits	35

© The Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers, London, 2015

Discovering Britain is a project of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)
The digital and print maps used for Discovering Britain are licensed to the RGS-IBG from Ordnance Survey

Cover image: Liver bird © Rory Walsh RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Stories from the sea

Discover how international trade shaped Liverpool

Tea from China, bananas from Jamaica, timber from Sweden, rice from India, cotton from America, hemp from Egypt, sugar from Barbados... These are just some of the goods that arrived at Liverpool's docks. In the nineteenth century, 40 per cent of the world's trade passed through Liverpool.

Though Liverpool's port employs less people today, the city still has a proud maritime industry. On this walk we will find out more about the different products shipped from around the world.

As we explore some of the city's major landmarks and some lesser-known sights, we'll see how Liverpool is truly a global gateway.

This walk was originally created in 2012 as part of a series that explored how our towns and cities have been shaped for many centuries by some of the 206 participating nations in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.



A painting of Liverpool from circa 1680, thought to be the oldest existing depiction of the city
Courtesy National Museums Liverpool



Albert Dock
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Practical information

Location	Liverpool, North west England
Getting there	<p>Train - The walk starts from Lime Street station. Regular services include London Euston, Manchester stations, Leeds, Sheffield, York, Birmingham New Street, Norwich, Nottingham, Wigan and Newcastle.</p> <p>Bus - There are many local and long-distance services to the city centre. There are bus stations at Queens Square and Paradise Street.</p> <p>Car - Liverpool is easily accessible from the north and south. The M62 links to the east (Hull, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford) the M6 and M1 to the south (including London, Nottingham, Birmingham)</p>
Start point	Lime Street Station, L1 1JD
Finish point	St George's Hall, L1 1JJ
Onward journey	To route is almost a circle - Lime Street station is visible from St George's Hall
Distance	3 miles
Level	Gentle - a fairly flat city route with a section along the riverside
Conditions	A city walk on pavements and paths. Some cobbled streets in the Ropewalks. Take care for traffic in the city centre and wrap up warm for the waterfront section.

Suitable for

Families - take warm clothes as the riverside section can often be very breezy

Pushchairs & wheelchairs - an entirely step-free route apart from the grounds of Our Lady & St Nicholas Church

Refreshments

There are plenty of cafés and shops along the route

Facilities

Free public toilets are available inside the museums

Other info

Monthly tours of **Liverpool Town Hall** are available by booking in advance. Tickets £3. (Tel: 0151 225 5530)

Family-friendly activities

You can catch the famous **Mersey Ferry** from the Pier Head (Stop 13). Crossings offer great views of 'the Three Graces'. For times and tickets tel: 0151 330 1000

Underwater Street Discovery Centre is a family-friendly attraction, open from 10am – 4pm, Tuesday to Friday and 10am – 6pm at weekends. (Tel: 0151 227 2550)

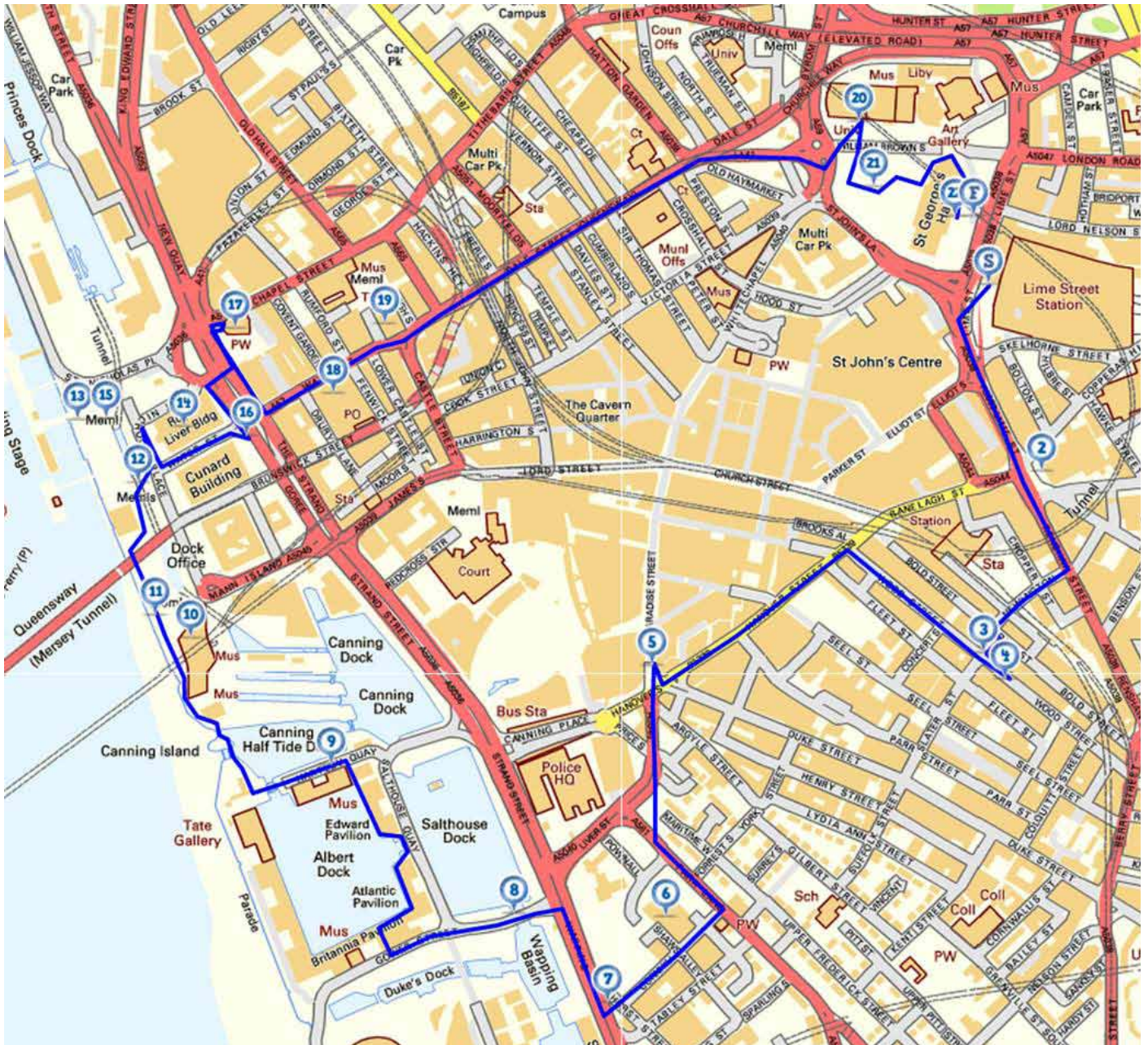
Merseyside Maritime Museum, International Slavery Museum (Stop 9), **Walker Art Gallery** and **World Museum** (Stop 20) are open daily 10am -5pm. Free entry.

Tate Liverpool art gallery at Albert Dock is open daily from 10am – 5pm. Free entry except for special exhibitions (Tel: 0151 702 7400)

Tourist Information

Albert Dock Visitor Information Centre, Anchor Courtyard L3 4BS. Open daily from 10am. You can find it on the walk route after Stop 8. (Tel: 0151 707 0729)

Route overview



Start and end sections of the route



Stopping points

- S.** Lime Street railway station
- 2.** The Adelphi Hotel
- 3.** Ropewalks
- 4.** The Tea Factory
- 5.** Former American Consulate
- 6.** Heap's Rice Mill
- 7.** The Baltic Fleet pub
- 8.** Salhouse and Albert Docks
- 20.** World Museum, Walker Art Gallery & Liverpool Central Library
- 21.** St John's Gardens
- 22.** St George's Hall
- F.** St George's Hall

Middle section of the route



Stopping points

7. The Baltic Fleet pub
8. Salthouse and Albert Docks
9. Merseyside Maritime Museum
10. Museum of Liverpool
11. Merchant Navy memorial
12. 'The Three Graces' (Royal Liver Building, Port of Liverpool Building, Cunard Building)
13. Pier Head
14. Liver birds, The Royal Liver Building
15. Titanic memorial
16. The Goree
17. St Nicholas Church
18. India Buildings
19. Liverpool Town Hall

1. Welcome to Liverpool

Lime Street railway station

Welcome to Liverpool! One of the major cities of northern England, Liverpool is known throughout the world as the birthplace of The Beatles and for its famous football teams.

The city was also the start, finish or stopping off place for many journeys by sea. Liverpool was a major port and built up its wealth and status through trade. And this trade connected the city with many other countries. This walk explores the people, trades and goods that built this city.

We'll discover warehouses where goods were stored, streets where ropes were made and a pub where sailors drank. We'll visit memorials to those who died on merchant ships, a hotel where transatlantic passengers stayed, the headquarters of shipping companies, and a church named after the patron saint of seafarers.

We hope you enjoy the journey!



Sights of maritime Liverpool
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Directions 1

With the station entrance behind you, turn left along Lime Street. Stay on the left hand pavement. Immediately after Copperas Hill is the Adelphi Hotel. Stop on the forecourt outside or go through the revolving doors into the lobby.

2. Land-locked liner

The Adelphi Hotel

Our first stop is the Adelphi Hotel, the largest and most famous hotel in Liverpool. There has been a hotel on this site since 1826, though the current building was rebuilt in 1912 by the Midland Railway Company. The rebuild made the Adelphi one of the most luxurious hotels in the world at the time.

Many of its rooms have solid Italian marble walls and it was one of the first hotels in the UK that had baths and telephones in every room. The hotel's opulent fittings reflected Liverpool's wealth and allure.



Hall 1 at the Britannia Adelphi Hotel
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

This wealth and status came from Liverpool's port. By the time the Adelphi was built, Liverpool was one of Britain's major trade destinations. Goods from around the world passed through Liverpool's docks and people from throughout the world stopped in the city – to live and to work, for business and for pleasure.

The Adelphi attracted wealthy visitors to the city. Many were passengers on huge luxury ocean liners that stopped in Liverpool during worldwide cruises. As a result The Adelphi was sometimes described as a cruise liner on dry land. The hotel's Sefton Suite is even a replica of the First Class Smoking Lounge on the RMS Titanic. In 1981 rooms at the Adelphi were used to film ocean liner sequences for the TV adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited* when the main characters were sailing back from New York.

Many famous guests have stayed here over the years including Charles Dickens – who named it his favourite hotel – and Mark Twain. Perhaps the most famous visitor was a horse! In 1954 the American actor Roy Rogers, TV's 'singing cowboy', stayed at the hotel with his horse, Trigger. With Rogers bed-bound with flu Trigger was free to trot along the Adelphi's corridors and even made his way up one of the hotel's staircases.

Directions 2

Continue along the main road which is now called Renshaw Street. Cross over in a safe place and then turn right into Newington. Follow this road then go into Slater Street. Stop at the junction of Slater Street and Wood Street on the right hand side.

3. A sign of the past

Ropewalks

Just a stone's throw from an opulent hotel where the city's wealthiest visitors stayed is an area where poor labourers did some of the dirtiest and most back-breaking jobs.

This area is called the Ropewalks. It has only been called Ropewalks in recent years but the name has a long history. Ropewalks are roads or lanes where ropes are made. And ropes were essential for the ships and liners that used the port of Liverpool.



Sailors working on a rope walk
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

Liverpool's first dock was built in 1715 when ships were powered by the wind. Sailing ships needed huge amounts of rope for rigging, mooring and anchors. A standard British Navy rope was 1,000 feet long (that's about 300 metres). A ship such as Admiral Nelson's HMS Victory carried over 20 miles of rope on board. Demand for rope here in Liverpool was vast. As the port grew so did the number of rope makers.

Rope was made from hemp which are soft, durable plant fibres. Some hemp was grown in Britain but there are also records of significant amounts being imported. Rope making was a dirty and difficult job. In the days before steam, ropes were made by hand by teams of up to 200 men. The raw materials were spun into yarn then coated with tar and twisted. This mixture was very flammable and many rope factories suffered from fires. The material was laid down on the ground and twisted along a cable. This is why some of the streets here are very long and straight. These streets, the rope walks, were called 'wappings' or 'warpings'.

By the early-eighteenth century, this area was a vibrant and busy spot, home to merchants, sailors and craftsmen. Today it is a conservation zone. Ropewalks was one of the first parts of Liverpool to be redeveloped in the 1990s and these streets have become a symbol of the city's renaissance.

Directions 3

From the corner cross Slater Street and stop outside the Tea Factory building on the left hand side of Wood Street.

4. Time for tea

The Tea Factory

Over the next few stops we will explore some of the goods that were imported through the port of Liverpool and traded in the city. Here on Wood Street we have arrived at a bar called the Tea Factory. Tea was one of Liverpool's major imports. From the 1840s, hundreds of ships brought tea to Liverpool's docks. Most of it came from the east – especially China and then India.

As the demand for tea increased merchants wanted faster ships to bring their cargoes across the oceans. These were known as clippers. The clipper trade was very competitive. Journey times of rival clippers were even printed in newspapers. The fastest journeys from Liverpool to China would have taken about 85 days. The last surviving tea clipper is the Cutty Sark, now housed at Greenwich in London.

Partly because of the tea trade Liverpool has the oldest Chinese population in Europe. Many of today's Chinese community have ancestors who arrived on tea clippers and other ships importing goods such as silk and cotton.

In the late 1850s the Blue Funnel Shipping Line employed Chinese sailors and built houses for them beside the docks. Some of these sailors settled here and by the 1890s the first Chinese shops and businesses had set up in the city. Today an estimated 10,000 Chinese people live in Liverpool, many in an area south of the city centre known as Chinatown.

Since 1999 Liverpool has been twinned with Shanghai. To mark the occasion a spectacular Chinese arch was built at the entrance of Chinatown symbolising Liverpool's historic relationship. The close relationship between Liverpool and China continues to this day. In fact Liverpool was the only UK city represented at the World Expo in Shanghai in 2010.



The Tea Factory signs
© Andy Miah, Flickr (CCL)

Directions 4

Retrace your steps back to Fleet Street. Continue to the end of Fleet Street then turn left into Hanover Street. Walk downhill to the junction of Argyle Street and Paradise Street then turn right onto a pedestrianised road. Stop outside the third building on the right.

5. The New York of Europe

Former American Consulate, Paradise Street

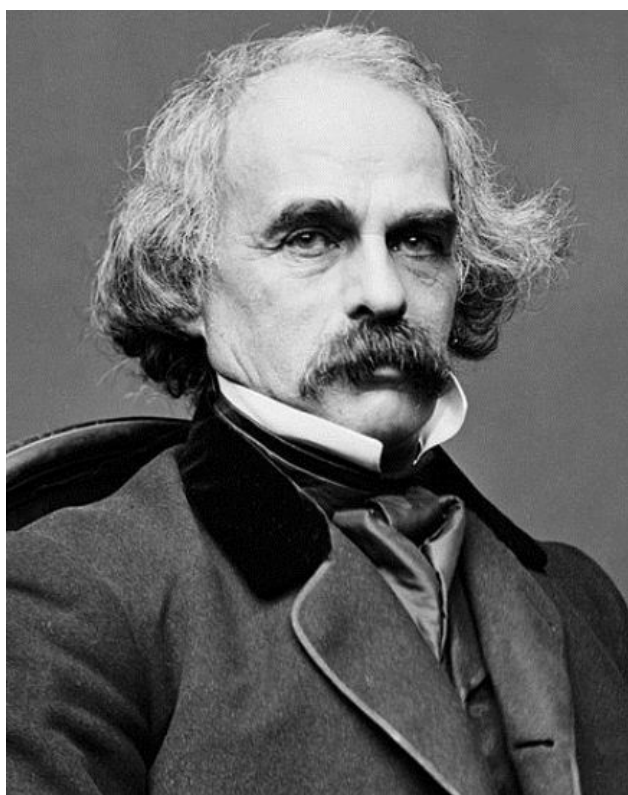
As well as trade with the east Liverpool traded with the west, in particular the United States. America was important because of cotton.

Cotton was the main raw material for the textile industry which had boomed in northwest England in the 1800s. In fact, 60% of America's cotton was exported to Liverpool. Well into the twentieth century Liverpool was Britain's biggest trade link with America.

This building with the carved eagle is the former offices of the United States Consulate. This was America's first ever overseas consular office.



The wooden eagle on the former US Consulate building
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



Nathaniel Hawthorne
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

Liverpool was considered the greatest commercial city in England. The first consul was James Maury, appointed in 1790. The job soon became America's most lucrative foreign posting. In 1853 the writer Nathaniel Hawthorne was posted here as consul. He was paid \$7,500 a year which in those days was quite a sum!

By then Liverpool was described as "the New York of Europe" for its trade value and the size of its buildings. Then in the 1860s came the American Civil War.

The Confederates of the southern states wanted to keep slavery while the Union of the northern states had already abolished it. And Liverpool depended on cotton grown in the slave plantations of the South.

So when the American southern states commissioned a warship in Liverpool in 1862, the city's cotton merchants helped to cover up why it was being built. The ship – the CSS Alabama – was built in secret on the River Mersey as an unarmed steamer. Weapons were added to it in the Azores and the Alabama was used in the Civil War.

As you can see the original Consulate building remains. After the Second World War the Consulate moved and this building became The Eagle pub. Left empty for many years the site was restored in 2008. As Liverpool's central business district was redeveloped the huge carved wooden bald eagle we can see was cleaned and repaired.



CSS Alabama
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

Directions 5

Return to the junction with Hanover Street. Cross over the road and go along Paradise Street. Keep on the left hand side with the triangle shaped garden on your right. Cross over Park Lane at the first junction with Beckwith Street. Stop and look across the road at the large brown building.

6. Heaps of rice

Heap's Rice Mill

Another major import that came through Liverpool's docks was food. Fish, fruit, sugar, spices, flour, wheat, grain and many other products were imported or processed in the city.

From here you can see the derelict warehouse of Joseph Heap & Sons. It is one of the oldest in the city. Although the lettering says 'Rice Millers', the company started off in 1778 in sugar refining.

Sugar was traded in Liverpool from the 1670s and in time the city became one of the world's biggest refining centres. The first sugar imports to Liverpool came from the West Indies, particularly Barbados and Jamaica, but soon spread to include the East Indies, India, Argentina and the United States.



Heap's Rice Mill sign
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The most famous Liverpool sugar company was Tate Sugars, now known as Tate & Lyle, which was founded in 1872. At its peak a century later the factory produced 550,000 tons of sugar per year.

Working in sugar refineries was heavy and hot work; illness was common and life expectancy short. Many labourers refused to do the work so refiners recruited skilled workers from Germany. In the 1851 census there were 44 German-born sugar workers in Liverpool and this had risen to around 200 thirty years later. The hours were long but there were perks – good pay and gallons of free beer to replace the body moisture lost in the terrific heat!

Joseph Heap & Sons later shifted their main activity to importing rice and this building was once the country's largest rice mill. Heap & Sons used their own fleet of ships called the Diamond H Line to import rice from India and Burma. They then exported the rice to Australia. As we go down Cornhill towards the next stop, look back at this warehouse and you will see the words 'Anglo Australian Rice'.

There are proposals to turn this building into luxury flats. We will see some more examples further along our walk of former warehouses turned into apartments.

Directions 6

Continue a short way along Park Lane then turn right into Cornhill. Continue to the junction with the main road. Stop outside the Baltic Fleet pub.

7. The sailor's watering hole

The Baltic Fleet

Another of the goods that came into Liverpool was timber. Most timber arrived from Canada, Scandinavia and Russia's Northwest and Baltic (present-day Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia). So much timber was imported into Liverpool that a new dock was built in 1859 especially for the timber trade. It was called Canada Dock. Canada Dock is still in operation today although it now handles bulk cargo and scrap metal.

This pub, The Baltic Fleet, was once a drinking hole for the men who worked on the ships sailing with their timber loads from the Baltic. The oldest part of the pub dates from the 1780s. It is full of character and apparently home to several ghosts.



The Baltic Fleet
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

They aren't the only resident spirits. The pub is also a micro-brewery and produces award-winning beers brewed in the cellar. The cellar has tunnels that run to the waterfront and were allegedly used for smuggling. The tunnels are now bricked up to stop any beer from going missing!

Commonly smuggled goods included alcohol and tobacco. Rum became popular after the British Navy captured Jamaica in 1655. The Navy used to give their sailors a daily liquor ration and Jamaican rum replaced French brandy as the tipple of choice. Tobacco came to Liverpool legally from the southern states of America. The first shipment was recorded in 1648 and the trade took off in the 1660s.

If you go inside The Baltic Fleet there is a good chance some of the wood fittings are Scandinavian or Canadian. After centuries of damp, heat and spilt drinks a lot of the wood has warped. Speaking of warps do you remember how ropes were made in streets called warpings or wappings? This road we are on is called Wapping – it is another ropewalk.

Directions 7

Turn right along Wapping and cross over at a pedestrian crossing. Turn left into Gower Street with Salthouse Dock on your right and Wapping Basin on your left. Stop overlooking Salthouse Quay.

8. Quays to the city

Albert Dock

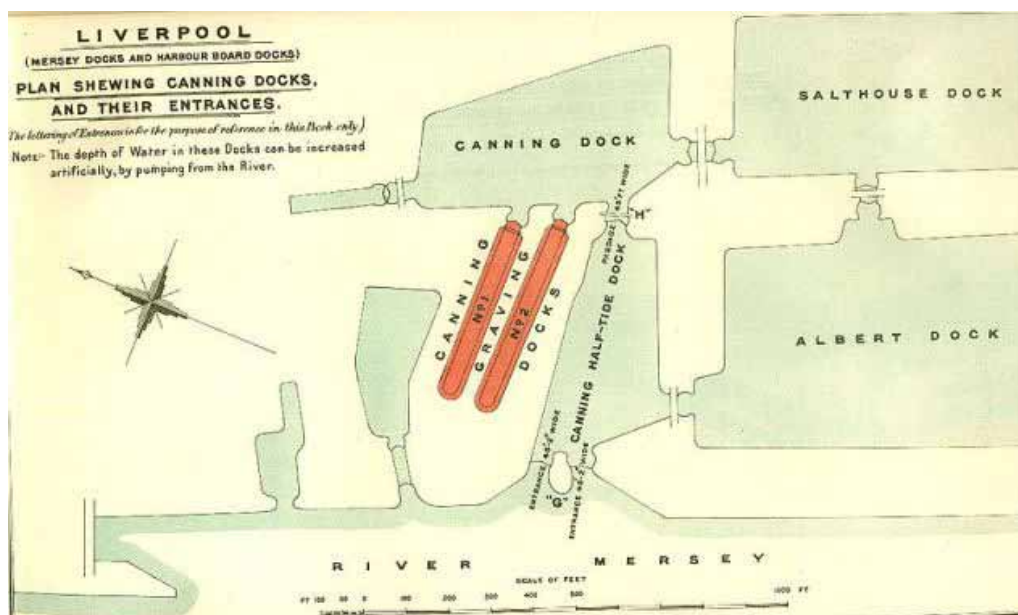
We have now arrived at one set of Liverpool docks. The docks stretch for many miles along the river front. By the nineteenth century 40 per cent of the world's trade passed through Liverpool's docks. That is incredible – 40 per cent of the world's trade came through here!

Ships would have queued for a berth in the docks. The docksides would have been packed with crowds of sailors and stevedores, traders and merchants, craftsmen and rope makers. Thousands of tonnes of goods were unloaded every week.



Albert Dock at dusk
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The warehouses were crammed with goods destined not just for Liverpool but also for the other industrial cities of northern England. It would have been a noisy, bustling place. There were times when Liverpool's wealth exceeded London's. Liverpool's Custom House became the single largest contributor to the British Exchequer. The city was so important to Britain's economy that Liverpool is still the only British city ever to have an office in Whitehall.

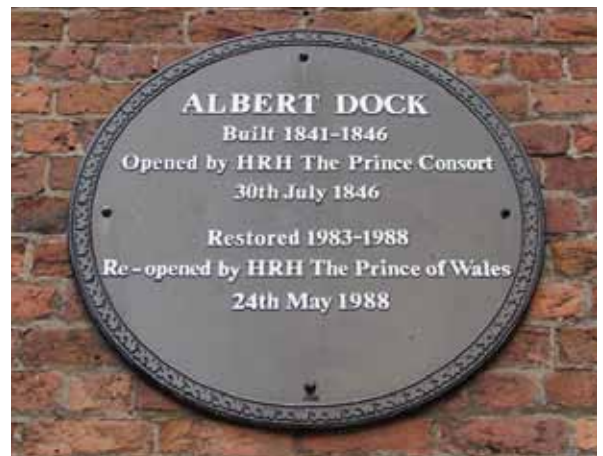


A 1909 British Admiralty map of Albert, Canning and Salthouse Docks
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

Liverpool's port didn't just bring goods from around the world – people arrived too. As well as the Chinese settlers we heard about earlier Liverpool became home to a large Irish population. Liverpool is nearer to Dublin than London and as a result many Irish people have settled here over the centuries. After the Irish famine of the 1840s around two million Irish immigrants came to Liverpool within a decade. By 1851 a quarter of Liverpool's population were from Irish descent.

Many of the docks along Liverpool's waterfront remain but few are used for their original purpose. Some have been cleaned out and are used for leisure boats. Warehouses have been restored and are home to museums and galleries, apartments and hotels, shops and television studios. This area around the Albert Dock is basically a leisure venue. This has revitalised the city's economy and brought life back into what had become a derelict industrial site.

Because of increasing mechanisation, the docks now account for less than 10% of Liverpool's employment. Liverpool remains an important UK port though. Several international shipping companies have UK headquarters in Liverpool such as the Japanese firm NYK and Denmark's Maersk Line.



Sights from Liverpool's transformed docks
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Directions 8

Continue towards Albert Dock. Find one of the passageways through the building to the inside of the dock. Make your way round the edge of the dock to the Merseyside Maritime Museum. Stop outside the museum.

9. Trade triangle

International Slavery Museum

We've talked a lot about the different goods that were brought to Liverpool from around the world. There's another type of trade that must also be mentioned too: slavery.

The first recorded slave ship from Liverpool set sail on October 3rd 1699. Named the Liverpool Merchant, it arrived in Barbados on September 18th 1700 with a cargo of 220 enslaved Africans.

Over the following decades the slave trade boomed in Liverpool. By the end of the 1700s, Liverpool controlled over 80% of the British slave trade and over 40% in Europe.

Africans were captured and enslaved from all the countries around the West African coast. They were taken across the Atlantic to the Caribbean to islands. Altogether nearly one and a half million Africans were forcibly transported in Liverpool ships.

Although slavery was abolished in the British Empire in 1807 Liverpool continued to trade with West Africa by importing palm oil. It also continued to import goods from places where slave labour was still legal – sugar from plantations in the Caribbean and cotton from the southern United States.

Evidence of Liverpool's involvement in the slave trade can still be found in some of the city's buildings, street names and, most obviously, the people. Liverpool has the oldest Black African community in Europe. Of the city's population today 9,000 are of Black African origin and 4,000 of Afro-Caribbean origin.

The Merseyside Maritime Museum and International Slavery Museum are well worth a visit. Here you can find out the history of the slave trade including stories of bravery and rebellion among enslaved people. You can also find out about the legacies of the trade as well as contemporary forms of slavery.



An iron coffle used to transport enslaved Africans
Courtesy National Museums Liverpool

Directions 9

When you are ready, make your way towards the waterfront. Cross the bridge over Canning Half Tide Lock and follow the riverside footpath. Stop outside the Museum of Liverpool. Look for a set of large animal sculptures.

10. Baa-nanas

Lambananas, Museum of Liverpool

Outside the Museum of Liverpool this group of odd sculptures look a bit like sheep. Look closely and they look like sheep that have swallowed huge bananas. So what on earth are they?

They are called Superlambananas. As the name indicates, they are a cross between lambs and bananas. The original Superlambanana was a seventeen-foot tall sculpture which moves around the city. It was designed in 1998 by Japanese artist Taro Chiezo.

These ones at the Museum are smaller replicas. There are four on either side of the building so take your time to spot them all.



A musical Superlambanana
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The idea is not as bizarre as we might think. Both bananas and lamb commonly passed through Liverpool's docks. Lamb was transported from Wales while bananas were imported from the Caribbean. In fact Liverpool introduced the banana into Britain when ship owner Sir Alfred Lewis Jones brought some through the docks in 1884.

The Superlambananas are a humorous reminder of Liverpool's trading past. Like the regenerated docks and the Museum of Liverpool they also show how the city has reinvented itself in recent years as a hub for the arts. This process culminated in 2008 when Liverpool was host city for the European Capital of Culture. A series of arts events across Liverpool attracted visitors from throughout the world and confirmed Liverpool as an international city once more.

Directions 10

Just past the Museum of Liverpool is a group of war memorials next to the waterfront. Stop by the tallest memorial.

11. Brothers in arms

Merchant Navy Memorial

Along the river front are some other reminders of Liverpool's international connections. The marble structure with a tower in the middle is the Merchant Navy memorial. It records the fallen of the Second World War. Liverpool was a very important city during the conflict. It was still Britain's most important trade link with the USA and the city became a vital source for American food supplies.

As well as food the docks transported military goods such as weapons. Overall Liverpool handled 90 per cent of the military equipment brought into Britain. Liverpool was also a major naval base in the Battle of the Atlantic. Allied Navy ships were based and launched from here. Put simply, without Liverpool, Britain would have lost the war.



Liverpool Merchant Navy memorial
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

But because of its strategic importance Liverpool was heavily bombed. After London, Liverpool was the second most-bombed city in Britain. The Liverpool Blitz began during the night of 28 August 1940 when 160 German bomber planes attacked the city. The raids continued until January 1942 and of course the docks were the major target. In all 2,736 people were killed in the city and around 4,000 people across Merseyside as a whole.

As a port city many of Liverpool's victims came from overseas. Here you can find memorial dedications to people from the Dutch and Belgian Merchant Navys, Chinese merchant seamen, Irish sailors and Norwegian air crew. As part of reconciliation after the war, Liverpool was twinned with the heavily-bombed industrial city of Cologne in Germany.

Directions 11

Stay near the memorials and turn your back to the river. Look away at the three buildings on the waterfront.

12. The Three Graces

The Liver, Cunard & Port of Liverpool buildings



The 'Three Graces' in 1950
© Ben Brooksbank, Geograph (CCL)

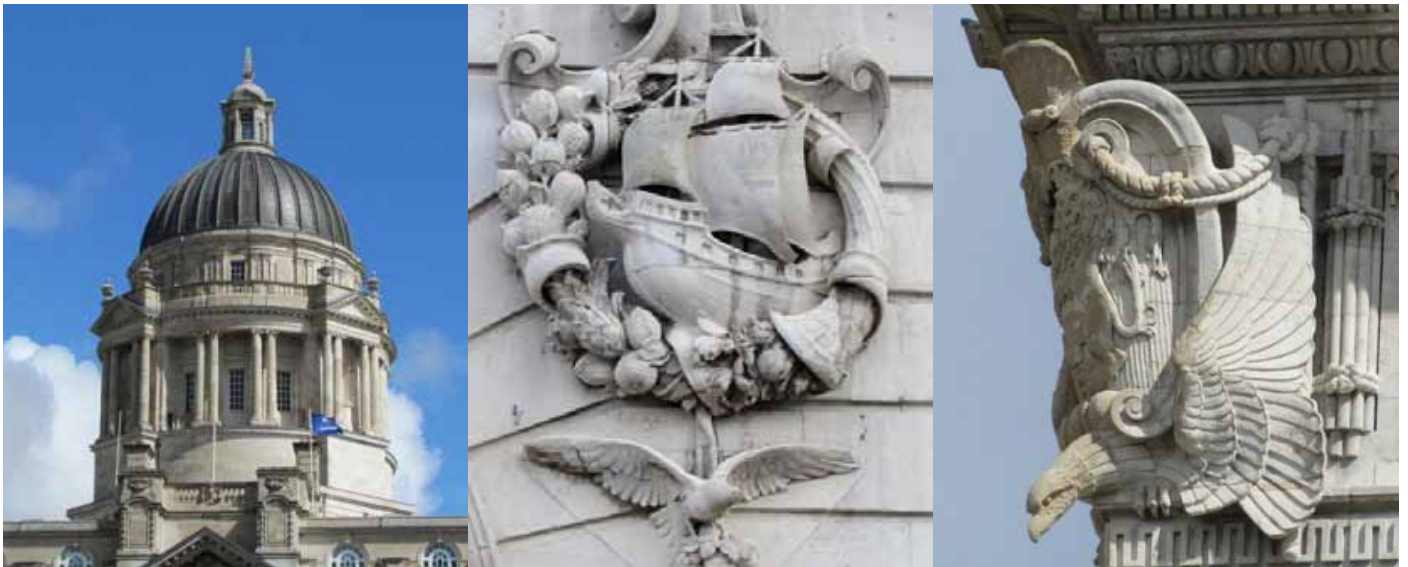
From here we can see the most famous buildings on Liverpool's waterfront, known as 'the Three Graces'. With the river behind us they are (from left to right) the Royal Liver Building, the Cunard Building and the Port of Liverpool Building. Built between 1903 and 1917 they were originally the headquarters for shipping and marine insurance companies. Impressive, aren't they?

The term 'the Three Graces' dates back to ancient Greek and Roman myths. The Three Graces were the goddesses of Charm, Beauty and Creativity. Using this name for these buildings is appropriate because they include ancient Greek and Roman style design features such as columns, stepped entrances and elaborate facades. They were designed to reflect Liverpool's international wealth and importance. No expense was spared in the external and internal fittings, with the best designs and materials coming from around the world.

First let's look at the Port of Liverpool Building – the one on the right with the domed roof. The dome is Italian Renaissance style. The corridors inside the building are lined with Indian marble, while wood fittings include Spanish mahogany and Polish oak. The central staircase contains stained glass windows that commemorate countries of the former British Empire such as Canada, South Africa, Singapore and Australia.

The Cunard Building in the centre was made for the Cunard Steamship Company, which operated trans-Atlantic cruise liners. The building is designed in the style of an Italian 'palazzo' or palace. There are also American eagles on the building's corners. These symbolise Cunard's cruise lines to America.

We will talk about the third of them, the Liver Building, in more detail a bit later. Meanwhile, do take your time to enjoy the spectacle of these buildings and look at the wealth of detail on their facades



Built to show the wealth of Liverpool and full of a wealth of details
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Directions 12

Turn around and face the river. A short distance further is the Pier Head. Stop here.

13. Ferries and floating palaces

Pier Head

So far we have mainly heard about Liverpool's port being used for commercial and military purposes. But remember the grand Adelphi Hotel where we started our walk. Many wealthy people arrived in Liverpool to board ocean liners.

The great ocean liners used to dock here at the Pier Head. Most of them ran between Liverpool and America though a few went also to Canada. The first trans-Atlantic service ran from Liverpool to Boston in 1840.



The new Pier Head cruise liner terminal in use
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

As the crossings became more popular competition grew between the shipping companies, such as Cunard, White Star Line and Inman. And as competition increased so did the ships. By the 1900s passengers who could afford to travelled in the highest levels of luxury on huge ships that were like floating palaces.

Alongside wealthy holidaymakers travelling in style there were more affordable liners for ordinary people who had chosen to emigrate and find a new life abroad. The American company Williams & Guion, for example, specialised in helping Irish workers get to New York.

After a slow decline the ocean liners eventually left Liverpool. White Star and Cunard moved to Southampton and then mass air travel took off in the 1960s. In recent years, though, the liners have come back. In 2009 a new cruise liner terminal opened at the Pier Head culminating in the visit of the royal liner, Queen Mary 2.

Today's cruises are often touring the Mediterranean or the Caribbean. The pier is also used for ferries to the Isle of Man and for the Mersey ferries shuttling across the river to Birkenhead.

Directions 13

Turn away from the river again and continue a short way along the waterfront. Stop when you have a good view of the Liver Building.

14. Liverpool legends

The Liver Birds, The Royal Liver Building

The Royal Liver Building (usually abbreviated to the Liver Building) is the most iconic building in Liverpool. It was completed in 1911 and in its day was at the cutting edge of building technology. It was the first building in the UK made using steel and reinforced concrete. Some 6,000 people worked here for the Royal Liver Assurance Group.

The building's most famous features though are the pair of Liver Birds perched on top of the clock towers. It's difficult to appreciate their size from down here but they are eighteen feet tall and have a wingspan of over twenty feet.



Liver Bird keeping watch
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Liver Birds are mythical creatures that are a cross between an eagle and a cormorant. They have been a symbol of Liverpool since the twelfth century when they were stamped on coins.

The pair on this building were designed by a German sculptor living in England called Carl Bernard Bartels. Although the cormorant is a lucky bird for sailors the Liver Birds didn't bring Bartels much luck. At the start of the First World War he was arrested among fears of spying and imprisoned on the Isle of Man. After the war he was sent back to Germany, despite having an English wife.

A lot of folklore surrounds the Liver Birds. Some stories claim one is male and one female. They face away from each other so the female bird can look out to sea and protect sailors while the male bird keeps an eye on the city's pubs! Apparently they also face away from each other so that they cannot mate and fly away - for if the Liver Birds took flight then Liverpool would disappear!

Directions 14

Pass the Liver Building and the ferry terminal. Continue to the traffic island with a tall stone memorial in the middle depicting some men in overalls.

15. Engine room heroes

Titanic Memorial

Past the Liver Building we find this stone monument. It is inscribed to 'the heroes of the marine engine room' and shows some ships mechanics, engineers and crew. It is dedicated to all those who lost their lives below decks at sea in the First World War.

There's another aspect to the story too. The monument is known locally as the 'Titanic Memorial' as it was originally going to be dedicated to the engine crew of the RMS Titanic.

The Titanic disaster is one of the most famous in marine history. On 15 April 1912 the ship was on its maiden voyage when it hit an iceberg off the coast of Nova Scotia in Canada. The supposedly unsinkable ship sank. In all 1,517 people died.

A well-known story in the tragedy is how the band kept playing as the ship went down. Less well known is that another group of men also stayed at their posts – the engine crew.

It might seem unusual to have a monument here to a ship that sank on the other side of the world. But the *Titanic* was closely associated with Liverpool. Although the ship was built in Belfast, it was registered in Liverpool as it belonged to the Liverpool liner firm White Star Line. Many of the crew were Liverpudlians, including the engineers who stayed below decks. In fact so many Liverpudlians worked on the *Titanic* that the crew referred to one of the service corridors as 'Scotland Road', a street in the city.



The New York Herald reports the Titanic disaster
Wikimedia Commons (CCL)

Directions 15

Walk between the Liver Building and Cunard Building along Water Street. Look for a street sign on the back of the buildings called Goree. If you cannot find it, just stop at the end of Water Street.

16. A curious name

The Goree

On this side of 'the Three Graces', the main road at this point is called The Goree. Look carefully and you might see this name on a street sign. The sign is all that remains of Goree Piazza which was a large warehouse complex. Goree Piazza was demolished in the 1950s after Second World War bomb damage.

Goree is rather a strange name isn't it? It originates almost 3,000 miles away in West Africa. Gorée is a very small island – less than a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide – which lies beyond the main harbour of Dakar, the capital of Senegal.



'Goree Piazzas, 1850' by Joseph Appleyard (1952)
© The Liverpool Wiki (CCL)

The island of Gorée was one of the first places in Africa to be settled by Europeans. First were the Portuguese then the Dutch, British and French. In the late 1700s and early 1800s a variety of products were shipped to Liverpool from the Goree including peanuts, peanut oil, gum Arabic and ivory. Gorée island was also synonymous with the slave trade that we heard about earlier. Today Gorée island is a place of pilgrimage for the people of the African Diaspora.

While we're here behind the Port of Liverpool Building we can see the unusual George's Dock Ventilation Tower. This tall building was made in the 1930s to provide ventilation for the Queensway road tunnel under the River Mersey.

Directions 16

Find a safe point to cross over the main road ahead, the Strand. Only use pedestrian crossings as this road is very busy. When you have crossed over turn left along The Strand a short way to the steps to Our Lady and St Nicholas Church. Stop in the church gardens.

17. The sailors' church

Our Lady and St Nicholas Church

Our Lady and St Nicholas Church is known locally as 'St Nick's' - and as 'the Sailors' Church' because it was used by sailors who worked at the docks. St Nicholas is the patron saint of seafarers and the building has several maritime features, such as the weather vane shaped like a ship on the church tower.

This church was once surrounded by high walls. This is because before the docks were built, the River Mersey used to reach the churchyard at high tide. Between 1758 and 1772 there was even a row of cannons in the burial ground to protect the river from potential military invasion.

The church garden reflects Liverpool's maritime past. near the steps look for a ship's mast which records Russian convoy sailors of the Second World War.



The St Nicholas Church weather vane
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The plants and flowers meanwhile have been collected from across the globe and include shrubs from Tibet and China and also a Judas Tree native to the eastern Mediterranean. It's fitting that 'the Sailors' Church' has such an international garden because it reflects how people and goods came to Liverpool from across the world.

Directions 17

Leave the church gardens the way you came and turn left back along The Strand. Take the first left into Water Street. A short way up the right hand side of Water Street is the India Buildings. Stop by the metal doors.

18. Imperial trade

India Buildings

We are now by the India Buildings, a vast structure that takes up an entire block. It was designed as an office for the shipping company the Blue Funnel Line. We heard earlier that this company brought many Chinese sailors to work in Liverpool. As the name of this building suggests, Blue Funnel also had connections with India.

Britain's interests in India started with trade. Over time trade was consolidated and organised under the auspices of the East India Company. Blue Funnel's founder, George Holt, named this building to commemorate the end of the East India Company's trade monopoly.



Guards at the India Building
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The East India Company imported goods such as dye, silk, cotton, tea and opium. Many of these arrived in Liverpool. The East India became very powerful and even had some military and legal powers in India. They used these powers to control the country's exports. Then from 1857, the British Government took over from the East India Company in the administration of India.

Today the building has an upmarket arcade of shops on the ground floor and offices on the upper floors. As you leave look across along Water Street at the impressive buildings. Many were built when Liverpool was at the height of its nineteenth-century boom and reflect the city's global importance.

Directions 18

Continue up Water Street until you reach the Town Hall on the left hand side. It's probably best viewed from the other side of the road.

19. African menagerie

Liverpool Town Hall

One of the grandest buildings in Liverpool is the Town Hall. This is one of the city's oldest trade sites. In the 1670s a building known as the Exchange sat here and served as the Town Hall and a market.

The building we can see today dates from 1795 and is designed in a neo-classical style. See if you can spot any similarities with 'the Three Graces' that we saw earlier, such as columns, pediments and ornate carving.

Look closely at the frieze that runs above the windows. Can you spot African faces and animals? Look out for elephants, lions, crocodiles, camels, giraffes and hippos. These African sculptures are also another reminder of Liverpool's links with the slave trade.

Many of the merchants who traded in the original Town Hall would have been involved in slavery. In fact it is thought sixteen of Liverpool's mayors were slave merchants.



Liverpool Town Hall, and an elephant in the wall frieze
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Directions 19

Continue along Dale Street. Take time to look up at the interesting buildings that demonstrate Liverpool's wealth. As the road rises up onto a flyover keep left down Dale Street. Using the pedestrian crossings, cross the dual carriageway under the flyover. Make your way round to William Brown Street. Stop outside the World Museum.

20. Extinct birds and Martian rocks

World Museum, Liverpool Central Library & the Walker Art Gallery

We have now arrived at a magnificent trio of civic buildings. They were built between 1860 and 1877. Their grand design and sheer size again indicate Liverpool's wealth and civic pride.

The World Musuem on the left features a large stepped portico, the Central Library is fronted by a row of columns and the Walker Art Gallery around the corner also features a typical neo-classical façade.

As it's name suggests the World Musuem contains artefacts from across the globe. Built in 1860 as the Derby Museum, this magnificent building is home to Ancient Egyptian mummies, stuffed extinct birds and even a meteorite from Mars!



Entrance to World Museum Liverpool
© Pilgrim, Flickr (CCL)

Meanwhile, the Walker Art Gallery contains works dating from the thirteenth century to the present day. Known as the 'National Gallery of the North' the collection includes work from around the world by – among others – Rembrandt, Holbein, Poussin, Rubens and Sickert.

Directions 20

Cross the cobbled William Brown Street and go into St John's Gardens. Stop at the statue for the King's Regiment.

21. In memoriam

St John's Gardens

In the heart of Liverpool's cultural quarter lies this peaceful garden. St John's Gardens take their name from a former church, St John the Baptist, which was demolished in 1898. Today the land is home to several memorials and statues of notable Liverpool people.

This is the King's Liverpool Regiment statue. The King's Regiment were one of the oldest in the British Army. They were founded in 1685 and saw service throughout the world. Look for the inscriptions recording campaigns in Afghanistan, Burma and South Africa. The King's also fought in Greece, Italy and Korea.

Behind this statue are other smaller memorials. There's even one to those involved in British nuclear tests on the Pacific islands of Kiribati.



King's Regiment memorial, St John's Gardens
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Gardens like these are not only a pleasant space for office workers to sit to eat their lunch they are an important part of civil architecture. Just like the surrounding civic buildings this garden offers reminders of a city's history and a space for communal remembrance. Places like these are an important part of civic identity and pride and help to bind a community together.

Directions 21

Walk up through the gardens towards the enormous building, which is St George's Hall. Go left around the side of the hall to the other side. Stop outside the front steps.

22. The Liverpool senate

St George's Hall

We are now at our last stop - and what a way to finish! Just look at the size and scale of this enormous building. St George's Hall is perhaps the grandest example of Liverpool's wealth and pride.

St George's Hall is another civic building that uses neo-classical architectural style. Outside are twin statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Queen Victoria presided over the expansion of the British Empire across the world. In 1876 she was even granted the title Empress of India.

On the steps of the Hall is a statue of the former Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli. We can also find the Liverpool-born Major-General William Earle who died in 1885 at the Battle of Kirbekan in present-day Sudan.



Major-General William Earle statue, St George's Hall
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Inside the building, the bronze doors to the Concert Hall feature the letters 'SPQL'. This motto is an adaptation of the one used in Ancient Rome. In Rome, SPQR stood for 'Senatus Populus que Romanus' or 'the Senate and People of Rome'. It was a symbol of Roman civilisation and democracy. Here it means 'Senate and the People of Liverpool'. Equating St George's Hall with the Roman senate shows how much the ancient world was appreciated in Victorian Britain – and how grand the vision for Liverpool was.

Today St George's Hall serves two public functions. It contains a concert hall and law courts. It may seem odd that this building contains two quite different civic functions but this dual purpose makes the SPQL motto rather appropriate.

Directions 22

Remain outside St George's Hall for the final stop.

23. A proud city

St George's Hall

We've now reached the end of our walk through Liverpool's trade heritage. Along the way we have seen how Liverpool became one of the most important ports in the world and heard about the many different goods that arrived at the docks.

We've learned about the people who arrived in Liverpool from foreign parts, and those who left these shores for new lives abroad. We've also seen how the wealth generated from shipping and trading was used to build magnificent commercial and civil buildings.



Sunset over the Mersey
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

During the twentieth century, Liverpool's prospects declined as modern technology changed the ways goods and people move around the world. By the 1980s the city's economy was stagnant, docks and industrial sites were derelict and unemployment was high. But since then the city has revived itself.

Today, Liverpool's economy is largely built around shopping, leisure, tourism and culture but its heritage has not been forgotten. The Ropewalks and the Tea Factory, the docks and warehouses, the 'Three Graces' and the India Building - all these areas and buildings connected with shipping and trade have been built into the contemporary fabric of the twenty-first century city.

Liverpool's important heritage as a port was confirmed in 2006. Six areas were awarded UNESCO World Heritage status under the name 'Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City'. We have visited four of them on our walk today – Albert Dock, the Pier Head, 'the Three Graces' and the Lime Street cultural quarter. Liverpool is once again a thriving and proud city.

Directions 23

Across the road is Lime Street Station where we started.

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this walk:

- **Eugene Rae** for researching the walk
- **Jenny Lunn** for editing the walk materials
- **Rory Walsh** for creating the walk resources and providing photographs
- **Nick Stanworth, Kristian Wall, Emma Richardson, William Dyson** and **Christine McKenna** for assistance with compiling walk resources
- **Christine James** for testing the walk
- **Ben Brooksbank, Andy Miah** and **Pilgrim** for additional photographs
- **National Museums Liverpool** for permission to reproduce archive images



Britain's landscapes are wonderful.

There is a tremendous variety within our shores – whether in the countryside, in towns and cities or at the seaside. And every landscape has a story to tell about our past and present.

Discovering Britain is an exciting series of geographically-themed walks that aim to bring these stories alive and inspire everyone to explore and learn more about Britain. Each walk looks at a particular landscape, finding out about how forces of nature, people, events and the economy have created what you see today.

The self-guided walks are fun, informative and inspiring. Prepare to discover something new, to be surprised and to find the unexpected.

Visit www.discoveringbritain.org to

Send your review of this walk

Search for other walks

Suggest a new walk