

**Fifty one****LIVERPOOL – MERSEY TRANSPORT.**

Some of the world's finest architecture, an underground trip, and a bracing trip on a Mersey ferry, all linked by a transport theme. A classic day out not to be missed.

Catch a train from Eccles to Liverpool Lime Street. For your travel in Merseyside you want a **Save Away ticket** covering all areas.

Alight at Liverpool Lime Street and descend lift, escalator or stairs to the Liverpool Underground. Go to the Wirral Line platform and board any departing train. *These trains go under the 19<sup>th</sup> Century rail tunnel.*

Alight at Liverpool James Street station. Take the James Street exit and turn right down to The Strand. *You are about to be gob-smacked by some of the finest architecture in the world but while you wait to cross first look at The Strand itself. Why is it called this? You are now standing on what was the bank of the Mersey (The name is a give-away) All in front of you is reclaimed land. Why is the strand so wide? In the centre was the two track Mersey Docks and Harbour Board railway that carried goods traffic between all the docks. Above this line, on a long steel viaduct running the full length of dockland, was the Liverpool Electric Overhead Railway. It was known locally as “The Dockers’ Umbrella” because they walked under it in bad weather. Tourists would travel on it to peer over into the docks to see the grand passenger liners.*

Cross the Strand. The first building you come to is The Mersey Tunnel Building of 1934. Take a walk round the outside. *It is late art deco in style – reminds me of Flash Gordon! Notice the preserved Mersey Tunnel Tollbooth. The tall centre part of the building is a ventilation shaft for the tunnel.*

Collectively the next three buildings are known as The Three Graces. Continue towards sea front and the next building is The Port of Liverpool Building of 1907. *Be prepared to have your breath taken away by this great wedding cake of a building!*

Take a walk round the outside of the building and then take a look inside. *It is currently and thankfully being restored. The central hall rises up through all floors to a great dome and lantern. Each floor forms a balcony round it. The first floor balcony has a great motto painted round it. There is much maritime symbolism including the decorative swags representing the plenty brought by trade. Go up in the lift to come down by the stairs. The fourth floor balcony has bronze globe lamps supported on stylised fish. The windows have badges and coats of arms representing imperial trading partners of Liverpool.*

Leave the building to the water front side – *a good view as you go out (how many ventilation shaft buildings can you see?)*

Turn right. The next building is The Cunard Building of 1915. *It was built as the offices of the Cunard shipping line, which provided the main way to New York until 50 years ago. Inside there is a fine early art deco reception hall. There is an American eagle on each outside corner of the building. Behind it notice the fine Architecture on the other side of the Strand (particularly St Nicholas' church, New Strand Buildings and Tower Buildings).*

Across from the front of the Cunard buildings is the stop for the open topped City Tours buses if you want to take a trip.

The next building is The Royal Liver Building of 1911. *Notice the Liver Birds on top (The only known pair and they are not breeding!)*

From the front of this building face the river and walk to the right and see the obelisk near the Isle of Man Steamer Jetty. *This is a 1916 memorial (neo-baroque style) to marine engine room staff – a hot and dirty job.*

Walk back along the front towards the ferry jetty. *There are four large steel columns that the jetty floats on. There is a new canal between you and the buildings, linking the Albert Docks with the Leeds and Liverpool Canal – before this canal barges had to brave a trip on the Mersey to make the connection.*

Go onto the Mersey Ferry for a circular trip on the River. *Covered by your Save Away ticket this trip provides splendid views of the river and includes an interesting and amusing commentary. The vessel was ‘Snowdrop’ when I went. Energetic individuals could visit the Spaceport at Seacombe!*

After alighting at Liverpool make your way back to James St Station to catch a train going to Liverpool Central. Alight at Lime Street and go up to the main line platforms to catch a train to Eccles.

CATEGORY:	SHORT      EASY. ASTOUNDING ARCHITECTURE, VIEWS, FERRY TRIP, UNDERGROUND TRIP, CITY TOUR BUS, and BRACING ESTUARY AIR. RAIL FARE: category four (all in).
-----------	---