

Seventy seven**BIRKENHEAD HAMILTON SQUARE –
A REALLY GREAT DAY OUT!**

Perhaps you think that I am kidding. I'm not –there is something for all ages. Pick and mix from a walk by the river, an old priory, a ferry boat trip, a tram ride/ transport museum, a German U boat, a grand Georgian Square, and a classic real ale pub.

Catch a train from Eccles to Liverpool Lime Street. Alight there and descend lift, escalator or stairs to the Liverpool Underground.

Go right onto the underground and to the Wirral Line platform.

Board any train – they all go to Hamilton Square. *N.B. if you are going to include a ride on the ferry then consider buying a full 'save away' ticket at the underground station (£4.50) or buying a joint ferry/museum ticket at Woodside.*

Alight at Birkenhead Hamilton Square Station. On leaving the station turn left. Cross John Street and then Canning Street (*on your left there is a fine Birkenhead Breweries Public House facade, and note the railway goods warehouse too.*)

Cross Shore Road, go right then left down towards Woodside Pier. *There is a replica of 'Resurgam' the first ever submarine vessel and a great view of Liverpool's waterfront architecture. The new buildings to the right replace Woodside Station used by Great Western Railway expresses to Paddington! Look back to see a fine brick tower on Hamilton Square station.*

Enter the ferry terminal. *There is a nice cafe inside.*

The Mersey Ferry sails from Woodside Pier. *The ferries depart hourly every day. Category two (concessions). You get fine views of Liverpool and of the huge oil tankers at Tranmere dock, and the cobwebs are blown off too! There is an interesting commentary provided and a cafe on board. Website: www.merseytravel.gov.uk, or www.merseyferries.co.uk.*

The U Boat Story entrance is on the right inside the ferry terminal. *The complete U534 is very well displayed in three parts along with many other well preserved artefacts including an 'enigma' code machine. The air/sea battle in which it was sunk took place **after** World War II had ended! Why had the commander not surrendered? Why was it armed with the most advance torpedoes? Find out how this U boat ended up here. Admission category two (concessions). Open daily 10.30 to 17.30 except Christmas, Boxing, & New Year's Day. [Tel: 0151 330 1444](tel:01513301444) Website: www.uboatstory.co.uk.*

WirralTransport Museum. Just in front of the entrance to the pier you can catch a tram up to the museum. *They run half hourly between 13.00 and 16.00*

on Saturday and Sunday. The return fare (2010) is £1.20. You pass docks and a bascule bridge on the way.

The transport museum is packed with transport artefacts, old trams, buses, cars, bikes etc. *all well cared for. Admission is free. Open Sat Sun and Bank Holidays 13.00 – 17.00, but Wed – Sun in school holidays. [Tel: 0151 647 2128](tel:01516472128) Website: visitliverpool.com.*

After your visit take the tram back to Woodside.

Birkenhead Priory Walk ahead and then around U534 to go onto the promenade. *Across the river is very fine architecture – L to R see the Royal Liver, Cunard and Harbour buildings, the latest Pier Head building and then the Albert Dock. On the ridge is the huge sandstone Liverpool Anglican Cathedral.*

Continue along the front and you come to a small inlet dock. *This is where the monks of Birkenhead Priory set up the original ferry service to Liverpool.*

Go right, away from the river. Cross church Street and walk a short way along Ivy Street.

Turn left along Priory Street. Birkenhead Priory (1150), and St Mary's Church are on the left. *Admission is free. Open: Wed-Fri afternoon. Sat-Sun 10.00-17.00 Tel: 0151 666 1249 Website: Wirral.gov.uk.*

There is a good little exhibition in one of the priory buildings and a chapel still used for weddings. They are of the same red sandstone as Eccles Parish Church. John Laird is buried in the churchyard.

Behind the priory is St Mary's church tower. *Inside you find the mizzen mast of HMS Conway (1859) and the story of the Parish Church.*

As you climb the many steps, see the clock mechanism, and the names of the 99 crew members (out of 103) who perished when the submarine HMS Thetis sank in Liverpool Bay. At the top there are good views all round. You can see Cammel Laird's Shipyard & watch shipbuilding/repairs going on in the dry dock.

When you leave the priory go back along Priory Street. Cross Ivy Street and go left along it. Bear right then cross the main road (Chester Street) – *see the Mersey tunnel tolls and the Georgian buildings to your left.*

Go along Market Street (roughly opposite) - *there are some tiled pub facades – tile making was another Birkenhead speciality.*

Go across Albion Street and take the next turn right onto Hamilton Street. You come onto Hamilton Square, with the railway station straight ahead.

