

Eighty seven. LIVERPOOL – HOPE STREET STROLL.

Be prepared to say ‘Wow!’ - more times than you would have thought possible in a day, as you follow this impressive perambulation between Liverpool’s two great cathedral churches.

Catch a train from Eccles to Liverpool Lime Street. Alight at Liverpool Lime Street.

Leave the station to the left and cross Skelthorpe Street.

Go up the right hand side of The Crown and along Renshaw Street.

Cross Copperas Hill. *You are now between The Adelphi Hotel and the John Lewis building - notice the ships prow and the plaques of children playing.*

Cross Brownlow Hill, turn left along it and then immediately right onto Mount Pleasant. *Try to ignore the criminally hideous 20th century buildings on the left. To make up for them, next you get the first taste of Georgian and Regency Liverpool. Right there is a monument to Renishaw Chapel and William Roscoe MP. Look at the building behind it.*

Further up is the Gothic ‘Liverpool Young Men’s Christian Association’.

Cross Rodney Street, then cross over to the other side of Mount Pleasant and continue up it.

On your left are the classical Assembly Rooms, 1816 (*now Wellington Rooms and in need of attention*).

Go left onto Great Orford Street. *The Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King looms to your right. This is the Roman Catholic cathedral. It’s an impressive sight.*

Go to the right of the new John Moores University building and right up the steps to the cathedral. *Someone had the novel idea of stained glass windows without a building.*

Circle the cathedral left (clockwise). *This great flagged plain is the roof of the huge crypt. There is a large outdoor altar for worship. The square pyramids top what were to be two corner towers of the immense cathedral planned by Sir Edwin Lutyens and started in 1933. As a response to the new, huge Anglican one it was perhaps a game of ‘Mine’s bigger than yours’. Beyond are the buildings of Liverpool University (the original one).*

Just right of the further pyramid look over to see a little cliff and entrance to the crypt chapel.

Continue round to the front of the cathedral. *This impressive entrance holds the bells above it.*

Enter the cathedral. *Admission is free. Around the central altar (above which is a crown of thorns) there is circular space with wonderful radiating chapels on the perimeter. The lighting contributes to a remarkable spiritual atmosphere.*

The cathedral was designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd, started in 1962 and completed in 1967. Originally quite bare inside, it is gradually acquiring the comfortable catholic accoutrements. See particularly the fourteen Stations of the Cross. Open daily. Tel: 0151 709 9222. Website

www.liverpoolmetro cathedral.org.uk

Go down to the crypt and treasury. Admission: category one. Here are the copes and silverware; a history of the Cathedral; a concert room, and a chapel as big as many a parish church. The Liverpool Beer Festival and university exams are held down here.

Leave the cathedral. There is a good view ahead to the ~~proper~~ (sorry, I mean Anglican!) cathedral.

Descend the steps, cross Mount Pleasant and go ahead along Hope Street. This street links the two cathedrals – its name must delight those of an ecumenical bent.

On the right you will see ‘The Philharmonic Dining Rooms’. It sells real ales and food and for all I know might be the grandest pub in the country. Make a point of going in – the decor is opulent, and the gents’ toilets are particularly grand.

Cross Hardman Street (don’t mess with him!) to continue along Hope Street which on this stretch is very elegant.

On the left is Liverpool Philharmonic Hall. Built 1939, it hosts a full calendar of events. Take a look at the light, airy art deco interior and the usual first floor cafe bar (real ales). Open daily. Tel: 0151 709 3789. Website

www.liverpoolphil.com

Continue along Hope Street but look right three times.

First along Hope Place to see the Unity Theatre; then along Rice Street to see ‘Ye Cracke’ another famous Liverpool real ale pub; then along Mount Street to see the Liverpool Institute 1825.

*Cross Upper Duke Street and in front of you is the **LARGEST CATHEDRAL** in the United Kingdom. To the left of it is a grand Regency terrace above a quarry.*

Turn right down Upper Duke Street and then left onto Cathedral Gate. On your left is The Oratory – a classical building containing memorial art. Visits by arrangement with Walker Art Gallery Tel: 0617 478 4102.

[OPTION: St James’ Garden and outer circuit of the cathedral.

I do recommend doing this.

Turn left onto the path just after The Oratory. It drops down with grave stones on either side. Notice that The Oratory, like the Acropolis, is perched on a rock.

Go through a tunnel *in the same red sandstone as at Eccles. The wooded garden is in a quarry that presumably provided the sandstone for the earlier St Peter's church, and other Liverpool buildings.*

The garden contains memorials to many famous Liverpudlians.

*** *Notice the Huskisson Monument centrally placed. Liverpool's MP died in Eccles after being hit by a train at Parkside on the opening day of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, 1830. ****

Continue gradually towards the right to a gate in an arch. Go out through the gate. *(There is a garden up the steps right if you want to take a look.)* Go across the car park and then right.

Walk with the church on your right and the new houses left. *The cathedral was started in 1904 and finished in 1978.*

At the end of the cathedral building go right. END OF OPTION.]

Walk up to the great north end doors and enter the cathedral through the smaller doors on the left. *Admission is free. The architect was Giles Gilbert Scott. Here the spiritual effect is one of awesome scale – like a great sandstone cavern, and as yet perhaps a little bare. The bridge across the nave is striking. There are huge stained glass windows and a grand altar piece. Above the cathedral shop is a cafe. Open daily Tel: 0151 709 6271. Website www.liverpoolcathedral.org.uk*

Go downstairs to The Lady Chapel. *This is more intimate and ornate but still far bigger than most parish churches. It has its own organ (behind you!). Notice the 'alleluia' door on the left.*

To ascend the tower (*admission: category two, tickets from gift shop, and well worth it!*) go up four floors in a lift; then along a corridor and up one flight of stairs. Take another lift from level 5 to level 10 and then go up 180 steps through the great bell chamber (*which has thirteen bells and is bigger than most buildings in Liverpool!*).

Look around from the roof. *The views are breathtaking. Liverpool is laid out below you with the Mersey River going south. Manchester & the Pennines are to the east; Southport, Blackpool and the Irish Sea to the north; and west, the Wirral, with the Clwyd hills beyond.*

Leave the cathedral and go down Cathedral Gate.

Cross Upper Duke Street and go ahead onto Rodney Street. *This is an elegant Georgian street – address of many lawyers and medics. Several buildings have heritage plaques.*

Notice in particular number 59 Rodney Street on the right. *This is a preserved 1950s photographic studio- you can visit. Admission is category two. Open Wed – Sun during Mar - October.*

Tel: 0151 709 6261. Website www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Continue across Hardman Street, *again taking care not to upset him, look right at 'The Vienna Bakery'*.

Then turn left down Leece Street. *Look right on Roscoe Street to see another famous Liverpool real ale pub – 'The Roscoe Head'. The bombed out shell of St Luke's church is on your left.*

Turn right onto Renshaw Street and pass The Dispensary *another well known Liverpool real ale pub (yawn!)*.

Further on and also on the right, *with entrance on corner of Upper Newington, is the unusual 'Grand Central Chambers' which is a sort of Affleck's Palace. You saw the back of it earlier.*

Cross Brownlow Hill to go in front of the Adelphi Hotel and cross Copperas Hill. *On the corner is 'The Vines' –it still has a grand interior, but I think it needs someone to love it.*

Cross Skelhorne Street and go up into Lime street station.
Catch a stopping train back to Eccles.

CATEGORY: MEDIUM EASY.
FINE ARCHITECTURE, CAFES, PUBS,
CATHEDRALS, VIEWS.

RAIL FARE: category three.

MAP OS 1:50 000 sheet 108 Liverpool A-Z
Philip's Street Atlas Liverpool & Merseyside.