

LOCKDOWN WALK 5

Birkenhead Priory and Monks Ferry Walk - 5.2 miles 8.5 kms

A walk to the oldest building on Merseyside, Birkenhead Priory. From the C12th to the C16th monks ferried travellers from here across the Mersey to Liverpool.

Start the walk from Christchurch Birkenhead. Walk down Kings Mount.

Turn left onto Woodchurch Road and at the Gateway Church and Lidl traffic lights cross to walk down Oxtan Road. At the bottom, cross over by the traffic lights into Grange Road. As you walk down Grange Road look above the shops to see the remains of original Victorian, Edwardian and 1930's buildings. Notice also Liverpool Anglican Cathedral straight ahead.



Grange Road would have linked The Priory to its farms.

(A **grange** was a name given to a **farm** attached to a monastery. The lands owned and farmed on behalf of The Priory extended to Bidston Hill, with the main sites being in the area of Claughton, towards the end of Grange Road and Grange Mount.)

Cross into Grange Precinct. Turn right in the Square and left by Cafe Nero. Pass WH Smiths and the Post Office on your right and Birkenhead Market entrance on your left. Turn left at the end, then, in St Werburgh's Square turn right down the final part of Grange Road to Argyle Street. The House of Frazer building (formerly Beatties) will be on your left and St Werburgh and St Laurence Catholic Church (Grade II listed) on your right. You will notice that the spire of St Mary's Church, Birkenhead's first parish church, perfectly aligns with this last part of Grange Road

Turn left into Argyle Street, cross over and continue on to Market Street.

Turn right into Market Street (Grade II listed) and enjoy the variety of pubs and shops, particularly noting the female figure head sailing out above a tattooist's shop on your right. Cross over Hamilton Street and continue on to the Antique's Triangle. (Grade II listed) This building has been converted by Ainsley Gommon Architects (AGA) into shops and residential units, retaining its original facade. Turn right down Cross Street, following the building round onto Chester Street (by one of the tunnel exits), look up and you'll see an original sign on the wall saying Market Cross 1847.

The site of the original Market Cross was between The Antiques Triangle and a similar building, long gone to make way for the tunnel exit.

Cross over Chester Street by the traffic lights and make your way down Ivy Street, then right into Priory Street. Birkenhead Priory is on your left at the end. In the same grounds are the remains of St Mary's Parish Church. When the Priory grounds re-open climb the church tower and you will have wonderful views down into Camel Lairds shipyard and across the Mersey.

Karl Thompson Associates renovated The Priory's Refectory. AGA oversaw the work of Chester stonemasons Haswell and Son who carried out major repairs to the tower and spire and to the remaining parts of the St Mary's church. AGA also carried out a churchyard wide refurbishment.

Retrace your steps up Priory Street. Turn right into Ivy Street, then 2nd right into Monks Ferry. Continue straight ahead to peer into Cammel Lairds Shipyard at ground level.

Retrace your steps. Turn right down the infamously named Alabama Way and make your way to the river and Monks Ferry slip way.

Turn left here following Wirral's Circular Trail along the river to Woodside. You will pass the Information board giving details of Wirral's Maritime Heritage Trail.

Make your way up to the Grade I listed Hamilton Square via Hamilton Square Station. Note its Hydraulic Lift Tower advertising the station's, still relevant, Frequent Electric Trains. Enter the Square passing Birkenhead Town Hall on your left and make your way to the Birkenhead Institute Replacement War Memorial, a statue of Wilfred Owen. He sits with his head in his hands over his poem, "Futility". The Sculptor was J Whelan and the artist D S W Jones. The statue was cast at Castle Fine Arts Foundry.

Walk round the Square to Argyle Street, turn left, then right up Conway Street. Look up to your right almost straight away and you will see the Post Office Buildings sign announcing itself on the (Ruabon) red brick Victorian building. Continue down passing the red brick Grade II listed Conway Centre also on your right. Arriving at the middle of the front elevation look up and see the statue under the 1st floor balcony and the wording letting us know this was an Elementary School. Note also the Boys' Entrances.

Continue down Conway Street. After crossing Watson Street/Exmouth Street it will become Park Road North. Turn left into Park Road East and, at the top, left again into Park Road South/Claughton Road. Cross this road and then almost immediately turn right into Cole Street. Continue up with the former Cole Street School on your right. It is currently being converted into flats. Cross over into Grange Mount and walk up the hill admiring the very fine Italianate building on your left. Where Grange Mount becomes Devonshire Road, keep the elegant Kenyon Terrace on your left and continue on to Slatey Road.

Turn left into Slatey Road. Pass the gate to Callister Gardens on your right and The Williamson Art Gallery on your left. Cross over Balls Road and continue up Bessborough Road back to Christchurch Birkenhead.

