



Stage Eight – Wilberforce House to Silver Street

Takes approximately 20 minutes

This part of the walk takes us back into the old town and onto the Victorian Commercial quarter of the city.



Standing outside Wilberforce House, cross over High Street. To your left you will see Gandhi Way. Walk down there on the left until you reach Alfred Gelder Street. Across the road is the **White Hart Hotel** – not to be confused with “Ye Old White Harte” which you will see later in this walk.

Turn left and walk down Alfred Gelder Street. You are walking alongside the **Combined Court Centre** which opened in 1990. You will come to the cross roads of Lowgate and Alfred Gelder Street, overlooked by the statue of the venerable Charles Henry Wilson, founder member of Ellerman Wilson Shipping Line. Once there, walk towards the light controlled crossing to your left, but don't cross over just yet – wait here a while until you have looked about you and got your bearings.

Here we have a similar problem with street names that we had with High Street. Here Lowgate was cut in two when Alfred Gelder Street was laid, and continues a short distance to your right between the statue's island and the grand building with the clock tower, the **Hull Guildhall**.

Directly opposite, over the crossing, is what was formerly the **Post Office** and is now The Three John Scotts Pub. To your left, in Lowgate, is **St Mary's Church**. It is Hull's second oldest existing church, built in about 1327-1333.

If you choose to go over to look at the Guildhall be sure to use the light controlled crossings. This can be an awkward place for pedestrians. When you have done that, return to this corner.

The Guildhall is still the working offices for Hull City Council. Built between 1904 and 1919 it originally it housed the local Law Courts but these were replaced by the Crown Court, which is behind you, in 1990.

If you look down the side elevation of the Guildhall you will see on the first floor 35 bays with alternating arch and triangular pediments over the windows with columns either side. Look up and you will see on pedestals, above the roof line, two colossal statues called The Daughters of Neptune. The nearest is Britannia in a chariot and accompanied by lions. Further down is Maritime Prowess; a female figure in a boat being pulled by sea horses. Have a look and identify the statues.



The Guildhall is fascinating both inside and out. You can visit if you wish. There is public access to the foyer, with its impressive marble staircase and floor and wonderful mahogany wall panelling. The building has frequently been used in films.



If you ask at the reception you can visit an anti-room which displays the Hull's tapestries and other items of civic interest. You can book a tour at select times of the year and you might see a wedding party as the register office is now in the Guildhall.

Look beyond the Guildhall. On your right, in the middle distance, can be seen the grand column and statue of **William Wilberforce**. It was originally erected in Victoria Square shortly after his death in 1833, for the princely sum of £1250 all from public donations. You will recall from stage 2 that it was moved to its present site in the early 1930s.

From this corner you have St Mary's Church to your left and, what was The General Post Office directly opposite you. This is the former **General Post Office** built during the same period as the Guildhall in Portland stone; it indicates the wealth of Hull during that time. It is now The Three John Scotts pub.



Suffolk Palace was on this spot. It was first built in the 1290s for the first royal keeper of Hull. It was granted to the De la Pole family in May 1330. Later it belonged to the King and this could well be when it was called King's Manor. It survived until 17th century. The Manor covered a large piece of land.

Cross Lowgate, turn left and make your way towards a pair of cream phone boxes. You are close to the entrance of named Three John Scotts pub.



St Mary's Church is on the opposite side. There is a walkway under the tower of the church which was put through in 1863. The council wanted to widen Lowgate and the body of the church was shortened to allow this to happen. However, they didn't want to take down the tower so they put a walkway through it. During the 18th Century St Mary's was ministered by three vicars who were three generations of the same family, all named John Scott. This is commemorated in the name of the pub opposite.

Continue down Lowgate. The next building you come to is Ocean Chambers, built around 1900 as law offices, which it still is today. Just past Ocean Chambers look on the pavement and you will see the image of a fish pointing towards an alley.

This is **Exchange Alley**. It is the best surviving example of Hull's L shaped alleys. This one dates back to 1794. It was this type of alley and courtyard that covered this area before the Alfred Gelder development. Most of the original alleys and courtyards contained 10 houses on either side, with no bathrooms and only 2 or 3 earth closets and one stand pipe to serve them all. Can you imagine what it would have been like, cramped, insanitary and unhealthy? I'm sure people were glad to see the back of them. If the gate is unlocked you can go in but these are working offices. The wall at the end actually turns a sharp left and comes out in Bowlalley lane. We'll see that later.



For now, return to Lowgate. Continue to walk down Lowgate and you will be passing the former **Shipping Exchange building**, built in 1866 for the Hull Exchange Company. It was described then as 'one of the chief ornaments of the town'.

Cross over Bowlalley lane. On the opposite side of Lowgate you will see the Old Custom House. Just below the top cornice is carved 'Post and Telegraph Office'. So it was in 1877 but now it is a restaurant and offices.



Carry on along Lowgate to the arched entrance to **Hepworth's Arcade**, built in 1895 for the chain of gentlemen's outfitters, Joseph Hepworth. There are 25 independent shops and cafes in here. As you will see, it is a two story building with a glass roof. Between the windows are half columns decorated with swags and tails.

The third shop in is **Dinsdale's Joke Shop**, established over 90 years ago. The window is an Aladdin's Cave of magic tricks and jokes for children of all ages. If you are looking for it don't ask for Dinsdale's – the locals know it as The Joke Shop.



As you drag yourself away from The Joke Shop, continue down the arcade towards the shops facing you. In the corner on the left is one of the entrances to Trinity Market. It is a lively, interesting place where you can get some refreshment and have a sit down. But let's complete Stage 8 first.



Turn right and follow the arcade to the exit which finds you in Silver Street.

On the opposite side you will see the pub sign for **Ye Olde White Hart**, Not to be confused with The White Hart on Alfred Gelder Street.

The entrance to this historic pub is through an alley just under the sign. You can walk down as far as the beer garden but the seating is for customers, of course.

Inside the Ye Olde White Hart you get the real 17th century atmosphere of the place with its flagstone floors and inglenook fireplaces. It is easy to imagine the parliamentary men with their wide brimmed hats, long coats and large white collars, leaning against the fireplaces.

If you venture upstairs you will find on the right, The Plotting Parlour, where, in April 1642, it is said, that Sir John Hotham and the Aldermen planned their refusal to allow King Charles entry to the town. This contributed to the start of the Civil War. Whilst this might well be the correct interpretation of events, some historians believe it was a plot hatched to get rid of the Catholic Governor of the town who had been imposed upon them by the King.

From the alley return to Silver Street. We have reached the end of Stage 8. You might like to take a break in Trinity Market but there are many other places to eat around this area. Stage 9 starts here.

End of Stage Eight