



## **Stage One - Around Queen Victoria Square**

In the late 1800's this was a warren of back streets and narrow alleys, full of rundown businesses and slum housing. It all changed when the Hull Mayor and architect Sir Alfred Gelder devised and implemented his development plan which opened up this area to create Queen Victoria Square, in 1901-2 followed by Alfred Gelder Street, which we will see on stages 7, 8 and 9 of the walk.

This area was severely damaged during World War II and many wonderful buildings were lost. (See: ***Hull and the two World Wars*** in our *Want to Know More?* section)

So please stand with your back to the statue of Queen Victoria and face the City Hall.



**The City Hall** is Edwardian, completed in 1909. If you look up you will see, just below the copper dome, 2 statues representing the arts, and round the front and the side is a frieze depicting the sciences, music and the classics. Below that is a balcony which is used to welcome Hull's returning heroes and heroines.

It was here in 1930 that thousands filled this square to greet Amy Johnson back to her native city following her epic flight to Australia.

You can see Amy's return to Hull on a British Movietone newsreel of the time on Youtube if you go to the '*Want to Know More*' section.

The hall plays host to both classical and pop concerts, to comedians, to exhibitions and many other activities.

Now in front of you to your left is the Hull Box Office which is where you can find information on tickets for Hull's theatres and concerts. You can also find out more about Hull and its attractions at the Information Pod situated at the entrance to the Interchange in Paragon Square.



So now if you could look to your left, beyond the Box Office and across the street you will see the very ornate **Punch Hotel** built in 1896.

As you might be able to see it looks as though it was built on the corner of a street, well it was. The street was covered over as part of the Princes Quay development during the late 80's. Well at least we've still got the pub.



Now to the left of the Punch you will see a rather imposing light coloured building with 2 dominant columns, this is the **Ferens Art Gallery** opened in 1927 by the Prince of Wales. It is considered to be one of the finest provincial galleries in the country and, following extensive refurbishment, it was the host to the 2017 Turner Prize Award Ceremony. The gallery includes work by several distinguished artists including Lorenzetti, Frans Hals, Canaletto, Stanley Spencer and David Hockney. It also hosts temporary exhibitions. Admission is free.

Turn around and you will see the back of our statue of **Queen Victoria** in the centre of the square. It was unveiled in 1903 by the then Prince of Wales, soon to be George V.



It was designed by the architect J.S. Gibson and the statue itself was sculpted by H.C. Fehr. Underneath the statue you'll find our Edwardian public toilets. It has been said that this is the only place in the country where you can see the great Queen on the throne.



To your right, past the fountains and on the corner of Savile Street, the building with the corner turret was a branch of the **Yorkshire Penny Bank** - now a coffee shop.

To the right of the bank, as you face it, is the **Maritime Museum** with two of its magnificent domes in view. Originally this building was the offices of the Hull Dock Company. It was built when Hull was one of the fastest growing ports in the country. It opened its doors in 1871 and operated as a office until the mid 1970's when it was taken over by the Hull City Council and turned into this wonderful museum.



Turn right and walk behind the museum. You will pass on the way one of the city's multicoloured **Telephone boxes**. They are unusually not red. Here's the reason why, Hull didn't join the national telephone scheme when it was nationalised in the early 1900's and, now a public quoted company (KCOM) and it remains independent.

Most boxes are cream but sometimes they are decorated to celebrate people or events of note. The one you can now see here has been painted in rainbow colours.

Another distinguishing feature of our boxes is that they don't boast the Royal Crown emblem above the door or the windows. This is because the red boxes were owned by the Post Office, then a government department and therefore they were Crown property. Ours were not owned by the Post Office - hence no crowns.

Also behind the museum pointing towards Queens Gardens is an artwork in the style of the bow of a ship. This is a monument dedicated to merchant seaman lost during the two World Wars.

From here you will see the fountain and flower garden of The Rose Bowl and beyond it is Queens Gardens.



Up until 1930 what is now **Queens Gardens** was Queen's Dock which was opened in 1778 and at the time the largest dock in the country.

It stretched over 500 metres down to the River Hull and the width is indicated by the streets on either side of the gardens.

Originally the dock was known simply as 'The Dock' and then 'The Old Dock' when Hull's second dock (now the Marina) was opened in 1809. Finally, it was named Queens Dock in honour of the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1854. An indication of the history of the area is reflected in the street names; Quay Street, Dock Street and Queens Dock Avenue.



Now, the final building on our look around Queen Victoria Square is to your right. It's the very ornate **Empress Hotel** which has the typical look of a dockside tavern of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. You will notice how very tall and narrow it is. Well, this is because it started out in life as a dock warehouse with toilets in the building next door.

So, this is the end of Stage 1 of our walk. I trust you've enjoyed it and you'll be back for stage 2.

So, if you turn back the way you came you will see, across the square, the entrance to Princes Quay Shopping Centre. This is the starting point for Stage 2 of the walk.

This might be a good time to visit Ferens Art Gallery, have a closer look at Queen Victoria and maybe use her facilities.

Whatever you decide to do, when you are ready for stage 2 please make your way to the entrance of Princes Quay Shopping Centre and go to Stage 2 "Into the Old Town".

*(You can find out more about Queen Victoria Square and see how the square and nearby buildings used to look in the 'Now and Then' and 'Want to Know More?' sections of our website)*

## **End of Stage One**