

Stage Nine – Silver St to Queen Victoria Square

Well here we are on Stage 9, the last leg of our walk this takes us to Queens Gardens and back to Queen Victoria Square.

Ok you should be standing at the entrance the



Ye Olde White Harte Alley looking across on Silver Street.

So, turn right and walk towards the pedestrianised Whitefriargate, the junction you can see in front of you.

As you walk you will pass on your right numbers 22 and 23 Silver Street built in 1886 for the Exchange and Discount Bank and following that is Suffolk House built as offices in the 1880's.

Now next to Suffolk House on the corner is



another ex bank this one has been offices for both the Royal Bank of Scotland and Nat West, it was built in 1907.

You should now be at the end of Silver Street facing Whitefriargate.

On the left, across the street on the corner we have yet another ex-bank this time built for **Barclays in 1891.**



The inside of all these ex-banks is worth a look, if only to see how prestigious banks used to be.

You should be standing on the corner of Silver Street and the Land of Green Ginger with Trinity House Lane to your left and Whitefriargate straight ahead of you. Whitefriargate was one of the main streets leading into medieval Hull, with Beverley Gate at the far end. It was historically a centre for commerce and banking. So now please turn right and you are entering the famous **Land of Green Ginger.**



There is no documentary evidence as to the origins of the name – some say it's a corruption of the name 'Lindegreen', a Dutch family who lived in this area in the early 1800's, others that it could be a corruption of the Dutch city of Groningen, still others say that this was the spice trading district of the old town.

You can take your pick.

On the left in the Land of Green Ginger you will



quickly come to one of Hull's most historic pubs dating back to the 17th century, the **George Hotel**. As you walk up to the George on the left-hand pavement just before the coach entrance on the first stanchion, you will see a brass plaque and to the right of the plaque is the **smallest window in England**. It is said the window was used for observing guests as they approached the hotel's courtyard.



A boy who sat behind the small window would identify them and allow them entry.

Other accounts say it was a lookout point for Excise men or even to watch out for press gangs coming. Again, you can take your pick.



Diagonally opposite The George is an attractive 3 storey building with a lantern hanging near the entrance. This was **Imperial Chambers** built in 1878 as offices, meeting rooms and library for Hull's branch of the Law Society. It is now a city centre bar.

Please now turn around and walk back towards Whitefriargate turn right and walk down about 50 metres close to one of our special phone boxes.

Fortunately, this area avoided bomb damage during World War ll. So, we have on the left an almost complete row of Georgian buildings right down to Queen Victoria Square. Look across the street and look up and you will see an impressive three storey 29 bay range of buildings.



The centre eleven bays with the triangular pediment above was formerly **Smiths & Sons Bank** a Hull firm setup by Abel Smith and his two sons in 1784. They were joined by Thomas Thompson in 1787 and it became Smith & Thompson based on Lowgate. They moved to this site when it was completed in 1830. In 1902 it merged with Union Bank which eventually became National Westminster Bank (NatWest) in 1947.

The other parts of the building either side of the bank were originally rather elegant town houses.

Opposite Smiths Bank on your right you will be able to see in contrasted a 1930's art-deco



fronted building which was originally the Hull branch of '**British Home Stores'**.

Please now walk further down Whitefriargate and soon on your right on the corner of Parliament Street, you will see a 4 storey stone building with half cellars.



This was the **HSBC Bank** built 1879 it was the last in Hull's old town banks when it closed its doors in 2017. On the pavement in front of the bank you should be able the see the Fish Trail image of a shark. Well it's no coincidence it was put close to a bank! The artist Gordon Young who created the Fish Trail in 1092 certainly had a mischievous sense of humour.

Now turn around and look at the building on the opposite side of Whitefriargate. There you will see the magnificent one-time **Neptune Inn** built in 1795 just a few years after the Hull's first dock was built. (now Queens Gardens)



The original idea of the Neptune Inn was to cater for people of substance travelling between London and Scotland or York. It was thought it would be easier and safer to travel by sea with a stop off in Hull rather than take on the hazardous journey by coach, with terrible roads and the possibility of highwaymen. However, these were difficult times in Britain having just lost the American Colonies and the ongoing Napoleonic Wars the expected rents could not be met, so unfortunately the inn was closed in the early 1800's.

It became Hull's Customs House in 1815 and remained its Customs House until 1912.

On the wall to the left of the archway is Hull's oldest post box, embossed with the letters VR for Victoria Regina.



Now looking back across the street from the Neptune Inn and you will see **Parliament Street**. It's an almost complete Georgian Street. It was built at the same time as the Neptune Inn to form a direct link between it and the dock it was planned to serve.

An Act of Parliament was needed to acquire the land and hence the named Parliament Street.

In 1861 The Builder magazine described it as “a snug little street full of attorneys, notaries, registrars and accountants” and as you will see as you walk down you will see there has been very little change.

Walk down Parliament Street and on the left you will pass the exception to the Georgian frontages, the **Edwardian Police Station**. It’s the building with the stone balcony. It was completed in 1904 in a baroque style. It was in use until the late 1950s when the Central Police Station was moved to a larger, more modern building on the other side of Queen’s Gardens. This has now been converted into modern apartments.



Walk on until you reach Alfred Gelder Street, to your right you will see a light controlled crossing please walk over to the crossing but do not cross over just yet.

Once you are there look to over Alfred Gelder Street and you will see the west end of **The Guildhall.**



From here you get an excellent view of the building and the wonderful statue of **Aphrodite** at the bow of a boat being drawn by seahorses.



Look behind you to your right and on the corner of Manor Street is the one-time dockside pub **Burlington Tavern,** a finely restored Victorian dockside pub once known locally as the Witnesses Arms because of its links to what used to be the Magistrates' Courts in the Guildhall opposite. The accused were known to have had their last drink here before sentencing.

Once the lights permit cross over Alfred Gelder Street and turn left, then almost immediately turn right and you will be on Quay Street facing Queen's Gardens. Walk down Quay Street.

As you walk towards Queen's Gardens you will cross Hanover Square, traffic comes from the right here, and you will find on your right a memorial to people from our area that fought with **The International Brigade** during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).



Their names including the four who died can be found around the sculpture. The Memorial was unveiled on 16th March 2019 and financed by donations from individuals and organisations

Hull International Brigade Memorial Group was formed in 2016. The sculpture is made of Spanish marble and steel from Catalonia and was made by Yorkshire artist Dan Jones.

You are now on the corner of Guildhall Road and Quay Street so please crossover Guildhall Road and you will be on the edge of Queens Garden *Guildhall Road is one-way so traffic comes from the right here.*

The fact that the garden is sunken reminds us of its previous existence as a dock, and the outline is clear in the low walls and wide surrounding streets.



You are now at the end of Stage 9 of the walk.

When you are ready to take a leisurely walk through Queens Gardens then come back here and go to **Stage 10** on your handset.

Thank you