

WALK 2 The Wonders of Birkenhead

Birkenhead has some fascinating historical attractions and if you haven't yet discovered them you may be pleasantly surprised. This walk visits ten of them. Hamilton Square including the former Town Hall, Birkenhead Priory, Woodside Ferry, the new U-Boat Story, the Tramway, Egerton Bridge, the Transport Museum, Pacific Road Arts Centre, the Mersey Tunnel Ventilation Shaft and Shore Road Pumping Station in one afternoon!

Start: Hamilton Square, Birkenhead.

Distance: About 2 miles. 2 - 6 hours depending on which attractions are visited.

Parking: There are numerous car parks in the area, and rates vary.

Buses and Trains: Regular services to and from Woodside Bus Terminus. Hamilton Square Railway Station has regular services from all adjacent areas.

① Make your way to the largest building in **Hamilton Square**, the former Town Hall, where you will also see the War Memorial for those who have given their lives. *Hamilton Square dates from 1826 and has the most Grade 1 listed buildings in one place in England, except for Trafalgar Square in London. The monument in the centre was modelled on the Eleanor Cross, which was first built by King Edward I who twice visited Birkenhead Priory. The statue is of John Laird who was the first MP for Birkenhead and his grave can be seen at the Priory later. The former Town Hall was built in 1887, of sandstone taken from Storeton Quarry. See Walk 1, South East Walk Wirral leaflet.*

② Walk to the right of the former Town Hall and down Brandon Street. At the main road turn right and cross at the pedestrian lights. Continue to the next set of

traffic lights and turn left into Ivy Street, following the Birkenhead Priory sign on your right. **Birkenhead Priory** is at the end of Priory Street on the left. *This former Benedictine monastery has an exhibition and the is oldest building in Merseyside - a chapel dating from 1150. St. Mary's Tower is worth the climb to enjoy views over to Liverpool, Birkenhead and the Cammell Laird Ship Yard. The dock directly in front of the tower was used to build the Alabama, a wooden ship launched in 1862 for the Confederate Navy which fought in the American Civil War.*

③ Walk back up Priory Street and turn right. Continue straight on, then down Alabama Way to the river side walkway at Monks Ferry. At the river turn left and follow the path along the river.

③a **Woodside Ferry Terminal** and the new **U-Boat Story**.

④ *There is also a replica of the 'Resurgam' which was the first steam-powered submarine in the world. The original is wrecked off the coast of North Wales. There is a café, and information and toilets. From here you could interrupt your walk by taking a cruise via Liverpool and Seacombe.*

⑤ Outside Woodside Ferry Terminal the Birkenhead Tramway lines lead to Egerton Bridge. *The original Birkenhead tramway was claimed to be the first in Europe and first ran in 1860. The current tram lines were laid in 1995 and there are plans to extend it further. At Egerton Bridge which is a 'Bascule' type, which is French for see-saw because it rocks backwards and forwards to open and close. The black tower once housed machinery to power all the dock bridges and sluice systems. A stroll around the perimeter of Egerton Dock and Morpeth Dock to the One O'Clock gunsite. See Walk 1, North East.*

⑥ From Egerton Bridge walk across Canning Street and across to Taylor Street where the Transport Museum is housed. *Here you are able to view the old cars, buses, trams, motorbikes and military vehicles.*

⑦ From the Transport Museum retrace your steps back to Pacific Road on towards the river to view the Mersey Tunnel Ventilation Tower. *The architect who designed the tower, Herbert J. Rowse, was also responsible for the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool and the similarities are evident.*

⑧ Return back up Pacific Road to Shore Road Pumping Station opposite the Woodside Ferry. *This building houses the 'Giant Grasshopper', a giant steam pump which used to pump water from the Merseyrail Tunnel.*

⑨ To return to Hamilton Square turn right out of the Pumping Station, cross over the end of Canning Street and round to Hamilton Square.

This walk is best followed at weekends, bank holidays and local school holidays as several of the attractions have restricted opening times. Check their respective websites via www.visitwirral.com.



Hamilton Square