

Day 21 Aug. 14 – Liverpool England – HOHO Bus Tour - Pedestrian Shopping Mall – Lorna Luft

During the night we had passed several oil drilling platforms marked by the plume of flared gas. This large platform was photographed shortly before dawn and fairly close to the coast of England.



The day started with calm sea and overcast sky as we approached the harbor of Liverpool, England formed by the River Mersey. The daily information sheet that we get for the port of call says that the entrance to this harbor is a bit more challenging than most. There is an area of shallows across the river entrance called the Formby Bar. We are only able to sail into the Mersey at high tide when the 7.6m draft of the Maasdam will pass safely over the Formby Bar. We picked up the Liverpool pilot earlier this morning and he will guide us over the Bar into the harbor.

The Port of Liverpool consists of seven miles of docks on both sides of the River Mersey containing terminals for all kinds of cargoes from all over the world. Liverpool has been a center for commerce and industry and today has also received acclaim as the Capital of Culture of Great Britain.

It was about 7am when we started the approach to the harbor and we were greeted by electricity generating wind turbines arranged in rows. There was little wind this morning so they were motionless.



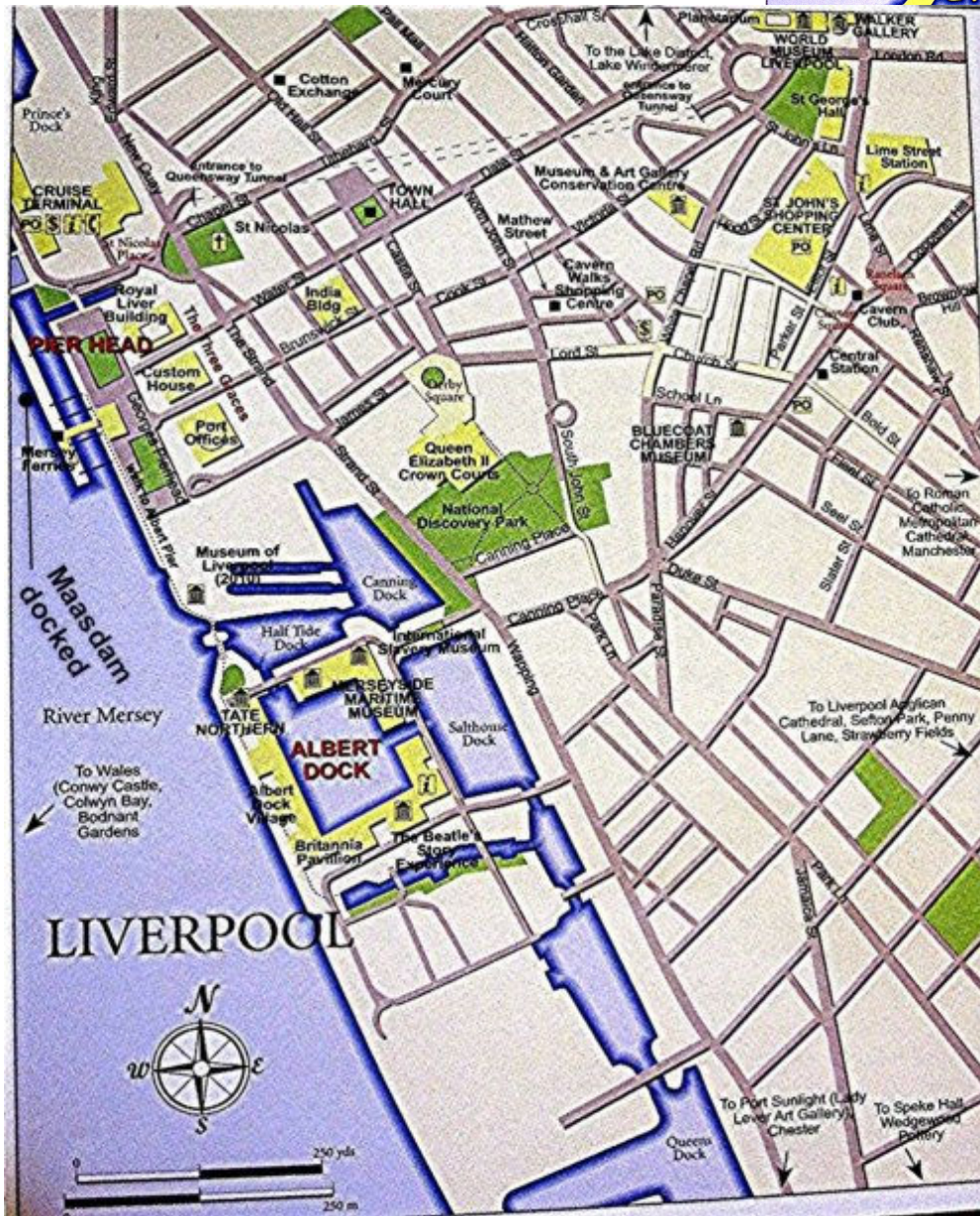
We cruised into the harbor and along the miles of industrial development with wind turbines distributed along the way. About 8am we docked at the facility known as Pier Head which contains the Liverpool cruise terminal.



The map on the right shows where Liverpool is located in the United Kingdom.



The street map below shows our location at Pier Head in Liverpool.



HOHO Bus Tour: We left the ship about 10am for a morning tour of Liverpool on our own. We passed through the Pier Head facility which is very convenient for cruise ship passengers. The cruise terminal is located there with maps and helpful staff. It was a short walk to Strand Street where we got these photos of the Liverpool landmark known as the Royal Liver Building. The two towers of the building are topped by metal sculptures of “Liver Birds”. The local legend is that if the Liver Birds ever fly away then



a great catastrophe will happen. They survived the bombing by Germany in WWII and were still in place this morning so we breathed easier.

Here is a close-up of one of the Liver Birds with an olive branch in its beak.

Barbara is an avid reader of the Cruise Critic (CC) Message board (www.cruise critic.com) and before we left on the cruise she had found a walking tour of Liverpool recommended by a devoted resident with the CC handle of “**towncar T**”. We used that suggested tour route to guide our day’s activity.

We wanted to take a Hop-On Hop-Off (HOHO) bus tour early in the day to get a feel for the city highlights. Luckily there was a HOHO bus stop with ticket agents close to the cruise ship passenger terminal. We like



the open air upper section which gives us the best views of new cities. This HOHO bus didn't have the earphones and multiple language capability that we have found in other foreign cities. The commentary was a recorded voice, in English, broadcast over the bus by a loudspeaker. That was fine for us and we guessed they have found the foreign language speakers can cope with the English.

Following are some of the more memorable sights we encountered along the HOHO bus route.

One unique display was a mega accomplishment by the artist/engineer Richard Wilson, who had a hole carefully cut in the outer wall of the Yates Wine Lodge Building. He then had the cut-out mounted on a rotating axis oriented so that at one point the cut-out is in its original position and then it assumes many different angles as the axle rotates. This was a striking thing to see and it is called "Turning the Place Over". Since it has been operating for some time we were surprised that it wasn't noted on the tourist maps we had.



Another memorable sight was the Catholic Cathedral built in a controversial conical shape as shown on the right. The entrance is located under the cross. Each of the many spires at the top has a cross at the tip.



Liverpool has a Chinatown and we drove past the entrance which was decorated with this fine oriental gate.



Just like in Boston, the HOHO bus has competition here in the form of the Yellow Duck. These versatile vehicles can take tourists for a short harbor voyage as well as a ride around town.



When the bus stopped at the Albert Pier we got off and took a walk around the Albert Dock Village that is in this large brick building shown below.



The Maritime Museum is the major attraction in Albert Dock Village but several other sites of interest are included. For example, the building houses the museum dedicated to the history of the Beatles singing group that originated in Liverpool. The entrance to “The Beatles Story” is shown on the right. From the number of young people flocking to the place it was clear that the Beatles are still popular.



the
The
in

Another store that really caught our eye was “the Bug World experience”. They sell all kinds of stuffed insect shaped dolls and paraphernalia like insect eyes and antennae to wear. In their window



they had this display of a preying mantis catching a grasshopper, as shown below.



In a macabre way Barbara became fascinated with this cuddly tarantula spider made up as a hand puppet. Only the price of \$50 USD stopped her from making the purchase. We hadn't seen a store like this in the US but it seemed like a concept that might be successful.

We worked our way around the large brick building until we came to the main event



which was the Maritime Museum. The Maritime Museum occupies about 50% of the space in the Albert Dock Village and is dedicated to displays that portray the history of ships and maritime commerce in the UK. Outside is a huge anchor from a large wooden battleship.

We went in (no entry charge) and checked out one of the main exhibits which describe three maritime disasters that took place in the 1912-1914 time period and

marked the end of the Edwardian heyday for Liverpool. The three disasters were the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, sinking of the Empress of Ireland in 1914, and the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915.

An example of their exhibits would be this life ring taken from the water after the Lusitania sinking.



After those disasters, with inevitable impact on maritime economy, Liverpool slipped into the background of international commerce. However, since WWII and particularly in recent decades there has been a resurgence of the vibrant Liverpool of former times.

On our bus tour of the dock area and in the maritime museum there was attention paid to the part that England played in the slave trade of the 1700 and 1800s. Much of the wealth in Liverpool in those times was generated by ships that participated in an efficient economic triangle. English ships took trade good to Africa to exchange for slaves captured by African tribes. The slaves were taken to the Americas and sold to sugar and cotton plantation owners. The ships were then loaded with sugar, rum, tobacco and cotton for the return trip to England. In recognition of the part England played in this

dark part of history a portion of the Maritime Museum is dedicated to exhibits that explain the history of slavery and attempt to help overcome the legacy of this practice in world culture.

Pedestrian Shopping Mall: After getting our bearings in Liverpool with the HOHO bus ride and tour of the Albert Dock Village we decided to visit the always popular commercial shopping district. We followed the walking directions given by Cruise Critic contributor, “towncar T”, and started out from near the Pier Head site. The magnificent St. Nicolas Parish Church is located near the pier and we got this photo as we passed.



We then proceeded down James Street and then Lord Street. We came to our destination at Church Street which has been converted into the most marvelous and popular open air shopping mall called “Liverpool One”.

Starting in September, 2008 motorized traffic was banned from the street and



the pedestrians took over. The streets have a decorative swirl pattern in the paving stones and the store fronts are designed to give a nice festive feel. We were there on a Friday afternoon and the streets were crowded. Here, on the left is a photo at the transition point where a bus has stopped where the pedestrian mall starts.

The picture below is from further down the street.



This Debenhams's store window display suddenly caught Barbara's eye.



At one point the pedestrian mall branched into two streets and there was still no lack of people to fill the space.

This sidewalk café, shown on the right, was the site of a "Pink Hat Society", get-together. We understand these women are younger versions of the high spirited ladies in the "Red Hat Society". They saw the Red Hatters having so much fun they formed their own society to join in. The picture doesn't show the pink hats very well but we thought we would show it for our Red Hat (and Cruise Critic) friend, KweenKaren.



Even though the number of people with cell phones stuck on their ear was about the same as in the US, they still have pay phones that work. These telephone booths in the mall were busy with two customers when we passed by. They have nearly disappeared from the scene in the US, presumably because of bad economics, but we have seen them surviving well in other parts of the industrialized world.

There was even an open air fruit and vegetable market that had been worked into the makeup of this very popular mall.



We walked out of the shopping mall, with its sharp looking buildings and prosperous people. We were then struck by the sight of the bombed out Anglican Cathedral located nearby. A new Cathedral was built a short distance away but this hulk was apparently left standing as a reminder of the horror that was dealt Liverpool by the Nazi bombing of WWII.



It was getting to be about time for the Maasdam to leave Liverpool so we headed back to the ship. Near the dock area we saw this prominent plaque honoring the unity and effort expended by American and British people in the port of Liverpool during World War II.



We were obviously American tourists as we visited the streets of Liverpool today and the residents were very friendly and helpful. We could attest that the current generations of Americans and British walking around Liverpool are continuing the cooperative tradition.

As we were about to pass through the cruise terminal on our way the Maasdam we got one last opportunity to record the visit of Barbara's library card to Liverpool. The cute little dog (?) and the sign behind it provided a great backdrop.

Liverpool is not a city we would have visited if it were not already chosen for this specific cruise. However, we thoroughly enjoyed our visit in Liverpool and can see why Cruise Critic message board contributor "towncar T" loves his city.



Lorna Luft: After the dinner hour each night there is entertainment for about an hour in the Rembrandt Lounge. The Maasdam has had some of the best entertainment we have seen on cruises. Lorna Luft, the daughter of Judy Garland, is a noted vocalist and she performed a wonderful show last night. Before she left the ship today, Moyra Miller the cruise director, interviewed her in the Rembrandt Lounge. We had returned from our tour of Liverpool and were just in time to take in the interview. Moyra did a good job of interviewing Lorna who was very poised and engaged with the audience as well as Moyra. This picture shows Moyra on the left and Lorna on the right during the interview. There was a large audience, many of whom expressed admiration of her career during the question and answer session. She left a very good impression on everyone not only as a wonderful singer but a well grounded person.



The Maasdam got underway about 6pm headed for Greenock, in Scotland where we will arrive tomorrow morning. Greenock is a small city about 40 miles from the much larger industrial city of Glasgow. We plan to catch a bus to Glasgow and just walk around to see some of the local sights.