

Carlisle City Centre walk - 2

As some of this walk takes you outside of the pedestrian area please beware of the traffic

The walk starts at the War Memorial outside the Crown and Mitre Hotel. This was the site of a block of properties called Glovers Row, which was demolished in 1896 opening up the Green Market [street sign still in place above Johnsons the Cleaners]. In medieval times this area was the bullring. The War Memorial was erected here in 1996, there being a feeling that the Cenotaph in Rickerby Park was too remote from the town centre, as well as being a joint County War Memorial not just a city one. The timber framed Guildhall facing onto the Green Market dates to 1406, but the plaster cast gargoyles were 19th century fakes, erected in 1844, and many were replaced recently. They are modelled on a figure in the Cathedral. At the sides of the upstairs windows are strong hooks from which the Guild banners would be flown on special days. The Guildhall had eight rooms for the eight city guilds which met there: Butchers, Merchants, Shoemakers, Skinners, Smiths, Tailors, Tanners and Weavers. To the left of the Guildhall are two town houses, now converted into shops.

To the right, on Saint Albans Row, a plaque commemorates the medieval chapel and graveyard which was on this site. Walk down Fisher Street. The building which is today Sawyers the chemist is dated 1776. Look for the fire mark high up on the building. The layout of Rosemary Lane on the right may have something to do with the boundaries of Saint Albans chapel. Past Rosemary Lane is the Kings Head Pub. Inside, but not on public view, is a date stone of 1783. Next along is the Guildhall Chambers, dated 1874. Note the Latin inscription, 'Laborare Est Orare' [To work is to pray] above the doorway. To the right of the door can be made out the fading lettering 'Caledonian Railway'. The District Goods Manager's Office was here. The Cumberland Building Society on the west side of the street was rebuilt in 1978.

The Arches Coffee House was the Quaker Meeting House until the 1960s. The original façade was dated 1776 [a rebuild of a 1702 Meeting House] with a small garden in front, but the building was extended forwards in 1864, hence the later date stone. The 1776 stone was moved to the rear of the building, fronting onto Rosemary Lane. Across the street, the now closed Browns Lane ran between Cranstons and the Cumberland Building Society. Your Move and Bells were early 19th century houses. Their sympathetic conversion to shops received a Civic Trust award. Opposite is Saint Mary's Gate, created in 1924 and so named as it led to Saint Mary's Church which formerly stood opposite the Cathedral where the raised flower bed is today. Opposite St Mary's Gate on Fisher Street is the former City Treasurer's building [now Piers Christian]. Treasury Court is a reminder of past days. The building on the corner of Fisher Street and Saint Mary's Gate was Connells Bank dating to 1830.

The 1801 Butchers Market was in a lane, on the right side between Scotch Street and Fisher Street. This was developed in 1854 and 1889 with extensions into today's covered Market. If the Market is open, go inside. Over the interior exit is a date stone of 1854. The Fisher Street façade is dated 1889. Incorporated into the capitals are carvings of sheep, bull and cockerel heads, representing the trade that went on in the market. These sculptures were all done in situ by Mr Beal of Newcastle. The next Market entrance [a blue door] went into the now closed Fish Market. Market Street was laid out in 1889. The first building across the road, now Atkinson and Ritsons, was the Town Clerks Office, and there is a date of 1879 on the pediment of this building. Opposite are two early 19th century town houses, now used by the YMCA and RAOB. The Methodist Central Hall has a plaque announcing that John Wesley, founder of Methodism, preached in the Fisher Street Chapel in 1788 and 1790. At that time, the chapel was further down the street. Another plaque on the building tells us that this church was built during the ministry of the Rev G. Bramwell Evens, otherwise known as the author, broadcaster and naturalist 'Romany'.

Fisher Street Galleries is a late 18th century house which belonged to the Hodgson family. The Working Men's Club with its serpentine front was the town house of the Fergusons and can be dated to circa 1790. The Civic Trust fought to prevent alteration to the building which would have seen the front extended to the line of the other buildings, hiding or destroying the 1790s façade which we enjoy today. The car park opposite is on the site of the former gardens for Castle Street houses. Past the Working Men's, with its replica 18th century doorway, is the building which collapsed under renovation entailing a complete rebuild. Spinners Court recalls that this area was used by the Dixon family as part of their works. 18 Fisher Street is on the site of the Fisher Street Presbyterian Church which was demolished in 1986. The Brickyard nightclub stands on the site of the original Methodist Chapel in

which Wesley preached. The Richmond Hall was built as parish rooms for Saint Mary's Church, opposite the Cathedral. The Rev Richmond was a minister at Saint Mary's and when he died the new hall was named after him and opened by his sister, Lady Kennedy. No 1 Fisher Street is early 19th century. Opposite is a three story building built in 1819. It was originally a terrace of 4 houses but the one nearest Finkle Street was demolished to allow for the widening of this street. The Quaker meeting house dates to the 1960s and was built on their former graveyard, closed in 1855 and today marked with a stone.

Across the dual carriageway we see the north city wall, the rest of which was demolished in 1811. Turn right into West Tower Street, which is on the line of the north wall. Some of the wall remains under the street. The Indian restaurant on the corner was the former Castle Print Works – faded lettering still visible. Further along is the Presbyterian Sunday School with its foundation stone of 1883. This was immediately behind their church on Fisher Street. Next are the remaining buildings of what was the Forster family works then, set back, Dixon's 18th century warehouse with characteristic round headed windows. The north side of West Tower Street was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the proposed inner ring road. Back across Market Street look for the Market foundation stone of 1887. The projecting building was added in 1900 for a poultry market and the original carved capitals moved forward. The entrance to Debenhams stands on the former Scotch Gate. The north Wall continued to Lowther Street and contained six towers, hence West Tower Street and East Tower Lane.

Walk down East Tower Lane, past the statue of Jimmy Dyer, and out onto Lowther Street. On the east side of Lowther Street is the Bowling Green Hostel, built as an Inn in 1885. There is a bowling green marked in this area on the map of 1746. The railings are all that remains of the Lowther Street Board School of 1885. Next was the site of Her Majesty's Theatre demolished in 1979 and now a car park. Across the road is the Howard Arms with its attractive Royal Doulton tiled façade. Lowther Street is set on the line of the east wall of the city. It was also a drove road, allowing cattle to pass around the city, hence the name Drover's Lane as it curves around Debenhams. There were no medieval buildings on the east side of the walls. Chapel Street commemorates the Catholic chapel which was built here in 1824. Today this building is a Health Club. Also of interest in this street is the Dispensary dated 1857 and the cream and red brickwork of the former 1874 Albert Hall.

Back across Lowther Street, the new Lanes development is dated 1986 (above Globe Lane). Cross the entrance to Old Bush Yard and the next building, dated 1901, was built for Amos the grocer. Opposite is Victoria Place, laid out circa 1837 when the Queen came to the throne. The corner building with its granite pillar was the office of the Architect CJ Ferguson, and the large windows at the top of the building were his drawing office.

Lowther Street was named after the Earls of Lonsdale who owned property in this area. Pippins was built by the State Management Scheme and opened as the Apple Tree in 1929. Next are the remains of Kings Arms Lane. On the opposite side is a terrace of houses dating to the 1840s, then Lonsdale Street. The News and Star building dates to 1851 and was built as part of the newly laid out Bank Street. Turn into this street. The north side of the street is all 1851. John Watts Coffee Shop is one of the oldest firms still trading under its original name in the city, being established in 1865. Coffee is still roasted on the premises. The HSBS building [originally the Carlisle and District Bank - hence the street name] was built in 1849 and extended in 1898. The Manager used to live on the premises and the imposing front door with its fan light above was the entrance to his house.

Prepared by Carlisle Library with the help of Denis Perriam
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carlisle.library@cumbriacc.gov.uk

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