

# the Chapel Street heritage trail

**Queen Victoria, free parks, the Beano, Marxism, Heat, Vimto...**

A self-guided walk along Chapel Street from Blackfriars Bridge to Peel Park.

**...Oh! and a certain Mr Lowry**

There's more to Salford than its favourite son and his matchstick men and matchstick cats and dogs.

## Introduction

This walk takes in Chapel Street and the Crescent – the main corridor connecting Salford with Manchester city centre. From Blackfriars Bridge to Salford Museum and Art Gallery should take approximately one and a half hours, with the option of then exploring the gallery and Peel Park afterwards. The terrain is easy going along the road, suitable for wheelchair users and pushchairs.

Thanks to all those involved in compiling this Chapel Street heritage trail:

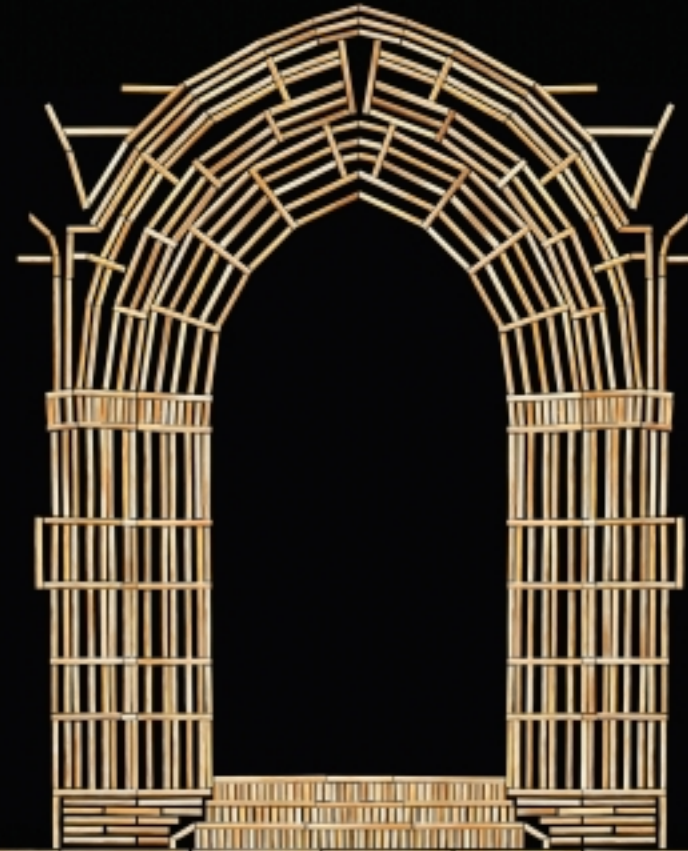
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## The Trail Background Information

Chapel Street was the first street in the United Kingdom to be lit by gas way back in 1806 and was one of the main roads in the country, making up part of the A6 from London to Glasgow. Today it is home to artists' studios, Salford Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Salford, great pubs and an ever-increasing number of businesses and brand new residences, meaning this historic area has an equally bright future.

### Blackfriars Bridge

The walk begins on Blackfriars Bridge, which crosses the River Irwell and connects Manchester with its neighbouring city, Salford.

This bridge was opened in 1820 and connects Salford with Manchester city centre. To your right is Victoria Bridge, which stands on the site of the original Salford Bridge. The bridge was the scene of one of the first battles of the English Civil War. During the war, Salford was strongly Royalist while Manchester was Parliamentary. The siege of Manchester in September 1642, which started the Civil War, was launched from Salford, with between 3,000 and 4,000 Royalists attacking the town. The battle raged on Salford Bridge and on into Deansgate, where the first casualty of the war, Richard Percival, was shot dead. The attack eventually failed and the siege was lifted in October of the same year.



Proceed forward over the bridge to the end of Blackfriars Street and onto Chapel Street.

On the opposite side of Blackfriars Bridge, look left towards the newest link from Manchester to Salford, the Trinity Bridge. Designed by Santiago Calatrava, the bridge, which opened in 1995, connects the Lowry Hotel with Manchester's central business district.

To your left on the corner of Blackfriars Bridge and Chapel Street is the Black Lion Pub, which was the birthplace of the Showmen's Guild.

Across Chapel Street to your right, on the corner is George Ellis Printers. The building was once a police station (the sign can still be seen above the doorway). It then became a tram ticket office, before being bought by the printing company.



The area behind the printers was originally the heart of medieval Salford. The Greengate area was once a thriving market place, complete with a courthouse, cross, stocks and water pump. In the centuries following the Norman conquest of 1066, Salford developed not only as a manor, but also as a town. In 1228 Henry III granted the town the right to hold a market, and the area grew and developed around this core.





Cross Chapel Street  
to the corner of  
Blackfriars Road.



Ahead of you now are Sacred Trinity Church and the former site of the Flat Iron Market. Originally called Chapel, Sacred Trinity is Salford's oldest church and gave the street its name. Prior to this, the street was actually called Sergeant Street and can be seen on old maps from c1650.

The present day Trinity Church was completed in 1635. Most of the current building dates from 1752. It is a grade 2 listed building with many original features. It was restored in 1877-74 and adapted for more flexible use in the 1980s. The church still houses the colours of the Salford 'Pals'. The soldiers of the Salford 'Pals' were the first battalion to go 'over the top' at Thiepval.



As you approach the church, in the grounds in front of the entrance is a cross-shaped monument. It is in memory of Salford people who gave their lives in World War One. There is one notable non-Salfordian on the list: Edith Cavell, the nurse turned informer who helped the British gain valuable information from the Germans during the war. Also in the grounds of the church, notice the gravestones, which make up the path on either side of the building.

When the chapel was first erected the population can have numbered only a few hundred and its site marked the limit of the town. Sir Humphrey Booth raised the money for the original church. Booth's tombstone is located in the church and his epitaph reads, 'Love his memory, imitate his devotion.' His grandson, also Humphrey Booth, set up a trust to maintain the church and help the 'poor of Salford' and is still doing its good work today.



Lowry painted the view of Trinity and the Flat Iron from Chapel Street in 1925 and it is now one of the only views in the city that has remained unchanged since he painted it.

Walk around the grounds to the back of the church. The impressive building on your right is Caxton Hall built in 1907 for the Typographical Society in Manchester. It was so named after Caxton, inventor of the printing press. The building was hired out to socialists and trade union activists for most of its life and was an important venue for the labour movement.



Continue past Caxton Hall to an area of Chapel Street that only became built up during the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century.

Cotton mills were built along the street along with homes to house the workers. One of the mills across the street from the chapel was that of the partnership of Phillips and Lee, located between Chapel Street and the Irwell. It has its place in history,

Continue along Chapel Street



as it was the first building in the country to be lit by gas.

On your left is the award-winning Lowry Hotel, the first five-star hotel in Greater Manchester. Opened in 2001 it has become a symbol of the riverside redevelopment of the Irwell area.

Also on your left, where the large white office block now stands, was once the home of DC Thomson, the printers. A variety of famous comics were once printed on the site, including The Beano and Dandy.

Past the hotel, proceed along Chapel Street under the railway bridge. Continue to the junction with New Bailey Street.

To your left, but on the opposite side of New Bailey Street, is Salford Central Railway Station. Opened in 1838 as the terminus and head offices of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury railway, it has three bridges, taking trains to and from Victoria Station. The three unique bridges that span New Bailey Street are all different in design. Influenced by the Greek style, they are actually listed buildings.

Close to where the station now stands, is the site of the former New Bailey Street Prison. Opened in 1790, it closed in 1868 when inmates were transferred to the new Strangeways prison.

On the corner of New Bailey Street, lies the Copperheads pub and hotel, which was once the Bulls Head, a favourite haunt of Manchester United star George Best.

At the junction, turn right onto  
Bloom Street and proceed to  
the Kings Arms Pub.



This is a real ale free house frequently featured in the Good Beer Guide. The pub was built in the 1870s to replace an older Kings Arms which stood on the other side of the street and which was pulled down to make way for the building of Salford Corporation's gas offices. On the side of the pub, notice the faded sign, which can just be made out and reads, 'Ye Anglers Club House'. The pub was once the home to Salford Friendly Anglers Club, who formed in 1817 and claim to be the oldest fishing club in the country. Recently, the pub has seen a new lease of life, becoming home to Studio Salford and frequently hosting innovative plays and gigs.

Past the pub, on the opposite side of the road stands the former Gas Works Offices. The elaborate building has recently been reconditioned, giving new life to the brickwork and displaying the decorative features of this hidden architectural gem.

Next to the Gas Works Offices, on the same side of Bloom Street stands the New Model Lodging House. Once a doss-house for the homeless or drunks who had been locked out of their homes by unsympathetic partners, it has now been

converted into luxury apartments. When developers first bought the building, they discovered the doors would not lock. They realised that this was because they had never been locked before, as the lodging house was always open to everyone 24 hours a day.

Trace your steps back to the junction and turn right back onto Chapel Street.



Continue to the main junction with Trinity Way. Cross Trinity Way, back onto Chapel Street.



Continue down Chapel Street.

On your left on the opposite side of Chapel Street is Griffin Court. This was where Vimto was first mass-produced after it had first been made in Manchester in 1908. The popular drink expanded its production partly by promoting itself as a temperance beverage and its popularity grew with the development of the temperance movement in Salford. The fruity drink was made on Chapel Street premises from 1910 to 1927.

Past Griffin Court, is the former site of Mrs. Meadowcroft's coffee shop. Where the large car park is now situated was the original meeting place of the Rechabites temperance movement and where they established the oldest teetotal and friendly society. The cobbles of Bolton Street where the coffee shop was located can still be seen in the car park. The irony of locating the teetotal society on Bolton Street was that Watson and Woodhead brewery was located a short distance down the same road!

On the right corner is the Salford New Harvest Christian Fellowship Church. The building has an unusual history. Originally built as a Scottish Presbyterian Church in 1846, complete with tall spire. Venture around the back of the building, down Saint Stephen Street and you can still make out the original features of the church on the back wall.

The present frontage was then added in 1912 and was opened as the Salford Cinema, one of the first in Salford and Manchester. The cinema then changed to Rex Cinema in 1938 and survived until 1958 before it became a bingo hall from 1967-1985.

Just past the church, down East Ordsall Lane, lies Islington Park. Completed in 1987, the park is built on the site of an old cemetery where 22,000 people were buried. The cemetery was known locally as the Plague Cemetery. This area was also once home to Francis Hodgson Burnett, author of the classic children's novel, 'The Secret Garden'. Is it possible she drew inspiration for the story from her own garden in Salford?

On your right now, is the tree-lined Bexley Square. The square gained notoriety in 1931 when it was the scene of the infamous 'Battle of Bexley Square'. This was the fight against the government enforced means test and poverty in Salford, which went on to feature in Walter Greenwood's play 'Love on The Dole'.



Walk past the archway, leave the square and onto Ford Street. Turn left.

Continue past the school, turning right back onto Chapel Street.



Continuing past the cathedral, turn right onto the cobbles of John Street, facing the tower of St Philip's Church. Wheelchair users can use the pavements all the way around the church for easier access if needed.

Head for the church and then turn left in front of the building and follow the grounds of the church round to the right and the entrance.

At the far end of the square is the old Salford Town Hall, now the city's magistrate's court. On the building you'll notice a commemorative brown plaque, which states, 'Salford Town Hall (Grade II) Built 1825-1827 with later additions to the rear. The first important public undertaking by architect Richard Lane.' To the left of the magistrates on the archway hangs another plaque, which reads, 'Wall, Archways and Gates (Grade II) a 19th Century addition to Salford Town Hall.'

On your right stands an imposing red brick building. Look up above the doorway and notice the engraving. The building was once The Salford Board School opened in 1894 it was the 8th to be erected by the Salford School Board.

A short distance on the right, notice the large, ornately decorated exterior of the former education offices for Salford. A brown plaque attached to the building states, 'Education Offices (Grade II) Built 1895, opened in 1896 as the Salford School Board Offices.' The city council's education directorate was housed here until 2001.

Past the former education offices, you will come to the magnificence of St. John's Cathedral. Consecrated by the second Bishop of Salford, Herbert Vaughan, in 1890, it has the tallest spire in the city. This is a Victorian church with a real middle-ages look and feel to it, which comes courtesy of architect William Hadfield's keenness for paying homage to genuine medieval churches in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Belgium. Notable too, is the Cathedral's claim to be the first to be built in the cruciform shape since the Reformation and the fact that the ground has been consecrated since 1424 (when it was occupied by a much smaller chapel). Within the grounds, there is also a bookshop and gardens for parishioners and visitors to relax in.

Designed by Sir Robert Smirke in 1825, the building's Greek style is unique in Salford. The view of the church from Chapel St is the most impressive, with its bow-fronted porch with iconic colonnade and balustraded parapet and bell tower above. The church is one of Salford's most distinctively designed buildings, yet also one of the city's undiscovered architecture gems. It may well be the only neo-classical building left in the city.

Stay on the cobbles facing the entrance to the church – you are now on Wilton Place. The view to your left takes in the arch, the entrance to the old County Court. Frequently referred to as Salford Hundred Court, it is the same scene painted by Lowry in his 1926 piece 'By the County Court'.





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Head towards the arch, but turn right onto Bank Place just before it. Follow the cobbles down left onto Encombe Place.

Return back to Bank Place.

Make your way towards the cathedral, following the railings of St Philip's.

With the 'Seed' behind you, continue forward towards the cathedral under the cover of the tree lined path.



The County Court and the old Magistrates building on your left, have now been converted into apartments. This area around the back of St. Philips is a fine example of one of the few remaining Georgian areas of the city.

Take in the view back towards the cathedral to your left. This is yet another scene admired and painted by Lowry in 'By St Philip's Church' 1926.

At the end of the church is the striking 'Seed' sculpture. Designed by Andrew McKeown in 2002, it takes the form of two sycamore seeds. Cast in iron, the sculpture represents life and growth emerging from the decline of the traditional engineering and manufacturing industries.

At the end of the path, stop and notice the small plaque on the brick post. It is one of three, which tell a story of one of the residents of the area. Here you can read the short tale of local Ged Burns. Across the street are the other two, which relive memories of Mrs Pickles who mistaid her son and Snakey Joe the Canadian, a market trader.

Head towards St. John's Square, at the rear of the cathedral. This is the perfect place for a short stop and a rest. There are benches to sit on and enjoy the view of the pyramid sculpture and the cathedral's imposing stained glass east window designed by William Wailes, which ambitiously represents the history of the Catholic Church in England. Trace your steps back to the 'Seed'. Veer to the left of the sculpture and St. Philip's back onto the cobbles of John Street. Leave the church behind you and make your way back to the main road, turning right onto Chapel Street.

The next large building on your right is the Salford Royal, once the city's biggest hospital, it has now been converted into luxury apartments, although the exterior of the building has remained largely unchanged. Notice the memorial plaque on the building, which remembers 14 nurses from the hospital who were killed in the bombing of the area in 1941.

At the traffic lights, look to your left and you will see the War Memorial monument to soldiers of the Boer War. Such memorials to the Boer War are very rare, this being one of only two in the whole of the Northwest. Also on your left, but on the other side of Oldfield Road is the site of the former head quarters of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU). The TGWU was part of the TUC, which was first established in Salford in 1868 in the Three Crowns pub in King Street. The Art Deco head quarters stood on this site until 2003, when the building was demolished and replaced with modern luxury apartments, opened in 2005.

Staying on the same side of the road as The Royal, now cross Adelphi Street, onto The Crescent, passing the steps down to the entrance of the Old Pint Pot pub. Continue further for a short distance and stop.



At the traffic lights, cross the Crescent to the other side of the road.

Make your way to the square. Wheelchair users can avoid the cobbles if needed, by using the pavements around the square.

At the base of the apartments, is another part of the Irwell Sculpture Trail – a quote from Shelley's poem, 'The Mask of Anarchy' about the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 in Manchester. The quote reads,

"Rise like lions after slumber, in unvanquishable number, shake your chains to earth like dew, which in sleep had fallen on you. Ye are many they are few."

The view to your right takes in the bend in Irwell with the meadow on the opposite side of the water. The area including the river and the meadow is a dedicated nature reserve for birds, wildlife and fish.

To the right of the meadow is the iron Adelphi Footbridge, which crosses the Irwell, erected in 1902. The bridge allows views of the Crescent and the weir, which is present in Lowry's painting of the scene from 1924. The area around the Irwell, along the riverbank was also the location for some scenes in David Lean's classic British film, 'Hobson's Choice'.

Behind you now, on the opposite side of the Crescent is the famous Crescent Pub. Now the first pub in Greater Manchester to be granted 24 hour drinking licence, it is also favourite with students and real ale fans alike. CAMRA – the group who campaign for real ale - was actually formed by Salford born Graham Lees. Before it was the Crescent, it was The Red Dragon and was once the favourite haunt of Frederick Engels and Karl Marx who often shared their thoughts on world politics over a pint or two.

As you continue along the Crescent, you will notice a real mix of diverse architectural styles. On your left on the opposite side of the road is a row of Georgian buildings – another example of the prominence of the area in Georgian times.

Back on your right, at the end of the crescent are the buildings of Salford University.

To your left is Hemsley House, built in 1935, on your right is the cobbled Fire Station Square. This was once the site of the Salford Fire Station built in 1903, and also the location for the firemen's houses. These were modernised and converted into 30 residential homes in 1986.

On the first corner you can step into one of Salford's smallest listed buildings. The old red telephone box is now actually a listed building, and is only one of two left in the city (the other is in Worsley village). In the centre of the square is the Egyptian monument of a Sphinx. Unveiled in 1922, it is a war memorial celebrating the campaigns of the Lancashire



**There's more to Salford  
than it's favourite son  
and his matchstick men and  
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Fusiliers. Also in the square you'll find the Riley Archive, a collection of work by Harold Riley. Lowry was his mentor and a close friend of the artist. The studio features a collection and archive of his work including examples of paintings and photographs of his passions, golf and football. The gallery can be viewed by appointment only from Summer of 2006.

Continue past the square and on your left is Joule House. Once the home of scientist, James Prescott Joule (1818-1889). Born in New Bailey Street, Salford, he is best known for his work on the nature of heat. As well as this building, the measure of heat he developed and a crater on the moon are named after him. Look out for another brown plaque attached to the building, which reads, 'Joule House (Grade II) Built early 19th century. Salford born scientist James Prescott Joule (1810-1889) lived here 1819-1854.' Here there are more examples of fine Georgian buildings, which were once houses. Across Acton Square is the Working Class Movement Library, which is housed in the large, red brick building, which used to be the old Nurses' Home. Notice the terracotta frescoes on the side of the building. It was named to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee of 1897, but did not in fact open until 1901.

Turn left after Joule House into Acton Square.

The library contains one of the finest collections about trade unions, Labour history, working class movements and related subjects in the world. The building also houses a red plaque commemorating 'Ewan MacColl, 1915-1989. Marxist, singer, song maker and dramatist lived in this neighbourhood.' Part of the building is now also the office of Salford's local MP.

On the opposite side of the road, the big red brick building is the Peel Building, now the administrative headquarters of the university. Built in 1896 by architect Henry Lord, notice the terracotta panels, depicting craftsmen and engineers at work, as the building was the original headquarters for Salford Technology College, the first of its kind in the country. The Peel Building was where Lowry studied life drawing.

On your right before the Peel Building, behind the flowerbeds is Salford Museum & Art Gallery. On the lawn in front of the museum, stand two statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Both were designed by Matthew Noble after funding was raised by public subscriptions and were unveiled in 1857 and 1864 respectively. The statues commemorate the Queen's 1851 visit to the city, when one million people lined the streets of Salford and a choir of 82,000 school children sang for her in Peel Park. To the left of the statues, now partially hidden by trees is what looks like an elaborately designed gazebo. Built in red brick, matching the Peel Building, it was actually a somewhat extravagant part of the ventilation system, once expelling noxious gases from the technology college!



Cross back over the Crescent towards the Peel Building.



To explore the park further, including the Irwell Sculpture Trail, the flood mark statue and acres of green space in the heart of the city, simply make your way down the steps. Wheelchair users can reach the park using the sloping ramps to the left of the steps.

The museum was built in 1850 and contained the first unconditionally free public lending library, which opened in 1851, and although, no longer a lending library, it is still free to enter today. A brown plaque on the buildings exterior reads, 'Museum/Art Gallery and Library (grade II). Originally Lark Hill House (built 1790) with 19th and 20th century redevelopments. The first unconditionally free public library established by a municipal authority in Great Britain. Opened in January 1850.' The building houses five galleries, the local history library, a Victorian Street, Lark Hill Place, a shop and a café. With so much to see, it's a good idea to give yourself plenty of time to explore everything the museum has to offer.

Alternatively if you prefer to continue exploring outdoors, make your way around to the left of the museum, to the back of the building and you will be presented with fine views of Peel Park. The park can boast of being one of the first free public parks in the UK. It opened in 1846 the same day as two other parks in Manchester and Salford were opened for the first time, giving locals free access to parkland and leading to the development of leisure time. With increasing interest in health and activity, it was so popular that on bank holidays, it was not unusual for a million people to visit the park.

Sir Robert Peel, the great social reformer was the man behind the opening of the park, which took its name from him. Salfordians were at that time amazingly well placed. They had a free library and park right on their doorsteps allowing access to learning and leisure, thus improving the education and arguably the health of the local residents.

#### Key Dates:

- 1226 - First recorded mention of a bridge over the River Irwell connecting Manchester & Salford.
- 1228 - Henry III grants Salford the right to hold a weekly market and annual fair.
- 1535 - Trinity Church is completed, with Catholic worshippers first using the Church.
- 1761 - The first Blackfriars Bridge is constructed.
- 1790 - New Bailey Prison opens, close to the site of Salford Central Station.
- 1806 - Lee & Philips factory and a portion of Chapel Street were lit by gas - the first use of gas lighting in the world.
- 1810 - James Prescott Joule is born in New Bailey Street, moving later to Acton Square.
- 1825 - The foundation stone of Salford Town Hall, Bexley Square is laid.
- 1827 - Salford & Pendleton Dispensary (a fore-runner of Salford Royal Hospital) opens.
- 1838 - Salford Central Railway Station opens on New Bailey Street.
- 1844 - Friedrich Engels publishes his book, 'Condition of the Working Class in England' describing life in Salford & Chapel St.
- 1846 - Peel Park opens its gates to the public, making it the first free public park in the country.
- 1850 - Salford Borough Library opens on the Crescent - making it the first unconditionally free library in Great Britain.
- 1851 - Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visit Salford, a choir of 82,000 children greet them with song in Peel Park.
- 1857 - Monument of Queen Victoria is unveiled on the crescent.
- 1896 - The Peel Building opens housing Salford Technology College
- 1903 - Salford Fire Station opens in Acton Square.
- 1995 - The Trinity Footbridge opens making the most recent crossing over the Irwell, linking Salford and Manchester.