

## Journal of European Trip, May-June 2019: Liverpool Component

This blog is based on Facebook posts covering the period 4-May to 25-Jun-19, during which we toured Ireland (by car), cruised on Russian rivers from Moscow to St Petersburg, visited Liverpool, cruised between Scottish Islands, spent a week near Oxford with friends, travelled to Tallinn (Estonia) for a work TNC (networking) Conference, and then had a couple of days in London before returning home. It has been constructed as separate Blogs (Ireland, Russia, Scotland, etc) to make each file manageable. Return to the Blog home page at <http://www.alex-reid.com/Blog/> to see the others.

**Monday, May 27:** After returning to the UK from Russia, we hired a car and drove North to Liverpool (where our next cruise was to start), stopping overnight outside Birmingham on the way. So we arrived in Liverpool mid-morning Monday. We had 2 days in Liverpool, and had 2 items on our agenda (actually, 3 – doing some washing was a high priority!). These were first to check out Liverpool FC memorabilia (for Isaac), given they were to appear in the European Champions League final in a few days. And second to check out various Beatles sites (via a “magical mystery tour” – based on the commercial offering, but self-driven). Our first priority was a laundromat, and we drove round and round trying to find one. When eventually we did, all of the machines were out of action! Of course, we resorted to Google, and saw that there were two within walking distance of our hotel. The first proved to be closed (Monday was a Bank Holiday in the UK). We just couldn’t find the second, until later, when I went for a walk to check it out close-up, and then I almost missed it – pick the laundromat from the photo below!



A camouflaged laundromat.

Of course, there are other sights in Liverpool, but we had seen many of them before. But I did want to check out the Royal Liver Building – as it happened, across the road from our hotel. Amongst its tenants is the Universities Superannuation Scheme, who monthly pay me my modest UK-based pension.



Royal Liver Building, and statue of King Edward VII.



A Liver Bird, atop the Royal Liver Building; note the ties to stop it flying away!

Our hotel was designed (I think) to look like the prow of a ship...



Liverpool Mercure Hotel.

Having dealt with the washing, it was time to check out some of the Beatles/Fab-4 sights, which included a great group statue on the Wharf, John Lennon lounging against a wall in Mathew Street, a cluster above a doorway also in Mathew Street, and just around the corner in North John Street atop the Hard Day's Night Hotel (which has not connection with the Beatles, other than the name).



The Beatles (larger than life size) on the Wharf in Liverpool.



John Lennon, lounging in Mathew Street, outside the Cavern Pub (across the street from The Cave).



The Beatles looking down on Mathew Street.



Hard Day's Night Hotel, with Beatles adorning the first floor.

Apart from statues of the Beatles themselves, there was also quite a lot about them in or near Mathew Street, the primary one being the Cavern Club in Mathew Street, the site of the Beatles first significant gig.





Mathew Street, and the entrance to the Cavern Club.



The Cavern Club, surprisingly deep down under the street, with a band playing Beatles songs!



Eleanor Rigby statue near Mathew Street.

Capitalising on the fame that the Beatles have brought to the city, Liverpool is quick to point out the many other musical greats that have come from Liverpool, like Cilla Black, Billy Fury, Gerry and the Pacemakers, etc.



Statue of Cilla Black in Mathew Street.

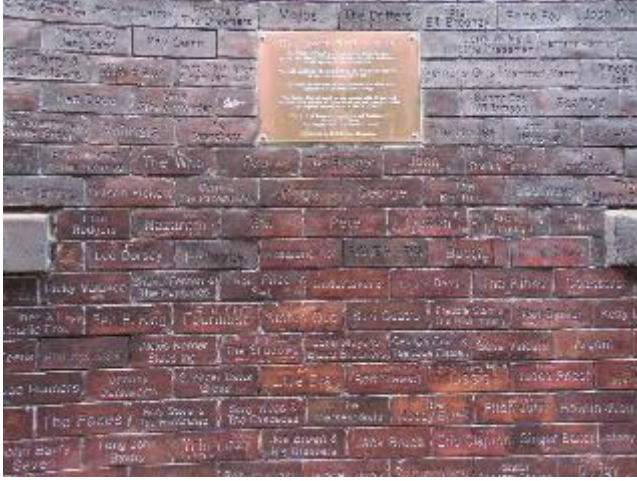


Statue of Billy Fury on the Wharf.



Liverpool's Wall of Fame (in Mathew Street): #1 hits by Liverpool artists.





The Cavern Wall of Fame: musicians who have performed in the Cavern Club – plaque on Mathew Street.

The above sights were all within walking distance of our hotel, but I had planned a drive to some more far-flung locations, including the childhood homes of John and Paul, Penny Lane (including the shelter in the middle of Penny Lane), and Strawberry Field.



John Lennon's childhood home.



Paul McCartney's childhood home.



The start of Penny Lane.



The end of Penny Lane, including (in the background) the shelter featuring in the song, now Sgt Pepper's Bistrot.



Strawberry Field: a children's home run by the Salvation Army, now being redeveloped, at which time the grounds will be opened to the public.

Since we were out in the Eastern part of Liverpool, we drove the short distance to the 16thC National Trust property, Speke Hall, quite eye-catching, and some lovely grounds/gardens.



Speke Hall, Liverpool.



Speke Hall, Liverpool.





Aliums at Speke Hall.

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