**About Liverpool**

Liverpool, as the maritime capital of Britain, has a reputation as an unglamorous working-class town, and it is tragedy deserted dockside area reflects the hardships wrought by the economic change of the 1980s. Yet mo Liverpool can boast of world-class theatres, a symphony orchestra, a variety of restaurants and thriving nightly. Liverpool is a world city of international renown, with its instantly recognizable waterfront, unique accent and famous sons and daughters. Based in the heart of Northwest England, Liverpool is also Britain's favourite day trip destination according to the national tourist board.

Liverpool, with its famous waterfront on the River Mersey, is a great shipping port and industrial center. King John launched it on its road to glory when he granted it a charter in 1207. Before that, it had been a tiny 12th-century fishing village, but it quickly became a port for shipping men and materials to Ireland. In the 18th century, it grew to prominence because of the sugar, spice, and tobacco trade with the Americans. By the time Victoria came to the throne, Liverpool had become Britain’s biggest commercial seaport.

As the birthplace of the Beatles, Liverpool has long been a popular tourist attraction. But the Beatle heritage is the character of the «Scouse» people than in such workaday landmarks as Strawberry Fields and the «Eleanor Indeed», the fabled Cavern Club, where the Beatles honed their craft, has been razed. The real secret of the Beatles dockside melting pot ensured a continual influx of less-than-proper music and attitudes from overseas. Visitors who simply must get the official version of events are directed to the city-sponsored Beatle exhibit and Dock. The Albert Dock itself is widely considered Britain’s most successful large-scale tourist renovation.

Recent refurbishing of the Albert Dock, the establishment of a Maritime Museum, and the conversion of warehouses into little stores similar to those in Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco have made this an up-and-coming area once again, with many attractions for visitors. Liverpudlians are proud of their city, with its new hotels, two cathedrals, shopping and entertainment complexes, and parks. And of course, whether they are fans of the Fab Four or not, most visitors to Liverpool want to see where Beatlemania began.

**European Capital of Culture - what does it mean?**

From 2005, there will be a new European Capital of Culture every year. This is a revival of the well-known City of Culture programme, which benefited Glasgow so much back in 1990.Far from being just another title; it is an ideal opportunity to celebrate the cultural accomplishments of Europe's great cities and to involve the community as a whole in that celebration. It is also an opportunity for further development. Glasgow experienced substantial economic and social benefits during its period as the City of Culture, both strengthening and promoting its own impressive regeneration. In 2008, the European Capital of Culture will be in the UK and Liverpool is one of the cities bidding for the title. Competition will be fierce, but the title is very much worth the battle, and Liverpool's claim is a very strong one indeed. Our bid team has the support of not just the City Council but also many cultural and business leaders. When the people of Liverpool get behind the bid too, we can and will be the European Capital of Culture in 2008.The benefits of winning the title are quite tangible. It will do so much more than simply throw the spotlight on all of the city's cultural and artistic achievements. The world already knows about the Beatles and our famous football teams. The title will enable us to tell a more complete story, encompassing everything from the Tate in Liverpool to the many events of the Liverpool festivals. Specific benefits to the city will also include local and regional regeneration, increased tourism, greater business activity and an overall increase in cultural activities. Just as importantly, the title will remind everyone in the region - and indeed the country - that Liverpool is very much a city to be proud of. Competition is now under way and the Government will publish a shortlist of candidates in the last quarter of 2002, with the final UK nomination decided in spring of 2003.At that point, the winning city will be able to start using the title European Capital of Culture 2008 and to start preparing in earnest for its year of tenure.

**Liverpool culture**

A range of theatres offer first class productions to rival London's West End and many tourists just come to Liverpool for its exciting nightlife. The city center has a wide choice of cafes, bars, pubs and clubs. Mathew Street, the home of the Cavern Club, still attracts thousands of Beatles fans from all over the world. The city is alive with musicians, poets, writers, artists, painters, sculptors, designers and architects - further enhancing its image as a European city of culture. Liverpool is bidding to be the European Capital of Culture in 2008. Liverpool is also a serious sporting city. Liverpool and Everton football clubs are renowned the world over. Liverpool is also home to the world's most famous horse race, the Grand National at Aintree.

Liverpool is also famed for its monumental architecture, which includes the gold-domed town hall and the large in England. A combination of high and low culture is evolving at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, founded and fu McCartney.

**Architecture in Liverpool**

Liverpool’s most important building architecturally is St George’s Hall, situated on St George’s Plateau on the world-famous Lime Street. Described as the finest Greco-Roman building in Europe, St George’s Hall was designed by 24 years-old Harvey Lonsdale Elms. Elms didn’t live to see his masterpiece completed. His friend and mentor, C.R. Cockerell, was brought into finish the building. Today, St George’s Hall serves as a home for music festivals and the Assize Courts. The grandeur of St George’s Hall rewards the visitor arriving from Lime Street Station with a remarkable first impression of the city.

Liverpool retains a large part of its Georgian heritage. Although a considerable amount has been lost this century, the city has more Georgian buildings than Bath. Many of those remaining have been sensitively restored. This can be seen in the Rodney Street area, created by wealthy merchants at the end of the 18th century. The extensive network of streets and squares between the city’s two cathedrals is home to both the University of Liverpool and the John Moore’s University. This area still captures the elegance of an earlier era.

**The Arts in Liverpool**

If the Arts is your passion, there are three important buildings side by side on William Brown Street: The Walker Art Gallery, acknowledged as housing one of the best collections of European art outside London; William Brown Library; Liverpool

Classical music lovers will find the home o the renowned Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra at the Philharmonic Hall, Hope Street.

Along the street is the much-loved theatre repertory company, the Everyman Theatre. On the subject of theatres, sample a little theatre history by visiting the Playhouse (Williamson Square), Britain’s longest established repertory theatre. Three other theatres in the city are well worth a visit: The Royal Court (Roe Street), The Neptune (Hanover Street) and The Empire (Lime Street).

Wildlife, Walks & Parks in Wirral

Tere are hundreds of acres of woodland and heath to be explored in Wirral. Why not start visiting Bidston Hill, Heswall Dales Local Nature Reserve, and Wirral Country Park (which includes the 12 mile footpath known as the Wirral Way starting at West Kirby)?

For something slightly different, try Hilbre Island Local Nature Reserve off West Kirby. Access to the Island is restricted by tides, which cut it off from the shore twice a day. Hilbre provides an ideal spot to see a wealth o wading and migratory birds, as well as famous dinosaur footprint.

There are some outstanding walks around the coastline of the peninsula. The North Wirral Coastal Park stretches over 4 miles along the coast with the Irish Sea. You can also fill your lungs with sea air on the various beaches in Wirral.

Of particular interest is the Red Rocks at Hoylake, one of the finest beaches in the area. Or stroll along the pleasant beachside promenades at New Brighton and West Kirby, where there is also the sunning Marine Lake (left).

For more formal facilities, visit Birkenhead Park, the first municipal park in the world and the forerunner and model for Central Park in New York City.

Or spend some time at Ness Botanic Gardens, the Internationally renowned Botanic Garden with extensive displays of seasonal flowers, shrubs and trees, including Rhododendrons and Azaleas. Wonderful Rock, Terrace, Rose and Water gardens.