We start the walk from one of Liverpool’s most famous landmarks, the Anglican Cathedral on St James Mount. This monumental building is visible for miles around from both Liverpool and across the Mersey from the Wirral. This is a circular walk which takes us through the elegant Georgian cultural quarter of Liverpool, through the University area down to the civic quarter and to the world heritage waterfront. If you are in need of retail therapy, the walk also skirts the new Liverpool ONE shopping complex. We end the walk at Rodney Street, just opposite the Anglican Cathedral.

Anglican Cathedral, St James Mount

Before entering be sure to see ‘The Risen Christ’ sculpture above the main, West door. This was the sculptor Dame Elizabeth Frink’s last religious commission which was unveiled on Easter Sunday 1993, a week before her death.

The Lady Chapel is famous for its two stained glass windows picturing Noble Women, including notable women associated with Liverpool. The Chapel, which was the first part of the Cathedral to be consecrated in 1910, is hidden away at the far corner of the building. The Noble Women windows are positioned at the back of the Chapel near to the stairs. These windows were restored after World War Two due to damage but the original designs were reproduced.

Portraits include (among others) Queen Victoria, the poets Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti, the Quaker and prison reformer Elizabeth Fry, missionary Louisa Stewart, and two heroines of the sea who had captured the public’s imagination at the time. These are Grace Darling, the daughter of the Bamburgh Lighthouse Keeper in Northumberland, who with her father had rescued nine survivors of a wrecked steamer; and Mary Rogers (née Foxwell), a stewardess who, as her ship sank close to Guernsey in 1899, refused to enter a lifeboat and died saving the lives of the women and children in her care. Also pictured is Catherine Gladstone (d. 1900) who was a philanthropist and political figure independently of her husband, the Prime Minister William Gladstone. In 1887 Catherine became the first president of the Women’s Liberal Federation; like her husband she was also involved in ‘rescuing’ prostitutes and sometimes attempted to restore their ‘self respect’ by entertaining them to tea at 10 Downing Street.

Other ‘Noble Women’ are heroines of Liverpool. Kitty Wilkinson saved many lives during Liverpool’s cholera epidemic of 1832 by using her kitchen as a public wash house. Kitty’s house had the only boiler on the street and, on advice from a physician, she began using it to wash and disinfect neighbours’ bedding and clothes using chloride of lime. The need for public baths quickly became apparent—most poorer homes had no running water—and, eventually, the first public wash house was established in Upper Frederick Street in 1842 with Kitty and her husband as superintendents. Here poor residents could come to bathe or wash clothing at a nominal cost. In addition to this work connected with public health, Kitty also attended the sick and founded a school in Liverpool for orphan children.
The stories of the other of Liverpool's 'Noble women' will unfold during our walk. Josephine Butler, pictured with lilies as representative of 'all brave champions of purity', was a social reformer and tireless campaigner for poor women's rights. Agnes Jones was inspired to become a nurse by Florence Nightingale and was sustained by her Christian faith as she nursed the poorest of the poor at Liverpool workhouse. Anne Jemima Clough was born in Liverpool in 1820; she pioneered the University extension movement (which provided lectures for women who were denied access to universities because of their sex) and used Liverpool as the base for her first pilot project.

In January 1914, towards the end of the militant suffrage campaign, Liverpool suffragettes targeted the Lady Chapel and attempted to disrupt evensong services by shouting and unfurling banners. In 1928 the evangelist and campaigner for women's ordination Beatrice Hankey preached a late-evening Sunday service here. For a woman to do this was controversial, but she was supported by the cathedral canon, Charles Raven, a sympathiser with the cause of women's rights.

Artist Sarah Biffin and Kitty Wilkinson are buried in St James' Cemetery here. The Anglican Cathedral has a quiet café with a lovely atmosphere, ideal for refreshment prior to commencing the walk.

### Canning Street

The artist and theosophist Isabelle de Steiger (née Lace) was born at 2 Canning Street in 1836. She trained at the Slade School and enjoyed a career as a professional artist. Between 1879 and 1926 she exhibited on twenty-nine occasions at the Walker Art Gallery. Her best known work is Cleopatra after the Battle of Actium. It was relatively unusual for a woman to have success painting classical historical and mythological themes, especially in oils. These were serious male preserves for which women were not deemed to have the required moral gravitas. It was thought more appropriate for women to concern themselves with floral subjects, pastels and illustrative work, and de Steiger accepted these commissions too. In the 1880s de Steiger became involved in spiritualism and joined Madame Blavatsky's esoteric, occult Theosophical Society—a movement that attracted many strong women, possibly because it held out the promise of a new, magical understanding of the world with a more equal sexual hierarchy. Number 2 Canning Street is an elegant building that has fallen on hard times; inside is a beautiful spiral staircase which must have been wonderfully imposing in de Steiger’s day.

### Huskisson Street

Lucy Cradock, the first woman doctor to practise in Liverpool, established and ran a surgery at 52 Huskisson Street.

### Catharine Street

Lucy Cradock lived near to her surgery here at 29 Catharine Street.

### Myrtle Street

The writer Jessie Vaizey (née Bell) was born at number 47 Myrtle Street South in 1856. Her home has gone now alas, but it would have been (approximately) where the Liverpool University Management School car park now stands. Her most popular stories were written for girls and Liverpool provided the setting for some of them. Her most successful books were about her heroine Pixie O’Shaughnessy, published under the name Mrs George De Horne Vaizey. From 1862 Myrtle Street was the location of a new Lying-In (Maternity) hospital.

### Abercromby Square/Bedford Street South

Walk through to Abercromby Square and at the end of the Georgian Terrace look right up Bedford Street South to the University of Liverpool’s Eleanor Rathbone Building which commemorates the key role that she played in establishing the School of Social Science at the University.

### Brownlow Hill

Continue on through the university campus until you get to Brownlow Hill. You cannot fail to notice Liverpool University’s Victoria Building on the corner with Ashton Street. Opened in 1892, this was designed by Alfred Waterhouse and is the origin of the term ‘red-brick university’. University College Liverpool had been founded in 1881 and formed part of the federal Victoria University with Manchester and Leeds. It received its charter in 1903 and became the University of Liverpool open to men and women alike (although the first woman medical students were allowed in 1905). In 1927 Liverpool began a pioneering Health Visitors Course which opened up valuable employment opportunities for women. Many women of note are associated with the University of Liverpool Victoria Women’s Settlement which was based at 322 Netherfield Road (too far to walk). The University Settlement movement began in the mid 1880s. The idea was for university women (men had their own
settlements) to live among the poor and working classes in order to help them and lead by example. The settlements proved attractive to independent young women who desired a more public life than that of a wife and mother. A notable member of the Victoria Settlement was **Eleanor Rathbone**, who began social work at the Settlement in 1903. Rathbone, one of the great women of Liverpool, was a philanthropist, secretary of the Liverpool Suffrage Society, and a central figure in local Liverpool politics. She was elected as an independent MP in 1929 and is best known for her campaigns on women’s issues, especially family allowances. (See the book review of the Rathbone biography in this issue).

Eleanor Rathbone met her life-long friend **Elizabeth Macadam** at the Victoria Settlement where Macadam was Warden 1901-1910. At this time the Settlement ran dispensaries, clinics, clubs and classes for disabled children. Macadam pioneered procedures here and launched a training programme for social workers; in 1910 Macadam became Liverpool University’s first lecturer on the methods and practice of social work. The suffragist and preacher **Maud Royden**, who was born at Mossley Hill near Liverpool, spent eighteen months at the Victoria Settlement. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden, who was born at Mossley Hill near Liverpool, spent eighteen months at the Victoria Settlement. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped found the Church League for disabled children. Royden was motivated by a profound religious faith, a faith that informed her suffrage views. In 1909 she helped find  

Metropolitan Cathedral
(Brownlow Hill Workhouse)

The site now occupied by the Roman Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral was until 1931 the location of the Brownlow Hill workhouse, the largest institution of its kind in England. This housed many women and children; on September 7 1862 a fire destroyed one of the dormitories and twenty one children and two women died.

The Brownlow Hill workhouse was where **Josephine Butler** commenced her work amongst the poor of Liverpool. Butler had moved to the City in 1864, shortly after the death of her daughter Eva. This tragedy had left her in despair and keen to ‘meet people more unhappy’ than herself. She found such people in the prostitutes at Brownlow Hill workhouse; she sat with these women in the segregated oakum shed, where they were tasked with unravelling rope—a tedious and often painful business. Butler went on to nurse these women in her own home and to open a small envelope factory to provide homeless girls with work. Butler was also central to the movement to reform the law which resulted in the Married Women’s Property Act of 1882 and in initiatives to provide higher education for women.

However **Josephine Butler** is most remembered for leading the Ladies’ National Association in its campaign against the Contagious Disease Acts, the misguided legislation which had been introduced in 1864, 1866 and 1869 to curb the spread of venereal disease amongst soldiers and sailors in eighteen garrison towns and ports (although not Liverpool). Butler interpreted these Acts as the ‘most flagrant of injustices against women’ and as a legal embodiment of the sexual double-standard (men were not inspected for disease). The Acts allowed for any woman suspected by a plain-clothed policeman of being a prostitute to be picked up and subjected to an internal examination—rape by speculum—or be sent before a magistrate to prove her virtue. If found to be infected she would be imprisoned in a lock hospital for around three-nine months. Butler exhibited great bravery in taking up this cause and speaking out in public, and one MP called her ‘worse than a common prostitute’. After almost twenty years of campaigning the Contagious Diseases Acts were suspended in 1883 and repealed in 1886.

The Brownlow Hill workhouse was also where another of Liverpool Lady Chapel’s Noble Women’ helped the City’s sick and poor. **Agnes Jones** came to Liverpool in 1865, accompanied by twelve Nightingale-trained nurses, to become lady superintendent of the workhouse infirmary. Liverpool pioneered the use of trained nurses—and Brownlow was the first workhouse to have its own training school for nurses—through this experiment which was led by Jones and funded by local philanthropist William Rathbone. Agnes Jones was intensely religious and hardworking; she...
looked after up to 1500 patients at any one time assisted by eighteen trainees and around fifty female inmates who received a small salary. Worn out, she died of typhus fever at the workhouse infirmary in February 1868.

Again, the Cathedral has a nice coffee bar if you need to take a rest.

11 Mount Pleasant

The Liverpool Medical Institute at 114 Mount Pleasant is one of the oldest medical societies in the world. The only woman doctor associated with it in the nineteenth century is Lucy Cradock, Liverpool’s earliest female physician. In October 1888 the council of the LMI debated whether to allow Cradock—a woman—membership. Cradock had written a humble letter, acknowledging possible objections to her attending meetings and reassuring that she would only attend if papers of great interest were to be presented, and that she was ready ‘to take a hint’ and leave if her presence hindered discussion. Cradock was elected, despite some opposition, although she was kept to the periphery at the beginning at least.

Alongside her private practice based in Huskisson Street, Cradock served as Medical Officer to the Female Staff of the Liverpool Post Office, became House Physician to the Women’s Hospital in Shaw Street, served on the Dispensary Board of the Victoria Settlement, was a medical attendant to the School of the Blind, and medical officer to the women students of the University Training School. She remained in Liverpool until her death in 1903, at the age of fifty-three.

By 1916 the LMI had seven women members; in 1926 Dr Frances Ivens, who had run a Medical Unit during the First World War, was elected vice-president, and in 1957 Dr Margaret Thomas (Later Lady Woolton) became the first woman president.

12 Renshaw Street

The Jubilee Congress of District Nursing was held at the Methodist Central Hall in Renshaw Street in 1901. District Nursing is closely associated with Liverpool. The hall is now an alternative shopping complex.

13 Lime Street

Lime Street was infamous in the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century as the place where ‘ladies of the night’ plied their trade. These, famously, included Maggie May. A nineteenth-century Liverpool sea shanty was written about Maggie who had ‘robbed so many a sailor, and skinned so many a whaler’ but who had ‘a figure so divine, like a frigate of the line’. The lyrics to Maggie May became well-known when the song was recorded by various groups including the Beatles:

Now gather round you sailor boys, and listen to my plea
And when you’ve heard my tale you’ll pity me
For I was a real damned fool in the port of Liverpool
The first time that I came home from sea
I was paid off at the Home, from a voyage to Sierra Leone
Two pounds ten and sixpence was my pay
When I drew the tin I grinned, but I very soon got skinned
By a girl by the name of Maggie May

Poverty was chronic in Liverpool in the final decades of the nineteenth century, exacerbated by the traditions of casual labour in the docks and the arrival of many Irish families fleeing the famine. Employment opportunities for women were even scarcer than those for men and they were often forced to work the streets out of economic necessity. The Liverpool slums were notorious and many of the women featured in this walk were motivated in their philanthropic work by dismay at the distress suffered by local women and children.

14 Clayton Square

Property developer Sarah Clayton (d. 1779) used an inherited lease on a piece of Liverpool land to lay out Clayton Square, and probably nearby streets too (she had developed an early interest in architecture). She moved into a large house on her square in 1767, although all the properties were not completed until nearly twenty years later. Sadly, the grand houses were demolished at the end of the 1980s to make way for the retail park. There is a well-known portrait by Joseph Wright of Derby, painted around 1769, which pictures Sarah Clayton sitting with a plan of Clayton Square.

15 William Brown Street

The Wellington Column was a favourite location for open-air suffrage meetings held by the Liverpool Women’s Social and Political Union (Mrs Pankhurst’s militant suffragettes). In early 1909 the WSPU held two major parades through the City centre.

16 Walker Art Gallery

The Walker Art Gallery on William Brown Street, which opened in 1877, was Britain’s first publicly-owned art gallery. What’s more, the first work bought for the gallery with public funds was Sophie Anderson’s Elaine (1870). The Walker was ahead of its time in its support of women artists and held exhibitions organised by The Society of Female Artists which had been established in London in 1835. In 1893 the painter Henrietta Rae became the first woman to sit on...
the Hanging Committee of the Liverpool Autumn Exhibition, an annual event held at the Walker and at which women were not infrequent exhibitors. Rae’s painting Ophelia had been purchased by the Liverpool Corporation in 1890 and is still owned by the Walker.

The Walker Gallery’s permanent collection includes works by Lavinia Fontana (d. 1614), Elizabeth Vigee-Lebrun (d. 1842), Emma Sandys (d. 1877), Sophie Anderson (d. 1903) and Louisa Starr (d. 1909). These and other artists are featured in the Walker’s The Rise of Women Artists exhibition to be held 23 October 2009 to 14 March 2010.

17 St George’s Hall

In 1875 Fanny Calder established the pioneering Liverpool School of Cookery and began running classes for adults at St George’s Hall. Calder’s aim was to improve the conditions of the poor; her staff gave demonstrations and instructions and the scheme was soon extended to girls in schools. The Liverpool School remained at the forefront of the movement for domestic science when Calder set up the Northern Union of Training Schools of Cookery in 1876, and the national Association of Teachers of Domestic Science in 1897. In 1892 Florence Nightingale wrote to her ‘Good speed to your great work—Saint of the Laundry, Cooking and Health’.

Mary Bamber, trade unionist, suffragist and worker with the poor—and mother of Bessie Braddock (see 18)—used to run, with other women, a soup kitchen for the Liverpool poor during the economic depression of winter 1906-7 from St George’s Plateau. She organised women workers and frequently spoke at outdoor meetings here and close by at the Wellington Column. Bamber was once arrested during an occupation in protest at unemployment staged at the Walker Art Gallery in 1921.

St George’s Plateau was also used by Liverpool’s women suffrage campaigners as a favourite place of public debate.

18 Castle Street (Liverpool Town Hall)

Bessie Braddock or ‘Battling Bessie’ as she was known locally, must be one of the most colourful characters to ever serve on Liverpool City Council. Bessie, a staunch socialist, was elected in 1930 and while in office she never tired of fighting for Liverpool’s poor. She argued against the inequities of the casual dock labour system and against sweatshops; she once took a large megaphone into the council chamber to force action over Liverpool slums. On another occasion she was escorted from the chamber for taking the mace from the dais during a heated meeting. In the post-war 1945 election Bessie was elected to Parliament as the first woman to hold a Liverpool seat—Liverpool Exchange—which she held for twenty four years. She was also the first woman to be given the honourary Freedom of Liverpool. Bessie—who was larger than life in size and personality—remembered that her mother, the redoubtable Liverpool trade unionist and suffragist Mary Bamber, used to take her as a young child to the dock meetings at which she spoke. It was announced in 2008 that there is planned a statue in memory of Bessie to be placed at Liverpool Lime Street Station.

In 1909 Eleanor Rathbone was the first woman to be elected to Liverpool City Council. Liverpool Town Hall is a grand building with opulent decorations and a splendid council chamber. On the roof of the Hall is a statue of Minerva, the Roman Goddess of Wisdom. The Hall is open to the public at various times with guided tours (see www.civicchalls.liverpool.gov.uk)
Sex), was born in Liverpool, although she moved to Dublin as a child.

The ‘Ferry Cross the Mersey’ operates from George’s Landing Stage. Take the Seacombe Ferry to the Wirral on a weekend and you will hear the story of Mother Redcap, who served as banker to smugglers and pirates (and often fleeced them!). Her cottage was at Egremont, near the Seacombe Ferry Terminal.

22 Duke Street

The miniature painter Sarah Biffin (sometimes Beffin) ran her own independent studios at 44, and then 8, Duke Street. (Number 44 still exists, but the numbering changes with the hairdressers next door to it now number 16; number 8 would have been where Duke Street meets the new Liverpool ONE shopping complex, near to John Lewis.) Biffin was born into humble beginnings in Somerset in 1784. She suffered from a severe medical condition which resulted in greatly-shortened arms and legs and an adult height of just thirty-seven inches. Biffin painted using her mouth and, despite this, became a well-known artist commissioned by royalty. Her 1833 full-size portrait in oils of Fanny Maria Cox (1833) is owned by the Walker Art Gallery. Her works are referred to by Dickens in his novels (including Nicholas Nickleby, Little Dorrit and The Old Curiosity Shop) and exhibitions of hers were held in Liverpool, including at The Mechanic’s Institute (now The Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts) in 1844.

Walking along Duke Street you will pass the building that was Liverpool’s first public lending library, opened in October 1852 at number 105. Women were enthusiastic users of this, which was the second public library to be opened in the country.

The prolific poet Felicia Hemans was born in 1793 at 118 Duke Street (the building is there but boarded up for refurbishment at time of going to press.) She was a celebrity in her time and received many prizes and poetry commissions. Hemans’ work was praised by John Taylor Coleridge and it was said that Byron carried her poems around with him; she is generally recognised as the most significant woman poet of the Romantic period, although male contemporaries such as Byron and Wordsworth are better remembered. It was Hemans who wrote the poem Casabianca (1826) which contains the well-known opening lines:

‘The Rock of Cader Idris’ by Felicia Hemans (from Welsh Melodies 1821)

I lay on that rock where the storms have their dwelling,
   The birthplace of phantoms, the home of the cloud;
   Around it for ever deep music is swelling,
   The voice of the mountain-wind, solemn and loud.
   ‘Twas a midnight of shadows all fitfully streaming,
   Of wild waves and breezes, that mingled their moan;
   Of dim shrouded stars, as from gulfs faintly gleaming;
   And I met the dread gloom of its grandeur alone,
   I lay there in silence—a spirit came o’er me;
   Man’s tongue hath no language to speak what I saw:
   Things glorious, unearthly, pass’d floating before me,
   And my heart almost fainted with rapture and awe.
   I view’d the dread beings around us that hover,
   Though veild by the mists of mortality’s breath;
   And I call’d upon darkness the vision to cover,
   For a strife was within me of madness and death.
   I saw them—the powers of the wind and

24 Colquitt Street

The old Liverpool Royal Institution building was the meeting place in the 1880s of the Liverpool Astronomical Society. Attending these meetings was astronomer Elizabeth Brown who was director of the Solar Section of the LAS 1883-1890. Brown made notable research contributions in her field and made expeditions to view solar eclipses to Russia in 1887 and the West Indies in 1889. In 1889 she was instrumental in the creation of the British Astronomical Association, an organisation which was an alternative to the exclusive Royal Astronomical Society which refused to
accept women as fellows until 1915.

The Liverpool Royal Institution building also has a place in women’s history as the venue for the Extension Lectures for Women organised by Josephine Butler and Anne Jemima Clough under the auspices of the North of England Council for the Promotion of Higher Education for Women. This organisation, which represents an important first step in the campaign to open up the universities to women, organised lectures by sympathetic male dons for female audiences on various subjects in the arts and sciences. Butler and Clough were founder members and used Liverpool as their first base for lectures. In 1871 Anne Clough went on to become Mistress of the residential house in Cambridge which became Newnham College for Women, the second college for women at Cambridge (Girton was established in 1869).

### 25 Berry Street

Number 28 Berry Street was the location of the Women’s Social and Political Union ‘Votes for Women’ or suffragette shop until 1911. These shops sold a variety of suffrage inspired merchandise, for example badges, hatpins, buckles and ties in the WSPU colours of green, white and purple. The Liverpool shop was run by Ada Flatman who had been inspired to become a suffragette after hearing Christobel Pankhurst speak in London. Flatman participated in many suffrage events, including the 1908 rush on Parliament to petition Asquith. Number 28 is on the corner with Seel Street and is now a betting shop!

### 26 Leece Street

On Leece Street you will pass the bombed out church of St Luke’s which is left as a wartime memorial. It is said to be haunted by the ghost of an old woman.

### 27 Rodney Street

Helen Jane Gladstone was born at 62 Rodney Street in 1814, the sister of William Gladstone the future prime minister. She led a troubled life, suffering from an eating disorder from the age of fourteen and becoming an invalid. In the summer of 1842 she converted to Roman Catholicism, to the dismay of her brother and the rest of the family, but to the fascination of the general public. Soon after, while living abroad, she became addicted to opium; she eventually settled in Cologne where she died in 1880.

The first meeting of The Liverpool Association of Medical Women was held at 45a Rodney Street in 1909, chaired by Liverpool physician Frances Ivens. Pioneer of women’s education Anne Jemima Clough lived for a time at 9 and 74 Rodney Street.

### Parliament Street

Finally, a little to the south of the cathedral was the now demolished Parliament Terrace. On November 16 1883 a meeting took place here to set up an International Council of Women. Leading figures of the American suffrage movement Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B Anthony were present.

Claire Jones, with thanks to Linda Friday, Christine Roberts, Pat Starkey, Ed Casson (Walker Art Gallery) and Paul Webster (Liverpool Record Office)

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**MisSpeak**

… the very desire for a vote on the part of a woman is an open confession of weakness, - a proof that she has lost ground, and is not sure of herself. For if she is real Woman, - if she has the natural heritage of her sex, which is the mystic power to persuade, enthral and subjugate man, she has no need to come down from her throne and mingle in any of his political frays, inasmuch as she is already the very head and front of Government.


Marie Corelli (Mary Mackay) was a popular and prolific romantic novelist, her books were said to be Queen Victoria’s favourite reading. The quote above is from a pamphlet she wrote on the question of women and the vote. Although Corelli was opposed passionately to women’s suffrage—she believed that to vote was unwomanly and may desex women—in other ways she could be called a feminist. For example, she believed in women’s intellectual equality with men and supported women’s strivings for economic independence.