



Series II – Programme VIII

Lost Treasures

Avoid disappointment – check with your chosen destination before leaving.

Mysteries - every town, village and city has a secret history. Forgotten facts, amazing people and dramatic events - lost treasures inches below the surface.



He's back, and on the trail of more lost treasures

Britain is literally a treasure chest just waiting to be opened, and in the North West especially we've only just scratched the surface of what lies beneath. Welcome to Programme Eight.

In this new series Mark Olly and his team go in search of some of these lost treasures and show how you can get involved to solve some of the biggest mysteries in history. This is "adventure archaeology" and you don't have to be an expert to get stuck in.

Wherever you live there are legends and myths lurking in the background; fantastic stories of giants and monsters, fairy tales, tall stories, sometimes with an amazing grain of truth – but how do you tell fact from fiction?



This week Mark and the Lost Treasures team visited **Liverpool**.

Liverpool is one of the great cities of the world and Mark was eager to get down to some serious research in this historical place. The city owes so much to its great river - the **Mersey** - and it is still, as Mark found, the most exciting way to enter the city.

In days gone by, millions were drawn to the vast cosmopolitan trading empire that prospered from the port of Liverpool, most looking for a fresh start in Britain or the exciting prospect of a new life in America. Even now, more than sixty languages are spoken in the city every day.

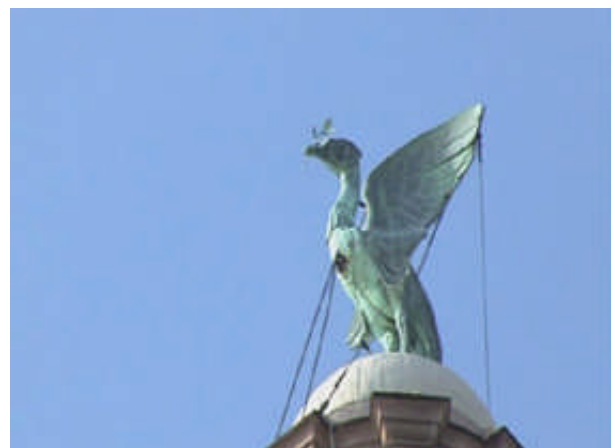


The historic city of Liverpool

Built across a ridge rising up to a height of around 230 feet above sea-level at Everton Hill, the city's urban area covers 43 square miles.

Currently Britain's fifth largest city, it is easy to forget that Liverpool is a relative youngster on the world stage, as most of what you see in the current city is less than 200 years old. The city never fails to amaze and intrigue, and even its name is a bit of mystery, its meaning almost lost in antiquity. The best explanation is possibly a translation from the Old Welsh of "place by the pool".

Perhaps a better clue can be found on top of the first skyscraper to be built in Britain, standing over 300 feet above the city – the stunning **Royal Liver Building**. The foundation stone for this building was laid in 1908 and, after climbing 160ft up on to the roof Mark was able to get an excellent view of the famous **Liver Birds**. These magnificent sculptures are 18ft high with a 12ft wingspan. They are made of solid bronze and stand 322ft above street level.



One of the famous Liver Birds

These mythical creatures have mystified historians for years. Mark's favourite theory is that the Liver Birds are based on the cormorant, a common seabird found along the Mersey. In medieval times, the cormorant was known locally as a "lyver bird" - lyver being a type of seaweed used for its nest and which, coincidentally, the modern Liver Bird now carries in its beak.

The other main feature of this building is the clock, which is 25ft wide – even bigger than Big Ben. Today the Liver Building is one of Liverpool's great symbols and since 1908 its avian sentinels have watched over Liverpool. One looks seaward and one looks inland celebrating the source of the city's great prosperity. And they still remain the most iconic images of Liverpool today.

For more information on Liverpool, where to stay and what to do visit:

www.visitliverpool.com/

For a virtual tour of the Liver Building and other Liverpool sites visit:

www.360spin.co.uk/virtual-liverpool/liver-building-liverpool.htm

The Royal Liver building is familiar to all Liverpudlians, but what most don't know is that another massive structure stood not far from here looking out across the Mersey. Strangely enough though, Mark has to travel 40 miles across to Lancashire to see it!

On a lakeside near **Rivington** not far from Horwich, stands what is known as **Liverpool Castle**. But what is it doing here?

In medieval times Liverpool was still a tiny fishing village overlooking the Mersey, but in 1207 **King John** realized its potential and gave Liverpool its first charter and a castle was built in 1232 to defend the developing port. The castle withstood two attacks - the last coming during the English civil war, but by this time its days were numbered and the ruined castle was dismantled in 1725.



Liverpool's lost medieval castle

However, the passion of a local wealthy family, the **Livers**, ensured that the memory of the castle would still live on in some form. The Lever family were a powerful influence in Liverpool at the time and made a fortune in the manufacture of soap. Having bought a huge estate in Rivington, they discovered that Liverpool once had a castle and decided to recreate it on their own land.

They took a set of plans from the original engravings and, between 1912 –25, constructed a half size copy of Liverpool Castle. Mark observed that Lord Leverhulme built the castle next to a rocky promontory overlooking a lake, replicating how the original castle would have overlooked the River Mersey.



The Lever family's replica castle

Lord Leverhulme's replica of Liverpool castle can be found at **Leverpark**. For more information on location and visiting times visit:

www.getoutguide.co.uk/outdoors/outdoors/lever_park.htm

Most Liverpoolians would be amazed by Liverpool's 'lost' castle, but probably most don't know the origin of the word "scouse" either. Scouse is a shortened form of "lobscouse" – a type of stew brought to Liverpool by Scandinavian sailors in the 18th century. It is still known in Scandinavia as "lapskaus." Some experts go further and say that the "scouse" dialect originates from Vikings settlers who came here 1000 years ago.

Evidence of anything older than the Vikings is extremely rare in Liverpool; however, Mark discovered, a mysterious group of objects not far from the city centre...

The **Calderstones** are 4000-year-old Neolithic stones now housed inside a green house in Calderstone Park in **Allerton**. Currently the public are not allowed in to the greenhouse as there are plans to redevelop the area, but Mark was allowed to inspect these incredible stones that originally formed part of a tomb. Profusely decorated with early megalithic rock art, the stones have a series of abstract symbols including spirals, circles, arcs, cup marks and strangely ...human footprints.



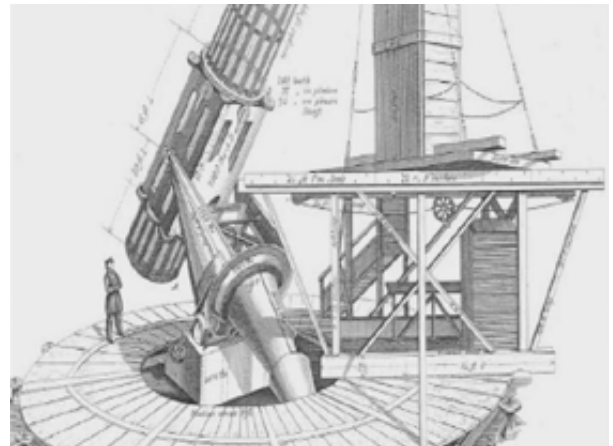
Mark wanders round the Calderstones

These tomb carvings may hold the secret to what the Neolithic mind might have been like and how they thought about death and the afterlife. Some experts believe these symbols are primitive pictures of the cosmos, but no one really knows for sure.

The Calderstones can be found in:
Calderstone Park
Calderstone Rd,
Liverpool. L18 6HS.

The park is open everyday.

By the 1840s, Liverpool was a city of immense energy and the fastest-growing port in the world driven by great entrepreneurs, men of industry, commerce and science like **William Lassell**. A successful brewer, Lassell had made a fortune producing beer for Liverpool's workers, but his real passion was astronomy. Using an incredible hand-made 20 ft long telescope - the most important scientific instrument in Europe at the time - he thought he had made a sensational discovery: a ring around the recently discovered planet of Neptune.



William Lassell's telescope

Mark went to talk to **Alan Bowden**, curator of Liverpool Museum **Earth Science**, who explained that Lassell examined Neptune intently for many nights and had a suspicion that he saw a ring around it, recording this meticulously in his notebooks. In the end, however, he began to mistrust his own observations, eventually dismissing his sightings as a fault in his telescope.

Amazingly, 150 years later, the deep space probe **Voyager 2** passed Neptune and revealed that the planet did have a ring around it. Lassell was right in the first place!

Liverpool once had many merchant palaces though sadly few survive today. One, however, does survive: **Sudley House** just south of Liverpool, which was owned by wealthy Victorian merchant **George Holt**. Now owned by the city of Liverpool, the house has just been restored and is now open to the public so that everyone can step back in time and admire the house and the wonderful paintings that Holt collected during his lifetime. Holt started collecting in the 1860s and paintings by artists such Turner, Gainsborough, and Burne-Jones can be seen today in their original Victorian setting.



George Holt – merchant and art collector

Sudley House

Mossley Hill Road

Aigburth

Liverpool

L18 8BX

Sudley house is open from 10 –5pm daily

For more information visit:

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/sudley/

Both Lassell and Holt benefited from the vast influx of workers who came to Liverpool from Ireland and Europe. In Victorian times the population rose rapidly as Liverpool attracted immigrants from right across Europe.

The thousands of migrants and sailors passing through Liverpool resulted in a religious diversity that is still apparent today, not least in the two very different and magnificent cathedrals that dominate the Liverpool skyline.

The **Anglican Cathedral** is the biggest in Britain and the last to be built in the medieval tradition. It is a spectacular building, which miraculously survived the bombing raids of WWII. Mark visited the cathedral and found where the foundation stone was laid in the Lady Chapel.

Building began in 1904, but the last brick wasn't laid until 1978 and Mark still remembers visiting as a boy and seeing the original scaffolding round the building.



Liverpool's Anglican cathedral

Boasting the biggest church organ in the world and a tower of 331ft, this enormous building dominates the city skyline offering spectacular views over Liverpool.

Liverpool Anglican Cathedral is open daily from 8am –6pm. Admission is by voluntary donation.

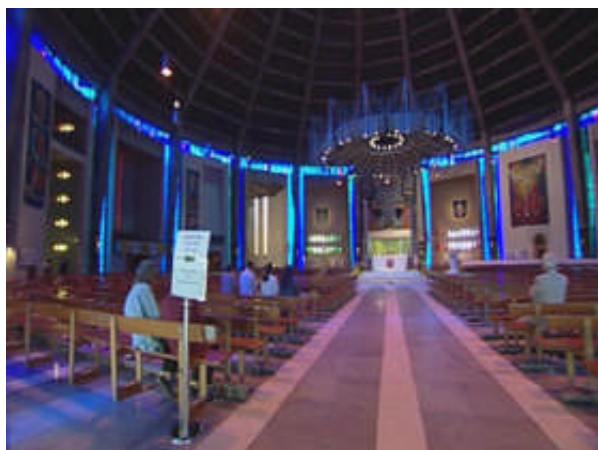
For more information visit:

www.liverpoolcathedral.org.uk/

or telephone: 0151 709 6271

Even this mighty building would have been dwarfed by another massive structure on the site of the present **Metropolitan cathedral** – the world's greatest building...which was never actually built!

Liverpool's **Metropolitan Cathedral** is a bold architectural statement and was built in just five years (from 1962-67) for only one million pounds. Its unusual circular shape was designed to create a more inclusive experience for church goers. The Pope visited the newly built cathedral in 1982 and thousands of Liverpudlians lined the streets to welcome him.



The interior of the Metropolitan cathedral

Mark's visit found him speculating that a building that was constructed in his own generation, reflects a pattern harking back to Stonehenge - perhaps the first circular temple in the country. The circle, he believes, is still in the religious consciousness today.

The Metropolitan Cathedral is, however, actually sitting on the foundations of a far grander structure intended to dwarf anything before it. In 1930, the world famous architect **Edward Luytens** was commissioned to build what would be the largest cathedral in the world; at an awesome 510ft, it would have been 60 ft higher than St. Peter's in Rome.

Although little survives of Luytens original vision, staff at the **National Conservation Centre** in Liverpool, have recently completed an astounding restoration of Luyten's architectural model.

Mark met **Chris Moseley** of the Conservation Centre who told him that, had it been built, the whole of St Paul's Cathedral would have fitted inside Luytens structure, and the statue of Liberty could have fitted into the Nave!



Luytens vision of Liverpool with his Cathedral

The cathedral would have taken over 200 years to build and, Mark believes, Liverpool would have surely owned the 8th wonder of the world.

Mark went to see the only part of this magnificent Cathedral that was ever built. Constructed in 1933, the **Crypt** is all that remains of the Cathedral-that-never-was. Despite much fundraising the project was sadly thwarted by the Second World War.

Luyten's Crypt is at Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral, but is only open for tours by prior arrangement. It is hoped to be fully accessible to the public during Liverpool's year as **European City of Culture** in 2008

Liverpool Metropolitan cathedral is also open from 8am – 6 pm and entrance is by Voluntary contribution.

For more information Visit:

www.liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk/

or telephone: 0151 709 9222

Having been underground in the crypt, Mark went on to investigate another underground lost treasure. Sixty feet below ground level, a vast network of brick-built tunnels forms the world's greatest subterranean folly; the grand vision of an eccentric Liverpoolian entrepreneur, **Joseph Williamson**.

Conceived and built in the early 19th century the tunnels became lost, forgotten and filled in following the death of Williamson.

Now a group of local enthusiasts are attempting to reclaim the tunnels, making them open and accessible for the public. **Dave Bridson** is the manager of the Williamson Heritage Centre and he told Mark that there is currently about 100 yards of tunnel open to the public, another 500 - 600 yards has already been discovered and it is thought there could be as much as 5000 - 6000 yards yet to excavate! So, exploring the length of these tunnels is proving a gargantuan task for the tunnel enthusiasts.



Williamson's tunnels beneath Liverpool

One of the trustees, **Frank Hodge**, told Mark that the most difficult job is getting rid of the 200 years of rubbish that is filling the tunnels. But surely, these tunnels are something other than a giant subterranean landfill site?

Some experts thought Joseph Williamson to be insane, but the land he created above the tunnels became valuable real estate and the ex-soldiers he recruited to build them became skilled labourers that would help shape the future of Liverpool... Perhaps there was method in his madness after all.

The tunnels extend for an amazing six miles below ground but only a tenth of this vast labyrinth has been explored so far. One of the things Mark came across was a huge pile of ash that had been created by a bakery above. When this was excavated it was found the pile went down 40ft and was estimated to be 2000 tonnes.

Who knows where these tunnels will lead or what else lies undiscovered in them?

Mark's next destination was another lost world of a bygone era that contained a mysterious graveyard of discarded machines. It was one of several secret locations, where most of the artefacts in the ownership of Liverpool's Museum services are stored; the public only get to see about ten percent of the full collection. It is an absolute mine of lost treasures, some quite spectacular.

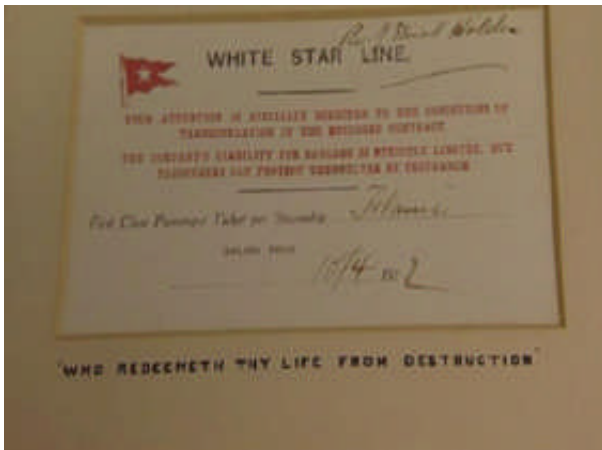
Over the years Liverpool has accumulated every imaginable artefact from vintage fire engines and steam locomotives to one of the city's most fondly remembered treasures: Liverpool's lost railway - the first overhead electric train system in Britain.



Liverpool's lost overhead railway

The last surviving motorised carriage from this overhead railway is still preserved and one of the curators, **Karen O'Rourke**, told Mark that each train had three carriages – two at either end were the third class motorised ones and, in the middle, was the first class carriage with no motor. Whatever the peculiarities of this system, it is certainly an enormous lost treasure!

Liverpool has more museums than any city outside the capital and in the **Maritime Museum** Mark discovered several rare artefacts from an ill-fated voyage that shocked the world on both sides of the Atlantic. One of these exhibits is the only surviving first class ticket from the **Titanic**, and curator **Dawn Littler** explained to Mark how it came in to their possession. It was left to the museum by the family of the Rev Stuart Holden, who was due to sail on the Titanic; however, on the night before the sailing his wife fell ill and couldn't travel and so, fortunately, Rev Holden never boarded the ill-fated vessel. To remind himself how lucky he was not to have sailed on the Titanic he framed the ticket with the biblical quotation, "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction." underneath.



The last surviving ticket for the Titanic

From a tiny medieval fishing village to a great maritime port, then a vibrant city of culture in the 21st century- after 800 years of history the great **City of Liverpool** is still going strong and firmly established as a place of international importance.

Across this series Mark and the team have explored some of Britain's finest lost treasures, seen incredible places and met wonderful people. Yet, when investigating history you really don't have to be an expert to make a difference. Lost treasures can be found in the strangest of places. So, now it's up to you...

Search harder...

Dig deeper...

Discover more...

Make history!

Get stuck in! How you can get involved with archaeology.

Portable Antiquities Scheme

Established in 1997 the **Portable Antiquities Scheme** is a countrywide community archaeology project to encourage the voluntary recording of archaeological objects found by the public in England and Wales; people who use metal-detectors, go out walking, gardening or just going about their daily work.

The objects found - if properly recorded - offer an important and irreplaceable source for understanding our past.

At its heart are the Scheme's **Finds Liaison Officers**, offer everyone a way to log all the finds for public benefit. The data recorded - itself an important educational resource – published on: www.finds.org.uk

The Council for British Archaeology

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/>

Get Involved!



Send us details of your local lost treasure:
Click the **your treasure** tab on the main www.lost-treasures.co.uk website or email the team at info@lost-treasures.co.uk



Mark Olly

Born and raised in Warrington, Mark Olly established and runs the **Celtic Warrington Project** archaeological unit (CWP), whose aim is to document all prehistoric and Dark Age remains in the Mid Mersey Valley, North Cheshire and South Lancashire. This unique historical project for the North West is revealing an unsuspected picture of the region in Dark Age times.

Mark writes on archaeology and other subjects for local and national press.

His books include the '*Celtic Warrington & Other Mysteries*' volumes, which have been based on six years of research.

His other interests are wide ranging and include, musician, artist, photographer, and archaeologist, having trained at Liverpool University. Mark also holds a Certificate of Ministry and a Diploma of Biblical Studies and is part of '*Dalraida The Norsemen*', a dark age, living history, re-enactment aspect of Celtic Warrington.

Mark joined forces with **Virtual-Knutsford** in June 2000 and his work features regularly on the site. The second of Mark's '*Celtic Warrington & Other Mysteries*' volumes, which covers Knutsford and surrounding areas, appears in regular instalments. Find out more at www.virtual-knutsford.co.uk

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Producer:	Phil Hirst
Exec Producer ITV:	Duncan Rycroft
Editor:	Matt Tidmarsh

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www.take27.co.uk/t27cgilt

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Their contact details are:

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Address: ITV Duty Office

Gas Street,

Birmingham. B1 2JT

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