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Feature Sample

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Photography: IAN BENNET

A jewel in Liverpool's crown

isn't all that long ago, that of all the British written off as a lost cause. With a declining port and mass exodus of industry and commerce, it was as though the city's very life blood was slowly draining away down the Mersey.

Now the tide has turned, and Liverpool has blossomed into one of Britain's to be a magnet for tourists.

In a far sighted partnership between city officials and the private sector, vast guard over silent docks, have been restored to their former glory. Within their cavernous walls have been created shops, showrooms, restaurants and wine bars. Offices, museums, an art gallery and luxury apartments.

The result is the re-birth of a dying city, where once again there is hustle and bustle. Out of a decaying evesore has risen a vibrant reminder of Liverpool's charismatic Victorian heritage, and somewhat ironically, a prestige business and commercial location.

Liverpool stood at the forefront of trade in the Viccities, Liverpool was being torian era, and nowhere was this more in evidence than at Albert Dock, where evocative square rigged sailing ships were constantly gliding across no less than seven acres of enclosed water.

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Officialy opened in 1846 by the then Prince Albert, amid great celebrations, Albert Dock was the centre premier locations, proving of the flourishing import/ export trade. Designed by former stonemason Jesse Hartley, the complex was a masterpiece of brilliant Vicwarehouses that once stood torian planning, forming secure warehousing of a unique fireproof construction for all manner of goods. Cotton was imported at the rate of 400,000 tons per year, whilst wool, sugar, grain and tobacco also featured highly. Coal and salt formed the basis of exports, along with garments and goods made from the cotton and wool.

And there were the emigrants too, some seeking a new life in America, while convicts were deported to Australia.

But times change and as the sailing ships gradually

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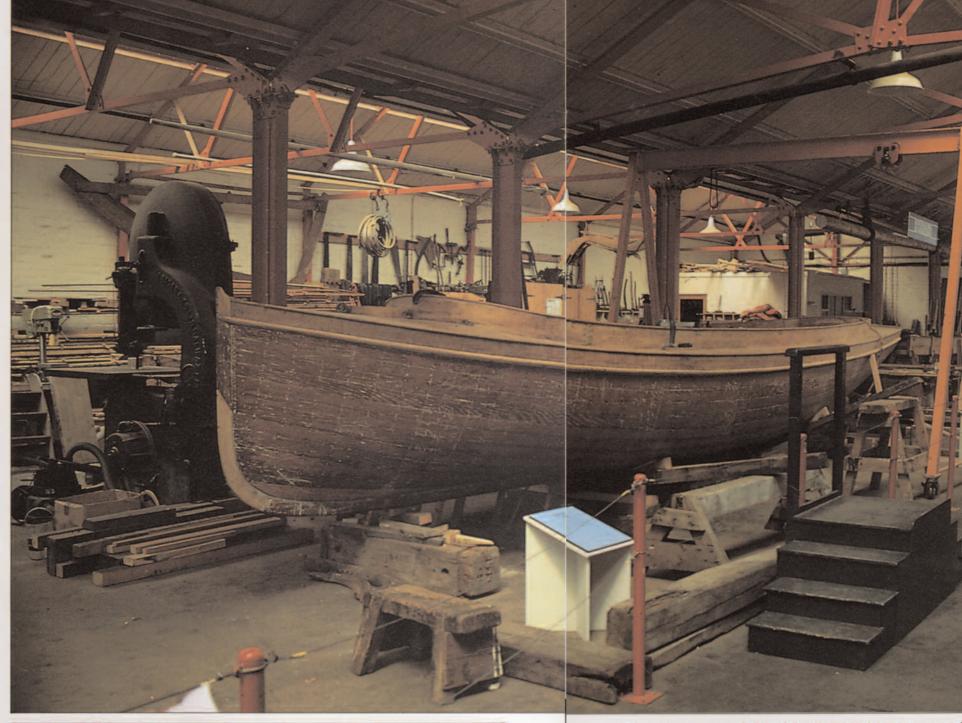
gave way to the faster and more reliable steamships, so the relatively shallow Albert Dock also fell into decline. It closed in 1972.

Against this background, a massively ambitious project to rejuvenate the waterfront area was initiated by enlightened planners. Successful to the extreme, close on three million visitors now throng the dock each year, like a colourful tide flowing through the veins of a lifeless corpse and once again bringing life

Approaching the dock today, one is indeed presented with an impressive panorama. Externally, the buildings have been painstakingly restored to their former glory, whilst inside they have been adapted to their new use with amazing skill. A whole new village of Victorian style shops and restaurants has been created so successfully, that were Prince Albert and his Queen to return, surely they would feel at home.

And so they might, for no expense has been spared, the commitment to accuracy being total.

It is the integration of modern business into virtual time warp accomodation, that has breathed life into what could have been a rather stagnant exhibit. Your first sight will be of the Granada Television News Headquarters. Originaly the Dock Traffic Office, the building is externally original. But inside, this is now





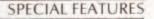
newsgathering operations to explore. for Granada, with only the most up to date, high-tech brick, and with an imposing to explore this flashback to times gone by.

Opened progressively ginning little over a decade from the former 'final' cloblocks around the dock above.

the centre of worldwide | form a natural route for you

Edward Pavilion, one of the first to be completed, is systems installed, all com- also the first you will enter puter linked to London and after leaving the news Manchester. Of rich red centre. Here you will wander through brick arches, pillared portico, it majesti- browse through the period cally guards the secrets style shops, and wander about to unfold, as you start onto the dock frontage, where steps lead down to the boat plying to and fro. Perhaps you might visit the over several years, and be- basement wine bar, quietly unaware that modern business is being carried on in sure, the five impressive the newly created offices







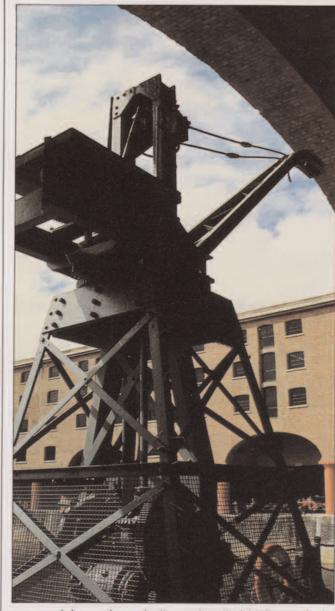


And so the illusion continues as you wander through Hartley's warehouses, now re-named as Pavilions. Edward, Atlantic, Britannia, and finally to the newly opened Tate Gallery.

A jewel in Liverpool's crown, the gallery is the result of sponsorship from major businesses, both local and national, but with a common faith in the resurgence of the region. Set to become one of the country's major tourist attractions, the Tate opened in 1988 with a full prog-



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exhibition each year.

But what is in a name?

people of course, but for most, the very word will grip you like the ebb 'museum' conjures up drab tide, the twentieth century surroundings and boredom.

Quite the opposite in fact of what you will find in the Liverpool Maritime Museum. When the first phase of the Albert Dock development opened, the museum was housed in a building of some 140,000 sq ft. and even at that early stage it was impressive. Forming the fourth side of the dock, the huge building has many surprises in store.

You will walk right out onto the dockside where cargo is stacked up, waiting for a tall masted sailing ship one of the seated passento carry it on the next stage of its journey. Move up close, walk in among the large as it was, there was

ramme of shows planned, all sacks piled high, touch the topped off with a major machinery that will lift them skyward, before slowly winching them down into Many things for many the ship's hold. For make no mistake, the atmosphere being left behind as you become immersed in Victoriana.

> You will find the same frighteningly realistic presentation employed throughout the many floors of this vast building. From basement to roof, the place is filled with imaginative displays which seem to capture the spirit and transport one back into time gone by.

Walk through a re-creation of an emigrant ship and you will not be the first to have directed a question at gers, so real do they appear. Yet good as it was, and

even more planned, so that through to the Cooperage, new Ocean Gallery. Next to tour or a dock boat trip. this you will find the boat As a tourist attraction, hall with wooden craft of all Albert Dock Village, and the ages, some in process of re- Maritime Museum of storation. You will be al- course, is an experience to lowed to wander just wher- savour. The learning process ever the fancy takes you. was never like this before. Along the quayside, in and As a business enterprise it around the cargo, alongside is just as successful with the dry docks. Take your commercial prosperity time, for there is plenty to returning to the region and see.

Liverpool Pilot Cutter 'Ed- Even a residential sector has mund Gardner', inspect been provided, with the Coleach deck level, the dining, lonades luxury executive sleeping, and working envi- apartments rising out of the rons. Soak up the atmos- dereliction of yet another of phere and leave with the Hartley's warehouses. adrenalin pumping.

to see in one visit. You still redundant buildings standhave not been through the ing rejected and forlorn, Piermaster's house. Up the have given birth to quaint staircase and through resurgence on an unprethe bedrooms. Back down cedented scale. Industry into the kitchen and living and commerce are returnrooms where once again the ing, and so are the tourists. coal fires burn, just as they Returning to a once proud did when Prince Albert was city that is proud again. here.

You have not been heritage.

now the museum has spread or to the Dock Office, seen across the adjacent Canning the floating exhibits on Can-Dock into the Pilotage Build- ning or Albert Dock, nor ing which has become the have you taken a quayside

business' clamouring for the Climb up on board the old newly created prestige sites.

Out of decline has come For sure there is too much forth the uprising. Hitherto Proud to welcome you to her

Special Announcement

