

Greasepaint and Limelight Trail Act 2

About the Greasepaint and Limelight Trail Act 2

I was very pleased to be asked by Discover Huddersfield to help to complete the work of the late Brian Haigh in the research and preparation of this Act 2 of the Greasepaint and Limelight Trail.

I was born, brought up, educated and worked in Huddersfield all my life. I am involved in local and family history research and have also actively enjoyed membership of some of the local theatre groups. Also I am old enough to remember with great pleasure the 26 cinemas and entertainment venues which existed in Huddersfield in the 1950's

Text: Ian Stevenson

Images: Huddersfield Exposed, Arthur Lloyd (Huddersfield Theatres), British Newspaper Archives, Discovering Old Huddersfield- Gordon and Edith Minter, Kirklees Images.org.uk, Ancestry.co.uk

Information

For more information about Discover Huddersfield or to learn more about the project and how to get involved, please get in touch through the following media:

www.discoverhuddersfield.uk

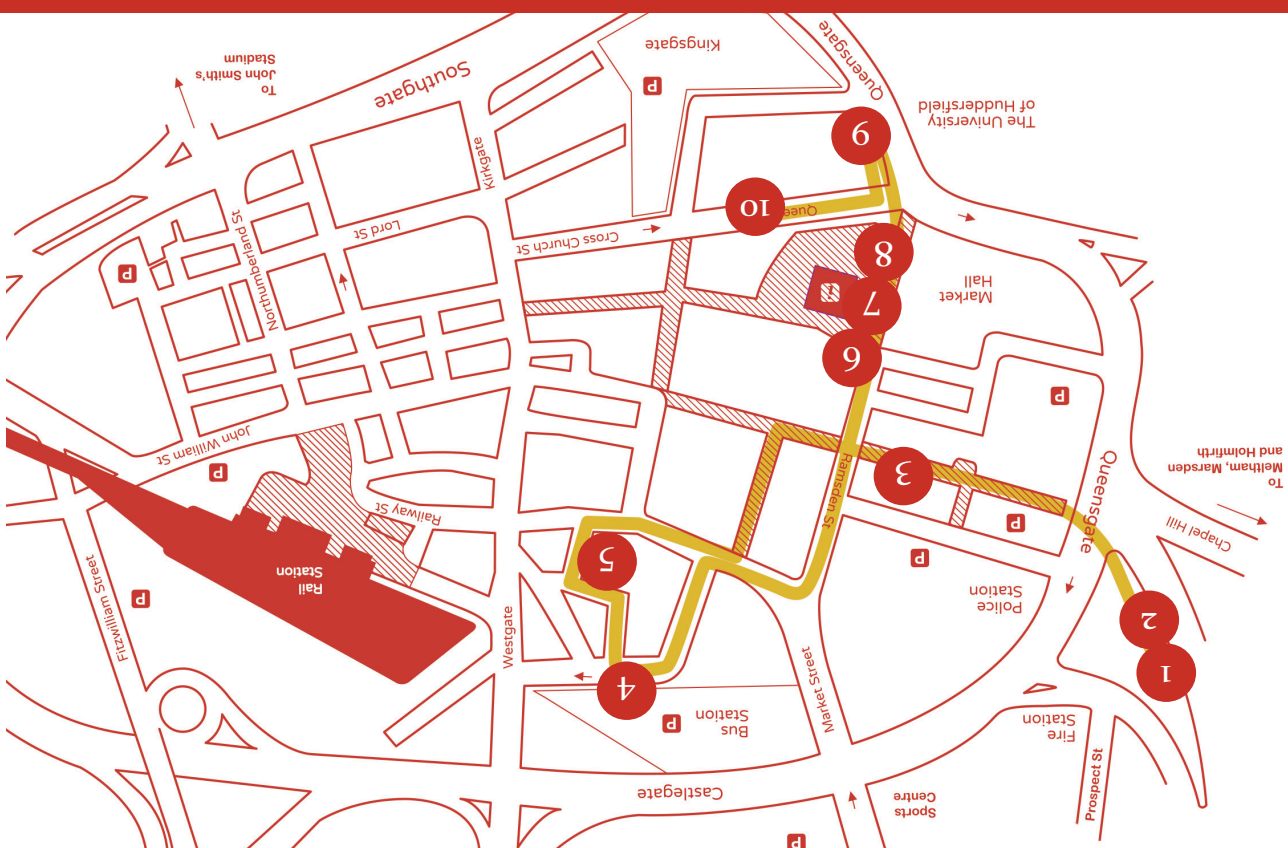
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Key:
 Pedestrian area
 Parking
 One way traffic flow



Discover Huddersfield offers new ways to experience this amazing Yorkshire town, through guided walks, talks and trails. See Huddersfield at its very best: grand listed buildings and small independent shops; a place for radicals from the Luddites to the Sex Pistols; birthplace of Rugby League; a town rich in creativity, stories, heritage and the odd ghostly encounter.



1 Argyle Music Hall

This Music Hall was at 16 Manchester Road and better known as the Greyhound Hotel. This building is listed and was built around 1850. The proprietor in 1863 was J.L. Hellawell who had moved from The Prince of Wales Music Room on King Street. In 1864 the premises were refurbished and entertainment was offered every night. In 1868 the Music Hall closed but the Greyhound remained a pub until 2014.



2 Grand Picture House

Built in 1921 as a single screen cinema it has a magnificent Grecian style front elevation with faience detailing and columns. It seated over 800 but closed as a cinema in 1957. After closure it became a bingo hall, then Sheridan Rooms, Hofbrauhaus and Ivanhoe's and finally Eros 1980-1. It closed completely in 1992 when it became part of a supermarket. The front elevation remains.

3 Picturedrome

Huddersfield's first purpose built cinema constructed for Hibberts Pictures in 1910 on Buxton Road. Following a fire in 1949 it was reopened and renamed The Curzon in 1950. Its iconic vertical sign marked the main entrance. The auditorium was located behind the Buxton Road shops and a rear entrance onto Albion Street. It closed in 1966.

4 Black Swan

This pub was on Upperhead Row and in 1858 was renamed Cambridge Arms Music Hall. It was bought in 1860 by Allen Hoyle and became notorious and was known as "the curse of the town". The licence was revoked and was then purchased by the Huddersfield Temperance Society in 1869 and converted into a pub with no beer as the 'British Workman' in 1870 until 1879 when the society developed Victoria Hall off Buxton Road. The building was demolished in 1974.



5 Ritz/ABC

Built in 1935 in the Art Deco style on the site of the old Cloth Hall it opened in 1936 with a Jessie Mathews film and a live performance by Billy Cotton's Band. The cinema seated 2000 and was originally a single screen auditorium with a Wurlitzer Manual Theatre Organ. There was also a ballroom and cafe included. It hosted a memorable Beatles concert in 1963 and had also been used by several local amateur operatic and drama societies. It closed in 1983 and was demolished in 1985 for a Sainsbury supermarket.

6 The Gymnasium Hall

Erected in 1847 for concerts and lectures it was converted in 1879 into public baths by The Huddersfield Public Baths Company Ltd. However, this was not successful and went into liquidation by 1888 and was closed. The building was purchased by Huddersfield Corporation for £2000 and following the success, at the time, of Lockwood Spa Baths was converted into Ramsden Street Public Baths. The baths closed in 1972 and were demolished a few months later for town centre development.



7 Picture House

Built as a cinema in Ramsden Street in 1912 with an ornate front elevation. It was bought at auction by The Essoldo chain together with the Tudor (see Hippodrome No 9). It closed in 1967 and demolished along with the next door Ramsden Street Baths (see Gymnasium Hall No 6) for the town centre re-development.



8 Theatre Royal

Built as a Lecture Hall for the Local Philosophical Society in 1841 the building could not easily be converted into a performance theatre and so a new theatre was built on the site in 1859. This did not last long and poor audience numbers resulted in its sudden closure only one year later. It was reopened under new management in 1861 but in 1880 was destroyed by a serious fire. Once again it was refurbished and reopened in 1881. This was the building known as The Theatre Royal, with a seating capacity of 1250. It was later run by Nita Valerie and her husband Peter Bernard until February 1961, soon after Peter died. Sadly, town centre redevelopment resulted in the demolition of the theatre from June to September 1961.



9 Hippodrome

Originally built at a cost of £2400 in 1847/8 as an indoor riding school, as is indicated by the two horses on the stone panels to front elevation. From 1848 to 1862 it was also the HQ of the 2nd West Yorkshire Yeomen Cavalry. From 1862 to 1901 it was an armoury used by The West Yorkshire Rifle Volunteers. It was converted into The Hippodrome Theatre with a capacity of 2000 in 1905 and was opened by Vesta Tilley a well known Music Hall artist of the time. It was transformed into a cinema in 1930 and has been The Cannon, Classic, Essoldo and Tudor. Currently empty.



10 Lawrence Batley Theatre

Originally built as Queen Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel by Joseph Kaye in 1819. The building is Grade 2 listed and closed for worship in 1970. Following repairs it was used as an Arts Centre, Squash Club, Dance Studio, Disco Venue up to 1984 when it was bought by Kirklees Council and with Arts Council support was converted into a theatre with seating capacity of 475 on three levels. It is run by Kirklees Theatre Trust as a registered charity and is named after Lawrence Batley (1911-2003) a local entrepreneur who had supported many local good causes during his life and after his death through his family and trust.