

# Western Approaches



## Visiting us guide

This guide details everything we think that you will need to know if you are planning to visit us. If there is anything you would like to know that has not been outlined in this guide, please get in touch.

Have fun, talk and laugh as well as reflect and please respect staff and other visitors.

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## Where to find us

### Telephone number

0151 227 2008

### Email address

info@westernapproaches.org.uk

### Address

Western Approaches HQ  
1-3 Rumford Street  
Exchange Flags  
Liverpool, Merseyside  
L2 8SZ

We are situated in the basement of Exchange Flags, just behind Liverpool Town Hall

### Opening times

**Opening Days vary by season. We are open 6 days a week November – March, 7 days a week March - October, please check the website.**

10:00am – 5:00pm. Last entry is 4:00pm.

Visitors take anywhere from 1 hour – 3 hours to explore the site. We would recommend allowing **at least** 1 hour 30 minutes for your visit.

### Parking

There is pay and display parking on Rumford Street in front of the museum (this is run by the NCP).

There are a number of other car parks nearby.

### Public Transport

There are two main train stations in close vicinity to the museum; Moorfields and Liverpool Lime Street.

The museum is also well serviced by local bus route

## Tickets

Ticket prices are as follows;

Adult: £10.50

Concession (senior citizens, students, Serving Personnel & children 5-16): £9.00

Under 5's: Free

Family (2 adults & 2 children): £30

Groups (10 or more): £9.00

Personal guides: £20 per hour

You do not need to book a ticket before your arrival. However, if you prefer to book in advance you can buy tickets from our web site.

You will be given a replica identity pass as your ticket to enter the site, which will be stamped with your visit date and allows you 1 free return visit within 6 months.

## Western Approaches Entrance



This is the entrance to Western Approaches. Unless you book a tour guide, your visit will be self-guided and there will be signs around the building to help you find your way.

## Staff

On entering, our staff will welcome you. Staff wear black and white and all have a Western Approaches badge on. Staff are there to make your visit as enjoyable as possible. Please let them know if :

- You have any problems at the Western Approaches site
- You want to know about any events happening at the Western Approaches site
- You have become separated from your group
- You have lost anything
- If there is anything you are unsure of, or if you just want to talk about stories of the Second World War.....

our friendly staff are happy to help, listen, and inform.

## Reception and gift shop



Above are pictures of the reception area and gift shop. You will enter and leave through this space.

Cash and card payments are both accepted. The currencies we accept are the pound sterling .

In the reception area is a well-stocked gift shop. In the Western Approaches shop you can browse a range of replica items, books, toys and unique mementos of your visit. We also have exclusively designed souvenirs and all profits made are put directly back into Western Approaches helping to make more of the premises accessible to visitors.

## Accessibility



Above are pictures of all the steps and staircases in the building. They are marked with a 'D' or 'U' to indicate whether they are stairs up or down when following the route. The Western Approaches site is across 2 floors with various staircases and steps in between. Due to the historic nature of the building, the only way around is via these staircases. Visitors with mobility restrictions preventing them using stairs are able to access some rooms on the upper floor though not following the intended route ( we do not charge these visitors an entry fee) .

There are seats located around the building which can be used by visitors. We also have small collapsible stools for visitors to take around if required.

Accessibility aids (wheelchairs, mobility scooters etc.) can be left at reception if possible.

## Fire alarms

There are fire alarms and activation points located throughout the building. If the fire alarm sounds please follow staff instructions and ask for assistance if needed. All staff are trained in the fire evacuation process and will be able to lead visitors to safety.

If there is a fire alarm test scheduled during your visit, you will be made aware of this on entry.

## Toilets

The toilets are located at the bottom of a ramp near the reception area. These are our only toilet facilities on site.

Our toilets do not have step access but are not wheelchair accessible. We do have baby changing facilities but unfortunately are not able to provide a “changing places” facility.

## Storage

We do not have any locker facilities on site. Downstairs can be quite cold in the winter and we would recommend taking your coat with you. If you have very large bags these can be left at reception at your own risk .

## Sounds

There are subtle sound effects throughout the building, these include;

Footsteps

Telephones ringing

Chatter

Speeches

Louder sounds come from a number of videos within the building which are detailed below.

## Videos

There are 3 rooms with video loops playing. Some of the sounds can be quite loud on these videos. The videos playing are located in;

The Johnnie Walker Room – 3 video clips. Scenes from the Battle of the Atlantic (including ships exploding), Johnnie Walker and crew returning from sea and Johnnie Walker's funeral.

The Teleprinter Room – video clips showing how teleprinter equipment works

The Canteen – A Liverpool at war documentary, showing footage of Liverpool during WW2 and accounts of memories from people who were alive during this time.

## Smells

Occasionally, due to the nature of the site the building can smell quite musty. This is nothing to be alarmed about.

## Photography

Visitors are encouraged to take as many photographs as they would like during their visit though are asked to please be aware of other visitors in the frame.

## Activities

Throughout the year we have several optional free activities for visitors to enjoy. These are detailed below, and further information can be found on these activities by checking the website, emailing or phoning reception.

### The Cipher Trail

The cipher trail is an activity pack which sets a role-play scenario where the visitor is given a code-breaking task to complete across the site. You will be given a reproduction gas mask bag filled with 'tools' and clues to help you complete the task.

This activity was designed for all ages. For younger children, the assistance of an adult may be required to complete this activity.

For visitors who have chosen not to take the cipher trail it is important to note that there are a number of clues hidden around the building near magnifying glass symbols. If you see a magnifying glass symbol or text around this, it will not make any sense without completing the cipher trail challenge. Please do not mistake this for museum interpretation, or if you are unsure of what something means please ask staff.

### The Trailblazer

The trailblazer is an activity map to be taken around the site and includes questions and challenges to complete in different rooms.

This activity was designed for younger children.

### Canteen games

We have a range of games and activities for visitors to enjoy. We have numerous books related to the Second World War, Western Approaches and Liverpool for visitors to sit down and read at their own pace. We have unique designs for children's colouring, old fashioned toys and games and multi-player family games.

### Seasonal crafts

We aim to provide a different range of activities relating to public holidays and special events, such as Christmas, Halloween, school holidays, Easter and Remembrance Day. Our social media will be updated to reflect the activities we have available.

## **School groups**

Western Approaches welcomes school groups and strongly believes in the importance of educating students about this site and the Second World War. On average, the site hosts school groups 3 times per week . Groups of approximately 30 children are led by staff on a tour of the building and are in each room for no more than 15 minutes. Visitors are welcome to explore areas at the same time as school groups and are also welcome to return to areas once the school group has moved on.

If you wish to enquire or book a school visit, please phone or email.

## **Installations and maintenance**

As this site is being continually updated there is a possibility that you may encounter staff installing new exhibitions, moving heavy goods, placing artefacts etc.

There may also be staff carrying out building and maintenance work. If this is the case, your route around the building may be redirected by our staff team.

## Into the bunker

Walking down the staircase into the bunker you will pass by a guard's desk and walk along a corridor into the first room.

## The 'Road to War'

The first room you will enter is known as the Road to War Room. The Road War to War Room holds an exhibition on the story of the road to war and why the Western Approaches site was set up in Liverpool. You can move around the displays in this room and look for extra hands-on information in cabinets, pigeon holes and stands. This room contains artefacts from the inter-war period and maps and blueprints of the Western Approaches site. There are 2 interactive aspects aside from the interpretation. Visitors are invited to make 'kites' out of Reichsmark bank notes and play the role of an architect sitting and drawing at an architects' desk.

## The Power Corridor

The power corridor connects the "Road to War" room to the radio room. This area of the building is slightly narrow though there is plenty of room for 2 people to walk side by side and stop to read the information on display. However, for larger groups it is more difficult to move around this section at the same time. On the wall there is a power board and an information panel.

## The Radio Room

This is a small room dressed to show radio equipment, maps and coordinates. There are quiet sound effects in this room.

## Memorial

This is a small room with a memorial to all those who died in the Battle of the Atlantic. The lighting in this room is low.

## The Main Operations Room

This is the biggest room at the site. Visitors can walk around and sit down at desks. The desks are laid out with paperwork and documents which can be handled, opened, and read to learn about people who worked in this building. Everything on the desks can be touched including phones, jackets and hats to dress up in. There are quiet sounds effects.

## The Cabins

Connecting to the Operations room are the RAF and Royal Navy cabins. There 3 steps up to each cabin. They both contain working typewriters which can be used by visitors. On exiting the RAF cabin, you will go up a staircase onto the next floor. To the right is a guard desk with a key cabinet with an original pin-up girl poster still on the inside.

## Bunk rooms

The bunk rooms are dressed as officers' bedrooms.

## Hortons Office

This room is laid out to replicate Admiral Max Horton's office with books, cigars and golf balls.

There is a speaking tube connected to the cabin below, so you may hear sounds from downstairs.

## Battery Corridor

The next section of the building is a connecting corridor. There is a slight ramp. Here you can read about the use of back up batteries, though this area is under development and will shortly hold an exhibition telling the story of Nan Currie the Superintendent of WRNS at Western Approaches.

In the same area is a Second World War projector once used by Winston Churchill.

## Johnnie Walker room

In this room you can watch several video clips and take a seat on the benches and chairs. Around the room you can find information about U-boats. IT also contains a small exhibition on the work of the Western Approaches Tactical Unit. Between the Johnnie Walker room and the next area there is a door which is for staff only. If needed, this door can be used to get straight back to the reception area and toilets without going back or going around the rest of the building.

## Teleprinter/Radio room

There is a staircase down to the next area. The teleprinter room shows a video on how a teleprinter machine works.

## Corridors

You will then walk along a series of corridors where you can look in small rooms, following the arrows to reach the next area.

## Dock Lane

The street scene is a recreation of a 1940's street. Visitors can go into the shops and look through the windows. There are quiet sound effects in this room. There is a hopscotch and a dressing up area. There is information

around the room on food, clothes and the black market. Visitors are welcome to use this space to play, read or just wander around.

## Canteen

There is a video playing in this room of Liverpool at war. Here visitors are invited to take a seat and help themselves to tea, coffee and biscuits at World War Two prices (2p) or any donation amount. Please note that due to the changing nature of our biscuits we cannot always be confident about what allergens maybe present in them. On the tables there are books and games for visitors to use. Please use this space for as long as you like. To continue with the tour, walk back through the street scene and out of the door. You will see signs to guide you.

Please note that this space is also used as an education room for school trips and may not be available to use if there is a school group in. If this room is unavailable, all refreshments will be moved into the Canada room.

## Canada room

This is the last room you will go into on your tour of the building. This room has displays dedicated to the involvement of Canada in the Second World War. The staircase in this room leads you back to reception.