

PLACES TO VISIT



Supplement to THE GRAPHIC, September 4, 1886



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BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF

BIRMINGHAM IN 1886

Late Victorian Birds Eye View of Birmingham. © Mary Evans Picture Library/Mapseeker Publishing

CHAMBERLAIN SQUARE AND THE CHAMBERLAIN MEMORIAL



© Birmingham City Council

Whilst the city hosts a number of memorials to Joseph Chamberlain, this is arguably the most impressive: located in what was the civic heart of Victorian Birmingham, purpose-built and highly ornate, it stands in a square likewise

dedicated in Chamberlain's honour. Designed by the Council's favoured architect, John Henry Chamberlain, it was unveiled in 1880 but received mixed reviews from artists and sculptors and led some to question the motives for its creation. Despite the demolition of many of the surrounding Victorian buildings, it remains in its original position. The monument and square are accessible to the public at any time. Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3BH

CORPORATION STREET



Courtesy P. Bounous

Started in 1878, this lengthy and ambitious project was part of Chamberlain's response to the Artisans' Dwellings Act (1875), providing councils with the power to buy up dilapidated property for the purposes of redevelopment. His intention was to clear the slums and replace them with a showcase Parisian-style boulevard lined with modern housing. However, the scheme received criticism when the resulting street was instead composed mainly of shops and offices. This was further exacerbated by the fact that the Act, and consequently the Council, made no immediate provision for the rehousing of people displaced by these improvements. Today, the street continues to be a central commercial thoroughfare and, above the level of the modern ground-floor shop frontages, the original elaborate architecture is much in evidence. Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 6QA

THE CHAMBERLAIN MEMORIAL CLOCK



Courtesy P. Bounous

Situated at the very centre of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, the ornate Chamberlain Memorial Clock was erected in 1903 in honour of his visit to South Africa as Secretary of State for the Colonies. Chamberlain's unrelenting support for local industry, his own background in screw-making, and his contribution to the abolition of jewellers' plate duties in particular, undoubtedly earned him the backing of many of the local manufacturers. The clock was restored to its former glory in the 1980s and is accessible to the public at any time. Warstone Lane, Birmingham B18 6JJ

HIGHBURY HALL



© Birmingham City Council

Named after the London suburb in which he grew up, this grand house was commissioned by Joseph Chamberlain and designed by renowned architect John Henry Chamberlain. Built in 1878, it was his residence until his death in 1914. Now owned by Birmingham City Council, it functions mainly as a

private venue for conferences and weddings. The house has been largely restored to its original period condition and contains an abundance of Chamberlain memorabilia. Highbury Hall is accessible to the public on occasional event-days. Highbury Hall, 4 Yew Tree Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8QG
Phone: + 44 (0) 121 303 2050
Website: www.birmingham.gov.uk/highbury-events

BIRMINGHAM COUNCIL HOUSE



© Birmingham City Council

Constructed during Chamberlain's mayoralty, taking five years to complete and costing over £160,000, Birmingham Council House was the political backdrop for one of the defining periods of Chamberlain's career: a time when his name became synonymous with municipal improvement and decisive

action. The building contains many original features and a wealth of historical ephemera. Today, still the administrative heart of the city, the House is not open to the public but private tours can be arranged using the contact details below. A virtual tour is also available at: www.summitvirtualtours.co.uk/portfolio_museums_Virtual_Tour.asp
Birmingham Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B3 3AA
Phone: + 44 (0) 121 303 2438
email: democratic.services@birmingham.gov.uk

KEY HILL CEMETERY



Courtesy P. Bounous

Originally called the Birmingham General Cemetery, it was established by a group of non-conformist businessmen dismayed at the restrictions placed on dissenting ministers officiating at funerals in Anglican

churches. Opened in May 1836, it is the oldest cemetery in Birmingham and is the resting place of many of Victorian Birmingham's great and good. A number of the Chamberlain family – including Joseph himself – are interred here, all in relatively modest graves. The cemetery is open daily but opening hours vary. Check before visiting at: www.birmingham.gov.uk/cemeteries or by calling 0121 554 0096. Key Hill Cemetery, Icknield Street, Birmingham B18 6PP

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM AND THE CHAMBERLAIN CLOCK TOWER



© University of Birmingham

A renowned advocate of the importance of education, Chamberlain was highly instrumental in the University's 1900 founding and held the position of Chancellor from its inception until his death. Despite being surrounded by more modern buildings, the Victorian red-brick heart of the University

still stands and is dominated by the Joseph Chamberlain Memorial Clock Tower – the tallest of its type in the world and affectionately dubbed 'Old Joe'. The grounds are accessible to the public at any reasonable time of the day and a virtual tour is available at www.virtualtour.bham.ac.uk. A self-guided heritage trail can also be downloaded at www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/culture/BookletfinalPDF.pdf. The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT
Phone: + 44 (0) 121 414 3344 Website: www.birmingham.ac.uk

BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL



© Birmingham City Council

Completed in 1834, Birmingham Town Hall was the setting for many of Joseph Chamberlain's political speeches, as well as those of his contemporaries. Completely renovated over a period of 12 years from 1996, the building now functions almost exclusively as a theatre

and concert venue. Whilst much of its external architecture has been preserved and restored, the interior has been extensively modernised – although, where possible, in keeping with the spirit of the original design. Regular guided tours are available for individuals and groups wishing to learn more.

Birmingham Town Hall, Victoria Square, Birmingham B3 3DQ
Phone: + 44 (0) 121 780 3333 Website: www.thsh.co.uk/tours

THE ELAN VALLEY



© Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water

It is ironic that perhaps the single greatest physical testament to Chamberlain's endeavours in Birmingham lies almost 100 miles away. Begun in 1892, the Elan Valley Water Supply Scheme was a masterpiece of civil

engineering and political manoeuvring that secured clean drinking water for the city. The construction of a series of dams and reservoirs in mid-Wales, taking over a decade to complete, allowed water to be transported along a 73-mile aqueduct directly to Birmingham. The dams and reservoirs remain in use and are accessible at any time. A dedicated visitors' centre, which includes a revealing exhibition of the project's history, opens daily 10am - 4.30pm.

Elan Valley Visitor Centre, Elan Valley, Rhayader, Powys LD6 5HP
Phone: + 44 (0) 1597 810 880 Website: www.elanvalley.org.uk