

[This is the foreword for the book [Liverpool Ghost Signs by Caroline and Phil Bunford.](#)]

History is all around us, not just hidden in dusty libraries and archives. The streets are alive with stories from the past, if we only take the time to stop, look and listen. Many of these stories begin with old signs speaking to us, uttering product names and slogans from years gone by. They no longer serve any practical purpose, but their story is one of survival against the elements and the efforts of property developers to erase their memory from history.

'Ghost signs' is a term that has come to describe these historical specimens that whisper suggestions of which brand of soap to buy, or where to find the best deals on tobacco. Often faded or fragmented, these signs are a common feature of towns and cities across the country. They reveal insights into our commercial past and the rise (and sometimes fall) of myriad products and businesses. Liverpool is no exception and the following pages commit some of these stories to print, ensuring their survival beyond the already extended lifespan of the ghost signs that tell them.

Sam Roberts, 2012
www.ghostsigns.co.uk

Sam Roberts has written numerous articles on historical hand-painted advertising and, in 2010, curated the History of Advertising Trust Ghostsigns Archive.