



Royal
Geographical
Society
with IBG

Albertopolis

A free self-guided walk in South Kensington



**Explore London's quarter for science,
technology, culture and the arts**

www.walktheworld.org.uk

Find Explore Walk





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Walk the World is part of Discovering Places, the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad campaign to inspire the UK to discover their local environment. Walk the World is delivered in partnership by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) with Discovering Places (The Heritage Alliance) and is principally funded by the National Lottery through the Olympic Lottery Distributor. The digital and print maps used for Walk the World are licensed to RGS-IBG from Ordnance Survey.



The
Heritage
Alliance



Albertopolis

Explore London's quarter for science, technology, culture and the arts

Welcome to Walk the World! This walk in South Kensington is one of 20 in different parts of the UK. Each walk explores how the 206 participating nations in the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games have been part of the UK's history for many centuries. Along the routes you will discover evidence of how many Olympic and Paralympic countries that have shaped our towns and cities.

Prince Albert and Sir Henry Cole had a vision: an area of London dedicated to education and culture. It became a reality 150 years ago in South Kensington, and became fondly known as 'Albertopolis' after its royal patron. Albertopolis is home to some of London's most spectacular buildings, world class museums and premier educational institutions.

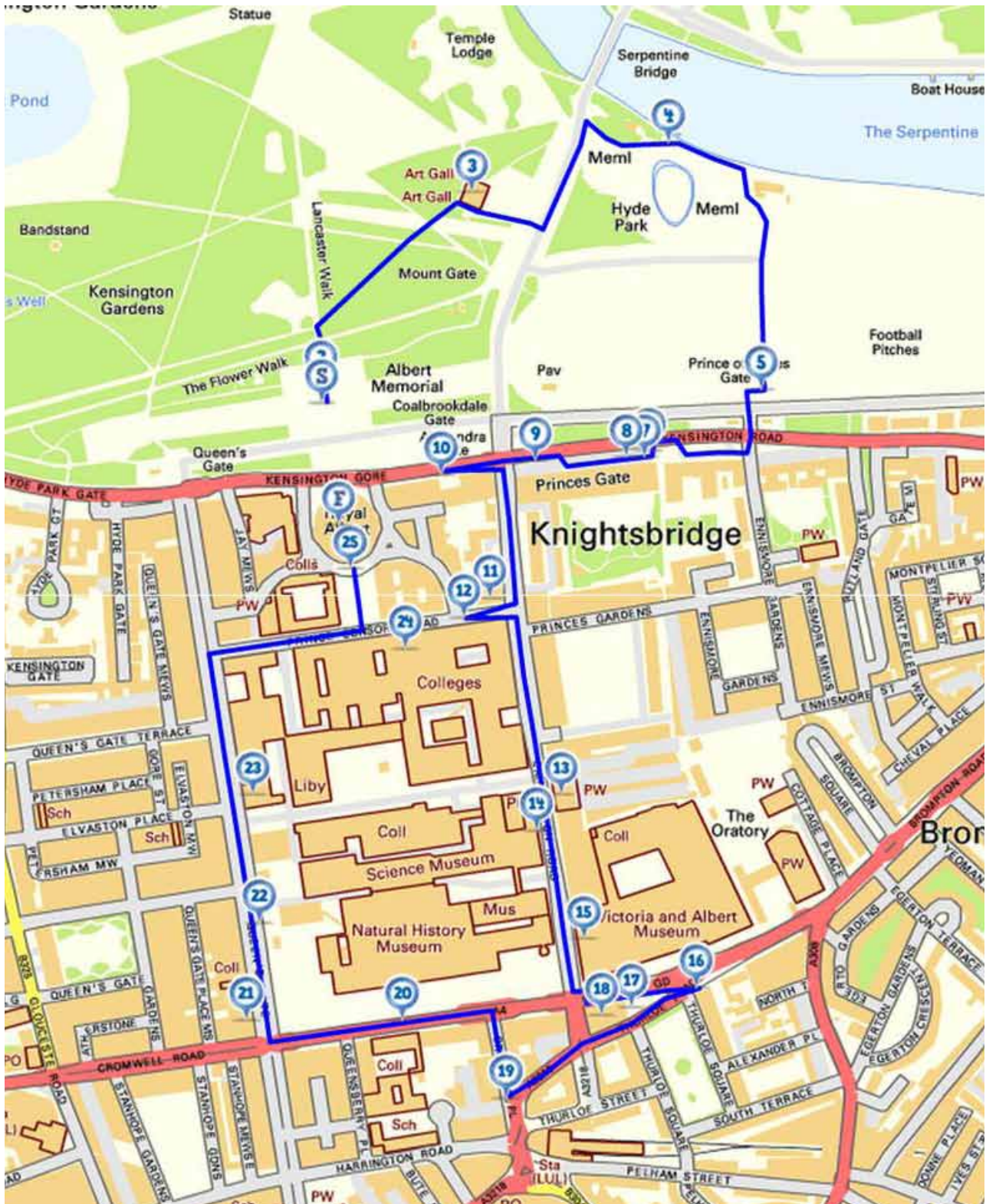
Albertopolis was designed to celebrate the achievement and grandeur of Britain and her Empire. Today, the area retains many links with the wider world and has a very international feel. It is home to dozens of embassies and cultural institutes, plus welcomes tourists and students from around the world.

Explore this cultural quarter with its magnificent buildings and great institutions. And hear some remarkable stories about diplomats and spies, musicians and artists, explorers and inventors, immigrants and refugees.



Aerial view of Albertopolis
© Andreas Praefcke via Wikimedia Commons

Route overview



Practical information

Location	South Kensington, Central London
Getting there	<p>Train - the nearest mainline stations are London Paddington and London Victoria</p> <p>Underground - nearest stations are South Kensington, High Street Kensington and Lancaster Gate</p> <p>Bus - routes 9, 10, 52, 70, 360 and 452 stop near the Royal Albert Hall and Albert Memorial</p> <p>Bicycle - several Barclays Cycle Hire docking stations in the area</p>
Start point & postcode	Albert Memorial, Kensington Gardens, SW7 2AP
Directions to the walk start	<p><i>From South Kensington station</i> - take the pedestrian tunnel inside the station concourse. At the end go up the steps and turn left onto Exhibition Road. At the end of the road turn left and use the traffic lights outside the Royal Albert Hall to cross to the Memorial.</p> <p><i>From High Street Kensington station</i> - turn right onto Kensington High Street. Find a safe place to cross over and continue on the left hand side. Pass Kensington Palace and after 5 minutes the Memorial will appear on the left.</p> <p><i>From Lancaster Gate station</i> - walk through Kensington Gardens along Lancaster Walk (a very wide pedestrianized road). Continue for around 10-15 minutes. The Memorial should be directly ahead.</p>
Finish point	Royal Albert Hall, SW7 2AP
Onward journey	To return to the museums or the park use Direction 26 at the end of the commentary
Distance	2 ½ miles
Level	Gentle - A flat route through a park and along city streets

Conditions

The whole route is on pavements or paved footpaths. Be careful of cyclists in the park and traffic when crossing busy roads. The route can be very busy at weekends and tourist seasons.

Suitable for

Families – A busy but safe area. Lots of family-friendly attractions along the route

Wheelchairs – An entirely step-free route

Refreshments

Many places to eat and drink including cafes in the park and museums.

Facilities

Free public toilets in the museums, many with baby changing facilities. There are also toilets in Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park (charges apply)

Other info

The route can be very busy especially during weekends, school holidays and tourist seasons

South Kensington underground station has steps to street level. There is no lift for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Most of the museums and attractions are free to enter (apart from special exhibitions) and open 7 days a week. Visit their individual websites for opening hours and exhibition details:

Natural History Museum - www.nhm.ac.uk

Royal Albert Hall - www.royalalberthall.com

Science Museum - www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

Serpentine Gallery - www.serpentinegallery.org

Victoria & Albert Museum - www.vam.ac.uk

Tourist information

Many of the museums and attractions have their own Visitor Information points.

The nearest Tourist Information office is at Victoria station, opposite Platform 8. Open Monday – Saturday, 7.15am to 9.15pm; Sunday and Bank Holidays, 8.15am to 7pm.

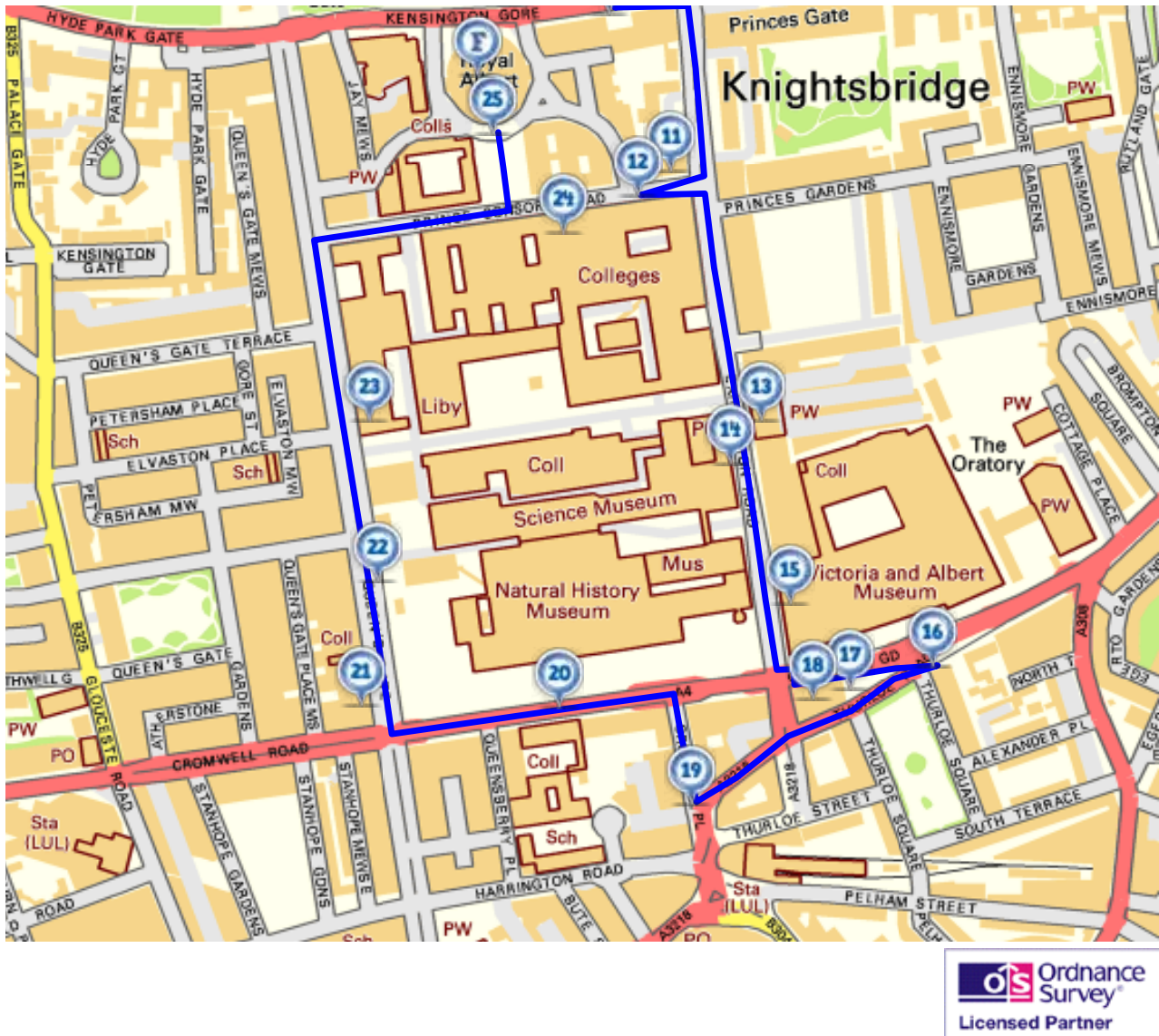
Detail of the first half of the route



Stopping points

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Albert Memorial | 6. Princes Gate |
| 2. Albert Memorial | 7. The Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate |
| 3. The Serpentine Gallery | 8. 16 Princes Gate |
| 4. The Serpentine lake, Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain and Isis sculpture | 9. Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, 20 Princes Gate |
| 5. Great Exhibition information board | 10. The Royal Geographical Society |

Detail of the second half of the route



Stopping points

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 11. Jamaican High Commission | 19. Institut Français |
| 12. Royal School of Mines | 20. The Natural History Museum |
| 13. Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints | 21. Baden-Powell House |
| 14. The Science Museum | 22. The Darwin Centre |
| 15. Henry Cole Wing, The V&A Museum | 23. 170 Queen's Gate |
| 16. Kazakhstan Embassy | 24. Prince Albert statue |
| 17. Yalta Memorial Garden | 25. Royal Albert Hall |
| 18. Ismaili Centre | F. Royal Albert Hall |

Directions

These directions are for use with the Albertopolis audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to Albertopolis

Albert Memorial, Kensington Gardens

Directions 1 - Begin the walk at the Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens. When you are ready, listen here to Track 2.

2. A man with a vision

Albert Memorial, Kensington Gardens

Directions 2 - From the Memorial, take the path in line with Albert's back. Then take the second path on the right following the sign to the Serpentine Gallery. The Serpentine Gallery is the first building that you reach. Stop outside and listen to Track 3.

3. Afternoon tea and contemporary art

The Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens

Directions 3 - From the front entrance to the gallery, turn left. Cross the road and be particularly careful as you cross the cycle tracks. On the other side of the road, turn left, past the red telephone box and the entrance to the car park. Then take the path to the right signposted for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain. Continue to the Serpentine Lake and stop by the statue of a bird to listen to Track 4.

4. Splish splash

The Serpentine, Hyde Park

Directions 4 - Walk towards the Lido Cafe Bar, the building with the clock. Turn right on the path immediately before the cafe. Follow the path and then cross the sandy horse ride. Go straight across the flat grassy area. When you reach the path at the other side, you will find an information board and a round plaque in the ground. Stop there and listen to Track 5.

5. An exhibition of all nations

Great Exhibition information board, Hyde Park

Directions 5 - Cross the horse ride then South Carriage Drive and leave the park through Princes Gate. Cross Kensington Road here at the traffic lights and turn right. Pass Kingston House North and stop at the beginning of a terrace of white houses. Listen to Track 6.

6. Upmarket housing

Princes Gate

Directions 6 - Walk along to Number 14 Prince's Gate. Stop outside and listen to Track 7.

7. Art and ambassadors

Royal College of General Practitioners

Directions 7 - Continue along the terrace to Number 16 and listen to Track 8.

8. Who Dares Wins

16 Princes Gate

Directions 8 - Continue along the terrace to Number 20 and listen to Track 9.

9. Diplomacy

Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum

Directions 9 - Cross over the top of Exhibition Road. Walk past the statue of Livingstone and the metal road sign to a red brick building with iron railings outside. Stop by the railings and listen to Track 10.

10. Age of exploration

Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore

Directions 10 - Retrace your steps and turn right into Exhibition Road. Pass the modern entrance of the RGS then cross over Prince Consort Road. Look back at the red brick building on the corner and listen to Track 11.

11. Crossing the Atlantic

Jamaican High Commission, 1-2 Prince Consort Road

Directions 11 - Walk along Prince Consort Road for a short distance to the grand steps up to a large white building. Stop by the entrance and listen to Track 12.

12. Mining gold and diamonds

Royal School of Mines, Prince Consort Road

Directions 12 - Retrace your steps back to Exhibition Road and turn right. Go past the modern glass entrance to the Imperial College Business School. Stop opposite at the junction with Imperial College Road, opposite a modern church. Listen to Track 13.

13. Newer developments

Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, 64-68 Exhibition Road

Directions 13 - Continue down Exhibition Road. Pass the tunnel for the Underground station and stop by the entrance to the Science Museum and listen to Track 14.

14. Inventions that changed the world

Science Museum, Exhibition Road

Directions 14 - From the Science Museum, walk a few yards further then look across Exhibition Road at the Henry Cole Wing of the Victoria and Albert Museum and listen to Track 15.

15. An unrivalled collection

Henry Cole Wing, Victoria and Albert Museum, Exhibition Road

Directions 15 - Continue down Exhibition Road to Cromwell Road. Cross at the pedestrian crossing and turn left until you are opposite the main entrance to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Stop outside the white building, Number 33 Thurloe Square, and listen to Track 16.

16. Kazakhstan and Christmas cards

Kazakhstan Embassy, 33 Thurloe Square

Directions 16 - With your back to 33 Thurloe Square, turn left. Cross Thurloe Place by using the traffic island and immediately enter the triangular garden ahead. Continue up to the sculpture and listen to Track 17.

17. A secret betrayal

Yalta Memorial Garden, Thurloe Square

Directions 17 - When you are ready, leave the garden and go into Thurloe Place. At the traffic lights, turn right and go into the pedestrianized street. Stop outside the grey building next to the Underground station entrance and listen to Track 18.

18. A blend of eastern and western styles

Ismaili Centre, corner of Cromwell Road, Exhibition Road and Thurloe Place

Directions 18 - Continue along Thurloe Place past various cafes, restaurants and shops. When you reach Cromwell Place you should see the Institut Français directly opposite. Stop outside and listen to Track 19.

19. Little France

Institut Français, Cromwell Place

Directions 19 - When you are ready, follow Cromwell Place and turn left along Cromwell Road noting the French school on your left. Stop when you are opposite the main entrance of the Natural History Museum and listen to Track 20.

20. 70 million specimens

Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road

Directions 20 - Continue along Cromwell Road. Don't forget to look out for more international links such as the offices of Royal Brunei Airlines and the Embassy of Yemen. At the junction with Queen's Gate, use the pedestrian crossings to cross over the opposite corner. Stop by the statue outside Baden-Powell House and listen to Track 21.

21. Scouting for Boys

Baden-Powell House, corner of Cromwell Road and Queen's Gate

Directions 21 - Cross back over Queen's Gate and turn left, keeping the Natural History Museum on your right. Stop by the second set of railings by the sign for the Darwin Centre. Look at the modern glass building and listen to Track 22.

22. Seventeen million creepy crawlies

Darwin Centre, Queen's Gate

Directions 22 - Continue up Queen's Gate, noting more embassies. Shortly after the Oman Embassy at Number 167, turn right at Falmouth Gate and stop outside Number 170, a redbrick house. Listen to Track 23.

23. Cement

170 Queen's Gate

Directions 23 - Continue up Queen's Gate. See if you can spot three more embassies – Thailand, Bangladesh and Bulgaria. Turn right into Prince Consort Road. Continue for about 200 yards then cross over and walk up the steps towards the Royal Albert Hall. Stop at the statue in front of the Royal Albert Hall and listen to Track 24.

Note: For a step-free route continue further along Prince Consort Road and turn left into Kensington Gore. Then follow the road round to the Royal Albert Hall.

24. Making music

Great Exhibition memorial outside Royal Albert Hall

Directions 24 - Pass the statue and stand outside the Royal College of Organists building. Look back at the Royal Albert Hall and listen to Track 25.

25. The advancement of the arts and sciences

Royal Albert Hall

Directions 25 - Remain at the Royal Albert Hall and listen to Track 26.

26. An international hub

Royal Albert Hall

Directions 26 - To return to the museums, go down the steps and turn left into Prince Consort Road. The Exhibition Road museums and South Kensington underground station are on the right. To go into the park, turn left from the end of Prince Consort Road.

Further information

Find out more about the walk story and places of interest along the route:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints United Kingdom

www.lds.org.uk

The Crystal Palace Museum

www.crystalpalacemuseum.org.uk

Goethe-Institut London

www.goethe.de/ins/gb/lon/enindex.htm

Imperial College London

www3.imperial.ac.uk

Institut Français

www.institut-francais.org.uk

The Ismaili Centre

www.theismaili.org

**Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle
Londres**

www.lyceefrancais.org.uk

Natural History Museum

www.nhm.ac.uk

The Polish Club

www.ognisko.com

Royal Albert Hall

www.royalalberthall.com

Royal College of Music

www.rcm.ac.uk

Royal College of Organists

www.rco.org.uk

Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

www.rgs.org

The Royal Society of Arts

www.thersa.org

Science Museum

www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

Serpentine Gallery

www.serpentinegallery.org

Serpentine Swimming Club

www.serpentineswimmingclub.com

Simon Gudgeon

www.simongudgeon.com

Victoria & Albert Museum

www.vam.ac.uk

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Walk the World walk:

- **Gary Gray** and **Mike Jackson** for creating the walk and providing photographs
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The
Heritage
Alliance





The UK is an island nation but we are by no means isolated -
we are a hub of worldwide connections.

Walk the World is an exciting series of free geographically-themed
walks that aim to show how the UK is linked with the 206 countries
due to compete at London 2012.

Each walk explores how the Olympic and Paralympic Nations
and their people have shaped our surroundings -
often in surprising ways.

The self-guided walks are fun, informative and inspiring.
Prepare to discover something new, to be surprised and
to find the unexpected.

Visit www.walktheworld.org.uk

Submit your own links

Search for other walks

Find out how to create your own walk