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Capital runners

A free self-guided walk in Cardiff



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Capital runners

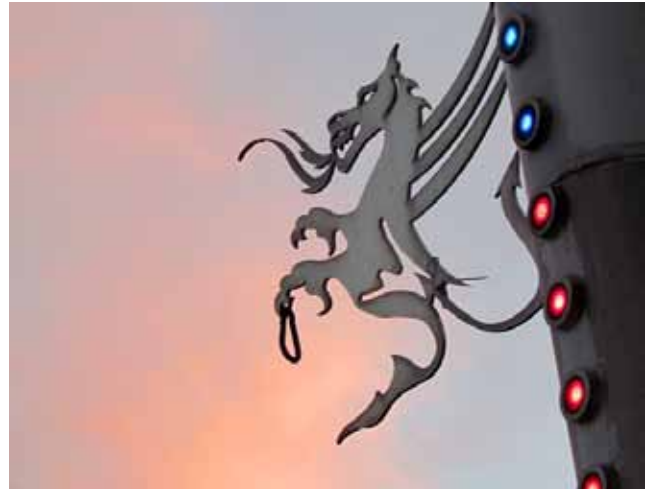
Discover Cardiff's civic pride and sporting heritage

Welcome to Walk the World! This walk in Cardiff 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 countries have shaped our towns and cities.

Cardiff was awarded city status in 1905 and fifty years later became the Welsh capital. Building on a strong local sporting tradition in rugby, football and cricket, it has since become the hub for various sports at national and international levels.

This walk explores Cardiff's twin roles as a civic and sporting capital. The route is lined with runners; the River Taff that gave the city its name and runs through its heart; European invaders who ran their Welsh empires from Cardiff Castle; Cathays Park civic district built to run the new city; athletes from Finland to Tonga who have run in Cardiff's sports venues and streets.

Follow in their footsteps to visit impressive civic buildings and sporting venues. Hear about Cardiff's sporting prowess that includes the Commonwealth Games, Rugby World Cup and Ashes cricket series. Also look out for daffodils, dragons and even a giant anteater!



Scenes from Cardiff
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Practical information

Location	Cardiff, South Wales
Getting there	<p>Train - The nearest station to the start of the walk is Cardiff Central. Direct services operate from most major towns and cities including London Paddington, Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly, South West England and West Wales.</p> <p>Bus - Cardiff Central bus station is next to Cardiff Central railway station. The city is served by a variety of local routes and long distance coaches. Routes X2, 96 and 96A stop outside Cardiff Castle</p> <p>Car - Accessible by Junction 32 of the M4 and the A48 from Swansea, Newport and London. Plenty of city centre parking (charges apply).</p> <p>Bicycle - Cardiff city centre is on National Cycle Route Number 8. Cycle hire is available at Pontcanna Fields in Bute Park near the SWALEC Stadium.</p>
Start point	Outside Cardiff Castle, CF10 3RB
Finish point	Millennium Stadium, CF10 1NS
Distance	2 ½ miles
Level	Gentle - a flat route through city streets and parks
Suitable for	<p>Families - plenty of sights for all ages including Bute Park and the sports venues</p> <p>Pushchairs / wheelchairs - an entirely step-free route</p> <p>Dogs - must be kept on a lead in the city centre</p>
Conditions	The whole route is on pavements and paved footpaths. Be careful of traffic when crossing busy roads, take care of children beside the River Taff

Getting from the railway station to the walk start

Cardiff Castle is approximately 10 minutes walk from Cardiff Central station. From the railway station exit, bear right to the road lined with trees. Keep the bus station on your left. At the end of the road turn right into Wood Street.

At the end of Wood Street use the pedestrian crossing to the right. Turn left and continue along the right hand side of St Mary Street. Continue along St Mary Street onto the pedestrianised High Street. Cardiff Castle's main entrance is at the end of the High Street.

Refreshments

There are plenty of places to eat in the city centre, plus cafés in the National Museum Cardiff (Stop 4) and in Bute Park (after Stop 13)

Toilets

Public toilets are available in Bute Park and National Museum Cardiff. Both have baby changing facilities.

Other info

The route can be very busy at weekends, especially when Cardiff or Wales teams are playing at any of the sports venues. If you do not like crowds you are advised to avoid match days.

The Millennium Walkway (Stop 19) beside the Millennium Stadium is closed on match days and after dark.

Places to visit

Bute Park (Stop 13) hosts family-friendly events throughout the year including a Nature Trail, cycle hire and sports facilities. Special events include the RHS Flower Show (April) and Sparks In the Park (5th Nov).

Cardiff Castle (Stops 1-3) is open daily from 9am to 5/6pm (November to February/March to October). Entry fees apply Tel: 029 2087 8100

National Museum Cardiff is open 10am-5pm Tuesdays to Sundays and most Bank Holiday Mondays. Free entry. Tel: 029 2057 3000

Tourist Information

Cardiff Tourist Information Centre is located in the Old Library, The Hayes, CF10 1AH (parallel to St Mary Street in the city centre). Tel: 029 2087 3573

Detail of the first part of the route



Stopping points

- 5.** Castle Street outside Cardiff Castle
- 2.** Cardiff Castle, Castle Street
- 3.** Cardiff Castle, Castle Street / North Road
- 4.** Cardiff City Hall and Crown Court, Cathays Park
- 5.** Gorsedd Gardens
- 6.** Boulevard de Nantes and Stuttgarter Strasse
- 7.** Alexandra Gardens
- 8.** Cardiff University Main Building, Museum Avenue
- 9.** Welsh National Temple of Peace and Health
- 10.** Welsh National Temple of Peace and Health garden
- 11.** North Road

Detail of the second part of the route



Stopping points

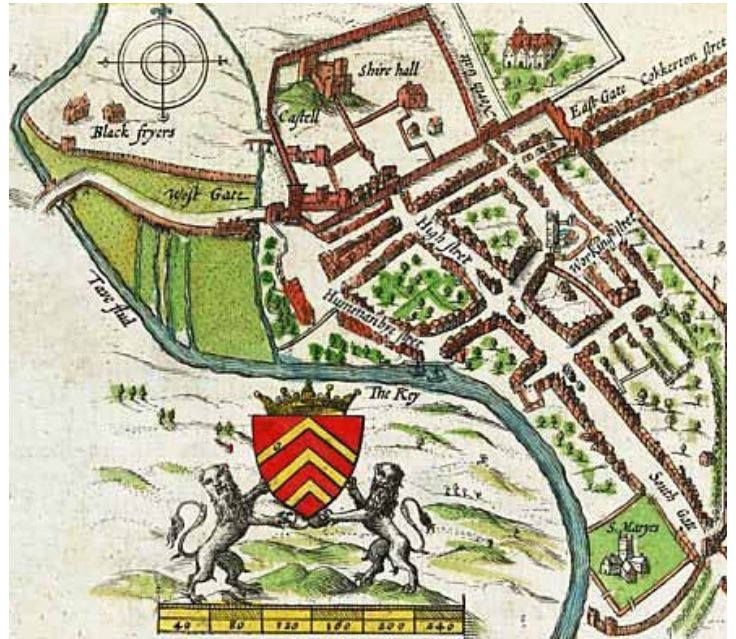
9. Welsh National Temple of Peace and Health
10. Welsh National Temple of Peace and Health garden
11. North Road
12. SWALEC Stadium
13. Sport Wales National Centre, Sophia Gardens
14. River Taff, Bute Park
15. Bute Park and arboretum
16. Animal Wall, Castle Street
17. Cardiff Arms Park, Westgate Road
18. Millennium Stadium, Westgate Road
19. Millennium Walkway

1. Welcome to Cardiff

Outside Cardiff Castle, Castle Street

Welcome to Cardiff! Though this city has a long history, with its castle dating back to the Roman period, this walk focuses on more recent times. Cardiff was made a city by royal charter in 1905 and became the Welsh capital 50 years later. As the Welsh capital city, Cardiff is home to a range of national institutions, organisations and headquarters - ranging from governance and administration, law and education, to culture and sport.

This walk explores two areas of the city. The civic quarter was laid out when Cardiff became a city and is home to grand buildings, gardens and monuments. Meanwhile Bute Park and the riverside were given to the people when Cardiff became the Welsh capital. This area is home to a variety of sporting venues.



Detail from John Speed's map of Cardiff (1610) - the Castle is at the top centre and Bute Park top left
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)



Cardiff Pride - Cathays Park
Colin Smith © via Geograph.org.uk

In these adjacent yet contrasting parts of the city we will find out about Cardiff's many international connections. The walk route is about 2 ½ miles long and almost circular. We start at Cardiff Castle and end at the walkway beside the Millennium Stadium.

There are some busy roads to cross and do take care of children by the riverside. As the route takes in a number of sports venues, you may want to avoid weekends when Cardiff or Wales teams are playing at home as these areas are likely to be crowded. We hope you enjoy the walk!

Directions 1 - Start at the main entrance to Cardiff Castle on Castle Street.

2. Roman conquest

Cardiff Castle, Castle Street

Most of this walk is about modern Cardiff in the 100 or so years since it became a city. The Welsh capital has a much longer history though, so we begin at the city centre's oldest building. Cardiff Castle is over 2,000 years old and can trace its history back to the Roman era.

The Roman conquest of Wales began in the north in 48 AD. The campaign was extended south to counter the resistance of the Silures, a tribe led by Caractacus (or Caradog in Welsh). Caractacus took the fight to the Romans in North Wales but was defeated and taken to Rome as a prisoner. By 75 AD the whole of Wales was under Roman control.



Cardiff Castle

© Webb Aviation (www.webbaviation.co.uk)

The first Roman fort in what is now Cardiff was built sometime before 75 AD and was replaced by a smaller fort after the complete occupation of Wales. These forts were wooden; the first stone one wasn't built until 250 AD. This fort acted as a naval base to protect against raiders from the sea and remained an important Roman outpost until their legions withdrew from Britain in the fifth century.



Sections of Roman wall at Cardiff Castle
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

In the main wall along Castle Street, you can still see parts of this Roman fort. Look out for the older looking stones on the bottom half of the wall, which are highlighted by coloured bricks.

Country links - Italy

Directions 2 - Continue along Castle Street towards the opposite corner of the castle from the one with the ornate tower. Stop where the main road bends round to the left.

3. Rebuilding and restoration

Cardiff Castle, Castle Street / North Road

After the Romans, Britain's next major invaders were the Normans. The Normans came from France and invaded in 1066 when William the 1st, or William the Conqueror, won the English crown at the Battle of Hastings.

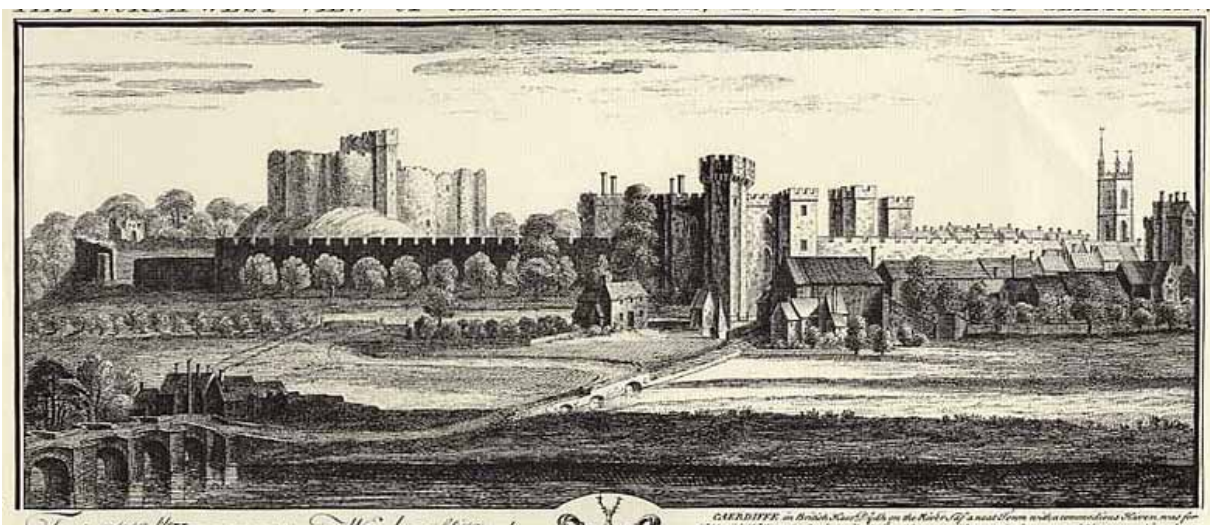
The Norman Conquest of England did not lead automatically to the subjugation of Wales. William the Conqueror considered the crown of England his birth right but not any of the Welsh titles. William expected to leave Wales alone.

The Welsh tribes had other ideas and crossed the border to attack the Normans. The Normans carried out a half-hearted campaign against the Welsh until 1081 when they became more committed.



The Norman Keep, Cardiff Castle
Jvhertum via Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)

Using the shell of the old Roman fort, the Normans constructed a motte and bailey castle – which is now Cardiff Castle Keep. By 1094 most of Wales was under Norman rule though there were constant battles with the Welsh tribes. Cardiff Castle remained a Norman stronghold through successive dynasties, including the De Clares and le Despensers. These very French names can still be seen in nearby streets.



An 18th century engraving of Cardiff Castle by Samuel and Natahaniel Buck
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)

The Castle passed through the hands of many noble families over the centuries. In 1766 it passed by marriage to the Crichton-Stuart family, the Marquesses of Bute. John, the Second Marquess of Bute was responsible for turning Cardiff into the world's greatest coal exporting port.



John Crichton-Stuart, Third Marquess of Bute
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)

The Castle and Bute fortune passed to his son the Third Marquess, also named John Crichton-Stuart. By the 1860s he was reputed to be the richest man in the world. He used some of his wealth to restore the castle, add new features (such as the Gothic Revival style clock tower) and lavish interior designs. Much of the Castle in its present form dates from this part of the nineteenth century.



Cardiff Castle c.1890 after it had been heavily rebuilt by the Marquesses of Bute
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)

Country links - France

Directions 3 - From the corner of the castle, go along Kingsway with the castle wall on your left. As you pass the castle, see how many of the country flags you can recognise on the top of the walls. Pass the bus stops and at the next corner of the castle, go down the ramp and through the pedestrian underpass. At the top of the ramp on the other side, turn left. Pass the first grand building. Stop outside the second building with the clock tower.

4. Triple crown

Cardiff City Hall, Cardiff Crown Court and the National Museum Cardiff, Cathays Park



Ornate detailing and statues on Cardiff City Hall and the National Museum of Wales
Ham via Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License) / Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

At the last stop we heard about the Third Marquess of Bute who restored the Castle. In 1898 he also sold 59 acres of land to the town. This land was used to create a civic centre called Cathays Park. Today it is often regarded as one of the most impressive civic centres in the world.

Cardiff was granted city status in 1905 when the city was very wealthy because of its port and industries. This trio of buildings – the Crown Court, City Hall and the National Museum Cardiff – reflect that wealth and newly granted city status.

Although designed to celebrate and showcase Cardiff, these buildings drew inspiration from around the world. The City Hall and Crown Court, opened in 1906, were important early examples of Edwardian Baroque architectural style. In the Edwardian era (1901-1910), many public buildings were built in this style across the British Empire. Edwardian Baroque was inspired by Sir Christopher Wren's seventeenth-century designs and the architecture of eighteenth century France.

The National Museum Cardiff, was built in an architectural style that recalls American Beaux-Arts. Beaux-Arts was a neo-classical style taught at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. It drew from ancient Greek and Roman architecture, the Italian Renaissance, and the French and Italian Baroque. This style was very influential in the United States from 1880 to 1920.

The City Hall features a distinctive clock tower, domed roof and entrance portico. Take time to look at the groups of sculptures at the corners of the two buildings – Science and Education and Commerce and Industry on the Crown Court and Music and Poetry and Unity and Patriotism on the City Hall.

Also look out for Neptune the Roman god of the sea and various creatures from Greek mythology, including nymphs and satyrs.

The National Museum Cardiff opened to the public in 1927. On the outside note the Museum’s impressive columns. If you have time to go inside, visit the vast lobby and its symmetrical staircases.

During the Olympic Games, a set of floodlit Olympic rings were placed outside the City Hall, followed by a display of the Paralympic Agitos, the symbol for the Paralympics.



Cardiff City Hall clock tower
Olivier Aumage via Wikimedia Commons
(Creative Commons License)



Cardiff Crown Court and the National Museum Cardiff
Ham via Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)

Country links - France, Greece, Italy, United States of America

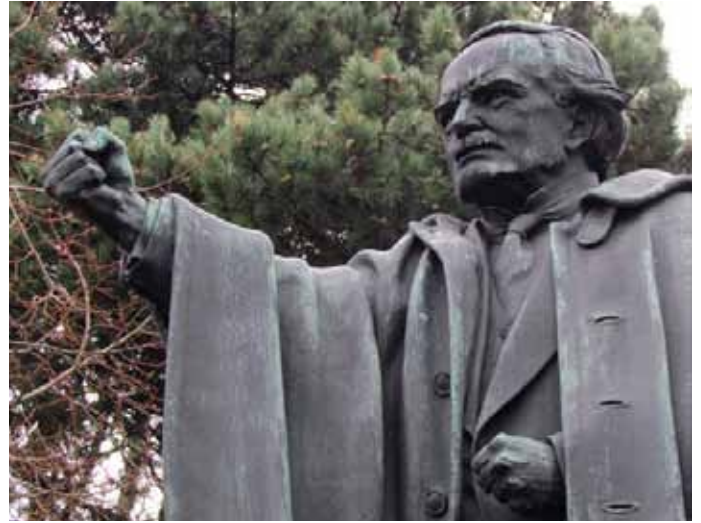
Directions 4 - Opposite the front of City Hall and the National Museum is a garden. Among the various pieces of public art are four statues. Stop when you have a good view of all four.

5. Civic quartet

Gorsedd Gardens

The three buildings that we have just seen were symbols of Cardiff's wealth and grandeur. Here in Gorsedd Gardens, the city shows off some of its most acclaimed residents. There are four statues here and each man depicted has international connections.

The man with a clenched fist is David Lloyd George, a Liberal politician and statesman. In 1915 he was made Minister of Munitions and argued for sending British troops to Greece and machine guns to Romania during the First World War. A year later he became Secretary of State for War then six months later Prime Minister.



Statue of David Lloyd George
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

As Prime Minister he guided the Empire to the culmination of the war. He was a major player at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 where the Allied powers reshaped the map of Europe with new borders. In 1921 he presided over the creation of Northern Ireland after the Irish Republic had been declared. He was Prime Minister until 1922 and remains the only Welshman to have held the role.



Statue of Lord Ninian
© Darren Wyn Rees via Wikimedia Commons

The man holding a pair of binoculars is Lord Ninian, Edward Crichton-Stuart. He was the second son of Cardiff's benefactor, the Third Marquess of Bute. Lord Ninian was Cardiff's MP from 1910 but was soon called away on war duties. As commander of 6th Battalion, the Welsh Regiment, he was killed when leading a night attack on the Western Front in France in 1915. His name lived on in Cardiff in the form of Ninian Park, the home of Cardiff City Football Club. In 1910 he had agreed to be guarantor for the new ground and it remained the team's home until 2009.

The man on horseback is Godfrey Morgan, First Viscount Tredegar, who was a British Army officer and politician. He was in command of a section of the Light Brigade at the Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War in 1854, which took place in present-day Ukraine.



Statue of Viscount Tredegar
© Darren Wyn Rees via Wikimedia Commons



Statue of John Cory
© Philip Halling via Geograph (Creative Commons License)

The man holding a Bible and a hat is John Cory. He was one of the sons in the company Richard Cory and Sons. This firm were ship brokers and merchants that exported coal. John and his brother Richard purchased several collieries in the South Wales valleys and became the largest private wagon-owners in Britain. They opened coaling stations around the world and by 1908 had 118 agencies and depots on all the major shipping routes. The brothers gave some of their wealth to Cardiff's social and educational causes. Their name lives on in Cory Brothers and Cory Logistics, which specialise in the shipping and transport sector. They have operations worldwide including offices in Singapore.

Country links - France, Greece, Ireland, Romania, Singapore, Ukraine

Directions 5 - Go towards the corner of Gorsedd Gardens where there is a busy road junction with traffic lights. Stand in a safe place at the junction.

6. Name games

Boulevard de Nantes and Stuttgarter Strasse

This busy roadway has two unusual names. Look to one side of the junction and you will see that the road is called Boulevard de Nantes. On the other side of the junction it is called Stuttgarter Strasse. They are named after two of Cardiff's twin towns - Nantes in France and Stuttgart in Germany.

Cardiff has been twinned with Nantes since 1963 and with Stuttgart since 1955. Cardiff is also twinned with Lugansk in the Ukraine, Bergen in Norway, Xiamen in China and Pernik in Bulgaria. See if you can find another link to Stuttgart later in the walk.



Signs of town twinning
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Town twinning is often based on something shared such as a common industry, a similar geographical feature, or a sporting connection. Twinning is a way to create economic and social links with other countries. It also helps to promote international understanding at a local level, particularly through business partnerships and school exchange visits.

Elsewhere in Cardiff are streets called Africa Gardens, Australia Road, China Road, Newfoundland Road, Canada Road and New Zealand Road. All of these recall Cardiff's international connections through its port and migrant communities. Why not find out if where you live is twinned with places overseas or look for international street names – you might be surprised what you find!

Country links - France, Germany

Directions 6 - Retrace your steps through Gorsedd Gardens. Between the City Hall and National Museum is Museum Avenue. Go along Museum Avenue and then turn left round the back of the City Hall. Turn right into the public gardens. Stop at the memorial with columns at the centre of the gardens.

7. Remembering

Alexandra Gardens

The civic quarter is not all about impressive buildings. This public garden is not just a place for office workers to come to eat their lunch; it has an important civic function as a place of remembrance to the people of Cardiff and Wales who died in conflicts. It is called Alexandra Gardens after Alexandra of Denmark, the wife of King Edward VII. He was the monarch that granted Cardiff city status.

At the centre of the garden is the Welsh National War Memorial, which records Welsh servicemen who died in both world wars. At the base three figures - a soldier, a sailor and an airman - represent the Army, Navy and Air Force. The memorial was designed by Sir Ninian Comper, who was inspired by two visits to French North Africa, and particularly Tunisia, where he saw public works erected by the Roman Emperor Hadrian.



View of the Welsh National War Memorial
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Take time to explore the gardens and the other memorials.

One is dedicated to the men from the International Brigades who fought in the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939. The International Brigades were a group of military units made up of volunteers from different countries, who travelled to Spain to fight for the Republicans. Alongside Wales, volunteers came from at least 20 other nations.

Another memorial commemorates the servicemen of Cardiff who fought against Argentina in the Falklands War in 1982. Nearby – between the Law Courts and City Hall – is a South Africa memorial dedicated to Welshmen who died during the Boer War.

Also see if you can find the memorial tree dedicated to Raoul Wallenberg. He was Sweden's special envoy in Budapest in Hungary during the Second World War. Hungary was occupied by Nazi Germany but Sweden was a neutral territory. In 1944 Wallenberg saved the lives of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews by sheltering them in Swedish territory buildings and issuing them protective passports.



Alexandra Gardens monuments
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



Raoul Wallenberg's memorial stone
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



The Falklands obelisk and the tower of City Hall
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



Inscription on the Welsh National War Memorial
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links - Argentina, Denmark, Hungary, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia

Directions 7 - Leave Alexandra Gardens by the side gate back onto Museum Avenue. On the opposite side of the road is a large building with a semi-circular driveway. Stop on the pavement outside this building.

8. A place of firsts

Cardiff University Main Building, Museum Avenue

Part of the development of Cardiff's civic quarter was the establishment of a university. Until the 1880s there was only one university in Wales – at Aberystwyth in the centre of the country. South Wales was an ideal place for a new seat of learning and in 1883 the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire was formed in Cardiff.

From the outset it was one of the first British universities open to female students. Cardiff also employed the first female professor in Britain, when Millicent McKenzie was appointed in 1904.



Cardiff University Main Building
© Stan Zurek via Wikimedia Commons

This is the Main Building which opened in 1909. It was designed by William Douglas Caroe, the son of the Danish Consul for Liverpool. Now Grade II listed the Main Building was designed in neo-classical style. Inside are a grand staircase of Welsh marble and an ancient Greek inscription by the Science Library. It reads 'Phrontidos telesphoron selas' or 'The flame of thought which brings fulfilment'.

Today Cardiff University has about 28,000 students. Many come to study from nations throughout the world. Besides Welsh national figures such as Neil and Glenys Kinnock, Cardiff University alumni include the former Jordanian prime minister Faisal al-Fayez, Iraqi politician Barham Salih, Polish physician Leszek Borysiewicz, Pakistani reporter Riz Khan and Indian movie actress Vedhika Kumar.

Another international connection Cardiff University can boast is that the Computer Science department were the original host servers for the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) website. The site is an online film and television guide. It was bought by Amazon in 1998 and later moved from Cardiff to a host site in China.

Country links - China, Denmark, Greece, India, Iraq, Jordan, Poland, Pakistan

Directions 8 - Continue along Museum Avenue. Turn left at the next junction onto College Road. Continue past the front of the National Assembly Building and at the next junction, cross over and stop outside the imposing building on the right.

9. Peace on earth

Welsh National Temple of Peace and Health

The Welsh National Temple of Peace and Health, commonly known as the Temple of Peace, opened in 1938. Despite its name it is a non-religious civic building and was a gift to the Welsh people from the politician and statesman Lord David Davies.

He was a campaigner for international relations. Davies fought in the trenches during the First World War and afterwards was actively involved in the search for international stability, through the League of Nations and the League of Nations Union.

Davies wanted the building to be a memorial to all soldiers killed in the First World War. In the crypt is a Book of Remembrance with the names of 35,000 Welsh men and women who lost their lives. As most died on Belgian or French soil, the bronze used on the glass casing is French and the marble pedestal it rests on is from Belgium.



The Temple of Peace entrance
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The building is now the home of the Welsh Centre for International Affairs and is used as a meeting place by other cultural and social organisations. Lectures and conferences on international issues are held here featuring speakers from all over the world. The building's design includes materials from various countries to emphasise the international nature of the work carried on inside. The main entrance is lined with dove-grey marble to symbolise the emblem of peace and the roofing includes dark red Italian pattern tiles.

Country links - Belgium, France, Italy

Directions 9 - Go round to the car park at the rear of the building and you will find a small garden. Stop in the garden.

10. Peace in earth

Welsh National Temple of Peace and Health garden

In the garden behind the Temple of Peace are several memorials and plaques dedicated to people or organisations involved in the international peace movement.

The centrepiece is a flagpole built on a mosaic of the United Nations flag. At the edges of the mosaic are the signatures and handprints of children from several UN member countries. Some of the signatures are a little worn but see how many you can spot. Look out for Armenia, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Poland, Japan and the United States among others.



Look for international plaques in the Temple of Peace garden
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Another monument in the garden is a stone with a bilingual brass plaque that records Wales becoming an official Sri Chinmoy Peace Nation in 1997. Sri Chinmoy was an Indian spiritual teacher and peace emissary. He worked closely with the United Nations and also offered spiritual advice to many famous people throughout the world. One person who sought Sri Chinmoy's guidance was American sprinter Carl Lewis, who won gold medals at the 1984 Los Angeles, 1988 Seoul and 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. Other Peace Nations include Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.

Elsewhere a cross is dedicated to the victims of the Armenian Genocide plus several trees are planted to international peace campaigns and groups. Look carefully among the brass plaques and you can find dedications to the Uganda Pioneers Association, the 2009 Copenhagen Climate change conference in Denmark, and the expansion of the European Union to include Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Country links - Armenia, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, India, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Spain, Uganda, United States of America

Directions 10 - From the Peace Garden go to the main road, North Road. Cross at the pedestrian crossing opposite the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Turn right past the main entrance of the college. At the end of the building is a gateway into the park on the left hand side. Stop by the information board.

11. Two halves

North Road

We are now half way around the walk. We have already seen many of the civic institutions at the heart of Cardiff and Wales; now we will look at sites that are important to the city and country in a different way. This road is the dividing line between Cardiff's civic quarter and Bute Park. It is also where our walk crosses from civic pride to sporting pride.

This busy road is North Road. Though built to carry traffic, on one day every year tens of thousands of people make their way along it. North Road is part of the route of the Cardiff Half Marathon. The thirteen-mile course takes in the scenery of Bute Park, Cardiff Castle and the regenerated Cardiff Bay. Most of Cardiff is flat which makes it perfect for runners of all abilities.

When the event was first held in 2003, there were fewer than 1,500 runners but now there are over 15,000. Some run for charity but others are professional athletes. The 2011 race was dominated by Kenyan runners. Edwin Kiptoo won the overall race in a course record time of 1 hour 3 minutes and 27 seconds. His countrymen Andrew Lesuuda and Edwin Kipkorir took second and third place. Kenya also won two podium spots in the women's race, with Alice Mogire coming first and Edinah Kwambai third.

Other past participants include Welsh wheelchair athlete Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson, who has won 16 medals (including 11 gold) across five Paralympics from Seoul 1988 to Athens 2004.



Kenyan athlete Edwin Kiptoo, winner of the 2011 Cardiff Half Marathon
© Lens Envy via Flickr.com (Creative Commons License)

Country links - Kenya

Directions 11 - Enter Bute Park through the gate by the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Follow the path down into the park and over the bridge. At the first junction, turn right along a wide tarmac path. At the next crossroads of paths, turn left, which is signposted for a cafe and toilets. Follow this path with a wall on your right hand side. When you reach the river, stop by the picnic benches.

12. From gardens to ashes

The SWALEC Stadium

Here we are in Bute Park, which between 1873 and 1903 was a private pleasure garden for the Bute family. The Fifth Marquess of Bute presented the land to the people of Cardiff in 1949. It is now a public park in the heart of the city centre.

As you walk through Bute Park keep a look out for sports people using this space for training or making their way to an event. Bute Park is surrounded by several sport centres and venues. We will see some of these in the second half of this walk.



The SWALEC Stadium

© Webb Aviation (www.webbaviation.co.uk)

Directly across the river is a cricket stadium which opened in 1967. It was originally known as Sophia Gardens after Lady Sophia the wife of the Second Marquess of Bute, who provided this open space for recreation in the rapidly expanding city. It is now known as the SWALEC Stadium after its sponsor SWALEC – the South Wales Electricity Company. Although SWALEC was bought out in 1996, the brand name remains.

The stadium is home to Glamorgan County Cricket Club. Currently there is no official Welsh national cricket team – Welsh players play internationally with England – but the headquarters of Cricket Wales, the governing body for recreational cricket is here at the stadium.

In 2008 the stadium's capacity was increased to 16,000, which made it suitable for international matches. The first was a one-day international between England and South Africa in 2008, followed by the first match of the 2009 Ashes series between England and Australia.

Country links - Australia, South Africa

Directions 12 - Remain in the same place and listen to Track 13.

13. Sport central

Sport Wales National Centre, Sophia Gardens

To the left of the SWALEC Stadium we should be able to make out a large building behind the trees. This opened in 1971 as the National Sports Centre for Wales. More recently it has been renamed the Sport Wales National Centre.

The Centre administrates Welsh sport and houses eleven sports governing bodies, including Welsh Basketball and the Welsh Judo Association. The latter has Neil Adams as Head Coach – he won Olympic silver medals in judo at Moscow 1980 and Los Angeles 1984. Other organisations based at the centre include Federation of Disability Sport Wales as well as a sports science team who work alongside Wales' aspiring athletes.

The Centre also provides training and competition facilities for the national badminton, netball and gymnastics teams. Various international sports tournaments have taken place here, such as the annual International Badminton Welsh Open every December. Held in Wales since 1928, it is one of the oldest badminton tournaments in the world. Event winners have come from 15 different nations.

Badminton originated in India with British army officers. Officers in the town of Poona revived an ancient game called battledore which used bats and shuttlecocks. Some of the soldiers played the game when they returned to Britain and in 1873 a match took place at the Duke of Beaufort's home in Gloucestershire. The building was called Badminton House and gave the new game its title.

3 Battledore and Shuttlecock.



An 1805 illustration of battledore
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)

Country links - India, Russia, United States of America

Directions 13 - Follow the footpath through the park with the river on your right hand side. Stop by the footbridge. Feel free to go onto the bridge for a better view of the river.

14. Water sports

River Taff, Bute Park

We have now arrived at the River Taff. This is the river that Cardiff developed around and gave the eventual city its name. Cardiff's name in Welsh is 'Caerdydd', which evolved from an earlier form Caerdyf. Caerdyf originated from the post-Roman words 'caer' which means 'fort' and 'dyf' - a form of 'Taff'. So Cardiff is in effect "the fort of the Taff".

Today the people of Cardiff make use of the Taff in many ways including the sports of rowing and fishing. Every March the river is used for the Head of the Taff rowing race. The event is organised by Welsh Rowing, the governing body for the sport in Wales.



Rowing in the River Taff
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Welsh Rowing promotes the sport and organises other national events, such as the Welsh Open Rowing Championships. Formerly known as the Welsh Amateur Rowing Association, the organisation is based in Cardiff and helps Welsh rowers progress into national and international squads. Three Welsh rowers took part at London 2012 – Chris Bartley, Vicky Thornley and Tom James, who won a gold medal in Great Britain's coxless fours team at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Another sport the River Taff is used for is angling. Many types of fish can be found in the river including chub, barbel and eels. The Taff has also become known for trout in recent years and its cleaner waters have attracted a few migratory species such as Atlantic salmon.

Country links - China, France

Directions 14 - Continue on the main path through the park with the river on your right hand side. At the next junction of paths is a large stone on the left hand side. Stop by the stone.

15. Tree time

Bute Park Arboretum

We have been hearing quite a bit about sporting events in Cardiff that draw competitors from worldwide. But here we have quite a different example of things being collected in Cardiff from around the world. This stone records the official unveiling of Bute Park's arboretum.

An arboretum is a botanic garden where trees are collected and grown for scientific study. As a result many of the trees in Bute Park have links with international nations.



Bute Park is home to many types of trees
© Athena's Pix via Flickr.com (Creative Commons License)

Examples include the Manchurian cherry tree. These trees are native to Korea and northern China. Their botanical name is *Prunus maackii* after the Estonian-born naturalist Richard Maack who discovered them. Another tree in Bute Park native to China is the Foxglove. In China and Japan the wood of these trees is used to make carved sculptures and musical instruments.

Despite their name Indian Bean Trees originate from the southern United States. In late summer they are recognisable for their long hanging bean pods. Maple trees meanwhile originate in Asia and have pointed leaves that are brightly coloured in autumn. Maples are the national plant of Canada and appear on the Canadian flag. Lime trees are widespread throughout Europe and Asia but have a special place in Polish, Czech, Slovakian and Slovenian mythology where they are considered sacred.

Country links - Canada, China, Czech Republic, Estonia, Japan, North Korea, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, United States of America

Directions 15 - Follow the main path a short distance further to the West Lodge Gate. Leave the park and turn left along the pavement. After about 20 metres, just before the traffic lights, look up on the wall for a stone sculpture of a pelican. Stop by the wall.

16. An international menagerie

Animal Wall, Castle Street

At the beginning of this walk we heard about Cardiff Castle's restoration in the Victorian era. During the process this unusual wall was built in 1890. The wall originally stood directly in front of the Castle and featured nine animal sculptures – a hyena, a wolf, a pair of apes, a seal, a bear, a lynx, a lioness, and two different lions.

Due to road widening, the wall was moved here in 1922 and six more sculptures were added – a pelican, a racoon, a leopard, a beaver, a vulture and a giant anteater. Sadly the Animal Wall fell into disrepair over time - more than once the anteater lost its nose! In 2010 the Wall was cleaned and restored, allowing visitors to enjoy this international menagerie once more.



Clockwise from top left - bear, anteater, wolf, racoons
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

None of the fifteen animals depicted on the wall are native to Britain. But continuing the sporting theme of this walk, can you think of sporting teams which use each of these animals in their name, nickname or emblem? An easy example is the English football team Wolverhampton Wanderers, whose nickname is Wolves.

Interesting examples can be found worldwide. For example another football team known as Wolves are the Warri Wolves of Nigeria. Cameroon's men's and women's football teams are known as the Lions and Lionesses. Other lions include the Chandigarh Lions cricket team in India and the Ponce Lions basketball team in Puerto Rico. South Africa's Schotsche Kloof Hyenas play rugby as do The Vauxhall Vultures from Jamaica. Hockey fans in Iceland may be familiar with the Lahti Pelicans, while the Bennigsen Beavers play baseball and softball in Germany. What other teams do you know about?

Country links - Cameroon, Germany, Iceland, India, Jamaica, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, South Africa

Directions 16 - When you have finished looking at the Animal Wall, go to the pedestrian crossing by the beaver and cross straight over. Stop outside the gates into Cardiff Arms Park.

17. A Commonwealth of nations

Cardiff Arms Park, Westgate Street

We have seen a number of new sporting venues in Cardiff but here is one of the older ones. Cardiff Arms Park became a popular sports venue from the 1840s. Rugby union and cricket were both played here until 1969. Then the cricket ground was demolished to make way for the rugby ground that you see today and a stadium next to it called the National Stadium.

Cardiff Arms Park was home to the Cardiff Blues professional rugby team until 2009 and is still the home of the semi-professional Cardiff RFC team. The ground has also been used for football, tennis, bowling, baseball, boxing, greyhound racing and music concerts.



The Wales rugby team, 1895
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons License)

In 1958 Cardiff hosted the British Empire and Commonwealth Games. The opening ceremony and the athletics events were held here at Cardiff Arms Park. Across the 29 athletics events (20 for men and 9 for women) Australia and England dominated the medal table, with 22 medals each. Jamaica, South Africa and New Zealand came next while Kenya won their first medals (bronzes in men's' hurdles and the six-mile run). Some 35 nations took part at the event, many for the first time including Brunei, the Dominican Republic and Malta.

This entrance to the ground features the Gwyn Nicholls Memorial Gates. Gwyn Nicholls was a rugby union player who played his whole career for Cardiff. He also appeared for the Wales national team 24 times between 1896 and 1906 in matches against England, Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand and South Africa. On ten of these occasions he was the Welsh captain. Nicholls was also the only Welsh player in the British Isles team that toured Australia in 1899. As the shining star of the first Golden Era of Welsh rugby he is remembered on these gates, which were opened in his memory in 1949, ten years after his death.

Country links - Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Dominican Republic, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Malta, Singapore, South Africa, New Zealand

Directions 17 - With your back to the entrance of Cardiff Arms Park, turn left along the pavement. Immediately before the river bridge, turn left onto the riverside walk. Along the side of the stadium are a row of flags. Beside each country flag is a matching mosaic in the floor. Stop by these mosaics.

(Note: the riverside walk is closed on match days and at night).

18. The world in Wales

Millennium Stadium, Westgate Street

We are now by the side of Cardiff's biggest sporting venue – the 74,500-seater Millennium Stadium. Built in 1999 it replaced the National Stadium which had stood on the same site for thirty years.

The Millennium Stadium was built in time for Wales to host the 1999 Rugby World Cup. The competing teams were Argentina, Australia, Canada, England, Fiji, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Namibia, New Zealand, Romania, Samoa, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Tonga, the United States of America, Uruguay and, of course, the hosts Wales.



Millennium Stadium

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Here you can see the flags of these competing countries. Mosaics in the floor depict objects associated with each national culture and a list of all the players in the tournament. This stadium hosted all Wales' matches plus the final between Australia and France. Since the tournament Wales have hosted a number of rugby matches at the Millennium Stadium.

The Wales national football team also plays here. Their first game in the new stadium was a friendly against Finland in 2000. While Wembley stadium in London was being rebuilt, the Millennium Stadium also held English Football Association competitions, including the FA Cup Finals between 2001 and 2006.

The stadium has been used for other events including concerts, boxing matches and even car racing. During the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, eleven football matches were played here including the opening football game between England and Uruguay and the men's bronze medal match between South Korea and Japan. Brazil, Egypt, Mexico and Switzerland also played here during the Games.

Country links - Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Romania, Samoa, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Tonga, United States of America, Uruguay

Directions 18 - Stay beside the Millennium Stadium.

19. A proud capital

Millennium Walkway

This impressive stadium is a fitting place to end our walk around Cardiff today. Along the way we have looked at two adjacent but contrasting parts of Cardiff – its grand civic buildings and its impressive sporting venues.

Both have told a story of a proud city which has been the Welsh capital city for just over 100 years. The Millennium Stadium is not only a world-famous sports venue but it is a source of civic pride in Cardiff too and this modern landmark captures both themes of this walk.



Wales mosaic, Millennium Walkway
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

On this journey through Cardiff's civic and sporting centres, we heard how the city was created by the Bute family and Royal charter. We saw impressive public buildings built on the wealth of coal and as an expression of civic pride. We also saw Cardiff's many sporting venues, from the historic River Taff and Castle grounds to modern stadiums and centres. Along the way we heard about the many international stories involved in building both parts of this proud capital city.

Exploring the Welsh capital, especially its sporting heritage, is a great way to celebrate Cardiff's links with countries around the world London 2012. On the walk we have found evidence of links to 58 nations. Maybe you spotted more. If you did, please let us know. And if you enjoyed this walk, look on the Walk the World website and you will find more in different parts of Britain that you can try. Why not think about creating your own walk?

Directions 19 - To return to Cardiff Central railway station or the shopping area of the city, continue along the riverside pathway. Turn left at the end of the stadium onto Wood Street. The station is on the right hand side and the shopping area is straight ahead.

Further information

Badminton Wales

www.badmintonwales.net

Cardiff Blues

www.cardiffblues.com

Cardiff Castle

www.cardiffcastle.com

Cardiff Half Marathon

www.cardiffhalfmarathon.co.uk

Cardiff RFC

www.cardiffRFC.com

Millennium Stadium

www.millenniumstadium.com

National Museum Cardiff

www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/cardiff

Sport Wales

www.sportwales.org.uk

Sri Chinmoy

www.srichinmoy.org/index.html

SWALEC Stadium

www.swalecstadium.co.uk

Visit Cardiff

www.visitcardiff.com

Welsh Centre for International Affairs

www.wcia.org.uk

Welsh National Temple of Peace and Health

<http://templeofpeaceandhealth.com/index.html>

Credits

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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

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