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Geographical
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with IBG

A wealth of nations

A free self-guided walk along Edinburgh's Royal Mile



www.walktheworld.org.uk

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Contents

Introduction	4
Route map	5
Practical information	6
Commentary	8
Credits	34

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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



A wealth of nations

Discover how Edinburgh's Royal Mile leads around the world

Welcome to Walk the World! This walk along Edinburgh's Royal Mile 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.

Edinburgh is made up of two distinct areas – the Old Town and the New Town. The Old Town with its winding streets and hidden alleys (known as closes or wynds) dates back to the Middle Ages. It centres on the Castle and the Royal Mile.



One of the world's most famous streets
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



Piper in the Royal Mile
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Lined with cobbles and layered with history, the Royal Mile is one of the most famous streets in the world. Visitors come from worldwide to explore its charming alleys and vibrant shops. Starting at historic Edinburgh Castle and ending at the new Scottish Parliament Building, this walk takes you on a fascinating journey along this famous stretch of Scotland's capital.

On the way you will discover international tales of kidnap and murder, dramatic love stories and the deeds of kings, knights and spies. As you follow the street's links to countries far and wide, you will also follow Edinburgh's development from an ancient castle town built on a volcano to a modern city built on international trade.

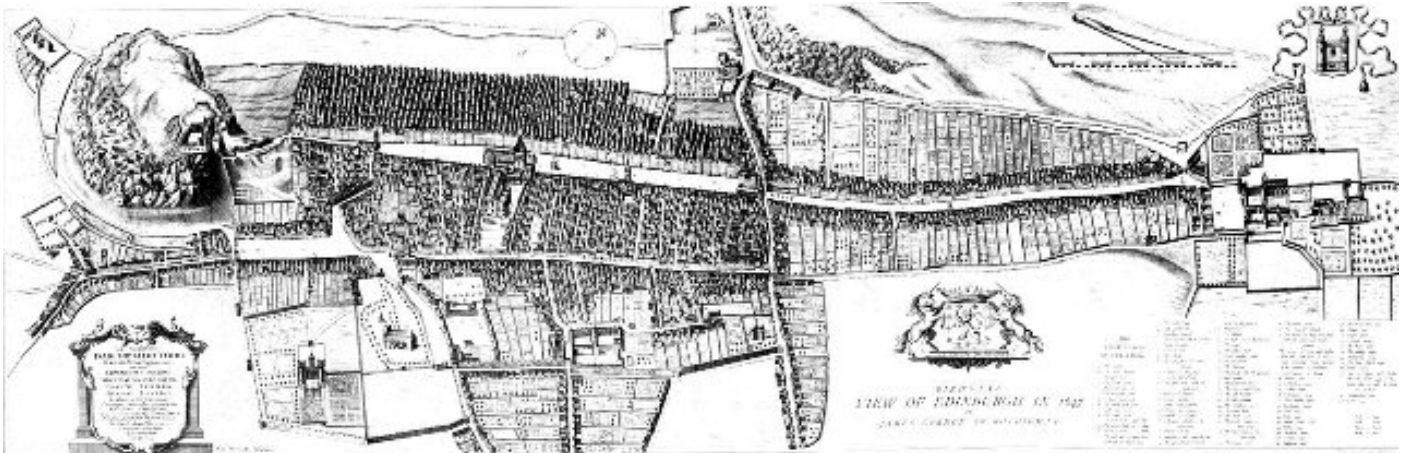
Practical information

Location	Edinburgh, Scotland
Getting there	<p>Train - The nearest station to the walk route is Edinburgh Waverley in the city centre. Regular services run from London Kings Cross, York, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Durham, Berwick, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen</p> <p>Bus - There are many local and long-distance services to the city centre. The bus station is just off Elder Street, near St Andrew Square.</p> <p>Car - Edinburgh is easily accessible from the north and south. The M8 links to Glasgow, the M74 and A1 to northern England.</p>
Start point	Outside Edinburgh Castle, EH1 2NG
Finish point	Scottish Parliament Building, EH99 1SP
Directions from railway station to the start	<p><i>From Edinburgh Waverley</i> - Exit onto Waverley Bridge and cross over the road. Turn left and with Princes Street Gardens on your right continue up to a roundabout. Turn right into Market Street. At the end bear right at the crossroads and go up Mound Place and into Ramsay Lane. There are no steps but it is steep - so take your time. At the top of Ramsey Lane turn right. The entrance to the castle is ahead.</p>
Onward journey	To return to Edinburgh city centre and Waverley station at the end of the walk use Directions 23 (on page 33).
Distance	1 ½ miles

Level	Gentle - a short city centre walk with no steps or climbs
Conditions	The walk is on a mixture of pavements and cobbles paths so wear suitable footwear. Make sure to take care when crossing busy roads.
Suitable for	<p>Families - take care of young children, especially at busy times of year (see Other Info below)</p> <p>Wheelchairs / pushchairs - an entirely step-free route though the streets are cobbled in parts</p> <p>Dogs - must be kept on a lead</p>
Refreshments	Plenty of cafés and shops along the route
Facilities	Free public toilets are available in Hunter Square (Stop 11) and at the end of the walk at the Palace of Holyroodhouse
Other info	<p>The route can be very busy at weekends and holidays - especially during the Edinburgh Festival (August) and at Hogmanay (New Year).</p> <p>Edinburgh Castle is open daily from 9.30am to 5pm / 6pm (Winter / Summer hours). Entry by ticket only, booking advisable at busy periods. Tel: 0131 225 9846</p> <p>The Palace of Holyroodhouse is open from 9.30am to 4.30pm / 5pm (Winter / Summer hours) except during royal events. Check before visiting. Free entry to the café and shop, ticketed entry to the Palace. Tel: 0131 556 5100</p>
Tourist Information	Edinburgh Information Centre, 3 Princes Street EH2 2QP. It is next to Stop 3 of the walk or Tel: 0131 473 3868

1. Welcome to Edinburgh

Outside Edinburgh Castle



A 1647 map of The Royal Mile. Edinburgh Castle is on the left
Courtesy of www.royal-mile.com

Welcome to Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city. This walk explores the city's historic Royal Mile and some of the narrow closes and alleys off it. Many of the buildings and monuments are familiar sights and popular visitor attractions but we will uncover some of the lesser known stories behind them and see things from an alternative angle. In particular we will explore Edinburgh as a city of trade and a city of enlightenment.

This walk takes in 22 sights that reveal the links between Edinburgh and some of the 206 Olympic and Paralympic Nations around the world. These international connections tell a story about the people, goods, ideas and inventions from this city. We have found links to around 40 different participating nations but we'd love to hear from you if you find any others on or near the route. The walk will also give you some ideas of how to look for international links near your home.

The walk is over a mile long starting at Edinburgh Castle and finishing at the Scottish Parliament Building. Please take care as the area can get extremely busy especially at weekends and in the tourist season. During the festival season in August the city's population can double in size. Whatever the time of year look after your valuables and please be patient when walking in the crowds! I hope you enjoy the walk.

Directions 1 - To start the walk make your way to the large open area outside Edinburgh Castle. Begin when you have a good view of the Castle entrance.

2. A volcanic fortress

Edinburgh Castle

Here we are outside Edinburgh Castle. Almost anywhere you go in Edinburgh you will see the Castle looming high above the city. It sits on a rock 120 metres above sea level. This rock is at least 350 million years old and is the remains of a volcanic eruption.

As you can see this location provides an ideal defensive one. There has been a royal castle here since the twelfth century and the rule of King David I of Scotland. The site was even known to the Romans under the name *alauna* or 'rock place'.



Edinburgh Castle from the top of the Royal Mile
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Today Edinburgh Castle is the biggest tourist attraction in Scotland. Over a million people visit it each year. Standing here you could forget that the building was designed to keep people out rather than draw people in. There have been several people to keep out over the centuries including Henry VIII, Oliver Cromwell and Bonnie Prince Charlie. As a result the Castle has been rebuilt and added to several times. Interestingly for a building so symbolic of Scotland and Scottish national identity help to defend the Castle has often come from abroad. They include a Frenchman, Antoine d'Arces, who designed armaments in 1514 and Migiliorino Ubaldini, an Italian engineer who was sent to strengthen the Castle in 1548 by Henry II of France.



A view of the Castle from below that highlights its ideal defensive position
© Craig Cormack via Flickr (Creative Commons license)

Take a look at the Latin phrase above the Castle entrance - *Nemo Me Impune Lacessit*. You might have seen this somewhere else – on the rim of pound coins. The phrase is the motto of The Order of the Thistle - the Scottish order of chivalry - and some Scottish Regiments in the British Army. It translates as 'No one attacks me with impunity', or 'Nobody attacks me without a fight'.

The motto refers to the Castle's defences and to Scottish national identity. The phrase has since been adopted by army regiments in Australia, Canada, South Africa, Belgium and the USA.



The motto of the Order of the Thistle
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Despite its history of conflict Edinburgh Castle is now a place of international diplomacy. Tourists visit it from throughout the world and you are more likely to see day trippers, foreign dignitaries and diplomats here than invading hordes.

Country links - Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, South Africa, United States of America

Directions 2 - From the Castle walk down Castle Hill to the junction with Johnston Terrace. On the right is a former church with a spire which is now called The Hub. Stop outside of it.

3. An international hub

The Hub

The building now known as the Hub was originally called the Victoria Hall. It was built between 1842 and 1845 as a church and assembly hall. It was designed by Edinburgh architect, J Gillespie Graham and the most famous gothic revivalist, Augustus Pugin. Pugin also designed several buildings, mostly churches, in Ireland and Australia.

The spire is actually the highest point in Edinburgh city centre, dwarfing all of the buildings around it. Its style is deliberately imposing and is a good example of architecture known as Gothic Revival. The term 'gothic' refers to a style of thirteenth-century buildings in southern Europe and was especially popular with Victorians who reproduced it in buildings across the Empire.



The Hub spire towering over the Old Town
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The building is now The Hub, the base of the annual Edinburgh Festival. The Festival is held every August and is actually a series of festivals that include music, literature, dance, opera, visual arts and comedy. Together they make the largest arts festival in the world. In 2011 a record-breaking 2,542 different shows took place in Edinburgh in over 250 venues. During Festival season visitors flock to Edinburgh from throughout the world and the city's population can grow from about 450,000 to over 1 million people.

Country links - Australia, Ireland

Directions 3 - From here, the walk goes the whole way down the Royal Mile to the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Sometimes there is only a short distance between stopping points and you will have to look carefully for signs. One of the first alleyways on the left hand side of the Mile is James Court. Go down the alleyway into James Court and stop inside the courtyard.

4. Enlightening times

James Court

We have now arrived at the first of The Royal Mile closes we will explore. There are many closes, also known as 'wynds', on either side of the road. Some of them lead to courtyards like this. Others are alleyways and staircases that cut through to elsewhere in the city. A few are closed off and private property.

Take your time to explore the closes – they are all different and often have interesting features and histories.

James Court was one of the places on the Royal Mile where the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment developed. The Enlightenment was a period that saw Scotland lead great advances in philosophy, economics, engineering, architecture, medicine, geology, archaeology, law, agriculture, chemistry and sociology.

By 1750 Scotland was one of the philosophical and intellectual centres of the world. Leading Scottish Enlightenment figures included Francis Hutcheson, Alexander Campbell, David Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, Robert Burns, Adam Ferguson, John Playfair, Joseph Black and James Hutton. There are statues throughout the city of many of these characters. You will see David Hume's, for example, a short way down the Royal Mile outside the High Court. As you explore Edinburgh, why not see how many others you can find?



Take time to explore the Royal Mile's closes, there are many surprises tucked away, like this view of the Scott Monument
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



Two of the Enlightenment statues on the Royal Mile - philosopher David Hume (left) and economist Adam Smith.
The toe of Hume's statue is shiny because people rub it for good luck!
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The Scottish Enlightenment proved influential across Europe and beyond. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries Scotland's intellectual, technological and social developments had worldwide impact. This was especially true in America, Canada and New Zealand. Scottish Enlightenment ideas were held in high regard leading to mass emigration by Scottish thinkers and inventors.

Back to James Court though. Philosopher David Hume and diarist James Boswell both lived here. Boswell also brought his friend Doctor Samuel Johnson to visit. Before we move on look for Edinburgh's city motto inscribed above a window in the court - *nisi dominus frustra*. The phrase has been linked to Edinburgh since 1647 and can be translated as 'Everything is in vain without the Lord'. Its appearance here is rather ironic given that David Hume was suspicious of organised religion!



James Court
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links - Canada, New Zealand, United States of America

Directions 4 - Go back onto the Royal Mile. Cross over to the other side and look for Riddell's Court. Stop inside the courtyard.

5. Royalty, rioting and regeneration

Riddell's Court and Riddell's Close

We are now at Riddell's Court and Close. The close is the access alleyway and the court is on the inside. This area has all sorts of interesting stories associated with it.

The two L-shaped buildings of Riddell's Court were built in about 1590 for Bailie John McMorran who was then the wealthiest merchant in the city. In 1593 McMorran hosted a grand banquet here that was attended by King James VI and nobles of the Danish embassy. McMorran met a sticky end in 1595 when he was caught up in a riot at Edinburgh High School. He was shot dead by one of the schoolboys who were protesting after being refused a holiday!



King James VI (left) and architect Patrick Geddes
Wikimedia Commons

Other notable residents include David Hume who lived here in 1751 before settling at James Court that we saw at our previous stop. In 1887 the building became a hall of residence for the university. Look out for an archway inscribed 'Vivendo Discimus' or 'By living we learn'. This commemorates Patrick Geddes, a Victorian lecturer and town planner, who hosted summer school classes here.

Geddes also helped to regenerate Edinburgh's Old Town. As well as a pioneer in town planning he believed that the physical environment affected people's mental well-being. Outside Scotland Geddes designed some of the street layouts of Tel Aviv and also worked in Bombay and Madras. He was a keen Francophile and in 1924 he also founded the College Des Ecosais, or Scots College, in Montpellier.

Country links - Denmark, France, India, Israel

Directions 5 - Go back out of Riddell's Close and turn right down the Royal Mile staying on the right hand side. Stop outside St Giles Cathedral and listen to Track 6.

6. To the hermitage

St Giles Cathedral

With its famed crown spire St Giles' Cathedral is the historic City Church of Edinburgh. It is named after St Giles who was a seventh century hermit (and later abbot) who lived in France. He became the patron of both Edinburgh and its church probably due to the ancient ties between Scotland and France.

St Giles is usually shown protecting a deer from an arrow which had pierced his own body. A fine relief of this image can be found over the main doors of the Cathedral. Images like these above the entrances to churches, cathedrals and other buildings are called tympanums.

Tympanums are semi-circle or triangle shaped decorative walls. They were brought to northern Europe from the traditions of ancient Greek and Roman architecture. Apart from a structural role supporting the doorway beneath a tympanum tells a visual story that everyone can view – like an early form of advertising.

Tympanums are found all around the world from the famous Pantheon in Rome to the Thomas Jefferson Building in Washington DC. Look out for this distinctive feature on public buildings near to your home not just on churches but on all kinds of monumental public buildings.



St Giles Cathedral tympanum
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links - France, Greece, Italy

Directions 6 - Go inside the Cathedral for the next stop

7. Memorials and memories

Inside St Giles Cathedral

Inside churches and cathedrals you can often find a wealth of international history and connections. If you want to find out about international links near to your home local churches are fantastic places to explore. Inside St Giles are some of the typical international links you can find.

Along many of the walls are war memorials. In St Giles there are memorials to Edinburgh soldiers who gave their lives in conflicts throughout the world. Look out for plaques commemorating those who fell in India, Egypt, France, Gallipoli, South Africa, Crete, Korea, Palestine, Jutland, Ypres, Pakistan and Afghanistan.



Robert Louis Stevenson memorial, St Giles Cathedral
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

You can also find statues of notable people. In St Giles there is a relief plaque depicting writer Robert Louis Stevenson and a statue of John Knox who served as Minister at St Giles until 1572. We will hear more about Knox a little later in the walk.

Before leaving the Cathedral take a look at the organ which is regarded as one of the finest in Europe. It was built in 1992 by the Rieger Orgelbau, an Austrian maker. The distinctive case is made out of Austrian oak. Rieger have their origins in a nineteenth-century family firm. After the Second World War it was nationalised by the Czech government and merged with another workshop as Rieger-Kloss. However the owners and workers of the original firm moved to Austria and founded a new workshop as 'Rieger Orgelbau'.

Country links - Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, Greece, India, Pakistan, Palestine, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey

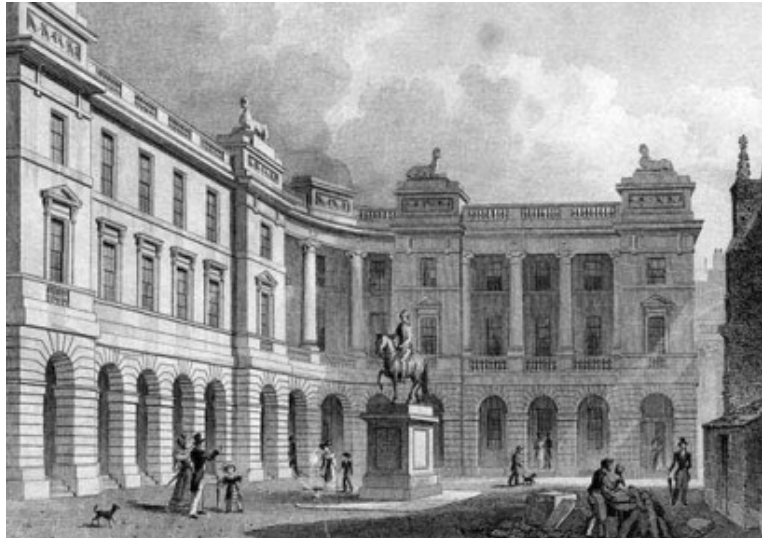
Directions 7 - When you are ready exit the cathedral and turn left. Continue into a square at the side of the cathedral and stop by a statue of a man on a horse.

8. The other world

Parliament Square

This is Parliament Square. It was originally built in 1632 but most of the buildings we can see date from the early 1800s. This is because the area was twice destroyed by fire. The square housed the original Canongate Tolbooth now marked by The Heart of Midlothian in the ground.

Opposite St Giles is Parliament House which served as a parliament building and a civil court. The front of the building was redesigned in the 1800s. Look at the shape of the buildings, the columns and steps. These are typical 'classical' features echoing ancient Greek and Roman architecture. We will discuss Edinburgh's classical buildings in a bit more detail later on.



Parliament House (1829)
Engraving by Thomas H Shepherd
© Peter Stubbs www.edinburghphoto.org.uk

Before its redesign Parliament Square was the centre of Edinburgh's business district. Outside the parliament building a variety of shops included jewellers, watchmakers, bookshops and even a coffee shop from "the other world". This shop belonged to Peter Williamson known as 'Indian Peter'. He was born in 1730 and kidnapped as a boy while overseas. He was then sold as a slave to work on American plantations and was even kidnapped again by Cherokee Indians. Williamson arrived in Edinburgh in 1758. When he set up his shop a wooden figure outside depicted him in Cherokee Indian dress with a sign that read "Vintner from the other world".

Also in the square we can find some interesting animals. Beside St Giles is a lead statue of Charles II on horseback. It has been attributed to Dutch sculptor Grinling Gibbons. Dating from about 1685 it is one of the oldest lead statues in the UK. Before you leave look up at the roof of the parliament building. Look out for statues of sphinxes, ancient Egyptian monsters with human heads on lion bodies.

Country links - Egypt, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, United States of America

Directions 8 - Walk around the back of St Giles Cathedral and straight across into the courtyard of the City Chambers. Just inside the grounds is another statue of a man with a horse. Stop in the grounds.

9. All his kingdoms and a horse

City Chambers

Across from Parliament Square is another interesting animal of the ancient world. We are now in the courtyard of the City Chambers, which are dominated by a statue called 'Alexander Taming Bucephalus'. It was made in 1823 by John Steell. Steell produced many notable statues in Edinburgh and went on to become Queen Victoria's official royal sculptor. He also produced statues of Walter Scott and Robert Burns that stand in New York's Central Park.



Alexander the Great on Bucephalus,
from the Alexander Mosaic in Pompeii
(Wikimedia Commons)

This statue depicts Alexander the Great, a king of ancient Greece. During the fourth century BC Alexander founded one of the largest empires in the history of the world.

He was never defeated in battle and by the age of 30 Alexander ruled lands extending from Italy to parts of India. His campaigns took in modern day Greece, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. He also helped to popularise ancient Greek culture and customs.

The choice of Alexander for a statue illustrates how he had become a figure of admiration and even hero worship. To the Romans Alexander became almost legendary, a model of empire building and a great leader. The Victorians admired Alexander too. In fact Greek and Roman subjects became highly fashionable in the Victorian era. In Edinburgh you can find examples across the city from statues like this to the vast monuments on Calton Hill. The fashion for classical architecture combined with the Enlightenment meant Edinburgh became known as the 'Athens of the North'.

Country links - Afghanistan, Egypt, Greece, India, Iraq, Italy, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, United States of America

Directions 9 - Cross back over to the other side of the Royal Mile and find Old Fishmarket Close. The entrance is decorated with sculpted fish. Stop at the entrance.

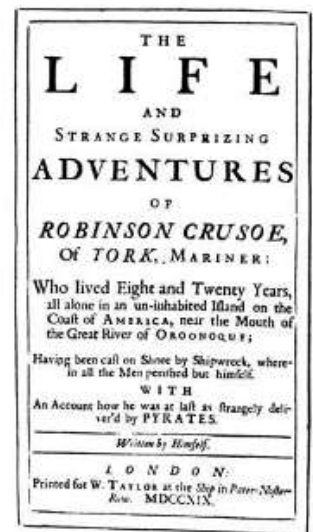
10. Fishy tales

Old Fishmarket Close

From horses to fish. Fish – including plaice, cod and herring – have been traded in Edinburgh since the sixteenth century. The east coast of Scotland shares waters with Iceland, Norway and the Faroe Islands. Fishmarket Close was where fish were sold. It was once described as 'a steep, narrow stinking ravine'. Look for the decorative fish over the entrance to the close, showing what kinds of fish were sold here.

Old Fishmarket Close also gives us a fictional link to warmer waters. In 1707 the author Daniel Defoe is thought to have worked here as a secret agent for the English government. At that time the Treaty of Union was being prepared, to unite Scotland with England and create Great Britain under a single monarch.

In 1719 Defoe published *Robinson Crusoe*, often regarded as the first English novel. The story was based on the true-life experiences of Scotsman Alexander Selkirk who was marooned off the coast of Chile on the Pacific Island of Mas a Tierra. Following the success of Defoe's book, Mas a Tierra was later re-named 'Robinson Crusoe Island'.



Robinson Crusoe, 1719 first edition title page
(Wikimedia Commons)

Country links - Chile, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway

Directions 10 - Continue down the right hand side of the Royal Mile. Stop when you reach Hunter Square outside Tron Kirk.

11. Give it some welly

Hunter Square

This square beside the Royal Mile is another reminder of Edinburgh's international links. Hunter Square shares its name with Hunter Boots Limited. This Edinburgh firm pioneered the design and manufacture of rubber boots commonly known as wellingtons or wellies.

Hunter was founded in 1856 as The North British Rubber Company by an American entrepreneur, Henry Lee Norris. The boots were a huge success and by 1875 the company's staff had risen from 4 to 600.



South African gumboot dancers
(Wikimedia Commons)

Much of Hunter's success came through supplying the British Army. During the First World War Hunter was asked to design a boot that could withstand flooded trenches. In the Second World War Hunter also made other rubber articles such as gas masks, lifebelts and groundsheets. Hunter then had to leave their Edinburgh factory to cope with rising production demands. They have been based in Dumfries ever since.

Most of the rubber Hunter used came from India. Rubber was a valuable commodity - well into the twentieth century rubber was more valuable than silver. Edinburgh's welly wonderland can boast even more international links. The boots apparently inspired the welly boot dance, or gumboot dance, performed by South African gold miners to keep up morale while working. It is believed by some to have been a forerunner of the tap dance.

Country links - Belgium, France, India, South Africa, United States of America

Directions 11 - Go back to the Royal Mile and cross over the junction of North Bridge and South Bridge. Continue downwards until you reach John Knox House on the left hand side.

12. Knock Knox

John Knox House

John Knox House is a fifteenth-century mansion apparently owned by the controversial religious reformer John Knox. You may have seen his statue inside St Giles Cathedral.

Knox was born near Edinburgh in 1505 and became one of the most influential churchmen in the Reformation. The Reformation was part of the movement throughout Western Europe which led to national churches breaking their ties with Rome.

In 1547 Knox was captured by the French during a raid on St Andrews Castle. After his release he lived in exile in Geneva and Frankfurt.

By 1559 Knox had returned to Scotland. He led the Lords of the Congregation, a group of powerful nobles at the forefront of the Reformation, into Edinburgh. Knox was elected minister of Edinburgh and played a major role in establishing styles of worship and administration that became accepted throughout the country.

This house became known as John Knox House from the nineteenth century onwards but Knox may not have owned it. There is a plaque in Warriston Close that marks the site of an alternate house Knox may have lived in. Either way, the house is certainly worth a visit, especially for the painted ceiling inside.



John Knox House (1829)
Engraving by Thomas H Shepherd
© Peter Stubbs www.edinphoto.org.uk

Country links - France, Germany, Switzerland

Directions 12 - Cross over the road to the Cashmere shop opposite John Knox House.

13. Copying cashmere

28 High Street

Here we can see evidence of another of the city's major trades – cashmere. The name comes from the region of Kashmir in India and Pakistan. The cashmere trade stems from the late-eighteenth century after British merchants and soldiers in India brought back Kashmiri shawls.

With their distinctive floral leaf design inspired by the Babylonian tree of life these shawls became very popular but were very expensive to buy. There was therefore a demand for a domestic version.



Multi-coloured cashmere

© Paloetic via Flickr.com (Creative Commons license)

Edinburgh was already well known for linen damask weaving, so in 1777 William Mortimer produced the first imitation Kashmir shawls in Scotland. Other weavers such as George Richmond and James Mitchell followed suit and the industry took off. A fashion for muslin sheath dresses which could be rather cold in winter also made the shawls very popular. The first shawls appear to have been printed and brocaded but in 1798 Mitchell produced the first woven shawls.

Most of the evidence for the Edinburgh shawl industry comes from the Board of Trustees for Fisheries and Manufactures in Scotland. This was an early Board of Trade that tried to encourage industry by giving prizes to various trades including textiles. The first prize for a Kashmir-inspired shawl was awarded to Mortimer in 1781. A decade later George Richmond had 13 looms in operation. Production reached its peak between 1800 and 1820 when over 1,000 weavers were employed creating Kashmir-inspired shawls.

Country links - India, Pakistan

Directions 13 - Continue down the Royal Mile across the junction of Jeffrey Street and St Mary's Street. Look across the road for Mid Common Close and a small sculpture on the wall above the entrance.

14. A romantic adventure

Mid Common Close

Here we come to another connection with warmer climates. This block of buildings is known as Morocco Land. Sounds odd doesn't it, a name like this in Edinburgh? The answer lies high up on the wall above Mid Common Close. Look for a little statue of a Moorish fellow resplendent in a turban and necklace.

The story behind it relates to the seventeenth century and a young Edinburgh resident named Andrew Gray. In 1633 Gray was sentenced to death for rioting. Apparently he helped to burn down the Provost's house during riots after the coronation of Charles I (the Provost was the equivalent to an English mayor).



Moorish statue, Mid Common Close
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

To escape the hangman's noose Gray fled to Morocco. He soon made his fortune there. Then in 1645 Gray returned to Edinburgh on an Algerian pirate ship. Edinburgh was then riddled with the plague and Gray's cousin had fallen seriously ill. To complicate matters this cousin was also the Provost's daughter.

Gray helped to tend her back to health and eventually they were married. Gray's execution order was presumably cancelled for his good deeds and the happy couple moved into a building near here. The block became known to locals as "Morocco Land". The statue, some say of the Emperor of Morocco, commemorates the dramatic story.

Country links - Algeria, Morocco

Directions 14 - Continue down the right hand side of the Mile. Turn into the archway of St John Street. Stop outside the second building on the right with the iron gates.

15. An ancient order

Chancery of the Priory of Scotland

Turning off the Royal Mile itself for a moment we come to the Chancery of the Priory of Scotland, or the Scottish headquarters of the Order of St John.

The Order of St John has its origins in the ancient Order of the Knights of St John, who went to the Crusades – not to fight but to look after knights who were sick. They were known as the Knights Hospitaller. Here in St John Street is where the Knights of St John were believed to have lived in the Middle Ages.

This building dates from 1798 though the Order is much older. It evolved from an eleventh-century hospital for pilgrims in Jerusalem and is now an international charity that works in over 40 countries.

The Order is probably best known today for providing the St John's Ambulance service. But St John's Scotland is unique in that it doesn't provide an ambulance service or first aid training. They work overseas with St John's hospitals in Jerusalem and Malawi.



A 14th century painting of the Grand Master and senior members of the Knights Hospitaller (Wikimedia Commons)

Country links - Israel, Malawi

Directions 15 - Retrace your steps through the arch. Turn left back up the Royal Mile for a few metres and look for a black and white cross in bricks in the road. When you find it, stop on the pavement beside it.

16. X marks the spot

St John Cross, 229 Canongate

Here in the road is a cross of St John or a Maltese Cross. At busy times it is very easy to miss in the traffic. It is the same type of cross as ones on the building that we just saw. The cross marks the site of the original standing cross of St John. The cross also marked the boundary between Edinburgh and the Burgh of Canongate.

Although it looks like one continuous street the Royal Mile is actually part of two distinct areas. The lower end is called Canongate. Canongate is named after the canons of the now-ruined Holyrood Abbey and up until 1856 the area was given 'burgh status'. In other words Canongate was a separate town from the rest of Edinburgh.



St John cross in the road at Canongate
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Long before then Canongate had become a hub for crafts and trading. The Confession of Faith, signed in 1638 by a large number of Canongate's residents, indicates that a broad cross-section of craftsmen lived locally. Over 50 tailors signed along with 32 wrights, 25 weavers, 15 dyers and 8 saddlers. As trading opportunities increased in the seventeenth century connections between Canongate and the wider world became stronger still, as we will see.

Country links - Malta

Directions 16 - Continue down the right hand side of the Royal Mile. Stop when you reach Sugarhouse Close.

17. A sweet story

Sugarhouse Close

One of the trades in Canongate takes us to the West Indies. Edinburgh's port, Leith, became Scotland's centre for West Indian trade. Vessels could be fitted out more easily at Leith than on the River Clyde in Glasgow. Leith was also a cheaper place to operate than London because trading here meant avoiding English duty charges. As a result many West Indian planters made Leith a base for their consignments.

One of the major industries that resulted was sugar refining. The first house in Edinburgh for baking sugars was set up at Leith in 1751. Here in the city is Sugarhouse Close. The land here was originally owned by the Earl of Dunkeld but between 1752 and 1824 the principal business conducted on this site was sugar refining.



Sugarhouse Close sign
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

In 1829 this site was purchased by MacFie & Sons, a company with a long history of refining in Glasgow. The company moved here after their Leith refinery, established in 1804, burnt down for the second time. The MacFie & Sons Edinburgh Sugarhouse continued operating even after the Leith refinery was rebuilt. It finally closed around 1840 and the company was later absorbed into Tate & Lyle.

Country links - Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago

Directions 17 - Cross directly over the road to the Tollbooth Tavern, the building with the pointed clock tower. There are some benches outside the building next door which you may like to use.

18. The old lock up

Canongate Tollbooth

This is Canongate Tollbooth - one of the landmarks of Edinburgh's Old Town. Built in 1591 it served as a tollbooth or toll-collecting gate for people entering Edinburgh from the Holyrood end of the Royal Mile. As well as a toll collection point the building was also a council chamber, police office and a notorious jail.

The Tollbooth has a colourful history including an exorcism. In 1654 prisoners held here included Scottish enemies of Oliver Cromwell. Many prisoners detained at the Tollbooth were then sent to the Caribbean for seven years hard labour on plantations. After completing their sentence they could return to Scotland or remain in the colony. Before departure however all the captives were marked. Women had their faces branded with an iron while men had an ear cut off.

One early-seventeenth century prisoner was a young merchant named Arthur Clephane. Clephane imported seeds. Some came direct from growers in the Netherlands and others from further afield via ships' captains.

From African marigolds to Silesian lettuce and from Indian cresses to French honeysuckle Clephane's seeds were distributed widely around Scotland through sales to the gentry. In turn the plants and their seeds became naturalised crops. But Clephane's business was based on credit and with no guarantees that seeds would germinate. Because Clephane repeatedly refused to pay his bills he was imprisoned in the Tollbooth.



Canongate Tolbooth clock tower
© Kim Traynor via Geograph.org.uk
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Country links - Caribbean, Belgium, The Netherlands

Directions 18 - Cross back over to the other side of the Royal Mile. Stop by the Museum of Edinburgh, a large building with gold writing on the walls.

19. A better life

Huntly House

Evidence of another trade in Canongate can be found just across from the Tollbooth. This grand building is Huntly House. It was built in 1570 when three small houses were merged. This part of Canongate was home to metalworkers, known as hammermen, and bakers. Hence the close at the end of this building is called Bakehouse Close.

Look up at the walls of Huntly House. It was also called 'The Speaking House' because of the Latin mottos you can see. In particular look for the motto with a picture of wheat sheaves. It reads spes altera vitae or 'hope for a better life'. To early agricultural people a good wheat harvest assured plenty of bread to keep their community alive throughout the winter. Wheat sheaves became symbols of successful harvest and were associated with nourishment and healthy life.



Wheat sheaves on Huntly House
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The wheat sheaf symbol dates back to ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia which is present-day Iraq. You can find wheat sheaves in other parts of Edinburgh including Dean Village. You can also find the 'spes altera vitae' motto elsewhere on the Royal Mile such as in Advocate's Close.

Huntly House is now the Museum of Edinburgh and is well worth a visit to find out more about the city's history. The entrance to the museum is through Bakehouse Close.

Country links - Egypt, Iraq

Directions 19 - Cross back over the road and walk down the left hand side of the Mile. Stop when you reach Panmure Close.

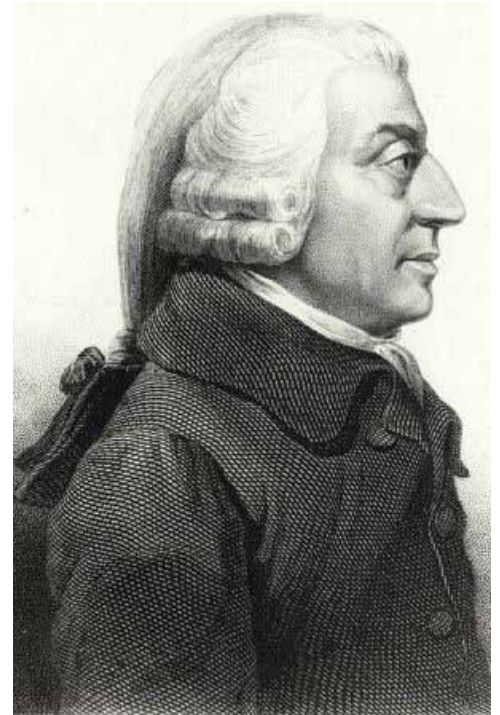
20. The wealth of nations

Panmure Close

This is the last of the Royal Mile closes we will visit on our walk. Appropriately its most famous resident could give us a title to sum up what we have already seen. From 1778 Panmure Close was home to the economist Adam Smith.

Smith was one of the leading figures in the Scottish Enlightenment. You might have spotted his statue near St Giles Cathedral. Smith gave lectures in Edinburgh from 1748 and was a member of the city's Philosophical Society. His work as a tutor allowed him to travel to France where he met other intellectuals including Voltaire and Benjamin Franklin.

Whilst he was in France Smith started writing a book on economics that would change the world. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776. It is usually known by its shorter title *The Wealth of Nations*. The book set out the arguments for a free market economy and was highly influential. Economists and thinkers throughout Europe including Jean-Baptiste Say, Karl Marx and Ludwig von Mises have followed Smith's ideas. In fact the book probably contains the origins for the current economic model of Western Europe and the USA.



Engraving of Adam Smith,
author of *The Wealth of Nations*
(Wikimedia Commons)

Country links - France

Directions 20 - Continue down to the end of the Royal Mile. Cross the road at the mini roundabout and in front of you is the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Go down towards the iron gates and stop in the palace grounds.

21. A retreat and an attack

Palace of Holyroodhouse

We have now walked from Edinburgh Castle at one end of the Royal Mile to the Palace of Holyroodhouse at the other end. The current palace dates from the seventeenth century and was partly built by Dutch craftsmen including painted ceilings by Jacob de Wet. The site is much older though – it dates back to Holyrood Abbey which was founded in 1128 by King David I of Scotland. You can see the ruins of the Abbey next to the Palace.



The Palace of Holyroodhouse
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

After the French Revolution Holyrood was briefly a refuge for the French royal family whose members stayed here until 1832.

Before it was a sanctuary Holyrood was even more briefly a base camp for war. In 1688 Scotland's Catholic king, James II, fled the country to avoid the Protestant William of Orange's invading army. Despite his exile James II maintained support from the Catholic community and his followers were known as Jacobites. On the 17th of September 1745 James II's grandson arrived in Edinburgh to try and reclaim the throne for his family. This grandson was Prince Charles Edward Stuart better known as Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Bonnie Prince Charlie declared his father, James Edward Francis Stuart, was the rightful King of Scotland. Some 60,000 people lined the Royal Mile to welcome the prince but his attempt to regain the throne was not a success. Unable to capture Edinburgh Castle Bonnie Prince Charlie set up court in Holyrood Palace staying here for five weeks. His officers were based at the end of the Royal Mile in White Horse Close. Bonnie Prince Charlie's plans to regain Scotland ended in April 1746 with defeat to the Duke of Cumberland at the Battle of Culloden. The Prince returned to his birthplace – Rome – and lived the rest of his life in exile. He is buried in the Vatican.

Country links - France, Italy, The Netherlands, Vatican City

Directions 21 - Retrace your steps away from the gateway to the roundabout. Turn left and follow the road around the Palace. Stop next to the side gates of the palace on a road called Horse Wynd.

22. A symbol of Scotland

Palace of Holyroodhouse gates

Today the Palace of Holyroodhouse is the official Scottish residence of the British monarch. It is open to the public except for days when it hosts state ceremonies and royal social events. International visitors in recent years have included Harald V of Norway, Margrethe II of Denmark, French president Francois Mitterrand, German chancellor Helmut Kohl, South African president Nelson Mandela, Russian president Vladimir Putin and Pope Benedict the Sixteenth.

Look on the palace gates for images of St Andrew the patron saint of Scotland. He is shown against an X-shaped cross. These crosses are saltires. You can also see them on the Scottish flag.



St Andrew at the gates
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

According to legend Saint Andrew was crucified on a saltire in Greece and the shape became a symbol of his martyrdom. Depictions of St Andrew on the cross in Scotland have been found dating back to 1180 and the reign of William I. The saltire became a Scottish symbol from the fourteenth century when in 1385 the Parliament of Scotland ordered Scottish soldiers to wear crosses. As we will see at our next stop the saltire is a symbol of Scottish identity still very much in use today.

Country links - Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Vatican City

Directions 22 - Cross over the road and make your way to the paved area in front of the Scottish Parliament. There are stone seats if you would like to sit down.

23. From historic castle to modern city

Scottish Parliament Building

This dramatic building is the new Scottish Parliament. Before the foundation of the United Kingdom, Scotland was an independent state with its own parliament. This changed in 1707 when the Act of Union allied Scotland with England. As a result Scotland was ruled from London and did not have its own parliament for another 292 years.

After increasing pressure from the Scottish Nationalist movement Scotland was granted its own legislature and work on a new Scottish Parliament building began in 1999.



The windows of the MSP building, Scottish Parliament
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

An international competition was held to design the building and attracted entries from architects including Rafael Vinoly from Uruguay and American Richard Meier. The winning entry came from Enric Miralles from Catalonia in Spain. Sadly Miralles died before the parliament opened in 2004.



Local granite in the walls
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

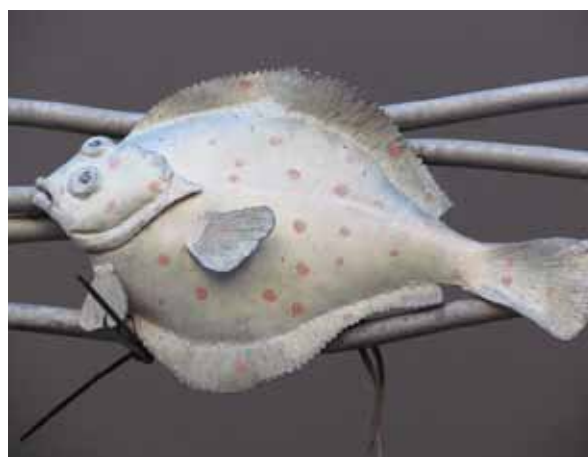
The building has won several architecture awards including the 2005 Stirling Prize. It is actually a series of buildings each designed in different styles. Miralles' plan was to reflect Scottish national identity. Scottish materials were used such as local granite, oak and sycamore while the grounds are home to Scottish wildflowers and plants. The roof line was designed to recall nearby Salisbury Crags. The unusual windows on the MSP building are apparently inspired by Henry Raeburn's painting, *The Skating Minister*. The seats outside are shaped like fishing boats, reflecting Scotland's strong ties with the sea.

You are allowed to go inside the parliament building. Look out for a series of saltires on the roof of the debating chamber.

We have now reached the end of our walk. The modern parliament building is a fitting place to finish. With its mixture of international design and traditional Scottish symbols the Parliament symbolises Edinburgh's international status as a city built on native talent but open to outside influences.

Our journey along the Royal Mile hasn't only taken us from Edinburgh's oldest to newest public buildings. We have also followed Edinburgh's development from a historic castle built on a volcano to a modern city built on invention, intellect and international trade.

Along the way we have discovered a wealth of international connections between Edinburgh and almost 40 of the 206 Olympic and Paralympic participating 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?



Some of the sights of the Royal Mile
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links - Spain, United States of America, Uruguay

Directions 23 - We hope you have enjoyed the walk. To explore the Royal Mile keep the parliament on your left and retrace your steps back uphill. To get to Waverley train station continue up the Royal Mile until you reach Cockburn Street on the right hand side. At the end of Cockburn Street cross over Market Street onto Waverley Bridge. The station is on your right.

Credits

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The
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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 -
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