



The Athens of the North

Discover how international ideas built Edinburgh's New Town

1. Welcome to Edinburgh

Welcome to Walk the World! This walk is one of a series of 20 walks in different parts of the UK. These walks explore 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 walking routes, you will discover evidence of how different countries have shaped our towns and cities.

Here we are in Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city. 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, dates back to the Middle Ages. It centres on the Castle and the Royal Mile. Increasingly cramped and twice destroyed by fire, by the eighteenth century the Old Town was becoming too small for the expanding population. So a New Town was planned.



The National Monument, Calton Hill
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Creating a New Town from scratch was an opportunity for fresh and bold urban design. The result was a grid pattern of streets, squares and public gardens, spectacular public buildings and elegant private houses. Built into the design was the space for celebrating the city's leading figures and commemorating those who had given public service. Although proud of their Edinburgh roots, many of these characters travelled the world, spending some of their working lives overseas, or had ideas that were influential around the world.

This walk takes in 26 sights around the New Town 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 and ideas that shaped this city.

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We have found links to more than 60 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 about 2 ½ miles long. We start at in Princes Street Gardens and finish at Calton Hill. The first part of the walk is through public gardens and church yards. The second part of the walk uses pavements but crosses busy roads so please do take care. Use pedestrian crossings, look out for traffic and take care of your valuables. The walk up Calton Hill at the end is fairly steep, with steps directly to the top or a longer step-free path. I hope you enjoy the walk.

Directions 1

From Waverley Station, follow signs for Princes Street Gardens. Enter the Gardens by the Waverley Bridge entrance. Make your way to the enormous Scott Monument located a few metres inside the gardens, where you can listen to Track 2.



A view of Edinburgh New Town from the top of the Nelson Monument on Calton Hill. Edinburgh Royal Observatory and the square Playfair Monument are in the foreground.
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



2. Great Scott

East Princes Street Gardens

We start at one of the largest and most ornate monuments in the city – the Scott Monument. This spectacular structure commemorates the writer Walter Scott, who was born and lived in Edinburgh. Imposing isn't it? It stands 200 feet 6 inches tall, with 64 carved figures. Scott is sitting at the bottom with his dog Maida by his side. The statue is made from the finest Italian Carrara marble. The monument looks so dark because it's made from a kind of sandstone that gets dirty very quickly. This stone was chosen deliberately to make the monument look more dramatic. Inside you can climb 287 steps to enjoy spectacular views of the city.

A monument this grand for a writer seems a bit strange. Shakespeare doesn't have a monument like this. Neither does Dickens. Monuments like this are usually for royalty or military figures. So why was this made for Walter Scott? First, Scott was an exceptional figure. He was the first writer to achieve lifetime worldwide fame. His books – such as *Waverley*, *Rob Roy* and *The Heart of Midlothian* – helped to give Scotland an exciting international image. They were also very popular in Europe, especially in France.

Another reason that the monument is so grand is its location. Princes Street Gardens were created after Edinburgh's New Town was built. This area in front of us was once a lake called Nor Loch which explains its shape as a deep and elongated trench. It acted as a moat for Edinburgh Castle until being drained in 1759. While the New Town was built, this site became a dumping ground. Then the gardens were created from 1816. By then Edinburgh was full of confidence. An international trade centre and the heart of the Scottish Enlightenment, the city was brimming with riches and ideas.

When the Scott Monument was completed in 1846, over a decade after Scott's death, it commemorated him but also Edinburgh's status and civic pride. The monument was a symbol of the transformed city's wealth, creativity and modernity. In a way, statues commemorate two groups of people – the people the statue is dedicated to and the people who put the statue up.



Portrait of Sir Walter Scott (1822) by Henry Raeburn
(Wikimedia Commons)

Country links

France

Italy

Directions 2

Make your way to the David Livingstone statue, just to one side of the Scott Monument and listen to Track 3.

3. Dr Livingstone, I presume? *East Princes Street Gardens*

Next to the Scott Monument, this statue looks rather more modest. The subject though is anything but. This is the Scottish explorer and missionary, David Livingstone. Livingstone was one of the most popular public figures of the Victorian era. Livingstone was not from Edinburgh but was given the freedom of the city in 1857 in recognition of his achievements.



'How I found Livingstone'

1876 engraving of Stanley meeting Livingstone in the Zambezi
(Wikimedia Commons)

From 1840 until his death in 1873, Livingstone explored many parts of Africa. His missions included journeys through much of southern, central and eastern Africa, including present-day South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Angola, DR Congo, Malawi and Tanzania.

Livingstone was one of the first Westerners to visit and map these lands. He was the first white man to make the 4,300-mile transcontinental journey across Africa. He was also the first European to see the huge waterfalls on the Zambezi River between Zambia and Zimbabwe. Livingstone dedicated his discovery to Queen Victoria and named them the Victoria Falls in her honour. There are similar statues of Livingstone to this one both on the Zambian and Zimbabwean sides of the falls.



Detail of Livingstone's statue
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The British government gave Livingstone financial support, since his religious missions also provided useful information and new trade links. Although he was an explorer, Livingstone is perhaps most famous for being lost! Deep in Africa, he lost contact with the outside world for six years.

Continues next page

Country links

Angola
Botswana
DR Congo
Malawi
Mozambique
South Africa
Tanzania
Zambia
Zimbabwe

In 1871, The New York Herald newspaper sent Welsh journalist Henry Morton Stanley to find Livingstone as a publicity stunt. Against the odds, Stanley succeeded. He tracked Livingstone down in Tanzania and greeted him with the now famous question "Doctor Livingstone, I presume?"

Livingstone died in Zambia from malaria. Attendants carried his body over 1,000 miles to Zanzibar on the coast, from where it was returned by ship to Britain. He was then buried in Westminster Abbey. This bronze statue, cast in 1877, was made by Amelia Paton Hill, one of Edinburgh's few women sculptors of the era. The statue was cleaned in 2010, so you can see its wealth of detail. Look out for the Bible in Livingstone's hand, the compass at his waist and the lion skin at his feet.

Directions 3

Follow the paved footpath along Princes Street Gardens with Princes Street on your right. At the end of this first section of the gardens, you reach the twin buildings of the National Gallery of Scotland and the Scottish Royal Academy. Stand by these buildings and listen to Track



The Victoria Falls, Zambezi River
By Zest-pk via Wikimedia (Creative Commons licence)

4. The Athens of the North

The Mound

In between the two halves of Princes Street Gardens are these two spectacular public buildings – the Royal Scottish Academy and the National Gallery of Scotland. Both are art galleries and have impressive collections by artists from across Europe. These include – amongst others – Botticelli, Cezanne, Degas, van Dyck, Gauguin, van Gogh, Goya, Monet, Poussin, Raphael, Rembrandt, Tintoretto, Titian, Velázquez, Vermeer and Watteau. There is also a significant collection by Scottish artists including Andrew Geddes, Henry Raeburn, Allan Ramsey, David Roberts, William Strang and David Wilkie.



Columns outside the Royal Scottish Academy
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Although the artists provide us with a multitude of international connections, this walk focuses on public buildings and monuments. So we are going to concentrate on the outside of the galleries. The Royal Scottish Academy building was completed in 1822 while the National Gallery of Scotland opened in 1859. They are less than two hundred years old but their style copies something from over 2,000 years ago.

These buildings are excellent examples of ‘neo-classical’ architecture. ‘Classical’ architecture was the building style of ancient Greece and Rome. Neo-classical means a more modern interpretation of that style. The columns, porticoes and roofs and elaborate stonework you can see here are all typical classical features. Classical buildings were designed using strict rules and mathematical formulae to make sure they were pleasing to the eye. Columns, for example, were not only structural features but also had a decorative function; their shape and spacing was carefully calculated. Also look on the roof for stone-carved sphinxes, which were mythical monsters from ancient Egypt that are part lion and part human.

Country links

Belgium

Egypt

France

Greece

Italy

Spain

The Netherlands

Continues next page



But you might wonder why architects in Edinburgh wanted to copy building styles from ancient empires. Well, in ancient times, this building style was an expression of wealth, power and prestige. In the eighteenth century, Britain was leading the world with its industrial advances and was growing rich on trade and

commerce. Therefore, buildings in neo-classical style also demonstrated wealth, power and prestige, just as they had in ancient times. Neo-classical style became very fashionable in Edinburgh and other British cities.

At the same time, Edinburgh was the heart of the Scottish Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was period when 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.

The Scottish Enlightenment together with the sheer number of neo-classical buildings like these meant that Edinburgh became known as ‘the Athens of the North’. Look out for more neo-classical architecture throughout this walk.



Sphinx and friend
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Directions 4

When you are ready, cross over The Mound and enter the western section of Princes Street Gardens. Follow the upper path. Go up the ramp to the statue of a soldier on horseback and listen to Track 5.

5. Second to none

West Princes Street Gardens

This statue of a cavalryman on horseback is a war memorial to commemorate the soldiers of a particular regiment – the Royal Scots Greys. They were famous for riding grey horses, hence their name. War memorials often record where soldiers have served overseas and are very good places to find international connections.



The Royal Scots Greys at the Battle of Waterloo in
Scotland Forever! (1881) by Lady Butler
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

The Royal Scots Greys were founded in 1707 and have a long history of international service. They fought in

continental Europe during the Austrian and Spanish successions, at the Crimea and also in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. Their most famous foreign battle was at Waterloo in 1815, where the Greys played a major role in defeating Napoleon's French army.

This memorial was erected in 1906 after the Boer War in South Africa. On the base you can find other plaques that have been added since. These include for the First and Second World Wars plus subsequent conflicts in Korea, Northern Ireland and Iraq.

As the military role of horses declined, the Greys were merged in 1971 to form the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards. The Royal Scots Greys motto was "second to none".

Directions 5

Go down the ramp back to the main path and continue a little further along the gardens until you reach a sculpture of a soldier. Stop here and listen to Track 6.

Country links

Austria
Belgium
Egypt
France
Germany
Iraq
Libya
South Africa
South Korea
Spain
The Netherlands
Tunisia
Ukraine

6. A call and a creed

West Princes Street Gardens

Here is another war memorial. This one is dedicated to Scottish soldiers of the First World War. The sculpture is titled 'The Call'. The memorial was a gift from Scottish Americans and offers "a tribute from men and women of Scottish blood and sympathies in the United States of America to Scotland".

The memorial shows a young Scottish soldier, complete with kilt, rising out of his seat to take part in the action. Behind is a frieze showing Scottish men marching to the front, changing from civilian clothing to uniforms as they go. Look for the bagpipers leading the line. The text that runs underneath is from a poem called 'A Creed'. The poem was written in 1916 at Vimy Ridge in France by a soldier in the trenches, Lieutenant Ewart Alan Mackintosh of the Seaforth Highlanders. Mackintosh was killed the following year at the Battle of Cambrai. He was 23.



The Scottish-American war memorial
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links

Canada

France

United States of
America

The person who created this sculpture was a Scots-Canadian called Robert Tait Mackenzie. The memorial took four years to complete and was cast at the Roman Bronze Works in Brooklyn, New York. It was unveiled here in 1927 by the US Ambassador, Alanson B Houghton. The story of this memorial just goes to show that international conflict can sometimes end with international co-operation.

Directions 6

On the opposite side of the path from the Scottish American memorial is a small fenced garden. Go onto the grass and round to the other side of this garden, where you can listen to Track 7.

7. A space to reflect

West Princes Street Gardens

Here is yet another war memorial. This small garden and stone plaque is a tribute to the Scots in the armed forces who lost their lives in the Falklands War in 1982 between the UK and Argentina.

Compared with the last few memorials we have seen, this is quite different isn't it? Instead of a large bronze statue, here is a simple stone with specially selected trees and plants. This shows how attitudes to commemorating conflicts have changed. Rather than flag-waving patriotism, memorials like this encourage reflection and international sympathy.



Falklands War memorial stone
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

This memorial is actually the focal point of Edinburgh's war commemorations. The 25th of June is the nationwide Armed Forces Day, and in Edinburgh the Falklands Memorial Garden is the site of a minute's silence. In 2011, Edinburgh was the host city for Armed Forces Day which saw an estimated 100,000 people turn out in the city to pay their respects. Various events were held in the city, culminating in a parade down the Royal Mile before a ceremony of thanks at the Gardens. Some 2,500 soldiers and veterans from the Army, Navy and RAF took part.

Country links

Argentina

Falkland Islands

Directions 7

From the Falklands memorial, take the path down the slope towards the open air theatre. Turn right along the footpath along the bottom of the gardens. Stop by the large stone a short way along on the left and listen to Track 8.

8. North Sea neighbours

West Princes Street Gardens

This massive boulder is yet another interesting war memorial. Like the Scottish American memorial, it is a gift from overseas – this time from Norway. It marks co-operation between Scotland and Norway in the Second War World.

During the war, Norway was under German occupation. Some Norwegians left their home country by crossing the North Sea to the Shetland Islands and mainland Scotland. Members of the Norwegian resistance were based in northern Scotland. They made the treacherous journey across the sea in fishing boats, a war effort known as the ‘Shetland Bus’. Between 1941 and 1945, the Shetland Bus snuck 373 refugees out of Norway and landed 260 spies, plus countless supplies and weapons.



Norwegian Brigade memorial
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links

Norway

Scotland’s strong relationship with Norway actually goes back several centuries. Norway is Scotland’s nearest overseas neighbour. In fact, parts of Scotland are nearer to Norway than much of the UK. Trade between the two countries can be traced back to the days of the Vikings. Parts of Scotland, especially the Orkney and Shetland Islands, have names of Viking descent. Today, the two countries have similar population sizes and climates and have common industries. For example, Scotland and Norway share fishing waters and, since the 1970s, have worked together extracting North Sea gas.

There is also a Norwegian Seamen's Mission with a base in Edinburgh. There are festivities in the city on May 17th each year to celebrate Norwegian Constitution Day. But perhaps the most famous Norwegian in Edinburgh is Sir Nils Olav. He is the Colonel-in-Chief of a Norwegian army unit, the King’s Guard. But Sir Nils is a penguin! He lives at Edinburgh Zoo. In 1972, the Norwegian King’s Guard came to Edinburgh for the Military Tattoo. One of their soldiers, Lieutenant Nils Egelien, visited the Zoo’s penguin colony. The regiment adopted a penguin, who was renamed Sir Nils Olav after the soldier and Norway’s King Olav V. Sir Nils was made Colonel-in-Chief in 2005 and was knighted in 2008. He is the first penguin to receive such an honour from the Norwegian army!

Directions 8

A few metres away from the Norway memorial is a path of paving stones through the grass. Follow these to a headstone among a group of silver birch trees. Stop here and listen to Track 9.

9. A man of letters

West Princes Street Gardens

Tucked among a cluster of silver birch trees is this small stone. It looks like a gravestone, doesn't it? In fact, it's a memorial to one of Edinburgh's famous writers – Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850. By 1850, Edinburgh had a well-educated population with an estimated literacy level of 75 per cent. Writing is still important in the city, as you can see from the Writer's Museum on the Royal Mile and the annual Edinburgh Book Festival.

Stevenson suffered from ill health throughout his life. As a result, he often travelled and worked in warmer climes. These not only suited his health but also provided inspiration for his writing. His journeys included periods in southern France, Belgium, the USA – notably Hawaii and San Francisco – as well as New Zealand, Samoa, Tahiti, and other Pacific Islands.

Stevenson's career breakthrough came in 1883 with his adventure novel *Treasure Island*. The book's success means even today most of us think of pirates as he described them – with peg-legs, hook-hands, eye patches and colourful parrots. Much of the story takes place on Skeleton Island, which was inspired by the British Virgin Islands in the Caribbean.

Let's think for a moment about the difference between this memorial and the one to Scott, also a writer. The Scott Monument is a public piece of bombastic reverence. This memorial doesn't even bear Stevenson's name, just his initials. The inscription underneath – 'man of letters' – is a cheeky pun. While Scott was a major public figure, who had great social and political influence, Stevenson was a social outsider. Scott's books helped create a romanticised image of Scotland. Stevenson meanwhile was suspicious about Edinburgh's redevelopment. His book *Jekyll and Hyde* was partly influenced by the contrasts in Edinburgh's Old and New Towns, in particular the social and class divides. In a way, their respective memorials reflect how the two men felt about their home city.



Robert Louis Stevenson (centre) at home with his family in Vailima in Samoa
(Wikimedia Commons)

Country links

Belgium

British Virgin Islands

France

New Zealand

Samoa

Tahiti

United States of America

Directions 9

Walk across the grass a short way to the large fountain and listen to Track 10.

10. Indecent and disgusting

West Princes Street Gardens

Our last stop in Princes Street Gardens is the Ross Fountain. This giant iron sculpture makes an impressive spectacle at the foot of Edinburgh Castle. Today it is one of the landmarks of the city and a Grade B listed structure of national importance. But the Ross Fountain was once an unloved and highly controversial part of Edinburgh's landscape.

The fountain dates from the 1860s and was made by Durenne, a French firm based just outside Paris. You can still see many of their statues and fountains on the streets of Paris. This one came to Edinburgh in 1869 when it was bought by gun maker and philanthropist Daniel Ross. Ross had first spotted it at the Great Exhibition in London. To make transporting it from London easier, the fountain arrived in Edinburgh in 122 sections and was reassembled!



Detail from the Ross Fountain,
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links

France

Greece

The fountain has a classical French design topped by a naked woman standing above four nymphs. Nymphs were minor goddesses in ancient Greek mythology. They often represented features of nature or culture. The four nymphs on the Ross Fountain represent art, science, poetry and industry. Below them are a series of mermaids.

After three years of intense debate about where to put it, the fountain was reassembled and unveiled here in 1872 after Ross's death. Despite the fountain's artistry, the naked French figures outraged some of Edinburgh's locals. The Dean of nearby St John's Church described it as "grossly indecent and disgusting". The fountain fell into disrepair over time before being restored in 2001.

Directions 10

Continue to the far end of the Gardens where you will see the wall of St Cuthbert's Church. Enter the church grounds. The church is open to visitors from 10am to 4pm from Monday to Saturday. Go inside and listen to Track 11.

11. Marble, glass and bronze

St Cuthbert's Church

This is the first of two stops at churches. Churches and other religious buildings are excellent places for discovering international links.

This church is named after St Cuthbert, a monk and hermit from Northumbria who became bishop of the Farne Islands, south of Lindisfarne. There has been a St Cuthbert's Church on this site since at least 850 AD, making the parish one of the oldest in Scotland. The current building is much younger, with extensive rebuilding in 1894.



Gravestone detail, St Cuthbert's Church
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Inside church buildings you can often find international connections in the different monuments and memorials, as well as building materials and design. There are a variety of these in St Cuthbert's. The church font, pulpit and communion table are made from Italian and Egyptian marble. The bronze statue at the font is a copy of Michelangelo's statue in the Church of Our Lady in Bruges, Belgium. And the spectacular frieze above the altar is an alabaster copy of Leonardo da Vinci's wall painting, The Last Supper, which shows Christ having his last meal with the apostles. The original is in Italy.

Country links

Belgium

Egypt

Italy

United States of America

In the late nineteenth century, architectural fashions had changed. Out went the neo-classical architecture that we saw earlier and in came imitations of Italian Renaissance art. So when St Cuthbert's was redesigned in 1894, it reflected these changing tastes. At the time, the congregation of St Cuthbert's included some of Edinburgh's most wealthy and fashionable residents, so they wanted to keep up with the times. Nowadays, it would be considered unusually ornate for a Church of Scotland church.

Before we leave St Cuthbert's, look out for another interesting international connection. One of the stained glass windows shows David on the way to meeting Goliath. The window is by the famous Tiffany & Co of New York.

Directions 11

When you have finished exploring the church, follow the path through the grounds, up the steps and on to Lothian Road. Turn right and walk a short way along to St John's Church. The church is open daily for visitors. Go inside and listen to Track 12.

12. War and peace

St John's Church

Right next to St Cuthbert's church is St John's, a Scottish Episcopal church. Straight away we can see another architectural style. St John's was built in 1818 in the 'gothic' style. The term gothic comes from thirteenth century buildings in southern Europe.

Like many churches, St John's contains war memorials that commemorate members of the congregation and other locals who served and died in conflicts overseas. Do go inside and have a look along the walls and see how many countries you can spot.



St John's Church tower
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



Douglas Beatson memorial
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Look out for a memorial to John S S Forbes from the United States Cavalry. Forbes was killed in 1876 at the Battle of Little Bighorn – also known as Custer's Last Stand – when a US Army unit was heavily defeated by Native American tribes.

When you have finished inside the church, leave by the main door, turn left and left again into the church grounds.

Continues next page

Country links

Afghanistan

Australia

Belgium

Canada

Chile

China

Greece

Grenada

India

Japan

Portugal

South Africa

Spain

Sri Lanka

United States of America



As well as the memorials inside the church, the graveyard is a treasure trove of international connections – people who were born, lived, worked, travelled or died overseas. Have a look around the gravestones here at St John's for links to Chile, China, India, South Africa, Portugal, Canada, Spain, Greece and Japan amongst others.

One of the graves here has a particularly interesting story behind it. Malvina Wells was born in 1805 in Grenada, West Indies. She was a slave girl. She worked on a plantation for a Scotsman called John Maclean. Malvina came to Scotland in the service of Maclean's daughter, Joanna. And after Joanna married an Edinburgh lawyer, John Macrae, Malvina worked for the Macrae family in Edinburgh for over 70 years, becoming 'a faithful servant and friend'.



Malvina Wells' gravestone
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Outside the café and shop, look for a white pole. This is a Peace Pole, with a message of peace written in 8 languages. It was erected in 2005 to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan. Also here in this Peace Garden are various plants mentioned in the Bible.

Look out for memorials and graves like the ones we have seen at St Cuthbert's and St John's in your local church. You may be surprised at what international links you can find!

Directions 12

You may like to stop at the café at St John's. When you are ready, cross over Princes Street/Shandwick Place and go up South Charlotte Street. When you reach Charlotte Square, stop by the railings and listen to Track 13.



St John's Peace Pole
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

13. A king, a queen and a prince

Charlotte Square

Here we start the second half of our walk in the streets of Edinburgh's New Town. A competition was held in 1766 for the design of the New Town and this was won by 26-year old James Craig. His design was a grid of streets, with a garden square at each end. We are now in one of the two garden squares. From this stop, we will walk all the way along the central street to the other square.

Craig's original plan was to name the squares after St George and St Andrew, to show the links between England and Scotland. But there was already a George Square in the Old Town so that wouldn't do.

Instead, the king, George III, named this square after his wife, Queen Charlotte. Nearby Hanover Street commemorates Queen Charlotte's family, who were from Hanover in Germany. Charlotte was known as Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.



Prince Albert statue, Charlotte Square
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links

Germany

But the statue in the centre of Charlotte Square is not of Queen Charlotte but another royal consort – Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert. Prince Albert was also from Hanover. He married Victoria in 1840 but died in 1861 aged just 42. Victoria was consumed by grief for the rest of her life. She commissioned several memorials in his honour, most famously the Royal Albert Hall and Albert Memorial in London. This statue was created in 1876 and unveiled by Victoria herself. It shows Albert on horseback in field marshal's uniform.

Charlotte Square was the last part of Craig's New Town plan to be completed. It was finished in 1800. The buildings around the square include the headquarters of the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust and part of the National Archives of Scotland. Although the square is very large, we can't go into it. The square is a private garden and only opens to the public for the 3 weeks of the Edinburgh Book Festival. Prince Albert remains symbolically untouchable.

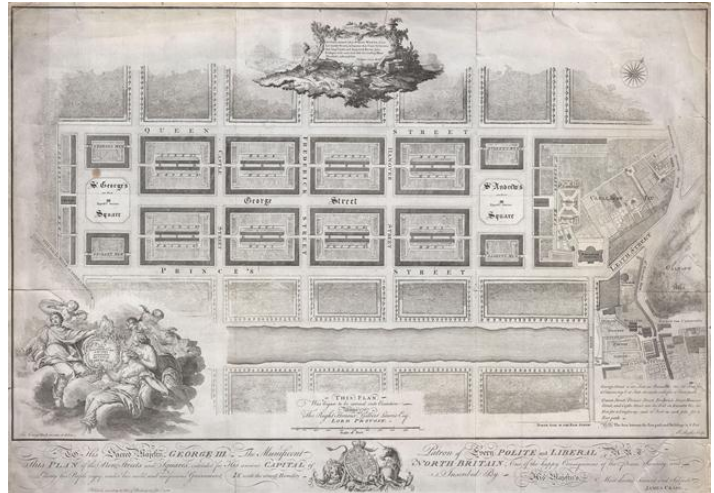
Directions 13

*Half way down the east side of Charlotte Square is the start of George Street.
Cross carefully over into George Street and listen to Track 14.*

14. A street fit for a king

Charlotte Square end of George Street

We are now at the start of George Street, named after King George III. At 115ft wide, it was the grandest street in the original New Town plan. As well as linking St George and St Andrew squares, the street runs parallel with Princes Street – to our right – and Queen Street – to our left. George Street is higher up than both of these because a lot of the New Town was built on uneven land.



James Craig's 1768 plan for Edinburgh New Town
(Wikimedia Commons)

Building work started in 1767. It took three years to line the whole street with buildings. To encourage people to move here from the Old Town, a £20 prize was offered to the first person to build their house on the street! The prize went to another George – a chap called George Young, whose house still stands today in Thistle Court.

Country links

Greece

Italy

As you walk along, you will see many impressive buildings. Look out for neo-classical features, like those we saw earlier at the art galleries. Look out for columns, stepped doorways and ornate roofs. Several have statues or figures carved into their facades.

George Street was initially a wealthy residential area. Then in the Victorian era, financial businesses moved here and built new offices. Some of the impressive buildings were originally banks, insurance companies and investment agencies. They were designed to showcase Edinburgh's wealth and civic status. More recently, increasing rents and new office developments on the edge of the city centre drove much of the financial sector away. Today the street is mostly home to upmarket shops, bars and clubs. The impressive buildings remain and we will stop at a few on our way.

Directions 14

Continue along the right hand side of George Street. Take time to look at the buildings around you. Cross straight over the junction with South Castle Street and pass the statue of Scottish mathematician, political economist and theologian, Thomas Chalmers. Stop outside the second building on the right and listen to Track 15.

15. Scotland's symbol

Freemasons' Hall, George Street

This is the Freemasons' Hall. The Freemasons' have many international connections. There are masonic lodges throughout the world and the origins of the movement have been attributed to historical figures including King Solomon, Noah, Moses, and Ancient Greek mathematicians Euclid and Pythagoras.

Above the doorway of the Edinburgh lodge is a statue of St Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland. At first he doesn't seem to fit in with the classical architecture of the street. But his appearance here is fitting. According to legend, St Andrew was crucified at Patras in Greece.

The x-shaped cross St Andrew was crucified on is a saltire and thereafter saltires became a symbol of his martyrdom. In Scotland, depictions of St Andrew on a saltire have been found dating back to 1180 and the reign of William I. The saltire on its own became a Scottish symbol from the fourteenth century. In 1385, the Parliament of Scotland ordered Scottish soldiers to wear crosses on their uniform for identification. The saltire is a symbol of Scottish identity still very much in use today. You will find examples throughout Edinburgh, from flags outside shops to the iron gates of Holyrood Palace.

Outside Scotland, saltires were symbols of early Christianity in the Roman Empire. Roman coins have been found with saltires on and saltires were also used as Christian symbols in ninth and tenth century Greece. They appear in heraldry and on flags. Apart from Scotland's, notable flags with saltires include those of Jamaica, Grenada, Jersey, the Russian Navy, the American Civil War Confederates and various cities, including Alabama, Florida and Amsterdam and island of Tenerife.

Directions 15

Continue along the right hand side of George Street. Stop at the junction of Frederick Street and listen to Track 16.



St Andrew statue on
The Freemason's Hall, George Street
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links

Greece
Grenada
Italy
Jamaica
Russia
Spain
The Netherlands
United States of America

16. A young Prime Minister

Junction of George Street and Frederick Street

Among the distinctive features of George Street are the statues that stand in the centre of the major junctions. There are four in total, all in bronze and mounted on stone plinths. Each one commemorates a notable Edinburgh resident or visitor.

Pitt was the Prime Minister from 1783 to 1801 and again from 1804 to 1806. He was just 24 when he first took office and is still the youngest person ever to have occupied the position. He is known as Pitt the Younger to avoid confusion with his father who was also called William. Pitt's time in office was dominated by problems overseas. He oversaw the aftermaths of the American and French Revolutions. There was unrest in the British colonies, especially in Canada, India and Ireland. Pitt also led the country through George III's illness and the Napoleonic Wars with France.



Engraving of William Pitt the Younger
(Wikimedia Commons)

This statue was unveiled in 1833. Notice the classical pose, with Pitt's cloak draped over his arm and the dates engraved in Roman numerals. The style meant the statue fitted in with the neo-classical designs of the surrounding buildings.

In 1924, plans were proposed to remove Pitt and the other statues so that trams could run along George Street. But fierce opposition meant the idea was scrapped. In 1963 there was another proposal to remove the statues for a tram line, but this was also scrapped.

Country links

Canada

France

Grenada

India

Ireland

United States of America

Directions 16

Continue along George Street. Keep looking out for interesting buildings, including the Northern Lighthouse Board office. Carry on to the next main junction, with Hanover Street, where you can stop and listen to Track 17.

17. Wearing a kilt with pink tights

Junction of George Street and Hanover Street

This statue is of King George IV. But if George Street is named after George III, isn't this a statue of the wrong king? The solution is on the statue's base, which records George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822.

George IV had become king in 1820. In his ten years as Prince Regent – heir in waiting – he led an extravagant lifestyle. He was obese, frequently ill and very unpopular, especially north of the border. Therefore royal officials planned to boost his popularity. So he became the first reigning monarch to visit Scotland for 172 years.

The visit was a slickly run marketing campaign. The fortnight-long visit was full of Scottish pageantry. At a Holyrood Palace reception, the king even wore a kilt – hiding his cold legs with a pair of pink tights! Wearing the kilt not only boosted the king's popularity but also established the tartan kilt as a symbol of Scotland. Events culminated with a grand parade, with large crowds cheering the king to Edinburgh Castle.



Portrait of George IV in kilt - but with bare legs
by David Wilkie (1829)
(Wikimedia Commons)

The royal visit to Edinburgh was a great success, but it also distracted the king from the Congress of Verona. This Congress saw military leaders from Britain, Russia, Austria, Germany and France discuss diplomatic issues about their respective empires, especially disputed land such as Turkey, Spain and northern Italy.

This statue also shows the dual motives of the visit. Erected in 1873, the statue shows an elegant figure with his cloak unfurled and a sceptre in his right hand. Notice he isn't wearing a crown. Instead of an obese unpopular playboy, George is shown here as a classical hero – in Walter Scott's words as a "handsome man looking and moving every inch a King".

Country links

[Austria](#)

[France](#)

[Germany](#)

[Italy](#)

[Russia](#)

[Spain](#)

[Turkey](#)

Directions 17

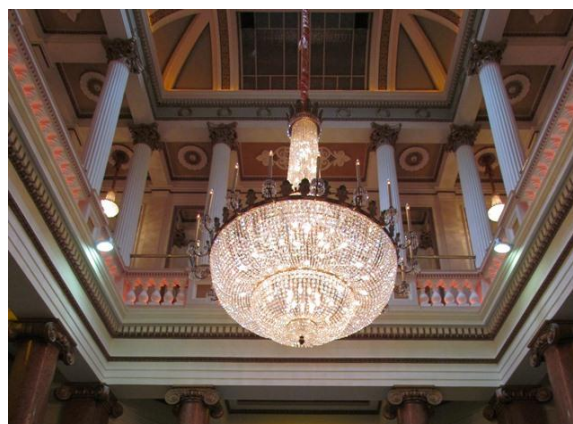
Cross Hanover Street and continue along the right hand side of George Street.

Stop at the large building called The Dome and listen to Track 18.

18. Not less than gorgeous

George Street

We have now arrived at one of the most striking buildings on George Street. Today it is a bar, restaurant and nightclub called The Dome. When this building opened in 1847, it was the headquarters of the Commercial Bank of Scotland. As we heard earlier, banking was a growth industry in Edinburgh in the 1840s. Bank buildings in this period were designed to impress and often used a mixture of styles. Here, for example, Ancient Greek and Roman features, such as columns and steps, combine with later Italian baroque aspects like the domed roof.



Chandelier in The Dome entrance lobby
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The architect was David Rhind. He was born and worked in Edinburgh and produced several other buildings for the Commercial Bank of Scotland. He also designed some of the city's churches, government offices and the spectacular Stewart's Melville College on Queensferry Road.

Country links

Greece

Italy

Shortly after it opened, this building was described in the Fine Arts Journal: "The front of this banking-house, a really magnificent structure, which has been erected in George Street, exhibits a Corinthian hexastyle portico ninety-five feet in width, of great general beauty, and having a bold but not obtrusive projection; the columns of which it is composed, six in number, as the name of its style indicates, are thirty-five feet high, of very graceful proportions, with a happily adapted intercolumniation, and having elegant well-relieved and spiritedly carved capitals". In April 1847, The Scotsman newspaper put it more succinctly, saying the building was "in a style which is not less than gorgeous".

Take your time to have a good look at the wealth of details in the architecture. The inside is well worth a visit too. As you go inside, notice the snake and dagger symbol on the doors. Before David Rhind's bank building, this was the site of the Physicians' Hall, the office of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.

Directions 18

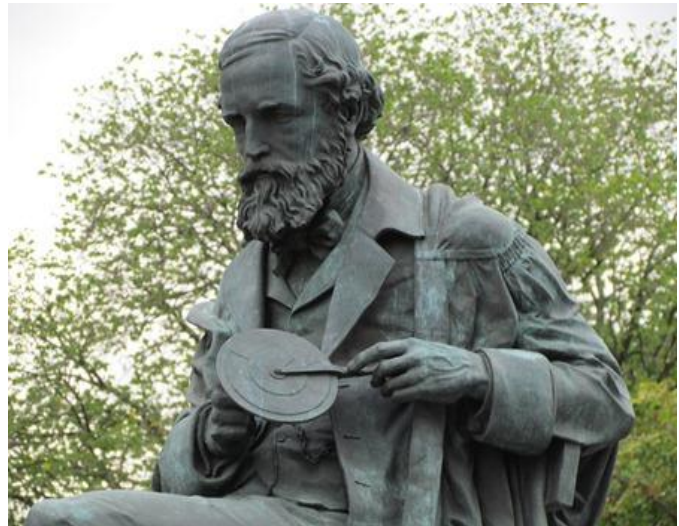
After you have looked around the inside of The Dome, continue to the end of George Street. Just before the end, cross over to the statue in the centre and listen to Track 19.

19. The man who changed the world forever

St Andrew's Square end of George Street

At the end of George Street is a much more recent statue. This is the physicist James Clerk Maxwell, with his dog Toby. Born in Edinburgh in 1831, Maxwell has been described as the nineteenth century scientist who had the greatest effect on the twentieth century. In 1861, he developed the first permanent colour photograph. That disc in his hand is a colour wheel.

Maxwell also developed electromagnetic theory. The theory now called 'Maxwell's Equation', demonstrates that light, electricity and magnetism are parts of the same energy field. The theory paved the way for radio, television, satellites and mobile phones. You can find the Equation on the base of the statue, which also bears some stylised ancient figures.



Detail of the James Clerk Maxwell statue
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links

Germany

Maxwell was a great influence on German physicist, Albert Einstein. Einstein wrote that Maxwell "changed the world for ever". By contrast, this statue of Maxwell was designed to fit in as much as to stand out. It is the same size and made from similar materials to the ones we saw earlier of Pitt and George IV. Yet it was only unveiled in 2008. The sculptor is Alexander Stoddart, who famously dislikes modern art, so his sculptures follow neo-classical traditions of elegant poses and historical subjects. And in any case, the New Town is part of a UNESCO World Heritage site. This protected status means that any new structures, including statues, should fit in with the existing built environment.

Directions 19

Cross over into St Andrew Square. Stop in front of the column and listen to Track 20.

20. The most powerful man in Scotland

St Andrew Square

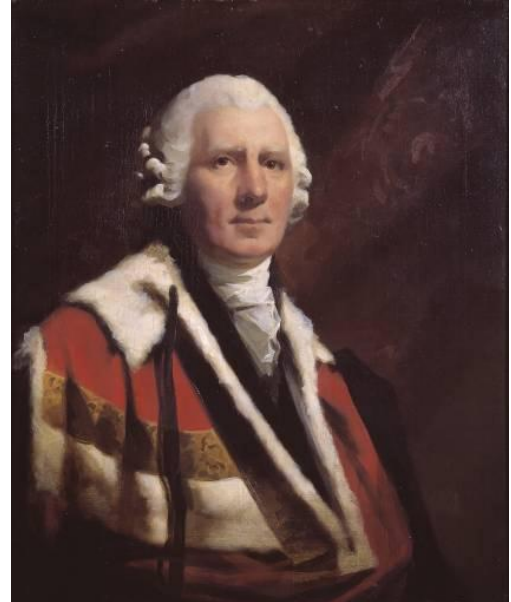
Here we come to a statue that was meant to stand out from the rest. You probably caught sight of it from a long way off. This 150-foot high column was erected between 1821 and 1823, loosely modelled on Trajan's Column in Rome. During construction, some of the residents of St Andrew Square were concerned about the Monument's stability. So the designer, William Burn, received some help from famous Scottish lighthouse engineer Robert Stevenson.

On top of the column is a statue of Henry Dundas. During his lifetime, Dundas was considered the most powerful man in Scotland. Friends even called him King Henry IX. Dundas held several powerful political posts, including Solicitor General and Home Secretary. In 1784, he became the first ever War Secretary while Britain took part the wars of the French Revolution. These wars saw a series of military coalitions try to intervene in Revolutionary France. Over a ten year period, the British fought alongside Spain, Portugal, Russia, Poland, Denmark, Norway and the Dutch Republic amongst others.

Dundas was made Viscount Melville in 1802 and from 1804 he worked as First Lord of the Admiralty. He made many contacts overseas. As a result there are places named after him such as Dundas Street in Hong Kong. In Canada, you can find Dundas Street in Toronto and the town of Dundas in Ontario. But at home suspicions grew about the Admiralty's finances and in 1806 Dundas became the last person in Britain to be impeached. He was later acquitted.

Directions 20

Continue across St Andrew Square and cross the road at the far side to a building slightly set back from the road. Stop outside the iron railings and listen to Track 21.



Henry Dundas, 1st Viscount Melville, circa 1805
by Henry Raeburn (Wikimedia Commons)

Country links

Canada
Denmark
France
Hong Kong
Italy
The Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Russia
Spain

21. The art of war

St Andrew Square

In James Craig's original plan for the New Town, this site was intended to be for St Andrew's Church. Instead, Dundas House was built. It was the home of Sir Lawrence Dundas, one of Henry Dundas' relatives. The house was built in 1774 by Swedish-born architect William Chambers. It was designed to look like a Roman villa, once again illustrating the classical fashions of the time. Since 1825, Dundas House has been the head office for the Royal Bank of Scotland. Features of the house even appear on Scottish bank notes.



Dundas House

Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

The statue outside is of John Hope, the Fourth Earl of Hopetoun. The Earl is shown in Roman toga carrying a sword. Notice the inscription on the base of the statue. John is spelt with the Roman 'I' and the dedication lists a series of virtues from past military eras. They include "the unshaken patriotism of the ancient Roman". The inscription shows how the Romans were idealised in the nineteenth century.

Another phrase on the dedication that stands out is "skill in the art of war". The Art of War is the title of an ancient Chinese military manual. The book is attributed to Sun Tzu, a warrior from the sixth century BC. It has been studied by military leaders throughout the ages.

The Earl of Hopetoun was a British Army general and took part in military campaigns throughout the world. These included the Netherlands, the French and Spanish West Indies, Egypt, Spain, France and Ireland.

Directions 21

When you are ready, leave St Andrew Square by South St Andrew Street. As you pass, take time to look at the bank building next to Dundas House, which is another spectacular piece of neo-classical architecture. When you reach the junction with Princes Street, turn left. Continue on the left hand side a short way until you are outside the National Archives of Scotland. Stop at the statue of a man on a rearing horse and listen to Track 22.

Country links

China

Dominican Republic

Egypt

France

Ireland

Italy

Spain

St Lucia

Sweden

The Netherlands

Trinidad & Tobago

22. The Iron Duke in bronze

Outside the National Archives of Scotland

Here is a magnificent statue of Arthur Wellesley, better known as the first Duke of Wellington. The Duke was one of the major military and political figures of the nineteenth century. This statue shows him mounted on one of his favourite horses – a battle steed named Copenhagen, after the capital city of Denmark. The Duke rode Copenhagen throughout the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Waterloo is in present-day Belgium, but at the time was part of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. In this battle, Wellington led the British army to victory over the French Emperor, Napoleon.



Copenhagen in Edinburgh!

© Stanley Howe via Geograph (Creative Commons licence)

While Copenhagen rears up onto hind legs the Duke is shown pointing ahead, giving the order to advance.

Copenhagen was a superb battle horse. He had great stamina and did not flinch in gun and cannon fire. But he was also tetchy and cantankerous. The story goes that when the Duke dismounted after the final battle of Waterloo, he wanted to pat Copenhagen on the rump in thanks for a fine day's work. The horse responded with a savage kick, just missing the General - who had escaped death many times that day. Despite his unpredictable nature, the heroic steed was buried with military honours when he died in 1836, aged 29.

Besides Waterloo, the Duke's military career took in campaigns in Holland, India, Denmark and Portugal. In 1828, he became the British Prime Minister. This statue is different to most of the others we have already seen. When it was unveiled in June 1852, the Duke was still alive. Instead of a memorial, it is a celebration of his achievements. The statue was erected in Edinburgh as many of the Duke's troops at Waterloo came from the Royal Scots Greys. We saw their regimental memorial earlier in Princes Street Gardens.

Over time, attitudes towards the statue have cooled in some quarters. In 2003, a member of the Scottish National Party suggested that the statue should be replaced. In a letter to the Scottish Parliament, he wrote: "it's time Wellington was given the boot". But Wellington still stands.

Directions 22

Continue straight where Princes Street becomes Waterloo Place and cross to the other side at one of the pedestrian crossings. Before the road bends to the right, turn right into Old Calton cemetery and listen to Track 23. There are a set of steps, though you can see the major monuments from the street entrance.

Country links

[Belgium](#)

[Denmark](#)

[France](#)

[India](#)

[Portugal](#)

[The Netherlands](#)

23. Graves and slaves

Old Calton Cemetery

Like church graveyards, cemeteries are also good places to look for local people who were born, lived or worked abroad. There are several cemeteries in Edinburgh and this one has a great deal of historic and international interest. Old Calton Cemetery is the resting place to many of Edinburgh's notable residents. The most obvious is the large vault for philosopher David Hume.

There are several graves with interesting international connections. These include James Leishman McDougal, a soldier awarded the Victoria Cross after fighting in 'the Opium Wars' in China. Look out for Peter Williamson, who was kidnapped abroad as a boy and grew up working on American slave plantations. Known in Edinburgh as 'Indian Peter', Williamson had a shop in Parliament Square and advertised as "the vintner from the other world". Outside the shop stood a statue of him in Indian dress. Julius Von Yelin, meanwhile, was a German knight and scholar who died in Edinburgh on the way to visiting Walter Scott.



David Hume's tomb, Old Calton Cemetery
© Jonathan Oldenbuck via Wikimedia
(Creative Commons licence)



The Emancipation Monument
© Kevin Rae via Geograph
(Creative Commons licence)

Near David Hume's monument, one of the most famous international landmarks in the cemetery is this American Civil War memorial. Built in 1893, it was made to honour six Scottish men who fought in the American Civil War. It shows the US President Abraham Lincoln, whose victory effectively abolished slavery in America. The man below him is a freed slave, reaching out in thanks. The man is also holding a book to symbolise his education as a free man. Look closely and you will find other symbolic details, such as thistles and cotton plants which illustrate Scotland and America's collaboration in the war.

Country links

China

Germany

United States of America

Continues next page

The monument is the only US Civil War memorial outside America and the 16 foot high statue of Abraham Lincoln was the first ever of a US President outside the USA. The monument came about after the widow of one of the Scottish soldiers wrote to the US Consul to ask for a pension. She and her children were living in poverty and her husband, Sergeant Major John McEwan, had been buried in a pauper's grave. The Consul, Wallace Bruce, forwarded her request to the US government. Mrs McEwan's pension and this monument soon followed.



The Political Martyr's Monument (left), Old Calton Cemetery
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Before you leave Calton Cemetery, take a look at the huge obelisk that dominates the skyline. This is the Political Martyrs Monument. It records the fate of five men who fought for political reform in the 1790s. At this time only the wealthy were allowed to vote in elections. The five men campaigned for a change in the law and instead they were arrested and transported to Australia. Two of the men died within a year of ill health, while another, Thomas Muir, escaped to France. The Monument was put up in 1844 to commemorate their campaign.

Directions 23

Leave the cemetery the way you came in. Cross back over the road and enter Calton Hill just to the right. Go up the first set of steps then turn right up another set of steps. If you have a wheelchair, pushchair or pram, you can use the longer but step-free road accessed from Regent Road. We shall look at all the monuments at the top of the hill in turn. Stop first at the cannon and listen to Track 24.

24. Fired across the globe

Calton Hill

This ship's cannon, which points towards Edinburgh Castle, arrived on Calton Hill after journeying across the world. Cast in brass in the early seventeenth century, the cannon was sent to the Portuguese colonies. Soon after it was built, the Portuguese king, Philip III was succeeded by Philip IV. If you look at the barrel of the cannon, you may be able to see a number 4 has been stamped after the king's name, along with the date 1624.

The cannon was probably used in Portugal's colonial wars. There are reports that it was used in Rangoon and at some time it must have been lost or captured. The next owners were the state of Arakan in Burma. Looking at the barrel again, can you spot some unusual script cast along the side? This is Burmese writing, which says the cannon was seized after Burma captured Arakan in 1784. How the cannon came to be owned by the King of Arakan is unknown but the next leg of the cannon's international journey occurred under Burmese ownership.

During the nineteenth century, Burma and Britain were at war three times. At some point the cannon was captured by the British and it was presented to the city of Edinburgh in 1886 for the Edinburgh International Exhibition of Science, Art and Industry, which displayed over 20,000 exhibits from across the globe. The cannon would have shared space with Italian furniture, Turkish rugs, even Icelandic knitwear. The Exhibition was held in a purpose-built hall at the Meadows beside the New Town.



Portuguese cannon, Calton Hill
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Country links

Iceland

Italy

Myanmar

Portugal

Turkey

Directions 24

From the cannon, make your way to the Nelson Monument up to the right and listen to Track 25.

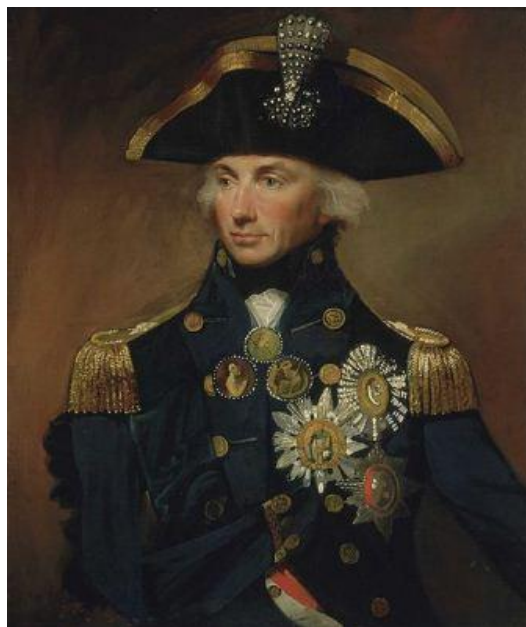
25. A sailing saga

Calton Hill

The Nelson Monument honours Horatio Nelson, who joined the navy at age 13 and rose to the rank of Vice-Admiral. His naval career is an exhausting worldwide travelogue.

In his early days, Nelson crossed the Atlantic twice, went on an expedition in search of the Northwest Passage that reached within ten degrees of the North Pole, and then went to India and back. He was then involved in the Caribbean during the American War of Independence before cruising down the Central American coast as far as the British settlements at British Honduras and Nicaragua.

Next he was in charge of accompanying convoys from Russia, Ireland, Canada and America. He then spent more time in the West Indies, including Jamaica and the Turks Islands, capturing a number of French and Spanish prizes. After a spell in France to learn the language, he was back in the West Indies, in Antigua and Nevis. He hadn't been home long before he was sent off for service again and spent the best part of the next seven years in the Mediterranean. At the end, he travelled home overland, including stops in Trieste, Vienna, Prague and Hamburg.



Portrait of Rear-Admiral Horatio Nelson (1800)
by Lemuel Francis Abbott
(Wikimedia Commons)



The Nelson Monument, Calton Hill (1829)
Engraving by Thomas H Shepherd © Peter Stubbs www.edinphoto.org.uk

Country links

Antigua & Barbuda
Austria
Belize
Canada
Costa Rica
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Egypt
Estonia
France
Germany
Gibraltar
India

Continues next page



Following that, Nelson was sent off to the Baltic, including a battle at Copenhagen and a stop at the Russian naval base at Reval, modern-day Tallinn. Next he was placed in charge of defending the English Channel from invasion by the French. Then he was appointed commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean Fleet and given HMS *Victory* as his flagship. From the Mediterranean, he chased the French fleet across to the Caribbean but could not find them and returned to Europe.

Then came the famous Battle of Trafalgar, where Nelson led the British fleet against Napoleon's naval forces. It was during this battle that he was fatally shot. Nelson's worldwide travels came to an end when his body was brought back home.

This monument is to Nelson and all of the fallen of the Napoleonic Wars. It was built to resemble a ship's telescope. At the top is a mast similar to a ship's rigging. Look out for the memorial plaque to Nelson on the side of the building with a stone model of a ship.



The Nelson Monument
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Directions 25

Inside the monument is a small museum about Nelson and the Napoleonic Wars. For a small fee, you can also climb up to the top of the monument for spectacular views over Edinburgh and the Forth. When you are ready, make your way down from the Nelson Monument to the area in front of the National Monument and listen to Track 26.

Country links continued...

Ireland
Italy
Jamaica
Malta
Nicaragua
Portugal
Russia
Saint Kitts & Nevis
Spain
Turks & Caicos Islands
United States of America

26. Momentous monuments

Calton Hill

Dominating Calton Hill, we come to the clearest examples of Edinburgh's neo-classical taste. This group of monuments built in ancient Greek styles can be seen across the city. The largest is the unfinished National Monument. Inspired by the Parthenon in Athens, this was designed to be a huge church commemorating Scottish soldiers who died in the Napoleonic Wars in France. Just look at the size of it! Dragging each immense stone up the hill took 70 men and 12 horses. The project had an estimated cost of £40,000. But only £26,000 was raised and in 1829 the money ran out, leaving only a dozen finished columns.



The National Monument, Calton Hill
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Now it is one of the most recognisable landmarks in the city, but for a long time many considered the unfinished building an eyesore. It became known as "Edinburgh's disgrace". There have been several proposals to complete the Monument, the latest as recent as 2004. But with the passing of time, the lack of money has been joined by a lack of enthusiasm for the idea. Many people in Edinburgh are used to the unfinished landmark and like it just the way it is.

Country links

France

Greece

Does the National Monument remind you of any other buildings we have seen on this walk? It was partly designed by William Henry Playfair who also designed the National Gallery and Royal Academy that we saw earlier. Playfair was one of the most successful architects in Edinburgh and he designed several of the other landmarks on Calton Hill.

The small building with a domed roof is the Dugald Stewart Monument, made in 1832 in honour of the late Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University. The ancient Greek style is an almost exact copy of the Lysicrates monument near the Acropolis in Athens. Playfair also designed the City Observatory, with the green dome, built in 1818. And at the corner of the observatory is the square Playfair Monument. Completed in 1826, it commemorates William Henry Playfair's uncle, the mathematician John Playfair.

Directions 26

Take your time exploring Calton Hill. At each monument are information boards with more details about their history.

27. High ambition

Calton Hill

We have reached the end of our walk. Take time to look at the spectacular views across Edinburgh, as well as Leith Docks and the Firth of Forth. As you look across the city, you should be able to trace the route that we have taken along Princes Street Gardens and back along George Street.

Calton Hill is a fitting place to end our walk. High above New Town, we have arrived – literally – at the height of the city’s architectural ambitions. As we heard at the start

of the walk, Edinburgh’s New Town was built from scratch and the bold design showed off the city’s wealth, sophistication and ambition. The spectacular architecture evoked the ancient Greek and Roman Empires. The streets, squares and buildings expressed affluence. Numerous statues communicate the city’s pride in people from Edinburgh and elsewhere in Scotland who made an impact in fields such as politics, economics, theology, science, philosophy and literature. Meanwhile, memorials to those from Edinburgh who died in war commemorate their contribution to victory and peace.

I hope that you have enjoyed our walk today exploring the ‘Athens of the North’. In the New Town’s streets, squares, buildings, statues, churches and monuments we have discovered a wealth of international connections between Edinburgh and at least 60 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?



Engraving of the view from Calton Hill (1829) by Thomas H Shepherd
© Peter Stubbs www.edinphoto.org.uk



Credits

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

- Alasdair McLeod for researching the walk and providing the commentary
- Jenny Lunn for editing the walk materials
- Rory Walsh for additional research and taking photographs
- Nick Stanworth for assistance with compiling walk resources
- Caroline Millar for editing the audio files
- Peter Stubbs and Leeds Art Gallery for kind permission to use archive images
- Stanley Howe, Peter Mould, Jonathan Oldenbuck, Kevin Rae and Zest-pk for additional photographs

Visit www.walktheworld.org.uk to

Submit your own links

Search for other walks

Find out how to create your own walk

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.



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