

Index

Daunt's Square.....	B3
Academy Street	B2
Albert Quay.....	F3
Albert Street.....	G2
Alfred Street.....	G1
Anderson's Quay	F2
Anderson's Street	F2
Anglesea Street.....	F4
Baptist Church	D1
Beasley Street	E3
Bishop Lucey Park.....	A3
Bowling Green Street	C2
Brian Boru Bridge	F2
Brian Boru Street	F1
Bridge Street	D1
Camden Quay.....	C1
Carey's Lane.....	B2
Caroline Street	D2
Castle Street	A3
Christy Ring Bridge.....	C1
City Hall.....	F4
City Library.....	A4
Clontarf Bridge	F3
Clontarf Street.....	F3
Coburg Street	C1
Coliseum.....	F1
College of Commerce.....	D4
Connell Street	F3
Cook Street	B3
Custom House Quay	G2
Custom House Street	G2
Eamon DeValera Bridge	G3
Eglinton Street.....	F4
English Market, The	A3
Everyman Palace Theatre.....	E1
Former Cork Library	D3
Former Cork Savings Bank building	E3
Former Provincial Bank of Ireland building	E3
Fr Mathew Quay.....	C4
Fr Mathew Street.....	C4
Fr. Theobald Mathew Statue	D2
French Church Street	B2
General Post Office	D3
Grand Parade	A3
Half Moon Street	B2
Harbour Commissioners Offices ...	G2
Holy Trinity Church	C4
Huguenot Quarter	B3
Lapps Quay	F3
Lavitt's Quay	B1
Lower Glanmire Road.....	G1
MacCurtain Street	E1
Marlborough Street.....	B3
Maylor Street.....	D2
Merchant's Quay	D2
Michael Collins Bridge.....	G2
Morgan Street.....	C3
Morrison's Quay	D4
Nano Nagle Footbridge	B4
National Monument.....	B4
Oliver Plunkett Street	C3
Opera Lane.....	B2
Parliament Bridge	C4
Parnell Bridge	E3
Parnell Place.....	E3

Paul Street	B2
Pembroke Street	D3
Penrose House.....	H1
Penrose Quay	G2
Perry Street	C2
Phoenix Street	D3
Pine Street	C1
Prince's Street	B3
Queens Old Castle.....	A3
Railway Street.....	H1
Robert Street.....	C3
Savoy, The	C2
School of Music	E4
Ship Street	F1
South Main Street	A4
South Mall	B4
St Patrick's Bridge.....	D1
St Patrick's Church.....	H1
St Patrick's Hill	D1
St Patrick's Quay	E1
St Patrick's Street	B3
Sullivan's Quay.....	B4
Summerhill.....	F1
The Boardwalk	F4
Tourist Information Office	B4
Trinity Presbyterian Church	F1
Tuckey Street	A4
Union Quay.....	E4
Unitarian Church	B3
War Memorial	B4
Washington Street	A3
William Street.....	C2
Winthrop Shopping Arcade	C3
Winthrop St.....	C3
York St.....	E1

Information Panels

1 Daunt's Square.....	A3
2 Grand Parade/South Mall	B4
3 General Post Office (GPO)	D3
4 Parnell Bridge	E3
5 Boardwalk	F3
6 Port of Cork	G2
7 Penrose Quay	G2
8 Brian Boru Bridge.....	F1
9 Coliseum Corner.....	F1
10 MacCurtain Street	E1
11 St Patrick's Hill/Coburg Street .	D1
12 St. Patrick's Street – north	C2
13 St. Patrick's Street – south	B3

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This project demonstrates the Government's support for cycling and walking as the most sustainable ways to travel.



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CORK WALKS

CITY CENTRE ISLAND

A self-guided walking
tour of Cork City's
Central Island area

WELCOME to Cork Walks and in particular to this walk of the central island area of Cork City which is bounded by the north and south channels of the River Lee. This is a self-guided walking tour and takes just under one hour.

There are three elements to this walk. This leaflet describes the walk and the sights along the way. It also has a detailed map. There are directional signs (orange walking symbols) throughout the walk to help orient and guide you. 13 information panels are located at various interest points along the route. These feature short descriptions of places and events in these locations.

Along the route there are many buildings of interest open to the public and which carry information leaflets. In addition the Tourist Office, on the Grand Parade, has further guides of the City and the greater Cork area. Please linger along the way, taking the time to go inside our churches, museums, and cafés.

We hope you enjoy this Cork Walk.

The City Centre Island Walk

A city carries the imprint of the people and events that have shaped it over time. These stories never reveal themselves in a simple line: the old sits beside the new; the new reinterprets the old. A small detail can be as revealing as a large building.

This walk traces how the city centre island of Cork developed following the infilling of a number of river channels that ran between a series of marshy islands. At the heart of the city, the main thoroughfare, St Patrick's Street, was at one time just such a waterway, as were the Grand Parade and the South Mall.

The bridges that span the north and south channels of the River Lee are also a crucial part of Cork's story. Different types of bridges were built to facilitate shipping and rail services. Each bridge in its own way contributes to the story of the time in which it was built.

Fundamental to the city's economic success was its port and the wealth generated by trade in commodities such as butter and the provisioning of ships for the British navy made Cork one of the most important places in Western Europe during the 19th century.

Continuity and renewal are interwoven in the life of a city. We hope that this walk will contribute to the understanding of these processes in the life of this city.

The City Centre Island Walk

The walk begins on Daunt's Square at Information Panel 1.

Continue from here and walk along Grand Parade as far as the National Monument to Information Panel 2.

This is one of the great gathering places of Cork, to where crowds came on a variety of occasions down through the years. The building to the west dates to c.1787. It was originally known as Daly's Clubhouse and subsequently as the City Club. The front of the building dates to the mid 19th century.

Continue along South Mall and cross the road to Pembroke Street and continue to Information Panel 3.

At the junction of Pembroke Street and the South Mall notice the Cork Library sign and date carved into the stone above a doorway. This was home to members of a Library Society and was open for five hours daily, six days a week and held books on a wide range of topics.

Much of this area was damaged during the War of Independence. From the ashes however, grew a new Cork including the Winthrop Shopping Arcade, just across from the GPO. The arcade was opened on 11th March 1926 and was the first of its kind built in the Free State.

Continue east along Oliver Plunkett Street, cross the road at the junction at Parnell Place and continue to Information Panel 4 on Lapp's Quay.

Parnell Place was once called Warren's Place and across the river where the City Hall now stands was formally known as Sleigh's Marsh. Both areas were named after the merchants and developers that helped bring them into the compass of the city.

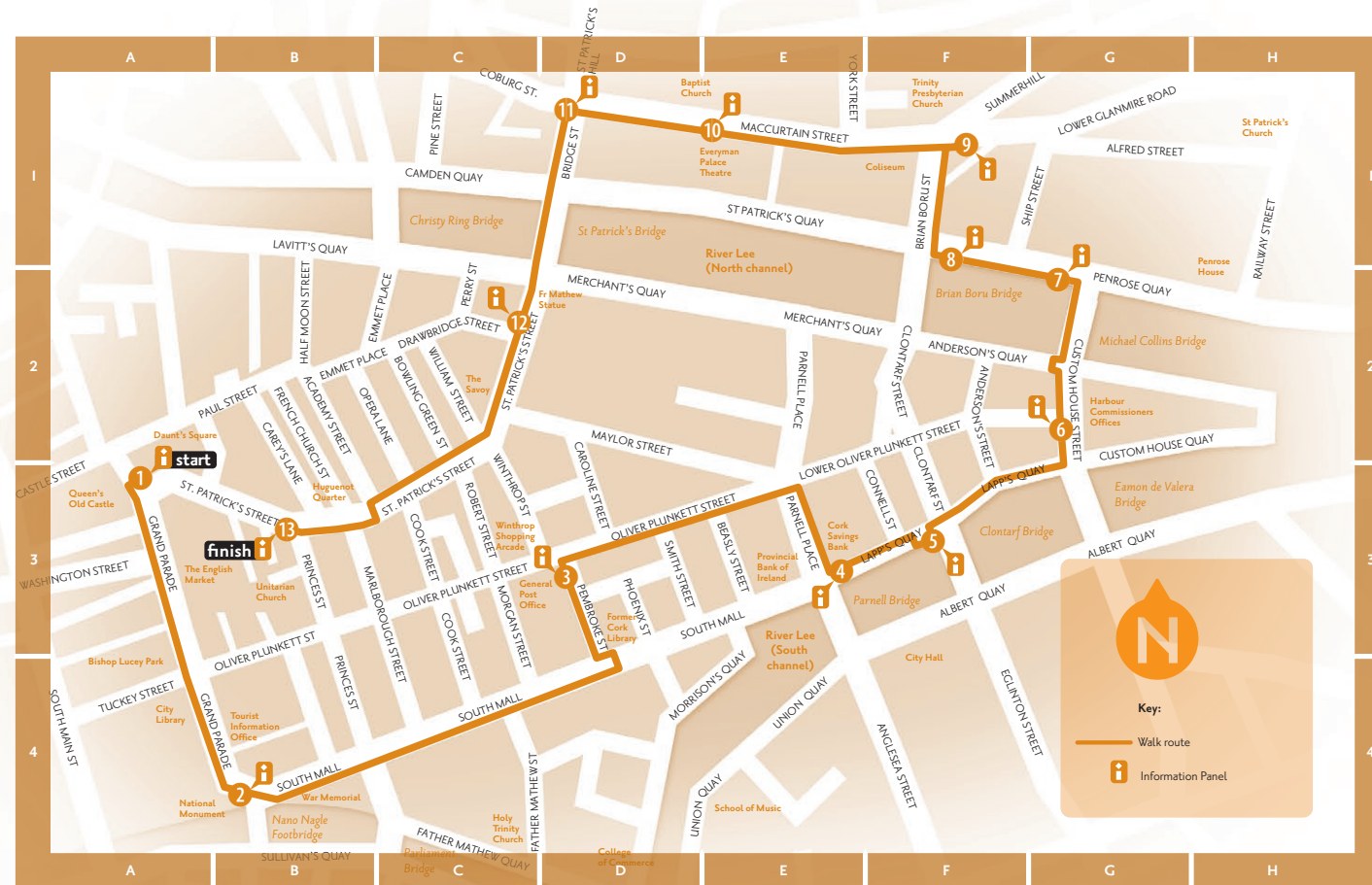
Continue along Lapps Quay as far as Information Panel 5.

Next continue along the Boardwalk as far as Information Panel 6.

There is evidence at every turn here of Cork's maritime history – from the warehousing to mooring bollards to the timbers of olden jetties rising from the river waters. The eastern extremity of the island is occupied by the Harbour Board Offices. To the north and the south are the furthest down-river crossings giving access to the island centre from the surrounding hinterland. On the South channel stands Éamon DeValera Bridge while the North channel is spanned by Michael Collins Bridge.

Continue along Custom House Street, cross over Michael Collins bridge and continue as far as Information Panel 7.

The quaysides of the northern channel of the river were a hive of industry in former times. Among the commodities landed



on these quays was coal, vital to the survival of a modern city. Until early in the 20th century the loading and unloading was done by hand, requiring a large labour force.

Continue west along Penrose Quay as far as Information Panel 8.

The 1912 Clontarf and Brian Boru bridges are unique in the city's history, built as they were to accommodate four different forms of transport namely; goods and passenger trains; vehicular traffic, pedestrian traffic and finally to lift into an upright position to accommodate the passage of shipping.

Cross the road and continue along Brian Boru Street as far as information Panel 9.

Brian Boru Street was built in conjunction with Brian Boru bridge and for a number of years it was simply known as the New Street.

At this junction, great crowds often accompanied famous people, among them political leaders, in procession to or from Kent railway station. In 1903, King Edward 7th and Queen Alexandria passed by here following their visit to the Cork International Exhibition in Fitzgerald Park.

To the north-east lies Harrington Square, where the famous short-story writer Frank O'Connor lived.

Cross Brian Boru Street and continue along MacCurtain Street as far as Information Panel 10.

Lord Mayor Tomás MacCurtain, after whom this street is named, was involved in the struggle for Irish independence and was commander of the Republican forces in Cork city during the 1916 rising. He was murdered by Crown police at his home in Blackpool in March 1920 and it was from the barracks here on MacCurtain Street, then called King Street, that the perpetrators left to commit their foul deed.

On the northern side of the street No. 43, Stokes Clocks is part of a tradition of clock-making that has been in the city since the 17th century while at No. 46 stands the city's Baptist Church. There has been a Baptist community in Cork since the 17th century, residing at a variety of locations throughout the city. The present church dates to 1892.

Continue along MacCurtain Street. Cross the road at the junction with Bridge Street to reach Information Panel 11.

The junction of Coburg Street, Bridge Street, St Patrick's Hill and MacCurtain Street is a spectacular one. From each of four directions different characteristics of the city can be seen.

You have journeyed along MacCurtain Street to the east. To the north, rising steeply away from the city, St Patrick's

Hill illustrates just how much of a valley the city sits within. In recent years the hill has been a spectacular part of international cycling races that have visited the city. To the west is Shandon Steeple, one of Cork's most famous landmarks, and also the 19th century tower of the city's Catholic Cathedral. Southwards is Bridge Street and St. Patrick's Bridge, beyond which can be seen the main thoroughfare of the city, St Patrick's Street, to where the walk now takes you.

Continue along Bridge Street, cross the River Lee and continue along St. Patrick Street as far as Information Panel 12.

Crossing St Patrick's Bridge and the North Channel of the Lee brings you once more onto the island centre of the city and into St Patrick's Street.

The statue of Fr. Theobald Mathew welcomes the visitor to the centre of Cork from the plinth where he has stood since 1864. A native of Tipperary, following his ordination as a Capuchin he served the people of the city for over forty years until his death in 1856.

Another iconic building on the street is The Savoy. For much of the 20th century this was home to the Cork International Film Festival, which many of Hollywood's most famous stars attended.

Situated to the west of St Patrick's Street is the Huguenot Quarter, named after the French Protestants who settled in Cork from the late 17th century onwards. The Huguenots were welcomed for their skills and soon became important members of commercial and civic life in Cork. Some established themselves in business and manufacturing industries, while others became renowned silversmiths. Several served as mayors of Cork. This surviving portion of the Huguenot burial ground has been restored and can be viewed on Carey's lane.

Continue along St. Patrick Street, cross to the eastern side of the street at the junction with Academy Street and continue as far as Information Panel 13.

The entrance to the nearby English Market is situated on Prince's Street. It was opened in 1788 and became known as the English Market as it was opened by the Protestant or English Corporation of the time. An Irish market was subsequently established on Cornmarket Street. The English Market has developed an international reputation as a food emporium, where a mix of traditional Cork foods, such as tripe and drisheen, and exotic fare can be purchased.

St Patrick's Street is also affectionately known as 'Pana' and walking it is known as 'doing Pana' – which, as you walk it, is exactly what you are doing now.

The walk ends here. To return to Information Panel 1 on Daunt's Square, continue on St. Patrick Street as far as the bend in the road and cross the road using the pedestrian crossing.