

1 Northgate Street ~ Home to one of Caernarfon's best known inns - the Black Boy Inn. Both the street and inn have interesting stories behind their names. Situated in the heart of the red light district during Caernarfon's period as a thriving port. The Welsh name for the street is Stryd Pedwar a Chwech (Four and Six). This, in old shillings and pence, is reputedly what sailors paid for the services of a woman, a bottle of stong liquor and a bed for the night.

The Black Boy Inn, formerly the King's Head and the Fleur de Lys, is now situated here. There are at least three theories to explain its name. One relates to a black boy brought into the country on a ship, another suggests it's a navigational buoy, and the third refers to the nickname given to Charles II by his mother and the fact that Royalists met here secretly at the time.

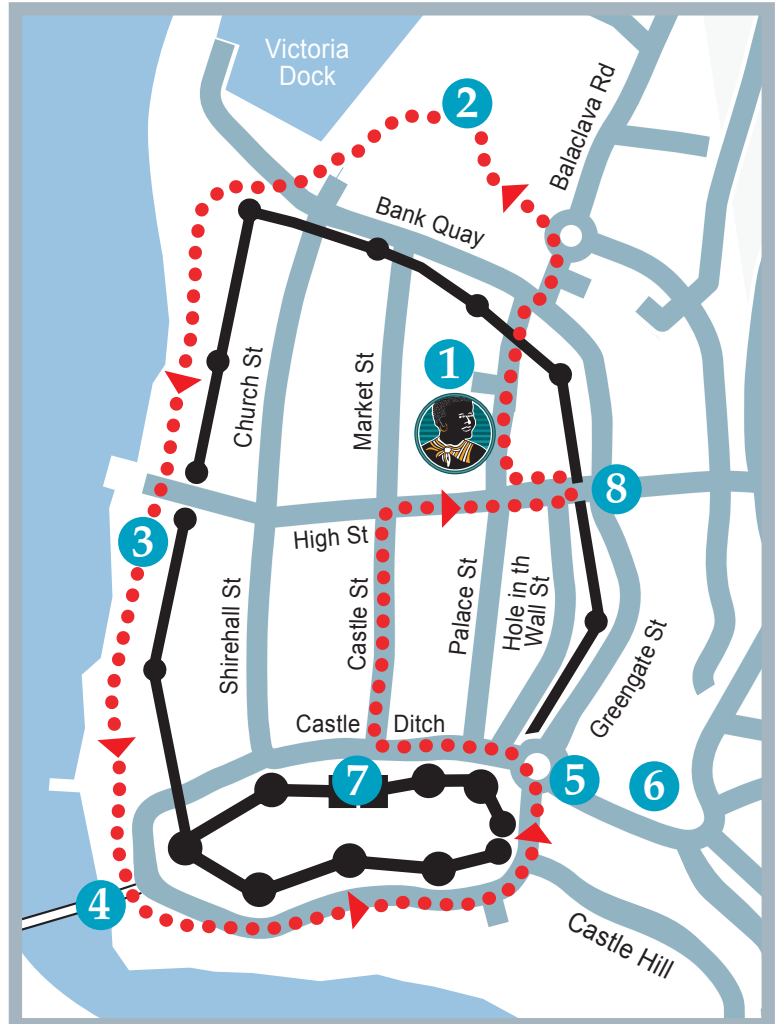
The Northgate arch is not one of the original points of access through the town walls. It was a 19th century addition to improve traffic flow.

To begin the walk, continue down Northgate Street under the archway. Cross the road and carry straight on until you reach Galeri.

2 Victoria Dock ~ A 19th century dock, it provides a berth for yachts, with many buildings around the area enjoying a new lease of life.

The dock was built at the instigation of forward-thinking mayor Llewelyn Turner in the 1870s when the thriving slate industry also led to a flourishing shipping sector. It later went into decline and has only in recent years benefitted from a regeneration programme.

It now houses the Gwynedd Archives, the Seiont II Maritime Museum and Galeri, a newly-built arts and creative business centre.



..... Walk	—●— Castle & Town Walls
1 Black Boy Inn	5 Castle Hill
2 Victoria Dock	6 Castle Square
3 Promenade	7 Caernarfon Castle
4 Aber Swing Bridge	8 Eastgate



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Other points of interest at Victoria Dock include the anchor from the training ship HMS Conway and the clay pipe-lined holes built into the walls of the chandlery building. The pipes date back to when this building was a warehouse used for drying out timber floated ashore from ships anchored in the Strait. The building was subsequently used by Breton onion sellers to store their stock. Under the footbridge is the Patent Slip, which pre-dates the dock and could haul quite large boats out of the water for repairs.

If you stand on the dock facing the sea, to your right is the turquoise-painted pier on the site of a former oil terminal. Beyond that is the start of the Lon Las Menai cyclepath, heading along the Menai Straits towards Bangor. A plaque outside the Maritime Museum commemorates Ellen Edwards who, unusually for a woman of that time, ran a successful navigation school in the 19th century, teaching vital skills to mariners.

3 Promenade ~ To continue the walk, head for the seafront near the Maritime Museum and set off along the Promenade with the sea on your right and the town walls on your left. This broad walkway provides a pleasant stroll away from the traffic and provides extensive views out across the Menai Straits.

Caernarfon was one of the most westerly points the Roman occupation reached and the ruins of their fort, Segontium, can still be visited a little way outside the town centre. To complete their invasion of North West Wales they had to overcome the major obstacle presented by the Menai Straits to reach Anglesey. The treacherous nature of the water and the ferocity of the forces amassed on the shore opposite Caernarfon resulted in a difficult and bloody episode.

Ferries plied their trade between the mainland and Anglesey at various points along the Straits until 1930, despite the building of the Menai Suspension Bridge by Thomas Telford at Bangor in 1826, and Stephenson's Britannia Bridge in 1850.

With the ancient town walls on your left, the green area ahead is Coed Helen Park, a reminder of Helen, the wife of Roman general Magnus Maximus, also known as Maxen (Macsen in Welsh). Continue along

the Promenade as far as the Anglesey Arms and then onto the footbridge on your right.

4 Aber Swing Bridge ~ Standing on the bridge, looking upstream, imagine this area bustling with industry as slate from the Snowdonia quarries was transferred to ships which packed the quay. The Aber Swing Bridge allows pedestrians across the River Seiont to the Aber Foreshore and opens to let boats through. It was built in the 1970s to replace the first bridge which had opened in 1900. Before that, people crossed by ferry at a halfpenny each way.

From the bridge you get an excellent view inland of the Slate Quay, with the Welsh Highland Railway situated at the far end. The Slate Quay had its heyday in Victorian times when this part of Wales was supplying the roofing material for Britain's rapidly expanding towns and cities, as well as to other countries. Ships filled the river mouth and maritime businesses flourished. Some of the premises, like the De Winton engineering workshops (now a plumbing business), can still be seen today, as well as the sturdy Harbour Trust Offices built in 1840.

5 Castle Hill ~ To continue to the next point, do not cross the bridge, instead carry on along the Slate Quay towards the car park entrance and Harbour Trust Offices. Standing outside the toilets and souvenir stalls on Castle Hill, if one looks across to the castle itself you will see a metal balcony jutting out of the archway.

on the 1st July 1969, a 20 year old Prince Charles stood here to greet the crowds; the day of his investiture as the Prince of Wales. But the event was by no means universally welcomed.

On the previous day at Abergele, two men were killed by their own bomb. It is believed they had intended to blow up the Royal Train.

Locally-raised Prime Minister David Lloyd George first brought this ceremony to Caernarfon in 1911, when Edward VIII was invested. All previous princes had been invested in England. If you turn to the right at the top of Castle Hill you will see a statue of Lloyd George.



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6 Castle Square ~ To continue the walk carry on up Castle Hill onto Castle Square, crossing the road to stand on the paved market area. The focal point of the town, Castle Square is generally known by its Welsh name, 'Y Maes'.

It may be bustling with market stalls, shoppers and sightseers, so it is hard to believe there was once a hill in the middle. The grassy hill was removed in 1817 and the earth used for building the Slate Quay.

This area was also at the centre of a cholera epidemic in 1866, which claimed many lives and finally forced the authorities to accept the need for a clean water supply. To celebrate the completion of the water supply system a decorative fountain was built in the square. This centrepiece is now located at the top of Pool Street, though there have been moves to bring it back to the square.

Once across the square, turn towards the Castle and go along Castle Ditch, the road along the landward side of the Castle, heading towards the Tourist Information Office and castle entrance.

7 Caernarfon Castle ~ This impressive structure dominates the Seiont estuary and this part of town. It is the main attraction for thousands of visitors every year.

King Edward I of England built Caernarfon Castle as one of a network of fortifications to consolidate his conquest of Wales. It was begun in about 1283, after the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the last Welsh prince.

This massive structure, which symbolised Edward's power, was built at enormous expense. The seaside location allowed for supplies to be brought in without risking treacherous overland transport, and the town walls were built to protect the English people living around the castle.

But there was still resistance and in 1293 Madog ap Llywelyn ap Maredudd, a distant relative of Llywelyn, led an uprising which started when his rebel forces captured the incomplete castle and set fire to the town on fairday. They murdered Roger de Puleston, the king's tax collector. They then marched east, onto Conwy and Denbigh, before the rebellion was quashed. Caernarfon Castle was back under English control some months later and building carried on until about 1330.

The Tourist Information Office is on the corner of Castle Street. To continue the walk go down Castle Street and turn right at the crossroads, going along High Street as far as the Eastgate.

8 Eastgate ~ Porth Mawr in Welsh is one of the oldest town wall entrances.

The town walls were built to keep the English inhabitants safe and to shut the Welsh out at night. So by the hour of the curfew, you had to make sure you were on the right side of the walls. Eastgate was the main access to and from the countryside beyond and had a drawbridge across the ditch. It closed from 8pm to 6am.

The design of Eastgate has changed over the years and at one time it had a clock illuminated by gaslight. This had to be removed as the lights were confusing to shipping.

At the opposite end of High Street is another gate, Porth yr Aur or the Golden Gate, which houses the Royal Welsh Yacht Club. It is suggested its name comes from the sight of the setting sun through the archway.

To complete the walk retrace your steps a little way down High Street and turn right into Northgate Street, looking out for the signs to the Black Boy Inn.



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