

Creative Walks: Town

A walking tour starting at Central Park, moving along Holton Road and concluding in Gladstone Gardens. On this walk you will immerse yourself in the Town of Barry and learn about the history of this area. Take this walk as an opportunity to creatively interact with your surroundings using the expression of free-writing/ free-drawing. Please note you will need headphones, a notebook, pen or pencil to complete this walk. You can alternatively type on your electronic device.

This walk is brought to you by Megan Mattravers, special thanks to Tom Clemett and Paul Ogden. Please send all responses to mvelios@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Welcome to our creative walking tour.

You find yourself in the central district of Barry. The town surrounds you, shop fronts, busy pavements and traffic flowing around you. Make your way to Central Park.

Central Park: The Park is located in the centre of the town and can be reached from Kings Square, Wyndham Street and Evelyn Street. Did you know Evelyn Street is named after Dr Livingstone's wife. He was a doctor and lived on what used to be called 'Doctor's Row' across the road.

The park has been used for a variety of events and activities including craft fayres, an open-air cinema and as a destination for sports activities.

Free-writing/Free-drawing Exercise: I want you to find a place to sit down, you may want to sit on the grass or find a bench further along. Look around you, what can you see? Create a list of everything you can see. Now choose one of the things you have listed and use it as inspiration to free write or draw.

Free-writing in this circumstance refers to an exercise of writing with a specified time and stimulus. It can produce anything from a short story, poem, rant, rap, monologue or another list. I'm going to give you a couple of minutes, try not to stop writing before the time ends. If you get stuck come back to your initial word.

I will play some music during the timed exercise. It is the music of Barry born composer Grace Williams. There is no right or wrong, just be free.

(Set a timer for two minutes)

Finish the sentence you are on, you may want to pause the recording here to read what you have written or you can move on to Holton Road.

Holton Road: This is one of the busiest areas of Barry. History surrounds us as we stand on the busy High Street. Holton Road was built in many stages throughout time. Can you see the dates at the top of the surrounding buildings? They range from 1891-1900.

Holton Road School at the top of Holton Road remains the biggest primary school in the Vale. Can you see a plaque on the building? This actually says the wrong date, it was completed in 1892 but instead says 1891.

On your right there is a multi storey car park this was the old police station, magistrates court and cells. This was demolished in 1978. At the top of the hill was the fire station with its look out tower.

Make your way down Holton Road

On your right is The Town Hall which was built in 1908, two years after the library. You are now standing in Kings Square, originally named King Edward Square by the Council to mark his death.

Free-writing/Free-drawing Exercise: Find a bench to sit down or a spot to stand still. We are going to do another free-writing exercise together, if you prefer to draw then that's also great. I'm going to give you some words to use as inspiration. You may want to write the words down so you can use them in your free-writing.

Shop, High Street, Atmosphere, Destination, Trade, Local and Passion

Use the words to guide you, there is no right or wrong. If you get stuck come back to the words. I will give you a couple of minutes.

(Set a timer for three minutes)

Finish the sentence you are on, again you may want to pause the recording here to read what you have written or you can move on to Gladstone Gardens.

Make your way along Holton Road. Look around as you walk, take in your surroundings. Imagine what the High Street would have looked like before. A bakery baking fresh bread, the smell of worn leather from the cobblers, fish shops with kippers smoking in the back and a sugary scent pervading the air from the local sweet shop.

Keep moving along to the corner of Thompson Street. At the junction between Holton Road and Thompson Street was Professor Lloyd's Cinema Theatre, later to become a Shooting Gallery and even later the Old Penny Bazaar. The building no longer stands but we can imagine what it would have looked like. Originally the whole road would have been cobbled stones.

The Memorial Hall: The Barry Memorial Hall across the road is one of the finest public halls in South Wales. It was built at a cost of £25,000 and was opened on Armistice Day 1932 by Miss Davies of Llandinam. Now known as the Memo, it remains a public space for arts and entertainment. The first show titled 'Flitch Trial' was performed on 16th November 1932. Over the years many famous companies have performed here, in 1943 there was a production of 'Macbeth' which was seen by many as a bad omen for the future of the hall. The Memo has also been a venue for several TV shows and pantomimes, have you ever seen a pantomime there?

Open the gates into Gladstone Gardens.

Gladstone Gardens: Named after William Gladstone the four-time Liberal Prime Minister, Gladstone Gardens is a retreat for many locals. When the National Eisteddfod of Wales came to Barry in 1968, the Gardens were used for the opening ceremony and in 2011, the Proclamation Ceremony of the Vale of Glamorgan, National Eisteddfod 2012 was held here.

Free-writing/Free-drawing Exercise: Find somewhere to sit down. You may want to sit on the grass or find a nearby bench. We are going to do another free-writing exercise together, so get your pens ready. As creatives we are always observing and on the look out for our next story. Using all of your recent observations and your current surroundings create a piece of free-writing or drawing which reflects this area. You may want to create a monologue for a local shop-keeper or you could create an autobiographical account of your time spent here. It's completely up to you.

I'm going to give you a couple of minutes for this final exercise.

(Set a timer for three minutes)

Finish the sentence you are on. How are you feeling? Did you enjoy free-writing and free-drawing? It would be great to read some of your responses. You can get in touch via email, the email address is included in the walk description. Your responses may get shared on our Vale of Glamorgan social media.

I hope you have enjoyed your creative walk. Take care and have a great day.