

The capital of Wales - Cardiff

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*W. Hen. HERBERT Viscount Windsor of y^e Kingdom
of England, and Baron Montjoy, of the Isle of Wight
This Prospect is humbly Inscrib'd by
his Lordships most Obed^t Serv^t
Geo: Smith, Esq^r.*



*CARDIFF in British, Kaerdyff, sits on the River, by a most flow with a commodious Har-
bour, with Hills and a Castle by Robt. Fitz Norman a Norman, the Conqueror of Glamorgan
AD. 1100 till he held his Courts of Justice, and kept a strong Guard, his a Piers or Knights
to defend their several Stations. In this Castle Robt. Cardore that unfortunate Prince eldest
the Conqueror was Imprisoned by his Soldiers until his Old Age, having been first deprived
as well as of his Reges of the Crown. It was taken by Madoc and Rhys Gryg with
allies 1192. It is now a Bishopric belonging to the R. Cath^o. Gilbert Lord of the
Isle of Wight had taken it from Rhys Gryg according to the Charter of King Henry 1st.*

CARDIFF



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The geography of Wales

Where is Wales?

On the west of the island called Great Britain, Wales is a member of the United Kingdom. It's to the west of England.

How big is Wales?

Wales is just over 20,000 square kilometres in size. At its widest it's 200 kilometres east to west, and 250 Kilometres north to south.



What's the geography of Wales?

Wales has a varied geography with strong contrasts. In the south, flat coastal plains gives way to valleys, then to ranges of hills and mountains in mid and north Wales.

There are three national parks and five areas of outstanding natural beauty, which cover a quarter of the land mass of Wales. 80% of the land is dedicated to agriculture, ranging from crops to livestock.

What is the capital of Wales?

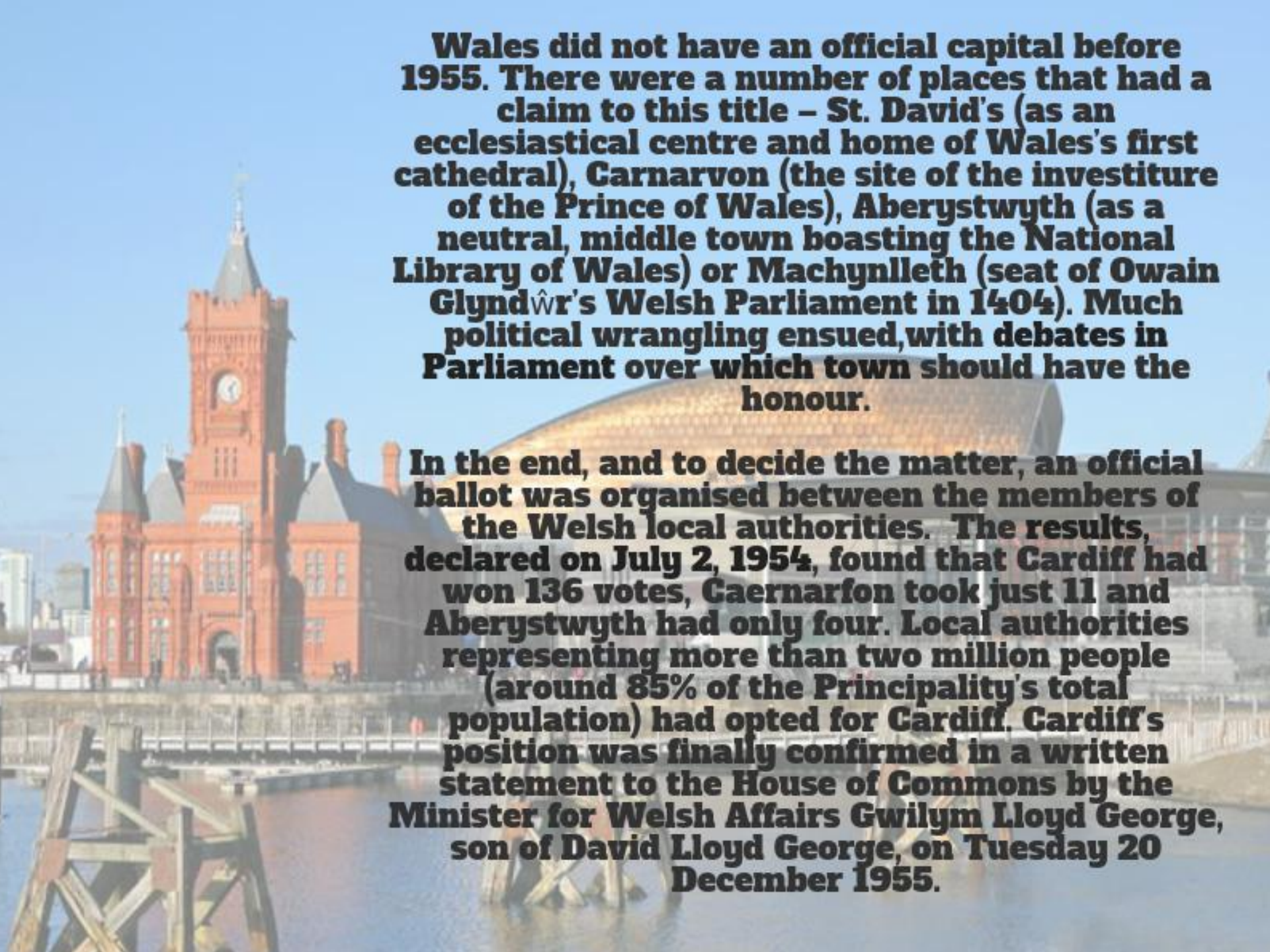
Cardiff is the capital and largest city in Wales and the eleventh-largest city in the United Kingdom.

The city is the country's chief commercial centre, the base for most national cultural and sporting institutions, the Welsh national media, and the seat of the National Assembly for Wales.

But did you know that Cardiff was only made the capital of Wales as recently as 1955?

So where was the Welsh capital six decades ago?

And what made them choose Cardiff in the 50s?



Wales did not have an official capital before 1955. There were a number of places that had a claim to this title – St. David's (as an ecclesiastical centre and home of Wales's first cathedral), Carnarvon (the site of the investiture of the Prince of Wales), Aberystwyth (as a neutral, middle town boasting the National Library of Wales) or Machynlleth (seat of Owain Glyndŵr's Welsh Parliament in 1404). Much political wrangling ensued, with debates in Parliament over which town should have the honour.

In the end, and to decide the matter, an official ballot was organised between the members of the Welsh local authorities. The results, declared on July 2, 1954, found that Cardiff had won 136 votes, Caernarfon took just 11 and Aberystwyth had only four. Local authorities representing more than two million people (around 85% of the Principality's total population) had opted for Cardiff. Cardiff's position was finally confirmed in a written statement to the House of Commons by the Minister for Welsh Affairs Gwilym Lloyd George, son of David Lloyd George, on Tuesday 20 December 1955.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CARDIFF

THE ROMAN FORT AT CARDIFF

Cardiff began as a Roman fort.

The Romans invaded Wales about 50 AD and about 55 AD they built a fort on the site of Cardiff. In the late 1st century the fort was reduced in size as Wales was now at peace. However in the mid-3rd century the fort was rebuilt and strengthened to defend South Wales against Irish raiders.

Yet in the fourth century Roman civilisation declined. Towards the end of the century the Romans abandoned the fort at Cardiff.



CARDIFF IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The town of Cardiff was founded when the Normans conquered Glamorgan. A Norman called Robert Fitz Hamon conquered the area. He built a wooden castle within the walls of the old Roman fort. (The castle was rebuilt in stone in the early 12th century).

Soon a little town grew up in the shadow of Cardiff castle. That often happened in the Middle Ages as the castle's garrison provided a market for the goods made by the craftsmen of the town. Cardiff had a population of between 1,500 and 2,000 in the Middle Ages. Towns were very small in those days, especially Welsh towns.

In Cardiff there were weekly markets. After 1340 Cardiff also had 2 annual fairs. In the Middle Ages the fairs were like markets but they were held only once a year and they lasted a fortnight. Buyers and sellers would come from all over Glamorgan and even further away to attend a Cardiff fair.

In Medieval Cardiff there were the same craftsmen you would find in any Medieval town like butchers, bakers, brewers, carpenters and blacksmiths. There were also leather workers like shoemakers and glovers.

CARDIFF IN THE 16th CENTURY

In the 16th century Cardiff remained a small and quiet town. In 1538 Henry VIII closed the two friaries in Cardiff. They were cannibalized for building materials.

In the 16th century, for the purpose of collecting customs, the port of Cardiff officially extended from Chepstow to Worms Head. In those days there were many pirates operating from Cardiff often with the connivance of local officials. The navy finally took decisive action to suppress piracy in the early 17th century.



Henry VIII is one of the most famous kings in English history.

CARDIFF IN THE 17th CENTURY

In the 16th and 17th centuries most of the foreign trade of Cardiff was with France and the Channel Islands. Coal and some iron were exported. Salt and wine was imported. There was also a thriving coastal trade. (In those days it was difficult and expensive to move goods by land so merchandise was often transported along the coast from one part of Britain to another.)

Goods from Cardiff were taken to Bridgewater, Minehead, Bristol, Gloucester and London. The main goods were farm produce such as cheese, salted butter, wool, grain and skins.

Some coal and iron was also transported from Cardiff to other British ports. Tanned leather was brought from them to Cardiff along with malt, which was used in brewing.

In the late 16th century 16 ships operated from Cardiff. However in 1607 Cardiff suffered from a severe flood. Then in 1642 came civil war between king and parliament. At first most of the townspeople supported the king. However by 1645 the king was losing the war and he lost support in Cardiff. In 1645 Cardiff was captured by parliamentary troops.

The civil war ended in 1646 but in 1648 there was a rebellion in South Wales. The rebel army was routed in a battle on the site of Fagins Drive. Afterwards Cardiff returned to being a peaceful port.

CARDIFF IN THE 18th CENTURY

In the 18th century Cardiff remained a small town, no larger than it had been in the Middle Ages. In 1762 Water Bailiffs were appointed. They charged tolls for the upkeep of the town quay. There were also 3 private wharves in Cardiff. In 1774 an Act of Parliament created a body of men called the Improvement Commissioners who were responsible for paving and cleaning the streets of Cardiff and lighting them with oil lamps. In the 1780s East, West, North and Blounts Gates were demolished because they impeded traffic. From the late 18th century Wales was transformed by the industrial revolution. At that time increasing amounts of iron were exported from Cardiff. However it was difficult to transport iron to the port by land so in 1794 a canal was built. In 1798 a sea basin was created with a sea lock to allow ships in where they could be loaded or unloaded from barges or from the wharf. In 1796 a writer said of Cardiff: 'The inhabitants of this town and neighborhood carry on a considerable trade to Bristol and send thither great quantities of oats, barley, salt butter and poultry of all kinds and from this town there are not less than 8,780 tons of cast and wrought iron shipped annually to London and other places'.

CARDIFF IN THE 19th CENTURY

In this century Cardiff grew at a phenomenal pace. In 1801 the population of Cardiff was less than 1,900. By 1851 it was over 18,000. By 1871 it was almost 60,000. By 1900 the population of Cardiff was over 160,000.

Exports of coal and iron from Cardiff boomed in the 19th century. The export of grain also flourished.

In 1839 Lord Bute built a dock, which became known as Bute West Dock. East dock was built in 1855. Roath Basin was dug in 1874. It was followed by Roath Dock in 1887.

The railway reached Cardiff in 1841. By making transport easier it fueled the growth of Cardiff.

In the 19th century there was a shipbuilding industry as well as a rope making industry. Other industries included iron and steel, brewing, milling and paper making.

Meanwhile there were many improvements to Cardiff in the 19th century.

From 1821 Cardiff had gas street lighting. In 1835 a covered market was built. In 1853 a new Town Hall was built. In 1886 a Coal and Shipping Exchange was built. It was followed by the Pier Head Building in 1896.

Furthermore Royal Arcade was built in Cardiff in 1856. Castle Arcade was built in 1887. The castles living apartments were rebuilt in the 1870s.

Despite these improvements, like all 19th century towns, Cardiff was overcrowded and extremely dirty. Disease was rife and 383 people died in a cholera epidemic in 1849.

However life in 19th century Cardiff gradually improved and sewers were built. Cardiff also gained a pure piped water supply.

In 1883 an infirmary was built.

The first public library in Cardiff opened in 1861. The University of South Wales was founded in 1893.

Roath Park was opened in 1894



Cathays Park was opened in 1898

CARDIFF IN THE 20th CENTURY

In this century population growth in Cardiff slowed. The population of Cardiff was about 160,000 in 1900 and reached 280,000 in 2000. That was a large increase but not so large as the one in the 19th century.

Amenities in Cardiff continued to improve during the 20th century. From 1902 electric trams ran in Cardiff. (They stopped running in 1950).

Duke St Arcade opened in 1902. In 1901 Splott Park opened. The National Museum of Wales opened in 1927 and the War Memorial was built in 1928.

The Temple of Peace was built in 1938.

During the Second World War 355 people were killed in Cardiff by German bombing. Large parts of Butetown were destroyed as was part of the city center. But after 1945 Cardiff was rebuilt.

In 1955 Cardiff was made the capital of Wales.

In the 20th century the port of Cardiff declined drastically. The old manufacturing industries also declined but they were largely replaced by new service industries including tourism.

CARDIFF IN THE 21st CENTURY

At the beginning of the 21st century Cardiff is a flourishing city.

Attractions in Cardiff include the new Mermaid Quay, which is famous for its restaurants, the Oval Basin and the Atlantic Wharf Leisure Village.

Furthermore the Cardiff Millennium Centre opened in 2004 and The Cardiff Story opened in 2011.

Today the population of Cardiff is 346,000.

More than 18 million people visit Cardiff each year, which makes it the 6th most popular alternative tourist destination according to National Geographic.

90% of the growth in the country is due to migration, not natural growth.

Interestingly, Cardiff has the smallest percentage of people over 65 in Wales at 13%.

More than 54,000 people in Cardiff belong to a non-white ethnic group

The Cardiff-Newport metropolitan area has a population of 1.1 million.

If you're not into history...

Whether you live in Cardiff or are visiting the city there's plenty to do to keep you occupied. And if you haven't considered visiting Cardiff before, then you should! The youngest capital in Europe has a lot to offer both tourists and residents.



Yes, Cardiff was once one of the largest coal ports in the world. The wealth created from its industrial past is still evident in the city's fine architecture, but the Welsh capital is perhaps best known around the world these days for being the home of Welsh rugby.

...Ride the waves.

Take to the boards even if it's raining on the simulated surf machine at the Cardiff International White Water Centre. There are even two lanes so that friends can have a go at the same time.

...Get on your bike.

Cardiff is one of the greenest cities in the UK. It's also one of the flattest, which makes it a great place to go cycling. The city's 'green lung' runs along the banks of its major river - The Taff. The Taff Trail runs for 55 miles between Cardiff and Brecon.

...Become a time lord.

Cardiff Bay is also the location of the Doctor Who Experience. But fans of the cult TV series that was filmed on location in Cardiff need to be quick as the attraction closes its doors on 9 September.

...Go arcade shopping.

One of the best retail destinations in the UK, Cardiff is known as the City of Arcades and has six charming Edwardian and Victorian arcades and the ultra-modern St David's Shopping Centre. Cardiff has the whole spectrum of designer brands, high street names and individual and independent shops.



And If you ARE into history but want a fun way to learn...

...bring history alive.

Visit one of Europe's foremost open-air museums and Wales's most-visited heritage attraction.

The St Fagans National Museum of History is an open air museum in the grounds of St Fagan's Castle that features over 40 rescued and rebuilt buildings from all over Wales which you can go inside and explore. As well as farm cottages and Celtic roundhouses, there is a church, a school, a bakery which bakes wonderful bread and a row of Victorian shops which sells old-fashioned sweets and treats. Best of all, it's completely free.





St Fagans is an open-air museum chronicling the historical lifestyle, culture, and architecture of the Welshpeople.

The museum is part of the wider network of Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales.

It consists of more than forty re-erected buildings from various locations in Wales, and is set in the grounds of St Fagans Castle, an Elizabethan manor house.

In 2011 *Which?* magazine named the museum the United Kingdom's favourite visitor attraction.



Widely regarded as one of the world's top performing arts centers, the Wales Millennium Centre has become one of Cardiff's most important cultural landmarks and is a must-visit attraction. Covering an area of nearly five acres, it regularly hosts opera and ballet performances, as well as dance and musical productions, comedy shows and music concerts in its three theaters. It's also home to eight Welsh national arts organizations, from opera to orchestra, theatre to literature.

Llandaff Cathedral, founded in the time of Bishop Urban (1107-34), is one of the finest such structures in Wales. The main part of the Cathedral dates from the 13th century, while the northwest tower was rebuilt in the 15th century. Much of the cathedral later fell into a disrepair, but an Italian Temple was built within its walls in 1734. Although severely damaged during the last war, it has since been restored and contains many superb features, including a notable figure of Christ in Majesty by Epstein.



The Red Castle: Castell Coch

This enchanting mixture of Victorian Gothic fantasy and fairytale castle features many lovely rounded towers and turrets. Another of Britain's famous "sham" castles, this attractive medieval castle was actually constructed near the end of the 19th century.

Used sources:

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