



Aston University
Birmingham

Walking Tour of
Birmingham



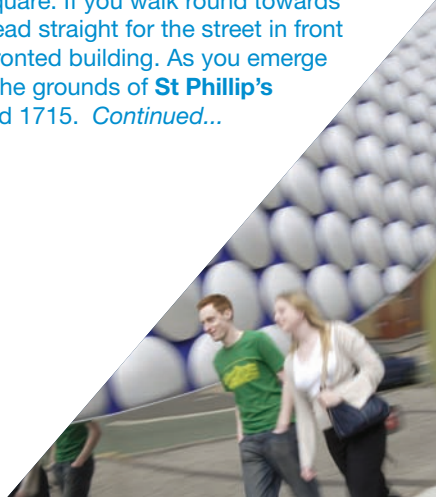
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Welcome to Birmingham and Aston University

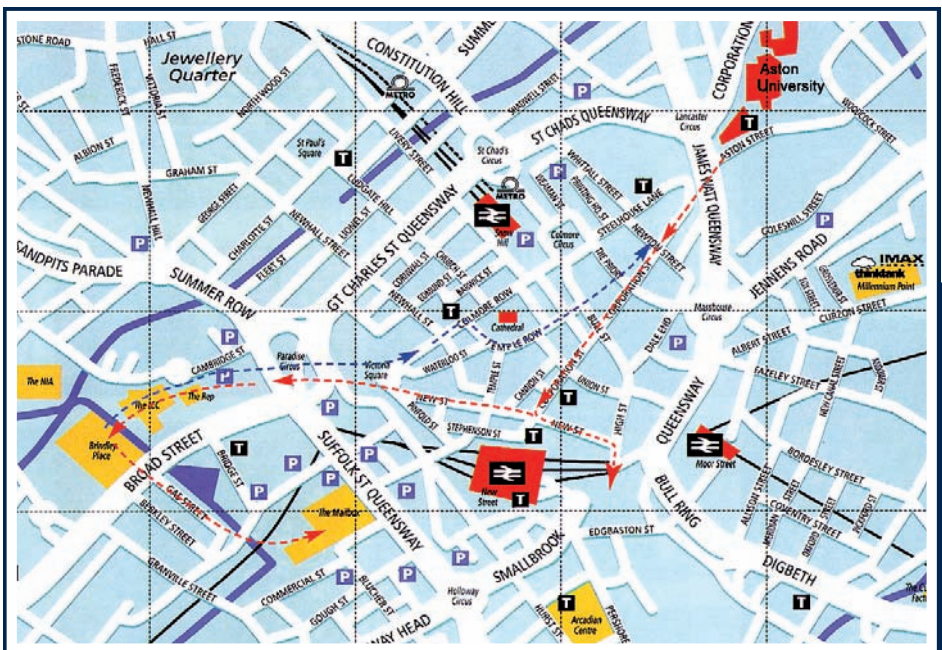
This short guide will take you on a gentle stroll around Birmingham city centre, taking in the best of the sights. With a few trivial facts thrown in for good measure, we hope you enjoy the trip. The journey begins outside the Main Building at Aston University. A route map is on the back page.

- ▶ From the Main Building Foyer walk out towards the residences, cross the zebra crossing and turn right along Aston Street. Follow the road up to the pedestrian crossing and cross bearing right, making it safely onto **Corporation Street** on the other side. If you can't see the STA travel shop you're in the wrong street, in which case back track and bear around the corner to the left.
- ▶ Continuing up Corporation Street (a slight slope) you'll pass a number of restaurants, take-aways and cafés on the left, many of which are favourites of Aston Students. Crossing two more pedestrian crossings, you'll be walking into the main shopping area of Birmingham.
- ▶ Walking down here, you'll notice many big named high street stores, trying to entice you in with all the latest fashions, but remember you're here for the wonderful sights of Birmingham!!
- ▶ If you continue to the bottom of **Corporation Street** with as few pit stops as possible, directly in front of you is the Pallasades Shopping Centre, where Birmingham New Street Station hides itself. To your left here (and around 100 metres along New Street) is the **Bullring Shopping Centre** which is well worth a visit. It's dubbed as Europe's new shopping capital and has 26 football pitches worth of shops, boutiques and restaurants. Shops include Selfridges, Debenhams and many more. Walking back from the Bullring you can begin the walk up New Street towards **Victoria Square**.
- ▶ When you reach the square you may notice a) that it's not really square shaped and b) the rather large fountain in the middle. The fountain is fondly known as the "the floozy in the Jacuzzi" but actually represents the life force of "The River". It is one of the largest fountains in Europe, with a flow of 3,000 gallons per minute.
- ▶ This is also home to the controversial Iron Man statue. Rusting and beginning to lean, it was erected in 1993 and designed by Anthony Gormley (also responsible for the much praised "Angel of the North" in Gateshead). At the top of the steps is the grand building of the Town Hall built in 1934.

- ▶ Following the building round to the left, you're now treading on the territory of **Chamberlain Square**. The large building on your left is the Council House (Aston University's graduation ceremonies are often held in this building) and to your right is the Museum and Art Gallery. The gallery is famous for housing a permanent collection of Pre-Raphaelite art and an outstanding collection of glass, ceramics and costumes. There's also a lovely Victorian tea-room inside that's well worth a stop.
- ▶ Looking over past the fountain (a memorial for Joseph Chamberlain) a statue of a man can be seen sitting on the steps. He's a statue of Thomas Attwood, famous for being a local banker and MP in the late 19th Century.
- ▶ Onwards and upwards now, towards the steps of the Central Library and Information Service, and then through Paradise Forum to come out into the continental style **Centenary Square**.
- ▶ Once through the walkway, the little domed building in front of you is the Hall of Memory which is in remembrance of all those who have died in the World Wars and other conflicts. Walking towards the large glass building at the far end of the square, you'll see the **Repertory Theatre**, which is one of five major theatres in Birmingham.
- ▶ Looking to your left, you'll notice the funny looking water structure. This is the "Spirit of Enterprise" with its three heads depicting Commerce, Industry and Enterprise. The glass building ahead is the **International Convention Centre (ICC)**, which is a public walkway. Inside the ICC, there is the Symphony Hall which is home to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO).
- ▶ Out the other side of the ICC is **Brindley Place**; a rather trendy complex set beside the canal, famous for its bars and restaurants. It also has the National Sealife Centre; which is the UK's largest and has the world's only 360 degree transparent tunnel. Just beyond Brindley Place, to the left, is **Broad Street**. This is Birmingham's answer to the Las Vegas strip (without the casinos!!) and is where much of the night life happens. From here you can also walk to the **Mailbox**, an indoor shopping centre filled with designer shops (including Harvey Nichols) and rather nice restaurants and bars overlooking the canals. Just follow the signs along the canals.
- ▶ Retrace your footsteps back towards Chamberlain Square. If you walk round towards the Town Hall, with the large fountain on your right, head straight for the street in front of you, **Colmore Row**, with 'Starbucks' in the glass fronted building. As you emerge round the corner at the end of the street, you'll be in the grounds of **St Phillip's Cathedral**. The Cathedral was built between 1709 and 1715. *Continued...*



- ▶ Admission to the Cathedral is free so you can wander in and enjoy it from the inside. In the winter, pre-Christmas, they have choir practice here in the evenings, including some of the classic Christmas carols. Perfect to get you in the mood for Christmas!!
- ▶ On the other side of the Cathedral, walk bearing right so you end up with The House of Fraser Department Store on your right. On the left, is the Great Western Arcade, built in the 1850s, that has some really fancy shops in it and an even nicer cake shop on the corner just in front of you.
- ▶ You can take a little detour down there if you so desire but come back the way you came – don't want you getting lost in Birmingham do we?! (If you do go into the arcade, opposite the other end is Snow Hill Station, one of the other mainline rail stations in Birmingham).
- ▶ With the Cathedral behind you, and House of Fraser on your right, begin the walk back to Aston University. Head downhill, across the road and through the arcade (**The Minories**) onto the other side.
- ▶ In the middle of the traffic island is a picture board of Tony Hancock (famous Birmingham comedian). Cross at the pedestrian crossing and head back down to the bottom of **Corporation Street** where you'll be able to see the skyline of Aston University on the right and can retrace your steps back to the Main Building.



Outward route - - - - ->
Return route - - - - ->