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One thousand years of history in a thousand paces...

Waterford is Ireland's oldest City and is also older than all of the Northern European capitals with the exception of London and Paris. In 914, the great Viking adventurer and pirate, Regnall, a grandson of Ivor the Boneless, established a base here and built a longphort or ships' haven, which would in time become a modern City.

In 918, Regnall took a fleet of ships and left Waterford sailing for York in England. York (Jorvick) was then controlled by Danish Vikings and was perhaps the most important City in the Viking world. After some fierce fighting, Regnall and his fleet captured York and he became the first Norse ruler of that City and held the title 'King of Waterford and York'. The name Waterford is derived from its Viking name Vedrarfjord which has two possible meanings; 'haven from the windswept sea' or 'fjord of the rams', a place where sheep or rams could be loaded for export.

The City was captured by the Anglo Normans in 1170 and the Vikings were expelled bringing about a dramatic change for the City. Within a few years of being captured, Waterford was escalated to the status of Royal City which owed allegiance to the Anglo Norman King of England, Henry II. Modern day Waterford City still retains six towers and long stretches of town walls from these periods which represents the largest collection of medieval defensive towers and walls in Ireland.

Blue Plaque Trail

Along this walking trail you will encounter a number of Blue Plaques at various locations in the City to commemorate a link between a particular location and a famous person or event which are managed by the Waterford Civic Trust. www.waterfordcivictrust.ie/site

1 Waterford Museum of Treasures: Located in a converted 19th Century granary, the museum houses a unique exhibition that tells the story of Waterford City from its Viking origins to the modern day.

2 Garter Lane Arts Centre: The arts centre is housed in a Quaker meeting house that was built in 1792. The arts centre houses a theatre where there are regular performances of theatre, film and music.

3 Waterford Chamber of Commerce: The Waterford Chamber was originally built by John Roberts in the 1780's as the townhouse of a wealthy merchant, William Morris.

4 St Patrick's Church, Chapel Lane: One of the finest surviving mid 18th Century churches in Ireland and the oldest church in Waterford, St. Patrick's was built during a time when the Catholic Church in Ireland experienced a most severe persecution.

5 Beach Tower, Jenkins Lane: Built on a rocky outcrop that forms a natural defensive position the Beach Tower has typical 15th Century crenellations. During the medieval period, the area between the tower and the river was not developed and the tower commanded a fine view of the River Suir.

6 John Roberts Square: Named in memory of the 18th Century Waterford born architect and builder John Roberts. Roberts designed both Catholic and Protestant Cathedrals, City Hall, Chamber of Commerce building and Newtown School.

7 Clock Tower: Built in 1861 at a cost of £200, this elaborate High Victorian public monument fulfilled two civic functions – one of which was a public water supply, including drinking bowls for horses and dogs!

8 Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity: Designed by John Roberts and built between 1793 and 1796 it is the oldest roman catholic cathedral in Britain and Ireland

9 Blackfriars: The Friary was known as Blackfriars because the Dominican order wore black habits. The Dominicans who built the friary first settled in Waterford in 1226. Blackfriars was dissolved in 1540 by order of King Henry VIII and subsequently used as a courthouse and theatre.

10 St Olaf's Hall: Restored by Bishop Thomas Milles in 1734 and named after St Olaf a Norwegian saint. Its location in the centre of the old Viking City suggests that the Church was originally a Viking foundation.

11 Franciscan Friary: Built in 1834 and designed by architect Terence O'Reilly, the Franciscan Friary is an imposing Church in the classical style which dominates the streetscapes of both narrow lanes on which it is sited.

12 Christ Church Cathedral: Considered one of the finest 18th Century ecclesiastical buildings in Ireland and is the work of Waterford born architect John Roberts. The Cathedral was the scene of the marriage of Strongbow and Aoife on August 25th which is the most important marriage in Irish history marking the end of the Viking age in Ireland and the beginning of English involvement in Irish affairs.

13 Bishop's Palace: Designed by German architect Richard Castle in the 1740's it has been described as one of the largest and finest Episcopal residences in Ireland.

14 Medieval Under Crofts: The conjoined deanery undercrofts are cellar like structures located under the 18th Century deanery building. The earliest undercroft dates from the 13th Century and was probably built as a mint. The upper undercroft dates from the early 15th Century and was used as a store.

15 Greyfriars: Ruins of a 13th Century Franciscan Friary known as Greyfriars after the colour of the habits worn by the friars as a sign of their humility. The grave of Waterford's most famous architect, John Roberts, lies beneath the tower arch. Beside the ruins is Greyfriars Art Gallery, which houses the municipal art collection.

16 William Vincent Wallace Plaza: Named in honour of the 19th Century operatic composer who was born nearby in Colbeck Street. William Vincent Wallace (1812-1865) composed Maritana, Lurline and Amber Witch and is regarded as one of the greatest 19th Century composers of English opera. Wallace was also a founder member of the New York Philharmonic.

17 Reginald's Tower: Reginald's Tower stands at the apex of what is known as the Viking Triangle – the historic quarter of the City. Reginald's Tower is the oldest civic urban building in Ireland and is one of the most remarkable Viking buildings still in existence in Ireland. It is named in honour of the Viking Regnall who founded the City in 914.

18 T.F. Meagher: T.F. Meagher was an Irish revolutionary leader and hero of the American Civil War. He went to America where he played a role in the Civil War, founding the Irish Brigade. After the war, the President appointed Meagher as the first Governor of Montana.

19 33 The Mall: 33 The Mall is a late Georgian building which was formerly the Wolfe Tone Club and was headquarters of the Young Irelander's in 1848. It is also where the Irish Tri Colour flag was first flown in Ireland by T.F. Meagher in 1848.

20 City Hall: Designed by John Roberts, work began on the building in 1783, the same year that the Penrose family established their glass house. In City Hall, the Grand Banqueting Room has welcomed notable figures including Daniel O'Connell, T.F. Meagher, King Edward VII and Eamon De Valera.

21 Theatre Royal: Located on the historic Mall, the Theatre Royal is one of the finest 19th Century theatres in the world. While its architectural heritage has been preserved, its programme is broad based and contemporary. It houses part of the city art collection.

22 House of Waterford Crystal: The new House of Waterford Crystal comprises a fascinating visitor centre and crystal factory tour and an opulent retail store housing the largest collection of Waterford Crystal in the world.

23 Court House: Opened in 1849, the courthouse was designed by Waterford architect Terence O'Reilly. The austere Classical detailing of the court house were meant to convey the authority of the judicial system.

24 People's Park: Laid out in 1857 by the Mayor John A Blake. In the centre of the park on either side of the band stand are two canons captured by the British army at the Battle of Sebastopol in 1854 during the Crimean War.

25 St John's Church: A Gothic Revival church. Built in 1845 with an exterior of high quality local stonemasonry.

26 St Martin's Gate: A 13th Century gate and portcullis flanked by twin towers. The passage or entrance was kept narrow to hinder invaders and to facilitate the collection of the murage (tax).

27 Watch Tower: Dating from the mid 13th Century a number of modifications have been made over the centuries. The absence of windows on the inner elevation suggests that this tower functioned exclusively as a defensive structure and was not occupied as a residence during peace times.

28 Double Tower: Named because it contains two chambers and in medieval times would have provided access to the Benedictine church for the monks whose monastery and lands lay outside the City walls.

29 French Tower: The French tower would have given a commanding view out over the surrounding country side. The ground and first floor of the tower date from the mid 13th century when King Henry III allowed the City Council to collect taxes to finance the fortification of the suburbs.

30 St. John's Priory: Founded by King John for the Benedictine Monks in 1211.

31 Semi Lunar Tower: The semi lunar or half moon tower is a flanking or on the wall tower. The purpose of these towers was to make defending the wall easier because attackers who attempted to scale the wall could be repulsed by archers from the relative safety of the protruding tower.

32 St Patrick's Church, Patrick Street: Church of Ireland built in 1727 on the site of a medieval church which was also dedicated to St Patrick it is built of local red sandstone with a limestone dressing.

33 Priory of St Saviour
Designed by George Goldie and built between 1872-1880 it embraced the Italianate renaissance revival style which is carried through to the interior.



Waterford City
Picture the Experience
www.discoverwaterfordcity.ie

 Fáilte Ireland