

## My Favourite Place: Cardiff Bay (text from poster)

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### General Facts

Cardiff Bay was originally called Tiger Bay before a rebranding, and it lies in Butetown, Cardiff, Wales.

It is located in the southern part of Cardiff, the capital city, on the shoreline of the Bristol Channel. Cardiff is located in the south east of Wales, approximately 15 miles west of Newport. Cardiff lies in the west of the United Kingdom. It is situated 51.5 North and 3.2 South.

### Cultural Geography

Cardiff Bay is one of few places in the United Kingdom to show great cultural diversity. In the 19th and 20th centuries, when Cardiff was one of the great global coal producers, a large number of people from overseas immigrated to Cardiff Bay. People came from the Middle East, Africa, Greece, Spain, Portugal, the Caribbean, China, Norway, Italy and Ireland. They settled down in the early 1900s and brought their cultures and traditions with them. There were few cultural clashes, as many cultures blended and mixed with existing Welsh traditions. Widely accepted things today, such as marrying other races, existed commonly here earlier than other places. Butetown became one of the United Kingdom's first multicultural communities. However, it eventually became a place to avoid, as rough sailors arrived and caused trouble and crime. They would commit murders and thefts, but moved on before being caught. Although regeneration has taken place at Cardiff Bay, a small area was not regenerated and is known to be a dangerous and poor part of Cardiff.

Cardiff Bay is the home of the largest British-born Somali population in the UK. Originally, Somalis were attracted to Cardiff as seamen at the end of the 19th century. After the opening of the Suez canal, they wanted to work in the docks, as they were very popular at this point in time. There was also plenty of work available, particularly as many of the jobs were ones which white workers did not want to do. It was lucky that they did immigrate, as they also helped out in undesired World War One jobs. Britain had a large colonial presence in Somalia, so it was easy for sailors to work and live in the UK. They did not come as slaves or refugees, but as sailors who wanted to become wealthier and to buy more livestock in Somalia. Boarding houses were set up on the bay. Some people settled down and married, while other kept returning back to Somalia to visit their loved ones. The boarding houses were useful and homely as the occupants shared the same culture and language. However, it was not an easy and comfortable life as the Great Depression brought starvation for many of the workers. In the 1980s, a civil war broke out in Somalia. This meant seamen from the community at Cardiff Bay were allowed to bring their families over. In fact, there is a proverb which says "Cardiff, my home", used by Somalis. Somalis also brought over a lot of their culture and religion. They have an important Friday prayer each week, and many of them go to the Al-Noor Mosque.

### Environmental Geography

Cardiff Bay is home to lots of wildlife. There is a large number of birds in the area, such as the shelduck, oystercatcher, dunlin, curlew and redshank. There is also a range of fish, such as salmon and sea trout. Two rivers, called the Ely and the Taff, flow into Cardiff Bay

which creates an artificial lake. The barrage which was built as part of the regeneration process at the bay creates a large freshwater lake. The bay is located on the right of the Tees-Exe line, meaning its geology consists of softer, sedimentary rock. The dominant rock is triassic rock. As Cardiff Bay is situated in the United Kingdom, its biome is temperate deciduous forest. This means its vegetation is primarily broadleaf trees (such as oaks, maples, and beeches), shrubs, perennial herbs, and mosses.

### Political Geography

Cardiff Bay and its regeneration was a matter of politics and whether the regeneration and financial support needed would be beneficial in the long term. It was a controversial issue which was campaigned for by both sides of the argument. People campaigning for the development argued that it would "create a range of job opportunities", "establish the area as a recognised centre of excellence and innovation", and create "a superb environment in which people will want to live, work and play". However, people campaigning for it not to be developed believed that it would pollute the water in the nearby river, food for birds would be removed causing them to die, and scientific interest in the area could no longer go on. People were also concerned about the raised water level. Raoul Bhambral, Friends of the Earth Cymru, said "The silt that has been built up over hundreds of years is full of invertebrates that are food for nationally significant populations of dunlin and redshank. It's very likely that the displaced birds will starve and die and this whole site of special scientific interest will be destroyed". He also said that they were "expecting algal blooms, midge swarms and Weil's disease" from the rivers Taff and Ely's high nutrient load being trapped in the barrage. Sïan Best, Cardiff Residents Against the Barrage, said "The barrage is bound to cause changes in ground water levels in the city. The geographical make-up of South Cardiff means that, with the proposed 400 acre lake in the area, there will be tremendous fluctuation in ground water levels. This will increase dampness in properties, cause health problems in the elderly and small children and may contribute to an increase in asthma cases." However Michael Boyce, Cardiff Bay Development Corporation, defended the project and said "We made a judgement to put people before birds. We made a judgement that deprivation, poverty and unemployment were considerably more important than the feeding grounds of a fairly common bird which has feeding grounds throughout the Severn Estuary."

It is now clear that the regeneration was worth it, as no significant effects have been recorded and Cardiff Bay has created jobs and attracted tourists. 16,750 jobs have been created, and the number of visitors to Cardiff has increased by 59% since 1998, a year before the project was complete. Also, 6,000 new homes have been created, allowing more people to settle down and help boost the economy. The bay is now aesthetically pleasing as there are no ugly mud flats, meaning Cardiff is seen as a nice place to visit. However, the project still costs tax payers in Wales £20 million pounds each year to maintain. This is politically very divisive, however it is worth the money, in my opinion, as tourism has greatly increased in Cardiff since the regeneration. Some other current criticisms are that animals can no longer live on the flats, the expensive homes can lead to removing residents and drawing in wealthier ones, and the tidal mudflats have been destroyed.

### Social Geography

Cardiff Bay was built to attract tourism in a previously poor part of Cardiff in Wales. When before the regeneration there was nothing to see or do for tourists in the area, after a wealth

of opportunities was opened for people visiting the city. Since the regeneration, the bay has continued to grow and more attractions have been developed. Some examples of the attractions available include museums, such as the Cardiff Story Museum, boat trips, TV show attractions such as The Doctor Who Experience, old churches and cafés such as the Norwegian Church and Cafe, science centres such as Techniquist, theatres such as the Wales Millennium Centre, clubs such as the Glee Club, entertainment centres such as the Red Dragon Centre, water-sports such as International White Water, and the Cardiff Bay Barrage amongst more exciting venues. It is also a good place to live, as many apartments and homes have been built in the area. It is such a popular place to visit, that in 2009, around 13 million visitors to Cardiff were day trippers who visited the city-centre shops and Cardiff Bay. Since 1998, a year before the Cardiff Bay regeneration was complete, the number of visitors to Cardiff has increased by 59%. This must be partly due to the new and regenerated Cardiff Bay. Also, it created 16,750 jobs for the local community due to it being rebuilt and as the local attractions needed to be staffed.

### Changes

Cardiff Bay has been changing since the 1980s when the Cardiff Bay regeneration project took place. It is still expanding and changing to this day. In the 19th century, Cardiff Bay was called Tiger Bay. It was prosperous and experienced growth due to the industrial revolution. Lots of coal and iron was needed, and there was lots of ore nearby. As it was a port, other materials were also imported, and products such as iron and steel were exported. Due to these factors, unemployment was rare.

In the 20th century, a peak of exports was reached in 1913. But from then on, the Cardiff docks began to handle fewer materials and products. This was due to a number of factors. Overseas markets were lost during the two world wars, meaning trading was not easy. Other countries began to produce their own iron and steel. It was often cheaper and reduced demand for materials from other countries, like Cardiff. In the early 1940s, Cardiff's trade had fallen to 35% of its 1913 export figure. In 1978, East Moors Steelworks closed, meaning 3,200 people lost their jobs, lowering the economy of South Cardiff. Later on, local coal and iron ore began to run out as most of it had already been extracted. This made it expensive to mine and made little profit. This decline in trading and mining continued into the mid 1980s. Unemployment grew and the land became empty and forgotten. People migrated away from Tiger Bay and empty houses and warehouses were left. To tackle these problems and regenerate Tiger Bay, the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation (CBDC) was created in 1987. It had 5 main aims. They were: to create an environment for people to live, work and play, to reunite the city centre with its waterfront, to bring job opportunities, to achieve the highest standard of design, and to establish the area as a centre of excellence and innovation. The scheme originates back to a visit by the Secretary of State for Wales, Nicholas Edwards MP to the Cardiff docklands in the early 1980s. He liked the idea of revitalising the area by incorporating new homes, shops, restaurants and an opera house at the waterside.

Regenerating Cardiff Bay was a big project, which cost a lot of money. The total cost was £200 million and it costs nearly £2 million each year to maintain. 14,000,000 square feet of non-housing development was built, and 5,780 housing units were created. About 200 acres of derelict land was reclaimed and around 31,000 new jobs were created. Lots of shops and

cafés were built, meaning Cardiff Bay was turning into a great place for tourists to visit in Cardiff.

The regeneration had some positive and negative effects. There are two main positive ones. Firstly, it has created a playground of entertainment for tourists and local residents who can afford to use the facilities there. Secondly, it has been good for the city of Cardiff and the local authority as the area has been regenerated. Cardiff is seen as a better city and its economy was boosted by the regeneration. There are two main negative effects. Firstly, local residents on low incomes living in apartment blocks in nearby Buton cannot access the facilities as they are too expensive. They feel they were not consulted in the redevelopment process. Secondly, the RSPB are opposed the barrage ,as the habitat of many wading birds who survived on the tidal mud flats has now disappeared due to the permanent freshwater lake.

The regeneration of Cardiff Bay made it a great place to work and relax. So, large attractions such as the Wales Millennium Centre, the National Assembly for Wales, shops and water-sports moved onto the waterfront.

Before regeneration, Cardiff Bay did not look very good and the mudflats put people off visiting. The tidal nature of Cardiff Bay meant that extensive mudflats were seen for all day apart from 2 hours. This was not aesthetically appealing. So, a solution of building a barrage was suggested. A barrage would be built across the mouth of Cardiff Bay from Cardiff Docks to Penarth. This would take freshwater from the rivers Ely and Taff to create a large freshwater lake, providing permanent high water. By making the area more appealing, investors were to be attracted to the bay. It was seen as the main part of the regeneration project. The barrage was completed in November 1999.

The barrage also had effects on the ecosystem nearby. Firstly, according to two studies published in 2006, the loss of intertidal mudflats reduced the numbers and diversity of birds at Cardiff Bay. Most of the common shelduck and shorebirds went away. There were no nearby sites to feed and they were unable to settle anywhere else.