


Tour of Geneva focusing on Henry Dunant places of interest (written in 2018, amended in 2024)

The information below is intended to enable you to undertake a self-guided tour of the significant buildings and monuments concerning the life of Henry Dunant (also known as Henri Dunant). Most of the photographs shown were taken during a private guided tour in 2017 organised by Geneva Escapade (website address: <http://www.geneve-escapade.ch/> should you prefer to book a guided tour).

Public transport in Geneva: At check in, the hotel reception should have given you a transport pass for the duration of your stay, enabling you to travel free on all buses, trams and trolley buses. Google Maps or the TPG app  can help you with the best routes.

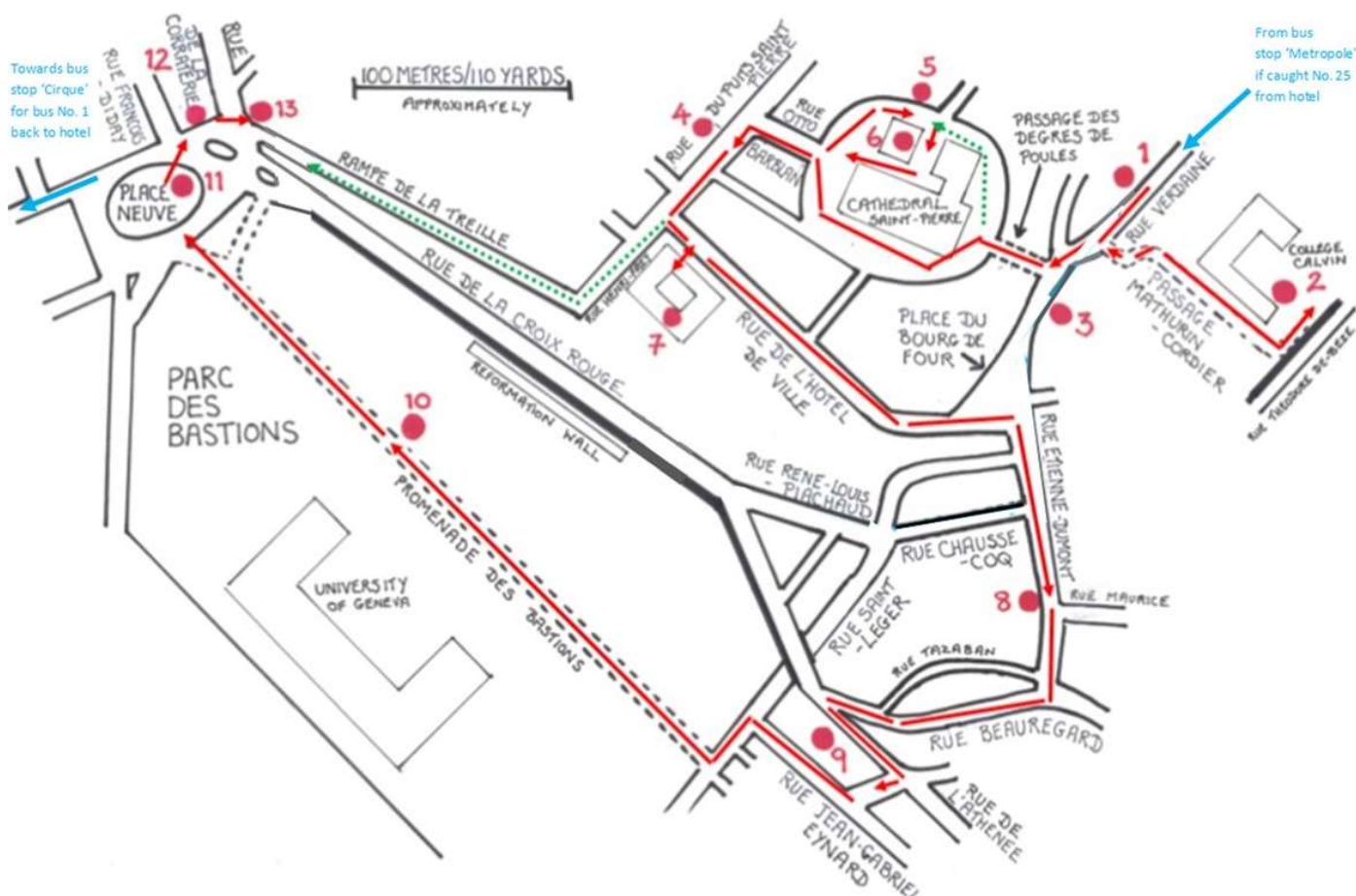
This Henry Dunant tour starts at 12 Rue Verdaine, a 24-minute walk from the hotel according to Google Maps. Alternatively, you could take the number 25 bus south towards Thonex, Vallard from bus stop 'Gautier', 80 metres (88 yards) from the hotel on Rue des Paquis. Ride 7 stops to bus stop 'Metropole'. From there it is a 5-minute walk (according to Google Maps) to Henry Dunant's birthplace. When you get off the bus keep walking in the same direction as you were travelling, crossing side streets Rue du Port and Rue du Prince. Take next right into Rue de la Tour-Maitresse. Keep going straight and this same road will become Rue Verdaine. Once you have crossed Rue du Vieux-College look out for number 12 on the right-hand side.

The diagram below gives you an overview of the walk and endeavours to follow, where possible, the chronological order of Henry Dunant's life. The walk can be shortened in various ways either by visiting sites in a different order or missing some out completely. Please be aware that the old city is on various levels with locations 4, 5, 6 and 7 at the higher elevations, 1, 2, 3, and 8 at the intermediate level and 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 at the bottom.

Alternative routes include (shown by short cuts in dotted green lines below):

1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13; or

1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 4, 7, 13, 12, 11, and 10 (which misses out 8 and 9).



1 **12 rue Verdaine**

Birthplace of Henry Dunant



Plaque on the wall



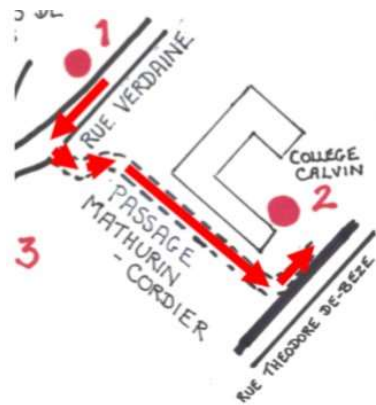
Henry Dunant was born on 8th May 1828, the first of five children.

This was his parent's city house. Like many other wealthy people, they also had another house in the country. They were a devout and charitable Calvinist family and were active in helping the less fortunate e.g. his father visited prisoners and campaigned to improve their conditions.

His mother's family name was Colladon and Henry was able to obtain French citizenship through her side of the family. An uncle, on his mother's side, Jean-Daniel Colladon, was a famous scientist who, in 1826, measured the speed of sound underwater in Lake Geneva.

One of Henry Dunant's nephews campaigned to get the plaque installed above this house.

Directions from birthplace to school



As you face the house, turn left and walk up the hill a little way and on left hand side you will see an entrance to a passageway "Passage Mathurin Cordier"



Follow the passage, go up the steps, keep going straight ahead, up a few more steps, and then alongside the building until you reach a wall blocking your way (do not climb steps up to the road at the top of wall). Turn left. The path will open out into the courtyard of the school.

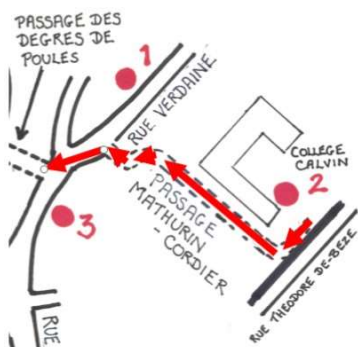
2 Calvin College



Henry Dunant was not a good student and had to have lots of private lessons to help him try and keep up. He was only good at theology and philosophy. He was asked to leave Calvin College early, aged 14, due to poor grades. His family were disappointed with his academic achievements as they had wanted him to be a doctor or lawyer.

Aged 21, he became apprenticed to a banking house in Geneva and, in his mid-twenties, they sent him to Algeria. He fell in love with the country and decided to buy an estate there to develop agriculture. In 1854, he was given a concession to build mills in Setif. Sometime later, needing water rights to make them viable and being unable to get them from the colonial authorities, he decided to appeal directly to Napoleon III (Algeria was then a French colony). At that time Napoleon III was in Northern Italy, supporting Victor-Emmanuel II, King of Piedmont in his struggles against the Austrian Empire. So Henry Dunant went to Italy to find him. Although unsuccessful in meeting up with Napoleon III, he ended up at Solferino, at the aftermath of a battle that, on 24 June 1859, left more than 40,000 dead or dying and the wounded lacking medical attention. Henry Dunant organised local people to bind the soldiers' wounds and provide food and comfort.

Directions from school to view of former poor house



Retrace steps back to Rue Verdaine. As you exit the arch, turn left and continue up the slope. When the road opens out, look out for a shop on opposite side with arched windows. Immediately to the right is an archway leading into Passage des Degrès-de-Poules, a long flight of stairs that takes you straight up to the Cathedral. Head for the staircase but **BEFORE** climbing them, look back up the road at the massive building on the far side.

3 Palais de Justice

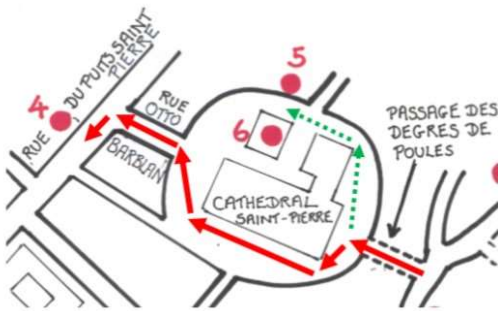


This building used to be a 'hospital' where the poor were housed. The family made regular visits as Henry Dunant's parents stressed the importance of social work - helping orphans, parolees, the sick and the poor. When as young as 9 years old he would accompany his mother on these visits.

Motivated by his strong sense of faith and desire to help others, as a young man, Henry Dunant began organising prayer groups and bible studies from his home. He went on to co-found the YMCA of Geneva in 1852. He became a fervent spokesperson for the YMCA, promoting it all over the world, and visiting emerging YMCAs across Europe and North Africa. His enthusiasm and passion to have a truly international movement led to the first ever International YMCA Conference held in Paris in 1855.

Years later this building became a courthouse and it was here, in 1867, that Henry Dunant was declared bankrupt after his business interests in Algeria failed. The water rights had not been granted and he had concentrated on humanitarian affairs rather than rectifying the problems in Algeria.

Directions from view of former poor house to 4 Rue du Puits-St-Pierre



Climb up the stairs (just under 70 steps) of Passage des Degrès-de-Poules. At the top, if you want to go in chronological order turn left.

(If you want to make the walk shorter without missing any sites, turn right at the top of the steps, then left at the corner, to go straight to location number 5. Then follow route to number 6 and, on way to number 7, you will pass location 4. Short cut is marked by green dashes.)

Having turned left at the top of the steps, at the corner turn right, and follow the path down the side of Cathedral Saint Pierre. (Apparently there is a very good view of Geneva from the top of the cathedral tower.) As the square opens out, head towards and go down the road in the middle of the far side (opposite the cathedral entrance), Rue Otto Barblan. At the end of the road, turn left into Rue Puits-St-Pierre. Number 4 is a few houses up on the right hand side.

4

4 Rue du Puits-St-Pierre

'A Memory of Solferino' was written here



Plaque on the wall



Henry Dunant inherited this house from his mother's side of the family and lived here, on the third floor, until his bankruptcy in 1867.

It was in these upstairs rooms that he wrote his book 'A Memory of Solferino' – the story of his journey to see Napoleon III and an account of the utter shambles and horror that he witnessed at the battlefield of Solferino. In the book he proposes the creation of national relief societies of trained volunteers to provide neutral and impartial help to wounded soldiers in times of war. He wrote: "Oh, how valuable it would have been...to have had a hundred experienced and qualified voluntary orderlies and nurses! Such a group would have formed a nucleus around which could have been rallied the scanty help and dispersed efforts which needed competent guidance."

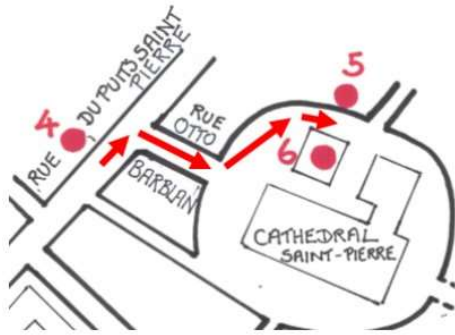
He also refers to a young corporal, an only son aged 20 years old, who asked him to write to his father and comfort his mother, gave him his address and then died. Henry Dunant complied with the request. International messaging is a key component of the work of all Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies today.

The book was published in November 1862 by the printers Jules-Guillaume Fick (see location 8 below) and copies were sent to important people throughout Geneva and Europe, including royalty and ministers.

This house was the first headquarters of the future ICRC.

Next door at number 6 is Maison Tavel. This historic building, the foundations of which date back to the 12th century, houses a museum that documents the history of the city of Geneva.

Directions from 4 Rue du Puits-St-Pierre to 3 rue du l'Eveche



Retrace steps back to Cathedral and on entering the cathedral square head towards road on far left, rue L'Eveche. Number 3 rue du l'Eveche is on the left hand side.

5 3 Rue du l'Eveche

House where Committee of 5 met



Plaque on the wall



This house was the headquarters of the Welfare Society of Geneva and it was here that Gustave Moynier presented Henry Dunant's ideas to the society on 9th February 1863. Henry Dunant's proposition was that the nations of the world should form relief societies to provide care for the wartime wounded; each society should be sponsored by a governing board composed of the nation's leading figures, should appeal to everyone to volunteer, should train these volunteers to aid the wounded on the battlefield and to care for them later until they recovered.

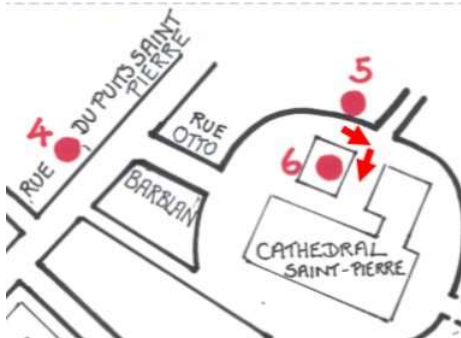
A meeting followed to discuss, plan and agree how to bring the ideas to life and on 17th February the 'Committee of Five', was formed comprising:

- 1 General Guillaume-Henri Dufour, a highly respected and well connected army officer, as President.
- 2 Gustave Moynier, a lawyer and President of Welfare Society of Geneva. He was the organiser in the team.
- 3 Dr Louis Appia, an internationally recognised surgeon who worked in field hospitals during Italian War of 1859.
- 4 Dr Theodore Maunoir, a friend of Appia and also a surgeon, he brought to the table a clear and precise mind.
- 5 Henry Dunant, the visionary.



The "Committee of Five" later takes the name of the 'International Committee For Relief to the Wounded'.

Directions from 3 rue du l'Eveche to Museum of International Reformation



As you face number 3 rue du l'Eveche, the next destination is immediately behind you but the entrance is at the far end around the corner. So go a little further along rue du l'Eveche, then turn right into Rue du Cloitre. The entrance to the International Museum of the Reformation is on your right.

6

Rue du Cloître

International Museum of the Reformation



Plaque on the wall



This building was a former cloister of the cathedral. It was here in 1536 that the vote for reformation was made.

Prior to 1919 it was the home of the international tracing agency and then from 1919-1922 the League of Red Cross Societies was based here, founded in 1919 in Paris in the aftermath of World War I. The war had shown a need for close cooperation between Red Cross Societies, which, through their humanitarian activities on behalf of prisoners of war and combatants, had attracted millions of volunteers and built a large body of expertise. A devastated Europe could not afford to lose such a resource.

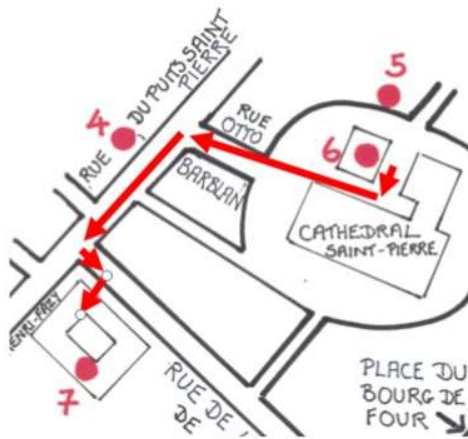
It was Henry Davison, president of the American Red Cross War Committee, who proposed forming a federation of these National Societies. An international medical conference initiated by Davison resulted in the birth of the 'League of Red Cross Societies', which was renamed in October 1983 the 'League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies', and then in November 1991 became the 'International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies'.

The first objective of the IFRC was to improve the health of people in countries that had suffered greatly during the four years of war. Its goals were to strengthen and unite already-existing Red Cross Societies and to promote the creation of new Societies.

There were five founding member Societies: Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States. This number has grown over the years and there are now 190 recognised National Societies - one in almost every country in the world.

Today the building houses the International Museum of the Reformation. The museum was founded in 2005 with the aim of showcasing the living history of Geneva and the Reformation. As such, it tells the story of both an idea and an ambition. In the 16th century, John Calvin set out to turn Geneva into a model for a new way of living the Christian life, to serve as an example to the world. This momentum gave birth to the "myth" of Geneva and explains its international influence. The aim of the museum is not to convert and convince, but to explore and explain the roots of this remarkable destiny.

Directions from International Museum of the Reformation to Hotel de Ville and Alabama Room



Continue in same direction towards side of Cathedral then follow road round to right. Keep going in the same direction across the square into Rue Otto Barblan. Turn left into Rue Puits-St-Pierre.

(If you took the shortcut, look out for house number 4 on right hand side and read description for location 4.)

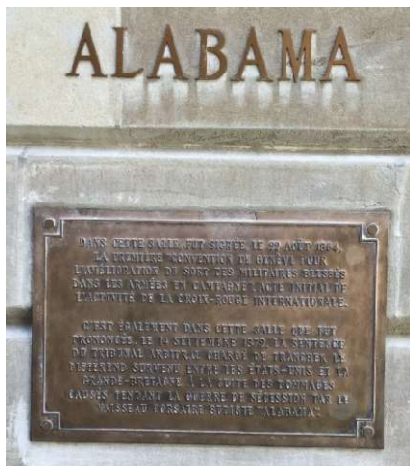


On left hand side, pass the home of the State Archives (the Old Arsenal with cannons outside and an archway containing three remarkable mosaic frescoes) and at the junction you will see the Hotel de Ville entrance on the opposite side of the road. Cross the road and go through the archway into the courtyard inside. The Alabama Room is in the diagonally opposite corner.

7 **Hotel de Ville, Alabama Room**



Plaque on wall of Alabama Room



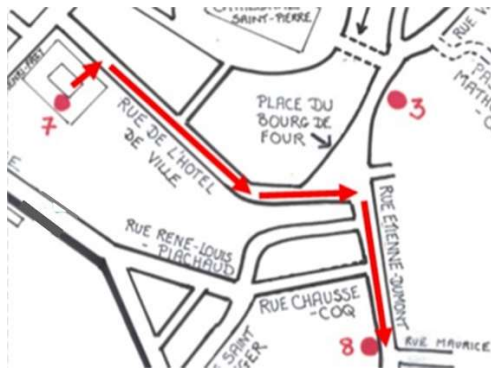
It was here in the Alabama Room that, on 22nd August 1864, the 'Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field', referred to as the initial Geneva Convention, was signed by 12 European states.

Henry Dunant was not actually in the Alabama Room during the convention as he was in charge of a side event. The treaty was not signed by the Committee of 5 but by the government of Switzerland. Moynier and Dufour were present in the room. A painting of the meeting shows Henry Dunant in the room but this is because the artist chose to add him to the scene.

The Alabama Room is so named for the mediation carried out here in 1872 between the United States and England, following the American Civil War, concerning the British ship "Alabama".

For over half a millennium, the Hotel de Ville has been the political heart of Geneva - countless treaties have been signed, conferences held and illustrious visitors received. Still today, the government of the Republic and Canton of Geneva meets within these walls. The Tour Baudet (1455) is the oldest element, housing the hall of the Council of State with its superb frescoes and woodwork. The large, winding, paved ramp (16th century), enclosed in a square tower, enabled horsemen to attain the three stories without dismounting, as well as providing easy access for litters and sedan chairs.

Directions from Hotel de Ville to 16 Rue Etienne-Dumont

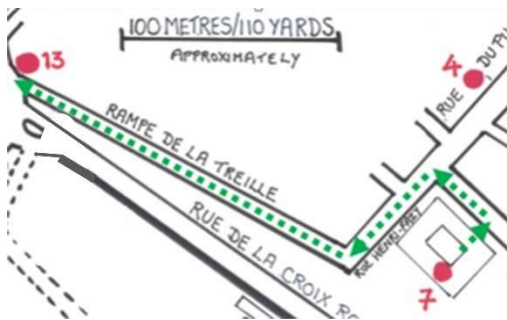


Leave courtyard to get back to Rue de l'Hotel de Ville. Turn right, down the hill, and follow the road around to the left. You will end up in the triangular Place du Bourg de Four. Keeping the open area to the left, cross to the far side and turn right down Rue Etienne-Dumont.

(If you walked to location 1 from the Palais Eynard bus stop then you will already have walked along this road in the opposite direction.)

Location 8 is on the right hand side at 16 Etienne-Dumont.

Alternative route to site 13, Bust of Henry Dunant



If you want to skip sites 8 and 9 and take the short cut to site 13 then leave courtyard to get back to Rue de l'Hotel de Ville. Turn left and left again at the corner into Rue Henri-Fazy. At the end, turn right into Rampe de la Treille, (note the extremely long bench) which will take you all the way down the hill to Place Neuve. The bust of Henry Dunant, location 13, is at bottom of hill on right hand side.

8

16 Rue Etienne-Dumont



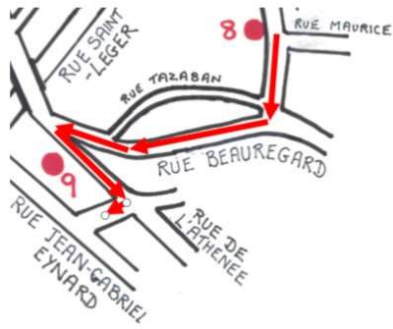
Plaque on the wall



Location of Jules-Guillaume Fick, printers of A Memory of Solferino

It was here, in 1862, that the first copies of 'A Memory of Solferino' were printed. The print run was 1,600.

Directions from 16 Rue Etienne-Dumont to Palais de l'Athenee



Keep going in same direction along Rue Etienne-Dumont. At the end of the road, turn right into Rue Beaugard and follow that downhill to the main road, Rue de l'Athenee. The Palais de l'Athenee is opposite. Cross the road and then head to left hand end of the building and turn right into side street to see the plaque on the end wall.

9 **Palais de l'Athenee**
Rue de l'Athenee



Built as a private building by friends of Henry Dunant, the Palais de l'Athenee was donated to the Geneva Art Society. Just before it was finished, the Committee of Five convened an international conference here on 26th October 1863 at which 16 states and 4 philanthropic institutions were represented.

The Conference adopted Dunant's and the Committee's proposals that a National Relief Committee should be set up in every country and decided that the neutral emblem, that would distinguish medical personnel, should be a red cross on a white ground (the inverse of the Swiss flag).

Plaque on end wall



Directions from Palais de l'Athenee to Bust of Moynier in Parc des Bastions



Continue down the hill and turn right into Rue Jean-Gabriel Eynard. At the end turn left into Rue Saint-Leger and then enter park through entrance on right hand side. Follow the path, Promenade des Bastions, through the park towards far end. The bust of Moynier is about half way along on right hand side.

10

Parc des Bastions

Bust of Gustave Moynier



Reformation wall can be seen at back of picture behind the trees

Gustave Moynier, a lawyer, was President of Welfare Society of Geneva and a member of the Committee of Five. He was the organiser of the team and was key in producing a plan of action to put into effect Henry Dunant’s visionary suggestions. He was also involved in developing the law of the ICRC. He was the President of the ICRC for a period of 46 years.

Following the massive disgrace of Henry Dunant’s bankruptcy and the huge debts (one million francs, involving many of his Genevan friends) which he left behind when he escaped to France, he was forced to resign from the Committee and Moynier endeavoured to erase him from the ICRC history books. He might have been successful had a journalist not interviewed Henry Dunant in 1895 and retold the story of his involvement in the formation of the ICRC.

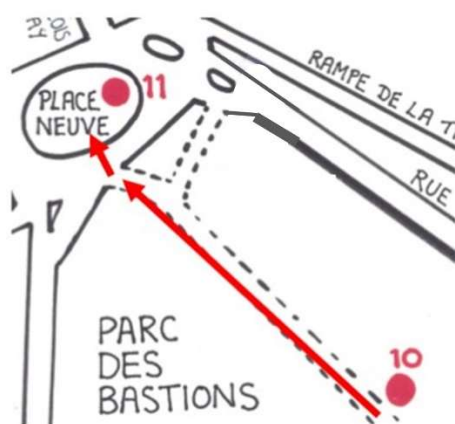
Parc des Bastions was Geneva’s first botanical garden, founded in 1817. The park still contains over fifty rare varieties of trees. With its lovely promenade, pavilion restaurant and giant chess game, the park is a popular meeting place in Geneva.

The construction of the Reformation Wall, which can be seen behind the bust, began in 1909, the year which marked the 400th anniversary of the birth of Jean Calvin and the 350th anniversary of the foundation of the Academy of Geneva. The monument is backed against part of the ancient defensive walls that surrounded the city until the middle of the 19th century and helps to provide much needed reinforcement to the old city fortifications.

At the centre of the wall, five meters high, are the four great figures of the Reformation: Guillaume Farel (1489-1565), Jean Calvin (1509-1564), Théodore de Bèze (1519-1605) and John Knox (c1514-1572).

Behind these statues stands the motto of the Reformation and of Geneva: “Post Tenebras Lux” (After darkness, light). On either side, statues and bas-reliefs represent the great Protestant figures of the different Calvinist countries and the crucial moments in the development of the movement.

Directions from Bust of Moynier to Statue of General Dufour



Follow foot path to end of park to enter Place Neuve. Cross to the central island. Watch out for trams!

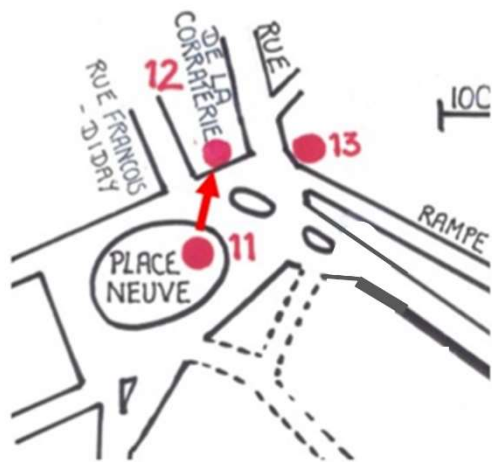
11 **Equestrian Statue of General Guillaume-Henri Dufour, Place Neuve**



Dufour (15th September 1787 - 14th July 1875) was the President of the Committee of Five, presided over the conference which elaborated the first convention and the honorary president of the ICRC when the Geneva Convention was discussed in August 1864. He was a topographer, an engineer and an army officer, who was elected four times to the supreme command of the Swiss army. A national hero, he was a respected soldier and the first to establish a map of Switzerland.

Bounded by the Conservatory of Music, the Grand Opera Theatre, the Rath Museum and the nearby Victory Concert Hall, the square at Place Neuve represents the pinnacle of high culture in Geneva.

Directions from Statue of General Dufour to Rath Museum



The museum is on the north side of the square, between Rue Francois-Diday and Rue de la Corratierie and can easily be reached using the zebra crossing.

12 **Rath Museum, Place Neuve**

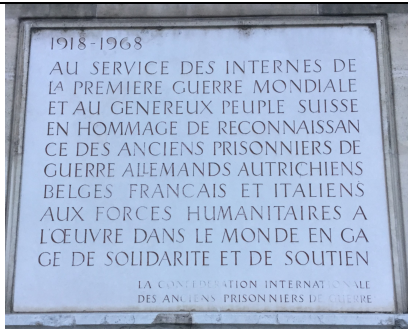


Plaque on the wall

In August 1914, the President of the ICRC, Gustave Ador, issued a circular announcing the establishment of the International Prisoners-of-War Agency, whose task was to centralise information and organise the dispatch of gifts to prisoners of war. The circular also stated that the Agency would classify incoming tracing requests and send copies to the National Societies of the Detaining Powers so as to ascertain where the individuals sought were being held.

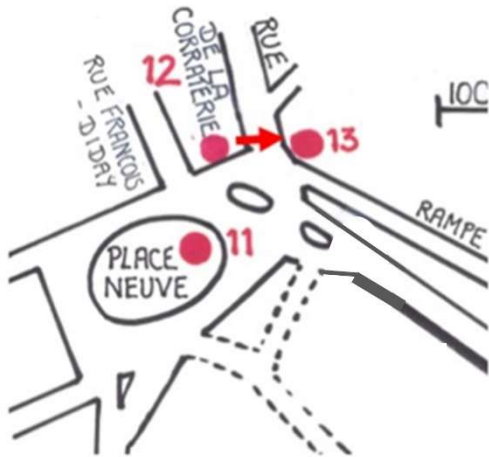
On 12th October 1914 the Agency began operations in the Rath Museum, setting up a system for processing information which allowed it to deal quickly and efficiently with the 5,000 requests it received daily.

Using the lists of prisoners of war provided by the warring States as a basis, the Agency made out an index card for each prisoner. These cards were classified by nationality, in files which also contained requests for information. As soon as a piece of information was matched with a request, the Agency was able to send a reply to the family or the place of origin of the prisoner of war concerned.



The index cards are now housed at the International Red Cross Red and Crescent Museum and samples can be examined by visitors as part of the museum tour.

Directions from Rath Museum to Bust of Henry Dunant.



As you face the museum with the square behind you, turn right and cross rue de la Corraterie. The bust of Henry Dunant is to your right, under the trees and against the high wall.

13 **Bust of Henry Dunant, Place Neuve**

A bust of Henry Dunant, born 8th May 1828, died 30th October 1910. It was erected in 1980 and marks the spot where public executions once took place. Henry Dunant campaigned to stop this practice. His nephew had tried to get a statue erected in 1919 but the Grand Council of Geneva refused. However, a commemorative plaque on Dunant was unveiled that year.

Henry Dunant’s life prior to 1867 is detailed above.

His bankruptcy in 1867 and all that entailed meant he was no longer welcome in Genevan society and he left for France. He never came back to Geneva and stayed away from Switzerland for twenty years.

He went to Paris initially and continued to pursue his humanitarian interests including campaigning to help prisoners of war and improve prison conditions. During the Franco-Prussian conflict from 1870 to 1871, he founded the ‘Common Relief Society’ to help soldiers wounded in battle.

Hounded by debtors and especially Moynier, he spent the period from 1874 to 1886 in abject poverty in a variety of European countries. He was often ill. Eventually, in 1887, aged 59, he moved to Heiden, a small village in Eastern Switzerland. A few years later, illness forced him to take residence in the local hospital.

A Swiss journalist, Georg Baumberger, found out that he was still alive and went to interview him in 1895 and retold the story of his key role in the foundation of the Red Cross



movement. After Henry Dunant’s rediscovery, the world heaped prizes and awards on him, including, in 1901, awarding him the first ever Nobel Peace Prize (together with Frederic Passy, the founder and president of the first French peace society). He continued to live in his room at the hospital until the end of his life.

Henry Dunant died in 1910, at the age of 82. Apart from some bequests to those who had looked after him at the village hospital, he left all his money to charity.

Directions to back to the President Wilson Hotel

According to Google maps it is a 24-minute walk back to the hotel. Please check Google Maps for the route.

Alternatively, you could catch a bus for most of the journey. To reach the bus stop (a 4-minute walk according to Google Maps) retrace your steps back to the front of the Rath Museum, then keep walking in the same direction. Cross side street Boulevard du Theatre, then cross Rue du General Dufour to enter pedestrianised section. At the main road, Boulevard Georges-Favon, turn right to reach the bus stop ‘Cirque’.

Catch the number 1 bus north towards Jardin Botanique and then ride six stops to the ‘Gautier’ bus stop, which is only 80 metres (88yards) from the hotel.

If you want to try a tram, then the number 15 tram north towards Nations also stops at Cirque. Ride 5 stops to the tram stop ‘Butini’, from where it is a 5-minute walk (according to Google Maps) back to hotel. Please check Google Maps for directions.

Additional key dates

22nd August 1864: Signing of the Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field, referred to as the initial Geneva Convention

6th July 1906: Revision of the initial Geneva Convention, which adapted and supplemented the 1864 principles.

		<p>5th May 1919: Founding of the League of Red Cross Societies, which, in 1991, became the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The idea was for the Societies to pool their capacities and resources in an effort to provide humanitarian assistance in peacetime.</p> <p>27th July 1929: Adoption of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War and official recognition of the emblems of the red crescent and the red lion and sun through a revision of the 1906 convention.</p> <p>12th August 1949: Adoption of the four Geneva Conventions. Following the atrocities of the Second World War, a fourth Convention provided for the protection of civilian persons in time of war.</p> <p>8th June 1977: Adoption of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 which strengthen the protection granted to victims of international armed conflicts and, for the first time, of non-international armed conflicts. In particular, they establish a distinction between civilians and combatants.</p> <p>8th December 2005: Adoption of the Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 (Protocol III), which recognises an additional distinctive emblem, the red crystal.</p>
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Document produced in April 2018 by Anne Balfour, member of British Red Cross Tiffany Circle, for delegates attending 'Humanity Beyond Borders Red Cross Tiffany Circle Society of Women Leaders International Forum: Geneva 2018'. Amended in January 2024 to delete references to irrelevant bus stops and add directions to and from the President Wilson Hotel where 'The Journey of Humanity' International Forum is being hosted by the Tiffany Circle International Council in October 2024.