

## **Self-management Necropolis Walk**

### **Blog by Kirsty McDonald and Lynsey Brodie**

September 2022 was [Self-management Month](#) for the Alliance. A series of events promoting self-management health and wellbeing was organised. The [Links Worker Programme](#) had a walking tour of Glasgow Necropolis to bring together the 15 Health Walk groups run by Links Workers across the city and to highlight the health and wellbeing benefits of walking.

The walk was attended by 58 people including walkers from the Health Walk groups, Walk Leaders, the [Good Move Walking team](#) from Glasgow Life and our [Paths for All](#) Development Officer. We had a lovely day of end of summer sunshine for our walk on 21<sup>st</sup> September and enjoyed a buffet lunch together after the walk to regroup and have time to chat to other people.



We had two routes for our walk to cater for various abilities. One group did a tour of Glasgow Cathedral first and a shorter walk within the Necropolis to the Jewish Quarter and finishing up visiting the [Ladywell](#), a 13<sup>th</sup> century well on the outside of the Necropolis's western wall. This route allowed for a flatter walk, avoiding steep hills and stairs.

The second route took in the full height of the Necropolis hill – said to be the second highest hill in Glasgow! One of the first notable points on our walk was the grand opening and bridge that leads into the Necropolis. It is known as “the bridge of sighs” and refers to the route the funeral procession would have taken over the burn towards the burial ground. We took the time to get a wee group snap at this point, and there is also a photo of the bridge from above.







We took our time walking up to John Knox's monument at the top of the hill. We followed the Glasgow Necropolis [Women's Heritage Walk](#) from the Glasgow Women's Library. We used their leaflet to give a guided tour, pointing out notable women as we went along and stopping to look at monuments, mausoleums and tombstones as we went. We enjoyed the amazing views across the city and further afield. We also stopped at the Ladywell on our way to lunch.



A particularly poignant moment during our walk was when we visited the gravestone dedicated to a “beloved mother”, believed to be Agnes Strang, who died in childbirth. The monument had an image carved into the stone of her 4 children cuddling together. Many in our group commented on the incredible detail of this and the children’s angelic faces. You couldn’t help but be moved by it. Indeed, it was a surprising mix of emotions during the walk; particular graves that made you reflect on life, history and how far we’ve come since the Victorian times (the final resting place of a man’s two wives created a bit of a stir with the grave of his first wife’s being considerably smaller than that of his second!)

There was also plenty of smiles as people came together and shared memories from their own lives. A highlight for me was when visiting the gravestone of William Miller, the author of Wee Willie Winkie, our guide and fellow CLP Kamila asked if anyone knew the words of the famous Glasgow poem as she wasn’t familiar with it herself. Our group was only too happy to oblige and burst into a harmonious rendition which sparked a round of applause and a few appreciative looks from bystanders! It was striking realising when the poem was first created, and here we are some 180 years later, still singing along





At the end of our walk, everyone had worked up quite the appetite and we headed to at the nearby Drygate where we had exclusive access to the upstairs lounge and enjoyed a selection of sandwiches, pies and biscuits. The steak pie in particular was a firm favourite amongst our walkers!

Each walker got the walking route leaflet and map which is available from the [Women's Library](#) or on their website. We encouraged the walkers to return to explore other parts of the Necropolis or look at some of the gravestones on the walk in more detail.

The Necropolis proved a popular choice with many walkers commenting on how much they enjoyed the walk or that they hadn't been to the Necropolis or Cathedral for a long time. Indeed, for some it was the first time that ever been and they were taken aback at the sheer size of the Necropolis and the incredible views spanning right out across the city. It is said that it is home to over 50,000 graves but only around 3500 are marked with headstones.



Some quotes from the day include:

*"I've not been here since I was in school... maybe 50-odd years ago. I wonder if it'll have changed since then"*

*"I've lived in Glasgow for 39 years and never visited the Necropolis! I'm enjoying the walk and being here."*

*"Lovely day out and learned a bit of history into the bargain! "*

*" Great walk and enjoyed meeting other people from the other walking groups"*

*"Hi Gayle thank you & all your team at Links Alliance for a wonderful day & buffet it was so lovely and much appreciated see you tomorrow 👍😊."*

*"Thanks for a great informative walk around the Necropolis, followed by the great lunch, I had a great time."*

The Links Worker Programme has an annual summer walk bringing together the various walking groups across the city. We weren't able to do this since 2019 so it was a really special day for us, being able to bring our groups together again to encourage walking, talking and meeting new people to help us all self-manage our health and wellbeing!





