

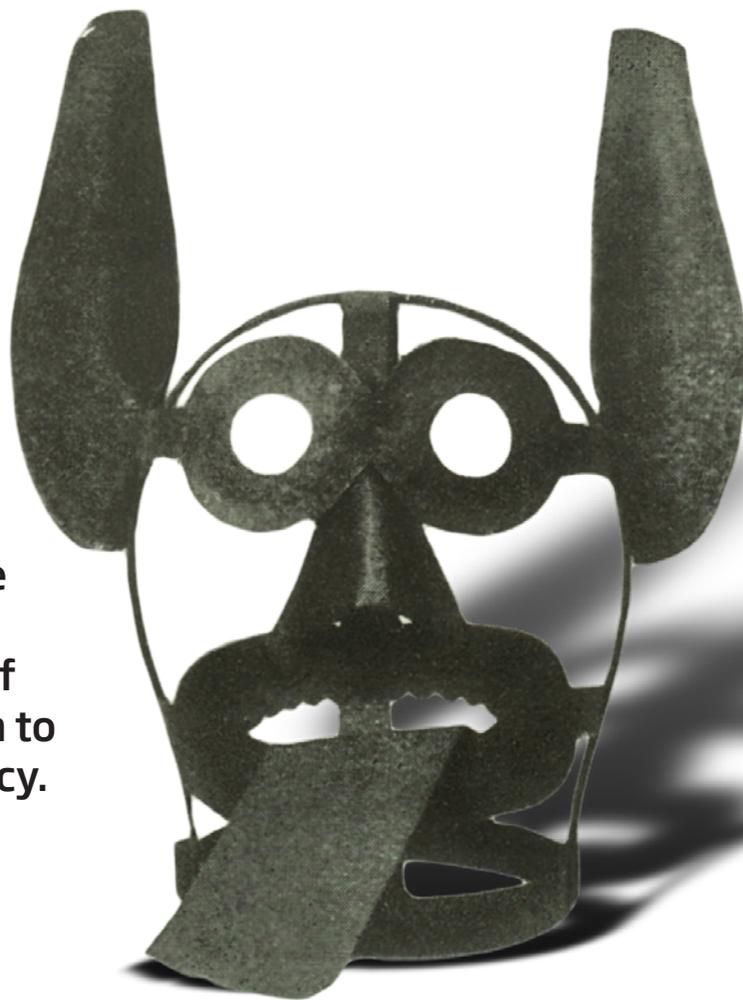


Glasgow
East End
Women's
**Heritage
Walk**

Glasgow East End Women's Heritage Walk

The women of Glasgow's East End have always had to be industrious and resourceful simply to survive. This walk focuses on some of their achievements and struggles, and the radical nature of the area which gave birth to them.

But first let us acknowledge the unrecorded ranks whose destinies were unfairly determined by their gender. Women are invisible in early sources about Glasgow, but the laws passed after the Reformation of 1560 paint a grim picture of female subordination to a misogynist theocracy.



Route map

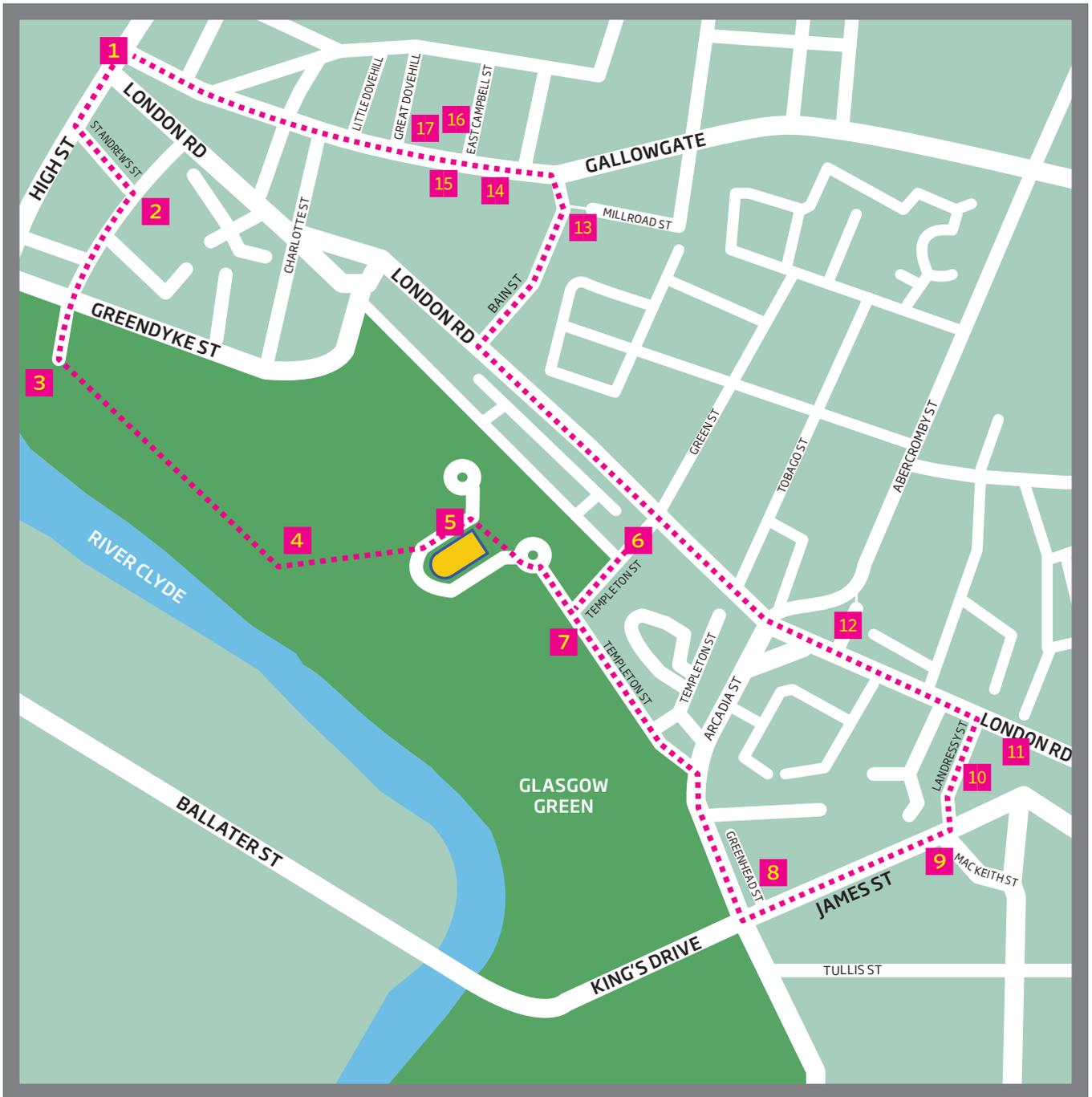


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www.scran.ac.uk; The original Barrowland Ballroom, 1935, reproduced with the permission of Glasgow City Archives and Special Collections; Monument to Maggie Wall, Dunning, Perthshire, photograph © Sandy Stevenson, www.visitdunkeld.com; Map of Glasgow in 1547, by Robert Gardner & Co, reproduced with the permission of Glasgow City Council, Special Collections; St Theneu statue, 1866, photographed by Heather Middleton, with kind permission of the Church of St Mungo, Townhead.

G **LASGOW CROSS** [1] was a marketplace from medieval times, but also a site of punishment - and what better place, with a ready supply of missiles to hand? Iron head-cages with spiked mouthpieces were excavated nearby; 'scolds' were amongst the punished women. A pulley was built over the Clyde to duck adulterers. Witches were likely held, interrogated and tried at the old Tolbooth here, and prostitutes were carted across town, ducked, put in stocks here then banished to drums and chants, with repeat offenders branded on the cheek.

Walk down Saltmarket, then left to approach **St Andrews in the Square** [2]. **Agnes Craig** (1759-1841) was well-educated for a woman of her time, a poet and a renowned conversationalist, who married here in 1776. 11 years on, now separated, she determined to meet Robert Burns. Their intense correspondence required pseudonyms, Clarinda and Sylvander, because Agnes was still a married woman. She pled their relationship must remain platonic: *"Why urge the odious, one request/ You know I must deny!"* Burns meanwhile had a son with her maid. They met for the last time in 1791 before Agnes left for Jamaica to attempt reconciliation with her husband; Burns wrote *Ae Fond Kiss* as a parting gift. Agnes found her husband had set up home with a mistress, so returned, outliving Burns by 45 years.



Turn right down Turnbull Street, passing the Central Police station where **Emmeline Pankhurst** was arrested in 1914 following a rowdy suffrage meeting, and into Glasgow Green.



On your right is the **Temperance Fountain** [3] commemorating early campaigners who abstained from spirits. The first completely teetotal society in Glasgow was the **Radical Temperance Society**, 1836. Five of its founders were women, four of those from one Bridgeton handloom weaving family. Women were active members, having most to gain from temperate households, and this led to involvement in other causes, such as woman's suffrage.

Walk to **Nelson's Column** [4]. Suffragettes rallied at this time-honoured place of protest from their first large open-air meeting in 1872 until WWI, which divided the movement. The pacifists turned to other causes, and with the men off fighting, took up leadership positions. Suffragettes **Agnes Dollan** and **Helen Crawford**,



along with **Mary Barbour**, set up the **Glasgow Women's Housing Association**, and co-ordinated the successful Rent Strikes of 1915. They launched the **Women's Peace Crusade**, and on 8 July 1917 a demonstration of 14,000 converged on the Green. The Crusade was a housewives' movement including women with husbands and sons killed in the war, yet still provoked criticism from a jingoistic press.

Walk to the near side entrance of the Winter Gardens, and find the pavement plaque commemorating **Sister Smudge**, (bottom of page) chief rodent operative of the **People's Palace** [5] and only cat to be a full member of the GMB Union. The People's Palace is a leading museum of social history, containing many items of relevance to the lives of women in Glasgow. Elspeth King was its curator between 1974 and 1991. In 1993 King published her groundbreaking book, *The Hidden History of Glasgow's Women*, essential reading for anyone on this tour!

Walk past the brightly-coloured former carpet factory to the **Templeton Gate** [6] commemorating female workers killed during its construction. The weaving industry was central to the development of the East End, but its gender profile shifted with the introduction of power looms, which women could cheaply operate. On 1 November 1889, high winds collapsed the brick facade under construction



onto the weaving sheds it had been designed to mask. 29 women died in the rubble. Templeton's was converted in 1984 into a business centre, part of which now houses another industry the East End is known for, the West Brewing Company, co-founded by Petra Wetzel. Now walk back down to the **drying green** [7].



Most of the poles here are Victorian originals, but women have been washing and drying clothes on the Green since it was gifted to the people in 1450. Women tramped washing in tubs with skirts hitched high and

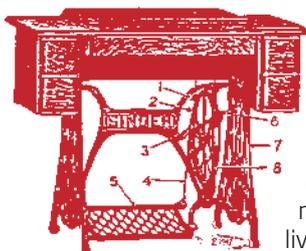


English travellers remarked on the brazen women of

Glasgow Green. Hugh MacDonald in 1854 advised bachelors that *"the tidy housewife and the dirty drab are here distinguishable at a glance"*, and *"the character of a sweetheart... may be learned more effectively there than either at Kirk or markets"*. The Green's first 18th century washhouse was the model for later "steamies", the first being Greenhead Washhouse, built 1878 where you now stand. It included swimming pools and private baths - 27 for men and seven

for women. It was demolished in 1960, but the drying green was still in use up to 1977.

Continue east along Templeton Street to leave the Green, then right onto Arcadia Street. Cross at the pedestrian crossing to James Street. On the corner with Greenhead Street can be seen the former **Logan & Johnson School of Domestic Economy** [8], which educated girls in cooking, sewing and laundry duties from 1893-1936. It was a condition of Jean Johnston Logan's bequest that the lady superintendent be a Protestant. The beehive sculpture represents the industry of the girls within.



Continue up James St to Landressy Street. On your right once stood a **Singer factory** [9], opened 1873, 12 years before the more well-known one in Clydebank. The sewing machine revolutionised the lives of working-class women.

Domestic clothes could be made more easily and extra income generated. March 1911 saw massive demonstrations on Glasgow Green after 12 women walked out of Clydebank's Singer factory in protest over reorganisation. They were followed by thousands more, then by the men. The strike did not succeed, and 400 were sacked, but it destroyed the myth of the biddable female worker.

Continuing along Landressy Street, we pass the new home of **Glasgow Women's Library** [10], in the former Bridgeton Library. Times have changed since it was built in the early 20th century, with separate reading rooms for men (large) and women (smaller) and children (upstairs where they could be neither seen nor heard!)

Turn right at the top of Landressy Street onto London Road to reach **Bridgeton Cross** [11]. In the 1830s and 1840s, Bridgeton was an important centre of Chartism, which sought votes for all men over 21. Chartists disagreed about female suffrage, but women still played a vital role, forming 23 Female Chartists Associations across Scotland, including the Bridgeton & Carlton and Mile End Associations. They raised funds, organised tea parties, led boycotts of unsympathetic shops and businesses, and marched under home-made banners. Initially spectators, they developed into public speakers, sometimes addressing thousands. Historian Dorothy Thompson concedes it is *"difficult to conceive Chartism without their participation"*.



Cross at the pedestrian crossing and go west along London Road to Abercromby Street, traditionally known as **Witches Loan** [12]. The Old Cattle Market was situated where it met Duke Street and while cattle were moved along here between market and river, they were said to be spellbound. One possible explanation is cows that were the victims of poor pasture recovered when brought to the Clyde to be fed and watered, falling ill again on their return. Continue along London Road for some five minutes before turning right into **Bain Street**.

At no. 9, **"Battling" Betty McAllister** ran a seafood shop [13] for many years. This was known as "the office" and functioned as HQ for her many campaigns. She knew how to grab headlines, dressing children in bandages daubed with tomato sauce to protest against proposed traffic rerouting. When Margaret Thatcher visited Templeton's Business Park, Betty organised a protest and informed the PM she could *"stick the poll tax where the sun don't shine!"* Her campaigns and other good works were recognised with a British Empire Medal in 1980 and a Scotswoman of the Year award in 1984. Before her death in 2009, she was rumoured to be plotting a midnight raid on Woodlands Road in the West End to return the statue of Lobey Dosser to his ancestral home in "Calton Creek".



Cross to Gallowgate's north side and along to East Campell Street to get a good view of the neon starburst frontage of the **Barrowland Ballroom** [14], and the archway to the **Barras market** [15]. The rags to riches tale of **Maggie McIver**, "the Barras Queen" reads like something from

Catherine Cookson. She was born in 1880, and worked as a barrow girl selling fish and fruit. After marriage, she and her husband began renting barrows to other hawkers. In 1920 they opened a market on the site of the present Barras, and by 1928, this was fully enclosed with static stalls. Maggie traditionally put on a Christmas dance and meal for her hawkers and, legend has it, found their usual venue booked one year so decided to build her own. The ballroom opened on Christmas Eve 1934, its famous sign dimmed only during WW2 when Lord Haw-Haw described it in a broadcast. The legendary atmosphere was due as much to the patter of house band Billy McGregor and the Gaybirds as to their music. Maggie died in 1958, and a few months later Barrowland burned down. It was rebuilt and reopened in 1960. While it only hosts the occasional tea dance today, it is still a hugely popular venue for touring bands. A gate into Glasgow Green commemorates its founder.



No. 15 East Campbell Street [16] was once part of the Saracen Tool Works. Its current incarnation is as artists' studios and the woman involved in their inception is print and paper maker **Jacki Parry**. She set up her studio here in 1985, attracted by the light and space. Within a week 12 artists had moved in, and Jacki became manager of a stable, supportive community. Today, it is known as **Dovehill Studios**, managed by arts charity WASPS. Jacki still works on the top floor. She loves the grittiness of Gallowgate, saying, "I could be up here in my atelier near the sky with the beautiful light and not engage with what's happening out there, but here you can't leave that behind."

Continue to the **Saracen Head** [17], Glasgow's first 'pub-museum' which takes its name from an older inn, built next door in 1755 on what was once the kirkyard of 16th century Little St Mungo church. The original 'Sarry Heid' was Glasgow's leading hotel for several decades but, facing stiff competition, was converted into shops and dwellings before being demolished in 1904. The present-day pub retains a mysterious skull, allegedly that of Maggie Wall, "last witch to be burned at the



Produced by Glasgow Women's Library's 'Women Make History' project

For further reading, visit the Women Make History pages at www.womenslibrary.org.uk. For more insight into women's history, contact Glasgow Women's Library to find out when our two hour guided walks of the East End and other areas of Glasgow take place. You can also take your own tours by downloading our maps and audio tours from our website.

stake", according to the wall plaque. Just outside the village of Dunning in Perthshire stands a stone cross with the painted inscription, "Maggie Wall burned here 1657 as a witch". No records confirm her existence, and no-one knows who built the monument. Perhaps Maggie represents all women executed as witches who should be remembered. As for the skull, it was possibly uncovered when the original inn, built on a burial ground, was demolished.

Continue along Gallowgate to return to our starting point [4]. The subtitle to the aforementioned *Hidden History of Glasgow's Women* is *The Thenew Factor*. Thenew was a 6th century princess and Christian convert who survived banishment, rape and two murder attempts before giving birth to Kentigern, founder of Glasgow. Hers was a popular cult in pre-Reformation Glasgow. Trongate, leading west from the Cross was originally St Tenu's Gait (above), or the way to St Thenew, and St Enoch's is a corruption of St Tenu's Croft, now St Enoch's Square. There her chapel and well stood, the latter reputedly having healing properties. Metal offerings, some in the shape of body parts, appear to have been inserted into a tree beside it - perhaps women sought help with their pregnancies. After the Reformation, Thenew's cult died out, as did her name. Today most Glaswegians have no idea that 'Enoch' was a woman and the mother of Glasgow. King uses her name as a symbol of how easily women may be written out of history.



About Glasgow Women's Library

Glasgow Women's Library (GWL), launched in 1991, is a unique organisation in Scotland. It is a key information hub on women and gender. In addition to its lending library and archive collection, it has exciting programmes of events, activities, courses and other learning opportunities and has dedicated projects that support women to develop their reading, writing and numbers and a project tailored for Black and Minority Ethnic women. It has a national lifelong learning programme that works with women across Scotland.

About Women Make History

Women Make History is GWL's women's history project. Volunteers research and deliver pioneering Women's Heritage Walking tours in Glasgow and related maps and audio tours. Other activities include talks, workshops, recording the histories of living heroines, tour guiding, training and ongoing women's history detective work. For more details contact GWL.

How to get involved

Glasgow's women's history is still largely hidden from the general public. There are many ways to get involved to address this. Why not join our women's history detective or tour guide teams? You may have information you think could be added to this tour or suggestions on how it could be improved. If so, we want to hear from you. Some people have chosen to show their support of GWL and the aims of Women Make History by sponsoring a book, shelf or library section and dedicating it to one of Glasgow's forgotten heroines. This fundraising campaign is called *Women on the Shelf* and you can donate at www.womenslibrary.org.uk.

Contact us

To find out more about GWL, Women Make History, our maps, audio tours and tour dates of other routes please visit our website at www.womenslibrary.org.uk, or email us at info@womenslibrary.org.uk

Further information on the area can be found in Glasgow City Council's Heritage trails of Calton, Bridgeton and Glasgow Green.



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Registered Company No. 178507, Charity No. SC029881
This trail was developed by the Glasgow Women's Library
"Women Make History East End Detectives" group and grant-aided by
Glasgow City Heritage Trust and Historic Glasgow.
Edited by Heather Middleton. Designed by Ian Corcoran.
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