

St Peters Walk 9 September, 2022

Bruntsfield Links to the Grange & Sciennes *By Sue & Michael Rotter, Participants.*
The co-ordinator was Janet Hodgson

This walk around interesting parts of south Edinburgh, passed many historic landmarks which most of us had not known or observed before, with some excellent descriptions given by some members of the group who knew a great deal about them. The walk was led by Janet Hodgson and is here reproduced in some detail to allow others to trace the same path and explore these places too.

Eight of us met at the south west corner of Bruntsfield Links for a quiet evening stroll. The weather was pleasantly cool and slightly cloudy, but there was no rain. We began by walking down Leamington Walk past the grand Georgian building of the original James Gillespie's High School for Girls, remembered by Muriel Spark as 'the school on the links'.

We passed the entrance to General Maczek Walk, named in honour of the great Polish tank commanding general who fought in both World Wars with remarkable success, and leading a Polish tank unit that trained and was based in Scotland during the Second World War before fighting in France. Afterwards he lived in the adjacent Arden Street to reach the age of 102 and was very much loved. The Walk was so named after a proposal by one of the participants who was with us on the walk.

We continued beside Melville Drive to Argyll Place, then across the road to Jawbone Walk (also known as Coronation Walk). There is a round paved gentle mound to indicate the location where two whales' jawbones had been erected in 1886 for the International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art held on the Meadows. These bones were sent as the Zetland and Fair Isle exhibit. The jawbones had deteriorated somewhat, so in 2014 they were moved for restoration to a museum (unknown location). It is hoped that a fiberglass or similar reproduction will be made and placed in this location in due course.



The walk then followed Jawbone Walk and soon came to the small water fountain as a memorial to Helen Acqueroff Sister Cathedral who was born in Newington. She was a great musician, singer, a prolific writer of hymns and songs and an enthusiastic supporter of the Scottish Temperance League. Blind from the age of 11, she was influential in support for blind schooling in Edinburgh. The appended name Sister Cathedral apparently comes from a performance she gave at Glasgow Cathedral which was particularly memorable.



After crossing the Meadows, we followed George Square Lane and Meadow Lane to see the building of the Orthodox Community of St Andrew, with its door messages written in Greek and Russian and a further language which we could not identify for certain.

From Meadow Lane we entered Buccleuch Street and stopped at the Archers' Hall with its interesting carved stone sculptures and learned a little of the important historical role of these archers to the monarch. Recently they were much in evidence accompanying the late Queen's coffin. Their shooting gallery is apparently the low long modern building next to the Meadows, so it shows how seriously the archery is still taken by them.



Thence we passed into the little narrow cobbled street of Boroughloch and saw the site and entrance into the old Boroughloch Brewery which used water from the Boroughloch (long since drained to make the Meadows).

Re-entering the Meadows and crossed on Boroughloch Walk, across Melville Drive and up Livingstone Place to Sciennes Road. We learned that Sciennes is named for Siena (an old Scottish distortion it seems) named for St Catherine of Siena's Convent which was a daughter house of the corresponding institution in Sienna. St Catherine's Convent was originally sited in what is now St Catherine Place and apparently one of the houses in that street still has a historic stone in the garden that marks its location.

From Sciennes Road we entered the narrow and unassuming Sciennes House Place which contains an old house where Robby Burns met and influenced the 16 year old Walter Scott (noted by a plaque on the wall), followed by the old fire station on the LHS (now with modern glass windows and door) and the old Police Station at the end on the RHS (looking somewhat forgotten).



As we left Sciennes House Place entering Causewayside, the modern building opposite is on the site of the former Wash House.

And so down Causewayside, past the Scottish Map Museum, down to Leslie's Bar for a welcome and very comfortable drink in a historic pub.

We owe a big thank you to Janet for organising such an interesting, varied and informative walk!