

GLASGOW

Rose Dykins discovers Victorian burial sites and historic chip shops on a tour of the Scottish city



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1 EAST END
Begin your tour just outside the city centre, at medieval clock tower Tolbooth Steeple. Walk eastwards on Gallowgate past Glasgow's Oldest Chippie (established in 1884) at number 161 – where you can pick up a deep-fried Mars bar – and a Celtic FC paraphernalia store that blares Irish folk music. This part of town is gritty, and a far cry from the historical tenement buildings of the centre, but it gives you a taste of the city's authentic character.

At 244 Gallowgate is the Barrowland Ballroom, with its iconic neon sign fringed with stars. Originally opened in 1934, it was severely damaged by a fire in 1958 before reopening in 1960, becoming the city's premier music venue, hosting everyone from Bob Dylan and David Bowie to Oasis and the Proclaimers. Its floor is said to be sprung on thousands of tennis balls cut in half to cushion the heels of twirling dancers – now a great surface for impassioned audiences to jump up and down on. Beside Barrowland is the arched gateway to Barras market, which takes place on weekends from 10am to 5pm. Wares include vinyl records and bric-a-brac.

2 GLASGOW NECROPOLIS
Head back to Tolbooth Steeple and brace yourself for a steep, ten-minute walk up the High Street. Turn right on to John Knox Street, and stroll a short way down until you reach the cast-iron gates of the city's Victorian burial ground. Follow the winding path to the top of the grassy mound, stopping to admire the magnificent graves of Glasgow's most distinguished 19th-century citizens. The towering obelisks, giant stone angels and mausoleums reflect the social standing of those in the ground below, particularly the merchants who were revered at a time when Glasgow was a global centre of trade, the Second City of the British Empire.

At the top of the pile is the John Knox monument – an 18-metre-tall sandstone column topped off with a statue of the Protestant leader clutching a bible. Keep your eye out for the resting place of Andrew McCall – though little is known about him, his grave is marked with a Celtic cross designed by Scottish architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh (more on him later). Open daily 7am until dusk. glasgowncropolis.org

3 TELLERS BAR AND BRASSERIE
Walk down the hill and turn right on to Ingram Street – at number 191 you'll find the Corinthian Club. Architect David Hamilton designed the building's lavish classical features in 1842, when it opened as the Glasgow and Ship bank. Since then, the edifice has served as the Union Bank of Scotland and judiciary courts, before becoming the Corinthian in 1999, a venue with bars, event space, a restaurant and a casino.

The Tellers Bar and Brasserie is looked down upon by the eight-metre-wide glass Corinthian dome, surrounded by opulent ceiling panels. It's an elegant space to dine in, with plenty of things to cast your eye over – including chandeliers modelled on the original ones from its days as a banking hall, a long bar adorned in mirrored tiles and intricate gold-leaf plasterwork. The international cuisine is very good (with dishes such as shellfish, sandwiches, steaks and salads) but it's the setting that you'll remember. Open daily around the clock; tel +44 (0)141 552 1101; thecorinthianclub.co.uk

4 CITY CHAMBERS
Turn right on to Frederick Street and walk straight on to George Square, where you'll find a monument of civic pride. Wandering through the 120 rooms of Glasgow City Chambers, you will discover clues about the city's past – in the banqueting hall, for example, oil-painted murals of young men working at the docks on the River Clyde illustrate the city's status as an international shipbuilding hub in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Queen Victoria opened the City Chambers in 1888 and it has been the headquarters of the council ever since. The building boasts one of the largest marble staircases in Europe – a stunning feature that winds up to the third floor. The warm sepia colours of the Carrara marble arches, thick leather wall coverings and brass chandeliers distinguish the interiors from other British institutions by giving it a European feel – London-based architect William Young was influenced by his time spent in Italy. Open Monday to Friday 9am-5pm; free entry; complimentary tours twice daily at 10.30am and 2.30pm. glasgow.gov.uk

5 MACKINTOSH HOUSE
Hop in a taxi and ask for the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, which you'll reach in 15-20 minutes. Next door is a narrow, concrete house – you will have seen Charles Rennie Mackintosh's art nouveau designs somewhere before, but coming face-to-face with the designer's house makes you realise how his work was light years ahead of his time.

Reassembled in 1981 by an expert team, the house contains original furniture, fixtures and interiors that were designed by Rennie and his wife (and fellow artist) Margaret MacDonald Mackintosh, arranged exactly as they were in the original building, at 78 Southpark Avenue. It's difficult to believe you're seeing a room from 1906, with its ultra-white interiors, minimalist feel and sleek lines that are modern even by today's standards. Mackintosh and MacDonald would invite potential clients to the house for consultations and to showcase their work. Open Tues-Sat 10am-5pm (last tour of house at 4pm), Sun 11am-4pm (last tour 3pm); free entry. University of Glasgow, 82 Hillhead Street; gla.ac.uk