

Walkers discover the hidden secrets of Manchester's Urban Jungle



Group photo at Piccadilly

This walk was a real departure from the usual countryside settings but the walking group members were excited to explore an urban environment for a change so off we went to discover more about Manchester's canal system.

We were to rendezvous at Piccadilly Station, so it made sense to travel in by train. The carriage was very quickly filled with chatter and we arrived, we met our walk leader, Jill R - **we were in safe hands!**

Time for a quick group photo at Picadilly and then off to explore. We walked around Piccadilly Basin, passing a grand Old Mill building, arriving at Islington Basin - what an unexpected find. It was a vibrant redevelopment, akin to something you would expect to find in London, with smart apartments, inviting cafes, and a spot for recreation; a village in itself. As we passed a very stylish cafe (the window full of inviting pastries), it didn't take much to persuade us that we needed an early coffeek (well all the chattering was thirsty work!).

The cakes were huge but sharing them took away all the guilt. Refreshed and hydrated, we headed off to explore more of the canal system.



Treats too good to miss.

Jill did an excellent job of adapting the walk to take us around some closed areas of the canal. It gave us the opportunity to explore places such as the Sackville Gardens, which offered some surprises including a cherry blossom tree bursting with colour, a statue of Alan Turing and The Beacon of Hope tower which told the sad story of aids, by significant year. The Gardens are a tranquil area away from the bustle of the city. We could have stayed for ages but no time to dawdle, the step count needed topping up, so we dropped back onto the canal tow path and continued onto Castlefield.

Once there, we were reminded of Manchester's rich history; the oldest surviving Merchant Warehouse, the hidden river of Castlefield and a Roman Fort. We enjoyed walking around the canal basin and even glimpsed a fashion shoot in progress. Talk about history and modern working in harmony.



The Victorian style bridge - built in 1991!

Time was marching on, so one walker left to go back to Picadilly, another headed for the shops - **well you cant miss that opportunity** and the rest of us went for a spot of lunch before hopping on the bus back to the station.

The steps may have been low on this walk but the smiles said it all, we had had a brilliant day of chatting, laughing and exploring a different side of Manchester. Huge thanks to Jill.

Roll on the next walk - this time Macclesfield Forrest.

To the left are a small selection - more pictures can be viewed and downloaded on the link below:

<http://e.pc.cd/PQxy6aIK>



Castlefield's Roman history

The walking group aim to meet once a month, the dates vary, as do the routes, so as to ensure they are available to as many members as possible.

For more details about any of our walks, just contact Barbara Wilson and get added to the WhatsApp group.

Email: bwilson3759@gmail.com

We make every effort to ensure our walks are safe and ask that all walkers assume responsibility for themselves.



The smiles say it all!