

Clare Phillips

Scotland's National Book Town

Writers' Walks



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Clare Phillips has lived and worked in southwest Scotland for almost thirty years. Nature, Clare's heroes, injustice, quirky people, climate change and travel to new places all spark poems.





Writers' Walks



A meander through Scotland's National Book Town beginning at a Crossroads and ending with a Prison.

Distance less than 1 mile to walk but this mile is busy with bookshops, dense with history and framed by a spread of upland scenery with peepshow views of Wigtown Bay.

I've attended at least one event at every Wigtown Book Festival since its inception in 1999. I usually come by car (I live in Dalbeattie, 45 minutes east) but a combination of the 501, 500 and 416 buses can work and I occasionally use them. If driving, I dutifully follow the temporarily sign-posted route to enter the old show field from Harbour Road to use the 'official' car park for visitors during the 10-days of the early autumn event.

Having parked at the top of the field nearest the town centre, often excitedly anticipating my first booked event, I'm at the start of what has become my favourite walk.

Stage One: walk through the gap in the dyke from the field into Southfield Lane passing the former Quaker Meeting House (now used by Crossroads Care & Support charity) on your right. Wigtown Baptist Church is on your left through another gap in a wall. Walk past the row of EV charging stations (several of which actually work!) and into the town. Your onward view is dominated by the County Buildings ahead of you.

Stage Two: stay in Scotland's book town for an hour, a day, one week or two DOING the festival or simply enjoy coffee and cake, browse books or antiques, bric-a-brac and other pre-loved bargains. Visit the Martyr's Stake, follow the 'Women's Walk', go and watch wildlife from the Bird Hide, or just sit by the bowling green and breathe.

Stage Three: return to Southfield Lane and as you look down the field see the tall chimneys and profile of a building that was once Wigtown Prison, then its Police Station with lock up cells and now a private house. Wander the grass, pick brambles, gaze up into decades old oak trees, ashes and maples, stare out to the hills and the sea.