

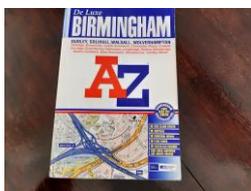
Walking the Nine Sites of the Birmingham Museums Trust August 3 – 12, 2020

Jane's Diary

23 July

It's been amazing and humbling to see how many people have sponsored me for my Walking Circuit of the Nine Sites of the Birmingham Museums Trust. £1,105 so far. Thank you all so much. The planning goes on. I shall be starting on Monday, 3rd August by setting off from the main Museum in the city centre and walking to Aston Hall, calling at Think Tank and the Museum Collection Centre on the way.

On Tuesday, 4th August it'll be Aston Hall to the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter via Soho House. Wednesday will be a rest day and then, on Thursday, 6th it's MJQ to Weoley Castle. This will be a long one, so we decided to try it by car first. The fact we used an A to Z published in 2003 made it more complicated. Since that drive I've bought the up to date A to Z!



27 July

BMAG bear is going with me, dressed in the colours of some of the staff from the Trust so they are not forgotten.



The walk starts on Monday, 3rd August when the weather is forecast to be the same as today! Oh well - after 76 years I'm used to the English weather. It's the bears who don't like it! The situation for the Museum is grim as it is for so many other cultural centres. Thank you to all who have sponsored me. £1,515 so far!

30 July

Preparations for Walking the Circuit of the Nine Sites of the Birmingham museums Sites are going very well. Today I dug out my old rucksack. It will be fine. Furthermore, BMAG Bear approves of it.



31 July

The walk around the circuit of the nine sites of the Birmingham Museums Trust gets ever closer. The preparations continue! see the essential supplies below!



And to confirm, I shall be on Radio WM's Sunday Breakfast Show, this Sunday at 8.40am to talk about the Museums Trust and the walk I shall be doing to raise funds to support this wonderful institution in its time of need.

Please help by donating to my Just Giving page at:
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/janehowell2020>

2 August

Final day off preparations. I think I'm as ready as I can be but BMAG bear wanted you to see his waterproofs!



We are both ready to depart from the Museum in Chamberlain Square at 10.30am tomorrow, Monday 3rd August.

3 August

Today's the day that the Walking the Circuit of Birmingham Museums Trust's Nine sites sponsored walk starts! Very exciting but feeling a little anxious. I know that feeling will go once I've started. Today is leaving Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in the city centre to Aston Hall and finishing up at Aston Hall going via Think Tank and the Museums Collections Centre. Shouldn't take too long. Don't think that either BMAG Bear or myself will need our waterproofs!
£1,920 raised so far.

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Success. First day completed. I walked 9,979 steps and completed 4.31 miles going between the Museum, Think Tank, the Museum Collection Centre and Aston Hall. Not too difficult although finding the crossings to negotiate the many dual carriageways was a bit of a challenge but I didn't get lost or run over. Aston Hall was very tranquil with a lot of people enjoying the park. It was interesting that the walk took nearly 2 hours whilst the train from Aston Station to New Street Station took 5 minutes and followed a very similar route!
Thank you to everyone who has donated so far.
Can you identify the locations?



Tomorrow is Aston Hall to the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter via Soho House.

4 August,

Woke up feeling remarkably good. Not at all stiff and few aching joints. That was a relief as my hips tend to twinge a bit - 'what do you expect at your age?' say the medics. All bodes well for today.

Some adjustments to the rucksack to make it lighter but otherwise much as yesterday. The most important contents are my lunch with plenty of water! I suppose the map is useful as well.



The route - Aston Hall to the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter via Soho House is about 3 miles and I've allowed 2 hours. Not so many dual carriageways, thank goodness!

As always, I am humbled by how many of you have donated so far. It shows just how important our museums are to the people of Birmingham and I am pleased to be able to 'do my bit'!

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Day two finished successfully. Not so long today and I was helped by having a lift back to Aston Hall by two members of the Friends of BMT. I am happy to use public transport but when a lift is offered, well....

Going from Aston Hall, on to Soho House and finishing up at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter took 7,348 steps and covered 2.92 miles. Today was the shortest day but I've walked 7.23 miles since leaving the museum yesterday morning.



I felt very sad as I looked at the padlock on the gates of Soho House. It felt lonely. This isn't the time to apportion blame - mostly it's due to Covid - but intensifies my commitment to doing as much as I can to reverse this situation. Thank you to everyone who believes I can do it and who is donating to the cause. We must save our museums!

On a lighter note, BMAG Bear was able to sit in the neck of my fleece (actually belongs to BMT - borrowed for the occasion!) as it was quite cold. I hope he enjoyed it. I have stopped feeling guilty about getting so much enjoyment out of this dreadful situation!

Please share this. The further we spread the word - the better. £2,755 raised so far.

6 August

Back on the road after a day without walking or Facebook and Justgiving posts. Starting early to beat the heat although I'm cold at the moment!

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Stage 3 of Walking the Circuit of the Nine Sites of BMT completed. I left MJQ at 9.10am and arrived at Weoley Castle at 12.05pm which included a 35 minute tea and loo break in Selly Oak. I walked 15,381 steps and covered 6.12 miles, making it 13.35 miles covered since leaving the museum in the city centre. (I'm including these statistics for other nerds like myself who find them fascinating!). I felt very pleased as this was the day that concerned me most. I ached a bit but it didn't feel too tough. I enjoyed the break in the friendliest cafe imaginable in Selly Oak and was only charged £1.50 for a coffee and a piece of toast! BMAG bear decided he wanted to join in! Once more, I got to a site that was firmly padlocked with no sign of life. I recognise that Weoley Castle is never fully open but even so....



The forecast for tomorrow is even hotter - today was quite cool in the end - so it will be another early start as I make my way from Weoley Castle to Sarehole Mill.

As always, I do appreciate the support from everyone and the generosity. It makes it all worth doing.

7 August

Well on the way on Stage 4. Because of the weather I was on the road by 8.28. Also because of the weather I had a lift back to Weoley castle. Progress is very slow today but it still feels OK. What is striking me is the kindness of total strangers. Yesterday in the cafe and today, well, I was desperate for the loo and saw that Oakville Floors in Raddlebarn Road was open. The lady cheerfully showed me the staff loo and when I left, she gave me £5 for our cause! It makes me feel very positive.

At Morrisons in Stirchley for a cold drink and a rest and then on to Sarehole Mill via Kings Heath.

8 August

Stage 4 of the Nine sites walk successfully completed. It was tough going even though I set off early to beat the heat. After the Morrisons' stop I struggled then remembered wonderful friends who live on the route. After a half an hour sit down and several glasses of a cold drink - non alcoholic - I revived and was fine for the rest of the way. I got to Sarehole Mill at about 12.40pm. I'd walked 16,066 steps and covered 6.39 miles, making it 19.71 miles since Monday.

It was wonderful to see it so busy! The cafe was full and people were clearly pleased to be able to use it. What a change from the rest of the sites. The staff made me very welcome and I did get an ice cream and then a coffee!



To finish the stage my son, Tom, and my grandchildren, Tove, aged 10 and Lars, aged 7 came to pick me up.

Week 1 of the Nine Sites walk has exceeded all my expectations. Once more, so many thanks to all who have donated and have supported me on my walk.

Back on the road on Monday to walk from Sarehole Mill to Blakesley Hall.

9 August

Walking the circuit of the Nine Sites of BMT – an update.

When I planned this walk the weather was cool and grey so 6 miles in a day looked easy and, in fact proved to be so as the walk started. However, as you may have noticed, this has changed. We've had some very hot days and tomorrow, Monday, and Tuesday are forecast to be the same. I found Friday difficult and have to recognise that I can't take the heat in the same way as when I was younger. So, my schedule is changing.

I'll leave Sarehole Mill tomorrow morning at about 8.30 and aim to arrive at Blakesley Hall 10.3 to 11am. Megan Sutton, who works in the Museum shop is going to meet me there for encouragement! Much appreciated, Megan!

Then, I am splitting the final section, Blakesley Hall to the city centre museum into 2 stages, one to be walked on Tuesday and the next on Wednesday. That way both stages are short and doable before it gets too hot. I have decided that this is preferable to collapsing with heat stroke! Also, BMAG bear will be pleased not to have to be stuck in a hot rucksack for too long at a time!

If all goes according to plan, I should arrive at the city centre museum at 11.00/11.30 on Wednesday morning and that will be the end of the walk.

I'm saying this as I know that one or two people are thinking of meeting me at the end and I don't want them to have a wasted journey on Tuesday.

This walk has been and is being, such a wonderful experience. I've met so many interesting people and have had so much support - and so many generous donations. We've reached £3,385 so far.

Thank you.

11 August,

Stage 6a, the penultimate stage of the Nine Sites Sponsored Walk.



I set out early and by 9am had left Blakesley Hall to head for the City Centre. I went along Bordesley Green East and past Heartlands Hospital. That has changed since I last saw it, many years ago. It wasn't long before the heat started to build up so I decided to stop at the Birmingham City Football ground and get on a bus the rest of the way as planned, leaving a fairly short final stage 6b. By that point I'd walked 8,096 steps and covered 3.22 miles. 67,892 steps and 24.12 miles since Monday, 3rd August.

The whole walk has been a wonderful experience in spite of the heat. The support has been fantastic and the donations have flown in. It was £3,415 the last time I looked. I'm hoping we can get it to £3,500 by the finish!

12 August



I've finished! I've walked the Circuit of the Nine Sites of the Birmingham museums Trust! I can't quite believe it.

Stage 6b turned out to be shorter than expected which was a relief as it was the hottest day so far. Fortunately, there was quite a lot of shade so I dodged around to make the most of it. Because I'd started early from St Andrew's, home of the Birmingham City Football Club, I was back in the city centre by 10am so enjoyed an ice lolly in the cathedral grounds.

Today I walked 5,140 steps and covered 2.04 miles. Over the last few days I've occasionally copied the wrong figures from my note book and yesterday on the Justgiving post I claimed that I had covered 67,892 miles! Now that would have been a walk!

The accurate totals since Monday, 3rd August are:

Steps - I walked 73,032.

Miles - I covered 29.38 - which is very close to the estimate of 30 miles that I gave out in my publicity - if anyone feels short changed, let me know and I'll walk the remaining 0.62 miles!

I've loved this walk. When I started I didn't know whether I'd be able to keep going to the end - but I did.

The challenges: Well, finding loos but I was never reduced to having to find a bush! and -- increasingly the heat! Who'd have expected that I would be doing this walk during a record breaking heatwave. I know one or two people were concerned and I appreciated that. That's why the schedule went out of the window and I adapted the timings. Apart from a few spots, I didn't have any rain, unlike at the time of writing when the thunder is rumbling and the rain torrential! Now that would have been fun - or would it?

The positives: The care and support from so many people, especially Lynda Perrin from the Friends of BMT and Rachel Cockett from the senior management team. There were many others.

It was lovely this morning when Lynda arrived to greet me and we went off for a tea together. A few people have queried how my joints are and my feet. All are fine. I walked in strong sandals which were great although I think my feet have permanently changed colour!



Finally, I want to thank everyone who has donated to our cause. We have one of the best museums outside of London, supported by all the other sites. We cannot let our city lose them. At the last look, we have raised £3,686. Let's make it £4,000!

17 August

It's nearly a week since the Nine Sites Sponsored Walk finished. I can't quite believe that I actually did it and was thrilled with the number of people who followed it, especially on Twitter. We have now raised £5,000, five times the original target. Thank you to everyone who has donated, both known to me and people whom I have never heard of but to whom the plight of the Arts at the moment clearly matters. There are also many anonymous donors. Thank you all for your generosity.

We've also helped raise awareness which is so important not only for the Birmingham Museums Trust but for all arts organisations. It has been useful being able to bring our Nine Sites together. Most people know of some of the sites but few people could think of all of them - the site most frequently forgotten is Weoley Castle which is, of course, an archaeological site!

Although my second target of £5000 has been reached my Justgiving page is still open - <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/janehowell2020> - and BMT and myself still welcome further donations!

Oh, I should add that BMAG Bear has developed his own following!

Jane Howell
August 20, 2020