# HOW DID GLASGOW PEOPLE WIN BACK A PUBLIC PATH FROM A RICH LANDOWNER?

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

In the 1820s, a wealthy Scottish landowner called Thomas Harvie built two high stone walls across a public path beside the River Clyde. He wanted to stop people from walking through his estate. Many people in Glasgow were furious because the path had long been used to reach the river and open countryside. In 1823, local people attacked the walls with gunpowder brought by coalminers. Harvie rebuilt them with iron spikes, broken glass and small cannons, but the campaign continued. People boycotted his whisky business and took the argument to court. In 1828, the House of Lords ruled that the public had a right to use the path. Archaeologists have now found what may be the foundations of the wall, as well as a token carrying the slogan “Let Glasgow Flourish”. The discovery has brought attention back to an early fight over public access and private property.

## WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

This story shows that ordinary people in the Industrial Revolution did not simply accept the power of wealthy landowners. They used protests, boycotts, violence and the courts to defend access to the countryside. Arguments about who can use land and who controls public space are still important today.

## THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

**“Why did Glasgow people risk punishment to reopen the path?”**

**Source:** Smithsonian Magazine

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/when-a-19th-century-scottish-landowner-blocked-a-public-footpath-locals-rebelled-now-archaeologists-have-unearthe