# Mural celebrating Mary Barbour’s legacy unveiled as a beacon for social justice in Govan



A vibrant mural celebrating the legacy of Mary Barbour was unveiled recently in Govan, Glasgow, marking a significant tribute to a pioneering figure in the struggle for housing rights. Barbour, renowned for orchestrating the 1915 rent strikes, was a formidable advocate for working-class tenants and has since become emblematic of grassroots activism in the city. This new artwork, crafted by the internationally acclaimed muralist Jeks, epitomises Barbour's enduring influence while connecting her activism to contemporary movements for justice and equality.

The mural, commissioned by SWG3’s Yardworks GRID in collaboration with Linthouse Housing Association, is part of a series celebrating the organisation's 50 years of service to social housing in the Govan area. It is also situated within the context of Glasgow's 850th anniversary celebrations, underscoring the city’s historical relationship with grassroots activism. This artwork is one of five new public murals in Govan that contribute to the growing cultural landscape, reiterating the area’s rich heritage and commitment to social justice.

Depicting a modern interpretation of Barbour, the mural features a young woman looking up towards a hopeful future, surrounded by scenes of protest. Elements like an equals sign tattooed on her neck and a thistle motif further signify themes of strength, equality, and Scottish identity. Such details were deliberately chosen to reflect Barbour's own spirit and dedication to equitable rights.

Irene C McFarlane, Chief Executive of Linthouse Housing Association, highlighted the importance of Barbour's contributions to the housing movement, stating, "Her contribution cannot be underestimated as she bravely tackled housing injustice and stood firmly on the side of tenants." This mural serves not only as a reminder of her activism but also complements the existing statue of Mary Barbour unveiled in 2018 at Govan Cross, which commemorates her pivotal role in the 1915 protests against wartime rent hikes.

Barbour's work was instrumental in shaping public policy during a turbulent historical period. Her leadership helped to galvanise tenant resistance, leading to significant legislative changes in government rent laws. The unveiling of both the mural and the statue encapsulates a broader recognition of the essential role women have played in social movements, a narrative that resonates particularly today in light of ongoing discussions about women's rights and representation.

Moreover, the area's dedication to honouring figures like Barbour highlights a conscious community effort to not only celebrate its past but also to inspire future activism. This mural, as part of Yardworks' partnership with Street Art Cities, reinforces Govan's significance in Scotland’s contemporary cultural narrative, positioning it as a hotspot for public art and activism.

As Glasgow continues to honour the contributions of figures like Mary Barbour, it also sets the stage for future generations to engage with their history and advocate for continued social justice and equality. The mural serves as both a powerful reminder of the struggle for housing rights and as a beacon of hope for ongoing movements aimed at achieving equality for all.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25163821.mural-tribute-glasgow-firebrand-mary-barbour-unveiled-govan/?ref=rss)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25163821.mural-tribute-glasgow-firebrand-mary-barbour-unveiled-govan/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/mary-barbour-18751958-and-isabella-elder-18281905-345325)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25163821.mural-tribute-glasgow-firebrand-mary-barbour-unveiled-govan/?ref=rss)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25163821.mural-tribute-glasgow-firebrand-mary-barbour-unveiled-govan/?ref=rss)
5. Paragraph 5: [[3]](https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/3266/Mary-Barbour-statue-unveiling-to-coincide-with-International-Womens-Day), [[4]](https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/glasgows-mary-barbour-statue-unveiled-14385125)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25163821.mural-tribute-glasgow-firebrand-mary-barbour-unveiled-govan/?ref=rss)
7. Paragraph 7: [[6]](https://fablevision.uk/projects-page/woven-in-govan/), [[7]](https://sghet.com/project/govans-monument-to-mary-barbour/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25163821.mural-tribute-glasgow-firebrand-mary-barbour-unveiled-govan/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/mary-barbour-18751958-and-isabella-elder-18281905-345325> - This article discusses a mural commemorating Mary Barbour and Isabella Elder, located near where Mary lived during the 1915 rent strikes. Mary Barbour was a political activist, councillor, and magistrate, while Isabella Elder was a philanthropist who supported women's education and training. The mural was created as part of Yardworks GRID, supported by the UK Community Renewal Fund, delivering public art programmes across Govan, Partick, and Yorkhill. The unveiling took place on 23 March 2023.
3. <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/3266/Mary-Barbour-statue-unveiling-to-coincide-with-International-Womens-Day> - This announcement details the unveiling of a statue honouring Mary Barbour, a key figure in the 1915 rent strikes, on International Women's Day, 8 March 2018. The statue was commissioned by The Remember Mary Barbour Association (RMBA) after a successful fundraising campaign. Mary Barbour led protests against landlords who raised rents during wartime, and her efforts led to changes in government rent legislation. She was also one of Glasgow's first female councillors and magistrates.
4. <https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/glasgows-mary-barbour-statue-unveiled-14385125> - This article covers the unveiling of a statue to Mary Barbour in Govan, Glasgow, on International Women's Day, 8 March 2018. The statue commemorates Mary Barbour's role in the 1915 rent strikes, where she led protests against landlords who increased rents during wartime. The unveiling ceremony was attended by hundreds of people, including local politicians and community leaders. The statue was funded by a £110,000 campaign led by the Remember Mary Barbour Association.
5. <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/16074625.govan-community-celebrates-mary-barbour-statue-unveiled/> - This article reports on the unveiling of a statue of Mary Barbour in Govan, Glasgow, on International Women's Day, 8 March 2018. The statue honours Mary Barbour's leadership in the 1915 rent strikes, where she led protests against landlords who raised rents during wartime. The unveiling ceremony was attended by hundreds of people, including local politicians and community leaders. The statue was funded by a £110,000 campaign led by the Remember Mary Barbour Association.
6. <https://fablevision.uk/projects-page/woven-in-govan/> - This article discusses the Woven Network Govan's project, which used the Mary Barbour statue outside Govan underground station to highlight the role of women as principal carers during the COVID-19 crisis. The project aimed to give voice and credit to the role of women in caring, both professionally and domestically, during the pandemic. The project was part of the Woven (Women's) Network, an arts-based initiative.
7. <https://sghet.com/project/govans-monument-to-mary-barbour/> - This article provides a reflection on the history and significance of the Mary Barbour monument in Govan Cross, Glasgow. The monument commemorates Mary Barbour's role in the 1915 rent strikes, where she led protests against landlords who raised rents during wartime. The article discusses the unveiling of the statue on International Women's Day, 8 March 2018, and its significance to the community. It also highlights the ongoing celebrations and gatherings at the monument.