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For details on the Ballsbridge, Donnybrook and Sandymount Historical Society, log on to www.bdshistory.org.

For details on Dublin City Council’s programme of walking tours and weekly walking groups, log on to www.letswalkandtalk.ie.

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In the 18th and 19th centuries Donnybrook was a tranquil village by Pembroke Township in the 19th century. Smothe, Ussher and Fitzwilliam families until it became part of the east and Ranelagh/Clonskeagh

The Charter of King John in 1204 granted the City of Dublin the right to hold a fair and so the Donnybrook Fair was established, lasting until 1855. Land and village later passed through the hands of the Smothe, Usher and Fitzwilliam families until it became part of the Pembroke Township in the 9th century.

In the 18th and 19th centuries Donnybrook was a tranquil village by the River Dodder to which destitute came to enjoy peaceful settings. At the same time initiatives developed and later many landowners saw the potential to develop a suburb, south of the city. Roads were laid out and plots of land were leased for house building and so we saw the transformation of a rural village into a suburban area.

Welcome to Donnybrook! This trail starts from one of the oldest institutions in Donnybrook and takes you through Herbert Park, across Tara of the High Kings, across the River Dodder, along leafy roads and past many places of historical interest. Walking at a leisurely pace, the trail should take you under 90 minutes to complete. So let’s walk and talk as we explore one of Dublin’s most iconic villages!

**1. THE ROYAL HOSPITAL DONNYBROOK**

The Royal Hospital Donnybrook was founded in 1743 on Townsend Street as a Hospital for Incurables. In 1972 it relocated to Buckingham House on Bloomfield Avenue. Today, it is an independent voluntary charity with a reputation for excellent rehabilitative care and specialist care. The house takes its name from Bloomfield House which together with Seahawk House was run by the Society of Friends (Quakers) from 1810 to 2005, catering for the elderly and those suffering from mental health problems. Across the road is Avila (formerly Gayfield), a retreat and conference centre under the direction of the Discalced Carmelite Fathers.

**2. MOREHAMPTON ROAD**

Morehampton Road and its extension Leeson Street Upper feature many redbrick houses built from 1860 onwards. Patrick La Cruzor Head (known as Kozumi Yikumo in Japan where he became a famous writer) spent some childhood years with his great-aunt at 73 Upper Leeson Street whilst E.E. Leeson Street was once the house of Helen Lyndon Goff, who under the name Pamela Lyndon Travers wrote Mary Poppins. The ‘Grove’, on the corner of Wellington Place and Morehampton Road is a bird sanctuary bequeathed to An Taoiseach by Miss Kathleen Goodfellow who lived at 4 Morehampton Road. Others who have lived on Morehampton Road include the artist Eamon O’Neill (and his wife, the writer Seumas O’Sullivan (2 Morehampton Road), Cecil Ffrench Salkeld, artist and father-in-law to Brendan Behan (45 Morehampton Road) and writer, Benedict Kiely (119 Morehampton Road), Former President of Ireland and Taoiseach Eamon De Valera lived near 31 Morehampton Terrace.

**3. HERBERT PARK**

Herbert Park was donated to Pembroke Urban District Council by the Earl of Pembroke in 1903 to commemorate the coming of age of his son, Lord Herbert. The land was first used for the 1903 International Exhibition which was attended by more than 2.7 million visitors. It was a showcase for Irish and foreign industry and included entertainments of all kinds. Abram Stoker, author of Dracula called it ‘The Great White Fair’. Herbert Park opened as a public park in 1911.

**4. HOME VILLAS/ST. BROC’S & PEBRICKO COTTAGES**

Home Villas, St. Broc’s Cottages and Pebbroke Cottages were built during the late 19th century and early 20th century as artisan dwellings. Home Villas was the first of this type of dwelling in Dublin to have an inside bathroom.

**5. DONNYBROOK FAIR**

Donnybrook Fair dates from a charter of King John in 1204 and was held annually until 1866. It began as a fair for livestock and agricultural produce but later declined, growing into more of a carnival and fun fair. Drunkenness and fighting became common place and the people of Donnybrook were anxious that it should cease. After a good deal of fund raising, the patent was bought by a group of prominent Georgian families and their extension Leeson Street

**6. THE MORRISON OBELISK**

The Morrison Obelisk is a monument to Alderman Arthur Morrison, Lord Mayor of Dublin (1835-1836) and member of the Grand Jury of the County of Dublin, in which capacity he helped improve the infrastructure of Donnybrook. This included the building of Anglesea Bridge over the River Dodder in 1832. Anthony Trollope, the well known author of the Barsetshire Chronicles lived nearby at 6 Seaview Terrace. A Viking burial was found at Seaview Terrace in 1879.

**7. THE CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART**

The Church of the Sacred Heart was designed by Ashtin & Puign and built by Michael Maede who also built nineteen houses on nearby Ailesbury Road. The Church opened in 1866. The tower dates from 1912 and the extension was completed by 1931. The Church contains stained glass windows by Harry Clarke and Michael Healy. Further along the Stillorgan Road is Montrose House, the former home of James Jemson of the James Jemson Whiskey distillers. The national television and radio centre, Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) is now located there. The main campus of University College Dublin can be found close to RTE, at Belfield.

**8. DONNYBROOK BUS GARAGE**

Donnybrook Bus Garage occupies the site of an old quarry. The stone from this quarry was used to build the Dublin to Kingstown railway. The garage was designed by the distinguished architect Michael Scott in association with One-Arup, a Danish engineer. It was completed in 1952 and was “the first building in the world to have a concrete shell roof lit by natural light from one side and the other”. A tramway once operated through Donnybrook and the old Train Depot is still in use as the No. 2 Bus Garage. Nearby Simonscourt Terrace was built to house the tram workers. Donnybrook Bus Garage was also the location for a European boxing title fight between Billy Kelly and Ray Fenechon 1955.

**9. BEAVER ROW**

The cottages on Beaver Row were built in 1811 for those who worked at a Beaver Hat Factory which was located on the opposite side of the River Dodder. A wooden footbridge was built across the river for the employees (later to be replaced by the present iron bridge) as was the now disused Wesleyan Methodist Chapel which can be found behind one of the cottages. At the entrance to Bishops Hill estate is a monument to the 1st All Ireland Football Final which took place there in 1888 between Limerick Commercials and Dundalk Young Internals.

**10. EGLENTON ROAD & SQUARE**

Eglington Road contains a number of fine Victorian and Edwardian houses. Former Sadowski, Dr Garnett Fitzgibbon lived at 79 Eglington Road. Eglington Square was formerly occupied by an old house called Ballingliss and is the reputed site of the holy well of St. Broc.

**11. DONNYBROOK CASTLE**

The site of Donnybrook Castle is now occupied by the Religious Sisters of Charity. The original castle was an Elizabethan mansion and residence of the Ussher family. It was replaced by the existing Georgian house in 1789.

**12. DONNYBROOK GRAVEYARD**

Donnybrook Graveyard dates back to the 8th century and was once the location of an old Celtic place of worship founded by St. Broc. It was also the site of Catholic and Protestant churches, both called St. Mary’s. Those buried here include Dr. Bartholomew Mosse, the founder of the Rotunda Hospital, Sir Edward Lovett Pearce, architect of the Irish Parliament on College Green and Dr. Richard Maddox, biographer of the United Irishmen. The wall on the south side of the cemetery is arguably the oldest man made structure still existing in Donnybrook.

**13. DONNYBROOK GARDEN STATION**

Donnybrook Garden Station occupies the site of the former Glebe House of the Protestant Church of St. Mary’s. The Rose Tavern, a public house which thrived during the times of Donnybrook Fair also once stood on this site.

**14. BELMONT AVENUE**

Belmont Avenue was formerly called Coldbowl Lane after an estate at the top of the avenue which was owned by a Colonel Coldbowl.

**15. MARLBOROUGH ROAD**

Marly Houses on Marlborough Road were built by the Plunket and Cranny families. Patrick Cranny built Muckross Park as his family home. It is now a second school for girls. His daughter Josephine married Court Plunkett and their son Joseph Mary Plunkett was executed as one of the leaders of the Easter Rising. Antarctic explorer, Ernest Shackleton lived for nine years at 35 Marlborough Road.