

Ballsbridge Walking Trail

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Now recognised as one of Dublin's most fashionable residential areas, Ballsbridge developed in the 19th century from what was then a tranquil village on the River Dodder. The name of the area derived from a local miller called Nicholas Ball who in the 17th century built the first bridge in the area across the Dodder, which up until then had been traversed by a ford. Today's stone bridge was built in 1791 and widened to its present size in 1904.



Ballsbridge had formed part of the estate of Viscount Fitzwilliam, passing on to the Earl of Pembroke in 1816. The 19th century saw a steady flow of professional and merchant classes from the city to the suburbs and in 1863, Pembroke Township was set up (later becoming Pembroke Urban District Council) to provide local government services in the area. Industries such as mills, laundries, bakeries and ironworks were established and housing was provided locally for the workers. Institutions like the Royal Dublin Society and Masonic Girls' School also moved to more spacious premises in the area and facilities for rugby, cricket, football, tennis and other sports were developed to cater for the growing local population.



Events of national importance which have taken place in the area include the Irish International Exhibition of 1907, the ambush at Mount Street Bridge during the 1916 Easter Rising and the annual Dublin Horse Show.

Ballsbridge has been home to many famous residents over the years including William Butler Yeats, T. C. Murray, Patrick Kavanagh, Patrick & Willie Pearse, The O'Rahilly and Sir Alfred Chester Beatty.

Today, Ballsbridge is a vibrant village within the city and boasts a number of quality hotels, restaurants, public houses and shops as well as some of the most expensive houses in Ireland.

Ballsbridge can be conveniently reached by DART local railway with Sandymount, Lansdowne Road and Sydney Parade DART stations all nearby, connecting Ballsbridge to the city centre and to many of Dublin's coastal villages. There is also a number of bus routes that go through Ballsbridge.



Welcome to Ballsbridge!

This walking trail starts at Sandymount DART Station and finishes at Lansdowne Road DART Station. Walking at a leisurely pace, the trail should take you under 90 minutes to complete.

1 SANDYMOUNT AVENUE

The DART electric rail system uses the Dublin to Dún Laoghaire (Kingstown) line, which was the first railway line in Ireland, opening in 1834. Sandymount Avenue has literary connections, with 5 Sandymount Avenue/George's Ville being the birthplace of Nobel prize-winning poet, William Butler Yeats, and 11 Sandymount Avenue once being the home of poet and playwright, T. C. Murray. Irish Nationalists, Patrick and Willie Pearse, both of whom were executed after the 1916 Easter Rising, once lived at 13 Sandymount Avenue.

2 CLAYTON HOTEL

Clayton Hotel on Merrion Road was built in the 1880s and was formerly a Masonic school for female orphans, closing in 1972. Masonic symbols still adorn the main entrance hall of the hotel. The assembly hall is now known as Thomas Prior Hall, after one of the founding members of the nearby RDS. Next to Clayton Hotel is the iconic post-modern building of the British Embassy, which was designed by London architects, Allies and Morrison and completed in 1995. A number of other foreign embassies are also located in Ballsbridge.

3 ROYAL DUBLIN SOCIETY

The Dublin Society was founded in 1731, becoming the Royal Dublin Society in 1821 on the visit of King George IV. The buildings fronting Merrion Road were erected from 1924-28 in a neo-classical style as the Society's headquarters, which had moved from Leinster House. The RDS promotes the development of science, agriculture, arts and industry and hosts a number of exhibitions, conferences, concerts and sporting events (including the Dublin Horse Show) every year. Opposite the RDS is the Red House, the oldest building in Ballsbridge, dating from the 18th century. Adjoining the Red House is the Sweepstakes, which was formerly the headquarters for the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes, a lottery based on horse racing set up to raise funds for hospitals.

4 PEMBROKE TOWN HALL

Pembroke Town Hall was built in 1880 for Pembroke Township by one of their councillors, architect Edward Henry Carson, who was the father of well-known Unionist, Lord Carson. It is now the headquarters of the City of Dublin Education & Training Board. The adjoining former Fire Station dates from 1892.

5 PEMBROKE LIBRARY

Pembroke Library was opened in 1929, and was the last of the Carnegie libraries built in Dublin with money donated by Scottish businessman and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie. The quantity surveyor was W. F. Beckett, father of writer Samuel Beckett. Its first librarian was Michael O'Donovan, better known as the writer Frank O'Connor.

6 BALL'S BRIDGE

Ball's Bridge gives its name to the area and is named after a Nicholas Ball, who had a house nearby. It was erected in 1791, rebuilt in 1835 and widened and improved in 1904. The bridge crosses the River Dodder, one of Dublin's major suburban rivers, rising in the Wicklow mountains and ending in Dublin Bay after 26km.

7 HERBERT PARK

Herbert Park is one of Dublin's most popular and oldest parks, dating from the Edwardian period. It 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. It was the site of the Irish International Exhibition of 1907 which ran for 6 months and was attended by over 2.7 million visitors. This Exhibition was a showcase for Irish and foreign industry and included restaurants, a concert hall and entertainments of all kinds. Bram Stoker, author of Dracula, called it the 'The great white fair'. The pond, into which a big water chute ended, is the only feature that still exists from the Exhibition.

Herbert Park opened as a public park in 1911 and caters for various sports including tennis, soccer, bowls and croquet as well as serving as a tranquil oasis from the hustle and bustle of the city.

10 RAGLAN ROAD/PEMBROKE ROAD

Raglan Road is immortalised in the poem, On Raglan Road by Patrick Kavanagh, which was subsequently turned into a song when the poet met with folk singer, Luke Kelly. Patrick Kavanagh lived for some time at 63 Pembroke Road. Pembroke Road got its name from the title of the landlords, the Earls of Pembroke, who laid out the road for building development from the 1830s.

11 ROYAL CITY OF DUBLIN HOSPITAL

The Royal City of Dublin/Baggot Street Hospital was opened in a Georgian House in 1832 as a teaching hospital for the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. It later also catered for students from Trinity College Dublin. The hospital was rebuilt in 1893 in a high Victorian style with red brick and buff terracotta to the designs of Albert Murray. It became The Royal City of Dublin Hospital on Queen Victoria's last visit to Ireland in 1900.

12 ST. MARY'S CHURCH

St. Mary's Church on Haddington Road opened in 1839 and features a rich variety of Irish and European stained glass and impressive interior decoration. Also to be seen in the Church is a plaque commemorating parishioners who as soldiers in the British Army were killed during World War I.

13 NORTHUMBERLAND ROAD

Northumberland Road provided a path for British soldiers who marched in from Dún Laoghaire during the 1916 Easter Rising. Irish volunteers held 25 Northumberland Road under the command of Éamon de Valera, who later became President of Ireland. Faint bullet marks can still be seen on the gable wall of this building. Irish Volunteers also occupied the schoolhouse, now a hotel, and Clanwilliam House, which was located beyond Mount Street Bridge. Two hundred and twenty British soldiers were killed or wounded and four rebels and several civilians also killed in the Battle of Mount Street Bridge. A plaque on 25 Northumberland Road and the memorial at Mount Street Bridge commemorate the volunteer dead. The bridge crosses the Grand Canal, which was built in 1791 and was an important transport thoroughfare.

14 BEGGARS' BUSH MILITARY BARRACKS

Beggars' Bush, an area once covered in bushes, was a refuge for beggars and highwaymen in the 18th century. Beggars' Bush Military Barracks was the first barracks rebuilt to the ideas of Florence Nightingale, who proposed improved accommodation for soldiers. It was the first military establishment handed over to the Free State in 1922. Irish Nationalist and author of The Riddle of the Sands, Robert

Erskine Childers was executed here by the Free State Forces in 1922; his son Erskine H. Childers later became President of Ireland in 1973. The posts at the front of the barracks are a full set of guns from an 18th century warship. The complex now houses the Geological Survey of Ireland and the National Print Museum.

15 AVIVA STADIUM

Shelbourne Road had many industries in the past, including Richard Turner's Ironworks and the Swastika Laundry, from which the brick chimney survives. A row of mature trees remain from the former Trinity Botanic Gardens which once covered the sites now occupied by hotels. James Joyce, author of Ulysses, lived briefly at 60 Shelbourne Road. Located beside the River Dodder and Lansdowne Road DART Station is the Aviva Stadium which was built on the site of the former Lansdowne Road stadium. It opened in 2010 and is home to the Irish Rugby Union and Republic of Ireland Football Teams.



8 THE REBELLION MONUMENT

The Rebellion Monument commemorates the Third Battalion of the IRA for their part in the 1916 Easter Rising. It was unveiled by its former Commander, President Éamon de Valera in 1973. Across the road is the Embassy of the United States which was designed by John MacL. Johannsen and Michael Scott based on the design of an ancient Irish ringfort. It was built in 1964 by G & T Crampton, a local building firm.

9 ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

St. Bartholomew's Church was consecrated in 1867 and is well known for its choir, bells and dedication to music. The church has beautiful windows by Catherine O'Brien of An Túr Gloine Stained Glass Studio. Elgin Road features a fine Victorian redbrick terrace of houses built by developer, Patrick Cranny in the 1850s.