

Ringsend & Irishtown Walking Trail

Map & Guide



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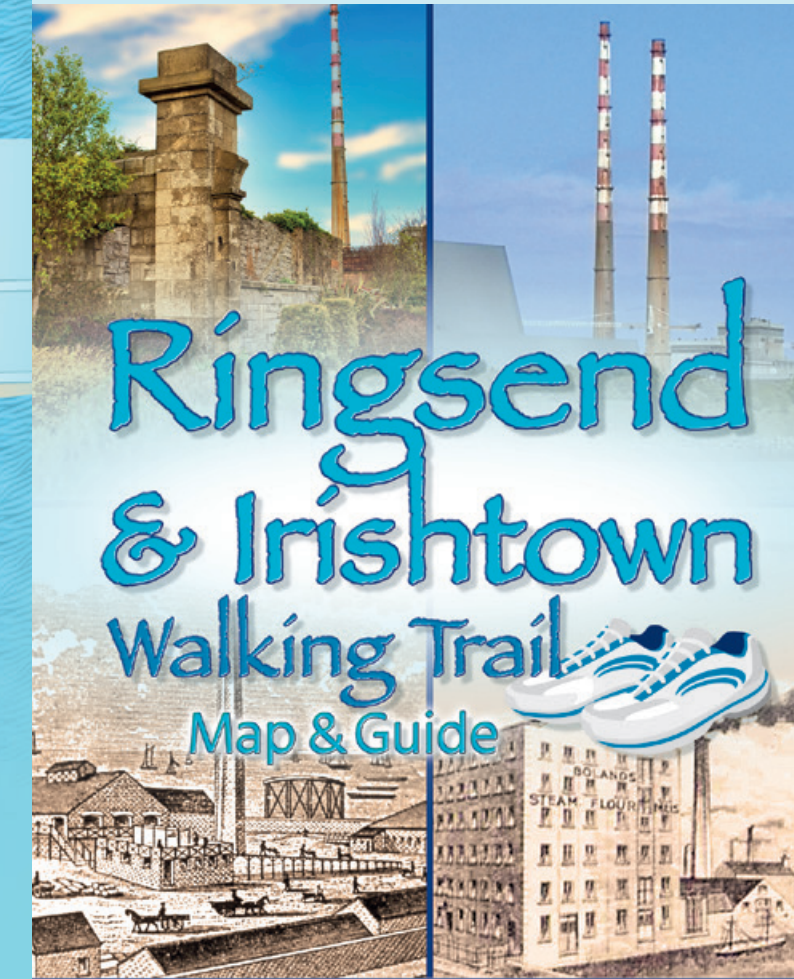
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Ringsend/Irishtown (*An Rinn/An Baile Gaelach*) is a southside inner suburb of Dublin located on the south banks of the River Liffey and east of the River Dodder, about 2km east of the city centre. Ringsend takes in the south side of the Dublin Docklands as well as South Lotts and part of Grand Canal Dock. A key feature of the area are the iconic twin chimneys of Poolbeg Power Station.

Ringsend’s attached twin village is Irishtown. By the beginning of the 13th century, Dublin had become the centre of English rule in Ireland and it was subject to many raids on it by the Irish. By the 15th century the increased Gaelic migration to the city concerned the English authorities and as a result, the Irish inhabitants of Dublin were expelled from the city proper in 1454, in line with the Statutes of Kilkenny. The Irish population were only allowed to trade inside the city limits by daylight and at the end of the day’s trading, were forced to leave and set up camp in what was to become known as “The Irishtown”.

Oliver Cromwell arrived in Ringsend in 1649 at a place called Whiskey Row which is now the location of Whelan House, O’Rahilly House and Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre on Thorncastle Street, before going on to massacre the Irish in



the reconquest of Ireland for the English Parliament. Whelan House and O’Rahilly House along with George Reynolds House are all Dublin City Council Complexes in the area which are named after Revolutionaries who lost their lives in the 1916 Rising. Ringsend was also a hive of activity during the War of Independence and the last person to die in that conflict was Margaret Keogh who was shot in Stella Gardens, the night before the Truce was declared.

Ringsend was a place of shipbuilders and boat builders in the 19th century and has long been known colloquially as Raytown, reflecting its history as a fishing village and popularity of the ‘stingray’ fish.

James Joyce’s first date with his wife Nora Barnacle was in Ringsend Park and is subject to many international studies as to how this meeting shaped Joyce’s life thereafter. Many films have been shot in Ringsend, including In The Name Of The Father, Educating Rita and The General and many of the songs that recent generations have grown up with were recorded at Windmill Lane Studios.

The area has developed fast in recent years and is now home to many of the world’s leading social media companies including Google and Facebook. Both Ringsend and Irishtown are vibrant villages with a strong community spirit thanks to a number of individuals, groups and organisations on the ground and their involvement with local festivals, events, activities and environmental issues. Local amenities include numerous sports clubs, Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre and Irishtown Stadium, a multi-sports facility with an athletics track. Between Ringsend Park, Sean Moore Park, and Irishtown Nature Park there are also ample opportunities for walks galore and relaxation.

Welcome to the twin villages of Ringsend and Irishtown!

This walking trail starts at the rejuvenated Docklands and takes in many places of historical interest as well as park and coastal walks. The trails is 8.6km in length and should take about two hours to complete at a leisurely pace.



1 SEAN McMAHON BRIDGE

This bridge was previously known as Brunswick Bascule (1857) and Victoria Bridge (1900) before being rebuilt and renamed **Sean McMahon Bridge** in honour of the former IRA Quarter Master General who took part in the seizure of nearby Boland’s Mills during the 1916 Rising. In 1873 local baker, Patrick Boland, had bought the stone cut flour-mill buildings overlooking Grand Canal Dock and milling continued there until 2001.

2 WINDMILL LANE STUDIOS

Windmill Lane Studios have been home to recordings from some of the world’s most famous musical artists including U2, The Rolling Stones, Lady Gaga, The Cranberries, Norah Jones, Sinéad O’Connor, David Bowie, Ed Sheeran and Rod Stewart. The studios contain a media library that is the envy of the world.

3 GRAVING DOCKS

In 1796 the Grand Canal Company opened two **Graving Docks**, for ship/boat building and repairs. The two Docks here are Dublin’s last remaining and operated until the 1960s. A third (now filled-in) was sited at the Viking Splash Tours lot. The largest of the three original docks is where the currently derelict ship, Naomh Éanna, is moored. During the mid-19th century, the Dublin Dockyard Company built steel ships and engines here before ownership transferred to Ringsend Dockyard Company in 1913. CIE took over control of the site in the 1940s before it was transferred to Waterways Ireland under the Good Friday Agreement.

4 MARGARET KEOGH MEMORIAL

Margaret Keogh was a printer’s assistant and a member of Cumann na mBán and the Irish Clerical Workers Union. On the night of 10th July 1921, the eve of the Truce bringing the War of Independence to an end, Margaret was shot as she answered the door of her home at 20 Stella Gardens, during what were 11th hour raids launched by the Black and Tans on suspected IRA safe-houses in the area. Margaret passed away two days later at the age of 21. The Margaret Keogh Committee erected a headstone at her grave in 2019 and had the **Margaret Keogh Memorial** plaque placed opposite her old home on the centenary of her death in 2021.

5 BOTTLEMAKERS HALL

En route to the next stop is the art deco style Ringsend Library on Fitzwilliam Street, built in the 1930s. **Bottlemakers Hall** was built in 1915 by an amalgamation of bottle blowers from the many nearby bottle making factories. The Glass and Bottle business was a powerhouse of industry in the area in the 19th and 20th centuries and this hall served for various forms of socialising. Jim Larkin used this hall for political rallies to bring Trade Unionism to Ireland.

6 DR. WILLIAM ASHFORD MONUMENT

William Ashford was an apothecary and general practitioner who operated in nearby Ballsbridge. He died at his home at 1 Serpentine Avenue in 1892 and the **Dr. William Ashford Monument** was erected the following year to commemorate his services to the poor of the parish. His grandfather was William Ashford, the well-known English landscape painter who worked exclusively in Ireland.

7 SAINT MATTHEW’S CHURCH

St. Matthew’s Church of Ireland in Irishtown dates back to 1706 when the foundation stone was laid by Archbishop William King. In 1878 the

9 SEAMAN’S MONUMENT

Unveiled in 1984, the **Seaman’s Monument** honours the men who served on ships tasked with bringing vital supplies to Ireland following the withdrawal of world shipping from Irish Ports after Ireland declared itself neutral in WW2. Sixteen ships were lost in unprovoked actions at sea and 149 men died. In the nearby estate, all roads are named after those ships whose crews risked life and limb to bring back supplies to Ireland.

10 IRISHTOWN NATURE PARK

Prompted by local residents, **Irishtown Nature Park** was developed by Dublin Corporation in the 1980s on top of a dump for waste and building rubble. The park is rich in flora and fauna and offers several kilometres of walking trails along the Poolbeg Peninsula with views of the coastline, the distant Dublin Mountains and nearby Poolbeg Chimneys. Walks through the park can be continued on along the Great South Wall, as far as the distinctive red Poolbeg Lighthouse.

11 THE PIGEON HOUSE HOTEL

The “Pigeon House” takes its name from John Pidgeon who was the first caretaker of the lodge built there in 1760 to provide rest for workers as they built the Great South Wall, a 30 year long construction. To cater for the growing number of traveller’s arriving into Dublin Bay, Pigeon opened a restaurant and then around 1793, the **Pigeon House Hotel**. The hotel did not last long however as it was soon converted into officers’ accommodation within the Fort that would be built in the area.

12 PIGEON HOUSE FORT

Following the 1798 Rebellion, the **Pigeon House Fort** was built and over the next hundred years grew to include an armoury, a hospital, and trenches crossed by drawbridges. It was heavily armed and garrisoned to protect Pigeon House Harbour which was the intended last ditch exit point from Ireland for the British in the event of a successful Irish rebellion.

13 ROWING CLUBS

Back in the days before there was any harbour, rowers would compete with each other in races to get to the ships first and negotiate a deal to tow them into a safe anchorage to offload their cargo. It was from this activity that the St. Patricks Rowing Club was formed in 1936 with a breakaway group forming another club, Stella Maris in 1937. Between the two **Rowing Clubs** is one of the entrances to Ringsend Park which has many amenities on offer.

14 THE FAIR PLAY CAFÉ

Formally a Mission Hall built in 1896 by two daughters of Victor Bewley (Bewley’s Café) and Sir William Fry for communal activities, the building prospered up until the birth of the Republic for Protestants of the area. Following a decrease in its usage, plans to demolish it were squashed as the sisters insisted in their will that it was to be kept in perpetuity. The building now serves as a crèche, garden centre and **The Fair Play Café**.

15 SAINT PATRICK’S CHURCH

Saint Patrick’s Church, built by the father and son Architect team of William and Ralph Henry Byrne in 1858, was opened by Archbishop Cullen in 1859. This Catholic Church was rebuilt in 1916 and one of its main features are its stained glass windows, in particular its large St Patrick’s Window which was restored by the world renowned Harry Clarke.



church was largely rebuilt, leaving the tower as its only saving element of the original building by architect J.F. Fuller who was also the architect of the Irishtown Gospel Hall & Chapel of Ease across the road.

8 WAXIE’S DARGLE

Many versions abound as to the origin of the name **Waxie’s Dargle** but for certain it consisted of a very large social gathering in Irishtown in the 19th Century. The term ‘Waxie’ may derive from the penchant of many cabdrivers for wearing waxed moustaches and it is likely that cabdrivers organised this gathering near the seafront after the Donnybrook Fair had closed down due to some boisterous behaviour. The name Dargle can only refer to Bray and its river Dargle and the large social gatherings which took place there for the gentry with Irishtown being the working class equivalent.