This Map & Guide was produced by Dublin City Council in partnership with the Harold’s Cross Community Festival.

Thank you to the following for their contribution to the Harold’s Cross Walking Trail:

Eoin Bairéad, Anne Corrigan, Dublin City Library & Archive, Pat Liddy, Tony McDermott and Conor O’Mahony.

Photographs by Pat Liddy and Ronan O’Donnell.


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

Design & Production: Kaelleon Design (01 835 3881 / www.kaelleondesign.ie)

© 2015 Dublin City Council
Welcome to Harold’s Cross!

Your trail starts at Robert Emmet Bridge on the Grand Canal and finishes at Harold’s Cross Park.

Walking at a leisurely pace, the trail should take you under 90 minutes to complete.

The name Harold’s Cross may be derived from a cross erected there in medieval times to mark the boundary between land owned by the Archbishop of Dublin and the Harold family of Rathfarnham, warning each not to encroach on the territory of the other. The Archbishop maintained a gallow here from medieval times where harsh justice was administered, often for menial crimes or perceived acts of insurrection. Harold’s Cross was an important rallying point for the United Irishmen in planning their rebellions of 1798 & 1803, and all the leaders attending Mount Argus church before the Rising and the 4th Battalion of the Volunteers based in nearby Larkfield.

The presence of the River Poddle encouraged milling and by 1801, there were eight mills in the area. Initially, mainly poorer people settled here - the rich didn’t want to live beside industrial mills and a gallow. However, due to its slightly elevated position, the area became regarded as very healthy and in the 18th century, many wealthy families moved to Harold’s Cross, building big houses such as Mount Argus, Mount Drummond, Mount Jerome, Greenmount and Mount Harold. These titles live on today in the names of some streets, squares and parks in the area.

Today, Harold’s Cross is a vibrant village with a wonderful community spirit, the winner of the cities category of the All-Ireland IBP Pride of Place Competition in 2013. New coffee shops, restaurants and other businesses have been established, alongside the famous Hoover shop that featured in the 2007 Oscar-winning movie Once.

Harold’s Cross is located south of Dublin city centre and the Grand Canal. It is served by a number of Dublin Bus routes (9, 16, 18, 4, 20, 21). Harold’s Cross Park is one of the city’s most used sporting facilities, with a tartan track for athletics, hurling, football and hurling. The site of the park was originally used as a commissary around which the village was located. A map, drawn in 1629 by the surveyor of the English army, shows a small town with a fort and a church. The green was the yeoman barracks from the end of the 18th century and later became the first national school of Catholicism.

The site of the church was originally the site of Mount Jerome. The church, which was converted into a park in the 1890s, is now used as a Victorian-style tearooms. Since 1984, the cemetery has been owned by the Maxwell family, including the most modern, eco-efficient crematorium in Ireland there in 2000.

In 1629 a convent of the Poor Sisters of St Clare was opened in Cook Street. Persecution forced the nuns to leave Dublin until they returned in 1712 to North Brunswick Street. In 1804, the Sisters acquired a building in Harold’s Cross and established an orphanage which operated until 1881. The nuns also provided education for those in their care and St. Clare’s Convent and Primary School, the oldest existing Catholic school in the Archdiocese, remain active.

In 1829 a convent of the Poor Sisters of St Clare was opened in Cook Street. Persecution forced the nuns to leave Dublin until they returned in 1712 to North Brunswick Street. In 1804, the Sisters acquired a building in Harold’s Cross and established an orphanage which operated until 1881. The nuns also provided education for those in their care and St. Clare’s Convent and Primary School, the oldest existing Catholic school in the Archdiocese, remain active.

Originally used for speedway racing, the stadium is now one of two greyhound racing stadia in Dublin. From 1929 until 1994 the ground was used by League of Ireland Football Clubs, Shelbourne and St. Patrick’s Athletic. George Best played there for Cork Celtic vs Shelbourne in 1976.

In 1829 a convent of the Poor Sisters of St Clare was opened in Cook Street. Persecution forced the nuns to leave Dublin until they returned in 1712 to North Brunswick Street. In 1804, the Sisters acquired a building in Harold’s Cross and established an orphanage which operated until 1881. The nuns also provided education for those in their care and St. Clare’s Convent and Primary School, the oldest existing Catholic school in the Archdiocese, remain active.

From medieval times, the River Poddle was essential for powering mills and providing drinking water for Dublin city. At Mount Argus Close, the river is divided by a stone structure resembling an upstream boat now reconstituted. The river was split by this so-called ‘Tongue’ or ‘Stone Boat’, with one third of the flow supplying the ancient City Watercourse and City Basin and two thirds continuing along the original river bed. The two streams combine to provide water for the most of Dublin Castle.

Harold’s Cross served as an execution ground from medieval times until the 18th century. While there is some debate about the location, it is generally accepted that the numerous gallows which stood, old maps suggest it was located opposite Mount Jerome where Flyer’s fish shop and mass card centre are today.

The church was built in 1938 on the lands of Mount Harold House, replacing a temporary tin church erected earlier when the parish was first formed. The original floor tiles of the house can still be seen on the chapel floor. The ornate stained-glass window over the main altar, depicting Our Lady of the Rosary, was installed in 2000.

The Church of Mount Argus was purchased by the Passionist Order in 1856. By 1878, a monastery and today's church had been built. James Pearse, father of Patrick and Willie, was a stone mason for the church. Both sons came here for confession on the day of the Easter Rising 1916. Members of the 4th Battalion of the Irish Volunteers, based at Count Plunkett’s estate in nearby Larkfield, also came to pray here before the Rising. The church houses the shrine of Saint Charles who lived here from 1857 until his death in 1893. Fr. Charles, who was mentioned as a miracle worker in James Joyce’s Ulysses, was canonised in 2007. Also buried here is Fr. Cuthbert Dunne, who was summoned to Oscar Wilde’s dubhthadh in Paris in November 1900 to convert him to Catholicism. Inside the church there is an altar dedicated to St. Charles and an exhibition on his life and the history of Mount Argus.

The site of the park was originally used as a commissary around which the village was located. A map, drawn in 1629 by the surveyor of the English army, shows a small town with a fort and a church. The green was the yeoman barracks from the end of the 18th century and later became the first national school of Catholicism.