



**Dublin City Centre Parks Visit**  
**July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, 6.00pm to 8.30pm**  
**with Dr Christy Boylan**

**Meet at the Civic Offices on Wood Quay proceeding to St. Audoen's Park, The Peace Garden, St. Patrick's Park, The Cabbage Garden, St. Kevin's Park, Iveagh Gardens, St. Stephen's Green, and Merrion Square Park. Visit terminates at Merrion Square Park.**

### **St. Audoen's Park**

St. Audoen's Park sits alongside St. Audoen's Church at Cornmarket in Dublin city centre. St. Audoen's Church was built in 1300 A.D. It is the only remaining parish church from that time. The church is dedicated to St Ouen, the 7th century bishop of Rouen and patron saint of Normandy. The park features Dublin's original stone walls (1100 A.D.), the last surviving entrance to the old city and Fagan's Gate, named after the nearby Fagan's Tower.

The small park was developed by Dublin Corporation Parks Department in 1981, with a low wall and railing which previously formed the boundary of the cattle market yards near Hanlon's Corner. In 2016, a revised layout by Dermot Foley was implemented.

### **The Peace Garden, Christchurch Place.**

Designed by Terry Murray of the Park's Department as a sunken garden to reduce traffic noise. The main feature was a bronze "Tree of Life" sculpture by Leo Higgins and Colm Brennan. Was officially opened by the Lord Mayor in 1988. The site was enclosed with a plinth wall and railings that was removed from the southern boundary of Finglas Road opposite Glasnevin Cemetery. A revised layout was implemented and opened in 2019. The three children dancing sculpture by artist John Behan, celebrates children in the new millennium in recognition of Barnardo's work. Dr Thomas Barnado, the founder of Barnados was born in Dame Street in 1845 and attended St. Patrick's Cathedral School until he was 16 years old after which he was trained as a doctor in London.

### **St. Patrick's Park**

Situated beside St. Patrick's Cathedral, tradition has it that St. Patrick baptised the first Irish Christians there with water from the River Poddle which flows underground. Developed by Lord Iveagh under the St. Patrick's Park Act of 1897, work was completed by July 1904 to a layout by Arthur Dudgeon C.E., dated 17th July

1901. Lord Iveagh continued to maintain the park for a number of years under a joint arrangement with the Corporation who eventually took full responsibility in the 1920's.

The park provides an ideal setting for the cathedral and recent additions in 1988 include a Literary Parade highlighting the works of Swift, Mangan, Wilde, Shaw, Yeats, Synge, O'Casey, Joyce, Behan, Beckett, Clarke, Dillon, and the Liberty Bell Sculpture. There is also a children's playground.

### **The Cabbage Gardens**

The Cabbage Garden is a small centre city neighbourhood park nestled at the rear of the houses between Kevin Street Upper and New Street, Dublin 8. The park however has a long history which dates to the 1600's.

Located at the top of Cathedral Lane off Kevin Street on 0.56 hectare, this small park is a redeveloped former cemetery dating from 1663. During the Cromwellian occupation it is reputed that the occupying soldiers cultivated cabbages on the site, hence its name. Part of the old cemetery was designated for Huguenot burials from 1681 to 1858. Many of the Liberties' merchants and tradesmen were buried in the cemetery which closed to burials in 1878. The Corporation developed the existing park in 1979/1980 with some redevelopment in 1998

### **St Kevin's Park**

St Kevin's Park is situated on the South side of the city centre on Camden Row off Wexford St. It is surrounded by high walls and buildings and access is through a gate which is open during daylight hours. The area around the park is extensively developed with businesses, roads, a third level college and a car park. Nearby greenspaces include St Stephen's Green, the Iveagh Gardens, and St Patrick's Cathedral. The site contains a church, which is now just a shell of walls, and a graveyard. Access to the interior of the church is restricted to the public by a locked gate but we can see many gravestones on the floor of the church through the locked door. The walls of the church are heavily covered in ivy. People who like to use the park include residents, students, and workers on their lunchtime break.

St Kevin's Park is listed as an area of historical and archaeological importance. The present church dates from around 1780 but a church has probably been present on the site since pre-Norman times. The use of the site as a burial ground has linked it with many important people in the social, economic, and religious history of Dublin and Ireland over 400 years. For example, Archbishop Dermot O'Hurley was buried there after being executed for treason in the 16th Century. The site was developed as a local park in the 1960s and was officially opened in 1971. Before it was opened as a public

park, all the gravestones were catalogued, and most were removed from their original location and placed upright along the boundary walls.

### **Iveagh Gardens**

Iveagh Gardens are among the finest and least known of Dublin's parks and gardens. They were designed by Ninian Niven, in 1865, as an intermediate design between the 'French Formal' and the 'English Landscape' styles. They demonstrated the artistic skills of the landscape Architect of the mid-19th century and display a unique collection of landscape features which include Rustic Grotto's and Cascade, sunken formal panels of lawn with Fountain Centre Pieces, Wilderness, Woodlands, Maze, Rosarium, American Garden, Archery Grounds, Rockeries and Rooteries.

The conservation and restoration of the Gardens commenced in 1995 and to date most of the features have been restored, for example the Maze in Box hedging with a Sundial as a centre piece. The recently restored Cascade and exotic tree ferns all help to create a sense of wonder in the 'Secret Garden'. The pre 1860s rose varieties add an extra dimension to the Victorian Rosarium.

### **St. Stephen's Green**

Ireland's best known Victorian public park dates to 1630. It was a private space until Lord Ardilaun acquired the title in the nineteenth century. With approval of a UK Government Act of 1877, he undertook a redevelopment designed by William Brodrick Thomas and supervised by William Sheppard. Lord Ardilaun spent £20,000 on the redevelopment and rented a room in the Shelbourne Hotel to supervise the works. In 1880, he opened it to the public without any ceremony

These 9 hectares/22-acre park has been maintained in the original Victorian layout with extensive perimeter tree and shrub planting, spring, and summer Victorian bedding. The herbaceous border also provides colour from early spring to late autumn. Sanctuary from inclement weather can be obtained in the Victorian lakeside shelter or in the Victorian Swiss shelters in the centre of the park.

Over 3.5 km of pathways are accessible for all users. The waterfall and Pulham rock work on the western side of the green are worthy of a visit likewise the ornamental lake which provides a home for waterfowl and a garden for the visually impaired. Several sculptures are located throughout the green. A children's playground is a popular attraction of the park.

### **Merrion Square**

The construction of the Georgian houses at Merrion Square began in 1762 and continued for 30 years. The

earliest plan of the park shows a double line of trees around the perimeter which was later enclosed by railings in the early years of the 19th century. A 'Jardin Anglaise' approach was adopted for the layout of the park with contoured grass areas, informal tree clumps, sunken curved paths, and perimeter planting.

Merrion Square soon became a fashionable address for the aristocracy and the professional classes. The park was purchased from the Pembroke Estate by the Roman Catholic Church in 1930 for £10,000 as a site for a cathedral. However, this project never materialised and in 1974 the then Archbishop, Dermot Ryan, transferred the 4.75 hectares (11.7 acres) to Dublin Corporation for use a public park. It was the first park for which a layout was presented to the City Council for comment.

Notable features of the park include many fine sculptures; the Rutland Memorial; a collection of old Dublin lamp posts; a central floral garden; heather garden and playground. What was once the preserve of local privileged keyholders is now a public park.

**Dr Christy Boylan**

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