

## Recreation

Over 2,300 sporting events take place in the Phoenix Park in the intensive recreation zone every year. They are organised by accredited sporting organisations to train and play matches such as soccer, gaelic football, hurling and camogie. There are also many athletic events.

A wide range of recreational activities including orienteering, astronomy, cross country events, athletics, cycle races and model aeroplane flying are organised by various clubs and groups who use the park.

**Phoenix Cricket Club** is the oldest cricket club in Ireland and one of the oldest in the world, having been formed in 1830. In the early 1860s The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, sponsored a Bill in Parliament, granting civil servants a cricket ground in the Phoenix Park. The Club played its first match on the front lawn of Áras an Uachtaráin in April 1863. The Club is still in existence and its grounds are located beside the Citadel pond. The **All Ireland Polo Club**, was founded in 1873 by Horace Rochfort of Clogrenane, which makes it the oldest polo club in Europe.

To protect the Phoenix Park, policy today only allows sports which are historically associated with the park to be permitted. Over 14km of cycle paths have been laid down in the park. Family cycle trails have recently been introduced around the 15 acres.

Beautiful vistas of the Dublin Mountains, tree lined paths, wildflower meadows, lakeside and woodland walks are just some of the many opportunities to enjoy in the park.

## Biodiversity

About 30% of the Phoenix Park is covered by trees, which are mainly broadleaf parkland species such as oak, ash, lime, beech, sycamore and horsechestnut. A more ornamental selection of trees is grown in the various enclosures.

A herd of **Fallow Deer** has lived in the Park since 1662 since their introduction by the Duke of Ormond. At it's largest the herd numbered almost 1300. During the 'Emergency' (World War II), the herd was reduced to only 40. Today the herd is maintained at about 450. The male deer is called the Buck, the female the Doe, and the young are called Fawns. There are four colours of fallow deer in the Park – black, brown, common and menil.

The Phoenix Park is a sanctuary for many mammals including foxes, badgers, rabbits etc. Over forty species of birds have been recorded in the park. Research studies and surveys are ongoing and include studies on mammals, invertebrates, aquatics and nocturnal species. A wide range of wildlife habitats are to be found in the park. One such area is the Furry Glen, which is managed as a conservation area.

## SIGNIFICANT PARK DATES

- c.1177 Hugh Tyrell 1st Baron of Castleknock, granted land, including what is now Phoenix Park land, to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem at Kilmainham.
- 1537 Henry VIII confiscated these lands.
- 1611 James I granted to Sir Richard Sutton, Kilmainham, demesne lands that lay to the north of the Liffey.
- 1617 Lands surrendered to the crown to be used by the King's representatives in Ireland.
- 1662 The establishment of a Royal Deer Park by James Butler, Duke of Ormond.
- 1680 The Royal Hospital was built and the Park was reduced to its present size (1752 acres). A new boundary wall was constructed.
- 1747 Lord Chesterfield opened the Phoenix Park to everyone.
- 1831 Opening of the Zoological Gardens.
- 1860 The Park was placed under the management of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland
- 1925 The enactment of the Phoenix Park Act.
- 1986 The Phoenix Park was designated a National Historic Park.

# Phoenix Park

## VISITOR'S GUIDE



PHOENIX PARK, DUBLIN

## Phoenix Park - A National Historic Park

The Phoenix Park at 707 hectares is one of the largest enclosed Parks within any European City.

## General

The **Phoenix Park** at 707 hectares is one of the largest enclosed recreational spaces within any European capital city. It is larger than all of London's city parks put together, and more than twice the area of New York's Central Park. The Park is located 2.5km west of Dublin City, is bounded by a stonewall 11km in length and has 22km of roads.

## Classification

The Phoenix Park has been managed as a **National Historic Park** since it was so designated in 1986, a year after the **Council of Europe Convention** for the protection of the Architectural Heritage was adopted by the European Council of Ministers, Ireland being one of its signatories.

The conservation and management of the park is guided by the **Florence Charter** on historic gardens as set out by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)

## History

The Phoenix Park was established in 1662 by one of Ireland's most illustrious viceroys, James Butler, Duke of Ormond, on behalf of King Charles II. Conceived as a Royal Deer Park, it initially included the original

demesne of Kilmainham Priory south of the River Liffey, but with the building of the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham, which (commenced in 1680), the Park was reduced to its present size, all of which is now North of the river Liffey. In 1747 the Earl of Chesterfield, having considerably improved the Park, opened it to the public. Even though the formation of Ireland's only Royal Park commenced in 1662, its present landscape and infrastructure is inherited from designs and managerial decisions which were taken from 1800 to 1880. The Victorian People's Flower Garden was designed during this period and was noted for its novel experimentation with floral displays.

## Phoenix Park - facts and figures

- Over 250 years open to the public
- Area 707 hectares (1752 acres)
- Over 200 hectares (500 acres) of woodland
- 22kms of roads
- 14kms Cycle lanes
- 30kms Footpaths
- 11kms of perimeter wall
- 450-600 Fallow Deer Herd
- 250 major public events annually
- 2300 sporting events annually
- 10 million car journeys per year



## Description

**Áras an Uachtaráin**, the residence of the President of Ireland dates from 1750 and served from 1782 to 1922 as the residence of the British Viceroys. **The United States Ambassador's residence**, built in 1774, in former times was the Park Bailiff's lodge and then became the Chief Secretary's Lodge. The **Ordnance Survey Offices** were established in 1825 and includes Mountjoy House which was built in 1728. **St. Mary's Hospital** was formerly the Hibernian Military School and dates from 1766.

West of St. Mary's Hospital, on the hill of Knockmary, stands a prehistoric burial chamber over 5,500 yrs old. The tumulus, which covered it, was opened in 1838 and skeletons, pottery and other relics, now in the National Museum were discovered. A similar sepulchre found in a gravel pit at Chapelizod was re-erected in the Zoological Gardens.

The **Wellington Testimonial** was designed by Robert Smirke as a testimonial to Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, who is reputed to have been born in Dublin. It was completed in 1861 and is the tallest obelisk in Europe at just over 62 meters tall. There are four bronze plaques cast from cannons captured at Waterloo - three of which have pictorial representations of his career while the fourth has an inscription at the base of the obelisk

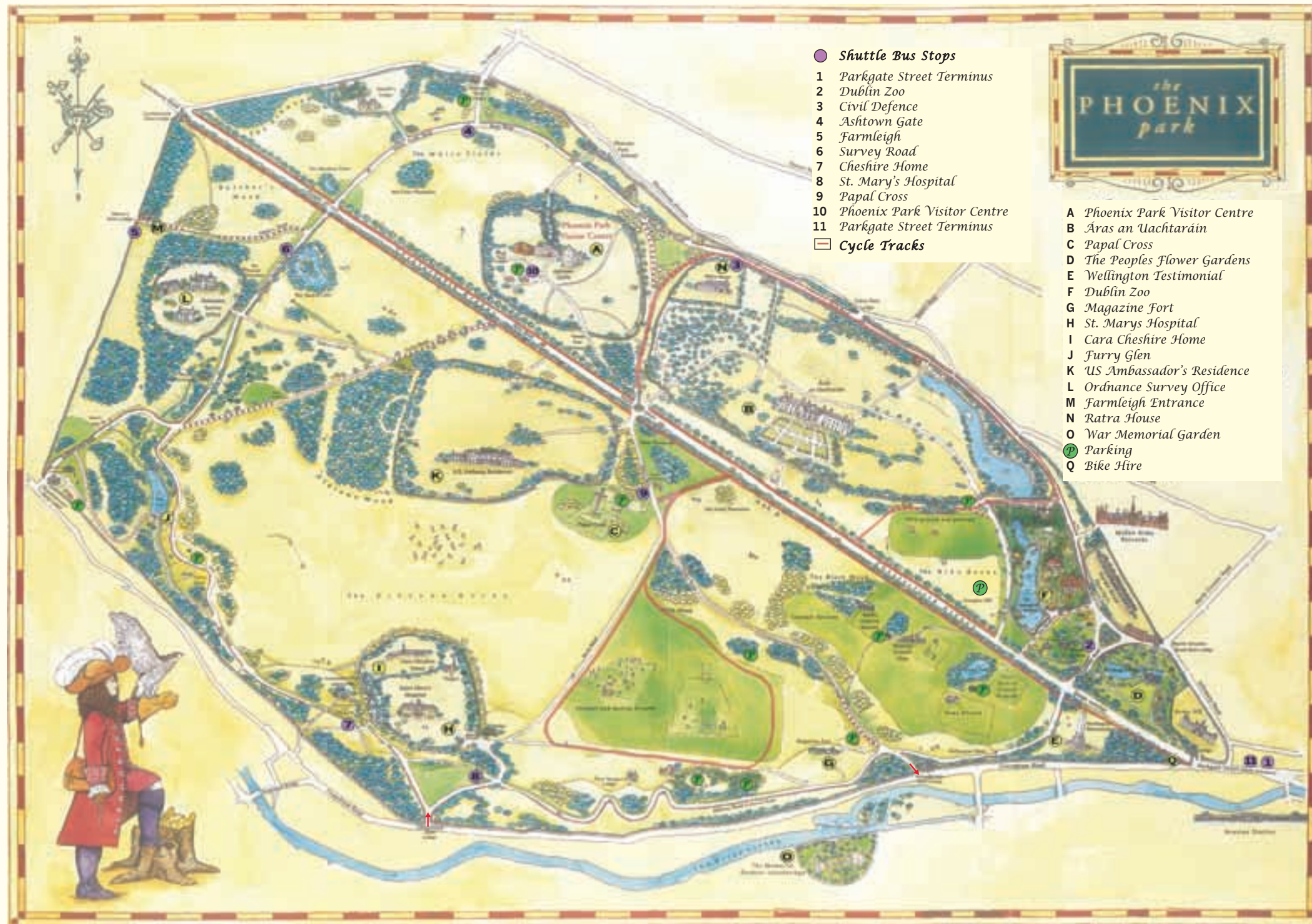
The **Papal Cross** is a simple large cross that was erected near the edge of the Fifteen acres for the Papal visit of Pope John Paul II in 1979.

The **Magazine Fort** in the south east of the park marks the location where Phoenix Lodge was built by Sir Edward Fisher in 1611. In 1734 the house was knocked when the Duke of Dorset directed that a powder magazine be provided for Dublin. An additional wing was added to the fort in 1801 for troops.

The **Phoenix Monument** was erected by the fourth Earl of Chesterfield in 1747. The column was carved in Portland stone. It is in the shape of a Corinthian column with a Phoenix bird rising from the ashes at its pinnacle. It is located in the centre of the Park and forms a focal point of a large roundabout on the beautiful tree lined Chesterfield Avenue.

The **Victorian People's Flower Gardens** comprise of an area of 9 hectares (22 acres), which were laid out circa 1840 and opened in 1864. They provide an opportunity to display Victorian horticulture at its best. Ornamental lakes, children's playground, picnic area and Victorian bedding schemes are some of the attractions.

**Ashtown Demesne** accessed off the Phoenix roundabout on Chesterfield Avenue, has numerous attractions for young and old alike. Those include Ashtown Castle, a two and a half acre Victorian Kitchen Walled Garden (under restoration), Phoenix Park Visitor Centre, The Phoenix Café, toilets, car and coach parking, woodland walks, picnic area and new playground.



**Phoenix Park Visitor Centre** has a historical interpretation and an audio-visual presentation of the Phoenix Park through out the ages. For details or bookings the centre can be contacted on 01 6770095.

Also located in the Ashtown Demesne beside the Visitor Centre is **The Phoenix Café**, which serves a range of homemade mouth-watering meals using many organic ingredients. Toilets are located here.

The **Victorian Tea Kiosk** serves teas and lunches with an outdoor picnic area. Situated between the band hollow and Dublin Zoo. Toilets are located here.

The **Band Hollow** is host to summer musical performances. Check OPW office for schedule.

Situated close to Parkgate Street entrance is the **Dublin Zoo** which was founded in 1830. Telephone + 353 | 474 8900.

## Park Rangers Services

There are uniformed Park Rangers patrolling the park on foot, on bicycle and in jeeps from 6.30am till 11.30pm, 7 days a week. In case of emergency they can be contacted on 087 2289698 or 087 2289688

## Rail and Luas

From Heuston station it is a short walk to the Parkgate street entrance of the park.

- Rail - Regional and Commuter trains serve the station on a regular basis.
- Luas - Heuston Stop on the Red line (Connolly station to Tallaght)

## Phoenix Park Shuttle Bus

The Phoenix Park Shuttle Bus departs from Heuston Stn./Parkgate Street (at Hickey's) near LUAS stop, 7am-7pm Mon-Fri & 10am-7pm Sat/Sun & Bank Holidays, running every 20 mins approx

This hop-on, hop-off service provides a 40 minute tour of the park, with tickets being valid all day.

The Bus stops at key attractions such as the Zoo, Phoenix Park Visitor Centre and Farmleigh and is a lovely way to experience the Park. A full commentary on the history, features and interesting facts on the park is provided.

- Adults €2, Kids €1, OAPs Free with valid travel pass

## Buses

Stop on Navan Rd. near the Ashtown Gate

- 37 - From Hawkins St. to Damastown
- 38 - From Hawkins St. to Carpenterstown (Riverwood Rd.)
- 39 - From Hawkins St. to Ongar
- 70 - From Hawkins St. to Dunboyne

Stops near North Circular Road Gate

Stop Serving North Circular Road

- 10 - From Donnybrook (UCD) to Phoenix Park

Stops at - Parkgate street, Islandbridge turnstile and Chapelizod Gate

- 25 - From Pearse St. to Lucan (Dodsboro)
- 26 - From Pearse St. to Palmerstown (Cherry Orchard)

Other buses serving Parkgate street:

25A, 51, 66, 66A, 66B, 66D, 67, 67A, 68, 69.

Stop at Heuston Station:

90 & 92

For further information, summer programme, events and activities please contact the Superintendents Office at Whitefield's, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8. +353 | 821 3021