WALK, CORK, 6654. W.L.

Irish civic planting
c.1740-*c*.1890

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T HE EXPANSION OF URBAN AREAS IN IRELAND DURING THE EIGHTEENTH AND nineteenth centuries led to a need for the provision of open areas for the citizens' recreation. The people of many Irish towns had free access to the parks of adjoining demesnes. For example, the townspeople of Ballinasloe, county Galway, had free access to Lord Clancarty's adjoining Garbally Park; the people of Bryansford, county Down, were free to walk in the grounds of Tollymore Park, the seat of the Earl of Roden; the inhabitants of Tuam were afforded a 'pleasant promenade' in the gardens of the Archbishop's Palace.[1] On the other hand, the private bowling green of Kilkenny Castle was open only to those who could pay. William Chetwood wrote in 1748 that the castle was then uninhabited: 'but the Bowling Green is now common for any gentleman that pays for his pleasure. It is generally the rendezvous of both sexes for an evening's Walk ... I have seen the beaumonde here make a very handsome figure.'[2]

Notwithstanding these facilities, civic or public tree-planting was undertaken in Ireland with increasing seriousness from the middle of the eighteenth century. It became an integral part of the urban planning of Dublin and of other Irish cities. It was also a component of many smaller towns and villages. In many places, as in Dublin, the planting was initiated and maintained by the civic authorities. In others, as in the case of the Mall in Armagh, the tree-planting was paid for by voluntary subscription from the community. In yet others, as in the case of the Mardyke Walk in Cork, a single philanthropist was responsible for funding the planting.

The new tree-planting shaded not only streets, but also a variety of other urban areas, such as the malls, walks and greens where the citizens were accustomed to walking for recreation. In some cities and towns, rides and drives were available, since exercise and fresh air were also taken on horseback and by carriage.

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1 – The Mardyke Walk, Cork (courtesy National Library of Ireland)

These were also often planted with trees. Trees were also planted to give shade to urban bowling greens, around health spas and in 'pleasure gardens' – those gardens designed for public entertainment that were characteristic of urban social life during the eighteenth century. (The latter are included in this article because though they were fashionable, they were not exclusive in the way that the later Dublin squares such as Merrion Square and Fitzwilliam Square were exclusive to the residents of the respective squares.)[3] Pleasure gardens were public in the sense they were open to all who could pay the relatively small charge, and so were used by a socially mixed company. For example, Thomas Campbell wrote of the crowds in the pleasure gardens of the Rotunda in Dublin in 1778:

> On these nights the rotunda and gardens are prodigiously crowded and the price of admission being only sixpence, everybody goes. It would perhaps benefit the charity if the price were doubled, for though it might exclude many, it would, I think, bring more money. On the other hand, it must be confessed that the motley appearance gives an air of freedom, for the best company attends as well as those to whom another sixpence might be an object.[4]

The tree of choice for the planting of public urban spaces was the lime or linden tree. It was known to be tolerant of the smoke of large cities and towns. For example, Thomas Fairchild, author of a book called *The City Gardener* (1722), wrote of the planting of the lime tree in the London squares of his time: '...all the squares in London which are already made, are proof the Lime-tree will bear the London Smoke'.[5] The elm tree was also commonly used for urban planting. Its relatively narrow, upright form, like that of the lime, was especially adaptable to confined urban areas. The use of ash, sycamore and chestnut is only occasionally recorded. As regards the layout of tree-planting, trees in confined urban areas were usually planted in orderly rows and spaced along the rows at regular intervals.

Some planted areas were laid out with gravelled walks for exercise. The gravel or sand used in Ireland had a variety of origins. Particularly prized was that from Rathfriland, county Down. Walter Harris described it in 1744: 'the sand dug out of the quarries is of singular use in garden-walks, being of binding quality always dry and clean and of a fine bright colour.'[6] However, the dark colour of the gravel used in many Irish walks was the subject of visitor comment. An English visitor, Anne Plumptre, wrote in 1817: 'The gravel of the country is ... of a dark hue unpleasant to the eye, and at the first glance scarcely better than cinder ashes; yet it is fine, besides it binds well, is firm and pleasant to the foot.'[7]

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THE MALL

MALLS WERE PROMENADES, USUALLY TREE-LINED, THAT WERE LAID OUT IN urban areas to encourage citizens to take exercise by walking. They were also prominent places of social intercourse and display. In the eighteenth century, malls featured in Dublin, Cork and Waterford, as well as other smaller cities and towns. The layout and planting varied. In Cork, for example, trees were planted on one side of the mall only. In Dublin, they were planted on both sides. In Waterford, the mall featured a double row of elm trees on both sides.[8]

Dublin's mall was short-lived. It was laid out on Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street) in the 1740s by Luke Gardiner. Having obtained ownership of one side of the street, Gardiner demolished the houses and widened the street to approximately 150 feet. He then rebuilt, laying out a mall, forty-eight feet wide, down the centre of the newly widened street. First known as Gardiner's Mall, it was enclosed within a low wall and was ornamented with a statue of General Blakeney by the sculptor Van Nost.[9] At the north end was a fountain.[10] However, in 1786, William Wilson reported with approval the mall's subsequent removal: 'Within these few years past, Sackville Street has received very considerable improvements particularly by removing the Mall at its centre, and by opening the entire into one noble street of one hundred and twenty feet wide.' [11]

Cork's mall was a place of fashionable resort in spite of its poor paving and the disagreeable smell emanating from the adjoining canal at low tide.[12] Charles Smith observed in 1750:

> The public walks of this city, in comparison of the number of inhabitants, are few and not very commodious: that most frequented is called the Mall which has little to recommend it except its being planted with trees ... this mall is ill paved yet on public days, it is well filled with the beau monde of the city and, during the assizes, with considerable numbers from the county.[13]

Thomas Campbell described the fashionable crowd in 1778, and remarked with approval on the filling up of the sometimes evil-smelling canal:

> After [Sunday] service, they generally betake themselves to a public walk called The Mall which is no more than a very ill-paved quay on one of their canals, with a row of trees on one side and houses on the other. It is a plea-sure to see, however, how they are filling up this canal.[14]

In spite of its shortcomings, Samuel Derrick, writing in 1786, extolled the virtues of the company, especially the ladies, frequenting the place: 'it is paved worse than the streets of London, yet I have seen it filled with very genteel company, and a greater number of pretty women than I have ever seen together in any other town.' [15]

2 – The Mall, Castlebar, county Mayo, in the 1890s
The age of the trees suggest the mall was planted in the eighteenth century. Note the trees on the right,
recently planted to eventually replace the ancient trees. (courtesy National Library of Ireland)

Waterford's mall, on the other hand, earned the unreserved approval of a visitor such as Charles Smith who wrote in 1746:

The Mall is a beautiful walk, about 200 hundred yards long and proportionately broad, situated on the East end of the city. The draining and levelling of the ground, which was formerly a marsh, was done at very considerable expense; it is planted with rows of Elms and the sides of the walk are fenced

with a stone wall. Near the centre facing this beautiful walk stands the Bishop's palace, which not only adds a considerable beauty to the Mall, but also reciprocally receives the same from it. Here the ladies and gentlemen assemble on fine evenings where they have the opportunity of each other's conversation. Nothing can be more agreeable than to see this shady walk crowded with the fair sex of the city, taking the air, enjoying the charms of a pleasant evening, and improving their health; nor need I inform the reader that this city has been long since peculiarly celebrated for the beauties of its female inhabitants.[16]

3 – The Mall, Birr, county Offaly,
in the 1890s
Trees, probably planted in the early nineteenth century,
flank one side of the mall only,
as they did in other malls such as that in Cork city.
(courtesy National Library of Ireland)

4 – The Mall, Bunclody, county Wexford,
in the 1890s
Lime trees flank the narrow, stepped canal constructed
in the mid-nineteenth century.
(courtesy Irish Architectural Archive)

The smaller city of Armagh did not obtain its mall until 1797. Then, a group of local subscribers funded the development of an eight-acre common in the middle of the city:

> A very fine mall or terrace has been lately enclosed with a dwarf wall, dyke and iron gates within which is a neat gravel walk, encompassing a lawn ... This work was completed by subscription which will be returned, as the rent produced from the lawn in some years will repay both principal and interest...[17]

Towns, like Loughrea, county Galway,[18] Castlebar, county Mayo,[19] and Kinsale, county Cork,[20] enjoyed malls on a smaller scale (Plate 2). The mall in Birr, county Offaly, was the scene of musical entertainment:[21] 'The principal public walk is the shaded terrace on Oxmantown Mall. In this place, which is occasionally enlivened on Sunday evenings by the attendance of a military band, the gentry of the town usually seek their afternoon recreation' (Plate 3).[22] The malls of two smaller towns, Westport, county Mayo, and Bunclody (formerly Newtownbarry), county Wexford, boasted formal canals running down the centre (Plate 4). James Fraser reported of the mall at Westport in 1844: '...through the middle of this street [Main Street] flows a clear transparent stream of water banked in on both sides by quays on which are planted rows of trees,

5 – The Mall, Westport, county Mayo, in the 1890s
The river, canalised in the late eighteenth century, was flanked on both sides by trees.
(courtesy National Library of Ireland)

bearing a close resemblance to a street in a Dutch town...'[23] (Plate 5).

The malls in some towns were associated with the town's assembly rooms, so they became the location of the town's indoor as well as outdoor entertainments. Such was the case in Waterford city and in Youghal [24] and Cobh (Cove), both in county Cork. John Barrow reported in 1836: 'At Cove, they have a small parade which overlooks the harbour, and appears well adapted as a lounging place, at one

end of which is an assembly-room, where the club [yacht club] hold their meetings, their dinners and balls.' [25] A small village like Summerhill in county Meath also boasted a mall:

> The village of Summerhill is composed of one street, about 900 feet long, and 200 feet wide, and in this area, a green mall in the form of a parallelogram has been formed, enclosed on each side by a row of full grown lime trees. It is highly ornamental and exceedingly healthful for the inhabitants and their children.[26]

THE STREET

SOME CITY STREETS THAT WERE NOT formally designated as malls or walks were also planted with rows of trees. The most common street tree in Dublin was the London plane, the hardy hybrid between the Oriental plane and the Occidental plane. Lime and elm trees, with their vertical proportions, were also favoured for civic planting. For example, lime trees were chosen to ornament the streets of Castlecomer [27] and Inistioge,[28] county Kilkenny, and Maynooth, county Kildare (Plate 6). Elms were planted along the wide principal streets of Stradbally, county Laois.[29] Other trees were used less frequently. Sycamore was used at Headfort Place in Kells, county Meath,[30] and rows of ash lined a cross street at Castlemartyr, county Cork.[31]

Avenues of trees were also used to mark the approach to some towns. An avenue of lime trees was planted along the Kenmare Road as it approached Killarney, county Kerry.[32] An avenue of elms marked approaches to towns such as Maynooth, county

6 – Main Street, Maynooth, county Kildare, in the 1890s
Young trees on clear trunks planted along the edge of the wide, flanking pavements.

7 – Castleblayney, county Monaghan, in the 1890s
The main street 'borrows' the view of the trees in the avenue leading to Blayney Castle. Note the clipped street trees on the left.

(photos courtesy National Library of Ireland)

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Kildare,[33] and Castlemartyr[34] and Doneraile,[35] county Cork, and the ash was selected for avenues approaching the town of Templemore, county Tipperary,[36] and the village of Gracehill, county Antrim.[37] The latter avenue of ash trees met to form a graceful archway over the road. In a town like Castleblayney, county Monaghan, the main street 'borrowed' the view of the avenue of trees leading to Blayney Castle (Plate 7).

Some towns were ornamented with more informal planting schemes. For example, walnuts that had been planted in and around Lambeg, county Down, gave the village a distinctive arboreal character.[38] Of the town of Hillsborough, county Down, Arthur Young observed in 1775: 'Lord Hillsborough has marked the approach to his town by many small plantations on the tops of the hills through which the road leads.'[39] Of Doneraile, county Cork, William Wilson reported in 1786: 'It is a very agreeable place being surrounded by fine, stately groves of fir which, flourishing at all seasons of the year, render the town extremely pleasant.'[40]

8 – The Mardyke Walk, Cork
A view by Sir John Carr published in 1806, when the elm trees were about eighty years old.
Note the walk raised over the surrounding meadows and the views back towards the city.

THE WALK

WHEREAS A MALL AND A STREET WERE SPACES THAT WERE DISTINCTLY URBAN in character, a 'walk', on the other hand, was usually on the edge of or outside a town. Typically, they stretched along the banks of a river or a canal, and were usually drained, levelled, gravelled and planted with trees. Cork city boasted two public walks known respectively as Friars Walk and the Mardyke. Friars Walk was a little out of the city, and though shaded by trees and enjoying a good view, it was relatively little used. The Mardyke was the more important of the two (Plates 1, 8, 9).[41] Charles Smith wrote:

> [The] Mardyke is a pleasant walk, being a bank walled on both sides and filled up, extending westwards from the city near an English mile and washed, on either hand, by a channel of the river. This bank is carried through a marshy island and was done at the private expense of Mr Edward Webber

9 – The Mardyke Walk, Cork
The trees in the 1890s were approximately 170 years old.
(courtesy National Library of Ireland)

anno 1719 who also built a house at the West end where are good gardens planted with fruit for the accommodation and entertainment of those who frequent the walk.[42]

From the shade of the Mardyke's tall elms, it was possible to enjoy extensive and varied views of the city and countryside. However, by the time John Barrow reported in 1836, the Mardyke, like many walks in other cities, had fallen into disuse as the fashionable promenade of the notables of the city.[43]

Dubliners enjoyed two waterside walks. One was around the City Bason (*sic*) and the other was along the banks of the Grand Canal. The City Bason – the reservoir of the city's water supply – was located in a walled enclosure on the western edge of the city. It was about a half-a-mile in circumference. Of its recreational use, Walter Harris observed in 1766:

> This is the pleasantest, most elegant and sequestered place of relaxation the citizens can boast of; the reservoir being mounded and terraced all round and planted with quickset hedges, limes and elms having beautiful walks between; in a situation that commands a most satisfactory prospect of fine country to the south, bounded by a view of that enchanting chain of hills, called the Dublin mountains ... The entrance is elegant by a lofty iron gate.[44]

10 – The Harcourt Lock, Grand Canal, Dublin.
This early nineteenth-century print shows the elm trees that were planted for some miles on both sides of the canal.
(courtesy Irish Architectural Archive)

opposite – 12 – The Grand Canal, Dublin, in the 1950s
The elm trees on the canal banks were then almost 150 years old. (courtesy National Library of Ireland)

11 – Lithograph by John Irwine Whitty of Baggot Street Bridge, Grand Canal, Dublin (1851)
'A delightful place of exercise for the citizens'. The elm trees were then about fifty years old.

The trees were formally planted in rows. The walks between the rows were of grass, not of gravel, as was more usual in public walks.[45] At one end of the basin was a Chinese-style bridge and palisades, over which there was a fine view of the Grand Canal.[46] However, in 1837, Samuel Lewis noted it as a place of declining fashion. He described it as 'formerly a favourite promenade'.[47]

The Dublin reach of the Grand Canal – the canal that traversed the south side of the city – was completed in 1796 (Plate 10). Its banks were planted with elm trees, and a gravel walk was laid out between the trees and the water. William Wilson reported their recreational use: '...the sides of the canal for some miles into the country are planted with elm-trees which render its banks in fair weather a delightful place of exercise for the citizens.'[48] The canal banks continued to be a much-used place of recreation throughout the nineteenth century (Plate 11). The trees reached splendid maturity during the last century (Plate 12).

Kilkenny city enjoyed two walks, one along a canalised section of the river

and another by the castle walls. The latter extended for about a mile (Plate 13).[49] A. Atkinson, reporting in 1815, admired the shimmering dresses of the promenading Kilkenny ladies:

> ...the banks of the river are richly planted with lime trees, which gives the approach to the latter [Kilkenny] a rich and picturesque appearance, and in the summer season, constitutes this walk, to the citizens and their families, a cool retreat from the noise and bustle of the town, and an elegant promenade in the hours of relaxation from business. The reflection of so many light dresses, together with the crystal waters of the Nore, through the foliage on the banks of the river, was rather an entertaining prospect to the traveller in his progress.[50]

The town of Cavan also enjoyed a promenade. Samuel Lewis reported in 1837: 'A large garden handsomely laid out in walks and planted was left by the will of the late Lady Farnham ... as a promenade for the inhabitants.'[51] By contrast, the promenade of the city of Londonderry was along the city's walls. Samuel Lewis noted: 'the walls were eighteen hundred yards in circuit, twenty four feet high, and of sufficient thickness to form an agreeable promenade on top.'[52] The walls of the town of Clonmel, county Tipperary, likewise, served as a walk for the townspeople until they were taken down in the early nineteenth century.[53]
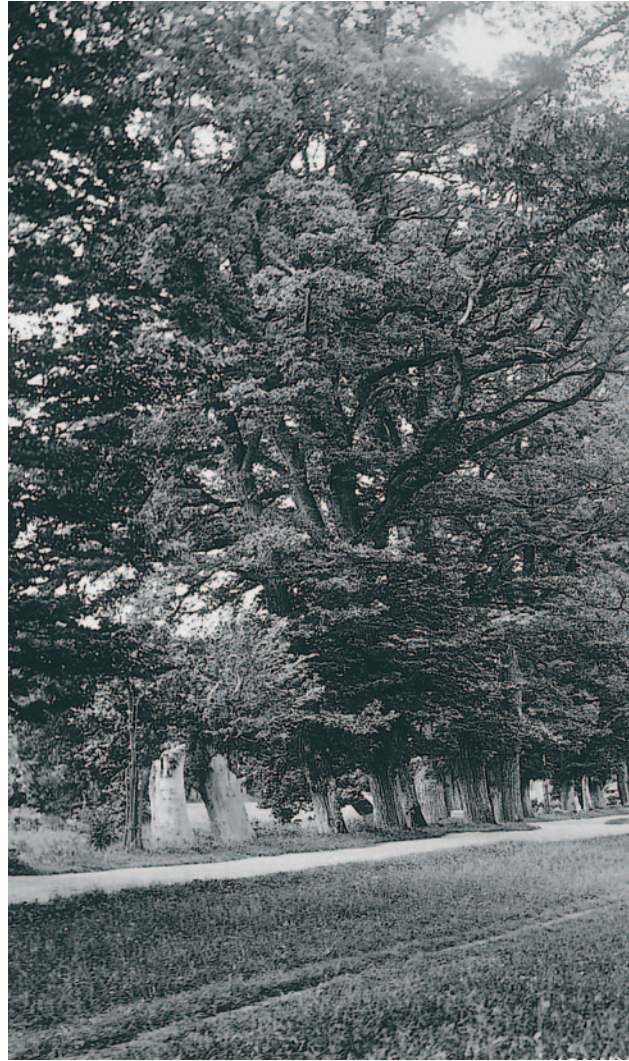
13 – The Avenue, Kilkenny, in the 1890s
Kilkenny boasted two walks shaded with lime trees, one along the riverbank and the other, shown in this illustration, by the castle walls. (courtesy National Library of Ireland)

THE RIDE

RIDING WAS REGARDED AS AN EXERCISE AS BENEFICIAL AS WALKING. RICHARD Lewis wrote of the banks of the Grand Canal in 1786: 'It is adorned with trees on either side for several miles, and having fine gravel walks, is a most agreeable place either for riding or walking.' [54] A prime location for recreational riding and carriage driving was the Circular Road around Dublin. It formed a circuit of nine miles, and was greatly enjoyed by visitors to the city as well as the residents. Richard Lewis wrote in 1786:

> This road nearly surrounds the city and is carried on in as circular form as the situations would admit. It begins on one side of the river and terminates on the opposite shore. It forms a very pleasant and agreeable ride, and adds much to the entertainment and recreation of the citizens of Dublin.[55]

Carr added his praises in 1806:

> I rented a jingle, and took an airing on the circular road which surrounds the city, and has been made on the site of an old Danish wall, formerly erected for the protection of the capital. The view almost everywhere on this superb road is delightful.[56]

Anne Plumptre remembered 'evenings spent pleasantly in drives ... around the Circular Road'.[57] Its shortcoming, according to Bowden in 1790, was the lack of trees. He observed: 'if both sides of the road were planted with trees at equal distances, as I observed on the Grand Canal, I do not believe there would be so fine an

environ in Europe.' [58] By 1837, parts of the road were already flanked by new buildings associated with the expanding city.[59] Less rural in atmosphere, it ceased to be attractive as a ride or drive for visitors and citizens alike.

THE GREEN

MANY TOWNS AND VILLAGES had what were known as greens. Richard Pococke noted in 1752 that the town of Donegal was 'built almost all around a sort of triangular Green'.[60] The greens were usually derived from ancient 'commons'. These had been areas of rough, unimproved open space, or green, to which there was common access. On an everyday basis, a commons was used for a variety of activities such as the pasturing of sheep or cattle or the drying of clothes. Some commons were level and were suitable for use for large gatherings, like that situated in the village of Brideswell, county Roscommon, where a huge annual patronal festival was held.[61] Some towns, like Carrick-on-Suir, county Tipperary, had a commons that was called a fair green, on which horses, cattle, sheep and pig fairs were held at regular intervals.

A civic authority or a local community sometimes adopted a commons legally for the purpose of improving it and laying it out for more formal recreation. This was the case in Dublin where the marshy and insalubrious

14 – Engraving by James Malton of St Stephen's Green, Dublin (1796)

The walk on the near side, known as Beaux Walk, was the most fashionable in Dublin. The trees were lime trees.

common that was known as St Stephen's Green was first enclosed in 1664. It was subsequently drained, levelled and surrounded with formal public walks. It was, in its day, the most substantial green in Ireland and among the largest in Europe (Plate 14).[62] Each side measured nearly a quarter-of-a-mile in length. Walter Harris wrote of its subsequent development in 1766: 'This spring the lime trees were planted on each side of the walks around St Stephen's Green.'[63] In another part of his book, he described the layout of the green at that time:

> It is enclosed by a low wall, with entrances from every side by gates and turnstiles at proper distances. The outer walks are gravelled and planted with trees on each side; the interior walks (seldom used) are enclosed by thorn hedges on each side and divided from the others by a fosse, which serves for a drain to carry off the water from the walks and the green. The inside is a spacious lawn at the centre of which is a curious equestrian brass statue of his late Majesty George II by Van Nost. In the walks may be seen, in fine weather, a resort of as much beauty and gaiety as the Ranelagh Gardens [London], St. James' Park etc.[64]

The walks on each side of St Stephen's Green came to have their own names. The north side (the most fashionable side) was called Beaux Walk; the east side, Monks Walk; the west side, French Walk; and the south side, Leeson Walk.[65] Thomas Campbell wrote in 1778 that the most popular times for ' genteel company' to walk in the green was during the evenings and 'on Sundays after two o'clock'.[66] However, within a short span of thirty years, the green was no longer fashionable as a place to walk. Charles T. Bowden reported in 1790: 'Stephen's Green is a fine extensive square, once the most fashionable place of resort but now I understand much in decline.'[67] In 1806 Sir John Carr wrote of a decline in the green's mainte-nance: '...it is a fine meadow, walled and planted with a double row of trees but is disfigured by a dirty ditch on every side, the receptacle of dead cats and dogs.'[68]

In 1817 Anne Plumptre reported that the neglected green was being taken in hand again and that it was in the process of being transformed into a more conven-tional public park. The low wall with which it had been previously surrounded was being replaced by an iron railing. The interior, which had previously been in the form of a meadow as the walks had been confined to the green's perimeter, was being laid out in walks and shrubberies. Although the old thorn hedges had been removed and the unpleasant ditch filled in, she saw, to her regret, that not one of the old trees had been left standing in the process of these improvements. (This new layout was to be itself transformed in 1880.).[69]

Formally laid-out greens featured also in smaller cities and towns. Samuel Lewis described the green (better known as Eyre Square) of Galway city in 1837 as 'protected by a handsome iron railing, and ... tastefully laid out in walks, and deco-

rated with planting'.[70] He also noted the green at Castlebar, county Mayo, as 'a pleasant promenade'.[71] Clonakilty, county Cork, had also been improved by the formation of a spacious green, 'the centre of which was planted and laid out in walks so as to form an agreeable promenade'.[72] On a smaller scale, villages with greens included Harold's Cross and Sandymount, now absorbed into the city of Dublin.[73] At Gracehill, county Armagh, the Moravian village was laid out in 1758 around three sides of a green, 'the interior of which was surrounded by a paling and a double row of trees, and which contained a gravel walk, a fishpond and a shrubbery in the centre'.[74]

THE BOWLING GREEN

BOWLING WAS A POPULAR SPORT DURING THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH centuries. It required the creation and maintenance of a level lawn of fine grass if the bowl or ball that was used in the game were to run true. Already in the seventeenth century there were private bowling greens in the gardens of great magnates, such as that previously referred to at Kilkenny Castle. Public bowling greens in cities such as Dublin, Cork and Waterford were recorded in the eighteenth century.

Rocque's 1760 map of Dublin locates three bowling greens in the city.[75] The grandest and most impressive of the three appears to have been the Marlborough Bowling Green. It was located on Marlborough Street, was surrounded by formal plantations of trees and adjoined the garden of the impressive Tyrone House. A second bowling green indicated on the map lay behind the Mayoralty House (now called the Mansion House) on Dawson Street, and a third – more informal in layout – is shown at Oxmantown Green adjoining a barracks (now called Collins Barracks). This green was also used as an archery green.[76]

Trees were also planted around Cork's bowling green. Charles Smith, noted in 1750 that they were regularly trimmed:

> On Hammonds marsh is a large pleasant bowling green, planted, on its margin, with trees kept regularly cut whose shade makes it an agreeable walk: it is also washed by a branch of the Lee; and, on it, a band of music has been supported by subscription for the entertainment of the ladies and gentlemen who frequent it. Adjacent to it is the assembly house...[77]

Chetwood had reported in 1748 that the shady walks around the bowling green were considered pleasant for walking in the mornings before the bowling enthusiasts came to play on the green in the afternoon.[78]

Trees were also planted around the bowling green in Waterford city. Charles

Smith reported in 1746:

> Near the Mall is a pleasant Bowling-green for the diversion of the citizens
> which is a most innocent and healthful exercise when, in summer time after
> the business of the day is ended, they sometimes recreate themselves. This
> Bowling-green is situated on the east end of the kay [*sic*], a little beyond the
> Ring-tower, from where to the Mall, trees are planted, as also on the sides of
> the Bowling-green, which makes this part of the town (affording the prospect
> of the river and shipping) very agreeable.[79]

Smaller towns like Kinsale, county Cork, also supported a bowling green.[80]

THE PLEASURE GARDEN

DUBLIN, LIKE LONDON, PARIS and other European cities in the eighteenth century, had its pleasure gardens. These were gardens laid out in the cities as places of outdoor entertainment during the summer season. Shady promenades, alcoves for taking tea, areas for dancing and for concerts, both vocal and instrumental, as well as special lighting effects in the evening, ensured that pleasure gardens were fashionable places of assembly. On occasion there were special events such as concerts by military bands, fireworks displays and acrobatic performances.[81] The Rotunda Gardens were Dublin's principal pleasure gardens (Plate 15). They were laid out in 1738 and continued to be fashionable a century later. The entrance charge in 1778 was sixpence. On certain evenings of the year, upwards of fifteen hundred people were recorded in attendance.[82]

The gardens were originally designed by a professional landscape gardener, Robert Stevenson, who 'was engaged for over two years to lay out the gardens at a fee of £10 a month. In the last three months of 1738, over 600 elms were planted and in the following year the gardens opened to the public.'[83] John Bushe described the gardens in 1764:

15 – Engraving by James Malton of the Rotunda Gardens, Dublin (1793)
On the left of the picture is one of the Doric pavilions and the new iron railing with lamps, erected c.1785.

a large square piece of ground enclosed, and three sides of the four prettily laid out in walks and plantations of groves, shrubs, trees etc., on the fourth stands the hospital. In the middle, nearly of this garden, is a spacious and beautiful bowling green. On the side of the green, opposite the hospital, the ground being much higher, is formed into a high hanging bank of nearly 30 feet slope, on the top of which is laid out a grand terrace walk, commanding a fine view of the hospital: on the upper side of this terrace, and nearly encompassed with groves and shrubberies, is built a very pretty orchestra.[84]

In 1786 elegant iron railings, set on a low stonewall, were erected around the garden to replace the original high wall. Lighting globes were erected along the railings to give a truly magnificent effect at night,[85] and pavilions, with columns in the Doric order, were erected in the north-east and north-west angles.[86] In the same year, Richard Lewis wrote:

The Rotunda and Gardens are open three evenings a week, during the summer season, when there are excellent concerts of vocal and instrumental music. At such times, and on Sunday evenings, when they are much resorted to, there is a numerous and brilliant assembly of the first people in Dublin.[87]

A second pleasure gardens for Dublin was opened in 1768. An entrepreneur purchased the house and grounds of Willbrook, Ranelagh, to create what became known as the Ranelagh Gardens. This was a commercial venture, unlike the Rotunda Gardens, the proceeds from which went to defray the expenses of the adjoining hospital. F. Elrington Ball described the Ranelagh Gardens as 'gardens of entertainment, with a theatre and gardens laid out with alcoves and bowers for tea drinkers. A fine band was constantly in attendance, the favourite vocalists of the day appeared in the theatre and some of the earliest astronauts made their ascents from the gardens.' [88] Ball is referring to the balloon ascents that took place from the gardens, the best known of which was that of Mr Crosbie in 1785. Unfortunately, the popularity of the Ranelagh Gardens, unlike that of the Rotunda Gardens, was short-lived.

THE SPA

'Taking the waters' was a common way of curing ailments during the eighteenth century. It consisted of bathing in or drinking medicinal spring waters once or twice a day, usually in the morning, and, then, in the evening during the summer months. A variety of entertainments were devised to keep the visitors occupied during the long hours that separated the twice-daily par-

taking. Tree-lined promenades, gardens and parterres were laid out. Assembly rooms, breakfast rooms, marble fountains and other ornamental structures were erected.

The most prominent spa in the south of Ireland was at Mallow, county Cork. Arthur Young observed in 1775 that the spring was in the shade of some noble poplars.[89] Richard Twiss wrote in the same year of the spring, and the setting that had been created for it: the 'waters, which burst out of the bottom of a great limestone rock, are at the end of a straight, well planted walk and canal of about a furlong and a half in length'.[90] Visitors were entertained by a walk in the meadows of the town. William Chetwood reported in 1748: 'The meadows where the company walk are very pleasant. Here is a very beautiful shell house and grotto built by subscription of which, they say, a worthy Doctor of Divinity was the contriver.' [91] Visitors to the Mallow spa also enjoyed riding or driving in a carriage along an informal circular drive around the town, which was shaded for the most part by lofty trees.[92]

The most prominent spa in the north of Ireland was at Ballynahinch, county Down. Samuel Lewis recorded the arrangements in 1837:

> In a picturesque and fertile valley south of the town is a powerful chalybeate spring; there are two wells, one for drinking, one for bathing. The grounds adjoining are tastefully laid out in walks, parterres etc. An assembly room and a newsroom have been erected.[93]

Sir Charles Coote described the arrangements made for visitors to the spa at Swanlinbar, county Cavan. It was set in an ornamental garden with neat plantations:

> The celebrated spa is in an ornamental enclosure, which is very handsomely improved with pleasant walks and neat plantations. The breakfast room is contiguous to the well, and here the company generally partake of this sociable meal, and ride or walk till dinner, when an excellent ordinary is provided.[94]

Pleasant walks for the entertainment of visitors were also laid out around the spa in the grounds of Lucan House, near Dublin. Richard Lewis described them in 1786: 'Lucan boasts a celebrated spa .. the well is sheltered in a deep niche neatly executed in hewn stone. There is a rural thatched seat for those who drink the waters, and space allowed for their walking about.' [95]

There was a multiplicity of smaller, lesser-known spas throughout the country. They were usually surrounded by planting. For example, birch trees shaded the mineral spring at Clonbella, near Birr, county Offaly.[96] A small resort with residential accommodation was developed in the grounds of Tollymore Park, county Down. It was unusual in that it was not developed for drinking mineral water but for drink-

ing medicinal goats' whey 'in May and June, when the milk on account of the flow-
ers on which the goats feed is in greatest perfection'.[97]

CHURCHYARDS, CEMETERIES AND SHRINES

THE TREE-PLANTING OF RELIGIOUS SITES CONTRIBUTED DECISIVELY TO MANY
urban environments. The tree-lined approach to the church in Virginia, coun-
ty Cavan, made a major impact on the aspect of the town. The central
avenue to the church and the adjoining avenues were in the form of a crow's foot or
patte d'oie design, the three avenues radiating from a central point (Plate 16).
Charles Smith wrote in 1746 of an area by the church in the town of Dungarvan,
county Waterford, that was 'handsomely laid out into gravel walks and planted with
trees, from whence may be seen a prospect of the harbour and the ruins of an oppo-
site abbey and church which makes the place a pleasant walk'.[98] Richard Lewis
wrote 1786: 'Near Howth-house stands the family chapel, a small but neat modern

16 – The Square, Virginia, county Cavan, in the 1890s
The avenue to the church in the centre and the flanking avenues form a crow's-foot or patte d'oie
radiating from a central point. (courtesy National Library of Ireland)

structure encompassed with a grove of ash trees.' [99] The church at Castlemartyr, county Cork, dating from the eighteenth century, was located in a spacious plot of ground surrounded by lofty elms.

Trees were also planted to augment the picturesque quality of ancient abbeys and churches. For example, St Mary's Church in Callan, county Kilkenny, was set in 'a small lawn environed by gravel walks and bounded by the King's river. This stream is crossed by a neat wooden bridge leading onto the abbey field in which are situated the venerable ruins of an ancient friary.' [100] An avenue of ash and sycamore formed the approach to the ruins of the Franciscan abbey at Desertmore, county Cork.[101] Horse chestnut, lime and sycamore trees surrounded the ruins of an old church at the Grange, Baldoyle, county Dublin.[102]

The tradition of planting trees around holy wells, the waters of which were believed to affect cures, is also well attested. For example, William Chetwood noted of St Bartholomew's Well, Cork, in 1746: 'The Well is enclosed with green trees, close to the side of the road and even the sight of it looks refreshing.' [103] William Wilson in 1786 noted that the holy well in St Lazerian, Old Leighlin, county Carlow, was 'shaded by many great ash trees'.[104] The grounds around Mullins Wells near Ballinahinch, county Galway, were tastefully laid out, according to Samuel Lewis.(105)

CONCLUSION

T HE IRISH TRADITION OF CIVIC PLANTING PRODUCED SOME REMARKABLE URBAN landscapes. The waterside landscapes of the Grand Canal, Dublin, and the malls in Westport, county Mayo, and Bunclody, county Wexford, are just some that survive to enhance their urban environments today. However, many civic planting schemes, such as those at the Rotunda Gardens and the City Bason (*sic)* in Dublin, which were notable in the, have been swept away. Some civic planting schemes such as that in Eyre Square, Galway, have been modernised to such an extent that their traditional virtues are no longer evident. In other instances, such as in Merrion Square, Dublin, and The Square in Clonakilty, county Cork, the traditional planting has been abandoned. This is a situation that contrasts with the strict conservation of the buildings around them, yet such squares were conceived as an aesthetic unity of buildings and planting. The fact that traditional civic-planting schemes are as important a part of our physical heritage as the buildings that surround them needs affirmation.

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ENDNOTES

The following abbreviations are used:

Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*   Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*,
                                                              2 vols (London, 1837)
Lewis, *Dublin Guide*   Richard Lewis, *The Dublin Guide* (Dublin 1786)

[1]   Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary,* II, 600.
[2]   William R. Chetwood, *A Tour through Ireland* (1748) 85.
[3]   Dublin City Council, *The Georgian Squares of Dublin* (Dublin, 2006)
[4]   Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland* (London, 1778) 27.
[5]   Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, *The London Town Garden* (New Haven and London, 2001) 189.
[6]   Walter Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (Dublin, 1744) 12.
[7]   Anne Plumptre, *Narrative of a Residence in Ireland* (London, 1817) 22.
[8]   Richard Pococke, *Pococke's Tour in Ireland in 1752*, edited by G.T. Stokes (Dublin and London, 1891) 133.
[9]   Richard Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1775* (London, 1776) 30.
[10] Lewis, *Dublin Guide*, 45. General Blakeney was a hero of the Seven Years War with France. The fountain, one of a number erected in Dublin's streets at the time, remained in position until 1807 when it was removed because the wind blew its water onto the road. The water froze in bad weather making the road around the fountain hazardous.
[11] William Wilson, *The Post Chaise Companion ... through Ireland* (Dublin, 1786) xii.
[12] Chetwood, *A Tour through Ireland*, 56.
[13] Charles Smith, *The ancient and present State of the City and County of Cork* (Dublin, 1750) 349.
[14] Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey*, 182.
[15] Samuel Derrick, *Letters from Leverpole, Chester, Corke etc*. (London, 1767) 44.
[16] Charles Smith, *The antient and present State of the County of Waterford* (Dublin, 1746) 193.
[17] Sir Charles Coote, *Statistical Survey of the Co. of Armagh* (Dublin, 1804) 322. The rent derived from the mall presumably was the financial return from selling the hay from the lawn. The common was used as a horse racecourse from 1731 to 1773.
[18] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, II, 279.
[19] *ibid*., I, 178.
[20] Smith, *City and County of Cork*, 226.
[21] Thomas Cook, *Pictures of Parsonstown* (Dublin, 1826) 244.
[22] *ibid*., 230.
[23] James Fraser, *A Handbook for Travellers in Ireland* (London, 1844), 473.
[24] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, II, 679.
[25] John Barrow, *Tour round Ireland* (London, 1836) 332.
[26] A. Atkinson, *The Irish Tourist* (Dublin, 1815) 358. James Fraser, in *A Handbook for Travellers in Ireland* (1859) 558, notes that the village of Summerhill (and presumably the mall) had already fallen into decay.
[27] Atkinson, *The Irish Tourist*, 460.
[28] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, I, 680.
[29] Sir Charles Coote, *General View of the Queen's County* (Dublin, 1801) 169.

[30] Atkinson, *The Irish Tourist*, 275.

[31] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, I, 293.

[32] *ibid*., II, 93.

[33] *ibid*., II, 187.

[34] *ibid*., I, 293.

[35] *ibid*., I, 462.

[36] *ibid*., II, 564.

[37] Plumptre, *Narrative of a Residence in Ireland*, 160.

[38] John Dubourdieu, *Statistical Survey of the county of Down* (Dublin, 1802) 161.

[39] Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland...* (London, 1775) 133.

[40] Wilson, *The Post Chaise Companion*, 341.

[41] Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey*, 103. He refers to 'another public walk, west of the city, called the Redhouse Walk, cut through very low grounds, for a mile in length, planted on each side, where the lower sort walk'.

[42] Smith, *City and County of Cork*, 349.

[43] Barrow, *Tour round Ireland*, 323. Although the Mardyke had by then fallen into disuse as a fashionable promenade, it remains to this day an important recreational facility for the city.

[44] Walter Harris, *The History and Antiquities of the City of Dublin* (Dublin, 1776), 482.

[45] Wilson, *The Post Chaise Companion*, xxvii.

[46] Lewis, *Dublin Guide*, 33.

[47] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, I, 515.

[48] Wilson, *The Post Chaise Companion*, xxvii.

[49] Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1775*, 159.

[50] Atkinson, *The Irish Tourist*, 422.

[51] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, I, 307.

[52] *ibid*., II, 263.

[53] John Loveday, *Diary of a Tour through Ireland* (1790) 36.

[54] Lewis, *Dublin Guide*, 78. Of course, the extensive Phoenix Park was also used for riding. The staff of Dublin Castle used the garden of the castle occasionally for riding: 'There is a very large garden adjoining the lower castle yard, but which having neither beauty or elegance, is only occasionally made use of as a place for riding or walking by His Excellency and his servants.' See *Dublin Guide*, 86.

[55] *ibid*., 104.

[56] Sir John Carr, *The Stranger in Ireland* (London, 1806), 127.

[57] Plumptre, *Narrative of a Residence in Ireland*, 81.

[58] Charles T. Bowden, *A Tour through Ireland in 1790* (Dublin, 1791) 10.

[59] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, II, 515.

[60] Richard Pococke, *Pococke's Tour in Ireland in 1752*, edited by G.T. Stokes, 69. Some Irish towns are characterised by a central square or green that is triangular or diamond-shaped. Triangular squares occur, for example, in Donegal town, Castleblayney, county Monaghan, and Clones, county Cavan. Some town squares are called 'The Diamond', usually indicating a square of an irregular trapezoidal shape, as in Monaghan town, and Coleraine and Kilrea, both in county Derry.

[61] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, I, 215,

[62] Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1775*, 13.

63 Harris, *The History and Antiquities of the City of Dublin*, 343.

64 *ibid.*, 481. Harris also comments on the extraordinary number of snipe that wintered on the green, enjoying its marshy character.

65 John Bushe, *Hibernia Curiosa* (London, 1764) frontispiece: map of Dublin.

66 Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey*, 6.

67 Bowden, *A Tour through Ireland in 1790*.

68 Sir John Carr, *The Stranger in Ireland*, 130.

69 Plumptre, *Narrative of a Residence in Ireland*, 51. This layout can be examined in the engraved bird's-eye view of the city of Dublin presented as a supplement to the readers of the *Illustrated London News* in 1865. In 1880 Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness Bt. (later Lord Ardilaun) sponsored the redesign of the square by William Brodrick Thomas and William Sheppard. The redesign included artificial rockwork by Pulham & Sons, and buildings by James Franklin Fuller.

70 Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, I, 633.

71 *ibid.*, 335.

72 *ibid.*, 278.

73 *ibid.*, 664. Harold's Cross Green was laid out as a public park in 1898 to the design of William Sheppard.

74 *ibid.*, 134.

75 John Rocque, *Map of the City of Dublin, 1760*.

76 Cook, *Pictures of Parsonstown*, 241.

77 Smith, *City and County of Cork*, 349.

78 Chetwood, *A Tour through Ireland*, 89.

79 Smith, *County of Waterford*, 193.

80 Smith, *City and County of Cork*, 226.

81 Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, I, 526.

82 Samuel Carter Hall and Anna Maria Hall, *Ireland: its scenery, character, etc.* (London, 1841-43) 47.

83 Edward McParland, *Public Building in Ireland* (New Haven and London, 2001) 13 and 84. McParland also reported that Stevenson was gardener to the Earl of Meath in 1734. Stevenson may have been responsible for the extension of the formal garden of the Earl of Meath at Killruddery, county Wicklow, that took place in the early eighteenth century. A plan for a formal garden by Stevenson found at Headfort House, county Meath, survives. See Edward Malins and the Knight of Glin, *Lost Demesnes* (London, 1976) 92.

84 Bushe, *Hibernia Curiosa*, 13.

85 The lighting globes are shown on a drawing of Frederick Trench's *Proposed elevation to Cavendish Street, 1784, for the new rooms of entertainment* (Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, 1784).

86 See James Malton, *Perspective and Descriptive View of the City of Dublin, 'Charlemont House, Dublin', c.1793*.

87 Lewis, *Dublin Guide*, 176.

88 F. Elrington Ball, *A History of the County of Dublin*, 6 vols (Dublin, 1802-20) II,109.

89 Young, *A Tour in Ireland...*, 309.

90 Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1775*, 153

91 Chetwood, *A Tour through Ireland*, 122.

92 Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, II, 301. In 1828 a new Spa House in the Early English style

was built. It and the canal survive.

[93] *ibid*., I, 104.

[94] Sir Charles Coote, *Statistical Survey of the county of Cavan* (Dublin, 1801) 136.

[95] Lewis, *Dublin Guide*, 173.

[96] Cook, *Pictures of Parsonstown*, 232

[97] Pococke, *Pococke's Tour in Ireland in 1752*, 9.

[98] Smith, *County of Waterford*, 88.

[99] Lewis, *Dublin Guide*, 153.

[100] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, I, 236.

[101] *ibid*., 442.

[102] *ibid*., 97.

[103] Chetwood, *A Tour through Ireland*, 85.

[104] Wilson, *The Post Chaise Companion*, 319.

[105] Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*, I, 147.

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