

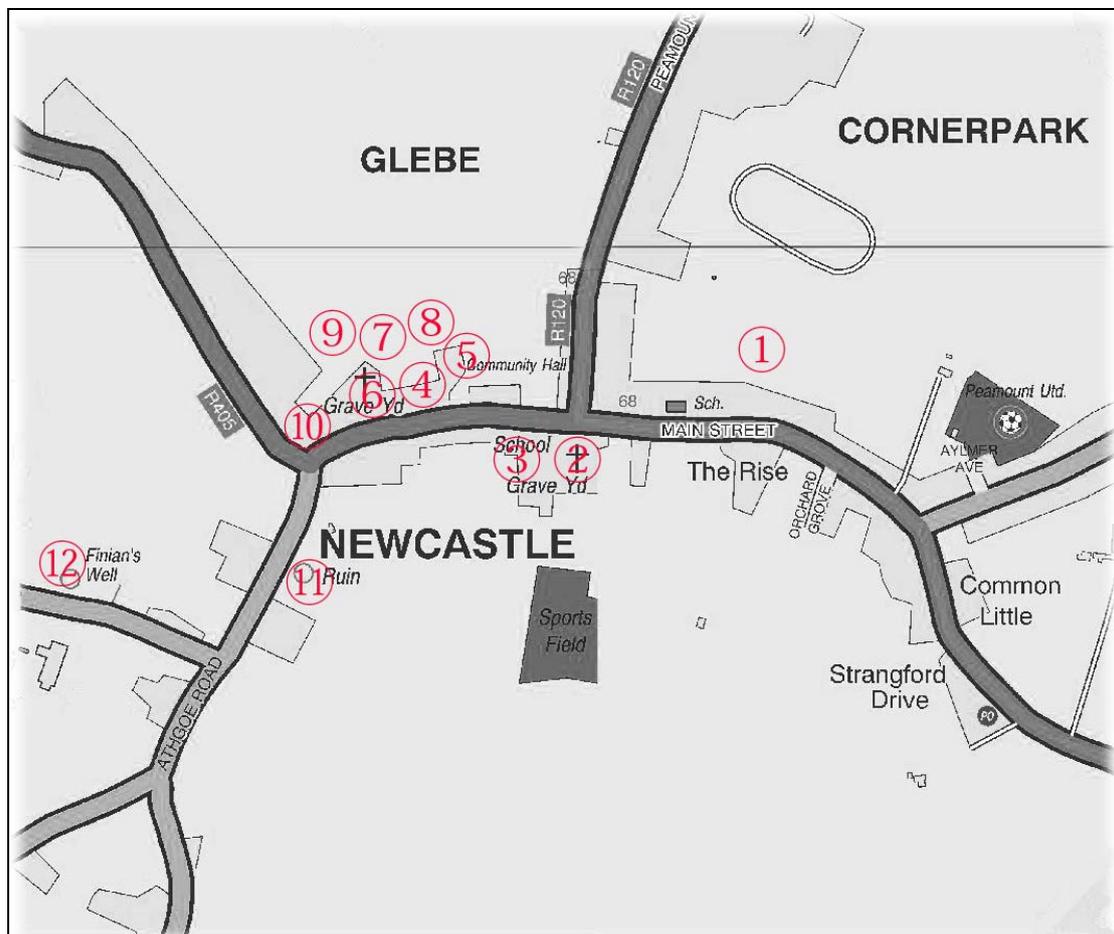
## Walking Tour:

Taking in the Norman, ecclesiastical and Medieval heritage of the village and its Neighbourhood.

As this is a walking tour, two of Newcastle's most famous places of note - Peamount Hospital (2 kilometres away) and Baldonnel Airbase (4 kilometres away), are absent due their distance from the village and their limited public access. Further information on both of these areas can be found on South Dublin Libraries' *Source* website:

<http://source.southdublinlibraries.ie/>

## Map:



## Getting There

### Dublin Bus:

- 68 from Hawkins Street (Dublin City-Centre) and the number 311 bus which links Newcastle to Tallaght and the Luas Red Line

By Car:

Newcastle Village is signposted from the N7 and N4. If heading west on the N7, take exit 4 for Saggart/Rathcoole. If heading east towards Dublin City, take exit 4 for Newcastle/Rathcoole and follow the signs for Newcastle.

If approaching from the N4, take exit 4 signposted as Lucan Village/Adamstown onto the Newcastle road.

Parking is available beside the Gondola Pub in Newcastle village. Please use pedestrian crossings and apply the Safe Cross Code when crossing roads. Note also that the road to St. Finian's Well has no footpath and should be walked with caution.

Distance: Approximately 2.5 km. The walk is not circular and will involve retracing the route back to the beginning. It will take 30 to 40 minutes at a leisurely pace.

If arriving by bus, on the approach route to the village, you will see on the left hand side a petrol station followed by a large wooden "Newcastle Lyons" sign announcing your arrival. Alight at the next bus stop after the sign. 150 Metres ahead you will see a small shopping centre. Carefully cross the road here. If you have come by car and parked in the Gondola car park, the shopping centre is across the road and to the right.

Towards the left hand side of the shopping centre is a narrow lane. Proceed down the lane and look at the fields behind the centre.

To the casual observer, these elongated fields ① would appear to be nothing special.



*Burgage Plots*

In fact they are the remains of Newcastle's Burgage plots. Burgage plots were a type of Medieval allotment; long and narrow plots of land were situated at the back of, and the same width as, street-facing properties and were used to grow foodstuffs. These are particularly well-preserved examples.

*Roman Catholic Church*



Cross the road again and head for 130m in the direction of the village. At Left is the Roman Catholic Church ② dedicated to St. Finian, whom we shall return to at the end of the walk. The building is one of the earliest examples of Catholic post-Emancipation architecture and dates back to 1813 just as the penal laws were in the process of being repealed.

To the right of the church is the old village school ③ which opened its doors on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1825. It's hard to believe now, but ten years after its opening, this building was catering for 200 pupils; boys were taught upstairs and girls downstairs. It still forms part of the current National School, which was established in 1950.



*Old School*



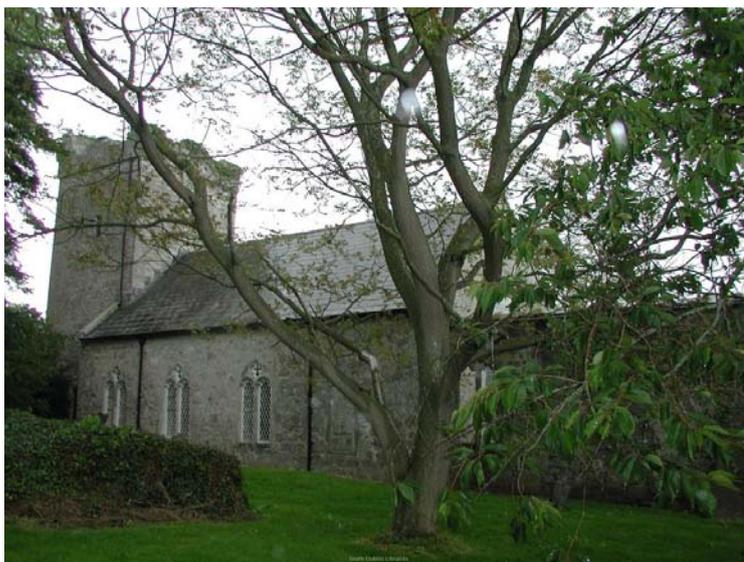
*Tower House*

Continue on for 200m and across the road you will see a square limestone construction ④ with a chimney and blocked up window facing the street. This is one of two surviving Tower Houses in the village dating back at least to the 1600s.

Behind the tower house stands the Glebe House ⑤. A "Glebe" is an area of land attached to a church, so this house would have originally served as living quarters for the clergy from the church next door which is our next stop. This house is open to the public in the summer months.



*Glebe House*



*Old Church*

Proceed now to the church ⑥ next to the Glebe House. This is Newcastle Church of Ireland "Old Church" - like its sister church up the road it is dedicated to St. Finian. This edifice dates back to 1400, although it is believed the site was used for worship in the very early days of Irish Christianity.

The west tower and chancel of this church are the 15<sup>th</sup> Century remnants of an earlier place of worship. In the 1600s the magnificent fifteenth century Gothic window in the Nave was moved from its original position in the Chancel as, owing to a remodelling of the church interior, it could no longer be seen in all its glory.

The outline of its original location can still be seen in the now-derelict chancel:



*Original and current location of Gothic window*

The church we see today owes its appearance to renovations carried out in 1775.



*Pillar Stone*



*Crucifix*

Within the grounds of the church is an interesting pair of ancient relics almost side by side, one a cross ⑦ and one a pre-Christian "Pillar Stone" ⑧

which stands at the end of a prominent but damaged early 19<sup>th</sup> century table tomb. Pillar stones' origins are unclear, but they may have been used as idol-stones, memorials or boundary markers. In any event the positioning of this monolith is as a result of human intervention and not natural geological activity. The other relic is a granite cross dating back to circa 500 A.D. which still shows evidence of the figure of Christ, despite the passage of one and a half millennia.

Another church, now ruinous, also dedicated to St. Finian exists in the neighbouring village of Esker in Lucan.



Exiting the church, a gate will be seen just at the corner of the church boundary. In the field beyond is a raised mound ☺. This is a Motte - a remnant of an ancient Norman defensive structure which would originally have had a wooden building or buildings on the top of the mound.

*Motte*

Surrounding the Motte would have been a Bailey - a type of courtyard, and around this would have been a protective ditch. This Norman structure is thought to be the castle after which Newcastle was named.

Continuing in the same direction is the ruin of what was once McEvoy's - a traditional thatched pub ☺. This protected structure was destroyed by fire in 2004.



*McEvoy's before its destruction*



Veering left and continuing for 170m, the second of Newcastle's remaining tower houses will appear. ⑪ This example is in a slightly more ruinous state than the one in the grounds of the Glebe.

*Tower House*

Behind the tower is a section of wall which is believed to be a remnant of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century medieval wall which originally surrounded the village [*Dublin and Beyond the Pale - Healy*].

160 m on from the tower house there is a right turn. At first glance this road has little of interest to offer, but take this turn and proceed for another 200 metres. *As this road has no pavement, please walk carefully facing oncoming traffic.*



*St. Finian's Well*

In the hedgerow to the right, signs of St. Finian's Well will gradually be revealed, sometimes with offerings placed there by visitors. St. Finian of Clonard was born around 520 AD in Myshall Co. Carlow, and has been described as the "Tutor of the Saints" due to his having taught Saints Colmcille of Iona and Ciarán of Clonmacnoise among many others. He established a monastery in Clonard Co. Meath and spent his life travelling widely and teaching scripture in Wales and France. He taught in St. Brigid's monastery, and she presented him with a ring on his departure.

St. Finian died in the great plague of 549-550

This is where our walk ends. Retrace your steps to where you started your walk.

We hope you have enjoyed this walk. Further information and other Walks around South County Dublin villages are available to view and download on our Digital Archive *Source*

<http://source.southdublinlibraries.ie/>