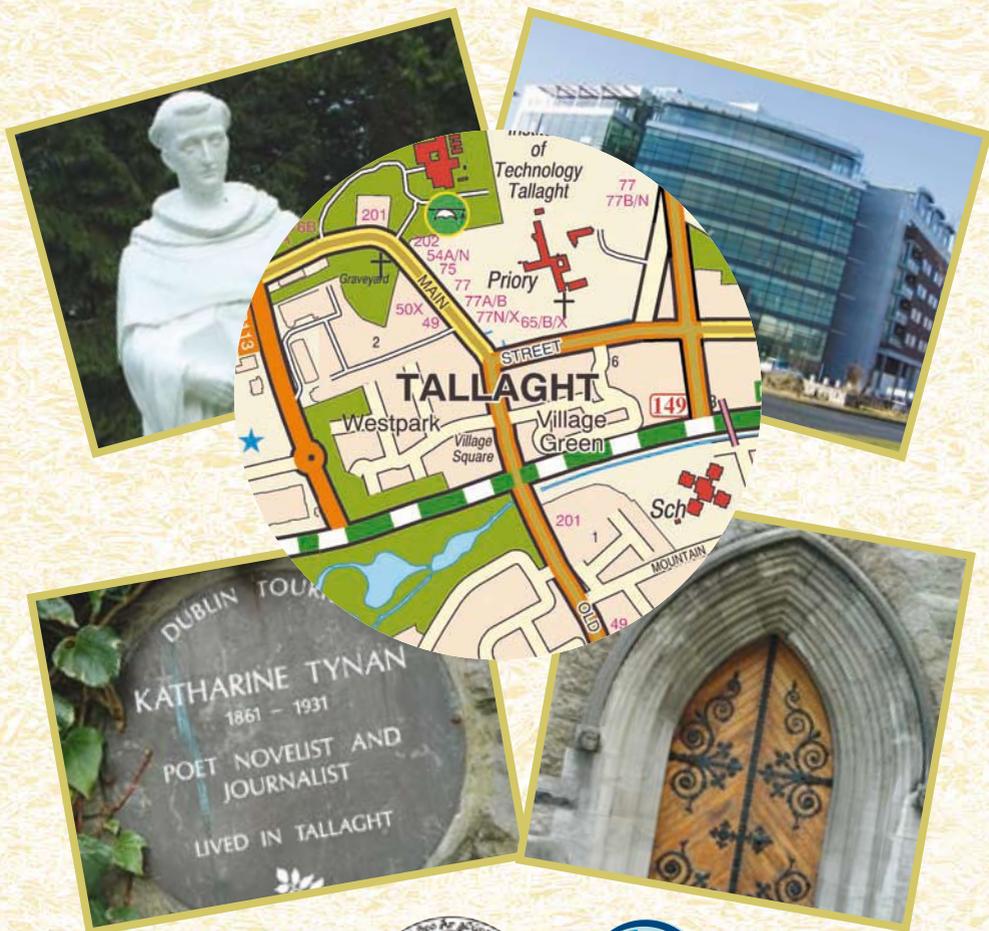


From Monastic Centre to Modern City

— Tallaght Town Centre to Tallaght Village
a guided walk



South Dublin County Council
Comhairle Chontae Átha Cliath Theas



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Introduction

Tallaght and the surrounding area are rich in heritage and history. A guided walk such as this can only hope to give a flavour of that history and heritage. Please see www.southdublincountyhistory.ie and www.southdublincountylocalstudies.ie for more information or visit the Local Studies Collection at The County Library. For South Dublin County tourist destinations see www.southdublincountytourism.ie.

Tallaght – the name

The placename Tallaght is derived from the Irish *támh leacht*, meaning a plague burial place. The earliest mention of Tallaght in recorded history is the account of Parthalon in the Annals of the Four Masters. Parthalon, a Greek prince, was one of the early invaders of Ireland. A plague killed 9,000 of his followers in one week. Their burial place is thought to be Tallaght and its environs and so the place came to be named *Táimleacht Muintire Parthalon*, the plague grave of Parthalon's people. However, the burials which have been found in the Tallaght area are all normal pre-historic interments, mainly of the Bronze Age, and nothing suggesting a mass grave has so far been recorded here.

Guided Walk

- Distance:** Approximately 2.5km
Duration: The walk can be completed in 1 hour.
However you may wish to linger . . .
Map: Centre of booklet, pages 6-7



This walk commences at the Luas Terminus and makes its way between the Square Shopping Centre and the Civic Plaza which includes County Hall, Civic Theatre and County Library.

1. The Luas Red line runs between Tallaght and Connolly in Dublin City. The service commenced in September 2004 and has proven to be a great success and a welcome addition to Tallaght's public transport services. The Luas terminus is located on the line of the Old Blessington

Road, along which ran the Dublin to Blessington Steam Tramway. The steam tram commenced operations to Blessington in 1888 and was extended to Poulaphouca in 1895. It ceased operations on 31st December 1932.

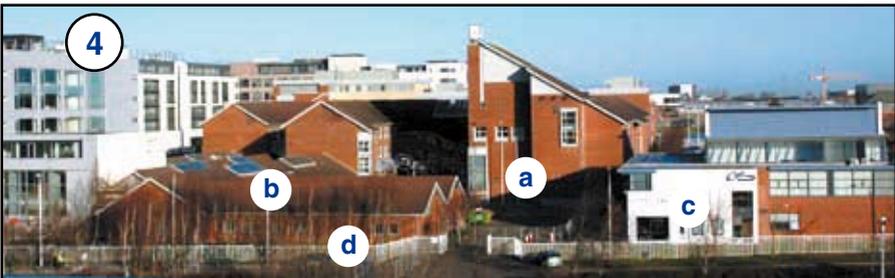
2. From the Luas terminus can be seen one of Tallaght's new landmark buildings, the tower of Belgard Square, built on the site of an old 19th century farmhouse, known as Virginia House. It is one of the new urban style Town Centre developments being encouraged by South Dublin County Council. This will eventually provide a modern Town Centre with active streets and a resident population.



3. The adjoining development behind the inbound platform, "Tallaght Cross", is another landmark retail, hotel and apartment development which will provide a new Civic Square and entrance to County Library.

At the Civic Plaza . . .

4a. County Hall/Halla an Chontae which was opened in 1994 is the headquarters of South Dublin County Council. South Dublin County Council was formed on 1st January 1994 as a result of local government reorganisation within the greater Dublin area.



4b. County Library/Leabharlann an Chontae, opened in December 1994 and offers a wide range of library and information services to users. The South Dublin County Local Studies Collection is housed at the County Library.

4c. The Civic Theatre/Amharclann Civic which was opened in March 1999 has joined the list of major theatre venues in the greater Dublin area and includes, as well as the main auditorium, a gallery, a multi-purpose flexible studio space, a restaurant and a theatre bar.

4d. The proposed South Dublin County Arts Centre is being developed next to the County Library, facing the Civic Theatre and the Square Shopping centre.



5. Built in 1990, the Square was the first large suburban shopping centre to be built in Ireland. There is a wide selection of shops, fast food restaurants, cafés and a cinema complex.



6. Tuansgate, another new landmark building is named for a mythological character Tuan Mac Cairill associated with the legend of Parthalon. Originally he had been son of Starn, brother of Parthalon who led a group of people into Ireland in the very distant (and fictional) past. Tuan had lived for a very long time under many different guises (a salmon, a boar, a stag and an eagle). In this manner he had witnessed all the great events which had occurred between the arrival in Ireland of Parthalon and the coming of Christianity. Tuan relayed all this knowledge to St. Finnian, thereby preserving it for posterity. (O'hOgáin, *Dáithí. Myth, Legend and Romance*).

7. Institute of Technology Tallaght is a third level institute teaching business, science, engineering and humanities. IT Tallaght was established under the aegis of Co. Dublin Vocational Educational Committee and opened



its doors to the first group of students in September 1992. Since January 1993 the Institute has been an independent third level institution under the Regional Technical Institutes Act. The policies and

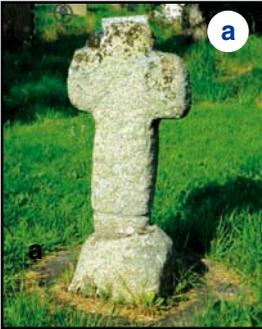
business of the Institute are overseen by a statutory Governing Body. Nearby is the Dublin West Education Centre which provides training, development and support for teachers and the wider school community of west Dublin.

8. St. Maelruain's Church, graveyard and tower are built on the site of the monastery founded by St. Maelruain in the 8th century. It is worth noting that the road takes the curve of the bank and fosse which surrounded the ancient monastery. The monastery was a centre of learning and piety and was particularly associated with the Céili Dé



spiritual reform movement. It was such an important institution that it and the monastery at Finglas were known as the "two eyes of Ireland". St. Aengus, an Ulsterman, was one of the most illustrious of the Céili Dé and devoted himself to the religious life. Wherever he went he was accompanied by a band of followers who distracted him from his devotions. He secretly travelled to the monastery at Tallaght where he was not known and enrolled as a lay brother. He remained unknown for many years until his identity was discovered by Maelruain. They later wrote the Martyrology of Tallaght together and St. Aengus also wrote a calendar of saints known as the Féilire of Aengus. The present day church was designed by the architect Semple in 1829 while the tower was formerly attached to an older church which was demolished in 1820.

An annual pattern or festival in honour of St. Maelruain was held here from the time of the saint's death in 792 down to 1874 when it had degenerated into an occasion for drinking and brawling, and was discontinued through the influence of the clergy. At that time the pattern was devoid of any religious tradition and the people were under the impression that *Moll Rooney* was a female saint.



8a. Within the churchyard is St. Maelruain's Cross, a small ancient cross set in a pedestal which is firmly fixed in a circular granite base resembling a millstone. The cross and base were formerly known as *Moll Rooney's loaf and griddle*.



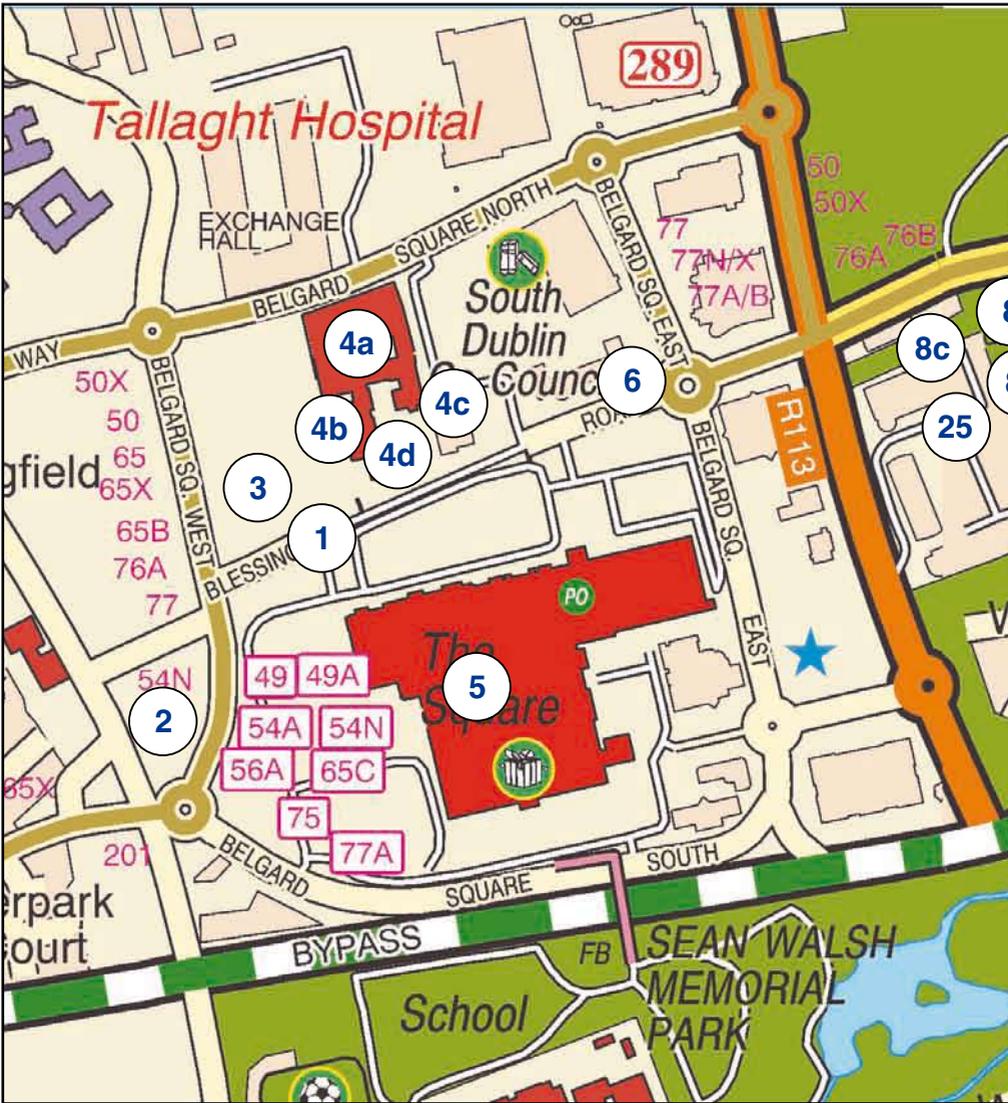
8b. Also within the churchyard, to the left inside the churchyard gate, is St. Maelruain's Loset, a wide and shallow granite stone trough or font. *Losat* is an Old Irish word for a wooden trough used in former times for kneading bread. It is likely that the country people named the font from its similarity in shape to the lossets which they used in their homes.



8c. The graves of George Otto Simms, former Primate of All Ireland, an expert on the Book of Kells and of renowned artists Oisín Kelly, Elizabeth Rivers and Evie Hone are in the new graveyard at St. Maelruain's.

9. Two beautiful 19th century cottages are located next to the gate of St. Maelruain's Church. The one nearest the gate is the church sexton's house and the other was the old Girls' School.





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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Luas Terminus 2. Belgard Square development 3. Tallaght Cross development 4a. County Hall / Halla an Chontae 4b. County Library / Leabharlann an Chontae 4c. The Civic Theatre / Amharclann Civic 4d. Proposed South Dublin County Arts Centre 5. The Square Shopping Centre | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Tuansgate 7. Institute of Technology Tallaght 8. St. Maelruain's Church, Graveyard and Tower 8a. St. Maelruain's Cross 8b. St. Maelruain's Losset 8c. St. Maelruain's New Graveyard 9. Sexton's House and former Girls' School 10. Fanagan's Funeral Home, former Garda B |
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| 11. Remains of Watercourse | 19. Retreat House |
| 12. Plaque commemorating the Fenian Rising | 20. St. Basil's Training Centre |
| 13. St. Mary's Church | 21. Former R.I.C. Barracks |
| 14. Site of the Archbishop's Bathhouse | 22. Katharine Tynan Memorial Plot |
| 15. Father Burke Memorial Church | 23. Late 19th Century Cottages |
| 16. St. Mary's Prioory | 24. Site of the Old Cross of Tallaght |
| 17. Dominican Library | 25. Remains of Fosse of St. Maelruain's Monastery |
| 18. 14th Century Tower | |

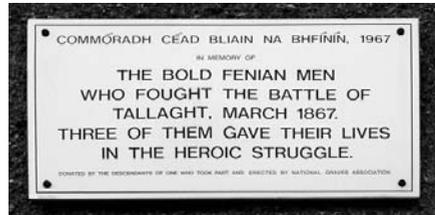
10. The building which now serves as Fanagan's funeral home was Tallaght's Garda barracks until replaced by the new building at Belgard Walk.



11. Next to the Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed is a low section of wall. Over this wall at the base of the higher wall can be seen a vaulted opening. This vaulted section was portion of a watercourse which formerly flowed into the grounds of the Archbishop's Palace. The Archbishop's Palace stood within what is now the grounds of St. Mary's Priory.

12. Near the top of the wall between the Dragon Inn and the Dominican Priory, a plaque can be seen commemorating the Fenian Rising which took place in Tallaght in 1867. The Fenian movement, founded in the United States in 1858 was a republican movement dedicated to the use of physical force to secure independence for Ireland. (see stage 21).

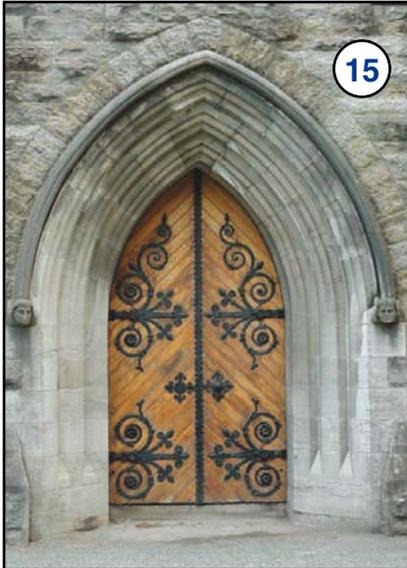
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13. The lands of St Mary's Priory are something of an architectural palimpsest. A castle was built on the site by the Anglo-Normans in 1324 to defend their town from the Irish tribes in the adjacent mountain territory. The castle gradually became delapidated and was demolished in 1729. Much of the land in the Tallaght area was

under the control of the Archbishop of Dublin and through leasing provided income for the church. In place of the castle, a Palace was built as a country residence by Archbishop Hoadley, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin. This building lasted for almost 100 years. It was in turn demolished to make way for a mansion, Tallaght House, built in 1820 by Major Palmer, Inspector General of Prisons in Ireland. He sold the mansion and lands to Mr Lentaigne, who succeeded him in his position as Inspector of Prisons.

14. In the centre of the lawn in front of St. Mary's Church is a stone lined depression in the ground. This is the site of the Archbishop's Bathhouse, built by Archbishop Fowler in 1778 on the line of the artificial watercourse formerly mentioned at *stage 11*.



15. Facing the lawn is the Dominican Church. The oldest section at the back was built in 1882 in the Gothic style and is known as the Father Burke Memorial Church. Father Burke was a famous 19th century Dominican preacher. The modern extension was added in 1969 to cater for Tallaght's growing population and won an architectural award for the sympathetic way it was incorporated into the older building. It was named for the Dominican Cardinal Michael Brown. The gothic main door of the older church is flanked by two carved monks heads. The one on the right is a representation of Father Burke.

16. In 1855 the Dominicans, whose history in Ireland goes back to the mid 13th century, founded the Priory of St. Mary on the site of the medieval Castle of Tallaght. The Dominican Order, returning from Lisbon, purchased the lands and buildings from Mr Lentaigne in 1855. They lived in Tallaght House and the towerhouse, saying mass in a converted farm building attached to the towerhouse. In 1864 they opened the present priory building, adding extensions in 1901 and 1957. The oldest part of St Mary's Priory was built in 1864. In the centre of the lawn to the left is a statue of St. Dominic with a dog at his feet.



17. The Dominican Library, built in 1957, houses many rare theological volumes.



18. An Ancient tower, which was built in 1324, is the only remaining portion of Tallaght Castle.

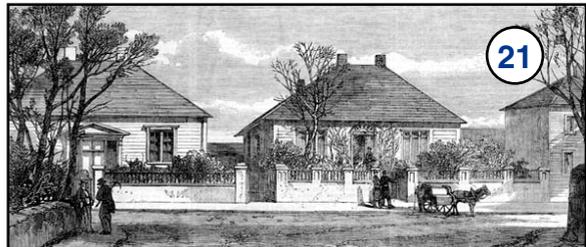
It houses the priory heating system, a small oratory and has a spiral stone staircase leading to the battlements on top. Mr Lentaigne, already mentioned, restored this remaining medieval towerhouse which had survived the earlier demolition.

19. The Retreat House, built in the 1960s incorporates the 19th century Tallaght House which is concealed within the modern fabric.



20. St Mary's National School, opened in 1930 is now the home of St. Basil's Training Centre. Next door was the site of the original Tallaght Library which was set up in 1971.

21. The former R.I.C. Barracks stood facing the old Greenhills Road. It was a single story building with protective bars on the windows. It stood a short way back from the road on the site now occupied by the Ulster Bank and Tom Maher Auctioneers Ltd. This was the scene of the engagement known as the *Battle of Tallaght* which





occurred during the Fenian rising on 5th March 1867. On that night, which had been fixed for the rising, the Fenians were moving out to the appointed place on Tallaght Hill. The large number of armed men alarmed the police in Tallaght who sent warning to the nearest barracks. There were fourteen constables and a head constable under Sub-

inspector Burke at Tallaght, and they took up a position outside the barracks where they commanded the roads from both Greenhills and Templeogue. The first body of armed men came from Greenhills and, when they came under police fire, retreated. Next a party came from Templeogue, and were also dispersed. After a while a more disciplined body came by the same road, but after shots had been exchanged, also retreated leaving some casualties behind. An old Fenian who died in 1946 left a stirring account of this engagement. It was bitterly cold and had been snowing heavily, and the Fenians suffered much from the severity of the weather. After they had been scattered by police fire, he got into the Priory grounds and hid in the old tower for several days, after which he escaped back to Dublin disguised as a lay brother.

22. The small pocket park is named the Katharine Tynan Memorial Plot in honour of the novelist and poet Katharine Tynan who lived at Whitehall, near Tallaght. The park was officially opened by President Mary Robinson. At its centre is a sculpture by Antoinette Fleming named *The Dancers*. It was installed in 1988 as part of a Village Improvement Scheme.



23. On the opposite side of the Main Street from the Dominican Priory can be seen a row of late 19th century cottages and the well-known local hostelry, the Fox's Covert.



24. At the end of the row of cottages is a stone sculpture. This was carved from limestone by the sculptor Dick Joynt and is called *The Victors*. The Old Cross of Tallaght, which disappeared in the 18th century, stood near this site.

25. At the rear of the DID premises and Smyth's toy shop is a high earthen embankment overgrown with bushes. A small notice on the edge of this embankment denotes that it is a national monument.



This is known locally as the fosse and is the only remaining part of the ancient circular bank and ditch which formerly enclosed the 8th century monastery of St. Maelruain.

www.southdublincounty.ie

www.southdublincountytourism.ie

www.southdublincountyhistory.ie

www.southdublincountylocalstudies.ie

Getting there:

Luas: Red Line

Dublin Bus: 49, 49A 49N, 50, 50X, 54A, 54N, 56A, 65, 65X, 75, 76, 76B, 77, 77A, 77N, 77X, 201, 202

Car: Tallaght is signposted from the national route ways M50, N7 and N81

Hotels:

The Abberley Court Hotel,

Tallaght, Dublin 24,
Ireland.

Telephone : + 353 1 4596000

Fax : + 353 1 4621000

e-mail : abberley@iol.ie

The Plaza Hotel,

Belgard Road,
Tallaght, Dublin 24

Telephone: + 353 1 462 4200

Fax: + 353 1 462 4600

e-mail: reservations@plazahotel.ie

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