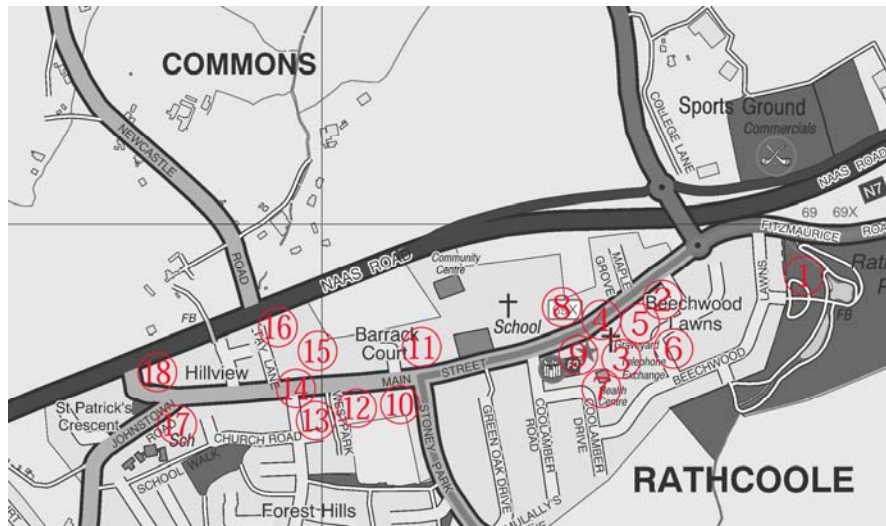


Walking Tour:

Taking in the village's Ecclesiastical, revolutionary and natural places of interest.

Map:



Distance: Approximately 2.5 km.

Getting There

By Car:

Rathcoole Village is signposted from the N4. Take junction 4 signposted "Newcastle/Rathcoole". Parking is available in the Avoca shopping complex, and also in the village itself by Pay and Display Monday to Friday. Parking there is free at weekends.

From the Avoca car park, walk out of the gates, head right and proceed along the railings of Rathcoole Park on the left. Skip down to the paragraph below beginning "Our first stop in the walk..."

Dublin Bus:

- 69 from Hawkins Street (Dublin City Centre).

If arriving by bus, on the approach to the village, you will see on the left hand side a directional road sign ahead indicating a roundabout and the direction to Newcastle/Rathcoole. Alight at this stop (numbered 3437 Fitzmaurice Road)

History:

Rathcoole derives its name from a rath, or fort, reputedly built in the area by the father of Fionn Mac Cumhail. In 1337 King Edward allocated Rathcoole to Metropolitan See of Dublin. It subsequently became one of the smaller manors belonging to the Archbishop of Dublin.

As Rathcoole's importance grew, a Portreeve (an official possessing administrative authority over a town) was appointed to the area. James Eustace, Viscount Baltinglass's rebellion in 1580 saw Rathcoole destroyed by fire. Again in 1596 and 1641 Rathcoole would rise. In 1641, Sir Arthur Loftus sent a party of Dragoons to the area as a consequence of a rebel attack. As a reprisal, the military set fire to an expanse of furze atop a hill overlooking Rathcoole, knowing that several hundred villagers, women and children included, had taken refuge there. Our walk will expand on the later happenings here in 1798 and during Emmet's rebellion of 1803.

1734 saw the establishment of Mercer's School. Established by philanthropist Mrs. Mary Mercer, who founded Mercer's Hospital in Dublin City. It opened in 1745 and catered initially for 20 Protestant girls; lessons included spinning, knitting, needlework, cow milking, butter and cheesemaking, bread baking and laundry. The school was relocated to Castleknock in 1826.

By 1831, Rathcoole village had 1,489 residents.

The next noteworthy event was the removal of Rathcoole as part of the route to the South West. In 1968 its centuries-old position as a way-stop was finally ended when the N7 was adjusted to bypass the village.



the Camac river.

Our first stop in the walk is

① Rathcoole Park which is accessible either from the Beechwood Lawns housing estate beside the bus stop, or either of two entrances opposite Avoca. If time permits, the park is worth investigating; among its attractions is a pair of interconnected lakes fed by

Exit the park at the gates beyond the lakes, head back to the main road and turn left heading into the village for 240 metres.

On the left will be revealed the rear of the historic, and now sadly derelict,

② Rathcoole House.

The Rathcoole House Estate was built on this site in 1750 and was owned by the Clinch family. The house you see today was constructed in 1830.



During the 1798 rebellion, Patrick Clinch, the owner of Rathcoole House, was accused during a raid by the military authorities, of harbouring a priest in the house contrary to the Penal Laws. When the girls of the house began to be harassed by the soldiers, the priest Father James Harold appeared from his hiding place and John Clinch, the owner's son, put himself forward as having been responsible for the presence of the priest in the house. At this point he was then wrongly accused of being a sergeant in the rebel army. This allegation was made due to mistaken identity. The real rebel sergeant was another man with the same name residing in Hazlehatch. Despite Clinch's denials of the latter charge he was hanged in Newgate prison at the same time as Lord Edward Fitzgerald was there dying of wounds. Father Harold was sentenced to transportation to Botany Bay and returned after 12 years to become Parish Priest of Glencullen, Co. Wicklow.

Many years later, during the demolition of part of the original house, the priest's hiding place was discovered. Also discovered, hidden in the thatch of a nearby house, was a penal cross made of wood along with a pewter gilt-lined chalice.



Beside Rathcoole House stands the village's ③ Anglican Church. The attached graveyard is the final resting-place of generations of the great and the good of Rathcoole. The best time to visit is at 10.00 on Sundays; at other times the church and grounds are locked.



There's a structure near the front boundary wall with iron doors and a family crest over the entrance. This is the ④ Kennedy family crypt which was constructed in 1828, and its high visibility is testament to the high esteem in which the Kennedy family was held in these parts. The first burial in this vault took place in 1828. This was Maria Beaumon, wife of John Kennedy, who later became the first Baronet Kennedy.

Later Kennedys married into the Gentry and had among their number a noted Justice of the Peace, three British army officers, a philanthropist and a Magistrate.

The Kennedy family home, the Johnstown-Kennedy estate, still exists and was used for exterior shots in the 1980s UTV/RTE series "The Irish R.M."

You will also see a distinctive burial marker in the form of a broken column.

This is the ⑤ Verschoyle family plot. The broken column memorial is a common theme in late 19th to early 20th century burials, and symbolises a life cut short. Arthur Griffith's headstone in Glasnevin Cemetery takes the same form.



At the front of the church boundary wall, facing the street, is a ⑥ plaque commemorating an incident in 1798 which reads:

**Within this churchyard
lie the mortal remains of
RICHARD FYANS
and
J. MOLLOY
who were executed near here
on the 20th June 1798**

We will learn more about these two men and their fate very shortly.

Beside the church is the ⑦ Rectory, the clergy's residence, which was



constructed in 1820. It now serves as the district health centre. Evidence of its previous use can be seen in the form of a bricked up doorway in the boundary wall which once provided the clergy with easy access to the neighbouring church.



Exit the grounds of the rectory. Look across the road and slightly to the right is a piece of street furniture which resembles



a street lamp, but is in fact a ⑧ sewer vent, used to release fumes, which has stood on this spot since 1880.

Next to the Rectory is the ⑨ Garda station which was built in 1930 and in itself is of no great historic interest.



However the piece of land on which it stands was the scene of another incident during the insurrection of 1798:

Richard Fyans had a bakery in the village (the location of which we will visit shortly). On the 22nd of June, the Angussshire Regiment led by Capt. Joseph Hewan was in the neighbourhood looking for rebels. They entered Fyans' bakery where they helped

themselves to newly-baked bread and buttermilk. A number of the soldiers became violently ill. Local lore describes the captain of the militia incorrectly concluding that Fyans had deliberately poisoned his men. A very different account in the book, "Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland", published in 1803 describes many more people, and some domestic animals being poisoned in the incident, and alleges that arsenic was found in Fyans' bakery. Whichever version is true, the result was that Fyans was taken from the bakery along with his apprentice, John Molloy, and both were summarily executed at this spot.

Walk approx. 300 metres to the ⑩ Baurnafeahouse pub at a corner.



The previous hostelry that stood here, called the Village Inn, was owned by the Fyans family in 1798.

Opposite this pub is a small pair of ⑪ semi-detached cottages. This was the site of Fyans' Bakery.



Next to the bakery site is Barrack Court, a new housing development from 2003 which takes its name from the RIC barracks which once stood here.

Continue now past Muldowney's pub and to the right, down a cul-de-sac, will be seen the Church of the Holy Family and the Community centre. The church opened for worship in 1988, the community centre having opened ten years earlier.

Rathcoole village boasts some of the oldest pubs in South County Dublin.

Look across the road ahead and you will see the thatched ⑫ Rathcoole Inn which was built in 1785



Right beside the Rathcoole Inn is the ⑬ Rathcoole Court of Petty Sessions building dating from 1914.



The Courts of Petty Sessions were forerunners of our modern day District Courts. The court building was found to be unsuitable for court business, and was later reincarnated as the village library. Here once stood the Catholic priest's house which was destroyed in 1798. This site was reputedly where a local United Irishman - Felix Rourke met his end.

Felix was born in 1765 and was the son of a local farmer and tollhouse keeper at nearby Blackchurch and was involved in several skirmishes in the area during the 1798 Rebellion, being later made a colonel by Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Having

served time for his activities, he was released only to become involved in the later 1803 revolution under Robert Emmet. He was actively involved in the fighting that took place in Thomas Street and High Street in Dublin City. Rourke was tried and convicted of High Treason in September of that year, and was sentenced to death. He was hanged at this place on the 6th of September 1803 on the roof beams of the burnt-out priest's house that stood on this site. Another version of the incident places Felix Rourke's execution as taking place outside his parents' house in the village. Either way, his execution was intended to be a very public and symbolic act, and his body was brought for burial afterwards to Bully's Acre in Kilmainham. By Rourke's side would later be temporarily interred the body of Robert Emmet himself.



On the 5th July, 1998 the then Tanaiste Mary Harney unveiled a ⑭ monument outside the court building to commemorate Fr. Harold, Clinch, Fyans and Rourke. The stone was designed and carved by Tallaght stonemason Eamon Brennan.

Crossing the road, and walking on, on your right will be seen

⑮ Glebe House, another residence for the local clergy. It lay derelict for many years before being destroyed by fire in 2008.



Now walk to the Credit Union building and take the first turn right. This is Tay Lane which was at one time the start of the road to Rathcoole's sister village Newcastle. The laying of the Rathcoole Bypass as part of the N7 in 1968 cut off this route. At the end of Tay Lane, on the right, is the site of

⑯ St. Brigid's Well which unfortunately, like so many of Dublin's Holy Wells, has been culverted to empty into the watercourse and no evidence of it is now visible. The name lives on as the name of the house facing the site.

Return to Main Street. Continuing for 200 metres you will come to a “Y” in the road. Look across towards the left side of the “Y” a little, and at left will be seen the village’s ⑰ former national school.

Built in 1886, it is built on a T-plan and was reinvented as a Scout Hut from 1977. It is now unoccupied.

Facing the school, across the green space, is our final stop on this walk: the famous ⑱ Poitin Stil pub.



This has stood here since 1700, and was originally a cattle-drovers’ inn with grazing areas for the cattle nearby and unorthodox licensing hours to cater for thirsty herdsmen. It is incredible to think these premises were already almost a century old when British Redcoats marched the streets of Rathcoole in search of

United Irishmen, and the Penal Laws were still very much in force.

This is where our walk ends. If you wish to return to the city centre by bus, go back towards the village on the left-hand path for around 100 metres to the city-bound bus stop numbered 3444.

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/>