

“Down by the Liffeside”

Series of walks and outings in the Liffey Valley

‘Down By The Liffeside’ is the start of a new series for you, our readers and friends. Its aim is to put suggestions as to where you might go and give an idea of what you might expect to see in each of the locations; walking, cycling, enjoying nature or simply strolling about sight-seeing on a day’s outing in one of the villages or towns on the banks of the Liffey.

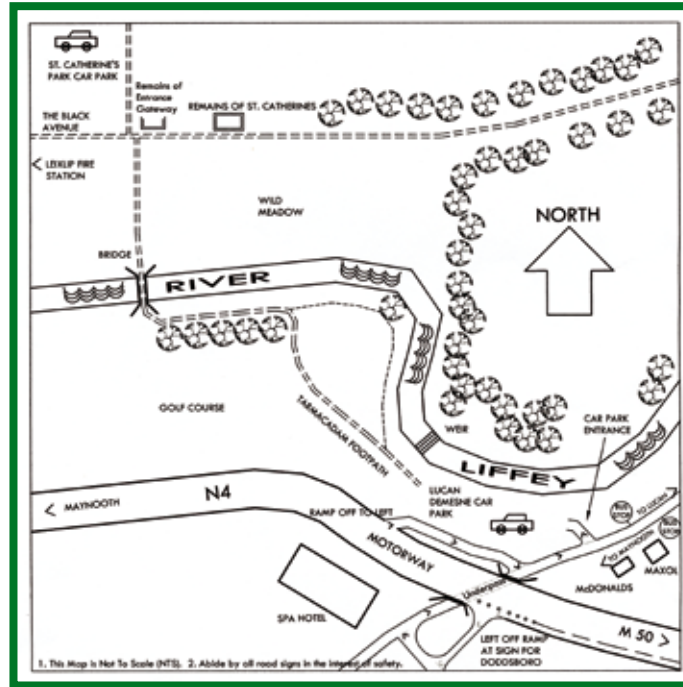
Thousands of people cross and re-cross the many bridges over the Liffey each day going about their business but regrettably most are unaware what more access can be had to the Liffey. This series, therefore, is an attempt to take the mystery out of it, so that the citizens of Dublin and Kildare, north and south, as well as visitors from other parts of Ireland and abroad can benefit from, and enjoy themselves in, the surroundings of this wonderful and natural amenity that is the Liffey Valley.

Walks and ‘stroll-about’ outings are described commencing at Islandbridge, Dublin and extending as far as Straffan in County Kildare. Each walk will be accompanied by a sketch map and photographs. Availability of car parks, buses (and their numbers), train stations and their locations are given. Path surfaces are noted and type of landscape to be encountered and also near access to hotels, cafes, restaurants and pubs.

The Liffey Valley is a treasure trove of the weird and the wonderful. It is a life giving and life enhancing green lung preserving that unique element of the countryside within our towns and suburbs. We recommend that you discover it for yourselves and be gladdened by it. Words cannot do it justice, you simply have to see and experience it with your own eyes and ears. The walks described here are accounts of the authors’ own experiences on one specific day of the year, which leaves 364, at least, still remaining to be discovered and enjoyed by you, the Reader.

Patricia Goff, LVPA.

“Down by the Liffeside” Route



St Catherine’s Car park opening times

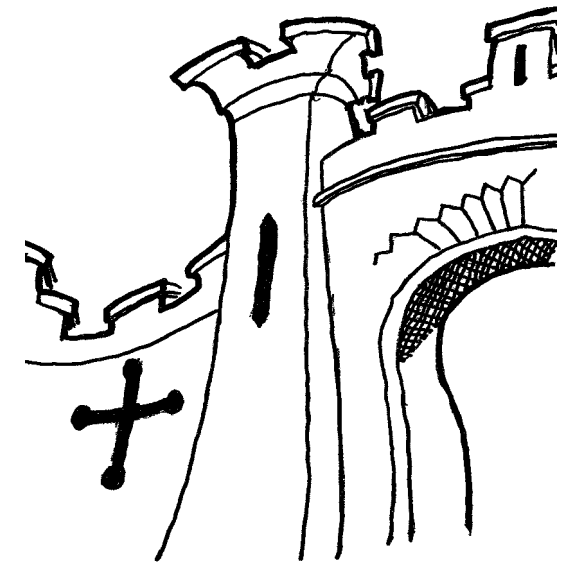
November, December	9am –5pm
January	9am –6pm
February, March	9am –7pm
April	9am –8pm
May	9am –9pm
June, July, August,	9am –8pm
September	9am –7pm
October	9am –7pm



Liffey Valley Park Alliance
www.lvpa.ie
Spring 2010



Series of Walks “Down by the Liffeside”



Walk No. 1 Lucan through the Demense and St Catherine’s Park to Leixlip

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Liffey Walk No.1.



This is a very pleasant, country walk, with the sights, sounds and smells of the open air, away from all traffic, which is just a distant hum. It meanders along beside the Liffey between Lucan and Leixlip. The Lucan entrance is opposite the McDonald's and the Maxol garage, on the west side of the town. It is a marked Slí na Sláinte walk, 2.2 kilometres, about 30 minutes each way. The path is tarmacadamed all the way, wheelchair and pushchair accessible, but it is rather steep at the Leixlip end.

There are plenty of seats along the way, if one gets tired, or just want to admire the view. Lots of wild life to see and hear, many birds foraging in the vegetation, and on a recent walk swans, ducks, moorhens, a cormorant and a heron were seen on the river, and also chaffinches, blackbirds and hooded crows. From April onwards, watch out for the swallows, feeding on the insects over the water. Later in the season, ducklings and cygnets may be seen. Children enjoy feeding the ducks, so remember to bring some bread.

Many people exercise their dogs here, but they are encouraged not to allow fouling of the footpath. The park hasn't got a full time superintendent, and, whilst there are many people out walking at weekends, weekdays tend to be quieter. The path runs beside the Liffey, through open country, dotted with shrubs, bushes, hedges etc. with unobstructed

views across the river, to the north bank, which is heavily wooded.

There is a line of fine old oak trees along the banks of the river. Lichens and moss grow on many of the branches and one tree even has a fern growing on it.

On a February walk the yellow colour of the lichens on the branches were gleaming in the sunshine and the dogwoods on the north bank were a vivid red. The catkins were on show. The water can be quite fast flowing over a weir, and the remains of a sluice gate. If one is lucky, canoeists can be seen shooting the gate and doing fantastic turns in the rapids.

After crossing the river by a rather ugly bridge, there are the remains of the old church and the farmyards, including the Entrance Gateway, of St Catherine's house, once a monastery. [Turning right on the north bank there is a large wooded hill, which is rather steep in places, but has a fully paved path, with many fine trees. It is an area well worth exploring].

But to continue the Slí na Sláinte walk go left, passing the water works, to Leixlip, via the Black



Avenue, a long avenue lined with beech trees; the last bit is rather steep. Exit/entrance on to the Mill Lane through tall gate piers between the Fire Station and the entrance to the Liffey Valley House Hotel.

The Liffey Valley is a most enjoyable area to walk, and it is hard to believe that one is beside a densely populated town. It is a highly recommended country walk, not far from the city. There are plenty of pubs, coffee shops and hotels in both towns for those needing a snack or a meal

Access.

Any of the no 66, 66A, 66B buses to or from the city (Terminus Pearse St.) pass near both ends of the walk. To get to Lucan from Dublin, take the 67A bus or the number 25, **not** the 25A. The No.239 bus comes from Blanchardstown. Dismount at Lucan Village Green. The start of the Demesne Walk is just a five minute walk away.

Limited parking at the Lucan end. From Leixlip, a large car park (*see opening times below the map*) is in the grounds of St Catherine's, beside the playing fields. Enter from Mill Lane, between the Fire Station and the gate to the Liffey Valley House Hotel.

Report by Roisín O'Riordain, LVPA
Photographs by Patricia Goff, LVPA
Map and Sketches by Roy Goff.

