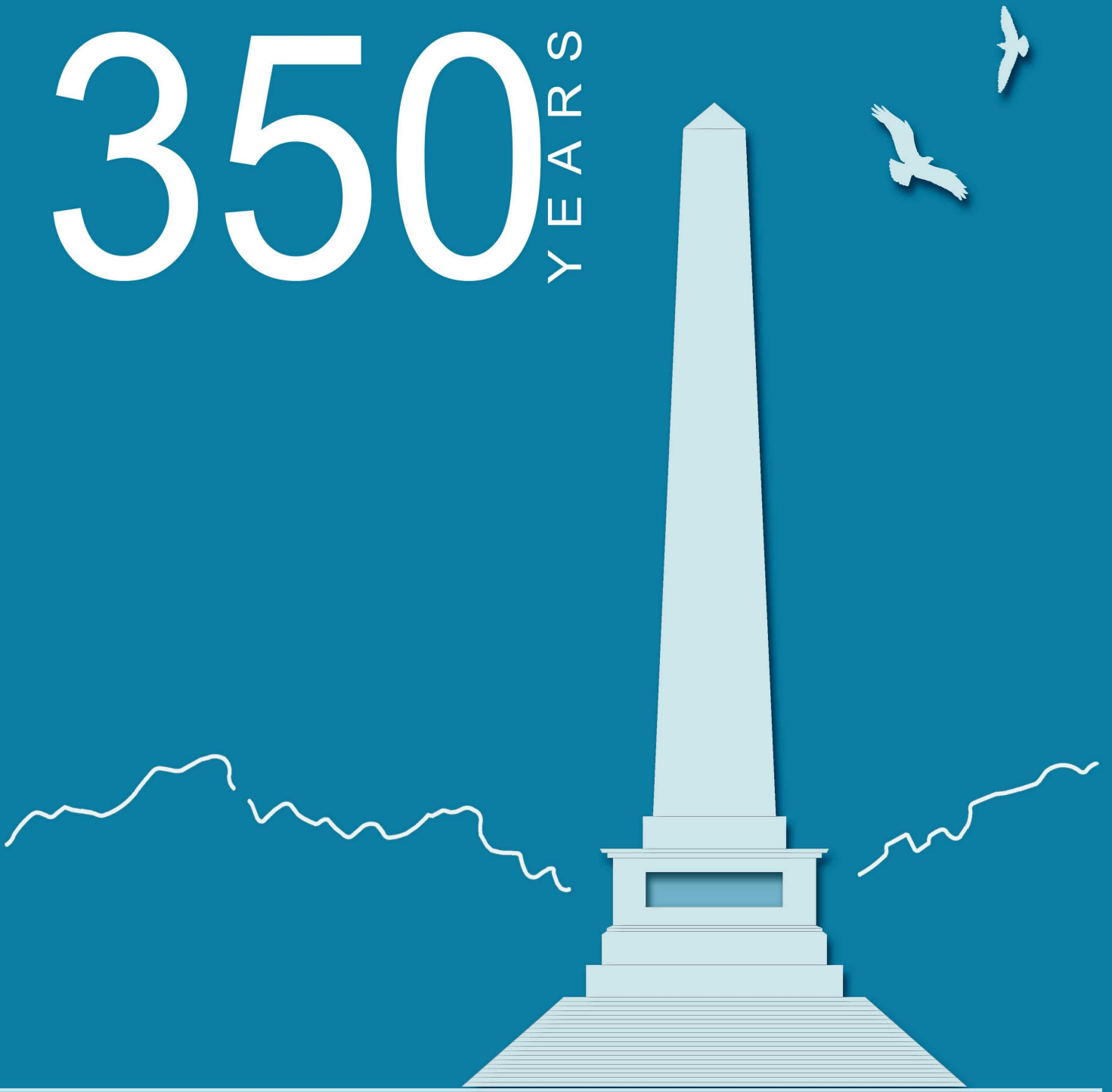


350 YEARS



Phoenix Park

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## Phoenix Park 1662-2012

### Background

The Phoenix Park was the first of a number of public schemes of 'unexampled grandure' undertaken by King Charles II with the express intention of keeping up 'the splendure of government'. James Butler, Duke of Ormond, who was the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, commenced the formation of the Phoenix deer park in 1662 and the Phoenix Park is officially mentioned in a King's letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 1662. Earlier correspondence refers to His Majesty's park, which was to be enclosed near Dublin for the breeding of deer and the maintenance of game.

*Shall Windsor Forest win immortal praise,  
Itself outlasting all its Poets' Lays?  
And thou, O Phoenix Park ! Remain so long  
Unknown to Fame, and unadorn'd in Song ?*

*Thou too canst boast thy Lawns, and painted Meads  
Thy sunny Vallies, and sequestered Shades;  
As pleasing Dreams thy Trees and springs bestow,  
As gentle whisper, and as sweetly flow;  
With equal Charms and tuneful Muse delight,  
Inspire her Rapture, and her lays invite.*

*Phoenix Park* by **James Ward, 1724**

In 1747, the Earl of Chesterfield, having considerably improved the Park, opened it to the public. Even though the formation of Ireland's only Royal Park commenced in 1662, its present landscape is inherited from designs and management decisions which were taken from 1800-1880. The Victorian People's Flower Garden was designed during this period and was noted for its novel experimentation with floral displays. The Magazine Fort, built in 1734, still remains, along with the Francis Johnston's buildings which were added in 1801.

*'The Phoenix Park is justly regarded with pride by every citizen, and with astonishment and delight by every stranger. For extant and natural beauty it stands unequal'.*

**The Dublin Builder, 15 May 1861.**

Sport has long been associated with the park. Formed in 1830, the Phoenix Cricket Club is the oldest in Ireland and one of the oldest in the world, even older than Lords. The All Ireland Polo Club was founded in 1873 by Horace Rochfort of Clogrenane, which makes it the oldest polo club in Europe. Hurling was first played in the Park in the 1770s but it was not until the 1880s that formal matches were organised.

The Phoenix Park was placed under the management of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland in 1860 and they have recently published the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (September 2011) which will guide the management of the Phoenix Park for future generations. The Phoenix Park is a historic landscape of international importance and one of the largest designed landscapes in any European city.

## Exhibitions at the Phoenix Park Visitor Centre

An exciting number of new exhibitions have been commissioned including a series on the historical maps of the Park, James Butler, Duke of Ormond and Lord Chesterfield, The Seamus Kearns exhibition of old Phoenix Park Postcards, James Joyce and the Park, The Phoenix Park Grand Prix of 1903 and also a series of line drawings of the Phoenix Park by Sheelagh Duff. Details as follows:-

**January** - The Office of Public Works recently launched the **Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan** and this exhibition of illustrated maps from the Plan, highlights the various strands that come together to make the Phoenix Park we know and love today. From its origins in 1662, with the various Demesnes, to land use and recreational maps to habitat maps, this exhibition of modern maps communicates the vision for the Phoenix Park into the future.

**February / March** - The **Seamus Kearns Collection of old Postcards** of the Phoenix Park, of which more than 100 will be on display, will illustrate the Park's buildings and landscapes from the late 1800s to the early decades of the 1900s.

**April** - An exhibition of **Historical Maps** illustrating the landscape of the Phoenix Park before its formation to modern times. This is a joint exhibition between the Office of Public Works and Ordnance Survey Ireland.

**May / Mid June** - '**the shadow of james joyce' Chapelizod & Environs**. This exhibition is a homage to James Joyce, whose last great masterpiece *Finnegans Wake* had its locale in Chapelizod and makes many references to the Phoenix Park. Contemporary Japanese photographer **Motoko Fujita** captures the spirit and body of this historic village on Dublin's fringes, and the enclosure of Phoenix Park that adjoins it.

**Mid June / July** - 2012 is the **80th Anniversary of the Eucharistic Congress** which was held in Dublin from 21<sup>st</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> June 1932. The congress was hugely significant in terms of asserting the identity of the Irish Free State and was the largest public spectacle in the twentieth century. The high point of the Congress was a massive open air mass in the Phoenix Park.

**August** - To coincide with **Heritage Week** an exciting exhibition of images taken by the public, of the Phoenix Park, both past and present will be exhibited.

**September** - **Motoring Through Time in the Phoenix Park**. Motor racing first took place in the Phoenix Park in 1903, when the Irish Gordon Bennett Race Speed Trials were held on the main straight of Chesterfield Avenue for both cars and motorbikes. This was followed in 1929 by the Irish International Grand Prix; the first of three Irish Phoenix Park Grands Prix. This interesting exhibition of video, photos and artefacts coincides with a vintage car display and a re-enactment of the sprints on Chesterfield Avenue of 1903.

**October** - This exhibition of line drawings of buildings, views and artefacts of the Phoenix Park was undertaken by **Sheelagh Duff, Artist** and records the Phoenix Park in the present day.

**November / December** - The Phoenix Park was the first of a number of public schemes of 'unexampled grandure' undertaken by King Charles II with the express intention of keeping up 'the splendure of government'. **James Butler, Duke of Ormond**, who was the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, commenced the formation of the Phoenix deer park in 1662 and the Phoenix Park is officially mentioned in a King's letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 1662. This exhibition on James Butler and his relationship with Ireland and the Phoenix Park culminates a year of celebrations honouring the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Park.

### **Photographic Competition**

Fancy yourself as a budding photographer? Well why not dust off your camera and take some pictures in the Phoenix Park. The pictures can be of anything, Nature, Buildings, or animals anywhere in the Park. Why not share your experience of the Park by uploading the photos *or* if you have some old photos of the Park in years gone by then you can also submit these to the competition by scanning them and submitting them. *Check [www.phoenixpark.ie](http://www.phoenixpark.ie) for full details in May 2012.*

### **The Phoenix Park Spring & Winter Lecture Series**

A series of illustrated lectures will take place at the Phoenix Park Visitor Centre over the spring and winter of 2012 on many topics, such as 'Is the Phoenix Park older than Newgrange?', 'The historical connection between Kilkenny Castle and the Park', 'The only city in Europe with a herd of wild Fallow Deer !', 'The History of the Metropolitan Police in the Park' and many more interesting topics with a diverse range of speakers. Details of full programme available at end of January 2012.

### **Primary School Competition**

The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre will be asking all primary schools to submit a project on the Park (be it on why I like the Park, It's Birds and Deer or Why the Park is important to me, etc) and a judging panel will select entries from the following groups (Jr/Sr Infants, 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Class) and the projects will be displayed at the Visitor Centre for the schools and public. A school's programme is also available. Please contact the Phoenix Park Visitor Centre for further details.

### **Special Events for 350**

As part of the celebrations for 2012, Chesterfield Avenue will be opened at weekends from Phoenix Monument to Mountjoy Roundabout to pedestrians, cyclists, runners, toddlers, etc . Cars will not be permitted on this section of the road at weekends and to kick the event off, a fun **Street Party** will take place on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2012 for all the family (Easter).

Author Senan Maloney will give a lecture to mark the anniversary of **The Cavendish Murders** in the Phoenix Park, that took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 1882. This lecture which will take place on Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2012, has been organised by **The Garda Historical Society**.

**National BioBlitz 2012** is taking place in the Phoenix Park on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2012. This 24 hour Biodiversity recording activity will cover the entire Park and a range of activities for the public and academics is being organised by the National Biodiversity Data Centre in association with the Office of Public Works.

**Health & Well-Being Workshops** - The Health Promotion Service, EHB and Dublin City Sports Network are co-ordinating a series of workshops and leading walks in the Phoenix Park to encourage the public to walk and use the natural amenities available within the Phoenix Park.

**Northern Ireland Heritage Gardens Committee** annual Conference will celebrate the Phoenix Park and their conference for 2012 is themed '**Royal Parks & Gardens, Back to the Future**'. This 2 day conference will take place from the 5-7 October in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham and booking details will be displayed on our website closer to the date.

**Please check [www.phoenixpark.ie](http://www.phoenixpark.ie) or [www.opw.ie](http://www.opw.ie) for further details of these and additional events planned for 2012.**