

Welcome to the MP3 tour Dún Laoghaire presented to you by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. Dún Laoghaire is the main town of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, one of the four local authorities in Dublin. The tour starts at the green Queen Victoria Fountain, which is at the junction of Marine Road and Queens' Road, some 50 metres from the entrance to the DART station. The tour is approximately three kilometres long and will last in the region of one hour. A number of additional walks are also suggested on the tour while there are also a number of coffee shops, pubs and restaurants along the way.

The tour has 6 stops at points of interest and follows the coast to Sandycove harbour. It then brings you back to Dun Laoghaire by the main Dalkey Dun Laoghaire Road and passes through Sandycove and Glasthule villages on the way. The tour finishes at the People's Park which is at the start of Dun Laoghaire's main commercial street called Georges Street.

To follow the tour, listen to the instructions on how to get to the next stop on the tour. At the end of each section you will hear a bell. On hearing this pause your player and restart the tour when you reach the next point. On the tour you will see some of the most beautiful views in Dublin, the expanse of the largest harbour in Ireland, the first railway in Ireland, towers built to defend the country against French invasion and places associated with two Nobel prize winning authors and one of the most important novels in the English language.

Just a word of caution - while most road crossings will be at pedestrian crossings please take care when crossing all roads.

### **1. Stop One - The Victoria Fountain**

Looking towards the sea you can see the terminal building for the HSS ferry that travels between Dun Laoghaire and Holyhead, the waters of the harbour, the neo-classical Royal Saint George yacht club to your right, one of 4 in the harbour. To your left is the original train station of Dun Laoghaire – now a restaurant. Turning around and looking inland you can see the Venetian style original town hall and the spire of Saint Michael's church both designed by J.L. Robinson. You can also see the modern Pavilion development that includes a municipal theatre. Further up Marine Road away from the sea is George's Street, the main commercial area of this Victorian town originally built for the prosperous classes of Dublin City.

You're standing at the heart of Dun Laoghaire's history. In front of you is the expanse of Dun Laoghaire Harbour, embracing nearly one square mile of water. The East Pier which you can see to your right is more than a kilometre long and the west pier is more than one and half kilometres in length. The harbour was designed by Scotsman John Rennie, one of the greatest engineers of the greatest engineering eras, also responsible for many important works including London Bridge and London Docks.

The construction of the Asylum harbour, as it was known, began in 1817. Before that Dun Laoghaire was just a small fishing village near today's west pier. The village was near the fort of King Laoghaire, High King of Ireland in the fifth century. It was during Laoghaire's reign that Saint Patrick began his conversion of Ireland to Christianity. Sadly Laoghaire's fort was demolished in the early nineteenth century.

While the Vikings established the town of Dublin in 917 Viking influence in this area was also strong. Nearby is Dalkey **the name of which is derived from** Deilginis the Norse for Thorn. Across the bay is Howth headland – whose name comes from the Norse for headland - 'hoved'. **Other evidence of Viking influence are the Rathdown slabs found at ancient churches in the area. These Rathdown stone slabs usually show a herringbone design and cup marks and are physical evidence of the conversion of the Norse settlers to Christianity fusing the symbols of the two religions.**

In Medieval times the lands and sea in this area were associated with the great Abbey of St. Mary's in Dublin with Cistercian monks building Bullock harbour, just to the south of Dún Laoghaire, and from there supplying fresh fish to the Abbey.

[You now have two options. You may wish to stay here for another few minutes listen to the rest of this section. Alternatively you can start walking to the next stop on the tour which is 100metres along Queens' road away from the railway station. Stop when you get to an old ships' anchor on the seaward side of the footpath.]

In the early nineteenth century tragic events would change the landscape of this quiet rural area forever.

Dublin Bay was notoriously treacherous for boats. The remains of at least 600 vessels rest at the bottom of the bay. On the night November 18, 1807 in gale force winds and heavy snow two ships, the Prince of Wales and the Rochdale, were wrecked just – north-west of here. Each was carrying troops to fight in the Napoleonic Wars. The Prince of Wales was driven onto the rocks at Blackrock. Its captain, Captain Jones, did not go down with the ship. Far from it. He saved himself and his crew and made no attempt to save the soldiers on board, even going so far as to hinder their escape on the ships only longboat by removing a ladder leading from the hold. 120 soldiers lost their lives. Jones was later charged with murder, but acquitted due to lack of evidence. A short distance away at Seapoint, the Rochdale with 265 troops on board was wrecked, just a few metres from rescue. As a result of these deaths on that fateful night a decision was taken to construct an 'asylum harbour'. Given the prevailing winds of the bay Dún Laoghaire was chosen. The harbour is the largest man made harbour in Ireland.

Today the harbour is a constant scene of activity. While there are daily ferry crossings between Dun Laoghaire and Wales – a sea link that goes back to at least 1826 - the harbour is also one of the most important sailing centres in Ireland. It hosts the largest Marina in the country with over 500 berths. There are also four Yacht clubs. The oldest of the yacht clubs, founded in 1838, is the Royal Saint George. In July Dun Laoghaire hosts the largest regatta in Ireland attracting hundreds of boats while summer racing on Thursday evenings is hugely popular - the billowing of hundreds of sails of scores of boats in the bay is a beautiful sight.

The neo-classical railway station of Dun Laoghaire designed by John Skipton Mulvany - one of the great railway architects in Ireland, who also designed the Royal St. George yacht club. The Dublin to Kingstown Railway Line opened in 1834. Ireland's first railway it was also the first commuter railway in the world. It was built by engineers William Dargan and Charles Blacker Vignoles. The railway station was renamed Mallin Station in 1966 to commemorate one of the executed leaders of the 1916 Rising. Across the road from it is the ornate cast-iron fountain dedicated to Queen Victoria. The two traditions of Ireland - nationalist Ireland and its colonial past – in such close proximity is a feature of the town of Dún Laoghaire.

The clash of these two cultures is shown in the history of the name of the town which changed with the ebb and flow of political fortunes. Originally the fishing village was known as Dún Laoghaire. In 1821 it was renamed 'Kingstown' in honour of a visit by King George iv. It remained Kingstown until 1920 when in a more nationalistic time it was renamed Dún Laoghaire. Curiously Dún Laoghaire is one of the few full Irish placenames in common use in Ireland outside of Gaelteacht, or Irish speaking, areas. But, to confuse matters, and often perplex visitors, it is usually given its English pronunciation 'Dun Leary'.

As a result of all this a common questions is 'how do you spell Dún Laoghaire?' This question even became the tongue in cheek subject of a song by legendary Irish punk band Boomtown rats whose lead singer Sir Bob Geldof, the founder of Band Aid and Live Aid, grew up in Dun Laoghaire.

Now walk to stop 2 on the tour which is 100 metres along Queens' road away from the railway station. Stop when you get to an old ships' anchor on the seaward side of the footpath and re-start your player.

## **2. Stop two - Queen's Road memorial platform in front of the Carlisle Pier.**

The construction of the harbour at Dun Laoghaire was a great help to mariners but the waters of Dublin Bay were still not safe.

If you look down the arm of the East Pier, near the elbow, you will see an obelisk memorial erected to the memory of Captain John McNeill Boyd and five crew of the naval boat Ajax that was stationed in Dun Laoghaire. The six were killed on February 10, 1861 during one of the worst **ever** storms recorded around the Irish coast. In winds exceeding 140km per hour no fewer than 23 ships were wrecked in or near Dún Laoghaire.

The *Neptune* and the *Industry*, two colliers, got into difficulty and struck the rocks off the back of the East Pier. According to one report, 'The shrieks of those on board were heard high above the tempest...Some of Captain Boyd's men procured ropes, lashed themselves [to the land] with them, and plunged into the surf, to endeavour to get on board either of the ill-fated vessels, but the sea was too powerful. Captain Boyd saved a few of his own men from death by pulling them out of the surf. At last, a tremendous sea struck the part of the breakwater upon which Captain Boyd and a number of his men were standing, dashing them with violence against the rocks'.

This disaster led to the establishing of a base of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute in Dún Laoghaire which still has a base here today which is in front of you.

On December 24, 1895 15 lifeboat men from Dún Laoghaire whose names appear on a memorial here lost their lives when attempting to rescue the SS *Palme*. The *Palme* had sought shelter in Dublin Bay from a storm shortly after leaving Liverpool *en route* to South America. When it got into trouble the lifeboat was launched and in heavy seas capsized about 500 metres from the stricken ship. The lifeboat crew of 15 was drowned. Every Christmas Eve the RNLi holds a ceremony at sea outside of the harbour at Dún Laoghaire to commemorate the darkest day in the history of the lifeboat service.

On October 18 1918, less than a month before the end of World War I, the greatest sea disaster in Irish history took place off the coast of Dun Laoghaire. The mailboat RMS *Leinster* left the Carlisle Pier, in front of you, on her daily journey to Holyhead. She carried 757 people, including over 500 military from Ireland, Britain, New Zealand, France, the United States, Canada and Australia. Just 17kms out of Dun Laoghaire she was torpedoed by German U boat - 123. 501 lives were lost. The *Leinster's* anchor was raised from the seabed and is here on display as a memorial to those who perished.

Dun Laoghaire Harbour has witnessed the arrival and departure of many notable figures. The largest memorial here is to George IV who visited the harbour in 1821 (in 1874 William Thackeray described the memorial as 'a hideous Obelisk, stuck on four fat balls and surmounted with a crown on a cushion'). While the local dignitaries had prepared to welcome him on his arrival to Ireland the Royal ship passed by and landed at Howth leaving the elaborate decorations redundant. However, one month later he left Ireland through Dun Laoghaire. In his honour the name of the town was changed to Kingstown and the main street changed to George's Street. Other Royal Visitors to the town were Queen Victoria and Edward VII.

In 1830 Daniel O'Connell, responsible for the emancipation of Catholics in Ireland, was accompanied by 100,000 people as he marched from Dublin to Dún Laoghaire. He had just been elected as MP and was on his way to Westminster to take his seat in Parliament – he was the first Catholic member of the House of Commons.

In 1891 the body of the leader of the Irish Home Rule Party, Charles Stewart Parnell, was brought back to Ireland for burial through the Carlisle Pier here at Dún Laoghaire.

During the 1916 Rising 2000 British troops were landed at the pier to suppress the Rebellion. Some of the troops thought they had arrived in France. On May 12, the last day of the executions of the leaders of the Rising Prime Minister Asquith came to Dublin through Dun Laoghaire to assess the aftermath of the Rising. When the prisoners who had been interned and imprisoned in Wales and England for their part in the Rising returned from England they disembarked at the Carlisle Pier and made their triumphal journey by train which once ran directly to the pier into the city centre. Among these was Countess Markievicz, the first woman to be elected to the House of Commons in Westminster.

Following the War of Independence in the first months of 1922 thousands of British Troops left Ireland through Dun Laoghaire. The town was witnessing the beginning of the break up of the British Empire and a new era in Irish history.

But the vast majority to leave Ireland through this port left in quite different circumstances. For many years a convict ship was moored in Dun Laoghaire and in the nearby Mariner's church –clearly visible just 100 metres inland from here - a special pew, separated from the main congregation was reserved for convicts before departure to Australia. The Mariner's church is now home to the National Maritime Museum.

For many decades the Carlisle pier was the main point of departure for hundreds of thousands of Irish emigrants bound for the factories, offices and building sites of Britain. One of these emigrants Des Kenny recalled the journey from Galway;

‘The first stage to Westland Row was relatively light-hearted as those people alighting in Dublin kept the atmosphere buoyant. The train stopped there for about fifteen to twenty minutes and then continued on to link up with the mail boat at Dun Laoghaire. A general gloom would settle on the train accentuated somewhat by the rather disdainful looks of the few commuters who had boarded in the city centre.

At Dun Laoghaire the emigrants hauled their meagre belongings the few hundred yards to the waiting ship, and once aboard the first timer became fully aware of the smell and reality of emigration. The women, for the most part, would stay on deck in ones and twos huddled together in misery and confusion. The men would head for the bar and try to bury the pain with pints of stout and half ones. Their failure to do so would be physically visible in the gents if the crossing was any way rough.’

We will now continue our walk to stop 3. Continue along the coast road past the National Yacht Club and the East Pier until you come to the second telescope. For those interested in walking the East Pier, one of the most popular walks in Ireland with over one million walking it every year, you can rejoin the tour after.

As you walk you will see on your right the Royal Marine Hotel originally designed by John McCurdy, a resident of Dalkey and President of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, was also the architect of the Shelburne Hotel and Kilmainham Jail – you could say he went from one form of accommodation to another. The Royal Marine Hotel has had many famous visitors including Queen Victoria, Laurel and Hardy and Frank Sinatra.

You will also see the Christ the King Statue overlooking the harbour. Made of bronze it was designed by American born sculptor Andrew O'Connor. Based in Paris for many years O'Connor was strongly influenced by Auguste Rodin whom he knew. Some of his most notable works include a statue of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois, Tristan and Iseult in the Brooklyn Museum, New York, the Lafayette Monument, Baltimore and Peace by Justice in the Hague. He was given the Légion d'Honneur by the French government.

The original decision to erect a monument to Christ the King came at a public meeting in 1931 in the Town Hall, Dún Laoghaire. World War II and clerical opposition to the stark design of the piece meant that Christ the King was not unveiled in 1978. The sculpture symbolises three distinct aspects of Christ's life; Desolation, Consolation and Triumph.

### Stop 3

**You are now at the second telescope past the East Pier with the old baths on your right.**

As a result of the beautiful setting for Dun Laoghaire and its closeness to Dublin it became a major seaside resort very popular with day-trippers from the city. You are now looking over the pleasure gardens first laid out in the late nineteenth century. On the pier are the Victorian sun shelter and bandstand where military bands entertained strollers. For many years the baths located here were a huge attraction. They were opened in 1843 and boasted cold seawater baths, hot fresh water baths, seaweed baths and Russian steam baths which were recommended for various ailments such as Rheumatism, Sciatica and Lumbago. The baths have been vacant for some years and are in a sorry state of dereliction.

Looking further down the coast you can see the squat round Martello Tower of Sandycove. This is one of 26 such towers that once punctuated the coast of Dublin – Laoghaire's fifth century fort was demolished to make way for one of these towers. Another tower was located across the road in the People's Park (you can see the entrance gates to the park behind you) and the remnants of the gun battery for that tower can still be seen at the base of the now derelict baths. These towers were built between 1804 and 1806 when there was a threat of a Napoleonic Invasion. Each martello tower had an armed garrison constantly on the watch for the French fleet. Built within sight of each other a signal would be sent along the coast from one tower to the next warning of an attack. The British had built the towers to this particular design after their bitter experience of attacking one at Cape Martella in Corsica which had provided staunch defence against their attack in 1794.

According to one British admiral, 'The *Fortitude* and *Juno* were ordered against [the tower], without making the least impression by a continued cannonade of two hours and a half; and the former ship being very much damaged by red-hot shot, both hauled off...The number of men in the Tower were 33; only two were wounded'.

Behind you on the far side of the road runs the railway that was extended to run to Bray in 1855. Running alongside the railway cutting is 'the Metals' a path along which ran carts carrying stone between Dalkey Quarry and the harbour works at Dun Laoghaire. You can just make out the quarry in the hills in the distance between the trees in the People's Park. Today the disused quarry is one of the prime rock climbing sites in Ireland.

We will now continue in the same direction that we have been walking following the path past the baths and then turn left to follow the path along the coast of what is known as Scotsman's bay. After about 300 metres until you reach a round shell like sculpture over a metre high in the middle of the path. Restart your player here.

#### **Stop 4 Shell like sculpture.**

This sculpture is called Sea Urchin and is by Rachel Joynt. It is probably the most popular piece of sculpture in the county, much loved by children. The area between the sea and the coast road behind you was reclaimed from the sea in the first half of the twentieth century. During the last week end of August this area is one of the main venues for the Council's musical Festival of World Cultures – a celebration of cultural diversity. The festival features musicians and artists from around the world and is attended by over 150,000 people. Unusually for festivals in Ireland many of the events are free to the public.

The stretch of water in front of you is known as Scotsman's Bay. It is a very important habitat for birds and provides a rich variety of food and places to shelter. The shallow sandy-bottomed waters attract many fish and is one of the best places to watch seals. During the summer months the area is a popular feeding place for hundreds of terns who dive from a height on their underwater prey. Among these terns are the very rare roseate terns – one of the most endangered sea birds in Europe. The rocks exposed at low tide in the bay are known locally as cormorant rocks after the primeval looking cormorants perch on them with wings outstretched to dry their feathers.

At the moment you are at the centre of what is a great Irish literary triangle.

Looking away from the sea you can see the hills of Dalkey and Killiney. This area has close associations with Nobel Laureate George Bernard Shaw. One of the world's great dramatists Shaw was born in Dublin in 1856. As a child Shaw and his mother moved to Torca Cottage on Dalkey Hill. Shaw, who professed no love of the city of Dublin, once stated that the happiest hour of his life came when he was told he was going to live in Dalkey. He once commented that 'I owe more than I can express to the natural beauty of that enchanting situation commanding the two great bays between Howth and Bray Head and its canopied skies such as I have never seen elsewhere in the world'. To this day Dalkey retains its attraction to literary and artistic figures and is home to Maeve Binchy, Hugh Leonard, Neil Jordan, Enya, Bono and many others.

Dun Laoghaire's East Pier on your left as you look out to sea is another significant literary landmark. It is associated with Samuel Beckett, another Nobel Prize Winner. Beckett was born about 4 kilometres from Dún Laoghaire, in Foxrock, and the whole area of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown features significantly in his darkly comic works. In his play Krapp's Last Tape he uses the East Pier as the setting for a real life experience which actually happened at Greystones in Wicklow when he was struggling to establish himself as a writer. On this walk came the revelation that he would use himself as his own subject

'Spiritually a year of profound gloom and indigence until that memorable night in March, at the end of the jetty, in the howling wind, never to be forgotten, when suddenly saw the whole thing. The vision at last...the fire that set me alight...great granite rocks the foam flying up in the light of the lighthouse and the wind gauge spinning like a propeller, clear to me at last...'

We will now walk to Stop 5 the final corner of this literary triangle which is the Martello Tower of Sandycove which you can see along the coast to your right. [Someone describe how to get here].

### **Stop 5 Joyces Tower**

You are now standing outside the Martello Tower of Sandycove now known as Joyce's Tower. It is the final corner of the great literary triangle and is perhaps the most important location in modern English literature. Writer James Joyce spent 6 days in the tower in 1904, a guest of another writer Oliver St. John Gogarty. This tower provides the setting for the first Chapter of his literary masterpiece *Ulysses* based on events in his native Dublin on June 16, 1904, otherwise known as Bloomsday. The tower is where 'stately plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed'. During the chapter Joyce refers to the sea around the tower as 'snotgreen and scrotum tightening'. In the second chapter, set in nearby Dalkey, one character refers to the piers of Dún Laoghaire as 'a disappointed bridge'. Every year on Bloomsday, June 16, the tower at Sandycove is the centre for world celebrations of one of the greatest books in the English language.

A visit to the James Joyce Museum in the Martello Tower will take about 30 minutes. There are great views from its roof where the opening lines of *Ulysses* are set.

Now to get to stop 6 you now need to retrace your steps past Sandycove harbour and walk up Sandycove avenue east to the traffic lights and the junction with Sandycove Road.

### **Stop 6 Junction of Sandycove Road and Sandycove Avenue East.**

The tour has now reached its furthest point from Dun Laoghaire. However, for the more energetic about a ten minute walk left towards Dalkey is a left turn down to the coast and the picturesque Harbour at Bullock which dates from medieval times. One can usually hire boats from here and a large number of seals frequent the harbour area. If you continue further along the main road passing the turn for Bullock you will arrive at Dalkey village, one of the loveliest villages in Dublin which has Dalkey Castle and Visitor Centre. It will take 10 minutes to walk to Dalkey and the visit to the Centre lasts 30 minutes. There is a Dart station in Dalkey where you can get a train.

Now back to the tour.

At the Sandycove Road and Sandycove Avenue East junction turn right back towards Dun Laoghaire. After some 50 metres you will see on your left you will see two buildings that have commemorative plaques on them. One is Tara Hall, the other is 4 Lawson Terrace.

Tara Hall was the residence of writer Monk Gibbon. Gibbon's home was a literary centre with regular afternoon tea parties which ran into the evening. Those who attended these events included Irish writers Padraic Colum, Austin Clarke and Ulick O'Connor. Gibbon always wrote in bed and often wandered down to the sea front in his pyjamas to collect driftwood. He was a keen cyclist all his life and could be seen riding his bike around Dún Laoghaire and Sandycove when he was in his late eighties.

Roger Casement was born at 4 Lawson Terrace in 1864. Casement was a diplomat, human rights activist and Irish republican. In 1895 he began a career in the British consular service and served in various countries. His report into the human rights abuses by the Belgian government in the Congo earned him the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George in 1905. He was later posted to South America where he investigated the abuse of workers in the rubber industry in Peru. His report earned him an international reputation as a humanitarian. He was knighted for his work.

However, Sir Roger Casement became disillusioned with the activities of the British Empire and in Ireland he became a member of the provisional committee of the Irish Volunteers. During World War I Casement fostered relations with Britain's enemy Germany and on Good Friday 1916 was arrested at Banna Strand, County Kerry. He had come ashore from a German submarine while a ship, the Aud, laden with guns for the Rising against British rule was also intercepted. Casement was found guilty of High Treason and was executed at Pentonville Prison on August 3, 1916.

To get to the next stop, stop 7, continue in the same direction towards Dun Laoghaire and stop at the crossroads in the middle of Glasthule village.

### **Stop 7 Glasthule Village**

Over the years Glasthule village has become a fine place for food, wine and other speciality shops and has a number of cafes, restaurants and pubs.

Again this area has a large number of connections with figures in Irish literature including Dennis Johnston, John Millington Synge, July Parsons, Hugo Hamilton, James Stephens, Flan O'Brien, Padraig Colum and LAG Strong. No-where in Ireland is there such a rich concentration of writers than the area around Dún Laoghaire.

The customary peace and quiet of this sleepy part of Dublin was rudely disturbed on the evening of December 20, 1940 when the village of Glasthule was the site of an attack by the German Luftwaffe. At around 7 pm an aircraft approached from the south-east flying over Dalkey and was heard diving to a height of a few hundred feet. A target indicator flare preceded the dropping of two bombs which injured three people. It was one of seven attacks on neutral Ireland during World War II known in Ireland as 'the Emergency'..

Continuing on towards Dun Laoghaire we will make our way to the last stop on the tour at the People's Park which is about 500 metres from Glasthule. On the way you will see Saint Joseph's church which has a number of beautiful stained glass windows. You will also cross the railway at Sandycove train station with the Metals running along it. There is an interesting street sign on the way for 'Martello Avenue'

a reference to a Martello Tower that once stood on the site of the People's Park. The People's Park is a small park on your right hand side surrounded by a low stone wall with traditional cast-iron railings.

### Stop 8 People's Park

**This is the last stop on the tour. Feel free to wander around this attractive Victorian park.**

This park was originally the site of a Martello Tower and afterwards was the location of a Quarry used in the construction of the harbour. In 1890 the Town Commissioners of Dún Laoghaire opened the area as a public park. Designed by J.L. Robinson a prominent architect of the area also responsible for the Town Hall and Spire of St. Michael's Church the park is a wonderful piece of Victorian design and a showcase for the town that had grown from being a small fishing village to being the choice of place of residence for many of the great and the good of the city of Dublin.

The People's Park is the location for a very popular farmers' market every Sunday. There is also a playground for smaller children and a garden for the visually impaired. One unusual characteristic of the park is that many of the trees and benches are dedicated to the memory of local people. There is also a Victorian tea-rooms open to the public.

Iron railings are a feature of the park and of the area of Dun Laoghaire generally. Unlike most Victorian towns in England where these railings were melted down for war use the squares and fine houses of Dun Laoghaire have retained theirs.

Before leaving the area of Dún Laoghaire you should take the opportunity of wandering around the fine Victorian residences and squares of the area. Many of these are Protected Structures – some of the more than 2,000 protected structures in the county.

Fine examples of the classic Victorian squares of Dun Laoghaire are to be found a few minutes inland at Clarinda Park, Crosthwaite Park and Royal Terrace.

We have now come to the end of the tour. There are a number of options that you can take from here. You can continue along the main road, that brought you from Glasthule, up George's Street, Dún Laoghaire's main shopping street where there are plenty of shops, café's, restaurants and bars. At the main junction a right turn will bring you back to the DART station. Alternatively you can stroll through the park to the entrance by the sea – if you turn left it will bring you back to the start of the tour.

This MP3 tour produced by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

I would like to finish the tour with a poem I wrote about growing up in this unique area.

*The sea, murmuring.*

*The clank of ropes on masts.*

*The baths. Teddy's Ice Cream.*

*The tang of chips and vinegar.*

*Salt-breeze. Sea-wrack. Gull-cry. Dogs.*

*Lost mongrels trotting the sleepy Metals.*

*The holy aromas of Caviston's deli.*

*Mr Clegg's key-cutting and shoe-repair shop, Dalkey.*

*Once, as a child, I saw Hugh Leonard on Castle Street.*

*Handsome as a Magi. Grave as Yeats.*

*Old Sandycove shops, dead wasps in the windows.*

*Forum Cinema, a week before demolition,*

*Faded poster for 'Jimi Hendrix at Woodstock: Late Show!'*

*Martello Tower: stately, plump.*

*The People's Park, my first French kiss,*

*(Gorgeous Patricia Keegan, from Monkstown Farm).*

*The bandstand on the Pier, where she broke my heart.*

*Dog-walkers. Lugubrious foghorns.*

*The ghosts of drowned lifeboatmen.*

*Hugo Hamilton, speckled boy, sitting on a wall.*

*The benches by the lighthouse,*

*On one of those August midnights*

*When you could reach out your hand*

*To stir the stars around in the sky.*

*Borough of steeples. Chapels and bars.*

*The Druid's Chair.*

*The discos of summertime.*

*Heavy metal howling from a pub on George's Street.*

*Smoke on the water. Smoke in the sky.*

*Michael's Church in Dún Laoghaire that burnt to the ground.*

*New church they built, with the black rubber floor.*

*(Old lady saying it smelt like a bicycle shop.)*

*Chinese girls on Bullock Harbour, buying crabs from the fishermen.*

*Africans in multicoloured robes, playing football on Glasthule green.*

*And the ghost of the Pavilion Cinema.*

*Taj Mahal of pastelled glamour!*

*Like a luxury liner that sailed up from the harbour*

*And moored itself, majestic, in the San Tropez of Marine Road.*

*Mariners' Church, with its special barred gallery*

*For prisoners who were brought there to praise the God of Oceans.*

*Afternoon Tea at the Royal Marine.*

*Elderly gentlemen, playing crown green bowls,*

*Grass-stains on the knees of their white, ironed slacks.*

*Forever young. Forever in Kingstown.*

*Punk beauty on the Pier,*

*Hand shading her eyes,*

*As she gazes across the billows at the astonishment of Howth.*

*And the sea, always murmuring.*

*The clank of ropes on masts.*

*As Banville has it, in his Book of Evidence:*

*'Like the sound of a Chinese orchestra.'*