

# ARCH IN THE PARK

Phoenix Park, Saturday 11 May 2013

## FREE Archaeological Workshop

Geophysics: Magnetic susceptibility /  
Magnetic gradiometry / Earth resistance

Kevin Barton, NUI Galway, Dr. Ger Dowling, Discovery Programme,  
Gary Devlin, Discovery Programme.

Aerial kite photography

Dr. John Wells, West Lothian Archaeological Trust.

Guided walk and talk

Franc Myles, Licensed Archaeologist.

First session: 10.30am - 12pm

Second session: 1pm - 2.30pm

Booking: [archaeology@dublincity.ie](mailto:archaeology@dublincity.ie)

Arch in the Park is a FREE EVENT which will aim to use archaeological remote sensing techniques to uncover the footprint and remains of the star-shaped fort at the Phoenix Park. Other activities that take place on the day will include a kite aerial photography demonstration above the magazine fort and a walk and talk to provide archaeological and historic background.

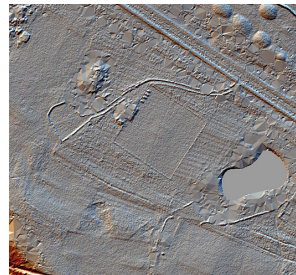
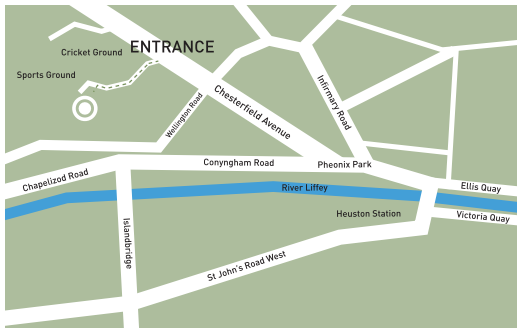


## Star shaped fort

The star-shaped fort at the Phoenix Park (SMR: DU018-007012) is located just south of Chesterfield Avenue at the SE end of the park. Covering 27 acres and consisting of substantial earthen embankments, the fort was commissioned by the Earl of Wharton during his lord lieutenantcy (1708-1710) and construction commenced in 1710. Designed by Thomas Burgh, the construction of the fort was part of a move towards using the park for military purposes in the eighteenth century. During this time, the park was used for military reviews, manoeuvres, encampments and artillery practices, indeed a salute battery was erected in the 'Wellington Fields', just to the east of the star fort, also in 1710. Reportedly due to cost overruns and unsuitability of the site, work on the fort stopped abruptly in 1711, although several maps from the period depict the fort apparently in its entirety.

The star fort was eventually levelled in August 1837 as an employment scheme for distressed weavers and was a major undertaking given the volume of earth to be moved. The remains of the fort are no longer visible today, although a series of ponds (including the Citadel pond) represent the remains of the defensive moat. A section of the northern portion of the fort was excavated in 2011 and remains of parts of the moat were uncovered in addition to the remains of a probable French drain.

## Directions



## Magazine fort

Construction of the magazine fort (SMR: DU018-007019) was commissioned by the Duke of Dorset in 1734 for the purposes of providing a powder magazine for the Dublin-based regiments, i.e. for the storage of arms and explosives. The original construction covered an area of approximately 61m<sup>2</sup> with a demi-bastion at each of the four angles which functioned as watch towers. It was surrounded by a moat and a drawbridge, overlooked by a sentry box, provided access on the eastern side. A 1793 plan of the fort shows that the interior contained several buildings: 4 powder magazines, 1 ammunition magazine, an officers' room [complete with coal-hole], and a Howitzer! In 1801, Francis Johnston added a triangle of brick buildings to the front of the original drawbridge entrance.

The magazine fort retained its military functions right up to the 20th century and was the victim of two raids. On the Monday of the 1916 Rising, a 30-strong party of Irish Volunteers and Fianna Éireann captured the fort, succeeding in taking guns but failing in an attempt to destroy the building by setting fires. On 23rd December 1939, the IRA removed 40 lorry-loads of guns and ammunition from the fort – which was then held by the Irish Army – although most of the loot was recovered by 28th December.