

# Bangor Cycling & Walking Heritage Trail

**Guidance for using this Map**

- All users must adhere to the guidance contained within the Highway Code <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/highway-code> and traffic-free sections.
- Cyclists should be aware that the Trail consists of both on-road and traffic-free sections.
- For on-road sections, cyclists should consider traffic conditions and may choose to walk parts of the trail if traffic is heavy.
- For traffic-free sections, cyclists must give priority to pedestrians and show consideration to all other path users.
- Traffic-free sections are more suitable for cycling with younger children. Parents must decide where it is appropriate to cycle with their child.

**Foldout Map**

Ards and North Down Borough Council  
CyclingUK Northern Ireland

Ards and North Down Cycling Campaign Group

Scan QR code

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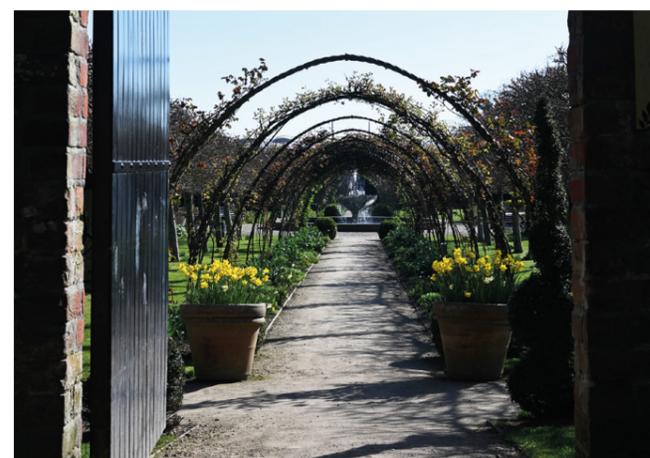
## 5 Ward Park

In 1908, Bangor Council leased this site from Lady Clanmorris with the purpose of creating a new park. Formerly used by Bryce's Brickworks and Cheal's Nurseries, much of that new park's Edwardian charm has been preserved to this day.

At the heart of the park stands the War Memorial, unveiled in 1927. It features a bronze sculpture of 'Erin' placing a palm frond on the obelisk.

In front of the memorial stands a gun which has been climbed over by generations of Bangor children. It was taken from the deck of a World War 1 submarine, U-19. This vessel was in active service and sank 58 ships, including several in the Irish Sea. U-boat captains often preferred to surface and use the deck gun due to the limited number of torpedoes carried and their lack of accuracy. At the end of the war, U-19 surrendered and was dismantled. Its gun was sent to Bangor in honour of Commander Barry Bingham VC, who was born in Bangor Castle in 1881. Commanding HMS Nestor in the Battle of Jutland, he launched an attack on the German Fleet, approaching close enough to fire the ship's torpedoes before it was severely damaged and disabled. Bingham received the Victoria Cross for his actions, which were described as 'one of the stirring examples of fine leadership', and his medal can be seen in the nearby North Down Museum.

You may wish to take a short diversion and see the ducks, geese and caged birds in the park. Cyclists are reminded that pedestrians have priority at all times in the park.



## 6 Walled Garden

Cyclists must dismount before entering the Walled Garden. The Walled Garden was created in the 1840s by the Ward family who lived at Bangor Castle. It produced vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers for the 'big house'. After World War 1 the family's interests lay elsewhere and the garden, along with the surrounding parkland and buildings fell into decline. The whole estate was bought by the then Bangor Borough Council in 1941 for £35,000 (around £2.25 million pounds in today's money).

After the purchase, the garden served as a plant nursery and subsequently as storage until 2007 when an ambitious restoration plan was unveiled. Opening to the public in 2009, the 1.5-acre space features a flower garden, a wildflower garden, a kitchen garden, and a damp garden. Portions of the kitchen garden are planted and maintained by the Bangor Horticultural Society.

There are two significant art works in the garden. The central fountain represents a flax flower with fish spiralling upwards out of the centre. It was inspired by a Victorian tongue twister, 'A Twister Twisting' which can be read on the pond coping as you wander round and round.

A second sculpture, 'The Curved Horn,' symbolises Bangor's historical name (Beannchor) and incorporates elements from Bangor's heritage, including the prow of a longboat, a fern, the Bangor Abbey Bell, a fisherman's net, and a whale's golden tooth.

There is a café and toilet facilities on-site. In the event of the garden being closed, walk round the garden by turning right at the entrance and following the wall. Cyclists should give priority to pedestrians in the Park.



## 7 Bangor Castle

After being granted lands in Upper Clondeboye and Great Ardes by James 1st of England, James Hamilton came to live in Bangor, building a fortified house on this site. Through marriage, the estate came to the Wards. A new house built c. 1780 was succeeded by the current 'Castle', erected by Robert Edward Ward in 1852.



Raven map Bangor extract c.1620's

To the rear of the Castle is the former courtyard stable block, which now houses North Down Museum. The visible difference between them in style and stonework may be the result of Robert Ward appointing two separate architects to design and construct the 'new' buildings.

Robert Ward was a great music lover, and the house had a huge salon for recitals. This fine room, with panelled walls, now acts as the Council Chamber. Each of the first floor bedrooms had a tin bath painted to match the wall hangings. The final occupant was Ward's only daughter and heiress, Lady Maude Clanmorris. It was on her death in 1941 that the Borough Council purchased the house and estate.

From the elevated site of the House, 'Schomberg's Stump' can be seen surrounded by railings among the trees. Duke Frederick Schomberg was a German general who joined William of Orange on his expedition to England in 1688. Dispatched to Ireland to confront the army of James II, he landed in Ballyholme Bay in 1689. Marching to besiege Carrickfergus Castle it is said that Schomberg rested here under a tree. In 1690 Schomberg led William's army at the Battle of the Boyne and lost his life trying to cross the river.

## 8 Bangor Abbey

Though there are no remains of the early monastery founded on this site in 558AD by St Comgall, a 7th century manuscript, the Bangor Antiphony, now held in the Ambrosian Library, Milan, notes that it was governed by the 'good rule'. This stressed obedience, chastity and humility and proscribed an austere lifestyle with strictly limited foods (bread, vegetables, water) and a regimen of prayer guided by the bell. Miracles attributed to St Comgall include healing a blind man with water from a spring in or near present-day Southwell Road in Bangor.



When Europe was seen to be in spiritual decline, many missionaries left Ireland, most notably saints Columbanus and Gall who left Bangor in 591 AD founding monasteries in Luxeuil (France), Bregenz (Austria), St Gallen (Switzerland) and Bobbio (Italy). The monastery declined following Viking raids in the 9th century, but was restored in importance in the twelfth century by St Malachy.

Sir James Hamilton rebuilt the abbey as a parish church in 1617 and c.1780 workmen found a 9th century bell in the grounds. It is speculated that it was hidden from Viking raiders and now resides in the nearby Museum. The large bell sculpture nearby commemorates the monastery. It is the largest bell ever made in Ireland and was constructed using the repoussé method, requiring 400,000 hammer blows from within.

The Churchyard behind the Abbey is of interest, with information provided about notable graves.



Bangor monastic enclosure shown in red outline

## START Bangor Bus and Train Station

The railway arrived in Bangor with the opening of a fine Italianate Station, designed by Charles Lanyon, on 1st May 1865. Pictures of the original station and the changes made to it through the years can be seen in a small exhibition accessed through the station's side door.

Cyclists should consider the traffic conditions on Bangor's busy Main St and may wish to consider walking to the first location on the map.



### 1 Market House

The Market House was completed in around 1780 and has served many purposes in its lifetime. It has been a court house, the Town Hall, an infant school (commonly called 'The Ward School'), a bank and a performance space for the local musical society.

It was also the scene of a grisly event. In June 1798 the Society of United Irishmen rebelled against English rule, seeking Parliamentary reform and removal of Penal Laws against Catholics and Presbyterians. Co. Down was a hotbed of dissent and guns were looted from Bangor Harbour on 10 June. The rebellion was crushed at the Battle of Ballynahinch, 13 June, and the ringleaders rounded up. Three from Bangor were hanged at the dock and their bodies displayed on the roof of the Market House as a warning to the populace. You can see the headstone of one of them, Archibald Wilson, in Bangor Abbey Churchyard.



### 2 The Promenade

Bangor's name may derive from the Irish word 'Beannchor' meaning 'curved horn' which could relate to the shape of the headlands pointing out into the sea from the coast. St Patrick is said to have rested here and saw a vision of the valley inland 'filled with Angels'.

Between the 1850s and 1920s, some tourists would have arrived by paddle steamer. At the peak of the trade, there were six return sailings daily from Belfast to Bangor, which led to a popular rhyme, 'The Bangor Boat's Away'.

*"The Bangor Boat's away, We have no time to play... We'll not go near the water, To chase the ducks away."*



### 3 Custom House & Eisenhower Pier

The last Gaelic Lord of Clondeboye, Conn O'Neill, forfeited half of his lands in 1601 following a dispute with English soldiers that resulted in his imprisonment. Subsequently, one third of these lands, including Bangor, were granted to James Hamilton, an agent and informer for King James I of England.

Hamilton developed Bangor, founding a successful Protestant Scottish settlement several years before the Plantation of Ulster. He built the Customs House with its tower in 1637 hoping to consolidate Bangor's position as a port and overcome competition from Carrickfergus and Donaghadee. From 1933-54, the building was used as a hot salt water spa.

On the other side of the road stands the Eisenhower Pier. In 1944 Belfast Lough was crowded with US Naval Ships readying for the WW2 Normandy landings. General Dwight D Eisenhower came to Bangor, inspected the 30,000 American soldiers present and then went out to the 27,000 ton USS Texas anchored in Bangor Bay to give a final speech.



### 4 Royal Ulster Yacht Club

The Yacht Club was formed in 1866 and received approval for the title 'Royal' from Queen Victoria in 1869. The current club house was completed in 1899 and is eye catching with its 'Tudorbethan' style of architecture designed by Vincent Craig. Several members of the Royal family have visited most notably Queen Elizabeth II who took afternoon tea there while Prince Phillip sailed his yacht 'Coweslip' in a regatta.

The most famous member of the club was Thomas Lipton. Born into poverty in Glasgow he rose to prominence as a shop and tea magnate. Having been 'black-balled' for not being a gentleman when he tried to join New York Yacht Club, he vowed to win the world's most prestigious sailing race, the Americas Cup. Lipton was familiar with Northern Ireland as he had worked on a Glasgow - Belfast steamer as a boy. He made his base at Royal Ulster and challenged for the trophy five times. The prize was not to be his - he was dubbed the 'World's best loser' - but his face and products were seen everywhere in America as a result of his efforts.

