



Queen's Park Heritage Trail





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Queen's Park History and Heritage

Camp Hill (now Queen's Park) and Langside Hill to the south are situated on a drumlin which are mounds of boulder clay that remained after the retreat of the glaciers at the end of the last Ice Age. Such hills are a characteristic feature of the Glasgow townscape, particularly north of the Clyde where several are intensively built over. Camp Hill is an irregular oval less than a kilometre long and reaches a maximum height of 65 metres (209ft) above sea level.

With the commanding views over much (though not all) of the surrounding countryside it is perhaps not surprising to find that the flat topped summit has been occupied since prehistoric times. The remaining circular earthwork is thought unlikely to have been primarily defensive in purpose, but may date originally from the Iron Age (1000BC – 1000AD).

Queen's Park is steeped in history and the south eastern edge of the park was the site of the Battle of Langside fought on the 13th May 1568.



Detail from stained glass window in Rawcliffe of Mary Queen of Scots after the Battle of Langside by W. & J. J. Kier, Glasgow, 1874
Photograph Michael Farrell



The forces of Mary Queen of Scots (1542-87) who had escaped from Loch Leven Castle eleven days earlier were intercepted by troops loyal to her half brother James Stuart, 1st Earl of Moray and Regent of Scotland (1531-70). Mary had mustered an army of 6,000 men led by Archibald Campbell, the 5th Earl of Argyll (1530-73) and was heading for the security of Dumbarton Castle when it was blocked by the Earl of Moray's occupation of Langside Hill. Mary's army took up positions on Clincart Hill where Langside College now stands. Moray's forces of about 4,000 were assembled around the village of Langside and in the south east corner of the park, which is now the miniature golf course. The two sides fired cannons at each other for about half an hour while their foot soldiers took position and it took the Regent's army just forty five minutes to defeat Mary's army with loss of about 400 men. Mary fled to England, to imprisonment and eventual execution in 1587. The personalities of Mary's reign and the battle are commemorated in street names throughout the south side of Glasgow among them her commanders the Lords Herries, Terregles and the Earl of Eglinton.

According to tradition, the Roman Catholic dead from the Battle of Langside were buried in the marsh area in the north side of the park (adjacent to the bandstand) because they were denied interment in the Protestant churchyard at Cathcart. This area of the park was known as the Kirkyard Park or the De'il's Kirkyard. There is yet to be any discovered proof to support this theory.

The area now Queen's Park was originally part of the lands of Langside which belonged to the Maxwells of Pollok. By the late 17th century, the western part had been sold off to form Camphill Farm, which passed through several generations of the Crawford family before being sold in 1799 to Robert Thomson, a manufacturer in Glasgow, who built Camphill House. His son Robert T Thomson bought the adjoining

Pathhead Farm from Sir James Maxwell of Pollok in 1834 and his grandson, Neale Thomson sold it for £30,000 to the Glasgow Corporation in 1857 for the purpose of forming Glasgow's third public park.

The park was developed in the late 19th century in response to the increasing population density of Glasgow in general, and the South Side in particular, with the growth of tenement housing supplying the increased demand for middle-class homes. Victorian Glasgow took the provision of open spaces extremely seriously, with the result that parks such as Queen's Park sprang up across the city.

Originally to be called the South Side Park; Queen's Park was formally opened on 11th September 1862, the year of Queen Victoria's Silver Jubilee. The Park was opened by Bailie Gemmell, the Convener of the Park Committee, who, in commemoration of the event planted a chestnut tree at what is now the entrance to the Wellcroft Bowling Green (it is still flourishing today).





The park was dedicated to the memory of Mary Queen of Scots and not Queen Victoria, a common misconception given the proximity to Victoria Road and the park was created during her reign.

Queen's Park was laid out between 1857 and 1862 to the design of Sir Joseph Paxton, architect of the Crystal Palace and Glasgow's own Botanic Gardens. After laying out Kelvingrove Park the City's fathers commissioned him to design Queen's Park and Alexandra Park in the East of the city. Thus the hand of one man, with considerable assistance from the city architect John Carrick, produced the whole suite of Glasgow's early Victorian Parks.

The original plans of 1860 showed a complimentary mix of formal and informal features. On one hand, a lavish winter garden which would house concerts and exhibitions on the flatted terrace facing north towards Victoria Road. In contrast, a winding carriage drive and a large artificial loch which was to be bridged by Langside Road which runs between the park and the Victoria Infirmary were suggested.

These plans were considered too extravagant, and the plans were modified by the City Master of Works, John Carrick and neither the loch nor the winter gardens were built. Coincidentally, Paxton had also been invited to submit plans for Kelvingrove Park in 1854, and on that occasion too Carrick edited out a lake and winter gardens. The south side of the park was deliberately laid out naturally, with pleasant grassy slopes and woodland areas. To the North, the picture is far more formal. As with Kelvingrove Park, Paxton's design is evocative of the grand Victorian manner. The main drive sweeps through impressive entrance gates, up a fine granite staircase and on up to a magnificent terrace some 750 feet long and 140 feet wide. Queen's Park was constructed by the unemployed during 1858-59.

The Camphill Estate was sold by the Thomson family in 1866 to the patrons of Hutcheson's Hospital. When the City boundary was extended to the River Cart in 1891, moves were made to acquire the estate, and in 1893, the Corporation bought it from the patrons of Hutcheson's Hospital. By that date the sandstone tenements had virtually surrounded the park.



Camphill House photographed 1880

About this addition Mr McLellan, ex superintendent of parks, in one of his interesting "Glasgow Parks" articles, in the Glasgow Herald of 26th December 1893, writes: *"With regard to the laying out of the new portion of the park, there are some four or five acres, including the flower garden, plant houses, part of the kitchen garden, and large bowling green, which are admirably suited for being set apart as a place of instruction and amusement in the shape of an arboretum, gymnasium, and maze, such as has been constructed at Hampton Court and Hatfield. The old garden should certainly be preserved, as there are few specimens near Glasgow which show so well what the old-fashioned gardens of our country houses used to be. A considerable portion of the lower ground is well suited for feuing purposes, for which a large sum could be obtained, and which*



which would not detract in any way from the natural beauties and amenities of the park. It would be desirable to continue the present carriage drive in the Queen's Park round the north and west side of the camp, and connect it with Camphill Drive round the base of the hill to Langside."

The drive round the base of the hill known as 'beech avenue' became the present carriageway from Langside Avenue to Camphill House (some of the original beech trees have survived).

In 1895 just after Camphill Estate had been purchased, a conservatory and hot houses were built on the hillside opposite the rose garden. They housed an exotic array of plants set among classical statues as well as producing bedding plants for the park.



The Glasshouse was demolished in 1930 and all that remains is a set of stone stairs at the bottom of Camphill.

John MacLean (1879 – 1923) seen here front centre on the steps of the glasshouse in 1918 was the hero of 'Red Clydeside' in the early twentieth century.



John MacLean was born in Pollokshaws, Glasgow the second youngest of four children and went to Queen's Park School. After school he trained as a teacher and eventually gained an M.A. from Glasgow University in 1904. A Marxist and labour leader who founded the Scottish Workers' Republican Party, he was appointed the first Soviet Consul in Britain in 1918 but was imprisoned five times for his views. John MacLean died aged 44 on 30 November 1923 at his home in Pollokshaws. His funeral march, led by the Clyde Workers' Band, was followed by between 10,000 and 20,000 people through the south side of Glasgow to his final resting place in Eastwood Cemetery.



Queen's Park Trail

1. Glasshouse (1905)



The Queen's Park Trail which should take approximately an hour and thirty minutes, begins at the Glasshouse which was built in 1905 by Simpson & Farmer of Partick and is Category 'B' listed. Other glasshouses built by Simpson and Farmer were Botanic Gardens, the Winter Gardens at Springburn Park and the conservatory at Tollcross Park. Queen's Park glasshouse consists of a central dome that gives access to a series of long, low glasshouse ranges. The area in front of the glasshouses has recently been upgraded with new entrance gates, lawns, picnic and seating areas.

Today the glasshouses are a popular attraction with over 150,000 visitors annually. Along with the many Tropical plant species the glasshouse exhibits a collection of birds and reptiles in what used to be the propagation house. Entering the glasshouse via the porch takes you into the dome area where there is a shop; while at the top end of the house is a café serving food and refreshments.

2. Langside Monument (1887) and the Battle of Langside



As you leave the glasshouse directly in front of you stands the impressive Langside Monument Category 'B' listed which commemorates a decisive battle in Scotland's history, the Battle of Langside (13th May 1568) which marked the final defeat of Mary Queen of Scots.

The memorial, dating from 1887 (the 300th anniversary of Queen Mary's death) was designed by Alexander Skirving, a former assistant of Alexander 'Greek' Thomson. The tall granite column has a lion at the top with a cannon ball under its paw, facing the battlefield, and decorated with thistles, roses and fleurs-de-lis reflecting Mary's coat of arms and marks the point where the thick of the battle took place, at the top of the 'Lang Loan', now Battlefield Road. It was restored by the Cathcart Society and others in 1988 as part of Glasgow's 'Adopt a Monument' scheme.

3. Hill 60 Wildlife Area

This area which is referred to locally as 'Hill 60' is a natural grassland with scattered clusters of trees and shrubs. It provides a good habitat for butterflies, caterpillars, frogs, toads and voles. The scattered trees and shrubs provide homes for mini beasts, nest sites for some birds and berries for winter feeding.



4. Scottish Poetry Rose Garden



The Scottish Poetry Rose Garden is situated on the site of what was once a walled garden adjacent to the original Camphill Hothouse. A rose garden was developed on this site during the late 1960s. Framed with a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees, the area provided opportunities for both formal and informal planting.

In the quest for a theme for a new rose garden, it became apparent that though there are many monuments to individual poets, Scottish poetry in general has no public area as a focus. Queen's Park rose garden therefore presented the opportunity to link the themes of poetry and roses, so often parallel. The

Garden was opened by HRH Princess Anne on 17th July 2003.

Stone setts commemorate twelve Scottish poets from Henryson (15th century) to Burns (18th century) and Violet Jacob (20th century). There are three carved stones by David Lindsay of Edinburgh each with a poem quoted. The central one, by Hugh McDiarmid, praises 'the little white rose of Scotland'. On the east stone are lines from Sorley McLean, Scotland's foremost Gaelic poet.

5. Camphill Bowling Club

On your right hand side just as you exit the park gates is Camphill Bowling and Tennis Club. This is one of three bowling clubs within the park. Originally a private green laid out by Andrew Hoggan for the use of his family, friends and estate workers it became an established club in 1888. By 1933 the club was expanded and a further 2 greens and tennis ground was added to its northern side. All that remains today is the original green with the remainder of the ground developed as a five a side football complex.

6. Langside Halls





Bordering the park, Langside Halls is a Category 'A' listed building. It was originally one of the city's most imposing commercial buildings, the National Bank of Scotland at 57 Queen Street, designed in 1847 by John Gibson, a prolific bank architect, with sculpture by John Thomas who also worked on the decoration of the Houses of Parliament. An 1872 Glasgow Guide described this as 'one of the most beautiful banking houses in the City'. When Mount Florida, Langside and Shawlands were annexed to the City of Glasgow in 1891, the City had to provide a public hall for the area. The whole building was dismantled, moved from the city centre and reconstructed here in 1902-03 with the interior much altered at a cost of £18,251. Moving the bank building met the need at higher quality and (probably) cost less than building a new one from scratch.

As you walk towards Camphill House you will see on your left the Goals Football Centre which is a privately run sports development. This was constructed on the site of the former Camphill Bowling Club.

7. Camphill House (1798)



Camphill House (Category 'A' listed) once stood at the heart of the Camphill Estate which dominated the area west of Langside village. The house is a classical house design with corner pilasters and a portico of coupled Ionic columns. It was probably designed by David Hamilton in about 1798 and built between 1800 and 1818 for Robert Thomson (1771-1831). Thomson was a partner with his father (also Robert, 1742-1820) in Robert Thomson & Sons, whose Adelphie Cotton Works in Hutchesontown was said to have been the first in Glasgow to manufacture cotton goods.

In 1894 the house and its grounds were added to Glasgow Corporation's Queen's Park. The building was converted into a museum in 1895-1896 and contained displays of costume and relics relating to the Battle of Langside (1598). The museum closed in the 1980s and in 1995 the building was converted into flats.

8. Nature Pond



The small duck pond was naturalised, creating areas for emergent vegetation to be planted. These plants provide cover and feeding for waterbirds and habitat for aquatic minibeasts such as damselflies who require such vegetation to enable them to crawl out of the water and emerge into beautifully coloured flying insects. Large numbers of frogs also lay their spawn in the pond. Since naturalisation, Mute Swan, Mallard and Coot as well as Moorhen have all nested. Some of the plants such as the native iris, Yellow Flag, with their bright yellow flowers in summer, make the pond an attractive place to visit and watch the wildlife including the young of the breeding waterbirds.



9. Boating Pond (1905)



A postcard showing model yacht and clubhouse

In Sir Joseph Paxton's original plans, a loch was proposed for the park, this however did not materialise. Instead the large boating pond and its smaller ornamental neighbour were excavated out of the lawn of Camphill House in 1905 just after the Camphill Estate was purchased. The pond has been used since its conception by model yacht clubs and, as times have changed, model boat enthusiasts.

The pond was also used for recreational purposes with paddle and rowing boats. The pond today is used to promote 'Sailing in the City', an educational project offering school children the opportunity to gain skills in the art of sailing.



The boating pond attracts common toad to breed, laying long strings of spawn. The young toads have to leave the pond around July and found that impossible because of the vertical sides of the pond therefore some ramps were created to enable the toadlets to emerge from the pond.

10. Balvicar Street Entrance



The Balvicar Street entrance to the park is a late 19th century/early 20th century Category 'C' listed gateway comprising of 4 chamfered square and corniced polished ashlar piers, the inner 2 bigger. This entrance would have been the main entrance to Camphill House as early OS maps of 1860 show. It wasn't until around 1930 that it was relocated to its current site.

11. Balvicar Street Play Area

This modern play facility was refurbished in spring 2008. It has a variety of equipment across a broad range catering for children aged between 3 – 14 years. Types of play equipment which was installed was a Nexus Tornado Carousel (an overhead roundabout for older children) and for the toddlers two small trampolines.



12. Wellcroft Bowling Club

On the park boundary sits the Wellcroft Bowling Club. One of the oldest bowling clubs in the world with very full records dating back to when it was founded in 1835, its proud boast is that it drafted the rules of the game. Charles Rennie Mackintosh's father was a member and won the pairs competition in 1902. In 1876, the greens were relocated to Queen's Park from Eglinton Street to make way for London – Glasgow Railway on its approach to Central Station.

As you head towards the bandstand you can see the remains of the park's pony track. This was a very popular attraction during the post war year period.



13. Bandstand



The original circular bandstand was manufactured by Walter MacFarlane & Co constructed in cast and wrought iron by the Saracen Foundry, Glasgow. Ordinance survey map (1895) shows the bandstand situated west of Pathhead farm and by 1912 it was relocated to its current site on what is known as the bandstand field. A favourite pastime for a Sunday afternoon would have been a visit to the park to listen to a military band playing.

The bandstand was moved to Duchess Park, Motherwell in the 1920's. It was replaced around 1930 by a new south facing bandstand with amphitheatre style seating area similar to Kelvingrove. The bandstand burnt down in 1996, only the terraces remain as a testimony to a more genteel bygone era.

14. Victoria Road Entrance

The Victoria Road entrance to Queen's Park is early 20th century, Edwardian baroque. It comprises of 4 corniced ashlar sandstone gate piers the taller inner piers have a coat of arms engraved on them and are topped with wrought-iron lamp brackets. The decorative iron gates, railings and quadrants form part of this impressive entrance which was almost certainly the work of the City Engineer Alexander Beith McDonald (1847-1915),



who constructed a number of gateways to the city parks during the early part of the 20th century. Category 'B' listed.



South East of this entrance on Langside Road stood Queen's Park UF Church designed by Alexander 'Greek' Thomson in 1868-69. This was Thomson's final Glasgow Church and his most extraordinary creation, its façade was not so much Greek as Egyptian. The church was destroyed by a German incendiary bomb in March 1943.

15. Granite Staircase (1858-59)



The impressive granite staircase is a typical feature of Paxton's design. The stairway forms the central part of the main promenade which runs north to south through the park, the axis of the formal part of Paxton's layout. Looking north from the top of the staircase you become aware of the grand vista along Victoria Road to





the heart of the City. It comprises a 2-stage, monumental granite structure with 4 small square and corniced ashlar piers connected by ornate iron fencing. Each pier had a rustic vase mounted on them, sadly these have disappeared however, they will be replaced in a similar style in 2008. This will be achieved thanks to Sara Esam from Ottawa, Canada, who has bequeathed funds in memory of her mother who regularly visited Queen's Park.. The wide double gateway on the top landing opens into the grand terrace.

16. Terrace (1858-59)



This impressive terrace is 750ft long by 40 ft wide and offers impressive views down towards Victoria Rd. The well maintained floral displays occupy the terrace which Paxton envisaged for his 'winter gardens' The winter gardens were substituted by a formal garden in an 18th century Dutch style; but the bedding layout now reflects a more current European fashion.



17 Bowling Green and Tennis Courts



This area of the park is where most of the recreational facilities are concentrated. There is an 18 hole pitch and putt course, two public bowling greens and tennis courts. The tennis courts were upgraded in 1998 which included the introduction of an all weather surface and flood lights and now attract over 8,000 playing visitors annually. There is also an established Tennis Club which regularly uses the facility.

18. Pathhead Farm (pre 1860)



This group of buildings was preserved when the park was created. The original farm building dates back to before 1860. A typical 19th century open court farm, it is the successor to an older farm settlement on the



original track from the Gorbals to Cathcart, which climbed to this point before passing to the front of the farm and falling again towards Langside Village. Prior to being used as the Parks Offices it used to be the park rangers' house. The building is a two storey sandstone structure with attached outbuildings. The outbuilding was rebuilt after fire destroyed the original in 1985. Above the side door to the Parks Offices is a 'Let Glasgow Flourish' motif.

19. Commemorative Trees



Adjacent to the council offices are two commemorative trees. The larger of the two is a beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) which was planted in 1970 to mark the 25th anniversary of the United Nations. To the right of this is the 'Halabja Tree' a large leafed lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*) that was planted by Friends of Kurdistan Society (Scotland) in remembrance of thousands of Kurdish civilians murdered in chemical bombings of Halabja by the Iraqi Baathist Regime on 16.03.1988.

20. Flagpole/Viewpoint

The mound was artificially created to afford spectacular panoramic views over the city, and on a clear day, the central belt of Scotland. The centre piece of the view point is marked by a flagpole. The original was made of



wood, probably Douglas fir, however this was replaced with a metal pole when the timber pole failed. The elevation at this point in the park is 209ft above sea level. The view finder identifies the local church spires, the Cathedral and Glasgow University. In the distance you can make out the Kilpatrick and Campsie Hills, on a clear day the summit of Ben Lomond 29 miles away is visible.

21 Encampment / Earthworks

With the commanding views over much (though not all) of the surrounding countryside it is perhaps not surprising to find that the flat topped summit has been



occupied since prehistoric times. The park boundary is mainly made up of Camphill, which local legend suggests got its name from the remains of an old campsite discovered near the summit of the park. It is therefore not surprising then to find that the brow of the hill could possibly date back to the Iron Age (1000BC – 1000AD). Examinations of this area have discovered charred wood remains and half burnt grain. These artefacts are now in the possession of Kelvingrove Art gallery and Museum.

The discovery of an old millstone may also indicate that this site was part of an ancient kiln used for drying grain.

There is a dispute over the origins of this camp, popular belief suggests that it is a Pictish settlement dating back to the 3rd century, whilst others maintain that the camp is of Norman origin (12thC).

22. Allotments

The modern notion of an allotment came into being during the 19th Century. A lot of people from the country went to work and live in towns and cities, there was poverty, and what the Victorians called 'degeneracy' amongst the working class. In the Victorian scheme of things, allotments provided an alternative to drink and other unworthy pursuits for the poor. The spread of urban allotments was intensified by the growth of high density housing, often without gardens. It was during World War 2 that allotments became really popular as a major provider of food as many farm-workers went to the war.

The 1.1 hectare site of the allotments at Queen's Park has been utilised since the early 20th Century.

Historical maps show the boundary of the site laid out as early as 1916.

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