

# the Derry Walls



# The Derry Walls

## 400 years in the making

The Derry Walls were built in 1613-1619 to enclose the new Plantation city of London-Derry, controlling trade as well as being a fortification. Since then, the Walls have been a constant feature of the City's life, witnessing events, both celebratory and tragic. They have never been breached, withstanding besieging armies in 1649 and 1689. During the recent Troubles, the 17th century Walls provided images of conflict once again. They became part of a Peace Wall separating communities and were refortified with military watch towers.

In 1995, the Derry Walls were reopened to the public. Today, like surviving town walls the world over, the Derry Walls are being reclaimed as a resource for cultural and economic development, creating a special sense of enclosure at the heart of the city's commercial and cultural core.

You can play your part in this transformation, by using this guide to spend time exploring and enjoying the Derry Walls.



The Master Gunner and his Good Wife



Walker Monument destroyed in 1973 IRA bomb



Apprentice Boys march on Grand Parade



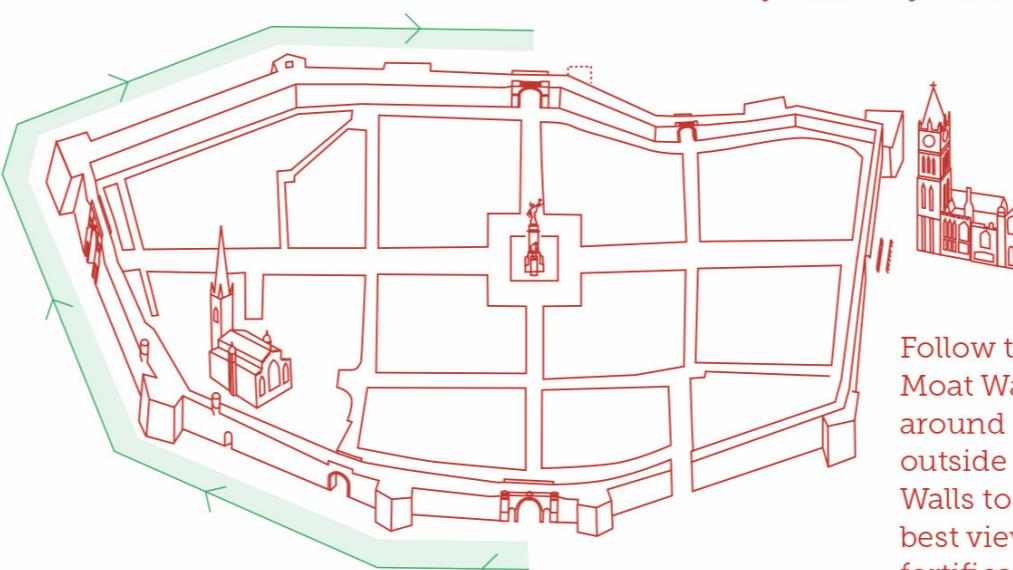
'Peter Benson' with modern-day masons



British Army's Masonic Camp

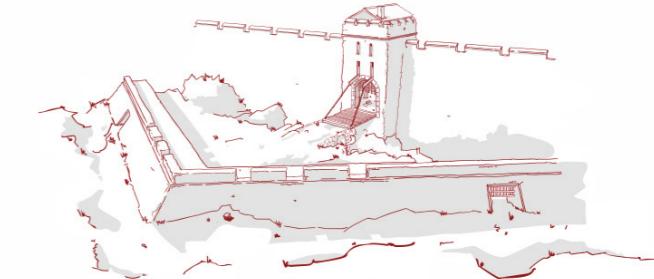


'Manus O' Cahan'  
Derry Walls Day 2013



Follow the Dry Moat Walk around the outside of the Walls to get the best views of the fortifications.

### Bishop's Gate Timeline



Siege Era Gate: 1688 - 1689



The Earl Bishop's Design: 1789



Troubles Era: 1968 - 1998

Turn over for your guide to the top features to look out for on your *Top of the Walls Walk* and *Dry Moat Walk*.

## Siege Cannon

Two Elizabethan cannon survive and can be found near Shipquay Gate, marked with a Tudor Rose and the date "1590". On Grand Parade and facing the Guildhall, there are nine cannon dating from 1610-1635. Look out for foundry marks and the City of London arms. On the bastions, see the seven 1642 cannons, inscribed on their barrels with the names of the London Companies - Mercers, Fishmongers, Grocers, Salters, Merchant Taylors and Vintners.



The Master Gunner and his Captain



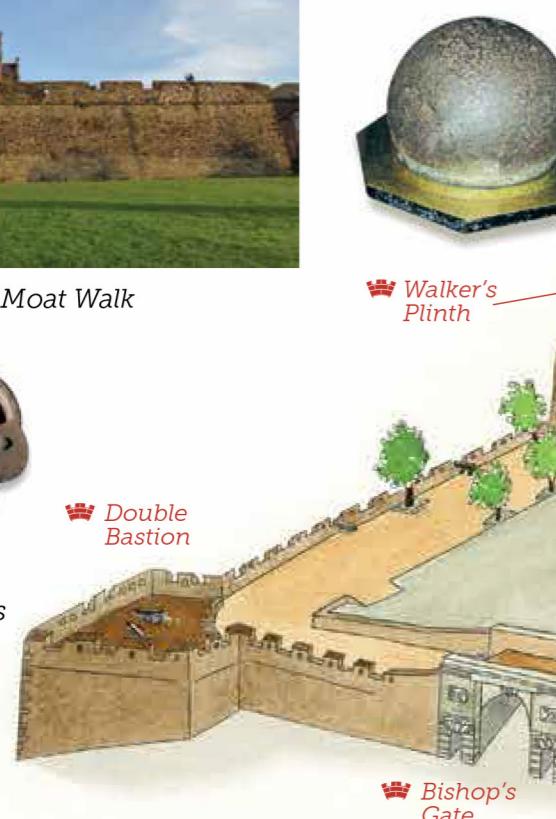
City of London Coat of Arms



View from the Dry Moat Walk



St. Columb's Cathedral contains the Padlocks and Keys of the 1688 Gates.

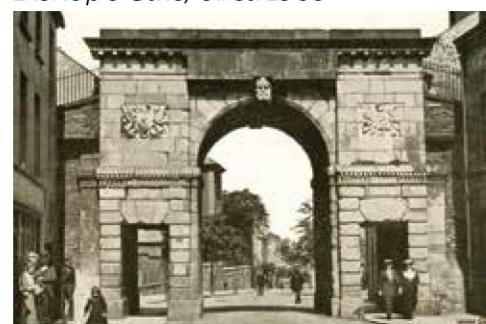


## Gates

Over the centuries the walls have been modified to meet the changing needs of the City - the outer dry moat has been infilled, three bastions were removed, the original four gates have been replaced by ornamental arches, and three new gates have been cut through the walls.

Three gates have sculpted heads ranging from River Gods to Siege Heroes.

Bishop's Gate, circa 1905



Boyne River God



## Battlements

At Church Wall there is a narrow high wall with crenellations to protect soldiers. It contains musket loops. The Watchtowers on either side of Church Bastion were added to the defences in 1628.

The defenders used the Sally Port to make surprise attacks by rushing out across and along the dry moat (hence the expression "to sally forth").

Sally Port



Watchtowers



Built between 1613-1619 by the City of London at a cost of £11,147, the Derry Walls are still owned by The Honourable The Irish Society. The Walls are scheduled as an ancient monument, in the guardianship of the Northern Ireland Executive.

Designed by Captain Sir Edward Doddington of Dungiven, the walls were laid out under the direction of Thomas Raven, a City of London Surveyor, and Sir John Vaughan supervised the work. A London master tiler and bricklayer, Peter Benson, was responsible for the erection of the walls.

Figures: Circuit 1,325m Height 6-7.5m Breadth 4-9m.  
Area within 13 ha.

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www.thederrywalls.com



The history of the city, including the building of the Walls, is told in the Guildhall stained glass windows.



Irish Society Coat of Arms

## Top Features

- Bishop's Gate
- Roaring Meg
- Bastions
- Sally Port
- Dry Moat Walk
- Views from Plinth

## Bastions and Platforms

Each bastion was given a name in 1622, in honour of the English settlers, such as "Lord Docwra's Bulwark" or the "Governor of the Plantation Bulwark". During the 1689 Siege, the bastions took on more topical names given by the many refugees to the city, such as "Hangman's Bastion" or "Coward's Bastion". The angled bastions were designed to give clear fields of fire along the whole length of the wall, so that there was no dead ground that could be exploited by an attacker.



The walls had eight bastions of which six remain. Also there are two rectangular demi-bastions or platforms. The stone walls were backed by compacted earth that acted as a shock absorber against cannon fire.

# the **Derry** **Walls**



**WALLS**



The Derry Walls are the largest ancient monument in Northern Ireland and claim the most complete circuit of ramparts of any surviving town walls in Ireland. The Walls are celebrating their 400th anniversary from 2013-2019, with special events taking place each year to unpack the story of the 6 years that it took to build them.

This guide has been produced by the Friends of the Derry Walls to help you make the most of your visit. You can support this educational work and keep in touch by becoming a Friend of the Derry Walls. For more information on the Derry Walls and how to get involved, check out our website.

**[www.thederrywalls.com](http://www.thederrywalls.com)**

Images courtesy of: Rory O'Doherty,  
Stephen Latimer, Lorcan Doherty,  
Mark Lusby, Derry Journal, Shaun  
Whoriskey and The Derry Sketcher



An Roinn Gníomhaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade