

Bellahouston Park History

History

The main part of Bellahouston Park was acquired by the City in 1895 for the sum of £50,000 and opened to the public in 1896.

- Three years later, the city's second municipal golf course was established at Bellahouston following the success of the course at Alexandra Park
- The park was extended in 1901 by the addition of a part of Dumbreck Lands purchased for the sum of £2,824 from Sir John Maxwell, Bart.
- A further addition was made in 1903 by including the lands of Ibroxhill at a cost of £40,222 from which commanding views of the city are available.
- In 1938 the famous Empire exhibition was held at the park.
 - The site took only fourteen months to build and the cost of admission was one shilling.
 - A mammoth attendance of 12.5 million was recorded and despite this, the exhibition made a loss of £130,000.
 - Today, of the 200 palaces and pavilions that were built for the exhibition only the Palace of Art remains - it now serves as a Sports Excellence Centre.
 - a stone Peace Cairn built for the exhibition is still visible from the rock garden.
- In 1996 Charles Rennie Mackintosh's House for an Art Lover was completed from original drawings of 1901 and now serves as contemporary centre of excellence for the visual arts.
- In 1982 the park was the venue for the visit of his Holiness Pope John Paul II which attracted 280,000 people and part of the ceremonial platform still remains.
- His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI visited England and Scotland on a four-day State Visit from 16-19 September 2010. The Holy Father arrived in Scotland on Thursday the 16th where he was received at the Palace of Holyroodhouse by Her Majesty the Queen. Later that evening Pope Benedict celebrated a public Mass at Bellahouston Park with Archbishop Mario Conte in front of 65,000 pilgrims. The Scottish composer James MacMillan was commissioned to write a new Mass for the visit (the Blessed John Newman Mass) and over 700 singers were in the choir. The mass was celebrated on a magnificent purpose built stage at Bellahouston and the Glasgow ceremony was televised worldwide to an audience estimated at over one billion people. A Papal Memorial Garden was built in 2011 to commemorate this event.

Outstanding Features

- There are several points of horticultural interest such as the walled garden with its fine collection of ferns and daffodils collected by the 19th century plant collector Peter Bar who lived locally. It also boasts a wide variety of herbaceous perennials, wall-trained shrubs, Chrysanthemums, Dahlias, and annual borders.
- The House for the Art lover also has a less formal garden consisting of mixed shrubs and herbaceous borders with a collection of heathers and heaths.

- The flanks of the central Ibroxhill is clothed in Rhododendrons and under planted with a vivid display of spring daffodils. It affords views over much of the city and as far as Ben Lomond on a clear day.

Also located here is a granite stone unveiled by King George VI on 9th July 1937 which marked the site of the Empire Exhibition of 1938 and was subsequently relocated to where it stands today.

- Find out more about the features in the park in the Bellahouston Park heritage trail.