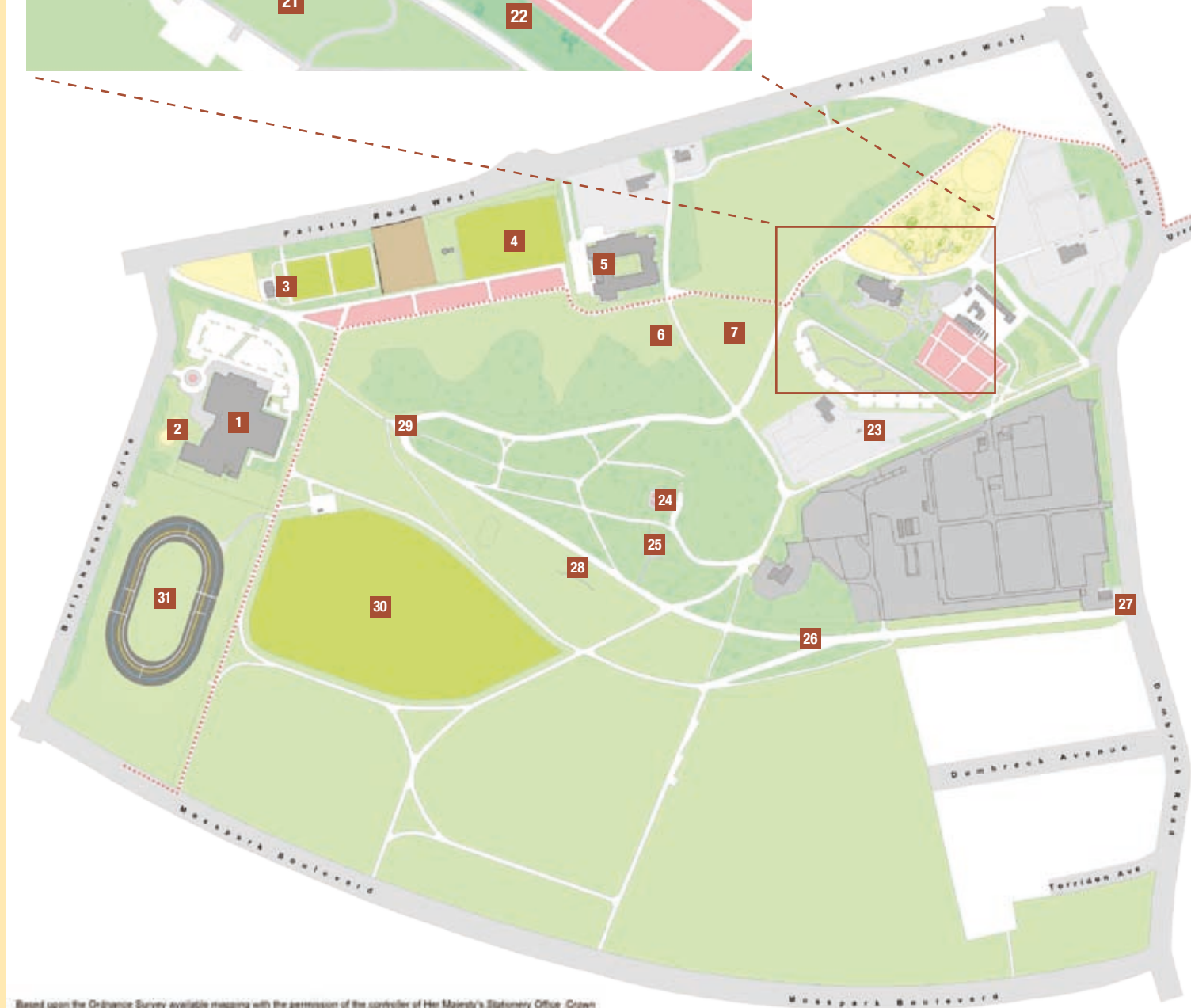




# Bellahouston Park Heritage Trail



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## BELLAHOUSTON PARK HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Bellahouston was part of the lands of Govan, which in the 16<sup>th</sup> century were held by small tenants or 'rentallers' of the Archbishops of Glasgow. In the 1590's a number of these Govan rentallers united and obtained from King James VI a charter granting them perpetual rights to their lands. Among those tenants in Meikle Govan, the Bellahouston end of Govan parish, were many members of the Rowan family and in 1726 this connection was renewed when Bellahouston estate was purchased by James Rowan of Marylands, a descendant of the old Rowan family of Govan.



Map 1795

Rowans remained at Bellahouston until 1824 when Thomas Rowan died and left the estate to a nephew by marriage, Moses Steven of Polmadie. In his hands, Bellahouston increased to 400 acres. In 1826, he bought the lands at Weariston from the trustees of Henry Ritchie of Craigton. From 1832-1850, Moses Steven of Polmadie purchased the Bellahouston House, formerly known as Dumbreck House and all the lands of Dumbreck from Robert Smith, founder of the Thistle Bank at Virginia Street. He had inherited Dumbreck from his uncle William Waddrop, a Glasgow merchant. Mr Waddrop had acquired the estate in 1790 and it was he who built the house on Dumbreckhill. Moses Steven changed the name of both estate and house to Bellahouston and Dumbreck House became Bellahouston House.



Bellahouston House

Moses Steven died in 1871 and was succeeded by his sisters Elizabeth and Grace Steven. He had expressed the wish that his fortune, which had come from Glasgow, should go to Glasgow. In the same year, the Steven sisters established the Bellahouston Trust and in conformity with their brother's wishes, dedicated the property at Bellahouston for charitable, religious and educational purposes within the city.

The Bellahouston Trust became operative on the death of Elizabeth Steven in 1892. By then, large parts of the estate had been feud. In 1895 the remaining 176 acres and with it Bellahouston House, were sold by the Trustees of the Bellahouston Bequest Fund to Glasgow Corporation for the sum of £50,000 to form what was the city's largest public park. At the time, Bellahouston lay just outside the municipal boundaries, but in purchasing the estate, Glasgow anticipated the needs of its rapidly spreading city. Only one year later, that part of Lanarkshire, which included the park and Craigton to the north, became part of Glasgow.

During 1899, Glasgow's second municipal golf course (now the 18 hole pitch and putt course) was established at Bellahouston Park following the success of the course opened in 1896 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.

In 1903 the adjoining lands of Ibroxhill and the old mansion house of Ibroxhill were purchased by the corporation at a cost of £40,222 to provide access to



Ibroxhill Mansion

the park at the junction of Dumbreck Road and Paisley Road, which was the natural entrance from the city to the grounds.

Ibroxhill had originally been part of the lands of Ibrox and until the middle of the 18th century was the property of the Hill family. In 1801, it was acquired by John Bennett, a Glasgow lawyer, who immediately began to build a new house. In 1816 it was purchased by John McColl, a Glasgow merchant, and to distinguish it from the other part of Ibrox he called it Ibroxhill. He added to the mansion from the designs of his brother-in-law, James Smith of Jordanhill. Glasgow Corporation converted the mansion into a tea room in 1905 and a general waiting room in 1910. In 1914, Ibroxhill House was demolished, but the front porch (portico) was left standing and a rockery was made with some of the stones.



Bellahouston Rockery

On the eastern fringes of the park the middle class residential areas of Bellahouston and Dumbreck were once part of the Bellahouston Estate.

During the First World War, Bellahouston Park became the location for a military hospital. The hospital stood on the grounds where the Leisure centre is today. The soldiers were eventually moved to Erskine Hospital. Bill Struth, the legendary manager (1920-1954) of Glasgow Rangers Football Club served as a physiotherapist at the hospital during this time.

Bellahouston Park, due to its size and relative absence of formal walkways has always been an ideal location for the city's events. The largest event to take place in Bellahouston was the ambitious 1938 Empire Exhibition. The site took fourteen months to build and was attended by 12.5 million visitors.



Plan of 1938 Empire Exhibition

The 1938 Empire Exhibition was to be 'the most elaborate and extravagant exhibition ever held in Britain'. Bellahouston Park was selected as it gave the organisers a large open space and a commanding view of the city. Formally opened on the 3 May 1938 at nearby Ibrox Stadium by King George VI and Queen Mary the site included more than 100 diverse sites ranging from a post office to a Highland Village complete with a Chiefs Castle. There were numerous pavilions, the two largest being the Palace of Engineering and Industry. The eating facilities included one of the first Indian restaurants in Scotland and



T W Marwick's Atlantic Restaurant

the Atlantic Restaurant, modelled on an ocean liner. The Clachan, a life-size model of a Highland village also proved to be a popular attraction. Architect Colin Sinclair assembled cottages from various parts of the Highlands and Islands and included one of his own designs, which he saw as a model for the future. The people who inhabited the village, carrying out their daily tasks as though at home, were genuine Gaelic-speaking Highlanders. One of the stars of the Exhibition was Mary Morrison from Barra, who sang Gaelic laments while working from her spinning wheel.

Dominating the whole exhibition on the summit of Bellahouston Park, above the grand staircase complete with waterfall, stood 'The Tower of Empire' affectionately known as 'Tait's Tower'. Designed by Thomas Tait, the



Highland Village by Colin Sinclair

tower was 300ft high, its silvered steel glittered by day and it shone out like a beacon at night. It had three observation balconies, each capable of supporting 200 people. The vane on top of the tower served to counteract wind torque. Erected on the summit of the hill in the very centre of the park, visitors could walk to Tait's Tower from any part of the grounds in less than 10 minutes.



Tait's Tower

The story persists that the 'Tower of the Empire' was demolished as it might be a landmark for German bombers, but this is an urban myth. The University of Glasgow's Gilmorehill building was at least as prominent and was not demolished. The order to demolish the tower was actually given in July 1939, three months before the war started, (Glasgow's Great Exhibitions, P&J Kinchin, White Cockade Publishing).

Sadly, the Palace of Art is the only remaining sign of the exhibition today.



Sculpture Courtyard in Palace of Art 1938

In 1965 the Royal Air Force held a display at the west side of the park where the leisure centre is now located. The display consisted of six aircraft; Valiant B1 – cockpit section, Hunter F4, Javelin – cockpit section, Chipmunk T10, Gnat T1 Trainer and a Javelin F(AW). In the background the tenements on Paisley Road West and Bellahouston Drive have hardly changed.



Royal Air Force display

Another significant date in the park's history was the pastoral visit of Pope John Paul II. As part of his pastoral visit to Great Britain, his Holiness celebrated Holy Mass in Bellahouston Park on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1982. Arriving by helicopter, Pope John Paul II was welcomed by Archbishop Thomas Winning of Glasgow.

Around 300,000 people from all over Scotland gathered on a spectacular warm summer's day to celebrate mass. At the end of the mass the congregation, the biggest crowd ever assembled in Scotland to date sang "*Will Ye No Come Back Again?*" After his address the Pope was applauded for eight minutes.



View of crowd from air at Papal visit



Pope John Paul II

## BELLAHOUSTON PARK TRAIL



### 1. Bellahouston Leisure Centre (1967)



The Bellahouston Park Trail, which should take approximately an hour and fifteen minutes, begins at the Leisure Centre which offers first class sport and leisure facilities for all age groups. The centre was built in 1967 at a cost of £216,000 and was Scotland's first multi-purpose Indoor Sports centre. In April 2001 a £10m refurbishment of the centre was completed and the facility which attracts over 800,000 visitors each year now boasts 2 large sports halls, a fitness suite with 96 stations, a dance studio, a health suite and gymnastics centre as well as a cafe. In addition to this a swimming centre with a leisure pool with river rapid feature and flume and a 25m main pool was added.

### 2. West Play Area (2002)



This modern play facility was constructed to compliment the refurbished leisure centre. It has a variety of equipment across a broad range catering for children aged between 3–14 years.

### 3. Bellahouston Bowling Pavilion and Greens



Bellahouston Bowling Pavilion comprises of a red brick single storey building with pitched slated roof, it was recently refurbished and extended with glass front and disabled ramp and now includes a lecture area, changing accommodation, kitchen and disabled toilets. The pavilion has a dual role, bowling use during the summer months on both adjacent greens and since 2004, use as a cycle activity centre. This new use included the establishment of the 'Pedal in the Parks' project which enables people with physical and mental disabilities to cycle. Adult cycle training courses are offered from the pavilion and it is also the base of the Glasgow Riderz youth cycling club.

### 4. All Weather Hockey Pitch

The hockey pitch was constructed in 2001 to compliment the Leisure Centre redevelopment. It is a water based system unique at the time of construction, built to Olympic standard. The Great Britain Ladies Hockey Team have trained on it.



## 5. Palace of Art



The Palace of Art was designed by Launcelot Ross (1885-1956) for the Empire Exhibition of 1938. It was the only one of the exhibition buildings intended to be permanent and was originally intended to house Glasgow Corporation's art collection. There were galleries around a central sculptured courtyard which were used to display works of art, with Scottish painting given special pride of place. It is a stunning large square structure with a stripped classical appearance built around an inner courtyard. In April 2004 the centre reopened after major refurbishment costing around £2m and now serves as a Sports Excellence Centre.

## 6. Glasgow Roots – 2007

This piece of speculative architecture designed by Gareth Hoskins Architects, will trace a line south to north across the hill with the relic of the former mansion 'Bellahouston House' as the centre point. A thin ribbon of indigenous meadow plants sweeps upwards to a grid-like arrangement of stone blocks set within the former basement of the house. Further individual stone blocks, etched with references to Glasgow's development seem to spill in a line, at seemingly random angles down the grass slopes towards the city centre.

## 7. Maze – 2007/08

The design proposal by JM Architects, which draws on the writings of Lewis Carroll ('Alice in Wonderland' and 'Through the Looking Glass'), is to create a modern mirrored maze, that should provide visitors with ways of exploring the interior. Built on a triangular site between the House for an Art Lover and the Palace of Art it will be lit at night to create a distinctive landmark.

## 8. Portico Entrance



This sandstone gateway structure was the original entrance portico to Ibrox Hill House which dates back to 1801. When the house was demolished in 1914, the front porch (Portico) was retained in its original position on the north wall of the house. A rockery was constructed on the site. In 1989 it was relocated to its present position and now forms the dramatic entrance to the sculpture gardens of the House for an Art Lover.



## SCULPTURE GARDEN



### 9. Foot and Arch (2005)

This unusual two piece structure was created by Ganesh Gohain an Indian sculptor during an artist residency in the City. It was installed in June 2005 by Alan Kean.



### 10. 'Untilled' (2000)

One of the pieces remaining from the Benchmarks exhibition. McGurn Architects created a bench which adapts and changes with the variety of people who use it. The materials, corten steel, concrete and wood will visibly change due to climatic conditions.



### 11. Bench for a Tree (2000)

Designed by Jules Goss, a bench for a tree gives "an opportunity to experience something whilst seated / not seated". The bench can be adjusted to expand as the tree grows supporting and changing with the lifetime of the tree.



### 12. Ghost (1999)

This piece is the only remaining sculpture in the garden from the first season exhibition. It was designed by Doug Cocker and is a leaning vertical, hard, contemporary image contrasting with the history laden mass of the building.



### 13. Jelly Moulds (2000)

Dotted throughout the garden 'One Foot Taller' designed these unusual seats in the shape of jelly moulds using recycled rubber flooring which is used in children's playgrounds.



### 14. Map Bench (2000)

Page and Park Architects wanted to produce something practical and beautiful which could be mass produced. The bench is based on a relief map of Bellahouston Park. It presents a 'floating picnic blanket' for people to sit around in a group, lie on and relax.



### 15. Orkney Basket Bench (2000)

Using traditional basketry techniques and materials this oak bench designed by Trevor Leat and Alex Rigg is inspired by Orkney hooded seating designs. Woven live willow grows up and overhead to provide a shaded canopy.





## 16. House for an Art Lover (1996)



The centre piece of the Sculpture Garden is the magnificent House for an Art Lover. In 1901, Charles Rennie Mackintosh entered a competition, advertised in a German design magazine, to design a grand house in a modern style that challenged architects of the time. Mackintosh's submission was the 'House for an Art Lover', a project in which he collaborated with his wife, Margaret Macdonald, a decorative artist and graduate from the Glasgow School of Art. Whilst the Mackintosh entry was disqualified from the competition on the grounds of not having enough perspective drawings, the designs were awarded a special prize, for their personal touch, their innovative and meticulous form and the uniformity of the exterior and interiors.

The House for an Art Lover was not built in Mackintosh's lifetime, but construction of his magnificent project commenced in 1989. The house sits on the foundations of the original Ibroxhill House built in 1801, which was demolished in 1914. Mackintosh's striking architectural concept became a reality in 1996 when the House for an Art Lover was completed some 95 years after the design plans were drawn up.

The House for an Art Lover is a contemporary exhibition centre and cultural attraction where visitors can marvel at the collections displayed in the Mackintosh exhibition rooms. On the ground floor the Art Lovers Café nestles in a bright contemporary space with access to the Café Terrace.

## 17. Peace Cairn



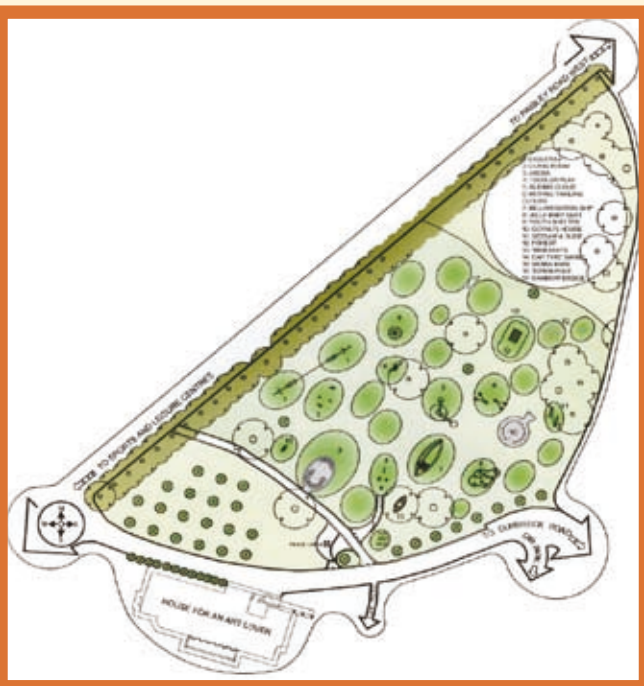
This stone peace cairn was erected for the 1938 Empire Exhibition and has numerous shaped blocks of stone within it, on which are engraved the names of the organisations and clans that attended the exhibition which were deeply concerned with the real possibility of war. The modern steel globe on top was added in July 2004 and features 'Peace' in different languages. It was designed by Elspeth Bennie, Ironhorse Studios as part of the 'Grounds for Play' project.



## 18. Grounds for Play (2004)



Unlike many of the traditional play parks, 'Grounds for Play' is unique, the overall park design concept and each individual play object have been specifically designed for this space. In 2001 a design competition was held. The winning entry for the overall scheme by Glasgow based Gareth Hoskins Architects was a carpet of leaf-like mounds on which, they imagined, would sit a range of play and art objects. These 26 giant leaves or grassy mounds now house 15 specially commissioned play pieces for children. The project represents an exploration of art and play within a public setting. 'Grounds for Play' was officially opened by the Lord Provost of the City of Glasgow, Liz Cameron, in June 2004.



The onsite plan of the play area identifies the locations of the play pieces e.g.

### *Living Room – position 2*

Carlos Peralta and Liliana Rodriguez designed the Living Room. As if frozen in time, a group of topsy turvey domestic furniture seem to defy gravity. This whimsical piece was built in concrete and wood by artist Alan Kean.

### *Bellahouston Ship – position 7*

Taking the skeletal form of an upturned timber boat, Bellahouston Ship draws inspiration from early fishing craft that sailed the Clyde in pursuit of salmon. Originally designed and constructed by Alex Rigg and Trevor Leat, Bellahouston Ship underwent a number of transformations before finally being redesigned and then constructed by Martin Orr and Dave Pain. At over 6 metres long and 5 metres high 'Bella Ship' as it has become known, is the largest single object in the playground.

### *The Activity Space and Jelly Babies – position 8*

The 'Activity Space' was designed by Katty Barac as a gathering and performance place. It quickly became popular with families and provides an eye-catching overview of the entire playground. Katty's Jelly Babies is based on the popular sweets for children. The forms are brightly coloured in fibre glass and are used for seating and climbing and are particularly popular with small children.

### *Skara Brae – position 15*

'Skara Brae' was commissioned by Trades House of Glasgow. It is based on early Scottish settlements discovered on the west coast and islands of Scotland. Skara Brae was developed from observations of excavated sites by the artist Tassy Thompson who designed this piece. Students from the College of Building and Printing built the walls; the timber seating at the centre is dedicated to each of the fourteen trades and ancient crafts the Trades House represents.



### *Moving Tinkling Clouds – position 6*

'Clouds' designed by architect Graeme Andrew and fabricated by expert blacksmith Hector McGarva, symbolises the movement of clouds. The work is broken into three separate elements, the first being 'Cloud Cabin' which can be climbed into and is connected to the slopes of the grassy mound by two slides. The two other clouds are grouped together and interact with the wind to create movement and sound.

### *Forest – position 12*

Designed by Tassy Thompson working with groups of local young people, the Forest was made by wood craftsman Robert Coia. Carved benches are placed near the work to form a meeting place and allow visitors to view the whole site from the bottom of the hill. The Forest was made possible by a grant from the Scottish Arts Council.

### *Govnu's Hoose – position 10*

Based on the Monymusk Reliquary, 'Govnu's Hoose' is an imagined resting place for Govnu, the ancient smith who created legendary swords and spears. The carvings on slabs of granite, which were quay stones from Govan's shipbuilding past, depict early Celtic motifs in homage to Govan's heritage. Govnu's Hoose was designed by Colin MacLeod, Director of Galgael.

### *Rainbow Bridge – position 17*

'Rainbow Bridge' is the result of artist Lorraine Aaron's workshops with children from Mossspark Primary School funded by the City's South West Area Forum and Culture and Leisure Services. Below the spectrum bridge and curved stainless steel is etched with the names of the pupils and teachers who contributed. Combined, the bridge and the under walkway form a perfect circle.

### *The Bug Swings*

These two insect shaped steel frames were designed by Elspeth Bennie of the Ironhorse Studios and house sets of swings for toddlers and older children. Their commanding stature and eye catching design makes them one of the most popular play objects on the site.

### 19. Stable Block and Dovecot (pre 1860)

Within the operational depot sits the old stable block with dove cote. The building is a single storey sandstone structure with loft space and dove cote which dates back to before 1860. It was used originally as the service area for Ibroxhill House where the estates horses were stabled.

### 20. Victorian Walled Garden (pre 1860)



The Walled Garden dates back to before 1860. Its original function was the kitchen garden for Ibroxhill House where all the fruit and vegetables for the house were grown. Located at the western corner of the garden and built into the wall are the original gardeners bothy/potting shed with an identical shed in the opposite corner. The garden was acquired by Glasgow Corporation in 1905. The garden is flanked with borders of herbaceous perennials, chrysanthemums and walled trained shrubs. There is also a collection of ferns under planted with Grape hyacinths and "Peter Barr" bulb collection (daffodils). Peter Barr was an avid plant collector of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century operating from the local area (Copland Road). The centre walk and lawn areas contain displays of annual seasonal bedding with the Trial Sweet Peas as a colourful backdrop. The trials are organised annually by the Scottish National Sweet Pea, Rose and Carnation Society and Glasgow City Council Land and Environmental Services.



### 21. Homage to Shipbuilding (2005)



The sculpture designed by Jimmy Cosgrove and constructed by Hector McGarva was installed in October 2005. It was made from cast iron and corten steel showing the silhouette of a shipyard worker and his dog. On the adjacent table lie the different tools he would have used. The piece has an inscription “celebrate those who made the Clyde great”.

### 22. Glasshouse, Garden for a Plant Collector (2007)

Located behind the west wall of the Walled Garden this striking design by Grossmax of a minimal glasshouse utilises fibre optics to provide drama and ultra violet lighting to encourage the growths of fluorescent and carnivorous plants. At dusk the glasshouse and the plants within provide an ethereal display

### 23. Bandstand/Glasgow Ski and Snowboard Centre



The original circular bandstand was replaced around 1933 by the current structure which now serves the Glasgow Ski and Snowboard Centre. Originally used for hosting concerts, the former amphitheatre now forms the structure for the four dry slopes. A modern extension onto the building was completed in 1998 but the original structure is still the main focal point.

### 24. Sunken Garden



The sunken garden is the basement of the original Dumbreck House which is noted on Richardson’s map 1795. It was Moses Steven in 1850 that changed the name of Dumbreck House to Bellahouston House. The house was finely placed on an eminence which had extensive views in all directions. The original entrance tunnel to the lower quarters of the house is still in use today leading visitors into the formally laid out garden which was refurbished in 2005.

### 25. Horseshoe Garden

Built into the hillside on the south side of the park is the Horseshoe Garden. The garden may have been used in the early 20th century as a drying green for Bellahouston House. Today it is a tranquil hidden garden backed by a sandstone wall with climbing plants. Its southerly aspect makes it an ideal sun trap where visitors can sit and take in the commanding views.

### 26. Lady Ure Primrose Drinking Fountain (1914)

The fountain was made by J&G Mossman, a family firm of monumental and architectural sculptures and erected in 1914. Made of solid granite it has three drinking receptacles and one located at ground level presumably for dogs. It was dedicated to Lady Ure Primrose (maiden name Anna Wylie) the wife of Sir John Ure Primrose, Lord Provost of the City of Glasgow (1902-05).





### 27. Dumbreck Road Entrance to the Park



An early 20<sup>th</sup> century gateway comprising of 4 symmetrically arranged sandstone and red glazed brick gate piers topped with a coping stone and pyramid stone finial. Each pier has an emblem from the Glasgow Coat of arms, the bird, tree, bell and fish. The entrance was almost certainly constructed by Alex B McDonald (1847-1915), the City Engineer during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who constructed a number of gateways to the city parks. The gates are believed to have been purchased in 1908 from the late James Cowan, of Rosshall, for £15.

### 28. Ceremonial Platform for Pope John Paul II Visit (1982)



The white painted sandstone retaining wall is the only remaining section from the original ceremonial platform built for the visit to the city of His Holiness Pope John Paul II on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1982.

### 29. Empire Exhibition Monument (1938)



This solid granite stone column which is mounted on a plinth finished in granite is a fitting memorial to the Empire Exhibition of 1938. There is an inscription on the stone *"This stone marking the site of the Empire Exhibition of 1938 was unveiled by King George VI on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1937, when His Majesty and Queen Elizabeth paid their first visit of their reign to the City of Glasgow"*.

### 30. Pitch and Putt

The pitch and putt course sits on the site of Glasgow's second municipal golf course (1899). It was opened for public use in 1960 and has 18 par 3 holes. The facility today is used in partnership with Culture and Sport Glasgow for junior golf coaching.

### 31. Community Cycle Track (2006)



Initially built in 1969 as an international standard running track and located adjacent to the new leisure centre, it previously comprised of an all weather seven lane track with full facilities for field events. The track was refurbished in 2006 and converted to a community cycle track, 420m, suitable for cycle skills training, cycle sports coaching and minor events.

As you leave the cycle track you will pass a group of mature Beech and Sycamore trees. Local legend suggests that this group of trees was planted by the Stevens family who lived in Bellahouston House on top of the hill in the late 1880s. The story is that a tree was planted over the grave of their horses. The group of trees was part of the garden area of the hospital where the soldiers were brought out to sit during the summer.

**When you finish the trail why not visit the Leisure Centre for toilets and refreshments.**

**Glasgow City Council  
Land and Environmental Services  
Richmond Exchange  
20 Cadogan Street  
Glasgow G2 7AD**

**Phone 0141 287 5064**

**Web [www.glasgow.gov.uk/parks](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/parks)**

## **Acknowledgements**

The information contained in this leaflet was provided from various sources:

Culture and Sport Glasgow  
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[www.theglasgowstory.com](http://www.theglasgowstory.com)

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[www.glasgowsculpture.com](http://www.glasgowsculpture.com)

House for an Art Lover  
[www.houseforanartlover.co.uk](http://www.houseforanartlover.co.uk)



**For a free guided tour  
of Bellahouston Park,  
conducted by Park  
Rangers phone 0141  
287 5064.**