

The Area of Ballinteer

There is some evidence of some prehistoric habitation confirming a settlement from prehistoric periods onwards. A number of artefacts dating back to Neolithic period have been found including a megalithic tomb, the tomb is known as Brehon's Chair, and estimates of construction dated back to circa 3000BC.

Ballinteer is a rough translation from the Gaelic name for the area being Baile on tSaoir meaning town of the craftsman.

Early mentions of Balayn (Ballinteer) in 1546 noted it as being part of the archidiaconal possessions of Taney. The area was previously the ancient estate of the Walshe's of Carrigmayn.

After some turbulent times during the reformation and then the Cromwellian ascendancy, there then came the reinstatement of the monarchy in England. As part of Restoration of Lands by Charles II the lands of Dundrum and Ballinteer were restored to Sir Oliver Fitzwilliam.

The population of Ballinteer per the **1871** Census was 178 persons, consisting of 34 families. In the Census of 1901 the population 83 persons, consisting of 16 families and per the Census of 1911 the numbers living in the Ballinteer area was 76 persons, consisting of 19 families. The reason for the decline in population over this period was there was less work for labourers and cottiers as the small farms were being bought out and being consolidated into larger farms in the area.

The first residential houses were built in 1932 at Ballinteer Gardens consisting of 41 houses and they were built by and for The Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust.

The Emergence of Ballinteer Parish

Ballinteer Parish grew out of the Parish of Holy Cross in Dundrum. In the late 1960's and early 1970's the estates of Ludford, followed by Ballinteer Drive, Grove, Close, and Crescent (these four roads were originally called Lissadel Estate), Woodpark, Broadford, and Pine Valley had been developed, and Kingston, Heather and Marley were being developed. This put extra pressure on the Mass schedule of Holy Cross Dundrum and extra Masses had to be added on Sunday mornings to handle the numbers attending. Fr Michael Loftus was appointed as curate in Ballinteer in the Parish of Dundrum.

With the increasing population in the Ballinteer area it was appreciated that local schools and a church would be required. A site of 6.5 acres was purchased from Abbey Homes for £45,000 in 1971.

The land where the church and school are located was previously part of a 55 acre farm rented by Edward Fitzachery, who was born in Glencullen. Mr Fitzachery rented the land from Brian Nolan who lived behind the current Luas Station in Dundrum. In the early 1940's the Fitzacherys ceased to reside on the property and the house was left vacant and fell into disrepair. The church is actually built over part of the old house.

The first sod was turned on the building of the church on Sunday May 21st 1972 by Fr Loftus. The cost of the construction of the church amounted to £155,000.

The choice of name of the church was decided upon by Fr Loftus who wanted to ensure there was a link to the parent Parish of Dundrum. Fr Loftus took his inspiration from the name of Holy Cross Church, being the Crucifixion, where St. John and Our Lady stood together at the foot of the Cross. Fr Loftus felt by calling the Church St. John the Evangelist it would retain a link to Holy Cross Church in Dundrum. Fr Loftus submitted the name and rationale to Archbishop's House for consideration and in due course it was approved.