

## THE ROCKS WALKING TRAILS

These three trails are south of Wexford town, beginning from the carpark behind Londis in the Faythe and at St. Mary's GAA club. This unique maritime village leads to a variety of walks through natural parkland with protruding rocky outcrops, affording panoramic views of Wexford Harbour.

### **Faythe Heritage Trail (Blue)**

The Faythe, described in the 17th century as a low thatched suburb and the centre of Wexford's sea-faring community was home to mariners, sea captains, fishermen, sail makers, boat builders and rope makers - remembered through the local street names such as Rope-Walk and Fishers Row. The walk brings you down by the Swan fountain and past the old Malt stores. Passing the site of Pierce's Foundry (now a Tesco supermarket) and the new Garda Regional Headquarters you enter the Rock's up Harris's Lane which is lined with mature native trees. Moving from urban to natural rock outcrops in a native woodland setting, prepare for stunning views of the Wexford estuary.

Its mud flats (slobs), teeming with wildfowl, provided an unlimited source of food to early settlers and spawned a specialist community of hunter-gatherers in Mesolithic times.

### **Family Trail (Orange)**

This trail starts at the St Mary's GAA club, with the pitch hewn out of the rock, in what was known as the First Field. The area has been a playground for generations of residents from the Faythe and Maudlintown. The rock is a distinctive purple quartzite, which has been quarried and used to construct a number of old buildings in the town. To the right of the pitch is Trespan Rock, where in 1649 Oliver Cromwell placed his canon and bombarded Wexford castle before sacking the town. The viewing point is at the base of Hilly Holly and gives views of the Harbour and the Sandbar. On your return, you pass 'slidey rock', with its surface made smooth by generations of children sliding down.

### **Fitness Trail (Red)**

Starting at St Marys GAA club house head past 'slidey rock'. From the upper viewing-points you can see Maudlintown, with its streets named after Wexford ships and home of the Wexford Cot which was a unique clinker-built wooden boat said to be based on Viking ships. At times you can see cot-sailing and mussel-dredgers in the harbour. Look south to Tuskar Rock Lighthouse with Raven Point to the north. Notice the sandbar, at the mouth of the harbour, where the Wexford whale was stranded in 1891. The skeleton of the blue whale hangs in the central lobby of the Natural History Museum in London.

## ITEMS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Mural to George Ross: Senior All-Ireland button-accordion champion 1956 and resident of the Faythe
- The Faythe Primary school: founded by the Sisters of St John of God in 1891
- Memorial gate to the 1911 lockout and memorial stone to United Nations' service men
- The Swan cast iron fountain or trough, made in Pierce's Foundry in 1888
- The Malt Stores
- Trespan Rock from where Oliver Cromwell fired his canon at Wexford Castle
- Views of Wexford Harbour, Raven Point, Tuskar Rock, Rosslare and the sandbar where the Wexford whale was stranded
- The three Church spires (Bride Street, Rowe Street and the Friary) lined up one behind the other.