

Ormeau Park



Route description

This route explores an historic parkland overlooking the River Lagan on surfaced paths with some hills and slopes.

Distance

1.25 miles 2.8 km.

Average Time

40 - 50 mins.

Access

By bus - Metro Services: 7 to Ormeau Road or 78-79 to Ravenhill Road, 0.6 miles (0.9km) and 0.4 miles (0.65km) respectively from the starting point.

By car - Car park at recreation centre – entrance off Ormeau Embankment.

Trail Route

Beginning at the car park beside Ormeau Recreation Centre, take the tree-lined path to the right of the recreation centre, past the all weather pitches.

Keep right at the next two junctions. Continue along this path past mature trees and woodland copses (1). You will reach a crossroads; notice the green post labelled E9 (2). Go straight on. You will pass the former Superintendent's House (3) within a garden on your left.

Continue on until you pass a small shelter. Ahead will be two roads, take the second one on the right. This leads to the outside of the former walled garden (4).

Turn left, keeping the wall on your right, and then left again on to the main path leading from the entrance to the service yard. Follow this path. You will see the bandstand on your right (5). Follow the path on your right which leads past a second shelter, some flower beds and mature conifer trees. Just beyond these on your right is a small wildflower meadow.

Continue past a triangular rose bed on your left, but veer left at the next triangular flower bed, in which there stands a bell (6) on a post.

Take the next right and then left to return to the car park.

Trail 16



History

The demesne at Ormeau was the home of the Donegall family. The second Marquis moved there in 1807 and extended Ormeau House to accommodate his large household. The estate was sold in the 1860s to Belfast Corporation to pay off the family's debts. Subsequently, the land was opened in 1871 as Ormeau Park, the first public park in Belfast. It remains one of the largest parks in the city – a successful combination of horticulture, recreation and informal landscaping.

Things of Interest

Trees (1)

There are trees from many different Northern hemisphere countries growing in Ormeau. These include an oriental plane from the Balkans, contorted willows from China, cedars from Lebanon, and maples from North America.

Ecotrail (2)

This is an educational trail (ecotrail) and an orienteering route through the park, for which there is a guide pack. For information tel. 028 9066 2259 or www.ecotrails.co.uk.

Superintendent's House (3)

This Victorian house was built for the park superintendent, who originally lived on the property.

Walled garden (4)

This walled garden, which now contains a recycling centre and bowling greens, was originally associated with Ormeau House in the time of the Donegalls. Parts of the wall are original; other sections have been repaired.

Bandstand (5)

The bandstand at Ormeau is a good example of what was a common feature of Victorian parks.

Bell (6)

It was once the custom to ring a bell in public parks to indicate closing time.

Look out for

- jays, as they fly from tree to tree.
- wild flowers in the meadows area and around the woodland plantings.