Placenames in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

dlr LexIcon in association with Blackrock Education Centre
Compiled by Séamus Cannon and Ríonach O Callaghan

LESSON PLAN 4:

The varied origins of placenames

Focus:
- Varied influences on local placenames, Irish, Viking, Italian

1.   Resources
1. Teacher background information
2. Photo of Sorrento Terrace
3. Photo of directional sign for Leopardstown
4. Screen shot showing words of Irish origin that occur frequently in placenames
5. Student Activity sheet

2.   Introduction:
1. Revise Scandinavian influence in the name Dalkey
2. Show 2. Traditionally Dalkey, Killiney and the surrounding areas are where many wealthy people chose to live. There are many place names in these areas that come from places in Europe, e.g. Sorrento, Vico, Nerano. Why do you think that happened?

3.   Development:
1. Bally is often found at the start of Irish placenames, e.g. Ballybrack. Baile in Irish means 'town' or settlement.
   Ballybrack = *Baile Breac* = speckled town (possibly houses widely scattered);
   Ballyogan = *Baile Uí Ógáin* = Hogan's town Ballybough = *Baile Bocht*. The Irish translation provides information about the area

2. Show 3. Leopardstown photo. The Irish for Leopardstown is interesting.
   Explain the origin of the name: '*Baile na Lobhar*' means lepers' town.
   Why do you think the local area beside Leopardstown was called 'Galloping Green'?

3. Show 4. As a class group, work out meanings. Full information in teachers' information

4.   Conclusion
See student worksheet

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TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION
LESSON 4

Common Irish words used in placenames

We've seen that names of places have historical origins that explain something of our past. Many of them come from Irish, such as *dún, cill, baile, Inis, gleann.* Here are some other Irish words that are frequently encountered in local placenames:

English	Irish	Meaning
Rath	Ráth	Fort
Lis	Lios	Fort
Bally	Baile	Town, settlement
Ath	Áth	Ford
Kill	Cill	Church
Dun	Dún	Castle
Tigh	Tigh	House
Carrick	Carraig	Rock
Carn	Carn	Mound/ cairn (e.g. of stones)
Clon	Cluain	Meadow
Glen	Gleann	Valley
Tubber	Tobar	Well
Tully	Tualch	Hillock
Slieve	Sliabh	Mountain
Ard	Ard	Height
Alt	Alt	Cliff
Park	Páirc	Field
Knock	Cnoc	Hill
Boher	Bóthar	Road
Gort	Gort	Field
Barr	Barr	Top
Barna	Bearna	Gap
Ben	Beann	Peak
Inver	Inbhear	Estuary

Some names come from other European countries. Along the coast in particular we find many names of Italian origin: Nerano, Sorrento, Vico, Maretimo. These derive from a time when wealthy young aristocrats would travel to the sites of ancient civilizations in Italy to round off their education. This was called the 'Grand Tour'. Often they stayed for a few years and they were very much influenced by the places they visited. Killiney Bay was regarded as being very like the bay of Naples and so, many of the returned aristocrats gave Italian names to their houses and copied classical architecture in their design. It was also common to purchase art and classical sculpture for installation in their Irish homes. Lord Cloncurry, of Maretimo in Blackrock arranged for the delivery of a four shiploads of artifacts but tragically lost a great deal when one ship was sunk off Wicklow Head.

Geology is also important in placenames: Blackrock refers to limestone, Whiterock is derived from the white aplite seam in the granite, Carriglea, *Carraig Liath*, is grey rock, referring to granite. On the other hand, Glencullen, *Gleann Cuilinn*, holly glen, owes its name to local flora as do names featuring heather, holly and hazel. Animals also features in Glenamuck, *Gleann na Muc*, which means valley of the pigs, not to be confused with Glenageary, valley of the sheep! Shanganagh, *Seangánach* is place of the ants. Foxrock of course is another prominent example.

The Irish for Leopardstown is interesting. '*Baile na Lobhar'* doesn't mean the town of the leopard as the English names suggests. It means the town of the lepers. Leprosy is and infectious disease of the skin and nerves. Eventually nerve damage leads to muscle weakness. Hands feet or face may become deformed. Antibiotics can now cure the disease. In the middle ages people with leprosy were kept outside the city to avoid infections. A leper hospital built in Dublin near St. Stephen's Green was moved out to the area now known as Leopardstown. It is suggested that the local area was called 'Galloping Green' because travellers speeded up passing Lepers town!

Irish people who were prominent at different times in our history also feature in local placenames: Charles Stewart Parnell, Michael Davitt, Patrick Sarsfield, Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet are represented, the latter probably dating from the centenary of the Rebellion in 1803. The 50th anniversary of the 1916 Rising prompted use of the names of some of the leaders from that time: Roger Casement, Patrick Pearse and Rory O Connor. Douglas Hyde is celebrated in Dalkey, and Moran Park and McIntosh Park refer to Patrick Moran and James McIntosh both of whom worked in Dún Laoghaire and played key roles in the War of Independence.

We also have names from other places in Ireland: Idrone Terrace is named after a barony in Carlow; Achill Road, Ardagh Avenue, Breffni Rd. are other examples. Local landlords also named new roads after themselves. Lord Longford and the Viscount deVesci are examples of landlords whose names are prominent in Monkstown.

Baile na Lobhar
LEOPARDSTOWN
R113 (N11)

English	Irish	Meaning
Rath	Ráth	
Lis	Lios	
Bally	Baile	
Ath	Áth	
Kill	Cill	
Dun	Dún	
Tigh	Tigh	
Carrick	Carraig	
Carn	Carn	
Clon	Cluain	
Glen	Gleann	
Tubber	Tobar	
Tully	Tulach	
Slieve	Sliabh	
Ard	Árd	
Alt	Alt	
Park	Páirc	
Knock	Cnoc	
Boher	Bóthar	
Gort	Gort	
Barr	Barr	
Barna	Bearna	
Ben	Beann	

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WORKSHEET 4
LESSON 4

1. Choose a placename in your locality that you find interesting. Translate it into Irish. Does it tell you anything new about the place?

2. Choose a placename and represent it with a drawing or a model