

LISBURN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



THE WALLACE FOUNTAIN CASTLE GARDENS LISBURN

The Wallace Fountain is a drinking water fountain named after the benefactor Sir Richard Wallace, Bart.(1818 – 1890), an English art collector and philanthropist.

Sir Richard, the son of the 4th Marquis of Hertford, had extensive property in Lisburn but lived mostly in Paris. In 1871 he was created a Baronet for his services to the people of Paris during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and, in particular, during the siege of Paris.

These services included the commissioning and erection of 50 drinking fountains, mainly at his own expense. Several of the fountains can still be found in Paris today where they are known as "Les Wallaces". In 1872 Sir Richard also gave five of the fountains to Lisburn, where two survive in the town to this day. The photograph shows the fountain in the Castle Gardens with the remains of the castle wall in the background.

Sir Richard Wallace initially designed the fountains himself, intending them to be beautiful as well as useful. Four nymphs or caryatids are mounted on an octagonal pedestal with their arms supporting an ornate dome decorated by dolphins. The caryatids are each subtly different and represent kindness, simplicity, charity and sobriety.