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YOUR EXCLUSIVE
TOURIST GUIDE

Go Ancient East

An Irish LOVE STORY

REMEMBERING GRACE GIFFORD
& JOSEPH PLUNKET

Things to SEE AND DO

EXPLORING IRELAND'S
ANCIENT EAST

A - Z of OGHRAM

DISCOVER IRELAND'S
ANCIENT ALPHABET

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Welcome to the original and best Ireland's Ancient East tourism magazine for Ireland's Ancient east. We bring you the history, happenings, events, things to see and places to go along Ireland's Ancient East route.

On behalf of the Go Wild production team, we would like to welcome you to what we believe to be the original and still the best tourism magazine for Ireland's Ancient East and we hope that your trip throughout the region is filled with lifetime memories.

We are delighted to bring you the third annual edition of Go Ancient East, which showcases 17 counties, 5,000 years of history and countless memories for the making.

Our lead story covers the special love story of Grace Gifford and Joseph Plunkett in 1916, which led to the wonderful lamenting song that we feature the words to, on page 6.

Inside the magazine, there are many historical, cultural and culinary delights to discover, so enjoy your trip and do come back and visit us again soon.

Slán agus beannacht!

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Newgrange





Grace

A LOVE STORY



The love story of Joseph Plunkett and Grace Gifford is one of the most moving and memorable in Irish history, which has captured imaginations the world over.

It tells a tale of two star-crossed lovers who married just hours before Plunkett was executed for his part in the 1916 Easter Rising.

Grace Gifford was born to a Catholic father and a fiercely Protestant mother in 1888, and was raised Church of Ireland. A talented artist and cartoonist, she contributed to various republication publications and was passionate about Ireland's independence from the United Kingdom.

She met and fell in love with Joseph Plunkett, who was the editor of the Irish Review, in September 1915. He too was born into wealth; his father, Count Plunkett, was the director of the National Museum. Joseph himself was a poet, nationalist and was committed to armed revolution. He was one of the military strategists of the 1916, Easter Rising.

Though Grace's parents did not approve of the union, the pair became engaged in December 1915 and intended to marry, however, history would intervene in their plans.

By the end of Easter week 1916, the Irish rebels had surrendered and were placed in Kilmainham jail, the fate of its leaders decided. The fifteen men, including Joseph Plunkett, were to be executed by firing squad.

When he discovered that he would die, Joseph requested permission to be married to his sweetheart, Grace. On the night of May 3rd 1916, just hours before he was to be executed, she was brought to the jail. In 1949 she recalled that evening, saying: "When I saw him... he was so unselfish, he never thought of himself. He was not frightened, not in the slightest."

The couple were married before a priest and two witnesses in the jail's chapel. The following day, Joseph Plunkett was executed. Before facing the firing squad, he said: "I am very happy I am dying for the glory of God and the honour of Ireland."

In his will, Joseph left everything to his widow, but his parents refused to honour it. She remained resolutely nationalist after her husband's death and was imprisoned in Kilmainham jail for three months in 1923. She never remarried and outlived her husband by 39 years. Grace Gifford died on December 13, 1955, and was buried with full military honours in Glasnevin Cemetery.

The tragic tale of their love was immortalised in song in 1985 by Frank and Sean O'Meara. It tells the sad story of their doomed relationship. The lyrics include poignant lines that reference the couple's last



moments together.
“Oh, Grace, just hold me in your arms and let this moment linger,
They’ll take me out at dawn and I will die.
With all my love, I place this wedding ring upon your finger,
There won’t be time to share our love for we must say good-bye.”

The song has been recorded by many musicians including The Wolfe Tones and The Dubliners and has proved to be very popular across the world. Most recently it left global superstar Rod Stewart bewitched, describing the ballad as “one of the greatest love songs ever written.” He recorded a version of the track for his latest album ‘Blood Red Roses’.

The legendary singer first came across the song when supporters of Celtic Football Club gave a rendition of it at a match and he became interested in discovering more about its origins.

Speaking to Ryan Tubridy, host of RTE’s Late Late Show, in March of this year, he said: “I first heard the song when I went to the Scottish cup final four years ago, the fans were singing it and I couldn’t get it out of my mind.”

So captivated was he by the song and story that he decided to visit the chapel in the Kilmainham where Grace and Joseph wed. Talking about the experience, he explained: “I visited the jail and went into the chapel where it all happened. So, it means a lot to me, that one, it really does. There was no furniture in the jail apart from the jail bed, no table, no bed, no chair, nothing.” Rod revealed that he also visited Grace

Gifford’s grave in Glasnevin Cemetery in March of this year (pictured).

Rod’s appearance on the Late Late Show became a celebration of the legendary love of Grace and Joseph and the beautiful, poignant ballad that was inspired by their story.

Ryan Tubridy presented the singer with a first edition collection of poetry by Joseph Plunkett which included a signature by Grace. Rod was moved to tears by the gesture and was taken aback by the generous gift. On the night Rod was also introduced to Frank and Sean O’Meara, the songsmiths who penned Grace.

One hundred years later, the love story of Grace Gifford and Joseph Plunkett continues to captivate the hearts and minds of both superstars and civilians alike.



As we gather in the chapel here in old Kilmainham Gaol,
I think about these past few days, oh, will they say we've failed?
From our school days, they have told us we must yearn for liberty,
Yet, all I want in this dark place is to have you here with me.

Oh, Grace, just hold me in your arms and let this moment linger,
They'll take me out at dawn and I will die.
With all my love, I place this wedding ring upon your finger,
There won't be time to share our love for we must say good-bye.

Now, I know it's hard for you, my love, to ever understand,
The love I bear for these brave men, my love for this dear land,
But when Pádraic called me to his side down in the G.P.O.,
I had to leave my own sick bed, to him I had to go.

Now, as the dawn is breaking, my heart is breaking, too,
On this May morn, as I walk out, my thoughts will be of you,
And I'll write some words upon the wall so everyone will know,
I love so much that I could see his blood upon the rose.

Songwriters: Sean O'Meara / Frank O'Meara

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A-Z Of The Ancient East



A IS FOR ARDMORE

The Round Tower in this Co. Waterford village, where St. Declan established his monastery, is the only monastery on Ireland's coast.

B IS FOR BRÚ NA BÓINNE

This UNESCO World Heritage Site is home to the largest concentration of stone art in Western Europe.

C IS FOR CINEMA

Over 25 different movies and TV series have been shot around the Palladian mansion and estate at Powerscourt, Co. Wicklow - including *Black Beauty*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Ella Enchanted* and *King Arthur*.

D IS FOR DOLMEN

Brownshill Portal Tomb in Co. Carlow is Europe's largest dolmen. Its capstone weighs in at an impressive 150 tonnes!

E IS FOR EPIC

The Battle of the Boyne 1690 was the largest ever assembly of troops on an Irish Battlefield. 61,000 troops faced off on July 1, 1690.

F IS FOR FLASHY

According to Lonely Planet, Hook Lighthouse is the flashiest in the world! It's the oldest intact operational lighthouse, too.

G IS FOR GUINNESS

Arthur Guinness was born in Celbridge and ran his first brewery in Leixlip before trying his luck in Dublin. He is buried in Oughterard, Co. Kildare.

H IS FOR HALLOWEEN.

'Samhain' was originally a Celtic festival celebrated by pagans at the Hill of Ward (Tlachtga), Co. Meath, as far back as 200 AD.

I IS FOR INN

Kytler's Inn in Killkenny is named after Dame Alice Kytler, born in 1280 and reputed to be Ireland's last witch. Kytler was widowed four times and accused of poisoning all of her husbands... though she escaped capture.

J IS FOR JFK

President John F. Kennedy's family hailed from Dunbrody, Co. Wexford. The John F. Kennedy Trust was founded in 1988 to commemorate his legacy.

K IS FOR KILLRUDDERY HOUSE, CO. WICKLOW

The ancestral home to the Earls of Meath has been a popular location for many well-known movies and TV mini-series, including *My Left Foot*, *Far & Away*, *Angela's Ashes*, *The Tudors* and *Camelot*.

L IS FOR LONELY PLANET

The influential travel brand not only voted Ireland one of its hottest countries to visit in 2015, but ranked the Smithwicks Experience in Kilkenny as one of the year's hottest attractions!

M IS FOR MUIREDACH'S CROSS

The tallest (and arguably most beautiful) remaining high cross in Ireland can be visited at Monasterboice, Co. Louth.

N IS FOR NEWGRANGE

This 5,000-year-old passage tomb was engineered 500 years before the Egyptian pyramids, and 1,000 years prior to Stonehenge!

O IS FOR OLD-SCHOOL

The High Kings of Ireland ruled from the Hill of Tara in Co. Meath. Meath continues to be known as the Royal County today.

P IS FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Barack Obama's great-great-grandfather was the son of a shoemaker from Moneygall, Co. Offaly. He left Ireland for America in 1850.

Q IS FOR QUAKER

Ballitore, Co. Kildare is the only planned and permanent Quaker Settlement in Ireland.

R IS FOR RUMBLED!

According to legend, the devil once called at Loftus Hall in Co. Wexford. His identity was uncovered during a game of cards, at which point he is said to have absconded... by flying through the ceiling.

S IS FOR SANTA CLAUS

The original St. Nicholas is said to be buried at Jerpoint Park, Co. Kilkenny... but sssh, don't tell the small people!

T IS FOR TITANIC

Cobh, Co. Cork, was the last port of call for the ill-fated White Star liner. 123 people boarded the ship at Ireland's most southerly point... although seven lucky souls disembarked. The ship struck an iceberg and sank on April 15, 1912.

U IS FOR MOUNT USHER

The Wicklow gardens were voted Best to Visit in Ireland by BBC Gardeners' World Magazine. Wicklow is known as Ireland's Garden County.

V IS FOR VOLCANO

Croghan Hill, Co. Offaly is the root of an ancient volcano.

W IS FOR WATERFORD, IRELAND'S OLDEST CITY

It was founded by Vikings between 856 and 914, making the city over 1,000 years old.

X IS FOR X-FACTOR

When mythical hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill tasted the Salmon of Knowledge, caught in the River Boyne, he was instantly filled with wisdom.

Y IS FOR YIELD

Something Sir William Wallace emphatically did not do during the Wars of Scottish Independence. *Braveheart*, which told the story, was filmed in part at Trim Castle, Co. Meath - Ireland's largest Anglo-Norman castle.

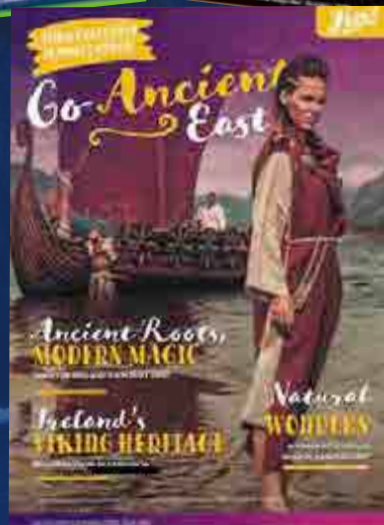
Z IS FOR... A ZILLION THINGS TO DO

in Ireland's Ancient East!



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Ogham: Ireland's Ancient Alphabet



Dotted around Ireland's Ancient East, and in some rare cases, in the westernmost parts of Britain where ancient Irish raiders had invaded and set up communities, are the Ogham Stones – standing stones which are marked along their edges with mysterious sequences of notches and slashes, writes Lorcan Mac Muiris

These markings, called 'feda,' are the ogham alphabet, said to have been given to the ancient Irish by Ogmios, the god of art, creativity and writing. Another story claims that it was the first alphabet developed after the fall of the Tower of Babel, and was brought to Ireland by a Scythian king who headed west after that biblical calamity. In reality, ogham was most likely a simple cypher based on the Latin alphabet, which would have been familiar to Irish merchants in the 1st century AD.

Each succession of characters is based on groups of different types of feda, beginning with one rightward slash for "B", two for "L", three for "V" or "F", four for "S" and five for "N". This has led to an alternate name for the ogham alphabet: the bethluisven, from the sounds of the first five letters. Other marks are leftward slashes, notches, and slashes which span from right to left. Some stones also have more complicated characters which represent diphthongs like "ae" or "oa" but it's thought that these fedas were added long after the rest of the alphabet had been developed.

Ogham gives us our earliest glimpse of the Irish language, with the language of the very oldest inscriptions classified as Primitive Irish. The vast majority of what's written on the ogham stones is little more than the names of leaders or landowners, and it's likely they were a form of ancient signpost, letting travelers, invaders and guests know whose land they were on.

Some of the best examples are to be seen in the Stone Corridor at University College Cork, and others can be seen at St Declan's Cathedral in Ardmore, County Waterford, where you'll also see one of the country's best examples of a round tower and some exceptional early Christian stone carvings. In some cases, ogham stones were later incorporated into churches, and some even survived with a new lease of life as lintels or doorposts in ancient buildings.



University College Cork houses an impressive collection of Ogham stones

Fanciful writers in the Middle Ages came up with imaginary uses for ogham among the ancient Irish, including a method of signaling in battle by spelling out, with your fingers, ogham messages on one's arm (lámhogháin) or nose (srónogháin)...a sort of mythical version of ancient text messaging!

Nearly all ogham inscriptions lack a feda for the letter "P" because the "p" sound had disappeared from the Primitive Irish language spoken by the ancient Celtic people who carved them.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN MEATH

BLUE JEAN COUNTRY QUEEN FESTIVAL, 31ST MAY TO JUNE 3RD

The Blue Jean Country Queen Festival was the brainchild of Patrick Farrelly, a member of Carnaross Macra na Feirme. After several visits to The Rose of Tralee, Patrick was so impressed by that festival that he wanted to start a similar festival in Meath. The very first Blue Jean Country Queen Festival took place in June 1987. It included many of the elements that would become mainstays of the festival to this day, including the queens' on-stage interviews, fashion show, fancy dress football and the Gala Banquet. Since 1987, many new elements have been added including the Saturday Carnival and Craft Fair, Sunday the Lark in the Park which have opened up the festival to the entire local community. It has also seen plenty of celebrity involvement from guest MCs like Brendan Grace, Ray D'Arcy, Hector Ó hEochagáin. bluejeanfest.com

KELLS

The town of Kells in County Meath is one of the highlights of any tour of Ireland's historic Boyne Valley. Boasting great religious significance, Kells Monastery originally included four high crosses built in the 9th century by the monks of St Colmcille's of Iona, Scotland in 804. The famous Book of Kells was completed at the monastery, which also features a round tower. The 9th century sandstone Market Cross, known as the "Cross of the Gate" has carvings which signified that a fugitive could claim sanctuary once inside the boundary of the monastic area. The South Cross, or the Cross of St. Patrick and St. Columba is closest to the roundtower and thought to be the earliest of the Kells crosses. Standing 3.3 meters high, it is carved from a single block of sandstone. Visit Kells in Co. Meath to examine the details of these monuments to the monastic age of Ireland.

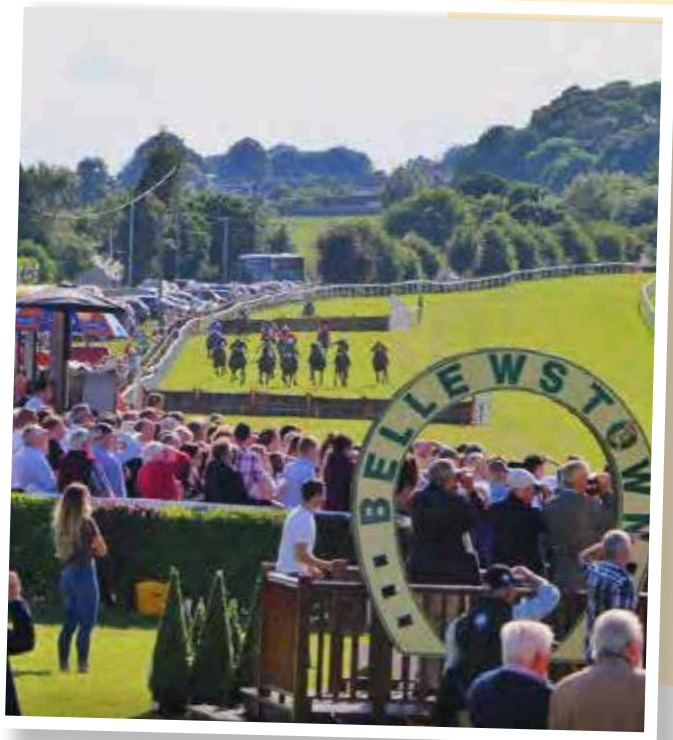


BELLEWSTOWN RACES 3RD TO 6TH OF JULY & 28TH AND 29TH OF AUGUST

Horse racing at Bellewstown Racecourse, on the Hill of Crockafotha in Co. Meath, is beautifully situated with magnificent views of the Mountains of Mourne to the north and the Irish Sea to the east.

The tradition of summer racing at Bellewstown dates back centuries and the first record of racing here appears in the August edition of the Dublin Gazette and the Weekly Courier in 1726. This superb one mile and one furlong left handed course, in a truly unique location, features both flat and hurdle racing. Bellewstown Races are synonymous with top class racing, wonderful summer evenings, family entertainment and ladies day races which add to the fun.

www.bellewstownraces.ie



MEATH COUNTY CRAFTS

Meath County Crafts is housed in Trim Visitor Centre which is one minute's walk from King John's Castle. The centre has an excellent audiovisual show about the medieval past of Trim and Co. Meath. Meath County Crafts stock a huge range of crafts from the Boyne Valley region and the rest of Ireland, North and South. Many makers are Crafts Council of Ireland approved. The range includes pottery, leather, textiles, metalwork, ceramics, jewellery, wood, soaps and much more. To visit the workshops of some of the Meath craft workers, it is advisable to make an appointment prior to visiting.

clancybrothersfestival.com

MAGNIFICENT MALAHIDE CASTLE IS A STONE'S THROW AWAY






Malahide Castle is a magnificent medieval castle just 10 minutes from Dublin Airport. The castle is set on 250 acres of parkland with a story dating back to the 12th Century. Enjoy daily tours of the castle, visit the ornamental walled gardens, fairy trail, exotic butterfly house and dine or shop at the Avoca Café and Retail store. We look forward to your visit.

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Malahide Castle & Gardens

Malahide Castle was home to the Talbot family for nearly 800 years and with a history dating back to 1185, there are plenty of stories to be told.

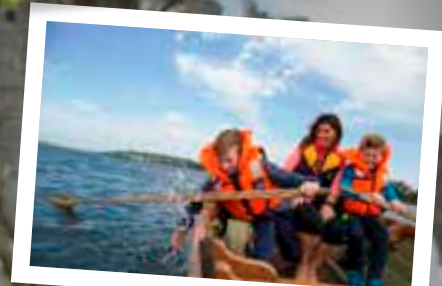
Enjoy a guided tour of Dublin's most loved medieval castle just 10 minutes from Dublin Airport and 13km from Dublin city centre. See the splendour of Lord Milo Talbot's walled botanical garden, the butterfly house and West Lawn. Take a break and breath of fresh air on Avoca's café terrace, overlooking the walled garden, or engage in some retail therapy in the Museum Shop in the visitor centre.

For more visit www.malahidecastleandgardens.ie



Mullingar

Music Myths and Legends



Mullingar, County Westmeath is your ideal base for exploring Ireland's Ancient East. This historical town is famous for its musical heritage, vibrant culture, sparkling lakes and ancient legends. A memorable visit is guaranteed, with great coffee shops, restaurants, boutiques and a range of high quality accommodation options. Mullingar is the birthplace of Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann, Ireland's Traditional Music Festival and will again host this memorable event in August 2020. The musical heritage of Mullingar spans genres and generations, with famous musical talent ranging from Joe Dolan to Niall Horan.

Among the must-sees in Mullingar is the Renaissance style Cathedral of Christ the King with its exquisite mosaics. Belvedere House, Gardens & Park on the shores of Lough Ennell guarantees a fantastic experience. Close by, Kilbeggan

is home not only to the world's oldest licensed distillery dating back to 1757 but also a horse racing stadium that is sure to offer the visitor a thrilling day out. The Hill of Uisneach is an ancient ceremonial site of international importance, offering truly memorable guided tours. Tullynally Castle's beautifully restored 18th Century gardens include terraced lawns, remarkable mature trees, walled flower gardens and ornamental lakes. Fore Abbey is also nearby; this 7th Century Monastic Site is famous for its intriguing stories of the 'Seven Wonders', where the results of 'miracles' performed can still be seen today.

Just an hour's drive from Dublin airport, Westmeath is also easily accessible by bus or train and a network of greenways, cycleways, walking trails and lakeshore amenities offer the chance to explore the stunning landscapes of this region. Find out more on www.visitwestmeath.ie

WESTMEATH
Discover your next adventure



Nestled in the very centre of Ireland, where Ireland's Ancient East meets Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Westmeath is your ideal base from which to explore it all.

Discover ancient stories, legendary lakes and hidden landscapes of true beauty.

Friendly tour guides and local storytellers are waiting to help you discover it.

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THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN WEXFORD



IRISH NATIONAL HERITAGE PARK

Located on the banks of the picturesque River Slaney, 'The Irish National Heritage Park' truly is the cornerstone of 'Ireland's Ancient East'.

A not-for-profit outdoor museum depicting 9,000 years of re-created Irish History situated within natural forestry and wet woodlands.

Take an unforgettable journey through Ireland's past and experience stories, sights and sounds that shaped our country. So, what are you waiting for? Step back in time and join us in 'Ireland Ancient East' at The Irish National Heritage Park. Your adventure begins here...

NATIONAL 1798 REBELLION CENTRE

On your visit you will meet the key figures of the Rebellion, participate in our state of the art 4D battle of Vinegar Hill Experience, discover how weapons from the period worked and learn in gruesome detail how some 20,000 insurgents faced the might of 10,000 well-trained and well-armed Crown Forces.



TINTERN ABBEY

Tintern Abbey was a Cistercian abbey located on the Hook peninsula, County Wexford, Ireland. The Abbey – which is today in ruins, some of which have been restored – was founded in c.1200 by William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, as the result of a vow he had made when his boat was caught in a storm nearby.



LOFTUS HALL

Loftus Hall is a large country house on the Hook peninsula, County Wexford. Built on the site of the original Redmond Hall, it is said by locals to have been haunted by the devil and the ghost of a young woman.

JOHNSTOWN CASTLE & GARDENS.

The spectacular ornamental grounds and gardens surrounding the 19th century castle were designed by Daniel Robertson who is famed for the gardens at Powerscourt in Co. Wicklow. Stroll through the grounds with over 200 varieties of trees and shrubs. Relax by the castle lakeside with its Gothic towers, waterfalls and statues. Enjoy a picnic in the sunken Italian garden or museum courtyard. Watch the peacocks strut by and display their finery. View the ruins of Rathlannon Castle.

JOHN F KENNEDY ARBORETUM

The John F. Kennedy Arboretum on the Hook Head Peninsula at New Ross, County Wexford, Ireland, is a park under public administration. On 252 hectares there are approximately 4,500 species of trees and shrubs

ENNISCORTHY CASTLE

Enniscorthy Castle, in the heart of Enniscorthy town, was originally built in the 13th century, and has been 'home' to Norman knights, English armies, Irish rebels and prisoners, plus local merchant families.

Why not visit our dungeon to see the rare medieval wall art – The Swordsman, or our battlements at the top of the castle to marvel at the amazing views of Vinegar Hill Battlefield, Enniscorthy town, and the sights, flora and fauna of the surrounding countryside.

Wells House & Gardens

Wells House and Gardens is a Victorian Tudor gothic country house museum, located around 7 km outside of Kilmuckridge, County Wexford. It was designed by Daniel Robertson in the 1830s.

**ANCIENT
WEXFORD**



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HOOK LIGHTHOUSE

Explore the oldest operational lighthouse in the world. Voted one of Ireland's favourite attractions, Hook Lighthouse in Wexford is truly one of a kind.

Purpose built 800 years ago by Knight William Marshal, take a step back in time and enjoy a guided tour hearing tales of medieval times and life as a light keeper.

Recently lauded by Irish Travel writer, Isabel Conway, she described the site as World Class, unique and deserving of further recognition at the Best Tourism Project awards UK and Ireland, held in London in November 2018.

Take in the spectacular view from the balcony with miles of sea rolling out before you. Enjoy the visitor centre with gift shop, art workshop, exhibits and café. Guided tours are on offer seven days a week, sharing with visitors one of the greatest experiences on Ireland's Ancient East.

Hook Head

Hook Head is a Special Protected Area (SPA) under Irish & EU legislation. SPAs are areas that are of European importance, specifically for bird species established under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). As a member of the EU,

it is required that Ireland designates any site that meets the ecological criteria laid out. The network of SPAs in Ireland includes important wintering waterfowl sites and areas supporting rare species.

Wexford is a county rich in biodiversity. Habitat diversity includes reefs, sea caves, coastal dune systems, lagoons, lakes, rivers, grasslands, marshes, woodlands, and peatlands. Many habitats throughout Wexford are rich in species diversity; they provide important roosting or feeding sites as well as being valuable wildlife corridors.

The Hook Head area is of special importance due to the presence bird species, fossils, sea-life and its vegetated sea cliffs. Visitor flow is managed to discourage visitors from entering the protected areas. We are committed to environmental conservation and education.

Whales and Dolphins

This rare sighting of a humpback whale off Hook Head, in Co. Wexford, was captured by Pdraig Whooley of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group. Whale and Dolphin watching is a popular pastime on the Peninsula.

The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group monitor sightings of whales and dolphins around the coast.

The majestic and rare sight of giant

humpback whales exploding out of the water and Fin Whales breaching, can be seen from the shoreline around Hook Head with a good pair of binoculars in the winter months, as they arrive to feed on the huge shoals of herring.

Humpback whales are amongst the largest creatures on earth. They can grow to 50 feet long and can weigh 40-tonnes.

Geodiversity

Geodiversity may be defined as "the natural range (diversity) of geological (rocks, minerals, fossils), geomorphological (landforms, processes) and soil features. It includes their assemblages, relationships, properties, interpretations and systems" (Gray 2004). Rocks, sediments and soils form the land on which we live and on which plants and animals thrive. Without rocks, no soil or nutrients can be created; without soil and nutrients, there is no starting point for plants and animals. Geomorphological processes, for example the effects of erosion and weathering, shape the landscape. Fluvial processes have created a diversity of river habitats and coastal processes are vital to the well-being of coastal biodiversity. Geodiversity underpins biodiversity since habitats have a geological foundation. If the geological foundation is not taken care of, biodiversity will suffer from it as it will be deprived from a vital supporting element.

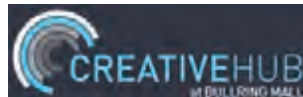


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Trailblazing Irish Beauty Queen Makes Data Fashionable!

by Nicky Sullivan



Emma Waldron is no stranger to the spotlight. The former Miss Ireland has been showcasing some of our favourite brands and presenting television shows for the likes of Larry King ever since she won her title in 2010.

But now she's hoping to turn that spotlight around with a new app — [waldron.app](#) — that helps women and men find the fashion inspirations that are right for them, while also actively promoting the spaces in which female creatives can flourish.

Which is also why the dynamic young entrepreneur has made her

“It was a strategic decision to move here; when you’re starting a business, you just have to go where you need to be. But I love it so much and for now, it’s home.”

...

home in New York for the last four years. “I can’t believe it’s been four years already,” she enthuses on a call to [Go Wild](#) magazine.

“In some ways, it feels like I’ve been here longer, but then I go home and it’s like I just left.”

This is not Emma’s first entrepreneurial outing. Several years ago, after finding herself inundated with products that were not really her style, she launched an app that set out to match brands with the influencers that are right for them. [Waldron.app](#) is really an extension of that, in that it seeks to match the



fashion-conscious with the fashion content that is right for them.

“It’s essentially a single platform for shoppable personalised fashion content,” she says, giving the elevator speech before launching into an energetic explanation of how it works. Think Netflix, but for all the fashion-oriented articles, ideas and inspirations that work for you.

“I’ve been playing with the beta version. Every time you swipe this way or that, it’s like you’re training a little computer that’s learning who you are and then serving you content that you want to see. There is so much content out there now and it’s so hard to sift through it and find what’s right for you. I basically want to give people their time back.”

But it’s more than that. Emma also wants to use it as a platform that focuses on female creations, whether it’s fashion or television, film, written media, whatever.

“I want a platform where you can go to support other female content creators, watch movies and series that have female leads and producers, and just by virtue of you being on the platform, you’re helping to empower these women and helping to create more content that is female-centric. That’s the dream!”

For Emma, landing in the States came as something of a shock. “I grew up being taught that if you work hard, you can do anything and then I came here and realised that that wasn’t necessarily the case. The stats are crazy! So, even though female companies create 60% more value for investors, they still only get 2% of venture capital funding.”

You can still hear the shock in her voice. But the woman who considers any challenge as an opportunity to show people what she’s made of, was not going to be deterred.

Suffice to say that the model-

turned-entrepreneur, who recently delivered a lecture to NYU Ph.D students on the application of data science in fashion, wrapped up her latest funding round with some of the biggest VC hitters on American shores, including Burch Creative Capital and Caivis Investments, co-founded by former Apple CMO John Sculley and David Steinberg.

Waldron.app will launch on iOS this April, and will also include content from Ireland, including Emma’s favourite designer, Alison Conneely of the Ardbear Peninsula in Galway, of whom she can’t get enough. “Her stuff is amazing. I’m obsessed with it,” she says.

It’s clear that no matter how much Emma has flourished in the fertile grounds of New York, a part of her will always be at home in Ireland.

One can’t escape the feeling that she’s only really just getting started Stateside though...

Photo credits: Don Nixon and Andre Grey

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN WATERFORD

WATERFORD CRYSTAL

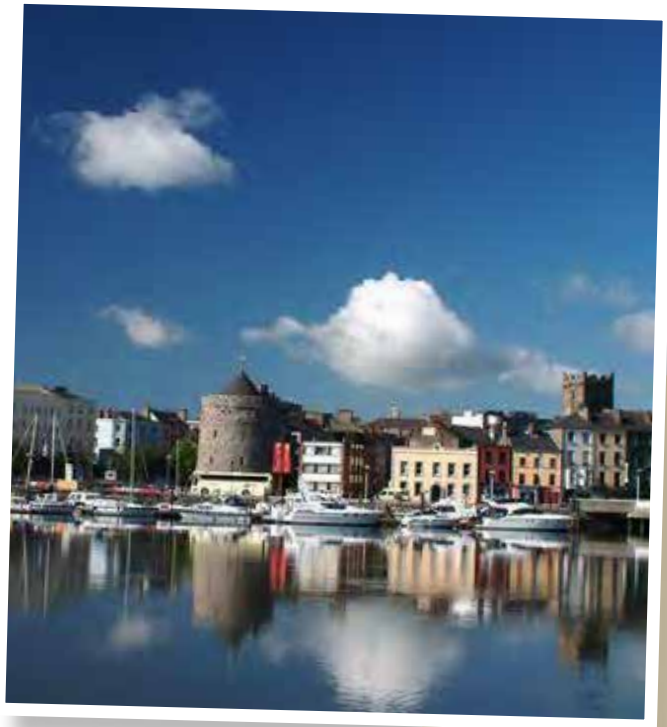
Go behind the scenes and gain a better understanding of the time and work that goes into crystal making on this one-hour tour of the House of Waterford Crystal factory. Your guide explains the step-by-step process of crystal making, as you wander the rooms where different techniques are used along the way. Meet a few of the high-end crystal makers, and visit the retail store where you can explore one of the world's largest displays of Waterford Crystals.

WATERFORD'S MEDIEVAL MUSEUM AND BISHOPS PALACE

Visit Waterford's Medieval Museum and Bishop's Palace, and discover two top attractions with ease on this combined admission ticket. Follow a guide through Waterford's Medieval Museum, home to many beautiful pre-Reformation treasures. Explore the 13th-century Choristers' Hall and 15th-century wine vaults, and gain insight into life here those centuries ago. Visit the Bishop's Palace, the town's grand 18th-century Georgian residence. Admire treasures including beautiful silverware and elegant glassware, and explore Waterford's history from 1700 to the 1970s.

EPIC TOUR OF THE VIKING TRIANGLE

Step back in time and explore Irish history from the Viking to the Victorian era on this 1-hour Viking Triangle tour in Waterford. Follow your guide through this ancient Irish city and visit six national monuments including Reginald's Tower, Greyfriars Friary, Choristers' Hall, the Mayor's Wine Vault and the Bishop's Palace. Gain insight into Ireland's colourful past and learn of the invasions, battles and victories which shaped the country we know today. Admire archaeological treasures from centuries passed and trace Ireland's architecture through the generations.



COPPER COAST HELICOPTER TOUR

Departing from Waterford Airport, one of the Irish Coast Guard Search and Rescue bases, you will route out towards the coastline where you take in breath-taking views of the UNESCO Geopark also known as The Copper Coast in County Waterford. Famous for its panoramic seascapes, coves, bays and cliffs you will see all this stunning scenery on your helicopter tour with Adventure 001 Ireland.

Duration: 30 Minute Pleasure Flight, please allow at least up to one hour on site. There may be delays on the day due to weather, air traffic or operational issues.

Our professional ground crew will take photographs of you just before you board your helicopter, these will be printed while you fly and can be purchased afterwards.

Don't forget to take your camera, so you can re-live the experience with friends and family and show off your fantastic photographs.

WATERFORD GREENWAY

Waterford Greenway is a spectacular 46 km off-road cycling and walking trail along an old railway line which runs between Waterford and Dungarvan. From the Viking City alongside the River Suir, out by Mount Congreve Gardens, through Kilmacthomas, across eleven bridges, over three impressive viaducts and through a 400m long tunnel; with wonderful views of the Comeragh Mountains and Dungarvan Bay.

PASSAGE EAST FERRY

As you descend into the River Suir Valley to the Scenic Passage East Ferry, you are now on a voyage of discovery, exploring the rich Viking and Norman heritage in this historic corner of Ireland's Ancient East. There is so much to explore and discover on both sides of this historic estuary, from the Viking Triangle in Waterford to the Norman Trail in Co. Wexford; the oldest operational lighthouse in the world Hook Lighthouse, haunted houses, cookery schools, adventure centres, Ireland's longest greenway-Waterford Greenway, stunning beaches, golf courses, the Copper Coastline, President Kennedy's ancestral home, the Dunbrody emigration ship, to local mountains, wildlife and of course the world-famous Waterford Crystal. The ferry allows you to traverse the River Suir saving you time and money. It sails between Passage East, Co. Waterford & Ballyhack, Co. Wexford and caters for all vehicles except large coaches. Come and explore!



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NEWBRIDGE HOUSE

Given a fresh lease of life

Step into a world of Downton Abbey-esque grace, splendour and beauty at Newbridge House & Farm in north County Dublin.

The setting is a stunning example of 18th century architecture and one of the last intact Georgian mansions in Ireland outside of the cities.

Recently acquired by Shannon Heritage, one of country's leading tourism and heritage companies, the house has been renewed so that it sparkles with fresh new life and visitors can truly "live" the history.

Built in 1747 for the then Archbishop of Dublin, Charles Cobbe, Newbridge House and Farm remained in Cobbe family hands until 1985 when it was bought by the local council. The house's original architect, James Gibbs, was one of the most influential of his time and also designed the church of St Martin in the Fields in London (which became a prototype for many churches in New England) and the extraordinary Radcliffe Camera in Oxford.

Three hundred years of Cobbe family history can be traced through exploring the house and its exhibits, including the intriguing Cabinet of Curiosities and the extensive art collection to be found

in the Red Drawing Room. Cabinets of Curiosities, also known as 'wonder rooms', were small collections of extraordinary objects which attempted to categorise and tell stories about the wonders and oddities of the natural world. They were a particular feature of the Georgian period, when Britain's explorer-traders were expanding their reach throughout the world, and the one at Newbridge is one of the only ones to be found in Ireland.

Earlier this year, the nearby Donabate Historical Society decided to house its own collection of historical artefacts in Newbridge House, which will be housed in a permanent display area.



“We have so much to see here, it’s clear how it will appeal to people from all over the world,” said Niall O’Callaghan, managing director of Shannon Heritage. “You can really feel how life was lived when the house was first occupied. It was a very ‘upstairs-downstairs’ world and Newbridge House is the only intact Georgian mansion in Ireland outside of the big towns. To me, the interiors and its history are mind-blowing. It’s like walking on to a set of Downton Abbey, really quite a unique feeling.”

Outside of the main house and its exhibits, visitors will find all of the working buildings that would have attended

the life of a traditional grand Georgian household. “Everything is as close to how it would have been as possible,” said Mr O’Callaghan. “The landscaping is Georgian and around the courtyard you’ll find the blacksmith’s forge, stables, the threshing barn, weigh house, hay barn and the chicken house; all the various buildings that you would expect to find on a Georgian farm are arranged around the main house.”

Moving slightly further afield, visitors can take in meandering woodland walks, a play area for kids, and a gorgeous farm populated by many rare pig and pony breeds as well as donkeys, sheep, Irish

draught horses, Kerry cows, birds, goats and deer.

If visitors want to combine an 18th century state house experience with a 15th century castle experience, they could spend several hours at Newbridge House & Farm before wandering down to Malahide Castle & Gardens, just a ten-minute drive away. One of the oldest castles standing in Ireland, Malahide Castle can be traced all the way back to the 12th century, though the towers and main hall were around between 1600 and 1650. This is another member of the Shannon Heritage property family, so keep an eye out for special deals on combined tickets.



ATHLONE... *at the heart of it*

Here at the centre of Ireland, you're in the heart of our great historic assembly – the land of Gods, Saints and Kings.

The vibrant town of Athlone is situated in the very heart of Ireland on the boundaries of Westmeath and Roscommon, making it a very popular destination for touring holidays.

There are few regions in Ireland that enjoy as many major visitor attractions in close proximity such as Clonmacnoise, Birr Castle and Lough Boora Parklands in Offaly, the Hill of Uisneach and Belvedere House in Westmeath, Lough Key Forest Park, Rindoon Village and Strokestown House in Roscommon, the Islands of the Saints and Scholars in Longford, Athlone Castle, Luan Gallery, The Viking Ship Cruise and the largest water-based fun park in Europe at Bay Sports.

The area is, therefore, rich in history, culture, majesty, and stories from times gone by. It also has a great social scene, and there are lots to do for families from waterpark excitement to zip lining and cruising with the Vikings!

Athlone's situation on the stunning shores of Lough Ree and on Ireland's longest river, the River Shannon, makes it a popular destination for pleasure boats

and cruises. In the past, the town was of a large strategic importance as the enemy could approach the town by the river. In the eleventh century, King John built a stone castle on the Connaught side of town, Athlone Castle. This big castle still stands today, and a Visitors Center within tells the whole history of the area.

Watersports, fishing, trekking, biking, art and serious shopping – you have it all here! Climb the spectacular Slieve Bloom Mountains, enjoy gallery tours and whiskey tasting, take in centuries of history, tee off at one of the region's 6 golf clubs, or cycle the new 40k greenway on the old railway line. And as all of that is thirsty work, you can even have a pint at Ireland's oldest pub, Sean's Bar.

Athlone's theatre scene is also varied: three theatres, the Dean Crowe Theatre & Arts Centre, the Little Theatre, and Passionfruit Theatre all have exciting programmes for all ages. The RTÉ All-Ireland Drama Festival takes place annually in the town, bringing together amateur drama groups from across Ireland. Street theatre, art exhibitions, workshops, and events for young people are all part of the festival, making it



an exciting time to visit Athlone. The Athlone Literary Festival is an annual event which began in 1999, initially as a weekend celebration of the life and works of John Broderick, but which now features a great variety of speakers and debaters.

Athlone enjoys unrivalled access from all parts of the country be it by road, rail or water along with an excellent mix of quality accommodation and amenities. **For more see www.athlone.ie**

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Since 1832, more than 1.5 million people have been interred in Glasnevin. Located just 2.5km from Dublin's city centre, Glasnevin Cemetery covers 124 acres of glorious parkland with plenty to appreciate – perfect for those interested in exploring the legacies of Ireland's heroes.

A hauntingly gorgeous Victorian Garden cemetery, each guide is passionate about sharing their love of heritage and history, telling the stories of Ireland's complex and fascinating history through daily walking tours turning a learning experience into a period of magic with a careful balance of passion, sensitivity and even fun.

Visitors to Glasnevin Cemetery can now climb the iconic O'Connell Tower for the first time in over 45 years - 198 steps to breath-taking views of Dublin and surrounding counties. The Tower is open to

visitors daily and bookings can be made online. The tower was built to commemorate the life of one of Ireland's greatest political figures, Daniel O'Connell (1775 – 1847) and took hundreds of skilled tradesmen 16 months to complete. O'Connell's final words "My body to Ireland, my heart to Rome, my soul to heaven" are inscribed in the elaborately designed walls of his crypt, located at the base of the tower.

Glasnevin, celebrating history, heritage and culture - join this intriguing journey through Ireland's past.



THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN KILDARE

DONADEA FOREST PARK

Donadea Forest Park is situated in northwest Kildare and comprises of approximately 243 hectares of mixed woodland. There are many different walks through the forest, including the 5km Aylmer loop, the lake walk (wheelchair accessible) and a nature trail with stops. The park is a designated National Heritage Area. There is a 9/11 Memorial at Donadea. The memorial was inspired by the memory of Sean Tallon, a young fire fighter, whose family had emigrated from Donadea. Additional facilities include public toilets with disabled access, coach parking and tea/coffee facilities.

THE IRISH NATIONAL STUD AND GARDENS

The Irish National Stud and Gardens is the home of equine royalty, immaculately-bred stallions, protective mares, frolicking foals and athletic yearlings. It is the only stud farm in Ireland open to the public and offering daily tours. Within the grounds are the world-famous Japanese Gardens, the Horse Museum and St Fiachra's Garden, created to celebrate the Millennium. Visit the Japanese Gardens for a relaxing stroll—created between the years 1906 and 1910, they were laid out by Japanese craftsman Tassa Eida and his son Minoru.



NEWBRIDGE SILVERWARE - MUSEUM OF STYLE ICONS

Originally set up as a cutlery manufacturing company in 1934, Newbridge Silverware today offers a unique tourism experience at its visitor centre. With one of the world's greatest collections of authentic couture style, Hollywood glamour, music memorabilia and other artefacts, the Museum of Style Icons is a treasure that has to be seen to be believed. Highlights of the collection include one of the greatest private collections of Audrey Hepburn garments in the world, two very famous outfits worn by Princess Grace of Monaco, Marilyn Monroe paper and garments, stage worn ensembles by Michael Jackson, plus much more. The Newbridge Silverware Factory opened last Summer to tourists for the first time ever. Guests were transported behind the scenes and immersed in the history and craft aspects of the business.

LULLYMORE HERITAGE AND DISCOVERY PARK

Lullymore Heritage and Discovery Park is a family day out attraction set in the heart of Ireland's largest bog land, The Bog of Allen in Kildare. There is a great mix of fun, leisure and education activity to ensure that there is something to interest visitors of all ages. The woodland/bog land walks and themed gardens are famous for their vibrant colour throughout the summer. Also, an extensive outdoor adventure play area and the forest indoor play centre, 18 hole crazy golf, a pet farm with Falabella horses and a beautiful road train make Lullymore the kind of attraction you can't miss when visiting the midlands.





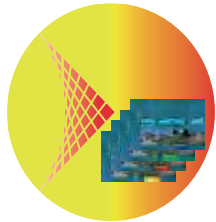
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THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN KILKENNY

Kilkenny, known as the Marble City, is a charming Irish city filled with Medieval architecture and buildings. An impressive castle, several well-preserved churches, and tons of artisan boutique shops and pubs make it a favourite place for tourists to visit and a popular weekend getaway for the Irish locals (especially for stag and hen parties). With so many things to do in Kilkenny, it's easy to spend a day or two in this picturesque town.

Kilkenny is only 1.5 - 2 hours from Dublin by car or bus, making it an easy day trip from Dublin, for those looking to get out of the capital and see a bit more of Ireland. It's also a popular stop on guided day trips from Dublin to Glendalough and Wicklow. Whether you have a couple of days, a full day, or even just a couple of hours, Kilkenny has plenty to offer and is definitely worth the visit. Here is my ultimate list of things to do in Kilkenny, Ireland.

THE MEDIEVAL MILE

Kilkenny's Medieval Mile is a trail that links Kilkenny Castle to St. Canice's Cathedral. This stretch is filled with shops, pubs, restaurants, picturesque alleyways and tons of history. It's fun to do on your own, but if you are a history fanatic or just a story love, consider taking a guided walking tour.

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL

Located on the highest point of Kilkenny, St. Mary's Cathedral is easy to spot. This impressive Cathedral is created from cut limestone, all of which was sourced locally when it was built in the 1800s. It's free to visit and definitely worth a walk around and a visit inside to examine the beautiful architecture.



NATIONAL CRAFT GALLERY AND KILKENNY DESIGN CENTRE

Kilkenny may be known as Ireland's Medieval city but it's also known for its local artisans and craft shops. Established in 2000, the National Craft Gallery is located in what was once the stable yard of Kilkenny Castle. The exhibitions here feature local and international artists who work with a variety of materials and techniques.

KILKENNY WAY HURLING EXPERIENCE

Fun fact: Hurling in Ireland means something completely different than it does in North America. It's a sport, and no, there's no excessive drinking or being sick involved. The sport of Hurling is 3,000 years old and you can delve into that history at the Kilkenny Hurling Way Experience. Packages here include a museum visit, introduction video to the sport, learning some skills, and then watching a game over lunch at the bar.

ROTHE HOUSE

Rothe House and Garden is a bit of a hidden gem in Killarney. From the street, it just looks like a beautiful old building; which it is. But while Rothe House is a stunning building, and the only one of its kind remaining in Ireland, it also is a museum and has a lovely garden in the back. Rothe House dates back to the early 1600s and is actually made up of three houses. The museum inside contains historical artefacts both found in the Kilkenny area and donated by residents. Tours are self-guided, with the gardens in the back being a highlight for many.

Adventures at Castlecomer Discovery Park



Located in the stunning grounds of the 17th Century Wandesford Estate, Castlecomer Discovery Park offers a wide range of activities on 80 acres (32 hectares) of woodland and lakes. It is now one of Ireland's best Adventure Centres, with Ireland's longest Zip line, High

Ropes Courses, Junior Play zones, Archery, Axe Throwing, Canoeing, Boating, Coal Mining Museum, Craft Shops and beautiful Cafes. Only 90-minutes drive from Dublin, and only 15-minutes drive from Medieval Kilkenny in Ireland's Ancient East. www.discoverypark.ie



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- Orienteering Trails
- Coal Mining Museum
- Café & Craft Courtyard

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THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN WICKLOW

GREENAN MAZE

Greenan Maze is set amidst the beautiful Wicklow hills on a pretty countryside farm. With two mazes, three museums, nature walks, woodlands, ponds, wildlife, farm animals, play areas, treasure hunt and fairy tree walk, there is plenty of fun for all ages. Families enjoy spending the day and The Irish Times designated it a Heritage Hotspot "it's an antidote to urban living within easy reach of Dublin. The two-metre-high hedge maze and gentler solstice maze with stone circles are fun for all ages and the barn and bottle museum offer a look at farming in former times, as does the farmhouse museum with its traditional furniture and utensils". The treasure hunt and fairy tree trail are great fun activities for kids but the large hedge maze is the highlight of most people's day: getting lost in the maze finds the kid in everyone. The tearooms are open for busy periods and make homemade cakes and goodies.

SHEKINA SCULPTURE GARDEN

This one-acre garden includes a stream with a bridge, two ponds on different levels, a patio, gazebo, seating areas, shrub beds and undulating lawns. A unique feature is a collection of 15 modern sculptures by Irish artists --: Michael Casey, Fred Conlon, Clodna Cussen, James Gannon, Leo Higgins, Anne Murphy, Paul Page, Noel Scullion, Alexander Sokolov, Imogen Stuart, Ken Thompson, Alexandra Wejchert, Elke Weston.

Directions: Via Rathdrum or Laragh: two miles from Glenmalur Lodge Hotel.

Opening Times: Open from Fri to Sun, May to Sept. Please phone ahead. Group bookings possible.

Admission: Entrance by donation to St. Vincent de Paul.

GPS Coordinates: N 52 56.523 W 6 19.422

GLENDALOUGH VISITOR CENTRE

The visitor centre brings visitors back in time to the golden age of Irish History: the Ireland of Scholars and Saints. Follow the footsteps of St. Kevin, founder of Glendalough. The audio-visual show is available in many languages as well as guided tours of the permanent exhibition.

The visitor centre is open daily throughout the year and is a must before entering the Monastic Site.

Visitor Centre is fully accessible for visitors with disabilities.

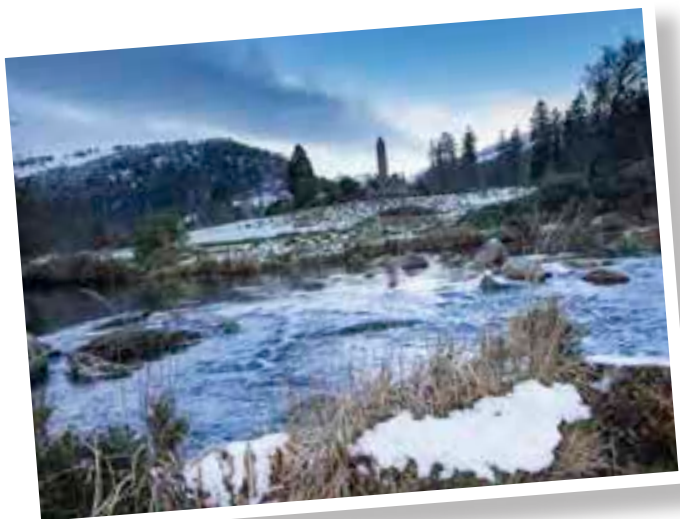
Access to the graveyard is very difficult for wheelchair users.

The Education Centre provides a range of courses and tours for schoolchildren, students and other groups. These are related to nature conservation and the ecology of the National Park. The centre is accessible for people with disabilities.

Glendalough is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Wicklow and indeed all of Ireland. It is unsurprising given the stunning landscape, historic ruins and beautiful walks on offer at this unique location.

Glendalough (or Gleann Da Loch, meaning 'The Glen of the Two Lakes') is situated in the heart of the Wicklow Mountains National Park, which has over one million visitors every year.

The ancient monastery on the site is a fascinating site, having been founded in the 6th century by St. Kevin. Set in a glaciated valley with two lakes, the monastic remains include a superb round tower, stone churches and decorated crosses. The round tower is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the area. The site also includes a Celtic high cross, St. Mary's Church and St. Kevin's Church. The remains of three stone crosses and a stone fort are also to be found between the upper and lower lakes.





Huntington Castle

Clonegal, Co. Carlow



Visiting



Contact

Huntington Castle
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info@huntingtoncastle.com
www.huntingtoncastle.com



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52.6905, -6.6492



Opening Times

Castle, Gardens and Tearooms are all open daily
May - September



Admission Rates

Gardens only Adults €6, Child (U12)€3
Castle Tour & Gardens
Adults €9.95 Child (U12) €5
Usual concessions apply



Parking

Ample free parking (including Coaches)
on site

One of Ireland's historical gems, this amazing Castle is still lived in by descendants of the original builders. The guided tour (approx 35 mins) features the world famous Temple of Isis in the dungeons as well as Castle rooms and ghost stories. With formal gardens, an adventure playground, tearooms and giftshop, Huntington Castle is the perfect place for a day out.



Enjoy a Wild & Organic Dining Experience along Ireland's Ancient East

BrookLodge & Macreddin Village is home to Ireland's first certified Organic Restaurant - The Strawberry Tree, boasting a daily changing menu that reflects the seasons and featuring the freshest Wild & Organic foods.

At the heart of The Strawberry Tree Restaurant lies the treasure trove that is the Wild Foods Pantry which holds much of the produce foraged and prepared by the Kitchen Brigade.

Call the Macreddin Village Crew on 0402 36444 to secure your Wild & Organic Experience at The Strawberry Tree Restaurant

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'Our aim is to spread the success'

Ask Niall Gibbons to reveal a hidden gem in his home city and he'll tell you about The Little Museum of Dublin. He's a man who loves the capital, mostly for its simplicity.

He's been Tourism Ireland's Chief Executive since 2009 and more recently, he was appointed deputy vice president of Dublin Chamber – the organisation represents the interests of businesses in the Greater Dublin Area.

Niall, tell us a little about yourself...

I'm a business graduate of Trinity College Dublin. Having qualified as an accountant with Coopers and Lybrand, I worked for a few years in the private sector. I then moved to the public sector with the Marine Institute, for seven years. I joined Tourism Ireland as Director of Corporate Services in early 2002, just as the organisation was being set up and, in June 2009, I was appointed Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland.

How has tourism impacted Dublin in previous years?

Tourism is fundamental to the economy of Dublin and we've seen the impact of the

success of overseas tourism on our city in recent years. Dublin earns close to €2 billion from around six million overseas tourists each year. Almost two-thirds of overseas tourists to Ireland visit Dublin as part of their trip.

How do you feel the Irish tourism industry is performing?

2018 was another record year for Irish tourism, surpassing all previous records and coming on the back of a number of years of strong growth. Revenue generated by overseas visitors last year was approximately €6.1 billion – a +10% increase over 2017; helping to sustain around 320,000 valuable jobs in communities across the island. Around 11.2 million people visited the island of Ireland in 2018, a +6% increase over 2017, with growth recorded from all markets.

In 2019, the ambition is to grow overseas tourism revenue by +6%, to €6.5 billion for the island of Ireland; and to grow visitor numbers to 11.67 million (+4%). Our aim is to spread the success throughout the year and around the entire island of Ireland – ensuring we maintain our renowned welcome and superb visitor experience.



Highlights in recent years?

The launch of Tourism Ireland's global website, Ireland.com, which attracts more than 20 million visits per year. Also, Tourism Ireland's emergence as a leader in digital marketing and in the social media space – Tourism Ireland now ranks fourth in the world among tourism boards on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, with a global digital reach of one billion.

The development and growth of Tourism Ireland's Global Greening initiative since it was first launched back in 2010 has also been a highlight. Our Global Greening has brought tourism to the heart of St Patrick's Day celebrations across the world and it generates positive international media coverage worth millions of euro each March for the island of Ireland. Last year, we saw over 300 sites and global icons light green for the day; in honour of our patron saint and our diaspora abroad.

Tourism Ireland's expansion into the tourism markets of the future, and in particular China, is also very exciting.

Ireland's and Europe's only hands on privately owned Military Museum

Welcome to Ireland's and Europe's only hands-on privately owned Military Museum with Family Park, Playground and State of the Art Conference facilities (Camping Site opening soon).

Housing US Convoy Military Vehicles with extensive displays on WW1 1916 WW11 Irish Independence, Vietnam, War First Gulf War. Visit our full-scale indoor Trench Cafe and experience Trench life from first hand. Enjoy our delicious coffee food snacks and treats while surrounded by authentic Military artefacts in the unique Trench setting of our very own Sergeant Sully's Café.

Re-enactments Family Fun Days BBQs Halloween and Christmas Events are ongoing all through the year! Why not have your birthday celebrations on site or take a Tank Spin in our Tank or even learn to drive it? So why not join us at one of Ireland's best-kept secrets today!



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The introduction of direct flights from China to Ireland last year has been a real game-changer.

In the area of screen tourism, we've developed ground-breaking partnerships with LucasFilm and HBO, which have allowed Tourism Ireland to leverage the global phenomena that are Star Wars and Game of Thrones to showcase the island of Ireland, in a new way, to hundreds of millions of fans across the world.

Tell us about your new global campaign:

We've just launched a new global campaign – 'Fill your Heart with Ireland'. It's being rolled out in over 20 markets around the globe and includes TV, cinema, print, outdoor and online ads, as well as content for social platforms.

Sustainability is the watchword for Tourism Ireland, in 2019 and beyond. We are placing a greater focus on driving growth to less visited attractions and locations, as well as on driving business in the off-peak and shoulder seasons.

We're working very closely with our partners in Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland, to ensure a seamless experience for today's tourist. It's never been more important to ensure that the promise

we make in the marketplace matches the wonderful experience on the ground.

Your thoughts on Brexit?

Brexit is the single biggest external challenge that is likely to impact on Irish tourism in the coming months and years. The immediate impact on Irish tourism after the vote in 2016 was the weakening of Sterling, which affected Ireland's competitiveness – making holidays and short breaks to Ireland more expensive for British visitors.

Tourism Ireland's message is that it is very much 'business as usual'; Britain continues to be a very important market for tourism to the island of Ireland, delivering 44% of all overseas visitors and around 25% of all overseas tourism revenue. In 2018, we welcomed around 4.716 million British visitors to the island of Ireland.

Since the Brexit referendum, Tourism Ireland has been monitoring developments closely, to better understand and plan for any implications of Brexit on Irish tourism. We've established a UK-based Brexit taskforce with senior members of the UK and Irish industry. We carry out research in the marketplace and we will be launching a new strategy for the market in 2019.

We continue to highlight the wide variety

of things to see and do on holiday here, as well as the ease of getting to the island of Ireland, with almost 238,000 seats by air and 46,000 car spaces on ferries from Britain every week. Competitiveness and the value for money message remain important.

What do you love about Dublin?

Simplicity – being able to cycle to work and walk around town. Watching my kids grow up in a city they want to grow old in.

Your favourite restaurants and pubs?

That's a question that gets me into trouble! However, I have to mention the Stag's Head where my college friends and I have been meeting regularly for over 30 years.

A 'hidden gem' in Dublin you think we should know about?

The Little Museum of Dublin – but you probably knew that already!





An Unmissable Experience!

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Summer Opening Times
(May to September)
Tues - Sat: 10am to 5pm
Sunday: 12pm to 5pm
(last admission 4pm)

Winter Opening Times
Wed - Sat: 10am to 5pm
(October to April)

Contact Details

Tel: 023 8858676

www.michaelcollinshouse.ie



Secret

SPOTS

Of The Ancient East

There's just something oh-so-special about exploring somewhere that no-one else has experienced. These are 5 of the best of The Ancient East's hidden spots...

1. Ireland's last Leprechaun Whisperer, Co. Louth

Kevin Woods has a very special skill. He has the ability to talk to leprechauns, and he's also affectionately known as Ireland's last Leprechaun Whisperer. Explore the vistas around Carlingford Lough in Ireland's Ancient East with Kevin, paying a visit to the Leprechaun Cavern, and see if you can spot some of Ireland's most famous residents for yourself...

2. Waterford's Copper Coast

The Waterford Copper Coast is now a UNESCO Global Geopark, one of three in Ireland. It extends along the County Waterford coastline for 25kms and is named after the 19th century copper mines that lie at the heart of this spectacular stretch of cliffs.

3. The Guinness Lake, Co. Wicklow

A lake made out of Guinness? Only in Ireland! Drive yourself up into the Wicklow Mountains, and you'll find views over Lough Tay. The inky black waters are framed by golden sands, making this look like a lake poured directly out of the tap in your favourite Irish pub.



4. Fermanagh Lakelands, Co. Fermanagh

The Fermanagh Lakelands aren't really a secret, as this beautiful waterworld is a well-documented phenomena! With 154 islands to explore, this is a natural adventure-land. Hop in a boat, a canoe or a kayak and see the curious stone figures on White Island, the two-faced Janus statue on Boa Island, the monastic settlement of Devenish, or the pampered pigs of Inishcorkish Island, who produce Fermanagh's famously delicious black bacon!

5. Dalkey Island, Co. Dublin

On Dalkey Island, the hustle and bustle of Dublin feels a million miles away. Pick up some supplies in the gorgeous town of Dalkey, before you take the boat from Coliemore Harbour to the island, in the capable hands of enigmatic ferryman, Ken. The island itself has a history that stretches back over 6,000 years – there's evidence of settlers here from 4,500 BC. It's served as a Viking slave camp, become a principal port for Dublin in medieval times, and has a Martello tower (one of many lining this shoreline). This tranquil island retreat is perfect for a little offshore exploration, with stunning views of the mainland.



Lough Derg Blueway



Experience the Lough Derg Blueway

With summer here, it's time to plan out the next few weeks of fun and activities. Whether you're a family, a couple, or a lone wolf, Lough Derg will provide you with more than enough adventure to keep you going! With its blissful, blue, clear water and beautiful, dramatic surrounding countryside, the Lough Derg Blueway stretches across three Irish counties - Clare, Tipperary and Galway - each with its own list of activities, trails and loops to explore.

Best of all, you can do it your way - by canoe, paddle board, under sail, cruising, by bicycle or by foot. North, south, east and west, we simply can't choose a favourite, so you'll have a ball no matter where you go!

If you really can't decide, here are Go Wild's highlights along the Lough Derg Blueway.

Northern Highlights: Portumna, Terryglass and Lorrha

The northern side of the lake has plenty to offer, from walking to kayaking, driving to horse-riding. There are plenty of ways to enjoy this part of Lough Derg and more activities than you can fit into a weekend.

If you're looking for a good hike, there's no shortage of beautiful trails in Portumna Forest Park, with a range of different hike lengths so you can find one suited to your family or group, and many are bike trails also. Don't pass up the chance to watch beautiful white-tailed

eagles from a bird hide in the forest - if you're lucky enough to see them, it's an inspiring experience.

Visit Portumna Castle to bring you back in time to the 17th Century and why not recharge in the newly-opened tea rooms and enjoy some delicious treats in the historical surroundings on the castle grounds?

There's plenty in the way of accommodation up this side of the lake too, but if you're looking for something a little bit different, check out the 'glamping' facilities at Podumna. The little wooden pods offer a unique experience, with all the fun and feel of a woodland setting in a convenient town central location and bikes for rent too.

Don't miss the opportunity to try kayaking in Terryglass with Lough Derg Water Sports. Learn from the experts as you tour around the beautiful harbour and lake at your own pace. The harbour also offers an excellent playground and the country village is home to two welcoming bars with restaurants.

Lorrha Monastic Village is just a short spin from the lake and is home to important ecclesiastical ruins, well worth a visit and try to catch a local tour while you are there to hear the ancient tales of the area.

Eastern promise: Garrykennedy, Nenagh and Dromineer

Dromineer is a beautiful place to gaze across Lough Derg, listening to the water lapping and the clinking of the dinghies in the small harbour. Stroll beside the boats, let the children loose in the playground, or at 'Aquasplash', an inflatable water park operating in the summer months; or



relax at the nearby café, bar and restaurant.

Go back in time and immerse yourself in local heritage at Garrykennedy Castle - this area is perfect for casual strolling close to the water in the woods, or along the harbour, watching the yachts and cruisers come and go. There are two lovely traditional Irish pubs in the idyllic village, and Larkin's serves some top-notch food. Visit on a Sunday if you can as they have great classical music in the evenings and additionally on Wednesdays in summer. If you fancy a cycle, then follow the North Tipperary Cycle Routes that take in Nenagh, Terryglass, Garrykennedy, Cloughjordan and Borrisokane. Don't miss the chance to climb the 101 steps to the top of the majestic Nenagh Castle; while surveying your surroundings, and you'll see Lough Derg and beyond in the distance.

The Lough Derg area has a rightly deserved reputation for gastronomy - options for fine dining or grazing at a farmer's market are equally catered for through 'A Taste of Lough Derg'. See www.atasteofloughderg.ie for a series of summer food events for visitors to enjoy.

If you've only time for one walk in this part of the lake then make it the Arra Mountain Loop (six hours). Travelling over tarmac, bog roads, farm tracks, gravel paths and fields, it winds past the northern edge of the Slieve Arra. It is a strenuous walk with some climbing, so it's not for the faint of heart! There are wooden steps up most of Laghtea Hill but stick with it and you will be rewarded with spectacular views of Lough Derg.

For your holiday photo, stop off at The Lookout in Portroe offering panoramic views of Lough Derg and take a trip down to Castlelough for a swim in the lake, or stroll in the woods, where fairy doors adorn the trees!

All that is before you even consider the kayaking, horse-riding, stand-up paddling, cycling and variety of other activities on offer around Lough Derg.

Southern Sights: Ballycuggeran, Killaloe/Ballina

In Killaloe/Ballina, Lough Derg is in the centre of everything; it bustles with sailing boats and cruisers and echoes with the clink of halyards on masts.

If you want to unwind and relax then experience the area from the water in the comfort of Killaloe River Cruises. Enjoy a different perspective of Killaloe from the water by contacting Soulkite Stand Up Paddling to arrange a trip along the Shannon and the picturesque canal. You'll have a blast trying to maintain your balance and, once you do, you'll be the envy of everyone watching from the shore - provided they haven't already seen you fall off 15 times!

There are significant architectural and heritage sites close to Killaloe/Ballina. You can undertake a self-guided tour of this historic area, or be guided by a local if you'd like to hear all the local stories. The tour includes the 13th Century St Flannan's Cathedral with its Ogham stone carvings, Romanesque doorway and the tomb of Muircheartaigh, the last O'Brien to be High King of Ireland. Killaloe is also home to two oratories - named after St. Flannan and St. Lua. The twin towns are home to elegant boutiques, bakeries, artisan shops and galleries - making it the perfect location to explore the old and the new. There is a beautiful riverside park and seasonal outdoor swimming pool, plenty of moorings for cruisers, and the jetty offers a platform to fish from.

There are many enticing eateries dotted around the twin towns, making it difficult to choose, but The Wooden Spoon, Goosers, Tuscany and Flanagan's are hard to pass by! With two hotels and many self-catering and guest house options, you won't be stuck for a place to stay either.



Wonderful West: Two-Mile-Gate, Scarriff, Mountshannon

Who says you need to go to the coast to visit the beach? Lough Derg has three Blue Flags, and one of these is at Two-Mile-Gate, a little lakeside beach where you can dip your toe or go for a swim. Here, you can stop off to enjoy a picnic on the boats and just across the road is Ballycuggeran Woods, impressive oak wood with looped walks and panoramic views of Lough Derg from its highest point. Scarriff and Tuamgraney are beautiful historical villages with a marvellous woollen mill and chocolate factory - just two of the hidden gems you might find. Trips out on the lake are offered at Scarriff Harbour with Derg Boat Trips.

If you head for Mountshannon, there's another Blue Flag beach here, but this time, travel out across the lake to Holy Island with local guide Gerard Madden of Holy Island Tours. You can spend a half day here walking amongst its six ruined churches and round tower while keeping a lookout for the local white-tailed sea eagles, which were reintroduced to the area in 2012. This is a breathtaking experience, but bring wellies - it's mucky in places! Across from the harbour, you can go for a walk through the quirky and beautiful Aistear park in Mountshannon. Run through the maze and along the paths overlooking the lake, or travel along the labyrinth. The wildness and beauty of this area have attracted many skilled artists and provides a diverse range of crafts, paintings, bog oak sculptures and mosaics for gifts and take-home memories. Some of these artists offer workshops as well, so you might even pick up a skill!

For an alternative view, try discovering the great outdoors and beautiful nature of Lough Derg on horseback with a guided tour with An Sibin Riding Centre in Whitegate. Enjoy a combination of visiting the ancient Irish castles, and monastic ruins with a lovely guided trail ride through Irish bogs, fields and local farmland.

Our top destination picks around Lough Derg

- Holy Island
- Castletlough
- Nenagh Castle
- Lookout at Portroe
- Portumna Forest Park
- Portumna Castle
- Two-Mile-Gate
- Aistear Park
- Tountinna
- Saint Cronan's Church, Tuamgraney
- St Flannan's Cathedral

A Taste of Lough Derg:

The lakeside towns of Lough Derg are renowned for their impressive array of award-winning restaurants, cafes, pubs and speciality food shops, all offering a famously warm, Irish welcome. For a chance to meet some of the area's food gurus, look no further than the many farmer and country markets that take place throughout the year in Killaloe, Scarriff, Mountshannon, Nenagh, Portumna and Terryglass. Catch one of the many food events that take place around the lake during the summer months as part of the 'A Taste of Lough Derg' food series. Visit www.atasteofloughderg.ie for more details.

Help planning your next trip

For some inspiration and to help you plan your trip to Lough Derg in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, visit www.discoverloughderg.ie, where you'll find details of accommodation and activity providers and some special offers too.



Follow on Facebook Discover Lough Derg or twitter @discoverloughderg.

www.discoverloughderg.ie



THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN CORK



MORNING

Breakfast at the Crawford Art Gallery Café – serving from 8.30am in this charming, Georgian, dining room in the heart of the city. Recently named in the McKenna Guides as one of the 100 Best Restaurants in Ireland, this relaxed, airy space, features art-work from the gallery and touches such as an Elizabethan granite fireplace, salvaged from an old great house. You can feel the patina of centuries in its very tactile, stone-carved hunting scenes. After breakfast, explore the gallery's intriguing mix of classical, period and contemporary art

Follow the Cork Vintage Map (which you will pick up in most cafes, markets and hotels). It's got the best of vintage and vintage-inspired clothing, accessories, flea markets, vinyl shops, antiquarian books and gifts, plus locally-based stylists who can help you achieve that vintage look.



AFTERNOON

A walk in The Quad at UCC – walk around to the university's old "Quad", the stone-faced, ivy-clad central quadrangle built between 1847 and 1849 (at the height of the Great Famine). The style is described as Perpendicular Gothic, the feel is ivy-league and you will find a very peaceful space to pause amidst the energetic life of our college.

Return to the city centre – Go via St Fin Barre's Cathedral – the great neo-Gothic Anglican church situated on a site of Christian worship since the 9th century. You may catch a choir at practice or the epic pipe organ at play. Look out for the large gilded angel on the roof of the eastern end. An old city legend has it that when the Golden Angel blows his trumpet, the world will come to an end.



EVENING

Early Evening Glass of Wine and Tapas – Drop into Meade's Wine Bar on Oliver Plunkett Street, cosy, understated Georgian rooms with a great wine list and small bites with locally sourced ingredients. Or, you could go nearby to Orso, offering vibrant, North African influenced dishes and salads in a small space. Orso is a firm favourite with the locals, so you may have a short wait for a table. Just put your name and number on the list and go next door to Arthur Mayne's Pharmacy. It looks just like an old Chemist or Drugstore, the surprise comes when you push open the door. A Pint & Some Trad – Wind down your day with a pint of the local stout (Beamish or Murphy's) in a nearby pub such the famous traditional Irish music bar, Sin E on Coburg Street or An Spailpín Fánach, which has traditional music seven nights a week.

To find out about some of Cork's best-loved, old-fashioned pubs – and get listings for nightly music sessions – visit Cork Heritage Pubs website.



LATER

Something Different In A Pub? – If you like a pint in a setting that's lively and quirky – The Mutton Lane Inn, hidden down a tiny lane off Patrick Street, is well worth a visit.

Once the quiet haunt of farmers and carters delivering produce to the English market, it's now a friendly, busy pub with great local craft beers and eclectic crowds and sounds. The Mutton can be busy (especially at the weekends) and little hard to locate, so just ask a local. They will be happy to direct you.



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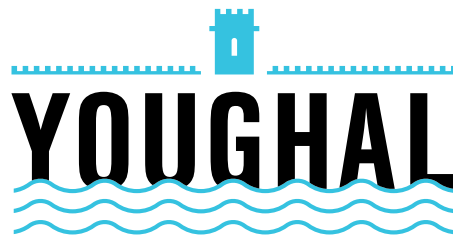
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Youghal, Co. Cork is a historic port town in Ireland's Ancient East with miles of sandy beach and a rich medieval history. Youghal sits midway between Cork City and Waterford City.

This largely unspoilt and undiscovered part of South East Ireland is a unique place, full of medieval history which has now been brought to life! We have a number of attractions in Youghal of international significance which can be incorporated into any itinerary, including tours of the newly opened Youghal Clock Gate Tower and St. Mary's Collegiate Church. However, no visit to Youghal is complete without a stroll along the 500m boardwalk. Our tours are suitable for F.I.T Groups, leisure and incentive visits.



For Tourist Information: www.youghal.ie Tel: 024-92447



Ireland's Viking Heritage

Is acher ingáith innocht
Fufnasha fariccege findfolt
Ni ágor réim mór minn
Dondláechraid lainn oia lothlind

Tonight the wind is sharp,
Tousling the sea's white hair
I fear not the fearsome Norse
flunting across the waves

Anonymous 9th Century Irish Poem, doodled in the margin of a sacred manuscript

"From the fury of the Northmen, O Lord
deliver us!"

Common Irish, English and French prayer, 10th century





Ireland has had a love/hate relationship with the Vikings for well over a thousand years. Back when Ireland truly was the land of saints and scholars, the riches of its monasteries didn't go unnoticed by the ferocious invaders from Scandinavia, and they descended on our coasts with depressing regularity. Though they weren't averse to ransacking pretty much anywhere, their favourite targets were the large, rich centres of Christian learning, from which they carried off gold, jewels, leather, textiles and slaves.

Naturally, this didn't endear them to the natives, but as time went on, the Vikings began to realise there was more to Ireland than terrified monks and their precious possessions. Eventually, the raiders began to establish permanent camps, which grew into settlements, which grew into towns, some of which became cities. At the very heart of the largest towns and all of the cities on the east coast lies a testament to the Vikings who put down roots, and stayed here.

Waterford is the oldest city in Ireland, and was founded by Vikings in the late 8th or early 9th century on the south bank of the Suir. Dublin was founded by the Vikings not long afterwards, at a spot that now lies under Wood Quay, though the rivers Liffey and Poddle had been home to Viking encampments long before that. Kings Island, in Limerick City, became a Viking stronghold at about the same time. Cork, previously an isolated monastic settlement hidden among marshy islands on the River Lee, was a thriving Viking area by the 10th century, at a spot now covered by a car park at the end of South Main Street.

In fact, everywhere you look along the coast of Ireland's Ancient East you'll find reminders that we owe much of to these fearsome invaders. Large port towns like Wexford, Youghal and Arklow (of these, only Youghal bears an Irish name), and towns along the River Shannon like Loughrea, all owe their origins to them. You can even see it in the people of Ireland: to this day you'll see more tall, blonde, blue-eyed people as you move from the Atlantic coast towards the Irish sea.

This clash of civilisations has led to some of the greatest stories in Irish history, including that of the mighty Brian Boru, known as The Last High King, who was slain after the Battle of Clontarf, near Dublin, in 1014. He had won the fight against the combined might of the armies of the Vikings Sitric Silkenbeard, Sigurd of Orkney and Brodar of Mann, and the traitorous

Irish King Maol Mórdha Mac Murchadh, but was killed by Brodar as he prayed in his tent that night. His victory, however, broke the power of the Vikings in the east and restored Gaelic Irish culture for generations.

Our Viking heritage is maintained not only in our place names and in some of Ireland's oldest buildings (Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin was founded by the same Sitric Silkenbeard who fought Brian Boru, for instance), but also in the heritage and surnames of today's Irish people. The surname O'Loughlin, means "descendant of the Vikings" from the Irish word for the seafaring scourge themselves: na Lochlannaigh. MacDougal, Doyle and MacDowell each comes from the Irish for "dark (in the sense of 'accursed') foreigner" or directly from Dugilla, a 10th century Viking lord of Carlow. MacAuliffe means "son of Olaf" and MacManus means "son of Magnus". Other Viking names you'll notice in Ireland's Ancient East include Cotter, Gould, O'Rourke, Higgins (originally 'Vikigr': "the Viking"), Broderick, Dowdall, Kirby, Hendrick or Hendrix, Hewson and more.

Today, when you meet someone with the surname O'Brien, you're meeting someone whose family claims descent from King Brian, defeater of the Vikings. As it's one of the most common surnames in the country, and one of the most stereotypical Irish surnames in the world, we can only assume that the king was very popular in his day!

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN OFFALY



SLIEVE BLOOM MOUNTAINS

The beautiful thing about the Slieve Bloom Mountains (besides being the most unspoilt and uncongested in the country) is that you'll find trails to suit every ability; from the experienced hiker to the casual stroller. Whether you take on the long-distance Slieve Bloom Way or opt for one of the shorter looped trails, you'll be rewarded by spectacular views stretching across the midland's of Ireland and on a bright cloud-free day you can see the four highest points of each of Ireland's four provinces.



LOUGH BOORA DISCOVERY PARK

Transformed from its previous incarnation as a commercial bog where peat was harvested to heat homes around the country, today Lough Boora Discovery Park is home to countless species of birds and wildlife, fish-filled lakes and a permanent exhibition of huge outdoor sculptures. These sculptures give the park an other-worldly feel, created using the old industrial materials of the bog such as locomotives, rail-line and timber, all crafted into magnificent works of art.

The raised bogs of the Midlands of Ireland evolved after the last Ice Age, around 15,000 years ago. Mesolithic people wandered through Ireland, and one of the most important Mesolithic sites in Ireland is at Lough Boora. Two sites were excavated in 1977. You can visit the site of the ancient settlement by following the Mesolithic Route.



CONMACNOISE MONASTIC SITE

The site is entered through the visitor centre, where a number of cross slabs are displayed. The centrepiece of the visitor centre is the Cross of the Scriptures, and the long and varied history of Clonmacnoise is recounted in an audio-visual presentation. Multi-lingual guided tours of the site are available, plus there are also exhibitions that deal with the flora, fauna and landscape of the region. But you don't have to be a history buff just to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of Clonmacnoise, nestling as it has done for centuries past, on the banks of the majestic Shannon. No visit to Offaly would be complete without a visit to this most special of destinations – even Pope John Paul II stopped by when he visited Ireland back in 1979.

MONEYGALL - HOME OF BARACK OBAMA

The people of Moneygall will never forget the day the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama and the First Lady Michelle Obama visited their village: his Irish ancestral home. President Obama's late mother, Ann Dunham was a descendant of the Kearney family who left Moneygall after the Famine in 1850 to build a new life in New York. Maybe you fancy a visit to Ollie Hayes' Bar in the Main Street like Mr President did, or view the President's ancestral home, where the Kearney Family left from in 1850 and view the old school house where the shoemaker's family were educated.

You can also call into the nearby Barack Obama Plaza Visitor Centre to see an exciting exhibition that tells the story of how an Irish emigrant, Falmouth Kearney departed a small village in Co Offaly in 1851 in search of a better life and became the 3rd Great Grandfather to US President Barack Obama.



COUNTY ARMS HOTEL BIRR, CO OFFALY

Welcome to the 4-star County Arms Hotel, founded by Michael & Margaret Loughnane in 1962 and Offaly's first four star Hotel. Join us in the elegant Georgian heritage town of Birr for meetings and conferences in the Heart of Ireland. As a family run Hotel for 50 years, we look forward to helping you celebrate your special occasions – our Georgian private dining rooms are particular highlights when added to our genuine care and attentive service. The County Arms Hotel is very popular for weddings from Tipperary, Offaly, Laois, Westmeath and Galway and our 3 generations of experience allows all our guests to relax and



trust our expertise and traditional Irish hospitality. Birr in the lakelands of Ireland is a friendly town for a short break with Birr Castle, Birr Theatre, and a host

of local activities including river Shannon cruising, walking in the Slieve Blooms, Bike Park Ireland, Birr Equestrian Centre, Lough Borra and Tearaways Pet Farm.



★★★★

The 4 County Arms Hotel is situated on a 9 acre estate in the charming Heritage town of Birr in the centre of Ireland, within Ireland's Ancient East and only 90 minutes from all major cities.*

A superbly restored Georgian house, the County Arms Hotel is run by the Loughnane family for over 55 years with strong emphasis on service and food. The Hotel has seventy bedrooms comprising double, twin and family rooms. Springs Leisure Club has a 20 metre pool, hydrology area and high tech gym. Renowned for excellent food, an extensive menu serves daily in Bar 62. Birr is the ideal location for touring Ireland with Birr Castle, Gardens & Science centre just a ten minute walk from the hotel and other local attractions include Clonmacnoise, Lough Boora Parklands, Bike Park Ireland and Tullamore Dew all within a 25 minute drive.



County Arms Hotel, Birr, Co. Offaly, Ireland.

Tel: +353 (0) 57 9120791 Fax: +353 (0) 57 9121234

Email: info@countyarmshotel.com



THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN TIPPERARY

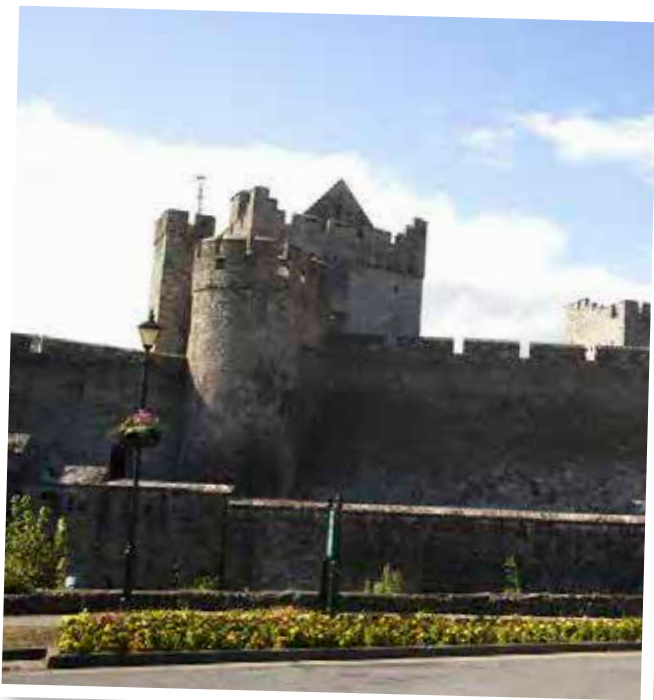
A PLACE STEEPED IN SPORTING HERITAGE

In sporting terms, Tipperary's heritage is without equal. The town of Thurles, complete today with a 53,000-capacity stadium, was in 1884 the birthplace of the Gaelic Athletic Association, Ireland's largest sporting organisation and one of the great amateur sporting associations in the world. The county is particularly associated with the 3,000-year-old game of Hurling, which today still attracts an 80,000 plus attendance and a global TV audience for its national showpiece, the All-Ireland final. With over 70 clubs, in Tipperary, the GAA also promotes Gaelic Football; its most played sport and one Tipperary also excels at, as well as Handball, Rounders, Ladies Football and Camogie (similar to hurling but played only by women). The Association also promotes traditional Irish music, song and dance.

CAHIR CASTLE

Cahir's awesome castle enjoys a river-island site with moat, massive walls, turrets and keep, mullioned windows, vast fireplaces and dungeons. Founded by Conor O'Brien in 1142, and passed to the Butler family in 1375, it's one of Ireland's largest castles. In 1599 the Earl of Essex shattered its walls with cannon fire, an event explained with a large model. With a huge set of antlers pinned to its white walls, the Banqueting Hall is an impressive sight; you can also climb the Keep.

A 15-minute audio-visual presentation puts Cahir in context with other Irish castles. The buildings within the castle walls are sparsely furnished, although there are good displays, including an exhibition on 'Women in Medieval Ireland'. There are frequent guided tours.



THE ROCK OF CASHEL

The Rock of Cashel is one of Ireland's most spectacular historic sites: a prominent green hill, banded with limestone outcrops, rising from a grassy plain and bristling with ancient fortifications. Sturdy walls circle an enclosure containing a complete round tower, a 13th-century Gothic cathedral and the finest 12th-century Romanesque chapel in Ireland, home to some of the land's oldest frescoes. It's a five-minute stroll from the town centre up to the Rock, from where fantastic views range over the Tipperary countryside.

The word 'cashel' is an Anglicised version of the Irish word *caiseal*, meaning 'fortress' (related to the English 'castle', from the Latin *castellum*). In the 4th century the Rock of Cashel was chosen as a base by the Eóghanachta clan from Wales, who went on to conquer much of Munster and become kings of the region. For some 400 years it rivalled Tara as a centre of power in Ireland. The vast medieval cathedral was used for worship until the mid-1700s. Among the graves are a 19th-century high cross and mausoleum for local landowners, the Scully family; the top of the Scully Cross was razed by lightning in 1976.

But the undoubted highlight of the Rock is the early 12th-century Cormac's Chapel, an exquisite gem of Romanesque architecture with beautifully carved doorways and the precious remains of colourful wall paintings.

TIPPERARY RACECOURSE

Tipperary Racecourse is one of Ireland's leading tracks. It's 3km northwest of Tipperary town and has regular meetings during the year; see the local press for details. The course is within walking distance of Limerick Junction station. On race days there are minibus pick-ups from Tipperary town; phone for details.



Great National Ballykisteon Golf Hotel is situated just outside Tipperary town on the main N24 Limerick to Waterford road.

With the Galtee mountains as our backdrop you don't need to wander far to discover the amazing stories of Ireland's Ancient East.

Accommodation rates
from as low as

€79

Bed and Breakfast.

Leisure & Spa

At Great National Ballykisteon Golf Hotel

Ballykisteon provides a tranquil retreat away from the stresses and strains of everyday life. Our leisure centre boasts an impressive range of leisure and relaxation facilities including swimming pool, Jacuzzi, steam room and sauna. If you are looking to relax even more indulge yourself with some much-needed pampering with our tempting menu of great value treatments carefully selected for our guests to enjoy.

Junction One Bar

Casual dining in a modern atmosphere with an extensive menu that is perfect for a light meal anytime of the day.

Junction One Bar is open daily from 10:30am. Sit back and relax with your morning coffee and freshly baked pastries or muffin.

For bistro style dining we have an extensive bar food menu available served daily from 12pm-9pm. On warm sunny days, dine al fresco on the terraces outside Junction One Bar.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN LAOIS

DURROW SCARECROW FESTIVAL, 29TH JULY–6TH AUGUST

For one week every summer, the village of Durrow is transformed for its annual Scarecrow Festival. A playful and imaginative festival that includes many quirky and curious events for the local community and visitors alike. Enjoy the uninhibited imagination, creativity, music, food and fun of the festival, but above all marvel at the weird and wonderful scarecrows.

EMO COURT

Emo Court is a country villa designed by architect James Gandon (1743-1823), best known for his great public buildings, including the Custom House and the Four Courts in Dublin. The house is a magnificent example of the neo-Classical style, reflecting the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. The house is surrounded by beautiful gardens and parkland which were first laid out in the 18th century and contain formal lawns, a lake and woodland walks with many very fine trees and shrubs.



CAPARD LOOPS

Situated in the Slieve Bloom Mountains the Capard Loop is one of the best walks and combines a beautiful wooded valley with lofty ridge views for all to enjoy. At almost 500m above the surrounding flat countryside, the wild windswept ridge is home to a vast array of wild plant and animal life and it is possible to see well into the counties surrounding Laois.

ELECTRIC PICNIC, STRADBALLY, FRIDAY AUGUST 30 TO SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 1ST

Electric Picnic is an annual arts-and-music festival which has been staged since 2004 at Stradbally Hall. What began as a one-day event has expanded to a three day extravaganza and is now one of the major festivals in Europe. The music and arts event has everything from music and comedy to theatre and laughter. An unforgettable weekend is guaranteed.



Get your copy today!

GoWild
Magazine



O'Sullivan's
Crookhaven, Co. Cork



O'Sullivan's Bar situated in the little hamlet of Crookhaven in West Cork is a little gem of a pub, run by Der O'Sullivan, you'll be hard pressed to find a more picturesque spot for a pint of Murphy's.

Whether you chose to sit out on the pier, where delightfully there is no through traffic, just ocean, or inside with a lit fire and decades of old village pictures surrounding you, it's hard not to relax. We recommend the Open Crab sandwich and homemade seafood chowder followed by the crumble, as delicious as it was in his mother's day!



Main Street, Crookhaven Tel: 028 35319 Facebook: /osullivanicrookhaven



Excellently located in the heart of Castlecomer steps away from Castlecomer Discovery Park. Avalon House Hotel offers a wonderful backdrop for both solo-travellers right through to large groups. Transport yourself into the world of elegance and privacy that characterises wonderfully restored 19th century manor.

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Tel: 056 444 1302 Email: stay@avalonhousehotel.ie

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EVERETT'S



Everett's of high street Waterford

Welcome to Everett's of High Street, Waterford. Set in the remains of the 15th century John Collyn House, Everett's combines fabulous, modern Irish cooking with historic, atmospheric surroundings.

Lucinda O'Sullivan - "exquisite, refined, modern Irish cooking at great prices...a hot dining destination"
Tom Doorley - "Everett's is a gem...the transformation of good raw materials into something that lives on in memory long after the last forkful has been swallowed...Beat a path to its door"

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Everettsrestaurant@gmail.com



Belvedere
House Gardens & Park



A Fascinating Estate to Visit

This magnificent 160 acre Lakeside estate boasts a fully restored Georgian Villa built in 1740 by the famous Architect Richard Castles for Robert Rochfort – later Lord Belvedere.

The estate has a fascinating Victorian Walled Garden, with one of Ireland's finest collections of rare and special plants. The naturalistic designed 18th century parkland, punctuated with Romantic Follies includes the largest in Ireland; "The Jealous Wall".

Whether you are part of a gardening group, historical society, school tour, active retirement association, family gathering or group of friends, a visit to Belvedere is a superb day out with a difference.

Belvedere House
Gardens & Park,
Mullingar, Co.
Westmeath.
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E-mail: nfo@belvedere-house.ie
www.belvedere-house.ie
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House of Waterford Crystal

SINCE the House of Waterford Crystal manufacturing facility and visitor experience opened in June 2010, it has welcomed over one million visitors into its haven of crystal creativity and innovation.



Located on the Mall in the heart of Waterford City in Ireland's Ancient East, the House of Waterford Crystal brings a visit to Waterford to a whole new level as visitors can witness the creation of crystal stemware, giftware and masterpieces right before their very eyes. Every year the House of Waterford Crystal melts down more than 750 tonnes of crystal and produces pieces using traditional manufacturing techniques. The factory tour is a unique and captivating experience that is sure to enthral visitors of all ages, both national and international. The tour lets people go behind the scenes for over an hour and see exactly how Waterford Crystal pieces are made and they can witness every stage of production, from the initial design stage right up to the final engraving of the piece.

On the tour, visitors first visit the mould room where they witness the mould making, a technique that has remained

unchanged throughout the centuries, as the Master Blowers shape the molten crystal flawlessly with the use of wooden moulds and hand tools. The next part of the tour is truly magical, as visitors enter the blowing department where they see glowing balls of crystal transformed into majestic shapes as they are put through the 1300-degree furnace. The Waterford Crystal pieces are then hand marked for precision and accuracy, and they are then cut, sculpted and engraved.

Visitors get a behind the scenes sneak peak of the highly skilled method of crystal manufacturing and see the high standards that the House of Waterford Crystal has for each and every piece that leaves the factory. The crystal is inspected at each stage of production, so each piece no matter how small goes through six inspections, and if it fails to reach the Waterford Crystal standards at any stage it is smashed and returned to the furnace to be re-melted so that the

piece can be started again. Some of the best known trophies and prizes around the world have also been hand crafted in The House of Waterford Crystal including the annual Peoples Choice Awards, the Solheim Cup, the Irish Open trophy and the Vincent Lombardi trophy.

The House of Waterford Crystal is also home to the largest collection of Waterford Crystal in the world; so for that special indulgence or a gift for any occasion, why not indulge in one of the designer Waterford Crystal pieces by John Rocha, Jasper Conran or Jo Sampson.

For further information visit waterfordvisitorcentre.com/emailhouseofwaterfordcrystal@wwrd.com

Tel: + 353 (0)51 317000
Facebook: House of Waterford Crystal/Twitter: @WaterfordCrystl
Instagram: @waterfordcrystalfactory

CASTLES AND CONQUESTS

on Ireland's Ancient East

The castles tell spectacular tales that weave a web of stories over Ireland's Ancient East



BIRR CASTLE, CO. OFFALY

Birr Castle is a scientific marvel. Not only is the castle a beauty, the gardens are also filled to the brim with rare floral specimens – collected by the Earls of Rosse as they travelled the globe for the last 150 years. There are also plans to create the world's largest grove of giant redwood trees outside of California. And we haven't even mentioned the Great Telescope yet, which reigned as the world's largest telescope for over 70 years, and was responsible for the discovery of the spiral nature of nebulae in space!

CASTLE ROCHE, CO. LOUTH

The ruins of Castle Roche come with a sinister secret. If you climb towards the castle, surrounded by lush green fields, you'll notice a window high up in the tower. It's known as the Murder Window. A wealthy and beautiful woman once promised her hand in marriage to the man who would build her a castle to her exact specifications. Men came from far and wide for the opportunity, and the woman made her selection. True to his word, the chosen craftsman built the castle and, upon marrying his new wife, they climbed to the window to survey their lands – where she promptly pushed him to his death.

CASTLE LESLIE, CO. MONAGHAN

Sometimes there just aren't enough superlatives to illustrate just how jaw-dropping a place can be at first glance. Castle Leslie falls into this category, with its lush, 1,000-acre estate, 1,000 years of intriguing family history and the elegant building at the very heart of it all. And then there's the inside. Every room comes with a different story about a Leslie family member. And what a family! The owners of Castle Leslie have quite the lineage, with venerable artists, writers and decorated soldiers included. And they can trace their roots all the way back to Attila the Hun.



TRIM CASTLE, CO. MEATH

Towering above the surrounding landscape, 12th century Trim Castle has kept watch over the gentle hills of County Meath for quite some time. The largest Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland, Trim has seen wars and rebellions, has survived sieges and conflicts and anything else that saw fit to try to breach these stone walls. The most recent, though, was more faux than fierce, when Mel Gibson and his crew of hundreds filmed the movie *Braveheart* in 1995.



THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN CARLOW

ALTAMONT GARDENS

One of Ireland's most magnificent landscaped gardens, Altamont covers 16 hectares on the banks of the River Slaney, with carefully selected plantings arranged in naturalistic settings where peacocks, swans, squirrels and wild hare abound, surrounding an ornamental water-lily lake.

HUNTINGTON CASTLE

"Come and experience living life in a genuine 17th Century Castle" - Huntington Castle, Clonegal, Co. Carlow, is still a family home to the Durdin Robertson family descendants of the original builders.

The castle was built in 1625 and the fascinating guided tour brings you through the castle to explore the ghosts and stories from over 400 years of history. There are also fabulous gardens featuring historic gardens, wilderness and an amazing collection of rare and unusual trees including the world-famous Yew Walk.

A children's adventure playground and visitor tea rooms and gift shop complete a great day out for all the family.

See www.huntingtoncastle.com for more details.

ST MULLINS MONASTERY

This important monastic site, founded in the 7th century by St Moling, was the legendary burial place of the Kings of Leinster. The remains include four church buildings dating from the 10th to the 15th centuries, the stump of a round tower and a 9th-century high cross. Nearby is the grave of General Thomas Cloney, a hero of the 1798 Rising, and a monument raised by 'St Mullins exiles in New York', marking the tomb of Art, King of Leinster (1357-1416).



DUCKETT'S GROVE

Dominated by the jackdaw-haunted ruins of a Gothic fantasy of a country house, the former seat of the Duckett family (the house burned down in 1933) was taken over by Carlow County Council in 2005. The walled gardens have been restored as a public park, filled with the scents of lavender and fruit blossom in early summer, while the outbuildings house craft workshops and a tearoom (open noon to 5pm Saturday, May to September). The gardens are 12.5km northeast of Carlow, signposted off the R726 and R418.

BORRIS HOUSE

This impressive Tudor Gothic mansion, the ancestral home of the McMorrough Kavanaghs, High Kings of Leinster, was modelled in 1810-20, around the earlier shells of an 18th-century house and a 15th-century castle. The highlight of the interior is the ornate stucco plasterwork by Michael Stapleton, whose work can also be seen in Trinity College and Powerscourt House in Dublin. Visits to the house are by guided tour only (begins 2pm), which must be booked in advance.

CARLOW COUNTY MUSEUM

This thoroughly engaging museum focuses on the lives of local people through the ages. There are some real one-offs, such as the trapdoor from the county gallows, dating from the early 1800s, and a 6m-high exquisitely carved pulpit from Carlow Cathedral. The museum is housed in an atmospheric former convent with original stained-glass windows.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN MONAGHAN

ST. PETER'S TIN CHURCH

Constructed of tin, St. Peter's Tin Church Laragh is one of a kind in Co. Monaghan and unique on the island of Ireland for its quirky design and carefully considered features. It was listed as a Building of National Importance by National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in 2014. St. Peter's of historic Laragh village is literally built on a rock, in a beautiful woodland. It is a very rare example of a nineteenth-century corrugated-iron-clad church. The community of Laragh formed a voluntary group in 2012 to ensure its survival and conservation. St. Peter's Tin Church Laragh was re-opened in 2014 and is a very popular fringe venue for larger festival and touring musicians/drama groups in the region.



THE PATRICK KAVANAGH TRAIL, INNISKEEN, COUNTY MONAGHAN

Discover the essence of a poet who saw the beauty in ordinary things and take the trail around Inniskeen. Start in the churchyard where he is buried, St. Marys, moving on to the ancient round tower that was once part of St. Daig's Monastery. Enjoy a spectacular panorama of the land where fabled mythological warrior Cúchullain roamed and finish at the Kavanagh homestead.



MUCKNO MANIA FESTIVAL, CASTLEBLANEY

Muckno Mania festival promises fun and intrigue and is interactive and diverse event. This four day event in Castleblaney has become one of the most anticipated annual gathering in the North East. Emphasis on family entertainment and the focus on the arts ensure the festival's success and popularity. To celebrate the its 20th year, Wilbert and his gang have decided to look back on all the fun memories with this year's theme: Muckno Mania - 20 Years of Mania

www.mucknomania.ie

FREE WALKING TOURS OF CARRICKMACROSS

Carrickmacross, is one of the few surviving market towns in Ireland. It was developed around a castle built by the Earl of Essex in 1630. The Convent of the St. Louis Nuns now stands on the original castle site. The area has a number of historical sites including the Round Tower in Inniskeen. St Patrick's Cemetery Donaghmoynne is the final resting place of Cathal Bui Mac Giolla. It is home to the world famous Carrickmacross Lace. Walks will take place every Saturday morning from May 5 to September 29, departing from the Court-house at 11am. The walk takes approximately 90 minutes. Everyone welcome and no booking is required.



TL MARKETING

TL Marketing is a strategic media, marketing and PR company that provide marketing & PR strategies with measurable results. We pride ourselves on helping our clients get the most of their budget by identifying appropriate channels to reach their market audience in the most efficient way, and the right tactics to engage them in a meaningful way. We work meticulously to our client's budget to deliver the best return on investment.

We develop strategies that are cutting-edge with the entrepreneurial drive to deliver upon them. It is this entrepreneurial drive that helps us to seek new innovations that keep us one step ahead of the competition.



We believe that long term beats short term. We create long lasting, positive rapport with our clients, with the media, as well between our customers and their customers. We have a proven track record of working with some of Ireland's largest brands and delivering top class campaigns across a range of industries including travel,

hospitality, education, local council and fashion, to name a few.

We specialize in Brand Strategy, Event Management, Media Buying, PR, Social Media Marketing.

For more information visit www.tlmarketing.ie, email: louise@tlmarketing.ie



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CASTLEMARTYR RESORT, CORK

Set adjacent to the ruins of 800-year-old castle, this 220-acre estate has a 17th-century manor house where guests can enjoy far-reaching countryside views and a stylish spa centre which includes an indoor swimming pool, 10 treatment rooms and a fitness studio.

The hotel has four dining options, including the award-winning restaurant The Bell Tower which offers gourmet dining as well as a traditional afternoon tea menu including Smoked Salmon on Irish Soda Bread and homemade scones made with fresh, locally sourced produce. Or you can visit their Italian casual

dining restaurant, Franchini's, the relaxed yet elegant Knight's Bar or their informal Clubhouse.
www.kclub.ie



KEADEEN HOTEL - YOUR HOME FROM HOME

Opened in 1970, The 4 star Keadeen Hotel is the oldest family-run hotel in County Kildare, located just 40 minutes south-west from Dublin City in the heart of 'Thoroughbred County'.

With 72 luxurious bedrooms and set on 9 acres of award-winning landscaped gardens the Keadeen hotel is ideal as a base to explore Ireland's Ancient East.



AC MARKETING

AC Marketing works primarily in the area of advertising, sales, digital marketing, social media and strategic development in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Averil Clarke established AC Marketing in 2017 who is an experienced Marketing Project Manager with a demonstrated history of working in the hospitality industry for over 20 years, formerly a graduate from Shannon College of Hotel Management. Skilled in Hospitality Management, Hotel Management, Business Development, Marketing Strategy, and the Travel Industry nationally and internationally.

AC Marketing works with companies who require marketing and sales expertise for creative planning and development of marketing plans and sales activity to grow revenue and is passionate about how professional marketing and sales strategies can quickly grow a business.

t: 00353876894283 e: aclarke@acmarketing.ie



VISIT A 13TH CENTURY CASTLE AND EXPERIENCE HISTORY BROUGHT ALIVE...

Athlone Castle was first built to defend the crossing point on the River Shannon and evolved into a bold defensive structure over the centuries. Elements of the original castle can still be seen today.

It tell the story of settlement in this part of Ireland's Ancient East, from the Neolithic period through Viking, and Medieval ages to modern life in Athlone. During your visit you will discover tales of bitter battles fought, territories won and lost and hear stories of bravery. Prepare to walk in the steps of monks, kings, soldiers and generals. You will be told



their stories and the story of Athlone Castle through a series of modern exhibitions, authentic museum artefacts, interactive games and an intense 360° cinematic experience of the Great Siege of Athlone. Some stories will be sad, some treacherous, some heroic and many will be bloody...

YOUGHAL CLOCK GATE TOWER

Youghal Clock Gate Tower is the iconic building straddling North & South Main Street and is the most visible landmark in Youghal town. A trip to Youghal is incomplete without a visit to this unique historic structure.

Visits to Youghal Clock Gate Tower are by way of pre-booked Guided Tour. Admission tickets are available online, or from Youghal Tourist Office on Market

Square, with adjacent Free Parking. A tour will take approximately 1 hour – you choose the tour time that best suits your itinerary.

While in Youghal Tourist Office, why not browse through the large selection of souvenirs and local crafts. Be sure to pop into Youghal Heritage Centre, housed within the Visitor Centre and get a feel of Youghal Heritage Town – it's FREE and makes the ideal forerunner to your upcoming tour.

Wondering where to go or what to do after your tour of Youghal Clock Gate? There is always something to do in Youghal – check out www.youghal.ie for more details.

BROOKLODGE & MACREDDIN VILLAGE, COUNTY WICKLOW

Multi-award winning and located in a picturesque Wicklow valley, Macreddin Village is the perfect spot for a relaxing break and is only an hour from South Dublin. A key food destination, hosting the renowned Strawberry Tree Restaurant, Ireland's first certified Organic Restaurant and La Taverna Armento an Italian inspired restaurant. The luxurious Wells Spa features a hammam massage room, wet and dry floatation, heated relaxation loungers, a mud chamber, steam room, sauna, outdoor hot tub and indoor to outdoor swimming pool. BrookLodge & Macreddin Village have Midweek Bed & Breakfast available from just €67pps.

Call the Macreddin Village Reservations Team on 0402 36444 to book your relaxing break away – www.brooklodge.com.



HUNTINGTON CASTLE

“Come and experience living life in a genuine 17th Century Castle.” - Huntington Castle, Clonegal, Co. Carlow, is still a family home to the Durdin Robertson family descendants of the original builders.

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A children's adventure playground and visitor tea rooms and gift shop complete a great day out for all the family.

See www.huntingtoncastle.com for more details.



COBH HERITAGE CENTRE

Learn about the story of Irish emigration in its various forms to many destinations, trace your ancestors, hear about the ill-fated Titanic and the Lusitania, and immerse yourself in Irish naval and military history at Cobh Heritage Centre.

This beautiful, informative and sometimes emotive exhibition is situated within Cobh's beautifully restored Victorian railway station, a building with its own historic story.



ZIPIT

Zipit is a treetop high ropes park in Tibbradden Wood, Dublin 16, only 15 minutes from Dundrum Town Centre. Situated in the Dublin Mountains, you can get a treetop panoramic view across Dublin Bay. Zipit is a place for young and old, where children can let their imagination run wild and where adults can embrace their inner child. You can climb high into the treetops, swing into cargo nets, even ride a BMX across a bridge,

before zipping down one of our many ziplines. Come as a family, come on your own, or bring along a group. Children from age seven to adults can enjoy up to four hours of excitement and adventure.

Whether you're an adrenalin junkie or just looking to try something different, Zipit offers a unique outdoor experience for everyone to enjoy. Forget the day to day stuff. Put down your smartphone. Escape the office. Get back to nature and let yourself go!

Zipit also has other parks in Farran Wood, Co. Cork and Lough Key, Co. Roscommon

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN LONGFORD

CENTER PARCS

Center Parcs first resort in Ireland offers everything you would expect from a quality, family break. Surrounded by up to 400 acres of trees, wildlife and natural landscapes, there's plenty of space to be explored.

Get together and try something new, with up to 100 indoor and outdoor activities to choose from. Whether you are a creative crafter or an adrenaline junkie, there's something for everyone. Imagine the good night's sleep that you'll enjoy in luxury accommodation. A real home from home with the forest as your backdrop. It's the perfect family retreat during your Ireland break. Then, to top it all off, at the heart of the resort is our Subtropical Swimming Paradise, the largest water park of its kind in Ireland.

CORLEA TRACKWAY

Don't miss the magnificent Corlea Trackway, an Iron Age bog road built in 148 BC. An 18m stretch of the historic oak track, like a pavement, has been preserved in a humidified hall at the site's visitor centre. Tours detail the bog's unique flora and fauna, and explain how the track was discovered and methods used to preserve it. The tour is highly informative and educational. The centre is 15km south of Longford town.

AUGHNACLIFFE DOLMEN

This dolmen is one of the three biggest portal dolmens in Ireland, with an improbably balanced top stone. Thought to be around 5,000 years old, Aughnaclyffe Dolmen is 18km north of Longford town.



ST MEL'S CATHEDRAL

Builders have completed a beautiful restoration of a great Cathedral after a fire gutted this building in 2009. It includes a new Pipe Organ, beautiful baptismal font and epic audio-visual system. The station of the cross are artworks in themselves. The stained-glass windows, some of which were designed in South America, replaced many that were cracked in the fire. These are modern and in keeping with the beautiful marble work that adorns this beautiful church. Named after the local Saint St. Mel. A great time/way to take a time out and contemplate the meaning of life.

ARDAGH HERITAGE AND CREATIVITY CENTRE

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands home of Midir and Etain. Heritage workshops for schools, groups and families. SFI Centre. Rooms to Rent for meetings or events.

The perfect venue for Arty Parties, Group Art & Crafts sessions for all from toddler to adult.



THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN LOUTH



MONASTERBOICE

Crowing ravens lend an eerie atmosphere to Monasterboice, an intriguing monastic site down a leafy lane in sweeping farmland, which contains a cemetery, two ancient church ruins, one of the finest and tallest round towers in Ireland plus two of the most important high crosses.

Come early or late in the day to avoid the crowds. It's just off the M1 motorway, about 8km north of Drogheda.

OLD MELLIFONT ABBEY

In its Anglo-Norman prime, this abbey, 1.5km off the main Drogheda–Collon road (R168), was the Cistercians' first and most magnificent centre in Ireland. Highly evocative and well worth exploring, the ruins still reflect the site's former splendour. Mellifont's most recognisable building and one of the country's finest examples of Cistercian architecture is the 13th-century lavabo, the monks' octagonal washing room.

GLYDE INN

VOTED IRELANDS PUB OF THE YEAR IN 2018 and a great family pub

Dating from 1770, this wonderful pub anchors Annagassan life. It has its own beer, Linn Duachaill (named for a local Viking settlement currently being excavated), which is also the name of its excellent restaurant which overlooks the beer garden, Dundalk Bay's tidal shallows and Mourne Mountains beyond.

ST PETER'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Displayed in a glittering brass-and-glass case in the north transept, the shrivelled head of St Oliver Plunkett (1629–81) is this church's main draw (the rest of the martyr was separated at his hanging in 1681). It's actually two churches in one: the first was designed by Francis Johnston in a classical style in 1791; the neo-Gothic addition was built in the late 19th century. Opening hours can vary.

SONAIRTE

At this inspiring, not-for-profit ecology centre, 10km southeast of Drogheda in Laytown, on an 18th-century former farm, you can wander through a walled organic garden, visit a beekeeping museum and take a biodiverse nature trail and river walk that incorporates wetlands, woodlands and grasslands. Recharge at its organic cafe or browse its home and garden shops. It hosts various courses, from home detox workshops to wild-food foraging; food and craft markets regularly set up on Sundays from 11am to 4pm.



CARLINGFORD OYSTER FESTIVAL

This rollicking four-day event toasts Carlingford's famous oysters with an oyster treasure hunt, fishing competition, music, food markets and a regatta on Carlingford Lough.

COUNTY MUSEUM DUNDALK

Different floors in this museum are dedicated to the town's early history and archaeology, and to the Norman period. One floor features the growth of industry in the area, from the 1750s to the 1960s, including the cult classic Heinkel Bubble Car. Other oddities include Oliver Cromwell's shaving mirror.



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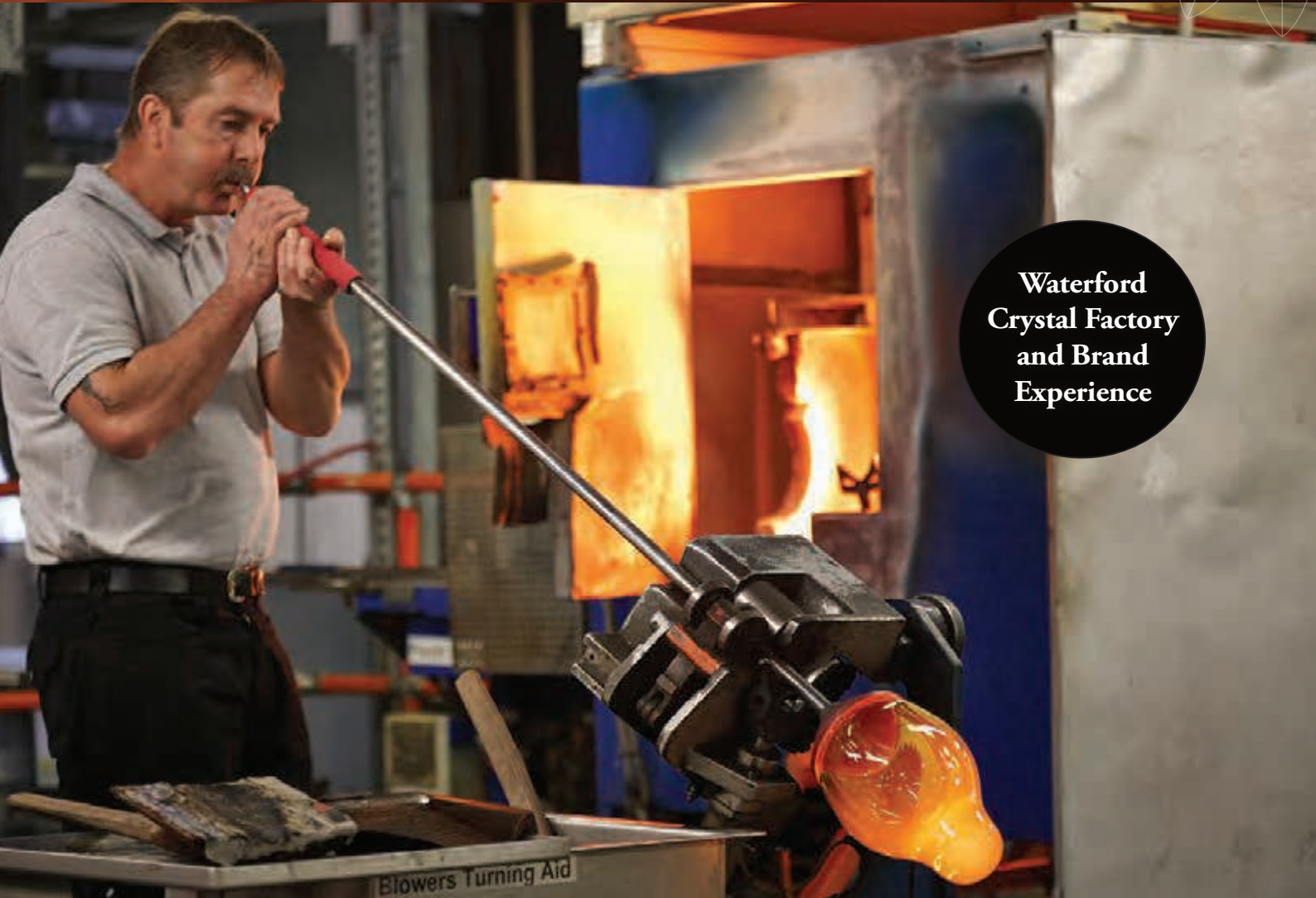


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