

THE LADY GREGORY &



YEATS HERITAGE TRAIL



Our Brochure



The Lady Gregory Yeats Trail incorporates historical sites between the towns of Gort and Loughrea associated with Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats.

These sites include Kilmacduagh, Coole Park, Kiltartan Gregory Museum, Thoor Ballylee, Killinane Graveyard, Roxborough Gates, Woodville Walled Gardens and St. Brendan's Cathedral.



WELCOME TO THE LADY GREGORY AND YEATS HERITAGE TRAIL



The unique landscape of South Galway and its people inspired both Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats to create some of their greatest works.

Writers, poets, historians, artists and musicians have long been attracted to the area.

We invite you to follow in the footsteps of Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats along this trail.





Kilmacduagh was founded in the seventh century by St. Colman, son of Duach and Rioghnach. He was born in Corker, Kiltartan in the parish of Gort. Colman belonged to the ruling family of Fiachrach Aidhne. Around 610 A.D. his kinsman, King Guaire, granted him land in Kilmacduagh where he built a monastery.

The original buildings have not survived but the ruins of Kilmacduagh remain among the most important and imposing sites in Ireland. The cemetery contains the grave of St. Colman, patron of the diocese, who died in 632 A.D.



KILMACDUAGH



The Kilmacduagh Monastic Site is one of the jewels of the West of Ireland. It exudes peace and tranquillity. Set against the backdrop of the Burren Mountains, this site has the highest Round Tower in Ireland.

It is Ireland's Pisa, as it leans two feet from the perpendicular. There are the ruins of seven churches and an abbot's house.

The cemetery contains the grave of St. Colman, patron of the diocese of Kilmacduagh and founder of a monastery here in the seventh century. In 1879 Sir William Gregory of Coole Park, Gort agreed to finance the restoration of the Round Tower regarding which he had written from Ceylon in 1872.





Coole is now a nature reserve of international repute, managed by the national parks and wildlife service and comprising of 405 hectares (1000) acres of woods, lake, river, turlough and bare limestone.

The nature reserve is open daily with marked trails. The visitors centre and tea rooms open during the summer months. Free attractions include, exhibition and audio visual show. There are picnic tables in the walled garden. Education programmes and guided tours for groups can be booked in advance.



COOLE PARK



Coole Park was once the home of Lady Gregory, dramatist, folklorist and co-founder of the abbey theatre with William Butler Yeats and Edward Martyn. In the early 20th century, Coole was the centre of the Irish literary revival.

Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, John Millington Synge, Sean O'Casey all came to experience its magic; their initials are carved on the world famous autograph tree in the walled garden for all to see.



Situated at historic Kiltartan Cross, made famous by W.B. Yeats, this red brick building is an architectural gem. It was built as a schoolhouse in 1892 at the behest of Sir William Gregory and designed by Frank Persse, Lady Gregory's brother.

Now an award-winning museum, it houses memorabilia, furniture and manuscripts dealing with the Gregory family and the Irish Literary Renaissance. It contains a rich collection of genealogy and local history which has proved invaluable for the Ireland Reaching Out project and for The Gathering Ireland 2013.



KILTARTAN GREGORY MUSEUM



The building also holds an old Irish classroom which will take you back in time to school life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Comments include: "absolutely brilliant", "could stay all day", "lovely, friendly place".

The Kiltartan Gregory Cultural Society was founded in August 1990 with the broad aim of preserving the heritage of the Kiltartan area in South Galway. We highlighted the work of the Irish Literary Renaissance and the part played by Lady Augusta Gregory and William Butler Yeats.



For many years Thoor Ballylee was a major tourist attraction in the South Galway area partly because of its proximity to Coole Park until the devastating floods of 1995 and again in 2009/2010 which forced Failte Ireland to close its doors to the public

The Lady Gregory Yeats Heritage Trail Group formed in 2010 to link the heritage sites between Gort and Loughrea connected with Lady Gregory and WB Yeats included Thoor Ballylee as a major site on the trail. Discussions have taken place between the group and Failte Ireland late last year and since then Failte Ireland have carried out restoration work within the building. The Group hope to persuade Failte Ireland to reopen Thoor Ballylee as it is a very important part of the literary and heritage trail of South Galway.



THOOR BALLYLEE



A 16th Century Fortified Norman castle with a small cottage attached it was acquired by WB Yeats in 1917 for the sum of thirty five pounds. He set about restoring it and renamed it Thoor Ballylee. He lived here with his family from 1921 until 1929.

Following his departure from Thoor Ballylee in 1929 the building fell into disrepair and it wasn't until 1964 when the Kiltartan Society founded by the late Mary Hanley undertook a major restoration project partly funded by Bord Failte and the Yeats family.

It was officially reopened by the poet Padraic Colum on Sunday 20th June 1965 on the centenary of WB Yeat's birth.





In 2006 Kilchreest Castledaly Heritage Group, after receiving funding from the Heritage Council and from Galway County Council commissioned Moore Archaeological & Environmental Services to survey the site.

With the permission of the Church Representative Body they then undertook the clean up of the graveyard which was hidden from view by brambles, briars, bushes and heavy undergrowth. It had become totally overgrown and neglected over the years. It was a huge undertaking but all the work to date has been carried out by local volunteers who give generously of their time.



KILLINANE GRAVEYARD



Killinane Graveyard is located in the townland of Castleboy in the parish of Kilchreest, Co Galway. It is accessed via a long laneway off the N66 approximately 4.5km from the village of Kilchreest. Although signposted it is secluded. Come with suitable footwear!

The graveyard is located within the domain of the Old Roxborough Estate.

Roxborough House was once home to the Persse Family and many family members are interred in the graveyard including Lady Gregory's family, as well as local Church of Ireland families thus its inclusion in the Lady Gregory Yeats Heritage Trail.





Lady Augusta Gregory was a frequent visitor to Woodville House, one time home to her brother Harry Persse. The adjoining stables exhibits old pictures, letters and artefacts belong to her family and give an insight in to country life in Ireland at the beginning of the last century.

Woodville and its experience does not disappoint and is a must visit for gardeners and historians alike. Afterwards why not treat yourself to afternoon tea in the garden or in the Stable tea room

For directions, opening hours plus a list of our events log onto www.woodvillewalledgarden.com or Contact Margarita on 087 9069191



WOODVILLE GARDENS



Woodville Walled Garden and Bluebell wood is nestled in the foothills of the Slieve Aughty Mts. on the N66 between Loughrea and Gort.

This oasis of tranquillity has been lovingly restored to its former glory. On arriving you are greeted by our resident white fantailed doves at home in one of the few remaining garden follies in the West of Ireland, a fully restored dovecote.

The garden features espaliered fruit trees, herbaceous borders with interest all year round from snowdrops to hellebores to tulips and a riot of summer colour.

The centre piece of this spiritual place there is a water fountain surrounded by roses and geraniums.





Augusta Persse was born at Roxborough on the 15th of March, 1852. She later became Lady Gregory – Irish dramatist, folklorist, patron of W.B. Yeats and co-founder of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. Her ancestor Dean Dudley Persse was granted lands here in this region by the Crown and built his mansion house at Cregarosta, later changing the name to the Borders' name Roxborough, the Persses having come from Northumberland, England.

Roxborough was the seat of the Persse family for 245 years, but sadly the 18th century mansion was destroyed by fire in 1922 during the Irish Civil War.



ROXBOROUGH GATES



The Roxborough Gates were restored through the initiative of the Lady Gregory Yeats Trail Group. Repair works to the entrance gates which date back to c 1860 were carried out by Mathieu and Mitchell who are master craftsmen in stone masonry and completed the conservation works in 2012. The project was sponsored by Galway Rural Development and Galway County Council.

The cast-iron gates were made by Richard Turner who also participated in the design of the Palm House at Kew Gardens, England. The gateway creates a handsome, sweeping entrance and forms an interesting roadside feature.





The foundation stone of the Cathedral was laid on October 10, 1897. Although small in size it is large in its interior magnificence. It has been described as the jewel in the crown of the Celtic Revival.

Visitors and locals alike can now enjoy a 30 minute audio tour of the Cathedral. The tour, available in English, French, German, Italian and Dutch introduces the visitor to Irish church art of international renown, with pride of place going to the unrivalled collection of Irish stained glass. The audio tour is available from the Parish Office, The Presbytery, Barrack Street.



ST. BRENDANS CATHEDRAL



Loughrea gets its name from the Irish Baile Locha Riach, the town of the Grey Lake. The Cathedral lies on the northern shore of this beautiful lake. St. Brendan's Cathedral is a "Treasure House of Celtic Revival Art".

Loughrea is the Cathedral Parish of the Diocese of Clonfert. There are two churches in the parish: the Carmelite Abbey and St. Brendan's Cathedral.



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