

Listen to the story of Loughrea Take an audio walking tour

The English language audio-narrative to accompany this tour can be downloaded from www.galwayeast.com/wayfinding. This audio tour narrated by Dr Peter Harbison describes in detail each of the sites featured in this tour and can be listened to on your PC, or on an MP3 player while walking the tour. There are 5 other Walking Tours in this series: Athenry, Ballinasloe, Gort, Tuam and Portumna.

See also our Ecclesiastical Driving Tour for a comprehensive tour of the main religious sites in Galway East. For more information on any of the places described in this brochure, or for general information on Galway East, contact Galway East Tourism www.galwayeast.com



Éist le scéal Bhaile Locha Riach Gabh ar shiúlóid fuaimne

Is féidir an tráchtairacht fuaimne Béarla don turas seo a íoslódáil ó www.galwayeast.com/wayfinding. Tugann an turas fuaimne seo le tráchtairacht ón Dr. Peter Harbison mionchuntas faoi gach suíomh atá luaithe sa turas seo agus is féidir leat éisteacht leis ar do ríomhaire nó ar sheinnteor MP3 agus an siúlóid á dhéanamh agat. Tá 5 Shiúlóid eile sa tsraith seo: Baile Átha an Rí, Béal Átha na Sluaighe, An Gort, Tuaim agus Port Omna.

Féach freisin ar ár dTuras Tiomána Eaglasta do thuras cuimsitheach ar phríomhionaid chreidimh in Oirthear na Gaillimhe. Tá breis eolais faoi aon cheann de na háiteanna atá luaithe sa bhróisiúr seo, chomh maith le heolas ginearálta faoi Oirthear na Gaillimhe, ar fáil ó Thurasóireacht Oirthear na Gaillimhe ag www.galwayeast.com.



This tour was developed by Galway County Council, with Galway East tourism and funding from Fáilte Ireland.



Other Interests

1. Turoe Stone
The 3 feet high granite boulder known as the Turoe stone is a beautifully decorated phallic stone. Dated between the 1st to 3rd centuries BC, it is one of the finest examples of a decorated ritual stone in Europe. The middle of the stone is decorated with a kind of Greek key. It is housed in the grounds of Turoe Pet Farm, in Bullaun.

2. The Lough
Lough Rea is a limestone lake covering 260 hectares. It is one of the few inland lakes to have achieved European Blue Flag status. The Long Point swimming area is equipped with changing rooms and showers, parking and picnic areas. The promenade provides a delightful walkway and the Lough is a haven for waterbirds.

3. Slieve Aughty Mountains
These mountains, south of Loughrea, consist of two ridges divided by a river which flows into Lough Cutra. The highest peak is 1314 feet. The mountains have been replanted recently with conifers. The Slieve Aughty region is home to riding and adventure centres, golf courses as well as friendly pubs and cafes.

4. Loughrea Literary Weekend (BAFFLE)
The B.A.F.F.L.E. festival is a literary and poetry event held every October holiday weekend. It presents a new concept entertainment and poetry performance. It is a festival where the punter can be the hero by composing his own poem and reading it to an audience. It is open to everyone and visitors are most welcome. For more information contact Finuala McNally - Tel: (091) 841295



Nithe Spéisiúla eile

1. Cloch an Tuair Rua
Is cloch fhallach 3 troigh ar airde í an bollán eibhir seo ar a dtugtar Cloch an Tuair Rua atá maisithe go hálainn. Baineann sí leis an tréimhse idir 100 agus 300 RC, agus tá sí ar cheann de na samplaí is fearr de chlocha deasghnátha maisithe san Eoraip. Tá eochair Ghréagach mar mhaisiúchán i lár na cloiche. Tá sí suite i dtailte Fheirm Pheataí an Tuair Rua, ar An mBallán.

2. An Loch
Is loch cloch aoil é an Loch Riabhach a chlúdaíonn 260 heicteár. Tá sé ar cheann den líon beag locha intíre a ghnóthaigh stádas Bratach Ghorm na hEorpa. Tá seomraí feistis agus cithfholcadáin, agus ionaid pháirceála agus phicnice ag ionad snámha an Phoainte Fhada. Is ionad iontach siúlóide é an promanád agus is tearman éan uisce é an Loch.

3. Sléibhte Eachtaí
Tá dhá dhroinn sna sléibhte seo taobh ó dheas de Bhaile Locha Riach agus iad deighilte ag abhainn a ritheann isteach i Loch Cútra. 1314 troigh atá an bhinn is airde. Cuireadh crainn bhuaircíneacha ar na sléibhte le gairid. Tá ionaid mharcáíochta agus eachtraíochta, cúrsaí gailf agus tábhairní agus bialanna cairdiúla i réigiún Shliabh Eachtaí.

4. Deireadh Seachtaine Litríochta Bhaile Locha Riach (BAFFLE)
Is féile litríochta agus filíochta é B.A.F.F.L.E a thionóltar ar dheireadh seachtaine saoire bainc Dheireadh Fómhair. Cuireann sé coincheap nua den tsiamsaíocht agus den reacaireacht filíochta i láthair. Tig leis an ngnáthdhuine a bheith ina laoch san fhéile seo má chumann sé a dhán féin agus má léann sé don slua é. Tá fáilte roimh chách, cuairteoirí san áireamh. Breis eolais le fáil ó Finuala McNally - Teil: (091) 841295

Loughrea Architectural Walking Tour Baile Locha Riach Turas Siúlóide Ailtireachta



Introduction

Loughrea, Baile Locha Riach in Irish, meaning 'the settlement of the grey or speckled lake', is a fine town standing on the ridge that rises above the shores of the lake that gives the place its name. It is located on the ancient route between the County's two largest towns - Ballinasloe to the east and Galway City to the west. The shores of the lake run all along the town's southern border, giving Loughrea a well-defined shape. The town's plan is roughly an east to west rectangle with Main Street running through it lengthwise and with Castle, Kelly's, Kings, Church and Piggott's Streets running southwards down from Main Street towards the thoroughfare at the lake's edge. Abbey Street then runs north off this mid-point in Main Street. There is ample parking near the Courthouse and this is where your tour of Loughrea will begin.

Réamhrá

Tá ainm Bhaile Locha Riach bunaithe ar an Loch Riabhach (liath nó breac), agus is baile breá é atá seasta ar dhroim a sheasann os cionn bruacha an locha as a fhaigheann sé a ainm. Tá sé suite ar bhealach ársa idir an dá bhaile is mó sa Chontae - Béal Átha na Sluaighe thoir agus cathair na Gaillimhe thiar. Tá bruacha an locha sínte ar theorainn theas an bhaile, rud a thugann imeall an-soiléir do Bhaile Locha Riach. Is i bhfoirm dronuilleoige garbh atá plean an bhaile, agus an Phríomhshráid ag dul trína fhad agus Sráideanna an Chaisleáin, Uí Cheallaigh, an Rí, na hEaglaise agus Phiogóid ag síneadh ó dheas ón bPríomhshráid chuig an mórbhealach ar imeall an locha. Síneann Sráid na Mainistreach ó thuaidh ón lárphointe seo sa Phríomhshráid. Tá fairsingeacht pháirceála in aice le Teach na Cúirte agus is anseo a thosóidh do thuras ar Bhaile Locha Riach.





1 Starting on the Fair Green near the lake shore, observe the Courthouse, erected under English rule in 1821. Faced in grey Galway limestone, it has two main floors, with projecting eaves under its slate roof. The T-shaped plan is arranged so that the court-room proper projects to the rear. Features such as some original panelling, doors, stairs and a balustrade survive internally, making it one of the best-preserved old courthouses in the district. Crossing the road northwards in the direction of Main Street, you will pass the remains of the only functioning medieval town moat in Ireland.

2 Follow the moat north, turning right onto Main Street. Take the first left up Abbey Street. A stretch of wall runs for 350 metres along 'The Walk'; a pleasant, pedestrian-only parkland area on the north side of the town. At the beginning of The Walk is St. Mary's, an historic religious site dating back to about the year 1300 and containing the ruins of a Carmelite Church and Priory, with its Gothic lancet windows. The tower and other enlargements are believed to date from 1437. Loughrea's medieval pattern of long, narrow 'burgage' plots, stretching back from their frontages on Main Street, often

enclose land all the way out to the northern and southern boundaries of the town. 3 At the far end of The Walk you come to Station Road. It was the last rural Irish branch line to survive, but its closure in 1975 resulted in the empty space now left at this corner. The old Railway Hotel, now O'Dea's Hotel still remains. Also in this area are the former buildings of the first pro Catholic Cathedral, which is a plain, early-nineteenth-century structure, currently used as a funeral parlour.



4 Make your way down in the direction of the Cathedral by going across Main Street and down Moore Street. Going down Moore Street, you'll see the tall, rather gaunt School buildings erected to bring Catholic education to the population in the second half of the 19th century. Here, at the south-east corner of the town and near to the edge of the lake, is a small stone tower - the remains of the early fifteenth-century Town Gate; a reminder of Loughrea's medieval origins. The town was founded in 1226, as a strategic feudal settlement. Following the pattern of conquerors almost everywhere in Europe during this period, Richard De Burgo, the Norman lord of Connacht, established a castle here.

5 Walking along Barrack Street, arrive at the Cathedral, Saint Brendan's. Begun in 1897, it has a single tower and spire, tall enough to dominate views from many points. It is one of the country's finest treasures. Saint Brendan's has a most beautiful interior and houses a collection of religious works of art in a considerable variety of media. Saint Brendan, who lived in the 6th century, is immortalised as the founder and abbot of the famed Abbey of Clonfert nearby. The Dublin architect William Byrne designed the Cathedral in a style that combines French with Irish and British elements of Gothic. Successive bishops and patrons have employed the finest artists, transforming the interior into a superb display of polished stone, sculpture and glass, continuing to the insertion of the final stained glass window in 1957. The crowning stained glass glory are Healy's two windows of The Ascension and The Last Judgment, a sparkling riot of colours and figures which were his final masterpieces.

6 Head back up towards Main Street via Church Street. At the corner of Church Street is the former Town Hall, later a cinema, a large building of about 1860. From here proceed up to the former Church of Ireland, now a library. Constructed in 1821, it was struck by lightning in 1832 on the first Sunday of December, two hours before the Advent service should have started. The spire, which toppled through the roof of the fortunately empty building, was re-built for £169.

7 Rejoin Main Street to finish the tour. Mainly above shops or bars, the buildings rise to two or, frequently, three storeys. Topping them are striking groups of chimneys rising above the slate roofs, sometimes with dormer windows inserted. For the most part, these buildings were constructed in this form from the late 18th century into the prosperous years of expansion before the mid-1840s. A few more modern interventions may also be seen in Main Street, including Staunton's - a two-storey, purpose-built department store with a unique and well-preserved shop front.



1 Tosaigh ag Faiche an Aonaigh in aice le brúach an locha agus breathnaigh ar Theach na Cúirte a tógadh faoi riail na Breataine sa bhliain 1821. Tá aghaidh d'aolchloch na Gaillimhe air, dhá urlár ann, agus sceimhleacha ag gobadh amach faoina dhíon slinne. Tá an plean T-chruthach leagtha amach ionas go síneann an seomra cúirte féin amach ar chúl. Tá roinnt den bhunphainéalú, doirse, staighrí agus balastráid fós laistigh, rud a dhéanann ceann de na seantithe cúirte is deachaomhnaithe sa dúiche de. Trasnaigh an bóthar ó thuaidh i dtreo na Príomhshráide thar iarsmaí an aon mhóta meánaoiseach baile atá fágtha in Éirinn.

2 Lean an móta ó thuaidh agus cas ar dheis isteach sa Phríomhshráid. Tóg an chéad chasadh ar clé suas Sráid na Mainistreach. Síneann píosa de mhúr ar feadh 350 méadar ar 'An Siúlóid'; ceantar páirce do choisithe amháin ar an taobh ó thuaidh den baile. Ag tús na Siúlóide tá láthair Mhuire, láthair stairiúil creidimh ó thimpeall na bliana 1300 mar a bhfuil fothraigh Eaglaise agus Príóireachta de chuid na gCairmilíteach, le fuinneoga caola Gotacha. Creidtear gur tógadh an túr agus méadúcháin eile timpeall na bliana 1437. Tá patrún meánaoiseach le plotáí fada caola 'burgage' Bhaile Locha Riach ag síneadh siar óna n-éadain ar an bPríomhshráid agus clúdaíonn siad talamh ar feadh an bhealaigh go léir go teorannacha an bhaile ó thuaidh agus ó dheas go minic.

3 Ag ceann na Siúlóide tiocfaidh tú go Bóthar an Stáisiúin. Ba é seo an chraobhlíne deireannach tuaithe a bhí in Éirinn ach dúnadh é i 1975 agus tá spás folamh sa chúinne seo anois dá bharr. Seasann sean-Óstán an Bhóthar Iarainn, ar a dtugtar Óstán O'Dea anois, i gcónaí. Tá seanfhoirgnimh na chéad Ardeaglaise Caitlicí sa cheantar seo freisin, struchtúr simplí ó thús an naoú haois déag, a úsáidtear faoi láthair mar theach tórraimh.

4 Síos leat i dtreo na hArdeaglaise trasna na Príomhshráide agus síos Sráid Moore. Ar do bhealach síos Sráid Moore, feicfidh tú foirgnimh arda loma Scoile a tógadh chun oideachas Caitliceach a thabhairt don daonra sa dara leath den 19ú haois. Anseo, ag cúinne thoir theas an bhaile in aice le himeall an locha, tá túr beag cloiche mar a raibh Geata an Bhaile go luath sa cheathrú haois déag; cuimhneachán de bhunús meánaoiseach Bhaile Locha Riach. Bunaíodh an baile mar lonnaíocht straitéiseach fheadach sa bhliain 1226. Mar a rinne lucht an choncais ar fud na hEorpa sa tréimhse seo, bhunaigh Richard de Burgo, tiarna Normannach Chonnachta, caisleán anseo.

5 Ag siúl leat trí Shráid na Bearice, tiocfaidh tú chuig Ardeaglais Bhreandáin. Cuireadh tús léi in 1897 agus tá an túr agus an spuaic aonair le feiceáil ó gach aird. Tá sé ar cheann de sheoda na tíre. Tá an taobh istigh den ardeaglais go hálainn agus áit inti do bhailiúchán ealaíne creidimh i meáin éagsúla. Maireann cuimhne Naomh Breandán a mhair sa 6ú haois mar bhunaitheoir agus mar ab ar Mhainistir cháiliúil Chluain Fhearta sa chomharsanacht. Rinne an t-aittire as Baile Átha Cliath William Byrne an Ardeaglais a dhearadh i stíl a mheasc gnéithe Francacha, Éireannacha agus Briotanacha den stíl Ghotach. D'fhostaigh easpaig agus patrúin éagsúla na healaíontóirí is fearr chun taispeántach iontach a dhéanamh den taobh isteach le cloch snasta, dealbhadóireacht agus gloine, agus cuireadh an fhuinneog ghloine daite deireanach isteach sa bhliain 1957. Is iad dhá fhuinneog Healy, an Deascabháil agus an Breithniúnas Deireanach, ciréib de dathanna agus d'fhigiúirí, a mháistirshaothair dheireanacha, buaic na gloine daite san ardeaglais.

6 Suas leat i dtreo na Príomhshráide trí Shráid na hEaglaise. Tá Seanhalla an Bhaile ag cúinne Shráid na hEaglaise, áit a raibh pictiúrlann ar feadh tamaill, foirgneamh mór ó thimpeall 1860. Lean ort suas go seaneaglais Eaglais na hÉireann mar a bhfuil leabharlann anois. Tógadh é sa bhliain 1821, bhuaíl tintreach é in 1832 ar an gcéad Domhnach de mhí na Nollag, dhá uair an chloig sula raibh seirbhís na hAidbhinte le tosú. Thit an spuaic tríd an bhfoirgneamh a bhí folamh ar ámharaí an tsaoil, agus tógadh arís é ar chostas £169. 7 Gabh ar ais chuig an bPríomhshráid chun an turas a chríochnú. Tá airde dhá nó trí stór go minic sna foirgnimh os cionn siopaí agus tábhairní. Os cionn na ndíonta slinne tá grúpaí suntasacha de shimléirí, agus fuinneoga dormánta istigh iontu uaireanta. Tógadh formhór na bhfoirgneamh seo idir blianta deiridh an 18ú haois agus na blianta rachmasacha fáis roimh lár na 1840í. Tá foirgnimh níos nua-aimseartha le feiceáil ar an bPríomhshráid chomh maith, ina measc Staunton's - siopa ilranna dhá stór saintógha le héadan uathúil deachaomhnaithe siopa.