

4.9. FAMOUS PERSONALITIES

SITE NAME **BIRTHPLACE OF PERCY FRENCH**

GRID REF.:M847 727 **OS DISCOVERY MAP SERIES NO.:**40

SITE DESCRIPTION

Percy French, artist, entertainer and songwriter (1854-1920) was born at Clooneyquin. His birthplace has been commemorated by the Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society by the erection of a plaque at the ruins of a house in Clooneyquin.

ACCESS

The site is signposted along third class roads from Clooneyquin which is located on the N61 approximately 3km north of Tulsk.

DISABLED ACCESS

The site is located adjacent to the public roadway.

SIGNAGE

Signposted from all access routes

ON-SITE INTERPRETATION

Plaques have been erected at the ruins of the house commemorating the birthplace by Bord Fáilte and Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society.

PARKING AND FACILITIES

This site is located by the side of a very narrow roadway where parking is limited to a maximum of two cars.

OWNERSHIP

Unavailable at time of survey



Photo 86: Percy French Birthplace

SITE NAME DR DOUGLAS HYDE INTERPRETATIVE CENTRE

GRID REF.:M703 925

OS DISCOVERY MAP SERIES NO.:32

SITE DESCRIPTION

Born in Castlerea, Douglas Hyde (1860-1949) later moved with his family to Portahard, Frenchpark, when his father was appointed rector for the area in 1867. Co-founder of the Gaelic League and first professor of Modern Irish in University College Dublin Douglas Hyde retired to Ratra House, at Frenchpark, but was soon recalled by the unanimous agreement of all political parties to be first President of Ireland under the Constitution of 1937. Portahard Church of Ireland, where his father was rector was restored in 1988 by Roscommon County Council and now houses the Dr Douglas Hyde Interpretative Centre. The garden (Gairdín an Chraoibhín) around the Church has been stocked with particular trees and shrubs which illustrate an ancient ‘Calendar – Alphabet’ system from old Irish literature.

ACCESS

The centre is housed in the former Church of Ireland at Portahard, approximately 3km west of Frenchpark on the N5. It is open afternoons from May to September. The garden and graveyard are open all year round.

DISABLED ACCESS

The centre has wheelchair access.

SIGNAGE

The centre is signposted on all access routes.

ON-SITE INTERPRETATION

The interpretative materials within the Centre include information panels, audio-visual display, letters, books of his poems and prose personal items, charts, maps and photographs. A panel in the garden interprets the ‘Calendar – Alphabet’ system and the trees. A Roscommon Interpretive Panel is located on the roadside adjacent to the pedestrian entrance.

PARKING AND FACILITIES

Car and coach parking are provided at the centre. A picnic area is located within Gairdín and Chraoibhín and a restaurant is located opposite the centre.

OWNERSHIP

Roscommon County Council

SITE NAME SEÁN Ó NEACHTAIN BIRTHPLACE

GRID REF.:M951 363 **OS DISCOVERY MAP SERIES NO.:** 47

SITE DESCRIPTION

Seán Ó Neachtain was a 17th century poet and writer, believed to have been born at Clonellan near Drum in South Roscommon. The Drum Heritage Group erected a Memorial Plaque at his former dwelling.

ACCESS

The site is accessible along third class roads to the north of the N6 at Cornafulla. The birthplace is in private ownership and not accessible to the public. The memorial plaque adjacent to the birthplace is clearly visible from the roadside.

DISABLED ACCESS

Roadside access only.

SIGNAGE

Signposted on approach roads within Drum area.

ON-SITE INTERPRETATION

A memorial plaque commemorates the site. The booklet ‘Seán Ó Neachtain – a late seventeenth century South Roscommon Poet and Writer’ published by Drum Heritage group provides a comprehensive account of his life and work.

PARKING AND FACILITIES

Limited parking is available along the roadside.

OWNERSHIP

The house and grounds are in private ownership.

SITE NAME COUNTY ROSCOMMON HERITAGE AND GENEALOGY CENTRE, STROKESTOWN.

GRID REF.:M926 808

OS DISCOVERY MAP SERIES NO.: 33

SITE DESCRIPTION

Located in the former St John's Church of Ireland built in 1819, the County Roscommon Heritage and Genealogy Centre offers the facility for people to trace their family roots in County Roscommon.

ACCESS

The Centre is located within the town of Strokestown and is accessible through a pedestrian gateway and along a paved pathway to the entrance doorway or via a larger gateway to the left of the main doorway.

The Centre is open Monday-Friday 9am-12.30pm and 2.30pm – 4.30pm all year round.

DISABLED ACCESS

Wheelchair access is possible through the larger gateway as there are two steps leading up to the pedestrian gateway. Access is along a short gravelled path to the main doorway. The doorway leads to an entrance porch and the main office is to the right. The turning space within the porch is narrow and may cause difficulties with wheelchair access. A double door leads from the porch to the main office/research area. The door is heavy and could not be opened unaided by a wheelchair bound person.

SIGNAGE

A sign is located outside the centre.

ON-SITE INTERPRETATION

There is no interpretation of the architecture or origins of the Church building provided at the site.

PARKING AND FACILITIES

Parking is available along the street to the front of the building. The Centre offers a genealogical service to people with County Roscommon family connections. Costs for this service vary dependent on the level of research required.

OWNERSHIP

The Centre is operated by the County Roscommon Heritage and Genealogy Company Ltd.

SITE NAME KEADUE HERITAGE PARK

GRID REF.:G911 113 **OS DISCOVERY MAP SERIES NO.:** 26

SITE DESCRIPTION

Dedicated to Turlough O’Carolan this park was opened in 1993. The celebrated songwriter and harpist (1670-1738) died at Alderford the home of Mac Dermot Roe, just outside Ballyfarnon. This house is privately owned and not accessible to the public. He was buried in nearby Kilronan church. His harp can be viewed at Clonalis House in Castlerea. Among O’Carolan compositions was the melody to which ‘the Star-Spangled Banner’ is sung.

ACCESS

The park is located in the centre of Keadue Village and is easily accessible.

DISABLED ACCESS

Ramped, paved walkways throughout the park allow wheelchair access. Seating is also provided within the park.

SIGNAGE

None

ON-SITE INTERPRETATION

A sweathouse is located to the rear of the park and interpretation on the working of the sweathouse is provided by means of engraved stone plaques mounted around a stone seat. A stone at the entrance to the park carries the engraving ‘Turlough O’Carolan Memorial Garden’.

PARKING AND FACILITIES

Parking is available along the village main street. The park contains planted flowerbeds, grass area, a fountain, gazebo, seating, litterbins and a sweathouse and is very well maintained..

OWNERSHIP

Keadue Development Association and Roscommon County Council.



Photo 87: Keadue Heritage Park