



ST BRIGID

She arrived with her nuns in the year 480 AD. She decided on Druim Criaig (Oak covered ridge) rising above the Curragh plains. There, under a great Oak tree, she built her "abbey" and hence the name of the present town of Kildare - Cill Dara, cell or church of the Oak.

She approached the King of Leinster seeking land for her abbey. In return for curing a deformity, he agreed to give her as much land as her cloak would cover - which, according to legend, spread out to cover the entire Curragh.

MONASTIC CITY

Vikings attacked the Monastic cities because of their wealth. The first of 15 attacks in Kildare occurred in 835 and the Vikings took away the shrines of St. Brigid and St. Conleth.

MEDIEVAL KILDARE

The street pattern of the medieval town that surrounded the Castle and Cathedral has been identified, but as Kildare was outside The Pale it did not develop to such an extent as did more secure centres such as Naas. After the collapse of the pilgrimage and cult of St. Brigid following the reformation and the devastating wars of the 17th century, the status of the site declined.



WAR AND REBELLION

Kildare suffered on several occasions as rival chiefs fought over titles and lands of the monastery - the control of such a holy site with its attractions for pilgrims made it a desirable place to be included in a tribal chief's area of influence.

A PROSPEROUS TOWN

Declined up to the mid 18th century because of no river and that the town was not on a major route. However in 1731 the road from Naas to Maryborough (Portlaoise) was turnpiked - placing Kildare on the main route to Dublin which allowed it to benefit from increased passing trade.

A GARRISON TOWN

The 1st military barracks was opened in 1901. In 1922 the British vacated the barracks. In March 1925 the newly created Artillery Corp arrived in Kildare. In 1998 they departed Kildare.

KILDARE TOWN HERITAGE CENTRE

Kildare Town Heritage Centre is an exciting visitor attraction in the picturesque town of Kildare. It is an area renowned for its bloodstock industry and is on the main Dublin/Cork/Limerick Road (N7), within 5 minutes of the famous Irish National Stud & Gardens, and the Curragh Racecourse.

Located in the restored 18th century market house is a multimedia exhibition telling the story of Kildare past and present. Your host Cogitosus a 7th century monk will take you on a fascinating journey through time from when St. Brigid established her church in 480 AD, to later centuries when Kildare was raided by Vikings and later ruled by Normans. In medieval times it had abbeys of Franciscans and Carmelites and its citizens experienced the 1798 rebellion. Kildare gradually developed into a market town and a modern town while still preserving the outlines of its street patterns, Round Tower and Cathedral which entice the visitors to explore the various sites of interest throughout Kildare.

Kildare Town Heritage Centre & Tourist Office is the ideal starting point for a tour of Kildare Town. An integral part of the story of Kildare is to visit the historical sites after visiting the centre.

OPENING HOURS

JANUARY - DECEMBER

Mon - Sat: 9.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.
closed for lunch: 1.00 p.m. - 2.00 p.m.
(subject to change)

- FREE ADMISSION -

For more Information Contact: **Tom McCutcheon**

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KILDARE TOWN

HERITAGE CENTRE & TOURIST OFFICE



For a free self-guided tour check out the Kildare Town Heritage Trail on Guidigo.com

Thank you for visiting Kildare Town!!!



HERITAGE TRAIL



KILDARE TOWN

HERITAGE CENTRE & TOURIST OFFICE



1. KILDARE TOWN HERITAGE CENTRE (Market House)

Opening Hours: Mon-Sat, 9:30am-1:00pm & 2:00pm-5:00pm

The perfect place to begin your journey around one of Ireland's oldest towns. The Centre is located in a restored 18th Century market house. You can see St. Brigid's Flame, which was presented to the people of Ireland by President Mary McAleese in 2006, outside on the square.

2. ST BRIGID'S CATHEDRAL

Opening Hours (May-Sept): Mon-Sat, 10:00am-1:00pm & 2:00pm-5:00pm, Sun, 2:00pm-5:00pm.
(Last admission 4:40pm. For all other times / dates please contact Kildare Heritage Town Centre)

Soak up the atmosphere from over 700 years of history and don't forget to make a wish as you wander through this magnificent Cathedral. It is located on the grounds of St. Brigid's monastic site. The present cathedral was built between 1223 & 1230. It was semi-ruinous by 1500 and entirely derelict by 1649. The Cathedral was partially rebuilt in 1686 and fully restored between 1875 & 1896. Further major restoration took place in 1996.



3. ROUND TOWER

Opening Hours (May-Sept): Mon-Sat, 10:00am-1:00pm & 2:00pm-5:00pm, Sun, 2:00pm-5:00pm.
(Last admission 4:40pm. For all other times / dates please contact Kildare Heritage Town Centre)

Why not climb Ireland's highest accessible round tower? The present tower dates from the 12th Century. It is built of sandstone and granite and stands at a mighty 108 feet (33m). From the top of this Tower, the adventurous have a spectacular 360° view of County Kildare and beyond.



4. ST BRIGID'S FIRE TEMPLE

Opening Hours: Mon-Sun, 10:00am-5:00pm

While visiting St. Brigid's Cathedral, take a stroll to the north side where you can view the restored foundations of an ancient fire temple. A small fire is ritually lit at the site St. Brigid's Feast day, 1st February. The flame was symbolically relit in 1993 and is now kept by the Brigidine Sisters at Solas Bhríde Centre and Hermitages.



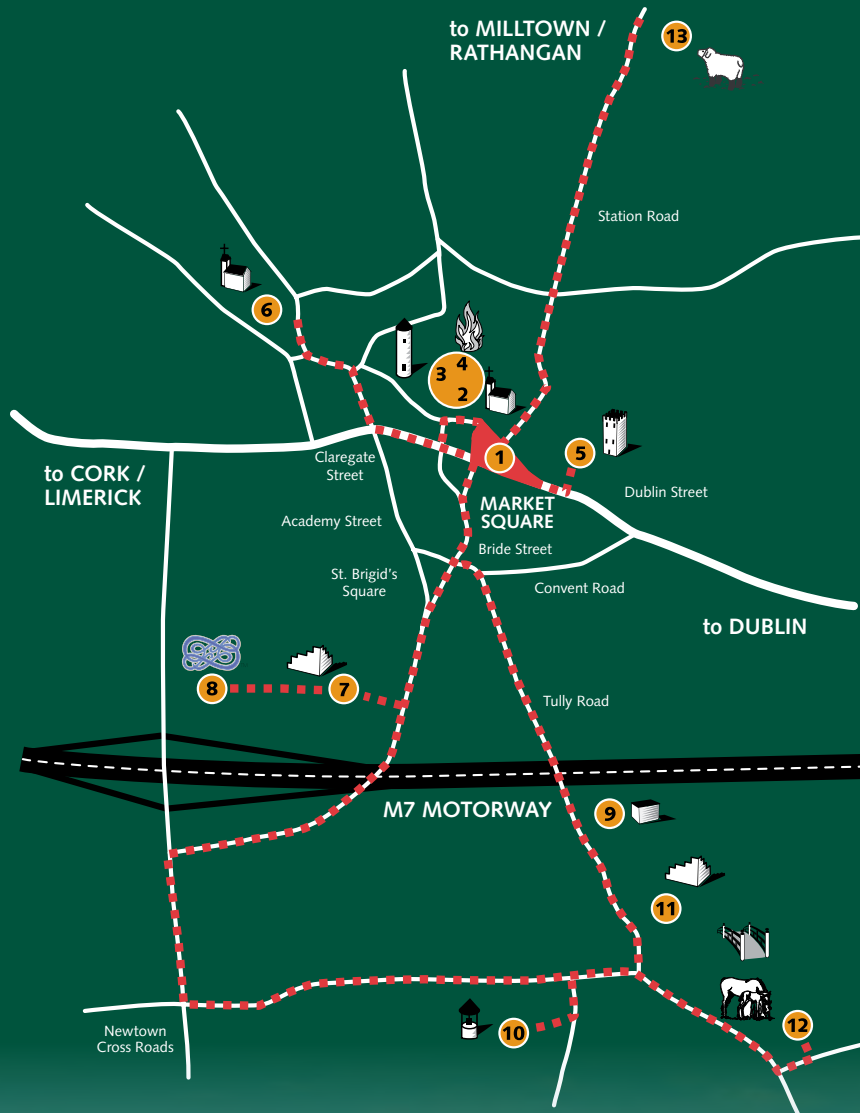
5. KILDARE CASTLE

Step back in time behind the Silken Thomas to the last remaining tower of the 12th Century Castle. It was once one of the most important castles of the Norman's in Leinster. The Fitzgerald's took advantage of Kildare's location as a frontier town to increase their power.



6. THE WHITE ABBEY

Explore this 700 year old Carmelite Church. The White Abbey was founded in 1290 by William de Vesce, Lord of Kildare and still stands today.



7. THE GREY ABBEY

Another de Vesce structure, The Grey Abbey was built around 1254 for the Franciscan Friars. This Abbey is the last resting place for the remains of several Earls of Kildare and sadly, its ruins are much depleted.



8. KILDARE VILLAGE OUTLET SHOPPING

Opening Hours: Mon-Weds, Fri, Sat, 9:00am-8:00pm, Thurs 9:00am-9:00pm, Sun, 10:00am-8:00pm
Get some retail therapy at the Kildare Village Outlet with deals of up to 60% off designer brands all year round.



9. SOLAS BHRÍDE CENTRE & HERMITAGES

Opening Hours: Mon-Fri, 9:00am-5:00pm (Sat/Sun by Appointment)

Drift away into a spiritual world and relax at this Christian Spirituality Centre that welcomes people of all faiths and no faith. Solas Bhríde Centre and Hermitages has a vision to explore the legacy of St. Brigid and its relevance for our time.



10. ST BRIGID'S WELL

It is located close to the Black Abbey near the millrace which was used by St Brigid. This well is a site for religious devotion particularly on St Brigid's annual feast day of February 1st.



11. THE BLACK ABBEY

This Abbey was founded prior to 1212 by the Knights Hospitallers at Tully. The Black Abbey ruins can be found on the grounds of the Irish National Stud.

12. IRISH NATIONAL STUD & GARDENS

Opening Hours (Feb-Oct): Mon-Sun, 9:00am-6:00pm

Colonel Hall Walker founded this Stud in Tully in 1900 and in 1945, it became the Irish National Stud. The Japanese Gardens were built by Tasa Eida from 1906-1910 to symbolise the life of man. St. Fiachra's Garden is set in four acres of woodland with lakeside walks. It features a Waterford Crystal display set within a monastic cell. The exhibition in the Horse Museum brings the Sport of Kings to life.



13. THE CURRAGH PLAINS

Walk, cycle, run & explore the Curragh of Kildare. It is one of the largest tracts of semi natural grassland in Europe consisting of 5000 acres of species rich grass. This strengthens horses' bones and produces some of the finest horses in the world. The Curragh has an internationally renowned racecourse and also houses the main training centre for the Irish Army and a Military Museum.

