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|---|--|-----------------------|
| 1 GAA Leinster Council | 8 Library | P Parking |
| 2 Train Station | 9 Garda Station | + Church |
| 3 Portlaoise Leisure Centre | 10 Áras an Chontae | i Tourist Information |
| 4 Portlaoise Heritage Hotel | 11 Laois Shopping Centre | B Bus Stops |
| 5 Dunamaise Arts Centre (Old County Gaol) | 12 Town Park | |
| 6 Courthouse | 13 Tower Hill | |
| 7 Fire Station | 14 Old Wall & Rampart Tower of the Fort of Maryborough | |

contact the Tourist Office: +353 (0)57 862 1178 www.laoistourism.ie



The publishers gratefully acknowledge photographic contributions primarily by Kevin Byrne and Redmond Studios. The publishers cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention future publications will be amended accordingly.

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www.laoistourism.ie



so different, so near

PASSPORT TO LAOIS – IRELAND

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WELCOME TO LAOIS

Ancient Celtic sites, serene country villages, monastic round towers, windswept valley landscapes, rugged desolate bog lands, tumbling waterfalls – Laois is steeped in myth and legend.

Today, Laois's captivating heritage is supported by breath-taking landscapes where you can enjoy peaceful moments of rejuvenation. Take a drive through the Slieve Bloom Mountains and its quaint mountain villages, or visit the charming towns and magnificent gardens around the county. You can choose from a number of picturesque riverside villages along the Grand Canal where fishing and water activities are popular. This diversity of landscape offers the visitor a wide variety of activities from horse-riding to fishing in any of Laois's renowned rivers and lakes.

Did you know that the Slieve Blooms are the oldest mountains in Europe and were once 12,000 feet high?

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Take a barge on the Grand Canal or a horse-drawn caravan holiday break, where you can view this magnificent scenery and so much more! Laois also offers some of the most competitive green fees in Ireland and easy access to many quality parkland golf courses.

The visitor is offered a myriad of unique reasonably priced places to stay, superb award-winning restaurants, great entertainment, exhilarating outdoor adventure, excellent shopping and welcoming people – all within an hour of Ireland's capital. With its central location and excellent road and rail infrastructure, Laois is the perfect place to stay and discover attractions in other nearby counties – Kilkenny, Carlow, Kildare, Offaly, Wicklow, Tipperary and Dublin. We look forward to welcoming you to Laois and we wish you an enjoyable visit.

For more details on County Laois or where to book accommodation, contact the Tourist Office, Lyster Square, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 1178, or visit www.laoistourism.ie

For any specific queries, contact Laois Tourism Officer:

T: +353 (0)57 866 4132 E: info@laoistourism.ie

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LAOIS

We can trace the first people in Laois to small bands of hunters and gatherers who passed through the county about 8,500 years ago. They were followed by Ireland's first farmers, who left behind burial mounds in Clonaslee and Cuffsborough. Next came the people of the Bronze Age, who produced metal weapons and tools as well as golden objects. They were followed by those of the pre-Christian Celtic Iron Age, whose ring barrows and forts still mark the landscape.

By the first century A.D., Laois was part of the Kingdom of Ossory. Its lands were divided among the Seven Septs (Families) of Laois - O'More (O'More), O'Lalor, O'Doran, O'Dowling, O'Devoy (O'Deevy), O'Kelly and Mc Evoy. Dermot Mc Murragh, King of Leinster, was instrumental in bringing the Normans to Ireland. He married his daughter Aoife to the Norman Knight Strongbow, and included the fortress on the Rock of Dunamais as part of her dowry. By 1175, the Normans controlled the best land in the county. However, the early 1300s saw a surge in the power of the Irish chieftains. The DEMPSEYS seized Lea Castle, while Dunamais was recovered by the O'Mores. The Normans withdrew and the re-established Gaelic lords built tower houses, often decorating them with the ancient symbol of the Sheela-na-Gig.

By the 1500s, the English again dominated the county. When Mary Tudor assumed the English Throne, she ordered the plantation of Laois with English settlers. This was the first of many plantations that were to follow. A great fortress was erected at Maryborough which was named in honour of the Queen and the county was named Queen's County. Although Irish chieftains fought to defend their land, after the Battle of Kinsale (1601), their power was shattered.

During the English Civil War, Cromwell's forces raged through Laois, destroying some tower houses and attacking the fortress at Dunamais. After Cromwell's death, Laois became a refuge for outcasts and political refugees - Quakers in Mountmellick and Huguenots in Portarlinton. What followed was a period of relative calm. Anglo-Irish landowners enclosed the land and built fine houses such as Emo Court and Castle Durrow. In 1836, the Grand Canal linked Portarlinton and Mountmellick further stimulating industry in those bustling towns. With the foundation of the Irish State, the county got its name back. 'Queen's County' was once again County Laois.

GETTING HERE

Apart from its own many attractions, Laois is ideally situated for visits to other places of interest that Ireland has to offer. Its county town, Portlaoise has a superb road, rail and bus infrastructure - one of the best in the country. Its network extends to Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Shannon, Waterford, Kilkenny and other Midland counties. Laois is extremely convenient to all the entry points into Ireland and is in easy access to Dublin airport and Dun Laoghaire, Dublin and Rosslare ferry ports.

BY AIR: All international flights to Ireland arrive to Cork, Shannon and Dublin Airport, all of which are within 2 hours of Co.Laois.

BY FERRY: Both **Irish Ferries** and **Stena Line** operate routes from France to Ireland and the U.K. to Ireland. (Dublin/Rosslare).

BY RAIL: **Portlaoise Railway Station** operates a daily service on the Dublin - Cork/Tralee and Dublin - Limerick lines. T: +353 (0)57 862 1303
Portarlinton Railway Station is situated on the main rail route from Dublin to Galway in the west of Ireland. T: +353 (0)57 862 3128

BY COACH: **Bus Éireann**: operate buses from Portlaoise at regular intervals daily on Dublin - Portlaoise - Cork; Dublin - Portlaoise - Limerick; Dublin - Portlaoise - Tralee and Waterford - Portlaoise - Athlone routes. Contact Bus Éireann for more details at +353 (0)90 647 8792.

J.J. Kavanagh's: run bus services on Portlaoise - Kilkenny and Portlaoise - Carlow routes. Also bus services between Portlaoise and Dublin Airport Contact: +353 (0)56 883 1106.

Aircoach: run regular bus services between Dublin Airport and Abbeyleix. For more details on timetables, contact +353 (0)1 844 7118 or www.aircoach.ie

BY CAR: **From Portlaoise to:**

Limerick	105km	(1 hour 30 mins)
Cork	170km	(2 hours 15 mins)
Dublin	80km	(1 hour)
Galway	148km	(2 hours)
Kilkenny	49km	(45 mins)
Rosslare	125 km	(2 hours)

Times listed are approximate



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HERITAGE

Like the pieces of a jigsaw, more than 1,000 different heritage sites tell the story of County Laois. To help you find your way, the attractions below are listed in alphabetical order. We've used icons to help you find the places that most interest you.



Historic Building



Garden



Laois Heritage Trail

SENSORY GARDENS, ABBEYLEIX

T: +353 (0)57 873 1325

Located in the old walled garden of the Brigidine Convent (founded in 1842), the Abbey Sense Garden is organised around the five senses. Plantings include a herb garden, a scent garden and many water features. All plants are propagated and maintained by people with learning disabilities. Open year round, Monday to Thursday from 9am to 5pm, and on Fridays from 9am to 4pm. From 1 June until 30 September, the gardens are also open on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from 2pm to 6pm. There is an Open Day and Garden Fete in the second week of June.

Portlaoise Tourist Office provide brochures on the Laois Heritage Trail, the Garden Heritage of Co Laois and maps of Mountmellick and Portlaoise Heritage Trails. Find out more on www.laoistourism.ie

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ABBEYLEIX

In the late 1700s, the Viscounts de Vesci moved the planned estate town of Abbeyleix to its present location. Today, Abbeyleix is one of Ireland's prettiest towns, featuring interesting architecture, mature plantings and five carefully restored fountains. Visit the Abbeyleix Heritage House Interpretative Centre and the picturesque Sexton's Cottage.

ABBEYLEIX HERITAGE HOUSE, ABBEYLEIXT: +353 (0)57 873 1653 E: abbeyleixlaois@eircom.net www.heritagehousemuseum.com

Located in the old Patrician North School, this museum tells the history of County Laois, as well as Abbeyleix. Panels and artefacts address pre-Christian tribes, monastic Laois, plantation and the influence of landlords, among other topics. An entire room is dedicated to the factory that made fine carpets that covered the floorboards of the Titanic.

AGHABOE ABBEY

Founded by St. Canice in the 6th Century, Aghaboe Abbey is the site of four different phases of Christian life in Ireland. Today the ruins of a Dominican friary survive. A plaque at the monastic ruins tells of the turbulent and bloody history of the site. Visitors can also view the tree-covered remains of a Norman motte nearby. Admission free.

BALLAGHMORE CASTLE (BORRIS-IN-OSSORY)T: +353 (0)505 21453 E: gracepym@eircom.net www.castleballaghmore.com

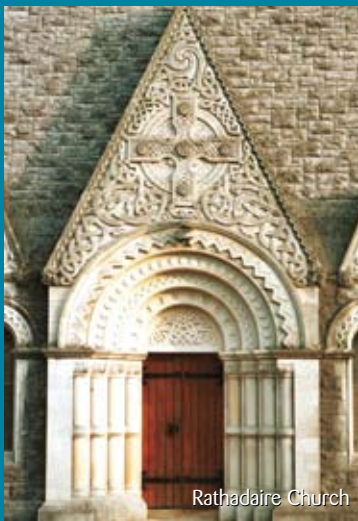
Once the chief seat of the Mac Gillphadraig, Lords of Upper Ossory, Ballaghmore Castle is strategically placed on the Bealach Mór, the great road to Munster. Visitors are given a guided tour of the castle's many interesting features, which include a Sheela-na-Gig.





Did you know that the Rock of Dunamase was once inhabited by the woolly mammoth, miniature horse and flying reptiles.

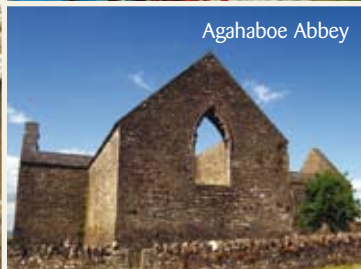
Donaghmore Museum



Rathadaire Church



Agahaboe Abbey



BALLYFIN HOUSE

Ballyfin House is possibly the finest Neo-Classical house in Ireland. Built in 1821 – 1826 in Slieve Bloom sandstone by Sir Charles Coote, it includes a superb Richard Turner conservatory. Private ownership.

CASTLETOWN

Located on the banks of the Nore, Castletown won 'Ireland's Tidiest Village 2001'.

DONAGHMORE WORKHOUSE MUSEUM

T: +353 (0)505 46315 M: +353 (0)86 829 6685

Visitors to the Donaghmore Workhouse Museum can walk through the virtually unchanged rooms of a 19th century workhouse. The workhouse, which opened in 1853, housed families immediately after the Great Famine and during the Land War. Restricted opening – please ring in advance. Guided tours only.

DURROW

The planned estate village of Durrow developed under the patronage of the Viscounts of Ashbrook, who also built Castle Durrow, one of the last large pre-Palladian houses built in Ireland. The town features fine Georgian and Victorian buildings. The Leafy Loop – a 14-mile series of way-marked walking routes around the town – includes riverside paths, leafy forest tracks, numerous historic sites and a rich variety of flora and fauna.

EMO COURT

T: +353 (0)57 862 6573 www.heritageireland.ie

One of the finest stately homes in these islands. Emo Court was designed by James Gandon in 1790 for the Earls of Portarlington. It is a magnificent example of the neo-classical style. Guided tours of the house are available. House open June to September and by appointment. Gardens open all year round. Tearooms are also available in Emo Court for refreshments.

EMO COURT GARDENS

Laid out in the late 1700s, the gardens of Emo Court are known for sweeping formal lawns, statuary, exotic shrubs and fine trees. Visitors can enjoy a variety of walking routes through the woodlands, including the Beech Walk, Margaret's Walk, Via Davida, the Apiary Walk and the Clucker Walk. Admission free.

GASH GARDENS, CASTLETOWN

T: +353 (0)57 873 2247 M: +353 (0)87 272 8337 E: gashgardens@eircom.net

An enchanting oasis packed with interesting and unusual plants to lure and inspire both the keen plantsperson and the garden novice. Colourful borders, a large rock garden and a well-established collection of trees, shrubs and roses combine to present a succession of colour through all the seasons. Open May 1 – September 30. Monday – Saturday from 10am to 5pm. The gardens may be viewed on Sundays strictly by appointment only. Admission €5.00. Groups welcome by prior arrangement. Adjacent plant nursery open all year.

GREAT HEATH

The Great Heath of Maryborough is one of the most important archeological sites in Ireland. It was the site of the battle of Caintin in the third century, the stone called Leac Reta where the seven cantreds of ancient Laois met, iron-age ring barrows, bronze-age cultivated ridges and many other historic features.

HEYWOOD GARDENS, BALLINAKILL 🌿 🌸T: +353 (0)56 772 1450 E: heywoodgardens@duchas.ie www.heritageireland.ie

One of the finest gardens in Ireland, this site contains two types of garden. The first is an elegant 18th century park with fine trees and lakes. The second is a series of small, inter-linked gardens designed by Sir Edward Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll in the early 20th century. Both can be enjoyed during daylight hours. Admission free.

IRISH FLY-FISHING & GAME SHOOTING MUSEUM, ATTANAGH 🏠 🌿T: +353 (0)57 873 6112 E: irishflycraft@hotmail.com www.irishflycraft.com

The only museum of its kind in Europe, the Irish Fly Fishing and Game Shooting Museum explores 300 years of fishing and hunting in Ireland. The collection includes rare flies, vintage rods, reels and firearms, and specimens of fish and fowl. Fishing guide Jimmy Tyrrell is on site to tie flies and frame them to order.

LEA CASTLE

Situated midway between Portarlinton and Monasterevin, Lea Castle was built in 1260 by William de Vesey. It changed hands many times during its turbulent history. Remains include part of the keep, a fairly complete corner tower, a walled courtyard, wards and a double-towered gate building.

KILLESBIN ROMANESQUE DOORWAY 🏠

The most striking and colourful Romanesque doorway in Ireland can be found among the ruins of the monastery at Killesbin. Some scholars believe that this elegantly decorated church may have been commissioned by Dermot McMurragh, King of Leinster (c 1133–1171), on the site of an earlier monastery.

MOUNTMELICK 🌿

In 1659, a small group of Quakers settled in Mountmellick. Over the next century, they were instrumental in transforming a sleepy village in the bend of the Oweness River into 'the Manchester of Ireland'. By the early 1800s, the town was a centre of textile production, and its factories also produced glue, starch, snuff and candles, among other goods. Canal barges took Mountmellick's wares throughout Ireland and brought shoppers back to its fine streets. Today Mountmellick's fine buildings and historical sites are identified on its Heritage Trail, which is signposted through the town.

MOUNTMELICK MUSEUM 🏠T: +353 (0)57 862 4525 E: themuse@mdasilt.ie www.mountmellickdevelopment.com

This museum tells the story of Mountmellick's rich Quaker and industrial history. It also showcases Mountmellick Work, a uniquely Irish form of embroidery that was developed in the 1800s to enable local women to support themselves.

POET'S COTTAGE, CAMROSS 🏠 🌿

This replica of a traditional thatched cottage allows visitors to experience what life was like for most rural people in the 1800s. The cottage is named for Patrick Ryan, a local poet who wrote about life in this area.

PORTARLINGTON 🏠 🌿

Founded in 1666 by Sir Henry Bennett, Lord Arlington, the town features exceptional Huguenot, Georgian and Victorian buildings. After the Jacobite wars, the lands were given to General Rouvigny, Earl of Galway, who offered refuge to French and Flemish Huguenots

forced to leave their homelands. Portarlinton became known for its 16 Classical schools, which educated well-to-do children in the 'French' manners considered desirable by the gentry. It also became a financial centre, and the skill of its silversmiths was renowned throughout Ireland.

RATHDOWNEY

Rathdowney has an abundance of historical sites, castles, moats, tower houses and the croppy grave. Rathdowney is the birthplace of the late Thomas Prior, founder of the Royal Dublin Society (RDS). Rathdowney was also home to the only brewery making non-deposit ale in Ireland in 1902 and had the distinction of holding the Royal Warrant as brewers to Queen Victoria.

ROCK OF DUNAMAISE 🏠 🌿

One of the great monuments and fortresses of Ireland towers over the Portlaoise/Stradbally road, offering breathtaking views of the county. Inspired by this great vantage point, people built fortresses here as early as 140AD. In the mid-800s, Vikings pillaged an early Christian settlement on this spot. A later fortress was part of the dowry of Aoife, daughter of the Leinster king Dermot McMurragh, when she was given in marriage to the Norman conqueror Strongbow in 1170.

ROUND TOWER, TIMAHOE 🏠 🌿

A beautifully carved doorway makes this one of the most interesting round towers in Ireland. If you look carefully, you can make out carved heads, with long moustaches and twining hair, on the sides of the doorway. This tower was probably built in the 1100s on the site of an earlier monastery. Beside the tower is the Church of Ireland now used as a library.

STRADBALLY STEAM MUSEUM 🌿T: +353 (0)57 862 5154 www.irishsteam.ie

The Stradbally Steam Museum tells the story of the steam engines that pulled trains, built roads and drove factory machinery in Ireland until the 1920s. Restricted Opening. Call ahead to confirm opening times of museum.

On Bank Holiday Sundays and Mondays from Easter to October, the Steam Museum also offers rides on a narrow gauge Heritage Railway that takes passengers through the grounds of the picturesque Stradbally Hall estate.

VICARSTOWN 🏠

This picturesque village on the Grand Canal is a useful base for walking, cycling, boating and fishing in the county. Buildings of interest include the 1860s Grattan School and Grattan Lodge, both of which were built in 1882 by Henry Grattan's grand-daughter Lady Pauline Grattan Bellow.

These other renowned Heritage Sites are close to Laois:

- Kilkenny Castle and the medieval city of Kilkenny (about 45 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Irish National Stud & Japanese Gardens, Kildare (about 30 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Clonmacnoise (about 50 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Glendalough (about 90 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Newgrange, Co. Meath (about 75 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Birr Castle and Gardens, Offaly (45 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary (about 45 minutes drive from Portlaoise)





Japanese Gardens, Kildare

DAY TRIPS FROM COUNTY LAOIS

KILKENNY CASTLE is situated in the medieval city of Kilkenny. A 12th Century Castle, there are extensive grounds and guided tours of the Castle daily. Other historic buildings are Saint Canice's Cathedral and Rothe House. Kilkenny is located only 45 minutes drive from Portlaoise and 30 minutes from Durrow.

IRISH NATIONAL STUD & JAPANESE GARDENS The National Stud is home to some of Ireland's finest thoroughbreds. The Japanese Gardens are the finest Japanese Gardens in Europe. Both are located in Co. Kildare, approx 30 minutes drive from Laois.

CLONMACNOISE This ancient monastic site is situated in neighbouring County Offaly and dates back almost 1,500 years.

BIRR CASTLE DEMENSE is famous for its exotic tree and plant collections, rivers and lakes, formal gardens, terraces and wildflower meadows. It is also home to the Science Centre. Birr is located approx 40 minutes from Portlaoise.

ROCK OF CASHEL is one of the most spectacular archeological sites in Ireland. It sits on the outskirts of Cashel on a large mound of limestone bristling with ancient fortifications. Mighty stone walls encircle a complete round tower, a roofless abbey, a 12th century Romanesque chapel, and numerous other buildings and high crosses. Cashel is located approx 1 hour from Portlaoise.

NEWGRANGE is most famous of all Irish prehistoric monuments, Newgrange is one of the finest European passage-tombs. It is more than 5000 years old and thus older than the pyramids in Egypt! This building, which is a big mound of some 80 meters in diameter, stands in the Boyne Valley in County Meath. Newgrange is located approx 1 hour 30 minutes drive from Portlaoise.

GLENDALOUGH 'the glen of the two lakes', is an ancient monastic settlement and two clear water lakes beneath the sheer cliffs of a deep valley which was carved out by glaciers during the Ice Age. The monastic settlement has been a centre for pilgrims and visitors since its foundation by St. Kevin in the 6th century. Glendalough in County Wicklow is located approx 1 hour 30 minutes from Portlaoise.

Rock of Cashel



Clonmacnoise



Kilkenny Castle



Newgrange





PROMOTING TULLAMORE'S DISTILLING, URBAN AND CANAL HISTORY

Located on the banks of the Grand Canal, Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre occupies the bonded warehouse, once used to mature the world famous Tullamore Dew Whiskey and Irish Mist Liqueur. The heritage centre relates the history behind the whiskey that is becoming one of the most recognised brands in the world and also the unique story of the Irish Mist Liqueur, also the fascinating story of the hot air balloon accident that almost destroyed the town of Tullamore and much more. Visitors can wander through recreated workstations and even try on period costumes. So much to see and do under one roof!



Facilities:

- All weather attraction
- 3 exhibitions in one museum
- Audiovisual – English, French, German
- Guided tours available (pre-booking necessary)
- Self guided tours – English, French, German, Spanish, Polish, Italian,
- Swedish
- Gift shop with specialise merchandise
- Tourist Information Office
- Wheelchair accessible
- 3 fully equipped meeting rooms available
- Cafe/Bar

Getting here:

From Dublin – M6 to the Kilbeggan link road, N52 south to Tullamore.

From Limerick – N7 to Nenagh, N52 North to Tullamore.

Irish Rail – Dublin to Tullamore (approx.45mins)

Open 7 days a week all year around:

May - September Mon-Sat: 9am – 6pm Sun/Bank Hols: 12pm – 5pm

October - April Mon-Sat: 10am – 5pm Sun/Bank Hols: 12pm – 5pm

*Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre closes: New Years Eve, New Years Day,

Good Friday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and St. Stephens Day.

Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre, Bury Quay, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, Ireland

W: www.tullamore-dew.org E: info@tullamore-dew.org

T: +353 (0)57 932 5015 F: +353 (0)57 932 5016



DISCOVER THE CHARM OF KILDARE VILLAGE



Find previous seasons' collections from the world's leading European and international luxury fashion and lifestyle brands, reduced by up to 60%* every day, all year round. Treat yourself to some time well spent. Over 45 boutiques just waiting to be discovered...

THOMAS PINK, L.K. BENNETT, WOLFORD, KAREN MILLEN, BALLY, REISS TSE, VILLEROY & BOCH, SAVOY TAYLORS GUILD and many more.

Facilities

- Free Parking.
- Children's Play Area
- Wheelchair and Buggy Loan
- Tourist Information Centre
- Global Refund/Tax Free Shopping

Getting here

- M7 Motorway to Exit 13 for Kildare town.
- Regular Irish Rail train service to Kildare town station.
- Complimentary shuttle bus service to Village.

Open 7 days per week (closed Christmas Day)

Monday to Wednesday	10am to 6pm	Thursday	10am to 8pm
Friday	10am to 7pm	Saturday	10am to 6pm
Sunday & Bank Holidays 11am to 6pm			

Kildare Village, Nurney Road, Kildare Town, Co Kildare.

T: +353 (0)45 520 501 E: KildareVillage@ValueRetail.com

www.KildareVillage.com

*off RRP

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SLIEVE BLOOM MOUNTAINS

Follow a mountain stream into a deep glen, trek through a lush forest or explore the blanket bog that covers a mountain summit. Anyone who loves the outdoors will enjoy a visit to the Slieve Bloom Mountains, whether on foot, bicycle, horseback or in the comfort of the family car. The mountains offer stunning views of the surrounding countryside. On a clear day, you can see the highest points of each of Ireland's four provinces. The Slieve Blooms are rich in wildlife. More than 65 bird species have been sighted there, and it is not unusual to glimpse fallow deer or wild goats, not to mention foxes, hares and stoats. Much may be visited by car. Three roads cross the mountain top, including the road from Mountrath, Co. Laois to Kinnitty, Co. Offaly; the Glendine Gap, and the "Cut" above Clonaslee. Other drives are signposted.

Did you know, legend has it, that Fionn MacCumhaill and the Fianna of old dwelled in the Slieve Blooms towering over County Laois?

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Picnic areas abound along the way. Particularly recommended are Monicknew, which has a nature trail, and Glenbarrow, source of the River Barrow, which features the Glenbarrow Waterfall. For walkers, the Slieve Bloom Way offers a circular trail through rolling hills and deep valleys (see page 25 & 26 for more details). The annual Walking Festival is popular among local people and visitors alike. The Slieve Bloom Mountains are also the home of storytelling, music, dance and song.

- For more information on the Slieve Bloom Mountains, contact Portlaoise Tourist Office at +353 (0)57 862 1178 or +353 (0)57 866 4132.
- The Slieve Bloom Heritage and Driving Map is available from Portlaoise Tourist Office or on www.slievebloom.ie.
- Guided tours may be arranged through the Slieve Bloom Rural Development Society, Kinnitty, Co. Offaly. T: +353 (0)57 913 7299.
- Cyclists can obtain route suggestions from the numbers above.
- Equestrian trails are serviced by a number of operators, including the Slieve Bloom Equestrian Centre, Borris-in-Ossory. T: +353 (0)505 41298.



GOLF

Golf has been played in Co. Laois since the 1890's and the Seven 18 hole parkland courses will suit all levels of golfers. Offering some of the most competitive green fees in Ireland. Each year the Laois International Golf Challenge takes place in May. This competition played over all 6 courses over 3 days, with the final being played at the Seve Bellesteroes designed Heritage Golf & Spa Resort in Killenard.

For information see www.golfirelandmidlands.ie or contact the Laois Tourism Officer + 353 (0)57 866 4132 or email: info@laoistourism.ie Group Bookings can also be arranged. Golf Packages can be arranged by your accommodation providers or contact the Tourist Office at + 353 (0)57 862 1178.

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OTHER GOLF COURSES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY | Birr Golf Club, Birr, Co. Offaly | Carlow Golf Club, Carlow | Castle Barna Golf Club, Co. Offaly | Esker Hills Golf Club, Tullamore, Co. Offaly | K-Club, Co. Kildare | Mount Juliet Golf Club, Kilkenny | Mount Temple Golf Club, Co. Westmeath | Mount Wolsley Golf Club, Carlow



ABBEYLEIX GOLF CLUB

Abbeyleix, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 873 1450

E: info@abbeyleixgolfclub.ie

www.abbeyleixgolfclub.ie

HEATH GOLF CLUB

The Heath, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 864 6533

E: info@theheathgc.ie

www.theheathgc.ie

THE HERITAGE GOLF & SPA RESORT

Killenard, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 864 5500

E: info@theheritage.com

www.theheritage.com

MOUNTRATH GOLF CLUB

Knockanina, Mountrath, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 873 2558 / 873 2643

E: mountrathgc@eircom.net

www.mountrathgolfclub.ie

PORTARLINGTON GOLF CLUB

Portarlington, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 3115 / 864 2916

E: portarlingtongc@eircom.net

www.portarlingtongolf.com

PORTLAOISE GOLF COURSE

Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 866 1557

E: hilltopport@hotmail.com

RATHDOWNEY GOLF CLUB

T: +353 (0)505 46170 / 46065

E: info@rathdowneygolfclub.com

www.rathdowneygolfclub.com

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THE HERITAGE GOLF & SPA RESORT

Killenard, Co. Laois

- 18 hole Championship Course, co-designed by Seve Ballesteros & Jeff Howes
- Magnificently appointed Clubhouse overlooking the 9th & 18th Greens
- The Seve Ballesteros Natural Golf School
- Resort Spa & Health Club
- Exclusive Housing
- 5 star Hotel & Conference Centre
- Exhibition Centre
- Floodlit walking track
- Commercial/Service Outlets
- A variety of bars and restaurants to choose from

T: +353 (0)57 864 5500 E: info@theheritage.com

www.theheritage.com

THE HEATH GOLF CLUB

Golf has been played on the Heath since the 1890s and the present club dates from 1930. A trophy which has come into the possession of the club was played for in 1891 and bears the inscription 'Queens County Heath Golf Club.' The course is laid out on open heathland, incorporating three natural lakes and was the first Laois Club to extend to 18 holes over thirty years ago. Facilities available include a 10-bay driving range, lake-side putting green and two practice areas as well as a magnificent clubhouse opened 10 years ago. Often described as an 'inland links' the Heath offers a unique challenge to all levels of golfer.

T: +353 (0)57 864 6533

E: info@theheathgc.ie www.theheathgc.ie



Did you know that Laois has some of the most competitive green fees in Ireland?

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PORTARLINGTON GOLF CLUB

Portarlington Golf Club situated on the Laois/Offaly border, on the Portarlington to Mountmellick road, was founded in 1908 as part of the Warburton Demesne. It is a beautiful 18 hole parkland course with some magnificent old trees, woodlands, and is a sanctuary to wildlife such as ducks, deer, and swans. The River Barrow which borders the course provides a very challenging finish and no card is safe until the 16th & 17th holes have been played. Our new clubhouse opened in 2001 has full bar and catering facilities.

T: +353 (0)57 864 2916

E: portarlingtongc@eircom.net

www.portarlingtongolf.com





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EQUESTRIAN & TREKKING

There is no better way to see the Irish countryside and the people, than by touring on horseback. For the experienced rider to the beginner, Laois offers excellent equine facilities. The breathtaking landscape is ideal for horse riding or trekking. The Slieve Bloom Mountains provides the perfect location to take a trail ride. The Slieve Bloom Trail offers 3 and 6 day trails through the Slieve Bloom Mountains in Laois. You can also experience a unique holiday by touring the heart of Ireland in a horse-drawn caravan at Tullibards Stud in Coolrain. Equestrian packages can be arranged with accommodation providers in the area.

Did you know the most famous builder of Irish Railways in the 19th century was Laoisman, James Dargan – father of the Irish railway system?

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KILLEIGH EQUESTRIAN CENTRE

Killeigh, Co. Laois.
T: + 353 (0)57 934 4393

POINT-TO-POINT RACING

Located at Stradbally in the Cosby Estate.

KILVAHAN HORSE DRAWN CARAVANS

Tullibards Stud, Coolrain, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 873 5178
E: kilvahan@eircom.net
www.horsedrawnacaravans.com

HORSE RACING

Available at the following locations all within an hour of Portlaoise:
The Curragh Racecourse, Co. Kildare.
Gowran Park Racecourse, Co. Kilkenny.

Ring the Portlaoise Tourist Office for more details at (057) 862 1178.





WALKING & CYCLING

Walking is truly the best way to fully absorb the beauty of the county. A network of quiet country roads and lanes will take you into the heart of County Laois where you are offered some of Ireland's most beautiful and extraordinary landscapes. Laois is a walker's paradise and boasts a total of approximately 480 kilometres of 'off-road' walking routes, encompassing areas of Slí Dala (Fisherstown area) Cullahill, Stradbally, Durrow, Timahoe, Whitehorse, Grantstown, Clonaslee, Portarlinton, Spink and Slieve Margy (Rossmore – Killeshin). Escape to the Slieve Bloom Mountains, one of most popular attractions for visitors, with the villages of Rosenallis and Clonaslee being the most favoured starting and finishing points. You could also take the Slieve Margy Walking route, which is located in the south eastern corner of the county. Walkers can join at any point and features highlighted are the Gloscha Waterfall, Oisín Park and the Grace Mausoleum in Arles. There are picturesque way marked walks around the renowned Grand

Canal from either the scenic areas of Fisherstown, Vicarstown or the Derries Wood and other beautiful sites such as the Rathadaire Lake, the Vicarstown canals, Courtwood Bridge and the remains of a mudhouse. There are also a number of Slí na Slainte (Healthy Walks) routes. For details on the Laois Walks Festival, guided walks on scenic way-marked routes in Laois day and evening, contact Laois Leader at +353 (0)57 866 1900. A list of guides can be found on page 73.

For maps and grades of difficulty of all walking routes, a Laois Walks Pack is available from Portlaoise Tourist Office at +353 (0)57 862 1178.

For details on Walking in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, the Annual Slieve Blooms Walking Festival or organised guided walking tours, please contact:

SLIEVE BLOOM RURAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY WALKING CLUB
Kinnitty, Birr, Co. Offaly. T: +353 (0)57 913 7299 / 912 4167 E: info@slievebloom.ie
www.slievebloom.ie



LAOIS ANGLING CENTRE

Located at Coolrain, less than 3 miles from the N7, the Laois Angling Centre combines the peace and tranquillity of the Irish country side with exceptional game and coarse fishing. The 4 large spring fed lakes, surrounded by mature woodlands, Clonoghil House and farmlands provide the perfect natural conditions for both the fish and fisherman.

The lakes are stocked regularly with brown and rainbow trout, carp and tench ensuring a varied and interesting experience. The modern facilities include large parking area, wheelchair access, tackle hire and light refreshments with picnic and bar be que areas ideal for family and corporate events.

Whether a beginner or an expert, the Laois Angling Centre provides the complete fishing experience. T: +353 (0)57 873 5091 M: +353 (0)87 996 2864 E: info@laoisanglingcentre.ie www.laoisanglingcentre.ie

Directions: From Roscrea, on N7 to Dublin.

Travel 3 miles from Roscrea. Take second left turn after Racket Hall Hotel and Roscrea Golf Club signed for Laois Angling Centre. The entrance is approximately 3 miles from the N7 on this road.

Directions: From Mountrath, on N7 to Limerick.

Travel 1 mile from Mountrath, take first right turn signed for Coolrain and Camross. Continue straight for 5 miles arriving at a T-junction. Take left and entrance is about 150 metres from junction.

ANGLING

Angling is one of the main attractions for visitors to County Laois as there are so many scenic locations for those who wish to get away from it all. Two of the main rivers in Ireland run through Laois – the Nore and the Barrow (which rises in the Slieve Blooms) among other rivers. Laois is also renowned for the Grand Canal and its many well-stocked lakes.

The game and coarse angler are well catered for in this hidden haven in the heart of Ireland. The river Barrow is well known as a game and coarse angling river for salmon, brown trout, roach, rudd, perch and tench. The river Nore provides excellent fishing and has good pike and salmon stocks. Coarse anglers are spoilt for choice between canals, rivers and a vast number of scenic lakes.

The fully comprehensive Angling Guide to Laois is available from Portlaoise Tourism Office or by phoning +353 (0)57 866 4132

There are over 10 lakes in Laois situated in the most scenic of surroundings – Rathadaire Lake, near Vicarstown, Ballinakill Lakes on the Laois/Kilkenny border and Stradbally Lake to name but a few. Little Bog Lake is situated at The Heath, one of the most historic sites in Ireland. The angler will enjoy excellent fishing at the very picturesque locations at Vicarstown and Fisherstown, situated on the Grand Canal. One can also enjoy some refreshment in the local pubs nearby! Permits can be obtained locally, in shops and pubs or by contacting your accommodation provider. There is an abundance of local or regular visiting fellow devotees to advise on the best places to fish in Laois. The following are some contacts in relation to angling and permits in Laois.

LAOIS LEADER, Portlaoise.

T: +353 (0)57 866 1900

Mr. Tom Treacy, Laois Tourism, The Heath, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 6622

Mr. Jim Crean, Barrowline Cruisers.

T: +353 (0)57 862 5189

A fully comprehensive guide to angling in Laois is available from the Portlaoise Tourist Office on +353 (0)57 862 1178



ACTIVITY & ADVENTURE

Mountains, lakes, woods and the rolling rural landscape provide the natural terrain for an exciting range of activities for adventure seekers. Paintballing in the Stradbally woods, four wheel drive jeeps in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, touring Laois in a horse-drawn caravan or taking a barge on the historic Grand Canal are just a taste of the activities on offer for children and adults alike!

A Laois Activity Brochure is available from Portlaoise Tourist Office or from Laois Tourism on T: +353 (0)57 866 4132 or E: info@laoistourism.ie or www.laoistourism.ie

Other sports which are available in County Laois are tennis, snooker, hill-walking, archery, cricket to name but a few! Contact Portlaoise Tourist Office for more details.

Did you know that the first ever motor car race in Ireland and the U.K.
– The Gordon Bennett Race – ran through County Laois?

STEAM TRAIN

There is a Narrow Gauge Railway in Stradbally where a rare steam train runs every bank holiday weekend.
T: +353 (0)57 862 5154
www.irishsteam.ie

SWIMMING

Ballinakill Open Air Swimming Pool (open summer season only)
T: +353 (0)57 873 3347 / 873 1037
M: +353 (0)87 418 5291

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE JEEPS

Wheelbase Ltd.
Off-Road Driver Training, Monasterevin.
T: +353 (0)45 525 488
M: +353 (0)87 273 5985

GAELIC FOOTBALL & HURLING (IRISH NATIONAL SPORTS)

See the national sports at O'Moore Park, Portlaoise and at regular venues.

HEALTH & LEISURE CLUB/GYM

Portlaoise Leisure Centre, Ridge Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 868 1200

Portarlington Leisure Centre, Link Road, Portarlington, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 864 5800
www.portarlingtonleisurecentre.ie

TOWN PARKS & CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS

Portlaoise: Timahoe Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
Abbeyleix: Heritage House, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois.
Portarlington: Link Road, Portarlington, Co. Laois.
Mountrath: Amenity Park, Mountrath, Co. Laois.

PAINTBALLING

Supershot Paintball Mission
Cork Road, Stradbally, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)86 377 7499
E: info@supershot.ie
www.supershot.ie

BARGE HIRE/BOAT HIRE

Barrowline Cruisers
Vicarstown, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 5189
E: barrowline@eircom.net
www.barrowline.com
Barges on Grand Canal from Vicarstown.

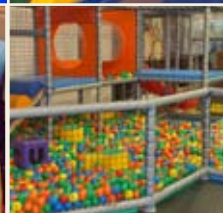
ROLL'N BOWL

Bowling & Children's Adventure Centre
Clonminam Industrial Centre, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 867 0005
E: rollnbowl@eircom.net
www.bowlingireland.com

HORSE-DRAWN CARAVANS

Kilvahan Horse Drawn Caravans
Tullibards Stud, Coolrain, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 873 5178
E: kilvahan@eircom.net
www.horsedrawncaravans.com

See also Golf on pages 19 & 20, Equestrian & Trekking on pages 23 & 24, Walking & Cycling 25 & 26 and Angling on pages 27 & 28.



Roll'n Bowl has activities for all ages:

- Ten Pin Bowling
- Soft Play Centre
- Ice Skating
- Indoor Soccer
- Crazy Golf
- Pottery Painting

Our cosmic glow-in-the-dark bowling features pinball wizard for kids. The Soft Play Centre has three separate areas over four levels catering for toddlers up to 12 years.

New to Roll'n Bowl, is a pottery painting studio. All paints and equipment are provided.

Clonminam Business Park, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 867 0005
www.bowlingireland.com



Other facilities:

- Coffee Shop
- Free Parking
- Wheelchair Accessible

Open 7 days per week
from 11:00am to 10:00pm

Birthday parties and group outings are our speciality.

Tearaways

Ireland's Number One for Indoor Fun

Tearaways is a unique and unforgettable adventure play centre for kids. We're the biggest and the best play centre in the region, and the kids Number One favourite.

With 6,000 square feet of high energy fun, from slides to tunnels, bridges to ball pools, activity towers, cargo nets, cannon shooters and more, your kids will love Tearaways.

Located at Rathdowney Shopping Outlet.

Tearaways Adventure Play Centre, Rathdowney Shopping Outlet, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)505 48711 www.tearaways.ie E: info@tearaways.ie

Other Facilities

- Dedicated, separate toddler area
- Birthday parties
- Free parking

Open:

Mon – Sat
10am to 6pm

Sun & Public Holidays
11am to 6pm



PORTLAOISE PET FARM

A FANTASTIC FUN DAY FOR ALL THE FAMILY

At this beautiful countryside location you will find over 40 different species including chipmunks, tassel-eared squirrels, tamarin monkeys, Indian blue & white peacocks, Richardson ground squirrels, miniature ponies, goats, sheep, ducks, chickens, red deers and their fawns, wallabies, rabbits, ferrets and iguanas. Come meet Jeffery the Parrot, Larry & Lucy the Llamas, Simon the Snake, Dancer the baby deer, Oscar & Stumpy the Emus and much more.

Our facilities include, a beautiful all-weather walkway around the farm, stables, large playground and sand pit, coffee shop, indoor/outdoor picnic area (you can bring your own food), toilets & baby changing and indoor play area. The site is fully wheelchair accessible, including the walkway.

We also take bookings for school tours, birthday parties or any group days out. Special group rates apply.

How to find us?

We are located off the Portlaoise to Mountrath road just after the M7 motorway to Limerick. Look out for the large sign on your left. You can also come off the Portlaoise to Abbeyleix (Cork) road through the village of Raheen.

Opening Times

March, April & May: Open weekends 12.00pm – 6.00pm

June, July & August: Open Tuesday to Sunday 12.00pm – 6.00pm

September & October: Open weekends 12.00pm – 6.00pm (weather permitting)

Visit Santa at Christmas

Look out for special events throughout the year.

Rates

€7.00 per person | Family and group rates also available

For more information

T: +353 (0)86 858 1776 or E: portlaoispetfarm@gmail.com

KILVAHAN ADVENTURE FARM

ENJOY AN OUTING ON A WORKING FARM WITH A BIG PET ZOO,
EXOTIC ANIMALS AND BIRDS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD



We offer pony and horse riding, carriage driving and other sorts of fun activities. We also have a nice playground with picnic and BBQ area and a cafeteria (soft drinks, sweets, tea/coffee). You also can stay over night in one of our horse drawn caravans and enjoy the evening at the campfire. Different packages available with endless possibilities.

Kilvahan Adventure Farm | Tullibards Stud | Coolrain | Co. Laois

T: +353 (0)57 873 5178 / +353 (0)86 275 0260 www.adventure-farm.com

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CRAFTS & SHOPPING

Portlaoise's compact town centre is a shoppers paradise. The town is packed with an eclectic and cosmopolitan mix of interiors shops, gift stores, specialist designer boutiques and much more. These friendly shops ensure the best of attention, making shopping in Portlaoise a pleasant and personal experience. While shopping here, enjoy a break in its many traditional pubs and coffee shops. Portlaoise regularly has craft and food fairs which are very colourful affairs.

In the county, there are other smaller towns with excellent shopping outlets – Mountrath, Mountmellick, Abbeyleix, Portarlinton and Stradbally to name a few. The Rathdowney Discount Designer Outlet is a popular destination for shoppers throughout Ireland and has a children's play area.

Did you know that the Duke of Wellington went to school in Portarlinton and that Churchill spent summer holidays in Emo Court?

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ABBEYLEIX POTTERY

Upr. Main Street, Abbeyleix. T: +353 (0)57 873 0769
E: sueryderfoundation@eircom.net

SMAOINTE

61 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 866 3643
Gifts, crafts and curios

TREASURES

72 Main Street, Portlaoise.
T: +353 (0)57 8621293 Gifts, crafts and curios

EASONS

Coliseum Lane, Portlaoise.
T: +353 (0)57 862 0466 E: laoised@eircom.net
General books, history & children's books and magazines. Coffee shop on the top floor. Specialists in school supplies. Amazing range of arts & crafts
www.eason.ie

OLD MILLRACE GALLERY

Main Street, Stradbally, Portlaoise.
T: +353 (0)57 862 5188
Old Millrace Gallery – a special place to shop for Irish Crafts. An extensive range of arts, crafts & curios. Open May to October 09.30am to 6.30pm Fri, Sat, Sun and Mon.

From pottery, ceramics, traditional and contemporary art to designer woollen hats and wooden carvings, Laois is a mecca for highly skilled craftspeople. Mountmellick's renowned embroidery can be seen at the Mountmellick Museum and symbolises the town's rich Quaker past. Craft Training Workshops available. T: +353 (0)57 862 4525

For the Laois Craft Trail Brochure or other information on crafts in Laois contact Laois Leader on +353 (0)57 866 1900 or Portlaoise Tourist Office at +353 (0)57 862 1178 or view www.laoistourism.ie



Fáilte Ireland

National Tourism Development Authority

Coupling vibrant towns with lush unspoilt landscape, the inland counties of Laois, located in Ireland's Lakelands and Inland Waterways is the perfect place for you to take a break without spending hours in the car. Boasting a packed events calendar, superb accommodation, spa packages, gourmet restaurants and activities ranging from power-boating to bog treks.

COME AND EXPERIENCE A RELAXING BREAK THAT WILL REFRESH YOUR SENSES, REVITALIZE AND INSPIRE YOU.

County Laois shares the Slieve Blooms with its neighbour Offaly and provides a great base to explore the mountains heartbeat. Immerse yourself in the culture and heritage of Abbeyleix and Mountmellick. Explore the waterways of Vicarstown and Fisherstown by Barrowline cruiser or enjoy the many festivals on offer in County Laois. Portlaoise hosts the World Fleadh in August, a must for all music lovers and a comedy extravaganza, Halloween Howls, in October. Explore in company the richness of our trails with the Laois walking festival.

Family Friendly

Family fun is paramount with many hotels featuring specialised activity programmes to keep children of all ages amused. This region is sure to evoke nostalgic feelings of childhood holidays as the unspoilt terrain allows visitors to enjoy simple pleasures such as bike rides, boat trips, angling, walking and hiking. More energetic activities include horse riding, cruising, golf and even parachuting.

Explore your Culture & Heritage

This region is brimming with culture and heritage sites. Explore the well-known sites of Clonmacnoise or the Rock of Dunamase. Enjoy breathtaking views along the Windy Gap. Visit the Great House and gardens of Emo Court and take time explore the Steam Museum in Stradbally. Explore Ireland's unique culture and history, abundant in this often overlooked part of Ireland.

For further information on Ireland's Lakelands and Inland Waterways please visit www.discoverireland.ie/lakelands.



Bramleys is a new smart modern concept store with furniture and accessories...



Rathdowney, Co Laois.
T: +353 (0)505 48900 www.rathdowneyoutlet.ie
Email us for further information info@rathdowneyoutlet.ie
Open 7 days: Monday – Saturday: 10.00am – 6.00pm
Sundays: 11.00am – 6.00pm

Exclusive tabletop linens and centrepieces with a difference that will appeal to the most discerning eye with design, texture and finish that is sure to impress. Glassware with different design and style that is contemporary yet functional and fun. Handmade jewellery by a well known Dutch make-up artist. Boutique with Northern European brands of clothes that offer quality and style at affordable prices. Chew and Chat in The Lunchroom at Bramleys.
Bramleys is the Perfect Gift Store for all occasions.

A Whole Lot More, For Less..

Rathdowney Shopping Outlet has been in existence for over 7 years and going from strength to strength with new retail stores opening on a regular basis. Originally developed as Ireland's only designer outlet, we offer great bargains and genuine "value for money" for brand-conscious buyers every day. Prices are constantly reduced all year round on a range of world famous brands and fashion labels with discounts ranging up to 70% off every day prices. The goods on sale are mainly excess stock and end of season lines from the high street or special buys, and are often sold through stores run by the brands themselves. You will, in fact, find stores and brands here that are not on sale anywhere else in Ireland.

Do All Your Shopping in One Place – With the recent addition of Dunnes Stores to the development, not only can you get great value on fashion, clothing and footwear but 'Always Better Value' on your daily groceries from this purpose built, new format superstore.

Relax & Enjoy Your Visit! But we've got more than just shopping. So that you can relax and enjoy your visit we have BB's Coffee & Muffins, a superb 100-seater all-day restaurant, and free all-day parking.

...and for the Kids Our younger visitors will love our state-of-the-art indoor play centre called Tearaways. One of the largest of its type in the country, Tearaways is Ireland's Number One for Indoor Fun, great for kids parties and special family events. Book on-line at www.tearaways.ie

Rathdowney Shopping Outlet – Now, Even More Choice, For Less!



Helena Malone Goldsmith

Helena Malone is a local award-winning local Goldsmith and Designer. 'My aim is to achieve a reputation for high quality & uniquely designed jewellery that will be treasured forever. Designing and working to commission with clients is my passion. My style is elegant and simple accentuated with high quality diamonds, gemstones and unusual pearls using gold, silver and platinum.'

helena.malone@ireland.com
T: +353 (0)87 698 7988

**Crafts Council of Ireland Trained
& Accredited**





ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment and being entertained, are part of the culture of Ireland. Social life is centred on enjoyment and County Laois is full of lively entertainment for people of all ages. Traditional Irish music sessions, classical music concerts, theatre, poetry readings, storytelling, pantomime and contemporary music are all to be found in the county. There are a number of festivals and events that run throughout the year – see page 52 for more details.

STORM MULTIPLEX CINEMA

Portlaoise, Co. Laois. T: +353 (0)57 866 2626

INTERNET CAFÉ

T: +353 (0)57 866 3355 E: info@dunamaise.ie www.dunamaise.ie

There is an internet café available in the Dunamaise Arts Centre, Church Street Portlaoise.

Did you know that many films were shot in County Laois including 'Into the West' and 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' ?

Did you know that the Book of Leinster was written in Oakvale in Laois?

SKY VENUE

Portlaoise Heritage Hotel
Town Centre, Portlaoise.
T: +353 (0)57 867 1919
E: info@skyvenue.ie
www.skyvenue.ie

One of Ireland's top live music venue Sky Venue has played host to some of the finest live national & international acts. Fun Loving Criminals, BellX1, Paddy Casey, Damien Dempsey, Aslan, Sharon Shannon & Shane McGowan and many more have graced the stage of Sky Venue. Sky Venue can also be booked for private parties.

Please contact us on 057 867 1919 for details or check out our website on www.skyvenue.ie



DUNAMAISE ARTS CENTRE

Church Street, Portlaoise, Co.Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 866 3355 E: info@dunamaise.ie www.dunamaise.ie

The Dunamaise Arts Centre is situated in the centre of Portlaoise in the historic building of the old town gaol. This multi-arts venue, with a visual arts gallery space and a 238 seat theatre, provides a year round programme of both local and touring arts. The centre, which was opened in 1999, is regarded as one of the leading regional arts centres in the country and has received accolades for both its design and management. Situated in the heart of the town it also has a busy coffee shop, which opens daily, and also incorporates an internet café.

MUSIC & DANCE

There are music and dance sessions in numerous pubs throughout Laois – see page 47 for a more detailed list.

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL'S ARTS

The purpose of Laois County Council's Arts Section is to plan a comprehensive arts programme for the people of County Laois. E: artsoff@laoiscoco.ie
T: + 353 (0)57 867 4342/44. www.laois.ie/LeisureandCulture/Arts/

We are happy to give advice on all matters relating to the arts and all areas of the arts including: theatre, music, art, publications, festivals & craftworkers.



LIBRARIES

The Library Service is a vital part of the social structure of the county. It aims to meet the library needs and aspirations of the people of Laois, and to provide information for the community. Libraries provide a wide range of facilities including adult learning, children and young adult sections, reference, foreign language novels, audio books, large print fiction, language learning resources, internet access, photocopying, access to ordnance survey historic maps, printing, music, CDs, DVDs and adult and children magazines.

Find out more information about your local library visit
www.laois.ie/LeisureandCulture/Libraries

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ABBEYLEIX LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 873 0020

Tuesday 10.00am – 7.30pm
 Wednesday 10.00am – 5.00pm
 Thursday 10.00am – 7.30pm
 Friday 10.00am – 5.00pm
 Saturday 10.00am – 4.00pm

BALLYLINAN LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 867 4315

Thursday 3.00pm – 4.00pm
 & 7.00pm – 9.00pm

BORRIS-IN-OSSORY LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 867 4315

Monday 3.00pm – 5.00pm

CLONASLEE LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 864 8437

Tuesday 3.00pm – 5.00pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
 Thursday 3.00pm – 5.00pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
 Saturday 11.00am – 1.00pm

DURROW LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 873 6090

Monday 1.00pm – 4.00pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
 Wednesday 1.00pm – 4.00pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
 Friday 10.30am – 12.30pm
 Saturday 11.00am – 1.00pm

MOUNTMELICK LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 862 4733

Tuesday 3.00pm – 5.30pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
 Wednesday & Friday 3.00pm – 5.30pm
 Thursday 3.00pm – 5.30pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
 Saturday 10.00am – 1.00pm

MOUNTRATH LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 875 6378

Tuesday 10.00am – 7.30pm
 Wednesday & Friday 10.00am – 5.00pm
 Thursday 10.00am – 7.30pm
 Saturday 10.00am – 4.00pm

PORTLAOISE LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 862 2333

Monday & Tuesday 10.00am – 5.00pm
 Wednesday & Thursday 10.00am – 7.30pm
 Friday 10.00am – 5.00pm
 Saturday 10.00am – 4.00pm

PORTARLINGTON LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 864 3751

Tuesday & Thursday 12.00pm – 8.00pm
 Wednesday & Friday 12.00pm – 5.30pm
 Saturday 10.00am – 1.00pm

Closed Saturdays of Bank Holiday Weekends

RATHDOWNEY LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)505 46852

Monday 2.30pm – 5.00pm & 7.00pm – 9.00pm
 Wed 12.30pm – 1.30pm & 2.30pm – 5.30pm
 Thursday 7.00pm – 9.00pm
 Friday 2.30pm – 5.00pm

STRADBALLY LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 862 5005

Tuesday 3.00pm – 5.30pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
 Wednesday & Friday 3.00pm – 5.30pm
 Thursday 3.00pm – 5.30pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
 Saturday 10.00am – 1.00pm

TIMAHOE LIBRARY

T: +353 (0)57 862 7231

Monday 2.30pm – 4.30pm & 5.30pm – 7.30pm
 Thursday 5.30pm – 7.30pm



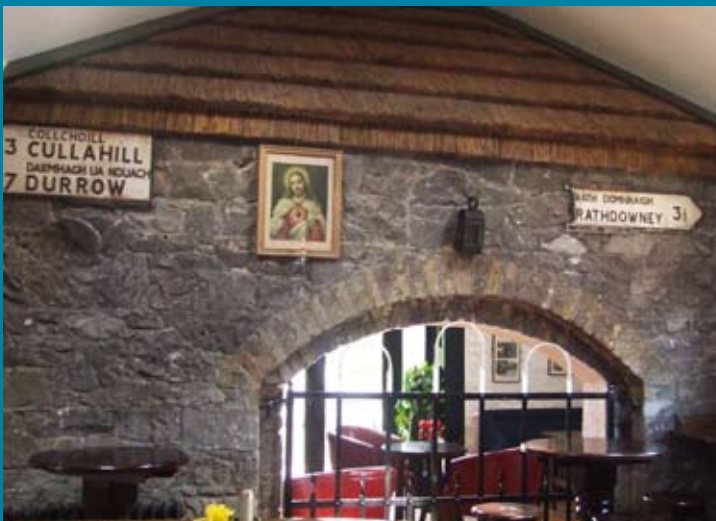
PUBS

Ireland is renowned all over the world for its pubs and for its music and dance. In the towns and villages throughout the county, you will find a variety of pubs from old world style to the trendy bar, which offer a combination of lively entertainment and friendly people. Laois is home to one of the oldest pubs in Ireland – Morrissey's – in the heritage town of Abbeyleix and is a major attraction for locals and visitors alike. Many of these pubs are situated in very scenic settings – by the Grand Canal in Fisherstown or Vicarstown, in the villages of Clonaslee and Rosenallis at the gateway to the Slieve Bloom Mountains and in every picturesque town and village throughout Laois. Many feature storytelling, music and dance sessions, particularly traditional Irish music. Contact Portlaoise Tourist Office at +353 (0)57 862 1178 for more details.

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Did you know that the leader of the miners' revolt at Eureka Stockade in Victoria, Australia was Laoisman Peter Lalor?

Did you know that his equally famous brother, James Fintan Lalor was a noted political writer and agrarian reformer?



PORTLAOISE

Bernie Keegan's Bar & Lounge 16 Lower Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1243
Bergin's Pub 80 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1958
Grellan Delaney's Bar 67 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 2916
Peig's Bar Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1531
Treacy's Pub & Restaurant The Heath, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 864 6539
Molly's Bar The Heritage Hotel, Jessop Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 867 1900

ABBEYLEIX

Morrissey's Pub Main Street, Abbeyleix. T: +353 (0)57 873 1281

CASTLETOWN

Castletown Inn Castletown. T: +353 (0)57 873 2564

DURROW

Bobs Bar Durrow. M: +353 (0)87 616 5484 E: ruthcampion@hotmail.com

KILLENARD

The Thatch Pub Killenard. T: +353(0)57 862 3822 E: info@theheritage.com
 Live music on selected dates.

MOUNTMELICK

The Hollow Bar Mountmellick. T: +353 (0)57 862 4172. Old World licensed premises since 1928.

MOUNTRATH

Ollie Gorman's Main Street, Mountrath. T: +353 (0)57 865 6287 E: olivergorman@eircom.net
Kirwan's Pub Shannon Street, Mountrath. T: +353 (0)57 865 6246 E: bkirwan1999@eircom.net

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Please ensure to contact pub directly as music nights can vary.

– PUBS WITH MUSIC –

PORTLAOISE

Sally Gardens 66 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1658 Music – Thurs & Sun

Egan's Bar 24 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1101

O'Gorman's Pub Kilminchy, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 868 2921

Ramsbottom's Pub 101 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1531 / 862 1015
Music every Thursday night – contact pub.

BALLACOLLA

Foxrock Inn Clough, Ballacolla, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 873 8637
Traditional music available every Tuesday night from April to October.

ERRILL

Dowling's Bar Errill T: +353 (0)505 44183 Olde World Irish Pub – Award winner.

COOLRAIN

The Village Inn Coolrain, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 873 5145 Music at the drop of a hat.
Thursdays - Irish night.

Kavanagh's Pub 'The Wren's Nest'

28 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1744

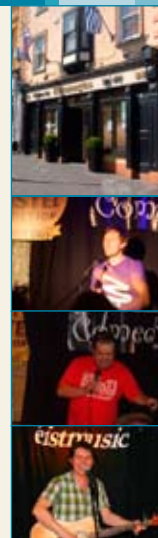
E: pjkavanagh@hotmail.com

Music and Comedy Club available

Kavanaghs Pub has just received another face lift which have elevated this pub to one of the leading live venues in the country. The bar in Kavanaghs is a traditional local bar, which serves tasty food during the day and covers all sporting events. Upstairs in Kavanaghs is the live venue and home of Kavanaghs Comedy Club www.kavanaghscomedyclub.com and [Eistmusic](http://Eistmusic.com) www.myspace.com/eistmusic. The beer garden at the back of the bar caters for all those smokers and the street terrace at the front of the pub caters for all those who like to sit back and watch the town pass them by. Live entertainment takes place every weekend in a purpose built venue.

Kavanaghs Comedy Club is one of the longest running Comedy Clubs in the country and is also the home of The Halloween Howls Comedy Festival which takes place in Portlaoise every October Bank Holiday Weekend.

Eistmusic is a hugely popular music club thats has seen almost all of the top Irish acts perform at this intimate venue. Early booking is advisable for all gigs at Kavanaghs. Contact the pub on 057 862 1744 or email pjkavanaghjnr@gmail.com for further details.



FISHERSTOWN

Fisherman's Inn Fisherstown, Ballybrittas. T: +353 (0)57 862 6488
300 year old thatched pub. Irish nights Thursday & Sunday. Set-dancing Thursday nights.

STRADBALLY

Dunne's Bar & Lounge Court Square, Stradbally.
T: +353 (0)57 862 5114 E: dickdunne@02.ie www.vfii.ie
Old World Bar situated in scenic Stradbally. Live music at weekends.

VICARSTOWN

Vicarstown Inn Vicarstown, Co. Laois. T: +353 (0)57 862 5189
On the banks of the Grand Canal. Music – Saturday nights. www.vicarstowninn.com

Turley's Pub Vicarstown, Co. Laois. T: +353 (0)57 862 5252
Irish Night – Monday.

RATHDOWNEY

Tuohy's Pub Pound Street, Rathdowney. M: +353 (0)87 967 5752
Music sessions and sing songs regularly. Old Style Pub owned by musician.

BALLYLYNAN

Pedigree Corner The Pike, Ballylynan, Co. Laois. T: +353 (0)59 862 5120
Music every Saturday night.



EATING OUT

Relaxing over a well cooked and well presented meal is a very important part of a successful break or holiday. There is a wide range of restaurants in County Laois that will tempt even the most discerning of palates. Laois offers a cosmopolitan outlook offering many award-winning restaurants from Irish to exotic world cuisine. Some of the restaurants offer cookery classes so you learn about the local delicacies. The restaurants below range from casual gourmet to elegant dining. For more details on dining in Laois, please contact the Tourist Office in Portlaoise at +353 (0)57 862 1178.



Did you know the Irishman, Col. James Fitzmaurice, was co-pilot on the first successful east-west transatlantic flight in 1928?

Did you know that Col. James Fitzmaurice, lived in Portlaoise until he was 16 and received all his formal education at the local Christian Brothers' School.

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STEAKHOUSE/GRILL

The Square Meal
13 Market Square, Portlaoise.

T: +353 (0)57 868 1695

E: duggancatering@eircom.net 60 seat restaurant
Open 9am to 5pm Mon – Sun

COFFEE SHOPS/SANDWICH BARS

Caffe Latte
Lyster Square, Portlaoise.
T: +353 (0)57 866 3017

Dunamais Arts Centre,
Church Street, Portlaoise.
T: +353 (0)57 866 3515

Mc Phersons
Unit 11, Lyster Lane, Portlaoise.
T: +353 (0)57 866 2960

RESTAURANT/ARTISAN FOOD SHOP/TEA SHOP

Mountmellick MDA Restaurant
Irishtown, Mountmellick.
T: +353 (0)57 862 4525 / 862 4661

Jim's Country Kitchen

Hynds Square, Portlaoise.

T: +353 (0)57 866 2061

For all your organic needs.

Open to 6pm daily except Sunday.

RESTAURANTS

Abbeyleix Manor Hotel

Abbeyleix, Co. Laois. T: +353 (0)57 873 011
Delicious, freshly cooked food with an
Irish Mediterranean twist the Manor Bar/
Bistro is the place to be. Caters for all tastes.
Stuck in traffic in Abbeyleix? Try our new
gourmet 'food to go' section 'Rocket & Thyme'.

Blooms Restaurant Main Street, Clonslee.

T: +353 (0)57 864 8400

E: bloomsrestaurant@eircom.net
40 seater restaurant.

Egan's Restaurant

26 Main Street, Portlaoise.

T: +353 (0)57 862 1101

www.egansportlaoise.com

Preston House

Abbeyleix, Co. Laois T: +353 (0)57 873 1432

email info@prestonhouse.ie

www.prestonhouse.ie

Fiachri Country House Restaurant & Cookery School

Boulerea, Knock, Co. Tipperary.

T: +353 (0)505 43017

E: fiachrihouse@eircom.net

www.fiachrihouse.com

The Kingfisher Restaurant

Old AIB Bank, Main Street, Portlaoise.

T: +353 (0)57 866 2500 / 866 2899

E: enquiries@kingfisherrestaurant.com

www.kingfisherrestaurant.com

Lemon Tree Restaurant

Main Street, Portlaoise.

T: +353 (0)57 866 2200

E: lemon_tree@eircom.net

Spago Restaurant

Portlaoise Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise.

T: +353 (0)57 867 1927

The Arlington Room

Heritage Golf & Spa Resort, Killenard.

T: +353 (0)57 864 5500

E: info@theheritage.com

The Club House Restaurant

Heritage Golf & Spa Resort, Killenard.

T: +353 (0)57 864 5500

Greens Restaurant

The Heritage Golf & Spa Resort, Killenard.

T: +353 (0)57 864 5500

Sol Oriens Italian Restaurant & Steakhouse

Killenard, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 3822

Treacy's Restaurant (Courtesy bus available)

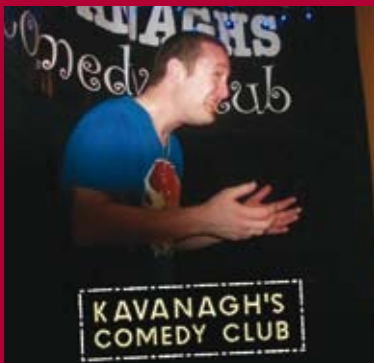
The Heath, Portlaoise.

T: +353 (0)57 864 6539

E: gandoninn@eircom.net



There are numerous other festivals in towns and villages throughout the county including agricultural shows, boat rallies on the Grand Canal, equestrian events etc. For information: www.laoistourism.ie



FESTIVALS & EVENTS

It is the unique mix of festivals and events from storytelling and music to walking and heritage that make Laois a superb venue to visit. There are festivals throughout the year and the following are a taste of festivals that take place annually. For further information on what's going on at other times during the year contact Portlaoise Tourist Office for more details or view our website at www.laoistourism.ie

MARCH

St. Patrick's Day: Celebrate our Patron Saints Day with fun for all the family. Visit the parades in Portlaoise, Portarlinton and Mountmellick.

MAY

International Golf Challenge: The Laois International Golf Challenge takes place each May. It is a 4 day event played over 7 courses. The Challenge is open to all golfers affiliated to a club or with a GUI handicap (or equivalent). The Laois International Golf Challenge attracts golfers and golfing societies from Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, Wales and all over Europe. The Challenge is run on a four ball, betterball basis and guarantees four days of golf with competitions and prizes each day. The best accumulated scores over the first three days are entered into the final at the Seve Ballesteros designed Heritage course at Killenard, County Laois (20 teams). Those who do not make it to the final play a separate competition on the final day. Contact Laois Tourism Officer for further information +353 (0)57 866 4132

MAY/JUNE

Irish Traditional Music & Set Dance Festival: Workshops for all levels. Contact +353 (0)86 344 0388 or +353 (0)86 260 7658

JUNE

Gordon Bennett International Classic Car Rally 'The Race that Saved Motor Sport': The original 1903 motor circuit ran through Laois, Carlow & Kildare. Following the success of the Gordon Bennett Centenary Rally in 2003, an annual rally for classic vehicles takes place in Laois.

Contact +353 (0)57 866 1978 / 862 6622 / 866 4000 for more details.

E: cdlewis@eircom.net www.laoistourism.ie



Rose of Tralee Regional Finals: Each year 6 lucky Irish girls are selected to represent Ireland in the International Rose of Tralee Finals in August. Co. Laois was extremely lucky to play host to the Regional Finals in 2008 and will look forward to welcoming all 32 counties back again in 2009. The new International Centres also send their Roses to be selected. During the 5 day event, there is lots to see and do, with two selection nights, a vintage car parade, entertainment in local venues and chances to meet the Roses around town. This festival takes place in June.

JUNE

Slieve Bloom Walking Festival: Guided Walking Festival in the Slieve Bloom Mountains. Guided walks all year. For information contact Slieve Bloom Rural Development Society at +353 (0)509 37299. www.slievebloom.ie

JULY

Laois Walks Festival: Guided Walks on scenic way-marked routes in Laois, day and evening. For information: contact Laois Leader at +353 (0)57 866 1900.

Erkina Festival, Rathdowney: Pageants and heritage festival. For further information contact T: +353 (0)57 866 0977 M: +353 (0)86 838 9590 / +353 (0)87 125 1669 / +353 (0)86 815 6944 www.erkinafestival.com

AUGUST

Stradbally Steam Rally: Running for forty years, takes place every August Bank Holiday weekend. The location is the scenic Stradbally Hall Estate and the famous narrow-gauge railway is in operation every bank holiday weekend throughout the year. Contact +353 (0)57 862 5444 / 862 5154 www.irishsteam.ie

Electric Picnic Event – 3 days: Venue: Stradbally Hall Estate, Co. Laois. Boutique Music Festival including International Comedy Club Stage. www.laoistourism.ie www.electricpicnic.ie

The World Fleadh: The World Fleadh is a celebration of Irish and Celtic Music and takes place over the August Bank Holiday. Musical highlights of the 2008 programme included Sharon Shannon, Mundy, Damien Dempsey, Jack L, Shane McGowan, Tommy Fleming, The Hothouse Flowers, The Wolfe Tones, Frankie Gavin, Dessie O'Halloran, Lúnasa, Seamus Begley & Jim Murray, Gráda, Máirtín O Connor, Seán Keane and the Kilfenora Céili Band.

The World Fleadh is also a family event with and street entertainment for families a priority, this year's event saw a French Market, a kids activity area with bouncy castles and street performers and a charity pig race.

OCTOBER

Storytelling Festival: The Slieve Blooms, a landscape of mountains, valleys, glens, waterfalls, ancient raths and medieval castles, in the heart of Ireland, rich in music and folklore, is an ideal setting for a new festival of oral storytelling, music, dance and song.

The stories that have been told for generations by the people who live on and around these mountains are bound up with the landscape, place names and the history of the area which stretches back to before the time of the druids. There are stories of invasions, plantations and rebellions, fairy lore and ghost stories, as well as the necessary yarns and tall tales which Irish people love.



Halloween Howls Comedy Festival: The Halloween Howls Comedy Festival is an annual 4-day comedy festival over the October Bank Holiday Weekend of each year. A whole host of entertainment will be provided including live comedy, music, television production, festival club and street entertainment, it will be held at 8-9 venues in the Portlaoise town centre. Please see www.halloweenhowls.ie for more information.

CO. LAOIS AND WILLIAMSON COUNTY TWINNING

In 2007, Laois County Council and the County Commissioners of Williamson County, Tennessee, both agreed to explore the possibilities of a twinning arrangement between the two counties.

Exploratory visits were arranged and in March 2007, a delegation from Laois visited the city of Franklin, Williamson County and representatives from Franklin visited Laois in July.

Both Laois County Council and Williamson County Commissioners formally agreed to the twinning process late in 2007 and March 7th 2008 saw the historic signing of the agreement between County Laois and Franklin, Williamson County in O'More College, Franklin, Tennessee.



The twinning programme is committed to establishing and building on links for tourism, heritage, culture, education, businesses and trade.

For information on Franklin, Williamson County, Tennessee, visit www.visitwilliamson.com

For more information on the Co. Laois & Williamson County twinning, contact the Tourism Officer, Laois County Council, Telephone: + 353 (0)57 866 4132 or Email: info@laoistourism.ie



HEALTH & BEAUTY

Laois is the ideal place to relax and take time out – so treat yourself to one of the many soothing and revitalising relaxation techniques on offer. Pamper yourself with a visit to one of the following Beauty & Spas available. Therapies include reflexology, aromatherapy, body massages and all can be enjoyed in a tranquil setting.

Did you know the founder of the first lying-in maternity hospital in Europe (1745) Rotunda Hospital, Dublin was Bartholomew Mosse from Portlaoise?



EALU SPA THERAPY

The Heritage Hotel, Jessop Street, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 867 8848 E: ealu@iolfree.ie www.ealu.ie

This day spa treatment centre provides a full range of treatment packages for both men and women, also includes holistic treatments such as reflexology, Indian massage and hot stone massage. Product range – Dermalogica Skin Care. Open to residents and general public.



COOLANOWLE COUNTRY HOUSE & HEALTH SPA BREAKS & SELF-CATERING COTTAGES

Coolanowle, Ballickmoyler, Carlow, Co. Laois
 T: +353 (0)59 862 5176 F: +353 (0)59 862 5176
 E: info@coolanowle.com www.coolanowle.com
 Contact: Bernadine Mulhall

A tranquil rural retreat on a working organic farm. A warm welcome awaits you at Coolanowle Country House and Self-catering Cottages. A range of health and beauty treatments available by request. Spacious individually styled bedrooms with antique furnishings. Organic and local foods are served in the house. Coolanowle House can accommodate up to 30 guests. Ideal for family function, small private wedding, anniversary or birthday party. Self-catering cottages adjacent to the house. Bord Failte approved 4 star cottages have everything you need to fully enjoy getting away from it all.

Awards: Bridgestone Best in Ireland 2007, 2008 Member of Good Food, Ireland Member of Slow Food Movement Tourism award winner.



THE SPA AT THE HERITAGE GOLF & SPA RESORT

Killenard, Co. Laois
 T: +353 (0)57 864 5500
 E: info@theheritage.com
www.theheritage.com



The Spa at The Heritage Golf & Spa resort offers a touch of tranquillity in a contemporary and luxurious setting. With 20 treatment rooms set in an oasis of calm, a selection of over 70 treatments and packages will allow you to indulge in a truly world class spa experience.

We believe in results. Through the use of leading Pevonia Botanica products range, we are able to deliver the highest quality professional treatments tailored to your individual needs.

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ACCOMMODATION

County Laois has a wide variety of accommodation choices from international standard hotels to privately owned historic houses, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts, country houses and a farm hostel. An excellent range of self-catering houses and cottages are available which range from the quaint thatched cottage to the more modern self-catering house. All accommodation listed here is Fáilte Ireland approved and priced very competitively. With its strategic central location and its diverse range of good value accommodation, Laois can offer packages and choices to suit all circumstances and requirements. With its close proximity to the capital but in the rural heartland of Ireland, Laois is the ideal base for the visitor.

For accommodation bookings and special offers view
www.laoistourism.ie

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CONFERENCING IN LAOIS

As a business person, you know the value of time. Laois, only an hour from Dublin, is located at the heart of an excellent national road and rail network ensuring easy access for you and your delegates to our wealth of conferencing facilities.

Here in Laois we are keenly aware of the commercial benefits of our central location. Because of this, we are rapidly becoming known as the conference centre of Ireland. As well as offering convenient access, Laois has a variety of state-of-the-art conference facilities. These venues are supported by a wide range of quality leisure activities offering championship golf, theatre, luxurious spa treatments, fine dining and a lively nightlife allowing for the extended stays and the perfect opportunity to network with business colleagues, entertain prospective clients or simply treat yourself.

Serviced by Irish Rail with direct daily schedules from Dublin, Cork and Limerick to Portlaoise, take the stress out of travelling to your conference.

For more information please contact anyone of our consultants listed on the coming pages or the Laois Tourism Officer, + 353 (0)57 866 4132.



THE HERITAGE GOLF & SPA RESORT

Killenard, Co. Laois.

The luxurious 5 star Heritage Golf & Spa Resort is nestled in the quaint village of Killenard in the heart of Ireland. It is a dream that has been realised in truly remarkable detail. This unique resort comprises of a luxury 5 star hotel, conference and exhibition centre, the Seve Ballesteros & Jeff Howes co-designed 18 hole championship golf course combined with the Seve Ballesteros 'Natural' golf school, a luxury spa featuring Pevonia Botanica products, floodlit walking track, health club, tennis court, and a variety of bars and restaurants to choose from.

T: + 353 (0)57 864 5500 E: info@theheritage.com www.theheritage.com



ABBEYLEIX MANOR HOTEL

Cork Road, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois.

Having completed a major extension and refurbishment in June 2007, the privately owned Abbeyleix Manor Hotel is well worth a visit. We have 46 beautifully appointed ensuite bedrooms, delightful bar and restaurant and a magnificent ballroom. The new Conference Centre offers state-of-the-art technology with meeting rooms which are fully air conditioned, have natural light and not to mention free car-parking too.

Discover the warmth of our hospitality, taste the difference in our cuisine and enjoy the craic in our bar with live music every Saturday night. For delicious, freshly cooked food with an Irish Mediterranean twist the Manor Bar/Bistro is the place to be. Caters for all tastes. Stuck in traffic in Abbeyleix? Try our new gourmet 'food to go' section 'Rocket & Thyme'.

T: +353 (0)57 873 0111 E: info@abbeyleixmanorhotel.com
www.abbeyleixmanorhotel.com



THE GANDON INN

Emo, Co. Laois.

The Gandon Inn, is a ten bedroom family-run inn. This prestigious premises dates back to 1750. Whether you are looking for a short break, business conference, party or a wedding, The Gandon Inn will look after your needs in a friendly and hospitable manner.

Food served all day.

T: +353 (0)57 862 6622
E: gandoninn@eircom.net
info@gandoninn.ie
www.gandoninn.com

TREACY'S RESTAURANT

The Heath, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

This family-run thatched roof premises is renowned for its quality of service and excellent value. Whether its a creamy pint of Guinness in the old style bar or a hearty meal in the restaurant you are after, Treacy's will not disappoint.

T: +353 (0)57 864 6539
E: treacysbar@eircom.net
www.gandoninn.com



THE PORTLAOISE HERITAGE HOTEL

Town Centre, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

Designed to reflect style, planned with meticulous care to deliver service excellence, the 4 star Portlaoise Heritage Hotel has earned itself the reputation of being the most sought after hotel in Ireland. Nestled in the heart of Portlaoise town, this sophisticated urban setting is perfect for business or pleasure. From the moment you arrive, its striking entrance creates an impressive sense of space and classic modern elegance. Featuring 110 bedrooms, a choice of unique dining experiences, 3 bars, a White Flag 5 star Health & Leisure Club, with Ealu Spa Therapy, we know you will appreciate being somewhere special.

Awarded the Excellence Through People Award for 2006, short listed for the HSMIA Best Customer Retention Strategy 2006, The Portlaoise Heritage Hotel is truly designed for Meeting Excellence. Excellence through People Awards 2006 & 2008. Music in Molly's Bar every Friday & Saturday night. Kelly's Foundry - +353 (0)57 867 8588

T: +353 (0)57 867 8588 E: info@theheritagehotel.com www.theheritagehotel.com





CASTLE DURROW COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL

Durrow, Co. Laois.

Shelley and Peter have filled this stunning house with so much informal warmth that it feels more family home than hotel. This lovingly restored 300 year old mansion overlooks its beautiful terraced gardens to the south and the River Erkina to the north.

This contemporary Country House Hotel welcomes you from the minute you arrive and engulfs you with its eclectic mix of furniture and style. Shelly and Peter have brought their many years restaurants experience to the Castle. Lots of ingredients for the fabulous food are supplied by the Castle's own organic kitchen garden along with locally sourced produce. Set in the middle of Ireland, a short distance from busy, cultural Kilkenny, most of Ireland is within easy reach.

T: +353 (0)57 873 6555 E: info@castledurrow.com
www.castledurrow.com



maldron
HOTEL
PORTLAOISE



THE MALDRON HOTEL PORTLAOISE - (formerly Comfort Inn Portlaoise)

Value is what business & leisure travellers' alike look for and value is what the Maldron Hotel Portlaoise delivers. Comfortable bedrooms, efficient and friendly service along with a product that is value for money. Maldron Hotel Portlaoise offers all of this and a little bit more – a unique place where common sense prevails. For the Leisure guest this central location is ideal for exploring the beautiful sights & surrounds of the midlands of Ireland from the picturesque Slieve Bloom Mountains to monastic round tower at Timahoe there is something for both young and old alike. Facilities at a glance:

- Superior 3 star property, 2km from Portlaoise on N7 & N8.
- 90 well appointed guestrooms including crisp white Duvet, broadband, power shower.
- Stir Bar and Restaurant
- 8 state-of-the-art Meeting Suites. All meeting rooms are inclusive of complimentary broadband
- Club Vitae Health and Fitness Club
- Body & Soul Beauty Treatment Rooms
- Complimentary car parking

T: +353 (0)57 869 5900 E: info.portlaoise@maldronhotels.com
www.maldronhotels.com



THE KILLESHIN HOTEL

Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

Sink into the comfort of crisp white linen, and relax in the soothing colour tones of your room. Each one of our 87 bedrooms has dedicated work space, complimentary broadband and generous in room facilities.

Cedarooms, our fashionable bar and restaurant, features two open floors of bars with a neighbourhood atmosphere whilst our restaurant, with its open kitchen feature, offers contemporary Irish cuisine.

Zest, our healthclub, offers extensive facilities including 18 metre swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna and steam room. For the energetic we offer fully equipped cybex gymnasium.

Forum, our dedicated meeting and events area, boasts six dedicated boardrooms and five multi dimensional rooms. The Walnut Room caters for the larger conference or workshop.

T: +353 (0)57 863 1200 E: info@thekilleshin.com www.thekilleshin.com



O'LOUGHLINS HOTEL

O'Loughlins is a family run hotel in the centre of Portlaoise. Home cooked locally sourced food is available from 7.30am to 8.00pm by our head chef Paul Conroy. Relax and enjoy a pint in one of our cosy bars. Each of our 24 en-suite bedrooms are unique and have recently been fully refurbished. There is monitored parking at the rear of the hotel. We have a Wi-Fi system in operation throughout the hotel for all your wireless internet needs. Also the exclusive Club 23 night club is the happening club in town and no visit to Portlaoise is complete without experiencing the atmosphere in the newly themed late night venue! Whether for business or pleasure, let us make your stay in Portlaoise an enjoyable one!

Main Street, Portlaoise, Co. Laois, Ireland. T: +353 (0)57 86 21305

www.oloughlinshotel.ie



CASTLE ARMS HOTEL

Durrow, Co. Laois.

The Castle Arms Hotel is located in the beautiful Georgian village of Durrow. Owned and managed by the Murphy family it is a haven for the discerning guest who will appreciate its relaxed friendly atmosphere. Comfortable bedrooms, including family rooms and excellent food, combine to make your stay a pleasant and memorable one. Traditional music is a regular feature of the hotel at weekends and is as popular with the locals as with the guests.

T: +353 (0)57 873 6117

E: castlearmshotel@hotmail.com www.castlearmshotel.ie

BALLAGHMORE COUNTRY HOUSE

Ballaghmore,
Borris-in-Ossory, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 1366
E: ballaghmorehse@eircom.net
www.ballaghmorecountryhse.com

Relax and unwind at Ballaghmore Country House and Spa. Set on an organic farm just 1.5hrs from Dublin at the foothills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. We can offer you time out to relax and enjoy your stay which can include spa treatments or use of the thermal suite. Golf, fishing, walking and candle light supper... the perfect getaway.

**BIANCONI RED LION**

Sean & Rosezita Murphy
The Square, Durrrow, Laois

T: +353 (0)57 874 0989
E: info@bianconi-redlion.com
www.bianconi-redlion.com

A warm welcome awaits you at this beautifully restored Georgian House, 8 rooms ensuite, located across the road from Castle Durrrow. Restaurant opening December '08.

**COOLANOWLE HOUSE**

Ballickmoyler,
Carlow, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)59 862 5176
E: coolanowle@eircom.net
www.coolanowle.com

Tranquil rural retreat on a working organic farm. A warm welcome awaits you at Coolanowle Country House and self catering cottages. Health and beauty treatments available. See page 57 for details. **Awards:** Bridgestone Best in Ireland 2007, 2008 Member of Good Food. Ireland Member of Slow food Movement Tourism award winner. Bord Fáilte approved 4 star cottages have everything you need to fully enjoy getting away from it all.

**FOXROCK INN**

Clough, Ballacolla,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 873 8637
E: marian@foxrockinn.com
E: sean@foxrockinn.com
www.foxrockinn.com

**LAOIS COUNTY LODGE**

Dublin Road,
Portlaoise,
Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 0472
E: colodge@hotmail.com

Award winning B&B. Elegant modern house. Ample car parking, located on Dublin road. Convenient to town centre, hospital and all amenities. Regular bus service from Dublin airport to our door.

**OAKVILLE**

Mountrath Road,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 866 1970
E: oakvillebandb@eircom.net

Maurice & Mary Murphy invite you to enjoy a relaxed stay in our home. We are conveniently located close to hotels, pubs, restaurants, shops, theatre and cinemas. Private car parking. Ideal touring base.

**TALL TREES**

Cork Road,
Stradbally, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 5412
E: epcn@02.ie

Contact: Kathleen Condon
Family-run home, quiet surroundings. Private parking. On Euro Route N80, to Midlands & West and an hour from Dublin. Tea/coffee on arrival. Ideal location for golf (seven courses to choose from). Coarse & fresh water fishing a twenty minute drive.

**ROSDENE B&B**

Limerick Road,
Portlaoise,
Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 2345
E: rosdenebb@eircom.net

**O'SULLIVAN'S B&B**

8 Kellyville Park,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 2774

Charming old house opposite the County Hall car park, 50 metres from Tourist Office in Portlaoise town centre. Private car park. Close proximity to bus stop (80 metres). All rooms en-suite.

**TULLAMONY HOUSE**

Tullamoy, Stradbally,
Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)59 862 7111
E: tullamoy@indigo.ie

Contact: Caroline Farrell

Tullamoy is a beautiful and historical stone built house set in peaceful surroundings. We are located just off N80, 5km from Stradbally. Close to historical sites, forest and country walks. Golf courses, fishing and several race courses are within a reasonable distance. Babysitting and off-road car parking available. Stables available on request for horses or dogs.

**THE COURT**

Main Street, Stradbally, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 5519 E: jfmc@iol.ie

DERAFINA HOUSE

Castlefleming, Errill,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois

Beautiful 18th century 4 star Georgian House. Spectacular walks and scenery. Situated in the middle of our farm, and has been described by some visitors as "Heaven". Come and experience for yourself.

T: +353 (0)505 44145 M: +353 (0)85 129 6676
E: shirleypstanley@hotmail.com
www.derafinahouse.com

**- HISTORIC HOUSES****IVYLEIGH HOUSE**

Bank Place,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 2081
E: info@ivyleigh.com
www.ivyleigh.com

Luxurious listed Georgian accommodation, excellent service and award winning breakfast, two minutes walk from town centre, antique furnishings, log fires and home baking, superior rooms with individual themes and private parking. Recommended by Frommer's, Karen Brown, Fodders, Georgina Campbell's Guide, Bridgestone's 100 Best Places to Stay in Ireland.

**ROUNDWOOD HOUSE**

Mountrath, Co. Laois.

Contact:
Frank & Rosemarie Kennan
T: +353 (0)57 873 2120
E: roundwood@eircom.net
www.roundwoodhouse.com

A country house hotel in a delightful location at the foot of the Slieve Bloom mountains. The house and outbuildings are almost 300 years old and have immense charm and character. Guests come to relax, explore many local sites and for genuine Irish hospitality in a homely atmosphere.



ABBNEYVIEW THATCHED COTTAGE

Jamestown, Ballybrittas,
Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)86 821 9430

E: abbneyviewcottage@barrowvale.com
www.barrowvale.com/abbneyview

Abbneyview is said to be Ireland's oldest thatched cottage, and has recently been renovated to the highest standard. Facilities include broadband internet access, satellite TV, DVD & video players. 3 bedrooms (1 Double /1 Twin /1 Single bedroom). Landscaped garden with patio and raised flowerbeds. Bed linen & towels supplied.

**ACORN LODGE**

Dereen, Durrrow,
Co. Laois.

Contact: Margaret Kells
T: +353 (0)57 873 6262

E: acornlodgedereen@eircom.net
www.acornlodge-ireland.com

4 star luxury self-catering accommodation and gardens. Close to several 18 hole golf courses. Wonderful fishing in nearby rivers and lakes. Surrounded by fabulous way-marked walks taking in hills, forests, rivers and lakes. Bed linen and towels provided.

**APPLE COTTAGE**

Emo, Co. Laois

Contact: Olive Donohoe
T: +353 (0)57 862 4143
E: revol@elive.net

A recently restored 3 bedroom Victorian cottage in a lovely rural setting next to Emo Court. Fully equipped kitchen & utility room. Open fires, cable TV and DVD. Large garden. Parking available. Ideally situated for exploring the surrounding countryside. Within 10km of 3 excellent golf courses. There is plenty of opportunity for walks in nearby Emo Park (5min) and Slieve Bloom (25min).

**ARAS ORAIN**

Shracullen, Clonaslee,
Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)86 862 4230

M: 087 293 2732 E: sclry@eircom.net

**BRIELLE HOUSE**

Irishtown, Mountmellick,
Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 864 4329

E: briellehouse@eircom.net



Spacious 2 bedroom bungalow. 5min walk from town centre. 10min drive to Heritage Golf & Spa Resort at Killenard. Hill walking, fishing, forests, pet farm, museum and gardens, all closeby. Ideal touring base. Athlone & Kilkenny a 45min drive. Only 1 hour to Dublin. Family-friendly premises.

COOLANOWLE HOUSE

Ballicmoyler,
Carlow, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)59 862 5176

E: coolanowle@eircom.net
www.coolanowle.com



Tranquil rural retreat on a working organic farm. A warm welcome awaits you at Coolanowle Country House and self catering cottages. Health and beauty treatments available. See page 57 for more details.

CLODIADH HOUSE

Clonaslee, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 864 8047

M: +353 (0)87 290 1471

E: marwou@eircom.net



An old stone cottage extended & renovated to the highest standards. Situated at the foothills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. 3 bedrooms with accommodation for 6-8 people. Proprietors: Mary Woulfe & Tony Dunne.

HILLSIDE COTTAGE

Killeshin, Co. Laois. T: +353 (0)86 375 1120
E: info@hillsidecottage.or
www.hillsidecottage.org

FITZPATRICK'S COTTAGE

Ballacolla, Co. Laois

T: +353 (0)57 8738985

M: +353 (0)86 814 0221

E: brennanscottages@yahoo.com



Charming thatched cottage. Well located for day trips to Dublin, Waterford & Limerick. Has been lovingly renovated into a cosy retreat. 2 bathrooms, timber ceilings & a woodburning stove. 23 miles from Kilkenny Castle. 40 miles from the Rock of Cashel, both world heritage sites.

GEOGHAN'S COTTAGE

Coolbally, Clough
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 873 8985

E: brennanscottages@yahoo.com

Contact: Margaret & Pat Brennan



Beautifully restored stone cottage in a rural setting. Centrally located, minutes from N7 and N8. Ideal for touring. Featuring 4 poster bed. Local Attractions include Slieve Bloom Mountains, Dunmore Wood, Lakes, stately homes and gardens nearby. Pub ¼ mile.

HILLVIEW FARM

Coolbanagher, Emo,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 864 6530

E: hillview22@hotmail.com

www.hillviewselfcatering.com



'The Stables' beautiful stone building (sleeps 2+4) converted to cosy 4 star accommodation. 3km from N7, Dublin side of Portlaoise. Also 3 star 18th century refurbished cottage (sleeps 7). Warm welcome assured, village closeby.

FARREN HOUSE HOSTEL

Ballacolla, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 873 4032

E: info@farmhostel.com

www.farmhostel.com

**ROUNDWOOD HOUSE**

Mountrath, Co. Laois.

Frank & Rosemarie Kennan

T: +353 (0)57 873 2120

E: roundwood@eircom.net

www.roundwoodhouse.com



3 self-catering cottages on the grounds of charming 18th century Roundwood House. The original stone buildings have been restored & furnished to a high standard. The 2-bedroom Coach House is very spacious & sleeps up to 7. The Forge, a split level apartment, sleeps 2. The cottage, set in an isolated woodland, also sleeps 2.

THE SPIRES

Stradbally, Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 862 5833

E: kevin@thespires.com

www.thespires.com



Situated on a private cul-de-sac 0.7 miles from the picturesque village of Stradbally. Ideally located for golfing, fishing, boating, hill walking and touring the midlands. Irish Tourist Board rated four star catering country house. Only 30min drive from the medieval city of Kilkenny and 1 hour from Dublin.

OLD RECTORY COACHHOUSES

Coolbanagher, Emo,
Co. Laois.

T: +353 (0)57 864 6538

E: info@oldrectoryemo.com

www.oldrectoryemo.com



Stay somewhere different in the spacious self-catering Coach-houses or Dawson House, situated around the courtyard of 'The Old Rectory' - located on the outskirts of picturesque Emo village. An ideal place to stay for touring, golfing, walking, fishing or just relaxing in 'the walled-in garden'. Sleeps 4-6. Prices €350 - €600 per week. Mid-week bookings available.

COACH HIRE

The following contacts for private coach hire are very useful whether you need to hire a minibus or have a larger group.

Horan's Coaches

Irishtown, Mountmellick, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 4124

Air-conditioned coaches.
Mini-buses from 12 seaters available.

Slieve Bloom Coach Tours Ltd.

Forest View, Killeen,
Mountmellick, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 4416 / 862 4820
E: info@slievebloomcoaches.ie
www.slievebloomcoaches.ie

Air-conditioned coaches with microphones,
T.V. video, DVD and toilet facilities.

Martleys Coaches Portlaoise

Kilminchy, Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 0888
E: mmartleytransport@eircom.net

TAXIS

The following are useful contact numbers
for taxis in the county.

Portlaoise Taxi Service Co-Op

Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 2417

Pat Byrnes

29 Beechfield, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 866 7777
M: +353 (0)87 285 7264

GUIDES**Maurice Murphy**

Oakville, Mountrath Road,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 866 1970
E: oakvillebandb@eircom.net
Specialist in history.

Margaret Mullins

Brittas, Clonaslee, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 866 4149
M: +353 (0)87 238 6946

Specialise: Tour Guide for County Laois
and Slieve Bloom Mountains.

Laois Tourism Adviser for East Coast
and Midlands Regional Tourism Authority.

Mick Dowling

Bus and Boat Tours
T: +353 (0)87 410 6493

Leader of walks in Slieve Bloom Mountains
Guide – Specialist in geology, folklore and
history of Slieve Blooms area.

BUS & RAIL SERVICES TO & FROM DUBLIN

For more information on bus and rail services
see page 6.

