

# Loughnaneane Park Roscommon

## Primary Schools Education Pack



Comhshool, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
Environment, Heritage and Local Government

County Roscommon  
Heritage Forum



Fóram Oidhreacht  
Chontae Ros Comáin

An Action of the County Roscommon Heritage Plan 2004-2008

# Chapter 1

## Flora and Fauna

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## Introduction



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This 'Loughnaneane Park, Primary Schools Education Pack' has been prepared to fulfil Action 1.3.2 of County Roscommon Heritage Plan 2004-2008 *'Identify Opportunities for Improving Heritage Awareness in the Education System'*.

This pack aims to promote Loughnaneane Park as an education resource site, to be used by primary schools in the county for field studies relating to natural, built & cultural heritage.

Loughnaneane Park is a free amenity provided by Roscommon County Council, available to all. When your school has reason to visit Roscommon town, whether for swimming, sports or any other reason, why not take an hour to explore the park and enjoy what it has to offer?

- Parkland
- Trees
- Pond, ducks and associated wildlife
- Roscommon Castle
- Playground



## How to use this Education Pack

This pack is divided into three chapters.

**Chapter One - Flora & Fauna**

**Chapter Two - Roscommon Castle - Junior Level**

**Chapter Three - Roscommon Castle - Senior Level**

Each chapter contains:

1. Teacher support sheets [code colour = red]
2. Information sheets [code colour = blue]
3. Activity sheets [code colour = green]
4. Evaluation forms [code colour = black]

**1. Teacher Support pages** are designed to assist teachers in organising their classes for visits to the park and include:

- The intended **Aims and Objectives** of the chapter.
- An outline of some **preparatory work** that can be done with students before they visit the park.

**2. Information Sheets** provide the basic information that students will need to complete the activity sheets and are include identification charts or keys. These sheets are also useful for teachers in assisting their students to participate in the activities outlined in the pack. These have been designed to:

- (a) Suit the ability level of primary school students and are
- (b) Compatible with the SESE curriculum for primary schools.

### **3. Activity Sheets:**

The Activity Sheets relate to the information sheets listed above as well as utilising the information boards in the park itself.

### **4. Evaluation:**

An optional evaluation sheet for both teachers and their pupils has been included. The evaluation sheet was designed so as to encourage feed back that can then be used to make any necessary improvements to the pack.

## Preparing for your visit to the Park

### Using the Park as an Educational Resource:

A small amount of preparatory work in the classroom will help to ensure that students will be safe and gain optimum value from their visit to the park such as:

**Safety First:** The park is a relatively safe area for use by school groups but as with any school outing, students need to be made aware of safety precautions in advance of their visit to Loughnaneane park. Care should be taken when carrying out the activities outlined in this pack, particularly in relation to the following:

School and Youth Groups - each member of the group should be suitably dressed for the outdoors and teachers/supervisors should ensure that the groups stay together and under their instruction.

Decked areas: take care on decked areas as they may become slippery in damp conditions.

Turlough: The turlough can be hazardous due to the higher water levels that can prevail during the wetter months of the year, and thus should only be explored at a distance from the adjacent viewing area, at that time.

**Caring for the park:** Students could be assisted to:

1. Discuss issues relating to how they can help to care for the animals and plants in the park during their visit and
2. Draw up their own code of behaviour for their visit to the park based on the "Leave no Trace" guidelines such as:
  - ✓ Leave living things in their habitat
  - ✓ Treat the plants, animals and the facilities of the park with respect
  - ✓ Do not litter

**Map work:** Students could develop their map reading skills by using the information provided in the pack to;

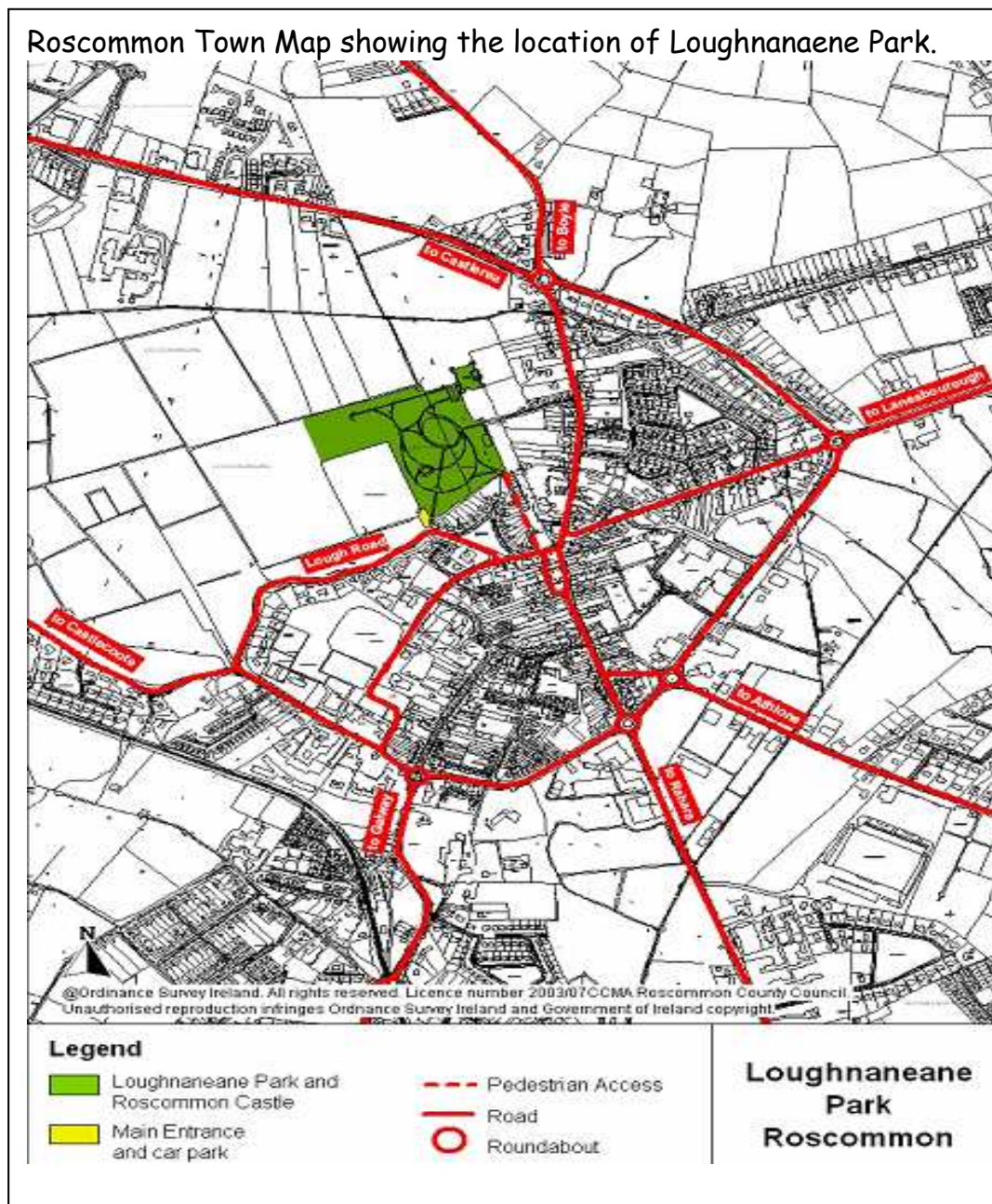
1. Locate where Loughnaneane Park is situated in Roscommon town and
2. Examine the Park Map to identify the relative locations of each of the features / facilities within the park. (Students could be issued with some copies of the park map with or without the surrounding labels that they could use during their visit).
3. Use colouring pencils to colour code the different areas of the park such as the paths, turlough, Wildflower meadow, grassland areas, castle, etc.

**Identification of Plants and Animals Living in the Park and Different Parts of the Castle:** The Information Sheets, Identification Charts and Keys in this pack could be used to help students to gain some basic knowledge about what they may see in the Park in advance of their visit.

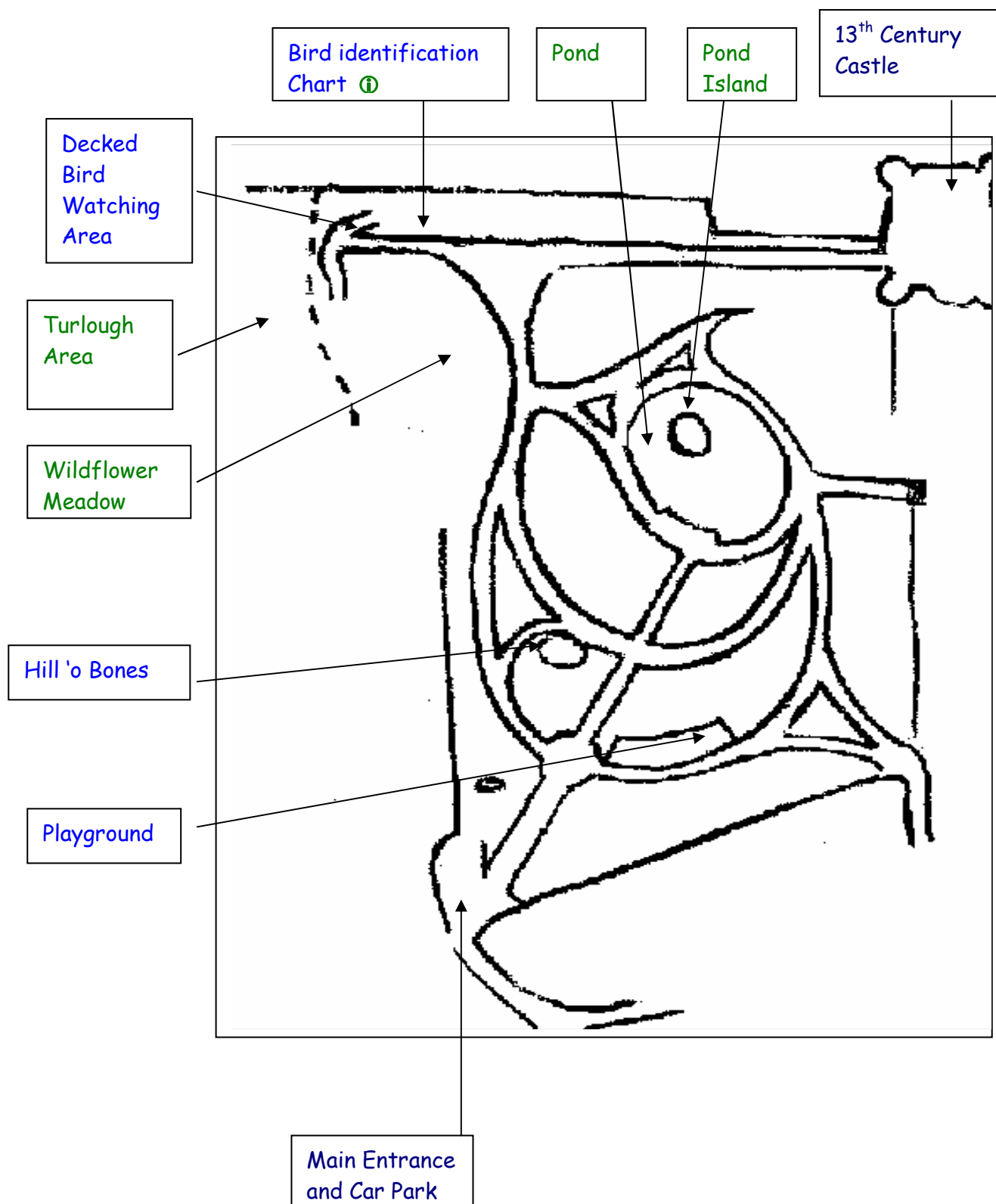
## Introduction to Loughnaneane Park

### Description

Loughnaneane Park is located in the townlands of Loughnaneane and Cloonbrackna, only half a kilometre from the centre of Roscommon town. The close proximity of the park to Roscommon town centre enables easy access to sites of immense interest in both historical and ecological terms. The main entrance to the park is from the corner of St. Ciaran's Park residential area. A car park is located here.



## Loughnaneane Park Map



## Introduction

The Loughnaneane (Roscommon Town) Park Education Pack has been produced as a joint project by Roscommon County Council, Heritage Office and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Education Office [North Midlands Region]

## Aims and Objectives

The Education Pack has been designed to enhance the visitors experience and knowledge of the flora and fauna that exist within the parks habitat area.

### Aims

- To acquire an awareness of nature, particularly of Irish wildlife.
- To gain an appreciation and interest in nature.
- To apply basic field studies skills.
- To develop a sense of responsibility for the natural environment

### Objectives

- Promotion of the use of local facilities [Loughnaneane Park] as an education resource
- Utilisation of a range of resources and activities that will encourage students to observe and examine nature at first hand.
- Application of basic field studies techniques in the exploration of the various habitats within the park.
- Endorsement of student's positive attitudes and behaviours towards the natural environment while they carry out their activities in the park.



## Evaluation Sheet

Date of Visit to Loughnaneane Park: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Class(es): \_\_\_\_\_ Number in the Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick the topic areas that your group participated in:

Trees: ☐ Plants: ☐ Pond Life: ☐

Minibeasts: ☐ Turloughs: ☐ Bird Life: ☐

Roscommon Castle Junior Level: ☐ Roscommon Castle Senior Level: ☐

What was the most useful part of the pack for your group? \_\_\_\_\_

Which part of the pack was the least useful for your group? \_\_\_\_\_

Please score the following out of 10

[e.g. 0 = very poor, 5 = good, 10 = excellent]

Pack design and layout: \_\_\_\_\_

Suitability of the information sheets: \_\_\_\_\_

Suitability of suggested activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Ease of use of Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make any comments or suggestions that may be used to improve the standard of this education resource.

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PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED EVALUATION FORM TO: HERITAGE OFFICE, ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL, COURTHOUSE, ROSCOMMON. EMAIL: [heritage@roscommoncoco.ie](mailto:heritage@roscommoncoco.ie). FAX 090 6637108

## Trees Information Sheet

### **Broadleaved Trees**

The trees in the park were planted in recent years and are therefore only young, small trees. Trees can be divided into two main groups: (a) Conifers and (b) broadleaved trees. (a) Conifer trees have thin leaves sometimes called "needles". An example of a conifer tree is the Sitka Spruce that we often use as a Christmas tree. (b) The trees in the park are all broadleaved trees. The term "broadleaved" means that the leaves of these trees are flat and wide. The leaves of most broadleaved trees die and fall off the trees in autumn and are therefore called "deciduous" trees. One of the broadleaved trees in the park, the holly, does not lose its leaves in autumn and therefore it is called an "evergreen" tree.

### **Native Trees**

A native tree is a type of tree that has been growing in Ireland since the last Ice Age. Native trees provide the best homes for our wildlife, compared to non-native trees. Many of the trees in the park are native as indicated on the tree chart [3.1.].


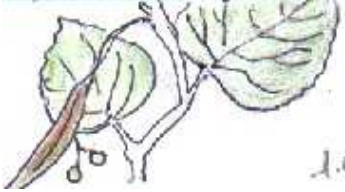
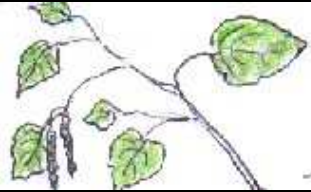





### **Trees for a Healthy Planet**

All trees play an important role in taking in and storing carbon from our atmosphere. Carbon in the form of carbon dioxide gas in the air is one of the gases that traps the heat energy of the sun and is having a bad effect on the Earth's climate. Trees take in carbon dioxide gas during the day and store it away for a long time. Trees release another gas, called oxygen, during the night for us to breathe.

### **How to Identify Trees:**

There is a wide range of trees in Ireland and it is difficult to get to know about them all. There are many ways of identifying trees such as using their basic tree shape, their leaf shape, their budding twigs or their bark texture and colour. By using this pack you will be able to identify a few of our more common trees by identifying their **leaf shape** for Spring and Summer visits to the park [Sheet 3.1.]

## Trees Identification Chart

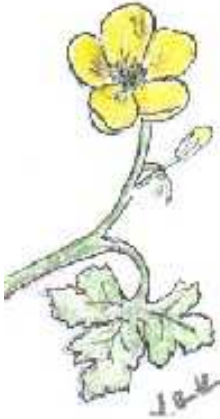







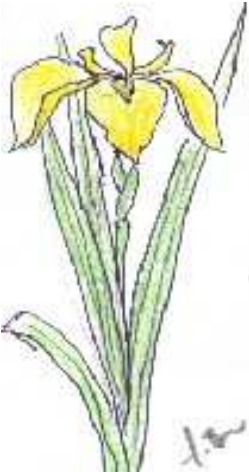

Tree	The Leaf and fruit	Information
Oak [Native]		Hundreds of years ago, most of Ireland was covered in oak trees. The oak can grow tall and very old, sometimes as high as 45m. One old oak tree can give a home to almost 500 different types of wildlife.
Common Lime [Not Native]		The common lime tree can grow into a tall 40m tree. Lime trees are often planted along the avenues of large mansions as well as in parks. Lime trees are fast growing and like most types of soil. Their leaves are lime green in spring.
Silver Birch [Native]		The beautiful Silver Birch grows wild in our bogs and on our mountains but is also planted along our streets and in our Parks. Birch timber is used for making plywood.
Horse chestnut [Not Native]		The leaves of the horse chestnut are made up of 7 leaflets that meet in the centre of the leaf so that it looks like a hand. It produces conkers that are its seeds. Although it is a well-known tree in Ireland, it is not native.
Willow [Native]		There are 34 types of willow in Ireland. Male and female catkins grow on different trees. Willow grows best on damp soils. The young branches, known as osiers, are woven to make many different things including baskets and wicker chairs.
Alder [Native]		This tree grows in swampy places beside streams and lakes, but not in peat bogs. Its leaves are nearly circular. Its female catkins look like miniature cones. The alder grows quickly but remains a small tree of less than 20m usually.
Field Maple [Not Native]		The field maple is a small tree with small leaves and therefore was commonly used in hedges. It has been used for hedging in Loughnaneane Park. It is related to the sycamore and produces a similar looking "helicopter" double seed.
Holly [Native]		Holly is an evergreen, small tree that produces distinctive red berries in Winter. It is a native, slow growing tree and can measure up to 20 m in height.

## Parkland Plants

The green areas of the park have many more plants growing in them than just grass! If you stoop down and take a closer look you will discover many other small plants hidden among the grass plants. Use the pictures below to help you to get to know the shapes, colours and maybe even the names of a few of them.

**Did you know that plants make their own food?** By using energy from the sun, plants mix three ingredients together to make their own food supply. The three ingredients plants use = 1. carbon dioxide from the air with 2. water and 3. special chemicals [nutrients] from the soil,. This process is called photosynthesis.

## Parkland Plants Information and Identification Sheet

<p>Buttercup</p> 	<p>Plantain</p> 	<p>Clover</p> 	<p>Daisy</p> 	<p>Nettle</p> 
<p>Ragged Robin</p> 	<p>Dandelion</p> 	<p>Cowslip</p> 	<p>Iris</p> 	<p>Speedwell</p> 



## Pond Life

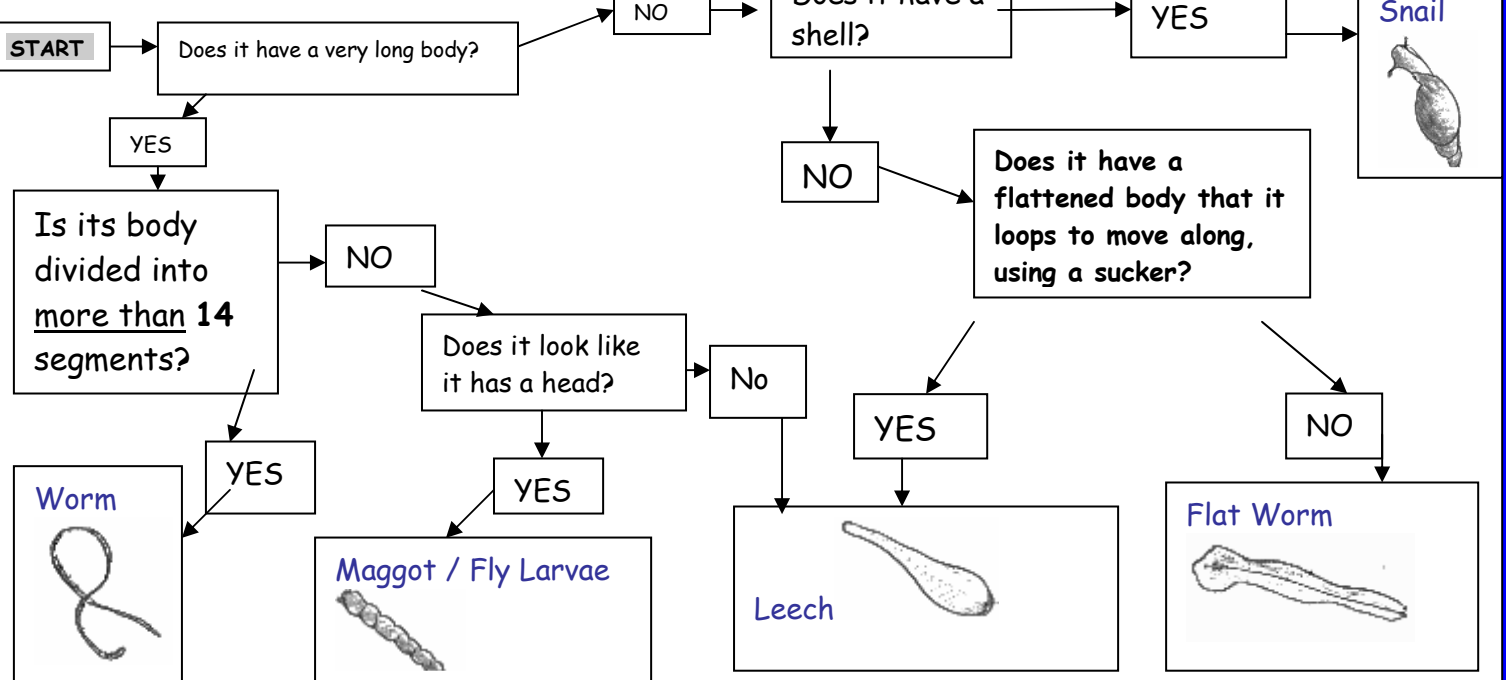
The pond is located close to the centre of the park. It is an ideal location to explore some of the small aquatic animals of the park using the basic POND DIPPING method outlined below. In addition pupils will be able to observe the colourful mallard ducks swimming on the pond.

### Loughnaneane Park Pond Life Information & Identification Key Chart

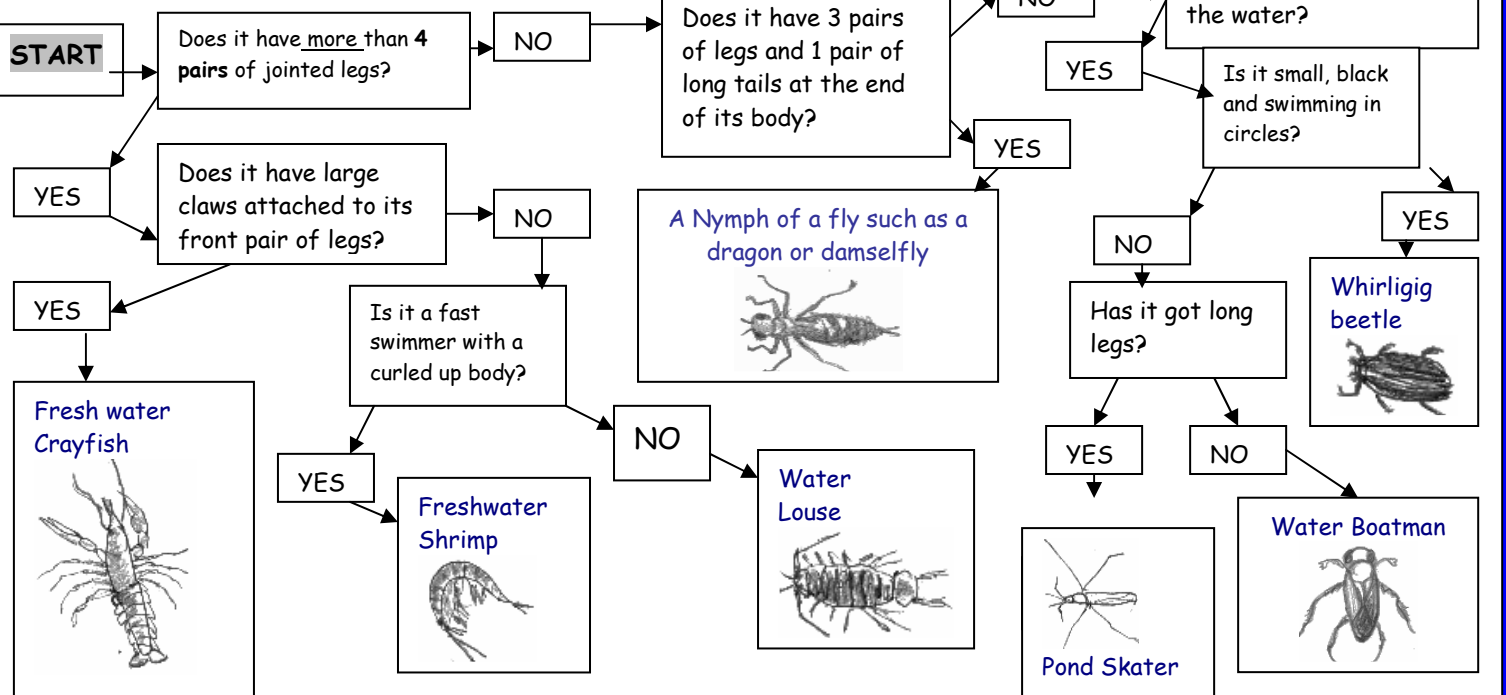
Use sheet **A.** if your mini beast has **NO** legs.

Use sheet **B.** if your mini beast **HAS** legs.

#### A. These mini beats have **NO LEGS**:








#### B. These mini Beasts **HAVE LEGS**:






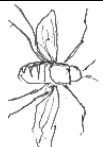



## Mini beasts Identification Key

### A. This identification chart is for mini beasts with NO LEGS:



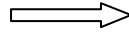





It's Body ➡	Fat and Slimy		Long, Round and Thin		
Look more closely to see if it has: ➡	No Shell ↓	Has Shell ↓	White, very small, almost see through, with <b>no</b> segments. ↓	Can be white, brown, green or orange with less than 15 segments. ↓	Reddish brown with <b>more than</b> 15 segments. ↓
Then it's a: ➡	<b>Slug</b>	<b>Snail</b>	<b>Roundworm</b>	<b>Maggot</b>	<b>Earth Worm</b>
This mini beast looks like this: ➡					

### B. This identification chart is for mini beasts with ONLY 6 LEGS:

It's Body ➡	Is very small [the size of a crumb of bread] ⬇		Has pincers at the back ⬇	Has a shiny, hard cover that is in 2 parts ⬇		Has wings ⬇	
Did you notice this? ➡	Is very good at jumping! ↓	Has a very thin waist. ↓	Is shiny and orange-brown in colour ↓	Cover is rounded ↓	Cover is diamond shaped ↓	Wings are see through ↓	Large, colourful wings ↓
Therefore it's a: ➡	<b>Springtail</b>	<b>Ant</b>	<b>Earwig</b>	<b>Beetle:</b> e.g. Ground beetle or Ladybird	<b>Bug:</b> e.g. Shield bug	<b>Fly</b>	<b>Butterfly or Moth</b>
This mini beast looks like this: ➡							



**C. This chart is for mini beasts with MORE THAN 6 LEGS:**

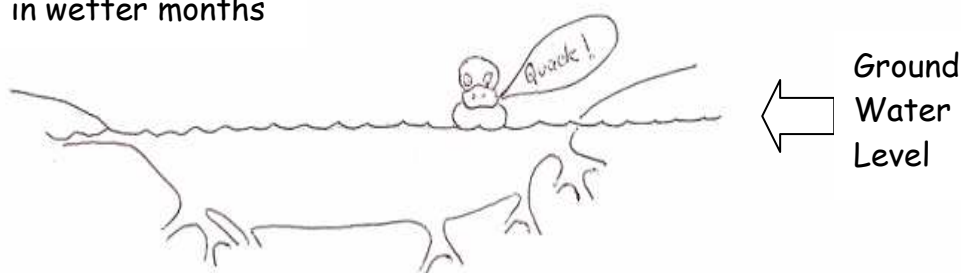
Number of Legs: 	6 + 4 false legs	8 legs	12 - 16 legs	Many legs: 2 per segment	Many legs: 4 per segment
Then it's a: 	<b>Caterpillar</b>	<b>Spider</b>	<b>Woodlouse</b>	<b>Centipede</b>	<b>Millipede</b>
This mini beast looks like this: 					

## Turlough Information Sheet

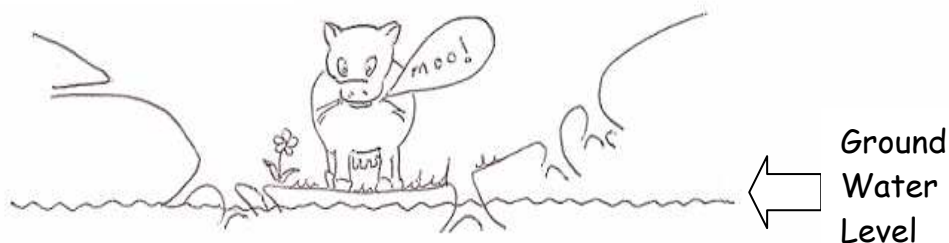
Turloughs are disappearing lakes!! Turloughs are only found in Ireland and only in some special areas of Ireland, such as County Roscommon, that are sitting on top of a type of rock called limestone. Limestone can be dissolved by rainwater. Sometimes the rainwater can dissolve deep holes into the limestone rock, called swallow holes, so that a whole lake full of water can disappear down these swallow holes - this is what happens to a type of lake called a turlough. The word turlough comes from two Irish words - "tur", meaning dry and "lough" meaning lake. The water only comes back into the turlough during the wet winter weather when the water levels rise so much that the water is pushed back up through the holes in the limestone to form a lake again. During the drier months of the year as the water gradually starts to disappear out of the turlough, different plants are found at the different water levels that are created as the lake empties. Some of the **plants** found in Loughnaneane turlough include: Yellow 'Flag' Iris, Cowslip, Silverweed, Daisy, Creeping Buttercup as well as a variety of grasses and sedges. [\[See Plant Identification sheet\]](#)

There are also some **amphibians** to be found in the turlough including frogs and newts.

Turlough in wetter months



Turlough in drier months



## Bird Life Information Sheet

Loughnaneane Turlough is a very important place (habitat) for birds. The name "Loughnaneane" comes from Irish; Lough, meaning lake and na naeane meaning ; of the birds. The park has an excellent display board that shows both the names and beautifully painted pictures by Gordon D'Arcy of the birds that visit the turlough. Some of the birds travel from other countries to spend the Winter in Roscommon. Birds on the display board clockwise from the top left corner: Black-headed Gull, Curlew, Dunlin, Golden Plover, Redshank, Lapwing, Whooper Swan , Shoveler, Meadow Pipit, Mallard, Wigeon, Snipe, Mute Swan, Snipe, Teal, Reed Bunting,



Birds Display Board.

## Be a Tree Detective:

This leaf is from a	This leaf is from a	This leaf is from a

## Find Your Tree:

**Method:**

- ## Activity Sheets - Flora and Fauna



## Sorting Out the Park Plants

(This activity is particularly suitable for senior classes)

Equipment: 1 sheet of graph or ruled paper (ideally on a clipboard) and a pencil per student. Pack of coloured pencils.

### Method:

#### Stage 1:

- ❑ Students are divided into groups of three.
- ❑ Each group is allocated a small area (4 -5 meters in diameter approx.) to explore.
- ❑ Each group is instructed to examine the plants that they can see growing among the grass plants and to observe the various shapes, colours, markings, sizes, of their leaves and / or flowers / petals. Remind students not to pick the plants, but to draw them where they are growing.

#### Stage 2:

- ❑ The students are then instructed to try and group the plants that they have seen according to their own criteria (e.g. they might decide to group the plants by their leaf shape - so that they are grouped according to whether they have elongated leaves or round leaves or they may decide to use flower colour as a sorting criteria). The students can then draw up a grid with the aid of the grid or ruled paper (or an empty grid could be printed out and photocopied prior to the visit) and write headings for the sorting criteria into the top line of the grid, and drawings of a small number of the plants (2 - 4 examples from each of their criteria) are sketched into the relevant boxes. Sketches can be coloured in, particularly if the plants are being sorted by colour.

This is an example of a simple grid that students could fill in for this activity:

We have sorted our plants according to: (e.g. colour of flowers or shape of leaf)	
Flower colour	
Yellow Flowers	Pink Flowers



## Pond Life Activity Sheet

**Safety Note:** As with all water-based activities, stringent supervision is required for this activity. Collection of fauna from the pond with nets can be carried out by accompanying teachers /leaders so that students can safely observe the pond life in containers, away from the edge of the pond.

### Materials and Equipment:

- ✓ Plastic containers (ideally white to make it easier to see the captured mini beasts),
- ✓ Fine fishing net (The long handled type found in toy shops are ideal),
- ✓ Plastic spoons,
- ✓ The pond Life identification sheets from this pack (these sheets could be held in clear, zip lock plastic bags to protect them from splashes),
- ✓ Clip Boards and Pencils.

### Method:

- Collect a small quantity of water using any suitable container and a selection of mini beasts from the pond using the long handled nets (it maybe safest if the accompanying teacher performs this task and then encourages students to take some specimens from the net to put into their own trays using the plastic spoons, while at a safe distance from the pond edge).
- Empty the mini beasts into the containers along with enough pond water for them to swim about in.
- Use the key sheet to identify the mini beasts that you have collected from the pond in your container.
- Draw a **circle** around each of the questions on the key to which you **answered YES**. Draw a square around whichever mini beast or beasts that you think that you have successfully identified in your container.
- Carefully release the mini beasts back into the pond once you are finished this activity.

## Mini Beast Hunt Activity Sheet

### Equipment and Materials Required:

1 pooter + 1 Magnifying Glass per pair or group of students,  
1 blank page + 1 copy of the Minibeast Identification Key + sheet + 1 Pencil attached to a clipboard per student (or pair or group of students) covered with a clear plastic bag for wet weather days.

### Method:

1. Look for mini beasts in likely locations such as under leaves, stones or other objects.
2. Use the pooter to collect the mini beasts that you find as follows:
3. For mini beasts with legs (such as woodlouse, spiders and millipedes) - point the end of the clear tube of the pooter over the mini beast. Suck through the green tube until the mini beast lands in the plastic cup of the pooter.
4. For mini beasts with no legs (such as slugs, snails and worms) - remove the lid of the pooter and lift the mini beast into the plastic cup of the pooter with the aid of a leaf or stick taking care not to injure the mini beast as you do so. Carefully replace the lid onto the pooter.

**6.2.1. Activity A:** (This activity is particularly suitable for junior infants - 2<sup>nd</sup> class, but is also a useful activity for senior classes before they carry out activity B)

Use the magnifying glass to examine one of the mini beasts in your pooter.  
Carefully draw a large diagram of the mini beast, showing its general shape, any marks on its body and any other features that you have noticed such as body sections, legs or antennae on its head.

### 6.2.2. Activity B:

Use the Identification key sheets to identify the mini beasts that you have collected in your pooter.

Look at one mini beast at a time and decide whether you should use the Identification Sheets for mini beasts WITH LEGS or with NO LEGS.

Draw a **circle** around each of the questions on the key to which you **answered YES**.

Draw a square around whichever mini beast or beasts that you think that you have in your pooter.

- Carefully release the mini beasts once you are finished this activity.

## Bird Life Activity Sheet

**Materials:** Binoculars, A4 Sheets on a clipboard [Covered by a large zip lock clear plastic bag if conditions are wet], pencils [including colouring pencils], warm waterproof clothing [as students may need to wait for a while to see the birds]. The Bird Identification Chart [laminated or covered with a clear plastic bag] from this pack or simply use the Park Information Board located near the decked Turlough viewing area.

**Method:**

1. Stand quietly along the decked area where the willow trees act as a "hide" for spying at the bird life.
2. Put the strap of the binoculars over your head and remove the protective covers from the lenses.
3. Adjust the focus of the binoculars using the small wheel in the centre. It is a good idea to practice focusing on other objects for a while, like trees and their leaves, before you try to look birds, particularly if they are flying or swimming about.
4. Try and see a duck and one other bird. Then draw the birds on your A4 page (make your drawing as large as possible and use your colour pencils if you can)
5. [4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> class] Now try and name the birds that you have drawn by using the Park Information Board.

### Bird Life of Town Park Turlough Record sheet:

Bird Name:	Date:
Description:	
My Drawing:	

## Introduction

This education pack has been designed to enhance the visitors experience and knowledge of the history and features of Roscommon Castle.

## Aims and Objectives

### **Aims:**


1. To acquire an awareness of the historic built environment.
2. To gain an appreciation and interest in history and architecture.
3. To raise pride and awareness of the history and development of the county.



### **Objectives:**

1. Promotion of the use of local facilities (Loughnaneane Park) as an educational resource.
2. Utilisation of a range of resources and activities that will encourage students to observe and examine the castle at first hand.
3. Endorsement of student's positive attitudes and behaviours towards the historic built environment while they carry out their activities in the park.

## Explore Roscommon Castle


### Stop 1 - Outside the Castle

1	List 3 ways the castle is different to your own house?	Sample - High Walls, Towers, Arrow Loops, Gun Loops, Big Fireplaces, Different Toilets, Big Stone Windows.
2	Can you find an Arrow Loop? 	Point out one loop as an example. This one is on the South-West Angle Tower.
3	How many more can you find out here, before you go inside the castle?	There are 2 more this South-West Angle Tower.
4	Describe how the arrow loops were used.	They were used by soldiers to shoot at people attacking the castle.

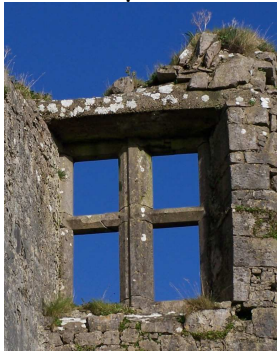

5	<p>Can you find any gun loops? If so, where?</p> 	<p>On the outside of the North-West Tower.</p>
6	<p>In which tower can you see the garderobe?</p> 	<p>It is outside the North-West Tower.</p>
7	<p>What is a garderobe?</p>	<p>It is a toilet. It had openings inside the castle on each floor. You sat over the opening. The waste went down the chute and outside through the opening into the moat.</p>
8	<p>There is another garderobe nearby, can you find it?</p>	<p>It is just outside the Postern Gatehouse, opposite the other garderobe.</p>




## Stop 2 - The South-West Tower

9	<p>Where in the castle can you find this staircase?</p> 	<p>In the South-West Tower.</p>
10	<p>What colour is the gate on these stairs?</p>	<p>Black</p>
11	<p>How many other gates of the same colour are there in the castle?</p>	<p>6</p>
12	<p>Draw an example of another gate that you found in the castle.</p>	

## Stop 3 - The Main Gatehouse

13	<p>Can you spot this window? What shape is it? What shape are the panes?</p> 	<p>The window is a rectangle. The top panes are square. The bottom panes are rectangular.</p>
14	<p>Can you spot any more shapes in the other windows?</p>	
15	<p>There are many fireplaces in the castle. Can you describe where one of them is?</p>	<p>Example: There are 2 fireplaces to the left of the entrance in the main gatehouse, one on top of another on different levels. All towers have fireplaces.</p>
16	<p>Can you find the fireplace in the main gatehouse?</p> 	<p>It is positioned to the right of the main entrance. This was most likely to have been used by servants or cooks.</p>

17	<p>Can you spot the punch dressing (design) on the fireplace? Take a rubbing of the punch dressing.</p> 	<p>Crayons work best for this exercise.</p>
----	---	---

## Stop 4 - The North-East Tower

18	How many windows can you find in the North-East Tower?	12
19	Do you think the windows would have had curtains on them?	

## Evaluation Sheet

Date of Visit to Loughnaneane Park: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Class(es): \_\_\_\_\_ Number in the Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick the topic areas that your group participated in:

Trees: ☐ Plants: ☐ Pond Life: ☐

Minibeasts: ☐ Turloughs: ☐ Bird Life: ☐

Roscommon Castle Junior Level: ☐ Roscommon Castle Senior Level: ☐

What was the most useful part of the pack for your group? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which part of the pack was the least useful for your group? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please score the following out of 10

[e.g. 0 = very poor, 5 = good, 10 = excellent]

Pack design and layout: \_\_\_\_\_

Suitability of the information sheets: \_\_\_\_\_

Suitability of suggested activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Ease of use of Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make any comments or suggestions that may be used to improve the standard of this education resource: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## The History of Roscommon Castle

- Once upon a time there was an English King, Edward 1, who built a castle in Roscommon. It was in the year 1269.
- The castle he built was beside a lake and a large moat was dug around the castle and filled with water from the lake. It had two gatehouses which contained drawbridges. It also had large gates at the entrance to each gatehouse.
- Many buildings such as barns, mills, stables, granaries and other workshops were found on castle grounds. A lot of activities happened inside the outer walls of the castle.
- Inside the castle walls you would find a kitchen, hall, pantry and buttery, a bake house and lots of store rooms, where food and other supplies were kept. Toilets, called garderobes, were built into the thick castle walls.
- It was very important that the castle was protected from any intruders. A murder hole, an opening in the roof, was put in so the soldiers could drop hot oil on or shoot arrows at attackers.
- The castle also had large walls, arrow loops and gun loops where soldiers could watch for intruders and shoot out to protect the castle.
- The O'Connor family who lived in Co. Roscommon were in control of the area and were very powerful Gaelic Kings in Connacht.
- The O'Connor family enjoyed having a good time and had lots of parties. They enjoyed listening to music. They liked to be entertained by minstrels and bards. They supported harp music especially.
- Both the English and the Irish spent many years fighting over who owned the castle. They had many fights during these years and the castle was burned down many times.
- After many years an English man called Sir Nicholas Malby took control of the castle and made some changes to it.

- He built an L-shaped building into the castle. This L-Shaped building was used for accommodation and it included a gatehouse into it.
- He converted a defensive castle into a luxurious and comfortable house for living in. He replaced the arrow loops with large windows. Big fireplaces with roaring fires kept his house cosy.
- Malby created many gardens around the castle to help transform it into a grand living house. He added an orchard and kitchen garden to supply the house with fruit and vegetables. Stables and workshops were also a part of this new design.
- He filled in most of the moat and used it for a garden and fish pond.
- He made sure that the castle was still protected by keeping the large wall and towers. It was very important that the castle was still defended. Because the fighting continued between the Irish and English.
- Once two mischievous Irish men, O'Connor and Mac Dermott were found guilty of betraying the English King. They began a fight and Roscommon Castle and town was burnt down.
- The castle changed ownership between the Irish and English many more times through many battles.
- Finally after many years a wealthy English family, the Capels were given the title of the Earls of Essex. This family was given ownership of the castle but they decided not live in it. They lived in England so the castle fell slowly into ruins.
- Today the castle is in ruins but is still one of the largest buildings in County Roscommon and even in Ireland. It has one of the largest gatehouses in Ireland. Some of the stones from the castle were used to build the Old Jail (Stonecourt) in Roscommon Town.



## The O'Connor Family

- There are O'Connor families all over Ireland. The O'Conor's in Co. Roscommon get their name from Conchobah, a King of Connacht who died in the year 971.
- In the O'Connor family there were 11 High Kings of Ireland and 26 Kings of Connacht since the time of Christ. Turlough Mor O'Connor was High King of Ireland in the year 1119.
- His son, Roderic (or Rory) was High King after him. Rory was the last of the Irish High Kings. He died in the year 1198, before Roscommon Castle was built. Turlough and Rory are both buried in Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly.
- Hugh O'Connor was King of Connacht when Roscommon Castle was built. He attacked the castle many times and the O'Conors held control of the castle for over 200 years.
- Clonalis House in Castlerea is the family home of the O'Conors.
- The O'Conors kept their Catholic faith and stayed at Clonalis all through the Penal Laws, when other Gaelic families left Ireland.
- Clonalis is the only house open to visitors that is old Irish, unlike Strokestown Park House, for example, whose family came after the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland.

## Design a Coat of Arms

### The O'Conor Coat of Arms



The sword stands for justice and military honour.

The arm, wearing armour, stands for a person fit for leadership and high deeds.

The helmet stands for wise defence and security.

The tree, an Oak tree, stands for antiquity and strength. The Oak tree was the most noble of the Chieftain trees.

The lions stand for courage.

The crowns stand for the O'Conors, Kings of Connacht and their association with Rathcroghan.

The harps stand for Ireland.

The green colouring stands for hope and loyalty in love.

The shamrock stands for time without end, eternity.

The motto 'Ó Dia gach cúcabrach' means from God every help.

## The County Roscommon Coat of Arms



The Blue background stands for truth and loyalty.

The Sheep's head stands for the long tradition of sheep farming in the county.

The Crown stands for Rathcroghan and the association of the O'Conor's, Kings of Connacht, with the county.

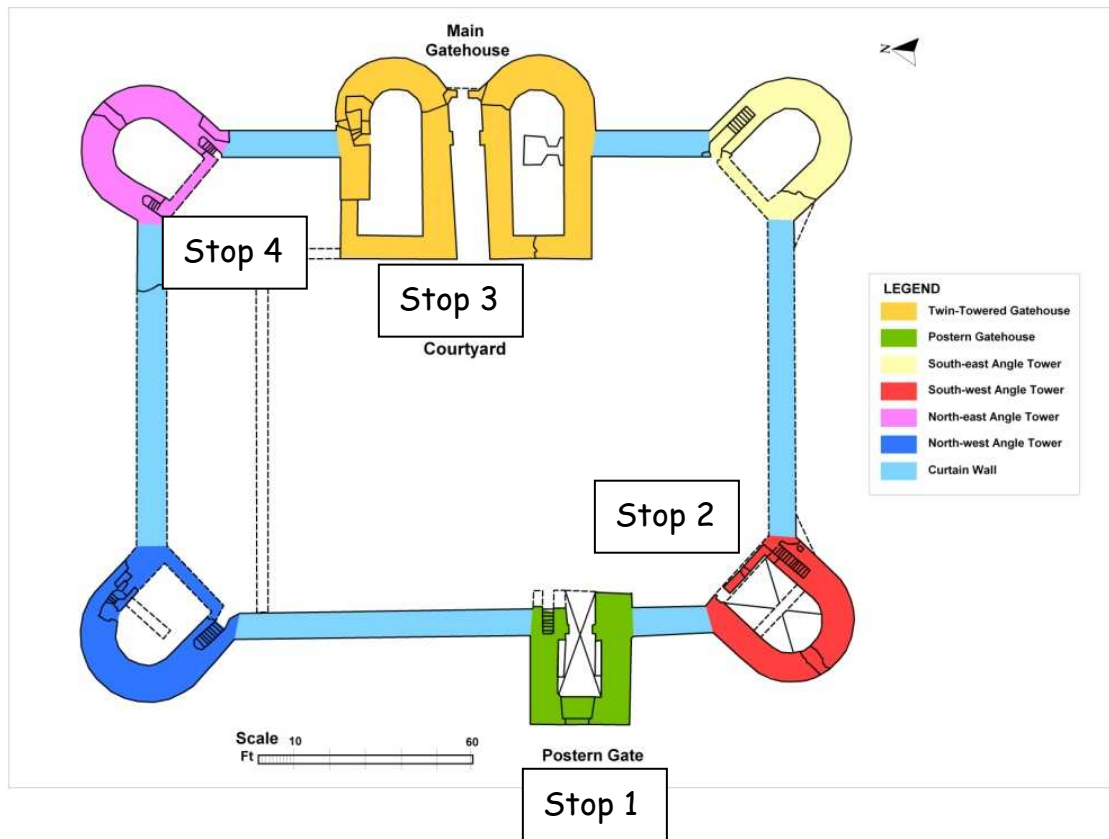
The Oak Leaf with acorns stands for growth and continuous fertility. It also represents Douglas Hyde, first president of Ireland, born in Co. Roscommon. He wrote under the pen name of 'An Croabhin Aoibhinn', which means little oak.

The Green in the triangle represents 'Ros' meaning wood, from Ros Comain - the Irish name for Roscommon, which means the wood of St. Coman.

The Gold Cross stands for the Abbeys in Roscommon, St. Coman and the Cross of Cong, which was made for High King Turlough Mor O'Conor in 1123.


The words 'Constans Hiberniae Cor' are latin and they mean *Irish, steady, firm, unchanging, constant and unwavering.*



## Plan of Roscommon Castle



## Explore Roscommon Castle


### Stop 1 - Outside the Castle

1	List 3 ways in which the castle is different to your own house?	1.  2.  3.
2	Can you find an Arrow Loop? 	
3	How many more can you find out here, before you go inside the castle?	
4	Describe how the arrow loops were used.	They were used by soldiers to shoot at people attacking the castle.



5	<p>Can you find any gun loops? If so, where?</p> 	
6	<p>In which tower can you see the garderobe?</p> 	
7	<p>What is a garderobe?</p>	
8	<p>There is another garderobe nearby, can you find it?</p>	




## Stop 2 - The South-West Tower

9	<p>Where in the castle can you find this staircase?</p> 	
10	<p>What colour is the gate on these stairs?</p>	
11	<p>How many other gates of the same colour are there in the castle?</p>	
12	<p>Draw an example of another gate that you found in the castle.</p>	

### Stop 3 - The Main Gatehouse

13	<p>Can you spot this window? What shape is it? What shape are the panes?</p> 	
14	<p>Can you spot any more shapes in the other windows?</p>	
15	<p>There are many fireplaces in the castle. Can you describe where one of them is?</p>	
16	<p>Can you find the fireplace in the main gatehouse?</p> 	

17	<p>Can you spot the punch dressing (design) on the fireplace? Take a rubbing of the punch dressing.</p> 	
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### Stop 4 - The North-East Tower

18	<p>How many windows can you find in the North-East Tower?</p>	
19	<p>Do you think the windows would have had curtains on them?</p>	

## Follow-up Activities

### Art Work

Create a drawing/painting/clay model/cardboard model of an exciting/scary or joyful event that happened inside the walls of this castle.

### Creative Writing

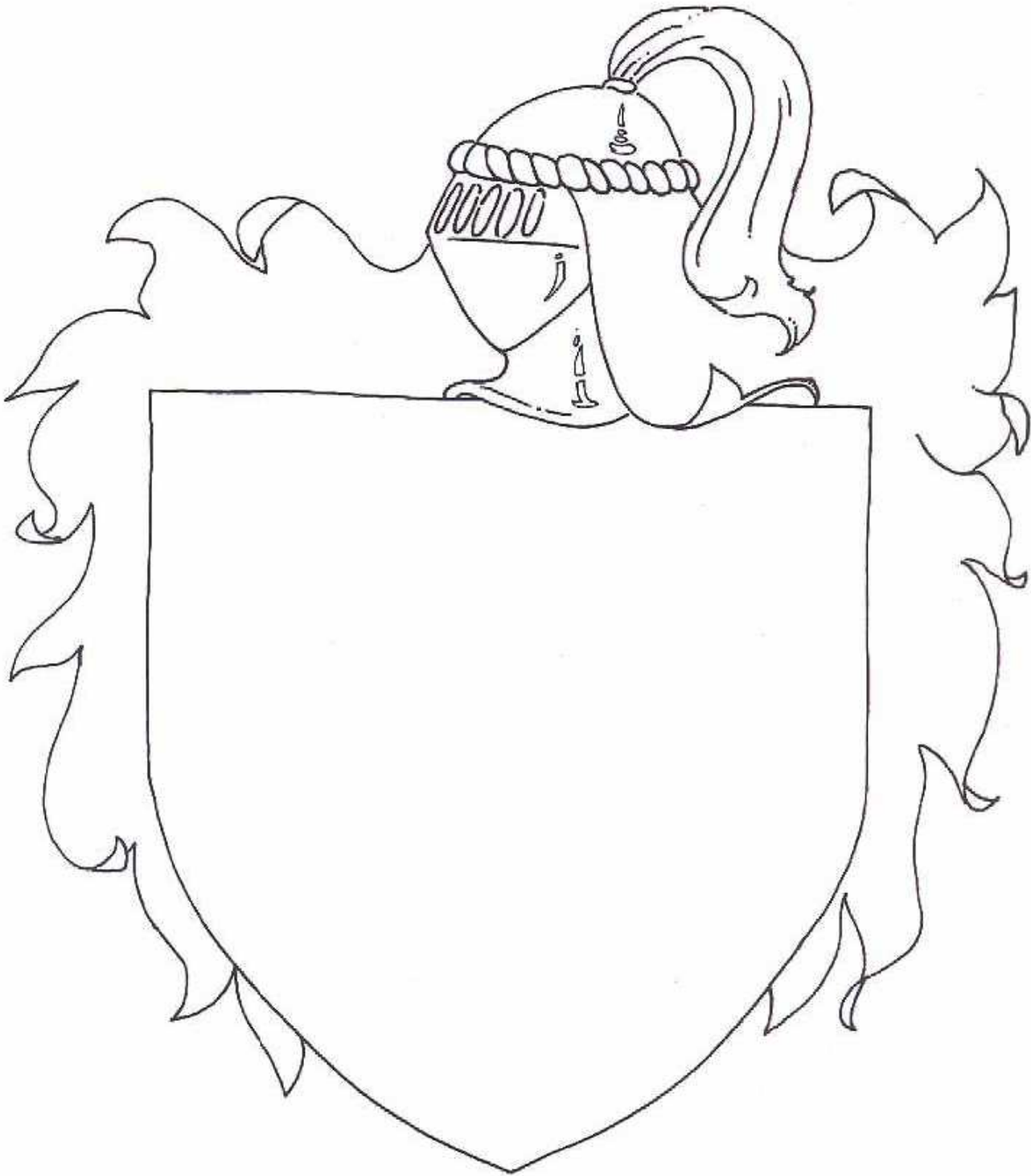
Write a short passage about your visit to the park.

INCLUDE

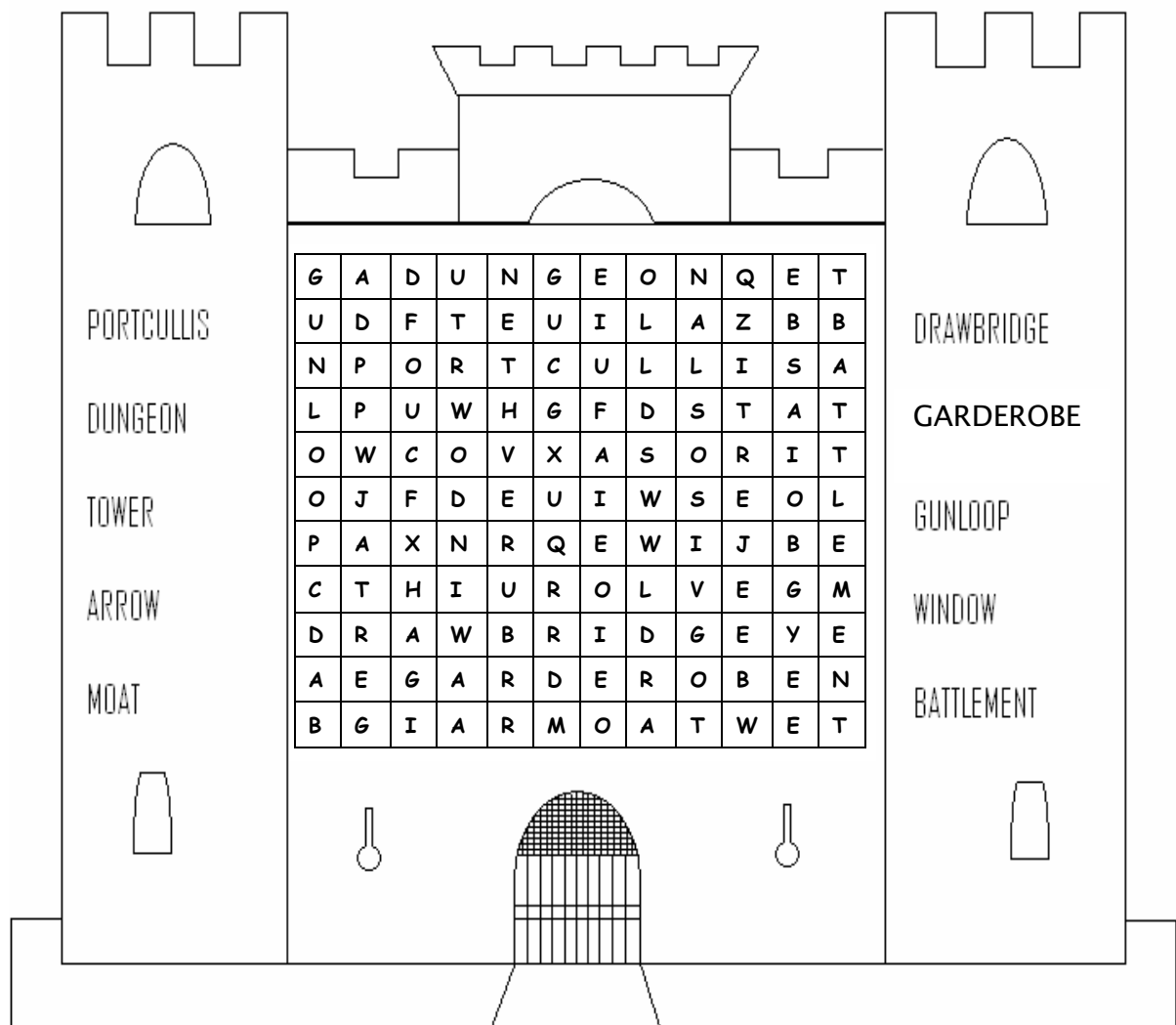
- Who you went with
- What you saw
- What you did
- What your favourite thing was
- Did you enjoy your trip

Illustrate your story with a drawing/painting of the event.

## Design a Coat of Arms



## Word Search





## Cloze Test

Roscommon castle was built in the year 1269 by an English King, Edward I who was trying to stop the O'Connor family who lived in Roscommon from \_\_\_\_\_ with the English people who lived there at the time.

The castle was built beside a lake and a large moat was dug around the castle and filled with \_\_\_\_\_. It had two gatehouses which contained drawbridges for \_\_\_\_\_ people in. It also had arrow loops which were long \_\_\_\_\_ in the walls so that soldiers could shoot arrows at anyone who was attacking the \_\_\_\_\_.

Many years later the castle became owned by a man called Sir Nicholas Malby and he made a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ to the castle. He changed it into a comfortable house for living in. Malby added many gardens. He filled in the moat and made a \_\_\_\_\_ pond. He replaced the \_\_\_\_\_ loops with \_\_\_\_\_ windows. He made sure the castle was still protected by keeping the \_\_\_\_\_ wall and towers.

The fighting never stopped between the Irish and English and as a result Roscommon castle was \_\_\_\_\_ down. The castle changed hands between the Irish and English for many years until it was eventually destroyed.

Today, the castle is in \_\_\_\_\_ and is looked after by the Irish state.

fighting	changes	water	high
arrow	letting	fish	castle
large	ruins	holes	burned

## Timeline

Draw a picture in each empty box.

**1269**

1572

# 1845

# 1930

1970

2002

The castle was built

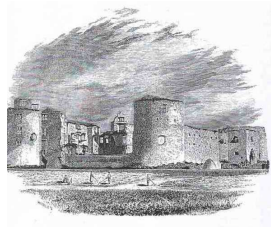
The castle  
was  
burned  
down

# The Great Famine

Your  
granny  
was born

Your  
mammy  
and daddy  
were born

You  
were  
born



## 2009

Draw something that happened to you this year

## Introduction

This education pack has been designed to enhance the visitors experience and knowledge of the history and features of Roscommon Castle.

## Aims and Objectives

### Aims:


1. To acquire an awareness of the historic built environment.
2. To gain an appreciation and interest in history and architecture.
3. To raise pride and awareness of the history and development of the county.



### Objectives:




1. Promotion of the use of local facilities (Loughnaneane Park) as an educational resource.
2. Utilisation of a range of resources and activities that will encourage students to observe and examine the castle at first hand.
3. Endorsement of student's positive attitudes and behaviours towards the historic built environment while they carry out their activities in the park.

## Explore Roscommon Castle


### Stop 1 - Outside the Castle

1	Have you ever visited any other parks in -	<p>(A) County?</p> <p>(B) Province?</p> <p>(C) Country?</p> <p>(D) Abroad?</p>
2	Have you ever visited any other large house or castle in -	<p>(E) County?</p> <p>(F) Province?</p> <p>(G) Country?</p> <p>(H) Abroad?</p>
3	<p>Can you find an Arrow Loop?</p> 	<p>Point out one loop as an example. This one is on the South-West Angle Tower.</p>

4	How many more can you find out here, before you go inside the castle?	There are 2 more this South-West Angle Tower.
5	Describe how the arrow loops were used.	They were used by soldiers to shoot at people attacking the castle.
6	Is this the main (front) gatehouse or the postern (rear) gatehouse? Why do you think so?  	Postern (Rear) Gatehouse. It's smaller than the other gatehouse.
7	Is this the main (front) gatehouse or the postern (rear) gatehouse? Why do you think so?  	Main (front) Gatehouse. It's bigger than the other gatehouse. It looks more impressive.


8	<p>Can you spot the water chute? What is it for?</p> 	<p>This one is on the Postern (Rear) Gatehouse. There is another one opposite it, on the South-West Tower. They allow rainwater to escape from the roof of the castle and the spout pours the rain away from the walls, helping to keep the walls dry and stop them getting damp.</p>
9	<p>Can you find any gun loops? If so, where?</p> 	<p>On the outside of the North-West Tower.</p>
10	<p>What is the difference between a gun loop and an arrow loop?</p>	<p>A Gun Loop was for shooting guns, while an Arrow Loop was for shooting with a bow and arrow. Gun Loops were built into the castle when guns replaced arrows in battles.</p>
11	<p>In which tower can you see the garderobe?</p> 	<p>It is outside the North-West Tower.</p>



12	What is the function of the garderobe?	It is a toilet. It had openings inside the castle on each floor. You sat over the opening. The waste went down the chute and outside through the opening into the moat.
13	There is another garderobe nearby, can you find it?	It is just outside the Postern Gatehouse, opposite the other garderobe.
14	Can you find the Murder Hole? Which gatehouse is it in? 	It is in the ceiling of the entrance through the Postern (Rear) gatehouse.
15	Who used it and how was it used?	It was used by soldiers to shoot arrows or drop hot oil on enemies who may have been trying to attach the castle and get inside the castle.
16	List 3 ways that the castle is protected.	High Walls, Towers, Arrow Loops, Gun Loops, Cruciform Loops, Moat.
17	Would the moat have been empty or full of water?	Full of Water.


18	Where did the water used in the moat come from?	From Loughnaneane lake and from rain.
19	Was it a good idea to build the castle next to the lake? Why?	It was good for defence purposes.
20	The moat was filled in during the 16 <sup>th</sup> century. Why do you think that was?	Sir Nicholas Malby created gardens and a fish pond where the moat was. He could do this because the castle was not under attack as much.

## Stop 2 - The South-West Tower


21	<p>Where in the castle can you find this staircase?</p> 	In the South-West Tower.
22	How many other gates of the same colour are there in the castle?	6



23	What do you think this staircase leads to?	Bedrooms, Living areas, the Roof where soldiers were on look out.
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### Stop 3 - The South-East Tower

24	<p>Can you spot the embrasure behind this Cruciform Loop? Draw a loop from the inside of the castle showing the embrasure.</p> 	<p>This embrasure has a Cruciform Loop. There is another embrasure to be seen at the Cruciform Loop in the Main Gatehouse. You can also see an embrasure behind the arrow loop in the South-West Tower.</p>
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## Stop 4 - The Main Gatehouse

25	What was the function of the main gatehouse?	To let people into and out of the castle.
26	Why do you think that the Lord lived in the main gatehouse and not in the corner towers?	It was safer and had more comfortable living space. The towers are more for defending the castle.
27	<p>This is called a transom-and-mullioned window.</p> <p>A: Which part is the transom?</p> <p>B: Which part is the mullion?</p> 	<p>Transom - Horizontal bar between the panes of glass.</p> <p>Mullion - Vertical bar between the panes of glass.</p>
28	What are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of window?	<p>Advantage - they let in a lot of light.</p> <p>Disadvantage - it's easier for enemies to shoot in through them.</p>

29	<p>Can you find the cruciform loop?</p> 	<p>It is in the Main Gatehouse.</p>
30	<p>Describe how the loops were used.</p>	<p>Like Arrow Loops, these were used to shoot out at enemies trying to attack the castle, however these loops are shaped like a cross.</p>
31	<p>There are many fireplaces in the castle. Can you describe where one of them is?</p>	<p>Example: There are 2 fireplaces to the left of the entrance in the main gatehouse, one on top of another on different levels. All towers have fireplaces.</p>
32	<p>Some fireplaces are high up in the walls. Why is this?</p>	<p>This shows that there were other floors in the castle, which were heated, such as bedrooms.</p>
33	<p>Can you find the fireplace in the main gatehouse?</p> 	<p>It is positioned to the right of the main entrance. This was most likely to have been used by servants or cooks.</p>

34	<p>Can you spot the punch dressing (design) on the fireplace? Take a rubbing of the punch dressing.</p> 	<p>Crayons work best for this exercise.</p>
----	---	---

### Stop 5 - From the Castle back into Town

35	<p>Where do you think the avenue that once linked the castle to the town might have been?</p>	<p>The closest you will get to this now is the entrance to the park that brings you out at the side of the Stonecourt Centre in the town square.</p>
36	<p>What other building in the town is as old as the castle?</p>	<p>Roscommon Abbey</p>

## Evaluation Sheet

Date of Visit to Loughnaneane Park: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Class(es): \_\_\_\_\_ Number in the Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick the topic areas that your group participated in:

Trees: ☐ Plants: ☐ Pond Life: ☐

Minibeasts: ☐ Turloughs: ☐ Bird Life: ☐

Roscommon Castle Junior Level: ☐ Roscommon Castle Senior Level: ☐

What was the most useful part of the pack for your group? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which part of the pack was the least useful for your group? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please score the following out of 10

[e.g. 0 = very poor, 5 = good, 10 = excellent]

Pack design and layout: \_\_\_\_\_

Suitability of the information sheets: \_\_\_\_\_

Suitability of suggested activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Ease of use of Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make any comments or suggestions that may be used to improve the standard of this education resource: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## The History of the Castle

Roscommon Castle was built in 1269 under Edward I, an English King who was trying to stop the O'Connor family who lived at Roscommon from attacking the Anglo-Norman families throughout Connacht and Leinster. The castle was burned many times after it was built and it changed hands several times between the Anglo-Normans and the O'Conors. The castle was built next to a lake and a moat was built around the castle which was filled with water from the lake. It had two gatehouses which contained drawbridges. They also contained portcullises, which were large gates in the archways in the entrance of the gatehouses that stopped anyone getting in. The postern gatehouse had a murder hole in the roof. A murder hole is an opening in the roof that let soldiers fire down arrows and hot oil from the room above. The castle also had lots of arrow loops which were long narrow holes in the walls so that soldiers could shoot arrows out over the moat at anyone who was attacking the castle.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the castle was in English control under a man named Nicholas Malby and a lot of changes were made. The castle was surrounded by lots of land and Nicholas Malby wanted to create a large estate with luxurious accommodation. He built a large L-shaped fortified house which was used for accommodation and he incorporated the gatehouse into it. He replaced several of the arrow loops with large transom-and-mullioned windows but he had to keep some arrow loops, gun loops and cruciform loops for defence. Big fires kept his house warm. Most of the moat was filled in at this time as a large fortified garden was built in front of the gatehouse. Part of the moat was kept and this was used as a large fish pond. Defending the castle was still very important and the garden was defended with large walls and two towers.

In the later 17<sup>th</sup> century the castle changed hands between the Irish and English. By this time, with the development of gunpowder and the use of cannon, castles could no longer survive attack. The castle was eventually dismantled, leaving the ruins we see today.

In 1832 it became the property of the Earl of Essex and by 1893 it was taken into the guardianship of the Office of Public works where it was declared a national monument. A public park was created to one side of the castle and was opened in 2003. It has a children's playground, flowers, trees and a bird watching area.

Another very important building in the history of the county is the old Cavalry Barracks, (sometimes called Blacks House or Edenville Lodge). This building, which once housed soldiers and their horses, was also built by the English, to guard the area and keep it under English control, just like the Castle. This barracks was built in 1702. Look out for it near the railway station. It too has high walls around it.

Roscommon town would not have been as big when the castle was built as it is today. However, there is one other building in the town that is just as old as the castle and that is Roscommon Abbey. Also known as the Dominican Friary, this was founded by Felim O'Connor, Lord of Roscommon in 1253.

## Features of the Castle

1	Moat	A large moat or ditch dug around the castle, usually filled with water in order to prevent intruders getting in.
2	Murder Hole	An opening in the roof in the postern gatehouse which allowed soldiers to drop hot oil or arrows on intruders who dared enter the castle.
3	Arrow Loop	A narrow opening in the wall allowing defenders to shoot arrows at attackers.
4	Cruciform Loop	A narrow opening in the wall in the shape of a cross, which allowed soldiers shoot at intruders.
5	Gun Loop	A narrow opening in the castle wall that allowed defenders to fire guns through the wall.
6	Embrasure	A wide opening situated behind the loops that gave the soldiers room to move around while defending the castle.
7	Tower	A tall building attached to the outer walls of the castle, which allowed the soldiers to view oncoming intruders.
8	Windows	In the 16 <sup>th</sup> century, the arrow loops were replaced with transom and mullioned windows. These windows were rectangular in shape. Transom: The horizontal bar between the panes of glass in a window. Mullion: The vertical bar between the panes of glass in a window.
9	Garderobe	This was the toilet, placed inside a recess in the castle walls. It emptied out into the ditch through shoots in the walls of the castle.
10	Gatehouses	The castle has two gate houses, the main gatehouse and the postern gatehouse. Main gatehouse: A fortified structure built at the front entrance to a castle. This gatehouse has two towers. Postern Gatehouse: A Fortified structure built at the rear of the castle.
11	Portcullis	Large gates found at the entrance to both the main and postern gatehouse that stopped anyone getting in.

## Life in the Castle

### Daily Routine

At sunrise one of the guards would trumpet the day's start. Servants would be up and about, getting fires lit, sweeping, cleaning and getting food ready. Chambermaids tidied up the apartments of the lord and his lady. Breakfast for all was bread and a drink.

Each day the Lord had business to attend to, looking after the running of his castle, the estates and the surrounding villages. The Lord had a large staff employed to help with this work. The most important of these was the steward, who had to know everything that went on around the castle. There were other important staff in the castle who kept it running smoothly.

The lady of the castle was served by ladies in waiting and chambermaids. The lady had to keep an eye on them, the kitchen staff as well as the spinners, weavers and embroiderers who had the job of making the clothes for the people in the castle.

When soldiers were stationed at the castle they would have included guards, watchmen and men-at-arms. Each soldier had his own place in an attack, some were crossbowmen, archers, lancers, or swordsmen.

The castle would have been noisy and smelly. Animals roamed around the stables. Blacksmiths banged and hammered out ironwork in the forges, soldiers practiced their skills, the children played after their lessons. There would have been lots of craftsmen working at the castle, making shoes, barrels and axes.

The high walls of the castle had buildings inside them, like the workshops and stables. There would have been fires burning around the place. Water would have come from a well.

Dinner was served early, between 10am and 12 o'clock. This was the main meal and would have had three or four courses. There would have been entertainment too. After dinner the work of the day continued. The evening meal, supper, was often eaten just before bedtime.

## Fun and Games

People in the castle would have worked hard, but they would have made time for fun too. Children wrestled, swam, fished and played a game that was a cross between tennis and handball. Chess was popular and a simple version of chess was played with dice. Games like blind man's bluff and bowling were played. Cock fights and bull baiting were popular spectator sports. At harvest time bobbing for apples and hunting, if allowed by the lord, was popular. Every castle had a falconer whose job was to train Hawks to hunt game birds. Story telling was popular. Music was popular for times of celebration and festivities, dancing took place as well. Music was usually played at mealtimes because it was believed that, as well as being nice to listen to, it helped in the digestion of food.

## Clothes

Peasants (poor people) wore simple clothes, made from wool, linen and sheepskin. The richer you were the more fancy your clothes were. Materials like velvet, furs, silks, lace and cotton would have been used.

Men wore tunics, undershirts and briefs with a sleeveless jacket and additional tunic over them. They wore stockings instead of trousers. Their coats would have been cloaks with a round opening that they slipped over their heads. Shoes designed for wearing in the castle would have been made from silk, velvet, cloth or leather and fastened with a buckle. These indoor shoes would have been covered with wooden and leather outdoor overshoes when they went outside.

Women wore tunics down to their ankles. A shirt was worn under the tunic. Under the tunic was worn a shirt. When out in public they wore a shorter tunic over the long one. Women wore tight fitting caps and nets over their hair. Their hair was long and wound into a 'bun' on their heads. If their hair was not in a bun, they wore veils to cover their hair. Like the men, the women would have had indoor and outdoor shoes. Dye was expensive, but those who could afford it would have had brightly coloured clothes.

## Food

What food they ate depended on how well off they were. The lord and his family ate geese, larks and chicken and other meats such as beef, bacon and lamb. Fish would have been fresh or smoked and salted. Lords would have also ate meals made from grain and had cheese and butter.

Peasants would have had a much simpler diet, like bread, peas and beans. Soup would have been made with anything that could be grown like onions, cabbage, garlic, nuts, berries, leeks, spinach and parsley. If they were really lucky they were able to add salt pork or fatty bacon to the soup. Food was cooked on open fires in the kitchen. The castle would have had a garden and fruit trees to supply fruit and vegetables. Water was not always clean and suitable for drinking, so the rich drank ale and wine, the poor just drank ale. Honey was used to make a sweet alcoholic drink called mead which was drank by all classes.

## Living Space

The castle had a great hall inside its walls. This would have been painted and had tapestries hanging from the walls. The ceiling would have been decorated and painted. The floor may have been covered with straw and scented with herbs. Wooden benches, long tables, cupboards and pantries would have been the type of furniture in the castle. Silver or pewter pottery would have adorned the long table in the great hall.

There was no central heating. Many parts of the castle were not heated at all. The lord and his family would have had an open fire to keep them warm. Servants, soldiers and others had to make do with tiny lamps and were cold at night. The lord, his family and guests would have had the comfort of heavy blankets, feather mattresses, fur covers and tapestries hanging on the walls to block out the damp and breezes. Servants and workers had sleep on the floor or maybe on some straw if they could get it, using their cloaks for covers.

The castle was fairly dark inside, the only openings in the walls being either loops or windows. The loops were covered by heavy curtains to keep out the cold. There was no glass in the windows so wooden shutters were used to keep out the cold.

## The O'Connor Family

- There are O'Connor families all over Ireland. The O'Connor's in Co. Roscommon get their name from Conchobah, a King of Connacht who died in the year 971.
- In the O'Connor family there were 11 High Kings of Ireland and 26 Kings of Connacht since the time of Christ. Turlough Mor O'Connor was High King of Ireland in the year 1119.
- His son, Roderic (or Rory) was High King after him. Rory was the last of the Irish High Kings. He died in the year 1198, before Roscommon Castle was built. Turlough and Rory are both buried in Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly.
- Hugh O'Connor was King of Connacht when Roscommon Castle was built. He attacked the castle many times and the O'Conors held control of the castle for over 200 years.
- Clonalis House in Castlerea is the family home of the O'Conors.
- The O'Conors kept their Catholic faith and stayed at Clonalis all through the Penal Laws, when other Gaelic families left Ireland.
- Clonalis is the only house open to visitors that is old Irish, unlike Strokestown Park House, for example, whose family came after the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland.



## Design a Coat of Arms

### The O'Connor Coat of Arms



The sword stands for justice and military honour.

The arm, wearing armour, stands for a person fit for leadership and high deeds.

The helmet stands for wise defence and security.

The tree, an Oak tree, stands for antiquity and strength. The Oak tree was the most noble of the Chieftain trees.

The lions stand for courage.

The crowns stand for the O'Conors, Kings of Connacht and their association with Rathcroghan.

The harps stand for Ireland.

The green colouring stands for hope and loyalty in love.

The shamrock stands for time without end, eternity.

The motto 'Ó Dia gach cúcabrach' means from God every help.

## The County Roscommon Coat of Arms



The Blue background stands for truth and loyalty.

The Sheep's head stands for the long tradition of sheep farming in the county.

The Crown stands for Rathcroghan and the association of the O'Conor's, Kings of Connacht, with the county.

The Oak Leaf with acorns stands for growth and continuous fertility. It also represents Douglas Hyde, first president of Ireland, born in Co. Roscommon. He wrote under the pen name of 'An Croabhin Aoibhinn', which means little oak.

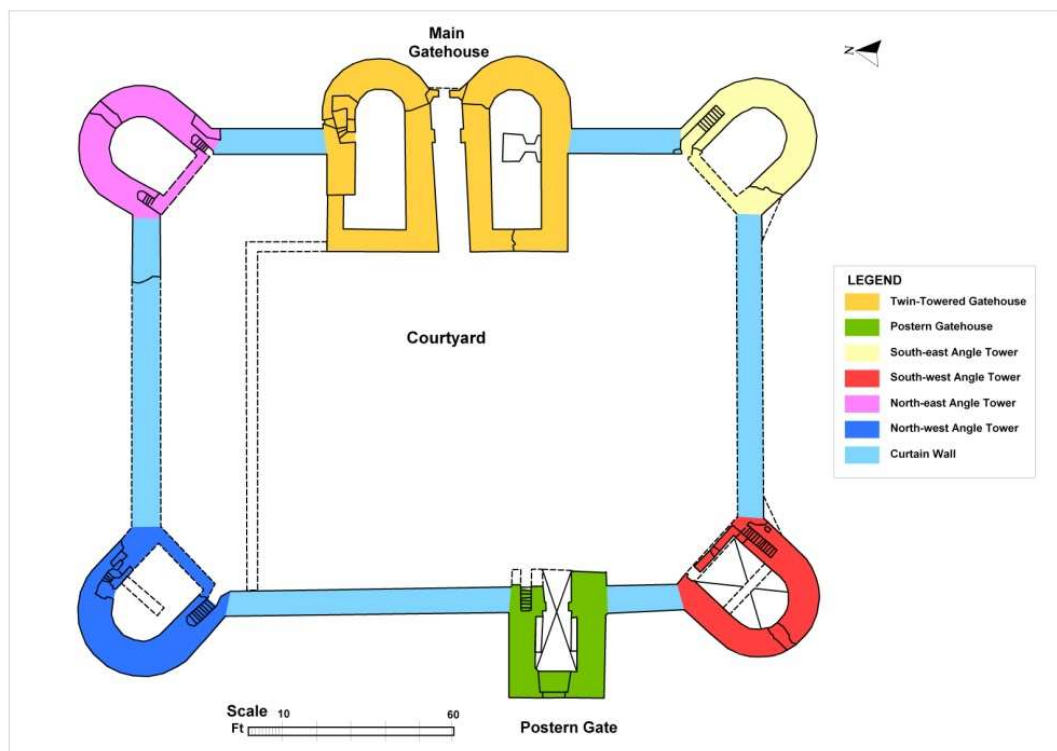
The Green in the triangle represents 'Ros' meaning wood, from Ros Comain - the Irish name for Roscommon, which means the wood of St. Coman.

The Gold Cross stands for the Abbeys in Roscommon, St. Coman and the Cross of Cong, which was made for High King Turlough Mor O'Conor in 1123.

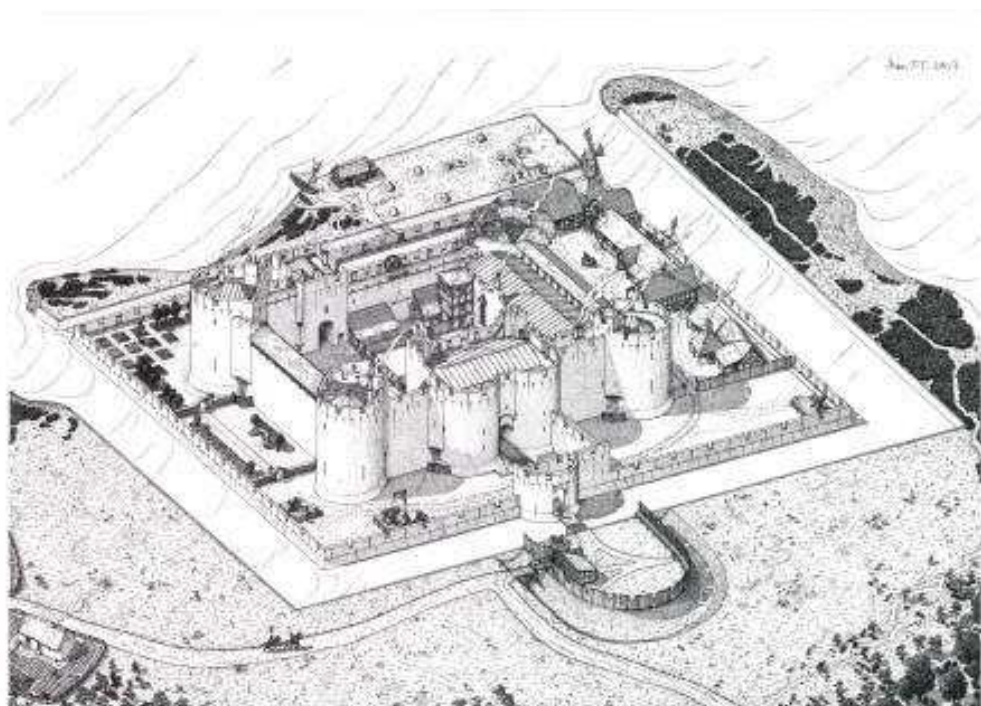
The words 'Constans Hiberniae Cor' are latin and they mean *Irish, steady, firm, unchanging, constant and unwavering.*

## Plan of Roscommon Castle

Roscommon Castle around 1307

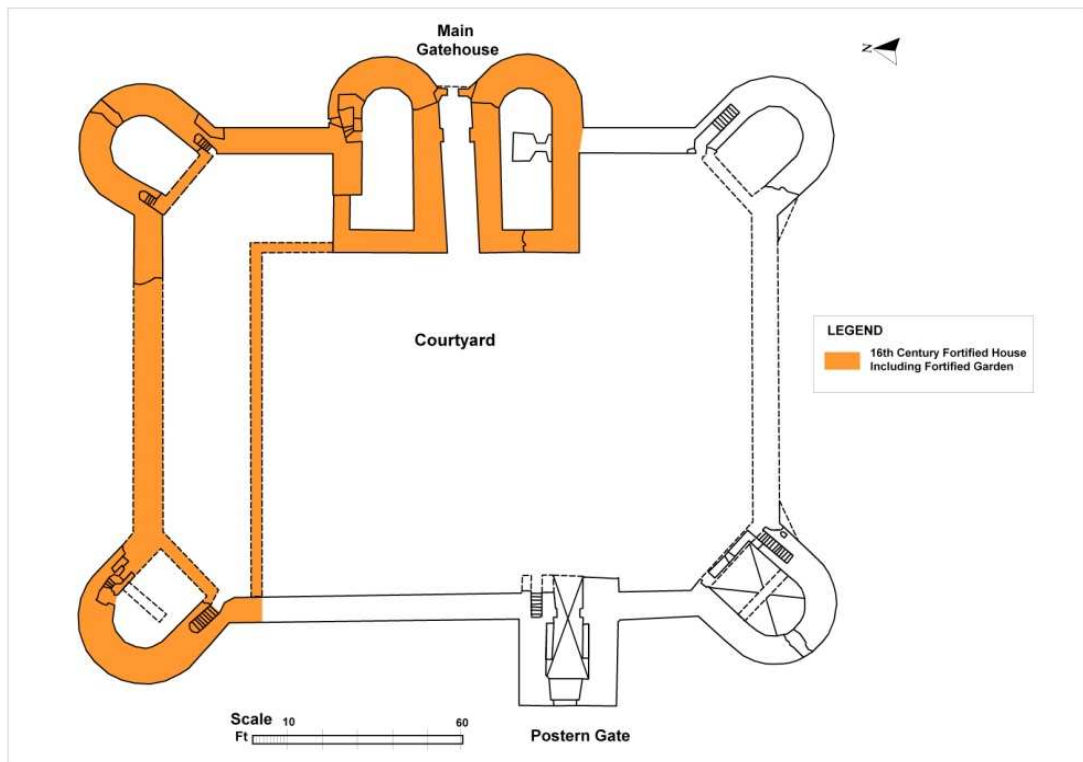


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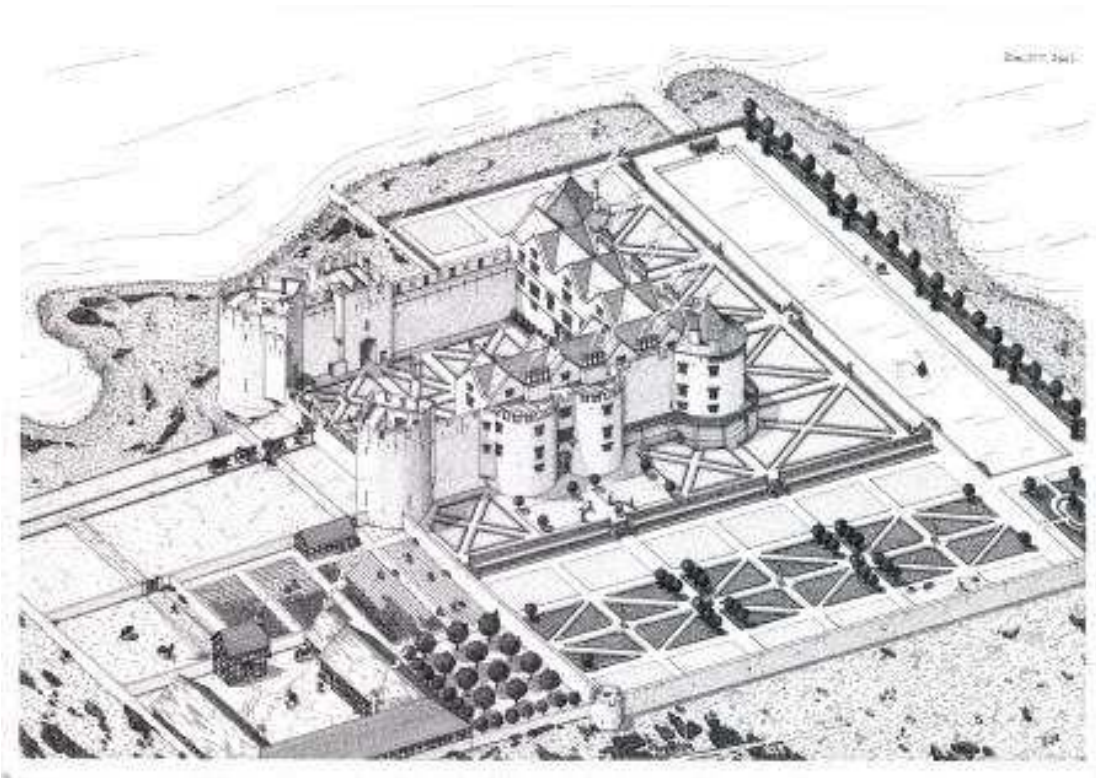


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## Roscommon Castle around 1584



© Roscommon County Council






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## Explore Roscommon Castle


### Stop 1 - Outside the Castle

1	Have you ever visited any other parks in -	<p>(A) County?</p> <p>(B) Province?</p> <p>(C) Country?</p> <p>(D) Abroad?</p>
2	Have you ever visited any other large house or castle in -	<p>(E) County?</p> <p>(F) Province?</p> <p>(G) Country?</p> <p>(H) Abroad?</p>
3	<p>Can you find an Arrow Loop?</p> 	

4	How many more can you find out here, before you go inside the castle?	
5	Describe how the arrow loops were used.	
6	<p>Is this the main (front) gatehouse or the postern (rear) gatehouse? Why do you think so?</p> 	
7	<p>Is this the main (front) gatehouse or the postern (rear) gatehouse? Why do you think so?</p> 	


8	<p>Can you spot the water chute? What is it for?</p> 	
9	<p>Can you find any gun loops? If so, where?</p> 	
10	<p>What is the difference between a gun loop and an arrow loop?</p>	
11	<p>In which tower can you see the garderobe?</p> 	



12	What is the function of the garderobe?	
13	There is another garderobe nearby, can you find it?	
14	Can you find the Murder Hole? Which gatehouse is it in? 	
15	Who used it and how was it used?	
16	List 3 ways that the castle is protected.	
17	Would the moat have been empty or full of water?	

18	Where did the water used in the moat come from?	
19	Was it a good idea to build the castle next to the lake? Why?	
20	The moat was filled in during the 16 <sup>th</sup> century. Why do you think that was?	

## Stop 2 - The South-West Tower


21	<p>Where in the castle can you find this staircase?</p> 	
22	How many other gates of the same colour are there in the castle?	



23	What do you think this staircase leads to?	
----	--	--


### Stop 3 - The South-East Tower

24	<p>Can you spot the embrasure behind this Cruciform Loop? Draw a loop from the inside of the castle showing the embrasure.</p> 	
----	---	--

## Stop 4 - The Main Gatehouse

25	What was the function of the main gatehouse?	
26	Why do you think that the Lord lived in the main gatehouse and not in the corner towers?	
27	This is called a transom-and-mullioned window. A: Which part is the transom? B: Which part is the mullion? 	
28	What are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of window?	Advantages:          Disadvantages:

29	<p>Can you find the cruciform loop?</p> 	
30	<p>Describe how the loops were used.</p>	
31	<p>There are many fireplaces in the castle. Can you describe where one of them is?</p>	
32	<p>Some fireplaces are high up in the walls. Why is this?</p>	
33	<p>Can you find the fireplace in the main gatehouse?</p> 	

34	<p>Can you spot the punch dressing (design) on the fireplace? Take a rubbing of the punch dressing.</p> 	
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### Stop 5 - From the Castle back into Town

35	<p>Where do you think the avenue that once linked the castle to the town might have been?</p>	
36	<p>What other building in the town is as old as the castle?</p>	

## Follow-up Activities

### Skills

Using your dictionary or the internet find out what the following words mean:

Moat	Embrasure	Tower	Portcullis
Castle	Garderobe	Transom	Mullion
Gatehouse	Dungeon	Battlement	Drawbridge

### Creative Writing

Imagine that you lived in this castle many, many years ago. What job do you think you would have?

Would you be	A knight
	A servant
	A prisoner
	A Lady
	A musician/entertainer?

What do you think used to happen in this castle?

- ❖ Write a story based on an exciting/terrifying/significant event that happened to you in the courtyard of this castle.  
Illustrate your story with a drawing/painting of the event.
- ❖ Write a diary entry of a day in the life of your character.  
Include some daily chores, your thoughts .....

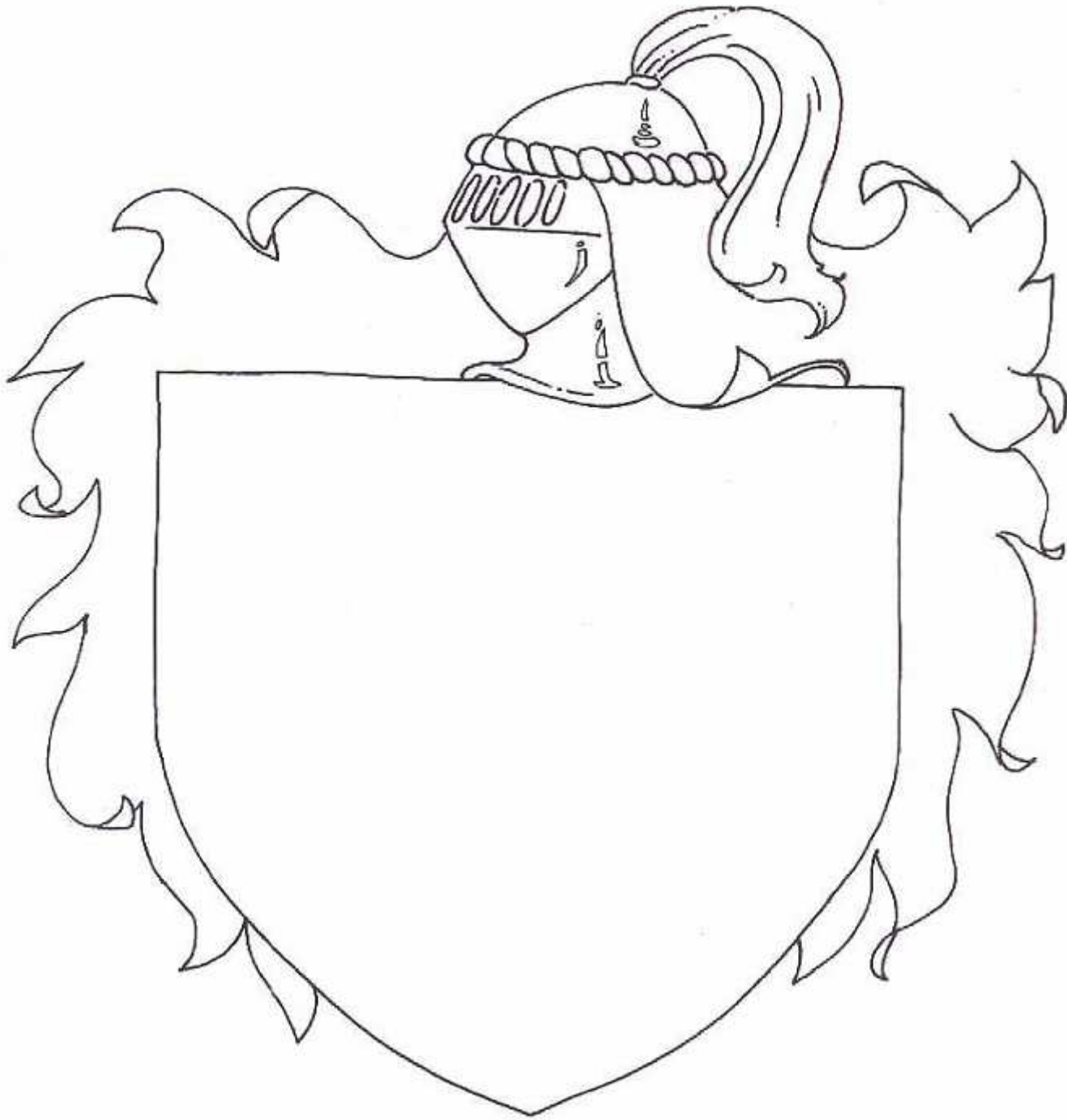
### Art Work

Make drawing/painting/construction (clay/cardboard/paper mache) of the castle of using your knowledge of the castle.

Make a clay model of someone who lives in the castle  
e.g. A Knight, a Servant, a Musician ...



## Design a Coat of Arms



## Word Search

PORTCULLIS

DRAWBRIDGE

GARDEROBE

BATTLEMENT

WINDOW

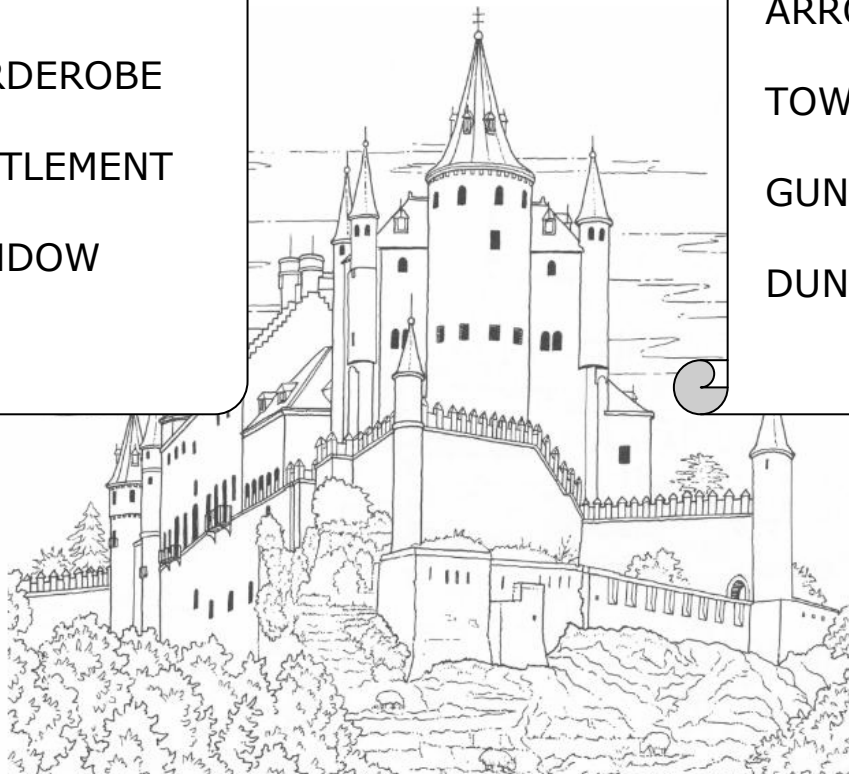
MOAT

ARROW

TOWER

GUNLOOP

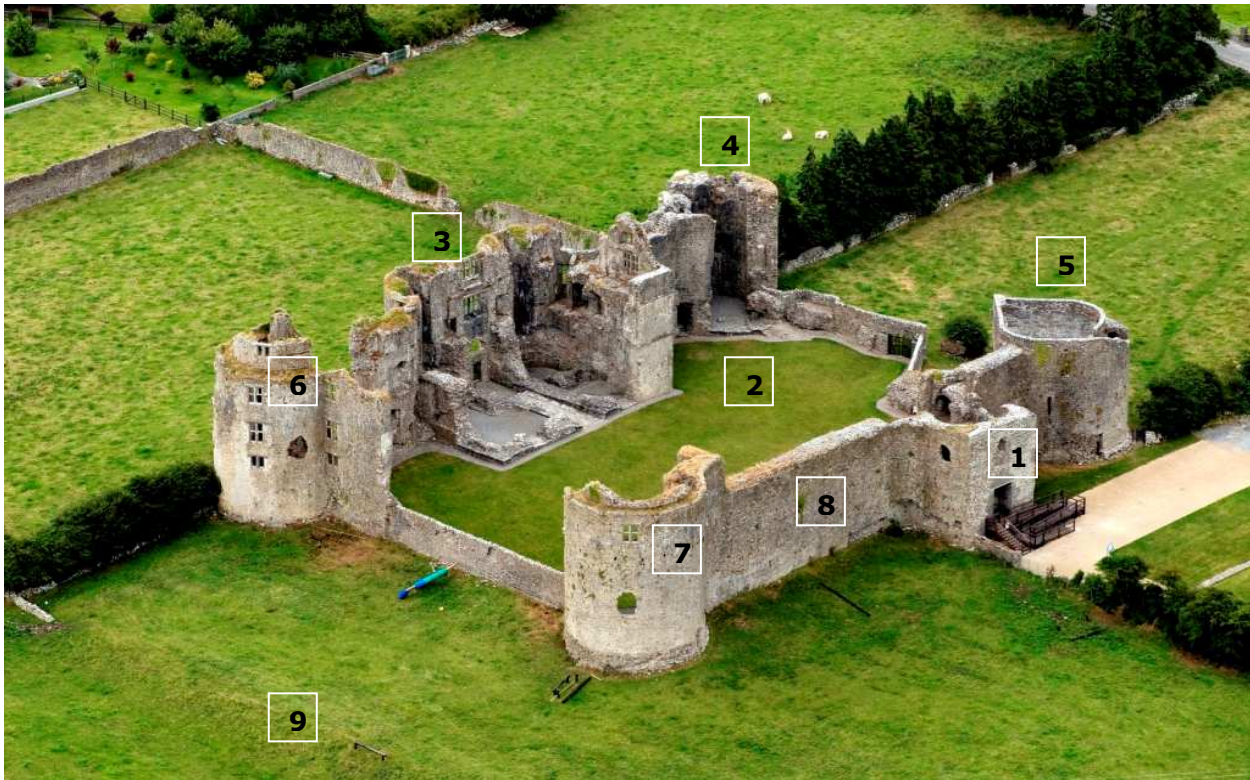
DUNGEON



W	C	B	A	P	O	O	L	N	U	G	M
B	A	T	T	L	E	M	E	N	T	S	L
O	N	A	V	H	J	F	T	S	I	X	U
O	O	L	G	K	W	A	D	L	I	O	P
M	S	V	A	O	X	D	L	P	U	B	C
E	A	D	R	I	D	U	N	G	E	O	N
C	U	R	D	I	C	D	T	O	W	E	R
E	A	I	E	T	M	L	N	D	O	A	I
B	U	D	R	A	W	B	R	I	D	G	E
L	F	O	O	J	M	I	A	C	N	L	P
J	P	D	B	V	L	G	O	Z	I	R	J
A	B	F	E	H	R	E	J	N	W	R	L

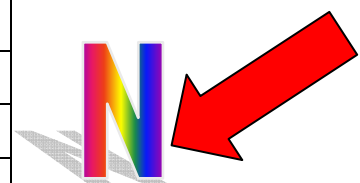
## Plan of Roscommon Castle

Using the numbers one to nine, name the parts of the castle using the words provided below. Don't forget to look at the directions they may help you along.



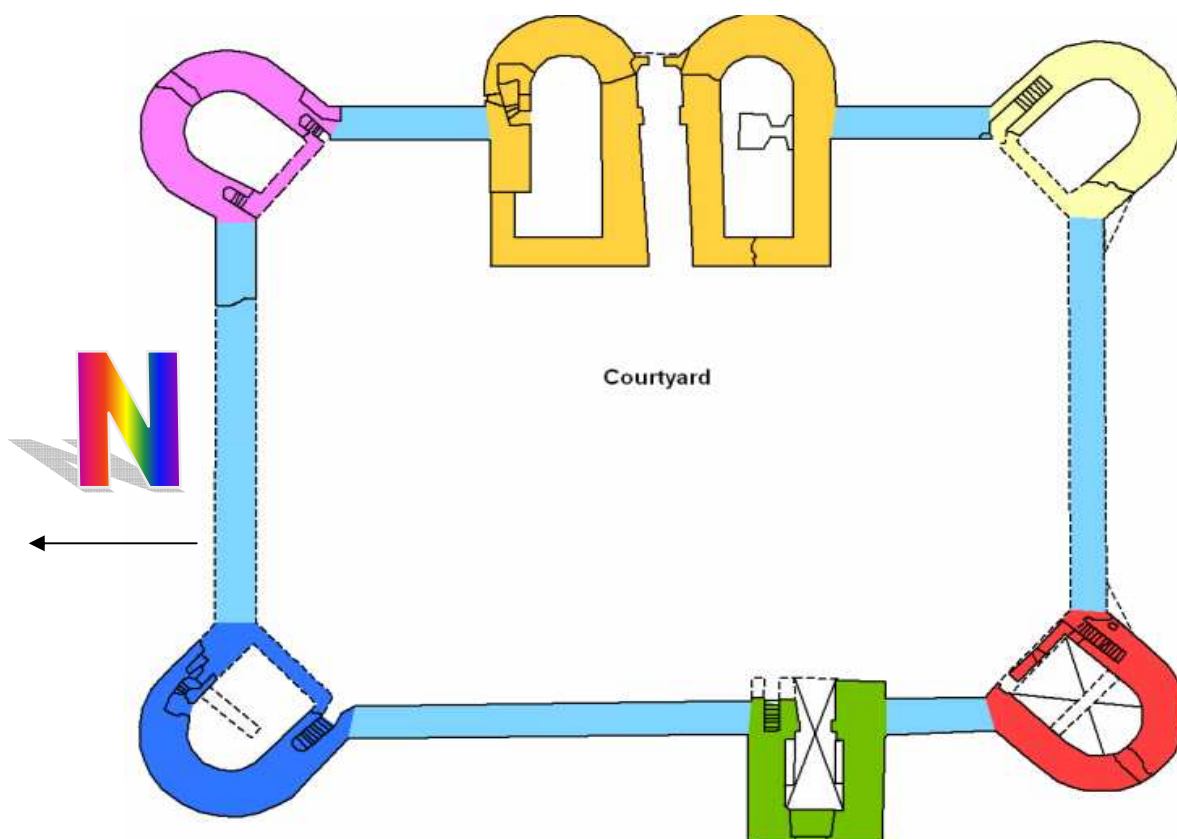
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South-east Angle Tower	
North-west angle tower	
Postern Gatehouse	
North-east angle tower	
Castle fosse/moat	
Courtyard	
Main Gatehouse	
South-west angle tower	
Curtain wall	



# Plan of Roscommon Castle

Figure out the directions on this plan of the castle. Place the numbers beside the correct part of the castle.

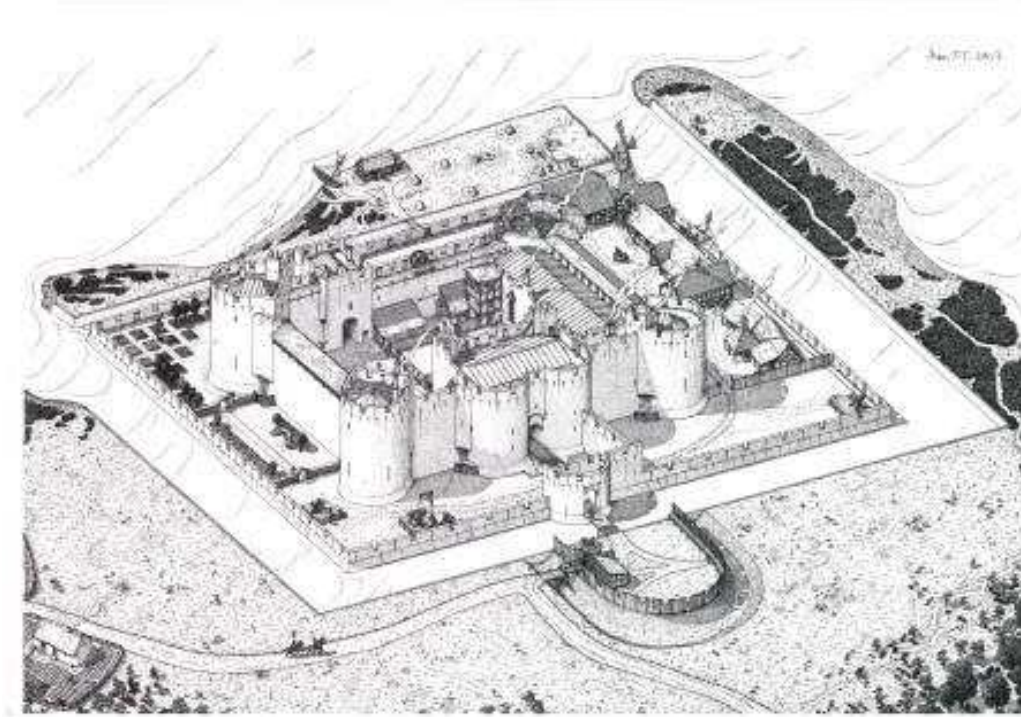


1	Postern Gatehouse
2	Courtyard
3	Main gatehouse
4	South-east angle tower
5	South-west angle tower
6	North-east angle tower
7	North-west angle tower
8	Curtain Wall



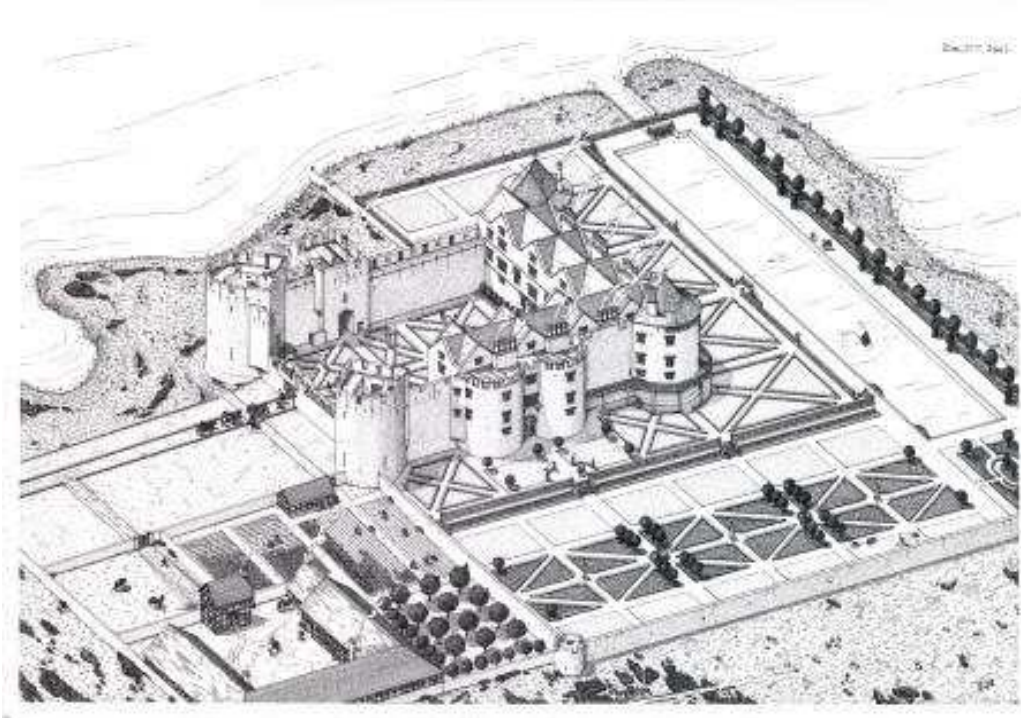
## Spot the Difference

### Roscommon Castle around 1307



© Daniel Tietzsch-Tyler

### Roscommon Castle around 1584



© Daniel Tietzsch-Tyler

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
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8	
9	
10	

## Acknowledgements

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Loughnaneane Park, Roscommon, Primary Schools Education Pack © Roscommon County Council 2008.

## Further Information

The sources of information below were used in this pack and may be of use for further studies.

### Books:

Roscommon Castle a Visitor's Guide, by Margaret Murphy & Kieran O'Connor, © Roscommon County Council 2008.

Guide National Monuments Ireland, by Peter Harbison, 1970. Published by Gill and Macmillan.

### Websites:

[www.clonalis.com](http://www.clonalis.com)

[www.heraldry.ws](http://www.heraldry.ws)

[www.castles-of-britain.com](http://www.castles-of-britain.com)

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