

UNIQUE EXPERIENCES



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Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works



Castletown House, Co. Kildare

Exclusive Viewing of an Irish Portrait Miniature Collection

Private
Guided
Tour

Castletown House is Ireland's first and finest Palladian style mansion. Built in the 1720s for William Conolly, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, Castletown House was constructed to exemplify its owners' influence and immense wealth. In the second half of the eighteenth century, William's grand – nephew Tom and his wife, Lady Louisa, created the grand interiors that visitors can still enjoy today. Remaining in the Conolly family until its sale in 1965, the estate was ultimately acquired by the state in 1994.



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IRELAND'S
ANCIENT EAST™
Wander Through Time

Contact: Kevina Dunne

Tel: +353 1 628 8252 **Email:** kevina.dunne@opw.ie

Address: Castletown House, Celbridge, Co. Kildare W23 V9H3
(Car Access from Exit 6, M4, Celbridge West)



Luxury Experience

Private Viewing of an Irish Portrait Collection of Miniatures

A “behind the rope”, private viewing of an Irish Portrait Collection of Miniatures, on loan from the Irish Georgian Society, in the Lady Kildare Room. The miniature and silhouette were personal items, often given as a gift and, in an age before photography, were often used as a visual memorial of a loved one which could be carried on the person as jewellery.

Your personal expert guide will lead your group on a journey of discovery through Irish history from the turbulent seventeenth century, through the opulence of enlightenment Ireland in the eighteenth century and to the eventual decline of the Big House. Insights into the estate's history, owners (the Conolly family), architectural and decorative art gems.

Inclusions:

- Exclusive access for private viewing of an Irish Portrait Collection of Miniatures – 30 minutes.
- Introduction to Castletown House and history of the Conolly family – 10 minutes
- Full guided, private tour and access to all museum rooms – 50 minutes
- Drop off and collection to Main House.

Group size: Min. 1 – Max. 4

Duration: 30 to 90 minutes

Mobility: No universal access.

There is Universal Access to the Ground Floor only.

Pricing: 1 person €200, 1-4 €150 per person. Suitable for children from 7 years, €50 per child.

Booking Conditions: Bookings must be confirmed by email 2 weeks in advance.

Payment: Payment must be made directly to OPW on the day or by invoice for those who are part of the OPW Tour Operators Voucher Scheme.

Availability: Last Friday of the month, March to October.

Languages: English only.

Facilities on site: Exhibitions, toilets, universal access toilet, coach park, car park, parklands, gift shop.

Access & Parking: Castletown is a 25 minute drive from Dublin City at Exit 6 on the M4.

Nearby: The Irish National Stud, Maynooth Castle, Kildare Village Retail Outlet, Farmleigh House, Leixlip Castle.



UNIQUE EXPERIENCES



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Dublin Castle, Dublin City

Meet the Curator

Private
Guided
Tour

Once the centre of British rule in Ireland, from 1204 to 1922, Dublin Castle is now the setting for some of the Irish nation's most important state ceremonies.

Ascend the Castle's grand Battleaxe Staircase and follow in the footsteps of world-famous figures, from Benjamin Franklin, Queen Victoria and Charles Dickens to Nelson Mandela, John F. Kennedy and Pope Francis. Experience the beautiful architecture and collections of this former palace, hear about the making of modern, independent Ireland, and see the grand hall where our head of State, the President of Ireland, is sworn into office.

The Dublin Castle Curators

Dr Myles Campbell is our Collections Curator and is responsible for researching, displaying, interpreting and supporting the conservation of the Castle's artworks and furnishings. He is passionate about the art and architecture of nineteenth-century Ireland and the lives of the people who shaped it. He holds a PhD in this field from Trinity College Dublin and has taught History of Art and Architecture at university level. His most recent publication, *Vicereines of Ireland: Portraits of Forgotten Women*, tells the untold stories of the women who once called Dublin Castle home. The book accompanied a landmark exhibition at the Castle in 2021.

William Derham is our Buildings Curator and is responsible for researching, presenting, interpreting and supporting the conservation of the Castle's buildings and interiors. He has a particular interest in the life of the Castle during the twentieth century, from the theft of the Irish Crown Jewels and the last days of the Viceregal Court, through the revolutionary period of 1916–23, to the rehabilitation and use of the Castle in post-independent Ireland. He is a graduate of the Dublin School of Architecture, T.U. Dublin, and studied Building Repair and Conservation at Trinity College Dublin. His most recent publication, *Splendour & Scandal*, examined the colourful history of the Office of Arms at Dublin Castle.



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Contact: Elizabeth Willms/Cormac Molloy

Tel: +353 1 645 8813 **Email:** elizabeth.willms@opw.ie | cormac.molloy@opw.ie
Dublin Castle, Dame Street, Dublin 2, D02 XN27.

Luxury Experience

Meet the Curator and explore the collection of Dublin Castle

Highlights and hidden gems await you on this special visit to the Castle, in the company of one of our two expert curators. Beginning in the palatial State Apartments, you will go behind the ropes for a private view of key artworks and architectural features, including a portrait by the renowned master Sir Anthony van Dyck, and the most important painted ceiling to survive in Ireland from the eighteenth century. Along the way, you will hear first-hand from the curator about the detailed research and conservation work that helps to safeguard these national treasures and bring their stories to life.

Moving to the soaring interior of the Chapel Royal, you will be brought behind closed doors for an exclusive visit to the gallery, with its velvet furnishings, jewel-like stained glass windows and array of sculptural ornament. As a memento of your time with us, you will be invited to choose a personally signed and dedicated copy of one of the curator's Dublin Castle publications.

Group size: Min. 1 – Max. 10

Duration: 45 minutes

Mobility: Universal access to State Apartments and Chapel Royal, but not to Chapel gallery. Drop off and collect to front door of Castle.

Inclusions:

- Private Curator Experience – 45 minutes with the Dublin Castle Curator.
- Expert introduction to Dublin Castle and its collections
- Exclusive access to the gallery of the Chapel Royal and to roped-off areas in the State Apartments.
- Let the Curator know in advance if you are interested in a particular period in history and they can select appropriate items for you to view.
- Drop off and collection at front door of Dublin Castle Upper Yard.

Booking Conditions: Bookings must be confirmed by email 2 weeks in advance.

Availability: Mondays – Fridays and some weekends. Due to the nature of this site, it may close at short notice due to government business and this is out of control of Dublin Castle staff, who will notify the buyer as soon as possible to arrange cancellation/ rescheduling if possible.

Payment: Payment must be made directly to OPW on the day or by invoice for those who are part of the OPW TOVS scheme.

Pricing: 1 person €200, 1-3 €150 per person, 4-10 people €100 per person. Suitable for children from 7 years, €50 per child.

Languages: English only.

Facilities on site: Exhibitions, toilets, disabled toilet, gardens. Guest toilet available for Unique Experience Visitors.

Access & Parking: Dublin Castle is accessed by Foot via: Dame Street and by Car via: Little Ship Street, Dublin 2.

Nearby: Dublin City Centre, Book of Kells, Guinness Storehouse, Kilmainham Gaol, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Phoenix Park Visitor Centre and Walled Victorian Gardens, Dublin Zoo, Farmleigh House, Castletown House.



UNIQUE EXPERIENCES



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Kilkenny Castle

The Ormonde Collection

Private
Guided
Tour

Voted in the top ten *most beautiful and fairy-tale esque Castles in the world* in 2019 by Conde Nast's 'Architectural Digest' readers, Kilkenny Castle is a truly historical and magical world. It stands on a strategic height above the River Nore, in twenty-one hectares of rolling parkland and formal gardens and is located in the very centre of Kilkenny City.

Today, it is one of the most prestigious of the National Historic Properties in Ireland with wonderful Medieval, Georgian and Victorian past eras to explore and enjoy. It was the former stately home of the most powerful and influential Butler Family – Dukes, Marquesses and Earls of Ormonde.

Exhibitions, tearoom, children's playground and several orienteering trails will add to the wonder of your visit.



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Contact: Anne Teehan

Tel: +353 (0)46 942 3481 Mobile: +353 (0) 87 6383017 Email: anne.teehan@opw.ie

Address: Kilkenny Castle, Office of Public Works, The Parade, Kilkenny R95 YRK1.



Luxury Experience

The Ormonde Collection

Step back in time and enjoy the wonder and history of this prestigious stately home.

From the very moment that you arrive through the Great Park Gates of Kilkenny Castle, the sight that you will behold of the majestic Castle and its rolling parkland will surely take your breath away. You will be warmly greeted by the Events Manager and one of our most experienced Guides, who will enthrall you with wonderful stories of the very powerful and influential Butler Family. This magnificent Castle has many hidden gems, which will be exclusively available to our Unique Experience Guests.

Some very special pieces from the Ormonde Collection will be available for your viewing in the Duchess Closest of the west wing. Guests will have the opportunity to handle some pieces, which may include weaponry, family photograph's, special family pieces and even some children's toys from the 19th century nursery.

Inclusions:

- A warm welcome and introduction to Kilkenny Castle
- A themed guided visit to the magnificent rooms by one of the Castle's most experienced Guides, which will include access to wonderful exhibitions. The visit can be personalised to the specific interests of our guests with advance notice.
- Exclusive viewing of some very special pieces from the Ormonde Collection in the Duchess Closet of the west wing.

Supplementary Options

- Exclusive car parking on the grounds of the Castle for one car or mini-van.
- Luncheon or Afternoon Tea at Butler House - a walk through the former stable and coach house areas of the Castle into the beautiful gardens of Butler House. Today it is a very exclusive hotel and restaurant and it is here where a wonderful table awaits you! A separate booking is required for this experience at Butler House.

Group size: Min. 1 – Max. 8 guests

Duration: 90 minutes

Availability: Monday to Friday during the months of April to October inclusive.

Mobility: Universal access to the west wing, but not to the central or east wing of the castle.

Booking Conditions: All enquiries must be made via Anne Teehan, anne.teehan@opw.ie. Bookings must be confirmed by email 2 weeks in advance.

Pricing: 1 person €200, 1-3 €150 per person, 4-8 €100 per person. Suitable for children from 7 years, €50 per child.

Languages: English

Payment: Payment must be made directly to OPW on the day or by invoice for those who are part of the OPW TOVS scheme. Payment for Luncheon or Afternoon Tea at Butler House is separate.

Facilities on site: Exhibitions, tearooms, stunning parkland walks, the formal Rose Garden with its feature fountain and exclusive access to the rooms in the west wing.

Access & Parking: Kilkenny Castle is situated on the Castle Road in the very center of Kilkenny City. Exclusive parking will be available to our Unique Experience guests within the grounds for one car or mini-van, with drop off and collection at the main door of the Castle in the courtyard.

Nearby: Kilkenny's 'Medieval Mile' meanders from the Castle to St. Canice's Cathedral with Rothe House, Medieval Mile Museum and Butler Gallery of Contemporary Art at 'Evan's Home' situated on the route. The formal stables and coach house of the Castle, is today the Kilkenny Design Centre, located across the street.



UNIQUE EXPERIENCES



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Farmleigh House, Dublin

Meet the Librarian and explore the collection of Benjamin Guinness

Private
Guided
Tour

A historic house holding important collections, an art gallery, a working farm, and the official Irish State guesthouse, Farmleigh House and Estate, located in an estate of seventy-eight acres situated to the north-west of Dublin's Phoenix Park. Farmleigh provides accommodation for visiting dignitaries and guests of the nation, most notably: Queen Elizabeth II in 2011, Emperor of Japan 2005, Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge, in 2020.

Built by the famous Guinness brewing family, Farmleigh remains a unique representation of its heyday, the Edwardian period, and houses important artworks and furnishings, as well as the Benjamin Iveagh collection of rare books, bindings, and manuscripts, which is held in the Library. The collection is owned by Marsh's Library and the collection was donated to Marsh's Library in 2009 by the Guinness family.

The extensive pleasure grounds feature walled and sunken gardens, and scenic lakeside walks.

Nuala Canny, OPW Librarian Bio:

BA in History and English (UCD), Masters in Library and Information Studies(UCD). 30 years experience as a librarian. Worked in the Law Society Library, Irish Management Institute, A&L Goodbody Solicitors and Portobello College before joining OPW main library in 2003, based in St Stephen's Green and was assigned to Benjamin Iveagh Library 5 years ago. Took over collections management in Farmleigh 4 years ago. She also oversees the Cholmeley Harrison Archive and Library in Emo Court.



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Contact: Maria O'Hanlon

Tel: +353 1 815 5914 Email: maria.ohanlon@opw.ie

Address: Farmleigh House and Estate, OPW, Phoenix Park, Dublin, D15 TD50.

Luxury Experience

Meet the Librarian and explore the collection of Benjamin Guinness

Enjoy the unique sense of history in the beautiful library of Farmleigh House, once home to the famous Irish brewing family – the Guinnesses.

Soak up the smell of leather and old books while our expert librarian guides you through the world-class collection of rare manuscripts and books. Gain insight into the binding process that created these beautiful books.

The Benjamin Iveagh Library was amassed by Benjamin Guinness (1937-1992), 3rd Earl of Iveagh, a keen and astute collector of rare books, manuscripts and fine bindings. The collection amounts to more than 5,000 items and includes mostly rare Irish books and manuscripts. Among the historical manuscripts in the collection is a 13th century description of Ireland, an Irish-language primer prepared for Queen Elizabeth I. All major Irish writers are represented in the collection, including James Joyce, Seamus Heaney, Samuel Beckett, Jonathan Swift, and includes first editions of Ulysses and Gulliver's Travels.

A particular strength of the collection is in fine Irish bindings from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Together with a large number of 'Livres d'Art' – books with beautiful illustrations by famous artists. This collection is as truly beautiful as it is educational and entertaining.

Booking Conditions: All enquiries to be made via Maria O'Hanlon, maria.ohanlon@opw.ie

Bookings must be confirmed by email 2 weeks in advance. Availability Mondays to Fridays and some weekends April to December.

Payment: Payment must be made directly to OPW on the day or by invoice for those who are part of the OPW Tour Operator Voucher Scheme.

Information on Public Tours: Public tours take place daily at various times throughout the day. These take place in parts of the house.

Inclusions:

- Introduction to Farmleigh – 15 minutes
- Private Library Experience - 45 minutes with OPW Librarian, Nuala Canny.
- Exclusive introduction to the Farmleigh House and the world famous collection Benjamin Iveagh Collection.
- Let Nuala know in advance if you are interested in a particular writer or period in history and she can select an appropriate manuscript for you to view
- Drop off and collection to the main door of Farmleigh House.

Supplementary Options:

- Full private guided tour (including Presidential Suite and other floors), exclusive access to important Irish art. (45 - 60 minutes)
- Library and house tours are suitable for children aged 10 years and above.

Group size: Min. 1 – Max. 10

Duration: 60 to 90 minutes

Mobility: Universal Access. Library Experience is on ground floor of house. Ramp at front of house south side of house. Drop off and collect to front of house for Unique Experience visitors.

Pricing: 1 person €200, 1-3 €150 per person, 4-10 €100 per person. Suitable for children from 10 years, €50 per child.

Languages: English.

Facilities on site: Exhibitions, toilets, disabled toilet, coach park, gardens.

Availability: 1st April – 11th December approx.

Access & Parking: Farmleigh is accessed via the Phoenix Park, Dublin. Drop off and collection at front door of Farmleigh House for Unique Experience visitors.

Nearby: Dublin City Centre, Dublin Zoo, Phoenix Park Visitor Centre and Walled Victorian Gardens, Kilmainham Gaol, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Castletown House, Dublin Castle.

