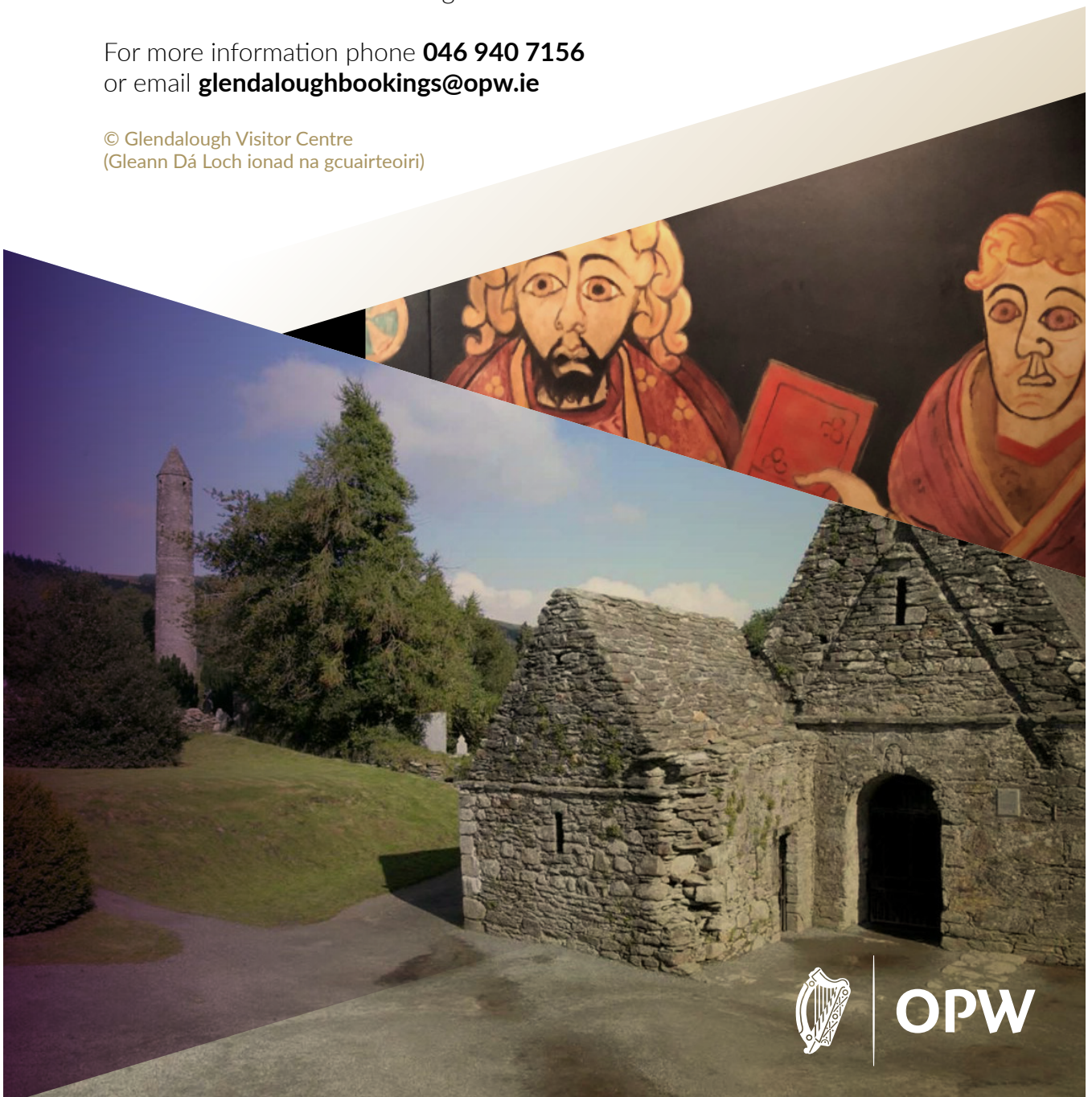


Information Resource for Schools

Glendalough Visitor Centre offers worksheets to use in conjunction with this educational resource pack that specifically look at key aspects of the school curriculum, these are available free of charge.

For more information phone **046 940 7156**
or email **glendaloughbookings@opw.ie**

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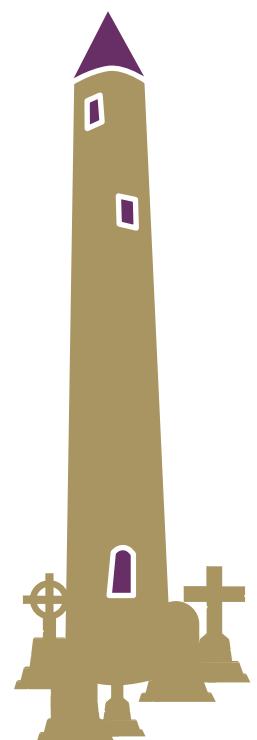


Introduction

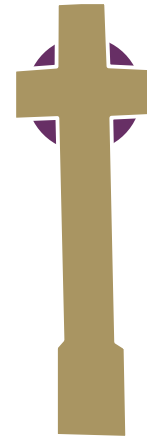
The Irish word Glendalough (Gleann dá Loch) means the valley of two lakes. Glendalough is a U-shaped valley and was formed about 20,000 years ago at the end of the last ice age. Granite and mica-schist were the main rocks that were deposited there. The valley floor has two glaciated lakes. There are two rivers that flow through Glendalough and are known as the Glenealo River and the Glendasan River.

St. Kevin arrived in Glendalough in the 6th Century and founded an early Christian Monastery. It is thought that St. Kevin was born in 498 and that he died in 618 so it is said that Kevin lived to be 120 years of age!

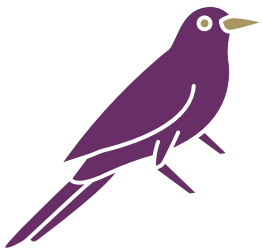
When St. Kevin arrived in Glendalough he wanted to live life as a hermit. He spent years living among the animals and close to nature (mostly away from humans!) It is believed that Kevin spent some of his time in his cave near Temple Na Skellig which is known as St. Kevin's Bed. This cave is manmade and carved out of the cliff face. St. Kevin's feast day is on June 3rd.



Myths and Legends about Saint Kevin



St. Kevin and the Blackbird



There are many myths and legends about St. Kevin. The most famous story is of St. Kevin and the blackbird (The Irish word for blackbird is Lon Dubh). The legend says that one day St. Kevin was standing praying in the upper lake with his hands outstretched when a blackbird landed in his hand. The Blackbird built its nest and laid its eggs and St. Kevin stayed in the lake for a very long time until the birds were able to fly.

St. Kevin and The Deer Stone

One day, the wife of one of the workmen in the monastery died while giving birth to twins. The workman was unable to look after the children and so he brought them to the monks to be cared for. The monks asked St. Kevin for help. St. Kevin prayed to God and the next morning a wild deer came down from Derrybawn Mountain and allowed him to milk it into the hollow of a stone. The deer returned every day for as long as the children were weaned. The stone still exists on the Green Road today and is called the Deer Stone.



St. Kevin and Kathleen



There was a young woman called Kathleen who fell in love with St. Kevin and would not leave him alone. One story tells us that she followed Kevin into his cave and he pushed her into the lake where she drowned. The other version of this story tells us that he beat her with stinging nettles, she repented for her sins and joined a convent!



Monuments in Glendalough

The churches of St. Kevin's time were built of wood so they do not survive today. During the 11th Century the monastery was greatly expanded. **These are the buildings that can be seen on your visit to Glendalough.**



The Gatehouse and Sanctuary Stone

The Gatehouse was the main entrance into the main monastery. It is the only surviving early medieval gatehouse in Ireland! It has two arches which are supported with centre stones that are known as keystones. The gatehouse may have originally had a timber roof. Just inside the gatehouse there is a large stone. This is known as the Sanctuary Stone and has a cross carved on it. This indicated to visitors that they were entering a safe place and that they would have to obey the rules of the church.



The Round Tower

It is believed that The Round Tower was built in the early 12TH Century. The Round Tower is 30 meters in height. The doorway is 3.5 meters from the ground. There were 6 timber floors originally inside the tower and they were connected by ladders. The top floor has 4 windows opening to the North, South, East and West. Round Towers were primarily built as bell towers, but served on occasion as storehouse or as places of refuge in times of attack, but they were not always the safest places to hide!





The Cathedral

The Cathedral is called St. Peter and St. Paul's and is the largest church in Glendalough. The Cathedral was the primary place of worship. It was built over many phases, the earliest, consisting of the present nave with its ante. The Chancel and sacristy date from the late 12th to early 13th centuries. The walls have small holes called 'putlog' holes. These holes once held the wood for the scaffolding that helped to build the high walls.

St. Kevin's Cross

St. Kevin's cross is an early Celtic Cross. A Celtic Cross may represent Christianity and Paganism. These two symbols, the cross and the circle may have been used to bring the two beliefs together. St. Kevin's cross stands at 3.7 meters in height. It may have been used to mark the original cemetery.



St. Kevin's Church

St. Kevin's Church it is also known as St. Kevin's Kitchen. (People once believed that the bell tower was a chimney so they thought that the church may have been a kitchen but we now know that cooking was mostly done outside during this time). It is believed to have been built around 1100 and about a century later an altar and sacristy were added to the Church. The altar does not survive today. St. Kevin's Church has a stone roof and a bell tower. It is the only church in Glendalough that has its roof intact today as most of the other churches had wooden roofs that have not survived.



Other Buildings in the Valley

The Priests' House is located close to St. Kevin's Cross and may have once housed the relics of St. Kevin.



St. Kieran's Church is situated close to St. Kevin's Church and only has its low walls preserved.

St. Mary's Church was located just outside the main enclosure. It may have been used as a church for a female congregation.

Trinity Church is located by the main road. It also had a stone roof and a bell tower but collapsed in the early 19th century.

St. Saviours Priory is located to the east of the main site. It is situated near the river and has the best Romanesque carvings in Glendalough.

Reefert Church is located near the upper lake. There are ancient crosses and grave-markers in the surrounding graveyard. It may have been a cemetery used for Royal burials.

Temple-Na-Skellig is on the Southside of the Upper Lake and can only be accessed by boat. It may have been the original site of St Kevin's Hermitage.

Life in Glendalough

In the 12th Century Glendalough was a great centre of religious power. Glendalough had a very large population. Many people also travelled to Glendalough. Some people travelled on Pilgrimage to Glendalough (a sacred journey, undertaken for a spiritual purpose) and Glendalough was also a great centre of education.

Prayer was very important in the daily life of the monastery. When the bells rang the people would gather for worship. Prayer times would have been 6am, 9am, 12 noon, 3pm and 6pm.

When the monks lived in Glendalough they lived in a cluster of houses in the outer enclosure.

The Guesthouse was used to welcome people to Glendalough

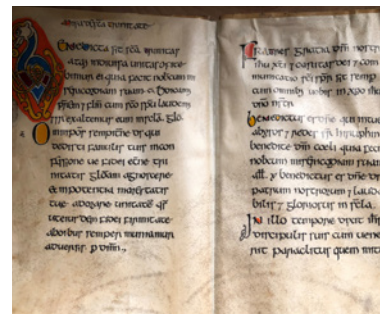
The Scriptorium is the place where scholars and scribes produced manuscripts.

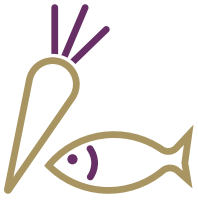
A master carpenter designed and built houses, churches and bridges.

Glendalough was surrounded by trees so the monks had plenty of supplies to make plates, barrels (for their beer and wine!) and writing tablets. Oak was also used in the building of the churches.

Blacksmiths used iron to make knives and nails. Metalworkers cast or worked bronze, silver and gold. Objects that may have been made were chalices, bells and shrines.

Satchels, shoes, belts were made from the skins of the cows.





Food

Food was mostly cooked outside.

The monks lived mostly off farm produce such as;

Milk and **cheese** from the cows and **meat**.

Chickens were kept for **eggs**.

Fish were found in the nearby rivers.

Onions, Carrots, Cabbage (root vegetables) were grown.

From the orchard they had **apples** and **plums**.

They kept food stored in the kitchen such as **beans and peas and herbs**. Some of these items were found growing wild in the forest.

Barley and oats was a very important part of the community's diet. It was used to make bread and gruel. A work pump was used on the river to mill the grain.

The monks kept beehives for **honey**. They also used beeswax to make wax tablets and candles.



People who lived in Glendalough

The Abbot: The Abbot was the spiritual leader and legal representative of the religious community. He assigned the monks their work roles. In 1100 the most famous Abbot was called Laurence O' Toole.

The Bishop: The Bishop was very important in early Irish Churches. One of his main jobs was to train the clergy. St Kevin was the first Bishop of Glendalough.

Airchinnech: The Airchinneach was responsible for looking after the daily running of the settlement. He was responsible for all the finances.

Monks: The monks lived in the religious community. Some of the monks studied, some did manual work, and some had roles such as cook or gatekeeper.

The Priest: The Priest was responsible for ministering the sacraments such as baptism and burials.

Tenants: Tenants were ordinary people who farmed the land and lived close to the settlement

Scribe/Scholar: Education was a very important part of the church life. Scribes illuminated sacred manuscripts they wrote about the lives of saints.



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