



Ardgillan Castle



EDUCATION PROGRAMME

AT ARDGILLAN CASTLE



ARDGILLAN CASTLE OFFERS A COMPREHENSIVE AND DIVERSE COLLECTION OF INTERACTIVE AND EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS AND TOURS.

WE HAVE DEVISED AN EDUCATION PROGRAMME THAT TIES IN WITH THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM TO OFFER SCHOOLS AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN HISTORY AND HERITAGE.

HISTORY OF ARDGILLAN CASTLE & DEMESNE



Ardgillan Castle and Demesne is situated in North County Dublin on an elevated coastline between Balbriggan and Skerries, 20 miles north of Dublin City. The demesne is well signposted off the M1. The park consists of 194 acres of rolling open grassland, mixed woodland and gardens, overlooking the Irish Sea with views of the Mourne Mountains to the north and Lambay Island to the south-east. Ardgillan is a sanctuary for many species of animals, mammals and birds for which the wooded areas provide a safe retreat from surrounding agricultural land.

Although referred to as a castle, the residence at Ardgillan is a large country-styled house with castellated embellishments. Originally named “Prospect House”, the central section was built in 1738 by Robert Taylor, with the west and east wings added in the late 1800s.

Initially the site was heavily wooded, the name Ardgillan being derived from the Irish “Ard Choill” meaning High Wood. It was cleared out by service soldiers and itinerant workers in return for one penny a day, sleeping accommodation and one meal.

The house consists of two storeys over a basement which extends out under the lawns on the southern side of the building. When occupied, the ground and first floors were the living accommodation while the west and east wings were servants’ quarters and estate offices. The basement comprised of the service floor, the kitchen and stores.

ARDGILLAN CASTLE TOUR:

The Ardgillan Castle tour is approximately one hour long and is an amazing opportunity to experience history at first hand. Many periods of social history are brought to life with the focus firmly on the family who once lived in the castle. Visitors will get the chance to explore the castle and enjoy the same atmosphere that the Taylors experienced from 1738, when the castle was built, right up to 1962, when it was eventually sold.

School groups will get the chance to explore the castle and collection in depth. Our education team all have experience working with school groups and bringing history to life. The tour will give schools a chance to see what life was like in a 'Big House' and to witness the stark contrast between life upstairs and downstairs.



Interactive Quiz & History Trail:

To coincide with a tour of the house, schools will be given the opportunity to engage with the castle by taking part in an interactive quiz and trail through the castle. This quiz has been devised to tie in with the developmental skills that are needed for children to advance. Using the cognitive skills and exploring the changes through time, children will be able to engage more fully with history and heritage.

FAMINE:

Ardgillan was not untouched by the Famine. The Taylor family were wealthy landowners at that time and it is recorded that Balbriggan and the surrounding areas were significantly affected by the Famine. The family employed extra people on the land to offer employment to the local families. The unique alcove wall that was built in the Victorian Walled Garden is a reminder of this time. This wall was built during the Famine years as a Famine relief project to offer further employment on the land. The wall still stands and is a reminder of the hardships and also the generosity of the Taylor family during this time.

LIFE IN OLD TIMES:



The collection at Ardgillan Castle provides us with ample opportunity to delve into life in the past. The kitchen in the castle is filled with objects that represent a time when life was much different. Using this collection we can illustrate how much life has changed and how altered our daily and domestic lives are from those of our ancestors, simple things that we now take for granted were far more difficult, more manual and time consuming. Living history is a tool that allows participants to immerse themselves in history and step back in time. We have a collection of items that relate to a laundry that was at Ardgillan, these include washboards, metal irons (both box irons and solid irons), and ironing boards amongst others. This workshop offers children the chance to get hands on and interact with the objects. Life in the laundry was difficult and this activity helps to bring this aspect of history to life for the children.

We also provide a butter making workshop. A selection of butter churns are displayed giving children the chance to engage with the objects and understand the methods and skill that would have been needed to make butter. This workshop begins by explaining how butter is made. Children are then given the chance to make their own butter. This workshop allows children to engage with the objects and work together as a team to achieve their goal.



There is an icehouse on site at Ardgillan which, we use as a catalyst to tell the story of how ice-cream and ice-lollies were made. *On a summer's day in the early 19th century how did people cool down? How did they get ice? How did things stay frozen before freezers?*

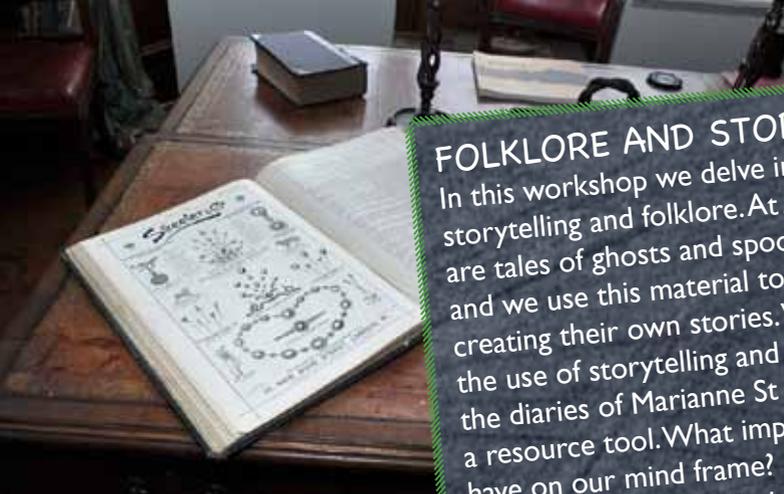


LIFE IN THE BIG HOUSE:
In this workshop children will get the chance to meet the Butler or House Keeper who will take them on a tour of the castle. Children will be given the opportunity to take on different roles within the house and 'interview' for the position. Others will also be given the chance to be the Lady or Lord of the Castle and learn about how life would have been in a stately home in the 18th century.

UPSTAIRS/DOWNSTAIRS STORY:

Children will get to learn about life in the Victorian Times. The group will get the opportunity to hear how people lived in a big house, with a workshop held, Upstairs in the Dining Room and then Downstairs in the kitchen. The contrast between the life of the family and the servants will be explained. Children will also learn about society at the time; themes include food, pastimes, crime, education and lifestyle. They will also get the chance to hear about the people who lived at Ardgillan in Victorian times, including the servants. The upstairs/downstairs story of life in a big house is central to this theme.





FOLKLORE AND STORYTELLING:

In this workshop we delve into the art of storytelling and folklore. At Ardgillan there are tales of ghosts and spooky goings-on and we use this material to aid children in creating their own stories. We also discuss the use of storytelling and writing using the diaries of Marianne St Leger Taylor as a resource tool. What impact does writing have on our mind frame? Is it good to tell stories? Are stories, diaries, and poems etc. useful tools? Do they help us to learn about history and heritage?

FAIRY TREE TRAIL:

Ardgillan Castle has launched the newest addition to its already spectacular parkland with the creation of a Fairy Tree Trail. This project was created in collaboration with Fingal County Council and is free of charge. The trail is dotted around the woodland area of the walled garden and offers visitors a chance to learn about the different varieties of trees growing at Ardgillan. Throughout the trail there are informative panels with interesting information on the many species of tree growing in the park. A map and quiz has been created to coincide with the trail. The quiz will give students a chance to learn more about the different species of tree in their environment and will also give them the opportunity to engage with the landscape and learn about the many different uses of trees and wood.



HERITAGE TRAIL:

Children will get the chance to explore the heritage of the park on this interactive outdoor tour. This trail can act as a catalyst for learning, as pupils are led through the park by one of our Education Team. Dotted around the park are key features that convey how life used to be at Ardgillan. These include the Icehouse that was built to store ice and keep the more perishable goods fresh throughout the warmer months. The Lady's Stairs illustrates the arrival of the railway to Ardgillan and ties in with the Industrial Revolution in Ireland. These advancements in transport made life much easier for people who lived in the area. The remains of a gate lodge can be seen on the estate; this provides a trigger for the changes that we see in buildings and land ownership. With the selling of the property by the Taylor family, the land began to change and some buildings were no longer necessary. There are other aspects of the estate that tie into the trail, which will help to bring history to life for the children.



There are learning resource materials that have been created to coincide with the Heritage Trail. They include a scavenger hunt that participants must complete, a map of the area that will touch on the topic of archaeology, amongst other things.

Learning resource materials are available that outline the different workshops that we have on offer.

***ALL WORKSHOPS ARE €5 PER STUDENT.**

For more information on any of our workshops contact;
Danielle Wilson Higgins
Culture & Heritage Officer,
Ardgillan Castle, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.
Email: Danielle.wilsonhiggins@fingal.ie or Tel: 01 8492212.



FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

Ardgillan Castle, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin

Phone: 01 849 2212

Email: eventardgillan@fingal.ie



Comhairle Contae
Fine Gall
Fingal County
Council

