



## OzLeisure Traveller episode 10

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### **Failte Ireland East and Midlands Region – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

#### **Host**

Richard Maguire from OzLeisure.com.au in Melbourne, Australia

#### **Guest**

Deirdre Cole, Failte Ireland East and Midlands Region

#### **General information**

Failte Ireland is the Tourism Board for Ireland, and on this show we are delighted to welcome Deirdre Cole, who represents the East and Midlands Region. The region boasts a fabulous array of attractions and events all year round, matched perfectly to the legendary Irish charm and friendliness that is known throughout the world.

As usual, there is far more on offer than we can fit into a single episode, but Deirdre has picked out a number of attractions and events to suit all types of people; young and old alike. In keeping with Ireland as a whole, there are plenty of attractions aimed at children and families with children of all ages.

If you are more interested in views than activities, then Ireland is also the place for you ... the landscapes are spectacular all year round, and the East and Midlands region is no exception to that – set on the Shannon, the entire area is a wonderland of sights and sounds that has to be experienced to be believed.

## Region covered



## Items mentioned – Activities

Failte Ireland main website

<http://www.discoverireland.ie/lakelands>

### Belvedere House & Gardens

An oasis of beauty in the Midlands is there to be enjoyed. Belvedere House Gardens & Park can be discovered on the shores of Lough Ennell, 4 miles from Mullingar in Co Westmeath and just one hours drive from Dublin. Belvedere opened to the public in 2000. The estate comprises of 160 acres of parkland with 6kms of woodland and lakeshore walks. Several follies adorn the landscape including Ireland's largest folly – The Jealous Wall. The restored Belvedere House is an 18<sup>th</sup> century hunting/fishing lodge and the walled garden contains one of Ireland's finest collections of rare and special plants. The stable block is home to a modern Visitor Centre with multi-media show, exhibitions and Café. There is also a delightful tram which provides guided tours around the section of the park ground.

Belvedere is open to the public 7 days a week all year round.

Phone; 0449349060

E-mail; [info@belvedere-house.ie](mailto:info@belvedere-house.ie)

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### Viking Cruises;

Enjoy an Historic Cruise in the Shannon & Lough Ree. The Viking 1 takes you back 1200 years to when Vikings Warbands roamed and pillaged in these waters. Ideal for Schools, Coach Tours or an interesting break.

Scheduled cruises daily from the Strand, Athlone.

Viking Tours, 7 St Mary's Place, Athlone

Tel; 09064 73383/73392

086 2621136

### Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre

The centre interprets an Iron Age bog road, which was built in the year 148BC across the bog lands close to the River Shannon. The oak road is the largest of its kind to have been uncovered in Europe and was excavated over the years. Inside the building, an 18 – metre stretch of preserved road is on permanent display in a specially designed hall with humidifiers to prevent the ancient wood from cracking in the heat.

Contact Kenagh, Co Longford

Tel; +353(0)4322386

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### Glendeer Open Farm

Take a break at Glendeer 6 acre Open Farm with over 50 species of animals & birds, play area & picnic area. This farm is transformed into Ireland's Lapland for the month of December with Santa, live deer, 'Dancer & Prancer' as special guests at the farm, live crib, snow and scene and lots more. Over 500 species of birds, coffee shop, play and picnic area, nature walk, restored cottage, souvenirs, self-catering accommodation, groups by appointment

Glendeer Open Farm

Drum

Athlone

Co Westmeath

Tel; 0906437147

E-mail; [glendeer@glendeer.com](mailto:glendeer@glendeer.com)

Web; [www.glendeer.com](http://www.glendeer.com)

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### Kilvahan Horse Drawn Carriages

Kilvahan caters for all your needs like special event openings, parades, VIP transportation, anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, picnic tours or just a relaxing Slieve Bloom tour. Based in the Slieve Bloom Mountains in Coolrain, Co Laois just outside Mountrath or Roscrea, but also provide a nationwide service with most of the carriages. It makes no difference, if you are looking for a romantic drive for just two persons in a 1900,s Victoria or if you would like to hire a big picnic carriage which is equipped with music player, lights, picnic table and storage. The carriages are pulled by expertly trained horses, which will bring you smoothly through the trials of modern traffic.

Contact Kilvahan Drawn Carriages

Tullibards Stud

Coolrain

Co Laois  
Tel; 0578735178  
Mob 087 2750260  
E-mail; [kilvahan@eircom.net](mailto:kilvahan@eircom.net)  
Web; [www.kilvahancarriages.com](http://www.kilvahancarriages.com)

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#### Birr Castle Demesne & Historic Science Centre

Birr Castle Demesne and Ireland's Historic Science Centre is host to Ireland's largest gardens, offering a Winter Garden, Formal Garden, Terrace Garden a River Garden. The beautiful parkland features thousands of rare trees and plants collected from all over the world. The rivers, lakes and waterfalls are all memorable.

The Great Telescope constructed at Birr Castle in the 1840's, the largest in the world for 70 years, is now fully restored and looks and moves just as it did 150 years ago.

Ireland's Historic Science Centre features pioneering achievements in fields of astronomy, photography engineering and horticulture.

Contact; Birr Castle Demesne  
Birr  
Co Offaly  
Tel; +353(0)579120336  
Web [www.birrcastle.com](http://www.birrcastle.com)

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#### Clonmacnoise

Clonmacnoise is a sixth century monastic site, with three high crosses, a cathedral, seven churches and two round towers. This great monastery was founded in 548-9 by St Ciaran. Clonmacnoise was a great centre of learning, and many manuscripts, including the Annals of Tighernach (11<sup>th</sup> Century) and the Book of the Dun Cow (12<sup>th</sup> Century), were written here. The site is entered through the visitor centre, where a number of cross-slabs is displayed. The centrepiece of the new Interpretative Centre is the 9<sup>th</sup> Century Cross of the Scriptures.

Tel; +353 (0)909674134.



### Ballinlough Castle Gardens

A sense of tranquillity prevails as one enters the gates of Ballinlough. Perched on a hill overlooking two lakes, the 17<sup>th</sup> century castle is the home of Sir John and Lady Nugent. The gardens were restored in 1994, and now open to the public, together with the lakeside and woodland walks. The walled garden is divided into four walled sections. On view are herbaceous borders, a grass tennis court, lily pond, rose garden, a herb and soft fruit garden and a well stocked orchard. From the walled gardens, a white door leads to the lakeside walks with the charming water garden and its rustic summerhouse.

Contact; Clonmellon

Co Westmeath

Tel; +353(0)469433268

Web [www.ballinlough.com](http://www.ballinlough.com)

### **Items mentioned – Events and festivals**

#### Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann

Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann 2008 takes place in Tullamore, Co Offaly from 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> August. The largest festival of Irish music, song and dance, with over 200,000 people gathering from all over the world, during this week long cultural celebration.

E-mail – [attractabrady@hotmail.com](mailto:attractabrady@hotmail.com)

Web – [www.fleadh2008.com](http://www.fleadh2008.com)

#### Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival 40<sup>th</sup> Year takes place Friday 15<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2008.

Old time Fair Green Day; Sunday parade of vintage cars, engines, floats, horses and carriages, marching bands, jugglers & clowns street theatre. An extensive exhibition trail; 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Antique and Fine Arts Fair and the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival; costume competitions; Old style shop windows; candle lit nights in local pubs; historical walking tours; Film nights and live theatre; Flying clubs Fly-in; Free daily children's events; Vintage & Modern Sports events; Photography Competition; Carlsberg pub Competitions; Guinness Donkey Derby and Barman's Race; Camcor Capers park games; Live music; Spectacular fireworks display.

Telephone +353(0)879226961

Web – [www.birrvintageweek.com](http://www.birrvintageweek.com)

### Shannonbridge and Clonmacnoise Mid Summer Festival

Shannonbridge and Clonmacnoise Mid Summer Festival take place from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

A popular stop for boaters on the Shannon, Shannonbridge has long had a tradition of music which has now developed into a three day long festival. Be prepared for a line up of performances in traditional jazz, classical and folk music with plenty to entertain little ones as well. We have made the most of our unique location by placing concerts on a floating stage on the River Shannon and using the monastic site of Clonmacnoise. Most of the events are also free.

Tel +353(0)9120923

Web – [www.midirelandtourism.com](http://www.midirelandtourism.com)

### Goldsmith International Literary Festival, June 2008

Oliver Goldsmith, Citizen of the world. Goldsmith Literary Heritage. Weekend to include Talks, Poetry Readings and Heavey Goldsmith Exhibition in Athlone Library. Annual Tour of Goldsmith Sites with readings by local writers on Saturday morning.

Annual National Adults and Children's Poetry Competition.

### TriAthlone takes place from 7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

Triathlon combines the best of 3 sports: swimming, cycling and running. The main triAthlone race is a Sprint Distance Race: 750m Swim, 20km Bike, 5km Run. The charity Try-a-tri-Athlone has a shorter-downstream swim of 200m with the same bike and run course. The event commences with a swim along the river Shannon, which flows through Athlone town, followed by a 20km cycle and 5km run around and through the streets of Athlone. Over 1,500 competitors are expected to take part with up to 100 elite athletes competing in a separate event later on Saturday evening. The river Shannon will provide a spectacular backdrop to the swim part of the triathlon.

Phone - +353(0)906422142

E-mail – [karen@triathlone.com](mailto:karen@triathlone.com)

Web – [www.triathlone.com](http://www.triathlone.com)

### Tullamore Show and AIB National Livestock Week, takes place on August 10<sup>th</sup> 2008.

The venue for this event is the Charleville Estate, Tullamore, Co Offaly. A family event, with focus on rural and family lifestyle, incorporating cultural, commercial and competitive elements.

Tel +353(0)579352141

E-mail – [tullamoreshow@eircom.net](mailto:tullamoreshow@eircom.net)

Web – [www.tullamoreshow.com](http://www.tullamoreshow.com)



## **Acknowledgements**

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If you have an idea for a podcast series that you would like to discuss with OzLeisure.com.au, please contact us by e-mail: [info@ozleisure.com.au](mailto:info@ozleisure.com.au) and we would be delighted to discuss it with you.