



ALDO PAPONE CASE STUDY 2007

Historical Preservation The Enchanting Duckett's Grove Castle



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Preface

This tourism case study is a result of months of research, and the hard work and dedication of two Knockbeg College students from County Carlow, for the GTTP International Student/Teacher exchange in Nice, France, in November 2007.



What we hope to achieve by undertaking this project is to shed some light on what is an overlooked, much unknown site. We believe it could easily be utilised to its full potential, and attract a lot of tourists, instead of 'lying dormant', as it is.

We don't claim to have all the information on this site, although we do have more than most, as we've grown up near it. What we do have is a normal person's view on the site, and practical reasons why and how it should be developed.



Ireland has changed so much in the past forty or fifty years. We have become much wealthier, to a degree that no one could have imagined back in the 1960s. However, in some ways this is a bad thing. Old sites of our past, ones that could be used for tourism and even just to be appreciated as part of our history and culture are being forgotten. A classic example of this is Duckett's Grove Castle in Carlow, and this is the site which our case study is about.

Introduction

'Romantic Irelands dead and gone, it's with O'Leary in the grave' – WB Yeats, famous Irish poet and philosopher.



W.B Yeats

Yeats' quote, however relevant it was at the time, has become all the more true in recent years. Romantic Ireland is indeed dead. We no longer care nearly as much about our culture or history, people are even campaigning to stop learning our native language in schools. Nowadays we have become a more financially driven country, all caught up in the rat race of modern day life. This is not the land our forefathers and ancestors fought for the freedom of. We may be richer financially, but we are poorer in what is more important – our culture and traditions.

With all this modernisation, many places which are so important to our history are simply forgotten. For example, Browneshill Dolmen in Carlow is a miracle of ancient engineering. It has the largest capstone in Europe, weighing in at over 100 tonnes, and no one knows how it was possibly constructed at the time, before modern machinery, thousands of years ago. Yet it is practically unknown or unheard of outside of Carlow, never mind outside of Ireland. No longer does anyone show an interest in our history – not even we ourselves, looking at how badly our sites are promoted.

Obviously, this isn't just the peoples fault – it's the modern way and many people would say that loss of identity is a small price to pay to be amongst the richest countries in the world. Maybe they're right. But the question I ask is – why can't we have both? In fact, can't we actually use our culture and history to make more jobs and money, through tourism? It has proven very successful in other countries. Take Australia, for example. Here, the main historical influence on their culture is the Aborigines. Australia is now a rich country, and yet they have proven that they can allow traditional Aboriginal culture to live on, by giving huge areas of land back to their predecessors and giving them a strong say in parliament. This shows how traditional culture and historical sites can be preserved to benefit everyone.



An example of Aboriginal Art

However, there is another, far more simple reason as to why many of Ireland's historical sites are being overlooked. As we have improved as an economy, our infrastructure has improved also, services like roads have been upgraded and new ones have been built. Motorways nowadays are planned to take the shortest possible routes, and in most cases bypass many sites of interest from our past. These days, everyone seems to be leading more of a rushed lifestyle, and they all take the motorways and main roads. This means they're not getting the chance to visit the sites.

Ireland is a majestic island with an amazing history and culture. Let's never forget these places or take that for granted. This project is about one of the many sadly forgotten sites, Duckett's Grove Castle.

Tourism statistics

When we started this project, we thought that it would be hard to find and research many tourism statistics for Ireland and the South East in particular, which wouldn't be nearly as popular with tourists as some other parts of the country, such as Munster or of course, the capital city, Dublin.

However, we were pleasantly surprised at just how fantastic the Tourism Board (Failte Ireland) of this country actually is, and they did all they could to provide us with information that has been a great help. The below graphs present various facts and figures related to tourism in the area of the south east, which includes the counties of Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny, Carlow and Tipperary South.



We noticed that the numbers of tourists have increased slightly since 2002, but there also has been a marginal downward trend in the last two years. However, it is still above the average numbers for tourists each year, so this is good news.

However, the next question is where these tourists came from. Did they come from abroad, or were they domestic tourists? This is important to Failte Ireland as it shows them where they need to market, and it is also important to our project because naturally, tourists from Ireland are going to be more interested in our history and culture than people from other countries, therefore they are more likely to visit the castle. These are the numbers:

Tourism to the South East					
Number of Tourist Visits (000s)	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Britain	463	425	479	432	384
Mainland Europe	199	205	217	246	253
North America	202	227	222	209	251
Other Areas	46	48	56	56	74
Total Overseas Tourists	910	905	974	943	962
Domestic Tourism	1,024	1,042	1,113	1,099	1,044
Northern Ireland	8	9	11	9	18
Total Tourists	1,942	1,956	2,098	2,051	2,024

These statistics are very interesting indeed. They show that, over the past five years, maybe unsurprisingly, the majority of overseas tourists are coming from Britain, although the numbers there are declining. But more interestingly, of all the tourists to the South East over that period of time, slightly over 53% of them have been Irish. This is good news for all sites of cultural interest.

The next table is very relevant to the project – how the previous table broke down into counties and how many of these tourists actually visited Carlow. How many then visited the other counties?

Overseas Tourism to the South East					
Overseas Tourists to Counties (000s)	Total	Britain	M. Europe	N. America	Other Areas
Carlow	60	31	18	6	4
Kilkenny	288	95	95	75	23
Tipperary (South)	161	65	45	40	10
Waterford	366	124	80	130	31
Wexford	215	116	53	30	16

This, as you can see, is very disappointing indeed, with the numbers for Carlow representing less than 6% of the tourism for the counties of the South East. However, it looks worse than it is, and there are in fact many reasons for this. First and foremost, Carlow has by a large margin the smallest population of these counties (its population is less than half of the next smallest – Wexford) but this isn't the only reason. Also, each of these other counties has at least one very large town, especially Waterford and Kilkenny, which both have cities. Thirdly, the other counties all have at other very popular attractions, such as Kilkenny Castle, Ferns in Wexford which is the old capital of Ireland, the Rock of Cashel in Tipperary and

Tramore in Waterford, which attracts huge numbers during the summer months.

This next table ties in significantly with the section on amenities. It shows the breakdown of where tourists chose to stay and where they came from.

Accommodation Used in South East (%)	Total	Britain	M. Europe	N. America	Other Areas
Hotel	28	25	20	42	27
Guesthouse/B&B	31	18	36	42	49
Rented	5	6	9	2	2
Caravan/Camping	3	3	7	–	1
Hostel	3	*	7	3	7
Friends/Relatives	29	46	21	11	18
Other	2	3	4	*	1

From the chart, it is clear that the majority of tourists that came to the Southeast in 2006 stayed in B&Bs. This is very interesting and also very positive as it means that the money being spent on accommodation goes directly to the people of the locality. What is also interesting is the huge amount of people who stayed with relatives or friends, in particular the British, which is not surprising considering the connection this country has with Britain, with so many of our own living there.

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It was very generous of Failte Ireland to provide us with such a wealth of fascinating information which was so relevant to our project.

Reasons for case study

When we were given the opportunity to enter this competition originally, we put a lot of thought into what our case study would be about. We wanted to do it about a site in our area, because we knew could easily get first hand information on it, as opposed to a site further away, which our main source of information on would be books and the internet.

Also, we wanted to do a less well known site, because we knew that it would benefit more from a project like this than a site which is well known and has already been promoted greatly. In other words, we didn't want to pick a clichéd site that everyone would know about, such as Newgrange, because it has already been promoted as much as it needs. And sadly, part of Newgrange being promoted so greatly means that other sites are overshadowed. Sites like this one.

We also both had great interest in this castle as we both have grown up in the surrounding areas and have childhood memories regarding it – for example, one of our childhood friends now lives in one of the gatehouses, we went horseriding in the estate on a childhood school tour, at the tender age of four and we have fond memories of exploring the towers as children (and indeed, to this day we often visit it). We believe that doing a project about something you really care about, like this, is far better than merely writing down facts and figures you have researched in books or from the internet – we have grown up knowing about this castle, and having pride in it.



The Crest for the County of Carlow

And it's not that we are biased towards this site, as some might claim – we have a genuine interest in the site and we know what we're talking about. All the statistics and information we give are 100% accurate to the best of our knowledge, and they alone prove that this site is of real interest, not just us promoting our own locality.

But the main reason, more important than all the others, is this – we have been waiting for years for an opportunity like this. We believe that right now is the optimum time for this castle – as we will explain in another chapter, (optimum time for development) there has never been a better time

for Duckett's Grove to become a big tourist attraction. This means that right now it needs more promotion than ever before, and we want to be a part of this.

History of Duckett's grove Castle

It all started back in 1695 when Thomas Crosthwaite of Cockermouth, sold his land to Thomas Duckett. Thomas did not use this land until the early 1700s, when he built his mansion house on the site of a smaller house that was already there.

This remained there, just a house. A mansion, true, but still just a house. This all changed in the early 19th century, when, under the supervision of the famed architect, Thomas A. Cobden, the turrets, the towers and the arches were added, making this mansion house a castle.

The Ducketts could afford to do this because this was at a bad time in Ireland, when the best tradesmen in the country could be hired for as little as 9 shillings a week. They took full advantage of this, as they were making over £10,000 every year from tenants on their 12,000 acre estate.

Eleven men were in full time employment for the Ducketts, maintaining the great expanse of lawns, gardens and drives leading to the mansion from its three gatehouses. The first gatehouse was the iron house. The second was named the Chain Lodge, was located on the Castledermot road, east of the castle. The third one, named the towers and the only one still standing today, is one of the finest examples of a gate lodge anywhere in Ireland.

The Ducketts were rich, and liked to show it off. For the next hundred years or so, they permitted anyone who wanted to picnic on their land, and hundreds showed up every day. However, in 1902, after a particularly loud group of visitors to the grounds annoyed Maria Duckett, the owner at the time, it was officially closed to all members of the public.

Maria Georgina Duckett was the last Duckett to live in this castle, however. After her husband, William Duckett, passed away in 1908, people say she was never the same again. She remained in the castle for a few more years, but then she moved away to travel. When she left, she left the estate under the management of an agent. He maintained it in her absence, and in 1921, a group of local farmers and labourers, under the umbrella of the Killerig Land Committee, pooled their funds and purchased the 1,300 acre land and estate, for £32,000.

They got this money from loans from the bank and they intended to lease out the land to tenants and make money. However, by 1925, none of them had agreed about the division of the land, and henceforth, had made no repayments to the bank. Thus, by June of that year, the bank issued the members of this committee with a bill for £38,217-18-6, with a threat that legal action would be taken against them should they fail to pay.

In this time, between 1921 and 1923, after the Irish War of Independence, the castle was secretly used as a base for IRA operations. (The IRA, or the Irish Republican Army, is a radical political group, dedicated to the unifying of Ireland, Republic and North). Unlike every other IRA base, however, which was vandalised and destroyed after they were finished with it, Duckett's Grove castle was kept perfectly preserved and not damaged at all.

Meanwhile, the committee leaders Fr Edward S. Campion and Fr. John C. Kelly were working on a plan for the resale and division of the estates amongst the small farmers. In 1927, a section of this was incorporated into the land act which empowered the land commission to buy the estates.

After a few years, the Land Commission repaid the bank debt, and by 1930 the division of the land amongst 48 farmers was finished. However, when the Land Commission purchased the estate, the bank retained the mansion alongside 11 acres of land, which was sold in 1931 to Fredrick George Thomson, for a mere £320. Thomson later pulled down some of the outbuildings and used the granite to build a school.

On April 20th, 1933, a mysterious fire, the cause of which is still unknown, destroyed the interior of the mansion and most of the outbuildings. The only section to remain undamaged was some of the servant's quarters.

Thomson then sold the ruined mansion to Charles Balding of Rainstown house, and the servant's house became the home of Ms Bertha Balding, until her death over 40 years later.

That same portion of the building was then occupied by Ms. Frances Brady, who ran a riding school in the grounds up until the year 2000, when she sadly passed away.

Nowadays, the castle and the 11 acres of grounds are owned by the Council. It is being developed, and it hoped that after all these years of being moved from owner to owner, and suffering in many different ways, the castle and its grounds can return to what it was in the 1800s when the Ducketts owned it – a place for the locals to visit, picnic, and enjoy the scenery.

History of the Duckett family

The Duckett ancestry can be traced back as far as the twelfth century, when they owned property in Fillingham, Lincolnshire. They were a very famous family back then where they were from, not least because of their claim that they were the ancestors of the great William the Conqueror.



The Duckett families crest, along with their motto 'let us be judged by our actions'

The first member of the Duckett family to arrive in Ireland was Sir George Duckett. He was but one of many English landlords to travel to Ireland during the Cromwellian period. This was a very turbulent time in Irish history, with frequent battles between the Irish natives and English army.

The Duckett family's settlement in Kneestown, Carlow, was as a result of the purchase of five hundred acres of land off Thomas Crossthwaith, who owned vast amounts of land in Ireland. Acquiring land here, if you were a British gentry family, was made easier under the provisions of the acts of settlement of 1666 and 1684, which gave these landlords complete claim to Irish lands.

In 1695 Thomas Duckett purchased five hundred acres of land in Kneestown. In Ireland, marriage contributed greatly to the Family's wealth in the early years. Thomas' wife, Judith, was the heir of the wealth of the wealthy Pierce De La Poer of Killowen, county Waterford. The family extended their estate and their wealth grew throughout the eighteenth century and in 1790 the marriage of William Duckett to Elizabeth Dawson-Coates represented another turning point for the better. She was the sole heir to the wealthy banker John Dawson-Coates. The couple had four sons and two daughters. Their heir was John Dawson- Duckett, and their second son, William, went to live at the nearby house at Russelstown Park, a property acquired by the Ducketts from the Burton family of Burton hall when their banking empire collapsed.

William was the first member of the Duckett family to hold a post in the public office in Carlow, as he was appointed a Justice of the Peace and High Sheriff in 1825. These jobs were subsequently held by other members of the family, a testament to his good work there.

William's brother, John - heir of Duckett's Grove - and his wife Sarah Summers had two sons. William, named after his uncle, was the eldest and the heir to the castle and John, named after his father, sadly died at a young age. He also had two daughters, Elizabeth and Anne. Elizabeth died at a very young age, like her brother John, but Anne went on to marry the wealthy Hardy Eustace of Castlemore in Tullow.

John Dawson-Duckett died on September 22nd, 1866, at the tender age of 75. His son, William, did not marry until he was 44, when he finally wed Anna Maria Morony, daughter of Thomas Harrison Morony, of Milltown house, Milltown Malbay, county Clare, in the west of Ireland. The couple had no children and when his wife died in 1894, William married Maria Georgina Thomson one year later. He was 73 years of age at the time. A friend of William, James Gaynor, later recalled the wedding while being interviewed by author James Maurice: "It seemed only yesterday when the 73 year old Mr. Duckett, game as ever, had brought home his new bride and her daughter.... The festivities were the best of all. That evening, there were fireworks to which the people came on foot and in donkey carts. Everyone danced till midnight, and then all went home to their lodges, their gatehouses and their cottages. Mr. and Mrs. Duckett, making sure that the flag had been correctly lowered, went along the long, polished corridors of the mansion, to bed." How he knew the last sentence of the quote to be correct is unknown.

Stewart Duckett, a first cousin of the Ducketts that lived in the castle, has a strong affiliation with Carlow golf club. This club, which celebrated its centenary in 1999, is renowned for being one of the greatest challenges of golf that this country has to offer. It measures at over 6,000 yards from the championship tees and it has hosted numerous national championships - even the world one armed championship in 2005. Both of us are members there and we know exactly how difficult the course is, but also how fantastic a condition it is kept in. Stewart Duckett was known for being one of the first members there along with being the first captain and one of the most prominent members the club has ever had. He also contributed some of his wealth to getting the club started. It is truly a magnificent testament to his name.



Not much is known about what happened in Duckett family history for the next ten or fifteen years, but one interesting source, a local newspaper, is quoted as containing the following paragraph about the Ducketts – the William in question being a first cousin of William Duckett. The following gives an insight into just how well known, wealthy and liked the family were at the time:

07-09-1901

We are glad to be able to record the safe return and in robust health of Mr. William Duckett-Stewart from South Africa, where he served for a lengthy period with the Imperial Yeomanry. Mr. Duckett's return was celebrated on Wednesday evening last in a very marked and friendly manner. An immense bonfire was lit on the fair green in front of the entrance gates to the family mansion, round which the villagers and their friends gathered. Dancing and refreshments were enjoyed until midnight by the throng of well-wishers, the local band playing a long and varied selection of music to the delight of the listeners. In the house, the large party who came to join in the welcome and to congratulate the hero of the evening was entertained to supper.

The Weather proved very favourable to the reunion and the rejoicings included a good display of fireworks, managed very ably by Messrs Belton & Co. of Carlow. The house party included Captain, Mr. and Miss Duckett-Stewart, Mrs. W.B. Persse, Mr. Kennedy RM, Reverend J. Coyle, PP. Capt. and Mrs. Thomas and party, Mr. and Mrs. Fitzmaurice and party, Mr. and Mrs. Vigors and party. Mr. Duckett-Stewart, on his appearance, was voicefouresly cheered and on his returning thanks to his well-wishers, the cheering was renewed and the best of good wishes expressed for his future welfare.

William Duckett now had a new wife and a stepdaughter, named Olive. Sadly, he didn't live that long afterwards, as he died in 1908, at the ripe old age of 86 (this age, as impressive as it is now, was astounding back then). He was the final member of the Duckett family line to live in the

castle, leaving just his wife Maria living there with her daughter. They spent the years between 1908 and 1916 moving between their houses in London and Dublin (where William had purchased a mansion on Raglan road, called De Wyndesore, as a wedding gift) until 1916, when Olive married Captain Edward Stamer O'Grady, and Maria decided to live in Dublin full time.

In 1921, during the Irish War of Independence, Maria decided that it would be in her best interest to sell Duckett's Grove castle and move to England for a while, after receiving a threatening letter which was signed by Sinn Féin. Many historians now believe it was from the locals however, who were spiteful.

She lived in England until 1928, when she felt safe enough to return back to her house in Dublin. However, she was suffering from a serious mental illness, which left her with lots of problems, including strong feelings of paranoia, thinking everyone, Catholics in particular, were out to get her. Her living conditions were described as appalling and squalid, and she was placed in a mental institution in 1935, where she lived out the final years of her life, until her death in 1937, at the age of 86.

The final living person to have any claim to the Duckett wealth was Olive, Maria's daughter and William Duckett's stepdaughter. However, there was a problem – Maria had only left her only one shilling in her will out of her £97,735 estate, saying in her will: "My daughter Olive, be it clearly understood, is cut off to a shilling. Had she been an ordinary, good daughter, she would have had all she could have wished for.... She was amply provided for in her stepfather William's will."

Olive was not going to accept this, however – she disputed that her mother was not of sound mind at the time of writing the will, and that she was in fact entitled to more than one shilling. Sadly, on her part, the judge declared in 1939 that the will was legitimate, and that was that.

So what ever happened to the Duckett wealth? Well, in accordance with the last will and testament of Ms. Maria Duckett, the money was donated to various charities, under the condition that they were British based and Protestant. The money was gone from Ireland forever.

The Gatehouses

Back in the nineteenth century, there were 3 gatehouses – The Iron House, the Towers and the Chain lodge. What follows is a history of what happened to them after the Ducketts left:

The Iron House was the first of the three gatehouses. It sadly lay dormant and unused for years after Ms. Maria Duckett left in the early 1900s. Not much is known about what happened to the gatehouse after that, as the Ducketts were not fond of keeping detailed records. It does not still stand today, but the answers to the questions of how or why are lost in the mists of time.

The Chain Lodge is a very interesting gatehouse. It was the second of the three to be built, and lay to the east of the castle. It served as the entrance to the castle from Castledermot. After the last Duckett left the castle, it lay dormant for years, until eventually, the Shannon family acquired it and built an extension onto it – for practicality reasons, the gate itself had to be taken down. They still reside there to this day.

The Towers (The Western Gate Lodge) has a very interesting history after the demise of the Duckett family. It was the last of the three gatehouses to be built, it was the largest gatehouse and it is the only one of the three original gatehouses to still be standing today. Originally, it was built to welcome visitors to the Duckett land coming from Carlow. After the Ducketts all moved out, this tower was forgotten for many years, until, in the 1970s, a family from Dublin decided to buy it from the bank and renovated it. They made it into a restaurant, known as the Tower Inn. It was a very successful business for a number of years, until the family decided to hire someone else, a local woman, to take care of the restaurant. Soon, it was practically bankrupt, and in 1988, not for the first time in Duckett history, a mysterious fire destroyed most of the building. However, it is alleged that the fire was started by the woman running the business for insurance purposes. Whether or not this is true is up for debate, but it is a fact that the insurance company did not pay out, and the bank repossessed the building.

Again, the building lay idle for nearly a decade. Then, a local entrepreneur purchased the building from the bank. He had been offered a very large sum for the gatehouse by a wealthy historical enthusiast in Britain. He intended to buy the gatehouse and ship it over, section by section, to Britain. However, the county council stopped him from doing

this, stating that the gatehouse was part of our culture. To this day the local man still owns it, but it is, for the third time in its history, lying dormant.



Structure of the Castle

Duckett's Grove castle is a majestic and awe inspiring building, as anyone who has seen it will testify. No pictures can do it justice. The original mansion house was built during the early 18th century and was comprised of just the original living quarters of the family. However, in 1824, Thomas A. Cobden was assigned as architect to add extensions to the mansion house, including turrets and arches. This house was now a castle.

The castle is a fine example of Gothic architecture. Gothic architecture was first used in the 1100s and almost all use of it ceased in the late 17th century. However, the Ducketts specifically asked for a gothic design to their castle, the reasons as to why are unknown.

The characteristic features of a gothic design are the pointed arch, the ribbed arch and the flying buttress and Duckett's Grove certainly has many of these features and more. Just to look at the castle, like in the next picture, you can see how fantastically designed it is, in particular the turrets.



One of the turrets from the castle

There are also many very good examples of gargoyles on the front façade of the castle. The style of coving on these is particularly intricate and they are a credit to Thomas Cobden's genius design. They add hugely to the gothic effect that the castle gives.

The narrow arch shaped windows, almost like slits, are typical of old Irish castles as the Normans used to have them very narrow so no arrows could be shot through them, but they could shoot them out at any intruders or invaders.

The walls to the castle are almost a metre thick in some parts of the castle and this is a further example of the castle's use of defensive mechanisms in its design, despite the fact that there would have been no one attacking the Duckett family house, naturally.

Indeed, so set on replicating a defensive fort castle, the Duckett's even had a network of dungeons leading from the Towers gatehouse to the main castle. It is even rumoured that there was a secret dungeon leading from the

gatehouse to Ballynakelly wood, a nearby forest directly behind where Burton Hall House once stood.



The Towers gatehouse. Do they hide a secret passage of dungeons?

The Towers has, still standing, a perfectly preserved spiral stairway up to the roof. This stone stairwell is simply amazing to climb, it gives a real feeling of history and stepping back in time, especially when you look out the narrow slit windows and see the beautiful Irish countryside around you.

The highest point of the main tower of the castle stands at over 100 feet tall and is the tallest structure for miles around. From up there, you can see 7 different counties – Carlow, Wicklow, Kildare, Laois, Wexford, Offaly and Kilkenny.

Duckett's Grove is without a doubt, one of the finest structures in all of Leinster, and its grandeur and magnificence has stood the test of time.

The Gardens

One of the main developments that were made to Duckett's Grove Castle was that the majestic and beautiful gardens and the walled pleasure grounds of the castle were opened to the public for the first time since the Ducketts themselves decided to close them back in August of 1902, because they were intruding on their privacy.



Carlow County Council put a significant sum of money into the renovation of these gardens, after purchasing them in 2005. Their work is beginning to pay off. The old paths around the gardens were restored, the borders were reinstated, and they started replanting in January 2007, trying to replicate the exact flora that would have been there in the 18th and 19th centuries, to the best of their ability.

The Upper Walled Garden is hedged with boxwood and is planted with fragrant old French roses, a collection of old Chinese and Japanese peonies, a variety of hardy and tender perennials and choice rare flowering shrubs, including echium, watsonia, acanthus, jovellana, daphniphyllum, acradenia, arbutus cornus, iris, eryngium, beschorneria and of course, the beautiful euporbia. And let us not forget the ornamental bananas.



The Lower Walled Garden now contains a great variety of fruits and old apple varieties, including ‘Irish Peach’, ‘Kerry Pippin’, ‘Sheep’s nose’ and the popular ‘Blood of the Boyne’.

Also, beautiful hummingbird moths, yellow wagtails, wrens, thrushes, blackbirds and robins have set up home and can be seen enjoying the gardens and the forested pleasure grounds.



The Pleasure Grounds of this castle are enclosed by a stretch of ‘Carlow fence’, the traditional railing comprised of vertical granite slab stones that is unique to county Carlow. Restored paths and the repaired ‘sunken stone’ bridge, plus supplementary plantings of oak, lime, hazel, spindle and laurel rekindle the spirit of these Georgian Pleasure Grounds. The coolness of the Hazel wood here offers some relief from the warmer walled gardens, especially in the summer.



The picturesque pleasure grounds are a beautiful sight

A very interesting point about the design of the gardens here that is worth mentioning is the different type of wall used for the south facing sections of the gardens. The South facing wall is made from red brick, as opposed to the granite wall that the rest of the garden is surrounded by. This serves a very interesting purpose. During the day, the red brick wall will catch the sunlight and heats up more quickly than the granite wall. During the night, this heat is slowly released, increasing the average temperature in the gardens and thus making them suitable for the growth of certain fruits and plants that would have been otherwise impossible.

The gardens were opened to the members of the public in July of 2007, and already they have made a huge difference. This next photo shows the large number of visitors they now attract. A job very well done and the council deserve a lot of credit for capitalising on this.



The gardens were open to the public in July, but it was not until the Friday the 28th of September that the official opening took place – by Irish Green Party Leader and Minister for the Environment, Heritage and local government, Mr. John Gormley, TD. The fact that such a big, famous figure in Ireland came down to the castle to officially open it gave a huge boost to

the credibility and status of the site as a big name in South Eastern Tourism in Ireland.



A large crowd turned out to visit Gormley on his official opening

Talking at this official opening was Jim Townsend, chairman of Carlow County council. He opened the proceedings with a concise account of what has been done at the castle so far in addition to talking about the finance behind the works, included in a different section. Also talking was Jimmy O’Toole, a local historian. He grew up near the castle and he talked at length about the immense impression Duckett’s Grove made on him during his childhood. He offered a detailed timeline of the history of the Duckett family from when they arrived in 1695 to the eventual end of their dominance due to the death of the last Duckett, Maria, during the early 1900s. He thanked Mr. Gormley for being there then and handed us over to him, for his speech.



Jimmy O’Toole delivering his speech

Mr. Gormley spoke about how delighted he was to be there and thanking Mary White, the party’s deputy leader, for recommending him to come to the place. He talked about how important culture and heritage are to the people of Ireland, both historically and economically, as he spoke at length about how much money the area could generate from our sites being promoted correctly. He stated that Duckett’s Grove is but one of many examples of how a site that has been previously neglected can be made into a successful tourist attraction through good work by the local authority and

tourist board. Then, without further ado, he revealed the plaque and announced the grounds officially opened.



Mr. Gormley unveils the plaque, declaring the grounds to the castle open to the public once again

There were great celebrations once that had happened and Mary White, John Gormley and Jim Townsend all went out to the gardens to plant a ceremonial tree there. This is often done in Ireland to mark a special event as we as people have great respect for trees and the shelter they can provide. It is a practice that is similar to the other Irish tradition of ‘turning the first sod’. A hole was dug by Mr. Gormley himself and the tree planted there. Then, everyone present was catered for by the fantastic service of Merlin catering.



Jim Townsend looks on as John Gormley plants the ceremonial tree

It was a fantastic event for all who were lucky enough to be present – it was an invitation only event – and we were amongst the lucky ones to receive invitations, courtesy of Mary White. Amongst the important figures present were John Gormley, leader of the Green Party, Mary White, deputy leader, Jim Townsend, cathaoirleach of Carlow county council, MJ Nolan TD with Fianna Fail, Walter Lacey a Progressive Democrat, Jimmy O’Toole, local historian, John Browne, retired TD and even Mrs. Shannon, resident of the remains of the Chain lodge.



Who's those two good looking men beside Mary White and John Gormley?

Effect of works

The works that the council have done and are continuing to do on this historic and monumental site will have a hugely positive effect on the local area and its people.

Firstly, it provides a source of information on the history of the area, making it a great place to teach people about their heritage, where they came from, and how the world was different back in the past.

It provides a lovely place for people to relax and enjoy nature in the gardens or the pleasure grounds – a place of natural beauty with a wealth of rare plants, which many budding botanists would find fascinating.

It will bring lots of tourists to the area, which will boost employment and investment in the area in the following ways:

- Direct employment is obviously created by the developments, most notably in the construction work and in the constant maintenance needed on the grounds by gardeners.
- More tourists coming to the area will mean that there will be more of a need for accommodation, so the hotels and B&Bs of Carlow will benefit from an increase in business. A local B&B owner, Jimmy O'Toole, was quoted as saying 'Over the past decade that I have been running this establishment, over 40% of my guests here stated historical sites as the reason for their visit to the area'.
- With more tourists in the area, there will be a greater demand for restaurants, cafés and pubs. This means that places like Palatine House, a local pub, will have more business and there will also be more encouragement for young entrepreneurs to set up businesses here. One particular idea for a business that is sure to be invested in is the opening of a café in the castle itself.

And not only will the positive effects be economic, there are others too. For example, the infrastructure of the area has already benefited from the increase of tourists, with the roads being improved on, and this is sure to benefit even more after the developments on the castle are complete.

Finally, the exchequer of the country as a whole will benefit, from money spent by tourists in the country. So, far from only benefiting the locals, it will lead to a better standard of living for everyone in the country.

Transport

Transport to the area is naturally vital to the making of the castle into a successful tourist attraction. Regardless of how spectacular and wonderful a site is (which Duckett's Grove Castle certainly is), if it is too difficult to get to, not many people will visit it. Because this castle is such a remote site, the transport links to it are made even more important.

This, however, is not going to be a problem for Duckett's Grove, due to good planning by Carlow Council. They set aside funds to improve the road there. They have spent lots of money on making the local infrastructure more suitable for the greater volumes of traffic – for example, they had the good idea of tarring the road prior to development so that the construction traffic would have a good road network to travel on to the site.

As this site is so remote, it is very important to have good signage to make the site a plausible attraction. Ireland has been renowned for its dreadful signposts in rural areas, which is a shame in our opinion, as it deters visitors from an area. Thankfully, things are slowly changing, and Duckett's Grove is but one example of this.



A sign for the castle just outside the village of Palatine

The main transport improvement around this area, which will not only benefit the castle, but tourism in general around the county, is the new, soon to be opened Carlow bypass. This new motorway will divert all the traffic travelling to and from Dublin, Kilkenny and Waterford (three of the six big cities in Ireland), past the town centre and within a mile of the castle. The number of people travelling this way would amount to thousands each and every day. This, if handled correctly, could be the single biggest contribution to the success of the castle as a tourist attraction, for one major reason.



A view of the continuing works from the Russelstown overpass

As the castle's best feature is its grandeur and magnificent appearance, the sight of it to the thousands who will be able to see it as they pass by every day will compel many to visit it. This can only be good news for this magical site.

Optimum time for development

We didn't just pick Duckett's Grove castle to do this project on for no reason – we carefully studied the matter and we realised that right now is the best time there ever has been to make this castle a big attraction since the Duckett family reigned over Carlow and invited people to picnic in their grounds. There are a number of reasons for this which we will now explain in detail.

- **Promotion** – There has been, with all credit going to Carlow County Council and Failte Ireland, a lot of promotion going into tourism in Carlow lately. There have been advertisements on television, newspaper articles and even the Leader of the Irish Green Party, John Gormley, came to the grounds to officially open the gardens to the public.
- **Gardens** – Naturally, a huge development to this castle was the opening of the walled gardens and pleasure grounds, as we have already mentioned, that were officially opened by John Gormley in September of this year. They are absolutely stunning visually and they offer a place to relax and enjoy nature on fine days. Indeed, we ourselves have been there on more than one occasion to bask in the beauty of nature that the people of Carlow enjoyed over one hundred years ago.



The beautiful arched entrance to the gardens.

- **Transport** – As we have also mentioned in the transport chapter, there is a very big new bypass - the N9 – going up near the castle. The castle is in fact in clear view to anyone who will drive on this road and, it being such an important road, this number amounts to

thousands of people every day seeing the castle in all it's glory. You just can't buy publicity like that.



Works going ahead on the N9 motorway

- **Politics** – This May, the Irish General Election was held and the Irish Green Party entered government for the first time. This is good news for Duckett's Grove, as this particular party holds very strong views on historical and cultural preservation. This means that more attention will be given to sites like Duckett's Grove, and this cannot be bad news.



Carlow's own deputy leader of the Green Party, Mary White.

Amenities

There are many different amenities in close proximity to Duckett's Grove castle, as all budding tourists will be delighted to hear. The following is a list of many of these, including hotels, B&BS, pubs and restaurants.

- A prime example of a hotel in close proximity to the castle is the Ramada. This luxurious four star hotel is located merely 2 miles from the castle and it offers facilities including an 18 hole golf course, a sentosa spa and leisure club, a banqueting suite designed to the highest specifications, excellent conference facilities and a children's outdoor play area. Along with all this, you would be hard pressed to find a more perfect or ideal base to explore the many historical sites that the area has to offer.



The majestic Ramada hotel and golf resort, in all its glory.

- The Seven Oaks hotel is a more traditional establishment, located in the centre of Carlow town. In the past few years it has undergone extensive development work to increase its capacity. This hotel has a very warm atmosphere and it is renowned for its good food. The hotel also has a modern leisure centre and a gym. Located just 5 miles from the castle, it is another great spot to stay if you're interested in tourism.



The Seven Oaks in the heart of Carlow town.

- There are many quality B&Bs in Carlow, known for their warm family run atmosphere. The main advantage of these places is that

they are inexpensive and many of them can be located closer to specific sites than hotels. They also give extra freedom to travel. Finally, as they are usually run by the local people, the proprietors can often offer invaluable advice about hidden sites that are worth visiting that you might not know about otherwise. All in all, many B&Bs are well worth considering as an accommodation for you.



Ballyvergal House, an example of just one of many top class B&Bs around Carlow

- Lautrecs Brasserie is known as one of the best restaurants in the county – it has a reputation for good food, friendly service and a lively atmosphere. Located in the heart of Carlow town, it offers a lot of varied dishes from all around Europe and the Mediterranean, with seafood being a speciality. And, from our experience, if you ever visit, try the lamb. 😊



The beautifully decorated Lautrecs Brasserie, at night.

- Teach Dolmen, meaning House of the Dolmen in the Gaelic language, is a great place to go for anyone who wishes to experience the delights of traditional Irish food. With its unique, homely setting, its name for great Irish music (which is played there very frequently) and of

course, the fantastic food, a visit to this place is a must for any tourist who wants to get a taste of something that is truly Irish.



Traditional Irish cuisine at its best? Look no further than Teach Dolmen.

- Palatine House, located in the centre of the charming village of Palatine, lies just 2 miles from Duckett's Grove castle. It is small and quaint, but it has a genuine atmosphere of friendliness and hospitality. It is the perfect place to sit back, relax, and sample a pint of our famous 'black stuff', Guinness.



Palatine House, famed for its hospitable atmosphere

Yes, there's no doubt that Carlow is a haven of amenities for any tourists who wish to visit the area.

Other sites of interest in the area

Make no mistake – as great and interesting a site as Duckett’s Grove Castle is, it is by no means the only site in the area. There are plenty of other reasons for people interested in history to visit Carlow, including:

- **Browneshill Dolmen** - Without a doubt the most well known and famous historical site in Carlow. Dating back over 4,000 years, this dolmen has the biggest capstone in Europe, weighing in at an amazing 100 tonnes. No one knows how it was put there, and many ancient artefacts, including arrowheads and jewellery, have been found there. An awe-inspiring site that everyone should visit at least once.



The awe inspiring sight that is Browneshill Dolmen

- **Carlow Cathedral** – This in particular is a fascinating place for anyone who has an interest in Duckettsgrove Castle, as the same architect, Thomas A. Cobden, designed them both. This cathedral was completed in 1833, at a cost of £9,000. It was the idea of the then bishop of the diocese, James Doyle. It is an exact replica of the Befroi tower, in Bruges, Belgium. Today, it is still fulfilling its job as the main church in Carlow town.



The internal works of Carlow Cathedral, based on the Belgian Befroi tower.

- **Carlow Courthouse** – Considered to be one of the finest courthouses in all of Ireland, it was designed by William Vitruvius Morrison in 1830. It is based on the temple of Lissus in Athens, and gives the impression of a temple set on a high plinth. This obscures the fact that the basement is a maze of cells and dungeons. A cannon from the

Crimean war stands on the steps, completing the illusion. This is a spectacular site, a real gem.



The spectacular Carlow Courthouse located in the middle of Carlow Town.

- St. Patrick's College – This College was built just before the French Revolution, and is one of Ireland's oldest educational institutions. The college first opened its doors to students five years before the Irish rebellion of 1798. It functioned as a seminary from 1793 to 1892, and is closely related to Knockbeg College. Until 1989 then, it was principally a seminary for the education of priests. During its 200 year history, this college has educated generations of politicians, priests, poets and leaders of the public life of their time.



The picturesque Carlow College.

- Carlow Castle – An old castle in the centre of Carlow town, it is thought to have been built by William de Marshall, Earl of Pembroke in 1207 and is similar in design to Ferns Castle (Ferns used to be the capital of Ireland). In 1814, however, a local physician planned to remodel the castle into an insane asylum, and use dynamite in an effort to remodel the interior and the resulting explosion was lucky not to claim any lives. Nowadays, only the west wall and towers remain of this once amazing sight. However, it's still well worth a visit.



The remains of the still outstanding Carlow Castle.

- Burton Hall House - Was the home of another gentry family from Britain, located about two miles from Duckettsgrove castle. The earliest recorded member of the Burton family, Edward Burton, narrowly avoided persecution at the hands of the devoutly catholic queen Mary during her reign of terror against the protestant population in Britain. The Burton family's links with the area were first established in 1712 when Benjamin Burton I purchased the then Ballynakelly manor and redeveloped it into Burton hall house. His son, Charles, was lord mayor of Dublin in the year 1753. They owned a bank in Castle Street in Dublin, which only served to increase their wealth until the 1730s, when the bank closed. They had 4,500 acres of land, and were involved in Parliament in Carlow. Overall, they were a very interesting family, and their house is a big part of history. Sadly, it suffered the same fate as Duckettsgrove and ran into disrepair, but its legacy still lives on. The driveway for this manor still exists, in the form of the luxurious stretch of road known to the locals as the Long Mile Avenue, so called because it is exactly one mile of straight road.



The Long Mile Avenue, the driveway to Burton Hall manor. Look closely and you can see Duckettsgrove in the background.

- Palatine Village - This village (Killyshane) has been known as Palatine Village ever since the 1940s, when a group of people from a region of Germany called Palatine settled here. Nowadays, it's a beautiful, quaint and quiet village, like stepping back in time. It has won the Tidy Town's competition in Carlow on numerous occasions, and many passers-by comment on the beauty of the flora in the area.



Palatine Village in all its glory

Every site mentioned is within three miles of Duckett's Grove and all are well worth the visit for any tourists in the area.

Conclusion

On completion of this project, we finally had the chance to look back on all the work we had done and on all the information in this booklet. We came to the following conclusions:

- Duckett's Grove is a truly magnificent site. This cannot be overstated. Having grown up around it, we thought we knew all there was to know about it. After doing this project however, we've seen how wrong we really were. It has a greater and deeper history than even we ever imagined and this project has only solidified our view that it has the potential to be a very large attraction, profiting everyone in the area.
- Even in the few months since we've started this project, huge developments have taken place in relation to the castle. For example, the gardens have been renovated and opened to the public, new sign posts have been put up to it, the local infrastructure has improved dramatically and it has been advertised to a point whereby the local awareness of its existence is much higher than it was. The local council deserve great credit for their hard work.
- Before undertaking this project, we had thought it would be difficult to gain information or find people willing to spend their time being interviewed. However, again, we were proved wrong. So many people, upon being told what this project was about, showed great interest in helping us in any way they could, even congratulating us on promoting a site so close to their hearts. Doing this project has certainly revitalised our faith in the kindness and goodness of people.
- Finally, we would like to say this – the title of this project is historical preservation. Some people may say that this is a waste of time and money, asking the good of looking backwards and saying we should forget the past and focus on the future. But we think we have proven them wrong. The past is what makes us who we are today. Without knowledge of the past, how can we possibly develop as a species? We hope to continue to move forward as a race, but never forgetting how we got here, or where we came from.

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Bibliography

We used a number of different sources of information in our research and development of this project. We gained our information by three different ways – researching books and documents, researching through the internet and interviews with people.

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- Fergal Flanagan
- Jennifer Ryan
- Cyril Hughes
- PJ Luddy

Glossary

Acre – A measure of land used in Ireland, equating to slightly more than four thousand square metres.

B&B – A form of accommodation, standing for bed and breakfast, commonly used in Ireland as an alternative to a hotel.

Co. Carlow – A county in the South East of Ireland, whose county town is Carlow also.

Co. Dublin – A county located on the East coast of Ireland, home to the capital city.

Co. Kildare – A county located to the East of Ireland.

Co. Kilkenny – A county to the west of Carlow

Co. Laois – A county in the Midlands of Ireland.

Co. Offaly – A county in the Midlands of Ireland.

Co. Waterford – A county located on the south coast of Ireland.

Co. Wexford – The most south-easterly county in Ireland.

Co. Wicklow – A county to the East of Ireland, known as ‘The Garden of Ireland’ because of its beauty and picturesque landscape.

Dolmen – An old Celtic form of burial tomb, consisting of a large capstone standing on smaller upright stones – many of them are scattered around the Irish countryside.

Guinness – Famous Irish brewed stout, renowned around the world for its smooth flavour. Brewed in Dublin.

Kilkenny Castle - Famous old Norman Castle located in the centre of Kilkenny city.

Killyshane – The correct name for the village of Palatine, located just three miles from Duckett’s Grove Castle.

Kneestown – The area in which Duckett’s Grove castle is situated.

Knockbeg College – The oldest secondary school in Ireland, founded in 1793, it is located in Co. Carlow.

Leinster – One of four provinces in Ireland, consisting of twelve counties. The most south-easterly of all the provinces.

N9 – The name of the new Carlow bypass – the Irish system for naming roads gives a letter for the type of road and a number for the specific road.

Newgrange – A famous megalithic tomb in the Midlands of Ireland.

PP – An abbreviation standing for parish priest.

Rock of Cashel – Fortified castle, located in Tipperary.

Seminary – A college where people are educated and become qualified as priests.

Shilling – An old Irish coin, equating to five old Irish pennies.

TD – Irish abbreviation for teachta dála, a Gaelic term meaning ‘deputy of the house’. It refers to a politician who is elected to government and sits the Dail, the Irish parliament.

Tipperary South – Tipperary is the only county in Ireland to be divided into two sections due to its size. This is the more southern of the two.

Tramore – A seaside resort in county Waterford.

Instructions for teachers

Introduction

This project has given us the opportunity to present our insights and opinions on Duckett's Grove castle. However, this is just one example, from one country, of a site that has needed to be preserved and developed. There are in fact, an uncountable number around the world. We will learn about more of these all around the globe at the international tourism conference – what better way is there to learn about these countries than from representatives from the countries themselves?

Aims of this case study

This project had a number of principal aims, including:

- To thoroughly research all aspects related to Duckett's Grove in the hope of producing a definitive case study on the castle.
- To learn and research into the economic benefits of promotion and development of historic sites.
- To learn and find out about tourism statistics and figures for Ireland over the past five years.

Methodologies

Part of this project is the Power Point presentation and thus the use and development of I.T skills was of great importance. Also, our communication skills were naturally improved by the number of interviews we conducted for research purposes. Class discussion on the importance of tourism to national economies is also an obvious teaching method and should be used as often as possible.

There is a huge cross reference in the subject of history in our project, for both the Junior and Senior Cycle, including the topics of plantations, historical architecture and it even touches off the topic of religious discrimination in Ireland in the past.

There is also a huge relevance to the Economics course for Senior Cycle in this project – macroeconomics in particular, with the mention of government spending on historical development, its advantages and disadvantages and the return from this investment.

This castle has been in the area of our ancestors for centuries. We hope it will remain in the future as important as it was in the past.

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