



Borris Heritage Walking Trail

Borris is a Georgian, granite village, full of charm and heritage nestling in the fertile valley of the River Barrow and the ideal gateway for nearby Mount Leinster and the Blackstairs Mountains. Its old granite houses and Victorian shop fronts have remained largely intact. Most of the town's buildings stand on the north side of a steeply rising main street, overshadowed by the presence of the very substantial demesne walls of Borris House.

1 The Step House Hotel

The Step House, referring to the distinctive flight of steps to the front door, is now a hotel. It is a fine example of the Tudor-Gothic architecture prevalent in Borris. Many of the buildings in Borris were constructed using granite which gives the town its nick name, 'Granite Town', and feature low front walls, distinctive gateposts, dressed granite curved, or 'ogee', door casements, fanlights, gabled windows and Tudor style chimneys. The Step House was built in the 1830s by the McMorrough Kavanagh family though the date '1808' over the arch testifies to an earlier building.

2 Arthur McMorrough Kavanagh Monument

Arthur McMorrough Kavanagh was a benevolent landlord well known for his even handed philanthropy. He served as Member of Parliament from 1868-1880 and in 1886 was made a member of the Privy Council of Ireland. The memorial monument erected in his honour is a fountain though it no longer functions as such. It is built of dressed limestone in the Hiberno-Romanesque style above a series of steps and is decorated with columns and a celtic knot design. This beautiful fountain is the only one of its kind in Ireland's Ancient East.

3 Former Protestant School (now in private ownership)

The five bay Protestant School House and accommodation was built in 1835 at the request of Lady Harriet Le Poer Trench, mother of Arthur McMorrough Kavanagh and second wife of his father Thomas McMorrough Kavanagh. The building occupies a prominent position on the Fairgreen of Borris and is set behind the characteristic low granite walls which feature distinctive gate piers.

4 Former Police Barracks (now Garda Station)

The three bay, two storey police barracks built circa 1850 displays architectural features characteristic of Borris. It has a gabled projecting entrance and projecting window bays, half-dormer gabled attic windows, corbelled eaves and dressed granite barges. This building also sits behind low granite walls with distinctive gate piers.

5 Loading Ramp

The loading ramp is an early to mid-twentieth century addition to the Borris streetscape, built to facilitate the loading of livestock into motor transport.

6 Water pump for the women of Upper Cottages

Known as the Cottage Pump because it was where the women from Upper Cottages would gather in the mornings for a chat. This pump was erected by the McMorrough Kavanagh family circa 1855 and was fed by three springs which never went dry. It was sometimes known as the horse-shoe pump due to its attractive horse-shoe shaped design. It is surrounded by a low granite wall with scotch capping stones and has a flagstone floor.

7 Upper Cottages - former estate houses

This row of estate cottages was built in 1865 by Arthur McMorrough Kavanagh for estate workers. Known as Upper Cottages their design won

an award from the Royal Dublin Society for Arthur McMorrough Kavanagh. Now in private ownership, the cottages in this terrace have been extensively altered and renovated in recent times however their facades remain essentially 19th century.

8 Former Railway Station & Station House (now in private ownership)

The railway buildings were built in 1858 to a very high standard. The three-bay railway station, the goods store and the Station Master's house were all constructed with the finest dressed granite. The Station Master's house has extremely tall chimneys and the goods store has four arched doorways but the station building itself is most impressive. These buildings are now in private ownership as the railway closed in 1963.

9 ONE Monument - (UN Peacekeepers)

This monument was erected by O.N.E. in memory of deceased members of the Organisation of National ex Servicemen and Women and members of all the defence forces. The Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen was formed in 1950 from an amalgam of a number of Veterans Organisations coming out of the War of Independence and the Second World War. Membership was open to those who served in various state uniformed organisations including the Defence Forces, the Red Cross and the Civil Defence.

10 Sacred Heart Church

The Sacred Heart Catholic Church was built in 1820 at an expense of £2,000 on a site provided by the McMorrough Kavanagh family. It was enlarged in 1896 by Father Beauchamp, a monument to whom stands in the church yard. The façade is of granite with limestone decorations and features a Romanesque arched doorway. Over the altar are three granite framed stained glass windows depicting the Crucifixion, and the three lower portions depict St. Fortchern, St. Brigid and St. Fiachra.

11 Library- Former Catholic School-

The Library, formerly the Catholic School, was built in 1832 by Mrs. Butler, née McMorrough Kavanagh. The McMorrough Kavanagh family contributed to the running costs and in 1837 it catered for 150 boys and 90 girls. The two storey, five bay Tudor Gothic edifice has a projecting entrance and an impressive tower built of granite. The bell tower and corner finials, thought to be after the 19th century architect, Thomas Cobden, were added in 1899 by Father J. Beauchamp. The building now functions as Borris Library and offers a range of services including Wi-Fi access.

12 Borris Golf Course

Borris Golf Club was established in 1907 when the ground was leased to the Club by William McMorrough Kavanagh. It is one of the oldest golf clubs in the country and has a thriving and burgeoning membership, making it one of the Ancient East's sporting jewels. It is a nine hole course in a mature parkland setting.

13 Borris Viaduct & Walk

Designed by William Le Fanu and opened in 1860, the stunning 16 arch viaduct was commissioned by Arthur McMorrough Kavanagh to extend the railway from Borris to Palace East in Wexford, at a cost of £20,000. Building the viaduct attracted labourers from Dublin as well as local areas. Some of these were 'journeymen' who left the area when the Viaduct was built, but others married locally and were absorbed into the local population. The Hughes brothers walked every day to and from Ballon a round trip of thirty miles. The work was completed was completed using almost no machinery other than a steam crane.

14 Borris House (open on selected days)

Borris House is one of the most impressive jewels in Ireland's Ancient East. It is also of the utmost importance to Ireland's national

heritage being a uniquely Irish house rather than an Anglo-Irish house. Remodelled in 1817 by the Irish architect Richard Morrison, the house stands on the footprint of a medieval castle, and evolved over at least five hundred years, being continuously occupied by the same Irish family, the McMorrough Kavanaghs. The house and grounds are open to the public on selected days and admission tickets can be obtained from the Gate Lodge on the Main Street of Borris.

Arthur McMurrough Kavanagh

Born without arms or legs, Arthur McMurrough Kavanagh, known as "the cripple Kavanagh" went on to become an expert horseman, a first class shot and a highly accomplished yachtsman. He grew up to be the most extraordinary member of his family, and a source of inspiration for disabled people worldwide. As a child, he was wheeled in a chair or carried on a servant's shoulders. When he rode, he did so tied on to a padded chair, with the reins tied around his arm stumps and his whip tucked into his side. He became a real all-rounder, excelling at billiards, boar hunting and fishing. His mother was a distinguished water colourist.

It seemed highly unlikely that the young Arthur would ever succeed to the Borris House seat, a position to which he was only fourth in line. However, his three older brothers died before him and Arthur took over the running of the estate at a time, when it had been severely neglected by the effect of the Famine. Has widely recognised as a progressive landlord, improving farming methods and undertaking much building in the town. He died on Christmas Day 1889, at the age of 57.



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