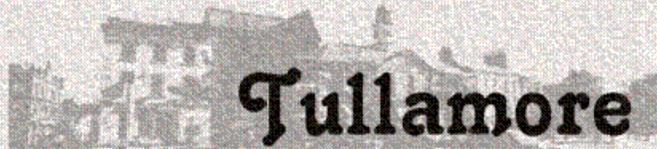


Sponsored and authored by SelfGrow Computer Services Ltd



Tullamore, is the capital town of Offaly, situated in a central position in the faithful county. It has many attractions including golfing, walking tours, fishing, many fine restaurants and and soon to have plentiful accommodation. (WATCH THIS SPACE!) The town is also the Midlands' central hub for entertainment, with several nightclubs and most sporting activities well catered for.



Towns in Offaly



Banagher	Cloghan Castle	Birr	Edenderry
Clara	Cloghan	Clonony	Clonbullogue
Clonmacnoise	Croghan	Daingean	Ferbane
Geashill	Kilcormac	Killeigh	Kinnitty
Rahan	Shannonbridge	Shannon Harbour	Tullamore

Banagher

[TOP](#)

Banagher is a picturesque town on the east bank of a shannon crossing. It is fortified on the Connacht side with a Martello tower and other batteries. Anthony Trollop was stationed here as Post Office surveyor and he commenced his first published book The Mac Dermots of Ballycloran (1843-7) here. The Rev. Arthur Bell Nicholls, Rector of Banagher, who married Charlotte Bronte, the authoress of Wuthering Heights died in Banagher in 1906. The father of Oscar Wilde, Sir William Wilde attended Cuba House school - sadly the building, once described as the most masculine house in Ireland, no longer exists. The ruined church and graveyard are on the site of an early monastery. The shaft of a High Cross from the monastery is in the National Museum. The Catholic church (1972) is by Robinson, Keefe and Devane and has a statue of the

Madonna by Imogen Stuart

Crank House, Banagher

This house dates from about 1760. It is a two storey, six bay Georgian townhouse with a bow front and a superb limestone doorway. The building was used as a residence up to the 19th Century, when a two storey granary was attached. From 1916 until 1946 the house served as a technical school. In 1989, Offaly West Enterprise Society, a voluntary community group bought the house and refurbished it. It is listed for preservation in the Offaly County Council Development Plan (1986). Crank house currently houses Banagher Tourist Information Point, a craft manufacturing and retail facility, a coffee shop, an independent hostel and an exhibition area.

Guided Evening Walks

On Wednesdays during July there is a guided tour of Banagher leaving Crank House at 7pm

Enquiries to Crank House (0509) 51458

Banagher along the Shannon

"Well that beats Banagher" and the rejoinder,

"And Banagher beats the devil"

are popular well-known sayings associated with this vibrant town, still a fording place on the lordly Shannon. Impressive fortifications guarding the river crossing are still seen. "Beannchar na Sionna," according to local historian Val Trodd, means "the place of the pointed rocks on the Shannon". A strong tourism presence has now revitalised Banagher. Angling and all water sports are very much to the fore. A spacious marina caters for the ever increasing river traffic, as does a new tourist information point. Cross the seven-arch bridge to Connacht to detour a little to visit Clonfert Cathedral, site of St. Brendan's celebrated monastery; the Romanesque doorway here is superb.

And if you want more monastic treasures Clonmacnoise is within easy reach. It is a little further north, tucked between river and bog. Why not approach it from the river on one of the river buses that cater for day journeys? Along the river banks the Shannon Callows are the treasure house of the wild flowers and the bird life. Inland from Banagher the countryside soon changes from the humps of esker ridges to the "brown desert" or better still the "brown gold" of the bog lands, a landscape unique in Europe. Banagher on the Shannon and Birds of Brosnaland both by Val Trodd, will provide any visitor with hours of pleasurable reading about this picturesque town, and equally interesting countryside.

North of Lough Derg, the River Shannon has a very shallow gradient and in parts regularly floods its banks. The resultant wet grassland area, known as the Shannon Callows is an internationally renowned area for wild birds and wildlife generally. The area holds one of the largest concentrations of breeding waders in these islands including Lapwing, Redshank, Sandpiper and Godwit. Extensive hay meadows hold large numbers of corncrake - one of the few places in the world where this globally threatened species is still common. Many species of migrant wild birds are also frequent visitors while otters, fox and ferret mink are common residents. Banagher, Shannon Harbour, Shannonbridge and Clonmacnoise are excellent places to visit for wildlife watching on the callows.

Cloghan Castle (Lusmagh)

- A Brief History

[TOP](#)

History states that St. Cronan established a monastery here in 600, later thought to have been attacked by the Vikings. The Normans fortified the remains of the monastery in 1203. The monastery was a cluster of small stone buildings, which is called a Cloghan in Irish. The Normans built a defensive wall around the monastery, a part of which still exists. In 1336 Eoghan O' Madden, the greatest chief of the O' Maddens, conquered the territory of Lusmagh. He is thought to have built the present keep. The O' Maddens lost the castle in 1595 during a siege which cost 200 lives. Two companies of Cromwellian soldiers occupied the castle from 1651-1683 and built several extensions, including two towers. The castle figured in the Williamite Wars when the Irish Jacobite Army camped outside the gate in 1689. A number of gun metal coins, dated 1844, were found on the site. The estate was 3,200 acres then, but was reduced after the Famine, and reduced again after 1908. It is set in 70 acres of beautiful park land with another 80 acres of ancient woodland, which is a wildlife sanctuary. It is the oldest inhabited home in the country.

Birr

[TOP](#)

Birr, set at the merging of the Camcor and Little Brosna rivers, is an old market and former garrison town dating to the 1620's. The early monastery founded in Birr by St. Brendan of Birr produced the Gospels of Mc Regol, named after the abbot at the turn of the century and now to be seen in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. In the 16th century the O' Carrolls of Ely had one of their castles here and this was granted to Sir Laurence Parsons in the course of the Stuart plantation, c. 1620. Sir Laurence Parsons built most of the structure of the present castle. The castle was twice besieged in the 17th century and one of the towers still shows the scars of the artillery of Patrick Sarsfield, who tried unsuccessfully to take it. The castle still remains the seat of the Earls of Rosse, but as a family home is only open to the public on special occasions.

The surrounding demesne is open every day of the year, and the gardens contain many fine trees and shrubs set in a landscaped park with waterfalls, river and lakes. At the centre is the case of the Great Telescope built by the 3rd Earl of Rosse in 1840's. This was the largest in the world until 1917. Rated with five stars in the official list of gardens of Outstanding Historic Interest in the Republic of Ireland, and double-starred in the Good Gardens Guide, the Birr Castle Demesne has won both Bord Failte's Special Award and Property of the year Award. To scientists and astronomers, it offers what was, for over three quarters of a century, the largest telescope in the world; to classical purists. It offers the formal gardens and layout including the Box Hedges which figure in the Guinness Book of Records as the tallest in the world, to gardeners, it offers a collection of over a thousand different species of trees and shrubs, scientifically numbered and catalogued; to nature lovers, it offers a park with lake, rivers and waterfalls, on which you may see swans, herons and kingfishers, not to mention the wild duck for which the demesne has been sanctuary since time immemorial; to all it offers a part of our heritage to be experienced, shared and enjoyed, summer or winter, any day of the year.

Laid out around a lake at the confluence of two lovely Irish rivers, with waterfalls, fountains and bridges, the Birr Castle Demesne has now more to offer than ever, with:

-its world famous gardens being further restored, its collection of plants from all over the world being catalogued, tagged and labelled and educational trails developed around the trees and shrubs of greatest distinction; -its latest exhibition "Sugar and Spice", showing every afternoon from 1st May to 30th September, what has been produced, cooked and eaten in the castle over the centuries; -its facilities now including a tourist information office, a coffee-shop, serving lunch as well as tea, and picnic and play areas in particular beautiful locations; -its detailed brochure being available in several languages.

Special events

- Special events taking place each year include concerts of chamber music in the castle itself on the second Sunday in June and forth Sunday in August (i.e. 13th June and 22nd August).

Opening times

- Open every day throughout the year. 9am. - 1pm. and 2pm. - 5pm. January - April and October - December. May - September 9am. - 6pm.

Birr itself has graceful wide streets and clean elegant buildings and the association with the Parsons family is shown in the layout and structure of this attractive town. Many of the houses in John's Place and Oxmantown Mall have exquisite fanlight windows of the period. In Emmet Square stands one of the oldest coaching inns in Ireland, dating from 1747 - Dooly's Hotel. The name of Galway Blazers was given to the Galway Hunt after a celebration held in the hotel in 1809 resulted in the premises being set on fire. The column in the centre of the square dates from 1747 and was built to carry the statue of the Duke of Cumberland. The statue was removed in 1915 as it was in danger of collapse. On the Roscrea road, near the County Arms Hotel is the beautiful gothic-style Catholic church of 1817-25.

Birr is now an officially designated Irish Heritage Town and well deserves it for its rich Georgian heritage, so carefully preserved. But it is no museum piece and has a bustle and vibrancy in the old streets, its hotels, bars and fine restaurants. Six miles south west of Birr is Clareen near to Seir Kieran, the site of an important monastery founded by St. Ciaran (not to be confused with his more well known namesake of Clonmacnoise). This may have been a pagan sanctuary in previous times, and a perpetual fire is said to have burned there. The site of the monastery is marked by earthworks, church ruins and early gravestones. There is also the sculptured base of a high cross. About half a mile south of Clareen cross-roads are St. Ciaran's Bush and Stone.

Guided Evening Walks

In Birr on Thursday evenings during August Margaret Hogan conducts guided walks to places of historic interest departing from Dooly's Hotel. Contact Margaret Hogan at (0509) 20337.

Edenderry

[TOP](#)

Edenderry is a market town on the Enfield-Tullamore road at the edge of the Bog of Allen. Immediately south of the town is Blundell's Castle which was acquired by the second Marquess of Downshire, married to a Blundell. Most of the town was built by the Downshires, including the Corn Market (Court House) dating from the 1830's.

There are many border castles in the area around Edenderry, which stands near the edge of the English Pale, some of which belonged to the Bermingham family. Three miles north of Edenderry the remains of the medieval Bermingham church and castle of Carrickoris stand on Carrick Hill. The road to Enfield crosses Cadbury Hill (4 miles East North East) from Edenderry where there is a motte. In the 14th century the castle and district were acquired by the Birminghams, but in the 15th century it was granted to ancestors of the Duke of Wellington and they built the Tudor-Jacobean stronghold. The Catholic Church in Cadbury has two windows by Catherine O' Brien: The Annunciation and SS Conleth and Brigid (1904).

Sir John Bermingham, Earl of Louth founded a Franciscan friary in 1325 two miles west of Edenderry in Monasteroris. The overgrown ruins of the friary, a dovecote on a motte and a small parish church remain there. A modern cross commemorates Fr. Mogue Kearns and Anthony Perry who were hanged at Edenderry for their part in the 1798 Insurrection, Remains of the strong Bermingham castle of Kinnafad which commands a ford of the Boyne lie three and a half miles North West of Edenderry.

Clara

[TOP](#)

Clara is a market town and once large manufacturing centre where the Moate - Tullamore road crosses the Brosna river. Clara has had a strong industrial base derived from textiles since the 1760's. The Protestant church dates from 1770 and the Catholic church from the 1880's. In the vicinity of the town are fine houses,

mostly built by the Goodbody family in the late 19th century. The Goodbody family have been associated with the town since the 1820's. Clara bog is a natural heritage area of great importance. It is one of the largest remaining relatively intact raised bogs in Western Europe, and provides a unique feature of the landscape and geological interest stretching over an area of 1600 acres. The bog makes a habitat for unusual plants such as Sundews, Bladderworts and Bog Rosemary (the Offaly County flower). If visiting the bog it is recommended that protective clothing and waterproof footwear should be worn.

Cloghan

[TOP](#)

Cloghan a village on the road to Shannonbridge, was once an important cross-roads village famous for its fairs. Two miles north west on this road are well preserved (modernised) tower and bawn of Clonony Castle.

Clonony Castle

[TOP](#)

Until 1600 most of West Offaly formed the "tuath" or territory of Delvin, the land of the Mac Coughlans. The Mac Coughlans were renowned castle builders having castles at Cloghan, Banagher, Raghra (Shannonbridge), Coole (near Ferbane), Kilcolgan (near Ferbane) and at another dozen sites. Among the finest of these is the lofty castle of Clonony. Built on a limestone outcrop and rising to fifty feet it dominates the surrounding landscape. The castle has many colourful associations and just a few yards from the main entrance to the castle lies a large limestone slab which bears an inscription telling us that it was the tombstone of Elizabeth and Mary Bullyn. From the other genealogical information on this slab we know these people to be relations of Anne Boleyn, one of the wives of Henry VIII, and also of course, of Anne's daughter who eventually became Queen Elizabeth I.

In the 1620s the castle was granted to Matthew de Renzi who was born in Cologne, moved to Antwerp, London and thence Ireland. His relationship with the Mac Coughlans was curious. Initially he spoke of being ostracised by them (understandably since they had lost their lands to him) but relations improved to the extent that de Renzi later learned the Irish language. His tombstone in Athlone credits him with writing a dictionary in the Irish tongue.

In the 1830s, the castle belonged to Edmond Molony, a barrister-at-law. A description of Colony in 1838 states that Molony was a counsellor who "was bred to law and retained a very proper veneration for it". He kept two Flagstaff on the battlements of Clonony which he used for the purpose of commemorating his professional triumphs. His wife died in January 1839 and was interred in St. George's Chapel in London. The epitaph on her monument erected by her husband is extremely long, having more than 300 words, including the immortal lines: She was hot, passionate and tender, A highly accomplished lady, And a superb drawer in water colours.

Clonbullogue

[TOP](#)

Clonbullogue village is one of the best kept in Ireland and is one of the most successful in the Tidy Towns competition. The Irish Parachute Club is based there.



Clonmacnois

[TOP](#)

Clonmacnois lies on the east of the River Shannon, 4 miles north of Shannonbridge. After Armagh, Clonmacnois was the most important ecclesiastical centre in Ireland. Many kings of Tara and Connacht were buried here, as well as other rulers and eminent people. The monastery was founded by St Ciaran who came down river from Lough Rea in January 545. Since the founding of Clonmacnois it has been ravaged many times, by fire, plundered by the Vikings, the Irish themselves, and the English. It was finally the English in 1552 who made Clonmacnois a complete ruin with all the altars, images, books, bells and even the glass in the windows carried away as booty.

Clonmacnois at its prime was more than a monastery. It was a monastic city with houses, workshops and some twelve or thirteen small churches and oratories. Today there are the fragments of no more than eight churches left together with two round towers, a cathedral, high crosses, graveslabs and a 13th century ringwork castle. The last High King of Ireland, Roderick O' Connor, who died in 1198 was buried here. In this peaceful rural setting on the banks of the Shannon it is easy to imagine life in the days of the Vikings and when the nobles of Europe sent their sons to be taught here. On a sunny summer's day the prospect is quite pleasant, but on a winter's day with the wind whipping up the Shannon they must have been very tough to survive such a life. A new interpretative centre is shortly to open at Clonmacnois which, it is hoped in line with the careful preservation of the monuments, will enhance the appreciation of this site for visitors.

Guided tours are available throughout the summer and several books and pamphlets on Clonmacnois have been published.

Croghan Hill

[TOP](#)

(north of Daingean)

This extinct volcano which rises to over seven hundred feet above sea level commands extensive views of the surrounding midland counties. The mound at the summit is thought to be a bronze age burial place. Bishop Mac Caille had his church on the side of the hill and he lived around the time of St. Patrick in the fifth century. The area has strong associations with St. Bridget and modern historians are now of the opinion that the patroness of Ireland was born near Croghan hill. The O' Connors of Offaly, the old gaelic rulers before colonisation and plantation in the sixteenth century, had one of their main residences here, and it was also the place of inauguration of their chiefs. Just north of the hill is a holy well dedicated to St. Patrick (signpost).

Daingean

[TOP](#)

Daingean Formerly Philipstown is situated on the Grand Canal. When Offaly was planted in the reign of Philip and Mary, (1557), the centre of the planted lands became Philipstown, the county town of the King's county. As the county was enlarged Philipstown was too far away from places in the south, and Tullamore became the county capital in 1833. The court-house here dates from the 1800's and in the burial ground in the town are the remains of Lewis Carroll's grandfather, Charles Dodgson.

Ferbane

[TOP](#)

Ferbane is situated on the Clara-Cloghan road. Half a mile south on the south bank of the Brosna stands

Gallen Priory (now the Convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Cluny). The priory is said to get its name from St. Canoc, who was born in Wales and who formed a monastery called Gallen of the Britons. In the middle Ages the monastery became an Augustinian priory. The ruins of a 15th century parish church are situated a short distance south of the convent and an early carved slab and cross-slabs are displayed. In fact, at Gallen and Clonmacnois are a large number of early Christian slabs - Offaly has some 400 of the 1,000 recorded. Six miles north of Ferbane are the remains of Doon Castle, with a carved figure called a sheelana-gig.

Five miles north east on the Ballycumber road lies Lemanaghan, where the remains of a Romanesque church and an early slab mark the site of a monastery founded by St. Manchan. Traces of St. Manchan's house can be found north of the church, whilst to the east of the church is St. Manchan's Well, from which a causeway leads to the "abbey". The "abbey" is an enclosure, traditionally the cell of St. Manchan's mother, St Mella. Legend has it that the stone between the well and "abbey" is where mother and son met every day without speaking to each other. The shrine of St. Manchan's is in Boher Church.

Geashill

TOP

Geashill is a neat village on the Tullamore-Portarlington road. Early Anglo-Norman occupation is indicated by the presence of a motte, but in the later Middle Ages the district was first held by the O' Dempseys and the O' Connors, and then by the Fitzgeralds, Lords of Offaly. Near the Protestant Church are the remains of the castle which was held in 1642 by Lettice Fitzgerald against her cousin Lord Clanmaliere.

Kilcormac

TOP

Kilcormac is a small town on the Tullamore-Birr road, at the foot of the Slieve Bloom mountains. There is a missal preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, which belonged to a 15th century Carmelite priory in the town. The Catholic Church dating from the 1860's is one of the first of the smaller churches in the country and unusually contains memorials to local Catholic gentry some of whom had strong European connections.

There's a treasure here well worth breaking a journey to stop off and see, it is the 16th century Pieta which is kept in the parish church, just off Main Street. The Pieta is a statue of Our lady holding the body of Jesus after he had been taken from the Cross. The scene was a very popular subject for sculptors in the in the middle ages in Europe, the most famous one that exists to this day is by Michaelangelo in St. Peter's in Rome. But the Kilcormac Pieta is different, being carved from a block of solid oak and measuring 5 ft. x 3 ft. It is a very beautiful carving and is thought to be the only one of its kind and era in Ireland. It is a subject of great devotion in the area and the wonderful story of its survival, which was passed on by word of mouth for generations was finally written down by a former parish priest of Kilcormac, the late Father Andrew Shaw.

It is thought that the Pieta is of Spanish origin and according to tradition, it was donated to the parish by a rich lady in the 16th century. It was placed in the parish church, which at that time was in Ballyboy, about 1 mile from Kilcormac. There it remained until 1650 when Oliver Cromwell's army was reported approaching from the direction of Cadamstown. Everyone gathered up their possessions and prepared to flee to the woods when two women thought of the Pieta. They rushed to the church, took the Pieta outside and buried it in a heap of rubbish. Later, under the cover of darkness, a number of men brought it out and re-buried it in a bog, where it was to lie for over sixty years. Had the Pieta not remained safely preserved in the bog for those years, it is unlikely that it would have survived to this day. During the years of persecution, the churches in Kilcormac and Ballyboy were reduced to ruins.

To return to the Pieta, it is thought that sometime between 1700 and 1720, only one man remained alive who knew where it was buried, and according to tradition, he was carried on his deathbed to point it out. The carving was carefully recovered and when it was examined it was found to be in perfect condition. It was then placed in the church that had recently been built in Kilcormac, the whole parish was overjoyed to have their valued Pieta among them again. It almost left the parish some years after that when a priest, who was moving to Borrisokane, took it with him! However, the parishioners brought it back and it has remained in the parish church of Kilcormac to this

day. So if you travel through Kilcormac some day, call into the church and see for yourself this wonderful sculpture.

The town of Kilcormac (Cormac's Church) where the oak-carved Pieta now rests was called Frankford for some 400 years before reverting to its ancient title. Frankford would appear to relate to Francis Magawley who founded the town on a ford across the Silver River. When travelling on the road to Kilcormac make a detour to visit Rathlihen Cemetery, a pre Famine graveyard and medieval church ruins which are well worth a visit. Turn left off the main road about a mile from Blueball towards Mountbolus. The road to Rathlihen is signpost on the right hand side. Take great care going down the lane to the graveyard as it is very narrow. The graveyard has been brought to its present beautiful condition by Mrs Daly of Ladywell. Three miles north west of Kilcormac, excavations in Lough Boora uncovered the earliest known traces of human activity in the Midlands. These dated from about the 8th millennium B. C.. Stonework which was discovered indicated a temporary fishing and hunting community.

Killeigh

[TOP](#)

Killeigh is a very pleasant village of historical importance situated on the Tullamore-Mountmellick road. This 6th century foundation was the chief church of east Offaly for almost a thousand years and the earthworks now remaining do no justice to a once royal centre. In 1433 all the learned and artistic people of Ireland gathered together at a festival given by Margaret O' Carroll of Offaly. The Franciscan friary was looted by Lord Deputy Grey, who stole the organ and windows from the church in the 530's. The cemetery adjoining the church of Ireland church off the village green commemorates old Offaly families, including the O' Connors, O' Dunnes, O' Molloy and O' Dempseys.

Kinnity

[TOP](#)

Kinnity is situated on the Birr - Mountmellick road. To the south and east rise the Slieve Blooms, which are full of beautiful scenery and have well signpost routes. Kinnity is worth a day trip for its pleasant ambience, historic sites and village pubs. The Protestant Church has a curious stone in the porch inscribed with a cross and contains stained glass windows by Catherine O' Brien and Ethel Rhind. One and a quarter miles to the north east is Castle Bernard, which was formerly the property of the Department of Forestry.

The castle is believed to be by the Pain brothers and dates from the 1830's. It was destroyed in the "Troubles" of the early 1920's and rebuilt such that the interior has little to offer. There is a shaft of a High Cross on the terrace with figure carvings including a Crucifixion on one face, and an Adam and Eve on the other. This could be a relic of a monastery founded in Kinnity in the 6th/7th century. One and a half miles north north west of Kinnity on the north of the Camcor is a fragment of the head of a High Cross which could be from the monastery founded by St Barrind in the 6th century. Beside it is a Norman motte.

Rahan

[TOP](#)

Rahan lies west of Tullamore and was the site of St Cathach's monastery. Carthach or Carthage was one of the principal founders of Irish monasticism and are ruins of two churches with Romanesque detail. The Jesuit retreat house and former boarding school of Tullabeg, once on a par with Clongowes, is now closed and the premises have been converted into a nursing home, together with accommodation. There is a driving range and a 9 hole golf course in the grounds. Whilst in this area it is worth travelling to Pullough in order to see the bog oak fittings in the local church. The altar, ambo and tabernacle are constructed from bog oak made by local Celtic Roots company and stained glass windows on the altar are beautiful. One is known to be by Harry Clarke, but the other is unsigned.

Shannonbridge

[TOP](#)

Shannonbridge is situated on the on the Cloghan - Ballinasloe road and is a fortified river crossing with a small well preserved, early 19th century fort built to secure the Connaght bridgehead. On the opposite side the Shannon is joined downstream by the River Suck. This area is renowned for bream, rudd and hybrids and has outstanding potential for the coarse angler. The town is well known for its bars and music. Whilst in Shannonbridge go for a tour on the Clonmacnois and West Offaly Railway, which will take you in a luxury train coach on a five and a half mile guided tour on the Blackwater Bog, This gives a golden opportunity to discover many aspects of Ireland's peatlands and is a must for visitors who want an authentic experience.

Shannon Harbour

[TOP](#)

Shannon Harbour - this village developed after 1800 as the terminus of the Grand Canal through the Irish midlands. Now a somewhat sleepy village with its old canal hotel in ruins, it has received a new lease of life from the growth of pleasure traffic in the canal since the 1970's. Writing in the late 1960's, James Pope Hennessy, biographer of Trollope, recorded his impressions of Shannon Harbour which are perhaps true of other villages too! "Shannon Harbour is by no means the only place of romantic beauty in the immediate neighbourhood of the Shannon at Banagher. A little to the south of the town a canal passes through the Victoria Lock, which, like the town bridge, was constructed in 1843. Save for an occasional canal-boat, this lock and its immediate surroundings are so unfrequented that even fishermen do not trouble to go there.

Here the banks of the canal and of the Shannon itself sustain a vegetation so rich and wild, so tangled and impenetrable too, that you are reminded if the tributary of the Niger at Old Calabar or Bonny, or of the tropical setting of the mountain torrents of Jamica and Dominica. Only the swans or the geese in flight, the meandering presence of a donkey and her inquisitive, velvet-snout foal, or the enthusiastic barking of a collie dog, pleased perhaps to see a stray human being at last, remind you that you are in Ireland"



[Mullingar](#) isn't too far away.....

