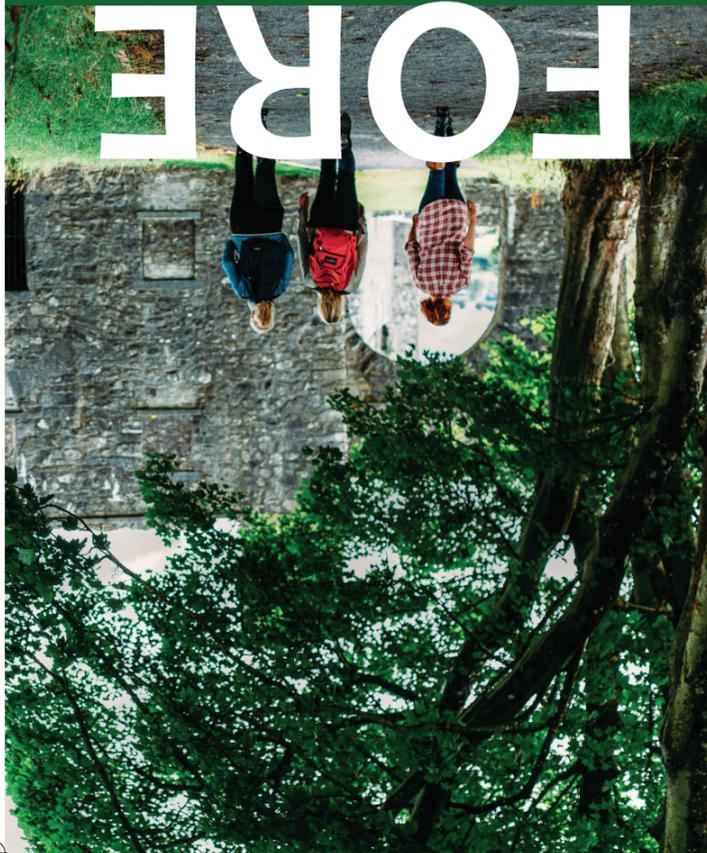


A VISITOR'S GUIDE



County Westmeath | Contae na hIarmhí



7 Wonders of Fore

Fore is an important example of an early Christian settlement which was converted by the Anglo-Normans into a chartered walled town with an important Benedictine priory. It continues to be occupied today and is famous throughout the land as "The Place of Seven Wonders". Fore takes its name from the Irish "Fobhair" meaning springs, referring to the water that turned St. Fechin's Mill. St. Fechin is said to have built a mill at Fore, a place which had neither river or stream flowing through it. Fechin walked to Lough Lene, and with his staff struck the base of the hill standing between it and Fore and water flowed from the lough under the hill to the mill thereby powering it!



BENEDICTINE PRIORY

The priory, founded before 1200 by the deLacys, contains the most extensive remains of any medieval Benedictine house in Ireland. The first monks were French. Like the previous Irish monastery it suffered various plundering attacks during its lifetime and its towers are demonstrative of the real need for abbey fortifications in the warring medieval times. There is a striking difference between the two monasteries - the buildings at this Anglo-Norman monastery are much more closely clustered than the sprawling nature of St. Fechin's monastery. The remains include a dovecote or columbarium.

THE BARD OF FORE

Michael Walsh was born at the Ben of Fore in 1897 and developed into one of Ireland's finest poets. His work was predominantly inspired by his love of nature and God, and today his poems adorn school-books and religious publications. Having to move out of the area to Wexford shortly after his childhood he was particularly inspired by the memory of springtime gradually enveloping the beauty of the landscape around The Ben.



Anchorite Cell – early 1300s

ANCHORITE'S CELL

The Anchorite's Cell is the small tower with attached chapel that lies further up the hill beyond St. Fechin's Church. The tower is composed of two storeys, the lower storey being vaulted. A circular stairs enclosed in a turret gives access to the second storey. The tower was the residence of a number of anchorites or hermits, men who deliberately chose a life of solitude and prayer. The most famous anchorite who resided in the tower at Fore was one Patrick Beglin whose epitaph engraved on a stone slab can still be seen in the tower. The small chapel attached to the tower contains in a vault under the chapel the crypt or burial place of the Nugent family of Clonyn Castle Delvin, Earls of Westmeath.

LANDSCAPE

Fore lies in a valley nestled between two ranges of hills, dominated to the north-east by The Ben of Fore and to the south-west by the steeply rising Carrick Balor or "The Rock". It is possible to climb Carrick Balor (meaning "Rock of the evil eye") passing by the Anchorite's Cell along the way.



ST. FECHIN'S CHURCH

St. Fechin founded a monastery here around 630AD. The monastery flourished and at its height is said to have had more than 300 monks together with 2000 students studying here. The site of the monastery was located on the hillside by St Feichin's church. The church, dating perhaps from the 10th century, was originally a simple rectangular structure, with projecting side walls and a Greek cross in relief over the lintelled doorway. A chancel was added about 1200 and two east windows were inserted about 1500, when the building possibly functioned as a parish church. Legend has it that it was St. Fechin himself that placed the lintel over the door. Apparently the workmen were unable to lift the stone so one day after their breakfast they returned to find it miraculously in place!



LOUGH LENE

Lough Lene is a designated Special Area of Conservation. It's known for its stocks of brown trout, pike and perch. The "cut" at nearby Collinstown is the main access point to this lovely lake.

This picturesque picnic area and slipway has been awarded blueflag status - EU recognition of its excellent water quality and amenity area facilities. Its water is quite alkaline and it supports a range of pondweeds and stoneworts together with freshwater marsh/fen vegetation. In areas alongside the lake are patches of wet woodland inhabited by willows, birch and alder together with some adjacent areas of Common Reed. Fish and bird life includes Freshwater Crayfish, Mute Swan, Teal, Mallard, Great-crested Grebe, Grey Heron and Cormorant.

The lake is also famous for what is known as the Lough Lene Bell now housed in the National Museum, a replica of which is used to bring the Dáil (Irish Parliament) to order!



ST. FEICHIN'S WAY

3km Looped Walk

7 Wonders of Fore

- 1 Anchorite in a stone
- 2 Water which will not boil
- 3 Monastery built on a bog
- 4 Mill without a mill race
- 5 Water which flows uphill
- 6 Tree which will not burn
- 7 Stone lintel raised by St. Fechin's prayers

3km Looped Walk	Dog Poo Bin	Parking
Picnic Bench Area	Dog Poo Bags	Gate
1 West Gate	19 St. Fechin's Rejected Stone	
2 Tobernacoganty	20 Site of Toberfoolagh or Lassair's Well	
3 St. Fechin's Bath	21 Beehive	
4 Gate House	22 Remembrance Garden	
5 Dovecote	23 Motte & Bailey Castle	
6 Eucharistic Walkway	24 Gallows Hill	
7 Bridge over Glore	25 Carving of St. Fechin	
8 Remembrance Garden	26 Daffodil Walk	
9 Carving of Goddess Ériu	27 School Orchard	
10 Nancy's Homestead	28 Nellie's Homestead	
11 Nancy's Fruit Garden	29 Michael Walsh, Bard of Fore, Memorial	
12 Beech Tree 300 yr	30 St. Fechin's (R.C. Church)	
13 Hedgehog Hut	31 South Gate	
14 Oak Plantation	32 Old Gaol	
15 Buzzard Habitat	33 Coffee Shop	
16 River Glore Rises	34 St Feichin's Mill	
17 Fairy Garden	35 Rock of Fore & Carrick Balor	
18 Pine Forest Walk		

IRISH WALLED TOWNS NETWORK
 An Chomhairle Oidhreachta The Heritage Council

Fore is a member of the Irish Walled Towns Network of the Heritage Council

