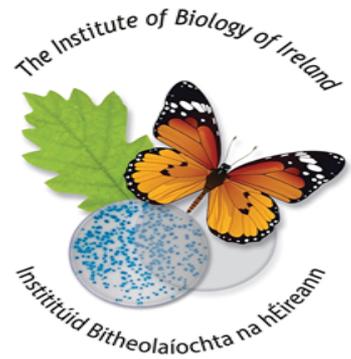


Institute of Biology of Ireland Activity Series, 2016

This is a family friendly event



Come and enjoy a morning-guided tour of Birr Castle award winning gardens and Grounds, including the Great Telescope, and an afternoon visit to Lough Boora Discovery Park.

Saturday, July 16th 2016

The Institute of Biology of Ireland (www.ibioli.net) invites its members, families, friends and general public to a guided tour** of approximately 1.5 hours (morning session) of Birr Castle award winning gardens and grounds, including the Great Telescope (www.birrcastle.com); and afterwards, in early afternoon for about 1.5 hours, a walking tour (3.3km) of The Sculpture Park Walking Route*** of the Lough Boora Discovery Park (www.loughboora.com).

*** The guided tour does NOT include a tour of the Castle, per se.*

**** Please note that there are 5 routes developed at the Discovery Park, but only one route (The Sculpture Park Route) could be undertaken in 1.5 hours.*

The Birr Castle and grounds tour begins at 10.30am and finishes at approximately 12.00 noon. Meet near the snack bar.

There is a snack bar at the Castle, but participants may wish to bring a packed lunch. There are picnic tables in the castle grounds near the tree house / children's play area. The suggestion is that we have a lunch break after the Castle tour before departing for the Lough Boora Discovery Park (a distance of 16km approx.).

How to get to Birr Castle:

When you reach the square in Birr, follow the signs for the Castle. The entrance is rather discrete; a metered car park is near the entrance.

We aim to begin the Lough Boora Discovery Park tour at approximately 2pm and finish at 3.30pm approx.

Costs of admission to Birr Castle grounds:

The Institute of Biology of Ireland will carry the cost of the Birr Castle grounds guide. However, there is an admission fee to the Castle grounds and garden:

- Non-members of the Institute of Biology of Ireland: €7 per person.
- Members of the Institute of Biology of Ireland: €3.50 per person.

Costs relating to Sculpture Park Walking Route, Lough Boora Discovery Park:

This is free to all participants. Maps are provided. However, there is a car parking fee of €2 for all day parking (pay at reception before leaving).

Bikes may be hired @ €5 per hour; bicycle trailers (will carry 2 small children) are also available to hire @ €3 per hour. These figures are negotiable downwards for group hire.

Info on the Birr Castle gardens and grounds:

The guided tour will allow you to travel back in time with the Parson's family, the Earls of Rosse when Birr Castle was a hub of scientific discovery and innovation (The Science Centre). The interactive galleries reveal the wonders of early photography, engineering, astronomy, and botany.

Meander through beautifully landscaped and natural parkland. See the impressive worldwide plant collections that boast rare species from around the world, including 40 champion trees of Britain and Ireland.

Discover what was the largest telescope in the world for over 70 years, created by the Earl of Rosse in the 1840's, and now fully restored.

Visit the enchanting Fernery, and discover Ireland's largest tree house with an adventure playground.

Info on The Sculpture Park Walking Route:

The Sculptures at Lough Boora Discovery Park started as an international sculpture symposium in 2002 when seven Irish and international artists created 8 site-specific works of art. It was developed under the tutelage of artist Kevin O'Dwyer, Arts Officer from Offaly County Council Sinead O'Reilly, and Bord na Móna staff.

The artists, inspired by the rich natural and industrial legacy of the bog lands, have created a series of large-scale sculptures that are now part of the Parklands permanent collection.

How to get to Lough Boora Discovery Park:

Lough Boora Discovery Park is located in County Offaly, between Tullamore, Birr and Clonmacnoise.

Directions by road:

From Tullamore: Leave Tullamore on N52 for Birr. At Blueball turn right onto R357 for Cloghan / Shannonbridge. Lough Boora Discovery Park commences within 7km of Blueball, look out for the sign.

From Birr: Take N52 towards Tullamore, exit for N62 to Athlone. Continue to Cloghan, turning right off roundabout onto R357. Lough Boora Discovery Park commences within 10km, look out for the sign.

Alternatively, travel from Birr to Kilcormac(16km, 12 minutes). On entering Kilcormac, take a sharp left between Feighery's Bar and Lounge and Graceland Bar and Lounge on to a narrow road , L7023, opposite O'Sullivan's supermarket. The journey to the Park is approximately 5 km (6 minutes).

GPS Coordinates: If you have a GPS and would like to enter the park's coordinates – please see below:

N 53°13'24.9" ; W 007°43'44.5"

Google Maps: You can also find the Park on Google maps, by simply searching for 'Lough Boora Discovery Park'. You will then be able to get directions to the park from wherever you are at that time.

To facilitate with our planning, please advise if you plan to join us on the day (give the number of persons in the group), by emailing info@ibioli.net on or before **July 11th**.

Looking forward to meeting you at Birr Castle and/or Lough Boora Discovery Park.

Frank McGourty, Hon Secretary, Institute of Biology of Ireland (www.ibioli.net).

