



Duckett Family Motto:
Spectemur agendo
'Let us be judged by our actions'



Duckett's Grove Walled Gardens & Pleasure Grounds

Duckett's Grove, Carlow,
South East Ireland



Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

In September 2005 during Heritage Week Carlow County Council acquired Duckett's Grove, an impressive ruined mansion and gothic revival castle, along with its outbuildings of stables, yards, barns, forge and two superb interconnecting walled gardens, a small area of pleasure grounds with a sheltering wood, in all, some 11 acres. This is a tiny but most important core area of a much larger demesne that was once part of a 12,000 acre estate.



Following extensive and sensitive restoration, the revived walled gardens and wooded pleasure grounds are now open to the public, and once more Duckett's Grove has become a centre of activity in the rural Carlow countryside. Duckett's Grove stands as testimony to the dedication and foresight of Carlow County Council, who in acquiring and developing this historic property, has revived a site of great historical and cultural significance for the enjoyment of visitors from home and abroad.



Source: The Lawrence Collection

History of the Demesne

Duckett's Grove, the 18th, 19th and early 20th century home of the Duckett family, was formerly at the centre of this extensive estate that has dominated the Carlow landscape for over 300 years. As the principal seat of one of the most prominent families in Carlow of that time, it remains an important and powerful reminder of a former period, rich in history and deep in tradition.

In his book *A Guide to Irish Country Houses* Mark Bence-Jones describes Duckett's Grove as a "square house of two and three storeys, transformed into a spectacular castellated Gothic fantasy by Thomas A. Cobden, of Carlow, for J.D. Duckett 1830. Numerous towers and turrets, round, square and octagonal. The walls enlivened with oriels and many canopied niches sheltering statues; more statues and busts in niches along the battlemented wall joining the house to a massive feudal yard gateway. The house was burnt in 1933 and is now a ruin".

Even in ruin, Duckett's Grove is a most important and impressive example of a Gothic revival castle in Ireland and the surviving towers and turrets form a romantic profile in the landscape making it one of the most photogenic historic buildings in the country. Immediately adjacent to the castle were two superbly built, partially brick lined, interconnecting walled gardens and a cleverly designed pleasure ground and lawned areas. These have now been splendidly restored to their original state and are open to the public.

History of the Duckett family

The origins of the Duckett family in Ireland are generally traced to Thomas Duckett, who in 1695, purchased the townland of Kneestown, a holding of less than 500 acres upon which Duckett's Grove was later built. The earliest origins of a house at Kneestown can reasonably be attributed to Jonas Duckett and dated to the mid-eighteenth century. This is likely to have represented a relatively modest house before his son, William Duckett, who, after marrying an heiress enlarged the house.

By the middle of the 19th century the Duckett estate spread across five counties and their magnificent mansion home, Duckett's Grove was at the heart of the demesne and centre of their possessions.

William Duckett's son and grandson successfully extended the house, favouring the Gothic style. Mrs. Maria Duckett, second wife of William Duckett (1822-1908), the last of the Duckett's Grove line, abandoned the property about 1916.

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In 1939 a sensational court case in Dublin ended the Duckett's Grove fairytale. The High Court action involved the will of Mrs. Maria Georgina Duckett, whose estate at the time of her death in 1937 was valued at £97,735, several million euro in today's values. Her only daughter Olive had been disinherited with what was known in such wills as "the angry shilling". The beneficiaries of the vast fortune were British based Protestant charities, to be nominated by her executors. Revelations during the hearing revealed a sometimes violent relationship between mother and daughter which shocked not just family friends in County Carlow, but the society circle in Dublin where both were regarded as leading socialites. After the 12-day hearing, her daughter got the interest for life on £7,000, with the capital to revert back into the estate after her death. The remainder went to charities and in legal fees.



The Walled Gardens and Pleasure Grounds at Duckett's Grove

The first phase of the revival of two old walled gardens has now been completed, the old paths revealed and the beds and borders reinstated. Replanting began in January 2007. In the 18th and 19th centuries these were ornamental and productive kitchen gardens growing a variety of fruit and vegetables. Stylistically the new planting schemes echo the past yet reflect changing fashions, utilising plants and planting patterns that may have evolved had the Duckett family or subsequent owners continued to garden there. The superbly constructed brick-lined walls are still studded with the original vine eyes and fruit nails, reminders of the generations of men and women who tended the gardens here.





The Upper Walled Garden, hedged with boxwood, is planted with historical varieties of shrub roses, a collection of Chinese and Japanese peonies, a great range and variety of hardy and tender perennials and choice flowering shrubs including *Echium*, *Watsonia*, *Acanthus*, *Jovellana*, *Daphniphyllum*, *Acradenia*, *Arbutus*, *Cornus*, *Iris*, *Eryngium*, *Beschorneria*, *Euporbia*, and to really test the microclimate of the gardens, some ornamental bananas.

The Lower Walled Garden, once the site of the old orchard, contains a variety of fruits once again, including figs, a mulberry, Chinese gooseberry, redcurrants, blackcurrants, rhubarb, pears, plums and Irish historical varieties of apples including 'Irish Peach', 'Kerry Pippin', 'Sheep's Nose', 'Ten Commandments' and 'Blood of the Boyne'. The borders also contain a variety of shrubs and perennials all echoing the past history of the gardens and people associated with Duckett's Grove.

Hummingbird moths, yellow wagtails, wrens, thrushes, blackbirds and robins have set up home and can be seen enjoying the gardens and wooded pleasure grounds.

The Pleasure Grounds are enclosed in part by a stretch of 'Carlow Fence', a traditional railing made of vertical granite slab stones that is unique to County Carlow. Restored paths and the repaired sunken stone bridge plus plantings of oak, lime, hazel, spindle and laurel rekindle the spirit of the Georgian Pleasure Grounds. The coolness and shade of the hazel wood offers relief from the heat and light of the walled gardens.



Local Attractions

Situated in the South East of Ireland, approximately 90kms from the ferry and airports of Dublin, Rosslare and Waterford, Carlow is one of Ireland's most stunningly pretty and charming inland counties. At the heart of its rural landscape, close to Carlow town is Duckett's Grove with a number of fine attractions located nearby.



The Brownshill Dolmen, Brownshill – this magnificent capstone weighs over 100 tonnes and is the largest of its kind in Europe. It is thought that religious rites, possibly even human sacrifice, were performed there for four and a half thousand years (2500 B.C.).

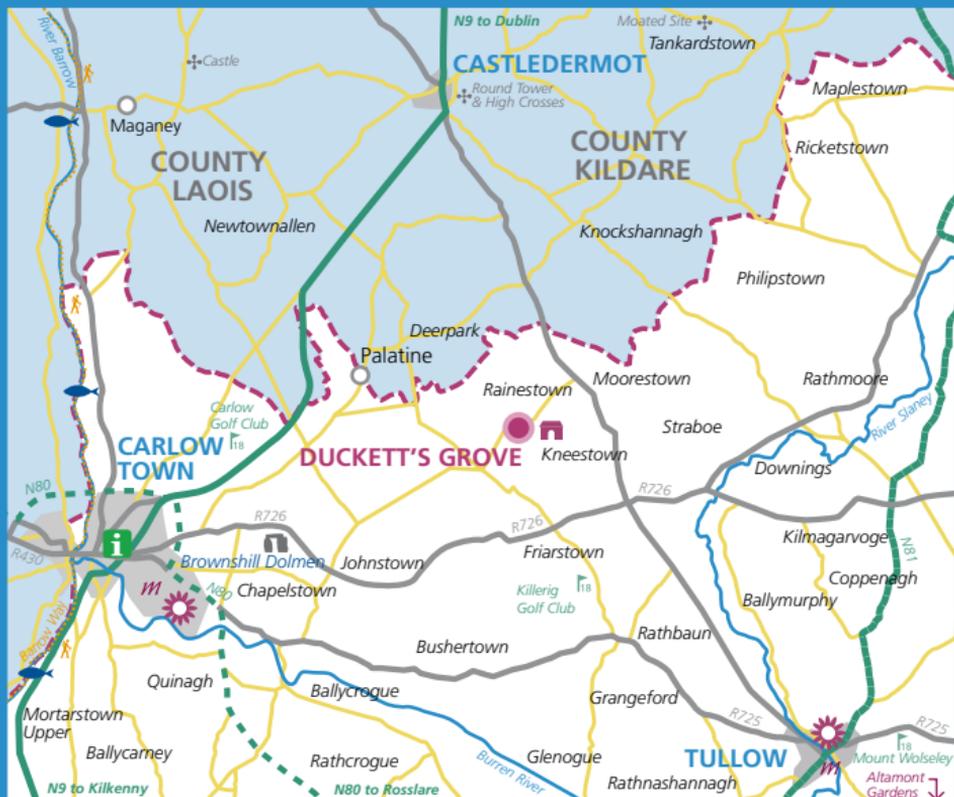
Oak Park Forest Park, outskirts of Carlow town – A mature, mixed species woodland with a predominance of Beech, Oak, Scots Pine, Silver Fir, Larch and Sycamore. Colour coded walkways of varying lengths with excellent accessible surfaces and easy gradients make a visit here an enjoyable and relaxing experience.

Altamont Gardens, Tullow – Widely respected as the jewel in Ireland's gardening crown, Altamont Gardens are an enchanting blend of formal and informal gardens with riverside walks covering over 40 acres. Lawns bisected by sculpted yews slope down to a lake surrounded by rare trees and rhododendrons and lead in turn to a very different garden featuring exotic shrubs and trees. T: (059) 9159444

The Delta Sensory Gardens, Carlow town – Consists of a series of 16 interconnecting gardens of a multi-sensory nature covering 2.5 acres including a water and woodland garden, a sculpture garden, a musical garden, a willow garden and a formal rose garden amongst others. T: (059) 9143527

With mountains, glorious countryside and river valleys all close at hand, Carlow offers an array of outdoor activities while the county also offers a fine range of visitor attractions guaranteeing fun and enjoyment for all the family. For further details visit www.carlowtourism.com





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-  Dolmen
-  Tourist Office
-  Heritage
-  Gardens
-  Fishing

Directions: Access off the R418 Castledermot/Tullow Road, the R726 Tullow/Hacketstown Road and the Castledermot/Carlow Road N9. Well signposted.



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opening hours	April – October: Daily from 10.00am – 5.30pm Rest of year: Daily from 10.00am – 4.00 pm
admission	Free admission and parking. Guide dogs only allowed.
facilities	Toilet facilities, car parking, wheelchair access.
owner	Carlow County Council
contact details	Carlow Tourist Office, College Street, Carlow T: + 353 (0) 59 9131554 F: + 353 (0) 59 9170776 E: info@carlowtourism.com W: www.carlowtourism.com



Duckett's Grove is a member of the Carlow Garden Trail which features many different types of gardens and parks including great old gardens and smaller gardens which are maturing beautifully with time. Award winning garden centres and forest parks complement the joy of a visit here.

The publishers gratefully acknowledge photographic contributions by Finola Reid, Historic Gardens Consultant, James Burke, the Lawrence Collection and Carlow County Museum.