

Glendalough: Art and Atmosphere

19 - 27 August, 9:30am - 5pm

Glendalough Heritage Forum

Brockagh Resource Centre, Laragh,
Glendalough, Co. Wicklow



Pattern at Glendalough by Maria Spilsbury Taylor,
courtesy of the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin

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Glendalough: Art and Atmosphere

Following the success of last year's exhibition by the Glendalough Heritage Forum of historic images from the National Library of Ireland's collection of Lawrence and Valentine photographs of Glendalough, the Forum is again mounting an exhibition of images of the Valley.

This year's theme is based on paintings, sketches and drawings of Glendalough showing how artists viewed this historic valley. The images on view are but a small selection of the many paintings and sketches which were made of this area and come, in the main, from the National Library of Ireland's Prints and Drawings Collection. Three paintings: the *Patron of Glendalough* by Joseph Peacock is held in the Ulster Museum, one image of *The Pattern at Glendalough* by Maria Spilsbury Taylor is from the National Gallery of Ireland, while the second Spilsbury Taylor painting is courtesy of the National Folklore Collection in UCD. These images give a sense of Glendalough as viewed 'through the artists' eye', leaving a legacy of their artistic creations and the atmosphere in which they saw this venerable place.

Glendalough has had many phases in its history: its golden age of monasticism, the introduction of religious orders, the reformation, its decline and then it rising again, like the phoenix in the late 18th century when it again became a place of pilgrimage. This time it was the gentry who were interested in experiencing the picturesque landscape and romanticism of the ruined valley. Glendalough and the Wicklow mountains became an important part of every tourist's visit to Ireland. From as early as the 1770s visitors were coming to Glendalough to view the antiquities and to explore the beauties of the valley. It was seen as important that the ruins which had lain waste for centuries should be recorded for posterity and that the Glendalough of the latter half of the 18th century has been preserved is due in no small manner to the Huguenot artist Gabriel Beranger and the Italian painter and architect Angelo Maria Bigari. They came in October 1779, stayed in Derrybawn House, the home of James Critchley and despite bad weather produced many drawings which were collected in a volume and presented to the Royal Irish Academy.

Following this resurgent interest in antiquities people such as Edward Wakefield who visited Glendalough in 1809, Sir Walter Scott in 1825, John Barrow in 1835, the German writer Kohl, Bartlett and O'Malley Irwin all came in the 1840s, as did Mr and Mrs Samuel Hall. Since then various illustrated guides have been written, each one giving a personal interpretation of what Glendalough held for that particular individual. These accounts have served Glendalough well over the years as they portrayed Glendalough as a mystical, romantic, picturesque landscape with something on offer for all comers. They were in effect performing the modern day equivalent of the marketing guru, depicting Glendalough as a place that must be seen and therefore enticing further visitors and writers to the Wicklow Mountains.

Many of the images on view in this exhibition were painted or sketched for inclusion in these guides and were an opportunity for people who were unable to travel to view the locations being described. They were the virtual tours of their day! This booklet accompanying the exhibition gives brief biographies of the artists, the source of which can be found at <http://www.libraryireland.com/irishartists> where the reader can access more detailed information. The exception is Paul Sandby whose biography can be viewed in full in *The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists*. The second section relates to extracts from some books in which the images appeared. Extracts have been selected to give a flavour of the writers' impressions of Glendalough and with the assistance of the images must have given the reader a very good sense of the beauties and antiquities of this special place. The art of the artists, along with the words of the writers, created a lasting atmosphere which we can still enjoy today.

The Artists

William Henry Beauford, 1735-1819

Born in 1735, little is known of the personal history of William Henry Beauford. In 1769 he was one of the sixty-one competitors who sent in designs for the building of the Exchange on Cork Hill. He was an ardent student of Irish antiquities and was one of the founders of the Antiquarian Society. He illustrated several of the antiquarian works published in Dublin at the end of the eighteenth century. He accompanied Rev. Edward Ledwich, his friend in an antiquarian tour of southern counties in 1786, and the following year toured Carlow and Wicklow. Many of the drawings of houses, old castles, churches, monasteries and ancient remains made by him in these and other tours were engraved by James Ford for Ledwich's *Antiquities of Ireland*, published in 1790. In his old age he became an inmate of Simpson's Hospital, Great Britain Street, now Parnell Street where he died in 1819, aged 84.

Angelo Maria Bigari, Landscape Painter, fl. 1772-1779

A native of Bologna, Italy, Bigari probably came to Ireland as a scene-painter, as about 1772 he was employed by Thomas Ryder at the Smock Alley Theatre. In 1777 he was living in South King Street. In 1779 he accompanied Gabriel Beranger in his tour to Glendalough and Connaught, assisting in the work of making drawings of ancient buildings and antiquities at the request of William Burton Conyngham. Beranger has left a manuscript account in which he frequently mentions Bigari, whom he found a useful colleague and a genial companion. At that time Bigari only spoke French and Italian.

Samuel Frederick Brocas, Landscape Painter, c.1792-1847

Samuel Frederick Brocas, second son of Henry Brocas Snr. and brother of William Brocas, was born about 1792. He was a successful student at the Dublin Society's School, obtaining medals for his work in 1801, 1802 and 1807. He practised in Dublin as a landscape painter, both in oil and water-colour. He contributed to the exhibitions in Dublin in 1804, 1809 and 1812, and exhibited landscapes at the Royal Hibernian Academy between 1828 and 1847. He was a member of the Society of Irish Artists which held its first exhibition in 1845. His painting *View looking into Powerscourt Demesne*, an oil picture is in private hands. The National Gallery of Ireland holds two water-colours by him; a *View of Dublin from near the Four Courts*, and a *View of College Green and Trinity College*, dated 1818. Two water-colours, *The Post Office and Nelson's Pillar*, and *The Castle Chapel*, are in the Victoria and Albert Museum; and *The General Post Office, Dublin*, is in the British Museum.



William Brocas, Portrait and Figure Painter, 1794-1868

William Brocas, third son of Henry Brocas Senr. and brother of Samuel Frederick Brocas, was born about 1794 in Dublin where he practised. He was an exhibitor at the Society of Artists in 1809 and 1812, and at the Royal Hibernian Academy in various years from 1828 to 1863. His contributions were chiefly portraits and figure subjects, with an occasional landscape. He was President of the Society of Irish Artists which held its first exhibition at the Royal Irish Institution in College Street in 1843; was elected an Associate of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1854, and a Member in 1860. Amongst his works are *Roderic O'Connor's Castle*, and *Sunday Morning*, exhibited in the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1847. His *Departure of Irish Emigrants*, was in the Dublin Exhibition of 1865. In Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh's *History of Dublin*, published in 1818, is a view by him of the *New Post Office*. The National Gallery of Ireland possesses his *View of Bray Head*. His portraits include *The Grand Duke Michael*, *Thomas McKenny*, *Lord Mayor*, and *Edward Bunting*, 1811. He also did a number of etchings after Hogarth's engravings which were published in Dublin.

William Henry Brooke, Portrait Painter and Draughtsman, 1772-1860

A British artist, Brooke worked in a banker's office, but left to pursue a career as an artist. He made rapid progress and established himself as a portrait painter. He first appeared at the Royal Academy in 1810, and continued to exhibit at intervals until 1826. Among his exhibited works were *Murder of*

Thomas a' Beckett, Tourists in the South of Ireland ascending the Galtee Mountains in 1823; a sketch of *The Battle of Waterloo* in 1826; a *Portrait of Robert Owen*, the Welsh social reformer in 1834, now in the National Portrait Gallery. He exhibited in the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1827, 1828, 1829, 1842 and 1846, and was elected an Associate in 1828. In 1812 Brooke undertook to make drawings for *The Satirist*, a London monthly publication, to which he contributed for a year. He obtained considerable employment as an illustrator of books, including vignettes for the edition of *Moore's Irish Melodies* published in 1822. Among other works illustrated by him are *Legends of Killarney*, William Carleton's *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, published in Dublin in 1834 and 1835. He contributed to Ryland's *History of Waterford*, 1824; *Lismore Castle, Round Tower, Ardmore, and Reginald's Tower, Waterford*. Brooke died at Chichester, after a long illness, in 1860, aged 88.



Thomas Creswick, Landscape Painter, 1811-1869

Thomas Creswick was born in Yorkshire where he displayed a great talent for drawing at an early age. Though only seventeen he moved to London in 1828 and was successful in having two paintings exhibited that year in the Royal Academy. He continued to exhibit paintings in the Academy for thirty years. In 1837 he visited Ireland and produced a number of illustrations. In 1842 he was elected an associate of the Royal Academy. He was mainly employed, very successfully, as a designer of book illustrations and etcher.



Jonathan Fisher, Landscape Painter, d. 1809

Born in Dublin, he was originally a woolen-draper in the Liberties. He took to painting as a young man and was said to have been self-taught. In 1763 he was awarded 10 guineas by the Dublin Society for a landscape. He was a regular contributor to the various exhibitions down to 1801. In 1792 Fisher commenced the issue of a series of views of scenery in Ireland at the price of half a guinea each. The whole series, comprising sixty plates, was issued as a volume in 1796 as *Scenery of Ireland illustrated in a series of prints of select Views, Castles and Abbeys, drawn and engraved in Aquatint*.



Samuel Lover, Miniature Painter 1797-1868

Samuel Lover was born in Dublin in 1797, the eldest son of S. Lover, a lottery-office keeper and moneychanger. While he joined his father at the age of 13, Lover's talents lay elsewhere; he had an extraordinary aptitude for music and drawing. Though his father sternly objected to him pursuing anything but making money, at age 17 Samuel left, supporting himself by teaching drawing while at the same time studying painting. By 1817 and 1819 he exhibited drawings in the Dublin Society and again in 1823. He initially confined himself to landscape and marine subjects but was encouraged to venture into miniature painting.

Lover began to exhibit in the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1826, and between that year and 1835 he contributed ninety-six landscapes, miniatures and drawings. He was elected an Associate in 1828, and a Member in 1829. In 1832 he sent to the Royal Academy a miniature portrait of *Paganini*, the violinist, and showed it in the following year in Dublin. Encouraged by his success Lover determined to try his fortune in London, and left Ireland in 1834. In that year he had six works in the Academy, and his miniatures were seen there regularly every year down to 1843 and again from 1851 to 1862.

During his time in Dublin Lover had demonstrated his versatility as a musician, a composer, a writer and book-illustrator. In 1818 he sang his eulogy on Thomas Moore, at the banquet given in honour of the poet. He contributed some of his stories to the Dublin magazines, including the *Dublin Literary Gazette*. He wrote a number of songs, such as *Rory O'More* and *Widow Machree*. In 1831 he published *Legends and Stories of Ireland*, illustrated by himself, which had an immediate success.

In London he established himself as a miniature painter and made good connections, and in the literary and social world he became as popular as he had been in Dublin. He commenced novel writing in 1836, with his *Rory O'More*, which was followed in 1842 by his best novel, *Handy Andy*, illustrated by himself. With the arrival of the camera demand for miniature portraits declined and with Lover's failing sight he embarked on a new career of *Irish Evenings*, of songs, recitations and stories. He went to America in 1846 with his show where he was met with great success in the United States and Canada. In 1848 he returned to London and gave a new entertainment, *Paddy's Postbag*. He began to paint again, and from 1851 to 1862 had a number of landscape drawings in the Academy. His last exhibited work in London was *The Kerry Post on St. Valentine's Day*, which he also had in the Hibernian Academy in 1863. His latter days were passed in failing health, and for the last four years of his life he lived in retirement in Jersey, where he died in 1868.

Alfred Nicholson, Water-colour Painter, 1788-1833

Son of the English artist Francis Nicholson, he was born at Whitby in 1788. In early life he was in the Royal Navy, but after a few years' service left and commenced his career as an artist. He came to Ireland in 1813 and remained until about 1817, when he returned to England. In 1821 he made a sketching tour in Wales, and again visited Ireland. His works, generally of small size, are carefully and accurately drawn and elaborately finished. He died in London in 1833. A drawing of an Irish landscape by him is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Joseph Peacock, Subject Painter, c.1783-1837

Joseph Peacock practised in Dublin as a painter, from 1810. He painted subject pictures, made copies from the old Dutch masters, and worked as a picture cleaner and restorer. He contributed to the various exhibitions in Dublin from 1809 to 1821, his first exhibited works being *A Stage-coach Scene* and a *Portrait of a Lion*. In 1811 he showed his *Palmerston Fair*. In 1821 he painted *The Installation of a Knight of St. Patrick in St. Patrick's Cathedral, 27th May, 1819*. He was chosen one of the original Members of the Royal Hibernian Academy on its foundation in 1823 and was an exhibitor from 1826 to 1835. In 1817 he sent a picture to the London Academy, *The Patron, or Festival of St. Kevin at the Seven Churches, Glendalough* which was again exhibited the next year at the British Institution and is now held by the Ulster Museum. Among other pictures by him were *Donnybrook Fair, a scene in a tent*, and a copy, bust only, of Reynolds' portrait of John Hely-Hutchinson which hangs in the Provost's House, Dublin.

Peacock described himself as a 'familiar life and animal painter.' His son, Joseph Peacock Jun., entered the Dublin Society's School in 1816, and painted landscapes, figures and portraits and was an exhibitor in the Royal Hibernian Academy down to 1835.



George Petrie, Archaeologist, Antiquarian, Painter, Scholar, Musician, 1790-1866

Born in Dublin in 1789 in Dublin, George Petrie was a distinguished archaeologist, antiquarian, scholar, painter, illustrator and musician. His father, James Petrie was a portrait painter, acquainted with many leaders of the 1798 Rebellion, including Michael Dwyer whom he painted. George followed his father's profession and by age 19 had begun to make excursions through the country in search of the picturesque, and to examine and take careful notes of antiquities.

In 1817 he began to exhibit in Dublin; but his most profitable work was furnishing sketches for illustrated books relating to Ireland, such as Cromwell's *Excursions*, Brewer's *Beauties*, and Fisher's *Historical Guide*. He became an associate of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1826, was a constant exhibitor and was elected a member in 1828, appointed librarian in 1830, and was subsequently President. He contributed articles on current literature, antiquities, and archaeology to the *Dublin Penny Journal* from its establishment in 1832.

From 1833 to 1846 he was connected with the Ordnance Survey, visiting all parts of Ireland in the course of his duties. In 1833 his essay on the *Origin and Uses of the Round Towers of Ireland* gained a prize of £50 from the Academy. Following the break-up of the Irish Ordnance Topographical Survey he reverted to painting. His great work on *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland* was published in 1845. Petrie also devoted much attention to the study of ancient Irish art and Irish music. He died at Rathmines, Dublin 1866, aged 77, and was buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery. His fine collection of Irish antiquities was purchased from his family by the Government and deposited in the Royal Irish Academy.



Paul Sandby, Painter, Draughtsman and Printmaker, 1731-1809

Paul Sandby was born in Nottingham in 1731 and like his older brother, Thomas began his career as a military draughtsman. Both brothers saw service in Scotland, Thomas during the 1745–6 Jacobite rebellion, and Paul after it, when he worked on a survey of the Highlands as part of the government campaign to subdue the area.

By 1752 Paul had returned to London, where he lived for a time with his brother. He also spent time with him at Windsor, where Thomas was a member of the household of the Duke of Cumberland, Ranger of Windsor Great Park (the brothers produced many views of Windsor and its environs, and the Royal Library at Windsor Castle has an outstanding Sandby collection). In his later work he often used body colour, sometimes painting in oils, and he was the first professional artist in England to publish aquatints in 1775. Gainsborough singled him out as the only contemporary English landscape artist who painted 'real views from nature' instead of artificial picturesque compositions. Both brothers were founder members of the Royal Academy in 1768.

Thomas Pope-Stevens, Portrait and Landscape Painter, fl. 1765-1780

Thomas Pope-Stevens was the son Thomas Pope and brother of Somerville, Justin and Alexander, all artists. He entered the Dublin Society's School in 1764, the same year as his brother Somerville. In 1765 he sent three landscapes and three portraits to the exhibition in George's Lane. In 1766 he exhibited two landscapes and two portraits, and in 1768 and 1769 he was also an exhibitor. He continued to send pictures to the Exhibitions of 1771, 1775, 1777 and 1780. He had as many as fifteen portraits and two landscapes in the Exhibition of 1777.



Francis Wheatley, Portrait, Landscape and Figure Drawer, 1747-1801

Francis Wheatley was born in 1747 in Covent Garden, London, the son of a master tailor. He received early art training and was awarded prizes by the Society of Arts in 1762, 1763 and 1769; in 1765, at the age of 18, he sent his first contribution to the Society of Artists

His progress as an artist was rapid; he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Artists in 1771, and a Director the following year, and he attained to a considerable practice. He was, however, extravagant which led him into debt, and in 1779 he was forced to leave London for Dublin to avoid his creditors. He brought with him the wife of the water-colour painter, Gresse, whom he passed off as his wife. The discovery of this deception, when uncovered, obliged him to leave Dublin.

In Ireland he met with much success as a painter. One of his best and most important paintings was *A View of College Green with the meeting of the Volunteers on the 4th November, 1779, to commemorate the Birthday of King William*. This was followed by the even more important, picture, *The Irish House of Commons in 1780: Henry Grattan urging the claim of Irish Rights*. In 1783 he sent from Dublin to the exhibition of the Society of Artists in London a *Review of the Irish Volunteers in the Phoenix Park*. This is possibly the picture which was for many years in the National Portrait Gallery in London and was transferred in 1898 to the Dublin Gallery.

Besides painting portraits, including that of Henry Grattan, MP, Wheatley also did drawings of important country seats and places in various parts of Ireland, such as Enniskerry, Glenmalure and Glendalough. He also drew rustic scenes with figures of peasants, which were popular, and obtained a ready sale. Wheatley left Ireland in 1784, having got into further debt and returned to London where he died in 1801.



Maria Spilsbury Taylor Painter and Genre Painter, 1777 - c.1823

Born in London in 1777, Maria was the daughter of John Spilsbury, the engraver. She painted portraits and rural and domestic subjects, and also did a few original etchings. She exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1792 to 1808, and at the British Institution from 1806 to 1813. In 1809 She married John Taylor and came to Ireland in 1813 where she did many pictures and drawings and was an exhibitor of small portraits at the Hibernian Society in 1814 and 1815. In a notice of the former exhibition, the *Monthly Museum* says: ‘Mrs. Taylor's pictures exhibit a taste and delicacy of execution rarely to be met with.’ She also exhibited, in Hawkins Street, portraits and rural subjects, such as *Gipsies at a Cottage Door*, and *Pattern at Glendalough*, in 1816 which is now held by the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin; *All Hallow's Eve* in 1817, and *The Cottage Door* in 1819.

Rev. Luttrell Wynne, Topographical Artist, 1739-1814

Born in London, Wynne was educated at Eton and Oxford and became rector of St. Erme Parish in Cornwall. He was often absent from his parish as he embarked on numerous sketching tours of the Britain and Ireland. While not a skilled draughtsman he was prolific and worked in watercolour, pen and ink and graphite. Many of his sketches appeared in books including *The Antiquities of Ireland* by Francis Grose, published in 1795. On his death in 1814 he was buried in Westminster Abbey.



The Antiquities of Ireland by Francis Grose

The valley of Glendaloch, in which the Seven churches are situated, is in the barony of Ballynacor ... It contains a greater treasure of genuine ecclesiastical antiquities than is to be found in any other part of Ireland, too numerous to detail in this place, but they have been minutely described in the antiquities of Ireland by the writer of these pages. The Seven Churches are, the Abbey, the Cathedral, St. Kevin's Kitchen, Temple na Skellig, Our Lady's Church, Trinity Church, and the Ivy Church.



The number of churches and their ornaments, and picturesque scenery of the glen, simply repaid the writer the many hours he employed in viewing and describing these venerable remains. The paintings from this book are by Angelo Maria Bigari and Rev. Luttrell Wynne.

From: *The Antiquities of Ireland* by Francis Grose, S. Hooper, 1795, pp. 96-97.



Scenery of Ireland by Jonathan Fisher

Arriving at the entrance, the prospect before you is composed of an assemblage of magnificent mountains, with cultivated spots in the valley beneath, through which the river, at the principal source of the Avonmore, pursues its course towards Arklow, where it empties itself in St. George's Channel.

Crossing the river Brocka over a handsome stone bridge of singular construction, and advancing about one mile through this romantic scene, you discover that part of the Glen which contains the Churches, etc.

Here the eye is agreeably surprised with the Ruins of several antique buildings, standing in the middle of a flat and rather extensive vale, environed by lofty mountains, watered by two small but rapid rivers, and terminated on the west by two deep lakes, from whence it derives the name of Glendalough.



Some of the buildings are nearly entire, and ornamented with circular belfries, in a taste extremely simple but not inelegant, and expressive of very great antiquity; others partly standing and partly fallen, with various trees growing out of the walls, form a picturesque effect in shading these precious reliques, whilst others are either wrapt up in masses of ivy, and other ever-greens, or mowed down by the all-levelling and unrelenting scythe of time. When to these we add one of those slender round Towers, which we often find erected near our most ancient Ecclesiastical buildings, and which are in a great measure peculiar to the antiquities of this kingdom, we may have a general though faint idea of the present appearance of the Seven Churches;



The first, and indeed the most considerable building in this island is the Cathedral of Peter and Paul, founded by St. Kevin, so long since (according to Ware) as the sixth century. Great part of the walls of the Church, with a little vestry-room adjoining, are standing, but the roof is totally demolished. By some fragments still remaining, it appears, that the windows of this, and not unlikely all the other Churches, were ornamented with curious sculptures on the impost mouldings.



Having now explored these remains of antiquity, you approach the Lakes, the principal of which extends about one mile in length, between the mountains of Kemyderry and Lugduff. The scenery of this spot is uncommonly grand, and finishes the extent of this glen by a magnificent piece of water, bordered by majestic mountains. The paintings in the book are by the author, Jonathan Fisher.

From *Scenery of Ireland* by Jonathan Fisher, 1795, pp. 1-6.



Excursions through Ireland by Thomas Cromwell

Glendaloch, or the Valley of the Two Lakes, is a spot of more than common interest to the lover of Irish antiquities. Anciently, Glendaloch was an episcopal see, and a tolerably populous city, until about 1214, when the see was annexed to the diocese of Dublin; and the city memorable for its religious edifices, not only suffered by decay, but insensibly became a receptacle for out-laws and robbers.

St. Kevin's Kitchen (its vulgar appellation) was undoubtedly one of the seven churches; and is still almost entire, having suffered alone in the ruin of its only window.



Kevin drew multitudes from towns and cities, from ease and affluence, from the cares and avocations of civil life, and from the comforts and joys of society, to be spectators of his pious acts, and sharers in his merits, and with him, to encounter every severity of climate and condition... where a city soon sprang up, and a seminary was founded, from whence were sent forth many saints and exemplary men, whose sanctity and learning diffused around the western world that universal light of letters and religion, which, in those earlier ages, shone so resplendent throughout this remote, and, at that time, tranquil isle, and indeed was, except by the emigration of her sons, almost confined to it. On 3rd of June, annually, numbers, of every age and sex flock to Glendaloch, and there celebrate the festival of the still highly venerated St. Kevin.

Our Lady's Church, the most westward of the seven and nearly opposite the cathedral, is now almost entirely in ruins; but, from the door-way and the few remains of the walls, it appears to have been built with more knowledge of the art than the other buildings.



We must now bid adieu to the once illustrious seminary, which, in the language of a late writer, 'was the luminary of the western world, whence savage septes and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion.' The romantic shapes of the surrounding mountains, (many of which are covered with wood, and others which, though of surprising height, retain the liveliest verdure almost throughout the year) the winding form of the fertile valley, the lake of considerable extent, all increase our veneration. In a word, on viewing such a scene 'to abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in dignity of thinking beings. Far from us, and from our friends, be such frigid philosophy, as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground, which has been dignified by wisdom or by virtue. That man is little to be envied whose piety will not grow warmer as he treads the ruins of Glendaloch.' The drawings in this book are by George Petrie.

From *Excursions through Ireland*, Vol III by Thomas Cromwell, J. Dowling, London 1820, pp. 135, 136, 140, 144.



The Beauties of Ireland by JN Brewer

Such are the mountainous wilds amidst which, in deep solitude and awful quiet, is situated Glendaloch, celebrated in early ages of Christianity for the comparative splendour of its religious piles, and for a city of considerable population; now a melancholy waste, romantic in character, and rich in antiquities, but visited by few, except the curious traveller and pilgrim.

The first architectural object which arrests attention is a building whose antient appellation is forgotten, and which is now known only by a name familiarly borrowed from the vestment which screens its decay; that of the Ivy Church. This ruin is situated to the south of the traveller's progress, and near the customary path. On the opposite side of the river, towards the south-east, are the remains of a building called by Mr. Archdall and Dr. Ledwich, the Priory of St. Saviour, and a chapel, which had been buried in obscurity for many ages, and was discovered only a few years back. At the distance of

about a furlong to the west of the Ivy Church, we reach the former market-place of the city; to the south of which are the cathedral; a round tower; St. Kevin's Kitchen; and other remains of ecclesiastical buildings. Nearby in the middle of the glen are the ruins of the abbey.

The two lakes which afford an appellation of this glen, are situated to the west of the cathedral and the site of the antient city. These are divided by a watery meadow; and a cataract enriches the interstice of two mountains, towards the south. Here, on the strip of land between the waters, is a stony path of pilgrimage; and the ruins of several crosses, and a circle of stones, denote the places of former ceremonials. The image from this book is by George Petrie.

From: *The Beauties of Ireland* by JN Brewer, Sherwood, Jones & Co., 1825, pp 311-312.



Landscape Illustrations of Moore's Irish Melodies by Thomas Crofton Croker

It would appear that in 1822 St. Kevin's bed was *thirty yards* above the lake: and this measurement being repeated, there is no reason to presume that it can be a mistake or a misprint. In a work by the same author, which was published early in the year 1834, the elevation of the bed is estimated at *thirty feet*; thus establishing an average annual approximation between the bed and the surface of the water, of five feet, or twenty yards in the course of twelve years. A subsequent publication, at the close of 1834, makes the height of St. Kevin's bed 'some twenty-five feet' over the lake, and fully confirms the average annual motion of either rock or water, to be deduced from the statements of Mr. Wright.

If, therefore, any reliance can be placed upon what is printed respecting Ireland, the result to be anticipated is, that in 1840 the bed will be completely submerged; unless indeed, it should be discovered that the recess which the memory of Kevin has hallowed, proceeds up and down in the rock with a kind of pendulum vibration every century. The image from this book is by Alfred Nicholson.

From: *Landscape Illustrations of Moore's Irish Melodies with Comments for the Curious* by Thomas Crofton Croker, J. Power, 1835, pp.43-44.



Ireland, Its Scenery, Character & Beauty by Mr. & Mrs SC Hall

Except along the borders of the Lower Lake, and on the heights that divide the mountains of Lugduff and Derrybawn, not a tree is to be seen, and scarcely a shrub large enough to shelter a lamb; nothing indeed to humanise its utter loneliness; it is hard to fancy that a few centuries ago the now barren district was a huge forest – a den for wolves and a nest for outlaws – or that, almost in our own day, the lesser hills were covered with foliage.

But the absence of trees is felt as an evil far less in Glendalough than elsewhere; to naked grandeur it is mainly indebted for fame; the shadows that fall upon the Lake, from the bare mountains which so completely environ it, giving a character of peculiar gloom – in solemn and impressive harmony with the ruins of remote ages; - churches unroofed and crumbling; oratories levelled to the height of humble graves; sculptured crosses shattered into fragments; broken pillars, corbels, and mouldings, of rare workmanship; gorgeous tombs of prelates and princes confused with the coarse headstones of the peasants; and the mysterious round tower - comparatively untouched by the destroyer – standing high above them all! In contemplating these worn-down, and subdued, relics of ancient power,

'A weight of awe, not easy to be borne,

Fell suddenly upon our spirit – cast
From the dread bosom of the unknown past.’

The image from this book is by Thomas Creswick.

From: *Ireland, Its Scenery, Character & Beauty* by Mr. & Mrs SC Hall, How and Parsons, 1842, pp. 212-213.

***The Illustrated Hand-Book to the County of Wicklow* by George O’Malley Irwin**

The approach of evening must deepen the visionary tone of such a place as this, and add an indescribable solemnity; even an ordinary mind might think, -

‘In such a place a this, at such an hour,
If ought of ancestry can be believed,
Descending angels have conversed with man,
And told the secrets of the world unknown!’



Artist unknown.

From: *The Illustrated Hand-Book to the County of Wicklow, being a guide to the Stranger and a Companion to the Resident* by George O’Malley Irwin, Newman & Co., 1844, p. 21



***The Patron of St. Kevin* by Joseph Peacock**

The painting *The Patron of St. Kevin* was painted by Joseph Peacock in 1813. It depicts the coming together of all classes of people and various aspects of social, economic, religious and cultural life in Ireland at that period to commemorate the feast day of St. Kevin, held annually on 3 June. The Round Tower, without the conical top, dominates the scene with the ruins of the cathedral to its left and St. Kevin’s Kitchen beyond that.

A patron or pattern was an annual event held to commemorate the feast day of a local saint in a devotional manner, allowing people to gather in prayer and in pleasure. It had a distinct difference from a fair which was a purely secular event. The *Parliamentary Gazetteer* of the mid 1840s referred to a fair held at Glendalough on 20 September, most likely a harvest fair, obviously distinguishing it from the event held on 3 June. Joseph Peacock described himself as a “familiar life and animal painter”. Two of his works *Palmerton Fair* and *Donnybrook Fair* depict scenes of “variety and merriment”, but without the obvious religious aspect of a patron. Though Peacock established his painting around the feast day of St. Kevin, there is little evidence of religious devotion being observed. It is difficult therefore to determine whether this was a patron or a fair.

This was a concern for the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church who were, even in the late 18th century, critical of patrons for bringing religious practices into disrepute by encouraging faction fighting and debauchery among those who attended. Peacock included a faction fight in the middle ground of the painting, showing people brandishing cudgels, scattering people before them who escape by climbing over the wall of the settlement, where the most of the entertainment tents were pitched, or leaping across the stepping-stones. A one-legged cripple fords the stream. The only example of debauchery is the woman selling oranges in the foreground who is being manhandled, while her produce is being stolen.

The patron at Glendalough did not escape the wrath of the clergy. Archbishop Cullen, later to be Cardinal Cullen, suppressed the Glendalough event. The Rathdrum Parish Register, dated 3 June 1862, records the fact that “*the Patron of Glendalough was completely upset by a circular from Archbishop Cullen to Fr. Thomas Coleman, P.P. of Glendalough, published by the local clergy. This was obtained from His Grace by Rev. Richard Galvin P.P. Rathdrum*”. It also recorded that Laurence Byrne of Ballinderry Hall died a few days after returning from the Patron of Glendalough from a fracture of his skull, sustained in a fight with his cousins, the Hugos. Hugo had torn out the button of Laurence Byrne’s son’s new coat as he was admiring it.

Peacock has included all kinds of service providers attending to the needs of the pilgrims. An entertainment tent, providing alcohol, music and dancing, signalled so by the sign of the harrow, is in the foreground with a woman pumping a bellows, livening up the turf flames for her large cooking pot. A wheel car covered with white cloth holds hats for both men and women, typical of the kind worn by the people in the painting. What appears to be heavy brogues for fieldwork hang from a basket. The only person shoeless in the painting is the well-dressed boy leaning on the hat stall.

The hardware dealer has much to offer his customers, including wooden bowls, kitchen utensils, candlesticks, pottery jugs and mugs. The dealer is drawing on a clay pipe as he observes the activity at the nearby food stall. Fashionably dressed ladies are sampling the sweetmeats on offer. Using the shafts of a wheel car a toy stall has been set up beyond the food stall. A variety of small toys are suspended from two hoops of ash mounted over the car. Children and adults with babies are showing a keen interest on what is on offer.

The ballad singer and the blind fiddler are surrounded by a crowd, with six people on horseback. The blind fiddler has attached his hat to his waistcoat to receive contributions from the onlookers. It has been suggested that the dandy wearing the striped waistcoat may in fact be Joseph Peacock, the artist.

The five vehicles close to the stalls give a good example of the modes of transport and passenger seating available at that time, including a gig with much bigger wheels than those on the other vehicles. Two other vehicles are depicted in the painting behind the entertainment tent. One is small, carrying a man and a woman, pulled by a single grey horse. The other is a landau, an open coach, drawn by four horses and driven by a coachman. The first of five ladies, dressed very fashionably in white muslin dresses with shawls, is assisted from the carriage by a soldier. That so many horses and vehicles are included is evidence of the importance of the horse in the early 19th century as a means of transport.

From *The Last County, The Emergence of Wicklow as a County, 1606-1845*, ed. Joan Kavanagh, Wicklow Heritage Project, 1995.



***Pattern at Glendalough* by Maria Spilsbury Taylor**

Paintings of fairs and patterns (the celebration of patron saints’ days) constitute a sizeable part of the small total of pictorial evidence available to us from earlier centuries concerning Irish traditional customs, costume, sports and pastimes, food and drink etc. Glendalough, an important ecclesiastical centre since early

Christian times and a popular tourist destination since the early eighteenth century, continued to attract large numbers of pilgrims long after its eclipse as a monastic settlement. The annual pattern in honour of St. Kevin on his feast day – 3 June – developed into a major secular event, as well as being an occasion of devotion and piety centred around holy well ceremonies and rituals. As shown in the picture, it became famous for merrymaking, sport and feasting and also – as other sources tell us – faction fighting, as a consequence of which it was eventually suppressed by the hierarchy in 1862.

Maria Spilsbury Taylor was an English portrait painter who settled in Ireland in 1813 after her marriage to John Taylor. As a young woman she had lived in Wicklow while her father was drawing master to

the Tighe family at Rosanna. *Pattern at Glendalough* is one of three versions of the subject painted by Mrs Taylor in the second decade of the nineteenth century. One is held in the National Folklore Collection in UCD; a second is in the National Gallery of Ireland and the third is in private hands. Delicacy and elegance are the essential characteristics of Maria Spilsbury Taylor.



A comparison of Taylor's *Pattern* to Joseph Peacock's version of the subject painted in 1813 (Ulster Museum) serves to emphasise the decorative and picturesque character of the UCD painting. Peacock, for instance, illustrates the habitual faction fighting of country fairs and in the foreground depicts a woman being man-handled while selling oranges. In contrast to this humourous realism Maria Spilsbury Taylor chose to highlight more innocent pursuits. In the foreground of her painting, elegantly arranged groups of figures enjoy a game of horse-shoe throwing while vendors proffer baskets of ribboned breads and sweetmeats; elsewhere a pair of wrestlers and a group enjoying a game of skittles can be seen. A delight in fashionable costume which is very evident in Taylor's portrait painting is also visible here in a variety of elegant regency bonnets, dresses and capes.

From: *Amharc Oidhreacht Éireann – An Exhibition of Paintings from the collection of the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin*, Department of Irish Folklore UCD, 1993.

The Glendalough Heritage Forum (GHF) is a non-statutory partnership that seeks to increase understanding and appreciation of the rich cultural heritage of the Glendalough Valley and to stimulate wider community engagement with this heritage through collaborative initiatives. The GHF aims to increase communication, collaboration and understanding between those with an interest in the cultural heritage of the famous valley of Glendalough and surrounding settlements. The Forum consists of a wide range of stakeholders including local residents, landowners, state agencies, County Council representatives and researchers from a variety of institutions. The aim of the GHF is:

to facilitate understanding and management of the remarkable cultural heritage of Glendalough

to engage local communities in this process

to maximise the benefits of working together and sharing information.

Further Information

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For more information on Heritage in Wicklow visit countywicklowheritage.org

The *Glendalough: Art and Atmosphere* exhibition is a display of 18th and 19th century paintings and drawings of the Glendalough Valley, capturing rarely seen aspects of the Valley's heritage. This exhibition is a collaborative venture with a number of agencies on the Forum, especially the Heritage Office of Wicklow County Council and the Heritage Council.