

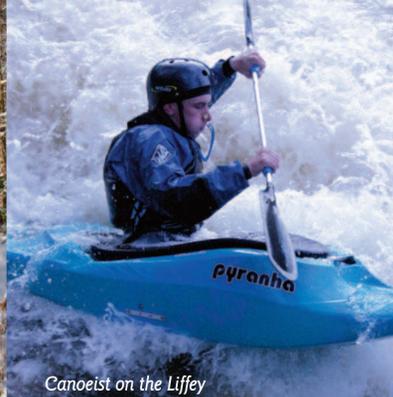
St. Mary's Church, Main Street



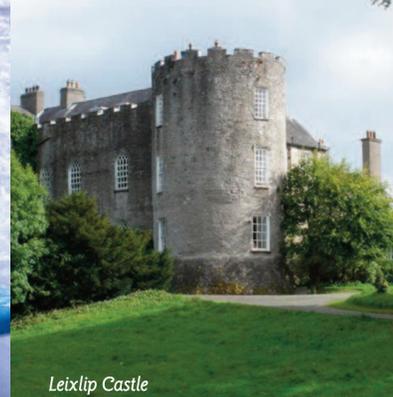
Heron, Royal Canal



Black Avenue



Canoeist on the Liffey



Leixlip Castle



Common Blue Butterfly, St. Catherine's Park



Wonderful Barn



Common Spotted Orchid

## LOCATION

Leixlip is situated in the north-east corner of Co. Kildare, on the confluence of the Liffey and the Rye rivers. The population is approx. 16,000, and it is one of the fastest-growing towns in Ireland. Our neighbouring towns and villages are: Maynooth 8 km, Celbridge 7 km, Dunboyne 8 km and Lucan 3 km. Dublin city centre is approximately 18 km to the east. The town is currently twinned with Bressuire in France (1996), and Niles (near Chicago, Illinois) in the USA (1999).

## TRANSPORT

The M4 motorway (Dublin to Galway) bypasses the town. Two interchanges allow access to both the east (J5) and the west (J6) sides of Leixlip. Leixlip is served by the No. 66 Dublin Bus route. The No. 66 begins its route in Maynooth, whilst the No. 66A starts in River Forest and the No. 66B starts in Barnhall (see map). All No. 66 buses terminate and depart from Merrion Square in Dublin. Bus Eireann provides a coach service to towns and villages along the M4, M6 and N6 routes. The nearest Bus Eireann stop going west is on the N4/M4 just west of the Spa Hotel. A hopper bus from Maynooth to Dublin airport passes through Leixlip every hour. It departs Maynooth on the hour from 4am to 10pm and departs Dublin airport 10 minutes before the hour. Irish Rail provides a local commuter train service stopping at both Louisa Bridge and Confeys stations. Both are within walking distance of the town centre. It is possible to take this commuter train to Maynooth and change there to the mainline Sligo train.

www.irishrail.ie  
www.dublinbus.ie

TFI TRANSPORT FOR IRELAND  
www.transportforireland.ie  
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## BRIEF HISTORY

A more detailed account of Leixlip's history and heritage is contained in the Leixlip Heritage Trail, the first panel of which is 40m to your right on the banks of the Liffey.

Evidence of Viking settlement has been found around Leixlip and the name they gave the town was *lax hlaup*, or 'salmon leap'. This is a direct old Norse translation of the Irish, *Léim an Bhradáin*, meaning 'Leap of the Salmon' and is the basis for the name we use today. It is known that Viking invaders settled here in the tenth century. Their stronghold was at Dublin and their small 'empire' extended as far west as Leixlip – possibly due to the fact that the shallow draft of their longships allowed them to navigate this far upstream.

The powerful Anglo-Normans arrived in Ireland in 1169 under the leadership of Richard de Clare (*Strongbow*). In 1172, one of his followers, Adam de Hereford, built Leixlip Castle in a prominent position overlooking the village. This important historical building has been added to over the years, and is one of the oldest buildings in the country in continuous residence. It was attacked by Edward the Bruce in 1317 and much damage was done to the local church (St. Mary's) at that time.

The castle together with other buildings and locations in Leixlip feature in various episodes and well-known dynasties in Irish history including the Earls of Kildare (the FitzGerald), the Flight of the Earls, Henry VIII, the Rebellion of 1641 and the Conolly family. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the town was something of a tourist attraction, not least due to the vista of the Salmon Leap cataracts (prior to the construction of a hydro-electric power station on the Liffey above the town in 1949, a series of cataracts, or small waterfalls, provided a fascinating view of salmon migrating upstream), and the discovery of thermal springs to the west of the town. The Royal Canal and the western railway – products of the industrial revolution – both pass through Leixlip. These days, canals are part of the leisure industry and the Royal Canal towpath is being incorporated into a 'greenway'.

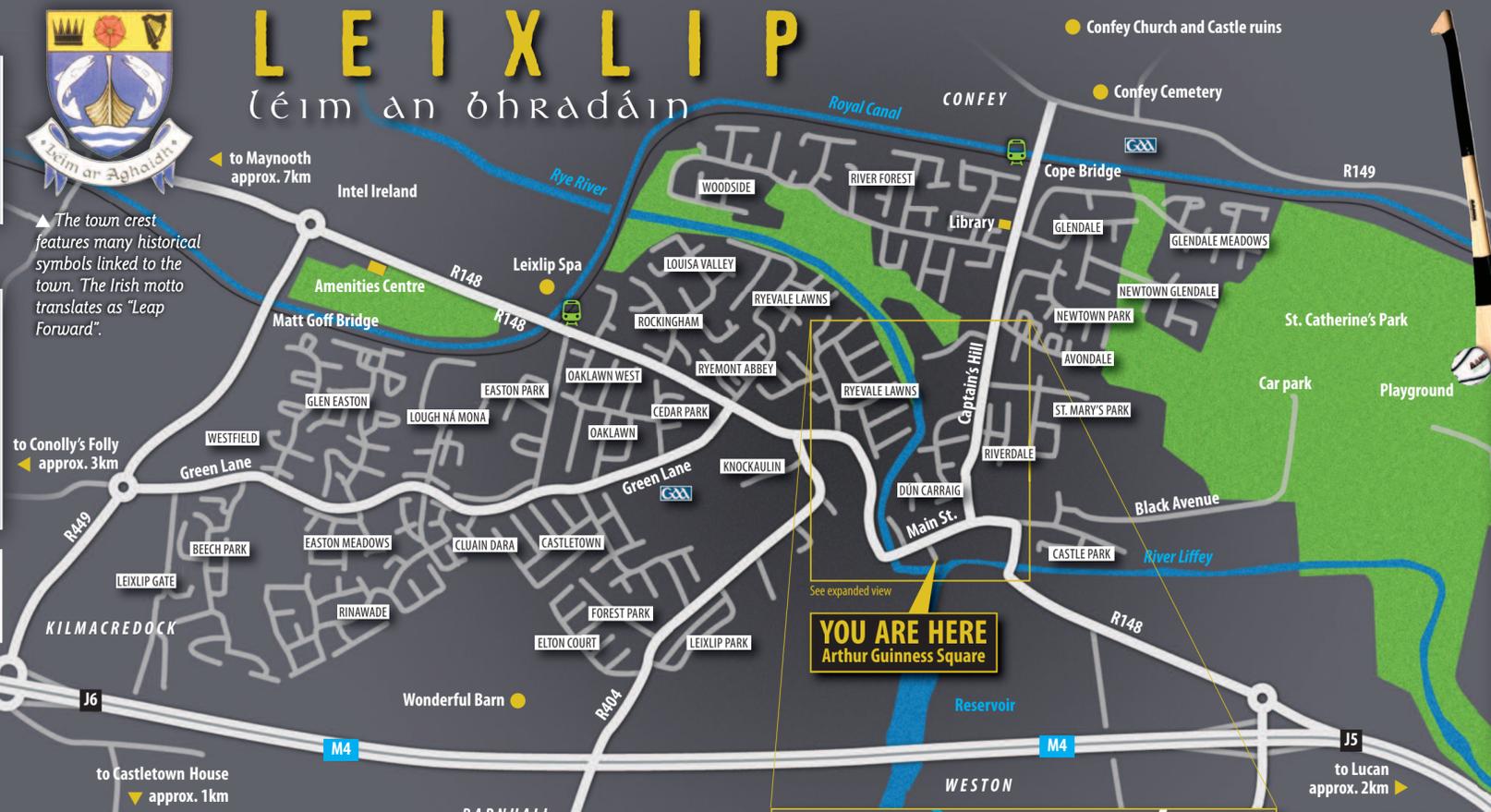
Today, Leixlip is a busy, thriving town. It still maintains much of its village character, whilst business opportunities and recreational and sporting facilities are continually being developed to cater for a growing population.



The town crest features many historical symbols linked to the town. The Irish motto translates as "Leap Forward".

# LEIXLIP

Léim an Bhradáin



YOU ARE HERE  
Arthur Guinness Square

## SPORT & LEISURE

Leixlip caters for all the main sporting activities, including GAA (The Gaelic Athletic Association caters for Gaelic football, hurling, handball, camogie and ladies football). St. Mary's GAA Clubhouse and main pitch (Radley Park) are on the Green Lane. Confeys GAA Clubhouse and pitch (Creighton Park) are at the junction of Captain's Hill and the R149 in Confeys; SOCCER: (Leixlip United FC play at the Amenities Centre on the R148); RUGBY: MU Barnhall RFC is located at Parsonstown off the Celbridge Road (R404); GOLF: There are several courses nearby, one at the interchange between Leixlip and Lucan on the M4 (Liffey Valley Par 3), Lucan Golf Club, accessible from the Lucan to Celbridge Road (R403), and two 18-hole courses at Carton House, on the road to Maynooth; CANOEING: The Salmon Leap Canoe Club, which hosted the Special Olympics canoeing events in 2003, is on the reservoir. The clubhouse is at Barnhall on the Celbridge Road (R404). The Liffey Descent race takes place each year in September; FISHING: Coarse fishing is available on the Liffey at the reservoir and all along the Royal Canal. Fly fishing is also available on the Liffey and Rye rivers. Permits are required; GENERAL: Leixlip Amenities Centre on the Maynooth Road (R148) near Intel Ireland Ltd. has a fully equipped gym and caters for a range of sports including tennis, athletics, badminton, archery, etc. THE LEIXLIP FESTIVAL: June Bank Holiday (Whit Weekend) featuring music, street entertainment, fireworks and more.

## PARKS, WALKS & OTHER ATTRACTIONS

### FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND LEIXLIP

Many of the sites listed here are detailed on other information panels located in this Square. We recommend you see the panel to your left (*North East Kildare Heritage Route Map*) in order to locate some of these sites. For a local heritage walk, we suggest you do the *Leixlip Heritage Trail*. For a longer walk/cycle, try *Arthur's Way*. The trailhead for both these walks begin in this Square near the river.

**HERITAGE TRAIL:** Beginning in Arthur Guinness Square, this walk continues along the Rye River towards Rye Bridge and Distillery Lane (at Confeys Church), before returning to the Main Street via Captain's Hill. The way is clearly marked by direction signs with information panels en-route.

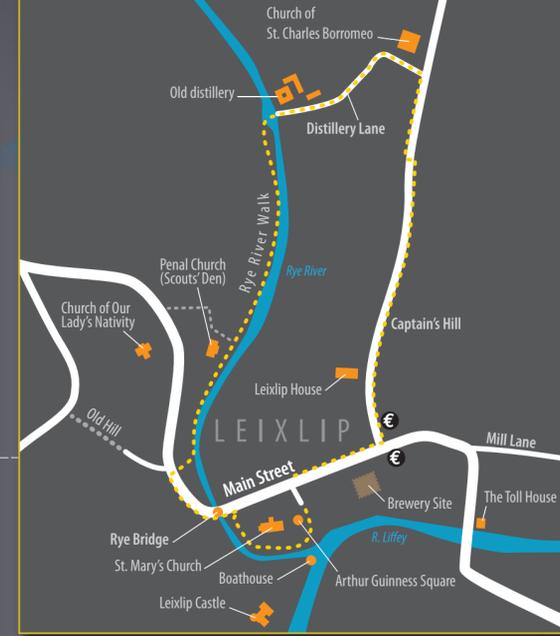
**ARTHUR'S WAY:** Developed recently as a tourist initiative, this 16km trail begins in Leixlip in the aptly-named Arthur Guinness Square, and links features that

have a connection with the famous brewer, including Castletown House in Celbridge. The Leixlip trailhead is close to the site of the first Guinness brewery. The route is well signposted all the way to Oughterard where Arthur Guinness is buried. It can be walked or cycled.

**ST. CATHERINE'S PARK:** Access to the park is via Mill Lane and the Black Avenue, or Glendale Meadows. This large, attractive park has many walks, tracks and paths. The tree-lined Black Avenue brings you to St. Catherine's and the River Liffey, with pedestrian access to Lucan.

**ROYAL CANAL TOWPATH:** The towpath is open to pedestrians and cyclists. Access is at Deey Bridge (near Intel Ireland Ltd.), Louisa Bridge, Cope Bridge and the Royal Canal Amenities Group boathouse at Confeys. The towpath will be part of the Royal Canal Greenway.

**LEIXLIP RESERVOIR:** There is pedestrian access near the Salmon Leap Inn for walkers and anglers.



Below is a brief list of key sites in Leixlip. Further information is available on other posters within this Square.

**INSET MAP**  
**LEIXLIP CASTLE:** Anglo-Norman castle, built in 1172. Viewing strictly by appointment.  
**ST. MARY'S CHURCH:** The original church was built during Norman times (about the same time as Leixlip Castle). Only the tower survived an attack by Edward the Bruce in 1317.  
**CHURCH OF OUR LADY'S NATIVITY:** Built in 1833 to cater for the growing Catholic population of the town, the church was originally dedicated to St. Charles Borromeo.  
**PENAL CHURCH:** Along the Rye River. Was once a Penal church. Built possibly in the mid-1700s, it served as a Catholic church, then as a school until 1930.  
**LEIXLIP HOUSE:** Built in 1772 by Capt. William Brady, it is currently a hotel.  
**THE TOLL HOUSE:** Built in 1734, it was used for collecting tolls to cross the Liffey bridge.

**MAIN MAP**  
**WONDERFUL BARN:** Built in 1743 under the guidance of Catherine Conolly (wife of Speaker Conolly), this conically-shaped building was also a famine-relief project.  
**LEIXLIP SPA:** Sited at Louisa Bridge, this Roman-style bath was built in 1793 during the construction of the Royal Canal. For a time, it was a popular tourist attraction. Today, it is a site of botanical and zoological interest (Special Area of Conservation).  
**CONFEYS CHURCH AND CASTLE RUINS:** The old church, St. Columba's, may pre-date the 12th century. The castle is early-mediaeval.

**CONOLLY'S FOLLY:** Obelisk-style folly (approx. 43 metres high), designed by Richard Cassels; famine-relief project built in 1739. (Not shown on map).