

# Interesting Facts & Famous Faces



## Abbeytown Bridge

This bridge is one of the oldest of its kind in Ireland. It was built between 1190 and 1220 when the Abbey was founded. It is one of only two built entirely of stone, not stone and masonry.



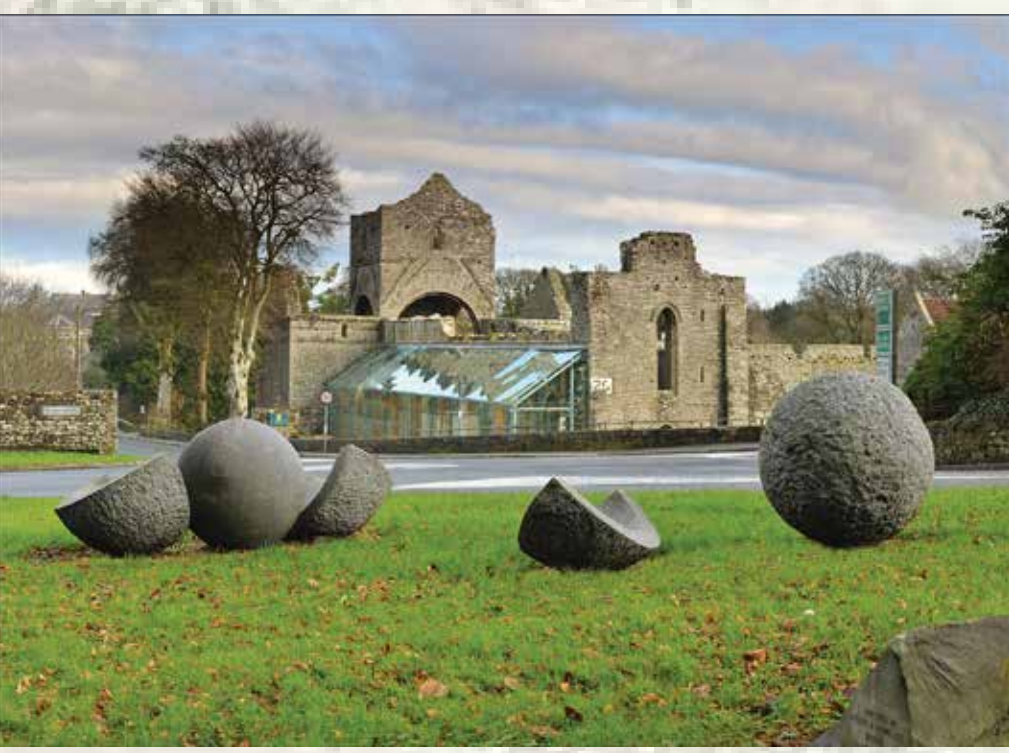
## Boyle Bridge

The bridge has 3 arches and was built in 1846 for the sum of £500. There was a statue of William III on the bridge which was removed to the Pleasure Grounds from where it disappeared in the 1930s.



## Brothers Sculpture

Located across from Boyle Abbey this magnificent sculpture was commissioned by Feelystone one of the longest running and well renowned businesses in Boyle. The sculpture celebrates brothers working together. There has always been a history of brothers working together at Feelystone. The 7th Generation Patrick Feely and his brother John worked together for many years. The 8th generation Henry Feely worked with his brother Christy for 50 years. The 9th generation Barry Feely worked with his brother Pat for 30 years and today Barry's sons Shane and Finbarr work together. The sculpture depicts the seeding of the tradition of stone from one generation to the next.



## Boyle Tennis & Country Club

Tennis was first played around Boyle in the late 1880's. The oldest tennis club in town had been Boyle Lawn Tennis Club, formerly known as the Country Club, located in the Pleasure Grounds. It had four lawn courts and one hard court. Dr. Douglas Hyde, the first President of Ireland (1938 – 1945) was elected a member of the Country Club on May 19th 1894. Douglas Hyde hailed from Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon.



## Chris O'Dowd (Actor & Writer)

Boyle native and Hollywood star Chris O'Dowd Chris is famous for his work on stage and on screen. With leading roles in the now iconic TV Series The IT Crowd, and films such as Bridesmaids and Calvary. Chris was also nominated for a Tony Award for his role as Lennie Small in the Broadway revival of John Steinbeck's classic novel 'Of Mice and Men'. Chris now divides his time between LA and London, with his journalist and presenter wife, Dawn O'Porter.



## John Carty (Traditional Musician)

John Carty is one of Ireland's finest traditional musicians having been awarded the Irish Television station, TG4's Traditional Musician of the Year in 2003. He has released several solo albums on fiddle and banjo. He has also recorded a number of duet albums with flute-player Matt Molloy of The Chieftains.



## John Mc Gahern (Novelist)

Known for the detailed dissection of Irish life found in works such as The Barracks, The Dark and Amongst Women, The Observer hailed him as "the greatest living Irish novelist" before his death in 2006 and in its obituary the Guardian described him as 'arguably the most important Irish novelist since Samuel Beckett'. The Leitrim native spent much of his childhood from the age of 10 living in Cootehall located just outside of Boyle where his father was the local sergeant.



## John 'Jacko' Reilly (Traditional Singer & Song Collector)

Famed traditional singer and song collector, originally from Carrick On Shannon who moved and settled in Boyle. Much of his repertoire of traditional and gypsy songs were made famous by Irish singers such as Christy Moore and Sinead O'Connor.

## King House Historic & Cultural Centre

King House was sold for £3,000 to the military in 1795. This was when the high circling wall was built around the house. It was occupied by the Connaught Rangers and then, in 1922, the Irish army. Originally there was a large parade ground, rifle range, detention cells and stables were set out to the east. A hospital also existed, which later became the Old Garda Barracks. Matt Molloy's father escaped from this heavily garrisoned and fortified barracks during the War of Independence. Matt Molloy is known worldwide as a renowned flute player and member of the Chieftains.



## Mary Mc Aleese (Former President Of Ireland)

Mary Patricia McAleese is an Irish politician who served as the eighth



President of Ireland from 1997 to 2011. Her father was born just outside Boyle and Mary spent much of her childhood in her father's family home. She and her family are still regular visitors and have a strong connection to the region, so much so that she donated the state gifts she received during her time as president to King House where there is now a public exhibition entitled "Intertwined". Visit [www.visitkinghouse.ie](http://www.visitkinghouse.ie) for more information.

## Maureen O'Sullivan (Hollywood Screen Icon)

A Hollywood screen icon of the 1930's and 40's, best known for her role as 'Jane' in the Tarzan films and mother of actress Mia Farrow. She was born on Main Street, Boyle and also lived as a child at Riversdale House, Knockvicar, in 1988 she unveiled a plaque on the house and planted a tree on Military Rd. Discover more about her life and legacy by visiting the Maureen O'Sullivan exhibition in King House Historical and Cultural Centre. Visit [www.visitkinghouse.ie](http://www.visitkinghouse.ie) for more information.



## Moone Boy

Boyle is the proud home of the hugely successful, Emmy Award winning TV series, Moone Boy. Boyle native and Hollywood star Chris O'Dowd co-wrote the series with Nick V. Murphy. Moone Boy is a fantastic comedy which centres on a twelve-year-old boy who has an imaginary friend (Chris O'Dowd). Much of the filming took place in various locations throughout Boyle. The Moone Boy Trail is an interactive walking/cycling trail that guides you through all these locations. The Trail is accompanied with a FREE brochure (which you can pick up in Boyle Craft Shop). This brochure pinpoints the various locations around Boyle where filming took place. It also includes handy QR Codes, which can be scanned by using your mobile phone or Tablet to show you edited footage of the Moone Boy series which is unique to each location.



The introductory music for much of each episode has near-iconic status in Ireland as it was used as the theme music for The Gay Byrne Show, a long-running and immensely popular morning radio show.



Neville Knott, originally from Boyle, is an interior designer, broadcaster and lecturer in interior and furniture design at the Dublin Institute of Technology where he has taught since the 1980s. He's hosted home makeover programmes such as, Beyond the Hall Door, Showhouse and Neville's Doorstep Challenge for RTÉ and TV3.

## Margaret Cousins (Suffragette, Activist & Author)

Margaret Elizabeth Cousins (née Gretta Gillespie; 1878-1954) was born in Boyle, she was an active member of the Suffragette Movement and a founder member of the Irish Women's Indian Association in 1917 and in 1932 served a year in prison for supporting Gandhi's free speech campaign. She is credited with composing the tune for the Indian National Anthem.

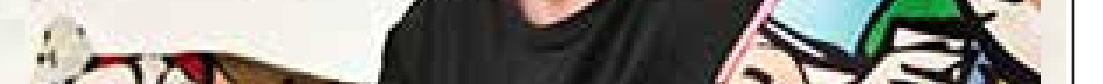


## River Shannon

The River Shannon is the longest river in Ireland and the longest stretch of it flows through County Roscommon. The Shannon gets its name from Sionnan, who was the granddaughter of the Irish God of the Sea. She was a beautiful yet curious mortal woman who lived in a mythical Ireland. This was the time of the Druids and they would gather on sacred nights in special places throughout the country to practice their ancient ways.

## Paul Young (Animator)

Founding member animation studio Cartoon Saloon who have been nominated multiple times for Academy Awards, Golden Globes, BAFTA's and EMMY's for their animated films The Secret of Kells, Song of the Sea and TV series Puffin Rock.



## The Courthouse

The Courthouse building was built in 1826 and it cost £800. On the external wall is a plaque to Padraic Pearse, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Rising and an engraved slab tells of the election of George Noble Count Plunkett as Sinn Fein MP for North Roscommon in 1917. It is reported that in 1898 the first movies in Boyle were shown here.



## The Grehan Sisters

were immersed in Irish traditional music from an early age via their parents' pub, Grehan's in Boyle, and as teenagers developed a reputation for their exuberant renditions of traditional and composed Irish songs and tunes. The sisters, popularly known in the industry as 'the female Clancy's' influenced many of today's leading performers, among them Christy Moore.

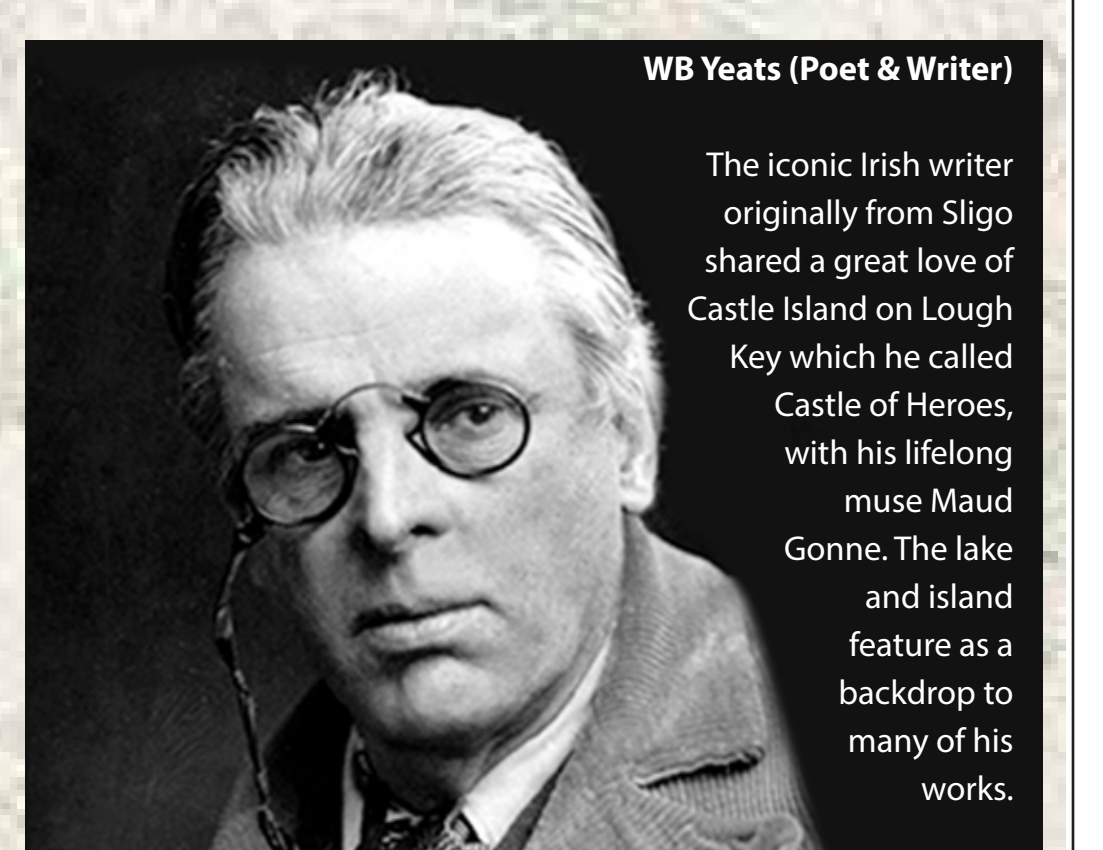


## Turlough O'Carolan

born in 1670 in Nobber, County Meath, his family moved to Ballyfarnon, County Roscommon in 1684. After being blinded by smallpox at the age of eighteen, Carolan was apprenticed to a good harper. At the age of twenty-one, being given a horse and a guide, he set out to travel Ireland and compose songs for patrons. For almost fifty years, Carolan journeyed from one end of Ireland to the other, composing and performing his tunes. He died in 1738 and is buried in the MacDermott Roe family crypt



in Kiltonan Burial Ground near Ballyfarnon, County Roscommon. The annual O'Carolan Harp Festival and Summer School commemorates his life and work in Keadue, County Roscommon.



## WB Yeats (Poet & Writer)

The iconic Irish writer originally from Sligo shared a great love of Castle Island on Lough Key which he called Castle of Heroes, with his lifelong muse Maud Gonne. The lake and island feature as a backdrop to many of his works.