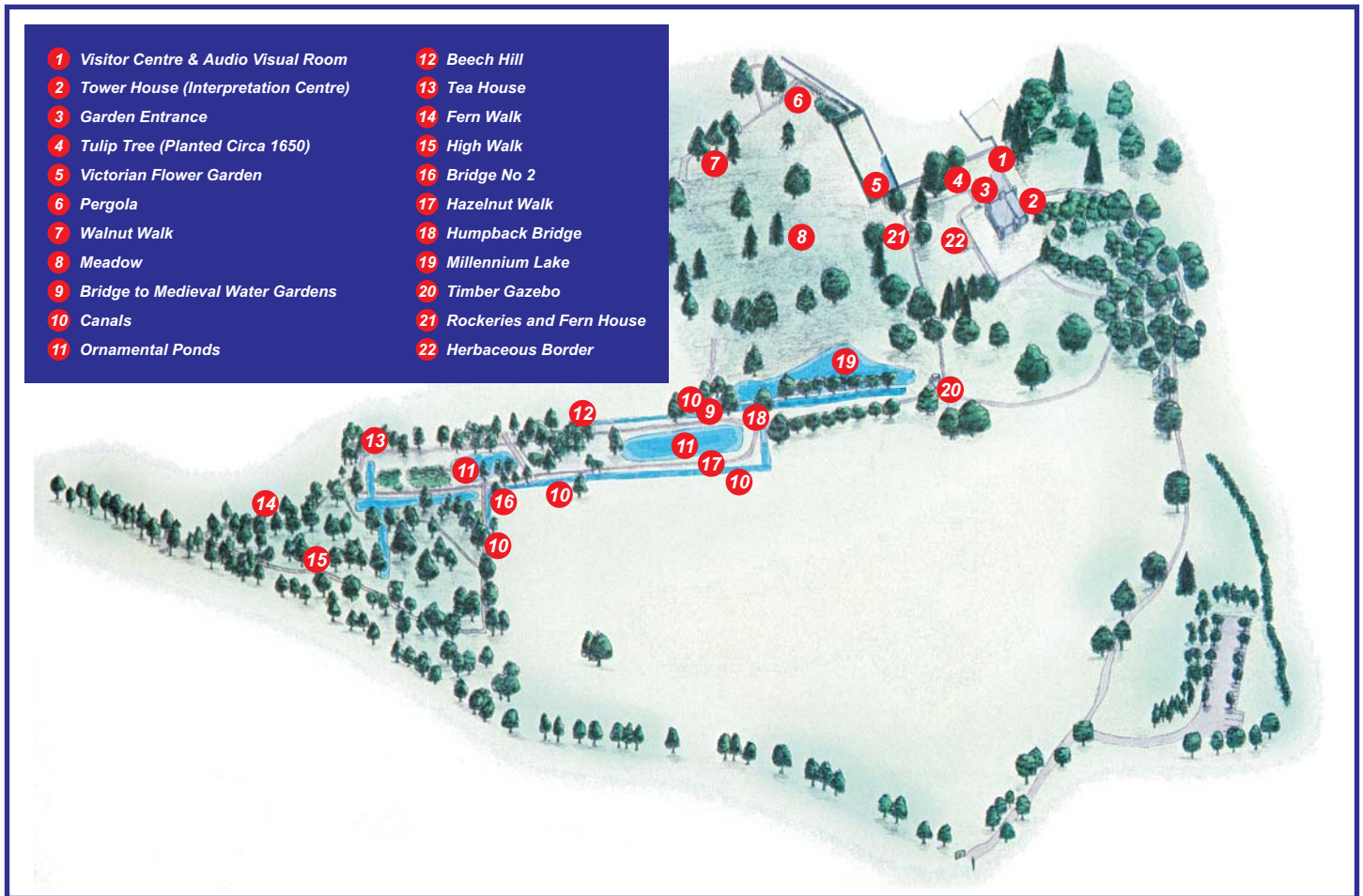




# Knockabbey Castle

& Gardens

## SUGGESTED ROUTE



### PLEASE NOTE

As there are many water features in these gardens, some of which are bog based and dangerous, we would ask you to be extremely careful and please ensure that you or your children do not leave the footpaths.

#### 1. Visitor Centre & Audio Visual Room

Here is an introduction to the history of the place, people and gardens of Knockabbey. We hope you take the time to watch the 25 minute film and wander through the exhibition in the tack room which details the evolution and restoration of the gardens.

**NOTE:** W.C. is opposite these buildings, beside the garden entrance gates.

#### 2. Tower House (Interpretative Centre)

See separate information leaflet.

**NOTE:** There is a separate entrance fee for the tower house (interpretative centre). Tours are at 12.00, 1.30, 3.00 & 4.30.

### 3. Garden Entrance

### 4. Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

This fine specimen, which is one of the largest girthed tulip trees in these islands, was possibly planted here in the late 17th century when it was first introduced to Europe from north America, possibly by John Tradescant Jr., it was highly fashionable at the time. It is called a tulip tree because it bears thousands of tulip shaped flowers in summer, cream in colour with a tinge of green. This rare tree is recognisable by the t-shirt shape of its leaves.

### 5. Victorian Flower Garden

This garden was established circa 1900 by Sybil O'Reilly as a formal ornamental garden with a lean-to glasshouse, rockery and shrubbery. The original rockery beside the glasshouse was built with stone brought from Donegal, the fashion at the time. The glasshouse is a faithful reconstruction. The two square holes which can be seen low down in the middle of the wall between the glasshouse and the pergola were actually for charcoal fires to heat the lean-to glasshouse in the walled garden.

### 6. Pergola

This is an installation from the third millennium, which we are still struggling.

### 7. Walnut Walk

This is also known as a nuttery and still yields nuts. This would have been part of a much larger orchard and nuttery in this area.

### 8. Meadow

As you leave the walnut walk you will meander along mown footpaths through the meadow. This will take you to the medieval water gardens and 11th century canals.

**NOTE:** Keep to the mown paths - please do not enter the meadow.

### **BEWARE OF THE WATER AND KEEP TO THE PATHWAYS**

### 9. Bridge to the Water Gardens

The water garden is the most interesting feature of the garden heritage at Knockabbey. In its present form it belongs to two periods (11) the canals and (12) the ornamental ponds.

### 10. Canals

The first period referred to above was the creation of two formal, linear and parallel canals in the 1730s. These canals were installed on the site of earlier ponds, which were used by the monks from the nearby monastery, which was founded in 1050, for fresh fish.

### 11. Ornamental Ponds

The second period occurred in the 1860s when a major transformation took place. The original canals were left relatively intact but two ponds were created in the middle space. The water gardens are situated in an inter-drumlin bog, so please take special care while in this area. It is interesting to note that no water flows into the gardens. However, it is supplied by three springs and its level is controlled by a sluice at the northern end of the waterways near the timber gazebo. The water from this sluice runs quite a distance underground in a French drain to the nearest stream.

### 12. Beech Hill

### 13. Tea House

This stone tea house is set on a raised platform surrounded by a stone faced ditch. It was further enclosed by a lime hedge which are now mature trees. It was obviously constructed to provide a destination point at the end of the walk along the formal canals and from which the waterworks below could be viewed. It was originally constructed in the mid 18th century and would have been used for taking tea on a gentle summer afternoon while viewing the garden from within. It would have been used for taking tea on a gentle summer afternoon while viewing the garden from within. It would have been accessed by a punt via the canals or by footpath. Part of the canals have been lost over the centuries, as originally they would have stretched from the fernhouse (22) to here. This building may have had a conical roof and a highly detailed pebble floor. It was used as a soup kitchen during the famine.

**NOTE:** This tea house is not open to the public.

### 14. Fern Walk

### **15. High Walk**

The clearing with the large rock halfway along the path was a popular picnic spot with the Victorians.

### **16. Bridge Number 2**

As you cross the bridge, look out onto the cornfield and you will see, crowning the hilltop, a small clump of oak enclosed by a low stone wall. This is a typical mid to late 18th century landscape embellishment much championed by Capability Brown. This is the only survivor of three which were located on hilltops within the demesne. These can be clearly seen on the 1791 map in the tack room (visitor centre) exhibition.

### **17. Hazelnut Walk**

As in the walnut walk, these trees produce quite a lot of nuts. Incidentally, the canals between you and the cornfield would have narrowed considerably since it was first installed. You may notice an abundance of bamboo in this area, it would have been part of the 1860 alterations.

### **18. Humpback Bridge**

### **19. Millennium Lake**

As the name might suggest, this is a recent addition. It was put in to bring the water gardens into view of the house.

### **20. Timber Gazebo**

Built on the site of the original structure, at the northern end of the water gardens. As with the tea house, this structure would have been for relaxing in and viewing from.

### **21. Fern House and Rockeries**

This building may have been built in the mid 18th century. It may have had different uses, it certainly had many repairs, during its lifetime. These may have included an orangery or a tea house. However, it ended up as a fern house in Victorian times, which is how it remains today.

### **22. Herbaceous Border**

This border was planted and enlarged from 2000-2002

## **THE JURASSIC AREA**

The present owner has added a Jurassic influence to this area of the garden, an example of which is the rock in the centre of the pond at the fern house.

The rock was mined 3,000 metres up the Atlas mountains in Morocco. It probably comes from the period when Europe separated from Africa 350 million years ago. As you can see from the shells, this stone originates from the seabed. Also on display on the window sill of the fern house is a piece of fossilised dinosaur dropping from a similar period. It was unearthed at a palaeontological site near the Golden triangle.

Nearby you will see a cycad, a Jurassic fern, which looks the same now as it did 200 million years ago, not having evolved with time. Note the tree ferns beneath the yew tree, these are also Jurassic. From here, as you look towards the glasshouse, you will see the weeping blue cedar, *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula'.

You may have noticed an unusual large plant in the centre of the glasshouse - this is called a Grass Tree or Blackboy. This species dates back 300 million years and would have been around at the same time as the brontosaurus. This particular Blackboy is 300 years old and comes from Australia. It derives its black appearance and name from being regularly burned in bush fires. After being burned it sprouts a spear-like shoot two metres long which then produces a white flower. If it doesn't burn, it will only flower every seven years.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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