



1 FAIR GREEN

Fairs and markets were held frequently. The triangular green was enclosed in the last century and remains the property of the Derreen Estate, formerly the Lansdowne Estate.

2 ROSE COTTAGE

Rose Cottage (Tigín na Rós) and the house adjacent to it formed the temporary home of Abbess Mary O'Hagan and six nuns from the Poor Clare Convent.



3 HOLY CROSS CHURCH

Kenmare's Holy Cross Church was consecrated in 1864. The architect was Charles Hansom.

4 KENMARE POOR CLARE CONVENT

This building was a convent of the Sisters of Poor Clare from 1862 to 1993. The Convent was the home of Sister Mary Francis Cusack, the Nun of Kenmare from 1862 until 1881.



5 MAIN STREET

Main Street was formerly named William Street in honour of the 1st Marquis of Lansdowne, William Petty-Fitzmaurice who was raised in Lixnaw, County Kerry, was Prime Minister of England in 1781. The Marquis designed the plans upon which Kenmare developed in the 1770's.



6 KILLOWEN CHURCH

Killowen Church of Ireland dates to 1814 and was built in a Georgian Gothic Revival style. Internationally renowned composer Ernest John Moeran (1894-1950) was buried here in 1950.



7 LANSDOWNE ARMS HOTEL

This hotel was built as an Inn in the 1790's and was named after the Lansdowne Family, the landlords of the estate and founders of Kenmare. In the nineteenth century the hotel benefitted from the growth of the Bantry-Killarney tourist route and was a stopping-off point for cars on organised excursions.



8 HENRY STREET

This street was named in honour of the 3rd Marquis of Lansdowne, Henry Petty – Fitzmaurice (1780-1863), who oversaw a number of major stages in the development of Kenmare.



9 THE OLD MARKET HOUSE

This three storey Classical style building was designed by renowned English architect Sir Charles Barry for the 3rd Marquis of Lansdowne.

You are very welcome to Kenmare and our heritage trail. The trail is looped around the town centre. It covers 1.5km and can be easily walked in 30/45 mins. You will see on the map several shorter trails off the looped walk. These trails, together 1.5km, will take you outside the town centre - you can venture to the town's pier built in 1826 or Reenagross Wood planted by the First Marquis of Lansdowne over 200 years ago.

Feel free to explore the town, if you decide to walk all the trails, set aside at least 1.5 to 2 hours for a leisurely stroll.

Early History

Archaeological sites in the area indicate that Kenmare has been inhabited from circa. 2200-500BC. Originally called Nedeem (An Neidín), Kenmare grew as a plantation town within lands granted to William Petty by Cromwell in 1657, as payment for the Down Survey.

From Nedeem to Kenmare (An Neidín)

In 1775 the First Marquis of Lansdowne rejuvenated the settlement of Nedeem, renaming it Kenmare. The "X" shaped layout of the town, as you see it today, was laid out. By the 1790s a Market House, Bridewell and an Inn were established.

Industry, trade and Lace

The town's growth into the 19th century was sustained by several local industries – herring fisheries; iron works; lead mining, quarrying and later a buttery. The town's infrastructure improved slowly. In the early 1800s new roads, houses and the first suspension bridge in Ireland were built. The Great Famine of 1845 however decimated the local population through starvation, disease and emigration.

In 1861 the Sisters of Poor Clare settled in Kenmare. Their convent and nearby Holy Cross Church were designed by renowned architect Charles Hansom. Sr. Mary Francis Cusack, the Nun of Kenmare, a writer and political activist lived in the convent from 1862 to 1881. The Sisters of Poor Clare also nurtured a significant lace making industry that would become world renowned in the late 19th, early 20th century.

Kenmare – as we see it today

With the turn of the 20th century Kenmare continued to expand. Emmet Place, Parnell Place and Davitt Place were named between 1908 and 1913. The street names indicate the rise of nationalism in the locality, a trend common throughout rural Ireland at that time.

The construction of a railway line in 1893 saw an influx of visitors. Kenmare Railway closed and the last train left the station on December 31st, 1959. The improvements of roads and the crossing of Kenmare Bay with a new suspension bridge in 1933, tourists took the Grand Atlantic Tour, later called the Ring of Kerry.

Background image, William Petty Fitzmaurice, 1st Marquis of Lansdowne (NLI)



10 EMMET'S PLACE / MARKET STREET

This lane, formerly Pound Lane, was the location of the cattle pound. During the nineteenth century many of Kenmare's tradesmen, such as leatherworkers, blacksmiths and tinsmiths, lived here. The change of name from Pound Lane to Emmet's Place took place in the early twentieth century and signifies the developing nationalist ethos of Kenmare at that time.

11 KENMARE STONE CIRCLE

This is the biggest stone circle in the south-west of Ireland. In the centre of the circle is a type of burial monument known as a Boulder Burial. These are rarely found outside of south-western Ireland.

12 CROMWELL'S BRIDGE

The antiquity of this bridge is unknown. Local lore believes it was built in circa the 11th century.

13 OUR LADY'S WELL

Our Lady's Well is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our Lady's Well is visited by devotees throughout the year but on the fifteenth of August special pilgrimages take place.

14 KENMARE PIER

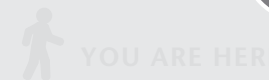
Kenmare Pier is set within Kenmare River (locally known as Kenmare Bay) – a 40km long inlet of sea that separates the Kerry Peninsulas of Iveragh and Beara. The pier played a role in Kenmare's economic development throughout the 19th century.



The Kenmare Heritage Trail rejuvenation has been co-funded under the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme, administered in this area by the South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd. This project was the inspiration of Kerry Tidy Towns Committee and was designed and project managed by Grainne Carvill and Frank Hughes of FrankArchitecture.

KENMARE

Heritage Town



The Trail

