

Presidential cottages

Mid & East Antrim



Discover Mid and East Antrim's rich Ulster Scots heritage and significant connections to American history. The excellently preserved ancestral homes of American Presidents Andrew Jackson and Chester A. Arthur, along with the US Rangers Museum, provide a unique opportunity to explore these connections and learn about the historical ties between Northern Ireland and the United States.

Visitors to Mid and East Antrim can explore beautiful landscapes, historic sites, and charming villages while learning more about its strong Ulster Scots and American connections.

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Arthur Cottage

Arthur Cottage, 4 miles from Ballymena town, is situated in the heart of County Antrim. Only a short walk from the village of Cullybackey, it is the ancestral home of Chester Alan Arthur, the 21st President of the United States of America.

Enter this carefully restored cottage and be transported to a bygone era and see how the Arthur family lived in the late 18th Century. Follow the story of the Arthur family and trace the link from a rural village in Northern Ireland to the American Presidency.

From its elevated site on Gourley's Hill, in the townland of Dreen (Irish DRAIGHEAN - BLACKTHORN), Arthur Cottage commands a magnificent view of its rich agricultural environment.

Constructed with local materials, the homestead is in perfect harmony with its rustic surroundings. Walls, twenty inches thick, are built of local stone, bog oak beams support a roof thatched with flax from the fields and inside the cottage a fire of turf burns on a cobble-stoned hearth. The simple rectangular cottage consists of 2 rooms, each the full width of the building. The main room serves as both living room and kitchen. Off the

main room there is a low chamber, furnished as a bedroom. Above this a loft, where children may have slept, is reached only by a ladder.

Today, staff in period costume demonstrate traditional baking and spinning at the open turf fire providing all visitors with a unique and authentic experience.

Seasonal events take place throughout the year and include activities such as Wreath Making, traditional baking, foraging, children's entertainment and many more. All event information is listed via the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council social media accounts and official website.



For a real taste of history, why not try some traditional Irish baking recipes. Easy to make at home - and delicious.

Traditional Baking Recipes



Pancakes

10 tablespoons of Soda Bread flour
2 tablespoons Caster Sugar
2 eggs
Enough buttermilk for a dropping consistency

- Mix flour and sugar together.
- Add eggs and buttermilk, whisk until smooth.
- Grease griddle with butter.
- Cook on a hot griddle, turn over when bubbles burst.
- Cool in towel.



Soda Bread

4 handfuls Soda Bread flour
Enough buttermilk to make a soft handling consistency


- Mix together and knead on a floured board until smooth.
- Shape into a circle about 1/4" thick. Cut into four and bake on griddle.
- Ready when a boass (hollow) sound is heard when tapped.
- Cool in towel.



Potato Bread or Fadge

Leftover potatoes
Butter
Salt
Plain Flour

- Mash potatoes smoothly and mix with a little butter.
- Salt to taste.
- Work in as much flour as the paste will take up and roll out thinly on a floured board.
- Roll out into round 1/8" thick and cut into quarters. Prick.
- Cook quickly on griddle.
- Cool in a towel.



“The greater the difficulties, the greater the achievements.”

- *Chester Alan Arthur*

“The great can protect themselves, but the poor and humble require the arm and shield of the law.”

- *Andrew Jackson*



**Mid & East
Antrim**

A land shaped by Sea & Stone

Andrew Jackson Cottage

Andrew Jackson was the seventh President of the United States and the first of many occupants of the White House with Ulster roots.

Jackson was born in the Carolinas and lived most of his life in Tennessee. His parents had emigrated from Boneybefore, Carrickfergus, in 1765 just two years before his birth.



The original Jackson Cottage was demolished in 1862, but the home of their former neighbours, the Donaldsons, now serves as an interpretive centre.

The Donaldson family would have known Andrew and Elizabeth Jackson and the mother and father of the future President would have visited the home which is now the Andrew Jackson Cottage.



When you step through the door of the cottage the Donaldsons built in 1750 you enter a different world, experiencing something of how people lived in Ulster in the 18th and 19th centuries. Key features include the open fireplace canopy above it to channel the smoke, and the various household items which were once part of everyday life.

The Cottage has an exhibition gallery which outlines the story of the Jacksons and Ulster emigrants in the 18th century and visitors can learn what motivations lay behind the mass Scotch-Irish migration.

From white washed cottage to the Whitehouse.



US Rangers Museum

The 1st Battalion, US Rangers, under the command of their dynamic leader Major William O. Darby, were activated on 19 June, 1942 at Sunnylands Camp, Carrickfergus.

The Rangers trained in extreme conditions and fought in some of the deadliest battles in Europe to become one of WWII's most courageous and decorated units. It remains the only US military unit to be formed on foreign soil.

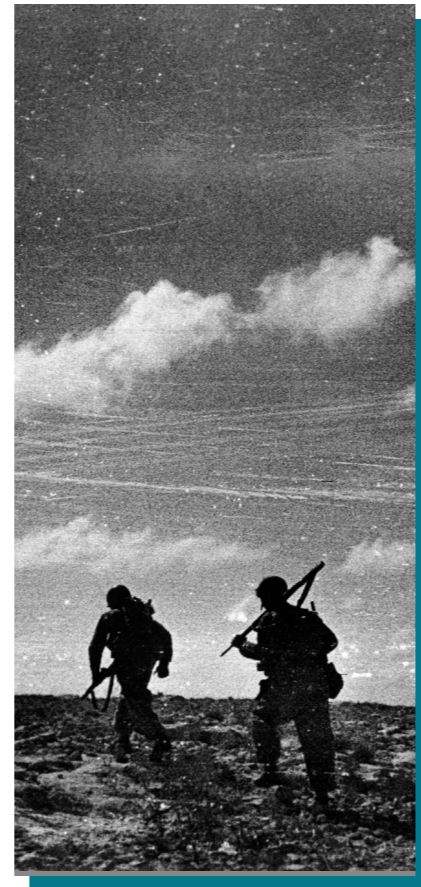


Following the United States' entry into WWII, General Lucian Truscott identified

the need for a US unit similar in style to the British Commandos - agile units who could carry out rapid, precise amphibious raids on the enemy.

This new elite unit was placed under the command of Major William O. Darby who travelled across the country recruiting willing volunteers, who then gathered at Sunnylands Camp to undergo rigorous test exercises. Of the 2500 men who volunteered, only 500 were selected to form the 1st Battalion of US Rangers.

The original museum was first opened in 1994 following a 50th anniversary event when visiting US Ranger veterans generously gave their photographs and memorabilia to create a permanent exhibition. Today the museum contains visually striking displays, never seen before artefacts and photographs, as well as compelling film footage.

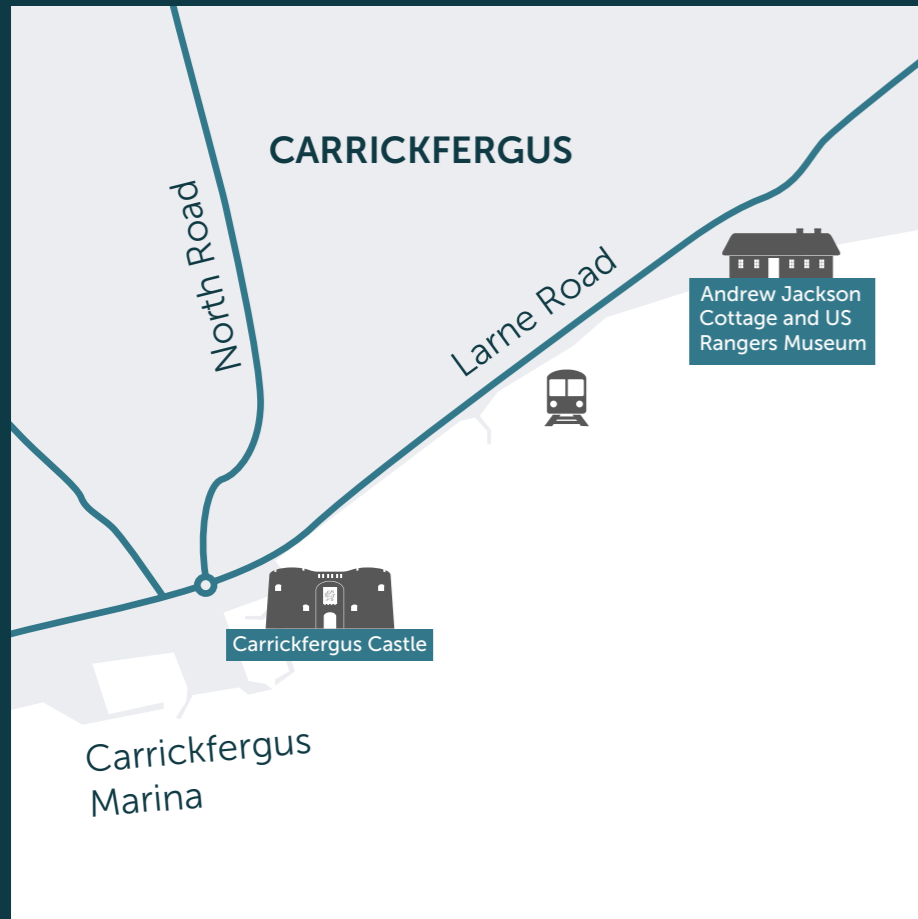


Of the 2500 men who volunteered, only 500 were selected to form the 1st battalion of US Rangers.



The museum aims to be a fitting tribute to the men who volunteered their services to the elite fighting force the US Rangers, in Carrickfergus and beyond.

Visitor Information



Andrew Jackson Cottage & US Rangers Museum

Wednesday - Sunday
11am - 3pm

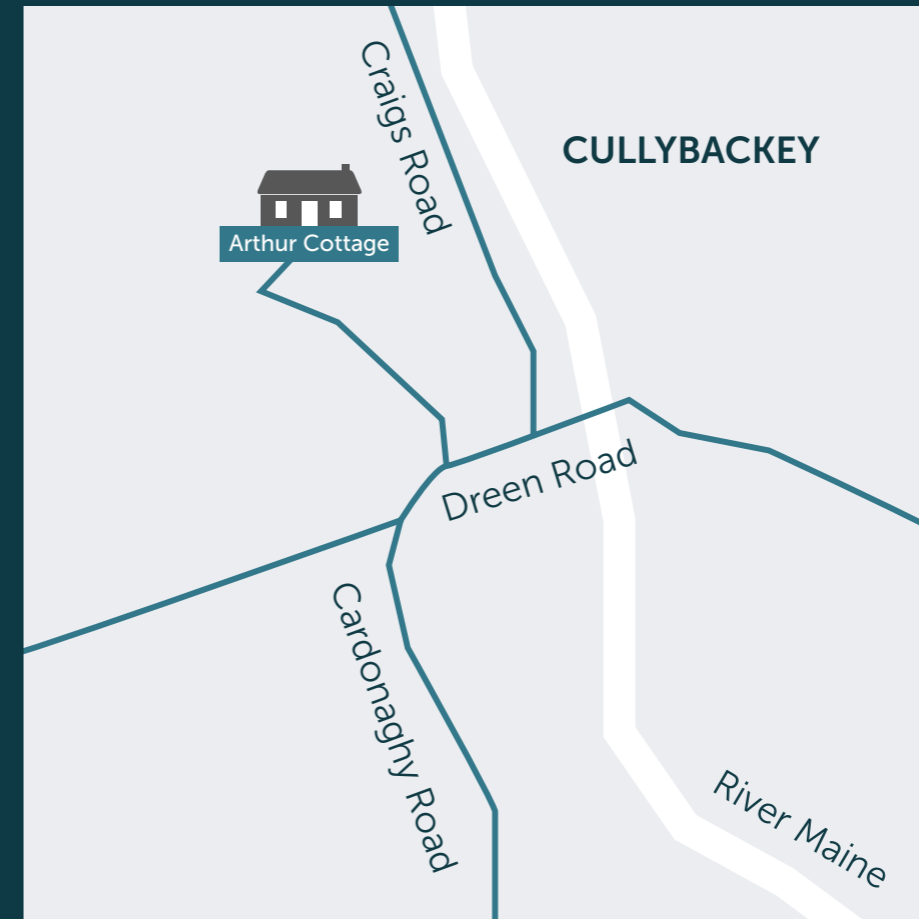
Admission: Free

2 Boneybefore,
Carrickfergus BT38 7EG

Facilities

- Guided Tours Available
- Picnic Area
- Accept coach parties, max. 25
- Toilets

- Event Facilities, Booking Required
- On site parking
- Dogs accepted by arrangement



Arthur Cottage and Interpretive Centre

Wednesday - Sunday
11am - 3pm

Admission Charges apply please contact Ballymena Visitor Information for more details

21A Dreen Road,
Cullybackey, County
Antrim, BT42 1FX

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- On site parking
- Family Discount
- Dogs accepted by arrangement



Mid & East Antrim

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**Ballymena Visitor
Information Centre**

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