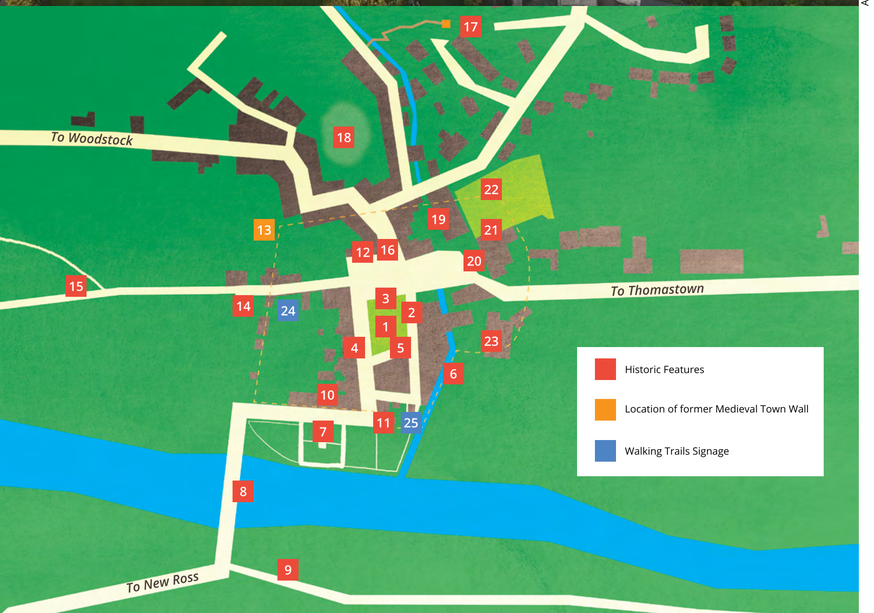
INISTIOGE

Aerial view of Inistioge by Shane Hatton: oldmillpictures.com



Welcome to Inistioge. We hope you will enjoy your visit and that this trail will help you become familiar with the village and its setting. Walking the trail will take about 40 minutes.

Inistioge Heritage Trail

Evidence on nearby Brandon Hill (515m) shows that people have lived in this area for more than 4,000 years. The village is situated at what was once a fording point on the River Nore. The site would also have been easily reached by boats coming upriver, as the river is tidal to this point. These features made the area a natural focal point for settlement and trade. The name of the village comes from the Irish Inis Tíog – Tíog's Island. Tíog, we can guess, was a local leader. In past times the area from the river to the present-day Square was an island with a stream running either side.

1. Base of Market Cross: This monument dates from 1628. The inscription reads: *This stone is to the memory of David Geraldin Baron de Brownsfoord and Johanne Morres.* It is the base of a larger monument which would have indicated that fairs and markets could be held in this area. There were weekly markets each Friday and an annual fair on December 13th. A Christmas Market still takes place here every December.

2. The Square: The square was laid out during the 18th century as part of the improvements made by the Tighe family, when the village was re-planned as an estate village for Woodstock Demesne.

3. Fountain: In 1879, Lady Louisa Tighe (1803-1900) had the fountain erected in memory of her husband William Tighe.

4. Almshouse: Sarah Fownes Tighe (1743-1820) had the Almshouse built in 1788 to care for widows in the area. Lace makers from Brussels were brought in to train the women in the craft and help them earn some money. The inscription over the door reads: *Make to yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*

5. Old Methodist Chapel: The chapel was built by the Methodist community when William Tighe leased them a plot of ground on the Square in 1849. The building was last used as a chapel in 1947 and is now a private home.

6. The Mill Stream: It flows from Mill Lane, where the 1837 and 1888 ordnance survey maps show a 'Corn Mill'.

7. The River Park: The River Nore Valley is home to many protected habitats and species including the autumn crocus, salmon, otter and bats. The river is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). Red squirrels may be glimpsed in Woodstock Woods. At dusk and dawn in summer, bats can be seen feeding near the bridge. The riverside trail towards Thomastown may give you views of herons and glimpses of kingfishers. Inistioge is on the 104 km South Leinster Way. There are information boards on these trails at 24 and 25.

8. Inistioge Bridge: This 10-arch bridge was built in 1765. The previous wooden bridge was washed away in a great flood during 1763.

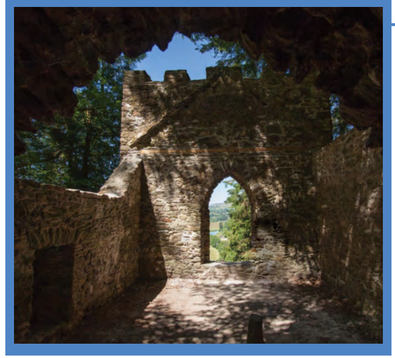
9. Rock Road: Local tradition records Rock Road as a Famine Relief Road built in the 1840s.

10. Old School House: The school was built at the same time as the Almshouse, under the direction of Sarah Tighe. She was a close personal friend of the founder of Methodist, John Wesley, and her Methodist faith made her an active and charitable patron to the village.

11. The Hundred Court: This two-storey ruined medieval building was used as a court house, in the time of the priory (12-16th Century).

12. Tower House: The ruin of a three-storey fortified medieval town house.

Folly-building was a fashion of the wealthy in late 18th and early 19th century. They often copied older buildings, usually from the Gothic period, as this one does. The folly, as the name implies, had no practical function. It was meant to add a romantic feel to an already naturally-beautiful spot and be a focal point of a walk or outing to enjoy the landscape. This folly, Sandford Castle, commissioned by the Tighe family in 1769 has a fine view over the village and the river valley.



13. Town Wall: There is a mention of a town wall in a 1608 charter. The likely location of the walls, based on recent research, is marked on the map. Town walls were built by the Anglo Normans for protection and as a status symbol. The gates were the means by which exit and entry could be controlled, and where tolls and taxes could be collected.

14. The River Gate: Located on the Point Road, this was originally an entrance to Woodstock House along by the river.

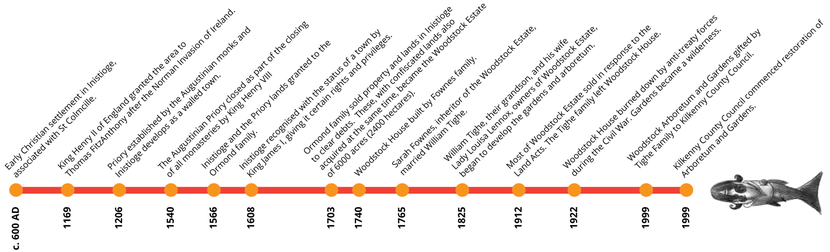
15. Ladies' Walk and Mount Sandford: For a longer walk continue on this road and turn right uphill after about 200 metres and walk on for about 0.5km. Then a path on your left is to Mount Sandford where there is a Folly.

16. Armillary Sphere: This sculpture was originally a feature in Woodstock Gardens. It was moved here in 1965. The garden in which it stands is the site of the former Royal Irish Constabulary barracks, demolished in the early 1950s.

17. St. Colmcille's Well: There is a Pattern (Patron) Day Mass celebrated on the 9th June each year on the Feast of the saint. The stone work on the well includes 16th Century carved stone panels which were probably salvaged from the Priory. One fragment has an image of Peter Rothe, a member of the important Kilkenny merchant family.

18. The Motte: This is the site of the first Norman fortification in the village, built for the Lord of the area, Thomas FitzAnthony. It is an earthen mound which once had a wooden or stone fort on top called a bailey. There is no public access.

Key Events in Inistioge's History



A day's catch from the 1950s. Photo courtesy of Eddie Cody

The Big Net was owned by the Tighe Estate and worked by four men to catch the valuable salmon for which the Nore is famous. When a run of salmon was detected by a lookout man, the net was stretched between the east bank of the river, at the Boatslip, and a boat. The boat was rowed so that the net encircled the salmon, but only part way across the river, to a point which had a marker, to allow some of the fish to escape the net and ensure continued fish stock. The landed fish were taken at the end of each day to the Woodstock Estate Office where they were weighed then sold to a salmon exporter from New Ross. The fish were iced, exported by boat via Rosslare, then by train to London, for sale at Billingsgate Fish Market next morning.

The Big Net operated for about 100 years up to 1965.

Inistioge as a Film Location

1994	Widows' Peak *[John Irving]*
1995	Circle of Friends *[Pat O'Connor]*
2013	Romantic Road *[Oliver McGarvey]*
2015	The Secret Scripture *[Jim Sheridan]*

Set of The Secret Scripture

19. St Colmcille's Church: The church was built in 1836. Pieces of carved stone from the cloister of the original Augustine priory have been built into the north and east walls around the church. As well as religious images, there is a carving of a mermaid.

20. St Mary's Church: The porch of the Church of Ireland was part of the original priory. The church was built in 1824. The belfry and clock were donated by William Tighe in 1876.

21. The Black Castle: This is in the churchyard behind the Church of Ireland. Once part of the Augustinian Priory, it is now the Tighe family mausoleum. Lady Louisa and William Tighe are buried here. There is no public access.

22. St Colmcille and St Mary's Graveyard: **James Freney,** 'Freney the Robber', an 18th century highway man, was born in Inistioge about 1719. In 1754, he wrote a best-selling account of his adventures. He was buried here in 1788, in an unmarked grave. There is a plaque to **George Brown** who was born near Inistioge in 1906. He died in support of the democratic government during the Spanish Civil War on 7th July 1937, aged just 30. He is celebrated every year at the George Brown Memorial Weekend. There is a mausoleum in memory of the poet **Mary Tighe** (1772 – 1810), with a marble figure by the English sculptor, John Flaxman (1755–1826). She is best known as the author of the poem Psyche; or the Legend of Love. It was very popular in her day and admired by Thomas Moore and John Keats.

23. The Cois Abhann Community Centre and GAA grounds: The Centre, opened in 2011, represents a proud history of community activity, especially the work of the Community Council and the Gaelic Athletic Association.

Ruins of Inistioge Priory

Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh

Inistioge

We hope you have enjoyed your stay and will come again soon.
Slán abhaile. Safe home.
For more detailed information see our website www.inistioge.ie

Special thanks to Eddie Cody, Eddie Keher and Eileen O'Brien.

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Discover Inistioge in 3 stories

Preparing for St. Colmcille's (Columba's) Feast Day

William Busher, Augustinian Monk and Canon of the Priory at Inistioge
8th June 1537

"There will be High Mass in the Priory Church tomorrow as the 9th June is the feast day of our patron saint, St Colmcille and I have preparations to make for the celebrations. I hurry through the town towards the river. I pass the big tower houses with long gardens where the rich merchants live and do business. The river is our busy highway. Boatmen make a good living from trading, carrying goods such as animal hides, wool, wine and grain to and from Kilkenny, Thomastown, New Ross and Waterford. There have been complaints from Kilkenny that they are less than honest, drawing off wine from the casks and adding water!

At the quay, fishermen have landed a catch of salmon. The fish will make a fine feast tomorrow. I head home facing the evening sun as it goes down behind the town walls. On the hill above the town, is the imposing **Motte and Bailey (18)** fort, built nearly 400 years ago by Sir Thomas FitzAnthony, son-in-law of Strongbow. He invited my order, the Augustinians, to set up our priory here over 300 years ago. Swallows circle the **Black Castle (21)** which is a peaceful sight, but these are not easy times for monasteries. Some say the Church is only interested in power and riches, and that there is need of reform. Others say King Henry VIII only wants our wealth and lands. I fear the law, passed last year, to close down monasteries and what it will mean for Inistioge. But maybe tomorrow I will forget my worries for one day as we celebrate St. Colmcille's Feast Day.

Lady Louisa's Morning Walk

Lady Louisa Tighe
Early December 1837

"I enjoy my walk from my home, Woodstock House, to the village. I come through the woods and by the **Ladies' Walk** and the **River Gate (14).** Today my business is to visit the **Almshouse (4)** and the **School House (10)** which my family built for the village. The Almshouse is home to eight poor widows who would otherwise be homeless. They are expert lace makers and, as lace is very fashionable, I find sale for it among my friends and I like to wear it myself. I also want to make them a present of a blanket and six yards of flannel each, as I do every Christmas. My husband William Tighe and I want to work for the good of the whole community and follow the Christian example set by his family, especially Grandmother Sarah who founded the Almshouse and the School House. I am glad to see the **two new churches lately built in the village (19 & 20),** both on the grounds of the ancient priory. William plans to give a plot of ground on the Square for a **Methodist Chapel (5).** At present the Methodist community meets for prayer in a school room.

At the school house I make plans with the teacher for the children's Christmas party. It brings to mind my own baby girl, who would be ten this year had she lived. But I'll put aside my sad thoughts for now and enjoy being with the school children and join in their merriment as they prepare for their Christmas party.

A childhood on the Square

Eileen and Eddie Keher
1950s

"We live over our shop on the south side of the Square. We are Kehers but it's our great grandfather's name, J. Tobin that's over the door. Mammy sells newspapers, magazines, comics, cards, sweets, cigarettes, biscuits and minerals. **The Square (2)** is the centre of our world. It's where we play and hurl and we love it. When we come home from school we throw our school bags under the stairs in the hall and then head out onto the square. It has a forge, two pubs, a hotel, a butcher's shop, a cobbler, a bone setter (who set Eileen's broken arm last summer), the Post Office and a **fountain (3)** where families get their water. Others get it from **St Colmcille's Well (17).** Two of our neighbours milk cows out the back of their houses. In long summer holidays we swim in the river and go barefoot, fishing for eels. We watch the men work the **Big Net*** on the river. Last week Eddie saw them catch 80 salmon. We go to the Sandpit to watch the sand martins. They fly in and out of the burrows they live in which they dig out of its sides. It's wild and overgrown there. We think it's beautiful. We play Fox and Hounds, and Cowboys and Indians on the **Point Road (14)** and in Woodstock Woods. We run wild up there! We come home when we're hungry.