

**FOXFORD -
a town of numerous
historical sites**

Cover image: St. Michael's Catholic Church, Foxford
(Image: www.visitfoxford.com)

Church of Ireland, Foxford.
(Image: www.visitfoxford.com)



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The History of Foxford

Foxford, Co. Mayo, came alive on Saturday, 21st June 2025, as the town hosted a vibrant celebration of Argentina Day to mark the 248th anniversary of Admiral William Brown's birth. Foxford is renowned for its historic sites. Here we include the most notable historical attractions in the town.

Foxford town lies on the River Moy, a famous salmon-fishing river, close to Lough Conn and Lough Cullen, positioned between the Ox Mountains and Nephin in north Mayo.

Its name derives from the Irish, *Béal an Easa*, which translates as "mouth of the waterfall". The name previously referred to a large fox-shaped rock found at a ford near the town. It is believed that this was possibly the same rock as "Cromwell's Rock", which marked the ford where Cromwell's Army is said to have crossed the River Moy during his campaign.

During the 18th century, Foxford produced one of Ireland's most famous people, William Brown, who became an important player in patrolling the seas around South America. William Brown was born on Providence Road in 1777 and became a National Hero in his adopted Argentina after he founded the Argentine Navy.

The final years of the 19th century saw the arrival of Mother Agnes Morrogh-Bernard, an Irish Sister of Charity nun, who established two convents. Moreover, she founded the famous industry of The **Foxford Woollen Mills** with the assistance of the Congested District Board. The water-powered mills continued to develop during the 20th century.



Foxford in bygone days
(Image: www.con-telegraph.ie)

They became and currently remain a successful industry. If one takes a stroll around the town today, they can discover the traces of its celebrated past which include some of the following;

St. Mary's Convent Chapel was opened in 1925 by Mother Morrogh-Bernard. The design of the Chapel is based on the late Gothic style of the ancient Irish abbeys, and the architect was Professor Rudolph M. Butler. Some of the stained glass windows were produced by Earley's of Dublin, whilst others were the work of Alfred Earnest Child.

The Church of Ireland was built in 1801 and contains a stained-glass window called Faith, Hope and Charity. A tower and gallery were added in 1826. It has been suggested that the tower was used in the early 1920s as a lookout post by the Irish Free State army due to its commanding views over the town.

The birthplace of Frederick Robert Higgins, the famous poet and theatre director.

He was born in a small cottage next to the Church of Ireland, on April 24th 1896. Higgins was a friend and confidant of the poet and former Senator of the Irish Free State, William Butler Yeats. Higgins also served on the board of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin from 1935 until his death in 1941. His best-known book of poetry is *The Gap of Brightness*, and he is also famed for his poem, *Father and Son*.

St. Michael's Catholic Church was built in 1879. The building stone came from the local parish of Killasser, and the altar was made by James Pearse, father of Patrick Pearse, President of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic. A large white crucifix in the grounds of the church marks the burial plot for the Sisters of Charity, and the grave of Mother Agnes Morrogh-Bernard.

The Admiral Brown Bust was given to the Foxford community by the Argentine Patriotic Association; it was cast in bronze by sculptor Don Julio Caesar Vergottini. The Admiral Brown Bust was unveiled in 1957 when the Argentine Navy visited Ireland for the centenary of his death.

The Courthouse was built in the mid-19th century, and it was here the historic meeting took place on October 3rd 1890 to discuss the crisis of the poor in the area.

This meeting is believed to have prompted Bishop Patrick Morrisroe's (Bishop of Achonry) to summon the Irish Sisters of Charity, who had been established in Ballaghaderreen, to relocate and assist the people of Foxford.

The Market Square was once the site of the courthouse and market. The market was originally set up by John Bingham who was granted the patent for a market and four fairs in 1683, which were chiefly for cattle, on May 13th, June 25th, October and December 10th.

Sources:

www.visitfoxford.com
www.mayo-ireland.ie
www.con-telegraph.ie



Admiral Brown Bust
(Image: www.visitfoxford.com)