

# The Battle of the Boyne



Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre  
Oldbridge, Drogheda, Co. Meath  
Tel : 041 9809950  
e-mail : [battleoftheboyne@opw.ie](mailto:battleoftheboyne@opw.ie)

## Teachers Notes & Resources - Secondary Level

### FREE Educational Visits for Schools

Under the terms of the Free Educational Visits for Schools Scheme, certain qualifying school / educational visits are permitted free of charge provided particular conditions are met.

### Eligibility

1: This Scheme is generally available to school groups of either Primary or Secondary level pupils, as well as pupils attending special needs schools or special needs classes.  
2 : This Scheme is **NOT** available to the following groups or organisations;  
- Tour and Coach Operators  
- Organisations for teaching English as a Foreign Language / Language Schools  
- Any third party individual or company charging for their services to organise activities, events or guided tours for educational groups.  
- College of Further and Higher Education, extra mural-courses, evening classes; study holidays, summer courses, summer schools and lecture tours.

### Conditions

1 : The visit must be booked directly with the site a minimum of 21 days in advance and must be confirmed no later than 24 hours prior to the visit.  
2 : The visit must be undertaken in pursuit of the Primary School curriculum or the Secondary / Vocational / Community School curriculum as approved by the Department of Education & Science.  
3 : In case of students from other EU countries, the visit must be undertaken in pursuit of the relevant primary / secondary course of study set out in the national curriculum in their parent country.  
4 : Qualifying visits under this Scheme must be made during the school academic year.



# Planning and making the most of your visit

---

If possible, we recommend that teachers make a visit in advance of bringing a group. An advance visit will enable you to familiarise yourself with the layout of the visitor centre and other facilities. If it is not possible to visit in advance, it is strongly recommended to visit our website [www.battleoftheboyne.ie](http://www.battleoftheboyne.ie) for more information about the battle and the visitor centre, and to download any relevant online resources.

## Have an objective in mind for your visit

Build the visit into a project at school- make it more than a 'day out'. Decide on the purpose of your visit.

## Is the purpose of the visit ?

- To gather information on your school's local area
- Related to an historical time period
- To meet curricular requirements in specific subjects or is it related to cross-curricular possibilities therefore allowing integrated learning
- To explore human and natural environments

## Prepare the class

Prepare the students for the visit. Give them an idea of what they can expect to see, or have a class discussion about the Battle of the Boyne in advance of the visit. Familiarise them with some of the vocabulary that they might come across at the visitor centre. Here are suggested questions/ topics for discussion:

**Where are we going?** Show your students images of the Battle of the Boyne visitor centre. Explain what kind of visitor centre it is, using the background and historical information contained in this pack and other information available from the Battle of the Boyne's website. Please refer to the below pages from the education pack:

1. *Battle of the Boyne Introduction*
2. *Main Characters*
3. *The Armies*
4. *Artillery & Weapons*

**Why are we going?** Feedback from teachers shows that students who understand why they are visiting the centre, or who recognise that there is a purpose to their visit, respond better, maintain focus through the excursion and have a more meaningful learning experience. For example, is the visit a fact-finding exercise to build on back in the classroom? Is it a reward for hard work on a particular project in school ?

**What will we be doing there ?** Explain to your students what they will be doing at the visitor centre. Will they be shown around the exhibition by a tour guide or will it be a self guided tour? How long will the tour last and will they have worksheets to complete ?

**Teachers please note that the Battle of the Boyne visitor centre will not provide each student with copies of the workbook to complete. These are all available on our website [www.battleoftheboyne.ie](http://www.battleoftheboyne.ie) to download and should be printed off for each student to complete in advance of your visit.**

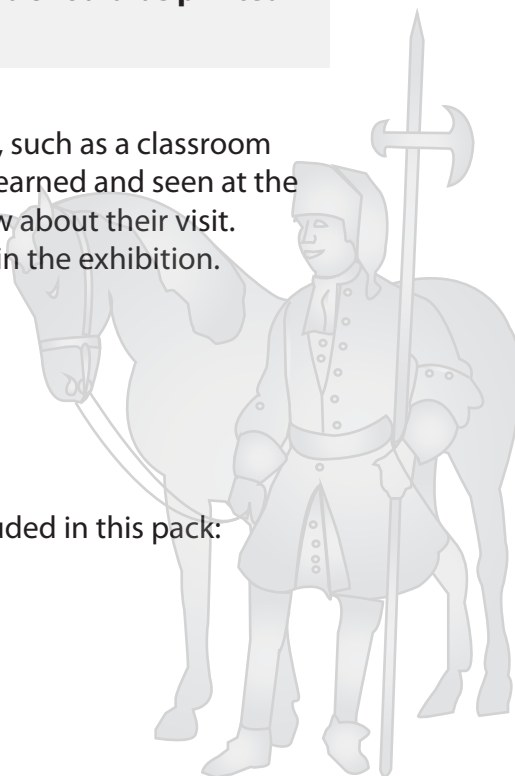
#### Post visit work

Have some follow-up work planned for back in the classroom, such as a classroom discussion and activities to build on what the students have learned and seen at the visitor centre. Ask students to write up a short article or review about their visit. Encourage them to describe the building and what they saw in the exhibition. Questions you could pose include:

- *What was their favourite part of the exhibition?*
- *Describe some of the weapons used at the Battle of the Boyne.*
- *Describe the soldiers' uniforms.*

Students can also complete the following activity sheets included in this pack:

1. Battle of the Boyne Crossword
2. Battle of the Boyne Wordmaze
3. Creative Writing
4. Fill in the missing words
5. Battle of the Boyne Card Game



*Battle of the Boyne*  
1690



# The Battle of the Boyne 1690

The Battle of the Boyne was fought on the 1st of July 1690 and was a very important battle in Irish, British and European history. The two Kings who were present on the battlefield were **James II** of England and his nephew **William III** of England (William of Orange). Although not present on the day a third king **Louis XIV** of France was also involved. The battle was a power struggle between these three monarchs, the victor would hold the balance of power in Europe. The armies of the rival kings, which numbered between them more than 60,000 men, were by far the largest forces ever assembled on a Irish or British battlefield. The Williamite side comprised of 36,000 troops made up of 12 nationalities, among them, Dutch, Danes, Germans, French Huguenots, English, Scottish, Irish, Swiss, Italians, Norwegians and Poles. The Jacobites numbered 24,000 men of five nationalities, Irish, English, Scottish, French, and German.

There were three issues at stake at the battle :

- 1: *The Throne of England*
- 2: *French Dominance of Europe*
- 3: *Power in Ireland*



King Louis XIV of France was expanding his territory in Europe and The Grand Alliance was set up to counter this French expansion. This alliance was headed by William of Orange, Stadholder of the Dutch Republic.

James II had lost the Crown of England to his nephew William III. With the help of King Louis XIV of France, James came to Ireland where he was still legally king. He hoped to use Ireland as a base to regain his throne in England.



On the eve of the battle, William held his Council of War in the ruins of Old Mellifont Abbey. He listened to the advice of his Generals, Duke Schomberg and Count Solms. The battle plans were then drawn up, a flanking manoeuvre towards Slane and a full frontal attack at Oldbridge. So in the early hours of the 1st of July the Battle of the Boyne began. The flanking manoeuvre drew two thirds of James' army towards Rossnaree leaving only one third at Oldbridge against the might of the Williamite army.

The Williamite army crossed the river at low tide onto the south bank of the Boyne at the little village of Oldbridge which was to be the core battle site. The Jacobite and Williamite armies engaged in battle for approximately 12 hours and 1500 men lost their lives, 1000 Jacobites approx. and 500 Williamites approx.

James retreated from the battlefield via Duleek, crossing the Nanny river, and returned to Dublin. From there he went to Cork and set sail for France, never to set foot in Ireland or England again. William, the victor, made his way to Dublin where he celebrated his victory in St. Patrick's Cathedral. The two armies remained in Ireland and a number of other battles were fought including the battle of Aughrim, the siege of Athlone and two sieges of Limerick. The Williamite wars in Ireland ended with the signing of the Treaty of Limerick on 3rd of October 1691.

# Main Characters of the Battle

## James II of England

James II inherited the throne of England from his brother Charles II. He converted to Catholicism and he showed favour to his Catholic subjects. Some of the English Protestant nobility objected to James' policies and were unhappy with his rule. He believed in the absolute right of kings and had little time for parliament.



## William of Orange

William was the Stadholder of the Dutch Republic and Prince of Orange. He was James' nephew and also his son-in-law. William was at war with King Louis XIV of France over territory. He was invited to take the throne of England by some of the English nobility. He accepted and arrived in England in November of 1688 with 15,000 troops. He and his wife Mary were crowned King and Queen of England in April of 1689. England was then part of the Grand Alliance against France.

## Louis XIV

King Louis XIV of France was James' cousin and the most powerful monarch in Europe. He, like James believed in the absolute power of kings. He was expanding the boundaries of France and claiming territory beyond its borders including part of the Dutch Republic. He was an ally of James at the Battle of the Boyne.



## The Duke of Schomberg

Duke Schomberg was second in command of William's army. He had a distinguished career in several European armies before joining William's army. William became impatient with him as he felt the campaign in Ireland was moving too slowly. William came to Ireland himself in June 1690 and took command of his army in person. On the morning of the battle Schomberg rallied the Huguenots over the Boyne and was killed on the south side of the river. He is buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin.

## Count Solms

Count Solms was born in Utrecht in 1638. He was a kinsman and advisor to William. He served in the Dutch army as lieutenant general of the infantry. After the Battle of the Boyne Solms remained with William and returned to England with him after the first siege of Limerick.



## Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnell

Richard Talbot was appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland by King James. He was in command of the right wing of the Jacobite army at Oldbridge on the day of the battle.

## The Comte de Lauzun

The Comte de Lauzun was the commander of the French forces in Ireland. He was advisor to King James at the Battle of the Boyne. He over-reacted to William's flanking manoeuvre and issued the orders which led to the majority of the Jacobite forces moving to Rossnaree, away from the main site of the battle.



# The Armies



## Infantry

Soldiers fighting on foot. They made up the main part of the army. They travelled from place to place by marching and carried their musket and personal belongings.



## Cavalry

Cavalry men always fought on horse back. They carried two pistols and a sword. They screened the movements of the army and protected the flank while the infantry fought and engaged in battle as needed.

## Dragoon

A dragoon soldier carried more weapons than a cavalry man. They rode into battle on horse back and dismounted and fought on foot. They were like mounted infantry men.

## Artillery

Artillery men operated the cannons and worked as a team. They needed special training in loading, firing and cleaning the cannon. The cannons were moved to the battlefields by horses.



### The Jacobite Army at the Boyne

- 9 Cavalry Regiments
- 7 Dragoon Regiments
- 26 Irish Infantry Battalions
- 7 French Infantry Battalions
- 16 Gun Field - Artillery

**Total : 24,000 men approx.**

**60,000 Troops  
Largest ever Battle  
in Ireland**

### The Williamite Army at the Boyne

- 23 Cavalry Regiments
- 5 Dragoon Regiments
- 38 Infantry Battalions
- 40 Gun Field - Artillery Train
- 6 Howitzers

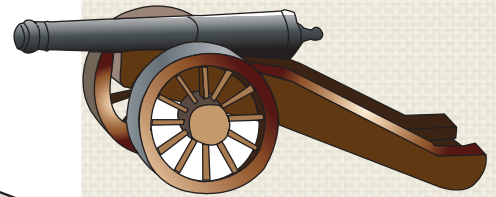
**Total : 36,000 men approx.**



# Artillery and Weapons

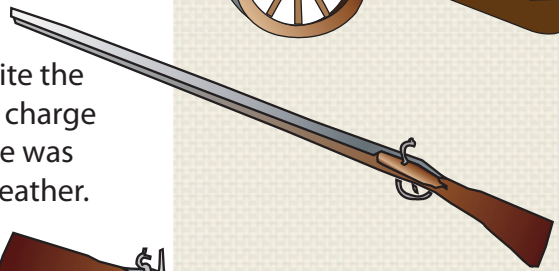
## Cannons

There were English, French and Dutch cannons at the Battle of the Boyne. The type used by the Williamite army was known as 6lb Saker cannons. The English called their cannons after birds of prey and a saker is a type of falcon.



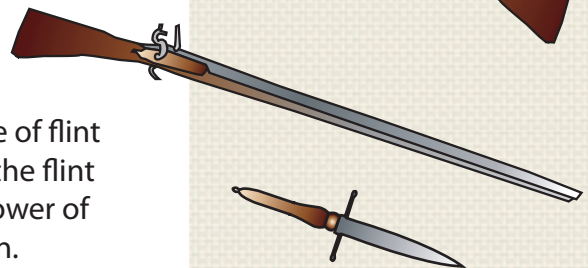
## Matchlock Musket

The Matchlock musket used a lighted match cord to ignite the priming charge in the pan, which then ignited the main charge in the barrel and fired the musket ball. The disadvantage was the cord was expensive and difficult to keep lit in bad weather.



## Flintlock Musket & Plug Bayonet

The Flintlock was the more up to date musket. A piece of flint replaced the lighted cord. When the trigger is pulled the flint strikes a piece of metal called the frisson causing a shower of sparks. These sparks then ignite the powder in the pan. The Plug Bayonet was developed as a means of giving a musketeer protection against the Cavalry. The bayonet plugged directly into the musket barrel.



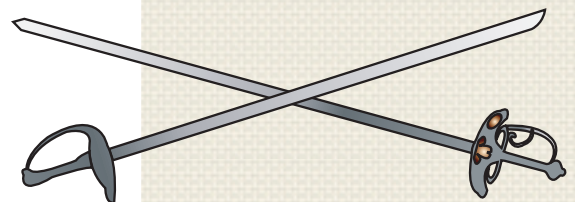
## Pistol

The Pistol was a smaller version of the musket, used by the Cavalry.



## Doubled Edged Sword & Single Edged Sword

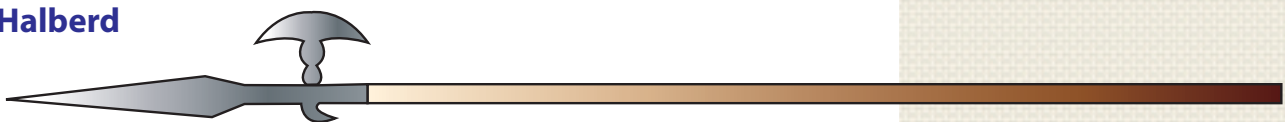
A double edged sword was used by the Cavalry. It was weighted at the tip to assist the horseman in fighting the infantry on the ground. A single edged sword was used by the Infantry and Dragoons. It was a much lighter sword which they could raise above shoulder level.



## Pike

The Pike had a long handle with a spear at the tip. It was used effectively to protect the infantry from enemy cavalry.

## Halberd



The Halberd was carried by the sergeant. It was used to impose discipline on soldiers and as a weapon against the Cavalry.

# Workbook Answers

Q.1 : 1690

Q.2 :



Q.3 : (a) William, (b) James II, (c) Louis XIV

Q.4 : Jacobite

Q.5 : 24,000

Q.6 : Tyrconnell

Q.7 : Dragoons

Q.8 : Cannons, howitzers, matchlock muskets, flintlock muskets, pikes, bayonets, swords, grenades, pistols.

Q.9 : 36,000

Q.10 : Jan Wyck

Q.11 : 11th May 2007

Q.12 : 1,500

Q.13 : True

Q.14 : 4000 metres

Q.15 : Saddle, bridle, pitchfork, bucket, sacks of grain, cannonballs

Q.16 : Field Mortar

Q.17 : 1500

Q.18 : William

## Battle of the Boyne Crossword Answers

Across : (3) Lauzun, (5) Matchlock, (6) Maas, (7) James, (8) July, (9) Mellifont, (10) Saker, (11) Donore.

Down : (1) Dutch, (2) Tullyallen, (4) Flanking, (5) Mary, (9) Louis, (10) Infantry, (11) Pike.

