



*HISTORY: Ireland's oldest hotel, Woodenbridge, has lost none of its charm*

**NESTLED in one of Wicklow's prettiest valleys on the banks of the Avoca River, Woodenbridge hotel boasts breath-taking surroundings.**

It is true that most lodgings in this part of the country benefit from stunning scenery, but what sets Woodenbridge apart is its rich historical background (it is Ireland's oldest hotel) and the warm welcome and personal service that you can only get from a family-run hotel such as this.

Originally opened as a coaching inn on the old Dublin-Wexford highway in 1608, the 400 year-old hotel has housed many people of interest over the years.

**BY NIAMH BYRNE**

Walk through the welcoming country manor style lobby and you will happen upon the very room where Eamon and Sinead De Valera stayed during their honeymoon. Michael Collins also stayed at the hotel while engaging in secret meetings with senior British Army officers in February 1922.

And down the road at Avondale is the ancestral home of Charles Stewart Parnell, the most influential politician of his age.

**Stunning**

After reminiscing about Ireland's past you can take in some stunning views on a leisurely hill walk.

The local area also provides opportunities for golf, trout fishing, shooting, orienteering, pony-trekking, falconry and a chance to step back in time and take part in age old crafts like butter churning, spinning sheep's wool and straw rope making.

Walking, golf and activity packages can be arranged through the hotel for a fun filled stay.

At night you have a chance to feel like a real local in the bar, the social hub for the area. Feel right at home in the cosy bay windows enjoying a tasty pint of Guinness and listening to local live entertainment. The fun goes on until well into the morning for those looking for a party.

This is a very special year for the hotel as it is celebrating its 400th birthday and to mark the occasion it has re-introduced some of its original, historical dishes to the menu at the bars and restaurants of the hotel.

Try some traditional hare broth followed by partridge with rustic vegetables, local, seasonal, obviously organic, simply cooked and prepared, and wholesome.

● To book your getaway in the garden of Ireland log onto [www.woodenbridgehotel.com](http://www.woodenbridgehotel.com) or call (0402) 35146