

MACROOM - TOWN PROFILE

Macroom is the principle town in the mid-Cork region. The town is ideally situated with respect to many amenities. Historically the town was developed and build around a castle built in the 12th century. The castle was burned and rebuilt many times and the remains of the castle tower and castle gate remain and form the focus for the town. The castle gate is situated opposite the town hall and both these buildings form the central focus to the town in terms of the administrative and cultural aspects.

Macroom is situated on the national primary route N22 between Cork and Kerry being approximatetly 38 km from Cork City and 48 km from Killarney. The road infrastructure is very well developed and is improving constantly. The town currently does not have a bypass but a route has been selected and hopefully will commence in the near future.

POPULATION:

According to the 2006 Census the population of Macroom Urban was 3,407, Population of the environs of Macroom is not clear from Census as it does not give the immediate townlands separate. Total population of Macroom rural area is in the region of 14,000.

SCHOOLS:

Pre-schools: There are three pre-schools (montessori) in Macroom.

There are three main primary schools in the town:

St. Josephs Primary School *A school located within the grounds of the local Mercy Convent. The initial years up to first class are mixed. Otherwise caters for girls.*

St. Colman's Primary School *This school is for boys from the post first class age to sixth class.*

Caum School *A small mixed local school located about four miles from the town.*

SECONDARY EDUCATION

There are three secondary schools in the town.

Bishop MacEgan College *This co-educational and vocational school is located in side the castlegates in the centre of the town and caters for all classes through to Leaving Certificate.*

De La Salle College *Located approximately three minutes walk from the town centre this school caters for male*

students only and offers courses through to Leaving Certificate.

St. Marys Secondary School

Located adjacent to the town centre this schools caters for female student sonly and offers all courses through the Leaving Certificate.

(Night classes in various topics/subjects are held from September – December and from January – April in MagEgan College)

HOSPITAL: *Macroom Hospital caters for 34 longstay elderly patients and for 4 respite/convalescent patients. It also has a psychiatric day care unit. It also gives palatitive care.*

The Hospital also has a dental surgery unit which caters for students from primary schools.

HEALTH CENTRE: *A new purposely built clinic was opened some years ago. It has rooms for the Community Welfare Officer, Physiotherapist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Home Help organiser, Public Health Nurses, Chiropody, School Doctors, South Doc Service 5.00 p.m. to 12.00 midnight.*

INDUSTRY:

Name: *MedCo Limited*

Location: *Codrum, Macroom*

Activity: *Making medical uniforms, surgical gowns, etc.*

No. employed: *4*

Name: *Rockwell Construction*

Location: *Gurteenroe, Macroom*

Activity: *Ventilation and air-conditioning units*

No. employed: *80*

Name: *Ship Company Limited*

Location: *Codrum*

Activity: *printed circuit-boards*

No. employed: *15*

Name: *Aquatico Limited*

Location: *Gurteenroe, Macroom*

Activity: *manufacturers of aquarium accessories*

No. employed: *9*

Name: *M. & J. Gleeson t/a John O'Shea & Son*

Location: *Gurteenroe, Macroom*

Activity: *Bottling distribution agent (incl. Beers and minerals)*

No. employed: *18*

Name: *Macroom Tool Hire*

Location: Gurteenroe
Activity: Tool hire, sale and repair
No. employed: 6

Name: Irish Window Blinds
Location: Gurteenroe
Activity: manufacturing of blinds, etc.
No. employed: 9

Name: Alliance System Buildings
Location: Masseytown
Activity: general building contractors
No. employed: 8

Name: Alida Systems Limited
Location: Inchigeela Road (just outside urban area)
Activity: electrical cable harness and sub-contract manufacture.
No. employed: 35

Name: Jack Joyce Pallets Limited
Location: Bowl Road, Macroom.
Activity: Making and repairing pallets.
No. employed: 6

The former General Instrument factory on the Inchigeela Road is presently vacant.

SERVICED INDUSTRIAL LAND:

- i) I.D.A. Industrial Site
Inchigeela Road (6.5 acres remaining)
- ii) Macroom Environmental Industrial Park
Owned by Cork County Council. (currently being developed)
(Acreage of site: circa 6 acres.)

LIBRARY: Library is located in the Town Centre with a wide range of books. Seating and study areas are provided as well as computers for internet and e.mail access. Daily newspapers provided.

CINEMA/THEATRE: The Briery Gap Cultural Centre comprising of a 208 seat cinema/theatre with hospitality room. New film releases are screened on a regular basis and a wide variety of drama, music and dance are performed there.

HOTELS: The Hotels in Macroom are:

- Castle Hotel, Main Street
- Victoria Hotel, North Square
- Riverside Park Hotel, Killarney Road

- *Coolcower House on the eastern side of Macroom..*

Restaurants:

- *Vaughans, North Square (in Town Centre),*
- *Café at Castle Hotel, Main Street, in Town Centre*
- *Café Muesli, South Square (in Town Centre),*
- *Lynch's Café, South Square (in Town Centre),*
- *Castle View Chinese Restaurant, Castle Street*
- *Yans Chinese Restaurant, Main Street*
- *Indian Restaurant at Fitzgerald Street*
- *The Auld Triangle on western side of town*
- *Granvilles, Castle Street, off Town Centre*
- *Buns n Stuff, Main Street (café)*
- *Chippers: Martin Hurleys, Main Street and Fitzgeralds, near Mart*

SWIMMING POOL: *One private 16 m pool in the Castle Hotel Leisure centre.*

GYM: *Also in Castle Hotel Leisure Centre.*

SERVICES

Water: *The source of Macroom's water supply is the River Sullane. The existing water treatment plant was provided as an interim scheme in 1996 located at the Castle Demesne. The supply network in the Town has been upgraded in 1995. A reservoir was built in the 1990s trebling the storage capacity for treated water. The present daily water consumption in Macroom is approximately 1500 cu.m per day. The interim treatment plant was designed to cater for an established future demand of 3,180 cu. m a day. This demand is comprised of: domestic 52%, industrial 38%, agricultural 6% and group schemes 4%. The water treatment plan is a mechanical package plant and is therefore costly to maintain and will require replacement. In general, there may be difficulties in providing water supplies to higher lands, development above the 120' contour **will** be restricted. An additional reservoir may be needed to the north of the town to service the proposed Action Plan area (land between proposed By Pass, north of the Town and the Town.. The current scheme will not be suitable to meet the needs of Macroom in the medium-long term, due to capacity and life expectancy of the treatment system. There is a need for a secure, long term solution either locally or as part of a regional scheme.*

Surface water drainage: *The oldest sewers in the Town are a combined collection system. Newly developed areas have separate storm sewers. New surface water systems are generally provided as part of developments.*

Foul drainage: *The present treatment works is an oxidation ditch type with a design capacity of 193 kgs of B.O.D. per day, providing secondary treatment with treated effluents being discharged to the River Sullane. The current treatment plant was built in the 1970s and a phosphate removal capacity and sludge de-watering plant have been added to the plant. There is hardly any spare capacity in the plant but increased capacity will have to be provided in the next 5 years to cater for increased demand.*

Broadband available in Macroom

FLOODING: The last incident of flooding was in 1986 when the Sullane burst its banks and flooded the Masseytown region.

RESIDENTIAL Macroom has a large collection of housing to support all budgets. There are housing developments within the urban area as well as in outlying areas. In brief the new housing developments that have been built in the town in the last seven years are:

Sally Gardens	14
Ard na Greine	55
Sullane Weirs	40
The Glenties	76
Oakwood	56
Oakwood Court	18
Castle Court	18
Carrigban	26
The Hermitage	70
Lios na Fea	40
Sleaveen West	14
Millbrook	20
Sunnyside, Barrack Lane	20
The Cornmills	10
Gurteenroe Park	10
The Lawn	28
Meadowlands	80 built (permission for 203)
Millstreet Road	5 houses not yet commenced
Cork Street	Apartments and town houses (76 in total) (planning permission granted but development expected to commence shortly).

Macroom Town Council also caters for the social housing element with various estates built in the Town.

There is also a Voluntary Housing Association which caters for the housing needs of the elderly

Housing development in Macroom is constrained by the steep and rocky topography of much of the land within the urban area, by the flooded Lee Valley, the Gearagh wetlands and the location of the proposed northern By-pass. For this reason all lands suitable for development within the urban area will be used at reasonably efficient densities i.e. normally not less than 10-12 houses per acre, with higher densities lands in or near the town centre. The area of land zoned and serviced for residential use is 25 ha.

The zoned and unserviced residential land is 69 ha.

RETAIL: 95% of retailers are located in the town centre.

Supermarkets: **Super-Valu** located at Main Street
Dunnes, Fairgreen

*Lidl, Fairgreen
Spar at Hospital Cross.
Homestead located at Masseytown .
Centra at Gurteenroe*

*Drapery and footwear: 7 small retail stores all located in Town Centre,
Also Dunnes Stores (mixed retail)*

, Hardware and D.I.Y.: 5 located in Town Centre, 1 in New Street.

Electrical: 4 all located in town centre.

Toys and sundry: 2, located in town centre

Sports Shop: 1, Railway View

Furniture shops: 1, secondhand in Luceys Lane

Newsagents: 1 specific and all supermarkets.

Book Shop: 2

Chemists: 4, all located in Town Centre

Travel Agent: 1, Main Street

Auctioneers: 4, all located in town centre

Insurance Agents: 4, all located in town centre

Solicitors: 5, all located in town centre

Accountants: 5, 4 in town centre, 1, in Masseytown

Printing Works: 1, in town centre

Doctors: 5, located in town centre

Chiropracter: 1, located in Railway View (lower Main St)

Reflexology 1, ditto

Homeopath: 1, ditto

Reiki: 1, ditto

Sports injury: 1, Main Street

Chiropody: 2, Railway View and South Square

*Dentists: 4, 3, in town centre and also schools are catered for at local
Hospital*

Vets: 3 (2, in town centre and 1 at eastern side of town).

Hairdressers: 6 (4 in town centre, 1, in Cork Street, 1, The Bridge)

Beauticians: 3 in town centre

Turf Accountants: 4, in Town Centre

Shoe repairs: 1, in Town Centre

Charity shops: 2, in Town Centre

Pet Shop: 1, in Town Centre

Funeral Directors 1, located in Town Centre

Public Houses: 10

Nursing Homes: 2 (One in New Street and one in Codrum).

Garages 5 (3 Main Dealers)

Victuallers 2

BUS SERVICES: *There is an hourly bus service to and from Cork City and good
Services to Killarney and Tralee. These services are an important asset to the Town.*

TAXI SERVICES: *Macrooom does not operate a taxi rank as it appears that the demand for one is not there. However, there are 7 to 8 hackneys operating in Macrooom and caters for the demand.*

AMENITIES

The Macrooom Castle Demesne, over 50 acres of riverside parkland and golf course adjoins the Town Centre, provides a very high quality amenity for the people of the town and its hinterland. The Castle Demesne is managed by a Trust acting on behalf of the residents of the Town. Excellent outdoor recreational facilities are available. There is an 18 hole Golf course in the Demesne, in addition to GAA facilities.

A Children's Playground has been constructed at Sleaveen Road overlooking the Castle Demesne.

The River Sullane offers abundant trout fishing for anglers. The Sullane joins the River Lee a mile outside the town where fishermen and anglers come from far and wide to fish.

The Town Park at the western side of the River Sullane extends at either side of the Bridge where there are lengthy riverside walks and seating arrangements. Extensive views can be had of this picturesque scene from the Macrooom Bridge where a viewing gallery has been located. As well as G.A.A. pitch in the Castle Demesne there is also two training pitches in the Town Park which are used extensively.

Macrooom Soccer Club have purchased a field and developed it into a pitch and changing rooms at Dan Corkery Place. It now has several teams and this pitch is used often for matches by the home club and outside clubs.

There are numerous clubs and organisations of a sporting and cultural nature in the Town. Macrooom enjoys participation in local pastimes and sports including road Bowling. Indoor facilities are provided for in the V.E.C. Macrooom Sports Complex, in the Castle Demesne, closed at time of writing for refurbishment i.e. indoor soccer, basketball, badminton, gymnastics and racquetball.

Clubs also use the Town Hall for indoor activities i.e. judo, boxing and modern dance.

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

As already mentioned there are numerous clubs in Macrooom. I detail ones that come to mind:

G.A.A, Macrooom.

Macrooom Soccer Club

Macrooom Judo Club

Macrooom Boxing Club

Macrooom Racquetball Club

Macrooom Bowling Club

West Muskerry Athletic Club

Ultra Flex Dancing Club

Sullane Film Society

Muskerry Toastmasters

Lions Club

Lee Valley Enterprise Board

Macrooom Vitners Association

Tidy Towns Committee

Neighbourhood Watch

*Girl Guides
Boys Scouts
Civil Defence
F.C.A.
Sullane Bridge Club
Macroom Bridge Club
The Flower Club
Lee Angling Club*

(Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of Clubs and societies)

OTHER FACILITIES:

MART

Cork Co-operative Marts Limited have their Macroom premises and yard located in the centre of Macroom Town and hold a mart on Saturdays and also on some Tuesdays and Thursdays depending on the season. These days are particularly busy due to the influx of farmers to the mart and there is resulting spin off to shops, etc.

MARKET

Macroom Town Council administer the Street Traders who trade on Tuesday in the Square, in the heart of Macroom Town. Their colourful stalls and different wares are a big attraction for tourists and are also well supported locally.

CIVIC AMENITY SITE

Macroom is fortunate to have a Civic Amenity Site located one mile from the town which facilitates recycling of paper, cardboard, newspapers, magazines, glass bottles, jars, aluminium and tin cans, mixed plastic bottles, textiles, batteries, waste oils, electric and electronic waste, green waste and scrap metal.

OTHER AGENCIES

- *Social Welfare Office, Bowl Road, Macroom*
- *Employment Exchange, Barrett Place*
- *Community Welfare Office, Health Centre at the Hospital (already referred to).*
- *Teagasc, Codrum (western side of town).*
- *Coillte, Inchigeela Road*
- *Cork County Council located in the Square*
- *Macroom Town Council located in the Square*
- *Garda Siochana, Barrack Lane*
- *Post Office, Main Street*
- *Cope Foundation – residential care for people with special needs, Dan Corkery Place*
- *Peter Bradley Foundation, 19, Glen Park.*
- *Fas hold a clinic in Town hall every second Thursday.*

MILLS

- *Creedon's Mill, some two hundred years old, is operating as a going concern and is renowned for its Macroom Oatmeal and Macroom Flour.*
- *Bealick Mill (Horgan's Mill)
Restored four-storeyed mill built in the early 1800s, a great tourist attraction.*

CHURCHES

- *St. Colman's Catholic Church, Chapel Hill, located in Town Centre*

CONVENT: *Sisters of Mercy, Chapel Hill, Macroom.*

DISUSED CHURCH

- *Former Church of Ireland Church in Castle Street, now in the possession of Macroom Town Council. To be restored.*

Tourist Office:

The Tourist office is situated in the Town Centre and gives invaluable service to tourists and passers-by.

NCT Centre:

This centre is located just off the Town Centre.

Banking facilities:

- *AIB Bank, West Square*
- *Bank of Ireland, North Square*
- *Permanent TSB, North Square*
- *Credit Union, Railway View*

QUALITY BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Macroom town nestles in a valley in lands rising up the Sullane Valley that runs west to east, in rising lands to the west of the confluence of the Sullane and the Lee. Macroom has developed on an east west linear axis following the Sullane River, with "fingers" of development reaching along roads running north out of the town. From Cork Street to Main Street is long and narrow and sweeps into the main Square, which is the commercial heart of the Town. The Square, which still functions as a successful market square, contains some very fine commercial buildings and is dominated by the Town Hall and the 15th century stone entrance to the Castle Demesne both of which are floodlit at night. The route to the west is over the arched stone bridge with views upstream and downstream to the Town Park. The town is characterised by use of local stone and decorative timber, in addition to the more usual brightly painted render found in County Cork. To the mid twentieth century, a railway ran from Cork to Macroom Town along the Lee Valley. The line ran east – west parallel to and north of Cork Street terminating at the Mart grounds. The line of the rail contributed to the shape of the town's development and some railway

structures have survived. Town Centre activities have tended to remain undeveloped in lands to the north of Cork Street.

ENVIRONMENTAL SITES (SAC)

The Gearagh, on the River Lee, a mile outside Macroom is a unique haven for wildlife. It is a unique and ancient forest system situated on a broad, braided channel where the river leaves the hills and widens out into an alluvial plain, formed at the end of the last Ice Age. The Gearagh is unique being an intricate tangle of narrow channels and many branching streams that encircle a maze of islands covered in oak forest. Although half the original area has been damaged it still represents the only extensive alluvial forest in Ireland or Britain and probably Western Europe west of the Rhine. The communities, or groupings, of plants growing together are uncommon and there are some very rare species of plants while the flooded areas attract large concentrations of wildfowl.

In 1954 a vast number of the oak trees were felled to make way for the reservoirs to drive the electricity generating station at Carrigadrohid. For about 25 years it was commonly thought by the scientific community that the entire area had been damaged. However, a remnant of the woodland remained and in the 1980s it was listed by the Wildlife Service as worthy of nature reserve status. In 1987 the area was declared a statutory nature reserve under the Wildlife Act, 1976, with the active co-operation of the E.S.B. who own the land.

KEY STRATEGIC AND NICHE FUNCTION - TOURISM

Macroom town is a town with a unique history and culture, with interaction between Gaelic and other traditions influencing its character. The ford over the Sullane near its meeting with the Laney River was the reputed site of a major battle recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters. The standing stone in the nearby meadow is associated with the death of Brian Boru's brother in battle. Evidence of the pre Christian and early Christian habitation of the area is readily apparent with a number of standing stones, dolmens, cist tombs and fulaght fia in the immediate vicinity of the town.

Macroom is an attractive town set in a beautiful surrounding countryside in the Lee Valley. The town should be an ideal base for people exploring the excellent scenery and historical sites i.e. south west to Gougane Barra, Inchigeela Lakes and the Gearagh. To the north west are Musheru Mountain, Millstreet Country Park, to the west Ballyvourney.

The immediate surrounding of the town is excellent for walking and rambling. As already stated there is an 18 hole golf course and an 18 hole pitch and putt course.

Analysis: *Macroom carries part of the environmental burden (through traffic) generated by established tourism destinations in the West. The town has not been successful in establishing itself as a tourism destination in its own right. Accommodation is limited and the town lacks a "day trip" attraction. The Castle Demesne is an excellent amenity but is not presented in a way that is attractive to tourists. New initiatives, including Eco-labelling, ecological tourism, the growth of walking tourism, Bealick Mill, The Briery Gap, the now refurbished Castle Hotel and*

the acquisition of the former Church of Ireland create new possibilities for tourism development.

It is essential that a co-ordinated strategy and co-ordinated marketing be adopted to develop the town's attractiveness to visitors. An increase in the number of available beds and a wide range of accommodation is needed along with co-ordinated marketing and in particular internet marketing. The development of a hostel in the town would be an advantage.