Donegal Visit
17th & 18th May 2019

This was the second visit to Donegal with heritage Groups from Mid Ulster and Donegal come together to take part in a study visit to Innishowen to explore sites linked to the O’Neill and clans of ancient Ulster.

The programme is an opportunity for joint working between Mid Ulster District Council and Donegal County Council though 3 study visits in each area to explore the shared heritage which led to the ‘flight’ of the Earls which took place from Rathmullan, Co Donegal; with the ‘Earls’, themselves coming from both Donegal and Dungannon along with the subsequent Plantation of Ulster which had a huge significance in the history and development of the areas.
O’Dohertys Keep

The remains of a former 14th century Norman castle, O’Doherty’s Keep. In 1601 it was a small, two-story castle, occupied by Conor McGarrett O’Doherty. In 1602 a third storey was added, and the keep restored by Hugh Boy O’Doherty. He intended it as a base for aid from Spanish forces who were expected to arrive at Inch Island. Crown forces burnt the keep in 1608 in retaliation for the revolt of Sir Cahir O’Doherty, who had sacked and destroyed the city of Derry. After Sir Cahir O’Doherty’s death at the Battle of Kilmacrennan, the Keep was granted to Sir Arthur Chichester, who leased it to Englishman Henry Vaughan. Further restoration work was carried out by the Vaughan family who occupied the keep until 1718.
Donagh Cross, Carndonagh

One of the earliest Christian crosses which dates back to the 7th Century. The Ancient stone cross slab of Donagh and its two guardstones are some of the finest examples in Ireland of low relief carved monuments.

Cloncha Church & High Crosses

The ruins of a small seventeen-century church, about 48 feet by 21 feet, known as the 'Church of Cloncha' that occupies an older foundation, lie eastward of Bothchonais (Carrowmore), on the road to Culdaff. Carrowmore, now better known as Baskil (basilica), was the probable site of the Monastery of Bothchonais mentioned by John Colgan. In Bishop Downham's Visitation Book, 1622, we find 'The church of Cloncagh is fallen down, and altogether decayed.' In that year 'Edward Boucker, clerk, an honest man, but noe licensed preacher,' was Incumbent, who was considered as 'sufficient for a parishe consisting wholly of Irishe.' This old church was roofed and used for Devine Service until the year 1827.

Outside, west of the graveyard of this church, are the remains of a High Commemoration Cross, known as the Cross of St Buadon.
Burt Castle

The Castle was constructed in the sixteenth century during the reign of Henry VIII. It was a traditional stronghold of the O’Doherty’s protecting the southern edge of their Inishowen Lordship. The design of the Castle was strongly influenced by contemporary Scottish fortifications, and anticipated the style of buildings constructed during the Ulster Plantation of the following century.

Grianan of Aileach

The Stone Fort of Grianán of Aileach sits on a hilltop in Inishowen County Donegal 250m above sea level, the stone fort was probably first built on an earthen rath. The origins of the Grianán of Aileach fort are dated back to 1700 BC. It is linked to the Tuatha de Danann who invaded Ireland before the Celts and built stone forts on top of strategic hills. They worshipped Dagda (the Good God) and he too is associated with the origins of Aileach. It was he who ordered the building of a stone fort to act as a burial monument to his dead son.
Showcase Event

Following a full day of visits on the 17 May 2019 the members of the Heritage Forum form Donegal and Mid Ulster presented their work and activities.

The Showcase Event gave all the history groups the opportunity to share their particular area of interest on the theme of the O'Neills and Ancient clans related to the Heritage Project. Groups shared the resources they have such as maps, leaflets, Apps etc.
About the programme

The purpose of the programme is the provision of the research, management and facilitation of a bespoke programme that will engage and develop sustained linkages through shared heritage between Mid Ulster District Council and Donegal County Council and groups within these areas.

The shared heritage will focus on the O’Neill and clans of Ancient Ulster with significance for Mid Ulster and Donegal. The programme presents an opportunity for joint working between both Councils and local interest groups. The programme is not only focused on bringing people together from across the border but also people from different community and religious backgrounds; with the aim of seeking to make a positive contribution to building a cohesive society and developing sustainable cross border contacts.

This project is supported by the European Union’s PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). The timeline for the delivery of the Programme is to commence June 2018 and complete May 2020.

Activities
1. Research into heritage of the O’Neill and clans
2. Development of a booklet and interactive app
3. Facilitation/connection of local interest groups in Mid Ulster & Donegal
4. Heritage Weekends: 2 in Mid Ulster 2 in Donegal
5. Study Visits and workshops: 3 Mid Ulster Visits 3 Donegal Visits

Participants

Donegal History Forum Members
Ardara GAP Heritage + History Group
Ballybofey and Stranorlar historical society
The Colgan Heritage Group
Cineal Eoghaín Inishowen
Cooley Cross Heritage Group
Craoibhin an Teachmann (Termon)
Culdaff and Olongcha Heritage Group
Donegal GAP Heritage and History Group
Donegal Heritage
Fahan Heritage Group
Lands of Eogain Group
Leitir Corn Mill, Kilcar
Kilcar Heritage Committee Coiste Oidhreachta Chill CharthaMcGinley Clan of Donegal
Newtowncunningham & District Historical Society
Oireas
Rathmullan Historical Society
Raymochy Historical Society
Sliabh Sneaacht Centre
Ulster Local History Trust (UHT) Donegal Historical Society
West Inishowen Historical Society

Mid Ulster History Forum Members
Aughnacloy and Truagh
Ancient Clan O’Neill
Broughderg Groups/ cookstown
Cinéal Eoghaín
Caledon Regeneration Project
Clans of Ulster
Clogher Historical Society
Donaghmore History Group
Desertcreate Church of Ireland
Eglish Historical Society
Killeshil and Clonanesse
O’Neill Country Historical Society
Stewartstown and District Local History Society

The programme is open to all groups that have an interest in participating throughout the duration of the Peace IV Cross Border Heritage Programme between Mid Ulster District Council and Donegal County Council.

The aim of engaging groups of interest in both areas is to identify O’Neill and Ancient Clans heritage linkages, gather local information and knowledge and develop sustained community linkages between Donegal and Mid Ulster.

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