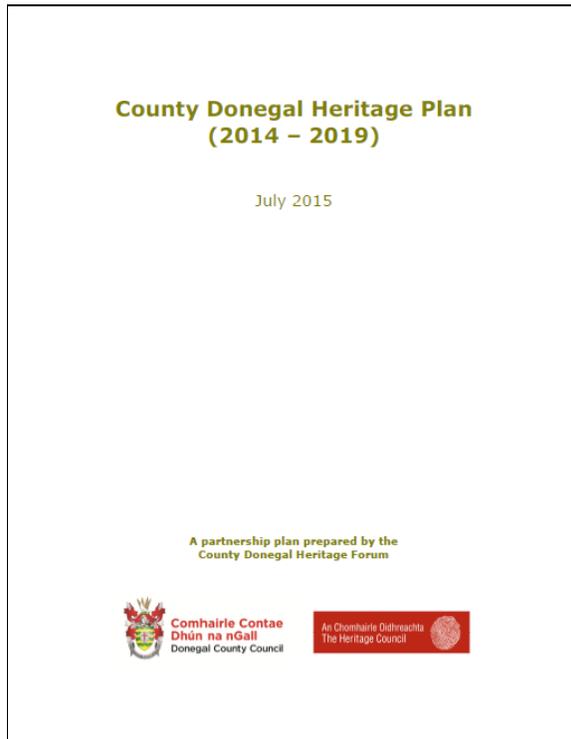


County Donegal Heritage Office Annual Report (2015)

Role of the County Donegal Heritage Office

The main aspects of the role of the County Donegal Heritage Office are to:

- Raise awareness of County Donegal's cultural, built and natural heritage;
 - Provide advice and information on heritage matters to the public and Donegal County Council staff;
 - Collect data and conduct research on aspects of County Donegal's heritage;
 - Promote best practice in relation to heritage matters;
 - Prepare and implement the County Donegal Heritage Plan in conjunction with the County Donegal Heritage Forum; and
 - Manage the County Donegal Heritage Office and County Donegal Heritage Forum administration, budgets and publicity.
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New County Donegal Heritage Plan

The County Donegal Heritage Office and the County Donegal Heritage Forum in partnership with The Heritage Council prepared the new, five-year County Donegal Heritage Plan. The aim of the Heritage Plan is to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the rich and diverse heritage of our county; to promote its conservation, enhancement and enjoyment; and to sustainably harness the economic, social and cultural benefits of heritage for current and future generations. The objectives of the Heritage Plan are to: (i) increase knowledge and awareness, and promote appreciation and enjoyment of County Donegal's heritage to reinforce our sense of place and identity, (ii) promote and encourage best practice in the conservation and management of our heritage, (iii) encourage partnership, networking and active engagement with our heritage, (iv) promote heritage education, training, tourism and outreach activities, and (v) collect data on heritage, inform decision-making and promote economic, cultural and social development. The County Donegal Heritage Forum prepares and submits an annual application to The Heritage Council for matching funding for the implementation of Heritage Plan actions. The Heritage Council awarded €27,000 for County Donegal Heritage Plan implementation in 2015. The County Donegal Heritage Plan was adopted unanimously by Donegal County Council in July 2015 and will be launched in 2016.



Hedgerow near St. Johnston: Under the Wildlife Acts, hedgerows should only be cut between the start of September and the end of February.

Hedgerow Heritage Public Service Announcement on Local Radio

As part of the County Donegal Heritage Plan (Action 4.1), the County Donegal Heritage Office in association with the Communications Office, Donegal County Council secured air time for a public service announcement on hedgerow heritage and hedgecutting. The 40-second public service announcement which was produced by Local Authority Heritage Officers and The Heritage Council ran fourteen times on both Highland Radio and Ocean FM regional radio stations in February.



Among the community-based heritage projects that received funding from The Heritage Council were the Kilbarron Castle Conservation Group for the preparation of conservation specifications for Kilbarron Castle (above) and the Old Church Conservation Group for a conservation plan for the Old Church in Straid, Clonmany (below). Both Kilbarron Castle and the Old Church in Straid are archaeological monuments protected under the National Monuments Acts.



Community-Based Heritage Grants Scheme

The Heritage Council awarded €53,300 in funding for eighteen heritage initiatives in County Donegal to groups and individuals throughout the county. Under the Community-based Heritage Grants Scheme, The Heritage Council awarded funding for conservation plans for Christ Church in Bunrana by the Church of Ireland, Ned's Point in Inishowen by the Swilly Marine & Heritage Exploration Centre and Straid Church in Clonmany by the Old Church Conservation Group. Funding was awarded for the preparation of conservation specifications to the Burtonport Heritage Group for the Cooperage in Burtonport, to Kilbarron Castle Conservation Group for Kilbarron Castle, to the Killybegs History & Heritage Committee for St. Catherine Church in Killybegs, and to the Maghera Heritage Group for Templecrone Church and gravestones in Maghera. Funding was awarded to the Meitheal Trust for a structural engineer's report and minor repairs to Inch Fort and conservation works to Holy Trinity Church in Dunfanaghy and St. Eunan's Cathedral, Raphoe were also funded. The Killymard Old Church Restoration Committee secured funding for a feasibility report for Killymard Old Church. A 'Historic Streets Alive' initiative in Letterkenny & Derry received funding as did the thatching of a farmhouse. The Bernician Studies Group was awarded funding for the 'Lands of Éogain' conference and the Ulster Scots-Agency received funding for the Raphoe Ulster-Scots Heritage Weekend. The Dunfanaghy Workhouse secured funding for Dunfanaghy heritage trail brochures and the Inch Island Gun Club was awarded funding for the Inch Island Partridge Project. BirdWatch Ireland was also awarded funding for the management of corncrakes in Donegal and Mayo.



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

Local History, Heritage & Culture Workshops for Teachers

The Donegal County Archives, Donegal County Arts Office, Donegal County Museum, County Donegal Heritage Office, Donegal County Library Service and Regional Cultural Centre in conjunction with the Donegal Education Centre held two workshops for school teachers on Wednesday, March 18 and Wednesday, April 22 in the County Museum, Letterkenny. The purpose of the workshops was to introduce teachers to the services offered by Donegal County Council and to sources of local history, heritage and culture that could be used in the classroom (Heritage Plan Action 4.1).



Pictured at the launch of 'The Butterflies of Donegal' book in Glenveagh National Park are (from Left to right): Cllr. Michael McBride (Donegal County Council and Chairman of the County Donegal Heritage Forum) with authors Frank Smyth & Bob Aldwell.

Launch of 'The Butterflies of Donegal' Book

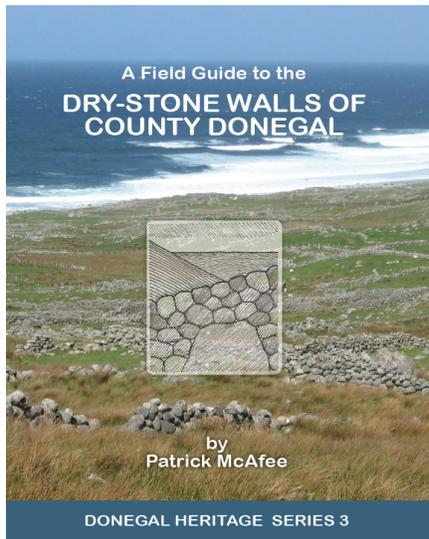
'The Butterflies of Donegal' book by Bob Aldwell & Frank Smyth was launched in the Visitors' Centre, Glenveagh National Park on Friday, June 5. The publication is the first book to provide a complete illustrated guide to Donegal butterflies. The contents are based on a systematic survey carried out from 1998 to 2014, with inputs from 160 voluntary recorders. The book outlines a short history of butterfly recording in Donegal, details of the most important butterfly habitats, descriptions and photographs of individual species of butterfly, distribution maps for each species and a list of 21 of the best butterfly sites in the county. The book was launched by ecologist Ralph Sheppard and was funded by the authors with part-funding from Donegal County Council (under County Donegal Heritage Plan Actions 1.7 & 4.1), Údarás na Gaeltachta, An Taisce and The Heritage Council.



President Michael D. Higgins addressing the audience at the Heritage Council 20th Anniversary Celebration Event in Kilkenny with Conor Newman, Chairman of the Board of The Heritage Council (photograph by Gary O'Neill).

Heritage Council 20th Anniversary Celebration

The Heritage Council marked its 20th anniversary with a special celebration event attended by about 300 people in Aras na hOidhreacht in Kilkenny on Saturday, June 6. The Heritage Council was established under the Heritage Act of 1995. President Michael D. Higgins gave a rousing keynote speech which highlighted the important role that heritage plays in our society. His speech is available on The Heritage Council website at www.heritagecouncil.ie. The Heritage Officer Programme is a joint initiative between The Heritage Council and local authorities in Ireland.



Launch of Dry-Stone Walls Field Guide
'A Field Guide to the Dry-Stone Walls of County Donegal' by Patrick McAfee was launched in the Folk Village, Gleann Cholm Cille / Glencolmcille on Friday, June 19. The illustrated field guide provides an introduction to the types of dry-stone walls found in County Donegal and their cultural heritage significance. The field guide was compiled by Patrick McAfee, expert stonemason and author of 'Irish Stone Walls'. This booklet is the third publication on the 'Donegal Heritage Series' edited by the County Donegal Heritage Office and was funded by Donegal County Council and The Heritage Council as part of the implementation of the County Donegal Heritage Plan (Action 4.1). Copies of the field guide are available free-of-charge from the County Donegal Heritage Office, Donegal County Council.



Pictured at the Dry-Stone Walls Seminar in Halla Mhuire, Gleann Cholm Cille on Saturday, June 20 were (front row from left to right): Úna Collier, Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark; Dr. Kirstin Lemon, Geological Survey of Northern Ireland & Dr. Joanne Curran, Consarc Design; (back row from left to right): agricultural historian, folklorist and author Dr. Jonathan Bell, Mary Laheen, University College Dublin & stonemason and author Patrick McAfee.

Dry-Stone Walls Seminar

Over 70 people attended the Dry-Stone Walls Seminar & Demonstrations organised by the County Donegal Heritage Office in conjunction with the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland in Gleann Cholm Cille / Glencolmcille on Saturday, June 20 as part of the implementation of the County Donegal Heritage Plan (Action 2.1). The aims of the seminar were to raise awareness of dry-stone wall types and methods of construction; disseminate information on regional variations of dry-stone wall types, geology and historical field patterns; promote best practice in the management of dry-stone walls; engage people in their conservation and convey their cultural heritage significance. The seminar was opened by Joe McHugh T.D., Minister of State, Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht. Guest speakers included Dr. Kirstin Lemon, Geological Survey of Northern Ireland; Dr. Jonathan Bell, agricultural historian, folklorist and author; Mary Laheen, University College Dublin; Patrick McAfee, stonemason and author of 'Irish Stone Walls' and Dr. Joanne Curran, Consarc Design.



Úna Collier, Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark & Dr. Kirstin Lemon, Geological Survey of Northern Ireland facilitate a Rock Detectives Club for children in Halla Mhuire in Glencolmcille on Saturday, June 20.

Rock Detectives Club

The award-winning Rock Detectives Club for children (aged 4 to 12 years of age) was held in Halla Mhuire, Gleann Cholm Cille / Glencolmcille on Saturday, June 20 as part of the Tír Chonaill Stone Festival. The aim of the Rock Detectives Club was to engage children with, and enthuse and educate them about, our geological heritage and dry-stone wall tradition. Children found out about how rocks are made, had a go at making their own planet earth, dug in glacial mud and even constructed their own stone wall! The free Rock Detectives Club was facilitated by Úna Collier, Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark & Dr. Kirstin Lemon, Geological Survey of Northern Ireland. The Rock Detectives Club won 'Best Children's Event' at the National Heritage Week Awards in 2014.



Ecologist, author and broadcaster Éanna Ní Lamhna and primary school teachers attending the 'Learning through the Landscape' course at Glenveagh National Park on Tuesday, July 7 identify some of the local flora and fauna that can be found in bogland habitats and discuss how this may be communicated to primary schoolchildren inside and outside the classroom.

'Learning Through Landscape' Teachers' Continuing Professional Development Course

The Donegal Education Centre, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Nature North West and the County Donegal Heritage Office organised a 'Learning Through The Landscape' Continuing Professional Development Course for Primary Teachers in Glenveagh National Park from Monday, July 6 until Friday, July 10. The course was sanctioned by the Department of Education & Skills and was fully subscribed (25 primary teachers). Themes addressed related to the primary curriculum and included reading the landscape and habitats (such as rivers and bogs) as well as transferable skills such as using maps, surveying, fieldwork and GIS. As part of the implementation of the County Donegal Heritage Plan (Action 4.14), the County Donegal Heritage Office sponsored the participation of ecologist, author and broadcaster Éanna Ní Lamhna who delivered a training day on bogs as habitats and contributed towards the provision of teaching materials.



Dr. Lochlann McGill, President of the Donegal Historical Society, speaking in County Museum at the launch of the County Donegal Heritage Week Event Guide compiled by the County Donegal Heritage Office.



National Heritage Week in County Donegal
 National Heritage Week took place from Saturday, August 22 until Sunday, August 30. National Heritage Week is coordinated by The Heritage Council & Local Authority Heritage Officers with support from the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht and Fáilte Ireland. ‘Heritage Week’ is an opportunity to raise awareness of, and engender pride in, the cultural, built and natural heritage of County Donegal. There were over 110 ‘Heritage Week’ events taking place in County Donegal including heritage open days, guided walks, fieldtrips, exhibitions, conferences, illustrated talks, historical re-enactments, birds of prey displays, whale watching, garden tours, traditional skills demonstrations, craft fairs, skills training, launch events, film screenings, storytelling, traditional music and children’s activities. The County Donegal Heritage Office compiled the free, pocket-size County Donegal ‘Heritage Week’ Event Guide (Heritage Plan Action 3.2) and it was launched in the County Museum, Letterkenny on Tuesday, August 11 by Dr. Lochlann McGill, President of the Donegal Historical Society. There was unprecedented demand for the County Donegal Heritage Week Event Guide despite 6,000 copies being printed. As part of the County Donegal Heritage Plan (Action 4.1), the County Donegal Heritage Office in association with the Communications Office, Donegal County Council secured air time for public service announcements on Highland Radio & Ocean FM in relation to Heritage Week in County Donegal.



Lughnasa International Friel Festival
 The County Donegal Heritage Office provided advice to the inaugural cross-border Lughnasa International Friel Festival that took place in County Donegal and Belfast from August 20 – 26 and August 27 – 31 respectively. Donegal Council Council also provided part-funding for the presentation by Dr. Frank Shovlin (Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool) to speak about the Donegal sense of place in Brian Friel’s works held in the Market Hall, Glenties on Saturday, August 22 as part of the implementation of the County Donegal Heritage Plan (Actions 3.7 & 3.5).



Prof. Alistair Rowan points out some of the architectural features of St. Euana's Cathedral, Letterkenny as part of the built heritage walking tour on 'Culture Night'.

A Gothic Progress Through Letterkenny 'Culture Night' Event

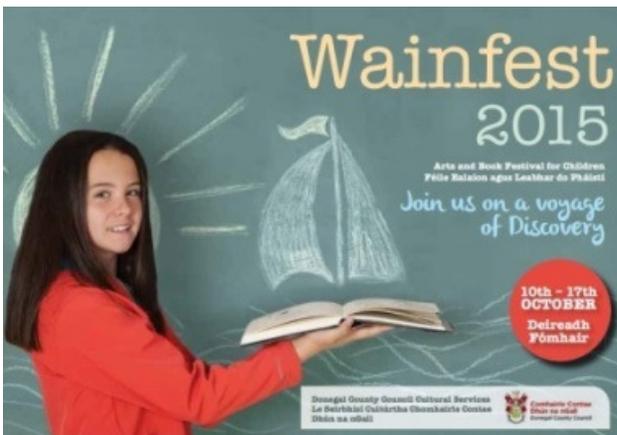
As part of 'Culture Night (Friday, September 18), the County Donegal Heritage Office hosted a built heritage walking tour of Letterkenny with Prof. Alistair Rowan that was attended by about 80 people. The short walking tour highlighted some aspects of the architectural heritage of Letterkenny (including its Gothic architecture, ecclesiastical structures and historic buildings) and the architects who designed them (Heritage Plan Action 1.1). The walk was led by noted architectural historian Alistair Rowan, author of 'The Buildings of Ireland: North West Ulster', Emeritus Professor of the History of Art at University College Dublin and former Principal of the Edinburgh College of Art.



Hugh Gerard Boyle, Maghera Heritage Group, discusses the heritage of, and the conservation work taking place at, Templecrone historic graveyard in Termon, Maghera on Saturday, October 17. The historic church ruins and the graveyard are archaeological monuments protected under the National Monuments Acts.

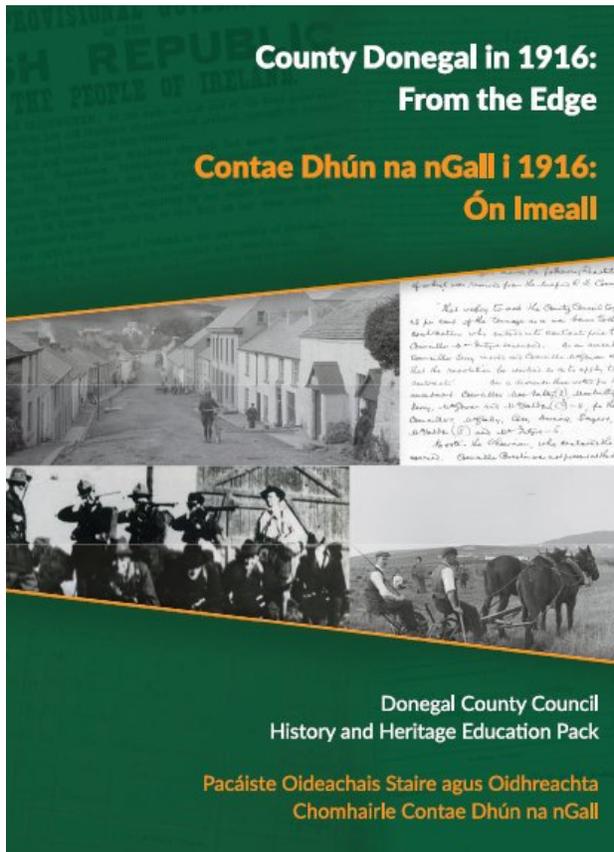
Mary Immaculate College Fieldtrip to Donegal

About 35 B.A. final-year students and staff from the 'Tourism & Heritage Management' course at the Department of Geography, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick took their annual three-day fieldtrip to County Donegal in October 2015. The County Donegal Heritage Office assisted the Department of Geography in arranging and delivering its programme (including research, presentations and site visits) while in the county (Heritage Plan Action 4.12).



Wainfest

Wainfest is Donegal County Council's Cultural Services Arts, Heritage and Book Festival for Children. In association with the County Library Service, the County Donegal Heritage Office sponsored performer Michael Moylan from *Irish History Live* to work with children to address the theme of 1916 and to explore artefacts from the period. The events took place in libraries in Buncrana, Carndonagh, Letterkenny & Milford on October 13 & 14. The event was part-funded under the County Donegal Heritage Plan (Action 3.4).



‘County Donegal in 1916: From the Edge’ History & Heritage Education Pack

The ‘County Donegal in 1916’ History & Heritage Education Pack is a collaborative effort between the Donegal County Archives, Donegal County Museum, County Donegal Heritage Office and Donegal County Library Service. The education pack consists of an A-4 size, 64-page illustrated booklet and 19 facsimile documents contained within a designed folder that address the material heritage related to key selected themes. The education pack is aimed at upper primary/secondary students, teachers and a general audience. The aims of this Heritage Plan action were to: (i) raise awareness of society and culture in County Donegal in 1916, (ii) set national events (such as the Easter Rising) and international events (such as the First World War, the Battle of the Somme and the Battle of Jutland) in the context of their effects on society in County Donegal, (iii) recognise the role that key individuals from County Donegal played in national/international events in 1916 and (iv) communicate the material culture of County Donegal in 1916 through key documents and artefacts. The production of the heritage education pack is an action of the County Donegal Heritage Plan (Action 3.4).



Management of Habitat for Breeding Waders
Under the County Donegal Heritage Plan (Action 2.8), part-funding was provided to BirdWatch Ireland to assist in the management of habitats for Breeding Waders in Magheragallan, Sheskinmore and Rinmore in County Donegal. Breeding waders (Lapwing, Redshank and Curlew) are one of the highest conservation priorities in Ireland, as their populations have declined by over 70% in the last 40 years. They are all listed on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland and are highlighted in the Government’s Priorities Action Framework (PAF). The machair and associated wet grassland sites of Donegal hold one of the most important remaining habitats in the country. The work funded involved the maintenance of predator-exclusion fences for the breeding season.



*Fishing boats at Portnoo Pier
(courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)*



View of Merville, once a popular point of departure for emigrants and seasonal migrants.

Maritime Built Heritage Study

As part of the implementation of the County Donegal Heritage Plan (Action 5.8), the County Donegal Heritage Forum, Donegal County Council commissioned Phase I of a Maritime Built Heritage Study. The aims of this Heritage Plan action are to (i) provide an overview of the maritime heritage and history of County Donegal (circa 1600 – present); (ii) record the location and material heritage of piers and associated buildings in County Donegal; (iii) establish a searchable database of piers, quays, slipways and landing places in County Donegal in consultation with Donegal County Council; (iv) assess the heritage value of piers and associated structures; (v) produce a photographic record of, and field sheet and site map for, each pier/quay/slipway/landing place site surveyed; (vi) interrogate existing sources of information on our maritime built heritage to assist in its interpretation and presentation; (viii) prepare narrative on seven locations that highlight the ways in which our built heritage facilitates the interpretation and presentation of the maritime story of County Donegal based on consultation with key stakeholders; and (ix) deliver a report and public presentation on the findings of the study. Phase I involved desk study and selected field survey phase of the study. Phase II will be undertaken in 2016.

*Compiled by:
Joseph Gallagher
County Donegal Heritage Office
January 2016*
