

CARLINGFORD COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2020 EDITION



This newsletter is jointly produced by the five bodies representing the Carlingford Community, namely:

Carlingford Lough Heritage Trust
CLHT

Carlingford & Cooley Tourism Assoc.
CCTA

Carlingford Tidy Towns
CTT

Carlingford Community Development
CCD

(The Foy Centre)

Carlingford Residents Association
CRA

Carlingford Community Forum News



Work has finally been completed on Strand and Old Quay Lanes. The surfacing on Old Quay Lane adjacent to the works would benefit from upgrading when further

funding comes on stream. The improvements give us a flavour of how the upgrading of other Public Realm spaces would enhance the overall appearance of the town.

Work will resume on Ghan Wall shortly with a promised September completion date. Refurbishment of the traditional gates will follow.

Regarding the funding announcement under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and what happens next, the Project Manager appointed within Louth County Council will commence the preparation of the brief which will enable the procurement of a consultant as the first step.

The Forum welcomes the announcement by Fáilte Ireland of the creation of a Tourism Masterplan for Carlingford. This work will support the aforementioned Rural Regeneration Development Fund secured by Louth County Council and also the Ancient Destination Development Plan which many in Carlingford have contributed to. On the agenda also is the upcoming attention to flood defences which has already begun elsewhere in the county.

It is thirty years since Carlingford was the subject of such activity. The Forum with its representation from the various organisations looks forward to actively engaging with these processes which we hope will further address many items on the 'Issues Paper' from our public meeting.

Many congratulations to John, Dan and the team who successfully completed the Mizen to Malin cycle and we encourage a visit to their Go Fund Me page of which the Foy Centre will be one of the beneficiaries.

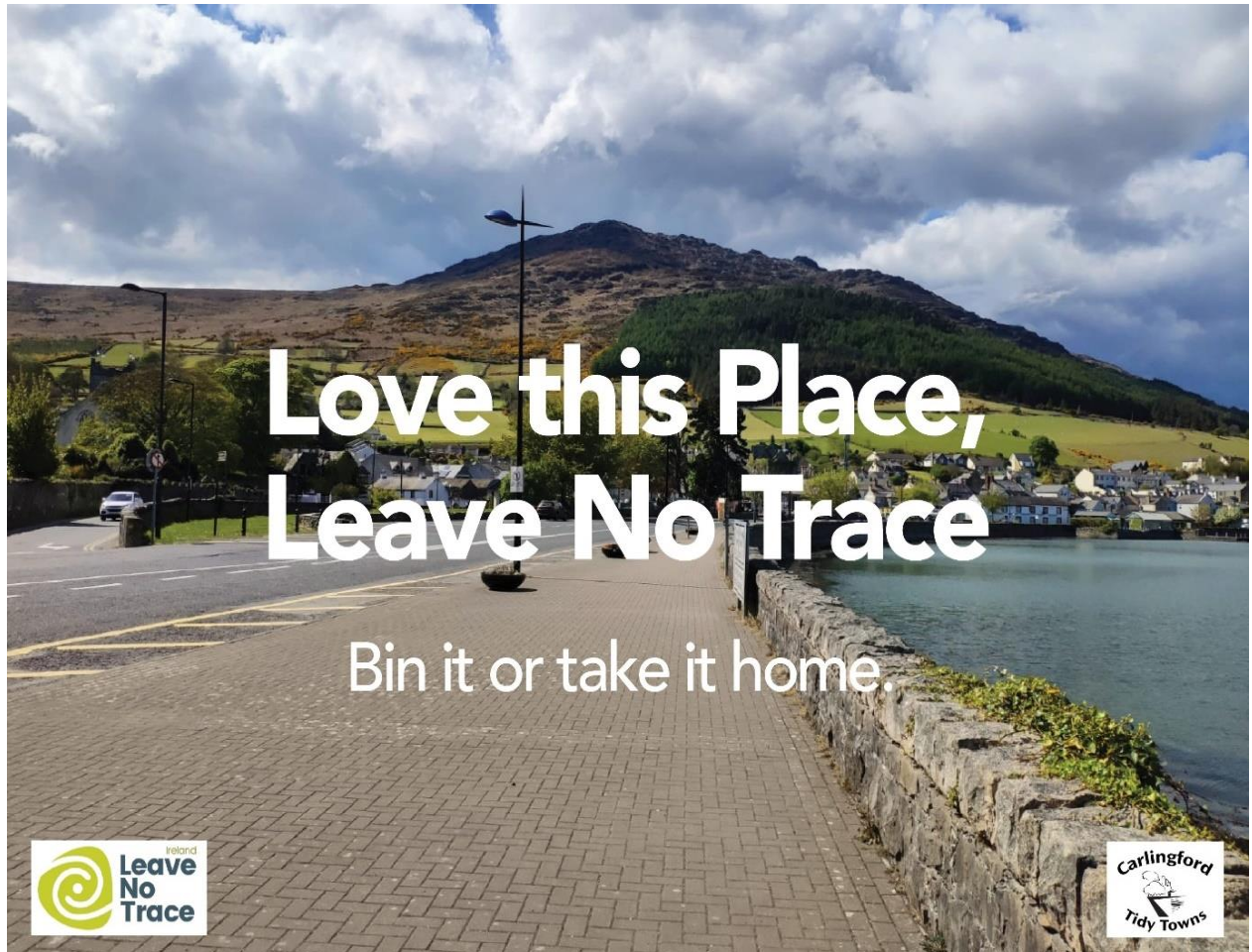
Carlingford Tidy Towns



Our Volunteers have been planting Snapdragons in the flower beds in town. In the coming weeks we will continue to plant more in the welcome beds and the pots along the promenade. We are waiting on plants to plant around the Shell Sculptures on the Village Green. We continue to meet every Saturday at 6pm to do a litter blitz on the Village Green. Please come along if you would like to help out.

We have heard that our expression of interest for Clár funding (for dual purpose recycle bins, picnic tables and benches) has been selected as one of ten to put forward to the Department for consideration for funding. We will know at the start of November if we get funding.

The Playground Committee have been working again this month on an application for funding to renew the Playground. We wish them every success.



The BIG BEACH CLEAN will take place on SUNDAY 27th SEPTEMBER at 2pm. There will be 2 separate beach cleans. Volunteers welcome, Meeting points are

1. Entrance to Beach out Greenore rd. just beyond Shilties Lough (driving from Carlingford to Greenore)
2. Beach near Anchor feature (opposite Ghan House)

We will follow Government guidelines on numbers permitted to meet depending on what they are at the time. The Beach Clean is subject to change/postponement at short notice. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page.

Our AGM was planned for the start of September, this is now postponed in line with new regulations.

Carlingford Lough Heritage Trust



CARLINGFORD PRIORY

In 1305 Richard Óg de Burgh, known as the Red Earl of Ulster, invited the Dominican Order to establish a priory in Carlingford to be dedicated to St Malachy. They got off to a poor start, soon becoming victims of the rampaging Scottish army led by Edward Bruce, younger brother of the Scottish king Robert. Edward lost the kingship of Ireland along with his head at Faughart in 1318.

The priory was just within the recently extended town walls, but there was more trouble ahead. The population of Carlingford fell so sharply in the Black Death at the end of the 1340s that there was not enough money to maintain the wall or manpower to guard it. The town literally shrank, to a new wall close to the Heritage Centre, and the Dominicans were once more out in the cold. By 1423 they had their own fortifications and battlements, including a machicolation supported on two stone corbels above the main door. This would have been handy for pouring boiling oil and the contents of priory toilets down onto attackers.

The priory was closed down in the 1540s when Henry VIII dissolved all the monasteries, and put up for sale as 'a strong mansion house in no need of expenditure on repairs. It was again the scene of battle in the long wars of the 1640s and 1650s: according to local folklore it was used by the Cromwellian cavalry for stabling. Things got easier for the practice of Catholicism with the Restoration under Charles II in 1660: the Dominicans tried to return, but the Franciscans had got in first to occupy the building. By 1689 it was back at war again, occupied by a Jacobite army under the Duke of Berwick which was retreating as William of Orange advanced from the north. Persecution returned in the 1700s, the Franciscans were on the run and the priory was used as a depot by herring fishermen. It is thought a large amount of the stone was taken by William Stannus for the construction of Ghan House in 1726.

Submitted by Seamus Murphy, Trustee.

We got the keys of the Castle!



*Maurice Buckley: Chair OPW,
Paula Carroll: Fáilte Ireland,
Patrick O' Donovan: Minister
of State for OPW, Harry
McCarthy: Chairperson CLHT,
John Woods: Director CLHT.*

July was a very exciting month for the Trust! After long years of waiting and working with state agencies to renovate Carlingford Castle to provide public access,

the project was finally completed and the keys presented to the Trust early in the morning of 30th July by the Minister of State for OPW, Patrick O' Donovan.

The Trust has been appointed as custodian of the Castle and the official body to conduct guided tours. We are seen as a model by the OPW to demonstrate how community organisations can manage an historical site in their location which could be made accessible to the public.

The Minister identified that the opening of the Castle will greatly enhance the attraction of Carlingford and the Cooley peninsula as a destination in the development of Ireland's Ancient East. He acknowledged the work of the Trust in pursuing the conservation work required to make the Castle accessible and for being willing to take responsibility for the protection of the site and the provision of guided tours.

Harry Mc Carthy, Chairperson of the Trust, thanked the OPW and Fáilte Ireland for their work and investment to make the project a reality and for having faith in the Trust to deliver on our commitment to manage the Castle as an attraction for locals and visitors to enjoy.



Carlingford Castle opens its Gate to receive visitors after 30 Years.

Carlingford Castle opened in Heritage Week 15-23 August to offer free guided tours at 11am and 3pm daily by local voluntary guides appointed by the Trust and members of staff and Trustees from the Heritage Centre. Locals and visitors thronged to the Castle where 2 consecutive tours were offered most days and were well received.

Locals were nostalgic as they revisited the famous haunt of their youth. George Fretwell remembered playing with his pals in the Castle after school as his father Benny Fretwell was the official keyholder of the Castle for many years when the family lived beneath the Castle walls.

Clodagh Mc Kevitt, well know tour guide of Anam Tours reminisced about hanging out in her teens at the Castle, scaling the walls to perch in the best vantage point to watch the activity in the town below. Others remembered the famous summer BBQs and concerts with 70's Irish icons like Red Hurley who played in the Castle.

Newcomers marvelled at the scale of the place and the grandeur of it in the past as it is depicted on the informative and cleverly illustrated signs produced by the OPW positioned around the site. Our wonderful team of guides are receiving just praise for informing and entertaining visitors with stories of our glorious or should that be inglorious Norman past while they work to keep everyone safe, observing strict Covid guidelines- no mean feat with curious youngster's keen to clamber all over a medieval Castle!

And speaking of our Glorious past

As part of the celebrations for Heritage Week, we enjoyed an interesting and entertaining talk outside in the grounds of the Heritage Centre by local Conservation Architect, Paraic McKevitt, based on his ongoing study of our interesting little building, the Tholsel, which is being funded by the Heritage Council.

As we stood overlooking Carlingford and the town, Paraic regaled us with tales of exploits of knights, monks and merchants. He surmised as to how the walls of the town may have been linked to the Tholsel and pondered the role of the Tholsel in the life of the 'city' of Carlingford as it would have been regarded at that time. And as rain and gloom forced the intrigued group (15) from the grounds of the Heritage Centre, we were left wanting to learn more and hope to hear from Paraic again when he completes his study in November. Our thanks to him for a most interesting talk.



Carlingford Heritage Centre hosts Virtual Summer Concert Series featuring artists from North and South of Ireland.

Carlingford Heritage Centre are delighted to host a virtual concert series which began on Sunday the 23rd of August at 7pm and runs on Sunday 30th and Sunday 6th September and can be viewed through links on our Facebook page. We were treated to a magical event on Sunday with Zoe Conway, John McIntyre and artists from north and south of Ireland. You can still view this concert episode and all others retrospectively on our Facebook page.



The series of 3 events is curated by renowned local musicians, Zoë and John in a unique collaboration with Ray Giffen Artistic Director of Duncairn Arts Centre Belfast. Artists include Colum Sands of Sands Family fame, Brian Connor and Yue Tang renowned classical pianist and cellist from the RTE Concert Orchestra, Irish American singer songwriter Cathie Ryan, harper Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla, and brothers Brendan and Declan Murphy from The 4 Of Us among others. This virtual series replaces the much-loved summer series of July and August, and brings welcome music to our regular audiences in Carlingford and the surrounding counties and also to a wider listenership nationally and internationally.

This project has been made possible through the generous support of Duncairn Arts Centre, and Create Louth bringing much needed financial support to artists in the locality at this difficult time during Covid 19 restrictions. Duncairn AC is an eclectic arts organisation situated in a former church building near the centre of Belfast.

So, lighten your spirits with some wonderful music from different traditions and enjoy our series by accessing the link on Sunday 30th August at 7pm. The series will remain available online for some time following the event. More information on the artists is available at www.carlingfordheritagecentre.com

EPISODE 1 - 23RD AUGUST Now available to view

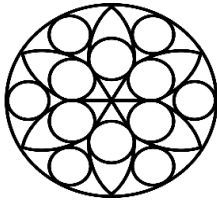
CARLINGFORD - YUE TANG & BRIAN CONNOR
DUNCAIRN - NIALL HANNA & RACHEL MCGARRITY
CARLINGFORD – ZOE CONWAY & JOHN MCINTYRE

EPISODE 2 - 30 AUGUST

CARLINGFORD - CATHIE RYAN
DUNCAIRN - EMMA LANGFORD
CARLINGFORD - THE 4 OF US

EPISODE 3 - 6 SEPTEMBER

CARLINGFORD - COLUM SANDS
 DUNCAIRN - CONOR CALDWELL
 ZOE CONWAY AND JOHN MCINTYRE NUMBERS WITH COLUM SANDS &
 CATHIE RYAN



THE DUNCAIRN



A New Carlingford?

Some thoughts by John Woods



Covid has brought great changes to the way we all live and how we view the world. As the months pass and society struggles to come to terms with the rules and regulations of our new circumstances this observer took a look at summer 2020 in our area.

After a period of 5K restrictions on travel it was great to see visitors back in July. But they seemed to be different. There were more and more families with children and they were coming through the week and not just at weekends. Even though the weather was patchy there has been a real buzz and it was wonderful to see the Adventure Centre open and the harbour, when the tide was in, full of young people having great fun pier jumping and navigating all kinds of craft while dozens of spectators promenaded or sat on the harbour wall enjoying the activity. Ice cream vendors and chippers did a roaring trade. Henry Donnelly, a new kid on the block, reminded me of a friendly polar bear as he had the chat with all and sundry.

Tennis is also a big winner and those of us who are past it, envy the enthusiasm with which the “youngsters” go at it from morning until dark.

The sea swimmers, Harry Jordan and co., provide another bit of diversion as they crawl their way from the far pier to the Marina and back. And the ladies, who shall be nameless, are growing in numbers, as they swim off the Sailing Club slipway and the Hospital Point.

Ivan Slater runs sailing courses from the Marina introducing a new generation of sailors to the thrills of sailing.

A trip out to Skypark revealed a facility that was at full swing, literally. Dozens of children having the time of their lives with every kind of contraption for pulling, sliding, squirming, rolling, reaching, imaginable. It made me wish I was a kid again.

There was a lovely atmosphere strolling through the town (not village). A buzz of people but no loud amplified music and no sense of intoxication as people queued with their masks at Centra. The tone suited me perfectly.

Trips to Greenore have been special this summer. With the ferry back running, the welcome dolphin appearing regularly, the golf club back, looking perfect, and the shore fishermen plentiful, the scene is magical.

Omeath is another jewel in our list of attractions and the Greenway makes it so much more accessible bringing people along its attractive seafront. When the Greenway to the border is completed its attractiveness to the visitor will be enormously enhanced.

Tourism has made great strides in this area and so many people are dependent on it. It is very important that we do not spoil the product that has been painstakingly built up over many years. Has the experience of summer 2020 shown us the way forward?



Musings about lockdown and how it has helped her to engage with our historic past from our new volunteer – History Graduate Grace Mc Kendry

Since lockdown, we have had to spend a lot more time at home, even just 2kms home at the height of the restrictions. This has, for me, given me a greater appreciation of the beauty and appeal of Carlingford Lough area with wonderful scenery, beautiful walks, and our intriguing past. As I have often been bored stuck at home in recent months, I think about how people entertained themselves in the past without Netflix, TV or cinema.

In Carlingford we are lucky, as we walk down our streets each day it doesn't take much imagination to see how those before us lived. These wonderful medieval buildings are part of our every day. We may be so used to them we forget to think of the history they can reveal to us. My brother recently asked dumbfounded about the existence of a railway station in the town, knowing it only as having previously been the public toilets. As a child, I saw the landmarks of Carlingford Lough as part of some fairy tale. I imagined what the Castle must look like inside, and what life must have been like for those who lived there.

As an adult instead, I like to imagine how these buildings functioned and how the town changed over the years. From the building of the Castle, through to the construction of the railway line. Now with the opening of the Castle we can find out

so much more and get a better picture of how it looked, and how its fortunes changed over the centuries

As a history graduate I often try to see the past in the every day, and spend much of my free time researching or visiting historical sites. In Carlingford we are lucky, we can see the past every day, though we may sometimes overlook it. With the re-opening of Carlingford Castle which has been closed for many years but means so much to local people and stands as an iconic landmark overlooking the town, we all have the opportunity to reevaluate our relationship with our history. Go visit it soon!



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

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