

HERITAGE WALKING TRAILS IN NEWTOWNABBEY DOAGH



Ballyclare & District Historical Society

To get to Doagh

Take the M2 motorway, leaving at Junction 4 (A8 Larne). From the main roundabout, follow the A8 through Corr's Corner roundabout and turn left onto the Doagh Road. Follow the B59 towards Doagh. Go straight down Station Road and begin the walk at the ancient churchyard on the left as you enter the village. Roadside parking in village.

The walk will take 1 1/2 - 2 hours. Take care on roads at all times. Children should be accompanied by an adult.



1. Open the iron gate and enter the churchyard. In the centre is part of an ivy-covered stone wall. This is all that remains of the Church of St Mary, which may have been part of a 6th-century monastic settlement of the black friars. The word 'dhu', meaning black, may even have been the origin of the name Doagh. A souterrain discovered in the 18th century provided an underground passage from the church leading across the road into what were then open fields.



2. Walk to the end of the graveyard and look over the wall. The mound is a Norman motte, one of the outposts of Carrickfergus Castle. The river forms part of its defence and on the top would have been a wooden palisade. Other mottes can be found in the War Memorial Park in Ballyclare and in the grounds of Antrim Castle.

In the 19th century there were several water-powered beetling mills on the river. Beetling was a finishing process in the manufacture of linen.

3. Turn left out of the graveyard, cross the road and walk a short distance to turn right into Exchange Avenue. Walk down the avenue, and you will be standing on what was once Doagh Railway Station. This narrow-gauge railway ran to Ballyclare and on to Larne. It was opened in 1884 for goods traffic and the extension to link Doagh and Ballyclare cost just under £4,000. As well as the station and platform there was a weighbridge, cattle pens and coal yard. You can walk along the track and see the redbrick house built for the station master.



4. Walk through the housing estate to the Doagh Road. Across the road is part of the wall that surrounded the grounds of Fisherwick. This house was built by the Marquis of Donegall in the late 1700s to entertain his friends who came to hunt. It is a four-sided building with a central courtyard. The depressed area surrounded by a bank was once a lake where there was skating in winter. Walk towards the centre of the village, where you will see a large building (no.10) to the right of the monument. This was built as a hotel and stables for the increasing number of visitors who came to hunt with the Marquis of Donegall.

5. The monument is dedicated to John Rowan, an engineer and inventor born in Doagh in 1787. Rowan established a well-known foundry in the village and in 1836 he designed and built a steam coach which he drove to Belfast. He was also known for his generosity towards his employees.

6. To the left of the monument, walk along the Burn Road to Ballyhamage House. The original owner of this house, Reverend George Johnston, built a church onto the house in 1853. This taller basalt building to the left of the main house was only ever used as a chapel of ease. More recent owners added an indoor pool beside the chapel. As this is a private residence, access is restricted to the roadside.

7. Walk back to the main street. From the Rowan Monument, walk up the street and turn left at the sign for The Entry. Just beyond the Methodist church is the building that was once the school. William Gault started a Book Club and one of the first Sunday Schools in Ireland here in 1770. He was a United Irishman and after the Battle of Antrim soldiers destroyed many of the books from the school by playing football with them. Further along there is a small ancient bridge.



8. Return to the main street, turn left and walk up to the primary school. Opposite is Torrens Hall, built in 1885 as the 'Ladies' School'. You may complete your walk at this point or continue up the road.

9. Follow the wall of the Fisherwick estate and just beyond this you will see Doagh Spinning Mill, which was built in the 1870s. Walk past the mill, and from the site of the dam you will see Kilbride Church of Ireland in the foreground and, in the distance, a white building which is Kilbride Presbyterian Church. Walk back to the village to complete the walk.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mary Florence McDowell, local author of 'Roses and Rainbows' and 'Other Days Around Me' wrote about her life in Doagh and its surrounding areas in her books. As a child Mary lived just outside Doagh village in Brookfield House and when she grew up she became a teacher in the Cogry Mill school. She met her husband at the 'tumbling' bridge just next to her home. To reach this bridge drive past Doagh Mill and follow the road around to the right. Take the first left onto Bridge Road and after a short distance you will come to the bridge. *Please note that this is not part of the walking trail as there are no footpaths along these roads.*



Contacts for more information

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Ballyclare Library
Local History Section
(including historical society programmes and summer walks information)
School Street, Ballyclare
Tel: 028 9335 2269

Selected books

THROUGH THE AGES TO NEWTOWNABBEY
Robert Armstrong, second edition, 1995

ORDNANCE SURVEY MEMOIRS:
Parishes of County Antrim XI, Vol 29
Institute of Irish Studies

MILLS, MINISTERS & MOGGIES
Kilbride Church of Ireland, 2001

ROSES & RAINBOWS, latest edition, 1992
OTHER DAYS AROUND ME, latest edition, 1992
Mary Florence McDowell



This leaflet has been part-funded by the Economic Development Department, Newtownabbey Borough Council.
* The information in this leaflet is available in large print on request.