



# Welcome to the South Antrim Heritage Trail.

Designed to highlight the fascinating heritage of South Antrim, the trail will take you around some of the most important historical sites of this beautiful area.

Settlers have left their mark here for thousands of years. You will be transported back to the ancient world, with visits to the remains of Neolithic burial tombs and forts, as well as a unique standing stone where partners have pledged undying love for centuries.

From a later age, you will be guided to churchyards and holy wells from the dawn of Irish Christianity, whose traditions are still carried on today. You'll visit Norman mottes, the site of a recently discovered 16th century castle, a hunting lodge built by the famous Donegall dynasty and an enthralling collection at an atmospheric farmhouse unchanged from its Victorian heyday.

You'll see monuments left by great local eccentrics and clock towers honouring local landowners. Discover the background of Ireland's first Sunday School and the churches with extraordinary stories and ministers, from Jonathan Swift, author of Gulliver's Travels, to Henry Cooke, one of the founders of modern Irish Presbyterianism.

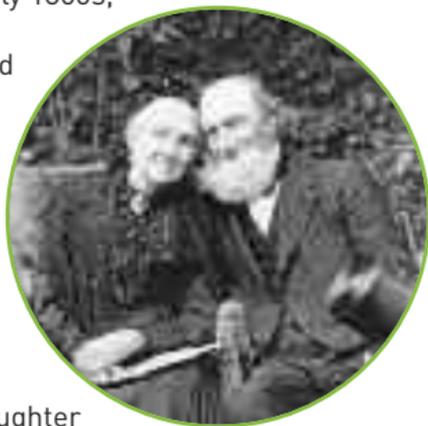
Discover a unique bridge from the glory days of steam and take in the many reminders of the area's remarkable industrial heritage, including cotton mills and beetling mills in this heartland of Ulster's once world beating linen industry. An industry which has slowly declined over the years is the art of spade making. However it's still alive in South Antrim and you can see spades being made by hand at Europe's last remaining working water driven spade mill.

Enjoy your journey!

## NEWTOWNABBEY

### *Ballynure Methodist Church*

In the early days of Irish Methodism, worshippers largely met in private houses. In the early 1800s, for instance, Methodists in the Ballynure area often congregated at the old corn mill in Straid. It was a local man, Robert Beatty, who built the Methodist church in Ballynure, in 1846. Robert had been converted by his brother Alexander and the family house became a beacon for followers of Methodism from far and wide. In 1839 he married Sarah Jane Boyd, herself the daughter of Methodists. Within a few years he



Robert and Jane Boyd Beatty

decided the Methodist congregation was of a sufficient size to warrant its own church, which he designed himself. He and Sarah lived long enough to witness an extension and the addition of a Sunday School room in 1894.

### *Doagh Motte*

Situated by the old graveyard in Doagh is a circular mound which was once the base of a wooden Norman fort, probably built around 1200 AD. The Norman invasion of

Ulster was led by the powerful knight John de Courcy in 1177AD. De

Courcy and his successors built a series of forts like this across Ulster to protect their lands. Doagh seems to have played an important part in this strategy. A significant manorial stronghold, the Normans held fortnightly courts here. The fort may have been destroyed during Edward the Bruce's failed military campaign against the Anglo-Norman forces in the early 1300s.



Sir John de Courcy, Earl of Ulster  
d.c1219 (1927)

Frank McKelvey 1895-1974

© Estate of Frank McKelvey, 2011  
Collection Ulster Museum

## Fisherwick House

Though people have lived in this area for thousands of years, the village of Doagh we know today only began to develop after the building of Fisherwick House in the late 1700s. Sir Arthur Chichester, who founded Belfast in the early 1600s, created a great park for hunting in the area. One of his successors, also Sir Arthur Chichester, the first Marquis of Donegall, decided it would be the perfect location for a hunting lodge where he could bring his friends for entertainment. The present house, a single storey lodge constructed around a courtyard, was built in 1805 by George Augustus Chichester, the second Marquis of Donegall, who also built a hotel and stables (the building still stands today at 10 Main Street) in Doagh.



Arthur Chichester  
*image reproduced courtesy of  
National Museums Northern Ireland*

## Kilbride Cemetery

The 11th century St Bridget's church once stood in the middle of this cemetery, which attracts interest for three of its graves. Pride of place belongs to the Indian influenced Stephenson family mausoleum, which was built in 1837 and commemorates several members of the family. These include Samuel Martin Stephenson, who died in 1834, who was 'Superintending Surgeon in the Madras Presidency'. Directly behind the mausoleum is the grave of schoolmaster William Galt, who established what is believed to be the first Sunday School in Ireland in the mid to late 1700s, while a white stone a little further away marks the family grave of a much loved local writer, Florence Mary McDowell, author of *Other Days Around Me* and *Roses and Rainbows*.



## Christ Church, Ballynure

The current church was built between 1854 and 1856 and designed by Joseph Welland of Dublin at a cost of £2,000.

However, the church it replaced, whose ruins you can see in the graveyard across the road, dates from a much earlier period and has associations with some very famous names. When Dean Jonathan Swift was based at Kilroot in the 1690s,

his parish included this very small church, St Mary Magdalene's, where

he preached to what he complained were very small congregations. The oldest grave, dated 1628, is that of Elenor Clemens, said to be an ancestor of one Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known to the world as Mark Twain. A large stone vault by the entrance was used to guard corpses from the notorious bodysnatchers of the day.



historical interpretation of St Mary Magdalene's by Maurice Oliphant

## Roughfort Motte

Probably built in the 11th or 12th century, this artificial mound would have been topped with a wooden or stone keep and could have been part of a Norman fortification. However, it is more famous as the gathering place of the

local brigade of the United Irishmen revolutionaries on the morning of

June 7th 1798. From here they marched to the Battle of Antrim, where their defeat signalled the ultimate failure of their rebellion.

Northern leader Henry Joy McCracken stood on the mound to address his ill armed troops, alongside his great friend, local man James (Jemmy) Hope. Just a few yards from the mound is a large oak tree, known as the 'Liberty Tree', which is believed to have

been planted to mark the first anniversary of the 1798 Uprising.



Jemmy Hope

image reproduced courtesy of National Museums Northern Ireland



## Ballynure Presbyterian Church

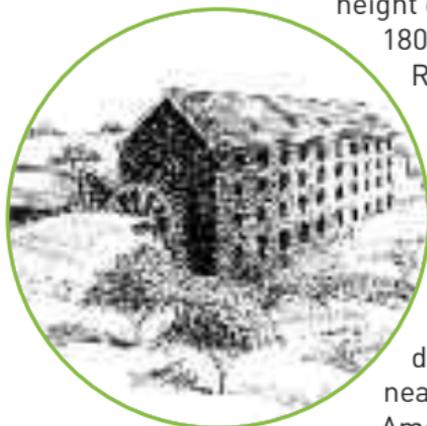
Presbyterianism in this area has deep roots. Established in 1723, during the reign of George 1, the new church meant that the large number of Presbyterians in the area no longer had to travel to Ballyclare or Raloo to worship. The present church was built in 1851 to meet the demands of a growing congregation. The fourth minister, the Reverend Adam Hill, achieved lasting fame when he officiated at a wake here for the recently hung United Irishman William Orr in 1797. Reverend Hill was himself detained for two days in Carrickfergus Gaol, though he was not tried as no one could be found to give evidence against him. Falsely tried, Orr's name became a rallying cry for the United Irishmen as they marched towards important battles at Antrim, Ballynahinch and Saintfield the following year.



*image reproduced courtesy of National Museums Northern Ireland*

## Ballynure Cotton Mill

In the days when cotton was king, this once great mill employed around 140 local men and women and houses were specially built to accommodate them here. At the height of production in the early 1800s the mill was owned by Robert Howe. Its 28ft (8 metres) waterwheel drove some 9,600 spinning mules at the peak of its success. Its decline was caused by two events. The death of Howe's son and heir, when a ceiling collapsed during a demonstration of hypnosis at a nearby mill, was followed by the American Civil War, when the Southern states prevented the export of raw cotton on which the mill depended. Ballynure Cotton Mill was forced to close. The mill was eventually destroyed by fire.



*illustration by Maurice Oliphant*

## Carngraney Tomb



*illustration by John Marshall,  
courtesy Cottage Publications*

What looks today like a haphazard collection of old stones would have been a very impressive monument when it was built, between 4,000 and 6,000 years ago. One of Northern Ireland's most important archaeological sites, the wedge-shaped ancient cairn or tomb was built by Neolithic settlers, the earliest farmers in this country. It is believed to have been surrounded by a circle of stones about 60ft (18 metres) in diameter. Known as Carngraney (Carn Grainne, the Cairn of the

Sun) its nine underground chambers were excavated in 1914, when an ancient urn containing a mass of compact human bones was discovered.

*The urn and its remains are now stored at the Ulster Museum.*

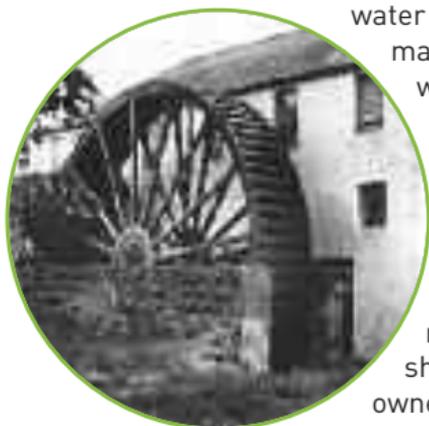
## Sentry Hill

The origins of Sentry Hill, a beautifully restored traditional Ulster farmhouse of the 19th and early 20th centuries, go back to the Scottish Highlands of the early 1700s. Young Highlander James McKinney, a Jacobite, and Helen Campbell from a clan loyal to the English Crown, were forced to elope to Ulster. Their grandson built a cottage at Sentry Hill, which was replaced by the current farmhouse in 1835. The house's character and most of its fascinating collections are due mainly to William Fee McKinney, born in 1832, who spent much of his life at Sentry Hill. Rare books, diaries, pamphlets and glass slides of the rural community are among the collections. Visitors can enjoy refreshments in what were the old stables or walk around the informal garden.



## Castletown Beetling Mill

Where the houses of Castletown Park now stand, a three-storey mill - its great waterwheel driven by water which was diverted through a man-made watercourse all the way from Straid Dam - once thrived. Long lengths of linen cloth, already bleached white, were delivered here for the final stage of the linen making process, when the cloth was softened by large wooden rollers to give it a special sheen. The beetling mill was owned by a local family, the Girvans of Ballynure, and it would have been one of the village's main employers. The mill finally closed in the 1930s and its machinery and contents were sold for scrap. It was used for training for soldiers fighting in the Second World War and later demolished to make way for a housing estate.



## The First Sunday School in Ireland

Just past the Methodist church in Doagh is the building in which what is believed to be the first Sunday School in Ireland once flourished. It was established by a local schoolmaster, William Galt, soon after he founded the Doagh Book Club in the mid to late 1700s. The book club, also known as the Doagh Reading Society, eventually developed into the Doagh Library. In 1780 the club was popular enough to raise funds for this building, which housed both school and library and hosted many meetings too.

Secretary of the Doagh branch of the Society of United Irishmen, Galt's collection of books was burned following the failure of their 1798 Uprising. Fortunately, the library was repaired and the book club reformed, surviving until 1850.



*illustration by Maurice Oliphant*

## *Doagh Spinning Mill*

Doagh Spinning Mill was built around 1870 on the same site that had previously hosted the foundry of the local inventor and engineer John Rowan (famous for building a steam coach in 1836 when the only road transport of the time was the horse). Later merging with a smaller flax mill in Ballysillan, this mill had 17,500 spinning spindles and 900 twisting spindles at its peak, making it a significant linen producer.



*image courtesy of the Belfast Telegraph*

Though this was largely a farming area, many who worked the land needed to supplement their income by working at the mill. The mill suffered with the general decline of the industry as linen was replaced by synthetic fibres, finally closing in 1939.



*illustration by Maurice Oliphant*

## *Doagh Churchyard*

The ancient section of ivy covered stone wall in the centre of the old churchyard was part of the west gable wall of Saint Mary's Church, which we know was in existence as long ago as 1251.

That was when the Bishop of Connor placed the 'Ecclesia Ste Marie de Douach' in the care of the Abbey of Muckamore, an important monastic seminary founded in the 6th century by the Order of Saint Augustine. It may be that the black woollen garb of the friars gave rise to the village's name. Could Doagh originate from 'Dhu', the Irish for black? Until the 1500s, it seems that St Mary's was a parish church with a curate supplied by the Abbey of Muckamore. Its decay probably began following Henry VIII's decision to dissolve the monasteries.

## *Patterson's Spade Mill*

No implement has been more important to Ireland than the spade, with each county boasting at least one variety suited to its particular terrain. Spades dug the vital potato crop and extracted peat from the bogs for heat and fuel. Irishmen took their favourite spades with them to build the canals, roads and railways of England and the US, for nothing, in their eyes, could beat an Irish spade. The last working water-driven spade mill in Europe, Patterson's Spade Mill in Templepatrick was founded soon after the First World War by William George Patterson, the third generation of the family to work in the business. The mill closed in 1990, but has been restored by the National Trust. You can still see spades being made in the traditional way, and even order one made to your specific requirements.



*image courtesy of National Trust*

## **ANTRIM**

### *Cranfield Holy Well*

Near Cranfield Church is an ancient well said to have been blessed by Saint Olcán, a disciple of Saint Patrick, and therefore seen as a place of miraculous cures.

Today it's still used by those suffering ailments in a tradition going back centuries. Amber crystals of gypsum, fished from the well, were once swallowed by emigrants to America for protection and are still used by local fishermen and others for the same reason. Pilgrimages were made to Cranfield to perform the

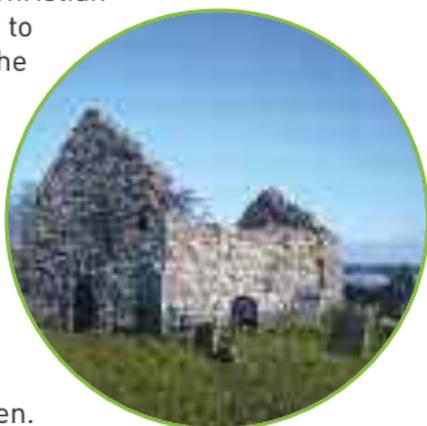
Stations of the Cross on any three days between May Eve and June 29th. According to tradition the well overflows on June 29th, raising the gypsum crystals to the surface.



## *Cranfield Church*

One of the most atmospheric Christian sites in Ireland, Pilgrims came to Cranfield (which comes from the Irish Creamhchoill - the wood of the wild garlic) to worship for centuries. A church existed here as long ago as 1306 and probably long before. You can still see the church's doorway and the remains of a tall pointed window in the east gable, near where the altar would have been.

Though the church's decay began in the 1660s, outdoor Masses continued to be held here, a tradition which has been continued since 1979, on the Sunday closest to June 29th. According to tradition Saint Olcán, who is believed to have been ordained by Saint Patrick, is buried here in soil brought from Rome.



## *Donegore Motte*

With a spectacular view of all six Ulster counties from this hill it's easy to see why this unique location was chosen as an ancient fort and burial tomb, a

Norman fortification and the rallying point for one of the most important battles in Irish history. A mound here is all that remains of a 12th century Norman motte, or fort, located here as part of the Norman strategy to subdue the native Irish.

Beneath the mound is a Neolithic passage tomb, while a Neolithic fort once existed on the

summit here too. It was here that poet weaver James Orr and his fellow United Irishmen gathered on June 7th 1798, before marching to face British forces at the Battle of Antrim.





## *The Ancient Camlin Church, Crumlin*

Only the atmospheric ruins remain of this historic church, which is much older than Crumlin town itself. Once the principal church of the Deanery of Clondermot, we know that it was in existence in 1306. The church's east gable remains with its central window, while side walls with alcoves can still be seen. Much less is left of the west gable, whose stones have been removed over the years. It was still in use in 1661, when the celebrated writer and scholar Bishop Jeremy Taylor ordained a deacon here. It is believed to have been destroyed by the troops of James II during the Williamite War.



## *Crumlin Clock Tower*

One of Crumlin's most striking features, the square Clock Tower was built in 1897 as a memorial to the Reverend Arthur Hercules Pakenham, the local landowner who had died two years previously. All four

faces of the tower are identical except for a small rectangular doorway at the base of the east side and a plaque on the west side. The Reverend Arthur, a nephew by marriage of the Duke of Wellington, lived at the magnificent Langford Lodge on the shores of Lough Neagh.

A justice of the peace, Arthur was regarded as a compassionate landlord who had a reputation for caring for the poorer of his tenants, and who gave regularly to charitable causes.



## *Crumlin Tree Ring, Mound, Crumlin Glen and Cockle House*

### *The Tree Ring*

This unique ring of trees, situated within the Parkfield housing estate, marks the location where horses from the nearby mills were buried.



### *The Mound*

Ancient funereal mound or the base of a Norman fort? At Nutts Corner, a field on the right contains a mysterious mound that has been puzzling locals for centuries.

### *Crumlin Glen*

The beautiful, winding Crumlin Glen gives its name to the town of Crumlin, which comes from Cromghlinn, the Irish for 'crooked glen'.

### *The Cockle House*

This tiny Gothic-arched temple in Crumlin Glen is said to have been built by an eccentric local landowner for a favoured Muslim servant.

## Old Mill Complex, Crumlin

Few figures have been more important in the development of Crumlin than the enterprising businessman Rowley Heyland, who built the first flour mill in the north of Ireland here in 1765. At that time just a tiny hamlet, Crumlin's growth would depend on the success of its mills. Five storeys high and powered by three water wheels, the mill was a major producer of flour and was the main employer in the area. It was later bought by Robert Macauley and Sons who also built a flax mill which employed many people in the area. Following a fire in 1884, the flour mill was taken over by the Ulster Woollen Company Ltd, manufacturers of the famous 'Lough Neagh Tweeds'.



*image courtesy of Len Kinley*

## The Triple Level Bridge



Imagine a plane flying over a train travelling above a car driving over a boat sailing down the river. It could only be Crumlin's famous triple level bridge. Here a bridge carries a railway line over the Crumlin Road, which in turn carries traffic over the Crumlin River! The 18.5 mile Antrim to Lisburn line was opened in 1871, during the glory days of steam train travel, when the railway network in Ireland was rapidly developing. It was closed in 1960 but re-opened in 1974 for nearly three more decades of useful life, before the line was closed again in 2003.

## *John Carey Fountain, Toomebridge*

The charming eight-sided 'Fountain of Liberty' was erected to give free water to all. Its unusual design and generous intention sum up John Carey, the



contradictory and somewhat eccentric man who donated it to the citizens of

Toomebridge. Born in 1800, he was educated at Royal Belfast Academical Institution and served for a period of time as a Presbyterian minister in Tyrone and Brookvale, County Down. After moving to Rarity

College in Toome, he built the

extraordinary Temple of Liberty, Learning and Select Amusement in Toome in 1866. "A free gift to his country", the building had a hall where at least 1,500 people could sit and a library with 5,000 books.

## *Rody McCorley Monument, Toomebridge*

During the United Irishmen Uprising of 1798, Rody McCorley, a young man from the townland of Duneane,

just a few miles from Toome, fought on the rebel side. On June 7th Rody, the son of a local miller, was with a rebel force that helped capture Randalstown before moving on to support the United Irishmen forces at the Battle of Antrim, where they suffered a



crucial defeat. He was later captured and hung at Toome Bridge. Following a

long campaign, a monument to him was built on the site of his execution. It was blown up during the Troubles, but replaced by the current monument in the 1970s. The ballad, Rody McCorley, made his name famous around the world.

## *The Holestone*



The best-preserved bronze pillar in the British Isles, this 1.5 metres standing stone has attracted lovers for centuries to tap into its supposedly magical powers. Once the woman puts her hand through the hole - artificially made thousands of years ago - it is grasped by her partner to signify their love will last to death. The tradition was already enshrined in the early 1800s, when a

historian wrote, "It is still deemed a place consecrated to the meeting of lovers, and when they join hands through the stone, the pledge of love and troths there given is sacred." The surrounding area features many megalithic tombs, while nearby Donegore Hill has a Neolithic enclosure on its summit. The Holestone is located on private farmland.

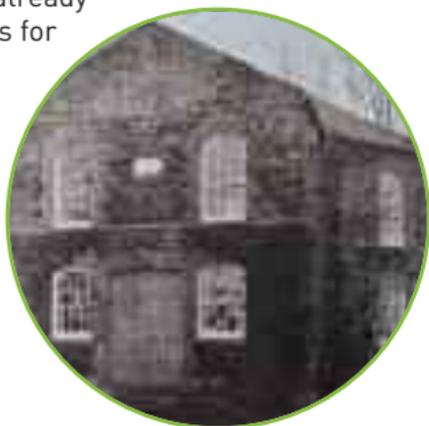
## *First Donegore Presbyterian Church*

First Donegore Presbyterian Church in Parkgate village is one of the denomination's oldest congregations, dating to 1627 when Andrew Stewart, a Scottish Presbyterian, was appointed to the ancient Parish of Donegore. When, in 1622, a second Presbyterian incumbent of the Donegore Parish Church, Thomas Crawford (Stewart's son-in-law), was no longer acceptable to the established church he and his followers conducted their worship in and around Parkgate, retaining the designation 'Donegore'. The present meeting house was built in the mid-1700s, during the tenure of its longest serving minister Alexander Brown (1702 to 1758). Its most famous minister was the fiery orator and architect of modern Irish Presbyterianism, Henry Cooke (1811 to 1818).



## *The First Presbyterian Church (Non-Subscribing), Crumlin*

The first Presbyterian meeting house in Crumlin, housing some 500 worshippers, was established in 1715, but the Presbyterians of the area had already been meeting in other locations for over 40 years. The present church was built nearby in 1835, under the ministry of the Reverend Nathaniel Alexander, and officially opened on September 17th 1837, having been built at a cost of £1,000. The opening address was given by the Rev Dr Henry Montgomery, the Minister of Dunmurry and a champion of the Non-Subscribing principle. His debates with the renowned orator Dr Henry Cooke, a fiery preacher of conservative Presbyterianism, became famous in the 19th century.



## *Templeton Mausoleum*

This imposing tomb in the village of Templepatrick was designed by Robert Adam, one of the most influential architects of the 18th century. It was built for the

Templeton family, the local

landowners, in 1789. One of

Ireland's finest surviving

examples of European neo-

classicism, it is embellished

with classical urns, leafy

swags and circular reliefs.

Adam was commissioned by

the second Viscount

Templeton, for whose father

he had already extended the

magnificent family home, Castle

Upton, which stands nearby. The old

burial ground around the mausoleum

contains the grave of William Orr, whose name became a

battle cry during the United Irishmen Uprising of 1798, the

year after he was executed for illegally administering the

oath of the United Irishmen.

