Issue 6, 28th October 2021

Irish Walled Towns Network

The Walled Town Crier

An Irish Walled Towns Network bi-monthly magazine. The IWTN is funded through the Heritage Council

IWTN Change of Project Manager

Get to know Carlingford

Regeneration & Creating Positive Spaces for our Towns

Image: Carlingford castle By: Abarta Heritage

IWTN Change of Project Manager

This edition of the ezine is a little bit different as it is my final edition as project manager. It has been a great privilege for me and the team at Abarta Heritage to have been involved with the Irish Walled Towns Network for the last two years. We've loved getting to know everyone involved in the Network, though we are delighted to pass the baton on to Valerie Kelly of the Heritage Council, who will take over as project manager from the 18th October.

We have loved our time managing the scheme. Our contract started in September 2019 and we started off by visiting some of the 29 town members around the country to hear ideas for future projects. Unfortunately in March 2020, the pandemic hit and we all had to come to terms with a new way of life. While getting to grips with working from home and homeschooling, we saw that communicating with the network to keep us all connected had become an even more important part of the role. We devised a children's workbook for those homeschooling and commissioned videos showcasing conservation work, updated the network through social media and created this bi-monthly IWTN online magazine - The Walled Town Crier.

The most enjoyable part of this role is getting out and meeting the people in the member towns that are passionate about the network and the shared walled town heritage. Though the pandemic impacted our ability to travel, especially in 2020, we did get to know everyone at least virtually, and the innovative ways that local authorities, working with community groups, promote and preserve their walled town heritage was a real pleasure to see.

We have thoroughly enjoyed our time working as the project manager on the IWTN. We hope that we have helped to strengthen connections in the network by sharing stories through our new ezine, webinars, training and by working closely with the local authorities and community groups that are a part of this network of shared heritage.

Before we go, we would just like to thank the IWTN Management Committee for all their support and encouragement over the last two years. We are also grateful to Ian Doyle and the Heritage Council team for the opportunity to join the network as Project Manager and all their support over the last two years and all the town representatives for your generosity, knowledge and enthusiasm for your walled town heritage!

Thank you,
Róisín & the team at Abarta Heritage

IWTN NEW PROJECT MANAGER:
Valerie Kelly (vkelly@heritagecouncil.ie)

Valerie is the Heritage Council's newly appointed Community & Public Engagement Officer, and will be taking over the administration of the IWTN programme. Hailing from a walled town herself, Valerie's background is in archaeology, community heritage, and diaspora relations. She looks forward to working with the IWTN, and the Heritage Council, in bringing a broader awareness of heritage to communities across Ireland. You can contact her at vkelly@heritagecouncil.ie.

Image: Fethard town walls By: Abarta Heritage

News:

IWTN Capital Grants 2021

Did your group benefit from an IWTN Capital Grant this year? Please send us good quality before and after photos for the December ezine so we can all see what has been achieved across the network.

You can email them to vkelly@heritagecouncil.ie.

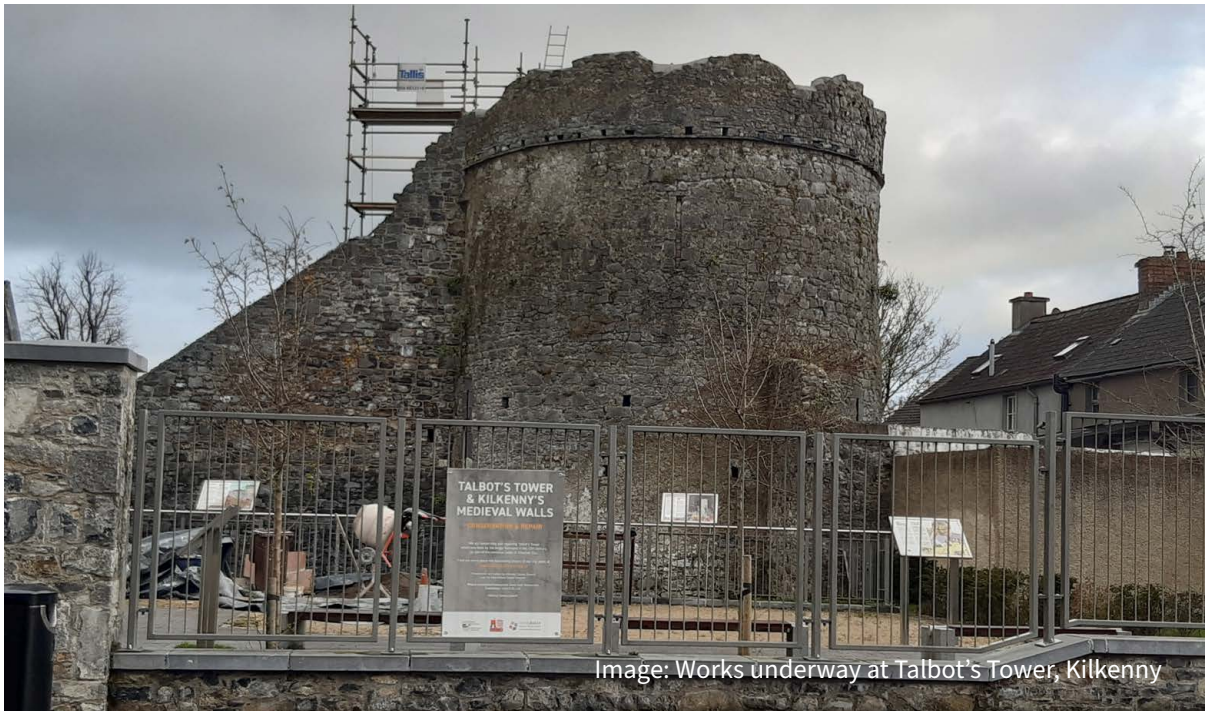


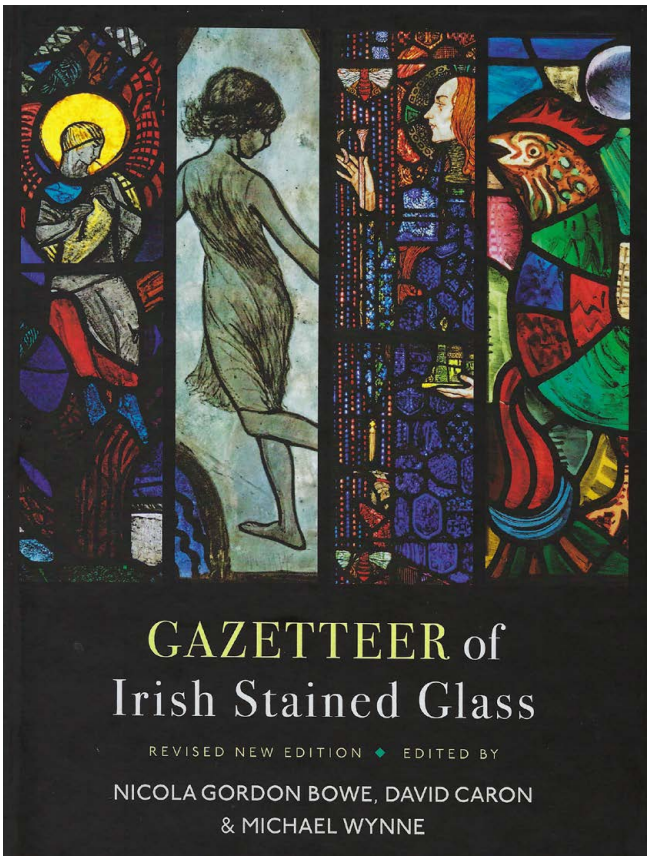
Image: Works underway at Talbot's Tower, Kilkenny

New book and podcast on Stained Glass Windows

A beautiful new gazetteer of Irish stained glass windows was recently published by Irish Academic Press. This is a revised new edition of the 1988 publication which has many new entries and in enhanced by many beautiful colour photographs.

One of the authors, Dr David Caron, recently made a podcast with Dr Christy Cunniffe about the windows of the Carmelite Abbey and St Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea for the Loughrea Virtual Medieval Festival 2021.

You can hear the podcast here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTSqhjUiEtY



IWTN Virtual Conference

By: Sharon Greene, Abarta Heritage

Thursday, 7th October saw many of our members and others join us for our virtual conference on the theme of ‘Regeneration & Creating Positive Spaces for our Towns’. Introduced by Ian Doyle, Head of Conservation at the Heritage Council, the three sessions were ably chaired by Declan Nelson, Conor Neligan and Shirin Murphy of the IWTN Management Committee.

The first session focused on conservation and reuse. Paul Keogh of Paul Keogh Architects started us off with a broad and interesting introduction to concepts of conservation and reuse with examples and case studies from home and abroad, setting the scene for the remainder of the day. This was followed by Martin Hulse and Miranda Iossifidis who introduced us to the involvement of the Tyne & Wear Building Preservation Trust in the renovation of 19th century market houses in Sunderland. The work here has a strong and inclusive community involvement that is being successful in attracting life and activity back into a place that had become derelict.

Our second session was focussed on buildings and communities and bringing life back to town centres. This session opened with a fascinating talk from architect Valerie Mulvin, whose book ‘Approximate Formality – the Morphology of Irish Towns’ was recently published. Valerie spoke about the evolution and form of our towns and the massive potential that their heritage provides for regeneration.

Quotes from the day:

"We already have positive spaces, they just need new vision"
Valerie Mulvin

"Everything we do is about getting people back using our town centres"
Nollaig Whyte

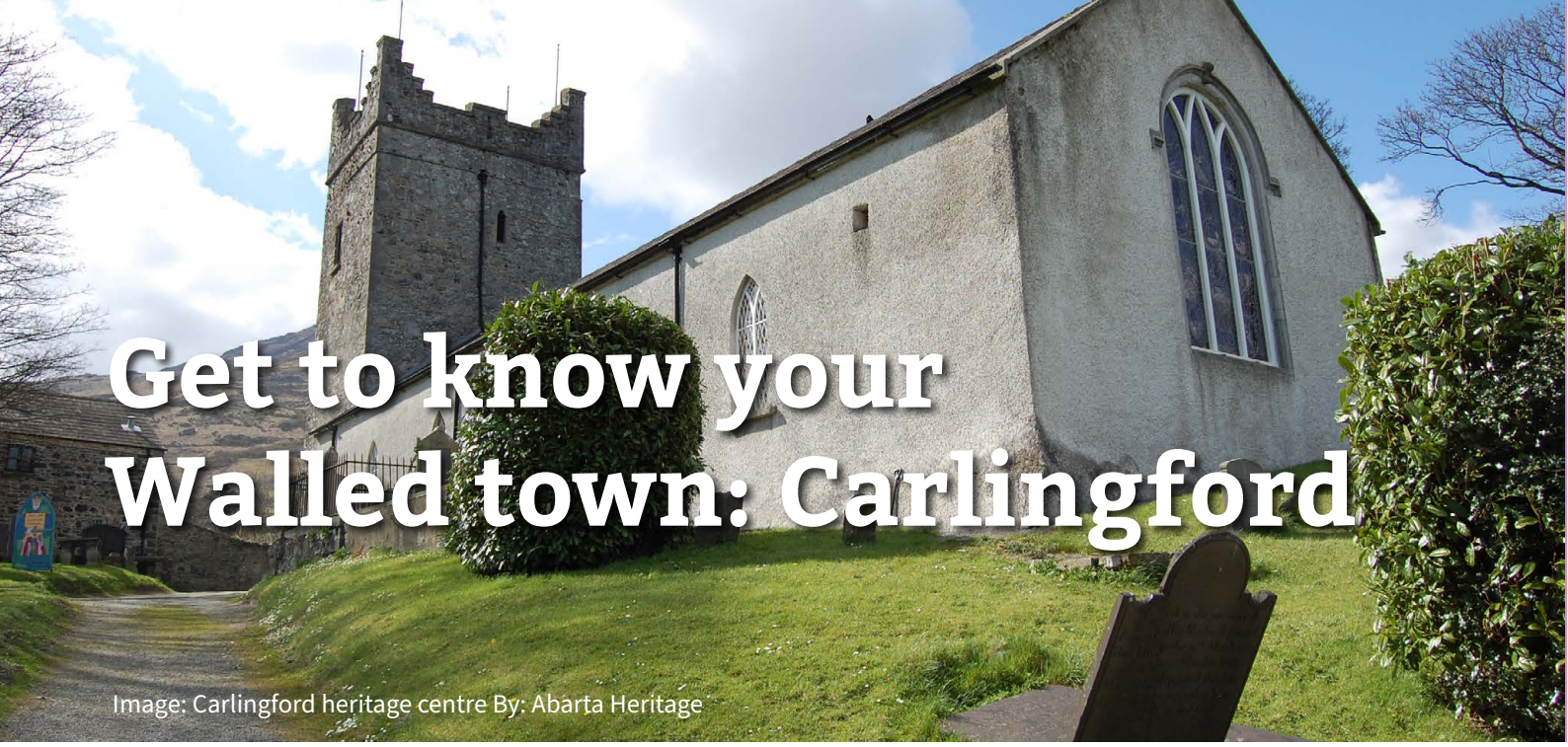
Nollaig Whyte of Roscommon County Council and Tony Monaghan of Derry City and Strabane District Council each spoke about steps being taken respectively in Roscommon town and Derry city to get people back into the town/city centres, exploring heritage and using spaces in a positive way. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been felt in all towns but one of the silver linings has been the reclaiming of space from traffic, making the urban space more pedestrian friendly, attractive and safe to enjoy. As things go 'back to normal', some big questions are being asked about holding onto the benefits of what were meant to be temporary changes.

Leading on from this nicely, the final session dealt with regeneration, tourism and the wider community. Lee Robb told us about 'Positive Carrickfergus', a movement for community-led change which incorporated some great ideas for what can be done to celebrate aspects of heritage that may have been overlooked in the past. Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth with Argyll and Bute Council and Council member of Scotland's Towns Partnership, shared some very interesting case studies from Argyll, where many small seaside towns have faced a change in function but are now using their heritage as a vehicle for regeneration with some very positive outcomes.

We finished the day with a very interesting presentation from Bart Neuts of KU Leuven which gave a macro-view of heritage tourism through the lens of a European Commission funded study, SmartCulTour. This looked at 107 cultural tourism interventions around Europe and examined their goals, outcomes, supporting resources, impacts, and contextual effects. It was interesting to see events and other interventions that we are all familiar with (festivals, community projects etc) examined from this perspective and the data from this project should be useful for future planning.

The overall tone of this conference was a positive one for our towns, at least when it comes to their potential for the future and while much of the talk was of the future, it was good to see the prominent role the past plays in that potential. We can become so focused on the problems faced by our towns, that it was refreshing to peel back the traffic and dereliction and focus on the positive attributes and what they offer. Our thanks must go out again to all the contributors who, as well as having achieved so much in their own various projects, have given us all a lot to think about when it comes to our walled towns.

This conference was recorded and can now be accessed on the Heritage Council Your Tube channel at https://www.youtube.com/user/TheHeritageCouncil/videos.



Get to know your Walled town: Carlingford

Image: Carlingford heritage centre By: Abarta Heritage

The town of Carlingford developed in the 1200s. Hugh De Lacey, built a castle here on a rock overlooking the harbour and from this the medieval town grew. By 1227, a fair was granted to take place in August for 13 days.

Find out more!

For more information about Carlingford, to book guided tours and find out about events in the area, we recommend visiting the Carlingford Heritage Centre website here: **https://carlingfordheritagecentre.com/**

To read the Carlingford Historic Town Walls Conservation & Management Plan, please see here: **https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/heritage/publications/carlingford%20conservation%20plan.pdf**

Sharon Greene introduces:

In 1326, King Edward II of England granted a charter for the Bailiffs of Carlingford to charge a murage tax on the inhabitants of the town in order to repair the town wall. This appears to be the first piece of written evidence that the town was enclosed. The town walls of Carlingford surrounded 8-12 hectares of land and had a perimeter of 1,600m. Apart from short sections of wall to the south-east of the Tholsel there is very little above-ground evidence of the defences. The surviving elements show evidence of splaying and musket loops.

Four named gates into the town are recorded in the medieval wall: North Gate, South Gate, Tholsel Gate and Spout Gate. The Tholsel is the only surviving gate. The current structure dates to the 15th century and used to be three storeys high. In the 19th century it was modified to two storeys and the slate roof was added.

Carlingford's medieval town walls were improved and extended in the 1500s, but Carlingford suffered during the rebellion of 1640. It was reputedly burned by the Duke of Berwick on the retreat of King James, during the Williamite Wars.

The decline of Carlingford in the 18th century had one advantage from a modern perspective and that is the resulting preservation of some fabulous medieval structures. 'The Mint' is a fortified townhouse close to the Tholsel and was probably home one of the town's prosperous merchants. Its most interesting feature is its five highly decorated limestone windows. The name suggests that it may have been a location for striking the town's coins, something that

Image: Carlingford priory By: Abarta Heritage

Carlingford was given permission to do by a charter in 1467, but there is no evidence to support this.

Another good example of a prosperous merchant's fortified townhouse is Taafe's Castle, near the harbour. This may also have functioned as a warehouse, with the family home being located in the upper stories.

When visiting Carlingford your first stop should be Carlingford Heritage Centre, where you can pick up information on the town and Cooley Peninsula and book guided tours of the town. The centre can be found in the Church of the Holy Trinity, formerly a Church of Ireland church. This building was built in the 19th century but has many features that betray the presence of earlier medieval structures on the site.

Another religious site worth a visit is the Dominican Friary founded by Richard De Burgo in 1305.

As you wander around this charming, atmospheric town, there are many more interesting features to be seen and this popular tourist spot has many café's restaurants and bars to cater to your needs!

Carlingford Castle recently reopened after extensive conservation works expertly carried out by the OPW. Tours of the Castle are available during the summer months and tickets are available online at carlingfordheritagecentre.com.

Hear the stories of Carlingford with the free Carlingford heritage trail audioguide. Available on all your favorite platforms such as Spotify, Apple podcast and Audible, **also available as a podcast here**. This Audioguide was supported by the Irish Walled Towns Network

Image: Medieval window Image by: Abarta Heritage

Image: King John's castle By: Abarta Heritage

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

Image: Carrickfergus town walls

Contact Us!

Please do get in touch at
vkelly@heritagecouncil.ie
if you would like us to promote news or projects happening in your walled town over the coming months.
Visit our website: **https://irishwalledtownsnetwork.ie/**

The IWTN is funded by the Heritage Council and delivered in partnership with local authorities and community groups.