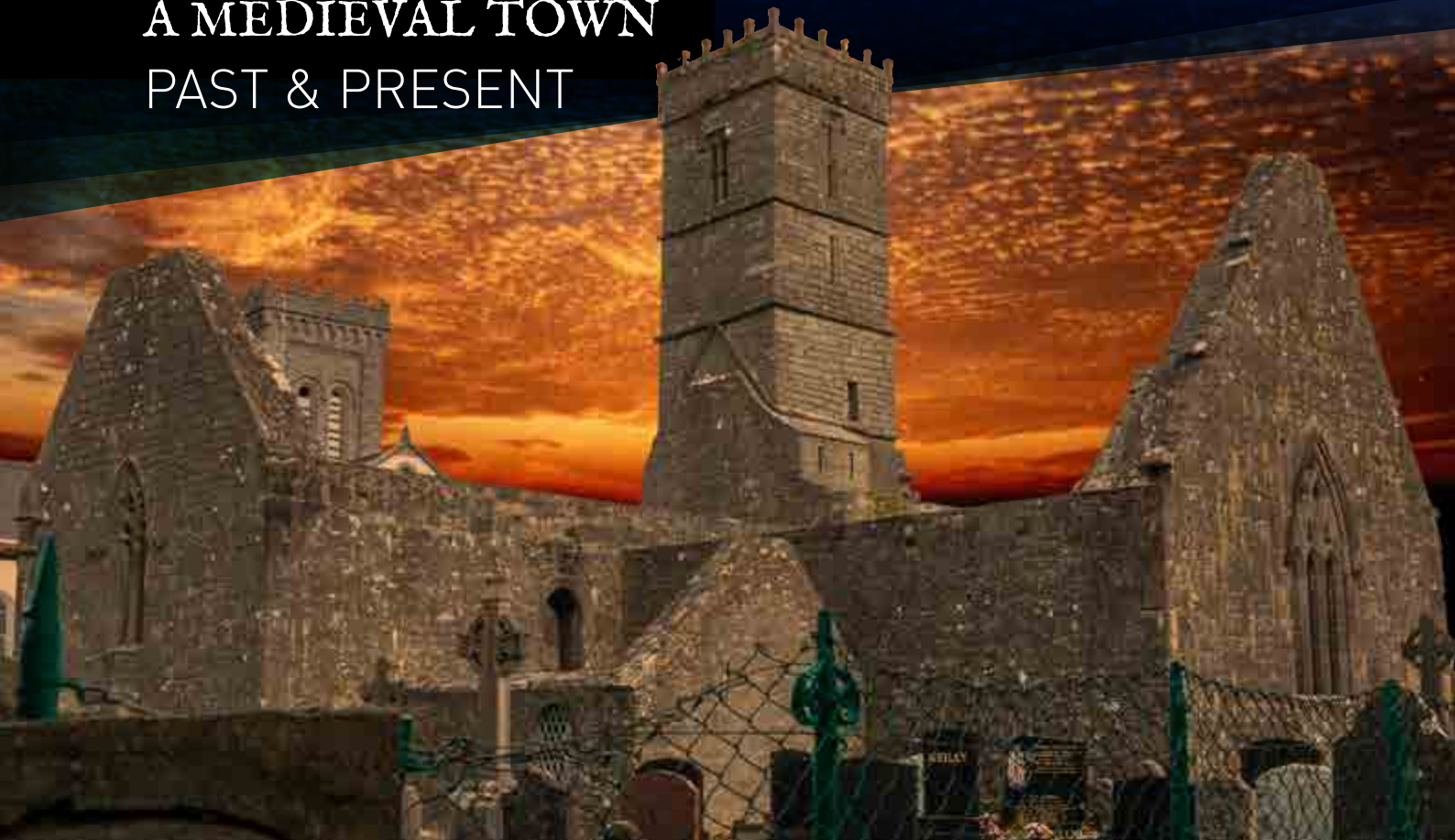


LOUGHREA

A MEDIEVAL TOWN

PAST & PRESENT



LOUGHREA MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL

COMMITTEE 2020

- Chairperson:** Cllr Michael Maher
- Treasurer:** Ann Dolan
- Committee:** Colman Shaughnessy &
- Members:** Joe Loughnane
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To those who merit credit and who have inadvertently not been acknowledged sincere apologies and grateful thanks.



MESSAGE FROM LOUGHREA MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Loughrea, founded c1236 by Richard de Burgo, is a fine example of an Anglo-Norman town. However, there is evidence of earlier settlement with the remains of several sites and monuments in the area, including ringforts, souterrains, enclosures and crannógs.

The town was fortified due to its strategic location. Its defences consisted of a town wall and a moat to the north, east and west, with the lake acting as a natural defence to the south.

The Loughrea Medieval Festival committee was set up in February 2014 with the aim of bringing greater awareness, understanding and knowledge of Loughrea's rich medieval heritage among the locals and visitors to the area. One of the major objectives of the committee is to create a new focus with regards to the medieval heritage of the town that will lead to further academic and local history research and make this available in print and digital format to a wide audience. In addition to this the committee also want to provide enjoyable, memorable fun days for residents and visitors to the town.

Loughrea is a member of the Irish Walled Town Network (set up by The Heritage Council) and a key objective is to network with other towns in IWTN and to learn from their experiences. Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee, working with Galway County Council, The Heritage Council, IWTN, the local community and





local businesses, want to showcase the rich medieval heritage of the town and make it accessible for all.

The committee is extremely thankful for all the help, assistance and funding it has received from the local community and local businesses, Galway County Council, The Heritage Council and The Irish Walled Town Network in achieving the objectives of the group. As can be seen in this booklet, many strategic projects have been initiated and delivered in the past six years including the award-winning three-day festival, undertaking a conservation and management plan for the medieval town, producing a heritage trail and developing online resources.

We would like to thank all who have assisted us in the delivery of these very important initiatives for our town and our county and look forward to bringing more projects and plans to fruition in the future and safeguarding the rich medieval heritage of Loughrea.

Cllr Michael Maher

Chairperson, Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee

Ann Dolan

Treasurer, Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee

Colman Shaughnessy

Member, Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee

Joe Loughnane

Member, Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee



THE IRISH WALLED TOWNS NETWORK (IWTN)

The Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) was founded by The Heritage Council of Ireland in 2005 in order to unite and co-ordinate local authorities involved in the management, conservation and enhancement of historic walled towns across the island of Ireland. The island of Ireland has 56 known walled towns, 29 of which have joined the IWTN.

Guidance and assistance is provided to member towns by providing grants for town wall conservation and for community festivals and heritage interpretation. Training is delivered to community groups on how best to use their town's heritage for the benefit of those who live there and we regularly research and publish user-friendly advisory documents.

The network is not a top-down organisation; rather, it exists to help its members. The IWTN's activities are controlled by a steering committee that is made up of representatives from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (due to transfer to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage), the Northern Ireland Historic Environment Division, The Heritage Council, and several member towns.

Walled towns and cities are an important national heritage asset. They link communities to their past, while continuing to shape the form of our modern settlements. Though the original defensive functions of the town walls may be obsolete, they can help to create a unique sense of place, belonging, and identity. They are also an important focus for tourism, cultural, and economic development. Many towns in Ireland, and indeed internationally, have used the presentation of their town walls and defences as a means to create a new vibrant identity for their town through imaginative public realm strategies with integrated conservation aims.

Since 2014, The Heritage Council, through the IWTN, has provided over €83,000 for the interpretation and celebration of Loughrea's town walls. Nationally, we have provided over €7 million to conserve, protect and promote walled towns across Ireland. To find out more about the IWTN and member towns, please see www.irishwalledtownsnetwork.ie

Róisín Burke

*Irish Walled Towns Network Project Manager,
Abarta Heritage*

CHRONOLOGY/TIMELINE OF LOUGHREA

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|---------------|---|
| 4000- 2500 BC | Neolithic people settle along the lake and on Shore island | 1248 | Walter De Burgh inherited Loughrea. (d 1271) or his son Richard, the Red Earl (d 1326) |
| 2500- 500 BC | First known phase of habitation on Island McHugo | 1250/ 1251 | Walter De Burgh was given four 'stags' and four 'does' from the king's Irish forest of Slescho/Slefcó (possibly for breeding in the deerpark, Earlsparc) |
| 600- 700 AD | Garrybreeda – Early Christian settlement established on periphery of gaelic settlements | 1271 1306 | Walter De Burgh died Loughrea noted in Diocese of Clonfert – first mention of Parish Church |
| 797, 799 & 802 | The 'fortress of Loch-Riach demolished by Muirghius, son of Tomaltach', a Connacht chief | 1310- 1311 | Richard III De Burgh, the 'Red Earl', unsuccessfully petitioned the king for a liberty in Connacht similar to that which he held in Ulster |
| 1100s | St Aodh Mac Bric Crozier created, metal working continues on crannógs | 1315 | Ruaidhrí, son of Cathal (Ó Conchobuir) burned Sligeach and destroyed Corann and Tobar Brigitte, burned Ros Comáin, Dún Mór, and Loch Riach - in short all the towns of Connachta save Áth na Ríg, Gaillim, and Clár |
| 1185 | Anglo-Norman adventurer William De Burgh is the first of his family to settle in Ireland | 1326 | Richard, the Red Earl died (son of Walter De Burgh) |
| 1203/ 1204 | William De Burgh steps across the River Shannon, but retreats | 1333 | Connacht in turmoil, murder of William De Burgh |
| 1227 | Richard De Burgh (AKA de Burgo, later Burke) awarded lordship of Connacht | 1333 | Inquisition into the lands of William De Burgh - |
| 1236 | Loughrea Castle construction by Richard De Burgh | | |

| | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| | 'a hall, chamber, a kitchen, and several other houses, in the said castle of Loghry.... are worth nothing... because they need large repairs' | 1580 | Castle destroyed by the sons of the Earl of Clanrickard (Ulick & John) |
| 1437 | Carmelite Friary in need of repairs, indulgence granted | 1582 | Earl of Clanrickard dies and is buried in the Abbey in Loughrea |
| 1458 | Kilcormac Missal written at Friary, completed by Dermot O'Flanagan | 1585 | The gaol of the newly created county of Galway was established in the central town of Loughrea |
| 1567 | Peace talks among leading men of Connacht and Ulster at 'Ballyloghreogh'. Loughrea castle and town in the charge of both Thomas Le Strange and Captain Collier | 1601 | The Earl died in the town of Loughrea and was interred at Athenry |
| 1574 | "The town of Loghreogh [which] was built by Englishmen [under Richard Sassanach], and besides the castle, which is a goodly place, the town thereabouts is well ditched and trenched, and fair walls begun, but not finished, having three fair strong gates made like three castles, the streets well divided and cut; and for the most part it was builded within the walls with houses of stone work, which are now partly destroyed and ruinous" | 1610 | Clanrickard given a grant of the Abbey and houses |
| | | 1611 | Loughrea to be newly erected, Portumna replaces Loughrea as the earl's principal residence |
| | | 1647 | The Nuncio Rinuccini officially bestows the Abbey on the Carmelites |
| | | 1652 | Cromwellians destroy the Abbey and disband the Friars |
| | | 1654 | In May of this year 50,000 displaced persons are said to have passed through the town in compliance with Cromwell's dictum: 'To hell or to Connaught' |
| 1576 | The Earl of Clanrickard was obliged to give up to him [the Justicier] the town of Loughrea, and all his territory, both lands and tenements, stone houses and castles, and he himself was [arrested and] declared the Queens prisoner | 1674 | Gaol in Loughrea was reported to be "so old and ruinous", prisoners were sent to Galway |
| | | 1680 | Convent for Carmelite order of nuns established |
| | | 1686 | A strong castle situated near the west bridge, and adjoining the towns walls, was selected by the grand jury to serve as a gaol for the county |

| | | | |
|------|--|---------|--|
| 1690 | Loughrea town falling into disrepair | 1890 | Loughrea branch line opens connecting the town with Attymon on Dublin - Galway line |
| 1755 | Carmelite nuns moved to Main St, Loughrea | 1893 | Publication of Wood-Martin excavation Shore Island |
| 1785 | Chapel and dwelling house erected at Carmelite Abbey | 1897 | Foundation laid for Loughrea Cathedral |
| 1791 | Clanrickard Estate Map produced | 1899 | Loughrea Rural District Council held inaugural meeting 22 April this year |
| 1816 | Chapel rebuilt at Carmelite Abbey (with contributions from Clanrickard family) | 1901 | Census Returns for Loughrea |
| 1821 | Church built by loan £1846.3.6 | 1903 | Wyndham Act ended landlord control over residents |
| 1825 | Carmelite Nuns moved to Cross Street, Loughrea | 1911 | Census returns for Loughrea |
| 1829 | Dwelling house at Carmelite Abbey rebuilt | 1914 | Connaught Rangers recruit Loughrea men for service in WW1 |
| 1830 | Nunnery moved to St Joseph's Monastery, where a school for children was set up | 1919 | Spanish flu hits Loughrea |
| 1832 | Spire of church was struck by lightning first Sunday in December, 2 hours before Devine service | 1921 | Loughrea District Council recognises Dáil Eireann |
| 1837 | Lewis visits Loughrea "...there are some remains... of the old castle" | 1922 | Military Barracks closes, British forces exit Temperence Hall |
| 1842 | Loughrea Workhouse opens | 1937/38 | Folklore Collection of Ireland – visit www.duchas.ie for entries from local schools |
| 1848 | Wood-Martin excavations on Shore Island found the head of a <i>Megaceros Hibernicus</i> , measuring over 13 feet (4 metres) from tip to tip of the antlers | 1940 | Works complete at cathedral |
| 1880 | Birth of Seamus O'Kelly, Mob Hill, Loughrea (Abbey Theatre playwright and author) | 1957 | Loughrea museum opens |
| | | 1963 | Loughrea lake freezes over in Big Freeze |



Stephen 'Stoney' Brennan, according to legend, was hanged on Gallows' Hill, Mount Carmel, for stealing a turnip during the penal times. Stoney's commemorative stone-carved head is displayed on the wall at Millennium House, West Bridge.

- 1975 Loughrea branch line closes
- 1986 Loughrea museum re-opens close to cathedral
- 1992 Loughrea Heritage Development Association established
- 2005 Irish Walled Towns Committee founded by The Heritage Council
- 2010 Loughrea lake freezes over
- 2014 Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee established
- 2014 A Short History of Athenry & Loughrea Walled Towns - A Medieval Comic Book
- 2014 Loughrea Medieval Festival winners of the Cathaoirleach's Community Awards 2014 for 'Best Contribution to Heritage Award'
- 2015 Loughrea Conservation, Management and Interpretation Plan
- 2015 A Digital 3D Reconstruction of Medieval Loughrea (Phase 1)
- 2016 Medieval Loughrea Memory Mapping project
- 2018 The Walks Project initiated
- 2018 Loughrea Z-Card & Online Heritage Trail
- 2018 Loughrea Medieval Festival wins Heritage Council's Le Chéile san Eoraip
- 2020 Carmelite Convent at St Joseph's Monastery closes



LOUGH REA HOTEL

R446 to Athenry & Galway

M6 GALWAY / DUBLIN

CARMELOMITE MONASTERY

MEDIAVAL ABBEY

Abbey Church

Old Railway Station

MART

N6 to Ballinasloe Dublin

DOLPHIN STREET

THE WALKS

TOWN MOAT

TOWN MOAT

TOWN MOAT

Former RC Church

BRIDE STREET

WEST BRIDGE

DUNKELLIN STREET

MAIN STREET

Post Office

MOB HILL

i

COURT HOUSE

FAIR GREEN

WALLED TOWNS DAY

FAIR GREEN

TOWN MOAT

CASTLE STREET

KELLY'S ST.

Fire Station

KING'S STREET

CHURCH STREET

LOUGHREA LIBRARY

PIGOTT'S STREET

MOORE STREET

BOTHERCOM

BARRACK STREET

Garda Station

BARRACK STREET

Presbytery

Loughrea Town Map

Crannóg

Crannóg

TEMPERANCE HALL

MUSEUM

ST BRENDAN'S CATHEDRAL

LATIMER GATE

LAKE ROAD

Lough Rea

SETTING

The town of Loughrea lies in the parish of Loughrea and the diocese of Clonfert. It is situated on relatively low ground on the northern shores of the lake from which it derives its name. The town straddles the principal Galway to Dublin road approximately forty kilometres southeast of Galway, on the R446, the former main road to Dublin. It continues to be an arterial route from the north, northwest, southeast and southwest. That network of roads was in place by at least the mid-seventeenth century and reflects the routes of early medieval routeways and possibly pre-historic trails.

TOPOGRAPHY

The dominant feature of both the town and barony of Loughrea is the lake of that name, Lough Rea, derived from the Gaelic *Locha Riach*, meaning the Grey Lake. It is situated in the northern half of the barony, covers an area of 260 hectares and, while relatively shallow, provides a major drainage catchment for the limestone plains of south Galway. Significantly, the lake is land-locked and is fed only by a couple of streams. The source of most of its water comes from subterranean springs in the limestone sub-strata. The Slieve Aughty mountain range defines the southern border of the barony, county and province. This low range of rounded hills runs from Lough Derg in the east to Lough Cultra in the west.



Loughrea Medieval Festival, held on the shores of Lough Rea

A third important, but less conspicuous topographical feature of Loughrea barony is the southern end of the Williamstown–Kilreekil ridge. That ridge of higher ground forms the ‘spine’ of the limestone lowlands of eastern Galway and represents a natural division between the better-quality agricultural land to its west and the more limited land to its east. Between the southern end of the ridge and the natural barriers formed by Lough Rea and the Slieve Aughtys there is an area of lower land that serves as the route of least resistance between Connacht and eastern Ireland. Strategically placed at the ‘gap’ is the northern part of Loughrea barony, and slightly to the southwest on the main east–west thoroughfare is the town of Loughrea. Given that the principal routeway between Galway and Dublin, via the Shannon crossing at Athlone, ran through Loughrea, the importance of the town and the topography no doubt influenced its siting. In contrast to the rolling hills and upland bogs to the south of Loughrea, the northern portions of the barony comprise flat-to-undulating open pasture.



LOUGHREA CONSERVATION, MANAGEMENT & INTERPRETATION PLAN

In November 2015, a conservation, management and interpretation plan was prepared by Howley Hayes Architects and Dr Jim McKeon, archaeologist with funding provided jointly by the Irish Walled Towns Network and Galway County Council.

This conservation, management and interpretation plan was drawn up in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the revised Burra Charter published by ICOMOS in 1999, which provides a model for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance.

The plan provides a framework and standards of practice for those with responsibility for the guardianship of such places.

This includes owners, managers and custodians, consultants, statutory advisers, opinion-formers, decision makers and contractors.

Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection: to the community; to the landscape; to the past and to the shared experiences of the inhabitants.

A fundamental principle of the Burra Charter is that places of cultural significance should be conserved for the benefit of both present and future generations. This defines conservation as 'all of the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance'.



As such, the general aims of a Conservation Plan are to:

- Provide an accurate record of the place.
.....
- Understand the significance of the place.
.....
- Identify any threats to the significance.
.....
- Formulate policies to address the threats, and to inform and guide the future preservation and management of the place.
.....
- Outline proposals for necessary conservation work.
.....
- Provide accurate documentation of the site to guide future decision-making.
.....
- Manage change by proposing a sustainable vision for the future of the monument.
.....

Following publication of the Burra Charter, the Ename Charter was adopted by ICOMOS in 2008 and deals specifically with the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage. This charter provides a framework for the communication of the cultural significance of a place to the public. Its objectives are to facilitate understanding and appreciation of the site; communicate its meaning, safeguard the tangible and intangible values and respect its authenticity.

This is particularly relevant in Loughrea, as the walls are no longer visible, and the setting for the moat has been altered so it is difficult for the general public to interpret. For this reason, the plan has a particular emphasis on proposals for how the walls can be best presented and their significance understood and appreciated by both locals and visitors.

While the primary focus of the plan is on the former town defences, the scope has been widened to include the medieval town generally, in order to provide context, and to help define the circuit and make provision for its preservation through consideration of the surviving medieval fabric of the town.



THE WALKS PROJECT

The Walks is a broad tree-lined T-shaped walkway located parallel to and north of Loughrea town centre (see map on page 10). The walkway is approximately 350m in length with an arm of the Walks extending a further 250m. It is a popular promenade within an amenity area that is of significant historic importance.

A high stone wall encloses The Walks to the south. A river flows at the base of this wall, along the length of The Walks. This man-made watercourse follows the line of defences of the medieval town moat, which was constructed around the middle of the 13th century. It is unique to Ireland, being the only still functioning medieval moat in the country, albeit significantly reduced in size. The river is a vital component of the Lough Rea fishery as it is the spawning ground for wild brown trout.

It is not exactly known when the walkway was put in place, but it was in existence by 1791, as it is shown in the estate map of this date. In medieval times, Loughrea was fortified with the moat, earthworks or timber palisade. The wall, foot bridges and stone lining evident today date from when the promenade was put in place probably, in the late 18th century.

Due to lack of maintenance, vegetative growth and general neglect, all of the masonry elements along The Walks were in need of urgent repair. One section of wall had collapsed entirely, some of the bridges were structurally unsound and the stone lining had all but disappeared.

In 2017, Galway County Council's Architectural Conservation Office commissioned a Conservation Plan for The Walks. This plan would specifically inform the repair of the wall, bridges and stone lining.

Following completion of the plan, a group of local people came together and set up The Walks Project. The goal was to raise funding to carry out the repair work to the masonry elements at The Walks and to ensure that this work was carried out in an appropriate manner.

An application to the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2018 was successful. €100,000 was allocated towards the project. Match funding was raised locally, through sponsorship by local businesses and a campaign "€1 a Week for the Walks" whereby people contribute €50 a year for a five year period. Fishery legislation only permits work to be carried out from July to October.

Phase 1 of works was carried out in 2019. 98 linear metres of wall and three bridges were repaired. An application for Phase 2 was made to the ORIS in 2019. This application was successful with €100,000 being allocated. Work is currently underway and will be completed by the end of October 2020. The work for the current year has three components: Repair of 10 bridges, repair/reinstatement of 29.5 meters of stone lining and site investigation works, to establish if reinforcement is needed for a number of sections of wall.

The NPWS, Loughrea Anglers Association and people with property bordering The Walks have been consulted. All the required consents and permissions have been obtained. The work is carried out under archaeological supervision with the required Ministerial Consent in place.

CONSERVATION PLAN TEAM

Ursula Marmion, Project Co-ordinator

Anne Carey, Archaeologist

Pat Meaney, Galway Building Surveyors,
Conservation Specialist

Dr. John Conaghan, Enviroscope Environmental
Consultancy

ADVICE & EXPERTISE

Mairín Doddy, Architectural Conservation Officer,
Galway County Council

Anne Carey, Archaeologist

Pat Meaney, Galway Building Surveyors,
Conservation Specialist

John Britton, Consulting Engineer

John Curtin, Bat Specialist & Ecologist

Irish Drilling Ltd.

The wider community is updated on the project through The Walks Facebook page and articles in the *Connacht Tribune*. The local fundraising has been very successful with about €46,000 raised to date for The Walks Project.

LOCAL STEERING GROUP - VOLUNTARY

Chairperson: Cllr. Michael Maher – representative for
Loughrea Medieval Festival

Vice-chairperson: John Cuddy, Solicitor

Secretary: Mary Nix – representative for Loughrea Tidy
Towns

Treasurer: Shane Donnellan, Accountant

Members: JJ Hannon & Pat Scully – representatives for
Loughrea Anglers Association

Project Co-ordinator: Ursula Marmion

CONSERVATION CONTRACTORS - PHASES 1 & 2

Mathieu & Mitchell Ltd.



LOUGHREA MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL



LOUGHREA Medieval Festival

The Loughrea Medieval Festival committee was set up in February 2014 with the aim of bringing greater awareness, understanding and knowledge of Loughrea's rich medieval heritage among the locals and visitors to the area. Other aims include:

Provide enjoyable, memorable fun days for residents and visitors - engage with all age groups - something for everyone

Develop and create a new heritage tourism resource for Loughrea town

Engage with the Loughrea community, build lasting relationships with groups and organisations

Create a new focus of the medieval heritage of the town that will lead to further academic and local history research and to make this available in print and digital format to a wide audience

Continue to be part of the Irish Walled Town Network (set up by The Heritage Council of Ireland), network with other towns in IWTN, learn from their experiences, and develop Loughrea as a high class Walled Town Festival and to engage other related heritage initiatives.

Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee present an exciting and varied programme of events, designed to appeal to people of all ages. It is scheduled over the weekend at various locations throughout the town.

The inter-generational, family-focused, fun and interactive weekend also has a strong medieval, educational and awareness-building themes.

There are approximately 5000 people resident in Loughrea town alone, and the committee want them all to take part in at least one event in the festival. This means including a diversity of content and being creative about how to include people.

By 2019 the three-day event attracted over 20,000 people from both at home and abroad. Each year there is a mix of events which have included medieval talks and demonstrations, knights' tournaments, living history presentations, butter making, spinning, straw craft, glass bead making, stilt walkers, copper craft, a game of medieval hurling between the two great rivals Loughrea and Athenry. There have also been blacksmith demonstrations, traditional crafts, medieval cookery demonstrations, workshops, archaeological dig, bee keeping, children's arts and crafts, medieval music, local camera club exhibition, child friendly jousting, sword fighting and amazing combat displays. Food is a big part of the festival each year with cookery demonstrations and the showcasing of high quality local foods.



LOUGHREA VIRTUAL MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL 2020

LEARN-CONNECT-CELEBRATE OUR MEDIEVAL PAST

SUNDAY 23RD AUGUST 2020



f Galway Beo Facebook

There is lots to discover and learn about Loughrea's medieval past. See our films, videos, 'Etching of Loughrea' online exhibition, medieval news activity book, photo gallery and much more on our online platforms.

Galway County Heritage Office <https://rb.gy/bf4d5c>

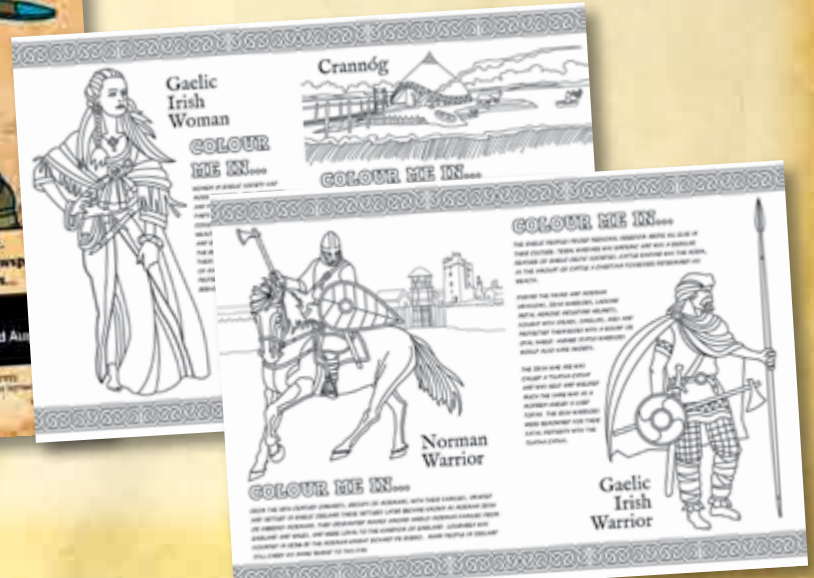
Live Streaming of Loughrea Virtual Medieval Festival will be on Sunday 23rd Aug at 1pm on Galway Beo Facebook **f**

POSTER DEVELOPED BY THE HERITAGE OFFICE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL & LOUGHREA MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL COMMITTEE. FINANCED BY GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND THE HERITAGE OFFICE. A MEMBER OF THE OPEN WALKED TOWN NETWORK.

LOUGHREA VIRTUAL MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL

Due to Covid 19, Loughrea Medieval Festival had to move to an online platform in 2020. The festival theme was 'Learn, Connect & Celebrate Our Medieval Past'. Over 40 videos, activities, and podcasts were developed and designed to be inclusive, accessible, fun and free for all to view on our website and social media platforms.

View online: <https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/topics/loughrea-virtual-medieval-festival>



Gaelic Irish Woman
COLOUR ME IN...

Crannóg
COLOUR ME IN...

Norman Warrior
COLOUR ME IN...

Gaelic Irish Warrior

LOUGHREA MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

The founding members of Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee in 2014 were Cllr Michael Maher, Chairperson, Michelle Mitchell, Secretary, Colman Shaughnessy, Treasurer and Joe Loughnane, PRO.

In 2018 the Chairperson was Cllr Michael Maher, Secretary Valerie Kelly, Assistant Secretary Michelle Mitchell and Treasurer Mary Ida Kelly. Committee members were Colman Shaughnessy, Joe Loughnane and Fiona Cusack.

Michelle Mitchell held the post of Secretary and was a committee member until 2019. The current committee members are Cllr Michael Maher, Chairperson, Ann Dolan, Treasurer. Colman Shaughnessy and Joe Loughnane are committee members.

The committee has received very valuable help and assistance over the years from the staff of Galway County Council offices in Loughrea, in particular, Gerard Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer, Enda Mulryan, Senior Executive Engineer, Michael Kelly, Community Warden, Michael Duane, Senior Technician, Pauline McHugo, Assistant Staff Officer, Lorraine Cooney, Clerical Officer, John Higgins,





Staff Officer, Lorraine Hughes (RIP), Bernie Healy, Clerical Officer and Brendan Sheehy, Assistant Engineer. In addition to this Gráinne Smyth, Clerical Officer, Caroline Hannon, Assistant Staff Officer and Martina Creaven, Senior Staff Officer undertake a considerable amount of work with regards to the delivery and administrative aspects of the festival.

Loughrea Athletics Club, Loughrea Memorial Group, Loughrea Hurling Club, East Galway Food and Heritage Movement, Gardaí Loughrea, Naomh Breandan Credit Union, Loughrea Anglers' Association, Loughrea Rugby Club, Loughrea Camera Club, The Carmelite Community, Temperance Hall staff, Monsignor Cathal Geraghty, Hany Marzouk and Larry Morgan, local photographers, the *Connacht Tribune*, *Galway Advertiser*, *Galway Bay FM*, the local schools and local businesses have all provided much needed assistance and help to the committee over the years. The GMIT Culinary Arts team who comprise Noel Loughnane, Johnny Carroll, Louis Smith, Mary Reid, Helen Scully, and Mike Loughnane host an excellent demonstration each year and pick a different aspect of food that would have been eaten in medieval Ireland and add a modern twist to it.

Several talks and events have been held in Loughrea Library over the years and the staff comprising Anne Callanan, Executive Librarian, Gretal St John Sullivan, Branch Librarian and Sheila Reilly, Branch Librarian have devoted considerable time and work with regards to the delivery of these events.

Each year the committee relies on a number of people to assist in a voluntary capacity in the delivery of the festival and

other initiatives, they include: Dr Christy Cunniffe, Damien Goodfellow, Ciarán Cannon; TD, Justin Lynch, Frank Lynch, David Lynch, Pat Maher, David Smyth, Brian Shiel; Benny Daniels; Benny and Mary Shiel; Kieran Morgan; Niall Maher and the Treblemakers; Tommy Skehill; Gerry Nihill; Keith Shaughnessy and Gerry Broderick.



Members of the Carmelite community assist with the Latin mass every year and these include Fr Micheal MacLaifeartaigh, OCD (Prior), Fr Willie Moran, OCD (First Councillor), Fr Cronan Glynn, OCD, Fr Ambrose McNamee, OCD, Fr Tom Shanahan, OCD.

The committee works in partnership with the Heritage Office of Galway County Council in the development of the festival and related initiatives. Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee is a member of the Irish Walled Town Network (founded by The Heritage Council) and works with the IWTN and The Heritage Council with regards to creating a greater awareness and knowledge of our medieval past. Funding for initiatives to date have been provided by Galway County Council, The Heritage Council, Galway European Region of Gastronomy, Galway 2020 and local community sponsorship.



UNCOVERING OUR MEDIEVAL ECCLESIASTICAL HERITAGE

This event which is held each year as part of Loughrea's Medieval Festival continues to attract visitors, especially those from overseas. Local guides, Colman Shaughnessy and Joe Loughnane, from Loughrea Memorial Group provide visitors with a fantastic insight into the holdings of Clonfert Diocesan Museum, St Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea.

The visitor has the opportunity to explore the Clonfert Diocesan collection, which showcases spectacular treasures including chasubles from the late 15th century, 500-year-old 'Matheus Macraith' chalice and carved painted wooden figures including the Kilcorban Madonna (c.1180 AD).

MEDIEVAL COOKERY DEMONSTRATIONS



The GMIT Culinary Arts team who comprises Noel Loughnane, Johnny Carroll, Louis Smith, Mary Reid, Helen Scully, and Mike Loughnane host an excellent

demonstration each year and pick a different aspect of food that would have been eaten in medieval Ireland and add a modern twist to it. They have cooked various foods including the turnip, potato, pig and food to be found in the local hedgerows.

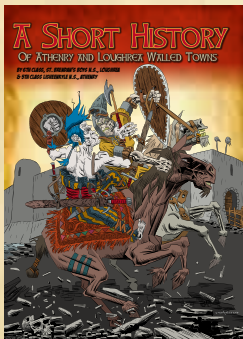
MASS IN THE OLD CARMELITE ABBEY



A unique Latin mass is celebrated in the ruins of the Carmelite Abbey with the Carmelite Community, and hymns from Padraig Connaughton. This event

is always a very moving and atmospheric event.

A SHORT HISTORY OF ATHENRY & LOUGHREA WALLED TOWNS - A MEDIEVAL COMIC BOOK



6th Class pupils from St Brendan's Boys National School, Loughrea, and 5th Class pupils from Lisheenkyle National School, Athenry took part in this project from May to July 2014. As part of the initiative they received workshops in art, history and comic making. This project was funded by The Heritage Council, Galway County Council and Irish Walled Towns Network, and

developed by Galway County Council, Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee, Athenry Walled Town Committee, and Athenry Heritage Centre. It was launched in Loughrea at Loughrea Medieval Festival 2014.

To view online see <http://goo.gl/t0WABq>

MEDIEVAL LOUGHREA MEMORY MAPPING PROJECT

Medieval Loughrea Memory Mapping project was launched at Loughrea Medieval Festival in 2016. This bi-lingual Memory Mapping Project was created by students from Gaelscoil Riabhach, Baile Locha Riach, and assisted by archaeologist Dr Christy Cunniffe, artist Teresa Ward and Garry Kelly, GK Media. There are 10 stops on this bi-lingual memory map.



In addition to bi-lingual text there are bi-lingual podcasts relating to each site. This work was commissioned by Loughrea Medieval Festival, The Heritage Council and Galway County Council. It was funded by The Heritage Council and Galway County Council.

View online: <https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/places/>

[loughrea-medieval-memory-map-trail-for-kid-by-kids](https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/places/loughrea-medieval-memory-map-trail-for-kid-by-kids)

LOUGHREA HERITAGE TOWN WALK & TALK



A walk and talk relating to the heritage of Loughrea takes place as part of the Loughrea Medieval Festival each year. It allows the visitor to discover the remnants of the historic medieval town of Loughrea. Colman Shaughnessy and Joe Loughnane, who are knowledgeable local guides from Loughrea Memorial Group, undertake these walks and talks.

A DIGITAL 3D RECONSTRUCTION OF MEDIEVAL LOUGHREA



A Digital 3D reconstruction of Medieval Loughrea was prepared for Loughrea Medieval Festival, in partnership with The Heritage Council, Irish Walled Towns Network and Galway County Council. Work was carried out by RealSim Galway. Phase 1 Complete. Launched as part of Loughrea Medieval Festival 2015.

This movie provides the viewer with a digital 3D reconstruction of medieval Loughrea. It is the first iteration of a multi-phased project to build a detailed and extensive 3D reconstructed digital interpretation of how Loughrea may have looked in the mid to late medieval period. This work was developed by RealSim on behalf of Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee, Galway County Council and The Heritage Council.

View online: <https://youtu.be/-1BHW4rXNUE>

GO EXPLORE THE MEDIEVAL HERITAGE OF LOUGHREA & ATHENRY

This bus trip was organised by Galway County Council in partnership with Athenry Walled Town Day Committee and Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee in 2015. Dr



Christy Cunniffe was the expert guide who took participants on a journey to uncover some of the hidden medieval heritage of the Loughrea and Athenry area. The aim of undertaking a bus trip was multifaceted. In the first instance it was to showcase the rich medieval heritage of the two towns as well as gauging interest in this type of tour and to look at the potential of running this initiative on a regular basis in the future.

CONNECTION BETWEEN MEDIEVAL TOWNS OF LOUGHREA & THE MEDIEVAL HUNGARIAN CITY OF GYÖR

Bishop Walter Lynch was appointed Bishop of Clonfert in



1646. He was exiled during the Cromwellian era, first going to Inishbofin and from there to the Continent. He finally found refuge in Hungary, where he was given shelter by the Bishop of Győr.

Bishop Lynch took with him a painting of the Virgin and Child from Galway and it was hung in a side altar. On St Patrick's Day 1697, according to tradition, blood flowed from it and was removed by a linen cloth, which is now a relic. An altar was built for the picture dedicated to Mary, Consoler of the Afflicted. Bishop Lynch died in exile in Győr in 1663 and is buried in Győr Cathedral.

In 2003, Bishop Lajos Pápai from Győr presented a copy of the painting to St Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea.

A TASTE OF THE PAST: EXPLORING OUR EUROPEAN CONNECTIONS

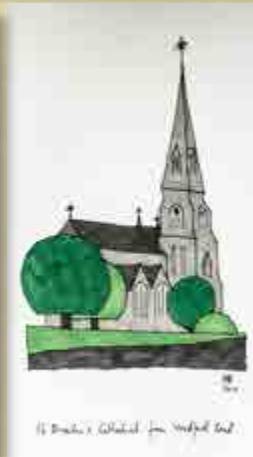
'A Taste of the Past: Exploring our European Connections' was an initiative developed by Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee and Galway County Council in partnership with Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture, Small Towns Big Ideas initiative. The event recognised and built on the connections between Ireland, Spain and Hungary. The medieval festival in 2018 brought artists, musicians, food lovers and historians to explore aspects the rich gastronomical traditions, language, landscape and migration of all three countries. It gave attendees the opportunity to understand the cultural similarities and differences between the countries and learn from each other; thus, uniting and strengthening the connection between Ireland, Spain and Hungary.



As part of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, The Heritage Council encouraged communities throughout Ireland to 'Make a Connection' with Irish and European heritage. They developed a special category to the National Heritage Awards 2018. The award Le Chéile san Eoraip gave special recognition to event organisers who explored heritage links between their community and a country in Europe. A Taste of the Past: Exploring our European Connections was one of three groups who won this prestigious award.

DRAWN TOGETHER ~ THE LOUGHREA ZIBALDONE

Drawn Together – The Loughrea Zibaldone project involved seven sketchers, 2 from Hungary, 2 from Spain and 3 from Ireland drawing together around the medieval town of Loughrea. Originally a zibaldone was a notebook kept by Italian merchants in the 14th century. They kept workday notes and also had personal stories and drawings in these notebooks. The most famous examples are Leonardo DaVinci's notebooks. The idea of the Loughrea Zibaldone was that this notebook would contain drawings, text, poetry, notes and stories captured by the sketchers over the course of the weekend. The legacy of this work, the Loughrea Zibaldone is available for all to see in Loughrea Library.



St. Brendan the Navigator

CIRCA
6TH CENTURY

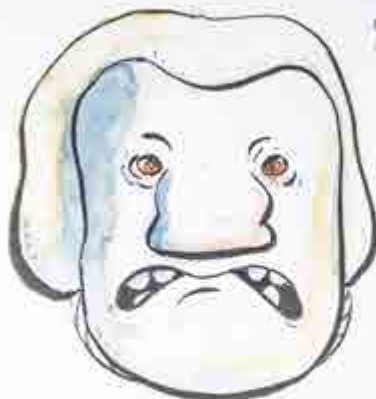


THE STORY OF ST. BRENDAIN GOES BACK TO AS EARLY AS 800 AD. THE WIKI: BRENDAIN ABBATIS IS ONE OF THE MOST ROMANTIC AND ENDURING STORIES OF MEDIEVAL CHRISTENDOM. ST. BRENDAIN LEFT IRELAND IN HIS LEATHER BOAT IN SEARCH OF A PROMISED LAND SOMEWHERE IN THE WEST ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

ON HIS SEVEN YEAR JOURNEY HE DISCOVERED HUNDREDS OF ISLANDS (INCLUDING THE FRODO ISLAND) AN ISLAND PARADISE OF BIRDS. HE MARKS CAMP AND LIGHTS A FIRE ON A SEA BEAST WHICH HE MISTAKES FOR AN ISLAND (A WHALE) AND THEN SOMETIMES GIANTS BARKING RUNNING ROCKS HE THEM (GLACIAL VOLCANOES) FRODOES BY CRUSTAL PLATES (GLACIERS) BEFORE REACHING THE PEAKING LAND (AMERICA)

STEPHEN STONEY BRENNAN

IN THE 18TH CENTURY HE WAS HANGED FOR STEALING A SINGLE TURNIP



GALLOWS HILL AT MOUNT CARMEL

PREHISTORIC LOUGHREA

Prehistoric activity in the area is intrinsically linked to the natural topography of the lake, Sliabh Aughty Mountains and natural esker ridge. While providing fresh drinking water and food, the lake also offered a safe environment from wild animals roaming the woodlands and unwelcome pillagers. Loughrea boasts a community of crannóg homesteads linked by submerged causeways to the shore. Neolithic activity is evident on at least one of the crannógs, with other possible habitation sites on the shores identified by McDermott during his research (see page 62).

The Bronze Age is represented with the presence of fulachta fiadh uncovered during excavations associated with the construction of the Loughrea by-pass 2004. Typically these cooking sites are represented in the landscape as kidney shaped mounds of burnt stone near a fresh water source. This period also sees the first instance of hilltop enclosures signifying the emergence of a social hierarchy. McKeon identifies two significant hillfort sites at Earlsparck within 1.5km of Loughrea. Bronze Age activity is also identified within the crannógs with the identification of a number of log boats, and a bronze pin amongst the many finds retrieved during 19th-century excavations. Lewis' Topographical dictionary of Ireland 1837 notes the presence of a circular enclosure, in which are seven stones, five standing stones on 'Monument Hill', in the centre of which is a small mound or tumulus. This would be a reference



St Brigid's Well. Photograph by Larry Morgan

to Recorded Monument GA105:162 (Stone Circle) located in Moanmore East. An associated tumulus would support the view this is Bronze Age in date.

Fourteen standing stones or sites of standing stones within a 7km radius of Loughrea shows a high concentration of possible prehistoric ceremonial sites. The most famous of these was located at Turoe, depicting La Tène Art on a large granite boulder. Moved from its original location of Feerwore Rath to Turoe in the late nineteenth century, it is currently under the care of OPW.



The Turoe stone decorated in the celtic La Tène style

The existence of forty early medieval enclosures identified within the immediate environs of Loughrea shows an intensity of settlement in the area. Commonly known as ringforts, these were agricultural homesteads, the larger of which may comprise a bi-vallate, or double ditch. Nearly every kame and drumlin in the area is taken advantage of with each fort located within sight of another, allowing support in times of cattle raids and pillaging.

The site at Garrybreeda, on the outskirts of the town, has long been associated with Saint Brigid, and with the possibility of an enclosure, holy well and it being referred to as Tobair Bride indicates its probable early Christian affiliations. One find from the crannóg investigations included a portion of a bucket handle with escutcheon dated to the 6th-7th century AD. Finds from Shore Island crannóg included traces of hearths, fragments of the upper and lower portions of a two-handled quern, a chert arrow head, a stone axe head of Silurian grit with a narrow butt and flat cross section, a bronze pin with a swivel head, a crozier of bronze, inlaid with silver, iron shears, a battle axe, a vessel of hammered iron that had been used for smelting purposes, a boar's tusk, a bone spoon, portions of hone stones, a knife with a bone handle, heaps of ashes, hazelnuts and part of a clay crucible.

The high concentration of early medieval enclosures shows the strong existence of communities in the area of Loughrea from the Early Christian period. This would have influenced the positioning of the possible Early Christian site at Garrybreeda. The curving nature of the surrounding landscape hints at a large circular enclosure, and the revelation of a ditch feature at Danesfort Drive in 2009 supports this (Delany, 2009). The holy well is dedicated to Saint Brigid and is still venerated today. Saint Brigid's Day is February 1st, and also ties in with the pagan festival of Spring. Many holy wells pre-date Christianity and were 'converted' to holy sites by the emerging Christian communities. The influence of Christianity continues and is evident in the rich ecclesiastical heritage in and around Loughrea.



MEDIEVAL LOUGHREA

MEDIEVAL BOROUGH OF LOUGHREA

Loughrea was founded as a medieval Anglo-Norman town in the thirteenth century by Richard De Burgh. Through time it has lost many elements of its medieval fabric, but close examination will pay the observer well. It has one of the last working moats in Ireland, one of its original gate towers, a Carmelite abbey, and still retains identifiable elements of its medieval street pattern and the shadows of its burgage plots. It also has a medieval church outside the town and a field to the west of the town known as Laurencesfield, a site that is thought to represent the location of a former leper hospital. It is missing elements such as its castle, parish church, town walls, two of its gates, market cross and similar other features associated with its past. However, an examination of the various primary and secondary sources allows us to piece together a picture of a vibrant and functioning medieval town. For example, the Inquisition Post Mortem held in Athenry following the murder of William De Burgh, the Red Earl of Ulster, in 1333 provides researchers with critical material that allows them to gain an insight into Loughrea in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. It also provides information on its associated manors and their tenants and enumerates the various rentals. A 1574 account noted in the Calendar of Carew Manuscripts states that Loughrea 'town is well ditched and trenched and fair walls begun but not finished, having 3 fair strong gates, made like 3 castles, the streets well divided and cut, and for the most part built within the walls

Loughrea was already 'on the map' or well inhabited with its lake dwellings, hillforts and enclosures by the time the Anglo-Normans arrived in Connacht. Establishing Loughrea as 'The Centre, or gateway of Connacht' was a statement of dominance and influence over the native people. Loughrea town was located centrally within the Anglo-Norman Cantred (later to become the Barony) of Loughrea, which corresponded to the early medieval Gaelic kingdom of Máenmag, a sub-kingdom of Uí Maine. Loughrea was to become one of Richard De Burgh's principal demesne cantreds and Loughrea town the chief borough, or Caput Baroniae, of the lordship of Connacht.

with houses of stone work, now partly destroyed and ruined'. This passage goes on to say that 'the compass is great and it is a very convenient place for a garrison to lie. It hath been within this 30 years a good market town but now there is none'. It also informs us that it was ruled by a portreeve since its foundation. A later entry in the Calendar of State Paper for Ireland dated 1611 informs us that Loughrea was 'anciently a walled town and corporation'.

This pamphlet focuses on the medieval aspect of the town using upstanding remains and a mix of primary and secondary sources, some from as late as the end of the seventeenth century to inform our understanding of the early town. Cartographic evidence in the form of a number of old maps provides other useful information. For example, a map survives from 1657 showing the layout of the town. Cuddehy's map dated to 1793 is of great interest as it also contains a list of the town's tenants at that time. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1840 is very informative as it notes the positions of the gates and gives the names of streets and other elements. It also illustrates the lines of burgage plots in the modern property boundaries.

LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION

Loughrea as the Caput Manorae of the De Burgh lordship was the capital of Anglo-Norman Connacht in the thirteenth century. From the various references it can be ascertained that



it had administrative and legal functions, having a corporation, a court, a portreeve, a constable and warders, so was capable of administering laws and enacting punishments. As late as 1837 Samuel Lewis records that a manorial court was still held in front of the seneschal, a throwback to feudal times in Loughrea. While Slaters Directory of Ireland for 1846 mentions that the 'government of the town is seated in a seneschal, who holds a manorial court occasionally'. The manorial courts were abandoned in 1852.



edition Ordnance Survey (OS) maps of c.1840, the Latimer gate and a gate at the eastern end of Main Street, the west gate now known as the west bridge had disappeared by that time. Interestingly, both of these gates are referred to on the OS map as castles, probably a reference to their size and tower house appearance. The only gate that remains in place today is the Latimer Gate. The bridge beside this latter gate is noted by John O'Donovan in the Ordnance Survey Letters for Loughrea as 'locally called "Lottomor" bridge, in the town, where one of the four gates in the town-wall formerly stood'. His suggestion that there were four gates might be a reference to the presence of a postern gate that provided access to the friary across the moat at the northern side of the town.

TOWN GATES

At the south-eastern end of the town a masonry gate of late medieval date, known as the Latimer Gate, survives. While it is missing some of its upper level, it is otherwise in good condition and provides us with some critical information regarding the town defences. It is significant for many reasons. It is one of three town gates referred to in the Carew Manuscripts for 1574. The earliest depiction of the Loughrea gates is on a map dated 1657 where they are shown in elevation. A reference to them occurs from c.1691 when the Jacobite follower John Stephens notes that 'the gates yet stand'. Two of them are shown on the first

When we examine the Latimer gate several things become apparent. The line of the original medieval street, now known as Barrack Street, can be deduced from the round-headed arches in the gate tower through which the narrow road was routed. It is also obvious from this that only relatively small carts and pedestrian passage was possible. A portcullis or drop-down wooden gate was present on the outer or moat side of the gate with a wooden gate on the outside. A wooden gate was also present on the town side so this building could be secured. An important aspect is that a shadow in the façade shows where the town wall abutted the gate tower.

Certain other things can be deduced as well; the gate tower is set back from the moat to provide space for a bridge, possibly a drawbridge. Recent excavation unearthed some wall footings and a cobbled surface in this area.

These large gates or gate towers were a statement of town status, a factor just as important as their defensive function. Many medieval towns had strong stone gates, though the rest of the town was defended by an earthen rampart. Gates were a statement of power and prestige. For example, at Athenry where an original medieval town seal survives, we find that the gates portrayed on the seal are stylistic and are a statement of status rather than an actual portrayal of what is to be seen there. The Latimer gate was converted for use as a diocesan museum in 1957.

TOWN MOAT

Loughrea contains the only surviving functional town moat in Ireland. An anonymous and undated transcript held in the local library states that the promenade along the northern side of the town moat was constructed in 1691 by 'levelling the old mound that ran along the northern side of the town in the days of the fortification'. This reference suggests that an earthen wall circumvallated the town and survived to some degree until the end of the seventeenth century. The moat is made up of a natural stream flowing from the lake at one side and an artificial channel returning to the lake completing the full circuit.



BREWERY

It is no surprise to find that the Borough of Loughrea had a brewery. Beer was an important commodity. One of the taxes collected in an Anglo-Norman town was referred to as the prisage of beer. Prisage refers to the tariff or percentage taken on wine and beer for the king. The Inquisition Post Mortem informs us that the prisage of beer for Loughrea was worth 40s. This is about £1,200 sterling or €1,323 in today's terms. Beer was often the preferred drink rather than water due to the pollution of wells and other fresh water sources because of the poor hygiene of the period. Even monasteries approved of beer drinking among the clergy for this reason. There is no hint at where the brewery was situated within the town other than that we now know that one existed. A brewery required a supply of fresh water, so a water source was essential. Beer, as R.W. Unger points out, was regarded as a nutritional necessity and was also used as medicine and was consumed by men, women and children alike. It could be flavoured with everything from the bark of fir trees to thyme and fresh eggs. We can ascertain from this, that it is likely that there would have been inns and taverns present on the streets of Loughrea, hinting at a successful settlement with many of the urban trappings we expect to find in towns.

STALLAGE & BAKERY

A reference to stallage and to a bakery occurs in the Inquisition Post Mortem of 1333. They are important indicators of urban living and of general mercantile activity. They are collectively

valued as worth 15s. Stallage refers to the rent or tax charged to each stall holder and street traders at the weekly market. Provision of a market was one of the critical functions of a town. Stalls were used by traders and farmers to sell products such as vegetables, meat and fish. Meat and fish stalls are generally referred to as shambles, thus the name Fishshamble Street in Dublin. The name is thought to derive from 'Shammel', an Anglo-Saxon word for the shelves which were a prominent feature of the open shopfronts at that time. There is little doubt, that Loughrea had both a fish and meat processing facility.

BAKERY

The reference to the presence of a bakery is interesting as it provides a further indication of the types of commercial activity that was taking place and the sort of shops there were in the medieval town. Bakeries, butchers' stalls, taverns, cobblers, candle makers etc are all trades and businesses essential to urban living.



Interestingly, King John introduced the first laws governing the price of bread and the permitted rate of profit in 1202. In 1266 a body known as The Assize of Bread sat to regulate the weight and price of loaves. The first bread subsidy was given – 12 pennies for eight bushels of wheat made into bread. A bushel of wheat is the actual weight of 8 gallons of wheat – this could vary according to the hardness or dryness of the grain. If a baker broke this law, he could be pilloried and banned from baking for life.

MILL

While the site of the original medieval mill has not been definitively identified it is very likely to have been on the stream side of the town moat. The presence of a mill near the town gate at the southern end of Market Street in the nineteenth century is very likely to be where the original medieval mill was situated. It was both convenient to one of the main town gates and close to the marketplace. This mill was known in the twentieth century as Fahy's mill. Despite an examination of the fabric in the recent past, nothing of an identifiable medieval nature was found within the fabric of the old mill structure. The right of multure was one of the privileges of the manor. It is a fee paid to the mill owner for having one's grain ground there. It usually comprised a percentage of the grain or of the flour produced. A mill presupposes the presence of agriculture and farms nearby. The mill was an essential feature of every medieval settlement. It was generally considered the property of the feudal lord and people using the mill thus had to pay him a certain amount either in money or in commodities for using the mill. This could be taken in the form of ground meal or grain.

FISHERY



The Inquisition Post Mortem also indicates the presence of a fishery and includes and values it in the same context as the mill. They are noted as 'a water mill,

whereof profits of tolls and a fishery adjoining it were worth £6 13s 4d, but now worth but 13s 4d'. It shows that the borough managed the fishing rights on the lake. The fact that it is mentioned suggests that it was a valuable resource and asset to the borough. It is known from documentary sources that other medieval boroughs constructed and maintained fishponds and fish weirs. Thus, it should be no surprise to find that full advantage would be taken of this 4.26-square-km freshwater lake. It is also likely that bailiffs were employed to control the fishery. Even as late as the twentieth century Loughrea eels were a prized food. The Fahy family held the rights to the eel fishery in modern times, a possible continuation from the original town charter. An examination of the east bridge shows that it has a number of arches. These were utilised in modern times in conjunction with sluices to manage and regulate the water flow to the fishery. A similar arrangement is likely to have operated in the medieval period.

DOVECOTE

The presence of a dovecote in Loughrea during the medieval period served both a practical function as a year-round source of fresh meat but was also an important outward expression of seigneurial status. Its value at 10 shillings indicates that it was a very profitable venture. A similarly valued dovecote is recorded for the rural manor of Tooloobaun situated some kilometres to the north of Loughrea. There is no upstanding evidence for where it was physically located. A number of dovecotes are illustrated on the seventeenth-century map of Galway. They are first noted here in the twelfth century when the Anglo-Norman colonisers introduced them as part of their suite of manorial buildings. Tadhg O'Keeffe makes the point that dovecotes 'were found at virtually all manorial centres for which we have information' and that 'doves were popular, but as a delicacy and not as a staple, as they provide little protein'. In another document O'Keeffe highlights the fact that doves 'were encouraged to nest in the small cavities inside dovecotes and were "harvested" in winter' and that their eggs were also consumed, while their feathers were used for filling for mattresses and pillows. Raymond Gardiner argues that dovecotes were often located in manorial gardens and they 'were firmly associated with rural lordship as the right to keep doves was a seigneurial prerogative'. Oliver Creighton notes that 'in England the right to build dovecotes was a privilege of the manorial lordship from the Norman period onwards and, prior to the seventeenth century, they were invariably without exception found in immediate proximity to high-status sites, both secular and ecclesiastical'.

MEDIEVAL PARISH CHURCH

The medieval parish church stood on the grounds of the Church of Ireland parish church, now the public library. It was dedicated to St Brendan, suggesting that it may have been a pre-Norman church, alternatively it could be a name acquired when it was procured as a prebendary by the clergy at Clonfert. Nothing survives of the medieval church, except its graveyard, containing three important medieval grave-slabs and a few pieces of medieval tracery to attest to its location. The grave-slabs discussed below are of great interest. A small number of references to the church occur in the papal documents. This church stood at a central place within the medieval borough. The parish church was an essential component of an Anglo-Norman town and generally commanded its own space within the town.

Loughrea appears in the Papal Taxation of 1302-08 where the goods of the rectory are valued at £37. 0s. 0d., returning a tithe of 49s. 4d., while the vicarage is valued at £6. 0s. 0d., returning a tithe of 8s. 0d. The available papal documents record some of the clergy and laymen associated with Loughrea parish church. One of the earliest entries dated June 1335 notes a 'grant to Thomas de Crosse, kings clerk, of the prebendal church of Loughrea in the cathedral church of Clonfert, in the kings gift by reason of his custody of the lands and heir of William de Burgo, earl of Ulster tenant in chief by king'. A second entry on this matter, dated May 1336 notes the 'revocation of the late collation by letters patent under the great seal of Thomas Crosse, kings clerk, to the prebendal church of Loghregh [Loughrea], in the church of Clonfert, in the king's gift by reason of his custody



of the lands and heir of William de Burgo, earl of Ulster, tenant in chief, as the king had already, by letters patent under the seal of Ireland, granted the church to Robert de Emeldon, kings clerk'. A further papal bull, dated December 15, 1415, confirms that a Hubert De Burgh had held the rectory of Loughrea for more than a month without papal permission. A papal letter for January 1418, appoints Edmond De Burgh as a canon of Clonfert and the rector of Loughrea, its value not exceeding 30 marks. Similarly, one for November 6, 1421 appoints David Ochalanayn as the vicar of Loughrea. This position was caused by the death of his predecessor Dermot Omurcuayn. Hubert De Burgh became the rector of Loughrea in 1423. In 1443 Roderick Ohegayd a priest of the diocese was removed as vicar of

Loughrea due to having held it for five years without permission, and William Omuregrayd was appointed as the vicar instead. In 1465 Donatus Ochanyyn, the archdeacon of Clonfert, informed the pope that Edmund De Burgh (a canon of Tuam) openly kept concubines and dilapidated the goods of the prebendary of Kilmeen and the rectory of the parish church of Loughrea. In 1459 Thady O'Hanrahan, an Augustinian Canon of Lorrha, Co. Tipperary informed the pope that Malachy O'Horan, the vicar of the parish church of Loughrea, had become a paralytic, and so was unable to administer the sacraments properly to the parishioners, and that he had also committed simony and dilapidated the goods of the vicarage, to the point that the parishioners chose to attend other churches or monasteries in order to receive the sacraments and hear divine offices. The upshot of this was that if it were found to be true, Malachy was to be removed and Thady appointed as vicar in his place. As Loughrea was a vicarage of the Abbey of St Mary de Portu Puro Clonfert the pope ordered that Thady be transferred from the monastery of Fontis Vivi, Lorrha to the monastery of Portu Puro, Clonfert. Loughrea was valued at 8 marks sterling at that time. A letter of 1448 to the pope from Matthew Macraith, bishop of Clonfert, sought to have the vicarage of Loughrea reunited to the monastery of Portu Puro, 'its former union thereto having dissolved by authority of the ordinary'. He planned to repair the monastery and create an episcopal residence for himself there. A further bull of 1489 appointed David De Burgh as rector of Loughrea following the death of his namesake, John De Burgh, who formerly held it, though having been deprived of it by papal authority. William O'Dempsey held the vicarage without

consent in 1493 and was deprived and the position was given to Edmund De Burgh, a cleric of Clonfert. These entries in the papal registres, though fragmented, provide a critical insight into the various appointments to Loughrea.

MARKET PLACE

An area to the north of the parish church stretching to a swelling in the eastern end of Main Street is where the former marketplace is likely to have stood. This area was referred to as Market Street until 1821. The presence of a weekly market is an essential component in a medieval town and in fact it could not have been a town without a market. While there are no records of the market or its value, a reference to stallage is a clear indicator of the presence of market stalls. Stallage is concerned with the toll or fee taken by the town from stall holders. An element absent from Loughrea is a market cross. However, it is highly likely that Loughrea had a cross, or perhaps more than one. A chance-find in the river or moat of a cross head of seventeenth-century date by Michael King of Bride Street may in fact have been a late market cross. It is described by Rev. P.K. Egan in the Loughrea museum catalogue as a 'fragment of a stone cross with the Crucifixus carved in relief. Only the cross piece with the arms and head of the figure and the upper portion with the letters INRI remain'. It was placed on display in the museum. After all Loughrea was the caput manorea of the De Burghs and taking into account its importance one would expect that it would have been fitted out with all of the trappings of power and status associated with an administrative and market centre. Medieval markets often spilled onto the graveyard surrounding the parish

church. A market was an important commercial element in the town as it allowed for tolls to be taken, but also for trade and commerce to develop. Both the Anglo-Norman colonists and native Irish would have traded goods at this market. It would also likely be used as a place to seal bonds and agreements.

LOUGHREA CASTLE

According to an entry in the Annals of Clonmacnoise a castle was erected by William De Burgh at Loughrea in 1236. Bradley and Dunne in the Urban Archaeology Survey note that 'there are occasional references to it in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and it seems to have been particularly important as a prison for distinguished captives of the earls of Ulster'. However, nothing survives of the castle today, so that the identity of its original location is an ongoing debate among commentators. A very important reference in the Inquisition Post-Mortem provides useful information on the condition of the castle in 1333. It relates that: 'there are several buildings, viz. a hall, a chamber, a kitchen, and several other houses, in said castle of Loghry [Loughrea], which are worth nothing beyond the charges, because they need large repairs'. While obviously describing a castle in a considerable state of decline, it nevertheless, provides some sense of its original grandeur and status as manorial castle.

The castle was clearly rebuilt as we find it in use again in the sixteenth century. A reference in the Annals of the Four Masters relates that in 1580 'The sons of the Earl of Clanrickard (Ulick and John) were at strife with each other' and that a 'party of the respectable inhabitants of Clanrickard were placed in

severe confinement by the constable of Loughrea, Master Jones by name, who had the command of the warders of the town since the capture of the Earl till that time.’ It further notes that it ‘was a great sickness of mind to John Burke that his town and hostages should remain thus long in the hands of the English; and he resolved in his mind to make a nocturnal attack upon the town of Loughrea. This he did, and took the town, killing everyone able to bear arms within it, except the constable, to whom he gave pardon and protection; and he then released the prisoners. They demolished the castle of Loughrea, the principal fortress of the territory’.

Little information is available on the actual location of the castle within the medieval town. Avril Thomas sees the castle as originally located ‘centrally along the lakeside’ where the Clanrickard House was later to be built. Others argue for a location where a vacant space occurs on Cuddehy’s 1791 map. A minor excavation undertaken in this general area by Paul Gosling failed to find any evidence of the castle. Excavations monitored by Delany in 2009, revealed a portion of wall along the western extent of Barrack Street. It was suggested this may be associated with the castle, but further investigation would be necessary to confirm this. Regardless of its location, the castle was a key element in the town.



BURGAGE PLOTS

A cursory examination of the first edition Ordnance Survey map for Loughrea shows elongated wedge-shaped plots to the rear of the houses within the township. These can be equated to the relict burgage plots of the medieval borough. Norman towns were typically laid out with such plots to the rear and for the scholar examining the layout of an Anglo-Norman town form one of the tell-tale elements looked for. In the medieval period these would have functioned as gardens and plots and as areas to keep small animals such as pigs. They would have held the stores and sheds. Normally, the medieval house was built with its gable facing the street. Burgage plots were lived in by the burgesses of the town.



GARRYBREEDA

Garrybreeda lies a little to the north of the medieval town core outside the moat on a high rise of ground. Referred to as Garrybreeda and as St Brigid's garden a reference to Saint Brigid. When and how St Brigid the patroness of Ireland became associated with Loughrea is unknown, but a number of elements refer to her. The medieval church outside the town

is in Garrybreeda and is referred to as such today. A holy well across the road from the church site is known as St Brigid's well and was a place of local pilgrimage in the past. The other highly significant element associated with the saint is the survival of a late medieval shrine known as St Brigid's Shoe. This slipper-like brass shrine is on public display in the National Museum of Ireland.



Garrybreeda church survives as a single chamber or unicameral building missing its west gable. It was restored and consolidated in the recent past and still retains a number of its

important original features. A damaged twin light ogee-headed window in the east gable dates to the late medieval period, probably fifteenth century. A similarly dated late medieval pointed doorway provided access to the church. The presence of a loose limestone corbel of late medieval date provides evidence that there was in all probability a priest's residence incorporated into the west end of the church. This was quite common at the time - similar priest's rooms are recorded at churches throughout the county. Otherwise this church lacks ornament. However, it would, like all medieval churches, have been fitted out with an altar, statues, a holy water stoup, and if functioning as a parish church, a baptismal font essential for the cure of souls. The corbel mentioned above has a knight's head carved on its underbelly. One of the earliest references to Garrybride appears in the Calender of Patent Rolls for 1305 and comes to us in the form of Tipperbride when we are informed that Richard De Burgh 'granted rent and land in Loughrea and Tipperbride to 24 chaplains'. The element 'tipper' in the placename appears to equate to 'tobar,' the Irish word for a well and with Bride appears to be an important early reference to the holy well.

According to Phelim Monahan ODC the church was built around the year 1240, placing it securely in the thirteenth century, the time when Loughrea was developing as an important town. It was common for twelfth and thirteenth century churches to be renovated and sometimes rebuilt in the fifteenth century. Many had suffered during the wars and also as a consequence of the poverty that followed the dreaded plague commonly referred to as the Black Death.



ST BRIGID'S SHOE

St Brigid's shoe is not a shoe *per se* but in fact a shrine or reliquary used to contain a relic of St Brigid's shoe. The shrine comprises of a metal case shaped in the form of a shoe with a scheme ornament, settings for stones and a Latin inscription. In its original form it had an oval bead, probably translucent rock crystal, the type that allowed pilgrims to view a relic beneath. In this case it is uncertain what it covered. Though the rock crystal is lost the raised clasps that held it in place are still to be visible. A smaller square mount can be seen further down. An incised design in the form of a sun burst or flames emanate from around this stud. A crucifix with a titulus above is shown beneath this, while the head of John the Baptist is at the top of

the scheme indicated by a Latin inscription naming the saint. A pair of sacred IHS monograms framed within circles flanks the crucifix. Ragnall Ó Floinn suggests that the shrine could date to the early sixteenth century, (perhaps evidence of repairs) making it quite a late reliquary. He also notes that the form of the Latin inscription suggests that it was used for swearing oaths on. It was preserved in Loughrea until the nineteenth century and afterwards was acquired by George Petrie. Following his death in 1866 it was donated to the Royal Irish Academy and was later transferred to the National Museum of Ireland. It is highly ornate and bears a crucifixion scene and an inscription that reads: "Loch Reich Anno Domini 1410. St Brigida Virgo Kildariensis Hiberniae Patrona".



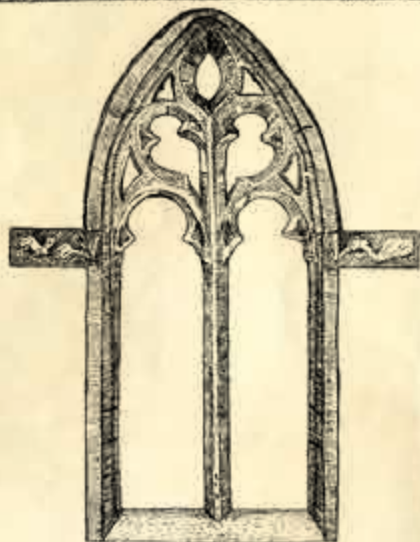
CLONFERT DIOCESAN MUSEUM

Clonfert Diocesan Museum holds a collection of rare ecclesiastical heritage objects. Of most interest to this discourse is a collection of medieval polychrome wooden statues. Two in particular are very relevant, a late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century Madonna and Child and a late medieval St Catherine from Kilcorban. They illustrate the type of statues that were to be found in medieval churches at the time. It is very probable that the two medieval churches associated with Loughrea, St Brendan's, the parish church within the borough and Garrybreeda outside the walls, along with St Mary's, the Carmelite Abbey, all had their own statues. In fact, St Mary's is likely to have had a statue of the Virgin Mary. While nothing of this nature survives from the town the examples in the museum

show us what may have been present in the past. Our Lady of Kilcorban is an enthroned Madonna depicting Mary seated on a wooden throne with the Christ Child presented in a regal fashion on her lap. The Kilcorban St Catherine, on the other hand is an upright figure and can be paralleled with the stone image of St Catherine depicted on the late medieval doorway at Clontuskert Abbey. A very fine, rectangular bowl of a baptismal font from Aughrim is also on show in the museum. It bears an interesting carving of an archer shooting a deer. Among the many chalices to be seen there, one dated to circa AD1500 belonged to Matthew Macraith, bishop of Clonfert from 1462 to 1507. It is the earliest of the chalices exhibited, the remainder are of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century date. This is one of the finest collections brought together by the late Dr Kevin Egan, a former priest of the diocese. Additional to the statues and church plate some rare examples of early twentieth-century Celtic revival work is also housed here. It will compensate the visitor well that frequents this small museum beside the cathedral.

ST MARY'S ABBEY

Writing on the history of the friars in Ireland, Colman Ó Clabaigh notes, that 'at the beginning of the fourteenth century the Earl of Ulster, Richard De Burgh, founded a Carmelite friary dedicated to St Mary at Loughrea, which, since 1236, had been the chief manor and seigniorial seat of the De Burghs in Connacht. Earl Richard further endowed the community in 1305 but there is no further reference to the Carmelites there until 1437 when Pope Eugene IV granted an indulgence to all who visited and contributed to its repair'. (O Clabaigh, 2007).



Though Richard De Burgh is generally accepted as the founder an entry in *Monasticum Hibernicum* identifies a man named Richard Harley as founder. The foundation date is generally given as AD1300. The papal letters provide a limited, but important source of information for the abbey. For example, John Fahy entered the Carmelite friary in 1435. An indulgence was granted in 1437 to those who gave alms as the house was in need of repair. This was a common way to affray the construction costs associated with repairs to religious buildings. St Mary's along with other religious houses was granted to Richard, Earl of Clanrickard at the dissolution in 1562. The friars continued to occupy the abbey under this arrangement, though taking themselves into hiding at times of turmoil. From 1640 on, St Marys was occupied by Teresian or (Discalced) Carmelites. They built a new friary on the grounds in the nineteenth century which they still occupy today.

What survives of the abbey today is the main body of the church - the nave and choir, a late medieval bell tower and a late medieval transept on the south and one other smaller annexe. The conventual buildings were originally laid out around a cloister to the north of the church. It was removed to accommodate the construction of the modern convent church which lies a little to the north of St Mary's. Various interesting features still survive. Inside, several medieval grave-slabs have been attached to the walls for safe keeping. The west doorway is of a late medieval pointed style and bears a pair of beasts on either side of the hood moulding. The remains of an ogee-headed window can be seen at first floor level to the north of this doorway highlighting where and in what manner the conventual buildings were attached to

the west end of the church. The crossing or bell tower is heavily coated with strap pointing but it is still possible to see that it is of late medieval construction. The style of the tower and the form of windows suggest a probable fifteenth-century date. The switch line east window is a replacement for an original lancet style window. A section of the original window still survives in the fabric. The tall lancet windows in the south wall of the choir are all contemporary with its construction date of c.1300. Families such as the Dolphins are buried here, suggesting a possible continuity from medieval times.

LEPER HOSPITAL

A site known as St Laurencesfields lies about a mile to the west of the town. It is believed to have been the site of a medieval leper hospital. Today it comprises a relatively well-preserved children's burial ground or killeen, with a second circular enclosure attached. The general view is that it was once the site of a leper hospital associated with the medieval borough. The presence of an earlier burial ground here could account for its use as a children's burial ground. Primary historical documents are lacking for this site and archaeological excavation has been limited and only focused on the line of the enclosing wall. Therefore, if there was leper or lazar hospital here it has not been identified. The Laurence element in the placename is a reference to lazar rather than to Laurence. Despite a geophysical survey and the excavation of a small test trench there by archaeologist Jerry O'Sullivan in 2007, prior to the erection of a stone sculpture, no traces of the hospital were noted.



LOUGHREA & THE DE BURGH FAMILY

Loughrea and the De Burgh family are inextricably linked since the early thirteenth century. The Anglo-Norman adventurer William De Burgh is traditionally regarded as the first of his family to settle in Ireland, arriving around 1185. Although granted much of what had been the former O Connor kingdom of Connacht by the Crown, it was his eldest son Richard who, along with his allies, achieved the conquest of Connacht in 1235.

De Burgh granted vast lands within the lordship of Connacht to his supporters but maintained a number of strategically important regions under his own immediate control. Foremost among these was the medieval cantred of Maenmagh in south Connacht. There, on the northern shore of Lough Rea, he formed the manor of Loghry and during the first years of the conquest built a castle which would become the seat of the lords of Connacht; around this castle developed the town of Loughrea.

The De Burgh fortunes prospered in the thirteenth century, when Walter De Burgh acquired the earldom of Ulster in addition to the lordship of Connacht. In the early decades of the fourteenth century, Loughrea was a significant medieval walled town with burgesses, a mill, a bakery, a brewery and an extensive deer park, partially walled, to the south-east of the town from which the modern townland of Earlsparck derives its

name. The earl's castle was described as having a hall, a chamber, a kitchen and other buildings. Some historians have taken the 'chamber' to be the stone castle itself and the 'hall' a separate, detached building, often used for communal purposes

William, the last De Burgh Earl of Ulster and Lord of Connacht was murdered in 1333 and the lordship descended into chaos, with in-fighting among junior De Burgh branches. The Gaelic Irish regained some of their ancient ancestral lands on the margins of the lordship but locally the De Burghs consolidated their hold in the more heavily-colonised central region in southern Connacht. This territory became known as Clanricarde and was dominated by the most powerful of the De Burgh branches. Loughrea remained the centre of their power, surrounded by junior De Burgh branches and families of Anglo-Norman settlers who managed to survive on their former estates. These included the MacHugos to the west and south of the lake, themselves a locally important branch of the De Burghs, and the Dolphins and Walls to the north and west.

The De Burghs and the Gaelicised Anglo-Normans adopted Gaelic laws of inheritance and the foremost member of the De Burghs of Clanricarde ruled almost as a Gaelic chieftain, adopting the title of Upper MacWilliam (as opposed to the most powerful rival De Burgh family in northern Connacht, the Lower MacWilliam). Ulick na gCeann Burke rose to power in the 1530s with the support of the Crown and accepted the title of Earl of Clanricarde in 1543. Thereafter, Loughrea continued not as the seat of chieftains but of the Earls of Clanricarde.

Throughout the late medieval period the town and castle were often the focus of violence, the castle being recorded as demolished in 1380. Like many others, it appears to have been repaired as it was still inhabited and defended throughout the 1500s. Clanricarde descended again into violence after the first earl died but the Crown supported his son Richard 'Sassanach' who became the 2nd Earl. The new earl and his sons gradually turned against the Crown, chafing at the loss of the earl's personal power locally.

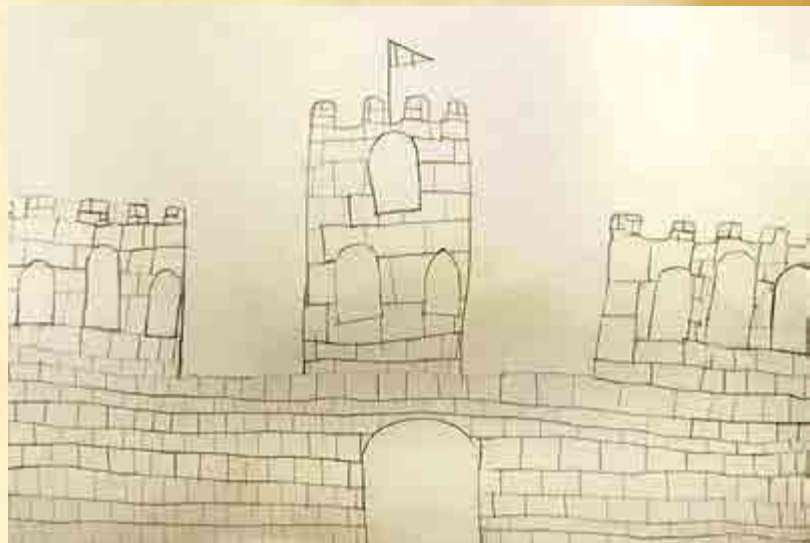
Loughrea was described in 1574, in the time of Richard 'Sassanach', as having been "built by [an] Englishman and, besides the castle, which is a goodly place, the town thereabouts is well ditched and trenched and fair walls begun, but not finished, having three fair strong gates made like three castles, the streets well divided



and cut; and for the most part it was builded [sic] within the walls with houses of stone work, which are now partly destroyed and ruinous. The compass of it is great, and is a very convenient place for a garrison to lie in. It hath been within this thirty years a good market town, but now there is none, and from the first foundation thereof was ruled by a portriffe to be chosen by the inhabitants thereof, as in other places it is accustomed; but these three or four years past, the place of the portriffe with all that civil jurisdiction was put down by the Earl of Clanricarde, who committed the government of the town to his constable, whereof all English orders ceased there." (The earl had the town defended in his interests by the head of the Scots gallowglass in his pay.)

Lord Deputy Sidney spent time as the earl's guest at his castle (which he described as 'Ballyloghreogh') in 1567 for peace talks among leading men of Connacht and Ulster. On his departure he took two of the earl's sons with him as hostages but these later rebelled. Sidney grew suspicious of the earl and sent him to England to be tried for treason, and his sons, the Mac an Iarlas, rose again against the Crown. Sidney wrote that he placed Loughrea castle and town in the charge of both Thomas Le Strange and Captain Collier. These two, he said: "so manfully and valiantly defended both the castle and the town, in which they were both besieged by 2000 scots and Irish, brought thither by the Earl's sons, that no house or cottage perished, although they were but 100 foot and 50 horsemen." Loughrea castle and town were still garrisoned in 1579 but the accession to the earldom of Ulick, the eldest of the Mac an Iarlas, negated the need for a ward as the new earl remained loyal to the Crown until he died in 1601. His son and heir Richard, 4th Earl of Clanricarde, was a steadfast royalist. He spent much of his life in England but constructed a new castle in the early decades of the 1600s at Portumna.

Portumna replaced Loughrea as the earl's principal residence and the castle at Loughrea appears to have fallen into disrepair during the seventeenth century. When the Jacobite Captain John Stevens was quartered in the town in the early 1690s, he described it thus: "the town is like the country, promises well at a distance, but when near you find only the remains of a formerly indifferent place with some memory of walls, the gates yet standing. There is also little more than the ruins of a very considerable house belonging to the Earls of Clanricarde."



Loughrea Castle by Lucy Anderson

Loughrea remained over the centuries an important market town within the County of Galway and, until the death in England of the last marquis in 1916, a part of what used to be the vast estate of the Clanricardes. Little remains above ground today of the De Burghs' medieval town with the exception of the ruins of the Carmelite priory, a later gatehouse of the town walls and the ruins of a few other buildings. Of particular interest are what may be the only surviving town moat still functioning in Ireland and the intermittent stone walls of the Earl of Ulster's deer park on the outskirts of the town.

THE ANGLO-NORMAN PARK; EARLSPARK, CO. GALWAY

Taken from research and work undertaken by Dr Fiona Beglane.

2 km south-east of the town of Loughrea, in the townland of Earlsparck, is an exceptionally well preserved medieval deerpark. First documented in 1333, a recent field survey has identified the park. It is defined by a mortared stone wall extending for 7.4 km and standing up to 2.6 m in height. It has a total area of 369ha (913 statute acres) and is split between the parishes of Loughrea and Killeenadeema.

WHAT IS A DEER PARK?

Deer parks were used to confine deer, but also had other purposes including grazing cattle and sheep, raising horses, supplying timber and firewood, conducting arable agriculture and providing a location for fishponds and rabbit warrens. The town of Loughrea was probably originally sited for its strategic importance in controlling traffic between Dublin and Galway, but there was a subsequent lack of economic and architectural development. Coupled with the aesthetic appeal of the lakeside setting, McKeon suggests that Loughrea might have become more important to the De Burghs as a recreational retreat rather than as an economic centre.



An excellently preserved stretch of original wall meets a rebuilt stretch. Note the 'letterbox aperture' on the left of the image © Photograph by Fiona Beglane

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The park boundary wall is coterminous with the townland boundary over its entire length. It extends to 7.4 km and much of it is similar in height to the surrounding field walls, though sections measuring up to 2.6 m in height do exist. It is important to note that the townland boundary was originally constructed in a different manner to nearby field boundaries. Extant high sections of the wall were built using angular blocks of limestone rubble mortared into rough courses, with the long axis of the stones set parallel to, rather than across, the line of the wall. Where exposed, a lime-mortared rubble core is evident inside the



The gateway at the NE corner, with detail of the S wall end showing the aperture for the beam to close the gate as well as the reveal into which the gate sat

© Photographs by Fiona Beglane

two faces of the wall. The base was generally 0.9–1.0 m thick, rising with only a slight batter. Mortar samples were removed from eight locations where the core was exposed. The one piece of charcoal recovered gave a radiocarbon date of 1251–97 (cal ad UBA-18087). The date range lies between the founding of the town of Loughrea in 1236 and the documentary evidence of the park being in existence by 1333. This ties the construction of the wall to the time of either Walter (inherited 1248, d 1271) or his son Richard, the Red Earl (d 1326).

ACCESS & SECURITY

The known gates into the park are at the NW and NE corners. The gateway at the NE corner of the park is 3.04 m (10 ft) wide, and so was of a sufficient size to allow access for carts. It was

secured from the outside, presumably by a wooden gate. There is stony, disturbed ground immediately outside. Geophysical survey suggests that a cobbled yard and track may once have existed there.

A sub-rectangular aperture through the wall, which was part of the original construction, was noted on the E side. This measures 0.2 m by 0.2 m and is positioned 0.8 m above ground level (Figure 1). It is sited at the top of a hill and close to a monument which is recorded as a hillfort. The aperture may have functioned in a similar way to a modern letter-box. It may also have allowed spoken communication between individuals on opposite sides of the wall.

The 17th-century map of Connacht and of Galway (1685), shows ‘The Parke’ and ‘Parkbeg’ to the south-east of Loughrea town. Parkbeg can be equated to the N portion of Earlsparke, and the presence of trees in the S portion, ‘The Parke’, suggests that it was still at least partly wooded at that time.

A complex of sites within the northern portion of the park is important in understanding the significance of the siting. This has the densest concentration of archaeological monuments in the townland including the ‘Lady Stone’ or ‘Earl’s Chair’, which is a previously unrecorded standing stone, a possible hillfort with two associated structures, two ringforts, a rectangular earthen structure and two ponds. The wall passes immediately to the north of these, curving to ensure that the monuments are incorporated into the park, while the relict road running between the gateways leads directly to this area. Several other ‘Earl’s Chairs’ are known, including those at Kilcolgan and

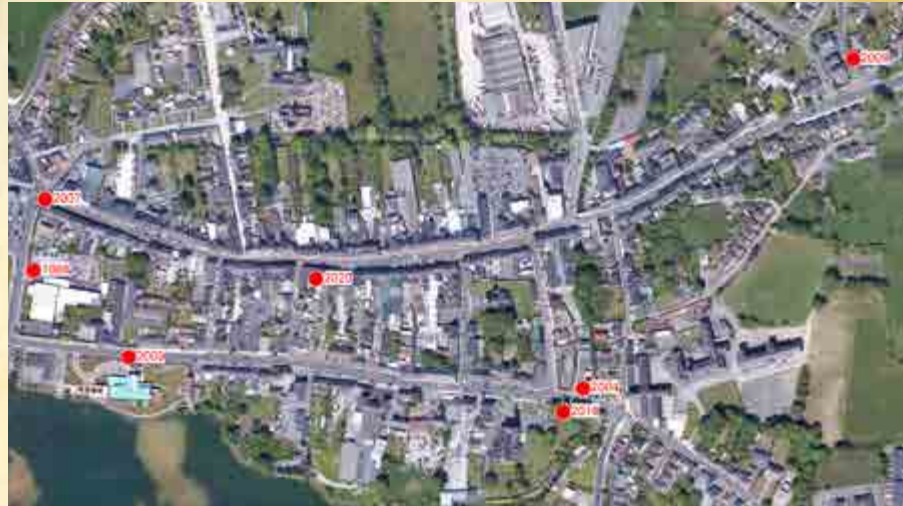


Earlsburg is the largest of the medieval parks known in Ireland, and the presence of a mortared stone wall makes it by far the most impressive. By 1236 the De Burghs were lords of Connacht, and by 1264 they had added the earldom of Ulster to their honours. As a result they were extremely powerful. Hunting was an integral part of the medieval elite lifestyle, parks were expensive to build and maintain, and a park of the size of Earlsburg was of royal proportions. As one of the most powerful families in Ireland, this park placed the De Burghs within the European elite.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS LOUGHREA

Recent archaeological investigations in Loughrea have been associated with the installation of services, construction and road developments. This means that investigations have been limited to the constraints of development so when archaeology is uncovered the archaeologist records and then ensures its preservation in situ. Only when archaeology cannot be preserved in situ, and once agreed by the National Monuments Service and National Museum of Ireland does full archaeological excavations proceed. Preservation by record is then applied. More information is gathered through excavations, like dating and the full extent of archaeological features, however; this is a non-renewable resource.

Loughrea town is classified as a Recorded Monument. The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is the most widely applying provision of the National Monuments Acts. It comprises a list of recorded monuments and places and accompanying maps on which such monuments and places are shown for each county. It can be consulted in county libraries, main local authority offices and on-line at www.archaeology.ie. The National Monuments Service of the Department of



Aerial view of Loughrea showing a selection of excavations within the town

Housing, Local Government and Heritage advises on the protection applying to any particular monument or place under the National Monuments Acts by reason of it being entered in the Record of Monuments and Places.

Consent is required from the National Monuments Service prior to any proposed works within the Zone of Archaeological Potential. Any excavations within the archaeological constraints of the town requires archaeological mitigation. Archaeological investigations continue to add to our understanding of Loughrea and its immediate environs as a focal point for human habitation.

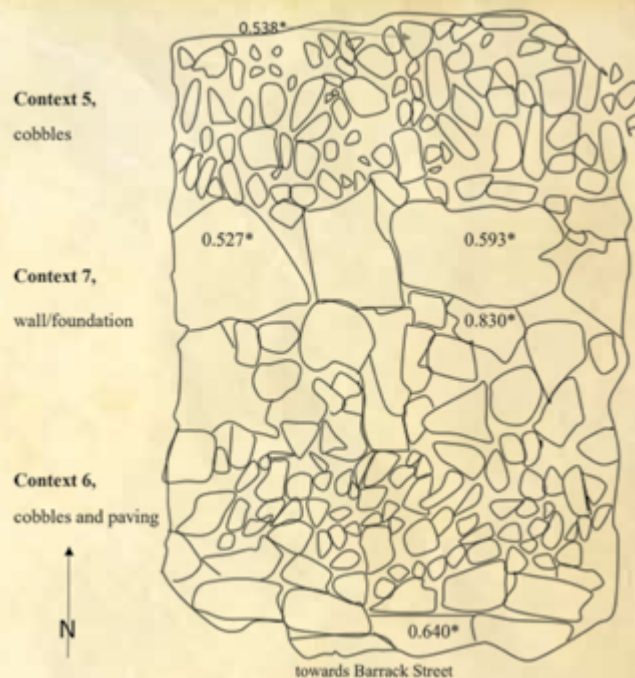
Loughrea is also designated as an ACA (Architectural Conservation Area) in the *Galway County Development Plan 2015- 2021*. Where elements of the town are listed as Protected Structures or located within Architectural Conservation Areas they are also protected under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010. The Acts require that Local Authority Development Plans include objectives for ‘the conservation and protection of the environment including... the archaeological and natural heritage’. In addition, development plans include a Record of Protected Structures that comprise a list of structures or parts of structures that are of ‘special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest’ within the Authority boundary.

The following is a selection of archaeological records associated with various developments within the town. Further information can be sourced from www.excavations.ie

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**2020 ~ COBBLED SURFACE,
15 MAIN ST, LOUGHREA
MONITORING, ANNE CAREY**

During excavations associated with refurbishment works at Ulster Bank/ OPW buildings, a substantial cobble surface flanking a possible wall or foundation of largely unmortared stone and plain construction was uncovered. It has not been possible to date these features but they are located at a depth of 620mm below current street level, indicating they pre-date the 18th and 19th century buildings that line the Main Street. The stone walling and flanking cobbled surfaces have been preserved in situ.

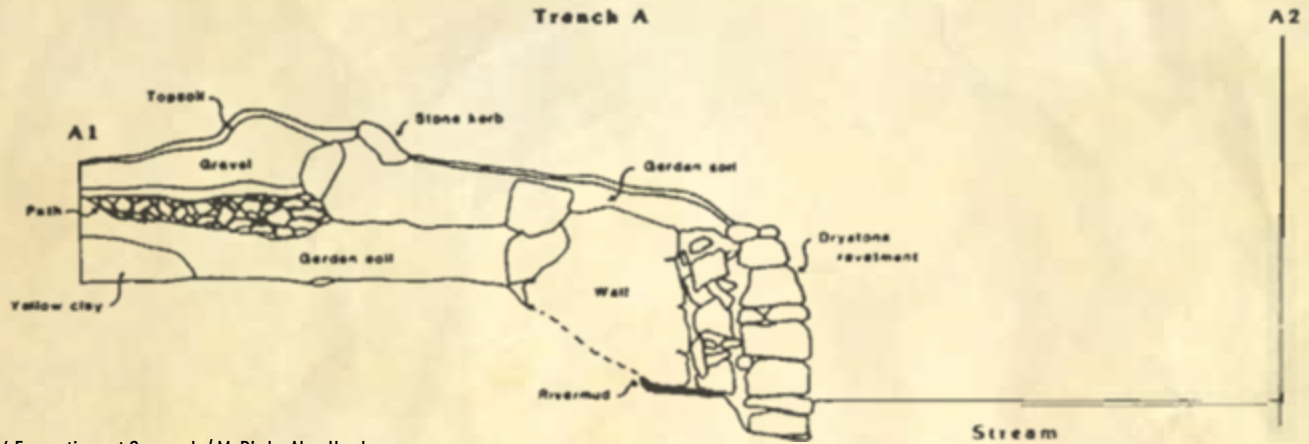


Plan showing cobbled surface and structural remains of walling, Main Street, Loughrea, Anne Carey

.....

1987/88 ~ LOUGHREA TOWN MOAT

The moat has not been extensively archaeologically investigated, though a small section of it was examined in 1986 by Paul Gosling and in 1987/88 by Alan Hayden, UCG, at the site of the former SuperValu development (currently McD's) to the



1986 Excavations at Supervalu/ McD's by Alan Hayden

south-west of the town. The excavation sought to establish the presence of a turret and associated wall along the moat. The moat was seen to have an original width of 4.5m and was dated to the thirteenth century. A later wall with a post-medieval date was discovered lining the eastern bank of the moat. The 'Turret' or Summer house on the Ordnance Survey Map proved to be a later construction of the 19th century. No evidence for earlier construction was identified.

.....
 2009 ~ BARRACK STREET
 DOMINIC DELANEY C338

Two walls were discovered on the northern side of Barrack Street, one of which appears to be related to the constabulary barracks.

The second wall was located c. 14m to the east of the first and it was c. 7m in length. The full extent of the wall could not be ascertained as it was outside the confines of the service trench. The two sections of walling uncovered during monitoring were of similar construction and alignment suggesting they are part of the same structure. Should these represent a continuous wall, its minimum length is 32.3m. It was considered likely that these walls are associated with the De Burgho's Anglo-Norman castle at Loughrea, which is recorded in this general area. Both sections of walling were preserved in situ.



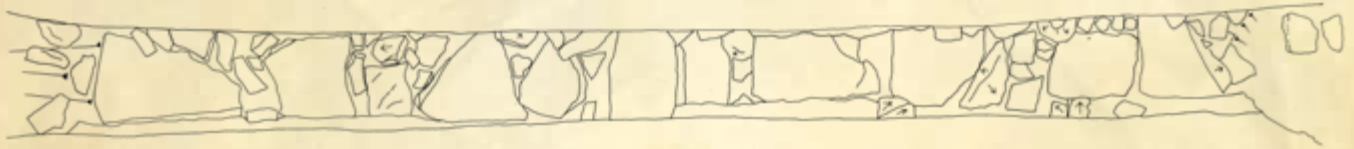
Showing limited revelation of walling at Barrack Street, 2009



Wall revealed at The Westbridge, Loughrea by (Fitzpatrick 2007)

2018 ~ LATIMER GATE MARTIN FITZPATRICK 18E0506

The Latimer Gate represents the sole survivor of three fortified gateways that once controlled access into the town. These are recorded on the map of 1657. The tower (5.8m by 7m) is approximately 10m high and has a battered base on its east and south sides. The architectural features of the building suggest a construction date no earlier than the 15th century and possibly considerably later. Excavations associated with an archaeological assessment for proposed development at the site uncovered features which would appear in the main to be post 17th century



Plan of wall from excavations at Barrack Street 2009



Elevation of wall from excavations at Barrack Street 2009



in date; however, a full recording of the ditch/channel uncovered was not possible and may provide earlier dating evidence. Finds from the site typically consisted of glass and pottery fragments - with black ware pottery, with a date range from the late 18th century onwards, the earliest artefacts recovered. Wall and ditch features uncovered were located immediately east of the gate tower. It is possible that they are related to the earlier medieval wall; however, it appears more likely that they functioned as a channel/canal feature that channelled water from the lake. A full excavation of the site may provide accurate dating evidence for this feature.

2007 ~ WESTBRIDGE

MARTIN FITZPATRICK E003193

Martin Fitzpatrick monitored excavations associated with broadband installation in the town under License E003193. The basal remains of the town gate were uncovered at the west end of Dunkellin Street. The first two sections of wall extended from the modern bridge over the moat and ran parallel to each other for a distance of c. 1.5m. They ran in a roughly east–west direction and were c. 4.6m apart. Both walls terminated at roughly the same distance from the bridge and facing stones were visible on both. The third wall was found to the east of the other two and measured 1.25m by 1.1m. The feature was cleaned back, recorded and backfilled, leaving the walls undisturbed.

2004 ~ LATIMER BRIDGE

In 2004 Fitzpatrick (License 04E1615) undertook archaeological testing in Barrack Street /Latimer Bridge in advance of development. A number of wall fragments and a stone chute/culvert were recorded. The site was located on the north side of Barrack Street, opposite the site of Latimers Gate.

2009 ~ DANESFORT DRIVE

DOMINIC DELANY C338

Features uncovered outside the historic town of Loughrea included a possible ditch, 9m wide and 1.8m deep, which was recorded in the west part of the area of constraint around GA105–049 (ecclesiastical remains) at Danesfort Road. This may represent part of an enclosing element around St Brigid's



Early Christian foundation; however, no finds or features indicative of the period were recovered during monitoring.

2004 ~ LOUGHREA BYPASS

MARTIN JONES 04E1506

The remains of a fulachta fiadh and associated features were excavated during the testing phase of the Loughrea bypass. In Area 1a, a level area at the south of the site was found to contain several cut features, including a long curvilinear ditch, pits or remnant troughs and modern drains or furrows. A number of recuts or modifications to the eastern end of the drain, at least some apparently closely contemporary with the period of initial use, were noted. The final fill of the drain contained a small, somewhat corroded, copper or bronze pin. The three similar pits were located towards the centre of Area 1a. Substantial amounts of burnt material were noted amongst the fills.



Drawing of spearhead recovered from archaeological excavation (after Angela Gallagher)

1990 ~ SOUTERRAIN, GRAIGUE
MARTIN FITZPATRICK

A souterrain discovered at Graigue, north of Loughrea, during development works at the golf course was not previously recorded, and appears to be an isolated archaeological feature of the immediate surroundings. There was no evidence of an associated enclosure. Souterrains have been long associated with ringforts, or early medieval farmsteads. It is widely accepted they were used as places of refuge and/or storage. The excavation revealed the western wall of the gallery extended a further 5.8m beyond the exposed lintel while the E wall extended for 5.25m.

These walls tapered on two occasions resulting in the gallery being just 0.75m in width at one point. The floor of the entrance passage sloped considerably, with a stone lined ramp leading to the gallery. A corroded iron spear-head was discovered close to the opening of the souterrain.

Objects of war are rarely associated with souterrains, so the recovery of this 9/10th-century spearhead is significant. While it was not found within the souterrain, it would appear to be associated with the users of the monument.

CRANNÓGS

Crannóg excavations in the 19th century identified that crannógs were inhabited from Neolithic times. Very few crannógs have been fully excavated in Ireland, hence the Loughrea concentration is extremely significant. Followed up with investigations some 120 years later, it proves we have much to learn from our lake dwellers.

1886 ~ EXCAVATIONS AT ISLAND McHUGO ~ WOOD/MARTIN

Bronze spear heads found in the proximity of the Island McHugo crannóg would suggest a Bronze Age date for some of its occupation. Wood-Martin also mentions traces of four canoes. A late medieval dagger, dated by the museum to 13th-16th century AD and what was identified recently as a portion of a bucket handle with escutcheon dated to the 6th-7th century AD would indicate a continued period of use from Bronze Age to the Late Medieval period.

1862 ~ KINAHAN

Three crannógs were investigated by Kinahan in 1862, showing habitation on Lough Rea from the Neolithic to Medieval

Period. A series of piles in the center of the Ash Island crannóg would indicate the sub division into various habitation or work areas. Finds supporting this on Shore Island include traces of hearths, fragments of the upper and lower portions of a two-handled quern, a chert arrow head, a stone axe head of Silurian grit with a narrow butt and flat cross section, a bronze pin with a swivel head, a crozier of bronze, inlaid with silver, iron shears, a battle axe, a vessel of hammered iron which had been used for smelting purposes, a boars tusk, a bone spoon, portions of hone stones, a knife with a bone handle, heaps of ashes, hazelnuts and part of a clay crucible.

More recent investigations in (2010) found an artificially constructed small harbour or docking area. Wood-Martin mentions that three hundred tons of bone were taken from the midden of this crannóg and possibly sold for manure or fertilizer. The bones recovered included those of oxen, sheep, goat, deer, pigs, large dogs or wolves and the head of a *Megaceros Hibernicus*, measuring over thirteen feet from tip to tip of the antlers. The finding of a stone axe and a chert arrowhead would suggest a Neolithic date for at least some of the portion of this crannóg's use.

Kinahan's excavations of Reed Island showed that it was constructed by layers of oak beams, laid at right angles to each other, followed by a layer of birch trunks and branches on which were laid a layer of large stones and peat. A circle of piles surrounded the crannóg two feet apart that were strengthened against wave action by a layer of flat stones. Peat and stones raised the floor of the crannóg as the lake level rose.



THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF LOUGH REA CRANNÓGS

Based on 'The Archaeology of Loughrea Lake and its Environs'

Loughrea is a fairly large lake measuring approx. 1.5k N/S and 1.5k E/W, with a circumference of some 7.7k. By and large the lake is quite shallow with the shoreline sloping gradually from 1m to 3m for most of the lake. In the centre however it deepens to at least 20m. While most of the lake has a mud/marl bottom, stony shores are apparent from Blakes Island eastward through Middle Island and southeast towards Stone Islands South. Natural reefs occur at the entrance to the boathouse on the northern shore, at Barrack Island and also at Stone Islands South.

The lake nestles in a wide valley floor, surrounded on three sides by a gradually rising series of hills with a slightly dominating view to the south of the Slieve Aughty mountains. Two small streams enter the lake, one from the south midway between Stone Islands South and Island McHugo while the other enters from the west, slightly north of Shore Island. There are two outlets from the lake, the Loughrea river exits the lake between two crannógs, Switch Island and Bush Island, and flows northwards, outside the medieval fabric of the town. This moat was constructed sometime after the castle was built in 1236 by William de Burgo.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE CRANNÓGS

A series of snorkels over most of the lake shore, backed up by reference to aerial photographs revealed a total of 13 crannógs with 1 other possible one.

One of the recently discovered sites located on a natural reef is only visible on an aerial photo. Traces of stone kerbing define a sub-circular inner area within the crannóg.

Barrack Island appears to be constructed on the same reef, the only visible traces above water are two small trees. Extending eastwards from the Long Island crannóg are traces of a possible causeway, which might indicate a site for craft or metalworking. Crannógs often had a small islet attached to them for that specific purpose.

Middle Island is a fine crannóg measuring 34.5m North/South and 26.4m East/West. From an aerial photo it is apparent that this crannóg is sited at the end of a long causeway, largely natural, which is up to 20m wide and extends SE from the present shoreline. There appears to be a possible ditch separating the crannóg from the causeway.

Bush Island crannóg appears to be sited to control access to the river mouth that feeds the town moat. There are six crannógs, which are all within the area that is defined by the only two rivers that exit from the lake. These rivers then form the town moat. Further East of this crannóg at the mouth of the river is what appears to be another possible crannóg or habitation site.

Island McHugo located in the SE of the lake is the only crannóg that could be termed to have a good defensive siting, i.e. out of range of arrows and small arms.

Bronze spear heads found in the proximity of the crannóg would suggest a Bronze Age date for some of its occupation. Wood-Martin (Wood-Martin, 1886) also mentions traces of four canoes. Finds also include a late medieval dagger, dated by the museum, to the 13th-16th century AD and what was identified recently as a portion of a bucket handle with escutcheon dated to the 6th-7th century AD. The range of artefacts would indicate a long period of use from Bronze Age to the Late Medieval period.

Ash Island was excavated by Kinahan in 1862. He did not find evidence that the crannóg was completely surrounded by wooden piling, but found parallel rows of ash logs on the NE of the crannóg six inches in diameter and two feet apart. Three oak piles were found on the N of the crannóg and two on the NW. A snorkel also found traces of posts extending from the W to the NW of the crannóg. Kinahan's finds were bone, wood ashes, hazelnuts, two hones and a round sea-stone. He found traces of a wicker dividing wall made of fir stakes, two inches in diameter and one foot apart, on the E of the crannóg.

Shore Island is located at the end of what appears to have been a natural causeway, formed of marl and peat. Kinahan in his 1862 excavations reached the original floor level, which had a basket flooring that stopped at a wickerwork wall. Extending N from this wall for 11 feet was a rough pavement of gravel on the same level as the basket flooring. He could not say definitely if the

basket flooring was in fact the original floor or if it was a collapsed dividing wall, he did note however that generally any series of piles in the center of a crannóg would indicate the sub division of the crannóg into various habitation or work areas. Finds from this crannóg included traces of hearths, fragments of the upper and lower portions of a two handled quern, a chert arrow head, a stone axe head of Silurian grit with a narrow butt and flat cross section, a bronze pin with a swivel head, a crozier of bronze, inlaid with silver, iron shears, a battle axe, a vessel of hammered iron that had been used for smelting purposes, a boars tusk, a bone spoon, portions of hone stones, a knife with a bone handle, heaps of ashes, hazelnuts and part of a clay crucible. There were at least three items treasure-hunted from this crannóg and now with the National Museum, two hoops joined in a bracelet, a perforated metal disc (both of uncertain date) and a finger ring with traces of millefiori dated recently to the 6th-7th century AD. Kinahan also found traces of three wooden circles of piles approx. 20m to the S of the crannóg extending in a slight arc and a series of stones and piles at the crannóg edge also extending in an arc, apparently delimiting the edge of the crannóg. There were also traces of oak piles to the East of the crannóg, a snorkel-dive found them to be part of an artificially constructed small harbour or docking area measuring 18.5m long and 5m wide. Five posts are still visible at the E end of this area. There are traces of piles extending along the N part of the crannóg as well. Wood-Martin mentions that three hundred tons of bone were taken from the midden of this crannóg and possibly sold for manure or fertilizer.

In 1848 among the bones taken from this crannóg were those of oxen, sheep, goat, deer, pigs, large dogs or wolves and the head of a *Magaceros hibernicus*, measuring over thirteen feet from tip to tip of the antlers. It would have been interesting to know the stratification of this particular find as there are no known associations of bones of the Giant Irish Deer with the earliest humans in Ireland. The finding of a stone axe and a chert arrowhead would suggest a Neolithic date for at least some of the portion of this crannóg's use.

REED ISLAND

Kinahan's excavations of Reed Island showed that it was constructed by layers of oak beams, laid at right angles to each other, followed by a layer of birch trunks and branches on which were laid a layer of large stones and peat. A circle of piles surrounded the crannóg two feet apart that were strengthened against wave action by a layer of flat stones. Peat and stones raised the floor of the crannóg as the lake level rose. The finds from his excavations included a whetstone, a hearth, a piece of iron, a wooden noggin, some brightly colored matter rolled up in a piece of birch bark and bones of ox, sheep and pig.

UNDERWATER FEATURES NORTH-WEST OF BLAKE'S ISLAND

A possible fulachta fiadh was sited 120m NW from Blakes Island crannóg. It is also possible they could represent earlier hut sites of a community living along the lakeshore.

ANGLO-NORMANS & THE LAKE

The founding of the present medieval town in 1236 by the De Burgh's may well have been influenced by the location of at least 6 crannógs, stretching in a rough line South from the only river outlet from the lake. The castle, of which no trace survives, is likely to have been in the area of high ground immediately West of these crannógs and a detailed investigation of the 1791 Clanrickard town map shows the distribution of Burgage plots (an Anglo-Norman sub division of land to retainers) which avoid the area in question. Coincidentally, it is also adjacent to the 'Castle Garden' and this gives us a tantalizing suggestion of where it possibly stood, on high ground overlooking the lake.

WHY DID PEOPLE LIVE ON OR NEAR LAKES?

Landscapes are physical, historical, social, sacred and economic and it is necessary to include all of these aspects in any approach to understanding how and why people chose to live in lake settlements. Continuity in lake settlement is visible in many sites from the Early Mesolithic onwards, which cover millennia in many cases, and show that an association with the past played an important role in settlement location. As society changed from a nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a more sedentary, settled lifestyle, settlement stability soon became more important than settlement mobility.

This overview of the current state of knowledge about the lake dwellings of Lough Rea allows a number of conclusions to be stated. There is evidence that from as early as Neolithic

times, man lived on constructed dwellings on the lake. Habitation on various crannógs continued up to the Late Medieval period. The evidence suggests that the earliest crannóg construction would be the adaptation of a possibly natural promontory at Shore Island by Neolithic settlers, followed by the construction of an artificial crannóg at Island McHugo.

Two types of crannóg construction apparent in the lake are the use of a naturally occurring reef on which to construct a habitation site such as crannógs and the construction of purpose built cairns of stones in specific locations (Island McHugo). Siting, in the case of the 6 crannógs located close to the present town, seems to have something to do with the exit of the only two rivers from the lake. The proximity to rivers may also have had some influence on the siting of the castle in 1236.





LOUGHREA
Medieval Festival

LOUGHREA HERITAGE TRAIL

Walking through history



Welcome to Loughrea (in Irish 'Baile Locha Riach', meaning town of the grey lake), located in east County Galway, approximately 30km southeast of Galway City.

Loughrea is regarded as dating from 1236, when Loughrea Castle was built by the Anglo-Norman, Richard de Burgo. However, there is evidence of earlier settlement with the remains of several sites and monuments in the area, including ringforts, souterrains, enclosures and crannógs. The town was fortified due to its strategic location. Its defences consisted of a town wall and a moat to the north, east and west, with the lake acting as a natural defence to the south.

This walking tour of Loughrea, comprising twenty-one heritage sites, starts at St Brendan's Cathedral, Barrack Street, and finishes on Main Street/Dunkellin Street. Each site is specified by its coordinates and shown on the map below.



1. ST BRENDAN'S CATHEDRAL

53.9701, -8.5660
The Cathedral of St Brendan, is the cathedral church of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Connacht. The foundation stone was laid on 10 October 1897. Built in a Neo-Gothic style, it was designed by architect William Burges. The cathedral was completed in 1902 and is now a treasury house of Gallic Revival art. The cathedral features stained glass windows from the cathedral stained Art for Glenties, comprising Michael Healy, Eilé Ní Hóla and Sarah Purser, and carvings by John Hughes and Michael Doolan. Metalwork and timber carvings were carried out by local craftsmen.



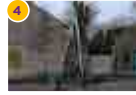
2. CLONFERT DIOCESAN MUSEUM

53.9700, -8.5667
The Clonfert Diocesan Museum, in the grounds of St Brendan's Cathedral, houses an important collection of objects of ecclesiastical interest. The oldest chance of the collection, the Hillfenn Heritage Chest, is nearly 500 years old. The collection of carved wooden trays includes the Kilcristan Madonna (c. 980 AD), the oldest surviving wooden statue in the country. The museum houses a selection of embroidered banners and vestments made by the Dun Emer Guild. The banners were designed by Jack B. Yeats, his wife Cora, George Wilson Russell and P.C. Smith. The collection also includes a variety of objects from the local region.



3. TOWN GATE

53.9701, -8.5660
This well-preserved town gate, also known as Lamer's Gate, dates from the 15th century and was originally a castellated structure. It is the only remaining gate through which the medieval town was entered.



4. POTATO MARKET

53.9704, -8.5662
A 1791 survey of Loughrea records a Potato Market on Barrack Street. The existing weighing scales are remnants of Loughrea's importance as a market town.



5. ST BRIGID'S WELL

53.9709, -8.5660
The Holy Well at Boherron, dedicated to St Brigid, is a natural spring well, one of many wells in the locality. It is said that the well was on the site of an Early Christian monastery, c. 6th - 10th century. At this site, ribbons were once tied to a nearby bush, and at least one eye cure is remembered.



6. ST BRIGID'S CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD, GARRYBREEDA

53.2008, -8.5600
The name Garrybreeda is derived from the Irish 'Garrú Bríde' and means the field of Brigid. It is supposed that this is the site of an Early Christian monastery, c. 6th - 10th century. The ruins of Loughrea's medieval parish church date to a 11th - 15th century and can be seen at this site. This church once housed the Shrine of St Brigid's shoe, a bronze slipper that is said to have contained the original slipper worn by the saint. The slipper, now in the National Museum of Ireland, bears the inscription 'Loch Riach Anno Domini 1400. S. Brigidis Virgo Kildarensis Intercessa Patrona'.

online heritage trail is to make information regarding the rich heritage of Loughrea available in an easily accessible format and to increase the awareness, knowledge and understanding of this rich heritage resources for the local person and the visitor to Loughrea.

The online trail has been devised and developed in such a manner that it can be added in the future should more research be undertaken.

The online version of the heritage trail can be found at:

<https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/places/loughrea-heritage-trail>

LOUGHREA Z-CARD & ONLINE HERITAGE TRAIL

This heritage resource for the medieval town of Loughrea features 21 sites or as they are known in the digital world, points of interest. The aim of the brochure and the

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ON-LINE SOURCES

www.academia.edu

www.archaeology.ie

www.celt.ucc.ie

www.excavations.ie

www.heritagemaps.ie

FURTHER ON-LINE RESOURCES SPECIFIC TO LOUGHREA

[https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/
content/places/3d-model-of-medieval-loughrea](https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/places/3d-model-of-medieval-loughrea)

[https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/
content/category/places/loughrea-heritage-trail](https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/places/loughrea-heritage-trail)

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LOUGHREA
Medieval Festival

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