

HERITAGE ASSET AUDIT

STRABANE AREA

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Commissioned by the
Department for

Communities

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Heritage Audit
Report Strabane



L-R St. Joseph's Church, Glenmornan, Sion Mills Stables, St. Teresa's Church designed by Patrick Haughey, 1963, Frieze by Oisín Kelly, Sion Mills, photographs by Marianne O'Kane Boal

Methodology

The audit area of Strabane saw a relatively comprehensive methodology applied. Although desktop survey was a crucial and informative method of research, it was quickly identified that desktop survey in isolation would yield a limited perspective. The consultants combined field survey and site visits with desktop survey from the outset and this element of primary research began in December 2017 in anticipation of the project initiation (and before the start up meeting 11 January 2018) with site visits to Sion Mills, Glenmornan, Donemana, and Artigarvan. It was felt at this stage that site visits to the ward areas were the fundamental core of the project and the best indication of the current state of potential assets. It also gave the consultants first-hand information and knowledge of the areas so that observations and strategic recommendations could be asserted with increased authority in the final audit report. In February 2018 Strabane town, Ballymagorry, Leckpatrick, Cloughcor, Knockavoe, Hollyhill, Urney and Clady were visited. Further visits took place in March to Donemana and Artigarvan, focusing on Silverbrook Mills and the surrounding area and the utilisation of a nearby scutch mill as a working pottery studio. Many days were spent in the Strabane area fully experiencing the heritage walks and researching at first hand the richness of selected sites.

Desktop survey and site visits were recorded by the consultants through taking an extensive range of photographs within the wards of audit areas. Over the period of 3 months a broad catalogue of photographs has been acquired which are an important primary resource in themselves. It was decided at the outset with NIEL and HED that the best way of recording

the heritage assets within the audit areas was through a range of predetermined wards for each area. Seven wards were selected for Strabane. The majority of research carried out centres on these wards. There is, however, some discussion, when appropriate of assets and heritage opportunities outside the selected ward areas. These asset examples are kept to a minimum and only cited when of importance to the audit areas or as examples of best practice that cannot be ignored.

Another important element of the methodology was consultation. This aspect was initiated by NIEL through its online survey and it quickly became apparent that consultation with individuals in the audit area as well as with organisations would give an important added dimension to the final report. This consultation would also indicate a sense of opportunities and challenges on the ground locally from a variety of perspectives. Consultation and feedback proved fascinating with representatives from local history organisations such as Strabane History Society providing key insights and knowledge. Other organisations that gave feedback included Derry City and Strabane District Council, Alley Theatre and Arts Centre, Strabane Library, NI Courts Service (Strabane Courthouse), Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust and West Tyrone Historical Society, Dunamanagh and District Community Association, and Dennett Interchange. Where possible discussions took place with owners of listed properties to gauge the challenges and responsibilities they faced. Without this crucial feedback from organisations and individuals the audit reports would lose richness and grounded purpose.

Strabane Overview

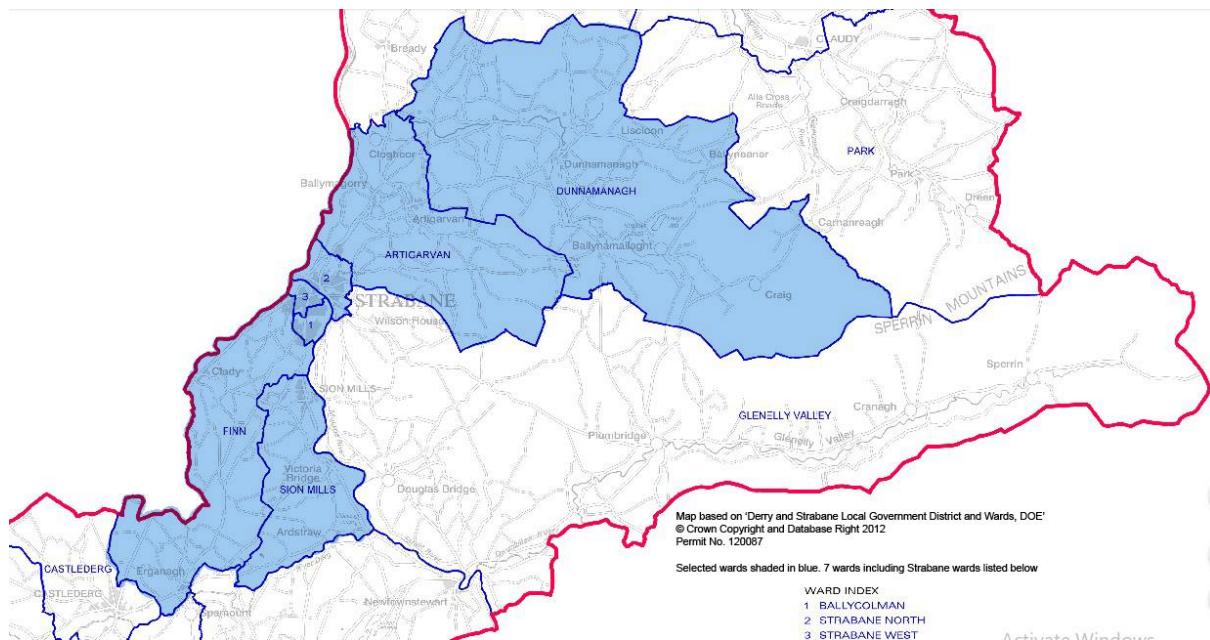
Strabane has from its earliest times been a centre for communication. Its position at the meeting of the Mourne, the Finn, and the Foyle, has led to its role as a gateway to the region. In later years a ferry crossing point linked Tír Eoghain to Tír Chonaill. The strategic location and subsequent territorial disputes led the building of forts and settlements which were destroyed and rebuilt over the centuries.

Strabane's most fruitful period came with the building of the canal and the coming of the railway. Situated in rich agricultural land, Strabane became an important market town. The introduction of linen manufacturing in the early 18th century led to a period of rapid growth. By 1777 it appears in Taylor and Skinner's "Roads of Ireland" as a sizeable town. The Earl of Abercorn was responsible for much of the subsequent development throughout the century which led to Strabane's linen business becoming the third most important in all Ireland.

Alistair Rowan in Buildings of Ireland "North West Ulster" Penguin 1979, describes the rapid development as follows; "It remained the property of the Earls of Abercorn, who in 1755 had the Lifford Bridge rebuilt by a Mr Ramsay, and who in the following year employed the local architect, Michael Priestley, to provide an extensive plan for new streets with 300 houses. These improvements struck contemporaries as remarkable, but the scale of much of the development was modest. Though the main streets were built up, in the lanes the houses were to be only 12 ft. high, their sole pretension to architecture that they were slated rather than thatched. In 1766 Priestley was working for the Earl, rebuilding Strabane Town Hall - a building which gave a good deal of trouble and for which Sir William

Chambers provided a design for the steeple - and in 1802 Robert Woodgate was drawing up plans for a further extension, called the New Town, to be built round the basin where a new canal, four miles in length, connected Strabane to the navigable reaches of the Foyle. By 1824 its linen business ranked as the third most important in all Ireland, and in 1837 Lewis records 836 houses. The town was then 'strikingly prepossessing' with 'thriving orchards attached to the houses, and in the immediate neighbourhood, producing apples, pears and cherries in abundance'. The growth which continued throughout the nineteenth century did not prevent a fall in the population. Rowan records; "...emigration reduced the population from some 7,000 before the famine to about 4,000 in 1889." In the 20th Century with the establishment of the border in 1922 Strabane underwent a steady decline.

For the purposes of this pilot audit seven wards in the Strabane area were chosen for investigation – these were as follows –Strabane West, Strabane North, Ballycolman, Artigarvan, Dunnamanagh, Sion Mills and Finn In some cases sites nearby, but alongside these wards were included.



Strabane Wards chosen for audit

Strabane’s relationship with its built heritage has been seen as problematic for many years. In 1979 Rowan writes; “At the time of writing Strabane is a town without much architectural focus, threatened, by new roads, and run down.” (Rowan, 492) Rowan remarks on some elements of what remains but laments on the possibility of their appreciation; “These are all good things that could make Strabane architecturally worthwhile, but they are not the things that planners or the architects who work for modern commercial interests are inclined to respect. Most new buildings are bad, and the older ones are at the time of writing allowed to decay.” (Rowan, 495) His description of the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy is worth reading; “Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, Mount St Joseph. A plain six-bay, two-storey block with an asymmetrical classical porch, enlarged to the N by a long block with a two-bay front which converts the plan to an L-shape. At the junction a thin Gothic tower with paired belfry windows and a parapet round a stumpy spire. The angle bartizans are just like those Robert Adam might have given to a stable block. These are probably the

additions made by William Hart in 1870. The chapel is later, a large four-bay hall with paired round-headed lancets with an earlier more elegant tower and broach-spire that look like John O'Neill." This was an important building in the town of Strabane and one still very much at the heart of local collective memory. Remarkably, and most unfortunately the Convent and Chapel have since been demolished and replaced by a housing complex. The Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School for Girls was built 1956-62 further up the hill from the Convent. The Principal Sr. Monica O'Kane used to take great pride in pointing out the "Award winning staircase designed by Liam McCormick." It too is gone, demolished.

We are in the unusual situation of having an historic asset which, in spite of its importance, is largely ignored. The stone bridge at Clady is considered one of the most important ten bridges in the province. In addition it is also the oldest of these ten bridges. Clady Bridge is an important part of our industrial heritage. Its' designation is A. The potential for tourism is virtually unexplored.

The historical information on the Department for Communities 'Historic Environment Map Viewer' States; "The bridge first appears on the first edition of the OS Map of 1832-1833, captioned "Clady Bridge." It is of early appearance, dating from at least the eighteenth century, and possibly earlier. There appears to be some secondary evidence to support a seventeenth century date for the bridge: "Clady: A History of Clady Village," unfortunately does not mention sources, but refers to a recently built bridge at the site crossed on 15 April 1689 by the Duke of Berwick, illegitimate son of James II, with 300 men and 600 horses, following a battle with the Ulster Protestant army, who had taken down an arch on the Co. Tyrone side to slow Berwick's progress. To cross, boards were placed over the collapsed arch, "which was later journeyed over by King James II," himself. A previous bridge is mentioned on 15 April 1650 when Bishop Heber McMahan with the Catholic Army of the North crossed the River Finn at Cladyford, then the name of Clady, in pursuit of the Parliamentary army ("Clady").

Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (1837) describes the village of forty-four houses, "most of them old," along a regularly formed street, which had two annual fairs for cattle, pigs and sheep. "Lewis also referred to the five-arched bridge and its historic associations with the wars of the seventeenth century and the fact that it was at one time a strong military post under the command of Colonel Skeffington" ("Clady"). The present span inconsistency may be attributed to Lewis's omission of flood arches and later repair work. The settlement has early origins and makes reference to the riverside location in its name. In Irish, Clady (Claideach) has two place name meanings. The first, when used along the coast means a stony shore, however, when used inland, the word refers to the "muddy bank of a sluggish river." The village's name reflects this second meaning and the name predates 784 when according to the Annals of the Four Masters, it was the location of a battle between Kinel Owen (O'Neills) and Kinel Conal (O'Donnells). Sometime later, the place became a river crossing and adopted the name Cladyford ("Clady"). McCutcheon in 1980 describes the bridge as "one of the most remarkable in the Province with greatly exaggerated lateral recesses in the parapet walls continues downwards to form massive salient-angled cut-waters" (McCutcheon. Plate 12; 3).

McClure, writing in 1983, ranks this bridge as "one of the top ten bridges in the Province and its historic importance should be compared with the following bridges:- "(1) the Craigmore

Viaduct and (2) the Egyptian Arch near Bessbrook "(3) the Charlemont Bridge at Moy on the Backwater and (4) the Bann Bridge at Coleraine. "(5) the Glendun Viaduct near Cushendun and the Randalstown Viaduct over the River Maine. "[Although] not an exhaustive list...these are the bridges against which Clady must be assessed. Clady is unique in that it pre-dates by several years (at present its date of building is not known) all the bridges listed above... . Whereas Glendun was built in 1839 and Randalstown about 10 years later and in all essentials the bridge today is exactly as it was built at least 250 years ago" (McClure, p.1). Hammond, writing in 1994, reiterates this appraisal, with an "almost certainly of the 18th century date (if not earlier)" (Hammond). Vertical cracks were reported in the projecting cutwaters in 1983 (McClure, p.1). Renovation occurred in late 1983, which laid the concrete plinths of the piers and secured the bridge with tie rods (McCurdy, p.1).

Within the past year the Strabane Academy, Derry Road, was demolished. The building functioned from 1894-1964 as a school. After that the building became an administrative centre for education and a venue for meetings. In "Buildings Past and Present" published by Strabane History Society in 2013 they stated, "The building has been allowed to deteriorate internally but the exterior fabric remains intact and every effort should be made to preserve it through finding alternative owners or tenants." Despite protests from Strabane History Society the building is gone.

It would seem that a building at risk in the Strabane context is an older building that becomes vacant or comes up for sale. In the majority of cases it is seen as an opportunity for demolition and development. The inherent worth of the building is ignored. Thankfully there are some notable exceptions to this bleak observation. The local authority has the opportunity to be proactive in its approach to the built environment and the heritage assets of the area.

Heritage and Local Authority Policy

The Derry City and Strabane District's Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017 – 2032 puts Heritage at the forefront of its Community Plan. In the introduction it states; "We are passionate about our built and natural heritage and sustainably enhancing our environment to develop a connected and vibrant City, Town Centres and rural areas" p. 2

Under section 7 "Making it Happen" Monitoring, Communicating & Review, in the final section of the plan under "Environmental Wellbeing" the importance of the "Total number of heritage assets in the DCSDC Council areas" is referenced. In Section 2 "We are a City Region" The Plan discusses the role of important "anchors" in the Eco-system of City-Regions. Heritage is identified as one of six of these anchors. In Section 4 "Health and Wellbeing" The Plan identifies the following key action –"Work with our cultural partners to use engagement with arts and cultural heritage as a means of improving the health and wellbeing of our citizens." P.48 In Section 4 "Community Development" The Plan includes the following key actions –"Foster positive community identities, creativity and build community capacity and resilience through a range of interventions." And "Develop and animate iconic shared space projects in Strabane/Lifford, Waterside and Top of the Hill areas." Again heritage is very much at the core of these actions.

In Section 7 "Making it happen" the Plan addresses the need to make sure all areas are kept informed and that inequalities are addressed. "Strategic Growth Partnership – A strategic Growth Partnership (Community Planning Partnership) has been formed to provide overall governance and oversight of the Community Planning Process. This partnership will be facilitated by the Council.

The statutory partners named in the legislation will be joined by political representatives, Central Government Departments and other key regional support partners.” P.62 In Section 4 Outcomes and Actions: Economy, Tourism, Arts and Culture key actions include maximisation of heritage assets – “Develop and promote our heritage assets – in particular managing the Walled City to realise its full potential to the standard of a world heritage site – through capital investment, preservation and a marketing programme.” P.42

In this report one of our consultees expresses the opinion that Sion Mills merits the designation of a world heritage site because of its unique industrial heritage. The River Foyle is also identified in the key actions – “Develop and promote the use of the District’s waterways and in particular the River Foyle as a tourism attraction.” P.42 It is evident that the approach established in the Derry City and Strabane District’s Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017 – 2032 favours growth in Heritage awareness and development. This inclusive approach to the concerns addressed in the Plan should help address the need to strengthen the heritage infrastructure in the Strabane area.

Strabane Railway Station

Despite the fact that Strabane was a centre of railway communication very little evidence now remains in the town. On the Railway Street Mr Pat Gillespie has incorporated a signal post and some station signs into a gable wall alongside his house. This is the only shadow of the railways past glory.



Strabane Railway Signal Post, track and signs at Pat Gillespie's House, Railway Street, Strabane Photo Eddie O'Kane

“Strabane had a railway before Belfast, reaching the town in 1845 from Londonderry” “Strabane had the largest rail junction in Ireland during the first half of the twentieth century. Strabane catered for four different railway companies.” “Your Place and Mine” 16 October 2014 [www. BBC.co.uk](http://www.BBC.co.uk)
The extensive Asda supermarket and surrounding shopping complex now occupy the site of Strabane Station. In order to see traces of the extensive railway infrastructure we have to move some distance from the town itself.

Important bridges once formed part of this network Mc Cutcheon states, “at Lifford, where the station itself lay inside Donegal, a remarkable metal bridge carried the railway across the broad rivers of the River Foyle, which here forms the boundary between Northern Ireland and the Republic of

Ireland. Built in 1907 for the Strabane and Letterkenny Railway Company by Courtney, Stephens and Bailey of Dublin it was a most impressive turreted trellis-work structure supported on four ashlar masonry piers set close to the river banks and with an overall length of just under 100 yards” The Industrial Archaeology of Northern Ireland p 185

The bridge is long gone but some of the Lifford station buildings remain hidden away beside new Donegal County Council buildings. About one and a half miles outside Lifford a stone building and part of a platform form the remains of Ballindrait Halt , some yards further along is another derelict station dwelling and in Ballindrait itself a two story station dwelling.

At Ballymagorry the small station building (listed) remains. It has suffered serious damage in recent storms. The station building is under the ownership and custodianship of Mrs Stevenson. The upkeep of the building is becoming a more onerous task in recent years.



Ballymagorry Station and platform View 1

photo Eddie O’Kane



Ballymagorry Station and platform View 2

photo Eddie O'Kane

We have to go further to find more substantial remains. At Victoria Bridge the Station Master's house is in excellent condition.



Station Masters House Victoria Bridge

Photo Eddie O'Kane

The house is occupied by the station master's daughter. She was four when Victoria Bridge station closed. A photograph shows the last train at the station. The station master is clearly shown overseeing the stopping of the last train and his daughter is just visible nearby him on the platform.



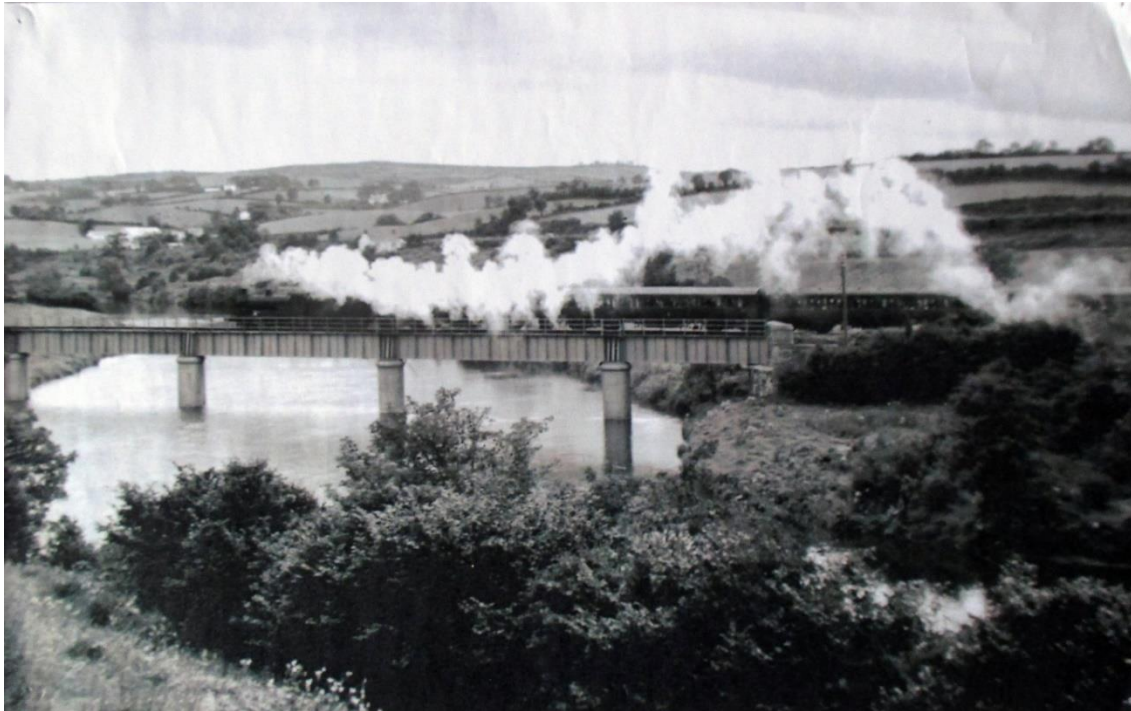
Last Train Station Master, Mr Anderson, in middle of picture, on left. His daughter is seen behind parcels. Photo courtesy Mrs Gillian McMullen, Station Master's daughter

The metal Camus railway bridge crosses the river within sight of the station. The bridge is still in situ.



Victoria Bridge Camus metal railway bridge

photo Eddie O'Kane



Victoria Bridge Steam train crossing Camus metal bridge Photo courtesy Mrs McMullen

About a hundred yards from the station masters house is Victoria Bridge Industrial Estate. These impressive brick built buildings are the remains of the once extensive Nestle factory which was served by the railway station. In the same way the now gone Sion Mills station once served Herdman's Mills.



Victoria Bridge Industrial Estate (remains of extensive Nestle Factory) photo Eddie O'Kane



Victoria Bridge Former Nestle Factory

Photo courtesy Mrs McMullen

Some of Strabane's industrial railway heritage lingered on after the station's demise. Several steam engines rested by the roadside at the Camel's Hump on the Lifford Road out of Strabane. McCutcheon explains the ultimate destination of these engines; "The North West of Ireland Railway Society was formed in 1970 and a decision was taken to initiate a project to re-establish a short section of the narrow gauge line from Victoria Road station, the Londonderry terminus of the former railway network operated by the County Donegal Railways Joint Committee, towards Prehen, and to bring together a museum collection in order to preserve for public exhibition the miscellaneous items of railway interest which still existed throughout the north west of Ireland. Abandoned locomotives, railcars, carriages and equipment located at Stranorlar, Strabane and Letterkenny since the closure of the railway system at end of 1959 had previously attracted the interest of a number of interested parties but it was due directly to the efforts of the new Society that not only were these items saved from the scrapyard but that positive steps were taken to move them from their resting places to the enclosed area at Victoria Road." *The Industrial Archaeology of Northern Ireland* p 362

Gardens and Walks

Although there are limited examples of Historic Gardens in the selected wards (Holyhill), (One of the most important Gardens, Baronscourt, lies outside the ward areas), some significant walks and amenities are freely available to the public. These are as follows: Strabane Canal Walk (which is referenced more fully elsewhere in this report). The Burn Walk is one of just three of The Woodland Trust's 'Woods on Your Doorstep' woodlands in Northern Ireland, created to commemorate the Millennium. This site is part of a wooded glen on the Cavanalee River above a housing estate near Strabane in County Tyrone. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/wood/5125/the-burn-walk/> Ligfordrum Forest - Skinboy Wood, Koram Wood, Owenreagh

and Ligfordrum Forest are also listed on the Woodland Trust website although they are not their sites. They are administered by the Forest Service NI.

Mills and Milling

Mills form an important part of Strabane’s industrial heritage. Apart from the major heritage site at Herdman’s Mills there are many mills dotted throughout the area. These mills utilise water power. Colin Rynne lists one windmill in the area built at Croaghan Hill Lifford in 1877. “Industrial Ireland 1750 – 1930 An Archaeology” p. 25

Water also provided one of the main methods of transport. When Springhill House, Moneymore, was being rebuilt after a fire in the late 1600’s archives preserved at the House show that the slates for the roof came from the St.Johnston quarry, across the river Foyle from Strabane. They were transported by boat along the Foyle and down the River Bann to finally arrive at Springhill. In the wards selected for this survey, many of the water-powered mills are to be found in the hills around Artigarvan, Dunamanagh and Glenmornan.

The restored complex at Silverbrook Mills, near Dunamanagh, is referenced in the asset survey. Nearby is another mill which has been utilised to house a different industry. The Mill Pottery was founded by Tom Agnew in 1976. This successful pottery business still continues to attract visitors from near and far. In a discussion at the Mill Pottery Tom explained the difficult in running the business during the winter months. Severe weather conditions make the hilly roads inaccessible and few visitors call in these months. The business is an important example of how part of the mill industrial heritage can be repurposed as a successful ceramic business and visitor attraction.



Mill Pottery Dunamanagh, former scutch mill

photo Eddie O’Kane



Interior of Mill Pottery, Dunamanagh

photo Eddie O’Kane

Strabane’s Archaeological Heritage

The Strabane area has a rich archaeological heritage. Much of this archaeological richness is situated in the hilly areas of Tyrone. There are reasons for the continued existence of these sites. “The destruction rate has been less in Tyrone (20 – 30 per cent) than in some more intensively farmed areas in Northern Ireland such as south Antrim (50 per cent) or mid-Armagh (52 per cent). This has resulted in a good survival rate of prehistoric sites, particularly in upland, less improved areas. Factors governing this better survival of sites include less intensive farming, a dispersed and relatively low population and a genuine interest in antiquities among country people, complemented in the past by a strong sense of superstition.” “Tyrone History and Society” 2000 p 3

Claire Foley states that nearly 10 per cent of the total amount of megalithic sites in the island of Ireland. The local authority has an excellent website detailing many of the accessible archaeological sites in the Strabane area. A more extensive appraisal of selected archaeological sites is included in the heritage asset surveys.

The Strabane area is rich in Archaeology. In her introduction to “Prehistoric Settlement in Tyrone”, Claire Foley states “County Tyrone plays an important role in our understanding of the development of prehistoric society in Ireland. In spite of agricultural development over the past two centuries, particularly since the Second World War, this county still has many areas with excellent archaeological preservation. Piecing together the evidence, and recognising chronological and topographical connections between sites, provides an interesting challenge to archaeologists today in the research and management of the historic landscape and its individual

parts.” “Tyrone History and Society” 2000 p 1

The extent of Tyrone’s share of Ireland’s archaeological assets is highlighted by Foley, “There are upwards of 1,500 megalithic tombs in Ireland. Tyrone has one hundred and thirty of them, 10 per cent of the total, and the four recognised tomb types, court tombs, portal tombs, passage tombs and wedge tombs are all found here.” “Tyrone History and Society” 2000 p 9

Many of the major sites, such as those in Glenelly, lie outside the ward areas chosen for this study. There is a concentration of monuments in the Plumbridge area. There is an excellent website with visitor information for a selection of the main archaeological sites in the Strabane area. <http://www.discovertyroneandsperrins.com/attractions/castles-ancient-monuments/>

The Wedge tomb at Loughash is an example of the approach to presentation for the visitor of archaeological sites in the area.



Sign on road depicting the monument Photo Marianne O’ Kane Boal



Information Sign at the monument Photo Marianne O’ Kane Boal



Close up of information sign at monument Photo Marianne O' Kane Boal

“Known on the OS maps as Giants Grave, this burial tomb dates from around 4500 years ago. It is called a wedge tomb because it narrows in size from front to back and also decreases in height. There are twenty-two wedge tombs in Tyrone and over 500 in Ireland as a whole. This site is built on a terrace sloping down from the north with Lough Ash as a backdrop to the south.

The entrance facing west has a double portal arrangement leading to the burial chamber. Originally the whole gallery would have been roofed with capstones, but only one now remains. It is enclosed by a wedge-shaped cairn.” Extract from the information sign beside the wedge-tomb.

The chosen wards for the Strabane area were as follows Strabane North, Strabane West, Ballycolman, Artigarvan, Finn, Sion Mills, Donemana. It was felt time constraints precluded the covering of all wards in the Strabane area. The chosen wards include a spread across the Council’s Area Based Community Planning Groups (as included in the Strategic Growth Plan Derry and Strabane District 2017-2032 published November 2017) Sperrin, Derg and Strabane Town. Artigarvan and Dunamanagh are included in Sperrin. Finn and Sion Mills are in Derg. Strabane North, Strabane West and Ballycolman covers all of Strabane Town.

The Strategic Growth Plan is an overarching approach to enabling involvement by local communities in determination of their future. In addition to the questionnaire feedbacks, interviews, individual and face to face discussions which they carried out, the consultants have taken cognisance of views expressed by the communities in the following local community plans – the Sperrin, Derg and Strabane town.

Categories for Heritage Asset Audit and Selected Assets

The assets chosen for the Heritage Audit were selected for their potential to provide linkages with other local community groups and for linkages with groups in other areas such as Lisnaskea. We were also mindful of the potential for development of existing resources and creation of new approaches which build on these resources. The heritage trail concept has proved a successful strategy. We encouraged extending this approach and suggested discussion might take place on the creation of new trails e.g. “The Linen Trail”. Again we identified the need for encouraging economic development based on heritage e.g. greater awareness of the excellence of Living Heritage in the Grosvenor Shirt Factory. We were eager to find examples of best practice to encourage interaction between groups and individuals and the celebration of successes. We identified assets which underpinned the strong

heritage traditions in literature and publishing. We identified existing clusters of built heritage assets which would benefit trails and build on the literary and publishing traditions.

The categories chosen for the Heritage Asset Audit and the assets chosen were as follows –

- **Listed Buildings**

Woodend Cottage

Christ Church, Bowling Green, Strabane

Church of the Immaculate Conception Strabane

Silverbrook House, Dunamanagh

- **Sites and Monuments**

Urney Glebe

Leckpatrick Graveyard

Patrick Street Graveyard, Strabane (includes standing stone)

Lough Ash Wedge Tomb

- **Industrial**

Sion Mills Stables

Porter's Mills (Grosvenor Shirts) Strabane

Clady Bridge

Strabane Canal (scheduled zone)

Silverbrook Mills Dunamanagh

- **Parks and Gardens**

Holly Hill – only SMR garden in the wards listed (Strabane Canal and other green space walks in the locality identified)

- **Defence**

Only two defence sites in the ward areas-

A nodal point at the top of Market Street, Strabane

A Ground controlled Interception/radar installation at Ballydonaghy

- **Battle sites**

Battle of the Three Fords 1689 – Northern Crossing

Battle of Knockavoe 1522

- **Conservation Areas**

Sion Mills

Only one conservation area in chosen wards





Buildings in the Bowling Green Strabane, photographs Eddie O’Kane


RSA Heritage Index 2016		
Table Adapted from Material in RSA Heritage Index		
Category	Derry City & Strabane	
		At Risk
Grade A Listed Buildings	19	
Grade B+ Listed Buildings	51	
Grade B Listed Buildings	608	30
Scheduled Monuments	133	
Sites & Monuments	857	
Industrial Heritage	923	
Country/Forest Parks	3	
Historic Parks & Gardens	1,015	
Special Areas of Conservation	1,329	
Blue Plaques	18	
Conservation Areas	5	


Asset Assessment and Discussion


Much of the discussion of the value and potential of the assets in the assessment lists is included in the asset assessment forms. In addition the desktop research and the on the spot in-depth investigation of the areas presented a range of further challenges and opportunities which are covered in the following discussion of Strabane built heritage.

Asset name/number	Battle of the Three Fords – Northern Crossing 14/04/1689 Side A Hamilton Jacobite Side B Lundy Williamite Victory Side A
Heritage type	Battle site
Location	C35960325
Condition/ Sensitivity	There are no visible remains of the battle. The site is near the mouth of Strabane Canal which has been restored and is under the management of City of Derry and Strabane District Council.
Ownership	Private ownership and Derry Strabane District Council
Brief description	The area where the crossing took place spreads along the banks of the Foyle near the Lower Locks of Strabane canal. Area of outstanding natural beauty.
Context (Setting)	Location forms part of an established walking trail which is much used by the local community the inclusion of the battle site information would extend the historical scope of the walking trail – it would add the 1689 period to the Strabane Canal’s industrial history.
Site appraisal	Inclusion of the battle site augments the educational and recreation value of the area
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>



Benefits/potential	
Audience	Local community, tourists, students.
Partnerships	Local authority, community groups, education.
Learning	Together with the rich natural resource surrounding the Strabane canal the incorporation of the battle site provides an extension of the learning resources available for schools and visitors.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	As in Frankfurt City National Park, Germany, volunteers could be trained to provide guidance and interpretation. If further Interpretative facilities were provided the local community could work in conjunction with the local authority. The main thrust would be the industrial heritage of the Strabane Canal and the rich natural resource and habitat along the canal.
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	Partnership between local authority and a structured volunteer programme would help reduce costs
Viability/constraints	Finances

	 <p data-bbox="791 600 1337 645">Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
<p data-bbox="217 651 357 680">Comments</p>	<p data-bbox="791 651 1382 853">This is an area of outstanding natural beauty. The local authority has gone a long way through the restoration of the Strabane Canal and providing access to the local community. Further enhancement could regenerate the area.</p>
<p data-bbox="217 902 544 931">General recommendation</p>	<p data-bbox="791 902 1331 976">Consideration should be given to upkeep and maintenance this important heritage asset.</p>


Asset name/number	Battle of Knockavoe
Heritage type	Battle site
Location	<p>Precise location of battle not currently known</p> <p>Although the Annals of the Four Masters describes the battle as a night time surprise attack, Jim Bradley maintains that the wide ranging battle continued at numerous locations throughout the following day.</p> <p>“Many of those who perished in the battle were buried with Christian rites in mass graves on the hillside (now Church Street) below the friary. In the early years of the twentieth century, long – buried remains were unearthed during pipe laying operations in the Church Street/Patrick Street area.” The Fair River Valley” Jim Bradley et al 2000 p.20</p>
Ownership	Private
Brief description	Prominent mountain above Strabane
Context (Setting)	Spectacular views from the rough stone road leading up the mountainside
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
Site appraisal	Site is accessible by hill walkers. Lower approaches reached by car. Parking available courtesy of a local farmer.
Benefits/potential	

Audience	Visitors, tourists, local population. School groups and those interested in outdoor pursuits.
Partnerships	Celebration of this historic battle site lends itself to a wide range of links with other hill walking groups outside the Strabane area.
Learning	The site has potential for learning in local school groups. With interest in films such as the “Game of Thrones” a battle of this type on one’s doorstep is a direct opportunity to engage students’ imagination.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	Community and school groups could be involved in pageants such as the Maguire Pageant at Lisnaskea. Schools in Lisnaskea and Strabane could have joint projects to study and explore respective periods of interest.
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	Monies could be made available through festival programmes and from educational sources.
Viability/constraints	Accessibility is limited to the physically fit. The site can be viewed from the approach road.
Comments	The account of the Battle of Knockavoe is one of the fullest accounts of a battle between the O’Neills and the O’Donnells in the Annals of The Four Masters. NB See account of the Battle of Knockavoe from the Annals of the Four Masters quoted separately in appendix
General recommendation	<p>Apart from the exercise and physical well-being involved in exploring the site the possibility of the imaginative learning potential of exploring the Knockavoe Battle are exciting.</p>  <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>

Asset name/number	Woodend Cottage 42 Woodend Road Strabane Co Tyrone BT82 0BP HB10/11/004
Heritage type	House
Location	“The house faces north and is situated between the old road to Dunnamanagh and the new stretch of road from Strabane to Londonderry about two miles from Strabane. The roads are joined on the Strabane side by the short length of Spruce Road A winding drive descends into the property from the entrance on the old or upper road.”
Protection status	Listed B1
Condition/ Sensitivity	Well maintained, good condition.
Ownership	Private
Brief description	“A non-vernacular house with a formal plan. The house is one and a half storey with a roughcast and whitened finish and the roof is thatched between cement skewers. Each gable rises to a chimneystack, that to the left (west) has one decorative pot and that to the right (east) has two similar pots. A further stack is set longitudinally above the dining room fireplace and has two pots. All pots have corbelled cappings and are fitted with spark arresters The entrance is recessed in a gabled projecting porch with natural slate roof and plain bargeboard. At each side of the porch there is a vertically sliding window with plain sashes. Beyond these on either side there are canted bays with vertically sliding windows plain sashed at the sides and with vertical division in the central light. The single openings have narrow sills and the bays have sills of traditional depths. All of the sashes have small stops. At the rear (south) a two-storey addition has a natural slate roof hipped where it joins the main building and with a rooflight set into the inner slope. The opposite gable on the south side is finished with a decorative bargeboard.”


Context (Setting)	Rural setting. Convenient to main roads.
Site appraisal	House is well maintained and is a unique example of its type in the Strabane area.
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
Benefits/potential	
Audience	Tourists seeking accommodation.
Partnerships	There are many examples of successful thatch house restorations in the Upper Lough Erne wards. It might be possible for both communities to exchange experience. It would also be worthwhile to look at the conservation of thatched houses in Kilmore Quay, Wexford and Stig in Denmark.
Learning	Example of best practice of restoration and conservation of a unique thatched B1 Dwelling. Preserved thatch cottages of this type are rare in the Strabane area. This could be a catalyst for further such initiatives.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	As an example of best practice in thatched house restoration and conservation the house provides a practical example to the local community of what is possible
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>

Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	On-going upkeep costs. Insurance. Marketing.
Viability/constraints	Changing patterns in tourism.
Comments	There has been an alarming decrease in the number of thatched cottages in the province. Radical measures are required to stop this decline or thatched cottages may soon only survive in Folk Villages and Museums.
General recommendation	Communities and individuals from other locations should be enabled to come together with people from the Strabane area to discuss viable ways of preserving this important part of our built heritage.

Asset name/number	Sion Mills Stables
Heritage type	Industrial Heritage
Location	Sion Mills
Protection status	Listing Grade: B+
Condition/ Sensitivity	Important high profile roadside building part of Sion Mills Conservation Area. Education Centre, Museum, and restaurant.
Ownership	
Brief description	 <p>Sion Mills Stables before restoration. Photo copyright © NIFHA 2012</p> <p>The involvement of Hearth with the local community Association has led to the restoration of the Stables. The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations website http://www.nifha.org/members/hearth-restores-historic-sion-stables/ features an article in which Jennie Donald, Deputy Chief Executive gives details of the successful outcome - “Hearth Restores Historic Sion Stables” Published on: 27 July, 2015”</p> <p>Sion Stables is a B+ listed building which had fallen into severe disrepair, leading to it being vested in 2008 by the Department of the Environment to ensure its survival. It was sold on to the building preservation trust Hearth</p>


	<p>Revolving Fund, which set about raising funds for its restoration. Hearth formed a partnership with the Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust, and together they have developed Sion Stables as a museum, heritage education centre for local schools and community groups, craft shop and tearooms. With the distinctive belfry fully restored and its historic bells marking the time, the Sion Stables is becoming a centre for village life and the newest tourism destination in the North West. The development of a Heritage Trail App which takes visitors on an immersive tour through the village tells the history of Sion Mills during the last 170 years. Paul Mullan, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund NI added “We were delighted to award over £900,000 to this amazing heritage project. Not only have the team saved another piece of our distinctive built heritage but they have created a new tourism hub which is bringing a wealth of economic and social benefits to the local area. The building was in such a terrible state and gave a negative impression of the area. Today, it has been utterly transformed and there is a great buzz and energy around the village. This is an excellent example to show what is possible when we find creative new uses for our heritage buildings. The education programmes and new App let people explore and learn all about the fascinating heritage of the Stables and Sion Mills.”</p> <p>Francis Hood, manager at the Stables, said “Today marks another mile stone in the development of Sion Stables and is a celebration of what can be achieved...” Karen Latimer, Chairman of Hearth Revolving Fund during the restoration, said she was delighted to see the building back in use. “We want to thank our funders, notably the Heritage Lottery Fund, DARD Arc NW, the NI Environment Agency and Ulster Garden Villages, for the confidence they</p>
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	<p>placed in us to restore this important building. We hope it will foster civic pride and encourage further restoration in this unique village.” Celia Ferguson of SMBPT said, “Sion Stables and its popularity is a testament to the added value of restoring an iconic listed building, well worth the years SMBPT fought for its restoration and hopefully an inspiration to others.” © NIFHA 2012, All Rights reserved</p> <p>The restoration of the Mill complex itself is a mammoth undertaking. Over the years much work has gone in to sourcing funding, forming groupings and alliances. The outbreaks of a series of fires, and vandalism have caused further destruction to the Mill. A change in ownership has occurred. The Sion Mills Stables project acts as a beacon showing what can be achieved Sion Mills and Strabane can learn from this success.</p>
Context (Setting)	<p>Sion Mills is a Conservation area. It has one of the largest concentrations of listed buildings in the North West. With the decline of the linen industry in the twentieth century Herdman’s Mills underwent a period of retrenchment and eventual closure. Many of the larger houses which were associated with the Mill industry began to fall into disrepair at this time.</p>

	<p>“HB10/07/001 GATE LODGE ZION HOUSE MELMOUNT ROAD SION MILLS CO.TYRONE</p> <p>Status: Currently at Risk</p> <p>Listing Grade: B+</p> <p>Condition – Very Poor</p> <p>Degree of Risk: Critical”</p> <p>The last added detail shows the crucial importance of the Sion Mills Stables restoration –</p> <p>“*NOTE; THE STABLES ARE NOW SAFE. THE GATE LODGE REMAINS AT RISK* Zion House may never have appeared before as a building at risk, although it is on the BARNI Register, but the gate lodge and stables did feature in Buildings at Risk, Vol. 1, pp. 109 and 110 respectively. Since that time, the half-timbered lodge has been restored, while the stables were to feature again as a building still at risk in Vol. 6. However, the picturesque and rambling stable block continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. This has prompted the use of enforcement action by the DOE (NI) and the first ‘Repairs Notice’ was served on the owner in 2003, which should eventually lead to compulsory acquisition. This represents a crucial turning point for the future of the building.” © Crown copyright</p>
<p>Site appraisal</p>	 <p>Restored Sion Stables photo Marianne O’Kane Boal</p>



Audience	Local Community. Tourists, students, passing traffic.
Partnerships	Sion Stables has the potential to be a key element in a “Linen Trail” which joins with Strabane, Dungannon, Lisburn and Belfast
Learning	Through sharing the experience of best practice in restoration, Sion Stables could establish a learning network which would benefit other community groups.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	Sion Mills is an outstanding example of industrial Heritage. Regeneration of this unique industrial complex is important to the whole country. The emergence of this highly visible conservation/reconstruction success is vital to the confidence of the community. This success story is a testament to their resilience.
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	As with many of the range of important industrial buildings, the financial implications in restoration and commercially viable reutilisation are immense.
Viability/constraints	In the case of Sion Stables problems relating to the ownership of this building at risk were solved through a vesting order and subsequent involvement of Hearth.
Comments	Sion Mills Stables is an illustration of how a building in danger of disappearing can become a vital focus within a community and an indication of way forward. It shows how the local community can work together with appropriate bodies to preserve heritage and make heritage work.
General recommendation	Sion Mills Stables is an example of Best Practice In restoration of a building which was almost beyond rescue. It is also an example of involvement of the local community with support organisations and funding agencies to preserve an important building which is a cornerstone catalyst for local heritage. Due to the mammoth scale of the task of Sion Mills it is important that the local community views these success stories as the way forward.

Asset name/number	Porters Mills (Grosvenor Shirts) Derry Road Strabane
Heritage type	Industrial Heritage
Location	Town Parks, Strabane
Protection status	
Condition/ Sensitivity	Conditions are as required for successful commercial manufacture for these high quality shirts.
Ownership	Private firm. Rented accommodation.
Brief description	Porters Factory on the Derry Road houses one of the few shirt factories left in the province. Grosvenor Shirts perpetuate the same level of skill and commitment to quality which once made Strabane the third most important shirt manufacturing centre in Ireland. The factory has been manufacturing shirts in Porter's Derry Road premises from 1999. Their shirts are sold in their shop in Mayfair, London. They opened a new, luxurious flagship store on Jermyn Street in 2013. The quality in their shirts is recognised world- wide and in 2013 they were granted a Royal Warrant. Their website proudly proclaims their factory in Strabane, "famous for manufacturing since the 1800's"
Context (Setting)	Grosvenor Shirts is situated in Porters Mills which has functioned as a shirt factory from Strabane's heyday as the countries third most important centre of shirt manufacture.
Site appraisal	A mixed range of tenants at present occupy Porter's Shirt Factory. Premises are rented from the overall owner of the building.
Benefits/potential	
Audience	Local community, schools and colleges. Visitors and special interest groups.



Partnerships	Potential partnership with other communities on the “Linen Trail” e.g. Sion Mills Stables (see below) Possibility of further extension of the “Linen Trail” to the Linen Green, Dungannon, to the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum, to the Linen Quarter, Belfast and to the heart of the linen industry in Flanders – traditional partners of Strabane and Sion Mills.
Learning	At present the owners of Grosvenor Shirts have an arrangement with Colleges in Belfast to facilitate student group visits to view the manufacturing process. Increased access for visitors to the factory would allow the local community and other visitors to learn of the sophisticated skill levels still alive the heart of Strabane.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	This living heritage provides an opportunity for the community to be justifiably proud of the rich skill and craftsmanship which exists in their midst. It is part of the on-going heritage which placed Strabane on the world stage in Shirt Manufacture. Sion Mills Stables is an example of best practice in restoration of a threatened protected structure. A museum based on linen manufacture is housed at Sion Mills Stables. If both facilities worked together as part of a “Linen Trail” visitors could move from the Sion Mills Stables Museum to Strabane Porter’s Mills/Grosvenor Shirts to see “Linen at Work”. Other partnerships could be explored as the concept grows.
	 <p data-bbox="826 1955 1145 1989">Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>

Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	Considerable potential for this living heritage
Viability/constraints	<p>The Porters Mills Complex has several tenants in addition to Grosvenor Shirts. The owners of the building would have to be fully involved in future developments.</p>  <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
Comments	<p>The Grosvenor Shirt Factory is Strabane’s “Hidden Jewel”. It is an important, unique example of the reason that Strabane was regarded as such an important centre of excellence in linen and shirt manufacture. It is an example of living heritage. It could be possible to make the local community more aware of this core of excellence in their midst.</p> <p>It affirms the high levels of skill, craftsmanship and creativity which made Strabane world – renowned. Porter’s Mill is part of Strabane’s industrial heritage but in this case Grosvenor Shirts ensure that this part of Strabane’s heritage is alive and thriving.</p>
General recommendation	<p>Further enhancement of the Factory Shop would provide both local people and visitors to the area the opportunity to buy products for sale at present in the West End of London in the heart of the high end fashion industry.</p> <p>Interpretative displays could provide visitors with a full understanding of the high quality of the shirt manufacturing process.</p>




Asset name/number	Christ Church (C of I) Bowling Green Strabane County Tyrone BT82 8BW, HB10/14/009
Heritage type	Listed building
Location	Bowling Green, Strabane
Protection status	B+(Church, gates, railings and walling)
Condition/ Sensitivity	Excellent
Ownership	Church of Ireland
Brief description	Early English Gothic Church. Architect Mr John Kennedy. Said to have been built on the site of one of the three castles around which Strabane developed. Church opened 1879.
Context (Setting)	Integral element of central square in the heart of Strabane town. (the Bowling Green)
Site appraisal	The Church, with its association with Cecil Frances Alexander, faces the birthplace of the writer Brian O’Nolan, (Flann O’Brien). Mrs Alexander and her brothers dedicated a stained glass window in the church to their parents, Major and Mrs Humphries, and the church was opened by her husband, then Bishop of Derry, William Alexander. To the side of the buildings is a line of listed buildings. Across from the back of the church is the historic Patrick Church Graveyard.
Benefits/potential	The church is at the heart of a heritage/conservation hub in the centre of a town which has lost so much of its built heritage. If this core square and its surrounding buildings are conserved it could provide a focus for heritage awareness in the town and elsewhere. Literary heritage trails. Church trails.
Audience	Church of Ireland congregation, local community, International scholars.
Partnerships	Links within North West, City of Derry, Donegal, overseas colleges and universities.
Learning	In addition to the above the involvement of local schools through studies of history, literature, drama and art could increase awareness of the richness of the heritage and tradition of their area.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	Cross community involvement in the literary tradition and the built heritage in this core area could lead to regeneration and pride of place.

	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	Potential for overseas investment.
Viability/constraints	Priorities in local authority and national funding.
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
Comments	Christ Church and surrounding buildings are within walking distance of many of the important buildings in the town, e.g. Church of the Immaculate Conception, Gray’s Printers, Alley Arts Centre and library.

Asset name/number	Sion Mills
Heritage type	Village
Location	
Protection status	Conservation area Designation date: 25 March 1977
Condition/ Sensitivity	Elements of the conservation area are under severe threat due to vandalism, fire damage, ownership issues and the funding requirements of such a large scale conservation project
Ownership	Mixed ownership.
Brief description	<p>“Collectively the simple, single and two storey gothic cottages built to house the mill workers contribute greatly to the architectural and historical significance of the village. Their presence alongside that of the old flax spinning mill, founded in 1835, give a wonderful sense of the industrial heritage which once dominated the national landscape. The Mill is a large complex of buildings sited on the River Mourne, (architecturally the most important of which is the main 5-storey stone building with yellow brick extensions designed by William Lynn in 1853), with an impressive chimney and huge water-power system which, until after the First World War, produced the highest water horse power in the British Isles. Including the Mill complex as one, there are 41 listed buildings in Sion Mills.”</p> <p>Information from Tyrone and Sperrins Website Strabane Visitor Information Centre</p>
Context (Setting)	Sion Mills Conservation Area is on the main tourist route to the North West. Apart from the obvious needs of the local community the Sion Mills area is of vital importance to visitors to the region.
Site appraisal	The current status of many of the most important buildings in the conservation area is critical.

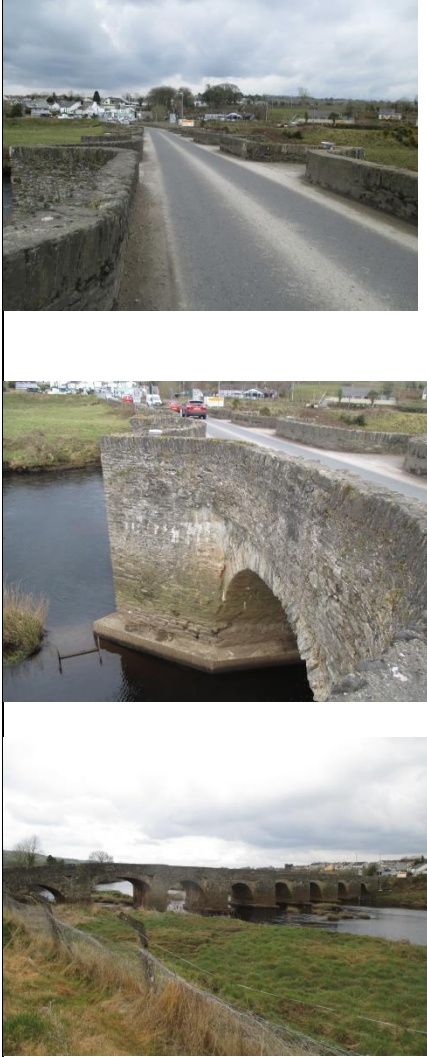
	 <p>Photograph Marianne O’Kane Boal</p>
Benefits/potential	
Audience	Local community, students, other local community groups.
Partnerships	Sion Stables is an example of successful partnership strategy. – see under that asset entry
Learning	See Sion Stables entry
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	See Sion Stables entry
	 <p>Photograph Marianne O’Kane Boal</p>
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	Phased financial input required. A range of feasibility studies would be required to establish the best way forward.
Viability/constraints	Scale of overall project requirements. Vital that the problem is solved through a series of small scale success stories.
General recommendation	All possible support should be given to the conservation of this important Heritage asset.

Asset name/number	Leckpatrick Graveyard SMR: - TYR002:018
Heritage type	ECCLESIASTICAL SITE Period: POST-MED; MED/L.MED Protection:
Location	Townland: LECKPATRICK Grid Reference: C3711002330
Protection status	
Condition/ Sensitivity	"In the graveyard of this site are foundations of a rectangular church, 45ft x 20ft. These may be remains of the medieval parish church which was known as Maghernelec & Kylpatrick. It is not mentioned in pre-Norman written sources but the existence of an arenagh in the Middle Ages suggests a pre-Norman foundation."
Ownership	
Brief description	Details: CHURCH & GRAVEYARD: MAGHERYNELEC, KYLPATRICK
Context (Setting)	The graveyard is well kept, with 2 masonry vaults
Site appraisal	The site has many important features, some unique.
Benefits/potential	
Audience	Local community exercising through walking. People seeking genealogical information. Historians. Tourists,
Partnerships	Partnerships have led to the local authority working with other groups to install signage.
Learning	The Graveyard is part of a walking trail which involves other features such as the Strabane Canal. Information signs are in situ along the walking trail
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	The involvement of the walking trail allows out exercising to learn about their heritage in a relaxed way through becoming familiar with the information signs along the route.

	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
<p>Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements</p>	<p>The site is an important attraction for visitors to the area</p>
<p>Viability/constraints</p>	<p>Upkeep of the cemetery. Upkeep of signage.</p>
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>


<p>Comments</p>	<p>Many of the features of the site were discussed in a BBC radio programme “Your Place and Mine” ” broadcast 16 October 2014</p> <p>William Roulston describes some of these: A skull and cross-bones, a bell (bells were rung at funerals) an open book (representing the Bible) crossed spades. These are assumed to represent the tools of the gravedigger. Here also can be found the only example in Ulster of a tree with a serpent wrapped around it. This represents the “fall of man” from the book of Genesis. He also points out that “of all of the graveyards visited throughout this particular series, Leckpatrick has the oldest dated headstone. It’s very probably the oldest in Ulster. On it is carved a coat of arms, a hand bearing a sword and a Celtic cross. The stone bears the inscription “To the memory of John Magee who died in 1617”. In the 1650s, one David Magee, presumed to be John’s son was the owner of Holyhill House. It was the Magees who sold it to the Sinclairs around 1683.” “Hamilton Thompson tells us about the Sinclair family connections in the graveyard. There is a square walled area with railings on top where the members of the Sinclair family are buried. Within this enclosed area there are some quite large and ornate memorials, some of which are actually set into the walls. The Rev. John Sinclair (who died in 1702) is buried here.” Paul Moore speaks next to Joan Donnell and Johnny Dooher .</p> <p>Joan is involved in a local project installing signage and interpretive boards around the area including the graveyard. She feels it’s very important to inform people of the historic significance of what they can see here. She says that this graveyard is a place which, due to its location, people drive past and don’t even</p>
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	<p>notice. Her hope is that, by raising awareness, more people might stop and take a look into the graveyard and perhaps appreciate some of the history that's to be found here. Joan herself has relatives buried here at Leckpatrick and makes the point that burials are still taking place here and many of the graves are still being visited. This is evidenced by recent flowers and wreaths that can be seen. Joan says that the graveyard is not just a historical monument but a part of the present day community too.</p> <p>Johnny Dooher talks about the Catholic burials that took place here up until the mid 1800s. One example he quotes is that of Father Tom Christie, originally from Glenmornan. He was the Parish Priest here at Leckpatrick and he died of a fever in 1827. It's thought that by the 1840s the Catholic churches had made their own arrangements for burials and that's why they appear to have stopped here at that time.</p> <p>Information from BBC website "Your Place and Mine"</p>
<p>General recommendation</p>	<p>More promotion should be given through radio and printed form. The information signs with their associated apps are an excellent method of giving the community heritage information.</p>


Asset name/number	Clady Bridge HB10/08/002
Bridge	Bridge, Industrial Archaeology
Location	Clady on border between Tyrone and Donegal Townland: Donneygowen IG Ref: H2925 9399
Protection status	A
Condition/ Sensitivity	 <p>Photographs Eddie O’Kane</p>
Ownership	Central Government

Brief description	<p>“A nine-span road bridge, built c.1700, carrying Urney Road over the River Finn to County Donegal on an east/west axis, located to west of Clady village. Roughly coursed rubble abutments, spandrels and parapets; rubble coping to parapet (partially repaired with ashlar stonework). Nine almost round- voussoirs (two arches to west are flood arches); central arches have been repaired below carriageway; continuous structure projects forming large V- shaped rubble cutwaters to piers allowing for pedestrian refuges on carriageway. Arch soffits have been sprayed with cement render. The carriageway is approximately 5m wide.”</p>
Context (Setting)	<p>The area of the Finn surrounding Clady Bridge has been subject to severe flooding on an annual basis. There has been similar flooding along the Finn river valley. It is important that the present bridge is preserved. Its character is unique and it has been described as one of the 10 most important bridges in the province.</p>
Site appraisal	<p>McCutcheon in 1980 describes the bridge as “one of the most remarkable in the Province with greatly exaggerated lateral recesses in the parapet walls continues downwards to form massive salient-angled cut-waters” (McCutcheon. Plate 12; 3). McClure, writing in 1983, ranks this bridge as “one of the top ten bridges in the Province and its historic importance should be compared with the following bridges:- "(1) the Craigmore Viaduct and (2) the Egyptian Arch near Bessbrook "(3) the Charlemont Bridge at Moy on the Backwater and (4) the Bann Bridge at Coleraine. "(5) the Glendun Viaduct near Cushendun and (6) the Randalstown Viaduct over the River Maine. "[Although] not an exhaustive list...these are the bridges against which Clady must be assessed. Clady is unique in that it pre-</p>

	dates by several years (at present its date of building is not known) all the bridges listed above....
Benefits/potential	
Audience	Local community, general public.
Partnerships	Local communities. Wider communities interested in bridges, industrial archaeology
Learning	Study of bridges throughout the wider Strabane area and also in Fermanagh. As stated above, this one of the earliest and most important stone bridges in the province. As such it is key to an understanding to the history of stone bridge building.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	Unique element of industrial archaeology. Important connection between two cross border rural communities.
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	Very little is made of the unique qualities of this bridge. It could be given much more prominence.
Viability/constraints	If links were made with the nearby Urney monastic remains, and the earlier sites and monuments, the bridge could be seen as part of an overall suite of attractions for the visitor.
Comments	The heritage importance of Clady bridge is undervalued. It is also part of the Battle sites category- The Battle of the three Fords 1689, southern crossing.
General recommendation	There could be greater affirmation of the importance of this Historic Bridge. For centuries in Scotland bridges such as this have been promoted as tourist destinations in themselves.


Asset name/number	SILVER BROOK HOUSE SMR Number TYR 006:048
Heritage type	17 th century House
Location	Parish: Donaghedy Townland: Tirkernaghan
Protection status	Scheduled
Condition/ Sensitivity	Substantial Remains (Vast majority definable) The house is used as a general store by the owners. It is surrounded by many large outbuildings which house the owners business. A new single story house has been built near to the C17TH House. The interior of the house has at least one lugged door in a large downstairs room  <p>Photograph Eddie O'Kane</p>
Ownership	Private
Brief description	"This house dates to the C17th & was lived in until the 1950s. It is at present 2 stories high, but was originally 3, according to the owner. The owner also recalled a cellar

	<p>& 2 blocked-up openings in the NE gable. A fine projecting turret is supported on stone brackets at first floor level in the N corner. This had extended to the 3rd floor but was reduced in height with the main structure. The interior has been stripped out. The ground floor is divided into a large open space with a smaller room to NE & the upper floor is used as a hay loft" SMR record -While the upper story of the house has been removed the external walls have been rendered with lime plaster.</p>  <p>Photograph Eddie O'Kane</p>
<p>Context (Setting)</p>	<p>The house is situated on the brow of a hill overlooking a river valley. It can clearly be seen from Silverbrook Mills on the other side of the river.</p>  <p>Photograph Eddie O'Kane</p>
<p>Site appraisal</p>	<p>The C17TH House seems to be part of a larger complex of buildings in the valley. A humpbacked bridge, Silverbridge, crosses the nearby river and on the other side of the river are the range of restored mill buildings, complete with waterwheels.</p>

Benefits/potential	
Audience	The building would appeal to students of the Plantation period.
Partnerships	Silverbrook Mills, the humpbacked bridge and the C17TH house are all important heritage assets covering Plantation domestic and industrial sections.
Learning	The C17TH features of the house would provide a learning experience for students and visitors in general.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	This is an important example of plantation architecture. Its existence is important to the history of the area.
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	These considerations would depend on the wishes of the owners.
Viability/constraints	Further development would depend on the wishes of the owners.
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
Comments	It is one of a very small number of surviving examples of domestic architecture from the plantation period.
General recommendation	This is an important example of plantation architecture. It is important that it should be conserved.

Asset name/number	Silverbrook Mills 90 Brook Road Donemanagh Strabane Co Tyrone BT82 ORX HB10/09/027
Heritage type	Mill Industrial Archaeology
Location	Townland: Rousky C4475 0043
Protection status	B1 Extent of listing: Mill buildings
Condition/ Sensitivity	The buildings have been restored as part of an earlier community project.
Ownership	Public Body
Brief description	“Complex of mill buildings including two-storey corn mill, built c.1830 with one-and-a-half-storey flax mill built c.1850, located to the east side of Brook Road. Corn mill is L-shaped-on-plan with single-storey gabled extension to south, built c.1880, at a time of improvements” Historic buildings entry.
Context (Setting)	The Silverbrook Mills complex is situated in a beautiful valley with the humpbacked Silverbrook Bridge and C17TH Silverbrook House across the river. There are several mills nearby including a scutch mill which has housed Mill Pottery since 1976. The Historic Buildings entry gives an impression of the richness of the site - “Flax mill is rectangular-on-plan. Roofs are pitched natural slate with concrete ridge tiles over timber eaves. Walls are roughly coursed rubble with fieldstone quoins. Windows are square-headed timber-framed 4-pane casements supported by stone lintels. Corn mill to north-west has replacement concrete eaves. Principal elevation faces west, single-storey at left due to topography of site; at left, large camber-headed opening with brick voussoirs at first floor contains vertically-sheeted timber double doors; at centre, similar opening flanked at left by single window; at right, square-headed opening containing similar doors at first floor. North elevation is blank.

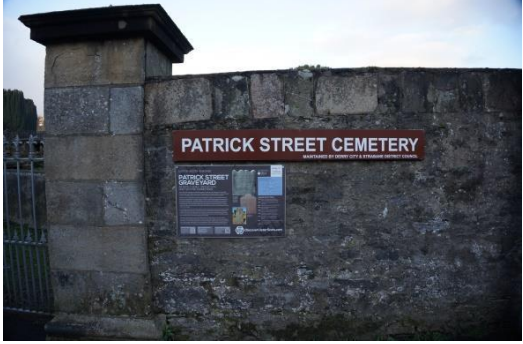


	<p>East elevation contains, at left, single window at first floor; ground floor abutted by wall-mounted breast- shot cast-iron waterwheel with brick surround to shaft opening; at right, projecting wing is blank. South elevation is abutted at ground floor right by single- storey extension containing single window to south; there is an unusual carved stone human face to the top left of this elevation. The west elevation contains vertically-sheeted timber door and window; east elevation contains single window. Timber sluice way and tail race to east bounded by rubble retaining wall. Flax mill to north-east Principal elevation faces south and consists of large square-headed opening in rebated surround with red brick quoins containing vertically-sheeted timber double sliding doors supported on timber rail to head; abutted at right by wall-mounted cast-iron waterwheel; pair of fixed metal rooflights to roofslope. West gable contains round-arched-headed window opening with red brick surround. North elevation is blank. East gable is blank. Detached one-and-a-half-storey saw mill directly to south of flax mill waterwheel; roof is corrugated asbestos sheeting; principal elevation is lime- rendered; exposed rubble elsewhere. Window and door openings to east and west elevations contain vertically-sheeted timber doors. Mill abutted at north- east by pitched corrugated metal open shed. Detached single-storey former dwelling to north at centre of complex. Roof is pitched natural slate with lime-rendered chimneys to north end; walls are lime- washed rubble over painted plinth; windows are square-headed 2/4 sliding sashes with painted stone sills. Principal elevation faces west and contains two windows and vertically-sheeted timber half-door. North gable is blank. East elevation contains two windows. South gable contains window at ground floor and attic. Detached one-and-a-half-storey outbuilding to south; detailed as mill buildings; vertically-sheeted timber entrance door to north; west gable contains single window to attic; three fixed metal rooflights</p>
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	<p>to north and south roofslopes. Set within private grounds; bounded to north by mill race; bounded from road at west and carpark at south by recent rubble walling surmounted by timber fencing; access through pair of diagonally-sheeted gates supported by circular rubble piers. Further one-and-a-half-storey building to south of carpark is largely overgrown; whitened rubble walling can be seen. Roof Natural slate Walling Roughly coursed rubble Windows Timber framed 4-pane casements Rainwater goods Cast-iron half-round gutters and round downpipes”</p>
Site appraisal	<p>Although the site has been inactive for some time it retains many of the characteristics which make it an important part of the local industrial heritage.</p>
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
Benefits/potential	
Audience	Local people, schools, visitors
Partnerships	Siverbrook Mills could combine with other nearby sites to provide visitors a comprehensive experience of local heritage.
Learning	The Mills Complex provide visitors and students with the opportunity to experience this important part of the areas industrial archaeology.

<p>Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering</p>	<p>“Donemana and District Community Association Ltd carried out a project to restore the Mills as a tourist venue, with tea rooms and a gift shop. The project was funded by the International Fund for Ireland, the N.I. Tourist Board, Strabane District Partnership and Strabane District Council. During the project, the water wheels were re-built and machinery re-instated to accurately depict the workings of the mill buildings”</p>
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
<p>Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements</p>	<p>The mill complex has been developed as a visitor attraction but was not self-sustainable and had to close.</p>
<p>Viability/constraints</p>	<p>The fact that the project has failed once would make it difficult to resurrect the venture as a commercially viable tourist facility.</p>

Comments	<p>“A site visit in October 2012 indicated that the facility has since proved unsustainable, and is now closed to the public; there is evidence of some deterioration to lime wash etc. The buildings remain in their original setting, with head race to the north. The restoration was accurate; there is little modern influence visible other than some 21st Century fencing and a gravelled parking area.” – Historic Buildings entry. It would be a major loss if the complex were to deteriorate beyond repair.</p>
General recommendation	<p>Silverbrook Mills is an important, accurately restored, mill complex. In spite of the failure of the project a reappraisal of possible partnerships with other local attractions might be worthwhile.</p>

Asset name/number	Patrick Street Graveyard Strabane
Heritage type	Graveyard, Stone Age remains, site of early Christian church
Location	Corner of Patrick Street and Church Street
Protection status	
Condition/ Sensitivity	Many of the graves are overgrown. The graveyard is maintained by the local authority and the key is kept at the Tourist information office, Alley Theatre.
Ownership	Local authority
Brief description	Right in the very heart of the graveyard is a mysterious prehistoric standing stone believed to date back as far as 2500 BC. Little is known of its exact purpose – it may have served to mark a burial site or simply to indicate a route way or boundary. Jim Bradley stated that this was later the location of the early Christian site “and the nucleus of the early settlement that was to become the town of the “Fair River Valley”
Context (Setting)	The graveyard is located in the centre of Strabane, near the Bowling Green.
Site appraisal	The graveyard’s proximity to the Bowling Green, with its concentration of protected buildings, makes the graveyard an important part of this heritage cluster.
Benefits/potential	
Audience	Local community, schools, visitors
Partnerships	Local Authority and local history groups.
Learning	As the graveyard spans many centuries and stories it provides an accessible narrative for Strabane’s heritage.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	Development of visitor trails. Guided walks in summer months

	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>
<p>Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements</p>	<p>The proximity of the Bowling Green and its cluster of listed buildings make Patrick Street graveyard an important part of this heritage nucleus.</p>
<p>Viability/constraints</p>	<p>The secluded nature of the graveyard lends itself to walking tours at appointed times. Guided tours could take place at appointed times, under the control of the local tourist office.</p>
	 <p>Photograph Eddie O’Kane</p>


Comments	There are Stone Age, Early Christian, and C17TH burials. There is the grave of “Half-Hung Mc Naughton” who was executed in Lifford for his killing of Mary Ann Knox of Prehen at Cloughcor in 1761. There was a Church of Ireland Church within the walls of the graveyard for many years. James 11’s soldiers used it as a hospital in 1689.
General recommendation	Promotion of the graveyard should continue through the signage, apps and walking tours.

Asset name/number	Urney Glebe SMR: - TYR009:004
Heritage type	ECCLESIASTICAL SITE
Location	Townland: URNEY GLEBE
Protection status	Scheduled zone
Condition/ Sensitivity	Some remains (Some definable features)General Periods:
Ownership	
Brief description	MONASTERY, CHURCH, GRAVEYARD & CROSS- CARVED STONE: ERNAIDE, ERNAIDHE or IRNAIDE Specific Type Specific Period Monastery E.CHRIST. Cross-carved Stone E.CHRIST. Graveyard POST-MED Church POST-MED Church MED/L.MED Graveyard MED/L.MED
Context (Setting)	The monastery site is between the main Clady – Strabane road. Urney Park, built 1800-1819, (listed B1), is on the other side of the road
Site appraisal	This monastery site combines a range of buildings and artefacts of various periods. “This possible pre-Norman church site is occupied by the ruins of a post medieval church & graveyard. The graveyard is rectangular, 90m NE-SW x 65m NW-SE & encloses a rounded knoll. The ruins of the church lie at the NW end of the S half. They consist of a simple rectangular nave aligned NE/SW with evidence for a bell tower at the SW end. There are no visible remains of the earlier foundation which appears in several places in the Annals of Ulster. There is a cross-carved slab at the E end of the church.”


Photographs Eddie O'Kane



Benefits/potential	
Audience	Local community, students, visitors.
Partnerships	This site could form part of an ecclesiastical tour of monasteries and churches in the area.
Learning	Further investigation of the site might yield useful information.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	Visitor potential in combination with other heritage sites nearby.
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	See above
Viability/constraints	The adjoining churchyard burial site is still in use.
Comments	The proximity of Urney glebe to Christ Church, Bell Road, Urney and to Clady Bridge and the three battlesites at that crossing would make an interesting cluster of visitor attractions.
General recommendation	The promotion of the heritage sites mentioned above should be undertaken to fully realise the tourist potential of the locality.


Asset name/number	Holy Hill, (also known as Holyhill and Holly Hill House), Strabane, Northern Ireland Address: Strabane, County Tyrone, BT82 0AJ HB10/11/001 L
Heritage type	Gardens Walled gardens
Location	Hollyhill
Protection status	B1 Extent of Listing: Walls, glass houses and potting shed
Condition/ Sensitivity	Well maintained Private not open to the public Form of site: demesne Purpose of site: Ornamental Context or principal building: house Site first created: After 1667 Main period of development: Late 17th century Survival: Extant © Copyright Parks and Gardens Data Services Ltd. 2017.
Ownership	Private
	 <p>Holy Hill photo Eddie O’Kane</p>
Brief description	“Holy Hill is a house set in a demesne from the late-17th century, with mature trees including much laurel. There is a maintained ornamental garden with herbaceous borders, lawns and shrubs, and a water garden from the 1970” © Copyright Parks and Gardens Data Services Ltd.

	2017.
Context (Setting)	Part of a cluster of historic buildings and gardens
	 <p>Holy Hill Photo Eddie O’Kane</p>
Site appraisal	<p>The Gardens are one of the few listed gardens in the area and the only garden within the wards chosen for this audit.</p> <p>A walled garden dating from c.1840 situated to the south of Holy Hill House (HB10/11/001A), a country house with demesne situated north-east of Strabane town. The garden consists of a rectangular enclosure approximately 9-10 ft high, constructed of rubble stone set in lime mortar. North and west walls are lined with red brick. There are a number of later structures abutting the inner face of the walls, as follows: Vine House Single-storey lean-to glazed timber vine house to north, rectangular in plan, with red-brick plinth wall having glazed timber frame over a continuous concrete sill. Access is at east via a half-glazed timber door. Corrugated tin boiler house connected to vine house on north side of wall. Sunken glass house Single-storey glass house, rectangular in plan, aligned roughly north-south. Red brick foundation and plinth walls support glazed roof with cast-iron frame and painted angled ridge tiles; eaves are timber. Access at north end via a timber door; top panel glazed (four panes), lower panel timber sheeted. Corrugated metal potting shed Single storey corrugated metal, rectangular in plan, aligned north-south and located on western outside face of walled garden. Lean-to with painted timber single glazed casement windows. No access to interior. Setting The walled garden is set</p>

	<p>within the demesne of Holy Hill House (HB10/11/001A-L). Walling: Rubble stone and red-brick Glass houses: Red brick/timber/cast metal/glass Potting shed: Corrugated metal</p> <p>Information Historic buildings database</p>
	 <p>Holy Hill House photo Eddie O'Kane</p>
Benefits/potential	
Audience	Scholars of built heritage and historic gardens
Partnerships	
Learning	<p>Historical Information</p> <p>The walled garden appears on the second edition map of 1856. The vine house is the only internal structure shown at this date, and the sunken glass house does not appear until the third edition map, making it a mid twentieth-century addition. The Holy Hill estate is likely to have been cultivated and improved and the house enlarged in the 1730s and 1760s, by John Sinclair, owner from 1718 until 1770. During the ownership (1770-1804) of his son, George, who had been apprenticed as a linen merchant, the estate was cultivated and a mill was likely established after 1779. Under the ownership of his nephew James, J.P., from 1804-1865, the estate was greatly cultivated and many estate buildings were erected, including the walled garden. While James' son William, a former High Sheriff in Co. Donegal in 1854 who became Deputy Lieutenant of Tyrone in 1876, also probably improved the estate until his death in 1896,</p>

	<p>it is highly likely that subsequent owners did not embark on any new projects.</p> <p>The walled garden would appear to date from the latter part of the ownership of James (J.P.) Sinclair, who made many improvements and was described in the OS Memoirs as follows: "...the only resident proprietor [in the parish of Leckpatrick] and his "skill in every department of agriculture [which] enabled him to suggest the most effectual means of improvement, whilst his liberality induced him to supply in a great measure the means.</p> <p>Information Historic buildings database</p>
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	Upkeep by owner. Site private
Viability/constraints	See above
Comments	The gardens at Hollyhill are part of a complex of listed Historic buildings. The house dates from C17TH. The house was spared from destruction by the Jacobite forces on direct intervention by King James 11.
General recommendation	<p>The House and Gardens at Hollyhill form one of the most important collections of heritage sites in the area.</p> <p>The gardens are open from time to time at the discretion of the owner. At other times they are private</p>

Asset name/number	SMR Number TYR 006:024 Loughash Wedge Tomb: Giant's Grave
Heritage type	Wedge Tomb NEO/B.A. Townland: Loughash General Type: Megalithic Tomb Condition: Some remains (Some definable features) Prehistoric
Location	Loughash Parish: Donaghedy Barony: Strabane Lower Council: Derry City and Strabane C4834000860
Protection status	Scheduled
Condition/ Sensitivity	Very good example of a wedge tomb. Has been excavated in archaeological digs and finds fully recorded.
Ownership	Privately owned farmland. Scheduled Monument
Brief description	On a hilltop sloping down to S. The tomb is enclosed by a wedge-shaped cairn. The entrance, which faces W, has a split-portal arrangement & there is an antechamber. The overall length of the cairn is 10m, 4m wide at back & 7.5m wide at front. The gallery & antechamber are 6.5m long x 1.7m wide. Excavation of the site uncovered several artefacts in the gallery. Towards the front was the broken mould of a palstave & at the back, part of a bronze blade. Sherds from 4 Beakers, 5 other pots were found with flint flakes. There was some charcoal & cremated bone, representing perhaps 3 individuals, the main burial being in a pit towards the back of the gallery. NISMR details
Context (Setting)	Site on hill side. Site accessible through field gate.
Site appraisal	Well sign posted from main road and from side road. Can be seen clearly by looking at sign post and up towards monument.
Benefits/potential	

Partnerships	Part on a network of archaeological sites. Well described and illustrated on Council website.
Learning	Sites are well explained by explanatory signs beside the monuments.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	These archaeological trails provide attraction for visitors and for the local community.
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	Monument in privately owned field. As stated above they are a vital part of the areas visitor attractions.
Viability/constraints	On-going maintenance of signage.
	 <p>Loughash Wedge Tomb Photo Marianne O’Kane Boal</p>
	Archaeological site situated in beautiful landscape with other important sites nearby.
General recommendation	The archaeological sites should continue to be promoted by the excellent council website. Printed touring maps showing specific attractions e.g.an archaeological trail would be a useful aid for visitors.



Asset name/number	Church Of The Immaculate Conception (RC) Barrack Street Strabane County Tyrone BT82 8HD HB10/14/008
Heritage type	Church Date of Construction: 1880 – 1899
Location	Townland: Town Parks of Strabane OS Map No: 72/8 NE IG Ref: H3485 9755
Protection status	Extent of listing: Church, piers, gates, railings and walling Current Grade: B+ Criteria for Listing Architectural Interest A. Style B. Proportion C. Ornamentation D. Plan Form E. Spatial Organisation F. Structural System I. Quality and survival of Interior J. Setting K. Group value Historic Interest Y. Social, Cultural or Economic Importance W. Northern Ireland/International Interest
Condition/ Sensitivity	Excellent condition. Well maintained.
Ownership	Owner Category Church - RC
Brief description	Large, impressive, cruciform RC church of 1895 by William Hague in the 13th century French gothic style, with large four-stage tower with spire, large, pinnacled side porches, side aisles and a large two-storey rear vestry projection. An excellent example of the genre, this almost cathedral-like church is well preserved both inside and out, and, internally, retains some fine mosaic work and altar-fittings.
Context (Setting)	This church was built in 1890-95 to designs by William Hague. It replaced an earlier smaller RC church -'St John's'- built at the south end of Meetinghouse Street in 1821, and extended and embellished in the two decades following. By the late 1800s the Catholic congregation of Strabane had outstripped St John's both in terms of size and aspirations, and the building itself had fallen into disrepair. It was abandoned c.1890, with services transferred to the chapel in the Convent of Mercy while work was completed on the new church. The building work was


	<p>largely funded by the congregation, however some money was raised by the curate, John McElhatton, from members of a congregation he had previously ministered to in the United States</p>
<p>Site appraisal</p>	<p>Exterior Description And Setting Large, almost cathedral-like, cruciform RC church of 1895 by William Hague in the 13th century French gothic style, with large four-stage tower with spire, large, pinnacled, side porches, side aisles, and a large two-storey rear vestry projection. The church is set on the east side of Barrack Street. [The church is actually set on a SW-NE axis, with the chancel to the NE, for the purposes of this description, however, SW will be read as W etc.] Although 'cruciform' in terms of design, this church is basically rectangular in plan. To the W end is the large four-stage tower which has an octagonal tower with turret-like corner pinnacles. The tower is flanked by relatively large two-level side-porches, with gabled fronts and prominent pinnacled buttresses. Stretching between these and the transepts are the side aisles. Projecting from the SE corner is the large two-storey vestry / office section. The building is constructed in squared rockfaced stone [?limestone] with quoins, dressings, tracery, eavescourses and stringcourses all in dressed light-coloured sandstone, with some relieving arches in rock-faced red sandstone. The uppermost stage of the tower as well as the spire are in dressed sandstone also. There are reducing buttresses to all sections of the building bar the vestry projection. The roofs of the various sections are slated, with moulded sandstone parapets with kneelers and decorative stone finials, and decorative red clay ridge tiles. The symmetrical front elevation consists of the tower and the gables of the side-porches. To the ground level of the tower is the main entrance. This is made up of a flat-arch opening filled with a panelled timber double door with decorative strap hinges. Above the doorway there is a finely carved pointed-arch frieze showing the Virgin Mary flanked by angels. The whole ensemble is set within a bevelled reveal, with marble colonette 'jambs' set on tall bases 'supporting' a moulded archivolt with some delicate</p>

carving. The entrance also has a drip moulding with carved human heads as stops. There is a short flight of stone steps to the doorway. To the relatively narrow exposed sections of the ground level of the N and S faces of the tower there is a cusped window. To the second stage of this face of the tower there is a large pointed arch window with geometric tracery, marble colonette 'jambs', a moulded archivolt, bevelled 'cill', and a drip moulding similar to the entrance (most of the windows are dressed in this fashion). To the N and S faces of this stage of the tower there are (relatively) small pointed-arch windows. To the (short) third-stage of the tower there is a 'blind' arcade, with a cusped head to each arch with curved arches over. Two of the arches are filled with slit windows, also with cusped heads. The other faces of the tower have similar detailing. Just below the second stage there is a moulded stringcourse with gargoyles to each corner. The uppermost stage of the tower is octagonal, but with the buttresses rising against the four 'bevelled' faces to form, part square part-octagonal, turret-like pinnacles with small slit 'windows' and conical roofs to each. Each of the other four other faces there is a large cusped opening with louvers and drip moulding. Above this stage, to the base of the spire, there is a stringcourse with dentil-like moulding. The spire has tall lucarne projections to four of its faces, all with geometric tracery forming niches; the alternative faces have small quatrefoil openings set higher up. The pinnacle of the spire has crockets and a metal cross finial. The side porches have two large windows set at a high level to their lower storey, each with geometric tracery and drip moulding with decorative stops. To the upper level, above a moulded stringcourse, there is three-light window, with cusped heads to each light. The central light is much taller and a 'linked' drip moulding covers all lights. There is relieving arch above this window, with another stringcourse above that. The buttresses to the corners of each porch rise into prominent gabled pinnacles. The N elevation is made up the chancel, to far left, then a small gabled porch, (attached to both



the side of the chancel and the E side of the N transept) , then the gable of the transept, then the side aisle, and, to far right, the large side porch. To the chancel there is a high level cusped window. To the (uneven) gable of the porch there is a pointed-arch doorway with panelled timber double door with strap hinge, bevelled reveal and moulded archivolt with drip moulding over. Above the doorway there is a small slit opening with cusped head. To the E face of the porch there is a small flat-arch window with shoulders. The porch extends from a taller projection with a lean-to roof. To the E face of this section there is a high level octofoil window. The lower level of the gable of the transept projects in a shallow 'lean-to' fashion. To the lower level there are two relatively small cusped windows. To the upper level there are two large pointed-arch windows with geometric tracery (two cusped lights and a cinquefoil). To the apex of the gable there is a large, but squat, pointed-arch window (actually an equilateral curved triangle) with geometric tracery in the form of three trefoils. To the side aisle there are windows each consisting of a pair of cusped lights. To the clerestory there are five large pointed arch windows, with geometric tracery. To the large side porch there is a doorway, similar to that to the smaller porch to the left of the N elevation, but larger and with marble colonette 'jambs'. Above the doorway there is a relatively small trefoil window. The S elevation is a mirror image of that to the N as far as the small porch attached to the transept and chancel. To the right of this, (extending from the chancel and abutting the E side of the small porch), is the large vestry / office projection. To the N-facing gable of this there is a large high level window with geometric tracery, (two cusped lights and a quatrefoil). To the apex of the gable there is a small slit window, with cusped head. To the W face of this section there is tall pointed arch window to right on the ground floor, with a small flat-arch window with shoulders, to the first floor. A tall chimneystack, whose lower half is finished as the walls of the church, but whose upper half is wholly in dressed sandstone, rises from the W side of


	<p>the roof of the vestry. The E elevation consists of the vestry to left, the chancel to right of this and the side of the small porch to right (already described above. To the ground floor of the vestry there is a doorway. This consists of a flat-arched reveal with shoulders, a panelled timber door, a pointed-arch frieze with decorative roundel recess, and a bevelled reveal, archivolt and drip moulding. There is a short flight of stone steps, with low walling, to the doorway. To the right of the doorway are three flat-arch windows, each with two cusped lights and a relieving arch over. To the first floor there are four windows, three with single (cusped) lights, one -the third window from left- with two lights. The chancel has a large window with geometric tracery., with a small slit window (with cusped head) to the apex of the gable. In front of the church there is a paved forecourt and drive. The paving continues around the whole perimeter of the building, with well-tended lawns beyond these. The grounds of the church are enclosed from the road by a low squared stone wall with bevelled sandstone coping, topped with decorative and distinctive iron railings. The wall is punctuated by square sandstone piers with bevelled bases, bevelled corners, cusped panels and 'gabled' caps with trefoil and roundel panels, and moulded ridge. There is a carriage gateway flanked by pedestrian gateways. The piers to the former have more elaborate 'pyramidal' caps. The S and E sides of the church grounds are enclosed by simple stone walls with sandstone copng. The wall to the S is taller and has had modern metal fencing attached to its S side. (NISMR details)</p> <p>The altar was built by Patrick Pearse's father. Architects Hague, William</p>
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	 <p>Church of the Immaculate Conception Photo Eddie O’Kane</p>
Benefits/potential	
Audience	Local community, visitors and students
Partnerships	Church would form an important part of a Church Tour of Churches of all denominations in the Strabane area.
Learning	The building combines many different aspects of church architecture and in its well maintained it affords valuable learning experience for visitors and students.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	The Church of the Immaculate Conception is an important, integral part of the RC community in Strabane. As part of the built heritage of the Churches of the Strabane area of all denominations it has the potential to be an important part of a Church Trail.
	 <p>Interior view Photo Eddie O’Kane</p>

	 <p>Interior view Photo Eddie O’Kane</p>
<p>Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements</p>	<p>RC Church for community worship.</p>
<p>Comments</p>	<p>This Church is an important element of the built heritage of Strabane.</p>
<p>General recommendation</p>	<p>The Church should be promoted as part of a tour of the churches of all denominations in the Strabane area.</p>

Asset name/number	Strabane Canal SMR: - TYR005:500
Heritage type	Modern
Location	STRABANE CANAL, BALLYDONAGHY LOCK, GREENLAW LOCK. CANAL: STRABANE CANAL, Grid Reference: C3594003910
Protection status	Scheduled
Condition/ Sensitivity	
Ownership	STRABANE CANAL, BALLYDONAGHY LOCK, GREENLAW LOCK This site includes 3 reaches of the Strabane Canal, IHR no.412.2 Reach 1 - C35940391-C36050262; Ballydonaghy & Leckpatrick Reach 2 - C36050262-H34899957; Strabane Bog, Woodend, Desert & Greenlaw Reach 3 - H34459832-H34629895; Greenbrae & Town Parks (Strabane) Two engineering trial pits were opened in bed of Strabane Canal (reach 3) as part of the ground works in advance of the proposed A5 works on behalf of Roads Service. The pits were 3m by 1m by 4.5m and were dug into the bed of the Canal (under SMC) where the proposed road will cross the canal. The pits showed that the canal appears to have been cut into subsoil with no evidence for sealing the base. The Canal was abandoned in 1962 and appears to have been purposefully backfilled [Mouchel, 2009]. NISMIR Details
Brief description	The Local Authority have designated 3 reaches of Strabane Canal Basin, Strabane Reach 2 and Strabane reach 3
Site appraisal	The development of the Greenlaw and Ballydonaghy sections as a leisure facility and walkway has been a great success and is much utilised by the community.

	 <p>Canal Basin Arena photo Eddie O’Kane</p> <p>The Canal Basin area in Strabane has seen substantial work carried out to provide an area for use by the local community for festivals and gatherings. There is a band stand and an arena for performance and audience participation SCORE arena.</p>
Benefits/potential	
Audience	Local Community and visitors
Partnerships	<p>The canal passes through many sections on the town. There is great scope for community groups involved in leisure, health and wellbeing and heritage.</p> <p>The Canal Basin area community park/ performance arena provides a rich resource. Communities can come together to organise festivals and events.</p>  <p>Canal Basin Arena photo Eddie O’Kane</p>
Learning	Scope for heritage learning and study of habitat and wildlife.
Community impact (involving communities)/regeneration/volunteering	Community groups are able to use the amenity according to their respective needs. The

	<p>canal walks are already a great success given their utilisation by the local community for recreation and exercise. Scope exists for volunteering to interpret the rich natural environment.</p> <p>The Canal Basin arena provides a vital facility for community regeneration. Its proximity to the Alley Arts Centre and Theatre allows events to be coordinated from there to spread out into a wider open air space.</p>  <p>Canal Basin Arena photo Eddie O’Kane</p>
Financial Implications – potential income opportunities and investment requirements	On-going costs in maintenance and upkeep of existing amenity.
Viability/constraints	Finance.
Comments	Partnership between local authority and a structured volunteer programme would help reduce costs of upkeep.
General recommendation	Very useful information signage is already in place along the existing walkways.

Strabane Built Heritage

Shadows of the Past – Footsteps in the Future

At the turn of the twentieth century Strabane was a thriving commercial centre with its canal, railway, and road network. The long, diverse, list of businesses in the local business directory gives evidence of the thriving entrepreneurial economy. Strabane's close relationship with the neighbouring town of Lifford made them the Gateway to Donegal. Lifford was designated part of Strabane Union at that time. Strabane was the location for the important hiring fare, which not only provided workers for Strabane and the Laggan, but for work further afield in Scotland.

Much of the built heritage in Strabane has been destroyed through unsympathetic development and destruction during the Troubles. Despite the destruction there are remaining buildings, which exist as important "Shadows of the Past" which give evidence of future directions. There are a range of buildings, which stand apart in this respect.

The first notable exception is Gray's Printers, which is overseen by the National Trust. For a while it housed an exhibition area and tourist information centre, run by Strabane District Council. The street front shop area now houses a tea-room. In earlier years it was a stationery and art shop.

The building is of interest not only because of its association with the Declaration of Independence in America but because its layout shows the nature of that of many of the Strabane shops and houses of earlier years. The shop area occupies the front on street area and the property stretches back to a yard, which includes the Printing Press in an upstairs workshop. The layout of these shops shows how the businesses extended well beyond the street façade. Businesses in many towns in Ulster had a similar layout.



Gray's Printers, photograph Eddie O'Kane

Further down the street is Gormley's Shoe Shop, which in earlier years was Gormley's Bookshop, stationers and lending library. Mr Gormley purchased this shop in 1922. The property ran from the present frontage in the Main Street through the back yard to the

premises in the Back Street (now Market Street). The small shop in the back street is now called “The Holy Shop”. The shoe shop retains the name Gormley but the present owner says he has no connection to the Gormley family. The Gormley owner of the original shop was the uncle of the writer Flann O’Brien. Flann O’Brien spent many of his early years reading books upstairs and listening to the conversation of people in the street outside.

A walk along the river taking the view of Main Street and Lower Main Street shows the original layout where extensive rebuilding has not completely obliterated it. This riverside walk shows how many Ulster towns, such as Strabane and Omagh have turned their back on the river. In earlier years the river was used to supply the back yards of the various businesses.

Two shop buildings, (their facades and interior shop fittings) – Blair’s Newsagents and Hill’s Chemists were removed many years ago and rebuilt at the Folk Park in Omagh. Older residents of Strabane will remember visiting these busy shops in Strabane. They can today walk around these shops in the Folk Park. They are an important part of Strabane’s heritage and another reason to extend the trail between Omagh and Strabane.

“The Farmers Home” public house on the Railway Road, retains many of its original features and has been sympathetically restored by its present owner, John McGowan. This premises features prominently in the Cooper Collection of Strabane photographs.



L-R, Gormley’s Main Street, The Holy Shop, Market Street, The Farmers Home, Railway Road, photographs Eddie O’Kane

The Bowling Green provides a focus for the town’s heritage. It has Wilson and Simms former solicitors’ offices, which is another fine example of sympathetic conservation. The solicitors business existed there for 150 years. At one time there was a small public house in part of the premises. It has recently been sold to a new owner.

Further along the same side of the street is a range of interesting houses, which are at present for sale. Some are former solicitors’ offices and others are apartments. Conservation

of the existing buildings would greatly enhance the architectural appeal of the Bowling Green.

Two buildings on the Green have associations with Strabane's literary heritage. Christ Church, Church of Ireland, was opened in 1869. It was designed in the early Gothic style by Mr John Kennedy and built by Mr John Mc Clay on a site he believed was that of the first castle in Strabane. It was consecrated by the then Bishop of Derry, William Alexander. It contains a five light stained glass window on the theme of the Last Supper. The window was presented to the church by Cecil Francis Alexander, and her brothers, as a memorial to her parents Major John and Mrs. Humphries. Flann O'Brien's birthplace has a blue plaque on the front of the house in the Bowling Green.



L-R, Christ Church, Flann O'Brien's Birth Place, Wilson and Simms Former Solicitors Office, All Bowling Green, photographs Eddie O'Kane

Across from the Bowling Green, on Church Street, is an ancient graveyard. There are prehistoric remains in the centre of the graveyard and it is the site of an early Franciscan friary. Jim Bradley discusses this site as follows – "In 1231 the Franciscan order of Friars Minor arrived in Ireland for the first time and over the next century founded many religious houses. By 1326 a group of friars is said to have established a religious foundation on a green plateau overlooking the Mourne and close to the riparian battlegrounds of the Finn and the Foyle. This site is now the old graveyard at Patrick Street, and, not for the first time in Ireland, the church buildings were erected beside the standing stone previously mentioned – the triumph of Christianity over paganism!" (*The Fair River Valley*, 17)



Views of Patrick Street Graveyard, photographs Eddie O'Kane

Another shadow of the past is Courtrai Park. It is named after one of the main Belgian partner towns in Strabane's linen trade. The Green is situated behind the modern police station on the Bowling Green.

In 1922, with the arrival of the border, many Strabane businesses, such as Devine's Tea Merchants and O'Doherty's Coach Builders established premises on the Lifford side of the border. The process may be set to repeat itself in the present time with consideration of Brexit.

In 1928 O'Doherty's Coach Builders, on the Railway Road, designed and made the first ever Diesel rail car in Europe.

Strabane, Sion Mills, and other areas have, through their local authority and community involvement produced a series of well-marked and well-documented walking tours. It might be possible, again with local involvement, to extend this health conscious approach to experiencing heritage.

5.6.3 Buildings of architectural or historic interest

Strabane is rich in built heritage and has a history which pre-dates the current built form (dating largely from the late Georgian and Victorian periods). The historic buildings dispersed throughout the town are varied and give the area a distinctive appearance and character. A number of properties are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest including the majority of properties on Bowling Green, the former Post Office on Castle Street, Strabane Bridge and the Gray Printers building on Main Street.

However many historic properties have not been well maintained or altered in an inappropriate way with a number of properties falling into disrepair. The objective must be to sustain the richness and distinctiveness of the town whilst facilitating imaginative architectural solutions on appropriate development, and taking inspiration from the best of the town's built heritage. It will also be important to encourage significant investment in the town's historic physical fabric which has become neglected over the years. It follows inevitably, the loss of a historic building, the destruction of its architectural features or other unsympathetic alteration, or introduction of inappropriately designed new development will serve only to degrade what remains of Strabane's historic interest and do harm to its character and appearance.



Attractive decorative door surround on historic property on Bowling Green.



The Georgian properties around Bowling Green are architecturally impressive.

Strabane Town Centre Masterplan: Baseline Report

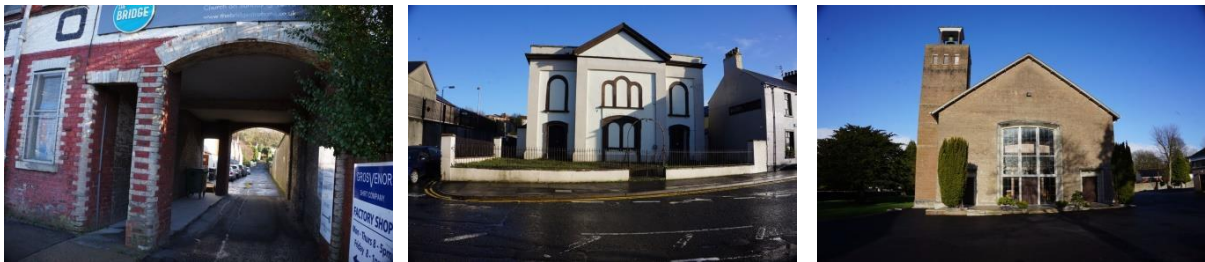
<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dsd/strabane-town-centre-baseline-report.PDF>



Around Sion Mills Conservation Area photographs Marianne O’Kane Boal



Strabane Courthouse Derry Road, Photographs Eddie O’Kane (courtesy Ni Courts Service)



Entrance to Porter’s (Grosvenor Shirts) Factory, Former Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church, Derry Road



Brook Cottage Derry Road, near site of turnpike, Mills and warehouses, Strabane Technical College, Derry Road



Masonic Hall, Cottage opposite Council Offices, Council Offices, former Strabane Workhouse, Derry Rd, all photos in these four rows Eddie O’Kane

Strabane Literary Heritage

In parallel with its reputation as a centre for communications Strabane has also had a publishing and literary tradition, which extends over hundreds of years. Its most famous literary son is Brian O’Nolan, who is more widely known among his many aliases as Flann O’Brien.

Flann O’Brien (Brian O’ Nolan) (5th October 1911 – April 1st 1966) Brian O Nolan was born in The Bowling Green, Strabane. He wrote under a series of pseudonyms.

His reputation as an important Irish writer has steadily increased in the years since his death. He is often sited alongside Samuel Beckett and James Joyce and is a leading figure in post-modernist literature. He is studied in academic institutions worldwide and every two years the International Flann O’Brien conference is held to discuss and celebrate his writing – to date at Vienna University, Rome, Charles University, Prague and University of Salzburg. *The Third Policeman* and *At Swim Two Birds* are regarded as his most outstanding novels. His novel in Gaelic, *An Béal Bocht*, published in 1941, is widely regarded as one of the greatest Irish language novels of the 20th century.

In 2015, at “Metamorphosis”, the Third International Flann O’Brien Conference held at the Charles University Prague 16 – 19 September 2015, Brian Ó Conchubhair, (University of Notre Dame), delivered a paper entitled “Flann O’Brien: Beyond and Behind An Béal Bocht”. In his lecture he gave a detailed history of the writer’s works in the Irish Language. His detailed listings of publication and translation dates showed that *An Béal Bocht* is the most published and translated novel ever produced in the Irish language. Archives of his writing and artefacts are held at Boston College and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. There is a blue plaque on the house where he was born in the Bowling Green, Strabane.

George Sigerson (11th January 1836 – 17th February 1925) was a leading figure in the Irish Literary Revival in the late 19th century in Ireland. He was a physician, scientist, politician, poet and writer. He was born at Holy Hill near Strabane. His father developed the spade mill at Ballyskeagh and was instrumental in the development of Artigarvan. Many of Sigerson’s poems relate to locations in the vicinity of his birthplace. James Joyce was a student of Sigerson in Dublin and Sigerson is mentioned in both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Sigerson’s wife Hestor Varian was an author and his eldest daughter Dora Sigerson (Shorter) was a writer whose poem “The Tricolour” was published in 1922. There is a blue plaque commemorating George Sigerson on the wall at the entrance to Strabane Library.

Cecil Frances Alexander (April 1818 – 12th October 1895) The celebrated hymn writer was born in Dublin. Her father Major John Humphreys was appointed land steward to the Duke of Abercorn in 1833. The family came to live at Milltown House in Strabane. The house later became part of Strabane Grammar School. She married the Church of Ireland clergyman William Alexander in 1850, in Strabane. He later became Bishop of Derry and then Archbishop of Armagh. He also wrote poetry.

Cecil Frances Alexander founded the Derry and Raphoe Diocesan Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, in Strabane in 1846. After her marriage one of her husband's appointments brought her back to Strabane. She lived from 1860 to 1867 at Camus Rectory Strabane. The building still remains intact. Her most famous hymns are "All Things Bright and Beautiful", "Once in Royal David's City" and "St Patrick's Breastplate".

William Collins (1838 – 1890) William Collins was born in Strabane. His father came from Munster. He grew up in a nationalist family. At the age of fifteen he ran away from home and took an emigrant ship to Canada. He worked for a time in lumbering and farming. He moved to Cleveland, Ohio and became a serious writer. He served in the American Civil War on the Union side. In 1866 he took part in the Fenian raid on Canada.

He returned to Cleveland and wrote poems and articles for the press. In 1874 he worked on the editorial staff of the "Irish World". He also worked for the "New York Tablet". He wrote poems, short stories and three novels. "Ballads, Songs and Poems", New York (1876), "Dalriada", New York (1890), "Sybill, Tales of the County Tyrone", "The Wild Geese"

Many of his works recall his time in Strabane. The most famous of these is "A Sigh for Old Times". "Summer in Ireland" was printed in "The Shamrock" on 8th September 1883. He died in Brooklyn, New York on 4th February 1890.

Rev. James Porter (Billy Bluff) (1753 – 2nd July 1798)

James Porter was born at Tamna Wood near Ballindrait, Donegal, overlooking Strabane across the Foyle. In 1768-9, a map and survey were made of the Lifford estate of Abraham Creighton, Baron Erne. From these it appears that James Porter was then the tenant of a small farm at Tamna Wood, and had a "tuck" mill at Ballindrait on the north bank of the Dee, a few yards west of the bridge.

He became a Presbyterian minister at Greyabbey on 31st July 1787. During the years leading up to the 1798 rebellion he became involved with the United Irishmen. In 1794 and 1795 he published songs in the Northern Star including "The Exiled Irishman's Lamentation". In 1796 he published a series of letters in the same paper under the name "Billy Bluff". These were reprinted in pamphlet form and widely circulated. He espoused the rights of tenants in their relations with landlords and parodied many of the leading members of the establishment. He caused particular anger to the Earl of Londonderry. After the rebellion Rev. James Porter was hanged in view of the meeting-house and his residence at Greyabbey on 2nd July, 1798.

"Ulster Biographies relating to the Rebellion of 1798" by W.T. Latimer 1897 reprinted Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland. Above information based on entry on Rev. James Porter

William Starrat lived in Strabane in the early eighteenth century. He ran a teaching academy, which specialized in preparation for a career in the army or surveying. He carried out estate surveys in at least eight Irish counties from 1716. Of particular interest are the surveys he carried out in Fermanagh and Tyrone for the Brooke family and for the

Creighton estate at Crom Castle, Fermanagh, and Lifford, Co. Donegal. An early survey map by Starrat of Holy Hill House is on display in the house. His major work "The Doctrine of Projectiles Demonstrated and Apply'd ... in Practical Gunnery" was published and printed by S. Powell in 1733 with folding plates. It was later printed by Philip Crampton, bookseller, of Dublin in 1746. Starrat is reputed to have written the first Ulster Scots poem in 1722. Starrat's will was proven on 4th January 1769.

Gray's Printing Press

John Dunlap (1747 – 1812), printer of the first copies of the American Declaration of Independence and a pioneer American newspaper publisher (The Pennsylvania Packet, 1771), served his apprenticeship in Gray's printing works Main Street, Strabane. He subscribed £4,000 to Washington's army and was a member of the American commander's bodyguard. James Wilson, grandfather of President Woodrow Wilson, also worked at Gray's prior to emigrating in 1807. (*Shell Guide to Ireland*, Killanin and Duignan 1967, 430)

"Beatha Cholm Cille" (Life of Columcille) was compiled by Manus O'Donnell at his castle in Lifford in 1532. This illuminated manuscript is now in the collection of the Bodleian Library in Oxford. (Jim Bradley *The Fair River Valley* 2000 Ulster Historical Foundation, 21). In 1536 **Sioghraidh O Mulconry** wrote a book of saints' Lives for Rose O'Donnell, wife of Niall Og O'Neill, in Baile an TSen-Chaisleain beside Bessy Bell. (*Shell Guide to Ireland*, Killanin and Duignan 1967, 396)

By 1771 Strabane had become an important publishing centre. The "Strabane Journal" or "General Advertiser" appeared 1771. John Alexander was the printer. The "Strabane Newsletter" was in existence by 1778 and ceased publication by 1810. The "Strabane Morning Post" appeared 5th November 1811. It was published by Carroll and Foster and later by Carroll and Gray. "The Strabane Magazine" or "The New Magazine" was a monthly journal from January to December 1800. It was published by D. McAnaw. "The Christian Enquirer" published and printed by Cowper Walker Castle Street in 1827. A range of publications of hymns and sermons was produced over the years. In 1783, the most important book produced from the Strabane presses emerged. *A History of Ireland from the Earliest Period*, addressed to William Hamilton Esq. by Rev. William Crawford was printed by John Bellew. It comprised two volumes containing over 768 pages with a long list of approximately 1,380 subscribers. (References: Chapter 14, "A Literary History of Strabane" Jack Gamble, *The Fair River Valley* 2000 Ulster Historical Foundation, Chapter 15, "Strabane in the Wider World" Jim Bradley).

Brian McGilloway is an author born in Derry in 1974. He studied English at Queens University Belfast. He was very active in student theatre, winning a national Irish Student Drama Association award for theatrical lighting design in 1996. He is a former Head of English at St Colman's College in Derry, but now teaches in Holy Cross, Strabane. McGilloway's debut novel was a crime thriller called *Borderlands*. *Borderlands* was shortlisted for a Crime Writers' Association Dagger award for a debut novel.

In 2007 McGilloway signed with Pan McMillan to write three crime thrillers in his Inspector Devlin series. The sequel to *Borderlands*, *Gallows Lane*, was published in April, 2008. McGilloway lives near the Irish borderlands with his wife and their four children. He draws his inspiration from the Strabane and Derry locality. This places him firmly in the realm of

the Strabane literary heritage tradition. The author's works include; Benedict Devlin series: 2007 – Borderlands, 2008 - Gallows Lane, 2009 - Bleed a River Deep, 2010 .- The Rising, 2012 - The Nameless Dead, Lucy Black series 2011 - Little Girl Lost, 2013 – Hurt, 2016 - Preserve the Dead, 2017 - Bad Blood

Literary Recommendation

It is recommended that discussions could take place regarding a centre for the study of Strabane's literary tradition in the town, e.g. in the proximity of the Bowling Green. The Bowling Green has strong connections with two of the famous writers mentioned earlier, Flann O'Brien and Cecil Frances Alexander. A centre could carry out studies in the English language, Irish Language and Ulster Scots language because of the strong influences of the writers directly associated with the area.

Further discussion could take place regarding internship programs and writer in residence programs. The local authority has already laid the groundwork for such an initiative through its support for the local Flann O'Brien Society. An annual program of events has been run based on the work of O'Brien.

World-wide academic interest in Flann O'Brien has seen a successful series of International Conferences on his work in Dublin, Vienna, Rome, Prague and Salzburg. A considerable amount of research on O'Brien's work has accumulated through the submission of academic papers at these conferences. The publication of books on the study of Flann O'Brien is growing year by year. Films and animations based on his work have been recently appeared and further studies of this type are in production in Ireland and abroad.

Building on the strength of the international academic interest in Flann O'Brien further discussion could include the various literary strands, which mark out the other writers mentioned earlier.

Heritage Networking

People involved in local history know the importance of networking. Local History draws on local knowledge and the sharing of that knowledge to give a true sense of place. Local History Societies arrange talks during the winter months where people from particular areas can share their sense of place. They also arrange for people from other communities to come and share their stories. Local History encourages mutual respect and builds bridges between communities. It encourages people to appreciate their common humanity.

The Federation for Ulster Local Studies, founded in Lifford, County Donegal in 1974, has played a crucial part in Heritage Networking. The Federation involves the nine counties of Ulster. "The Federation was set up to promote and assist with the study and recording of the history, antiquities and folk-life of Ulster, to develop communication and co-operation between local historical groups and between these groups and relevant statutory and

voluntary organisations.” The Federation encourages shared experience between local communities. “From the outset the Federation had a dual role. It firstly acted as the unified voice of local history in Ulster calling for greater recognition for those involved in local studies and the proper resourcing of this discipline. Over time it drew more and more locally based societies into the organisation. Today it can claim almost one hundred societies in its membership representing thousands of people with an interest in Ulster's local history, folk lore and archaeology.” The Federation also provided an enabling framework for local societies throughout Ulster. “It organised much needed low cost insurance cover to give piece of mind to those engaged in meetings and field trips. It hosted conferences, workshops and seminars at which society members could meet, exchange ideas and experiences. The workshops helped to tap the deep reservoir of knowledge that exists among those societies and to use this to build new skills in less experienced and emerging bodies.” (All quotations the Federation for Ulster Local Studies website)

The Federation for Ulster Local Studies also set up the **Ulster Local History Trust** in 1981. This Trust gives small grants to help with local heritage publishing.

Johnny Dooher of Strabane History Society has been at the centre of the Federation's development, growth and continued survival. He has served as the Federation's Chairman.

Dennett Interchange, Dunamanagh, arranged a series of history workshops by Johnny Dooher and **William Roulston**. The local history programme also involved visits to places of interest such as the Old Courthouse, Lifford.

The Ulster Historical Foundation - “The Ulster Historical Foundation was founded in 1956, at the direction of Sir Basil Brooke (later Lord Brookeborough), the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. In 1969, it was reorganised as a voluntary trust and named the Ulster-Scot Historical Foundation. In 1975, it became the Ulster Historical Foundation, affirming its role to serve all denominations and traditions in the province. Between 1956 and 1987, the Foundation was an integral part of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Since 1988, it has been a separate organisation, and in 1991 moved to premises in College Square East in the centre of Belfast. In November 2006, it moved to new premises in Cotton Court, Waring Street, Belfast and finally moving again to 49 Malone Road in November 2009.” (The Ulster Historical Foundation website)

Continuing the publishing tradition

The Ulster Historical Foundation plays an important role as a leading publisher of historical, educational and genealogical books. In conjunction with Strabane History Society it has published books such as “The Fair River Valley” which provide vital resources for the appreciation of local heritage. This support helps Strabane History Society to continue the literary and publishing tradition which was a core element of Strabane's heritage for centuries. **Johnny Dooher** and **Michael Kennedy** have been at the centre of Heritage Publishing in the Strabane area, on behalf of Strabane History Society.

Heritage Animators and Mentors

Dennett Interchange, Donemana, have involved local history experts Johnny Dooher and William Roulston in their community programmes. This illustrates the importance of heritage animators and mentors in promoting local awareness of heritage.

John Bradley of West Tyrone Historical Society has served as Chairman of the Federation for Ulster Local Studies and has had strong association with the Folk Park in Omagh over many years.

Relevant Organisations Audit

Relevant Organisations

The main Heritage Organisations in the chosen area are:

Strabane History Society

Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust

West Tyrone Historical Society

Donemana Cultural Association

Community Associations involved in Heritage Projects:

Dennett Interchange, Donemana

Dunamanagh & District Community Association

Local Authority Heritage Support:

Derry City & Strabane Council Heritage Officer

Derry City & Strabane Council Cultural Services

Alley Arts Centre: Theatre

Alley Arts Centre: Tourist Information Centre

Questionnaires were sent to relevant selected individuals and organisations from above lists.

Where it was felt more appropriate the following methods were employed:

Telephone interviews (with a predetermined list of questions)

Face to face interviews (with a predetermined list of questions) Discussions with individuals

involved with heritage and heritage support Group discussions involved with heritage and heritage support.

Attendance at meeting of Strabane History Society Questionnaires – full questionnaire results in appendix

Discussion of questionnaire results

Questionnaire responses to the on line longer 25 questions format tended to be brief and to the point. The results were easily quantifiable in terms of statistical analysis. The shorter questions for individuals, when used in telephone interviews tended to produce more personal, in-depth insights into local heritage. Likewise the same questionnaires used in face to face interviews produced a wide range of views based on long personal experience. Group discussions such as the conversation with Alley Theatre staff produced highlighted the vital heritage support role played by both the Theatre and the Tourism Information Centre.

Individual owners of listed buildings expressed concerns regarding their awareness of their responsibilities in relation to up keep and maintenance and on-going expense.

An analysis of Questionnaire feedback has shown some common concerns expressed by those who shared their experience and knowledge. The full text of the questionnaire feedback is included in the appendix of this report.

In this section some of the main concerns have been selected for closer comment and discussion.

A Museum for Strabane

Feedback from consultees has shown a desire for a local museum/interpretative centre for Strabane.

There is a need to support pride of place in the heritage of Strabane. Feedback has shown that people have a genuine fear that local authority changes have endangered Strabane's position in relation to realising the full potential of its own heritage. A local museum would provide a focus for the community to establish an understanding of its past and a way forward in the future. A museum could be housed in an existing vacant building and could involve a joint venture between existing organisations – e.g. local history societies, community groups and local authority

“there is certainly a group of people in Strabane who are keen to have a museum in Strabane.”

“The Strabane Museum Collection has been in storage for several years. Strabane District Council had envisioned a museum for Strabane to be housed in Gray's Printers. In 1997 they bought a private collection – called the Dunbar Collection. It was mainly a collection of miscellaneous memorabilia. The WW1 collection can be used for school visits. The whole collection is being moved up to Lisnahally to join the rest of the City of Derry Collection”

“The music and drama tradition of the area should be celebrated. Maybe a Heritage Centre would be a way to do all this”

“There is a need for a Heritage Centre to be established in the town to show its history. This Centre would provide a vital focus for the inhabitants of the area – young people in particular. It would also help to give information to people who return to Strabane later in their lives, who want to learn about their heritage.”

Involvement of Younger People

One of the main concerns in local history societies and community groups in general is the need to include younger people in the various projects and on-going activities of their organisations.

Feedback from questionnaires highlights this concern.

“Lack of involvement by younger people”

(Organisation Questionnaire online Q17 What are the main obstacles to fulfilling your ambitions?)

(Organisation Questionnaire online Q23 What do you think are the biggest issues facing heritage in your area?)

“Yes. The older people would appreciate it more so than the youth.”

“A “The younger adults are too busy making a living and raising their families to be engaged in non-domestic activities”

ot of the younger generation don’t see it but someday they will appreciate it.”

(Q5 Online shorter questionnaire. Do you feel the area's heritage is appreciated locally and regionally? Please explain your answer. Selected responses)

Feedback also shows awareness for the reasons for non-participation in activities. Firstly they have their own family or work commitments or work commitments which are driving factors in the early stages of their lives. They are making their way in their chosen career, or in unemployed they are trying to find gainful employment. They have less time for voluntary activity.

Emigration

“The biggest problem for the area is emigration. For generations the high unemployment has forced people to leave and look for work abroad. They no longer have a feel for, or interest in the history of the area.”

The economic decline in the Strabane area led to emigration and a decrease in the younger population. Strabane has had high levels of unemployment and high rates of economic inactivity. Derry City and Strabane District Council Strategic Growth Plan 2017 to 2032 shows pockets of deprivation based on job seekers claimant rate, which identifies particular concentrations in the council area.

In the Republic of Ireland, after the slump in the economy, emigration led to a widespread drop in the younger population. This was particularly evident in rural communities where local sporting clubs found they no longer had the personnel to make up their teams. On the other hand, sporting teams in New York, Boston and Philadelphia flourished as the number of young people increased dramatically.

In rural villages the move to bigger cities like Belfast, Dublin, London and further afield has had a dramatic effect. Post offices, banks, police stations, smaller shops closed down. Facilities which people took for granted for generations were no longer there. There is much less opportunity for face to face social support or interaction for the general population and the elderly in particular. The move to online banking and online commerce decreased social interaction.

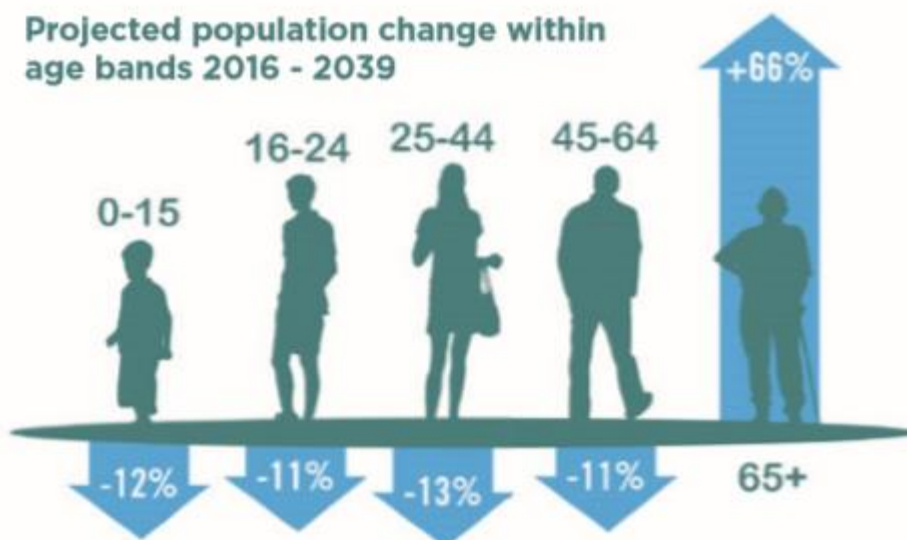
Changes in population profile

Evidence gained by the consultants indicates that the problem may become greater. Reports show that projections for demographic changes in the population indicate a much higher proportion of the population in Derry City and Strabane will be elderly in the not too distant future.

Social challenges

Over the next 20 years the City and District will experience a significant shift in the age profile of the population. By the end of this period, our region is projected to have nearly 4,000 fewer children aged under 16 with an increase in those of retirement age of around 14,000.

Projected population change within age bands 2016 - 2039



Whilst the health trends for the Council area are moving in the same positive direction as that for Northern Ireland as a whole, generally our residents suffer from higher levels of health inequalities. This is a situation that is further exacerbated for those living in our most deprived areas - both within our high density urban areas and our rural areas.

Derry City and Strabane District Council Strategic Growth Plan 2017 to 2032

Q3 What do you think are the biggest issues facing heritage in your area?

Many respondents highlighted the loss of important built heritage, "Convent of Mercy which has now been demolished."

"The Town Hall has also gone. It was an important building. It was a focal point for the whole community."

"The Market House, the Town Hall was a big loss. There was an arch there going through from one side to the other. It was called the "Eye" of Market Street. There was a Herring Street and then Butcher Street and the Back Street It was a pity all of that section of the town was demolished to make the car park."

"Preservation of buildings and sites"

"Not enough research being done and the up keep of these buildings"

Others felt education and funding were main concerns

"More time needs to be spent on instilling an awareness of heritage in education"

"The main threats revolve around funding. Heritage is way down the pecking order when placed alongside health, education etc."

"The Heritage Lottery Fund sees us as unsustainable."

"lack of co-ordination and funding"

Volunteers

There was concern that over reliance on volunteers would place too heavy a burden on communities

“Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust now works in partnership with the Council. Unfortunately the local authorities expect a lot from local people who are volunteers. There is only so much time and effort that volunteers can give to projects. Many of the forms which are required to apply for grant aid and support are very complex. They are often beyond the resources of part time voluntary groups. More help should be given by the authorities to local groups to help them satisfactorily complete these complex forms. Partnership is very important. Local Council officials could help directly by completing the required forms.”

There is a big turnover in trustees as volunteers only have limited time at their disposal and increasingly there is a feeling that volunteers are being taken for granted by the authorities. The voluntary sector is expected to do too much”

The changing age demographics highlighted earlier in the Derry City and Strabane District Council Strategic Growth suggests there may be a change in the numbers of people willing to volunteer. Traditionally older people are more disposed to take an interest in heritage and in volunteering. The increase in the older population suggests there may be an increase in those willing to share their time and experience in the voluntary sector. This would help to spread the burden felt by present volunteers.

Heritage Volunteering

In 2012 Strabane Local History Society took part in the Grundtvig Programme. The programme was organised by the Federation of Ulster Local Studies. It involved members from several Ulster local history societies. Members had to be over 50 years of age and be involved as volunteers in heritage. One member of Strabane Local History Society was selected to take part. The programme offered a unique insight into how volunteering in another European country, Belgium, worked.

The Leuven Armagh Partnership Grundtvig European Union Programme (Lifelong Learning) took place over a 2 year period involving online contact and exchange residency and research. Ulster members spent a 3 week residency in Irish College Leuven. Work carried out in City Archives, Leuven with archivists and volunteers transcribing, cleaning and digitising manuscripts. They were also taught palaeography and basic Flemish. Visits were made to archives and tourist attractions in Brussels, Antwerp and the Leuven region. They met with officials, employees, volunteers, local and national politicians. They discussed a wide range of issues covering topics such as conservation, built heritage, volunteering, tourism, networking and new technology. They attended many talks and members of the group gave talks to people in Flanders. In this way they learned through sharing experience.

The Flanders group was hosted in Belfast, Armagh and Derry and introduced to similar range of experiences as their Ulster counterparts.

The programme gave the Ulster participants a working insight into Belgium’s structured approach to volunteering and the involvement of senior volunteers in heritage.

The City of Derry and Strabane District Strategic Growth Plan is committed to increasing volunteering,

“Increase volunteering within the community and voluntary sector by 10% by 2025 and expand on opportunities to recognise their contribution to society.” Key Action p.50

Examples of Best Practice

The importance of examples of best practice was highlighted. In the case of Sion Mills it was recognised that the restoration of the stables and their repurposing as a restaurant and museum was an important boost for morale in the community. It showed what was possible.

“Until the Stables were restored local people could not see how the project could ever be brought to completion. The Stables restoration gave everyone a visible example of what could be achieved.”

Visions for the Future

“For heritage to be recognised as a key catalyst to regeneration by creating unique environments which will attract people and sustainable investment and a means of bringing communities together to further develop a sense of pride in our District.”

“There is a need for a person with vision and enthusiasm to go abroad and promote Strabane.”

“Imaginative Promotion of what we have here – through art and writers”

Successes such as those achieved by Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust lead to increased confidence and a greater awareness of possibilities for the future.

“A world Heritage Site for Sion Mills. It is brilliant story and deserves to be told.”

Thatched Houses - Need for local Case Study

The Asset Audit has highlighted the alarming decline in one of the core elements of our built heritage. There are very few examples of properly restored and maintained traditional thatched houses in the Strabane area.



Woodend Cottage, Derry Road, Strabane Example of Best Practice, photographs Eddie O’Kane

The decline in thatched houses was highlighted in a newspaper article in the Irish Examiner in 2006. At that time only 150 traditional thatched cottages were left in Northern Ireland from around 40,000 in the 1950s. “There are between 1,300 and 1,500 thatched cottages on the island of Ireland, less than 0.1% of the building stock. In Northern Ireland only 150 thatched cottages survive from around 40,000 in the 1950s. “It is clear there is a real crisis in the survival of historic thatch and without action it is possible to say that outside of folk museums, very little historic thatch will be soon be left,” the report pointed out. It recommended putting all remaining thatched buildings on a protected status list, training a generation of thatchers, and offering grants to encourage use of traditional materials. Ireland can provide just 30% of materials used in thatching, with the remainder being imported — mostly from Turkey or Poland. The report called on the Government to take steps to boost local production. Concern was also voiced that Ireland’s distinctive styles of thatching were being eroded because a shortage of local craftsmen meant thatchers were being hired from abroad and were using foreign techniques.” “The Irish Examiner” June 05 2006 Donal Hickey

The article comments on the lack of traditional skills in native Irish thatching techniques. While it is important that these traditional skills are preserved, we can learn much from other countries on their approaches to preservation in their own countries. We do not need to sacrifice our own methods of thatching. We can, however, ask how people in Stige in Denmark manage to preserve and conserve their thatched houses,



Thatched houses in Stige, Denmark

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

Strong heritage resources

Literary and publishing – authors and poets in English, Irish and Ulster Scots Industrial heritage – linen industry, flax mills, shirt manufacture and seed mills

Rich Archaeological heritage

Presence of Heritage experts and mentors in the locality

Strong Local History Organisations

Strong Building Preservation Society in the area

Council committed to heritage support and development (via the Alley Arts Centre through theatre, art exhibitions, workshops in traditional crafts etc.)

The Tourism Office in the Alley Arts Centre promotes attractions, heritage, genealogy and visitor accommodation. The Tourist Office sells books and publications on local history and heritage

Strabane Library is committed to supporting heritage through exhibitions, readings, workshops and research facilitation. It also provides a venue for Strabane History Society meetings.

Some clusters of listed buildings still remain and should be preserved.

WEAKNESSES

Depletion of built heritage through a long period of unsympathetic planning and development decisions and destruction of built heritage during the Troubles.

Decline in industry and increasing unemployment

High levels of deprivation and hardship Emigration of many particularly the young

Subsequent disassociation and lack of interest in built heritage or heritage in general among much of the public.

Lack of control of independent decision making as it existed before amalgamation of local authorities.

Heritage is well down the list of priorities when decisions are being made about health, education, employment etc.

Perceptions of heritage as something apart rather than a core element of a personal identity.

Lack of a dedicated community based heritage centre/museum to provide a focus for the whole area.

Lack of heritage education for young people

Lack of awareness of the employment creation potential of heritage

OPPORTUNITIES

The possibility of development of more Tourist Trails relating to strengths identified earlier – industrial heritage, literary and publishing heritage, built heritage, (remaining examples) American heritage links.

The recent devolved responsibility of planning to local authorities could allow local input to the designation of conservation areas. The Council can address mistakes made in the past through designation of a conservation area in Strabane.

Networks could be established through these heritage audits. People from different communities could share their experiences and successes with each other.

Examples of best practice in the area could be highlighted in order to show the wider community what can be achieved. Small and not so small success stories could indicate a way forward.

A structured heritage mentoring system would enable local community associations to avail of this support as their programs require.

There are many beautiful walks with the possibility of the casual introduction of heritage to the local community and visitors through information panels. Strabane canal is an excellent example of this approach to heritage, conservation, education and appreciation.

The recently established greenway cross border trails launched by Derry City and Strabane District Council and Donegal County Council are a welcome development which will extend the above heritage experience.

In recent days the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Education confirmed that officials are in contact with the Advisory Committee of the Youth Club at Melvin Hall with regard to identifying a suitable location for a Young Adult Centre in Strabane. This exciting development would allow the establishment of links with local heritage as appropriate within the centre.

THREATS

The uncertainties surrounding Brexit and the World economic climate. After partition in 1922 many Strabane businesses felt the need to set up parallel business premises on the other side of the border.

The perception exists of being overshadowed by the larger partner in the combined local authority framework.

Lower financial support for the heritage sector.

Volunteers may feel overwhelmed. Most volunteers have only a finite time to offer to heritage projects. There is a rapid turnover in volunteers in heritage organisations.

The Heritage infrastructure in the Strabane area needs to be strengthened.

General Findings

Derry City and Strabane District Council Strategic Growth Plan 2017 to 2032 prioritises heritage awareness and engagement of local communities in heritage conservation and development. The Local Development plans have enabled vital community input and created a sense of ownership. The SWOT analysis has shown a range of opportunities and obstacles to be overcome. Structured approaches could be adopted to allow both younger and older people to become heritage volunteers. A partnership approach between the local authority and community is vital to development and promotion of assets and increased heritage awareness. Private owners of heritage assets should be supported and encouraged. The strong mentoring capability which exists in the area should be utilised to help local communities and individuals.

Asset Assessments Discussion

- Strabane has a rich heritage in archaeology, literature and publishing, industrial archaeology and important examples of built heritage.
- Examples of industrial archaeology include Strabane canal, Porters Shirt Factory, Sion Mills, Silverbrook Mills and Clady Bridge. The asset assessment has shown the problems faced in the case of Sion Mills restoration, and the difficulty in achieving self-sustainability in a community based project such as Silverbrook Mills.
- Examples of best practice have been identified. Sion Mills Stables and Woodend are important exemplifiers of successful engagement with heritage projects for the wider community.
- Heritage trails such as the 'Tyrone and Sperrins' Website (Derry City and Strabane District Council) Ancient Monuments and Historic Interests Trail feature archaeological sites such as Lough Ash wedge tomb, Patrick Street Graveyard Strabane, Leckpatrick Graveyard, Ballymagorry and Strabane Canal, Ballymagorry. The walking tour of Sion Mills is a sign posted aid for visitors.
- The Tyrone area has one of the country's main concentrations of archaeological sites. They are mostly situated in the hills and uplands.
- Many important built assets exist in the area including two churches in close proximity. Church of the Immaculate Conception, Strabane and Christ Church, Strabane. Christ Church has associations with Cecil Frances Alexander and is surrounded by a cluster of listed buildings. It is opposite Flann O'Brien's birth place.
- Holy Hill or Holly Hill is the SMR garden in the wards within the audit. Strabane Canal and other green space walks within the locality have been noted.
- Sion Mills is an example of an early designated conservation area. Nearby Newtown Stewart has a conservation area. A conservation area could be considered for Strabane.
- Strabane has already established the Strabane Canal project as a tourist attraction. Its strategic position, parallel to the River Foyle, provides scope for further development.

Surveys & Discussion

- The surveys: online, face to face, telephone and group discussions with a wide range of interested parties (comprising owners of listed properties, council employees, members of historical societies, community groups and business owners) were vital components of the audit. The experience gleaned from this process gave an overview of the range of important assets and the challenges involved in heritage preservation and development.
- The important work of Strabane History Society, West Tyrone Historical Society, and Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust became apparent very early in the process. The local knowledge, dedication and years of experience evident in these voluntary organisations are at the core of heritage awareness within the community.
- Mentoring by experts such as Johnny Dooher, Michael Kennedy, Jim Bradley and William Roulston could be facilitated for community groups. In the case of Dennett Interchange local History talks were built into their community programme.
- The importance of trails became apparent through questionnaire and discussion feedback. The consideration of a Linen Trail could be discussed. Inclusion of additional assets such as the battle of the Fords, 1689 was proposed for the Canal Trail. Maintenance of information signs became an issue through observation on sight visits. Perhaps local community organisations could become involved in the monitoring and upkeep of these.
- Heritage learning could be provided through structured programmes by the local authority. Battle sites such as Knockavoe could feature on local school history and creative studies programmes. Training could also be given to prospective younger and older volunteers as these age ranges have been particularly identified in feedback. Opportunities for learning and genealogy research are afforded by visits to graveyards such as Urney, Leckpatrick and Patrick Street.
- Feedback discussed the possibility of a museum in Strabane. Perhaps an existing vacant building or part of a building could be utilised for this purpose. Possibilities for partnerships between the local authority and community or heritage groups could be explored. Examples of successful reutilisation of vacant buildings are Sion Mills Stables and Mill Pottery, Donamanagh.
- The Literary Heritage & Publishing tradition has continued through the work of Strabane History Society, The Ulster Historical Foundation, West Tyrone Historical Society and the Ulster Local History Trust. Local writers groups have used heritage sources for their creative writing. They have also carried out their own heritage research into their own areas and families. Contemporary writers such as Brian McGilloway use the audit area for inspiration.
- Little remains of the once dominant railway heritage of Strabane. The existing elements such as Ballamagorry Station and Victoria Bridge Station could be provided with all possible support.
- The Area Based Community Planning Groups ensure that each area is involved and has a sense of ownership. Partnership is at the core of the Plan. This should work to the

advantage of those who have an interest in keeping heritage high on the agenda. Communities will be enabled to share experience, embark on joint projects and provide a framework for volunteering. This is in essence what local history organisations such as the Federation for Ulster Local Studies have been doing for years.

The recommendations which follow are based on feedback from online questionnaires, face to face questionnaires, telephone interviews, individual and group discussions. Experience was also gathered by visits to as many sites and trails as possible, given time and travel constraints. It was felt that the consultants should experience the sites as a visitor would experience them. Earlier reports were read and considered in forming opinions.

The following recommendations suggest areas for discussion and strategies for consideration to improve Strabane's heritage infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The setting up of a heritage forum could be discussed. This would enable all interested parties e.g. local authority and community groups, to exchange ideas and discuss developments.

A Conservation Area could be established in Strabane eg: at the Bowling Green and heritage buildings radiating out from it. (This would fit in with a key action included in Derry City and Strabane District's Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017 – 2032 – 4 Outcomes and actions: Environment and Regeneration Key action 3 "Develop a heritage/conservation-led masterplan and renewal action plan for the village of Sion Mills and other settlements, including Newtownstewart town centre conservation area." P.44)

If a centre was established in Strabane for English, Irish and Ulster Scots literary heritage, internships and residencies could be facilitated there. Liaison with local universities and universities abroad could be encouraged.

Increased access could be established to enable local people and visitors to be aware of the manufacturing excellence and craftsmanship which exists in their midst e.g. Porters Factory/ Grosvenor Shirt Factory. This living heritage facility could illustrate the quality standard which was a hallmark of Strabane's industrial heritage.

This living heritage experience could be linked to the newly restored Stables complex at Sion Mills. Visitors could see the Linen Museum at Sion Mills and then see the manufacturing process at work at the Shirt nFactory. This could form part of a "linen trail" which would link with other centres further afield such as Dungannon, Lisburn, Belfast and Belgium.

Methods to improve access to the canal walk could be discussed by communities and local authorities. There are many beautiful walks with the possibility of the casual introduction of heritage to the local community and visitors through information panels. Strabane canal is an excellent example of this approach to heritage, conservation, education and appreciation.

Examples of best practice should be identified to indicate a way forward for the wider community and encourage entrepreneurship –

- Restoration of a building at risk Sion Mills Stables. In this case the building had almost completely disappeared. Now it is a successful, award winning facility with a proven

record as a focus for the local community and tourists.

- Thatched house restoration and maintenance. Woodend Cottage is unique in the Strabane area as a successful conservation of one of the few traditional thatched houses in the area. Experience of successful thatched house conservation in the upper Lough Erne area could also be shared.

Consideration could be given to creating a Museum/Interpretive Centre in Strabane to provide an on-going focus for heritage. The centre could interpret the built heritage of the area and explore and demonstrate the remaining buildings e.g. Grays Printers, The Farmers Home, Porters/Grosvenors Shirt Factory, to illustrate the area's industrial and commercial past. The interpretive facility could direct visitors to explore the rich archaeological heritage which exists throughout the area. The local authority, heritage and community groups and funding agencies could discuss ways of achieving this objective. An existing, vacant building might enable a local heritage group to initiate this process. The Derry and Strabane District Council Offices at the former Workhouse on the Derry Road already have a small display in the foyer and entrance hall of the building, dealing with the history of the workhouse.

Firm links could be established with the Folk Park in Omagh to show the connection with two of Strabane's oldest shops. Hills Chemist and Blair's Newsagents /Publishers are now a part of the Folk Park's "Old World" complex. It would be possible to establish regular tours to enable people to travel back and forth between Strabane and Omagh. Similar linkage with the Folk Park would enable tourists to move between Strabane's American Heritage centres – Gray's Printers and the Wilson Homestead and the Folk Park.

Consideration could be given to setting up a training and awareness programme for heritage. This could provide training for heritage guides and ambassadors. Many young people are seeking employment in the Strabane area. This would be an excellent opportunity to involve younger people in heritage. (This would fit in with a key action included in Derry City and Strabane District's Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017 – 2032 – 4 Outcomes and actions: Environment and Regeneration Key action 5 "Protect and promote our natural and built heritage assets through the establishment of multi-sectoral heritage partnerships, heritage education programmes, skills specialisms development and integration with our tourism offering." P.44)

Discussion could take place regarding a structured approach to volunteering to enable community participation.

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“Heritage and Cultural Audit of the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in Derry and Strabane” RPD Consulting, June 2015

Marks of Time, Manus Deery - Site featuring a wide range of his original watercolours based on the Strabane area images are accompanied by comprehensive information on chosen sites, buildings and monuments <https://www.marksofetime.com/>

Local community plans – the Sperrin, Derg and Strabane Town.

<https://www.derrystrabane.com/getmedia/761db606-10ec-4317-983f-dcae7d441371/EVB-2-LDP-Context.pdf>

This document contains proposals for development within Strabane town centre including a conservation area in the town centre including listed buildings but does not indicate The Bowling Green as a targeted area. There is a SWOT analysis for Strabane Town. Maps, details of vacant buildings, proposals for alternative uses of the SCORE site in the Canal Basin, development of buildings in the Canal Basin (such as Smiths Mills), aerial shots of the three rivers area (Riverine Project) are included. There is also discussion of importance of linkages with Lifford, Letterkenny, etc.

<https://www.derrystrabane.com/getmedia/9fd03703-3061-48c3-a3b3-24dbb5a62e3d/EVB-7-City-and-Town-Centres.pdf>

This document is on the historic environment and includes maps showing the conservation areas and their limits including Newtownstewart and Sion Mills, (with listed buildings and archaeological sites marked on them, and a screenshot of historic parks and gardens). A table of a range of options for protection included to guide workshop members in their response and feedback to the choices.

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Appendix

Questionnaires

26 question online questionnaire sent out initially

Q1 Organisation Details

1 Derry City and Strabane District

Council 2 West Tyrone Historical

Society

1 Maura Fitzpatrick

2 William John Bradley

1 maura.fitzpatrick@derrystرابane.com

2 wj.bradley@yahoo.co.uk

Q2 Organisation Details – Location

1 Strabane

2 Strabane

Q3 Did you participate in NIEL's "Investing in Northern Ireland's Heritage" programme?

No

No

Q4 What sort of organisation are you? (Tick all that apply)

Public body 1

Voluntary organisation 1

Q5 How many staff do you employ?

0

0

Q6 How many volunteers do you have?

0

15

Q7 Tell us about the kind of heritage that you are involved with

Built Heritage 1

Other (please specify) Local History

Q8 Tell us what your main aims are

1 To raise awareness of the significant contribution the built heritage can make to the Districts economic, social and environmental priorities.

2 The study and encouragement of public interest in the history, folklore, archaeology and antiquities of the area

Q9 Can you summarise your biggest achievements (please include dates)

1 Providing a point of focus, encouraging best practice and raising awareness across Council Service Areas and the key players across the District.

2 Monthly meetings including lectures and workshops Publications Involvement in issues of cultural significance

Q10 Tell us about the kinds of activities that you undertake (please tick all that apply)

Outreach and community programmes

1 Talks/lectures 1

Q11 What kind of facilities do you provide? (please tick all that apply)

1 Dedicated Council Officer

2 We use premises at the Ulster American Folk Park

Q12 Do you require financial resources to run your organisation?

Yes

Q13 If you answered "Yes" to the above, what are the main sources of your income?

NI Government Grants 1

EU Funding

Local Government 1

Trusts and Foundations

Earned income 1

Membership 1

Q14 Are your main sources of income increasing or decreasing?

No change

Q15 How much financial reserve do you have? Is it enough for...

More than a year 1

No reserve

Q16 What kind of fundraising capacity do you have in your organisation?

Included in a staff member's duties 1

Volunteer 1

Q17 What are the main obstacles to fulfilling your ambitions?

Resources 1

Lack of involvement by younger people 1

Q18 What kinds of support would help you to achieve your targets?

Human Resources 1

Policies and Procedures 1

More connections with the heritage sector and other sectors 1

Other (please specify) Ideas on how to encourage participation by younger people 1

Q19 What sort of partnerships do you have? Who are your key partners?

1 Historic Environment Division of DFC

2 Use of premises Ulster American Folk Park

Q20 What are the main opportunities for heritage in your area?

1 significant built heritage assets across district exm Derry City Walls

2 West Tyrone has many sites of archaeological and historical importance. Our membership includes individuals with many talents.

Q21 How would you define your geographic area of work or influence?

1 District wide

2 West Tyrone and further afield as appropriate.

Q22 What do you consider to be the most important historical sites and organisations in your area?

1 Derry City Walls, Built Heritage assets across the District including urban and rural areas, intangible heritage, maritime heritage.

2 Newtown Stewart Castle, Harry Avery's Castle, Baronscourt Estate, The location of the Mountjoy estate .

Q23 What do you think are the biggest issues facing heritage in your area?

1 lack of co-ordination and funding

2 The younger adults are too busy making a living and raising their families to be engaged in non domestic activities.

Q24 What do you think should be the vision for heritage in your area?

1 For heritage to be recognised as a key catalyst to regeneration by creating unique environments which will attract people and sustainable investment and a means of bringing communities together to further develop a sense of pride in our District.

2 To study and encourage the history, folklore, antiquities of our area.

Q25 Would you be willing to share your experiences as a case study for others to learn from?

Yes

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS SO WE CAN GET IN TOUCH. DATE 1

wj.bradley@yahoo.co.uk

6 question online questionnaire sent out subsequently

Q1 Which area are you responding on? Strabane 4

Q2 What do you consider to be the most important historical buildings/sites in your area?

1 Castles and Mills 3/23/2018 1:36 PM

2 The Mill in Sion and houses built by the Herdman family for the workers 3/22/2018 11:15pm

3 Churches, factories, traditional houses 2/13/2018 6:45 PM

4 Grays Printers 2/12/2018 2:57 PM

Q3 What do you think are the biggest issues facing heritage in your area?

1 Not enough research being done and the up keep of these buildings 3/23/2018 1:36 PM 2

Lack of investment 3/22/2018 11:15 PM

3 Preservation of buildings and sites 2/13/2018 6:45 PM

4 People not keeping notes etc 2/12/2018 2:57 PM

Q4 What are the main opportunities for heritage in your area?

1.Silverbrook Mill Donemana pottery 3/23/2018 1:36 PM

2.The location of the area and the appeal to visitors 3/22/2018 11:15

3.Development of trails to encompass different sites 2/13/2018 6:45

4.We should try and have a local office in this area 2/12/2018 2:57

Q5 Do you feel the area's heritage is appreciated locally and regionally? Please explain

1 Yes. The older people would appreciate it more so than the youth. 3/23/2018 1:36 PM

2 By some. A lot of the younger generation don't see it but someday they will appreciate.

3 Low sense of appreciation - lack of leadership 2/13/2018 6:45 PM

4 Not really I think we need an area to display info and then more people would come and visit

Q6 Can we put your name down as a consultee for this project?

2 yes 2 no TOTAL 4

1 Sean Crawford 8 The Willows Sion Mills BT82 9FQ T07927 969 695

2 Johnny Dooher johndooher@btinternet.com 2/13/2018 6:45 PM

Short Phone Interviews Mary Mc Cafferty

1. What do you consider are the most important historical sites/organisations in your area?

Some of the important sites are buildings that have gone or are in danger of going.

- 1 The Convent of Mercy which has now been demolished.
 - 2 The Catholic Church of St John, which was the first Catholic church in the town. It stood on the site now marked by the grotto. One of my ancestors, Sarah Bannigan, bought the land originally and gave the site to the Catholic Church to build St. John's. The church later relocated to Barrack Street.
 - 3 The house at the corner of Lower Main Street and the corner of Eden Terrace was built by my father after he returned from the First World War. He was a medic. He set up his medical practice in that house. It was sold and later was a dentist's surgery. For some time it has been vacant. I read in the local newspapers lately that it has been vandalised and is a nuisance for neighbours as undesirables are gathering there at night. I am going to contact local politicians to see what can be done.
 - 4 The Town Hall has also gone. It was an important building. It was a focal point for the whole community.
2. What do you think are the biggest issues facing heritage in your area?

The biggest problem for the area is emigration. For generations the high unemployment has forced people to leave and look for work abroad. They no longer have a feel for, or interest in the history of the area.

3. What do you think should be the vision for heritage in your area?

There is a need for a very committed group of people to work to make Strabane a place to be proud of. I think the joining up of the two local authorities, Strabane and Derry, will make the task more difficult for Strabane.

There is a need for a Heritage Centre to be established in the town to show its history. This Centre would provide a vital focus for the inhabitants of the area – young people in particular. It would also help to give information to people who return to Strabane later in their lives, who want to learn about their heritage.

You can see the love for their heritage that is evident in the people who attend the meetings of the Strabane History Society.

There is a need for a person with vision and enthusiasm to go abroad and promote Strabane. It has been done by the people of Derry. There is no reason why it cannot be done for Strabane.

4. Can we put your name down as a consultee for this project?

Yes. Mary Mc Cafferty.

Short Phone Interviews

Frank Elliott

5. What do you consider are the most important historical sites/organisations in your area?

- 5 Strabane Canal. I remember coarse fishing for roach and perch and for pike in the Canal Basin in the centre of Strabane. I am keen on fishing. I remember people fishing for pearls in flat bottomed boats round the Lifford bridge. He wouldn't have made a fortune as he didn't find many pearls. Other people used to have cheap flat bottomed boats made for poaching as they could just leave them behind if the bailiffs came after them.

It is good to see the canal being restored. Up to this time it is only the upper third of the canal that has been restored.

- 6 The Maurice Harron sculptures at the roundabout have been a great way to attract people to the music and dance heritage of the area. People constantly stop to take photographs.
- 7 Sion Mills is another important site. But vandalism and the fire have set the project back.
- 8 Strabane Credit Union is an organisation that has done a lot for the economic well-being of the people of the area.

6. What do you think are the biggest issues facing heritage in your area?

The loss of many of the important buildings in the area.

Many of the buildings around where I live have disappeared. When I was young there was a social club nearby where I used to play billiards. Apparently years ago it was a school set up by the Christian Brothers. A whole section around there has gone. The Council put a new road through from one part of the town to the other. It was put across just where the Methodist Church is. It was named John Wesley Street. The land was given by Mr Hunniford and Mr. Sweeney who were Methodists. They owned the land the street was built on.

The Commercial Hotel and Hunniford and Sweeney and Blair's shops all went around the same time.

I remember calling in with Bobby Gray at Gray's Printers. He had a shop selling sheet music and books. His brother Jack did the printing. Bobby was keen on fishing. Thankfully that shop is still there. I remember shopping in Blair's Newsagents and Hill's Chemist. Both those shops are in the Folk Park in Omagh now.

The Market House, the Town Hall was a big loss. There was an arch there going through from one side to the other. It was called the "Eye" of Market Street. There was a Herring Street and then Butcher Street and the Back Street It was a pity all of that section of the town was demolished to make the car park.

7. What do you think should be the vision for heritage in your area?

Something should be done to commemorate people who have made an important contribution to the people of Strabane. The Sisters of Mercy did so much to combat poverty in the area and to provide education. The contribution of the Clipper Carlton Show-band should be commemorated. They were one of the first big show-bands. One of their members is still alive. The music and drama tradition of the area should be celebrated. Maybe a Heritage Centre would be a way to do all this

8. Can we put your name down as a consultee for this project?

Yes. Frank Elliott.

Face to Face Interview

Adrian Beattie Questionnaire

9. What do you consider are the most important historical sites in your area?

Grays

Printers

Hollyhill

Mourne River Valley. The Castlederg Cauldron is in the National Museum, Dublin. Many gold artifacts have been found in that area.

Glenelly Valley Many seriously rich archaeological sites and also shooting lodges of the landed gentry.

Strabane Docksite The buildings surrounding the Canal dock should be stabilised and conserved. These canal buildings are very important.

The Bowling Green

Eden Terrace. The terrace of red brick dwelling houses have unique features such as the royal cypher in brick on the upper façade of the buildings.

Derry Road The older houses along the road are important including the terrace of Houses called Ard na Greine opposite the Presbyterian Church

The red brick building opposite Gray's Printers was formerly the premises of Devine's Tea Business – one of the major employers in the area.

Sion House, Sion Mills

The Monument to Col Ricardo – who died in mysterious circumstances

at Sion Mills. Frieze on the façade of St Theresa's Catholic Church at

Sion Mills

The Garden of Remembrance

Sion Mills Urney House

With regard to "defensive sites" there are examples of World War instances –

Celia Ferguson refers to a house in the Bowling Green which was a convalescent home for soldiers as was Camus House.

Part of Sion Mills was used for munitions manufacture.

There was a gas cleansing station in a brick building opposite Porter's Shirty Factory. It faced on to the Canal Basin.

There was an air raid shelter at the Convent of Mercy.

What do you consider are the most important historical organisations in your area?

Strabane History Society

Johnny Dooher and Michael Kennedy have done much important work

There is a need to connect more with the wider community. Sometimes local history seems too remote from people in general.

Other important local historians are Celia Ferguson, (Sion Mills), James Emery (Castleberg), and Pearl Watson (Sion Mills)

The Strabane Museum Collection has been in storage for several years. Strabane District Council had envisioned a museum for Strabane to be housed in Gray's Printers. In 1997 they bought a private collection – called the Dunbar Collection. It was mainly a collection of miscellaneous memorabilia. The WW1 collection can be used for school visits. The whole collection is being moved up to Lisnahally to join the rest of the City of Derry Collection.

10. What do you think are the biggest issues facing heritage in your area?

The main threats revolve around funding. Heritage is way down the pecking order when placed alongside health, education etc.

Environmental protection is important – keeping heritage visible. Planners are generally good. The listing process is quite stringent.

More time needs to be spent on instilling an awareness of heritage in education.

3 What do you think should be the vision for heritage in your area?

Imaginative Promotion of what we have here – through art and writers. Everything is in danger of becoming too Derry centric.

We have 4 – 5000 years of heritage in the Strabane area.

There should be a proper memorial to John Dunlop. A proper dig should be carried out on the site of his house and the results could be used.

We need an imaginative interpretation of heritage

4 Can we put your name down as a consultee for this project?

Yes Adrian Beattie

Face to Face Interview

Celia Ferguson Questionnaire

1. (a) **What do you consider are the most important historical sites in your area?**

Sion Mills. The whole area. It's the only historical mill complex of this scale in Northern Ireland. The whole social experiment embarked on by the Herdmans. They were very good employers.

Sion Mills was a model village on a grid system.

The whole village was a very holistic concept with the employers living right in the middle of the area.

(b) **What do you consider are the most important historical organisations in your area?**

Strabane History Society

Sion Mills Building Preservation Trust

The Sion Mills Cricket Club set up in 1864

Sion Mills Anglers started in the 1930's. The Herdmans wanted to ensure that the working man had access to fishing.

The Almagamated Sports Committee set up in 1921 – contributions were paid from wages for membership. In a similar way contributions, from wages paid for health provision for Sion Mills workers.

The Sion Mills medical surgery originally belonged to the mill.

2. **What do you think are the biggest issues facing heritage in your area?**

The fact is that we are so remote in the eyes of the authorities. The Heritage Lottery Fund see us as unsustainable.

I feel that Sion Mills village should be recognised as a World

Heritage Site. Location is the biggest barrier.

Until the Stables were restored local people could not see how the project could ever be brought to completion. The Stables restoration gave everyone a visible example of what could be achieved.

Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust now work in partnership with the Council. Unfortunately the local authorities expect a lot from local people who are volunteers. There is only so much time and effort that volunteers can give to projects. Many of the forms which are required to apply for grant aid and support are very complex. They are often beyond the resources of part time voluntary groups. More help should be given by the authorities to local groups to help them satisfactorily complete these complex forms. Partnership is very important. Local Council officials could help directly by completing the required forms.

There is a big turnover in trustees as volunteers only have limited time at their disposal and increasingly there is a feeling that volunteers are being taken for granted by the authorities.

The voluntary sector is expected to do too much.

The mixed ownership of the Mill complex itself and other buildings present a difficulty as different owners have different priorities.

3 What do you think should be the vision for heritage in your area?

A world Heritage Site for Sion Mills. It is brilliant story and deserves to be told.

4 Can we put your name down as a consultee for this project?

Yes Celia Ferguson

NB

Two online questionnaires were received by the consultants too late for inclusion in the Audit Report but their submission is appreciated.

Battle sites

Battle sites: **Battle of the Fords: northern crossing**

BATTLE Battle of the Fords: northern crossing

DDMMYY 14/04/1689

SIDEA Hamilton: Jacobite

SIDEB Lundy: Williamite

OUTCOME A: victory

GRIDREF C35960325

TYPE

CENTURY 17

Battle sites: **Battle of the Fords: central crossing**

BATTLE Battle of the Fords: central crossing

DDMMYY 14/04/1689

SIDEA Hamilton: Jacobite

SIDEB Lundy: Williamite

OUTCOME A: victory

GRIDREF H33469827

TYPE

CENTURY 17

MAIN_REF

Battle sites: **Battle of the Fords: southern crossing**

BATTLE Battle of the Fords: southern crossing

DDMMYY 14/04/1689

SIDEA Hamilton: Jacobite

SIDEB Lundy: Williamite

OUTCOME A: victory

GRIDREF H293939

TYPE

CENTURY 17

MAIN_REF

Battle sites: **Carricklee**

BATTLE Carricklee

DDMMYY 01/05/1588

SIDEA The Earl of Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill

SIDEB Turlough Luineach O'Neill

OUTCOME B: victory

GRIDREF H324965

TYPE

CENTURY 16

MAIN_REF AFM, Vol 5, p1867

Battle sites: **Strath-ban**

BATTLE Strath-ban

DDMMYY 1583

SIDEA Turlough Luineach O'Neill (defending)

SIDEB Hugh O'Donnell

OUTCOME B: victory

GRIDREF H345476
TYPE town attacked and burnt
CENTURY 16
MAIN_REF AFM, Vol 5, p1811

Battle sites: **Strabane (unlocated)**

BATTLE Strabane (unlocated)
DDMMYY 12/1641 or 04/1642
SIDEA Sir Phelim O'Neill: Irish
SIDEB Garrison (defending): Scots (?)
OUTCOME A: victory
GRIDREF H345476
TYPE Assault
CENTURY 17
MAIN_REF Young.RM, Historical Notices of Old Belfast,1896,p210 'Friar O'Mellans Narrative of the wars of 1641' Brantry Friary

Battle sites: **Strabane (unlocated)**

BATTLE Strabane (unlocated)
DDMMYY 12/1641 or 04/1642
SIDEA Capt Hugh Murrach O'Divin (defending): Irish
SIDEB Col Sir William Hamilton: Scots/English
OUTCOME B: victory
GRIDREF H345476
TYPE Assault (3 days after O'Neill took the fort)
CENTURY 17
MAIN_REF Young.RM, Historical Notices of Old Belfast,1896,p210 'Friar O'Mellans Narrative of the wars of 1641' Brantry Friary

Battle sites: **Clady**

BATTLE Clady
DDMMYY 789.AD
SIDEA Cenel Eoghain
SIDEB Cenel Conaill
OUTCOME A: victory
GRIDREF H293939
TYPE
CENTURY 8
MAIN_REF Annals of Ulster, 789AD::AFM, Vol1, p391 (784AD)

Battle sites: **Knockavoe**

Battle Knockavoe
DDMMYY 1522
SIDE A Conn Bacach O'Neill
SIDE B Hugh Dubh O'Donnell and Manus O'Donnell
OUTCOME B: victory
CENTURY 16 Night time assault by O'Donnells
MAIN_REF Annals of Ulster, 1522 AD::AFM, Vol.5

Gardens

	Ref No	Site	Status	Criteria	Council	CF HB	CF SMR	Shape Area	Shape Length
126	T- 022	Holy Hill or Holly Hill	Register		Strabane	HB 10/2/1 – House		HB 10/2/1 - House	

HOLY HILL or HOLLY HILL HOUSE

Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes Reference: T-022

Status: Register

Source Historic Environment Map Viewer

Just outside the area is another listed garden, Moyle House, which is not open to the public.

MOYLE HOUSE, County Tyrone (REGISTERED SITE – AREA PLAN STRABANE 10) The site has a complex history. The house and surrounding garden are not in themselves of particular historic interest but the lime trees in the avenue are of great importance. They were reported as, ‘old’ in Mason’s Statistical Account and Parochial Survey of Ireland of 1817, ‘... a long line of fine old lime trees in the front which faces south.’ They are connected with Castle Moyle, which is now in ruins beside the Strule River. The castle is preplantation. Remains of a large formal garden can be seen in St Joseph’s photos of 1952 and on the OS maps. The lands became glebe land. The lime avenue has been incorporated into the changing landscape throughout the following generations. Likewise the ruins of the castle, which were converted into a summer house. The rectory was built in 1727 and has now gone but the walled garden survives. It has a few fruit trees. The present Moyle House is post-1834. There is a gate lodge of 1855. SMR: TYR 17:10 Site of Castle Moyle. Private.
register Northern Ireland-NIEA

Buildings at Risk NI Strabane area

Wards

North	None
West	None
Ballycolman	None
South	None
Finn	None
Sion Mills	4 listings see below
Artigarvan	1 listing see below
Dunamanagh	None

ID	HB Number	Council ID	Ward ID	Address	Type
626	HB 10/07/001	Strabane	Sion Mills	Gate Lodge Zion House Melmount Road Sion Mills	
242	HB 10/07/001A	Strabane	Sion Mills	Zion House 120 Melmount Road Sion Mills	House
243	HB 10/07/004	Strabane	Sion Mills	Herdmans' Mill Mill Avenue Sion Mills Liggartown Strabane Co Tyrone BT82 9HE	Mill
244	HB 10/07/020	Strabane	Sion Mills	Thatched House Peacock Road Glebe Sion Mills Co. Tyrone	House
639	HB 10/11/009	Strabane	Artigarvan	Millars' Corn Mill Artigarvan Strabane Co. Tyrone	Mill

Derry City and Strabane District DOENI Scheduled Historic Monuments

DOENI Scheduled Historic Monuments				
TOWNLAND	MONUMENT	GRID REF	DISTRICT COUNCIL	SM NO
AGHALANE	Standing stone, stone circle, alignments and dist	H4946 9260	Derry and Strabane	11 15
AGHALUNNY	Bridge: Fairy Bridge	H1695 7985	Derry and Strabane	IHR 4504 23:500
AGHNAHOO and LEITRIM	Souterrain	H2263 8032	Derry and Strabane	26 00
BALIX LOWER	Cashel	H4921 9757	Derry and Strabane	6 4
BALIX LOWER	Court tomb (area surrounding the state care monument)	H4836 9635	Derry and Strabane	6 6
BALLYKEERY	Killeen	H4492 9540	Derry and Strabane	11 17
BALLYNABWEE	Counterscarp rath	C40900500	Derry and Strabane	2 4
BALLYNAMALLAGHT	Prehistoric landscape, standing stone, cairns and field walls	Area of H510 988	Derry and Strabane	6 46
BALLYRENAN	Portal tomb: Cloghagile	H3732 8317	Derry and Strabane	17 35
BARONS COURT	Crannog and fortification 'Island MacHugh'	H3646 8378	Derry and Strabane	17 33
BARONS COURT	Derrywoone Castle	H3669 8357	Derry and Strabane	17 34
BERRYSFORT	Standing stone (area surrounding the state care monument)	H2719 8382	Derry and Strabane	16 46
BULLOCK PARK	Portal tomb	H2778 7892	Derry and Strabane	24 29
CARRICORRAN GLEBE	Portal tomb: Giant's Grave	H2889 8243	Derry and Strabane	24 8
CARRICKAYNE	Prehistoric landscape, stone circle, alignments and cairns	Area of H526 988	Derry and Strabane	6 44 & 45
CARRICKAYNE	Prehistoric landscape, cairns and field walls	Area of H516 985	Derry and Strabane	6 47
CASTLEDAMPH	Rath	H5206 9174	Derry and Strabane	11 4
CASTLEDAMPH	Stone circles and stone alignment	H5216 9236	Derry and Strabane	16 00
CASTLESSEAGH	Bawn: Castleberg Castle	H2605 8442	Derry and Strabane	16 16
CHURCHTOWN	Wedge tomb, 'Todd's Den' (area surrounding the state care monument)	H2688 8565	Derry and Strabane	16 17
CHURCHTOWN	Portal Tomb (area surrounding the state care monument)	H2666 8539	Derry and Strabane	16 18
CLOGHERNY	Stone circles	H4925 9480	Derry and Strabane	11 19
CLOGHERNY GLEBE	Rath	H5741 9165	Derry and Strabane	12 7
CLOGHERNY GLEBE	Rath	H5780 9195	Derry and Strabane	12 8
CLOGHERNY GLEBE	Rath	H5852 9221	Derry and Strabane	12 9
CORICKMORE	Friary: Corick Abbey	H4519 8817	Derry and Strabane	18 12
CORRAMORE	Rath	H5878 9229	Derry and Strabane	12 10
CORRAMORE	Platform Rath	H5917 9238	Derry and Strabane	12 11
CROSH	Portal tomb: Cloghagile	H4176 8791	Derry and Strabane	17 18
CROSH BALLINFREE (Newtown Stewart)	Castle site (mound and foundation): Pigeon Hill	H4036 8578	Derry and Strabane	17 11
DERGBROUGH	Rath	4692 8994	Derry and Strabane	11 12
DOORAT	Stone circles (2)	H4926 9689	Derry and Strabane	6 22
DOORAT	Stone circles (2), standing stone and alignment	H4952 9652	Derry and Strabane	6 30
DUNNALONG	Fortified town: Dunnalong Fort	C378 105	Derry and Strabane	1 2
EVISH	Wedge tomb	H3923 9678	Derry and Strabane	5 10
FREUGHLOUGH	Standing stone	H2620 8530	Derry and Strabane	16 19
GARVAGH	Cashel	H2031 8460	Derry and Strabane	15 3
GARVAGH	Court tomb: County Carn	H2016 8694	Derry and Strabane	15 5
GLENKNOCK	Portal tomb 'Cloghagile' (area around the state care monument)	H4117 8794	Derry and Strabane	17 9
GLENRONAN	Portal tomb and wedge tomb: Dermot and Grania's Bed	H5485 9145	Derry and Strabane	12 5 and 12 24
GOLES	Stone alignment	H6698 9478	Derry and Strabane	13 1
KILCROAGH	Standing stone: the White Stone	H2554 8487	Derry and Strabane	16 45
KILLETER	Court tomb	H2014 7906	Derry and Strabane	23 1
KILLETER	Double stone alignment	H1939 7872	Derry and Strabane	23 42
KILLYMORE	Rath: Attyhole Fort	H4333 8658	Derry and Strabane	17 5
KILLYNAGHT	Portal tomb	C39090113	Derry and Strabane	5 2
KNOCKNAHORNA	Stone circle	H4105 9890	Derry and Strabane	5 14
LAGHTMORRIS	Possible cashel	H1860 8435	Derry and Strabane	15 11
LEGLAND	Court tomb	H3613 7963	Derry and Strabane	25 16
LEITRIM	Druid's Altar	H2250 8000	Derry and Strabane	23 7
LEITRIM	Hillfort	H2205 8020	Derry and Strabane	23 16
LETTERBRAT	Portal tomb	H4715 9156	Derry and Strabane	11 14
LISKY	Court tomb (area surrounding the state care monument)	H3575 9051	Derry and Strabane	10 6
LISNARAGH	IRISH Rath	C45690025	Derry and Strabane	6 15
LOUGHASH	Wedge tomb: Cashelbane	C51620130	Derry and Strabane	6 2
LOUGHASH	Wedge tomb: Giant's Grave	C48340080	Derry and Strabane	6 24
MAGHERAKEEL	Church	H1841 7971	Derry and Strabane	23 22
MEENAGORP	Megalithic tomb	H4520 9160	Derry and Strabane	11 12
MEENDAMPH	Standing stone and stone circle	H4579 9755	Derry and Strabane	6 7
MULLANABREEN	Cashel	H2005 8242	Derry and Strabane	23 24
NEWTOWNSTEWART	Castle and bawn	H4023 8582	Derry and Strabane	17 47
OUGHTOY	Stone Alignments	H5959 9377	Derry and Strabane	12 22
OUGHTOORISH	Rath	H5875 9253	Derry and Strabane	12 12
TIEVENNY	Platform rath: Tievenny Fort	H3178 8558	Derry and Strabane	16 30
TIEVENNY	Platform rath	H3206 8626	Derry and Strabane	16 31
TIRKERNAGHAN	17th-century house	C44540032	Derry and Strabane	6 48
URNEY GLEBE	Ecclesiastical site and cross carved slab: Erraidhe	H3034 9491	Derry and Strabane	9 4
WINDYHILL	Wedge tomb	C40160229	Derry and Strabane	2 7
Strabane Canal				
BALLYDONAGHY/ LECKPATRICK	Strabane Canal Reach 1	C35940391- C360602	Derry and Strabane	5 500
GREENLAW/ STRABANE BOG/ WOODEND	Strabane Canal Reach 2	C36050262- H348999	Derry and Strabane	5 500
GREENBRAE/ TOWN PARKS	Strabane Canal Reach 3	H34459832- H346298	Derry and Strabane	5 500

Strabane Museum Collection Inventory - Sample list of items in collection

<i>Inventory Number</i>	<i>Simple name</i>	<i>Brief Description</i>
SDC:2000.015	Photograph	Framed photograph of a painting featuring the writer Brian O'Nolan, by Michael O'Nolan
SDC:2000.016	chaplin doll	One Charlie Chaplin ventriloquist doll and walking cane.
SDC:2000.019	magnifying glass	Hand held magnifying glass with folding handle.
SDC:2000.031	nipple remover	
SDC:2000.034	Dresser	One single drawer dresser with three shelves.
SDC:2000.037	Sign	One metal sign advertising Will's Gold Flake Cigarettes.
SDC:2000.044	Clock	Grandfather clock.
SDC:2000.047	Plough	19th century T-shaped farm implement comprising wooden main shaft and handle.
SDC:2000.050	Helmet	German army helmet.
SDC:2000.055	Helmet	Air Raid Wardens helmet.
SDC:2000.057	Cap	Royal Air Force cap.
SDC:2000.060	Book	Mein Kampf.
SDC:2000.070	identity card	
SDC:2000.073	Book	Clothing ration book.
SDC:2000.085	Photograph	One signed photograph of Dame Vera Lynn D.B.E. along with compliments slip.
SDC:2000.090	Magazine	Picture Post Magazine dated December 5th 1942.
SDC:2000.114	christmas card	Un-used Christmas card showing caricature of a kissing man and woman underneath the caption 'Xmas comes but once a year...'
SDC:2000.124	christmas card	Humorous Christmas card with a cartoon showing a servant pumping beer to a man in the next room.
SDC:2000.128	christmas card	Swedish postcard showing young girl with a snowball.

The collection mainly consists of memorabilia, tools and artefacts. According to the former curator of the collection (Adrian Beattie) the most useful section was the range of items relating to the two World Wars. They were a popular aid in school visits relating to heritage. The collection is being moved to Lisnahally.



Displays at entrance to Derry City and Strabane District Council Offices, Derry Road, Strabane (formerly Strabane Workhouse) photo Eddie O'Kane



Derry City and Strabane District Council Offices, Derry Road, Strabane (formerly Strabane Workhouse) photo Eddie O'Kane

Battle of Knockavoe (Cnoc-Buidhbh) 1522

The Battle of Knockavoe was one of the fiercest encounters between the two clans of the O'Neills and the O'Donnells. Although it took place during one night the O'Neills lost 900 men of their army.

Conn Bacah O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone was determined to establish control of Tyrconnell, O'Donnell's territory. He gathered a large force of his own clan and other allies such as the MacDonnells of Antrim, Bissetts and MacSheehys. His army also contained English troops and forces from Connacht and Munster. They attacked and took Ballyshannon and laid waste to much of the county. On their return to Tyrone O'Neill's army camped at Knockavoe, the hill above Strabane. Hugh Dubh O'Donnell and Manus O'Donnell gathered their forces at Drumleen outside Lifford and planned their revenge. They decided that a surprise attack was their only option as O'Neills army outnumbered them. They attacked on foot at the dead of night. O'Neill had heard that there was some danger of attack and had posted guards. They were however taken by surprise and in the darkness it was difficult for either side to tell friend from foe.

Battle of Knockavoe (Cnoc-Buidhbh) 1522

While encamped at Knockavoe, near Strabane Conn O'Neill's forces were surprised at night by Hugh Dubh O'Donnell and Manus O'Donnell. Hugh and Manus led their small force quietly up to the campsite and launched a surprise attack before the sentinels were aware of how matters stood, with the two forces fighting furiously in pitch darkness in the midst of the camp. After a long and fearful struggle, in which men found it hard to distinguish friend from foe, the completely unprepared O'Neills and their supporters were routed with a loss of 900 men; and O'Donnell took possession of the camp, with an immense quantity of booty.

The full account of the battle appears in The Annals of the Four Masters as follows

“When O'Donnell heard that O'Neill had done these deeds, he ordered his son, Manus O'Donnell, to proceed into Tyrone with a detachment of his army, and to plunder and burn that country; and he himself, with the number of forces he had kept with him, directed his course over Bearnas, in pursuit of O'Neill, and to defend Tirhugh. As to Manus, he plundered and burned all the neighbouring parts of Kinel-Owen; he also slew and destroyed many persons, and then returned in triumph.

When O'Neill discovered that Manus had gone into Tyrone, he returned across the River Finn, and spoiled the country before him as far as Ceann-Maghair, from whence he carried off a prey; and he then proceeded in triumph to his own country.

O'Neill afterwards pitched his camp at Cnoc Buidhbh, at Loch Monann, commonly called Cnoc an Bhogha, with all the forces before mentioned, except the western army, as we have said before.

As to O'Donnell, after his son Manus had reached him with many spoils, as he had not caught O'Neill at Ballyshannon, and as he had not overtaken him after the plundering of Ceann-Maghair, he returned across Bearnas, and mustered all the forces he had, though they were few against many at that time, and they all came to one place to Druim-Lighean. They held council to consider what they should do in the strait difficulties they had to meet, for they knew that they would not be at all able to maintain a contest with O'Neill and his army, and with the Connacian army, which was then marching towards their country, should they succeed in joining each other before the engagement; so that the resolution they adopted was to attack O'Neill, as he was the

nearest to them, choosing rather to be slain on the field than to become slaves to anyone in the world. They agreed (as the army opposed to them were so very numerous) to attack O'Neill's by night. A notice and forewarning of this resolution reached O'Neill, so that he placed sentinels to guard every pass by which he thought the Kinel-Connell might come to attack him, while he himself, with the main body of his army, remained on the watch at the rear in his camp.

O'Donnell, having arrayed and marshalled, excited and earnestly exhorted his small army, commanded them to abandon their horses, for they had no desire to escape from the field of battle unless they should be the victors. They his forces then advanced until they came up to the sentinels of O'Neill without being perceived by them. However, the sentinels began to give notice to their people that their enemies were approaching. The Kinel-Connell now, fearing that the sentinels would reach O'Neill before them, rushed onwards with such violence and vehemence that they went out of array; and they and the sentinels reached the camp together. On thus coming into collision with one another they raised great shouts aloud, and their clamour was not feebly responded to by O'Neill's common soldiers, for they proceeded bravely and protectively to defend their chief and their camp. Both armies were engaged at striking and killing each other, and mighty men were subdued, and heroes hacked, on either side; men were hewn down, and death and evil destiny seized vigorous youths in that place. Scarcely did any one of them on either side know with whom he should engage in combat, for they could not discern one another's faces on account of the darkness of the night, and their close intermixing with each other. At last, however, O'Neill and his army were defeated, and the camp was left to O'Donnell. Great indeed was the slaughter made upon O'Neill recte, O'Neill's forces on that spot, for it was calculated by the people of the churches in which many of them were interred, and by those of the neighbours who were near them and recognized the bodies, that upwards of nine hundred of O'Neill's army fell in that engagement, so that the name and renown of that victory spread all over Ireland. The most distinguished men who fell in that engagement were the following: Donnell Oge Mac Donnell, with a countless number of gallowglasses of the Clann-Donnell Mac Donnell; Turlough Mac Sheehy, with a great number of his people; John Bissett, with the greater part of the Scots who had come with him; Hugh, the son of Owen, son of William Mac Mahon, with a party of his troops; and Rory Maguire, and some of his people along with him. There fell there also many of the Lagenians and of the men of Meath, for there came not a leader of a band or troop, small or great, in that muster of O'Neill, who did not complain of the number of his people that were left dead on that field; so that this battle of Cnoc Buidhbh was one of the most bloody engagements that had ever occurred between the Kinel-Connell and the Kinel-Owen. The Kinel-Connell seized upon horses, arms, armour, a store of provisions, strong liquors, and several beautiful and rich articles, both eiscras and goblets, of the forces whom they had defeated; and though O'Donnell's people were without horses on going into the engagement, they had many horses from the warriors whom they had cut off in that slaughter. Some of O'Donnell's forces went to their houses with their share of the spoils, without his permission, but he sent them a peremptory order to return to him at once; and after they had collected to one place at his summons, he marched, with all the speed that might be, westwards, through the gap of Bearnas Mor, over the Rivers Erne, Drowes, and Duff, and over the lower part of Carbury, and pitched his camp at Ceathramha-na-madadh, on the north side of Binn-Golban, because the Connacian army, of which we have (already) spoken, had advanced to Sligo, laying siege to that town, in which O'Donnell had placed warders”

The Annals of the Four Masters Vol 5 p.1355,1356, 1357, 1358, 1359.

John O'Donovan, Dublin, Hodges Smith and Co., Dublin

Appendix 1

Historic Environment Assets within the Derry City and Strabane District

Monuments

- 862 on the Sites and Monuments Register
- 128 Scheduled Monuments
- 14 State Care Monuments
- 21 Areas of Archaeological Potential
- 964 Industrial Heritage Assets
- 70 Defence Heritage Assets
- 62 Shipwrecks
- 33 Battlesites

Listed Buildings:

- 675 Listed Buildings

Conservation Areas:

There are 5 Conservation Areas within the District, namely:

- The Historic City Conservation Area;
- The Clarendon Street Conservation Area;
- The Magee Conservation Area;
- Sion Mills Conservation Area;
- Newtown Stewart Conservation Area.

Areas of Townscape Character:

- Victoria Park;
- Bonds Hill;
- Eglinton;
- Culmore

Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes

- 9 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes (Registered)
- 13 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes (Supplementary List)

Note on items from National Museums NI Collection

NB: Due to the size of this listing, this information can be accessed on request.