

The Walled Town Crier

An Irish Walled Towns Network
bi-monthly magazine.

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An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



The westernmost bastion (or Double Bastion) of the Derry Walls, during a recent cold snap. Image courtesy of Mark Lusby.

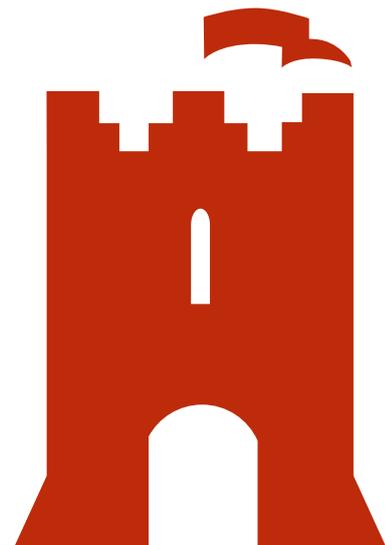
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Project Manager's Message



Hello everyone and welcome to the February 2023 edition of the Walled Town Crier.

You'll notice that this first issue of 2023 has been given a bit of a design revamp to reflect the Heritage Council's new logo and branding, which was launched this month in tandem with the Council's new Strategic Plan 2023-2028: *Our Place in Time*.

The IWTN has had a busy start to the year, with two grants schemes currently open for applications, our annual AGM and the continued expansion of the network.

Dave Swift of Claoimh in conversation with medieval enthusiasts at "Athlone Castle Brings History Alive" - one of many wonderful events to receive IWTN grant funding in 2022. 2023 grants schemes are now open. Image courtesy of Athlone Castle Visitor Centre.

In this issue we'll be getting to know Derry-Londonderry, one of our founder member towns, as well as introducing Fore, Co. Westmeath, our newest member. There's also a report from AGM 2023, details of this year's grants schemes and the usual round-up of news and updates.

Warmest Regards,

Eimear

Eimear O'Connell, IWTN Project Manager.

AGM 2023: Report



The former Bishop's Palace, Church Lane, Kilkenny. Home to the Heritage Council since 2008.

There was a great turnout – both in-person and online – for the IWTN's Annual General Meeting, which took place at the Heritage Council headquarters in Kilkenny on 16th February.

Welcoming the attendees, Virginia Teehan, Heritage Council CEO, reflected on the valuable contribution that the IWTN has made to the conservation and regeneration of walled towns, and commended the spirit of collaboration that has made that contribution possible.

The business of the AGM followed – with a Project Manager's Report, Financial Report and Details of Grants Schemes 2023. Minutes have been issued to all town representatives.

One of the main topic of discussion was the difficulty in procuring contractors and consultants to carry out conservation works, and the underlying issue of the lack of conservation skills training in Ireland. A number of existing initiatives were highlighted but all agreed that this continues to be a major issue for the sector.

This was a first AGM for both the current IWTN Chair and the current IWTN Project Manager and a great opportunity to put faces to names.

AGM 2023 also marked the end of their respective terms on the IWTN Management Committee for Sarah McCutcheon (Kilmallock, Limerick), outgoing Deputy Chair, and Conor Nelligan (Bandon, Buttevant, Youghal), outgoing town representative. Many thanks to both Conor and Sarah for their contributions.

Loreto Guinan (Kells, Trim) was elected to the Deputy Chair position and Shirin Murphy (Carrickfergus) was elected to the town representative position. Congratulations to Shirin and Loreto.

After the business of the AGM had concluded, those attending in person had the opportunity to visit the Abbey Quarter regeneration site in Kilkenny City. Kilkenny County Council kindly facilitated our visit and provided a very interesting presentation on how the heritage features of the site (including the city wall) have influenced the regeneration process. The opportunity to access St. Francis' Abbey – which has been inaccessible to the public for many years - was a highlight of the visit.

Visiting the interior of St. Francis' Abbey, with the new Kilkenny City Library visible in the background.



in the northeast and descending to the Gallows Strand in the south west.

The Derry Walls are 1,325m in length and range from 6m to 8m in height, and 4m to 9m in width. The area within the Walls is approximately 10 hectares.

Built between 1613-1619 by the City of London at a cost of £11,147, the Derry Walls are still owned by The Honourable The Irish Society, its subsidiary. The Walls are scheduled as an ancient monument, in the guardianship of the Northern Ireland Executive and managed by the Department for Communities, Historic Environment Division.

Designed by an English army officer, Sir Edward Dodington, the walls were laid out under the direction of Thomas Raven, a City of London Surveyor. Sir John Vaughan, Governor of Londonderry, supervised the work. A London master tiler and bricklayer, Peter Benson, was responsible for the erection of the walls.

The walls had eight bastions of which five remain. There are also two rectangular demi-bastions or platforms. The stone walls were backed by compacted earth as a shock absorber against cannon fire.

An interpretation of Nicholas Pynnar's survey of 1619, by Jonathan O'Donoghue. Image courtesy of Mark Lusby.



Fishmonger's Cannon. Image courtesy of Mark Lusby.





2013 when 1750 people recreated the marking out of the pattern for the Walls, 400 years earlier. Image courtesy of Mark Lusby.

Each bastion was given a name in 1622, to honour the leaders of English colonists, such as Lord Docwra's Bulwark or the Governor of the Plantation's Bulwark. During the 1689 Siege, the bastions took on more topical names given by the many refugees to the city, such as "Hangman's Bastion" or "Coward's Bastion". The angled bastions were designed to give clear fields of fire along the whole length of the wall so that there was no dead ground that could be exploited by an attacker.

Two Elizabethan cannon survive and can be found near Shipquay Gate, marked with a Tudor Rose and the date "1590". On Grand Parade, and facing the Guildhall, there are nine cannon dating from 1610- 1635. They bear their foundry marks and the City of London arms. On the bastions there are seven 1642 cannons, inscribed on their barrels with the names of the London Companies - Mercers, Fishmongers, Grocers, Salters, Merchants, Tailors and Vintners.

Each of the English and Scottish settlers were leased a piece of ground within the Walls to build a house on; a piece on the island of Derry, protected by the Walls, as a garden; and land down-river within the town liberties, protected by the fortified city and Culmore Fort, as a domestic farm. These were called the city lots, the perches and the acres.

The Walls provided a protected marketplace for traders. Only freemen born within the Walls had the right to trade in Derry. However, these merchants and traders had to pay for the privilege of this monopoly, with a fee known as 'spoon and bucket'. Money raised from leases, fees and customs was used to pay for the Londonderry Plantation, including the upkeep of the Derry Walls.

Over the centuries the walls have been modified to meet the changing needs of the City - the outer dry moat has been infilled, three bastions were removed, the original four gates have been replaced by ornamental arches, and three new gates have been cut through the walls. During the 20th-century Troubles, the 17th-century Walls became part of a Peace Wall separating communities and were refortified with military watch towers.

In 1995, the Derry Walls were reopened to the public. Today, like surviving town walls the world over, the Derry Walls are being reclaimed as a resource for cultural and economic development, creating a special sense of enclosure at the heart of the city's commercial and cultural core.

Other attractions

The Derry Walls define the 'old town' at the heart of the modern city of Derry-Londonderry. Within and just 'without' these walls is a cluster of civic and voluntary museums which all contribute to telling, with authentic voices, the shared history of this uniquely resilient city.

A London Promise Delivered: St. Columba's Cathedral & Chapter House Museum

The City of London sent over a silver-gilt chalice with the first settlers, as a promise to build a church on the Island of Derry. St. Columba's Cathedral, completed 1633, is the fulfilment of that promise and is the oldest building within the Walled City. In its architectural style, its name and the treasures it contains, the cathedral is a symbol of those enduring links between London and Derry.



Heroes of the Great Siege:

The Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall & Siege Museum

Three centuries ago, this corner of Ireland became embroiled in the War of the Grand Alliance, a global conflict between Louis XIV of France and a European-wide coalition of Austria, the Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch Republic, Spain, Britain, and Savoy.

The Siege Museum unpacks the story of the Great Siege of 1688-89 and tells how this valiant little city played its part in these momentous events, shaping modern Europe and our local cultural identities.

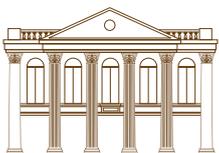
The Enigma of St. Colmcille:

Long Tower Chapel & St. Columba's Heritage Centre

The Long Tower Chapel is on the site of a medieval cathedral, dedicated to St Columba. A round tower was located nearby; it survives in the neighbourhood's name. The museum in the former "Wee Nuns" primary school tells the story of this enigmatic saint, who is still venerated in the church. This beautifully decorated church and school are symbols of the renaissance of the Catholic part of the city's community from the 18th century onwards.

Scots-Presbyterians on the Frontier:

First Derry Presbyterian Church & Blue Coat Museum



The museum within the church grounds relates the story of the Scots-Presbyterians: how their non-conforming spirit

was forged in the ever-changing borderlands between Scotland and England, how it matured in north west Ireland where they settled in the 17th century during the transition between Gaelic and English authority, and how it ultimately grew into a revolutionary spirit, taken with them to the colonisation of the frontier lands of America in the 18th century.

Wee Church on the Walls:

St Augustine's Church

Located at the top of a winding street, an

ancient pilgrimage route long before the London Plantation, St Augustine's is an integral part of the Derry Walls. Here you can wander in off the grid, taking your ease in its cool interior or browsing among the fascinating headstones of the ancient churchyard. A tradition of refuge and welcome, established when there was a medieval monastery on the site, lives on for the modern-day traveller.



Birthplace of Northern Ireland's Civil Rights:

Free Derry Corner & Museum of Free Derry

The Museum of Free Derry is situated close to Free

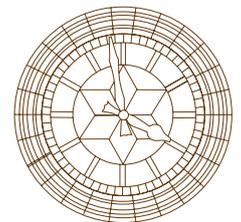
Derry Corner in the Bogside, the centre of the neighbourhoods where Bloody Sunday took place in 1972. The museum focuses on the Civil Rights era of the 1960s and the early Troubles of the 1970s.

The museum is part of a global network of sites of conscience, connecting past struggles to today's movements for human rights and social justice.

Keepers of the Story:

Guildhall & Tower Museum

The civic museums, the Guildhall and Tower Museum, tell the many histories of the city and the region through the wealth of the civic collections. The Guildhall is the town hall, where the city and district council still meets, reflecting a continuous story of civic government since the early 17th century. The Tower Museum is located in a modern replica of the 16th century O'Doherty tower-house, which once stood nearby.



A new maritime museum, Derry North Atlantic, will be located in the former Hospital building in the regenerated 19th-century Ebrington Barracks.

PM Note: The original text has been edited for inclusion in the ezine by the IWTN project manager. Any errors or omissions PM's own.

Introducing Fore, Co. Westmeath



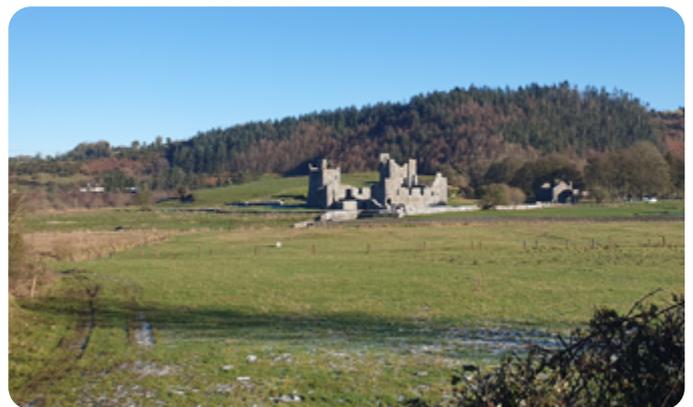
Westmeath Heritage Officer, Melanie McQuade, and members of the Fore Heritage and Amenity Group at the North Gate.
Image: Eimear O'Connell.

The village of Fore, with a population in the region of 200 people, can lay claim to being both the newest and the smallest town in the network.

St. Feichin is believed to have founded a monastery here in the 7th century. Mentions in several Annals indicate that this soon grew to be a large and widely-recognised monastic community but no visible remains of the early monastery survive today. Fore Abbey as it survives today dates largely to the Anglo-Norman period. Hugh De Lacy, Lord of Meath, established a Benedictine Priory in the valley of Fore in the late 12th or early 13th century. It was one of only very few Benedictine foundations in Ireland.

Fore was walled in the 14th and 15th centuries. References exist to murage grants, first in the reign of Edward III (1327-77) and again in 1436 under Henry VI. Fore's location outside the

View of Fore Abbey from the North Gate.
Image: Eimear O'Connell.



Pale – and therefore vulnerable to attack – likely made the construction of defensive walls necessary.

Today two substantial masonry gates and a series of earthen ditches survive. It is unclear whether a complete circuit of masonry defences was ever constructed and



South Gate, Fore, viewed from southwest.
Image courtesy of Melanie McQuade.



Ditch running west from South gate, on presumed line of town wall. Image courtesy of Melanie McQuade.

Avril Thomas (*The Walled Towns of Ireland*) speculates that a large area of marshy ground on the northeastern side of the village as well as a substantial rocky outcrop on the northwestern side may have acted as natural defences – making the construction of walls in these areas unnecessary.

Fore Heritage and Amenity Group is a voluntary community group that works to enhance the town's heritage assets and recreational amenities for visitors and residents alike. In recent years the group has developed a 3km looped walk around the village, produced a guide to the wayside crosses of Fore and worked with LAWPRO and the IFI to improve water quality in the River Gloire. They were awarded a Pride of Place Award in recognition of their efforts in 2020.

Community Monuments Fund funding has been used to carry out conservation works to the Old Gaol, within the walled town, and to prepare Conservation Plans for St. Feichin's Bath and St. Feichin's Mill.

Last, but by no means least, no description of Fore would be complete without a mention of its famed 'Seven Wonders'. These are a series of locations associated with the monastic complex to which miraculous or mysterious qualities are attributed. The wonders in full: The Monastery Built on a Bog. The Mill Without a Race. The Water that Flows Uphill. The Wood that Won't Burn. The Water that Won't Boil. The Anchorite in the Stone. The Lintel Raised by St. Feichin's Prayers.

The IWTN is delighted to welcome Fore to the network. Fore will be represented by Melanie McQuade, Westmeath County Council Heritage Officer, and by the Fore Heritage and Amenity Group.

News and Updates

Grants Schemes 2023



Applications are currently open for funding under the IWTN's 'Conservation/Capital Projects' and 'Interpretation & Events' Grants Schemes for 2023.

A total fund of €218k is available under the 'Conservation/Capital Projects' scheme for conservation works to town walls (Conservation Management Plans must be in place and be adopted/about to be adopted by the relevant Local Authority) and for the preparation of reports and surveys necessary to obtain Ministerial Consent for carrying out conservation works to town walls.

A total fund of €124k is available under the 'Interpretation & Events' scheme for a range of interpretation and events projects, including the preparation of Conservation, Management and Interpretation Plans, Walled Town Days, small festivals, conservation training and interpretation materials.

Detailed guidelines for both schemes have been circulated to all town representatives. Contact iwtn@heritagecouncil.ie with any queries.

Application is via the Heritage Council's online grants management system. The closing date for applications under both schemes is 5pm on 9 March 2023.

IWTN Conservation Audit

There are a number of responses still outstanding. If one of them is yours, please submit it. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

Social Media

Thanks to everyone for sending on social media content as we adjust to the new system. Please continue to use the hashtag **#IWTN** on all network-related posts and to tag the relevant Heritage Council account:



@HeritageHubIRE



TheHeritageCouncil



@theheritagecouncil

View of Derry Walls, taken at night.
Image: Liam Mannix.



Contact Us:

Please do get in touch at
iwtn@heritagecouncil.ie
if you would like us to promote news or
projects happening in your walled town
over the coming months.

www.irishwalledtownsnetwork.ie



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