

The Walled Town Crier

An Irish Walled Towns Network
bi-monthly magazine.

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An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

The Record Tower,
Dublin Castle. Photograph
by Mark Reddy/Trinity
Digital Studios, courtesy of
the Office of Public Works.

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Project Manager's Message

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

The sun continues to shine on a busy time of year for the network, with the first of this year's grant-aided projects getting up and running. We had a fantastic training day in Kells in May and I've been enjoying getting out and about and visiting some of our wonderful member towns.

In this issue, our regular 'Getting to know...' feature puts a spotlight on Dublin and we have an update from New Ross, where rubbing shoulders with Hollywood stars is all in a day's work for the IWTN town rep

and the rest of the hardworking team at Wexford County Council's municipal district office. There's the usual round-up of News and Updates too.

I'm continuing my town visits over the coming months. If I haven't already been in touch to schedule a visit to your town, I will be soon. In the meantime, if there's a particular date or event that you'd like to arrange a visit around then please do reach out and let me know and I'll do my best to make it happen.

Warmest Regards,

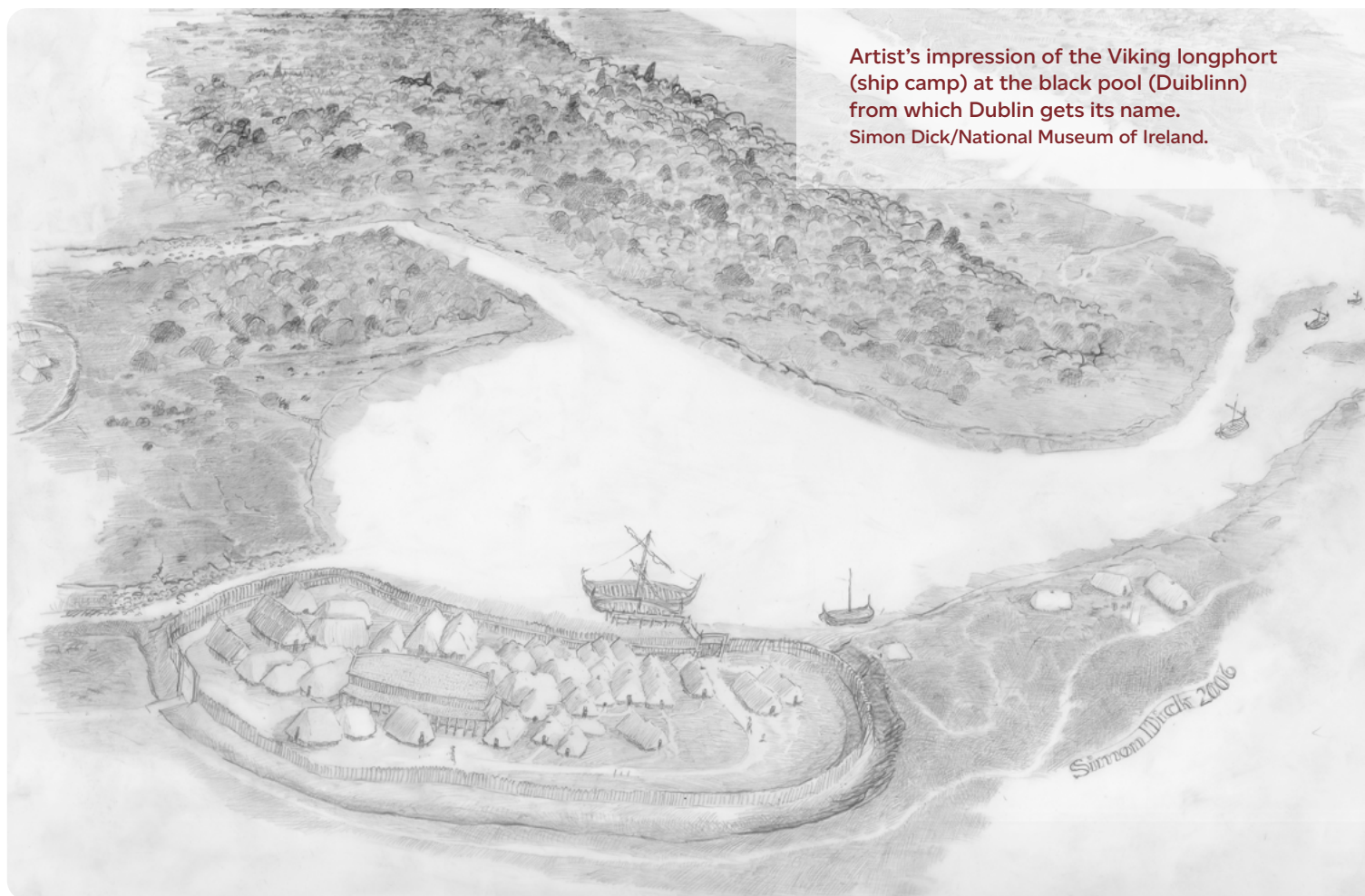
Eimear

Eimear O'Connell, IWTN Project Manager



Kilmallock's town wall – and the wonderful West Wall Walkway – on a recent visit.

Getting to Know Dublin



Artist's impression of the Viking longphort (ship camp) at the black pool (Duiblinn) from which Dublin gets its name.
Simon Dick/National Museum of Ireland.

In this issue we're off to the nation's capital. Niall Colfer, Assistant City Archaeologist at Dublin City Council, has kindly put together the following text so that we can all get to know Dublin and its walls a little better.

Very little is known about the first settlement in Dublin apart from its two early place-names – Duiblinn meaning 'black pool' and Áth Cliath meaning 'ford of the hurdles' – names still in use today. The arrival of the raiding Vikings in the late 8th and 9th centuries was to change Dublin life forever. The first ship camp, or longphort, was probably on the southern banks of the 'black pool', now the site of the Dubh Linn Gardens behind Dublin Castle.

By the 10th century, the settlement – known as Dyflinn – had expanded in size and was surrounded by high earthen banks.

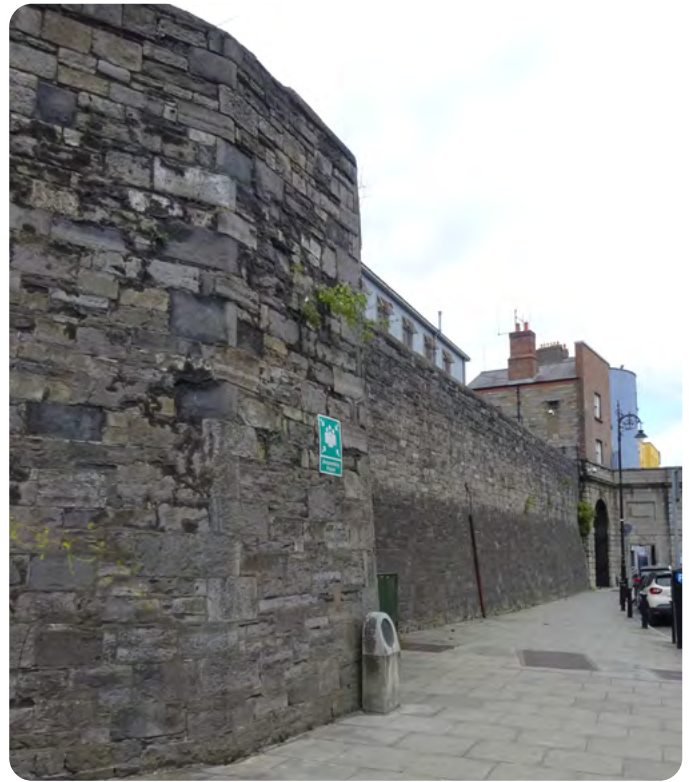
Ruled for 40 years by Muirchertach Ua Briain, the great-grandson of Brian Boru, Dublin saw its earthen defences replaced in stone by 1100. Although only limited sections of the wall survive today, almost the entire circuit can be traced in modern streets: Cook Street and Essex Street West mark the northern limit, while Ship Street Little and Lamb Alley mark part of the southern and western lines, respectively. When completed, the circuit would have been very imposing, the limestone structure towering to between 5m and 7m in height and a massive 1.50m and 3m in width.

An extensive section of the wall survives at Cook Street, in a stretch extending for 83m and towering to at least 10m in height (although the upper level dates from the 1980s). The continuation of this early wall, measuring some 100m in length, was exposed during the Wood Quay excavations and is partially preserved in the Wood Quay Venue of the Civic Offices. One of the most significant discoveries was made in 1993 at Ross Road where the massive 11th-century town wall, measuring 1.60m wide, was cut into the earlier earthen bank defences and then used as a footing for a later Anglo-Norman tower known as Genevel's Tower.

The year 1170 represents a watershed in history when Dublin fell under Anglo-Norman rule as a result of Diarmait Mac Murchada, King of Leinster, travelling to England to seek help from King Henry II. The c.1100 Viking wall was demolished and replaced at Ross Road in the late 12th century, while sources tell us that 'Newgate', the western gate (at present day Cornmarket), had been rebuilt and renamed by 1177. The existing walls were also bolstered by the construction of stone mural towers, which varied in type and structure: some were D-shaped; others were rectangular or square in plan. Each entrance to the city was also protected by a strong city gate.



City walls at Cook Street, Dublin. Dublin City Council.

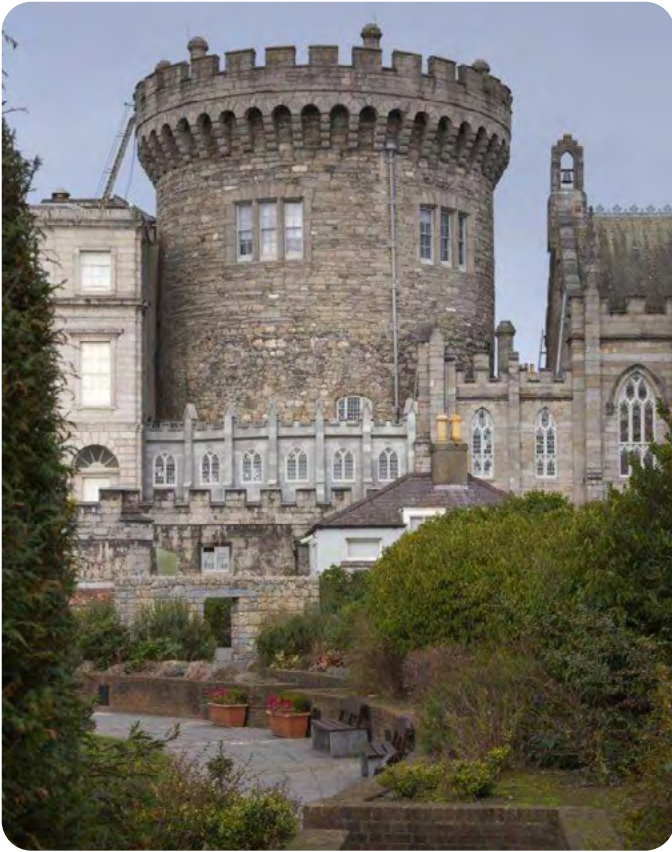


City walls at Ship Street Little, Dublin. Dublin City Council.

Several sections of the Anglo-Norman wall still survive in the landscape. The most impressive section, along Ship Street Little, extends for 39m and stands 4m high. A second, smaller stretch, at Lamb Alley, stands 5m in height and was conserved by Dublin City Council in 2002. The remains of a mural tower – known as Genevel's Tower – were found during the excavations at Ross Road. The tower – which survived to first storey in height – has been preserved in an underground chamber.



The Viking Age earthen defences, early town wall and medieval Genevel's Tower, exposed during excavations in 1993. Claire Walsh.



The Record Tower, Dublin Castle. Photograph by Mark Reddy/ Trinity Digital Studios, courtesy of the Office of Public Works.

The jewel in the crown of the defences, however, was Dublin Castle. Begun in 1204 by order of King John, the massive rectangular structure – probably completed by the 1230s – was a formidable defence, consisting of a substantial curtain wall with four rounded corner towers and a massive double D-shaped gatehouse, complete with causeway and

drawbridge. The castle was demolished in the 18th century; only the Record Tower survives substantially intact.

The success of the port of Anglo-Norman Dublin can be charted by the rapid expansion of the city where land was reclaimed along the southern side of the Liffey. Work on the new wall to enclose this reclaimed area had probably begun by the mid-13th century, and was evidently completed by c.1260 when it is referred to as the ‘new wall towards the Liffey’. Most of the original town wall was left intact, providing a second line of defence within the city. Gates were cut through the old wall, and one of these – St Audoen’s Arch, Cook Street – survives to this day.

The new wall was also a quay wall at Wood Quay, where the main dock was located. There were a number of mural towers, including Isolde’s Tower at the north-eastern corner of the city wall, projecting out into the sea. The massive foundations of this circular tower were found during excavations, the walls measuring 4m thick but only surviving to 2.50m in height. The remains are now preserved in an underground chamber at Exchange Street Lower, part funded by the Irish Walled Town Network.

In 2004, with Heritage Council support, Dublin City Council published a conservation plan for



The well-preserved remains of Isolde’s Tower found during excavation in 1993. Dublin City Council.



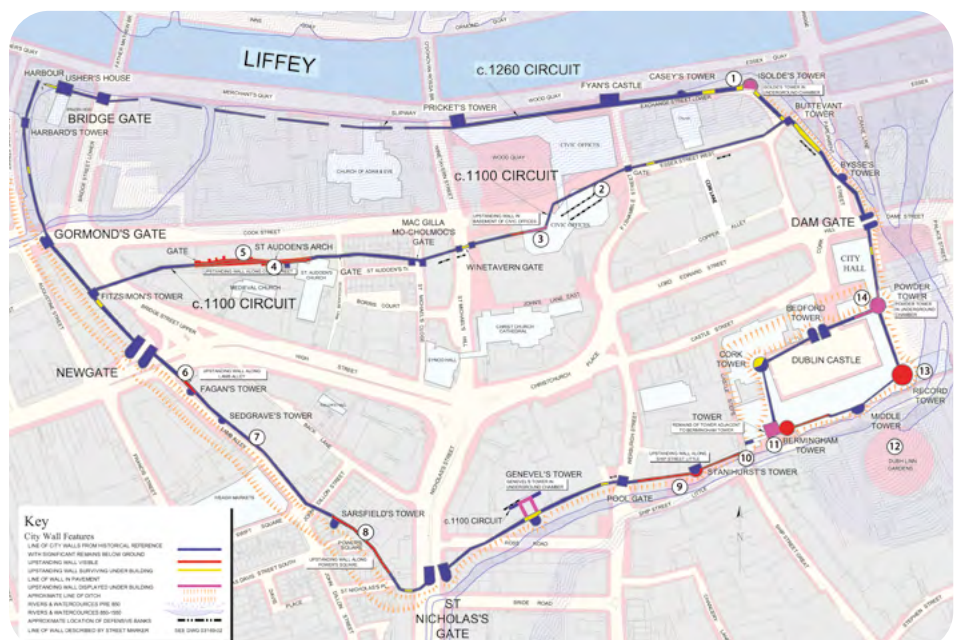
The Wood Quay Venue, Dublin Civic Offices, designed by McCullough Mulvin Architects, which was opened to the public in 2009. Dublin City Council.

the city walls and defences by Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd. This plan led on to the creation of the 'Wood Quay Venue', which opened in 2009. The upstanding sections of the walls are a National Monument owned and maintained by the City Council in accordance with the conservation plan. In 2020 the City Council, with Carrig Conservation and Summit Ltd., repaired the section of the Dublin City Wall in the Wood Quay Venue, and environmental monitoring is ongoing. The wall in the Venue is interpreted with a permanent exhibition supported by the Irish Walled Town Network. The Community Monuments Fund 2023 will fund Dublin City

Council in preparing a photogrammetric survey and condition assessment of the upstanding walls at Cook Street and Lamb Alley. The survey will inform the future conservation repair and maintenance this most important civic monument.

Note

The historical content is taken from Dublin Through the Ages: The City Walls written by Linzi Simpson and edited by Charles Duggan and Ruth Johnson for Dublin City Council (2020).



Map of the city walls key features. Dublin City Walls and Defences Conservation Plan, Dublin City Council (2004).

Filmmaking in New Ross



Film crew at work transforming shopfronts on Quay Street into a style suitable for 1985.

March 2023 saw New Ross go back to the 1980s with the town being taken over by a team of 120 actors and crew, as well as over 100 extras, for the filming of *Small Things Like These*. Ger Walsh, Staff Officer, New Ross Municipal District and IWTN Town Representative for New Ross, reflects on the experience of hosting a major film production in the historic town.

Small Things Like These tells the story of coal man Bill Furlong in 1985, in the town of New Ross, during the weeks leading up to Christmas. Early one morning, while delivering an order to the local convent, Furlong makes a discovery that forces him to confront both his past and the complicit silences of a town. The screenplay for

the film is based on the Booker Prize-nominated book of the same name by Claire Keegan. Keegan – who grew up on the Wicklow/Wexford border – is also the author of *Foster* on which the Oscar-nominated film *An Cailín Ciúin* was based.

Bill Furlong was played by Cillian Murphy, with Ciarán Hinds and Emily Watson also taking leading roles. It was directed by the Directors of *Peaky Blinders* and *Normal People* and financed by Ben Affleck and Matt Damon's Artists Equity production company.

The locations team arrived in January to scope the town for the film and in March the full company rolled into town filling three car parks with trucks containing everything from set design props to snow machines.



'Mister H' clothing, before and after its 1980s makeover.

Overnight, New Ross was transformed from a town that showcases its proud Norman Heritage - following significant funding from Fáilte Ireland, Wexford County Council and the Heritage Council via the Irish Walled Towns Network - to a 1980s streetscape. In one day in Quay Street, where New Ross Municipal District Offices are based, all the street furniture that had been installed in recent years - including everything from outdoor dining facilities to our beautiful bespoke archways - was removed and replaced with street furniture from 40 years ago, including Christmas trees with tinsel as well as old fashioned sodium lighting. Going into the offices on a March morning through a street that sympathetically mixed our Norman, 1798 and 21st-century story, and leaving that evening to a 1980s Christmas streetscape, was very surreal!

From the arrival of the locations team in January to when they left at the end of April, the Municipal District staff worked hand-in-hand daily with the film crew, providing everything from car parking facilities, traffic management, scouting for locations and working with the film's props team to removing the street furniture and replacing it with the 1980s (not so attractive!) versions. In fact, so well did the partnership work that instead of filming for just two weeks in New Ross and four weeks in studio as planned, they decided to film five of the six weeks in New Ross instead.

Over the last ten years, the residents of New Ross had become used to seeing works being carried out on such sites as Goat Hill and the High Hill and lots of gable walls with Murals being painted, but this was another level entirely, with the speed of the transformation



A 1980s Christmas.

and the size of the team that descended on the town. But - as with their buy-in to all the recent projects carried out - they came out in force to look at the filming and to help the crew in any way they could. The excitement in the town was palpable and although there was a worry that when it was over that there would be an air of sadness in the town, the thoughts of a film premier next year as well as the opening of Phase 1 of the South East Greenway from New Ross to Glenmore this summer and projects such as the Norman Visitor Centre and the Emigrant Park in the pipeline, brought a new air of excitement.

We look forward to seeing New Ross on the big screen, and hopefully the stars of the film at the Oscars, in 2024!

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.



An article in the New Ross Standard shows filmmaking in progress.

News and Updates

Grants 2023



€504,700 has been awarded to 13 projects under the Conservation/Capital Grants Scheme in 2023 and €126,530 has been awarded to a further 13 projects under the Interpretation and Events Grants Scheme. Congratulations to all involved.

Please note that all successful applicants are required to confirm by no later than 15th July 2023 that their project will go ahead this year and that it can feasibly be completed by the drawdown deadline. Failure to provide such confirmation may result in funding being withdrawn. You must notify the Grants Officer by 15th July 2023 - or sooner if possible - if your project will not proceed or if there will be a significant underspend.



Buttevant Biodiversity Heritage Day
Saturday 1 July 2023



Muintir na Tíre Hall, Buttevant,
PS1 PRDO
Saturday 1 July 2023 13:00 - 18:00
Talks on local biodiversity, exhibition, market,
medieval knights, animals, craft demonstrations,
face painting and much more.
Lots of fun to be had by all at this free event

Upcoming Event: Buttevant Biodiversity Heritage Day on 1 July

Buttevant Heritage Group will hold a Biodiversity Heritage Day on Saturday 1st July next. This will take place in the Muintir na Tíre hall and market square in Buttevant and will include talks, demonstrations and family activities. This event has been funded by the Heritage Council through the Irish Walled Towns Network. For more see:

www.facebook.com/medieval.buttevant



Three Castles Project

This presentation of the conservation repair and consolidation works carried out at Menlough, Tirellan and Merlin castles in Co. Galway may be of interest to members. These are three fortified houses, all of circa C14th – C17th construction, in various stages of dilapidation. The presentation touches on masonry, ivy, bats and a whole range of issues affecting works to ruinous medieval structures. Shared here with the kind permission of Engineers Ireland.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAHY2S2u7gs



IWTN Festivals and Events Training Day

Our Festivals and Events Training Day for 2023 took place in Kells on 10 May. It was as entertaining as it was informative and we all went home with a fresh perspective on organising events in a post-Covid society. Slides and a written report have been circulated to all members.



New Ross Destination Town

The IWTN PM was also delighted to attend the recent Destination Towns launch in New Ross. It was fantastic to see the town looking so well and to hear about the impact IWTN funding has had over the years. The IWTN funded 1798 signage and promotional videos as part of Destination Towns works in New Ross.

Making Neighbourhoods



The IWTN Project Manager attended the national Making Neighbourhoods seminar on 8 June.

The was organised by Workhouse Union, Self Organised Architecture and Cloughjordan Co-Housing and focused on creative approaches to community-led neighbourhood making. There was a great line up of speakers, including Katherine Wheeler of the Stove Network, Anthony Freeman of Robert Emmett Community Development Project, Brigid Carmody of Cork Traveller Women's Network, Caroline Crowley, independent researcher, and Ian Dempsey, former CEO West Cork LEADER Partnership.

Though it wasn't a specifically heritage-focused event, it was heartening to hear how often heritage was the key to community engagement with place and a session on Creative Town Centre Renewal focused very much on town-centre living and on the importance of using the existing historic building stock – themes with which the IWTN is very familiar.

Social Media

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



@HeritageHubIRE



TheHeritageCouncil



@theheritagecouncil



Signage marking the location of the North Gate in New Ross town wall at Goat Hill.

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

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



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