

Irish Walled Towns Network



The Walled Town Crier

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

The Importance of Early Buildings in Our Towns

Meet the IWTN Committee 2021

Get to know Athlone!

Find out more about planning a virtual festival

Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the Irish Walled Towns Network bi-monthly magazine where we feature news and events relating to the network.

On the 24th of February, a Workshop and the IWTN AGM were held online. We were delighted to welcome Malcolm Noonan, TD, Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform to address the attendees (representatives from 25 walled town members from across the island of Ireland) and launch the 2021 Grants Programme. Virginia Teehan, CEO of the Heritage Council also addressed the attendees and wished everyone the best of luck with projects in 2021.

The workshop featured wide ranging, informative talks which gave attendees lots of inspiration for projects in 2021. Clare Lee discussed works in Carrick on Suir as well as the benefits of being part of the Network. Marie Mannion talked about the opportunities and challenges of organising a virtual festival and Garry Kelly gave useful advice on how to run festivals online. For more information about planning an online festival, please see page 8.

Amanda Ryan (Grants Administrator, the Heritage Council) discussed IWTN 2021 Grants (the closing date is **31st March at 5 pm**). For tips about completing applications, please see below.

I hope you enjoy this magazine, if you have any questions or comments, or would like to promote any events taking place in your walled town over the coming months, please do get in touch at irishwalledtownsnetwork@abartaheritage.ie

Róisín Burke - IWTN Project Manager

TOP TIPS FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

(Amanda Ryan, Grants Administrator, Heritage Council)

- The IWTN Grants Programme was launched on Wednesday 24th February and the deadline for grant applications is **5 pm Wednesday March 31st**.
- Applications must be made via the Heritage Council online grants management system (<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/ga/funding/on-line-grants-system>).
- Please **READ THE GUIDELINES** and allow enough time to complete your application.
- Ensure your project is well planned and that you demonstrate the difference it will make to your area.
- Spend time preparing the budget and outlining the major steps of the project.
- Show evidence of appropriate consultation, partnerships and collaborations.
- Do not be overly ambitious...work within the timelines and/or resources available. The assessors will **ONLY** be reviewing the information submitted via the online system.
- Do not assume the assessors are familiar with your project.
- You can upload as many documents as you wish if they are relevant to the application. However please ensure file names match the document content.
- For a community group interested in applying, please do contact your Local Authority IWTN representative for more advice and support in advance of submitting an application.
- Please do contact the IWTN project manager if you have any questions about the application process.

Contributors to this edition:

Róisín Burke, IWTN Project Manager, Nicola Matthews, Tara Clarke, Marie Mannion, Amanda Ryan
Designed & Produced by Abarta Heritage

Contents

Putting Town Centres First



Podcast Series



NEWS! What is going on?



Kilmallock Videos



Meet the IWTN Committee



Importance of Early Buildings



Planning a Virtual Festival



Get to know your Walled Town:
Athlone

News:

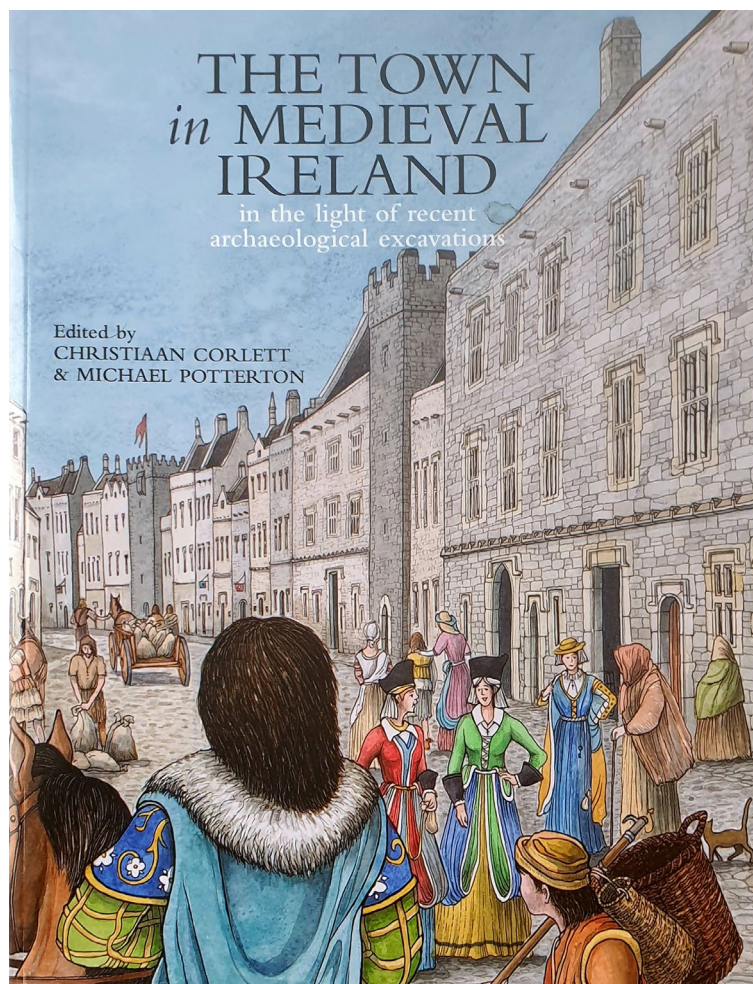
Podcast 'Putting town centres first'.

If you're looking for a good podcast to fill the long evenings of lockdown, then try out the Heritage Council's first-ever podcast series 'Putting Town Centres First'.

In this first podcast series from The Heritage Council, Alison Harvey (Manager of the Heritage Council's National Planning and Regeneration Programmes) interviews a range of contributors about the issues facing our historic town centres.

The new series aims to raise awareness and understanding of the issues, and it highlights the overwhelming need for innovative and collaborative responses and solutions to overcome them.

To listen to the first episode featuring Dr Philip Crowe Assistant Professor in Climate Responsive Design at UCD visit: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/ga/projects/podcast-series-putting-town-centres-first/episode-1>



NEW PUBLICATION

'The Town in Medieval Ireland in the light of recent archaeological excavations' has recently been published by Wordwell. This is the sixth volume in the successful series; 'Research Papers in Irish Archaeology'.

The publication features essays on new discoveries in a number of Irish Walled Towns Network members including Kilmallock, Kildare, Castledermot, Athy, Wexford, Kilkenny, Fethard, Rindown and New Ross.

The eye-catching illustration on the cover is a reconstruction (drawn by Uto Hogerzeil) of Kilmallock's Main Street, c.1560 looking through the arch of King's Castle.

The book can be bought here:
<https://wordwellbooks.com>

Videos



Merchant Houses

Kilmallock,
Co. Limerick

[Click here to watch the video](#)

Sarah McCutcheon
Executive
Archeologist
Limerick City &
County Council



Castle Towers & Town Walls

Kilmallock, Co. Limerick

[Click here to watch the video](#)

Sarah McCutcheon
Executive
Archeologist
Limerick City &
County Council

Open House Limerick created two fantastic videos about the medieval heritage of Kilmallock with Limerick City and County Council Executive Archaeologist; Sarah McCutcheon.

In the Merchant Houses video, Sarah gives a behind the scenes tour of the only surviving merchant house in the town, (there may originally have been thirty houses of similar design lining the main street of Kilmallock). The

architectural features that can be seen in the house are all characteristic of Irish building in the sixteenth century. The building is of national importance due to its rarity now within Ireland.

In the second video: Castle Towers and Town Walls, Sarah walks us through the stories and features of King's Castle, Blossom Gate and the conserved town walls of Kilmallock.

Click here to watch the videos:

<https://www.openhouselimerick.ie/ohl-weekend-2020/>

Find Out More:

Open House Limerick is an annual festival showcasing outstanding architecture for all to experience, completely free of charge.

Open House Limerick is a celebration of Limerick City's architecture. Over one weekend buildings of all types and periods open their doors to visitors allowing them to explore the architecture of the city with special walking and cycling tours by dedicated professionals and enthusiasts, all completely free.

<https://www.openhouselimerick.ie/>



Image: West Wall & Walkway, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick

Message from the Minister!

Minister Malcolm Noonan, TD, Minister for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, delivered a great welcome address to the Network and was very positive about the importance of the Network, particularly in these difficult times.

In his Welcome Address to the Network, the Minister said: “The only thing constant for all walled towns in Ireland is change ... Through the sensitive conservation, reuse and promotion of heritage, the IWTN works to assist member towns in becoming more socially and economically robust to the challenge of change. “

The central objective of the Network is to help Ireland’s walled towns become great places in which to live, work and visit. This central objective mirrors the government policy of Town Centre First and is now critically important given the task of rebuilding communities and urban centres post-pandemic.

The IWTN AGM:

The virtual IWTN AGM took place on Wednesday, 24th of February via zoom. There was a great attendance at the AGM with representatives from 25 towns taking part.

Following the project manager report, the election of a town representative to the IWTN Management Committee took place. Páraic McKeivitt (representing Carlingford) had served a term on the Committee and was stepping down. Three candidates put their names forward for election and a vote was held. Conor Nelligan, Cork County Council Heritage Officer was elected to the Management Committee. The Network paid tribute to Páraic for all his work on the committee and welcomed Conor, who represents Buttevant, Bandon and Youghal, to the Management Committee.

Role of the IWTN Management Committee:

The IWTN Management Committee oversees the work of the IWTN. They meet regularly to discuss issues affecting the network, the project manager’s work programme and any other matters relating to the development of the network.

The committee is made up of representatives from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Northern Ireland Department for Communities, The Heritage Council, three member towns from the Republic of Ireland and one member town from Northern Ireland.

To watch the IWTN workshop that was recorded on the 24th of February, please click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Vh2InW2SUQ&feature=youtu.be>

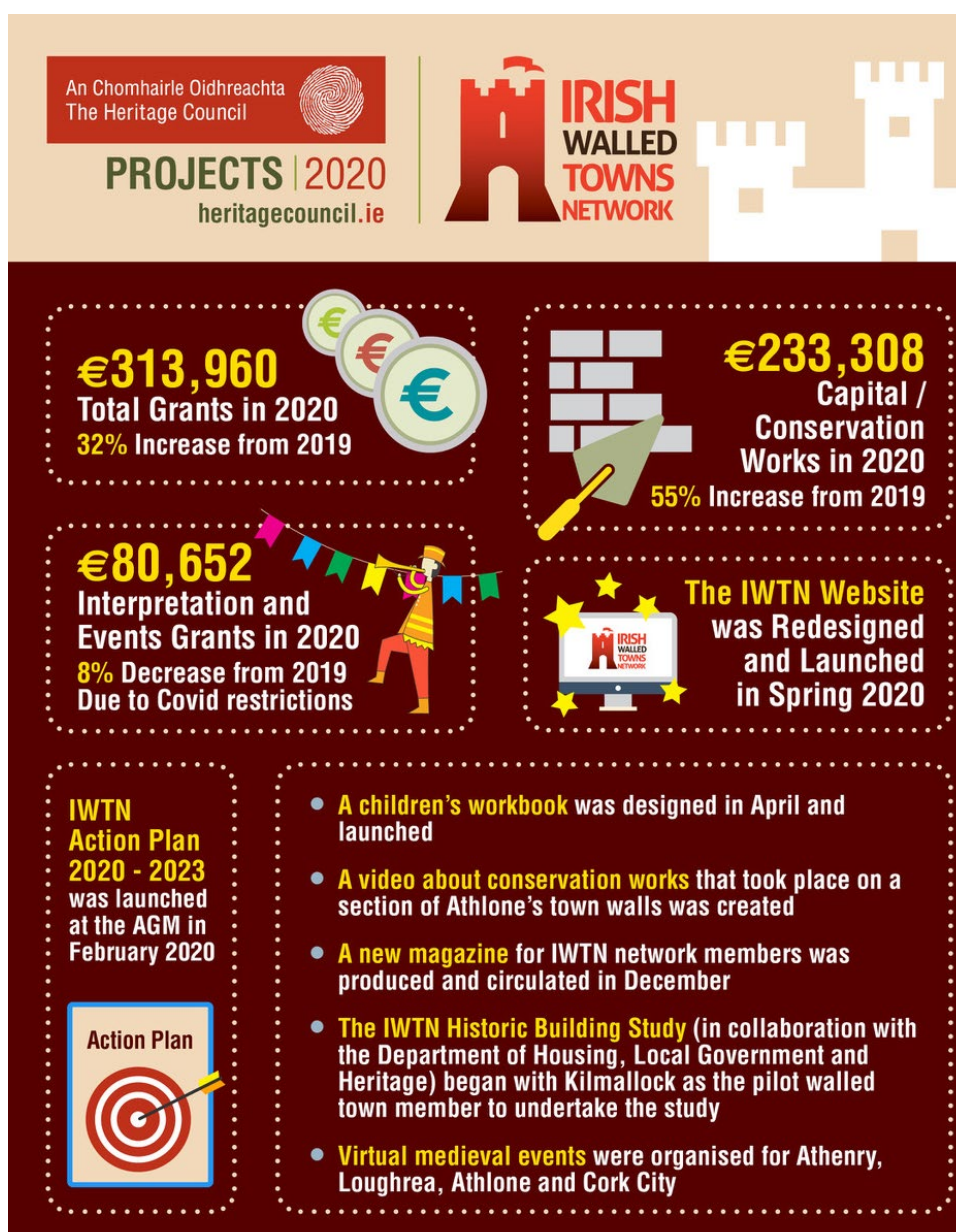
Image: Screenshot of IWTN Workshop on the 24th of February.



The members of the IWTN Committee for 2021 are:

- Declan Nelson - Chairperson
- Sarah McCutcheon - Vice Chairperson representing Kilmallock and Limerick City and Executive Archaeologist, Limerick City & County Council
- Ian Doyle - Head of Conservation Services, Heritage Council
- Nicola Matthews - Senior Architect, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage
- Paul Logue - Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities, Northern Ireland
- Marie Mannion - representing Loughrea and Athenry and Heritage Officer with Galway County Council
- James Lavin - representing Wexford and New Ross and Senior Executive Planner with Wexford County Council
- Shirin Murphy - representing Carrickfergus and Carrickfergus Museum, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
- Conor Nelligan - representing Buttevant, Bandon and Youghal and Heritage Officer with Cork County Council

If you would like to learn more about the work of the IWTN Management Committee, please get in touch at irishwalledtownsnetwork@abartaheritage.ie



With the weather improving, why not take a walk around your town or city to discover features of early buildings?

Keep an eye out for features of early buildings that might be hidden in plain sight.

To find out more about historic buildings in your area, please have a look at: National Monuments Service Archaeological Survey of Ireland: www.archaeology.ie

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage; www.buildingsofireland.ie

Historic Environment Record of Northern Ireland, Department for Communities, Northern Ireland: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/historic-environment>

Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni>

The IWTN, in collaboration with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will be undertaking a study of historic buildings in urban centres over the coming years and we are looking forward to bringing this study to all our member towns.

In the meantime, if you find interesting features in your town, why not take a picture and post it on IWTN social media or email it to:

irishwalledtownsnetwork.ie

About the Author:

Nicola Matthews is a senior architect in the Built Heritage, Architectural Policy & Strategic Infrastructure division of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. She is also a member of the IWTN Management Committee, representing the Department.

The Importance of Early Buildings in Our Towns

We have all noticed the slow abandonment of our urban towns and city centres over the last few decades.

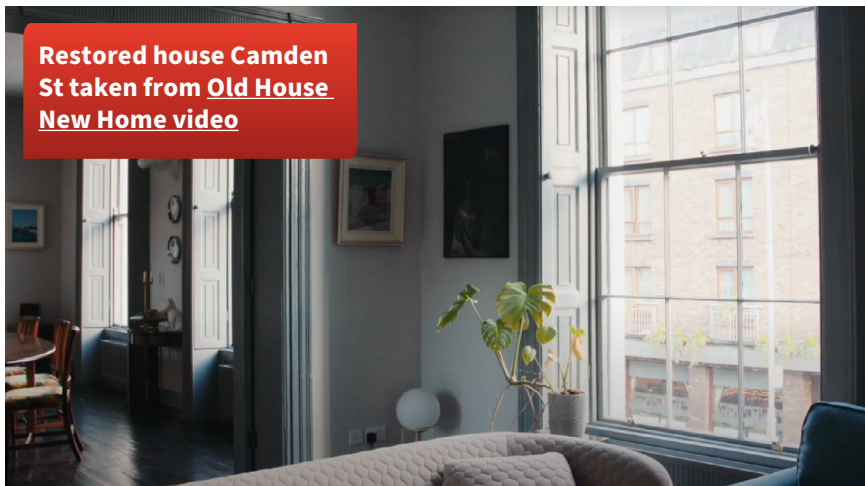
Beautiful houses and shopfronts surviving from pre-Georgian and the subsequent Victorian and Edwardian eras, once integral to bustling town centres, now stand empty and unloved. The reuse and repair of such buildings is key to retaining cultural identity, traditional skills and sense of place and a strategically important part of sustainable development and climate change mitigation. In recent times medieval urban buildings surviving in town fabric have been discovered through the detailed assessment of historic fabric and features. The idea of cultural significance being hidden in plain sight is highlighted by the Department as a greater

understanding of traditional building practice has developed. Research has indicated that over time buildings were typically modified and refashioned concealing earlier building phases and what might appear as Victorian externally may conceal much earlier plans. Examples of how such buildings have been reimagined and brought back to life illustrate the potential of town living within unique settings.

Much like the art of Kintsukouji (the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending with precious metals), a restored building can provide the same sense of home and comfort as a new build. There



Image of restored house on Camden Street, taken from Old House New Home video



Restored house Camden St taken from Old House New Home video

are also some great benefits to restoring an existing building. For example it reduces the amount of waste that would occur in a new build and reduces time spent in cars commuting to work, therefore making a positive impact on climate change. A restored building also provides work for specialists in traditional crafts and helps to revitalise town centres.

Over the past few years a number of derelict urban houses have been successfully restored. One fine example can be found on Camden Street, where the upper floors of a derelict Georgian house were combined to form a contemporary home, and the roof of the 1960s extension was turned into a stunning roof garden with impressive views of the city. (See image below)

Another impressive example of what can be done with a disused urban building can be seen at number 18 Ormond Quay, Dublin. This old merchant building was beautifully restored by Dublin Civic Trust using conservation architects, engineers and tradesmen. (See image below)

By providing exemplars in design and reuse that demonstrate the potential of creative re-imagining of historic buildings,

it is hoped to prompt a new approach to planning and incremental repair and reuse. In rural towns and cities throughout Ireland, our early historic buildings survive hidden in more significant numbers than we realised. Through the continued work of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, it is hoped to record these new discoveries comprehensively. It is also hoped that the publication of guidance and case studies on sensitive reuse will inspire owners to consider the importance of these early buildings and the opportunity they present for contemporary homes, work units and cultural spaces.

Old House New Home

is an online guide to conservation and renovation from the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland. The guide explains how to understand historic homes, conserve period features and reimagine buildings for contemporary living, while maintaining the character and craftsmanship that come with historic properties. The guide includes a number of case study projects representing different sizes, conditions, characteristics and location.

To download your free copy, click here:

<https://www.riai.ie/work-with-an-architect/working-with-an-older-building>

Reuse presents an opportunity to encourage the enhancement and protection of both the existing built heritage and the wider historical context. As a sustainable development principle reuse/adaptation is positioned at the centre of the government policy and the funding of heritage-led initiatives for historic towns. The collaboration between the then Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, with the RIAI and Dublin Civic Trust, identifies the importance of demonstrating how to repair and to reuse existing built heritage resources, to encourage heritage-led development and the transformation of derelict and rundown properties as the means to revitalise our historic cities, towns and countryside.



18 Ormonde Quay restoration, before and after. Image taken from Ormonde Quay video

Planning a Virtual Festival



Tara Clarke and Marie Mannion discuss

The events of 2020 forced us to come up with innovative ways to promote our valuable heritage.

LOUGHREA VIRTUAL MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL 2020

LEARN-CONNECT-CELEBRATE OUR MEDIEVAL PAST

SUNDAY 23RD AUGUST 2020

 Galway Beo Facebook



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

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

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

FESTIVAL DEVELOPED BY THE HERITAGE OFFICE, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, & LOUGHREA MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL COMMITTEE. FUNDED BY GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND THE HERITAGE COUNCIL. LOUGHREA IS A MEMBER OF THE IRISH WALLED TOWNS NETWORK



Despite the many challenges posed by Covid, the walled towns of Athenry, Athlone, Cork City and Loughrea hosted successful virtual festivals to celebrate the medieval heritage of their towns. We asked Galway County Council Heritage Officer; Marie Mannion, for tips about organising a festival online.

- Firstly, allow for plenty of time to plan the events. Remember, virtual content needs to be commissioned, edited, re-edited and delivered within the time frame. You should give at least six - eight weeks for this and there may be unforeseen issues with technology. Deadlines are important to consider when planning a festival. There is not enough time to proof and prepare content within 48 hours of the festival launch.
- Having a theme can make the process simpler. It helps with content creation and flow. Both Athenry and Loughrea used the theme of Heritage Week 2020 (Heritage and Education: Learning from our heritage) for inspiration. Not all the content of the festival needs to be

To get inspired for 2021 check out Loughrea's medieval festival content:

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

brand new. If you have previously commissioned work which suits the theme reuse it.

- All of the planning and themes are pointless without promotion. Social media, email lists, websites, and local newspapers are fantastic ways of getting the public's attention, but Marie found that local radio stations made a huge difference. People heard about the events on the radio and then logged onto Facebook to watch the videos. This resulted in a dramatic increase in engagement with their social media pages. Their Facebook stats for one month showed 15,300 post reach, 3,341 post engagements and 72 new page likes!
- Finally, once the festivals are over, you should think about the legacy. All of the virtual content created should be made available to the public. Marie found that having a dedicated YouTube channel was a great free way to keep the content available.

ATHENRY VIRTUAL 2020 **LEARNING FROM OUR HERITAGE**
WALLED TOWNS DAY **2020** **SUNDAY 16th AUGUST**
ONLINE ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

A VIRTUAL MEDIEVAL EXPERIENCE OF...
 CRAFTS • MUSIC • WEAPONRY • ART • HERITAGE TALKS & WALKS •
 MEDIEVAL FOOD & MUCH MUCH MORE!!
FOR THE VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE LOG ONTO...

Galway County Heritage Office <https://rb.gy/tnbj8f> Athenry Heritage Centre <https://rb.gy/mfzay8>

PROJECT DEVELOPED BY GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND ATHENRY ARTS & HERITAGE CENTRE
 FUNDED BY GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND THE HERITAGE COUNCIL.

Festival Checklist:

- **Start in plenty of time to plan** - At least 6-8 weeks in advance
- **Create a cutoff point for submissions** - 48 hours before launch is too late to troubleshoot
- **Consider a theme** - helps focus intent and create boundaries
- **It's ok to reuse suitable material**
- **Put a promotion strategy in place** - social media, radio, papers etc. Get the message out there!
- **Consider the legacy** - Make it available after the event, for example, consider a dedicated YouTube channel

Get to know your Walled Town: Athlone



Image: View to Athlone castle

Róisín Burke introduces:

Find out more!

To Find Out More about the story of Athlone through the ages, why not visit Athlone Castle Visitor Centre, located on the banks of the Shannon in the heart of the Old Town. The Castle has exhibitions which tell the story of the area from the Neolithic period right up to modern life in the town. During your visit you will discover tales of bitter battles fought, territories won and lost and hear stories of bravery. To find out more, visit; <http://www.athlonecastle.ie/>

A video documenting the works to the wall was undertaken in September 2020 by the IWTN and Westmeath County Council and can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmTYIMBAh1E&t=0s>

The second instalment in our series “Get to know your Walled Town” is Athlone.

History of the Walls

The construction of Athlone’s town defences began in the 13th century. These defences were reinforced over time, in particular during the Tudor and Stuart reigns of the 16th and 17th centuries. Additional gates, towers and ramparts were added to the walls to protect the town from attack.

Athlone found itself at the centre of an international conflict in the late 17th century during the Williamite War. The largest bombardment in Irish history was recorded in 1691 in Athlone, when Williamite forces fired over 12,000 cannonballs and 600 bombs on the Jacobite soldiers in Athlone Castle.

The walls of Athlone deteriorated during the 19th and 20th centuries and only a few sections of the town walls are still standing today.

Conservation of Athlone’s Town Walls

When Athlone became a member of the IWTN, a conservation management plan was carried

out to help understand and plan the conservation works required on the walls.

The plan can be accessed here: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/irish-walled-towns-network>

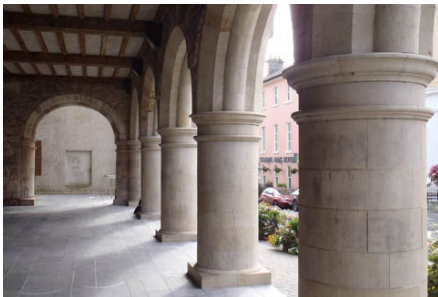
In 2020 a conservation project (funded by the Heritage Council through the IWTN and supported by Westmeath County Council) was carried out on a section of the walls under the supervision of Westmeath County Council Heritage Officer Melanie McQuade. This conservation work has helped to safeguard an important part of the story of Athlone for future generations.

Speaking about membership of the IWTN, Melanie McQuade said: “Being a member of the IWTN provides access to sound advice and allows knowledge sharing between member towns. We were delighted to receive funding from IWTN which has facilitated essential conservation works to one of the earliest surviving sections of Athlone Town Wall (at Court Devenish Railway View) and to the Lower battlements of Athlone Castle.”

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



Image: View of White castle, Athy



Contact Us!



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

Coming up in our next issue!



Visit a Walled town - Athy



Find out more about biodiversity
in urban centres.



A digital toolkit for monitoring
medieval building fabric.

The IWTN is funded by the Heritage Council and delivered in partnership with local authorities.
Project management is provided by Abarta Heritage.