

THE GLENS OF ANTRIM

ISSUE FOURTEEN SUMMER/AUTUMN 2017

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE HEART OF THE GLENS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

Heart of
the Glens

Landscape Partnership Scheme

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WELCOME TO THE FOURTEENTH ISSUE

We have lots to tell you about our projects over the last few months. We have had a number of traditional training courses, volunteer events, project launches and numerous events to celebrate this fantastic landscape. We would also like to welcome Leona Devlin our new Admin and Finance Officer. Leona lives locally in The Glens and is looking forward to helping with the day to day running of the programme.



TRADITIONAL HERITAGE SKILLS

TRADITIONAL BAKING & COOKERY TRAINING PROGRAMME

We had both locals and visitors from further afield taking part in this fully booked 6-week training course in traditional baking and cooking in Cushendall – The heart of The Glens. This goes to show that it's not only people who are from here who want to keep local Glens traditions alive but there are also people from surrounding areas who want to learn about The Glens traditional skills.

A big thanks to Edel Healy for passing on her vast knowledge of baking and cooking in traditional Irish ways to include things such as sodas, fruit bread, cakes, to full 3 course meals.

STONE ENGRAVING



Our introductory stone engraving training course with the highly skilled John McCollam took place in February and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Another fully booked training course which proved to be very inspiring and captivated a vast audience. All participants got to take home their

own piece of stone which they had engraved over the 2 sessions. With this great enthusiasm for this highly skilled trade, we hope to offer a more in-depth training course on stone masonry. Keep an eye on our social media pages or contact us for more information.

WOOD CARVING



The first of our series of traditional woodcraft training courses began with professional artist and wood sculptor Raymond Watson delivering a two-day wood carving workshop in April 2017 at Glenmona House in Cushendun.

Over the two days Raymond Watson guided the group through the wood carving

process and taught them the proper technique to create a variety of relief wood carvings. By the end of the two days each participant had completed their own wood carving and left with a good knowledge of what is involved in this creative process – from design, drawing, carving, finishing and varnishing.

WILD HARVESTING & COOKERY



Always a popular gathering by Glenn White who led locals and visitors from far and wide on a foraging adventure around Cregagh Wood and Cushendun beach. This training covered the identification of wild foods. Glenn taught participants which plants were safe to eat and which weren't, the different foods

that can be found during each season, the various uses of wild foods and the history and mythology surrounding them. During this training, the group went out on a wild forage walk around a local forest to collect their own wild foods for cooking. The training finished up with cooking the wild foods collected and tasting some nettle soup.

Day one was based in a forest environment at Cregagh wood in Cushendun and Glenn was able to show the group how to cook wood pigeon and we had some nettle soup. Day two was based in a beach environment at Cushendun where Glenn was able to show the group how to gut a fish and cook it over a fire.

FORK TO FORK



The first of our fork to fork training workshop took place in Tiveragh View Allotments in Cushendall. The training was delivered by keen experienced gardener Kelly Hann who taught participants about the principles of organic gardening, planning your garden, composting, pests and diseases, best use of a polytunnel, crop rotation

and many more. The best part was showing everyone how to create a lasagne bed. We also had expert Glenn White there to show the group what weeds they could eat in their garden. A number of vegetables and fruit were planted over the two days and we will be coming back again for day three of the training in September to find out what we can cook with our vegetables.

If you are interested in taking part in any of these heritage training programmes please get in touch with Laura at laura@lps.ccght.org or call **028 2075 2100**.



LEVEL 2 & 3 HERITAGE TOUR GUIDING TRAINING IN 2017

The aim of this project was to offer local people accredited and acknowledged tour guide training and development, thus giving them the opportunity to run their own tour guides of the landscape. The reason we wanted to offer this kind of training is to bring life to the stories of the local landscape, develop the capacity of local people, create a network of quality local guides for the area and provide income generating opportunities for local people and businesses.

We are delighted to say that we have put 2 groups of people through the OCN Level 2 Heritage Tour Guide training and 1 group through the OCN Level 3 Heritage Tour Guide training. This training focused on aspects such as customer needs, scripting a tour, delivery, dealing with different cultures etc. The training was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

All participants who completed their Level 2 and Level 3 heritage tour guide training are now fully qualified tour guides for the area with most of them already taking tours for local people and tourists. Already our guides are actively increasing tourism footfall and length of stay in the region. Having a pool of local people trained in Tour Guiding skills not only improves the interaction and experience that tourists have but ultimately will help deliver tourism growth and maintain sustainability going forward.

The second Level 2 training course took place from March to May and involved 3 months of bespoke training including research work, health and safety as well as presentation skills required to lead a tour group. Participants who successfully completed the course received an Open College Network (OCN) Level 2 Award in Tour Guiding Skills & World Host Ambassador, World Host Principles of Customer Service, World Host Customers with Disabilities, World Host Service Across Culture Certificates.

The Level 3 was a more advanced training course which enabled participants to take tours by bus and be able to deliver tours all over, rather than just at one particular site.



SPERRINS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME TOUR OF THE GLENS

We hosted a group of newly qualified Level 2 tour guides from the Sperrins Landscape Partnership scheme in June. They wanted to get an insight into what our guides were doing within The Glens and experience some of the wonderful sights. One of our local guides Kevin McGowan who has completed the Level 2 and Level 3 Heritage Tour Guide training with us, led the tour around Ballycastle, Fair Head, Cushendun and back over Orra mountain. We were also joined by another of our qualified guides Mark Rodgers who talked to the group about his experiences being a tour guide and running his own tourism business.



INTERVIEW WITH MARK RODGERS

Tell us a little about your background to your business and your role as a Tour Guide

Dalriada Kingdom Tours was formed on the 17th March 2016, looking for the luck of the Irish on St Patrick's day. The first tour I conducted was from Dunseverick Castle along the cliff path to the iconic Giants Causeway site. Two people turned up and rather than being disappointed I saw it as a beginning, something to build upon. I had a firm belief in what I was doing was right and in the importance of the stories I wanted to tell. I had the love and support of my wife Rosemary and my family and I had faith.

Twelve months later we have established Dalriada Kingdom Tours as a brand name at the forefront of providing guided tours on the "slow road" through the Glens of Antrim and on the Causeway Coastal route. It is now recognised as being the "people's tour company" and our guides are known for the authenticity and their pride and passion in telling our stories to the world.

My role as a Tour Guide

Firstly, and most importantly I Guide to keep my family history and the history of our friends and neighbours alive. These are the people of the shore and their history and their heritage is pivotal to everything I do. Then I would say I provide experiences for our guests that I want to be a story that they will tell as the highlight of their Excursion or Vacation.

I am a teacher. I see the importance of youth and I am teaching young local people to guide on the Giants Causeway and that will develop further into the Glens of Antrim and Rathlin Island.

Finally, I am an Ambassador for my Country. I now guide regularly for Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland. I am extremely proud to showcase the jewels in the crown of Irish Tourism to influential international guests. These people influence the market as service providers and when we can have them leave with enthusiasm to promote Ireland, The Glens and the Causeway in particular then that means I am doing my job well.

What do you enjoy most about being a Tour Guide in The Glens of Antrim?

Honestly it is meeting new people, making new friendships and being part of something bigger than just me. I am lucky to work with so many decent folk, from different organisations. Folk from your Partnership Scheme, Belfast MET, Tourism Ireland and Northern Ireland, Tour Guides N. I. and the Glens of Antrim Cluster group.

Their commitment to highlight the Glens and the Causeway Coast is phenomenal. They have a great pride of place, and self-worth and the passion that they display without knowing it is only matched by the outstanding natural beauty that I enjoy showcasing so much.

Now imagine working closely with all these folks to Guide in the Glens and the Causeway and it is easy to see why this is something that I truly enjoy.



Why is Guiding so important?

Simply because I love the Causeway and the people very deeply. The Causeway is my home I can feel my ancestors all around me when I tour there. I believe they guide me and no two days on the are ever the same. I get to represent the people of the shore and tell stories that are centuries old that no one else knows yet. I get to keep alive a history that was nearly forgotten and breathe new life into a heritage almost lost. I have been well taught and I have made great friends. I am grateful to the people who have helped to create Dalriada Kingdom Tours. I want to learn more and challenge myself to improve constantly. I want to showcase the shoreline from Belfast to Derry and tell the world our story.

I want guests to come here and share what we have, a history that is tangible, a heritage that identifies us, and I want them to see outstanding landscapes and enjoy our culture right here amongst the most amazing race of folk.

Someday I will not be here and other Guides will tell our stories. Dalriada Kingdom Tours will keep our history alive and that has to be the most important reason why I guide.

Tell us a bit about the work you are doing with the Heart of The Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme

I owe the Partnership Scheme a great deal. They have put me through Level 2 and Level 3 tour guiding courses and associated World Host skills. I hope to complete Level 4 next year.

This initiative took ordinary local people and gave them the skills to create and conduct guided tours within the area that they reside and love. These guides are all passionate about what they do and we all work together to showcase this area. The guides I have trained with form a huge part of the Tourism experience locally and the best example I have seen of it recently was when the Landscape Partnership Scheme opened the new paths on an Binn Mhór (Fair Head).

Approximately 50 people took part in the inaugural walk and they were guided by 6 tour guides who had all been trained via the Partnership Scheme. The feedback that you can read about these guides on Trip advisor or Facebook is encouraging and the profile of the areas in which the guide is soaring to a greater audience on a daily basis.

Tourism is certainly on the rise and thanks to these schemes our guests will have their experiences here enhanced. I am very proud to be part of it.

HERITAGE FESTIVALS SUPPORT FUND

Festivals and events are an important part of life in The Glens of Antrim. They allow local people to celebrate the living heritage of the region and showcase it to other locals and visitors alike. In our recent Glens of Antrim Festivals and Events brochure The Heart of The Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme has been promoting local festivals and events to local communities and to the wider tourism market. We wish to see the regions heritage flourish and encourage the development of new local festivals and events and the creation of new dimensions to existing festivals and events. One way of doing this was to offer support to new and existing festivals in line with the vision of the overall LPS.

The aims of this funding were to:

- Support new and innovative aspects within existing festivals and events to celebrate the heritage of The Glens of Antrim.
- Support new festivals and events which are aiming to create an annual and sustainable event.
- Support groups that demonstrate they can add value to the local tourism industry by attracting visitors to The Glens. For example, by increasing the number of bed nights in the region.
- Support groups that work with communities, especially young people, to ensure that an understanding and appreciation of heritage (old and new) is a central part of The Glens of Antrim.
- Support events that are open to everyone in the community.

Big congratulations to the following community groups who have been awarded this funding:

- Antrim Glens Tourism for their extended Ghosts in the Glens Festival.
- Ballycastle Community Development Group for new innovative aspects in their Maritime Festival to include new maritime heritage tours and traditional marine creel workshops.
- Glenarm Building Preservation Trust for their extended heritage skills workshops as an extension on their walking festival.
- Carey Historical Society for their new Bonamargy Festival of Heritage.

The main purpose of this grant was to facilitate groups to try new heritage based festivals or add new heritage elements to existing festivals. The grant will be open again next year and we will be offering a workshop to help groups apply for these and other grants. For further information contact laura@lps.ccght.org.



VOLUNTEER TREE PLANTING DAY AT DRUM WOOD WITH WOODLAND TRUST

Even the torrential rain couldn't put off the 40 or so hardy volunteers that turned out to plant a mix of native trees at Drum Wood, Cargan. The Woodland Trust, who own the site, are very keen to see this young woodland develop for the enjoyment of the local community.

If you are interested in volunteering with us please get in touch with Laura on **028 2075 2100** or email laura@lps.ccght.org



COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT CLOUGHANCOR MEGALITH

The last phase of our Community Archaeology project will kick off this September 2017 with a three-week archaeological excavation of Cloughancor Megalith, in the Glen of Glenballyeamon overlooking the quaint village of Cushendall. This is the fourth and final archaeological excavation carried out in The Glens of Antrim, organised jointly between the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork at Queen's University Belfast and the Heart of the Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme. Over the three weeks we will be working with local schools and communities demonstrating different archaeological skills and techniques.

The site we will be excavating this year lies in rough grassland on a gentle slope at the base of Tievebulliagh. The site is a megalithic tomb dating to the prehistoric period and consists of five standing orthostats (which are upright stones or slabs forming part of a structure or set in the ground). These upright stones enclose a small area that would have been used for burial during the Neolithic and Bronze Age (roughly 4000 – 1500 BC). Traces exist of a possible cairn (covering mound of rocks) that measures roughly 9m in diameter. This is best preserved in the north-east of the site where there is an arc of a slight scarp.

The classification of the monument (e.g. Portal, Court, Passage Tomb etc.) remains problematic in the absence of excavation. The enclosed area created by the orthostats was undoubtedly covered by a capstone in antiquity, and a large flat stone lying to the immediate south of the monument might be the displaced capstone. The potential presence of the remnants of a cairn is also interesting as it would appear to have been extensively robbed out, and perhaps disturbance was caused to the capstone during this activity (originally the cairn would have completely covered the tomb and would have looked like a large mound for millennia). It is hoped that through excavation, artefacts will be recovered to date the monument, and to finally classify the tomb at Cloughancor.

We plan to excavate three trenches during the investigation. The first two will centre on the tomb where we will excavate the chamber itself and investigate the cairn. Often, secondary burials were inserted into the cairn, and we also hope to remove a portion of the cairn and investigate the ground surface below the stones. In theory, this will be the original prehistoric ground that has been protected by the cairn sitting on top. This should provide us with important environmental information on the surrounding area as well as affording the opportunity to encounter archaeology pre-dating



the construction and use of the tomb (fingers crossed!). We also plan to excavate a trench approximately 10m from the tomb. This trench will investigate the exterior to the tomb and should reveal artefacts that can be compared and contrasted with those from the tomb itself.

As this is a community excavation all local primary schools from Glenarm, Carnalbanagh right round to Glenravel and Ballycastle, will be taking part again this year. The children will get the chance to do some actual archaeological work; trowelling archaeological strata, sieving soil, sorting and labelling artefacts and some measuring and drawing of the site. It's a real hands-on experience! The pupils will also get a tour of the site and a talk outlining the site's history. Most importantly The Glens are bursting with history and the whole area around Tievebulliagh and Lurig is steeped in archaeological features,

myths and legends. The mid Glens are the perfect area for exploration, with their rugged mountains and wide Glens, they provide the perfect backdrop for visitors to take a journey back in time.

The Queens Centre for Archaeological fieldwork will be offering training days to those who are interested in developing their skills and we are holding an open day where everyone can come along and have the chance to dig, help with surveys or just watch the fun unfold! You don't need any prior experience, just a willingness to learn and a sense of adventure! The site will be open to volunteers and general public on Saturday 23rd September for everyone to get involved in the excavation and find out more about the site. There will be two sessions throughout the day. The first session will run from 10 – 11.30am and the second session will run from 12.30 – 2pm. Spaces are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment. To book your place please email laura@lps.ccght.org or call us on 02820752100.

Not only does this project offer the community a great opportunity to connect with their past but it also means that new discoveries, new research and knowledge of our ancestors will be documented and added to Northern Ireland Environment Agency records. We will also hope to present the findings through a series of talks and an exhibition to create a lasting record of the work we have done to help preserve the lost memories and mysteries of the past for our future generations.

Digging beneath the surface who knows what you'll uncover; whether it be a new skill, a new friend or an ancient relic! Get in touch with us for more information on how to get involved!

NATURAL PLAY

Natural Play Areas, are play environments that challenge and inspire children and teach them about the wonders and intricacies of the natural world while they play within it. They blend natural materials (stone, timber, water, etc.), features (logs, boulders, etc.), and native vegetation with creative landforms, alongside traditional play equipment, to create exciting play opportunities.

This type of play has multiple benefits for children by providing them with sensory stimulation, learning about nature, socialising with friends and increasing their imagination. It also incorporates an element of acceptable risk, that has largely been designed out of the traditional 'steel and plastic' playgrounds, which is important for children's emotional, social and cognitive creativity. The concept of Natural Play is becoming more popular across Europe, US and elsewhere because of these benefits.



GLENARIFF NATURAL PLAY PARK

Over the last few years we have worked in partnership with the local community of Glenariff and Council to develop facilities along the Beachfront. A big part of these plans, identified during the community consultation process, was the creation of new play opportunities for local children. An area beside the Beach Café was identified as the best place for a new set of play equipment as it could be built into and over the existing grass mounds to make a much more interesting play area. Parents can also enjoy a cup of tea and a bite to eat whilst the kids play within sight. However, the beauty about this play park is that it has no fences and the surrounding natural habitats form part of a larger natural play park. Some of the play equipment extends into an existing stand of pine trees with some of the weaker trees thinned out to open views into and out of it for passive supervision. The newly created wildflower meadow has mown paths specially designed for BMXs or just for exploring the wildlife within it.



CARNLOUGH NATURAL PLAY PARK

With what seems like an age ago now, we got involved with the local community, local representatives and Council to explore alternative ideas for a proposed new playground in Carnlough, located close to Glenlough Community Centre. The design of the park was developed based on the wishes of local people who wanted a play park which was a little different, one that offered plenty of play opportunities but was also sympathetic to the natural heritage of the area and one that gave children the chance to get closer to nature. This Park does just that by incorporating timber play equipment with natural features such as trees, wildflowers, rocks and earth mounding.

Mayor, Councillor Paul Reid, officially opened the play park on 17th July with the event enjoyed by residents and visitors to the Borough, both young and old, as they basked in the glorious sunshine. The play park is a result of the tireless work and commitment of a number of local people over the years who campaigned for a new safe playing space for the children in the neighbourhood.



OFFICIAL OPENING OF GLENS GREAT GRASSLANDS TRAIL

In June, we had the official opening of the Glenariff Beachfront Works as well as the Glens Great Grassland Trail (a series of 11 publicly accessible wildflower meadows throughout the Glens). It was a great day out with members from the local community, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, and other distinguished guests enjoying the occasion. However, the stars of the day were definitely the pupils from St Patrick's Primary School who added lots of youthful enthusiasm to the event. A special thanks to Mayor Paul Reid of MEABC and Mayor Joan Baird CCGBC for opening the trail.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Our events are free and open to everyone! To ensure we have enough refreshments please let us know you are coming. Register with laura@lps.ccght.org. You can also get in touch through **Facebook** and **Twitter**. Keep an eye on our social media pages and also our website for further updates and upcoming events.

Saturday 9th September

10am – 12.30pm
Glenariff Forest Park

GLENS RED SQUIRREL WALK

– Come along to Glenariff Forest Park to find out what The Glens Red Squirrel Group are doing for the conservation of red squirrels throughout The Glens and hopefully catch a glimpse of our shy and endearing native red squirrel.

Saturday 23rd September

10am – 11.30am or 12.30pm – 2pm
Cloghancor Megalith, Cloghs Road, Cushendall

COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY OPEN DAY

– Become an archaeologist for the day and learn some new skills such as trowelling, surveying and identifying artefacts. You can join in this exciting adventure at Cloghancor Megalith in Glenballyeamon.

Thursday 19th October

7.30pm – 9.30pm
Glenmona House, Cushendun

THE SPIRIT OF THE GLENS STORYTELLING

– This workshop with storyteller Liz Weir will help harvest the rich legacy of stories which local people already know. Those attending will be encouraged to develop their own storytelling skills and gain the confidence to share their stories with the wider community.

Saturday 18th November

11am – 2pm
Ballyeamon Camping Barn

BIG CÉILIDH FIRESIDE STORIES

– Join us around the fire for a morning of storytelling, live traditional music, traditional baking and craic as we celebrate the cultural heritage of The Glens of Antrim.



TRAINING

Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th October

10am – 4pm
Glenmona Workshop, Cushendun



TRADITIONAL HEDGE CHAIR MAKING

– Come and learn the craft of hedge-chair making with expert Glenn White. Over the two days you will learn the skills of the traditional Irish hedge carpenter whilst making a simple but elegant three-legged back stool or Irish 'creepie'. You will gain an understanding of timber choice, tool selection and project design, ending up with a functional seat to take home and the knowledge to make more.

Cost is £30 per person.

Limited spaces so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Thursday 23rd November

7pm – 9pm
Ballycastle Golf Club

HEDGEROW MANAGEMENT TALK

– Come along to find out the many uses of hedgerows for farmers, landowners and the environment. Our expert hedge layer will talk about a range of topics including the benefits of hedges and suitable styles for sheep and cattle, hedge establishment and species selection and management of small woodlands for timber and fuel.

Friday 24th November

10am – 4pm
Ballyvoy

HEDGE LAYING TRAINING

– Our expert hedge layer will teach you the traditional way of laying a hedge, the theory behind it and the importance of hedgerow habitat to biodiversity. This training is free of charge.

Monday 4th December

7pm – 9pm
St Marys Parish Centre, Cushendall

WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP

– There's just something so special about making your own door wreath. The wonderful fragrance of pine and cinnamon, plus the chance to get lost in the flow whilst making a unique design. Anne will show you how to use a variety of winter greenery to make a vibrant wreath to adorn your door this Christmas.

Cost is £10 per person. Spaces are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Wednesday 13th December

7pm – 9pm
Glenlough Community Centre, Carnlough

CHRISTMAS BAKES & EDIBLE TREATS

– Join local expert Edel Healy for an evening of fun, baking a range of treats such as chocolate bark, coconut ices, fudges etc. Learn how to make these in your own home using limited equipment. These can be little treats for yourself or as Christmas presents for that special someone.

Cost is £5 per person.

ABOUT THE HEART OF THE GLENS

The Heart of the Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme is made up of 21 exciting different projects over five years and covers a large area from Ballycastle to Glenarm. This Scheme is focused on and for the benefit of the communities and beautiful landscape of the Glens.

- TO CONSERVE AND ENHANCE THE BUILT, NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE
- TO ENGAGE AND INSPIRE COMMUNITIES
- TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND LEARNING IN THE AREA
- TO OFFER HERITAGE SKILLS AND TRAINING

Heart of the Glens
Landscape Partnership Scheme



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