

DEFENDING THE CAUSEWAY COAST

AREA OF OUTSTANDING
NATURAL BEAUTY



CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS
HERITAGE TRUST

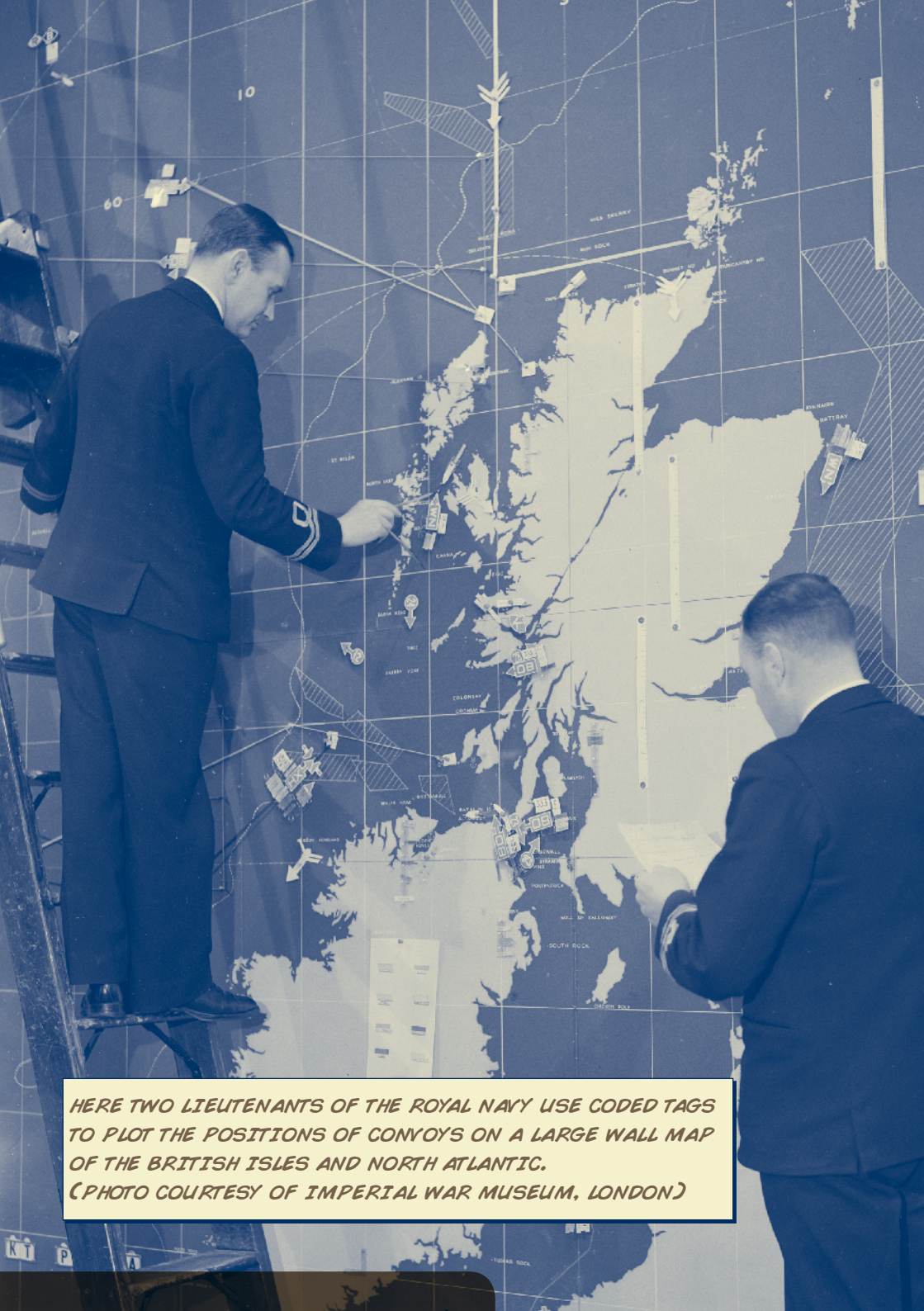
INTRODUCTION

The Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty extends along 30km of what was, throughout the 20th century, a strategically important stretch of Europe's North Atlantic coastline.


Beginning before the First World War (1914-1918) and continuing through to the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War in 1991, the landscape and natural heritage of this area played an important role in the defence of the British Isles and continental Europe.

This short guide explores how the natural heritage of the Causeway Coast (geology, biodiversity and landscape) shaped and influenced decisions regarding the location of defence infrastructure along the Atlantic Coast and the lasting impact which this activity has had on the landscape we see today.

We hope this guide will answer some questions you might have about unusual buildings or features in the local landscape, and even let you know about some features which you may never have known existed. Through landscape interpretation and defence heritage, we hope you will learn a little more about the outstanding geology and biodiversity and unique history we treasure within the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



HERE TWO LIEUTENANTS OF THE ROYAL NAVY USE CODED TAGS TO PLOT THE POSITIONS OF CONVOYS ON A LARGE WALL MAP OF THE BRITISH ISLES AND NORTH ATLANTIC.
(PHOTO COURTESY OF IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, LONDON)



WWII CATALINA AT THE AIRSHOW IN PORTRUSH, 2014 (SEAN KELLY)

LET'S TOUCH BASE!

An Introduction to the Causeway Coast AONB

Let's first explore a **landscape worth defending**. The landscape of the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) owes much to its geological history and many areas of the coast are designated for their unique and outstanding geology.

The oldest rocks in the area date from the Jurassic Period (201-145 million years ago) and are seen in small exposures at Portrush and White Park Bay. Fossils in Cretaceous White Limestone or 'chalk', provide evidence of the animals which inhabited ancient seas (145-66 million years ago) and provide a striking contrast to black volcanic basalts which tend to cap the cliff top along this coast.

The different rates of erosion associated with this varied geology have created the dramatic coastal landscape seen today, with more resistant rock remaining as headlands and cliffs, while weaker rock types have eroded to form caves, bays and beaches.

The most famous geological site within the AONB is undoubtedly the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site. Created 60 million years ago during a period of extensive volcanic activity, the column shaped basalts and distinctive cliffs owe their great number and regularity to the slow cooling and gradual contraction of lava which had flown into a flooded valley. This presents evidence of activity related to the opening of what is now the North Atlantic Ocean, when Europe and North America physically parted company.

GIANT'S CAUSEWAY



WHITEPARK BAY

WHITEROCKS



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE GEOLOGY OF THE AONB LOG ON TO WWW.CCGHT.ORG OR PICK UP A COPY OF OUR 'ROCKIN' THE CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS' BOOKLET.

With such a rich variety of geology along this dynamic and exposed coast, it's not surprising to find abundant plant and animal life on land and in the sea. Some of these plants and animals are considered rare in Europe.

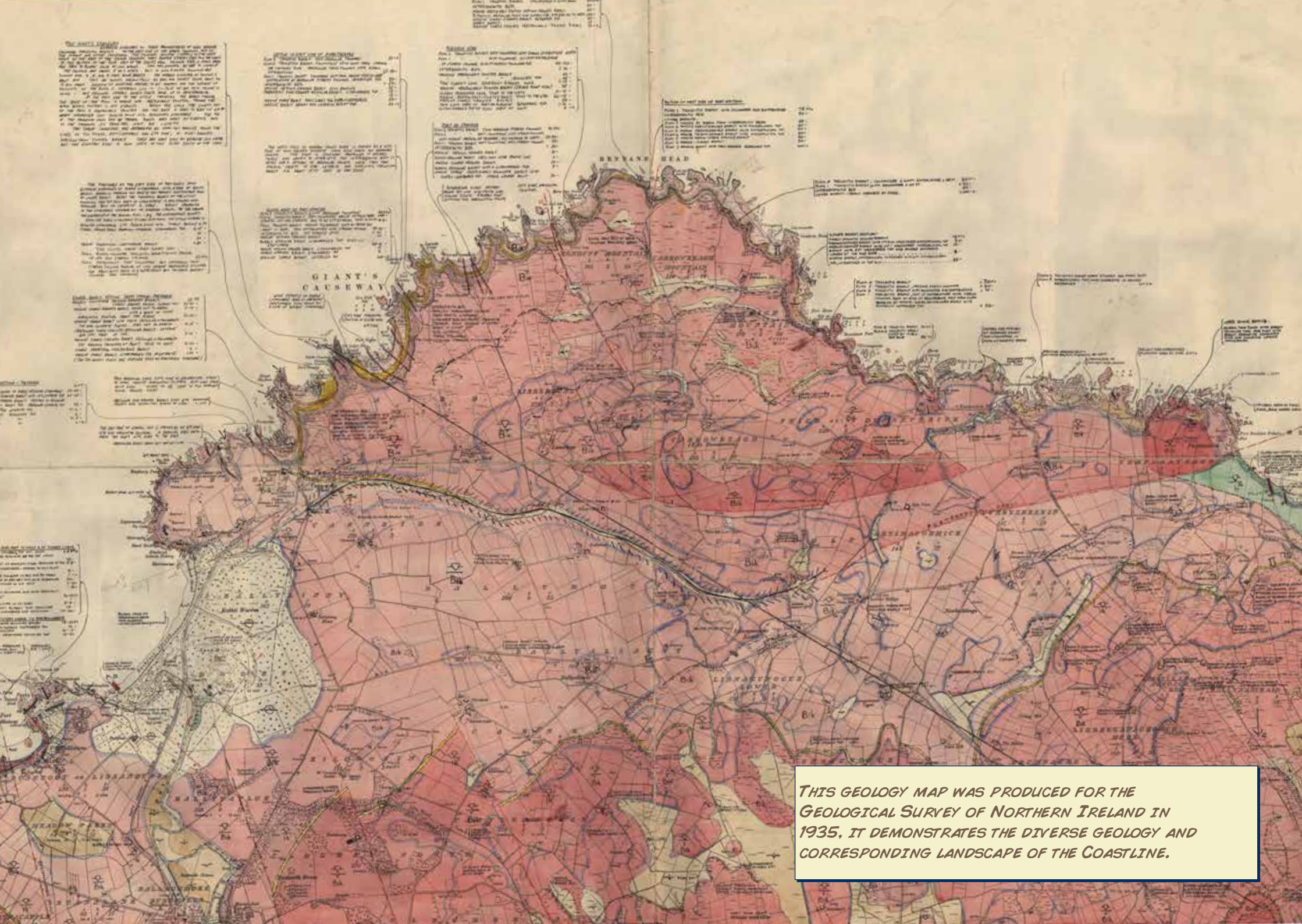
In spring and summer wildflowers bring the landscape to life, including blue flowers of spring squill, pink thrift and white sea campion. Along the shore plants have adapted to the salty environment such as the oysterplant. Wild thyme, harebell, eyebright and ragwort are common in the dune systems where rare orchids and the beautiful flowering parnassus grass can be found. The Causeway Coast can be a harsh environment for trees, especially in the winter months; however small copses of ash, hazel and blackthorn survive in the more sheltered areas.

Insect life includes a wide range of butterflies, crane flies, beetles and weevils. The Giant's Causeway National Nature Reserve supports the only known population of narrow-mouthed whorl snail in Northern Ireland.

Animal life is plentiful and species found in the area include badger, rabbit, fox and the large Irish hare. From time to time otters visit the coastline. The steep sea cliffs support a rich seabird community, such as guillemot, razorbill, kittiwake and fulmar. Eider ducks hug the rocky shore, where wading birds such as the redshank and oystercatcher are common. Falcons and choughs are spotted less often.

Rockpools dotted along the coast make great homes for shellfish, seaweeds, sea anemones, shrimps and crabs as well as several varieties of fish such as blennies, gobies, pollack, wrasse, dogfish and conger eel. Whales, porpoise and basking sharks are common visitors, as are salmon and sea trout runs on the River Bush.

TURN OVER TO EXPLORE A HISTORICAL GEOLOGY MAP OF THE CAUSEWAY COAST AND TO PLOT LOCATIONS WHERE YOU MIGHT SPY SOME OF THE KEY PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN THE CAUSEWAY COAST.



THIS GEOLOGY MAP WAS PRODUCED FOR THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN 1935, IT DEMONSTRATES THE DIVERSE GEOLOGY AND CORRESPONDING LANDSCAPE OF THE COASTLINE.

CAN YOU SPY ANY OF THESE PLANTS OR ANIMALS?



WILD THYME



HAREBELL



EYEBRIGHT



RAGWORT



PARNASSUS GRASS



SPRING SQUILL



PINK THRIFT



SEA CAMPION



BADGER



RABBIT



FOX



IRISH HARE



GUILLEMOT



RAZORBILL



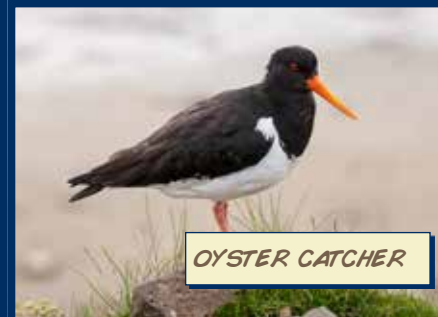
KITTIWAKE



FULMAR



EIDER DUCK



OYSTER CATCHER

DUNLUCE CASTLE

A LANDSCAPE WORTH DEFENDING

The rich geology and biodiversity we have described combine with coastal processes to present a landscape of outstanding natural beauty. Within the Causeway Coast AONB it is possible to identify six distinct areas.

The 'Skerries Coast' between Portrush and Portballintrae provides elevated views over the top of the Skerries islands towards the North Atlantic Ocean and the Donegal Coast. Dunluce Castle is a key landmark with distant views to the Giant's Causeway with its distinctive stepped coastline.

RIVER BUSH

The River Bush flows through a shallow wooded gorge and the small village of Bushmills with its world famous whiskey distillery. From here it flows through open countryside and Runkerry sand dunes to enter the North Atlantic at Portballintrae.

The 'Causeway Plateau' between Runkerry and White Park Bay includes the famous cliff exposures of columnar basalt at the Giant's Causeway and forms a distinctive basalt and heath capped coastline with numerous small rocky bays and islets.

The 'Magpie Coast' from the broad sandy White Park Bay to Carrick a Rede presents contrasting black basalt and white chalk rock formations along the coast. Sheep Island dominates views out towards the North Atlantic. This particular stretch of coast has evidence of former industries including quarrying, fishing and kelp collection and drying.

Beyond Carrick-a-rede, the 'Kinbane Plateau' meets the coast to form steep basalt cliffs with excellent views towards Rathlin Island, the western Scottish islands and the Mull of Kintyre. Inland the landscape is strongly textured with a patchwork of rough grassland, dry-stone walls, bog land and gorse.

Ending in the 'Ballycastle Valley' the landscape consists of smooth green pastures divided by dry-stone walls and gorse hedgerows. Views towards the North Atlantic and the coastline are dominated by Rathlin Island and Fair Head, the largest basalt sill in Northern Ireland.

CARRICK-A-REDE*KINBANE CASTLE*

THE SKERRIES

Perhaps the most impressive views along the Causeway Coast are enjoyed by those at sea.

Between Portrush and the Giant's Causeway the coastline is formed of rugged and intricate basalt and contrasting chalk cliffs with submerged sandbanks, sea caves and reefs. Ramore Head at Portrush juts out to sea forming a very prominent headland and is composed of a hard dolerite sill which extends offshore to form the Skerries, a chain of nearby low lying uninhabited rocky islands. Located on a rocky outcrop, the dramatic medieval ruin of Dunluce Castle overlooks the rugged cliffs and wild sea beyond. There are three sections of scenic beach, Bushfoot Strand, Curran Strand and Portrush West Strand where high energy rolling waves are popular for surfing. Portrush is a popular tourist resort, providing a good location to explore the coast and nearby visitor attractions.

The iconic and world famous Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site is a defining feature of this stunning coastline. This stretch of coast is typified by rough seas crashing against a series of rocky headlands and surrounding high vertical cliffs with dramatic

THE WHITE ROCKS



GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

formations of Basalt and Chalk. There is also an impressive submerged palaeo-cliff shoreline off White Park Bay. There is an intricate pattern of sweeping bays, islets, rocky headlands and outcrops, punctuated by the sweeping sands at White Park Bay, backed by hummocky ground and low rising, slumped Chalk cliffs. There are a number of small rocky islands near to the coastline including Sheep Island and Carrick-a-Rede Island with a series of submerged sandbanks, sea caves and reefs. The area has a strong undeveloped character with a remote and exposed experience that contrasts with the intimacy and shelter provided by the distinctive harbours at Ballintoy, Dunseverick, Portbradden and Portnaboe. Along the cliff tops, there are extensive swathes of semi-natural grasslands and patches of gorse.

WHITEPARK BAY



MAP OF THE BRITISH ISLES SHOWING THE DISPOSITION OF AIRFIELDS AND RELATED ESTABLISHMENTS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR. (JOHN HEWITT, VIA ERNIE CROMIE OF THE ULSTER AVIATION SOCIETY)



THE CAUSEWAY COAST AND WORLD WAR ONE

Nowadays very little remains of the physical defence structures from the First World War in the Causeway Coast. That said, the coastline between Portrush and Ballycastle was strategically important during this war, particularly with the introduction of submarine warfare and a significant naval campaign by German U-Boats against the allies and trade routes around the British Isles.

In the early days of submarine warfare, German U-Boats had to surface frequently to recharge their batteries and dispose of waste material. Along the Causeway Coast, locals and military personnel would have kept a constant lookout on the horizon to spot surfacing vessels in an effort to protect key shipping routes from the North Atlantic towards Glasgow and Clyde and into the Irish Sea towards Belfast and Liverpool.



TIN CONTAINS FRAGMENT OF SHELL THAT FELL ON PORTBALLINTRAE (CAUSEWAY MUSEUM SERVICE)

At 15.45 on Sunday 6th May 1918 German Submarine U20 surfaced just off Dunluce Castle as a small British tramp steamer from Liverpool, the Wheatear sailed past the Giant's Causeway, returning to England. Armed with just one four inch gun the Wheatear came under attack, with six inch shells from U20 falling all around the little ship. Under fire, Captain

Davey's boat made steam for Portballintrae, drawing a 'hot and furious bombardment from the submarine'. Portballintrae Bay was described by residents as 'studded with remarkable upsprouts of water' as the shells came closer and closer to the village itself. Local newspaper reports state that eventually U20 'got the line of fire on the village' but 'had not the range', so shells passed overhead to the high ground near the Coast Road. In all 13 shells exploded, the closest 120 yards from the village houses. Two tramway men, on duty, ran to Portballintrae Halt and were caught by shrapnel but sustained no serious injuries.



Portion of shell fired by German Submarine
off Portballintrae, N. Antrim Coast, (near Bushmills)
at the Steamer of Spiller and Parker, Flour Millers
Cardiff Sunday 5th May 1918. Many fragments &
shells came into Portballintrae when there were 18
shell holes. The Cardiff Steamer put out a
Smoke screen, which was clearly seen (and the action
also for the steamer replied to the fire) from Bath Terrace
Portrush. The firing went on for about 1½ hours. Request
Donor Mrs J. Blair (aka F. M. M. Blair) 14 Cliftonville Avenue, Belfast.

Shell-fragment (see note)
for Steamer 'Labmarine' into
Portballintrae
to Mrs J. Blair

A PORTION OF ONE OF THE SHELLS
FIRED ON PORTBALLINTRAE IN 1918
(CAUSEWAY MUSEUM SERVICE)



PORTBALLINTRAE (KATHLEEN MILLAR)

Portballintrae was the only place on the island of Ireland to suffer enemy bombardment during the First World War. The fact that serious injuries were not sustained in this event is evidence of the rural nature of the landscape. This postcard shows isolated farm dwellings and fishermen's cottages clustered around the small harbour with neat fields and hay stacks in the foreground. Nowadays the village of Portballintrae has expanded considerably and this landscape has changed dramatically. If shells were to land in the areas indicated in 1918, damage would be severe.

A Position of U20

B Position of 'Wheatear'

1 Location of lowest shell point **2** Location of highest shell point

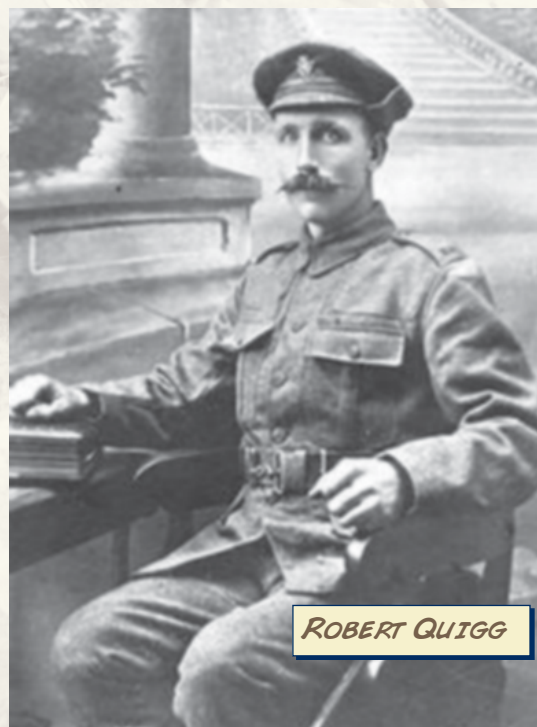
Elsewhere in the Causeway Coast AONB, changes have not been so dramatic. Located on the exposed Atlantic Coast, the area has never been particularly suited to growing arable crops. Much as today, in WWI the majority of farmland would have been used to keep cattle, sheep and grow 'spuds' (potatoes). Because arable crops were uncommon, the area presented fewer access issues for the training of service personnel.



GERMAN TYPE U 9 U-BOAT

Unfortunately no photographs have been discovered which show training within the Causeway Coast during this period.

With the exception of the attack on Portballintrae in 1918, events in the Causeway Coast AONB were minor when compared with the devastation generated in the battlefields in France. A number of local residents connect these two locations. One is Robert Quigg from Bushmills, a recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry available to British service personnel. In 1916, stationed in the French village of Hamel, located on the north bank of the River Ancre, Robert Quigg's battalion was ordered to advance towards enemy lines. The attack left hundreds of the battalion lying dead or wounded in 'no man's land', including Lieutenant Harry Macnaghten also from Bushmills. Robert Quigg under enemy fire attempted to locate Harry Macnaghten.



ROBERT QUIGG

After several trips into no man's land, Robert Quigg, exhausted, had to retire from his efforts. To this day Harry Macnaghten has never been found.

Upon his return Robert Quigg was presented with a gold watch by Lady Macnaghten in recognition of his bravery in attempting to find and rescue her son. Robert Quigg was laid to rest in Billy Parish Churchyard in 1955.

Throughout the Causeway Coast there are memorials dedicated to the memory of all those who have served in modern conflicts. These can be found in Portrush, Bushmills and Ballycastle.

THE CAUSEWAY COAST AND WORLD WAR TWO

By the time the United Kingdom declared war on Germany in September 1939, military technology had developed significantly. This placed the Causeway Coast within range of much more rapid and dangerous attack from continental Europe and the North Atlantic Ocean. As a result there was a much greater need to install defensive infrastructure along the Atlantic Coast. This included pill boxes, anti-aircraft batteries, observation posts, and significant training facilities to prepare service personnel for war in Europe. Much of the WWII defence infrastructure in the Causeway Coast has fallen into a state of disrepair or has been put to an alternative use. That said, there is still significant evidence of these installations in the landscape.



PORTRUSH

Within Portrush it is possible to see the remains of two pillboxes. These are integrated into stone walls at the Harbour and along the promenade at East Strand. These pillboxes are of a relatively simple, but uncommon design:

3m (10ft) square

50cm (18 inch) thick walls

One doorway and up to three embrasures (openings or slits)

These structures were built as part of anti-invasion preparations to protect East and West Strand Beaches and Portrush Harbour. There was significant concern that the Germans could use the extensive beaches along the coast to launch an invasion of Ireland.



The small pillboxes in Portrush would have been staffed around the clock and could have sounded the alarm and provided a first line of defence in the event of an attack.

The landscape of the town and natural environment surrounding these installations has changed dramatically since the end of WWII. The harbour, beach infrastructure, promenades and dune systems have been modified by natural processes and development.

Today, looking from the pillbox at East Strand there are outstanding views of the Skerries islands and the Causeway Coast towards the distinctive stepped profile of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site. The white limestone and basalt topped cliffs provide a striking contrast to the green farmland and blue and white topped rolling waves of North Atlantic.

Nowadays most water based activities within sight of East Strand Pillbox are recreational e.g. surfing, diving, fishing, canoeing and sailing; however back in 1942, a quick glance to the north would have revealed "a large number of wartime ships moving west to east". For those on-board the ships and those staffing the pillbox, it was often what lurked beneath the surface they feared the most. Carl Letson, an American Soldier serving with the 82nd Airborne Division recounts "at night, German subs had been seen coming up to recharge their batteries, and it was suspected that there could be a possible landing". Today you're unlikely to see any submarines but you might be lucky enough to spot a harbour porpoise or seal.

Whilst keeping a constant lookout on the North Atlantic, those staffing this pillbox had an opportunity to enjoy the landscape. Sergeant Edward Isbell (82ABD), serving with the 82nd Airborne Division let his imagination run wild, stating "in the distance, we could see a large rock sticking out. It was shaped just like an army truck".

John McCann in his book 'Passing Through' suggests Ed was looking at the tip of the Giant's Causeway. Can you see this truck today?

At the southern end of Portrush Harbour you will find an embrasure or gun slit high up the harbour wall. Behind the stone façade, evidence remains of a concrete wall. This pillbox would have had a view of the landscape north towards the harbour, west towards the Inishowen Peninsula in Donegal and south towards West Strand Beach.

American Soldier Sergeant Carl Letson (82ABD) recalls "at night, looking due west from Portrush, the streetlights of the little County Donegal hamlets of Moville, Greencastle and Stroove were ever present. To the men who gazed out at the Inishowen Peninsula these lights served as a welcome reminder of the more peaceful times they had left behind". Portrush would have been in darkness under blackout restrictions.

Today looking towards West Strand Beach you are more likely to find people using the beach for surfing, swimming or occasionally sunbathing. During WWII troops would have trained on this stretch of beach in preparation for landings elsewhere in Europe. Looking towards the majestic Inishowen Peninsula today you will catch the odd fishing ship or oil tanker heading towards Derry~Londonderry or Greencastle; however during WWII this stretch of water would have been dotted with warships. This pillbox would have been a great spot to watch the German U-Boats chugging towards Lough Foyle to surrender in the final days of WWII. Many of these U-Boats were scuttled off the north coast after the war and now provide world class diving experiences.



WW1 GERMAN U-BOAT U-2511 (STEWIE ANDREWS 2014)

Stewie Andrews has provided a photograph of one such dive showing the conning tower of the WW1 German U-Boat U-2511. It is 26km NW of Malin Head in 66m of water and was disposed of on 7 January 1946 as part of Operation Deadlight, having been held in Lisahally.

U-2511 was known as a Type XXI Electro-Boat which was the birth of the modern submarine, as we know it. She could remain submerged as long as fuel and food allowed.

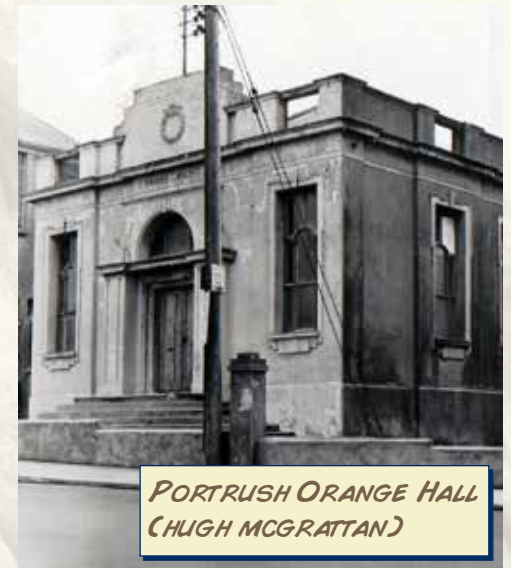
The astonishing thing about this U-Boat is that she was the only operational Type XXI U-Boat to make it into active service, all be it for just a few days before the ceasefire was called.

In command was the U-Boat Ace Korvettenkapitan Adalbert Schnee.

Elsewhere in Portrush, residential and community buildings were rushed into service for the accommodation of significant numbers of American Soldiers who arrived in 1943. Carl Letson wrote "there was great confusion getting the troops assigned to billets. We were scattered all over the place, usually grouped by companies, living in an area of formally private homes". One soldier, Private Bill Howell (82ABD) described Portrush as "a small city situated on cliffs above the Atlantic". Corporal Frank Cuff (82ABD) describes having "a small room out back with a stone floor and a tub of water. 'Our building' was in a private home, located on a street where the tram to the Giant's Causeway ran. Just around the corner was a building known to us as the 'Orange Hall'. This Orange Hall served as a kitchen and mess house, and was the site of great controversy when the Red Cross opened the hall for midnight Christmas Mass in 1943."

Other sites in Portrush served as additional mess halls, including what is now the Coastal Zone Centre operated by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Shelter at Ramore Head.

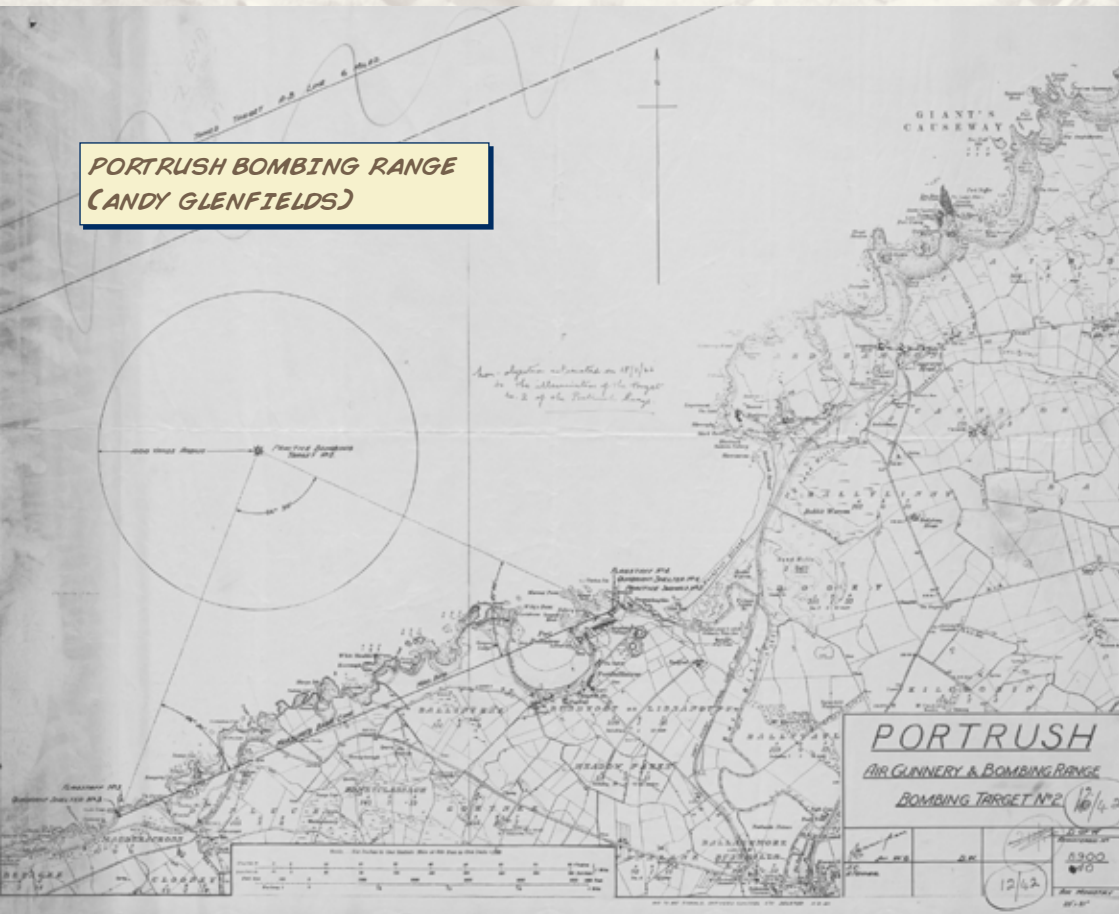
Throughout WWII Portrush and Portstewart remained popular holiday resorts in the summer months. Private Glen Drake (82ABD) noted that Portstewart was "like a miniature Coney



*PORTRUSH ORANGE HALL
(HUGH MCGRATTAN)*

Island. It was a popular place for spending the holidays. With the arrival of fall, 90% of the population went back to where they came from". It could be argued that not much has changed in either town in this respect. Nowadays the local council runs a series of festivals and events to extend the summer season. The signature closing event is the annual Portrush Airshow. Once a year locals and visitors can watch the Red Arrows (UK display team) and military, civilian and historic aircraft pass overhead; however back in WWII Portrush hosted military aircraft on a much more regular basis. The Portrush Bombing Range was used by pilots to practice bombing runs off the north coast. On the ground, colleagues would monitor the flight paths and target accuracy of the pilots in preparation for action in Europe.

**PORTRUSH BOMBING RANGE
(ANDY GLENFIELDS)**



**AMERICAN SOLDIERS VISITING DUNLUCE CASTLE
(CAUSEWAY MUSEUM SERVICE)**

PORTBALLINTRAE AND BUSHMILLS

Overlooking Portballintrae and Bushmills on the Ballyclogh Road is a radio and radar station which was constructed in 1953. This installation was an observation post with fantastic views of the Causeway Coast towards Binevenagh Mountain, Lough Foyle and the Inishowen Peninsula. The present day observation post is located on private property and access is not possible.



**BUSHMILLS/PORTBALLINTRAE
OBSERVATION POST IN EARLY 1980S
(HUGH MCGRATTAN)**

Below this observation post in fields adjacent to Portballintrae a small arms training range was located. Little visible evidence remains of this training range, however in satellite images of the area it is possible to observe significant man made features and embankments which may have formed part of this facility.



AMERICAN SOLDIERS AT THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY (JOHN MCCANN)

Corporal Lloyd Jackson (34th Infantry Division) describes a bit of free time spent in the area around Portballintrae and Bushmills during WWII – “A good buddy of mine rented a couple of bikes and we pedalled to the Giant’s Causeway and visited an old castle [likely Dunluce or Dunseverick]. We also went to the Bushmills Distillery where we were served some libation”.

Throughout WWII the Causeway Tramway which travelled through this landscape, would have ferried soldiers from Portrush out towards the Giant’s Causeway. Carl Letson recalls that “because it closely resembled an old trolley that appeared in a cartoon series that ran in their local newspapers”, they called it the “Toonerville Trolley”. Evidence of the old tramway can be seen as you travel the coast road today.

Giant's Causeway

The Giant’s Causeway was a popular tourist attraction long before it and the adjacent coastline became Northern Ireland’s only World Heritage Site in 1986. During WWII soldiers never visited the Giant’s Causeway as a unit, but it was “an unusual and beautiful sightseeing spot where the men loved to take their girlfriends for an afternoon”.

On Monday, 20th July, 1942 disaster befell the popular tourist spot when a Wellington Bomber from Aghanloo Airfield near Limavady, crashed in poor visibility just a few hundred yards from the Causeway Hotel. Pilot Officer Wilson Twentyman (New Zealand Airforce), aged 26, was flight captain and the other pilot was Vernon Pither, Royal Australian Air Force, aged 28. Both men died instantly and are buried at the Church of Ireland Graveyard in Limavady. A small memorial for both men can be found at Port Coon on Runkerry Head. Parking is available at the Giant’s Causeway Visitor Centre.



WELLINGTON BOMBER AT THE AIRFIELD IN LIMAVADY (IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM)

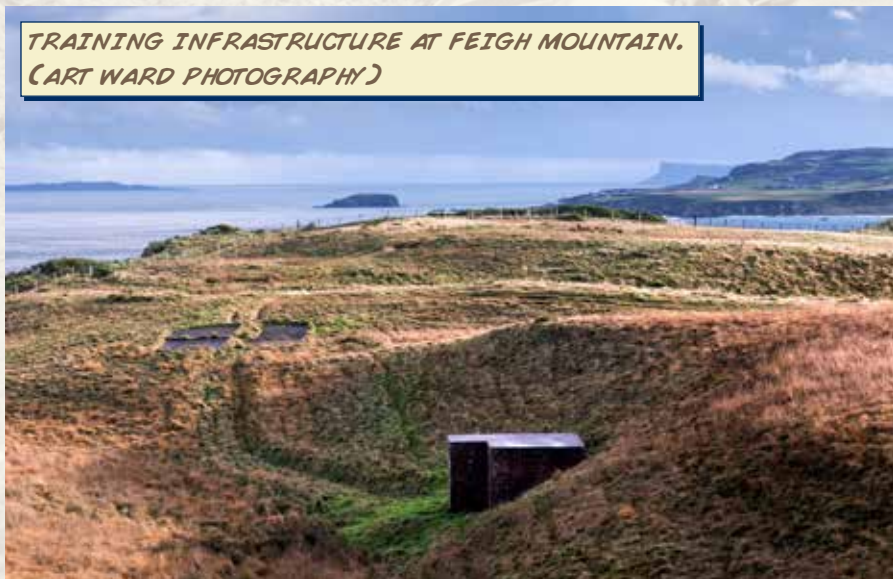
Causeway Coast and Ballintoy

A walk along the Causeway Coast Way provides spectacular views of the Causeway Coast; however as you approach the World Heritage Site boundary at Feigh Mountain near Dunseverick Castle you may notice some unusual buildings and structures. These are all that remain of a substantial and quite experimental training and target range. This consisted of a concrete track around 30ft (9 metres) wide and 600ft (180 metres) long running in an east-west direction. It is said that a lorry drove backwards and forwards along this track, attached to a series of steel ropes and pulleys. These pulled a target bogey up a parallel track towards the headland. This provided a moving target for guns on the hill immediately south of the track. Sir Patrick Macnaghten, interviewed in 1990 suggested this original system proved unsuccessful and was superseded by a tracked bogey several hundred yards to the west.

The site at Feigh Mountain was also used to provide target practice for ships stationed in or moving through Rathlin Sound. It is said that a catapult system was used to fire dyed strips of material off the headland. Until recently an old bath and mangle along the Causeway Coast Way were all that remained of this system.

All of the buildings and structures at Feigh Mountain are located on private property and access is strictly prohibited; however all features of interest can be viewed easily from the coastal path.

**TRAINING INFRASTRUCTURE AT FEIGH MOUNTAIN.
(ART WARD PHOTOGRAPHY)**



OLD SCHOOL HOUSE, BALLINTOY

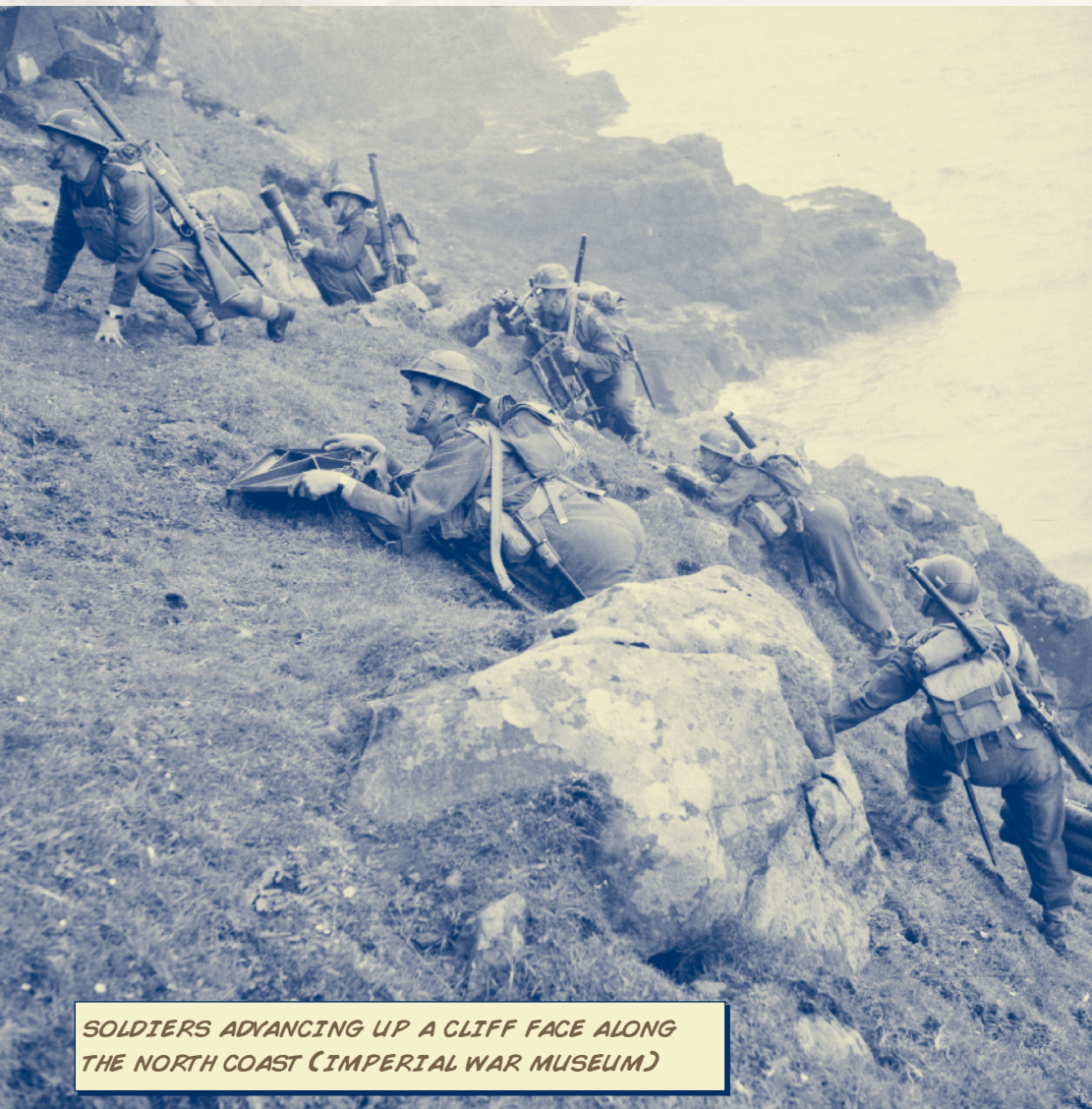
Further around the coast, the area surrounding the small village of Ballintoy was a popular area for training exercises. John McCann, in his book 'passing through', explains that during WWII farmers in Northern Ireland were offered subsidies to increase their crop yields. The Causeway Coast was not particularly well suited to arable crops therefore this made training exercises much more feasible. The Imperial War Museum has provided a number of photographs of soldiers training along the Causeway Coast during WWII.

On at least one occasion a school near the town of Ballintoy was used to accommodate soldiers during exercises. One amusing story told in John McCann's book is of a soldier who took off from the school through a ploughed field on a one man reconnaissance exercise. Having only gone about two hundred yards the soldier thought he heard some men moving around and found a squad of men all fast asleep behind a nearby hay-stack.

Today hay-stacks have been replaced with round black wrapped bales and the school house is used as a small community hall.



**SOLDIERS TRAINING ON THE CAUSEWAY COAST
(IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM)**



*SOLDIERS ADVANCING UP A CLIFF FACE ALONG
THE NORTH COAST (IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM)*

The Imperial War Museum have supplied the previous photographs from WWII training exercises along the Causeway Coast AONB. If you know of any others please contact the Causeway Museum Service.

COLD WAR

Soon after WWII the relationship between the West (the USA, United Kingdom and their allies) and the East (USSR and its allies) deteriorated as suspicions increased over weapons and political intentions. This period gave rise to huge advances in all forms of technology as each side tried to gain an advantage over the other, perhaps most famously demonstrated by the USA successfully landing astronauts on the moon in 1969. During this time there was significant concern that both sides could launch a devastating nuclear attack on the other. As a result monitoring posts, nuclear bunkers and all manner of unusual defence infrastructure was built across Europe.

As in WWI and WWII the Causeway Coast was a strategic location in the defence of the British Isles. As a result there are a number of unusual and unique features in our landscape today.

Perhaps the most interesting feature and one which is still clouded in mystery is a 'Submarine Detection Station' which was constructed at Portballintrae in 1952. Using a series of hydrophone arrays directed north across the shipping lanes, the purpose of the station was to determine the course and speed of a submarine in order to direct units to intercept the target. It is suggested that the experimental installation at Portballintrae was not particularly successful and was closed towards the end of the 1950s. Nowadays all that remains is a concrete platform which provided the foundations for temporary prefab buildings which housed the scientific equipment. Along the shoreline at low tide it is still possible to see lengths of armoured metal pipe containing multi-cored cable which extend undersea. These would have connected the underwater hydrophones to the buildings located above.



*PORTBALLINTRAE SUBMARINE DETECTION STATION
(NIEA DEFENCE HERITAGE PROJECT)*

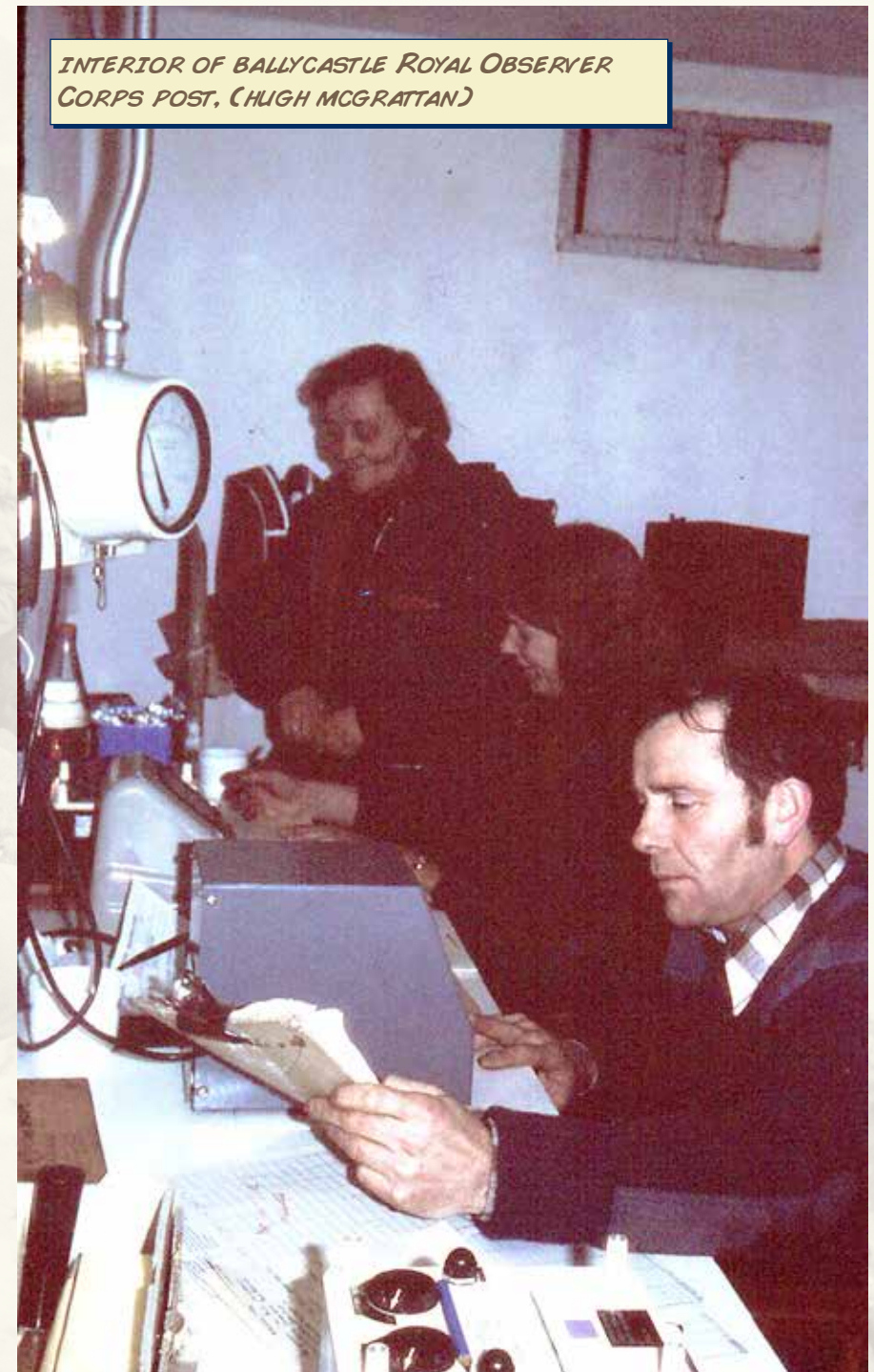
The following photograph of the facility was collected as part of the Environment and Heritage Service's (now NIEA) Defence Heritage Project in 1998.



In the event of a nuclear attack in north-west Europe the Causeway Coast was well prepared with the installation of two Royal Observer Corps Warning and Monitoring Posts (Nuclear Bunkers) - one in Bushmills and one just above Ballycastle. Both of these facilities remain in place today, but have reverted to private landowners. Access to these installations is not permitted.

Both bunkers opened in August 1957. Bushmills closed in October 1968 and Ballycastle remained operational until September 1991. Nowadays as you drive on the coast road from Ballycastle towards Ballintoy you can see access and ventilation shafts on the surface.

These are of a common design and can be found all across Northern Ireland (there were approximately 50 in total). The bunkers provided protection against effects and radiation from nuclear bursts and contained scientific instruments for the detection of nuclear blasts and the measurement of ionizing radiation. The Royal Observer Corps was a civil defence organisation composed of mainly volunteers and a small group of professional full-time officers.



FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

For further information about the Causeway Coast AONB please access or contact the following groups and resources:

Ballintoy Historical Society
 Ballycastle Tourist Information
 Bushmills Historical Society
 Bushmills Tourist Information
 Causeway Museum Service
 Coleraine Tourist Information
 Giant's Causeway Tourist Information
 Imperial War Museum
 Northern Ireland Environment Agency
 Portrush Heritage Group
 Portrush Tourist Information
 Ulster Aviation Society

Contributors:

Andy Glenfields - <http://ww2ni.webs.com>
 Antony Macnaghten
 Art Ward
 Causeway Museum Service
 Ernie Cromie
 Geological Survey of Northern Ireland
 Google Royalty Free Images
 Hugh McGrattan
 Ian Lawler
 John Hewitt
 John McCann - Passing Through:
 The 82nd Airborne Division in Northern Ireland 1943 - 44.
 Kathleen Millar
 Northern Ireland Tourist Board
 Robert Quigg VC Commemoration Society
 Sean Kelly



*SOLDIERS TRAINING ON THE CAUSEWAY COAST
 (IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM)*



CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS
HERITAGE TRUST



Author: Andrew Bratton (Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust)

With support from: Tiérna Mullan (Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust)



CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS
HERITAGE TRUST

CCGHT is grateful for support from:

