



Bearing in mind the concept of a trail as a journey, this trail will take the reader on not only a journey through the village of Loughbrickland, but also through time; from the earliest traces of settlements in the area to the latest developments of the present day.

The starting point of the trail then is not in the village at all but at the shores of Loughbrickland Lake at the south end of the village.

Reach the car park by taking the B3 (Grovehill Road) for Rathfriland at its junction with the A1 Dual Carriageway, and then turning almost immediately into Lakeview Road on the right.

From the car park a path leads down to the lakeshore where excellent views can be had, not only of the lake and its surrounding hills, but also of perhaps the two most significant early settlements in the area. The most noticeable is obviously the island in the lake, which is, in actual fact, a Crannog (1). Crannogs were man made islands that first appeared around 500 AD in the Early Christian period, and many remained in use as late as the 17th century fulfilling a similar role of protection for man and animals as provided by the raths that are so common on hilltops throughout the Loughbrickland and Scarva area. The other site, just visible on the hilltop at the opposite end of the lake, is a rath known as Water Hill Fort (2), which is very interesting in that it differs from other raths in having a ditch inside its protective bank rather than the other way round. Archaeological opinion suggests this to be a ceremonial site of some kind, which in turn reinforces its claim in local folklore of being the site of Bricriu's Feast, one of the stories of the Ulster Sagas, from which Loughbrickland is believed to have derived its name. There is, however, some current thought among historians that this pair of sites became for a short time a new capital of Ulster, after the Ulaid people left Emain Macha and retreated into Counties Down and Antrim and before they set up a more permanent base at Downpatrick. Even if the more powerful ruling class moved on to Downpatrick, it would appear that Loughbrickland remained the headquarters of one of the chief tribes of the Ulaid, the Uí Echach Coba.

The Magennis family eventually emerged as the ruling clan or Lords of Iveagh. Until the mid 16th century the Loughbrickland branch of the Magennis Clan held the Lordship of Iveagh and had their castle on the lakeshore before moving to a house on the crannog when they sold their lands here in 1615 to a Staffordshire army contractor called Marmaduke Whitechurch. The crannog was originally much bigger than it is now, and, in writing on Loughbrickland in 1905, Canon Lett recalls a story told by farmers working on the loughshore in the early 1800s of hearing a large splash and seeing a large portion of the island falling into the water. So it is possible that, while the core of the crannog, made up of a ring of wooden posts infilled with stones and earth, is only about 27 metres across, this supported a much larger wooden construction overhanging the water which eventually rotted away and collapsed.

From the car park, proceed on foot back to the B3 and proceed towards the village through the pedestrian underpass beneath the A1 dual carriageway (Note the mural by a local artist and children from New-Bridge Integrated College depicting Loughbrickland's history) and turn right at the end towards Loughbrickland village.

Loughbrickland owes much of its current form to Marmaduke Whitechurch, who laid out the village, built a corn mill and church, and secured patents to hold markets and fairs. The tradition of milling, both corn and flax, was carried on for many generations, and the old building on the right at the bottom of the hill just before entering the village is one of the few remaining local mill buildings. Believed built in 1806 as a corn mill (3), it has been converted to a most

characterful dwelling and stands opposite what is known locally as Kiln Lane, which formerly led to a corn kiln. At one of the village's two old water pumps, which for many years provided fresh spring water for residents and travellers, cross over to the other side of the road and proceed into the centre of the village.

Many fine houses line the main street, and some of these operated as coaching inns at a time when Banbridge did not exist, and Loughbrickland was an established post town on the roads between both Belfast and Dublin and the ecclesiastical centres of Armagh and Downpatrick.

Adjacent to the shop in the centre of the village and standing head and shoulders above the buildings around it is another attractive conversion of an old building of great character. The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (4) was built in 1826 at a cost of £200 and carried on with relatively small numbers until it closed in the 1880s.

Proceeding into Scarva Street, Aghaderg Parish Church looms into view on the left.

It is not really known where the original church in Aghaderg was built, as there is evidence in many of the local townland names to support their claims to being the exact location. The present church site appears to have been chosen by Whitechurch, but the church that he built, along with his castle and much of the village, was destroyed in the 1641 Rebellion. The church was re-erected, however, around 1688, had the tower and spire added in 1821, and then underwent a complete refurbishment in 1876 under the direction of Dean Jeffry Lefroy, who was buried in the graveyard in 1885 having served the parish for forty nine years. The church itself is named St. Mellans (5) in memory of one of three saints who were associated with the parish in the 7th century and who are believed to have been buried at the old church site further along the valley in Drumsallagh, where, incidentally, much of the stone came from to build the parish church.

Beyond Aghaderg Parish Church, Scarva Street today has a much different character and layout than it appears to have had when the village was first laid out. Firstly the houses immediately adjacent to the church are set well back from the street, and from them can be traced a line of houses running virtually the length of the street, some of which are still in use as dwellings while others have been incorporated into the outbuildings of newer properties built closer to the present street. Looked at in this light the key building in the street is Bovenett House (6). One of the oldest buildings in the village, this fine house appears to have started its life sometime in the 17th century, most likely as a Market House, and as such, given the layout of the aforementioned buildings, may have stood in the middle of what was a very wide street and Market Square. Later becoming a dwelling house, part of it was used as a doctor's surgery in the early 1900s while in the 1920s it was pressed into service as a police barracks.

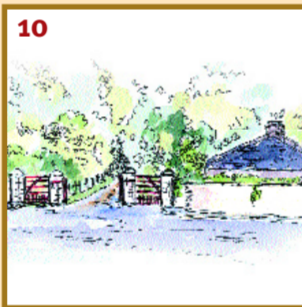
Opposite Bovenett House stands St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church and Parochial House (7). Until this chapel was built the local Roman Catholic church would have been St. Mary's at Lisnagade, some two miles from the village. However, thanks to the generosity of Nicholas Charles Whyte, a member of the Whyte family of Loughbrickland House, a site was given in 1827, along with the substantial donation of £400, to build a chapel in the village. This went some way towards meeting the £1000 that the chapel had cost by the time it was opened and dedicated by Dr. Kelly, the Bishop of Dromore, on 28 October 1832. The tower was added in 1870 while the Parochial House had been erected by the Rev. John Doran in 1847.

At the end of the terraces of houses and shops adjacent to the chapel stands Aghaderg Lodge (8). Originally one of the homes of the Trevor



Loughbrickland

Historic Trail



family of Lisnagade, the house passed into the ownership of the Ansell family on the death of Helen Trevor in 1866. In 1880, the Presbyterian Church, which was founded in 1610 by Scottish settlers on a site near the southern end of Loughbrickland Lake and is known locally as 'The Far Meetin', purchased it from Andrew Ansell for £320 and used it as a manse until 1955 when a new red brick Manse (9) was built beside it.

Proceeding along the street, cross the junction with the Old Newry Road and arrive at the entrance to Loughbrickland House.

Loughbrickland House (10), which dates from the 18th century with later re-modelling in the 19th century by Thomas J Duff of Newry, is the family home of the Whyte family and was built after John Whyte of Leixlip married Mary Purcell. Mary was the grand-daughter of Marcus Trevor of Lisnagade, who had married Marmaduke Whitechurch's daughter, Frances, before becoming Viscount Dungannon, and, as such, she was heiress to a large estate in the Loughbrickland area.

While this is still private property, an arrangement between the Whyte family and Banbridge District Council led to the creation of limited access to the estate along a waymarked Woodland Trail Permissive Path in 2001 taking in the impressive Coolnacran Rath (11). This was extended in 2008 to include a Boundary Trail Permissive Path along an old 'ride' around the estate that passes Johnston's Fort (12), another old rath with beautiful views over the Whyte Estate and Loughbrickland village.

To follow these two trails please turn to the reverse side of the Trail Guide to find the map and associated information. To continue with the Loughbrickland Historic Trail proceed as follows:

Cross Scarva Street and proceed back towards the centre of the village.

A new doctor's surgery now stands adjacent to the site once occupied by the National School beside the graveyard. Opened in 1833 on land again provided by Nicholas Charles Whyte, the school provided education for the local children until the late 1990's when it was replaced by a new school, St Francis', built nearby. Further along, a little cottage (13) beside the Henry Wilson Memorial Orange Hall is effectively the last of the cottages that lined this side of the old broad street to survive in more or less its original form. At the south side of the entrance to the Poyntzpass Road stands another interesting cottage (14), which, although seeming to have been built in the 1820s, stands on the line of the old row. Its particularly fine railings and Georgian doorcase give it a distinguished air and lend much character to the junction of the two roads. Tradition has it that, on his way to the Battle of the Boyne, King William III used Loughbrickland as a base for a number of days while assembling his army. He is also thought to have stayed at a house in the village belonging to the Trevor family, possibly even Bovenett House, and mounted his horse from a stone on the corner of the Poyntzpass Road.

Take the road for Poyntzpass and continue to Loughbrickland Park on left. Continue past the main entrance and take the private road adjacent to the Park, once the main coach road through the village, to a metal and chain gate on the left at the bottom of the hill. Enter the Park here and follow the path to the bridge over the stream.

Loughbrickland Park (15) was laid out on seven acres in an informal manner in the 1970s by Banbridge District Council. The park contains a newly refurbished playground. The original planting of willow and birch was added to in May 2000 when the gFeet Adrenalin Rush 2000 adventure race, organised by local man Brian Elliot, came to Loughbrickland.

Assisted by Banbridge District Council, local volunteers and international competitors came together to plant 1000 native trees and shrubs, including oak, ash, hazel and rowan, a number of which have survived to increase the biodiversity in the park. A Millennium project also saw the creation of a number of environmental art works in 2001 including an interesting analematic, or human, sundial. This was re-set in paving stones when the play area was refurbished in 2007, and by standing on the appropriate month on the central stone on a sunny day, with your back to the sun, you can tell the time. While now peaceful, the stream through the park was once a hive of activity providing power to drive the water wheels of a number of corn and scutching mills dotted along its course, and supplying water to a huge millpond that originally dominated the western boundary of the park.

Follow the path towards the striking view of the spire of St Mellan's and cross first bridge. Climb the steps up the slope to the left and follow this path along the stream to the next bridge. Either exit along the pedestrian link to Main Street to the left or stay in the park and follow the path for a short distance to the right then take the first left along the stream following the path to a steep set of steps at the SE corner of the park leading to the Dublin Road. On emerging proceed right.

On the opposite side of the road stands Loughbrickland Reformed Presbyterian Church (16). The church as it is today was built during the 1830s when the congregation that had been meeting in Loughbrickland since 1817 joined with a congregation that formerly met outside the village of Scarva at Drummiller Lane. When the Ordnance Survey Memoirs were being compiled in the 1830s, the church was still undergoing repair and rebuilding costing some £800, but it eventually opened in 1839 when the Rev. Samuel Sims was installed as the first minister.

Proceed along the Dublin Road towards Newry and turn left through the subway under the A1 dual carriageway once more towards the Lakeview Road car park. On emerging from the subway unto the B3 (Grovehill Road), turn left and proceed a short distance to the old school building on left.

This fine building set in a most attractive location looking towards Loughbrickland Lake was once Aghaderg School (17). Built as the Glebe School by the Church of Ireland in 1825 it served all denominations and remained in use as a school until the 1950s. In 1981 the school was restored and became the Parish Hall. It stands just across the Aghaderg Road from the gates of the old Aghaderg Glebe House (18) which was built in 1801 and enlarged in 1857 during the residency of Jeffry Lefroy, Dean of Dromore and Pastor of this Parish from 1836 to 1885. As a young man, his father, Thomas Langlois Lefroy of Carigglass Manor, Co. Longford was linked romantically with the writer Jane Austen and may have inspired the character of Mr Darcy in 'Pride and Prejudice'. Aghaderg Glebe was eventually sold in 1950 after which it was fully restored to the fine residence it is now. (It should be noted that there is no access to this private property.)

Retrace steps to Lakeview Road and return to car park.

The A1 Dual Carriageway (19) is the most recent development to again radically change life in Loughbrickland. It was built in the 1970s to redirect the rapidly increasing amount of traffic on the Belfast to Dublin road away from the centre of the village and return a sense of rural calm and tranquillity to the place. In a way it has also brought expansion to the village by creating much easier access to major employment centres and, therefore, allowing people to live in more peaceful rural surroundings.