

A Decade of Celebrating Heritage of Bantry

Bantry Historical & Archaeological Society has organised events for Heritage Week for just over the past ten years. There has been huge local support for all these events, with large crowds attending. This year, 2020, we look back over these events

Heritage Week 2019 - Culture and Creativity in Bantry

An evening of celebration of rich local heritage and culture of Borlinn, Coomhola, Kealkil and Mealagh valleys beside Bantry Bay, with singers and storytellers, and host John Greene of C103 Radio.

This most enjoyable evening held in Bantry Library with capacity crowd showcased the rich culture and talent of these rural havens from seashore to mountain tops, overlooking Bantry Bay. A social consisting of songs/poetry written about the Bantry area, storytelling, readings from the Schools Folklore Collection of 1937/39, written by the school children of these valleys who walked barefoot to school, plus small craft display, thus linking the past with the present, and creating a sense of belonging to place, and getting to know ourselves.



This event formed part of our 2019 project which was supported by Cork County Council/Creative Ireland Programme 2019. Included in photo: Vincent Crowley, N O'Leary, Mayor of Co Cork Cllr C O'Sullivan, Seán Ó Sé, Conor Nelligan, Cllr Holly Cairns, and participating residents from the valleys.

Please see <https://bantryhistorical.com/localhistory>

Heritage Week 2018 - The Doonour Stone Mould and its significance in Early Bronze Age metalworking



Reproduced with kind permission of the National Museum of Ireland

This amazing archaeological object was the subject of a talk delivered by Ms. Sharon Weadick, Assistant Keeper, Antiquities Division, National Museum of Ireland. The talk in Bantry Library was preceded by the official launch of the Societies exhibition - Bantry Through the Ages - by the Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Patrick Gerard Murphy

Heritage Week 2017 – What it Said in the Newspapers

We delved into Irish newspapers to discover what made the news in Bantry 100 years and 150 years ago and presented a public event focused on these small stories of ordinary life. With period costumes and spirited performances we recreated a glimpse of life in Bantry from times gone by.



The theme of this year's Heritage Week was Nature, which chimed brilliantly with the Ellen Hutchins Festival activities. We were delighted once again to be part of this award-winning festival which took place in Bantry, Glengarriff, Kealkil and Ballylickey. The final event of the week was the wonderful Whiddy Island Seaweed Event with a huge attendance, exploring our natural heritage.

Heritage Week 2016 – Traditional Basket-making Workshop

This was tutored by well-known, local and professional basket-maker, Martin O'Flynn

It was fully booked out. Participants were thrilled to have opportunity to try their hand at this ancient craft.



Bantry Remembers 1916 - 1921

As part of the 1916 national commemorations we published a book “Bantry Remembers 1916-1921” which details the events leading up to 1916, mentions the Uprising in Dublin, and all the details of who did what in Bantry at Easter 1916, as well as the following years right up to the Truce in July 1921.



During Heritage Week 2016 the book was launched in Bantry Library by Conor Nelligan, Heritage Officer with Cork Co Council.

Photo L to R: Jenny Dempsey, Design, Denis O’Sullivan, Title of Book, Angela O’Donovan, Cathaoirleach Bantry Historical, Conor Nelligan, Heritage Officer, Noel O’Mahony, Senior Executive Librarian, Bantry Library.

Heritage Week 2015



Bantry Historical Society, together with Madeline Hutchins and Clare Heardman of NPWS initiated Ellen Hutchins Festival, celebrating the life and works of Bantry woman, Ellen Hutchins, Irelands First Female Botanist.

See www.ellenhutchins.com This Festival was the winner of “Hidden Heritage” category awarded by the Heritage Council of Ireland.

Photo shows Angela O’Donovan, Cathaoirleach Bantry Historical Society, Clare Heardman, Conservation Ranger, NPWS, Michael Parsons, Chairman Heritage Council and Madeline Hutchins, Researcher on Ellen Hutchins.

Heritage Week 2014:

Knitting Workshop in Bantry Library – led by Mary Sharkey of **Bantry Yarns & Goretti Sheehan**. This workshop attracted young and old, male and female. Some of the attendance learned the traditional art of knitting at this workshop and have continued to enjoy creating garments ever since.



Celebrating Bantry Heritage & Seaweed by Sally McKenna at Gerahies on the south side of Bantry Bay. Sally, a Seaweed specialist and food writer, gave an inspiring talk on the health-benefits of seaweed, guidance on foraging for seaweed, and we learned much about how seaweed formed part of our heritage food, used in times past near the shores of Bantry Bay and elsewhere.



Heritage Week 2013 - The Development of Bantry Town:



Three centuries of tourist and travellers' descriptions, 1650 – 1950 by Dr Richard Butler. This was an excellent and informative talk in which he gave us many glimpses of what life was like here in Bantry during that era.

Heritage Week 2012 Carriganass Castle and Kealkil Stone Circle.

Aine Brosnan, Archaeologist, dressed appropriately in a colourful 16th century costume, coinciding with the era of the castle outlined the history of this recently conserved building. We also visited Kealkil Stone Circle where we learned it is not just a stone circle but much much more. Aine's archaeological talk here was absolutely inspiring.



Heritage Week 2011 We moved out to more rural surrounds of Bantry in search of heritage. Liaising with Clare Heardman of NPWS, we organised a series of five different Heritage Walks:-

1. Abbey Sculpture Garden to Blue Hill former Coastguard Station
2. Newtown 16th century Fort and shoreline walk to Newtown cross
3. Cnoc na Bhfiach hill walk with megalithic tomb
4. Mealagh Valley wood – natural heritage including megalithic tomb,
5. Ecclesiastical walk of Bantry town including site of first Catholic Church and first Church of Ireland building dating back to early 1700's.

Heritage Week 2010

Bantry Historical Society focused on the newly documented Heritage Walks of Bantry with Clare Heardman, Conservation Officer with NPWS. This involved five different events-

- A. Former Railway Line, old station and Béicín Walk
- B. Bantry's Pre-Famine Docks (sand quays), Blackrock, Árd na mBráthar, Kilnaruane Pillar, and down the back walk-way to Bantry House for bat watching / listening at the East stables.
- C. Guided walk past Priest's Leap Stone (monument of Penal Times) along old road to Donemark Mills and more bats!
- D. Walk to the Mass Rock and old well at Beach hearing all the local history and folklore of that side of town
- E. Guided heritage walk of Bantry town.

Kilnaruane Pillar Stone 2009

This iconic shaft of High Cross located on high ground overlooking Bantry Bay was the subject of a talk by Canon Liam Leader including an interesting interpretation of each of the carvings on this historic pillar stone. On a very wet Sunday during Heritage Week 2009, Canon Liam led a guided walk from Westlodge Hotel to this pillar stone.



The large crowd was very appreciative of his insights on this matter. Bantry is hugely indebted to Canon Liam, not just for the second level school that he initiated and ran for several years, providing secondary education for boys of the area, but for raising awareness of this ancient monument – Kilnaruane Pillar Stone. An interpretative panel provided nearby by O.P.W. gives much information.

L to R Rory O’Callaghan, Former Mayor of Bantry, with Canon L Leader and Dr James Hourihane at Kilnaruane Pillar Stone. Dr James with his brother Dr Colum Hourihane wrote a detailed article which was published in Journal of Cork Historical & Archaeological Society. More recently, members of CHAS visited Kilnaruane Pillar Stone on a summer outing organised by Flor Hurley, with Dr Colum Hourihane as speaker at Kilnaruane. See photo below.

