





Breathtaking New Sculpture for Bessbrook

October saw the launch of Bessbrook's 'Flax Flower' sculpture by artist Alan Burke. The flax plant was key to the growth of the linen industry in the area and without it, Camlough river may have run its course largely unnoticed and undoubtedly Bessbrook would be a very different place today.

At the launch Chairperson Councillor Naomi Bailie said, "It's said that Art has the ability to reach across boundaries, inspiring, teaching and bringing people together. This project has shown that is true with people from all ages and backgrounds coming together for these two pieces of art in Bessbrook and Camlough. We know that art makes a positive difference to communities and I am very happy to be here today to launch the latest public art for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council."

Rosemary Mulholland, Chairperson of the Bessbrook Heritage Group said, "With the demise of linen production in the mid 1900s, fields of blue-flowered flax no longer appear in our countryside. Most people have never seen the one plant which was essential to the creation of villages like Bessbrook. This amazing sculpture will be a constant reminder and celebration of the flax which was grown throughout the Bessbrook and Camlough areas, spun and woven here in the Mill and exported all over the world."

Lúnasa Festival Highlights



During August we hosted our inaugural Lúnasa Festival, which had an event running, somewhere in the Ring of Gullion, every day in August. We had music, arts and crafts, a Fleadh Rua, story telling, lectures and guided walks; all of which celebrated the rich heritage and landscape of the Ring of Gullion. We hope you enjoy the selection of photos from the festival and we hope to see you next year.

If you have any suggestions for events for Lúnasa Festival 2016, we'd love to hear from you. Contact us by email, alison.henderson@newryandmourne.gov.uk.











Permissive Paths or Rights of Way, different routes to the same destination

The Carlingford to Omeath Greenway is one of the most popular new tourist attractions and local amenities in our wider area and is located just over the border from the Ring of Gullion. Plans are currently being worked on to extend it into Newry, along the Newry Ship Canal (and into the Landscape Partnership area), where it would connect with the Newry to Portadown canal towpath. You may well have walked it yourself already. What you might not have realised is that this fabulous new facility is not a 'normal' public right of way, instead it was developed as a 'permissive path'. This approach enabled Louth County Council to work very efficiently and effectively with local landowners to develop this amazing resource in a remarkably short timescale.

While the existing network of Rights of Way forms an excellent resource, there are sometimes situations where an extra link can greatly improve the path network. The creation of new links between existing rights of way in the Ring of Gullion area might also best be done by agreeing permissive paths, like the Greenway, which has already breathed new life into many cafés, B&B's and small businesses along its route. The creation of a new, formal public right of way along the old railway line might have taken years (or even decades) to negotiate, whereas a 'permissive path' designation allowed this project to hit the ground running (or walking or cycling!).

It is fully understood that landowners have to take care of their land and other property, including stock, which is how they make their living. While most farmers are keen to support projects that provide benefit to their own local community, many have genuine worries. Some are concerned about creating precedents or 'burdens' that might cause them, or their heirs, problems in the future, perhaps by limiting their freedom of operation on their own land. Providing public access to land can cause farmers anxiety about farm safety and security, including trespassing, theft, insurance claims and disturbance of stock by dogs, so it is important to farmers to retain as much control as possible if new paths are proposed.

Creating a 'Permissive Path', rather than a RoW, allows a landowner to experience the 'feel good' factor that comes from supporting the local community and tourism industry while still retaining control over the route. This can be done through imposing conditions on occasional closure and usage in ways that could not be done under a formal dedication as a permanent and unalienable public right of way. Two classic examples of how this can work are: the facility for the landowner to close the path on certain days e.g. the Carlingford Greenway is closed on Christmas Day every year, and/or the facility to route a path down different sides of a field boundary one year as compared with another, as cropping arrangements change. This highly flexible arrangement is a benefit not lost on most landowners

Some walkers' groups may have concerns that a voluntary and impermanent arrangement is a poor substitute



for a permanent right of way but countryside access management is, like any other form of management, 'the pursuit of the attainable' and sometimes 'the best is the enemy of the good'. The aim is to allow people access to land and if an arrangement such as a permissive path works for both landowners and walkers then that is an ideal solution. After all, rights of way (RoWs) and permissive paths are two different routes to the same destination, which is improved and agreed access to privately-owned land.

Could permissive paths be a way forward in the Ring of Gullion too? Would they help us improve access while avoiding the 'RoWs'? What do you think? Are you a landowner with worries about providing public access to your land? Do you support the use of Permissive Paths as a consensus building method of getting people out and into the countryside? Let us know your thoughts, email abby.mcsherry@newryandmourne.gov.uk.

Built Heritage

Dr Eileen Murphy a Senior Lecturer in the School of Geography Archaeology Palaeoecology Oueen's University Belfast kicked off ou Built Heritage Survey project with a lecture in Tí Chulainn on "Reading our past – Gravevard memorials in Ireland and North America." This was then followed up by graveyard training in the 6th November; by studying their form, decorative symbols and the contents of epitaphs it is possible for us to 'read' these memorials, each of which is a unique record of named individuals of the past and their wider communities. By studying the monuments we can gain insights about their attitudes towards death and the afterlife, social strategies and ambitions, occupations and personal tragedies. The trainees will survey their respective graveyards over the winter and the Ring of Gullion team will digitise this in the spring and make it available on the website.

Michael J. Murphy Winter School

This is the third Winter School in honour of Michael J.Murphy and this year the theme is 'A Sense of Place', which is appropriate to his memory. Michael J.Murphy was born in Liverpool, but came home to Dromintee when he was not yet nine years old.

He went to Dromintee Primary School; left school at fourteen years old and went to work in the fields around Slieve Gullion; began to collect the stories of the people; started to write articles for the newspapers and periodicals; began a career in broadcasting and when his first book 'At Slieve Gullion's Foot' was published in 1941 he began to work for The Irish Folklore Commission throughout 'Old Ulster', from Rathlin to the Boyne and from Sligo to the Ards in Co. Down. By the time of his retirement in 1983 he had compiled the largest collection of oral tradition ever collected by a single individual in the English-speaking world. He published ten books and amassed a huge photographic collection.

The Winter School, begins in Dromintee GAA club on Wednesday, November 18th at 8pm, where his very detailed survey of Dromintee Parish in the spring of 1942 will be unveiled for the first time with the kind permission of The Department of Irish Folklore, University College, Dublin.

On Friday, November 20th, and on Saturday, November 21st, in Ti Chulainn Cultural Centre, a number of eminent speakers will address the theme 'A Sense of Place'. These include Joe Mahon (Lesser Spotted Ulster); Aine Ni Neachtain (University College, Cork); Donna Traynor (BBC News Presenter); Bernadette McAliskey (Community activist and former Mid-Ulster MP); Linda Ervine (East Belfast Irish Language Development Officer); Cathleen O'Neill (Dublin City Community activist); Frances Black (Singer and CEO of The Rise Foundation); Colm Donnelly (QUB Archaeologist) and Donal McAnallen (GAA writer based in the O'Fiaich Library). There will be music on both nights with Paula Flynn and Bothan. So look out for the detailed programme which will be available in local retail outlets, in the press and on social media.





Local company wins prestigious design award

Local company, Wibble Web Design & Development has won a DANI award – Northern Ireland's premier digital industry awards for its work on the revamp of the Ring of Gullion's new website. At the DANI Awards Black Tie dinner the website won highly commended in the 'Not for profit' category and went through a stringent shortlisting process to be chosen.

Paudie Fearon, owner of Wibble Web Design was delighted with the nomination. "For a new, local business to, firstly, win the tender for the project and then to be nominated for such a prominent award is amazing. We were up against some tough competition but are extremely pleased that the hard work put into the project has been recognised with the award"

Chairperson Councillor Naomi Bailie said, "The new Ring of Gullion website was launched earlier this year and it has been a resounding success. It's absolutely great for the district to have such an asset, and to have a great website to raise awareness. This site, and the work carried out by the Ring of Gullion team ensure the area is protected and growth is sustainable."

Visitors to the site have sky rocketed; currently the site is experiencing over 25,000 sessions a month, up from around 500! Early numbers suggest visitors to the area are up, attendance at events is up, and feedback from local business, community groups and other stakeholders is extremely positive.

Teenagers discover the Ring of Gullion

Over the summer we trained up our first contingent of volunteer Youth Rangers.

The programme was designed to equip the Youth Rangers with valuable outdoor skills as well as give them a taste of what is involved in environmental management. The Youth Rangers took part in an eight day programme over four weeks. Four days were spent learning

outdoor skills, such as map reading, through adventure activities. The Youth Rangers also gained a recognised first aid qualification. The other four days of the programme gave the Youth Rangers the opportunity to participate in practical conservation work, such as path



Winter Solstice Festival provides opportunity for Ring of Gullion jewel to shine.

With all the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping and preparations, why not take some quiet time out this year and mark the Winter Solstice with a visit to the Slieve Gullion summit and Ireland's highest known

surviving passage tomb, which is aligned to the setting sun of the Winter Solstice. The Ring of Gullion team is hosting a series of events this year from Saturday19th to Tuesday 22nd December, to

year.

Slieve Gullion is a fabulous location to explore by foot. It is full of myths and legends and heritage, through this festival, families can learn more about the area through craft workshops, star gazing and walks.

celebrate the arrival of the shortest day and the turn in the

The ever popular walks to the passage tomb from the 19th to the 22nd Dec will open for booking on the 1st December on the Ring of Gullion website www.ringofgullion.org. Booking is essential as places are limited. These walks are weather dependent and a good level of fitness is needed.

The Hawthorn Suite in Slieve Gullion Forest Park will host a range of very interesting events over the weekend including Accolade choir singing their hearts out on the Sunday 20th and a special treat; The Armagh Rhymer Play on Tuesday 22nd December.

On Monday, for Irish speakers, there will be a treat for anyone interested in world travel and mountain climbing with a walk and talk with Dermot Somers.

To book a place on this free event visit www.ringofgullion.org/events.

maintenance and bracken bashing. Throughout the programme the Youth Rangers were taught about the different environments which make up the Ring of Gullion Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Youth Rangers for their hard work throughout the programme.

The Youth Rangers programme is open to 14 to 17 year olds and is an ideal opportunity for young people who are passionate about the environment or who are considering an environmental career.

The programme will be running until the end of the summer in 2018. If you would like more information on the programme, please visit our website www.ringofgullion.org.





One Million Trees in One Day is a charity and cross-border initiative, which aims to plant a million young native trees at sites right across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland – and all in the space of 24 hours.

The charity is now inviting farmers, smallholders and organisations in Northern Ireland to apply for free trees. The packs1 – which range from five to 500 saplings – will be delivered next February, in readiness for planting later that month on a date to be announced. Applications for the Republic of Ireland will open soon.

Imogen Rabone is the project co-ordinator and says: "Both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are sadly lacking when it comes to woodland and tree cover. This project has big plans to facilitate the planting of much-needed trees and woodland in both rural and urban areas throughout Ireland.

"This is a unique opportunity for farmers and landowners to make their mark; to transform landscapes; and to leave a lasting legacy for future generations."

The initiative has been developed in collaboration with the Irish Natural Forestry Foundation in the Republic of Ireland, with support from the Woodland Trust in Northern Ireland.

Gregor Fulton, operations manager with the Woodland Trust, adds: "This is a fantastic opportunity to be part of a much bigger picture, and to help change landscapes through the simple act of tree planting. Trees and woodland offer so much, from helping to improve water and air quality to providing shelter for crops and livestock. We really hope that local people will give this special project the backing it deserves."

During the project's pilot phase (2013 to 2015), more than 400,000 native trees were planted at over 1,000 different sites across the 32 counties.

Trees are given out free of charge. However the project relies upon support to reach its one million tree target. Landowners applying for trees are encouraged to make donations; businesses are also invited to donate and become local sponsors for trees in their area.

Applications close at midnight on 25 November 2015. Trees will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis. To apply for trees; to make a donation; or to simply find out more visit www.onemilliontreesinoneday.com or contact the Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership team at www.ringofgullion.org





Get involved in the Ring of Gullion River Watch Project

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is calling for volunteers to join the new Ring of Gullion Riverfly Monitoring Project. Training for the project will take place on Saturday 30th January in Crossmaglen Community Centre at 10.00am. Booking is through the Ring of Gullion website www.ringofgullion. org. Taking part in the project will involve monthly surveying in the Ring of Gullion area using a three-minute health check with riverflies as a barometer for water quality examining the abundance of pollution sensitive riverfly larvae.

The Ring of Gullion has joined a national scheme, The Riverfly Partnership, to monitor water quality in the area's rivers. Volunteers will be trained how to sample and identify the invertebrate life present in the gravel and silt on the river bed. Many of these tiny creatures are sensitive to pollution so their presence and numbers help indicate the quality of the water.

The project will enable statutory bodies such as the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to respond quickly to sudden, severe water quality issues such as pesticide spills. Frequent sampling also acts as a neighbourhood river watch scheme deterring would-be polluters. In addition to helping address actute pollutions events, volunteers will also have the potential to make a significant contribution to long term plans, for example local delivery of Water Framework Directive outcomes.

The training will be provided in partnership with the Ballinderry Rivers Trust, the Riverfly Partnership and Northern Ireland Environment Agency. This training is free and supported by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership, and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

If you would like to get involved in the training, book your place through the website www.ringofgullion. org or call into the office in Crossmaglen Community Centre, O'Fiaich Square, Crossmaglen, BT35 9AA Tel:-(028) 3082 8590.

To find out more about the National Riverfly Partnership visit http://www.riverflies.org/.





Wild Flowers of South Armagh

The County Armagh Wildlife Society will be carrying out an exciting wildflower project in this area over the next few months in partnership with the Ring of Gullion AONB, Butterfly Conservation Northern Ireland, the Council's Biodiversity Officer and the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland. This project has been

made possible by the Northern Ireland

Environment Agency's Challenge Fund which supports people in helping the environment and will be aimed at educating people about the wildflowers and butterflies that are found in South Armagh. The partners will work together to create ID guides for these species and train volunteer recorders in surveying, as well as working with community groups and schools to increase their awareness of local biodiversity. It is hoped that this project will help to give us a better idea of the condition of local habitats, what needs to be done to protect them, as well as encouraging more people to get involved in conservation.

For more information on the County Armagh Wildlife Society visit: http://www.armaghwild.org.uk/

Big Garden Birdwatch

Wildlife doesn't have to be rare and elusive to

count and a huge amount of information about the health of our environment can be got from something as simple as watching and recording the birds in our garden. Recently a group gathered in Crossmaglen as part of our "What's about in the Wild" series of events to learn about the common birds of our neighbourhoods and to make some simple bird feeders. We will also be learning about the easy ways to record your wildlife sightings at a Citizen Science event on 19th November at Crossmaglen Community Centre (see www.ringofgullion.org/events to book) and in January we will be running a Big Garden Birdwatch over the weekend of 30-31st January to encourage the people of Gullion to join in with the RSPB's National annual bird count. In 2015 over half a million people counted more than 8.5 million birds. With over 585,000 pairs of eyes spending an hour counting birds in their garden the results happily showed an increase in numbers of a majority of the Top 20 types of birds.

To encourage more birds into your garden for you to count for the Big Birdwatch now is the time to start feeding. If birds find a reliable source of food they will keep returning and it is interesting to know that if you see, for example, one blue tit on your feeder you are probably feeding more than 10 individuals during a single day. While putting out peanuts, seeds and scraps is great, it is vital for the health of the birds that the feeding station is cleaned every now and then to prevent Trichomonosis a disease which has caused our Greenfinch numbers to crash. As important as the food is a good source of clean water, for drinking and washing – and you don't need an expensive bird bath, an upturned bin lid or roasting tray is just as good. In fact our recycling bin can be a great source of bird feeders, an old yoghurt pot tied upside down and filled with lard and seeds is far cheaper than buying fatballs from the supermarket and an old lemonade bottle or milk carton can make a great peanut feeder. See www.ringofgullion.org/how-to-help for how make these.

Budding photographers showcase the Ring of Gullion area

Newry Mourne and Down District Council and the Ring of Gullion AONB project hosted their annual photography competition with this year's theme 'The World around us in the Ring of Gullion".

The 2 categories were under 14's and over 14's. The overall winner of the competition was John McCabe. Patrick Roe won the under 14's category. The winning prize was £100 towards camera equipment of the winner's choice with the runners up receiving compact pro-tripods. The top pictures were chosen by a panel of judges made up of Darren Rice, the Landscape Partnership Manager, Cllr Naomi Bailie, the



Ring of Gullion and Cooley Pine Marten Den Box Scheme

The Ring of Gullion and Cooley Red Squirrel Group is involved in a new project, made possible by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Challenge Fund, which hopes to learn more about pine martens in the local area by creating artificial dens for them. This will be a first of its kind project for Northern Ireland and will be in partnership with the Ring of Gullion team, Queens University Belfast and Quercus.

Earlier this year the Northern Ireland pine marten and squirrel survey observed that grey squirrels were less likely to occur in areas where pine martens are found and so they could help to conserve the red squirrel population. In addition to this, the pine marten is a European Protected Species that has struggled in Northern Ireland due to the lack of suitable forest for them, so promoting their recovery here is important.

The pine marten dens will be created with help from the Clanrye Group and then placed in suitable locations throughout the area, which will be decided upon with guidance from Dr David Tosh who worked on the NI survey. The project also hopes to increase the local community's awareness of wildlife issues, particularly those involving pine martens and red squirrels, by placing web cams on the den boxes and holding events at schools.

To find out more about the red squirrel group visit: www.ringofgullion.org

Chairperson of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Patrick McShane, Environmental Co-ordinator.

Members of the public will be able to enjoy and view the photographs entered in the competition on the Ring of Gullion website and in the 2016 Ring of Gullion Calendar, available from the Ring of Gullion office (limited numbers).



What's on!

When	What	Where
Saturday 14th November, 9.15am – 4.45pm	Reflections on the Revolution in Ulster	Cardinal Ó Fiaich Library & Archive, Armagh
Saturday 14th November, 10.00am – 4.00pm	GPS training	Crossmaglen Community Centre
Wednesday 18th November, 2.00pm – 5.00pm	Business Development on the Farm	Bus leaving from Crossmaglen Community Centre
Wednesday 18th November to Saturday 21st November, 8.00pm	Micheal J Murphy Winter School 2015	Dromintee GAA club and Ti Chulainn Cultural Centre
Tuesday 24th November, 7.00pm – 9.00pm	Thinking of setting up a new business? Go for It Programme will help you develop your business plan	Forkhill Women's Centre
Saturday 28th November, 10.00am - 4.00pm	Skeletons in the cupboard – Winter Tree ID	Derrymore Park
Saturday 28th November, 11.00am - 3.00pm	Vegetation clearance and restoration of the inside of the church	St. Jude's Church, Church Rock, Camlough
Monday 30th November, 7.00pm – 9.00pm	Having problems with rushes? CAFRE are looking at different rush control methods	Jonesborough Pastoral Centre
Tuesday 1st December, 7.30pm – 9.30pm	Citizen Science – Making your wildlife count	Crossmaglen Community Centre
Saturday 19th - Tuesday 22nd December	Winter Solstice	Booking available from 1st December
2nd January 11.00am — 4.00pm	Wild Plant Hunt	Starting at Victoria Lock and ending in Slieve Gullion Forest Park
23rd January, 6th February, 20th February	Conservation Volunteer Day	See website for locations
26th January	Launch of Ring of Gullion Photography Competition	See website
Sat 30th January, 10.00am – 4.00pm	Riverfly Monitoring Training	Crossmaglen Community Centre
13th February	Make a nest box for your garden	Jonesborough
27th February	Townlands Celebration Event	See Website
1st March	Applications for Youth Ranger programme	See Website

For even more events, to book and for more information check www.ringofgullion.org

Forest Service Schemes

Forest Expansion Scheme

- We will support you in the creation of native woodland
- You will **RETAIN YOUR BASIC FARM PAYMENT** (formerly the Single Farm Payment) for 30 years
- You will receive 10 years of Woodland Payments
- 100% OF ESTABLISHMENT COSTS including trees, planting, fencing, ALSO maintenance of new woodland for a number of years during establishment period. E.g. replacement of trees etc.
- The minimum area is 5ha in one single block of broadleaf and

Native Woodland Tree Planting Grant (due to open 2016-2017)

- Aims to support landowners in the creation of native woodland between 0.15 - 5ha
- This will be a standard grant payment and should be open for applications in the 2016-17 planting season, check www. ringofgullion.org for updates

Woodland Investment Grant

For improving woodland resilience and environmental value (restocking, restructuring, invasive species control and public amenity access).

Woodland Trust Schemes

Trees for Farms

- Free support for farmers interested in creating farm shelter belts, riparian strips, pasture trees, agro forestry schemes
- **UP TO 100% FUNDING AVAILABLE**

GULLION'S GREEN WOODLAND SCHEMES

One Million Trees Giveaway Scheme 2015-16 (free tree giveaway for landowners)

- FREE NATIVE TREES AND HEDGING FOR SELF-PLANTING (minimum order of 50 trees)
- This scheme is ideal for landowners who:
 - Have small areas of land they would like to plant or who just want to plant a small number of trees scattered around their
 - Want to under plant or extend existing woodland
 - Improve the resilience of their lands for future generations (i.e. help strengthen riverside banks, provide shelter for livestock and buildings, timber for firewood, water retention and improved grass growth)
 - Want to create a small orchard
 - Want to improve the wildlife value of their lands

Resilient Landscapes Scheme (Future proofing)

- With the potential that **Ash Dieback** will over kill over 95% of our Ash trees this means approx. 50% of our hedgerow trees may disappear. This scheme will provide free trees and tree guards for landowners to plant into their hedgerows. This project seeks to reduce negative visual, shelter and biodiversity impacts of potentially losing so many of our trees in the future.
- Book onto our hedgerow renovation training via www.ringofgullion.org
- FREE TREES AND GUARDS, numbers limited.

Gullion's Garden Tree Giveaway 2015-16

- **FREE TREE PACKS** consisting of 4 native trees suitable for gardens
- Pick up points will be organised at selected locations in the Ring of Gullion in early March 2016 (venue and date to be confirmed, please contact the Ring of Gullion LPS closer to the time)
- Register by contacting Alison Henderson in the Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership Scheme on 028 3082 8594.















