

The Ring of Gullion

A Newsletter for the Ring of Gullion
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and
The Landscape Partnership Scheme

ISSUE 20
Winter 2019

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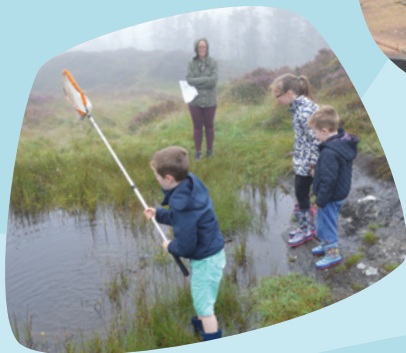


Summer Highlights

Another busy summer is behind us, and before we look forward to what is coming up this autumn and winter, here are a few of the summer highlights.

We were joined by another enthusiastic group of Youth Rangers, who spent eight days learning all about the Ring of Gullion, having adventures and helping to conserve our beautiful area.

The summer season finished with another successful Ring of Gullion Lúnasa Festival. Roary the dinosaur and friends, visited us once again at the Geotastic Extravaganza and we had excellent turn outs at our guided bus tours, hikes and walks.



Ring of Gullion Winter Solstice Festival 2019

The Winter Solstice Festival, which takes place throughout November and December, has a magical programme of events showcasing all that is great about the Ring of Gullion area with a range of lectures, music, and craft workshops.

On Friday 1 November, the Festival will feature a coach tour highlighting the Celtic footprints in the area, traditionally known as Samhain. In Celtic Ireland, about 2,000 years ago, Samhain was the division of the year between the lighter half (summer) and the darker half (winter).

On the 2 and 3 November in Killeavy Castle, experience 'Hunter's Moon of Airgialla', a theatrical fusion of drama, poetry, music, song and dance, celebrating the 18th century poets, myths and legends of Creggan and the lands of Oriel. This new Irish stage-play was written by Rosemary Tumilty. The play is set in the hallowed grounds of Creggan graveyard, on a chilly All Hallows' Eve. There will be a drinks reception and traditional music by Dara Vallely, on arrival.

Colleen Savage is currently working on some new song recordings and will be releasing a self-penned Christmas Song this winter. We also hear that she is doing her own version of John Spillane's 'Slieve Gullion', which he wrote and sang for us, as part of the Ring of Gullion Lúnasa Festival 2018. Keep an eye on our website for events which will feature these songs during the Festival.

The Festival is part of the Mourne, Gullion, Strangford Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark activity programme.

For the full programme, check out the Ring of Gullion website: www.ringofgullion.org/events





Michael J Murphy Winter School

This year's Winter School, in honour of Michael J Murphy, will focus on the literature, music and songs of Oriel.

Michael J Murphy was born in Liverpool but came home to Dromintee when he was eight years old. He went to Dromintee Primary School and left school at fourteen, when he went to work in the fields around Slieve Gullion. Once there, he began to collect the stories of the people, started to write articles for the newspapers and periodicals, and began a career in broadcasting. 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 on Friday 15 November at 7.30pm in Tí Chulainn, Mullaghbane, with a concert from some of the outstanding talent of the area, including

Blaithín Mhic Cána, Gareth Doran and Pádraig Carragher with South Armagh Traditional Arts Partnership. Gearóid Trimble will provide background on the music, song and poetry. All the artists are influenced by the area's rich musical tradition. Admission £5.

On Saturday 16 November, there will be several talks on the literature in Oriel, starting at 2.30pm:

- Charlie Dillon on 'Peadar Ó Doirnín (1700-1769): The Poet and his Poetry';
- Kevin Murphy on 'Peter Donnelly of Lislea: Prose Writer, Poet, Playwright, Translator, Political Campaigner, Classical Scholar and Businessman';
- author, Laurence McKeown, will read from and discuss, his latest collection 'Threads';
- author, Marie McCartan, will read from and discuss her latest novel, 'On the Border'; and
- the day will finish with a forum on 'The Literature of Oriel', chaired by Una Walsh.

Admission £5.

Landscape Partnership Scheme Legacy

As the Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership Scheme's (RoGLPS) five-year delivery phase draws to a close, we have been reflecting on the work that has gone into delivering the outcomes from the Landscape Conservation Action Plan and celebrating all that has been achieved.

Throughout the past five years the Partnership has always had an eye on the legacy of the projects; but over the past few months preparation has intensified, and a detailed Legacy Plan has emerged. The RoGLPS legacy phase starts afresh on 1 January 2020 and will continue for at least ten years.

The 10-year legacy phase has a budget to maintain countryside furniture, the tree nursery, reprint brochures and distribute them. More importantly the team will maintain the extensive outreach with the many hundreds of stakeholders with whom a close relationship has been built up over the past five years.

Once the Legacy Plan has been recommended for approval by the RoGLPS Board, and agreed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, it will be published, and a programme of outreach

will take place early in 2020 to update all the stakeholders on the detail of the Legacy Plan.

Chairperson of the RoGLPS, Des Murphy said, "From when I started working with the Partnership back in 2012, until now, it has been an eye-opener as to what goes on in the area. I am so glad to have been part of the Landscape Partnership, and it's not just me saying this, but the external evaluation report too; it has been such a success for South Armagh. I really look forward to being involved over the next ten years too."

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson, Councillor Charlie Casey said, "The news of this grant back in 2014 was truly welcome. Well done to all involved in delivering such a worthwhile project which has helped our continued efforts in both sustaining and transforming the landscape and heritage of this area. I look forward to the next ten years of the legacy phase and have no doubt the Partnership will deliver it with the same gusto as they did the delivery phase."



South Armagh Lace Collective – Working to Commemorate 'Bride Ship Lasses'

The South Armagh Lace Collective (SALC) are a group of lace-makers based in the wider Culloville area. The group was set up in the autumn of 2018 with the aim of promoting the rich heritage and tradition of lace-making, which dates back to the early 1830s.

The Collective have had a very busy first year running a series of lace-making workshops and classes, as well as a large community event to celebrate 'International Lace Day' on 6 July. They have been involved in a number of very successful collaborations, which have resulted in the making of a short film entitled 'The Threads that Bind Us' and the development of an All-Ireland Lace Trail website.

The SALC are embarking on another exciting collaboration in October, with artist Christina Henri, from Tasmania. Christina is the creative inspiration behind the international 'Roses from the Heart Memorial' project. This project seeks to commemorate the lives of

the young, single girls and women who were shipped to Australia in the mid-1800s, under the Earl Grey Famine Scheme. Between the years 1848-50 there were 4,175 girls and women who left Ireland from the workhouses, to a country where most of the population was male. Many were orphans, but the sad fact was that many of these girls' families had no means of survival outside of the workhouse. The ships they travelled on were later referred to as 'Bride Ships'.

This current project will run over the winter months between October and December. It will involve making and decorating mid-19th-century bonnets for individual girls from counties Armagh, Louth and Monaghan. These bonnets will feature in a large commemorative event in May/June 2020 in Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin, where many of the girls set sail. Visit 'The South Armagh Lace Collective' Facebook page for more details.

Celebrating Volunteers

At the Celebrate Ring of Gullion end-of-project event the Ring of Gullion Partnership celebrated and thanked, two new 200-hour volunteers: Anne Fegan and Órlaith Rice as well as nine new 100-hour volunteers: Anna Rice, Conor Shields, Divij Prajapati, Isabella Collins, John-Patrick Donaghy, Paddy McBride, Pádraig O'Hanlon, Ria Prajapati and Róisín Gray.

Volunteers play a vital role within the Partnership, many of our projects simply would not have been delivered without the dedication of volunteers such as those above. Volunteers assist with event preparation and delivery, running the tree nursery and carrying out practical conservation.

There are many benefits to volunteering with us and we have opportunities to suit those who can only give a few hours every so often, to those looking for regular weekly volunteering. Volunteering outdoors is a kind of green therapy; we spend a lot of time surrounded by nature,

which is scientifically proven to reduce stress and boost your immune system. Cutting down unwanted cherry laurel and rhododendron with hand tools is an excellent outlet for pent up anger and stress, not to mention a good work out. Through volunteering longer term you can develop new skills which can boost your job prospects, make new friends, as well as make a difference for the better to your local environment and community.

For upcoming Saturday volunteering opportunities, check out www.ringofgullion.org/events or email volunteer@ringofgullion.org for information about weekday opportunities.



Paddy McBride 100-hour volunteer



Anne Fegan 200-hour volunteer



Slieve Gullion Summit Path Completed

Over the last few months you may have noticed large bags of stone and aggregate on the slopes and summit of Slieve Gullion. These deliveries were organised by the ASCENT path team to facilitate erosion control and path work on the route from the car park to the cairn. Working with volunteers and a temporary contract group, they were able to repair key sites previously identified in the Strategic Path Review.

Path contractors, McGowan Ltd, began work on the summit plateau and were assisted in constructing a section of sheep wool and aggregate path (sheep's wool is used as a base, then smaller stones are packed on top) across deep peat by the ASCENT Path Team and Partners from Hodda, in Norway; who were over on a study visit in August. McGowans will also be trialling a section of rushes and aggregate path on another section of deep peat. All wool, rushes, aggregate, and stone are sourced locally. Using local materials like wool and rushes reduces the carbon footprint of the materials used and supports local landowners by providing a local buyer.

The path from the cairn to the lake was completed in mid-October, and there will be ongoing maintenance on the path from the car park to the cairn for the rest of the year.

Development of Carrive Forest Community Trail

'Community Trails' connect local people from their doorstep to their local outdoor green spaces and to neighbouring villages and communities.

Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) were commissioned by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to map the current system of community trails in each District Electoral Area (DEA) and identify potential trails for development, aligning to local need and demand.

Extensive consultation has led to Carrive Forest / Glendesha / Slievebrack being identified as a new opportunity for development. The project will look at how the forest could provide better links for both Forkhill and Mullaghbane communities to green spaces.

For more information contact:
Joe Murray (ORNI)
E: j.murray@outdoorrecreationni.com
T: 028 9030 3930



Forging New Links With Mayo

St Mary's Primary School, Mullaghbane, in partnership with the Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership and Dromintee Primary School, were successful in the application for funding from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's Co-operation with Northern Ireland Funding Scheme 2019. This funding has enabled the groups to research the less known historic connection between communities in South Armagh and West Mayo, forged by the Goat Men of South Armagh in the late 1800's. The local primary schools will link with Mulranny National School, Mulranny, Co Mayo, and the Old Goat's Society, Mulranny.

Contemporary efforts to preserve culture, in the form of the Old Irish Goat, has brought these communities together, discovering a historic trade route that symbolises the symbiotic historical links between the entire United Kingdom and Ireland. That connection, being reawakened and renewed, through common history will support culture-based tourism in the future, by giving the pupils of today the skills of the future.

The Old Irish Goat is an icon of living cultural heritage and it is hoped that this project will help to highlight and improve its current critical conservation status by incorporating the Old Irish Goat into local heritage-based tourism.



Pupils will pick up on work already begun in the local community by researching the ancient goats, to learn what distinguishes them from goats farmed today. They will look at areas in our localities where different herds are to be found, for example, on Slieve Gullion, Camlough and Croslieve mountains. They will also research how we can protect them from cross-breeding with modern varieties.

Pupils will use virtual reality technology to reconstruct their village virtually, as it was in a chosen year, such as 1850, and follow the route the goat herders would have taken through their village. These reconstructions will be used for 'Virtual Goat Walks' to enable visitors to learn about the goats and take a virtual walk through the recreated villages of the past, thereby promoting their conservation via tourism.

The project will finish with members of the Mulranny school and community visiting the Ring of Gullion to share learning on both sides.

To find out more about the goats in the Ring of Gullion, search for 'Old Irish Goats' on the Ring of Gullion website.

Gullion Wellness – Four local women create new wellness venture

The beautiful and peaceful landscape of the Ring of Gullion lends itself to mindfulness, healing and wellness. Four local women, recognising this, came together in June 2019 to establish Gullion Wellness; a company promoting self-care through a diverse range of retreats and workshops.

The purpose of Gullion Wellness is to support and encourage people to look after themselves and to inspire everyone to live a more content and stress-free life. They offer unique experiences nestled in the valley of Slieve Gullion, itself a natural healing space. The team will

provide support and guidance, nutritious food, guided practices of yoga, mindfulness, body movement and a chance to really immerse yourself in the whole healing experience. All the workshops are designed to bring you that little bit closer to self-compassion and kindness, recognise what it means to you and start to build your own wellness strategies to better manage life's stresses.

For upcoming events and retreats follow them on Facebook at [Gullionwellness](#) or email gullionwellness@outlook.com



Research Just In – Native Predators Have a Good Reputation

For the last three months, the Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership had the pleasure of working alongside work placement student, James Algeo-Orr, a Master's student from Queen's University Belfast. His main purpose was to investigate the public's attitude towards our native predators.

James said, "The Ring of Gullion was the perfect setting for my study as it has seen a resurgence in the numbers of the elusive pine marten, which was once on the brink of extinction in Ireland. Most of my time was spent interviewing members of the public trying to gauge how they feel towards four different types of predatory animals; many thanks to those of you who took the time to chat to me!"

In total, James collected 514 responses and the results are in. Interviewees were asked to identify images of four predators: buzzard, fox, pine marten and kestrel; the fox was the most frequently identified (99%) with the kestrel being the least identified (34%). He also asked respondents factual questions relating to each of the species and most of you answered correctly. So, it seems like you know your stuff about predators here! Attitudes towards the predators were also mainly positive, with the majority of respondents agreeing that the predators are important here and disagreeing that there are too many of them.

James believes that there is more information within the surveys. He will continue to analyse them over the next few months and will keep us updated with any interesting results. Once complete, his report will be uploaded to the Ring of Gullion website.

Ring of Gullion Schools Link with Classrooms in Nepal

Ten schools from across Northern Ireland have linked with classrooms in Nepal for a global education project, which includes St Mary's Primary School (PS), Mullaghbane (cluster leader) and St Patrick's PS, Crossmaglen. They're taking part in Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (CCGL), a Department for International Development and British Council programme, which runs in over 30 countries and aims to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to live and work in a global economy. It provides teachers with the resources and training to teach internationally and as part of this, partnered schools work together on a project focusing on one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and receive funding for reciprocal visits.

In June, Nepalese schools were welcomed to Northern Ireland with an event at Killeavy Castle. The event, which saw the guests greeted with traditional music, dancing and song, also provided a chance to officially launch a joint project between the Northern Irish and Nepalese clusters, which focuses on gender equality. Using digital technology, the schools aim to encourage girls into coding and ensure all pupils receive a quality education.

Speaking about the project was Ciara Crawley, St Mary's International Co-ordinator, she said, "We're delighted to welcome our Nepalese guests to Northern Ireland who we were lucky enough to visit last year. The event was a great way to share and celebrate what we have achieved together so far on this CCGL project and we hope this is a springboard for future collaboration. The pupils love to see international visitors. Through projects like this, not only do they learn about their own country, but also about others and it's so important, especially now, to give them that international outlook."

Schools interested in being part of the CCGL programme can sign-up and find a partner school by going to: www.britishcouncil.org/connectingclassrooms and selecting the part of the programme they are interested in, or by emailing schools@britishcouncil.org

'Women in the Archives' Project Films

From March to June of this year, a group of 25 women from South Armagh came together to complete 26 hours in film-making to create five, spine tingling films, under the common thread of 'South Armagh - Changing the Narrative'. The five film themes are: Songs of the Area, Women Artists, Women in Sport, Women in Farming, and the area's Lace Tradition. The films are now available online and will be shown at several events over the coming months.

This was an amazing project which brought the participants together using the creative arts and digital technologies to fire their imagination and unlock the creativity of participants, whilst exploring contentious history and identity, and promoting reconciliation. The project has helped the women to highlight their own lives and skills, and the outstanding stories from the area. These films showcase women and South Armagh and will help change the narrative around both.

Women in the Archives is a joint initiative between the Linen Hall Library (LHL) and the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) to uncover hidden women's voices from their archives.

Between them, the heritage organisations hold some of the key records and building blocks of women's heritage in Ireland. In partnership with Libraries NI, an exhibition will tour around Northern Ireland, continually evolving and being added to as new groups interact with the subject through interactive community engagement projects.

The 'Women in the Archives' project is part of a larger 'Making the Future' programme. The programme is a cross-border cultural programme which will empower people to use museum collections and archives to explore the past and create a powerful vision for future change. The regional programme is being delivered by a consortium of leading cultural organisations including the Nerve Centre, National Museums NI, PRONI and LHL, supported through €1.82m of EU funding under the PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

To view the films, visit:
<https://tinyurl.com/femaleheritage>

Khale Launches New Website

Khale has a new, beautifully designed website, which you can check out at www.xhale.biz

Khale is run by Ann Ward, one of the Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership's first Ambassadors. The Partnership has been proud to support Khale's development since its inception in 2015, alongside the Tourism Team from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Khale's vision is of deeply connected individuals, communities and organisations, nurtured through the gifts of meditation and the landscape. To that end, Ann uses her skills as a Meditation Coach, Shinrin Yoku (forest bathing) practitioner, Sacred Sites Tour Guide and ambassador, to facilitate meditation, Shinrin Yoku and other immersive experiences; which are designed around the Celtic calendar. All experiences are person-centred and tailored specifically for individuals, groups and the corporate sector.

Check out the website for upcoming experiences and facilities for hire.



News in Brief

1. Hedging, forestry and other tree packs are now available for order from Trees on the Land, visit www.treesontheland.com for details..
2. Now is a good time to collect your own pollinator-friendly wild flower seed to add to your meadow. Knapweed seed is easy to collect and it's a great plant to have in your meadow as it is extremely rich in nectar. To learn more about collecting your own seed locally visit www.pollinators.ie and search for 'Collecting and using pollinator-friendly wild flower seed'



Knapweed flower



Knapweed seed

What's On!

When?	What?	Where?
Events this November		
Friday 1 – Sunday 3, Saturday 23 – Sunday 24 10am–6pm	The 'Art of Wintering' Vedic Art Foundation Course	Bluebell Lane, Mullaghbane
Friday 1 10.30am–4.30pm	Tracing the Footsteps of the Celts in South Armagh Coach Tour	Departs Cross Square Hotel, Crossmaglen
Friday 1 8pm–11pm	Glórtha gCuilinn Singing Circle	Keenan's Bar, Crossmaglen
Saturday 2 11am–3pm	Volunteer Opportunity: Cherry Laurel Clearance	Slieve Gullion Forest Park
Saturday 2 – Sunday 3 7pm–2.30am	Hunter's Moon of Airgialla Play	Killeavy Castle Estate, Meigh
Sunday 3 10am – 12.30pm	Slieve Gullion Runners G8:19 Run	Slieve Gullion Forest Park
Monday 4 November – Monday 17 February 2020 10.30am – 12.30pm	Preparation for Floral Design: NAFAS Level 1 Certificate	Crossmaglen Community Centre
Tuesday 5–Tuesday 26 7pm – 9pm	Fascinator Making Course	Crossmaglen Community Centre
Wednesday 6 Novem- ber – Wednesday 11 December 7pm – 9pm	Genealogy Course: Tracing your family tree	Crossmaglen Community Centre
Thursday 7 November – Thursday 20 February 2020 10.30am–12.30pm	Preparation for Floral Design: NAFAS Level 1 Certificate	Bessbrook Community Centre

Thursday 7 – Thursday 28 7pm–9pm	Fascinator Making Course	Bessbrook Community Centre
Saturday 9 11am – 2.30pm	Feeding your Senses	Old Church of Ireland Church, Jonesborough
Friday 15–Saturday 16 Various times	Michael J. Murphy Winter School 2019	Ti Chulainn, Mullaghbane
Saturday 16 & Saturday 30 11am–3pm	Volunteer Opportunity – Cherry Laurel Clearance	Slieve Gullion Forest Park
Saturday 30 1pm–4pm	Winter Wellness	An Tobar, Finnegan's Nursery, Silverbridge

Events this December

Sunday 1 9am	Bookings open for Cairn Illumination Hikes	www.ringof- gullion.org/ events
Friday 6 8pm – 11pm	Glórtha gCuilinn Singing Circle	Keenan's Bar, Crossmaglen
Saturday 7 11am – 12.30pm	Family Wreath- making Workshop	An Tobar, Finnegan's Nursery, Silverbridge
Wednesday 18, Thursday 19 & Monday 23 2.30pm – 5.30pm	Cairn Illumination Hikes	Slieve Gullion Mountain
Friday 20 2.30pm – 5.30pm	Cairn Illumination Hike as Gaeilge	Slieve Gullion Mountain

These details are correct at the time of printing, however changes can occur.
Please check the website for more events and up to date information
www.ringofgullion.org/events

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Ring of Gullion
Landscape Partnership

