



Fingal's Heritage Trails/Guide Sites
Communicating Fingal's Archaeological Resource

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



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Introduction

There are almost 700 archaeological monuments recorded with Fingal. They represent every aspect of humanity over the past 10,000 years from the shell middens of the earliest settlers to the industry of the nineteenth century. Some sites are highly visible in the landscape; over a quarter of sites are sub-surface; some are inaccessible, many are in private ownership, but all are part of the unique heritage resource of Fingal.

While there has always been interest in learning about these sites, the recognition of the potential of heritage not just as an educational resource but a community and potential tourism and economic resource has been heightened in recent years. Influxes of new people into communities, a desire to connect with the locality and the availability of community funding such as LEADER has meant an increase in the development of heritage trails, the incorporation of heritage signage into recreational trails, and the production of heritage guides for both locals and visitors.

The first step was to try to establish the number of heritage trails existing or development within the county. The next was to determine how the existing information could be used to best advantage. Given the short timeframe a 'virtual' heritage trail was thought to be the most effective. However during the course of the period the FMA contract the Council's Walking & Cycling Projects (WCP) working group was reactivated. This group identified the Fingal Coastal Way, Heritage Town trails in Rush, Skerries, Lusk and Balbriggan and Rural Recreational Trails in Naul village, Balscadden village, Garristown, Ballyboghal, Oldtown and Balrothery Heritage/eco trail. All but the Fingal Coastal Way are community-led.

A number of documents had been prepared by members of the WCP group. National policy, access; health & safety; insurance and even trail width and surfaces have been investigated. However the archaeological resource, both in terms of impact upon sub-surface archaeology by proposed trails and the need to focus on the archaeological built heritage resource. Another issue highlighted was the need for

consistency and quality of information and signage for heritage trails. For example a proposed heritage trail for Balrothery proposes to incorporate 'a Ringfort contemporary with Newgrange'...the ringfort lay where the Rosepark housing is now built' (Recreational Walking Trails November 2011, 20). The former statement is completely inaccurate. Ringforts are the defended farmsteads of the early medieval period (5th-11th centuries AD), Newgrange is the apex of the Neolithic passage tomb tradition, a chronological difference of several thousand years. It would also be useful to highlight that the 'ringfort' was only partially excavated and the open space of Rosepark housing estates is the site of several recorded monuments including the remains of the ringfort and a holy well. It may also be helpful when compiling this heritage trail to make use of the two publications, *Archaeological Excavations at Rosepark, Balrothery* (O'Carroll, 2008) and *Archaeological Excavations at Glebe South and Darcystown, Balrothery* (O'Carroll & Wiggins 2008) relating to the extensive archaeological excavations in this area, perhaps emphasising the lengthy timespan of human activity here.

In light of the above it was thought to provide information regarding the 'top' sites of different types of archaeological monuments within the county-prehistoric, medieval, castles, churches, holy wells, industrial and sculpture. These sites are presented consistently in terms of context, accessibility and other sites in their vicinity. This provides a resource for incorporation into the development. For more information on recorded archaeological monuments see www.archaeology.ie

A Note about Heritage & Trails

The following should be factors in the design and planning of heritage and recreational trails

- Physical impact of the trails on sub-surface archaeological remains. Research on sub-surface remains must extend beyond the RMP-*Assessing Fingal's Geophysical Resource* (Baker 2010) concluded that 63% of study areas that contained no 'known' archaeology produced moderate to highly significant results.
- Visual impact of trails and their attendant signage etc. on archaeological sites and their context.
- Potential benefits of improving access need to be balanced with maintaining the integrity and authenticity of the historic landscape. This requires an understanding

of the significance of the historic landscape. For example, its design and features, architecture, archaeology, historic and cultural associations, scientific or wildlife interest and role as an amenity

- The quality and consistency of information used for the basis of the trails and its signage is paramount to their success
- The National Monument Service, DAHG must be notified in advance of works on or in proximity of a recorded monument or site (RMP).

A Note about Heritage & Signage

Interpretative signage of archaeological and other heritage sites can add significantly to the understanding and enjoyment of the site by visitors; it can highlight the presence and significance of a site thus raising awareness and consequently improving its level of protection; and it can be an important communication and education tool. Equally signage if done carelessly, placed badly or incorporating inappropriate or out-of-date information can have a detrimental effect on a site. For example an ugly interpretation panel on the axis of a key vista can detract from the enjoyment of the view of the landscape.

From Tildens' six principles of interpretation (1957) to the ICOMOS 'Ename' Charter for the Interpretation and presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites (2008) there have been some guiding principles which can be summarised as follows

- The content of an information panel should be based on multi-disciplinary evidence (historical, archaeological, ecological, botanical, architectural etc.) and local traditions and stories that relates directly to the site and its surrounding landscape.
- The content of an information panel should through the use of well-written text and professional graphics to catch the attention; provoke curiosity, increase appreciation and understanding of the site; explain and relate the message and should stimulate further interest.
- The content of an information panel should distinguish the successive phases and uses of a site and the diversity and communities both associated with the site but within the audience/vistors to the site. Interpretation for children requires a fundamentally different approach.
- The design of an information panel should be sensitive to the character, setting and the cultural and natural significance of the site, while remaining easily identifiable.
- The placement of information panels should not be physically or visually intrusive to the site, or its context. Consideration should be given to relationship of the panel and the site; aesthetics, and the suitability of the environment for installation and maintenance.

- The site should not suffer detrimental impact-either physical or visual by the addition of interpretative signage. Foundation holes for signage should not be dug on or in close proximity to an archaeological monument as it may disturb sub-surface archaeological remains. Nor should signage be affixed directly to masonry. Upright 'roadside' type signage is not appropriate.

Sources:

The ICOMOS 'Ename' Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites (2008)

Tilden, F. 1957 *Interpreting Our Heritage*

U.S.D.A. Forest Service Interpretative Signs

www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/implementation/Interpretative-Signs

English Heritage *Easy Access to Historic Landscapes* (2005)

Resources:

Heritage projects undertaken by Fingal County Council

Archer Ltd. 2009 Assessing Fingal's Archaeological Resource

Baker, C. 2011 Managing Fingal's Archaeological; Resource

Baker, C. 2011 Monuments at Risk Update

Baker, C. 2010 Assessing Fingal's Geophysical Resource

Baker, C. 2010 Assessing Ownership: The Archaeological Monuments of Fingal County Council

Baker, C. 2010 Monuments at Risk assessment Report

Bolton, J. 2008 Martello Towers Research Project

Carrig 2011 Fingal Industrial Heritage Survey Phase 1: Desktop survey

Cronin, J. 2010 Fingal Coastal Architectural Heritage Project.

Cronin, J. 2009 Historic Road Bridges Project

CRDS Ltd. 2009 Historic Graveyards Project

Gowen, M. 2007 The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project of the Donabate-Portraine Area

Gowen, M. 2007 The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project of the General Swords Area

Gowen, M. 2009 The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project-Balbriggan & Environs

Nolan, D. 2011 Structural Assessment of Archaeological Monuments in Fingal County Council Ownership

Fingal County Council heritage publications

Baker, C. 2010 *Antiquities of Old Fingal- the archaeology of north County Dublin.*


Baker C. (edt.) 2009 *Axes, Warriors and Windmills: recent archaeological discoveries in north Fingal*


Bolton, J. 2008 *Discovering Historic Fingal*

Clabby, G. et al. 2012 *The Martello Towers of Dublin*

Parkes, M. 2012 *Islands, Coast and Quarries, Fingal's geological heritage*

Prehistoric Sites

	
<p>Bremore Megalithic Cemetery, Balbriggan</p>	
<p>At Bremore headland, south of the Delvin are the only surviving passage tombs in Fingal. The passage tomb cemetery consists of a large mound, over 3m in height, surrounded by four smaller satellite mounds, reflecting the layout of passage tombs elsewhere. Kerbstones have been identified at all but one of the mounds, which had visible cairn stones. The location of the passage tombs near the mouth of the Delvin is indicative of a Neolithic coastal pattern whereby passage tombs have been identified from Gormanston to Rush. This is relatively early in passage tomb development, a development which culminated in the tombs of the Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange in the Boyne Valley.</p>	
<p>Setting: The setting affords fantastic views of the east coast of Ireland, northwards to Slieve Gullion and the Mourne Mountains, southwards to Skerries and inland to the Fourknocks ridge.</p>	
<p>Ownership: Private-permission must be sought.</p>	
<p>Access: By foot either via laneway from R132 or up steep access from surrounding beaches.</p>	
<p>Facilities: None</p>	
<p>In vicinity: Bremore Castle</p>	

	
<p>Howth Portal tomb (Aideen's Grave)</p>	
<p>In the late eighteenth century Gabriel Beranger drew the 'cromlech' at Howth and recorded the legend that it was a quoit thrown by Fionn Mac Cumhaill from the bog of Allen. According to another local legend it was the resting place of Aideen who died of grief for the loss of her husband Oscar in the Battle of Gabhra. It is a portal tomb or dolmen high on the hill of Howth, just below Muck Rock. A large roof stone rests on two portals over a partially collapsed chamber with a partially collapsed doorstone.</p>	
<p>Setting: It once had extensive views over the coastland but is now surrounded by woodland.</p>	
<p>Ownership: Private</p>	
<p>Access: By foot through Howth Golf Club</p>	
<p>Facilities: Carparking in Howth Golf Club</p>	
<p>In Vicinity: Howth Castle, Shelmartin & Dun hill tombs</p>	



Knockbrack Hillfort, Naul

A single bank and fosse rampart encloses the prominent eminence of Knockbrack hill near Naul village. This hill-fort was identified primarily through aerial photography, as due to deep ploughing, very little of it was traceable on the ground. In the northwest, the rampart has been incorporated into a field boundary, the fosse or ditch measuring 7m in width. The hill-fort encloses 21.8 acres (8.8 ha.) and although classified as a Class 1 univallate hill-fort, it is more likely to have evolved from the ceremonial henge tradition. It also encloses a burial tumulus, one of a group of six in the vicinity. It is thought the site is more ceremonial than defensive, the builders possibly drawn to the hill due to its 'pre-existing sanctity'.

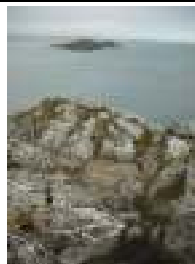
Setting: One of the highest points in Fingal. Fantastic panoramic views.

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought.

Access: By foot up a steep gradient

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Hollywood Church, Black Castle, Naul Village



Cairns, Howth Head

There are two cairns on the summit of Howth. They are associated in legend with Crimthann, a pre-Christian chieftain. He is said to have made an expedition across the sea accompanied by a sprite. He returned to Benn Etar with a golden chariot and chess board, an all-conquering sword and spear. His bones are said to be buried in the valley between Dun Hill and Shelmartin which are marked by stone cairns. The former is a denuded cairn built on a low earthen mound. It may be the result of construction of a nineteenth century signal post. The Shelmartin cairn survives to almost 2.5m in height and has visible kerbstones. It is marked as a Trigonometry Station, and was dismissed by Westropp as a modern pile of stones

Setting: High points of Howth peninsula. Excellent views of Dublin Bay to the south and Fingal's coastline to the north.

Ownership: private with public access.

Access: By foot via trail paths

Facilities: Two carparks; marked trails

In Vicinity: Aideen's Grave, Howth Castle,



Drumanagh promontory fort

North of Loughshinny harbour is the impressive promontory fort of Drumanagh. The extensive headland of almost 46 acres is defended by three large banks and intervening ditches. The stone capped ramparts show evidence of what was a heavily defended settlement and trading post. The discovery of Roman pottery and artefacts from within the fort has led to extensive speculation. With a sheltered harbour nearby it would have made an ideal landing for merchants travelling the Irish Sea route. Alternatively it could have been a native Irish settlement serving as a distribution centre for Roman goods. Drummanagh and its hinterland is currently being studied by the Discovery Programme as part of their LIARI programme www.discoveryprogramme.ie . In the early nineteenth century the Martello tower was constructed on its eastern end.

Setting: Extensive views of the surrounding coastline and Lambay Island

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought

Access: By foot. From Loughshinny along a dangerous cliffpath. From the Skerries road via farmtrack.

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Giant's Hill passage tomb site; St Catherine's medieval church, graveyard, and tower house



Inch Mound, Balrothery

Prior to intense development it was intervisible with the Balrothery standing stone. The roughly circular mound is overgrown, almost 2m in height is within a tillage field. Two worked flints were found to the east of the mound in the 1970s.

Setting: This mound is prominent north of the old Dublin-Balbriggan road, opposite Balrothery village.

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought

Access: On foot, across field

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Balrothery church and castle

Medieval Sites



Leastown Ringfort

This impressive ringfort has been planted with trees. It measures 38m in diameter and just over 3m in height. The raised interior is overgrown with brambles and there is a possible entrance to the south-west. In 1950 there were reports of a broad outer ditch that had been filled.

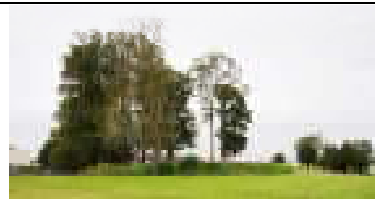
Setting: Located on a north-south rise above the Ballyboughal river with views of the surrounding farmland.

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought.

Access: By foot across field

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Wespalstown church and graveyard.



Corduff ringfort

Marked as fort on the 1837 Ordnance survey map it is believed to be a platform ringfort with a diameter of 42m and a height of 3m. The ringfort is planted with trees and large boulders have been set along its upper edge. It is now criss-crossed with paths and known locally as a fairy fort.

Setting: The ringfort at Corduff is situated within a public park of what used to be the rear of Corduff House.

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Public pathway

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Mulhuddart church, Ladyswell holy well



St Helens Motte

This unprepossessing mound is in fact one of six surviving Anglo-Norman mottes in Fingal. The 1.5m high mound is surrounded by a ditch. It was thought that a bailey may have been present to the south but recent geophysical survey found no evidence for it.

Setting: Naomh Mearnog GAA Club has developed pitches in its vicinity.

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Via playing pitches

Facilities: Carpark of Naomh Mearnog GAA Club

In Vicinity: Malahide Castle



Knocksedan Motte, Brazil

Located within the Ward river valley this Anglo-Norman motte is a large flat-topped mound 6m in height. Surrounded by a very deep ditch which does not extend around its entire circumference, possibly indicating the presence of a bailey to the south. It would have overlooked (and controlled) two important river and road routes.

Setting: Overlooking the Ward river and close to the old routeway north through Fingal.

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought

Access: By foot through uneven pasture

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Knocksedan Bridge

Castles:



Howth Castle Gatehouse

Howth Castle, the seat of the St Lawrences, has stood on the north side of Howth Head for over 800 years. The illustrious deeds of the Lords of Howth are recorded in the sixteenth century Book of Howth, a compilation of annals, historical tales and legends. The medieval tower house and gate house have been added to throughout the various periods, including a seventeenth century hall, eighteenth century range, nineteenth century wings, stables and courtyards. The gatehouse which has three storeys and battlements is located to the north of the courtyard. A studded wooden gate still stands at the entrance to the arch, within which are two guard rooms. The upper floors are lit by decorative ogee-headed windows. Extensive gardens, famed for their rhodendrons, are now a golf course. The St Lawrences are still in residence.

Setting: Lower slopes of Howth Head.

Ownership: Private with public access

Access: The access for Howth Golf Club runs directly by the gatehouse

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Howth portal tomb.



Stellas Tower, Portrairie

The Inquisition of 1541 describes the tower house as 'having divers buildings including a threshing house, hemp yard and haggard. One hundred years it was recorded as having a thatched hall adjoining, a small barn, a cowhouse and one garden plot. Jonathan Swift write to his Stella (Esther Johnston) who was living there in 1712. The last inhabitant was Lady Acheson who died in 1735.

Setting: Flat rural field on the periphery of Portrairie

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought.

Access: By foot across fields

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: St Catherine's medieval church and graveyard, the Burrow



Castleknock Castle

Referred to in the annals as *Cnucha*, Castleknock was the site of the legendary battle of Cnucha, where Cumhall the Great fell in the seventh or eighth century. The manor of Castleknock was granted to Hugh Tyrell in 1177 and included Castleknock, Clonsilla and Mulhuddart. The impressive motte is oval in plan and is enclosed by two deep ditches. The first stone castle of its kind survives as a polygonal keep and curtain wall. William Wordsworth on a visit to the area in 1829 felt it ‘possess a melancholy as well as a wildness peculiarly striking in the vicinity of a great town’.

Setting: School grounds

Ownership: private-permission must be sought

Access: By foot, steep gradient to castle

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Porterstown Church

Swords Castle

The castle at Swords was built by Archbishop of Dublin, John Comyn as his manorial residence around 1200. It was never a castle in the accepted sense but an episcopal palace. The curtain walls form an irregular polygon enclosing over an acre. Incorporated into the walls were mural towers. The gatehouse survives and includes a residential tower and chapel. Excavation of the chapel in the 1970s by Tom Fanning unearthed a fourteenth century tile pavement, part of which is on display in the National Museum. In 1326 the castle, although past its prime, was still impressive and was described as having a hall, a chamber for the archbishop, chapel, chambers for friars, knights and squires, a stable, bakehouse, haggard, , granary and a byre. A National Monument, Swords Castle has been partially renovated by Fingal County Council and is the subject of a Conservation Plan.

Setting: Main Street, Swords

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Limited

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: St Colmcille’s church, round tower and holy well



Dunsoghley Castle

Dunsoghley Castle is one of the pre-eminent towerhouses of Fingal. It was built in the fifteenth century by Thomas Plunkett, a chief justice of the King's Bench. The three storey over vaulted undercroft, with four projecting corner towers is an example of the Pale castle. The corner towers are also vaulted, the prison being in the smallest turret. Exceptional is the original oak roof which is preserved over the second floor. Fireplaces and Tudor chimneys also survive. There are remnants of battlements extending from the castle but these have been incorporated into farm buildings. To the south is a small chapel. The plaque over the doorway is inscribed with the instruments of the Passion, the initials JPM DDS and the date 1573. It is thought to refer to John Plunkett, Knight of Dunsoghley and his wife Genet Sarsfield. Dunsoghley Castle is a National Monument and was recently the subject of a conservation plan.

Setting: Within a working farm

Ownership: OPW but access is through private land-permission must be sought

Access: Through private property

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Dublin airport



Malahide Castle

Home of the Talbot family from 1174 until 1976, Malahide Castle is an example of the evolution of architecture and fashion throughout the ages. The core of the building is the twelfth century, the first floor now containing the 'Oak room', lined with sixteenth century panelling. In 1475, the Great Hall was added, although its roof, windows and gallery are of much later date. The house was transformed through extensions into a country house in the early seventeenth century. The next substantial building phase was during the period 1765-1782, when the west wing was reconstructed after a fire. An entrance porch and two squared towers were added in 1820. A turret houses a staircase known as Puck' staircase, where a small bearded ghost keeps watch. The castle has recently reopened after its latest phase of renovation.

Setting: Within demesne lands

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Good

Facilities: Carpark, guided tours, playground, sports facilities, Avoca

In Vicinity: Malahide Church



Luttrellstown Castle

Associated with the Anglo Norman family of Luttrells the gothic mansion incorporates the remains of an earlier castle. In 1800 the Luttrell family sold the property to Luke White who changed the name to Woodlands. Queen Victoria visited Luttrellstown Castle twice, with fifty years between her visits, the occasions marked by an obelisk in the demesne. Another Victoria got married there-to David Beckham in the 1990s.

Setting: Demesne lands

Ownership: Private with public access

Access: Good

Facilities: Carpark

In Vicinity: St Catherine’s church and holy wells



Lanestown Castle. Newbridge Demesne

Lanestown or Lanistown is a one of a series of towerhouses that dot the Pale. In 1376 the de Bathe family was granted the lands of Lanistown, which they held until around 1600. The castle survives to three storeys with stepped battlements. Like many of the towerhouses of Fingal it has barrel vaulted ground floor, a garderobe, and fireplaces. There is evidence on the outer wall for an adjoining building, long since removed. In 1897 it was recorded that ‘Mr Cobbe, the proprietor of Newbridge Demsne used this castle 100 years ago as his dining hall but after this time it was no longer kept up’. In the 1960s it suffered further ignominy, being used as a cattle shelter.

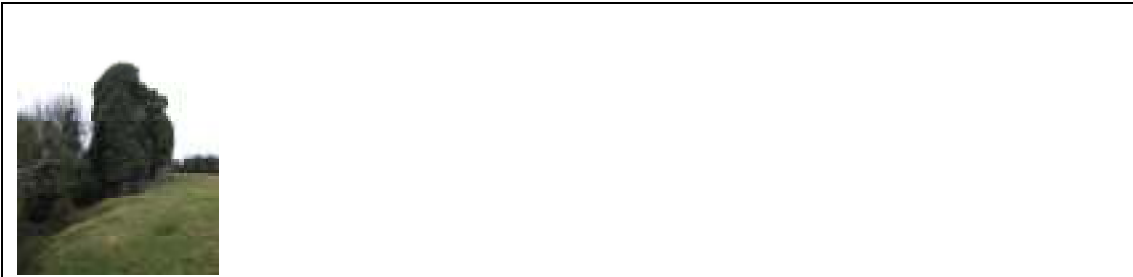
Setting: Within Newbridge demesne

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Across grass. No access to interior.

Facilities: None in immediate vicinity of Lanestown

In Vicinity: Newbridge House



Black Castle, Naul

Known as the Black Castle, there was another castle, known as the White Castle on the opposing bank, the site of which has long since been built over. The remains of the Black castle, attributed, probably erroneously to the Cruise family, are now in a state of collapse, and smothered with ivy. The remains of a double-barrelled vault over the ground floor and possible bawn wall indicate something of its former grandeur. The castle was destroyed by Cromwell in 1649, when 40 of its defenders were put to the sword, only one lady escaping. Oliver Plunkett, whose head is now displayed in Drogheda was supposed to have been arrested at the Black Castle.

Setting: perched on the edge of steep cliffs above the river Delvin

Ownership: Private ownership-permission must be sought

Access: Over uneven ground

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Naul medieval church and graveyard

Holy Wells:



St Margarets well

Enclosed by a brick wall with upper stone masonry, it resembles a tank more than the traditional well. Gated with steps in the wall, there is an extensive plaque along the west end according to which Sir John Plunkett of Dunsoghley who died in 1582 enclosed the well for a bath. The structure however appears to be of much later date. In the nineteenth century it was frequented for its medicinal qualities and according to D'Alton in 1838, the 'tepid water may be seen to be bubbling up from the bottom every minute'.

Setting: End of a narrow laneway

Ownership: Public

Access: By foot.

Facilities: Carpark nearby

In Vicinity: St Margaret's medieval church and graveyard



St Catherine's holy wells

An unusual example of two wells side by side. Tradition has it that the water from the larger well was drunk and the water from the smaller well was used to bathe sore eyes. It was also said that the wells can never run dry nor can the water be brought to the boil. A carved stone head that used to be fixed to the canopy of the larger well has disappeared and the hood vandalised.

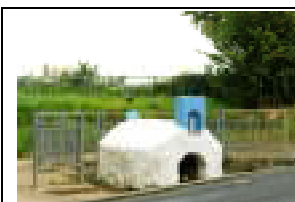
Setting: In woodland by laneway

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: By foot

Facilities: Carpark, demesne walks, sports pitches

In Vicinity: St Catherine's church



Ladyswell

Mulhuddart holy well is a natural spring that is now enclosed in a vaulted structure, with two inscribed stone finials on the roof. There are supposed to be nine cures in the water. In 1749 Isaac Butler described the well ‘about midway ascending to ye church is an excellent well, it is carefully walled and several large trees about it. Here on 8th September a great patron (pattern) is kept with a vast concourse of all sexes and ages from many miles, upwards of eighty tents are pitched here, furnished with all kinds of liquors and provisions for ye reception & refreshment of ye company’.

Setting: Roadside

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Public

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Mulhuddart medieval church



St Mobhi's well

Geophysical survey has shown that St Mobhi's well lies within an extensive ecclesiastical site. However its construction from boulders suggests it may be prehistoric in origin. A small Latin cross carved into one of the boulders shows it was Christianised. It was originally a natural spring which has since been enclosed with steps downwards and a bullaun stone set into the wall near the base.

Setting: Within the demesne woods of Milverton estate

Ownership: NAMA

Access: Woodland path

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: St Mobhi's church and graveyard



Fieldstown

Traditionally associated with St Catherine the spring well is east of a hollow way of a possible deserted medieval village. Enclosed by a brick and stone arched structure.

Setting: Within a farm

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought

Access: Through fields

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Newbarn mound, Newbarn ringfort



St Douloughs

St Doulagh's well is enclosed by an octagonal building. A fresco painted internally in 1609 by Mr Fagan of Feltrim was visible into the nineteenth century but unfortunately is no longer. Adjacent is St Catherine's well.

Setting: Grounds of St Doulagh's church

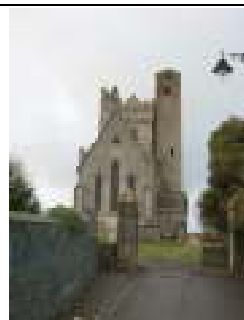
Ownership: Private-public access

Access: Via steps

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: St Doulagh's Church, Kinsealy church, Abbeville House

Churches



Lusk church

Lusk associated with Saint Mac Cullin has all the characteristics of a major ecclesiastical centre; three enclosures, the innermost of which contains the church and burials; a holy well just within the outermost enclosure; a bullaun stone; a round tower and in the eight century a fair or óenach. The latter was proof of its economic and commercial growth and it would have attracted large numbers to the location. It also attracted raiders, plunderers and looters. The church of Lusk was burned by the Vikings in 827 and 856. In 1053 hostages were taken from the church and in 1069 it was burnt again. The medieval residential tower contains the tomb of Marian Sharl.

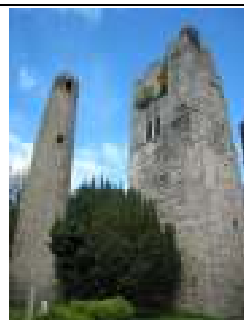
Setting: Lusk village

Ownership: Fingal County Council and OPW

Access: Via laneway to graveyard To church and round tower via keyholder

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Rogerstown estuary



St Colmcille's, Swords

St Colmcille was said to have founded the church in the 6th century. Swords grew as a powerful ecclesiastical centre, to become a *plebia* or mother church. These ecclesiastical sites were not only centres of spirituality but major centres of economic power. Granted land and amassing benefices from the secular septs, the church centres were in a position to produce surpluses and thus become centres for trade, exchange and craftsmanship. Brian Boru and his son Morrough, were overnighed in Swords church after the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, when the bodies of these warriors were conveyed in solemn procession from Dublin.

Setting: On highpoint overlooking the Ward river within Swords town.

Ownership: Private with public access

Access: Limited

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Swords Castle



Baldongan

Dating from the 15th century, tradition has it that Baldongan was a friary, a nunnery and a school for daughters of the gentry. In 1642 the church and castle were besieged by the Confederate army, the former being destroyed. Surrounded by a walled graveyard, the medieval parish church consists of a nave and chancel, with its residential tower to the west. There are arched recesses in the walls of the chancel and an ambry in the east wall. A double bellcote, tops the tower, from where thirteen counties can reputedly be seen. The church and castle was in the possession of the Barnewall and Bermingham families before the Lords of Howth. It is now a National Monument.

Setting: Within farmland

Ownership: OPW

Access: By foot

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: St Mobhi's medieval church and graveyard



Ballyboughal Church

Ballyboughal church has a triple bellcote on its western gable and a carved head on arch stop of the east gable. The church has a window dating to c.1300. a reference from 1302 says that St Patrick's bachull or staff, was kept there for a period.

Setting: Within Ballyboughal village

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Can be accessed by car

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Westpalstown church and graveyard



Malahide Demense

The church at Malahide demesne acted as a graveyard for the Talbot family. After he took Drogheda in 1649, Oliver Cromwell, stationed his lieutenant Myles Corbet at Malahide Castle. Tradition has it that Corbet stabled his horses in the church and used the lead of the roof to make bullets for his soldiers. The standing ruins consist of a late fifteenth century nave and sixteenth century chancel. The western gable incorporates a tripe bellcote with stairs for access. At the southeast corner is a two storey tower which would have been used as a sacristy or residence. The upper floor contains a fireplace and chimney, while the lower floor is barrel vaulted. The church itself has many decorative features which reflect the wealth of its owners. Three triple ogee-headed windows are visible in the western gable and east wall of the chancel. The opposing doorways have pointed arches and external mouldings, the southern doorway having a carved bishop's head. In the exterior walls are two sheelana-gigs. Several box and table tombs are within the church itself. The most striking is that of Maud Plunkett set near what would have once been the altar.

Setting: Within Malahide Demesne

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Public

Facilities: Carparks, restaurant, signage

In Vicinity: Malahide Castle



Hollywood

It is thought that the place named Hollywood refers to the forest covered hills which once surrounded the area and were used for worship. There was an earlier church on the site which probably pre-dated the Anglo-Norman invasion.. The present church dates from 1275 and belonged to the Priory of Llanthony. The triple bellcote at the western gable is a feature of the churches of Fingal.

Setting: Towards the base of a steep slope with extensive views south to the Dublin

Ownership: Fingal county Council

Access: By foot

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Naul Village



St Doulaghs

The earliest reference to the church dates to the ninth century, when it was referred to in the Martyrology of Oengus as *Duilech Cain Clochair*. Remnants of an ecclesiastical enclosure survived in the form of a bank south of the graveyard into the 1970s and have lately been mapped through geophysical survey. The present church has elements from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries as well as nineteenth century additions. The vaulted stone roof is at 68 degrees, the steepest in Ireland. It is similar in style to that of the pre-eminent Romanesque church, Cormac's Chapel at Cashel. Associated with the seventh century anchorite, St Doulagh, there is a 'hermit's cell' in the entrance hall, reputed to be the burial place of the founder. By the roadside is a short-armed granite cross that was formerly in the graveyard.

Setting: Adjacent to the Malahide road

Ownership: Private with public access

Access: Limited

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Abbeville House



Howth Abbey

The original church at Howth was founded by Sitric, the Viking King of Dublin around 1042. In 1235, the church of St Nesson was moved from Ireland's Eye to Howth and rededicated by the Archbishop of Dublin to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The upstanding remains date mainly to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The church has a double aisle, with sides of different lengths. The western gable has a triple bellcote with a stairs for access. In the southeast corner of the abbey is the chantry chapel which contains the tomb of Christopher St Lawrence, 13th Baron of Howth, who died in 1492 and his wife, Anna Plunkett of Ratoath. Collapse of the wall surrounding the graveyard has meant extensive engineering works.

Setting: Overlooking Howth harbour

Ownership: OPW

Access: Via steps to graveyard. Via keyholder to abbey.

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Howth Martello tower



St Marnock's Church, Portmarnock

Reputedly built on the site of an earlier church by the mid sixteenth century the medieval church was in ruinous condition. The church formerly had a triple bellcote, a feature of many of Fingal's churches. Internally the Plunkett family had a plot. Externally there are several gravestones dedicated to the Jameson family, the distillers and the famous Dublin Lord Mayor, Larry O'Neill. Near to the church is the site of a holy well, which was described as a large circular pool with sixteen stone steps down into it. A hoard of groats, dating from 1420-1473, were found there. An ogham stone, supposedly with the fingerprints of St Marnock on it, reputedly stood beside the well in the nineteenth century but was broken up for building material. Despite being held in esteem by local fishermen and sailors for foretelling the coming of storms, there is now no trace of the well.

Setting: Within golf course

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Through stiles

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Velvet Strand



Oldtown

St. Mary's Church is on the site of a medieval parish church. The Civil Survey of 1654 describes the 'the Old Church upon ye premisses of Clonmethan... out of reparaire'

Setting: By road

Ownership: Private-public access

Access: By stile

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Oldtown village

Houses



Westtown, Naul

In the nineteenth century Westtown House, the Naul was described as ‘a respectable mansion of antiquated character in a highly timbered demesne containing a Rath, and commanding a magnificent view of the beautiful Roche valley’. Supposedly dating from the twelfth century the eighteenth century mansion incorporates an earlier towerhouse, the vaulted undercroft of which is still evident. Built by the Beaulie or as they became known, the Bellew family it passed by marriage to the Husseys who rebuilt it about 1630, renaming it from Snowtown to Westtown. The estate was taken over by the land commission in the early 1930s and divided amongst local farmers.

Setting: Farmland

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought

Access: By foot via overgrown original avenue

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Fourknocks passage tomb, Naul village, Knockbrack Hillfort



Newbridge

The lands of Newbridge, Donabate and Lanistown were purchased by Sir William Handcock in 1698. His widow married James Ford, who according to documentary evidence was in possession of a house at Newbridge in 1705. Whether this house was incorporated into the present house or was nearby has not been resolved. The present house was built in 1747-52 for Dr Charles Cobbe, Archbishop of Dublin. It was attributed to Richard Castle or possibly George Semple and latterly Scottish architect James Gibbs. Two storeys over basement, the house is fronted in pink ashlar facing. The west wing was built in 1765 while the formal gardens were replaced in the 1770s by parkland. Newbridge House remained the residence of the Cobbe family until 1985.

Setting: Demesne lands

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Good

Facilities: Carpark, Farm, guided tours, playground

In Vicinity: Donabate medieval church



Ardgillan Castle

Built by the Rev. Robert Taylor in the eighteenth century it was originally known as Prospect House. The site was a wooded hill that had to be cleared by out-of-service soldiers and itinerant workers from Bangor Co. Down. The workers were paid a penny a day, and given sleeping accommodation, one meal a day and a tot of Bushmill's rough whiskey. It became Ardgillan about 1815 and remained in the Taylor family until the 1960s. It was purchased by Fingal County Council in 1982 and the house and grounds have been restored.

Setting: north facing slope, between Balbriggan and Skerries, Ardgillan Castle has views all the way to the Mourne mountains

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Good

Facilities: Carparks, Demesne walks, guided tours, café, playground

In Vicinity: Barnageeragh tombs



Knocknagin

The lands of Knocknagin originally belonged to a Mr. Robert Echlin of Lusk. The house and outbuildings were built about 1720 and were remodelled at different periods. The present front, 3-story with single-story wings each side is thought to date from the early 19th century. The back avenue was originally an old coach road through Knocknagin village, the remains of which are still standing.

Setting: Within farmland

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought

Access: Limited

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Gormanstown bridge, Bremore passage tombs

**Brackenstown**

Recorded as a possible medieval fishpond, the 'old pond' at Brackenstown House is a canal, the remnant of extensive landscaping undertaken by Robert Molesworth in the early decades of the eighteenth century.

Setting: Open space to the rear of housing estates

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Across playing pitches

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Dublin airport

Industrial



Naul Limekilns

Lime kilns were furnaces in which limestone was subject to temperatures high enough to convert it to lime. In the medieval period it was used in lime mortar, the bonding element in construction. It was also used in agriculture as a fertiliser especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Setting: To rear of Naul graveyard beside the Black Castle

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought

Access: Through farmland

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Black Castle, Seamus Ennis Centre



Skerries Mills

The current 19th century mill complex occupies the site of a watermill mentioned in the 16th century as 'the watermill of Holmpatrick' and a century later as 'a decayed watermill'. The later complex is an L-shaped building with a mill race, mill pond and overlooked by two restored windmills. It was used as a bakery until 1986 and opened as a visitors centre in 1999.

Setting: Within Skerries town

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Good

Facilities: Carpark, guided tours, café, weekend farmer's market

In Vicinity: Kybe well, Holmpatrick church



Royal Canal

The Royal Canal was another infrastructural undertaking. Known as the Rival canal or the Cobblers canal in reference to Mr Binns, a retired shoemaker and member of the Board of the Grand Canal. He fell out with the other board members and set up a rival canal company. Works commenced in 1790 but were slowed considerably by two miles of deep sinking between Blanchardstown and Clonsilla. This set-back effectively bankrupted the company and it was eventually sold to the Midland Western railway to build a railway alongside. It was while walking along the canal that William Rowan Hamilton (1805-65) discovered the theory of quaternions, a revolutionary mathematical concept that he carved into the stone work at Broombridge. He was the director of the observatory at nearby Dunsink.

Setting: Urban

Ownership: Public

Access: By foot

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Dunsink Observatory



Garristown Windmill

Windmills were characteristic of the landscape of Fingal are the windmills. Although many streams and rivers had watermills, they were generally too slow flowing, whereas the hilltops of north Fingal and the low-lying coastal areas were ideal for harnessing wind. Garristown windmill is built on a possible earlier hilltop enclosure. An external plaque reads 'windmill built by Edward & Marie Walsh of Borranstown 1736'. There is an internal plaque similar but the names were removed by pocking of the stone. Above it is another stone marked 1827

Setting: Located on high position with extensive views from the Dublin to Mourne mountains and on a good day west to Laois

Ownership: Private-permission must be sought

Access: By stile over a wall, by foot up steep gradient

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Garristown effigy, Garristown church, graveyard and whetsone



Balbriggan factories

In 1780 a Joseph Smyth joined his cousin Mr Hatton in establishing the firm of Smyth & Co. in Balbriggan where it traded for over 200 years. One of its employees was Thomas Managan, who along with his brother were the first to perfect lace stockings. Their customers included the Empress of Austria, the Czarina of Russia and Queen Victoria of Britain. Managan won the royal approval by making stocking which were so fine as to weigh just three and a half ounces for a dozen pairs. He continued to make stockings for Queen Victoria in Balbriggan for almost sixty-five years.

Setting: Station Road area of Balbriggan

Ownership: Public

Access: Street

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Bremore castle



Rush Windmill

A three-storey post-medieval windmill of the old fair green. It has an unusual vault feature and in the 1970s had battlemented parapets.

Setting: rush village green

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: By foot up slight hill. No internal access.

Facilities: Nearby carpark

In Vicinity: Rush Library

Sculpture



Garristown Library

Fragments of this medieval effigy were excavated in the graveyard of Garristown church. It portrays a female with a heavy woollen skirt, falling in regular folds, which is raised to reveal a smock underneath. Her feet rest on a tasselled cushion. Two smaller fragments also discovered and a side slab of the tomb chest. The slab has been dated to the 15th century and represents a Pale school of figure sculpture.

Setting: Garristown Library

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Dependant on library opening hours

Facilities: Library

In Vicinity: Garristown church and graveyard, Garristown windmill



Plunkett Tomb

Daughter of the baron of Killeen, Maud Plunkett who died in 1464 was said to be a 'maid, wife and widow' in one day. Her first husband, Thomas Hussey of Galtrim was killed in a skirmish near Balbriggan, after marrying Maud in the morning on Whit Monday 1429. Sir Richard Talbot of Malahide became her second husband and although she outlived him and indeed her third husband, she was buried at Malahide.

Setting: Within Malahide Demesne church

Ownership: Fingal County Council

Access: Limited

Facilities: Carpark, demesne walks, guided tours, sports facilities, Avoca

In Vicinity: Malahide Castle



Barnewall Tomb

Marion Sharl of Shallon Co. Meath married Christopher Barnewall of Grace Dieu. They reputedly used the stones of the nunnery at Grace Dieu to build their residence at Turvey in Donabate. When Barnewall died in 1575, Marion Sharl went on to marry Sir Lucas Dillon who kindly erected a monument to them in Lusk church. It reads

‘This monument is made for the Right worshipful Sir Christopher Barnewall of Turvey, Knight, by the Right Worshipful Sir Lucas Dillon of Moymet, Knight and Dame Marion Sharl his wife, who married her three years after the death of the said Sir Christopher, her firste and loving husbände, who had issue 5 sons and 15 daughters by him. Wish well to Dillon, 1589’.

Setting: Within the medieval tower of Lusk Church

Ownership: OPW

Access: Limited (via keyholder)

Facilities: None

In Vicinity: Lusk round tower



Howth Abbey

This 15th century tomb is at the end of the south aisle within St Mary's Church. And bears the effigies of Sir Christopher St Lawrence Lord of Howth and his wife, Anne Plunkett. The former dressed as a knight in plate armour and chain mail. His feet rest on a dog, assign that the knight died at home rather than in battle. The lady to his right is wearing a gown and horned head dress. An inscription around the edge of the slab is almost illegible.

Setting: within Howth Abbey

Ownership: OPW

Access: Via steps through graveyard. Access to church limited (via keyholder).

Facilities: Signage

In Vicinity: Howth College, Howth Martello Tower