

# Aughrim Heritage & Biodiversity Plan

## 2013- 2016



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## Introduction

### **Aughrim**

Aughrim is an attractive village located 8km west of Ballinasloe, in south east Galway. The name ‘Aughrim’ (in Irish ‘Eachroim’) means horse ridge or horse hill reflecting the low-lying ridges that characterise the local landscape. Aughrim has a particularly rich heritage of national and international significance. The most notable event was the Battle of Aughrim in 1691, a defining battle in the war of William and James for the English throne, which had a lasting impact on the area.



*St. Catherine's graveyard*

The Aughrim Heritage and Biodiversity Plan sets out a list of heritage and nature-related projects, events and activities that will run over the next three years in the Aughrim area.

### **Heritage and Biodiversity Plans**

Heritage and Biodiversity Plans provide a framework for protecting, managing and/or enhancing local heritage and biodiversity in an area through action led by the local community. The process of producing such a plan creates an opportunity to co-ordinate action among local groups, individuals, statutory bodies, and other organisations.

Many towns and villages, like Aughrim, have active community-based groups such as Tidy Towns, Development Associations, farming organisations, schools etc. that work tirelessly for the benefit of their members and the community. The production of a local heritage and biodiversity plan can help ensure that community-based projects will not have a negative impact on heritage and biodiversity, and may have a positive impact on natural, built, and cultural heritage, the environment, and local amenities in the area e.g. through raising awareness, habitat creation and/or appropriate habitat management.

## **Heritage**

In this action plan, the term heritage refers to built and cultural heritage. Essentially heritage is considered to be what we inherit from the past.

*Built heritage* can be considered any individual or group of buildings, structures, monuments, or installations, or remains, which are associated with architectural, cultural, social, political, economic, or military history. Heritage items are considered to be of value because they reflect something individually or collectively about our history, something that is sufficiently important to require its preservation for future generations. It is therefore an important part of an area's identity and character.

*Cultural heritage* includes tangible culture (such as buildings, monuments, landscapes, books, works of art, and artifacts), intangible culture (such as folklore, traditions, language, and knowledge), and culturally-significant landscapes.

## **Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is the variety of all living things- plants, animals, microbes and fungi. Biodiversity also refers to the places where plants and animals live (habitats), and the complex interactions among living things (the web of life), and their relationship with the environment (ecology). Biodiversity is our *natural heritage*.

Biodiversity has many benefits for local communities by providing natural recreational amenities (e.g. parks and green spaces, walking and biking routes, picnic spots, places for fishing and angling), local educational resources and environmental protection. Allowing room for nature and wildlife in our towns and villages makes them more attractive and interesting, protects our environment, and improves our quality of life.

### **Process to produce the plan**

Heritage and Biodiversity Training was provided for interested individuals and groups in Aughrim in order to raise awareness of what heritage is, why it is important, where it is, and the many benefits of this resource for people, communities and the environment. The aim of the training was to produce a Heritage and Biodiversity Plan for the village. Several towns and villages in east Galway have produced Biodiversity Action Plans in recent years. Aughrim is one of the first villages to produce a plan that encompasses both heritage and biodiversity.

Residents from Aughrim and the surrounding area met on four occasions with Janice Fuller and Ruth Minogue, to develop the Biodiversity and Heritage plan (Appendix 1). Janice and Ruth provided the training, facilitated the production of the local heritage action plan and conducted a couple of additional field visits. The objectives and actions of the plan were decided by the local community.

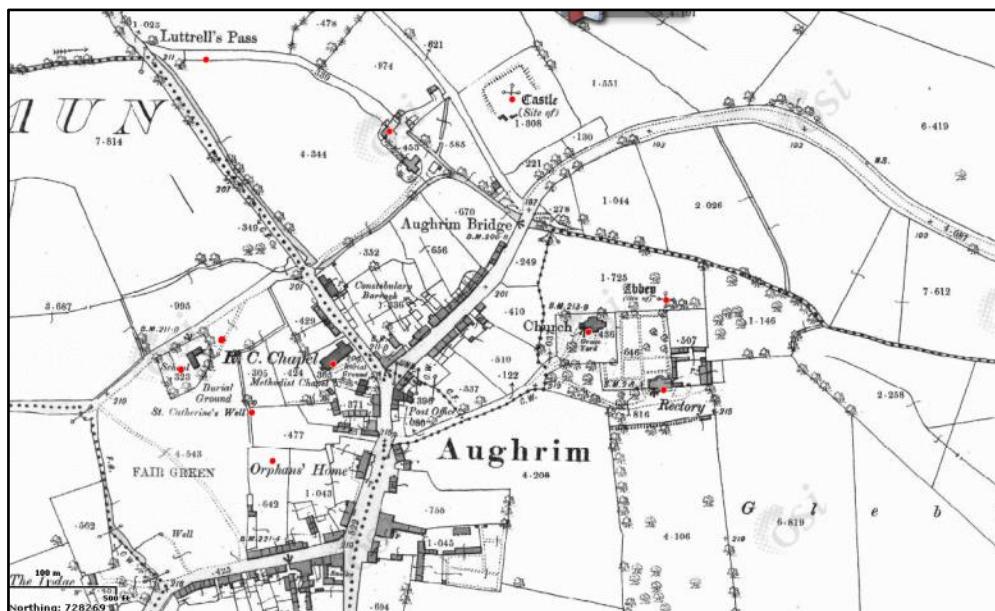


*Aughrim Heritage Park*

## Nature and heritage in Aughrim

Although most commonly associated with the Battle of Aughrim, the village and wider area has a long history of human habitation. The limestone soils and gravel resources of the eskers, combined with freshwater have made it attractive to people for over a thousand years. A monastery was founded in Aughrim by St Connall of Kilconnell in 736AD. St Connall also founded the See of Aughrim but this dwindled over time to parish status. No remains of this monastery can be found today, although it was located north east of the current Church of Ireland.

An indication of the wealth of monuments in the area can be seen on the map below, which shows recorded archaeological sites within the area.



*First edition 6" OS map of Aughrim with known archaeological sites indicated in red.*

Source: National Monuments Service (<http://webgis.archaeology.ie/NationalMonuments/FlexViewer/>)

The O’Kelly family were the Gaelic chiefs in the area and their castles dot the landscape. Although suffering a turbulent history with subsequent defeat at the Battle of Aughrim, they gave tracts of lands to monastic houses including Clonmacnoise during their history. Other surviving sites in the area include a cluster of ringforts in the south of Aughrim village, the old catholic church (now in ruins) and graveyard (St. Catherine’s), St. Catherine’s Well, the remains of Aughrim Castle, Kilcommodan Church and Graveyard.



*St. Catherine's graveyard*

### **The Battle of Aughrim**

The last battle of European significance that occurred in Ireland was the Battle of Aughrim, which took place in July 1691. A decisive battle in the Jacobean and Williamite Wars, it is widely recorded in folklore, art, song and poetry. The Battle of Aughrim was also one of the bloodiest with reportedly 7,000 Jacobite soldiers and approximately 2,500 Williamite soldiers killed. The area around Aughrim is dominated with names that reflect this history such as Bloody Hollow, Luttrell's Pass and St Ruth's Bush (named after the French commander of the Irish Jacobite forces). After the battle the area of Aughrim was devastated and the village itself was abandoned; it wasn't until the early 1700's that Aughrim began to grow again. The Battle of Aughrim Interpretive Centre situated in the village tells the story of the battle in an engaging way through displays and audio-visual shows.



*A photo of the Battle of Aughrim site taken in 1942 (Browne Collection, Galway County Library)*

## People and places

There are several notable historical figures and folklore associated with particular buildings or locations in the Aughrim area. Principal figures associated with places in the village include Dr William James McNeven the father of American chemistry; Michael Davitt spoke to a gathered crowd of 10,000 people in 1884 on the Hill of Aughrim; John Wesley visited Aughrim in 1748; and Annette Kirwin of Kirwan's Lodge who married Edward Carson, the voice of Ulster Unionism, around the time of Home Rule.

Hurney's Forge was built in 1910 and functioned as a meeting place, crossroads dancing as well as making and repairing tools and shoeing horses. The village itself is very attractive with some fine architecture, a number of churches, the Aughrim Interpretive Centre, as well as the Aughrim Heritage Park.



## Natural and cultural heritage

The landscape around Aughrim is one of farmland, hedgerows, esker and raised bogs. South of the village a large area of boggy land has long since been drained and improved for agriculture. Only small remnants of wetland remain now, on either side of the Melehan River. This large bogland between the Hill of Aughrim and Urraghry Hill, was important factor in the positions adopted by both sides in the Battle of Aughrim as it was extremely difficult to cross.

The Esker Riada runs east-west just north of the village. Esker Riada is a series of ridges stretching from Dublin to Galway across the midlands. These geological features were created at the end of the Ice Age when silt, sand and gravel were deposited by melting rivers under the ice. Esker grasslands are often species rich with many herbs and orchids.

The Aughrim Community Development Association, in partnership with Galway County Council, developed a **Heritage Park** in the heart of the village which includes a Children's Playground. This beautiful park was landscaped with many trees and shrubs. The Park also reflects the rich heritage of the area as it incorporates artefacts and interpretive signage that celebrates the life in the village, culture and character of the area including music, landuse and learning.

There is a miniature reconstruction of the battlefield of the Battle of Aughrim embedded into two mounds of earth in the Heritage Park, representing the headquarters of the two opposing armies, the Williamites and Jacobites. There is also a small replica of the O'Kelly castle, which was in ruins at the time of the battle. Coloured bark is used to illustrate natural features such as the bog and the streams.



*Aughrim Heritage Park*



*Bug hotel*



*Information board in the Heritage Park*

**The Hymany Way** is a long distance walking route that runs through east Galway. It is part of the Beara Breifne Greenway that traces the epic march of O’Sullivan Bere in 1603 from the Beara Peninsula in West Cork all the way to Cavan. The Hymany Way starts in Portumna and goes through Meelick and Clonfert before reaching Aughrim and then on to Ballygar. It passes through beautiful countryside with fields, hedgerows, stone walls, bogs, rivers and wetlands in a landscape steeped in history and folklore. The Hymany Way provides excellent access to the countryside for walkers and visitors, and to the site of the Battle of Aughrim. There is an information board on the route in the Aughrim Heritage Park. See [www.hymany.org](http://www.hymany.org) for more information and maps.



*Aughrim landscape*

A small river runs through the village of Aughrim, the River Melehan. Rivers and any associated wetlands are wonderful places for wildlife. Wet and watery places are usually buzzing with insects in the summer months. They therefore provide an abundant source of food for birds, fish and small mammals. Rivers also provide a wildlife corridor for animals, big and small, to move through the landscape.

Large, mature trees are a feature of Aughrim Village and the surrounding landscape. There are many fine beech trees in the village and Scot's pine is common to the south. There is also an area of forestry and wet woodland associated with several small lakes, just north of the village and the M6. Trees and woodland provide a range of habitats for wildlife particularly birds and small mammals such as red squirrel and bats. They bring life and colour and a sense of maturity to villages and urban centres.



*Church of Ireland*



*View east from the Hill of Aughrim*

## Community action

Aughrim has a strong community spirit as evidenced by the many events that occur in the area, for example, Aughrim Remembered, the Military History Summer School, O’Kelly Clan gatherings, and Aughrim IRO events etc. The **Aughrim Development Company Ltd.** has also been involved in numerous events and projects over the years. The beautiful Heritage Park and childrens’ playground was developed by the company in partnership with Galway County Council. They have entered the Golden Mile Competition several times. They produced a brochure for one of the miles (which won the top prize!) with excellent information on both natural and cultural heritage. The Development Company also published ‘The Social History of Aughrim since 1691’ in 2006, an invaluable resource. They also manage the Hymany Way walking route.

The **Aughrim Tidy Towns** is a subgroup of the Development Company. FÁS Community Employment Scheme, TÚS and RSS workers make a huge contribution to the upkeep of the village and assisting the work of the Tidy Towns Group and Development Company.



*Aughrim Remembered 2012 event*

Both **national schools** in Aughrim, St. Catherines and the Glebe, are participating in the Greenschools programme and both have earned Green Flags. This environmental education programme aims to raise awareness of protecting the environment among the school community and includes a biodiversity theme.

## Aughrim Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2013- 2016

	<i><b>Project/ activity/ action</b></i>	<i><b>Project leader</b></i>	<i><b>Project Partners</b></i>	<i><b>Timeframe</b></i>
1	Develop Looped Trail of the battle site and around the village with mapboard, stands, signage and trail markers.	Aughrim Development Association	Galway Rural Development, GCC, NUIG	2013
2	Develop interpretive heritage information (archaeological, historical, cultural and natural heritage) for the Looped Trail to be used in the production of a booklet, map, and a phone App.	Aughrim Development Association	Galway Rural Development, GCC, NUIG	2014-2015
3	Investigate the possibility of developing a work placement programme for 3 <sup>rd</sup> level students at Aughrim Interpretive Centre in order to undertake projects including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Produce inventory of artefacts held in the Aughrim Interpretive Centre</li> <li>2. Record the provenance of the artefacts in the centre</li> </ul>	Aughrim Development Association	GCC, NUIG, GMIT	2014
4	Conduct a feasibility study of promoting a national tour of the four main Williamite Battle Sites in Ireland – Boyne, Athlone, Aughrim and Limerick	Aughrim Development Association	Fáilte Ireland – Monica McKeever, GCC	2013 onwards
5	Undertake folklore research as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education project with primary school children about folk memories of the Battle of Aughrim</li> <li>• Support folklore research being undertaken by the Active Retirement Group</li> </ul>	Aughrim NS, the Glebe NS, Aughrim Active Retirement	Aughrim Development Association	2013-2016
6	Enter the Golden Mile competition	Aughrim Development Association	Local residents, GCC	2014
7	Plant native trees and shrubs in and around village (develop tree planting and tree care plan)	Aughrim Development Association	GCC	Annually during Tree Week

8	Develop a tree planting plan for cleared areas along old N6	Aughrim Development Association	GCC	2014-2015
9	Support school biodiversity projects (e.g. bug hotel, bird nesting boxes, school gardens)	Schools	An Taisce, GCC	Annually
10	Include wildlife-friendly landscaping in village planting schemes (e.g. flower boxes, wildflowers, planting for butterflies etc.)	Aughrim Development Association	GCC	2014
11	Run natural heritage walks and talks (e.g. bats, birds)	Aughrim Development Association	GCC	Tree Week/ Biodiversity Week/ Heritage Week
12	Develop tree trail map for the Heritage Park for use in the local schools	St. Catherine's NS, The Glebe NS	GCC	2014

*GCC = Galway County Council, NS = National School, NUIG = National University of Ireland, GMIT = Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology*

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

A group will be established to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the 'Aughrim Heritage and Biodiversity Plan'. They will meet at least twice a year in order to set annual goals and to review progress to date. The committee will liaise with the Galway County Heritage Officer and the Galway County Biodiversity Project Manager.

## Funding sources

Organisation	Comment	Contact details
Galway Rural Development Company	This leader company offers full and part funding for a variety of community-led projects. Discuss potential projects with the Community Development Workers prior to submitting applications to determine if they meet the GRD criteria for projects.	<a href="http://www.grd.ie">www.grd.ie</a>
Galway County Council Community Support Schemes	Small funding available for a range of community activities including heritage and tourism.	<a href="http://www.galwaycoco.ie">www.galwaycoco.ie</a>
Heritage Council	The Heritage Council grant schemes are advertised yearly in September and cover these 3 areas - 1) Heritage Research; 2) Heritage Management and 3) Heritage Education, Community and Outreach. They were unable to provide grants for 2012 but hope to open grant scheme again in 2013.	<a href="http://www.heritagecouncil.ie">www.heritagecouncil.ie</a>
The Ireland Funds	The Ireland Funds support Irish culture and heritage by providing funding for programs that promote cultural awareness and understanding; preserve uniquely Irish art forms and artifacts; increase public access to a variety of art forms and collections support community arts initiatives; and ensure the protection of and access to Irish heritage sites and resources	<a href="http://www.theirelandfunds.org">www.theirelandfunds.org</a>
The Arts Council	Funding can be available for architectural research and education	<a href="http://www.artscouncil.ie">www.artscouncil.ie</a>
Office of Public Works	On occasion the OPW will advertise for initiatives involving working with community groups and monuments under OPW management. Whilst this may not be direct financial assistance they may be able to offer training and mentoring. Friends of Irish Heritage is the name of the scheme	<a href="http://www.heritageireland.ie">www.heritageireland.ie</a> or <a href="http://www.opw.ie">www.opw.ie</a>
The Wheel	The Wheel is a national support and representative network for the community and voluntary sector which works to strengthen organisations as well as the sectoral infrastructure and environment. The Wheel provides a wide range of training, information, support and advice services to individual organizations as well as undertaking advocacy and campaigning work on cross-cutting sector development issues.	<a href="http://www.thewheel.ie">www.thewheel.ie</a>
Foras na Gaeilge	Provide grants for signage and booklets etc. that include the Irish language	<a href="http://www.gaeilge.ie/">www.gaeilge.ie/</a>

## Heritage and Biodiversity Resources

**Table 1. Useful contacts**

<b>Name (Group/ Individual)</b>	<b>Activities/ Expertise</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
Marie Mannion, <b>Heritage Officer,</b> Galway County Council	All matters relating to heritage	mmannion@galwaycoco.ie www.galwaycountyheritage.com (091) 509198
Christy Cunniffe, <b>Field Monuments Advisor</b>	Advice in relation to archaeological monuments and features	chrisccun@eircom.net 0879697692
Elaine O’Riordan, Galway County <b>Biodiversity Project Manager</b>	Biodiversity, natural heritage, habitat mapping, community-based projects, biodiversity guidelines for community groups	elaine.oriordan@nuigalway.ie www.galwaycountybiodiversity.com (091) 495921
Maeve McKeever, Fáilte Ireland	Advice on national trail/ tour of battle sites.	(01)8847 136
Michael Loughlin, OPW	Friends of Heritage Scheme	(01)6476635
National Parks and Wildlife Service	Responsible for the protection of Ireland’s natural heritage, particularly sites designated as Special Conservation Areas, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, and Nature Reserves etc., and species of conservation concern e.g. hen harriers.	www.npws.ie
Galway Bat Group	Organise walks and talks on bats in Galway	galwaybatgroup@gmail.com
Vincent Wildlife Trust	Promote conservation of bats and other mammals; provide information and advice; organise walks and talks on bats	katemcaney@vwt.org.uk www.mammals-in-ireland.ie/
BirdWatch Galway	Promote conservation of birds and their habitats; conduct surveys and organise birdwatching events in Galway	www.galwaybirdwatch.org

**Table 2. Heritage and Biodiversity Plan actions and relevant information sources**

Action	Topic/ Activity	Information source
1	Looped trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.irishtrails.ie/National_Trails_Office/Publications/Trail_Development/Guide_to_Planning_and_Developing_Recreational_Trails_in_Ireland.pdf">www.irishtrails.ie/National_Trails_Office/Publications/Trail_Development/Guide_to_Planning_and_Developing_Recreational_Trails_in_Ireland.pdf</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.irishtrails.ie/National_Trails_Office/Publications/Management_Standards.pdf">www.irishtrails.ie/National_Trails_Office/Publications/Management_Standards.pdf</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.noticenature.ie/Walking_Trails_in_Ireland.html">www.noticenature.ie/Walking_Trails_in_Ireland.html</a></li> </ul>
2	Interpretive heritage information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.failteireland.ie/Market-Your-Business-With-Failte-Ireland/Expand-Your-Marketing-Toolkit/Attract-Cultural-Tourists.aspx">www.failteireland.ie/Market-Your-Business-With-Failte-Ireland/Expand-Your-Marketing-Toolkit/Attract-Cultural-Tourists.aspx</a></li> <li>➤ A tourism toolkit for Ireland's Built Heritage.</li> <li>➤ A tourism toolkit for Ireland's Cultural Experiences</li> <li>➤ Sharing our Stories Manual</li> </ul>
3	Work placement project for 3 <sup>rd</sup> level students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage Officer (contact details above)</li> <li>• NUI, Galway/ GMT</li> </ul>
4	Feasibility study for national tour of Williamite battle sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.failteireland.ie/">www.failteireland.ie/</a></li> </ul>
5.	Folklore research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archaeology in the Classroom <a href="http://www.itsabouttime.ie">www.itsabouttime.ie</a></li> <li>• 'Collecting and Preserving Folklore and Oral History: Basic Techniques, Galway County Council, 2006'; <a href="http://www.galway.ie/en/Services/Heritage/CulturalHeritage/folklore%20publication%20english%20galway%20co%20co[1].pdf">www.galway.ie/en/Services/Heritage/CulturalHeritage/folklore%20publication%20english%20galway%20co%20co[1].pdf</a></li> <li>• The Folklore of Ireland Council; <a href="http://comhairlebeal.ie/index.html">http://comhairlebeal.ie/index.html</a></li> <li>• National Folklore Collection at UCD – you can search the national folklore collection and can request access to records; <a href="http://www.ucd.ie/irishfolklore/en/">www.ucd.ie/irishfolklore/en/</a></li> </ul>
6.	Golden Mile competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.galway.ie/en/Services/Heritage/GoldenMile/">www.galway.ie/en/Services/Heritage/GoldenMile/</a></li> </ul>
7.	Planting native trees and shrubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/heritage/pdfs/buds_of_the_banner.pdf">www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/heritage/pdfs/buds_of_the_banner.pdf</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.treecouncil.com">www.treecouncil.com</a></li> </ul>
8.	Tree planting plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity Project Manager (contact details above)</li> </ul>
9.	School biodiversity projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.greenschoolsireland.org/_fileupload/biodiversity%20resources/Insect%20Hotel%20Habitat.pdf">www.greenschoolsireland.org/_fileupload/biodiversity%20resources/Insect%20Hotel%20Habitat.pdf</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.rte.ie/radio/mooneygoeswild/factsheets/naturegarden/">www.rte.ie/radio/mooneygoeswild/factsheets/naturegarden/</a></li> </ul>
10.	Wildlife-friendly landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.butterflyconservation.ie/wordpress/?page_id=33">www.butterflyconservation.ie/wordpress/?page_id=33</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Sustainable-gardening/Plants-for-pollinators">www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Sustainable-gardening/Plants-for-pollinators</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/wildlifegarden/">www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/wildlifegarden/</a></li> </ul>

11.	Natural heritage walks and walks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heritage Officer and Biodiversity Project Manager (contact details above)</li> </ul>
12.	Tree trail for Heritage Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity Project Manager (Contact details above)</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1: Participants in Heritage and Biodiversity Training

	Name
1	Mary McLoughlin
2	Michael Manning
3	Colette Treacy
4	Alan Headd
5	Aileen Daly
6	Robert Cooke
7	Celsus Treacy
8	Carmel Murray
9	Thomas Dolan
10	Sinead O’Sullivan
11	Kate Treacy
12	Sen Larkin
13	Teresa Scott
14	Patricia Dolphin- Loughnane
15	Aileen Daly
16	Pat Cafferky
17	Majella Riddell
18	Martin Loughnane