

# BALLYMONEY HERITAGE GUIDE

## GUIDE



HISTORIC SITES AND FAMOUS PEOPLE FROM THE BOROUGH OF BALLYMONEY



Discover more about the people and places from our past. Visit Ballymoney Museum at Ballymoney Town Hall.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS on accommodation and facilities in the Ballymoney area, please contact:

**Tourist Information Centre**  
Ballymoney Town Hall  
Townhead Street  
Ballymoney BT53 6BE

Tel 028 2766 0230  
Email townhall@ballymoney.gov.uk

Visit the Ballymoney Borough Council websites at  
[www.ballymoney.gov.uk](http://www.ballymoney.gov.uk)  
[www.visitballymoney.com](http://www.visitballymoney.com)  
[www.ballymoneyancestry.com](http://www.ballymoneyancestry.com)



BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO THANK Jack Wilkinson for providing the artwork for this brochure, some of which can also be seen in the book "Ballymoney - An Illustrated History and Companion" published by Cottage Publications, 1995.

Mr. S. Alex Blair for his assistance in editing this guide.  
The Community Relations Unit for their financial support.

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# WALKING TRAIL

of Ballymoney Town



## BALLYMONEY TOWN HALL

Arts Centre, Museum & Tourist Information Centre, Townhead Street

The Town Hall was erected through public subscription in 1866. It was renovated and enlarged in 1934, and again in 2005. Inside are rooms which commemorate some of Ballymoney's most celebrated historical figures - George Shiels, the playwright, K.K. McArthur, Olympic gold medallist and James Cramsie. Cramsie helped to establish the town's first

museum and subscribed over £400 to the building of the Town Hall. A stained glass window at the front of the building, depicts the former Ballymoney Coat of Arms.

The Town Hall is the home of Ballymoney Drama Festival, the oldest festival of its kind in Ireland.



## ST. JAMES'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

St. James's Road

When the famous Rev Dr Henry Cooke opened this church on 20 March 1836, it was on the road to Coleraine and regarded as a very fine, well proportioned basalt 'barn' church. The road was closed a few years later and after initial difficulties, the congregation grew and is now a very strong and prosperous one as may be seen from the fine halls adjacent to the church.



## NORTHERN BANK BUILDING

High Street

This grand building with its imposing 'Italianate' façade was originally a ballroom built by the 5th Earl of Antrim at his own expense. It was completed c.1760 and hosted the Earl's grand Antrim Hunt Balls, to which local aristocrats and all their guests were invited. Later it was used as barracks for Government troops during the 1798 Rebellion and the Napoleonic Wars. The Northern Bank Ltd. (formerly the Belfast Bank) has used these premises since 1863.



## BALLYMONEY REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Charlotte Street

Reformed Presbyterians or Covenanters as they are often called, are the followers of those Presbyterians who signed the Covenants of 1638 and 1643. In the 18th century there were local societies of Covenanters at Kilaughts, Dervock and Ballymoney. They secured a minister, the Rev Dr W J Stavelly, in 1804 and in 1831 this church was built. It has been refurbished many times, most recently in 2003. Services here retain the old Presbyterian traditions of singing only metrical psalms, unaccompanied, led by a precentor.



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## OLD COURT HOUSE

Charlotte Street

The Court House is believed to be an early example of the work of Sir Charles Lanyon. He was appointed County Surveyor in 1836, shortly before work began on this building. Lanyon is famous for such spectacular architecture

as Queen's University, Belfast. The building is impressive for its small upper storey Vitruvian doorway. It was used as a courthouse for nearly 140 years and is now in private ownership.

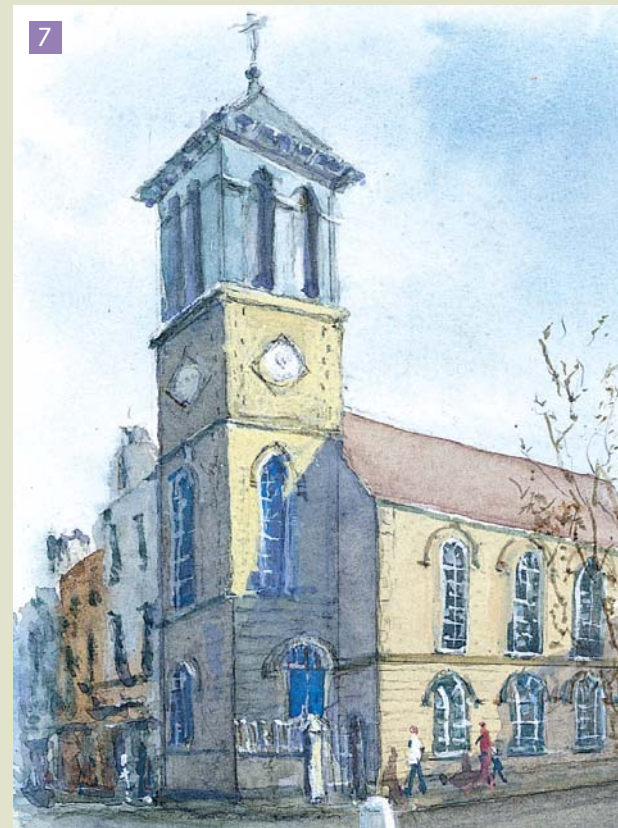
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## CHARLOTTE STREET

This street is regarded as a fine example of Irish late Georgian terrace houses. Many of the houses still retain their beautiful door cases, windows and fan lights. Formerly called Pyper Row, in 1826 it was re-named in honour of Lady Charlotte Kerr, daughter of the 6th Earl of Antrim.

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## MASONIC HALL & TOWN CLOCK

The Diamond

Since it was erected by the 6th Earl of Antrim in c.1775, this building has served as a Market House, Court House, Town Hall, place of worship and school. It also housed the town's first library (opened in 1839) and museum (opened in 1860). In 1785 the famous Methodist Rev. John Wesley preached here.

Following the 1798 Rebellion, local United Irishmen were hanged from gallows attached to the clock tower. Their bodies were buried at the base of the tower. The Campanile (bell tower) above the clock was erected by Hugh Seymour, 9th Earl of Antrim in 1852.

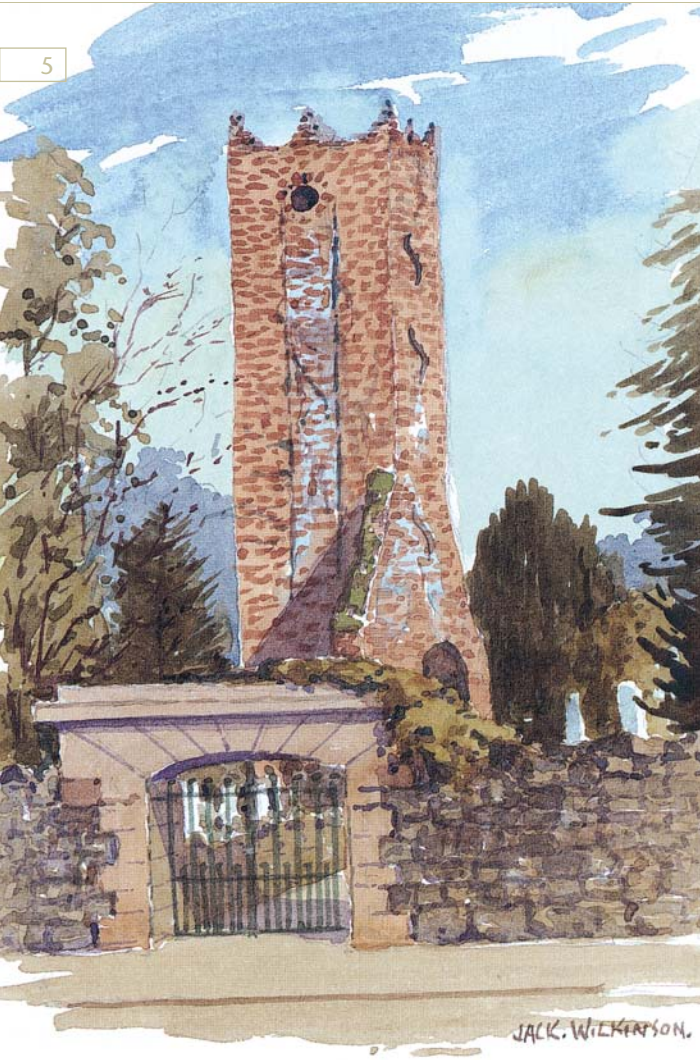
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## THE OLD BANKHOUSE

Church Street

The Ulster Bank first opened a local branch at 33 Charlotte Street in 1836, before moving to these purpose built and rather ornate premises in 1866. A listed building, it is now a commercial property containing private businesses.



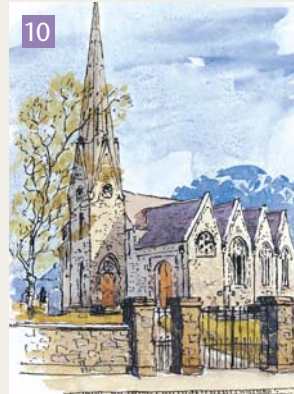
## 9 OLD CHURCH TOWER

Church Street

The tower is the oldest surviving building in the town, with a datestone inscribed 1637. The church was re-built after it was burned during the 1641 Irish Rebellion and was used until 1782. Among those buried here is the town's ghost, George Hutchinson JP, known as "Bloody Hutchinson". Hutchinson was a local magistrate, infamous for his summary justice following the United Irish Rebellion of 1798. Alexander Gamble, a United Irishman was also buried here in 1883, 85 years after he was executed. Recent restoration work, part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, has helped to preserve this important building. A leaflet guide to the Old Church Graveyard is available at the Tourist Information Centre.

JACK WILKINSON

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## ST. PATRICK'S PARISH CHURCH

Church Street

The Church of Ireland congregation has worshipped in this building since 1782. It was enlarged in 1868 when, among other additions, the tall spire was built and more seating provided with a south aisle. Across the road, the Old Church Tower is all that remains of the original Parish Church.

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## TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rodeing Foot or Roddenfoot

This congregation began as a Presbyterian Seceder Society in Pyper Row (now Charlotte Street) and moved to this site in the 1840s. The current building was opened in 1885, largely due to the efforts of the illustrious Rev. J. B. Armour who was minister here from 1869-1925. The church is still known by many townspeople as "Armour's Meeting House".

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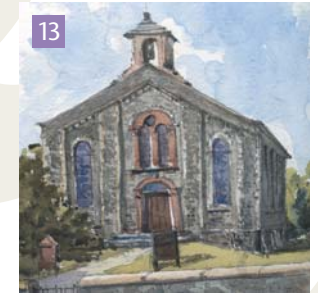


## BALLYMONEY FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Meeting House Street

This is the oldest place of worship in the town that is still in use. It is often known as "the Cathedral of Presbyterianism in the Route". It was built in 1777 to replace the first Meeting House of 1690. The building was later extensively renovated in 1871, 1921 & 2004. The east window contains the coat of arms of the regiments in which members of the congregation fought during World War One.

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## BALLYMONEY METHODIST CHURCH

Seymour Street

In 1859 the Rev William Crook opened a Methodist mission to bring practical and spiritual help to the people of Castle Street and surrounding areas. That year also saw a great religious revival across Ulster and Mr Crook decided he had enough support to merit the building of a Methodist Church, which was opened in 1861. It had a schoolroom underneath and both church and school functioned well until the early years of the 20th century. In 1906 the school was closed and the church was also in poor condition. Services were transferred to the Town Hall but a great renovation scheme of 1954-5 restored the building and it was re-opened for worship. Further renovations have taken place in 1987 and 1993.



## BALLYMONEY RAILWAY STATION

Seymour Street

Since 1855, passengers and freight have passed through Ballymoney Railway Station. For many years, the main line was under the control of the Belfast & Northern Counties Railway, while the Ballycastle Railway Company also ran a narrow gauge line from here to the coast from 1880-1950. The present station building was constructed in 1901 and later renovated in 1990.



## KIRGAN MONUMENT

Graveyard of the Church of Our Lady & St Patrick

When Christopher Kirgan died in 1931, aged 103 years old, he was one of Ireland's oldest men. Kirgan was born at Unshinagh, near Dunloy. He was a well known citizen of Belfast and first initiated the erection of this gothic mausoleum 20 years before his death. The churchyard also contains the grave of the famous playwright, George Shiels.

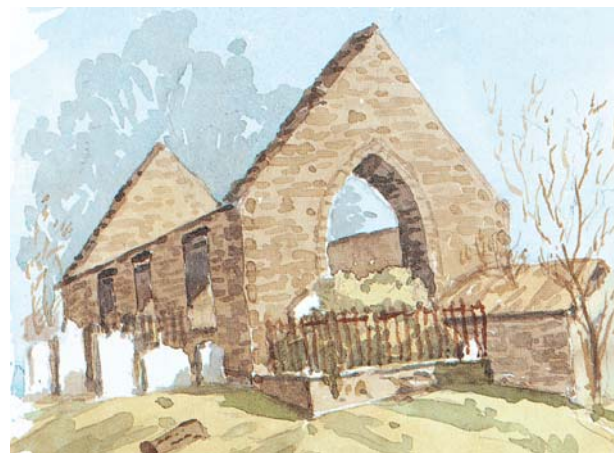


## CHURCH OF OUR LADY & ST. PATRICK

Castle Street

The Church of Our Lady & St. Patrick was dedicated on 2 June 1878. The construction cost £8,870, raised through public subscription over a period of nearly 20 years. It replaced an older building of 1833, although the first church on the site was completed in 1794. The ornate interior includes a pulpit and altars made from Caen stone. The main altar was the gift of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The stained glass windows in the apse were created by the renowned Franz Meyer Studio of Munich, Germany.

# HISTORIC SITES



## DERRYKEIGHAN OLD CHURCHYARD

Derrykeighan Old Churchyard (Grid Reference C9629 3375), one and a half miles from the village of Dervock, was a place of early Christian worship. Churches have been built on this site since the mediaeval period, possibly even earlier. However, the present ruins are of the parish church, vacated in 1831.

A replica of the Derrykeighan Stone can be seen in the churchyard. Pre-dating Christianity, this remarkable stone with decorative Iron Age carvings, was found in 1981 built into the walls of

the ruined church. The original stone is now in the care of the Ulster Museum.

The headstones that survive in the old churchyard include that of a United Irishman, William Dunlop, who was hanged in Coleraine in 1798.

John Meeke is also buried here. During World War One, Meeke courageously rescued Major William Redmond, a famous Irish MP, from the battlefield. Meeke was injured twice and Redmond later died of his wounds.

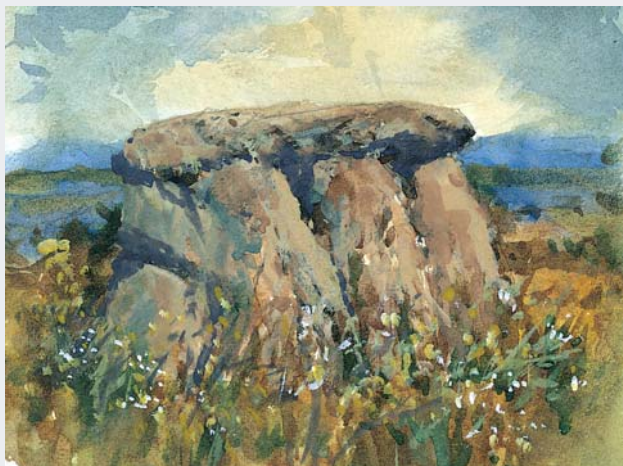


## BENVARDEN HOUSE, DERVOCK

On the banks of the River Bush, this historic estate was first owned by the McNaughten family who acquired it in 1636. In 1798, it passed to the present owners, the Montgomery family, who invested heavily in the improvement of the splendid house and grounds. The beautifully landscaped gardens are open to the public during the summer.

**FOR FURTHER DETAILS**, including opening hours, please contact

Benvarden House,  
Dervock, BT53 6NN  
Tel 028 2074 1331  
[www.benvarden.com](http://www.benvarden.com)



## NEOLITHIC TOMBS, RASHARKIN

There are two Stone Age tombs found in this area - Craigs Dolmen (Grid Reference C9740 1729) and the Broad Stone (Grid Reference C9793 1756).

Despite its name, Craigs Dolmen is not a dolmen but a passage tomb. It can be clearly seen from the Mullan Road. On nearby adjacent farmland is the Broad Stone, a court tomb. These ancient monuments show

that early settlers lived in this region 4,000-6,000 years ago. Both tombs are in State Care and are looked after by the Environment and Heritage Service.

**Craigs Dolmen is on private land and can be observed from the road side. Access to the Broad Stone is through private land and cannot be visited without the landowner's permission.**



## THE CHI-RHO STONE, DRUMAQUERN

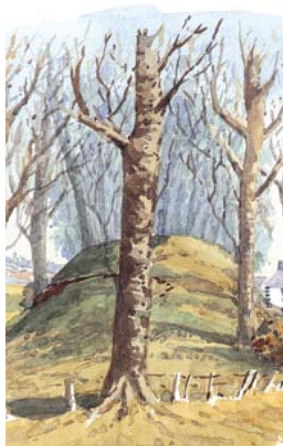
"Chi" and "rho", the first two letters of the name "Christ" in Greek, are enclosed with a circle and engraved on this ancient standing stone. It shows that the early Celtic Church knew Greek and links the Irish church with European thought. What makes the stone unique is the fact that the same symbols appear on the other side but have the "rho" reversed. Known as "Old Patrick", the stone is believed in local tradition to commemorate a visit by the Saint to the area. Of exceptional interest, it is the oldest Christian symbol in the Borough.

**This site is on private land and cannot be accessed without the owner's permission.**

## DRUMART, BALLYMONEY

On the Kirk Road, close to the town of Ballymoney, Drumart (or Drumard, Grid Reference C9600 2774) is an example of a Norman motte. This is a mound on which raised defences were built to provide a place of safety for those who lived in the small surrounding settlement.

**This site is on private land and cannot be accessed without the owner's permission.**



## DOOEY'S CAIRN, DUNLOY

Close to the village of Dunloy is Dooley's Cairn (Grid Reference D0216 1830), a Neolithic tomb dating from around 2000-4000BC. It is named after Mr Andy Dooley on whose land it stood and who was instrumental in having it excavated in 1935. At that time various artefacts were discovered such as polished axe heads and flint arrows.

When further excavations took place in 1975, traces of cereal seeds were discovered implying that early agriculture had been introduced to the region. That year, the Dooley family handed the site over to State Care and it is maintained by the Environment and Heritage Service.



## KNOCKAHOLLET MOTTE & BAILEY, LOUGHGIEL

Knockahollet (Grid Reference D0490 2305) is a classic example of a motte and bailey fort built by Norman invaders during the 12th century. Concealed beneath the fort are two souterrains, underground chambers in which people hid from attack. In the early

20th century, archaeologists discovered that the fort was built on an ancient burial site when two large Bronze Age urns were unearthed in the mound.

**This site is on private land and cannot be accessed without the owner's permission.**



## LESLIE HILL OPEN FARM, BALLYMONEY

Leslie Hill has been occupied by the Leslie family for around 350 years. The present Georgian house was built by James Leslie in 1760 and the farm buildings date from the 18th and 19th centuries. Amongst them is the Bell Barn (shown here) described by Arthur

Young in 1780 as "the best contrived I have seen in Ireland".

**FOR FURTHER DETAILS**, including opening hours, please contact

Leslie Hill Open Farm, Leslie Hill, Ballymoney, BT53 6QL  
Tel 028 2766 6803/3109  
[www.lesliehillopenfarm.co.uk](http://www.lesliehillopenfarm.co.uk)





## STRANOCUM HALL

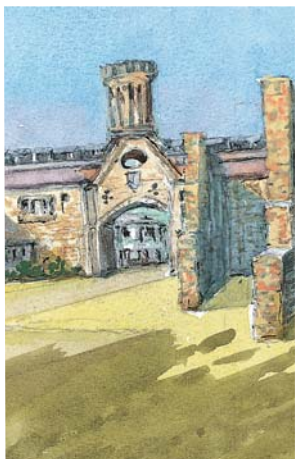
Close to the village of Stranocum, five miles north west of Ballymoney, is Stranocum Hall, once owned by the Hutchinson family. Built in the eighteenth century, this grand house has recently been restored as a private residence. It includes a heritage museum which is open to groups by appointment.

Nearby are two ring forts, or raths, which are the remains of fortified settlements commonly built in Ireland 400-1000AD. Concealed beneath one of these raths is a souterrain.

**FOR FURTHER DETAILS**, including opening hours, please contact

Stranocum Hall, 139 Fivey Road  
Stranocum BT53 8JH  
Tel 028 2074 2281  
[www.stranocumhall.com](http://www.stranocumhall.com)

**The ring forts cannot be accessed without the owner's permission.**



## LISSANOURE CASTLE, LOUGHGIEL

In the middle of the small lough, there is an early crannog (man made island). On the lake shore are the ruins of Lissanoure Castle built in the 13th century. This was the birthplace and home of George, Earl of Macartney (1737-1806). The castle was destroyed in 1847 following a huge explosion caused by the accidental ignition of caskets of gunpowder.

The grounds of Lissanoure Castle are strictly private. Facilities are available for weddings and private functions. **FOR FURTHER DETAILS**, please contact

Lissanoure Castle, Loughgiel BT44 9JP  
Tel 028 2764 1132 [www.lissanourecastle.com](http://www.lissanourecastle.com)

# HISTORIC PEOPLE

## WILLIAM JOSEPH DUNLOP MBE OBE (1952-2000)

Joey Dunlop was one of the most successful motorcycle riders of all time. His incredible sporting career included five Formula One World Championships, 13 wins at the North West 200 races, 24 wins at the Ulster Grand Prix and a record 26 wins in the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy. He was tragically killed while

racing in Estonia in July 2000. In May 2001, Ballymoney Borough Council officially opened the Joey Dunlop Memorial Garden, located on the corner of Seymour Street and Castle Street. In this beautiful setting, visitors have time to reflect on the memory of this much loved international motorcycling legend.



## REV. J. B. ARMOUR (1841-1928)

Born in Lisboy in 1841, J.B. Armour was ordained minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church in 1869. He was an outstanding public figure, widely known as an educationalist, an upholder of Home Rule principles, an independent thinker and fearless advocate of the rights of the people. He was particularly interested in the Route Tenant Right Association. He retired in 1925 after 56 years of serving the church and died three years later.



Courtesy Clifford McLean Photography



Picture by Stanley Matchett

## JAMES YOUNG (1918-1974)

James Young, the famous Ulster comedian, lived the first six months of his life in Union Street, Ballymoney. Young first achieved fame as a comic radio actor before embarking on a celebrated career in theatre and television. Recordings of his work, with favourite characters such as Derek the window cleaner, Mrs O'Chondriac, and Wee Ernie from the shipyard, remain popular broadcasts with local audiences.



Courtesy Potchefstroom Museum

## KENNEDY K. McARTHUR (1881-1960)

K.K. McArthur was born in Dervock and emigrated to South Africa as a young man. An outstanding athlete, he won the Olympic gold medal for his adopted country in the marathon at Stockholm in 1912. Following his victory, McArthur returned to visit his birthplace in Dervock and was greeted as a hero by a crowd of thousands. A large bronze plaque in Ballymoney Town Hall commemorates his victory.



Courtesy McKinley Memorial Library

## PRESIDENT WILLIAM McKINLEY (1843-1901)

President William McKinley was born in Ohio, USA. His ancestors lived in Conagher, near Dervock, and emigrated in the late 18th century. He was elected 25th President of America in 1896. In 1901, during his second term of office, he was assassinated by an anarchist.



## GEORGE SHIELS (1881-1949)

The famous playwright George Shiels was born at Ballybrakes. He achieved great success writing for the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. His plays, most of which were written in Main Street, include 'The New Gossoon', 'The Passing Day' and 'Professor Tim'. These were hugely popular here and abroad. In 1940, Shiels' play "The Rugged Path" was seen in Dublin by a record 35,000 people over a 3 month period. He spent the last years of his life in Carnlough and is buried in the graveyard of the Church of Our Lady & St. Patrick, Ballymoney.



## GEORGE, EARL OF MACARTNEY (1737-1806)

Born at Lissanoure, as a young man the Earl of Macartney attended Trinity College, Dublin. Later, as a student in London, he mixed with such notables as Edmund Burke, Dr Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds. His many diplomatic appointments included Chief Secretary of Ireland, Governor of Grenada, British Ambassador to Russia (where he was a friend of the Empress, Catherine the Great). His biggest achievement was his appointment as the first British Ambassador to China and he ended his diplomatic career as Governor of the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. He was responsible for rebuilding and improving the village of Dervock, of which he was landlord.



Courtesy New Zealand Historic Places Trust

## ROBERT HANNAH (1845-1930)

Robert Hannah emigrated from Ballymoney to Australia in 1863. He followed the "Gold Rush" to New Zealand where he set up his own business selling footwear, essential equipment in the harsh working conditions. His business later became one of the most successful in the country and commanded over half the shoe trade in New Zealand. With his newly found wealth he built a grand home, Antrim House, which is now the headquarters of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust in Wellington.

## DR. JOHN YOUNG

John Young was born at Ballylough, Kilraughts. He emigrated to America where he became a distinguished barrister and well known personality in Indianapolis. In 1860, he helped Abraham Lincoln in his presidential campaign. As a reward, Lincoln appointed Young to the Diplomatic Corps of the United States of America. In 1861, he returned to Ireland as American Consul to the Port of Belfast. He served as Consul until 1866 and died some years later in Indiana.

## SAMUEL ROBINSON (1865-1958)

Samuel Robinson served his apprenticeship in his uncle's grocery store in Ballymoney, before emigrating to Philadelphia. In 1891, he founded the American Stores Company with his friend Robert Crawford. This soon became the largest chain of stores in the country. Robinson donated funds for the erection and endowment of the Robinson Memorial Hospital, Ballymoney, which opened in 1932.

## SAMUEL McCLURE (1858-1949)

Samuel McClure emigrated to America where he founded the first newspaper syndicate in the country. He is regarded as the man who discovered Rudyard Kipling. He also founded McClure's Magazine in 1893 which continued to be published until 1933.

## WILLIAM S. ARMOUR (1881-1940)

William, son of the Rev. J. B. Armour, was the founder of the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster, one of Northern Ireland's leading youth organisations. He was educated at Oxford University where he was President of the Union. He became a barrister, educationalist and later editor of the leading Belfast daily newspaper, "The Northern Whig".