



LECALE & DOWNE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

'EXPLORING OUR HERITAGE'

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Take the fuss out of paying your subscription...

Don't miss your membership subscription again by filling out and returning the Standing Order form on the back of this edition of Lecale News. Your bank will then automatically send your membership payment on 1st April each year.

It will also save the Society money in sending out reminder letters!

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LECALE & DOWNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Lecale News

ISSUE 37

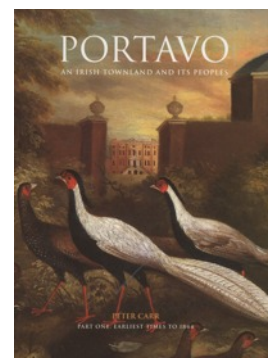
AUGUST 2014

Keeping you up to date with news from Lecale & Downe

September Meeting

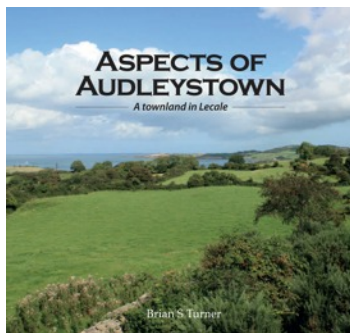
'From Powdered Dandy to Old Bear: The Life of David Ker'
by Peter Carr
Monday, 15th September 2014 @ 7:30pm

Peter Carr is a noted author of the two volume study of Portavo townland and is a leading authority on the Ker family. In the early 19th century, the Ker's were one of the leading landed families in County Down. David Ker (1751-1811) was responsible for expanding his lands from the small estate at Portavo near Donaghadee to include the town of Ballynahinch and its neighbouring estate at Montalto.



October Meeting

'Audleystown: Researching a Townland History'
by Dr Brian Turner
Monday, 20th October 2014 @ 7:30pm



In May 2014 the Society launched its third monograph, 'Aspects of Audleystown'. It has been widely welcomed. Dr Brian Turner will explain how he conducted the research into this townland in Lecale and how this might be applied to other townlands by people interested in recording their history.

Launch of Lecale Review No. 12

Monday, 17th November 2014

Society members can collect their complimentary copies from 7:00-7:30pm. We would appreciate it if you would have your membership payment paid before the launch night. Entertainment and refreshments will be provided.

December Meeting

'Down From Every Angle'
by Mike Hartwell
Monday, 8th December 2014 @ 7:30pm

Mike Hartwell is one of the most distinguished local photographers and will be bringing us on a photographic tour of County Down not to be missed.



All lectures take place at our usual venue at Down County Museum

Saving Saint Patrick's Cross

By Philip Blair

In early June this year, the Lecale & Downe Society was approached by Mike King of Down County Museum and asked if we would consider joining the Friends of Down County Museum in an exciting, once-in-a-lifetime project.

A drawing dated 1842 and entitled St Patrick's Cross was discovered by George Rutherford in a scrap-book of sketches by Alexander Johns of Carrickfergus, now in the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). George brought the image to Mike who had been searching for early images of the Downpatrick High Cross as it had just recently been restored for exhibition in the Museum and a replica made to go under the East window of the Cathedral.

By coincidence, Peter Harbinson, an expert on Irish High Crosses, soon afterwards identified another drawing of the Cross, dating about 1840 amongst a collection of drawing put up for sale in Dublin. These have since been purchased by Down County Museum.

The drawings show that the Cross had been damaged before 1840, losing its cross-shaft and having its top arm knocked off. It was the subject of vandalism in 1842 and although re-erected several times, it was eventually broken into the three sections that survive inside the entrance of Down Cathedral today.

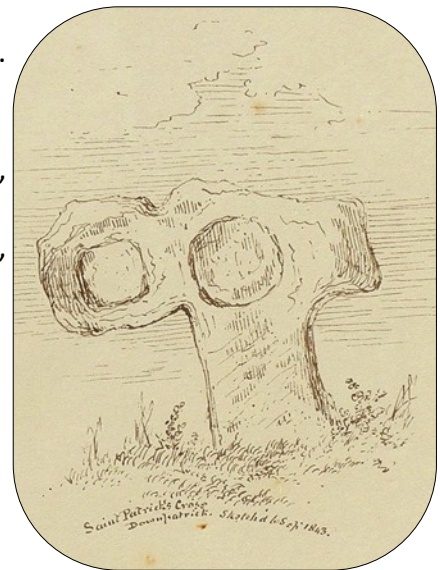
In mid June, the cross pieces were removed from the porch of the Cathedral to the Museum, where there was more space, in order for the cleaning to begin. This process was carried out by Cliveden Conservation of Bath at a cost of £1,660, £500 of which was donated by the Lecale & Downe Historical Society, the remainder coming from the Friends of Down County Museum.

I attended one of Mike's tours of the County Down High Crosses, which was very interesting and helped to demonstrate the importance and development of these high crosses. Visiting the Kilbroney High Cross in St Bronagh's graveyard, gave the best impression of

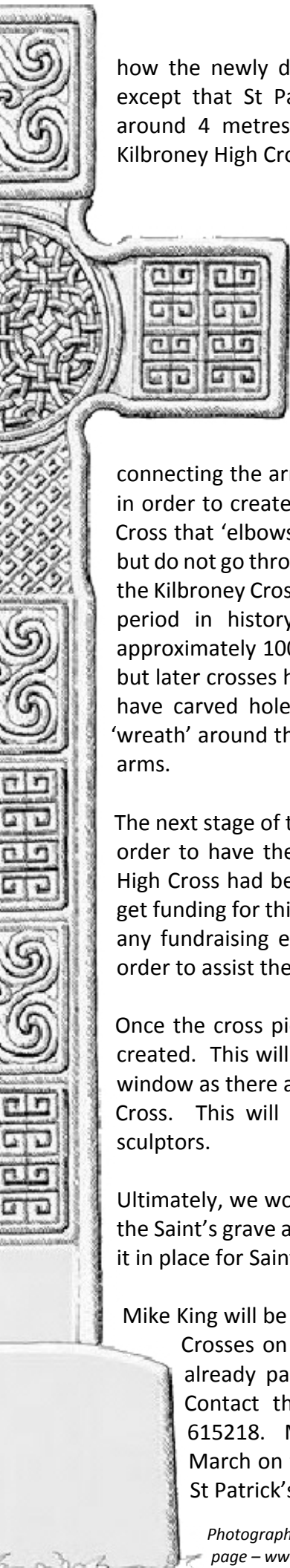


Right: A drawing by reconstruction artist Philip Armstrong showing how the newly discovered cross may have looked when complete.

Below: The 1843 drawing of St Patrick's Cross by Alexander John, re-discovered by George Rutherford in a sketchbook at PRONI.



Philip Blair with the fragments of St Patrick's Cross



how the newly discovered St Patrick's Cross may have looked – except that St Patrick's Cross must have been much bigger at around 4 metres high and 1.6 metres wide, compared to the Kilbroney High Cross at 2.5 metres high.

The Kilbroney Cross has been sculpted from one piece of Newry granite and at some point in history the right arm has broken off and been re-attached. This shows why these Irish crosses evolved into the familiar hoop shape (like the Downpatrick High Cross, and many modern crosses seen in graveyards). The hoop is thought to be representative of a wreath, symbolising life and death. This 'wreath'

connecting the arms of the cross was most likely added to crosses in order to create more stability. It can be seen on the Kilbroney Cross that 'elbows' have been carved into the corners of the arms, but do not go through to the back of the cross. So we can guess that the Kilbroney Cross and St Patrick's Cross are from around the same period in history. The Downpatrick High Cross is later (by approximately 100 years) as it has the rounded/wreath headstone but later crosses have gone a step further in that the stonemasons have carved holes through the cross, creating a more effective 'wreath' around the arms, but still helping with the strength of the arms.

The next stage of the St Patrick's Cross project is to raise £20,000 in order to have the cross pieces scanned, just as the Downpatrick High Cross had been in order to create its replica. Mike hopes to get funding for this, but I am sure that our members would support any fundraising events we might run in the next few months in order to assist the fundraising.

Once the cross pieces are scanned, Mike hopes to have a replica created. This will not be as easy as the High Cross under the east window as there are only three fragments remaining of St Patrick's Cross. This will involve the expertise of historians, artists and sculptors.

Ultimately, we would like to see the replica placed near the site of the Saint's grave as it was centuries before. Perhaps we could have it in place for Saint Patrick's Day 2015...

Mike King will be conducting more tours of the County Down High Crosses on the 10th, 24th and 31st August. If you have not already participated, I would highly recommend the tour. Contact the Museum for more information on 028 44 615218. Mike will also be giving the Society's lecture in March on the High Crosses of County Down, as part of the St Patrick's Festival.

Photographs of the County Down High Crosses can be viewed on our Facebook page – www.facebook.com/lecalehistory



Geologist Ian Meighan surveys the granite of the Kilbroney Cross



Mike King with the later Donaghmore High Cross, complete with 'wreath'

LECALE AND DOWNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STANDING ORDER REQUEST FORM

YOUR DETAILS

BANK NAME

BANK ADDRESS

ACCOUNT NUMBER

SORT CODE

REFERENCE (Initial & Surname; ie. J.SMYTH)

AMOUNT (£10 individual/£15 family)

START DATE

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

*** INSTRUCTIONS TO BANK ***

Please send the above amount to the following bank account annually on 1st April until instructed otherwise. (Make immediate payment if this April's payment is missed)

***Lecale & Downe Historical Society
Ulster Bank Ltd. (Downpatrick branch)
A/C No.: 21787023
Sort code: 98-05-40***

IMPORTANT – MEMBER, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN

Please complete and detach this form and return it to: The Treasurer, Lecale & Downe Historical Society, 26 Marian Park, Commons of Clanmaghera, Ballykinlar, Co. Down, N. Ireland, BT30 8DJ

I _____ (PRINT NAME) have set up a Standing Order with my bank to make an annual payment of £10/£15 (DELETE AS APPROPRIATE) to pay my membership fee to the Lecale & Downe Historical Society.

The reference for this Standing Order is: _____ (AS ABOVE)

Signed: _____ Date: _____