

Kilfenora high crosses

The diocese of Kilfenora is situated entirely in north county Clare and comprises the baronies of the Burren and Corcomroe. St Fachnan founded the first monastic settlement in Kilfenora in the sixth century and today's cathedral is dedicated to his memory. In 1111 the synod of Rathbreasail ignored a claim by Kilfenora to episcopal government. This resulted in an alliance of two powerful local clans, the O'Connors and O'Loughlens, who did not wish to see the O'Brien-dominated diocese of Killaloe taking over their own independent bishopric.

The decision was overturned in 1152 at the synod of Kells and the diocese of Kilfenora was recognised as a separate entity.

The Burren Centre, open daily between:

March 15th to May 31st 10:00 to 17:00 hrs

June 1st to August 31st 09:30 to 18:00 hrs

September 1st to October 31st 10:00 to 17:00 hrs

Possibly seven high crosses were erected to celebrate its episcopal authority, establishment of a cathedral and arrival of its first bishop, which led to Kilfenora being dubbed the 'city of the crosses'.

This summer saw the restoration and repositioning of three high crosses to a special area of conservation within part of the cathedral called the *lady chapel*. The lady chapel has been roofed with glass and the three high crosses re-erected underneath this new canopy. Possibly the most famous of the crosses is one called the Doorty cross. Its iconography portrays the important events of 1152. The National Monuments Service has carried out the restoration of the cathedral and the high crosses at a cost of approximately one million euro.

The high crosses and cathedral are found beside the Burren Centre in Kilfenora village and they can be visited everyday from 10am to 5pm, mid-January to mid-December.

The Doorty cross—now stands protected



Ag iarraidh oidhreacht eisceachtíúla ár gcontae a chur chun cinn

Lá Brian Ború

Lá Brian Ború was organised by East Clare Heritage in order to celebrate the opening of the new *Ború, Emperor of the Irish* exhibition at the Heritage Centre in Tuamgraney. Through establishing this exhibition, East Clare Heritage seeks to reflect the unique association we enjoy with the great High King. Local tradition informs us of Brian being a frequent visitor to the ancient church since his childhood. This folklore, coupled with the association Brian's abbot brother Marcán had with the church, as well as an inimitable record in the annals, further illustrate the links between this historic building and the High King of Ireland. The fact, that the doorway he used then, which was built c. 950, to this day remains unchanged, allows visitors to literally walk in the footsteps of the great Brian.

The exhibition, which was funded by Clare County Council and established by the heritage consultancy service Boru Cultural Enterprises, consists of content and graphic panels, exhibition content and external orientation and explores Boru's life and accomplishments and, of course, his connection with Tuamgraney.

Activities during *Lá Brian Ború* included a Ború march in which six schools participated as Ború's army. A short re-enactment involving Brian and his abbot brother Marcán followed, before the large crowd assembled followed the army into the grounds of Tuamgraney castle to witness a fight between two Dal Cassian warriors. The re-enactment was followed by a series of Gaelic interactive outdoor



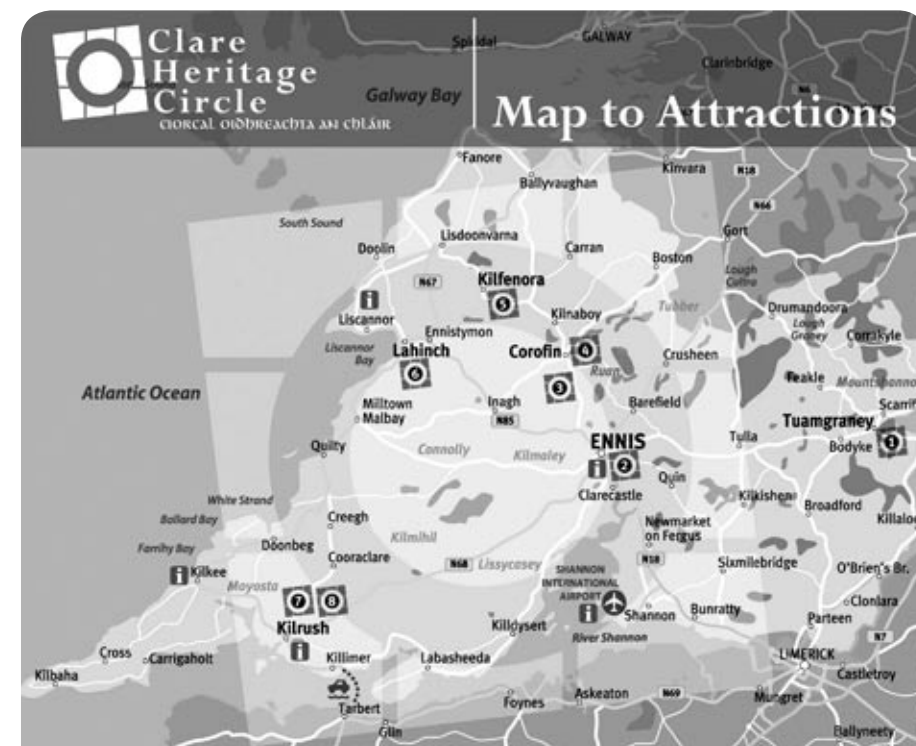
East Clare Heritage, Tuamgraney
Thursday June 9th 2005

photo courtesy of Clare Champion

workshops where the schoolchildren were taught about Gaelic and Viking board games, pottery, blacksmithing, *torc* making and a variety of arts and crafts. Traditional Irish musicians also entertained the crowd.

On the evening of Lá Brian Boru, international author Morgan Llywelyn provided an intriguing lecture on the life of Brian Boru and officially launched the *Boru, Emperor of the Irish* exhibition at the East Clare Heritage Centre. In August *Lá Brian Ború* was aired on RTÉ on the *Nationwide* programme. The committee of East Clare Heritage is an entirely voluntary group which makes the success of *Lá Brian Boru* all the more noteworthy.

The East Clare Heritage centre Tuamgraney is open year round weekdays from 9.30am to 5.00pm.



- 1 East Clare Heritage Centre
- 2 Clare Museum
- 3 Dysert O'Dea
- 4 Clare Heritage Centre
- 5 The Burren Centre
- 6 Lahinch Seaworld
- 7 Vandeaur Walled Garden
- 8 Shannon Dolphins

QUICK REFERENCE DIRECTORY

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| The Burren Centre | 065 708 8030 | East Clare Heritage | 061 92 13 51 or 086 874 9710 |
| Clare Heritage Centre | 065 683 7955 | Lahinch Seaworld | 065 708 1900 |
| Clare Museum | 065 682 3382 | Vandeaur Walled Garden | 065 905 1760 |
| Dysert O'Dea | 065 683 7401 | Shannon Dolphins | 065 905 2326 or 087 854 5450 |

The following are the members of the Clare Heritage Circle:

- ✦ The Burren Centre
- ✦ Clare Heritage Centre
- ✦ Clare Museum
- ✦ Dysert O'Dea
- ✦ East Clare Heritage
- ✦ Lahinch Seaworld
- ✦ Shannon Dolphins
- ✦ Vandeaur Gardens



DOLPHIN MURAL COMPLETED

Nearly one year after the life size dolphin mural was started it has finally been completed. The mural shows a group of bottlenose dolphins from the Shannon estuary, with some dolphins leaping clear of the water and others seen underwater.



This mural is part of the education and awareness resources being developed at the Shannon Dolphin and Wildlife Centre in Kilrush. The centre is run by the Shannon Dolphin and Wildlife Foundation (SDWF) who carry out research and monitoring of the Shannon dolphins. Opened in 2004, the centre has had a busy opening year with over 1,000 visitors in the first three months as well as schools, visiting students and special need groups.

During July 2005 a major field study on the dolphins, funded by *Bord Ischaigh Mhara*, was successfully

carried out, proving the value of a field centre on the shores of the Shannon estuary. Also throughout 2005 the SDWF are carrying out on-going monitoring of the dolphin tour boats on behalf on the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The mural was designed and painted by internationally renowned wildlife artist Mick O'Clery and will no doubt attract many admirers to the centre.

For more information contact 065 905 2326 or info@shannondolphins.ie. Open daily, June-Sept; other times by arrangement.

www.shannondolphins.ie

Vandeleur Walled Garden continues to develop

The Vandeleur Walled Garden, on the outskirts of Kilrush town, first opened its gates to the public in 2001. Once the forgotten garden of Kilrush House, home to the Vandeleur landlords, the walled garden has been completely revived and is now a flagship tourism project for west Clare.

Under the direction of the board of Kilrush Amenity Trust Ltd there is an on-going commitment to development and, earlier this year, the garden was further enhanced by the provision of visitor information boards. These boards provide visitors with a historical survey of the Vandeleur estate, information on the revival of the garden, details of plants and species found in the garden and attractive visual illustrations. Matching funding for the information boards was secured through Shannon Development's *Tourism Heritage Innovation Scheme*.

At present construction is well underway on a Victorian-style glasshouse on its original foundations at the east side of the garden. This glasshouse will provide the necessary controlled environment in which to propagate plants for planting in the garden. While the glasshouse will be a working area for garden staff there will also be a display section accessible to visitors housing a selection of more unusual plant species, including *Streptacarpus Vandeleurii*, introduced into cultivation by a member of the Vandeleur family, Crofton Bury Vandeleur (1867-1947).

Matching funding for this project has been secured from Rural Resource Development Ltd under the *Leader National Rural Development Programme in Clare 2002-2006* and is due for completion in October.

Phone: 065 905 1760

Open daily, year round

Apr-Oct 10:00-18:00 hrs Oct-April 10:00-17:00 hrs



Our picture shows Gerry O'Malley, chairperson of Kilrush Amenity Trust Ltd and Siobhán Curran, marketing and development officer, Kilrush Town Council viewing one of the new information boards. Looking on are Cllr. Deirdre Culligan, Pat Shannon, Leonard Cleary, directors of Kilrush Amenity Trust Ltd, Fidelma O'Kelly and Sinead McSharry.

Clare Heritage and Genealogical Centre

The Clare Heritage and Genealogical Centre came about as a result of an overwhelming desire by large numbers of people of Clare origin throughout the world to learn more about their ancestors and about the social conditions which prevailed in Ireland during the nineteenth century. This buildup of interest had been happening over many years and particularly during the 1960s and early 1970s. Many visitors to Clare were being directed to Naoise Cleary because he was known to have a vast knowledge of Clare surnames and their origins. Naoise realised, however, that these people required more than just general information on their family name; they wanted specific information on who their ancestors were, where they lived, as well as an insight into the social history of their area.



County Clare, situated on the west coast of Ireland in the province of Munster, suffered greatly from emigration over the last two hundred years. Between the years 1850 and 1880 an estimated 112,000 people emigrated from Clare. By comparison the present population stands at just over 100,000.

Emigration has created a Clare diaspora which has resulted in millions of people worldwide who can trace their ancestry to county Clare. From the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, South Africa and Argentina, thousands of people seek a greater understanding of the lives of their ancestors, and an awareness of their own personal heritage.

The Clare Heritage and Genealogical Research Centre is now recognised nationally and internationally as the leading centre of its kind in the country. The centre offers a professional service to persons wishing to trace their Clare ancestry.

Since its inauguration in 1983, the centre has successfully assisted tens of thousands of people worldwide to trace their ancestry. In August of this year we had a visit from a Richard Benn and his family. Mr Benn's great-grandfather James Connellan was born at Glendree in the parish of Tulla, the son of John Connellan and Mary Kilfoyle. This couple leased a five acre holding at Glendree. In 1847 John Connellan, his wife and five children emigrated to South Africa, where they eventually ended up owing a farm of 10,000 acres. With the assistance of the Clare Heritage Centre Mr. Benn was able to visit the original family homestead at Glendree where, 161 years ago, his great-grandfather was born.

E-mail clareheritage@eircom.net or visit clareroots.com

Phone: 065 683 7955

Open daily May 6th to October 31st 10:00 to 18:00 hrs

Genealogical centre open Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00 hrs, year round.

Lahinch Seaworld & Leisure Centre

As we come to the end of another summer season here at Lahinch Seaworld we look back over the developments of the last twelve months.

We refurbished our aquarium over the quieter winter season, upgrading some of our older exhibitions and introducing new ones, namely the Brazilian seahorse and cuttle fish displays. We have significantly increased our stock numbers and we now care for sixty-four species which number 1,000 fish in total.

We have also introduced a 'comment card' facility for our patrons so that they might let us know if we are 'getting it right', and indicate to us what they would like to see in addition to the existing set-up. This feature has resulted in the construction of steps at the base of our higher exhibits so children can have easier



access. Also, take note of the *Species of the Week* board as you begin your tour.

We continue to develop our friendships and relations with the other aquaria around the country by sharing both advice and stock. The 2005 school tour season was a great success, with visitor numbers in excess of 4,000.

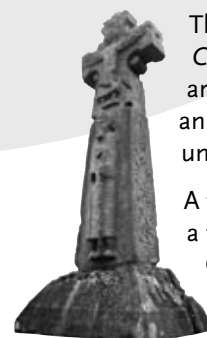
This year was also very busy in regard to external activities; we were part of *World Ocean Day* that took place over the June weekend in addition to our usual involvement in *Science Week* during November and a radio interview with Ray D'Arcy on Today FM when they visited on July 27th. All this activity and all the other facilities here at Seaworld, our 25m pool, kiddie pool, sauna, jacuzzi and steamroom, *Sammy Sharks* playzone, retail store and café, makes sure that your visit surpasses all expectations!

Phone: 065 708 1900

Open daily, year round; contact reception for details

A journey through our past

Built in 1480 by Diarmuid O'Dea, ruined by Cromwellians forces in 1651 and lovingly restored in 1986 to the fine condition it is today, Dysert O'Dea is a tribute to John and Anola O'Day of Wisconsin and to Risteard Ua Croinin, whose restoration idea it came from.



The castle now known as the *Clare Archaeology Centre* and houses an extensive museum of local artefacts from the stone age to the present day, an audio visual presentation on the history of this unique area and various temporary exhibitions.

A tour of the castle and exhibitions gives the visitor a fine feel for the history and heritage of Dysert O'Dea and will serve as a primer for the history walk and freedom of wandering the open countryside.

Some recent acquisitions at Clare Museum

Since the start of 2005 members of the public have donated some interesting artefacts of a political and domestic nature from Clare's past to the Clare Museum in Ennis.

For example, early in the year, the museum received a voting card from the 1966 presidential election and a Primus stove probably used during the emergency. We are grateful also to have various documents relating to Frank Butler, a former IRA volunteer during the war of independence and civil war. It includes an autograph book from Mountjoy prison dated from 1917 which records the signatures of many notable Clare republicans from this time, including General Michael Brennan.

Helena Rees from Kilnaboy donated an implement used for cutting tobacco from the days when tobacco came in solid blocks and had to be cut in the precise portions required by the customer. Also a large tongs which was used in an open fire many years ago was presented by Susan William of Kilfenora.

The museum also received two hardback school books used by two young women from west Clare dating from a century ago, which gives us a unique glimpse into the type of schoolwork assigned at that time. Another interesting donation was a linen bed quilt dating from 1880 which was made from flax grown on the donor's family farm and dyed with natural dyes. It is a welcome reminder of the self-sufficiency of our ancestors.

Donations of artefacts to the museum collection are always welcome. Photographs of artefacts donated in the past are included in the recent acquisitions section of the museum web site, hosted by www.clarelibrary.ie.

Opening times October to April

Tuesday to Saturday 9:30am to 1:00pm 2:00pm to 5:30pm

Admission free

The O'Dea clan gathering

The O'Dea clan gathering takes place every three years and the highlight of their trip would be a visit to their ancestral home at Dysert O'Dea castle where participants are served Irish coffee and smoked salmon, followed by a guided tour of the castle and other historical sites in the Dysert O'Dea area including the twelfth century high cross, church and round tower.

This year the election of the new chieftain (an Australian named M S Pole) took place at the castle.

The castle is situated 11km from Ennis on the Corofin R476 road.

Phone: 065 683 7401

Open daily May 1st to September 30th 10:00-18:00 hrs

other times by appointment

