

Lecale

Bulletin of the Lecale Historical Society

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February 2006

CHANGE OF DATE FOR APRIL MEETING

Songs of the County Down – an evening of words and music with Jackie Boyce - will now take place at 7.30pm on **Monday 24th April** and not the usual third Monday (Easter Monday) as printed in the Programme.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR 2006

- Monday 20th February** ‘*County Down Farming Families: Stories of change between 1930 and 1960*’ by Jonathan Bell
- Monday 13th March** **The St. Patrick’s Festival Lecture:** ‘*St. Patrick and the Fall of Ulster*’ by Richard Warner
- Monday 24th April** ‘*Songs of the County Down: an evening of words and music*’ by Jackie Boyce (**CHANGED DATE FROM PROGRAMME**)
- Monday 15th May** Annual General Meeting
- Monday 19th June** Annual Outing – Dundrum with Brownlow McClean
(Details in next bulletin.)

Meetings in Down County Museum at 7.30pm

St. Patrick’s Festival Lecture

Saint Patrick and the Fall of Ulster

This year’s lecture, by Richard Warner, is once again supported by Down District Council and is free to all members of the public.

Richard Warner has worked for the Ulster Museum as an archaeologist since 1966. His expertise includes the Iron Age, the Early Medieval period and scientific archaeology, and he is the author of more than 100 papers on these and other topics. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy, of the Institute of Archaeology of Ireland and of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He has been chairman of several learned societies and presently sits on the National Committee for Archaeology. Besides being Keeper of the Department of Archaeology & Ethnography, he also is Acting Head of the Division of Human History.

Down County Museum

Monday 13th March

7.30pm

Where is the hand of Ardtole?



Writing in the 1917 volume of the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, pages 130-135, the Belfast antiquarian, Francis Joseph Bigger, described the 'restoration' work which he had carried out on the ruins of Ardtole church near Ardglass.

At the end of his paper FJ Bigger tells us that near the altar of the church:

... was found a unique relic in the shape of a carved stone representing a bishop's hand as if aised in blessing. ... The carving is life size, with a cuff, the first two fingers and the thumb (portion of which is missing) raised as if in blessing. A ring appears on the middle of the third finger. It was not broken from a statue, nor was it ever attached to one. It is complete in itself, and was built into some place, as can be seen from the construction of the back. ... I had it carefully built in at the edge of the altar window on the gospel side, about nine feet from the ground, where it shows to advantage and is quite safe. May it long remain there as a symbol of blessing to the old church of St Nicholas of Ardtole now so well protected against further decay.

Bigger's hopes have not been fulfilled. The carved hand is no longer where he put it. It may have been lost, stolen, or perhaps been found loose and taken away for safekeeping. Somebody may have it without knowing where it came from or what it is. Does anybody locally know where it is, or have any information about it? If so, Cormac Bourke, Curator of Medieval Antiquities at the Ulster Museum, and the Society, would like to know, simply for information.

If you can help please contact the Society at admin@lecalehistory.co.uk

Local History Publications



Apart from the *Lecale Review*, several other books of interest have been published recently:

Portavo - An Irish Townland and its Peoples by Peter Carr. Part Two: The Famine to the Present. The White Row Press. www.whiterowpress.com
The two volumes, now available, set a new standard for the study of local history.

"*Maps and Map-Making in Local History*" by Jacinta Prunty. Maynooth Research Guides for Irish Local History - Number 7. General Editor: Mary Ann Lyons. Four Courts Press. 2004.

The Whitewashed City – the story of Crossgar Vol 2 by Tom Hewitt completes the story including the railway and the start of the Free Presbyterians.

Tollymore – the story of an Irish Demesne by the Earl of Roden is published by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society and is lavishly illustrated.

Can you help?

We want to make our journal, *Lecale Review*, a place for our stories. These stories can result from academic research or personal memories. They can come from something found in the attic or the family album. All sorts of things and experiences and people create the history of Lecale and east Down.

We need our journal to preserve our own memories and make them available to others. The next issue is now being prepared. Can you help? Have you an article, a note, a photograph, an old will or emigrant letter, a personal memory or a family story. Don't be shy. Speak to the editor of the journal, Brian Turner, or any member of the committee.

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