

A photograph of a stone archway made of rough-hewn stones, leading to a stone wall. The archway is the central focus, with a path leading through it. The background shows a clear blue sky and some distant buildings. The overall scene is a well-preserved historical site.

Limavady
Heritage Trail

Drumsurn

Drumsurn

Drumsurn Old Chapel



Drumsurn – Droim Soirn – 'furnace ridge'

Fifty years ago Drumsurn was a thriving and self-sufficient community.

Flax mills, corn mills, lime works and quarries provided plenty of employment. Goods were exported via the railway, which also provided passenger services.

The village consisted of two streets, the Far Row and the Lower Row, and included a tailor, blacksmith, shoemakers, post office and several shops.

The main centre of activity was O'Connor's Supply House, now a bar. The O'Connors ran a general merchant's store, grocery, pub, undertakers and even a hotel during the building of the railway. Every year a dance was held in the store loft to celebrate pulling the flax.

The chapel was built in 1796 at a cost of £166 and 5 shillings, which was raised by public subscription. It accommodated 400 people and there were no seats inside so people had to bring their own slates to kneel on. There is a font to the right of the doorway which is still believed to hold a cure for warts and other ailments.

Drumsurn and Galvin Old Churches were replaced in 1902 by St Matthew's Church, which caused some controversy as the new church was supposed to be built halfway between the two areas.

PERIOD
C18th

GRID REFERENCE
C7196 1703

TOWNLAND
Drumsurn Lower

ACCESS
Public access from
Drumsurn Road

Kilhoyle Lime Works



Loughery's Mill



This unusually large lime kiln was linked with the quarry behind it, and burnt the limestone before it was transported down the hill to the railway station. The site has wonderful views of the Sperrins to Tyrone.

The quarry is shown on an 1830 map of the area, but the kilns are not shown until 1848. A tramway brought the lime from the kilns down to the Gortnarney Road; the weight of a loaded buggy going downhill brought an empty buggy back up to be refilled. The lime was then taken to the railway station by horse and cart. Lime was often used as an agricultural fertiliser to reduce soil acidity, or as lime mortar in building work. The lime works closed shortly after World War II.

PERIOD
C19th

GRID REFERENCE
C7413 1678

TOWNLAND
Drumsum Upper

ACCESS
North Sperrins Way.
Marked Way Access
from Gortnarney Road

The Roe Valley was an important linen manufacturing centre and there were at one time seven flax scutching mills around Drumsum. Scutching is the process where the woody stalk of the flax plant is broken away from the long linen fibres.

Loughery's Mill, close to Drumagavenney Burn, was one of these water-powered scutching mills, which fell into disuse after World War II. Although the roof has collapsed, the water wheel and some of the original machinery remains, as well as the mill dam.

Cottages for the scutchers were built at the foot of Long's Lane. They were closely arranged around a square clearing and had their own gardens and orchards. Scutchers were allowed to keep the flax stalks, known as 'shouse', to light their fires. Around 1900 the thatched roof of one house caught fire during the night. The fire spread quickly and all five houses were burnt to the ground. Of the families that lived there, only the Mullans stayed in the area.

PERIOD
C19th

GRID REFERENCE
C7210 1680

TOWNLAND
Drumagavenney Lower

ACCESS
Private, permission
must be gained from
landowner

The Rhellick



King's Fort

King's Fort is one of the best preserved raths in Ulster. It is situated in a very defensive position, with magnificent views to the east, south and west.

A rath is a circular earthwork enclosing a small settlement for an extended family group and their animals. They were used from the Iron Age throughout the medieval period, from 4th to 12th centuries. They are often referred to as ring forts, though there is some debate about whether this type of structure provided adequate defence.

King's Fort has an impressive deep ditch on the north side, making the bank 6m high externally. There is no bank on the south side where the natural slope of the hills falls away steeply. There is an entrance at the north-east and a corresponding causeway over the ditch into the enclosure.

PERIOD
C5th / C12th

GRID REFERENCE
C7431 1671

TOWNLAND
Kilhoyle

ACCESS
North Sperrins
Heritage Trail.
Access from
Gortnarney Road



This site was possibly originally an Early Christian cashel and souterrain, but was reused as a killeen – a burial ground for unbaptised children. It has long fallen out of use; the latest known burial here was in 1831.

Kilhoyle, or *Kill Chomhghaill*, means 'Church of St Comgall.' Local legend says that a church was going to be built here, but that every time the masons started building they returned in the morning to find their work demolished. As they were discussing this problem with the local parishioners, two ravens suddenly flew down on the demolished ruins and took hold of a plumb line. They took the line to Balteagh townland. This was taken as a sign that this was a much fitter place to build a church, the remains of which can still be seen in Balteagh graveyard.

PERIOD
C19th

GRID REFERENCE
C7380 1598

TOWNLAND
Kilhoyle

ACCESS
Private, permission
must be gained
from landowner

Port of Drumsurn



Despite Drumsurn's distance from the shore, at one time from one to four members of every family went to sea with the Merchant Marine.

The first to pursue a life at sea was John McGlinchy in the 1890s. Attracted by the generous wages compared to those of a farm labourer, he soon persuaded his brother James to join him. James was followed by his sons Willie, James and John – and so a tradition developed.

The headstones in St Matthew's graveyard testify to this long seagoing tradition, but also to the dangers of a life at sea and the fact that many men never returned. The seafaring tradition has come to an end with the decline of Coleraine and Derry Harbours and Micky Magilligan was to be the last of the Drumsurn sailors.

PERIOD
C20th

GRID REFERENCE
C7279 1640

TOWNLAND
Drumsurn Lower

ACCESS
Roman Catholic Church.
Public access from
Drumsurn Road



Limavady's Path Through History

Below is a timeline showing Limavady Heritage Trail sites in their historical context. Those featured in this guide are highlighted.

| BC | C1st | C5th | C7/8th | C12th | C13th | C17th |
|--|---|--|--|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| CARNABANE TOMB 4500-2500BC | DRUMCEATT ASSEMBLY SITE C1st | BLACK FORT C5th/C12th WHITE FORT C5th/C12th KING'S FORT C5th/ C12th | TANDRAGEE FORT C5th/C12th ROUGH FORT C5th/C12th TAMMARIN FORT C7th/C8th | BANAGHER OLD CHURCH C12th BOVEVAGH CHURCH C12th DUNGIVEN PRIORY C12th | ST AIDAN'S CHURCH C13th | DUNGIVEN CASTLE C17th/C19th |
| C18th | C19th | | | | | |
| DRUMSURN OLD CHAPEL C18th BALLYDONEGAN SWEATHOUSE C18th DRUMCOVITT HOUSE C18th TANNYPANNY CHURCH C18th | THE RHELICK, KILLEEN C19th LARGY BRIDGE C19th LIMAVADY WORKHOUSE C19th PAUPER'S GRAVEYARD C19th BALLYKELLY OS BASE TOWER C19th MAGILLIGAN MARTELLO TOWER C19th SAMPSON'S TOWER C19th | | | LOUGHERY'S SCUTCHING MILL C19th KILHOYLE LIME WORKS C19th GALVIN SCHOOL C19th RITTER'S GENERATOR C19th CARRICK MILLS C19th | | |
| C19th | C20th | WW2 | | | | |
| LARGY SCHOOL C19th LARGY POET'S HOUSE C19th LARGY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH C19th LIMAVADY JUNCTION C19th DRUMSURN RAILWAY STATION C19th MAGILLIGAN RAILWAY STATION C19th BELLARENA RAILWAY STATION C19th OS MARK MAGILLIGAN C19th OS MARK BENBRADAGH C19th | ST MATTHEW'S GRAVEYARD DRUMSURN C20th LARGY ORANGE HALL C20th LARGY PILLARS C20th | AGHANLOO AIRFIELD WW2 BALLYKELLY AIRFIELD WW2 | | | | |

For more information please contact:

**CAUSEWAY
MUSEUM SERVICE**
T: (028) 7034 7234
E: cms@coleraineabc.gov.uk

**LIMAVADY TOURIST
INFORMATION CENTRE**
T: (028) 7776 0307
E: tourism@limavady.gov.uk

The Causeway Museum Service represents a partnership between the four local authorities of Coleraine, Ballymoney, Limavady and Moylis. This project is part of a three year community outreach programme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Causeway
Museum Service



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