

# Ancient Sites and Monuments

Across the Causeway Coast there is much evidence of the people who once inhabited this iconic landscape. Ruins such as Dunluce Castle and Dunseverick have become landmarks themselves, iconic features of our stunning coastline which reflect the rich history of the past millennium. However, in addition to these famous and prominent sites, there are many additional areas of archaeological interest which reflect an even more distant past.

Settlers first arrived on the island of Ireland in the Mesolithic period almost 10,000 years ago. Mesolithic finds have been uncovered at several sites in the vicinity of the Causeway Coast, including at Portbradden. Meanwhile, the landscape is dotted with Neolithic tombs and standing stones. The remains of Neolithic settlements have been uncovered in sand dunes at both White Park Bay and White Rocks. A Bronze Age cist (small burial) was also excavated at White Rocks beach.



Image: Wes Forsythe

## THE DRUID'S ALTAR (MAGHERABOY)

The well-preserved remains of a Neolithic chambered grave, known as the Druid's Stone, sits atop a knoll on the boundary of Ballintoy Demesne. People of the Neolithic period (c.4,000-2,500 BC) often built megalithic structures to mark grave sites, and they likely had a ritual or religious purpose. The Druid's altar is one of a group of three graves overlooking White Park Bay, the others being Clegnagh and Lemnagh Beg sites.

## THE CUPS AND SAUCERS

At Lissanduff, Portballintrae visitors can explore a set of ancient earthworks (known locally as *The Cups and Saucers*) which are thought to date to the Iron Age, c.500BC. The Lissanduff Earthworks consists of large circular enclosures. The precise function of these structures is unknown but it is believed they may have served some ritual or spiritual purpose. This site is a scheduled monument and is accessible to the public.



Lissanduff Earthworks, image courtesy of Causeway Coast and Glens Museum Services

## WHAT MIGHT YOU UNEARTH?

Generally, it is not unheard of for residents of the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to pick up ancient stone tools and other finds in gardens, ploughed fields or along the coastline. For example, this photo shows Neolithic flint tools, c. 4,000 to 6,000 years old, discovered at Maghernahar by the McGill family. Other tools uncovered in this area include large 'Bann flakes', scrapers, and awls, alongside more recent objects like 19th century clay pipes!

