

Press Release



Fermanagh District Council

17 May 2011

Maguire Hospitality from Medieval Times to 2011

Fermanagh's Maguire Heritage was celebrated at the 3rd Annual Maguire History Weekend. Visitors from as far afield as New South Wales in Australia and as local as Lisnaskea, Garrison and Enniskillen congregated in a celebration of Maguire history and hospitality.

The weekend began with a tour of Devenish Island on Friday afternoon which explored the Maguire Chapel and graves on this important monastic site. Later that evening forty people attend the evening of Medieval Hospitality at Enniskillen Castle.

First of all they were entertained with tales of the Maguire hospitality in Medieval Times. Sarah McHugh – Manager of Museum Services spoke of the generosity of the Maguires in a short talk held within the old castle kitchen. There she quoted from a 16th century poem written by the poet O'Cleirigh and addressed to Cuchonnacht Maguire –

“Red wine will not last in this palace, so abundantly is it drunk. Nobody has yet been questioned in the crowded feast of vintage drink.”

In another poem, again addressed to Cuchonnacht a poet writes:

“Ships are not sufficient provision for the Maguires, they do not spare drink; the Maguires surpass in providing wine, they are not loath to dispense it.”

The Medieval Maguire hospitality was honoured by a 2011 cookery demonstration by Teresa O'Hare of Orchard Acre Farm, Liz Moore of the Belle Isle School of Cookery and Joe Kelly of the Kitchen Academy. They presented salads and herbs, breads and cheeses and spit roasted pork inspired by Medieval recipes and served them to the forty strong visitors. It was an evening where history, cuisine and wine were enjoyed by everyone.

The weekend continued on Saturday with a field trip around important Maguire sites in the county – beginning with a talk by Ronan McHugh, Principal Surveyor of Queen's University Belfast at the Maguire Inauguration site Sciath Gabhra, Cornashee near Lisnaskea. He described the history of the site and its role as the site where chieftains were essentially crowned as Clan leaders.

Castle Balfour located on the site of the original Maguire stronghold was visited next. Vicky Herbert, local historian toured visitors around this site and explained its strategic importance to the Maguire leaders who lived there.

A picnic lunch was due to take place but owing to the rainy conditions the group were invited to partake of 2011 Maguire hospitality when they were invited to enjoy their picnics in the warm and comfortable surroundings of Franks Bar owned by a local Maguire family.

Lunch was followed by a visit to the Lisnaskea Maguire's local church and burial ground at Aghalurcher, a few miles outside of Lisnaskea and the trip ended with a visit to the site of a Maguire Stronghold at Knockninny which was later rebuilt as a Plantation house. Each part of the tour was embellished by tales of Maguire hospitality by Vicky Herbert and local stories by Bernadette Layden.

The weekend came to a close on Sunday when people were invited to explore their local family history with the assistance of the Fermanagh Family History Society.

Speaking about the event's success, Sarah McHugh Manager of Museum Services said:

"This was the third Maguire History Weekend and the biggest event yet. It was a great success and everyone was complimentary of the experiences they had - be it the inspiration of sites of Maguire history in the county or the enjoyment of re-enactments of Medieval Maguire hospitality."

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