



Discover
Ulster-Scots



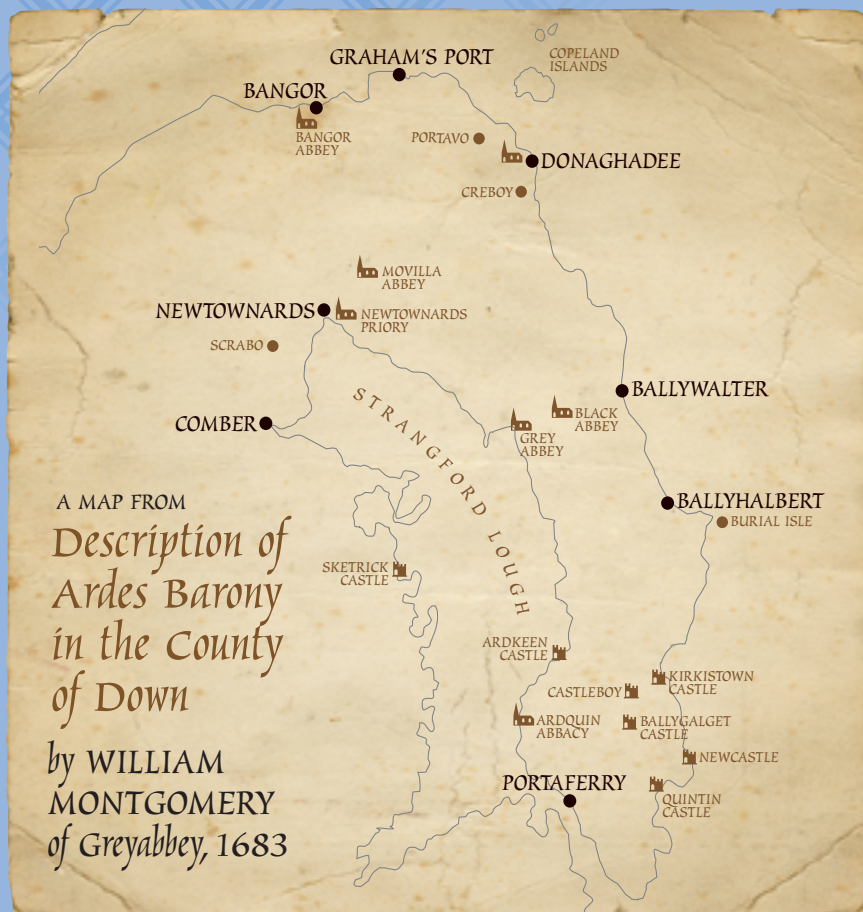
Ards and
North Down
Borough Council



ULSTER-SCOTS HERITAGE IN ARDS AND NORTH DOWN

visitardsandnorthdown.com | discoverulsterscots.com

IT WAS MAY 1606 when Scottish families began to settle in the Ards and North Down, led by **James Hamilton** and **Hugh Montgomery** from Ayrshire, following the land deal they had struck with **Con O'Neill** of Castlereagh. In 1683, Montgomery's grandson William (who is buried at Grey Abbey) wrote the first tourist trail of the area, entitled *Description of Ardes Barony, in the County of Down*. Many of the places he described can still be visited today.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit **North Down Museum**, where the Plantation Room houses the original 17th Century Raven Maps and interactive exhibit.
www.northdownmuseum.com
 Tel: 028 9127 1200



Visit Cathedral Quarter's new **Discover Ulster-Scots Centre**
 Corn Exchange, 1–9 Victoria Street,
 Belfast BT1 3GA
www.discoverulsterscots.com
 Tel: 028 9043 6710

JUST 18 MILES TO SCOTLAND

People have been visiting Ards and North Down for thousands of years. Our area is dotted with dolmens, cairns and raths from ancient times – and our close proximity to Scotland is a big part of our story.

Local tradition says that **St Patrick** arrived at Templepatrick just south of Donaghadee, having left Portpatrick in Scotland. **Viking raiders** gave Strangford Lough its name, **Anglo-Normans** like the Savages built abbeys and castles. A branch of the **O'Neills** moved in and remained until the 1570s when **Sir Thomas Smith** attempted but failed to establish an English colony here with a new city, a 'little London', called Elizabetha.

Hamilton and Montgomery Smith failed to oust the O'Neills of Castlereagh, but over 30 years later Ayrshiremen **James Hamilton** and **Hugh Montgomery** struck a deal with **Con O'Neill**. In May 1606 they started to bring boatloads of Scottish families to our shores. Working with the O'Neills, and also the **Savage** family, Lowland Scots settled from the River Lagan all the way to the bottom of the Peninsula. Their surnames can still be found all over the Ards and North Down today.

Centuries of Connections

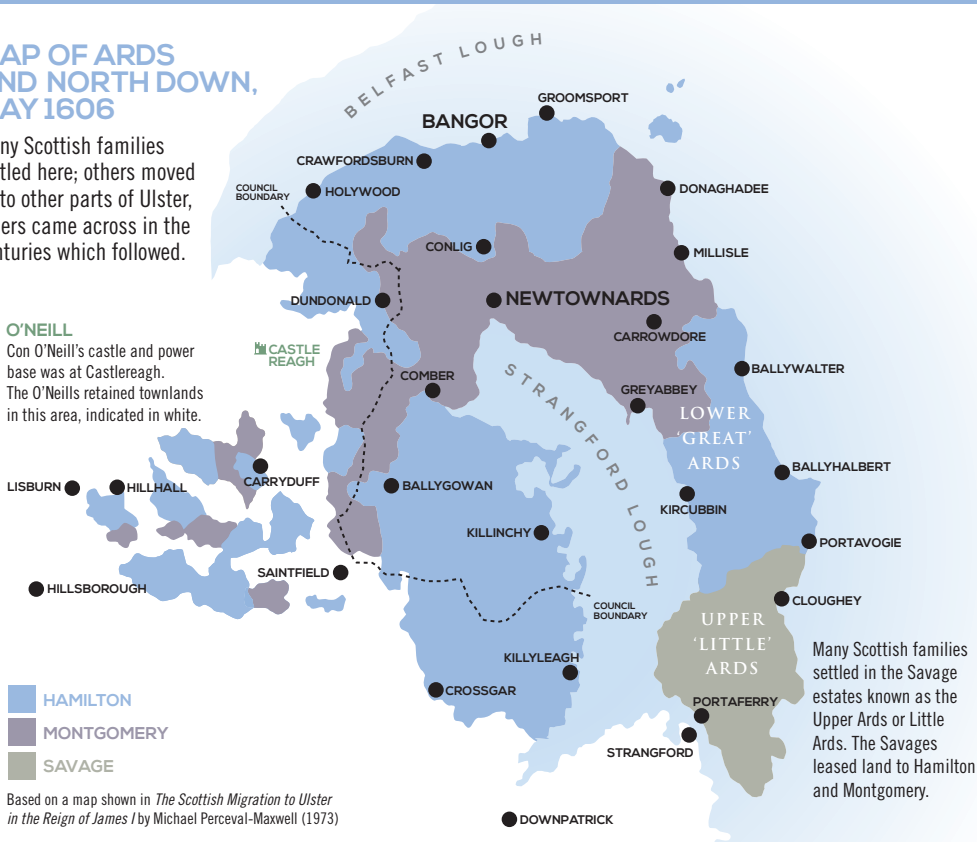
It was these Scottish settlers of the 1600s that transformed Ards and North Down. In 1606 there were only a few 'ruined churches' and 'roofless cabins'. What you can see today is largely a result of centuries of Ulster-Scots thrift, graft and perseverance. From towns and villages to our rolling landscape and place names, and the 'wee' turns of phrase you'll overhear when talking to the older locals, all of Ards and North Down is in some way Ulster-Scots.

MAP OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN, MAY 1606

Many Scottish families settled here; others moved on to other parts of Ulster, others came across in the centuries which followed.

O'NEILL

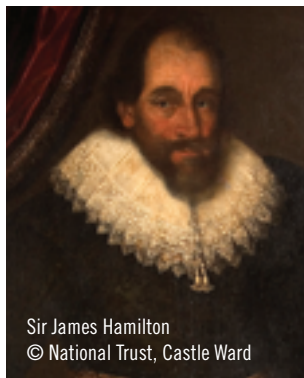
Con O'Neill's castle and power base was at Castlereagh. The O'Neills retained townlands in this area, indicated in white.



Many Scottish families settled in the Savage estates known as the Upper Ards or Little Ards. The Savages leased land to Hamilton and Montgomery.

BANGOR

Bangor is an ancient Christian and monastic site. Under Sir James Hamilton the town grew rapidly and by 1611 it contained 80 new houses 'all inhabited with Scotysmen and Englishmen'. In 1613 Bangor received a charter of incorporation from the King. In the late 1600s the Ward family of Castle Ward married into the Hamiltons. Busy streets like **Hamilton Road**, **The Vennel** (a common street name in lowland Scotland) and even **Pickie** (an Ulster-Scots word for a young coalfish) carry on the connections. Scottish country dancing was a popular activity at Pickie on Saturday afternoons during the 50s and 60s.



Sir James Hamilton
© National Trust, Castle Ward



Bangor Castle garden features a 'chapiter', brought from Africa by Admiral James Hamilton Ward (1802–1873)



Bangor Abbey

The church contains a fascinating collection of early 17th-century church monuments, including one to **Rev. John Gibson** (d. 1623), the first Protestant minister in the parish, and another to **Beatrix Hamilton** (d. 1633), the wife of his successor, **Rev. Robert Blair**. However there is no memorial to Sir James Hamilton who was buried here in 1644. The cemetery includes **1798 Rebellion** gravestones and that of famous Ulster-Scots writer **W.G. Lyttle**, a blue plaque to whom is at 85 Main Street.

www.bangorabbey.org
Tel: 028 9145 1087 (BT20 4JF)



North Down Museum

The Museum, attached to Bangor Castle, is near the site of Sir James Hamilton's original home. Among the Museum's prized possessions is the beautiful set of maps of Bangor and surrounding townlands drawn for Hamilton by **Thomas Raven** in 1625. Another remarkable artefact is a **slate sundial** dating from 1630 that was once fixed to Bangor Abbey. It was the work of John Bonar, a schoolmaster in Ayr, Scotland, whose other sundials can be seen in Scottish museums.

www.northdownmuseum.com
Tel: 028 9127 1200 (BT20 4BT)



Tower House

The Tower House in Bangor is the most important 17th-century port building surviving in Ulster. It was built as a custom-house in 1637 by Sir James Hamilton who had ambitions to develop Bangor into an important port. In more recent times the building has been used as a photographic studio, the Council-run 'Hot Sea Water Baths', and an antiques shop. The building now houses the Visitor Information Centre.

www.visitardsandnorthdown.com
Tel: 028 9127 0069 (BT20 5ED)

NEWTOWNARDS

Originally an important Anglo-Norman settlement, in the early 1600s **Sir Hugh Montgomery** established his 'headquarters' at Newtownards and with the assistance of his wife **Elizabeth** oversaw the development of the town which by 1611 included around 100 houses 'all peopled with Scottes'. In 1744 Newtownards was acquired by the Stewart family. The **Town Hall** was built as a market house around 1770; during the **1798 Rebellion** it was held for a time by a party of United Irishmen. **St Mark's Church of Ireland**, completed in 1817, is one of the best examples for its date of the Perpendicular Gothic style in the British Isles.



Newtownards Priory and Bawn

In 1244 a Dominican priory was founded in Newtownards. When Sir Hugh Montgomery moved to Newtownards he converted the cloistral buildings of the priory to his domestic residence – **Newtown House** – and had the priory church restored as a place of worship. The tower with its handsome classical entrance was built in 1636 – the year in which Sir Hugh died. His funeral was along the lines of an impressive Scottish state funeral, and he was buried within these walls. Newtown House burned down in 1664, but a portion of the bawn wall – from which Castlebawn takes its name – survives.

(BT23 7NX)



Market Cross

Under Sir Hugh Montgomery's direction Newtownards became an important market centre. The story is told that in 1607 merchants would travel from Scotland to Newtownards and back in a day to do business. The Market Cross in Newtownards is the second on the site, the first having been built under Montgomery's direction as a replica of the market cross in Edinburgh. At the market cross 'all proclamations that come from the Chief Governor of this kingdom' were issued. It bears the date 1636, the year that Montgomery died.

(BT23 7HS)



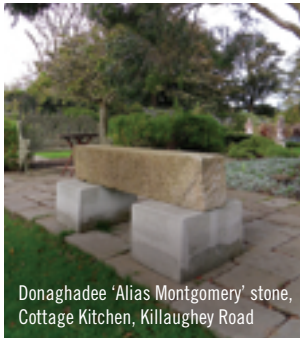
Movilla Abbey and Cemetery

On the outskirts of Newtownards is Movilla Cemetery. This was the site of a monastery founded by St Finian in the 6th century which became an Augustinian abbey in the 13th century – the ruins of the abbey church stand in one corner of the cemetery. The cemetery includes some memorials to rebels executed in 1798 including Archibald Warwick who was hanged at Kircubbin. The Corry mausoleum is one of three graves at Movilla to former Provosts of Newtown - Provost being a Scottish term for mayor.

(BT23 8HH)

DONAGHADEE

Donaghadee was an ancient Christian site just north of **Templepatrick**, where centuries of local tradition say St Patrick landed in the 5th century – having sailed from Portpatrick in Scotland. At the beginning of the 1600s Donaghadee was acquired by **Sir Hugh Montgomery** and an important port developed. Montgomery tried to rename the town Montgomery, but the new name failed to take hold. The historic **Manor House** in High Street is believed to stand on the site of Sir Hugh's original dwelling. Donaghadee is home to **Grace Neill's**, said to be the oldest pub in Ireland, founded in 1611.



Donaghadee 'Alias Montgomery' stone, Cottage Kitchen, Killaughey Road



Donaghadee Harbour viewed from The Moat which overlooks the town - with Scotland visible on the horizon



Parish Church

Sir Hugh Montgomery had a large cruciform church constructed in Donaghadee. It was in this church that the **Rev. Andrew Stewart**, one of the earliest historians of the Ulster Scots, began his ministerial career in the mid 1640s. After he was ejected from the church in 1661, on account of his Presbyterian beliefs, Stewart continued to minister to Presbyterians in Donaghadee until his death in 1671. The graveyard contains a fascinating collection of memorials, many of them reflecting Donaghadee's maritime heritage.

donaghadee.down.anglican.org
(BT21 0AJ)



Harbour

In 1616 Sir Hugh Montgomery received a Royal Warrant which attempted to limit all crossings between Ulster and Scotland to the **Portpatrick/ Donaghadee route**. A decade later he built the first major harbour at Donaghadee. Donaghadee was the main port of entry for travellers from Scotland from the early 1600s until the mid 19th century. The harbour is dominated by the lighthouse constructed in 1836 which was the first in Ireland to be lit by electricity.

(BT21 0DG)



Copeland Islands

These three small islands – named **Copeland, Light House** and **Mew** – are located just off the County Down coastline. The islands take their name from the Anglo-Norman family of **de Coupland**. In the early 1600s the islands were acquired by **Sir James Hamilton** and were mapped for him by **Thomas Raven** in 1625. The islands are no longer inhabited, but once supported a small population of farmers and fishermen. The islands can be reached by boat from Donaghadee during the summer months – an unforgettable experience is feeding fish to the grey seals!



Priory



Maypole



Lorne House

HOLYWOOD

Hollywood was an important Anglo-Norman settlement. Scots settlers developed the town and restored the church (the Priory) as a place of worship.

It is possible that Holywood's famous **maypole** in fact originated as a typical Scottish market cross, as shown in miniature on Thomas Raven's map of c. 1625. Holywood is laid out as a neat town of 51 houses, built around the maypole/market cross, with a stream separating the town from the Priory.

In the early 1600s the **Priory** became the place of burial for Scottish families that had settled in the area. Several of the Hamiltons, kinsmen of Sir James Hamilton, were interred here, including his younger brother William who was 'creditably buried, and with great lamentation' in the 1620s. In 1615, Robert Cunningham became minister of Holywood, only the second Presbyterian minister in Ireland. In 1644 the Solemn

League and Covenant was signed by the local Ulster-Scots population – a copy of it is on display at the Ulster Museum in Belfast.

In the 1870s, Rev Henry Henderson, minister of **Hollywood Presbyterian Church**, authored a newspaper column under the name 'Ulster-Scot'. A later minister was Rev J.B. Woodburn, author of the important 1914 book *The Ulster Scot - His History and Religion*.

Lorne House overlooking Belfast Lough (left), is now home to the Girl Guide Association of Ireland. It was built by Henry Campbell, a wealthy industrialist, in the Scottish baronial style in 1875 and named after the hereditary home of the Campbells in Scotland.



The Old Inn



Crawfordsburn House



Crawfordsburn Glen

CRAWFORDSBURN

Named after Andrew Crawford of Kilbirnie in Ayrshire, where the ruins of the family castle still stand, Crawfordsburn has a distinctively Scottish name.

Crawford arrived in County Down as a tenant of Sir James Hamilton and is named on the Thomas Raven maps of the Hamilton estate which were drawn c. 1625. The family bought their lands from the Hamiltons in the 1670s.

The historic main street retains wonderful architectural character including the famous **Old Inn** which dates from 1614. The Inn was a regular location for Belfast-born author C.S. Lewis, whose writings contain numerous Ulster-Scots references and characters.

Crawfordsburn House was built in 1906, designed by Vincent Craig, who also designed Royal Ulster Yacht Club in Bangor. He was a brother of the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Sir James

Craig. The Craigs were an Ulster-Scots family, and Sir James often used the term. Crawfordsburn House was turned into private apartments in the 1990s.

Crawfordsburn Country Park and Glen are very popular destinations. Once the estate of Crawfordsburn House, the park includes a number of walks and two sandy beaches.

Nearby is Clandeboy Estate (private property) originally founded by the Blackwood family from Scotland. Within the estate, close to Conlig, is the impressive **Helen's Tower**, designed in Scottish baronial style in 1848 by William Burn, who designed **Bangor Castle** in 1852. A replica of Helen's Tower was built at Thiepval in France as a memorial to the 36th Ulster Division.

COMBER

A town famous for potatoes and whiskey and the designer of the SS Titanic.

St Mary's Parish Church stands on the site of the original Comber Abbey, which was burned in the tension between the O'Neills and the Smiths in the 1570s. Some of the original carved stones are on display inside the church.

In the early 1600s Hamilton and Montgomery jointly funded the restoration of the church. However, their rivalry saw Hamilton attempt to set up a new town – New Comber – across the River Enler. Meanwhile the Montgomeries developed the original town, and built a grand house at Mount Alexander for their son and his bride Jean Alexander. Her father, Sir William Alexander, was tasked with settling Scots at Nova Scotia in Canada.

Overlooking **the Square** is a monument to Robert Rollo Gillespie, a local war hero of Ulster-Scots descent.

The Andrews family are Comber's most famous dynasty. Also tracing their roots back to Scotland, the town today recalls their influence in some of the historic buildings. John Andrews & Sons **flax spinning mill** is still a spectacular structure, recently converted into apartments. Just across the road is **Andrews Memorial Primary School**, named after Thomas Andrews the designer of the SS Titanic who was on her maiden voyage and sank with her.

Comber Early Potatoes have been recognised by European law and have PGI status (protected geographical indication). The legal definition of a true Comber potato is that it must have been grown in the area of County Down which was once the original Hamilton and Montgomery lands!



The Square



Parish Church



Old Mill

KILLINCHY AND WHITEROCK

Rev John Livingstone, chaplain of the Countess of Wigtown in Scotland, was invited to Killinchy by Sir James Hamilton in 1630.

Livingstone's congregation worshipped in an earlier church on the site of the present-day **Parish Church**. In September 1636 he was one of four ministers onboard *Eagle Wing* on her ill-fated voyage to America. When Livingstone returned, he soon relocated to Stranraer. His Killinchy congregation is known to have rowed across to Scotland from Donaghadee to visit him.

One of his successors at Killinchy was Michael Bruce, who was arrested in Scotland for illegally preaching in the open air. When the judge sentenced Bruce he gave him a choice of where he would like to be banished to. Bruce chose 'the wild woods of Killinchy' – the judge had no idea that he had just given Bruce permission to return home!

The church cemetery includes the graves of Bruce's children, and of 1798 fighters James McCann and Dr James Cord.

Killinchy Presbyterian Church is based on an unusual cruciform plan.

Sketrick Castle, now ruined, is one of the many castles built by the Anglo-Normans, probably in the 1400s.

Scottish author James Meikle published a novel entitled *Killinchy in the Days of Livingstone* in 1839, telling the story of the Scots settlers of the 1600s.

Ulster-Scots author W.G. Lyttle's famous book *Daft Eddie and the Smugglers of Strangford Lough*, first published in 1890, is a County Down classic. A local restaurant takes its name from the hero of the story.



Parish Church



Presbyterian church



Sketrick Castle



Portaferry Castle



Presbyterian church



Ferry

PORTAFERRY

Portaferry retains much of the character of an historic coastal town, and the famous ferry crossing with Strangford is a highlight when visiting.

Portaferry Castle (beside the Visitor Information Centre) was built by the Anglo-Norman Savage family in the 1500s, but was in ruins when the Scots settled here in the 1600s. Jean Montgomery married Patrick Savage in 1623, and her brother Sir James Montgomery renovated the castle as a wedding gift. The town developed into an important port, and a ferry charter was granted. The Savages, later the Nugents, remained as major landowners in the area until the 1970s.

Ancient **Templecranny Church and graveyard** contains the family grave of Bishop Robert Echlin, originally from Fife in Scotland, who lived at the **Abbacy** at nearby Ardquin. 1798 Rebellion fighter James Maxwell is also buried here. During the Rebellion an attack took place on **Portaferry Market House**, which still features the Savage coat of arms.

Portaferry was one of the first Presbyterian congregations in Ireland,

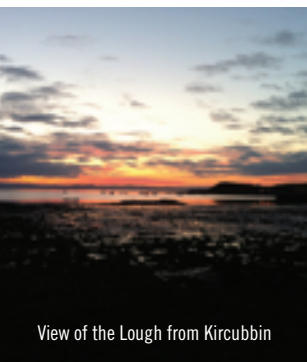
dating from 1642. The current **Portaferry Presbyterian Church** was built in 1841 in the Neoclassical style. It is now 'Portico', a new visitor and heritage centre. A blue plaque to **Rev William Steele Dickson** is on the building. A renowned leader of the United Irishmen, he was arrested in 1798 on his way to co-operate with the 'United Scotsmen' movement in Scotland.

Two miles east of Portaferry is **Quintin Castle** (a private residence but visible from the road and shore). It was also owned by Sir James Montgomery in the early 1600s. He was killed by pirates in the North Sea in 1652 - one of whom was called Smith. It transpired that he was one of Montgomery's tenants from Quintin Castle.

In 1731 Dean Jonathan Swift, author of *Gulliver's Travels*, wrote *A North Countryman's Description*, about Ulster-Scots sailors from Portaferry arriving in Dublin.



Presbyterian church



View of the Lough from Kircubbin

KIRCUBBIN (SOMETIMES SPELLED 'KIRKUBBIN')

An early Christian site, Roland Savage leased Kircubbin to Sir James Hamilton in the early 1600s, and Scottish families such as the Maxwells settled here.

Prior to the 1760s Kircubbin was simply a small hamlet. However, around 1770 a local landlord, James Bailie, encouraged its development by granting leases on good terms and taking out a patent for four annual fairs and a weekly market.

The origins of **Kircubbin Presbyterian Church** are interesting. In 1777 the Presbyterians here requested permission from the Synod of Ulster to establish their own congregation. When permission was refused they looked to Scotland for help and George Brydons was ordained their first minister by the Scottish Presbytery of Lauder in 1778. The Synod of Ulster did not appreciate this

interference from Scotland and it was not until 1783 that the congregation of Kircubbin was formally recognised.

On 15 October 1798, Archibald Warwick, a 29-year-old licentiate of the Presbyterian Church, was executed at Kircubbin for his involvement in the rebellion of that year. The gallows were raised between the church and the manse, in an area which today is a public car park, and thousands gathered to see Warwick die. He was buried in the family plot at Movilla Cemetery - the grave can still be seen there today.

PORTAVOGIE

Famous for fishing and seafood, Portavogie was settled in 1606 as part of James Hamilton's estate, and developed as a fishing village in the 1700s.

The first recorded Ulster-Scots settlers are believed to have been the Boyds of Kilmarnock whose impressive Dean Castle can still be visited there today. A map of Portavogie was drawn for Hamilton by Thomas Raven c. 1625.

It remained as a small settlement until 1750 when it developed rapidly thanks to the arrival of a community of Scottish fishing families from Maidens in Ayrshire. They made use of the natural harbour at **McCammon Rocks** and sandy beach at the north of the present day village. In the late 1800s around 60 boats sheltered here. A **new promenade** along the beach

from the Warnocks Road to the **harbour** is popular and enjoyable route.

In 1683, William Montgomery recorded Scots language fish names which are still used here today - 'lythe' for pollack, 'blockan' for coalfish and 'bavins' for wrasse. Today, Portavogie fish sellers travel to local markets, and fish vans go door-to-door, all over Ulster every week.

The earliest place of worship in the village was a Presbyterian outreach, the Fisherman's Hall, which opened in 1887. Portavogie Presbyterian Church was founded later, in 1926.



Promenade



Harbour

CLOUGHEY AND KIRKISTOWN

From 'cauld hames' to a grand castle – and golf.

Kirkistown Castle is an impressive tower house said to have been built by Roland Savage in 1622. It was located near the other Savage castles at Ballygalget and Ardkeen, each visible from the others. The castle was later acquired by James McGill and in 1683 it was said that he had 'improved this place very much, by building garden walls, and houses, and repairing in and about'.

The local name '**Calhame**' comes from a Scots term meaning 'cold home', a name which can be found all over Scotland as well as in counties Antrim and Donegal.

The **golf courses** nearby bring that most Scottish of sports to the area. **Ardkeen Church of Ireland** includes a memorial to George Francis Savage-Armstrong, the renowned Ulster-Scots poet. New **boardwalks** through the sandy 'knowes' (knolls) provide access to the beach.



Kirkistown Castle



Beach boardwalks

THE 'LITTLE' OR UPPER ARDS

An ancient boundary, with Scottish settlers on both sides.

The Saltwater Brig over the **Blackstaff River**, by the historic **St Patrick's Church**, marks an age-old division separating the southern end of the Ards (the 'Little Ards' or 'Upper Ards') from the rest of the peninsula (the 'Great Ards' or 'Lower Ards'). The river used to run right across the Peninsula, reaching the North Channel between Ballyhalbert and Portavogie. In the 1570s, it was proposed to build a fortification along the river.

In the early 1600s the 'Little Ards' remained in the possession of the old Anglo-Norman family of Savage, with the 'Great Ards' to the north being granted to Hamilton and Montgomery. There are many sites in the 'Little Ards' that are associated with the Savages and these early Scottish families. Well worth a visit is **Kearney** on the outer coast which was restored by the National Trust as a 19th-century fishing village.



Restaurant named after, and situated beside, the Saltwater Brig



Some of the buildings at Kearney



Whitechurch



View from the harbour



Community centre datestone

BALLYWALTER

An important part of Sir James Hamilton's estate in 1606, this coastal village with popular sandy beaches attracts visitors all year round.

When it was built in the 1200s, **Whitechurch** (also known as *Alba Ecclesia* – which translates as both 'White Church' or 'Scots Church') was one of the biggest churches in County Down. Today some stone coffin-lids of its Anglo-Norman founders can be still be seen.

The gravestones include that of John Cooper, originally of Kilwinning in Ayrshire, who settled with his family at nearby Ballyhaskin. One of the first Scots to settle here, he died in 1608 aged 92. Thomas Makie, an early 17th-century Burgess of Stranraer also lies here. Look out for the 1798 Rebellion gravestones of David and Hugh Maxwell, James Kain and William Stuart, all killed on the attack on Newtownards Market House.

In 1623 King James I granted James Hamilton permission to build a **harbour** which is still in daily use by small

pleasure boats and local fishermen as they land crubins (large edible crabs), lobsters in creels, and line-caught fish.

In 1626 Hamilton's nephew Rev James Hamilton became the first Presbyterian minister on the Ards Peninsula – a datestone can be seen on the **community centre** in Main Street. A stone bearing the date 1644 can be seen at Whitechurch – this was the year in which the Solemn League & Covenant was signed here.

Ballywalter has many **brown heritage street signs** which recall the original Ulster-Scots street names around the village. The main street is dominated by the Presbyterian Church, built in 1889, with the smaller Parish Church built in 1849.

Ballywalter Park (private property) is the seat of Lord and Lady Dunleath. The estate was bought in 1846 by Andrew Mulholland, from a Belfast Ulster-Scots merchant family.



Old church and graveyard



Harbour



Balligan church interior

BALLYHALBERT

The most easterly point of Ireland, Ballyhalbert is within the Parish of St Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland.

The slopes of the Anglo-Norman **motte** which overlooks Ballyhalbert include a prehistoric **standing stone**, indicating that this is an ancient settlement. The ruined **Anglo-Norman church** at the seafront dates from around the late 1200s. Early records name the church as 'Talbotston'.

When Sir James Hamilton acquired the area in 1606, Ballyhalbert church was restored for its Scottish population and in 1622 a Rev George Porter became minister.

The church fell into ruin, and in 1704 its handcrafted roof timbers were salvaged for use in the new church at nearby **Balligan** where they can still be seen today.

Ballyhalbert **graveyard** is a fine example of an 18th century burying-ground, the oldest surviving gravestone dating from 1709. Its gravestones include that of Captain John McWhir who inspired the heroic character Captain MacWhirr in the 1902 Joseph Conrad novel *Typhoon*.

Ballyhalbert has many brown heritage street signs which recall the original Ulster-Scots street names around the village, such as *Tay Pot Raa*.

During the summer months, jet skiers enjoy the harbour and bay, while the dulce-pickers dry their seaweed harvest along the harbour wall.

GROOMSPORT

The earliest port on the North Down coast; scene of the *Eagle Wing's* attempted emigration to America in September 1636.

James Hamilton's 1606 coastal lands stretched from the River Lagan in Belfast to Groomsport. The natural **harbour** here was initially owned by the O'Mulreves, whom Hamilton was on good terms with, and who called the area 'Gilgroomes port'.

Soon it was settler Scots families who developed the area, such as Robert Kyle of Irvine in Ayrshire. The Rosses also of Irvine settled at nearby Portavo. Thomas Raven drew a map of the 'Gromsporte' settlement c. 1625.

In 1634 Groomsport was the departure port for Rev John Livingstone, when he sailed to London to make plans for the eventual emigration of *Eagle Wing* which set sail on 9th September 1636, carrying four Ulster-Scots Presbyterian ministers and a further 136 passengers.

A stone at the seafront marks the arrival in 1689 of the army of the Duke of Schomberg.

Groomsport House was founded by the Maxwells in the late 1600s. They came to Ulster from Calderwood, south of Glasgow, in the early 1600s. The current building, dating from 1849, was recently converted into private apartments.

In 1973 the historian Michael Perceval-Maxwell (a descendant of the Maxwells) wrote the landmark volume *The Scottish Migration to Ulster*. His Perceval-Maxwell ancestors had led a migration from North Down and Ards to **Amherst Island** in Canada during the 1800s, where they founded a little Ulster-Scots community complete with Presbyterian church and Orange Hall.

The picturesque **Cockle Row cottages** at the harbour are a step back in time. Each year the departure of the *Eagle Wing* is remembered in the cottages' summer entertainment programme.



Eagle Wing sculpture



Cockle Row



Thomas Raven map

MILLISLE

A popular resort village, Millisle grew quickly in the early 1900s around its long sandy beaches and at that time two Presbyterian churches, one of which still remains, right on the beach.

Ballycopeland Windmill is one of the area's most famous buildings. At one point there were so many windmills on the Ards Peninsula that the area was known as 'little Holland'. The Windmill was in operation until the 1970s, and opens occasionally during the year.

Millisle's most famous daughter was the missionary, children and women's rights campaigner and author Amy Carmichael. Her parents are buried at the secluded Ballycopeland graveyard. **Millisle Baptist Church** has a blue plaque in her memory; it was originally the local primary school which Amy attended.

Just north of Millisle, **Templepatrick townland** was where the telegraph cable from Scotland came ashore. 1500 years ago it is said that St Patrick landed here, where a small church and well once attracted visitors to the tiny graveyard. Legend has it that St Patrick's horse left hoof prints on a rock on the beach, which can still be seen at low tide.

Just south of Millisle, **Woburn House** was built by John Gilmore Dunbar in the early 1800s as his summer residence. His family originated in Hempriggs near Caithness in Scotland. A descendant also founded nearby **Christ Church**, where the poet Louis MacNeice is buried.



Ballycopeland Windmill



Millisle Baptist Church



Woburn House (no public access)

GREYABBEY

The village of Greyabbey occupies a sheltered coastal location, protected by South Isle and Mid Isle. These are connected to each other and to the mainland by tidal causeways known locally as 'roans'. Greyabbey has long attracted settlers and there is evidence to suggest the Vikings were here. The local name for Greyabbey, 'Greba', may have come from the Old Norse word Grípa, meaning 'seize', 'grasp', or 'attack'. Greyabbey was acquired by Sir Hugh Montgomery in the early 1600s and, from about 1623, a weekly market was held at The Square, serving the thousands of lowland Scots farmers who had settled here.



A shamrock & thistle detail



The Abbey contains many memorials, including generations of Montgomeries.



Grey Abbey

Substantial ruins of the Cistercian abbey founded in 1193 survive. In the early seventeenth century the abbey church was repaired by **Sir Hugh Montgomery**. The site was abandoned when a new Anglican church was built a short distance from the old one c. 1778. Today the ruins are in state care. To the east of the ruins of the abbey church is Greyabbey graveyard. This was the burial place of **Rev. James Porter**, the local Presbyterian minister who was executed in 1798 for his alleged involvement in the Rebellion. (BT22 2NQ)

Greyabbey village

Greyabbey has two 'old' parts clustered at either end of Main Street. The original shore road from Newtownards to Portaferry came directly into the early 17th-century settlement at the market square end of Main Street close to the shore. An even older small settlement sat along what is now North Street Church Lane, where an ancient road from the far side of the Ards peninsula ran down to the Abbey entrance. The village includes two Presbyterian meeting houses: Trinity Presbyterian and the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian. Brown street signs feature the old names, such as 'Hard Breid Raá'.

Grey Abbey House

In 1629 Sir Hugh Montgomery's eldest son **James** moved to Greyabbey and built a residence close to the abbey. James was killed by pirates in 1652 and his impressive monument stands within the abbey ruins. The present Grey Abbey House, also known as Rosemount, is the third on the site and was built in 1762. The surrounding estate encompasses what is believed to be one of the first landscaped gardens in Ireland. (Please note that the estate is private property and visits are by arrangement only.) www.greyabbeyhouse.com

STRANGFORD LOUGH

Our Council area surrounds Strangford Lough, said to be the largest sea water inlet in the British Isles. At the Narrows, between Portaferry and Strangford, strong currents are created by millions of gallons of water surging through, the energy of which is captured by the SeaGen tidal turbine. In 1683, William Montgomery wrote of '... a whirl-pool or eddy of the returning tides, called by the Scotch the rowling weele from the loud sound it sometimes makes... near to which if small boats come ... it is said they will be sucked in ...'

The ferry crossing between Portaferry and Strangford is a must-do experience, giving a real sense of the strong currents below. You can see why the Vikings named this 'Strong Fjord'. Windmill Hill overlooking Portaferry is the ideal viewpoint.

COASTAL DRIVES

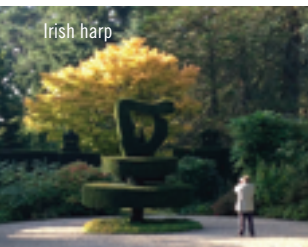
Along the **west coast** the road winds through ancient Christian sites like Nendrum, island-hopping causeways, sailing clubs, and castles such as the ruined Sketrick to James Hamilton's impressive 17th century home at Killyleagh, which looks like a grand French chateau.

Along the **east coast** from Newtownards to Portaferry is part of the **St Patrick's Trail**. As you head south, get off the beaten track and take the lesser-known routes – hug the coastline from Bishops Mill south to Portaferry; then travel from Portaferry up to Cloughey – the beauty of these country roads is an experience you'll remember.

The outer **North Channel coast** is part of the Mourne Coastal Route, but it could just as easily be called the **County Down Ulster-Scots Route**. On a clear day Scotland is easily visible from Crawfordsburn to Cloughey – at night the lighthouses of the Mull of Galloway, and boats of all sizes from fishing trawlers to cruise ships, twinkle in the darkness.



The view from Tullycarnan townland across 'The Narrows' of Strangford Lough, towards Lecale and the Mourne Mountains. It is said that Con O'Neill may have spent his latter years here. His widow Eilis married Henry Savage of Ardkeen in 1628.



Irish harp



Red Hand of Ulster



House and gardens

MOUNT STEWART

Mount Stewart is one of Northern Ireland's best National Trust properties, and was recently reopened following a major programme of renovations that lasted for three years and cost £7m.

Having previously been owned by the families of **Montgomery** and **Colville**, Mount Pleasant, as it was originally known, was acquired by **Alexander Stewart** when he purchased the manors of Newtownards and Comber for £42,000 in 1744. Like the Montgomerys and the Colvilles, the Stewarts were originally from Scotland. Stewart was from Ballylawn in County Donegal and had been MP for Londonderry. He used some of his wife Mary's fortune (inherited from her brother who had been Governor of Bombay) to buy the estate.

Alexander Stewart's eldest son **Robert** became an MP in 1769 and a peer in 1783, rising to Marquess of Londonderry in 1816. He died in 1821 and was buried at Newtownards Priory in the family tomb. His son was **Lord Castlereagh**, the Chief

Secretary of Ireland who forced through the Act of Union in 1800 and later the British Foreign Secretary at the time of the Congress of Vienna of 1814-15.

The house was constructed over decades and much of its present appearance dates from the late 1840s. The most distinguished building on the property is the **Temple of the Winds**, built in the 1780s, which is in the first rank of Classical buildings in Ireland.

With an incredible collection of plants as well as great ingenuity in their design, Mount Stewart's gardens are among the finest in the world. **Edith, Lady Londonderry**, was instrumental in the development of these gardens. Look out for the Red Hand of Ulster flower bed as well as topiary shaped like an Irish harp.



Scrago viewed from Craigantlet

SCRAGO TOWER

Designed in the Scottish Baronial style, Scrago Tower was built in 1857 in memory of the 3rd Marquess of Londonderry, who died in 1854.

According to the inscription on the plaque on the wall, the tower was built 'by his tenantry and friends'. It was designed by the architectural firm of Lanyon & Lynn and cost over £3,000 – massively over-budget (even after reducing it by one storey).

Rising nearly 125 feet from the summit of Scrago Hill, itself over 500 feet above sea level, the tower can be seen for miles around and from it there are spectacular views, even to Scotland on a clear day. In recent decades the tower was taken into public ownership and the area around turned into a country park.

Scrago Hill was described by William Montgomery in 1683. He wrote that –

'... therein is the quarry of the best freestone that may be seen anywhere ... ye stones whereof are well known in Dublin, and taken thither and elsewhere in great abundance ...'. For centuries, Scrago stone was a standard building material across the Ards.

Legend has it that Macananty, King of the Fairies, is buried under Scrago Hill. In *Ballads of Down* (1901), Ulster-Scots poet **George Francis Savage-Armstrong** wrote a poem about Macananty –

*'... Frae the hill an frae the lea:
That nae mair in magic trances
Whun the silver moonbeam glances
Come the Wee-Fowk wi' their dances ...'*

ULSTER FOLK AND TRANSPORT MUSEUM

Situated at Cultra near Holywood, the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum is one of Europe's most prestigious 'national' open-air museums.

The Museum is on the former Kennedy estate at Cultra. The Kennedys had moved to Ulster from Ayrshire in the 1660s, settling at Ballycultra. They bought the estate from the Hamiltons a few years later, and married into the Stewarts of Ballylawn in Donegal (who later moved to County Down and bought Mount Stewart).

The open-air folk museum opened in 1964 and has reconstructed a traditional landscape with dozens of old dwellings from all over Ulster. Two in particular are from an Ulster-Scots background — the **Coshkib Hill Farm** (north Antrim) and the **Ballyveagh thatched house** (Mourmes). Both these

houses were well-known in their communities as 'kailey' houses where neighbours gathered for a 'guid nicht's crack'. There is also a T-plan Presbyterian Church, or 'Meeting-House', from County Tyrone.

The transport museum at the same site has exhibits and exhibitions which tell the story of many **Ulster-Scots innovators** such as tractor entrepreneur Harry Ferguson.

The **Ulster Dialect Archive** at the museum has invaluable collections relating to the varieties of language in Ulster, particularly Ulster-Scots. The archival collections and research library of the museum are open to visitors by appointment (office hours only).



Coshkib Hill Farm



Traditional Ulster gate

PARKS AND COASTAL WALKS

North Down Coastal Path is a 16-mile route from Holywood to Orlock near Groomsport, following Sir James Hamilton's estate boundaries of 1606. It connects with **Crawfordsburn Country Park**, where **Crawfordsburn Glen** winds 1.5 miles inland from the coast.

The Commons at Donaghadee is very popular with locals and of course enjoys views to Scotland. All of the **beaches** on the North Channel coast are easily accessible.

Further south, **Kearney** has coastal grassland walks, while **Knockinelder Bay** and **Ballyquinton Farm trails** near Portaferry are local favourites.

For a bird's-eye view, **Scrabo Country Park** is a must. To get close to the Lough you can walk from **Greyabbey** to **Mid Isle**, or along the shorelines at **Islandhill** and **Whiterock**.

Strangford Lough is on the National Cycle Route, and there are 11 canoeing trails.



Knockinelder Bay near Kearney



Ballydorn Lightship near Whiterock

PLACE NAMES

The burns and braes of the Ards and North Down.

From Crawfordsburn village, to Cunningham just north of Mount Stewart, to the Carrstown Burn near Portaferry, if you keep your eyes open you'll see Ulster-Scots place names dotted naturally right across our Council area.

The Scots settlers of the 1600s kept the townland names which the O'Neills had been familiar with, but they introduced their own new Scots-influenced names

as well. Some of these have been restored on brown signs in some of the villages, whilst others can be seen on the regular white street signs. Talk to the older locals and you'll find names which live on in popular memory - 'Coo Vennel' in Comber, 'Schoolhouse Brae' in Donaghadee, 'Echlinville' in Ballyhalbert parish, 'Whaup Rock' in Greyabbey, 'Saltwater Brig' in Ardkeen... keep your eyes and ears open!



Holywood



Portaferry