Welcome to the Whyte Estate

The Loughbrickland Historic Trail in the Whyte Estate follows tree lined trails through woods and open countryside. The trail offers an opportunity to enjoy the beauty and peace of this natural environment and to discover the traces of previous occupants of the estate from the time over 400 years ago when the impressive Coolœurac Ringfort and the smaller Johnston’s Fort were in use - to World War II when troops were stationed in the estate.

The Whyte Family

Originally a Norman family, the Whytes of Loughbrickland are descended from one Walter Whyte who, having accompanied Strongbow to Ireland in 1177, was knighted by Henry II in Dublin in 1179. He then played a leading role in the Norman conquest of Ulster alongside John de Courcy for which he was made one of the five barons of Ulster under de Courcy and given large estates to the west of Strangford Lough where the family became Lords of Dufferin.

By the 16th century the head of the family, Sir Nicholas Whyte, was in residence at Lealip Castle, which had been granted to him in 1569 and remained the family seat until it was sold to William Collony of Castletown in 1732, and Loughbrickland House became the family seat. The Loughbrickland estates had been the property of Sir Phelim de Cogart, who laid out the village of Loughbrickland in its current form after he purchased the surrounding lands from the ruling Irish family of the time, the Magennis, Lords of Loughgue in 1613. They passed into the Whyte family’s possession when Sir Nicholas’ great-grandson, John Whyte, married Whitechurch’s great-granddaughter, Mary Purcell, in 1684. Mary was also a granddaughter of Mark Trevor, Viscount Dungannon, of Lurgan, and part of her extensive estate remains in the ownership of the Whyte family who have continued to play an important role in the development of the village over the years.

The Woodland Trail and the Boundary Trail

Although the estate is privately owned the Whyte family generously permitted public access to the Woodland Trail as part of the Loughbrickland Historic Trail project in 2005. This was a joint project between Dr. Jean Whyte, Loughbrickland Community Association and Randalstown District Council. In 2008 an extension of the historic trail, the Boundary Trail was opened extending the walk around the perimeter of the estate and giving access to another ringfort, Johnston’s Fort.

The Woodland Trail follows a circular path through the woods, to Coolœurac Fort and back to the main entrance at Swan Street past the rookery. You can extend this walk by following the Boundary Trail which follows an old landscape feature which runs around the perimeter of the estate and takes in Johnston’s Fort, another scheduled ancient monument.

Information:

- No Public Right of Way - Permissive Access Only
- Please stay on the way marked trails
- No public access to houses, grounds or along front avenue beyond entrance to the Woodland Trail
- Please respect ‘private’ notices
- All children must be accompanied by adults
- To ensure the path is pleasant for others to use please do not drop litter
- Please keep your dog on its lead and clean up after it
- Fields along the Boundary Trail are in agricultural use please ensure that your dog is kept under control at all times and does not enter adjoining farm land
- Look out for agricultural machinery at crossing points along the Boundary Trail
- Please leave wild flowers and plants undisturbed for others to enjoy
- No motor vehicles, bicycles, or horse riding
- No parking within the estate
- No hunting
- No camping

For further information please see the Loughbrickland Historic Trail guide (2008)

If you encounter any problems with the trail, please contact the Countryside Officer on 028 4667 4667