

An aerial map of Carrickfergus, showing the town's layout, including the castle, the river, and surrounding areas. The map is rendered in a sepia tone with some green areas representing parks and fields.

EXPERIENCE 1500 YEARS IN ONE DAY

CARRICKFERGUS
WALKING TOURS
FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS
OF KINGS, KNIGHTS
AND PRESIDENTS



Mid & East
Antrim
Borough Council



EARLY CARRICKFERGUS

Carrickfergus' history is both long and fascinating. It is one of the most excavated towns in Ireland, and objects unearthed during archaeological investigations show that there were pre-historic inhabitants in the region from as early as the Irish Mesolithic (7000–4000BC). Settlements of this period are likely to have been tribal and possibly temporary in nature, not the permanent village or town we are familiar with today.

According to legend, the name Carrickfergus came from Fergus, reputedly the First King of Scotland. It is said he sailed home to Ulster in 501 A.D., in search of a cure for his leprosy from a healing well, believed to exist in this area. His ship foundered on the enormous basalt rock or "carraig" upon which the castle was later built and, from that point on, the rock was known as "Carraig-Fergus". The body of Fergus was said to have washed ashore and he was buried in Monkstown Abbey, on the slopes of Knockagh Hill.

Whilst it has proven difficult to determine the exact life story of Fergus Mór mac Eirc, (Great Fergus, son of Eirc), many historians acknowledge that he is an important historic figure, considered by many to be the "Father of Scotland".

The 131st High King of Ireland, Fergus ruled over Dál Riata, a Gaelic kingdom which included north-eastern Ulster and western Scotland. Whether by conquest or treaty, Fergus moved the throne of Dál Riata from Ireland to Scotland in 498 A.D. and, in the process, was crowned the first King of Scotland.

Over 1100 years later in 1666 the Duke of Ormonde visited Carrickfergus. He asked historian William Montgomery where Fergus' body had been found and where the grave was.

Fergus reputedly took with him to Scotland the famous "Lia Fail" or "Stone of Destiny", upon which every Scottish King has since taken their oath. The stone is said to have been removed to Westminster Abbey by Edward I in the 13th century, and is still used in the coronation of British monarchs. In 1997, the stone was restored to Scotland and now sits in Edinburgh Castle, but is to be returned to Westminster Abbey for future British royal coronations.

In the centuries immediately following Fergus' rule, Carrickfergus is rarely mentioned in historical documents. The real story of the town and its importance in Irish and British history begins in the late 1170's with the invasion of the Norman knights.

In 1823 Belfast historian George Benn wrote of Monkstown that
"There is a curious and general tradition among the people, that Fergus I, King of Scotland, was buried here, and some even yet pretend to point out the spot."

WELCOME

Welcome to the Heritage Carrickfergus walking tour. This tour is designed to be self-guided, ensuring that visitors are given the opportunity to take in all of the major historical attractions our town has to offer. Your walk today will encompass the entire range of Carrickfergus' history - from the 12th century Norman castle and church to the 20th century industrial heritage of the town with the fascinating Flame! Gasworks Museum.

For a large portion of the tour, your path will follow our magnificent town walls. Completed in 1615, the walls of Carrickfergus pre-date Londonderry Walls and around half of the original circuit remains intact and preserved.

This guide book aims to provide an overview of the attractions however you will find detailed information about the town walls on signage boards located at various points around the walls. Additional printed information is available at several of the attractions.

A timeline of the town's history displayed in Market Place in the town centre provides an excellent chronological overview of significant events in our history and provides a wonderful photo-opportunity for visitors to get a picture with a life-sized Norman knight!

We welcome you to our town and hope that this tour gives you a very real sense of an ancient history of which we are very proud.

**FOR A FULLER, MORE IN DEPTH EXPERIENCE,
WHY NOT BOOK A GUIDED TOUR OF THE TOWN
WITH ONE OF OUR EXPERIENCED TOUR GUIDES?**

For further details and costs, please contact:

Visitor Information Centre, Carrickfergus Castle, Marine Highway, Carrickfergus BT38 7BG
T: 028 9335 8222 E: visitorinfo@midandeantrim.gov.uk

Illustration of a steam fire engine made by Merriweather and Sons in 1908 which is now housed in the museum.



The famous silver Ceremonial Sword (presented to Carrickfergus Corporation in 1712) and silver-gilt Mace of Carrickfergus (presented to the Corporation by Richard Gardner in the same year).

CARRICKFERGUS MUSEUM

The museum provides a remarkable glimpse into this historic town from earliest times to the present day.

As one of the most archaeologically explored town in Ireland, the finds on display at Carrickfergus Museum provide a remarkable glimpse into life in the town from the Medieval period through to recent times. As well as significant artefacts from the Council's civic collection, the museum also houses objects from other private and national collections.

In addition to the permanent displays, an engaging and varied programme of temporary exhibitions take place throughout the year, including special exhibitions produced by the museum as well as touring exhibitions and displays from local artists and groups.

The Civic Centre in which the museum is housed is a building with a fascinating history in its own right which you may wish to read before moving on...

MAKE SURE TO SEE

The magnificent Kane Atlas, presented to Colonel Richard Kane by King Louis XIV at the Palace of Versailles in 1712

Elizabethan and Jacobean town charters

Ceremonial sword and mace from 1712

Silver farthings made in Carrickfergus for John De Courcy

A medieval tower house window from Market Place

The skeleton of a Barbary ape that once roamed the grounds of the Franciscan Friary.

VISITOR INFORMATION

April to Sept: Monday–Friday 10am–5pm; Saturday 10am–4pm

Admission Charges: Free

Contact: Carrickfergus Museum and Civic Centre, 11 Antrim Street, Carrickfergus

T: 028 9335 8241 E: carrickfergusmuseums@midandeantrim.gov.uk



Contemporary illustration of the civic centre and town hall complex.



The Civic Centre building on a glorious sunny day.

CIVIC CENTRE AND TOWN HALL

INCLUDING HANGING GATE

Carrickfergus Civic Centre houses the town museum as well as providing accommodation for some council departments and functions. Consisting of a spacious glass atrium built between two red-brick structures, this site has served many different purposes over some 800 years.

This location was originally the site of a Franciscan friary built by Hugh de Lacy in 1240, (where he was later buried). The friary was suppressed during the Reformation in Ireland in the mid-16th century and was later converted to a storehouse for arms.

By 1610, the buildings had fallen into ruins, and Sir Arthur Chichester (Lord Deputy of Ireland) chose this site to build his new home. Joymount Palace took some 8 years to complete and was a magnificent building, described by an English traveller of the time as being a "prince's palace", with 365 windows, 52 doors and 12 chimney breasts.

Chichester soon turned his attentions to expanding his estate lands to the north and the establishment of Belfast. By 1724, the Chichester family had ceased to reside in Joymount Palace. The building fell into disrepair and was demolished in 1768.

In 1778, construction began on the County of Antrim Gaol on the site and the following year the Courthouse (present day building) was constructed. The gaol was enlarged on a number of occasions and, by 1815, consisted of 150 cells, each of which provided two beds, expected to accommodate up to four prisoners.

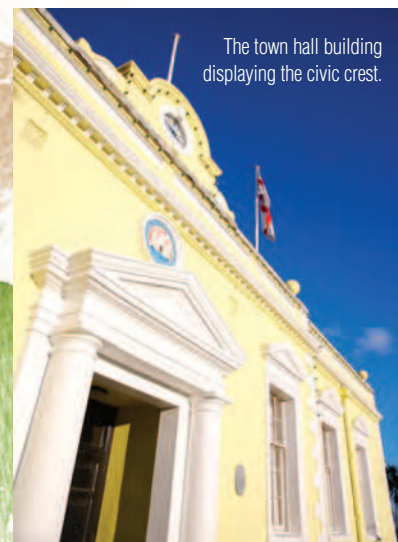
Execution by hanging, which until 1819 had been carried out at Gallow's Green, took place at the "Hanging Gate", a site now marked by a small archway and plaque on the perimeter wall on Antrim Street. 1844 saw the last public execution take place but there was such public outcry at the hanging of 18 year-old soldier, John Cordery, (executed for shooting his bullying sergeant), that public executions ceased, though hangings continued to take place away from public view.



The reception area with the barred windows of the ordnance stores in the background.

Originally the site of a Franciscan Friary, the site of the Civic Centre has been in continued use for some 800 years.

Public hangings took place until 1844 at "The Hanging Gate" and Antrim Street was once known locally as "Drop View Terrace".



The town hall building displaying the civic crest.



The site of the "Hanging Gate", commemorated by a discreet brass plaque.

Despite several attempts over the years to remove court sessions to other towns, the courthouse and gaol in Antrim Street served the county through until 1850, when sessions were moved to the new Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast. It is reported that the in-mates of the day were forced to march the more than 10 miles to their new incarceration in shackles.

In 1856 the Antrim Artillery acquired the site for their use as a barrack and ordnance store. In 1896 they demolished the old gaol and erected new buildings. With the castle as its headquarters, the militia had 980 men at its height. After the First World War the unit was demobilised, and the site went out of use. Standing in the glass atrium of the civic centre today and looking upwards, one can still see the barred windows of the ordnance stores. A small cell house also survives today, and is thought to have been used to hold rule-breaking soldiers.

In 1934, the newly formed Borough of Carrickfergus Council chose the surviving old courthouse to be the town hall with part of the former artillery stores used as offices. The Dobbs Room, (now used for meetings, civil ceremonies, and civic receptions), would have been one of the main courtrooms. Adjoining the Dobbs Room is a round tower, thought to be the last remaining remnant of the Barbican Gatehouse which stood in front of Joymount Palace. The large Jubilee Hall in the town hall is used for concerts, dances and large-scale functions and is said to have some of the best acoustics of any hall in Northern Ireland.

In 1992, council made the decision to dedicate the main part of the artillery stores to house a new visitor attraction – a themed monorail history ride. Although it enjoyed great popularity at its height, the "Knight Ride" ultimately proved to be commercially unviable and, in 2002, the difficult decision was made to close the attraction.

The closure did, however, facilitate the development of a new museum – a much-needed facility for such a historic and heavily excavated town. Carrickfergus Museum was officially opened in 2005 and now houses a wealth of archaeological material as well as notable and valuable artefacts relating to the area's long and distinguished history.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Guided tours of the Town Hall can be arranged on request.

Contact: Carrickfergus Museum and Civic Centre, 11 Antrim Street, Carrickfergus
T: 028 9335 8241 E: carrickfergusmuseums@midandeantrim.gov.uk



Contemporary illustration of the North Gate.



The town wall at the entrance to the former Joymount Palace.

TOWN WALLS

SHAFTESBURY PARK, NORTH GATE AND IRISH GATE

The following aims to provide an overview of the walls history but look out for the information signage along the route, designed to provide information on particular features of historical interest.

Whilst there were more than 40 walled towns in Ireland by the end of the 17th century, there were only a handful in Ulster and, of those, only the walls of Carrickfergus and Londonderry survive today. The walls in Carrickfergus may be somewhat less substantial, (and perhaps less celebrated), than those of Londonderry but they do pre-date their counterpart, making Carrickfergus the oldest walled town in Ulster.

Carrickfergus was first protected by earth ditches in the medieval period to defend the growing settlement surrounding the castle. The defensive earth ditch and bank walls were partially replaced by stone in the late 1500's.

Queen Elizabeth I had promised that the earthen walls would be replaced in stone and this work was started in 1608 under the direction of Sir Arthur Chichester with one hundred men beginning work that summer and continuing each summer until the walls were complete in 1615.

The method of working was to first encircle the town with a low wall up to three metres thick on very strong foundations and then build higher each year resulting in the 'banded' effect now visible, especially at Joymount, where your tour of the walls begins.

The completed stone walls were 1159 metres long and over 6 metres high with four gates: Irish Gate and North Gate, (both of which had moats and drawbridges), Quay Gate, and the smaller Water Gate. In addition to the gates, seven protective bastions were strategically positioned along the length of the walls. As well as the obvious protective purpose, the walls also allowed for strict control of tolls and taxes on goods within the town and enabled curfews on those entering or living in the town to be more easily enforced.

The protection afforded by the walls and the castle made Carrickfergus an important stronghold for those who sought to control the area and this contributed to the town's strategic importance in British and Irish history. Over the centuries, those in power saw the town as a safe haven whilst those seeking power saw it as a key strategic target. In these respects, the walls served up mixed fortunes.

A view from atop the ramparts at the north-east bastion.



Commenced in 1608 and completed in 1615, the town walls in Carrickfergus pre-date the more illustrious Derry's Walls.

Today, around half of the 1159 metres of the original circuit of the walls remains in excellent preservation, telling much of the fascinating story of the town's last 500 years' of history.



Of the four original gates, the North Gate is the only remaining.



A re-enactment at the town wall on European Heritage Open Day.

During the 1641 rebellion, the walls ensured that Carrickfergus was one of the chief places of refuge in the North of Ireland and was one of the few Ulster towns to escape attack.

In August 1689, however, the walls were unable to withstand the Duke of Schomberg and his Williamite army. At that time Carrickfergus was held for King James II by three Jacobite regiments. The strategic importance of Carrickfergus meant that its capture was the Duke's first priority and the town was put under siege. The Duke's heavy artillery breached the walls in several places, notably just east of the North Gate. This breach was subsequently repaired but the scar left in the wall can still be clearly seen. After a week, the garrison was forced to surrender. The way cleared, King William III subsequently landed at Carrickfergus on 14 June 1690.

The walls received much needed repairs in response to the 1715 Jacobite rising in Scotland, when the fabric of the walls, gates and drawbridges were brought back to their former glory. These repairs received many a test of their strength in subsequent years. Notably, in 1760, a force of 800 French soldiers under Commodore François Thurot landed at Kilroot and marched on Carrickfergus, half of the force attacking the North Gate and half attacking at Joymount. During this attack, the bastion at Joymount was badly damaged and was not rebuilt.

Sadly, throughout the 19th and even much of the 20th century the preservation of historical heritage perhaps was not afforded the importance that it is today and the walls were not spared from the path of progress. During the 1800's the narrow gates became regarded as a problem and, by 1821, Irish Gate and

Quay Gate had been removed. Further changes affected the walls in 1838 when the two south west corner bastions with adjoining parts of the walls were removed.

Since 1886, however, the walls have been safe from deliberate damage and, in 1972, Department of the Environment archaeologists began working at the Irish Gate site. Partly as a result of this work, the importance of the walls as a historic monument was acknowledged and, in 1990, the walls were taken into the care of the Department of the Environment (now Department for Communities), their future survival assured.

Today, an unbroken stretch of just under half of the original circuit of the walls remains in excellent preservation, telling much of the story of the town's last 500 years of history.

MAKE SURE TO SEE

The north-east bastion is the only remaining full bastion and is one of the best-preserved sections of the wall

Of the original four gates, **the North Gate** is the only remaining preserved gate

The breach of the walls by General Schomberg's troops at St. Bride's Street car park



CARRICK FERGUS WALKING TOUR

1&2 Carrickfergus Museum & Galleries

3 Walls Walk

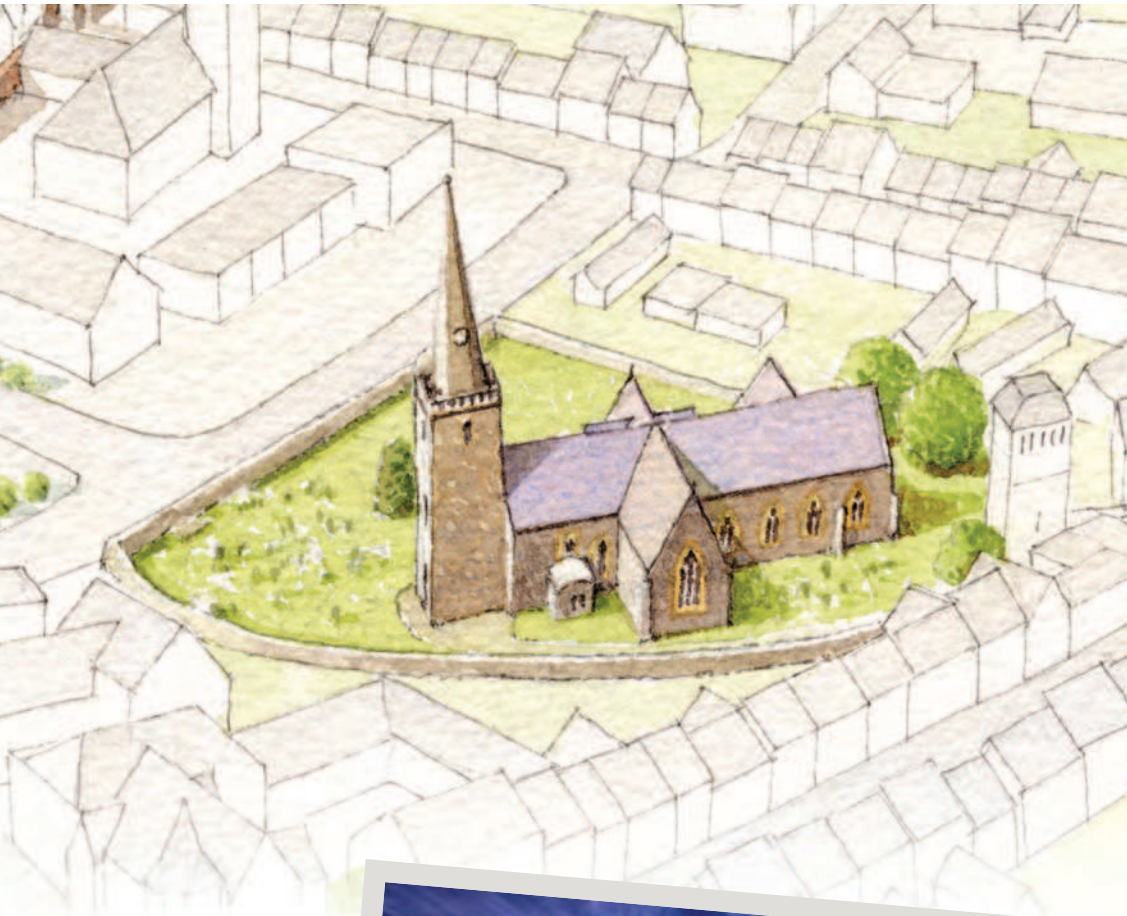
4 Saint Nicholas Church

5 Flame! Gasworks Museum

6 Historic Harbour

7 Carrickfergus Castle

NB: The Andrew Jackson Cottage and US Rangers Centre are a 20 minute walk from the town centre, along Marine Highway and the Larne Road.



Contemporary illustration of Saint Nicholas' Church in the heart of Carrickfergus.

The magnificent Anglo-Norman Saint Nicholas Church, captured beautifully in the sun.



ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH

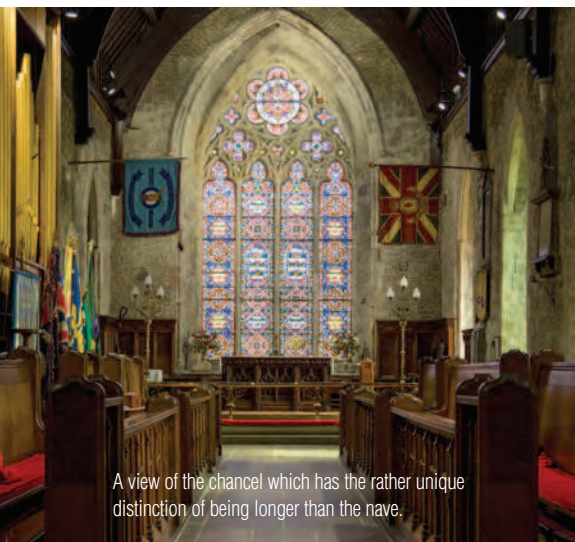
Saint Nicholas' Church is a magnificent building, originally constructed at the same time as our iconic castle. Whilst the building perhaps lacks the ornateness of some other great cathedrals and churches, its austere modesty creates a becalming atmosphere of reverence.

The church was established on this site in 1182 by John de Courcy, a knight of Anglo-Norman descent but it is thought that this was a site of worship even pre-dating this time. It is believed to have been attached to St. Mary's Abbey, also founded by de Courcy for the Premonstratensian Order of monks.

Originally, the church looked quite different to its current form in several ways. The building has been reconstructed several times in its history due to roof collapses and numerous attacks. In essence, however, it is still a wonderful example of Norman architecture. The body of the church was originally much wider, with the Norman arches, (still part of the present structure), opening out to side aisles. The chancel was originally shorter and was lengthened by Robert le Mercer in 1305/6, giving it the rather unique distinction of having a chancel longer than its nave.

In 1614, the church underwent a major reconstruction by one Thomas Paps, "freemason", under the instruction of Sir Arthur Chichester. The mayor of the time had requested the assistance of the Lord Deputy after the church had been reportedly "burned and spoyled by the Rebels".

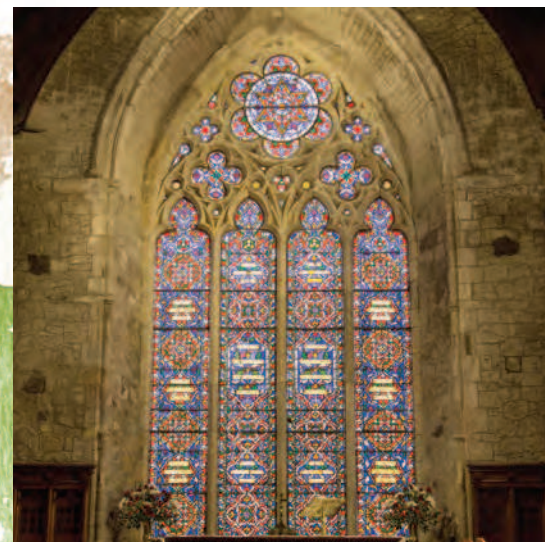
A notable feature of the church is the "skew" or "crooked aisle". Often assumed to be an architectural or construction mistake, this feature is quite deliberate. When Christ died on the cross it is said that his head fell to the right and, along with the cruciform layout of the building, this skew is thought to be symbolic of the crucifixion. The only other example of this in Ulster is Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh.



A view of the chancel which has the rather unique distinction of being longer than the nave.

Recent scholarship has concluded that Edward Bruce's coronation as King of Ireland took place here in June 1315. Twelve Irish kings swore loyalty to him, forming a Scottish-Irish alliance to overthrow the Anglo-Normans

Saint Nicholas' has experienced many forms of worship in its history. Today, it is in the Church of Ireland (Anglican) tradition. It is thought that this is where the first Presbytery in Ireland was held in June 1642.



The magnificent Main East Window at the end of the chancel.



Coat of Arms / Seal of King James I which would have been placed in the church after the extensive reconstruction of 1614.

The church also boasts a number of fascinating and beautiful internal features. The Chichester Monument which dominates the Chichester or Donegall Aisle is the burial vault of this family, so influential to Carrickfergus and, indeed, Ireland. This elaborate Jacobean monument in marble and alabaster dates to 1625 and is quite unique in Ulster. The tiny effigy between Sir Arthur Chichester and wife, Lettice, of their only child who died in infancy is particularly poignant.

The church has a number of fascinating examples of stained glass. At the end of the chancel is the magnificent Main East Window and, situated in the nave is a window depicting Jesus being baptised by John the Baptist. The "leper window", a low, narrow window beside the prayer desk in the organ console, is somewhat inconspicuous but holds a fascinating story. It is said that lepers from the hospital in the east suburb of the town, (who were not permitted entry to the church), used this window to watch services and to receive the sacrament. The famous Saint Nicholas Window in the baptistery depicts the Saint to whom the church is dedicated, featured in various guises including that of Santa Claus on his reindeer-drawn sleigh, with the result that it is affectionately referred to as the "Santa Claus" window.

Given the age of the church, the cemetery is also exceptionally interesting with many ancient graves, and magnificent familial memorials dating back hundreds of years.

Saint Nicholas' has been a site of almost continual worship for more than 800 years and continues to be a living church. Visitors are asked to be respectful of the fact that, whilst visiting, they are guests of the church and its congregation.

MAKE SURE TO SEE

The magnificent marble and alabaster **Chichester Monument**

The famous Saint Nicolas or "Santa Claus" window in the Baptistry

The font which is believed to have originated at the ancient Woodburn Abbey, founded by John de Courcy in the 12th century.

Celtic cross
gravestone in
churchyard.

VISITOR INFORMATION

June to Sept: Tuesday: 2pm–3.30pm / Saturday: 11am–1pm

Note: Tours may be arranged at other times by appointment only.

Admission Charges: Free admission (Donations gratefully received)

Disabled access: via Vestry Porch / East Door but, please note, some portions of the church are accessible only via steps.

Contact: St Nicholas Church, Lancasterian Street, Carrickfergus

T: 028 9336 0061 E: office@saintnicholas.org.uk

W: www.saintnicholas.org.uk



FLAME!

GASWORKS MUSEUM

Flame! is Ireland's only remaining preserved Victorian gasworks and is a significant site of the town's industrial heritage.

During the 1800s and 1900s, coal gas was used for heat, light and power, before it was eventually superseded by electricity and natural gas. Flame! is now the only place in Ireland where you can witness how gas was made from coal.

The gasworks opened in 1855 and supplied the town with gas made from coal until 1967. It was subsequently used to distribute gas piped from Belfast until its closure in 1987. The gasworks was restored by the Carrickfergus Gasworks Preservation Society and opened to the public as a visitor attraction in 2002.

Flame! is one of only three preserved gasworks in the British Isles. It boasts Western Europe's largest set of retorts, (in which the gas was made), and an extensive collection of gas appliances and documents. During your tour you will see the ingenious way in which gas was extracted from the coal. You'll also be able to climb the gasholder and get a panoramic view of the town. The stoker will entertain you with his tall tales, but be prepared for a fright in the shower!

MAKE SURE TO SEE

The largest collection of gas retorts (in which coal was cooked to produce gas) in Western Europe

The wonderful view of the town from atop the gasholder

Audio visual presentation explaining how coal-gas was produced

VISITOR INFORMATION

May to Sept: Daily (except Saturdays) 2pm -5pm **October to April:** Open by prior arrangement.

Group Bookings by prior arrangement

Admission Charges: Free (Donations gratefully received)

Disabled access: Disabled access throughout the site (except library, basement & gasholder)

Contact: FLAME Gasworks Museum, 44 Irish Quarter West, Carrickfergus BT38 7LH

Tel: 028 9336 9575 Email: info@flamegasworks.co.uk W: www.flamegasworks.co.uk

Also on Facebook & Twitter



Contemporary illustration of the extensive Gasworks Museum site.



The entrance to the Gasworks Museum on Irish Quarter West.



Contemporary illustration
of King William Statue,
gazing out to sea.



The historic King
William pier.

HISTORIC HARBOUR

KING WILLIAM STATUE AND KING WILLIAM PIER

Carrickfergus people have long depended on the town's wonderful coastal setting, with the salty sea air evoking rich memories of fishing, shipbuilding, and bustling trade and commerce.

Whilst subsistence fishing would have been a mainstay to locals, commercial fishing became an increasingly important industry with herring, cod, lobster, oysters and mussels all abundant. At its height, some 300 people were directly employed in the local fishing industry.

Throughout the medieval period, Carrickfergus was the main commercial port in Ulster – a hub of European-wide trading. Indeed, Belfast Lough was known as “Carrickfergus Bay” until well into the 17th century. In 1637, however, Carrickfergus sold its custom rights to Belfast, contributing to the decline in importance of the former and rise of the latter.

The old harbour was the site of the landing of King William III on 14th June 1690 ahead of his victorious Irish campaign against James II which included the famous Battle of the Boyne. His landing is commemorated by a blue plaque on the historic King William Pier and, in 1990, a life-size bronze was unveiled in commemoration of the town's link to this hugely influential figure in Irish and British history.

The 19th century saw rapid industrial development, fuelled by growth in the local textile industry and salt-mining at Kilroot and facilitated by an expanding shipbuilding industry, with Paul Rodgers' shipyard employing 150 men at its height.

This growth in commercial activity led to expansion of the harbour and, in 1885, two new piers were officially opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales for whom they were named after (the Edward and Alexandra piers). Into the 20th century, coal importation increased and Carrickfergus was a principal landing site for John Kelly Ltd., one of the most significant solid fuel importers in Northern Ireland.

This commercial prosperity was not to last, however, and the last merchant ships discharged their cargo at Carrickfergus Harbour in 1996, signalling the end to commercial shipping. As an important chapter in Carrickfergus' maritime story closed, the focus of the waterfront area transitioned towards recreation and leisure.

CARRICKFERGUS CASTLE

The magnificent castle has been the iconic symbol of Carrickfergus for 800 years, its strength and brooding presence an ever-constant in the town's history.

The castle remains the best preserved example of Anglo-Norman military construction on the island and, even by modern day standards, it provides an imposing and impressive sight on our shoreline.

The enormous basalt rock of Fergus, surrounded by sea on three sides, was an ideal location to establish a military base for King Henry's Anglo-Norman invaders of Ireland and John de Courcy commenced construction of the keep and inner ward in 1178. By 1210, King Henry's successor John had taken direct control of the castle and strengthened the defences by constructing the middle ward. In 1226, Earl of Ulster, Hugh de Lacy, began construction of the outer ward and imposing gatehouse and portcullis. By 1242, the construction was completed and the castle was largely as we see it today.

The castle became an important strategic military asset and anyone wishing to gain control in Ireland over the next six centuries viewed it as a key target. The garrison withstood, (and occasionally succumbed), to sieges from the local Gaels, the Scots, rival English kings, and the French. In the early 1800's, the castle became a military prison and, for around a century more, it remained a military armoury. During the First World War, it was employed as a garrison and ordnance store.

In 1928, after 750 years of continuous military occupation, (the longest of any castle in Ireland), Carrickfergus Castle was transferred by the War Department to the Ministry of Finance for preservation as an historic monument although the castle was briefly pressed back into military service as an air raid shelter during the Second World War.

Castle staff deliver tours of the monument and their expert knowledge provides a unique insight into life dating right back to the Anglo-Normans.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Opening times: Mon–Thurs: 08.30–17.00; Fri–Sat: 08.30–20.00; Sun: 09.30–20.00

Admission Charges: Adults: £5.00. Children / Senior Citizen / Students / Concession: £3.00
Children Under 4: Free. Family and group discounts also available.

Disabled access: Disabled access is restricted

Contact: Carrickfergus Castle, Marine Highway, Carrickfergus T: 028 9335 1273

W: www.discovernorthernireland.com/Carrickfergus-Castle-Carrickfergus-P2814



The magnificent and imposing site of the iconic Carrickfergus Castle.



Contemporary illustration of the Andrew Jackson Cottage at Boneybefore.



The faithfully restored interior of the Andrew Jackson Cottage.

GO FURTHER

ANDREW JACKSON COTTAGE US RANGERS MUSEUM

The Andrew Jackson Cottage is a visitor centre dedicated to the 7th President of the USA, whose parents emigrated to America from Carrickfergus in 1765.

Located less than a mile from the town centre, in the picturesque village of Boneybefore, the traditional, thatched farmhouse offers a glimpse into the mid eighteenth century life of Jackson's parents.

The original Jackson cottage was demolished in 1860 to accommodate the new railway. It was one of twelve similar cottages that stood in the village at that time. The cottage has been faithfully restored to its original state, including an open fireplace with daub and wattle canopy and hanging crane as well as many other fixtures and fittings typical of the time.

It is said that, more than any predecessor, Andrew "Old Hickory" Jackson was elected by popular vote and he sought to act on behalf of the common man. A character of fearsome reputation and strong convictions, his name has been associated with the spread of democracy and the passing of political power from established elites to ordinary voters. Jackson and his supporters were founders of the Democratic Party. The centre honours President Jackson and his links with Carrickfergus with an impressive exhibition of his life and achievements.

The U.S. Rangers Museum is another tribute to Carrickfergus' links to the United States of America. The Museum pays homage to the soldiers of the 1st Ranger Battalion of the elite U.S. Rangers which was sanctioned, recruited, and began training in Carrickfergus in June, 1942.

Designed to be modelled on the British Commandos, members of the 1st Ranger Battalion were the first American soldiers to see combat in the European theatre, in World War Two. Of 500 volunteers who first formed the Rangers at Carrickfergus, only 87 survived by the end of the war. The exhibition has an enthralling collection of uniforms, photographs, documents and other material detailing this famed combat unit and providing poignant reminders of these young lives lost.

Despite undergoing several dis-bandments and re-designations in intervening years, the US Rangers, now known as the 75th Ranger Regiment, continues to serve the U.S. military with distinction to this day.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Summer season: Wednesday – Sunday 11am – 3pm all year round
(Can be opened at other times by prior arrangement)

Admission Charges: Free admission **Disabled access:** restricted

Contact: Visitor Information Centre, Carrickfergus Castle, Marine Highway, BT38 7BG
T: 028 9335 8222 E: visitorinfo@midandeantrim.gov.uk

NB: The Andrew Jackson Cottage and US Rangers Centre is a 20 minute walk from the town centre.

GO FURTHER

MARINE GARDENS AND PROMENADE

Marine Gardens is a beautiful park-space within sight of the castle to the north-west. Refurbished in 2012 as part of a £1.3 million investment, the park consists of three distinct spaces with a winding walk as far as Fisherman's Quay, where visitors can make their return to the castle along the delightful seafront promenade, (around 2km in total).

The cenotaph features a full-sized, restored Churchill Mk VII tank, (a tank factory operated in the town during World War II), and the remembrance garden provides a thoughtful space to remember brave borough residents who have made the ultimate sacrifice serving their country.

The Marine Gardens clock has been a distinctive feature of the park since it was originally established in 1967 and incorporates a viewing platform over the wide green recreational space as well as a café offering a pleasant rest-point.

The children's play-park area was built with the town's maritime roots firmly in mind. The centrepiece is the 30ft galleon, "Result", which was the last schooner to be built in Carrickfergus. The park offers a fun and safe environment for our younger visitors.



The splendid Marine Gardens which overlook Belfast Lough.



The 5 Gold Anchor marina includes a beautiful sea promenade where seals are often spotted.

CARRICKFERGUS MARINA AND PROMENADE

Carrickfergus Marina is a state-of-the-art maritime facility that boasts the prestigious 5 Gold Anchor and European Blue Flag status as well as designation as a Royal Yacht Association Sailability Centre. The marina continues Carrickfergus' proud maritime traditions by offering a spectacular and modern facility with every imaginable amenity for the sailing community.

The promenade provides a beautiful walk, taking visitors around the entire marina area and to a small headland where, for much of spring and summer, seals can be spotted squabbling for basking space on a rock which just barely breaks the surface of the water.

The headland also offers wonderful views across the lough to Royal Belfast Golf Club and Helen's Bay and up the lough to Belfast with Samson and Goliath, the world-famous twin yellow cranes of Harland and Wolff, just visible.

The walk from castle to end-point and back is approximately 2km but the entire waterfront area boasts a range of bars and cafes where the "weary traveller" can find ample reward for their exertions.

An aerial sketch of Carrickfergus Castle and the surrounding town. The castle is a large, walled structure with a central tower and several smaller buildings. It is surrounded by a dense residential area with many houses. A church with a tall spire is visible in the center of the town. The sketch is done in a light, artistic style with muted colors.

FOR ENQUIRIES OR FURTHER INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:

Visitor Information Centre
Carrickfergus Castle, Marine Highway,
Carrickfergus BT38 7BG
T: 028 9335 8222
E: visitorinfo@midandeantrim.gov.uk



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

Please note: all details correct at time of going to press
but are subject to change without notice E & OE