ULSTER-SCOTS HERITAGE

PATRICK STREET GRAVEYARD
AN ANCIENT BURIAL GROUND WITH MANY SCOTTISH CONNECTIONS

Patrick Street Graveyard is the oldest burial ground in the town of Strabane (An Srath Bán – ‘the white river holm’). Right in the centre of the graveyard is a large megalith, possibly prehistoric in origin and suggesting that this has been a site of importance for thousands of years.

Strabane was an important stronghold of the O’Neills in the latter part of the 1500s and the location of a castle built by Turlough Luneach O’Neill. During this period significant numbers of Scots settled at Strabane – probably Highland warriors known as Redshanks in the service of the O’Neills. In 1598 it was reported that there were ‘above 3 or four score Scottish families inhabiting there’ in the early 1600s Strabane was granted to the Earl of Abercorn, a Scottish nobleman, under the scheme for the Plantation of Ulster and under him the development of the modern town began.

For over 250 years a Church of Ireland parish church was located within this graveyard. In 1622 it was recorded that there was ‘a fair church begun by the late Earl of Abercorn’ at Strabane. In 1689, at the time of the Siege of Derry, this church was used as a hospital by King James’s army. It continued to serve as the Church of Ireland parish church until a new building was built a short distance away in the Bowling Green in the 1870s.

The earliest memorials in the graveyard date back to the 17th century and most of them commemorate families that originally came from Scotland. The oldest memorial with a legible inscription commemorates George Home who died in 1672. The graveyard is the burial place of John ‘Half-Hanged’ McNaughton who was executed in 1761 for inadvertently killing Mary Ann Knox of Prehen (whom he claimed was his wife) when he was aiming his pistol at her father.

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Local tourist information
Strabane Visitor Information Centre
The Alley Arts & Conference Centre
1A Railway Street, Strabane
Co. Tyrone BT82 8EF
Tel: 028 7138 4444
Email: tic@strabanedc.com
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This Project is supported by the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) Ulster-Scots Academy

STRABANE HISTORY TIMELINE

1522 Battle of Knockavoe above Strabane between the O’Neills and the O’Donnells
1573 Turlough Luneach O’Neill builds a castle at Strabane
1613 Strabane receives a charter of incorporation
1641 Strabane captured by the forces of Sir Phelim O’Neill
1689 Strabane used as a base by King James’ army at the time of the Siege of Derry
1724 Guy Carleton, army commander and Governor of Quebec, born in Strabane
1747 John Dunlop, printer of the American Declaration of Independence, born in Strabane
1767 James Wilson, grandfather of President Woodrow Wilson, born at Dergalt, outside Strabane
1796 Strabane canal opened

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