



LANESBOROUGH BALLYLEAGUE

A CULTURAL MAPPING PROJECT
CULTURE AND CREATIVITY
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

What is Cultural Mapping? This is a subject that is continually evolving into the 21st century, and provides a rich vein of debate and discourse. In November 2015 a group of post-graduate students from IADT Dún Laoghaire undertook a Cultural Mapping project of Lanesborough and Ballyleague, sister villages on the shores of the River Shannon in the Irish Midlands. The villages are connected by a bridge, but are separated by county and provincial borders; Lanesborough being in Co. Longford, and Ballyleague in Co. Roscommon.

The aim was to document, or map, the cultural activities within the villages through engagement and dialogue with the community. The objective of this Mapping exercise is to feed into and inform any new Arts Plans that impact on either of these villages and surrounding area.

This task involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. As part of the Mapping process it was decided to carry out a survey of opinion with regard to arts and cultural provision and development. The findings show that Lanesborough and Ballyleague are home to vibrant, enthusiastic, culturally rich groups. The survey wish list is well worth developing, and could be supported by the various Arts Council and arts agency funding schemes.

The predominant culture is associated with the River Shannon. However, the key findings of the data highlight a wide diversity of cultural activity. Heritage is strong. The Lough Ree Environmental Summer Festival features well, and both villages are looking towards a major international angling championship event in 2016. There is a diversity of visual artists, writers, craftspeople, musicians, filmmakers, and others who are keen to assist in providing a multitude of activities. All who were met emphasised the importance of youth. It is possible that business could be further encouraged to invest in and support long-term cultural initiatives.

This Cultural Map involved some prior research by students, with one day on site. It is a snapshot with an intent to provide a basis for further discussion and use by local residents, groups and visitors.

This Cultural Map has been produced in good faith from information gathered directly from the local community as well as from online and offline resources.



WHAT IS CULTURAL MAPPING AND WHO IS IT FOR?



(1) Cultural Mapping is a process that enables members of the community to assess their region's cultural capacities, and to develop policies, strategies, and meaningful connections that support what already exists.

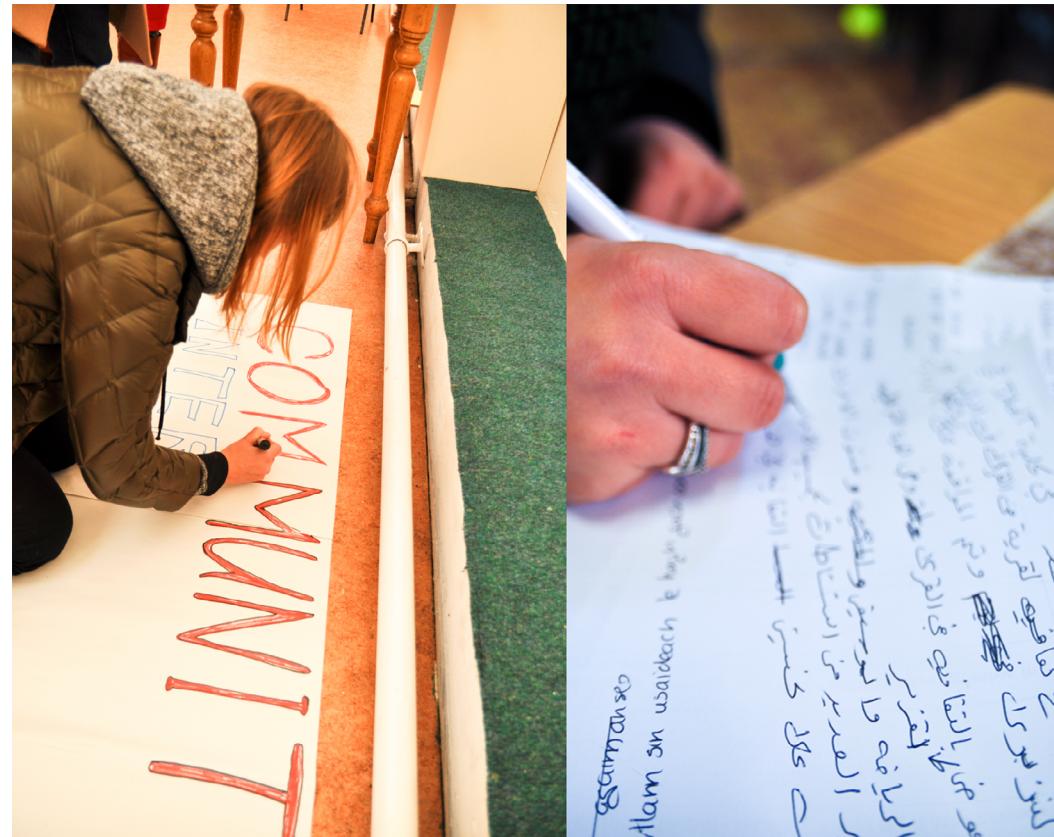
LOCALS – First and foremost, the cultural map assists local community members that have an interest in culture or the creative economy. This may include, but is not limited to, individuals working for organizations, businesses, or industries that have an art & craft, cultural, heritage, or tourism focus, and individuals that are engaged in cultural activities in their every day lives.

VISITORS – The cultural map can be of use to audiences from outside of the county that are interested in culture such as cultural tourists, art and craft buyers, and business owners looking to expand/locate in an area that supports the creative economy.

PLANNERS – Cultural maps can be a great asset for planners, policy developers, and decision-makers on a regional and municipal level who can use the map to inform policy and planning.

(1) Baeker, Greg. (2010). *Rediscovering the Wealth of Place: A municipal cultural planning handbook for Canadian communities*. Ontario: Municipal World Inc. Genevieve Allen. (2013) Project Manager of the Kings County Cultural Mapping Project.

10 STEPS TO CULTURAL MAPPING



PRE-PLANNING STAGE

1. Assemble a team; conduct a management skills and resources audit
2. Identify purpose and objectives; consider budget
3. Consider the mapping framework/design; set timelines regarding teamwork and interaction with the community
4. Identify methodologies and data storage including marketing strategies and research categories

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

5. Examine logistics in terms of action plan formation including task delegation and responsibility, deadlines, task completion with project launch and relevant announcements
6. Review and adjust the process as required, checking research accuracy; continuous assessment of skills and tasks delegation
7. Information gathering, analysis and interpretation of findings with confirmation of sources
8. Create the Cultural Map from all information correlated

CONCLUSION STAGE

9. Hand over the Cultural Mapping project to the community; consider publicity
10. Review with discussion and evaluation in terms of process and results

COMMUNITY INTERACTION WALL



An interactive survey can enable the understanding and sharing of culture as well as the promotion and development of creativity.

The community was invited to share its knowledge of the cultural activities available in the locality, as well as to express what it would like to see more of. The interactive survey took the form of a 'Community Interaction Wall' on which a tree was drawn whose branches represented different cultural activities as follows:

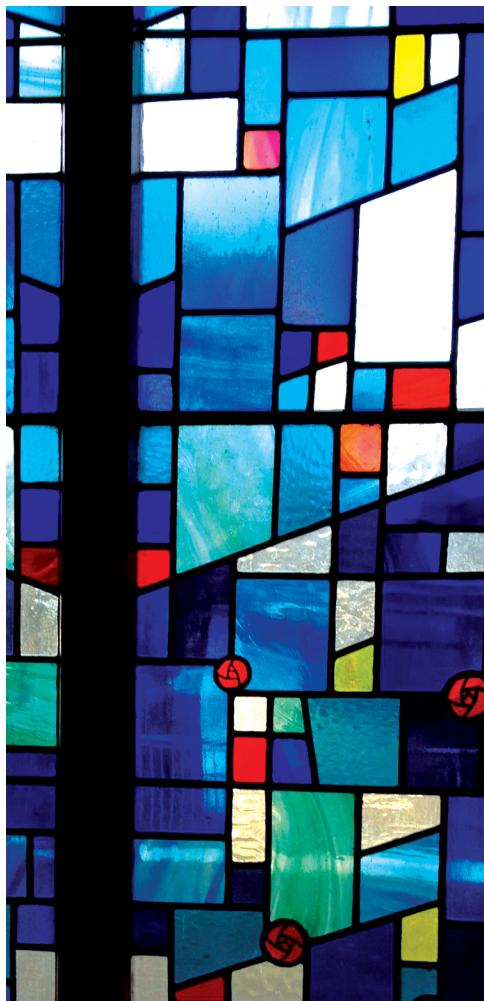
- Visual Arts & Photography
- Literature & Poetry
- Local Library
- Creative Industries
- Sports & Recreation
- Crafts & Home Industries
- Music
- Festivals
- Dance
- Heritage
- Theatre & Drama

The mediators worked closely with people to elicit answers, and guided their thought process by encouraging them to think about each of the cultural areas, and to visualise how activities could be organised in a better, more exciting and challenging way.

From the survey findings it was concluded that there is a sizeable amount of cultural activity, resources and infrastructure in the locality already. Local school students were particularly enthusiastic about a Banta Central TV project, lessons in Scratch computer programming, a sculpture competition, a kayaking club and a summer school in which they have been able to participate. The young adults also pointed to gaps that they would like to see filled, e.g. an under-18s disco, a CoderDojo club, a photography club for young people, gymnastics, a music, DJ-ing and recording club, aerial yoga classes, a fashion club, a young persons' book club, fishing for young people and an indoor sports facility for playing soccer and basketball in the colder months. The latter is something that the adults also feel is missing from the locality.

The interactive survey helped to shed a fresh perspective on the area's cultural landscape.

VISUAL ARTS



The Visual Arts were experienced as an integral part of community life with culture appreciated as local asset and attraction. Schools have engaged and supported children and young people in the production of artwork. Pupils from Lanesborough Community College won the Strokestown Park Sculpture Competition and created for example the 'Cat' and a stained glass window. Cultural Mapping recognises the contribution of local teachers in encouraging creativity. Youth arts can benefit from the new Longford Arts Strategy 2015-19. Arts Council and Irish Architecture Foundation programmes offer engagement with contemporary practice.

Multiple sites for artwork evidence an appreciation of the visual. The contribution of graphic artist Mary Fleming includes wildlife illustrations on outdoor boards. Wall paintings by children represent an imaginative way to enhance disused buildings. The Riverside Park mosaics provide a sense of place with the Library Tree. Lanesborough Fire Station commission was completed in 2015. The Arts Council strategy Making Great Art Work (2016-2025) may be interesting regarding funding.

There are very active community groups. Brushstrokes with over 30 members was founded in 1995. The mostly amateur group meets bi-weekly and mounts exhibitions throughout the year. The predominant medium is painting, drawing inspiration from the local landscape. Excursions to exhibitions with talks and classes are organised. Shannonside Camera Club boasts many members and is also long established. Local practitioners include amateur photographer Brigid Mullooly. From Lanesborough, Kip Carroll's work is widely recognised. The Environmental Summer Festival provides an important opportunity for both to show and sell work.

The Mapping identified enthusiasm for the development of the Visual Arts aspect of the Environmental Summer Festival, offering exposure to practices nationally. Previously, work was selected from the Arts Council Collection.

RESIDENTS SURVEY

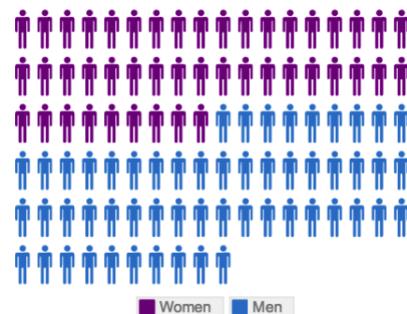
The principal methodology used to produce this Cultural Map was a survey of opinion about arts & culture provision and development. This information gathering was conducted during a one-day site visit on 20th November 2015, for which the student researchers were given use of the Co-Op building on Lanesborough's Main Street.

The survey followed the same approach taken by the Central Statistics Office for the 2011 Census by considering the villages of Lanesborough, Co Longford and Ballyleague, Co Roscommon as one single catchment area.

A cross-section of opinion was required and the group therefore set a minimum target of 60 responses for the survey to be deemed valid.

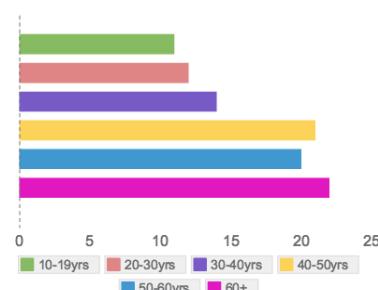
A total of 83 responses were recorded, of which 76 contained valid data. Seven responses were deemed to be invalid and therefore omitted from the final data.

Gender Breakdown



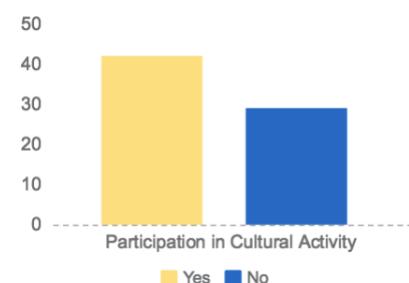
Of the people who took part in the survey, 45% were women and 55% were men.

Age Bracket



The average age of survey participants.

Cultural Awareness & Participation



CULTURAL WISHLIST FOR THE FUTURE

We asked the residents what events they would like to see happening in Lanesborough and Ballyleague in the future. Here are some of the suggestions:

Accommodation, B&B or hotel

Annual historical re-enactment of Parnell's visit to Lanesborough

Art & crafts centre and more workshops, sculpture park

Battle of the bands, folk music, music festivals, showband carnivals

Christmas festival

Documentary club

Leisure centre

Local museum

More activities for young people like a gym, and discos

Artisan and craft shops, food festivals and fairs, farmers markets

Regular art exhibitions, arts festivals, permanent exhibition space

Film screenings

Sports festivals e.g. cycling and triathalons

More theatrical events and musicals

Expansion of the Shannon River Waterways Festival

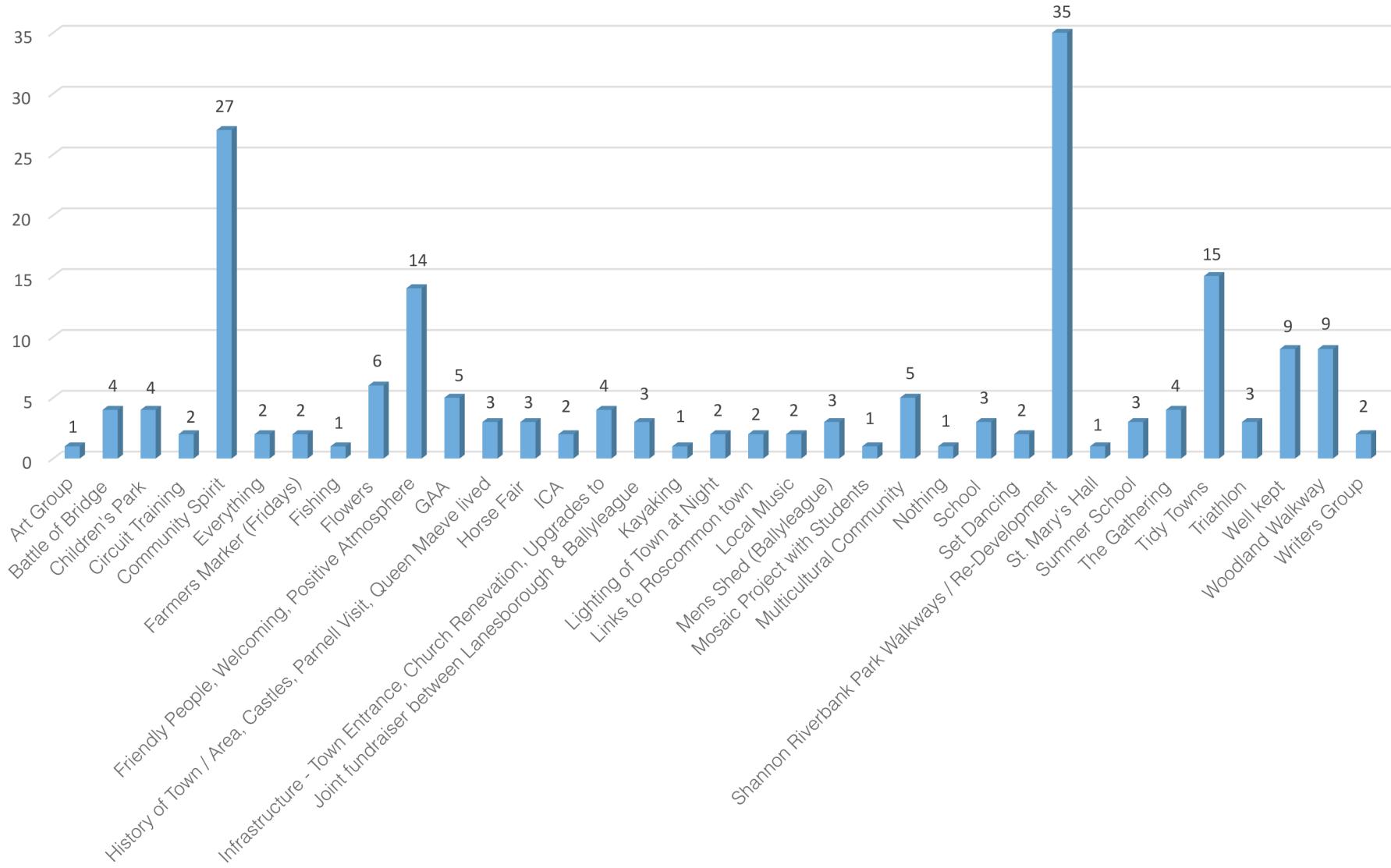
More sean-nós and Irish dancing

Tap dancing, hip-hop classes, ballroom dancing events

LOCALS IDENTIFIED AS BEING VERY CREATIVE ARE:

Noel Carberry, Mary Clarke, Joe Cribbon, Sarah Crinigan, Shane Crossan, Catherine Duggan, Joe Dunphy, Mary Fleming, Ray Hogan, Liam Hogan, Liam Kelly, Thomas Lyman, Michael McCarthy, Mary McGushin, Bridget Mullooly, Ciaran Mullooly, Theresa Mullooly, Joe O'Brien, Andy Rogers, Kathleen Rooney & Paul Tharry.

RESIDENTS SURVEY: POPULAR LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS



THEATRE AND MUSIC

Edel Loftus is an internationally acclaimed Lanesborough-based singer and musician, who along with her daughter Alida set up Windsong Music School, which includes an outreach project in local and regional schools in Co. Longford. Her Seminars for Success programme focuses on secondary school students making the big decisions in life. She would like to bring this to third level institutes in the future.

During the summer months, Windsong Music School also includes an international strand, which sees international students participate in a Harps on Holiday event. Here, each student has an opportunity to learn about Irish culture and musical heritage, and performs with Windsong Harp Ensemble on completion.



FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

LANESBOROUGH AND BALLYLEAGUE HORSE FAIR - MAY

Dating back to the 1700's, this festival was traditionally called the Fair Day of Lanesborough, where it was said that you could walk from Lanesborough Church to Ballyleague Church on the backs of horses - such was the popularity of the event. A carnival-style weekend is planned in May 2016 to promote its revival.

LOUGH REE ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMER SCHOOL - JULY

Five days of water-based events including boat trips and raft racing.

TWO PROVINCES TRIATHLON AND KIDATHON - JULY

This takes place on Lough Ree over one day and comprises a 750m swim, 20km cycle and 5km run. The Kidathon is suitable for ages 8 to 15 and includes a 100m swim, 5km cycle and 500m run.

LOUGH REE ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMER FESTIVAL - AUGUST

Various activities and workshops for children and teenagers form this festival, including photography, stained glass, kids crafts, and herbalist workshops. Exhibitions include Brushstrokes and Shannon Side Camera Club & Heritage.

BATTLE OF THE BRIDGE - NOVEMBER

This joint community fundraising event is organised by local football clubs to unite both sides of the river. A White Collar Boxing highlight sees both sides compete in the Battle of the Bridge.

BRUSHSTROKES CHRISTMAS EXHIBITION - DECEMBER

Held in St Mary's Hall, this features works at prices to suit all budgets. Over the years the group has produced a set of calendars, the proceeds of which have supported local services such as the Tidy Towns and Lough Ree Sub Aqua. Paintings by members of the group have travelled worldwide and can be found in Canada, America, Australia, New Zealand and many European countries.

CRAFT, CREATIVE AND HOME INDUSTRIES, INDOOR MARKET AND MEN'S SHED



The Indoor Market has been running for eight years, most recently in St Mary's Hall. There is a variety of local home-baking, jewellery, accessories and crafts, such as dried flower ornaments made by Geraldine Monahan. There are also decorated candles made by Deirdre Curly, and hand-made duvets and cushions. Open every Friday from 9.30am to 1pm, it's a place to socialise with refreshments provided by local SOLAS (formerly FÁS).

The Men's Shed scheme for the Lanesborough and Ballyleague area successfully runs a boat-building workshop and provides a social space for men (women are also welcome) living in the area.

The Lanesborough Guild of the ICA was established in 2014 and the committee members are Regina Morrissey (President), Rita Greene (Secretary) and Mary Mulvihill (Treasurer). The Guild is involved in a number of craft activities including patchwork, crochet, knitting and hat-making.

The patchwork course is run by Kathleen Rooney and the group has made a variety of items such as tea cosies, bags, wall hangings and quilts. Cot quilts are also made for the Simon Community and Women's Link in Longford. The knitting and crochet group makes a range of items including hats for Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin.

Local primary and secondary school students were particularly enthusiastic about Creative Industries activities in which they have participated, including a Banta Central TV project (coordinated by County Longford School Completion Programme) and lessons in Scratch computer animation programming.

Students highlighted Lanesborough Community College's three pottery wheels as being a big asset, which linked to their participation and success in the nearby Strokestown Park Schools Sculpture Competition. Local young people enjoyed helping create a mural on the river walk. They would like to have a photography club for young people; there is one for adults, and more arts & crafts activities.

HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT



The name Lanesborough comes from Lord Lane who was granted the borough in 1664, however the Irish name Béal Átha Liag (Ballyleague) translates as ‘the mouth of the ford of the flagstones’, as it was historically a crossing point on the Shannon. The river remains important as angling and boating are key tourist activities in the area. With dressed limestone walls and Kiln House, Ballyleague harbour is an attractive local amenity. The Kiln House forms part of a complex of buildings, which was used during the Williamite War of 1688-91.

Close to the harbour is Ballyleague Castle, a late 16th century tower house now in ruins. Late medieval tower houses were commonly surrounded by an array of associated structures such as bawn walls, barns, kitchens and cottages. It is likely that such remains exist in the area around Ballyleague Castle, and exploration such as geophysical survey, could transform our understanding of the site. In the wider riverine landscape is the island of Inchcleraun on which are the remains of seven early churches and the monastery of St Dermot.

Much of the later heritage of Lanesborough and Ballyleague surrounds Bord na Móna. Generations of local families, who worked in the surrounding bogs, were housed in the Bord na Mona housing development at the southeast end of Lanesborough. Built in a distinctive style they make an attractive contribution to the streetscape, telling the town’s social and economic history. The proposed 2030 cessation of peat harvesting will impact on Lanesborough and Ballyleague. However, potential redevelopment of the surrounding bogs may see some converted to nature reserves providing amenities for the local community and ecotourism.

Lough Ree is a diverse natural habitat and the area is registered as a Special Area of Conservation (pcSAC), as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Natural Heritage Area (NHA).

LIBRARY



Situated on the town's main thoroughfare Lanesborough Library provides a wide range of services and activities for the local community including an exciting array of educational events, classes and exhibitions while facilitating a large number of community groups.

GROUPS

Throughout the year the Library hosts a Knitting & Crochet circle as well as providing a home for the Lasraí writers groups and the Library Book Club.

CLASSES

As an educational hub for the community the Library provides Art Classes, Computer and Internet Classes, and an impressive array of Language Classes including Irish, French, Italian and Spanish.

EVENTS

The Library in Lanesborough hosts a number of events for its younger members. Throughout the summer months it is a hive of activity with Author Visits, Magic Shows, Arts & Crafts Events and Story Time with Puppets. During October as part of the Children's Book Festival the Library facilitates author visits and during Halloween organises craft activities for children. Furthermore, the Library is actively engaged with the local primary school in organising school visits promoting literacy and education.

EXHIBITIONS

Annual Exhibitions in the Library engage with local groups affiliated with primary and secondary schools including Young Scientist, Community Games and Young Environmental Groups. Heritage Exhibitions run throughout the summer months and have included WW1 and Lanesborough, Business in Lanesborough Since 1990 and Schools Folklore 1933-34.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOE O'BRIEN

Local Newsagent & Lanesborough Native. By Gboyega Akerele.

Joe O'Brien, who was born and raised in Lanesborough, starts the interview by going back in time to the 1950's when, he recalls, about 64 new houses were built in Lanesborough, only one of which was lived in by a local person. The remainder of the new residents came from other counties, and he says this accounts for the diverse culture that can be seen in the area today.

LOCAL ART

Joe is planning a new community art project for summer 2016 that will encompass music, literature, performing arts, dance, theatre, visual arts, drawing, painting, sculpture, and media arts like photography and cinematography.

He also spoke about his idea to create an amphitheatre in the quarry area of Lanesborough with the potential support of Longford County Council, which he points out, could be modelled on a similar outdoor performance space in Ballykeeffe in Kilkenny.

Joe is particularly fond of the work of the artist Michael Casey, whose studio is located nearby at Barley Harbour, Newtowncashel, along the shores of Lough Ree in County Longford, and who is noted internationally for his bog wood sculptures.



CULTURAL VISION

Joe notes that stone walls divide the two separate Roman Catholic dioceses to which Lanesborough and Ballyleague belong. They share, however, a traditional Summer School that has been running for many years.

The River Shannon divides Lanesborough and Ballyleague, and there are separate scouts and GAA clubs, too, with Rathcline representing Lanesborough and St Faithleach's representing Ballyleague. It all adds up to a healthy rivalry, says Joe.

Joe is candid in acknowledging that he would prefer the two communities to come together under one name - Beal Atha Liag. In fact, the two GAA clubs already united in 2014 in a Strictly Come Dancing fundraising event with huge success. This was followed up in 2015 by a White Collar Boxing contest, with both sides competing to win the Battle of the Bridge.

CONCLUSION

Through the process of Cultural Mapping, it became evident that the residents of Lanesborough and Ballyleague are actively involved in many aspects of their community, its heritage and culture.

There was great pride in the local community and a strong desire to develop Lanesborough and Ballyleague further. While much already exists, there is the scope to expand community initiatives and cultivate more inclusive activities that engage all ages.

It is hoped that this Cultural Map will lead to increased investment and enjoyment.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this Cultural Mapping project, in particular the following community members and groups. Special thanks to Margaret Gillen from the Co-Op hall for providing the venue, and of course to our lecturer Jenny Haughton.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| John Casey | Local Historian |
| Bernadette Clancy | Lasrai Writers Group |
| Sara Crinnigan | Brushstrokes |
| Carmel Fallon | Summer School |
| Nollaig Feeney | Roscommon Heritage Officer |
| Mary Fleming | www.rustylemon.com |
| Margaret Gillen | Co-Op Hall |
| Stephanie Hanlon | Horse Fair |
| Michael Connaughton | Collector |
| Betty Hogan | Crochet Maker |
| Hugh Keane | Lough Ree North Angling Club |
| Fergus Kennedy | Longford Arts Officer |
| Carmel Linnane | Brushstrokes |
| Edel Loftus | Windsong Music School |
| Ronan Lynch | Sculptor |
| Michael McCarthy | Painter |
| Regina Morrissey | ICA Lanesborough Guild |
| Mary Mullins | Roscommon Arts Officer |
| Ciaran Mullooly | Writer and Journalist |
| Mairead Ni Chongaile | Longford Heritage Officer |
| Margaret Nohilly | Lasrai Writers Group |
| Joe O'Brien | Newspagent |
| Stella O'Sullivan | Library |
| Kathleen Rooney | Patchwork Maker |
| Seadna Ryan | Lanesborough Tourism Coop |
| Linda Shevlin | Artist and Curator |
| Nicolette Spelic | Photographer |
| Therese Whelan Tierney | Painter |
| Gerry Kelly & Sprint-Print | Booklet Printing |

Photography and booklet composed by the students of IADT's PGDip programme in Business in Cultural Event Management 2015. All photographs in this document were taken on November 20th during our visit to Lanesborough and Ballyleague.

Aideen Flynn, Aine Rynne, Alison Byrne, Alyson Gavin, Amy Coyle, Anna Susay-Duffy, Anne McCoy, Aoife Walsh, Bernadette Dunphy, Caitriona Moore, Carmen Sant'Angelo, Cathy Burke, David O Sullivan-Kountourzis, Gboyega Akerele, Helen Mason, Igoris Kozachenko, J. Raffael Abarca, Kerrie Clarke, Maisie Lynch, Maria Laura Tofoni, Rana Salman, Rosa Lopez-Walsh, Seanan Kerr, Shan Kelly & Vaida Holohan.

USEFUL LINKS

NATIONAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Longford Co. Council Arts Office
Roscommon Co. Council Arts Office
Ballyleague North and Harbour Conservation Dept. of Environment, Community & Local Gov
National Rural Network

www.longfordcoco.ie/arts_office.html
www.roscommoncoco.ie/en/Contact_Us/Arts_Office/Arts_Office.html
www.roscommoncoco.ie/en/Services/Heritage/Ballyleague
www.environ.ie
www.nrm.ie

NATIONAL ARTS & CULTURAL AGENCIES

The Arts Council
National Development Agency for Collaborative Arts
The Heritage Council
Design & Crafts Council of Ireland
Business to Arts
Fáilte Ireland

www.artscouncil.ie
www.create.ie
www.heritagecouncil.ie
www.dccoi.ie
www.businessarts.ie
www.failteireland.ie

HERITAGE

Bord na Móna's Community
National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
Irish Walled Towns Network
The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland
Waterways Ireland
Ballyleague Village Renewal & Tidy Towns Committee
Roscommon Heritage Office

www.heartland.ie
www.buildingsofireland.ie
www.irishwalledtownsnetwork.ie
www.iwai.ie
www.waterwaysireland.org
www.loughree.ie/about/ballyleague-village-renewal-tidy-towns/
www.roscommoncoco.ie/en/Services/Heritage/Heritage_Office_Home

EDUCATION

Lanesborough Community College
Windsong Music School
Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology

www.lanesborocc.com
www.windsongmusicschool.ie
www.iadt.ie

VISUAL ARTS & PHOTOGRAPHY

Longford County Council Visual Art Website
Brushstrokes Art Group
Rusty Lemon Graphic Design
Midland College of Photography
Longford Digital Arts
Outtake Films

www.visuallongford.ie
www.loughree.ie/Brushstrokes
www.rustylemon.com
www.midlandcollegeofphotography.ie
www.longforddigitalarts.ie
www.visuallongford.ie

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Lanesborough Horse Fair
World Championships Predator Bank Fishing 2016

www.facebook.com/LanesboroughHorseFair
www.worldpredatorclassic.com

RECREATION

Lough Ree/Lanesborough Angling Club
Blueways Ireland
Waterways Ireland
Lanesborough Ballyleague Badminton Club
Men's Shed Lanesborough Ballyleague

contact@pikefishinginireland.com
www.bluewaysireland.org
www.waterwaysireland.org
www.facebook.com/lanesboroballyleague.badminton
ballyleaguemensshed@gmail.com

LOCAL MEDIA

Midlands Arts & Culture Magazine
Lanesboro & Ballyleague Notes
Longford Leader
Roscommon Herald
Shannonside Radio
Irish TV
Ciaran Mullooly

www.longfordcoco.ie
www.joeobrien.ie
www.longfordleader.ie
www.roscommonherald.ie
www.shannonside.ie
www.irishtv.ie
www.rte.ie

LIBRARY

Longford County Library
Lanesborough Library

www.longfordlibrary.ie
lanesborolibrary@longfordcoco.ie

CULTURAL MAP

An IADT Cultural Map of Lanesborough and Ballyleague www.culturemap2016.com

Lanesborough & Ballyleague

Country: Ireland
Province: Leinster & Connacht
County: Longford & Roscommon
Population appx: 1,377

Coordinates: 53.674 N 7.992 W



INSTITUTE OF ART, DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY, 2015
PG DIP IN BUSINESS IN CULTURAL EVENT MANAGEMENT