Unlock the Past

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

DOWN COUNTY MUSEUM
www.downcountymuseum.com

Admission FREE

Ag freastal ar an Dún agus Ard Mhacha Theas Serving Down and South Armagh
The Old Gaol of Down

The Museum is located in the historic buildings of the eighteenth-century County Gaol of Down. The site is the birthplace of Down Cathedral and the former residence of the Governor of Down. This unique location provides an opportunity for visitors to experience the history of this important site.

Visitors can explore the restored cells and courtyards of the gaol buildings in 1981. Today you can visit the restored cells and sample the atmosphere of the Old Gaol, bringing the rich history of County Down to life. Hands-on features, interactive databases, and photographs are displayed in this permanent exhibition.

One of the prisoners who were incarcerated here was Charles Stewart, known as "The Ossian Poet." He was arrested in 1795 for his involvement in the United Irishman movement, which advocated for Irish independence. After his release in 1796, he went on to become a renowned poet and writer.

In addition to the permanent exhibition, visitors can also see the site of the gallows and find out more about crime and punishment. The Old Gaol of Down is a fascinating collection of objects and photographs that tell the story of the development of the criminal justice system in County Down.

The Gallery of the Old Gaol

The Gallery of the Old Gaol is located on the lower floor of the new building and tells the story of the Downpatrick High Cross. This is a partnership project with the Church of Ireland and the Department of the Environment and is part financed by the European Union’s INTERREG IVA Cross Border Programme Managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.

Over 1000 objects, documents, and photographs are displayed in the Governor's Residence of the Old Gaol. These objects tell the story of the Downpatrick High Cross and its place in the early Christian tradition.

The Downpatrick High Cross is a rich harvest from the sea and landscapes of regionally important objects. This permanent exhibition tells the story of farming and fishing in County Down. It is located in the central Governor's Residence and tells the story of the Downpatrick High Cross.

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A visit to Down County Museum brings 9000 years of history to life for visitors of all ages.

Our permanent exhibition, *Down Through Time*, is located in the central Governor’s Residence building and tells the story of the County from the arrival of the first people 9000 years ago, to the celebration of the new millennium in 2000.

Over 1000 objects, documents and photographs are displayed in the Governor’s Residence of the old Gaol, bringing the rich history of County Down to life. Hands-on features, interactive databases and audio points capture personal experiences and provide opportunities to find out more.

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**Discover how prehistoric hunters and farmers left their imprint on the landscape**

**Learn more about St Patrick and the Early Christian church**

**Hear accounts of Viking raiders and Norman invaders**

**See industrial and domestic objects made by local people**

**Uncover the experiences of people who lived through conflict and war**

**Find out more about our diverse culture and identity**
This permanent exhibition tells the story of the Downpatrick High Cross and its place in the early Christian tradition of County Down.

A fascinating collection of artefacts illustrates the story of the development of Christianity in the locality, with the centrepiece being the 10th century Downpatrick High Cross displayed in a specially constructed gallery.

This unique object has been carefully moved to ensure its preservation for future generations and makes a stunning impact highlighting its importance in our local history.

Hear how the Downpatrick High Cross was moved to the Museum and how a modern day replica was made using the latest technology.

Raising the Cross in Down

This is a partnership project with the Church of Ireland and the Department of the Environment and is part financed by the European Union’s INTERREG IVA Cross Border Programme Managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.
This permanent exhibition tells the story of farming and fishing in County Down.

In *Harvests from Land and Sea*, located on the lower floor of the new Museum extension at the rear of the building, visitors can find out how these industries have developed over time and how our landscape, culture and identity have been shaped by those working on the land and sea. The gallery displays a number of regionally important objects from ploughs and carts to crop harvesting tools.

- **Find out how the fertile landscape has provided us with food for the past 9000 years**
- **Discover how varied the farming industry is, from sheep farming in the Mournes, to growing fruit and vegetables in the Ards**
- **See some of the machines and tools used by farmers**
- **Listen to stories of how farmers have expanded and diversified their activities to meet changing demands for food**
- **Learn about how generations of people from villages and towns along the coast have braved the elements to bring in a rich harvest from the sea**
Cathedral View Tearoom

The Cathedral View Tearoom provides a great range of reasonably priced snacks and lunches. Serving great coffee, delicious home-made food with locally sourced ingredients, there are plenty of tempting treats on offer for all the family!

The tearoom also offers a superb panoramic view taking in Down Cathedral on the Hill of Down, Slieve Croob mountain, the Quoile River, Inch Abbey and the early medieval fort called the Mound of Down.

Special catering packages for groups and birthday party menus are all available.

Contact the catering manager on 028 4461 1958 for more details. Catering packages are also available outside normal museum opening hours.

The tearoom is run by Mainstay DRP (Downe Residential Project) in conjunction with the Museum. Mainstay DRP is a local charity providing respite and residential care and vocational training for adults with a learning disability and/or autism.

Find out more about the work of Mainstay DRP at www.mainstaydrp.org
The Museum’s diverse collections and our location in the historic building of the old Gaol make it a must for a school visit.

Our hands-on active learning visits provide curriculum linked, enquiry based experiences for pupils from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4. Visits are designed to promote group work, investigation and problem solving and develop thinking skills and creativity.

School visits include:
- Toys and games
- Life in the recent past
- Food and farming
- World War II
- Life in early times
- The Early Christian church in Down
- Viking life
- Victorian lives and times
- Religious and cultural diversity
- Crime and punishment

Our on-line learning resources include:
- Finding Refuge During World War II: The Millisle Farm Story
downcountymuseum.com/findingrefuge
- Transformations: Politics and Protest in County Down 1900-1920s
downcountymuseum.com/transformations
Visits for Groups and Families

A trip to the Museum makes an ideal visit for families, community groups, clubs, societies and visitors with disabilities.

Groups can explore the history of the old Gaol, enjoy our permanent exhibitions, and see one of our special, temporary exhibitions displaying objects from our varied collections.

Visits can be accommodated outside normal opening hours by arrangement. Reasonably priced refreshments and lunches are available in the Cathedral View Tearoom.

A number of exciting guided tours are also available including:

- Tour of the Museum and old Gaol
- Walking tour of Downpatrick
- Bus tour of 1798 rebellion sites
- Bus tour of Early Christian sites in Lecale
- Reminiscence and object handling sessions
- Behind the scenes tours

A guide can also accompany your own tour to the High Cross and local Early Christian sites associated with St Patrick by arrangement.

As well as hands-on features in our exhibitions, the Museum’s annual programme of events regularly features family entertainment and craft activities.

We run major family themed events at Christmas, Easter, Halloween and on St Patrick’s Day.

We also run:

- Birthday parties
- Summer schemes
- Young Archaeologists’ Club
- Murder Mystery Nights
Learning and Access

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School visits include:
- Tours and games
- Life in the recent past
- Food and farming
- World War II
- Life in early times
- Heritage Centre
- Check in/break
- Visiting floor plan and times
- Religious and cultural diversity
- Crime and punishment

Our on-line learning resources include:
- Finding Peace During World War II - The Methodist Home History (downcountymuseum.com)
- Finding a Voice

Transformations: Politics and Protest in County Down 1800-1920 (downcountymuseum.com/transformation)

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- Tour of the Museum and old Gaol
- Making Waves at Downpatrick
- The War of 1798: Q&A (Downpatrick)
- The War of Early Christian Times (Downpatrick)
- A relaxing and enjoyable walking experience.

Behind the scenes tours

A guide can also accompany your own group through the Museum with a talk on its exhibitions.

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We can arrange family friendly events, talks, lectures, webinars and an on-site shop.

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- Young Archaeologists’ Club
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Visitor Information

Location
We are located on the Mall, English Street, Downpatrick, between Down Cathedral and Downpatrick Courthouse.

On entry to the town from either the Belfast road or the Newcastle road, follow the brown signs to the Museum. There is an Ulsterbus service from Belfast to Downpatrick, departing from the Europa Bus Centre. There is also an Ulsterbus service from Newry.

Opening Hours
Monday to Friday: 10am – 5pm
Saturday & Sunday: 1pm – 5pm

Admission
Admission to the Museum is FREE*

Access
Fully accessible galleries, shop and tearoom
Hands-on features for children and families
Audio tour for visitors with visual impairments
Selection of tactile objects and features
Large format information available on request
Tactile orientation model of site
Baby changing facilities
Toilets for visitors with disabilities
Guide/hearing dogs welcome

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W: www.downcountymuseum.com

* There is however a charge for some special events and for guided tours. Please contact us for more details.