

20th May 2009

Press Release

Landscape and Heritage in the Community

The importance of the relationship between people and the landscape in which they live has been the focus of a course attended by representatives of nine communities in South West Mayo over recent weeks. The Landscape and Heritage course is an action of the *County Mayo Heritage Plan* and was the outcome of collaboration between Deirdre Cunningham, Heritage Officer, Mayo County Council and Jo Orтели, Community Development officer, South West Mayo Development Company, with support given by the Heritage Council.

The course ran over eight evenings, with two Saturday field trips. The lectures covered a diverse range of topics, highlighting and interpreting different aspects of Mayo's rich and varied heritage. Community representatives from Balla, Ballyglass (Claremorris), Ballyglass (Scardaune), Clogher (Claremorris), Islandeady, Mayo Abbey, Partry, Kilkeeran and Newport were made aware of the heritage value of a range of topics, from traditional shop fronts and gateposts to potato ridges and house styles. The cultural and historical value of archaeological monuments, including churches and graveyards was also shown to be integral to an understanding of the past and a connectedness with the living landscape.

Techniques for recording local and natural history and the recognition of landscape types, with their impact on human habitation and plant life and its diversity, were covered by experts in their field, to the interested enjoyment of all participants. Highlights were the trips to Hollymount Church and Graveyard and Partry House and Woodland, affording participants the opportunity to test theory in the field. Commenting on the course a participant stated "the contributors were so passionate about their subjects, I found them a great inspiration". Another remarked "I am walking the landscape with new eyes, I want to learn more".

The end of the course will be the start of a new phase, as participants come together to plan heritage projects within their own communities that will encourage an interest in and recognise the value of local heritage into the future.

-Ends-

For Further Information:

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