

Around the Meadow - An Age Friendly Reminiscence

The water around the Broadmeadow forms a magical stream of memories, of journeys, of days playing, fishing, swimming and being young.

A place in the heart of locals and visitors; a place where childhoods were spent, romances blossomed, and family days were full of fun by the water overlooked by the castle and Watergate.

The Police Pavilion and pitch, close to the castle, saw cricket, rugby and school athletics played by police teams, local teams and schools, alongside visiting sportsmen. When the local GAA sold their field across the water on the Sligo Road, they played their Gaelic games here too.

The Broadmeadow has always been a place where sports were played. Cricket, rugby, football, Gaelic games, boxing, horse jumping and school athletics were all played along the meadow.

The Fermanagh Lakeland Forum opened on 19 May 1976. It was a logical decision to locate the sports centre along the Broadmeadow in Enniskillen. It was opened by William (Willie) J. McBride M.B.E., a former rugby union footballer.

Around the Meadow is a celebration of The Broadmeadow and these meadow memories; just a short path along the water's edge on the west of the town it has, for decades, been enjoyed by many.

An associated exhibition celebrates the Around the Meadow trail and can be viewed in Enniskillen Castle from June to December 2021.



Around the Meadow : Football at the Meadow

Football continues to be played on the Broadmeadow as it has been for decades; both formal tournaments and friendly kick abouts.

From the early C20th the Enniskillen Corinthians played all their home games on the Broadmeadow.

Enniskillen Rangers formed in 1954, sharing the ground with the Corinthians for home games, every other Saturday. The big summer competition was organised by John Jones, bookmaker in the town.

International players, like Derek Doogan, from Belfast, who played for the Wolverhampton Wanderers and Johnny Crossan from Derry, and who played for Manchester City, would play for local teams under different names.

In both photographs below you can see the clocktower of the townhall. Still an easy way to quickly look up and see the time.



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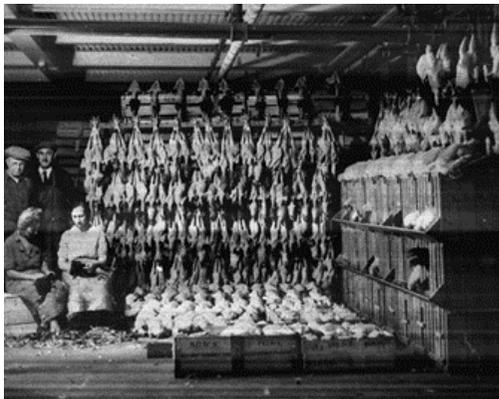
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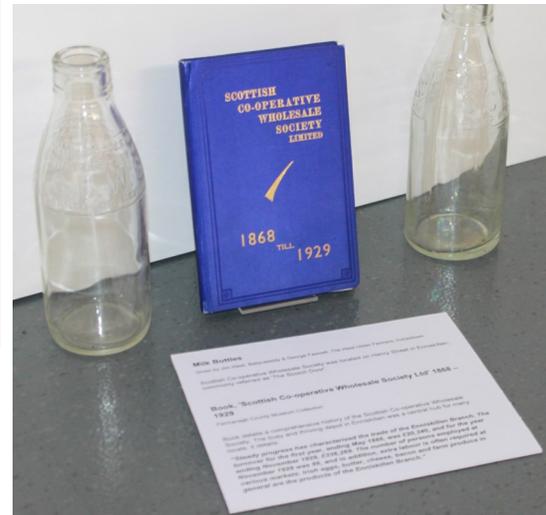
Around the Meadow : Time at the Meadow

Look across to the Sligo Road to the Scotch Store (built 1885-1899). The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society SCWS began in Glasgow in 1868. In 1885 it set up a buying depot in Enniskillen. The “Scotch Store” runs in a north to south curve on the main Sligo Road into Enniskillen.

The main products collected were butter, eggs, pigs (slaughtered on site) and seasonal fruit and fowl.



Left: Interior view of the Scotch Store showing Josie Feeley and Lillie Henderson, both of Dame Street, earning extra money for Christmas by plucking turkeys. The products were transported by train and steamer to Glasgow through Derry and Belfast ports
©FODC Museum Services



Above: Milk bottles from SCWS



We didn't need clocks

“I got up in the morning and I could hear the Angelus coming up from the Convent; I can still hear it. We didn't need clocks. We could hear a horn from Lisbellaw, from the factory there...
...that came in at five to eight if the wind was in the right direction. At nine o'clock we got the Angelus, at twelve o'clock we got the Angelus, and at quarter to one, one, and two we got two horns. The gas works down in Gas Lane, the horn went off there at one o'clock and the Scotch Store at Sligo Road, they had a horn at two o'clock. We had the Lisbellaw horn at five and another from the Scotch Store or the Gas Works and we had the clock on Forthill in between. So we didn't really need watches or clocks at all. It was a very very evocative time.”

Joan Trimble, FODC Oral History Collection



Above: Thistlebank House was built for the manager 1893.

Around the Meadow : Friendship at the Meadow

**“To me, fair friend, you never
can be old,
For as you were when first your
eye I ey’d,
Such seems your beauty still.”**

“Sonnet 104”,
William Shakespeare

There are no strangers here; only
friends you haven't yet met.
Many friendships were forged on the
path along the water's edge.
The meadow was always, and still is
a place to see a familiar face.

This sign is placed next to a seated
area where you are invited to stop
and chat, make friends and
exchange memories.



Around the Meadow : Fishing at the Meadow

Gone Fishing Cast your line and capture a memory

As an island town the locals and visitors fished along the shoreline on the Broadmeadow.

The daily catch was pike, bream, perch, and a little peace and quiet.



Above @ FODC Museum Services
Michael Greenaway and Michael
Coburn at the stern of a fishing boat at
Weir's Bridge, Enniskillen, 1959.



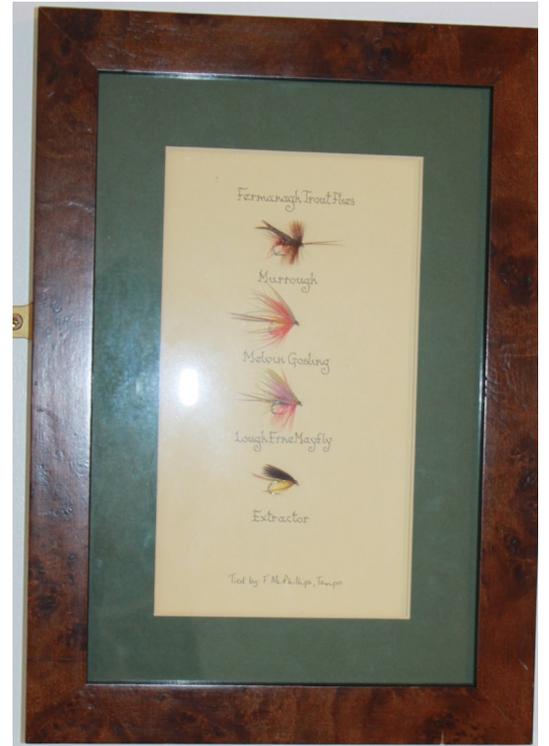
Above: Fishing Basket
Given by : Paddy-Joe Slevin, Belleek.
Always handy to have an extra storage
accessary for the fishing pole.

Cast away your troubles

♪ You shall have a fishie in a little dishie
You shall have a fishie when the boat comes in



©FODC Museum Services



Above: Fermanagh Fishing Flies
Fermanagh County Museum
Made by local fisherman Frankie
McPhillips for trout fishing.



Around the Meadow : The Island at the Meadow

Castle Island

When you are on the broad meadow, take a moment to look across to Castle Island, or do you call it something else? Sally's Island, Sallow Island, Lally's Island or Irvine's Island? The house pictured built in 1870s by William Irvine.

What memories do you have of the island?

**Row a Boat to Devenish
Devenish is full of fish**

**Row, Row your boat gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily life is but a dream**

The small boys who lived in the house were rowed across to the Sconce in the morning and made their way to school along the meadow.



©Lawrence Collection, NLI



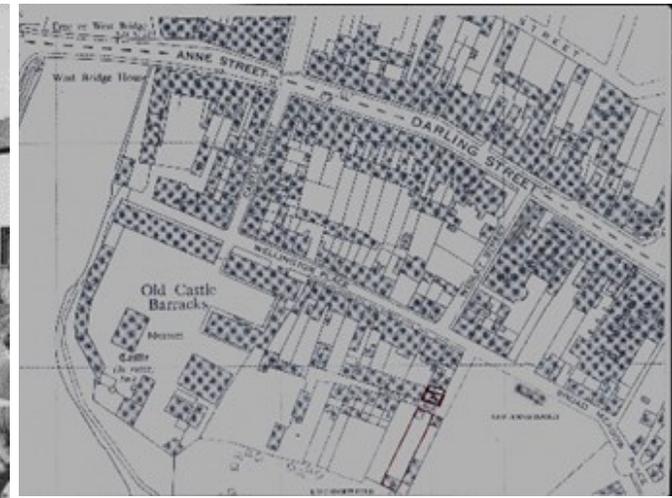
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Around the Meadow : Playing at the Meadow



The slide was organised once a year on the “Tennis”, Wellington Place.

©FODC Museum Services

The slide was organised by a Mr Allen, who was responsible for setting up a Youth Club in Henry Street, just across the water. 'The Tennis' was so-called simply because the area had been tennis courts.

Perhaps you were in the queue?



Around the Meadow : Romance at the Meadow

Dances were held in a large marquee at the Broadmeadow.

Many a romance blossomed flourished hand in hand around the meadow.

A place where romances started and lifelong friendships were made.

Down By the Salley Gardens

Down by the salley gardens
my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens
with little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy,
as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish,
with her would not agree.

In a field by the river
my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder
she laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy,
as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish,
and now am full of tears.

W.B. Yeats



Around the Meadow : Meeting at the Meadow

The Sconce or “Skonce”

A natural meeting point along the meadow, (the small grassy bank, beside the jetty).

On the lough shore just south east of the castle along the broadmeadow, this grassy bank is the remains of an earlier defensive earthwork built to protect Enniskillen castle. The sconce was a great place for hide and seek.

Look at how little of St. Michael’s Church you can see from the sconce in the photograph.

Perhaps you can remember when the steeple was added?

The meadow was the place to go with the family as seen in these beautiful family pictures.

Horrible History...

Irish general, RC Bishop Heber Mahon, captured near Kilskeery, by Major King, Governor of Enniskillen, was hanged here in 1650.

The governor of the town did try to save his life, but the execution went ahead at the command of the Parliamentary leader, Sir Charles Coote.

The Bishop’s head was placed on a spike on the tower of Enniskillen Castle and his trunk buried on Devenish Island.



The Quinn Family, Queen St.
Left to Right, Joe, Margaret, Mary, their daddy, Paul, holding baby Pat, brother Paul by his side.
Joanne Henderson, Queen Street pictured too.

Around the Meadow : Fun at the Meadow

Dipping your Toes and Skimming stones in the Water

The magic of the water that surrounds the town is unique. Sitting by the water's edge and dipping your toes is magical too.

Children, big and small, still dip their toes and try to skim stones.

Time spent by the water or dipping your toes in by the water's edge is still a magical feeling. Trips to the seaside by train were a real treat for many children.



Relaxing by the Shore, c.1901
© Fermanagh County Museum.



Kindly lent by the Trimble Family

The Magpie Poem

One for Sorrow

Two for Joy



Three for a Girl

Four for a Boy

One for sorrow,
two for joy,
three for a girl,
four for a boy,
five for silver, six for gold,
seven for a secret never to be told,
eight for a letter over the sea,
nine for a lover as true as can be

Do you salute a single magpie?

Around the Meadow : Memories at the Meadow

Take a Moment, Make a Memory

No one else can remember your memories.

Take a picture, a return ticket, to a moment otherwise gone.

The history of the town of Enniskillen is shaped by the water; it shapes many of our memories too.



Above: Sisters, Marguerite (Rita), and Edith Kidd daughters of Leonard Kidd M.D, Chief Surgeon of the County Infirmary 1897-1937.

Possibly taken at Castle Caldwell. 1901
The family lived at Westbridge House
Annie King Collection.
© Fermanagh County Museum.



Around the Meadow : Picnics and family at the Meadow

What's in your Picnic Basket?

There are many popular picnic spots along the Lough.
Do you have a favourite spot?

Time with Family

Perhaps the most important memories people have of the meadow is playing with their brothers, sisters and friends. Taking the baby for walk in the pram, a family picnic or an evening stroll.



From the Gunning Family Album
©FODC Museum Services



Mary Toland (nee Preston) pictured with her 4 children in the garden of their house, which stood on the site of the present Visitor Information Centre.

©FODC Museum Services



Taylor Woods staff picnic on White Island, 1961
©FODC Museum Services

Thank you for visiting 'Around the Meadow.'

The Chair of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Councillor Errol Thompson officially launched "Around the Meadow" on 28 July 2021.

Attending the launch, Ethel Oldcroft from South West Age Partnership said:

"This trail is a path of memories for me. The Broadmeadow was my playground as a child, it wasn't like this then just a waste ground and two football fields."

Around the Meadow is part of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Age Friendly Strategy to allow older people to lead more independent, engaged and socially connected lives and is funded through the Department for Communities Access and Inclusion.

