

A HERITAGE AUDIT TECHNIQUE: A HANDBOOK FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY HERITAGE GROUPS

A new publication titled: ***'A Heritage Audit Technique: A Handbook for Local Community Heritage Groups'*** was recently produced by Galway County Council in association with Galway County Heritage Forum and the Heritage Council. This bilingual publication depicts how best to conduct a heritage audit of our physical landscape, producing a valuable resource for future research, educational purposes.

The aim of a Heritage Audit is to examine and record the heritage features of a local area as they appear on the landscape. In order to do this it is recommended that a systematic field survey is undertaken and the findings are documented in the form of maps and descriptive accounts.

This will result in a comprehensive database of information on local heritage which can be utilised for research, educational and planning purposes.

The information gathered should then be supplemented with documentary and/or oral data about the history of the feature.

This involves secondary research of documents and primary research, including talking to local inhabitants, historians and specialists.

The benefits to a Local Community Heritage Group who undertake such an audit include:

- A comprehensive record of the heritage features of the local landscape;
- A focus for future projects and development of a strategic plan;
- Creation of a knowledge and awareness of the local environment among the people who carry out the survey;
- A heightening of the observational and interpretational skills of the members of the group.

This handbook is divided into four sections:

1. Planning a Strategy
2. Carrying out the Audit
3. Features to Note
4. Compiling and Documenting the Information

Each section carries practical advice on the technique of heritage audit. Some examples are provided from a practical pilot project which was undertaken by the author with the Heritage Steering Group of Eyrecourt and District Development Co. Ltd. in 2005 under the auspices of the Galway County Heritage Forum and Galway County Council.

This publication was officially launched by Cllr. Michael Mullins, Mayor of the County of Galway at Eyrecourt Library, Eyrecourt, Co. Galway in March 2007. The publication is free as it is jointly funded by the Heritage Council and Galway Council.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the publication please contact one of the following:

***Bríd Higgins,
Acting Heritage Officer,
Tel: 091 509198
Email: bhiggins@galwaycoco.ie***

or

***The Heritage Council
Rothe House, Parliament Street,
Kilkenny, Co Kilkenny
Tel. 056-7770777
Email: mail@heritagecouncil.com***