

THE IRISH FOR FENAGH IS 'FIODHNACH' WHICH MEANS 'THE WOODED PLACE'- IF YOU CAN IMAGINE FENAGH 1500 YEARS AGO IT WOULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY COVERED IN TREES, BUT THE LANDSCAPE ITSELF HAS REMAINED LARGELY UNCHANGED TODAY. THERE ARE STILL THE SAME DRUMLINS AND HILLS. THE 6TH CENTURY WAS A TIME BEFORE THE VIKINGS AND THE NORMANS... BEFORE THE ENGLISH INVASIONS, AND EVEN BEFORE THE POTATO!. IT WAS A FASCINATING TIME IN HISTORY, A TIME OF DRUIDS AND MONKS, KINGS AND QUEENS, WILD ANIMALS SUCH AS BOAR AND DEER ROAMED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND OF COURSE CHRISTIANITY WAS BROUGHT TO IRELAND BY ST. PATRICK, WHO WAS KNOWN TO ST. CAILLIN AND IS BELIEVED TO HAVE SPENT TIME HERE IN THE MONASTERY IN FENAGH.



Fenagh Visitor Centre - History of the building: The building was first opened as a Temperance Hall on October 25th 1912. It was burned by the Black and Tans in early 1920 and repaired and reopened around 1925. Some events in the hall throughout the early years included GAA conventions, drama groups, dances, concerts, 25 card drives. Fenagh Fife and Drum Band had their practices here during the 40's. It was used as dance hall in the 1930s to 50's. It fell into disrepair and remained neglected and derelict until the early 90's when maintenance work was carried out as part of a FAS scheme under the supervision of Fenagh Development Committee. It was opened as Fenagh Visitor Centre in 2005 and now offers a Heritage Centre, Children's Indoor Play Area, Café and Meeting/Training Rooms open year round 7 days a week.

Some other notable dates in Irish history:

- 432AD St Patrick arrives in Ireland
- 795 The Vikings arrive in Ireland performing small raids
- 1100 Normans arrive
- 1500 Tudors reign
- 1607-09 Flight of the Earls/Ulster Plantation
- 1642 Cromwellian Wars
- 1690 Battle of the Boyne
- 1798 Irish Rebellion of 1798
- 1845-49 Great Irish famine, workhouses, mass emigration
- 1916 The Easter Rising Sunday
- 1919 The Irish War of Independence
- 1921 Irish Free State formed
- 1937 Irish Constitution voted in
- 1960s Civil Rights movement
- 1972 Joined EU
- 1972 Bloody Sunday
- 1998 Good Friday Agreement
- 2002 Adopted euro currency



Fenagh History Down Through the Years

The first record of human activity in Fenagh refers to the **NEOLITHIC PERIOD (4000-2500 BC)** - settlers may have come to Fenagh via riverways or mountains - this was the age of court, passage and portal tombs (dolmens), all of which are to be found scattered around Fenagh village. They were associated with rituals or burials.



The various standing stones around Fenagh possibly came from the **BRONZE AGE (2500-600BC)** - they would have been either burial or boundary markers. The Portal Tomb/Dolmen at Fenaghbeg is reported to be the burial place of Conal Gulban who died c464 - he was an Irish king and founder of Tir Chonaill kingdom (now Co Donegal) in the 5th century

This period was followed by the **IRON AGE (600BC-500AD)** and the coming of the Celts who were an Iron Age people from Central Europe. They brought new language, culture, art to Ireland, introduced using iron for making tools and weapons and more importantly brought a sense of kingship, kingdoms and power.



The **EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD (500-1169)** saw the introduction of Christianity to Ireland (St Patrick) - it brought metal Celtic art, stone carvings and manuscripts - Ringforts, Crannogs and the Bell and Book of Fenagh are associated with this period. The **MEDIEVAL PERIOD (1169-1600AD)** sees the establishment of Fenagh Abbeys.

Book of Fenagh & Shrine of St Caillin: The Book of Fenagh was completed at the monastery in 1516 and a copy is now kept at the Royal Irish Academy. It contains a verse and prose "life" of St Caillin of Fenagh and additional poems from the lost Old Book of St. Caillin which are believed to be relevant to the politics of 11th- to 13th-century Tyrconnell. Next year sees the 500th anniversary of the Book of Fenagh and a series of local and national lectures and events are currently being planned for late Summer 2016. The Shrine of St Caillin (decorated book cover used to hold the book of Fenagh) was handcrafted by the monks and is believed to have originated around 1536. The Shrine had an inscription on it saying it was made by Brian O'Rourke (King of Breifne - the Breifne territory included the modern Irish counties of Leitrim and Cavan, along with parts of County Sligo. It was badly damaged in the fire at St Mels Cathedral in Longford in 2010 and is currently undergoing conservation work at the National Museum of Ireland.



Bell of Fenagh (Clog na Ri): it was a handbell in the monastery to call monks to rise and to prayers and meals. It was called Clog na Ri because it was supposed to have been used to baptise kings, inverted and filled with water (it holds one and a half pints). It remained in the possession of the Coarbs of the monastery until the 1700s. It was unfortunately lost in the fire at St Mels Cathedral in 2010.

