

Bangor Castle / North Down Museum

Location: Bangor town centre, close to leisure centre and cinema

Access / Ownership: Museum opening hours available at www.northdown.gov.uk/heritage



Built in 1852, Bangor Castle is close to the site of James Hamilton's first home, which was described in 1611 by the Plantation Commissioners as "...a fayre stone house at the towne of Bangor... about 60 foot longe and 22 foote broade...".

In 1709, Anna Catherine Hamilton, the great granddaughter of James Hamilton's brother William, married Michael Ward of Castle Ward near Strangford. Edward Southwell Ward built a castle at Bangor in the late 1700s; in 1837, this castle was described as being "surrounded by extensive grounds and tastefully laid out".

The present Castle was built in 1852 by Robert Edward Ward, a descendant of Hamilton.

North Down Museum, attached to the Castle, contains a number of important historical artefacts. In particular, the original 1625 Thomas Raven maps of James Hamilton's estate are on display here, as well as a sundial from Bangor Abbey which is dated 1630. This means that famous minister Robert Blair, his congregation and other colleague ministers of that era would have used this as their timepiece. It was made by John Bonar, a schoolmaster from Ayr - another Bonar sundial, dated 1623, is at

Kenmure Castle in Kirkcudbright. Bonar is also known to have written a poem describing his journey from Ayr to Bangor, although the manuscript for this has not been located.

The Raven Maps and Bonar sundial are two of the most important early Ulster-Scots artefacts on public display anywhere in the world.

Groomsport and Eagle Wing

Location: Groomsport village

Access: public space



See the detailed study of Groomsport in the accompanying documents.

Groomsport occupies a special place in the annals of the Ulster-Scots for it from here in the autumn of 1636 that the Eagle Wing sailed. The Eagle Wing was the first emigrant ship to leave Ulster for America. She was commissioned by four of the Presbyterian ministers who had been brought to Ulster by Hamilton and Montgomery. They were Rev Robert Blair (brought to Bangor by Hamilton), Rev John McClelland (brought to Newtownards by Montgomery), Rev John Livingstone (brought to Killinchy by Hamilton) and Rev James Hamilton (he was Hamilton's namesake and nephew, who was made minister of Ballywalter).

The two richest accounts of Eagle Wing are the autobiographies of Blair and Livingstone. There are other contemporary references which corroborate these autobiographies.

All four ministers had family connections with Sir Hugh Montgomery. On 8th September, Sir Hugh Montgomery was buried. A Scottish State funeral was held in Newtownards, with earls, nobles and lords from Scotland and Ireland paying their last respects to one of the founding fathers of the settlement in north-east County Down. The very next morning they went to Groomsport, boarded the Eagle Wing and set sail. Frustratingly for

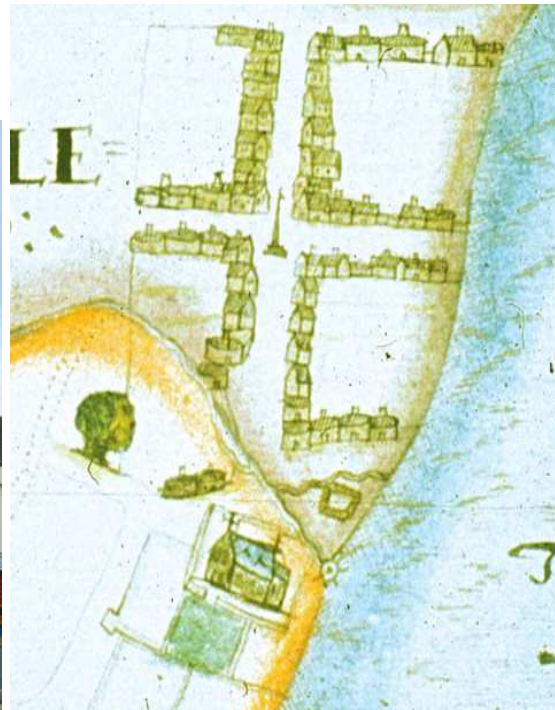
those aboard the ship never made it to America. After eight weeks at sea severe storms forced the ship to return to Ireland.

Today this brave, but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to sail across the Atlantic is remembered at Groomspoint through the annual Eagle Wing Festival held during the 4th of July celebrations.

Hollywood Maypole

Location: at the crossroads in the middle of the town

Access: public space



Hollywood Maypole is the only one of its kind in Ireland. There are a number of theories as to its origin, but what is certain is that a maypole features on Thomas Raven's 1625 map of James Hamilton's estates. It is possible that English people had settled at Hollywood (just as in Bangor where, in 1611, the Plantation Commissioners said that "the town consists of 80 new houses, all inhabited with Scotishmen and Englishmen...") and installed the maypole. The Raven maps of Hamilton's estates are on display at North Down museum.