

Press release

16th April 2015

Over 200 delegates from all over Ireland attend Dundalk Chamber Tourism Conference

Dundalk Chamber of Commerce held a major Cross Border Tourism Conference in the Crowne Plaza Dundalk on the 15th April. Sponsored by Crowne Plaza Dundalk, Haines Fleet Management and Matthews Coach Hire with the support of Louth Local Enterprise Office this event expanded on the key issues and the collaborative actions required to maximise a regions social and investment potential, as a major tourism destination.

The topic was chosen as this is the 700th anniversary of the Bruce invasion from Scotland and the crowning, in Dundalk, of Edward as the last High King of Ireland

Battlefield tourism is big business across the world. Louth, halfway between Belfast and Dublin, is, in many ways, the Flanders of Ireland. Louth has been at the heart of the action for millennia, from the semi-mythical Cú Chulainn, Queen Maeve and the Táin Bó Cuailgne, to Edward Bruce and the Battle of Faughart, through Hugh O'Neill and the Nine Years War, the Confederate War and Oliver Cromwell and the Battle of the Boyne Louth has been the site of many decisive battles. More recently Louth was badly affected by 'the Troubles'.

Dundalk Chamber in association with **Brendan McSherry**, Heritage Officer with Louth County Council brought some very high profile speakers together for this event. There were presentations on Belfast's Black Taxi tours, by **Michael Culbert** and on the development of the Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre by **Dr Eugene Keane** of the OPW. **Prof. John Lennon** of Glasgow Caledonian University spoke on 'Dark Tourism' including Auschwitz, Cambodia and other massacre sites. A local lady **Dr. Vanessa Ryan** covered the castles and other defences that lie across our lovely countryside. She is starting her own company in this area, **Irish Authentic Heritage**. These included Roche and King John. Forensic Anthropologist **Lauren Buckley** also gave a very interesting talk on "Bones, Battles and Bodies". **James O'Neill** talked about the battles in Dundalk, Faughart, 1318 and the battle in the same area in 1600, which was part of the 9 years' war. (Clontibret and Yellow Ford were in the same period) Chair for the event was **Gary Breen** of Failte Ireland and there was a free Workshop by **Kieran Swail** of Southern Regional College on Podcasts for Tourism- an emerging digital channel.

The event was very successful and the Chamber intends to host another Tourism conference in 2016 so watch this space!

Press release ends

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