

## **Fort Dunree and Inch Wildfowl Reserve join forces**

Two of Inishowen's best loved visitor attractions have begun a collaboration to maximise the potential of both sites. Fort Dunree Military Museum Ltd was originally opened to the public in 1986, and has provided interest for tourists of all ages ever since. It has also been a source of great pleasure and reminiscence for those of a military background, whether having served at the post or just been involved in its military history. At present there is a Military Museum, Wildlife Centre, Network of walking paths, Auditorium, Shop and Cafeteria. This range of facilities is not on offer anywhere else in the peninsula. It also has the finest array of artillery artefacts anywhere outside of Gibraltar. In recent years Dunree has become known as a Centre for Peace & Reconciliation and holds a Remembrance Ceremony every year in honour of the men and women of Inishowen who died in World War I. There are exciting future plans to develop the tourism product on site and recent funding has enabled the first phase to take place with the restoration of pier facilities at Dunree. As FDMMLtd approaches its 30th anniversary it has welcomed over 300,000 visitors through its doors.



The Board of Fort Dunree with members of Inch Wildfowl Trust

Inch levels and Wildfowl Reserve has been a massive success story for the Inishowen and indeed Donegal Tourism industry. The project which involved an amalgam of local community, Donegal County Council, National Parks and Wildlife and Donegal Creameries have secured substantial funding to create a fantastic walking loop around Inch Lake spanning 8km. The combination within this site of extensive feeding areas and safe resting and roosting sites makes this site one of the most important wetlands in the country for wintering waterfowl.

It supports a wide diversity of wintering waterfowl, notably swans and geese, as well as breeding terns, gulls, waders and duck. Being on the western- most part of Europe it also attracts a fair share of unusual birds throughout the year. The site has been a phenomenal success in it's first year, attracting 65,000 visitors and receiving recognition from the Irish Tourism Industry awards under the Best Environmental Tourism Innovation.

There are a number of ways in which the two projects will work together to help build on the work already taken place. Both attractions are discovery points on the Wild Atlantic Way and will be a massive aid to each other in building visitor numbers. Fort Dunree will provide "front office" facilities for the Inch Wildfowl Reserve project, taking in clerical duties, marketing through website and Social Media, publicising the site through various tourist organisations. There could also be possibilities of joint funding initiatives in the future. This arrangement will be very productive for both projects and should create conditions favourable for greater development in the years ahead.



Francis Conaghan, Chair of Inch Wildfowl Trust with Fort Dunree Chairman John McCarter

### **Alfie's Cycle and Walk 2015**

We hosted a charity cycle and walk in aid of Cancer Care West on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October. The event was organised on behalf of popular former Fort Dunree staff member Alfie McGovern who received tremendous treatment and support from the facilities provided by Cancer Care West.



### **ATSWIM at Fort Dunree**

Fort Dunree will feature in a new book detailing 40 swimming venues around the coast of Ireland. Two friends, Brendan MacEvelly and Michael O'Reilly, aided by Fort Dunree's Terry Tedstone undertook to swim at Fort Dunree pier on a Sunday morning at the end of August, not for the feint hearted!



### **Weddings at Fort Dunree**

This summer has been a busy time with weddings at Fort Dunree. Three couples celebrated their nuptials at Fort Dunree in July and August. The board and staff of Fort Dunree would like to extend their best wishes to Jane McCarter and Robbie O'Dowd, two former employees, on the recent occasion of their wedding.



## Successful Storytelling Event at Fort Dunree

Fort Dunree once again hosted an extremely successful and enjoyable Storytelling evening as part of Heritage week. A large crowd were treated to a wide array of local talent and special mention as ever must go to our MC for the evening Dermot McLaughlin.



## The Redevelopment of Dunree Pier

As recorded in our last Newsletter we are delighted that the pier facilities at Dunree were awarded funding of €112,500 from the Local Authority Harbour Development and Marine Leisure Programme. As you can see there has been quite a transformation. The team from Donegal County Council deserve enormous credit for their hard work.

