

# Portrait of Armagh

Darren McLoughlin

The smallest of Northern Ireland's counties, Armagh is a county of contrasts. From the geological landscape of Slieve Gullion in the south to the low lying drumlins in the north; from hill farms to apple orchards; from ancient megalithic tombs to modern architecture.

Armagh is a county steeped in history with evidence of human settlement from c. 5000 BC; at its centre, the important site at Navan Fort and its position at the heart of the Ulster Cycle of mythological tales.

In the middle of the county, Armagh city is best known for its association with St Patrick and has remained the centre of Christianity in Ireland since he founded his principal church here in 445 AD. It quickly gained a reputation as the City of Saints and Scholars.

The major urban area lies to the north-east; Craigavon is a planned town based around the older towns of Lurgan and Portadown. The rest of the county is rural, with small towns and villages sitting among the patchwork of drumlins that cover the county.

Known as the Orchard County, Armagh is a perfect size for touring and is at its best during apple blossom time in May.

All this and more is featured in over 140 glorious images by expert photographer Darren McLoughlin.



## About the Author

Darren McLoughlin has always had a passion for the environment, history and Ireland. Graduating with a degree in Geography he went on to work in archaeology, then as a company manager, until in 2006 he became a full-time photographer specialising in landscape, travel and architectural photography.

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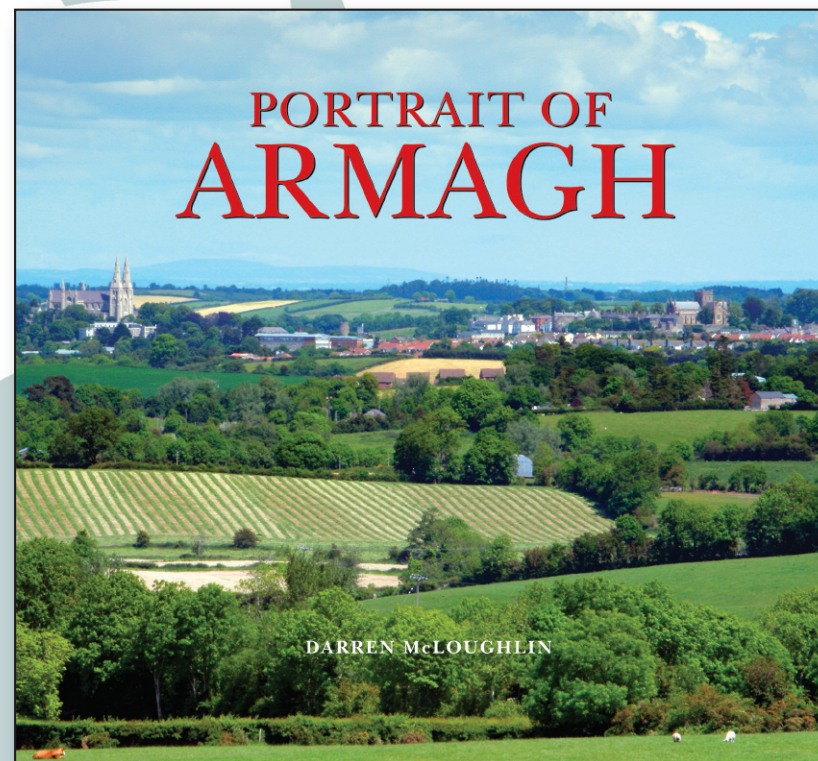
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Horse and trap road races are common on the roads south of Armagh.



Ballykeel Dolmen.



Callan River near Tassagh.



The medieval street pattern can be seen centred on the Church of Ireland Cathedral.



**Armagh Franciscan Friary**  
Founded in 1250, this was Ireland's longest medieval friary church. Dissolved in 1542 and ruined by 1600.

*Right: Ballymacdormot*  
Winter as seen from Ballymacdormot court tomb. Dating from around 3500 BC, this site is impressively situated on the edge of a steep slope with sweeping views over Meigh.



Tassagh Viaduct and Mill.

Example of a double-page spread.