

## HALSGROVE DISCOVER SERIES

# NORTHERN IRELAND'S ANCIENT SITES

Diana Dicker

Northern Ireland is an area of stunning natural beauty. But its true treasure is the historic hand of man. From quiet dolmen stones nestled in the countryside and standing stones striding across the landscape to dramatic castles dominating seascapes, the eras of mankind have stamped their passing across the land.

And every site comes with a fascinating tale. The megalithic monuments inspire stories of fairies and giants and are the ancient legends expressed in stone and earth. Christianity and accounts of the early saints have left a stamp on the land with old church ruins, holy well pilgrimage sites and the emblematic round tower. And ghost yarns abound in the fortified tower houses and castles of the Anglo-Scottish Plantation landowners.

Many sites are well signposted and easy to find. But some require a good map and perseverance to locate. And it is the engaging pleasure of meeting locals to find the latter that makes this journey special.

From the wilds of the mountains to the gentility of Georgian towns, Diana Dicker paints the picture of an intriguing past profusely illustrated with photographs of the historic dimension of this scenic land.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Diana Dicker is a writer-photographer with a university background in archaeology. Now resident back in the United Kingdom, her journalism training was in Arizona, U.S.A. and she contributes to magazines and books on both sides of the Atlantic, and beyond. Specializing in travel writing, she has enjoyed working on this book uniting her love of exploration and history as well as connecting with her family's Irish heritage.

### HALSGROVE CATALOGUE

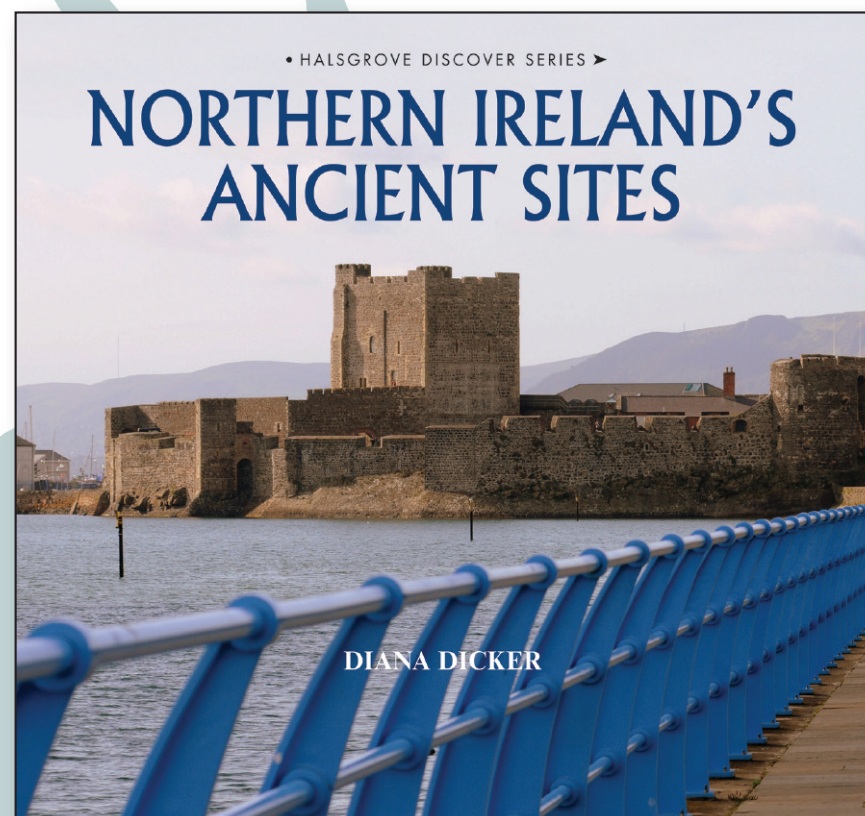
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# Great Books from your Local Bookseller

# NORTHERN IRELAND'S ANCIENT SITES



Stone Circle, Drumskinny, Fermanagh.



Giant's Causeway.



Carrick-a-Rede Bridge.



Sperrin Mountains.



Overview of Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge.

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Modern bungalow with rainbow.

Although many elements of the past have gone, the cells of Lough Neagh are no longer caught with hard wood traps. Carrick-a-Rede is no longer the perilous rope bridge of the salmon fishermen but a very safe structure tended by the National Trust, and the first white stone cottages have been replaced by very ordinary bungalows. But, nevertheless, an ancient cultural heritage is alive and well in the contemporary world.

Convenience stores sell fairs, a potato soup or savory cake, and soda bread. Dulse seaweed and yellowman taffie are seaside treats. And the Ulster breakfast with white and black pudding, a sausage with the black pudding coloured by pigs' blood, and a vat of porridge sweet with a splash of whiskey, honey and cream is a great start to the day. And there is wild salmon or bass caught offshore for supper.

The Irish tongue has died away as a primary language but a repulsive (right-headed) politician (don't smile, you'll talk them) remains. There are the beginnings of a resurgence of interest in the Gaelic tongue and culture. At every turn there is a tale to be told whether taken from the Ulster Cycle, an epic myth of cattle raids and dynamic struggle, or a local legend. Paper tags are still tied to trees or holy wells to gain cures.



Soda fairs in packet.



Soda bread on a plate.

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Example of a double-page spread.



Carrickfergus Castle.