Áitreabh

Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement

NEWSLETTER

No. 28 2023–24

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Annual Outing 2024
Portlaoise
(See page 49 for details)

€5 (Free to members)

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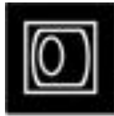


Group
for the Study
of
Irish Historic Settlement

President's Welcome

Warm Greetings to members and friends of the GSIHS.

Following the heady excitement of 2022 and our much-postponed Donegal conference, it was pleasing to get back to our regular schedule of meetings and to gather in Roscommon in May 2023 for our 50th annual, regional conference. We were comfortably accommodated in the Abbey Hotel and enjoyed an excellent range of papers with Kieran O'Conor's keynote getting us off to a great start. Kieran also facilitated our visit to Moygara Castle on the Saturday fieldtrip and guided us around Roscommon Castle on the Sunday. Before our conference dinner on the Saturday evening we launched the volume *Rethinking medieval Ireland and beyond: essays in honour of T.B. Barry,* edited by Vicky McAlister and our GSIHS Secretary Linda Shine. Terry Barry, a former Secretary of our Group, was in attendance.

Some of our Roscommon speakers have provided written and illustrated versions of their papers in this *Newsletter*. We awarded the 2023 Niamh Crowley student bursary which enables postgrads to attend the conference to Daniel O'Mahony. Daniel has provided an overview of the conference and the papers delivered on pp 40–1 of the *Newsletter*.

Over the last 12 months we have sadly lost two stalwart members and supporters of the Group, eminent castle historian David Sweetman and early-modern scholar and former President of the GSIHS, Raymond Gillespie. I am grateful to Harman Murtagh and Matthew Stout who agreed to write appreciations for the *Newsletter*. Sarah Gearty, in her contribution on the IHTA, also reflects on the contribution Raymond Gillespie made as a board member of the IHTA.

We are now looking forward to our annual conference in Portlaoise, which promises to be a great event with a fine lineup of speakers and fieldtrips. Our Secretary, Linda, has worked hard organizing the conference and has been ably assisted by Regina Dunne of Laois Tourism. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration with the Laois Heritage Society.

As President of the GSIHS, I would like to thank the hard-working committee and especially our treasurer, David Fleming and secretary Linda Shine. They do a huge amount to ensure that the day-to-day business of the Group, as well as the conferences, run smoothly.

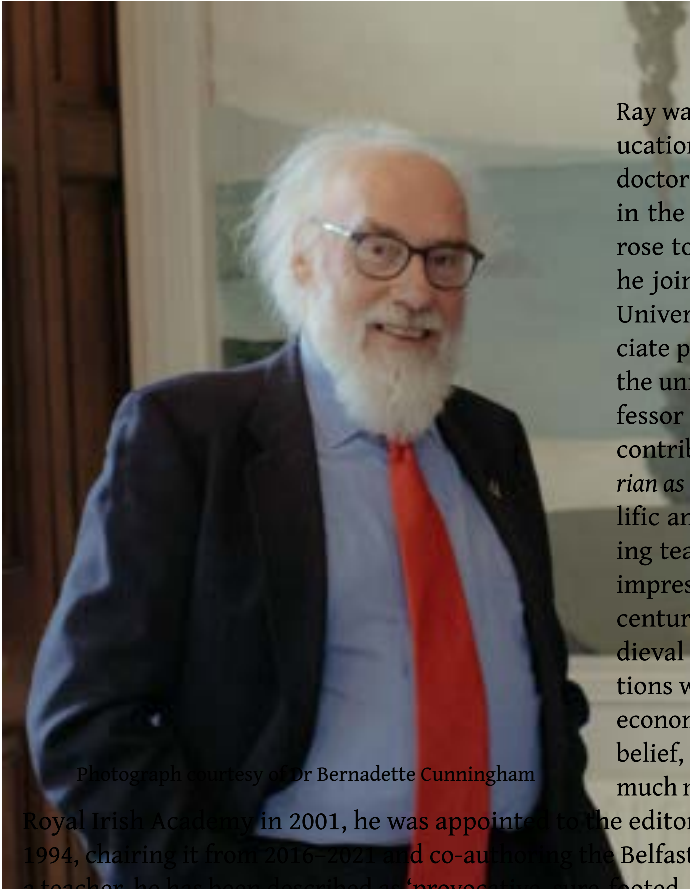
Finally, sincere thanks and praise to Charlie Doherty who has once again edited and designed a very informative and attractive *Newsletter*.

On behalf of the GSIHS committee, I look forward to welcoming you to Portlaoise in May.

Margaret Murphy (President) April 2024

Raymond Gillespie – an appreciation

The passing of Raymond Gillespie in early February filled all his friends in the Group with great sadness. Ray and Bernie were amongst our absolute stalwarts, never missing an annual conference for thirty years. Ray joined the committee in 1996 and served as president from 2001 to 2004. He chaired many sessions at our annual conferences and contributed papers at Carnlough and Enniskillen. He also spoke at two of our Dublin thematic conferences, 'parishes' and 'plantations', subsequently co-editing as *The parish in medieval and early-modern*



Photograph courtesy of Dr Bernadette Cunningham

Ray was a Belfast native, whose undergraduate education was at Queen's University, followed by a doctorate at Trinity College, Dublin. After a spell in the department of finance, during which he rose to be an assistant principal officer, in 1991 he joined the history department of Maynooth University, where he eventually became an associate professor. Following his retirement in 2021, the university honoured him with the title of professor emeritus, and more than eighty scholars contributed to his 300-page festschrift, *The historian as detective* (Four Courts, 2021). Ray was a prolific and challenging scholar, and also an inspiring teacher. His list of publications is large and impressive. His main focus was the seventeenth century, but he also ventured into both the medieval and later periods. His works or contributions were on topics as wide ranging as the Irish economy, colonial Ulster, reading, books, religious belief, church records, preaching, conspiracy and much more besides. Elected to membership of the Royal Irish Academy in 2001, he was appointed to the editorial board of the *Irish historic towns atlas* in 1994, chairing it from 2016–2021 and co-authoring the Belfast (2003) and Carlingford (2011) fascicles. As a teacher, he has been described as 'provocative, sure-footed, well-prepared' carrying into the classroom 'an energy and enthusiasm that held the attention' of his students.

For outsiders, his teaching contribution is most apparent in the Maynooth Studies in Local History series of booklets – numbering more than 150 to date – published by Four Courts and stemming from the theses of students on the University's MA course, a programme initiated by Ray. And in a sense, this brings us back to the Group, for our interdisciplinary focus on the settlement of a particular locality not only paralleled Ray's own interests, such as the publications he co-edited on Longford, Cavan and the Borderlands, but dovetailed neatly with his teaching programme. Ray was deeply learned but also unfailingly encouraging to others and most generous with his knowledge. He was ever an entertaining companion with a great twinkle in his eye, but without a malicious bone in his body. Each year, like so many, I particularly looked forward to meeting him and Bernie at our conference. Like the rest of the Group, I shall miss him greatly. Our heartfelt sympathy on her great loss goes out to Bernie, herself one of our former presidents, a very considerable scholar, and much in our thoughts at this sad time.

Harman Murtagh
Honorary Vice President
Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement

David Sweetman – an appreciation

Berni Clyne, Owen Clyne, David Sweetman, Lisa Shortall on the field trip at the Annual conference in Galicia, May 2019

DAvid Sweetman, a loyal member of the Group and regular attendee at our conferences, died at the end of October last year. He was a great friend of mine and to many readers of our *Newsletter*. Those of us who knew David for a long time are aware of the massive contribution he had made to settlement studies in Ireland. We shared in the milestones of his working life. It is worthwhile to offer here a brief account of his career so that our younger members might better understand the influence this had on our academic pursuits.

David spent his entire career working as an archaeologist for the National Monuments Service (NMS). In the years before private archaeological companies were even imagined, the Service conducted their own excavations in advance of development works. As such, David participated in some of the most important excavations in the 1970s and early '80s. With his colleague Tom Fanning, he produced the first publications to emerge from the Office of Public Works since the time of H.G. Leask (1882–1964). Thus, he kept alive a tradition of research and publishing that has been carried on to this day. For example, in a forthcoming volume on *Sea and settlement in Ireland*, to be published by the GSIHS and Four Courts press later this year, four of its contributors work for the NMS. The exciting series on the Dublin Castle excavations are similarly the work of NMS under two of its most illustrious archaeological emeriti, Con Manning and Ann Lynch. David, himself, wrote the first major medieval excavation report published in the Republic on Trim Castle in 1978. Before that time, medieval archaeological research was mainly the domain of scholars in the six counties. In addition to his ground-breaking work on castles, it can also be said that David discovered the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age horizon in the Boyne Valley. His published excavations of the henge monuments at Monknewtown and Newgrange shed light on the dynamic settlement that continued within the Bend of the Boyne after the end of the passage tomb period.

In 1985 David Sweetman was appointed the head of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. Before that date, the ASI had a long, and indeed tragic, history of gross neglect. Under David's management, however, it emerged from two decades of despond. Beginning with the earliest county volumes, the publication of the comprehensive Co. Louth survey and the creation of the Sites and Monuments Record office, Sweetman oversaw the Survey's entrance into the modern world. Of course he was not alone in achieving this, but

under his overall guidance archaeology.ie has now become the indispensable and easy-to-use source available at the click of a mouse to all settlement historians. A lasting and beneficial by-product of the progress of the ASI was the 1994 improvements to the National Monuments Act. Under this legislation all, I repeat *all*, of the nation's archaeology was legally protected by default.

David was Chief Archaeologist between 1994 and his retirement in 2003. During his tenure he grew the staff of the National Monuments Service, and the management of development archaeology was put on a sound footing. The ASI continued to prosper, and publication remained a high priority. Excavation.ie, another indispensable tool for the settlement historian, came into being under his supervision. Towards the end of his career in the NMS, David published his most significant monograph, on *The medieval castles of Ireland* (Collins Press, 2000). This book was the synthesis of a lifetime of research in castles, drawing on his earliest excavations in the 1970s, through his work with the Archaeological Survey, to the leadership role he took in guiding ASI archaeologists out in the field. The book is, in many ways, like David himself. It was straight forward and absent of any unnecessary flourish, but it was true and to the point. His book is where you go if you want to know about Irish castles. *The Medieval castles of Ireland* is now out of print, but there are plans to bring it back into print later this year.

David Sweetman was an elected member of three distinguished societies; Château Gaillard, the elite castle's study group, the Royal Irish Academy and the Society of Antiquaries of London, so his contribution to prehistoric and medieval studies was well appreciated. He also was an important presence in the Irish Castles Studies Group. He enjoyed our annual conferences and was with us in our last three outings including the marvellous adventure that was Santiago de Compostela. I think he was most impressed with the standard of the papers at our Donegal Town conference in 2022. David had spent an entire lifetime holidaying in Donegal and it came as a very pleasant surprise to him that so much outstanding and original research was being carried out in his second homeplace.

While this offering has focused on David Sweetman's contribution to Irish settlement studies, those who know me well know what a wonderful friend he was to me and to all of those of us who were lucky enough to call him a friend. My friendship with David spanned half a century. He was one of the most important people in my life and was certainly the most important person in my career and in the careers of many others. In our grief over his loss, we can take some small bit of pleasure in knowing that his work lives on after him.

Matthew Stout
Honorary Vice President
Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement

Figure 1 Map of Rathardeaghar in 1802 (16M14.1)

Articles

Oisín Ó Drisceoil
(Public Library Service in County Dublin. Formerly National Famine Museum, Strokestown Park.)

The Mahons of Strokestown and the development of North Roscommon: the development of land usage and settlement patterns on the estates of a Cromwellian planter family, 1660–1913

Introduction

THe Mahon family were the principal landholders in the area of North Roscommon surrounding the village of *Béal na mBuillí* (Strokestown) for nearly three hundred years, and in that time they shaped the district's urban and rural landscapes to reflect their priorities, interests, and self-perception, leaving a legacy that continues to influence the patterns of human settlement right up to the present day. Through processes such as road and canal building, bog drainage, forest planting, and detailed urban planning, the successive holders of Strokestown House helped to determine the shape of human and natural geography across the area under their control and beyond — in the process, expressing their own complex and contingent social, political and religious identity as they adapted and responded to changing political and social conditions. This apparent flexibility of identity is one of the most interesting aspects of the Mahon family, as over the centuries they successfully transitioned from 'Irish' to 'English', and from Catholic to Protestant, while at the same time appearing to frequently occupy something of a liminal space between the two poles. This complex social and religious identity, along with their long period of occupation in Strokestown and the unusually complete archive they left behind makes the Mahon family an ideal case study for the role played by Cromwellian planter landlords in the development of human settlement in North Roscommon since the seventeenth century.

This paper will attempt to set out a general history of the Mahon family and their relationship with Strokestown, and will then conduct a close analysis of the development of two specific townlands that lay within the Mahon estate from the mid-eighteenth century up to the present day. Through these geographical microhistories I hope to illustrate how the landlords intervened in the natural landscape in ways that reflected their long and short term priorities and how in turn their actions shaped the morphology of the human landscape that built up around the infrastructure they laid down. In writing about the history of the Mahon family I am deeply indebted to the pioneering work of Dr Susan Hood, whose PhD thesis on the urban development of Strokestown has been an invaluable resource in charting this complex history.[1] It is my hope that my analysis of areas surrounding the town will serve to complement and build on her work and allow us to extend some of the dynamics she observed at play in relation to the town out to the wider estate. My analysis is based primarily on the estate maps housed in the National Library as part of the Pakenham Mahon Papers, which were donated to the state by the family in 1954. By closely studying place-names and comparing these maps with the nineteenth-century ordinance surveys I have been able to positively identify two areas that are particularly well recorded and chart them across several maps up to the present day.

The establishment of the Mahon family at Béal na mBuillí

The Mahon family's connection to Roscommon began in 1652, when the Parliamentary army under Captain Charles Coote invaded the county from the west, capturing the O'Conor stronghold at Ballintober before embarking on a brutal and protracted counter-insurgency campaign. Among Coote's officers was one Captain Nicholas Mahon, who in the subsequent decades would cleave closely to his former commander as Coote established himself as a major Roscommon landowner and built up a powerful patronage network.[2] Very little can be said for certain about Nicholas' life before his military service, but it appears likely that he or his forebears had originally been Catholics and had converted to Anglicanism at some point prior to the Cromwellian invasion. His marriage sometime before 1642 to the Catholic Magdalena French would seem to support this, and it is notable that Magdalena appears to have remained a practising Catholic throughout her life, with popular tradition holding that Nicholas renovated or possibly built her a private chapel on the grounds of their home to facilitate this. The couple's religious difference and mutual tolerance are evidenced even in their wills; while Nicholas mandated that his friend the protestant Archbishop of Tuam should be responsible for ensuring that his children would be raised 'in the fear of God, and in the Protestant Religion', he apparently had no problem with Magdalena leaving generous bequests to a number of friars and catholic priests from the locality.[3]

To further complicate the picture, one of the earliest extant sources relating to Nicholas shows that in 1642 he married his daughter into the Kelly family of Clonyon, Galway, a Royalist military family who would go on to play a role in the Jacobite movement, implying that Nicholas' original allegiance may have been to the crown rather than parliament.[4] If this is the case it is a another point of comparison with his patron Coote, who had begun the English Civil War as a committed Royalist before gravitating towards the parliamentary side.[5] All of this points towards a certain ambiguity in the family's religious identity, and a marked flexibility in their political allegiances, traits which served them well in a time of social and political upheaval.[6]

The name Mahon is itself obviously Gaelic in origin, and by tradition derives from Mathúin, one of Brian Boru's grandsons, and family tradition tentatively placed Nicholas' origins in Co. Clare.[7] Regardless of his origins, from the 1650s on Nicholas set about establishing an entirely new seat for himself that represented a near total break with his family's history, as symbolised by his religious conversion and adoption of the English language.

During this period Roscommon was decidedly 'outside the lines', meaning beyond the area controlled by the Parliamentary army, and it was considered hostile enough to the British forces for its inhabitants to be described as 'universally enemies' of the government.[8] Even after the surrender of the main rebel force under the O'Conor Don in April of 1652 fighting persisted for years, with the parliamentary army widely employing scorched earth tactics that reduced whole swathes of the county to famine-stricken 'wastes'.[9] As has been established by Lenihan and others, Ireland experienced a major demographic collapse during this period as a result of war-induced famine, as well as plague, emigration and direct conflict casualties.[10] Although much of the country recovered surprisingly quickly over the remainder of the century, Roscommon specifically remained thinly populated well into the eighteenth century — the county's problems compounded by the post-war policies of dispossession and transplantation.[11] It was in this context of a colonial *tabula rasa* established through violence that Mahon, Coote and men like them set about creating themselves as the masters of a new Roscommon.

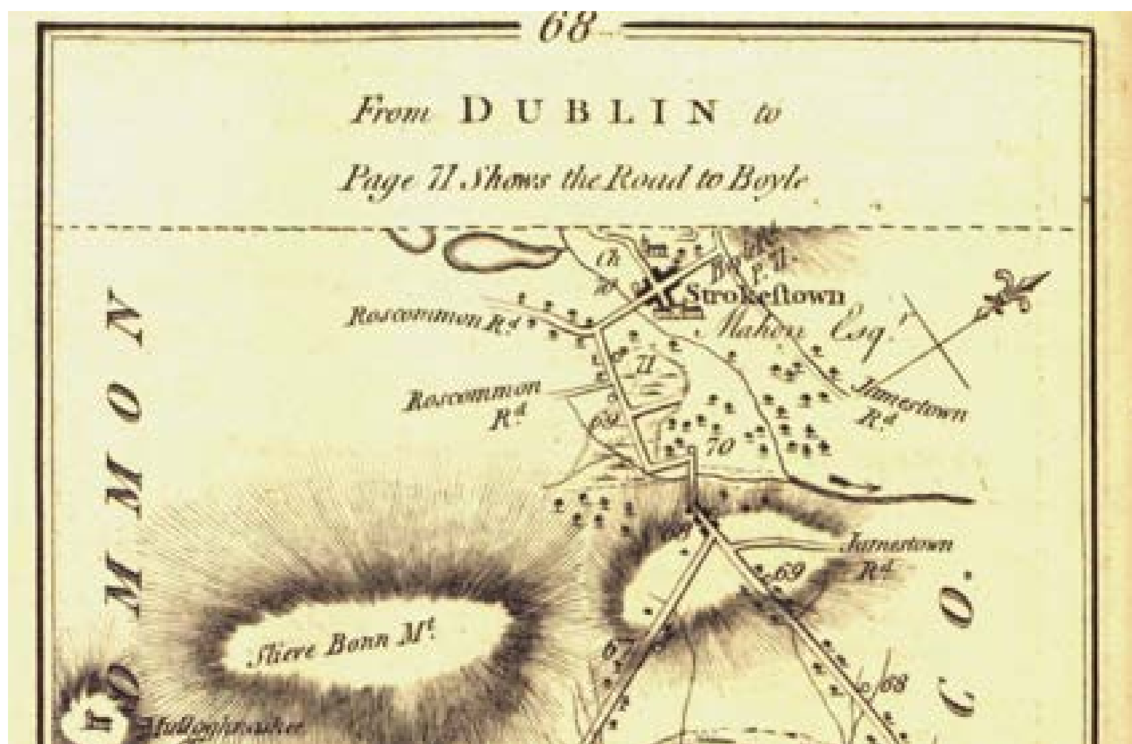


Figure 2 Detail from Taylor and Skinner's *Map of the Roads of Ireland, 1777*, p. 68.

Nicholas began acquiring property in the 1650s at a time of complex overlapping claims on the land, as dispossessed Catholics from within and outside Connacht sought to gain new estates through the courts under the transplantation policy, in direct competition with the incoming Protestant adventurers.[12] With the Restoration in 1660 the Cromwellian plan to relocate Catholics *en masse* to Connacht was abandoned, and the indiscriminate dispossession of Catholics was at least nominally reversed, with those Catholics who had not participated in the Confederate rebellion granted the opportunity to reclaim their lands. In practice, however, the aforementioned wartime policy of treating everyone outside the areas controlled by the government as a rebel made it extremely difficult for Catholics to retroactively prove their innocence, and only a small minority were ever successful in regaining their possessions.[13] This created a period of high confusion and disorder as Cromwellian adventurers and the surviving Gaelic and Hiberno-Norman elites from within and outside Connacht jostled for control of the land, a situation that would ultimately take centuries to resolve. Charles Coote for his part immediately declared his allegiance to the restored monarchy and was duly rewarded with an earldom and the position of Lord Justice of Ireland. Nicholas appears to have benefited from his benefactors good fortune, as in 1660 he gained a position as a Royal Officer with responsibilities that included adjudicating land claims in Mayo, Roscommon and Leitrim.[14] By positioning himself in the middle of this elaborate mess Nicholas was able to get the inside track on where the best pockets of land were available, and like many other officers of the court he appears to have successfully leveraged his position for personal gain.[15]

Eventually, he set his sights on the estates held by the debt-riddled Hiberno-Norman Dillon family, including a townland once home to an O'Conor castle known as *Béal na mBuillí*.[16] Having been dispossessed under Cromwell, the Catholic Dillons had managed to regain the majority

of their estates post-Restoration, but despite this continued to struggle with debt (much of it owed to none other than Charles Coote) and like many other Catholic landholders they were eventually forced to sell most of the land they had held onto or recovered.[17] Mahon had initially rented land from the Dillons, but by 1667 he was in possession of and resident in a substantial portion of their former holdings, as confirmed by the Commissioners of the Act of Settlement who recorded him as the holder of approximately 2,700 acres of land in the Barony of Roscommon. In 1663 he was also appointed to the lucrative post of Sheriff for the county, a position he would hold until his death.[18]

By 1667 Mahon was resident in *Béal na mBuillí* and had begun expanding and reinforcing the existing fort, adding new flanking walls and an expanded bawn.[19] The first direct description of the growing settlement comes from John Keogh, who visited the area in 1683 and described a village built up around the fort and the Bumlin river, with several water mills already in operation.[20] By the time of Nicholas Mahon's death in 1680 the situation in Ireland had changed sufficiently to render the defensive structures redundant, and Nicholas' son John set about replacing it with a more aesthetically pleasing and presumably comfortable two storey house, which he completed in 1696. It was during John Mahon's time that the name of the settlement was translated for the first time; whereas his father had styled himself as the squire of 'Ballynamully', John replaced this crude phonetic Anglicisation with a more literal translation, following local tradition in taking *buillí* to refer to 'strokes' or 'blows', implying an ancient battle site, and combining it with an apparent misreading of *béal* (ford) as *baile* (town) to produce Strokestown, which would appear on subsequent deeds and maps.[21] While this clearly represents another way in which the Mahons reshaped the cultural and social landscape of the district to reflect their evolving identity, it is interesting that they went to the effort of actually translating the name rather than continuing to render it phonetically, or for that matter replace the name entirely in the style of the Cootes, Hamiltons, or Edgeworths.[22]

While phonetic renderings partially preserved the pre-settlement tradition while leaving them unintelligible, and re-naming sought to completely erase the earlier cultural tradition, a direct translation can be seen as a kind of middle path, which excluded the Irish language while leaving the historical tradition of the area as an ancient battle site intelligible to future generations. Actions like these somewhat problematize the idea of a clean break between pre- and post-Cromwellian Ireland, and illustrate the often surprising cultural continuities between the new and old elites, just as the thick medieval walls of the ancient O'Conor fort can still be identified within the greater structure of the modern Strokestown House.

Crisis, consolidation and decline

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Roscommon remained sparsely populated, with Keogh recording only nine settlements of note, and these he described as being largely made up of 'cabins' with only a few large buildings. The landscape was divided between limestone hills, lowland pastures, relatively small forested regions largely concentrated on the river valleys, and large areas of blanket bog, evidence of thousands of years of land-stripping agriculture that had rendered large parts of the county as economically unproductive marshland. The depopulation during the seventeenth century had left large tracts abandoned and unenclosed, creating an opportunity for large-scale sheep-walks, in line with the wider Irish economy which benefited at this time from the market for live sheep exports to England.[23] The scale of these flocks and the wide areas on which they roamed would still elicit comment as late as the 1780s, even as the transition to cattle farming was well underway.[24] Although the lucrative sheep business and the availability of land would stimulate some recovery in the county, crisis reared its head once more at the end of the seventeenth century, as the combination of Britain's wars with Holland and France, limitations passed by the English parliament on wool exports from Ireland, and the general recession instigated by the collapse of the South Seas Trading Company led to a period of general crisis and eventually famine in the first decades of the eighteenth century.[25]

This national crisis was mirrored by troubles for the Mahon family. John Mahon died suddenly in 1708, leaving the estate to his 8-year-old son Nicholas. The estate was therefore left under the control of guardians appointed in John's will, which curtailed the family's ability to acquire and renew leases. Following a period of rapid expansion under John, the estate's growth stalled and even declined as leases expired, and the family's constrained finances were put under further pressure by the young Nicholas' marriage into the Ormsby family of Dublin in 1720, an event which sparked a severe conflict with his mother that persisted until he came of age and assumed full responsibility for the estate the following year. The family's fortunes began to improve under Nicholas, who with the help of his relative and patron John French of Frenchpark was successfully elected as an MP for Roscommon in 1727, but the situation was once again upended by Nicholas' premature death 1734, leaving the estate to his younger brother Thomas.[26]

It was under Thomas Mahon that the family would reach the peak of their powers, aided by Thomas' marriage in 1735 to the eldest daughter of Sir Maurice Crosbie, who would later be made Baron Brandon. With his father-in-law's help Thomas was successfully elected to parliament for the first time in 1739, a position he would hold for the remainder of his life. As the sitting MP, Thomas Mahon held significant influence in the county, and played a hand in a large number of major infrastructure projects, including the building of a new bridge over the Shannon at Termonbarry, and the construction of the first canal at Cloondara.[27] This position also helped him to greatly augment his personal fortune; by 1765 the family's income from rent alone had more than tripled and by end of the century the family were recording an annual income in excess of £5,000.[28] As the estate incomes grew alongside Thomas Mahon's power and influence, the family could begin reshaping the landscape around them on a new scale.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the first major project under-

taken by Thomas Mahon was the rebuilding of his own house. This work began in 1740, and in line with the prevailing architectural trends of the day Strokestown House was refashioned into a grand Neo-Palladian manor house, with an expanded central block connected to new two-story wings by a pair of curving screen walls, and while the house would undergo many expansions and revisions over the years this imposing façade would be largely maintained up to the present day. The rebuilding of the house was a major project which took at least ten years to complete and provided work for up to a hundred craftsmen, masons and builders, whose arrival appears to have been the impetus for a new wave of urban expansion in the town.[29]

Figure 3 OS Map of Rathardeaghar, 1840

By the 1740s Ireland as a whole was experiencing an economic upswing, fuelled by an increase in demand for beef in Britain's American colonies as well as the growth of the domestic linen and woollen industries.[30] As an influential MP, Thomas Mahon was well positioned to encourage local economic development and to direct new infrastructure projects towards Strokestown, which was fast becoming a significant market town. While Nicholas Mahon's original settlement was likely closer to the house along the course of the river, over time the town had developed on an east-west axis, eventually stretching out to cross the Elphin road, making the town a natural stopping point for traffic heading to the west. Frank and Skinner's 1777 *Road Map of Ireland* contains the first extant illustration of the town, and although basic it clearly shows the town's position stretching across the Longford-Elphin road with Strokestown House (its wings clearly visible in the illustration) at the eastern end and the recently built church at the western end, showing that the town's distinctively geometric layout was already in place by this point (see figure 2 on page 2).[31]

A first-hand account of the dramatic changes to the area wrought by Thomas Mahon is provided by the noted English agricultural reformer Arthur Young, who visited Strokestown in August of 1776, five years before Thomas Mahon's death. Crossing the Shannon from Longford, Young came up through the road from Lanesborough and was immediately struck by the extent of the bog-

land on either side of the river, which to his eyes was crying out to be drained and converted into pasture.[32] The second feature of the landscape to strike Young was the size and quality of the sheep walks, which he describes as 'much better than in the Curragh of Kildare'.[33] Young's visit coincided with a period of transition; while as stated the wool industry remained important to the local economy, the growing population and the expansion of other forms of agriculture had put pressure on the sheep grazers, and as a result the sheep walks and flocks had gradually shrunk. Young estimated that at the peak of the Roscommon sheep boom many farmers had kept flocks in excess of 20,000, but by the time of his visit there were none larger than 7,000.[34] This would seem to align with seventeenth-century commentators who noted the lack of enclosures and the great sheep flocks in north Roscommon, while by the time Young visited he saw a landscape 'divided into inclosures [sic] by stone walls generally' and a great many shepherds keeping flocks, with much of the wool going south to Cork.[35]

Somewhat more surprising to modern eyes is the extent to which flax cultivation and linen spinning had spread through the county, which Young states had become fully integrated into local crop rotation practices. Although at this stage the linen industry remained concentrated in the northern counties, the immense demand for cloth in England (where by mid-century Irish cloth had come to dominate the import market) fuelled expansion, and by the 1770s the flax growers of Strokestown would have been able to sell their yarn directly to weavers in Longford, Westmeath, and Edgeworthstown.[36] Although still very much a cottage industry in Connacht at this point, the spinning of flax provided a vital supplement to the normal farm income, subject as this was to variances in weather and foreign demand. This also provided an enlarged economic role for women in the farming communities; as Young put it, 'The men dig turf, and plant potatoes, and work for their landlord, and the women pay the rent by spinning.'[37]

By far the largest part of Young's travelogue is dedicated to describing the extensive forests planted by Thomas Mahon across his estates, which he praises in direct contrast to the 'cheerless' bogland nearer to the Shannon.[38] Mahon had begun planting woodlands in his demesne shortly after inheriting the estate, and by the time of Young's visit these forests were well established on either side of the house and clearly impressed the visitor, who described them as the finest woods of their age he had ever seen. The size and quality of these woodlands is clearly conveyed by Young's account, and it is striking the degree to which Mahon planted native, broadleaf trees, primarily ash, oak, elm and beech, a great many of which have survived to the present day. Roscommon's forest cover had been greatly reduced prior to 1600, and by the late eighteenth century much of the remaining old forestry had been cut down for fuel or building materials. Mahon's decision to plant extensive new woodlands therefore constituted a major intervention in the landscape that ran directly against the prevailing trends of the era and which remains highly visible today. Mahon had even gone to the lengths of experimenting with different species to see which trees would best thrive alongside his flocks of deer, an example of modern enlightened agricultural practice that clearly delighted Young, who similarly praised Mahon for introducing new ploughing technology on his own lands and employing men to instruct his tenants and neighbours in its use.[39]

We may wonder why a landlord would choose to convert so much of his land into technically unproductive forestry, and Young provides at least part of the answer in his statement that it added a 'richness to the view' from the house and a nearby hill.[40] The Mahons had clearly attained a level of material comfort which allowed them to prioritise aesthetics within their demesne, as evidenced by the building of the first walled gardens in the mid-eighteenth century. The ability to turn over valuable pasture land to permanent, broadleaf forestry can be seen as a form of conspicuous consumption in and of itself, as can the preservation of large tracts behind the house as a deer park. As a long term investment that would presumably survive for hundreds of years, forests could also symbolise the family's ambitions for and attachment to the district, as well as advertising their paternalistic character as landlords who reinvested rather than simply extracted, who planted rather than cut down. We can therefore see the planting of large scale forests as a kind of psychosocial intervention, communicating both the family's wealth and power but also their role as stewards of the land and servants of the common good, and in this way it notably resembles modern Irish government statements about the alleged success of reforestation since independence.[41]

On a more utilitarian level, the planting of forests provided timber resources that had a number of applications. Writing around fifty years after Arthur Young, Isaac Weld in his *Statistical survey of Co. Roscommon* commented on the lack of timber as one of the 'great wants under which Ireland at present suffers', and in particular he saw the lack of wood as a barrier to the full exploitation of the county's waterways. If more wood were available it would, he felt, encourage the building of small boats for navigating the lakes and rivers, compensating for the still relatively poor road network.[42] In this we can see evidenced two of the other primary focuses of landlord-led development during this period; transport infrastructure and water system management.

The paucity of usable roads in the west was a constant complaint of visitors, and although Thomas Mahon had overseen the construction of several new county roads during his lifetime, decades after his death Weld would still comment that the main road from Lanesborough contained holes deep enough for carriages to sink down to the nave of their wheels.[43] In this context, river and canal navigation was rendered even more important, and the completion of the Royal Canal to Cloondara in 1817 (where it joined up with the short canal previously installed by Thomas Mahon) had had a transformative impact on local trade, and was by that point already being augmented by the construction of a new road from Longford town across the north of the county. Although cattle farming was growing in importance, by 1830 there were still reportedly around 7,000 barrels

of wheat leaving the district each year, along with significant amounts of corn, and it was anticipated that the new, more direct road would only stimulate this trade further. There were downsides to this new connectivity too, of course. Where in Thomas Mahon's time Strokestown had supported at least three breweries, by 1830 the arrival of cheap porter from Dublin had destroyed the local industry, and substantially lowered local prices.[44]

Figure 4 Map of Clooonglasny/Lecarrow, 1778

Despite this, the markets in Strokestown, facilitated by the famously wide main street, were by Isaac Weld's time bustling and lively affairs with all the aspects of a fair or carnival. The local population by this point was growing rapidly, and the Mahons were drawing in excess of £20,000 a year in rent.[45] This apparent prosperity was not universally shared, however, with the number of paupers in receipt of grain relief having grown significantly, while of the 261 houses in the town 160 were described as basic cabins or huts.[46]

Another major change appears to have been the decline of flax growing and linen production; whereas previously it had been an integral component of the local crop rotation practice, by 1830 it had all but vanished while wheat, oats, and corn persisted.[47] This is in line with changes in the rural economy across the country, largely brought about by the introduction of the power loom in England which, given the inability of the Irish elites to impose protectionist measures following the Act of Union (an act which the Mahons had enthusiastically supported), had put immense pressure on the embryonic Irish textile industry. While the linen industry in the northeast was established enough to adopt power-looms and survive, this spelled doom for cottage spinners like those of Strokestown, and so this vital secondary industry that had provided a lifeline to the poorest farmers during periods of distress was lost forever.[48]

Even before the Great Famine, this lopsided economic relationship encouraged mass emigration of weavers and spinners from Ireland to the north of England, where by 1841 there were estimated to be at least 400,000 Irish-born people resident.[49] In this we can discern a hint of the ways in which the Union, along with the beginnings of industrial capitalism, disrupted the paternalistic social relations that had been established in Thomas Mahon's time. More broadly, the period in which the Mahons would effect sweeping changes to the geographic and social landscape around them was coming to an end, and as the Irish economy would lurch from one crisis to another in the coming decades the social bonds would break down further. The Great Famine and the mass evictions enacted by the then proprietor Denis Mahon represent both the last major intervention made by the Mahon family within their holdings, and the absolute nadir of their relationship with the people, culminating of course with his assassination in 1847.

Following these events the Mahons, by then known through marriage as the Pakenham Mahons, retreated behind the imposing gothic gates of their demesne, disengaging from the local community as the tenants began to politically self-actualise and gravitate towards the various movements for the reform of politics and land ownership. Although traces of a lingering paternalistic sentiment can be detected in reports of bonfires being lit in the locality to celebrate the birth of a daughter to the family in 1894, the process of land redistribution that would eventually lead to the departure of the family and the final reversal of the Cromwellian settlement that had underwritten their power was already well underway. It is interesting to note that at this stage, with the family well advanced in their decline, the aforementioned final heiress, Olive Pakenham Mahon, appears to have experienced an interesting personal journey of identity. In a private letter to her English second husband in the 1920s, Olive was at pains to point out that she was Irish rather than English, and in her final interview with the RTÉ journalist Jim Fahy she further emphasised that she saw Strokestown and Roscommon as her home rather than England, referring somewhat paternalistically to the people of Strokestown as 'our people'.[50] It was therefore unsurprising that, following her death in a nursing home in England, she returned to Strokestown for burial, though notably she spurned the family mausoleum within the estate in favour of burial in the town's Catholic cemetery. Before her death Olive had for several years been attending Mass in the nearby village of Scramogue, where she was friendly with the parish priest, and although it is impossible to say whether she in fact considered herself a convert to Catholicism, her choice of final resting place can be seen as a final nod towards her family's three hundred year journey and the complex legacy they left behind.[51]

The maps

In 1954 Olive Pakenham Mahon made a substantial donation of papers to the National Library of Ireland, which now form the Pakenham Mahon Papers (MSS 48,355), a collection of hundreds of documents dating from the 1640s to the 1930s and dealing with all aspects of life on the estate.[52] The full cataloguing and organising of these papers has not yet been completed, but they nonetheless constitute an invaluable resource for historians wishing to learn more about the history of landed estates in Roscommon. Among the collection are three bound volumes of maps and architectural drawings covering the entire history of the estate, collected under the call numbers MS Map 16M14, 15, and 16. The volumes contain maps of various townlands, streets and buildings ranging in date from 1734 to 1889, as well as a number of architectural drawings and designs, including for Termonbarry bridge. They are sorted in a loosely chronological order, with the maps dating to the late nineteenth century concentrated in M16, and the other two volumes each covering the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century. Together, they constitute an incomplete but nonetheless fascinating record of land usage, improvements and urban planning from the perspective of a Roscommon ascendancy family over almost three hundred years. Through close examination of visible landmarks, I have been able to identify the locations of three maps dating from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, and through comparing each of these maps to the various ordnance surveys and to modern aerial photography, we can begin to chart how the landlord interventions altered the natural landscape and shaped the development of human settlement, and in so doing gain an idea of some of the priorities and beliefs that motivated them in their endeavours.[53]

1. Rathardeaghar/Rawdeighra, 1802 (16M14.1)

The townland of Rathardeaghar is located on the old Elphin to Boyle road, approximately thirteen kilometres northwest of Strokestown. In 1802 the area was part of the Mahon estate and was thus included in a survey of several townlands in their possession conducted by one Thomas Morris. The map (see figure 1 on page vi) is quite basic, showing the then Elphin to Boyle road (which, unlike the modern main road ran to the east of Cavetown lake through Croghan and Eastersnow), showing one field with two houses, two small sections of bog, and a prominently marked ringfort. The map covers an area of around ninety acres, and it records field divisions that are still clearly visible today.

In and of itself, this map does not contain a huge amount in information, apart from that this area was sparsely populated and that the pronunciation of the Irish word *rath* was perhaps then more phonetically Gaelic than is common today, resulting in the rendering as 'raw'. It is also notable that the ringfort from which the townland derives its name is so prominently featured, though a visit to the area makes this less surprising. The rath in question is located on the crest of a steep, long hill, with rolling fields down either side of it, and even today it still dominates the landscape around it and would be impossible for any decent surveyor to overlook. We can also note that of the two houses one is relatively large, while the one to the north appears as a sort of cabin or cottage.

The map reveals more information if we compare it to the ordnance survey map completed forty years later (see figure 3 on page 4); by 1842 a new road has been drawn running east to west through Rathardeaghar, connecting the townland to the new road into Boyle to the west. A road is now also visible to the east running parallel to the one from the 1802 map and connecting with it a short distance up, though it is unknown whether this was new or had simply not been illustrated on the original map. We can also see that a number of new houses have grown up, primarily a string of cabins/cottages to the north and a substantial new house built alongside the new road to the west of the ringfort. The northern half of the field has been divided into three sections with a new cabin built in the middle of them, while to the south of the new road what was once a single large field has been divided into four sections with a row of trees planted parallel to the road. Including the division created by the road, this means that a single field of 90 acres in 1802 has now become seven fields with a size ranging from 27 to 2.3 acres, with two houses becoming as many as six (assuming all structures are homes, some may well be sheds or bothies). This clearly visualises the rapid population growth and subdivision of land that were

such prominent features of early nineteenth-century Irish agriculture. By 1841 the population of the larger parish of Creeve was 1,736, dropping post-famine to just over a thousand.[54] We can also get a glimpse here of how interventions like road building could affect the development of settlements both positively and negatively: within a few years of the new east to west road being built we have a substantial new house built alongside it. At the same time, the construction of new, more direct routes between the major towns in this period must surely have impacted life in the parish, as in the long term such isolated townlands would become increasingly marginalised.

Figure 5 Map of Lecarrow, 1824

It is also notable, although the new road runs much closer to the rath than the existing roads did, that the designers have still been careful to avoid actually intersecting with it, instead running slightly off the crest of the hill to its south. From the OS map the new road appears quite distinct when compared to older, pre-colonial roads and paths; it is extremely straight, following a logical and clearly planned course rather than being built up over time through human use. But despite this, in the effort to protect the ringfort we can see that at least some traditions persisted. Whether they believed in local traditions surrounding raths or not, from the landlord's perspective such features were a desirable indication of the antiquity of the land they held, and were thus often preserved as curios and landmarks. The Mahons had at least three distinct ringforts within their own demesne, and these were similarly protected. We can also see that bog drainage has occurred, whereas the large area of bog to the northwest has survived (and still survives), the smaller area to the south has disappeared, and almost no trace of it remains today.

Moving on to the 1913 OS map, we can now see that the original road represented in 1802 has fallen out of use and all but disappeared in favour of the parallel road to the east. We can also see that many of the houses that had been built by 1841 on the edge of or within the original field are now gone, with the nexus of the human settlement having moved north towards the townland of Boherroe, which by 1913 has a school and a substantial number of small houses. The fate of those visible on the 1841 map can only be guessed at, but given the rapid decline in population in the wider parish between 1841 and 1851 it seems possible that at least some of this depopulation relates to the Great Famine. On a more positive note, the decline of the road appears to have freed up space for fields, and there are a substantial number of new divisions visible that appear to take the old road as their border. The large house to the south of the field still survives and is for the first time named as 'Bushy House'. Visiting this area today, the old road represented in 1802 is still barely visible within the topography of the new field. It is clear that the drainage effected in the early nineteenth century has wrought lasting benefits, as the area is marked by wide, healthy fields, with only a small marshy bog visible to the north from the ringfort (the same one visible in 1841). Bushy House has not fared as well, as on the site there is instead a complex of farming buildings, some of which appear to have older sections which perhaps incorporate elements of the previous building. The cot-

tage built along the new road by 1841 is, on the other hand, still occupied and in excellent condition.

2. Cloonglasny/Cloonglassna and Lecarrow/Lahcarrow (16M16 3 and 24)

The impact of landlord-led road building is also evident in two maps of the townlands known as Lecarrow/Lehcarrow and Cloonglasny/Cloonglasna. Located nine kilometres to the north of Strokestown in a hilly area along the road to Drumsna/Jamestown, these adjoining townlands are situated with the Kilglass lakes (and specifically Grange Lough) to their south and east, and the smaller Lough Elia to their west. In 1778 Thomas Mahon, presumably in his capacity as a local government official, was involved in planning a new road that would connect Strokestown to the substantial English settlements at Jamestown and Carrick on Shannon, replacing the more circuitous road then running to the east of Kilglass (what is now the Rooskey to Scramogue road). Given that this new road would inevitably increase the value of the land in the area, Mahon hired a surveyor named Rowland Swiney to map and valuate the area. Swiney would work for Mahon on several occasions, and his maps have a tendency to be of high quality, both in terms of accuracy and readability.

His map of Lecarrow and Cloonglasny is no exception (see figure 4 on page 6); it clearly shows the proposed route of the new road, accurately illustrating the two visible lakes as well as the long, boggy peninsula in the centre. As mentioned this area is very hilly and surrounded by lakes, and thus flooding must have been a concern, as evidence by the notes on Swiney's map which mark the various grades of bog and note which ones tend to flood the fields around them, including the area of the large field in Cloonglasny marked 'B' which Swiney states is 'liable to flood in winter'. Most of the area represented is either lake or bog, but great pains have been taken to identify and mark anywhere that might usefully be turned to pastureland, indicating that the Mahons were anticipating the development of a settlement, and by carefully tagging and working around the flood plains they were placing this future settlement on a sure footing.

Moving ahead, from 1824 we have another impressive map of the area (see figure 5 on page 8), this time produced by James Johnston. By this time Strokestown would have been occupied by Thomas Mahon, the second Baron Hartland (the grandson of the previously discussed Thomas Mahon), but it appears that Cloonglasny has been split off into the estate of one 'General Mahon', most likely his younger brother Stephen.[55] As a result only Lecarrow is represented in detail, but we can see that Thomas Mahon's designs from 1778 have been brought to fruition, with the road completed and the areas determined as arable by Swiney now divided into eleven plots, all of them apparently rented out and drawing in a total annual income of £146. Among the tenants listed are one John Kelly and one John McDermott, notably the names of two families who would have lost major holdings under the Cromwellian settlement. Although no houses are depicted, the presence of a Roman Catholic Chapel on the bend in the road implies that there must have been at least some human presence. The flood-prone region previously marked as 'H' is now marked as no. 16, and though still apparently subject to flooding it has nonetheless been given a valuation of £15, evidence of the desire by this point to expand the area of arable and rentable land as far as possible.

By the time of the 1841 ordnance survey, the road has now been in place for over fifty years and a substantial settlement has begun to develop. Where no houses were marked before, at least twenty five separate structures are now represented, most following the line of the road. The earlier chapel has been replaced with a larger church to the south of original site, which is still marked. The OS surveyors also saw fit to mark a crannog and a number of raths that were not previously included. We can also see that a school has appeared to the north of the chapel, and hedgerows appear to have been planted, the lack of which in the district had been commented on by Weld four years earlier. By this point the parish of Kilmore, in which these two townlands are situated, had a recorded population of 5,119, and from the manner in which clusters of small houses with multiple new divisions of land have appeared right down the lakeshore in areas that in 1824 were held by a single tenant, we can see that the competition for usable farmland has significantly intensified.

When we turn to 1913, the changes are obvious. By this point only eleven houses are visible, and almost all of these are concentrated along the road near the school and church house. All of the small clusters or clachans to the south have disappeared, and these areas are now marked as boggy wastelands (see figure 6 on page 10). Between 1841 and 1851 the population of the wider parish of Kilmore had dropped from 5,119 to 2,860, a drop of just under forty-five per cent. Considering that the population had likely fallen further after this, it should come as no surprise that the area had become visibly depopulated. It is also notable that this map marks areas prone to flooding, including both areas tagged as such by Swiney more than two hundred years before. Looking at the peninsular bog, we can see a system of small roads have been built into it, evidence both of the by then long gone clachans and of increased turf cutting. Visiting the area today it remains relatively well inhabited, with several houses including some older cottages still in place and occupied. The catholic church similarly is still in use, though the school has now become a private house and the original chapel from 1824 has vanished without a trace.

One of the most striking features of the area is the incredible straightness of the road, which cuts through the landscape in two great lines across several steep hills, turning sharply at the nearest point to Lough Elia and heading north. Standing at the modern church it is possible to see the full extent of the road stretching away and to appreciate the skill and foresight that went in to building it across complex and challenging terrain, and although the road has largely been rendered obsolete over time, the settlement that grew out from it persists. Pleasingly, locals still refer to this early nineteenth-century landlord-built road as the 'new road'.[56]

Conclusion

As we can see from these examples, landlord interventions have played a decisive role in the development of human settlement and land usage patterns in Roscommon since the seventeenth century, and most intensively between the mid-eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries. When Nicholas Mahon

social structure had been thrown into chaos through war and dispossession. The environment had already experienced substantial deforestation and relatively intensive agriculture, and large areas had been reduced to unusable blanket bog. The pasture land was largely unenclosed, but large areas of arable land were available and those on the right side of the Cromwellian

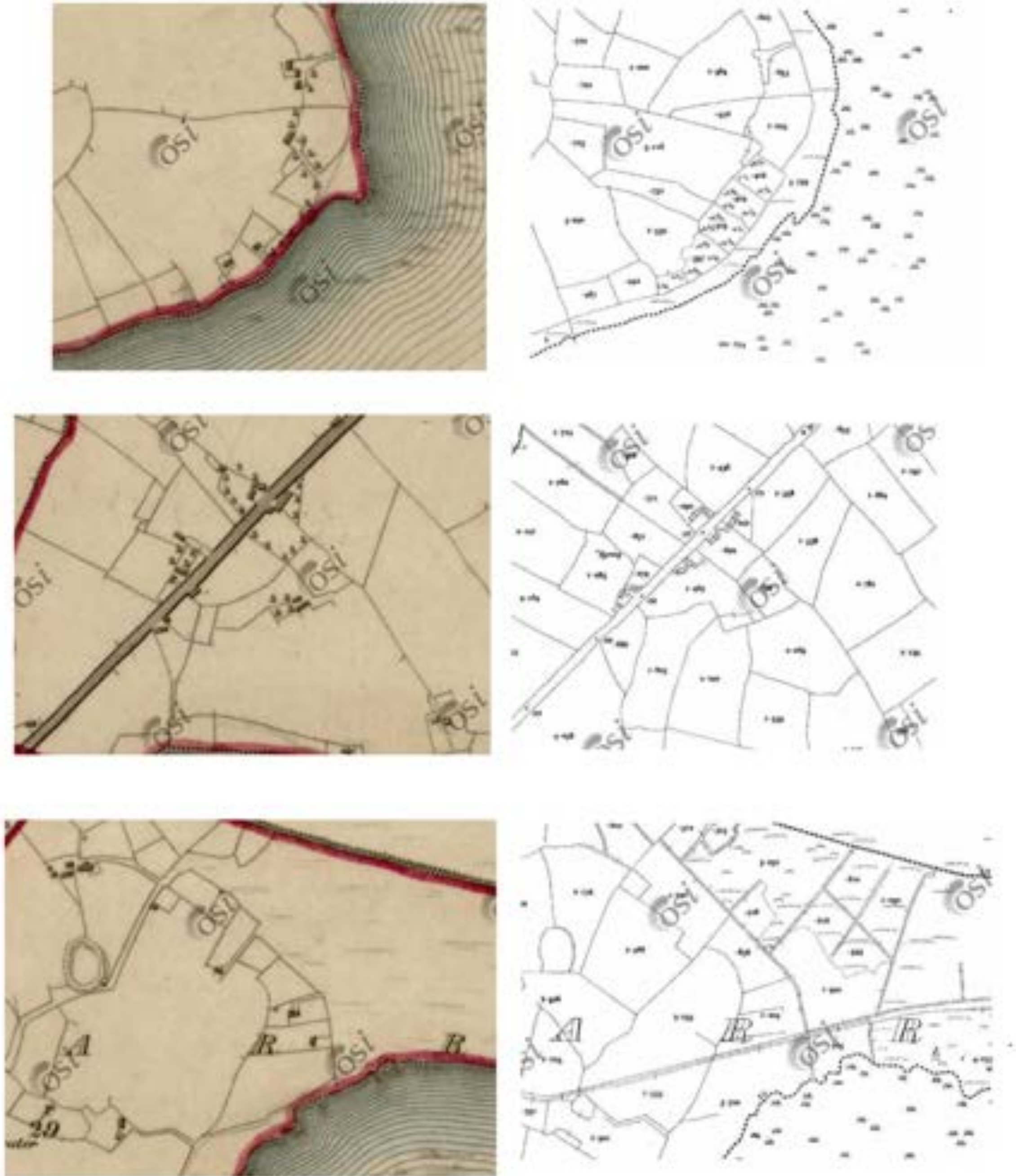


Figure 6 OS maps of Lecarrow from 1840 (left) and 1913 (right) showing dissappearance of several clusters or clachans

In the short term, Mahon built a defendable settlement where he expanded the local milling capacity and established a regular market, encouraging his tenants and neighbours to engage with the new economic opportunities entailed by Ireland's further integration into developing capitalist markets in Britain, Europe and beyond. In the lands around Strokestown, large sheep walks over unenclosed and thinly populated areas pre-

dominated, at least partly in response to the demand for live sheep exports to England. Nicholas Mahon's descendants oversaw the gradual enclosure of the land and the development of local transport infrastructure, as well as the draining of bogs and the further utilisation of the water system for transport. This further integrated Roscommon into the global economy, and in response to foreign demand the tenants moved towards production of flax and wheat, and sheep farming declined but remained important. Within their own demesne and its immediate surrounds, the Mahons gradually became comfortable enough to prioritise aesthetic considerations, greatly expanding their house and augmenting it with gardens, a deer park, and extensive forests, and closely overseeing the development of the town through careful leasing and planning, including through leases that indirectly subsidised the textile industry.

In their more remote holdings, the Mahons gradually expanded the extent of arable and accessible land through bog drainage and road building, and this shaped the morphology of the human settlements that built up around the farmland. Over time, as the population increased these fields were subdivided further and further, and land that had previously been seen as unusable came to be not only farmed but in some cases densely inhabited. Through their extensive surveying and mapping, the Mahons not only translated the natural environment into quantifiable money values, but also translated the cultural and linguistic landscape from Irish into English, prefiguring the Ordnance Surveys of the nineteenth century.

As the nineteenth century progressed, the new connectivity that had stimulated economic growth and diversification in previous decades began to cut in the other direction; as the local industrial base was undercut by cheaper imports, the local economy stagnated and the smaller tenants were increasingly pushed towards bare subsistence farming heavily reliant on the potato. During the Great Famine, the Mahons attempted once more to radically reform their holdings by evicting their poorest tenants *en masse*. The human devastation brought about by this policy led to a complete breakdown of the relationship between the family and the people, and ultimately inspired the assassination of the last male heir to the house of Mahon. The famine and the evictions none the less cleared the way for a final reorientation in the local economy, as the surviving farmers turned gradually towards cattle grazing and away from arable crops and textiles. In the aftermath of the assassination, the Mahons left the town entirely for several decades, and by the time they returned they were already being rendered redundant by the gradual reversal of the Cromwellian settlement that had underwritten their power. Ironically, they found themselves overtaken by the very catholic bourgeoisie that they had helped to foster through favourable town leases and employment as middlemen. By the time they left the town for good they were truly a relic of a lost era, and their story provides a fascinating perspective from which to view the last three hundred years of development in the county, with the archives of their estate constituting a historical resource that we have barely begun to tap.

ENDNOTES

[1] Susan Hood, *The landlord planned nexus at Strokestown, County Roscommon: case study of an Irish estate town, c.1660–1925*. (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Ulster 1994).
[2] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, pp 37–19.
[3] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, pp 42–3.
[4] NLI, MS10.155. It is also notable that Olive Pakenham Mahon, the last of Nicholas' descendants to occupy Strokestown House, stated in a radio interview that she believed her ancestor to have been in France with the exiled King Charles II, and although the documentary evidence clearly places him in Ireland throughout the period it further points towards the family's potential Stuart sympathies (Jim Fahy, 1981).
[5] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, p. 44.
[6] While conducting research for the first Ordnance Survey in the 1830s the surveyor John O'Donovan was told by a relative of the family that the Strokestown Mahons' fortunes had begun with two Catholic brothers from Monaghan who set out to gain property 'by hook or by crook', and with this in mind one brother joined the Willamites and the other the Jacobites, with the understanding that the brother on the winning side would help the other after the war. Although this story is almost certainly apocryphal, especially given that Nicholas was well established as a landholder before the Williamite wars, as a piece of family lore it again points towards the Mahon's adaptable, even mercenary approach to matters of politics and religion.
[7] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, p. 43.
[8] Pádraig Lenihan, 'War and population, 1649–52', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 24 (1997), 4–6; Robert Dunlop (ed.), *Ireland under the Commonwealth* (Manchester, 1913), pp 134, 140.
[9] Dunlop, *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, p. 134.
[10] Lenihan, 'War and population', 6; John Cunningham, *Conquest and land in Ireland: the transplantation to Connacht, 1649–1680* (New York, 2011); L.M. Cullen, 'Population trends in seventeenth-century Ireland', *Economic and Social Research Institute, Economic and Social Review*, 6:2 (1975), 149–65.
[11] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, p. 57.
[12] Cunningham, *Conquest and land in Ireland*, pp 131–3.
[13] Cunningham, *Conquest and land in Ireland*, p. 124.
[14] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, p. 47
[15] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, pp 46–8; Cunningham, *Conquest and land in Ireland*, pp 117–18, 132–3.

[16] Throughout history multiple names and Anglicisations have been used in relation to the townland, so to avoid confusion I will employ either the modern Irish or modern English names, i.e. *Béal na mBuillí* or Strokestown.
[17] Cunningham, *Conquest and land in Ireland*, p. 108.
[18] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, p. 47
[19] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, p. 51
[20] J. Keogh, 'Description of County Roscommon', 1683, (TCD.MS833/1) quoted in Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, p. 51.
[21] It has also been theorised by some in the locality that *mBuillí* is itself a misreading of *muillí*, meaning 'mill', which would appear to align with early accounts of mills in the area predating the Mahon settlement.
[22] The lords of Cootehall, Manorhamilton, and Edgeworthstown, respectively.
[23] L.M. Cullen, *An economic history of Ireland since 1660* (London, 1972), pp 11–13.
[24] Arthur Young, *A tour in Ireland, 1776–1779* (London, 1780), p. 301.
[25] Cullen, *An economic history of Ireland*, pp 40–4.
[26] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, pp 69–73.
[27] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus* pp 109–10. Plans for the canal and the first bridge over the Shannon at Termonbarry are included in the same folio as the previously mentioned estate maps (MS 16M16).
[28] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, p. 107, and NLI MS.10.158.
[29] Hood, *The landlord planned nexus*, p. 77.
[30] Cullen, *An economic history of Ireland*, pp 55, 62–5.
[31] G. Taylor and A. Skinner, *Taylor and Skinner's maps of the roads of Ireland, surveyed in 1777* (London, 1778), p. 68.
[32] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, p. 298.
[33] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, p. 300.
[34] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, p. 299.
[35] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, p. 299.
[36] Cullen, *An economic history of Ireland*, pp 60–1.
[37] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, p. 302.
[38] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, p. 298.
[39] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, p. 304.
[40] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, p. 298.
[41] Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, *Forest statistics: Ireland 2020* (Wexford, 2020), pp 5–7.
[42] Isaac Weld, *Statistical survey of the county of Roscommon* (Dublin, 1832), pp 309–10.
[43] Weld, *Statistical survey*, p. 317.
[44] Weld, *Statistical survey*, pp 324–30. It is worth noting that while Weld states that there were no longer any functioning breweries in the village by the time of his survey, the Ordnance Survey of the same period records one brewery situated on the Dublin road, though it is not clear whether this was in fact operating.
[45] Weld, *Statistical survey*, p. 333.
[46] Elsie Owens, *The development of Strokestown*, (MA, NUI Maynooth, 1992), p. 10.
[47] Weld, *Statistical survey*, pp 315–17.
[48] Cullen, *An economic history of Ireland*, pp 120–1.
[49] E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963), pp 469–71.
[50] J. Fahy, 'Looking West — Olive Hales Pakenham Mahon, Strokestown', Radio Interview, 1982. Private correspondence, Strokestown Park Archive.
[51] It is worth noting that Olive appears to have begun attending at a Catholic church following the closure and deconsecration of Strokestown's Anglican church. It is also important to keep in mind that despite common usage of the term in Ireland, adherents of the Anglican church are not in fact technically Protestants at all, being rather members of a Catholic church not in communion with Rome, and while Catholics are famously barred from attending Anglican ceremonies there is no corresponding bar imposed on Irish Anglicans. It is therefore potentially problematic to state the Olive converted, but based on her behaviour we can assume that she had at the very least a positive relationship with Catholic religious practice.
[52] Note that the collection listing gives the date range at 1725–1933, but there are in fact many documents from before 1700s, most of them listed under the 'Additional Papers' supplement and with various call numbers, an indication of the work that remains to be done and the challenges currently facing researchers who wish to make use of these papers.
[53] In conducting this research I have made extensive use of Ordinance Survey Ireland's geospatial data hub available through the GeoHive website.
[54] Census Data, accessed through The Great Irish Famine Online, UCC.
[55] General Stephen Mahon would himself die without issue in 1828, at which time the land reverted to his mother Catherine Mahon, who was noted by Isaac Weld for her charitable works.
[56] Interview with Camilla Kelly, local resident and historian, 1/7/2023.

Ariel view of Strokestown House and lands

Black and white photograph of front of Strokestown House taken in the 1920s

Photographs by kind permission of National Famine Museum, Strokestown Park

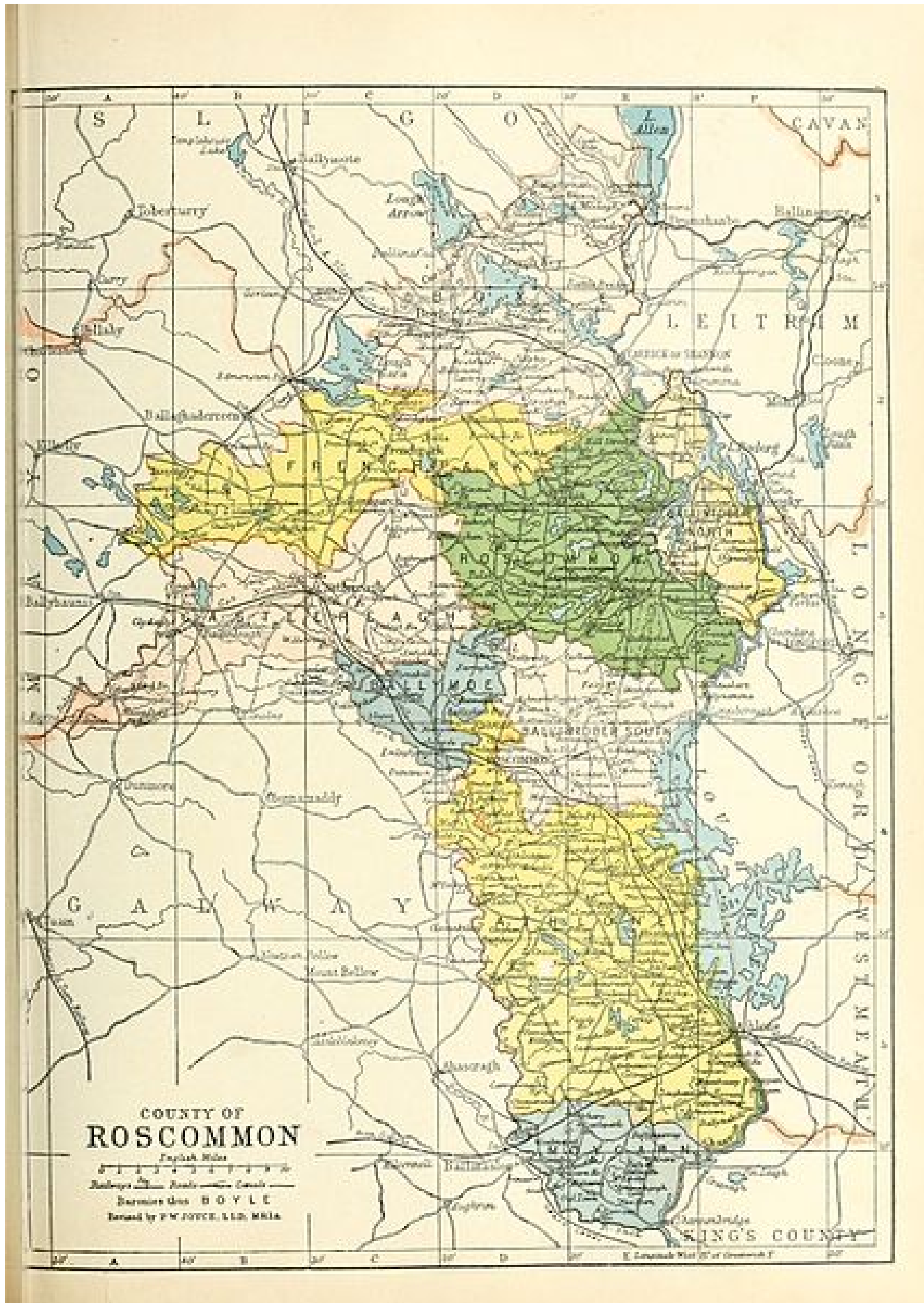


Figure 1 Map of County Roscommon showing baronies from P.M. and A.M. Joyce, *Atlas and Cyclopedia of Ireland* Part 1, *A Comprehensive Delineation of the Thirty-two Counties, With a Map of Each* (New York: Murphy and McCarthy, 1900), p. 252.

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The Local State and the Development of an Urban Network in County Roscommon (1569–1914)

Introduction

THis article will examine County Roscommon between the local state and the urban network over a *longue durée* of 345 years.[1] The Normans introduced local government (also known as the local state) to Ireland in the twelfth century.[2] They imported two significant institutions from France and England which remained dominant for 800 years: the county and the borough corporation/town council.[3] The first reliable reference to the existence of County Roscommon dates from 1292, but it collapsed in the fourteenth century due to the Gaelic recovery and had to be re-established in 1569.[4] Accordingly, the local state in Roscommon is essentially an early modern creation, just over 450 years old.[5]

Roscommon's local state has always co-existed with other stakeholders. Before 1800 the most prominent of these was the Protestant landed elite who founded and developed towns and villages across the county. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the land ownership of County Roscommon was transferred to a coterie of British settlers who remained in control for the next three centuries.[6] In 1871, there was a total of 575 landowners in County Roscommon, though most owned relatively small amounts of land.[7] After 1800, central government became more significant, but only assumed a predominant place after independence.

Irish local government underwent significant reform between 1828 and 1921 as part of a worldwide administrative revolution characterised by what Michel Foucault described as the replacement of sovereignty (exercised by medieval rulers over territory) by governmentality (exercised by modern rulers over both territory and its population).[8] Consequently, the national and local state created a professional, fulltime, salaried bureaucracy which exercised greater and more systematic control over the populace than ever before.[9]

Traditionally, Irish local authorities have had two main functions: as representative bodies and as provider of services.[10] Accordingly, the article is divided into four parts: a brief overview of Roscommon's urban network; an outline of Roscommon local authorities; their impact as representative bodies for the urban network; and their provision of services to the urban network. Two categories of town are excluded to facilitate direct comparisons for the entire period. Firstly, medieval towns such as Rindoon, Ballintober, Rathfernan, and early Roscommon Town, as they existed for a comparatively short time and never constituted even an embryonic urban network.[11] Secondly, three towns whose role within Roscommon were altered in 1899 under the provisions of the Local Government (Ireland) Act (1898). Parts of Ballinasloe and Athlone were transferred from Roscommon to Counties Galway and Westmeath respectively, while the entire town of Ballaghaderreen was transferred from County Mayo to Roscommon.[12]

Year	Roscommon	Boyle	Castlerea	Elphin	Strokestown
1659	235	912	Nil	118	Nil
1749	1,100	1,000	700	300	680
1821	3,015	3,407	1,143	1,369	1,518
1831	3,306	3,433	1,172	1,507	1,547
1841	3,439	3,235	1,233	1,551	1,611
1851	3,364	2,727	1,221	1,225	1,353
1861	2,731	3,098	1,452	1,007	974
1871	2,375	3,347	1,146	1,051	974
1881	2,117	2,994	1,229	997	835
1891	1,994	2,464	1,232	855	841
1901	1,891	2,477	1,190	728	811
1911	1,858	2,691	1,224	649	792

Table 1 Population of selected urban areas in Roscommon (Figures for 1659 and 1749 are approximate)

Roscommon's urban network

After 1600, an authentic and enduring urban network developed in Roscommon. Indeed, two features have characterised urban Roscommon from the beginning. Firstly, Roscommon has always been one of the least urbanized of Irish counties, even using the generous Irish census definition of an urban area as having a population of 1,500 or over. Thus, only 4.4 percent of its population was urban in 1841 and Roscommon ranked second to Leitrim as the least urbanized county in the state, both in 1926 and 2016. Between the latter two dates, Roscommon's urban population only increased from 5 to 27 percent of the total, compared to a comparable national increase from 32 to 63 percent.[13]

Secondly, the principal towns have nearly always been

Boyle, Roscommon, Strokestown, Elphin and Castlerea, although their ranking within the urban hierarchy has varied (see Table 1 on page 15). Of these, Roscommon was the administrative capital, known as the 'county town', in which were located the local administration, law court and jail. According to the 1659 'census', the three largest were Boyle, Roscommon, and Elphin in that order. By the time of the 1749 census of Elphin Diocese, which is largely coterminous with the county, they had been joined by the estate towns of Castlerea and Strokestown.[14]

Until 1956, Boyle was usually the most populous of the five, followed by Roscommon, since when their roles have been reversed. Castlerea ranked third in 1749, but between 1821 and 1851, only ranked fifth after Strokestown (third) and Elphin (fourth). Since 1861, Castlerea has occupied third place, except for 1901 and 1911 when the newcomer Ballaghaderreen temporarily ranked third. Finally, the populations of Strokestown and Elphin collapsed, from respectively 1,611 and 1,551 in 1841 to 792 and 699 in 1911. By 2016, they had made a partial recovery to 825 and 565 respectively.[15]

Finally, the towns of Roscommon were established and developed by the Protestant landed elite in their role as urban patrons (see Table 2 below). Working in partnership with the (often Catholic) rising bourgeoisie of merchants, professionals and developers, the patron leased sites to wealthy tenants on which they built houses and business premises. The patron usually provided certain prominent buildings himself, such as the market house and the land agent's residence.[16]

Roscommon local authorities

The county has always been the most important element in the Irish local state. In 1575, six years after its resurrection, the first sheriff of the revived County Roscommon was appointed. The sheriff held office for a year, and combined many of the functions of a governor and chief justice. The Roscommon shrievalty was dominated by the county's landed elite, with names such as French, Sandford and King recurring frequently.[17] One of the sheriff's principal functions was the appointment of the grand jury, a judicial body consisting of twenty-three individuals which from 1614, also acquired administrative functions. The ruling body of the county until 1899, the grand jury's main weakness was its lack of institutional continuity. It convened for a fortnight twice yearly for the spring assizes (March/April) and summer assizes (June/July), an annual total of four weeks (8 per cent of the year) and even then, had no continuity of membership.[18]

In 1831, the post of lord lieutenant for each county was created, though the shrievalty continued to operate. As chief civil and military official in his county, the lord lieutenant commanded the county militia, appointed deputy lieutenants, was head of the magistracy and recommended to the Lord Chancellor for appointments of all local magistrates. The post was usually held by the senior noblemen in the county.[19]

The Poor Relief (Ireland) Act of 1838 introduced an additional, but more rational structure of local authorities. Ireland was divided into 130 (later 163) poor law unions, approximately the same size, which often breached county boundaries, and centred on a market town which gave its name to the union. In 1839, Roscommon was divided into the unions of Boyle, Carrick-on-Shannon, Castlerea, Roscommon, Athlone, Ballinasloe, and Swinford, to which in 1850 were added Strokestown and Glenamaddy. The administrative centre of the Boyle, Castlerea, Roscommon and Strokestown unions were situated within the county. Each union was administered by a board of guardians, half elected, and half local magistrates appointed ex-officio. Elections were held annually and the electorate, drawn from the ratepayers of the union, was relatively inclusive, though weighted in favour of the better off (who could have up to eighteen votes each).[20]

Name of Town	Owner of Town	Owner of Borough
Boyle	King	King
Roscommon	1. Malby (1579–1638) 2. Viscount/Earl of Ranelagh (1638–1712) 3. Earl of Coningsby (1712–32) 4. Hanbury-Williams (1732–59) 5. Earl of Essex (1759–20th century)	Sandford
Tulsk	Lane/Fox-Lane	Caulfeild
Castlerea	Sandford/Wills-Sandford	None
Strokestown	Mahon/Pakenham Mahon	None
Elphin	Anglican Bishop of Elphin	None

Table 2 Urban Patrons in Roscommon

The Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 transformed Roscommon local government. Under its provisions, the grand jury was replaced by Roscommon County Council as the county's governing body in 1899.[21] Rural district councils (RDCs) were also established, which had identical boundaries and the same membership as their respective boards of guardians, with responsibility for social housing, rural sanitation,

roads, and public works.[22]

In the seventeenth century, three of County Roscommon's towns were made parliamentary boroughs, each returning two MPs to the Irish Parliament: Roscommon and Boyle in 1613 and Tulsk in 1663.[23] Each was governed by a borough corporation. In most Irish boroughs, the same family owned both town and corporation, as was the case with Boyle owned by the King family (from 1806, Viscounts Lorton). However, in both Roscommon and Tulsk, ownership of the town and borough was divided. In Roscommon the town was successively owned by, among others, Lord Ranelagh and the Earls of Essex and the corporation by the Sandfords of Castlerea. Similarly, the town of Tulsk was owned successively by the Lane and Fox-Lane families, and the corporation by the Caulfeilds of Dunamon.[24]

Each corporation was headed by a mayor (Borough Master in Boyle, Provost in Roscommon, Portreeve in Tulsk), elected annually by the serving mayor and town council from amongst their own membership. The town council consisted of the mayor and twelve councillors called Free Burgesses who served for life. Vacancies were filled by co-option. The Commonalty consisted of the freemen nominally comprising all the inhabitants, but Boyle and Roscommon eventually ceased to appoint any, while from the beginning Tulsk never had any. Besides the mayor, all three corporations were empowered to elect a variety of other officers, but by the time of their disappearance, Boyle had only one, a town sergeant, and the other two had none. The corporations of Roscommon and Tulsk were abolished in 1800 and that of Boyle in 1840.[25]

Ireland underwent a Municipal Revolution between 1828 and 1899.[26] It was inaugurated by the Lighting of Towns Act (1828), accelerated by the Towns Improvement Act (1854), and resulted in the establishment of a modern system of urban government. Under the provisions of these Acts, an urban area could elect a body of commissioners whose activities were financed by a limited rate levied on all properties worth £5 or more annually. Neither Act was compulsory, but voluntary measures which had to be adopted by a particular town using a clearly defined procedure.[27] Roscommon received two reformed town councils (TCs) as part of the Municipal Revolution, both of which were established through the efforts of a local grandee: Roscommon in 1837 by Farrell McDonnell (1804–90), one of the richest merchants in the town and Boyle in 1867 by John D. McDermot (1821–80) a lawyer and one of the Gaelic aristocratic McDermots of Coolavin.[28]

Their impact as representative bodies

From 1663 to 1800, County Roscommon and the three boroughs each returned two members to the Irish Parliament. These eight MPs were either drawn from or under the control of the landed elite.[29] The landlord-controlled grand juries survived as the governing bodies of Irish counties until 1899, but most of the town councils and boards of guardians outside Ulster were taken over by the newly mobilised and well-organised nationalists in the 1870s and 1880s.

Roscommon County did not function as a truly representative institution until the 1880s. For long periods, Catholics were disenfranchised (1728–93) and could not sit in parliament (1692–1829). The county electorate consisted of the forty-shilling freeholders, mostly tenant farmers, who numbered around 1,500–1,600 in the early 1790s and 6,000 in 1815, the increase being largely due to the enfranchisement of Catholics in 1793.[30] The disenfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders in 1829 reduced the number of voters to 729 but subsequent electoral legislation resulted in a partial recovery to 1,776 (1832) and 3,932 (1862). Even so, the electorate remained under effective landlord control until the secret ballot was introduced in 1872 for national and local elections (except for poor law unions).[31]

A democratic system in county representation only emerged in the 1880s and in three stages. First, the 1880 general election resulted in the replacement of two landlords, the O'Conor Don and Charles French by two bourgeois, Andrew Commins and James Joseph O'Kelly.[32] Second, the Representation of the People Act (1884) extended the vote to all adult male householders and increased the Roscommon electorate from 3,399 (1881) to 18,922 (1891). Third, in 1885, the county was divided into two constituencies, Roscommon North and Roscommon South, each returning one MP. The ensuing 1885 general election marked the establishment of a permanent nationalist ascendancy, with both constituencies returning Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) members.[33]

The 1880s saw a similar transition in the local state.[34] Before this watershed, Roscommon boards of guardians were highly unrepresentative. The three principal officers of a union were the chairman, vice-chairman, and deputy vice-chairman, who were elected annually and usually held office for very long periods. The presence of the ex-officio guardians (usually landowners) meant that Protestant, landed and unionist control was dominant until the 1880s.[35] Thus, the chairmanship was held in Boyle by the King family in 1844–7, 1850–4, 1861–2 and 1869–96; in Roscommon by the Crofton family in 1844–7, 1849–70, 1871–2 and 1873–81 and in Strokestown by the Pakenham Mahon family in 1853–87. From 1881, the IPP actively contested poor law elections, to break the stranglehold of the *ex-officios*. This resulted in nationalist control being established successively in Roscommon (1881), Strokestown (1887) and Boyle (1899).[36]

Under the 1898 Local Government Act, democracy was introduced to local government. The local government franchise (including boards of guardians and town councils) was granted to all householders and occupants of a portion of a house and extended it to all women, who satisfied the same criteria as men. Women were also allowed to become members of both urban and rural district councils, though not of the County Council until the Local Authorities (Ireland) (Qualifications of Women) Act (1911).[37]

The Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1919 provided for the introduction of proportional representation (PR)

to the local electoral system, and the first local elections held under this legislation were in 1920, with the urban elections occurring in January and those for the county councils and RDCs in June. As a result, Sinn Fein and Labour in alliance took control of Roscommon local state, which then broke away from British rule and gave its allegiance to the Dáil.[38]

Until 1899, Roscommon town councils were even more unrepresentative than the county institutions. The pre-1800 municipal boroughs were unaccountable 'closed corporations', without any Catholic membership. Each was controlled by their patron, who effectively appointed the mayor, town council and MPs. Nominally extensive like the county electorate, the borough electorates were also under gentry control. By the eighteenth century, freemen were no longer being created, leaving tiny easily controlled thirteen-man electorates. In Roscommon, the Sandfords held the office of Provost for decades. In the early nineteenth century, the Borough Mastership of Boyle was filled in alternate years by Lord Lorton's land agent and one of his friends. In 1833, the town council was made up of Lord Lorton, his son, brother-in-law, aunt's husband, land agent, three friends, three loyal tenants, and two officers in the regiment of which he was colonel.[39]

Inevitably, patronal families frequently represented their boroughs in the Irish Parliament.[40] Boyle counted among its MPs several members of the King family, including the second, third and fourth baronets, first and second Earls of Kingston and first Lord Lorton. Members of the Sandford family sat for Roscommon Borough in 1692–3, 1695–9, 1703–14, 1715–60 and 1768–1800, while the Caulfeilds provided Tulsk with at least one MP in 1692–3, 1695–9, 1703-14, 1715–51 and 1761–86 and both MPs in 1727–47 and 1769–72.[41]

The Municipal Revolution introduced a more representative system of town councils. Elections were held for Roscommon TC every three years for all seats as it was under the Lighting of Towns Act and in Boyle TC annually for one third of the seats, as it operated under the Towns Improvement Act. The latter Act widened the municipal electorate to householders with £4 instead of £5 annual valuation and increased the pool of potential councillors from householders with £12 instead of £20 annual valuation.[42] Each commissioner sat for a three-year term and the secret ballot was introduced in 1872. Nationalist control was established on Roscommon TC in 1880 and Boyle TC in 1882.[43]

Nevertheless, the system was far from democratic. Before 1899, only a small minority could vote in municipal elections. In 1885, the Roscommon electorate numbered 119 out of a population of 2,117 and in Boyle 114 out of a population of 2,994. Town councils were confined to a prosperous elite of merchants, shopkeepers, publicans, and professionals.[44] Even the introduction of the householder franchise in 1899 did not displace this elite. During the long chairmanship of Luke P. Hayden (1880–97), who owned the *Roscommon Messenger*, his family established a hegemony over Roscommon TC, not unlike that exercised by the Sandfords over the old corporation. This was copper fastened when one of Luke's brothers, Joseph M. Hayden was installed as Town Clerk of Roscommon (served 1884–1909).[45]

Town	Slated houses	Thatched houses	Thatched cabins	Total thatched
Castlerea	45	15	40	55
Boyle	15	18	67	85
Strokestown	14	24	62	86
Roscommon	10	13	77	90
Elphin	7	20	73	93

Table 3 Housing stock in Roscommon towns in percentages

Service Providers

Until the Great Famine, the principal service providers in Roscommon's towns were the Protestant landed elite, although their firm ascendancy over the local state makes it difficult to separate their public and private role. Even in the latter, their impact was striking, especially in Boyle, where in the eighteenth century, the resident Kings laid out Main Street, created two public parks and erected a statue of King William III. During the long proprietorship of the first Viscount Lorton (1799–1854), modern Boyle took shape. Fine houses were built along Main Street, Bridge Street and the Crescent; and Lord Lorton also brought about the construction of the New Bridge (1817), the Courthouse (1825) the Shambles Market on Bridge Street (1826), the Workhouse (1840–1) and a new Boyle Bridge (1846).[46] By contrast, Roscommon Town's absentee landowners made less impact. A partial exception was the County Infirmary (now the County Library) built in 1783 at the expense of the wealthy Mrs Alice Walcott, neé Caulfeild of Dunamon.[47]

The central impact of the landed elite on Roscommon's principal towns as reflected in the quality of their housing stock can be measured through Isaac Weld's *Statistical survey of Roscommon*. Significantly, it was published in 1832, when their central role as urban patrons was about to be replaced by that of central and local government. Table 3 above summarises Weld's data, with standards graded from slated houses to thatched cabins. It demonstrates a strong correlation between a resident patron and a higher standard of housing, as the towns with absentee patrons, Roscommon and Elphin, have the poorest housing stock.[48]

Second to the landed elite until the 1840s, the most significant service provider was the grand jury, which was responsible for the provision and maintenance of infra-

structure and authorised to levy a property tax called county cess. Its principal achievement was the creation of a modern road network in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[49] The legal and prison systems were also administered at county level by justices of the peace (lay magistrates) operating in courts of quarter sessions and from the 1730s at sub-county level in courts of petty sessions.[50] In this connection, the grand jury constructed a county prison (1702–04) and county courthouse (1761–3). As the state became more active, a larger prison (1816) and courthouse (1820s) were provided.[51] The efficiency of the grand jury was somewhat improved by the appointment of the first county secretary (1785) and county surveyor (1834).

The poor law unions were the third most important service provider. From the 1840s, they formed a more comprehensive and effective system than the infrequently meeting grand juries and comparatively few urban authorities. Their principal object was to provide 'indoor relief' for the most deserving poor, particularly the old, invalided, widows and children. Outdoor relief (assistance for those outside the workhouse) was not permitted until 1847. The system was financed by rates raised entirely in the union. Boyle, Castlerea, Roscommon and Strokestown benefited from being the headquarters of poor law unions with the construction of impressive workhouses (the largest building in town), which were significant employers and major customers of the local business community.[52] In 1851 each union was divided into dispensary districts, each with a dispensary that provided free medical care for poor.[53] Thereafter, their powers grew rapidly, as they were given responsibility for registering births, deaths, and marriages (1864); and outside urban areas, burial grounds (1856), sewerage systems (1865), water supply, slaughter houses and food safety (1878) and social housing (1883).[54]

Urban authorities came in a poor fourth as service providers. Before 1800, the principal functions of Roscommon and Boyle Corporations were making by-laws; provision of a borough court; and the election of two MPs. Tulsk Corporation never discharged any functions except returning MPs. In Roscommon and Boyle, unlike many other Irish urban authorities of the time, the Corporation did not have jurisdiction over fairs and markets, which instead was controlled by their respective urban patrons. By 1800, all three discharged few functions beside the return of their MPs. Boyle Corporation survived until 1840, by which time it had no property and no income, except the pittance derived from fines and charges imposed by the inefficient and little used borough court.[55]

The TCs established in Roscommon and Boyle as part of the Municipal Revolution were empowered to pave, clean and light the streets; build sewers, drains, wells and water pumps; and provide a fire engine. By 1879, a system of public gas lighting, provided by a private company had been established in Roscommon. Boyle's public electric lighting was provided by a private company (1901–65), which was the last of its kind when it was taken over by the Electricity Supply Board.[56]

However, the TCs lost most of their functions when the Public Health (Ireland) Act of 1878 transferred street cleaning, water supply, sewerage, drainage, and food quality to boards of guardians and grand jury. As a result, most of the towns' major improvements were made by the latter rather than the TCs. In both Roscommon and Boyle, the first sewerage scheme was constructed by the board of guardians in the 1880s and the first piped water supply was built by the RDC in 1904 and 1903–05 respectively. Both were subsequently extended and improved by the county board of health (which functioned from 1923 to 1942) and county council.[57] Similarly although in the 1880s social housing within town boundaries became a function of TCs, by 1915 Roscommon and Boyle TCs had provided only ten and fourteen units respectively, compared to 145 and 107 units provided by Roscommon and Boyle Boards of Guardians within their admittedly larger operational areas.[58]

Conclusion

From 1569 to 1914, the influence of the local state on Roscommon's urban settlements was profound. Its legacy was deeply embedded in their built environment, from courthouses and workhouses to roads and water supply. However, the principal service providers and (with the exception of the landowners) representative bodies were not urban but the non-urban landed elite, grand jury, county council and boards of guardians. After independence, the county council became the principal local authority, with the abolition of board of guardians (1921) and RDCs (1925). The process culminated with the abolition of town councils (2014).[59]

Fundamentally, the fewness and smallness of Roscommon's towns determined that its urban councils would always be overshadowed by county institutions. Both borough corporations and town commissioners exercised limited functions and commanded miniscule resources. In this, the Roscommon local state was but a microcosm of the Irish local government system outside the seven largest cities.[60]

ENDNOTES

[1] For local government system in nineteenth-century Ireland see William F. Bailey, *Local and centralised government in Ireland. A sketch of the existing system* (London: Cassell and Co. Ltd and Dublin: Hodges Figgis and Co., 1888); Virginia Crossman, *Local government in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Belfast, 1994); and R.B. McDowell, *The Irish Administration, 1801–1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).

[2] Matthew Potter, 'Local government in County Roscommon' in Richie Farrell, Kieran O'Conor and Matthew Potter (eds), *Roscommon – history and society. Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2018), pp 279–99.

[3] Desmond Roche, *Local government in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1982); Mark Callanan and Justin F. Keogan (eds), *Local government in Ireland inside out* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2003).

[4] Niall C.E.J. O'Brien, 'The medieval county of Roscommon', *County Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society Journal*, 14 (2019), 117–19.

[5] Cæsar Litton Falkiner, 'The counties of Ireland: an historical sketch of their origin, constitution, and gradual delimitation', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 24C (1902–04), 178, 184.

[6] T. Cronin, 'The Elizabethan colony in Co. Roscommon' in Harman Murtagh (ed.), *Irish Midland studies. Essays in commemoration of N.W. English* (Athlone: The Old Athlone Society, 1980), pp 107–20.

[7] Local Government Board, Ireland, *Landowners in Ireland. Return of owners of land of one acre and upwards* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1876), pp 314–19.

[8] Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect. Studies in governmentality with two lectures and an interview with Michel Foucault* (Chicago, 1991).

[9] Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality' in Burchell, *et al.* (eds), *The Foucault Effect.*, p. 100.

[10] Two other functions were much less important, particularly before 1945: agents of central government such as motor taxation and higher education grants; and local regulators such as town planning.

[11] B.J. Graham, 'Medieval settlement in County Roscommon', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 88C (1988), 19–38.

[12] *Annual report for the Local Government Board for Ireland, 1899* (Dublin: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1900), pp 81, 85, 307.

[13] *Census of Population, 1821–1911* (Dublin: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1821–1911); *Census of Population, 1926–2016* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1926–2016).

[14] Séamus Pender, *A census of Ireland circa 1659* (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, [1939] 2002), pp 573, 581, 585; Marie-Louise Legg (ed.), *The census of Elphin 1749 with a statistical analysis by Brian Gurrin* (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2004), pp 1–13, 111–21, 147–61, 331–49, 445–58.

[15] *Census of Population, 1821–1911*.

[16] J. Proudfoot, *Property ownership and urban and village improvement in provincial Ireland, ca. 1700–1845* (London: Historical Geography Research Group, 1997), pp 58–64.

[17] Joseph Byrne, *Byrne's dictionary of Irish local history* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004), p. 86.

[18] *Report from the Select Committee on Grand Jury presentments*, Ireland H.C. 1827 (555) iii. 745.

[19] 1 & 2 Will. 4. c. 17. (U.K.) (23 August 1831).

[20] W.L. Feingold, *The Revolt Of The Tenantry: the transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–86* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1984), pp 15–49.

[21] Frank Friel, *Roscommon County Council. 100 years of local government 1899–1999* (Roscommon: Roscommon County Council, 1999).

[22] 61 & 62, Vict. c. 37. (U.K.) (12 August 1898).

[23] For Boyle, see *First report of the commissioners appointed to enquire into municipal corporations in Ireland*, HC 1835, XVIII (hereafter *Municipal Corporations Report*), pp 7–12. For Roscommon, see *Municipal Corporations Report*, XVII, pp 613–17. For Tulsk, see *Municipal Corporations Report*, XVII, pp 643–44.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Matthew Potter, *The Municipal Revolution in Ireland: local government in cities and towns since 1800* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2011).

[27] 9 Geo. IV c. 82. (U.K.) (25 July 1828); 17 & 18 Vic. c. 103. (U.K.) (10 August 1854).

[28] Matthew Potter, *Boyle, Roscommon and Tulsk 1613–2013, 400 years of municipal government in County Roscommon* (Roscommon: Roscommon County Council, 2013), pp 51, 57, 77, 81.

[29] E.M. Johnston-Liik, *History of the Irish Parliament 1692–1800: commons, constituencies and statutes 1692–1800*, 6 Vols. (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2002), Vol 2, pp 317–21.

[30] Ibid, p. 318.

[31] Brian M. Walker (ed.), *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), pp 236–7, 309–10.

[32] Paul Hickey, 'The collapse of Roscommon's nineteenth-century political establishment. The story of Roscommon's apocalyptic election', *County Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society Journal*, 11 (2009), 123–8.

[33] Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland*, pp 371–2.

[34] See Samuel Clark, *Social origins of the Irish Land War* (Princetown: Princetown University Press, 1979); Marliyn Silverman and P.H. Gulliver, *In the valley of the Nore. A social history of Thomastown, County Kilkenny, 1840–1983* (Dublin:

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[35] *Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory* (Dublin: Thom, 1844–80) and *Thom's Official Directory of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* (Dublin: Thom, 1881–1922), *passim*.

[36] Ibid.

[37] 61 & 62, Vict. c. 37. (U.K.) (12 August 1898).

[38] Friel, *Roscommon County Council*, pp 51–62.

[39] *Municipal Corporations Report*, pp 7–12; *Municipal Corporations Report*, XVII, pp 613–17, 643–4.

[40] Johnston-Liik, *History of the Irish Parliament*, Vol. 2, pp 317–21.

[41] Potter, *Boyle, Roscommon and Tulsk 1613–2013*, pp 42, 71, 92.

[42] 17 & 18 Vic. c. 103. (U.K.) (10 August 1854).

[43] Potter, *Boyle, Roscommon and Tulsk 1613–2013*, pp 51, 77.

[44] *Return as the Each Municipal Borough and Municipal Town or Township in Ireland on 1 January*, 1885 HC 1885 (141), pp 55, 59.

[45] Minutes of Roscommon Town Commissioners, 1837–1927, in Roscommon County Library, *passim*.

[46] Cyril Mattimoe, 'La Belle Boyle – her story' in Vol. 2, *Boyle: A selection of articles on its place, its people, and their pastimes, complied by Moylurg writers* (Boyle, Co. Roscommon: Moylurg Writers 1993), pp 9–13.

[47] Isaac Weld, *A statistical survey of the County of Roscommon* (Dublin: Royal Dublin Society, 1832), pp 393–438

[48] Ibid., pp 189, 321, 340, 398, 469.

[49] Ibid, pp 176–7.

[50] McDowell, *The Irish Administration*, pp 112–16, 135–63. Central government took over police in 1836 and prisons in 1877.

[51] Michael O'Donnell, 'Roscommon Town: the role of the planning authority from 1720', *Living Heritage*, 10:1 (autumn, 1993), 23–6.

[52] Feingold, *The Revolt Of The Tenantry*, pp 15–49.

[53] For the dispensary system, see Crossman, *Local government*, pp 49–50.

[54] McDowell, *Irish Administration*, pp 188–9.

[55] *Municipal Corporations Report*, pp 7–12; *Municipal Corporations Report*, XVII, pp 613–17, 643–4.

[56] *Royal Commission to inquire into Boundaries and Municipal Areas of Cities and Towns in Ireland, Report, Part III., Minutes of Evidence, Appendices*, H.C. 1881, L (3089), pp 591–6.

[57] Friel, *Roscommon County Council*, pp 142–53.

[58] Ibid. pp 100 and 113.

[59] Act 1 of 2014 (RI), 27 January 2014.

[60] Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Galway, Belfast, and Derry.

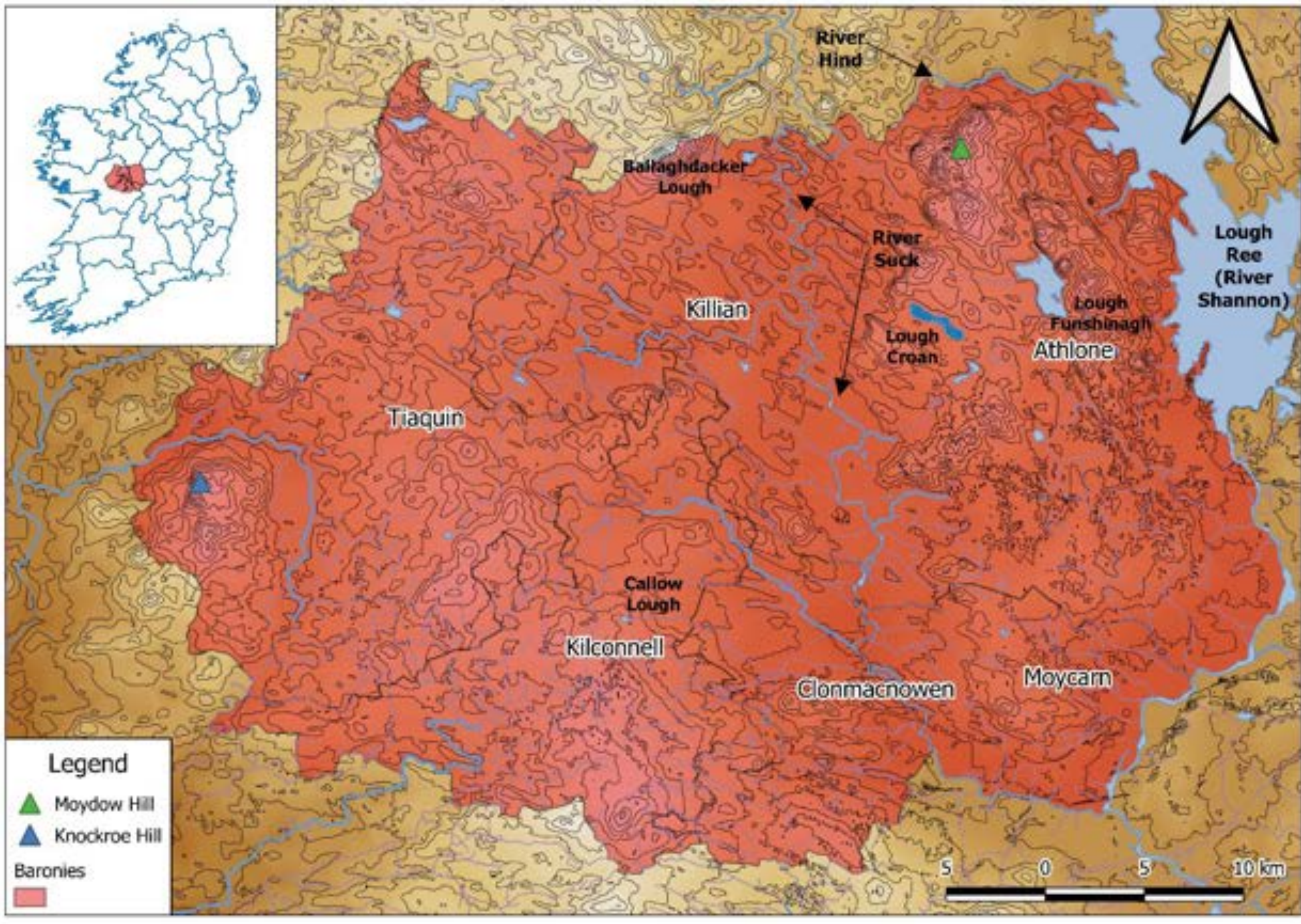

Figure 1 **Figure 1** Map of the Ó Cellaig lordship, as per its extents in the fifteenth century, when the later medieval lordship was at its most powerful, after Nicholls 1976.

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The value of place-name analysis to reconstructing medieval Gaelic settlement – a case study from Uí Chellaig Country

Introduction

THE townland is the smallest administrative unit on the island of Ireland. Each townland possesses a name and defined boundaries, boundaries which were firmly cemented during the Ordnance Survey of Ireland of the mid-nineteenth century. Although evidence for the origins of the townland system is difficult to confirm, it is in place by at least the twelfth century, as townlands are referred to in documentary sources of that date.[1] The divisions, and in many cases, names, can be presumed to be of considerable antiquity, with possible origins for the townland system in the early medieval period or even earlier.[2] Therefore, one of the best preserved, yet underused, primary sources available to the Irish archaeological and landscape researcher is that toponymical record.

A considerable amount of information can be gleaned from analysis of the toponymy, particularly townland names, as they are one of the primary forms of recording and remembering landscape,[3] and were a key component of the collective cultural memory which medieval Gaelic and Gaelicised society established and preserved through a number of centuries – a use that is often overlooked. The survival of townland names and the names of local features is, therefore, an invaluable key to the former organisation of the later medieval landscape and its societies.[4] Using the online resources available currently,[5] a systematic approach can be developed which allows all researchers (including novices to the Irish language) to interrogate this source material and yield informed results. Given the relative absence of detailed socio-economic documentation for medieval Gaelic Ireland, particularly prior to the sixteenth century, it will be demonstrated here that the place-name record can provide very useful insights into the organisation of this time and place – and such approaches need to be adopted by more researchers in an effort to identify locations of past settlement, sites of production, and places once given over to specific functions; and, in general, to repopulate and better understand this past environment across the social strata. It must be noted that while chronicles and related historical sources concerned themselves with the secular and ecclesiastical elite, the toponymical record could be described as a much more egalitarian source for the historic past, helping us to consider society through a slightly broader lens.

By way of establishing an approach to this research, the present writer will now outline a series of insights gleaned from his study of the landscape of the later medieval Ó Cellaig (O'Kelly) lordship, the subject of his PhD research. It is hoped that this may encourage others to elaborate and improve on this methodology, and indeed modify it to the betterment of their own requirements.

Study area

The later medieval patrimony of the Ó Cellaig lords of Uí Maine and Tír Maine constitutes, at its greatest extent in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, all of south Roscommon before the River Hind, and a considerable expanse of eastern and central Galway. In effect, this is represented by the baronies of Athlone and Moycarn, Co. Roscommon and Clonmacnowen, Kilconnell, Killian and Tiaquin, Co. Galway (see figure 1 page 22 opposite). This eastern Connacht region is predominantly low-lying, and the landscape character is mixed, with substantial zones of peatland throughout, between which are located tracts of riverine pastures, grazing land, low hills and generally undulating grassland. The usefulness of turning to consult the toponymical record in a meaningful way for the present writer arrived out of a pressing need to attempt to recognise where the high medieval centres of Ó Cellaig authority were located. The problem which the primary and also the small quantity of secondary literature on that subject struggles with is that prior to the adoption of the tower house castle as the residence type of choice amongst the Uí Maine elite post *c.*1400, the traditional historical sources are nearly silent on the matter.[6] Equally so, approaching this identification from a purely archaeological standpoint alone would have yielded little if any truly beneficial insights. As a result, consultation of the often lesser used sources for archaeological researchers, literary sources, genealogies and praise poetry, provided the first glimpses of pre-tower house elite settlement environments, and using these sources alongside the place-name record, enriched the understanding of the cultural landscape considerably.

Identifying the cenn áiteanna through toponymical research

The present writer has chosen to use the Irish term *cenn áit* when researching these topics. The term *cenn áit* (literally, 'chief' or 'head place') was one of a number of terms used in Irish historical sources to describe the fortified earthen enclosures used by the pre-towerhouse Gaelic elite.[7] Here, the term will be used to reference the lordly centre and the immediate landscape attached to, and manipulated by, the lord within the wider *trícha cét*/lordship. This has been adopted as an alternative to the Latin *caput*, when referring to these elite places.

The outlined approach was partly responsible for recognising the former significance of a now much changed lacustrine environment at Lough Croan, Co. Roscommon. This (now turlough) retains evidence for five named *crannóga* or natural islands – and a catalogue of evidence indicates that it served as a key location of residence and administration for both the early medieval Uí Maine kings and their later medieval Ó Cellaig descendants. Key to this success was an analysis, not just of the townland name directly of interest, but of the townland as the landholding unit within which the archaeological

remains survive. Instead of this site-specific treatment, consideration of the names as part of a wider hinterland can yield very positive, and occasionally surprisingly detailed, results. In the case of Lough Croan, a range of townlands in the immediate vicinity around the lake retains information which points to elite settlement, seasonal assembly, the presence of prominent local ecclesiastical sites and the landholdings of learned kindreds in close adjacency to the *cenn áit*.[8]

Furthermore, consultation of the toponymical record can even provide insights into the organisation of movement through the *cenn áit*, in this instance at least. For this, the townland name of Garrynphort – *Garraí an Phoirt* 'the garden/court of the bank/landing-place', located on the southern lakeshore is interesting. An alternative translation for the prefix *garraidh*, which MacCotter outlines, is a colonial import (from the Norse garth), would be 'chief house' or 'chief enclosed residence'.[9] This would give the translation as 'the chief house of the bank/landing place'. Two adjacent modern townlands bear this name at Lough Croan, indicating that this area must have served as the routine location from which watercraft were launched in order to access the islands of the lake. The place name survival, therefore, informs us of where people connected to the lakeland environment congregated in order to gain admittance onto these islands. O'Sullivan presents a convincing argument that *crannóga* and occupied natural islands would have been habitually approached from a specific location on the shoreline, a defined boat landing place or harbour, and in doing so allowed the island-dwellers to control access to the islands, as well as creating a social performance when people travelled out on to these sites.[10] We can imagine these locations to have been carefully maintained and kept clear of lakeland vegetation, by comparison with the rest of the lake shore, therefore framing the easiest place from which to interact with the people on the lake.

The site of a ringfort is located close to the shoreline of the lake here and, although no visible surface remains survive, it may have been the monument referred to in the place-name. Another possibility is that the attested site may have been some form of U-shaped embanked or palisaded enclosure, which provided safe harbouring of the watercraft on the lake shoreline. If this was the case, no above-ground trace of this feature survives in the townland. As such, a thorough inspection of the former shoreline here would be a valuable future investigation. Regardless of the morphology of the monument being described, it is likely to be an example of a dry-land service site associated with one or more of the *crannóga* on the former lake, where it would have operated as the administrative and agricultural centre for the occupants of the Lough Croan *crannóga*.

Figure 2 Crannóg on Callow Lough, Co. Galway.

Another example from a different Ó Cellaig locale confirms the point. Callow Lough, Co. Galway, is an historically-attested *cenn áit* of the Ó Cellaig lords from at least as early as the mid-thirteenth century until, arguably, the early seventeenth century. The modern name of the lake is taken from the townland immediately to the south of the lake, Callow – *An Caladh* (in this instance translatable as a 'landing place' *or* 'ferry'). The landholding itself retains the remains of the ruins of Callow castle, the degraded remains of a

fifteenth-century tower house. However, to the west of the castle site, field inspection and aerial imagery confirmed the faint remains of what was a modified natural harbour, the main purpose of which would have been to provide landward access out onto the single large and impressive *crannóg* at the centre of the lake (see figure 2 opposite).[11]

In these two instances from Ó Cellaig country, and certainly many more cases which await inspection throughout the island, the historical sources are confirming the location of residence, but the townland names actually aid in reconstructing the micro-organisation of the residence itself in these lacustrine settings. In doing so, and in the relative absence of above ground archaeological features, the toponymy is actually providing the critical information in identifying targets for future archaeological prospection, in terms of fieldwalking, remote sensing survey and possibly excavation on the landward side of these lakes.

It is also important to be aware of the explicit references in the toponymy relating to longstanding landownership when attempting to identify the Gaelic elite focal points. Due to the form of the surname retaining the prefixes[12] in the cases of Farranykelly – *Farann Uí Chellaig* ('Ó Cellaig's land') at the Ó Cellaig *cenn áit* at Ballaghdacker Lough, Co. Galway, Cloonykelly – *Cluain Uí Chellaig* ('Ó Cellaig's meadow') at the Ó Cellaig *cenn áit* Athleague, Co. Roscommon, and Lissyegan – *Lios Mhic/Uí Aogáin* ('Meic Aodhagáin's fort'), Ahascragh parish, Co. Galway, would heighten the likelihood of all three examples being instances of later medieval landownership. The latter instance is likely to have referred to the once prominent Gaelic legal family, the *Meic Aodhagáin* or (Mac) Egans. Originally a family of Soghain origin, the *Nósa Ua Maine* rights tract records 'Clann Aedhagain' as being a tributary family of the Uí Chellaig,[13] until they became *ollamhain* or chief legal family to the Uí Maine lords,[14] meaning that their presence amongst the place-names of Ó Cellaig Country is unsurprising.

Repopulating the later medieval Gaelic cultural and economic landscape with the assistance of place names

Following on from the initial point, the present writer is of the opinion that due to the site-specific focus which archaeologists (in particular) have taken in large part up until recently – that is, when a high-medieval Gaelic place of elite residence is identified, the search is concluded. However, we can and should advance our investigation by considering a range of questions which should inevitably emerge relating to the site, such as:

- Why was the cenn áit sited in a particular location?
- What people would have surrounded the cenn áit, and where in the immediate area would their settlements have been located?
- How would this elite residence have been supported economically from its host landscape, and what would this have looked like?

Again owing to the lack of detailed socio-economic records for this time and place, such questions, and others, are regularly left unanswered, or responded to in vague terms, based upon the (often spartan) historical source material available. However, in certain instances, the toponymical records can be used to, at least partially, fill in these gaps.

The first question can be answered, in some cases, by the negative evidence presented in the place-names. Early modern and modern cartographic sources for the case study area attest to the former presence of extensive and named woodland, particularly in south Roscommon. Analysis of the names which describe woodland and difficult/wasteland, and conversely the quality of the soils, inspired by the approach taken by Breen in respect of his O'Sullivan Beare study area,[15] correspond very readily with the historically-attested *Feadha* of Athlone, the woods of Athleague and woods of *Bruigheol*. All once occupied considerable areas of what is now pastureland. Combining this with the zones of undrained bog and wetland which today is greatly tamed from even its nineteenth-century iteration, creates a much different environment in terms of settlement and agricultural potential for the medieval population of the area. The Ó Cellaig *cenn áiteanna* avoided these zones entirely, perhaps unsurprisingly, and in every case were located within the best quality soils of the lordship, and in areas which were easily networked with the wider region, through riverine and overland routes.

Today, these lordly centres present as relatively isolated locations. However, consideration of the toponymy can evolve our understanding of the past environment. Taking Callow Lough as an example, the place-name record, used in association with historical and literary references, informs us not just of the presence of an elite residence at Callow and probably Lisdonnellroe – *Lios Dónaill Rua* ('Red Dónal's fort'), but also the landholdings of a whole range of hereditary service kindreds attached to the lord: Ballydoogan – *Baile Uí Dhúgáin* and Cartrondoogan – *Cartrún Uí Dhúgáin* = Uí Dhubhagáin poet historians;[16] Lecarrowmactully – *Leithcheathrú Mhic Mhaoltuile* ('the half-quarter of Mac Maoltuile') = Mac Mhaoltuile physicians; Ballynabanaba – Uí Longorgáin harpers and Uí Shideacháin horn-players; Annagh – Mac an Bhaird poets.[17] FitzPatrick notes the proximity of service kindreds' landholdings to their lords' residence throughout Gaelic Ireland,[18] and due to the types of roles being undertaken by these kindreds in respect of their chief, their placement in the landscape is telling. In each instance, medieval settlement archaeology survives in the respective townlands in the form of ringforts, enclosures, and a small tower house castle in Ballynabanaba. In the case of the well-known Uí Dhubhagáin poet historians, one 'Donell O Dugan' is described as being 'of Lisfenelle' in 1617.[19] The 1st Edition OS 6-Inch map labels a ringfort in Ballydoogan as 'Lisfineel Fort'.[20] This very large ringfort, 39m in internal diameter and defined by as many as four earthen banks separated by three ditches, can still be seen today. This site may have served as a principal residence of the Uí Dhubhagáin during the later medieval period

prior to the seventeenth century. In terms of inspecting the places and lifeways of the strata of society that operated beneath a powerful later medieval Gaelic lord, each of these sites, which in large respects have only been brought to prominence through analysis of the place-names record, would be fruitful to investigate further.

More than this, however, 3km to the south of Callow Lough is Kilconnell village, and with it a series of townland names connected to the former landholdings of the well-known Franciscan Friary at the centre of the village. These include Loughaclerybeg and Loughaclerymore/Hillswood – *Loch an Chléirigh* ('the cleryman's lake'), Monambraher – *Móin na mBráthar* ('friars' bog'), Gortadeegan – *Gort an Deagánaigh* ('deacon's field') and Glebe. The lordly centre seems to have been consciously separate from what is likely to have been a larger population centre at Kilconnell, and this is also the setting for seasonal trade and economic activity, confirmed by the survival of the place-name Corraneena – *Corr an Aonaigh* ('the round hill of the assembly' *or* 'fair') (see figure 3 below). Indeed, the presence of named and, in some cases, historically-attested, places of seasonal assembly and fair activity, does strengthen the identification of these Gaelic seats of lordly authority in the landscape. Other examples include the location of assembly immediately south of Lough Croan, Tullyneeny – *Tulaigh an aonaigh* ('hill of the cattle fair/assembly'), alluded to earlier, but also Portrunny (*Port Airchinnigh* – 'the port of the 'erenagh' ',[21] just north of Galey, Co. Roscommon, as well as the medieval fair surrounding the Ó Cellaig-patronised Cistercian house of Abbeyknockmoy, Co. Galway near to the late medieval *cenn áiteanna* at Monivea, Garbally and Tiaquin.[22] Combining this information leads to an altogether different, more vibrant, impression of the later medieval Gaelic settlement environment, a landscape that can be considerably reconstructed through study of the toponymical survivals.

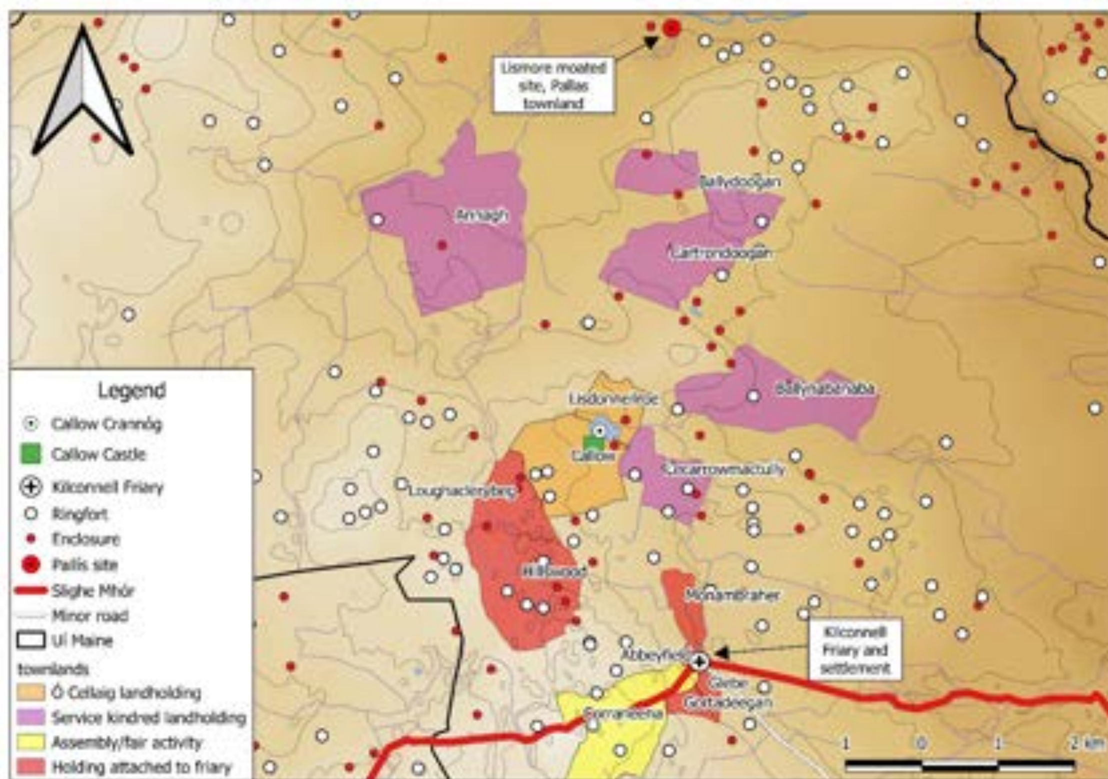

Figure 3 The place-names surrounding Callow Lough, Co. Galway

Place-name evidence for the economic structures of Gaelic Ireland

The historical sources are clear that the primary economic driver of later medieval Gaelic Ireland was agricultural production, with pastoralism playing an integral role. Cattle farming was a major preoccupation in Gaelic society, and the resources taken from these herds extended from diary produce (milk, butter, a variety of cheeses and associated *bánbidh* (white meats), buttermilk and sour curds), to beef, but also hides, tanned leather, tallow (for candle-making), and even the blood. The practice of blood-letting of cattle for sustenance can be found recorded in townland names, micro-toponymy and through local information gathered from as late as the early twentieth-century. Examples of this, usually undertaken in times of food shortage throughout the history of Ireland, can be seen with *Poll na Fola* ('hollow of the blood') and *Gleann na Fola* ('glen of the blood'), Co. Galway, and Cornafulla, Co. Roscommon (*Cor na Fola* – 'round hill of the blood').[23] The latter townland is located within the study area.

The agricultural cycle of the year is evident in the place-names also, with the survival of names linked to transhumance. Known as 'booleying', from *buaile*, 'cattle enclosure', this involved the cyclical movement of cattle from winter pasture, close to the settlement centres of the area, to summer pasture, whereby grazing was undertaken in upland, woodland and bogland environs, or in the areas vacated by the seasonal flooding in turloughs.[24] Place-name survivals in the study area, such as Boleyduff, Cloonboley, Corboley, Boleymore,

Knocknaboley and Shanboley are all likely to be relics of this farming practice. The survival of these names is interesting on a number of levels. Firstly, as in the case of Boleyduff, they are pointing to areas which are now largely improved grassland, but in times past were more marginal, given over to woodland, in that case, the woods of *Bruigheol*. Beyond that, however, while it might not immediately be recognised that the relatively flat and pastorally productive land which makes up much of the study area would have necessitated booleying, the place-name evidence paints a different picture, and highlights parts of the landscape such as river callows, bogland margins, and now disappeared woodland, which, in times past were the locations in eastern Connacht utilised for seasonal grazing.

Continuing the exploration into the cattle economy, the hinterland around Lough Croan has place-names such as Cornalee – *Corr na Lao* ('the round hill of the calves'), Carrowntarriff – *Ceathramhadh an tairbh* ('quarter of the bull'), Lisseenamanragh – *Lisín na mannrach* ('little fort of the stalls' or 'mangers'), Grange – *Gráinseach Chairn Bhuaileadh* ('Grange/granary of the cairn of the booley/cattle-enclosure') and Tullyneeny. The townland name of Lisseenamanragh is reflected in the field divisions still extant in the latter townland and the adjacent Carrowmore townland, made up of smaller stone walled 'stalls' or pens, matching the description. Taken together, and with the *cenn áit* and the assembly location at the core, this clustering of bovine-related place-names indicates that the landscape was once formally divided up according to the age and purpose of the animals which constituted the herd. Taken as a collective, it demonstrates that this area was given over to the intensive production of, and trade in, cattle attached to the lord.

At Galey, another Ó Cellaig elite centre, a continuation of this trend is apparent. The names of Cornamart – *Cor na mart* ('round hill of the beeves/butchered cattle'), Corboley – *Corbuaile* (possibly 'round hill of the dairy'), Curraghalaher – *Currach a' leathair* ('moor of the leather') as well as nearby Pollalaher – *Poll a leathair* ('hole of the leather') all indicate a predominance in the practices of cattle rearing, dairying and livestock movement, as well as butchery and processing of the associated resources. In the latter cases, this process utilised the naturally occurring tannic acid from wetland contexts for tanning and leather production. The immediacy of these townland names surrounding the lordly centre is telling, and it responds directly back to the resources which maintained the Gaelic elite in this area (see figure 4 below). Supporting this even further, the Galey *cenn áit* is located immediately to the north of another livestock-related place name, Longnamuck – *Long na muc* ('house of the pigs' or 'ship of the pigs'). This place name possibly relates to the housing and riverine transportation of live pigs or cured pork, and indeed also the aforementioned resources, utilising the natural harbour, all obviously controlled by the resident native lord.

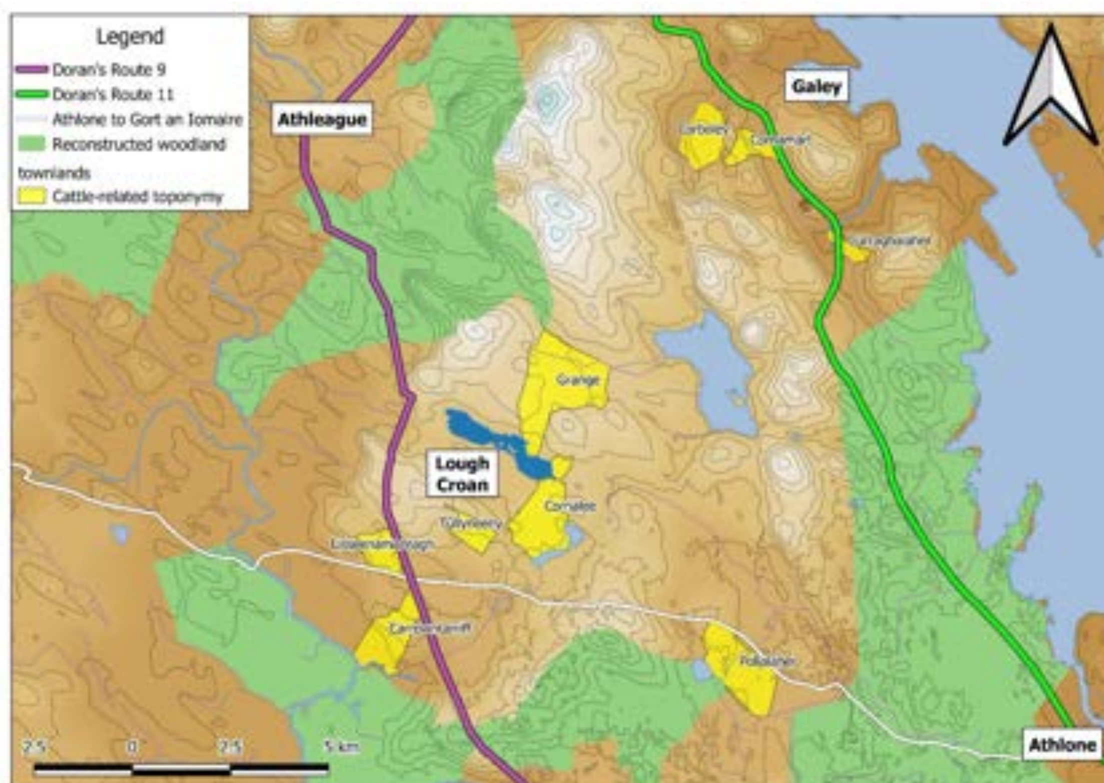

Figure 4 The cattle-related place names surrounding Lough Croan and Galey Bay, Co. Roscommon

Combining the toponymical evidence from both Lough Croan and Galey enables the reconstruction of an organised and dynamic later medieval rural industry centred around cattle, involving stock rearing and animal husbandry, dairying, trade, slaughtering of livestock, processing and commodification of the derived resources – and ultimately the export of these materials for gain out on to the River Shannon system, thus connecting

the Ó Cellaig lord to the wider world. In terms of the surviving physical remains, however, like much of what has been described thus far, they are only very faint traces, where they survive at all. The two names which refer to leather production, Curraghalaher and Pollalaher, would be interesting locations to explore in terms of gaining a greater understanding of possibly organised medieval hide and leather production in this rural setting. Based on the excavations at locations such as the 'Blackpitts', New Street South, Dublin 8, this may have taken the form of different morphologies of clay, timber or stone-lined pits, fed by a stream or mill-race-type water sources. The shape and depth of these pits at Blackpitts have been interpreted as relating to the various phases of the tanning process.[25] Archaeological investigations of prospective locations within each of these townlands may uncover similar modifications, albeit utilising the natural environment more fully to create the same circumstances for leather production.

Moving away from the agricultural exploitation of the study area, the place-name record does provide hints in respect of resources derived from the natural environment. It has already been noted that very extensive woodland once populated large sections of Ó Cellaig Country, and the place-names record a variety of indigenous tree species, with a particular emphasis on oak. In large part, it must be assumed that these woodlands served as a well-utilised asset to society at this time. Cattle and sheep were routinely grazed in woody pasture and the 'mast' (acorns and other nuts) harvest was a vital food source for keeping pigs.[26] The bark of certain trees would have been used for tanning leather.[27] Timber resources were a very valuable commodity and would have provided the raw materials for the great majority of buildings constructed in the territory, as well as providing a ready source of firewood and building materials for both domestic and industrial purposes, while charcoal was another commodity which would have been derived from these areas, all suggesting managed woodland.[28]

However, one place-name, and its appearance in the historical record, illuminates the value that these woodlands possessed for construction purposes. Cornaseer – *Cor na saor* ('round hill of the carpenters') between the medieval towns of Athlone and Roscommon. It is interesting to note that William de Prene, the king's carpenter, was granted a manor at Moyvannon in 1286, the next townland directly to the north of Cornaseer.[29] Perhaps the king's carpenter was granted this manor to be in a position to provide seasoned and worked timber from the *Feadha* of Athlone, within which it is located, for maintenance works on local royal castles, such as Roscommon, Rindoon or Athlone. It might also explain why de Prene was fined £20 for wasting timber in the same year.[30]

There is a possibility that other resources were derived from the natural environment of the region, albeit the place-name evidence for it is slight. Evidence of occasional metalworking was uncovered at both Loughbown I and Mackney ringforts, Co. Galway in the form of quantities of charcoal, slag and iron ore.[31] This iron ore must have been sourced somewhere in the region, and the excavations indicate that there was a demand for these minerals.

Mineral acquisition, or perhaps surface or open-cast mining is indicated by a number of townland names. Killoy – *Cill luaighe* ('wood of the lead'), Co. Roscommon may point to the surface mining of lead in the area in the historic past. We have widespread evidence of lead being worked in Ireland from the early medieval period onwards.[32] Excavations in advance of the M6 infrastructural project in Treanbaun townland, Co. Galway, some 40km to the southwest of Killoy, uncovered a large (7m in diameter, 2.2m deep) circular mine pit, from which were recovered a series of radio-carbon dates ranging from the Early Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age period. An additional radio-carbon date, albeit anomalous, may point to the use of this open-cast mine through to the seventh and ninth centuries AD. The mineral that was extracted at Treanbaun is known as galena, which is a lead-ore, and which is associated with lead and silver mining.[33] The evidence in the townland name of Killoy suggests that similar mineral extraction may have taken place in this location during the later medieval period.

Cloghnashade – *Cloch na séad* ('stone of the jewels'), Co. Roscommon speculatively provides evidence of mineral acquisition or extraction between Lough Croan and Athleague. Another nearby townland, Cloonruff – *Cluain Ruibh* ('the meadow of the brimstone' or 'sulphur'), 5km to the west, has been postulated as a 'Seefin' boundary location linked to the mythologically-derived Finn landscapes of medieval Ireland. These Finn landscapes have been argued to originate as boundary markers and wilderness zones within a territory, often reserved for hunting activities, and associated in some cases with mineral extraction for economic purposes.[34] Research into this part of the medieval Gaelic economy is little understood, but the presence of these names in the landscape is intriguing as regards their use in the historic environment nonetheless.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this brief survey of the place-name survivals of south Roscommon and east Galway as they relate to the former Ó Cellaig lordship has demonstrated something of the richness of this resource, and how it can be analysed in order to garner insights into the social organisation of later medieval Gaelic Ireland, in this instance. Embracing this source material can elevate our understanding of the historic past environment, and the present writer has been able to partially reconstruct the later medieval elite and service kindred settlement landscape, as well as locations of routine trade, sites of local industry, and some of the processes which supported society at large in this time and place. Just to reiterate, it is sincerely hoped that this may encourage others to elaborate and improve on this methodology, and indeed modify it to the betterment of their own requirements.

ENDNOTES

[1] Liam Ó hÁisibéil, 'The place-names of Co. Roscommon' in Richie Farrell, Kieran O'Conor and Matthew Potter (eds), *Roscommon – history and society. Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2018), pp 157–90 at p. 169.

[2] Tom McErlean, 'The Irish townland system of landscape organisation' in Terence Reeves-Smyth and Fred Hammond (eds), *Landscape archaeology in Ireland* [BAR 116] (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1983) pp 315–339 at p. 335; Kenneth W. Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the middle ages* [2nd ed.] (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003), pp 138–9.

[3] Annaba Kilfeather, 'A landscape of words: the placenames of Lough Kinale' in Christina Fredengren, Annaba Kilfeather and Ingelise Stuijts (eds), *Lough Kinale: studies of an Irish lake* (Dublin: Wordwell, 2010), pp 167–216 at p. 167.

[4] Ailbhe Séamus Mac Shamhráin, 'Placenames as indicators of settlement', *Archaeology Ireland*, 5:3 (1991), 19–21; Edel Bhreathnach, *Ireland in the medieval world, AD 400–1000: landscape, kingship and religion* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014), p. 19.

[5] Principally the Placenames Database of Ireland, available via www.logainm.ie, and Irish Townlands, available via www.townlands.ie.

[6] See, for example, John O'Donovan, *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many, commonly called O'Kelly's Country, now first published from the Book of Lecan, a manuscript in the library of the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin: Irish Archaeological Society, 1843), p. 3.

[7] Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland*, pp 141–2; Kenneth W. Nicholls, 'Gaelic society and economy in the high middle ages' in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, ii: *Medieval Ireland, 1169–1534* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) pp 397–438 at p. 405.

[8] Daniel Patrick Curley, 'Reconstructing the Lough Croan *cenn áit* of the medieval Ó Cellaig lordship of Uí Maine', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 150 (2022), 201–24.

[9] Paul MacCotter, 'The M7 motorway historical landscape: studies in the history of Ormond', *Tipperary Historical Journal* (2018), 66–87 at 86.

[10] Aidan O'Sullivan, 'Early medieval crannogs and imagined islands' in Gabriel Cooney, Katharina Becker, John Coles, Michael Ryan and Susanne Sievers (eds), *Relics of old decency: archaeological studies in later prehistory* (Dublin: Wordwell Books, 2009), pp 79–88 at pp 83–4.

[11] Daniel Patrick Curley, '*Le triúcha chéd in Chalaidh a máeraidecht idir mincís 7 mórthobach*' – multidisciplinary approaches to recovering an Ó Cellaig *cenn áit* in later medieval Uí Maine, *Eolas*, 13 (2021), 2–29 at 22–4.

[12] Surviving in mutated form as the letter 'y' in the anglicised version of the place-name in these instances.

[13] Paul Russell (ed.), 'Nósa Ua Maine: 'The customs of the Uí Mhaine' ' in Thomas Mowbray Charles-Edwards, Morphydd E. Owen and Paul Russell (eds), *The Welsh king and his court* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp 527–51 at p. 533.

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[15] Colin Breen, *The Gaelic lordship of the O'Sullivan Beare: a landscape cultural history* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp 28–32, 212–14.

[16] Elizabeth FitzPatrick, 'Ollamh, biatach, comharba: lifeways of Gaelic learned families in medieval and early modern Ireland' in Liam Breatnach, Ruairí Ó hUiginn, Damian McManus and Katharine Simms (eds), *Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Celtic Studies, Maynooth 2011* (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, 2015), pp 165–89 at pp 168, 188; Elizabeth FitzPatrick, 'The last kings of Ireland: material expressions of Gaelic lordship, *c.*1300–1400 A.D.' in Kate Buchanan, Lucinda H.S. Dean and Michael Penman (eds), *Medieval and early modern representations of authority in Scotland and the British Isles* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp 197–213 at p. 204.

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[18] For instance, Elizabeth FitzPatrick, 'Gaelic service kindreds and the landscape identity of lucht tighe' in Eve Campbell, Elizabeth FitzPatrick and A. Horning (eds), *Becoming and belonging in Ireland, AD 1200–1600: essays in identity and cultural practice* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018), pp 167–88 at pp 173–87.

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[20] Olive Alcock, Kathy de hÓra and Paul Gosling, *Archaeological inventory of county Galway, Vol. II: North Galway* (Dublin: The Stationary Office, 1999), p. 45.

[21] Michael Connellan, 'Port Airchinnigh-Airchinneach-Portrunny', *The Irish Book Lover*, 32 (1954), 55–6 at 55.

[22] Máire MacNeill, *The festival of Lughnasa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp 128–31.

[23] Anthony T. Lucas, *Cattle in ancient Ireland* (Kilkenny: Boethius Press, 1989), pp 216–17; Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland*, p. 137.

[24] J.A. Watt, 'Gaelic polity and cultural identity' in Cosgrove (ed), *A new history of Ireland* ii, pp 314–51 at p. 331; Enda O'Flaherty, 'Archaeological watermarks: turlough floodplains as communal spaces and places of assembly' (2014). Online article (https://www.academia.edu/6115533; Eugene Costello, *Transhumance and the making of Ireland's uplands, 1550–1900* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2020).

[25] Antoine Giacometti, 'Blackpitts: Dublin's medieval tanning quarter' in Seán Duffy (ed), *Medieval Dublin XVIII* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2021), pp 243–63 at pp 248–55.

[26] Nicholls, 'Gaelic society and economy', p. 415; Thomas Finan, *Landscape and history on the medieval Irish frontier: the King's Cantreds in the thirteenth century* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), p. 75.

[27] Nigel Everett, *The woods of Ireland: a history, 700–1800* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), p. 17.

[28] Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland*, pp 198–202; Mark Gardiner and Kieran O'Conor, 'The later medieval countryside lying beneath' in Michael Stanley, Ronan Swan and Aidan O'Sullivan (eds), *Stories of Ireland's past* (Dublin: Transport Infrastructure Ireland, 2017), pp 133–52 at p. 150.

[29] *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland*, H.S. Sweetman (ed.), 5 vols (London, 1875–86), iii, No. 528.

[30] Roger A. Stalley, 'William of Prene and the Royal Works in Ireland', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd Series, 41 (1978), 30–49 at 38; Helen Walton, 'The English in Connacht, 1171–1333' (Dublin: Unpublished PhD Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1980), pp 282–3.

[31] Nicholas Bower, 'Two ringforts in Loughbown: stockyard, souterrain, metalworking and cereal kilns' in Jim McKeon, and Jerry O'Sullivan (eds), *The quiet landscape: archaeological investigations on the M6 Galway to Ballinasloe national road scheme* (Dublin: The National Roads Authority, 2014), pp 172–84 at pp 176–7; Finn Delaney, 'Ringfort with round-house, souterrain and cillín burials at Mackney' in McKeon and O'Sullivan, *The quiet landscape*, pp 187–200 at p. 194.

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[33] Marta Muniz-Pérez, 'Prehistoric lead mine and cists at Treanbaun' in McKeon and O'Sullivan, *The quiet landscape*, pp 130–134 at pp 130–1.

[34] Elizabeth FitzPatrick and Ronan Hennessy, 'Finn's Seat: topographies of power and royal marchlands of Gaelic polities in medieval Ireland', *Landscape History*, 38 (2017), 29-62 at 32, 34, 37.

Notices of recently published books

Bernadette Cunningham

This is a selection of recently published books thought likely to be of interest to readers of *Áitreabh.* Some notices are partly derived from information supplied by the publishers.

Ballynahatty: excavations in a Neolithic monumental landscape
Edited by Barrie Hartwell, Sarah Gormley, Catriona Brogan & Caroline Malone
(Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2023. xv, 222p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN: 9781789259711. £58)

One of Ireland's most significant Neolithic ceremonial monuments, known as the Giant's Ring, overlooks the river Lagan on the southern outskirts of Belfast. Standing stones, tombs, cists and ring barrows can be traced in the surrounding landscape. A 90 m long timber enclosure with an elaborate entrance and inner 'temple' was first observed through crop marks in aerial photos. The main site was excavated between 1990 and 2000 and this new book contextualises the site, explaining the organisation of its construction and use, and interpreting the ceremonial landscape through the discoveries made during the archaeological excavation. Ballynahatty was one of the last great public ceremonial enterprises known to have been constructed by Neolithic farmers in the north of Ireland, an enterprise proclaiming their enigmatic religion and territorial aspirations.

Ancient DNA and the European Neolithic: relations and descent
(Neolithic Studies Group seminar papers, 19)
Edited by Alasdair Whittle, Joshua Pollard & Susan Greaney
(Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2022. x, 194p. Illus. Pbk. ISBN: 9781789259100. £40)

The movement of populations and individuals, patterns of descent, relationships and aspects of identity are among the issues in which ancient DNA evidence is transforming archaeological research. New evidence has been uncovered for the movement and mixture of people at the start of the Neolithic, as farming spread from the east, and at its end, when the first metals as well as novel styles of pottery and burial practices arrived in the Chalcolithic. This collection of essays stems from an online conference in 2021 which brought geneticists and archaeologists together in the same forum and the papers offer reflections on the progress of ancient DNA studies, and on their future direction.

Monumental times : pasts, presents and futures in the prehistoric construction projects of northern and western Europe
Richard Bradley
(Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2023. x, 165p. Illus. Pbk. ISBN 9798888570388. £39.95)

This book is a reflection on the origins, uses, perceptions and subsequent histories of monuments. It emphasises the time scales illustrated by these structures, and their implications for archaeological research. There is an emphasis on structures in Britain and Ireland, and the period between the Mesolithic and the Viking Age. The first part of this book considers the rarity of monumental structures among hunter-gatherers, and the choice of building materials for Neolithic houses and tombs. It also discusses 'megalithic astronomy' and ancient notions of time. Part Two is concerned with the reuse of ancient monuments and asks whether they really were expressions of social memory, and whether links with an 'ancestral past' have much factual basis.

Death in Irish prehistory
Gabriel Cooney
Illustrated by Conor McHale
(Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2023. vii, 454p. Illus. Pbk. ISBN 9781802050097. €30)

Spanning over 8,500 years up to AD 500, this book looks at understandings of life and death through the available archaeological evidence, asking what prehistoric mortuary rites tell us about belief and practice. The archaeological analysis is interspersed with literary material that reflects the human experience of death and dying.

Pagan Ireland: ritual and belief in another world
John Waddell
(Dublin: Wordwell, 2023. 253p. Illus. Pbk. ISBN 9781913934927. €30)

This is an accessible discussion of ritual and belief in pre-Christian Ireland, spanning some 4000 years. The author reflects on ways in which the evidence of archaeological monuments and recovered artefacts can be used to interpret the attempts of pre-Christian people to understand the world in which they lived and died.

Uisneach or the centre of Ireland
Frédéric Armao
(Studies for the International Society for Cultural History)
(New York: Routledge, 2023. xii, 323p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9780367697693. Stg£120; Pbk. ISBN 9780367697709. £34.99)

This book examines medieval documents connected with the hill of Uisneach and compares them with the evidence from archaeological data and modern Irish folklore. Discussing a period of more than 1500 years, the author argues that the symbolic significance of the hill at or near the geographical centre of Ireland has echoed the evolution of Irish society through the ages.

An introduction to peatland archaeology and paleo-environments
Benjamin Gearey & Henry Chapman
(Studying Scientific Archaeology)
(Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2023. xiii, 234p. Illus., maps. ISBN 9781789257557. Stg£29.95)

THe joint authors outline the major themes and methods of peatland archaeology, describing the ecology and formation processes of peatlands and the different archaeological and palaeoenvironmental techniques that have been adapted for these environments. It includes a short historical review of work on peatland archaeology in Ireland. In-depth case studies are used to illustrate best practice, as currently understood, including separate lengthy discussions of Lisheen, Co. Longford and Tumbeagh, Co. Offaly.

The archaeological history of hermitages and eremitic communities in medieval Britain and beyond
Simon Roffey
(Routledge Studies in Archaeology)
(Abingdon: Routledge, 2023. xiii, 203p. Illus. ISBN 9780367110611. Stg£120)

THis archaeological history of hermitages and eremitic communities relies mainly on British evidence, but within a wider comparative perspective, encompassing India, China, Japan, Tibet and the Middle East. It ranges from early Christian times to the modern era. Chapter 6 discusses the archaeology of hermitages in early medieval Ireland, especially at Skellig Michael and the hermitage associated with St Colman Mac Duagh in the Burren in Co. Clare.

Viking camps: case studies and comparisons
Edited by Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson & Irene García Losquiño
(Routledge Archaeologies of the Viking World)
(London: Routledge, 2023. xvi, 320p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781032389493. Stg£130)

SItes in Ireland, England, Sweden and Atlantic Europe are explored in this collection of essays assessing the functions and form of Viking camps. Case studies are used to consider the interaction with the landscape and the local population of Viking expeditionary groups during the early stages of settlement. Clare Downham writes about early tenth-century Ireland and Ian Russell writes about the winter camps at Woodstown, Co. Waterford. David Griffiths compares the features of Viking camps and trading sites across Britain and Ireland. The various essays attempt to situate Viking camps within their wider geographical and chronological contexts, and show how the camps were embedded in wider processes of trade, settlement and social consolidation.

Exploring Ireland's Viking-age towns: houses and homes
Rebecca Boyd
(Routledge Archaeologies of the Viking World)
(London: Routledge, 2023. xv, 273p. Illus. ISBN 9780367482787. Stg£130)

THe emergence of towns and urban lifestyles in Ireland coincided with the arrival of the Vikings and the appearance of the post-and-wattle Type 1 house. These houses reflect a crucial transition to urban living with its implications for individuals, households, and society. This study of Ireland's Viking-Age towns uses household archaeology to assess domestic buildings as homes where people lived, worked, and died. The author draws on a variety of archaeological data to conduct comparative analyses of some 500 Viking-Age urban houses, asking how those who lived in these early towns, most especially Dublin, created a sense of place and belonging in newly emerging urban environments.

Dublin castle: from fortress to palace. Volume 2: the Viking age archaeology
Ann Lynch, Conleth Manning & Ken Wiggins
Incorporating the results of excavations by Marcus Ó hEochaidhe
(Dublin: National Monuments Service, 2023. xiv, 327p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781446880968. €50)

SIgnificant evidence for Viking-age habitation, including post-and-wattle houses, was uncovered as part of the first archaeological excavation to be carried out in Dublin, at the Cross Block in 1961–2. Further evidence of habitation was excavated at the areas of the Cork Tower and Powder Tower in 1985–7, with elements of the eastern defences of the Viking-age town recorded within the footprint of the latter tower. The contextualisation of artefacts discovered during the excavations together with the analysis of environmental samples, faunal and human remains and metalworking debris throw much light on everyday living conditions and craft activity within the Viking town. Specialist contributions place the findings of these excavations within their national and international context.

Discovering medieval Ferns, County Wexford
Edited by Stephen Mandal, Michael Potterton & Denis Shine
(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2023. xxvi, 357p. Illus. Pbk. ISBN 9781801510219. €29.95)

FErns was one of south-east Ireland's most important medieval settlements, and this is reflected in the archaeological and built heritage of the town. Probably founded by St Aidan at the end of the sixth century, Ferns was later a royal seat and developed as the centre of an influential medieval diocese. Substantial structures are still accessible to visitors today of which the thirteenth-century castle is probably the best known. This well illustrated book draws on the expertise of an interdisciplinary team of scholars who discuss the new evidence uncovered in recent archaeological and historical investigations of St Mary's Abbey, a watermill, and other structures and artefacts, to expand our understanding of the royal and ritual landscape of medieval Ferns.

Beaubec, Co. Meath: excavation of a French Cistercian grange in the Boyne Valley
Geraldine Stout & Matthew Stout

(Julianstown, Co. Meath: Chapel Press, 2023. xviii, 301p. Illus. ISBN 9781399968508 €30 plus postage)

Excavations in the townland of Bey More, Co. Meath, from 2019 to 2021, led by Geraldine and Matt Stout have been promptly and comprehensively reported in this illustrated large-format book. While some late Neolithic and early medieval items were recovered, most of the finds relate to the era of medieval settlement when the land was used as a Cistercian enclosed farm. The book opens with a detailed discussion of the historical landscape and the location chosen by the Cistercians for their abbey at Beaubec. The detail of the excavation is recorded and there is discussion of woodland, cultivation, the grange system, farming practices and trades, and of the various buildings that occupied the site, whether monastic, residential or for farm use.

Medieval Dublin XIX
Edited by Seán Duffy
(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2023. 335p. Illus. ISBN 9781846829673)

Another essay collection in this well established interdisciplinary series was published in 2023. Catherine Swift explores the world of traders and trading by Dublin's merchants in the late Viking and early Anglo-Norman era. Bruce Campbell studies of the places of origin of Dublin's population in the aftermath of the Anglo-Norman conquest in 1170 and Grace O'Keeffe compiles a prosopography of the priors of the hospital of St John the Baptist. Bernadette Williams shows what the annals of John de Pembridge can tell us about the city's history in the era of the Black Death. Randolph Jones examines the last will and testament of William Hogeson, Dublin's mayor in 1514–15, and Lenore Fischer reconsiders the identity of the Old English of the Pale, as seen through the writings of Christopher St Lawrence, seventh baron of Howth. Paul Duffy reports on two major excavations at Aungier Street and George's Street, where partial foundations of the medieval church of St Peter were found. There are studies of skeletal remains by Joseph Harbison and René Gapert in the vicinity of the Hospital of St John the Baptist, Thomas Street, by Maeve Tobin at the site of the medieval abbey of St Thomas the Martyr, and Jennie Coughlan near St Peter's parish church in Aungier Street and Stephen's Street.

Louth history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county
Edited by William Nolan
(Dublin: Geography Publications, 2023. xxxv, 860p. Illus., maps. Hbk. ISBN 9780906602867. €60)

There is plenty to enlighten the settlement historian among the 33 chapters in this new volume on Louth. Gabriel Cooney surveys the prehistory of County Louth and Donald Murphy discusses the early medieval archaeology. Eamonn P. Kelly assesses the role of the Vikings while Hélène Bradley Davies provides a geographical analysis of Anglo-Norman rural settlement and Brendan Smith takes the story of colonial Louth up to 1450. More specific sites considered in other chapters include Castle Roche, Mellifont Abbey, the Barmeath Estate, the linen mills in Ravensdale, and the architecture of Drogheda in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. William Nolan contributes an intriguing essay on John Arwel Edwards' rural geography of Louth (1965).

Landscapes of the learned : placing Gaelic literati in Irish lordships, 1300–1600
Elizabeth FitzPatrick
(Medieval History and Archaeology)
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023. xv, 353p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9780192855749. Stg£83)

This major new study of the Gaelic literati and their estates in late medieval Ireland is a thoroughly researched and elegantly written work. Elizabeth FitzPatrick investigates the built landscape and material remains of the learned elite to situate them in the landscape. She provides a nuanced assessment of the intellectual and cultural milieu of this key element of Gaelic society, by focussing on precisely where and how they lived. Extensive fieldwork has resulted in a series of case studies of the estates, dwellings and schools of members of the learned class, presented in a well illustrated and closely argued book. FitzPatrick is an unrivalled authority on the archaeological and topographic evidence for Gaelic lordly society in the late middle ages, and this book deserves to be widely read and understood.

Ireland's sea fisheries, 1400–1600: economics, environment and ecology
Patrick W. Hayes
(Irish Historical Monographs)
(Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2023. xv, 311p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781783277063. Stg£90)

Environmental, political and economic history are combined in this study of early modern Irish sea fisheries. Among the changes leading to decline of the fisheries towards the end of the sixteenth century were the influx of cheap cod from the Newfoundland fisheries, shifting climatic conditions, over-exploitation of fish stocks, and the destabilising warfare in late Tudor Ireland that allowed pirates to thrive.

Moygara Castle, County Sligo and the O'Garas of Coolavin
Edited by Kieran O'Conor
(Dublin: Four Courts Presss, 2023. 285p. Illus., maps. Hbk. ISBN 9781846827976. €45)

Moygara castle was built by the O'Garas on an elevated site, probably in the early fifteenth century. Though it is not precisely dated, it remains one of the most significant masonry-built medieval structures in Connacht, with its high curtain walls, gatehouse and four towers. The archaeological and historical essays presented here shed new light on the castle and its functions as the centre of the O'Gara lordship of Coolavin between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among those who owned Moygara was Fergal O'Gara, MP, patron of the Annals of the Four Masters in the early seventeenth century.

Magnates and merchants in early modern Kilkenny

Edited by Jane Fenlon & Sarah Maguire
(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2023. 184p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781801510899. €50)

Kilkenny was a prosperous town in the early modern period, thanks to the efforts of the merchant elite as well as the Butlers of Ormond. This essay collection addresses several topics of interest to settlement historians. Linda Doran examines the urban landscape of medieval New Ross, Danielle O'Donovan discusses the architecture and sculpture of the Ormonds, and Jane Fenlon looks at the houses and wealth of early modern Kilkenny merchants.

The Maxwells of Finnebrogue and the gentry of County Down, c.1610–c.1960: a resident and responsible elite
A.P.W. Malcomson
(Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2023. xxix, 642p. ISBN 9781913993146. £49.99)

Varied aspects of the world of the Irish landowning elite of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are explored in this handsome, large-format volume. This study of the gentry of Co. Down, defined as 'titled and untitled aristocracy', tells the story of the Maxwell, later Waring Maxwell, later still Perceval-Maxwell, family of Finnebrogue, Downpatrick. The opening chapter sets the scene with a discussion of landownership in the barony of Lecale, 1554–1710. Chapters two and five discuss the building of Finnebrogue in the 1660s and 1670s and its remodelling in the 1790s. A recurring theme is the Down gentry's sense of pride in their county's superiority over all other counties in Ireland, revealed in its buildings as well as in the residence-record and public spirit of their own gentry class.

Landscape design & revolution in Ireland and the United States, 1688–1815
Finola O'Kane
(London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2023. ix, 262p. Illus. ISBN 9781913107383. Stg£45)

Eighteenth-century ideologies of improvement were applied to already complex landscapes across the western world. Finola O'Kane's latest book is lavishly illustrated and offers comparative studies of the realities of designed landscapes and property structures on both sides of the Atlantic as they were formed during the long eighteenth century. Questions addressed include how newly formed republics and well-travelled revolutionaries, with their ideas of equality and freedom, translated their principles into spatial form. Among the Irish places discussed in this sophisticated transnational analysis are Belcamp, Co. Dublin, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, and Ballintemple House, Co. Carlow.

Borrowed landscapes: China and Japan in the historic houses and gardens of Britain and Ireland
Emile de Bruijn
(National Trust series)
(London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2023. 256p. Illus. ISBN 9781781300985. Stg£35)

From the seventeenth century onwards the design and decoration of interiors and gardens in Britain and Ireland was profoundly influenced by the importation of Chinese and Japanese luxury goods. This profusely illustrated book explores the impact of those trends on the country houses of Britain and Ireland in a series of chronological chapters covering the period from 1600 to 1900.

Brickmaking in Ireland: a gazetteer. County survey of brickmaking history and brick use in buildings
Susan Roundtree
(Dublin: Wordwell, 2023. vii, 344p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781913934729. €40)

Over the past four centuries, most brick used in Irish buildings was made locally. Conservation architect Susan Roundtree explores the rich social, industrial and architectural history associated with the local manufacture of brick. The gazetteer identifies the remnants of local brickfields and brickworks, and also illustrates a variety of buildings and structures in each county that show the range of types and uses of native brick.

Irish follies and whimsical architecture
George Munday
(Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2023. 191p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781788494335. €32.99)

Landscape photographer George Munday's work is accompanied by stories of some of the follies he has visited and photographed for this attractive book. Some of the structures are well known, and in state care, but many others are much less familiar, and in variable condition, looked after by private owners throughout the country.

An architectural history of the Church of Ireland
Michael O'Neill
(Dublin: Church of Ireland Publishing, 2023. 394p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781904884897. €55)

Broadly chronological chapters from medieval to modern provide a comprehensive overview of the architectural styles associated with Church of Ireland buildings through the ages. Some medieval churches continued in use for a very long time. 'Planter gothic' churches were added in the seventeenth century followed by Classical-style urban churches in the early eighteenth. Still particularly prominent in the landscape are the hall and tower church type of the Board of First Fruits in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Each chapter is well illustrated with photographs, maps and antiquarian drawings. Thematic chapters on specific topics such as glebe houses, cathedrals, and church interiors are also included.

Town & country: perspectives from the Irish Historic Towns Atlas
Edited by Sarah Gearty & Michael Potterton
(Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2023. xvii, 294p. Illus. Pbk. ISBN 9781911479819. €30)

Drawing comparisons between different Irish historic town atlases, case studies are used to consider ways in which particular urban landscapes interacted with their suburbs and wider hinterlands over time. Howard Clarke and Ruth Johnson discuss the Viking era, James Galloway, Margaret Murphy and Michael Potterton examine the later middle ages, Raymond Gillespie and Brendan Scott look at town and country in the early modern era, while Frank Cullen, Colm Lennon, Ruth McManus and Séamas Ó Maitiú consider Dublin suburbs in the nineteenth century. Broader interpretive essays are presented by Michael Potterton and by Chris Dyer. The book is dedicated to historical geographer J.H. Andrews, and part of the book is devoted to essays on his research and publications, along with a bibliography of his writings.

History of Ireland in maps
Pat Liddy
(Dublin & Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 2023. 256p. Illus., maps. Hbk. ISBN 9780008469504. Stg£25)

More than 100 maps of Ireland through the ages are used to illustrate this large book which shows how cartography has both documented and influenced changes over time as the island has evolved. Many of the maps will be well familiar to readers of *Áitreabh*. The book opens with the prehistoric era and continues chronologically down to the present time, even glancing at a 'future Ireland' in the context of rising sea levels.

Mapping south Kerry: 450 years of maps and a changing landscape
Arnold Horner
(Dublin: Wordwell, 2023. xv, 464p. Illus., maps. ISBN 9781913934712. €50)

This exceptionally comprehensive book tracks how maps have recorded five centuries of far-reaching changes to the landscape, society and economy of south Kerry, documenting the condition and ownership of the land and charting the surrounding seas. Major mapping projects such as the Down Survey and the Ordnance Survey of Ireland are examined alongside many lesser-known maps, to illustrate how the past has molded the present in south-west Ireland. The first and most substantial part of this profusely illustrated book is discursive text analysing the maps and what they represent. Part 'B' is an atlas of key maps, while part 'C' is a select list, by repository, of maps relating to south Kerry. Many of the maps listed in this inventory are in publicly accessible archives while others are in private collections.

Kerry from maps and charts
Noel Kissane
([no place given]. Killiney Press, 2023. xix, 121p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781739499709. €30)

Over 100 printed or manuscript maps of the Kerry region are analysed here, ranging from Ptolomy's world maps in the second century AD to twentieth-century British Admiralty charts. The author discusses the portrayal of Kerry in local Grand Jury maps, landed estate maps, and maps produced by commercial publishers as well as the various maps created on behalf of the British government through the nineteenth century. Large reproductions are included of twenty-four of the more significant maps and charts.

Dublin: mapping the city
Joseph Brady & Paul Ferguson
(Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2023. xix, 252p. Illus. ISBN 9781780277516. Stg£30)

This selection of historical maps can be used to trace the growth and development of Dublin from the early seventeenth century to the present day. Arranged chronologically, well-known maps recount the big stories, such as the impact of the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 or the act of Union in 1800, or the effects of the Easter Rising in 1916. Some of the maps selected also tell more detailed local stories, such as the development of a 'model suburb' at Marino after the First World War, the creation of a colony of Irish speakers in the late 1920s, the location of the smartest shops in the 1930s, revolutionary plans for redevelopment of the Four Courts area north of the Liffey in the 1940s, and the growing need for various traffic control measures including parking meters and how they changed the way people could use Dublin city centre.

A city runs through them: Dublin and its twenty river bridges
Fergal Tobin
(London: Atlantic Books, 2023. xiv, 281p. Illus., maps. ISBN 9781838959357. Stg£20)

Dublin's first bridge was on the site of the present Fr Mathew bridge, just west of the Four Courts, at or very close to Áth Cliath, the ford of the hurdles from which Dublin gets its Irish name. For more than 600 years there was only that one bridge across the river Liffey, the town having developed on the southern bank of the river. Three more bridges were built between 1670 and 1690 prompting expansion on the north side of the river. Within a century, Dublin was being talked of as one of the ten largest cities in the whole of Europe. Built over a span of a thousand years, the twenty bridges that now traverse the tidal section of the Liffey have each contributed to the city's development, as it pushed through the open fields north of the river and east towards the bay. Discussing the bridges in chronological order, Fergal Tobin charts the spatial growth of Ireland's capital city.

Kilmaine, from landed gentry estates to family farms: a modern land history of Kilmaine parish
Gerry Keane
([no place given] Ard Choill Publishing, 2023. 357p. ISBN 9780995708815. €25)

Up to the early twentieth century the land of Kilmaine village and parish was owned by about 25 landlords, most of whom lived elsewhere in Ireland, some in Dublin or Laois, but others more locally. This study traces the history of landownership in the area from the 1640s down to the twentieth century. There are profiles of the various landed estates and their owners. There is a particular focus on the period of about

thirty years during which land was purchased from former landlords and resold to the local tenants and to families relocated from other more congested areas. The impact of the work of the Congested Districts Board, the Estates Commissioners and the Land Commission is revealed in this detailed local study, which also considers the difficulties encountered in the process of land reform.

Portmagee, Co. Kerry: the origins of an Atlantic smuggling village
Denis Casey
(Maynooth Studies in Local History, 162)
(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2023. 86p. Illus., maps. Pbk. ISBN 9781801510950. €12.95)

THe village of Portmagee was founded by Theobald MacGhee, a smuggler, and in this short book Denis Casey investigates the complex story of the village's origins in the early eighteenth century, and the exploits of its founder, against the wider backdrop of its Atlantic coastal setting and connections.

Making the imperial nation: colonization, politics, and English identity, 1660–1700
Gabriel Glickman
(The Lewis Walpole series in eighteenth-century culture and history)
(New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2023. v, 405p. Illus. ISBN 9780300255065. £30)

VIgorous debates were provoked by contact with peoples from other cultures as England acquired an extensive territorial empire. New questions were raised about England relations with Ireland and Scotland as Stuart monarchs tightened control over existing territories and encouraged schemes for more distant colonial expansion.

Edmund Sexten Pery: the politics of virtue and intrigue in eighteenth-century Ireland
David A. Fleming
(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2023. 310p. Illus., maps. Hbk. ISBN 9781801510875. €65)

EDmund Sexten Pery was at the heart of Irish political life for much of the second half of the eighteenth century, during which time he championed various economic and urban projects, not least in Limerick. The family seat was at Stacpole Court, Co. Clare and Pery inherited over 800 acres in and around Limerick city and a further 2,500 acres in Co. Clare. In addition to analysing his political career, this fascinating biography documents Pery's activities in the development of eighteenth-century Limerick, where he invested in quays, bridges, canals, and a new custom house as well as developing significant residential areas. His role as an urban developer in eighteenth-century Ireland was matched only by the Gardiners and Fitzwilliams in Dublin.

Visitors to the Country House in Ireland and Britain: welcome and unwelcome
Edited by Terence Dooley & Christopher Ridgway
(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2023. 283p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781801510271. €55)

ELite social networks were traditionally sustained through the exchange of invitations to visit large country houses. Later, with the rise of the railway and then the motor car, such houses became accustomed to receiving rather more visitors, eventually giving rise to the heritage tourism of today. Visits were sometimes recorded in journals or works of fiction, sketches or photographs, or even simple guestbooks. Some less welcome visitors, ranging from arsonists and looters to revolutionaries and political undesirables, also crossed the doorsteps of some of Britain and Ireland's best known country houses.

The lead mines: Ballycorus and Glendalough in the nineteenth century
Rob Goodbody
(Dublin: Wordwell, 2023. xv, 192p. Illus. Pbk. ISBN 9781913934873. €20)

LEad mines in the hills at Ballycorus in Co. Dublin and in the Glendalough valley and nearby Glendasan in Co. Wicklow were profitable businesses in the nineteenth century for the Mining Company of Ireland. Starting from the industrial archaeology still visible in the landscape, Rob Goodbody has conducted extensive research on these places and tells their story in this well-written and nicely illustrated book.

Hunger & hope: the Irish Famine migration from Strokestown, Roscommon in 1847
Edited by Christine Kinealy, Jason King & Mark G. McGowan
(Cork & Hamden CT: Cork University Press & Quinnipiac University Press, 2023. xii, 171p. Illus. Pbk. ISBN 9781736171226. €25)

ALmost 1,500 emigrants made the journey from Strokestown, Co. Mayo to Canada, via Dublin and Liverpool, at the height of the Irish Famine in 1847. They had lived on Major Denis Mahon's estate in Mayo and their travel to north America was subsidised with the intention of allowing them the opportunity of a better life elsewhere. These seven essays trace the journey and the subsequent settlement patterns in north America of those migrants that survived the Atlantic crossing.

Dwelling(s) in nineteenth-century Ireland
Edited by Heather Laird & Jay R. Roszman
(Society for the Study of Nineteenth-Century Ireland)
(Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023. xii, 300p. Illus. ISBN 9781802078787. Stg£80)

ESsays employing a range of methodological approaches including history, folklore and literature, art history and social policy, offer new perspectives on the material culture of domestic dwellings. Among the thirteen chapters there are discussions of fictionalized homes, social housing schemes, suburban living spaces, institutional living, migration and memories of the home-house, and gender and eviction. Rather than focus on the Big House, this volume looks at dwelling

spaces that were especially vulnerable to economic forces: the homes of the urban and rural poor, and the rising urban/suburban middle class, exploring their impact on housing and on cultural life. The editors' introduction provides an overview of related studies that have been published recently.

Day Place, Co. Kerry: 'The most respectable locality in Tralee'
Laurence Jones
(Maynooth Studies in Local History, 164)
(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2023. 78p. Illus. Pbk. ISBN 9781801510974. €12.95)

A fashionable terrace of ten Georgian houses in Tralee attracted some of the town's wealthiest residents. By tracing the changing local elite who settled in this terrace Laurence Jones can tell the story of the economic and political transformation of Tralee in the century from 1830 to 1930.

The building of Adare Manor: a family chronicle
Anna-Maria Hajba
(Dublin: Eastwood Books (Wordwell Group), 2023. xix, 385p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781913934309. €40)

In the 1820s, the Wyndham Quin family, earls of Dunraven, began a major rebuilding project to transform their house in Adare, Co. Limerick, into a Tudor/Gothic masterpiece. Among the architects involved were Lewis Nockalls Cottingham, Augustus W.N. Pugin and P.C. Hardwick. The work was largely funded from the family's Welsh estates in Glamorgan, and this book draws on extensive archival records in the University of Limerick and in the National Library of Wales to tell the story of the family and their major building project from the 1820s to the 1870s. Watercolours, architectural drawings and other depictions of houses owned by the family and comparable houses elsewhere add to the interest and attractiveness of the book.

Spectral mansions: the making of a Dublin tenement, 1800–1914
Timothy Murtagh
(Dublin: Four Courts, Press. 2023. xii, 265p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781846828676. €30)

Before the Act of Union of 1800, Henrietta Street was one of Dublin's most prestigious addresses, home to the city's social and legal elite. The street took thirty years to build, between the 1720s and the 1750s. By 1900 those same houses had become tenements, housing the very poor in unsanitary and often extremely overcrowded conditions. This book investigates Dublin's nineteenth-century housing problems that led to the transformation of a once refined street into a centre for slum dwelling and deprivation. The early twentieth-century population was a transient one, with only 16 of the 152 families in 1901 still there in 1911. This book is a project of the Dublin City Council Heritage Office, and is connected with the creation of a museum at 14 Henrietta Street.

The land war in Ireland: famine, philanthropy and moonlighting
Laurence M. Geary
(Cork: Cork University Press, 2023. xii, 300p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781782055525. €39)

Civic and religious relief agencies were active in responding to the famine that affected the west of Ireland in the late 1870s and early 1880s, providing some humanitarian relief. There was a strong international dimension to the relief effort involving Australasia and North America. The philanthropic response is shown to have been complicated by the interplay between philanthropy and political activism. Agrarian secret societies responded in a different way to the plight of the impoverished and marginalised communities affected, blaming the crisis on the shortcomings of landlords and government.

Our ancient landscapes: holy wells of Ireland
Tamlyn McHugh
Edited by Ian Doyle
([Kilkenny]: The Heritage Council, 2023. 36p. Illus., map. Pbk. ISBN 9781906304614. no price given)

Holy wells are embedded in the landscape throughout the island of Ireland. Their location and form can vary a great deal, on low and high ground, in urban as well as rural areas, though most are found close to church sites. Holy wells are recorded archaeological monuments, protected under National Monuments legislation, but the focus of this illustrated introductory booklet is on folklore and modern visitor experiences rather than archaeology.

Wells and wellbeing: the hydrogeology of Irish holy wells
Bruce Misstear
(Dublin: Geological Society of Ireland, 2023. Illus., maps. ISBN 9781899702709. €20 + postage from GSI)

Stories abound of the therapeutic and curative powers of water from holy wells in Ireland. Now, Bruce Misstear has undertaken scientific analysis of the chemical composition of the water from a large sample of holy wells throughout Ireland, and his findings on the links between water chemistry and human health are now available in print. While the water from some Irish holy wells is not potable, in other instances the mineral composition indicates a potential therapeutic benefit in some circumstances.

The Irish Forestry Society, 1902–1923
Hugh Crawford
(Glenealy, Co. Wicklow: Society of Irish Foresters, 2023. v, 222p. Pbk. ISBN 9781399952316. €20)

Founded in 1902, the Irish Forestry Society sought to counteract the level of deforestation that had occurred in Ireland in the late nineteenth century. The Society's work, driven by a group of individuals from widely differing social and political backgrounds, was undertaken during a politically volatile era in early twentieth-century Ireland, and changed the course of Irish forestry at that time.

Homeward bound: return migration from Ireland and India at the end of the British Empire
Niamh Dillon
(The Glucksman Irish diaspora series)
(New York: New York University Press, 2023. x, 245p. ISBN 9781479817313. US$30)

First-hand accounts of those who had lived in and departed from Ireland and India following independence and subsequently settled in Britain, are the key source through which Niamh Dillon explores concepts of empire in the post-colonial era. The impact of national independence movements in the first half of the twentieth century for Southern Irish Protestants after 1922, and for the British in India after 1947, was cataclysmic and prompted a large-scale migration to Britain. This thought-provoking book focuses on those Irish protestants with 'neither a big house nor a horse' who were working in the civil service or the judiciary or in business, people for whom Britain was their 'imagined home'. Many of them opted to resettle there. Return migrants chose Britain because of continuing connections with it as 'home', but often found their colonial experience was not valued in a country re-orienting itself to the post-war order. Between 1911 and 1926, the number of Protestants in the Irish Free State dropped from approximately 313,000 to 208,000, and in a similar way much of the British population left India after 1947, but found themselves culturally, ethnically and politically separate in Britain.

Herbert Simms: an architect for the people
Lindie Naughton
(Dublin: New Island Books, 2023. 244p. Pbk. ISBN 9781848409101. €17)

Herbert Simms designed high quality social housing in Dublin on behalf of Dublin Corporation between 1932 and 1948. Simms believed that publicly funded housing developments should be built to last 200 years. The distinctive modernist and art deco designs of his inner-city flat complexes proved successful and many of the apartment blocks he masterminded are still fully occupied. He also led the team that planned, commissioned and built the extensive suburban housing districts of Crumlin on Dublin's south-west side and Cabra on the north-west, comprising well laid out compact family homes with gardens. Few architects have left a more distinctive mark on Dublin's urban landscape.

More than concrete blocks, volume 3. 1973–99: Dublin city's twentieth-century buildings and their stories
Edited by Ellen Rowley & Carole Pollard
(Dublin: UCD Press with Dublin City Council, 2023. 512p. Illus. Pbk. ISBN 9781910820124. €30)

More than 30 case studies of particular developments or buildings are presented in this essay collection, and there are three broadly chronological overview essays. Carole Pollard assesses the 1970s, Ellen Rowley the 1980s, and Merlo Kelly the 1990s. This is the third and final volume in the series and the focus of the various studies is on the relationship between architecture and the inhabitants of Dublin city, highlighting connections between Dublin's late twentieth-century buildings and the city's evolving economic, social, cultural and political history.

Dublin: creation, occupation, destruction
Niall McCullough
(Dublin, Anne Street Press, 2023. [vi], 328p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9780951536483. €40)

Looking back from the early twenty-first century at the way Dublin city was made, this book considers the unintended ways its buildings came to be used, and how so much was destroyed. By documenting losses in the city, the book encourages the reader to reimagine relationships between people and space in various parts of the city over time. At a time when glassy office developments are rapidly replacing streets of small houses, over 400 photos are used to recall a 'vanished city' and what it was like to live there.

Landscape and environment in contemporary Irish art
Yvonne Scott
Edited by William Laffan
(Tralee: Churchill House Press, 2023. 183p. Illus. Hbk. ISBN 9781399956185. €35)

This beautifully illustrated large-format book celebrates modern expressions of landscape art in Ireland. Showcasing examples of the work of more than a hundred contemporary artists, the book illustrates how landscapes are constantly changing as social change inevitably alters the physical environment and the human relationship to it.

A selection of key electronic resources for Irish archaeology, historical geography and architectural history

Bernadette Cunningham

This is a selection of some key online resources for Irish archaeology, local history, historical geography and architectural history that may be of particular interest to readers of *Áitreabh*.

Archaeology The National Monuments Service provides a wealth of authoritative archaeological information on this website, much of it derived from decades of research on sites and monuments the length and breadth of Ireland. Data previously published in print format in county-by-county *Archaeological Inventories* can now be accessed on the 'historic environment viewer' on this site. https://www.archaeology.ie

Buildings of Ireland Database of over 65,000 buildings and gardens documented by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). The website also includes digitised versions of county booklets previously published in print format. https://www.buildingsofireland.ie

Down Survey A digital version of a key late seventeenth-century historical and cartographic source for many Irish counties excluding Connacht. http://downsurvey.tcd.ie

Excavations Authoritative short reports on Irish archaeological excavations. The reports are uploaded by licensed archaeologists onto this fully searchable free website. The database includes the content of reports published annually in print from 1969 to 2010 as well as those reports published online since 2011. https://excavations.ie

Griffith's Valuation Griffith's Valuation is among the useful mid-nineteenth-century historical sources that can be accessed freely on this site. http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/

HeritageMaps A special data-viewer of built, cultural and natural heritage, compiled by the Heritage Council using datasets drawn from state agencies and local authorities. http://heritagemaps.ie

Irish Historic Towns Atlas (IHTA) Digital editions of some of the Irish Historic Towns Atlas series are available online, as well as prototype GIS-based digital atlases for Derry/Londonderry, Dungarvan and Galway. https://www.ria.ie/research-projects/irish-historic-towns-atlas/ihta-digital

Irish History Online The national bibliography for Irish history. https://www.ria.ie/irish-history-online

LandedEstates A comprehensive resource guide to the landed estates of Connacht and Munster, *c.* 1700–1914. http://www.landedestates.ie

Logainm The national place-names database. The data has recently been expanded to include street-names (currently in English only). There is also a crowd-sourcing (*meitheal*) element of this project, where information on local place-names can be uploaded. This is on a separate part of the website: https://meitheal.logainm.ie/ga/ https://www.logainm.ie/en/

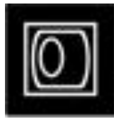
Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) The Irish national mapping agency website includes a section on historic maps. https://www.osi.ie/products/professional-mapping/historical-mapping/

Paddi The bibliography for Irish architecture, listing publications on all aspects of the built environment and environmental planning in Ireland, north and south. https://www.paddi.net

Place Names Northern Ireland An authoritative guide to the origin and meaning of over 30,000 place-names in Northern Ireland. Includes a searchable database of current and historic place-names and a map depicting townland and parish boundaries. http://www.placenamesni.org

PRONI Historical maps viewer Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and Land and Property Services Northern Ireland have combined their resources to provide access to historical maps. The viewer displays county, parish and townland boundaries and includes information on sites, buildings and landmarks of historical interest. It provides access to historical Ordnance Survey maps for Northern Ireland counties as well as modern base maps. https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/about-proni-historical-maps-viewer

UCD open source maps Downloadable versions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historic maps in UCD Library. https://digital.ucd.ie/view/ivrla:426



Group
for the Study
of
Irish Historic Settlement

Historic Settlement: Roscommon

Report on the Fiftieth Annual Regional Conference of the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement, Abbey Hotel, Roscommon Town, 5–7 May 2023.

The Fiftieth Annual Regional Conference of the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement, in association with the County Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society, was held in Roscommon Town, Co. Roscommon. Members and guests discussed a range of topics relating to historic settlement within the county and slightly beyond.

Friday 5 May 2023

Registration was followed by a talk by keynote speaker Kieran O'Conor, who provided attendees with an overview of the archaeology of North Roscommon from prehistory to *c.*1650 AD. The broad scope of his talk ranged from Mesolithic hunter-gatherers to Neolithic farmers and megalith builders, through the Iron Age and medieval periods, up to the aftermath of the Cromwellian invasion.

Saturday 6 May 2023

The morning session comprised two talks. The first, given by Kate Robb and Camilla Brännström, was titled 'Farming an archaeological landscape: challenges, trials, and future thinking'. In a case study funded by the Roscommon County Council and Heritage Office, they discussed the risks posed to archaeology in their study area by animal grazing. They proposed practical mitigating and preventative measures to allow the ground to recover from damage and prevent further damage caused by animal erosion.

The second talk, titled 'Rathra: a royal stronghold of early medieval Connacht', was given by Joe Fenwick. He presented a detailed case study on the site of Rathra, taking us through the history of the site, drawing on comparative examples to make connections with the geography and other sites of human occupation in the surrounding landscape.

After a break for refreshments, the talks continued into the afternoon with Daniel Curley's 'The archaeology of the later medieval Ó Cellaig lords of Uí Maine and Tír Maine (1100–1600)'. Drawing on the continued use of settlement sites such as crannogs and townland names, Daniel produced a narrative of continued Gaelic influence and wealth throughout the late medieval period.

The final talk before lunch was given by Harman Murtagh, who discussed 'Anglo-Norman settlement in South Roscommon: its rise and demise'. This was an account of the mixed fortunes of Anglo-Norman lords and the Crown in their efforts to take and hold power and territory in South Roscommon. Particularly important to their efforts, as well as our understanding of their activities, are the complex sites of Rindoon and Ballintubber. The former was a royal stronghold complete with a castle, inland port, religious house, and hospital. The latter, consisting of a castle and town, was built by Hugh de Burgh. Anglo-Norman power appears to have unravelled in both locations owing to the resistance of Gaelic lords and the disinterest of various English kings.

After lunch, a field trip was organised, taking us first to Rathcroghan Visitor Centre. Here, a self-guided tour of the colourful and interactive exhibits brought the prehistoric and medieval landscapes of Rathcroghan to life. We were then met at Moygara Castle, across the border in Co. Sligo, by Kieran O'Conor, who gave an account of the history and architectural development of the later medieval Gaelic fortress. Finally, we visited the Cistercian Abbey of Boyle, where the history and conservation of the site were discussed by Fionnbarr Moore and Geraldine Stout. During the bus journey, it was possible to see the elusive 'pits and pitfields', which would be the topic of Martin Timoney's talk the following morning.

After returning to the hotel, a wine reception took place to launch Victoria L. McAlister and Linda Shine's 'Rethinking medieval Ireland and beyond: essays in honour of T.B. Barry'. Matthew Stout

introduced the honoured guest, Terrance B. Barry, with an overview of his many important contributions to our current understanding of medieval Ireland, particularly in relation to settlement (moated sites) and the identification of the ringwork castle. Professor Barry made his acknowledgements with gratitude and humility and gave his appraisal of the state of current and future research before handing over to Dr Linda Shine, co-editor of the festschrift produced in his honour, who expressed her personal gratitude and affection for her former teacher. This was followed by the conference dinner.

Sunday 7 May 2023

The Annual General Meeting of the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement was held in the morning. Margaret Murphy (President), David Fleming (Treasurer), and Linda Shine (Secretary) presided. The decision was taken to increase the membership fee from €20 to €25. All but one committee member chose to remain in place, and this was accepted by the AGM. A new member, Anne-Julie Lafaye, was then added to the committee.

Following the AGM, Matthew Potter delivered his talk on 'The local state and the development of an urban network in County Roscommon since 1600'. Matthew provided a detailed account of the development of the urban network in County Roscommon, charting the transition from the feudal system of asset management to a system of governance that presided over society to a greater extent.

Martin Timoney provided an update on his working theories relating to the elusive phenomenon he refers to as 'pitfields', which are undeniably present in the landscape of Mid-North Roscommon but so far lack a clear explanation. Martin provided the group with strong evidence for the human origin of these enigmatic features, such as correlation with field boundaries, as well as excavation evidence showing that the pits were filled not long after being dug. He also suggested a rethinking of the naming of these features, as perhaps the word being used in discourse might obscure a better interpretation.

Mary Timoney delivered a paper on 'Commemoration in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Roscommon graveyards and churches'. Mary provided a succinct overview of the artistic and geographical journeys of the mason families responsible for these carved memorial stones, through close analysis and comparison of examples across Roscommon and as far away as Kilkenny.

The final two talks of the conference commenced after a short refreshment break. Brian Gurrin gave a talk titled 'Settlement and population distribution in the Diocese of Elphin, 1749'. This looked at how census information for the Diocese of Elphin was used in conjunction with landscape, mapping, and historical evidence to work out patterns of settlement and population change over time.

Lastly, Oisín Ó Drisceoil concluded the conference proper with his talk, 'Strokestown House and the development of the town by the Pakenham Mahon family'. This talk focused on the lives and legacy of the Pakenham Mahon family in North Roscommon. He explained how they rose to prominence after the Cromwellian invasion and created a dynasty influencing the landscape as well as the local populations through land management and politics, which lasted until the turmoil of the Great Famine.

After lunch, the group met up and proceeded to Roscommon Abbey, a Dominican priory founded in 1253 by Fedlim Ó Conchobair, king of Connacht. There, the various architectural features and effigial tomb were discussed in conjunction with the building's history and its influential patrons. This was followed by a tour of Roscommon Castle, given by Kieran O'Conor, which brought the weekend to a close.

Congratulations to the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement for their successful organisation of this conference in Roscommon Town. I would like to thank the speakers for sharing their insightful and fascinating research over the course of the conference, as well as others in attendance for their interesting conversation throughout the weekend. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the conference organisers for the Niamh Crowley Student Bursary, which enabled me to attend.

Daniel O'Mahony
PHD candidate and Teagasc Walsh Scholar, School of Archaeology, UCD

Niamh Crowley Student Bursary recipient 2023

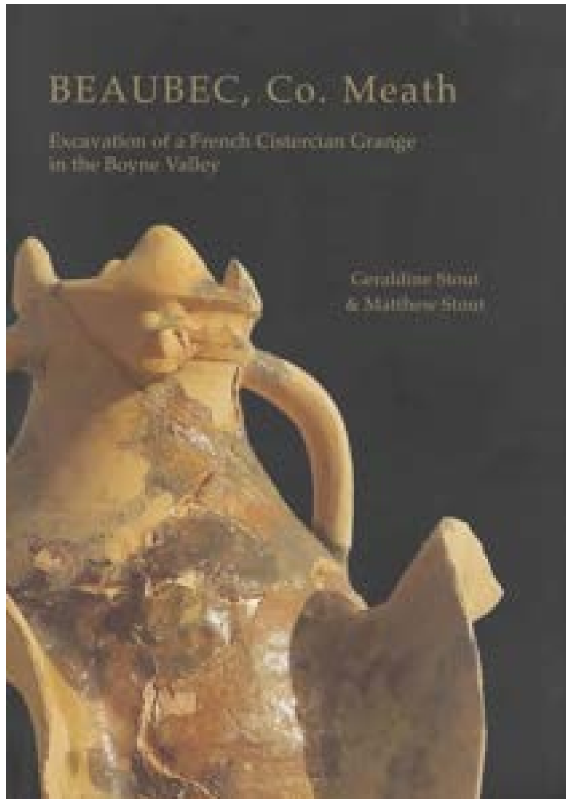
Reviews

Beaubec, Co. Meath: excavation of a French Cistercian grange in the Boyne Valley

Geraldine Stout & Matthew Stout

(Julianstown, Co. Meath: Chapel Press, 2023. xviii, 301p. Illus. ISBN 9781399968508 €30 plus postage. Contact gracemccullen@gmail.com)

THIS publication is a shining example of what can be achieved by limited excavation in the right place led by the right people. Over three summers (2019, 2020, 2021) Geraldine and Matthew Stout brought together professional archaeologists and an international band of energetic volunteers to dig at Beaubec, Co. Meath. Following the excavation, work started on the analysis of finds, and interpretation of the site. The result is this informative, comprehensive and beautifully presented book which adds substantially to our knowledge of ecclesiastical granges, farming and diet in late-medieval Ireland. The book is dedicated to John McCullen, owner and caretaker of the remains at Bey More, who also wrote the preface. McCullen was instrumental in getting funding from FBD for the dig and the publication. The name FBD is synonymous with farming and rural communities in Ireland and their support for a project which revealed so much about past land-use and farming is both appropriate and auspicious.



In the late twelfth century Hugh de Lacy, Lord of Meath, whose family had strong ties to Normandy, granted the Cistercian Abbey of Beaubec in Normandy in the region of 1,000 hectares south of his new urban foundation of Drogheda. Beaubec by Drogheda (as it became known) is a rare example of a monastic grange attached to a Norman Cistercian house rather than an Irish house. Common in England, these alien priories or cells were staffed by a small number of monks from the mother house. Their primary function was to act as agricultural production and processing units with surpluses either transferred back to the mother house or sold to provide funds for the same. Beaubec by Drogheda successfully fulfilled these obligations, exporting wool, skins and grain out through the port of Drogheda for over a century. Hostilities between England and France, which finally erupted into the Hundred Years War, put an end to lands in England, Wales and the Lordship of Ireland being used for the benefit of 'foreign' houses. The grange of Beaubec was first leased and then in 1332, granted to Furness Abbey, a Welsh Cistercian house which already had lands in the area. A combination of absentee owners and the environmental shock of the Black Death resulted in the site's abandonment in the late fourteenth century. The excavation, detailed in the twenty-one chapters and four appendices of this book, provides us with an accessible and detailed account of the appearance, functions and connections of the grange in the late medieval period.

In Section 1 Aidan Giblin examines the landscape and location of the site including the all-important role of water management. The following chapters narrate the documentary history of Beaubec by Drogheda as well as its mother houses of Beaubec in Normandy and later Furness in England. David Thornton's chapter which painstakingly collates the names of the monks and attorneys representing the interests of both Beaubec and Furness abbeys in Ireland, completes this section.

Section 2 details the excavations that were conducted at Bey More townland over three July months between 2019 and 2021. The primary aim of this limited research excavation was to determine whether the site was indeed the location of the monastic site of Beaubec. In addition, there were the objectives of dating and understanding the upstanding remains and the layout of the settlement, identifying the agricultural economy of the site and exploring its internal and external contacts. Three areas were excavated: the interior of what turned out to be a service tower, an area to the north of this tower and an area to the south. Each area revealed a wealth of evidence for structures and activities, including a prehistoric ceremonial site, medieval cultivation ridges, a medieval barn and residence and a post-medieval avenue.

Sections 3 and 4 contain twelve chapters written by the experts who undertook the analysis of the artefacts and ecofacts uncovered by the excavations. Although the focus of the excavation was on the medieval activity, a prehistoric ceremonial timber pit circle was uncovered containing a lithic assemblage that is strongly indicative of Neolithic activity. The lithic material is analysed by Conor Brady in a well-illustrated chapter while Stephen Mandel examines a stone axehead which may have originated in Britain. Almost 800 medieval pottery sherds were recovered, the majority locally produced in Drogheda whose kilns churned out both coarse and fine wares. Examples of both found their way to Beaubec. Rosanne Meehan identified some imported Saintonge ware but it formed a relatively small proportion of the total assemblage. The ridge tiles and louver examined by Kieran Campbell also appear to have originated in Drogheda. The louver was a lantern-like structure fitted to the roof as a smoke-vent or for ventilation and lighting. Louver fragments have been recorded from excavations in Ireland but the Beaubec example is unique in its completeness, as can be seen by the image on the front of the publication.

A highlight of the metal finds is the silver groat of Edward III, minted in London and dated by Órla Scully to between 1360 and 1369. Although the site is situated on dry land, a small wood assemblage was uncovered, largely from the basal deposits of the moat and latrine. Catríona Moore and Ellen O Carroll identified various pegs, dowels and laths as well as some gaming pieces made of yew. A relatively large faunal assemblage is considered to be 'of national significance' by zooarchaeologist Fiona Beglane whose detailed and excellently presented report forms Chapter 13 of the volume. The importance of wool production on the grange is shown by the high proportion of sheep bones and the age-at-death data indicating that older adult sheep were slaughtered. A high proportion of the cattle bones also came from older individuals indicating that the meat eaten on the grange usually came from animals that had spent a period providing milk, wool or traction power.

Penny Johnston's discussion of the archaeobotanical remains focusses on the period after the beginning of the thirteenth century when the grange was fully operational and the lands around it were producing surpluses for the local and export markets. Wheat was the predominant cereal type in virtually all the samples examined and was particularly dominant in samples taken from the kiln, indicating that it was the preferred bread grain for the grange's inhabitants. While Beaubec is classified as a rural site, its proximity to Drogheda meant that imported foods would have been fairly easily obtained. Both grape and fig were recovered from the latrine deposits suggesting that these more 'exotic' foodstuffs did appear on the dining tables in the grange.

The discussion chapter which forms Section 5 draws on all the evidence assembled and puts it into the wider context of the state of our existing knowledge of medieval grange layout and residential and agricultural structures both in Ireland and in Britain. There is little doubt now that the site, interpreted as a thirteenth/fourteenth-century moated grange, was indeed the locus of the grange of Beaubec by Drogheda. The service tower was attached to a two-storey main chamber believed to be residential and possibly incorporating a chapel. The identification of a masonry barn is very significant given the dearth of knowledge of such structures in medieval Ireland. The Beaubec barn measured 26.80m long and 7.90m wide, nearly twice as long as the barn also excavated by the Stouts at Bective, making it comparable to the middle range of English tithe barns.

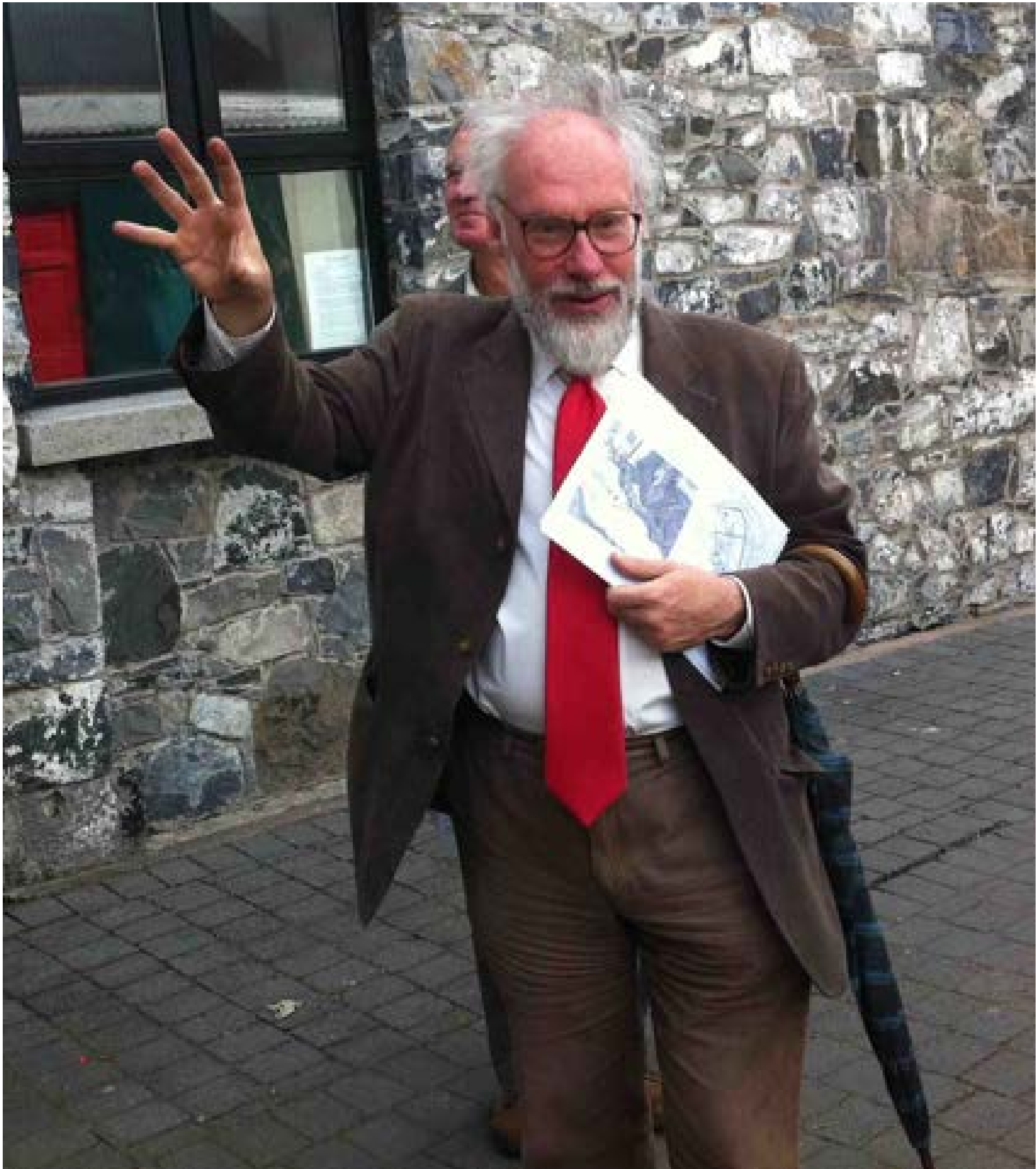
Most excavation reports would end at this point but the work at Beaubec has resulted in a significant legacy which is detailed in Section 6. Funding from the Community Monuments Fund has made possible both necessary conservation work and an infrastructure for the presentation and interpretation of the site, which is building up a reputation as a tourist destination. Chapter 18,

written by architect Chris Southgate and Geraldine Stout, details the conservation work and includes examples of the interpretive panels. Artist/archaeologist John Sunderland contributes a chapter reflecting on the experience of his artist's residency on the site in 2021 and the art camp for young adults which took place on the site in 2022. In her chapter Grace McCullen charts the process by which word of the emerging finds at Beaubec spread into the wider world and how blogs, local newspapers, appearances on television and even customised tee shirts all played a part. Many of the volunteers at Beaubec were young and Chapter 21 titled 'Autoethnography at Beaubec' gives some of them the opportunity to document their experiences and reflect on what they learned. It is a reminder of how important it is to give young people the opportunity to be part of a task-focussed community and to form bonds with a diverse range of individuals. For some, it was this aspect of the experience that was most memorable. For others, it was the growing understanding of the past and its relationship to the present. Oliver Zajac who was fourteen when the first sod was broken on the site tell us that he 'started thinking about the past, and what it means. I realised that all the lives lived before us are never truly gone; they are a part of us, our world, and the ground beneath our feet'.

From start to finish, therefore, this book provides us with cutting-edge research, excellent detail and visually-attractive information about the grange at Beaubec. It also provides a model which future projects of this type could and should adopt. The authors, volunteers and the site's owners and guardians are to be applauded.

Margaret Murphy (President GSIHS)
Assistant Registrar for Academic Affairs & Lecturer in Medieval History
Carlow College

Aerial view of the Beaubec service tower during conservation works with the outline of the great barn beside it (photo: National Monuments Service)



Raymond Gillespie giving a walking tour in Carlingford for the launch of the atlas there on 16 June 2011

News from the Irish Historic Towns Atlas (IHTA), Royal Irish Academy

Sarah Gearty, Cartographic editor

In February 2024, the atlas of Cork went to print, marking the culmination of ten years of research (by authors Howard Clarke and Máire Ní Laoi) and three years of production by the editorial team in what has been the most ambitious undertaking for the IHTA to date. One reason for this is the scale and complexity of Cork's topographical story, which is told as a whole, up to 1900 (rather than in chronological parts like Dublin and Belfast). The original fascicle format has been adapted to suit the increased text section and number of folded maps, though readers will be able to find their way around no. 31 in the series.

Advance copies of *Cork/Corcaigh*, by H.B. Clarke Máire Ní Laoi, published by the Royal Irish Academy in association with Cork City Council. The fascicles will be launched in Cork City Hall on 14 May 2024.

The printed atlas follows on from the release of the *Digital Atlas of Cork/Corcaigh* at the end of 2023 – a project that had run for the full year having received a grant from the Heritage Council Stewardship Fund. The *Digital Atlas* maps 6,245 known historical sites for the city of Cork in a thematic way. It is freely available to explore via www.ria.ie/digital-atlas-corkcorcaigh. Video tutorials and further map layers can be expected during 2024.

Another highlight of the year was the publication of the book, *Town and country: perspectives from the Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, edited by Sarah Gearty and Michael Potterton. This includes four essays focusing on Ireland, with an introduction and a concluding essay giving some international context, in addition to a section dedicated to the work of J.H. Andrews. *Town and country* was launched by Vanessa Harding, who is the current chair of the British Historic Towns Atlas, in the RIA on 22 Nov. 2023. On the same night Howard Clarke gave a lecture to a full house on 'Mapping places, mapping people: Dublin and Dubliners' perspectives'.

Heritage Week in Aug. 2023 provided an eclectic mix of activities. IHTA Dublin city and suburbs authors – Rob Goodbody, Ruth McManus, Frank Cullen, Séamas Ó Maitiú and Colm Lennon – were out and about through the week giving walking tours to booked-out groups in the Industrial South-East City, Drumcondra, Kilmainham/Inchicore, Rathmines and Clontarf. Meanwhile, a 7-minute video about the IHTA Cork project, which had been produced by the team with Frameworks Films during July 2023 was released on YouTube. If you missed it, you can view it here: www.ria.ie/news/irish-historic-towns-atlas/placing-our-heritage-irish-historic-towns-atlas-cork-video.

This year's annual IHTA seminar 'Marshland to metropolitan city' is being held in Cork and will take place the day after the launch. Speakers have been supplied with advanced copies of the new atlas and will respond from their perspectives on various aspects from early development, to visual art/map collections, to topographical themes, to built heritage.

Raymond Gillespie: an appreciation of his 'Atlas' work

The past year is overshadowed by the untimely death of Raymond Gillespie on 8 Feb. 2024. Raymond was very much at the heart of the Atlas (his own way of referring to the project). He was appointed to the editorial board in 1994, recruited by and joining co-editors Anngret Simms and Howard Clarke. He remained a vital part of the Atlas team for thirty years. Just three weeks before he died Raymond returned markups on the printers' proofs for *Cork* and we remember warmly our most recent Christmas lunch in Anngret's home in Sandymount, where he was as always the best of company.

By the time of his appointment to the board, Raymond was already actively working on Belfast with Steve Royle as co-author. Together they produced *Belfast, part I, to 1840* for publication as no. 12 in the series in 2003. Raymond rose to the editorial challenge of refining the topographical information with gusto and proved that the larger cities could be tackled in the Atlas programme for the modern period. This ambitious approach was applied to the practicalities of the project too and it was Raymond who wrote the rationale for a very successful and financially

favourable co-publishing deal between the RIA and Belfast City Council for the multi-parted Belfast atlas project, approved in 1999.

In the early noughties, building on the increasing number of fascicles and with cities now included, the Atlas programme branched out to include ancillary publications and Raymond was central to that initiative in all sorts of ways. He proudly provided the model, in the form of Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* fold up for the 'pocket map' series, beginning with the revision of H.B. Clarke's *Dublin c.840 to c.1540: the medieval town in the modern city* (2002). The presentation of map extract alongside written commentary was a favourite book format of Raymond's – he pored over the tiny details of Charlie Brett's detailed annotations of lease information on the Incumbered Estate Courts maps and wrote the accompanying text for *Georgian Belfast, 1750–1850: maps, buildings and trades* (2004). Later, he was instrumental in the publication of the series of map extract books, *John Rocque's Dublin* (2010), *Dublin in 1847* (2014) and *Renaissance Galway* (2019), which all became best sellers, just like he said they would.

Alongside initiatives, however, Raymond believed in the importance of the core work of the project. Having produced Belfast in the main series, when his good friend Harold O'Sullivan died in 2009, he went on to complete work begun by Harold on what became no. 23 *Carlingford* published in 2011. He was chairman of the board from 2016 to 2021, a period which saw the publication of *Galway*, *Drogheda* and *Dungarvan* in the main series; the launch of the Dublin suburbs series with no. 1 *Clontarf*; and the release of IHTA Online – all significant developments ably guided through under Raymond's steady watch and encouragement. In his editorial capacity, he was thoroughly supportive of authors and never happier than when considering what sources might be untapped or useful for a town – it was always a pleasure to witness him in that particular zone, consulting his own internal bibliographical database, one thing leading to another. If this took place in a library or archive, the experience took on a life of its own as Raymond navigated the shelves – a trip to the Registry of Deeds was a particularly joyful experience!

Raymond brought the Atlas into the fold of local history and the extent of his generosity and network was never more visible than when celebrating the launch of a fascicle locally. Some of his former students from Maynooth University Department of History such as Brian Ó Dálaigh (no. 25 *Ennis*), Rob Goodbody (no. 26 *Dublin, part III*), Ned Mc Hugh (no. 29 *Drogheda*) and Séamas Ó Maitiú (Dublin suburbs, no. 2, *Rathmines*) became Atlas authors and many others have helped the programme of work through the SPUR scheme or as research assistants. Much of what the Atlas is about is taking the local and putting it into a comparative framework – Raymond was always fully activated for such conversations and he often provided clarity when shaping ideas around topics for annual seminars and their consequent publications *Maps and texts* (2013), *More maps and texts* (2018) and *Town and country* (2023).

Raymond's contribution will be remembered through the pages of the Atlas and will continue to be appreciated by his colleagues, past and present – fellow editors Anngret Simms, Howard Clarke, Jacinta Prunty, Michael Potterton, Ruth McManus and Jonathan Wright; cartographic editors Mary Davies and Sarah Gearty; and editorial staff Angela Murphy, Angela Byrne, Jennifer Moore and Frank Cullen. The Atlas has had its own lifetime through Raymond's own but it won't be quite the same without him.

FIFTY-FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise

10–12 MAY 2024

Historic Settlement in Laois

The Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement

In association with
Laois Heritage Society

Friday 7:00–8:00 pm: Registration in Killeshin Hotel

Speakers:

Keynote lecture: Arnold Horner (Formerly University College Dublin)
Representing the Laois area on maps, c.1560–c.1840
Eoin Sullivan (Heritage Officer, Carlow County Council)
The prehistoric monuments of the Great Heath, Portlaoise—are they hiding in plain sight?
Thomas Nelligan (The StandingStone.ie and Guide with the OPW)
Through the centuries at Old Kyle Cemetery: the search for St Molua's Bell
Mairtin Dalton (OPW)
The maps of Leix and Offaly; Rolf Loeber's legacy
Regina Dunne (Laois Heritage Society)
Opening a window in the past: The Helen Roe Collection in Laois Local Studies
Barry O'Reilly (National Built Heritage Service)
Vernacular settlement of County Laois
John Colclough (of the travel company Ireland and Britain Observed)
More minor than major: the lesser country houses of Laois
John Beattie (National Built Heritage Service)
A not-so-distant past: the 20th century architecture of Portlaoise.

Saturday 2:00 pm: Field Trip by bus to include:
Cosby Hall and Dunamase Castle
Saturday 7:00 pm: Wine reception

Saturday 8:15 pm: Conference dinner (Killeshin Hotel)

Sunday 9:30 am: AGM Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement (Killeshin Hotel)

Sunday 1:30–4:00 pm: Walking tour of Portlaoise to include the Helen Roe Archive and Fort Protector

Conference Fee*: €60/£55, Students* €30/£27
Individual sessions: €30/£27
Annual membership fee: €25/£21
Annual student membership fee: €15/£13
Conference dinner: €37

*Conference fee includes tea/coffee and bus for fieldtrip

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Contributions are invited on topics related to historic settlement in Ireland and the Irish-sea region, the history, conservation and interpretation of the cultural landscape and on local and regional studies. These should be sent to the Editor, Mr Charles Doherty, 13 Bancroft Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 YH2V; or e-mail: charles.doherty@icloud.com
Contributors are requested, where possible, to send materials, text and graphics by e-mail.
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