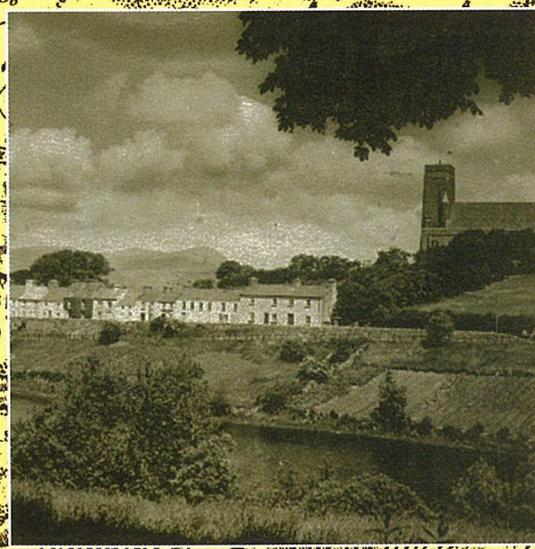
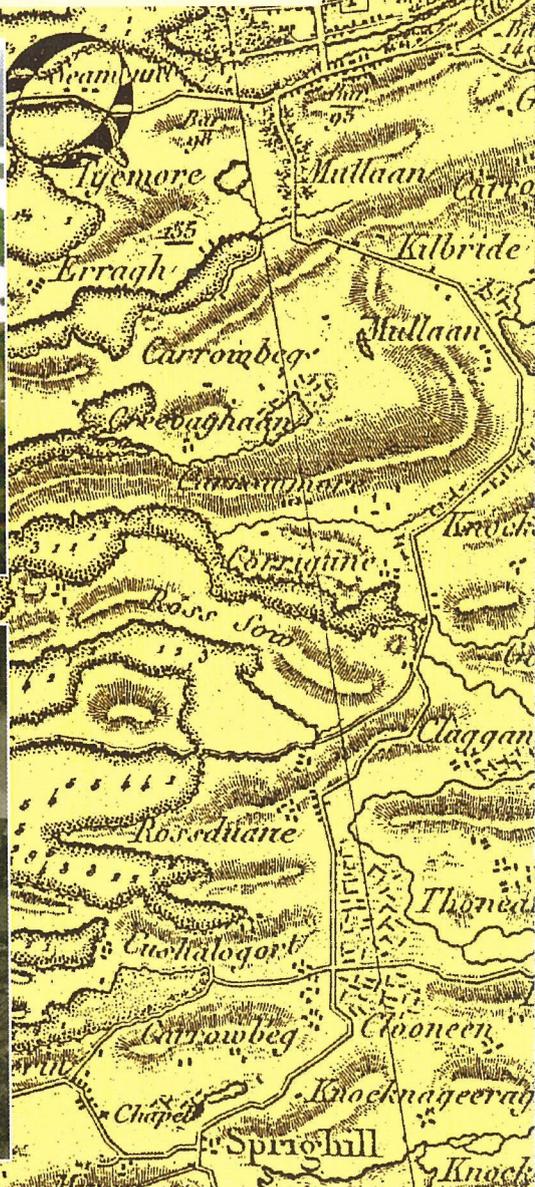
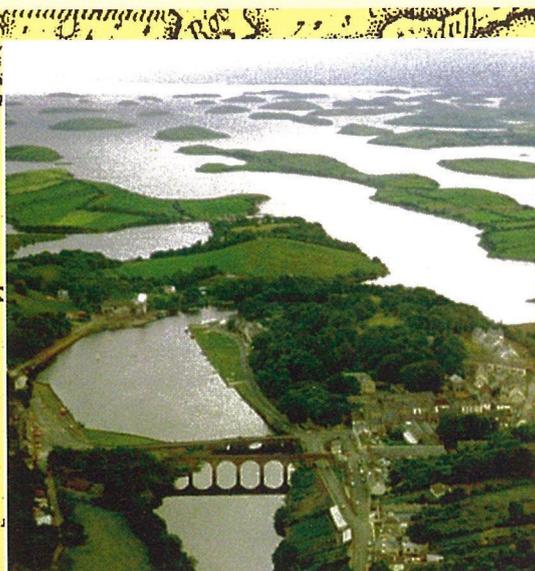
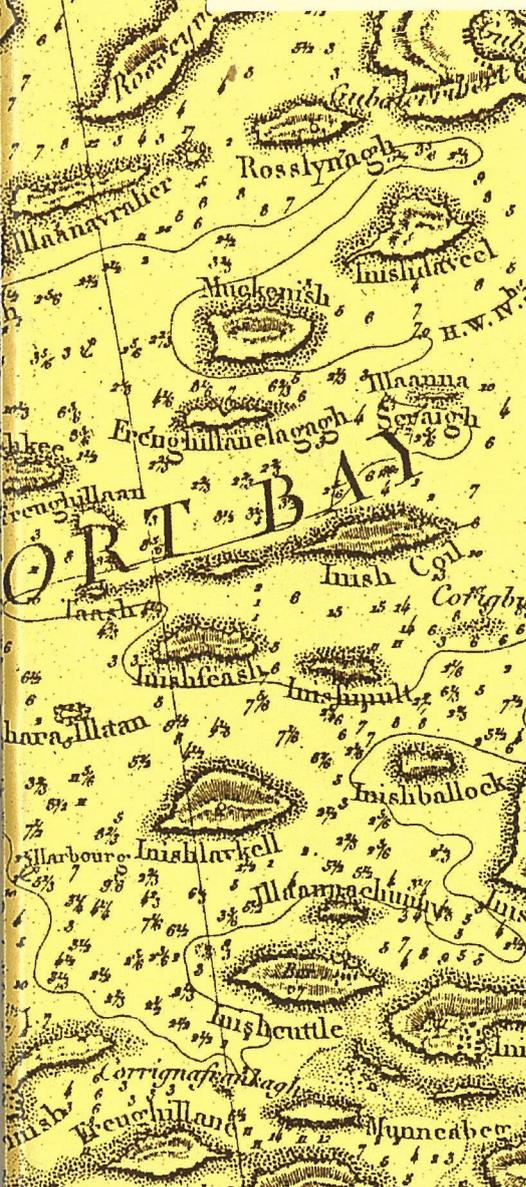


# BACK THE ROAD

RECOLLECTIONS OF BURRISHOOLE  
AND NEWPORT



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In photographs, people are named from left to right  
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## INTRODUCTION

As a result of an enjoyable winter of local history, a group of people from the Parish of Burrishoole got together to form a small local history society. Almost immediately it became clear that there was a need for some new publishing of local historical writings.

Great work had gone before. P. Ó Móráin's "Short account of the history of Burrishoole" had set a very high standard, published by Thomas Canon Killeen P.P as "Annála Beaga Pharáiste Bhuiréis Umhall". The Foróige publications on "Newport Our own Place" and "St. Patrick's Church" were both excellent.

It is in this tradition that the Newport historical society wish to work. The Society has worked carefully and diligently from a great variety of sources both written and oral and also from careful observation of the landscape, to produce this, their first journey "Back the Road" into the realms of history and folklore.

It is hoped that more publications will follow when this, the first, has made it's mark..

There are many people to be thanked for their hard work. The arrival of this publication is perhaps the best way to say thanks.

So, rather than inadvertently omit any names the Historical Society decided just to say a big thank you to all involved, from contributors to sponsors, to suppliers of information, photographs etc. Again, thank you. (Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.)

To all of you who read this book we say thank you. If you have any information in addition to that presented by us, any corrections to photographic detail, we would be much obliged if you would submit it to the committee at the address below.

A special thanks must go to the sponsors, those who advertised in this publication. History books are not always best sellers, but the society urge all who read these pages to support those sponsors who gave generously that you might enjoy a good read.

It was with great sadness that the committee learned of the death of Tom Chambers, Knocknageeha who, from the start, was a diligent member of the society, contributing much to get things going. It is sad that he did not live to see this book published. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

Rúnai, Cumann Staire Baile Uí Fhiacháin  
Secretary, Newport Historical Society  
Skerdagh School  
Glenhest  
Newport  
Co. Mayo

Email : [mcd@anu.ie](mailto:mcd@anu.ie)

# The Bronze Age In Newport And Surrounding Areas

Joe McDermott

In their proceedings for 1915-1916 the Society of Antiquaries of London note and report the following among the year's finds.

A hoard of nine specimens from Newport Co. Mayo belonging to the late Bronze age, according to the Society 1700 to 1500 BC

The hoard contained :

2 small socketed and looped Celts

1 socketed spear head

A fragment cut or broken from the blade of a large bronze sword

2 pins of the "Sunflower type"

2 flat-headed pins, one twice the size of the other

2 fragments of a small plain ring

The items seem to have lain in peat and so the "sunflower" pinheads are considerably corroded. The implements seem to have been part of a founders hoard to be melted down.

The interesting thing about these finds is a recorded occurrence of similar pins from a Swedish hoard found in a peat bog at Långebro in the Parish of Vårdenge. This could suggest that there was trade between Sweden and Ireland at this early stage. Did Newport bronze workers export items to Sweden or vice versa.

There are other Bronze age connections with the Burrishoole area.

For instance, standing-stones in the area may well be late bronze age landscape features.

Perhaps the two unique finds from the bronze age in the area are the Dyra hoard now on view in the National museum and the Bronze age sword found in

Beltra lake and in the caring possession of one of the Society's members.

The Dyra hoard is of gold pieces found while workmen were removing rocks from the land of Mr. John Dyra on the high Drumlin hill (through which the Southernmost of Newport's railway tunnels pass) in the townland of Kilbride. This hoard was buried under a large rock over a metre tall.

The items discovered were

2 bronze socketed axes

A gold bracelet

A gold dress fastener

The dates for the items are probably around 700-800 BC.

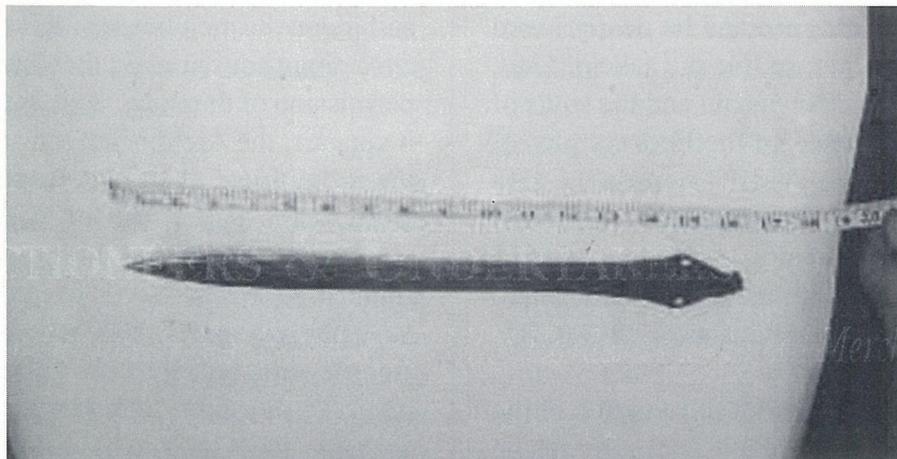
A full account and close description of the items appears in Cathair na Mart Vol. 8, No. 1 1988.

The bronze sword was recovered from the lake bed in Beltra lake. It measures over 16 inches and is in good condition. At the moment it is in private hands. Beltra lake may also boast a Crannóg - a lake dwelling, an island often created from nothing as a home for a family secure from the shoreline and whatever predators, human or otherwise, hunted there.

Undoubtedly there yet remain other hoards hidden under rocks and in bogs or secure places waiting to be unearthed.

Sources :

1. Proceedings of the Society on Antiquaries of London
2. Cathair na Mart Vol 8 No1 1988
3. Jack Geraty communication



Bronze age sword recovered from Lough Beltra.  
Picture contributed by a member.

## Burrishoole Abbey

Michael Hughes & Mary Jo Guilfoyle



*"We are in a grand remote sanctuary of nature hallowed in past ages by the reverent hand of man. Lone and grey on the bank of the river running from the lakes into the bay, nestled the ruined old Dominican Convent of Burrishoole on that remote Western coast. (P.G. Smyth in the Rosary Magazine, Somerset, Ohio, 1900)*

During the 14<sup>th</sup> century the old Gaelic families had been replaced by the Norman families with a few exceptions. The De Burgos owned great tracts of land in Connacht, Ulster and Munster. In the year 1469 Sir Richard De Burgo (Burke) - Lord MacWilliam Oughter, Chief of the Burkes of Turlough, known in Irish as "Risteard an Cuarscidh" (Richard of the curved Shield), resigned his lordship. He was an old man and he dearly loved the Order of St. Dominic, so, for the sake of God, the eternal welfare of his own soul and the souls of his forefathers, he granted to the Order a plot of ground in Burgo's Vaill named Carta Gracilis (Carrowkeel), together with a certain portion of land in the vicinity. An inquis of 1615 found that half a quarter of land in "Rosnabracher" was parcel of the house of Barasoule A 813 (CR).

Richard also granted monies for the erection of the Abbey. He then took the habit and entered the Dominican order himself. Shortly afterwards Rory Ó Moran and some other members of the order came to Burrishoole and erected a temporary church and

monastery of wood and settled down to ordinary convently life, Richard joined them in the abbey and lived there until his death four years later in 1473.

The Archbishop of Tuam, Donal Ó Murry had given his permission for the founding of the abbey. It was nevertheless irregular, Boniface VIII had forbidden the mendicant orders to accept the site of a religious house unless they had first obtained the permission of the Pope. Evidently the founder and, it appears, the Archbishop himself was unaware of the prohibition. It was not until the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1486 in the Papal Bull of Pope Innocent VII to Archbishop William Joyce of Tuam that the foundation was declared "irregular". The Bull then gave permission for the erection of a church, with a steeple and bell and an abbey furnished with refectory, dormitory, cloisters, cemetery, garden and orchard - the Abbey to have the title of the Blessed Virgin Mary. "His Holiness now gives power to the Archbishop to absolve from excommunication and irregularity all those who began work without

proper sanction, a salutary penance is to be imposed”, stated the Bull.

Very little is known of the next hundred years or so but the abbey flourished. It's peaceful community acted as pastors, physicians and hospitallers for the community round. This was the century immediately preceding that of the Protestant Reformation. There was a great religious revival in Ireland. Friars of all orders made their greatest progress in Connaught, numbers of new foundations were made, each Irish chieftain vying with the other to have the Friars in his territory. Several of the older abbeys were rebuilt from the ground.

When the storms of Persecution broke over the country and the more ancient orders were swept away as well as the communities of friars of the eastern and English parts of the country the Friars of Connaught held together and kept up succession in the worst times. More than that, as each successive storm somewhat abated and the communities in Leinster were dispersed and practically extinguished they were recruited and brought to life once more by Irish Friars from Connaught, so that the whole of Catholic Ireland owes a great debt of gratitude to the province of the West.

In the year 1563 Honoria De Burgo (Nora Burke), who was only 14 years old, received the habit of the third order of St. Dominic that in the order of St. Catherine of Sienna from Fr. Thaddeus Ó Duane. She was the daughter of Richard an Ierain (Iron Dick) who was the second husband of Grace Ó Malley (Granuaile). He had four castles in this area, Burrishoole - his residence which was built by the Butlers, Ballyviahan, Carrickaneath and Carrick an Chabhlaiigh (Rockfleet). But wealth or property possessed no attraction for his daughter. She built a small convent close to the abbey where she lived with some other sisters.

About the year 1580 an armed band of British soldiers came to disturb the peaceful convent of Burrishoole. Fearing for her chastity she fled to the mountains. The soldiers followed in quick pursuit. As they were drawing near sister Honoria earnestly besought the Saviour and His mother to come to her aid. When her pursuers had all but overtaken her their course was suddenly checked - rushing waters miraculously surrounded the place where she prayed, forming it into an island. The baffled soldiers were obliged to depart and when it

was safe to do so Sister Honoria returned to her convent.

After Elizabeth I came to the throne the English gradually gained control in west Connaught. In August 1597 Sir Nicholas Malbie, Governor of Connaught gave the following description of the abbey - “the 17<sup>th</sup> I removed to Burrishoole, an abbey standing very pleasant upon a riverside within three miles of the sea where a ship of 300 tons may lie at anchor at low water”. He had the abbey fortified and left a garrison of one hundred men in it. Fr. Thady O Duane was captured by the soldiers and kept in the abbey as their prisoner. However he converted every single member of the garrison to Catholicism, the converted soldiers all left the abbey and scattered over the country among the Catholic people (Hib. Dom. 521)

In 1653 the abbey was attacked by Cromwellian soldiers. Sister Honoria Burke and another sister Honoria Magaen (Kane) and a maid servant fled to Oylean na Naov (Saints Island) in Lough Furnace.

The abbey itself was fortified and held against the enemy by a few confederate Catholic soldiers. Two attacks made on it were repulsed. On the third they broke through, killed some, wounded others while the rest of the defenders fled. After pillaging the abbey some of the soldiers discovered the two nuns on the island. They were brutally stripped naked even though they were old, sister Burke then being 104, and it was the month of February and as cold as the middle of winter. After breaking three of her ribs she was flung into a boat “as if she was a bundle of sticks” and left to die. She was carried on the shoulder of the maid back to the convent where she died. Sister Honoria Magaen, who escaped from her captors, on reaching the lake shore fled into a neighbouring wood and concealed herself in the hollow trunk of a tree. The next day she was found frozen to death. The sisters were buried side by side in the chapel Sister Burke is depicted on a fresco of Saints in Sicily.

This attack on the abbey and its occupants was the last fighting that took place at Burrishoole. Of the subsequent history of the abbey and it's personnel little is known. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century edict after edict went forth ordering priests and friars to leave the country. Some were driven out by force but others remained. The Dominican Order kept up its numbers and these were multiplied when the

persecution eased. During most of that period three or four hundred friars were saying Mass wherever they could, hearing confession, preaching and burying the dead. In most cases they lived in thatched cabins as near as possible to the old abbey which they witnessed going to ruin year by year. The roof collapsed in 1793. The friars wore no habit and were in no way distinguished from the ordinary people. The Dominican friars preached devotion to the rosary. They were commonly called "Fathers of the Rosary". They were hated by the Government because they disregarded their unjust laws. The government forbade burials in old abbeys. The friars continued burials in their old abbeys and cemeteries over which they still retained their canonical rights. The government forbade the opening of schools but the friars defied the law and carried them on in the woods. In 1642 the Dominicans had opened a school at Burrishoole for the training of youths. It continued with untold difficulty until 1697. One of the professors at the Burrishoole school was Father John O Rune.

In the Lords Committee returns of 1731 the following notice is taken of the Burrishoole community :- "Another friary in the parish of Burrishoole whose number is said to be 20, of whom

five are kept abroad in foreign parts and fifteen commonly dispersed themselves about the country. In 1756 the community consisted of five priests of the Dominican order - Fr. Francis Mac Donnell who was prior, Fr. Anthony Mac Donnell sub prior, Fr. Dominic Barrett, Fr. Dominic Healy and Fr. Francis Bourke who was thirty four years of age and the youngest of the community. He is said to be the last priest of the Dominican order connected with Burrishoole. Fr. John Mac Donnell was the last prior 1798-1800.

Tradition has it however that a friar Horan lived in the abbey or it's vicinity in the early years of the nineteenth century. He is described as a saintly, humble and charitable man. In handing down the tradition the generation that has passed away spoke with great reverence of Friar Horan who was the last link of a practically unbroken chain extending over almost three hundred and fifty years. With this, the religious history of the Dominicans of Burrishoole comes to an end.

The last friar to take the habit for Burrishoole was John Hughes in 1862. He was a native of Galway and it was at Esker that his habiting took place.

#### A Hallowed Resting Place

It was indeed considered a privilege to be buried within the grey walls of the abbey or within it's shadow. It is fitting that we mention the names of a few whose mortal remains repose within the walls. The oldest inscribed monument within the abbey is the Ó Kelly altar tomb, the inscription which is in Latin gives the date 1623, also within the abbey repose the remains of Peregrine Ó Cleary, one of the Four Masters !, in his will dated "Gort na h-Eilte 8<sup>th</sup> February 1664" ( the original manuscript of which still exists) he set out :- " I bequeath my soul to God and I charge my body to be buried in the monastery of Burghéis Umhaill " (Gort na h-Eilte is a townland in Glenhest)

For many sleep in old Burrishoole where once the altar stood they rest  
As shattered stone and manuscript and clear traditions voice attest  
God keep the grass green on their graves with sweet wind that fills the West.

#### Sources

Rev. Martin O'Donnell C.C. Spiddal, Co. Galway - Burrishoole Abbey

Pádraig Ó Móráin Annála Beaga Pharáiste Bhuiréis Umhaill.

A special word of thanks to Jane O'Malley, Kiltarnet, Newport for her personal notes and papers

Mayo County Library

Connaught Telegraph.

## The O'Donels of Newport

Peter MULLOWNEY and Jack GERATY

The O'Malley clan ruled Umhall or the area around Clew Bay. With the coming of the Normans the Butlers laid claim to the area to be replaced in time, by the Bourkes who had divided into two septs, the Mac William Iochtar and Mac William Uachtar. The first of these claimed Burrishoole which included Achill. The Butlers regained the title under the Composition of Connacht, and the Duke of Ormond leased a large section of Burrishoole estate, including Achill, to Richard Martin of Dublin and Anthony Lord Bishop of Meath for ninety nine years in 1641. The lease did not run its full term and the Earl of Arran granted the estate to Sir H. Bingham, with provision for it to pass in reversion to Thomas John Medlycott, Commissioner of Revenue for Mayo and former Deputy Steward of Westminster under the Duke of Ormond.

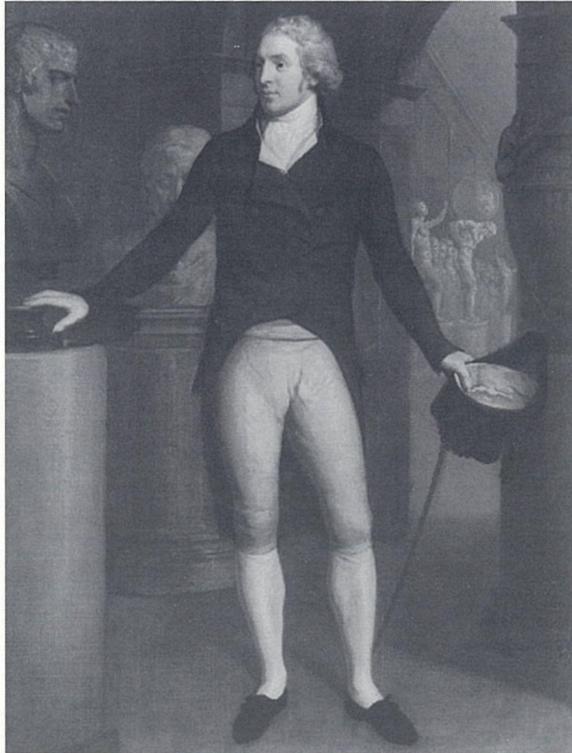
The O'Donels were the lineal descendants of Niall Garbh O'Donel, cousin of Red Hugh O'Donel, who regarded Tir Chonaill as his inheritance and was bitterly disappointed when the Crown bestowed it upon Earl Rory. However he had himself made chief in 1602 on the death of Red Hugh. He was lodged in The Tower of London after being arrested and held prisoner, without trial for implications in the Cahir O'Doherty Rising of 1608, until his death in 1625.

His son Manus, a colonel in the army of Owen Roe O'Neill was killed at the Battle of Benburb in 1646.

The Cromwellian campaign resulted in wholesale clearances of the native population in Donegal and following the defeat of the Irish at Svarriffhollis, outside Letterkenny in June, 1650, it is believed that Manus's son "Rory of Lifford", and many others, were transplanted to the Ballycroy district of Mayo, around 1654.

Rory's son Manus (Colonel Maney) fought at Limerick in 1691 in the army of King James. He is the first of the O'Donels who is mentioned as of Newport Co. Mayo although his first residence was at Rosturk. He died in 1736.

Manus had three sons, Charles Roe, the eldest, Manus and Hugh the youngest.



*Portrait of Hugh O'Donel*

Charles Roe, was married to Catherine, daughter of James O'More in 1712. Of that union there were three sons and two daughters. Manus, the eldest, born 1713, became Major General of the Austrian Empire.

He returned later in life and married, on the 8/12/1780, Margaret, daughter of Henry Browne, of Castlemacgarrett. They had one daughter, who married Robert Gage Rookwood, son of Thomas Gage of Suffolk.

Manus died in 1793, aged 80 years. He was, as all that family were, buried in Straide.

Elizabeth O'Donnell married Thomas Cormack of Mullinamore and Castlehill.

Mary, the second daughter of Charles Roe married Darcy of Galway.

Lewis, third son of Charles Roe, of Killeen, born 1715 (died 1822), Captain in the Austrian Army, returned to Killeen, married Bridget, daughter of Randal McDonnell of Massbrook, they had three sons and two daughters. The sons were, Charles, who died unmarried, aged 19 years. The second son, Manus became a Captain in the British Service and died of his wounds. There is no record of his marriage but it is to be presumed that he did. The third son, Lewis, of Ross, Killala, was married in 1821 to Judith Bourke of Ballina. He died and was buried in Ostend in 1841.

Bessy married Daniel Kelly of Kellygrove, in the parish of Clontuskert, Barony of Cloonmacrowen, Co. of Galway. Mary was married to Edward Bourke of Mayo and finally Bridget married Edward Bolinbroke of Old Castle, Meelick, Co. of Mayo.

Lewis O'Donnell of Ross who was married to Judith Bourke had issue, one son and three daughters.

Charles, b 27/11/1823, was Lieutenant in the Connaught Rangers. Had Errew and sold part of it to Granville Knox, on which he built a mansion and never lived in it.

The first daughter, Jane Louise had the estate of Killeen and Cabra around 1850. I do not think she married and there is no record of the other two sisters, Mary Baptiste or Judith.<sup>6</sup>

Hugh lived at Melcombe near Newport. Melcombe is a placename imported by the Bingham's, whose English home was Melcombe Bingham in Dorsetshire. Hugh gave £10 for the erection of a Catholic church in Newport and died in 1762. He also built Newport House. He had a number of sons. The eldest, Hugh Og, was unmarried. The next, Francis, left an only son, Hugh, who died in the East India Company's Service. The third was Neal.

Neal became a Protestant a year after his father's death in 1763 and his uncle Manus followed his example in 1766.<sup>4</sup>

Neal O'Donel held title to Kildavnet and Achill Beg in 1776. In 1780 he purchased the fine estate of Cong and 3 years later he was able to purchase the Burishoole estate, from John Thomas Medlycott for £33,958 in opposition to John 3rd Earl of Altamont afterwards first Marquis of Sligo.

In 1752 the Medlicott estate yielded only £1700 but in 1800 Sir Neal's income was £8000 a year.

The source of his wealth was derived from the honourable occupation of smuggling, then prevalent on the west coast of Ireland. Sir Neal was a shipowner and traded as far south as Cadiz, Spain. Revenue officials seized several hogsheads of wine from his Melcomb premises in 1790. He retaliated by suing the Crown for trespass and the breaking open of doors, etc. After protracted court

proceedings he was awarded £1,500 damages and costs.<sup>5</sup>

Neal O'Donel had of course changed his religion, and was now Protestant and therefore not subject to the penal laws.<sup>6</sup> However he sent his children to be fostered in the homes of his tenants as he had been fostered in Ballycroy and his grandson Richard was fostered by the O'Donnell family of Rossmore.

Sir Neal devoted great attention to horse breeding and when in 1776 his kinsman John 1st Earl Altamont died, he purchased the Earl's horse stud, at the time the second most important in the kingdom. The Freeman's Journal of 15th Jan 1811 recording the death of Sir Neal says he never bought or trained a horse that did not pay for himself in the first year in Plates, a proof of no common penetration.

The baronet had married Mary, daughter of William Coane of Ballyshannon and had a numerous family. Their eldest son, Hugh, was Lieutenant Colonel of the South Mayo Militia and Colonel of the 100th Regiment of the Line.

Sir Neal O'Donel and his sons were not at Newport House when the French landed at Killala and the French Officer Boudet was in possession of Newport. Sir Neal O'Donel was at Athlone and his four sons were serving with their regiments.

Colonel Hugh O'Donel and Captain James Moore O'Donel were MPs in Grattan's Parliament. Hugh was Burgess for Donegal Borough and James Moore for Rathoath Borough, County Meath. The O'Donels were the first members of their family to seek Parliamentary honours and entered parliament with the set purpose of offering a persistent and determined opposition to the forcing the Act of Union through Parliament. They voted against the Union in 1799 and 1800 with the observations in the proceedings.

No 98 Colonel Hugh O'Donel, a most ardent antiunionist dismissed from his regiment of Mayo Militia.

No 99 Captain James Moore O'Donel killed by Mr Bingham in a duel.

Of those who voted for Union were the two members elected for Mayo.

No 16 Right Hon D. Brown , brother to Lord Sligo.

No 82 Colonel G. Jackson "A " Regiment. also

No 8 one of the Bingham, created a peer, got £8,000 for two seats and £15,000 compensation for Tuam. This gentleman first offered himself for sale to the anti unionists and then became Lord Clanmorris.

In the debate on union at the opening session of Parliament in 1779 Colonel Hugh O'Donel stated "There is no person in or out of this House who can be more anxious for supporting the closest connection between England and Ireland than I have been or ever shall. I have fought to preserve it from being interrupted by external and internal foes; but should the legislative independence of Ireland be voted away by a Parliament which is not competent therewith I shall hold myself discharged of my allegiance and I will join the people in preserving their rights. I will oppose the rebels in rich clothes as I have ever done the rebels in rags. If my opposition to it in this house shall not be successful I will oppose it in the field ."

In Oct 1799 when Colonel Hugh O'Donel died he had been offered an Earldom (Earl of Achill ) and a large sum of money for his support of the Union but he died as he had lived - an Irish gentleman.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Court-martial of Captain James Moore O'Donel and Lieutenant Connel O'Donel .

The record of Proceedings of a Court-martial held at Castlebar on charges made by the Reverend John Benton, Protestant Chaplain to the South Mayo Militia and others against Captain James Moore O'Donel M.P. in Grattan's Parliament and his brother Lieutenant Connel O'Donel.

Evidence was given that Captain James Moore O'Donel stepped forward at Castlebar as advocate to two known rebels, Crump and Gibbons and also backed another rebel Denis McGuire and that several known rebels were serving as members of the Newport Cavalry and Infantry. Another rebel James Kelly had encouraged support for the United Irishmen but still remained a member of the Infantry Corps. Lieutenant Connel O'Donel was asked to

ensure that Kelly would appear before the local court on charges of sedition but in the meanwhile Kelly absconded. The court met at Castlebar on Monday 1st December 1800 and members of the court were Major Wetherington of the 9th Dragoons President, Major Graham of the Royal Meath Militia and Major Frazer of the Frazer Fencibles.

Reverend Benton stated that in 1798 Newport Pratt was considered to be the sink of rebellion but it appeared that neither Captain O'Donel, who was a magistrate and a yeoman officer nor any of his family came forward as loyal men or prosecuted to conviction one rebel leader.

The Tree of Liberty was planted in the town by a yeoman of the name of Gibbons who was convicted on the clearest testimony but escaped from prison. Captain O'Donel found in the house of Gibbons a hat decorated with a profusion of green ribbon, the emblem of disloyalty and found among his papers sufficient evidence to hang him but did not produce this at the trial of Gibbons or give evidence himself.

Captain O'Donel met the Lord Lieutenant in Athlone and told him that the French were in possession of the town of Tuam knowing this not to be true. This delayed the progress of the King's troops for one whole day.

Another charge against Captain O'Donel was that a rebel called James Gordon was heard to say by John Wallis and Richard Davis that Captain O'Donel had spent the six weeks before the French landed at Killala going from one corps of United Irishmen to the next telling them that they would soon be relieved.

Joseph Kenning of Newport, a yeoman and an Orangeman was sent for by Sir Neal O'Donel and asked was he an Orangeman. Anthony Wilkes swore that Lieutenant Connel O'Donel called the yeoman off parade into the market house and asked them to separately swear they were not Orangemen, which Kenning refused to do. Lieutenant O'Donel had rushed at James Wilks with a drawn sword for playing 'The Protestant Boys' and swore the tune should never be played in Newport.

The court also heard that Lieutenant O'Donel frequently on parade read letters from Captain James Moore O'Donel wherein the Captain boasted that in Parliament he was pulling down the Orange badges.

The court decided after hearing the evidence that Dr Benton had failed to prove the allegations and that Captain James Moore O'Donel and Lieutenant Connel O'Donel had fully exculpated themselves from any imputation of disloyalty or want of zeal in their duty as magistrates and officers.<sup>3</sup>

After the defeat of the '98 insurgents James Moore O'Donel arrested scores of rebels and then when they came up for trial went to extraordinary lengths to defend them from the gallows. He was killed in a duel at the hands of Major Denis Bingham on 14th September 1806 at Killanley Glebe near Enniscrone in County Sligo. A tradition says that he was lame and had the sight of only one eye. He is supposed to have been placed with his back to the sea, so that he was silhouetted against the horizon. The same source alleges that his opponent had been instructed by his second to fire before word was given. This he did scoring a direct hit to the heart. Bingham himself was unhurt.<sup>5</sup>

The inscription on his memorial tablet in Newport Protestant Church reads "In arduous times he proved his loyalty to his King, in corrupt times he supported the independence of his country and as he lived a Man of Honours so he died a Man of Courage in the 36th year of his age."

Neal Beg O'Donel fought at Ballinamuck under Cornwallis as Captain in the Louth Militia. He had two sons and a daughter Mary, who became a Catholic nun, Sr. Mary de Piazzì O'Donel at the Presentation Convent in Galway on 5th February 1829 and died on 12th November 1864. Neil Beg succeeded his father Sir Neal and was also known as Sir Neal. He in turn was succeeded by his son Hugh James Moore. Hugh's reign was short as he met his death in a shooting accident at Newport House. He was succeeded by his brother Richard who became Sir Richard.

Sir Richard married Mary, the daughter of George Glendenning and fixed the dowry as her weight in gold, which she improved by concealing two smoothing irons in her dress when she was weighed. Sir Richard was forced to sell his estate in Cong due to it being heavily mortgaged and parts of the Burrishoole estate to settle his debts. He was deeply religious and became a member of the Darbyites, who were founded in Dublin by John Nelson Darby, a Dublin lawyer who became a Protestant clergyman. He is regarded as the founder of the Plymouth Brethren. Sir Richard built a church or

conventicle for his sect. This building is now the Parochial Hall.

Although Sir Neal and Neal beg had given £300 and £100 respectively to building a Catholic church, Sir Richard seems to be anti Catholic and evicted many of his Catholic tenants and together with Reverend Nangle in Achill set up colonies. After the famine, Sir Richard sold Achill, as part of an encumbered Estate.<sup>6</sup> Half was sold to English capitalists led by Mr Ashworth and including Mr William Pike and Mr Wyndham. The other portion was sold to the Protestant Mission in the island, led by Reverend Nangle.

Pádraig Ó Móráin in his book *Annála Beaga Pharáiste Bhuiréis Umhaill* states 'Sir Richard did his best to try and convert the poor papists to the light of the Gospel. He helped the good work by evicting every Catholic family he could. His policy was extermination. But when all this was over the only family exterminated was his own. The broad acres that were once Sir Richard's are now owned and occupied by Catholic families many of whom are descendants of those whom he cruelly cast out to die on the roadside or in the workhouse. Of the O'Donel's nothing remains but the bones that are mouldering in the family vaults.'<sup>4</sup>

His successor Sir George appeared not to be interested in religion. He married a Catholic, Mary Kirwan who remained a Catholic until her death and it was due to her that the Sisters of Mercy secured the site for the Convent on Barrack Hill which is now owned by Western Care. She also donated two fine stained glass windows that were in the Convent chapel but are now in the Parish church. George died childless in 1889, his heir being his niece, Millicent Agnes, daughter of his brother, Richard Alexander, who had predeceased him. The estate had been heavily encumbered with charges and mortgages from the beginning. The burden had been somewhat eased by the sale of the Cong lands, comprising some 7,770 acres, to Sir Benjamin Guinness in 1856. It was he who built the grandiose residence now known as Ashford Castle Hotel, Cong. What Millicent Agnes received was only a small fraction of her extensive possessions of her great-great grandfather, the first Sir Neal. She married Edwin Thomas, who changed his name by deed-poll to "O'Donel". They had an only child, George O'Donel Frederick Thomas O'Donel, a Captain in the British Army, who was killed in action in France, 16th June, 1915. He was married but had no family.<sup>5</sup>

Edwin Thomas O'Donel died 25th August, 1932, and Millicent Agnes herself on 15th October of the following year. She left the little she possessed to her daughter-in-law, who sold Newport House to Mr Michael McShane who in turn sold it to Mr Mumford Smith who established Newport House Hotel. His son's widow sold the hotel to the present owners Mr & Mrs. Kieron Thompson.

#### The Cathach of Saint Colmcille.

The O'Donel's possessed an ancient manuscript, a copy of the scriptures called the Cathach of Saint Colmcille. The book was copied by St. Columcille from a book of the Psalms belonging to St. Finian on a visit to his monastery on the shores of Strangford Lough. A dispute arose between the two saints as to the ownership of the copy which was the subject of the famous copyright case of long ago in which the decision "to every cow its calf and to every book its copy" was given by Diarmuid, the High King of Ireland. Colmcille decided to go into exile in Iona rather than comply with this ruling and vowed never to set foot on Irish soil or see Ireland, which he got around following several visits back to Ireland by placing soil from Iona in his shoes and wearing a blindfold.

The cathach was used at the inauguration of the new chief of the O'Donnell clan and the custom was to have it borne thrice around the army of Tyrconnell on the breast of a sinless cleric; then, if the fight was in a just cause, it was believed that St. Columcille would come to the assistance of his kinsmen and victory was assured.

Brigadier Daniel O'Donal of the Ramelton Branch, whose regiment fought at both the Boyne and Aughrim, took the Cathach, or Battle Book of the O'Donals, with him to France, to which he repaired under the Treaty of Limerick. Daniel was worried that the shrine was showing signs of wear and tear. To save it from further deterioration he had a rim case into which it could fit made and deposited the relic in a Continental monastery, to be claimed by whosoever should prove himself the Head of the O'Donnells. It lay unknown and forgotten for almost a century until Sir Neal of Newport chanced to hear of it. Some say that it was Fr. Prendergast, the last Abbot of Cong, who had been abroad, told him.

In any case, fortified by the spurious pedigree,

prepared by Sr. William Betham, showing him as senior of his race which he was not - that honour rested with Lewis of Killeen, who lived to 106 years - made a successful claim and so had the sacred heirloom brought back to Ireland.<sup>5</sup>

The Cathach had been handed to the Royal Irish Academy by Sir Richard O'Donel for its safe keeping and remained enclosed in its cumlach or case until 1920, when it along with some other valuable manuscripts was sent, after permission was given by Mrs. Thomas O'Donel, to the British Museum to be enclosed in the best possible binding obtainable. The leaves of the manuscript were permanently sealed by inserting each leaf in a frame of strong paper. The book was then rebound in its cover and would then fit in its shrine as well as it did prior to restoration.<sup>2</sup>

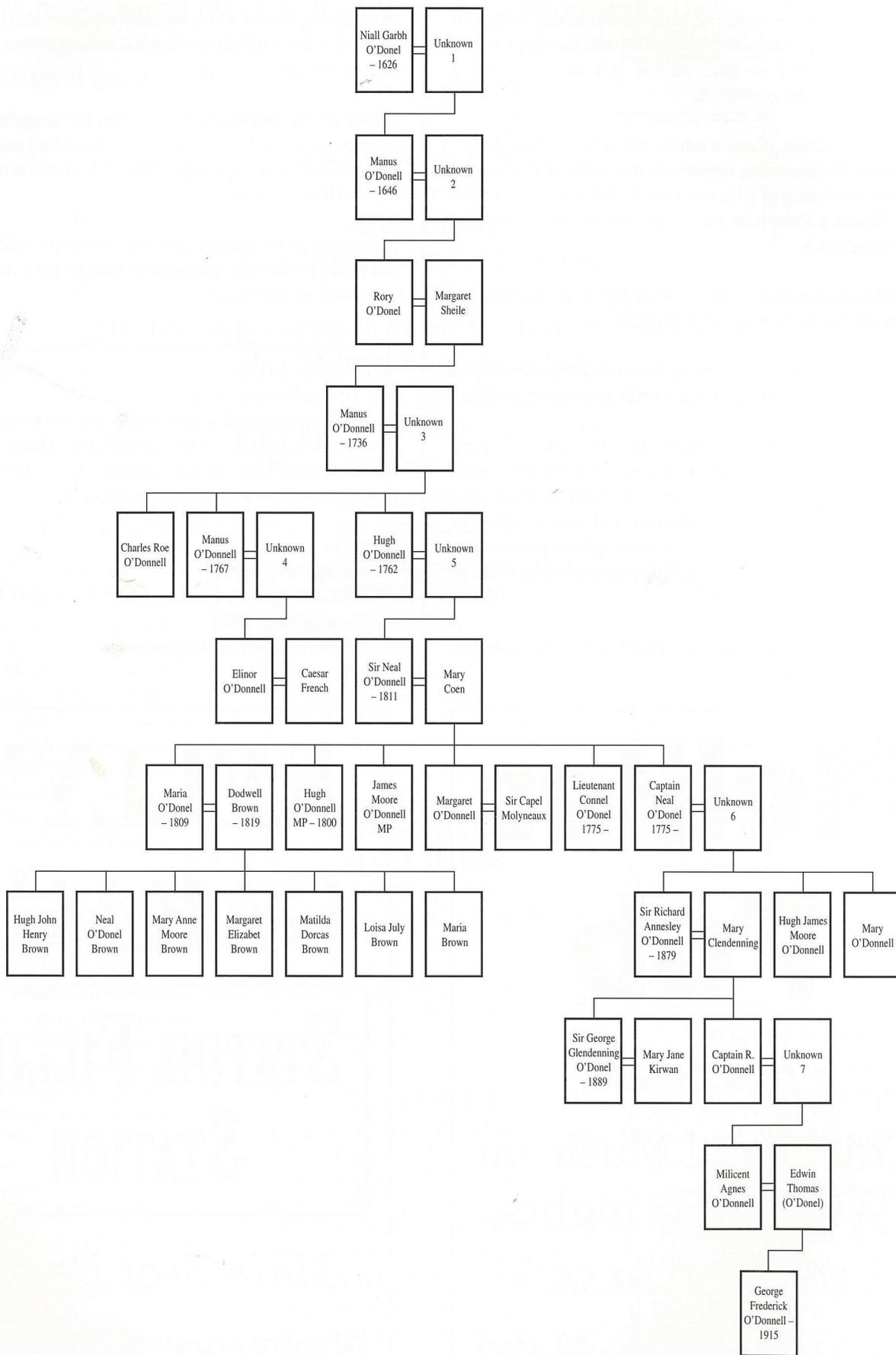
Tradition still tells us of the harmony and friendship that existed between Sir Neal O'Donel and his tenants and also of his practical sympathy and support towards the Catholic Church and it was remarked that Newport House was a haven of refuge for persecuted priests who suffered and were prescribed under the Penal Laws.<sup>3</sup>

The part taken by Colonel Hugh O'Donel M.P. and his brother Captain James Moore O'Donel in their vigorous fight against the Act of Union, by spurning every form of bribe, 'honours', and base corruption, stamps them as ardent, sincere and pure souled Irishmen and worthy compatriots of Ball, Barrington, Burke, Fitzgerald, Grattan, Egan, the Parnells, Plunket and Foster, all noble Protestants but true Irishmen all.<sup>3</sup>

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## Descendants of Niall Garbh O'Donel



## Knockavelly Glebe Graveyard

Nancy Mulhern

A valuable source of historical information to any village or town are the graveyards, hence, the decision for the Newport Historical society to take on the job of researching Knockavelly Glebe graveyard.

Knockavelly Glebe, Cnoc a mhíle, hill of the mile or hill of the warrior or champion, situated in the south east corner of Newport, consisting of 15 acres, 1 rood, 6 perches. It contains Glebe House, a Protestant graveyard and the ruins of an old Protestant church.

The society was granted permission by the owner Mr. Hughes to carry out the necessary work required.

The ground was purchased by James Moore who developed Newport town and port, and had a vault built there in 1766.

Natural growth has resulted in the disappearance of many memorials. During a partial cleanup, some tombstones, beneath ground surface, were uncovered, also trees have fallen over resulting in collapsed headstones and one in particular broken in minute pieces. However the group persisted in mapping out the area and numbering and recording some of the graves.

Two factors cause the greatest problems to headstones,

weathering and erosion, making the inscriptions difficult to decipher, but with perseverance we were able to read most of the engravings.

Many of the unadorned headstones are completely covered in writing, all of the inscriptions were incised with a variation of lettering used. Spelling deviated from the normal in some cases.

Not many of the monuments were erected vertically, most of them are horizontal, and approximately 1m x 2m in size and are made of limestone.

Numerous uninscribed mounds were located, concluding these to be famine graves.

The only overground vault contains the O'Donels of Newport House, descendants of the famous Red Hugh. Situated in another part of the cemetery, memorials of other relatives can be seen, some of them from Castlebar.

### Sources :

1. Knockavelly Glebe -  
Ordnance Survey Field  
Name Books 1838  
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## Knockavelly Glebe, headstone inscriptions

The following is a partial list of the headstones in the Knockavelly Glebe graveyard. It is hoped to complete this listing in the next issue and to make similar lists of headstones from other local graveyards.

### JAMES MOORE

This vault contains the remains of  
James Moore  
Esq. Late collector of Newport,  
His wife Margret,  
also his mother Deborah Moore his daughter Phillippa &  
her husband Roger Shiel Esq.  
who purchased this ground & caused this  
vault to be built in the year 1766.  
Those who sleep in Jesus God  
will bring with him.

### JAMES WILSON

Beneath this stone are deposited the mortal remains of James Wilson of Newport who departed this life on the 18 day of April A.D. 1891 aged 39 years. He was an affectionate husband a fond parent and whi?? Better a good Christian. Reader go thou do likewise. This stone erected by his wife Catherine Wilson Ferriss

### JOHN MOORE

In affectionate remembrance of our beloved father John Moore died 14<sup>th</sup> Nov 1907 also beloved brother Alexander Moore died 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 1909 also Esther Moore who died 28<sup>th</sup> Nov 1932

### FRANCES HERN

Here lies the mortal remains of Mrs. Frances Hern daughter of the Rev. Joe Marsh and wife of the Rev Josiah Hern her husband. As it was formed on solice best described by the precepcis of the Gospel for she was as far as human infirmity and weakness of fiaine would aclime in manners in disposition and in health all and faithful Christan  
She was released from the pains of hunger in disease and the miseries of the wicked world  
1793

### ESTHER SMITH

Beneath this stone are deposited the remains of Esther Smith alias Wilson daughter of Alex R Wilson of Carabag who departed this life the 13<sup>th</sup> day of January 1807 aged 25 years and her father Alexander Wilson who departed this life 12<sup>th</sup> day of September 1811 aged 58

### JOHN WILKS MARY WILKS

Here lies the ? mortal remains of John Wilks who departed this life the 13 of March 1789 aged ? years His wife Mary Wilks alias Kelly who departed this life February 17<sup>th</sup> 1806 aged ?

### SUSAN BOLE

John Bole Newport. To the memory of his beloved wife Susan nee Savage who died 23rd Decr 1856

### THOMAS MAHON

Beneath are deposited the remains of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Thomas Mahon M.A. of St. John's College of Cambridge. Eldest son of the late Rev<sup>d</sup> Tho<sup>s</sup> Mahon Rector of Annaduff in the County Leitrim. He was 16 years Rector and Vicar of Newport and died on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 1825. Beloved and lamented by all who knew him. This trifling tribute of affection to his valued memory erected here by his truly attached brothers Major Mahon of Strokestown House and John Mahon of Thornfield

### CLAUDIUS ODONEL

In loving memory of Claudius O Donel M D F R C S I who died at Castlebar on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1890 aged 26 years  
"What I do thou knowest not now but thou shalt know hereafter"

### SAMUEL WILSON

In loving memory of Samuel Wilson died 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 1902 aged 82 years also his son Samuel Wilson died 18<sup>th</sup> June 1903 aged 32 years  
Thy will be done

**HILLIARD M<sup>c</sup> NAB**

In loving memory of Hilliard M<sup>c</sup>Nab who died May 16 1893 aged 28 years. For he looked for ac? who? had found whose building and maker is God. HEB XI 1.10

**ANN WEBSTER  
MARY WEBSTER**

Here lieth the body of Ann Webster who died October the 8<sup>th</sup> 1768 in the 52 year of her age and her daughter Mary Webster who departed this life the 22<sup>nd</sup> Day of February 1799 aged 61 years

**JAMES O DONEL**

In memory of James O Donel who died 27<sup>th</sup> July 1888 aged 68 years  
Thy will be done

**GEORGE HOPE**

In loving memory of George Hope, Knockloughra who died 14th. October 1901 aged 86 years. Also of Anne his wife who died 8th. May 1878 aged 57 years

**HUGH O DONEL**

In memory of Hugh O Donel who died on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1896 aged 82 years The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord

**AMY ARABELLA  
QUADLING**

Sacred to the memory of Amy Arabella the beloved wife of Mr. H.C. Quadling and affectionate daughter of Mr. C. Williams. She fell asleep in Jesus on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1853 aged 25 years. Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised

**FANNY O DONEL  
PRUDENCE WALKER O  
DONEL**

**JEMIMA MATILDA O DONEL  
FANNY O DONEL  
ELIZA FRANCES O DONEL**  
Children of Francis O Donel Fanny O Donel died 4<sup>th</sup> July 1859 aged 16 days. Prudence Walker O Donel died 8<sup>th</sup> December 1871 aged 14 years. Jemima Matilda O Donel died 31<sup>st</sup> July 1877 aged 17 years Fanny O Donel died 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1878 aged 12 years Francis O Donel Eliza O Donel died 5<sup>th</sup> October 1884 aged 30 years  
Not lost but gone before

**JOHN AIBUTHNOT**

Beneath this stone are deposited the remains of the late John Aibuthnot Esq. Of Rockfleet Castle in this county and formerly of Mitchum Surry in England died on the 27<sup>th</sup> Day of December 1797 in the 69<sup>th</sup> year of his age  
This stone is placed here by his fourth son Col. Sir Roben Aibuthnot K.C.B. of the Coldstream Guards

**MRS. MARY LARMONIER  
LARMONI?**

Beneath this stone are deposited the mortal remains of Mrs. Mary Larminie alias Lendrum. She lived so she died a real Christian. She was the most affectionate of wives a tender indulgent mother - a sincere friend she now rests in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection through the merits of her suffering redeemer. She departed this life 29 May 1804 ag<sup>d</sup>, 34  
Reader go thou and do likewise

**CATHERINE MARY  
O DONEL**

In memory of Catherine Mary O Donel wife of Francis O Donel of Castlebar who died "happy" on 5 September 1891 aged 68 years  
Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord  
Goates Dublin

**JAMES HERN**

Here lyeth the body of the Reverend James Hern Rector and Vicar of the Union of Newport who departed this life ? July the 20<sup>th</sup> 1778 ? 1798

**HUGH O DONEL**

In memory of Hugh O Donel who died 13<sup>th</sup> January 1888 aged 36 years  
Make him to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting

**JAMES BERRY  
HENRIETTE BERRY  
DOROTHY JANE BERRY**

Memory of James Berry born 26<sup>th</sup> April 1840 died 21<sup>st</sup> December 1883  
" Let not your heart be troubled ye be here in God believe also " also his only daughter Dorothy Jane Berry she is not dead but sleepth also his wife Henriette who died 6<sup>th</sup> March 1920  
" Till the resurrections ?

**ALEXRD CORDINE  
ANNE CORDINE**

Sacred to the memory of Alexrd Cordine who departed this life September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1827 aged 49 years. Also his wife Anne Cordine alias Armstrong who departed this life May 15<sup>th</sup> 1824 aged 47 years

**SUSAN O DONEL**

Sacred to the memory of Francis O Donel who departed this life February 21 1854 aged 74 years also his wife Susan O Donel who died on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1856 in her 69<sup>th</sup> year. Be ye also ready

## The Famine in the Parish of Burrishoole

Tommy Hughes

In the years predating the famine the parish of Burrishoole had a huge and vigorous population centered mainly in the poorer regions.

All of the land was owned by the Ascendancy class, (the O'Donnells of Newport, in the case of Burrishoole). These landlords had almost limitless power over the tenants, who for their part paid high rent for the small portions of land they could afford. Most of the farmer's income of course went to pay the landlord, so there was little money in the economy. This inevitably led to a system of subdivision where land was given to couples as marriage dowries, which of course had the effect of reducing the portions of land even further.

It was clear that the gap between the rich landowner and his poorer counterpart, the peasant farmer, was enormous. By the end of 1850 the true extent of this gap was to become a sad and horrifying reality. This unbalanced system was held together only by the fact that the peasant farmer had a cheap and plentiful source of food, "the potato".

The potato was introduced into Ireland around 1590 and could grow in the poorest of land. Planted in April or May the early crop came into season in late August. The potatoes were then stored in pits until the following May. Crops were generally plentiful and were capable of supporting a large family. On average an adult would eat 12 to 14 pounds of potatoes per day.

### Coming of the Potato Blight

First reports of the potato blight began to emerge in September 1845 but were restricted mainly to eastern counties. By the end of December and early January reports were coming in of potatoes rotting in their pits in Mayo and other western counties. Crop failures were not uncommon in the past. However these were due mainly to climatic conditions and crops always returned the following year. Perhaps it was this line of thinking which delayed immediate action. The crops were not to return the following year, this time the potato was attacked by a fungal disease called (phytophthora infestans) potato blight.

The effects on Burrishoole were devastating as elsewhere in the County. The following years were to reveal harrowing accounts of hunger, disease and eventually thousands of deaths in the parish. At the height of all this misery and suffering Irish corn was still being exported to Britain while its poor and destitute were dying by the side of the road. This was due to the policy of government in Britain at the time which held the view that the free market of goods and trade could not be interfered with at any cost.

There was a public outcry for exports to be stopped and more grain to be imported instead. This would of course have meant a repeal of the Corn Laws, which laid down that large taxes should be paid on imports. The British Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, to his credit was in favour of a repeal of the Corn Laws, knowing only too well that large imports of grain were necessary to relieve famine distress in Ireland. There was huge opposition to this within his own party and he was forced to resign as Prime Minister saying "good God are you to sit in Cabinet, and consider and calculate how much diarrhoea, and bloody flux, and dysentery, a people can bear before it becomes necessary for you to provide them with food."

Peel became Prime Minister again in June 1846 and eventually forced through the repeal of the Corn Laws. This however was a little too late, because Peel had secretly arranged the purchase of £100,000 worth of Indian corn in November 1845 unknown to his party. The problem with Indian corn was that it was hard to mill and very difficult to digest. Corn meal was later imported and used in a mixture with Indian corn (one part to three) which was found to be more palatable.

In 1845 a Relief Commission was set up with the aim to place food depots all over the county. The grain was sold at cost price to local committees who would sell it on to the local population also at cost price. The Relief Commission had only limited success because it was frequently hampered by fraudulent malpractice. For example

the relieving officer in Kilmaclasser and Islandeady was requested to tender his resignation for the use of an illegal beam. This was quite a common practice resulting in surplus grain being then sold on to shops at black market prices.

R.A. O'Donnell, in which he states that employ had been offered by him to a number of per who are in the receipt of out-door relief in the U who declined to work on the terms proposed.

Enclosure referred to.

POOR RATE Due by Immediate Lessors in the District of Sir R. A. O'Donnell, Bart , Rate Collector .

		Electoral Divisions			
Names	Residences	Newport	Achill	Ballycroy	Total
Marquess of Sligo	Westport House	£54 4s 6d	£ 14 1s 11d	£ 2 1s 1d	£ 70 7s 7d
Sir R.A. O'Donnell	Newport House	£84 9s 4d	£102 18s 11d	£44 5s 4d	£231 13s 8d
Peter Bourke Esq.	Ballinew, Castlebar	£ 5 17s 7d			£ 5 17s 7d
James Hilles, Esq.	Maryland, Newport	£ 3 5s 8d			£ 3 5s 8d
Charles McDonnell, Esq.	Moyour, Westport	£ 2 5s 0d			£ 2 5s 0d
Dominick McLoughlin Esq.	Achill	£ 4 5s 2d			£ 4 5s 2d
John McLoughlin Esq.	Achill	£ 4 6s 9d	£ 22 2s 9d		£ 26 9s 6d
Reps of P. McLoughlin Esq.			£ 28 14s 10d	£ 9 4s 4d	£ 37 19s 2d
Reps of Captain O'Donnell.				£20 3s 5d	£ 20 3s 5d
		Total due			£402 6s 11d

Another function of the local committees was to raise money locally to help the poor and provide some sort of employment . However they found it difficult to raise money, in particular from the rich landlords. For example a letter to the Commissioners in March 1848 highlights this in relation to Sir Richard O'Donnell .

Mr. Lynch to the commissioners :- March 17, 1848.  
I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> March, and in accordance with your request, I beg to inform the Commissioners that the sum due by immediate lessors in the district of Sir Richard O'Donnell, rate collector, amounts to £402 6s 11d. I annex a list of the persons by whom it is due, and shall take care to draw the particular attention of the collector to the fact, that he is himself the largest defaulter.

A letter to the Commissioners earlier that month indicates he had a works farm in Derrada which was stopped for want of labourers.

The COMMISSIONERS to the VICE-GUARDIANS :- March 4, 1848

I am directed by the Commissioners to forward herewith , for your information , a copy of a letter which the Commissioners have received from Sir

I am at the same time to forward a copy of the Commissioners' reply.

ENCLOSURES.

Sir R.A. O'Donnell to the Commissioners :- March 2, 1848

My object in writing to you is to benefit the rate-payers and poor of my electoral division. Having received a loan under the Land Improvement Act, I am anxious to employ, as far as lies in my power, the able-bodied of my district.

The Vice Guardians have directed the relieving officer to give me a list of 50 able-bodied men receiving relief, residing in the neighbourhood of two farms upon which I am anxious to carry on improvements. A portion of these 50 persons attended once at the works at Derrada farm and informed my agriculturalist that they would not work by task, but that if I gave them one shilling per day they would work for me. My agriculturalist is well known in the district as a humane honest man that understands the value of labour well, and he assures me that if the men were only inclined to work they could make at his prices one shilling per day.

My works at Derrada farm are stopped for want of labourers, although we have, I am informed, more than 6000 persons receiving the outdoor relief in this unfortunate electoral division; and my works at other farms are going on in an unsatisfactory way from the same cause.

I am prepared to give employment to 600 men a day and to take them from the outdoor relief list; and if other landed proprietors of this district will do the same according to the extent of their properties, the rate payers will be relieved and the poor saved.

Gentlemen you have shown energy and determination in collecting poor rates, I now call upon you respectfully to save our country by protecting the rate payers with the same energy, and using your influence in the administration of the Poor Laws to raise the poor of Ireland out of their lazy habits of dependence upon others, with its immoral results arising therefrom.

Reply to the foregoing : March 4, 1848.

I am directed by the Commissioners to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst., informing the Commissioners that the Vice Guardians of the Westport Union had ordered 50 of the able bodied men who were in receipt of outdoor relief in the Union to proceed to two farms upon which you were anxious to carry out some improvements, and that the men refused to work unless paid at the rate of a shilling a day for their labour.

In reply, I am to state that the proper course appears to the Commissioners to admit of no reasonable doubt; and the Commissioners cannot presume otherwise than it has been adopted by the Vice Guardians as a matter of course.

Sir Richard had also employed labourers in the cultivation of flax in the Summer and Autumn of 1847 according to the accounts of Asenath Nicholson (Annals of the Famine). Her accounts of his driver however were not so favourable.

"I saw step by step all taken for taxes and rent; everything that had life out of doors that could be sold at auction was sold, then everything of furniture, till beds and tables left the little cottage, and the mother was put in jail, and is now looking through its grates, while her children are struggling

for bread. Sir Richard O'Donnell is the landlord in possession of most of the land there and his "driver" like other akin to him, does strange things to the tenants, quite unknown to the landlord, who has been called humane. But this fearless driver throws or causes to be thrown down, cabin after cabin, and sometimes whole villages, of which it is said the landlord was entirely ignorant, but the pitiless storm heeded not that, and the poor starved exiles pleading that the cabin might be left a little longer, have no pity, their pot and even the cloak, which is the peasant woman's all by night and by day has often been torn from her emaciated limbs, and sold for auction.

Perhaps in no instance does the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy come before the mind so vividly, as when going over the places made desolate by the Famine, to see the tumbled cabins, with the poor hapless inmates, who have for years sat around their turf fire, and ate their potato together, now lingering and oftentimes wailing in despair, their ragged barefooted little ones clinging about them, one on the back of a weeping mother, and the father looking in silent despair, while a part of them are scraping among the rubbish to gather some little relic of mutual attachment.

Then in a flock, take their solitary, pathless way to seek some rock or ditch, to encamp supperless for the night, without either covering for the head or the feet, with not the remnant of a blanket to spread over them in the ditch where they must crawl.

Are these solitary cases? Happy would it be were it so; but village upon village, and company after company have I seen; and one magistrate who was travelling informed me that at night fall the preceding day, he found a company of who had gathered a few sticks and fastened them into the ditch, and spread over what miserable rags they could collect (for the rain was fast pouring; and under these more than two hundred men, women and children were to crawl for the night. That day they had all been driven out, and not one pound of any kind of food was in the encampment."

The famine was at its peak in 1847. this was the year which would become known as Black 47; peasants flocked to the already overcrowded workhouses, bringing with them many diseases like typhus which spread through the workhouse like wildfire.

The Newport workhouse had not been built at this time, many perished on the roadsides, while others who did make the journey to Westport were forced to wait outside for hours and were often turned away.

This was also the year of mass emigration. A ship called the "Argyle", chartered by Mr Flanagan, Ship Agent, to convey passengers to Quebec dropped anchor at the harbour of Inishgowla between Newport and Westport in June 1847. Many peasants, weary of the human misery and suffering, availed of the opportunity to escape, in the hope of a better life in another land. Pitiful sights were witnessed as families were torn apart, never again to be seen by the loved ones left behind.

One account tells of a family who set out on their journey to catch the emigrant ship at Inishgowla. It was customary to leave one child behind to look after the elderly. When they reached the boat they turned around to find the young boy who had been left behind had followed them. This young lad was later to become a prominent official at the Treasury in New York. Many of the emigration ships bound for America were less than sea worthy. One such ship left from this parish with a full cargo of emigrants and was never seen again.

In the meantime terrible accounts were still emerging. A man by the name of Michael Gorman born in 1868 recalls, "A man in Lettermaghera was sick of the fever. He died and there was nobody in the house with him except his wife. It seems the neighbours avoided the house for fear of the fever. The wife dug a grave by the bedside and rolled her husband's body out of the bed and into the grave. Then she covered it in."

Asenath Nicholson also recalls : "The state of the Famine here might be illustrated by a few facts which come under my observation. The chapel bell tolled one morning early, when a respectable young woman was brought into the yard for internment. No bells tolled for the starving, they must have the burial of an ass or none at all. A young lad improved his opportunity while the gate was open, and carried in a large sack on his back, which contained two brothers, one seventeen, the other a little boy, who had died by starvation. In one corner he dug, with his own emaciated feeble hands, a grave, and put them in uncoffined, and covered them while the clods were falling on the coffin of the respectable young woman.

I never witnessed a more stirring striking contrast between civilised and savage life – Christianity and heathenism – wealth and poverty, than in this instance; it said so much for the mockery of death with all its trappings and ceremonies – the mockery of pompous funerals and their black retinue. The poor boy unheeded had stayed in the dark cabin with those dead brothers, not even getting admittance to the gate, till some respectable one should want a burial; then he might follow his procession at a suitable distance, with two dead brothers upon his back, and put them in with his own hands, with no one to compassionate him."

Asenath Nicholson later recalls another terrible account in a house not far from Newport.

"A cabin was seen closed one day a little out of the town, when a man had the curiosity to open it and in a dark corner he found a family of the father, mother, and two children lying in close compact, the father was considerably decomposed; the mother it appeared had died last, and probably fastened the door, which was always a custom when all hope was extinguished, to get into the darkest corner and die, where passers by could not see them.

Soup kitchens were set up in the parish to relieve the terrible hunger which grew by the day. One such kitchen was set up just above Newport on the Westport road at a place still known as the Colony. A huge pot was also erected in the farmyard of William Mairs (grandfather of Dick Mairs). Here hundreds of starving people were given aid by the Mairs family. Many brought vessels to bring soup back to family members who were too weak to make the journey.

Accusations began to emerge of proselytising, though no such activities seem to have occurred in this parish, with the exception of some instances in Mulranny and Murreveragh. Wholesale abuse of the Catholic religion was recorded in the Connaught Telegraph in April 1850. The paper reads :

"They are thought to look upon the faith and discipline of the Catholic Church as damnable and idolatrous. The holy days and the fast days of their church are held forth to them as mummery and the invention of crafty priests."

My great grandfather Tommie Kelly recalled some of the instances of the soup school at Murreveragh

“There were soup schools at Mulranny and Murreveragh (just east of Mulranny). Some of the people turned with the soupers and remained with them till they died.

A few of these went to Inishbiggle when driven from home by shame, fear or otherwise. One man not a native of this parish, turned . He was passing by the priest’s house one day in his native place and raised his hat. “Ah,” says the priest, “you cannot please God and the Devil.” “Ah Father,” said he, “It’s only till the praties grow.” He turned back later. His son was also a Protestant, but only for a time during the Famine.

It is clear that the feelings between the Protestant and Catholic communities were running high at the time, no doubt as a consequence of Penal times. However a compromise at the time may well have saved many more lives.



*Tommie Kelly – Fairday June 8th.  
Born 1853.*

Evictions too were becoming all too common. Some 40 families in Treanbeg and Treanlaur were evicted by the landowner to create his so-called work farm. He attempted to do the same in Lettermaghera.

Workhouses, which figured so prominently in the rest of the country, didn’t really apply in this parish during the so called year of the Famine. The nearest workhouses were in Westport and Castlebar. The workhouse in Newport was not built until 1849

which indicated that the effect of the Famine persisted long after the potato crop began to revive. For example 45 families were evicted from Carrowmore in 1854 and the O’Donnell family (ancestors of Neil O’Donnell, Tiernaur) were evicted from the Lecarrow district in 1868.

Famine graves are dotted throughout the parish. There are mass graves in places like Derryloughan, Cuilmore and Fauleens to mention just a few and it is almost impossible to tell how many are buried in the sandybanks at Mulranny.

Statistics before and after the famine make some horrifying reading. Burrishoole had a population of almost 12,000 in 1841. This had dropped to 7,500 by 1851. Out of 2,217 houses in 1841 only 1250 remained by 1851. One of the worst areas affected was Derryloughan where out of 16 houses and 90 people in 1841 only one house and 8 people remained in 1851.

One child born out of the Famine was to change the possession of land in Ireland forever . He was of course Michael Davitt . the struggle was to be a long one but would eventually put an end to the unjust system of landlordism which had punished generations of Irish people and ensured that such a catastrophe could never happen again.

The writer wishes to thank Willie Sammon for his valuable contribution towards this article .

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## Griffith Valuation 1855

In order to value property and land for Poor law rate in the nineteenth century Sir Richard Griffith carried out a massive programme of valuation over a period of years. It was a success and still forms the basis for rating today.

It gives a useful indicator of land owners and lessees in post famine Ireland.

Below is a selection of Townlands and the persons leasing land there, in the Newport area in 1855. It is not complete, only part of the Parish is listed here for space reasons.

### Aghadoey Glebe

Anthony Armstrong  
James Clinton  
William Landrum  
George Malley

### Barrack Hill

Bridget Anthony  
William Atkinson  
John Bole  
James Burke  
James Caine  
Patrick Carolan  
Patrick Cleary  
Charles Cobden  
Michael Connor  
Thomas Davis  
Julia Fleming  
Peter Fox  
Luke Gibbons  
Patrick (sen)Gibbons  
Barbara Ginely  
Martha Grady  
Mary Grady  
Mary Haron  
Patrick Hestor  
Thomas Hunt  
Daniel Kelly  
Eliza Kelly  
Mary Kinning  
John Maguire  
Patrick Masterson  
James McEnee  
Thomas McGovern  
Michael McKee  
Francis McLoughlin  
Patrick McManomon  
Michael Merrick  
Mary Murphy  
Martin Murray  
Edward Naughton  
Hugh O'Donnell  
Sir Richard O'Donnell  
Dominick Quin  
Michael Rourke  
Jonas Swaine  
Anthony Sweeny  
Michael Walsh

### Bleachyard

Patrick Aikins  
John Barrett  
Michael Barrett  
Thomas Barrett  
Patrick Browne  
Thomas Caine  
Richard Hester  
Edward Kelly  
John Landrum  
John Mahony  
William Macan  
William Mahony  
Thomas McManaman  
Thomas Wilks

### Castlebar Road

Elizabeth Bird  
James Caine  
James Caine  
Richard Connor  
Mary Davis  
Constabulary Force  
Charles Gilmore  
Austin Hoban  
Charles Hobin  
Grand Jury  
John C Larmonier  
James Lynn  
William Mahony  
Bridget McKenna  
Huston Nixon  
Sir Richard O'Donnell  
Revenue Police  
George Walsh

### Church Lane

Austin Geraghty  
Bridget Masterson  
Thomas McGrane

### Derrada

Michael Burke  
Patrick Chambers  
James Gannon  
Andrew Gibbons  
James Graven  
Patrick Higgins  
John Malley  
Patrick Moran  
Charles Mulchrone

Michael Mulchrone  
Capt Alex W. Wyndham

### Derryloughan North

John Boggan  
Patrick Boggan  
Martin Caine  
Henry Cunningham  
Dominick King  
John King  
Michael McManmon  
Richard O'Donnell  
Alexander Sweeny

### Derryloughan South

John Geraghty  
Patrick Kain  
Patrick McAnealy  
John Mulcroon  
James Mulroy  
James Sheredan  
James Walsh  
Patrick Walsh

### Doontrusk

John Burke  
Peter Cleary  
Philip Fergus  
Patrick Gorman  
Dominick Grady  
Anthony Machrone  
John Machrone  
Peter Machrone  
John Malley  
Timothy McNally  
Michael McNulty  
Michael Moran  
Thomas Walsh

### Drumbrastle East

Patrick Casey  
Margaret Gibbons  
Patrick McDonnell  
George Moore  
Hewson Nixon  
Henry O'Brien  
Daniel Salmon  
Michael Salmon

### George's Street

John Coolahan  
Richard Davis  
Anne Flynn  
Edward Forrestal  
Martin Gallagher  
John Geraghty  
James Hobin  
Daniel Kelly  
Ellen Kilroy  
John Loftus  
Martin Loughney  
Edward Malley  
Bernard McCarroll  
Bernard McCarthy  
Thomas McManomon  
Martin Murphy  
William Nixon  
John O'Hara  
John Stanton  
Anthony Sweeny  
John Sweeny  
Alice Walsh  
William Walsh

### Kiltarnaght

Anne Burke  
James Caine  
James Collins  
John Collins  
James Davis  
Phelim Donnelly  
  
Michael Flynn  
George Hughes  
Michael Macan  
James Malley  
Thomas McDonnell  
  
Catherine Murray  
Anne Nixon

**Knockavelly Glebe**  
 Rev Robert Gildea  
**Knocknageeha**  
 Thaddues Hoben  
 John Johnston  
 Bernard McCarrroll  
 Sabina McGooran  
 Mary McLoughlin  
 Sir Richard O'Donnell  
 Hugh Sweene  
 Owen Sweeney  
**Main St**  
 John Bole  
 Michael Brennan  
 James Caine  
 Peter Caine  
 Thomas Cannon  
 Martin Carey  
 John Coolahan  
 Owen Coyne  
 John Feeny  
 Anne Fergus  
 William Forrestal  
 Dominick Gavan  
 Patrick Gibbons  
 Peter Gibbons  
 Hugh Higgins  
 Dominick King  
 Richard Landers  
 James Mangan  
 Bridget McGovern  
 Sarah McGovern  
 John McNaught  
 John McNealy  
 John Moore  
 Dominick Nelson  
 Thomas O'Boyle  
 John Quin  
 Patrick Quin  
 Peter Quin  
 John Stanton  
 Anthony Sweeny  
 James Sweeny

Michael Walsh  
**Medlicott Street**  
 Anne Browne  
 Dodwell Browne  
 James M.D. Davis  
 Rev Matthew Flannelly  
 Thomas Flynn  
 Celia Heron  
 Edward Joyce  
 Mary Joyce  
 Jane McGuirk  
 Neil O'Donnell  
 Sir Richard O'Donnell  
 Patrick Ryder  
 Charlotte St. Leger  
 William Thulis  
 Deborah Williamson  
 Guardians  
 Newport Union  
**Newbridge Lane**  
 John Caine  
 Patrick Cusack  
 James Flynn  
 Anne Ginelly  
 Patrick Hannon  
 John Healy  
 Patrick Malley  
 Edward Moran  
 Thomas Nestor  
 Denis Nowlan  
 Catherine Ryder  
 James Sweeney  
**Newport**  
 Bridget Caine  
 Anne Fergus  
 Hugh Higgins  
 Patrick Hynes  
 Patrick Masterson  
 Patrick  
 McManomon  
 Edward Moran  
 Sir Richard O'Donnell  
**Quay Road**  
 Daniel Quin

**Quay Rd. Sth. Newport**  
 John Langley  
 John Malley  
 Sir Richard O'Donnell  
 Jonas Swaine  
**Shramore**  
 John Chambers  
 Patrick Chambers  
 Thomas Chambers  
 William Chambers  
 Patrick Conolly  
 James Conway  
 Patrick Fadeen  
 James McEntyre  
 John McEntyre  
 Thaddeus McEntyre  
 Thomas McEntyre  
 Frank McManmon  
 John (Ned) McManmon  
 Michael McManmon  
 Michael McManmon  
 Neal McManmon  
 Michael Mollony  
 Anthony Morrison  
 Bryan Morrison  
 Bryan Morrison  
 Dominick Murray  
 Patrick (jun) Murray  
 Patrick (jun) Murray  
 Thomas (sen) Murray  
 Thomas Nolan  
 Thomas Noon  
 Patrick Walsh

The major landlords in the parish at the time were

Name	Acres	Rateable Valuation
Marquis of Sligo	13042	£ 646.30
Henry J. Smith jr.	8261	£ 700.95
Nathaniel Simes	8110	£ 417.00
Sir Richard O'Donnell	7117	£1826.85
Capt. Alex W. Wyndham	6967	£ 812.20
Col. Arthur Knox Gore	4128	£ 113.75
Sir Roger Palmer	2004	£ 410.15
James Kelly	1701	£ 73.70
Lord Vaux	1458	£ 120.00
Jonathan Pim	336	£ 171.60

The higher rateable valuation of some landholdings is due to the quality of land being better for agricultural use.

## Lecarrow

Bryan M<sup>c</sup>Hugh

The townland of Lecarrow consists of 401 acres and is situated one and a half miles south east of Newport town in the Parish of Burrishoole, Barony of Burrishoole in the County of Mayo.

The townland of Lecarrow was first recorded in 1612 and it's history parallels that of the rest of the Parish.

A Butler chronicle of the 18th. Century records a tradition that Theobald, son of Walter Butler seized the area in 1185. They were dispossessed by the De Burgos in 1272. The De Burgos held onto the area for 300 years but in 1612 King James I confirmed Butler now Duke of Ormond as owner. On 16th, June 1612 Lecarrow was included in the land owned by the Duke of Ormond and is recorded in "The Book of Survey and Distribution" of 1641.

In Petty's Map of 1683. Lecarrow was shown together with adjacent townlands of Caramore, Carragan and Killmore. The Butlers held onto Lecarrow until 1666 when they leased it to Thomas Meddlcott for 999 years. They in turn held it until 1785 when Lecarrow was sold as part of the Meddlcott Estate to Sir Neal O'Donnell for £33,598-19s-4d. He leased Lecarrow to John McLoughlin of Newfield who became involved in the 1798 rebellion and had to flee to France. Afterwards O'Donnell evicted all of his Catholic tenants between Rosow Bridge and Newport Town and Lecarrow was turned into a grazing farm with one Herd living in the townland and looking after his stock. When John O'Donovan visited the area in 1836 while making the Ordnance Survey Maps, he wrote that it was let at a yearly rent of 22 shillings per acre. It was charged cess for the County of 3/3 (3 shillings and 3 pence) per acre yearly.

In 1910 the Congested Districts Board purchased the O'Donnell Estate of 7,534 acres for the sum of £47,568 and Lecarrow was divided into Family Farms which were allocated it is believed, to descendants of those who were evicted by O'Donnell. It was divided into 10 Family Farms.

### Social History

The people of the townland were farmers. They had mainly cottage farms where they grew vegetables, oats and had their own orchards. Their

largest income was in their livestock, they had a few cattle and sheep. They used the cows' milk for butter and cheese.

Even though they had these things they were still very poor because they had to pay high rent to the Landlord who was Sir Richard O'Donnell from Newport House.

The Doctor was not needed much because the people were very hardy and they had their own traditional remedies.

Many different herbs and flowers were used including :

*Comfrey* : Juice from root for cuts.

*Elderberry* : Flower tea used for headaches, colds, flu, stomach upsets.

*Nettle* : Nettle tea for sore throats and bronchitis.

*Oak* : Leaves boiled and juice was used for liver complaints.

A great recording of all these remedies and cures that were used by the people of the townland was made in 1934 by a man named Frank Power or "An Paorach" as he was known locally, who was Principal in Cuilmore National School at that time.

The earliest list of names of householders in Lecarrow was "O'Donnells (The Landlord) Rent Rolls". In those Rent Rolls a list of householders in arrears with their rent in Lecarrow Log in March 1828 showed the names : Geraghty, Devers, Lynchichan, Gibbons, Dugan, Gettins, McManus, Campbell, Burke, Collins, McLoughlin, Doude, O'Toole, Broad, all in arrears.

Decrees would have been granted against all those in arrears and this gave the Landlord an excuse to evict them but he still did not collect his rent.

Another list of the Householders for the townland are the Tithes Records of 1832. The Tithes were taxes collected for the upkeep of the Church. All of the names in the arrears list in O'Donnells Rent Rolls also appear in the Tithes Records of the townland.

In those records, the townland of Lecarrow seems to have been divided into four areas, - Lecarrow Log, Lecarrow East, Knockananlamane and Lecarrow West.

In William Balds Map of 1817. Lecarrow Log and Knockananlamane are clearly shown marked in red. Some of the names of the areas of the townland shown in the Tithes Records are still household names in the townland.

Part of the land presently owned by the Sammon Family in the centre of the townland is known as "Log" and it compares accurately with the area marked "Log" in Balds map. Also the land presently owned by the Keane Family in the east of the townland is known as Knockananlamane and this also compares accurately with Balds Map.

In Lecarrow West in the Tithes Records the name Campbell is shown seven times. In the land owned by John McFadden in the West of the townland there is a spring well which is known as Campbell's Well.

In the townland of Knocknatinywell, one mile north of Lecarrow there are ruins of a house known locally as "Doudes Old House". Local folklore has it that Doudes were evicted from their land in Lecarrow and took up residence there.

The Tithes Record shows that a Frank Doude lived in Lecarrow East in 1832, he is also mentioned in O'Donnells Rent Rolls list in 1828. There are 41 households named in the 1832 records, in the Census of 1841 there were 42 houses and 232 people.

In the Census of 1851 there were 23 houses and 119 people. Where exactly those people lived is not very clear.

William Bald's map shows clustered specks which one must assume are houses as they compare very accurately with local folklore and existing ruins. These clustered specks are shown in the area of Campbells Well and Lecarrow Log where ruins were visible but were removed in the 1960s in the process of reclamation. They are also shown on the north side of Crugan na Geann in the south of the townland where the ruins of houses are clearly to be seen.

In the revised list of Griffiths Valuations one can see how the possession of land was changed from neighbour to neighbour and father to son.

In the census of 1901 there were only four households in the townland of Lecarrow as a result of eviction and the famine. Of the four households

one was O'Donnells Herd - Patrick Casey. One was Patrick Keane - a Herd or Tenant of a Hen Rose. The remaining two were Owen Keane and Kate Geraghty and were tenants or squatters on the O'Donnell estate. When the Congested District Board purchased the townland in 1910 they built a road straight through the centre of the townland. They also built six new two storey houses and one bungalow. The material used in some of these houses i.e. windows and doors and some of the stone were taken from the old workhouse in Newport which was being demolished at the time. They also built one two storey outhouse with each house which could accommodate 8 cattle and a horse.

The Herd, Patrick Casey, was given a house and a farm of land, the other three families were given a farm of land only as they were classed as having second class houses at the time and that Pat Casey had a third class house (mentioned in the 1901 census). The other 6 houses and farms were allocated to families of two neighbouring townlands.

### **Political History**

Politically, Lecarrow did not have a lot of activity. Most of the people in the townland would have supported the Old IRA during and after 1916.

Michael Kilroy of Newport was a nephew of my great grandfather John Kilroy and was a frequent visitor to Lecarrow. He was in charge of the West Mayo Brigade of the Old IRA. He and his comrades used my great grandfather's house in Lecarrow as one of many safe houses while on the run during 1916-1922.

He was elected to Dáil Éireann for the constituency of Mayo South in the election of 1923.

### **Historical Geography**

The townland of Lecarrow geographically consists of a series of Drumlin hills running in a North-East South-West direction. Some of these hills rise to about 200 feet high. The northern side of those hills are very steep, with a rise of five feet in three in places, the soil is shallow and wet and at the base of all the hills on the northern side there is an abundance of cold clear spring water oozing from under the hills.

On the southern side the hills slope gradually down

onto large flat areas. The southern side has pockets of deep rich fertile soil and the flat areas have dark, very deep, peat-type soil.

The townland has part of two lakes, one – Lough Arrow at the eastern end and Broad Lough at the western end. The townland has two streams as ninety percent of it's boundaries, one rises in the eastern end, flows through Lough Arrow, it turns west and then south through Broad Lough and west again towards the sea on the southern side.

There are two roads going through the townland, one at the very northern boundary and the other runs right through the townland near the top of the hills. There is an old road which crosses the townland towards the east end which was used to get from Newport to Westport in a very early period.

### Folklore

#### Crugan na gCeann (Hill of the Heads)

Cnochán na Geann is a round hill 100 feet high and is situated in the Southern corner of the townland. Legend has it that there was a fierce Battle fought here some centuries ago. There were two clans fighting at the Cnochán. The main weapons used by the armies were axes, swords and spears. One of the chieftains, named Leachtain, was injured during the battle when he was hit on the head by a stone that another man had thrown, so his clan retreated to the end of the Valley. Here the clan were surrounded and defeated. The Chieftain died and was buried there. A whitethorn bush and a few large stones mark the grave.

It is said that a man from a nearby village tried to cut the whitethorn bush with an axe but the axe bounced off the bush and cut his hand.

Evidence of this battle was found when Michael Keane of "Gortawalla", a nearby village, found a bronze age battle axe in a stream at the base of the Crugan na gCeann.

#### The Cobbler's Wake

A story is told about a cobbler who lived about 160 years ago in a part of the townland called Lecarrow Log. It was said at that time it was a custom to give donations of money at a wake to the family of the deceased person. The cobbler decided to pretend he was dead and to have a wake. While he was

lying motionless in the Cailleach (Bed in the Kitchen) and the house was full of people, a smart fellow found the Cobbler's toolbox under the bed and he picked up the Bradawl (sharp tool used for boring holes in leather), left the pointed end on the cobbler's heel and hit it with his fist and with pain and the fright the cobbler sat up and roared and he frightened everybody out of the house. A few days later he died of a blood-poisoned heel and there was a real wake. But only a few people turned up at it because they were afraid he might come to life again.

### Forts

There are two Iron Age Forts in the townland of Lecarrow (map Attached). One of them is not visible from a distance as it is overgrown by scrub but part of the circular earthen bank is still intact, (circled in red on the map). It is fifty feet in diameter. The earthen bank is approximately four feet wide and four feet high. Parts of the bank are broken and are overrun by cattle and sheep.

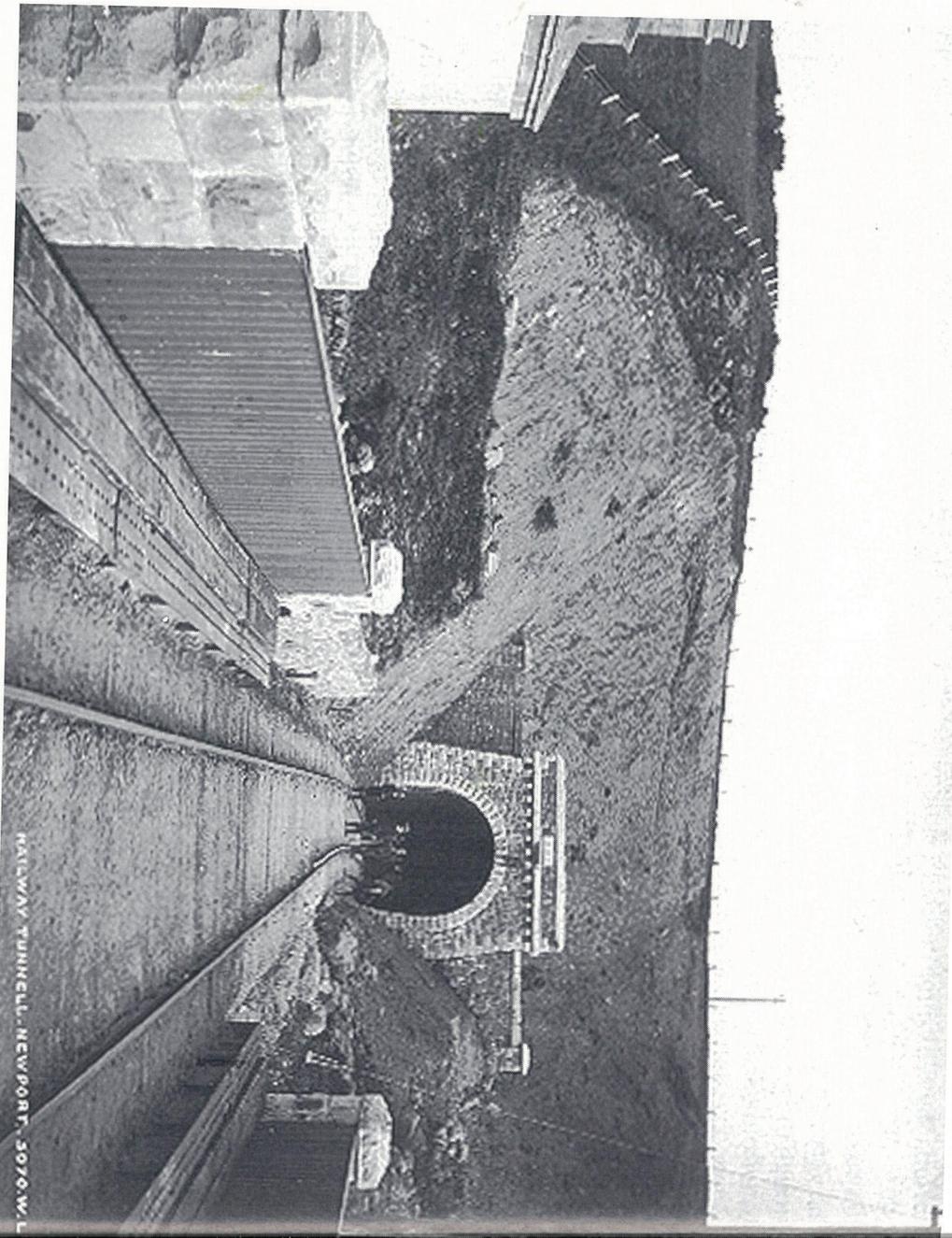
The other fort is built on a hill near the west boundary. It is in excellent condition. The outer bank is six feet high, the trench inside that is fifteen feet wide and six feet deep. This trench was probably larger when it was in use. Inside the trench there is an oval shaped enclosure which has a flat surface. There is a large entrance facing north east on the edge of the fort.

### Flora and Fauna

The townland has large areas of untouched habitation where wild herbs, plants and flowers grow in serenity. There is an abundance of wildlife in the townland. Wild duck, Woodcock, Snipe, Badgers and Foxes are all present. The Corncrake is gone, so is the Rabbit. There are two acres of natural hazel woodland in the western end of the townland. Red Deer wander into the townland from the next parish and can be seen grazing in the quiet areas in the early morning.

### SOURCES

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Vice-Chairman, Westport History Society, John Mayock  
My Father - John McHugh



*Newport Viaduct and tunnel (circa 1894)*

## St. Biorróg's (Barbara)bed and holy well

Veronica O'Malley

There are traces of a very early religious foundation at Burrishoole, East of the Abbey. In the vicinity is St. Biorróg's bed and a holy well called Tobar an Súil, the well for the eyes. Many years ago a Protestant Minister was appointed over the area "The Glebe" where the bed and holy well are situated. He inquired what was the stones (i.e. the bed) in the middle of the field. When told it was St. Biorróg's resting place the Minister had a wall built around it, which stands to this day.

The story of the well is one of a love story. A British soldier fell in love with St. Biorróg. She asked him which part of her body he had fallen in love with and when he replied her eyes, she is said to have ripped them out and thrown them onto the ground where the well then sprung up. There is no record of her death, except that she is buried in the blessed bed which lies to the South of the well. This bed and well is still a favourite place of pilgrimage for people with afflictions of the eyes.

There have been several accounts of people who have been cured of ailments to the eyes after doing the station.

Further history can be found in Dept of Folklore, U.C.D. Belfield, Dublin.

### Station

1. The station must be carried out before sunset on three days, as follows :  
Monday, Thursday, Monday  
or  
Thursday, Monday, Thursday.
- 2(a). The pilgrim stands at the foot of the blessed bed facing West and says :  
7 Our Fathers  
7 Hail Marys  
7 Glories
- (b). They then walk around the bed 7 times saying prayers of their own choice.
- (c) They then repeat part 2(a)
3. The pilgrim then goes to the holy well which is situated to the North of the bed, along the wall which surrounds the field and repeats the station as at  
2(a) - (c)



*Saving the hay near the seven arch bridge at Burrishoole. Possibly mid 50's or early 60's.*



*Treenbeg school 1923-24*

**Back Row :** Miss Flynn (teacher), Mary Dyra, Mary Bea Chambers, Katie Keane, Annie Marie McLoughlin, Nora Mulchrone, Paul Chambers, Paddy Mulchrone, Mick McGovern, Teddy Mulchrone, Tom O'Malley, Master Gibbons.

**Third Row:** Roseanne Lavelle, Mary Chambers, Nell Chambers, Katie Bryce, Kathleen McLoughlin, Mary Chambers, Paddy McGovern, Francie Chambers, Charlie Mulchrone, Pat Noone, Tom Dyra.

**Second Row:** Mary Kate O'Donnell, Katie O'Malley, Cathleen Chambers, Mary Anne Bryce, Nancy O'Malley, Manus O'Donnell, Paddy Horan, Mick Chambers, Mick Mulchrone, Peter O'Donnell, Tommie Mulchrone, Dick Lavelle, Ned O'Malley.

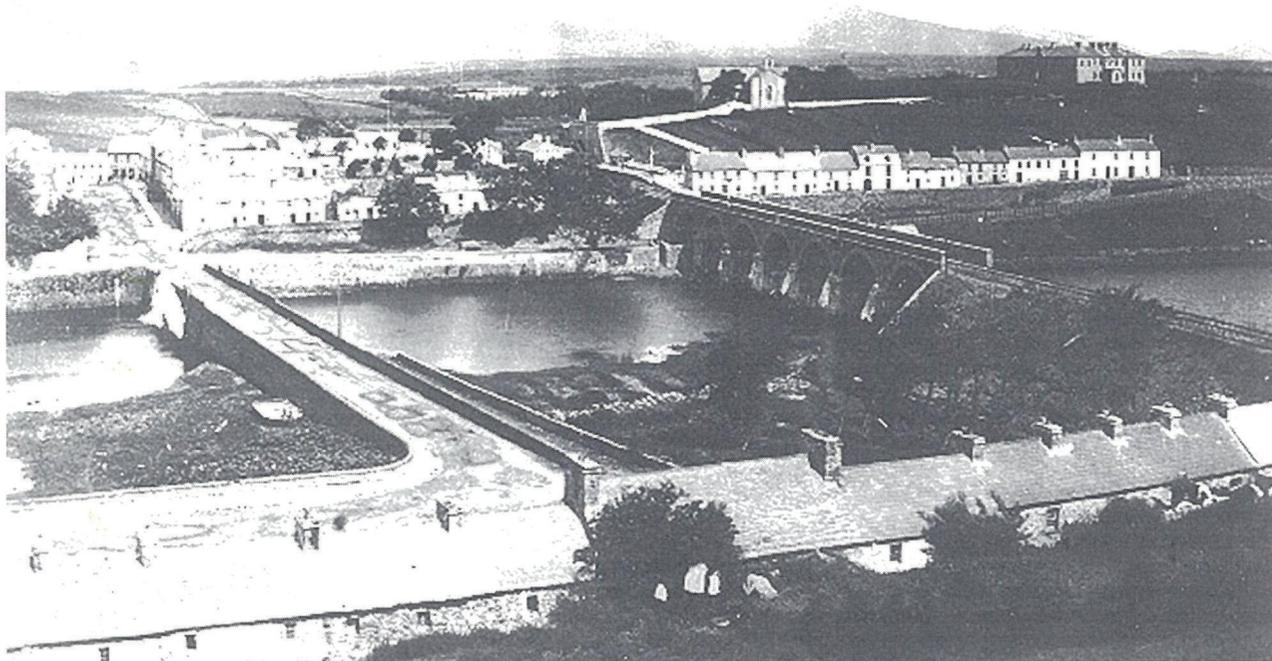
**Front Row:** Petie Bryce, Davy Mulchrone, Pat Noone, Mick Chambers, Mick Dyra, Charlie Keane, Paddy Chambers.

## Newport - The 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Joe McDermott

When Captain Pratt leased the Medlycott estate in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century he set about building a new town for his linen enterprise. The old Irish town of Burrishoole was probably overcrowded with cabins and small farms. Hence the *New Port*. A Quaker Community was encouraged by Pratt to set up in the town and the linen industry flourished for a while. Weaver's Row, now Castlebar Street, and Bleachyard, are names that derive from that period. James Moore, the land agent to the Medlycott landlords, managed the town in the middle years of

is referred to in Tirecháin's "Tripartite Life of St. Patrick" circa 900 A.D. Today it is associated with the Barony of Burrishoole which reaches around Clew Bay from Westport to Achill Island. It is however chiefly with the abbey of the Dominicans near Newport that the name is closely related. This 15<sup>th</sup> century abbey had a short but varied existence, from it's early years as a Dominican abbey, through occupation during the late 16<sup>th</sup> century wars and abandonment in Penal times.



*Newport circa 1900*

the 18<sup>th</sup> century and during that time oversaw a period of great economic success. At one time Newport's trade surpassed even that of Galway. It remained a trading town even though in the 19<sup>th</sup> century famine brought about the beginning of a long, slow decline paralleled by the decline in the fortunes of the O'Donel estates. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the appearance of benefactors such as Martin Carey, whose entrepreneurial skills stemmed the tide of decline and left the town some fine buildings such as the Catholic Church on the hill known as Barrack Hill. Today the town is making a determined effort to re-assert it's self-importance through growth and development and through pride in it's varied history.

First mentioned in the Ormonde deeds in the 1570s, this ancient land division has a long pedigree which

An examination of placenames and the physical evidence of ring forts and early Christian sites such as Teampaill Cúl na Gréinne show a long tradition of occupation by native and newcomer alike. It has a fine anchorage which is referred to in historical documents as a regularly visited port of call for English and Spanish traders in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries and perhaps even much earlier.

When Mr. Medlicott acquired the large estate formerly the Manor of Burrishoole, from the Duke of Ormonde, he leased it on to a Captain Pratt who served in the treasury office in Dublin Castle. Captain Pratt set out for Burrishoole in the early years of the Eighteenth century. He must have hoped to develop the port at Burrishoole and encourage the development of a linen trade there. However the old port at the abbey did not meet with

his approval for reasons not quite clear today. One may assume that there existed there a substantial and crowded Irish town. Pratt decided to retrace his steps to the townland of Ó Fiacháin on the abhainn Daire Duibhe, the Black Oak River. Here he began to construct his new port, calling it Newport Pratt.

Medlycott Street was probably among the first streets to be developed and some of the older houses such as those with one window on the second floor could conceivably originate from this time.

A Quaker Community was encouraged to come to the town and so the elements of a linen industry were put in place.

For whatever reason Mr. Pratt's endeavours did not succeed. Perhaps he had invested all his own cash in the town beginnings and could not fund further development, certainly the Quakers found the going equally tough and they were leaving by the late 1720s and early 1730s. They cite the "Tithe monger", failure to acquire a burial site and the long distances to the nearest Society Community at Moate in Co. Westmeath as reasons for leaving. Before they went they left us an intriguing list of guests at a Quaker wedding in Newport in 1727. Notable among those are the O'Donel family members Manus and Hu. These O'Donels were descendants of the Tír Conail O'Donels whose fortunes had disappeared with the Flight of the Earls after Kinsale in 1601.

By the late Eighteenth century these O'Donels would be making a return to power and status in the Newport area. However the mid Eighteenth century was to be dominated by a man whose tombstone and vault is at Knockavelly Glebe Graveyard. James Moore, land agent and entrepreneur, dominated the estate until his death in 1766.

He supervised the building of the Quays at Newport and the new Protestant church at Knockavelly Glebe. The Roman Catholic church behind Market Street, now Main Street, in the vicinity of Kelly's Kitchen was constructed during his land stewardship. The town appears to have thrived at this time. Records show ships of German and French origins trading into the port. James Moore was probably the first millionaire from the town, his fortune made in a wide variety of enterprises from wines and spirits importing to cattle rearing and money exchanging and banking. His family lived the life of gentry, his daughters, he had five,

were educated in Dublin where his wife went for the summer season each year. His own preference being horse racing at Breaffy.

Notable travellers of the Eighteenth century visited the town and it's Protestant merchant class. Dr. Poccoke, the noted Eighteenth century traveller preached in Knockavelly Glebe Church and also visited the ruinous Burrishoole abbey.

By Moore's death - 1766 - the O'Donel family had succeeded in acquiring much land and were ready to become owners in their own right, by changing their religion in 1763 they had paved the way for this. By 1777 they were buying the Medlycott estate which was for sale. The Medlycotts found no one to successfully replace James Moore.

The town was approaching it's economic peak. Methodism, Presbyterianism, Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic rubbed shoulders in the town, the Quakers had come and gone, the Darbyites yet to establish themselves.

The town could now boast these religious presences and streets such as Sailors Row, Tailors Row as well as Market Street and Newbridge Street and Barrackhill Street. Tinker Street, now George's Street gets a mention in the rent rolls of the late Eighteenth and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

The De Bille incident may well indicate the continued importance of the town in the 1780s when the Danish Naval Frigate the Bornholm limped into Newport Bay and Milcum for repairs, crew dead and dying from an unknown disease, wrecked by storm, Captain De Bille found succour and solace among the townspeople of Newport. The Danish Royal family responded with finance which enabled the building of the fine stone building De Bille house on Market Street in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

By the 1780s the O'Donels were engaged in their own building programme, Newport House remains as a testament to their own powerful status.

1798 saw Newport held by a French Irish garrison before reverting to the Crown. Fr. Manus Sweeney, a young man educated on the Continent and viewed by both Catholic and Protestant as a radical threat to the established order was hung and quartered in the town.

Other forces were at work in the town and in the country. The success of the potato, the rapid increase in population saw the town swell in

numbers in the late Eighteenth and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The culmination of this dramatic growth was the famine of the 1840s, not however the first to afflict Newport. The 1820s saw famine, the 1830s cholera, the 1840s were merely the crowning disaster to befall the area.

The town population had risen to 1541 by 1841, in 1851 it had fallen to 870. The decline continued through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The famine began the destruction of the landed estates. This issue would continue to bedevil Irish society through the nineteenth century until agitation, land war and finally legislation empowering the people to own their own land finally by the 20<sup>th</sup> century put paid to a system of land tenure that endured too long.

The encumbered estates courts and nature itself eventually ended the O'Donel hegemony. No money and no male heirs ended an estate whose holdings had once encompassed over 70,000 acres from Kilmeena to Achill and North to Ballycroy, mountain and moorland, drumlin and island, a man could not travel it's extent in one day on horseback.

The social conditions of the nineteenth century reached their nadir in the famine years. Newport was established as a Poor Law union and the workhouse built at Derryloughan Beg. This continued to serve a large union and was so busy

that in the late 1840s the workhouse held over 1,000 inmates and another 2,000 were fed on outdoor relief schemes.

Martin Carey first appears in Griffiths Valuation of 1856 and his presence in the area was to inject new economic life into the town for the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His son succeeded him and their contribution to the town is especially marked by the imposingly beautiful St. Patrick's Church on Barrack Hill. This church was to be the last of three built in the town since the easing of the Penal laws in mid 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The town continued to serve a large hinterland right into the twentieth century, the railway arrived in 1896 over a fine red sandstone bridge that had cost almost £10,000 to construct. The railways' life had run it's course by the 1930s as the economic war with Britain came to a close so too did the railways days end. Emigration continued to bedevil the population but the town held on through boom and burst until the 1980s and now the 1990s bring new ideas, new ways of living, working and playing in Newport, Co. Mayo.

**Sources :**

1. M.S.5737 National Library Ireland
2. Census of Population 1841 and 1851
3. Microfiche Castlebar (Co. Library)

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## Poetry

The following are some pieces of poetry that reflect on Burrishoole abbey “Roofless, doorless, monkless”

Authors unknown.

### **Burrishoole Abbey**

There is a temple in ruin stands  
Fashioned by long-forgotten hands  
Two or three columns, and many a stone,  
Marble and granite, with grass o’ergrown

### **A Legend of Burrishoole**

One morning all alone,  
Out of his convent of grey stone  
Into the forest older, darker, greyer,  
His lips moving as if in prayer,  
His head sunken upon his breast  
As in a dream of rest  
Walked the monk.

### **A Pilgrim’s Last Request**

Many altars are in Banba,  
Many chancels hung in white  
Many schools and many abbeys  
Glorious in Our Father’s sight;  
Yet! Whene’er I go a pilgrim  
Back, dear holy isle, to thee,  
May my filial footsteps bear me  
To that abbey beside the sea -  
To that abbey roofless, doorless,  
shrineless, monkless, though it be.



*Michael Kilroy T.D. 1923 - 1937 and his wife Nan*

Shramore School 1923-24n



**Back Row :** Patrick McManamon, Jack & Connor McIntyre, Jim McManamon, Neil McManamon, Pete McManamon, Fred McIntyre, John Chambers, Frannie McFadden, Tom Chambers.

**Third Row :** Master Gilligan, Sarah & Bridgie Ann Murray, Kate McIntyre, Mabel McFadden, Rose McIntyre, Annie Sweeney, Celia & Greta McIntyre, Eileen McManamon, Mary Kate McManamon.

**Second Row :** Paddy McIntyre, Aggie Kilker, Mamie & Nonie McManamon, Baby McManamon, Mary Kate Kilker, Lizzie McManamon, Veronica McFadden, Nora McManamon, Mollie Chambers, John P. McIntyre, Francie McManamon.

**Front Row :** Dan McManamon, Paddy McManamon, Vincent McManamon, Tom McManamon, Neil McFadden, Tady McIntyre.

## Shramore N.S. 1909 - 1970

Nancy Gallagher

Shramore N.S. opened in 1909 to serve a school-going population of approximately 65 children on a site donated by the Connelly family (Shramore).

Prior to its opening children attended school in Treenbeg, which entailed a five to six mile walk for those living furthest away. Because of the distance involved, only those that were big enough and strong enough to walk could attend. For some years prior to 1909 the younger children of the village attended a "hedge school" held in a barn belonging to Pat McManamon (of the Sraith). This was run by Martin McNeill, a school teacher from Galway. He resided in the village and was paid by the parents at a fee per pupil. Others attended school in various districts where they had family and relatives to lodge with.

The first principal of Shramore school was Patrick Moran from Collabrack, Newport and the assistant teacher was his sister Mary. Patrick, also known as Pádraig Ó Móráin was later more widely known as a great Irish Folklorist and translator. He taught in Shramore for a number of years until he moved to another position in Knockloughra N.S.

Other teachers to work in Shramore N.S. were Mr. Gerald Flynn, Miss Teresa Moran, Mr. Gilligan, Miss O'Boyle, Miss Gibbons, Mr. Mulloy, Mr. Evans, Miss Annie Maye, Mrs. McNulty, Miss Dillaney, Miss Burke, Miss Doyle, Miss Ward, Miss McHale, Miss Moran, Miss Kilroy and Miss Conroy.

In the early years of school night classes were held for the village adults who wanted to avail of the opportunity to improve their literacy and numeracy

skills. Such skills may have been limited prior to this due to the possible lack of opportunity. Also cookery classes and butter-making classes were held in the school. Shramore N.S. covered an area from Letterkeen to Althahoney to the North and Glenamong to Treenlaur to the South. However a number of children from other areas also attended. Children from the West side (Thirclue) of the village had to cross the river by means of stepping stones and on horseback up until the early 1930's when the bridge was built on the Black river. The children were required to bring turf with them to school each day in order to heat the school.

Just two of the original pupils of the first year (1909) are still alive. They are Frank McManamon (the Sraith) and Kate (McManamon) Waters of Althoney.

In the early years dances were held in the school. From the early 1930's up until 1964, when Shramore church was built, it was also used for Sunday Mass. In the latter years, prior to the school's closure, socials were again held in the school.

The school was closed in 1970 due to the dwindling number of pupils and the Dept. Of Education's Amalgamation Policy of the time.

The last teacher to run the school was Mrs. McGuire (née Conroy), Newport. In May 1970 she and her 12 pupils, namely : Barbara Chambers, Breda Calvey, Mary McIntyre, Frank McManamon, Jimmy Chambers, Breege McManamon, Breege Chambers, Margaret McManamon, Martina Calvey, Sheila Kilker, Ann Chambers, Margaret Gallagher, transferred to Derradda N.S. - and so ended 61 years of education in Shramore.

## Newport Town - 60 Years Ago

Gerard Bracken

Sixty years ago the Main Street of Newport presented a thriving business scene, with Carey's shop, one of the largest of such premises in rural West of Ireland, providing the focal point.

Newport House Hotel was then known as Newport House, the private residence of a landed gentry family of O'Donnells, where an "Upstairs, Downstairs" tradition existed. The last link with the family was Thomas O'Donnell, who died around that time, and who enjoyed more popularity with the locals than did some of his predecessors. The annex to the hotel was then a Gate Lodge operated by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Moore, whose daughter, Mrs. Margaret Ryan, now lives at Knocknabola, Kilmeena.

First house on Main Street was that of Bracken's Sweet and Fruit Shop (now owned by Walsh's Bridge Inn Bar) where the first ice cream in the town was sold in the late 1920's. In the adjoining laneway Harry Hoban rented a premises from Brackens for his blacksmith trade. Next door the licensed premises now known as The Bridge Inn was just purchased by Willie O'Malley from a Lyons family. The premises now known as The Tastebuds Take-Away was Keenan's Drapery 60 years ago, when the family moved to Galway that year and garage proprietor and building contractor, Michael Kelly purchased the premises around that time.

Next door was Carey's, which was demolished and reconstructed by Mayo County Council into shops and flats. Sixty years ago this massive premises consisted of a drapery, hardware, grocery, bakery and select bar which had the facility of one of the few full-time barmen in the county at the time. Owned by Patrick Walsh, Carey's had a full-time staff of twelve, as well as a number of part-time employees. Carey's were also a builder's providers, and timber was cut at their water-powered Mill on the Castlebar Road, operated by John Maguire, who lived nearby. Coal was imported by Careys into Newport harbour and stores at their coal stores on The Quay and at George's Street store recently refurbished by Newport Development Company. In

1936 the stores at the rear of the Main Street shop were destroyed by fire and have since been converted into industrial units by the Development Company.

The premises next door to Carey's was a pub owned by Dominick Gavin, and is now known as Brannen's Lounge. Sixty years ago the adjoining premises of McNulty's was operated only as a bakery before becoming a pub and grocery, and was managed by Christy McNulty until he died a few years ago and is now run by his wife Sarah. The premises next to McNulty's was owned by a Nora Callaghan and has since been purchased by John Chambers of Brannen's.

The next door MACE Supermarket operated by the Chambers family was then owned by Carey's and was rented to the then Munster and Leinster Bank for a branch office. The second and third floors were used as the local Garda Station. Later the building became Jack Corbett's chemist shop and family residence. Next door was a drapery owned by a Mrs. O'Donnell, whose husband Pat was a well-known historian and, at the time, a member of Mayo County Council. The premises is now known as Keane's meats.

Sixty years ago the premises known as John F's Tavern was a pub and hardware shop owned by John Francis Chambers, an uncle of Councillor Frank Chambers. Next door Chambers operated a Newsagents shop and, following the death of Frank Chambers, the proprietor, the members of the family expanded the premises into a newsagents, grocery and confectionery establishment, now operated by Jim and Mary Alice Reilly. The next door premises, now Nevin's Lounge Bar, was known sixty years ago as Devine's Hotel, the only such premises in the town, and was also a well-known bar. On the other side of the laneway was O'Boyle's licensed premises, owned then by Lizzie O'Boyle, and managed by a Paddy Keane, who also operated a Bookmaking business. The premises is now Kelly's Kitchen, owned by the Kelly family.

And it was in that year that Dominick Kelly opened that victualling business, which has been continued

by members of his family and was recently expanded. Part of the lower road at Oak Park was the home of a Stokes family.

The first house in the nearby New Bridge Street, now owned by Nancy Mulhern, was then owned by Mrs. Ethel Davitt and family. The next door premises, later owned by Mrs. Coggins, was the home of Michael Kelly, garage proprietor, who subsequently moved to Main Street. The next door home of Michael Hughes was unoccupied until he moved into it two years later. Next door was owned by a Gavin family in Ballina and was then occupied by Katie Flynn, who operated a small sweet shop there. The now roofless next door property was the home of a Roger McGuire and family and later became the home of his daughter Mrs. Frank Callaghan and some members of this family are now living in America. The next door Angler's Rest was then a licensed premises run by John McGovern and family and some of them are still living in England. The premises was later purchased by Paddy Walsh, who owned Burrishoole Lodge at the time. The Angler's Rest and adjoining premises is the site for a proposed hotel complex.

The now derelict building on George's Street hill was owned by a Dominick Berry, who operated a carrier service with his horse and cart. Next door, Aggie Mulchrone's house was owned by John Joe Ketterick, who owned a bakery business and operated a taxi service. The adjoining space, now the site of a mobile home, used as a Credit Union office, was the home of James Ketterick (father of John Joe), who also operated a bakery. The next door Corcoran's Drapery was a joinery shop owned by Packie Callaghan, while the adjoining premises (also Corcoran's) was McManamon's, home of the late Celia O'Donnell of Oak Park, and the next door premises, now also owned by Martin Corcoran, was the McGreal family home.

On the other side of George's Street hill the first house was then Brady's pub. The next door home of Dan Hoban was then owned by his uncle Jim Grady, who operated a pub and a taxi service. The now unused building was also O'Grady's pub and grocery, known as Mary Lunn's. The next door premises, now owned by Martin Corcoran, was then known as Kelly's Drapery. Later the family changed

the business to Main Street. Next door to Kelly's, now Conway's was owned by Tony Conway until the premises was sold. The next door Cowley's drapery was then owned by Frank O'Dowd.

The adjoining pub, owned by Frankie Chambers, was then run by his father Frank, as a bar and grocery and now known as "Nellie's Bar". The next-door grocery and hardware premises of John Cowley was a shoemaker's shop sixty years ago, owned by a Hugh O'Malley. Frank Cowley's lounge bar was then known as Callaghan's bar (operated by Mrs. Callaghan, grandmother of Mickie and the late Junior) and next was a premises owned by Bertie Staunton, Westport, for the collection of eggs. The next door home of Mrs. Jordan was then owned by a Miss McNulty, a dressmaker, while Eileen Sweeney's end-of-street grocery shop was then known as Pat McFadden's - her uncle.

The end house at Church Street was owned by Michael Berry (horse and cart haulier) and now owned by his son Mick. The next door Eddie Fitzgerald home was then owned by his father. The nearby old railway cottage was the home of the Smith family - Mick Smith was a signalman at the Railway Station. The "Three Chimneys" house at the Railway bridge was owned by Johnny McManamon, a tailor and was the only home on that side at the time.

In the now open space behind the Fr. Manus Sweeney Mural at the top of Main Street, stood Cusack's Butcher's shop and residence, and Peter Davitt's house. The home of Mrs. Patricia Padden was then the home of Dominick McGovern and family. Next door, Mickie Walsh's Footwear, was the home of his grand-aunt, Margaret Barry, a former Postmistress. The extended Darac Handcrafts Shop, now owned by Jack Geraty, was the home of Nurse Padden, mother-in-law of Patricia, and a confectionery shop owned by John Kilroy, grandfather of Mary Geraty.

The nearby three-storey De Bille Guesthouse and business premises, owned by Frank and Philomena Chambers, was at that time, sixty years ago, the drapery and residence of Johnny Moran. The next door premises, now Hairs & Sirs, Hairstylists, was

then a hardware premises owned a Patrick E. Walsh. The next-door home of Una Chambers was owned by Pakie Davitt, who operated a taxi service. The adjoining premises, now owned by Chambers' newsagents with top storeys converted into flats and ground floor leased to Durcan's Chemists, was a pub owned by Martin Sweeney (father of Mrs. Mary McCormack), who also operated a cooper business. The next door Sheridan's Fashion Boutique was the home of the Miss Berry sisters. The next door Sheridan's Annex was a popular licensed premises sixty years ago, operated by Pat Keane and family. Sheridan's Supermarket was the home of a Walsh family who operated a bar and hardware business. It was the birthplace of the former Archbishop of Tuam, the late Dr. Joseph Walsh. Next door was Chambers' Corner Shop, now owned by Tony Chambers.

First house on Castlebar Street was the home of Mark Cusack and family. The private house of Michael Sheridan was the property of Walsh's, Main Street, and was used as a branch office for the Bank of Ireland. The nearby Quinn's home, before it was extended, was the local Post Office, operated by Mrs. Bridget Tobin and family. The four nearby houses, now owned by Tony Chambers, and then owned by Walsh's Main Street, was occupied by the Flynn family (butchers), Garda Fagan and different tenants. The railway line ran on the site of Kelly's garage (no through road then) and Micheál Kelly's house was then the home of Station Master, Mr. Russell.

The next two houses, now owned by Charlie Brady, were the homes of a Mrs. Casey and the Hennesseys. Next door was the home of Tom Chambers, father of the present owner, P.J. Chambers. The next-door home of Denis Coughlan was then owned by his grandfather, Thady Berry, a well-known boat builder and boatman. The adjoining now unoccupied premises was owned by Mrs. Maria McGovern, mother of Fr. Martin and the late Fr. Joe McGovern. The next-door house was then a store on which Joe Kelly, a former clerk at Newport Parish Church, built the house.

The next-door premises, now occupied by Mrs. Rowland, was the home of a Mrs. McIvor, a grandaunt of the late Paddy Gibbons, Meddlcott Street. Mr. And Mrs. Michael Brady's adjoining

house was then owned by John O'Malley, who carried on a tailoring business there. The Courthouse was then used in a similar capacity sixty years ago. A Miss Slowey occupied the adjoining single storey premises and the home of Mickie Kelly was then owned by a Harte family, who subsequently moved to Ballina.

The present Community Hall, built in 1940, was then a small Wesleyan Church building (purchased by Canon McDonald P.P. in 1930) which was used as a club room, and later as a céili hall, until the new hall was built. The homes of Michael and Lily Chambers are built on the site of the then Catholic curates' residence, Rev. Fr. J. Walsh. The next-door premises, now the home of John Joe Mulchrone and family, was owned by a Patrick Joyce and the adjoining home of Mrs. Margaret Kealy was owned sixty years ago by Mr. and Mrs. John J. Moran before they moved to the Tiernaur area, where they were engaged as National School teachers. The nearby houses of Cyril Moore and family and Mr. and Mrs. Kenny were built by the late Sam Moore on the site of the derelict R.I.C Barracks. The building, now known as the Riverside Youth Club was a disused Presbyterian Church building sixty years ago and Riverside House, now owned by the Floss family, was then the home of Dr. Michael Lee, the local medical officer.

Peadar Kilroy's home at Carrabawn was the family home and workshop of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kilroy. The new ball-alley was erected on the site of the old Boy's National School. The first houses on Meddlcott Street, now owned by Kenneth Stevens were then occupied by Martin Keane, a shoemaker and by a Maguire family. The late Bob Loftus' house next door was the home of a Donovan family. The home of Judy Gibbons was the family home of Judy's parents, Larry and Julie Davitt. The adjoining two houses were the homes of the Maloney sisters and of Jim and Nora Mulloy. David Moran's next door home was owned by an O'Connor family, who were well-known painters.

The existing Post Office was a licensed premises owned by a Martin Healy. The Gráinne Uaile Lounge was then the home of Harry Hoban (blacksmith) and family, some of whom are living in England. The next-door premises, owned by Lily Chambers, was the home of an Ellicott family

sixty years ago, one of whom is a nun in the U.S.A. The adjoining premises, now owned by Mr. Joe McManamon, was the home of a Doherty family, and the next-door house, owned by Joe Saunders, was the home of his grandaunt, Biddy Jordan. The next-door house now occupied by Frank McManamon was owned by a Mary Grady, who had a small sweet shop there.

The adjoining house, owned by the late Paddy Kilroy, was then owned by John Stokes, a scrap merchant. The next-door McCormack home was then the home of Mary McCormack's mother-in-law, also Mary McCormack, and family. The next-door Black Oak Inn was the licensed premises of J.K. Moran's and the portion occupied by Reid's Supermarket was a cement store, owned by McEllin's of Balla and was previously a cinema. Joyce's Garage, and adjoining private house, now owned by Sylvie Healy, was then operated by his grandfather, Michael Joyce, and family. The premises known as The Blue House, on the Melcomb Road, was the home of Miss Rose. The nearby then "Parochial House", purchased by fashion designer, Sara Perceval, was then the house of the Parish Priest, M Canon McDonald. Joe McGee's home at Sandymount was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Peter McGee and family, as was Peter McManamon's house, which was owned by his grandparents. The Clew Bay Seaweeds premises was an unused store, owned by Careys.

The private residence of the St. Lucy Nuns, at the Quay, was the home of a Meaney family and the factory portion, which includes the Oratory, was then a coal store owned by Careys. The adjoining house, now occupied by Dr. Joe Devine, Listowel, was the home of a Miss Lavelle. Miss T. McNeela's house was then an open space, on which Mr. Kelly built a house. Mrs. McDonagh's house was the home of a Power family and Mr. Power, known as An Paorach, was a teacher at Cuilmore N.S. And sixty years ago the home of

P.J. Kelly was a coal store, owned by Careys, as was the adjoining premises, which was used by the firm as a store.

The single-storey houses at the Quay Road were the first to be built in the town as a County Council

Estate. The two end-houses, nearest the sea, were occupied by a Josie Stokes and a James Dillon. The house owned by Mickie Callaghan was occupied by his uncle, John Flynn. The adjoining house of Séamus Cussane was occupied by his father James Cussane. The next block of houses were occupied at the time by Tom Cusack and Dominic Kilroy and are now owned by Bridie McHale. The end-houses nearest the town were occupied by Mickie Ketterick and now owned by Aggie McDonnell and the adjoining house of Eddie Kilroy was occupied by a Frank McGee, who was a town postman at the time.

As can be seen from this survey the face of Newport has changed much during the past half-century. Gone are many familiar names and only a few links remain with it's residents of 1935. Gone also is the Railway Station, much in operation sixty years ago, with the platform premises now turned into flats and the goods store becoming an Oratory.

But the population of Newport has increased by thirty per cent in the last 60 years and there is a projection of it still increasing by fifty per cent by the turn of the century. Many new houses have since been built, including the Stella Maris estate houses, the Chalet houses, the Oak Park estate houses, Sea View Estate, many new private bungalows on the approach roads to the town, especially on the Mulranny Road and the Quay. Also, many new business premises and the new primary school on the Glenhest Road.

## Country Butter and Buttermilk

Nancy Mulhern

Buttermilk plays an important part in our bread. To describe how buttermilk is made, I will take you back to your childhood, because homemade butter & buttermilk is a rarity in Ireland.

As you are well aware, cows are milked twice a day in the morning and evening. The milk was strained and put into earthenware crocks. Every day the cream was skimmed and held in the dairy undisturbed until it soured and enough gathered for churning.

This was tipped into a revolving barrel churn and was rotated with a handle at the side. There was another type of churn, one with a dash that was thrust up and down to strike violently against the liquid, they both served the same purpose, but in different ways.

In reference to the revolving barrel churn, the handle was turned round and round on it's axis

until some instinct told one that it was time to unscrew the lid and pour boiling water into the churn, the lid was re-clamped, the churn handle rotated and moments later the butter had separated from the milk and formed itself into solid lumps in the liquid. Cold water was now added. The butter was collected in a wide wooden bowl, washed in running water until the water was clear, salted and shaped into oblongs, each weighing about one pound.

The liquid left in the churn after the butter is removed is the buttermilk. Fresh buttermilk is sharp and tart and very refreshing to drink. It is far above water as a thirst quencher. In days gone by, if one was suffering from a hangover, it was a swift cure.

There was an old tradition, if anyone visited the house when a churning was in progress, they had to participate, if they left without rotating the handle the butter would not form.

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## Notes From The Years Of Macra Na Feirme In Newport

Willie Sammon

When World War Two ended, farming in Ireland was in a very depressed state with the land in a very low state of fertility due to constant cropping due to compulsory tillage and lack of fertilizers.

To try and remedy this a group of young Agricultural Scientists came together and formed an organization to be known as Macra na Feirme or Young Farmers clubs. The organization quickly spread throughout the country and among the first clubs to be formed was Newport.

Newport branch very quickly made a special niche for itself with the aid of very eminent lecturers provided for it by the R.D.S. and various bodies. The winter months were filled with classes and on it's first Summer it was decided to hold an Agricultural Show which was held on the last Wednesday of August and it was to continue to be a feature of Parish life for the next thirty one years. Every year it attracted many thousands of people to the town from all parts of the county.

Macra catered not only for the educational needs of the farmers but also for the social needs and the Farmers Dances were the most looked-forward-to events in the social calendar but it was quickly realised that there was more culture than agriculture and in mid Summer an annual Feis was held which brought competitors from all parts of the country.

On 8<sup>th</sup> June 1952 the Young Farmers decided to honour the memory of Fr. Manus Sweeney, the Catholic Curate of Newport hanged for his part in the 1798 rebellion and a vivid impressive flashback into the tragic history of '98 was witnessed by the thousands of people who filled the streets of the town.

Mr. Michael J. Egan Solr. read a script by Torlach Ó Huid and as he finished reading, twenty mounted redcoats made a colourful show as they charged across the bridge followed by Fr. Manus Sweeney sitting on his coffin in his father's cart surrounded by twenty footsoldiers in uniforms of the period with shouldered guns, while, waiting at Newport House gate was Sir Neil O'Donnell mounted on a white charger who led the way through the throng to the top of the street where

the gibbet was erected. Here Fr. Manus was hanged and as his body dangled from the rope,

scarcely a whisper was heard. An interested spectator that day in Newport was Mrs. Guy Cooper great, great granddaughter of Henry Stevens, one of the famous brothers executed in '98, also the occasion was favoured by a special leading article in the Sunday Press devoted to the work of Newport Farmer's Club.

In 1953 the martyrdom of the Burrishoole Nun Honoria Magaen and Sr. Honoria De Burgo was commemorated by the club with special ceremonies. The club was honoured by having President Seán T. O'Kelly with the Archbishop of Tuam Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Walsh and the Bishop of Achonry Most Rev. Dr. J. Fergus.

The ceremonies opened with Mass in the Abbey and at three o'clock the crowd gathered at Burrishoole bridge to see a pageant enacted on the hillside opposite where back in time 300 years ago the hunted people gathered to hear Mass when they were surprised by over twenty mounted Cromwellian soldiers who galloped from the old bridge to confront the people where a bitter fight took place to protect the priest. The statue to commemorate the martyrs was unveiled on the bridge that day.

On another year it was decided to remember the work done by Michael Davitt and the Land League and this took place on Show Day when two "houses" erected on the hill opposite were the scene of an eviction. It was clearly demonstrated to the crowd what the poor people must have suffered when their homes were torn down. The sheriff with police, a battering ram and all, came into view and then using the battering ram, knocked their home to the ground. When viewed from the showgrounds it was a very touching scene.

The Macra na Feirme club in Newport held centre stage for all of its thirty one years and carried out a very full programme every year until it had to discontinue its show due to Government rules concerning livestock but despite its heavy workload at home its members were active in every farming activity in the county and many of its members

played a major role in the co-operative movement in Mayo and were very influential in having the Creamery & Store in Castlebar and the Co-Op Store & Mart in Westport.

The success of the Macra club and it's great influence on Parish life for thirty years is a great

reminder of the important role that rural areas can play in the community, this is very evident today in the work being done by places like Cuilmore and Derradda, where the young men and women have breathed new life into their areas and the many projects they have undertaken will be a lasting reminder of their good work.



**Macra na Feirme 1952 or 1953**

**Back Row :** John Joe O'Malley, Tony Nixon, Mick Gannon, Josie O'Donnell, Liam Walsh, Mick Lavelle, Peter Mulchrone

**Middle Row :** Pat Gannon, Walter Sammon, John Collins, Joe McManamon, Paddy Lavelle, Paddy Mulchrone, Dominick Kelly, Tony Gallagher.

**Front Row :** Tom Geraghty, Seán Nixon, Willie Sammon, John McNulty, Tom Garavan, Pete Donnelly, Dominick Grady.

## Working in Newport House

Nancy Mulhern

In the late fifties there were not many jobs for young people, therefore, when my father was alerted to an available position in the kitchen of Newport House he suggested that I should apply as I would be just "hanging around" during the school holidays. I passed the interview and started work sometime in June. My mentor was an elderly lady called Mrs. Cusack who had worked in the "Big House" as it was called since she was a young girl and when the O'Donels owned it. Part of my job was washing the dishes, pots and pans and anything that was put before me. But when it came to preparing vegetables and potatoes for lunch and dinner, instructions were handed down to be precisely carried out.

All the vegetables and fruits were grown in the hotel garden and were incorporated into the menus as to what was in season. Always there was a wonderful smell of cooking from the brown bread wafting across the kitchen to the chickens roasting in the oven.

Lobsters were brought in a crate and left on the kitchen floor, in the course of my work I would meet one making it's way across the flagged floor, resulting in a flurry of activity to get away from the monster. Someone who knew lobsters would pick it up and land it right back where it belonged with a warning that "if it was not handled properly it would take the hand off you."

Newport House had it's own milking cows and the fresh cream was skimmed off the milk and whipped with an old-fashioned hand-held whisk for the desserts. They were Mrs. Cusack's specialty, she told me on many occasions that "my grandfather had given a donkey to her late husband" therefore I was privileged to be handed a saucepan and spoon and sent to the scullery to sample the remains of desserts of the day and one dared not refuse.

The larder had marble slabs and in addition to the milk kept there, beautiful hams from Lipton's in Westport cooked and dressed in the kitchen took pride of place on the slabs, if anyone helped themselves to a sliver, questions would have to be answered.

Morning times were busy, in addition to breakfasts, lunch baskets had to be prepared for the guests who were going fishing. The hotel bar in the evening was crowded with fishermen relishing and living through the events of their catch.

Many a waitress cautiously checked the clock wishing them to be seated for dinner - and indeed the gong in the hall would give another resonant signal to try to usher them to their tables - as there may have been a dance in the Parochial hall that night with the Newport based band called the "Twilight Serenaders".

Much to the displeasure of the manageress. Miss Walsh, two gentlemen guests would faithfully approach the kitchen inquiring as to what was for dinner that evening, they would discuss the day's events with Mrs. Cusack and politely adjourn to the dining room.

Fortunately for me my days in the kitchen were coming to an end, I was getting a promotion, moving up to work in the pantry. This entailed more washing of dishes, but with an elegant status, as it was all the silverware and china. The silver was examined closely for any stains before it reached the dining room and the china was also scrutinised.

The staff had their meals in the pantry and after tea at six o'clock, it did not matter what was happening, Mrs. Cusack would make her appearance with her beads in hand and everyone knelt and said the Rosary.

Hours were long, from eight o'clock in the morning to eleven at night with a two-hour break during the day, seven days a week with a paycheck of thirty shillings (£1/10s)

School did not appeal to me very much, but after my couple of months working I was glad to be back in class.

## The Salmon Research Centre

Joe McDermott

Arthur Guinness acquired the Zetland Hotel in Connemara in 1952. The directors of the company wished to improve the local fisheries there but found that basic information needed was not available because fundamental research had not proceeded at that time.

The company approached the Minister for Agriculture and it was agreed to set up the "The Salmon Research Trust for Ireland". The first task was to choose a suitable research location. The Burrishoole river system was at that time in the ownership of Major C.W. Roberts who agreed to participate and the trust entered into a fee arrangement with Roberts. In 1965 the company purchased the fishing rights from Roberts.

In 1956 rearing ponds were erected at Treenlaur and in 1957 the Farran Laboratory was built. This laboratory was called after George Phillip Farran, chief inspector of fisheries from 1938 - 1946.

In 1958 the mill race at furnace was developed. All fish are diverted into holding tanks where they are examined, counted and tagged with a minimum of handling.

On the Lettermagheragh side the salmon leap was also developed for fish counting and examination.

As the years have gone on the scale of the work has developed. General biological survey work in the river system, research into eels, peat silt research and general landscape awareness surveys are part of the ongoing work of the laboratory.



*Salmon Research Centre. Construction of fish traps at the "leap" (mid 1960's)*



*Fair day in Newport*



*McGarry Fergus and ????????????*



*Jim Connolly and his father Patrick,  
Carrowsallagh.*

## Newport Sisters of Mercy

Sr. Consilio

*“Shortly before his death, Fr. Prendergast, P.P. Newport wished to have a convent in the town and invited the Sisters of Mercy at Castlebar to undertake the foundation. Negotiations were opened but no arrangement was agreed on to undertake the foundation and the project was then abandoned.”* (Extract from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy, Westport). Fr. Prendergast died in 1883 and was succeeded by his nephew - Rev. P. Greally P.P. Clifden. Fr. Greally greatly appreciated the work of the Sisters of Mercy, who first came to the Archdiocese of Tuam and to Westport on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1841. Rev. U. Paul Cullen, foundress and first superioress of the Westport Convent was held in high esteem by the new P.P. who approached U. Paul and requested her to open a branch house in Newport. He promised that he would give every assistance in his power, to this project. U. Paul gladly consented; permission from the Archbishop - Most Rev. Dr. M<sup>c</sup>Evelly was secured and fund-raising got under way.

The Protestant landlord of the O'Donel estate - Sir George O'Donel donated “three acres of the best land on Barrack Hill, as a free-for-ever site” for the new foundation. His wife, Lady O'Donel, (a personal friend of U. Paul), was a Catholic, had a domestic chapel and the services of a chaplain - a Fr. M<sup>c</sup>Hale, nephew of the late Archbishop of Tuam, Most Rev. Dr. John M<sup>c</sup>Hale. Sir George and Lady O'Donel presented two stained glass windows for the Oratory of the new convent. (These windows were transferred to St. Patrick's Church in 1987 at the behest of the Sisters of Mercy after their departure to Castlebar St.)

When digging the foundation for the new convent in 1884, workmen unearthed many coins and buttons - the latter bearing the inscription of “Pratt”. (This Mr. Pratt is likely to have been the former Treasury official who transferred the town from Burrishoole to Newport in the early years of 1700). Mr. Kavanagh of Westport was the builder of the convent. The Parish Priest acted as supervisor and by the summer of 1887 “a fine stone structure, comprising of convent and school crowned the hill overlooking the town” (Westport Annals).

July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1887, which was then kept as the Feast of the Visitation, was selected as the date for the

opening of the new convent. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the 6a.m. convent Mass in Westport was not celebrated. After hours of waiting, the founding sisters and three companions, all fasting, decided to set out for Newport. On the sister's timely arrival at the gate of the new convent, they were given a rousing welcome by the waiting crowd. Among those present were Very Rev. Fr. Greally P.P., Fr. Coen C.C. and Fr. B. M<sup>c</sup>Dermott, Adm. Kilmeena as well as leading residents of the town. This welcome was followed by the celebration of Mass in the sacristy of the new convent as the chapel was not quite ready. After Mass the sisters partook of a very belated breakfast !. The seven founding sisters - including U. Paul Cullen took up residence in their new abode and their three companions returned to Westport.

Newport's St. Joseph's Convent N.S. opened next day with an enrollment of 112 girls and 5 infant boys. By the last day of July 1887 the girls numbered 211 and the number of boys had risen to 34. By Whitsuntide there were over 100 infants (boys & girls) on roll and the numbers grew apace.

The people of Newport rejoiced to have nuns of their own and that bond between the people and the sisters strengthened down the years. Mr. Martin Carey and his wife Julia - wealthy Newport merchants - were among the early benefactors of the new project. They presented the sisters with a beautiful marble altar which is now in use in Laval Catholic Church. The outdoor statues of Our Lady and St. Joseph which occupy separate niches on either side of the convent door, were also a gift of the Careys. The statue of St. Joseph still shows two bullet holes sustained during the Civil War when the convent was caught in the crossfire between the rival parties. The front porch - which was a later addition - was a gift of Mr. & Mrs. Dominick Kearns of Westport. Other monetary donations received were used to furnish the convent and school.

In 1894 a “Technical” School was established on the convent grounds for the training of local girls in a lace-making industry. As well as working in the “lace-room” building proper, the work continued the undertaking in their own homes. The output was thus increased in short order and so

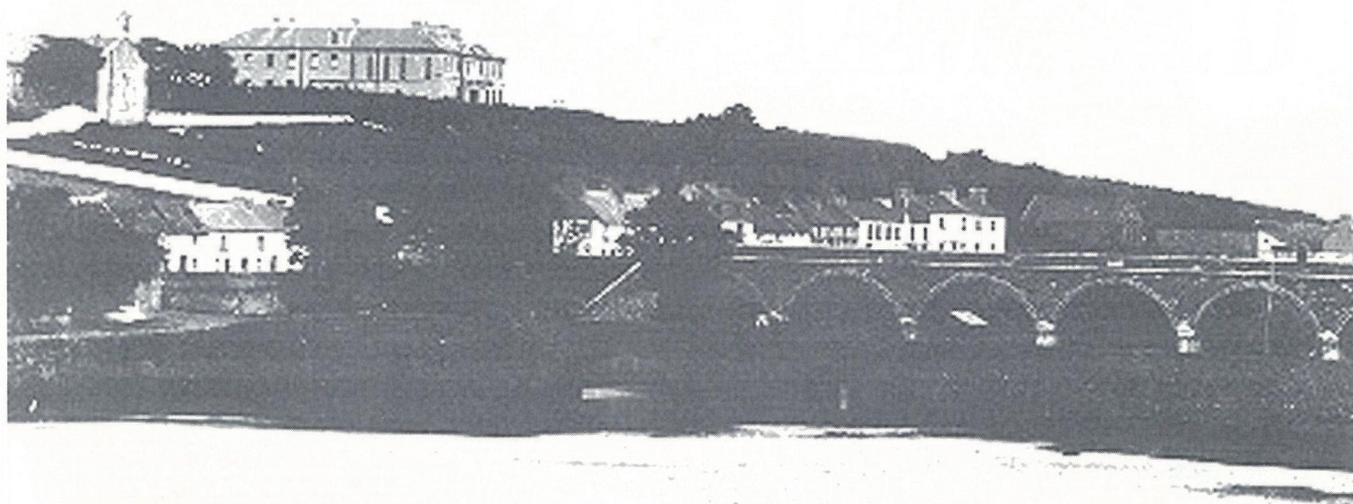
became a valuable source of income to the workers. Orders came from the U.S.A. and the finished goods had to reach a high standard of skill and perfection. Even when the market eventually collapsed the skills remained and survive - albeit sparsely - to this present day.

In the days when second level education was the privilege of the favoured few, pupils in the Primary School were encouraged to remain on in higher grade classes where subjects such as Domestic Science, Elementary Science, Nature study as well as Shorthand and Typing were taught. When the Westport Sacred Heart Secondary School was opened, many pupils from Newport daily cycled the seven miles each way to and from Westport. There was no free transport at that time. Years later, in September of 1956 a co-ed second level school was opened in the old Presbyterian church building in Newport. The local Development Committee had approached Archbishop Walshe for his approval of such an undertaking. Permission was readily granted and the Archbishop requested the Sisters of Mercy to take charge of the new school. He also appointed a diocesan priest as teacher/chaplain in the said school. The latter flourished for thirteen years until amalgamation of schools and free transport to large central schools became the order of the educational day. This sounded the death knell for St. Mary's Secondary School. It's pupils were transported by bus to swell the ranks in the three post-primary schools in Westport, namely the

Sacred Heart School, the C.B.S and the Vocational School. The doors of the old Presbyterian church were closed once more.

The late sixties and early seventies were traumatic years for the Sisters of Mercy in general and for Newport in particular. Plans were afoot to unite all the different communities of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland into a single congregation. The first step was taken when Diocesan amalgamation took place. Rationalisation and closure of various houses of the Order ensued. The Mercy Sisters in Newport vacated the original convent on Barrack Hill on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1977 and took up residence in a rented premises in Castlebar St. The following October saw the opening of Holy Family Central N.S. when the amalgamation of the Convent and Boys' Schools took place. Knockloughra N.S. joined the ranks shortly afterwards. At the moment there are just three Primary Schools in the parish - Holy Family Central, Cuilmore and Mulrany.

In the early seventies the Sisters of Mercy became involved in the local Youth Club. The advantages of becoming part of a National Youth Organisation became apparent and the Newport group joined Macra na Tuaithe - later known as Foróige. For over twenty years the Newport Foróige Club flourished and became the proud winners of three national and numerous regional awards. The Sisters wish the new club, it's members and leaders, every success in their present ventures.



*Sisters of Mercy Convent, Newport.*



**Choir for Special Ceremonies Mass in Burrishoole Abbey, Sunday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1953**

**Back Row:** Peadar Kilroy, Mickie Walsh, Fr. D. Prendergast, Louisburgh, Gerard Bracken, Jim Molloy, Tim Davitt, Paddy Gibbons  
**Third Row :** Mrs. G.Flanagan, Mrs. Aggie Connolly, Mary Healy, Noreen Molloy, Bridie Kilroy, Miss M.F.O'Malley, Mrs. Agnes Gibbons, Bridie Walsh, Maureen O'Grady, Rev. Sister Stanislaus, Re. Sister Philomena  
**Second Row :** Mrs. Irene Coughlan, Mrs. J.Cronin, Mrs. Elizabeth Bracken, Mrs. Molly McGovern, Rev. Sister. Teresa (organist), Judy Davitt, Patsy Quinn,  
**Front Row:** Carmel Gibbons, Maura Gibbons, Mary McLoughlin.



**Mercy Convent 1918**

**Front Row**

N. O'Malley  
 T. O'Malley  
 A. O'Malley  
 J.Keane  
 L.Keane  
 M. McLoughlin  
 A. McLoughlin  
 ???

**Second Row**

G.Berry  
 ?. McNeela  
 ?. Heraty  
 ?. Heraty  
 K. Kelly  
 ?. O'Donnell  
 ???  
 ????

**Third Row**

A. Keane  
 M.Daly  
 B.Brady  
 ?. Callaghan  
 J. Kelly  
 K. Welsh  
 ?. McNeela  
 L. McManamon  
 ???????

**Fourth Row**

J. Maguire  
 K. Chambers  
 M. Gibbons  
 L.Grady  
 ?. Collins  
 ?. Maguire  
 ?. O'Malley  
 ?. Kelly  
 C. McManamon

**Back Row**

M. Heraty  
 I. Berry  
 N. Kelly  
 P. Chambers  
 K. Murray  
 ? Gibbons  
 ? Gibbons  
 ? O'Malley  
 ????????



*Mulranny Village 1890*



*Seven King Sisters from Gruffy*

*Sara Cummins, Rose McManamon, Kate Gibbons, Nora King, Margaret Hannon, Bridgie Fox, Mary Donlon.*

## Local history sources, where are they ?

Joe McDermott

Writing history is a serious business. Many would claim that only the winners write history. In the Irish context that raises lots of questions for the historian. There is the question of the dispossessed in Irish history, the native cottier class whose history was handed down from family to family, orally, the recovery of this history is difficult.

We are fortunate to have eyewitness accounts from travellers, many of whom visited Newport in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, indeed even in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Sir Edward Fitten, on Queen's business, writes interestingly of Burrishoole Abbey and port. Others such as Rev. Dr. Pococke and Rev. C. Otway and the Frenchman La Tocnaye all visited Newport and described the area.

Castlebar public library, the County library has copies of most of this local material, it is well worth a visit to view and read newspapers and census data from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the great houses deposited their records with the National library in Dublin. The O'Donel estate records that survive are kept there. Rent rolls and listings of lessees are available for scrutiny.

The National Archives in Dublin also keeps records, mostly official papers such as census papers, Griffith valuation records (used in this publication). They are also accessible to the public.

There are catalogues to guide the searcher through

the maze of documents. In the National Archives an average of 60 members of the public inspect documents every day. About 40,000 documents are inspected every year.

Yet there remain many undiscovered sources lying about the countryside, lying about Newport. Indeed maybe even in your attic or in that old box under the bed in the back room.

That song "Kilkelly Ireland" was composed by the author in Boston from letters received from Ireland throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

There are some records of late 18<sup>th</sup> century Newport in the Danish Naval Archives. They were generated by the "Bjornholm" incident - De Bille House- when the captain wrote to his superiors about the plight of their stranded frigate in the 1780's.

Headstones in graveyards, old postcards, the list is endless. It is from this mosaic of sources that history is written, the community recreated by the pen of the local historian.

So don't burn everything. Even though you may not wish to have letters or documents disclosed during your lifetime, in time to come, perhaps a few generations from now some local historian will be interested in reconstructing life in 20<sup>th</sup> century Newport. Your letters, diaries, photographs will be his/her source - if they survive.

**Next Issue:** The Society hopes to feature "The Troubles". From the turn of the century to 1927 or thereabouts. Any pictures, articles or reminiscences would be greatly appreciated.

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