



*From
the
turn of the
century . . .*

when Thomas McGreevy first opened his shop on the corner of Bridge Street and South Mall, McGreevy's have grown to be a major part of the retail history of Westport. In those early days of the nineteen hundreds, Thomas McGreevy offered the people of the area a wide selection of merchandise at very fair prices.

To-day his grandson, Don, carries on that proud McGreevy tradition – offering quality goods at very keen prices. However, some things have changed at the Corner House, the building has been extended and completely modernised. The family has also opened an ultra-modern card and toy shop at centre Bridge Street. This new building also houses the auctioneering offices of McGreevy Estates – another aspect of this enterprising family's business.

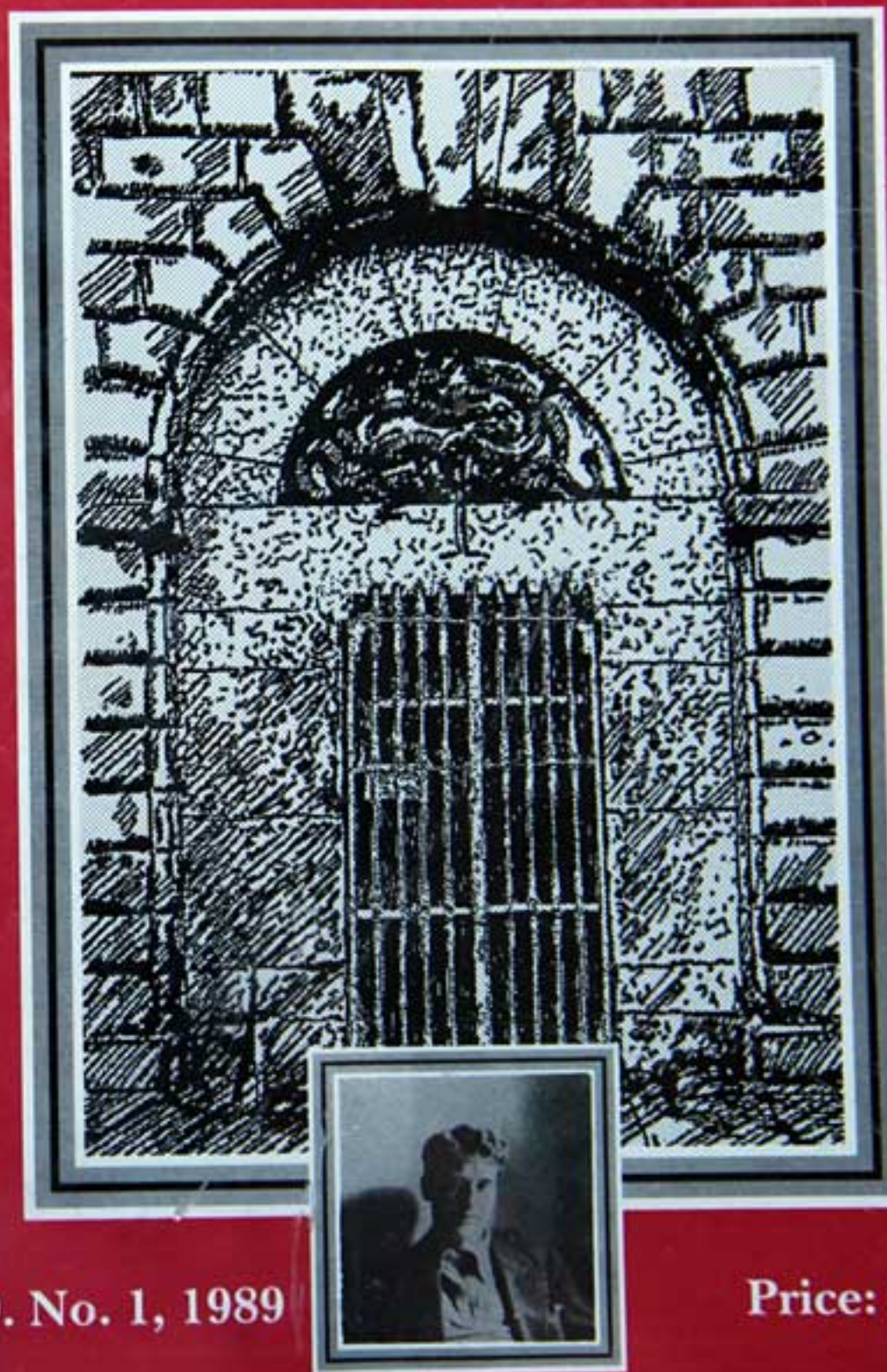


McGREEVY'S – The Corner House
WESTPORT – COUNTY MAYO

BERRY'S OF WESTPORT

Cathair na Mart

Journal of the Westport Historical Society



Vol. 9. No. 1, 1989

Price: £4.00

*Featuring a previously unpublished
Ernie O' Malley letter from Kilmainham Jail.*

CATHAIR NA MART, VOL. 9, NO. 1, 1989

JOURNAL OF THE WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Front Cover:

**Ernie O'Malley from a photograph taken in 1934 with
Kilmainham Jail in Background**

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Ernie O'Malley

Autobiographical Letter

Edited by Cormac K. H. O'Malley

Introductory Note

After the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921 and the surrender by Commandant General Ernie O'Malley of the Republican-held Four Courts in Dublin on 30 June 1922, he managed to escape immediately thereafter. He had been appointed Assistant Chief of Staff to Liam Lynch of the Irish Republican Army and was responsible for Ulster and Leinster. In that capacity he established his office in a hidden room in the home of Mrs. Ellen O'Rahilly Humphreys on Ailesbury Road, Dublin. On 4 November 1922 his hideout was surrounded by the National Army of the Irish Free State and since he refused to surrender, he was only captured after being seriously wounded. Though he was subsequently court-martialled and ordered to be shot by the Free State, he was not to be shot until he had recovered his health, which he never did. When the cease-fire was called by the Republicans on 30 April 1923, the military struggle was over for those outside but not for those held prisoner.

O'Malley's name was put forward for a North Dublin seat in the Dáil election of August 1923 and he won readily. When the hunger-strike by Republican prisoners held in Mountjoy Jail, started on October 13, O'Malley, and others in Kilmainham Jail, joined in and lasted the full 41 days despite his own generally poor state of health.

This thirty-eight page letter is one of thirty-five O'Malley wrote to Mrs. Erskine Childers, the recently widowed wife of the distinguished Republican propagandist, in the period between July 1923 and January 1924. The correspondence was most intense near the end of, and just after, the hunger-strike. In this letter begun three days after the end of the hunger-strike, he summarizes his life and activities to date, in case he might not survive the period of recovery which is often more difficult than the period of deprivation. Though no record has been found rescinding the court martial order, he was eventually released in July 1924. In late summer 1924 O'Malley received some funds from the Green Cross and went to Europe to recuperate. He returned to the University again in 1926, but without finishing his studies took off for the United States in October 1928 with General Frank Aiken to raise funds for the *Irish Press*. Upon his return and marriage in 1935, he took up his studies again but never completed them. His *On Another Man's Wound* was published in 1936. Thereafter, he became a

farmer during World War II in Burrishoole, Newport, Co. Mayo, but afterwards pursued art commentary, was Arts Editor of the *Bell*, wrote some books and articles and delved into historical research on the Troubles. He died on 25 March 1957.

The original of this letter was found in the house where Mrs. Childers lived in 1923 by the current owner and was presented to me in 1984.

[Kilmainham Jail]

Begun 26 November 1923

Finished 30 November 1923

[Postscript 1 December 1923]

To: [Mrs. Erskine Childers]¹

This may not be lucid and may tire you, but I will try to do my best. As a youngster in Castlebar² I had the inborn hate of things British, which I expect all Irishmen inherit; the King was then my objective. I hated him and blamed him for everything. I had great daydreams of myself playing the part of a soldier charging at the head of men, and reforming the dream until I was satisfied. When I was ten in 1907, or about that year, the family moved to Dublin when I was sent to school to the Christian Brothers, [North] Richmond Street³ [a] fairly good school where we rubbed shoulders with all classes and conditions. I remember once when King Edward visited Dublin, bringing my younger brother outside Mountjoy Jail to see him pass down from the Phoenix Park. We felt very proud because we kept on our hats as he passed.

I did not work at school, just did as I had to and nothing more. Father⁴ and Mother were not literary or religious; they did not possess any natural faith, knew nothing of a national tradition, and all my life at home, so far as my country was concerned, I might as well have been living in Wales. When we were young – I was second eldest – we had governesses, etc. Later, as more children came (in all there were eleven)⁵ the others did not get the attention we did. Mother had been nursing once [in Dublin] so we were well looked after and were all very healthy and hardy. I think in ways we were rather a singular family. To this day I know nothing of Father and very little of Mother. I do not know when Father was born, anything about his life, his people or his relatives. He is silent, a very hard worker⁶ and evidently takes a genuine interest in his work. One day I found that he could speak Irish fluently, but I have only heard him speak so two or three times. I knew Mother's people and have spent holidays at their home in Co. Roscommon. We were strictly brought up, so much so, that my elder brother Frank and I often thought our parents had never been young, but it was due to the stern country tradition in which one always addressed one's father as 'Sir'. There was very little love in the family. I can honestly say that I never loved my parents, but I respected them.

At school I managed to get through my exams alright and into the First

Eleven football team until I was fifteen, when I was confined to bed for six months in great agony with a diseased bone in my leg. After the operation the doctor said I could never lead a strenuous life and to be very careful of my leg for fear of another attack. All this time we had not thought nationally. My sight was a little bad about this time and as I sat near the end seat [in school] I could not see the board, and I did not tell anyone till I was eighteen and ready to go to University. The result was that I could not see the maths teacher during these four years working out problems, nor could I see much at the geometry or drawing lessons, yet somehow I got through all my exams until I was eighteen. The term exams were generally written on the board and [I] was generally in such a position as not to be able to see, so I had to memorise as the teacher called out the questions at the beginning of the exam. At the official exams, papers were supplied so that was not so bad. I do not know why I did not tell about my sight, not that it was very bad, but I was always terribly shy (and you will add also foolish). Another factor, Mother, who was a very good housekeeper, always preached economy to us, so much so that I never liked to ask for money for books, and, beyond official authors, I never asked for any, so I never had a maths text book or I think a geometry [book], and many other books I did without. When the War 1914-18 started I was seventeen and, though not enthusiastically pro-British, yet I was somewhat so. I could never see how England could be beaten on sea whatever happened to her land forces. My brother Frank was keen to join the [British] Army as he was 'grinding' for the Civil Service and, though rather a good person at maths, physics, etc., still home life was none too congenial as its ties were never strong enough.

As boys we had to bring the younger people for walks in the country, were not allowed out after we came home from school and were continually getting into trouble for kicking football. Still we kicked football and broke regulations as our liberty was infringed upon. We seldom or never received pocket money, and indeed my recollections of home life are not pleasant, all due to lack of religion, for growing boys are not naturally religious, and if mothers and fathers do not show the good example, it is hard for the young people to learn to love their God.

The excessive, though well-meant, restrictions will make a boy a rebel outright, a weakling, or a liar. I'm afraid we were more inclined to the latter and also to the former. I had few real chums but what I had were staunch, but we never brought our friends home. I have ever been singularly fortunate in my good friends for they have proved to be true and straight, but always something has happened to them so that now I am often afraid to make friendships.

I had three chums during my whole school life. One is in the [British] Navy, the second was drowned, the third died as a result of wounds received in action in 1916. Later when I left home I had two good friends in Clare, both killed since. My best friend in Tipperary – Seán Treacy – killed; the lad I liked best in East Limerick murdered by Tans. My brother Frank killed in German East

[Africa]. In Cork of the original Flying Column, the first in Cork, and of which I was in charge, Liam Lynch who was round with the Column, killed; the Quarter Master and the Adjutant, both of whom I was very fond of, both killed. My best chum in Kilmainham [Jail]⁷ when I was here last, hanged – Paddy Moran. I had two orderlies – one was badly wounded, the other killed. After the Four Courts, Paddy O'Brien [Officer in Charge of the Four] Courts, of whom I was fond – killed at my side in Wexford. My Quarter Master – murdered. My Adjutant, Tom Derrig – badly wounded. My former Adjutant, Con Moloney, who was a great chum of mine – badly wounded. My little orderly, [Jimmy Mooney] – died in Mountjoy [Jail] and myself not dead yet b.l.d. (buíochas le Dia). It's well I'm not superstitious.

This, however, is a digression. In 1915 I won a scholarship⁸ and went to the National. I began Medicine which I had decided to do some three years previous. I was then 18 years of age. The National consists of raw, unfledged, rather uncouth youths who have, as a rule, very little of a national outlook and possess none of that indefinable something approximating to esprit de corps. It is a university in name only, no real social life, no chance of interchange of ideas or getting to know men thoroughly, no culture. I was anxious to join the [British] Army as Frank had joined in November '14 or '15 and, though I liked the University well enough, yet I wanted to get away. My people were still strict with me and I could not go out after six without showing good reason for it. All of which was irksome.

I did not work. I 'cut' lectures for no obvious reason and did very little homework. Then came like a thunderclap the 1916 Rising. I knew Major [John] MacBride,⁹ as my people knew the MacBrides when they lived in the West, and he visited us occasionally. I was down town that morning¹⁰ and [when] passing Trinity [College] was asked by a man I knew, if I would go in and I would get a rifle. I agreed and was going in the gate, when a boy who lived near my place who had accompanied me and who felt strongly nationally (but has never **done** anything) told me not to be a fool, but to tell them I would consider and come back later. On the way home he pointed out to me the disgraceful fact that I was about to take up a rifle to shoot down my own countrymen. Previous to this I had heard a little of the Irish Volunteers, but at home we always laughed at them as toy soldiers. Before [Easter] Week was finished I had changed. When I heard of the executions I was furious. I helped to get people through the pickets [*sic*] get through myself.

I began to do work for National Aid [Fund] and to kick up a row generally at the classes, which were held each week, carrying a large Republican flag and a small revolver. I bought books with any money I could get – books on Anglo-Irish Literature, Synge, AE, Sigerson, Yeats, Lady Gregory, Alice Milligan, Ethna Carberry, Rooney, McDonagh, etc. Delving amongst a heap of books which were in my study I found a first edition of Wolfe Tone's Autobiography in two volumes and this I read. I began to do some work and went to céilithe [dances] and

everything that was doing at the time. I joined the Gaelic League and we waited rather impatiently for the reorganisation of the Irish Volunteers. Later I was injured on the arm in a baton charge in Westmoreland Street. All these activities were unknown to my people. I went to a céili by getting out the window at night, scaling the back wall and returning again in the morning. We got to know each other in 'the College', as the University was known to us and eventually our associates were all I.R.A. We rather looked on some of the other able bodied men with a certain kind of contempt and though we never actually expressed it in words or actions, still it was sensed.

My brother Frank was hit in the Strumer Valley [France] about October 1916 and was finally invalided home on furlough. We were as good chums as ever as he knew of my activities and jeered at me for my reading of Anglo-Irish literature. In May 1917 I was definitely attached to F Company Battalion 1, Dublin Brigade and a few of us met every week at Parnell Square for a little drill, the reading of orders, or parade, etc. – very minor activity – as we were only the nucleus of the Company. One day I decided to get some arms so I borrowed Frank's uniform whilst he was out, changed into it in a house out [in] town, and after considerable trouble in which I had to visit the Police Department and finally the office of the Provost Marshal, where I had to interview him and another Command Officer, I obtained a permit in the name of an officer I knew and purchased a .38 Smith & Weston and 100 rounds of .38 ammunition. I felt very proud at being the possessor of such a weapon. My brother never discovered I had used his uniform. Michael Collins, R.I.P., was highly amused when, by some means, he heard of the incident a year or so later.

'F' Company continued to grow. Our Captain was a 'dud' really, but I thought he was Napoleon and Foch rolled into one; Diarmuid Hegarty was Vice Commandant of the Battalion and Dick Mulcahy was, I think, Officer in Charge of the Brigade. I was very eager, with some friends in the University, to carry off stunts, but we were afraid to approach our Section Commanders on the subject for fear they would think we were trying to forward ourselves and 'to throw our weight about' – also as class distinction would probably prejudice them to our detriment and to that of the Company. We got a new Captain and I had to explain to him how I got my revolver; later I got a rifle and 200 rounds of .303 which I took to pieces and concealed in a room at home; two years later my father handed it over to the British.

Home life was becoming rather wearisome. Treated as a kid as I was by my people, I began to develop a kid's mentality. I had constantly to outwit the seeming lack of vigilance of my people, as they seemed to suspect that I had Republican tendencies. It is hard to hear your ideals maligned and sneered at, and not to be in a position to correct such misstatements or to defend the honour of the men in charge of us. Frequent orations on parade convinced me that 'the day' would come soon, as all we lived for was another fight on the Easter Week model with a prospect of country fighting. We were certain that there

would be a fight if [Thomas] Ashe died, as we were told by officers that there would be trouble.

At my first exam in June 1916 I failed in all subjects. In September, after a little work, I got through. In September 1917 I went up for my second examination. I had not done, practically, any work but, even so, when I heard of Ashe's¹¹ death as I was sitting at [my] exam I handed in my paper, walked out of the room, and locked up my stuff. The day of the funeral we were ordered, those who had them, to carry sidearms and I carried mine and 100 [rounds] in my pockets, and a slouch hat to disguise myself. We had to hold the roads near Finglas and nothing happened.

I was now a kind of an N.C.O. [non-commissioned officer]; later I was told to attend an N.C.O. and a signalling class. I attended the latter only, as I could not invent any pretext for being out after six two nights in the week. Even for those, a boy who lived near us, and who was in my class and who was often held up to me as an example, was utilized to serve as a decoy as I was supposed to work at his house.

Before September 1917 I began to drink. I did not like drink, despised anyone who 'soaked', but still I drank. I was never drunk as I knew when to stop and, as I got more polite the more I took, it was never noticeable. My people did not know this. I did no work at the University, played billiards, read books in the University Library, studied any military books I could 'pinch' or borrow from my brother. When at home in my study, if I was not reading poetry, I was 'browsing' in some one of the encyclopedias of which we had a number.

[Our] Company increased in strength. One night in 1917 we were doing physical 'jerks' in the hall of the American Rifles, near Dorset Street, when our Captain stopped the drill and said 'there is a lady, a sister of the O'Rahilly, about to inspect the parade and if I see a smile on any of your faces, God help you when she leaves.' He evidently knew her mission. Mrs. Ellen [O'Rahilly] Humphreys¹² came into the room and gave each of us a medal of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. I reminded her that she had given me one a year previous, but [I] had lost it; thereupon she gave me a card as well and shook hands with me. I never told her what the Captain said. It was hard to keep from laughing as our Company was a 'tough' one. It had paraded 90% of its strength on Easter Monday, and it comprised professional men, students, civil servants, shop assistant, newsboys and every and all trades – a difficult crowd to handle but a good Company.

In March [1918] I went up for my second [year medical exam] again and failed. About 21 March I left home having first sent my books to Charlie Dalton (of Free State glory). Later they were all sent to Tipperary and were all destroyed in a house burned by the [Black and] Tans as a reprisal. I had my .38 and about £10. I was allowed go to Tyrone that day to help volunteers during the election and was appointed 2nd Lt. by [Richard] Mulcahy.

I was attached to the Organisation Department under [Michael] Collins. The country was strange to me, especially the discomfort of it as, from the beginning, I lived close to the people, lived with them. When my stock of money ran out I had to manage as best I could. I would walk or get the loan of a bicycle to go from place to place. During my whole time, up to the signing of the Treaty, I did not spend more than a week in hotels.

Gradually I got accustomed to the discomfort save for cycling, which I hated; to go without food, as I could not eat the grub, and I was generally put up in the poorest houses; to lack of clean clothes, of toilet necessities, to cold and all kinds of discomfort; to lack of companionship as I was always alone. There was no one to talk to. At that time very few had their heart in the Movement and responsible officers were satisfied with devoting two hours work a week to the Movement. I was very sensitive and shy. The people knew I was not of their own particular class and were diffident. The elder people thought I was mad, as they had very little sympathy with us. The men were raw and did not know anything about military work, their officers had not been 'blooded', did not know more than their men and hence, as knowledge begets confidence, they were utterly incapable of handling them.

I had stopped drink, did not play cards, did not dance, was not interested in racing and was an all round social failure, not that I could ever be anything else as I could not get on equal terms with them. Democracy is more snobbish in its shades of distinction than aristocracy. I studied hard at military work. I had no one to help or direct. Collins simply said 'here's an address in such a place, he's a good fellow – go and organise that county or brigade, tell me as soon as you arrive and report in writing every three weeks.' That was not much to build on. However, I generally managed to do several hours study each day at military work. Much time was wasted as I began with wrong books; some I had were useless, but by constant reading and thinking and by working my knowledge on the men in lectures and field work, by the end of 1919 I had a pretty all-round knowledge. As I managed to keep up my supply of maps and books, I continued to study right through till 1922. Then, and even at the middle of 1920, I was fairly well saturated. I could lecture fluently and write all kinds of articles and training notes.

Progress was slow and heartbreaking. Men simply would not carry out the simplest instructions. I had issued, in detail, the duty of each officer, had helped to give officers lectures, to supply them when I had money with books and maps, but it was not until 1920 when the fighting started, that men who were gradually being led by minor activities began to become more confident and more independent of their people's control; eventually one's people had not the slightest say in matters nor did they attempt it.

The standard of living was gradually improving. During the time I was on active service it made immense strides. In 1918 frequently I had to sleep in the kitchen in a 'settle-bed', with one or two others – the boys of the house. I

generally worked till late, the people of the house got up at 6 a.m. and there was I at 9 a.m. or 10 a.m. (as I always slept well, as I am easily tired out) trying to dress myself when I could get the women folk out of the kitchen. The men folk dressed before their wives or sisters; neither washed themselves – that was reserved for Sundays or market days. The girls were slattern, wore heavy boots, rather unlaced, without stockings generally, hair untidy, blouse or apron dirty. The bed clothes, consisting of some heavy kind of a sheet, if at all, with heavy blankets and a huge red, heavy, cold, moist, quilt were never aired and suffered from uninvited guests. A tin basin of water, with a wee drop of water at the bottom and a piece of rough soap were then left in the kitchen, and one had either to wash before the women folk or not at all. Breakfast consisted of fried rasher in the proportion of 99% fat to 1% meat, or a fried egg with its white badly spilt and the yoke mangled and dirty, or a boiled egg generally several minutes underdone, cake and butter, the former thick and ponderous but very palatable and strong tea, or, tea which had been stewing since the last breakfast. The breakfast was generally served in the 'room' which was cold and cheerless. About 1919 a fire was introduced here. The towel one dried oneself in was always dirty – at least the dirt of a week of Sundays – say a wash once every two months – with rugged jags of soap adhering to its surface, and so not to hurt their feelings one used it. I had a complete outfit at the beginning – 3 suits of clothes, several towels etc. I had to dispense with clothes after a while as it meant either clothes or books and papers and I chose the latter two. By degrees I lost all my clothes and had to depend for a change of shirt (I had to dispense with underclothes) on the generosity of some of the males in the house. Later as my clothes became worn out I got a garment here and there, so often the only article I actually owned was my collar, and I generally, till I dispensed with it, carried half a dozen good soft collars with me. In Clare once I got a very voluminous trousers from a corpulent individual, Michael Murray of Newmarket; the waist line would go half around me again, so I folded it and used a belt as well as a pair of suspenders. The legs were like a sailor's trousers and I loved them, as I always tried to imagine I was a sailor on holidays when I went to Dublin in them.

One sat and worked winter and summer in such a cold room. There was generally an all pervading feeling of dampness here. One was being constantly warned to avoid being seen by the neighbours, and one had often to dive out of a back window, suddenly, because someone was coming, or to remain ever so long without food because an over zealous visitor remained too long in the kitchen. Often in bad neighbourhoods one could not move out until dark.

At times the elders of the family, through the sons, insisted on my removal. On several occasions I was taken as a spy; often I was made feel that I was not wanted. However, my instructions were to make the area efficient and to organise it, to raise companies, form them into battalions, call a Brigade Council and elect officers. The latter were always elected, some being absolute 'duds' even though all officers present knew the calibre of the men, but had not the

moral courage to forward a second name for nomination. No one ever discussed one's orders, few sought your advice and no one ever discussed what they thought was strange or, to them of little faith, impracticable in your orders. You must be well away before the criticism of you began.

Dinner generally consisted of potatoes, bacon and cabbage, or rashers and eggs and tea afterwards. The cabbage water was served with the cabbage always. At first so as not to hurt the people I ate the rashers and the cabbage, or attempted to, and always felt ill. After about a year I had sufficient courage to ask for a medium boiled egg and tea for breakfast, dinner and tea.

Gradually the men in the country began to think for themselves. Home life was terribly strict. The men worked like mules and the women like slaves. The boys got an odd sixpence or shilling the day they went to a fair or market, so many of them increased their allowance by taking a stray bag of potatoes or of something else to the fair. At the beginning great courage was needed to enable a man to leave home for some hours in the busy season, to leave it for a day was wonderful and, at any time one choose, nothing short of marvellous. I think great credit should be given to the young lads who risked parental displeasure and loss of inheritance by leaving home despite their parents. As time went on it became more or less customary, also the spirit of the old was growing until about the end or middle of 1920 the youth did as their country needed; the young girls also became more emancipated. People began to think less in terms of crops and money. A farmer, I always thought, was worth what money he had in his pocket at any given moment. The money in the bank did not mean improved conditions; it meant more stock. The standard of comfort increased gradually. The people who were good were brighter and livelier. The girls dressed better and in many cases were always neat and clean; if one was well known they endeavoured to study one's taste and the welcome afforded by such a home, in a bad district, made up for many a week of hardship. One very noticeable thing had occurred – the growth of independence of mind and of expression. About 1918 the daily paper only came to the squireens and the man who received a weekly paper was known by that alone. Later most houses had an *Irish Independent*; they read, studied and discussed it. In 1921, two months before the Truce, I had my headquarters, four miles from Tipperary town in a house in a fairly level country, surrounded by enemy posts. Tipperary alone had 1400 troops, 150 Tans, yet every night the neighbours dropped in, sat round the fire and as I worked with Con Maloney, my Adjutant, we often stopped to listen and wonder. They discussed the paper minutely – Continental matters as well as home ones, passed shrewd comments and when in doubt, always consulted me as the last word in everything. I always worked till 3 a.m. and then fell into bed, often too tired to undress, or over my papers. This shows both their educational advance and integrity.

At first, police were inclined to get information but when people who talked loosely were located throughout the I.R.A. Intelligence system, or saw

their friends suffer as a result of their looseness things changed somewhat; for the enemy intelligence agents things were made so hot by the threatening and shooting of spies, and even more so by the clearing out of the local Royal Irish Constabulary garrison, the well-thought and extremely effective agent of Imperial ideas and the nucleus of imperialism, people found it did not pay as 'England was far and protection a name', so people eventually learned to shut their eyes and close their mouths.

There was no such thing as good publicity to educate the people spiritually. It was badly needed in 1920 and 1921 to consolidate the people in their national faith and to foster the growth of spirituality. Instead we had to depend upon the conduct of our men, on their tact or their courage. I paid great attention to the instruction of officers on such points and utilized the column as 'the last word' for inculcating morale. People by degrees got used to the sight of armed men and to looking after them. The local companies felt that there were arms in the country. If an action occurred the area was in future 'safe for democracy'. The people learned to look out for, and to be particularly kind to all, Column men and to fight among themselves to see who would put them up.

This refers of course to the period June 1920 to June 1921. The previous years were for me one long Purgatory but last year [1922] was sheer joy. In 1918 and 1919 companies were being formed as a result of the Conscription scare; Company captains met and elected a battalion staff, the latter in turn elected a brigade staff. The brigadier and his staff, the battalion staffs, lived at home and attended to I.R.A. routine as it suited them or as their conscience dictated. My first duty was to get a battalion staff elected and a brigade staff. I then inspected each company on parade after having held a battalion council, addressed the men and taught them something. At councils I went in detail into organisation, administration, training and operations, such as they were, and obtained a working knowledge of the staff and captains. (A company council consisted of company officers, the adjutant and quarter master; a battalion council of the battalion staff – commandant, vice commandant, adjutant, quarter master and all company captains; a brigade council of brigade staff and all battalion commandants). The brigade staff (1918-1920) seldom or ever visited battalion councils, were satisfied with issuing odd orders and transmitting an odd report, for the greater portion untrue, to General Headquarters. Brigade staffs actually could not tell the names of the companies in the brigade. (A company consisted of as many men as could be raised locally – generally 20-35; four or more companies, up to seven, comprised the battalion, the headquarters of such being determined by proximity of a town or railway station, or predetermined by the presence of an enemy force). In reality our essential ideas of organisation were and always have been totally wrong. It was hard to deal with such areas, as the battalions and companies reflected always the personality of the senior officers. Here and there one met men eager to work. I generally endeavoured to pull a member of the brigade and battalion staff round with me, to show them

what the area was like and to make them get in touch with the men, but often, as General Headquarters was far away, and they knew I would not complain they gave me a dog's life.

At times I 'pitched them all to hell' (as the Claremen say) and ran the Brigade myself doing everybody's work, from brigade officer in charge down to that of company captain. The issue of orders and memos which I composed myself was a trying task, as I had to write them all out and send copies to *all* companies as I could not trust battalions to do so. If I had carbon paper I was lucky; if not, I did each in turn. I had thought much over the subjects and put my soul into my writing, endeavouring to build up esprit de corps, strengthen discipline, love of country, inculcate an offensive spirit, make them play the game by the country and their comrades. Often I wondered when later I reread some of my memos how I managed to write them. Such orders and memos were generally dumped or destroyed and were not read to the men, or the men who received them could not view them in the light of their own spirit and so scoffed at them. I then visited each battalion holding officers' classes for nearly a week of three hours per night, and by degrees officers got interested. I purchased military books for them and just as I saw the faint glimmer of a result, I was moved by orders from Headquarters to another area. My knowledge thus belonged to myself rather than to the brigade, as one cannot transmit impressions of men and detailed knowledge to a brigadier who does not know the names of the companies. Thus my work was more or less undone; junior officers saw that their senior officers knew nothing. The senior officers were quite content. After all was I not attached to Organisation? Was it not my work to organise?

Now and again I was called to General Headquarters. The first time Mick [Collins] asked me how was I off for money, so I said I had none, whereupon he gave me £5. I protested as I did not like the idea of my taking money so, as he insisted, I took it. I did not believe that any of the I.R.A. ever took money. I saw always the best side of my seniors and always stood in great awe of them. As time went on I grew to know Mick and Dick [Mulcahy] better. Mick often questioned me as to what I thought of certain people and found that my judgement was generally shrewd. Though I made many efforts yet I never met the others of the [General Headquarters Staff], and though attached to [the Department of] the Organisation yet had to train men in all services, instruct them in all departmental duties without any help from Training Staff, from directors of various services, from the Adjutant General. At the beginning Mick was Adjutant General, Director of Organisation and nearly Quarter Master General. He held the strings together, but did not know the first thing about training, organisation [and] seemingly little about administration. Dick was Director of Training and later Assistant Chief of Staff and then Chief of Staff. Mick then became Director of Organisation, later Director of Intelligence when [Diarmuid] Hegarty was appointed Director of Organisation. When in Dublin I kept aloof from the Dublin I.R.A. and the Staff. I did not know them and I was not anxious to be

known either. I was always on formal terms with the men on the staff and never got to know any of them intimately. Mick arranged to give me money whenever I asked for it, but the latter proviso never occurred as far as I was concerned.

I have always, and, have still, a terrible antipathy to the I.R.A. taking money, and though Mick, now and again offered, I only took it when I was destitute [or] needed it for railway fares. Later on, about November 1920 or earlier, I was offered a salary of £6.10s. a week by Hegarty. I refused, said it was excessive, that such people as I only needed money for travelling expenses, such as trains, for equipment or military books; laughingly they said that Dick would speak to me; so he did and pointed out that I should take it. I did so but gave Adjutant General Gearóid £20 for Prisoners Dependants Aid, and at once went into a wild riot after books; from this on I always gave a quota to Prisoners Dependants and spent the remainder on military books and kit. All along I had to buy my own kit and my own guns and stuff from the Quarter Master General. It was not until January 1920 that I got a .45 Smith & Weston; all [up until then] my life had to depend on my little .38 which had now something wrong with the spring. Yet I often have qualms about the taking of the money.

In general things began to improve, but I made few friends. I grew careless about religious matters, never went to Mass, as strangers in country districts are too conspicuous, seldom said my prayers, and generally led my solitary life without help from God or man. My heart was nearly broken daily by petty meanness, by lack of energy and by the lukewarmedness [*sic*] of the officers and men. One could forgive and understand either extreme – a good worker or a thorough slacker, but a face saver is hard to deal with. I never spared any of them. If a man did not do his work I always hit out fair and straight, and he was not long in doubt as to what I thought of him. I never, I believe, said a hard word to a good worker or to a man who meant well. Always one felt on a level with the good worker; one had found a friend. Such men were few and far between. Take 40 men from the I.R.A. between 1918-1920, take 250 to 300 between 1920-June 1921, and the Free State clock would have been put back for another 5 to 10 years if not for a generation. My language was bad though never vulgar and I became somewhat impatient of results. I suppose I judged most men by what I did myself, or rather I think I judged them by what I knew they could do, and what I actually saw some of them do later. The development of the sense of duty and responsibility and of sacrifice was a hard doctrine to teach – that of duty perhaps hardest. If a man does his duty he is happy in the doing of it and that is his reward. The plaudits or abuse of friends or foes should not make him turn aside. Friends often do harm in this as they tend to inculcate false standards. In this country the sense of duty is so little developed that if we see a man doing his duty, everyone goes delirious with applause.

The right tradition is to carry on a man's work, not to wave a flag and sing a song. Undoubtedly songs produce a big effect and help to strengthen national faith, but it is of little use to sing unless your soul is in your song. It is of little use

to quote Tone, Emmet and Mitchel, save you carry on the tradition for which they died. In their time people were apathetic, spies and enemy numerous, death or life-long imprisonment certain. We have the lesser part to play – our sufferings are short if we fall into enemies' hands. I also taught that one should always be ready to give one's life for the big as well as the small issues, that God if the effort is whole-hearted and careless of self, very often renders back the life so freely offered, but if motives are false there is more danger of it being taken. I risked my life consciously and unconsciously at all times as I did not mean to be caught alive. Often the officers remonstrated with me. Frequently night and day I sat down by myself to debate whether, knowing that I had to attend a battalion council at a certain place and time, and that the area was reported unsafe owing to enemy or rumoured enemy activity, if I was justified in attending, but in the end with my heart in my mouth I started off. I always kept my appointment – late now and then owing to adverse wind or enemy activity – to find that a meeting for which I had risked a lot consisted of one man, often of none.

At times I nearly failed hopelessly because I was not prepared to meet my God, but always I overcame it somewhat and went into action well knowing what would happen to me if I was killed. When I look back on those days I can say with Cardinal Wolsey 'would I had served my God as I had served my country'. I seemed to have a charmed life so far as immunity from raids and bullets – fatal ones – were concerned. I was hated thoroughly. Now that people can back-reckon, as I call that process by which one visualises the past in the light of the knowledge of the present, they may say I am or was loved or how popular I am or was. This is untrue. The men respected me, for always I did my duty and my best to improve their knowledge in every way, but I could not stand half-heartedness, and as the majority of men lacked method and most of all moral courage, they felt the edge of my tongue. Of course when I was well away they could give their opinion of me. I was feared in an area more even than the enemy, so this will give you a general idea of the spirit of the men. I worked hard always and if I felt myself idling, I endeavoured to make up for it. When I came to Dublin, I slacked off and did nothing save walk round with my hands in my pockets, visit bookshops and restaurants, especially Bewleys, where the girls knew me, and often gave me a good 'feed' when I was unusually 'hard-up'.

From the middle of 1920, when fighting became intensive, I had a better time as men had developed; some were inclined to study and those who had seen service in the Flying Columns eventually recognised that they were untrained and had found, by bitter experience, the truth of what I had endeavoured, in my own ignorant way, to impress on them. Previous to this I had always been looking for fight as it was the best expression of my convictions, and also the only way to thoroughly shake up and impress an area. My mission was organisation and I felt that the area must have the groundwork ready before I began the fighting, and the waiting broke my heart. Fighting was so easy compared with that awful soul-

numbing uphill fight against one's people's ignorance and prejudice. Then when I had things in shape and was ready for a holiday [of] fighting I would be moved, but some one reaped anyhow and that's the main thing. I was pleased to see that I was able to overcome my fear in action, and the men who actually fought under me were always anxious to do so again, as I nearly always succeeded – due to method and superior tactical knowledge and nothing else. When the other men saw that my theory was built on its applicability to active service, they had more respect for my doctrines and something for myself, though, fight or no fight, I never relaxed with regard to their conduct.

And so I think I will finish. To sum up my knowledge at school – I was fond of English, of history and historical geography, of chemistry. I was useless at maths, geometry, trigonometry, physics, passable at Irish, took very little interest in Latin, though I always loved Horace. I was fond of music at home but stopped after I went to university. At the university I learned how to waste time but developed a love of books, for literature and art, but was too lazy to read anything difficult. My years on active service have taught me 'to grin and bear it', to suffer without complaining, to endure beyond bodily strength, not to be a coward; to play the game by your enemies, your own and most of all yourself; to think and ponder over problems, to write memos, orders, articles and books on military subjects, to saturate myself with my self-instructed subject so that I could lecture at random; to be more emotionally attached to books; lastly, but only of late, to know my God and to put him before my country. Now I intend, with God's help, to do medicine and also to study to improve myself. I found that one required a working knowledge of Greek to be able to appreciate poetry, drama and philosophy, so I began Greek but have not made much progress. Spanish is a comparatively easy language to learn, so I began to study it as it would inflict least mental effort, but I did not get very far. Seóirse [] and I intend to do Latin together, starting with Virgil and Horace, as I have done some of both before and so it will not be too difficult, but I always found Latin hard as I had not much taste for it. Now I am eager to take it up again, so perhaps my enthusiasm will carry me forward. Paddy Coughlan, who taught the Spanish class, will give me help and advice. I sent out for a Spanish dictionary for him to-day as his is not a modern one. Greek I will also take up if [Éamonn] Enright is moved back here. (To digress Éamonn Enright is a peculiar genius – a B.Sc. Honours, a very good classical scholar, deeply read in philosophy and English literature, a first class engineer, a top-hole soldier, fearless, shy and retiring, a little knowledge of German, good [knowledge] of Irish and French, a little of Spanish, keen on art, a great companion to have in gaol. He has written a long poem in Mountjoy on Arthurian legends [and] William Morris).

French I will read a little. Before I left school I could read René Bazin's *La Douce France* but now I am 'rusty', but if I read a little easy French I am sure it would not be too much of a strain. I was thinking of starting on Pascal's *Pensées*.

I am eager to take up maths but will wait until released. Now I will ask you

to be Chief of Staff in charge of Education, and you can direct and have directors appointed for the various branches who could help, but you will control and direct all. I would suggest that Lady Gregory, if she would be so kind, would help my Anglo-Irish studies and that Bobby [Childers]¹³ be Director of Fairy Tales. You will look after my art education, please. I will give you an idea of what I have read. Before gaol began I read at random, poetry chiefly, some prose and history. In poetry I have read the following *but have not studied* as I was afraid of injuring my brain. I just read to get the main idea of the author – verse or history – in fact in all my reading I did not think out anything much as I was weak. I read philosophy, poetry, prose, history, fiction and reviews each day. So soon as I got tired of any particular author I dropped him at once, had a wee sleep and began at something fresh.

Poetry, Drama

For poetry [and] drama I have read:

Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*; Shakespeare; Milton; Pope, a little; Blake; Wordsworth (shorter poems); Shelley; Keats; Longfellow (some); Coleridge; Morris, *Faith*; Dante some 'Hell'; Browning's plays; Browning's *The Ring and the Book*; Tennyson; Ledwidge; Masfield (a little); de la Mare (a little); Drinkwater (some plays); R. Taylor (two books); Wilde (a little); Whitman (a little); Scott (a little); Yeats.

Prose

Some Shakespeare, criticism of Masfield, Hazlitt, Coleridge; 'Morte d'Arthur'; Bunyan; biographic literature; Lamb's *Essays*; Montaigne (1 vol. so far); a little of Ruskin and Pater (both of whom I love).

History

Prescott; Roscoe; Macauley (a little); Moly, Irving; Trevelyan; Carlyle; Froissart; Mary Darmesteter, very pleasant.

Classical

Homer, a little of Aristophanes, Sophocles and Aeschylus; Plato (whom I love; I have sent out for the *Republic* which I have read before and for *Phaedrus*). I am waiting till I read through all before beginning the Myths; Virgil (which I like in the original); Plutarch; Epicetus; M. Aurelius; I intend reading Herodotus when my health clears, also the dramatists.

Fiction

A deal of Conrad, Twain, R. L. Stevenson, some of Jane Austen, Hawthorne, Melville, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Anatole France and various odds and ends. *Don Quixote*, Dante, Schiller, Papini.

(I have now been here 21 nights, I think it is, without sleep, in all 5 hours [of sleep], so I have just now received a draught of bromide and a mixture of brandy in port, and my head is going round.)

I like Shakespeare best and would like your suggestions on the best criticisms to read on him or Chaucer, Milton, Spenser, Browning, Blake. I intend

to study the other Elizabethans as I think it a very interesting period, so I would like your advice as to the best criticism on them [and] in all cases names of well annotated editions, as my general knowledge is very scanty.

I love Shelley, Keats, Browning, William Morris and Blake. Of the Moderns – Yeats, de la Mare, W. H. Davis. Of Taylor I have read *Citangela* and *Fruit Gathering* both very beautiful. I simply had to read them aloud and at night to my orderly and to Paddy Fleming, through a wee hole in the wall which we had made; he was equally charmed. (Did you ever listen to a good record (gramophone) in the dark? Seán Donovan had a small gramophone, not much good, but a few good records. *Henry VIII*, *Peer Gynt* and a few others, and I found it lovely to get Jim to put them in action about 12 midnight and in the dark. I am afraid I have little knowledge of music as I always missed the operas and good concerts by reason of active service, and though I love music my education in that respect is terrible). The edition was the Tauchnitz one of Bernard law, Leipzig. (The latter place must be a great publishing centre as I notice that all good editions of the classics seem to have been published there very early.) It is sold at all continental bookstalls also at Librairie Henri Gambon, 39 rue Madame, Paris.

I am now real bad and feel inclined to sing; it's the brandy does it, so don't mind, please, what I say between this and the end, as I must finish it now. Could you find, please, where they might be procurable and, please, obtain two catalogues and forward me one? As my sight is bad, I will find it difficult to get back to the World Classics, Everyman and Globe editions, which I generally use. Besides the French edition might be procurable quite cheaply in Germany, and if well bound, would be infinitely superior to the above mentioned editions.

In prose I like Lamb, Hazlitt, Johnson and the 35 others I mention under this heading.

History

In History I find Irving easiest to read; also I like Prescott, Motley and Roscoe.

Classical

I love them all especially Homer, Plato and Virgil.

Fiction

Of modern fiction I have not read much. I like Thackeray, have done a little Dickens, some Scott. I love Stevenson, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Tchekhov. I have read *Penguin Island* (the work either of a bitter cynic, of a disillusioned man, or of a straight man thinking it hopeless to see good in anything). I know nothing of A. France, but I most certainly enjoyed the *Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard*. I like all the others on [my] list. I intend to read Flaubert and Pierre Loti, also some of Meredith, Hardy and some little of the first novelists up to the Victorians. Could you, please, supply me with a list of the best works of each? I want to derive as much benefit as possible in a concentrated form from whatever I read, so if I know the best, I could read them first and later return to the particular author.

Are there any good translations of A. France, Pierre Loti, Ernest Mello, René Bazin? Could you, please, give me an idea of the best French authors? When I left school I could read Bazin's *La Douce France*, Erckmann-Chatrian, but I am 'rusty' now as my constant 'knocking-round' has exposed my little French to the elements, but I intend l.c.d. [le cúnamh Dé, 'with the help of God'] to read, in six weeks' time, a little French daily. Could you, please, forward me a catalogue of French books? The French, I think, go in quite a bit for good cheap editions, and if the people I ask about or those whom you suggest are not too difficult, I would prefer to read them in the original. Is Molière difficult? At school I read a little of Hugo's and de Musset's verse in French and liked them well.

In modern fiction I read a few of the following. I do not know if the selection is a good one – all I know is that they gave me pleasure. Are there any modern works by the above authors or by any others – in fiction, drama or verse – which you could recommend, as it would help to fill in the programme and release my mind after reading heavier stuff?

Stevenson: *Master of Ballantrae*

Farmon: *Beltame The Smith*

Locke: *The Beloved Vagabond*

Philip Curtis: *Street of Adventure*

Walpole: *Jeremy, Fortitude* (would read this again)

Henry Sydnor Harrison: *Queed*

Frunkan: *Peter Jackson, Cigar Merchant*

Masefield: *Lost Endeavour*

H. R. Haggard: *Eric Brighteyes*

Colum: *The Sheriff of Dyke Hole*

Ernest Bramah: *The Wallet of Kai Lung, Kai Lung's Golden Hours*

James Stephens: *The Crock of Gold*

H. G. Wells: *Mr Polly, Mr Britling Sees It Through*

Bennett: *Anna of the Five Towns*

Snaith: *The Sailor*

Conrad: *Set of Sire*

Galsworthy: *The Green Curve*

Shaw: *An Unsocial Socialist*

Galsworthy: *In Chancery, Cardigan*

Fitz-James O'Brien: *The Diamond Lens*

Lafcadio Hearn: *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*

Booth Tarkington: *Penrod*

Morley Roberts: *Sea Dogs*

Buchan: *Greek Mantle*

Finally could you please forward any old reviews, books or notes, especially tending to develop literary or artistic taste, judgement and criticism?

Perhaps Lady Gregory, if she would be so kind, could forward me any idea of what best to read in Anglo-Irish literature? It is terrible not to know the mythology or sagas of one's own country. Did you ever read the *Táin*, an epic in 20 books, I think, published so far as I remember by Hodges Figgis ten or twelve years ago? I read five books and was vastly interested. I have *Poems* and *Later Poems* of Yeats at home.

Tonight, before being quite finished, I read this [letter] through to Frank [Gallagher]¹⁴ as he is my friend also and we should not conceal much from one another, and he liked it. He said that my summings up were good, but after I have written them I always cut them down, as I feel as if I were expressing my point of view too dogmatically. At his request I attempted to correct misspellings, etc, which I hated to do but it will be now, I hope, easier to read.

[1 December 1923] (Postscript)

I will try to take a holiday for a few days now and not write any more. On second thoughts, please do not burn this when read as it may help Frank to write his book; and in conjunction with my résumé of activities and whatever portion of either you may wish me to amplify, as I have no ambition in this respect, I will do so and perhaps the whole might be useful, in extract, to any of our literary people who feel inclined to devote attention to a proper interpretation of a much unstudied period of our history, which has simply been glossed over by the words – 'murderers, fanatics, gunmen, wild foolish boys, idlers, looters, impractical idealists'. If the men who worked and the people who helped could see their work in relation to the whole panorama of activity, how ever much weakness counted in the fight, what our somewhat haphazard method when inspired by the love of country and the spirit of sacrifice, could achieve when pitted against overwhelming odds and brute force in its naked reality, I am sure that it would inspire them to increased effort. The fact that it was the war that counted not the arms – one can always get arms if one has a few of the proper type of men to lead – would show them the immense importance of spirituality and moral force. The neglected Irish Volunteer who always fills the gap when needed, the men of the rank and file, not stuck in it as their officers have a habit of doing, could see their own brave hearts reflected in the spirit of the whole struggle and receive some slight token of appreciation. If I ever become lyrical it would be with regard to the rank and file.

God bless you now. I am wearied but I have done as I said I would.

Fond love to Bobby [Childers] and yourself.

Ernie.



Ernie O'Malley c. 1954 (Irish Press photo).

Footnotes

1. Mrs Childers was born Mary Alden Osgood in Boston, Massachusetts and died 1 January 1964 in Wicklow. In 1923 Mrs Childers was working with IRA Publicity and among other things kept detailed records and clippings of all new articles relating to the Republican cause.
2. O'Malley was born in Castlebar, Co. Mayo on 23 May 1897.
3. The O'Connell School, founded in 1828.
4. Luke Malley was born in Stonepark, near Ballinrobe, Co Mayo. His father before him was also Luke Malley – not O'Malley – of Aughagower, Co. Mayo, who had married Ellen McGrath of Stonepark. Marian Kearney (Malley) was born in Cloncloose, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon.
5. The complete family born between 1895 and 1918 included: Francis Luke, Ernest Bernard, Marian Helen, Albert Patrick Victor, Cecil Patrick, Charles, John Patrick, Luke Kevin, Kathleen Mary, Brendan and Desmond.
6. When he moved to Dublin in 1907 Luke Malley worked for the Congested Districts Board which subsequently became the Irish Land Commission.
7. O'Malley had been arrested in Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny, in November 1920 just as he was about to assume the command of the Second Southern Division. He pretended to be Bernard Stewart, was held and tortured in Kilmainham. Condemned to death he managed to escape, with two others, in a daring episode in February 1921, one of only four people ever to escape from there.
8. O'Malley was one of 24 successful candidates who on 3 August 1914 were awarded scholarships to University College Dublin (known as 'National') by the Dublin Corporation Scholarship Committee.
9. Major John MacBride (1865-1916), Boer War veteran and one of the leaders executed after Easter Week 1916, had been born and raised in Westport, Co. Mayo.
10. Easter Monday morning 1916.
11. Thomas Ashe died 25 September 1917 while being force-fed in Mountjoy Jail on the sixth day of his hunger strike.
12. It was to be in the house of Mrs Humphreys that O'Malley was eventually captured by the Free State troops on 4 November 1922.
13. The Childers had two sons: The older, Erskine, later became President of Ireland and the younger was Robert or Bobby. Though quite young Bobby had been writing notes to O'Malley during this period.
14. Frank Gallagher later became a distinguished author and journalist and also wrote under the pen-name Frank Hogan.

Cormac K. H. O'Malley

Born in Dublin in 1942, the youngest of three children of his Irish father and American mother, Cormac was educated in Ireland and England until his father died in 1957. At that time he joined his mother, sister and brother in New York and continued to finish his education at Harvard University and Columbia Law School. After ten years as a Wall Street international lawyer, he joined Bristol-Myers Squibb Company to become an in-house company counsel for Europe and is now International Counsel for their Health Care Group. Cormac has retained a strong interest in Ireland, Irish matters and the O'Malley Clan.

Levallinree Crannóg

An early 7th Century lake dwelling in Co. Mayo

By Christy Lawless, Ragnall O'Floinn, Michael Baillie and David Brown.

In 1886, Wood Martin¹ recorded only one crannóg in Co. Mayo, on Achill Island. Recent work by Prof. Etienne Rynne and Christy Lawless has revealed numerous crannógs in the county, such as that of Tucker's Lough, near Castlebar.

Levallinree Crannóg

Levallinree Lough is situated in the centre of the Parish of Turlough, Co. Mayo, 6 miles north east of Castlebar. The crannóg is 30m off the north west shore of the Lough (Levallinree Townland, O.S. Sheet No. 70, 28.4 cm from west, 5.0 cm from north). The Lough comprises 121.591 acres in area.

The crannóg was first identified in August, 1983 by Christy Lawless. The water level was at its lowest in that year due to the very dry summer and the added bonus of the outlet having been cleaned by the Moy drainage scheme, the previous year.

The crannóg is composed of a cairn of stones and measures 23.50 m in diameter east-west. During the low water level a double palisade of oak posts was



Plate 1, Morticed Peam, Q 7884 (Photo, Christy Lawless).



Plate 2, Dugout Canoe (B). (Photo, Christy Lawless).

visible around the perimeter of the crannóg. On the east side of the crannóg at water level a large oak beam protrudes from under the island to its perimeter, it measures 44 cm wide and 18 cm thick. It has a mortice 48 cm by 15 cm into which an upright is set. (Plate 1).

A number of artifacts were found by Christy Lawless close to the oak beam. There were three iron tools, i.e. an axe (Fig. 1), a three-pronged fish spear (Fig. 2) and an ancient spade blade (Fig. 3). Also found were a lead weight, a fragment of a pewter flagon and a fragment of a whetstone. At various points around the crannóg edge there is evidence of wickerwork.

There are four dugout canoes around the crannóg on the lake bottom. Two canoes (A & B) are on the north side; they are made of oak. One (C) on the west is made of white deal. One (D) on the south west is made of oak.

Canoe A is on the north east side of the crannóg, it is positioned NW-SE. It is 7 m long and 75 cm wide and is 3 m from the crannóg edge in c. 1 m of water. Canoe B (Plate 2) is positioned N-S between canoe A and the crannóg. It is 3.35 m long and 58 cm wide. This canoe was removed for recording by Mr. Raghnaill O'Floinn of the National Museum of Ireland and afterwards it was replaced in its original position. Canoe C is on the west side of the crannóg, positioned north to south, in 1.5 m of water and is 4 m from the crannóg edge. It is half pear-shaped and is made of white soft wood. It is 1.5 m long, 60 cm wide at the south end and 35 cm wide at the north end. Canoe D is on the south west side of the crannóg. It is positioned east to west in c. 1.5 m of water and is 4 m

from the crannóg edge. It is 5.8 m long, 1.3 m wide at the east end and 60 cm wide at the west end. This canoe has a flat bottom and one seat. The seat is a prepared piece of white soft wood attached to the floor of the canoe with two wooden dowels.

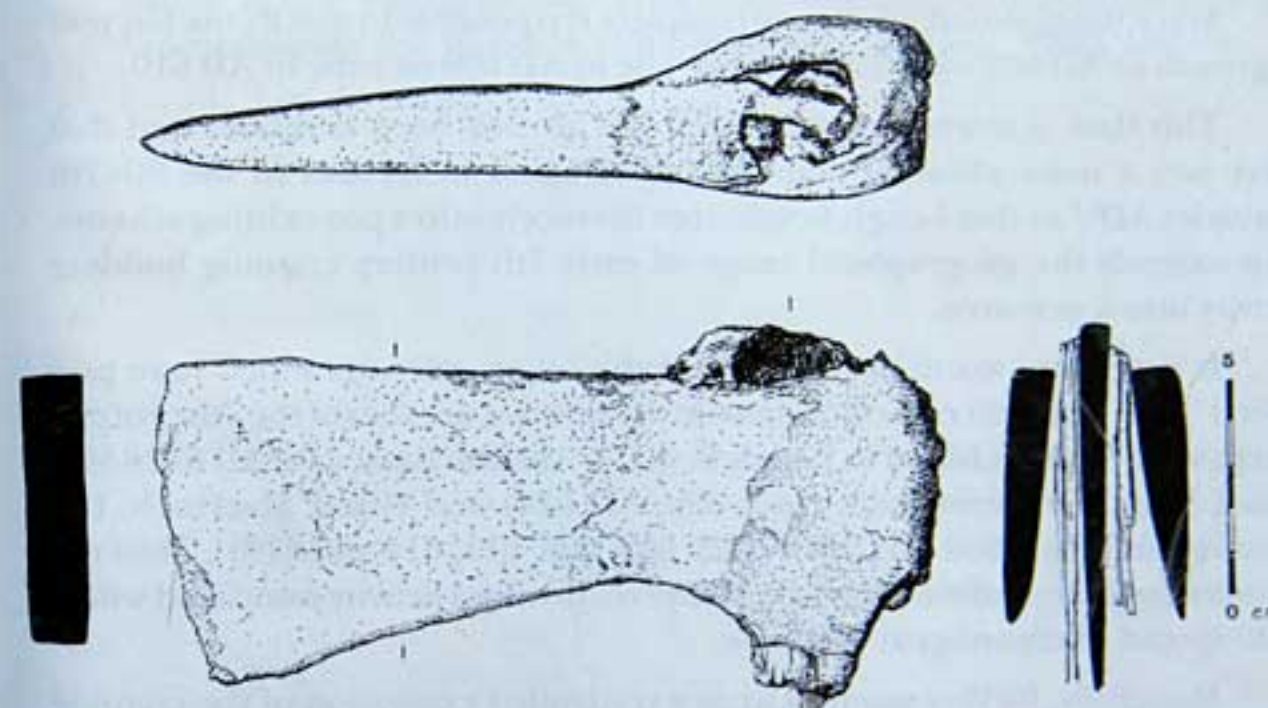


Fig. 1 Woodman's axe. (NMI Reg. No. 1984:28).

Levallinree Lough Crannóg: the dating

In 1989 the opportunity arose to sample two structural oak timbers from the crannóg in Levallinree Lough. Such sampling can only provide some sort of 'spot' dating. That is, any date can indicate a time when timber felling was taking place; presumably related to constructional activity on the crannóg. A full understanding of the chronology would require detailed sampling in association with a full-scale archaeological excavation.

From a dendrochronological point of view, the exercise has its own interest because of the extension of the tree-ring dating method to an area where few results are available; can ring patterns from Co. Mayo be tied into the available Irish tree-ring chronologies?

The two timbers sampled were a substantial horizontal beam, Q7884 (Pl. 1) and a riven vertical plank, Q7885. The latter timber retained complete sapwood right out to the underbark surface and hence represented the best candidate for accurate dating.

Results

Q7884 provided a ring pattern of 160 years. At the time of writing no definitive date can be ascribed to this sample.

Q7885 provided a ring pattern of 208 years, including a total of 30 sapwood rings. This sample dated consistently against a suite of Irish chronologies with its end year at AD 609. Correlation values up to $t = 5.4$ uniquely specify this dating position.

Since the sapwood was clearly complete it is possible to specify the last year of growth as AD 609 with felling either late in AD 609 or early in AD 610.

This date is interesting because it has already been demonstrated that there was a main phase of crannóg construction in Ireland in the 6th-7th centuries AD^{2,3} so that Lough Levallinree fits nicely into a pre-existing scheme. This extends the geographical range of early 7th century crannóg building activity into a new area.

It is perhaps worth noting that, of the other crannógs which have produced 'spot' dates, three yielded dates in the first two decades of the 7th century. These were Midge's Island in Lough Beg, Co. Antrim (spot date AD 612 \pm 9), Ross Lough, Co. Fermanagh (spot date AD 614) and Island MacHugh, Co. Tyrone (timbers felled in AD 601, 602, 603, 608, 611, 614 and 619)⁴. Thus the Levallinree date confirms almost exactly synchronous activity associated with a wide spread of crannógs at that time.

Hopefully, further samples from a controlled excavation of the crannóg would allow a close comparison between the dates of activity at Levallinree and elsewhere and might serve to clarify whether or not the spread of felling dates at Island MacHugh is exceptional.

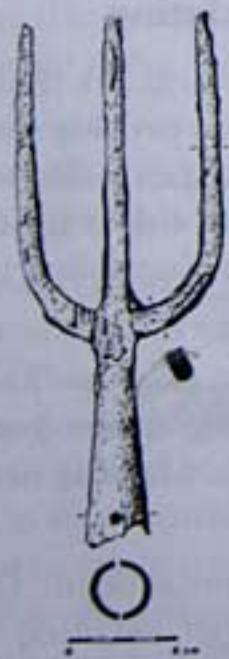


Fig 2. Fish Spear (NMI Reg. No. 1984:29).

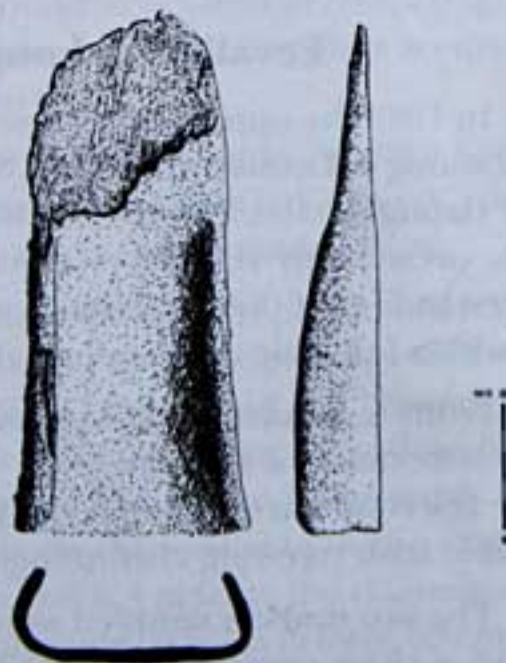


Fig. 3. Socketed iron spade blade. (NMI Reg. No. 1984:27).

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Recently Discovered Burials at Tooremore East, Turlough

By Laureen Buckley, Brendan Glass and Fionbarr Moore.

In January 1989, land reclamation work was carried out in the townland of Tooremore East, Turlough, Ordnance Survey 6" Sheet, Mayo 70, (Nat. Grid M 233 953). The field is locally known as 'Mullin's Catair' from a previous landowner named Mullin. Previous land reclamation in the area in 1968 had uncovered bones and work had then ceased. The work carried out in 1989 involved the removal of several large stones and the clearance of field fences. This work disturbed buried bones and spread them across a wide area as a scatter, which was collected by Mr. Christy Lawless, Turlough, Castlebar. He reported his findings to the O.P.W. and sent the bone scatter to Dublin for examination. The bones were identified as human and reclamation work ceased. The scatter consisted of the bones of four separate individuals and a single bone of an infant. The analysis of the skeletal and dental remains of these individuals (A-D) follows.

Further to this, the site was visited by Mr. F. Moore, O.P.W. and an almost intact burial examined. This is analysed hereunder as Burial 1 which represents an adult skeleton, but some child's bones were also present.

The site consisted of a slightly raised area roughly 59m in diameter, its perimeter much altered by later field walls and hedges. It bore no tradition of being a sanctified site or being a 'Killeen' or 'Caldragh'. Burial 1 (Fig. 1) was aligned roughly E-W, which suggests a Christian burial, but the dating within that era is problematic. The importance of this report lies in the fact that it is one of the first reports on any human remains from this period in Co. Mayo, and gives us an insight into the life expectancy, stature, disease and diet of the past population of the country.

The Bone Scatter

The bones were generally in a poor state of preservation and were quite light in weight. When dry they had a chalky appearance and texture. They were extremely fragmented and represented the remains of at least four individuals.

The skull bones consisted of numerous small fragments of cranium, some temporal bones and portions of mandible and maxilla. There were posterior portions of the right temporal from three skulls showing the mastoid process,

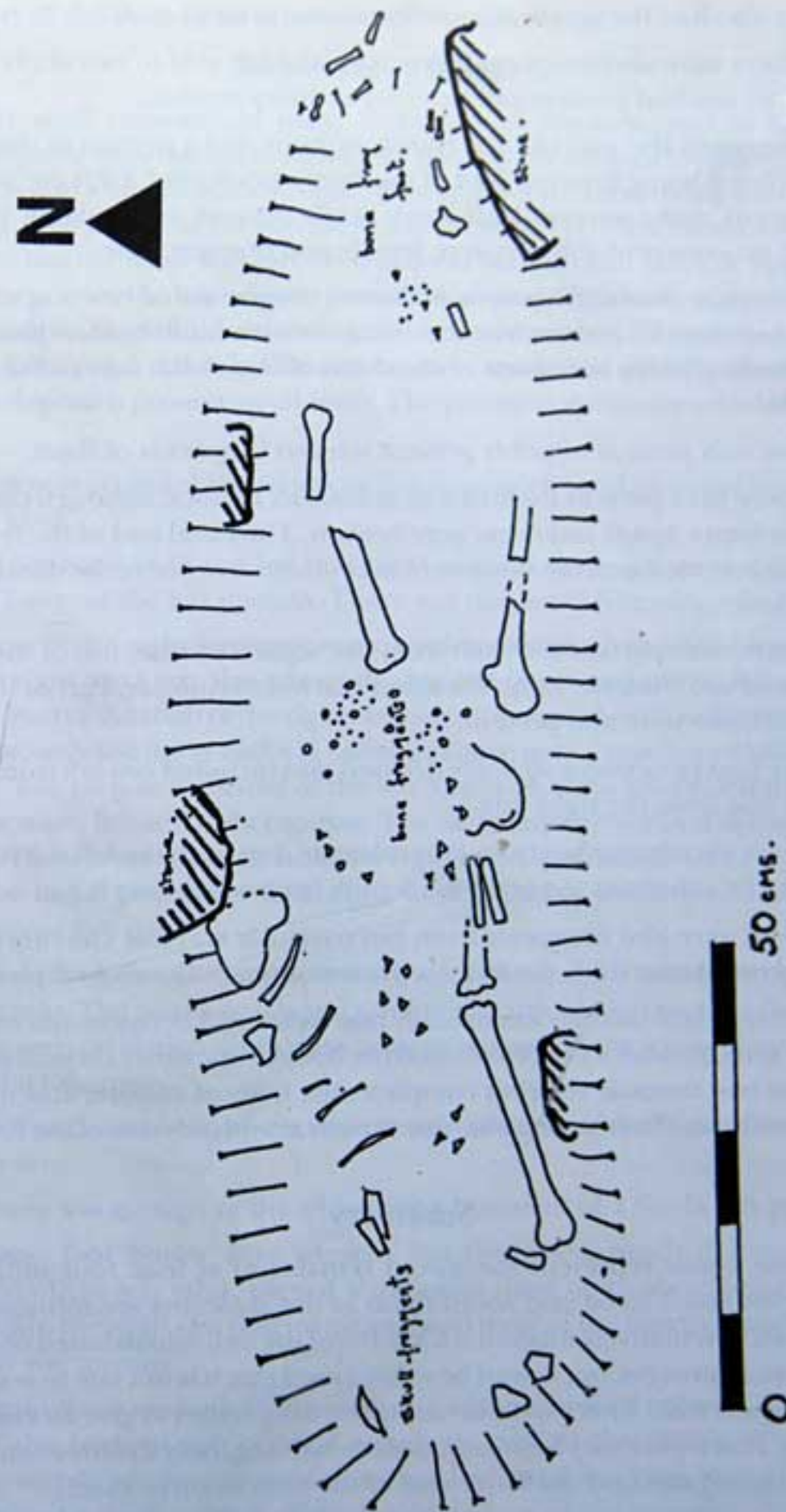


Fig. 1. Burial 1. Tooremore East.

and one also had the external auditory meatus present.

There were also temporal bones from the left side of two skulls showing part of the mastoid process and external auditory meatus.

There was also part of a left zygomatic bone and a portion of the left side of the frontal bone, showing part of the upper portion of a left eye socket. In other words there were at least three skulls present and judging from the mastoid process, probably two were female and one was male.

The post cranial fragments included fragments of two scapulae, four incomplete clavicles and two humeri, one of which could be identified as from the right side. There were parts of the shafts of one radius and two ulnae, also eight ribs.

The only portion of pelvis present was two fragments of ilium.

There were parts of the shafts of at least six femora, although there were only four femur heads and these were broken. The distal end of the femur was complete in three cases, but there were four other cases where the distal end was incomplete.

There were parts of the shaft from five separate tibiae, two of these from the left and two from the right; the other was indeterminate. Part of the shafts of three fibulae were also present.

The foot bones were all badly decayed and included two tali from the left side and one from the right side.

There were fragments from four calcanei, two from the left side two from the right; the other was too small to identify from which side it had come.

There were also fragments from two navicular and one cuneiform bone. A second metatarsal from the left was present along with two foot phalanges.

The vertebral column was virtually non-existent. There was one atlas (first cervical) vertebra which was broken and the body of one other cervical vertebra. There was one thoracic vertebra complete, the body of another and the spine of another three. There were no lumbar vertebrae and only part of the first sacral vertebra.

Summary

These bones represent the mixed remains of at least four individuals. There is not much to be said about them as the skeletons are so incomplete. Gender can be tentatively suggested for three of the individuals based on the size of the mastoid process, but it must be emphasised that it is not safe to sex on one morphological trait. There were no complete long bones to give an estimation of stature. There were very little joint ends remaining, only the lower end of the femur in three cases and the lower end of the tibia in three cases.

There was no sign of arthritis in any joint or of any other pathology in the post cranial skeleton.

Part of the shaft of an infant femur was also found.

Bones from Burial 1

The skull consisted of many fragments of cranium, part of the right temporal bone showing the mastoid process, and the external auditory meatus. There was also a small fragment of the base of the cranium showing the occipital condyles. A large part of the mandible was present. The right ramus was almost complete but the head and coronoid process were broken off. The upper part of the ramus from the left side was present. Also part of the body of the mandible was present on the left side, showing the mental foramen. There were six teeth present 1,3 2,8 4,5 4,6 4,7. The molars have moderate attrition. Some slight calculus deposit is present on all teeth. The premolar exhibits enamel hyperplasia.

The post cranial skeleton was far from complete, and again the bones were badly broken.

The acromion of the left and right scapulae were present and also the glenoid cavity of the left scapula. There was one small fragment of a clavicle.

Most of the right humerus was complete, although the head was broken off. The right ulna was also complete, but the lower end of the left ulna was missing. Part of the shaft of the right radius was present; the left radius was almost complete, only the lower end was missing. There were a number of hand bones present. The carpals consisted of the left scaphoid, right lunate, left triquetrum, left trapezium, left and right capitate. The metacarpals consisted of the second, third and fourth metacarpals from the right hand. In addition there were seven proximal hand phalanges and eight middle hand phalanges. There were fragments of five ribs.

From the pelvis a large portion of the left ilium and some of the right ilium were present. The sciatic notch and most of the articulation area for the sacrum could be seen on the left ilium. Also present was part of the left ischium showing the ischial tuberosity.

The neck and head of the right femur and part of the shaft of two femora were present.

There was no sign of the tibiae but a fragment of a fibula was present.

Some foot bones were present but they were much decayed. These consisted of the left talus, part of a navicular, part of a cuboid bone and two metatarsals, the shaft of a first metatarsal and most of the fourth metatarsal, but the head was missing.

Again there was very little remaining of the vertebral column. There were parts of the body of two cervical vertebrae, part of the spines of about five thoracic vertebrae, the spines of three lumbar vertebrae, part of the first sacral vertebra and a small section of the dorsal surface of the sacrum.

Again little could be said about this skeleton, except that it was probably

a female aged 25-35, and the length of the ulna – 27.8 cm – gives a stature based on the Trotter and Gleser formula (1) of 176.5 cms (5ft. 9.5 ins.). There were no obvious pathological conditions on the bones present.

In addition to the main skeleton, there were also four metatarsals from a child skeleton. The epiphyses were not fused at the head of the metatarsals, so the child had not reached the age of puberty.

Dental Remains

The remains comprise the fragmented dentitions of four individuals. The state of preservation of the fragments is fair; however there was much post mortem loss of teeth. The remaining teeth show a high rate of tooth wear or dental attrition, which is typical of pre-industrial European dentitions with a high degree of dental attrition or tooth wear, due to the poor quality of milling stones which resulted in flour with a high level of grit. Tooth loss was most frequently a result of the rapid rate of tooth attrition, or less frequently, periodontal disease. Dental decay or caries is not common in such remains and was not found in these individuals. However, the sample size is too small to assess this disease. On the basis of tooth wear, it is likely that the remains are not of famine burials of the nineteenth century.

The details are presented as a) Bony Remains and b) Dentition. The age of each individual was based on the degree of dental attrition, and may be taken only as a rough estimate.

1. Individual A (Age 50+ years)

Bony Remains:

Fragment of mandible extending from 4,4 socket to distal of 3,8. The general tubercles are very pronounced suggestive of strong masticatory action. There is bony repair of 3,6 socket indicating that the tooth was lost a considerable time ante mortem. There is bony destruction of the buccal wall of 3,7 socket caused by a dental abscess. There is severe loss of alveolar crest of 3,8 socket due to chronic periodontitis. The apical portion of 3,5 socket shows evidence of a periapical granuloma as a result of pulpal necrosis, due to expanse of the pulp by attrition.

Dentition:

Teeth present are 4,4 4,3 4,2 3,5

All teeth are heavily worn, with expanse of the pulp chamber of 3,5. The apical third of 3,5 exhibits hypercementosis. Heavy calculus deposits are present on 4,3, and mild to moderate deposits affect the remaining teeth. Teeth lost post mortem were 4,1 3,1 3,2 3,4 3,7 and 3,8.

Individual B (Age 40-50 years)

Bony Remains

Fragments of right mandible from distal 4,8 socket to mesial of 4,1. There

is post mortem destruction of bone in the incisor region. Severe bony destruction of 4,8 socket was caused by periodontal disease, aggravated by mild mesioangular impaction of 4,8. Mild periodontal disease affected the alveolar crest of 4,7 4,6 4,5.

Dentition:

Teeth present 4,7 4,6 4,5.

Both molars have severe attrition, and 4,5 moderate attrition. Heavy deposits of calculus are present on the buccal and lingual of 4,7 and lingual of 4,6. Teeth lost post mortem are 4,8 4,4 4,3 4,2 4,1.

Individual C (Age 25-30 years)

Bony Remains:

Upper left maxilla extending from midline anteriorly to mesial of 2,8 socket. Alveolar crest condition is good with no evidence of periodontal disease.

Dentition:

Teeth present are, 2,4 2,5 2,6 2,8, and display moderate attrition.

Both premolars exhibit linear enamel hypoplasia in the apical third of the crown. There are mild deposits of calculus on all teeth. Pronounced hypercementosis affects the apical half of the roots of 2,8. Teeth lost post mortem are 2,1 2,2 2,3 2,7.

Individual D (Age 15-18 years)

Bony Remains

Fragment of mandible extending from 4,7 socket to 3,3 socket. There is moderate post mortem destruction of all sockets, preventing assessment of periodontal disease.

Dentition:

Three disarticulated teeth found with the collective remains have been attributed to this individual because of the mild attrition on these teeth. The disarticulated teeth are 2,1 2,4 and 2,6. There is mild attrition of the one remaining tooth, 4,3, associated with the mandible. Mild deposits of calculus are present on the buccal of 4,3.

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Acknowledgements

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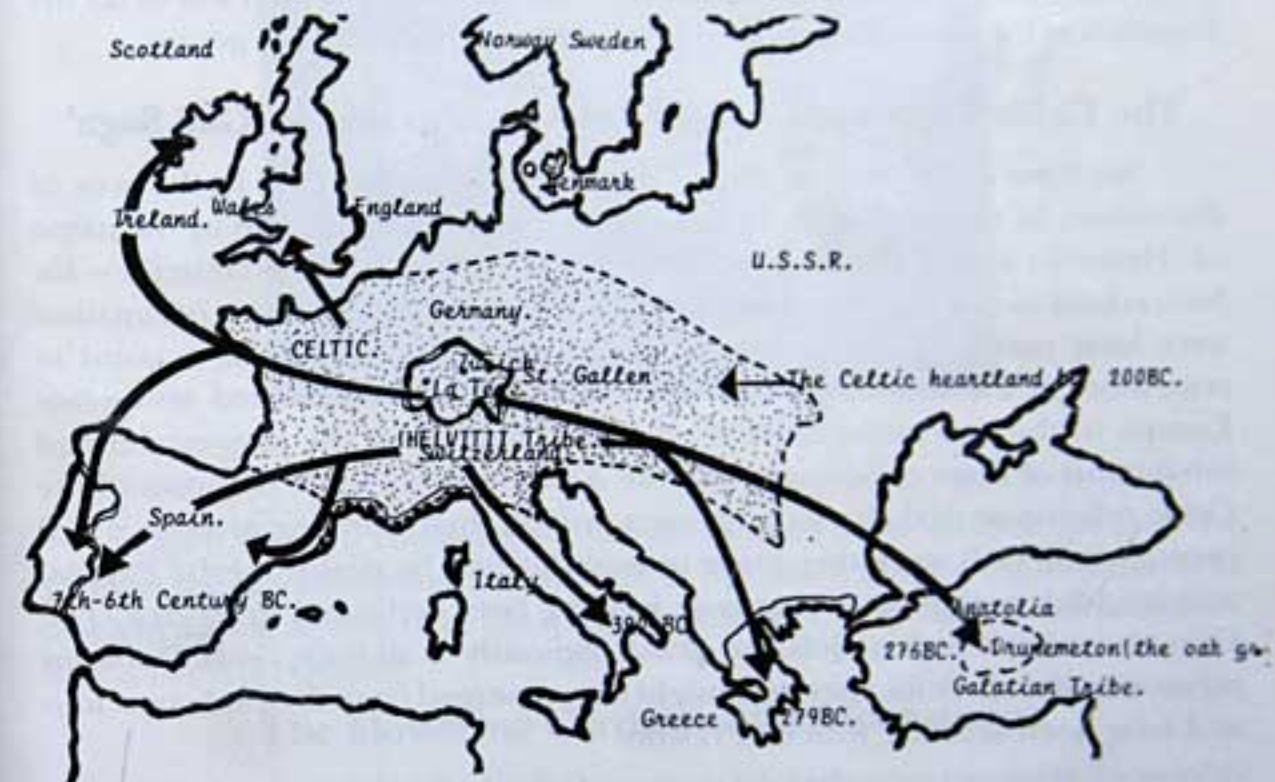
Consultant at the Dental Hospital, Trinity College, Dublin. Is an expert on dental disease and wear due to diet, at present working on the dentition of Early Christian populations in cemeteries from Cos. Meath and Dublin.

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Archaeologist with the Office of Public Works, specialising in field survey and excavation, has recently conducted major excavations at the monastic site at Ardfer, Co. Kerry.

In the footsteps of Saint Gall

By Michael O'Malley



Celtic Heartland by 200 B.C. The expansion of the La Tène and Hallstatt Cultures.

From the fifth century BC the La Tène Celts began to figure in the writings of classical authors. Their technology was for the most part equal to that of their civilized Greek and Roman contemporaries. The reason that they figure in this article is because of the link, however tenuous, between the Helvetii tribe, the La Tène culture and the northern area of the West of Ireland. The sudden blossoming of La Tène art in northern Ireland may be accounted for by the coming of bands of Celtic invaders to the country, possibly in the second century BC. These must have entered the country through Britain. An earlier wave of immigrants had reached the west of the country some time in the third or second centuries BC, coming direct from the Continent. This immigration accounts for the presence in Ireland of two groups of La Tène peoples and would, as we have seen, account for the fact that the Táin Bó Cuailnge, the earliest Irish epic tale, is concerned with the traditional rivalry between the inhabitants of Connacht in

the west and those of Ulster in the north-east¹.

Splendid objects in the La Tène style have been found in Ireland. These include two fine collars, one from Clonmacnois, County Offaly, and the other from Broighter, County Derry. The Clonmacnois collar would seem to have been manufactured in Ireland, but it owes much to Continental models. The Broighter collar, on the other hand, has affinities with British art and may be compared with one example from Snettisham. Various other objects suggest a flourishing and individual school of Celtic art in Ireland, which was to lay the foundation for all the later flowering of medieval Irish creative genius.

The Celtic Expansion and its Relevance to the 'St. Gall Saga'

We have established that the Celtic tribes occupied land in the area of discussion, St. Gallen-Zurich. In fact one of the tribes was known by the name of 'Helvetii', almost the same spelling as the correct name – Helvetia – for Switzerland to this day. Now while we accept that the days of Celtic occupation were long past by the time that St. Gall arrived in Switzerland, a point to remember is the following. The Celtic peoples who dominated temperate Europe in the first millennium BC, may well have been the long-established inhabitants of France, Germany and the Alpine region. Little is known of the Celtic religion or of their characteristics though their drinking prowess is well recorded! St. Gall was either brave or foolish when he destroyed the Pagans' wooden idols and broke a container holding beer dedicated to Woden. The Celts also made wooden idols and drank copiously to all their Gods. Dormant memories of their Celtic ancestors might have emerged from their subconscious and have been aroused, with dire results!

Christianity

Christianity brought a revival of the Celtic art forms, a Golden Age notably in the illuminations of the great manuscripts. The design on the following page is a very ancient one called the Triskele or the Triskelion from the Chi-Rho page of the *Book of Kells*, illuminated by monks in the ninth century, in the style of Iona where it came to rest. 'Intricacies, so delicate and subtle, so exact and compact, so full of knots and links, with colours so fresh and vivid, that you might say that all this was the work of an Angel and not a man.' So wrote Giraldus Cambrensis, commenting on the Kells Triskele². The artistry of the scribe embellished the vellum with the same skills that the Celts applied to the implements they made.

In the *Book of Kells*, the *Book of Durrow*, and the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, the monastic scribes wrote down in brilliantly decorated form, the gospels and the other versions of the word of God. Clearly influenced by Hallstatt and, especially, La Tène cultures at their most glorious, from these illuminations arise many of the immediate visual connotations of the word 'Celtic' today. Thus at the very point of dilution, the Celtic civilisation produced its last, and perhaps greatest, flowering³.



Illustration from the Book of Kells.

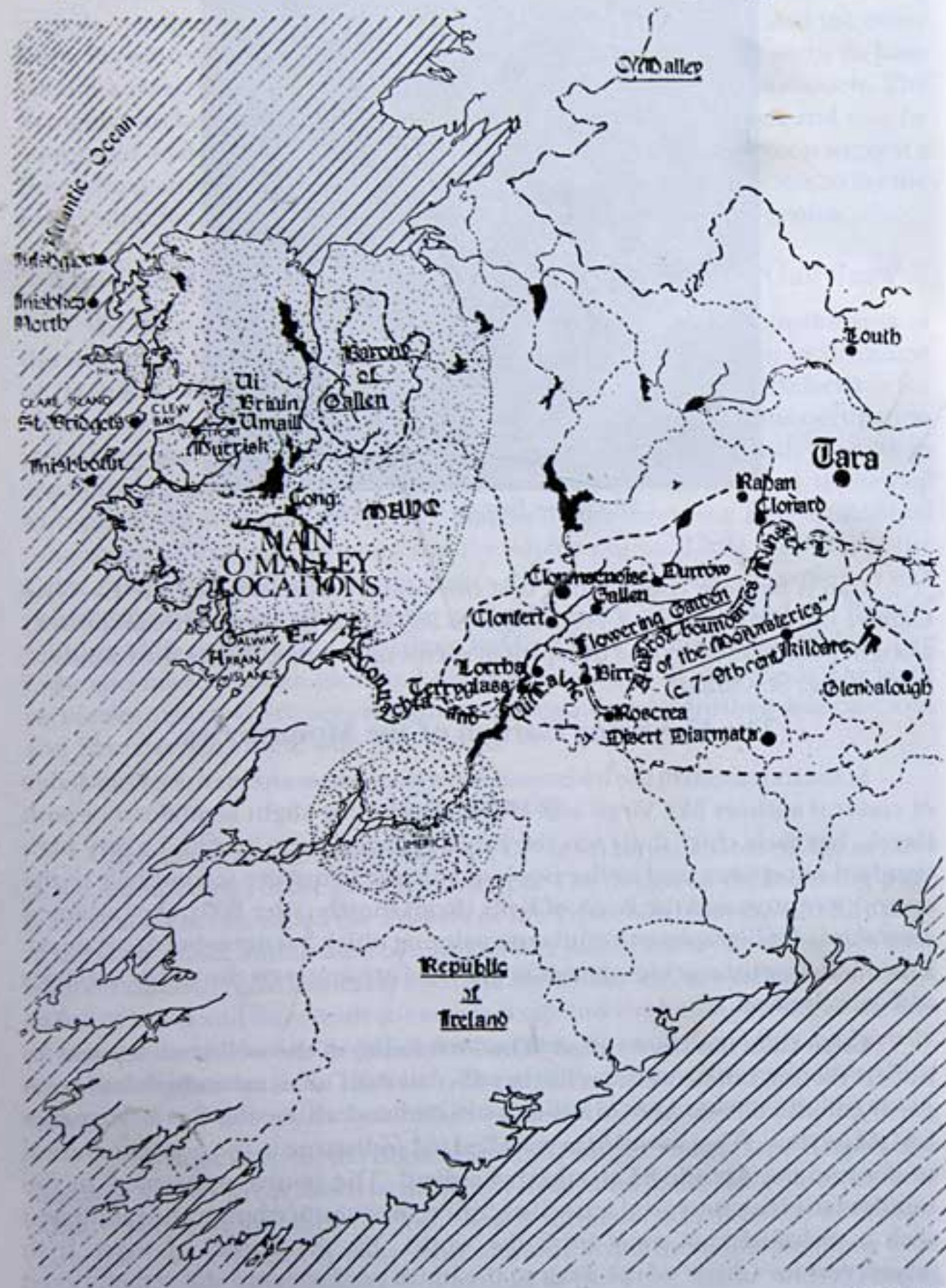
Can it be pure coincidence that the country from whence the La Tène Culture initially blossomed, retains still in St. Gallen Library (Stiftsbibliothek) a bright mirror and focus of the spirit of medieval Europe and its two founders, St. Gall and St. Otmar?

The Flowering Garden of the Monasteries

Scholars trained in the Irish monastic schools show an extensive knowledge of classical authors like Virgil and Horace and some slight acquaintance with Greek, but their chief study was the Bible. Many of them reached a very high standard as copyists, and in the *Book of Durrow* (from the second half of the seventh century) and the *Book of Kells* (from shortly after 800), they attained a standard of calligraphy and miniature painting which has never been surpassed. Indeed their artistic achievements in this field are amongst the greatest glories of Gaelic Ireland.

Colm Cille has been called 'The First Exile' in the well known poem by Robert Farren, but he went no further abroad than to an area which had been partly colonised from Antrim a century earlier and where the Gaelic language had taken root. From Iona Aidan travelled to Lindisfarne in the next generation to become the Apostle of Northern England. The motive uppermost in the minds of the Irish peregrini was self-sacrifice, to renounce home and family and seek a secluded spot away from the world. Yet the names of these Irish 'wanderers for Christ' of the sixth to the ninth centuries are still remembered with affection across the European mainland: Columban in France and Italy where he died at Bobbio in 615; Gall in Switzerland, after whom a city, a canton

and a diocese have been named; **Fiacre** and **Fursey** in France; **Feuillen** in Belgium; **Killian** in Germany; **Donato** and **Cataldo** in Italy; **Fergal** in Austria.⁴



could lighten that darkness with their knowledge, and in so doing establish outposts of learning throughout Europe.

Boys were sent to study at almost as early an age as they are now, but there was no age limit. They conquered the difficulties of reading by the use of the Bible and learned the whole 150 Psalms by heart! They were taught to read and write the Latin alphabet. Latin rules were committed to memory and Virgil was studied. Greek and Hebrew were also on the curriculum. Then there was music and poetry. Ecclesiastical chant was considered important also. The harp was the principal instrument.

Students went to the Scriptorium to learn illuminating and ornamental writing. The boys of St. Gall's in Switzerland used to practise on the line, 'Adnexique globum Zephyrique Kanna secabant', which can be literally rendered (after the manner of lard!) as 'The quick brown fox jumped over the slow lazy dog', since both sentences are valuable only as containing each letter of the alphabet. It is now easier to see that these monks when they ventured forth into foreign lands were not so ill prepared as might have been assumed. It certainly helps to explain their success.

Despite what appeared to be an end to our search for St. Gall in Ireland, with O'Malley country only 100 kilometres west of Gallen Priory, we decided to continue our search.

St. Gall was a Leinsterman as was St. Columbanus or Columban. They both studied under the Abbot St. Comgall at the great monastery of Bangor opposite Carrickfergus on Belfast Lough. St. Columban had always had a desire to travel in foreign parts. He approached the Abbot St. Comgall and sought permission to travel into pagan lands and to spread the word of Christ.⁶ Permission was granted for him and twelve companions to leave the monastery and to bring the gift of Christianity to those who were without. Among those chosen to venture forth with him was St. Gall.

It would be only conjecture to say anything of the trials and tribulations which must have occurred during their travels. Enough to say that St. Columban and his twelve companions, including St. Gall, passed over into Gaul, where barbarian invasions, civil strife and clerical slackness had reduced religion to a low ebb. The Irish monks at once set about preaching to the people by showing an example of charity, penance and devotion. Their reputation eventually reached the King of Burgundy, Guntramnus, who about the year 590 offered St. Columban ground for building at **Annegray** in the Vosges, sited in a disused Roman fort! However the house became too small for his numerous followers who desired to live under the discipline of the saint. He therefore founded a further monastery at **Luxeuil**, also in the Vosges. There his monks lived according to Irish tradition, keeping the Irish date of Easter, having a bishop who was subordinate to the abbot and promulgating Irish penitential practice.

In all these ways, Columban's monasteries differed from the rest of the



St. Columba and St. Gall crossing Lake Constance, from a fifth century painting (Stiftsbibliothek - St. Gallen).

Frankish church and friction was almost inevitable. Columban founded a further monastery which was named **Fontes** on account of its springs, near Fontaine. These, with **Bobbio**, a later foundation, were founded by Columban himself. Saint Gall despite being, by inclination, a hermit, had several cells and monasteries named after him. However, Saint Gall did not found the Benedictine monastery which proudly bears his name in what is now a famous city in Switzerland. The monastery and original town were built on the site of his hermitage about a century after his death in c.630.

The Hermitage of Gallus

This account of Saint Gall or Gallus, as he is known in many countries including Switzerland, recounts details which are sometimes lacking in the overall history of the foundation of the original monastic cell, which eventually became the core of the present city of Saint Gallen in Switzerland. Some of the details of miracles as in Jonas, live on to this day in the many legends surrounding the city of Saint Gallen. Yet most of these events took place around the year 600 A.D. – 1,400 years ago!

The main story revolves around the initial movement of St. Columban and his monks after their expulsion (which for the sake of brevity will not be recounted here) and their re-entry, which will be dealt with, if only for a brief spell. Our story is with Gall. The monks crossed the Rhine and came to the castle of Turegum (Zurich). They then followed the lake shore to Tuccinia (Tuggen). Here they halted and tried to preach to the local Pagans. However, Gall, as impulsive as ever, set fire to some wooden idols, with the result that they were violently expelled from the district. However, there were some Christians among the Pagans of this mountain country that was to become Switzerland. They met them after Saint Columban's party had travelled on over hill and through forests and eventually reached Boden lake and a walled village called Arbona (Arbon). Here a saintly priest named Willimar made them welcome and in response to St. Columban's enquiry, showed them a good place to settle in the district of Pergentia (Bregenz). Experience had taught caution and the Irish monks did not start 'idol-smashing' immediately. Gall, however, eventually thought it was safe to do so. Having disposed of the idols, he broke a container holding 500 measures of beer dedicated to Woden! About half the population were favourable to the monks, but the remainder gained the ear of the Pagan Duke of Alemannia (Cunzo), who ordered them to leave.

Columban and his depleted band of followers then set out on the arduous crossing of the Alps to Italy. Columban, at least, left with bad grace. 'We found a golden egg, but it contained serpents', he said, as he hiked with his party, without Gall, over the mountains into Lombardy and founded his last monastery at Bobbio.⁷

However our tale mainly concerns St. Gall, who being ill with fever, was unable to start with the other monks for Italy. Saint Columban, though giving

him permission to stay behind, felt, however, that he was malingering and forbade him to say Mass until after his (Columban's) death. This extremely heavy punishment for a 'presumed' offence was quite typical of Columban's strict code of discipline. Suffice to say that Gallus did not say Mass again until informed of the death of St. Columban. He was notified of the death by the receipt of Columban's wooden pastoral staff which was sent from Italy as a sign of forgiveness.

The Vitae of St. Gall does preserve a very attractive and probably quite accurate account of how St. Gall found, and settled in, a cell which was to become a hermitage and eventually the famous monastery of Saint Gallen, though the latter was not in his lifetime.

Tended in his sickness by the priest Willimar and two of his clerics, Maninold and Thwodore, Gall, as soon as he was well enough, asked for a suitable place for a hermitage. Hiltibold, a deacon of Willimar's household, was a keen sportsman and knew of a likely place, but warned the 'would be' hermit of the savage scenery, the rocks and the mountains and the wild beasts that lived amongst them, not only harmless creatures, but wolves, boars and bears. Gall, who had encountered such creatures many times before, was not deterred. Hiltibold guided Gall from Arbona into the hills, having instructed him to bring a supply of food and the smallest of his fishing nets. Gall set off fasting determined not to eat until God had shown him the place where he should settle. Eventually they came to the bouldery mountain torrent of the Steinach, and here Gall, catching his foot in some brambles, took it as a sign that they should halt. Here was the chosen place! He cut a couple of hazel branches and set up a rough cross; on it he hung the leather satchel which he had brought from Ireland, and which contained the relics of Saints Mary, Maurice and Desiderius. They then lit a fire, but Hiltibold was more than alarmed when a bear came lumbering out of the wood towards them. 'Bear,' said Gall, 'I order you in the name of Jesus Christ, to go back and bring us out wood for the fire.' The bear returned with a log!

In art from this story, Gall is shown with a bear carrying a log in its paws. This scene is depicted on all town crests and flags and also on the ivory cover of the so-called Long Gospel (MS 53), representing the Blessed Virgin Mary and Gallus with the bear, carved by Tuotilo about 894. The cantonal flag of St. Gallen is, however, different. The story goes on with the ejection of demons that lived in the place and how Gall fasted three days, while Hiltibold went back to Willimar to report progress. After his fast, Gall also went back to Arbona to secure equipment to take back to his monastic site. When he was at a meal with the others, Hiltibold said of a sudden to Willimar, 'If a bear were here, Gall would likely give him something to eat!' This account of the initial establishment of Gall's monastery in Switzerland is an extract from *The Irish Saints* under 'Gall'. It corresponds in most details with the account given by Walahfrid Strabo in *The Life of St. Gall*. As the Abbot of St. Gallen, Gozbert, was still alive at the date when



The author pointing at the wall painting of Saint Gallus and the bear.



St. Gallus and Hiltibold with the bear, from a fifteenth century painting (Stiftsbibliothek, St. Gallen).



The plaque at the pool where Saint Gallus caught fish and established his original hermitage cell during the seventh century.

English translation of inscription on plaque near pool of river Steinach

Here the messenger of faith to the Germanic regions, from the monastery of Bangor in Ireland, coming from Arbon by the Bodensee [Lake Constance], rested with Deacon Hiltibold in the wilderness of the forest. Here he sank his fishing net into the whirling water. Here he had the wonderful encounter with the bear, who at his command threw wood into the fire, and as a reward received bread with the order to disappear into the mountains. Here Gallus looked upon his fall into the thorn bushes as a sign from Heaven to stay at this place, where he erected a cross of hazel branches. He decided to build his cell and chapel there, mindful of the words of the psalm with which God once made his choice of the castle of Zion known to King David.

this was written, that fact alone must lend much credence to its authenticity.

Walahfrid Strabo adds to his life of the Saint, a second book, of nearly equal length, relating the many miracles said to have taken place during and after the life of St. Gall. I will quote only one miracle as it appears to me to have relevance to the story as a whole.

How the holy father drove from that place demons who appeared in the guise of women.⁸

When the night was spent and the golden light of day illuminated the forest shades, the deacon said: 'My father, what are we to do today?' 'Prithee my son', replied Gall, 'take not amiss what I say: since the Lord has caused us to find what we sought, let us pass this day also in this place. Take thy net and go to the pool, and I will follow thee as soon as I can. It may be that the Lord will show us His accustomed bounty, so that on our return to the town (Arbon), we may have to offer the priest our father some gift which the Lord has granted us to find.' 'I am well content with thy bidding,' answered the deacon and rose without delay, calling on the name of the Lord; then taking the little fishing net, he went to the river. As he was about to throw it into the water, two fiends in the shape of women appeared standing on the bank, naked as though they were about to take a bath; and after flaunting their indecency in his face, they took up stones and began to pelt him saying: 'Tis thou hast led yon man into the wilderness – one full of iniquity and malice, who hath ever foiled us by his evil practices.' The deacon returned to the man of God and told him what he had seen and heard. Then that chosen warrior of God threw himself on his knees (as did also the deacon), and besought the Lord saying: 'Oh Almighty God, whose goodness is past telling and whose majesty is beyond all measure; not according to my merits but according to Thy mercy, hearken with favour unto my prayer and bid these fiends quit this spot that it may be consecrated to Thy glory.' Then rising they approached the pool and forthwith the fiends turned and fled along the course of the stream to the neighbouring mountain, and St. Gall said to them: 'By the boundless might of the Trinity I charge you ye phantasms, to leave this spot and withdraw to the uninhabited mountains, and never henceforth dare to return hither.'

After this they let down their net into the pool and caught as much fish as they wanted. As they were disentangling the fishes from the meshes of the net, they heard from the mountain-top voices like the voices of two women bewailing the dead saying one to another: 'Alas! what shall we do? Whither shall we go? This stranger will not suffer us to dwell among men nor even to abide in the wilderness.'

Nor was that the only time such voices were heard; but on three several occasions when the deacon had entered the valley to catch hawks, he heard the demons shouting from the mountain called Himilinberg,⁹ asking one another whether Gall was yet in the wilderness or had gone away.

It is undoubtedly time for me to revert to my amazement and that of my wife at coming across the name 'Gallen' in a map of Ireland while researching the history of the O'Malley Clan! After consulting the map and noting the proximity of the barony of Gallen and the remains of the Abbey of the same name, it does appear a kind twist to fate that 1,300 years after Gall, a man with

the surname O'Malley should have the pleasure to meet and marry a lady named Doris Fatzer, daughter of Jacob Johann Fatzer and Frau Anna Fatzer-Schwetzer, who owned and lived in a konditorei. That same konditorei was situated only about nine metres from the previously mentioned mountain river Steinach¹⁰ by which she played as a child, and which runs 'helter-skelter' down the hill to the pool where St. Gall used to fish, and which is mentioned in the one miracle quoted from the *Life of St. Gall*. The results of our initial curiosity proved to us once and for all, that the world is a much smaller place than either of us had believed and that little or nothing is impossible! Even the fact that the La Tène Celts, who invaded the area of Ireland that was to be eventually 'O'Malley country', came from the area of Switzerland near to the present site of the City of St. Gallen, does not amaze me as it once might have done. Since we followed 'In the Footsteps of St. Gall,' the world is a smaller place and mankind is much more closely related one to the other than we could ever have believed before!

Finally it should be said that when Gall died c.630, having outlived Columban by at least 15 years, he had established himself as the principal pioneer of Christianity in Switzerland. This, although he was a hermit, and not a bishop or an abbot. His cult is a very ancient one, his name is in early ninth century martyrologies. His shrine remained until the Reformation: when it was 'rifled', his bones were seen to be unusually large. The abbey survived until 1805 and the church is now a cathedral. The abbey library is one of the most notable in Europe and is as old as the St. Gall monastery itself. It goes back to the institution's two founders of the seventh and eighth centuries, St. Gall and St. Otmar.

In conclusion, I must just say that whether or not we achieved our goal in following 'In the Footsteps of St. Gall' by resolving the ties between him, Ireland and Switzerland, I have personally enlarged my knowledge of my wife's home town in a historic sense, and am full of admiration for the manner in which this history has not been drowned in a sea of modernism as appears to have happened with so many cities.

Notes

I wish to dedicate this article to my wife without whom it would never have been undertaken.

1. A. Ross, *The Pagan Celts* (1986), pp 140-1.
2. John J. O'Meara (trans.), *Topography of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis* (1951), p. 67.
3. F. Delaney, *The Celts*, p. 51.
4. Patrick Loughrey, *The People of Ireland*.
5. See S. Mulloy, *O'Malley People and Places* (1989), map of Co. Mayo baronies, p. 71.
6. D. H. Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*.
7. F. Delaney, *A Walk in the Dark Ages*.
8. Walahfrid Strabo, *Miracles of Saint Gall*, No. XII, p. 80.
9. According to the Bollandist editor this is Monzeln (Mons Coelius), a hill near St. Gall.
10. See p. 9.

Bibliography

The main sources of our knowledge of St. Gallus, apart from the almost casual references which occur in the *Life of St. Columban* by Jonas, are three documents dealing with St. Gall in particular. The first, unfortunately preserved only in a fragmentary state, was written about a century after the saint's death. The second by Abbot Wetting dates from the early years of the ninth century, and the third by Walahfrid Strabo must be another twenty years or so later. All three have been edited by B. Krusch in MGH, *Scriptores Merov.*, Vol. iv, pp 251-337. There is also a metrical life by Notker. See further J.F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, Vol. i, pp 206-8; Gougaud, *Christianity in Celtic Lands* (1932), pp 140-4; *Les Saints Irlandais hors d'Irlande* (1936), and last, but by no means least, *The Life of St. Gall* by M. Joynt (1927).

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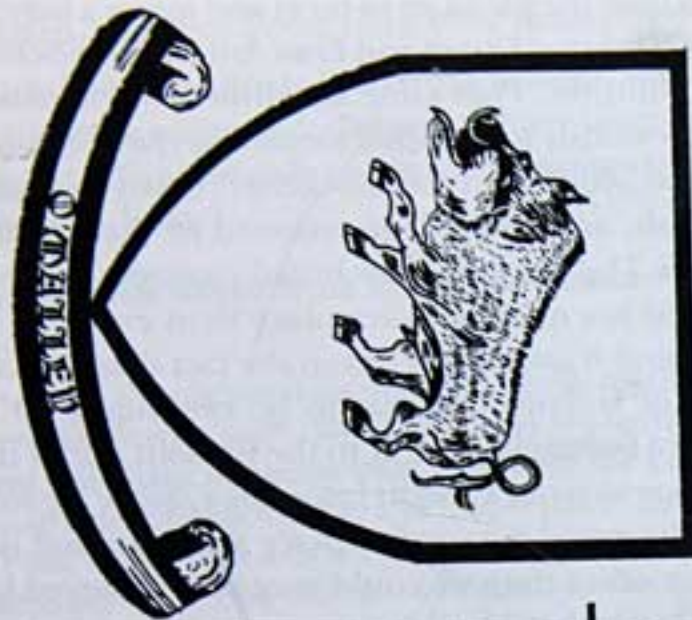
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The Times Atlas of Archaeology, Past Worlds.

Michael O'Malley, Romsey, Hampshire, England, had a distinguished career with the Ordnance Survey. Later he made some important archaeological discoveries in the Romsey area, including the remains of the oldest manmade dwelling in Great Britain (8,500 years old). He received the Chronicle Archaeology Award for 1979. In 1982, he published *When The Mammoth Roamed Romsey, a study of the Prehistory of Romsey and District*.

ORIGIN OF THE SURNAME O'MALLEY
It is well to remember that this spelling is the anglicised version of 'O'Máille'. The clan originated from the same area in which it is now located. It belongs to the Uí Briain race, which derives its name from Brian or Brian, son of Eochaidh Muighmheadoin King of Ireland who died in AD 366.



In Pagan Celtic lands, the wild boar was regarded as the prince of animals.



The Irish Swiss Connection.

The Fizzer heraldic insignia is that of a knight, possibly of the 10th-12th century.

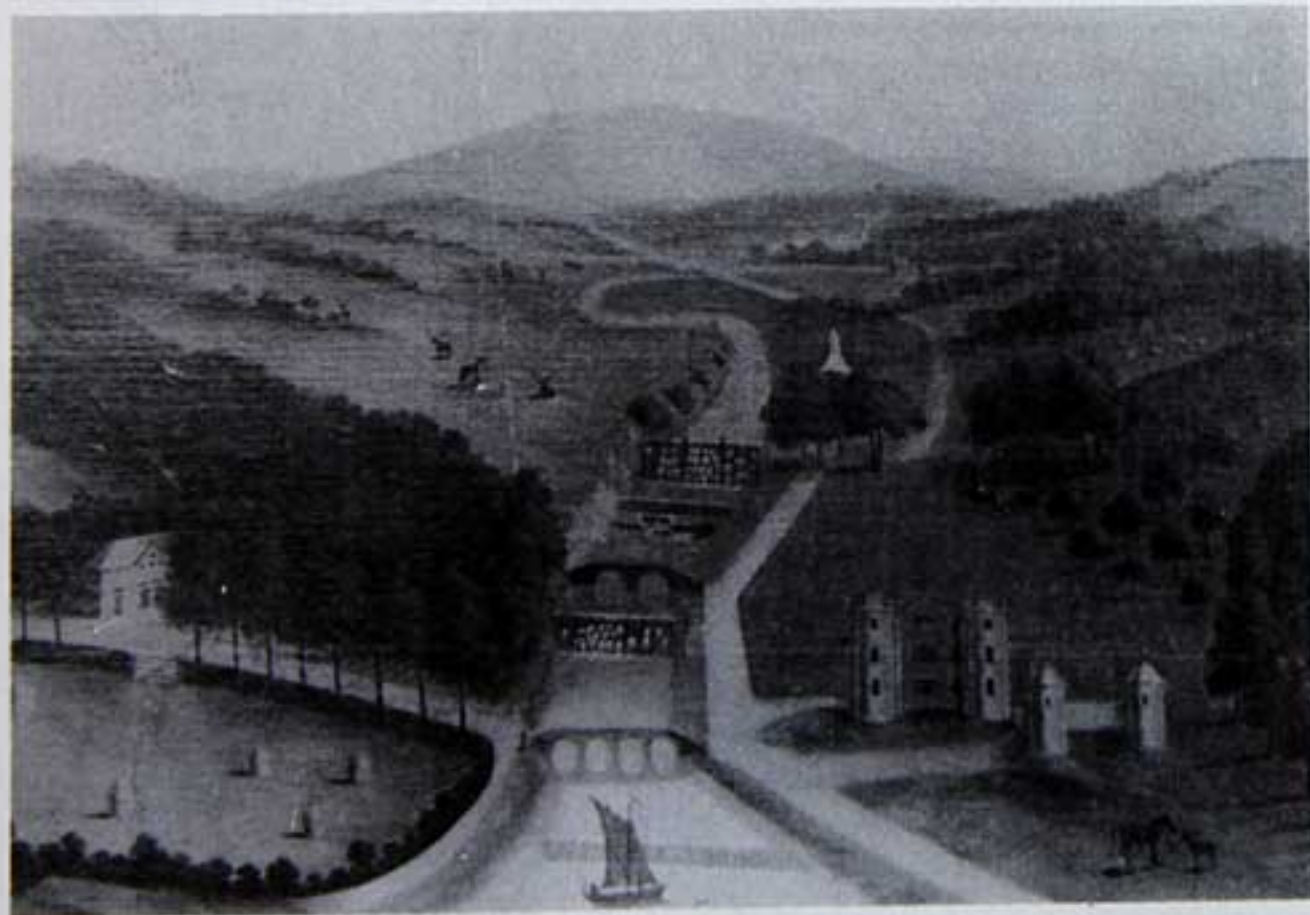
Westport – An Early Irish Example of Town Planning

Part II, Westport House

By Brendan Jeffers

The Construction and History

When Colonel John Browne acquired Cathair na Mart, he probably lived in what was left of the original fortress, which had been destroyed (as a fortress) in 1583, by Ulick John, son of the Earl of Clanrickarde and Sir Nicholas Malby.¹ Cahernamart or *Cathair na Mart*, 'the stone fort of the Beeves', was of circular form. The castle of the O'Malleys also bore the same name, and was built on 'the margin of the Bay of Westport' – probably where the dungeons are now i.e. underground vaults along the east side of the present house.



Painting by George Moore showing West Front in 1760. (Photo Liam Lyons).



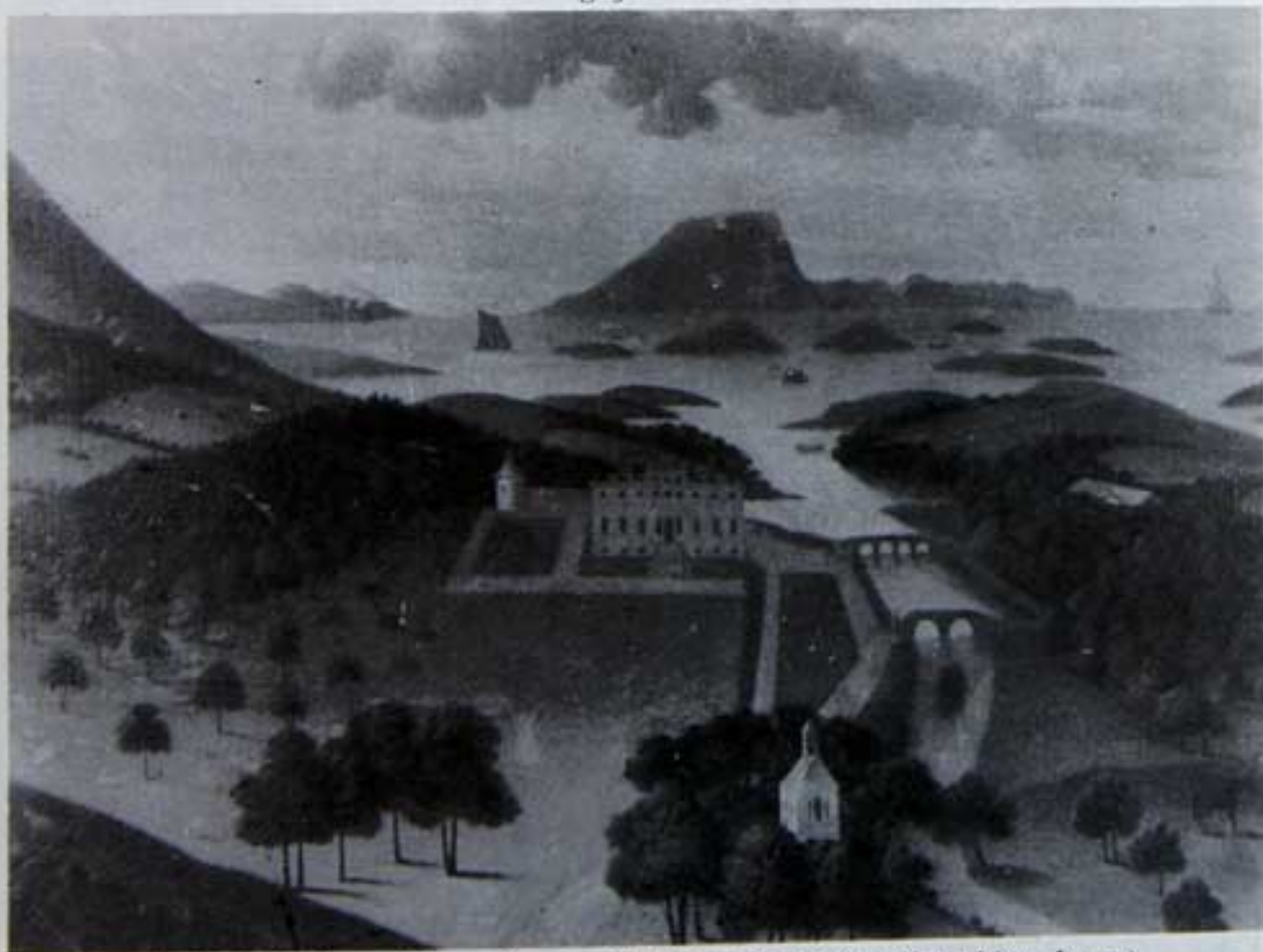
House Bridge

Colonel John Browne began building Westport House in 1685.² Picture No. 134 in the house shows that part of it which was built before 1700, with the two half-towers on either wing and the two turrets. This picture is in the top passage of the house.³ In 1683, Colonel John Browne's agent, writing from Cathair na Mart, states 'The turrets are nearly finished now.' No doubt, Colonel Browne lived at Cathair-na-Mart before he built Mount Browne; most of his letters are headed 'Westport'. There was then neither dam nor lake, and the tide rose and fell against the walls.

In 1685, having finished restoring or repairing the turrets, he started on the house. The bridge near the house was probably built in 1734 by his grandson, another John Browne, but may have been built earlier. A stone, bearing the initials 'J.B. 1734' was found in it during the repairs in 1897. Before this bridge was built, the ford, just below the present bridge was the only means of crossing. The ford and the road up to the farm can be well traced by trees. *Pococke's Irish Tour 1752* says that John Browne 'built two handsome bridges, and has form'd cascades in the river which are seen from the front of the house', but he does not say the exact year. He also states the house 'is much like Bedford house in Bloomsbury Square, except that it has a pavilion in the middle over the Attic Story, in which there is a large convenient Bed chamber for the young people, of the size of the hall'.⁴



Ceiling of Front Hall.



Painting by George Moore showing East Front in 1760. (Photo Liam Lyons).

The architect was Richard Cassels, author of *Villas of the Ancients*,⁵ who also built Carton for the Duke of Leinster, Hazelwood, Co. Sligo, together with David Bindon, and Russborough, Co. Wicklow, etc.

The east front has fine cut stone window frames. The stone is better than that on any other part of the house, being taken from the quarry south of the farmyard and the best stratum. This front was completed about 1730. Cassels made the fine cornices in the east face, but the barrel roof of the front hall was built by Wyatt. The ceiling of the front hall is very similar to that of the music room at Russborough.

After the east front was finished, the house bridge was built and then the stables. The town was at that time all around the house and all the farm stock, stables, etc. close to the house (see Pictures Nos. 133⁶ and 134 in Westport House), so that the house bridge and stables were built and the nucleus of the present farmyard before 1740. The enclosures close to the house on the south with the two towers, were pulled down between 1750-1778, when the south facade of the house was built by the second earl.

The east face, as is seen in Picture No. 133, presents an appearance similar to the present front, but the other three sides are much altered. From the plans of 1773, the ground floor consists of (1) waiting room – now the large library; (2) front staircase – now the antelibrary; (3) the hall – now the front hall; (4) the



Westport House, East Front.



Entrance East Front.

back staircase – now man-servant's bedroom and part of the drawing room; (5) breakfast room – now part of the drawing room; (6) dressing room – now the eastern end of the gallery. With the exception of the dressing room and a smaller room, the house was only one room deep. The family probably used the front hall as their sitting room, as was the custom in those days. At this time, the lake was non-existent and the tide ran up to one of the waterfalls which had been constructed before 1750. The present town gate and lodge were made by the third earl or first marquess in 1785. The main entrance was formerly at the dispensary, now occupied by Mrs. Henderson, which features on the ordnance maps as Wood Cottage and was known as the Lodge.

In July 1779, Gabriel Béranger stayed in Westport with Lord Altamont and made many sketches.⁷ In notebook No. 4 entitled *Rambles through the County of Dublin and some others in Ireland*, his drawing No. 6, 'View of Croagh Patrick, etc.', and No. 7, 'Clew Bay', are both from the demesne showing the house, gardens, etc. Sir William Wilde in 1880 published a *Memoir of Béranger*. On page 152 he gives a description of the residence: 'The first additions planned in 1773, may or may not have been commenced by the first lord, but the south face of the house was built in 1778, in the time of the second lord, who died in 1780.'

The third lord, John Dennis, subsequently the first marquess, completed the square. The front portion was an open courtyard. The interior, the dining room (see plan of 1781)⁸, ceiling of oak staircase and of the front hall, and most of the cornices were by James Wyatt (1781-86), pupil of Robert Adam; also the Chinese room. James Wyatt also designed the theatre in the town.

In 1805 lodges for the town were built and also gates across Newport Road, by Wood Cottage, which were removed in 1931, and erected at the end of the wall running south from the south west corner of the house.⁹

The second marquess built the north wing as bedrooms for the servants about 1816, and the south wing for the library was designed in 1819 by Benjamin Wyatt, the son of James Wyatt, and completed in 1825. It was Benjamin Wyatt who destroyed the present gallery by removing the ceiling and cornices put up by his father, similar to those in the dining room. He would have destroyed the whole, had it not been for the wife of the second marquess, who made her husband get rid of Benjamin Wyatt.

The south wing, for the library, was burned to the ground within a few months of its completion, in January 1826, owing to the over-heating of some flues connected with the hot air heating system which had been installed. The wing was subsequently restored by the third marquess after 1845, the outer walls remaining as before. The oak staircase leading to the library was saved from the fire. In the centre of the south face, was a broad flight of steps leading up to a large door and vestibule. This staircase was designed by James Wyatt in 1781. The

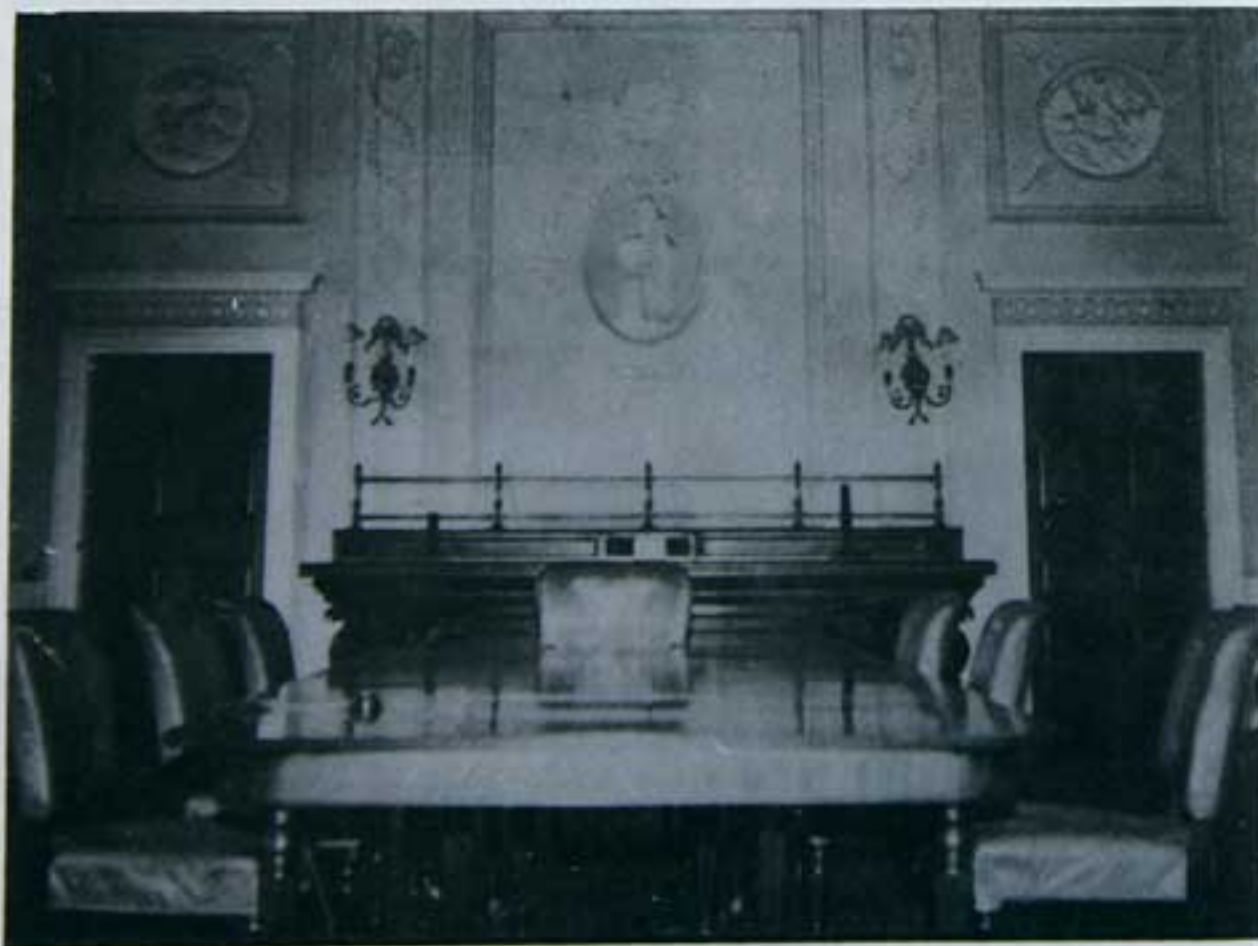


Westport House, West Front.

cornices of the ceiling are a series of designs, e.g. earl's coronet, arms of Browne family, female busts, etc. in profile, and the Greek letters in cartouche.

The north wing is shown in O'Connor's pictures of the house dated 1818 and may, therefore, have been built before 1816. It carries a hopper for rainwater which is dated 1830, but this may have been added many years after completion. The house and north wings were covered with lead from the Sheafry mines, Drummin, Westport. This lead was of a much greater thickness than usual and contained more silver than is found in most other mines. After the destruction of the library, the second marquess covered in the court. The centre of this space was enclosed, leaving a well on each side for light and air to the basement. There were two staircases in the house, one to the north entrance hall and one to the south. After the library was burned, the northern staircase was removed, and the stone backed staircase was built in the basement up to the dining room floor and landings to the bedrooms along the south wall of the gallery.

According to the wife of the second marquess, the dam forming the lake was built by the first marquess before 1800, and it is shown on the survey of Mayo which was made '3 Irish miles to the inch'. The survey for this map was made between 1775 and 1785, and the map issued in 1800.



Dining Room by James Wyatt 1780.



Ceiling over oak staircase designed by James Wyatt in 1781.

The eagles on Westport House were erected in 1806 by Coade & Seely, London. Both bridges, i.e. by the church and house, were built by 'Mr. Browne' (see *Pococke's Tour 1752*), and the first marquess added to the wall which enclosed most of the demesne near the house.

The second marquess practically rebuilt and considerably added to the farm, introducing all kinds of machinery. Most of the farm buildings were obviously later than the house. Curwen, writing in 1813 (published 1818),¹⁰ states that 'they were built at that date and much of these buildings were used as Linen Mills in 1817. The monthly sales of linen were £3,000 and of yarn £1,000'.

The third marquess undertook many changes inside the house. Early in his time, he demolished the basement portion of the stairs to the south of the entrance hall. In 1857, he demolished the remainder. He also abandoned the library, substituting for the latter the present marble staircase made by Italians brought to Westport for the purpose.

The third marquess built the new Church of Ireland church about 1872, and it was stated that the alabaster inside this church was from the wreck of a ship on the coast near Westport. The Lord Sligo of those days had the foreshore rights and he more or less built the church around the alabaster.



Marble staircase installed by Third Marquess.

Accounts of Westport and Westport House from various sources

Whilst engaged in this study of Westport, I have come across many glowing accounts of the beauty of the town and Westport House, and some of these extracts I now include.

The Irish Sketch Book, by William Makepeace Thackeray, p. 230 (The Oxford Thackeray, written in 1842).

Nature has done much for this pretty town of Westport; and after Nature, the traveller ought to be thankful to Lord Sligo, who has done a great deal too. In the first place, he has established one of the prettiest, comfortablest inns in Ireland, in the best part of his little town, stocking the cellars with good wines, filling the house with neat furniture, and lending, it is said, the whole to a landlord gratis, on condition that he should keep the house warm, and furnish the larder, and entertain the traveller.

Later, on p. 233, another reference

The chapel is before the inn where I resided, and on Sunday from a very early hour, the side of the street was thronged with worshippers, who came to attend the various services.

Another reference on p. 234

The Catholic chapel was built before their graces the most reverend lord archbishops came into fashion. It is large and gloomy, with one or two attempts at ornament, by way of pictures at the altars, and a good inscription warning the incomer, in a few bold words, of the sacredness of the place he stands in.

Practical Geology and Ancient Architecture in Ireland, by George Wilkinson, p. 284 (London 1845).

At Westport, overlaying the limestone at Farm Quarry, which we have already noticed, there are about 16 feet of greyish blue coloured sandstone, hard, quartz and gritty; in colour it approaches very closely, especially in the lower beds, to that of the limestone on which it rests, and from which it is only separated by the lines of stratification, similar to those occurring in the limestone beneath. The mineral character, however, of the two rocks at their junction is quite distinct. The sandstone weathers on exposure to a light brown colour, and is discoloured for several feet in the upper beds, which are too soft to be useful. The joints of this stone are nearly vertical, and covered with quartz, which gives a natural smooth surface to the stone. The mansion of Lord Sligo, and the office buildings attached, have the plain face of the walls constructed with stones selected so as to present a smooth face, and to anyone acquainted with the circumstance, would give the notion of a carefully worked limestone wall, having the stones laid in flat narrow courses. The cornice and other cut stones of these buildings are of the limestone.

The Scenery and Antiquities of Ireland, drawings by W.H. Bartlett, text by J. Stirling Coyne, Vol. II, p. 46 (published by James S. Virtue, City Road, London, 1850).

The town of Westport itself is embellished with a wall enclosing a stream and running through the principal street; at the further end of this is a gate entering to the grounds of Lord Sligo, the principal proprietor of the county. The best hotel in the west of Ireland is Robinson's at Westport, situated on the side of the wall. The lofty eminence of the Reek, or Croagh Patrick, which is the conspicuous feature of all the views in the neighbourhood, is celebrated as a place of religious pilgrimage . . .

Just opposite Westport, at the entrance to Clew Bay, lies Clare Island, the residence of the ancient chieftainess of the County Mayo and its multitude of isles – Grana Uaile. One square and strong tower yet remains of her stronghold on the island shore.

Irish Pictures, drawn with pen and pencil by Richard Lovett, M.A., p. 176 (published by Religious Tract Society, Paternoster Row and Picadilly, London, 1888).

Westport, like other towns on this coast, is prepared on a somewhat ambitious scale for a prosperous future, which has not yet arrived. It is situated at the head of Westport Bay, an inlet of Clew Bay. It is certainly beautiful for situation, and hard by is the lovely park of the Marquis of Sligo. Beyond this is Westport Quay, with its warehouses and wharfs, but having nothing wherewith to fill them. To the south and west the prominent feature in every view is Croagh Patrick, the lofty conical mountain, whence according to tradition, St. Patrick finally cleared Ireland of reptiles. The mountain has long been the scene of pilgrimage. But in these days it is quite sufficient to rest its claims upon purely natural features. The view from the summit, almost 2,500 feet high, embraces a glorious prospect over Achill Island to the Donegal Highlands, over the whole expanse of Clew Bay with its thousand islets, and over mountain regions of Connemara.

Pleasant Places, by George A. Birmingham (Canon Hannay, Rector of Westport), pp 96-8 (1934).

Westport is a small country town, situated in the extreme west of County Mayo, the most desolate and backward county in the whole of Ireland... An Irish country town is usually a higgledy-piggledy affair, sordid and mean, built without any idea of making the most of the site, which is often beautiful. Westport, alone of Irish towns known to me, was planned, and planned with a certain feeling for dignity and beauty. Originally, I believe, the chief part of the town was beside the quay, where ships and boats lay in the tidal harbour. The houses straggled inland and the church stood half a mile east of the quay. Then it occurred to the Marquess of Sligo – all this was very long ago – to divide the town into two parts. The warehouses at the quay remained. The rest of the town was removed inland. He built the present town in a pleasant and spacious fashion. The principal street is wide and straight, ending in the gates of the demesne. Down the middle of the street runs the river, with low walls on its banks. On each side of it is a carriage road with footpaths for pedestrians. The houses were built in the dignified Georgian fashion.

I do not suppose that the town would be admired by the architects of our garden cities, but it is a very early example of the town-planning which has become fashionable of late... The Church of Ireland church was quite modern, being, I believe, the last church erected by the ecclesiastical commissioners, before disestablishment. They achieved a more graceful spire than was usual in their work. But the church itself was uninteresting and unattractive, except for the beautiful mural decorations put up from time to time by the Sligo family. These were, I think, unique. The walls of the church between the windows were covered with large pictures, cut on white marble, the lines being filled in with hard black

cement. The whole background was gilt. There was also some modern carving done by the same artist who carved the grotesque figures on the exterior of Kildare Street Club, in Dublin.

The rectory was a very gracious house, situated on a hill, with a broad lawn in front of it and a winding drive leading up to the door. It was built in 1798 and had the dignified proportions of the Georgian work of those days.

Notes from U.C.D. – As regards the work of Castles outside Dublin, note that a fairly comprehensive list of houses designed by him was contained in a paper read by Thomas U. Sadleir before The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland on March 28th 1910, *vide Journal* Vol. XII Consec. series (Vol. 1 Sixth Series) on Richard Castles, Architect.

Notes

Much of the research done in this work was carried out in the archives and library of Westport House, and I am deeply indebted and grateful to the Honourable Denis Browne, tenth Marquess, who has supplied and verified a great deal of information which enabled me to write this thesis.

1. O'Donovan, John (ed.), *Annals of the Four Masters* (1851), v, p.1803.
2. See Sligo, the Marquess of, *Westport House and the Brownes* (1981), p. 12, where the date is given as 1680. – Editor.
3. This picture (see photograph on page 48) is now on one side of the marble staircase. It was painted by George Moore in 1760, and is reproduced in *Cathair na Mart*, vol. i, no. 1. – Editor.
4. p. 98, 1891 edition.
5. London, 1728.
6. This picture (see photograph on page 50) is now on one side of the marble staircase. It was painted by George Moore in 1760. – Editor.
7. He was a French Huguenot who came to Ireland from Rotterdam 1750.
8. This plan was by Thomas Ivory, and can be seen in Girouard, Mark, 'Westport House, Co. Mayo, Ireland – 1', *Country Life*, 29 April 1965. – Editor.
9. This house is now occupied by Michael Browne, Solicitor, and his family. – Editor.
10. Curwen, J.C. *Observations on the State of Ireland, principally directed to its Agriculture and Rural Population; in a series of letters, written on a tour through that country.*

Brendan Jeffers, architect, is a member of the well-known Westport family who were proprietors of the Railway Hotel for many years. This article is the remainder of the thesis he presented for the Royal Institute of British Architects final examination in 1955.

His Excellency the Marquis of Anglesey, Lord Lieutenant and General Governor of Ireland, visits Westport, April 1831

Contributed by Sheila Mulloy

Henry William Paget, first Marquis of Anglesey (1768-1854), was the eldest son of the earl of Uxbridge. He had a distinguished military career, having served in Flanders, Holland and Portugal.

Having succeeded as earl of Uxbridge in 1812, he was created marquis of Anglesey on 4 July 1815 in recognition of his services at Waterloo, where he was in command of the horse artillery and the cavalry. Wounded in the knee at the battle, he had later to have his leg amputated. 'The limb was buried in a garden in the village of Waterloo; a monument was placed over it, and it is still a source of income to the proprietor'.¹ Promoted to Master-general of the ordnance from April 1827 to January 1828, he then succeeded Wellington as Lord-lieutenant in Ireland, which office he held until March 1829. A supporter of Catholic Emancipation he became 'very popular in Ireland, and the day of his departure was kept as a day of mourning in Dublin'.²

Lord-lieutenant once more from 1830 to 1833, he found himself at loggerheads with Daniel O'Connell, and stated 'Things are now come to that pass that the question is whether he or I shall govern Ireland'.³ Promoted field-marshal in 1846, he was once more Master-general of the ordnance from then until 1852. He died in 1854.

J. M. Callwell, a member of the Martin family of Ross, Co. Galway, recounts the following amusing memory of Lord Anglesey's tour through the west of Ireland as Lord-lieutenant. He spent a night in Ross when the writer was a child:

He carried amongst his baggage an assortment of cork legs, suitable for various occasions, and whilst the company were assembled downstairs at dinner his valet treated the servants to a private view of them. I was taken to the exhibition by my nurse, and I remember that there was one leg in ordinary morning attire, another booted and spurred for riding – the leg which was clad in evening array he was wearing at that moment.⁴

That most loyal organ the *Mayo Constitution* has the following account of the lord-lieutenant's arrival at Westport to an enthusiastic welcome from the local populace, together with the address from his 'most devoted servants', and His Excellency's gracious reply thereto.

Arrival of His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant at Westport⁵

The town of Westport presented a scene of unusual gaiety and animation on Wednesday last, in consequence of the expected visit of our illustrious and beloved Viceroy – The splendour and variety of the banners and devices which waved from every elevated part of the town – the rich festooning of the triumphal arches of laurel and evergreen – and the gorgeous floating of silken drapery which met the eye at every turn, impressed the beholder with surprise and admiration, and we almost fancied ourselves transported to the regions of fairy-land, or amidst a splendid pageant of the olden days of chivalry and romance.

At an early hour the Marquess of Sligo and a party of the mounted constabulary under the command of Messrs. Jones and Lewis, set out for Delphi Lodge, the romantic residence of Stepney St. George, Esq., where his Excellency had passed the previous night, and about 12 o'clock the High Sheriff, Charles N. Knox, Esq. and a numerous body of the most respectable inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, proceeded from Robinson's Hotel to meet his Excellency. In order to prevent confusion no vehicles of any description were allowed, save that in which the High Sheriff and Colonel Jackson were. – Each horseman carried a banner of parti-coloured silk, or a white one with some appropriate and complimentary motto – the horses' heads were also decorated with silken bows and streamers, and as the procession moved along the principal streets, headed by the band of the 66th Regt. its appearance was peculiarly brilliant and striking.

About two miles from the town, the procession halted, and after some minutes of anxious suspense the loud and enthusiastic cheers of the peasantry, and the roar of the cannon which were planted on the hills along the line of the route, announced the approach of his Excellency. Shortly afterwards the state carriage of the Marquis of Sligo drawn by four beautiful greys, was seen slowly advancing, and when it had reached the eminence on which the procession was stationed, a simultaneous burst of acclamation, and waving of hats and banners greeted the representative of a patriot King. The procession then filed off three abreast, and preceded the noble party, who soon afterwards quitted the carriage and mounted their horses. His Excellency wore a plain suit with the ribbon and star of the Order of the Garter, and the Cross of the Order of St. Patrick, and looked extremely well. – The Marquis of Sligo rode by his side, and he was followed by his two aides-de-camp, Captains Paget and Williams, in field officers' uniform.

As the brilliant cavalcade approached the town, its progress became considerably slower – the roads and adjoining fields were covered with the immense multitudes who thronged around their illustrious visitor, and it would indeed be impossible for us to convey an adequate idea of the enthusiasm which seemed to animate the bosoms of the assembled thousands – The loud roar of the cannon, and the tolling of the bells, which rang out a merry peal, were lost in the still louder and more exhilarating acclamations of warm-hearted and generous

people, and the tear which glistened in the eye of the Noble Marquess, (who declared his reception far exceeded anything he had hitherto experienced), attested the delight and gratification which this tribute of unbought and sincere attachment afforded him.

At the entrance of the town, his Excellency passed under a triumphal arch of laurel, decorated with mottos and flags of various hues, from the centre of which was suspended an immense wreath of laurel; and at the Barracks of the 61st Depot, which was very tastefully ornamented with banners and devices, the garrison was drawn up, and received his Excellency with presented arms, the band playing God save the King. In this manner the procession moved through the town, his Excellency repeatedly taking off his hat, and bowing in the most affable and condescending manner to the elegantly dressed females who filled the windows, waving scarfs and banners, while the loud shouts of congratulation and welcome continued without intermission. We cannot avoid noticing that amid the enthusiasm and delight which the presence of our illustrious Viceroy inspired, the Irish virtue of gratitude was not forgotten. – The name of the noble proprietor of the soil was frequently mingled with that of the "hero of Waterloo," and his Excellency was heard to observe, that much as he estimated the compliment paid himself, he felt still more gratitude at hearing the praises of a good landlord, from the lips and hearts of a grateful and attached tenantry.

After proceeding along the North Mall, the procession entered the demesne of the Marquis of Sligo by the grand entrance, which was very elegantly and tastefully decorated, as was also Westport-House, which displayed a variety of flags, with the Royal standard flying in the Centre. On alighting, the Lord Lieutenant was received by the Marquis and Marchioness of Sligo, the High Sheriff, Colonel Jackson, Sir Samuel O'Malley, several of the nobility and gentry, and a guard of honour of the 61st Foot. His Excellency then turned to the assembled multitude, and thanked them for the very cordial and flattering reception which he had met with, and for which he should ever feel most grateful. An address (which will be found in another place) was then presented to his Excellency by the Marquis of Sligo and several of the most respectable inhabitants of the town of Westport, to which he returned the answer annexed. The Rev. Messrs. Stoney and Hughes, etc. next presented him with an address from the inhabitants of Newport, to which he replied in a very handsome manner. After alluding to the distress, which he regretted to find, prevailed throughout the country to a considerable extent, he begged it to be distinctly understood that he did not come there for the purpose of affording any certain relief, but that he was urged to it by an anxious solicitude for the welfare of the people and in order that his representations to the government might be productive of some ulterior benefit. There were three distinct measures of relief, some of which in his opinion should be adopted, to remedy the existing distress, or probably a modification of all. – The first was to allow the peasantry a sufficient quantity of ground to supply themselves and their families with food – The

second, to provide them with sufficient and remunerative employment, or thirdly to introduce a compulsory measure of relief. His Excellency was listened to with the most profound attention during the delivery of this reply – He apologised from being unable from fatigue to receive the address of the inhabitants of Castlebar entrusted to Counsellor Bourke of Carrokeele, but appointed the following morning at twelve o'clock, at which hour the deputation was received by his Excellency.

We are gratified to add that throughout the entire day, notwithstanding the vast multitudes assembled to receive his Excellency, not the slightest accident occurred. Preparations were being made for illuminating the Town in a very handsome manner, but at his Excellency's request no rejoicings of this sort took place.

The following day a very numerous and distinguished party were invited to Westport House, to meet his Excellency, and yesterday morning the Noble Marquis and suite, consisting of Baron Twyth, Mr. Blake, the Chief Remembrancer, Sir James Anderson, his Excellency's physician, Captains Paget and Williams, Major Warburton, etc., etc., left Westport-House for Mount-Bellew, where the Viceregal party halted for the night, and this morning proceeded on their route to Dublin.

18 April 1831

The only accident that occurred on the day of his Excellency's arrival at Westport, was from the accidental explosion of some gun powder in firing off the guns, by which Mr. B. Collins was slightly injured.

Westport Address To His Excellency, The Marquis of Anglesey, Lord Lieutenant and General Governor of Ireland⁶

We, the Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders of the town and vicinity of Westport, request permission to offer you the expression of our warm attachment and our sincere gratification at your arrival amongst us.

As the Representative of our beloved and patriotic King, we could not entertain towards your Excellency, any other sentiments than those of extreme respect and duty.

We, however, feel particularly called upon on the present occasion, to lay before you the declaration of our feelings of affection and gratitude for your person, and the assurance and confidence we repose in the continued wise discharge of the powers that have been intrusted to you by our Gracious Sovereign.

We are truly grateful for the unceasing, unwearied and successful attention that has been paid by your Excellency to the internal affairs of Ireland – we remember that you were in your former Government, a warm advocate for one great measure, Constitutional amelioration – we now see you the willing and anxious organ of the Government, which is about to dispense another great and signal benefit on the land in general. We see you choosing, as the period of your visit, not a moment of pleasure or gratification, but one of severe distress, a selection which could only be prompted by the most benevolent feelings! We expect that some benefit to the starving population will

attend your Excellency's visit and personal inspection of their deplorable state, but we look forward to a much more general and lasting advantage, as being likely to arise from your Excellency's own individual observations, in the wise and patriotic measures which will, in consequence, emanate from your mind, and will lay the foundations of the future prosperity of this too long neglected Island. While we thus repose our feelings of well deserved affection, for your Excellency, in your public Character, as our viceroy, we do not forget that you are in your private station intimately connected with Ireland – we remember that in time of need you added to your own glory, and our safety by your exertions in the battle field. We now see you devoting with signal skill the resources of your mind to our advantage in time of peace.

We feel that in every point of view, we owe you the tribute of our sincere gratitude, and our present anxious wish, is, that we may long enjoy the blessings of your Administration, and that you may, in the consciousness of the benefits you have conferred on us, enjoy the happiness of which you are so deserving.

Your Excellency's most devoted Servants,

John Thompson	Sligo
W.G. Clarke	Geo. Taylor, C.E.
W.M. Patten	C.G. Higgins, Lieut. half pay.
John Pinkerton	Michael O'Malley
Peter Browne, J. P.	John McAndrew
W. Graham, Jun.	P. Kelly, Apothecary
W. Graham, Sen.	Robert Patten, J.P.
Charles O'Hara	Stephney St. George, J.P.
Daniel Hegarty	George Mahon
Myles Gibbons	A. Clendining, J.P.
J. Dillon, M.D.	Fitzgerald Higgins, J.P.
T. Lowell	M. Macdonnell, J.P.
Luke Byrne	J.D. Browne, J.P.
Thomas W. Reed	W. Parker
W. Fitzgerald	Richard Levingston
Joseph Burke, J.P.	Samuel Smyth
Theobald Burke J.P.	J.C. Garvey, J. P.
Charles O'Malley	Wm. Levingston
Henry Magill	B. Burke, P.P. and V.G.
John Monsley	Richard Levingston, Jun.
J. Irwin, R.N.	Robert Ekins
Syl. Jones	Wm. Bermingham
Michael Brenan	Henry Hildebrand
Martin Gallagher	William Dudgeon
James Conway	George Sinclair
John Hegarty	William Wilks
W. Robinson	James Gibbons
John Regan	Michael Toole
W. McMyler	John Gibbons
John Wynn	Samuel Larminie
Francis Burke	Charles Larminie
P. Fitzmaurice, R.C.C.	T. Jones, Curate of Westport

Thomas McCaffrey, R.C.C.
John Canavan, R.C.C.
John McArdle
James Lavell
G. Woods
Joseph Kelly
Timothy Kelly
Peter Lynch
J. Taylor, J. P.
Jas. Taylor, N.P.

James White, Clk.
Michael Carney
Walter Walsh
John Hoban
Richard Gibbons
P. Joyce, R.C.C.
George Hildebrand
J. W. Armstrong
Joseph Zuche
W.B. Collins

Reply

The Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders of the Town and neighbourhood of Westport, have my warmest thanks, for the kind and cordial manner in which they receive me among them.

The greatest happiness of our Gracious King, is to promote that of his people, and to none is his Majesty, more attached than to his Irish subjects.

Personally, I am bound to Ireland by a strong and grateful sense of the confidence and affection which I experience from her, and it is, therefore, only by labouring for her good that I can fulfil the wishes of my Sovereign, and conform to the dictates of my heart.

I am from day to day more persuaded of the wisdom and justice of the great act of Emancipation, and support the measure of Reform, as I did it, from a deep conviction that it is essential to the concord of the Empire, and the strength of the State.

I deplore most particularly, the distress which prevails in particular districts, and in conjunction with those whom I address, no efforts of mine shall be wanting to effect every possible relief for the poor, and to improve the general condition of the Country.

Notes

1. *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. xv (1909).
2. Ibid. Daniel O'Connell wrote 'The people are heartsore for the loss of the brave and gay and good Anglesey' (*The Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, ed. Maurice R. O'Connell, 8 vols. (Dublin 1972-9), 1544 as quoted by Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Great Dan* (1986), p. 160). He fell out with Anglesey on his return as Lord-lieutenant because of the latter's opposition to repeal.
3. *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. xv (1909).
4. *Old Irish Life* (1912), p. 278. Callwell has the following account of the losing of the leg on p.277 of the same book:
As he [Anglesey] rode over the field by the Iron Duke's side near the close of the day, a spent cannon-ball carried away his leg at the thigh.
"By G—! sir, I've lost my leg!" he exclaimed.
"By G—! have you, sir?" responded the Duke, who was probably too much preoccupied at that critical moment to take in the full extent of the calamity that had befallen his comrade-in-arms.
5. *Mayo Constitution*, Thursday, 14 April 1831.
6. Ibid.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement

By Patrick Shanley

The following personal experience may be of interest.

In September 1986 a series of lectures under the heading 'Ulster American relations 1600-1800' was held in County Clare and Trinity College Dublin, organized by the St. Brendan's Association Clare under the auspices of the American Embassy and the Department of External Affairs, which the writer attended at Trinity College Dublin. There was an opening banquet on the Saturday evening preceding the first lecture, and this gave an opportunity to acquaint oneself with the persons attending and the various officials who were in charge of arrangements. There was no serious discussion at this gathering, and the first meeting was to take place on either the following Sunday or Monday, when we would be addressed in the first of a series of lectures on different aspects of the relationship between Ulster and America over the period concerned.

I proceeded to Trinity College the morning of the lecture in good time, and first went to the Porter's Lodge to find out in which room the lecture was taking place. There was a man standing square in the entrance to the Porter's Room, and by his looks and style of dress an American. I could not pass in or out while he stood there and I said to him 'I thought you Americans knew how to make up your minds. Are you going in or out?'

He said with a twinkle in his eye 'I am half Irish, does that explain it?'

'Are you going in or out?'

He said 'I am going in' and I asked him to please do so. Whatever he was enquiring about was not on that day, and on an impulse I said to him 'I am going to a lecture on Ulster American Relations; would you like to come with me seeing that your own lecture is not taking place?'

He said 'Can you do that sort of thing?'

I said 'Yes, you will find that all doors will open before you on the good Irish principle of kicking down any door you meet.'

He followed me without a word and we went right into the lecture hall to which we had been directed. There was nobody there except one of the officers who had been pointed out to me the previous evening. I told him how I had come to meet this American in the Hall and the circumstances, and asked was it in order for me to bring him along. He said it was and began to ask my new

friend about his experiences. The American was very interesting. He had gone into Japan with McArthur after going through practically the whole naval campaign, and he knew all about the system in Japan following the surrender of that country and had worked under McArthur in getting the system going. As is well known Japan was rapidly appropriated into the Western system of defence and this man had several interesting details to relate as to the system so developed.

The official then turned to me and said 'Now, Mr. Shanley, have you any adventures to relate?'

I replied 'The nearest I came to Japan was when I did the trans-Siberian journey, and then took a Russian ship through the sea of Japan and then into the China seas on the way to Hong Kong. You don't go into Vladivostok nowadays but into a town north of it called Naxodka.'

At which point the American interrupted me and said, 'That's the difference between our country and theirs; you can go anywhere with us.'

This was manifestly so untrue that I felt I should hardly be called upon to answer. I contented myself with saying 'I am sure you have many places in your country which one cannot go into.'

He said 'name one'.

I considered this remark so idiotic that I merely observed, half jokingly, 'Fort Knox'.

He said 'You know that is a joke.'

'May be, but I didn't come here to argue the cold war with you. You can have your views on that but leave me mine.'

The official became manifestly uneasy at the turn the conversation was taking. He was playing the part of a public relations officer and he wanted to keep the temperature low.

He said 'Mr. Shanley, you appear to know quite a bit about these matters, would you move the vote of thanks here to-day?'

'Certainly.'

'Would you please move up to the front?'

The lecture hall was now beginning to fill up. I turned to the American and said, 'If I had not met you, I would not now be going to move the vote of thanks, so come up to the front with me. This is part of our common destiny.'

He said, 'I believe that too.'

The two of us moved up to the front of the lecture hall. The lecturer came on and the lecture began. He was an expert in this field. Over the period we were discussing, about two hundred thousand people had emigrated to America from Ulster. These Scots-Irish, generally Presbyterians, were seeking religious

freedom, as Ulster at that time was governed by the landlord class in combination with the established Protestant Church. When the War of Independence broke out, they took part in it, and in their opposition to England they were among the most determined of Washington's supporters.

One of them in particular, John Hancock, was Secretary of the Continental Congress and he is credited with preparing the first draft of the American Constitution, though its final form was probably given by Jefferson. To-day the Hancock Centre in Boston, one of the most commanding buildings in the town, is dedicated to his memory.

The writer was then called on to move the vote of thanks. I began by thanking the lecturer for his informative lecture and observed that the Scots-Irish were regarded as the back-bone of Washington's Army. We must never forget that that war was fought under the slogan 'No Taxation without Representation.' The Americans refused to pay taxes imposed by the British Parliament in connection with the recent British War against France, on the grounds that they had no representation in the British Parliament. And let us remember that in the Anglo-Irish Agreement we have followed the British example in this. The Unionists were not represented; this was a diktat imposed on them. Remember also, that in the period about which we are speaking, Presbyterians were the leaders of the 1798 Rising in this country and for the same reasons. Henry Joy McCracken was hanged for his Presbyterian beliefs as much as for his Irish nationality, but, above all he died for freedom.

These words were received with some thing less than indifference by the audience, but when the speaker came down to the floor he came to me and shook my hand. As for the American we said good-bye at the gates of Trinity College and I never saw him again.

Patrick Shanley, B.A., now living in Westport, was a consultant in the Trimbole Extradition Case. He was the first secretary and a founder member of the Central Branch of Fine Gael, and a former member of the National Executive of Fine Gael.

The Catkin Flower

The Catkin flower blew into my hand,
The Cuckoo began to shout above the clatter of the train
And, once again, as one to whom life is hired out, I tried to understand.

But come again against impossibility
A dusty speck in a starry cloud?
Indeed; an old story, but better than a fancied greatness.

There is nothing small in seeing things so
The greatness of life we sadly learn by living.

I can blow away this flower as if it were nothing
But life itself – that is not nothing
It is – it is there, it is something.

The Catkin flower is higher than any prophecy.
He who breaks it quietly becomes something other.
If it is not given us to change all at once to what we want
When we change ourselves the world changes.

And we go out to something different
Far, far away to other lands as yet unknown.
Unnoticed is that strange rocking
As we cast off for other waters on other ships.

And when heaves up that strange new moorings
In other dawns than the ones we knew
Sweet comrade, Do not despair!
Believe in that unknown, that frightening, shore
The friends that do not understand, even betray, forgive.

Understand, forgive even, the beloved who has fallen out of loving
Like the Catkin flower let her fall from your hand.
And that new shore, if it stales, leave.

Your calling is the unbounded farthest world
Break with the thread that has become a chain.
Again set out and even if it's sorrow.
The unexplainable has its sense.

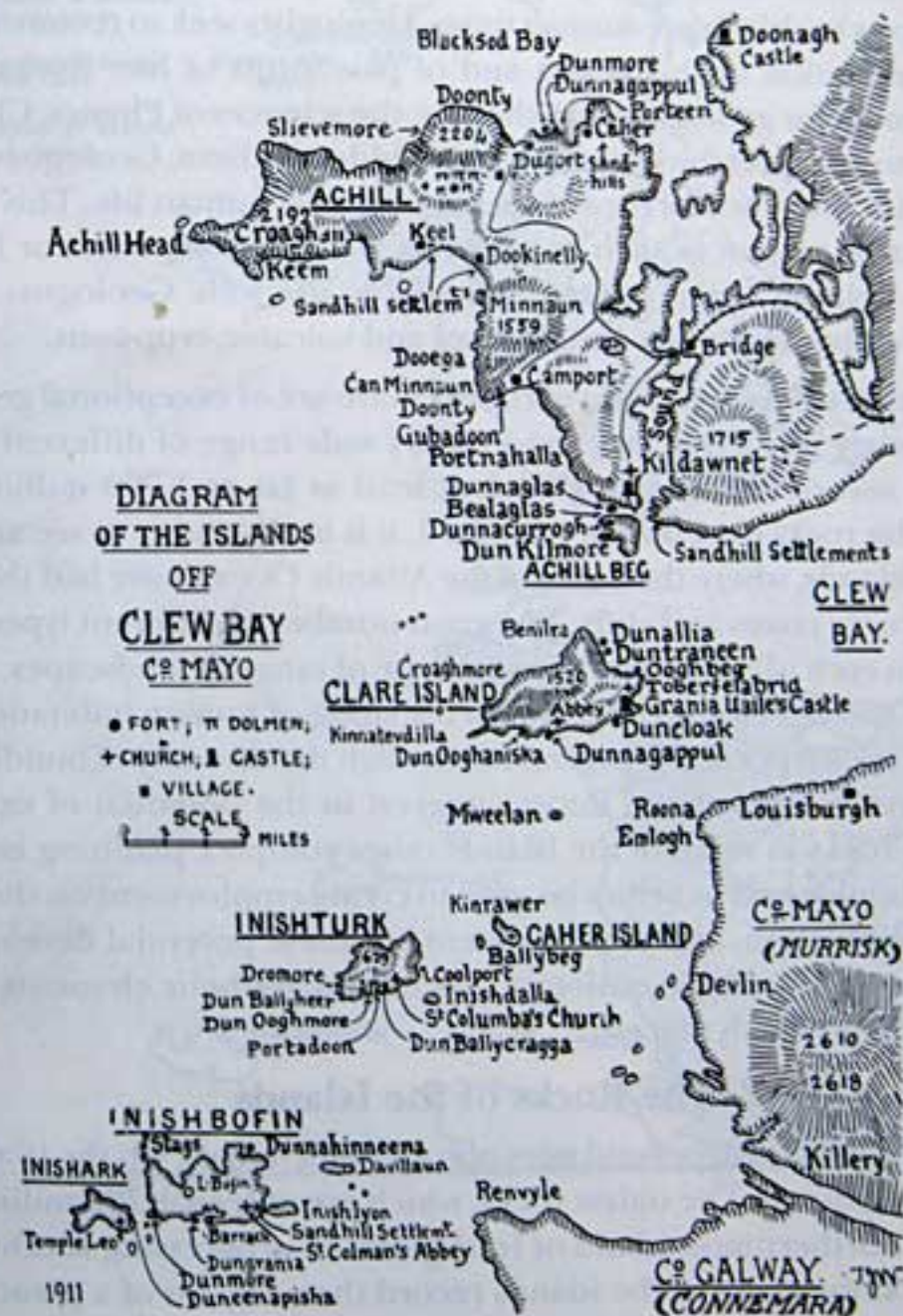
The values change but this is nothing.
Life itself is the prize, it neither falls nor rises
A value unchangeable for that which is beyond all value.

And why all this? because that mad Cuckoo cry
Has foretold me long life and fortune!
But why again: Because that Catkin flower lies in my hand
And, trembling, lives.

From the Russian of Evgeny Evtushenko by Patrick Shanley.

The following papers were delivered on 7, 8 and 9 April 1989 in the Westport Ryan Hotel.

Westport Historical Society
Fourth School of History
OUR WESTERN ISLANDS
THEIR PAST, PRESENT AND
FUTURE



The Rocks of the Mayo Islands

By Adrian Phillips

1. Introduction

History and archaeology are concerned with reconstructing and explaining things that have happened to human beings in the past. Human remains and artifacts such as manuscripts, buildings, tools and utensils are the raw materials upon which historians and archaeologists work. Geology is a natural extension of these subjects back into pre-human times. Geologists seek to reconstruct and explain the evolution of this planet and of past forms of life. Rocks are the historical records for geologists; and they use the sciences of Physics, Chemistry and Biology, to interpret the history which is hidden in them. Geologists are also concerned with the practical uses of rocks to support human life. This involves locating valuable resources such as minerals, oil, gas, coal, water or building materials; or helping to understand how best to use soils. Geologists are also involved in helping to predict earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

The islands off the west coast of county Mayo are of exceptional geological interest. They are formed of an extraordinary wide range of different types of rocks, which record history going back at least as far as 1,700 million years. Though similar rocks exist on the mainland, it is much easier to see and study them on the islands, where the waves of the Atlantic Ocean have laid them bare of soil along rocky coasts and cliffs. The great number of different types of rock has resulted in each island having a unique type of range of landscapes, and this of course has had a profound effect upon the siting of human habitations. The wide range of rock types is also expressed through the diversity of buildings and monuments made from them. Recent interest in the potential of exploiting minerals and rocks in some of the islands raises complex planning issues. To what extent should these activities be used to create employment on the islands and stem depopulation, and to what extent are these potential developments incompatible with the fragile ecological, social and aesthetic elements of these both beautiful and harsh places?

2. The Rocks of the Islands

Figure 1 shows the types and ages of rocks which make up the islands and the adjacent mainland. The oldest rocks, which are at least 1,700 million years old, form the northernmost island of Inishglora. In progressing southwards as far as Inishturk, the rocks of the islands record the progress of a great cycle of Earth history involving the breaking up of an ancient continent, the opening of

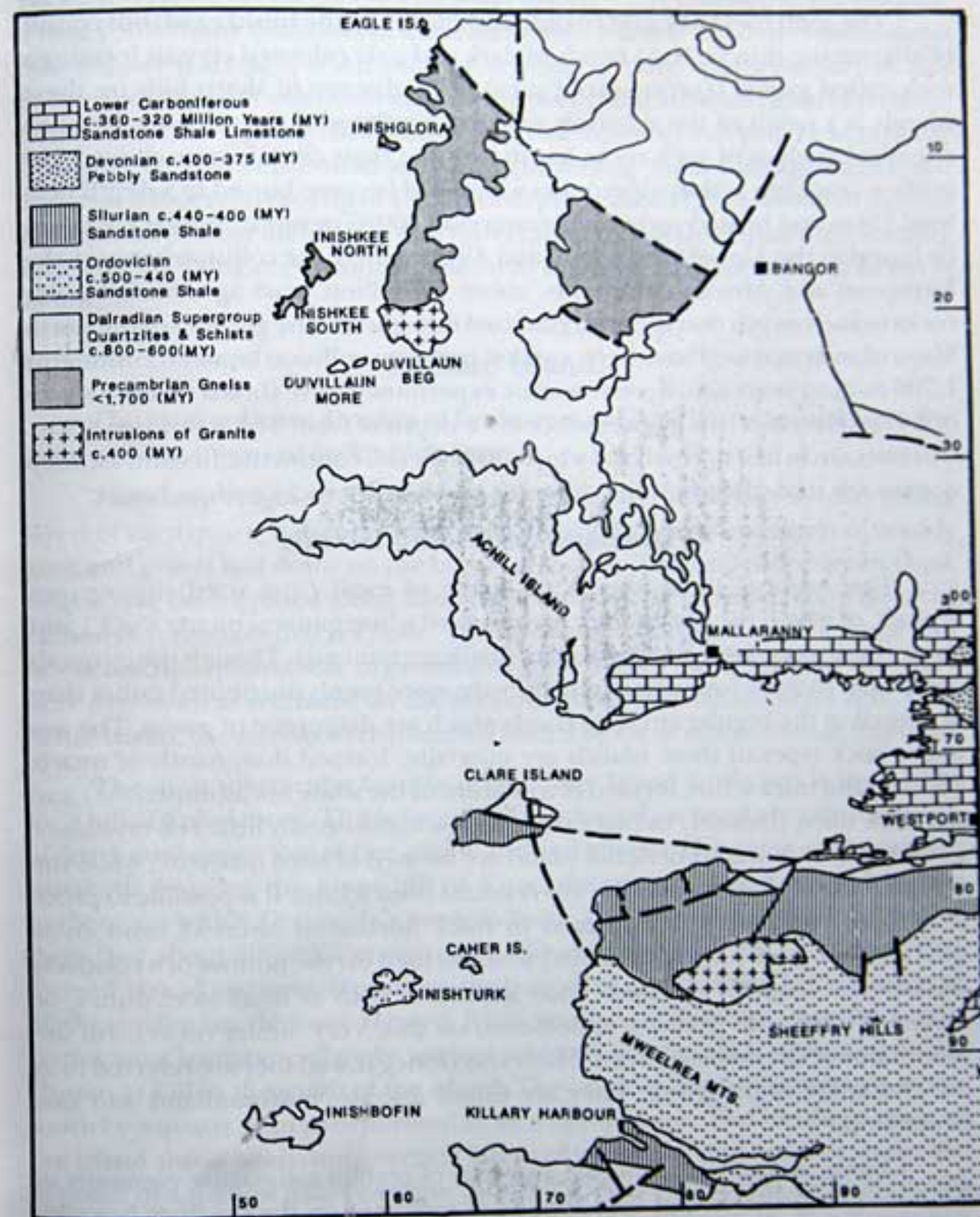


Fig. 1 showing types and ages of rocks which make up the islands and the adjacent mainland.

an ocean, followed by its closure and the collision between its bounding land masses. It is natural then to start with the northern islands.

3. Islands West of the Mullet Peninsula

The solid rocks of Eagle Island, Inishglora and the Inishkea islands consist of alternating thin (c.1cm) bands of dark and pale coloured crystals forming a rock called gneiss ((pronounced nice). The absence of sharp hills on these islands is a result of the relatively uniform hardness of the gneisses. Detailed chemical analysis of such rocks has shown that their crystals grew about 1,700 million years ago within older rocks which had become buried to a depth of at least 15km and heated up to temperatures of 600°C or more. Similar rocks can be found in the Alps of Switzerland and Austria where the collision between the European and African continents, about 40 million years ago, buried older rocks to such depth that they recrystallised into gneiss. The gneisses of the north Mayo islands may well have been created by such a collision between continents 1,700 million years ago. Recent seismic experiments have shown that the whole of Ireland is underlain by gneisses below a depth of from 3-5km down to 30km. Gneisses are in fact the material which underlies all continents. In contrast deep oceans are underlain by quite different and heavier rocks such as basalt.

4. Duvilaun and Achill Islands

The rocks of these islands are made of small (mm sized) intergrown crystals, of which the commonest are the hard white mineral quartz (SiO_2) and the soft shiny crystal platelets of mica (a silicate mineral). Though the minerals are similar to those found in gneiss, they are more evenly distributed rather than arranged in the regular cm scale bands which are diagnostic of gneiss. The two major rock types of these islands are quartzite, formed dominantly of quartz crystals, and mica schist, formed of a mixture of the white mica (muscovite) and the dark mica (biotite). In places the mica schists contain little red crystals of garnet. The mountains of Achill island are formed of hard quartzite, while the lower areas are underlain by the less resistant mica schists. It is possible to prove that these rocks were first formed in thick horizontal layers of sand (now quartzite) or mud (now mica schist) which settled on the bottom of a relatively shallow sea. Many of the rocks show structures such as small sand dunes, or channels filled with pebbles, to demonstrate this. Very similar rocks form the mountains of Connemara, north Mayo and Donegal, and they are referred to as the Dalradian Supergroup. They are found also in Newfoundland and east Greenland.

Chemical Analysis of minute amounts of certain radioactive elements in these rocks has shown that they formed as sediment on the sea floor between about 800 and 600 million years ago. These sediments formed the bed of an ocean which split open the older continent formed of gneisses such as those of north Mayo. The original layering of sands and muds on the sea floor was horizontal. Now the layers of quartzite and schist are often vertical and they show

complicated folds varying from a metre across to a scale of tens of kilometres. The very thinly banded quartzite which is being quarried at Kildownet in southern Achill, was formed by intense flowage at the base of a great mass of rocks, several kilometres thick, which was driven many kilometres northwards. These contortions and zones of movement were formed by compression about 500 million years ago, when rock underlying a more southerly part of this ancient ocean was driven downwards to the north beneath this region of Ireland. Some of the downgoing rock melted and rose upwards carrying heat into the overlying compressed Dalradian rocks, converting them into quartzites and schists at temperatures of up to 450°C at a depth of about 12km. Towards the end of these earth movements, hot water precipitated crystals of quartz containing impurities of manganese oxides (Amethyst) in fractured quartzite near Keem in Achill.

5. Clare Island

The extraordinary diversity of landscapes in Clare Island results from the many different types of rock which form it.

The sharp ridges of northern Clare Island are underlain by alternating layers of hard quartz rich rocks which were originally horizontal layers of muddy sand and gravel laid down on the bed of an ocean. The hollows between these ridges have been eroded along bands of soft shaley rock formed from layers of carbon rich mud on that sea floor. The remains of a large siliceous sponge and of microscopic planktonic organisms in these shaley rocks indicate that they were deposited as sediment on the sea floor about 500 million years ago. As in Achill Island, these rocks were intensely folded by earth movements at this time.

The most spectacular feature of the Clare Island landscape is the 1300ft high hill of Knockmore. This is formed of southward inclined alternating layers of hard sandstones and softer green and red shales. The same rocks extend eastwards forming the lower hill of Knocknaveen and the headland by the harbour on which Granuaile's castle is built. The fossil remains of fish scales show that about 420 million years ago (Silurian Period), the rocks were first formed as mud and sand deposits on the bottom of a shallow sea. The oldest layer of these Silurian deposits formed from an ancient boulder covered beach resting on a landscape of more ancient schists. This contact is seen close to the church at Kill in the south of the island. The boulder deposit is overlain to the south by a quartz sandstone formed from a sandy beach. The southern coast of the island shows alternating vertical layers of sandstone and reddish shale, the deposits of a shallow tidal coastline. Silurian rocks in Ireland as a whole record the existence of a major ocean bounded in SE Ireland by the European continent and in Mayo by a continent which included north America. The Silurian rocks of Clare Island provide a unique record of the history of this ancient shoreline of north America. The tilting up of the once horizontal layering of the Clare Island Silurian rocks was caused by the collision between

the N. American and European continents about 400 million years ago. These earth movements also caused blocks of the continents to move sideways along great fault planes. A similar process goes on today in California.

The steep northern slopes of the hills of Knockmore and the Silurian rocks of southern Clare Island were moved about 160 kilometres eastwards relative to the northern part of the island. This fracturing allowed partly molten rock to rise from a depth of several hundred kilometres to fill opening cracks in the Silurian rocks. These 'igneous rocks' have unusual compositions and some of them are similar to kimberlite, a rock which sometimes contains diamonds. Though there is no likelihood of diamonds being found on Clare Island, one of the other igneous rocks formed at this time is of practical value. It consists of a large mass of talc rich serpentinite near the SE coast of the island. This soft rock was used for sculpture in the Cistercian Abbey on the Island.

The much flatter landscape of eastern Clare Island is the result of erosion of flat lying layers of red and white quartz rich sandstone and red, green or grey mudstones. The mudstones contain numerous fossil remains of plants and trees of a sort which are well known in eastern Canada but unusual in European rocks of this age (c.330 million years old). At the time that these 'Lower Carboniferous' aged rocks were formed, there was no Atlantic Ocean between Ireland and Canada. The rocks represent deposits of rivers which buried the older folded rocks of northern Clare Island in a large valley along the present site of Clew Bay. The sandstones provide ideal building materials for walls of houses and fields.

6. Caher Island and Inishturk

The smoother but craggy landscapes of Caher Island and Inishturk have been produced by the erosion of vertical layers of green coloured sandstones and slatey rocks. These were originally horizontal layers of sand and volcanic ash mixed with mud, which were deposited from time to time on the muddy bottom of an ocean. These rocks are older than the Silurian ones on Clare Island. They are part of the major unit of 500-450 million years old 'Ordovician Period' rocks which form the Sheaffry Mountains and Mweelrea Mountain in south Mayo. The layering of the rocks was pushed into a vertical attitude by earth movements largely related to the continental collision 400 million years ago. At this time molten 'igneous' rock was injected into these rocks and the accompanying hot fluids introduced some gold.

7. Inishbofin

The low gnarled landscape of Inishbofin has been created by the erosion of Dalradian aged mica schists similar to those seen in southern Achill island. To the east, these rocks are also found in northern Connemara. The higher ridges are formed from quartz rich bands which often show a very complicated pattern of folding produced by earth movements some 500 million years ago. Along the southwest coast of the island there is a large mass of soapstone. This is a very soft rock, largely made of the mineral talc, which crystallised from a magnesium rich

molten rock which was injected into a major fracture system. The soapstone is an attractive material for making small pieces of sculpture.

The Dalradian rocks of Inishbofin and Connemara moved, about 450 million years ago, to their present position south of Inishturk from an area many hundreds of kilometres to the west. This movement caused some early compression of the Ordovician rocks of Inishturk and Caher Island.

8. Conclusions

Most of central Ireland is underlain by relatively flat lying limestones (Lower Carboniferous) which are younger than any of the rocks of the Mayo islands. The uplifting of the mountains of Mayo and their erosion, which allows us to see older rocks in them and in the islands, is a very recent event dating from about 20 million years ago. The uplift took place during the movement of Europe away from N. America and the opening of the Atlantic Ocean. Within the next 100 million years the heavy newly formed basaltic rocks beneath the Atlantic Ocean are likely to sink beneath the lighter continental crust of Ireland. This will convert the west of Ireland into a landscape comparable to that of the Andes mountains in S. America, with active volcanoes and rising high mountains shaken by severe earthquakes. The rocks of the islands show that this will merely repeat what happened in Mayo 500 million years ago. There may well have been at least five or six comparable cycles since the planet formed about 4,500 million years ago.

9. Suggestions for further reading

The Hamlyn Guide to Minerals, Rocks and Fossils, (5th edition 1989) by W. R. Hamilton, A. R. Wooley and A. C. Bishop.

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The Natural History of our Western Islands

By Tony Whilde

Offshore islands are places of mystery, beauty, excitement, solitude and freedom and, as Lloyd Praeger observed in his introduction to the Clare Island Survey, 'islands and their animal and plant inhabitants have a special interest for the naturalist' (Praeger, 1915). If anything, I think he was understating the case, because in my experience offshore islands have a *near fatal* attraction for naturalists. Those of us who are tempted to visit them are often faced with rough sea crossing, treacherous transfers in small boats, difficulties in getting ourselves and our equipment onto and off the islands, the discomforts of camping on rough, wet and windswept ground, the remoteness of emergency services in the event of accidents and the problems of working at night or in the winter. But don't for one minute think that this litany of misery is meant to elicit your sympathy. Far from it. We do it all for 'fun'! And there's plenty of scope for fun off the west coast of Mayo, where there are fifty islands and many more accessible rocks to visit.

The History

The dangers of visiting offshore islands pale into significance when compared with the dangers for an ecologist wandering into the territory of archaeologists and historians. The sub-title of the conference – 'their past, present and future' – immediately put my head into a spin, for several reasons. Firstly, unlike human history which, at this stage, is fairly well defined in time and space, the natural history of plants and animals which inhabit our islands may, literally, stretch back hundreds of millions of years and to times when the island of Ireland, as we know it, was just a twinkle in the eye of Mother Nature. So, when do we begin our story?

Secondly, naturalists have the greatest difficulty in finding out anything about the history of wildlife at any given location. Direct evidence in the form of remains is scant for most plants and animals, and even from historic times there are few reliable, let alone comprehensive, documentary accounts of our flora and fauna. Giraldus Cambrensis, who toured Ireland in the late 12th Century, provided us with an early account of some of our wildlife, but many of his observations must be taken with a large grain of salt! And, since we cannot tap into the folklore of otters, oystercatchers or sea pinks – sealed, as it is, in their genes – the detailed history of individual species of plants and animals is largely a closed book to us. Certainly, the fossil record has provided us with a broad view of evolution and development of our flora and fauna, but generally it does not



Fourth School of History, April 1989 (from left to right, back): Prof. Michael Healy, Professor Adrian Phillips, Denis Gallagher T.D.; (from left to right, front) Kitty O'Malley Harlow, Secretary W.H.S., Dr. Sheila Mulloy, Dr. Tony Whilde, Dr. Stephen Royle.

have any immediate relevance to the current natural history of our islands.

Therefore, I've selected just two periods in the history of our natural landscape to mention briefly, before we take a look at what is out there on our offshore islands these days. Firstly, I have chosen the post-glacial period from 10,000 to 7,000 B.P. to illustrate some of the biological history of our islands. Then, to add a human touch to the story, I will discuss the Clare Island Survey which reports on a brief but significant period in natural history research in Ireland in the early years of this century.

Today's landscape is young in geological terms, and has been moulded by natural processes and by man during the 10,000 years or so since the last glacial period gave way to milder conditions. Fortunately, we can find evidence of earlier post-glacial landscapes in the bogs and lakes of Ireland, and this is just as true for offshore islands as for the mainland though, to date, our islands have received little attention. However, we are lucky that the vegetation history of Clare Island has been the subject of a study by Dr. Peter Coxon (Coxon, 1987) of Trinity College, who has determined what at least part of the Clare Island landscape would have looked like during the 7,000 years after the retreat of the last glaciers – that is to say between about 10,000 B.P. and 3,000 B.P.

Peter Coxon and his colleagues used pollen analysis to reconstruct the general vegetation history of Clare Island. This widely used technique, which involves the microscopic examination of pollen grains long preserved in acid peat or lake sediments, is simple in principle, tedious in practice and produces results which require expert interpretation.

The results of the pollen analysis for Clare Island are similar in many ways to those recorded elsewhere on the mainland. They show that the earliest plant colonisers were grasses, sedges, crowberry (*Empetrum*) and dock (*Rumex*) which dominated the landscape from 10,200 to 10,000 B.P. These were followed by juniper (*Juniperus*) and willow (*Salix*) which peaked between 10,000 and 9,000 B.P. Then as the climate improved, hazel (*Corylus*) appeared and expanded its range between 9,000 and 8,500 B.P. – creating a landscape perhaps somewhat similar to parts of the Burren today. Alder (*Alnus*) appeared between 7,500 and 6,500 B.P. along with elm (*Ulmus*). The alder continued in vegetation record, presumably living in the damp areas of the island, but elm declined around 5,000 years ago in the face of an enormous expansion of pine (*Pinus*) which dominated the landscape from 4,500 to 4,000 B.P. and remained a prominent but declining component of the vegetation for another thousand years – a period during which man's impact on the island was becoming evident! With the demise of the pine wood came the return of grasses, sedges, bog myrtle (*Myrica*), heaths, and the first sign of plants such as plantains (*Plantago*) which tend to indicate human activity. The remains of pine stumps exposed by turf cutting are poignant testimony to the last extensive areas of woodland to have existed on the island – about 4,000 years ago.

The extraordinarily painstaking work carried out by Dr. Coxon and his colleagues, has provided us with a general image of the landscape as it existed over a period of about 7,000 years since the last Ice Age. What it has not done, nor could it do, of course, is tell us what animals lived in and around the woods and moorlands of that time. Were the bird communities of the ancient hazel scrub the same as those we find in the Burren today? Which insects lived on the willow trees of 10,000 years ago? Which animals colonised Clare Island before it became an island 8-9,000 years ago and which were later introduced by man? Were there field mice (*Apodemus*) on Clare Island 7,000 years ago? We don't know answers to most of these questions and nor, I suppose, will we ever know. We can only speculate on the greater part of the history of our island fauna.

However, one thing we do know now is that man, more or less from the day he set foot on our main island, has greatly and rapidly modified the natural environment. We tend to think of modern man as the principal destroyer of our natural landscape, but this is not the case. Our contemporaries may be doing it faster, but they didn't start the process. In fact, the open, threadbare landscape that is Ireland today would have been recognisable 2,000 years ago. We have inherited a landscape of neglect and ruin. Not a square centimetre has escaped the hand or implement of man – and that includes every square centimetre of most of our island.

Bearing that in mind let us move on to the twentieth century and the Clare Island Survey. Historically and ecologically this was a very important survey, being one of the first comprehensive, integrated studies of its kind in the world. It serves as an historical biological baseline unsurpassed in these islands. The survey recorded 3,219 plant species, of which 585 were new to Ireland, 55 were previously unrecorded in Ireland and Britain and 11 (mostly algae and fungi) were new to science. Of the 5,269 animal species recorded, 1,253 were new to Ireland, 343 were previously unrecorded in Ireland and Britain and 109 were new to science.

The Clare Island Survey was first mooted in early 1908, and the first meeting of interested naturalists took place in the National Museum in Dublin on 13 April 1908. The chairman was R.F. Scharff, the secretary Robert Lloyd Praeger and the committee comprised R. M. Barrington, Nathaniel Colgan, Professor G. A. J. Cole and the Reverend Canon Lett.

The selection of Clare Island followed on a successful small scale survey of Lambay off the Dublin coast and was influenced by its suitable size, position and unusual elevation as compared with most of the western islands. Furthermore, it lay sufficiently far off the coast to raise interesting problems as to the immigration of its fauna and flora, but not so far as to introduce delay and expense to the working parties owing to precarious communication with the mainland; also it was possible on Clare Island to procure accommodation for working parties without outlay or building. With the kind permission of the Congested Districts Board, a large shed close to the harbour and a little hotel was fitted up as a laboratory (Praeger, 1915).

Things moved quickly and fieldwork commenced in spring 1909, and parties of 6 to 16 were set down at monthly intervals between April and September. In addition a large number of workers visited the island separately, and there was no month in the year during which observations of some kind were not carried out. Work was extended to nearby islands and the mainland, to ensure that a representative range of rock types and habitats was sampled, and the area covered extended from Killary Harbour in the south to Achill, and from Clare Island to Castlebar in the east. The mainland sites were centred on Achill Sound, Westport, Belclare and Louisburgh. The islands of Turk, Caher and Bofin were surveyed for archaeology, molluscs and flowering plants, and some of the outlying rocks such as Mweelaun and the Bills were also visited. Shore collecting was carried out around Clare Island, Clew Bay and at Achill Sound, and dredging was undertaken in nearshore waters from open boats and later with the aid of the fisheries steamer *Helga*.

More than one hundred people were involved in the survey, including volunteers from England, Scotland, Germany, Denmark and Switzerland. The organisation of the survey and the publication of the results within four years, are testimony to the enormous energy, commitment and determination of Praeger and, I believe, if he'd done nothing else in his career he would still have earned the enduring admiration and gratitude of biologists throughout Ireland. (Of course, Praeger's career flourished for four more decades and is admirably documented by Tim Collins – 1985). The Clare Island Survey reports were published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* between 1911 and 1915. Sixty seven out of the sixty eight planned reports were published – a remarkable achievement when it is considered that over forty different groups of animals were studied, as well as flowering plants, mosses, lichens, liverworts, seaweeds, geology, climate, agriculture, archaeology, placenames and the names of plants and animals. One of the longest reports – 188 pages – was written about some of the smallest animals, the single-celled Foraminifera which live in tiny shells and inhabit the inshore waters. The 'sand' in Dog's Bay at Roundstone, Connemara, is composed mainly of foraminiferan shells.

Before I leave the Clare Island Survey I'd like to record one of the nicest, unwitting tributes to Lloyd Praeger. Some years ago I was talking to an old man on Clare Island, and I got round to asking him whether he remembered any biologists visiting the island. 'No', he said but he did remember groups of people they called 'The Praegers' regularly coming to the island!

So much for two phases in the history of the Mayo islands. Now let us make a rapid tour of the islands to see just a sample of the plants and animals which inhabit them today. My selection of examples is a narrow and personal one. Inevitably it is dominated by birds, because these are the most conspicuous and well studied organisms inhabiting the islands. But clearly, there's much scope for further study, and many groups of plants and animals on many islands are awaiting attention.



Herring gull eating the egg of a guillemot. (Photo by David Cabot).



Puffin. (Photo by David Cabot).



Common Tern. (Photo by David Cabot).



Gannet. (Photo by David Cabot).

We'll start in the north at Dooabristy and work our way southwards. This prominent, stratified sea stack just a few metres off Downpatrick Head, is an ideal place to see some of our common seabirds. Guillemots (*Uria aalge*) and kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla*) breed on the east face, while fulmars (*Fulmarus glacialis*) are most clearly seen on the west face. Fulmars are relative newcomers to Ireland, breeding first on the north Mayo cliffs in 1911 and later, in 1915, on the cliffs of Clare Island.

Illanmaster is a conical, green island just offshore from Glinsk, the highest point along the north Mayo cliffs. It's about 5ha in extent, 108m high and an Irish Wildbird Conservancy reserve important for its large populations of breeding puffins (*Fratercula arctica*) and storm petrels (*Hydrobates pelagicus*). The island is difficult to get to and was last surveyed in 1976 by J. M. Rochford and P. A. Cummins (1976). The remote and inaccessible Stags of Broadhaven, about 3km north-east of Benwee Head, are also important seabird rocks, perhaps best known as haunts of Leach's petrels (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) – a very scarce breeding species in Ireland.

In complete contrast, the small, low-lying island of Inishderry at the sheltered head of Broadhaven Bay has been host in the recent past to breeding sandwich terns (*Sterna sandvicensis*), arctic terns (*Sterna paradisaea*), little terns (*Sterna albifrons*) and black-headed gulls (*Larus ridibundus*). Inishglora is also a tern-nesting island but, being exposed to the full force of the Atlantic, this low, flat island is less hospitable and less accessible to birds and men alike. However, it has been the subject of several ornithological expeditions which have studied and ringed the storm petrels which breed under the rocks and in the island ruins.

The incessant piping of oystercatchers (*Haematopus ostralegus*) is my abiding memory of the Inishkeas. Landing from an inflatable dinghy on a perfect day in June 1984, the oystercatchers greeted my two colleagues and myself and didn't stop piping until we'd completed our survey of the nesting terns. Clearly, the oystercatchers gained some sort of victory because there was near mutiny on the boat when we approached the next island with oystercatchers. There was to be no more oystercatcher piping for my colleagues that day!

The Inishkeas, however, are better known for their wintering barnacle geese (*Branta leucopsis*) studied for over thirty years by Dr. David Cabot and his colleagues. The geese arrive from their Greenland breeding grounds in October and return in April, and as many as 2,600 – well over 50% of the Irish total – have been recorded on the islands (Cabot and West, 1983). Smaller numbers of barnacle geese use the other Mayo islands, too, where they graze on the short-cropped, maritime turf.

Autumn is the time when the grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) haul out onto the Inishkea islands to pup. This is a vulnerable time for them as recent history has shown, with the slaughter of pups by enraged salmon drift-net fishermen.



However, it is to be hoped that a more rational approach to salmon fishing and to so-called 'wildlife problems' will be adopted in the future, and that harmony will be restored to these beautiful islands.

Slaughter is not new to the Inishkeas, for in the early part of the century there was a whaling station on Rusheen Island, off the north-east shore of South Inishkea. Between 1908 and 1914 seven hundred great whales were slain in commercial operations to supply stations on Rusheen and at Blacksod. The history of this industry is documented in detail by Dr. James Fairley (1981).

At the other end of the scale Dr. Fairley and his colleagues (Fairley et al, 1978) studied the field mice (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) on the Inishkeas to see if they, like some island mice off the British coast, were bigger than their mainland cousins. They weren't! (But mice on the Blasket Islands in Kerry were found to be bigger than the mainland mice.) However, a later study by Pat Kelly (reported in Fairley, 1984) showed that the mice on Inishkea North were smaller than those on the mainland. The mice on Inishkea South and Clare Island were slightly bigger than those on the mainland, while those measured on Inishturk were substantially bigger!

Duvillaun More, off the south-west tip of the Mullet, is another island of ornithological interest with breeding storm petrels, fulmars, shags (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*), cormorants (*Phalacrocorax phalacrocorax*), terns, choughs (*Pyrhocrax pyrrhocrax*) and wintering barnacle geese (Cabot, 1967a). In 1983 David Cabot and Michael Viney caught a Leach's petrel there but could not determine whether it was breeding on the island.

Moving southwards, past Achill, we skirt Bills Rocks – islands with flattish tops carpeted with sea-pink (*Armeria maritima*) and with sea beet (*Beta vulgaris*), and spear-leaved orache (*Atriplex hastata*) in the depressions between the *Armeria* clumps. Puffins, razorbills (*Alca torda*), fulmars, shags and great black-backed gulls (*Larus marinus*) nest on the rocks and barnacle geese feed on them during the winter (Cabot, 1967b).

Clare Island, even in modern times, is one of the best studied Mayo islands and a number of reports on its geology, plants (Doyle and Foss, 1986) and birds (Lloyd, 1982) have been published. More recent visits by naturalists have led to new discoveries and it is to be hoped that these will be published, too. On the positive side it is encouraging to note that gannets (*Sula bassana*) are now breeding in small numbers on Clare Island. On the negative side it is disheartening to read (Doyle and Foss, 1986) of the alarming deterioration in the flora brought about by overgrazing.

The natural history of Clare Island deserves an article to itself, so I'll move on. To the south we pass Mweelaun – memorable in the summer mainly for its smell – generated by a colony of cormorants!

Not a lot has been recorded recently about the natural history of Caher Island. There were two pairs of arctic terns nesting on it in 1984 and one species

of woodlouse has been recorded there! The same appears to be true for Inishturk. However, over three hundred species of plants have been recorded on the island along with thirty seven species of birds, three mammals and one dragonfly.

This survey of the wildlife of the Mayo islands has been brief and sketchy, mainly because there is little published information about it. Table 1, containing information drawn from a variety of sources and personal observations, illustrates this point most effectively. Of course, Clare Island is the exception, but here, too, recent information on most groups of animals is lacking, and even the flowering plants have been subjected to only brief surveys in recent times. The return of the 'Praegers' to repeat the Clare Island Survey will, therefore, be most welcome if current proposals come to fruition.

The future

The Mayo islands have had a rich and varied history, have been buffeted by nature and modified by man. Their future, no doubt, will be just as rich and varied and just as firmly in the grip of man as has been their past for 5,000 years and more. This grip could be benign, understanding and caring, or it could be otherwise.

The natural history of the islands will continue to change with natural environmental changes, species will flourish and species will disappear. Such changes will be outside the control of man. However, man's influence on island wildlife has been and will continue to be the greatest influence in post-glacial times. The floral changes wrought by the intensification of agriculture on Clare Island since the beginning of the century are a sharp reminder of this influence. Undoubtedly, a repeat Clare Island Survey will highlight many more man-induced changes. Of course, change in itself is not bad. Nature is dynamic and, in fact, changing continuously. Problems arise when the speed and direction of change leads to an impoverishment of nature, something that is clearly happening on some islands. The actual and potential problems of our islands are many and varied and I have listed some of them in Table 2. This table was originally published in a paper entitled 'Environmental Problems of Offshore Islands' (Whilde, 1989) in *The Heritage of Inishmurray* - a publication which will be of interest to anyone concerned about the future of our offshore islands. It would be useful if members of the Westport Historical Society and their island friends checked the list island by island to see if and where any of these problems exist.

Undoubtedly, there are also many social and economic problems associated with our offshore islands and these must be tackled. However, without first understanding and caring for the natural fabric of our island environments, there will be little hope of tackling these problems effectively. Forewarned is forearmed and if we can identify potential problems well in advance of them becoming a reality, we might be able to influence the future in a positive way - to the benefit of our islands, their wildlife and their people.

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Table 1.
Numbers of species of plants and animals on some
Mayo offshore islands.*

	Illanmster	Inishkea North	Inishkea South	Duvillaun More	Bills Rock	Clare Island	Inishturk	Caher Island
Flowering plants	16	185				393+	329+	
Terrestrial mammals		2	2	1		7	3	1
Breeding birds	6	32	23	10		34		37
Butterflies						7		
Dragonflies						5	1	
Woodlice						6		1
Non-marine molluscs						54		9

*Table does not include species recorded in the Clare Island Survey unless they were recorded on other islands.

Table 2.
Environmental Problems of Offshore Islands

ECOLOGICAL

1. Exposure.
2. Distance from mainland.
3. Overgrazing (livestock).
4. Overgrazing/erosion (rabbits).
5. Guano-trophy.
6. Excessive plant growth where grazing and trampling no longer occur.
7. Introduction of alien species.
8. Re-establishment of formerly resident species.

HUMAN ORIGIN

1. Inappropriate land use/management.
2. Ownership/speculation.
3. Recreation/tourism.
4. Disturbance.
5. Litter/vandalism/theft.
6. Shooting/snaring/poisoning.
7. Disturbance/removal of rare species.
8. Offshore industrial development, e.g., oil, intensive industrial fish production, fish processing.
9. Pollution, e.g., oil, toxic chemicals.
10. Quarrying.
11. Energy generation - wind, waves.
12. Illegal culling of protected species.
13. Military activities(?).

Cathair na Naomh and its Cross-slabs

By Michael Herity

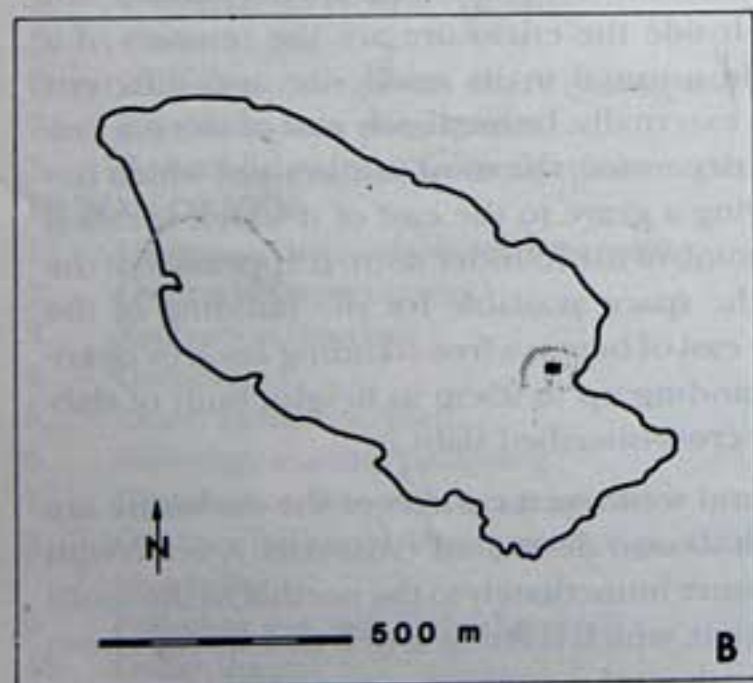
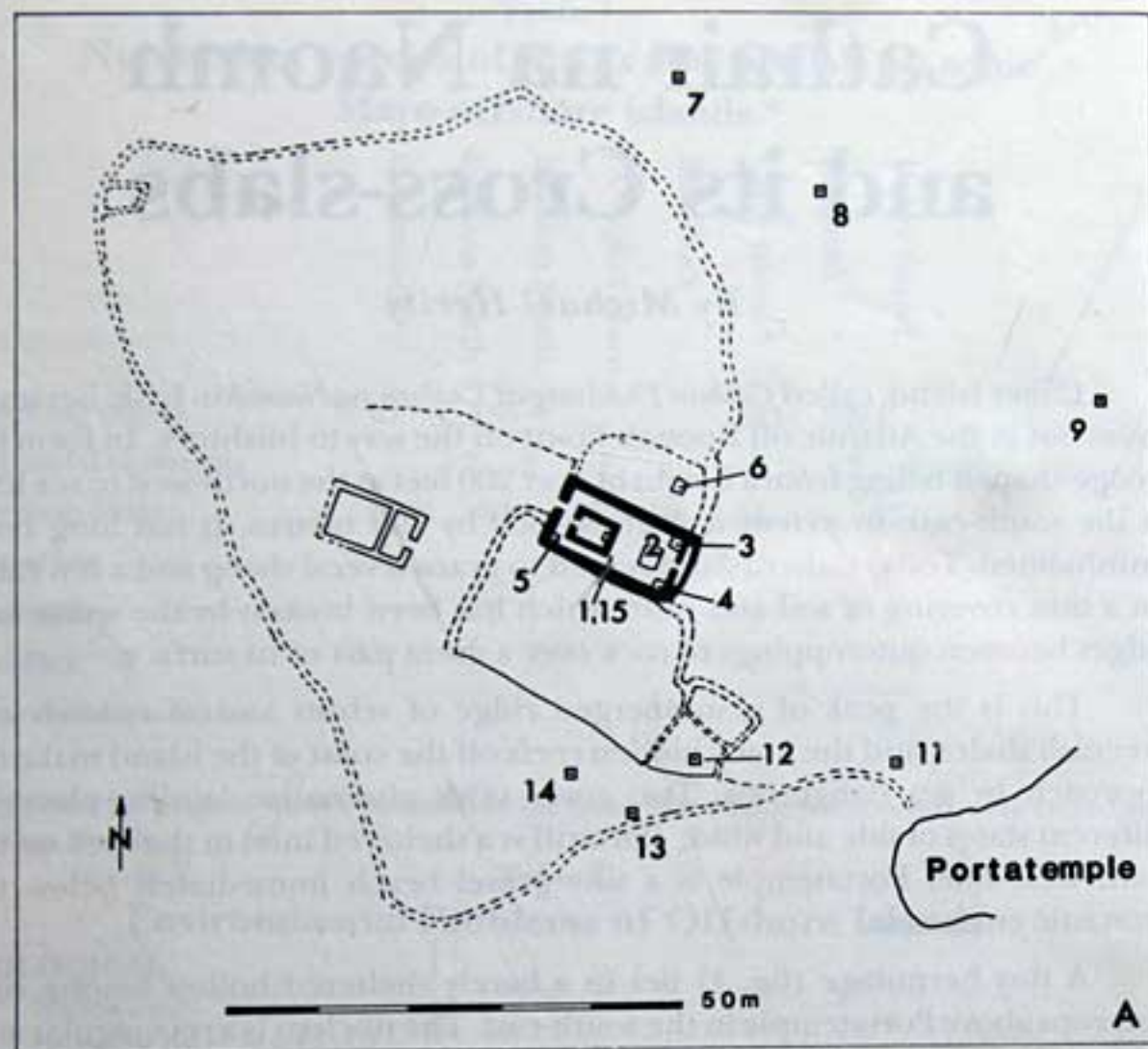
Caher Island, called *Cathair Phádraig* or *Cathair na Naomh* in Irish, lies seven miles out in the Atlantic off Roonah Point on the way to Inishturk. In form it is wedge-shaped falling from a height of over 200 feet at the north-west to sea level at the south-east; in extent it is about 600 by 300 metres. It has long been uninhabited. Today Caher Island is used to graze several sheep and a few cattle on a thin covering of soil and peat, which has been broken by the spade into ridges between outcroppings of rock over a great part of its surface.

This is the peak of a submerged ridge of schists and of reddish and greenish shales, and the many hidden reefs off the coast of the island make the approach by sea dangerous. Two coves offer alternative landing-places at different states of tide and wind; Portariff is a sheltered inlet in the rock on the south-west side; Portatemple is a tiny gravel beach immediately below the monastic enclosure.

A tiny hermitage (fig. 1) lies in a barely sheltered hollow among rock outcrops above Portatemple in the south-east. The nucleus is a rectangular area 6.5 by 13.8m, enclosed by a dry-stone wall with the entrance in the west end. The wall at the east end is broader, up to 2.05m, to incorporate a wall-chamber 5m long by 1m wide and 50cm high. Inside the enclosure are the remains of a church built in late medieval style unusual in its small size and different proportions, measuring 5 by 3.95m externally. Immediately east of this is a line of upright grave-slabs, two of them decorated, the most southerly of which has a recumbent decorated slab overlying a grave to the east of it which is called *Leaba Phádraig* (Patrick's Bed), the tomb of the founder saint. It appears that the presence of these graves limited the space available for the building of the medieval church. In the open space east of here is a free-standing *leacht* or open-air altar, about 2.5m square and standing up to 95cm in height, built of slab-shaped stones, on which stood two cross-inscribed slabs.

In the north-east, south-east and south-west corners of the enclosure are other rectangular *leachta*, each with its own decorated cross-slab. A *leacht* with plain slab stands in a cemetery enclosure immediately to the north. On the south side is a tiny pond, 15 by 24m in extent, which is fed by a well that springs from its north-west corner. Now choked with mud, it supports a growth of yellow iris.

An outer walled triangle, roughly 100m across, runs on top of the most prominent outcrops of rock and encloses three terraces stepped down from



Plan of the hermitage at Caher Island showing focal enclosure and positions of leachta and cross-slabs.

north to south. On the lowest of these terraces is the inner focal enclosure and to the west of it the foundations of a late rectangular building, probably sixteenth or seventeenth century in date. The enclosing wall begins and ends at the east wall of the focal enclosure. This outer wall, now greatly ruined, restricted entry to the focal enclosure and controlled the movements of pilgrims and visitors arriving at the landing-place of Portatemple.

To the north-east and south-east of this enclosure are two arrays of four *leachta* each, three of which in each case have decorated cross-slabs, the stations of *an turas*, which thus occupies a compact area close to the confines of the hermitage. The distance travelled on the *turas* round is at most 250m. This *turas*, according to tradition, was performed on the island on one of the Sundays immediately following the last Sunday in July, when pilgrims climbed the Reek of Croagh Patrick on the mainland opposite.

Though John O'Donovan failed to get to the island when he visited Westport in July 1838, he mentioned a cursing stone, the large boulder of conglomerate known as *Leac Phádhraig* now on the altar of the church, and recorded the prayer recited by devotees at the tomb of the founder saint:

Mo leaba is searhaill chruaidh

Mairg a Chríost a chuaidh 'na seilbh!

(My hard bed and pillow, Wretched for him, O Christ, who took possession of it.) (OSL 1838).

He also recorded the prayer said by passing boatmen: Umhluímid do Dhia mhór na h-uile chomhachta agus do Phádraig míorbhúilteach; they raised their hats and dipped their sails as they did when passing Inishglora, Cruach MacDara, St. Grigóir's tomb in Aran, and Inishcatha or Scatterry Island in Clare. Since O'Donovan's time descriptions of the remains on the island have been published by Browne (1898), Rolleston (1900), Westropp (1904; 1911; 1914) and Henry (1947). Françoise Henry's article is based on observations made during two brief visits, under unfavourable conditions, in June 1939 and August 1946 (1947, 26). The descriptions presented here are based on work done during several visits over recent years.

The fourteen decorated slabs on Caher Island are a varied group disposed within the focal enclosure and on the stations of the pilgrimage round close to it. Many have a characteristic hammer-head form and two are ornamented on both broad faces. Three are described here. Probably the most interesting is the Dolphins Slab, a drawing of which is presented here (fig. 2). It stands on the *leacht* at the east end of the church. The slab, of grey coarsish grit, is cut from a stone broadly triangular in shape, narrowing towards the butt. Its west face is ornamented with a Greek cross-in-circle above a pair of affronted dolphins. At the head of the slab the edges have been worked in a curve to follow the outline of the circle enclosing the cross. The dolphins stand about 30cm high, their bodies twisted in an S-shape. The tails curve outwards and upwards towards the



Dolphins slab, Caher Island, front and back views with suggested reconstruction.

edges of the slab; the upper bodies curve inwards above the dorsal fins so that the upper backs support the encircled cross. The heads turn inwards, the beaks biting back onto the bellies; the eyes are marked by drilled circles. The composition is unitary, the affronted dolphins supporting the encircled cross.

Henry has pointed out that this iconography is one which can be broadly paralleled in the early Christian world and has drawn attention to the parallel of the hanging bowl escutcheon from Faversham, where a Latin cross with expanded terminals is supported between the bodies of two dolphins (1947, 36-7). The attitude of the dolphins on the Caher slab, biting back on their own bodies, sets them within a second set of contexts, those of the Germanic and Merovingian worlds; the animal biting on its own body or on that of another is a common motif introduced from the Germanic world into Insular ornament as in the Book of Durrow. The S-curve of the dolphins' bodies is also reminiscent of S-shaped animals depicted in Merovingian jewellery. It appears therefore that at Caher Island this classical motif may well be under influences from the European continent which can be dated to the sixth century or the early part of the seventh.

The cross-slab in the south-east corner of the focal enclosure has a simple cross outlined by a broad band incurving at the crossing of arms and shaft (fig. 3). There is a large flat circular boss at the centre of the head with four smaller ones placed within the terminals. The outline of the upper part of the slab is cut to emphasize the shape of the cross, while the lower part is left undressed. A very similar cross with better proportions (fig. 3) is outlined on a slab at Kill, near Streamstown, on the mainland of county Galway; here the upper part of the slab is worked into a frame containing all but the arms of the cross, which is itself outlined by a broad band standing in relief. There are tiny projections on either side of the slab near the head.

The cross-pillar standing in the north-east corner of the enclosure is 1.15m tall (fig. 4). On its west face a multiple outline Latin cross 56cm high is carved above three bosses in rectangular frames. The outline of the slab generally follows the outline of the cross, except at the head where expansions to right and left form a hammer-head, and at the foot, where the cross has the appearance of sitting into a pedestal created by the unworked lower half of the pillar. The cross is created by two nested mouldings in relief and has relatively short arms placed just above halfway on a long shaft, all four elements expanding towards the extremities, the lines of the upper and lower shaft tending to be concave. A single raised rounded boss stands at the junction of arms and shaft. At the top left corner of the cross the outer of the two mouldings is drawn out into a horizontal projection indicating the rho of a Chi-rho design. An outer framing moulding which follows the outline of the upper elements of the cross kicks out at this point to accommodate the rho; at the base it expands to enclose the three framed bosses.

In its proportions, in the placing of its arms slightly above halfway on the

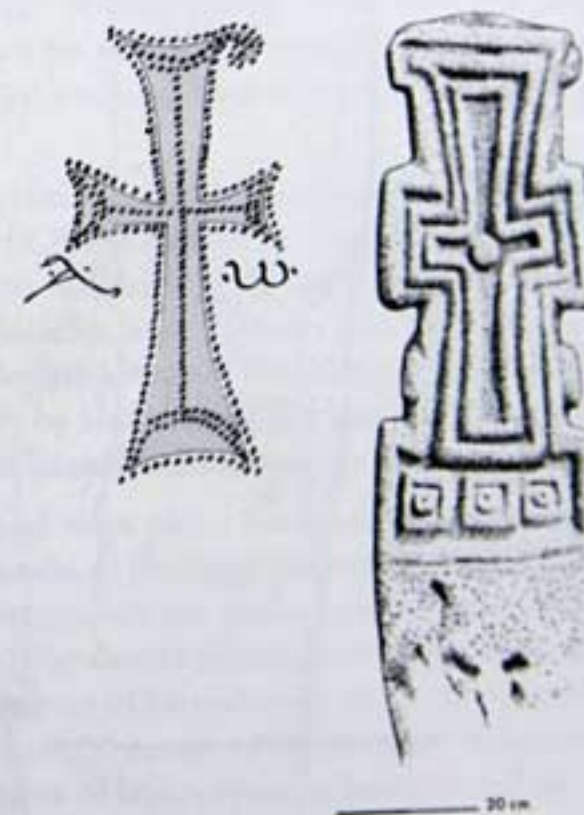


Left, cross-pillar in the south-east corner of the focal enclosure at Caher Island with, right, cross-pillar from Kill, Streamstown.

shaft, in the slight concavity of the long elements and in its multiple outline this cross resembles the one depicted on f.149v of the Codex Usseianus Primus in Trinity College, Dublin (MS. A.4.15 (55); Alexander 1978, Pl. 1) (fig. 4), dated shortly after the year 600, which also takes the form of a Chi-rho design.

At Thallabawn on the mainland opposite Caher Island is a tall pillar (fig. 5) which stands above the road on the east side, apparently within a small ecclesiastical foundation, now ruined, with a view towards Caher Island. On its west face near the top is an equal-armed cross in relief, in form similar to the encircled cross on the dolphin slab at Caher, the arms expanding in gently curved lines. It stands on a projection issuing from the foot. This is one of a type of cross known in both manuscripts and carvings in Ireland. The closest comparison is with the encircled cross on the Arragien ogham stone on the slopes of Mount Brandon in Kerry; other comparanda in Kerry are to be found at Reask, Knockane, Maumanorig, and Kilvickadowning; further examples are known at Inishcealtra in Clare and at Inishkea North and Inishmurray. Similar crosses standing on stems with expanded terminals are represented in the Cathach manuscript psalter, ascribed to Colmcille, the Book of Durrow, and the Echternach Gospels. The Thallabawn cross seems thus to date to the seventh century, probably to its first half.

Besides Thallabawn two other foundations appear to have existed on the mainland near Roonah. One of these was at Dooghmakeon where a stone 97cm



Cross-pillar in the north-east corner of the focal enclosure at Caher Island compared with chi-rho design in the Codex Usseianus Primus, Trinity College, Dublin.



Left, prehistoric *gallán* with cross-in-circle motif at Killeen; right, cross-inscribed pillar at Thallabawn.

tall, inscribed with a cross of arcs in a circle on one face, now stands among the sand-dunes. The second was at the modern graveyard of Killeen where there are two cross-carved stones. The one described and illustrated here stands at one end of the modern graveyard. It is a very tall stone, up to 2.50m in height, 82cm wide and 40cm thick. Carved on the south-west face, about two-thirds of the way up the stone, is a cross-in-circle design (fig. 5). Within the circle, 60-63cm in diameter and marked by two incised lines, the widely expanding arms of the Greek cross are formed by four curving lines which segment the circle but without meeting at the centre. The design has the appearance of a compass-drawn composition and the arcs which mark the lines of the arms have the same radius as the enclosing circle. Within the four petal-shaped areas left between the arms of the cross radial lines run from the centre towards the inner circumference of the circle, broadening into forked or fishtail expansions at their outer ends. This ornament within the petal-shaped areas of the quadrants emphasises these elements and tends to lessen the visual impact of the Greek cross. In fact the design could be interpreted either as a cross-in-circle or as a four-petalled marigold in a circle. This ambiguity may be intentional since the marigold is a fairly common feature in early Christian art; other slabs, such as those on the Inishkeas (Henry 1945, Pl. XVIII) and the pillar-stone at Reask (Fanning 1981, 139-40, Fig. 29A), have similarly ambiguous designs; at Reask the petal-shaped quadrants are also ornamented, though with a slightly more elaborate design than those at Killeen. The cross-design on the Killeen stone may date to an early stage of Christianity in Ireland. The stone on which it is carved would appear from its size and orientation to be a prehistoric *gallán*, so the marking of the cross on its surface may represent the Christianizing of a pagan monument.

These mainland sites are the analogues of similar sites at Glencolumbkille, opposite Rathlin O'Birne Island in Donegal, Staid near Streedagh, opposite Inismurray in Sligo, Kilmore Erris and Cross, opposite Inishglora, Omey and Kill, opposite Ardoileán, and Tarmon and Fallmore near the south end of the Mullet opposite the Iniskeas and Duvillaun. These are paralleled on the Iveragh peninsula of Kerry by such mainland sites as Killabuonia, Kilreelig and Lohar opposite the great island foundation on Sceilig Mhichíl.

The mainland sites often have only one or a few decorated stones in contrast to the islands, at the most prominent of which several decorated cross-slabs of the highest quality are preserved. It appears that the hermitages, both on the islands and the desert places of the mainland opposite, are foundations of the earliest centuries of Christianity, a fact demonstrated by the early dates of the cross-slabs. Further, many of these slabs demonstrate surprisingly direct contacts with centres of innovation in Ireland and on the continent. Through them we can dimly perceive the presence in the west of early illuminated manuscripts and metalwork crosses which may have served to transmit some of the designs of the cross-carved slabs.

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Military History of the Western Islands

(with special reference to Inishbofin)

By Sheila Mulloy

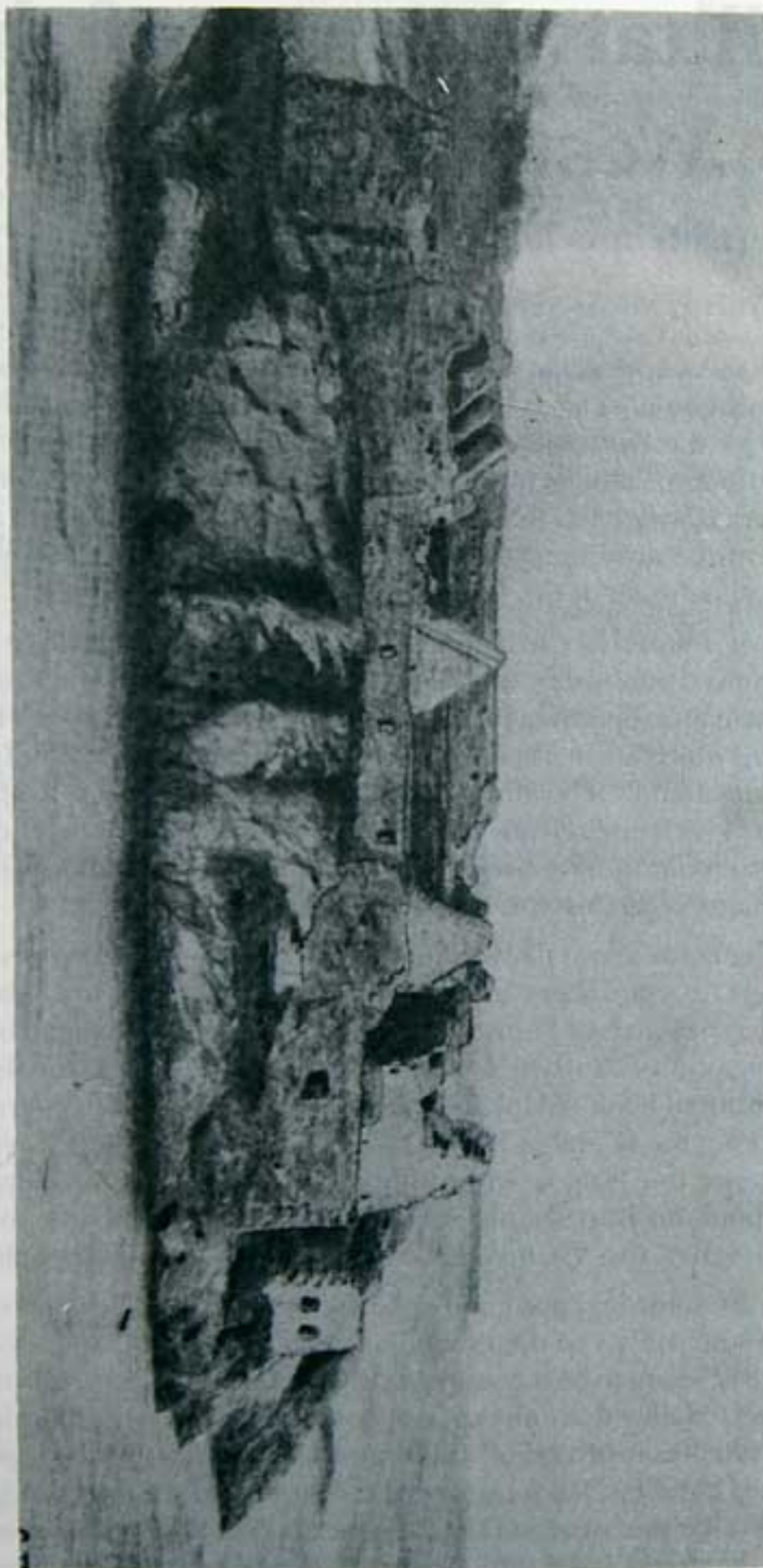
My talk today appears in your programme under the title 'Inishbofin - The Ultimate Stronghold.' This is in fact the title of an article I have published in issue no. 67 of the *Irish Sword*, the journal of the Military History Society in Ireland. Inishbofin has been included among our islands this weekend because it and Inishark belonged to the barony of Murrisk in Co. Mayo from the end of the fourteenth century until 1873, when both islands were restored to the barony of Ballinahinch in Co. Galway.

However, I would like to begin by talking about warfare among the whole group of islands from Inishbofin north to the islands off the Mullet peninsula. If you look at Westropp's map on our conference brochure you will notice the wealth of dúnns which are marked from north to south along the coastline of both islands and mainland.¹ It is rather difficult nowadays to imagine warfare in the serene waters which encircle us, but these dúnns were built for defence and it is certain that there must have been some minor battles here either between the local inhabitants or against invaders from the outside.

When we come to our native annalists we have several references to attacks by the Vikings or 'searobbers' as they call them. They came to Umhall in 811 according to the Annals of Ulster, but were slaughtered by the men of Umhall. They came again in 812 when they killed Cosgrach, son of Flannabhrat, and Dunadach, King of Umhall.² Incidentally, Máille, grandson of Cosgrach, is the man from whom the O'Malley family, Clann Mháille, are called.³ Several other raids took place but little is known about them. Pádhraig Ó Móráin in his fascinating book on Burrishoole attributes the name Inishcuttle, one of the islands in Clew Bay, to a Viking chief called Caitil by the local people.⁴

There are some legends connected with the Viking raids, but one of the most picturesque is that of the miraculous survival of the O'Malley clan. The slaughter of 812 seems to be the source of this legend, although the first mention of the name O'Malley does not appear until 1123, when it is mentioned that Tadhg Ó Máille was drowned off the Aran Islands.⁵ This survival legend is not unique to the O'Malleys. It is found in other places and in connection with other families, but it has persisted in O'Malley history. There are two versions of the legend, but the theme is the same in both, the miraculous survival of the clan.

According to one version of the legend, the family with the exception of



a little boy was wiped out by the 'Danes'. This child was saved by his nurse who fled with him to the south of Ireland. Here the nurse married, and the boy was reared as her own, and he regarded her as his mother, and her children as his sisters and brothers. When he grew up, however, his foster mother did not think it right to leave him in ignorance of his true birth and parentage, so she told him of his illustrious descent. He went back to Umhall, where he was recognized by a blind man named Ó hOireachta (Herrity) an old retainer of the O'Malley family. They say he knew him by his hands! The young man told him his story, and immediately, with manifestations of great rejoicing, he was proclaimed chieftain of Umhall.

The other version of the legend is the one chosen by that great artist Evie Hone for the window executed by her in 1951 in the church at Kilmilkin in the Maam valley in Co. Galway. This story relates that the young mother with her son, the only surviving male child of the O'Malleys, fled to Inish Glora, off the Mullet Peninsula. The child was sickly and was restored to health through the intervention of Saint Brendan, at whose well his mother prayed. There is a variation of this story which attaches the incident to Saint Brendan's well near Kilmeena church. It was believed that this well could change the sex of babies if they were dipped in it. When all the O'Malley male children were slain, a baby girl was dipped in the well and so turned into a boy 'and from him all the O'Malleys are descended'.⁶ However, I feel that the St. Brendan's well at Roskeen is more properly connected with this version of the legend.⁷

These memories of the Viking raids are shadowy. We are on safer ground when we come to the Anglo-Norman invasion. The Normans had come to Burrishoole near Westport by 1185, when the great Butler family had been granted part of the barony of Umhall. They built a castle there which I think can be identified with the ruins in the grounds of Burrishoole Lodge, formerly the residence of Ernie O'Malley. The Butlers however, did not appear to have been able to maintain a foothold in the area because this castle was burned by the O'Connors in 1248. In 1272 the O'Connors defeated and slew Henry Butler, and the family disappears from the scene for several hundred years.

Meanwhile another great Norman family, the de Burgos, had made their appearance in Connacht. Their objective was the subjection of the area to their rule, and this they set about by sometimes siding with, and sometimes opposing, members of the native Irish family then in power - the royal O'Connors. And so by 1230 there were Anglo-Normans supporting Felim son of Cathal Crobhdearg O'Connor against Aedh, son of Ruaidhri O'Connor in the contest for the kingship. Assisting Aedh were the sons of Muirheartach O'Connor, seventh son of Turlough O'Connor, and Aedh O'Flaherty of Galway. Later Felim fell out of favour with Richard de Burgo and Aedh was set up in his place. Felim subsequently demolished the de Burgo castle at Galway and held sway in Connacht in 1233 and 1234.

This led to the campaign of 1235 when Maurice Fitzgerald the justiciar

came with other great Anglo-Norman barons to Connacht, in order to subdue Felim and put Richard de Burgo in possession of his Connacht lordship. First they advanced against Thomond where they defeated the O'Briens who had been assisted by the O'Conors. O'Brien submitted and then Fitzgerald marched to Galway where he received O'Flaherty's submission.

Felim O'Connor went north to seek the protection of O'Donnell with a son and grandson of Muirheartach Muimhneach O'Connor, who had by now changed their allegiance from Aedh to Felim O'Connor. The 'Foreigners' (as the annalists call them), came to Dún Mughord near Westport. This castle appears to be Doon castle east of the town, although some authorities have identified it with Mac Philbin's castle at Ayle. Messengers were sent to Maghnus son of Muirheartach Muimhneach demanding peace and hostages but Maghnus refused. There then began one of the few recorded battles among the inner islands of Clew Bay. Maghnus at this time was with his vessels in the sound of Inisheeny or Inish-Aenaigh which is the nearest island to Murrisk strand. Meanwhile Aodh ÓFlaithbheartaigh, who had submitted at Galway, and Eoghan Ó hEidhin arrived with a large army and some boats at the shore opposite that island. The language of the annals is rather obscure here because it states that O'Flaherty and Ó hEidhin 'went round with a large army, and with boats which had been brought to Leenane'. Some authorities understand from this that boats had been brought overland from the Corrib to Leenane, and thence by sea to Clew Bay, and this would seem to make a lot of sense as it would avoid a long and hazardous sea journey from Galway to Murrisk. There were at any rate 'great contests and conflicts' between the two fleets. The Anglo-Norman side appears to have had the worst of these encounter at the beginning because they retreated for a while and set up camp. When Maghnus saw this he withdrew to Inishraher which is north-east of Inisheeny, and took with him some sheep from Inisheeny as food for himself and his followers.

What happened next is best described by the annalist –

When [the Foreigners] observed, moreover, that Maghnus and his people had gone towards the island, and then to another island, and that they had neither watch nor ward over the Foreigners, and that the island was between them and the Foreigners – when the Foreigners perceived this they arose furiously, terribly and quickly; and they suddenly lifted their boats along the strand, and put them on the sea, and filled them promptly with forces, and with armed, mail-clad soldiers, who went upon the two islands, and killed all the people they found in them. Maghnus and all of his people who were in Inish-rathain [Inishraher] arose and went into their vessels; and if Ó Máille's people had been esteemed by Maghnus, he (Ó Máille) would have sent his vessels against the Foreigners and their boats. However, though short the period of the day remaining at this hour, there was not a cow remaining on any island of Innsi-Modh [the Clew Bay islands] that was not transferred to the shore before night; and [the owners of the cows] would have themselves previously gone away, through thirst and hunger, if they had not been captured; and many inferior

persons were slain between them this night. On Friday, moreover, the day following, they went upon the islands of the North of Umhall, and the masters of the mercenaries, in honour of the Passion, imposed a restriction that no man should be killed. When the Foreigners had succeeded in robbing and plundering Umhall, by sea and land, they proceeded with their cows and preys to Lughbhurtan.

This is Luffertaun near Ballintubber beside the home of Brendan Tuohy. That seems to have been the end of the troubles as far as our islands are concerned.⁸ There is an interesting reference there to Ó Máille holding aloof during this episode. The interpretation appears to be that Maghnus had settled uninvited in O'Malley territory and therefore O'Malley did not help him in his hour of need. The O'Malley inaction on this occasion led to a feud between the two families which resulted in some murderous attacks on both sides.

Now, we turn to Inishbofin, which is the most significant of our islands from a military point of view especially in the seventeenth century. *Inis Bó Finne*, 'the island of the white cow', lies about six miles north-west of Cleggan Harbour in Co. Galway. It extends three and a half miles in length by two miles in breadth, forming an area of some 3,264 acres.⁹ In common with all the islands lying off the west coast, the population has fallen from a dramatic high of 1,404 before the Great Famine to the 1981 figure of 195 souls.¹⁰ This low lying island, traditionally believed to be of legendary origin, was nevertheless of very real strategic importance down to the eighteenth century.

The island was captured by the O'Malleys from the O'Flahertys about the year 1380, and became an important part of the possessions of that seafaring clan. Together with the neighbouring islands of Shark, Turk and Clare, it formed part of the barony of Murrisk, which with the barony of Burrishoole, comprised the O'Malley lordship. This lordship encircled Clew Bay with its offshore islands and the outlying islands from Shark to Achill, which were of considerable importance for whoever controlled the islands controlled the bay. In the early medieval period the outlying islands marked the passage outside which the natives dared not venture because of the unknown perils of the ocean beyond, and for the stranger they marked a route off the Irish coast inside which they feared to penetrate because lack of maps and navigational aids compelled them to keep a prudent distance from the coastline.

Unlike most of the Irish clans, the O'Malleys looked to the sea for their living. They levied taxes on foreign vessels – fishing and commercial – and established bases further afield on the Galway coast from which to make raids on shipping using the port of Galway. These raids led to the well-known incident at Carrickahowley or Rockfleet castle, which is situated west of Newport. In reply to the constant complaints of the Galway merchants, Sir Edward Fitton, governor of Connacht, sent a sea expedition against the famous Gráinne Ní Mháille or Gráinne Uaile in 1574. The expedition under Captain William Martin set sail on 8 March and was forced to retreat on the 26th as a result of the spirited defence

of the redoubtable Gráinne. By this time, when the O'Malley power was at its height, the islands were an essential element in their policy of maintenance by land and sea, in the true spirit of their motto *Terra Marique Potens*. With their large galleys capable of carrying at least seventy men each,¹¹ they were for a time the sea mercenaries of the western coast, ready to ferry troops and supplies wherever they might be required and to whomsoever might require them. These activities were especially dear to the heart of the said Gráinne Uaile who flourished from c.1530 to 1603. On the west shore of the harbour at Inishbofin is Dún Gráinne, a cliff-top fort which may or may not have been associated with her. We are, however, on surer ground when we come to Cromwell's Barrack opposite Dún Gráinne, which embodies Bosco's castle. This belonged to Melaghlin O'Malley in 1574. Bosco is said to have been a pirate – a Spaniard or a Dane – allied with Gráinne in their attacks on shipping, and it is said that they kept a boom across the harbour as part of their defences.¹²

By the time of Gráinne's death in 1603 the old order was changing and power had definitely passed from the native chiefs. Inishbofin, like Clare Island, had become Bourke property and was claimed by the earl of Clanricard known to the Irish of the sixteenth century as Mac Liam Uachtar, as distinct from the Mayo branch of the family which was ruled over by Mac Liam Íochtar. Both islands were repossessed by the O'Malleys in the first years of the 1641 rebellion. Lord Clanricard, governor of the town and county of Galway,¹³ complained that 'my islands of Clieria and Ennis-Boffin' had been taken by the O'Malleys, whom he described as 'ancient pretenders to these places'.¹⁴ Clanricard remained neutral at this stage of the rebellion, only committing himself firmly to the confederate side in the year 1646, when he joined Ormond and Inchiquin in the war against the English parliament. The owner of large estates both in Ireland and England, he was utterly devoted both to the catholic religion and the crown, but his dealings with the insurgents required caution. He exercised his diplomatic skills with great ability, treading a wary path among the various factions. To put the matter in simplistic terms, these were the extreme clerical party which placed religion first; the Irish party which perhaps placed Irish interests before religion; and lastly, the Old English who were catholic and loyal, but wanted to retain their possessions, many of which were gained at the expense of the Church and the older race. In reality, the situation was far more complex with protestant loyalists, such as the Gaelic Inchiquin and the Old English Ormond, playing leading roles against the parliamentarians, and divisions on the Irish side between the confederates and the northern catholics. In fact, the situation has been well described by Prof. M. D. O'Sullivan as being 'a chaos of conditions which are without parallel in the history of the country'.¹⁵

The year 1649 saw an extraordinary quickening of events, with the execution of Charles I in January, the departure of Rinuccini in February and the coming of Cromwell in August. By the spring of 1650, Limerick, Athlone and Galway were the only important towns remaining in loyalist hands. By the end of the year Ormond and Inchiquin had left Ireland for France, and Clanricard

became the lord deputy. He was to find himself in the hopeless position of defending Galway, a town torn by internal strife between the extreme clerical party and his own followers, with a starving population swollen by refugees, whose sufferings were to be aggravated by plague which from the first outbreak in July 1649 was to sweep away 3,700 of the inhabitants.

At this juncture one of the many appeals for help from the Continent for the frantic citizens of Galway showed signs of bearing some fruit. Ormond had sent Lord Taaffe to the duke of Lorraine, Charles IV, with the mission of obtaining a loan on the security of the town of Galway.¹⁶ In May 1650 Colonel Oliver Synnot arrived from Lorraine to pursue the negotiations. Simultaneously the clerical party sent envoys to the duke expressing their willingness to accept him as protector in exchange for any services he might be in a position to render to the Irish catholics. The eventual agreement, which was more in accordance with the views of the clerical party than those of Clanricard, provided that the duke was to advance £20,000 on the security of Galway and Limerick. A treaty was signed in July 1651, and shortly afterwards two frigates were sent to Ireland with arms, ammunition and some money, though not the £20,000 originally promised. One of these frigates went to Muskerry in the south, while the second under the command of Colonel Synnot arrived in Inishbofin in October.¹⁷ This ultimate stronghold had now become the last link with the Continent while the powerful parliamentary fleet blockaded the port of Galway. Lorraine sent altogether four frigates with supplies to Ireland, but two of these fell into the hands of the parliamentarians.¹⁸

Galway finally surrendered to Coote in April 1652 against the wishes of Clanricard, with Aran surrendering at the same time. Inishbofin then engaged the attention of the Cromwellian commissioners, and some strong measures were proposed to bring about its surrender. In the course of a letter to Sir Charles Coote on 17 August 1652, they write that 'as for Inishbofin and the pirates residing upon that coast' they have ordered the parliament's ships-of-war from the south, and 'conceive it advisable that the inhabitants and their stock should be removed from the next adjacent coasts to that island, and the said coasts laid waste to prevent their getting of relief from the shore, and that some garrisons were planted in those shores, from whence they may most probably have relief conveyed unto them'.¹⁹

It seems unlikely that these decisions were implemented in view of subsequent happenings in the area. In December Colonel Synnot with a force of 600 men made a raid on Aran and took possession of the island 'owing to the disobedience of Captains Gething and Busquill in quitting the coast contrary to orders'.²⁰ The commissioners made urgent plans to take the two islands in January. They reported to the council of state:

Thirteen hundred foot, with a battering piece and other accommodations were shipped about six days since in the bay of Galway for the reducing of Aran, and 600 foot more are marching by land to Ir-Connaught, to be carried thence to Aran, to strengthen that party

if need be. They are victualled for a month, and more provisions are going up to them in order to their going on to Boffin, if the Lord give them success in their attempt upon Aran.²¹

The Lord heeded their prayers, for Aran was recaptured, and Inishbofin became the last post to surrender to the Cromwellians on 14 February 1653.²² Lord Castlehaven, who served under Ormond and Clanricard, described the island as being 'a fit place for a magazine, it being a large island, lying off Jer-Connaught, three miles into the sea, in which we had a strong garrison. 'Tis surrounded with rocks, and has but one entrance, where there is a pretty good harbour for frigates and small men of war'.²³ This garrison was in the remains of the fortress known as Bosco's castle, and according to the *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, quoting a letter from the Rev. John Dowley, vicar-general of Tuam, 'seeing that the help expected from the duke of Lorraine had not reached our shores at the time appointed... [they] surrendered the said island of Bofin with its fortress to the enemy... although that island was well furnished with muskets, and other weapons, with food, soldiers and all other warlike equipment...'²⁴

There appears to be some grounds for the strictures of the Rev. Dowley, because the articles of surrender were described by Colonel Jones as being 'suteable to the difficulty of gaining of that place by force'. He adds:

Questionless that service was owed by God, for during all the time of that treaty, there was soe greate a clame that our shippes ridd in safety close to the island all the while, which they could not possibly have done if any winds had been stirring, as Captain Clarke informs us...²⁵

Another significant incident was what happened on 6 February near Renvyle Castle when

800 Irish fell (out of an ambush in a narrow pass) upon 270 foot, which were marching that way to meet the forces that went by sea to reduce Buffin, and routed them.²⁶

The intemperate author of the *Aphorismical discovery*, a supporter of Owen Roe O'Neill, is more scathing and suspects the governor of treachery, describing him as 'practiced in the area of failinge in his trust'. He describes the island as being

the onely hauen or harbour in Ireland now for the Irish, kept for the duke of Lorainge, whoe furnished the same with all things conducent unto its defence, prouision, and ammunition for two yeares siedge, extraordinarie good workes with abundance of greate ordinance, beside a worlde of armes that belonged unto that forte, six hundred cases of pistells, and 600 barrells of powder was sent unto the kingdom by his Highnesse, which, for the most parte, had beene at present at the same ilande. In this braue posture of defence did stande this machine; many Irish, both ecclesiasticke and laitie, did thither flocke, some for saftie, others for loyaltie, to see things well caried; and others contrarie. Amonge the rest that soe thither retired was the bishop of Clonferte, Roger Moore and Donogh Oflahertye. This forte was an itche in the enemie arme, makinge, therefore, all the shewe possible with shippes and otherwise to leager the ilande, though well perswaded, considering the posure and strength therof, to be in vaine, unlesse a waye was founde to corrupt the commander by inticinge angells, which was an easie taske in the opinion of seuerall witts, as being one George Cussacke, leutenant colonell to late Generall Preston, and one of his hatchinge...

He claims that the corruption began about 1 December 1652 when Charles Fleetwood, 'chiefe governor for the state of England in Ireland',

prevailed on Christopher Cusack of Donore, Co. Meath, to go to Inishbofin and persuade 'the neuer faithfull lieutenant colonell', his brother, to surrender the island to Commissary General Reynolds. After the surrender Cusack was suitably rewarded and sailed off with the 'Pigmeyan prelate' – the bishop of Clonfert. Here the author summons up all his gifts for vitriolic comment and recounts that 'the bloudie tigers, and human-bloud-sucker-wasps' abandoned their friends Donogh O'Flaherty and Roger Moore. O'Flaherty was captured and beheaded, and Roger Moore escaped to Scotland.²⁷

After the surrender orders were given to repair the fortifications on Bofin.²⁸ But on 20 February 1655 Sir Hardress Waller, and Colonels Hewson and Sankey, recommended that the works at Bofin should be abandoned, the garrison withdrawn, and £1,000 advanced to block up the harbour. As a result £600 and the barque *Elizabeth* of Galway were offered to anyone who would undertake the work.

The council of state, however, abandoned this enterprise and it was again decided to work on the fortifications. On 3 June 1656 it was ordered

that a fort be erected and built on the island of Bofin, and that the other fortifications there be repaired for the defence of the said island; and that of the 22 guns in the island, 6 or 8 of the shorter size be sent to Galway for the state's use, and that, instead of them 3 longer be sent to Boffyn with good-carriages, bullets, etc.

The spiritual needs of the garrison were not to be neglected, for on 12 June 1656, it was decided 'to send an able, pious, and orthodox minister of the gospell to be settled at Bofin, to be paid with the company'. Also

that Sir Charles Coote do consider of ordering that Colonel John Honnor, the governor there, shall suffer no Irish to keep any boats upon any parts of that coast of Ir-Connaught, the co. of Mayo, or adjacent islands; also to exclude all ill-affected Irish out of that island, and clearing the same of all dangerous and disaffected persons.²⁹

It was at this time, according to James Hardiman, that some fifty of the catholic clergy were shipped to Aran and Bofin, awaiting transportation to the West Indies, 'and being allowed but two pence a day each, for their support, they were nearly famished'.³⁰ This seems somewhat at odds with a letter from T. Herbert to the governor of Galway on 5 March 1658, in which he states:

The lord deputy and council did in July last give order for payment of £100 upon account to Col. Sadleir, to be issued as he should conceive fit for maintenance of such Popish priests as are or should be confined to the Isle of Boffin, according to six pence daily allowance, building cabins and the like.³¹

But perhaps some improvement had been made in the interval in the conditions imposed on the unfortunate prisoners. Even twopence a day was not such a small amount at the time, comparing very favourably with allowances for prisoners in later wars, but the awesome bleakness of their surroundings in Bofin must have struck terror into the hearts of even the most devout clerics.

The island fortifications remained after the Restoration, probably as much for the protection of trade and fisheries, as for defence. Both Aran and Bofin



Cromwell's Barrack, Inishboffin. (from R.I.A. Prog., vol., xxxi, part 2, plate ix).

were, however, of strategic importance as potential bases for attacks on the mainland. The two islands were linked together for defensive purposes, with a company of 100 men supplying the garrison in both places. In 1662 this company was under the command of Captain Robert Deey of Dublin. In August of that year Ormond wrote to Anglesey, treasurer of wars in Ireland, ordering him to pay Lieutenant John Sandes of Robert Deey's company thirty pounds to make a new boat and repair an old one 'for his majesty's service in the said garrisons,' and thirty four pounds to repair the houses 'in and adjoining the forts in the said islands'.³²

In March 1663 we find the earl of Mount-Alexander, master of the ordnance, asking Ormond for one month's pay for Captain Robert Deey's company 'more than the rest of the army have from time to time', because Aran and Bofin are so remote from the mainland 'that they cannot without much difficulty be supplied from thence, and that the islanders have already trusted the soldiers beyond their abilities'. He further requested Ormond to supply 'eighty four swords and belts, sixty collars of bandeliers, twelve fire locks, twelve pikes, a drum and some match, and the exchange of seven barrells of decayed powder'.³³ Ormond was graciously pleased to comply with Mount-Alexander's requests.

Captain Deey was succeeded by Captain Nicholas Bayley in 1663, who reported to Ormond on the two islands in the following year:

In the fort of Boffin there are three and twenty pieces of ordnance, half the which want carriages, whereof twelve are iron minions, five iron falcons, four iron sakers, one iron twelve-pounder, and one demi-culverin, whereof the four last are only useful as to the defence of the harbour. Therefore I do with all humbleness offer it to your grace, having discoursed with your gunner there, a man of known judgment, that two brass sakers, or two of the longest sort of demi-culverins, are absolutely necessary for the justification of that important harbour, the fort commanding it having cost fifteen hundred pounds in the building, and do humbly offer it, if your grace thinks fit, that from the town of Galway, these garrisons may be supplied and the said town will be left sufficiently stored with artillery.

He writes that there is 'an absolute necessity of a small vessel of twenty or thirty tons, to fetch provisions where it may be cheapest had'. In addition a vessel of twenty-five tons lying at Bofin could be repaired for £90.

I shall only presume to mention it to your grace, that without such boats your garrisons can scarce subsist in these islands, so without some small encouragement to their masters, and some more men allowed to your garrisons, we shall not be able with the few we have to put them to sea when repaired, and hope your grace will so order it, there having never been, till alderman Deey's time, less than one full company in each island.

We have in both garrisons but eight barrells of powder and much of that decayed, we also want a proportion of great shot suitable to the guns we desired from your grace, as also trucks, ladles, rammer heads and sponges, proportionable to the ladles, a hundred weight of sheet lead for aprons, six crows of iron, one hundredweight of two-inch rope for fackles to haul the guns, one dozen of priming irons and two hundred shot suitable to the guns we have, which, if your grace so think fit, may be supplied from Limerick or Galway, and for one hundred and fifty pounds both islands may be so provided with boats, and the forts so repaired, that your grace need not be at any further charge for some years with them...³⁴

This petition was granted and orders were given to send two long brass sakers or two demi-culverins to Bofin from Galway, and £150 for a new boat of fourteen tons at Aran, the repair of the old boat at Bofin, and other essential repairs and supplies needed in both places. On the same date an enquiry was instituted into the money granted to Lieutenant John Sandes. His pay was to be suspended 'till he give an account of the said money'.³⁵

In April it was decided 'that two men skilful in marine affairs be employed as masters of the frigate and boat belonging to the said islands', while recruits sent then and the following January brought Nicholas Bayley's company to two hundred men. All the 'great guns as are now lying upon the strand or shore between the town of Galway and Inver' were to be sent to Aran and Bofin, clothes were to be sent to the troops there and fifteen barrels of powder for forty great guns, 'two hundred great shot, for culvering, demy-culvering, and saker cut, also one hundred of the old ammunition swords out of the store of Dublin, which troopers formerly had, and two hundred muskets, and two drums with sticks for his majesty's service in the islands aforesaid'.³⁶

No doubt both Arkin castle in Aran and Cromwell's Barrack were kept in a reasonable state of repair all through the uneasy post-Restoration period, with a likely increase in activity from the accession of James II in 1685, and especially from the date of Tyrconnell's reorganisation of the Irish army in 1686. However, there is little further recorded of them after 1665. Nicholas Bayley, who had become a major by 1666, was still in his old post as governor of Aran and Bofin in 1678, and there is a 1684 list of sixteen unmounted iron ordnance in Galway which had been removed from Bofin.³⁷ These islands were regarded as outposts of importance, although only Bofin figures to any extent in the Jacobite war of 1689-91.

In 1691, after the battle of Aughrim and the capture of Galway, Sir Henry Bellasis, the Williamite governor of Galway, sent Captain Dunbar to take possession of the island of Bofin, and favourable articles of surrender were agreed between him and the governor, Colonel Timothy O'Riordan, on 19 August.³⁸ Another well-known personage to figure in the articles was Edward Berminingham, Lord Athenry and lord lieutenant of Mayo, who sat as one of the peers in King James's parliament of 1689, and who married, firstly, a daughter of Richard, earl of Clanricard, and secondly, Bridget, eldest daughter of Colonel John Browne. He was a captain in the earl of Clanricard's infantry regiment. Lieutenant Colonel John O'Kelly and Colonel John Browne were included in the same article. Lieutenant Colonel O'Kelly of Clonllyn in Co. Galway was a younger brother of Colonel Charles O'Kelly, the author of the important Jacobite history of the war published under the title *Excidium Macariae*. He had represented Roscommon in King James's parliament. The astute Colonel John Browne of Westport, ancestor of the present marquess of Sligo, the subject of a special article in the military articles of the Treaty of Limerick,³⁹ was adjudged to be included in the articles for the capitulation of Galway, and so permitted to

go to Limerick if he should so desire, and 'the governor of Galway promises that he shall be safely conducted thither with his horses, servants and arms'. His infantry regiment was never taken into service, but the colonel, a lawyer by profession, played an indispensable role in the war, by supplying the Jacobite troops with tools, iron bars, nails, etc., from his ironworks near Westport. During the later stages of the war, when the Jacobite sector in Connacht was restricted to the counties of Mayo and Galway, he supplied the garrisons with beef, mutton, hay, oats, butter, wheat, malt and salt, which he commandeered from the inhabitants.

Captain Nicholas Blake, described by D'Alton as an ensign in Lord Bophin's infantry, was sent to Bofin to have the surrender terms signed by Colonel O'Riordan, leaving behind as hostages in Galway Lieutenant Colonel John O'Kelly and Captain Richard Martin. Two others to get a mention in the capitulation are Captain Michael Cormack and Captain Dominick Browne. Captain Cormack from Mayo had been in command of an independent company while Captain Dominick Browne was also from that county.

Bofin is rarely mentioned after this period although the garrison was maintained for a time against the ravages of French privateers and to protect the fishing from the Dutch. Bofin and Shark were restored to the barony of Ballinahinch, Co. Galway, in 1873, having belonged to the barony of Murrisk in the period under review. The barrack still exists in a fair state of preservation, and must be one of the very few military buildings of the seventeenth century still standing. T.J. Westropp gives a very full account of it in the *Clare Island Survey*,⁴⁰ which was published in 67 separate reports by the Royal Irish Academy:

The fabric of 'Cromwell's Barrack' consists of a long irregular enclosure, with variant bastions at each corner and a round turret on the south face. Inside is an irregular courtyard, with a choked well in the middle, and buildings to the north, west, and east. The stonework was once rich in well-cut coigns of blue limestone; but nearly all have been removed by lime-burners; the arch and a few jamb-stones of the gateway remain.

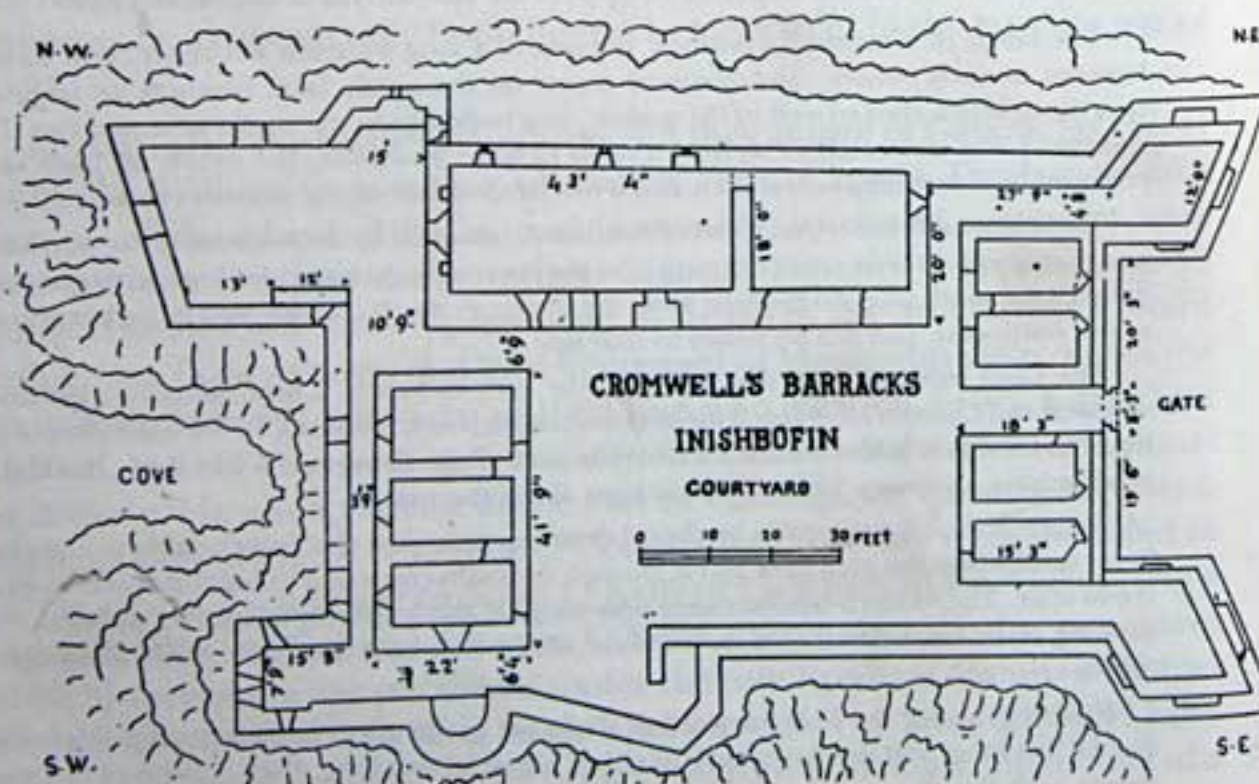
The site is well chosen, on a sort of headland, bounded by the harbour to the north and west, a convenient little creek running in at the latter side. A rugged hollow, partly quarried, defends the south side. To modern ideas the site is too much commanded by higher ground to the south-east, and has no fosses to that side.

The chief frontage is to the east, with the only entrance, a fine, roundheaded door, recessed and chamfered, 5 feet 3 inches wide, though much injured by the vandalism of the lime-burners. It is in the middle of a curtain wall, 45 feet long and 6 feet thick, flanked by two bastions; a passage 32 inches wide runs along the top.

Before describing the ruins further, I desire to point out that I was unable to complete to my satisfaction the plan here given, though the main court and its buildings and bastions are to scale. The western bastions were only roughly and hurriedly measured, so I desire my drawing to be considered as a sketch-plan, which time and weather did not allow me to finish.

Entering, we see the hole for a rather slight bar in the north jamb, a passage 6 feet wide and 18 feet long, and side buildings on either hand, 30 feet long. Each consists of two small rooms, with fireplaces in the inner angles, and large chimneys to each pair at the curtain. To each outer side of these buildings a passage 5 feet wide leads up to each eastern bastion by a sloping way. The bastions are 'diamond-shaped,' each inner face 12 feet 6 inches, and

the walls 5 feet thick, with recesses and loopholes in each face, their stonework mostly removed. The range to the north side of the court is about 78 feet long. It has two rooms, the first evidently a kitchen, the other a guard-room; the first is 30 feet long outside, and 24 by 18 feet inside. The next, to the west, of the last, is 43 feet 6 inches long, and 19 feet wide, with a large window flanked by ambries, in the west end, and three loopholes in the north wall towards the harbour; the south walls of both rooms are nearly levelled; portions of two windows remain in the first, with a small loophole commanding the sloping way to the north-east bastion, and a fireplace in the east wall. The partition wall has a door, and the north wall is blank; there seem to be traces of two doors and a window in the south wall of the west room. Separated from it by a passage 6 feet 9 inches wide, is the west range, probably a store – three gloomy rooms, each with a loophole in the west, and with great fireplaces and chimneys; but the face next the court is nearly all broken, and the end walls blank. Behind it a passage, 3 feet 6 inches wide, leads between it and the outer western wall over a creek. In this rampart are opes through which (doubtless by a crane) supplies could be raised from boats. Behind this, to either side, is a bastion, with parallel sides. The northern is 27 feet long; between it and the large room is a smaller bastion, projecting 5 feet, to sweep the northern wall, and 15 feet long. The small south-western bastion is 15 feet long, 7 feet 9 inches wide, with walls, as usual, 4 feet 9 inches to 5 feet thick. It, like the larger one opposite, has loopholes commanding the cove and southward. East from it, in the passage at the south end of the stores, a semicircular turret projects from the outer wall. The latter at 20 feet from the store bends back, with a small house in the angle: I did not find any garderobe in the ruin. The curtain wall runs straight from the angle to the south-eastern bastion without any other features save the narrow walk and loopholes along its summit.



Plan by T. J. Westropp from *R.I.A., Prog., xxxi, part 2, plate x.*

The Rev. John Neary, writing in 1920, states that 'about 1700 a John Burke, sent as Clanricard's agent, dismantled the barracks and erected a residence, now used as R.I.C. barracks, on the upland across the bay.'⁴¹ Whatever John Burke did, the present substantial ruins are impressive and worthy of a modern survey.

Appendix 1 Articles for Inishboffin [1653]⁴²

Articles of agreement between Lieutenant Collonell Henry Flower, Captain Edward Landen, Captain Martin Jubbs, and Captain William Wade, by authority from Commissary-Generall Reynolds, on the behalfe of the Commonwealth on the one parte, and Collonell Richard Bourke, Collonell William Jordan, Lieutenant Collonell Dudley Costelloe, and Captain George Cruse, on the behalfe of themselves and Collonell George Cusack, Governor of Ines buffine, on the other parte, for the surrender of the Island of Inesbuffine and other adjacent Islands, concluded on February 14th, 1652[3].

1. That Colonell George Cusack doe deliver unto Commissary-Generall Reynolds, or whom hee shall appoynt, the Island of Inisbuffine, castle, armes, amunition, ordinance, publique stores, and all other utensills of warr within the said island, without any manner of spoyle or embeizilment, for the use of the Parliament of the commonwealth of England by Thursday next, being 17th Instant, at tenn of the clocke in the forenoone.
2. That all officers and souldiers under the command of Collonell George Cusack and Lieutenant Collonell George Cusack and Lieutenant Collonell Dudley Costello, within the Island of Clere and Enisturke, shall there deliver up within six days after the date hereof all their armes, amunition, publique stores, and all other utensills of warr to Commissary-General Reynolds or whom hee shall appoynt, and that the said island shall bee left to themselves, and the rest of the regiment in order to their transportation untill they bee shipped, they giving Captain Maly as hostage for the delivery of the same, and all others of the same regiment now out of afforementioned Islands, which are to repaire thither, shall, within two dayes after being there, deliver their armes in the said Island, to the Comissary-General or whome hee shall appoynt to receive them.
3. That in consideration of the premises all officers and souldiers and all others included in these articles shall have quarter for life and an Act of indemonety for any thing donn by them from the first day of the warr to the date hereof, murther excepted, of which those who are guilty are not to bee comprehended in these articles or receive any benefitt thereby.
4. That Collonell George Cusack, and all officers and souldiers of what quality soever, shall enjoy what goods and cattle as are properly their owne within the said Islands or elsewhere, and that they and every of them bee allowed 28 dayes time after the surrender of Inisbuffine, winde and weather serving, to take with them, sell or dispose of the same into any of the States, quarters or elsewhere to their best advantage, and passes granted to them for that purpose.
5. That Commissary-Generall Reynolds undertake to transport Collonell Cusack, Lieutenant Collonell Costello, or either of them with one 1000 men, or as many of them as they can produce by the time hereafter limited from Clere Island, to Bilbo, Sebastian, or any other convenient porte in Biskey, within 21 dayes from the date hereof and upon their shipping shall receive for each man 12s. and their being landed shall receive the benefitt of as good conditions as was made with any that have made any contracts with the Spanish agents here, and upon laying down armes, they shall receive one months pay, according to the States rate for their officers and souldiers to the above number, or so many as they shall produce, and that from the 7th March next both officers, and souldiers respectively, shall bee provided for with shipping and provisions, untill they bee landed in Biskey, and that at the Commissary-Generall's charge, and that such of them, as shall not then bee produced, shall, within six weeks from the date hereof, bee transported from Galway, and receive the like provision and conditions for them as for the rest, both here, and in Spaine, and an order of thoroughfare in their march thither.
6. That Collonell George Cusack shall have allowed unto him, to travail about his occasions, 4 horses, 4 swords, and 4 case of pistols; and to Lieutenant-Collonell Bourke, the same, to Lieutenant Dudley Costello, and their field officers, 3 horses, 3 swordes, and 3 case of pistolls; to each Captain,

one horse, one sword, and one cast of pistols; to each Lieutenant and Ensigne, his sword.

7. That all the Prelates and clergymen in Buffine and in the Islands aforesaid shall have protection for their lives, and goods, and bee transported with the rest of the party.

8. That all officers and souldiers now submitting upon these articles shall have as much interest in their owne estates, and as much favor shewed unto them as any other officers and souldiers that laid downe armes since the first of March last shall have of theirs; that such of their wives as shall not bee transported shall be protected in their bodies and goods, and have free liberty to live upon their owne estates or elsewhere in their quarters, paying contribucion, and if any officers shall have occasion to returne hither to their wives, and families, and to transport into Spaine, or to live with them heer, shall be permitted soe to doe, they acting nothing prejudiciall to the State.

9. That all inhabitants, merchants, strangers, forrainers, and all others in the said Islands shall be protected in their persons and goods and estates, paying their contribution, and all such as shall transporte themselves by the 7 of March shall pay no contribution, butt have free liberty to make sale, or transporte by sea or land, to any parte of the Parliaments quarters or elsewhere for their best advantage, all their goods, cattle, and merchandize unto them belonging, and shall have their severall passages to that purpose.

10. That all manner of persons comprehended in these articles shall have free liberty to sue, arrest, or implead any persons justly indebted to them, and have the full benefitt of the law, as to that effect.

11. That the inhabitants of Bellenchensy [Ballinahinch] barony as are now residing in Buffine, or elsewhere under the said Collonell Cusack's command shall have free liberty to repaire to their former dwellings, with their goods and cattle and there to be protected, paying only their contribution for the time to come.

12. That it bee allowed to Lieutenant Collonell Costello's wife, and children, for their family and tennants, to live in the Island of Clounty, in the county of Mayo, where now she liveth, for two yeares yet to come with 4 ploughs and 200 cowes, or as many of them as she or they may have in the lands about the said Island; she and they paying their contribucion accruing due in that country and acting nothing prejudiciall to the State; And the said Lieutenant Collonell, his wife, tenants, children and family shall not bee arrested either in body, or goods, for any act by them or any of them committed, since the beginnige of the warr, to the date hereof; nor for arreares of contribution challenged, pretended to bee due upon the said Lieutenant Collonell other then due debt appearing by bill, cond' or wittnes.

13. That if any person shall violate these articles, it shall bee answered by the person offending, and no others, and their officers endeavouring to bring them to justice; and that Captain Moylett and Captain George Cruse, shall be delivered up as hostages for the surrender of the Island of Inisbuffine by the time aforesaid. In witness of our assent unto, and conclusion on all and every the abovementioned articles, wee have heerunto sett our hands the day and yeare above written.

Rich: Burke.	Hen: Floure.
Wm. Jordan.	Ed: Landon.
Dudley Costello.	Mart: Jubbs.
George Cruse.	Wm. Wade.

It is agreed upon the signing these articles that if any men shall appeare who doe belong to Collonell Cusack who shall not bee armed, to each man, so appearing, nine shillings shall bee allowed, upon the muster taken of them in order to their transportation, besides the 12s. for each souldier at the entring on ship board.

I doe heerby ratify and confirme these articles.

George Cusack.

Appendix 2

Articles and Capitulations agreed upon by Sir Henry Bellasis Governour of Galway, and Colonel Timothy Royrdan, Governour of Buffin, concerning the Surrender of the said Island and Garrison [1691]⁴⁵

First, That the said Island of Buffin, and the Fort thereof, and the adjacent Islands belonging to the Earl of Clanrickard, shall be surrendered to such Officers as shall be appointed by the Governour of Galway, with all the Stores, Ammunition, Provisions and Magazines of all sorts, without Imbezelment, so soon as the Governor of Galway shall think fit to send thither after Captain Nicholas Blake's return from thence.

Secondly, In Consideration of the Surrender as aforesaid, the Garison shall march forth with flying Colours, Drums beating, Match lighted, Bullet in Mouth, and as much Ammunition as each Officer and Souldier can carry with him.

Thirdly, That the Governour, Officers and Souldiers of the said Garison, the Lord Atheery [Athenry], Lieutenant Colonel John Kelly, and all the Inhabitants of the said Islands, shall possess and enjoy their Estates, Real and Personal, as they held, or ought to have held under the Acts of Settlement and Explanation, or otherways, by the Laws of this Kingdom, freely discharged from all Crown-Rents, Quit-Rents, and all other Charges to the Date hereof: And that if the said Colonel John Brown shall desire to go to Limerick, the Governour of Galway promises that he shall be safely conducted thither with his Horses, Servants and Arms.

Fourthly, That the Governour, Officers and Souldiers, and other the Inhabitants thereof, by any Grant of King James the Second, before his Abdication, or any of his Ancestors, shall have a general Pardon of all Attainders, Outlawries, Treasons, Felonies, Premunires, and other Offences committed since the said K. James's Reign, to the Date hereof.

Fifthly, That the Garison, Officers and Souldiers, shall be transported from thence, either to Galway, or the River Shannon, in order to go to Limerick, or otherways march over Land with safe Conduct, as to the Governour shall seem fittest; with Arms, Bag and Baggage, as aforesaid.

Sixthly, That the Governour of Buffin shall be furnished, if need be, with necessary Horses to carry his Equipage to Limerick.

Seventhly, That any of the inhabitants of the said Island that shall desire it, may go or be transported to Limerick, with their Goods, along with the Garison, and be as safely conducted as they; and that if they shall march by Galway, the said Souldiers, if they shall need it, shall be furnished with four Days Provision of Bread for their march to Limerick.

Eightly, That Capt. Michael Cormack, and Capt. Dominick Brown, if they will, may stay and remain in the said Island, and enjoy their Stock, Corn and other Goods, under safe Protection, with their Servants and Families. And that if any of the Garison, Officers or Souldiers, or any of the Inhabitants, shall desire to stay, they may, with the like Advantage and one Priest. That if any Ships shall happen to be at Buffin, at the time of the Surrender, they shall have free liberty to go out of that Harbour; and that the said Capt. Michael Cormuck, and Captain Dominick Brown, may go to any place in the County of Mayo, where their Concerns are, and there remain, with their Corn, Goods and Stock as aforesaid.

Ninthly, That for the due perfecting of these Articles, Captain Nicholas Blake is immediately to repair to Buffin, to have them signed by Colonel Royrdan the Governour of that Place, and in eight Days to return with them so Signed: And for assistance of his return, he hath given Lieut. Col. John Kelly, and Capt. Richard Martin, as Security.

Tenthly, The Governor of Galway promises that the General shall have these Articles and Capitulations ratified, after such manner, and within such time as the Articles of Galway shall be.

That for due performance of these Articles and Capitulations, the Governour of Galway, and the Governour of Buffin, have interchangeably Signed and Sealed them, the 19th Day of August 1691.

Signed and sealed in the presence of Tim. Royrdan.

Geo. Dunbar,

Anthony Tellett.

Notes

I am indebted to the Military History Society of Ireland for permission to reprint pp105-17 of this article, which appeared in *The Irish Sword*, No. 67, under the title 'Inishbofin – the Ultimate Stronghold.'

1. *Clare Island Survey*, Part 2 (1915).
2. Knox, H.T. *The History of the County of Mayo* (1908), p. 38.
3. Ó Móráin, Pádraig, *A Short Account of the History of Burrishoole Parish* 1957, p. 5.
4. *Ibid.*, pp 58-9.
5. Knox, op. cit., p. 44.
6. Logan, Patrick, *The Holy Wells of Ireland* (1980), p. 76; see Duffy, Jarlath, 'Kilmeena, Part I', *Cathair na Mart*, Vol. 5 (1985) p. 6.
7. See Ó Móráin, op. cit., p. 11; Ua Tiománaidhe, Micheál, *Targaireacht Bhriain Ruaidh* (1906), p. 38; Ó Moghráin, P., 'Naomh Bréanainn Chluain Fearta agus Ceap-Sinsear na Máilleach', *Béaloideas*, Iml. xxii (1953), pp 154-90; Ó Riain, Pádraig, 'Two Legends of the Uí Máille', *Éigse*, xiv (1971-2), pp 1-12.
8. Hennessy, William M. (ed.), *Annals of Loch Cé* (1871), 1235.
9. There is a certain discrepancy in the figures given for the acreage of the island by the various authorities, but this is the modern official figure.
10. James Morrissey, *Inishbofin* (1987) gives an interesting overall view of the island.
11. The figures given for the carrying capacity of the O'Malley galleys in the annals and in the state papers vary between 70 and 300.
12. For more information on Gráinne see Anne Chambers, *Granuaile, the life and times of Grace O'Malley* (1979).
13. Ulick, fifth earl of Clanricard (1604-57) was the only son of Richard, the fourth earl of Clanricard and first earl of St. Albans, and of Frances Walsingham widow of Sir Philip Sidney and Robert, earl of Essex (John Lowe, ed., *Letter-book of the earl of Clanricarde, 1643-47*, 1983, p.xvii). John Burke, second son of William, seventh earl of Clanricard, was created Baron Bophin by James II in 1689.
14. Clanricard, Ulick de Burgh, fifth earl, afterwards marquis of, *Memoirs* (London 1757), pp 55, 59.
15. M. D. O'Sullivan, *Old Galway* (1942), p.280. Professor O'Sullivan gives an excellent account of the part played by the earl in the insurrection.
16. For the negotiations with Lorraine, see O'Sullivan, *Old Galway*; E. P. Duffy, 'Clanricarde and the duke of Lorraine' in *Galway Arch. Soc. Jn.*, xxxi (1964-5) pp 71-99.
17. *Old Galway*, p. 306.
18. It is difficult to ascertain what help Lorraine sent to Ireland. According to a letter from Anthony Geoghegan, prior of Conell and vicar-general of Meath, to Father William Shiell, 4 February 1652, in J.T. Gilbert, *Contemp. hist.*, 1641-52, iii, p. 285, a ship with wheat, rye and powder came from Lorraine to Aran on 28 January. At the same time a frigate and two more ships arrived at Inishbofin. Dean King states that the aid consisted of £20,000, with £16,000 'defalked for the charge of the negotiations', 1,000 arms, 30 barrels of powder and 1,000 barrels of rye (*ibid.*, p.302).
19. Robert Dunlop, *Ireland under the commonwealth* (1913), i, p.255. For information on Aran at this period, see J.R.W. Goulden, 'Arkin: an outpost in Aran' in *Ir. Sword*, i, no. 4 (1952-3), pp 262-7.
20. Dunlop, *Commonwealth*, ii, p. 303.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 310.

22. For the Articles, see Appendix 1.
23. *Memoirs of the earl of Castlehaven* (1815), pp 96-7.
24. P. F. Moran, *Spicilegium Ossoriense* (1874-84), i, p.95.
25. Gilbert, *Contemp. hist.*, 1641-52, iii, p.370.
26. *Ibid.*, pp 370-1.
27. *Ibid.*, i, pp 142-44. The bishop concerned was Dr. Walter Lynch, who had been warden of Galway for several terms. He arrived with the governor and garrison of Inishbofin at Ostend in April. From there he went to Gyor in Hungary, bringing with him a famous painting of the Madonna, which still hangs in the cathedral there and is the subject of widespread veneration (see James Mitchell, 'Fiction and "The Empty Frame"' *Galway Arch. Soc. Jn.*, Vol. 40 [1985-6] pp 20-48).
28. Anthony Marmion, *The ancient and modern history of the maritime ports of Ireland* (1855), p. 447, states that Cromwell erected the fort there to protect the island from the Dutch, 'whose principal deep sea fishing was then off this coast'. He writes further that 'the harbour can accommodate a great number of vessels not drawing more than ten or eleven feet of water, and is placed in the centre of those immense fishing banks which extend from Lough Foyle to Cape Clear.'
29. Original council book, Dublin Castle, as quoted by James Hardiman, ed. Roderic O'Flaherty, *West or H-Iar Connaught* (Galway, 1978).
30. James Hardiman, *History of Galway* (Dublin, 1820), p. 134. J.R.W. Goulden, op. cit., p. 266, states that the soldiers in 1665 were allowed four pence each per day when moving to new stations, quoting from *Ormonde MSS*, i.
31. Dunlop, *Commonwealth*, ii, p. 657.
32. *Ormonde MSS*, i, p. 251.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
34. *Ibid.*, pp 296-7.
35. *Ibid.*, pp 297-9.
36. *Ibid.*, pp 303, 322-3.
37. *Ibid.*, ii, p.209, i. p.387.
38. See Story, *A continuation of the history of the wars in Ireland* (1693), pp 198-201. For the articles of capitulation, see Appendix 2. Colonel O'Riordan is described as 'Colonel Timothy Royrdan' in Story. His must have been a very late creation, as his rank in J. D'Alton, *King James's Irish army list*, ii, p. 337, is given as 'Major Timothy O'Riardon.' In the last stages of the war promotions were freely given.
39. Story, *Continuation*, p. 253, has the following query opposite Article 13: 'Whether it be to conform to the laws of war, that one and the same person should be included in articles of surrender of three distinct places, as was Col. J. Browne.'
40. Part 2, pp 71-2.
41. 'History of Innishbofin and Innishark' in *I.E.R.*, xi (Jan-June 1920), pp 216-28.
42. Gilbert, *Contemp. his.* 1641-52, pp 364-6.
43. Story, *Continuation*, pp 199-201.

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Settlement, Population and Economy of the Mayo Islands (including Inishbofin)

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By Stephen A. Royle,

Introduction

It is fitting that a geographer should address an historical conference on this particular topic because the challenges faced by those who live and work on islands are essentially geographical. These challenges are and have been faced by inhabitants of all islands at all times throughout history; consequently the settlement, population, and economy of islands, essentially their human geography, show much commonality (Royle, 1989).

Three major areas of challenge can be identified. Firstly, isolation. By their very nature, islands are not well-connected. There is always an extra stretch of water to be crossed which costs money, whilst this stretch of water can act as a barrier to outside influences, tending to make an island community inward looking and, in some cases, old fashioned, even backward. Secondly, there is the economic problem faced by island societies of having to sustain themselves from what the island can provide. Too often this provision is meagre and frequently on islands there develops an imbalance between population and resources, which may result in the necessity for islanders to migrate and/or the necessity for the island community to seek outside help.

Finally, there is a group of challenges brought about by what is usually a relatively small scale of society on an island. Small communities can provide only a limited range of services for themselves and tend to be able to provide only limited infrastructures. This may make life on an island less attractive than life elsewhere. Island economies often are of insufficient size to provide economies of scale; this can and does increase living costs – another disincentive to life on an island as compared to a nearby mainland area. And, finally, islands are usually powerless. Throughout history islands have been invaded, bought, sold, even swapped (for example the British basically swapped Heligoland for Zanzibar

with the Germans in 1890). Islands generally have very little political clout, because of their small size.

It is the author's contention that all islands through at least some, if not all, stages of their history, have suffered from these problems. Even the two major island groups that were once colonial powers, Great Britain and Japan, were themselves powerless at times, dominated by outside, continental forces: during the Dark Ages and earlier when Great Britain was repeatedly invaded, and after the Second World War in the case of Japan when, following its defeat, the country was administered by American officials for a few years.

This paper will seek to illustrate these three general themes by reference to the Mayo islands, during the last one hundred and fifty years or thereabouts.

Isolation

In 1837 it was recorded that 'the pier which was erected at the only landing-place in the island [of Inishturk] has fallen into ruin' (Lewis, Vol. II, p. 25). The implications of this bald statement were made clear a few years later when the 80 Inishturk families, all chiefly dependent on fishing, were described as being 'hardly able, though living in the centre of the most valuable fishery on the coast, to obtain a sufficient supply for their own support.' (*Parliamentary Gazetteer*, 1846) because of the ruined pier. An 'artificial' harbour, as it was described, was planned. The isolation of Inishturk and the consequent economic penalty could, thus, be reduced. It could never, though, be overcome.

A new pier or harbour, an improved ferry service, only make the final journey from the mainland easier; they do not make it unnecessary and it still costs money to take. Even in the limiting case, a bridge, as with Achill, only reduces isolation. While it was a true island without its bridge, commentators reported on its remote and backward ways:

Its inhabitants, till within the last eight or nine years, were in a condition, as to manners, ideas, and arts, little if at all, different from their ancestors of the fourteenth or fifteenth century ... rude, poor and outré (*Parliamentary Gazetteer*, 1846).

Mr and Mrs Hall in 1840 had been amused by the island's primitive customs, reporting on a race between two swains, the winner to gain the affections of a young woman (pp. 397-8). After the first of the Michael Davitt bridges had been built in 1887 (see McNally, 1973), Achill did not suddenly become well-connected and advanced. It remained, and remains, in the extreme west of an island, itself on the extreme western periphery of Europe. The bridge and the road are basically a cul-de-sac: Achill is the end of the line. Thus, a couple of generations after the opening of the bridge, Mason reported on the survival here, and only here, of the ancient practice of summer booley migration of stock and keepers up to the old Slievemore village (1936, p.39). A

few more generations on, a television film crew making that noted programme, *Shark hunters of Achill Island* (shown on 4 December 1984 on Ulster Television), used much of their footage on Charlie Tom O'Malley, last of the old-time Achill curragh makers, and his attempts to pass on his skills to keep this ancient craft alive. But Achill's isolation is now of the order of, say, the Mullet peninsula; it is not of the order of, say, Clare Island. Achill now makes much money from the holiday trade; Clare and the others are that much more cut off, and fewer visitors come. From Achill, the livestock can be driven to market; from Clare and the others they still have to travel by boat – at increased expense.

Generally speaking, relative isolation is better than almost absolute isolation, but there have been occasions when isolation has served as a resource for the Mayo islands, an attraction for those seeking isolation for religious purposes for example. Mayo may not boast the Skelligs, but it does have Caher – *Cathair na Naomh*, city of the saints, with its ancient monastery (see, for example, McNally, 1978). Isolation has also been used by those with more warlike intentions. The strategic location of the islands has seen them being fortified in times both ancient and modern; for example, the Achillbeg site of Dún Kilmore, fortified by different cultures from the early iron age until the fifteenth century; or the Cromwellian castle on Inishbofin; or the use made of the islands, especially Achill and Clare, as a stronghold by Grace O'Malley, 'high spirited, bold and adventurous ... ever foremost in danger' (Lewis, 1837, Vol. 1, p. 336), who was such a thorn in the flesh of Elizabeth I of England. The castle bearing her name, even though probably never her permanent place of residence, still stands on Clare, a structure unremarkable in itself, yet lent much romance by its association with the very remarkable Granuaile.

Limited Resources

The *Parliamentary Gazetteer* of 1844-45 described Clare as 'one of the most fertile [islands] ... nearly all in a tolerably good state of cultivation ... susceptible ... of being made ... a miniature paradise.' Yet 30 years later, far from having become a paradise, Clare was in such distress that the *Freeman's Journal* had opened a subscription fund for its relief (Moran, 1985, pp. 54-5). Gerard Moran's analysis of the problems on Clare in the 1870s lays much blame at the door of a harsh new landlord, Martin MacDonnell, from Westport who 'from the outset declared his intention of extracting as much rent as was possible from his new investment' (p.55) but, at that time, as on so many other occasions, part of the difficulty was the development of an imbalance between population and resources caused by failures in potato and oat crops. Additionally, some resources are finite and essentially non-renewable, and as late as 1956 Haughton commented unfavourably on the continuing practice of taking scraw sods for fuel on Inishbofin, 'a short-sighted policy which will make it necessary to reduce the number of sheep on the commonage in the near future' (p. 126).

The basic problem is that small size, limited arable land and difficult

weather conditions can make wresting a living from the western Irish islands difficult at the best of times, and if there is any particular problem – with an important crop or the fish – there are few alternatives or reserves upon which to fall back. Throughout much of their history the islands were being utilised to the limit and beyond of their resources. Distress was a constantly recurring theme throughout the nineteenth century – despite Clare's 'paradise' potential. Moran notes that:

reports of continuous distress were common from such places as Clare Island, Achill Island, Connemara, Inishturk and Inishbofin [see also Brady, 1873]. Poverty and the failure of the potato crop were ever-recurring themes in these regions, and the problem of relieving the distress was exacerbated by their geographical remoteness (p. 54).

The normal island response to population-resource pressure was to use any possible means to produce food and/or make money. Browne (1893) noted for Inishbofin that every family had to combine fishing with farming. Much later Haughton reported on many other activities here that were engaged upon to provide additional income – provision for tourists, shops, crafts etc. (1956, p. 126). In the early nineteenth century, before the Great Famine reduced population pressures, this occupational pluralism was at its height on Irish islands. Because of data availability, this can be seen most clearly on the Aran Islands, Co. Galway in the 1820s:

islanders ... produced all their own food and clothing and built their own houses, thatching with home-grown rye straw, but the economy had moved beyond simple subsistence given the evidence of trade with the mainland in Aran products such as calves, fish, lobsters, kelp, feathers, and, possibly, textiles, (Royle, 1983, p.50).

Table 1 shows that Aran's population density was below the mean for a series of similar islands in 1821, but Aran had particular problems caused by its limestone geology's legacy of a lack of soil and surface water, and the marginality of its economy was seen in 1822 when it was badly hit by potato failure caused by adverse weather conditions (Royle 1984). Lewis (1837) and the *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1846) report reasonably favourably on the three Mayo islands shown in the table, though the lack of a decent pier on Inishturk has been noted, but their population densities were well above the mean, and they were subject to population pressure should anything go wrong, as it did on a number of occasions, including the 1870s, as noted above.

Achill, though having a population density rather less, (c. 0.35 persons per ha in 1831) had much unusable mountain and bog land and, as McNally puts it:

For much of their history the people of Achill have struggled to derive a livelihood from inherently infertile soils. The conditions of absolute poverty, overcrowding and land abuse that prevailed in the island

during the Great Famine had been only marginally ameliorated by the turn of the century (1978, p.49).

Confirmation of this comes from the *Irish Daily Independent* for 29 June 1894. Achill was described as:

a stretching patch of bog and barren soil ... There are 6,000 people living in the most miserable hovels ... The few fowl, the pig, the horses, the cow, are only a wretched mimicry filling up the scene. They bring in next to nothing but the Irish peasantry will try every means of turning a penny, (cited in Clarke, 1986).

One such means of turning a penny was to leave the islands and seek seasonal employment elsewhere – the Achill 'tatie squads' were well known in Great Britain. However, with seasonal migration, as on all occasions when the islands had to be left, their isolation was a problem. The fare to Britain had to be paid, even getting to the mainland was both a cost and a risk. Thirty two seasonal migrants from Achill to Westport overturned in Clew Bay, (see Clarke, 1986, and see McNally, 1973 for an account of seasonal migration from Achill).

Another response to population pressure was to seek help (or to have help forced upon you) from outside. Sometimes the help has been advisory – the islanders in their goldfish bowl being scrutinised by outsiders, usually for the best possible motives, as with the Clare Island Survey (1911-15) or the Geographical Society of Ireland visit to Inishbofin in 1954 (Freeman, 1958; Grahame, 1956, Haughton, 1956 and Jones-Hughes, 1956). At other times the help has been direct and practical, from reforming landlords, the Congested Districts Board and, more controversially, the Achill Island Mission.

The Achill Mission was set up by Edward Nangle (1799-1883), who came from an old Anglo-Norman family in Meath. During the 1831 famine in Connacht, Nangle helped to organize a shipment of meal to Achill and decided to set up a protestant missionary settlement on what was then a very remote and poor island. It began in 1834 and its slow start can be noted from the Committee of Public Instruction report of 1835 (British Parliamentary Papers, 1835). By this time there was no Established Church on the island, but divine service was performed at a private house in Doogorth (Dugort), the settlement of the 'mission to Achill and the islands'. The average attendance was 15-20 if the weather was bad; up to 35 in fine weather from a total Established Church congregation of 156. Quite how far the Mission had to go in its proselytizing, can be seen by the size of the Roman Catholic population, 5583, supporting two chapels with a combined attendance up to 900 and 'increasing'. It was the way in which Nangle tried to vary this imbalance between the religions that caused the controversy.

The mission's zealotry and its blatant sectarianism, especially its organ, the *Achill Missionary Herald and Western Witness* were challenged by Catholic and Protestant clergy alike (Bowen, 1970, see also Whelan, 1987) and there were

allegations of souperism, particularly during the Great Famine. 'Souperism' refers to what is basically the bringing of people to convert by offers of food aid, presumably including soup. The Halls were particularly opposed to this type of activity and in 1842 praised the fortitude of those islanders who refused to seek help from the mission lest they risked the degradation of their religion (Mr and Mrs S.C. Hall, 1846). However, McNally reports that 'there is every indication that the mission did everything in its power to relieve distress among Catholics and Protestants alike' (1973, p.99). The mission, after 1852 the outright landlord of 60% of Achill as well as Inishbiggle, though never an 'improving' landlord (Bowen, 1970, p.101) achieved some temporal advantages, bettering living conditions and agriculture, and McNally even assigns the commencement of Achill's tourist trade to the building of the mission's hotel at Dugort in 1840. The mission abandoned its work in 1880 because of financial problems and the out-migration of many of its converts, (Bowen, 1970, p. 103) and now a rather forlorn notice on its church gate notes that the building is 'maintained by the few protestants who live here'. The mission's bricks and mortar legacy remains in the form of the settlement at Dugort, a neat, well-regulated, planned village that stands in contrast to the other less ordered settlements on the island.

With regard to landlords, mention has already been made of Clare's MacDonnell in the 1870s and generally the Mayo islands were not served by improving landlords, though Orme in his general work on Ireland does illustrate landlord-reorganised settlement by reference to Ashleam on Achill (1970, p.150). It was an outside body to which the islands had to look for much of their improvement, the Congested Districts Board. The Board's role was to acquire land and property in the overcrowded areas of the west of Ireland, to carry out improvements, eventually enabling the land to belong to its inhabitants. (Micks, 1925). Clare Island was one of the Board's first projects, it having acquired the island for £5,486 from the MacDonnell family in 1895, keen to sell by that time because they had been having great difficulty in collecting rents, even having to resort to sending in a boatload of police in 1880. (Though, in an uncanny similarity to Tory Island, Co. Donegal, when a government cutter, *The Wasp* failed to reach the island when on a mission to collect taxes in 1884, the Royal Irish Constabulary expedition to Clare failed, their boat getting stuck on a sandbank). When the Board took over the island there was more cause for trust and, during the transition phase when the island was being reorganised, rents were paid. The Board reapportioned the island from its then pattern of very fragmented holdings into 74 farms (Figure 1) and, significantly in landscape terms, built a c. 1.7m wall for five miles across the island to separate the tillage land, particularly in the more fertile south of the island, from common pasture land further north, (Dwyer, 1963). The tenants were issued with purchase annuities to replace rental payments at 3½% interest over 68½ years with a provision forbidding subdivision of the land (McNally, 1978). However, pressures for subdivision hardly arose, for the island's population loss from 490 in 1901 at about the time of the Board's work to 239 in 1956, close to the date of Dwyer's

survey had led to nine farms falling vacant by that time (1963). Since then the population has declined by another hundred or so, further relieving any population pressure on the land.

The Congested Districts Board carried out similar work elsewhere. For example, it purchased Inishbofin, once part of the holdings of the absentee landlord, the Marquess of Sligo, from a Mr. C. Allies in 1907. Each family was issued with six or seven acres (c. 2.5 ha) of improved land, plus a share of commonage on the mountains, whilst new farms were created away from the villages for those who could not be accommodated in the traditional population clusters. Investment was also made into the fishing industry's infrastructure (Jones-Hughes, 1956). New houses were also built on Clare, Inishbofin and elsewhere, typically rectangular concrete, slated structures immediately recognisable on islands all around the coast from Tory to Clear.

The islands continue to need and to receive help from outside, both remittances from migrants and state aid (see, for example, Freeman for Inishbofin, 1958; Dwyer for Clare 1963). More recently, European Community aid has eased Irish insular life. Thus a sign at the harbour on Aranmore, Co. Donegal, acknowledges, in Irish, grant aid from the European Regional Development Fund. Harbour works at Inishbofin have also been aided by outside sources. Those islands in the Gaeltacht benefit from language grants; every island has people receiving unemployment and other social benefits; support for agriculture and fishing continues. These payments are rights, not acts of charity, but they are costs to the national revenue, and it was once observed to the author that the population of Clear Island could be permanently housed in the best hotel in west Cork at a saving in cost to the Irish taxpayer. The late Professor T.W. Freeman, a noted geographer, known for his directness, remarked about Inishbofin thus:

'(Inishbofin) is an area in which the work begun by the Congested Districts Board has borne fruit, whose people live reasonably well by crofting standards thanks to the help of emigrants and of the state' (1958, p.209).

but earlier he had stated that:

'if one believes that every inhabited area must make its *economic* (my italics) contribution to the state, Inishbofin is a debtor on a considerable scale' (1958, p. 202).

The small scale of society

Another response to population pressure is for sections of the population to leave, not seasonably, but permanently. All the islands have suffered population loss, usually of the young adult sections of their society, leaving the islands with an imbalanced, ageing population structure (Figure 2). If there is only a small population to begin with, an island suffering from outmigration can reach the stage when its community is no longer viable and complete depopulation will

Figure 1. THE PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT ON CLARE ISLAND IN 1956.

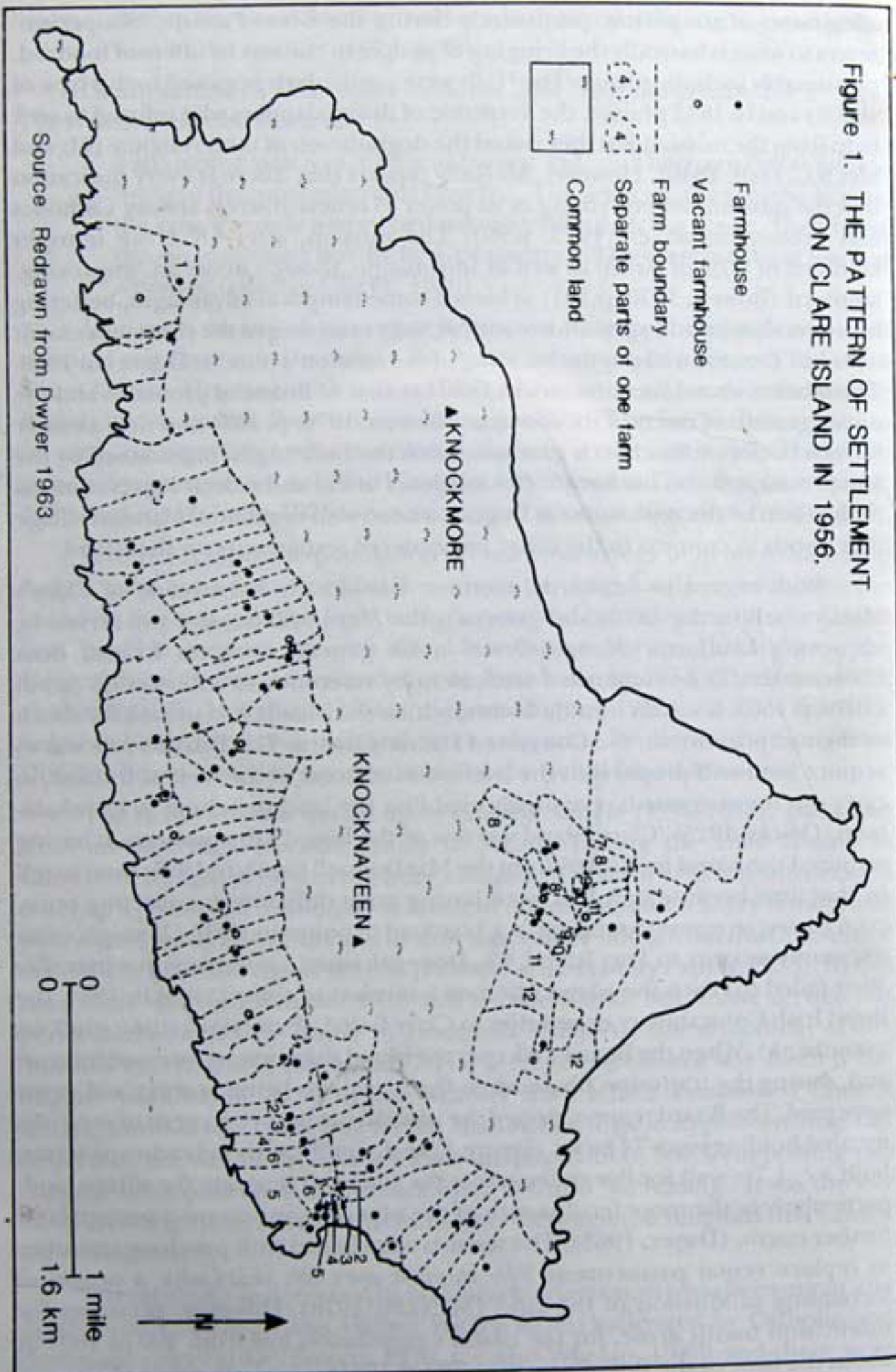
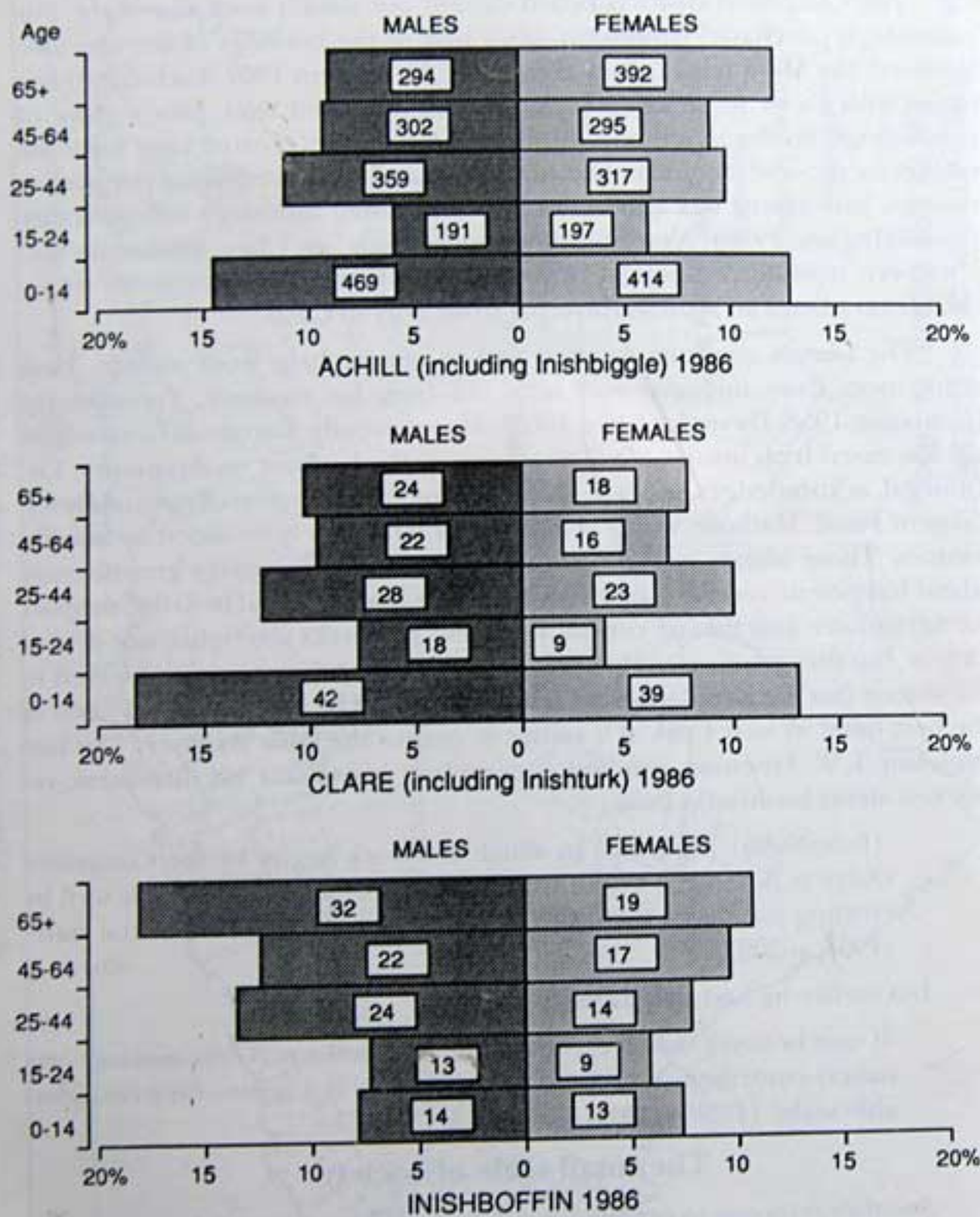


Figure 1: The Pattern of Settlement on Clare Island in 1956.

Figure 2. POPULATION PYRAMIDS 1986



Source: 1986 Census

14 absolute population

Figure 2: Population Pyramids 1986

result. Depopulations have been occurring for a century or more all around the Irish coast. Sometimes there is the drama of the last boat out, taking with it the remnant of the island's population, bag and baggage, as with the Great Blasket in 1953 (see, for example, Stagles and Stagles, 1980). More often depopulation is a slow drift of people away from the island, making its continued occupation at first marginal, then intolerable, and then, one winter, nobody stays. This process was observed on Gola, Co. Donegal in the late 1960s (Aalen and Brody, 1969), and it is now almost complete for the 'other' Inishboffin in Co. Donegal, the population of which in recent winters has dropped as low as two, though the island remains lively enough in the summer fishing season. For the Mayo islands, the remains of settlement can be seen on North and South Inishkea, Caher, Achillbeg and Inishark, not to mention some of the tiny Clew Bay islands. McNally (1978) describes Achillbeg's population decline from 117 in 1911, its highest total since 1861, to just 38 in 1961 when habitation could no longer be supported, the provision of social services being no longer viable and the islanders transferred to Achill in the mid-1960s, though Achillbeg is still used for grazing and some of its houses are inhabited seasonally.

Inishark, just off Inishboffin, was visited as part of the Geographical Society of Ireland's fieldtrip in 1954. By then it had just 40 people (Freeman, 1958) and Haughton noted that only nine were able-bodied men. This put Inishark into his 'critical stage' where it was no longer a 'self-contained social unit', and it was only a matter of time before the settlement disappeared (1956, p. 127). After this visit, Freeman, in his direct way, summed up Inishboffin's prospects for continued occupation thus:

as long as the fuel holds out (see Grahame, 1956), there seems to be no reason why the island should not remain inhabited ... though the cost of maintaining this community to the state and its relatives could form the subject for an economist (1958, p. 209).

Inishboffin has remained inhabited (Table 2), though population loss has continued.

There is little the islanders can do about the provision of services beyond the economic threshold of their population sizes – and those bound to be provided by the state, such as schools, must be provided at an uneconomic cost. For commercial services not viable on the islands, the inhabitants must do what generations have done before them, travel to their mainland town. They can do little, either, about the cost penalties of their communities' lack of economies of scale. The generating station on Clare produces, presumably, a reasonably efficient service, but at what must be a considerably greater unit cost than on the mainland.

However, there is one challenge brought about by the small scale of their society that the islanders have gone some way to meeting. They have tried to overcome the problem of their individual powerlessness, as will be detailed in the next section.

The present situation

With the exception of Achill and its bridge, the islands are still isolated. Sheep being exported from Clare still have to be put into a boat at an extra cost that will not be reflected in any higher returns at the mainland market; inbound goods still have to come across the sea at an extra cost. Inishbofin has a new harbour but this only eases the problem of isolation, it does not remove it. People from that island wishing to come to this conference still had to say that they would come 'weather permitting' (personal communication), not a factor that this writer had to take into consideration, even though he was coming from a much greater absolute distance. Isolation and the small scale of society are still extracting their price upon the lives of the Mayo islanders. Recently, the *Irish Times* presented an article on Inishbiggle (16 December 1986), population now 82. The article noted that the island was cut off for up to 100 days per year; that it had no pier; no roads; only dirt tracks; no shops; no accommodation for visitors; no Catholic church; though there is a Church of Ireland church, presumably resulting from the activities of the Achill mission, but without a vicar for the congregation of three. There is no graveyard. The article added that without some infrastructural improvements, there might soon be no people. The Inishbiggle Community Council was campaigning for a fixed link to Achill as 'one last desperate effort to ensure ... survival'.

Further recent bad press has come the islands' way in the form of the book by Deborah Tall, *Island of the White Cow* (1986). Tall, an American writer, came to find escape on the island with a new husband. Her book about her five years' residence does not portray the island or its people in a good light. A *Sunday Press* report describes it mildly as 'quite unsentimental in its description of the harshness of the place and the circumscribed lives of its people' (15 June 1986). The latter comes across with unnecessary forcefulness. Like another American writing on Irish islands, Tall attempts to conceal the identity of her island. But just as John Messenger gave away the identity of his 'Inis Beag' by including photographs and an accurate map of its reality, Inisheer, so Tall, by calling her place the Island of the White Cow reveals its identity as Inishbofin, a name which translated into English means just that. Further, in his widely read, classic book on Irish islands, T.H. Mason starts his chapter on Inishbofin, by not only stating what its name means in English, but by recounting the legend of the white cow which gave the island its name in the first place (1936, p. 48).

Turning to another medium, film, we can consider *Desecration*, directed by Neville Presho (1981). This is a story of a geologist who finds tungsten beneath an old ruin which an islander was trying to restore. The film becomes a saga of conflict between the need for jobs, which developing the tungsten would bring, opposed to the need to protect the island's heritage, the ruin which could be destroyed by the mining. Islanders, plumping for the jobs, damage the ruin just before a government official arrives with a preservation order: the restorer becomes distraught and the geologist feels that he has violated the island. A

made up story, certainly, but one filmed on Inishbofin and one which presents rather a negative image of some of the fictional islanders.

However, all is not bad news and poor publicity for Inishbofin and the Mayo islands. On the economic front, new resources have come on stream recently. Fish farming is being developed, a potential saviour for many a coastal Atlantic island from the west coast in Canada (e.g. Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick) to our eastern coasts in northwest Europe. For example the population of Mull in the Inner Hebrides has risen by 1000 in the last ten years to about 3000 'partly due to the introduction of fish farming' (*The Independent* 18 March 1989), and it is appropriate to record that one of the sponsors of this conference is Clare Island Seafarm. In this increasingly busy and crowded world, quiet, peaceful places offer sought-after holiday relaxation, and it is not just Achill but all the populated islands that make some money from tourism.

Finally, with regard to political powerlessness, there is progress here with the foundation within the last few years of the *Comhdháil na nOileán*, the Federation of the Islands of Ireland, a grouping together of 16 offshore islands, without fixed links to the mainland – Achill cannot join – from Rathlin off Co. Antrim, round anticlockwise to Clear and Sherkin off Co. Cork (Royle, 1986). Inishbofin (in fact both Inishbofins), Inishturk, Inishbiggle and Clare are members. The *Comhdháil na nOileán* speaks with the combined force of all the sixteen communities facing similar challenges off the coasts of Ireland, and it has succeeded in pressurising the Irish government to set up a Ministerial Islands Committee to oversee island affairs, a considerable step up on their previous positions as tiny, isolated, offshore responsibilities of several different county councils. The *Comhdháil na nOileán* seeks better communications for its member islands, better educational and health service provision whilst, paradoxically, it would like to see Inishbiggle become disbarred from membership by its support of that island's community council's campaign for a fixed link (though if the cheapest alternative was to be provided, namely a cable car link, then Inishbiggle could stay a member following the precedent of Dursey, attached to mainland Kerry by cable car but represented in the *Comhdháil*).

Freeman's last word on Inishbofin a generation ago was that 'this island is not, and, presumably, cannot be self-supporting under modern conditions' (1958, p. 209). Things are still not all rosy. Table 2 and Figure 2 show that population loss is still continuous, except for a slight easing on Clare, and the 1986 population pyramids indicate an ageing and imbalanced population structure for each island. However, the *Comhdháil na nOileán* is very well aware of the continued challenges of island life, and at least there now exists an organisation that will fight to keep the islands inhabited. Appropriately, the present secretary of the *Comhdháil na nOileán* is from Inishbofin and she, and the other islanders in the area, may yet prove Freeman to have been wrong.

Table 1: Area and population density of similar Irish islands in 1821

Island	Area (ha)	Population	Population Density (persons per ha)
Inishmore	3044	2285	0.75
Inishmaan	911	387	0.42
Inisheer	567	421	0.74
Aran Islands	4522	3093	0.68
Arranmore	1762	788	0.45
Clare	1598	1395	0.87
Clear	608	886	1.42
Great Blasket	413	128	0.31
Inishbofin	936	1053	1.13
Inishturk	585	456	0.78
Rathlin	1375	1104	0.80
Mean			0.75

Table 2: Population of the major Mayo islands and Inishbofin 1961-1986.

Island	1961	1966	1971	1979	1981	1986
Achill	4069	3958	3129	3089	3190	3148
Inishbiggle	113	103	112	97		82
Clare	205	167	168	132	203	230
Inishturk	108	92	83	85		
Inishbofin	248	247	236	203	195	177

Source: Census Reports.

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Stephen Royle was born in Lancashire and attended school in Essex and Birmingham before reading geography at St. John's College, Cambridge and taking a Ph.D. at Leicester. Since 1976 he has been Lecturer in Geography at Queen's University Belfast. His research is largely on urban historical geography and on islands and, though much of this is now set within Ireland, he has ambitions to research St. Helena.



December 1988, launching of *Cathair na Mart*, Vol. 8 and *My Stand for Freedom*. Left to right: Jarlath Duffy, Mark Killilea, M.E.P., Sheila Mulloy, Jim Kemmy, T.D.



December 1988, launching of *Cathair na Mart*, Vol. 8. From left to right: Kitty O'Malley Harlow (Secretary W.H.S.), Christy Lawless (Castlebar), Jarlath Duffy (Chairman, W.H.S.), Marie Kelly (contributor), Jim Kemmy T.D., Sheila Mulloy (Vice-Chairperson, W.H.S.), Brian Mannion (Vice-Chairman, W.H.S.), Don McGreevy (sponsor), John D. Clark (contributor).

Westport Historical Society

Proceedings 1 December 1988 – 30 November 1989

Cathair na Mart, Vol. 8, No. 1. (1988) was launched in the Public Library, Westport, on Saturday 10 December by Jim Kemmy, T.D. At the same time *My Stand for Freedom*, by the late Joe Baker, edited by Jarlath Duffy and published by the Society, was launched by Mark Killilea, M.E.P. There was a large attendance including Enda Kenny, T.D., Senator Martin J. O'Toole, Chairman of Mayo County Council; the Chairman and members of Westport Urban District Council; members of the McGreevy and Baker families. The event was co-sponsored by McGreevy's, represented by Don McGreevy and by Mrs Mary Baker.

Our fourth **School of History**, based on the theme **Our Western Islands, Their Past, Present and Future**, was held in the Westport Ryan Hotel on 7-9 March. This was a most successful event, being well attended, with a varied and interesting programme:

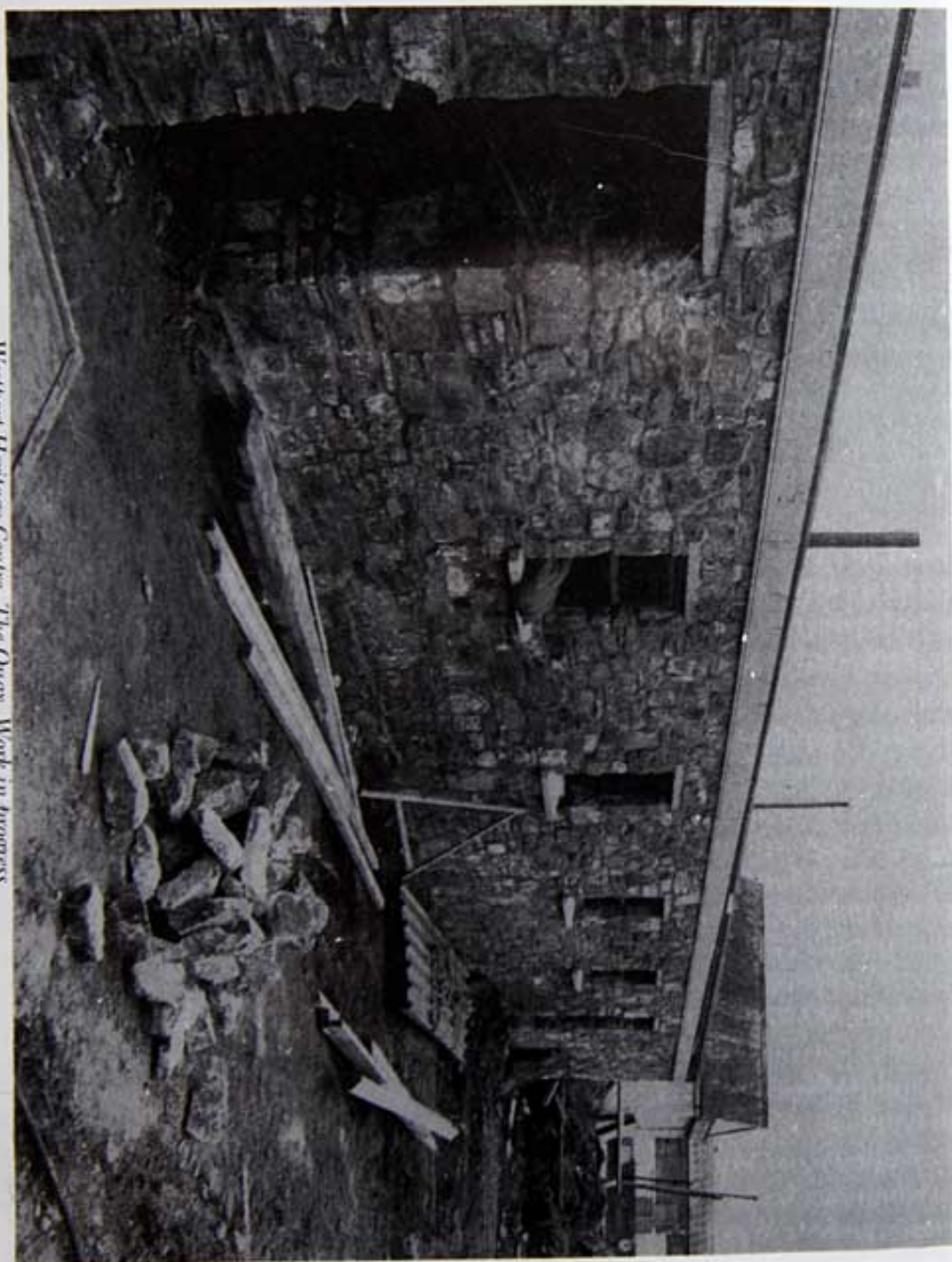
Friday 7 April, 7.30 p.m.: 'Natural History of the Islands', by Dr. Tony Whilde. 8.45 p.m.: 'Hermit Islands off the Mayo Coast', by Prof. Michael Herity.

Saturday 8 April, 10.30 a.m.: 'Geology of the Mayo Islands', by Dr. Adrian Phillips. 12 noon: 'Settlement, Population and Economy of the Islands', by Dr. Stephen Royle. 2.30 p.m.: 'Inishbofin – the Ultimate Stronghold', by Dr. Sheila Mulloy. 4.00 p.m.: Meet the Islanders and Fishfarmers. 8.00 p.m.: Annual Dinner of Westport Historical Society.

Sunday 9 April, Excursion to view the fish farms in Clew Bay, whose sponsorship of the conference is acknowledged with grateful thanks by the Society.

Dr. Royle was kind enough to write the following account of the conference in *Geoneus*, No. 24 (May 1989):

The Westport Historical Society are to be congratulated on organising an imaginative, multidisciplinary conference on the Mayo islands (including Inishbofin, part of Mayo until the 1870s). There was gathered together an eclectic mix of invited speakers: Tony Whilde, ecologist (Corrib Conservation Centre); Michael Herity, archaeologist (U.C.D.); Adrian Phillips, geologist (T.C.D.); Stephen Royle, geographer (Q.U.B.); and Sheila Mulloy, military historian (Military History Society of Ireland). Their five lectures, mostly well illustrated and all well received from an audience of around seventy, were developed from



their varied academic studies of the islands. The lecturers were not exactly outsiders, several had spent a good deal of time on the islands in question, but their reports were those of people whose lives are lived elsewhere. The imaginative part of the conference was to leaven these academic presentations with a session in which the voices of the islanders themselves could be heard. Thus the PRO of the Irish islands federation, Comhdháil na nOileán, spoke on the achievements of this all-Ireland island pressure group since its formation in the mid-1980s and a number of islanders made their own contributions. A further presentation was by the conference's sponsors, the fishfarmers of Clew Bay and Clare Island, whose activities are bringing much needed employment, and what is more, productive employment, to the West coast and some of the islands. This presentation included a very welcome opportunity to sample some of their wares, washed down by the product of another sponsor, Guinness – other conference organisers, please copy!

The challenges of island life, particularly the problem of accessibility, emphasized during the lectures, were brought home to the conference audience when the promised field excursion to Caher Island, about whose monastic remains Michael Herity (U.C.D.) had spoken so lucidly, had to be cancelled. An alternative trip to some of the fish farms was organised but unfortunately, your correspondent and his accompanying family lost the convoy at the first turning in Westport by following a car containing people out to buy their Sunday newspapers. The misfortune was particularly felt by the said correspondent, since his nine year old son then insisted on being accompanied up Croagh Patrick, the final scree slopes of which seemed to be 70 degrees, though a geomorphological colleague has suggested subsequently that this may be an exaggeration, brought about by the climber's state of mind and legs. Terminal exhaustion apart, the conference was an enjoyable, friendly and informative occasion – a testimony to the Westport Historical Society in whose journal *Cathair na Mart*, some of the papers are to be published.

The Society members were fortunate enough to tour **Caher Island** on a beautiful Sunday in June. Chris O'Grady, proprietor of the Bayview Hotel on Clare Island, brought us from Clare to Caher on 18 June, one of the best days in a long spell of sunny weather. The wonders of this small island sanctuary are described elsewhere in this journal by Professor Michael Herity. It will, therefore, suffice to say that it was an idyllic day never to be forgotten.

Michael O'Malley of Hampshire, England, a noted amateur archaeologist, gave a talk on Thursday 27 July on his excavations at Broom Hill, to members of the Society and their friends. He is the recipient of an award for his discovery there of the oldest man-made habitation in Britain dating from the Mesolithic period of about 6,500 – 8,500 years ago. We were privileged to handle many of the artefacts he discovered at this site.

In connection with the **Confined Draw** held for the Clew Bay Heritage Centre four interesting tours were undertaken. In June Mr. John Mulloy brought the members through old Westport at the Quay; July saw the Society rambling through the fields of Kilmeena under the guidance of our Chairman;

August brought the Society to Aughagower where a most interesting evening under Mr. Brian Mannion's leadership was enjoyed by all. Mr. Owen Campbell completed the outdoor events with a guided tour of Murrisk.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Society this year was the refurbishment of an old building at the Quay to become the **Westport Heritage Centre**. This undertaking advanced with commendable speed, helped no doubt by the excellent weather we enjoyed last summer. The Society appointed B. Byrne & Son, Louisburgh to build the Centre under the watchful eye of Noel Costello, B.E., and of Patrick J. Tobin & Co. (Castlebar and Galway). The Centre will be opened next Easter in time for the tourist season.

The Society wishes to place on record its gratitude to the Minister for the Environment, Pádraig Flynn T.D., for his assistance in procuring a grant from the Lottery Fund. The Confined Draw run by the members during the summer raised a further £10,000, and the Society hopes that generous donations will be forthcoming from local business interests who recognise that the Heritage Centre will fill a void in what is on offer to the tourist in Westport.

When opened, the Centre will have four sections:

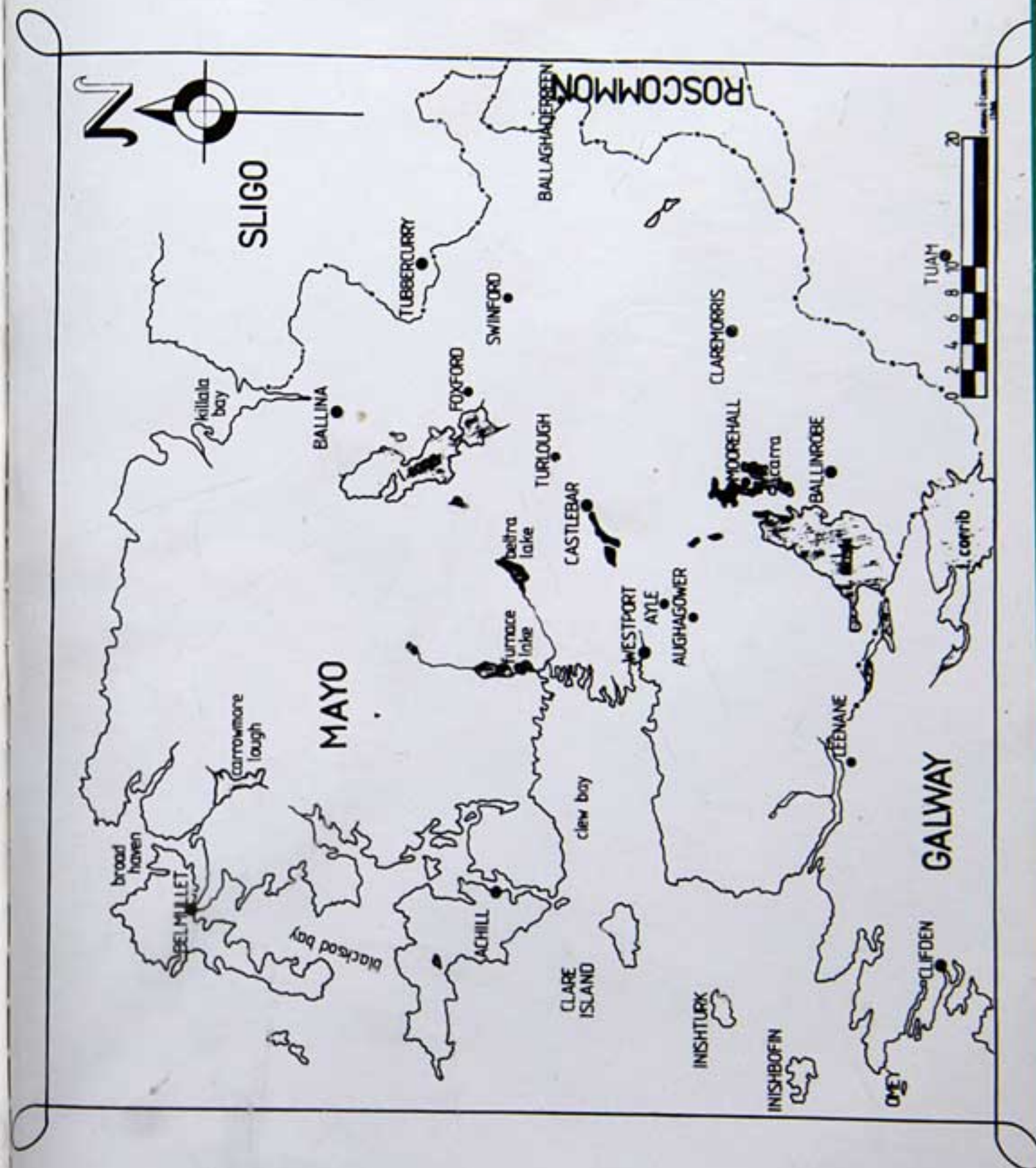
- (1) Genealogical service providing roots research for visitors in particular.
- (2) Artefacts showing the life of a once-thriving Westport port.
- (3) The Birth of our Nation where memorabilia of Major John McBride, Maude Gonne and their son, Seán McBride, will be displayed.
- (4) Some local material including records of the O'Malley Clan.

Below is a list of some of the donations received by the Centre to date. Acknowledgments will be made of further donations in *Cathair na Mart*, No. 10.

JB, Murrisk	£ 50.00
Baxter Ltd. Castlebar	£100.00
Kathleen Bengree, New Zealand	£ 25.00stg
Phyllis Carlson, Manitoba, Canada	£ 25.00
Walter Curley, U.S.A.	£100.00
Patrick Duffy, Chicago, U.S.A.	\$100.00
Mrs. Betty Jack, Victoria, Australia	£ 20.00
Reg Gilbert, Somerset	£ 20.00
William McNamara, Rostrevor, Australia	£100.00
Mrs. Mary O'Grady, Chicago, U.S.A.	\$100.00
Margaret O'Malley, U.S.A.	\$ 90.00
Mrs. Lyn Rogers, New Mexico, U.S.A.	£ 79.04
Janet Ruddy, California, U.S.A.	£186.34
Paddy Shanley, Westport	£ 20.00
Mrs. Anne Walsh, Enfield, Australia	£ 20.00

In 1990 the Society will see the opening of the Heritage Centre, the publication of the tenth journal and the holding of the fifth School of History, which will be devoted to the Emergency at home and abroad, and so will have cause to celebrate as it moves into the nineties.

We invite those interested in our past to join with us in the year ahead.



SLIGO

MAYO

ROSCOMMON

GALWAY

TUAM



Broad Haven

BELMILLET

Blackrod bay

Carrigrohane

ACHILL

CLARE ISLAND

INISHTURK

INISHBOFIN

O'KEY

CLIFDEN

TEENANE

AUGHAGOWER

WESTPORT

AYLE

CASTLEBAR

Turfiff lake

TURLOUGH

FOXFORD

BALLINA

Killala bay

SWINFORD

TUBBERCURRY

BALLAGHADREEN

CLAREHORRIS

MOOREHALL

Ballinrobe

Ballinrobe

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