

A Moycullen Miscellany

History, architecture and the archaeology
of the N59 Moycullen Bypass

Jerry O'Sullivan, Shane Delaney, Carlos Chique and Karen Molloy

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Foreword

The mission of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) is to deliver high-quality transport infrastructure and transport services for the public good. We aim to facilitate safer, more efficient journeys between one point and another and to enhance the quality of life and the economic opportunities for everyone who lives along the way. The new N59 Moycullen Bypass will form part of a tourism route into Connemara. Conversely, it will ease the daily commute of people who live in Connemara but who work in the busy hub of services, industry and education that is Galway City today. Importantly, the bypass will also allow Moycullen itself to breathe and grow. The village main street will no longer form part of a busy national secondary road but will instead become a public space to be enjoyed at leisure by visitors and by everyone living in the village and its environs.

This welcome contribution of a 21st-century road development to the future of Moycullen seems especially apt because—as readers will see in the present book—the village owes its origins to another road development, in the early 19th century. When Alexander Nimmo engineered a new road from Spiddal, on the north shore of Galway Bay, to Knockferry, on the west bank of Lough Corrib, he created a crossroads in Moycullen, at the intersection with the existing road between Galway and Oughterard. Moycullen had previously been a dispersed sort of place, with houses and cottages here and there along the main road and scattered across the neighbouring hillslopes. The new crossroads became a focus for future development and, within a few generations, the village that we know today had become firmly anchored around that point.

Of course, the story of Moycullen is much older than Nimmo's road. There are very significant ancient ruins in the area. The present book describes an early medieval church dedicated to St Enda (Éinne) on Killagoola Hill, and a later medieval castle of the O'Flahertys by Ballyquirke Lake. Archaeological investigations along the new bypass route have now pushed this story back much, much further in time. The excavated evidence indicates settled populations in Bronze Age and Neolithic times. This is corroborated by the evidence of fossil pollen from a peat bog in Ballyquirke West, which records the advance and retreat of native woodlands as successive human communities cleared the ground for tillage land and pasture in prehistory.

TII are pleased to have funded these investigations along the bypass route and to publish an account of the work in this latest instalment in our TII Heritage Series. We are especially pleased to have enjoyed the support of Cumann Staire Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh (the Moycullen Historical Society), who contributed a local history gazetteer to the book, based on the society's own signed village heritage trails. Cumann Staire Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh is named after an accomplished scholar who was the last Gaelic lord of Moycullen. The tricentenary of his death in 1718 was marked with a full calendar of lectures and field trips. This *Miscellany* is our contribution to the evolving story of Moycullen in the next 300 years and we hope that everyone who reads it will find something to enjoy.

Michael Nolan
Chief Executive
Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Acknowledgements

Archaeological and palaeoenvironmental investigations on the N59 Moycullen Bypass were commissioned by Galway County Council and funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). The archaeological excavations were conducted for the Council by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. Ministerial Directions for the archaeological investigations were granted by the National Monuments Service (for the Minister) in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland.

The excavation team members were Shane Delaney (Senior Archaeologist), Andy Cunningham, Olly McHugh, David McIlreavey, Stephen McLeod, Fiona Maguire, Daniel Maher, Mark Moraghan, Fergal Murtagh, Johnny Ryan, Bruce Sutton, David Swift, Fintan Walsh, Anthony Wilkinson and Maria Woodlock. Mechanical excavators were provided by Joe O'Brien Ltd and operated by Stephen O'Brien, James O'Reilly and Shane Turnelty. Post-excavation analyses were by Peter Looney (Neolithic pottery), Sol Mallía-Guest (prehistoric chipped stone), Meriel McClatchie (plant remains), Ellen O Carroll (wood charcoal), Maeve Tobin (bone), the ¹⁴CHRONO Centre at Queen's University Belfast (radiocarbon dating), and the Irish Stone Axe Project at University College Dublin (Neolithic stone axeheads). GeoMara Ltd conducted an underwater archaeological survey at the Lough Kip River crossing and Hugh Kavanagh (Landmark Survey for IAC Ltd) recorded a detailed architectural heritage survey of the old Clydagh Bridge. Line-drawings for the archaeological excavation reports by IAC Ltd and for this book were produced by Hugh Kavanagh and Katie O'Mahony.

Pollen analysis of a peat core from a bog in Ballyquirke West was undertaken by Karen Molloy and Carlos Chique of the Palaeoenvironmental Research Unit (School of Geography and Archaeology) at NUI Galway, in collaboration with Archaeological Management Solutions Ltd. The coring team were Ailbhe Conaghan, Patrick O'Rafferty, Aaron Potito and Daisy Spenser. John Conaghan carried out a vegetation survey of the bog and provided plant photographs. Graeme Swindles kindly gave permission for use of his photographs of testate amoebae.

The investigations were supervised for the Council by Micheál Naughton of Halcrow Barry (consulting engineers) and TII Archaeologist Jerry O'Sullivan. The Project Engineers at Galway County Council were Rory Timlin, Adrian Grandison, Seán Devaney and Pádraic Wall.

Walter McDonagh, Mark McNally, Hazel Morrison, Tomás Ó Cadhain and Mary O'Shea of Cumann Staire Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh (Moycullen Historical Society) all commented on a draft version of this book and generously supplied additional information. The maps that accompany the local heritage gazetteer (Appendix 3) were designed by Michelle Gannon for a guide to local walking trails developed by the Moycullen Historical Society in 2015–17.

We are grateful to landowners along the bypass route—including Ciarán Curran, Pat Feeney, Thomas and Mary McDonagh and James Regan—for their co-operation during the investigations, and to everyone who gave access to lands and buildings in the course of the environmental impact assessment for the road project in 2010–11.



Aerial view of Moycullen (Ordnance Survey Ireland 2015).



A walk in Moycullen

Jerry O'Sullivan

with contributions by Hugh Gallagher and Tomás Ó Cadhain

Moycullen (Maigh Cuilinn)¹ lies about 12 km west of Galway City on the main road to Oughterard and Clifden. The village is a gateway to the lake and moorland country that forms the heart of Connemara (Conamara). Around Moycullen itself the main road is a dividing line between hilly ground to the south and west of the village and the lower Lough Corrib basin to the east and north. Thus the village is overlooked by the hillslopes of Drimmavohaun (Droim an Mhúcáin) (161 m OD), Drummaveg (Droma Bheag) (149 m OD) and Killagoola (Cill Ogúla) (142 m OD), with much lower ground (c. 10 m OD) in the east towards Lough Corrib (Illus. 1.1). This boundary between high and low ground lies along a strikeline in the underlying geology. The hilly terrain is characterised by peaty acid soils on granite bedrock, while the lake basin has clay and alluvial soils on limestone bedrock. Several watercourses drain the higher ground. Chief of these is the Lough Kip River, on the southern outskirts of the village, which descends from Killagoola in a series of noisy rapids and rocky pools. To the north and east Moycullen is fringed by a necklace of smaller lakes in the Lough Corrib basin, including Ballyquirke Lake (Loch Bhaile Uí Choirc). The two topographic zones—known locally as Taobh Garbh (rough side) and Taobh Mín (smooth side)—have always been an influence on historic settlement in and around Moycullen. This is expressed most clearly by its two oldest buildings: the hermit of Templeany church lived high on Killagoola Hill, whereas the medieval lords of Moycullen built their castle in the fertile lakelands below.

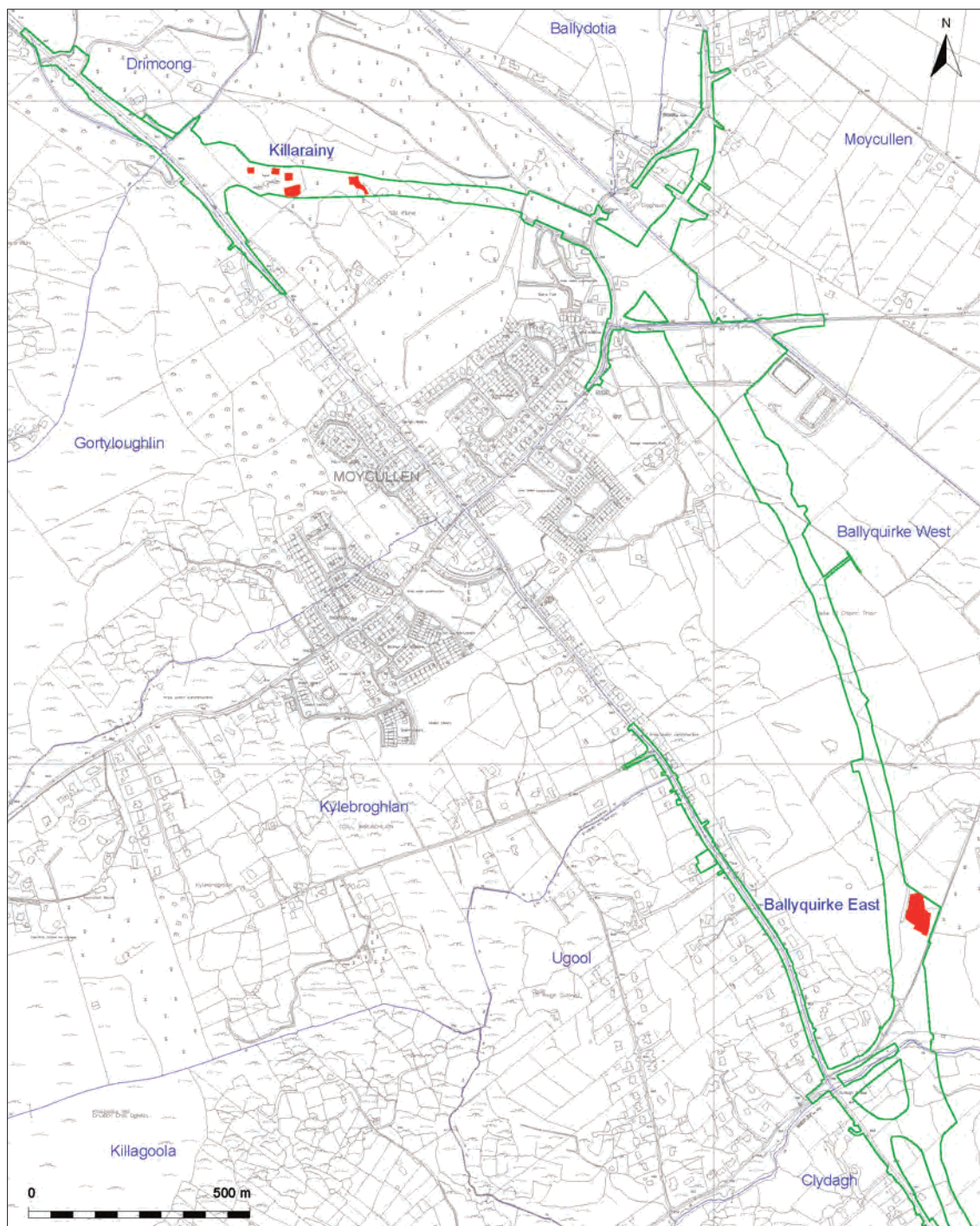
Moycullen offers an unusual case-study in the development of a village. It began at the old castle as an Anglo-Norman manor in the medieval lordship of Connacht but migrated in modern times to rearrange itself around a crossroads built in the 1820s. The crossroads was formed by the old road from Galway City to Clifden—which, in time, would become part of the N59—and a new road from the coast to Lough Corrib.

Two centuries after the village crossroads was built another road development is at the heart of a new chapter in the history of Moycullen. In 2012 An Bord Pleanála approved plans by Galway County Council for the N59 Moycullen Bypass. The route passes north and east of the village, between the townlands of Drimcong (Droim Chonga) and Clydagh (Cláideach) (Illus. 1.2). It

¹ English forms of place-names are used throughout, with the Irish forms in brackets at the first instance. Spellings follow the Placenames Database of Ireland at www.logainm.ie and the most recent mapping of Ordnance Survey Ireland at www.osi.ie.



Illus. 1.1—Relief map of the landscape around Moycullen, showing selected archaeological monuments and early buildings, as well as the footprint of the bypass (red).The N59 divides hilly rough ground (Taobh Garbh) south and west of the village from more fertile land (Taobh Míh) in the Corrib basin.



Illus. 1.2—Location map of the N59 Bypass Scheme, showing also the locations of archaeological sites discovered in Killarainy and Ballyquirke East. (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, based on the Ordnance Survey map*)

extends over a total distance of 4.3 km on 38 ha of land acquired by the Council using a Compulsory Purchase Order. The archaeological and architectural heritage of Moycullen was considered in some detail in the Environmental Impact Statement for the project. This was based on consultations, maps and printed sources, and on field inspections (Galway County Council 2011). The formal approval of the project was the trigger for a more active programme of fieldwork to mitigate any potential archaeological impacts of road construction.

In 2014 and 2015 archaeological investigations were undertaken by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd (IAC) all along the bypass route (Illus. 1.3). IAC also organised an underwater archaeological survey of the Lough Kip River crossing, by GeoMara Ltd, and an architectural heritage survey of the old Clydagh Bridge at this same crossing, by Landmark Survey. (The bridge was subsequently demolished and replaced but we will come to that again shortly.) Among other results of archaeological testing and excavations, a Neolithic occupation site was discovered by Ballyquirke Lake. To find out more about life in the area in prehistoric times, and especially about the impact of these first farmers on the local environment, a study based on fossil pollen from a peat bog in Ballyquirke West (Baile Uí Chuiric Thiar) was carried out by the Palaeoenvironmental Research Unit at NUI Galway in 2016 (Illus. 1.4). All of this work was commissioned by Galway County Council and funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the results are gathered together here in this latest volume in the TII Heritage Series.

This book aims to tell the story of Moycullen from ancient times to the present day, drawing on the evidence of early maps and local histories, recent archaeological and palaeoenvironmental investigations and, not least, on what can be seen in the built environment of the village today. Many of the buildings and monuments mentioned in this chapter feature in the local signed walking trails developed by the Moycullen Historical Society (Cumann Staire Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh) in 2015–17. They are described in the gazetteer section in Appendix 3, which includes the Society's maps of the heritage trails. We encourage you to seek out the trails, to walk about Moycullen at leisure, to look around and to take time to appreciate what is a very pleasant place in which to live, with some good stories to tell.

Prehistory and early history

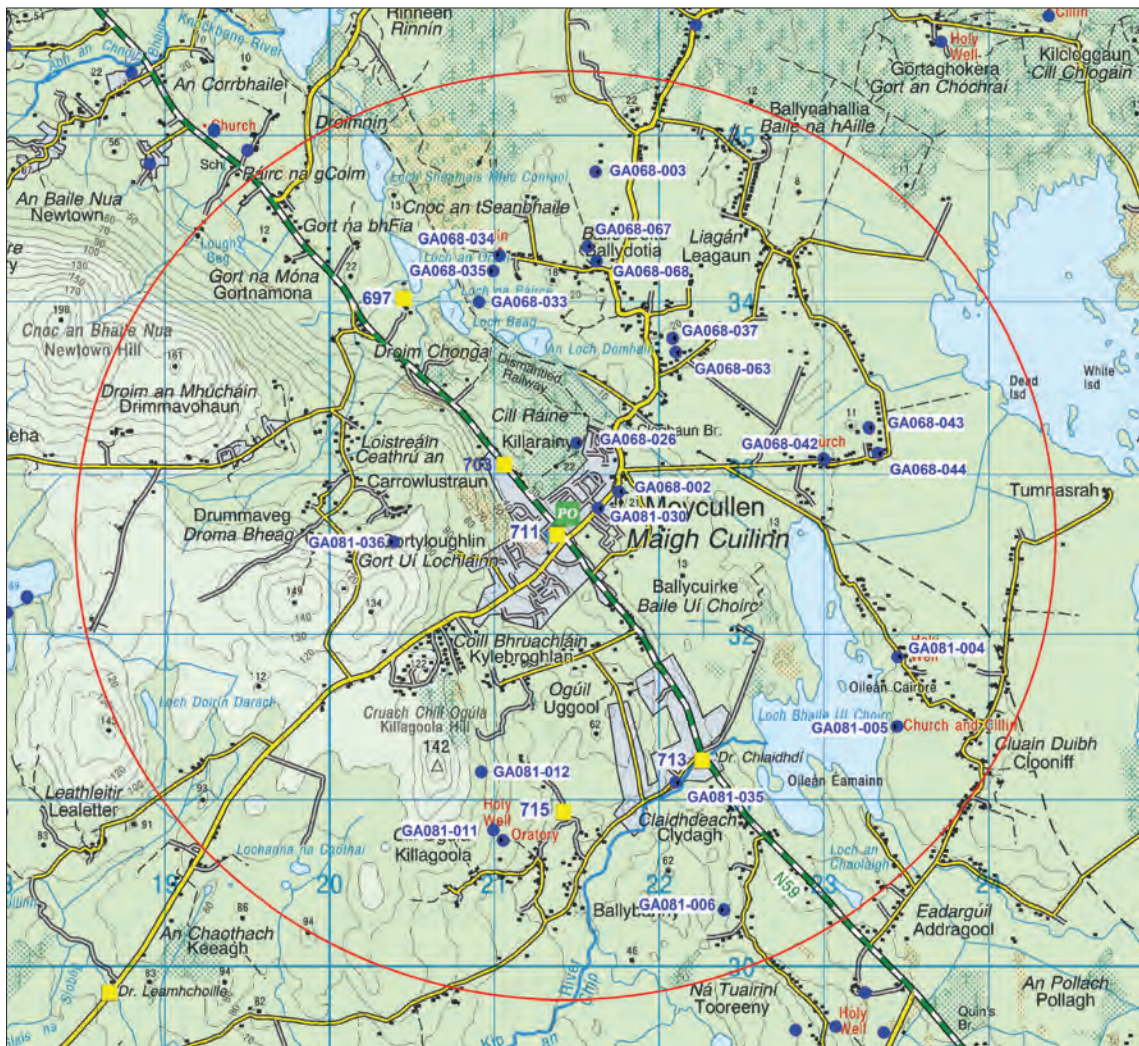
Who occupied Connemara in antiquity? And how did they organise themselves and use the land and its resources? The existing record does not paint a comprehensive picture in this regard, but at least it offers some broad-brush indications. The statutory Record of Monuments and Places for County Galway (RMP 1997) shows a relatively low density of known archaeological sites and monuments in Connemara in comparison with south and east Galway. Prehistoric monuments include megalithic tombs, standing stones and the sub-peat field walls of ancient farmland. There is a notable concentration of these monuments in north-west Connemara, around coastal inlets and maritime valleys from Clifden to Killary Harbour. This can be explained by the fact that calcareous schist soils offer more arable potential and better grazing than the thin, peaty acid soils



Illus. 1.3—Test trenches in Killarainy. Archaeological assessment work was conducted throughout the footprint of the road project by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.



Illus. 1.4—A peat core was extracted from Ballyquirke Bog for radiocarbon dating and pollen analysis (vegetation history) by the Palaeoenvironmental Research Unit of NUI Galway. (*NUI Galway*)



Illus. 1.5—Within a 3 km radius of Moycullen crossroads the Record of Monuments and Places (blue) and Record of Protected Structures (yellow) include a miscellany of prehistoric, medieval and early modern features, from a possible megalithic tomb to a Victorian grain mill. (Based on the Ordnance Survey Ireland map)

that occur elsewhere in the region (Gibbons & Higgins 1988, 63). But prehistoric monuments make up only 20% of the record. The archaeological landscape of Connemara is dominated, instead, by monuments of early and later medieval date. These are mostly cashels or ringforts (homesteads or livestock enclosures), early monastic churches and hermitages, holy wells, and later medieval parish churches and tower-houses. These medieval monuments can be impressive but they represent a relatively short timespan (c. AD 400–1600) within 10,000 years of human occupation of our island. In all periods in the region the distribution of sites and monuments shows a marked bias away from the peat-clad hills and towards the Atlantic coast or the shores and

Table 1.1—Archaeological sites listed in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (RMP 1997) and architectural features listed in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS 2015) for County Galway within 3 km of the crossroads in Moycullen.

RMP	RPS	Description	Townland
—	697	Drimcong House and grounds	Drimcong / Droim Chonga
—	703	Walled garden of former Danesfield House	Killarainy / Cill Ráine
	711	Moycullen Co-operative Society Building	Gortyloughlin / Gort uí Lochlainn
—	713	19th-century grain mill on Lough Kip River	Clydagh / Claídeach
	715	Thatched house	Killagoola / Cill Ogúla
GA068:003	—	Circular enclosure (site of)	Ballydotia / Baile Dóite
GA068:026	—	Circular enclosure or cashel (in forestry)	Killarainy / Cill Ráine
GA068:033	—	Circular enclosure (site of)	Knockshanbally / Cnoc an tSeanbhaile
GA068:034	—	Children's burial ground or <i>cillín</i> : 'Lisín na Leannaí'	Knockshanbally / Cnoc an tSeanbhaile
GA068:037	—	Standing stone (site of)	Leagaun / Liagán
GA068:042	—	Medieval church and graveyard	Moycullen / Maigh Cuilinn
GA068:043		Earthwork enclosure; possible ringfort	Moycullen / Maigh Cuilinn
GA068:044	—	Moycullen Castle; also Moycullen Lodge	Moycullen / Maigh Cuilinn
GA068:063	—	Earthwork; possible mound or barrow	Leagaun / Liagán
GA068:067	—	Cashel / ringfort (site of)	Ballydotia / Baile Dóite
GA068:068	—	Bullaun stone (site of)	Ballydotia / Baile Dóite
GA068:35	—	Settlement cluster (site of)	Knockshanbally / Cnoc an tSeanbhaile
GA081:004	—	Holy well near Templebeg	Clooniff / Cluain Duibh
GA081:005	—	Early church (Teampall Beag / Templebeg) and	Clooniff / Cluain Duibh
GA081:006	—	Remnants of possible enclosure	Clydagh / Claídeach
GA081:011	—	Early church (Tempaill Éinne / Templeany), holy well (Tobar Éinne / Tobareany) and children's burial ground or <i>cillín</i>	Killagoola / Cill Ogúla
GA081:012	—	Enclosure (site of)	Killagoola / Cill Ogúla
GA081:035	—	Watermill (horizontal millwheel type)	Clydagh / Claídeach
GA081:036	—	Megalithic structure? Or natural rock shelter?	Gortyloughlin / Gort uí Lochlainn

islands of Lough Corrib. A recent study of find-spots of early prehistoric artefacts between Lough Corrib and Galway Bay bears out this pattern, with a particular concentration of early material—chipped stone tools and polished stone axeheads—along the River Corrib, where it rushes out from Lough Corrib to the Atlantic (Driscoll 2006, fig. 5.6). In short, the archaeological record of the region is dominated by medieval monuments; monuments of all periods are clustered on the Atlantic or Lough Corrib; and, broadly speaking, mainland Connemara, which accounts for about 30% of the land mass of County Galway, accounts for only 8% of its recorded sites and monuments.

To some extent the local record for Moycullen and environs corresponds with this regional pattern in Connemara. There are scarcely more than a dozen known archaeological sites and monuments within easy walking distance of Moycullen at, say, a radius of 3 km from the village crossroads (Table 1.1 and Illus. 1.5). There are only a few of prehistoric date. A standing stone (site) at Leagaun (Liagán) (GA068:037) was broken up in the 1930s, but an earthwork (GA068:063) about 75 m south of it may have been a funerary mound or barrow. A reported ‘megalithic structure’ in Gortyloughlin (Gort Uí Lochlainn) (GA081:036) was reclassified on further examination as a natural bedrock gully with some capstones placed over it to form a shelter.

Recorded monuments of early medieval date include, potentially, several enclosures that may have been cashels or ringforts. Only a couple of them survive, in Moycullen and Killarainy (GA068:026 and GA068:043). The others were levelled for land improvements. Of the surviving examples, the enclosure in Killarainy was formerly in a dense forestry plantation but was briefly glimpsed in 2005 when the plantation was felled, before rapidly regenerating wild scrubwood concealed it again (Illus. 1.6). Previté (2010, 60) draws attention to the place-name element ‘kill’ (Irish *cill*) and suggests that the cashel here was an early church site. The Moycullen Historical Society reports a second enclosure, elsewhere in the plantation in Killarainy, 350 m to the north-west (information from Hazel Morrison). We are on surer ground regarding the character and significance of ruined early churches at Templeany on Killagoola Hill (Cill Ogúla) (GA081:011) and Templebeg in Clooniff (Cluain Duibh) (GA081:005), on the north shore of Ballyquirke Lake. These are important monuments, albeit very poorly preserved. Templeany (Illus. 1.7) is a very early building, of probable 10th- or 11th-century date, with an associated holy well and with extensive views over the hinterland of Moycullen and Lough Corrib beyond. Templebeg (Illus. 1.8) has a plain chancel arch, indicating a slightly later date for its construction, though it may have an early core. Both churches are very ruinous. Kilcallin in Dovepark (Páirc na gColm) (GA068:012), c. 3 km north-west of Moycullen, is also worth a mention. This ruined church is probably later medieval in date but may well occupy a much older church site.

For our story, the most significant later medieval monuments in the environs are Moycullen Castle (GA068:044) and the medieval churchyard nearby (GA068:042). They have a special place in the history of Moycullen, as monuments to the former O’Flaherty lordship and as the focal places in the original manor village.

Of course, the Record of Monuments and Places lists only what was known at the time of its publication (1997) and there can be many more features of interest in any area—including undiscovered archaeological sites—as we shall see below (Chapter 2).



Illus. 1.6—An early medieval enclosure (a ringfort or cashel, centre left) in Killarainy could be seen from the air when the commercial forestry plantation surrounding it was clear-felled in 2005; wild scrub has since concealed the site again. (*Michael Gibbons*)



Illus. 1.7—The little ruined church at Templeany on Killagoola Hill is among the oldest mortared stone buildings in Ireland and probably dates from the 10th or 11th century.



Illus. 1.8—A ruined church at Templebeg in Clooniff, on the east bank of Ballyquirke Lake, is possibly a monastic church built in the 12th century. (*Anthony Previté*)

Two early churches

Jerry O’Sullivan

The oldest buildings in the hinterland of Moycullen are two early churches at Templeany (Teampall Éinne) on Killagoola Hill (GA081:011) and Templebeg (Teampall Beag) in Clooniff (GA081:005), on the north shore of Ballyquirke Lake. These are among the earliest mortared stone buildings in Ireland. Wooden churches built with oak planks (*dairthech*) began to give way to stone churches (*daimhliac*) from about the mid-eighth century. The very earliest stone churches were simple, oblong buildings with thick walls, a narrow window in the east gable and a plain, straight-sided or tapering (‘trabeate’) doorway in the west gable. They date from the period AD 750–1100. Templeany, on Killagoola, is one of these. The first major evolution in the architecture of these early stone churches was the addition of a chancel at the east end, often framed by a chancel arch in cut or sculpted stone. These first nave-and-chancel churches date from AD 1100–1200. Templebeg, in Clooniff, is one of these.

With dimensions of 6 m x 4.1 m (Templeany) and 10.7 m x 5 m (Templebeg), both churches are very small compared, say, to the later medieval parish church at An Sean Reilig near Moycullen Castle. The small size of early medieval churches has contributed to debate about their use. The earliest examples were probably tomb chapels built to house the bones (corporeal relics) of founding saints, typically at larger monastic sites, where they became foci for local pilgrimages. Later churches in this period were built for congregational worship by monks and their élite patrons and by pilgrims on religious feast-days and saints’ days. Large public churches, with services delivered by parish clergy for the benefit of the local laity, did not become common in Ireland until the later medieval period, in the 13th and 14th centuries.

What was the genesis of our two churches? There are remnants of a cashel wall surrounding the church at Templeany and it may originally have been the site of a hermitage, which afterwards became a permanent church site, with the present church replacing an earlier wooden oratory in the 10th or 11th century. We do not know the hermit’s name. The church is dedicated to St Enda or Éinne, a fifth-century Ulster prince who laid aside his sword to become a monk. He is associated with Connemara and the Aran Islands especially, where several early churches are dedicated to him. Templebeg probably had a different genesis. The north shore of Ballyquirke Lake has good, fertile land. The element *chuan* (a water-meadow) is often associated with early Irish monasteries (e.g. Clonfert, Co. Galway; Clonmacnois, Co. Offaly; Clones, Co. Monaghan). There is no visible evidence at Templebeg for a monastic settlement associated with the church, but this site may originally have been a monastery nonetheless, on lands endowed by a royal or aristocratic patron. Again, the present church probably replaced an older church, in wood.

Ó Carragáin’s *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland* (2010) is a major, comprehensive study on the architectural, liturgical and social context of our early churches. Previté’s *Guide to Lough Corrib’s Early Monastic Sites* (2010) is a good starting point for more local information.

Place-names and peoples

By early medieval times we can begin to put names on historic peoples and places around Moycullen. Most old Irish place-names refer to natural or topographic features. The place-name Moycullen/Maigh Cuilinn can be loosely translated ‘holly vale’. The holly (*cuileann*) is a lime-loving tree that flourishes in the understorey of mature deciduous woodlands. The other element (*magh*) means ‘plain’ but has the special sense in early Irish documentary sources of ‘settled territory’. So the place-name Maigh Cuilinn evokes natural woodlands interspersed with clearances for human settlement in antiquity.

There is an alternative derivation for the place-name, based on early Irish myth or *dinnseanchas*. In the 1680s Ruaidhrí Óg Ó Flaitheartaigh (alias Roderick or Rory O’Flaherty) produced a history of the region based on observation, oral history and information from older annals. This was eventually published by James Hardiman (1846)—the first Librarian at Queen’s College Galway—as *A Chorographical Description of West or hIar-Connaught written AD 1684 by Roderic O’Flaherty Esq.* Ruaidhrí Óg Ó Flaitheartaigh attributed the place-name Magh Cuilinn to the warrior prince Uilinn, who slew Orbsen (alias Manannan Mac Lir of the Isle of Man) in a power struggle among the Tuatha Dé Danann—a supernatural people descended from the goddess Danu. Their battle was fought on the low ground south of Lough Corrib. Ruaidhrí Óg’s account



Illus. 1.9—John Brown’s *Map of the Province of Connaught and Clare* (1591) identifies the lands around Moycullen by the ancient Gaelic name of Gnó Beg (‘know begg’) but styles Gnó Mór further west ‘The bar.[ony] of Moycullin’. The legend below reads ‘Ireconnaght S[i]r Morough O Farty his countrie part of the county of Galway’. (Library of Trinity College Dublin)

of the battle describes a large pillar-stone that was erected in antiquity to mark the spot. William Wilde (1867, 304–5) included the story in his *Lough Corrib, its Shores and Islands*. Wilde's retelling of the myth is especially interesting because he identified the battlefield with a standing stone in Leagaun townland 'called *Clogh-more Leagaun* by the peasantry', though he also reports that it was 'prostrated by the storm of 1839' (ibid.). (This is the same stone listed as GA068:037 in Table 1.1, above.) Almost 100 years later the stone was destroyed entirely. Its sorry fate is described in a letter to the Archaeological Survey of Ireland from Mr Enda Farrell (8 September 1987), who says that it was broken up with dynamite in 1933 and the pieces used in building field walls.

Whichever derivation of the place-name is preferred, it originally referred to lands in the ancient Gaelic territory of Gnó Beg. The combined territories of Gnó Beg and Gnó Mór were the domain of the Delbnae Tír Dhá Locha, afterwards MacConrrys (Gnó Mór) and O'Heaneys (Gnó Beg). This remote western kingdom extended from Lough Corrib to Galway Bay, and was bounded in the west by Kilkieran Bay (Cill Chiaráin). In later medieval times it was perpetuated by the barony of Moycullen, which now extended over both Gnó Beg and Gnó Mór and which encompassed the parishes of Moycullen, Ragoon, Kilcummin and Kilannin (Illus. 1.9) (www.oughterardheritage.org; MacCotter 2008, 140–1).

Normans, Gaels and planters

The O'Flahertys formerly occupied the Gaelic territory of Maigh Seola, east of Lough Corrib, but by the 13th century had been pushed westwards into Connemara by pressure from the O'Conors and ultimately by the Norman de Burghs (*alias* de Burgo). The lordship they established in their new mountainy territory, between the Corrib and the Atlantic, lasted for over 300 years. Moycullen was held by the southern branch of the O'Flahertys. They may already have been overlords of the O'Heaneys and MacConrrys before their migration into Connacht. Now they effectively displaced them as lords in Moycullen.

The heart of the medieval manor of the O'Flahertys in Moycullen was located about 1 km east of the present village. Ruins of their church and castle survive today (Illus. 1.10 and 1.11), at a convenient distance from the village for walkers and cyclists, along a pleasant rural road (Home Farm Road). It is not at all certain, however, that the O'Flahertys founded this manor or built the castle. Hugh Gallagher (below) has examined the surviving ruins closely and finds tell-tale signs of the handiwork of Norman masons. So it seems that medieval Moycullen may have been founded by a short-lived Anglo-Norman colony, west of Lough Corrib, and was afterwards appropriated by the Gaelic O'Flaherty chiefs.

Was there once a medieval village straddling the road between the castle and its church? East of Lough Corrib, in the de Burgh lordship, fertile soils and Norman habits tended to create agricultural communities with a nucleated focus—i.e. a walled town or village with a church and castle, and with weekly markets and seasonal fairs—like examples at Ardahan, Athenry and Loughrea. We do not know whether a planned village of this sort formed part of the Norman



Illus. 1.10—The ruins of Moycullen Castle are c. 1 km east of the village on Home Farm Road. They now form the walled garden of a private dwelling house. (Paul Naessens)



Illus. 1.11—A ruined church, near the castle on Home Farm Road, once served the medieval parish of Moycullen. The graveyard remained in use until modern times.

A Norman castle in a Gaelic lordship?

Hugh Gallagher

Following Richard de Burgh's conquest of Connacht in the mid-1230s, a Norman feudal system was imposed. His supporters received grants of land, where they built castles, churches and market towns to increase the economic output of their new territories. The *Annals of Lough Cé* (Hennessy 1871), the *Annals of Connacht* (Freeman 1944) and the *Annals of the Four Masters* (O'Donovan 1848–51) all refer to a great raid by 'the English', which secured all of Lough Corrib in 1256, and this may have been the starting point for an Anglo-Norman colony west of the Corrib, in Connemara. The new lords of Connacht gave land grants in Connemara to Jordan de Exeter and later to Hubert de Burgh. This ancient Gaelic territory formed part of the medieval barony of Moycullen. An inquisition *post mortem* on William de Burgh in 1333 lists areas where rents were payable and also notes that charges were due from a court in Gnó Beg (Knox 1902, 397). Courts were held in or near castles to settle minor disputes and were also places where rents and tributes were received. Was there an Anglo-Norman castle in Moycullen?

Moycullen Castle shows signs of alteration over its long occupancy, as might be expected. A survey by the writer in 2016 discovered that it retains clear tell-tale signs of a 13th-century origin. It is basically a square, mortared masonry enclosure, measuring 35 m by 34 m internally, with walls surviving to a height of 6.5 m at one point at the north-east. The walls have putlog holes (recesses to receive wooden scaffolding supports during construction) both externally and internally. At the north-east corner there are remnants of the base of a round tower, with an internal diameter of 3.5 m. This was clearly part of the original structure and would have provided archery protection for the east and north walls. The remains at the south-west corner are not as well defined but there was probably a corresponding tower here, to defend the south and west walls (Illus. 1.12). The east wall has an entrance high above ground level, accessed by a ramp. (This entrance is similar to what would have been typical in the 13th-century defended residences called hall-houses.) There are remains of two blocked-up windows on the left of the entrance, 3.5 m above ground level (Illus. 1.13). They are similar to short lancet windows, though the tops are missing, so we cannot now say that they were once pointed. The remaining dressed stones forming the windows show clear marks of diagonal tooling, which is very characteristic of 13th-century masonry. The outer margins of the windows are chamfered (i.e. cut back or bevelled on the angles) to form an outer splay. This implies that they lit a building that was attached to the inner wall of the castle. There are no signs of masonry bonding or tusking at the internal wall face, suggesting that the building was timber-framed. Excavation here might discover low stone foundations, as this was a common feature of medieval timber-framed buildings, but none were visible at the time of survey. In fact, the ground level inside the castle is now up to 2 m higher than outside, probably owing to an accumulation of soil and rubble over

the centuries since its occupation.

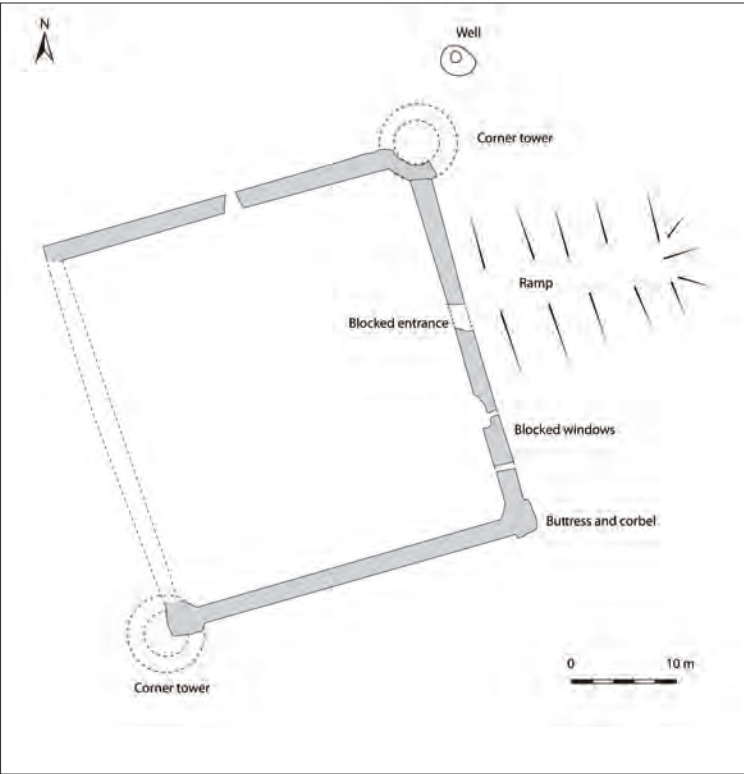
The architectural survey also detected traces of work from a later period. At the south-east corner the wall is supported by buttressing that shows punch-marked stone, a style of masonry dressing more typical of a later medieval tower-house. Above this is a stone corbel, also punch-dressed, which probably supported a machicolation—a projecting defensive feature, defending the corner from overhead. This and the blocked-up windows (above) suggest a restructuring of the defences that may correspond with historical evidence for the destruction and rebuilding of the castle in the 16th century (Hardiman 1846, 387).

The ruins of the nearby medieval church also show evidence for alteration and rebuilding. The windows have diagonal tooling and chamfering similar to the castle, but the west gable has punch-dressed stone and differs greatly from the east gable in its construction. There is no surviving doorway, but fragments of masonry arches lying within may be from a doorway or possibly from a tomb shrine. There are some late O’Flaherty graveslabs (with memorials in English) but no graveslabs that are obviously from the Anglo-Norman period.

Other than the castle, and possibly the earlier part of the church, there are no known physical remains of the Anglo-Norman colony in Moycullen. Historical sources indicate that it was short-lived, with the earliest and latest references spanning a period of about 80 years (1256–1333). In contrast, the O’Flaherty lordship in Moycullen lasted about 300 years. The O’Flahertys may already have gained possession of the castle prior to 1333, as part of a resettlement after their movement westward. By that date no income from the court was being declared to the de Burghs. Hubert de Burgh held his grant from Walter de Burgh, who died in 1271, and presumably this extinguished the grant. At this stage Anglo-Norman culture in Connacht was already in retreat, as the de Burghs split into family groups and began to assimilate into Gaelic society.

settlement at Moycullen, though it is likely. In the later medieval period, when the O’Flahertys held the castle, the homesteads of ordinary folk were more likely to have been dispersed across their territory, and their houses mere temporary structures, suitable to the semi-nomadic, pastoralist economy practised in the Gaelic west.

The post-medieval period saw the gradual erosion of O’Flaherty power and wealth in Connemara. From the late 16th century the merchant families of Galway City (‘the Tribes’) began to establish estates in the county, ‘converting the profits of trade into landed wealth’, and the barony of Moycullen was considered especially suitable to supply the growing wool trade (Cunningham 1996, 110, 117). This process of gradual colonisation by old money from the city was hastened in the later 17th century by war and its aftermath. In the period of the Cromwellian plantation, the O’Flahertys lost most of their lands in Connemara to merchant families from Galway City—they had become indebted to the Martins especially—as well as to royalist Catholic



Illus. 1.12—A conjectural plan of the original Anglo-Norman castle, showing the entrance ramp and corner towers. (Hugh Gallagher)

Illus. 1.13—Tell-tale signs in the masonry of Moycullen Castle suggest that it was originally of Anglo-Norman construction, remodelled by the Gaelic O'Flahertys in the 14th century. (Hugh Gallagher)



families transplanted from elsewhere in Ireland. John French Fitz Stephen was one of these and was settled on 2,200 acres that included the O'Flaherty manor of Moycullen. He developed old Moycullen Castle as a country seat, 'Moycullen Lodge', with the curtain wall of the former castle forming a walled garden, and a house and stable-yard immediately adjacent (Illus. 1.14). The standing remains of the castle were probably robbed at this time to supply some of the masonry for the new house and its offices. There is a large, oval enclosure north of the castle, which may have been a little deer-park dating from this period of gentrification by the French Fitz Stephen family.

The last O'Flaherty chief to live at the castle or at any rate to be born there was Ruaidhrí Ó Flaitheartaigh ('Ruaidhrí Óg', 1629–1718). His mother was a D'Arcy, one of the old merchant families of Galway City, showing how intertwined the affairs of Gaelic and old Norman families had become by this time. Ruaidhrí Óg was a noted scholar who produced two major works in the 1680s. A history of Ireland, *Ogygia: seu Rerum Hibernicarum Chronologia*, was translated into English in 1793 by Revd James Hely. *A Chorographical Description of West or hIar-Connaught* was a history of the region, published by James Hardiman in 1846, as mentioned above. A collection of Ruaidhrí Óg's correspondence with other scholars of the period was recently published by the Royal Irish Academy (Sharpe 2013).

According to Hardiman (1846, 55), Ruaidhrí Óg was restored to 500 acres of his ancestral lands. He was confirmed in these lands by a Cromwellian commission in 1653 and again by a Crown commission in 1677. Ó Muráile (1996, 191) remarks dryly that this was 'an unprofitable inheritance as it was [by then] so unpopulated'. Ruaidhrí Óg spent his last years in a house in Park (An Pháirc), on the coast of Galway Bay, near Spiddal (An Spidéal). He continued to enjoy a considerable reputation as a scholar and to receive visitors there. He is commemorated in Moycullen today by a carved limestone bench, bearing an inscription and the O'Flaherty arms, on the roadside opposite the Catholic church; and he was celebrated throughout the tricentenary of his death in 1718 by a lively programme of events organised by Cumann Staire Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh (Moycullen Historical Society).

The succession from Gael to planter, or from castle to lodge, can be seen today in the ruins at old Moycullen. The succession can also be glimpsed in early maps of the region. A church and castle are shown at the approximate location of the O'Flaherty manor of Moycullen on John Brown's (1591) *Map of the Province of Connacht and Clare* (Illus. 1.9, above) and also on Sir William Petty's (1685) *Atlas of Ireland* (based on the 'Down Survey' of 1655–7). John Norden's (1607–8) *Map of Ireland* also shows the castle at Moycullen. But Taylor & Skinner's (1783, 90) *Maps of the Roads of Ireland* identifies a gentleman's house here in the name of 'French Esq.' (Illus. 1.15). Like Ruaidhrí Óg before him, he was the last of that family to occupy the house. It was afterwards purchased by a branch of the equally venerable Lynch family, one of the old merchant Tribes of Galway City.

Today, the remains of the old stable-yard of Moycullen Lodge have been incorporated in a modern dwelling house, with the castle curtain wall forming a garden enclosure to the rear. There are other modern dwelling houses and their gardens at the east and north walls of the castle. Thus the ruined castle can be seen from the public road but is otherwise surrounded by private dwellings and is not a place of public access.



Illus. I.14—Moycullen Lodge was a gentry house built from the ruins of Moycullen Castle by the French Fitz Stephen family following the confiscation of O'Flaherty lands in the 17th century. The old stables now form part of a private dwelling house.

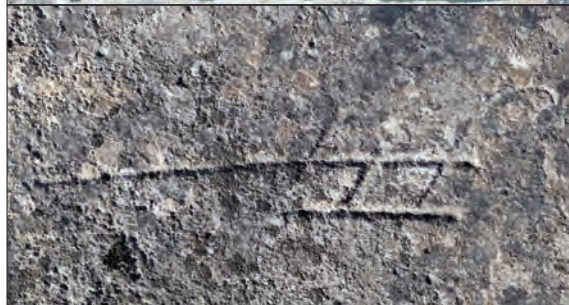


Illus. I.15—Taylor & Skinner's (1783, 90) *Maps of the Roads of Ireland* identifies Moycullen with a gentleman's house ('French Esq.'). at the site of the old medieval castle, now Moycullen Lodge.

Illus. 1.16—A well-maintained Lourdes grotto attests to continuing community interest in the old graveyard on Home Farm Road.

The nearby medieval churchyard is open to the public, however, and has enjoyed a deal of local care in recent years. It was superseded as the main graveyard in Moycullen c. 1830 by a graveyard in the village at the present Roman Catholic church, but burials continued intermittently in family plots until 1933. Some minor architectural elements added in the modern period attest to continuing community interest in the place. These include a well-maintained Lourdes grotto (Illus. 1.16) and an inscribed memorial boulder ('In memory of those who are buried here ... 1991'). A name plaque ('An tSeán Reilig') by the entrance to the graveyard bears a motif styled on some of the occupational gravestones within it (i.e. early modern gravestones bearing symbols of the occupations of the deceased—ploughman, carpenter or smith) (Illus. 1.17).

The centrepiece in the graveyard is a ruined medieval building that was once the parish church of the O'Flaherty manor (Illus. 1.11, above). The building is typical of medieval parish churches in the west of Ireland. It is a simple structure, rectangular on plan, built with mortared rubble that was probably originally covered by a lime-based render. The roof was most likely to have been thatched or possibly shingled (with oak). The only surviving dressed stones are the narrow, flat-headed windows in the gables. There are two enigmatic carved stone heads, one on each gable. The doorway was probably towards the west end of the church, in the south wall, but does not survive.



Illus. 1.17—A plaque at the entrance references one of the early modern vocational stones in the old graveyard—in this case showing a plough.

Modern Moycullen: transport, commerce and land

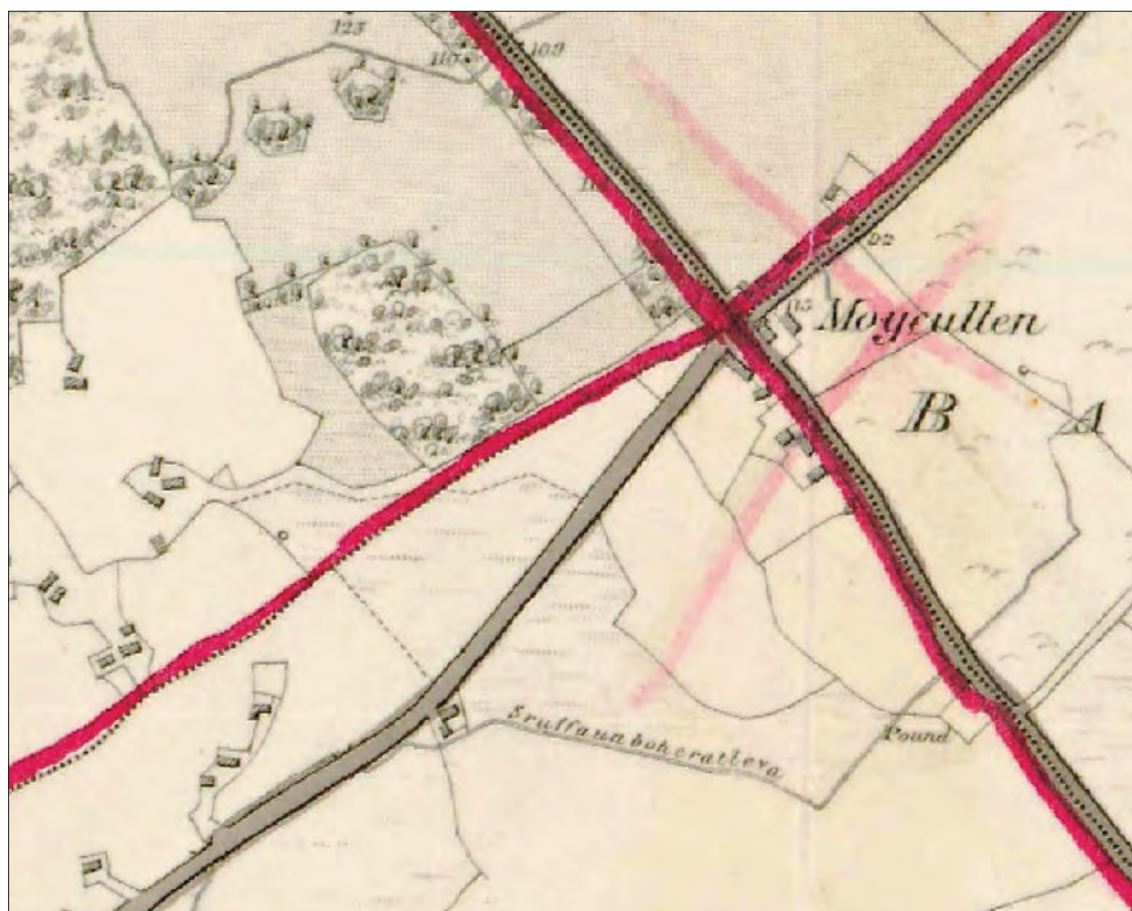
Why did the modern village of Moycullen not develop around the old church and castle? The heart of the old manor was located on good land, with lime-rich pastures and good arable capability. We have suggested that the dwellings of the tenants and other dependants of the O'Flahertys were dispersed. The little road that skirts the north shore of Ballyquirke Lake today may once have been part of the main route from Galway to the castle but, in the absence of a nucleated village settlement surrounding it, there would not have been a critical mass of population and buildings to anchor this as the main road. Instead, the main road from Galway, into central Connemara via Oughterard and on towards Clifden on the Atlantic coast, became established on higher ground south and west of old Moycullen, along the rim of the lower Lough Corrib basin.

The Scottish engineer Alexander Nimmo devoted the most productive part of his career to developing the roads and harbours of the west of Ireland. Much of the existing N59 in Connemara follows a route that he developed in the 1820s, following his public appointment as Engineer for the Western District. At Moycullen the N59 is intersected by another of Nimmo's roads, a transverse route from Spiddal, on the coast, to Knockferry, on Lough Corrib (Villiers-Tuthill 2006, 115). The road between Moycullen and Knockferry already existed in Nimmo's time but a new crossroads was created when he continued the Knockferry road to the coast. This crossroads became the focal point of a nascent settlement. It was known at first as Garraí Gamhain, which was the name of a fair green near the crossroads (opposite the present Texaco filling station on the south-eastern outskirts of the modern village). The establishment of a police station at the crossroads was perhaps another factor in the development of a village at this location (Moycullen Historical Society 2008, 10). In any case, the migrating village of Moycullen had finally found its fixed place in the landscape.

The village was described about this time by Samuel Lewis (1837, 402) in his *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* in an informative entry that is worth quoting at length.

MOYCULLEN, a parish, in the barony of Moycullen, county of Galway, and province of Connaught, 4 miles (north-west) from Galway, on the road to Oughterard; containing 5,965 inhabitants. This parish is bounded on the east by Lough Corrib, and comprises 27,294 statute acres, as applotted under the tithe act. The land is of very indifferent quality; and there is a large quantity of reclaimable waste and bog. In the village, which has a penny post to Galway, petty sessions are held on alternate Tuesdays; and fairs on 1 February, 28 May, 2 September and 8 December. The principal seats are Kirkcullen, that of M P Browne, Esq.; Danesfield, of P M Burke, Esq.; Drimcong, of J Kilkelly, Esq.; and Knockbane, of A O'Flaherty, Esq. The living is a rectory and perpetual cure, in the diocese of Tuam. The rectory forms part of the wardenship of Galway, and the perpetual curacy forms part of the union of Kilcummin. The tithes amount to £133 6s 8d, of which £100 is payable to the warden of Galway, and £33 6s 8p to the perpetual curate.

In the Roman Catholic divisions the parish is in the diocese of Galway, forming part of the union or district of Spiddal, and partly a district in itself. The chapel is a neat building. The late Rev. Francis Blake, P.P., left £500 for erecting a school house, to which the Board of National Education added £200. A very good building has been erected, in which about 500 children are educated. Another school house has been recently erected at the other end of this extensive parish, under the auspices of A O'Flaherty, Esq. There is a private school, in which are about 60 children. A fine Danish fort [a medieval *rath* or ringfort] at Danesfield gives name to the estate on which it stands, and there are ruins of two old castles [Moycullen and Tullokyne], which have obtained celebrity from being selected by Lady Morgan as the scene of one of her novels. They may be seen from a great distance. Roderick O'Flaherty, a learned Irish historian and antiquary, was born here in 1630.



Illus. 1.18—The modern village of Moycullen grew up around a crossroads created in 1828 when Alexander Nimmo drove a new road from Spiddal on the coast to Knockferry on Lough Corrib. The nascent village was recorded by the Ordnance Survey on the first-edition six-inch map of 1839.

This busy description of Moycullen in the 1830s suggests a substantial village with a large population. Again, however, as with the old O’Flaherty manor in medieval times, the population was dispersed over a constellation of townlands, all around Moycullen, and was not concentrated in the village at all. In the first detailed map of the area, being the first-edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map of 1839, Moycullen is no more than a cluster of a dozen buildings around the crossroads (Illus. 1.18). Nevertheless, if the village itself was small, the Ordnance Survey map also records a heavily populated hinterland, including both landlords’ houses and the much more numerous cabins of their tenants.

The higher ground south and west of the road, especially, ascending towards the less fertile slopes of Killagoola and Drummaveg, was dotted with hundreds of buildings at this time, being the cabins, sheds and byres of the rural tenantry. The first-edition Ordnance Survey map shows these dwellings forming the irregular settlement clusters known as clachans. Around Moycullen there were clachans, for instance, in the townlands of Clydagh, Killagoola, Uggool (Ogúil), Kylebroghlan (Coill Bhruachláin), Gortyloughlin, Drummaveg and Drimmavohaun, all on the high ground, and in Knockshanbally (Cnoc an tSeanbhaile), Ballydotia (Baile Dóite), Leagaun and Ballyquirke West, on the lower ground towards Lough Corrib. There are derelict remains of these clachans in the landscape around Moycullen today (Illus. 1.19), and a few buildings that are still in use, but in the village itself there is now only one surviving roadside cottage of probable early



Illus. 1.19—Pre-Famine cottage in Ballyquirke West. The early 19th-century population of Moycullen was scattered about the rural hinterland in the clusters of cottages, byres and sheds called clachans. Hunger, disease and emigration depopulated these settlements but there are surviving ruins here and there.

19th-century date, at the road junction on the N59 at the foot of Kylebroghlan (not illustrated).

Clachans were often shared tenancies, with an infield area of enclosed cultivation plots and a much more extensive outfield of unenclosed common grazing. This settlement pattern and its associated agricultural regime were probably long established by the time it was first mapped by the Ordnance Survey in the 1830s. It is glimpsed in Ruaidhrí Óg Ó Flaitheartaigh's own account in 1684 of the agricultural capability of his ancestral lands of Moycullen: 'good for pasture for cattle, but so craggy and full of stones and so destitute of deep mould [topsoil], that in very few spots of it a plough can go, yet, the tenants by digging, manure it so well, that they have corn for themselves, their landlords and the market ... wheat, barley, rye or oats' (Hardiman 1846, 57).

The tenants supported an élite class of landed gentry who did not dig and manure, and who did not occupy the craggy hillsides. Around Moycullen, the gated avenues and gate lodges indicating gentlemen's houses, with parkland and planting, were located along the main road. They are glimpsed in William Wilde's (1867, 284) *Lough Corrib*, occupying an idealised sylvan landscape: 'In the boundary line ... along which the main road runs, patches of culture—small lakes catching downfall from the hills—wooded glades, a few villages, some gentlemen's seats present themselves'. The remains of gentlemen's houses and their demesnes can be seen around Moycullen today at Danesfield (Burke), Drimcong (Lynch, Kilkelly), Kirkcullen (Browne, Cockurn-Hare) and Knockbane (O'Flaherty), as well as Moycullen Lodge (French Fitz Stephen, above). Drimcong survives and is an occupied private house (RPS 697), well maintained. The house at Danesfield is gone; only stables and a walled garden (RPS 703) survive (Illus. 1.20). Similarly, at Knockbane only outbuildings and part of the walled garden remain. Kirkcullen was a very lovely house in its heyday but is entirely ruinous now, partly demolished, and with vegetation colonising the ruins (Illus. 1.21). Moycullen House (c. 1890) of the Campbells is of much later vintage than any of these (Illus. 1.22). John, the first Lord Campbell, was a political peer and was briefly Lord Chancellor of Ireland in 1841. He acquired extensive lands in Connemara from indebted estates, including the former Lynch estate of Moycullen. Moycullen House was built by his son William, Lord Stratheden and Campbell. It is a fine house in the Arts & Crafts style. It was built as a shooting lodge on the stony hilltop of Kylebroghlan, which once overlooked populous clachans on the slopes below but by then supported only wildfowl and game. If any



Illus. 1.20—Danesfield House of the Burkes is now gone, but its walled garden can still be seen by the N59 on the western outskirts of the village.



Illus. 1.21—Time and wild nature are reclaiming Kirkullen House of the Brownes, one of the old medieval merchant families (the Tribes) of Galway City and landlords around Moycullen in early modern times.



Illus. 1.22—Moycullen House was built by Lord Stratheden and Campbell as a shooting lodge (c. 1890) in the heyday of Victorian gentrification of a depopulated Connemara.



Illus. 1.23—Walter McDonagh of the Moycullen Historical Society in An Scioból Mór. This was a grain barn where the tenants of the Burke estate of Danesfield brought the products of their labour. The ruins are now overgrown, standing in a former Coillte forestry plantation in Killarney.

single survival of this period could be considered a microcosm of the relationship between landlord and tenant, it is perhaps the big mortared stone agricultural building known as An Scioból Mór (Illus. 1.23) in Killarney, where tenants of the Burke estate of Danesfield brought their grain to the landlord's granary (Moycullen Historical Society 2008, 226). There is little tillage farming in the area today but Hely Dutton's (1824, 53) *Statistical and Agricultural Survey of Galway* records that it was once otherwise: 'Almost the entire baronies of Ballynahinch, Ross and Moycullen are pasture. In the valleys there are many patches of tillage and about the town of Moycullen a large quantity of excellent wheat is produced for the Galway market.' Like most other buildings of the period, An Scioból Mór is very ruinous. Until recently it stood in a clearing in a Coillte forestry plantation but was soon concealed by regenerating native scrubwood when the commercial conifers were felled.

The Great Famine and its aftermath cleared away many of the clachans and their people. The economic basis of the landed estates came under increasing pressure, but Moycullen was too well situated to fail and continued to develop as a local commercial and transport centre throughout the Victorian period and beyond. In Moycullen today there is still a core of 19th- and early 20th-century buildings evocative of that time (Illus. 1.24). A new schoolhouse was built in 1909 and is



Illus. 1.24—Several buildings in the village recall the social and economic life of early modern Moycullen. Árus Uilinn was once a National School (top left); the White Gables occupies the former RIC station (top right); Morrisons' House was used for Church of Ireland worship (below left); and Fox's Bar (now the Coach House) doubled as a ticket office for Bianconi cars and for the Cunard White Star shipping line.

now a community hall (Árus Uilinn). (The schoolhouse mentioned by Lewis in 1837 was also used intermittently as a community hall until it was demolished in 1977. Thus the present Scoil Mhuire, on the same site, is Moycullen's third National School.) At the village crossroads the White Gables restaurant occupies the former RIC station. The Moycullen Co-operative Agricultural Society building (RPS 711), opened in 1918, stands close by (Illus. 1.25, below). On another corner of the crossroads, Morrisons' House (alias Morrisons' Church) is an early 19th-century dwelling house that was used for worship by several generations of Moycullen's Church of Ireland congregation. Further east along the main street the Coach House bar was the first staging post for Bianconi cars making their daily trek between Galway and Clifden (c. 1837–95). It was also a local ticket office for the Cunard White Star Line, a merger of two great oceanic steamship lines in 1934. Horse-drawn Bianconi cars gave way to the noisy energy of Victorian engineering when the Galway to Clifden Railway arrived in Moycullen (1895–1935). The line passed through the northern outskirts of the village, where there are surviving railway buildings, albeit much modified



Illus. 1.25—The Moycullen Co-operative Agricultural Society was founded in 1914 and a dedicated building was completed in 1920. It is still a landmark building in the village main street.

as private dwellings or commercial premises (Illus. 1.26). (For a succinct history of the Galway to Clifden Railway see Villiers-Tuthill 2008.) The original Roman Catholic church (Lewis's 'neat building') was demolished and replaced in the 1950s by a larger building in a clean, modern, Latin style. Opposite the church, 'Frenchville' is a plain two-storey dwelling house that belonged to the Frenches of Moycullen Lodge. On the northern outskirts of the village is a series of little canals (Illus. 1.27) that linked Drimcong Lake and Ballyquirke Lake to Lough Corrib and, ultimately, to Galway City. The canals formed part of the Corrib Navigation Scheme, executed under the provisions of the *Drainage (Ireland) Act 1856*, at a time of widespread and energetic improvements in drainage, agriculture and transport. The writer has not discovered to what extent these little canals were used to carry, say, lime, coal or grain between Galway Docks and Moycullen; Spellissey (1999, 418) believes that they were for drainage only. In any case there were certainly local mills, with two surviving buildings on the Lough Kip River: a little 'tuck mill' (i.e. textile mill) of probable early 19th- or later 18th-century date a few hundred metres upstream from Clydagh Bridge and, immediately next to the bridge (Illus. 1.32, below), a much larger grain mill (RPS 713) that was built c. 1900 and operated intermittently until the middle decades of the 20th century.

The Co-operative Society Building

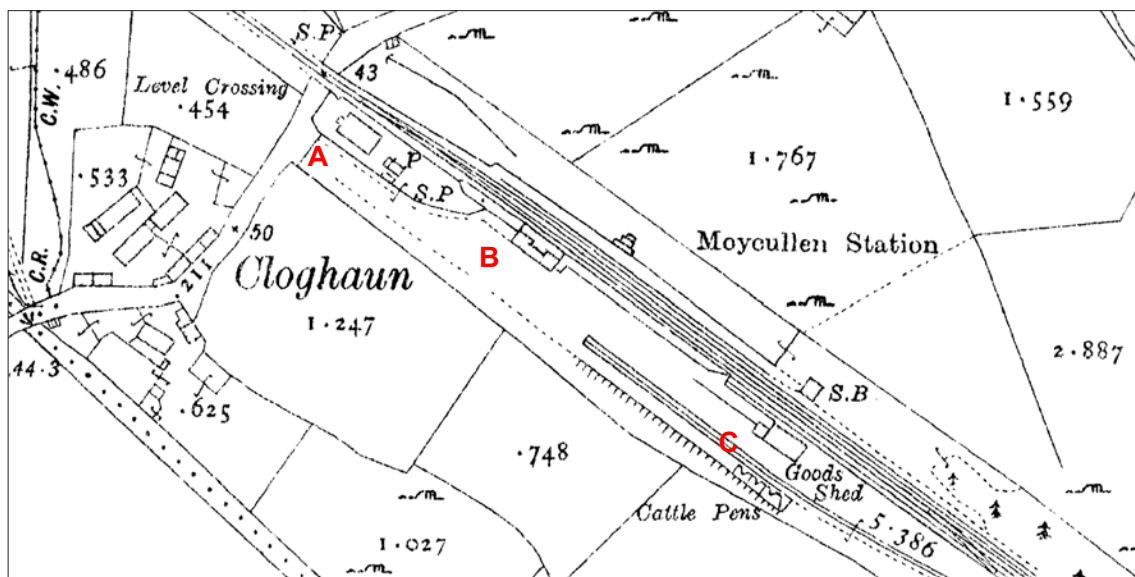
Tomás Ó Cadhain

The Moycullen Co-operative Agricultural Society was established in 1914 by local farming families. The first chairman was Lieutenant Colonel Charles Randolph-Kilkelly, of Drimcong House. The Co-operative Society operated at first from temporary premises in a group of wooden huts on lands north of the village main street, in Killarainy, but moved to the present building in 1918 (Illus. 1.25). The building that has become known simply as ‘the Co-Op’ was nicknamed ‘the Basilica’ in its early years. This was because it was reportedly styled on ancient Roman market houses, with a central trading hall and two multi-unit wings. On the front elevation it is a five-bay, two-storey building with a gabled breakfront and a large, striking Diocletian window to the centre of the breakfront.

The Co-operative Society had over 300 paid-up members from the parishes of Moycullen and Killannin. It was ably managed and traded successfully from the outset. Within a few years it became one of the most successful rural co-operative societies in the West of Ireland and returned a surplus of almost £5,000 in 1919, equivalent to almost €300,000 today. It was of great benefit, especially, to the local community during the difficult years of rationing that resulted from the First World War.

In spite of its early success the Co-operative Society survived for only a few years. During the War of Independence (1919–21) an active unit of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was based in Moycullen. Reprisals by Crown forces in 1920 included raids on the Co-operative Society building by the Black-and-Tans and the Auxiliaries. During one such raid the manager was shot and wounded and two young male staff members were taken outside and beaten. There are conflicting accounts of the impact of these raids on the Co-operative Society. In one narrative of events it was looted by local people, who took advantage of the general disorder and the absence of the wounded manager. Others believe that the co-operative spirit was a silent victim of the Civil War years (1922–3) that followed the War of Independence. In any case, the Society did not recover from these dark days and was liquidated shortly afterwards. This was a particular blow to Charles Randolph-Kilkelly, as he had been the biggest shareholder, first chairman and, in effect, the patron of the Society.

Over the succeeding decades the building has had multiple other uses. It has at various times been a police barracks, a dance hall, a garage, a grocery shop and a boat-building, craft and antique centre. By the early 1920s it was the first premises of the Jubilee Nurses in Moycullen. The Knitting Factory was initially part of the Co-operative Society venture but was housed in its own adjacent premises (a wooden building that has not survived). The Knitting Factory employed over 30 local women at its peak, making it Moycullen’s biggest employer in the 20th century. It provided a vital source of income for many local families during the extremely difficult economic times of the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1950s the Co-operative Society building was home to a bespoke carpet factory, V’Soske Joyce Carpets (now the Dixon Carpet Company, relocated in Oughterard). Most recently it has been refitted as a bar-café.



Illus. 1.26—Towards the close of the 19th century the daily trek of the horse-drawn Bianconi car gave way to the noisy energy of the Galway to Clifden Railway (1895–1935). There are surviving station buildings on the northern outskirts of Moycullen, though all are now in private use. Left to right: A: Master's house; B: station offices; and C: goods shed and water tower.

Moycullen today: streetscape and community

The fluctuating population of Moycullen in the modern period tells much of its recent story. Lewis (1837, 402) gave the population of the parish as 5,965 in the 1830s, at a time when the village was tiny though the surrounding townlands were well populated with rural tenantry. The Great Famine (1845–9) and subsequent evictions and emigration took a heavy toll over several decades, so that by the census of 1911 the population of the parish had fallen to 2,285. (This is a minimum figure, as 1911 census figures are not available for several townlands in the parish.) Lately, the pendulum is swinging upwards again. In 2009 Mulcahy (2009, 19) estimated the population of Moycullen village and environs at 3,700. The national census of 2011 recorded a combined population of 3,993 in Moycullen and neighbouring Tullokyne (Tullagh Mhic Aodháin), and in the census of 2016 this had grown to 4,217 (www.cso.ie). This partly reflects a



Illus. 1.27—The little canals that join the smaller lakes north of Moycullen with Ballyquirke Lake and ultimately Lough Corrib were dug as part of the Corrib Navigation Scheme under the *Drainage (Ireland) Act 1856*.

rising national population but more particularly represents the recent growth of Moycullen as a dormitory of Galway City and the ‘suburbanising’ of the surrounding countryside by single-site housing developments.

The village has changed beyond all recognition since the 1970s, when green fields could still be glimpsed in all directions from the central crossroads, and most of this growth has occurred in the last 20 years. Development on this scale has had a radical effect on the built environment. The single biggest element in this is the number of new dwelling houses. Some more recent examples are in a ‘new vernacular’ style that typically includes pitched roofs with dormered windows, porched entrances and simple ground-plans, but others—while good building stock—would be equally at home in the suburbs of any town or city in Ireland. Many of the new retail premises pay homage to older shopfronts by imitating their scale, form and fabric. Other new premises are less conservative in their design but make prominent use of local materials, or mix old and new in the same façade (e.g. cedarwood cladding and mortared rubble), and maintain the rooflines of neighbouring buildings (i.e. pitched slated roofs over two or three storeys) (Illus. 1.28). Thus the



Illus. 1.28— Some recent commercial developments in Moycullen have sought to replicate the scale and fabric of older shopfronts (above); others mix old and new materials in the same design (below).



Illus. 1.29—The shopping centre at the village crossroads—An Cearnóg Nua—makes no concessions to the design, scale or fabric of older buildings in the centre of the village.

Old and New Clydagh Bridge

Jerry O’Sullivan

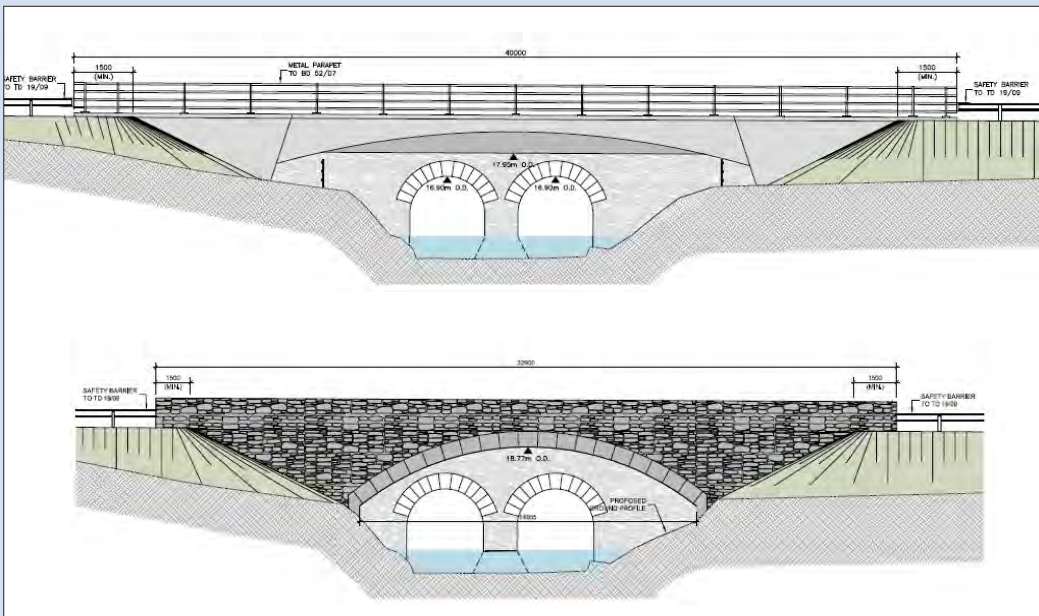
Clydagh Bridge is on the eastern outskirts of Moycullen, where it carries the N59 from Galway over the Lough Kip River. Taylor & Skinner’s *Roads of Ireland* (1783, 90) shows a river crossing at this location in the late 18th century. Very likely there had been a bridge here for some decades by that time. A good bridge would have been required, not least, for the carriages of the gentry who had houses along this road: the Burkes, Kilkellys and Lynches in Moycullen and, further west, the O’Flahertys in Oughterard and the Martins in Ballynahinch. In addition, Oughterard was a barracks town from the mid-18th century. The military did build bridges on some mountain roads in Ireland and Britain in this period, but old Clydagh Bridge was probably built under a contract issued by the Grand Jury, which was the precursor (until 1898) of the present County Council.

The old bridge was a modest but robust structure, carried on two plain round arches and with massive abutments on either side (Illus. 1.31). The masonry was mortared rubble (mixed limestone, granite and schist). The parapets were also in plain mortared rubble, with a ‘soldier course’ of edge-set field stones on part of the northern or downstream side—a secondary feature. The carriageway was 21 ft wide between the parapets, which corresponds to the minimum permitted width under the *Act for the Repair of Highways 1759*. The fabric suggests multiple episodes of rebuilding and repair, especially on the southern or upstream face, where relieving arches were built into the façade and the breakwater at the foot of the pier was roughly rebuilt. Alexander Nimmo was Engineer for the Western District in 1829, when his accounts record repairs to Clydagh Bridge costing £20. This included a payment to John Shaughnessy for masonry and ‘compensation to Redmond Delaney’, presumably an injured workman (Noël Wilkins, pers. comm.; Wilkins 2009, 217). In more recent years the faces of the bridge were heavily pointed with modern cement-based mortar and, in places, all-over harled. The soffits or undersides of the arches were entirely rendered or ‘gunited’ with a strong cement mix applied on a reinforcing mesh. A series of cast-iron pattress plates along the south face showed where the masonry was bored and cabled to strengthen the structure. All of this contributed to its rough, rustic appeal and, with the adjacent mill building (c. 1890), it formed part of a very pleasing building group in a leafy riverbank setting.

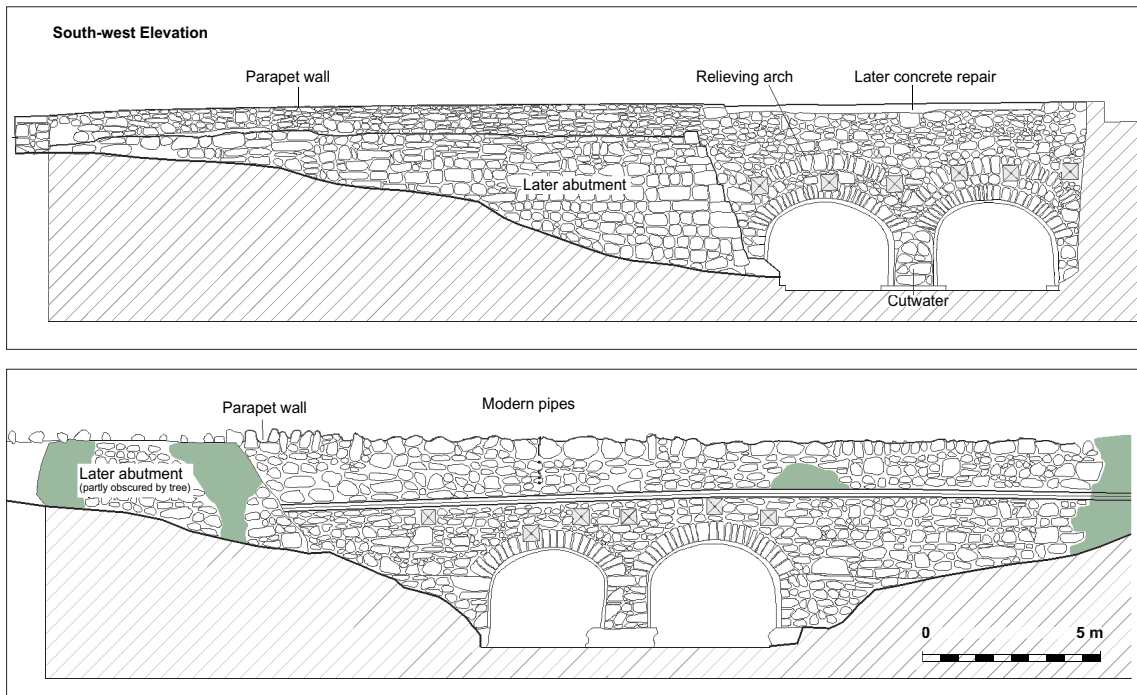
The N59 Moycullen Bypass project included improvements along the eastern approach to Moycullen. This posed a design problem in relation to the old bridge because building a wider approach road, with a better vertical alignment, would require a higher, wider bridge at Clydagh. The alternatives considered were either to widen and raise the existing bridge or to replace it entirely. Ecological constraints meant that the twin arches of the existing bridge could not be extended or replicated in any new structure, because ‘in-stream’ construction work would not have been permitted in a river forming part of the

Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Any structure designed to widen the old bridge would therefore have been of a different form, without twin arches and a central pier (Illus. 1.30). In addition, raising the height of the old bridge would have seemed to diminish the original arches, reducing them in appearance to mere culverts within the resulting higher elevation. In short, the fabric of the old bridge could be preserved within a bigger, hybrid structure, but its character would be lost. From a purely aesthetic point of view, therefore, the design team concluded that a better option would be to build an entirely new bridge, on a single elliptical arch, with stone cladding.

This proposal was given a thorough airing at the oral hearing on the road scheme convened by An Bord Pleanála in 2012. When work commenced on the road project in 2015, however, the demolition of the bridge provoked a vigorous local protest and briefly became a national news story. The issues were aired again by Galway County Council, in a meeting with local people and their elected representatives. The protestors were no happier after the meeting but conceded that, for better or worse, a lawfully approved development—and, moreover, one for which the Council had already engaged a main contractor for the works—must be allowed to proceed. The old bridge was finally demolished over two days in September 2015 and the new bridge built over the succeeding months, being completed in February 2016 (Illus. 1.32).



Illus. 1.30—The N59 Bypass Scheme requires a higher and wider bridge at Clydagh on the Lough Kip River. None of the options considered would have preserved the character of the old bridge. (Roughan and O'Donovan Engineers for Galway County Council)



Illus. 1.31 (above)—Measured survey drawings of the south-west (upstream) and north-east elevations of the old Clydagh Bridge on the Lough Kip River; on the eastern approach to Moycullen on the N59; and (right) a plan of the bridge, showing also the adjacent Victorian grain mill. The relieving arches on the upstream side suggest rebuilding of that façade and this may have been the work carried out by Alexander Nimmo in 1829. The different treatments of the parapet walls also suggest rebuilding. The massive rubble masonry cladding of the abutments is a more recent addition. The bridge was probably built in the mid-18th century by the Galway Grand Jury (precursor to the local authority until 1898). It was demolished and replaced in 2015–16. (*Hugh Kavanagh for Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd*)



Illus. 1.32—The old Clydagh Bridge and the adjacent Victorian grain mill formed a pleasing rustic group on the Lough Kip River. The new bridge is a much bigger structure but its stone cladding attempts to capture some of the original character of the place.

general trend in new commercial developments and especially along the main street has been to retain or at least refer to the traditional character of the village streetscape. The most striking departure from this trend is the new shopping complex—An Cearnóg Nua (Illus. 1.29)—with its marbled, split-level plaza and underground car-park. This is a big building in a modern style that would be out of balance with the surrounding streetscape were it not located at the crossroads in the centre of the village. In this location its radical departure from the traditional idiom attempted by other new buildings on the main street helps at least to identify it as a focal point in the village and a 21st-century counterpart to the old Co-operative Society building (1918), which it confronts on the opposite side of the street.

All in all, this mix of old and new is largely successful and most people would agree that Moycullen is an attractive village. Certainly there is plenty of visible evidence of pride of place. Most of the buildings in the streetscape are well maintained. Flower baskets adorn many of them throughout the summer. Here and there are religious sculptures, roadside monuments and street furniture, endowed by private organisations or individuals. They are eye-catching features contributing to a strong sense of place, and attest a local perception of the street as a shared public space in which it is possible to express community memory and identity.

2

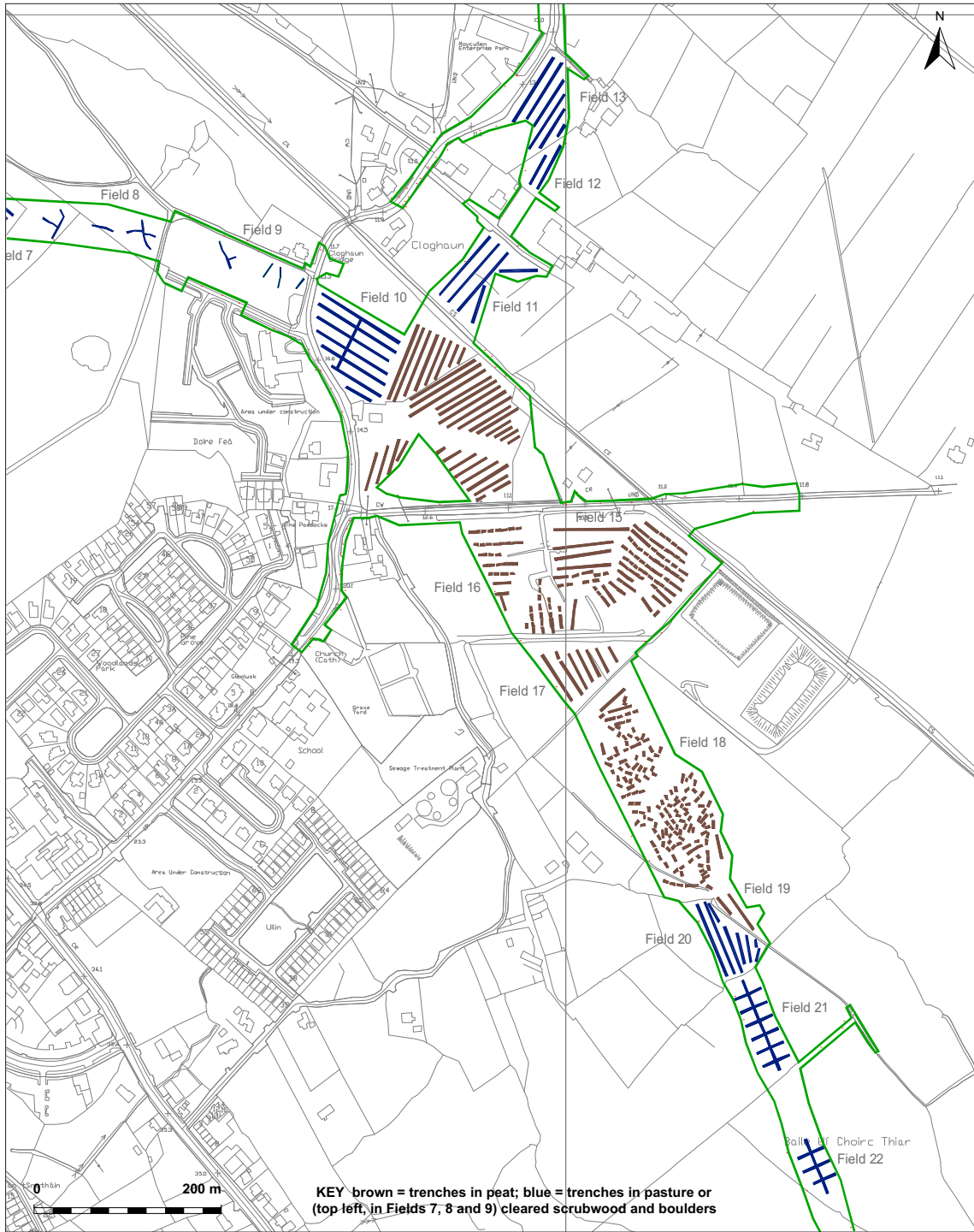
Archaeological excavations

Shane Delaney and Jerry O’Sullivan

Visitors to Moycullen will find visible surviving evidence of its later medieval and early modern history, as we saw in the previous chapter, but the picture of Moycullen’s earlier history and prehistory is almost entirely obscure. There are few previously recorded archaeological sites and monuments in the hinterland of Moycullen and almost none of prehistoric date. Nonetheless, we can still make an educated guess that the landscape around Moycullen was well populated in early medieval times and probably had resident populations in periods of prehistory too. There are local areas of fertile alluvial soil very suited to agriculture around Lough Corrib, and the lake would have offered abundant fish and game, so that the lake shore and its environs would have been attractive for settlement in all periods of prehistory and early history.



Illus. 2.1—Test excavations were opened by machine, under archaeological supervision, throughout the footprint of the bypass.



Illus. 2.2—Ground conditions and terrain—including cleared scrubwood with boulders and outcropping rock (top left), low-lying peat deposits and improved pasture on hilly, undulating land—dictated the extent and layout of test trenches along the bypass. (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd based on the Ordnance Survey Ireland map*)

Table 2.1—Excavated archaeological sites on the N59 Moycullen Bypass.²

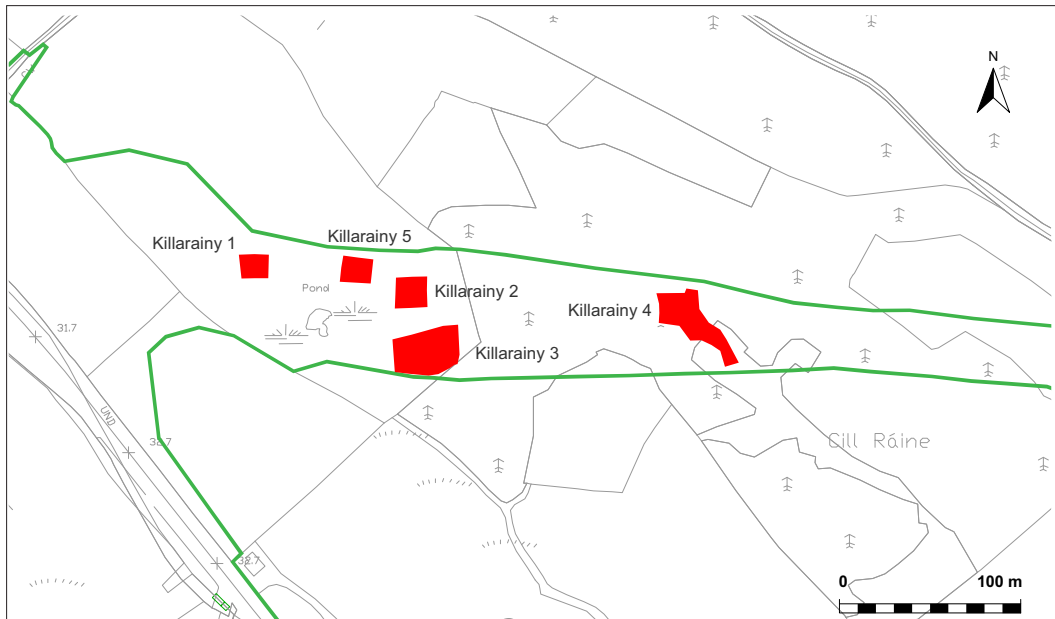
Site location	Summary of excavation results
Killarainy 1 Reg. No. E4575 ITM 520920 733320 Director Shane Delaney	Large irregular pit (undated)
	Hazel charcoals in lower fill
	Neolithic chert scraper from topsoil
	No radiocarbon date
Killarainy 2 Reg. No. E4576 ITM 521007 733353 Director Shane Delaney	Early medieval charcoal kiln (pit)
	Oak charcoals
	No artefacts
	Radiocarbon date: AD 784–990 (2 sigma)
Killarainy 3 Reg. No. E4577 ITM 521017 733320 Director Shane Delaney	Large Bronze Age burnt mound (pit, no trough)
	Ash, hazel and other charcoals
	No artefacts
	Radiocarbon dates: alder charcoal from the mound 890–792 BC; hazel charcoal from the pit 1084–906 BC; peat overlying the mound AD 1444–1630 (all at 2 sigma)
Killarainy 4 Reg. No. E4578 ITM 521162 733338 Director Shane Delaney	Small Bronze Age burnt mound; medieval charcoal kiln(s)
	Oak, hazel and other charcoals
	No artefacts
	Radiocarbon dates: elm charcoal from mound 2014–1777 BC; ash charcoal from a charcoal kiln AD 1444–1630; hazel charcoal from the same kiln AD 1283–1393 (all 2 sigma)
Killarainy 5 Reg. No. E4579 ITM 520977 733367 Director Shane Delaney	Early medieval hearth and stake-holes
	Oak, hazel and other charcoals; cereal grains; burnt bone fragments (unident.)
	Neolithic/Bronze Age chert flake
	Radiocarbon date: hazel charcoal from hearth AD 901–1023 (2 sigma)
Ballyquirke East 1 Reg. No. E4580 ITM 522420 731732 Director Fintan Walsh	Two Neolithic pits; early medieval pit
	Hazel, oak, birch and other charcoals; cereal grains and weed seeds from pits
	Neolithic pottery sherds; stone axeheads; chert point/burin; flakes and debitage; poss. hone stone
	Radiocarbon dates: hazel from pit 3692–3527 BC; hazel charcoal from kiln AD 777–973 (both 2 sigma)

²All of the excavations were in the barony and civil parish of Moycullen, Co. Galway.

What can the archaeology of a new road project add to this story? Several newly discovered archaeological sites were excavated along the route of the N59 Moycullen Bypass in 2015, including an Early Neolithic occupation site, Bronze Age burnt mounds, an early medieval hut or house floor, and early and later medieval charcoal kilns (Table 2.1). All of the sites were discovered by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd in the course of test excavations using mechanical excavators under archaeological supervision (Illus. 2.1 and 2.2). Once the sites were identified in this way, they were fully excavated by hand by a team of professional archaeologists, and finds and samples were retained for post-excavation identification, dating and analysis. Fully illustrated technical reports on the work have been filed with the National Monuments Service, the National Museum of Ireland and the Hardiman Library at NUI Galway. Digital copies of the reports are being made available on the internet in the TII Digital Heritage Collections section of the Digital Repository of Ireland (www.repository.dri.ie). What follows here is a summary of the headlines from each of the excavated sites.

KILLARAINY

The archaeological sites discovered in Killarainy (Cill Ráine) (Illus. 2.3) were located in undulating, hilly terrain with some low-lying hollows prone to flooding. The subsoil here is a compact glacial till (sandy clay-silt) with occasional large boulders and limestone rock outcrops. The topsoil is generally a shallow brown loam but with pockets of peat in the hollows. On the first-edition Ordnance Survey map of 1839 the area is shown as rough ground with frequent



Illus. 2.3—Locations of excavated archaeological sites in Killarainy townland. (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd*)

boulders and some small wooded copses. By the third-edition map of 1933 it was mostly wooded. Within living memory the land was cleared of trees and scrub, rock and drystone field walls, and now supports improved grass pasture. The work was carried out using mechanical excavators. Some of the knolls were levelled down and some of the low-lying hollows were infilled with earth and boulders (information from Mr Pat Feeny, landowner).

Here and there, relict plough furrows were observed at the base of the topsoil during our excavations, indicating areas of arable cultivation at some time in the past. The furrows are widely spaced and up to 1 m apart, suggesting that they were dug by hand—a common practice in the west of Ireland until the mid- or later 19th century. Frequent flecks of scorched, red earth in the topsoil hint at an aggressive regime of paring off the sod and burning it after fallow periods, which was another common practice in early modern agriculture. So the landscape of Killarainy has had a very variable history. It has been stony, marginal ground, sometimes wooded, but with areas capable of being made productive by hard work and a determined hand, and it will soon carry a new road around the village.

Killarainy 1: undated large pit

Killarainy 1 was one of those puzzling, isolated features that can turn up in precautionary testing but cannot be explained. It was a large, irregular pit, 4.8 m long by 1.15 m deep (Illus. 2.4). It was backfilled with layers of clay, silt and stones, with a charcoal-rich deposit in the base. Some of the stones appeared scorched but there was no evidence for *in situ* burning in the pit itself. Hazel was the only species represented. Did this big pit hold some sort of giant marker post in antiquity? Or was it merely a quarry pit? From the available evidence we simply cannot say why the pit was dug and therefore we did not feel that it justified the expense of a radiocarbon date. The only artefact from the site was a chert scraper (Illus. 2.18, below) of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date. As it was found in the topsoil, it may be an incidental or stray find having no relationship with the pit.



Illus. 2.4—Killarainy 1. There is no obvious explanation for this large, undated pit filled with stones, soil and burnt sediment.

Killarainy 2: early medieval charcoal kiln

Killarainy 2 was one of several medieval charcoal kilns discovered on the bypass route. It was a large, rectangular pit with steep sides and a flat base (1.9 m long by 1.4 m wide and 0.5 m deep) (Illus. 2.5). There was an area of scorching in the base. This was overlain by a deposit of charcoal, which was sealed in turn by a pale sandy clay-silt (redeposited subsoil) and then a loose, dark, sandy clay-silt with some charcoals. The charcoal fragments were all of oak, between 5 mm and 25 mm in size, with between two and 15 annual tree rings. Fast growth was recorded on some of the fragments, which hints at managed woodlands, possibly coppiced. A sample of charcoal was radiocarbon-dated to AD 784–990 (UBA-29110), in the early medieval period.

The pit is interpreted as a clamp or kiln, where oak charcoal was produced for use in iron-smelting. Oak charcoals burned longer and achieved higher, more constant temperatures than charcoals of other available species. Charcoal kilns like this are recorded throughout Ireland in the early medieval period. They are often found at a distance from settlements, nearer to where the metalworker's raw materials—oak wood (charcoal) and bog iron—could be found. The early medieval period in Ireland produced a wealth of very fine metalwork, including enamelled brooches and liturgical vessels commissioned by churches and monasteries. The craftsmen who produced this fine work enjoyed a high status in early Irish society. But every farmstead also had a collection of more basic tools forged of iron, including chisels, knives and shears, for instance. These lowly objects were most likely produced by itinerant or journeyman smiths, although then, as now, some farmers may have been capable of doing the repair work themselves. The charcoal kiln at Killarainy 2 can be seen in this context—an essential part of the local subsistence economy in early medieval times.



Illus. 2.5—Killarainy 2. The charcoal fragments in this large oval pit were all from oak, which was favoured for metalworking. It is one of several medieval charcoal kilns discovered in Killarainy.

The burnt mound enigma

Jerry O’Sullivan

The burnt mound is the most common type of site discovered by archaeological testing on rural development sites in Ireland. Wherever ‘blind’ test trenches are opened in low-lying, wet ground—on the edge of a bog or a rushy stream valley—there are good odds that a dark, charcoal-rich mound or spread of friable, heat-shattered stone might be found. These mounds are usually interpreted as the by-product of heating stones to boil water in a trough that was sunk into the ground in an area with a high natural water-table. Sometimes the troughs were simply earth-cut pits but often they were lined with stone slabs, wattlework or planks (Illus. 2.6). The troughs were used on multiple occasions and the resulting mass of stony debris could extend over a large area all around.

This ‘pyrolithic’ technique seems to have been very widely known. Burnt and shattered stone heaps are found throughout north-west Europe. They have been called, variously, ‘red hill’ or ‘pot boiler’ (England), ‘burnt cairn’ (Scotland), ‘*kogestengrube*’ or ‘cooking stone pit’ (Denmark), ‘*skärvstenshög*’ or ‘shattered stone heap’ (Sweden) and *fulacht fiadh* (Ireland) (Ó Néill 2009, 43–6). The term most often used now in archaeological writing in English is simply ‘burnt mound’.

Over 1,200 burnt mounds have been excavated in Ireland. Most of these date from the Bronze Age (2200–800 BC), and especially the Middle to Later Bronze Age, but there are many outliers in this chronology, across a very long timespan extending from the Neolithic period to medieval times. The reliability of the medieval dates has been challenged (Hawkes 2011). Nonetheless, the term *fulacht fiadh* comes from medieval Irish sources. Burnt mounds are treated in an ambivalent manner in the sources: their purpose was still understood, but they are treated as antiquities in the heroic tales in which they are described.

In Irish medieval sources burnt mounds are used for cooking and bathing, but archaeologists do not all agree that this is how they were used in prehistory. Rival proposals include brewing, curing meat, bending wood, processing textiles (fulling or dyeing) and heating saunas or sweat lodges. Unfortunately, none of these proposals finds strong support in the finds assemblages from excavated burnt mound sites, which are notoriously poor in artefacts, animal bones and plant remains (i.e. useful and cultivated plants). One school of thought is that a large volume of steam and hot water could have multiple uses, so that burnt mounds were not dedicated to any one purpose but were simply the ‘kitchen sinks of the Bronze Age’ (Delaney et al. 2012, 57–60).

Ó Néill (2009) published a comprehensive study of the burnt mound phenomenon in *Burnt Mounds in Northern and Western Europe*, and there is a good summary of the Irish evidence by Delaney et al. (2012, 58–60) in *Borderlands*. For a review of burnt mounds in early Irish sources see papers by Ó Drisceóil (1988 and 1990).



Illus. 2.6—Artist's impression of meat joints being prepared for immersion in the plank-lined water trough of a *fulacht* or burnt mound site. (Jonathan Millar in Bolger et al. 2015, illus. 3.24)

Killarainy 3: Bronze Age burnt mound

The burnt mound discovered at Killarainy 3 was located in a low-lying wet hollow at the boundary between an improved pasture field and woodland scrub (Illus. 2.7 and. 2.8). (This site was also at the boundary of the lands acquired for the new road.) The mound was 20 m long by 17 m wide and up to 0.35 m deep (Illus. 2.9). It consisted of grey and black heat-shattered stones (sandstone), with coarse sand and charcoal inclusions throughout. Ash and hazel were the dominant species among charcoals from the mound, with smaller amounts of birch, oak, Pomoideae (a family that includes a wide variety of small fruiting trees), yew, alder and elm. A sample of alder charcoal from the mound was radiocarbon-dated to 1084–906 BC (UBA-29111), in the Late Bronze Age.

There was no trough beneath the mound but only a large, subcircular pit to one side. This was steep-sided with a flat base and measured 1.6 m long by 1.55 m wide by 0.3 m deep. It was filled with sandy silt with some heat-affected stone but with only a few charcoal inclusions. A sample of hazel charcoal from the pit was dated to 890–792 BC (UBA-29112), in the Late Bronze Age.

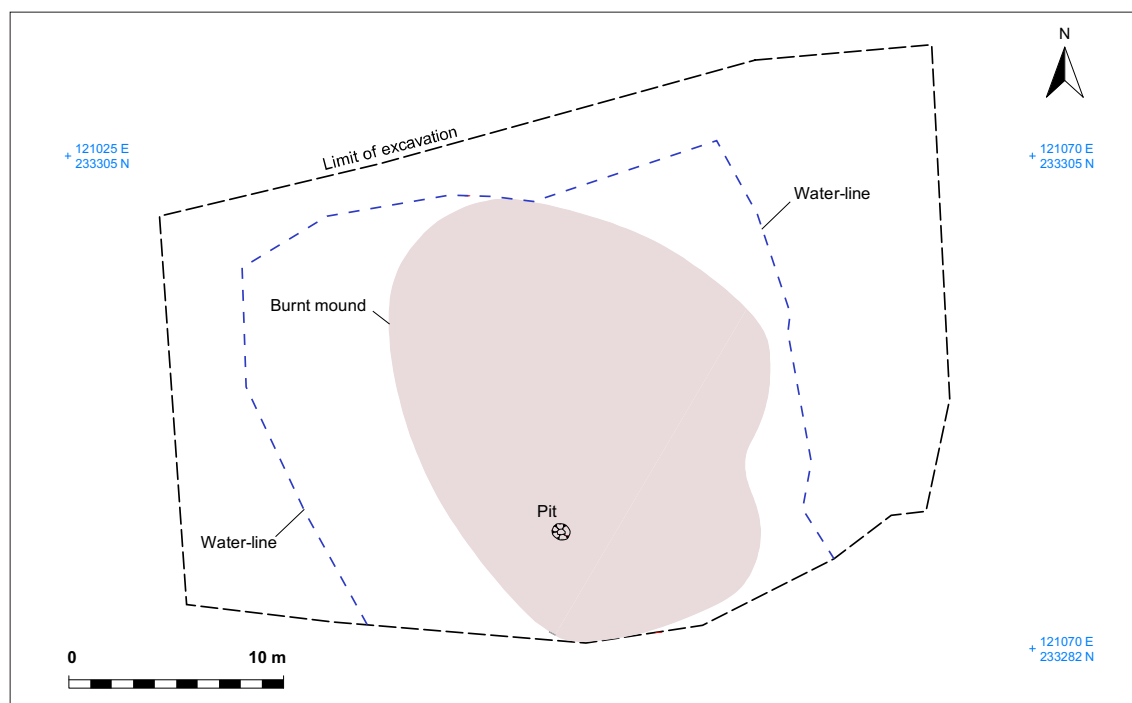
The mound overlay a layer of natural peat that had formed in this low, wet hollow, and it was partly sealed, in turn, by a further accumulation of peat. A sample of this later, overlying peat was dated to AD 1444–1630 (UBA-29314), in the later medieval period.



Illus. 2.7—Killarainy 3. A large spread of burnt mound material discovered in a hollow was excavated by hand.



Illus. 2.8—Killarainy 3. Burnt mound sites occur in low-lying places with high water-tables. The excavated area at this site was flooded after heavy rain.



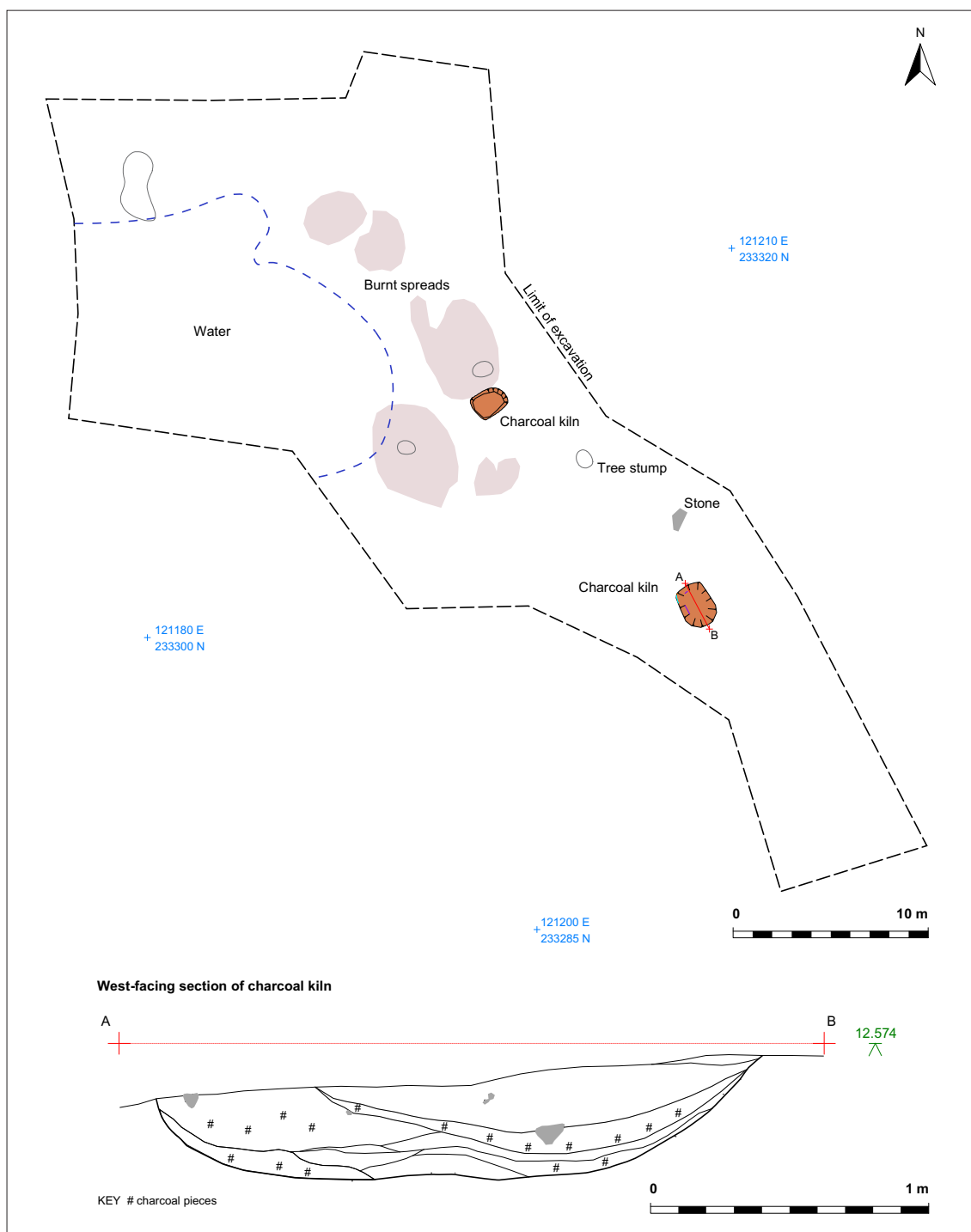
Illus. 2.9—Killarainy 3. Plan of the burnt mound spread, showing the extent of flooding after heavy rain. (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd*)

The upper part of the mound was very disturbed in places and there were dumps of stone overlying it. This corroborates the landowner's account of recent land improvements. Part of the mound remains *in situ* outside the boundary of the lands acquired for the bypass. It may well be that there is a trough beneath this undisturbed part of the mound, as none was found in the excavated part of the site.

Killarainy 4: Bronze Age burnt mound and later medieval charcoal kiln(s)

Burnt mound

A second burnt mound was recorded at Killarainy 4. This was located at the foot of a gentle, west-facing slope at the margins of wet, low-lying ground. It was very badly disturbed and consisted only of surviving spreads of heat-affected stone (limestone), in a matrix of charcoal-rich sand, extending patchily over an area of 21 m by 15 m with a maximum depth of 0.2 m (Illus. 2.10). Among the charcoals that were sampled oak was dominant, then hazel, with some yew and elm also present. (This contrasts with the Later Bronze Age burnt mound at Killarainy 3, where ash and hazel were dominant.) A charcoal sample (elm) from the mound was dated to 2014–1777 BC (UBA-29115), in the Early Bronze Age.



Illus. 2.10—Killarainy 4. Plan of patchy remnants of a disturbed burnt mound. Two medieval charcoal kilns were also found on this site (section, below). (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd*)

Charcoal kilns

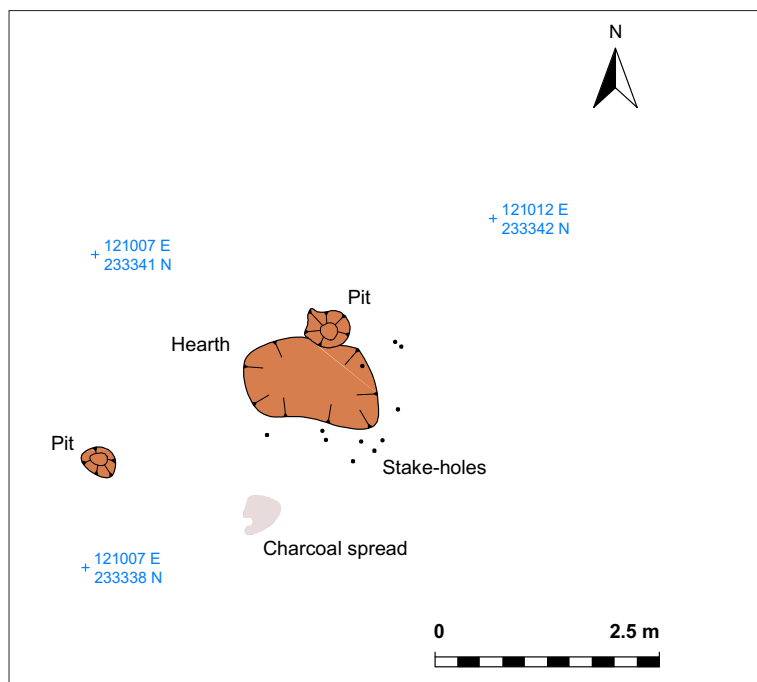
Two large pits were interpreted as charcoal kilns (Illus. 2.10). One was located upslope from the mound. It was a subrectangular pit with vertical sides and a flat base, measuring 2.2 m long by 1.7 m wide by 0.4 m deep. There were multiple fills of grey, sandy clay-silt with occasional stones, frequent large charcoal fragments and occasional flecks of burnt, oxidised (red) soil. The fills were mixed and evidently the kiln was used more than once and backfilled. Among the charcoals oak was dominant, with much smaller amounts of hazel, ash, yew, Pomoideae and possibly alder. As the pit was at first suspected of being a cereal-drying kiln, a bulk sample of the fills was examined to ascertain whether any charred cereals were present. The results were negative and only a stone from a sloe (blackthorn), a hazelnut shell fragment and a weed seed from cleavers (*Galium aparine* L.), alias stickyweed or goosegrass, were recorded. A charcoal sample (ash) from the base of the kiln was dated to AD 1264–1383 (UBA-29114), in the later medieval period. A second sample (hazel) from an upper fill of the kiln was dated to AD 1283–1393 (UBA-29113), also in the later medieval period.

The second charcoal kiln was cut into the remnant burnt mound. Again it was a rectangular pit with steep sides and a flat base, measuring 1.7 m long by 1.3 m wide by 0.6 m deep. There was only a very shallow deposit of charcoal at the base. All of this was oak. The remaining fills were silts with some small stones. No radiocarbon date was obtained.

Killarainy 5: early medieval hearth and stake-holes

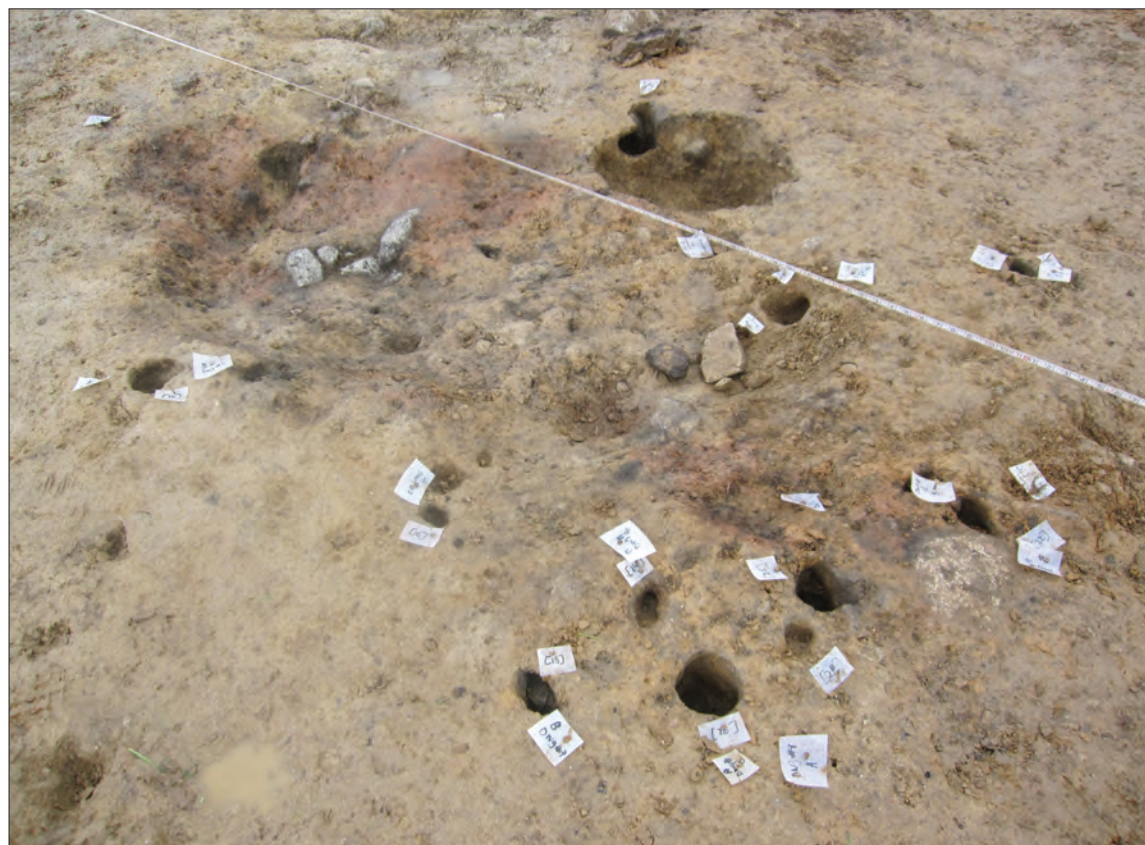
Killarainy 5 afforded a rare glimpse of an unenclosed habitation of early medieval date, though the evidence is slight and occupation of the site may not have been permanent. Evidence for early medieval domestic settlement in Ireland is usually found within the circular homestead enclosures known variously as cashels (stone), ringforts or raths (earth). These enclosures are still very common in the Irish countryside, although, sadly, thousands have been destroyed by agricultural improvements in the last 50 years. Their essential characteristic is a stone wall or earth-cut bank and ditch forming a barrier between the settlement space (inside) and the farmscape/wildscape (outside). They are often discovered to contain the foundations of one or more small round-houses and the underground tunnels or stone-built chambers known as souterrains. Evidence for unenclosed settlement is much less common in this period, though it is very likely that landless serfs forming the lowest tier in early medieval society did not live within the ringforts and cashels they built for their masters, but in shelters they built for themselves on adjoining land.

The site at Killarainy 5 was situated within a slight hollow on the east-facing brow of a knoll. The central feature was a broad, shallow pit in the subsoil measuring 1.9 m wide by 0.16 m deep. The sides and base were scorched and the fills were spreads of dark grey or black sandy clay-silt with frequent charcoal and flecks of burnt soil. The feature is interpreted as a domestic hearth (Illus. 2.11 and 2.12). There were cut features scattered about the hearth, mostly on the south and east sides, which are variously interpreted as stake-holes and possible post-holes. A small quantity



Illus. 2.11—Killarainy 5. Plan of a hearth, pits and stake-holes. (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd*)

Illus. 2.12—Killarainy 5. The hearth, pits and stake-holes were found in a hollow on the brow of a knoll and are interpreted as remains of an early medieval hut or house site.



of burnt bone (26 fragments weighing 1.2 gm) was recovered from the pit but could not be identified owing to the small fragment size and worn condition. Among charcoals from the hearth and cut features oak was dominant, followed by ash and Pomoideae. Two charred cereal grains (unidentified) and one charred hazelnut shell came, respectively, from a post-hole and the hearth. A charcoal sample (hazel) from the base of the hearth was dated to AD 901–1023 (UBA-29116), in the early medieval period.

The only find was a used chert flake (length 50 mm) of probable Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date (Illus. 2.18, below). Again, this was found in the topsoil and is probably a residual find, unrelated to the early medieval hearth and stake-holes.

The excavated features on this site are interpreted as the well-worn, bare earth floor of a hut or small round-house, with a hearth at its centre. Early medieval sites in Killarainy include the (unexcavated) cashel or homestead in the scrubwood in Killarainy Wood, south of the road corridor; the metalworkers' charcoal kiln excavated at Killarainy 2 (above); and this present hut site at Killarainy 5. Taken all together, they can be considered to represent a working landscape with diverse resources—wood, pasture, arable soil and possibly bog iron, supporting different classes of people, co-existing within a single social order.

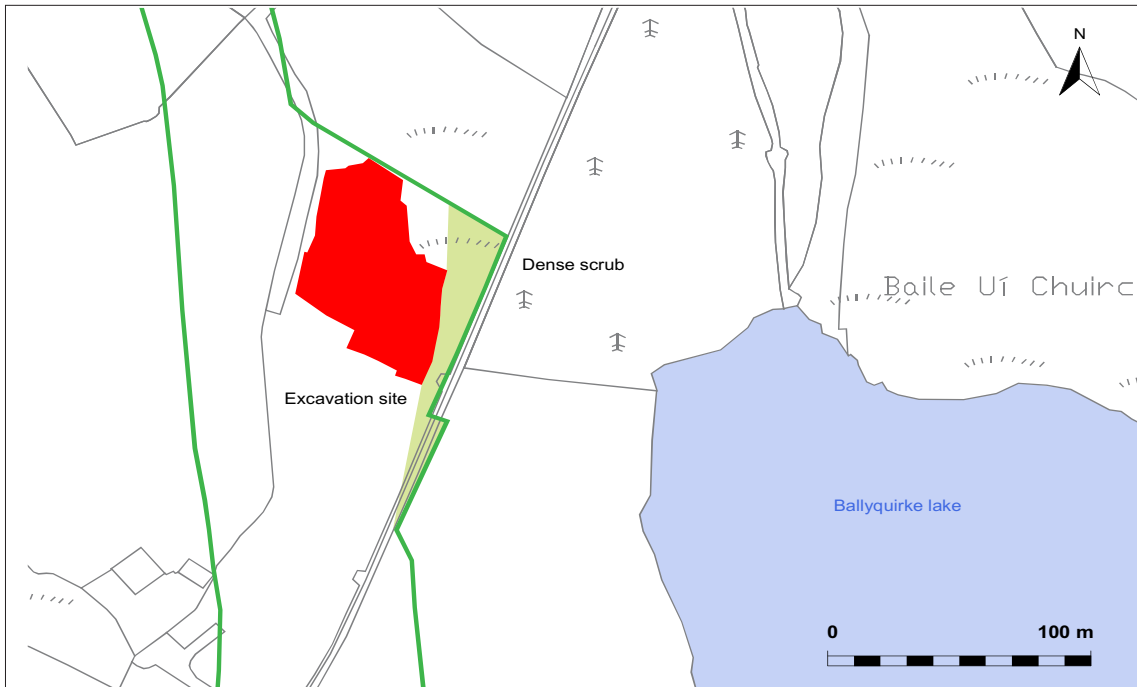
BALLYQUIRKE

Ballyquirke East 1: Neolithic features and artefacts; medieval pit

We have already seen from the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (RMP 1997) that Connemara seems to have been thinly populated in prehistory. Furthermore, there have been no other investigations to date of Neolithic occupation sites west of Lough Corrib. Therefore the evidence of an Early Neolithic occupation site recorded at Ballyquirke East 1, while slight in itself, is of the first importance for the region.

The site was located in a low-lying setting, in rough pasture, on the south shore of Ballyquirke Lake (Illus. 2.13). The lake itself is a very pleasant body of water, over 60 ha in extent. Today it is fringed by limestone boulders, tall reed beds, alders and light scrubwood, and boasts several small, overgrown islands that may once have been crannogs, though none of them is listed as such in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP 1997). The lake has good stocks of freshwater coarse fish, including bream, roach, rudd, perch, pike and eel. Among these only eel is a native species. We can safely say that eels would always have offered a protein-rich food supply to anyone living on the lake shore. (During the Second World War, fresh live eels from Ballyquirke were exported to fish markets in London. They are still trapped today on Lough Corrib for export to mainland Europe.)

The topsoil on the excavation site was very thin and, over most of the site, covered gravelly clay-silt subsoil lying in pockets over karstic limestone bedrock. There was one large bedrock reef near the middle of the site. Its surface was criss-crossed with scored lines, indicating that the site had been ploughed repeatedly or levelled by machinery in the course of farm improvements.



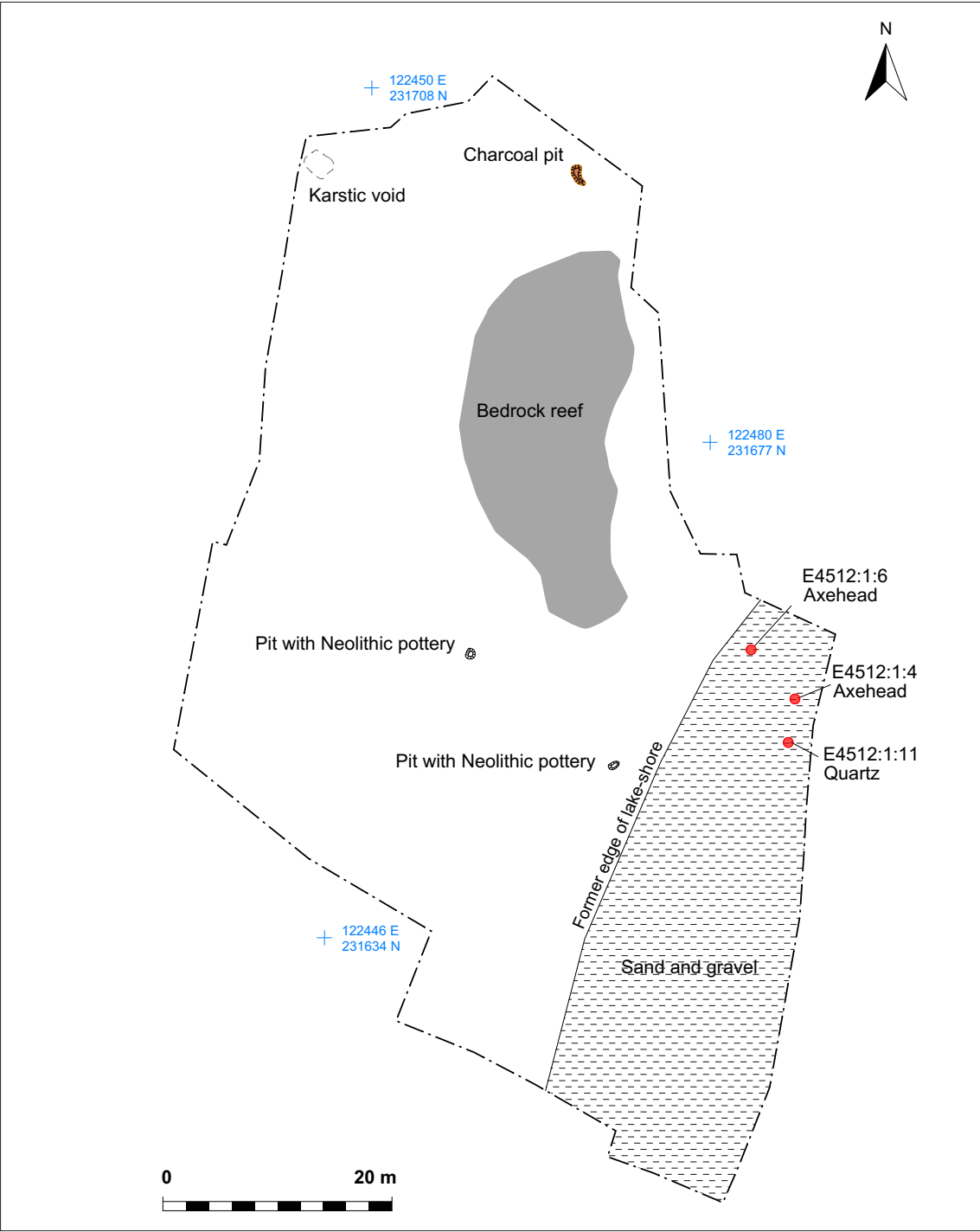
Illus. 2.13—Location plan of the excavated archaeological site at Ballyquirke East I. (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd*)

Closer to the lake the topsoil was peaty and overlaid water-sorted coarse sand and gravel. This is a reminder that Ballyquirke Lake would have been more extensive before drainage works under the Corrib Navigation Scheme reduced the level of Lough Corrib and its satellites in Victorian times.

Neolithic pits, pottery and axeheads

Two small, irregular pits were recorded within the excavated site, at different locations (Illus. 2.14). One was 1.05 m wide and 0.6 m deep; the other was 0.9 m wide by 0.4 m deep. The fills were dark grey-brown, sandy clay-silt with frequent charcoal flecks. Three small sherds of a coarse prehistoric pottery were recovered from the pits. All three are undecorated body sherds that can be identified as fragments of Early Neolithic carinated bowls (Illus. 2.15). This is the earliest known pottery type in Ireland and is frequently found on domestic sites. A chert notched point/burin (Illus. 2.18, below) was found in one pit. This was probably a tool for fine woodworking.

Hazel, oak and some birch charcoals were identified in samples from the pits. There were also two cereal grains, several hazelnut shell fragments and a weed seed of black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*). One of the cereal grains could be identified as wheat (*Triticum* sp.). The presence of cultivated cereals at a Neolithic site in the west of Ireland is an important discovery. Wheat was the dominant cereal crop in Neolithic times but the evidence for cereals in this period is more often present at sites in the east and north of the island. The hazelnut shells suggest that foraging would also have been important to the people who occupied this site. A charcoal sample (hazel)



Illus. 2.14—Plan of the excavated features at Ballyquirke East I. Drainage works in the 19th century lowered the level of the lake, exposing water-sorted sand and gravel (bottom right). (Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd)

Neolithic stone axes

Shane Delaney

Stone axes were the ultimate multi-tool during the Neolithic period in Europe. They were used for clearing land, for pollarding and coppicing trees, for chopping and shaping wood, for construction, boat-building and many other tasks. They may even have been used as personal weapons. The Ballyquirke East 1 assemblage certainly represents tools that were used: they were dulled through use, sharpened and resharpened, and broken beyond use; there was even one 'blank' axehead (i.e. a tool that had not been finished or used).

Many Neolithic stone axeheads have been found during drainage works in rivers and lakes, especially in Ireland. In these contexts they often occur in clusters or hoards. This has often been interpreted as a symbolic deposition of the artefacts, intended to put them beyond use. An alternative explanation is that these watery deposits occurred in a practical context, when large timbers or trunks were floated to a working area and shaped in the shallows, with tools being broken and discarded, or lost in the water. The water-level at Ballyquirke Lake was reduced in the later 19th century during the Lough Corrib drainage works. Our find site at Ballyquirke East 1 would have been on the original lake shore. It is tempting to think that this find-spot at Ballyquirke East may have been the location, for a short period during the Neolithic period, where a log boat was shaped or some other large timber structure was constructed using the stone tools that we recovered during the excavation.

Axes were traded and exchanged. The interactions this afforded would have facilitated the exchange of ideas too, over a wide area. The axe trade may initially have exploited the coastal zone and larger rivers, as a means of maximising contacts and the distribution of the artefacts. The axes at Ballyquirke East 1 were all made from shale. Shale axes are known from around the Galway and Clare coastlines, with large concentrations of axes also recovered from the Shannon at Killaloe, Co. Clare, and from counties Longford and Sligo. One important source has been identified at Fisherstreet in Doolin, Co. Clare, where cobbles were naturally shaped on the beach by the grinding action of the waves. These 'blanks' were collected and processed into ground and polished axes. Fisherstreet is one potential place where the shale axes from Ballyquirke East 1 may have originated.

Axes were important items and some of the more elaborate or exotic examples would definitely have been used as expressions of status. A Cumbrian Great Langdale Type VI green tuff axe was discovered by the writer in Doolin townland in 2000, not far from Fisherstreet. Unlike the examples from Ballyquirke East 1, this axe was obviously treated in a more special way, as it displayed no use-wear and must have been a prestige item. It is a striking example of how far trade items could travel in the Neolithic period.



Illus. 2.15—Ballyquirke East I. Early Neolithic pottery sherds. (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd*)



Illus. 2.16—Ballyquirke East I. Neolithic stone axeheads or adzes made of shale, possibly sourced on the Clare coast. (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd*)



Illus. 2.17—Ballyquirke East 1. These 'handstones' are naturally formed on local granite and would have been used for rubbing, grinding or hammering. (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd*)

from one of the pits was dated to 3692–3527 BC (UBA-29118), in the Early Neolithic period, corroborating the identification of the pottery sherds.

Although the pits were the only prehistoric features recorded at Ballyquirke East 1 there were numerous prehistoric objects. These were eight stone axeheads or adzes (Illus. 2.16), three 'handstones' for rubbing, grinding or hammering (Illus. 2.17) and eleven pieces of struck chert (Illus. 2.18). These objects all came from topsoil, including a few that were found overlying the water-sorted gravels near the present lake margin. The axeheads were all made from pieces of shale, which were worked by flaking and then grinding. They were variously 44 mm to 133 mm in length. Several of them had wear or use damage. Evidently they were tools, not display objects, though they might have been highly valued all the same. The remaining objects were also made with raw materials easily available in the region, if not locally, including chert (struck or chipped pieces), granite and quartz (handstones). The struck chert pieces included a core, a flake, a scraper and waste flakes from percussion manufacturing. These objects are all important in themselves but, collectively, have a greater significance: they confirm that the truncated, charcoal-rich pit remnants represent a permanent Neolithic settlement site, or at least a substantial seasonal camp, on the shore of Ballyquirke Lake. This is corroborated by fossil pollen evidence, and the impact of Neolithic settlers on the local vegetation is described in the next chapter.

Early medieval pit

The only other feature recorded on the excavation site at Ballyquirke East 1 was a shallow, subrectangular pit (Illus. 2.14) measuring 1.5 m long by 0.5 m wide by 0.2 m deep. The fill was



Illus. 2.18—Chipped stone objects from Ballyquirke East 1 (E4512:1:10, E4512:1:17, E4512:1:18 and E4512:15:2), Killarainy 1 (E4512:1:1) and Killarainy 5 (E4512:1:2). The burin is from an Early Neolithic pit. The other finds are from topsoil. (*Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd*)

rich in charcoal, which consisted of hazel with some oak. The sides were not obviously burnt or scorched. The feature may have been another charcoal kiln but, given the dominance of hazel in the fill, was more likely to have been a cooking hearth. There was no surviving evidence for any associated hut or shelter. A charcoal sample (hazel) from the fill was dated to AD 777–973 (UBA-29117), in the early medieval period. A rough stone hone (E4512:001:009) found in topsoil on the site resembles early medieval examples found elsewhere in Ireland.

Karstic void

One unusual feature investigated at Ballyquirke East 1 was a small, irregular void in the bedrock (variously 0.3–1.0 m wide). This had been roughly capped and filled with field rubble—presumably by a landowner anxious to protect his livestock from mishap. We removed the rubble by hand and excavated the upper fill of the void (a clean mineral soil with gravel and small stones) to a limited depth (c. 0.5 m). We soon concluded that this was an entirely natural solution hole in the limestone bedrock and found no evidence that it had been used or modified by people in the past.

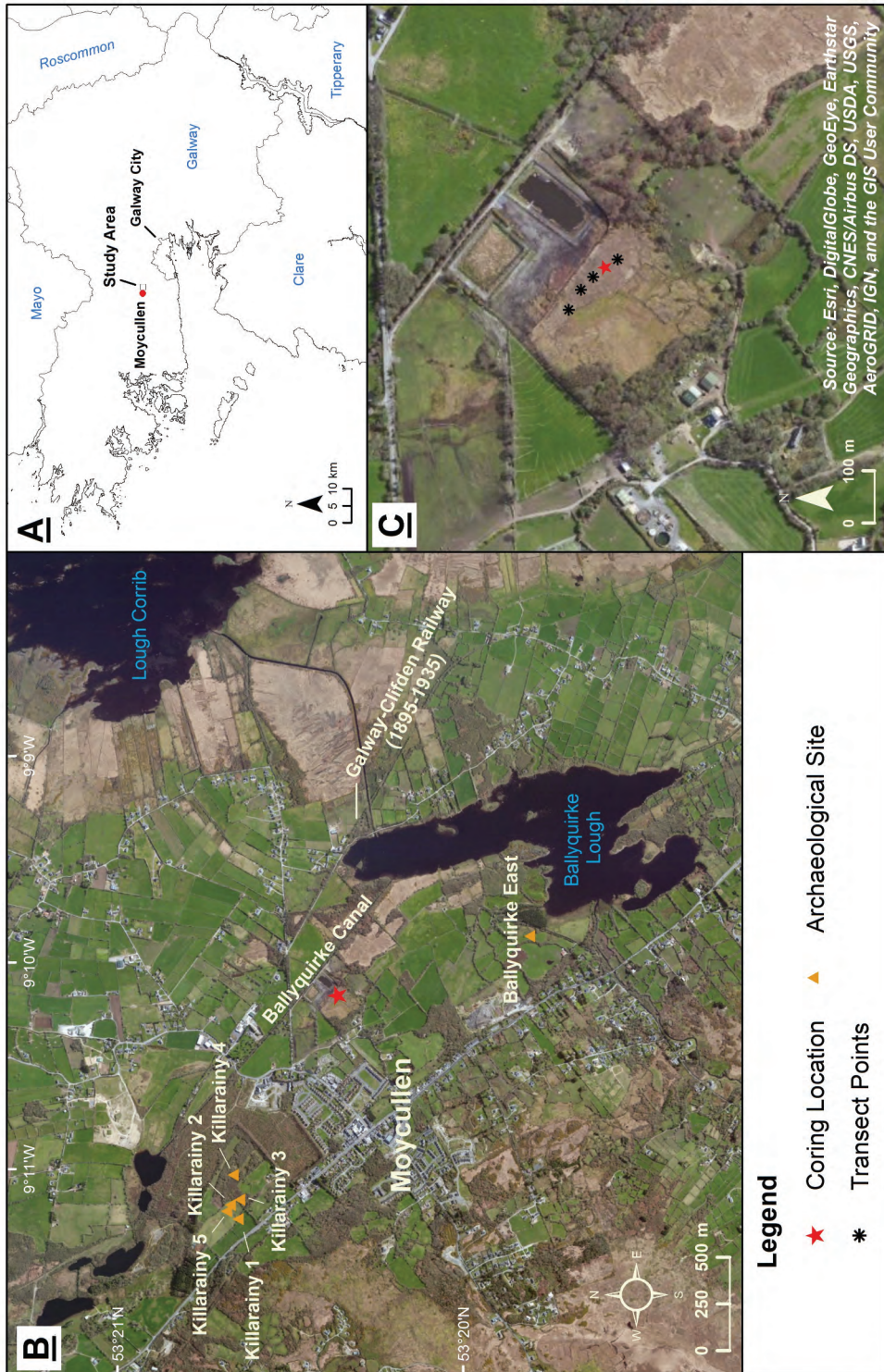
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Vegetation in prehistory

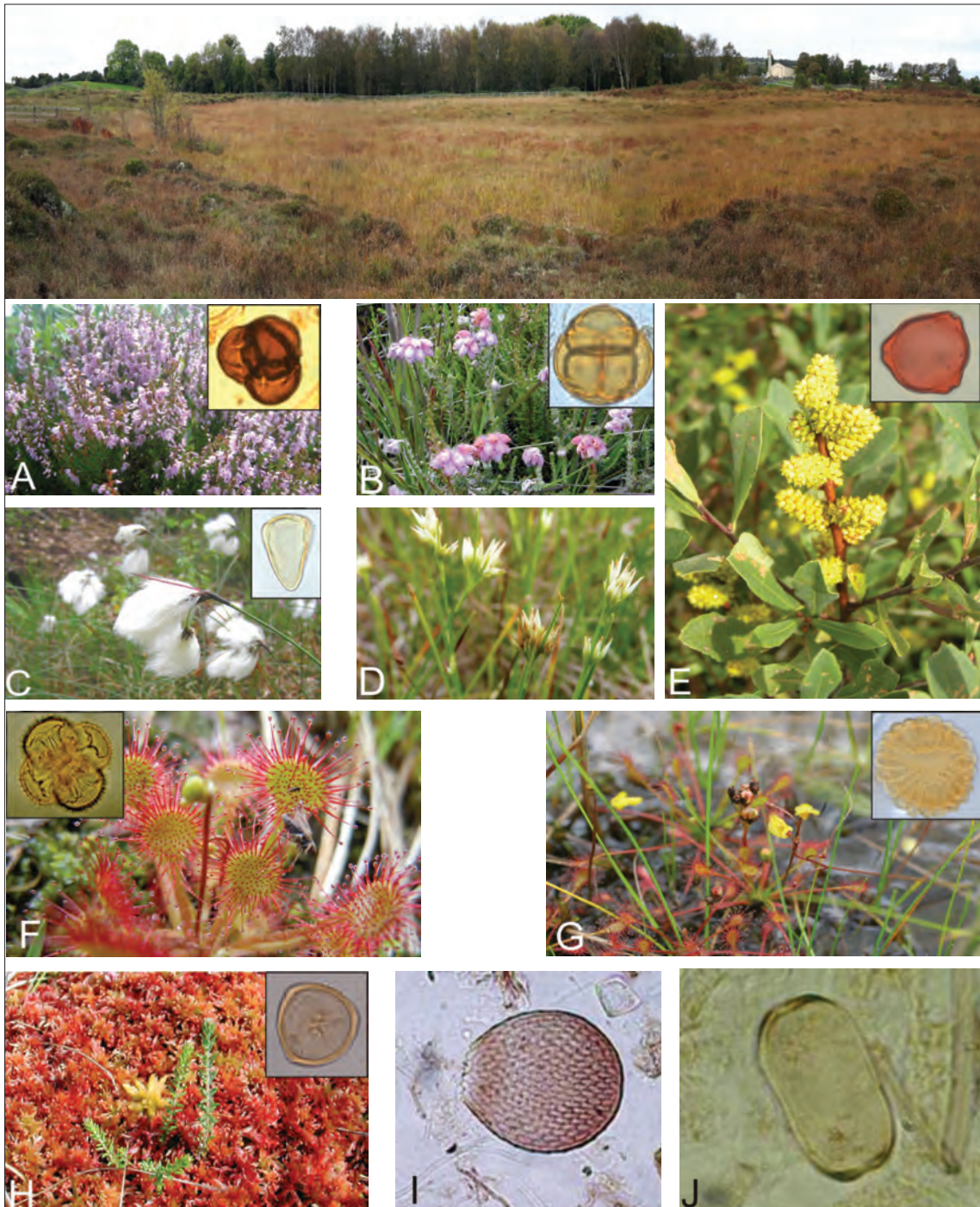
Carlos Chique and Karen Molloy

This chapter presents the main findings from fossil pollen and other palaeoenvironmental evidence in a peat core sample taken from a bog in the townland of Ballyquirke West (Baile Uí Chuiric Thiar) (Illus. 3.1). The investigation was undertaken in conjunction with archaeological excavations along the N59 Moycullen Bypass route by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. The excavations (Chapter 2) uncovered three pits with charcoal-rich fills in Ballyquirke East, near the shore of Ballyquirke Lake. Charcoal from one of the pits was radiocarbon-dated to 3693–3527 BC (UB-29118), corresponding to the Early Neolithic period, and pottery sherds of Neolithic type were found in two of the pits. Another pit was dated to AD 777–973 (UB-29117) and is interpreted as the remains of a charcoal kiln. Further north, in Killarainy townland, there were other discoveries, including Bronze Age burnt mounds, an early medieval hut floor, and early and later medieval charcoal kilns. The focus of our investigation of fossil pollen from the bog in Ballyquirke West was on the prehistoric period, with the aim of providing a history of vegetation change in the environs of the excavated Early Neolithic site.

Sediments, including lake and bog sediments, accumulate over time on a yearly basis. As they accumulate, pollen from plants growing in the landscape at the time becomes incorporated and subsequently fossilised in the sediments. This has been happening in Ireland since the closing phase of the last Ice Age c. 15,000 years ago. As people arrive into a landscape they begin to modify it. The first people were small bands of Mesolithic hunter-gatherers, who had a minimal impact on their landscape. From the Neolithic onwards farming was adopted, with more significant impact. In addition to documenting changes in natural vegetation (woodlands, grasslands, bogs), fossil pollen also provides insights into human activity, particularly farming, as there are several key pollen types that are considered to be ‘anthropogenic indicators’—i.e. pollen of plants that are strongly associated with people (Behre 1981). These include types such as ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and cereal-type pollen, the former an indicator of pasture and the latter associated with arable farming. Bog/lake systems are therefore considered to be valuable resources, providing insights into past vegetation, and also human subsistence strategies, from the end of the Ice Age to recent times.



Illus. 3. |—(A) Location map of the study area. (B) Aerial view of Ballyquirke Bog in its landscape setting, showing the locations of excavated archaeological sites on the bypass route. (C) Detailed view of the bog, showing locations of trial cores and sample core BQW2. (NUJ Galway)



Illus. 3.2—View of Ballyquirke Bog, looking north-west, with (below) some of the main bog plants, and their pollen, that occur on the bog today. (A) Ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*); (B) cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*); (C) bog cotton (*Eriophorum vaginatum*); (D) white-beak sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*); (E) bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*); (F) sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*); (G) bladderwort (*Utricularia minor*); (H) *Sphagnum* moss. Also shown are testate amoebas: (I) *Assulina* and (J) *Amphitrema*. (NUI Galway)

Ballyquirke Bog

Ballyquirke West townland is south-east of Moycullen village and c. 2 km west of Lough Corrib. The bog itself is located in a shallow basin in undulating terrain, east of the village and north-west of Ballyquirke Lake, and is bounded on the east side by the Ballyquirke Canal, which was probably built as part of the Corrib Navigation Scheme in the later 1800s. The bog has been extensively cut over (i.e. by small-scale peat-harvesting for fuel) to the east and west. The intact, undisturbed section of the bog currently measures c. 0.5 ha. This appears to have been unaffected by peat-cutting in the past, although it is likely to have been subject to shrinkage as a result of cutting elsewhere in the bog. On the second-edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map of 1893 it is evident that the surviving bog was once part of a larger bog system (52 ha in extent) that extended north-east beyond Ballyquirke Canal towards Lough Corrib. Much of this area is now under agricultural grassland on a peaty soil. In addition, there has been development of dry birch woodland on old cut-over bog areas.

The study site is within the remaining area of intact bog. Here the surface of the bog retains a cover of vegetation typical of a western raised bog (Illus. 3.2), dominated by varying amounts of cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*), white-beaked sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) and deer grass (*Trichophorum germanicum*). Other frequent vascular plant species in the vegetation include ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), purple moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), common bog cotton (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), carnation sedge (*Carex panacea*), bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*) (Table 3.1). The occurrence of blanket bog species such as black bog rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) and purple moor-grass differentiates western raised bogs from midland raised bogs, which occur in the eastern half of the country. The cover of mosses is locally well developed, with three sphagnum mosses (*Sphagnum cuspidatum*, *Sphagnum papillosum* and *Sphagnum capillifolium*) the main species encountered. The lichen *Cladonia portentosa* is also frequent, growing on the drier hummocks.

Investigation methods

In order to carry out palaeoenvironmental investigations it is first necessary to recover a continuous sediment sequence (core). Individual samples are then taken from the core at regular intervals with a modified syringe, and undergo chemical treatment to remove as much debris (e.g. plant remains, silt) as possible, leaving only the fossil pollen (see Moore et al. 1991 and Molloy & O'Connell 2004 for details of the methodology). The pollen is then identified and counted under a microscope (magnification x400) and the results plotted as percentage data on a pollen diagram. Changes in the pollen percentages from one sample to the next reflect changes in the composition of the vegetation growing around the coring site over time as the sediment accumulated.

The bog in Ballyquirke West was cored in November 2016 (Illus. 3.3). Probing with a gouge corer was first carried out to locate the deepest part of the bog. The main core BQW2 (NGR 122180, 232749), which measures 821 cm in length (Illus. 3.4), was then taken with an Usinger

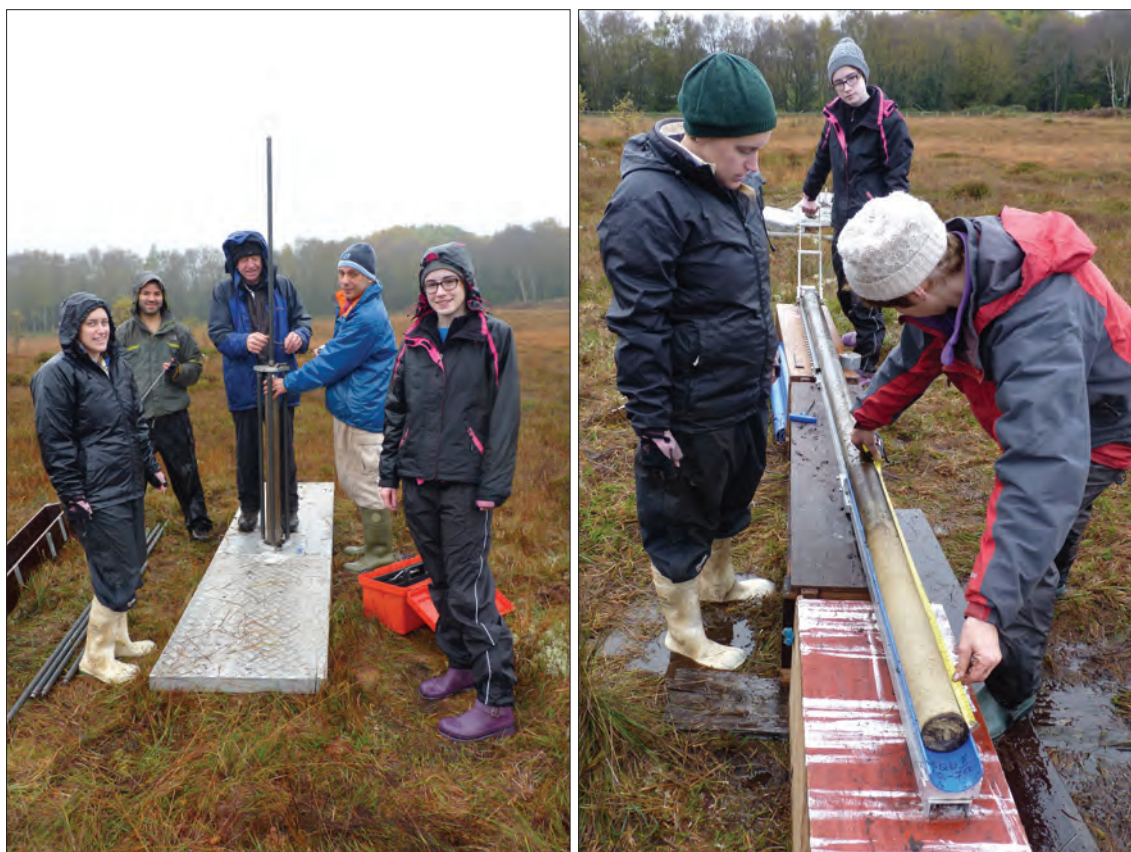
Table 3.1—Species list for the intact bog surface at Ballyquirke West. Apart from sphagnum, other mosses cannot be differentiated on the basis of their spores.

Botanical name	Common name/type
<i>Aulacomium palustris</i>	Moss
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Ling heather
<i>Carex panicea</i>	Carnation sedge
<i>Cladonia portentosa</i>	Lichen
<i>Cladonia uncialis</i>	Lichen
<i>Dicranum scoparium</i>	Moss
<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved sundew
<i>Drosera intermedia</i>	Oblong-leaved sundew
<i>Erica tetralix</i>	Cross-leaved heath
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	Common bog cotton
<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>	Hare's-tail bog cotton
<i>Hylocomium splendens</i>	Moss
<i>Hypnum jutlandicum</i>	Moss
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	Purple moor-grass
<i>Myrica gale</i>	Bog myrtle
<i>Narthecium ossifragum</i>	Bog asphodel
<i>Pleurozia purpurea</i>	Liverwort
<i>Pleurozium schreberi</i>	Moss
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil
<i>Racomitrium lanuginosum</i>	Moss
<i>Rhynchospora alba</i>	White-beaked sedge
<i>Schoenus nigricans</i>	Black bog rush
<i>Sphagnum capillifolium</i>	Sphagnum moss
<i>Sphagnum cuspidatum</i>	Sphagnum moss
<i>Sphagnum denticulatum</i>	Sphagnum moss
<i>Sphagnum papillosum</i>	Sphagnum moss
<i>Sphagnum tenellum</i>	Sphagnum moss
<i>Succisa pratensis</i>	Devil's bit scabious
<i>Trichophorum germanicum</i>	Deer grass

piston corer. (Another attempted core, BQW1, was abandoned because a fossil timber, most likely a pine stump, was hit at a depth of 220 cm from the bog surface.) Fifty samples, each 2 cm³, were taken for pollen analysis between the intervals 122–530 cm from core BQW2. It was thought that this interval was most likely to relate to the Neolithic/Bronze Age periods. The sampling interval ranged from 6 cm in the upper part to 24 cm at the base of the sequence investigated. In addition to pollen and spores, ‘extra fossils’ or non-pollen palynomorphs (NPPs), including fungal spores, testate amoebas (microscopic animal remains) and micro-charcoal (≥ 37 μm), were also routinely counted. In most samples a total terrestrial pollen (TTP) sum in excess of 500 pollen grains (excluding bog taxa) was counted. In order to establish a chronology that can be applied to events in the pollen record, six samples were taken for radiocarbon dating at the ¹⁴CHRONO Centre, Queen's University, Belfast. These samples were sieved to recover macrofossils—heather flower heads, birch and hazel twigs and wood fragments—suitable for dating (Appendices, Table A.1).

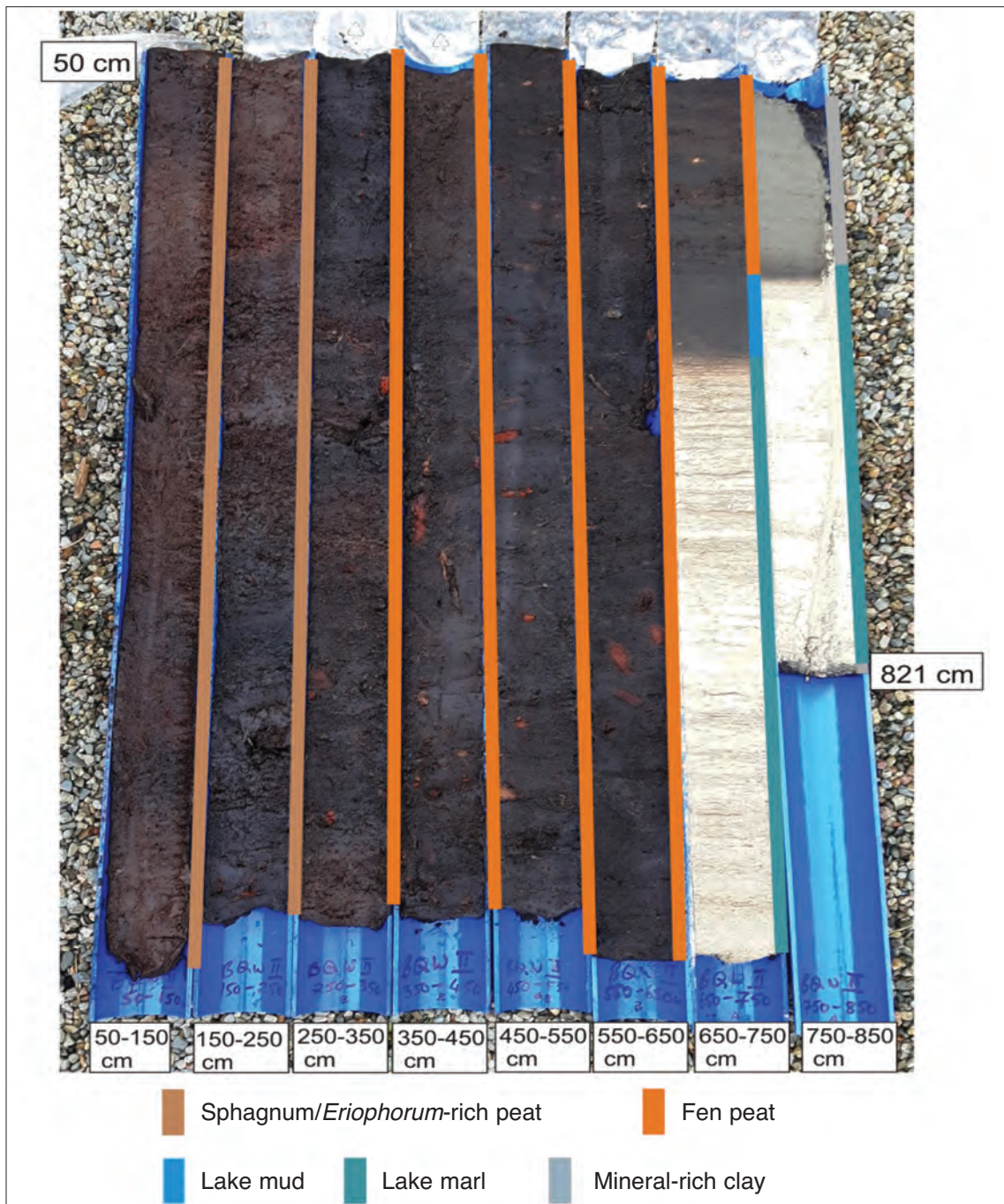
Results

The stratigraphy of the core indicates that the study site was originally a shallow lake, which gradually infilled to become a fen and eventually a western raised bog. The lowermost 70 cm of core BQW2 (820–750 cm) consists of a sediment sequence typical of the end phase of the last glaciation—the Late-glacial (c. 15,000–



Illus. 3.3—(Left) Coring team members Daisy Spencer, Carlos Chique, Pat O'Rafferty, Aaron Potito and Ailbhe Conaghan, using an Usinger piston corer. (Right) White lake sediment from beneath the bog being measured by Karen Molloy. (NUI Galway)

11,700 years ago). This is represented by a tripartite sequence, with 1.5 cm of glacial clay overlain by white lake marl, which in turn is overlain by 32 cm of dark minerogenic clay representing the Younger Dryas. This relates to a severe cold snap at the very end of the last Ice Age, preceding the beginning of the current post-glacial period (c. 9500 BC) (Illus. 3.4). Immediately above this the sediment consists of white-brown marl with organic-rich layers (750–685 cm). These marl layers were laid down under shallow lake conditions as climatic conditions warmed up and calcium carbonate precipitated out of the water. Above the marl a fine brown lake mud (gytjja) (685–675 cm) occurs, and then a well-decomposed fen peat, with reed (*Phragmites*) and wood remains scattered throughout, is recorded (675–252 cm). Saw sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) remains are present at c. 620 cm. This fen peat was formed by plants of fen, reed swamp and woody carr (i.e. low-growing, wet woodland, dominated by willows, alder, reeds and meadowsweet) rather than true bog plants. Above this (252–83 cm) the sediment consists of red-brown fibrous peat with alternating layers of peat rich in bog cotton (*Eriophorum*) or in bog moss (*Sphagnum*), indicating



Illus. 3.4—Core BQW2 from Ballyquirke Bog, halved longitudinally and cut into c. 1 m segments. The grey silt layer represents the Younger Dryas. The white sediment (marl) was laid down under warm lake conditions. (NUI Galway)

that the transition from fen to raised bog had occurred. Fibrous peat with ling heather (*Calluna*) remains and modern roots makes up the upper 80 cm of sediment.

The results of pollen analysis are presented on a percentage pollen diagram (Illus. 3.5), which is divided into seven local pollen assemblage zones (Zones 1–7) based on major changes in the pollen curves. On the basis of radiocarbon dating an estimated age can be assigned to each zone. Based on the size of the basin, it is assumed that the pollen is quite local and derives from a 1 km radius of the bog. While the core taken measures 821 cm and potentially spans the period from the end of the last Ice Age to recent times, in view of the discovery and subsequent excavation of the Early Neolithic site at Ballyquirke East 1 the focus of the research reported on here was predominantly the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. With that in mind, neither the bottom nor the top of the core were investigated for pollen analysis and what follows is an account of landscape change from approximately 6300 to 910 BC.

Mid-post-glacial woodlands: c. 6300–5750 BC (Zone 1: 530–506 cm)

The lowermost part of the pollen profile indicates a landscape dominated by woodland. Trees and shrubs account for almost 80% of the TTP, which excludes bog plants that were growing locally on the bog surface. The dominant tall canopy tree was pine (*Pinus*), with lesser amounts of oak (*Quercus*), elm (*Ulmus*) and birch (*Betula*). Hazel (*Corylus*) was present in abundance but probably as an understorey shrub. Ferns, including bracken (*Pteridium*) and polypody (*Polypodium*), were a feature of these woodlands. The stratigraphy indicates that the shallow lake once present at this site had become a fen before 6300 BC. The pollen of grasses probably arises from plants such as reed (*Phragmites*) and purple moor-grass (*Molinia*) growing on and around the edges of the fen.

Pre-Elm Decline Atlantic woodlands: c. 5750–3800 BC (Zone 2: 482–380 cm)

In Zone 2 there is a substantial change in the pollen record, with the pollen of pine and hazel decreasing initially as oak, elm and alder (*Alnus*) increase. The abundance of alder pollen (maximum value of 39% at 410 cm) in this zone marks the transition from Boreal to Atlantic woodlands c. 7,700 years ago (Molloy & O'Connell 2014) and the expansion of alder in the landscape. Tall canopy woodland (pine, oak and elm) dominated the landscape to the detriment of hazel. Ivy was also present, probably as a component of the woodland edge community. Alder probably grew on wet soils around the bog basin. At times this was a closed canopy woodland, with tree pollen accounting for up to 93% of the TTP. A high number of fern spores were recorded in the upper half of this zone, most of which could not be identified to a particular fern as the spores had lost the outer diagnostic coat. These are plotted as monoete fern spores in the pollen diagram. Spores of marsh fern (*Thelypteris palustris*), a plant of fens, wet woodlands and lake shores (Parnell & Curtis 2012), are also present in this zone, however, and it is possible that marsh fern spores

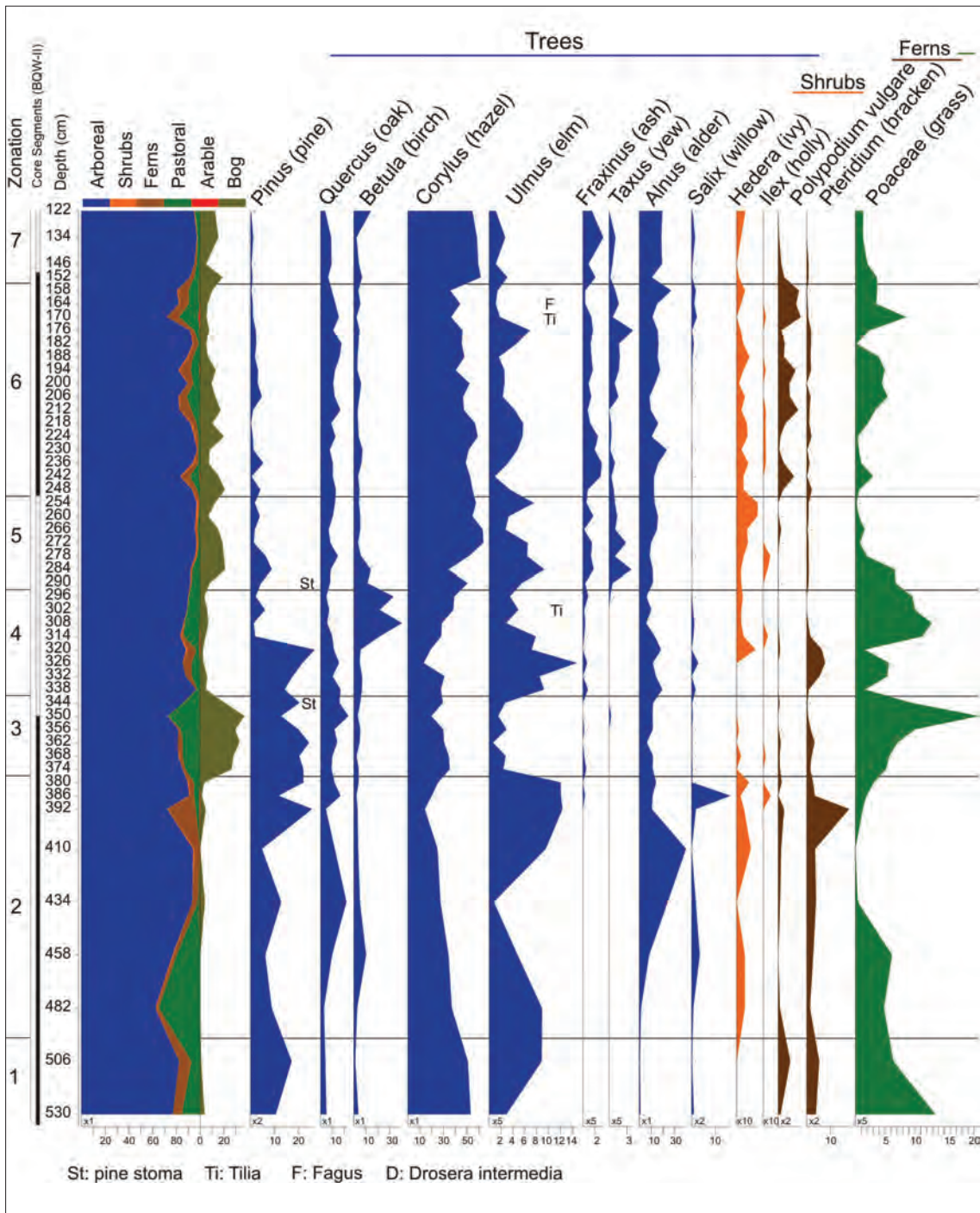
account for a large proportion of the monoletete curve. Locally, a wet alder–willow woodland/carr, which probably included marsh fern, dominated the site, while pine, oak and elm woodlands occurred on drier mineral soils close by.

Microscopic charcoal suggestive of fire is common in this zone. We hesitate to attribute this to Mesolithic activity, given that there is neither pollen nor archaeological evidence for a human presence at this time. Microscopic charcoal is also recorded, in a pre-Neolithic context, from other pollen records from around the country, e.g. the Céide Fields, Co. Mayo (O’Connell & Molloy 2001), and Lough Muckno, Co. Monaghan (Chique et al. 2017). It is possible that the fires resulted from natural causes, such as spontaneous combustion during dry periods, for example.

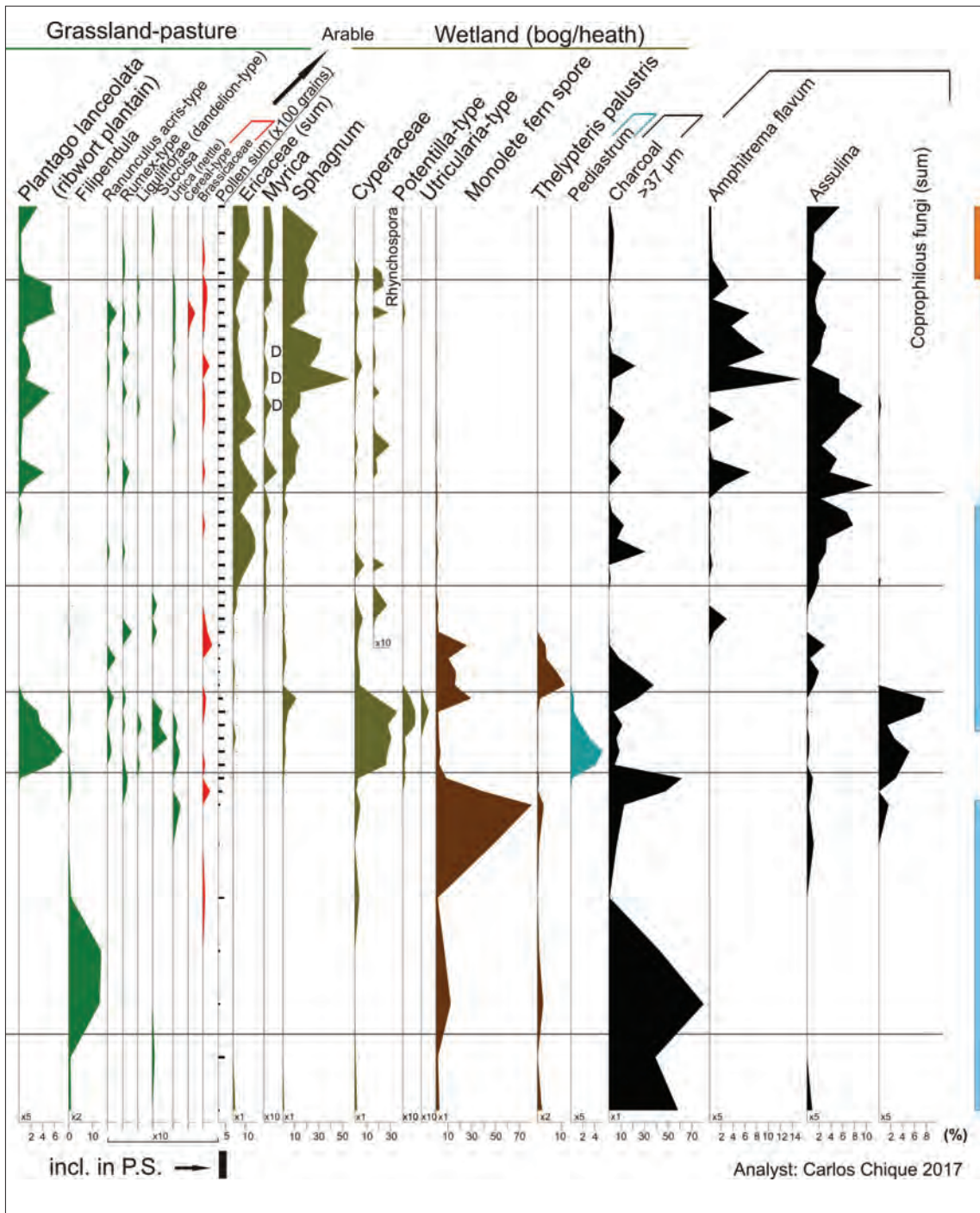
The Elm Decline and Neolithic *landnam*: c. 3800–3400 BC (Zone 3: 374–344 cm)

A sharp decline in elm pollen defines the lower boundary of this zone. This is interpreted as representing the Elm Decline, a feature of many north-west European and most Irish pollen diagrams, which has been widely dated to 3800 BC (Molloy et al. 2014; Molloy & O’Connell 2016; Chique et al. 2017). The Elm Decline is very well expressed at Ballyquirke West, with elm pollen decreasing from 10% to 2% within c. 100 years while at the same time an increase in hazel pollen is recorded. This suggests a reduction in the elm population and an opening up of the canopy, which facilitated the increased flowering of hazel. The decline in elm was presumably caused by a disease that adversely affected elm alone, similar to the modern Dutch Elm disease (Molloy & O’Connell 1987; Peglar & Birks 1993; Parker et al. 2002), but human activity associated with Neolithic farming may also have played a role. Bear in mind here the Early Neolithic remains discovered at Ballyquirke East 1 near the shores of the lake (Chapter 2). Immediately following the initial decline in elm there is a dramatic expansion of herb pollen, in particular grasses (Poaceae) and ribwort plantain. Pollen of buttercups (Ranunculaceae), dandelions (*Taraxacum*), clovers (*Trifolium*) and nettles (*Urtica*) also register and are strongly suggestive of pastoral farming locally. Overall, elm was the main tree affected. Pine was growing on or near the bog surface (there is one record of a stoma—one of the specialised cells found on the surface of pine needles—at the top of the zone) and appears to have been unaffected by farming. Coprophilous fungal spores (CFS), which derive from fungi that grow mainly on herbivore dung, also have increased representation. This is surprising, as dispersal of fungal spores is generally poor in comparison to pollen, as they grow close to the ground surface and records for them are rare in bog systems (Feaser & O’Connell 2009; van Geel et al. 2003). They are regarded as an indicator of local grazing, which in this instance was in close proximity to the coring location.

Locally, surface conditions were very wet. Sedges dominated, with lesser amounts of bog moss and tormentil (*Potentilla*) present. Bladderwort (*Utricularia*), a small, aquatic, insectivorous plant that occurs in ditches, bog holes, pools, fens and lake margins, was present. *Pediastrum*, a unicellular alga that often responds to nutrient enrichment of waters, was also present.



Illus. 3.5 (above and right)—Pollen diagram representing sample core BQW2 from Ballyquirke Bog, plotted to a depth scale and showing percentage composite (left) and individual (main taxa) curves. Colour coding indicates the main ecological/land-use indicator groups. (NUI Galway)



Woodland regeneration in the Middle Neolithic: c. 3400–2860 BC (Zone 4: 338–296 cm)

The pollen of ribwort plantain does not register in this zone, grass representation is much lower and CFS (associated with dung) are not recorded, suggesting that farming was no longer practised in the catchment. In response to the removal of farming pressure, woodland regeneration followed. Elm recovered to its pre-Elm Decline levels, with elm pollen attaining its highest representation for the profile. Pine also played an important role in the woodland until c. 3160 BC, while marsh fern was once more an important component of the fen vegetation.

Local hydrological conditions changed c. 3100 BC, as suggested by the disappearance of spores of marsh fern. Woodland, predominantly hazel and birch, dominated the landscape, the latter probably growing on or around the edge of the fen. Pine was no longer an important tree of the local woodlands. A second crash in the elm population occurred, which, in the absence of human indicators, was most likely to have been also disease-related. The substantial increase in Poaceae values at this point probably reflects the growth of grasses as part of the fen community rather than on mineral soil.

Woodland dynamics in the Later Neolithic: c. 2880–2430 BC (Zone 5: 290–254 cm)

Hazel expanded to become the dominant woodland tree. Shrubs, ivy and, to a lesser extent, holly (*Ilex*) were part of the woodland. Birch was no longer important locally. Elm recovered but not to Middle Neolithic levels. Ash (*Fraxinus*), which may have been present at low levels in the landscape since before the Elm Decline, became established in the woodland and probably expanded into areas formerly occupied by elm. Similarly, yew (*Taxus*) expanded, although it failed to become the dominant woodland component as it did in other parts of western Ireland at this time (O’Connell et al. 1988; Molloy & O’Connell 2012). The expansion of *Pinus* and the record of a pine stoma suggest that pine was present locally on the bog surface (clusters of pine pollen were also noted). This corresponds to the expansion of pine onto blanket bog along the western seaboard at this time, which may be linked with a short-term climate change to drier conditions. (Note again that fossil timber, possibly pine, was hit while coring for the abandoned sample core BQWI.)

Surface conditions were drier. Ericaceae pollen, primarily from ling heather (*Calluna*), is more abundant now, reflecting the spread of these plants onto a drier fen/bog surface. Microscopic animals are also of use in reconstructing hydrological conditions in bogs/fens. The abundance of the testate amoeba *Assulina muscorum* (unicellular protozoans living on the surface of bogs) may be useful in this regard. *Assulina* is generally found in drier habitats such as moss hummocks on bog surfaces.

Renewed farming in the Early to Middle Bronze Age: c. 2430–1310 BC (Zone 6: 248–158cm)

Over a period of c. 1,100 years the pollen data suggest that people were present in the area and continuously practising farming, which was predominantly pastoral but with a minor arable component (cereal-type pollen and other indicators of arable farming are sporadically recorded). The level of intensity of land use varied throughout the period, with intense phases recorded at the opening of the zone, centred on 2320 BC, midway through the zone at 2000–1865 BC, and a more prolonged, intense phase at 1505–1295 BC. During each phase, pollen of key human indicators increases, including grasses and ribwort plantain. This occurs in conjunction with a high abundance of spores of bracken, a fern that quickly colonises newly opened ground and/or abandoned farmland. These, along with more sporadic pollen records for buttercups, docks (*Rumex*), clovers and dandelions, point to the creation of open, species-rich grasslands nearby. Cereal-type pollen is only recorded during the last, more intense phase of activity. (Cereal-type pollen generally tends to be poorly dispersed and therefore is often under-represented in the fossil record.) Pollen of the cabbage family (Brassicaceae), which is also an arable indicator, is recorded during each ‘pulse’ of activity, when small-scale woodland clearances occurred. The main tree affected was elm and, to a lesser extent, hazel, oak, ash and yew. In between the pulses of human activity a decline in the intensity of land use allowed for a degree of woodland regeneration—primarily elm.

The transition from fen to raised bog is recorded in this zone. *Sphagnum*, the main moss of raised bogs, becomes plentiful in the record from c. 2320 BC. The presence of the testate amoeba *Assulina* suggests, however, that the bog may have been relatively dry until c. 1830 BC, when a peak in the remains of *Amphitrema*, a testate amoeba indicative of wet conditions, coincides with an expansion in *Sphagnum* spores. *Assulina* becomes less frequent in the record after this. *Sphagnum* layers were observed in the stratigraphy of the core above 232 cm. Pollen of the insectivorous bog plant sundew (*Drosera intermedia*) was also recorded sporadically in this section of the core. Bog myrtle (*Myrica*), present at low levels in the landscape since c. 2840 BC, became more plentiful. Bog cotton was also present (there were macroscopic remains visible in the sediment), contributing to the peaks in sedge (Cyperaceae) pollen.

Decline in farming in the Late Bronze Age: c. 1310–910 BC (Zone 7: 152–122 cm)

Towards the end of the Bronze Age evidence for farming activity is minimal. Human indicators are at extremely low levels, suggesting that farming was no longer being practised adjacent to the bog. At Killarainy 3, to the north-east, however, a burnt mound has been dated to this period (Chapter 2). As pressure was taken off the land, woodland regenerated quickly. A hazel scrub developed, with some elm, ash, alder, oak and yew. Pine was probably no longer present locally. Arboreal pollen now accounts for >90% of the TTP, indicating that closed canopy woodland predominated.

Overall, the bog surface was dominated by heathers and *Sphagnum* mosses, with bog myrtle also present. Surface conditions appear to have become drier, as suggested by the decline of the *Amphitrema amoeba* in favour of *Assulina*.

Vegetation and land use in prehistory

As a bog system, Ballyquirke West has gone through substantial changes throughout the post-glacial period. Initially a shallow lake, it became a fen c. 8400 BC and eventually a western raised bog c. 3,800 years ago. The pollen profile recorded in our peat core sample provides insights into the human influence on vegetation structure in these environs from the early post-glacial period until the end of the Bronze Age.

The early post-glacial woodlands were dominated by oak, elm, pine and hazel. A pronounced Elm Decline is recorded at 3800 BC and appears to reflect the collapse of the elm population as a result of disease. A similar feature is also reported in pollen diagrams from other parts of Connemara, including Lough Namackanbeg near Spiddal (An Spidéal) and, further west, Lough Sheeauns near Cleggan (An Cloigeann) (O’Connell et al. 1988; Molloy & O’Connell 1991).

Human activity and woodland disturbance first register immediately after the Elm Decline in the Early Neolithic period (c. 3750 BC), when the evidence points to the removal of woodland and the expansion of species-rich grassland associated with pastoral farming (Illus. 3.6). This phase of Neolithic farming lasted c. 400 years (with the most intense phase of activity in the early part) and is comparable with a *landnam* (woodland clearance) recorded at Lough Sheeauns (Molloy & O’Connell 1991). There is no evidence of arable farming at this time. A period of c. 1,000 years follows in which evidence for human activity in the landscape around Ballyquirke is lacking. A similarly ‘quiet’ period, lasting 700 years, is recorded at Lough Sheeauns. In the absence of human impacts, woodlands regenerated and elm, hazel, pine and, later, birch (probably on the peat surface) all flourished (Illus. 3.7). Pine appears to have become less common from c. 3100 BC to 2760 BC, after which it expands onto the bog surface for a short period of c. 100 years, presumably as a result of a short-term climate shift towards drier conditions. This may also have favoured yew, which appears in the pollen record at the same time. The expansion of yew here is not as marked as at other sites in Galway—for example, Lough Atalia, in Galway City (O’Connell & Molloy 2017), or Lough Namackanbeg (O’Connell et al. 1988)—where yew expanded to become the dominant tree, forming dark, dense woodlands by c. 2800 BC. Yew is a native evergreen tree that generally occurs on well-drained calcareous soils. (A good example of a native Irish yew wood can be seen in Reenadinna Woods, Killarney, Co. Kerry.) Given the limestone bedrock in Ballyquirke, it is difficult to understand why a more marked expansion did not occur here, as the local soil conditions would have been very favourable for the growth of yew.

In contrast to the Neolithic period, the Early and Middle Bronze Age is characterised by substantial though fluctuating levels of human activity. Initially, from c. 2400 BC to 2285 BC, there was a short interval when elm and, to a lesser extent, yew were cleared and pasture expanded. A



Illus. 3.6—Species-rich grassland, showing some of the anthropogenic indicator species and their pollen recorded in the Early Neolithic period in the pollen profile for sample core BQW2 from Ballyquirke Bog. Pollen types (L–R): dandelion type, ribwort plantain, grass, red clover and buttercup. (*NUI Galway*)

peak in micro-charcoal at this time suggests that fire may have played a role in woodland clearance/management. More sustained clearances, and of greater impact, are recorded in the Middle Bronze Age from 2000 BC to 1865 BC and from 1505 BC to 1295 BC. What is unusual, however, is the lack of evidence for farming in the Later Bronze Age, which is often seen in Irish pollen records as a period of intense human activity that involved substantial woodland clearance. Regionally, this has been reported from sites such as Caheraphuca Lough, Co. Clare (Molloy & O’Connell 2012), and Ballinphuill Bog, east Co. Galway (Molloy et al. 2014). While people may not have been present in the immediate area of the bog at this time, i.e. around Ballyquirke West, this does not mean that the wider study area was abandoned. To the north-west, in the townland of Killarainy, archaeological excavation has revealed finds dating from the Early Bronze Age to the early medieval periods (Chapter 2). It is possible that available land at Ballyquirke became less favourable for farming as bogland expanded, or simply that the local focus of settlement shifted to beyond the catchment of the bog and thus is no longer registered in the pollen record here.



Illus. 3.7—Some trees represented by pollen in the Ballyquirke peat core (clockwise from top-left): hazel leaves and catkins; Scots pine on peat; holly, flowering; wych elm leaves and fruit; yew with fleshy seed cones. (*John Conaghan*)

4

Change is constant

Jerry O'Sullivan



Illus. 4.1—Members of the Moycullen Historical Society at An Fuarán, the starting point of their heritage trails in the village. From left: Mark McNally, Hazel Morrison, Walter McDonagh, Tara Derenzy, Tomás Ó Cadhain, Mary O'Shea and (front) Eve McNally.

Why do we value our history, archaeology and architectural heritage? Why do we trouble to investigate, preserve and explain? Old village houses, roadside monuments and castle ruins are visible and substantial elements of the past. At a local level, the stories we tell about them create a sense of continuity with the past and contribute to our sense of place. They also deepen our awareness of difference. Change is the only constant in any human environment.

Storytelling is an engagement between the teller and the listener. Since 2015 the Moycullen

Historical Society has been creating heritage trails, with signboards, in and around the village (Appendix 3). These signboards are a form of public storytelling. They only come to life when passing strollers pause to read them and, musing on them, experience some small personal change in what they know, and how they feel, about the place where they live. These gentle epiphanies can be experienced by anyone who takes a walk around the village. The storyboards transform everyday places on the street or roadside into public theatres of shared community memory for everyone who lives in Moycullen today—native and newcomer alike.

How we narrate the past is a function of the character and provenance of the available information. Some of the information on the heritage trails signboards is historical in the strict sense—deriving from written sources. Some of it is from oral tradition. And some of it is from living memory, invoking friendly ghosts of persons not long dead whose participation in the social, political and economic life of the village is still warmly remembered, like the several forges operated in Moycullen by the Connors, Lydon and McCorry families, or the inexhaustible hospitality of the Morrisons' house—the unofficial village café. Old evidence that we might have thought immutable is capable of being re-examined and of yielding new revelations. In this volume, for instance, Hugh Gallagher observes the chiselled margins of a window in a Gaelic castle and asks: 'Could that be the handiwork of a Norman mason?' (Chapter 1). There can be new sources of evidence, too. A largely untapped reservoir of archaeological evidence in the woods, fields and bogs around Moycullen is still awaiting discovery. The excavations on the N59 Moycullen Bypass route have given us a glimpse of this (Chapter 2). This is evidence of a different character. It is harvested on an excavation site as data—samples, measurements, descriptions, photographs and drawings. These are sorted, processed and ordered to become scientific evidence. The archaeologist's first concern is to give a clear and unbiased account of this evidence. Only then can storytelling begin.

A major road scheme is like a giant trial trench—a random sample of the potential buried remains of Moycullen's more ancient past. What is discovered is never a complete spectrum of evidence from every period. The Bronze Age and early medieval periods are especially well represented in the record of archaeological 'rescue' excavations in Ireland and, locally, they dominate the record of discovery on the bypass route too—with Bronze Age burnt mounds, and an early medieval hut site and ironworkers' charcoal kilns (Chapter 2). Evidently the district was well populated in these periods. The discovery of Early Neolithic remains on the lake shore in Ballyquirke East is especially important because it offers a rare glimpse of early prehistoric settlement in Connemara, albeit on the fertile limestone soils of the lower Lough Corrib basin (taobh mín) and not on the meagre acid soils of the higher ground (taobh garbh), which are more typical of the region.

The evidence from Ballyquirke East is slight. How do we know that it represents a resident Early Neolithic population and not, say, the temporary campsite of a transient group exploring the lands west of Lough Corrib? On this point the evidence from fossil pollen in a peat core from a bog in Ballyquirke West is conclusive (Chapter 3). It records a major *landnam* or woodland clearance event in early prehistory. Evidently these first settlers transformed the landscape on a



Illus. 4.2—Jason Ronayne, stonemason, at work on the new Clydagh Bridge in spring 2016.

large scale to make grass pastures for their cattle. Why did this colony fail? We do not know. The story is never complete. The fossil pollen from the bog paints a picture of woodlands advancing and retreating throughout prehistory, like an irregular tide, as human communities worked to claim land for pasture, tillage and settlement, and the trees, in turn, reclaimed it for wild nature.

Change is constant. The new bypass will be the single biggest change in the built environment of Moycullen since Alexander Nimmo created the village crossroads almost 200 years ago, at the intersection between the old Galway to Clifden road and his new Spiddal to Knockferry road. The new bypass will be a major addition, but the project has already taken something away. Many people in the village still regret the demolition of the old Clydagh Bridge (Chapter 1). It was built for horse-drawn vehicles in a much slower, gentler time. In its place there is a new bridge—higher, wider and certainly more suited to the thousands of motor vehicles that now stream across it every day. The new bridge is a fine structure but it has not yet found a place in people's hearts. It belongs, like the bypass itself, to the history of the next 200 years in Moycullen. Someone else, gentle reader, will have to write that story, and someone else will have to read it.

Appendix I—Radiocarbon dates

All samples were processed and dated at the ¹⁴CHRONO Centre, Queen’s University, Belfast, using the AMS method (accelerator mass spectrometry). ‘Yrs BP’ refers to the measured radiometric age of the sample in years before present (i.e. before AD 1950). This figure must be adjusted or calibrated to take account of known fluctuations in the Earth’s natural carbon reservoir over time to derive the calendrical dates given here as ‘Calibrated date ranges’. These are given at one-sigma (68%) and two-sigma (95%) levels of statistical probability. ‘Median ages’ in Table A.1 are the mid-point of the calibrated date range (1 sigma), rounded to the nearest five years. The calibration dataset is IntCal 13.14c (Reimer et al. 2013) and the calibration programme used was CALIB REV 7.0.0 (Reimer & Steiner 1986–2013).

Table A.1—Radiocarbon dates from peat core BQW2 from a bog in Ballyquirke West.

Lab no.	Sample details	Yrs BP	Calibrations	Median age
UBA-33812	170–172 cm: heather stems with leaves and flower heads	3168 ± 37	1496–1414 (1 sigma) 1514–1316 (2 sigma)	1455
UBA-33813	249 cm: hazel twig c. 2 cm long	3937 ± 36	2486–2384 (1 sigma) 2565–2300 (2 sigma)	2420
UBA-33814	284 cm: birch twig	4156 ± 32	2870–2676 (1 sigma) 2878–2630 (2 sigma)	2775
UBA-33815	436 cm: wood, possibly birch	5820 ± 38	4723–4614 (1 sigma) 4780–4557 (2 sigma)	4670
UBA-34540	380 cm: birch wood	4993 ± 33	3796–3710 (1 sigma) 3938–3669 (2 sigma)	3753
UBA-34541	684 cm: wood fragments and birch bud scales	9879 ± 50	9371–9278 (1 sigma) 9641–9249 (2 sigma)	9345

Table A.2—Radiocarbon dates from excavated archaeological sites.

Lab code	Sample material	Yrs BP	Calibrated date ranges
Killarainy 2 (E4576): charcoal kiln			
UBA-29110	Charcoal (oak) from the base of the charcoal kiln	1120 ± 15	AD 894–968 (1 sigma) AD 784–990 (2 sigma)
Killarainy 3 (E4577): burnt mound			
UBA-29111	Charcoal (alder) from the mound	2831 ± 30	1016–930 BC (1 sigma) 1084–906 BC (2 sigma)
UBA-29112	Charcoal (hazel) from a pit adjacent to the mound	2648 ± 27	821–800 BC (1 sigma) 890–792 BC (2 sigma)
UBA-29314	Peat (humic fraction) overlying the mound	383 ± 27	AD 1450–1616 (1 sigma) AD 1444–1630 (2 sigma)
Killarainy 4 (E4578): burnt mound and charcoal kiln(s)			
UBA-29113	Charcoal (hazel) from the base of a charcoal kiln	645 ± 26	AD 1291–1387 (1 sigma) AD 1283–1393 (2 sigma)
UBA-29114	Charcoal (ash) from the base of a charcoal kiln	701 ± 26	AD 1273–1294 (1 sigma) AD 1264–1383 (2 sigma)
UBA-29115	Charcoal (elm) from the mound	3561 ± 28	1947–1882 BC (1 sigma) 2014–1777 BC (2 sigma)
Killarainy 5 (E4579): hearth and stake-holes			
UBA-29116	Charcoal (hazel) from the hearth	1056 ± 23	AD 982–1016 (1 sigma) AD 901–1023 (2 sigma)
Ballyquirke East 1 (E4580): Neolithic artefacts, pits; early medieval charcoal kiln			
UBA-29117	Charcoal (hazelnut) from a possible charcoal kiln	1146 ± 26	AD 780–967 (1 sigma) AD 777–973 (2 sigma)
UBA-29118	Charcoal (hazel) from a shallow, truncated pit	4830 ± 30	3563–3538 BC (1 sigma) 3692–3527 BC (2 sigma)

Appendix 2—Place-names

Most rural place-names in Ireland refer to natural features in the landscape, to local agricultural practices and land divisions, or to names of persons or families. This is true of place-names in and around the village of Moycullen, too. For interpretations the principal sources followed here are the classic work by P W Joyce on *Irish Names of Places* (3 vols, 1869, 1871 & 1913) for townland names, and *Moycullen—its People. Maigh Cuilinn—a Muintir* (Moycullen Historical Society 2008) for some other local names, with some additional glosses by the editor of the present volume. Spellings follow the Placenames Database of Ireland at www.logainm.ie and the most recently available mapping of Ordnance Survey Ireland at www.osi.ie.

Townland names

Baile Dóite / Ballydotia ‘Burnt townland’, i.e. with scrub, fallow or stubble burnt off to clean the ground for tillage (Joyce, Vol. 3, 82).

Baile Uí Chuirc Thiar / Ballyquirke West *Uí Chuirc* or Quirk’s townland (Joyce, Vol. 3, 116).

Baile Uí Chuirc Thoir / Ballyquirke East As above.

Ceathrú an Loistreáin / Carrowlustraun *Lustraun* or *lusgraun* is ‘corn burned on the ear’ (Joyce, Vol. 3, 187). *Ceathrú* (Carrow), a ‘quarter’, was a medieval designation of c. 300 Irish acres (500 statute acres) or its productive equivalent or, more generally, a quarter of a townland. Burning or scorching ears of harvested cereals was one means of removing the husk.

Claídeach / Clydagh A stony watercourse or shore (Joyce, Vol. 2, 394–5); in the present case no doubt a stony riverbed, referring to the Loughkip River.

Cluain Duibh / Clooniff *Cluan* is a common element meaning a water-meadow or grasslands beside a marsh, lake or river. The name is very frequently associated with early church sites. Joyce (Vol. 1, 473) derives the second element, ‘-iff’, from ‘-duff’ and ultimately from *damh*, an ox. Hence, perhaps, ‘water-meadow of the ox’.

Droim Chonga / Drimcong ‘Hill ridge’ (*druim*) of the narrow strait (*cong*) (Joyce, Vol. 3, 310), referring often to a passage of water between two lakes (Vol. 2, 409).

Gort Uí Lochlainn / Gortyloughlin *Gort Uí Lochlainn* or Loughnane’s field (Joyce, Vol. 2, 137), but see also ‘Danesfort’, below.

Cill Ogúla / Killagoola Joyce does not gloss this place-name but gives ‘uggool [*ogúll*]’ as ‘a hollow’ (Vol. 3, 596). The first element simply means ‘church’ (*cill*) or, less probably, a wood (*coill*). Alternatives considered by the Moycullen Historical Society (2008, 123) are that the name includes the element *qualainn* (a shoulder) or may be a corruption of *youghill* (yew hill).

Cill Ráine / Killarainy Joyce (Vol. 3, 409) derives this as *coill-a’-raithnighe*, ‘wood of the ferns’, but does not explain why he prefers ‘wood’ (*coill*) to church’ (*cill*) in this instance.

Cnoc an tSeanbhaile / Knockshanbally Hill (*cnoc*) of the old settlement (*sean baile*).

Coill Bhruachláin / Kylebroghlan Joyce does not gloss this but gives ‘broghlan’ as one variant of ‘brocach’, ‘a haunt of badgers’ (Vol. 1, 484), and so Kylebroghlan may mean ‘badger’s wood’.

Liagán / Leagaun A standing stone or pillar-stone (Joyce, Vol. 3, 464).

Maigh Cuilinn / Moycullen This can be translated as ‘holly vale’ (*magh*, a plain, and *coileann*, holly). The holly is a lime-loving tree that flourishes in the understorey of mature deciduous woodlands. The name, however, does not simply indicate a natural forest wilderness in antiquity because the other element, *maigh*, has the special sense in early Irish documentary sources of ‘a settled territory’. Some antiquarian writers (e.g. Wilde 1867, 304–5) give a mythological origin, citing a great battle by Lough Corrib in which *Uilinn* slew Orbsen of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

Na Tuairíní / Tooreeny Joyce (Vol. 1, 236) glosses ‘toor’ or ‘tuar’ as a ‘bleaching green’ and says that it is commonly applied to any fields by streams. Alternatively, the elements ‘toor’ and ‘tuar’ are sometimes found in place-names associated with monastic beehive cells or clochans, and a nearby holy well and cashel in the same townland may be the remains of a monastic hermitage.

Ogúil / Uggool See Killagoola, above.

Other place-names

Bearna na gCorp Literally ‘the way or gap of the corpse’, this refers to a resting place for funerary processions along the main road (N59) north-west of Moycullen, now marked by a plaque (Moycullen Historical Society 2008, 435).

Ceathrú an Teampaill ‘Church quarter’, or lands in the environs of Teampaill Éinne church on Killagoola Hill.

Cloghaun / An Clochán The Moycullen Historical Society (2008, 273) identifies this place-name with stepping-stones across the canal by the Knockferry road bridge, but it is shown on the early Ordnance Survey map, some decades before the canal was constructed, as the name of a clachan or cluster of dwellings around that location. The clachan was on the banks of the ‘Cloghaune stream’. Perhaps there were stepping-stones here in a watercourse that was afterwards canalised.

Cnoc an Stóir ‘Store Hill’ is a location north of the village, associated with An Scioból Mór (below).

Danesfield An Ascendancy house with demesne lands in Gortyloughlin townland. Joyce (Vol. 2, 137–8) believes that the name may derive from a mistranslation of the townland name, attributing the ‘loughlin’ element to ‘*lochlanach*’ or Vikings. Alternatively, there may once have been an early medieval cashel or ringfort here, as these were sometimes called ‘danesforts’ in early antiquarian writing.

Frenchville A smaller dwelling house, in the village of Moycullen, perhaps the house of a factor or estate manager of the Frenches of Moycullen Lodge.

Home Farm Lands in the environs of the O’Flaherty castle when it became ‘Moycullen Lodge’ of the French estate, from the mid-17th century.

Morrison’s Church The home of the Morrison family, at the crossroads in Moycullen village, was used for worship by the Church of Ireland congregation in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Moycullen Historical Society 2008, 358).

Moycullen Lodge See ‘Home Farm’.

Scioból Mór The ‘big barn’ was a granary of the Burke estate of Danesfield (Moycullen Historical Society 2008, 226), now a ruinous building in scrubwood on a former Coillte plantation in Killarainy.

Appendix 3—Moycullen Heritage Trails

A network of signed trails in and around Moycullen village was developed by Cumann Staire Ruaidhrí Uí Fhlaitheartaigh (Moycullen Historical Society) in 2015–17. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) is pleased to have the opportunity, in collaboration with the Society, of reproducing the trail maps and including here a gazetteer of the features of interest that are signed along the trails.

Some of these features are public buildings or commercial premises intended for public access (e.g. the community hall at Árus Uilinn or the Connemara Marble Visitor Centre). Many others are not public places but can easily be seen from the roadside (e.g. the old Co-operative Society building or Danesfield House walled garden). Some of the places described in this book, and shown on the Heritage Trails map, are on private land, however, and may not be visited without the prior consent of the landowners. In addition, a few of the features described below are now merely historical sites, where the feature of interest has itself long disappeared (e.g. the prehistoric standing stone known as Cloch Mhór Liagán), though leaving a lasting folk memory.

An Fuarán, a spring well near the village crossroads, is the starting point for all three trails.

I. Killarainy Woods Walk

1. An Fuarán

This stony rubble structure is a replica of a spring well that was near the corner where the Forge bar and restaurant now stands. It was culverted during the construction of An Fuarán retail complex in 2004. Fuarán means ‘fountain’ or ‘spring’. The original well would have been used by local people to collect water, in white enamelled buckets, before a piped public supply became available in Moycullen in the 1940s.

2. Coach House

The Coach House was the first staging post on this route for the horse-drawn coaches or ‘long cars’ of the Bianconi Company, which travelled daily between Galway and Clifden from 1835 to 1895, until they gave way at last to the new railway (1895–1935). The house was also used by ticket agents for the Cunard White Star Line, owners of the ill-fated *Titanic*, in the early 1900s. The local Post Office was sited here until 1914. The building has mostly been used as a public house or bar since the 1930s, under the names of various owners (Cunningham, Dooley, Fox, Geraghty, Kellett, McDonagh), and has also been known as the Ferryman and the Silver Teal.



3. Old Blacksmith Site

Moycullen blacksmiths provided an essential service for agriculture and transport, and the forge was also a social venue for farmers and other locals. There were several forges in the village by the early 1900s, including a few along the village main street. On the present walk, the site of McCorrys' forge was between two bars: the Forge and the Coach House. The site of Connors' forge was between Regan's Bar and the Brass Monkey (formerly the Crossroads, Cullinanes' or Lees'). (And see Killagoola Loop Walk, below, for Lydon's Forge.) By the 1930s John Connor kept a grocery shop in the premises that had been his father's forge but was still known by the nickname 'John an Gabha' (John the Smith). He may have learned smithing from his father, Mairtín, before converting the forge into a shop. Construction work on the site in the 1960s discovered numerous horseshoes.

4. Morrisons' House

Morrisons' House, at the crossroads, is believed to have been built c. 1830, making it one of the oldest buildings in Moycullen. In the 1850s the house was owned by Lord Campbell and provided accommodation for some of the constables attached to the neighbouring police barracks. There was no Protestant church in Moycullen and from about this time Church of Ireland services were held instead on the upper floor of the house. (A surviving communion set is inscribed 'Moycullen Church 1852'.) The building was passed by the Campbells to the Church of Ireland Church Body and was eventually purchased by Johnston Morrison, RIC constable, who had been living there since 1898. The Morrison family made it their home for 105 years, over four generations, until 2003—hence the name by which it is known today. Church of Ireland services continued here in the Morrisons' time, until the early 1960s.

Local historian and folklorist Pádraic Breathnach (*Maigh Cuilinn a Táisc agus a Tuairisc*, 1986) says that there was evidence for a soup kitchen located behind the house during the Great Famine of the 1840s. This would have been in an outhouse that was afterwards converted into a private dwelling, now often referred to as May Savage's house. May Savage (née Walsh) was a teacher. She was initially to reside with her sister Julia, who was married to a publican, Andrew Cullinane. As teachers were not permitted at that time to live in public houses, the Cullinanes purchased the outhouse and converted it into a dwelling for May.

The Morrisons were famous for their hospitality and the house saw a constant stream of visitors, with the kettle never off the boil. It could be considered the original village café. At a time when few people owned a car, the kitchen often became a waiting room on Fridays, when Arthur Morrison drove some elderly locals home after they had collected their pensions and shopping. There were regular social evenings in the house, when card games were the focus of the entertainment (twenty-five and whist). Such was the openness of the house in the Morrisons' time that it is said that a man once shouted out 'Shortcut to Knockarasser!' as he passed through, having entered at their front door and immediately exited at the rear!

5. White Gables Restaurant

The building now occupied by the White Gables Restaurant was built in the 1830s as a police barracks and sergeant's living quarters, with a garden to the rear. The site was provided by the Burkes of Danesfield, a wealthy local family. The barracks would have been occupied by a police constable (and his family) and four sub-constables of the 'Irish Police' or the 'Royal Irish Constabulary' (RIC), as the force became officially known in 1867. The Burke estate, which included the RIC barracks, was taken in hand by the Congested Districts Board (CDB) in the early 1900s. The building remained in the possession of the CDB and continued to be a barracks until it was torched by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in 1920, during the War of Independence. (The resident police had already been withdrawn to Galway City for their own safety.) The derelict barracks was purchased from the CDB by John O'Toole, who restored the building and sold it in 1923 to the Trustees of Moycullen & Killannin Jubilee Nurses Association. (This benevolent association had been established a few years previously by Charles Randolph Kilkelly of Drimcong House and his fellow trustees.) The building was now a clinic and living quarters for two Jubilee Nurses, who provided general nursing and midwifery services to families in the parishes of Moycullen and Killannin. This situation continued until the 1960s, when such nursing services were taken over by statutory bodies—in this case Galway County Council and then the Western Health Board—though the building remained the property of the Trustees of the Moycullen & Killannin Jubilee Nurses Association. The property afterwards provided rented accommodation for local families. It was purchased in 1990 from the Welby family by Kevin and Anne Dunne and is now the premises of their award-winning White Gables Restaurant.

6. Old Courthouse (site of)

Moycullen's 19th-century courthouse, where petty sessions were held every other Tuesday, was sited on the north corner of the village crossroads. The building was bought in 1952 by Jack Kyne, who ran a successful family shop there. It remained in the Kyne family until the site was redeveloped in more recent years as An Cearnóg Nua, the major commercial and retail centre that now dominates the village crossroads.

7. Old Handball Alley (site of)

The first known handball alley in Moycullen village was built in the late 1800s on lands owned by the Burkes of Danesfield, who also provided the lands occupied by Moycullen's old RIC barracks. The handball alley stood close to the barracks and the game was played by RIC men and locals alike. In fact, the RIC encouraged its officers to take part in physical sports. The handball alley was a simple structure with a back wall and two short side walls. It was twice extended and by the 1950s it had become a full-sized 60 ft x 30 ft court, complying with the regulations of the Gaelic Athletic Association, now the patron body for the sport in Ireland. Eventually a back wall and viewing gallery were added, such was the popularity of the sport in Moycullen. The alley was acquired by the Trustees of the local Moycullen Handball Club in the late 1990s but was subsequently sold again and was demolished in 2003 to make way for an extension to the White Gables Restaurant. The handball club has gone from strength to strength, however, and now plays on custom-built indoor courts at the GAA/community complex in Ballydotia, on the northern outskirts of the village, on the Knockferry Road.

8. Co-operative Society

The Moycullen Co-operative Agricultural Society was established in 1914 by local farming families. It operated at first from temporary premises, in a group of wooden huts, but moved to the present building when this was completed in 1918. The building is reportedly styled on ancient Roman market houses, with a central trading hall and two multi-unit wings.

The Co-operative Society was an immediate success but, despite this, survived for only a few years. During the War of Independence an active unit of the IRA was based in Moycullen and drew reprisals from Crown forces in 1920, when the Co-operative Society building was looted and members of the staff were beaten and shot and wounded. The Co-operative Society did not recover from this episode and was liquidated shortly afterwards.

Over the succeeding decades the building has had many other uses. It has at various times been a police barracks, a dance hall, a garage, a grocery shop, a café-bar, and a boat-building, craft and antique centre. By the early 1920s it was the first premises of the Jubilee Nurses in Moycullen and, by the 1950s, the home of a bespoke carpet factory, V'soske Joyce (now the Dixon Carpet Company, relocated in the old railway station in Oughterard). The knitting factory was initially part of the Co-operative Society venture but had its own adjacent premises (a wooden building that has not survived).

9. Garda Station

Following the establishment of a new Irish Free State in 1922 and the end of the ensuing Civil War, in 1923, law and order in Moycullen—as elsewhere around the country—was not fully restored. In fact, with the RIC disbanded and no replacement national police force yet deployed, a general state of anarchy existed. In parts of the country murders, beatings, postal hijackings, looting and burglary were common. Consequently, the newly elected Irish government was anxious to establish a new police force as quickly as possible.

Five members of the new Civic Guard were deployed to Moycullen in the autumn of 1923. On their arrival they got a shock: their intended accommodation was already occupied. The former RIC barracks (above) had been burnt by the Irish Republican Army in 1920 and the restored building had been purchased by the Trustees of the newly founded Moycullen & Killannin Jubilee Nurses Association. With few other options available to them, the five policemen took up residence over the north wing of the former Moycullen Agricultural Co-Operative Society building.

This was a wholly unsuitable space, however, and was described by Garda Commissioner General Eoin O'Duffy as 'by far the worst in Ireland'. Matters came to a head when part of the roof was blown off by a storm in October 1926. The Gardaí obtained temporary accommodation in Malachy Caulfield's public house. Plans for a new station became urgent and, following an accelerated construction programme, this was finally opened for use in November 1927. It remains the premises of An Garda Síochána today.

10. Danesfield House and Walled Garden

The Burkes were descended from Galway's premier Norman family, the de Burgh lords of Connacht. Their house stood on an elevated site south of the main road, on the western outskirts of the village. The first-edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map (1839) shows a house and stable-yard, approached by symmetrical avenues curving uphill from the main road, all among extensive planting and with a walled garden opposite, north of the road. Very little of this remains. The planting is largely felled and the eastern avenue has disappeared. In place of the mansion house there is a modern bungalow. The stable-yard is now a farmyard (private) but it retains the distinctive bell-cote that often featured in stable-yards of the period and some horse stalls remain in use.

On the opposite or northern side of the road, a tall wall in mortared rubble encloses a large rectangular area of grass pasture that was formerly the walled garden of Danesfield House. There is a narrow gateway within the wall, round-headed with massive quoins (cut limestone) and a wrought-iron gate. The overgrown ruins of a small gardener's building occupy the south-east angle of the enclosure. Walled gardens are common features of large country houses of the period but the separation of the house and garden by the main public thoroughfare is unusual.

One distinguished member of this household was Elizabeth Mary 'Daisy' Burke-Plunkett (1862–1944), afterwards Lady Fingall and one of the first presidents of the United Irishwomen. Her friends and acquaintances included Countess Markievicz, Hugh Lane, Horace Plunkett, Lady Lavery, H G Wells and W B Yeats. She dined with King Edward VII and Michael Collins—but not, we are assured, at the same time.

11. Connemara Marble Shop and Visitor Centre

The Connemara Marble Shop offers a fine collection of marble jewellery and gift items. The marble quarry in Clifden was opened in 1822 and the marble jewellery factory at Moycullen in 1962. The Visitor Centre is across the road from the shop. Visitors can see skilled craftsmen at work and learn about the geology and history of this indigenous regional industry. The mahogany front doors of the Visitor Centre are the original doors of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, which was burned down in 1951.

12. An Scioból Mór

The roofless ruin of a large masonry building, in mortared random rubble (mainly limestone), stands in natural scrubwood in a former Coillte forestry plantation. Joist holes in the gable walls, internally, indicate a first floor and an attic floor. There are small windows in the gables and opposing doors in the long side walls. This building was once a granary of the Burkes of Danesfield. Little grain is grown around Moycullen

today but this was not always the case. There was a fourfold increase in tillage nationally between 1650 and 1850, declining afterwards, and the Burkes' barn probably dates from c. 1800. On the first-edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map (1839) the granary forms part of a building group, with a larger, L-plan building standing immediately east of it—possibly an early estate steward's house or another agricultural building. This second building is not recorded on any later map, though vestigial remains of it survive.

13. Tomás Bairéad Home

Tomás Bairéad (1893–1973) was an author, journalist and Irish nationalist, born in Moycullen. He was active in local sports as a youth, playing both Gaelic football and hurling for the local parish team. His nationalist instincts awoke early in life and at only 17 years of age he was involved in driving off cattle from the estate of a local landlord, George Burke, as a reprisal for some tenant evictions on the estate. He was sentenced and jailed for this activity. Bairéad was a member of the Irish Volunteers at the time of the Easter Rising in 1916 and afterwards became a Volunteer in the IRA and a member of the Sinn Féin party. He was with a group of Volunteers who burned a Royal Irish Constabulary barracks in Rosmuc in 1920. He first worked as a journalist at the *Galway Express* and afterwards became Editor of the *Irish Independent*. He published several collections of short stories in Irish, including some award-winning publications that were included for a while in the National Schools curriculum. He lived in Galway and Dublin but returned in later life to his native Moycullen and made a home here on Knockferry Road near Cloghaun Bridge.

14. Killarainy House

Killarainy House was a Roman Catholic presbytery or priests' house built in the late 1930s. Local people helped to finance the building and contributed their labour to its construction. (Collective voluntary labour or '*meitheal*' was once a common feature of agricultural life in Ireland.) A young oak tree blessed by Pope John Paul II during his visit to Ireland in 1979 is planted in the grounds. Killarainy House is now a private residence.

15. Roman Catholic Church

The present Roman Catholic church is a modern building fronting the Knockferry Road. It was built by Coogan & McNally Contractors to a design by E R Ryan, Architect, and was consecrated on 8 December 1953 by Bishop Michael Browne of Galway. It cost £20,000 to build. The funds were raised by weekly contributions from locals and former parishioners who had emigrated abroad. It replaces a more traditional cruciform building of the Catholic Emancipation period that was consecrated in 1827 and demolished c. 1950. According to the Moycullen Historical Society (2008, 189) there was an even earlier church in Moycullen, from the period of the Penal Laws, or at any rate a thatched building that was used as a church, north of the village, but nothing of this survives.

The present church is a simple oblong structure under a pantiled roof, with a double doorway in the west or front elevation. The mullions of a large central window in the west front form a giant cross and this theme is repeated in the east (altar) window. There is a series of eight tall, narrow, three-light lancet windows in each of the side walls. Externally, a tall, free-standing bell-tower stands by the south-west angle, in lieu of the traditional spire.

Other features in and around the church include a colourful *pietà* (Mary and Jesus after the Crucifixion) framed in a mortared rubble grotto; a finely carved limestone marble bench commemorating the Gaelic scholar Ruaidhrí Ó Flaitheartaigh (1629–1718); and, in a simple bell-cote erected on the churchyard boundary wall, a bronze bell—a relic of the old church—embossed with nationalist symbols (a

harp with wreath bearing the words *Erin go Brath* over and, under, a spray of shamrock) and dated 1862 on the reverse. The accompanying graveyard is not an ancient one and the earliest gravestones date from c. 1860. An inscribed stone in the graveyard remembers all those buried in unmarked graves throughout the parish in children's burial grounds (variously called *cillíní*, *lisíní* or *reilig na paistí*).

Seen from ground level on the Knockferry Road the church is an unremarkable building, but looking down from the main street in the village it can be glimpsed here and there from above, set pleasantly among mature trees, with its tall bell-tower forming a striking element of the built landscape on this north side of Moycullen.

16. First Moycullen National School (site of)

When the Board of National Education was established by statute in 1831, its main objective was to unite children of different religions in one educational system, according to the then Chief Secretary of Ireland, E G Stanley. One of the earliest of the new National Schools in County Galway was built in Moycullen in 1834. This was an impressive three-storey building, sited behind the present school. It was built on lands that were part of Lord Campbell's estate. The parish priest at the time, Reverend Francis Xavier Blake, bequeathed £500 towards the cost of the project; the Board of National Education added £200. Lewis (1837, 402) called it 'a very good building ... in which about 500 children are educated'. Apart from teaching, the school was used variously as a parish hall, a Sinn Féin Party assembly hall and a residence for school teachers. It fell into disuse for a time and was replaced by an adjacent new building in 1909, which in turn became a community hall, *Árus Uilinn* (below). The original schoolhouse was finally demolished in 1977 to make way for the construction of the present school, *Scoil Mhuire*, on the same site. *Scoil Mhuire* is thus the third National School to serve the village in less than 200 years.

17. *Árus Uilinn*

Árus Uilinn stands just south of the Roman Catholic church on the east side of the Knockferry Road. It was built as Moycullen's second National School in 1909, adjacent to the original schoolhouse of 1834 (above), which had fallen into disrepair. It remained in use as a school until 1977, when it was succeeded by the present school, *Scoil Mhuire*, nearby. In its general fabric and design *Árus Uilinn* is typical of later 19th- or early 20th-century schoolhouses in rural Ireland. It is an eight-bay, single-storey building under a simple pitched, slated roof, with red-brick chimneys to the gables. A gabled wing projects from the front elevation, with doorways to either side, forming a twin-porched entrance.

Árus Uilinn is now a community building with a staffed community office. It houses scrolls recording the names of local people associated with the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence and past wars, as well as numerous pictures, books and memorabilia of Moycullen through the decades. The change in use to a community hall is commemorated by a boulder at the south doorway, inscribed with the year 1990.

18. Vaughan's Post Office

The old Post Office was sited at the entrance to the present SuperValu carpark, below the village crossroads. It was run by two generations of the Vaughan family—Mr and Mrs Paddy Vaughan and, subsequently, their daughter Etta and her husband Bernard O'Sullivan—until 1979. Etta Vaughan was a stand-in for Maureen O'Hara in the film *The Quiet Man*, playing opposite John Wayne in the title role. It was filmed on location in Connemara and Mayo in 1951–2.

2. Sean Reilig Loop Walk

The following features have already been described as part of the Killarainy Woods Walk, above: **1. An Fuarán (starting point)—2. Coach House—3. Old Blacksmith Site—4. Morrisons' House—5. Old Courthouse—6. Vaughan's Post Office—7. Árus Uilinn—8. First Moycullen National School (site of)—9. Roman Catholic Church—10. Killarainy House—11. Tomás Bairéad Home.**

12. Old Cloghaun Village (site of)

On the northern outskirts of Moycullen, a canalised watercourse (see 'Canal', below) is crossed by an early 19th-century road bridge at Cloghans. The name *clochán* means stepping-stones and perhaps the bridge was sited on an older crossing or fording point on the watercourse. The Moycullen Historical Society (2008, 273) records that this location remained a focal point in the local social scene, where folk would gather to draw water from the canal for household use. A cluster of several buildings—cottages and outbuildings—is shown near the bridge on the Ordnance Survey six-inch maps (e.g. 1839; 1933) but none of these survives.

13. Railway Station

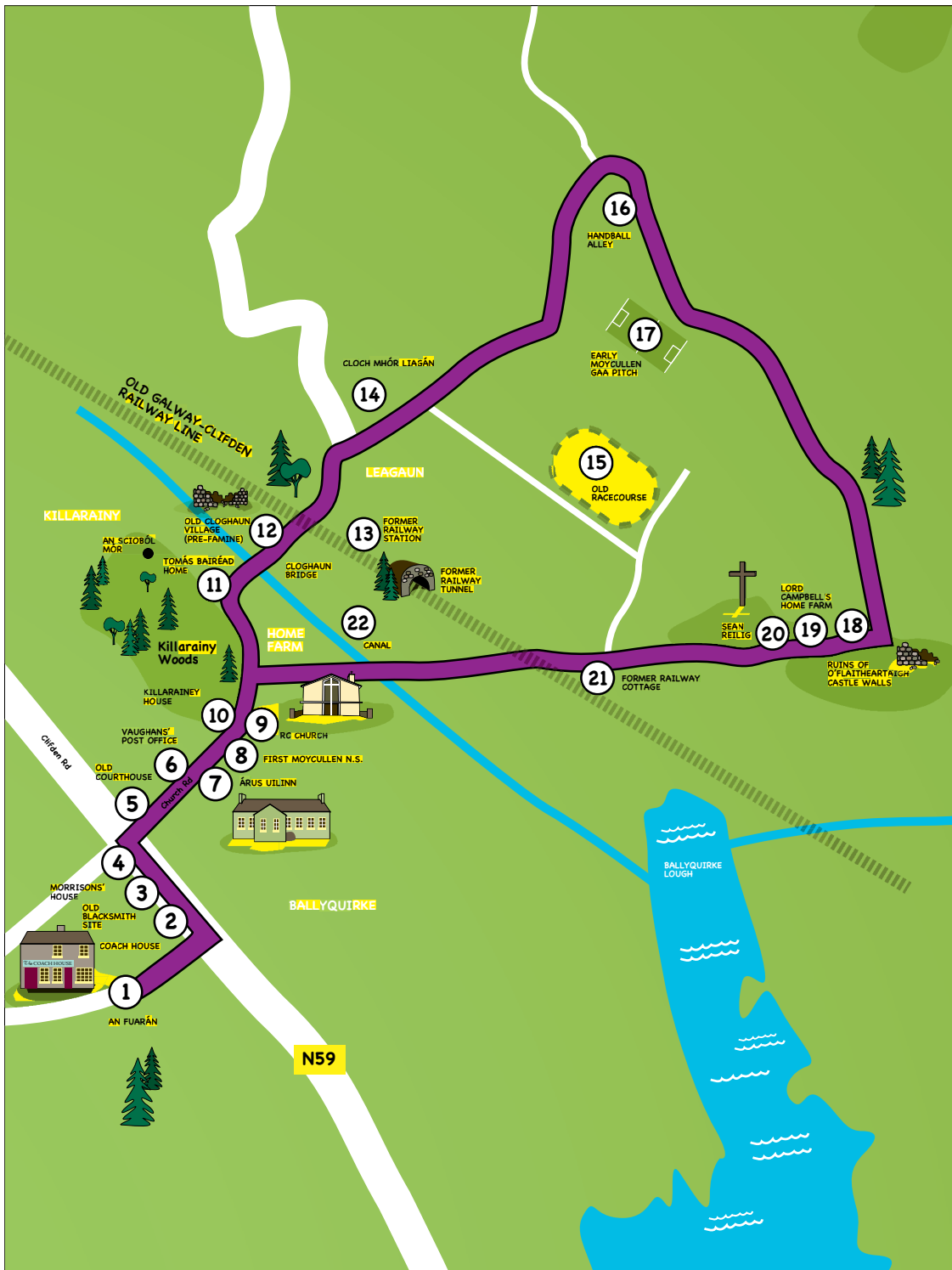
The Galway/Clifden railway (1895–1935) was one of the last of the Victorian railways built in Ireland but lacked nothing in the quality of its design, buildings, bridges and other structures. It was built by the Midlands Great Western Railway Company under the provisions of the *Light Railways (Ireland) Act 1889* (alias 'The Balfour Act').

Moycullen Station was the first of seven stations between Galway and Clifden and its facilities are described succinctly in a report read to the Institute of Engineers of Ireland by the railway engineer J H Ryan (1901, 214–15). It had a 'good store, up and down passenger platform 100 yards each, cattle bank 90 yards, goods platform 55 yards ... As to the architectural features of the railway buildings ... they are very permanent structures, in fact, equal to average main line buildings, and they may strike the tourist as being more elaborate than the generally wild surroundings [of Connemara] would warrant.'

The station building is in a cul-de-sac off Knockferry Road; the station master's house is on the corner of Knockferry Road, at the entrance to the cul-de-sac. Both are now private dwelling houses, much extended and modified. The goods shed and water-tower have been incorporated into a group of commercial industrial buildings in the yard of Moycullen Concrete Products. The railway itself has been lifted and the line paved over.

14. Cloch Mhór Liagán

The townland of Leagaun gets its name from *Cloch Mhór Liagán*, a great standing stone. This is not shown on any map but was seen in the 1860s by Sir William Wilde, who described it as 'a large limestone flag, which was prostrated in the storm of 1839 [*Oíche na Gaoithe Moiré*], and which measures 12½ ft long by 7½ ft wide, and is 13 inches thick' (Wilde 1867, 304–5). Wilde also believed that this was undoubtedly the stone described by Ruaidhrí Óg Ó Fhlaitheartaigh in his *Chorographical Description of West or H-Iar Connacht* in 1684 (published by Hardiman in 1846) as marking the spot where the giant Uilinn slew Orbsen (alias Manannan Mac Lir) of the Tuatha Dé Danann in a great battle by Lough Corrib. Evidently the stone was still extant or perhaps re-erected in the early 1870s, when it was described as 'a remarkable, tall standing stone' by Kinahan (1872, 12). Its sorry fate is described in a letter to the Archaeological Survey of Ireland from Mr Enda Farrell (8 September 1987), who says that it was broken up with dynamite in 1933 and the pieces used in building field walls. Despite the disappearance of the stone, there may well be buried remains—perhaps funerary deposits—of prehistoric date surviving on the site.



15. Old Racecourse

In the 1890s race meetings for ponies and horses were held on lands owned by Lord Campbell on a track at this location—now pasture fields in private farmland—in Leagaun townland.

16. Handball Alley

A handball alley in Leagaun may have existed since the 1800s. It was renovated in the 1950s and again in 2009. Moycullen has a long tradition in the sport and Moycullen Handball Club now plays on custom-built indoor courts in Ballydotia, on the northern outskirts of the village.

17. Early Moycullen GAA Pitch

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) was founded in 1884 and became established locally, in Moycullen, in the early 1900s. Hurling and Gaelic football were once played on ‘informal’ pitches at this location, marked out on farmland after farmers had saved their hay. Today Moycullen GAA Club has modern facilities on the northern outskirts of the village, in Ballydotia.

18. Ó Flaitheartaigh Castle (Moycullen Castle)

Moycullen Castle and the neighbouring church and graveyard would have been focal features in the medieval manor settlement that gave modern Moycullen its name. The main surviving element of the castle is a massive wall, in mortared rubble, forming a large, square enclosure. A round-headed doorway in the north wall may be an original feature, though the margins are brick-built now. On the outer face of the east wall a narrow chamfered window, part of a doorway, a projecting quarter-round corbel (or floor support) and masonry scars of a wall that extended eastward from the south-east angle all combine to indicate that there were substantial buildings associated with the enclosure, and probably corner towers on two angles. It is not clear that the castle was built by the O’Flahertys. It may originally have been the seat of an Anglo-Norman manor, appropriated by the O’Flahertys in the 14th century. (For more on this see Hugh Gallagher in Chapter 1.) The castle is now surrounded by private dwelling houses, including one that was built in the renovated stables of Moycullen Lodge (below).

Ruaidhrí Óg Ó Flaitheartaigh (1629–1718) was the last Lord of Iar Connacht (Connemara), and the last recognised chief of the O’Flaherty clan. Born in the castle at Moycullen in 1629, he became a highly regarded historian and collector of Irish manuscripts. In the 1680s he wrote two major works: *A Chorographical Description of West or h-Iar Connacht* and *Ogygia, or, a Chronological Account of Irish Events* (Hardiman 1846; Hely 1793). He lost the greater part of his ancestral estates after the Cromwellian confiscations of the 1650s. He died in a modest house at Park (An Pháirc), near Spiddal, in 1718.

19. Lord Campbell’s Home Farm (Moycullen Lodge)

Moycullen Lodge was a gentleman’s house built on lands confiscated from the O’Flahertys, next to the ruins of Moycullen Castle. John French Fitz Stephen was settled here on 2,200 acres, as a ‘transplanted person’, during the Cromwellian plantation of the later 17th century. In the later 19th century the house was acquired by John, Lord Campbell, who was briefly Lord Chancellor of Ireland in 1841. Lord Campbell became a major landowner in Connemara by acquiring indebted estates after the Great Famine. His son William, Lord Stratheden and Campbell, built Moycullen House on the opposite or south side of the village, on high ground (Crú Hill) in Kylebroghlan. Moycullen Lodge was then occupied by his agent. Afterwards

it served as a barracks for the RIC and, during the War of Independence, for the infamous Black-and-Tans. Today only the stables of Moycullen Lodge survive and have been renovated as part of a private dwelling house.

20. An Sean Reilig

West of Moycullen Castle, a ruined medieval church stands within a large graveyard, bounded by a drystone rubble wall. The church probably dates from the 13th or 14th century. It would have been under the patronage of the O'Flahertys in medieval times but may originally have been built by a short-lived Anglo-Norman colony in Moycullen (see Hugh Gallagher in Chapter 1). According to local tradition, it was called Teampall Bhreandáin in honour of St Brendan, patron saint of the old diocese of Annaghdown. This was on the opposite or eastern shore of Lough Corrib but it incorporated the present area in later medieval times. The ruined church is a plain, oblong building, with narrow lights in the east and west gables and two carved stone heads, one on each gable. Within the ruined church there are early modern tombstones of the French and O'Flaherty families. Some of the other grave-markers are 'vocational gravestones' that bear symbols of the occupation of the deceased (e.g. plough, horseshoe, axe). The graveyard was used as a local burial ground until 1933. Minor architectural elements added in the modern period attest to continuing community interest in the old graveyard. These include a Lourdes grotto, an inscribed memorial boulder ('In memory of those who are buried here ... 1991') and a name plaque ('An tSean Reilig') by the entrance, with motifs drawn from the vocational gravestones found in the graveyard.

21. Former Railway Cottage

About 1 km east of Moycullen village, a crossing-keeper's cottage stands by the public road where it was once traversed by the Galway to Clifden Railway (1895–1935). The cottage is now a private house. (See also 'Railway Station', above.)

Further west along the line, and now in private farmland, the arches of a road overbridge that once crossed the railway have been blocked up to create an agricultural building. The earthen embankments that carried the road on its approaches to the bridge have been entirely robbed out.

22. Moycullen Canals

A chain of smaller lakes in the environs of Moycullen is linked to Lough Corrib by a series of narrow, straight canal cuts. In theory, along these waterways a narrow boat could have carried, say, lime, coal or grain from Galway Docks as far as Rosscahill in the interior. The canals, however, were probably intended for drainage and not for bulk transport. It is not clear when they were originally dug. The Corrib Navigation Scheme, under the provisions of the *Drainage (Ireland) Act 1856*, offers one probable context, but successive local drainage works, famine relief projects and even the construction of the Galway to Clifden Railway in the 1890s may all have contributed to the development and maintenance of the canal network. The canals are the subject of ongoing research by the Moycullen Historical Society at the time of writing.

The canal on this trail links Loch Domhain with Ballyquirke Lake. It passes under the Knockferry Road at Cloghaun Bridge. Further east the Home Farm Road is carried over the canal on a plain, modern, flatbed bridge, on girders. The canal itself is a simple earth-cut trench, c. 6 m wide by 1 m deep (visual estimates only), with no visible evidence for stone revetments or clay lining.

3. Killagoola Loop Walk

1. An Fuarán (starting point)

As for 1. Killarainy Woods Walk and 2. Sean Reilig Loop Walk (above).

2. Nurse's Cottage

A nurse's cottage was built on Lord Campbell's estate. Possibly this provided the first accommodation for the Jubilee Nurses. Valuation records show that one Nurse McIntyre, the village midwife, was living here in 1936.

3. Lydons' Forge

Lydons' Forge was located behind a convenience shop/filling station near the Old Village Pump and the Dispensary (below). It was the last of Moycullen's old forges and closed in the 1980s. It was run by Tom Lydon and later by his son John. The site is occupied now by a Texaco filling station.

4. An Garraí Gamhain

Moycullen's old fair green, and sometime livestock pound (for stray or confiscated animals), was located on the roadside east of the village crossroads (opposite the present Texaco filling station). The site was known as An Garraí Gamhain (literally 'calf garden') and, in fact, this was also the name once given to Moycullen itself by local people. A monthly pig fair was held here until the 1960s. The makeshift loading bay where the pigs were loaded onto lorries is still extant.

Walter McDonagh (of the Moycullen Historical Society) used to accompany his father Johnny, from Knockarasser, to the pig fair in the 1950s and recalls the harsh treatment sometimes experienced by the pigs. When the buyer had struck a deal he would mark the pig's back with his penknife. A more pleasant 'fair day memory' is drinking lemonade in Pat Fox's bar with his father and neighbours.

5. Pump

One of the few remaining water pumps in Moycullen stands by the main road on the eastern approach to the village crossroads. It was in occasional use until the 1980s, though a piped public water supply had been available in the village since the 1940s.

6. Old Dispensary

The role of the public dispensary doctor can be traced back to the late 18th century in Ireland, as a forerunner of our present-day general practitioners (GPs). In the 1830s there were attempts to create a system of medical relief based on the network of workhouses. After the *Medical Charities (Ireland) Act 1851*, a medical system based on the Poor Law was put in place, allowing Poor Law Unions to be divided into dispensary districts. The *Public Health Act 1866* gave these dispensaries some public health functions and their role was further expanded by the *Public Health (Ireland) Act 1878*. The dispensary system lasted until 1972, when the present General Medical Services (Medical Card) Scheme was introduced.

The Moycullen Dispensary was built in the mid-1930s and ceased to operate on the retirement of the last incumbent, Dr Eamonn Scully, in 1990. Doctors Mullin, Greene and Hassett served the parish before



Dr Scully. There had previously been a dispensary at the site of the Brass Monkey public house.

7. Old Killagoola Village

Early 19th-century settlement around Moycullen—in the generation before the Great Famine of the 1840s—was characterised by the irregular clusters of buildings known as clachans. These were simple vernacular buildings comprising the cottages, byres, fuel sheds and poultry houses of local tenants. One cluster in Killagoola is shown as an especially dense concentration of c. 50 buildings on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey six-inch map (1839); another, smaller cluster has 11 buildings. Most of these do not survive, and settlement in Killagoola today is dominated by individual farmsteads and dwelling houses of much more recent date. Nevertheless, there are still elements of the original clachan settlement here and there. Look out for roadside ruins and some relic buildings incorporated in modern farmsteads. There is one well-maintained thatched cottage in Killagoola but this is dated c. 1860, after the Famine.

8. Teampall Éinne

On the south-east flank of Killagoola Hill (alias Cruach Chill Ogula) is a group of features typical of early medieval church sites in the west of Ireland. The church (Templeany or *Teampall Éinne*, Enda's Church) is a simple building of small proportions, with a narrow doorway in the west front but no surviving windows. The building is very ruinous, especially as much of the mortar has leached out, making the remaining masonry very susceptible to collapse. What remains stands only a metre or so in height. Immediately south of the church are the remains of a small cubical cairn of the sort known as a *leacht*, believed to have been used as outdoor altars. There is a bullaun stone north of the church. There are numerous small, edge-set field stones in rows south and west of the church. The rows are too close to represent adult burials and tradition records this as the site of a *cillín* or children's burial ground. All of these features are partly enclosed by a low, massive wall or 'cashel' with outer faces of drystone rubble and a smaller rubble core. (The wall survives on the west and south sides only.) North-west of the churchyard enclosure a natural spring well is enclosed by a little drystone structure (*Tobar Éinne*, Enda's Well). Rosary beads, holy medals and coins indicate that this is still a place of veneration. There is a double bullaun stone adjacent to the well (i.e. a boulder with two bowl-shaped hollows that retain water), known to the locals as *Glúine Phádraic*, meaning [St] Patrick's Knees, (Wilde 1867, 303). A quernstone bearing a geometric design ('compass-drawn petals') was found in Cill Ogúla townland in 1989.

This group of features represents an early monastic hermitage with probable 6th- or 7th-century origins. The church belongs to the earliest generation of mortared stone buildings in Ireland and was probably built in the ninth or 10th century. St Enda is remembered as a Connacht saint especially, notwithstanding his Ulster origins (below), and dedications in his name are common in Connemara and on the Aran Islands. The setting of the present church, on the flanks of Killagoola, affords splendid views over the hinterland of Moycullen and glimpses of Lough Corrib beyond. The hill itself is named for the church and the surrounding lands were known as *Ceathrú an Teampall* (*ceathrú*, a 'quarter' of land equivalent to 300 medieval acres).

Éinne or Enda was a fifth-century warrior prince from Ulster, who put aside his sword to become a monk and studied with St Ninian in Galloway, in south-west Scotland. According to the Moycullen Historical Society (2008, 231), the present site was venerated on 21 March, being St Enda's feast-day. Wilde (1867, 303) described the waters of the well as 'an infallible cure for sore eyes' (and as an ophthalmologist he was qualified to say so!) and said that annual stations were still performed there in his day. The saint's annual pilgrimage or 'pattern day' (i.e. patron's day) has not been honoured in recent years.

The site can be approached by a meandering trackway between high drystone walls, but the church

and trackway are both on private farmland and should not be visited without the prior consent of the owner.

9. Monument to John Geoghegan

John Geoghegan (1893–1921) was a farmer, an activist in Conradh na Gael, a member of the Gaelic Athletic Association and an Acting Clerk for the Galway Rural District Council. He was a native of Uggool townland, on this eastern side of Moycullen. A memorial near Clydagh Bridge, on the road to Killagoola, marks the spot where he was murdered by British armed forces on 20 February 1921, during the War of Independence. His mother planted a rose-bush on the spot where he fell, which can still be seen beside the monument.

10. Kyne's Mill

This plain but imposing building by Clydagh Bridge was a grain mill built c. 1900. It is three storeys tall under a pitched, slated roof, with walls of mortared random rubble (limestone), and stands gable-end to the roadside. Its main elevation on the west side is washed by the waters of the Lough Kip River, where masonry remnants of the mill channel can be seen in the riverbed. Timber plank-and-joist floors (pine) survive throughout and the joists are supported, in turn (at any rate at basement level), by iron girders. It is unlikely that the present floors are original, as the girders are recycled railway rails, probably from the dismantled Galway–Clifden line (1890–1935). Railway rails also appear as heads of the doorways in the north and east elevations. There is some *in situ* milling machinery on the first floor but this is modern gear and not original. Following a period of disuse, the mill was brought back into service during World War II ('the Emergency', 1939–46). This would explain the recycled railway rails, replacement floors and modern machinery. According to local tradition, the mill was used as a dancehall in the 1930s or 1940s. A millwheel from the building is currently in use as a garden table at a nearby dwelling house.

According to local tradition, there were other mills on the Lough Kip River. One other mill building survives, c. 200 m upstream from Clydagh Bridge. It is on the same bank of the river as Kyne's Mill but is a much simpler structure that housed a horizontal (gearless) millwheel, powered by a mill-lade diverted from the river but now infilled. This simple building was probably of 18th- or early 19th-century date.

11. Clydagh Bridge

The original Clydagh Bridge was an early modern masonry bridge of rubble construction on two small arches. It is recorded as being repaired by Alexander Nimmo, Engineer for the Western District, in 1829. It was probably built some time in the mid-18th century, when Oughterard, further west, was a barracks town and Moycullen itself had several gentry houses in its environs. It was a landmark for the people of the locality, who waited there in the 1940s and 1950s for Ferguson's bus, with hens, butter and vegetables to sell in the market in Galway, and was a meeting place for young people, who sat on the bridge to await each other before going to a dance in Galway. It was demolished in 2015 in the course of road improvements forming part of the N59 Moycullen Bypass project and replaced with a larger bridge of concrete construction, which is clad in stone and carried on a single elliptical arch.

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A Moycullen Miscellany weaves together many strands in the story of an attractive village with a colourful history and a pleasing mix of old and new architecture. The village lies between the fertile limestone basin of Lough Corrib and the upland granite country of Connemara. Archaeological excavations on the N59 Moycullen Bypass route have identified new evidence for prehistoric and early medieval settlement in this landscape, including the first Neolithic farmers. This evidence is corroborated by fossil pollen from a local peat bog, which records the advance and retreat of woodlands as successive human communities cleared the land for tillage and pasture throughout prehistory. In medieval times Anglo-Norman conquerors built a castle and church near the lake, but their manor of Gnó Beg (an ancient name for Moycullen) was afterwards ceded to the O'Flahertys, the Gaelic medieval lords of Connemara. By early modern times the choicest land was occupied by big landowners and their mansion houses, while their tenants lived in clustered cabins on the rugged hillslopes. From the 1830s the modern village began to converge around a crossroads created by Alexander Nimmo when he engineered a new road from Galway Bay to Lough Corrib. Though the village continues to grow, the crossroads is still at its heart.

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