

The CorkCott Project

How old is my house?



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council



Funded by
An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



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Cottageology is grateful to the participants for allowing use of photographs of their properties.

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Cottageology

The CorkCott Project

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Summary

Traditionally-constructed houses can be hard to date, yet people love to know their house history.

During the summer of 2024, a group of Cork County householders collaborated with archaeologists, conservation officers, librarians, genealogists and the Cottageology* group to find out more. CorkCott was a “citizen science”, community-based, public archaeology project, funded by Cork County Council and the Heritage Council.

The main aim of the project was to use archaeology and history to engage the participants with the buildings they occupy so that the extra effort and expense of maintaining these buildings is viewed in context.

The project demonstrated that apparently ordinary 19th and 20th century buildings often reveal earlier, sometimes vernacular phases, and that the recent provision of many historical records online has made “DIY” research much easier for house owners.

This document may also help these ideas to be taken up in other counties in 2025 and beyond, and to help individual online research.

**Cottageology is a voluntary online group of 26,000 people interested in bringing back traditionally-constructed Irish buildings into habitation, and maintaining and minding them.*



*Project participants get advice from conservation engineer and project participant Aoife Howard at the final project visit.
Photograph: Mary Sleeman*

Contents

You probably do not need to read all of this book.

If you just want to understand what can be learned from community archaeology visits, read pages 35-100.

If you want to work online to research your own house, read the Activities (pages 7-33).

If you are thinking of running a similar project in your county, read the Introduction and Appendix 5.

If you have a specific interest in Cork County and the benefits of combining oral, documentary and community archaeology sources, read Appendices 1-4.

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Background

The current property shortage, along with the vacant and derelict property grants, and the SEAI grants, are helping to bring back traditionally constructed buildings into use. Yet at the same time, buildings that have survived through neglect are threatened with forms of renovation that can destroy the traces of their vernacular origins, or their history in the land reforms of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Project archaeologist Colin Humphreys points out: "By its nature, the restoration of a building has the potential to destroy details which help indicate the function and development of the structure, hence the need to record, ideally prior to any works commencing."

These buildings need to be recorded, but not in the detail required for the register of protected structures. New skills and technologies have made this process easier. Finding the house history needs to be "expert fed" and is a great way to involve new inhabitants so that they are prepared to put in the extra time and expense involved in maintaining these buildings. Minding these "everyman" buildings helps to make Cork's landscape attractive to visitors and residents alike and continues the Irish tradition of living with the landscape.

For accessibility and cost reasons, the project made use of mixed method, multidisciplinary, approaches informed by adult learning:

- A supportive WhatsApp online group
- An email distribution list
- eLearning activities on mapping, documentation, recording and collecting oral history, designed to allow people to drop in and out of the bits that interest them, and to cope with complex lives.
- Group face-to-face visits to 10 houses, supervised by experienced archaeologists
- Genealogist support to provide the valuation cancellation records for 17 houses
- Access, with support from the Local Studies librarians, to the excellent resources of the Cork County Council library and the Cork City and County Archives Service.
- Face-to-face Heritage Week event with input from archaeologists and participants about what they had discovered.
- "Piggy-backing" on the work of the Conservation Officers to encourage attendance at their Heritage Week events.
- Survey responses to understand what elements of the project were valued by the participants.

Acknowledgements

The enthusiastic and encouraging work of Mary Sleeman and Colin Humphreys provided their deep archaeological knowledge to our householders. They combined that knowledge with friendly encouragement and education, which formed the core of this project. Their approach was appreciated by all participants.

We were fortunate that one of our participants happened to be conservation engineer Aoife Howard, who kindly provided her thoughts on the most important steps to take, and mistakes to avoid, when bringing back traditionally constructed buildings into habitation.

Slides from Mary, Colin and Aoife's presentations for the final visit of the project can be viewed at <https://cottageology.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Corkcott-Project-for-CorkCoCo-21-Aug-version-3.pdf>

The assistance of the Local Studies Unit librarians at Cork County Council Library, particularly Marie D'Arcy, was invaluable in providing the project with written resources. We received great support from Brian McGee of the Cork City and County Archives, who spent time collating an index of their resources relating to the administration of the various publicly funded schemes that provided cottages from 1880-1920 and this index is available on request from info@cottageology.com.

The Cork County Council Heritage Department went out of their way to provide advice and information so that the project got completed on time, and ably caught the many balls flung their way at short notice. Conor Nelligan, Emma Baume, Elena Turk and Shane McCarthy all went beyond the call of duty and provided direct help to several participants. Dan Breen, Curator of Cork Public Museum, provided fast and well-organised help with emergency recording work.

For my own house, I had the benefit of help from four experienced local historians. Eileen McGough, Leslie Roberts and Fergal Browne, editors of *Tracton, where the Abbey Lies Low*. They could not have been more helpful with resources and suggestions. Jerome Lordan's practical lifetime researches and knowledge also helped to sharpen up some of my less-informed work on differences between the western and coastal parts of Cork County, compared to the northern and eastern 'strong farmer' areas.

I was delighted to receive permission to use figures from the comprehensive *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape* from the authors and their publishers Cork University Press. *The Mallow Field Journal* were similarly generous, as were Tailte Éireann, who hold the copyright of the historical Ordnance Survey maps, and helped with a workaround so that Cork County Council's existing licence for this information could be used for this publication.

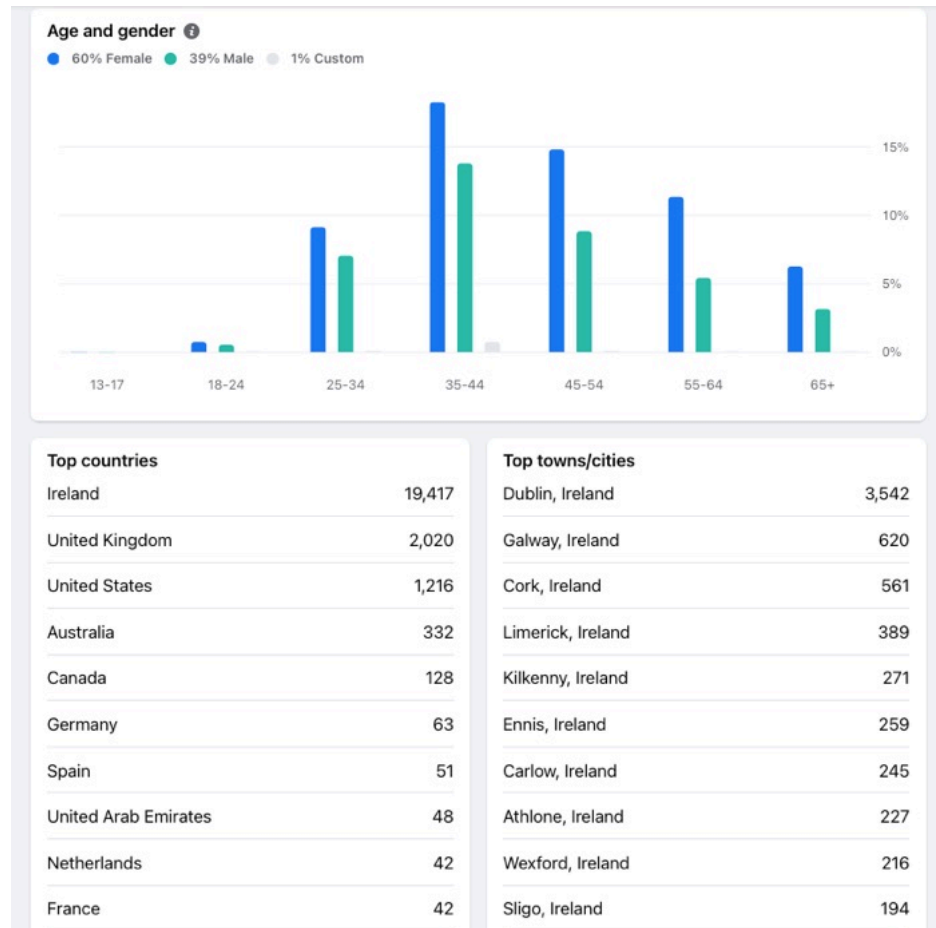
Last but not least, I thank my husband Paul Adams for his usual patience, kindness and forbearance, as well as for over thirty years of skilled work bringing our own house back from the brink.

Imogen Bertin

The project participants

Thirty-four people signed up to be involved in the project through an advertisement on the Cottageology group, and gave their location, a picture of their house, and contact details.

The project participants predominantly identified as female (26 of 34 participants or 76%), whereas the group itself at the time was a little more balanced at 60% female, with 561 members located in Cork County.



Cottageology membership at the beginning of the project in April 2024

Activity 1: Is your house on the historic maps?

The WhatsApp group started on 24 May 2024, and the first activity was for each person to look up their location on the historic Ordnance Survey maps.

Dating old houses can be hard. But in one of those accidents of colonialism, Ireland has some of the best and earliest detailed maps in the world, so let's start by finding out how many of your houses are on the older maps. (If you want to know about the history of the first OS maps, there's a great article here:

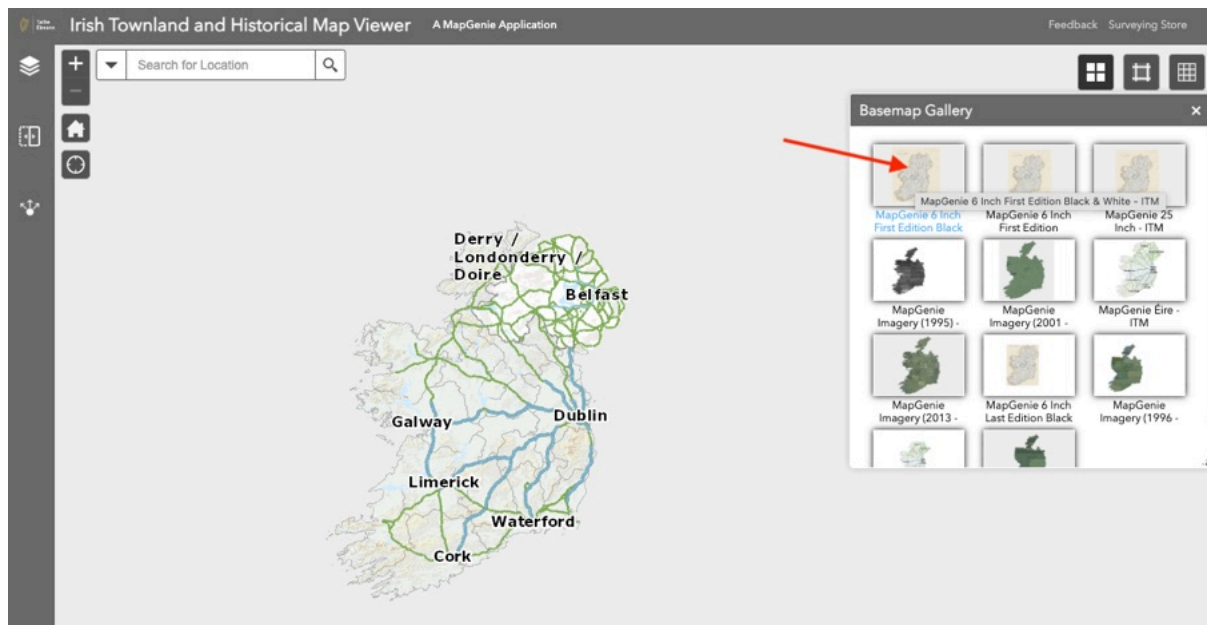
<https://www.economist.com/interactive/britain/2023/04/06/how-intrepid-victorian-surveyors-mapped-the-length-and-breadth-of-britain>)

First, find the building Eircode see <https://www.eircode.ie/>

Head to this website: Irish Townland and Historical Map Viewer

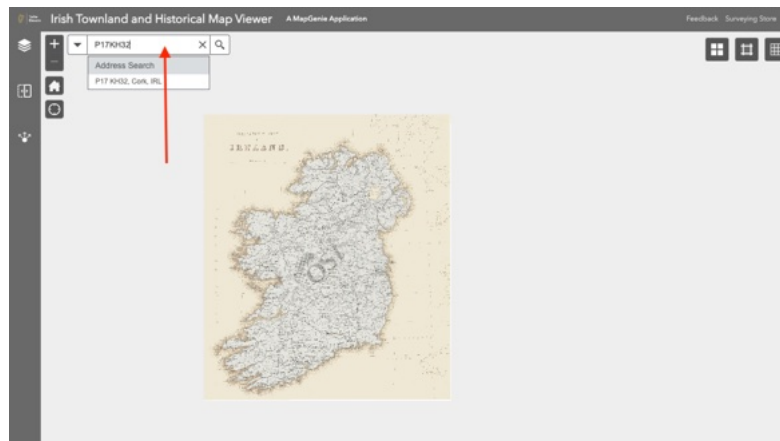
<https://osi.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=bc56a1cf08844a2aa2609aa92e89497e>

Choose MapGenie 6 inch First edition Black by clicking on it once.



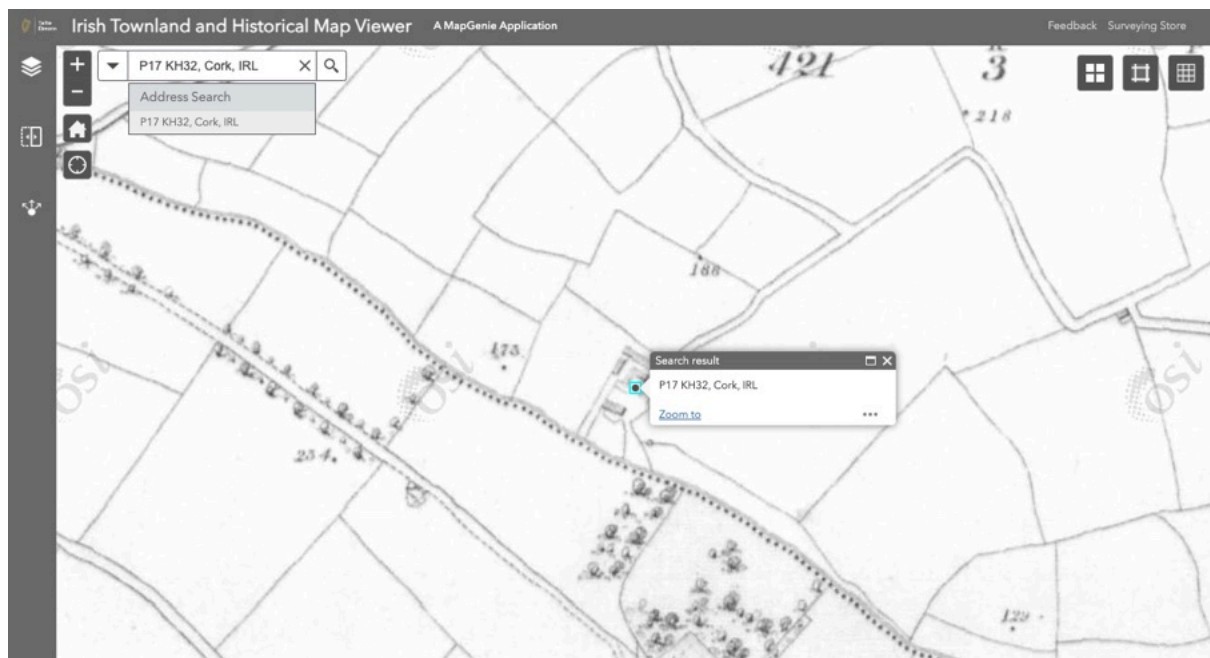
It will jump to a historic map of Ireland.

Note: This website does not work well from a phone so please use a tablet or laptop instead.



Now put in the Eircode in top left and search (click on the grey box with Cork IRL if needed).

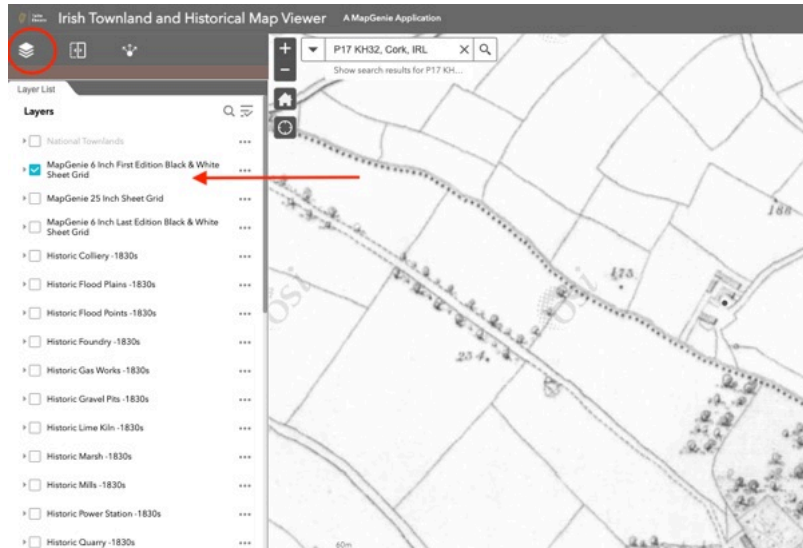
It will zoom in to what's on the map for your Eircode. If your house is on the map the detail is usually brilliant.



Please take a screenshot for the house records if anything interesting pops up.

Either print it out, and put it in a folder or hardback notebook, or start a digital folder for the project.

Now check when the OS map for your particular area was done as there is a variation of a few years. Click on the layers icon top left and turn on layers, then tick the MapGenie 6 inch first edition layer.

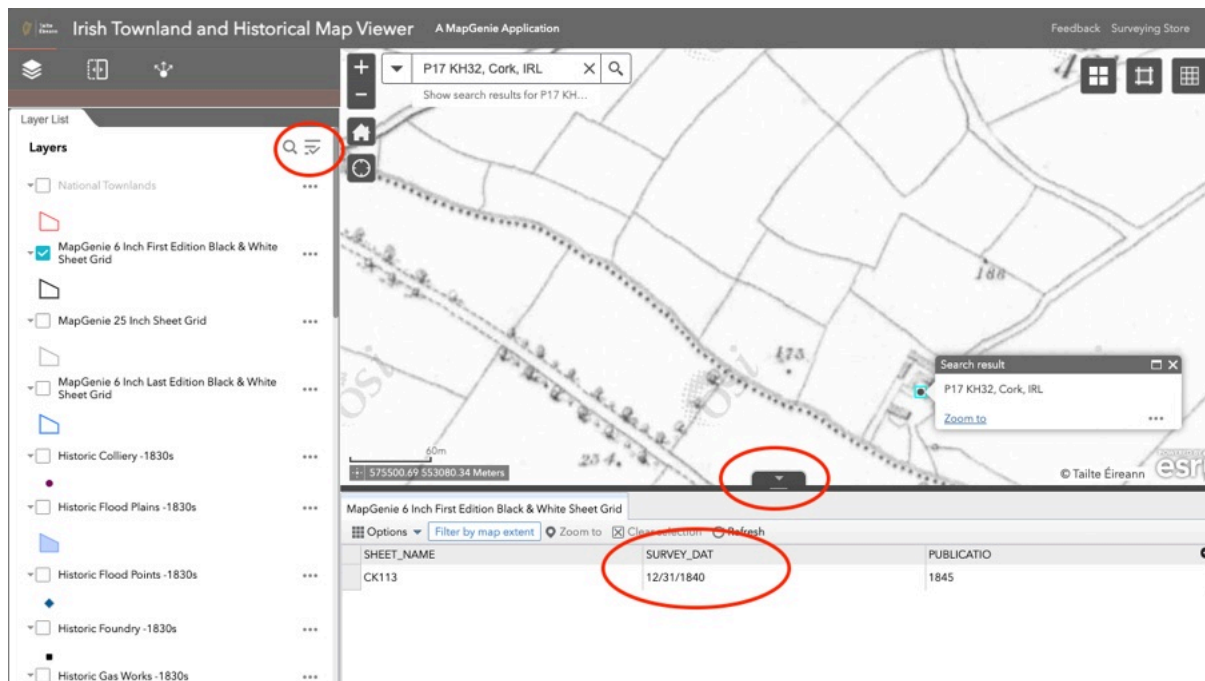


To see the date, click the small upward pointing triangle at the bottom.

If, after clicking on the triangle, the screenshot is not like the one below, use the menu in the layers panel to “expand all layers” and make sure that you have ticked the first edition layer. There have been changes recently to how this website works. Here’s a short video to show the same thing: <https://youtu.be/x0IA0ilyvQ4>

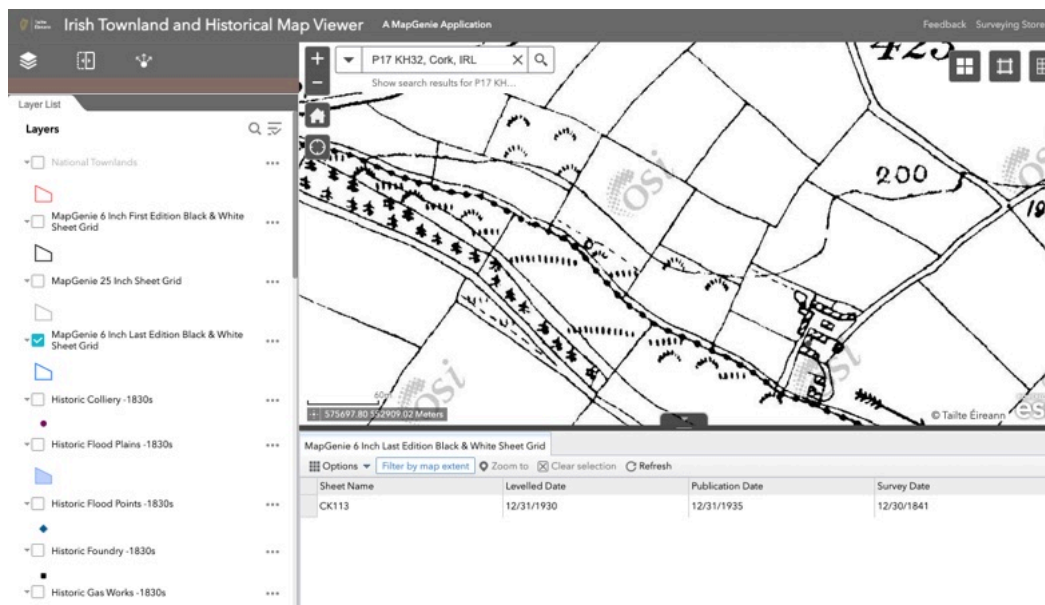
Record the survey date, even if your house does not show on the map. This indicates when it wasn't in existence, possibly?

This is the first point for a timeline – was the house here at this specific survey date?



Many hours can be spent on this website!

Check some of the other base map options such as the 25 inch and the 6 inch last edition (and record the date of that survey in the same way – but you may have to completely refresh the website then go through the sequence described above to get the date).



You can also turn off and on other layers. So, the base map function is controlled from the icons top right, and the layers by the menu on the left.

Have fun!

Learnings from Activity 1

Some people found their house and some didn't, which could be confusing... some got very enthusiastic about old maps and really went to town on looking up other sources for old maps of their locality.

Because the 25 inch OS Map is a different resolution, you must "zoom in" to that one then, zoom out if you go back to the 6 inch maps.

A recent update to the website has made it difficult to be sure you are seeing the correct date for different maps. Project administrator Imogen Bertin looked up the paper copies of the maps at the Local Studies Unit and was able to confirm the contribution of one of the participants, librarian Ann-Marie Kenneally regarding usual dates for Cork County. This problem had the benefit of also making people look up which "sheet number" their townland is on for the OS maps, information which was re-used in other activities.

This link: <https://archive.org/details/op1248631-1001/page/4/mode/2up> takes you to a searchable online version of the index of townlands.

ABOUT BLOG PROJECTS HELP DONATE CONTACT JOBS VOL

Search inside (1 result)

Reagrove

Page 786
Reagrove

786 CENSUS OF IRELAND FOR THE YEAR 1851

No. of Inhabitants in the Townland	Townland and Town	Area in Acres	County	Parish	Post-Office	Post-Office (to 1841)	Number of Inhabitants in 1841
1, 4, 6	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
54	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
55	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
56	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
57	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
58	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
59	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
60	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
61	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
62	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
63	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
64	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
65	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
66	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
67	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
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99	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170
100	Barrowishale Park	5,148 1 1/2	County Kerry	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	Barrowishale	2, 170

10 Inhabitants in 1841, 1841
11 Inhabitants in 1841, 1841

(1) Inhabitants in 1841, 1841
(2) Inhabitants in 1841, 1841

Use the search on the left (shown above) to search for a townland, not the one on the right-hand side. Zoom in when the townland is highlighted and the first column gives the sheet number of the 1st edition OS map (sometimes a townland can spread across more than one sheet) to request the paper copy at the library if required.

The dates of the important maps for almost all townlands in Cork County are:

- First edition 6 inch to the mile: 1839-1841
- 25 inch to the mile: 1898-1901
- Last edition 6 inch to the mile: 1935-1938

To be sure, go to the county library and read the edge of the OS Map sheet. This displays not just the date, but also the name of the person who surveyed it at that time!

Activity 3: Ways to record your house

Should the house record be an “owner’s passport” too?

What would be the best way to record what might be found in the house? These “finds” might be things like holy medals in the window sills, or children’s shoes up the chimney? It is still traditional in many areas of the country to add a few coins to any new or replaced floor, for luck.

A physical or digital file of the house history can be added to, creating an “owner’s manual” for your house. This might include important information about how the house works technically too, to help those who come after the current inhabitants?

This was not needed in the past, but new energy efficiency regulations require that records are kept for the BER listing – such as details of materials used in windows and doors and plasters and insulation methods.

Another modern requirement is knowing where building trenches and cables are located. While not yet in the regulations, SEAI has funded work by the Irish Green Building Council to produce a “building renovation passport”. It might help to start writing that stuff down, as part of the house record?

There are three basic elements in recording a building:

- Record sheet
- Photographic record
- Map location

Do you need plans as well? Photos are vital but measured simple sketches or surveys (plans) can be really useful and don’t have to be complex.

JimBob McCormack, of the facebook Derelict /house restoration Ireland group, points out customers get a “record” or manual with a car you might own for just a few years these days. His advice is to do it however you feel most comfortable, but just try to make a record of the house. It might be a few mobile phone photos, or a photocopy of a local history article, or a diagram of the route of a trench for a cable – all in a folder kept on top of the fridge?

- Hardback notebook with written notes?
- A4 looseleaf folder for printouts, notes?
- Digital folder on a phone or computer?
- Photographs?
- Video?
- Plans (measured sketches / surveys)?
- House owner’s building passport folder on top of the fridge?

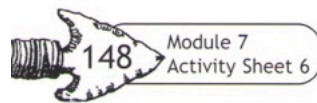
The fundamentals of description can be narrowed down to just three items:

- Is the roof gabled, hipped or flat?
- How many stories (horizontal divisions)?
- How many bays (vertical divisions)?

Other important details include:

- Form – shape and size
- Fabric – what's it made of?
- Function – what's it for? House? Stable?
- Date – anything available about when was it built? Any major changes over the years?
- Context – other buildings nearby? Landscape features?

If you're not sure about the jargon, this sheet from "Archaeology in the Classroom", produced by Limerick Education Centre may help.



Module 7
Activity Sheet 6

Building Record Sheet

Name _____

Name (or Number).....

Type of building..... Detached Semi-detached Terrace

Date of visit..... Recorded by:.....

Number of storeys..... Inscription.....

Number of bays..... Building material

Roof type Roof Material

Is the building rendered? Colour

Original function..... Present use:.....

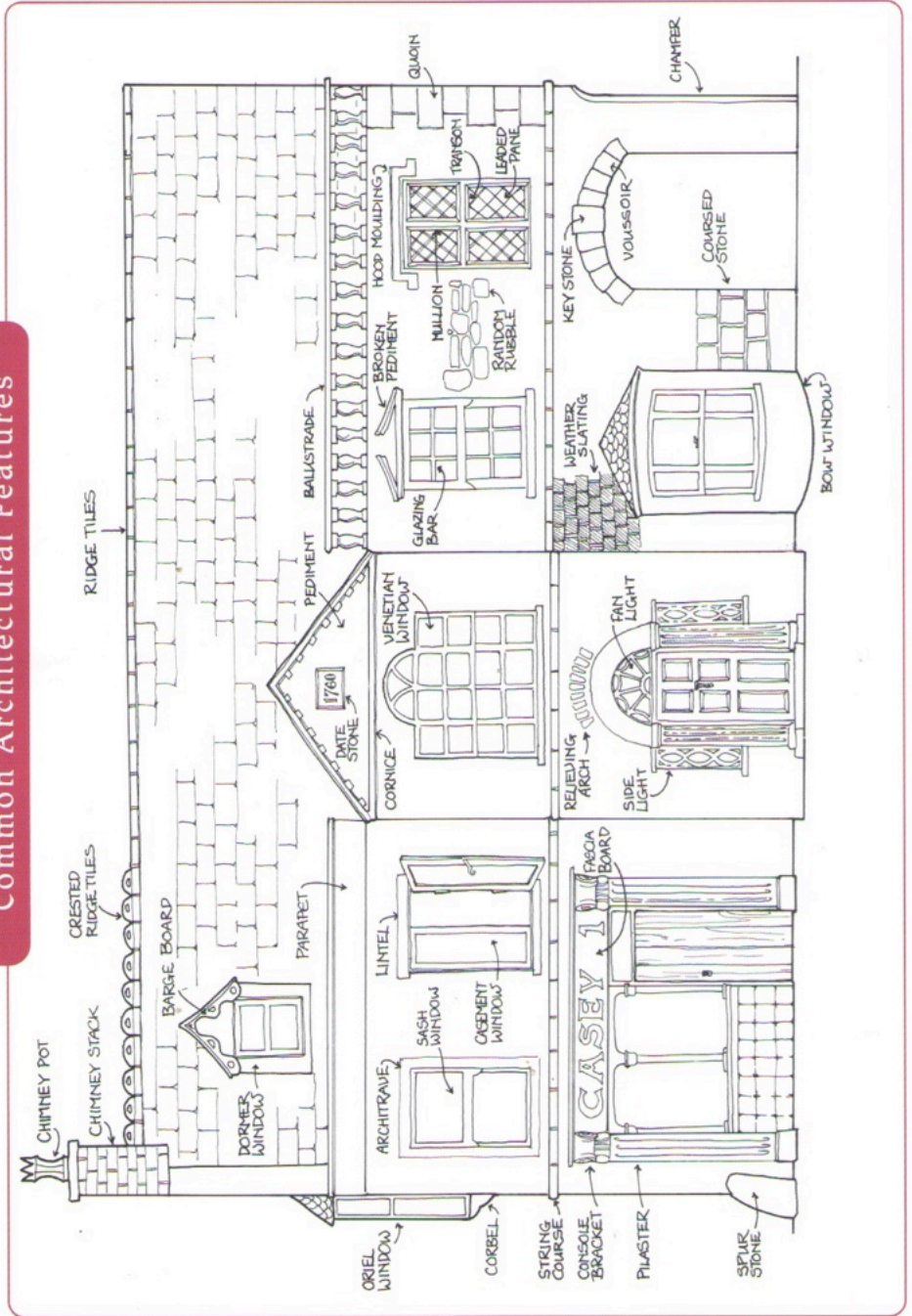
Previous Owner Present owners

Drawing	Door
	Window
When was it built?	Condition:

If you're not sure about the architectural features jargon, this page from the same book is a great reference.

Teacher Guidelines: Module 7

Common Architectural Features



The most important thing is to start. Go with your motivation and just "get it done".

Written record or “record sheet”

1. Describe the setting of the building. This ideally this would include the topography (hills and valleys, coastline?), whether on farmland or commonage, and if known, the size of the landholding historically associated with the building, number of outbuildings, any sources of water.
2. A general description of the exterior building including the compass orientation, the number of storeys, the roof covering, chimney stacks, wall construction materials and the number of windows and doors. Any obviously modern extensions need only a very brief description.
3. A brief but more detailed description of each exterior wall. This would include guttering, wall finish, the openings; doors and windows, any blocked openings, straight masonry joins etc.
4. A general description of the interior of the building including the number of rooms, the layout of the rooms and whether or not they were heated.
5. A more detailed description of each room: the ceiling, the walls including any hearths, the floor, any openings and the associated doors and windows. And other stuff, fitted furniture, fire surround, drains etc.
6. A description of the roof structure. If the roof has trusses ideally one is measured and drawn but even a sketch showing the types of the joints used in the construction could be useful with dating.

Photography

1. Ideally all photographs include a scale (ranging pole but if you don't have one, how about a ruler?). A wide angle lens is useful.
2. General: to show the landscape setting especially the relationship with other buildings.
3. Exterior of the building: a photograph as square on as possible of each elevation, detail shots of windows, doors and any other features of merit.
4. Interior: As square as possible to each wall and from each corner showing the whole room. Detail photographs of doors, and all features of merit.
5. Each room can be given a number and this is shown on the plan. Each photograph can also be numbered and the location and direction also shown on the plan.

Archaeology

Inevitably, groundwork will occur during the restoration of a building which, if monitored, can give an indication of the date of the structure. Sherds of pottery are the most likely artefacts to occur and useful for dating. For example if pottery is found beneath a formerly undisturbed floor than the floor cannot date any earlier than the pottery. It is suggested that any pottery or other artefacts uncovered are kept in separate bags for each area (example: “beneath the floor”, “the drain along the south wall” etc.) and marked on the plan.

Plans

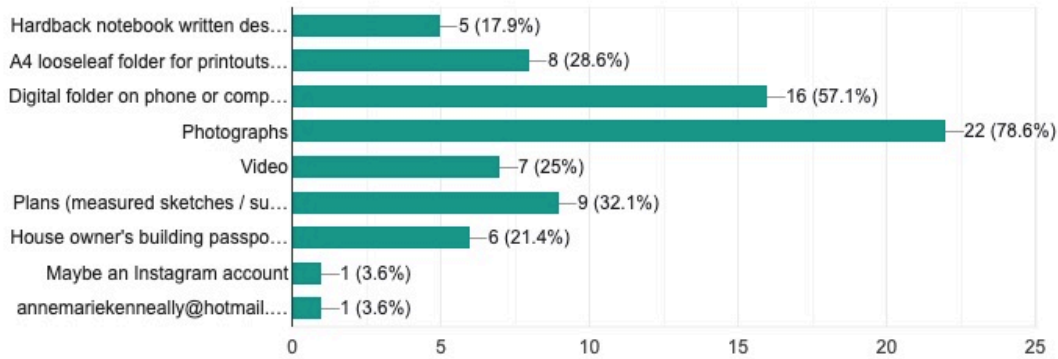
Each building report should ideally be accompanied by a plan of each floor. Architect plans can be used for this purpose but these are not always drawn to the accuracy required for this exercise.

Accurate drawings would show any changes in wall thickness which is a strong indicator of different periods of build that in turn tells a story of the fortunes of the occupiers.

Learnings from Activity 3

Photographs and digital records were the most popular choice for method of recording, but a third of the project participants were prepared to consider sketching or drawing plans.

28 responses



At the end of the project, it was decided to create a simple online recording form for written notes, photographs and sketch plans. It would have been preferable to do this earlier in the project, but it had been hoped to work on this aspect in conjunction with the National Built Heritage Service and the work to do this could not be completed within the short timeframe.

The online recording form was therefore created estimating from other documents how best to use compatible formats. For ease and cost reasons, the form uses Google Drive, which may not be compatible with public service requirements, but the data can be exported easily if needed in a different format in future.

It is available here and the houses covered in the Visits chapter of this publication have been added: <https://forms.gle/oMYuAsJZtrFPVpLv8>

Cottageology - record my house

Make a record of your traditional house built on the island of Ireland before 1947
This record will only be made public if you specifically agree to that in further email correspondence
We will keep the record for you and you can view it through our website with a login
If Cottageology isn't continuing, we will ask you what should be done with your data.
Our email is info@cottageology.com if you wish to have your data deleted.

The name and photo associated with your Google Account will be recorded when you upload files and submit this form. Only the email address you enter is part of your response.

* Indicates required question

Email *
Your email address

Firstname *
Your answer

Lastname *
Your answer

Activity 3: the 1901 and 1911 censuses

Sadly, there are only two sets of census records easily searchable online, but they can provide very interesting information about a house. The sad tale of why all the others no longer exist (burning of the Four Courts, pulping to reuse paper etc.) is here:

<https://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/help/history.html>

But it won't be long until the census of 1926 is finally published. They are always held for 100 years to ensure privacy (although now we're living to over 100 perhaps that will change?)

Format of the census

The 1901 and 1911 censuses are really detailed and contain loads of information, as explained here (original at

<https://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/help/about19011911census.html>)

A form

This is the basic household return, filled in and signed by the head of the household. There is one for each household in the country. The information sought was: name, age, sex, relationship to head of the household, religion, occupation, marital status, county or country of birth.

The census also records an individual's ability to read or write and ability to speak the Irish language, and whether deaf, dumb, blind, idiot, imbecile or lunatic.

The 1911 census asked a significant additional question: married women were required to state the number of years they had been married, the number of their children born alive and the number still living.

The back of the form, also available on this website, gives the head of household and its address. In some cases, where forms were filled out in Irish, the name of the head of household appears in English on the back of the form. This name has also been indexed, and appears on the list of residents of a household. The back of the form is available to view under Form A, page 2.

B1 form

House and Building Return: this form gives you details of the houses and buildings in a townland/street, including what kind of building (private dwelling, factory, shop etc.), what class of building, how many families lived in each house, how many people lived in how many rooms, and name of head of household. This form is very useful for the examination of urban overcrowding.

B2 form

Return of Out-Offices and Farm-Steadings: this form tells you what extra buildings are attached to a dwelling, for example, stables, coach houses, cow houses, dairies, piggeries, barns etc. This form gives an idea of the full extent of a person's property.

N form

The Enumerator's abstract: this form gives details of the number of houses in a street or townland, and the number of occupants of each house, broken down by sex. The form also tells you the religious denominations present in each household.

To search for a townland's record, go to <https://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/search/>

Search [More search options](#)

Census year

Surname

Forename

County

Townland/street

DED

Age + or - 5 years

Sex

Exact matches only

Browse

[Browse by place](#)

You can also search the census records by place, and view your ancestors' neighbors, or get information about the place they lived in.

[Click here for help with browsing.](#)

[Jump into Ireland](#)

Help with searching

What information does the census contain?

- [What information does the census contain?](#)
- [Person search](#)
- [Location search](#)
- [Age](#)

Read our [detailed guide to the 1901/1911 census](#)

Bear with this activity because it might not produce house information straight away. It maybe the census research will need to be repeated later on in the project if it doesn't work out straight away. To make best use, it's important to know the right family names, or the enumerator summary may prove confusing. It's not uncommon to have to go back and forward between different sources until the "right" record is found.

If there is no family surname to look for at this stage, "browse by place" as indicated above. Choose Cork first as the county. Next it offers "DEDs". This is short for district electoral districts. However, these could have changed both in terms of your Dáil constituency and your parish so again, it may be information that needs revisiting.

During Activity 1, the common problem of townland spellings was encountered. The way a townland is spelled now might not be how it was spelled in the past. This link: <https://archive.org/details/op1248631-1001/page/4/mode/2up> provides a searchable online version of the index of townlands. Use the search on the left hand side to search, not the one on the right. Zoom in when the record is found record (the zoom icon is tiny on this website, and at the bottom right). Try different spellings, and use the column headings to find your "parish" which may no longer be where you attend any religious service. In this example, the townland Reagrove was formerly in the Kinsale constituency, and the parish is Ballyfoyle which no longer has any church although the graveyard survives – Ballyfoyle is what is needed to search for under "DED" when using the census in this example.

No. of Sheet of the Ordnance Survey Maps.	Townlands and Towns.	Area in Statute Acres.	County.	Barony.	Parish.	Poor Law Union in 1857.	Townland Census of 1851, Part I.	
							Vol.	Page
1, -4, 5	Ravensdale Park or Anaverna	2,343 0 18a	Louth	Lower Dundalk	Ballymascanlan	Dundalk	I.	176
26	Ravenswell	47 2 12	Dublin	Rathdown	Oldconnaught	Rathdown	I.	37
14	Ravernet	401 1 10	Down	Lower Iveagh, Up. pt.	Blaris	Lisburn	III.	189
6, 11	Raw	123 0 13a	Fermanagh	Lurg	Magheraculmonee	Lowtherstown	III.	208
24, 29	Raw	147 3 10	Fermanagh	Magherastephana	Aghalurcher	Lisnaskea	III.	217
23	Raw	151 2 4c	Monaghan	Cremorne	Aghnamullen	Cootehill	III.	238
43	Raw	307 0 1	Tyrone	Omagh East	Clogherny	Omagh	III.	310
19	Rawes	332 0 12	Armagh	Tiranny	Tynan	Armagh	III.	60
23, 32	Rawleystown	261 2 5	Limerick	Smallcounty	Cahercorney	Kilmallock	II.	259
17	Rawros	216 1 22	Donegal	Kilmacrenan	Mevagh	Millford	III.	130
79, 88	Raws Lower	236 2 4	Donegal	Raphoe	Donaghmore	Strabane	III.	138
79, 88	Raws Upper	455 0 34	Donegal	Raphoe	Donaghmore	Strabane	III.	138
13	Ray	143 2 39d	Cavan	Tullyhaw	Templeport	Bawnboy	III.	95
37	Ray	574 2 30	Donegal	Kilmacrenan	Aughinish	Millford	III.	122
45	Ray	187 2 17	Donegal	Kilmacrenan	Kilmacrenan	Millford	III.	129
25, 34	Ray	1,847 1 10	Donegal	Kilmacrenan	Raymunderdoney	Dunfanaghy	III.	131
86, 87	Rayhill	144 3 18	Galway	Kilconnell	Killallaghan	Ballinasloe	IV.	41
54	Raymoghly	372 0 21	Donegal	Raphoe	Raymoghly	Letterkenny	III.	142
39	Raymondstown	186 3 13	Limerick	Coshma	Dronin	Kilmallock	II.	243
44	Raynestown	302 2 18	Meath	Ratoath	Rathbeggan	Dunshaughlin	I.	219
45	Raystown	301 2 24	Meath	Ratoath	Ratoath	Dunshaughlin	I.	219
142, 151	Rea	266 0 16	Cork, W.R.	West Carbery (E.D.)	Abbcystrowry	Skibbereen	II.	136
21, 22	Rea	248 3 22	Kerry	Clunmaurice	Killyn	Tralee	II.	170
11, 17	Rea	259 0 32	Kerry	Irishcormor	Duagh	Listowel	II.	190
21, 22	Rea-allen	293 0 2	Cork, E.R.	Duhallow	Kilmee	Kenturk	II.	73
50	Reaboy	356 1 3	Kerry	Magunihy	Kilcummin	Killarney	II.	201
92	Reacashlagh	232 0 11	Kerry	Dunkerron South	Templenoce	Kenmare	II.	185
70	Reacashlagh	432 0 33	Kerry	Iveragh	Kilimane	Cahersiveen	II.	197
32	Reacashlagh	1,224 1 38	Kerry	Trughanacomy	Ballincuslane	Tralee	II.	206
20	Reacaumaglanna	200 1 3	Waterford	Coshmore & Coshbride	Lismore and Mocollop	Lismore	II.	347
80, 31	Readeabarn	247 0 34	Kilkenny	Kells	Kilmaganny	Callan	I.	109
36	Readoty	86 3 13	Waterford	Decies within Drum	Ringsgonagh	Dungarvan	II.	353
67, 68	Readrinagh	376 0 23	Kerry	Magunihy	Kilcummin	Killarney	II.	201
88, 44	Readstand	123 1 21	Meath	Ratoath	Dunshaughlin	Dunshaughlin	I.	213
36, 37, 42, 43	Readstown	433 2 11	Meath	Lower Moyfeurath	Laracor	Trim	I.	210
39, 45	Reafadda	837 0 39	Tipperary, N.R.	Kilnamanagh Upper	Toem	Tipperary	II.	280
138	Reagh	221 1 37	Cork, W.B.	West Carbery (W.D.)	Kilcrohane	Bantry	II.	144
29, 36	Reagh	163 0 29	Roscommon	Roscommon	Cloontinlough	Roscommon	IV.	209
116, 117	Reaghan	493 1 31	Galway	Leitrim	Tyaugh	Portumna	IV.	56
18, 25, 26	Reaghan	567 0 38	Tyrone	Strabane Upper	Cappagh	Omagh	III.	325
41	Reaghfa	74 1 36	Clare	Islands	Killone	Ennis	II.	30
11, 17	Reagh Island	127 3 10	Down	Castlereagh Lower	Tullynakill	Newtownards	III.	164
10, 11, 15, 14	Reaghstown	735 1 21	Louth	Ardee	Philipstown	Ardee	I.	174
46	Reagoulane	179 0 28	Tipperary, N.R.	Kilnamanagh Upper	Toem	Tipperary	II.	280
61	Reagrallagh	358 0 9	Cork, E.R.	East Muskerry	Inishcarra	Cork	II.	104
113	Reagrove	421 3 6	Cork, E.R.	Kinalua	Ballyfoyle	Kinsale	II.	94
46, 51	Reahouse	149 3 29	Wexford	Barry	Killar	Wexford	I.	308

Once the correct parish/DED is located, the townland should be visible. Depending how populated the area is, the surnames for the houses should prove easy to work through. If you have family or neighbour information, search for surname. Otherwise, work through each surname for your townland eliminating those which are "impossible" from the information provided.

There is an option to look at the original census scanned form or to select occupants.

From the form, information is available about each house in 1901 and 1911, including literacy, Irish fluency, religion, gender and age.

Take note of the "No on form B" entry at the top right (11 on the screenshot below).

CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1901.
(Two Examples of the mode of filling up this Table are given on the other side.)

FORM A. No. on Form B. 11

MEMBERS of this FAMILY and their VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY, the 31st of MARCH, 1901.

NAME AND SURNAME.	RELATION to Head of Family.	RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.	EDUCATION.	AGE.	SEX.	RANK, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION.	MARRIAGE.	WHEELS BORN.	IRISH LANGUAGE.	If Deaf and Dumb; Blind; or Lame.
1 John Ahern	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	Read and write	39	M	Farmer	Married	Co. Cork	English	
2 Mary Ann Ahern	Wife	"	"	37	F	"	"	"	"	
3 David Ahern	Son	"	cannot read	5	M	"	not married	"	"	
4 Thomas Ahern	Son	"	"	4	M	"	"	"	"	
5 Ellen Ahern	Daughter	"	"	2	F	"	"	"	"	
6 Mary Dinnan	Mother-in-law	"	Read and write	60	F	"	Not Married	"	Irish English	
7 Catherine Dinnan	Sister-in-law	"	Read and write	20	F	"	not married	"	Irish English	
8										
9										
10										
11										

There is lots more information if the "occupants" option is selected, as this gives you access to the B forms, about the house itself, as well as a summary of the townland that may help you identify the right house by excluding others (for example, if neighbours have owned their house for generations, then the original forms and the summary can be used to figure out the size of house by number of occupants, and which house relates to which name, thus "excluding" other houses while trying to find a specific building).

Asking neighbours or whoever knows the local history for the family name, if unknown, is another great way of finding the right record. But the B forms will really help. If you zoom in on the B1 form and read the headings of the columns, it tells you how many windows at the front, what the walls and roof are made of, and the number of rooms. By comparing this to the 25 inch OS map (1898 for most of the Cork areas), you should be able to figure out which is yours.

HOUSES.

No. of Houses or Buildings.	Whether Built or Building.	State whether Private Dwelling, Public Building, School, Manufactory, Hotel, Public-house, Lodging-house, or Shop, &c.	Number of Cupboards and Furnishings as returned on Form B. 1.	Is House Inhabited? Yes or No, as the case may be.	PARTICULARS OF INHABITED HOUSES.				CLASS OF HOUSE.	
					WALLS.	ROOF.	ROOMS.	Windows in Front.		
(Col. 1.)	(Col. 2.)	(Col. 3.)	(Col. 4.)	(Col. 5.)	(Col. 6.)	(Col. 7.)	(Col. 8.)	(Col. 9.)	(Col. 10.)	(Col. 11.)

The B2 form describes any outbuildings, which also helps when considered with the 25 inch map. Record the "No on form B" from form A to match this up with a name and the occupants.

So here is a jigsaw puzzle, which is much easier to piece together if the family surname at this date for the building is known. But even if no-one knows, it's usually possible to track back information.

Activity 4: Using Griffiths Valuation Survey

Go do the Askabout Ireland website.

Their guide is at <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/irish-genealogy/understanding-the-valuation/>

This guide is not the easiest to use. If the name of who might have lived in the house in 1853 is known, use the Name option at <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml?action=nameSearch> – but this may not be that helpful if it's a common surname.

So as a general rule, try starting with the placenames at

<https://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml?action=placeSearch>

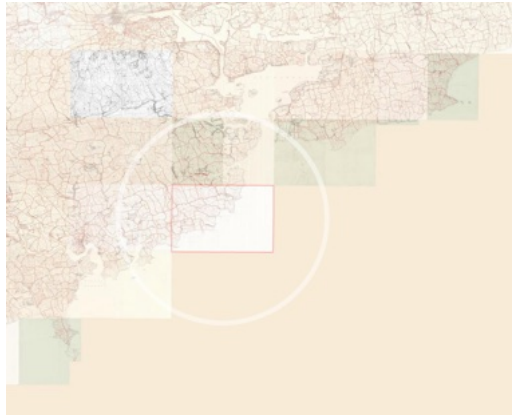
Put in the townland as the placename and your county. Now we get to another frustration. You may be fairly sure you know the right "Barony", "Union" and "Parish" from the work we did on the historic OS maps and census. However, sometimes what came under what changes. If you don't get a result putting in just your townland, mess about with these options.

In this case it was vital to choose Kinsale as the Barony even though it's actually Kinalea, which for some reason does not work... then up pops Reagrove at last!

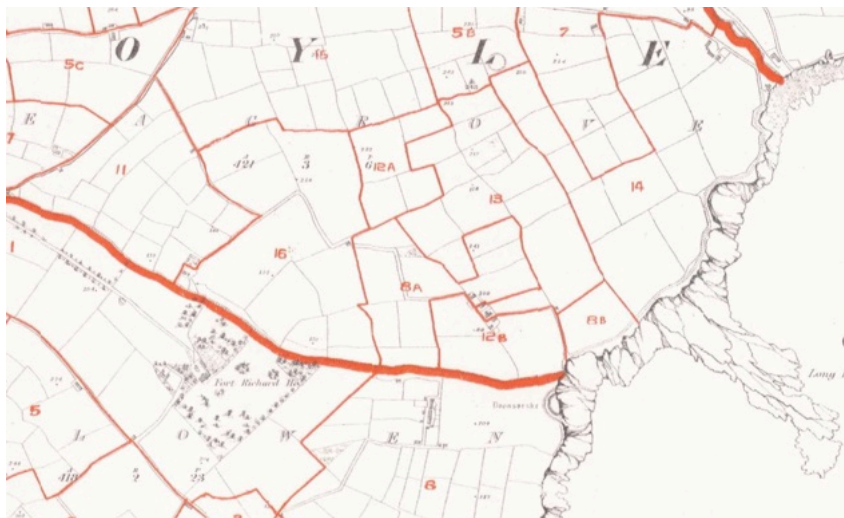
The screenshot shows the Ask about Ireland website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Search" and a "GO" button. Below the search bar are navigation links: "About Us", "Links", "Contact Us", and "Accessibility". The main navigation menu includes "Reading Room", "Learning Zone", "Libraries", and "ENFO". A large banner for "Griffith's Valuation" is displayed, featuring a map and a photograph of a man. The banner text reads: "The Primary Valuation was the first full-scale valuation of property in Ireland. It was overseen by Richard Griffith and published between 1847 and 1864. It is one of the most important surviving 19th century genealogical sources." Below the banner, there are links: "Griffith's Names", "Griffith's Places", "Name Books", "Thoms", "Search Tips", "Upload", "About GV Maps", and "Read More". The search results section is titled "Results of your search" and contains the following text: "In the results table below... Click the 'occupants' icon to see who lived in the locality. Click the 'Maps' icon to see modern (Google Maps) and 1840s (OSI 6-inch) maps." Below this text is a table with the following columns: "Placename", "County", "Barony", "Parish", "Townland", "Occupants", and "Map Views". The table contains one row of data: "Reagrove", "Cork", "Kinalea", "Ballyfoyle", "Reagrove", and two map icons. Below the table, it says "Results 1 to 1 of 1".

Placename	County	Barony	Parish	Townland	Occupants	Map Views
Reagrove	Cork	Kinalea	Ballyfoyle	Reagrove		

Now check the map view (use the right-most magnifying glass in the screenshot above to click on under Map View). It will take a good few seconds to show up.

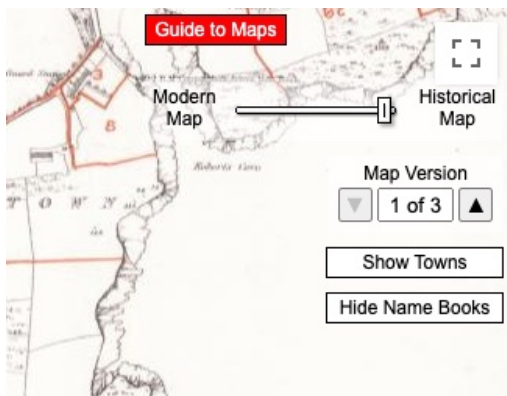


As usual there are plus and minus zoom signs at the bottom right – and it should help that in a previous activity the location of the house (if it existed in 1850) was already identified.



The house of interest here is at the bottom left of holding number 16.

Looking at the top right of the screen there are options for all the Griffiths map versions that cover the area. At least one will probably have working scribbles on it from the person who surveyed it. Unfortunately, most of the name books for Cork (again, working information from the surveyors) do not survive, but there are a few so as well as finding all the maps for the area, check if there are any name books.



Once all the maps available for the house are identified, return to the summary for your townland, and this time choose “Occupants”.

Now a summary of all the people who lived in the townland is displayed, in this format:

Occupier Surname	Occupier Forename	County	Parish	Details	Original Page	Map Views	Upload your content for this record
CALLAGHAN	DANIEL	CORK	BALLYFOYLE				
BRIEN	TIMOTHY	CORK	BALLYFOYLE				
JEFFERS	ROBERT	CORK	BALLYFOYLE				
MCCARTHY	CHARLES	CORK	BALLYFOYLE				
AHERN	DAVID	CORK	BALLYFOYLE				
NOONAN	DAVID	CORK	BALLYFOYLE				
SLINE	JAMES	CORK	BALLYFOYLE				
BUCKLEY	JOHN	CORK	BALLYFOYLE				

When the details are revealed using the magnifying glass, icons these should match, including the Map Reference number. So, going back to the example, the map reference was 16. But... for all the Reagrove entries, there is no map reference for 16.

Click on the largest version of the "original page" to see a text table listing all the residents. This view is pretty much impossible to screenshot and quite annoying to use. Take a picture of the screen with a mobile phone instead as a workaround.

No. and Letters of Reference to Map.	Names		Description of Tenement	Area	Val Annual Value		
	Beneficial and Occupier	Immediate Lessee			Land	Buildings	Total
KILLOWEN							
a	John Sullivan, sen.		House and land	4 0 0	0 15 0	4 15 0	0 15 0
b	Daniel M'Carthy		House, offices, and land	8 0 0	1 0 0	9 0 0	10 0 0
c	James Elphinstone		House, office, and land	8 0 0	0 10 0	8 10 0	9 10 0
d	Robert Aherne	John Galway, Esq.	House, office, and land	74 2 15	0 15 0	74 3 15	75 0 0
e	John Aherne		House, office, and land	3 0 0	0 10 0	3 10 0	4 10 0
f	John Aherne		House and land	3 0 0	0 10 0	3 10 0	4 10 0
g	Mrs. M'Carthy		House and land	3 0 0	0 10 0	3 10 0	4 10 0
h	Timothy Callaghan	John Galway, Esq.	House	0 0 0	0 5 0	0 5 0	0 5 0
i	Timothy Aherne	John Galway, Esq.	House	0 0 0	0 5 0	0 5 0	0 5 0
Total,				418 2 25	106 0 0	524 25 0	630 25 0
REAGROVE (Ord. S. 113.)							
1	Daniel Callaghan	John Michel, Esq.	Land	1 3 13	0 15 0	1 3 13	0 15 0
2	Timothy'Brien	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House, offices, and land	11 0 1	4 10 0	15 10 0	16 0 0
3 A B	Robert Jaffers	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House and land	8 1 2	4 10 0	12 20 0	13 0 0
4	Charles M'Carthy	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House and land	11 0 2	5 15 0	16 15 0	17 15 0
5	David Aherne	Charles M'Carthy	House	—	0 12 0	0 12 0	0 12 0
6	David Noonan	Charles M'Carthy	House	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
7 A B	James Sizer	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House, offices, and land	23 1 0	15 10 0	38 20 0	39 10 0
8	John Buckley	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House, offices, and land	10 0 3	11 15 0	21 15 0	22 15 0
9	Timothy Corcoran	John Buckley	House	—	6 10 0	6 10 0	6 10 0
10	Unoccupied	John Buckley	House and offices	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
11	Michael Fennell, sen.	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House, offices, and land	43 3 34	20 0 0	63 3 34	64 3 34
12	Daniel Looney	Michael Fennell, jun.	House	—	0 12 0	0 12 0	0 12 0
13	Mrs. Ambrose	Michael Fennell, jun.	House	—	0 14 0	0 14 0	0 14 0
14	William Walsh	Michael Fennell, sen.	House	—	0 16 0	0 16 0	0 16 0
15	Catherine Drinan	Michael Fennell, sen.	House	—	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0
16 A B	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	Walter Fitzsimons, Esq. and others	Land	144 2 20	107 0 0	144 2 20	107 0 0
17	Mrs. M'Carthy	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House and office	—	1 5 0	1 5 0	1 5 0
18	William Lyons	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House and office	—	2 5 0	2 5 0	2 5 0
19	Denis Gilmanc	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
20	Jeremiah Donovan	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
21	Unoccupied	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	Offices	—	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0
22	Unoccupied	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
23	William French	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House	—	1 5 0	1 5 0	1 5 0
24	John Neill, sen.	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House and office	—	1 5 0	1 5 0	1 5 0
25	John Neill, jun.	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
26	James Webb	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	Smithy	—	0 5 0	0 5 0	0 5 0
27	James Webb	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House, offices, and land	4 0 2	3 15 0	7 15 0	8 15 0
28	Rev. Simon Murphy	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
29	Michael Kely	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House, offices, and land	22 1 23	12 5 0	34 10 0	35 10 0
30	John Kely	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House, offices, and land	28 1 11	16 10 0	44 20 0	45 10 0
31 A B	William Halloran	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House, offices, and land	20 1 8	15 15 0	35 15 0	36 15 0
32	John Callaghan	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House, offices, and land	29 2 34	11 5 0	40 20 0	41 5 0
33	Unoccupied	John Callaghan	House	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
34	Unoccupied	John Callaghan	House	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
35	Unoccupied	John Callaghan	House	—	0 5 0	0 5 0	0 5 0
36	Michael Fennell, jun.	Samuel Hodder, Esq.	House, offices, and land	68 0 1	44 0 0	112 0 1	113 0 1
37	Richard Neagle	Michael Fennell, jun.	House	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
38	William Neagle	Michael Fennell, jun.	House	—	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0
39	Daniel Corcoran	Michael Fennell, jun.	House	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	0 10 0
Total,				421 3 6	284 15 0	705 21 0	728 14 0
REANIES HOUSE (Ord. S. 113.)							
1	Daniel M'Carthy	Luko J. Shee, Esq.	House, offices, and land	49 3 0	22 10 0	71 4 0	72 10 0

This should give you all the information about the house – if the name and map reference match, and the additional information seems to be correct (eg if you are looking for a house, an entry that just says “Land” is probably not the right one?)

Now go back and read the guidance on this website again about how the numbers and letters in the left column were used <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/irish-genealogy/understanding-the-valuation/>

If this worked there should now be information about the inhabitants in approximately 1853. This produces further possibilities to see all those responsible for paying rates for that house down to 1970, when rates were abolished, using the “valuation cancellation” records held at the Valuation Office. This information can be cross referenced with the 1901 and 1911 census records, covered in Activity 4.

Don't worry if nothing has been found so far – it can be complex.

By 1855, tracking backwards from the Valuation Office records, the example house was occupied again, by a James Drinan, with the correct amount of land for plot 16, and as well as the house, there is a labourer's cottage listed, also still in existence close by, now used as

a shed. The valuation cancellation records show everyone who has owned or paid rates on this house up until 1990.

Finding out who was in the house in 1926 will be useful in two years time, when the 1926 census records will be released by the CSO.

The Griffiths Valuation for Co. Cork was completed on 9 July 1853 – 171 years ago. If you want to read more about how it can be used for family history, try <https://leitrim-roscommon.com/GRIFFITH/Griffiths.PDF>

To do lookups of valuation cancellations at the valuation office, four pieces of information are required.

- Your townland.
- Your DED (this is what you use to this day when you vote, but it is often listed under “parish”).
- Name of a householder just prior to 1970.
- It will help, if it’s a difficult one, to also have your OS map screenshot so the map and the householder can be cross referenced.

There are two options:

1. Use a genealogist to get the information if travelling to Dublin is not practical. Here is a list of genealogists from the National Library of Ireland: <https://www.nli.ie/sites/default/files/2023-03/researchers-list-march-2023.pdf>). For the CorkCott project, we used Nicola Morris of Timeline Research Limited. She has also written an excellent online summary of the land records available at: <https://timeline.ie/tracing-irish-ancestors-online/irish-land-records/>
2. If it is practical to travel to the Valuation office in Abbey St Lower, here’s information to book a free appointment: <https://www.valoff.ie/en/covid-19-updates/public-office/> and advice on doing your research: <https://tailte.ie/en/valuation/archive-research/genealogy/>

Activity 5: other documentary sources

Tithe Applotment books 1833

If there is a name associated with the house when the Griffiths survey was completed in 1853, check out the Tithe Applotment records:

<https://titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie/search/tab/home.jsp>

These records “were compiled between 1823 and 1837 in order to determine the amount which occupiers of agricultural holdings over one acre should pay in tithes to the Church of Ireland (the main Protestant church and the church established by the State until its dis-establishment in 1871)” (National Archives of Ireland)

As previously, now that all the different options of townland, parish, union for the house have been researched, it should be possible to use the location search to find the records quite easily. Be careful, this website has a tendency to select the line above or below the line desired!

The tithe applotments are beautifully handwritten records – the townland may be on more than one page, but lots of names will be on each page.

Note that these applotments are sometimes thought to be in Irish acres (larger) for some areas, but in Cork the parish acreage total matches the Ordinance Survey and Griffiths Survey, and are UK statutory acres.

This may provide information to travel back a few more years before 1840, if the house had more than one acre of land with it.

Grand Jury Map 1811

“Grand Juries” were established in the eighteenth century to determine whether there was a good case for a criminal prosecution to take place. Later they took over some of the

functions now carried out by county councils. Bridge building, road maintenance, and the building of fever hospitals were some of the duties carried out by Grand Juries. The poor law unions took over most of these functions in 1840 and county councils took over any remaining fiscal and administrative functions after the Local Government Act of 1898. Neville Bath's map for the Grand Jury of Cork was surveyed in the 1790s and published in 1811. The map is one of the best and most detailed maps of the county before the Ordnance Survey maps of the 1840s. It is a treasure trove for geographers, historians, and place-name specialists. The scale of the published map is three-quarters of an inch to one mile (1:84480)." <https://digital.corkpastandpresent.com/Documents/Detail/1811-grand-jury-map-of-county-cork/35603>

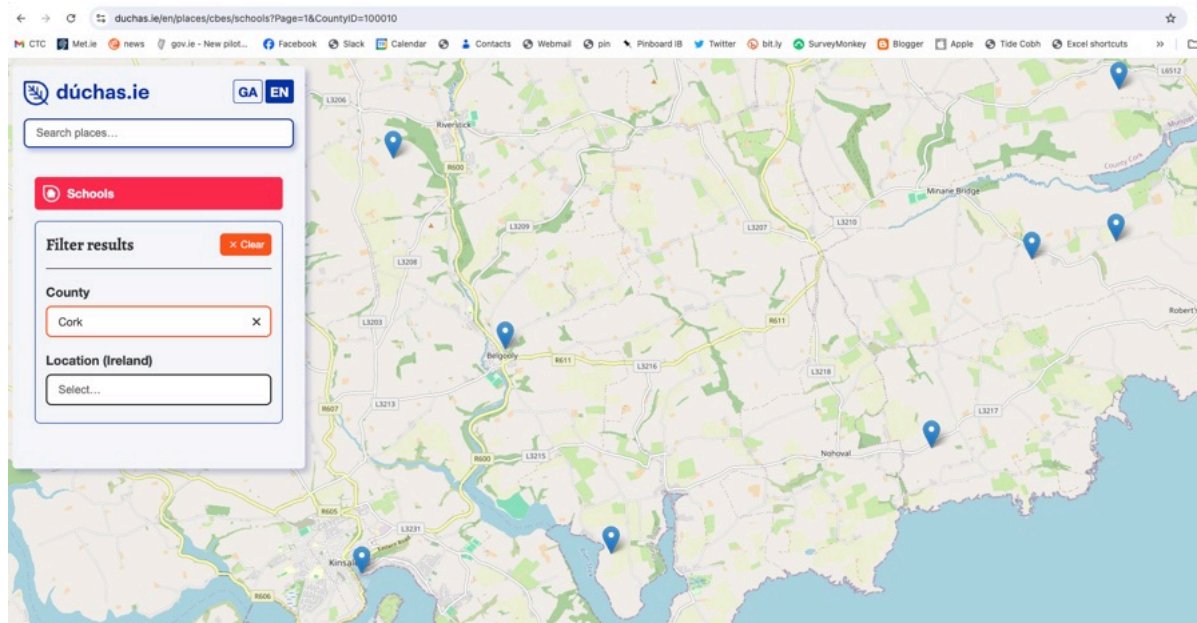


The UCD folklore collection 1937-1938

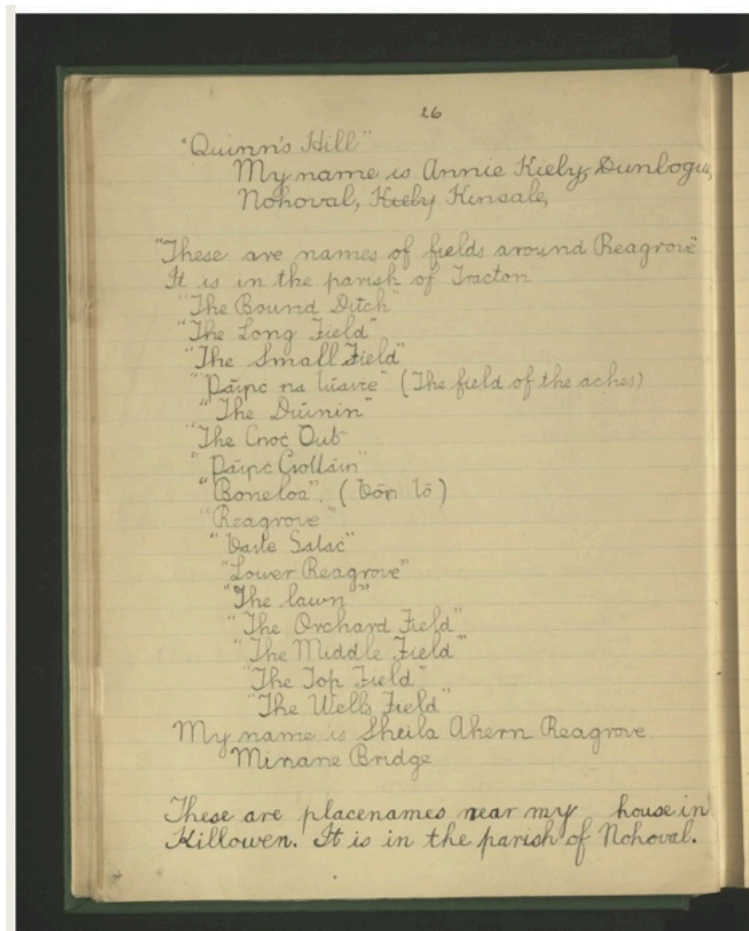
Jumping forward in time, some fascinating information was collected from local National Schools by the UCD folklore collection project here:

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/places/cbes/schools?Page=1&CountyID=100010>

Zoom in on the map to see the schools close by. Depending on topography, the National School that children from the house attended may not be the nearest as the crow flies.



These are placenames written by a member of the Ahern family, who may have lived in one of our participant houses. The folklore collection includes cures, riddles, local characters, local myths in its pages.



Eámon Lankford's Placenames Project

This project only covers Cork and Kerry and took place over many years finishing up around 2010. It has to be consulted in person at the Local Studies Unit in Cork County Library. Only the items for Cape Clear are available online.

This webpage gives an idea of what is available by townland. It includes any place name information from the UCD collections as well.

<https://corklocalstudies.ie/portfolio/cork-place-names-archive/>

There is more information about Lankford's work here:

<http://celebratingcorkpast.com/eamonlankford/#:~:text=established%20a%20methodology%20for%20the,Place%20Names%20Survey%20in%201995.>

How about adding to this information by talking to neighbours and recording place names? This website is a good start on village and townland placenames www.logainm.ie/en/ while family name locations are covered here: www.barrygriffin.com

Cottages built with state assistance 1880-1920

For anyone with a more recent cottage in Cork, it is well worth reading the excellent short article: "Parnell Cottages" by A.J. Coughlan and John Caplice from the Mallow Field Club Journal No. 15 (1997) which the Local Studies Unit of Cork County Library can provide access to in person (not online). This describes the history of the cottages built in Munster for agricultural labourers and shows some of the designs (Parnell Cottages and Labourer's Cottages).

On the western side of Cork mainly along the coast there were also "congested district board" cottages built after 1890. This website is a good starting place to research: <https://durrushistory.com/2020/08/28/1893-baseline-reports-for-the-congested-district-board-west-cork/>

The congested district boards also provided agricultural education.

A University College London online thesis "John Bull's Other Houses", by Murray Fraser (1993), has some more drawings of the different cottage designs at the very end (after page 334): <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10101065/1/10055353.pdf>
Guy's Directory of Cork

If the building is a farmhouse or a house previously occupied by someone with land, they may be listed in Guy's Directories. It's interesting to search by location to try to find who was the local JP? The local doctor? Local businesses nearby?

1875

<https://digital.corkpastandpresent.com/Documents/Detail/1875-1876-guys-county-and-city-of-cork-directory/2621>

1891:

<https://digital.corkpastandpresent.com/Documents/Detail/1893-guys-directory-of-munster/2632>

1914:

<https://www.failteromhat.com/guy.php>

1921:

<https://digital.corkpastandpresent.com/Documents/Detail/1921-guys-cork-almanac-and-directory/>

1935:

<https://askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/environment-geography/place-names/st-patricks-street-cork-b/1935-guys-cork-city-and-c/>

Other maps and documents

Skipping back in time, it can also be interesting to look at some of the earlier maps despite their lack of detail. Trinity College provide access to the Down Survey maps (1656-1658) at <https://downsurvey.tchpc.tcd.ie/> but unfortunately this website is very hard to get screenshots from – you will probably have to photograph your laptop with your phone.

Other maps are described and linked by UCD here:

<https://libguides.ucd.ie/findingmaps/mapshistIreland> . The National Library of Scotland has recently published the second world war maps for Ireland which can add interesting detail like wells and smithies to knowledge of a townland: <https://maps.nls.uk/os/one-inch-ireland-gsgs4136/>

Lewis' topographical dictionary is also worth a read at

<https://www.logainm.ie/download/logainm.ie-a-topographical-dictionary-of-ireland-samuel-lewis.pdf>

Visits to 10 Cork houses

The project participants were able to visit 10 houses around Cork County accompanied by one of the project archaeologists, Mary Sleeman or Colin Humphreys. To make the visits as educational for all as they could be, the archaeologists focused on houses that appear on the first edition 1840 maps and that were under restoration or had photographic evidence from restoration that was likely to help display evidence from the past to suggest the phases of building (an alternative source of evidence, if work to re-inhabit the building has already “covered up” this evidence).

The archaeologists looked at the historic maps before each visit to spot any relevant local features or nearby buildings. Hosts were also asked to check if they had any finds from work during their ownership such as pot sherds or shoes, tools and coins. Each host described what they knew about their house from their work on the maps and censuses. We had not received the Griffiths survey data at the time of the visits so this information was not available. Then the hosts led the group around their buildings and a brief written record was made for each one. The main objective of the visits was to help people to understand how to look at buildings.

If researching Cork houses, and interested in maps and data sources, it may be productive to read *Appendix 2, Differences within Cork County*, which looks at the differences illustrated in geographical data collected by Aalen, Whelan and Stout in their comprehensive 2011 edition of the *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*, along with the invaluable resource *Archaeological Heritage of County Cork* available online at <https://www.corkcoco.ie/sites/default/files/2023-06/archaeological-heritage-of-county-cork-2020.pdf>

Features which proved significant on the visits included:

- Masonry lines that may indicate where one phase of a building ended and another began (one built on top or extending beside another)
- Differences in building materials (types of stone, brick and mortar, and arrangement of stones)
- Thickness (depth) of walls (over 70 cm likely to be earlier)
- Changes in floor levels within a building.
- Differences in roof construction (trusses and purlins, remains of thatch coverings, type and origin of slate, tiles or corrugated iron coverings)
- Number, arrangement and design of windows and doors
- Evidence of external steps and loading doors indicating use of buildings for storage.
- Putlog holes in stone walls that may have been used to stage access platforms in the past.
- Construction of hearths and features of fireplace timbers, as well as storage presses built into fireplaces.
- Arrangement of outbuildings and farmyards (informal, courtyard, “street”).
- Reminders of drains and floor coverings (such as flags and cobbles).

Historical photographs and documents found by visit hosts were also illuminating. One project participant spotted this wonderful explanation of what we were trying to do in an exhibition in Skibbereen, and the artist Brian Lalor has kindly allowed us to reproduce it.

Evolution of a West Cork Farmhouse
The O'DRISCOLL FARM, ROSSARD, BALLYDEHOB, Co. CORK



North Cork

Mullentaura, Ballyhooly

This is a roadside two-story three-bay house on limestone land, just south of a larger farm which faces east. The OS map imagery shows that the two buildings present in 1840 had been demolished by the time of the 25 inch edition in 1898. There is a single storey building directly the south and a slated out-office at right angles to the main house.



*Ordnance Survey
First edition, 1840*



*Ordnance Survey
25 inch, 1898*



*Ordnance survey
final edition, 1935*

The house was derelict from 1999 to 2019, and the current owners recorded these photographs before their renovations. The current owners report that the bedrock around the house is "like flint" in terms of difficulty of excavation. There is a lean-to kitchen block at the south west corner of the house.



The southern room has a stone hearth with timber lintel which had a crane and side presses, as well as a Pierce rotary bellows.



The northern room also has a fireplace using the same stack with mirrored over mantel and similar decoration to the main fireplace. The roadway door is split in two vertically





The ground floor is stone-built but the upper floor appears to be a later block addition. The slates have been torched with plaster and the rafters are sawn.

The door from the lobby to the northern room is panelled. The newel post and banisters happened to be almost identical to those in the other house we visited on the same night.





The chimney had a stepped construction in stone.



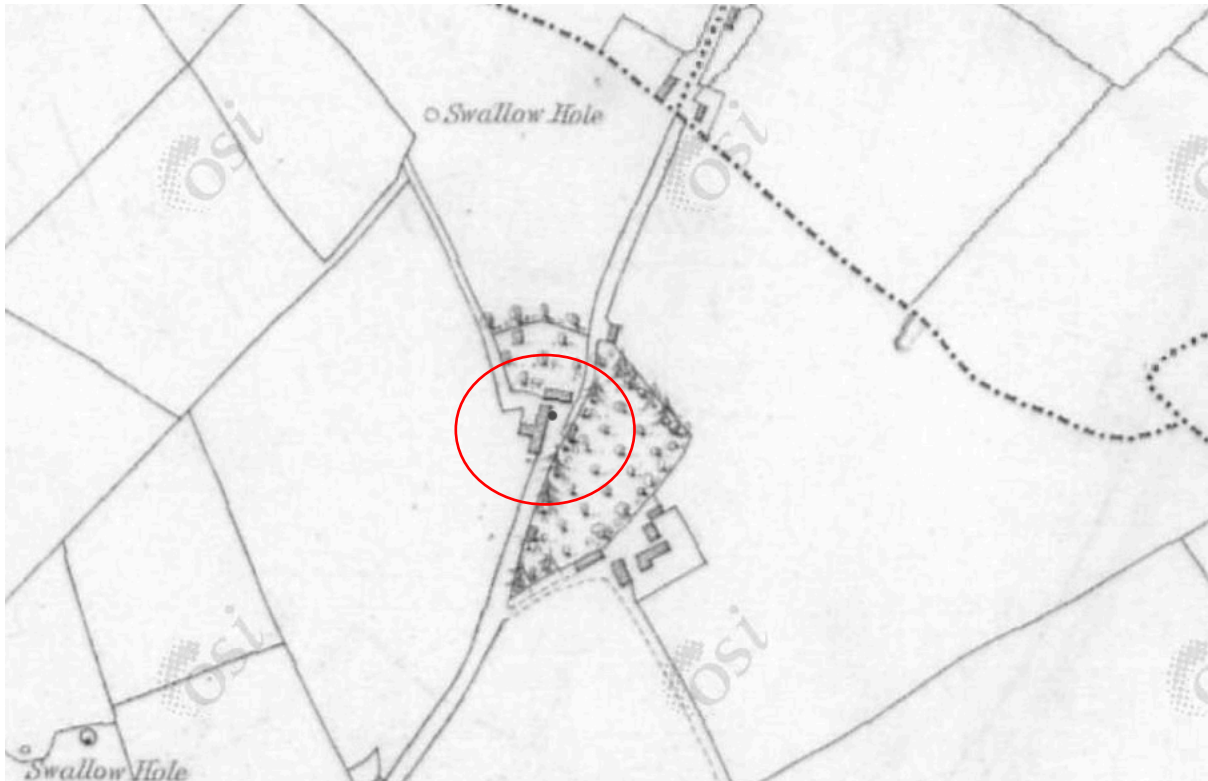
During renovation works a lot of metalwork and glass has been recovered along with the remains of cart wheels.



Very little of the above house history can be seen after the renovation. The chimney stack has been incorporated into a bathroom. Works are still under way.

Kilcanway, Mallow

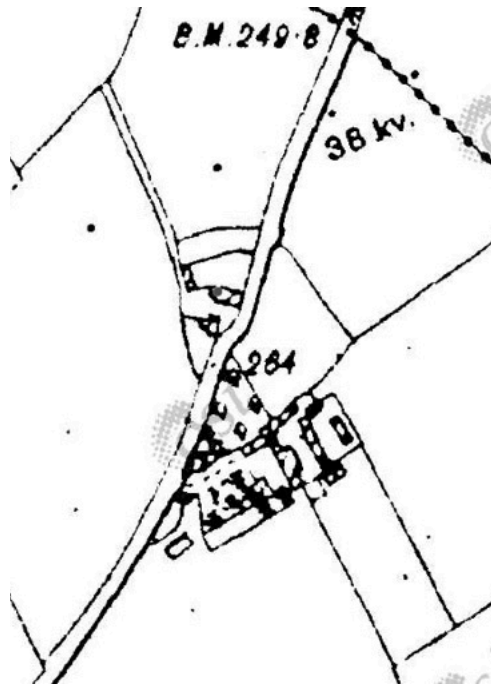
Located close to Mallow, this building is in a limestone area with two swallowholes close by where surface streams plunge down to the subsurface in areas of limestone geology.



First edition Ordnance Survey map 1840



25 inch Ordnance Survey map 1898



Final edition Ordnance Survey map

This is a four-bay house, formerly thatched but now roofed with corrugated iron. It is positioned with its east gable facing the road, and the front facing south. To the west is a stone-built cow byre, now roofless. The initial impression of the house is that it has a very high, steep roof with a tall brick chimney stack painted white. There are two blocked second storey windows in the western gable end, and a lean-to shelter has collapsed.





There is currently only a front door but of the three back windows, one may have previously been a door. At the front door the render has been decorated to imitate ashlar blocks. The door to the right leads to a parlour and is wide and panelled. The front windows have stone cills.



The house is constructed of mud, and the remains of the thatch can be seen where timber panelling has been removed from the eastern gable.

A parlour ware cupboard remains to the north side of the fireplace, which is 20th century.



The window on the northern side has been partially blocked. The windows on this side of the house have concrete cills, and the central window is considerably narrower than the other two with a very low cill.



In the central room the hearth has been blocked in with a 20th century brick fireplace with two presses on the left-hand side.



Unfortunately, the southern window in this room has suffered a lintel collapse. There are brackets below this window which suggest a sink was previously installed here. On the western side is a staircase, and a doorway to the westernmost room. The north wall seems to be moving away from the western internal separating wall. The thatch roof can be clearly seen at the eaves.



Thatch remains are visible, although these are covered by a tin roof now.

The sash window on the northern side has retained its lintels.



The newel post and balustrade of the staircase by coincidence are identical to those we saw in another house nearby on the same day.



On the second floor at the southern/left side of the stairs is a bedroom. It is apparent from the outside that at one stage this had two window openings in the gable end, now blocked.



This is the only second story room. There is a small access to the central attic which reveals the rafters are of sawn timber, but the supports of the thatch are rough poles.

It is apparent from the historical maps that there were other buildings which have not survived, and that the roofless byre to the north west was added in the late nineteenth century.



Half a metal tong lies outside alongside the remains of many late twentieth century marmalade jars and an empty Old Spice aftershave container.

South Cork

Loughbeg, Ringaskiddy

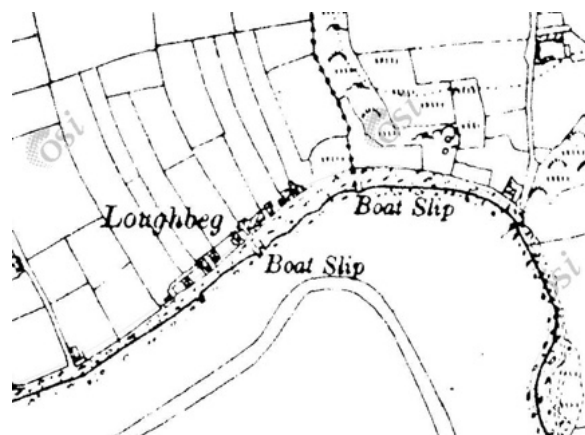
This site consists of the remains of row of coastal cottages. Two buildings are still largely extant, with mud walls and thatched roofs, on the edge of Cork Harbour at Loughbeg, Ringaskiddy, close to the DePuy factory. The buildings are built gable end on to the sea and the old land rundale settlement pattern of long gardens behind the houses is still partially extant.



Ordnance Survey
First edition map 1840



Ordnance Survey 25 inch
map 1898



Final edition Ordnance Survey
map 1935

The photographs show the house and barn west of the .284 height mark, here pictured from the shore.



This is a two-bay house with central doorway opening at right angles to double chimney stack. There is a small additional fireplace in the northern bay. The remaining thatch has been recently capped with a tin roof. There is a spectacular stepped chimney stack and fireplace arch in the main room. The fireplace retains a Pierce rotary bellows.





In previous years this building was hidden by vegetation which has helped to protect the mud walls, now in a fragile state.



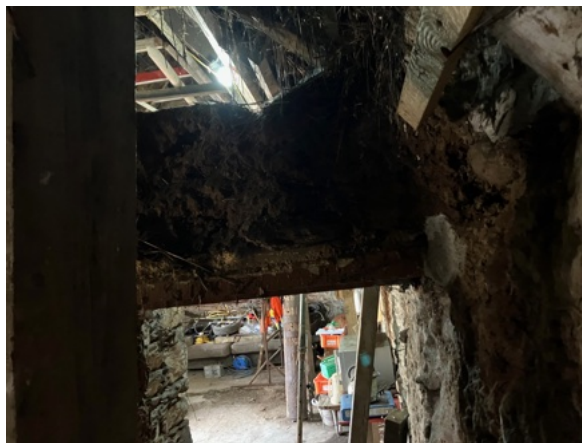


The owner believes that the ventilation but also moisture provided by the previous lack of window frames may have helped to preserve the mud walls. As well as providing a tin roof to protect the structure, tin sheeting is being used to try to keep some of the exposed external mud construction from washing away.





The roof structure appears to be adzed poles. The mud wall above the internal doorway is in a perilous state.



There is a barn east of the house, currently occupied by poultry, which may have been a house as it is thatched. The sea-facing gable has been recently concreted. The yard between the house and barn is cobbled.



Most of the other western buildings appearing on the OS maps have succumbed to the weather but there is evidence of some brickwork and iron guttering in places.

The buildings were abandoned in 1960 and the last householder in the surviving house is thought to have been Daniel O'Neill.

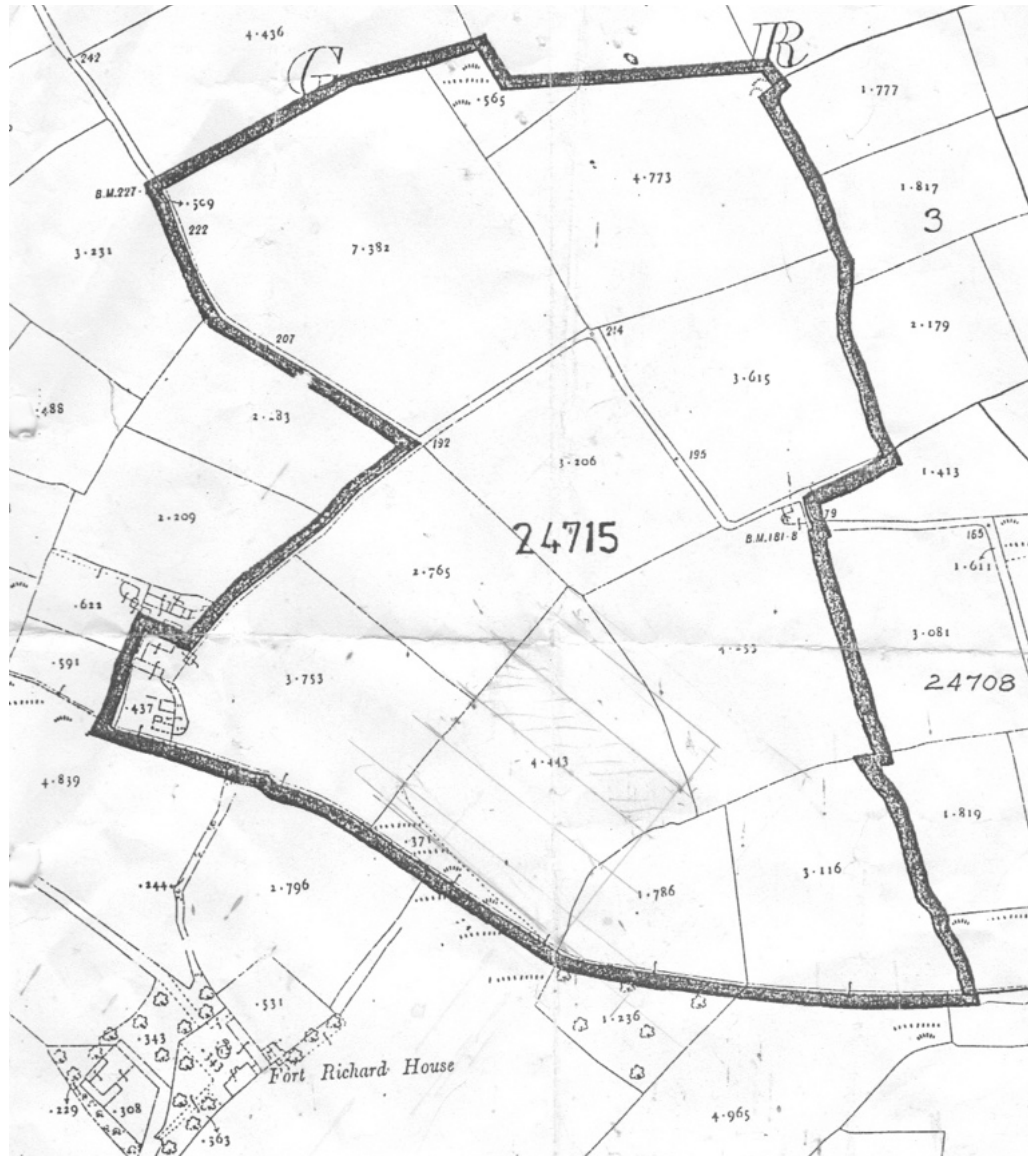




The survival of an apparent "rundale" strip system of landholdings behind these cottages, along with the urgent need for further work on the surviving cottages, is currently being assessed by the owner and the Cork county conservation officers.

Reagrove, Minane Bridge

This is a two storey, three-bay farmhouse built of stone, and roofed with slate, set in a courtyard of outbuildings. The location is facing south west in a coastal valley about one mile from the sea, with a separate set of smaller buildings belonging to another landowner adjoining. It previously was the farmhouse of a holding of about 40 acres, which was rented from Captain Samuel Hodder of Ringabella House.



The setting is sheltered on all sides except on the south east, sea-facing aspect. There is a stream below the house and the 1898 OS map shows a well or spring feeding down to this stream about 100 metres away. Directly south across the valley in Killowen townland is Fort Richard House, named by John Gallwey in 1787. The notes recorded by Lankford from the 1840 survey there state: "Raygrove House with some isolated trees is near the [N.] boundary."

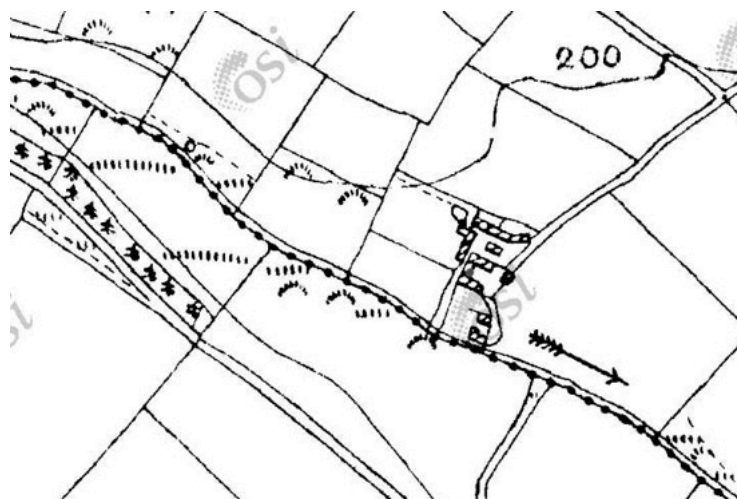


First edition Ordnance Survey map 1840

By 1898, the house and stable have been joined to create a three-sided farmyard.



25 inch Ordnance Survey map 1898



Final edition Ordnance Survey map 1935

By 1935 extra outhouses have been added at the entrance and on the lower level by the stream. The house is approached from the north east down a narrow breen with stone ditches on either side. An entrance porch was added in the 1990s.

This picture, taken in 1990 from the Fort Richard drive looking north-east across the valley, when the house was uninhabited, and had been used as a barn for some 15 years, shows the remains of the neighbouring houses behind. The tall tin-roofed building behind still shows evidence of previous thatch.



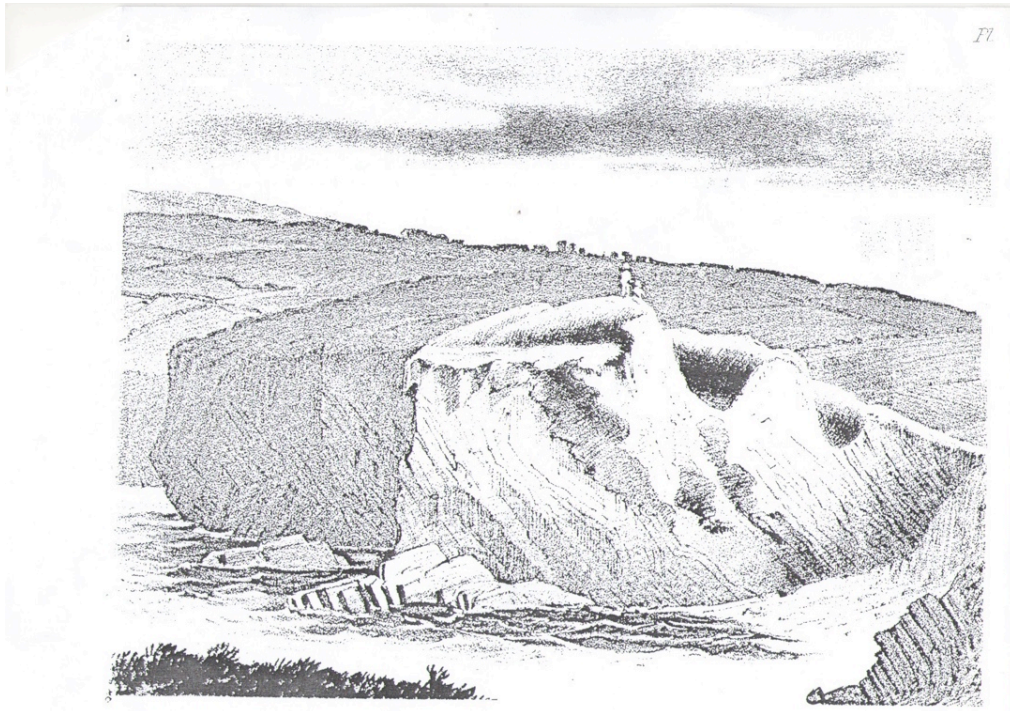
Within a two kilometer radius are the remains of seven ringforts and a promontory fort (Ordnance Survey map 1840 first edition 6 inch map)





Less than 500 meters upstream (north-west) is Butter Bridge, a late nineteenth-century causeway and tunnel where butter was collected to be transported to Cork.

In the other direction, downstream and south east of the house about 800 meters, is a coastal promontory fort now considerably eroded by wave action, named Doonsorske on the OS maps: The illustration below is from Popular Physical Geology by JB Jukes, 1853, when a bit more was left.





The house has directly opposing front and back doors with a large hearth at the north west end of the main room spanning 1.57 meters high 2.18 meters wide, with a stepped chimney stack on the second storey.



The walls were rendered with lime harling but about a third of this has been replaced in recent years with concrete dashing.

In the north west ground floor bay there is a second hearth sharing the stack, in the smaller parlour room. This room has a door opening directly north east to the adjoining cobbled byre, and facing south-west there was a shuttered window which appears to have been another door previously. This "parlour" third of the house has a floor level 15 cm higher than the rest of the building.



This third of the house is constructed, like the stable to the north east across the yard,, with a corbel top row of stones at the eaves, and good quality masonry. The second storey of this section has purlin roof construction, while the stable has pegged A-frames with some chamfering of the beams. This suggests these buildings may be earlier than the 1840 maps. The main roof construction of the other two thirds, by contrast, is common rafter trusses.



Top right: corbel top row
 Centre left: large purlins
 Centre right: pegged A-frame beams in stable.
 Bottom left: stable building showing good quality masonry partially rendered with lime.



On the south east side (out of shot to the left of the picture above) there is a scullery or dairy room on the ground floor (now the kitchen) with no hearth. Above this room the bedroom on the second floor had a 19th century coal fireplace leading to the south eastern brick chimney stack.



There are four second storey rooms and the two central bedrooms above the main room are divided by timber partitions. The doors to the end bedrooms are restricted in height by the roof slope to 1.4 meters tall.



The windows are single glazed cottage sashes with solid timber lintels, some of which have peg holes, suggesting they may be salvaged timber. There is a small transom window above the south-west facing back door. The staircase, according to oral history, although 19th century in style, was fitted in the 1950s and is possibly salvaged from another house. There are two sets of stencils decorating the stairwell. The tricolour shamrocks, an old IRA symbol, have been stencilled on top of a previous fern leaf pattern.



The stable building has a stone door lintel over 140 cm long. Opposite the house door is the the workshop, which has a timber lintel window engraved "Room 100", also likely to be salvaged timber. The stable and workshop have second story hayloft storage.



Although the byre at the north-eastern end was added between 1840 and 1898, at some stage there was an opening into the boundary double-ditched passageway northwest of the house, which connects the neighbouring buildings north-east of the house to the water source of the stream below.



The yard ditches are provided with sturdy stone gulleys supplying drainage into the adjoining field to release storm water. The yard gate is wrought iron but has no maker's stamp. The field gatepost, and several more around the former landholding, are made of girders from the El Zorro ship wreck at neighbouring Man of War Cove (1917). There are aspen trees (now

a rare native species) at the yard entrance. The remains of a Hornby horse-drawn mower can be seen in the lower part of the haggard, shown as being a shed on the 1898 map.



This location is a typical "strong farmer" house with possibly some pre-nineteenth-century elements. It represents a western outpost of the Hodder family estate at Ringabella, which was recorded as extending to over 1,090 acres in 1876.



East Cork

Inch, Killeagh



This building was last inhabited in 2004 and was originally thatched, then roofed in asbestos as shown below. It is situated opposite another thatched cottage, with a third thatched building down the same lane.



*Historical Ordnance Survey Map
1st edn 1840*

The location is just above a spring and smithy according to the Ordnance Survey 25 inch edn map below, which includes the house and outbuildings with a field of 3.348 acres.



The house, currently roofless with a recently-added ring beam, faces north west, and is adjoined by a barn to the east. The barn has a massive buttress, a hipped tin roof at the eastern gable, and the roof timbers are poles. There is a 3 x 2 window in the eastern gable.

There is a dividing partial internal wall with a hayloft type floor in the barn, that local oral history reports used to be the stage of Inch village hall. The side door of the barn has a stone arch. On the road side, the wall has a corbel top row below the tin roof.





The next picture is taken from the front (north-eastern) side of the house showing the gable of the barn behind it.



The house previously had a large central chimney stack which was removed since the most recent occupation. Window reveals are made of brick, which may be local as there was a brickworks at Youghal nearby but some bricks appear to be handmade.



The house previously had lime render with coloured distemper paint on the exterior and windowsills.



There has been a recent addition to the south western end of the house and masonry indicates the area between the hearth and the southern addition may also be a different phase.



There is also a small byre northwest of the house which sports a handsome metal gate, unfortunately without a maker's stamp.



To the east of the house the ditch has a stand of aspen trees, not widespread in the area. The owner is currently involved in efforts to raise funds to reinhabit this house.

Glanturkin, Whitegate

This collection of buildings is located close to Inch House West, divided from it by an area of marshy ground and a stream.



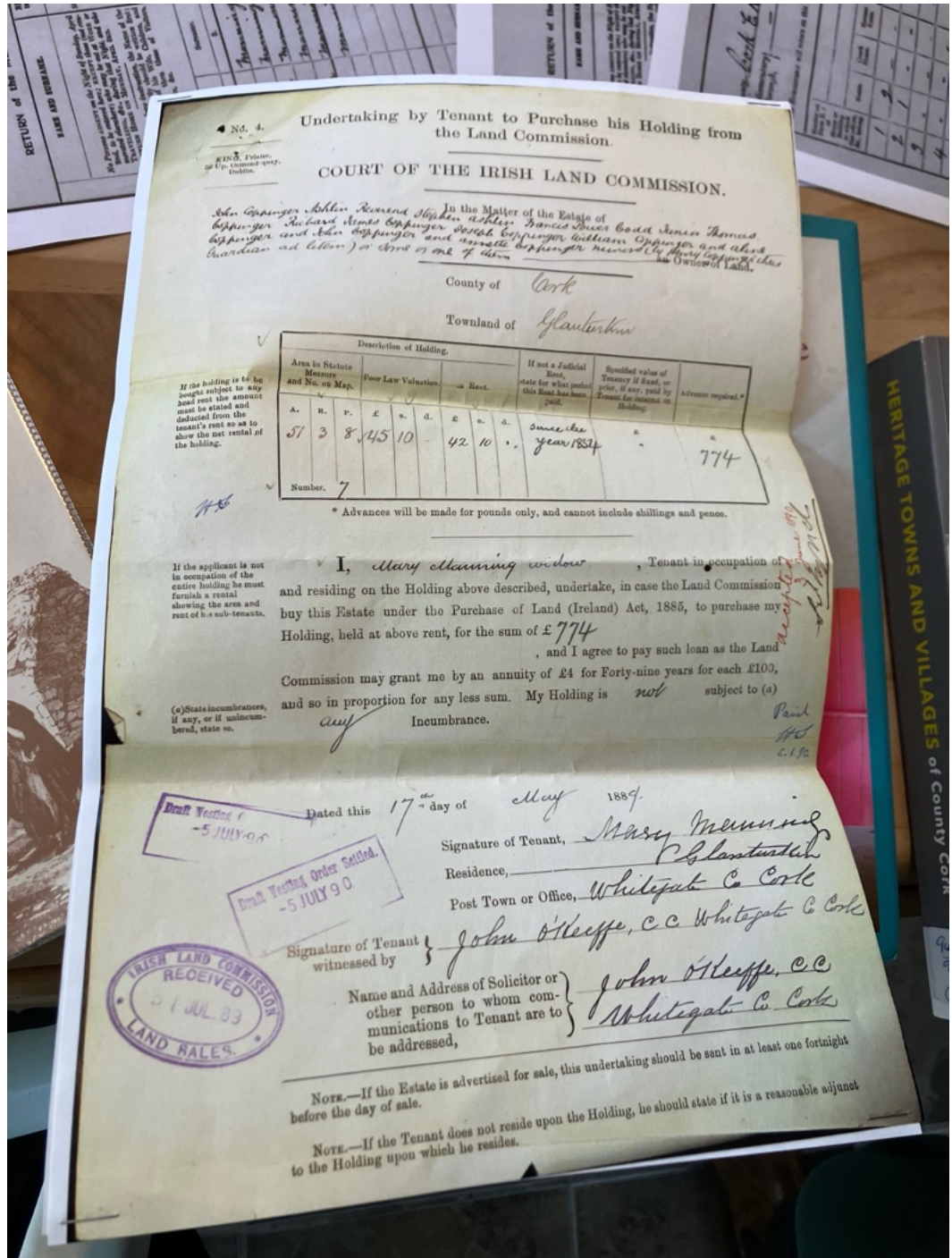
Ordnance Survey
First edn 6 inch map 1840



Ordnance Survey 25 in 1898 map

It is located under a slope in the ground to the south west, which provides shelter from sea gales.

The house was purchased by the Manning family through the land commission from the estate of John Coppinger in 1889. The house remained in the Manning family until recently and a member of the family, Mary Hickey, kindly provided extra information during the visit.



The central main house faces south east, was previously thatched and now bears a slate roof.



There is a tall fireplace with an old beam showing unusual taper marks which may prove worthy of investigation as apotropaic marks to ward off evil.



Opposite the fireplace at the north-east gable is a narrow staircase which was previously unenclosed, a "balcony" leading to the south-eastern bedroom. There is another staircase behind the main fireplace.



Anne Hickey explained the rear of the main house, now a kitchen and dining room extension, was previously a lean-to kitchen leading to the dairy building and piggery with a walled external area for the pigs.

Opposite the main house to the south east is another smaller dwelling which was converted from a cow byre.



There was also a cow byre facing north west, half of which has been demolished, although the open area retains cobble floors with drains. Anne Hickey explained the cobble went into a two-stone drain across the yard and that the yard accommodated four cows in the past. The drain is now under concrete.



In the remaining half of this byre, there is a course of stones in the gable closest to the main house plus an opening surrounded by four large stones.





There is also a final building to the north west of the main house, built of stone.

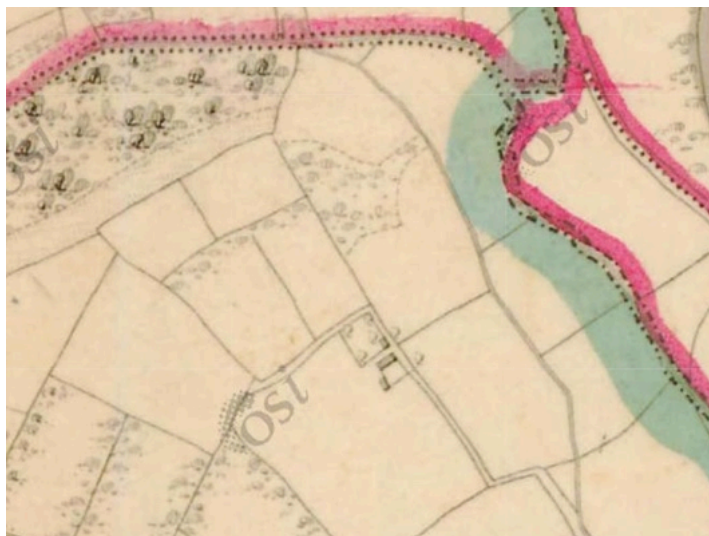
West Cork

Ballycatteen, Ballinspittle



This building faces south east, and has been under conservation/renovation for the past four years. The setting appears to have been at some stage a quarry and the house is above the Ballinspittle stream and close to Ballycatteen Fort to the south-west, the second largest ring fort in Ireland.

The house is built on top of bedrock and considerable excavation has been done to the north and west sides in recent years. This map section is from the 25 inch (1898) but it also appears on the 6 inch first edition 1840. There is also a good supply of yellow clay, re-discovered recently when digging percolation holes.



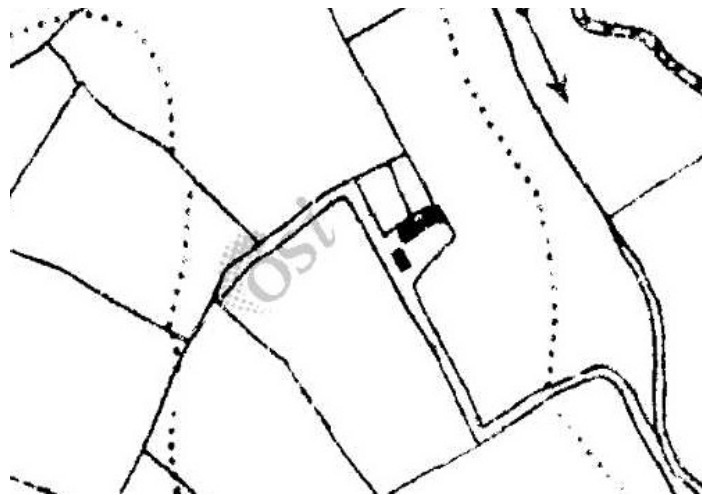
First edition Ordnance Survey map, 1840

By 1898 the road access has changed and the field behind the house has lost its trees and been subdivided.



25 inch Ordnance Survey map, 1898

The house currently has three bays with a two-storey annex to the north west connected at the eastern end.



Final edition Ordnance Survey map, 1937

On viewing digital maps this "kitchen" annex looks to be appear on the final edition OS map but not on the 25 inch which might date that part of the house to between 1900 and 1938.

This annex has arched brick lintels but the bricks are of poor quality and badly spalled (shown here at the bottom of the picture, the palletted bricks are modern replacements for use in the renovation works). The barn beside the .281 marker has already been converted into another house.



The house is currently parcelled with 20 acres of land but previously the associated landholding was 140 acres.

The western end of the house was used as a stable and is constructed of much less fine stonework than the central bay with mainly earth mortar. There was a stream flowing into a concrete surround bowl at the back of the house, recently removed, and another small spring was channelled by drain to the back of the house and then under the floor.



Large square oak timbers have been re-used as lintels over several windows. These have a row of slightly offset round holes with the sawn off remains of staves; possibly parts of a former fireplace beam.

A roofer told the owners that the old slates, which have been replaced, were from the Innishannon quarry.

Considerable works have taken place to the fireplace in the central bay which was previously wider and possibly spanning the entire room. There is a stepped chimney breast.



In the kitchen annex the fireplace has had the timber lintel replaced. There was a range installed.



Behind the kitchen annex there is a passageway and the back/northern side of the house retains layered whitewash.



The owners have retained the old windows although there was no time to look at them. There are several interesting wrought iron gates.



An archive of pencilled records has been found on tongue and groove panelling from the interior. In addition to family records of births and TB, it lists specific details such as deaths at Crossbarry in 1921.

The CorkCott project consulted the curator of Cork City Museum at Fitzgerald Park, who kindly arranged to record these planks, and it is hoped when conserved they may be on temporary display at the museum.



This is an interesting multi-phase building that would benefit from further recording and research.

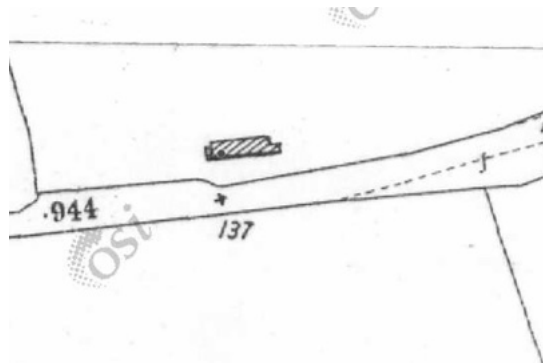
Ballinacurra, Kinsale

This cottage is located close to Ballinacurra House, above the small quay at Whitecastle creek where tidal flow ceases, facing south. It is not far from the site of a former flour mill opposite White Castle.



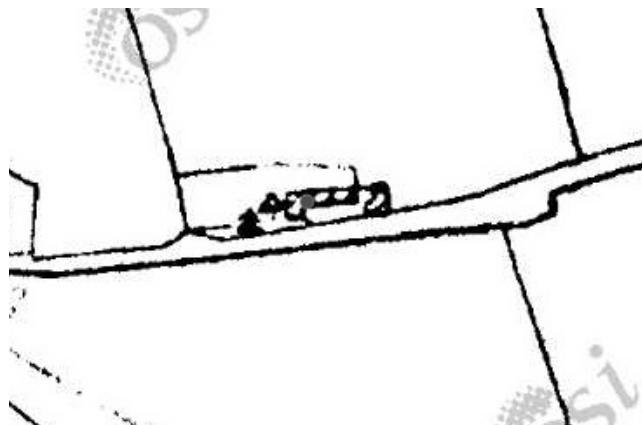
First edition
Ordnance Survey map, 1840

By 1898, the arrangement of buildings has simplified.



25 inch Ordnance Survey map, 1898


It has regained an outbuilding by 1935.



Final edition Ordnance Survey
map, 1935

This cottage is listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage at <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/20911140/ballinacurra-cork> and was recorded in 2009.

BALLINACURRA, CORK



Survey Data	
Reg No	20911140
Rating	Regional
Categories of Special Interest	Architectural, Social
Original Use	House
Date	1830 - 1870
Coordinates	161168, 51185
Date Recorded	08/04/2009
Date Updated	--/--

Description

Detached six-bay single-storey vernacular house, built c.1850, having single-bay single storey addition to side (west) and lean-to outbuilding to side (west). Now vacant. Pitched corrugated-iron roof with rendered chimneystacks and gable copings having uPVC rainwater goods. Corrugated-iron roof to lean-to additional outbuilding. Rubble stone walls with rendered plinth to front (south) elevation, rendered walls to side (east, west) elevations of house, rubble stone wall to rear (north) elevation. Rubble stone and concrete block walls to side (west) elevation of addition and sides (north-south, west) of outhouse. Square-headed window openings having replacement render sills and reveals, having timber casement windows throughout, some openings blocked with timber panelling. Square-headed door opening with brick surrounds, having recent rendered stepped approach and timber battened door to front elevation. Square-headed door openings with timber battened doors to front and side (west) elevations of additions. Associated outbuildings to east and west. Rubble stone enclosing walls with rendered square-profile piers, having single and double-leaf iron gates to south. Rendered enclosing wall with square-profile single leaf galvanised gate to east.

Appraisal

An eye-catching roadside dwelling which is an excellent example of the vernacular building tradition. The characteristic thick rubble stone walls, corrugated-iron roof and irregularly placed openings are notable features. It would appear to have been used as a pair of houses in the past, though was in single use in more recent years.

Since that date, the previous owner's granddaughters have conserved and renovated the property. It is in fact mainly constructed of mud, with lower courses in rubblestone.



It also had a thatched roof. The owners report that the house was partially burned in about 1950 in an arson attack. At this point the western/left hand end got a galvanised roof but later all the thatch was removed.



The front elevation seems to suggest that at one state this was two houses (eastern end middle window is wider, same width as today's door, with two chimneys at gables).

The roof visible in the pictures below has been replaced and this building is now used for holiday rentals as well as by the owners.



The current owners have kept a small archive of wallpapers removed during the recent renovations. The final picture is off the current owners as small children at the door of the house.



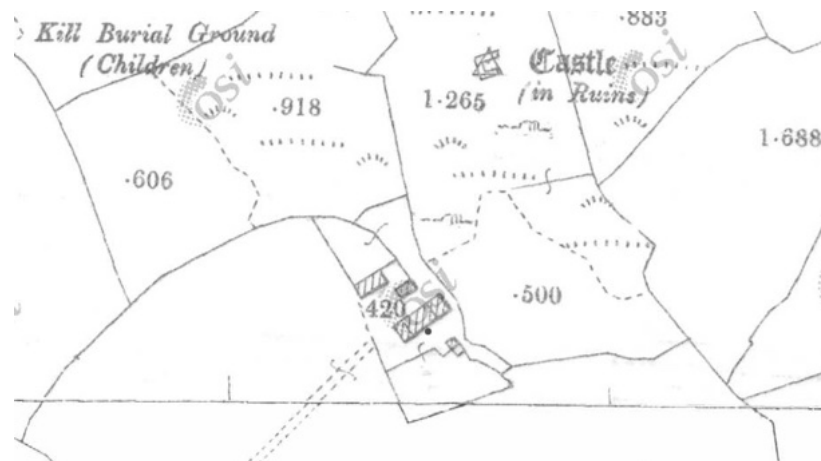
Ardagh South, Baltimore

This three bay, two storey house with two extensions is located just south west and below the ruins of Ardagh Castle (ruined around the turn of the 17th century), with a stream close by.



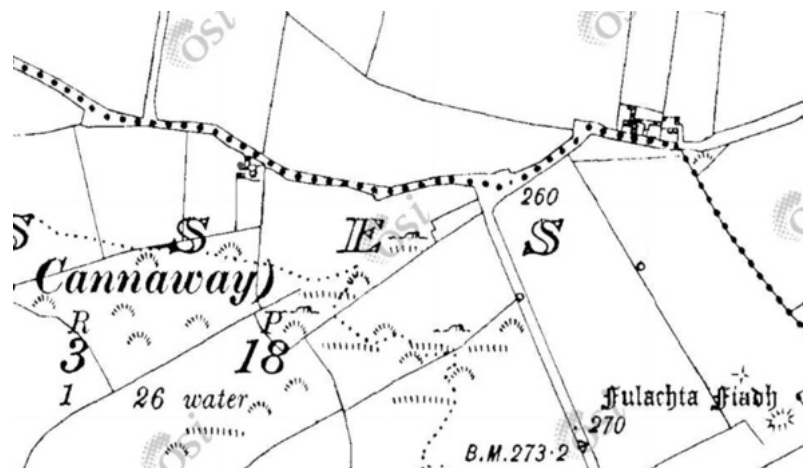
First edition
Ordnance Survey map, 1840

The entrance track has been moved since the 1840 map to the west.



25 inch
Ordnance Survey map, 1898

The final edition shows fulachta fiadh to the south east.



Final edition, Ordnance Survey map 1935

The house faces south east and has been substantially renovated from a state of dereliction in around 1997.



The former back door facing northwest is now in an internal wall. It has a timber lintel with some socket holes and carbonised discoloration.



The fireplace in what was originally the north eastern gable has a very large lintel stone and had a wheel bellows.



The 1901 and 1911 censuses indicate this house had grown from two rooms to three by 1911, and there is an extension to the north east, now used as a boarding cattery behind this gable. The extension had an external staircase which has recently been replaced – the older steps can still be seen.



This extension can be seen roofless in the later part of the 20th century before its recent re-use as a cattery below.



The front porch has also been rebuilt. The former owner Ellen Murphy can be seen posing at the porch below.



In recent years another extension previously used for cheesemaking (hence the louvre door to keep the room cool).



Behind the house a former byre/hayloft building has been converted into a holiday cottage and the chimney on this building is decorative and not attached to a functional hearth.



There are two putlog holes beside the loading door for the former hayloft on this building.



Between the house and the holiday cottage at the castle end of the haggard is a small donkey and cart house seen below.



The current owners state that the ground in the area has shallow soil over bedrock within six inches making construction work arduous.

The Cove, Baltimore



1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1840



25 inch Ordnance Survey map, 1898

This three bay cottage is located in what was the original village of Baltimore before most habitation in Baltimore was built to the northeast



The area to the east of the front door is raised up about 60 cm and shows as a separate building on the 1898 map. Between the two buildings flagstones were found during late 20th century works on the cottage.



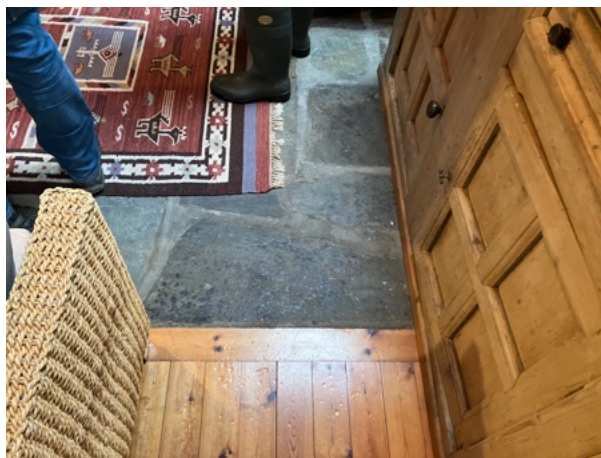
The northern window has a deep stone lintel.



The owners have kept an old stone threshold timber from the front door, which has socket holes and carbonation. There are also socket holes in the lintel above the front door.



The owners report that when they were working on this cottage they found a stone drain under the floor, which sloped away from the fireplace, and that they relaid the flagstones.



The hearth has an unusual curved background, and the chimney stack is partially external to the gable.





Renovation pictures suggest that the chimney stack has been added to with the curved background, which has a flue directly to the gable that does not look big enough to be for fish smoking.



There is a small area of cobblestones remaining outside the back door, and an old well in the field to the east of the house across the road.



Local history indicates this building belonged to the Molloy family and was last occupied in the 1940s by Minnie Molloy. It had a tin roof when bought by the current owners in 1956. The current owners hope it's somewhere on this early map of the Cove at Baltimore.



This map is thought to be c. 1630, draughtsperson unknown, taken from the Earl of Strafford's Papers held at the Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments at Sheffield Archive (WWM/Str /20/100), reproduced here by kind permission of the Head of Sheffield Libraries, Archives and Information

The cottage has recently been used as a location for a Hallmark Film.



Appendix 1: General distribution of building types in Cork

While a distribution of house types cannot be drawn from a sample of just 10 visits, the work of Aalen, Whelan and Stout in their comprehensive 2011 edition of the *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*, published by Cork University Press, draws together some themes which people interested in the building designs in their location may find useful.

We found three buildings which had all or in part mud (clay) walls. Clay is found throughout Cork except in the extreme south west.



The figure above is based on K Danaher, 'Materials and methods in Irish traditional buildings' in *R.S.A.I Jn lxxxvii* (1957) page 61-74 and K Danaher 'some distribution patterns in Irish folk life' in *Bealoideas xxv* (1957) p. 115

Traditionally, byre dwellings (which combined humans and animals) are only found in the western part of the county. There are also a few remains of longhouses with opposite front and back doors too.



The figure above is based on K Danaher, 'The combined byre and dwelling in Ireland' from *Folklife, ii* (19674) pp 58-75. By contrast, in the eastern part of the county, lobby entrance/central hearth houses and some hipped roofs are seen as shown below.



The figure above is from the *Atlas of Ireland*.

We also looked at four buildings with thatch remnants, or thatched remnants nearby, in our project and were lucky to have as one of our advisers Mary Sleeman, who surveyed thatched

houses in Cork in 2001 (see https://www.corkcoco.ie/sites/default/files/2022-10/thatched_houses_of_cork.pdf).

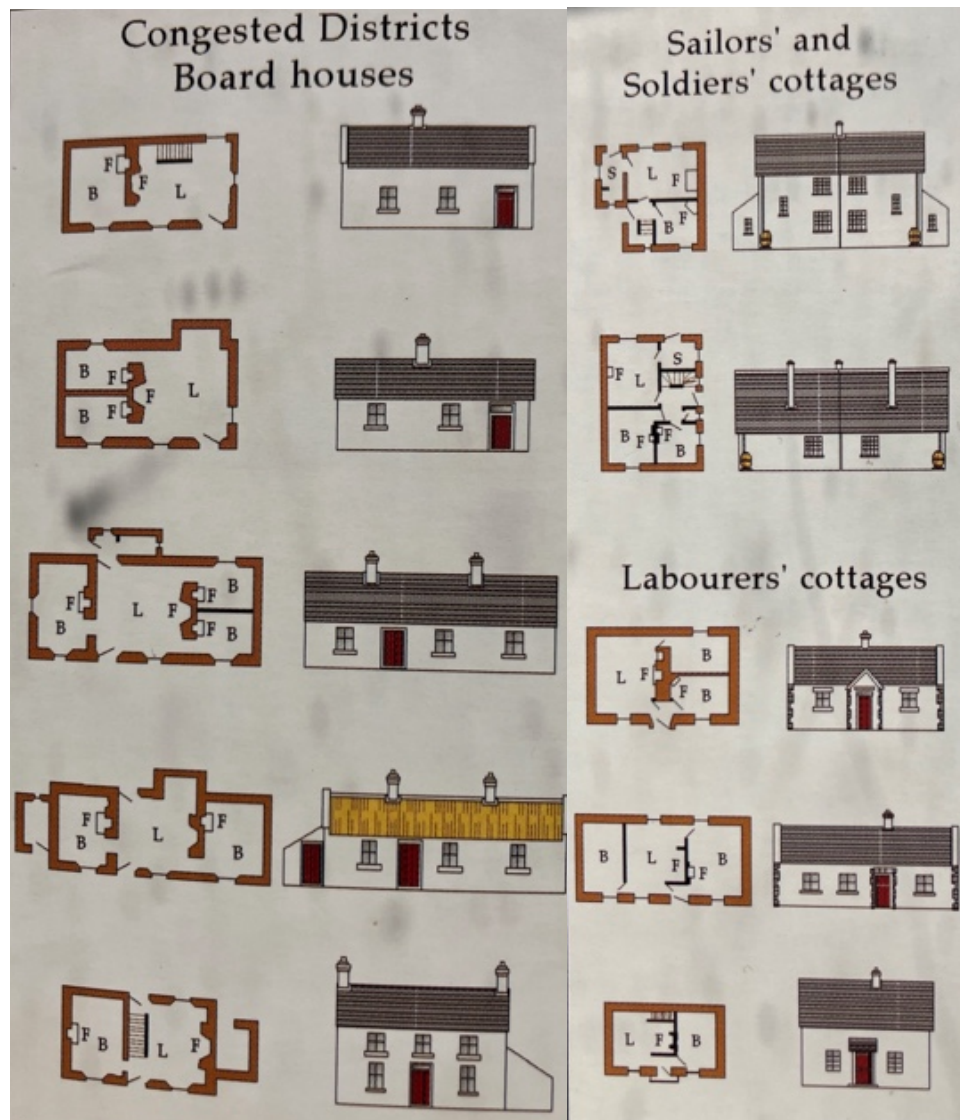
The survey distribution map shows thatch as a roofing material now largely confined to north and east Cork.



Interestingly, three of our four “new sites” are not on this map, although sadly all four are remnants rather than functioning roofs. One is west of Kinsale while two are further south than the buildings marked above, perhaps because they have been found through a different route, though still largely conforming to the pattern Sleeman identified.

A number of our project participants live in cottages or farmhouses that from the map evidence are likely to have been built with public assistance after the land reforms of the late nineteenth century, from 1880 to 1920.

Congested district board houses are only found on the western side of the county. Labourer’s cottages (also called Parnell Cottages) are found throughout the county, while sailors and soldier’s cottages, built after World War 1, are focussed around Cork Harbour.

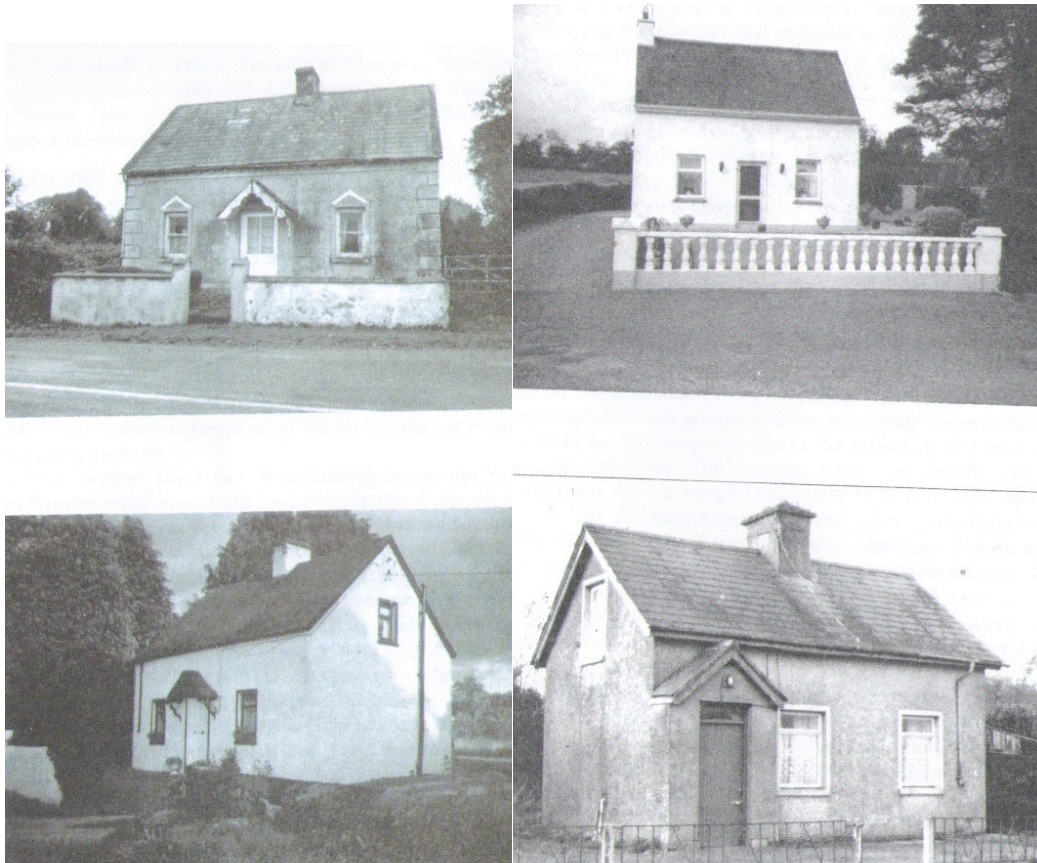


The photographs below are for Parnell cottages. The first tranche of Parnell Cottages were funded from 1883 and were for those involved in agricultural work for hire. The rent charged was one shilling a week, and they cost around £100 to build. These houses were on garden plots of not more than half an acre and had to include a kitchen and two bedrooms. Roofs could be thatch or slate but not corrugated iron.

In 1885, the act was amended to include women, weavers and fishermen. In 1892, the size of the plot was increased from half an acre to one acre. In 1903, the definition of a labourer was widened to include anyone earning less than half a crown a day.

The buildings became more elaborate after 1906 and usually included at least three bedrooms with fireplaces, and improved ventilation as well as the encouragement of a southerly aspect for the building.

Another act was introduced in 1919 but by this time, the priority focus on the war effort plus the increased cost of building (around £450 by 1920) had brought the schemes into decline.



For anyone wishing to take research on these 1880-1920 cottages further, it will be necessary to approach Cork City and County Archives and apply to be a reader as well as make an appointment see

https://corkarchives.ie/research_room_access/register_as_a_reader/

Cottageology has a summary of the documents available, which look fairly comprehensive for the North Cork area labourer's cottages.

The archivist has mentioned: "Note that the 14 local Poor Law Boards of Guardians (BG) in Cork would have had administrative responsibility for Cottages from about the 1880s to about 1899, followed by the 14 local Rural District Councils (RDC) from 1899 to 1925.

In 1925, the South/North/West Boards of Public Health took over the Cottages function, which continued until about the 1940s, when the County Council took direct control.

We have the minute books of the 14 BGs and RDCs and those of the 3 Boards of Public Health."

Appendix 2: The detail that oral history can add

This project failed to make as much use of local history and oral history resources as it could have done, partly because these resources vary so much by location and partly because of time limits which meant that doing the online activities and onsite visits took priority.

This appendix is intended to encourage current and future participants to engage with neighbours, local historians and family to use oral history to find out more – they won't be around for ever, so ask for their memories now!

This example relates to the south Cork location at Reagrove detailed in the visits chapter belonging to project administrator Imogen Bertin. "In 1990, the house had been empty for about fifteen years. It had no electricity or running water other than the stream. We were lucky to have great neighbours. In particular, a close neighbour Donie Murphy came down to the house, who had attended threshing suppers there as a boy, and he showed us the different rooms and outbuildings and what they were used for in the past (stable, byre, geese, pigs, calves). This was fascinating because it linked directly to the information in the 1901 census (stable, cow house, dairy, piggery, fowl house, and barn).

"Soon afterwards, thanks to connections through the local newsletter, we were able to contact relatives of the Drinan family that had previously lived in the house and still lived in the parish. They also kindly visited and told us more about the families, and gave copies of 1920s photographs which give some idea of the day to day life lived here.

"The earliest material the Drinan family have found that may relate is a lease from Francis Harrison, Ballindeenisk to Thomas Hodder and Maurice Drinan of Reagrove, along with John Drinan of Farrenbrien dated 23rd March 1753 for the "south part of Reagrove" "comprising one hundred and fifty acres", although at this time the Earl of Shannon was the ultimate landowner. This lease is for thirty-one years at a cost of £42, which means it complied with the rules at that time for leases to Catholics. There is no sign of any habitation worth noting at Reagrove on the 1811 Cork Grand Jury map.

"From the 1833 tithe applotment books, by eliminating landholding sizes and quality, and surnames attached to other holdings, while taking account of the tithe amounts, it can be speculated that in 1833, the lease was held by James Cullinane. This family name never reappears in the historic documentation for the parish, and there is a James Cullinane born 1808 recorded in the Cork prison records in 1838 for an "excise conviction" (register no. 339) though there may be no connection or it could reflect two different persons with the same name. This man died in 1878. Smuggling was a major commercial activity at this time and the Reagrove location would have provided several options to land goods close by.

"At some stage Walter Fitzsimons holds the townland lease. Fitzsimons gives his address as Reagrove when his daughter Dorothea marries Robert Lawton in 1834. In 1837, part of the townland described as "Bailebeg" or "Ballybeg", is advertised for a seven year lease, as a result of a debt owed by Henry Fitzsimons. The lease of the whole townland is advertised for sale in 1842. From a later bankruptcy sale notice, it appears the Fitzsimons may have bought the townland lease in 1827 from Achilles Daunt, a large landlord at the time in the Tracton area.

"In 1840, the surveyor of the first OS map writes in his Killowen notes that "Raygrove House with some isolated trees is near the N. boundary (of the townland), which is exactly the house location today.

"In 1847 at the time of Griffith's valuation survey, the house and land is leased by Samuel Hodder of Ringabella House (born 1820, died 1888) from John Gallwey, who held the neighbouring Killowen townland. Samuel is reported to be "farming about 160 acres himself and leasing a further 144 acres from someone else at Reagrove".

"There is no record for plot 16 at the time of the Griffiths survey, but the valuation cancellation records show that by 1855, it is rented by James Drinan from Samuel Hodder. In 1864, Thomas Drinan takes over the house. This fits with oral history that this house was originally a "hunting lodge" used by the Hodders, who lived at Ringabella House. Samuel Hodder's plot 16 is only valued for two "offices" in Griffiths in 1847, no house. See the visit report for Reagrove for how this may tie in to the buildings that remain.

"By 1857, the whole townland lease is for sale again, with the residue of "two unexpired terms of which there are several hundred years yet to run". The advert mentions "a good Cottage, excellent Out-Offices, and an enclosed garden, which at a trifling expense could be made a comfortable residence" and (when rent is paid), it amounts annually to £159 1s and 7 d. "The Poor Rate is low, being only 21/2d in the pound".

"It's not clear if this house is definitely the one getting this estate agent treatment. But the 1857 advert details may also fit with the house being recorded as having a thatch roof at the date of the 1911 census.

"Samuel Hodder's son William Morgan Hodder inherited Samuel's holding and sold part of his more easterly Ringabella landholding to other members of the Drinan family in 1893.

"A marriage settlement is drawn up on 26th February 1895 between Thomas Drinan and John Ahern. Thomas was born in Ringabella in 1832, and descended from a family of Catholic land agents that can be traced back to about 1770 in Cork. John Ahern was from nearby Ballingarry, and had spent some time away from Ireland in America before "marrying in" to the farm.

Their agreement states that John is to pay the sum of £80 to marry Thomas' daughter Mary Anne, and will be left the house so long as she can remain in the house, and receive support and "some form of money for clothes". This was usual practice at the time if a man was marrying into the farm of an only daughter, or where the inheritance had been settled. "Any sum less than £50 would be considered extremely low" (Jones WB, 1880 "The Life's work in Ireland of a landlord who tried to do his duty", quoted in *The Land and the People of Nineteenth-Century Cork*, James S Donnelly Jr 1975).



Mary Anne Drinan

"This picture is a copy of a family portrait of Mary. By 1901, the census tells us there were five members of the Ahern family and two Drinans living in the house, one of whom, the mother-in-law Mary Drinan, still speaks Irish. All the adults are literate. John Ahern takes over from Thomas Drinan as the person responsible for paying rates in 1902.

“By 1911, four more children have arrived and the house is sheltering 11 people. The picture below shows Nell, a sister of Mary Anne, with orphaned niece, Judy, and was taken in about 1928. Judy emigrated to England.



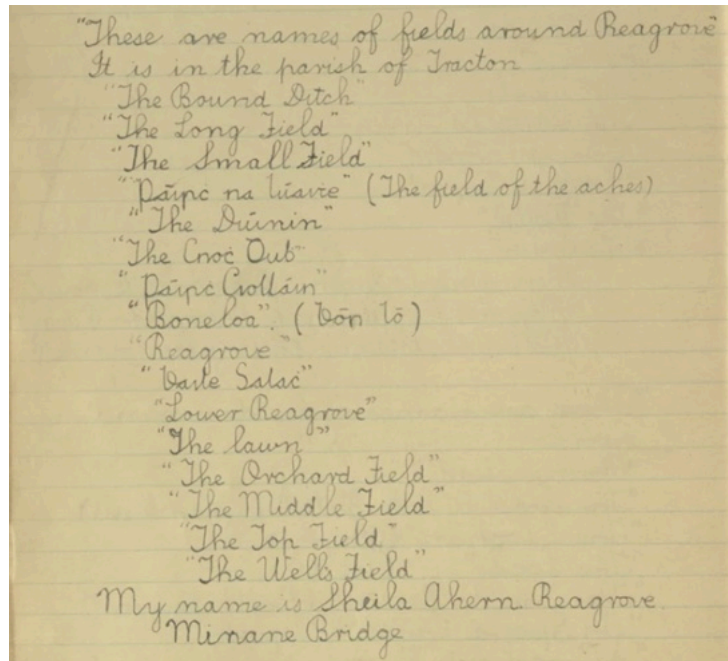
“In April 1924, William Hodder Morgan sold the Reagrove house and land to John Ahern through the land commission. The document shows that John deliberately crossed out the part of the form that stated “On His Majesty’s Service” before signing. As this photograph above was taken four years later, proudly displaying two storeys and a new slate roof, income from the farm must have improved from the depressions of the 1880s.

“After John’s death in 1931, Mary continued to pay £5 19 shillings and four pence to the Land Commission every six months until it was paid off. She died in May 1934 at the age of 66 (occupation “farmer”).



"The picture above is particularly interesting because it is clear the previous picture in the same set, of the back of the house, must have been taken by someone up the hayrick ladder. Nancy Sisk confirms the lady in the picture above is Mary Anne Drinan, her grandmother, and the subject of the marriage settlement.

"In 1937, Sheila Ahern, attending the local Rennies School, contributes placenames to the UCD Folklore Collection:



"I hope to put the actual locations back to some of these fields this winter with help from other neighbours, and that Sheila Ahern's name will pop up again when the 1926 census is released.



"I still have this horse's shoes. Unfortunately, his collar was too rotted to save, but I found that in an outhouse too. Another neighbour Miceál Buckley, identified these men as Jerry and Jackie Ahern, Mary's sons, accompanied by another neighbour, I think one of the Desmond family, collecting cobbles or seaweed at low tide on Long Rock.

"Our neighbours across the valley, the Lynch family at Fort Richard House, described the sad end of Jerry, the last member of the family who lived here, who preferred his own company.

They could see across the valley that the chickens had not been let out for a couple of days and came down to discover his messages not collected from the end of the lane where they were usually left. He had passed on alone in the house.

“They also told us a bayonet was found in the attic, as well as several out-of-date, uncashed cheques. At the time, Jackie was ill in hospital and when he got the news from the neighbours, hospital staff said he had been agitated since the time of the death, before he had heard the news, already convinced that something was awry with his brother.

“Although there are still Aherns quite close by, from the Ballingarry branch of the family, there are none in Tracton parish, and no Drinans either. Frank Thompson’s work on names reflected in Catholic Parish Registers from 1802 to 1880 is interesting, published in “Tracton, Where the Abbey Lies Low” (Cork, 2007). There were 477 Aherns baptised in the parish during this period (the third most common name in the parish), and 293 Drinans (the sixth most common). Thomson also comments: “The Drinans clearly functioned in the 17th and 18th centuries as Catholic land agents or middlemen to the Lords Shannon” who owned the townland of Reagrove.

“Emigration was already common from Tracton before the famine and Thompson traces a David Drinan and wife Catherine McCarthy with children in Tracton before 1822, but living in Boston by 1827. Ahern family members are also living in Boston by the 1820s. As with many other areas of Ireland, because passage money was required to emigrate, emigrants were frequently those who already had some money, and who then sent back more funds to assist their other family members, who were unable to marry without land and funds in Ireland. The majority of unmarried Boston immigrants were married within five years, and the Drinans went on to produce a number of celebrated descendants in America.

“Jackie was older than Jerry but died soon afterwards in 1975, and then the house went to John Duane from Kinsale in 1980, following on to the Tierney family in 1983, who had shortly before given land for the Kinsale Community School and received compensation to purchase land elsewhere. Mrs Tierney was from the neighbouring townland Killowen, and her brothers John and Michael Kiely were great neighbours, minding us during the first few years we were here, when they were still renting the land beside the house. When we were travelling to and fro getting it habitable before moving in, we would often find a cabbage or a few potatoes on the doorstep.

“I would like to thank Nancy Sisk and Maura Hennessy (of the Drinan family), for their help with this account. I deeply regret not taking up Phyllis Hodder’s kind offer to look at her archive of estate records in the 1990s, because other things always got in the way. A lesson learned the hard way about oral history!”

Appendix 3: Other differences within Cork County

The information in this Appendix is taken from Aalen, Whelan and Stout's comprehensive 2011 edition of the *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*. The graphics are reproduced here by kind permission of Cork University Press.

There are major differences in the geography and history of Cork county, particularly between the north and east area when contrasted against the south and west. This Appendix is in no way to be considered academic research, but a resource for considering how location and human settlement may have affected sites and construction of buildings within the county. It was collated by the project administrator in order to present the data in chronological order.

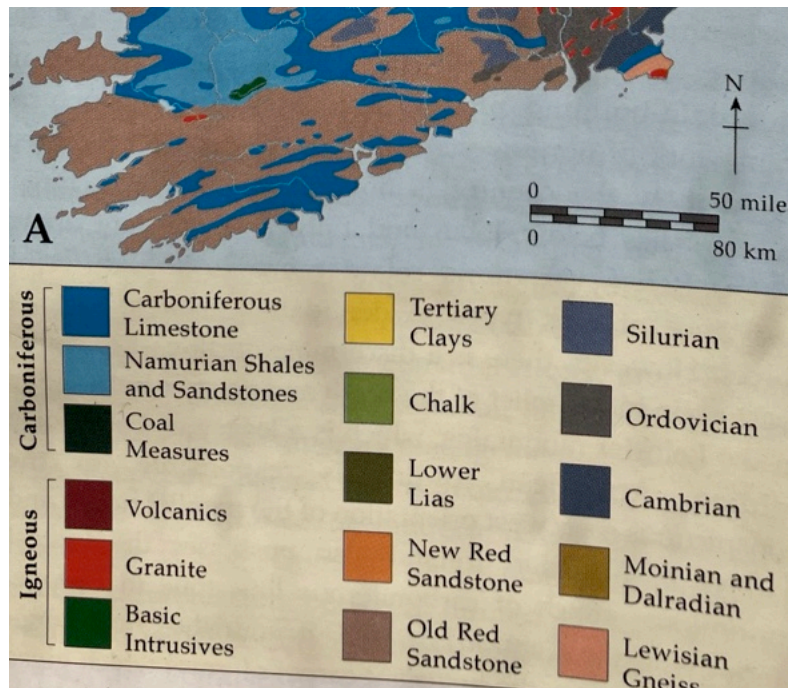
It is suggested that if this data is of interest for researching a specific location, it should be considered alongside a perusal of the *Archaeological Heritage of County Cork*, produced by the Heritage Unit of Cork County Council and available through the County Library.

About 20,000 years ago, part of the county was covered by glacial ice, whereas part was not:



Figure based on *The English Landscape* (Oxford, 1985) and Andersen and Borns, *The Ice Age* (Oslo, 1994)

There are also considerable geological differences in the bedrock (particularly in terms of whether limestone is available for building and agricultural use) around the country. These differences combine to make the different ways land can be used wider in north and east Cork compared to the terrain of the south west.



(Figure based on Geological Survey, Ordnance Survey and Atlas of Ireland)

One of the earliest indications of differences in human settlement in the county is the distribution of evidence of fulachta fiadh (cooking pits which typically date from 1900 to 1400 BC) shown below.

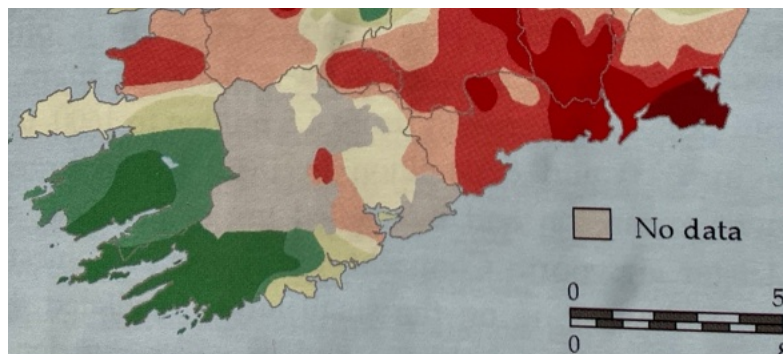


Ringforts and enclosures are widely distributed all over Cork county and usually date to the fifth to tenth centuries AD. There is some east-west disparity between enclosures and ringforts (more enclosures in the west).

Moving forward to recorded history, survey work in the 16th century of settlements by Robert Lythe (1569) has been used alongside poll tax returns to map the areas of Anglo-Norman colonisation after the 12th century which is focussed on the coastal areas and the eastern part of the country (shown below).



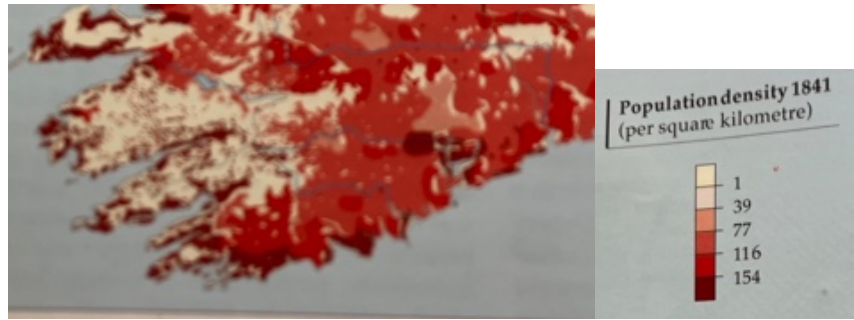
The figure above is constructed from an unpublished map by HJ. H. Andrews, based on a conflated version of Robert Lythe's map of Ireland 1569



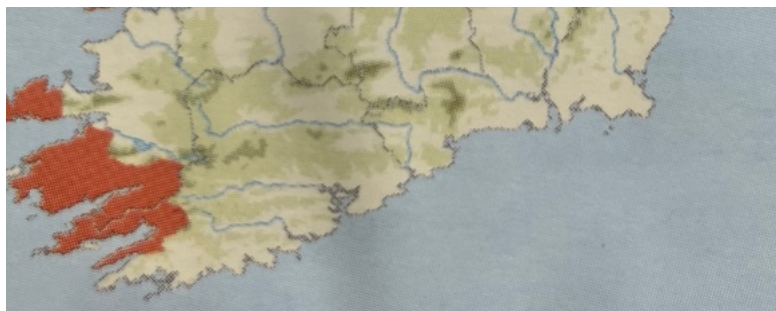
In this figure, red indicates a higher proportion of Old English surnames - after R Macalister, *Corpos inscriptionum insulum Celticarm*, (Dublin 1945-49), and the Record of Monuments and Places. Grey indicates no data available.



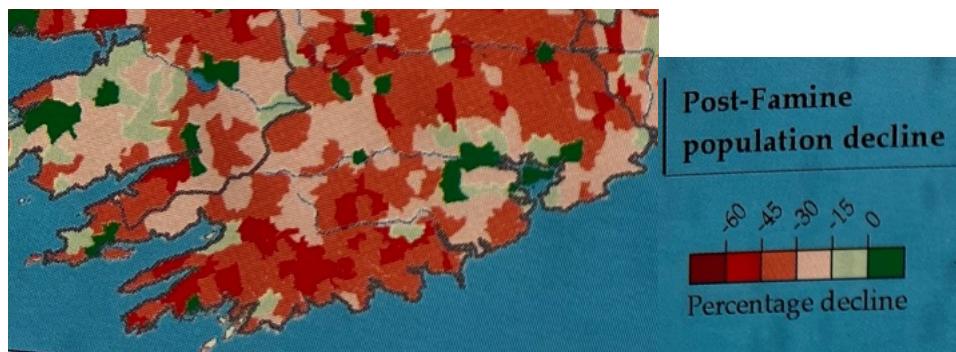
Distress was already divided across the county before the famine period, such as the food shortages caused by rain damage to the potato crop in 1822.



There was also a considerable difference in population density before the famine in 1841. The figure above is from data in TW Freeman, *Pre-famine Ireland*, Manchester 1957, showing the harbour area and the coastal south western districts to be far more heavily populated. The reasons for this are expounded in JS Donnelly's *The Land and the People of Nineteenth-Century Cork* (1975).

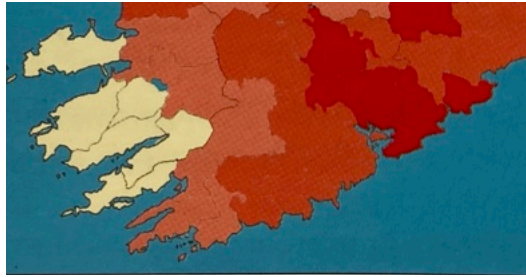


By 1847, the different stresses caused by the famine are clear. The figure above shows the areas with distressed Poor Law unions. The figure above is from T. Neely *This Great Calamity The Irish Famine*, Dublin 1994.



In 1851 this is reflected in the population decline data. The above figure is based on data from Maynooth's All Ireland Research Observatory at airo.ie

Also in 1851, a clear distinction between the north east of the county as a tillage area versus the south west as a cattle area is also apparent when figures for number of cattle and acreage of crops are analysed (figure below).

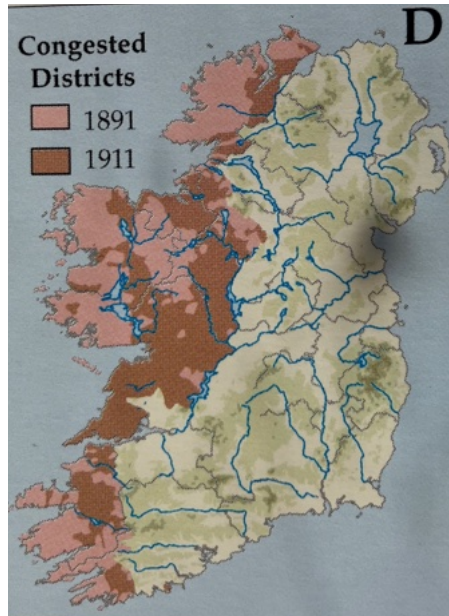


This figure is drawn from Ó Grada Economic History and looks at the ratio of cattle when compared to acreage under crops. Crops need lower rainfall and well-drained, lighter soils and this distinction is thought to have begun in the mediaeval period. The ability to grow crops favours larger farm holdings.



The figure above is taken from T Jones Hughes 'The Large Farm in nineteenth-century Ireland' in A. Gailey and D Ó Hógain (eds) *Gold under the furze*, Dublin, 1992. It shows locations of large farms valued at over £100 in 1850. Aalen, Whelan and Stout comment: "The strong-farm world of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland was drawn from the tillage, dairying and cattle fattening regions. Big farmers were preferred tenants, possessing the necessary capital and entrepreneurial drive to effect landscape improvements. They could construct two-storeyed, stone-walled houses; plant orchards and trees; lime and drain; rotate crops and reclaim land... The... crisp break in west Munster... also demarcates the hurling / football divide."

The congested district board locations show the same distribution continuing in the county.



By 1960, on average, the size of farm in Cork is still only around 40 acres, but disparate between the strong tillage and dairy farmers in the north and east versus the smaller farmers in the west.

Where buildings form part of a yard or other arrangement, the types found also vary between parts of Cork county. In our project's small sample, we saw buildings around three sides of a rectangular yard in south Cork, and in scattered informal arrangements in east Cork and west Cork. The figure below is drawn from Kevin Danaher's work 'Farmyard Forms and their distribution in Ireland in Ulster Folklife 1981.

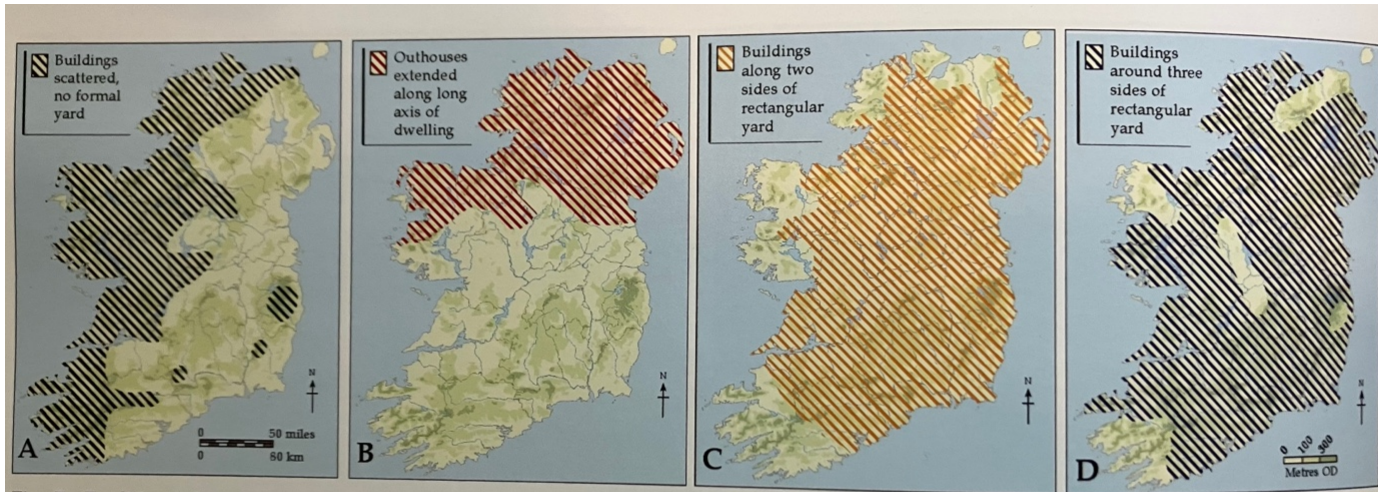


Fig. 7. Traditional farmyard types. These are typical of the west of Ireland.

Appendix 4: Why record your house?

Recording buildings is important for different reasons in different situations. The main purpose of this project is to engage **owners in the history, design and construction of the house** to encourage the inevitable extra effort involved in minding an old building.

- You as the owner may just be curious! Who built it? Who lived here?
- It might relate to planned alterations, restorations and planning permissions
- It might help you to make decisions about the conservation of the building
- It could help you be informed about the best way to repair the building
- Have you thought about how to improve its energy efficiency without destroying its character?

In Ireland, large and complex historic buildings can be placed on the Register of Protected Structures (RPS) and recorded on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) Building Survey. All sites on the NIAH Building Survey are recommended by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to the elected members of the relevant local authority for their consideration to be included on the RPS. The inclusion of structures on the RPS is a reserved function of the local authority's elected members, who can decide to exclude structures. So: being on the NIAH survey does not mean a house will be put on the Register. And recording your house for this project does not imply it is likely to be added to the survey or Register.

In fact, ordinary cottages and farmhouses are rarely included on the RPS unless they have special features like a thatched roof. Yet many are examples of "vernacular" buildings.

Cork County Council's guide to recording built heritage makes the point that built heritage also refers to modest buildings. "All buildings can tell us of changes in designs and fashions, and of economic, social and historical changes". You can download this guide (although it is a little out of date now) at:

[https://www.corkcoco.ie/sites/default/files/2022-](https://www.corkcoco.ie/sites/default/files/2022-10/guide_to_the_recording_of_built_heritage.pdf)

[10/guide_to_the_recording_of_built_heritage.pdf](https://www.corkcoco.ie/sites/default/files/2022-10/guide_to_the_recording_of_built_heritage.pdf) and this guide stresses considering:

- Form – shape and size
- Fabric – what's it made of?
- Function – what's it for? House? Stable?
- Date – anything available about when was it built? Any major changes over the years?
- Context – other buildings nearby? Landscape features?

Sorting out that jargon: what is “vernacular”?

What does “vernacular” mean, in relation to farmhouses and cottages? In simple terms, vernacular means built of local materials by local people in a local style. The more buildings that are recorded the more the contrast between these different styles around the country is shown.

	<i>Vernacular Architecture</i>	<i>Formal Architecture</i>
<i>Builder</i>	From immediate locality Name rarely known	Usually from some distance away Name often known
<i>Owner</i>	Farmer, labourer, fisherman Often the builder	Includes powerful, professional Rarely the builder
<i>Scale</i>	Relatively small buildings	Often much larger buildings
<i>Costs</i>	Relatively low	Usually considerably higher
<i>Design</i>	Drawn from tradition Simple shapes, roofs, etc. Thick walls Little ornamentation	Designed professionally Often complex shapes, roofs, etc. Usually much thinner walls Often ornamented, e.g. with carved bargeboards to gables
<i>Inspiration</i>	Tradition Strong regional character	Mainly influenced by architectural styles Designs can usually be found anywhere
<i>Climate</i>	Very carefully considered	Much less considered
<i>Layout</i>	One of two traditional plans No formal hall One room (pile) deep Kitchen is hub of house Small number of rooms	Can be of greatly differing type Usually a formal hall Frequently two rooms (piles) deep Kitchen is an ancillary room More rooms and more variety
<i>Materials</i>	From immediate locality Include mud, straw, wattle Rarely include fired brick, cement, metals Often unsawn roof timbers Rarely industrially-produced Majority originally thatched	Often transported some distance Rarely use these materials Frequently include brick and latterly cement and metals Usually sawn or at least squared Often industrially-produced Thatched used rarely, as ornament
<i>Survival</i>	Heavily rural	Greater proportion is urban
<i>Dating</i>	Rarely datable No longer built, since c. 1900	Usually a precise date known Continues to be built today
<i>Protection</i>	Few protected by law	Proportionately more protected

The rest of the presentation this graphic came from, by Dr Barry O'Reilly, who has written the government strategy for vernacular houses, and spends a lot of his time visiting and recording them is available at <https://cottageology.com/knowledge-base/understanding-and-minding-small-old-irish-homes/>..


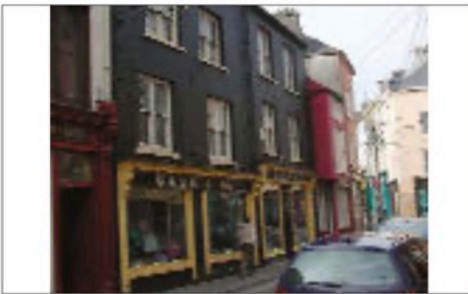
Barry says: "Defining vernacular building can be tricky. They are NOT designed away from the locality by a professional. If it came from a drawing board, it's not vernacular. For example, the Swiss Cottage in Cahir is "formal" not vernacular. But what about corrugated iron? First produced in the Black County of England, it became widespread as a construction material for roofing in the 1860s. Is it now "vernacular" to Ireland by adoption?"

- Do you think your house is vernacular? (It doesn't have to be!)
- Is there anything characteristically "Cork" about your house?
- Are you interested in adding to the information about Cork's built heritage?
- Is your house part of a group of buildings?

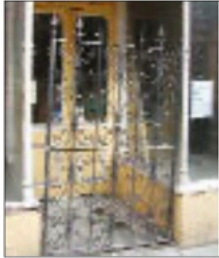
Occasionally, recording a building needs to be done in a complex fashion. The recent government scheme to provide free conservation advice for people taking on vacant traditional farmhouses in need of restoration required a 25-page record of the building. For official "registered protected structures", the handbook describing the recording choices is over 70 pages long.

We're not asking you to do an 70-page report!

Just think through the motivation for involvement in the project, to end up with a record that is going to help the specific situation. Historic England has structured their recording into four levels to fit with different needs. Level 1 is just a photographic record with brief notes, similar to Cork County Council's 2010 sample record sheet, which in turn is based on a "Core Data Sheet" approved by the ministers of the Council of Europe in 1995, and this is probably "more than enough" for most people.

Name of Recording Group		Cork Historical Society	
Name of Survey Area		Clonakilty Town Centre	
Date of Recording		12-12-2005	
Address of Building			
Name/No.		Cash & Co	
Street		Rossa Street	
Town		Clonakilty	
Townland		Clonakilty	
Building Information	Number on Map	22	Number of Photographs
	4		
Building Type			
House and Shop			
Insert Representative Photo Here			
			
Building Description (optional)		Historical Information (optional)	
<p><i>Terraced two-bay three-storey house with shop to ground floor. Pitched slate roof having rendered chimneys and dormer windows. Rendered walls, paired timber sliding sash windows and replacement PVC windows to upper floors. Full-width timber shop front comprising fixed window flanked by pilasters with entablature, consoles and lettering above. Wrought-iron gate to entrance, leading to recessed pair of timber glazed doors.</i></p>		<p><i>The carved timber shop front is an interesting addition to the streetscape. Original shop fronts are increasingly threatened by historical pastiche replacement. The porcelain lettering is particularly unusual. This building also retains paired timber sliding sash windows, which are notable features.</i></p>	
Insert site/context photo here			
			

Insert detail photo here (eg. window, door, etc)



Detail of: Entrance Gate

Additional Photos	Are there additional photos for this building ?	Yes
	How many additional photos are there ?	2
	Are the additional photos attached to this form ?	Yes

Insert detail photo here (eg. window, door, etc)




Photo info (eg rear outbuilding etc): Porcelain Lettering

Insert detail photo here (eg. window, door, etc)

Photo info (eg rear outbuilding etc):

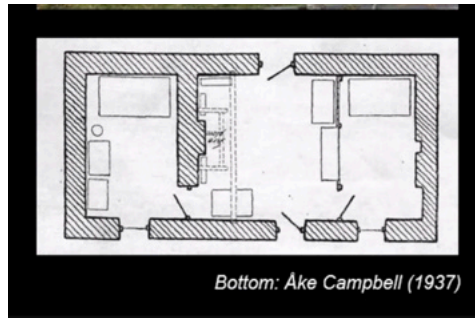
In contrast, a “level 4” recording in the Historic England scheme of things would be a full historical and architectural analysis with photos, drawings, location maps and plans, and a detailed description as explained here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/understanding-historic-buildings/hea099-understanding-historic-buildings/>

Historic England asks you to think about these reasons in its publication:

- Inform management and use of the building
- Promote understanding and appreciation of historic buildings
- Inform a scheme for conservation, repair or alteration of the building
- Inform the planning/conservation process
- Make a record of a structure which is likely to be lost or damaged
- Assess the significance of a grouping of buildings
- Record a surviving sample to inform research in future

You don't have to tick all these! The objective is to figure out which elements are important to you and your family. Do you have any other reasons of your own, such as family history? Perhaps you just enjoy detective work?

Ake Campbell was a Swedish ethnologist who carried out a survey of Irish rural housing and wrote in 1935: “the Irish peasant house never stands out in bold relief against its background but melts into it even as a tree or a rock. Built of stone, clay, sods, grass and straw brought from the vicinity, the house harmonises with the landscape to which it belongs.”



This work was later built on by Caoimhin Ó Danachair, a folklorist and ethnologist, as well as an instructor for the Artillery Corps in WWII, to provide one of the main sources of written records relating to vernacular buildings. He distinguished the two common cottage designs – lobby entry and direct entry. One of the many useful things a plan can do is help to connect a house’s design with its history and use.

Mary Sleeman, one of our project archaeological advisers, reviewed Cork’s surviving thatched buildings back in 2001, describing their sad decline at https://www.corkcoco.ie/sites/default/files/2022-10/thatched_houses_of_cork.pdf

If Mary had not carried out her survey before the loss of so many of these buildings, we would not be able to see the way in which the distribution and decline of thatch was in part geographical, partly related to availability of different materials, and certainly related to the type of plan and structure of the houses. Historians might add, the survival of thatch is also related to the structure of landholdings in the past, as well as the methods of eviction and landholding consolidation during the famine era, which differed in parts of Cork.



In October 2024, An Bord Pleanála agreed a Wexford thatched building can have its roof replaced with slate because insurance cannot be found – a modern threat to this type of cottage – along with the cost of thatch renewal and the difficulty of finding thatchers:

<https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/woman-living-in-fear-over-lack-of-insurance-for-thatched-home-granted-permission-to-replace-roof/>

So plans can be really important. But they take time, and measuring tapes, and often more than one person to make and it may be that some people's interest does not lie in drawing them up

The record is likely to include documentary history, and you've started looking at this through researching maps of your locality. In later activities, other sources are covered, such as the censuses, local trade directories, maps, newspaper archives, Griffiths and Downs Surveys, the tithe applotments and the like. Sadly, there are no 1665 hearth money roll records for Cork County – another Four Courts tragic loss, from the 1922 burning of the national archives.

It's also important to start collecting oral history from neighbours or family or local history societies too. Start collecting it now – those people won't always be around or willing to help!

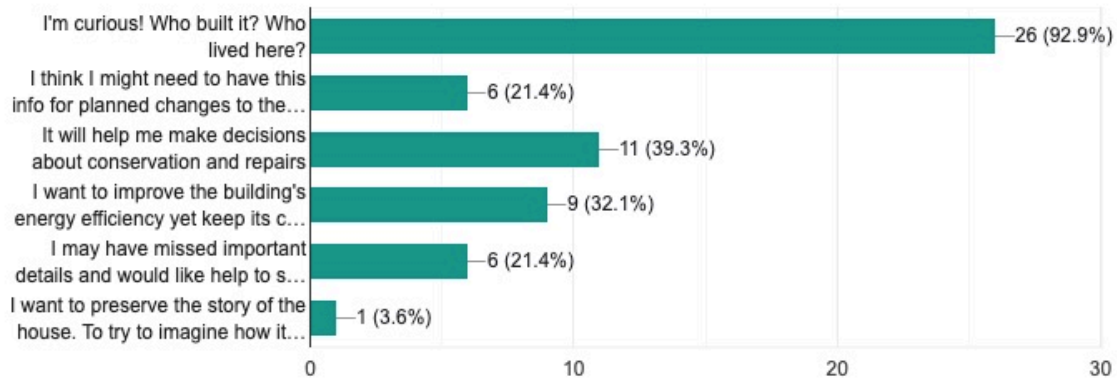
What about involving the next generation? Maybe they would like to record barn finds, or items found while working on making the house liveable? Recording wildlife and plant-life is another option.

Learnings from the CorkCott participants

We asked: what's your plan of action now, after thinking about "why record"?

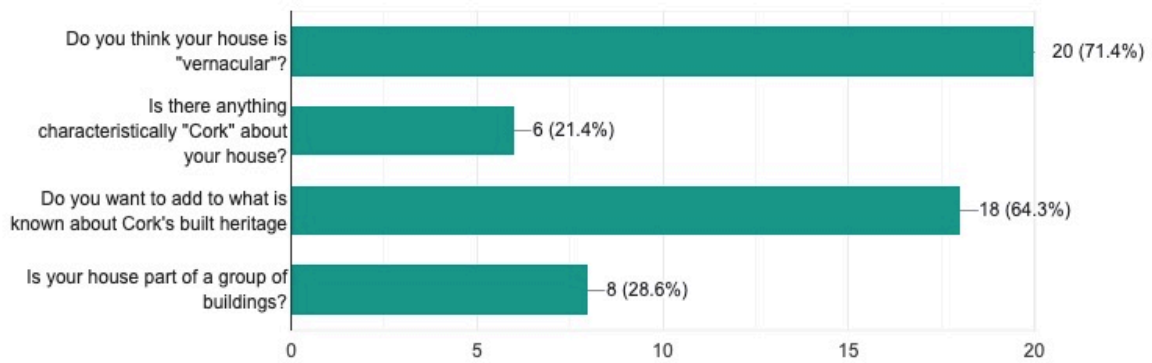
The project participants gave their reasons for recording:

28 responses



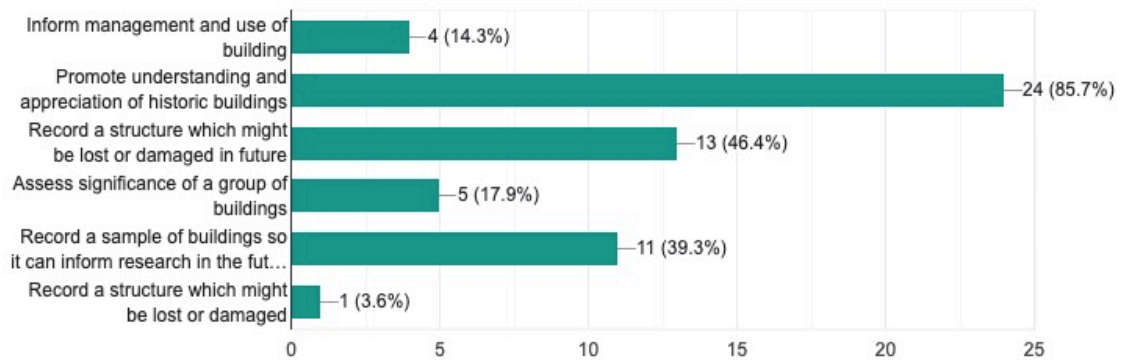
Plus their view of their house currently:

28 responses



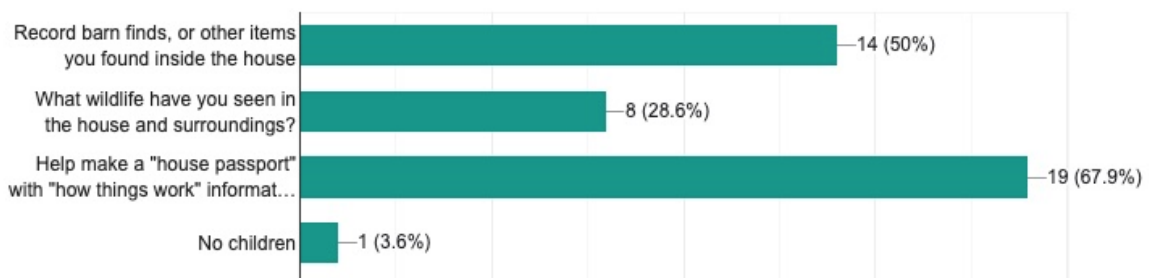
And how their motivations coincided with the official Historic England reasons – mainly to encourage appreciation of historic buildings:

28 responses



Keeping the next generation involved and recording wildlife wasn't a big motivation, but having a "how things work" record was:

28 responses



Appendix 5: Tips for organising something similar elsewhere

First, find your participants. Cottageology is happy to help in advertising any future projects in other counties. Local facebook noticeboards, local history societies, libraries and parish newsletters are other suggestions.

Next, you need an experienced archaeologist. Contact your council conservation officers for suggestions. (Conservation officer listing available at <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2024/05/Architectural-Conservation-Officers-03.05.2024.pdf>)

Insurance is vital as always and can be expensive. We used Cottageology's insurance policy and put together a draft risk assessment for the visits which can be supplied. We had sign-up sheets for each visit, and checked after the events that no-one had experienced any incidents.

All participants need to provide:

- A face-on picture of the front of their building
- Name
- Email
- Mobile number
- Eircode (check this is for the right building – they may live elsewhere?)

Request permission to add everyone to a WhatsApp group or similar, and their permission to send emails (required under GDPR regulations). Make everyone aware that in order to collaborate, they will have to provide some information about their situation, but that details like eircodes will only be made public with their permission.

Contact your county library's local studies unit to get help with useful local history publications and groups. Involvement of local historians, and local history societies, may be easy or difficult at your location but it's important to try.

When arranging visits, take advantage of weekends and long summer evenings to provide options for different life commitments. If possible, the organiser should bring along useful books that people attending the visit can peruse. Provide Google maps screenshots and estimates of the time between locations if a visit involves more than one location.

Not everyone will be able to join in face to face, which is why the online activities work well. The cost of getting Griffiths valuation cancellation information through genealogists is about €60. We use Timeline Genealogy: <https://timeline.ie/tracing-irish-ancestors-online/irish-land-records/>

Be sure to use Google forms and other methods to gauge feedback from your group – what's popular and what worked? Here are the key responses from our group.

What I liked

- Seeing what resources that are already available to find out more about the history of our cottage and locality.
- Community / supportive community.
- I loved what I've learned about the dating of our cottage and the history that goes with it.

- Learning more about the history of the ownership of the house / area
- Finding out about history of buildings
- Meeting like minded people who are working on/ living in old houses and getting help finding info on our properties. Hearing from archaeologist and heritage engineers on what to look out for.
- I really liked feeling part of a community that is genuinely interested in keeping the heritage of old houses alive. I loved being given the tools to dig deep into the past of our home.
- Hearing everyone else's stories and their journeys through the project.
- Learning how to look up old maps and finding history from census ect
- Seeing houses at different stages of renovation, learning the various research techniques
- Sharing the love of cottages with like minded people
- I loved the energy behind this project and the diverse scope it took in, delving into the history of an old building from so many angles was fascinating.

Difficult or frustrating things

- Living in a town it was more difficult to identify my house in the valuations.
- I was unable to attend any of the visits so didn't get to engage in those or meet anyone from the project in person
- Being summer time, my time is more distracted by children
- Wrong timing for me... would have loved to participate more but a new baby in the house took priority.
- Still struggling to find out when my cottage was built-the valuation cancellations info has confused me as the land on which it seems to indicate the cottage is, is different to the modern map location of the cottage
- Personally, I didn't feel I could commit enough time and energy as I'd like. Completely my fault. Not retired enough to get really stuck in.
- Finding the time in my own life to fully complete the project as I wanted to.
- Trying to make it to see others cottages, work always got in the way
- I like knowing what the end goal is. The activities felt quite 'episodic' and I wasn't sure how it all tied together
- Difficult as internet speed needed for maps and trying to understand what I needed to do to make my computer system compatible
- My own time. Difficult to juggle with commitments
- I missed the introduction and underestimated the size of the project. I'm not great at keeping track of WhatsApp, especially when threads are very long so I gave up following it quite soon.
- Life got in the way for me but Imogen made every effort to keep me up to speed.

Suggestions for doing it better

- It might be nice to start with a presentation or sharing of a completed house record to show what's possible

- For me, a live zoom session on 'how to' access maps. Also, I didn't take on board the amount of 'work' that would be needed as part of the project. Maybe for next time an outline of timeframes and work that would need to be completed.

The estimated time burden is hard to be definitive about, because it depends to what level any participant wants to involve themselves, but can be estimated at seventeen hours – similar to most adult evening classes:

- Two hours for each activity
- Three hours plus travel time to attend a visit covering two houses
- Two hours to take suitable own-house photographs, answer the questionnaire and upload the house record online – a little more if sketch plans need to be drawn.

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