

## Introduction

The writing of a history of a townland involves several steps. The first is to obtain maps of the townland and surrounding areas. A map of the county should be obtained to show the location in relation to the larger towns in the county. The next map that should be obtained is the townland map of the parish. This shows the location of the townland in relation to the other townlands in the parish. Once the maps are obtained a visit to the Valuation Office will allow holdings to be identified on the townland from 1857 until 1965. Sources to be used will include:

1. O'Donovan's Ordnance Survey letters.
2. Tithes Applotment (1835).
3. Griffith's Valuation (1857).
4. Summary Censuses of 1841 - 1891
5. 1901 Census.
6. 1911 Census.
7. Leases and Rent Rolls.
8. Gravestone Inscriptions.
9. Baptism registers for Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland .
10. Birth registrations.
11. Marriage registers for Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland .
12. Valuation Office Entries.
13. Photographs of houses (occupied and unoccupied in the townland).
14. Old photographs of previous occupants.
15. Interviews with present occupants.

As we accumulate data for the townland we are working on, we can follow the progress as the [history of the townland of Kiltarnet](#) in the parish of Burrishoole, Co. Mayo is put together.

A manual in Adobe Acrobat containing all the information to be covered is available. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer please click the image to download a free copy. <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html><http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>  
Links to external web sites will open in a new browser window. There will be a navigation bar to the left of each page on the website

A series of twelve lectures will be given and there will be a web page for each lecture.

1. An introduction to townland history and sources
2. The history of Kiltarnet
3. Sources in the county library
4. Sources in Dublin (optional field trip)
5. Sources on the Internet
6. Maps and mapping
7. Photography
8. Scanning images and image manipulation
9. Obtaining the oral history
10. Making the family tree
11. Archeological findings in the townland
12. Presentation of the finished project

[Click](#) if you want details of the next course in Newport

## Sources in the County Library.

1. Six inch Ordnance survey map.
2. Archeological survey map.
3. O'Donovan's Ordnance Survey letters.
4. Tithes Applotment (1835).
5. Griffith's Valuation (1857).
6. Summary Censuses of 1841 - 1891
7. 1901 Census.
8. 1911 Census.
9. From O'Donovan's Ordnance Survey letters of 1838, the landlord of the townland can be identified. A search in R.J. Hayes (ed.) Manuscripts sources for the history of Irish civilization (12 vols. Boston , 1964) and Manuscript sources for the history of Irish civilization. First supplement , 1965 - 1975 (3 vols, Boston, 1979) will give references to documents in the National Archives and National Library, Manuscripts Reading Room that could involve rent rolls and leases giving earlier details of the occupants of the townland.

## Townland Sources in Dublin.

Sources to be used will include:

1. Leases and Rent Rolls. ([National Library of Ireland](#)) ([Registry of Deeds](#))
2. Baptism registers for Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland .  
([National Library of Ireland](#))

([The Representative Church Body Library](#))

([National Archives](#))

3. Birth registrations. ([General Register Office](#))
4. Marriage registers for Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland .([National Library of Ireland](#))  
([The Representative Church Body Library](#))
5. Valuation Office Entries. ([Valuation Office](#))

For the parish of Burrishoole several of these records have been transcribed by William G. Masterson .

The publications are :

County Mayo, Ireland , Newport Area Families 1864 - 1880 by William G. Masterson , revised July 2000 , 163 pages indexed , no permission required by General Register Office . price \$21 .

Newport Chapel, Co. Mayo , Ireland , Baptisms 1872-1891 by William G. Masterson revised January 2000 , 110 pages , indexed , permission granted by the parish priest . Price \$18 .

Newport Chapel, Co. Mayo , Ireland , Baptisms 1892-1911 by William G. Masterson September 2001 , 69 pages , indexed , permission granted by the parish priest . Price \$15 .

A Collection of Newport/Westport Co Mayo Marriages 1821-1911 ,by William G. Masterson, March 1999 , 206 pages , indexed , permission to publish from Archbishop of Tuam . Price \$25 .

Burrishoole Parish , Co Mayo , Ireland , Tithes applotment Book Transcription (1832) by William G. Masterson revised January 2000 , 60 pages , self indexed , with permission to publish from the National Archives , Dublin . Price \$15 .

1901 Census , Burrishoole Parish , Co Mayo , Ireland , by William G. Masterson revised July 1999, 171 pages , transcription and index , with permission to publish from the National Archives , Dublin . Price \$23 .

1911 Census , Burrishoole Parish , Co Mayo , Ireland , by William G. Masterson may 2002, 158 pages , transcription and index , with permission to publish from the National Archives , Dublin . Price \$21 .

Spiral bound xeroxed copies are available as a service at cost from William G. Masterson , 829 Fernwood Court , Indianapolis , IN 46234-2102 . Tel (317)-271-5736 .  
These publications are available in the Local History Section in Castlebar Library and in the National Library, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

### Mapping the history of a townland:

Maps to be obtained:

1. Map of County
2. Map of Parish
3. 6 inch Ordnance Survey Map of townland
4. Valuation Office Maps of townland
5. Archeological Survey Map of townland

### Photography of your townland.

Photographs should be taken of :

- All houses presently occupied and ruins of houses not occupied.
- Photographs of gravestones of previous occupants.
- Present occupants that give interviews.

Old photographs of previous inhabitants of the townland should be obtained and [scanned](#) and returned to their owners.

When the family trees have been established contact may be made with descendants of previous inhabitants in foreign countries. These people may be able to provide photos as email attachments

Photographs should be downloaded from the digital camera and edited in a program such as Paint Shop Pro.

The image may be cropped if there is too much background. When the image is being saved reduce the size of the image so it is no bigger than its final size on the web page.

Make sure the web toolbar is visible. Press button. On the quality tab, set the compression ratio for the image. The higher the compression ratio, the faster the image loads but also the quality is decreased. The image should be saved as a JPEG. Images should not be any bigger than 30Kb.

Photographs will be included in the pages on each townland will include:

- gravestone inscriptions.
- photographs of houses (occupied and unoccupied in the townland)
- old photographs of previous occupants.

On each page of photographs a thumbnail version should be displayed with a hyperlink to a larger photograph.

## Scanning images.

The flatbed scanner should be used to obtain digital images of :

- Any old photographs that can be obtained of previous occupants of the townland.
- A copy of the six inch ordnance survey map of the townland.
- A copy of the archeological survey map of the townland.
- A copy of the Valuation Office map of the townland.
- Any old letters written by former inhabitants of the townland.

Photographs should be scanned and edited in a program such as Paint Shop Pro.

The image may be cropped if there is too much background. When the image is being saved reduce

the size of the image so it is no bigger than its final size on the web page.

Make sure the web toolbar is visible. Press button. On the quality tab, set the compression ratio for the image. The higher the compression ratio, the faster the image loads but also the quality is decreased. The image should be saved as a JPEG. Images should not be any bigger than 30Kb.

## Oral history of the townland.

Interviews should be carried out with as many as possible of the older inhabitants of the townland.

Once the interviews have taken place they should be transcribed and interviewees asked if they agree with the content. The original recording should be retained.

Do a [quiz](#) on meaning of old proverbs.

The following was obtained from <http://www.oralhistory.org.uk>

- Oral history is the recording of people's memories. It is the living history of everyone's unique life experiences.
- Oral history records people's experiences on sound and video tape. It is a vital tool for our understanding of the recent past. No longer are we dependent only on the written word.
- Oral history enables people who have been hidden from history to be heard, and for those interested in their past to record personal experiences and those of their families and communities.
- Oral history is new and exciting because it is interactive: it is shared history and a rare chance to actually talk to history face to face.
- Oral history preserves everyone's past for the future.

## **How Can Oral History Be Used?**

- Oral history brings a new dimension to local and family history.
- Oral history is used in schools by young people to explore their own community: talking about the past brings young and old together.
- Oral history is used in community and residential work with older people to encourage a sense of worth and continued contribution to society.
- Oral history in museums, galleries and heritage displays is used to inform and brings displays to life.
- Oral history collections at local archives and libraries have emerged as important new sources for all those interested in history.
- Oral history is an important source for many radio and television programmes.

## What is Oral History?

When many people think about history, they think about dusty books and documents, archives and libraries, or remote castles and stately homes. In fact history is all around us, in our own families and communities, in the living memories and the experiences of older people. We have only to ask them and they can tell us enough stories to fill a library of books. This kind of history - that we all gather as we go through life - is called ORAL HISTORY.

Everyone has a story to tell about their life which is unique to them. Some people have been involved in momentous historical events like the Second World War, but many others haven't. Regardless of age or importance we all have interesting experiences to share.

Most importantly, historical documents and books can't tell us everything about our past. Often they concentrate on famous people and big events, and tend to miss out ordinary people talking about everyday events. They also neglect people on the margins of society - ethnic communities, disabled and unemployed people for example - whose voices have been hidden from history. Oral history fills in the gaps and gives us history which includes everyone.

Unfortunately, because memories die when people do, if we don't record what people tell us it is history that is lost for ever.

## What Can People Remember?

Everyone forgets things as time goes by and we all remember things in different ways. Some people's memories are better than others and for reasons we don't really understand, many people actually remember their early years more as they get older. This is helpful when we want to tape-record people's memories. All memories are a mixture of facts and opinions, and both are important. The way in which people make sense of their lives is valuable historical evidence in itself. Few of us are good at remembering dates, and we tend to telescope two similar events into a single memory. So when we interview people it is important to get them to tell us about direct personal experiences - eye-witness testimony - rather than things that might have been heard second hand.

## Where you Start

If you haven't done any oral history interviewing before, think first about a focus or theme for your project. This could be your own family or street or block of flats, or it could be where you work, or your school. You might want to pick a topic to ask people about, for example memories of childhood, leisure, politics, religion or women's experience in wartime or memories of coming to Britain as a migrant. Whether you decide to work alone or as part of a group, having a theme will help you to decide who to interview.

## Finding someone to interview

- Ask friends, relatives, neighbours, work colleagues
- Contact local history groups, Women's Institutes, Rotary Clubs, trade unions, schools, professional or voluntary organisations
- Visit older people's centres and clubs
- Ask your local newspaper or radio station to run an appeal
- Put a notice up in your local library or museum

## Planning

Before interviewing someone it's useful to have done some background research. Have a look at any books, maps or old newspapers that might be relevant in your local library or record office. Prepare a list of questions but be careful that this does not make you too rigid in your questioning approach. Use it as a memory jogger.

Some of the best things you find out will be unexpected, and once you get started you are likely to be told some things you had not previously thought about. So it is essential to give the person you are recording plenty of space to tell you what they think matters. But you should not let the interview drift: it is your job to guide it. For this you need an overall plan. Group the topics you want to cover in a logical way. Often a chronological structure is best.

## Preparing questions

Work out how to ask the essential questions.

Use plain words and avoid suggesting the answers. Rather than,

**"I suppose you must have had a poor and unhappy childhood?"**, ask

**"Can you describe your childhood?"**

You will need some questions that encourage precise answers:

**"Where did you move to next?"**

But you also need others which are open, inviting descriptions, comments, opinions:

**"How did you feel about that?"**

**"What sort of person was she?"**

**"Can you describe the house you lived in?"**

**"Why did you decide to change jobs?"**

There are some points to cover in every interview: date and place of birth, what their parents' and their own main jobs were. And whatever the topic, it usually helps to get the interviewee talking if you begin with their earlier life: family background, grandparents, parents and brothers and sisters (including topics such as discipline), then onto childhood home (housework, chores, mealtimes), leisure (street games, gangs, sport, clubs, books, weekends, holidays, festivals), politics and religion, schooling (key teachers, friends, favorite subjects), early relationships, working life (first job, a typical working day, promotion, pranks and initiation, trade unions and professional organisations), and finally later family life (marriage, divorce, children, homes, money, neighbours, social life, hopes) Most people find it easier to remember their life in chronological order, and it can sometimes take you two or three sessions to record a full life story.

The best interviews flow naturally and are not rehearsed. Don't over-prepare. don't use a script. Tape recorded life stories should be lively, spontaneous and vivid. Allow people to be themselves.

## Recording Equipment

Because you can't write down everything that someone tells you it is a good idea to use a tape-recorder. Your recordings will be unique historical "documents" which other people need to be able to hear and understand easily, so it's worth getting a good quality recording. If you can't afford to buy any equipment you might be able to borrow some from a local oral history, group, library, museum or talking newspaper.

### Audio recorders

There are many different makes of portable audio recorders: some, like audio cassette recorders, are analogue; some, like minidisc recorders, are digital. Choosing the right recorder depends very much on your budget and what you plan to do with the recordings subsequently, bearing in mind that audio formats and professional advice are in constant flux, so it is vital to seek up-to-the-minute advice. Amongst analogue cassette recorders the Marantz CP430 and the Sony Professional Walkman are the best available, but there are lots of cheaper Walkman-style cassette recorders around. Many of this second type will have built-in microphones which can give poor results, so if possible find one with a socket which takes an external microphone. It's also worth looking out for one with a "noise reduction" (NR) system, like Dolby. Always use new, unused tape: C60 length ordinary ferric (FE) cassettes are best. Remember to set the controls on your recorder to match the type of tape you are using. For digital recording DAT (Digital Audio Tape) is now regarded as an obsolete format and is not to be advised. Many oral historians are now using minidisc recorders (MD) with great success. MD has the benefits of portability, hiss-free recording quality, index trackmarks, and the recorders can be relatively low cost. Their main disadvantage is that MD is a format that is unlikely to last more than 5-10 years so if the recordings are to be archived it is recommended that they are copied (cloned) onto CDR (preferably gold rather than silver CDR) which is regarded as a more viable long-term archival medium.

### Microphones

For one-to-one interviews indoors, the best microphone is a small tie clip or lapel microphone. If your recorder is stereo and has two microphone sockets you can get two microphones - one of your interviewee and one for yourself. They can be attached discreetly to your clothing and give excellent results. For interviews outdoors a uni-directional (or cardioid) hand-held microphone is best as it will pick up less unwanted noise.

The best way to approach someone you want to interview is by personal contact, rather than by letter, and often the initial contact will be by telephone. This gives you an opportunity to introduce yourself, explain your project and outline the sort of topics you might cover in your conversation. The person you have approached may be uncertain: they might say they have nothing interesting to say. So you sometimes have to do a bit of persuading. The key is to talk in terms of "a chat about the past" or a "story of your life" rather than an "interview" which can sound forbidding!

When you speak to them get some background information and decide where the interview should take the place. The person's own home is by far the best as they will be much more relaxed. A one-to-one interview is best. Privacy encourages an atmosphere of trust and honesty. A third person present, even a close partner, can inhibit and influence free discussion.

## Doing the interview

### Be reassuring:

Remember that you are their guest, and if they are elderly, that you may be the first person they have spoken to for several days. They will be as nervous and apprehensive as you are, so it is essential to be cordial and patient.

### Choose a quiet place:

Try to pick a room which is not on a busy road. If you can, switch off radios and televisions, which can sometimes make it difficult to hear what someone is saying.

### Get close:

Sit side-by-side and if you are using a clip-on microphone, put it about nine inches from the person's mouth. With a hand-held microphone place it as near as possible but not on the same surface as the recorder, nor on a hard surface which gives poor sound quality. Generally, the closer the microphone the better the results.

### Keep your questions short and clear:

- Don't interrupt: Don't ask too many questions. Your aim is to get them to talk, not to talk to yourself. Always wait for a pause before you ask the next question. Listen carefully and maintain good eye contact.
- Respond positively: body language like nodding and smiling is much better than "ers" and "ums" and "reallys".
- Be relaxed, unhurried and sympathetic.
- Don't contradict and don't get into heated debate.
- Don't be afraid to ask more questions, but don't jump from one subject to another too abruptly. As well as a mere descriptive retelling of events, try to explore motives and feelings with questions like "Why?" and "How did you feel?".

Getting behind stereotype and generalisation is one of the most challenging aspects of interviewing people. But remember to be sensitive and always respect confidences.

## After the interview

After the interview is finished don't rush away. Take time to thank them and talk about yourself. You will often be shown some interesting old photographs or documents. Before you leave provide an address or phone number where you can be contacted and make clear whether you will be returning for a follow up interview or not. This can avert any unnecessary worry. Remember that your visit will often have a major impact on someone who has perhaps never told anyone their memories before.

Back at base it is useful to make a safety copy of each tape. Write as much information as you can on the tape box, in particular the interviewee's name and date of birth, the place and date of the interview, your own name and the number of tapes you used. Think about giving a copy to your local library or archive. Write a synopsis of the interview which briefly lists in order all the main themes, topics and stories discussed. This will come in useful if you want to use the interview in an exhibition, or book, or radio programme.

## Making family trees for the townland.

A list of people in Griffith's valuation should be made. Any families that appear in the townland should be added to this list. Family trees of the descendants should be made from as many of these inhabitants as possible. Another possibility is constructing family trees of the current occupants of

the townland and working backwards.

Software for constructing family trees can be obtained from [www.bkwin.org](http://www.bkwin.org)

Once the family trees have been constructed further software is needed to convert these in to a series of web pages.

Software that can be used for this include:

[www.gedhtree.org](http://www.gedhtree.org) [www.gedhtree.org](http://www.gedhtree.org): a GEDCOM to HTML converter.

Click on icons to download software.

#### Archeology of the townland

On Ordnance Survey Map 67 of the archeological survey of Mayo there are 85 archeological monuments identified.

ABBEY	1
ALTAR	2
BARROW POSSIBLE	1
BUILDING	2
BULLAUN STONE	1
BURIAL	1
BURIAL GROUND	1
CASHEL	2
CASTLE	3
CHAPEL	1
CHURCH	1
CRANNOG	1
CRANNOG (S) POSSIBLE	2
CROSS-INSCRIBED STONE	1
EARTHWORK	5
EARTHWORK POSSIBLE	2
ECCLESIASTICAL REMAINS	3
ENCLOSURE	25
ENCLOSURE POSSIBLE	3
GRAVEYARD	2
HOLY WELL	3
HOUSE SITE	1
HUT SITE POSSIBLE	2
INSCRIBED STONE	1
IRON WORKING	1
LEAHT CUIMHNE	1
MEGALITHIC STRUCTURE	1
PROMONTORY FORT	1
QUERN STONE POSSIBLE	2
SETTLEMENT DESERTED	2
SOUTERRAIN	6
STANDING STONE	1
STANDING STONE -PAIR	2
WATERMILL -HORIZONTAL	1

A copy of the survey map should be obtained, scanned , the townland outlined and added to the history. Photographs should be obtained of the monuments still extant.

The following was obtained from <http://www.iol.ie/~sec/sites.htm>

# A Brief Guide To Irish Archaeological Sites

This page is intended as a brief introduction to some of the many types of archaeological monuments which can be seen in Ireland. It is constantly updated so check back regularly.

- [Wedge Tombs](#)
  - [Ceremonial enclosures](#)
  - [Bronze Age Burials](#)
  - [Barrows](#)
  - [Cairns](#)
  - [Stone Circles](#)
  - [Fulachta Fiadh](#)
  - [Ringforts and Cashels](#)
  - [Souterrains](#)
  - [Medieval Moated Sites](#)
  - [Mottes](#)
  - [Further Reading](#)
- 

## Wedge Tombs

[Return to menu](#)

### [Menu](#)

There are about 505 wedge tombs known in Ireland. These megalithic tombs are characterized as having a gallery constructed with side-stones which decrease in height from the western to the eastern end, and are either parallel or give it a wedge-shaped appearance. They usually have an outer revetment walling which is close set and emphasizes the wedge shape. They are roofed with large stones which sit directly on the walls of the gallery and are usually oriented north-east to south-west, and the entrance, placed at east, is often closed by a single stone. At Ballyedmonduff, Co. Dublin, there was a small ante-chamber placed at the east end. Some sites interpreted as wedge tombs are quite small, such as Reananiree, Co. Cork, which measures a little over 1m in length, and appear to overlap, morphologically, with Bronze Age cist graves.

## Ceremonial Enclosures

[Return to menu](#)

Another type of public monument consisted of a circular to oval area defined by either a bank, ditch, standing stones or a combination of these. These sites are described in the literature as embanked enclosures, which appear to relate to the henges of Britain, and stone circles. The embanked enclosures of the Boyne Valley region in Co. Meath can be up to 110m in diameter with a flat-topped earthen bank enclosing a circular to oval domed or hollowed area with a single entrance. The site at Monknewtown, Co Meath, for example, enclosed a cemetery of cremations, mainly in pits, and a ring-ditch; associated with beaker pottery and dated to 1860±45 uncal bc. This activity post-dated the construction of the site but indicated that it continued in use well into the Bronze Age.

## Bronze Age Burials

[Return to menu](#)

The Bronze Age period lasted in Ireland from about 2500 BC to about 500 BC and the burials of the period show a wide degree of variety with

both pits and stone cists used. The pits can be simple holes or can be stone lined and range from circular to oval. More substantial stone built rectangular and polygonal cist graves, like at Keenoge, Co. Meath, were also used. The cists were also buried in holes in the ground. In some instances the cists can assume the proportions of small underground megalithic tombs. The human remains were prepared for burial in a number of ways. Some were placed in extended position into large pits, or in contracted and flexed positions in smaller pits and cists. There is evidence that individuals were bound or tied before burial. On occasion the remains might be stored until the flesh had decayed enough for the bones to separate or disarticulate, and were then interred. Or the remains could be either partially or completely cremated on a funeral pyre. The remains were then collected, and sometimes after further crushing or cleaning placed into the grave, often in a pottery container. The remains were often accompanied by decorated pottery vessels, referred to as food vessels or cinerary urns and less often with objects of stone and bronze. The burials were frequently made in cemeteries which were in use for hundreds of years. These cemeteries might either be in stone built cairns or earthen barrows or were flat.

## **Barrows**

[Return to menu](#)

Barrows have been constructed in Ireland since the Middle Neolithic and were in use until the early centuries A.D. They may cover or contain megalithic Linkardstown type cists of the Neolithic, all of the burials type of the Bronze Age (see below) or cremations or inhumations of the Iron Age. In the east of Ireland the mounds of these sites have been levelled in large numbers, leaving Ring-ditches, or have been remodelled into ceremonial enclosures, as at Tara, or Medieval Mottes as at Rathmore, Co. Kildare. In the east Ring-ditches have been dated as late as the seventh century AD. Bowl Barrows, often referred to as Tumuli or Moats, have a central dome-shaped mound, 2m or higher, usually enclosed by a fosse and one or more external banks. Where an enclosing fosse is not noted on the ground it is often found during excavation. Saucer barrows have low mounds, usually under 1m, and range from 5-20m in diameter with one or more enclosing fosses and banks. Bell barrows resemble bowls but have a berm between the mound and the fosse. Ring Barrows resemble Saucer barrows but have a flat interior rather than a mound. Another type of barrow has a bank and a hollow interior, these are pond barrows. Excavation has revealed that a significant number of barrows belong to the Iron Age (c. 300 BC-100 A.D), but many are of Bronze Age date as well. The barrows are often found in groups or cemeteries where a number of types can be found together. Sometimes they are found juxtaposed to megalithic cemeteries as at Carrowmore, Co. Sligo or associated with ceremonial enclosures.

## **Cairns**

[Return to menu](#)

Barrows have been constructed in Ireland since the Neolithic, when they covered megalithic tombs and were in use until the fourth or fifth centuries A.D. Unlike barrows cairns are a by-product of agricultural clearance and in upland areas and on thin soils covering exposed geological formations would have been a readily available building material. Cairns are usually of three types. High cairns, resembling bowl barrows, which often covered passage tombs, much lower cairns of less than 2m in height with flat tops and ring cairns, which enclosed a central burial. A number of the cairns covering megalithic tombs had Bronze Age cists added to them or had the central chambers re-used for Bronze Age burial.

## **Stone Circles**

[Return to menu](#)

These monuments consist of a ring of free-standing stones, uneven in number and symmetrically arranged so that one stone, the axial stone, is set directly opposite two stones, usually the tallest, marking the entrance to the circle.

Characteristically, the stones reduce in height to the axial stone, which is set consistently in the south-western part of the circle. Though divided into two groups, five-stone and multiple-stone circles, they are essentially one type of monument with a common basic design. Though cremated burials in small unmarked pits were discovered at the three excavated

multiple-stone circles (Bohonagh, Co. Cork,

Drombeg, Co. Cork and Reenascreena South, Co. Cork) these monuments are not primarily burial places but are generally regarded as ritual sites where ceremonies took place. Many stone

circles appear to have been deliberately orientated so that the main axis of the circle (a line extending from the middle of the gap between the entrance stones across to the centre of the axial stone) is aligned north-east/south-west - those sectors of the horizon in which the sun rises or sets at significant times during the year, an equinox or solstice. At Drombeg during the midwinter solstice, the sun appears to set at a point on the horizon in line with the axis of the stone circle. In Ireland stone circles are concentrated in mid-Ulster and in South Kerry/West Cork, as are the stone rows. Exact dating evidence is lacking, but they are likely to be Bronze Age in date.

### **Fulachta Fiadh**

[Return to menu](#)

Fulachta fiadh were an integral component of the Bronze Age landscape and provide significant evidence of activity in areas with little evidence of artifact deposition. Usually they consist of horseshoe-shaped heaps of heat-fractured stone mixed with charcoal and dark soil, associated with lined rectangular water troughs and hearths. They are also called burnt mounds and are known from Scotland, Wales, England, Scandinavia and northern Germany.

### **Ringforts and Cashels**

[Return to menu](#)

Ringforts are the most common site type in Ireland. They were primarily built and used during the Early Christian period, 500-1200 AD. They are differentiated from cashels in having enclosing banks composed of dumped earth and sometimes a mixture of earth and stone. However these distinctions are not clear cut and some sites had earthen banks faced with stone, or had sections of the enclosing element composed alternately of earth or stone. In some cases the enclosing element is so eroded or robbed out and sod covered that it can be difficult to determine if it had originally been a wall or bank. The distinctions between ringforts and cashels may be more apparent to archaeologist than the people who built and used the sites and the choice of enclosing a site with stone or earth, or a combination of the two may have been determined by the availability of material, the difficulty of digging a fosse as well as social concerns of status, manpower and legal restraints.

Cashels were constructed at the same period and fulfilled the same functions as ringforts. They differ in their construction technique, being assembled rather than quarried and piled up, and therefore usually lack an enclosing fosse. The usual technique was usually to construct two concentric drystone walls of medium-sized blocks and slabs, limestone was the preferred material, set on a foundation of large boulders. The area between was then infilled with rubble. The construction technique allowed for some elaboration and in some case chambers were built into the walls, sometimes linked to souterrains, and stone steps might lead to broad wall walks. The walls are often, when well preserved, 2m or higher. As they represent a ready source of stone may have been plundered to build field walls, roads and

houses. The quarrying and or collection of suitable stone, its transport and the requirements for skilled wall builders made a cashel a more expensive alternative to a ringfort and they are much less common. They are also restricted to areas where suitable stone was available. Individuals unable to construct a complete cashel may have added stone revetments to ringforts to make them resemble cashels. Stone enclosure at Carrigillihy, Co. Cork was found to date to the Early Bronze Age and some cashels appear to have been occupied into the medieval period so that the site type appears to have a long currency.

### **Souterrains**

[Return to menu](#)

Souterrains are artificial, subterranean (or semi-subterranean) structures built to allow access and usually associated with habitation. They are common in ringforts and cashels of the Early Christian period c.A.D. 500-1200 A.D and appear to have been used as an underground bolt-hole if a ringfort was attacked and the simpler examples, without complex chambers and defensive arrangements such as creeps, were probably also a secure place to store valuables and perishable foods such as meat, butter or grain. In a sense the souterrains could represent the most defensive aspect of a ringfort and it has been suggested that their uneven distribution may indicate that they were constructed by tribal groupings engaged in struggles with neighbouring groups. The clustered distribution of souterrains has been further emphasized by the ongoing work of the Archaeological Survey. For example no souterrains were noted in any of the 261 enclosures and ringforts recently published in the inventory of county Carlow.

### **Medieval Moated Sites**

[Return to menu](#)

These rectangular sites, enclosed by water-filled moats and earthen banks, probably topped by palisades were constructed by the Anglo-Normans to protect their manor houses. To date the majority of these sites are known from the south-east of the country, especially Tipperary and Wexford, and appear to have been constructed along the marches or border lands of the Anglo-Norman colony and the Gaelic lands. Excavations have indicated that these sites were constructed and used from the late thirteenth to the mid fourteenth centuries.

### **Mottes**

[Return to menu](#)

Mottes are flat-topped earthen mounds with a fosse at the base. Some, but not all

sites

The Motte at Greenmount, Co. have a sub-rectangular area enclosed by a bank and fosse, known as a bailey, contiguous to the

Louth. Photo OPW

fosse. They were usually constructed at strategic locations, river crossings or on important routeways. Sometimes the builders used pre-existing ringforts and even burial mounds as the bases of these sites. The sites were constructed by Anglo-Norman lords at an early stage of the Norman conquest in the thirteenth century. Today they appear as earthworks but they would originally have been topped with timber palisades and are sometimes referred to

as timber castles. Most of the examples are found in the east of Ireland, but there are also examples in the west.

### Further Reading

[Return to menu](#)

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