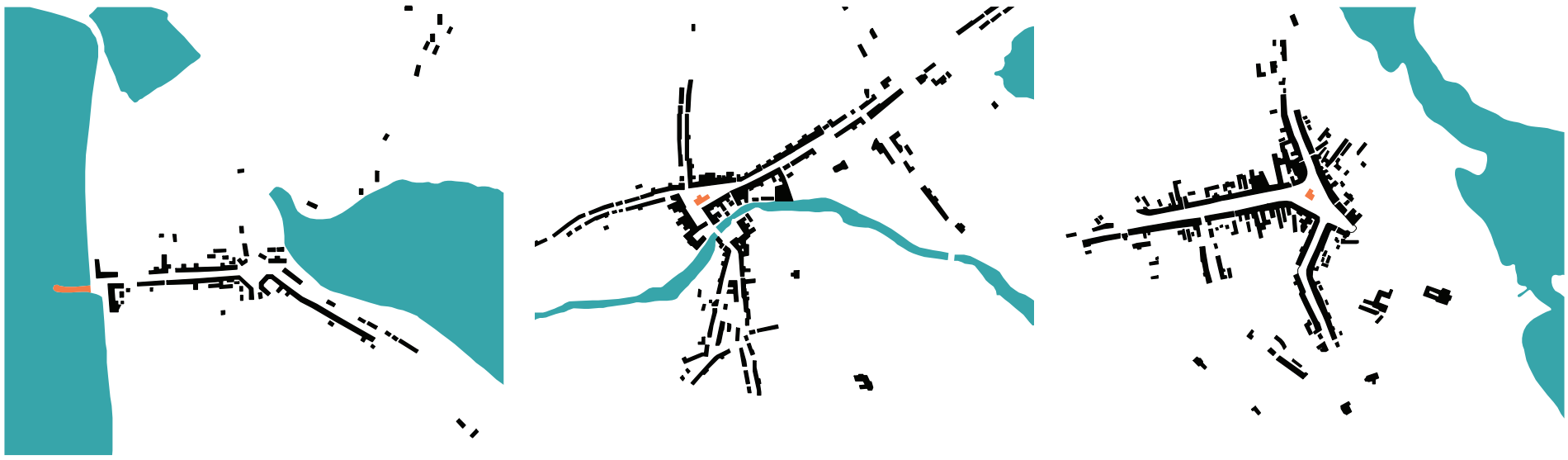

POST INDUSTRIAL

Introduction

Dr. Colin Rynne

Ireland's partial and largely incomplete industrialisation was truly one of bold contradictions. Her shipbuilding, linen, brewing and milling industries were all, during certain periods, of international significance. But in other sectors industrial growth was extremely limited, a circumstance which was not to significantly change after Independence. Indeed, the debilitating consequences of the island's lack of coal and other important minerals, along with its high transport costs, on its general failure to industrialise, remain with us. Belfast and its environs largely avoided this trend, through privileged access to Scotland's heavy engineering zone, while the milder Irish climate greatly assisted the manufacture of linen. Southern industry, by way of contrast from the Union in 1801 to the Famine, was largely concerned with processing agricultural raw materials. Nevertheless, the international success of Ireland's linen industry flies in the face of the notion that Ireland's industrial interests were subordinated to those of Britain: it actually employed a higher share of the Irish population than that cotton industry did in the rest of UK. Yet any evaluation of industrial development in the period 1801-1922 based on comparison with Britain is perhaps inappropriate. In a wider European context Ireland's industrial development compares more favourably: it was certainly not backward in this regard. In point of fact, some 23% of the working population of Ireland was employed in manufacturing or construction in 1911, which placed it firmly in the middle ranking industrial countries such as Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, where this ranged from 22-25%.

Owing to severe industrial resource restraints in Ireland - principally the lack of coal and iron ore - eighteenth and nineteenth-century Irish industries tended to be concentrated within the environs of port towns. Most of the centres of production and consumption, indeed, were on the east coast, where some four-fifths of the coal imported into Ireland was directly consumed. Yet some industrial activities, such as mining, were generally located quite some distance from existing centres of population. As early as the seventeenth century, Irish ironmasters had been obliged to provide, in varying degrees, accommodation, land and a basic social infrastructure for their skilled workers. These latter measures were largely an inducement to attract the requisite personnel from English-and even European-ironworking regions to settle in Ireland, and by this means relatively large immigrant communities were to become temporarily settled throughout the island. This same settlement pattern was to be continued in the nineteenth century in key Irish extractive industries, where again English and Welsh mining specialists were to be housed in what were often self-sufficient industrial communities.

Mining settlements, then, tended to be sited away from existing settlements, but so also were early factories and other industrial installations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in order to harness a reliable supply of water power. In this way, whole new villages (often centred on textile manufacture, such as Portlaw, Co. Waterford and Bessborough, Co. Down) were created in which housing and other amenities were provided by companies anxious that their workforce be close at hand and also, to a certain extent, be easier to control. The association of Protestant dissenter communities with the creation of 'model' textile villages, or intentional communities, in Ireland is marked, and elements of social control over living habits-sobriety, self-improvement and even recreation - are clearly discernible in their organization. Nonetheless, the workforce in these settlements was often multi-denominational. Yet the inhabitants of model villages, were not only more closely integrated than in wider world but also, for the most part, enjoyed a higher standard of living, with greater access to education and to credit facilities. However, workers' housing in nineteenth -century Ireland could also be built under the auspices of philanthropic societies or local authorities, although the accommodation provided was intended to improve the living conditions of the working classes in general and was not specific to any factory or, indeed, industry.

The excellent series of essays featured here, by an up and coming generation of Irish architects, presents the physical and material world of these industrial settlements in a whole new light. Using their professional skill set they have created a new appreciation of how these villages as worked a social spaces, while at the same time highlighting future conservation priorities.

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Quakers and industry in Mountmellick

The aim of this essay is to study Quakers and their industries in Mountmellick and in Mountrath, small towns located in County Laois. This exploration, taking Mountmellick as the main study is made through both text and a series of maps, charting the influence of the Quakers and their industries on the growth, changes and development of both of these towns.

The "Society of Friends", or Quaker movement began as a dissenting Protestant group in 1647 England, led by George Fox. It was brought to Ireland in 1659 by William Edmundson. Edmundson was the first Quaker preacher in Ireland and settled in Rosenallis, a small village located three miles from Mountmellick, Co. Laois.

As Quakers were known to be acceptable members of the Protestant community as well as being hard working, industrious, honest and committed to peace, they were invited often by Protestant landowners in Ireland to settle on their lands. Having established a community at Rosenallis, they were invited to settle in the nearby town of Mountrath, in 1680 by the Earl of Mountrath.

> *…Many considerable men in this country, that have great quantities of land to set, do very much covet to have Friends for their tenants, for many of our Friends have been so diligent and industrious, and have made such fine improvements upon the farms that they have taken, and have also been so punctual in paying their rents, that they are much respected by their landlords (Butler, 2009)*

Quakers, at this time, led simple and honest lives, and many were successful merchants, becoming involved in industries such as milling, brewing and textiles.

> *They consciously preferred commerce because among its temptations they could prove their honesty and fair dealing. (Beale, 1975)*

Like their English counterparts, they played a huge role in the industrial development of the country. Although educated to a high standard, Quaker beliefs did not permit them to take oaths, which restricted their entry into most professions; therefore they gravitated towards careers in industry and manufacturing.

> *They were the merchants and manufacturers who filled the void between the landed classes and the Roman Catholic poor (Goodbody, 2007)*

Several other Quakers settled in the Mountmellick area along with Edmundson, which at that time was centered around an ironworks and a regular market and thus essentially established the town; building their factories, their meeting house (1709) and their school (1786). Their impact and dominance of the town by the year 1770 is illustrated on the map overleaf where Quaker owned properties are highlighted alongside their key buildings; these being the meeting house and school.

In Rosenallis, the original Quaker village, three miles northwest of Mountmellick lies the Quaker "Sleeping Ground" (graveyard). The land was donated to them by William Edmundson whom, it is believed, lived in a house across the road. The first burial here was in 1664 and the burial site is still in use now. The headstones are simple and uniform in shape and size, in accordance with the Quaker way of life: "Plainness in speech, behavior and apparel". (O'Keefe, 1994) They are dedicated to individuals and are clustered in small family groups around the site.

> *Pride was taken family life, educating their children and practicing this strict, yet simple and honest way of living. "They strove to improve conditions in gaols, they conducted schools, and practiced philanthropy in all its forms…" (Beale, 1975)*

Sir Charles Henry Coote, in his Statistical Survey of Laois in 1800, comments on the industrious nature of the Quakers here. He expresses his admiration for the Quaker attitude towards education. He notes that the Quakers, as well as sending their children to the school in the centre of the town, taught their children different skills such that they could provide another source of income for their families. It also impressed him to see how much "care and pains" the Quakers invested into educating their youth and concludes that this particular form of strict education is worth the effort because the children grow up to be: "…a most respectable body of people, whose general characteristic is a well thriven industry" (Coote, 1801)

Fig. 1
Mountmellick and surrounding areas

Early industry in the town was based around the needs of the barracks located in the town. The ironworks set up by the Loftus family specialized in the making of bits and stirrups for the military stables. It closed however, in the 1750s, losing out to cheaper imported goods. Small scale or domestic industry was the other main type of industry in Mountmellick at this time. Examples include home breweries, potteries and woollen manufacturing. Many of the weavers lived in the Davitt Road area and in Acragar, slightly removed from the industrial centre of the town.

By the early 1800s, Mountmellick was at the height of its prosperity and known as "The Manchester of Ireland". It was the main town in the county in terms of wealth, industry and population. During this period, large-scale manufacturing arrived in Mountmellick, mostly based on cotton and woollen production. There were also a variety of other industries long established in the town, including brewing, distilling, tanning, and malting. Quaker families established and ran most, if not all, of these industries. A snapshot of Mountmellick during its peak industrial years can be seen on the 1839 map overleaf, with industry hatched in orange and key buildings in the town hatched in black.

Industries located in the centre of the town were owned by some of the most prominent Quaker families, including the Bewley and Pim families. The Beale and Bewley families were involved in the textile industries, while the Pim family were involved in a variety of industries including brewing, tanning, and the manufacturing of soap, glue and candles.

John Bewley opened up his cotton factory in 1790 and is said to have employed around four hundred people. Another member of the Bewley family, Mungo II, established a cotton-spinning factory in the nearby Mountrath, employing roughly one hundred to one hundred and fifty people at the time. The initial spinning of the cotton happened in Mountrath and the weaving took place in Mountmellick, the cotton was then finished in Dublin.

In 1836, a branch of the Grand Canal opened in Mountmellick, connecting the town to Monasterevin, Portarlington and Dublin. All the industries in the Mountmellick area benefited from access to the canal.

It is possible to chart the start of the decline of the "Manchester of Ireland" to the time when the first potato crop failed. Mountmellick, like most other towns in the country was devastated by the famine. The population of Mountmellick in 1845, at the beginning of the famine years was four thousand eight hundred and by the end of the famine in 1850, it was three thousand one hundred and twenty. The effect of this social and economic disaster is clearly evident on the redrawn 1907 map, overleaf, where the workhouse and fever hospital have been built. The Quaker meetinghouse and Provincial School closed by 1921. The main industry to operate in Mountmellick post-famine was malting and most of the factories in the town were converted to malt houses.

Joseph Beale and his wife Margaret, who were prominent industrious Quakers in the town at this time, became heavily involved in helping to provide relief for the people of the town during the famine. The Beales owned several properties in and around Mountmellick including woollen mills. Margaret, alongside friends and relatives ran soup

Fig. 2
Mountmellick 1770

kitchens in their various now vacant properties in the town. Joseph had converted his woollen mills into a grain mill and was running it at a financial loss to himself to grind corn for the starving.

Like the Beales, Quakers across Ireland were actively involved in providing relief to the famine stricken. They received financial help and donations from Friends in the U.K and America and between them, they established a Relief Committee, which worked to provide clothing, food and money to areas badly affected around the country:

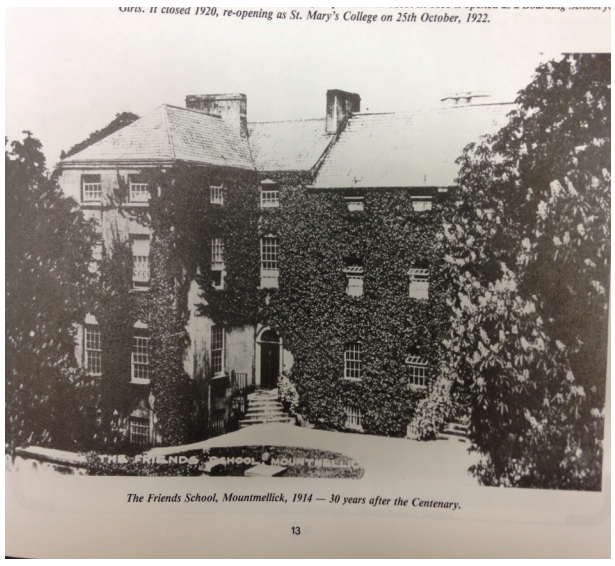


Fig. 3
Quaker School, Mountmellick

> *…encouraged employment and the production of food by distributing large quantities of seeds, assisting industrial schools, and making grants to fishermen to enable them to redeem their nets from pawn and to repair their boats (Goodbody, 2007)*

Unfortunately, their relief was not enough. There were three thousand Quakers in Ireland at this time working restlessly to aid a starving Irish population of eight million.

Joseph Beale, like many other Irish Quakers after the famine, was exhausted and financially ruined and there was no business in grain, wool or flax production. Many of the skilled labourers in this area had emigrated and there was no market to buy the goods produced. In the year 1852, Joseph Beale made the decision to leave for Australia, where there was a flourishing woollen industry. Before he departed, he was given a letter from the people of Mountmellick thanking him for his services to the town.

> *We feel it is a pleasing duty which we owe you, to express on your removal from amongst us to settle in Australia our recollection of the benefits conferred on the locality from the extensive employment given by you: "whose family have been residing here nearly two centuries" more particularly in the Woollen and Cotton manufacture which owing to your own enterprise and exertions was brought to near perfection. (Beale, 1975)*

Through this brief study of Quakers and industry in Mountmellick we can chart the rise and decline of this industrial town. There are no practicing Quakers or active industry in the town today. Many of the factories which were once the life and centre of the town, now stand in ruins. One exception being a former mill building in Irishtown, which now houses a museum, dedicated to the Quakers and their strong and lasting industrial influence on this small, country town.

Deepka Abbi

Key sources:

Joseph Beale's letters home to Ireland from Victoria, 1852-53
Beale, E. (1975)
The Quakers of Mountmellick: A short history of the Religious Society of Friends in the town of Mountmellick 1650-1900
O'Keefe, R. (1994)
A suitable channel: Quaker relief in the Great Famine
Goodbody, R. (1995)

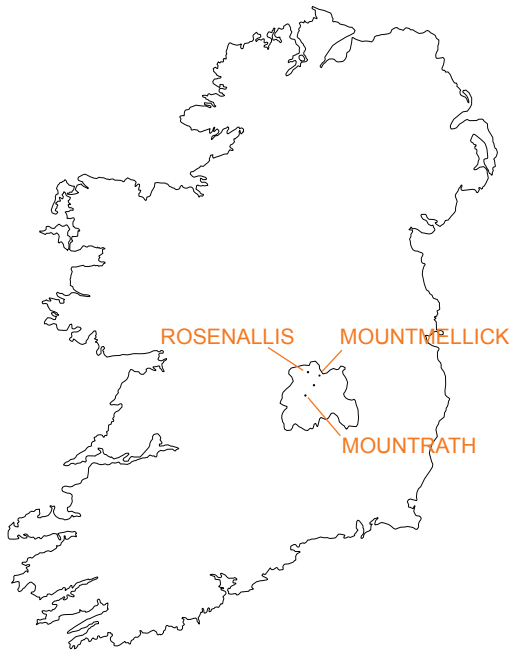


Fig. 4
1839 Mountrath

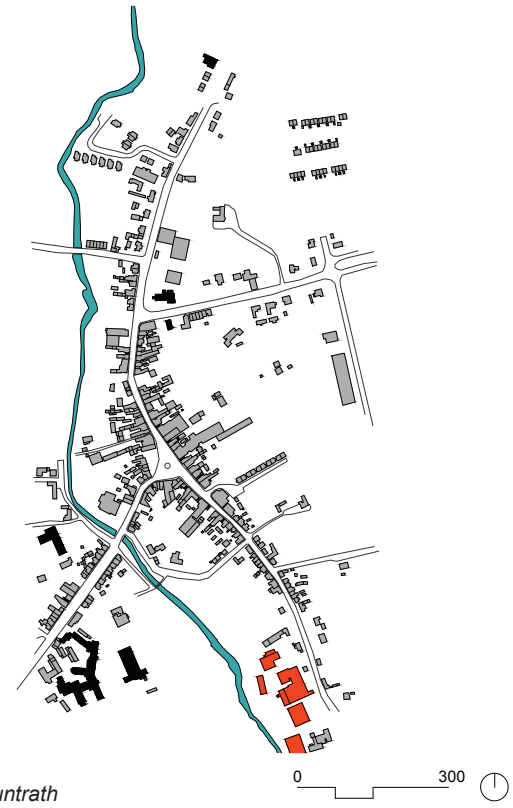


Fig. 5
2016 Mountrath

Fig. 6
1770 Mountmellick

Fig. 7
1839 Mountmellick

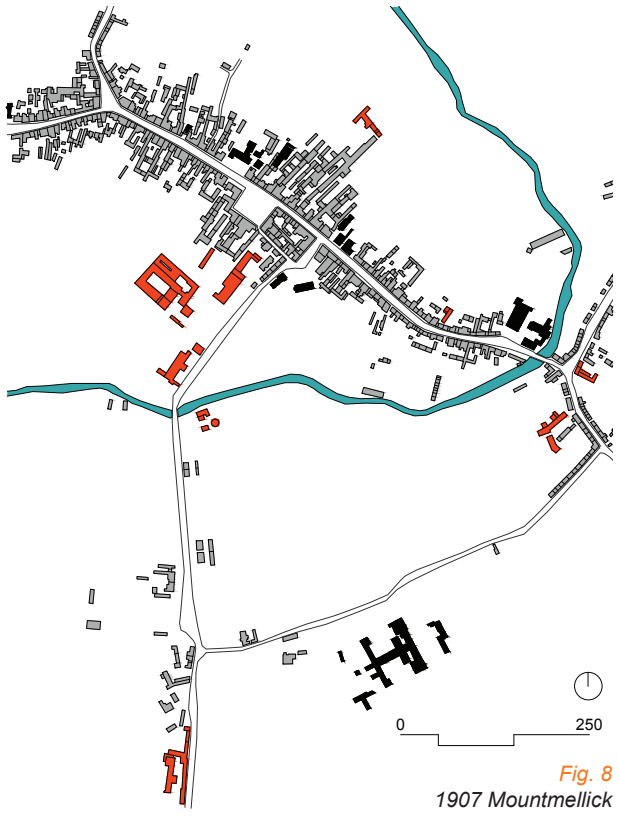


Fig. 8
1907 Mountmellick

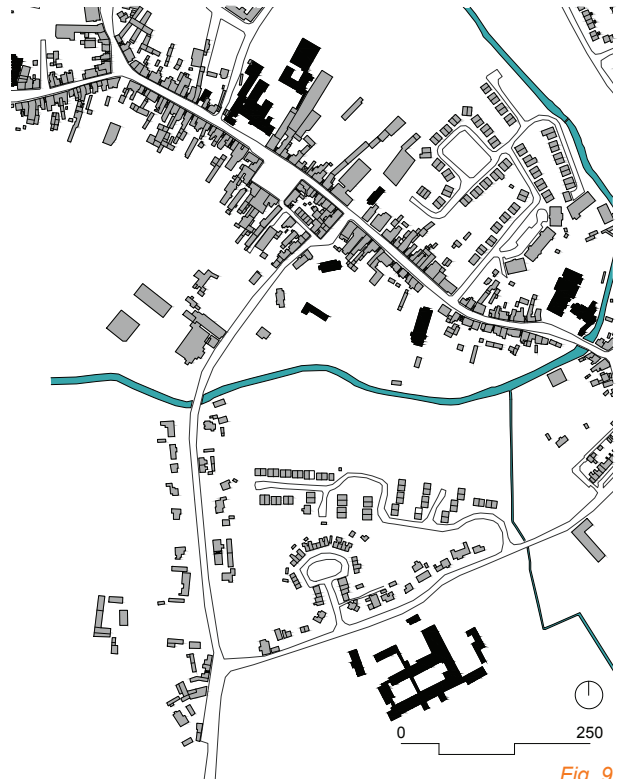


Fig. 9
2016 Mountmellick

Mountrath maps - Scale 1 : 15,000

Mountmellick maps - Scale 1 : 10,000

Industry

Key Public Buildings

Shaping the Town of Castlecomer

The following edited essay seeks to explore the town plan form of Castlecomer in County Kilkenny, within a comparative Irish context. The discovery of coal in the area, which was mined there for over 300 years, had a major impact on the growth of the town and its hinterland. As too, did the landlord family, the Wandesfordes, who acquired the lands in 1636, and continued their presence in the area until the 20th century.

Diagrammatic plans, redrawn from the 1st edition OS maps, dating from the mid 1800's, of each town are used for comparative analysis. Similarities and contrasts between Castlecomer and other pre-famine towns, help better to understand the morphology of this early industrialisation.

It is clear to see in the maps presented overleaf, that each of the towns drawn, including Castlecomer, appear to be planned. Proudfoot and Graham (1992) broadly define a planned town or village; as having "the creation of regularly structured space in accordance with some preconceived ideal". It is not always entirely evident as to who planned particular villages or towns, however the clear structure, be it a cruciform plan, linear plan, town with a square or triangular square plan, is obvious in each of the maps represented. The straight line and linearity are common to each of the villages mapped. The emergence of the straight line and an ordered plan within an unordered natural landscape, implies the bringing of civility to said landscape. In many cases in Ireland, this straight-lined civility was in stark contrast to what Miriam Delaney (2010) describes of "native cottages [being] predominantly oval shaped, and native settlement types such as the ringfort, [being] circular or oval." Tim Ingold (2007) further states the importance of the straight line in town planning through comparison of the two meanings of the word 'ruler', and the significant connection between the two.

> *A ruler is a sovereign who controls and governs a territory. It is also an instrument for drawing straight lines.*

Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that in the case of Castlecomer, an area previously occupied by the native O'Brennan family, that the ordered layout of roads, and parcelling of land, was vital to the creation of firm foundations for the town, and too, the survival of the Wandesfordes in the town.

It has been previously stated that Sir Christopher Wandesforde acquired the lands around Castlecomer in 1636 by grant of the Earl of Ormond. Nolan (1994) states however, that the true establishment date of what is essentially an 18th century town can be accredited to the accession of Anne Wandesforde (Lady Ormond following her marriage to John Butler) to the estate in 1784. At this time, the town had taken shape with a central square, four intersecting streets, market house, big house, demesne and Church of Ireland church, Catholic chapel and cabin suburbs. Development was briefly halted due to the 1798 Rebellion when a large part of the town centre and big house were destroyed, however on payment of compensation estimated to be eighteen thousand pounds, the town was reconstructed on a grand scale. A rebuilt market house in Carlow limestone with Palladian façade, a new fever hospital, dispensary, and houses for miners at Bowden's Row were all installed. As too was a new larger estate house, built in 1802 on the east bank of the river Dinin (*map 05*), the house held an "isolated and commanding location, and the lodge house and long symmetrical tree-lined avenue symbolized social dominance and separateness".

Arnold Horner (1994) describes the comprehensive redevelopment of towns during the mid 18th century as being a result of the "general artistic context" of the time.

> *Fashionable thinking embodied an international dimension, taking on European ideas from the Enlightenment to promote new initiatives in art, architecture, and planning. This was a period when improvement initiatives were espoused for their aesthetic, as well as their potential economic, benefits.*

Horner (1994) is speaking generally here about the redevelopment of towns during the mid 18th century, however his essay 'Maynooth', focuses specifically on the town of the title. He clearly states that the roots of Maynooth in county Kildare, date back to the 12th century, but as with many towns in Ireland, its current form is resultant of later development of the town by an "improvement-minded resident landlord". This happened over a period of years due to the gradual expiry of leases, though in some case the Earl of Kildare did buy out particular leases. At Castlecomer a similar landlord action is evident. After succeeding his mother, Charles Harward Wandesforde began a program of rationalization, in breaking the hold of the middlemen interests in the town. This was done to such an extent, that by 1850, two-hundred-and-sixty-two units were in the landlords' hands. Charles Harward Wandesforde also ensured that no development could be made on the estate side of the river Dinin by purchasing the extent of the east bank from Bartholomew Brophy, even today little development is evident here, and only a golf course occupies the eastern bank.

In an attempt to understand and categorise the form plan of Castlecomer, I have drawn series of maps of other Irish planned villages with similar characteristics and morphologies.

The town plan form at Castlecomer, in existence since at least the time of Lady Ormond, and still evident today, can be described as being a **linear town with a square** (the square being less defined in Castlecomer than other villages as it occurs at a widening main street). This is the description applied to it in the thesis of architect and academic Valerie Mulvin (1992), where Mulvin seeks to catalogue pre-famine towns of Ireland. Mulvin (1992) states that the linear type is the most common street plan in Ireland as it is:

> *The simplest solution to dividing a parcel of land in the most economically viable way: the street roughly bisects the rectangle/oval and property boundaries are set out on both sides normal to the main street, running to the limits of the town […] A variant of the linear plan is the crossroads plan, where both streets appear to have an equal significance and a market place is often located at the junction.*

In the case of Castlecomer, one can also see a **crossroad plan**, where due to the location of the square on High Street, the north-south direction is given less significance than the east-west axis. Immediately south of the junction on Kilkenny Street, a market house is located, making Castlecomer different to both a typical linear plan and a typical crossroad plan. The centre of the town would generally facilitate weekly markets, and Mulvin goes on to describe how this form, at a crossroads such as at Castlecomer, has been common to Europe since Roman times, "the forum at the junction of cardo and decumanus".

In describing the narrowing rectangular square type, witnessed at Castlecomer, Mulvin (1992) says, "the straight wide street has a formal beginning [at the bridge] and an end where it widens, the street begins to focus on a square and the town acquires a centre". The widening street is comparable to the **triangular centre** planned towns, where the widest point is usually the end of the square and center for activity, and where two streets diverge in opposing directions. In many cases this is a variation of a crossroads plan.

When dating the town of Castlecomer to the time of Lady Anne Ormond as an 18th century town, it is not uncommon to find the isolated estate house located as it is, according to Mulvin (1992):

> *[…] the castle or fort was replaced by the undefended country house, related directly, indirectly, or not at all to the towns. The house altered its role from visible symbol of security and authority set on axis with the town to a discreet presence signaled by a set of gates closing the vista.*

In the case of each of the towns presented, the estate house is not ingrained into the fabric of the town plan form, rather it is usually presented to the town by the gates and gate house, and by a long tree-lined avenue, each of these, as previously mentioned, serving to symbolize social dominance over and separateness from the tenants of the town or village. Some places lost entirely their direct relationship with the landlords' residence, "as the house withdrew to a carriage distance away" (Mulvin 1992). Likewise at Castlecomer, the mines are at a remove with little visible presence in the town. Within the towns themselves, the presence of a Market House and/or Barracks became the face of the landlord. Both of these also became a major factor to the social lifeblood of the town.

Many of the towns presented as part of this study show organized centers with dispersing development outwards. This is not an organic growth phenomena, rather each town or village has experienced the situational factors which affect any development to this day in Ireland. Beginning at the center, the town was built outwards, and in many places the towns express an inability to fill out in the same way as they began. Such factors as economic pressures, poverty, famine and rebellion all affect the rate and quality of the built work in many towns. Valerie Mulvin (1992) states that "it is in the nature of towns to change", and that development is a planned response to complicated series of factors.

It can be seen from each of the towns presented, that the straight line and linearity are consistent in the development of towns by landowners. This has been attributed to both the influence from Enlightenment ideas relating to art, architecture and planning in the mid 18th century, but also dating back to the first establishment of the towns prior to this, when the straight line and linearity were considered to bring order and civilization, to an otherwise "uncivilized" landscape and population.

Castlecomer proves to be an interesting case study as it straddles a number of categories. It is an industrial village, built on the success of the adjacent coal mines, but also a planned estate village. Castlecomer could be categorised under a number of village morphologies; linear, crossroad, triangular square. It defies simplistic categorisation.

Mark Corcoran

Key Sources:

Dissertation '*The Morpology of Irish Towns: An Architects Overview of the Planning of Towns from the 10th Century to the Famine*', by Valerie Mulvin.

Essay '*Castlecomer*' by William Nolan, in '*Irish Country Towns*' by Anngret Simms and John Harwood Andrews.

Dissertation '*Line, Text, Silence, and Scale. Reading the Raven Maps of Londonderry, 1622*', by Miriam Delaney.

'*Lines - A Brief History*', by Tim Ingold.

Reading the Urban Morphology of Castlecomer

Fig. 1
Crossroads at Castlecomer

Fig. 2
Widening main street or 'triangular centre'

Fig. 3
Relationship between market house and square

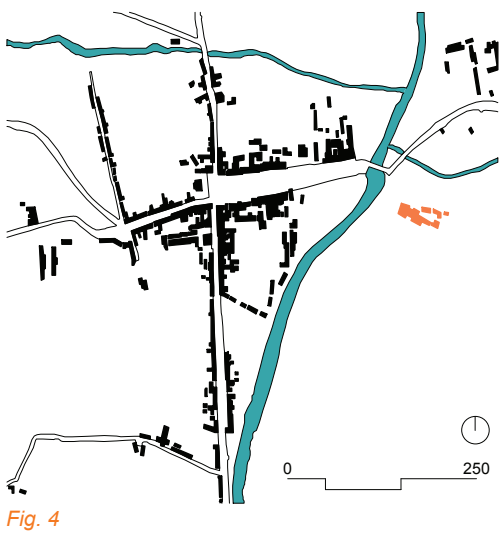


Fig. 4
Isolated estate house

Crossroad plans

Each of the examples illustrated depict a clear structure of a crossroads type plan. It is possible to see how Castlecomer may be considered alongside these, though its form is altered to accommodate the wide market street. Each has two intersecting streets, at roughly right-angles.

Late examples of towns with a central square, and cardo and decumanus being intersecting streets of equal importance are Louisburgh and Belmullet. These western towns, according to Mulvin (1992) were perhaps such defined to offer strong contrast to the 'clachan' patterns in the surrounding areas, again suggesting 'civilization' against the apparent disordered settlements of the west.

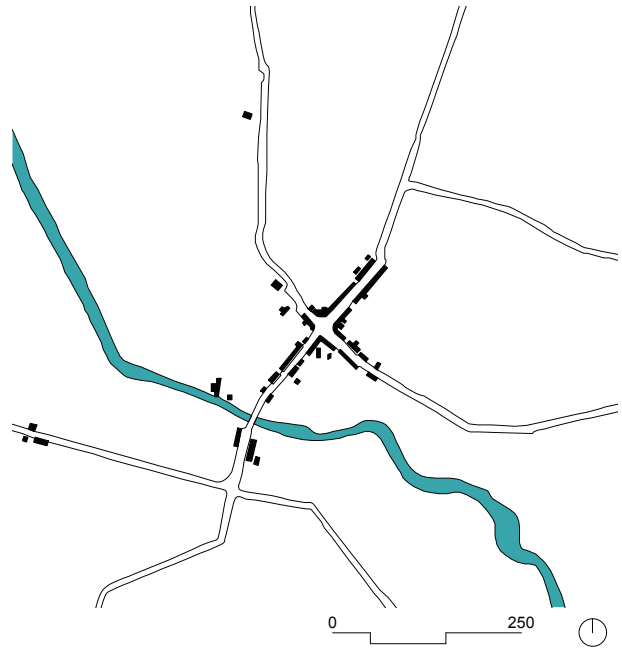


Fig. 5
Louisburgh, Co. Mayo.
Dating from: 1795.
Estate house: None. Town was established by 1st Marquess of Sligo, to house Catholic refugees who fled sectarian conflict in the north of Ireland.

Triangular Plans

Similarities may be drawn between Castlecomer and these triangular plan forms. At Castlecomer, the High Street has a beginning, and from here it widens to focus on a centre, the centre being where the two main streets of the town intersect.

Dunmanway, in particular, is very similar to Castlecomer. It has a clearly linear street type running from east to west, which then begins to widen in to the triangular shaped green. This green forms the centre of the town, and it is also the junction from which streets run in four directions, cario and decamanus again witnessed.

Indeed in each of the towns it is seen that the triangular green is a centre from which all routes diverge, Geashill being the most obvious of these as comparable to a crossroads plan. Castleblayney is different from the others in that cardo and decamanus are not present, however the axis set up between the triangular green space and the big house does imply four routes diverging from the centre.

Fig. 9
Dunmanway, Co. Cork.
Dating from: Founded by Sir Richard Cox, c.1700.
Estate house: Brookpark House.

Linear Plans

The linear plans presented represent variants of the linear plan type. Lurgan is similar to Castlecomer as it has a main street which widens to focus on a centre, also being directly comparable to Dunmanyway.

Both Eyrecourt and Maynooth are linear plans which exhibit similarities to the crossroads plans. The axis of the crossroads has been shifted, creating a stretched central space between the routes. In the case of each it is clear that the linearity of the street is set up to be on an axis with the big house, and the college in the case of Maynooth. Particularly at Maynooth, the importance of the relationship between the main buildings of the town and the linear street has caused a shifted position between the routes from the town; a variant cardo and decamanus.

Rathdowney is a more typical linear type in that it has one main street, which widens centrally to from a rectangular market space, and then continues.

Fig. 13
Maynooth, Co. Kildare.
Dating from: Origins in the 12th century, the modern town dates back to 1750-83, when rebuilt following the erection of Carton House by the Earl of Kildare.
Estate house: Carton House.

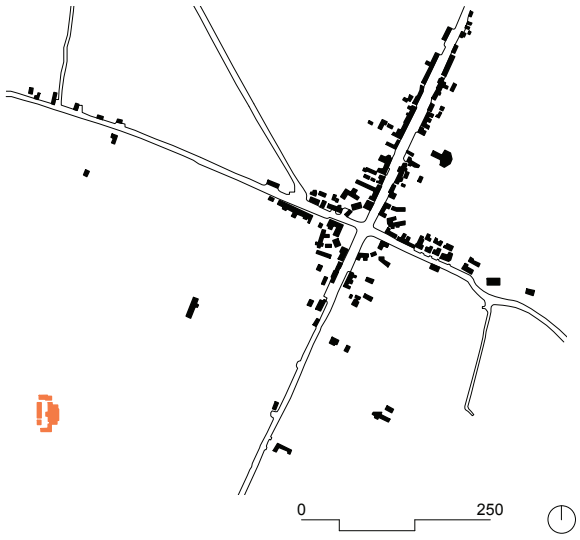


Fig. 6
Johnstown, Co. Kilkenny.
Dating from: 1760.
Estate house: Violet Hill.

Fig. 7
Belmullet, co. Mayo.
Dating from: Early 18th century by Sir Arthur Shaen, but developed to current form from 1822 following arrival of William Henry Carter, after his marriage to Shaen's daughter.
Estate house: Shaen Manor, located 2.5km south of village.

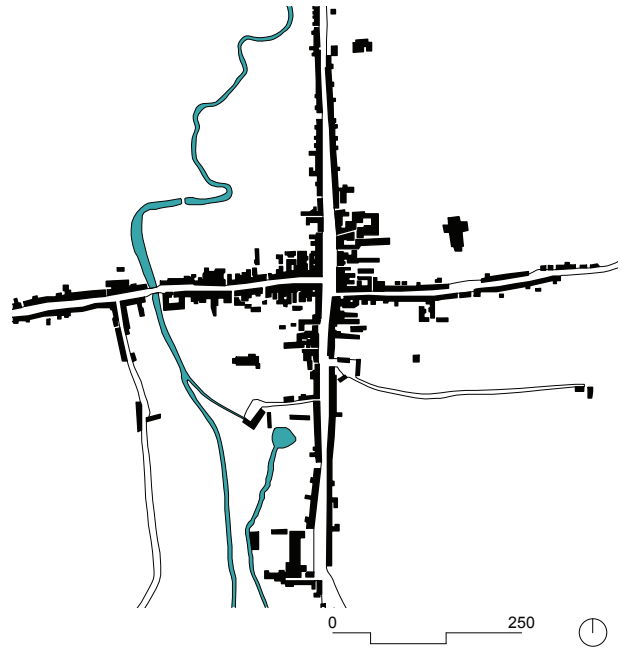


Fig. 8
Tallow, Co. Waterford.
Dating from: Early 17th century.
Estate house: Kilmore House, located 5km south of town.

Fig. 10
Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny.
Dating from: c.1620.
Estate house: Ballyragget Lodge.

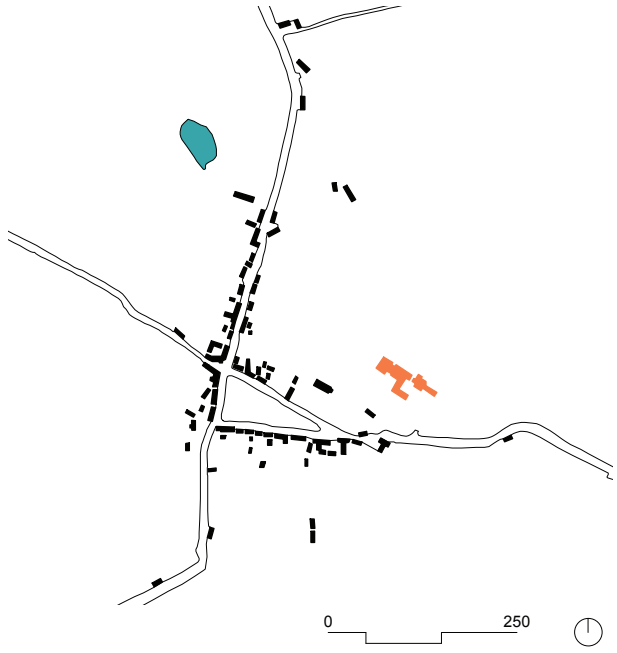


Fig. 11
Geashill, Co. Offaly.
Dating from: Origins in 1620, growing during 1860-70 but maintaining the triangular green.
Estate house: Geashill Castle.

Fig. 12
Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan.
Dating from: Founded by Sir Edward Blayney in 1611-12, the modern town has its origins in the 18th century.
Estate house: Blayney Castle.

Fig. 14
Lurgan, Co. Armagh.
Dating from: 1620, a plantation town by William Brownlow, rebuilt following the 1641 Rebellion.
Estate house: Brownlow House.

Fig. 15
Rathdowney, Co. Laois.
Dating from: Dates back to the mid 17th century, enlarged from 1820 by the Fitzgerald family.
Estate house: Levally House, located 3km south of town.

Fig. 16
Eyrecourt, Co. Galway.
Dating from: c.1750.
Estate house: Eyrecourt Castle.

Failed Utopias

The history of the Industrial Revolution in Ireland tells of a gradual urbanisation of an agricultural population into small towns and villages, but there remained a significant number of industrial villages that fell into decline. These villages often failed due to a number of factors, such as the change of proprietor, lack of profitability, poor initial planning and so on.

In this essay I examine two such 'failed' industrial villages, Monivea and New Birmingham, in terms of the layout of the villages, and the reasons for their decline.

Monivea, Co. Galway and New Birmingham, Co. Tipperary are both planned villages that incorporated a form of industry and fell into decline after a short time. Monivea lies nine kilometers north-east of Athenry and New Birmingham lies just north of the Slieveardagh Hills in Glengoole. The stories of how these villages came to be, in terms of the design of their layout, and how they had fallen into decline after such a short time is of interest to me as a student of architecture. Their Utopian ideals and how they had diminished in a time when many planned villages around them succeeded, provides an interesting counterpoint to some of the research conducted by my colleagues.

Monivea

Monivea originated as an estate village, set up in the early 17th century. It was originally established by the Ffrench family who having had their lands confiscated for supporting the Irish in the Cromwellian Invasions of 1641, they had bought them back in the late 1600s. It was not until 1744, when Robert Ffrench inherited the estate, that the linen mill was introduced to the village. Linen had proved an exceedingly prosperous industry in Ulster, and Ffrench sought to capitalise on this to make great improvements to his family's lands. After the Cromwellian Invasions, the Ffrench family decided it was better to adhere to Anglican ways and eventually adopt the Protestant faith, Robert Ffrench was no exception to this and had often favoured Protestants as new inhabitants in his town, although he did not exclude Catholics from his estate. Robert Ffrench's enlightenment and philanthropic ideals, promoting radical improvements on his estate, were paralleled internationally by many similar Utopian communities, such as Fulneck and New Lanark.

Monivea was laid out in a linear manner, the village oriented around a large main street that announces the entrance to the Ffrench family estate. (See Fig. 4) This gives us a clear indication of its prior existence as an estate village, the tenants of which were to serve the Ffrench family. At either end of the main street, routes to nearby villages are maintained, having access from every direction; the street is also wide enough that it contains quasi-parterre green areas and is largely used as a park with service roads through it. The linen mill was then situated to the north of the village with an access road leading from the center of its large main street, ensuring it was easily accessible to the villages inhabitants, whom were to work there.

The Charter School and a Nursery were established in the 1760s by Robert Ffrench to bring younger generations into the village in order to supply young workers for the linen mill. The school was established in collaboration with the Incorporated Society, an organisation promoting Protestant teachings around Ireland and teaching English to local children, and the nursery was added at a later date to provide new pupils for the school. They were situated at the western end of the wide main street, giving them an importance in the village as they end the main street and face the Monivea demesne. (See Fig. 4) Having encouraged the inhabitants to practise the Protestant faith, Robert Ffrench built a church in the village in 1761, to save the locals from travelling to Athenry to attend service. The church was positioned close to the entrance of the Ffrench estate, perhaps because Robert Ffrench himself wanted to make use of it with his family.

In the case of Monivea, the village's origins come from the need for tenants' homes next to the Monivea demesne in order to readily serve their landowners. As a result, Robert Ffrench was aware of the immediate problems of the town and how they could be resolved, as well as being aware of what improvements needed to be made to the lives of his inhabitants. It is no surprise, therefore, that the town was exceedingly successful during his lifetime, his improvements creating a better life among the inhabitants.

Another important factor I have identified in my analysis of these villages is the proximity of the industry to the village. As mentioned before, the linen mill in Monivea was situated to the north of the main village, an access road linking to the centre of its large main street. This made it easily accessible to all inhabitants of Monivea, yet it gave the mill enough space to develop and expand if it needed to, while keeping a respectful distance from the residents' homes.

The general layout of Monivea still remains today, with its housing and social amenities facing onto a wide main street, although many of the buildings have been replaced or have been left to crumble. The Charter School is now used as a main store for the sale of potatoes and farm goods, the church lies in ruins, only the tower remaining, and the linen mill has been completely demolished, a privately-owned farm taking its place.

The success of Monivea came from the improvements Robert Ffrench had made to his inherited lands; the introduction of the linen mill, along with a more rigorous control of renting land in and around the village, which left plenty of funds to improve the village with social amenities such as the school and the church. The village thrived under Ffrench's watchful eye, though this success was short-lived. Robert Ffrench had been a widower to his wife Nicola Acheson from 1762 onward, he sought comfort with one Winifred Higgins, a servant of his, with whom he had five illegitimate children, in addition to the five children he had had with Nicola. This meant that his inheritance could not be divided fairly among his children and so the family estate was bequeathed to a board of trustees, who proved themselves neglectful of the village to the point of its ultimate decline. Had the village been further improved by the next generation of Ffrenches, Monivea might have stood as a more successful village today.

I believe Monivea was initially a successful planned industrial village and showed potential to grow and develop. The long history of the Ffrench family in the area, their intimate knowledge of the landscape of their own lands and tenants ensured the initial success. Robert Ffrench's personal background as an enlightened, educated landlord and his attention to issues such as education again suggest that Monivea could have thrived. It appears to me that it was the unfortunate combination of an inheritance that did not continue through his family, and the neglectful board of trustees who managed the village poorly, which led to the rapid decline in Monivea's fortunes.

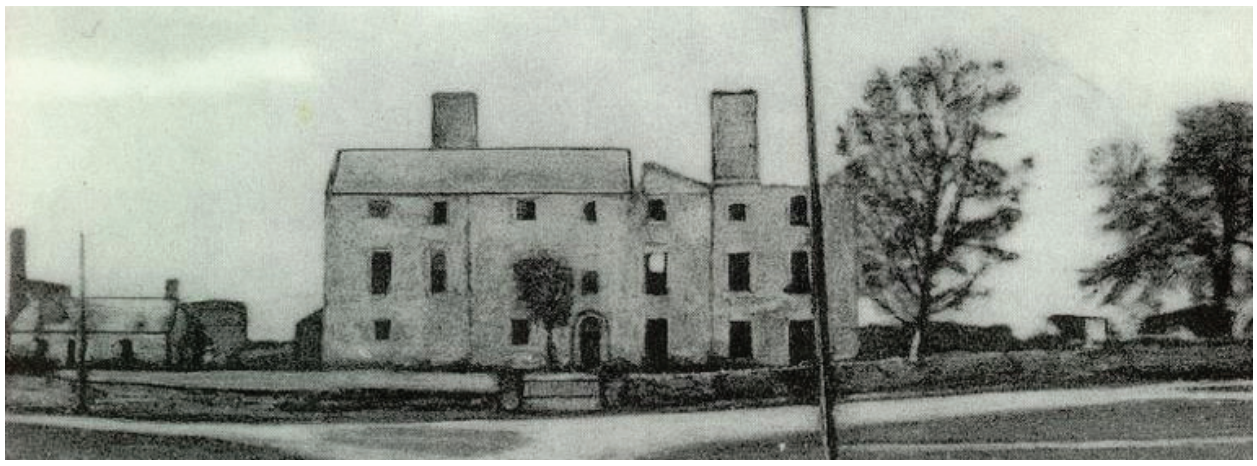
New Birmingham

New Birmingham was founded in Kilcooley, Co. Tipperary on lands that the Hunt family had acquired in the early 1700s. Sir Vere Hunt Bart founded his prospectus village there in 1801 to take advantage of the nearby coal veins in the Slieveardagh Hills. This occurred just after the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and the 1801 Act of Union in Ireland, but also at a time when Robert Owen established New Lanark, and had written extensively on the subject of "Utopian Socialism", suggesting that this ideal of establishing a new settlement with the possibility of creating a new social structure was very much present with the establishment of New Birmingham. The Napoleonic Wars broke out in 1803, which was unfortunate timing as it meant the British Administration was otherwise engaged and there were delays in Vere Hunt's applications for permissions for a barracks and post office. Ultimately, the village only survived a short time and fell into decline by as early as 1817.

New Birmingham was laid out in a cruciform manner in order to have access to the village from all sides. This is due to Sir Vere Hunt Bart's desire to create a new trading hub in the centre of Ireland. He had proposed ideas for diverting the Cork-Dublin mail route through the town and for extending the Grand Canal in Dublin down to his new village to ease the transport of coal to bigger cities. Unfortunately, these ambitious desires never came to pass, but it is clear why he needed to make the village so readily accessible to nearby towns and villages.

New Birmingham's north-south axis (see Fig.4) was to provide for the previously mentioned diversion of the Cork-Dublin mail route. Pulled back from these main roads, on what would be presumed to be quieter streets, housing was laid out. The church ends one of these streets to the north, and the post office is situated next to it in order for both to serve the inhabitants from one location and become the main social amenities of the village. He built a bridewell, a prison for petty offenders, on the southwestern street in order to keep discipline among the inhabitants, the barracks he had built in order to give the village an established reputation situates itself along the main north-south axis, announcing the village's status to passers-by.

New Birmingham, being situated in northern Tipperary was quite a distance to Sir Vere Hunt Bart's home estate in Curragh Chase, Co. Limerick. This, coupled with the fact that he had to battle with bureaucracy over the establishment of a post office and barracks within the village to give it status as a worthwhile investment, led to his neglect of the immediate problems of the village. These problems worsened and the morale of the inhabitants diminished, as a result, they had stopped working in the coal mines in later years and money ran out for the development of the village. The village was



abandoned one year before Sir Vere Hunt Bart's death in 1818.

Another factor, which I believe led to the decline of New Birmingham was the distance between the village and the coal mines.

The coal mines had to be situated where the coal lay in the Slieveardagh Hills, however the village had to remain within the Hunt family's lands in Kilcooley. This resulted in the village's industry being situated quite far away from the main village, up a steep gradient which made it arduous for villagers to get to, meaning that the transportation of the coal to the village was difficult. This, coupled with the Bog of Ely to the west, meant that traveling to and from the village proved a lot more difficult than Sir Vere Hunt Bart had originally anticipated.

Very little of the original town appears to remain in New Birmingham today. The main cruciform road layout and some boundary walls still remain, apart from which it appears only one house remains. The church has been demolished and a new one stands in its place, facing onto the main north-south road. The barracks and bridewell have also been taken down, in favour of a national school and community centre for the local area.

New Birmingham's failures came from a number of factors, one key issue being transport to and from the village. Sir Vere Hunt Bart, a military figure turned politician, had great ambitions to turn his family's lands in Kilcooley into the central trading hub of Ireland. The village had been named New Birmingham in an attempt to attract prospective investors to it. The Bog of Ely to the west and the Slieveardagh Hills to the east meant that the

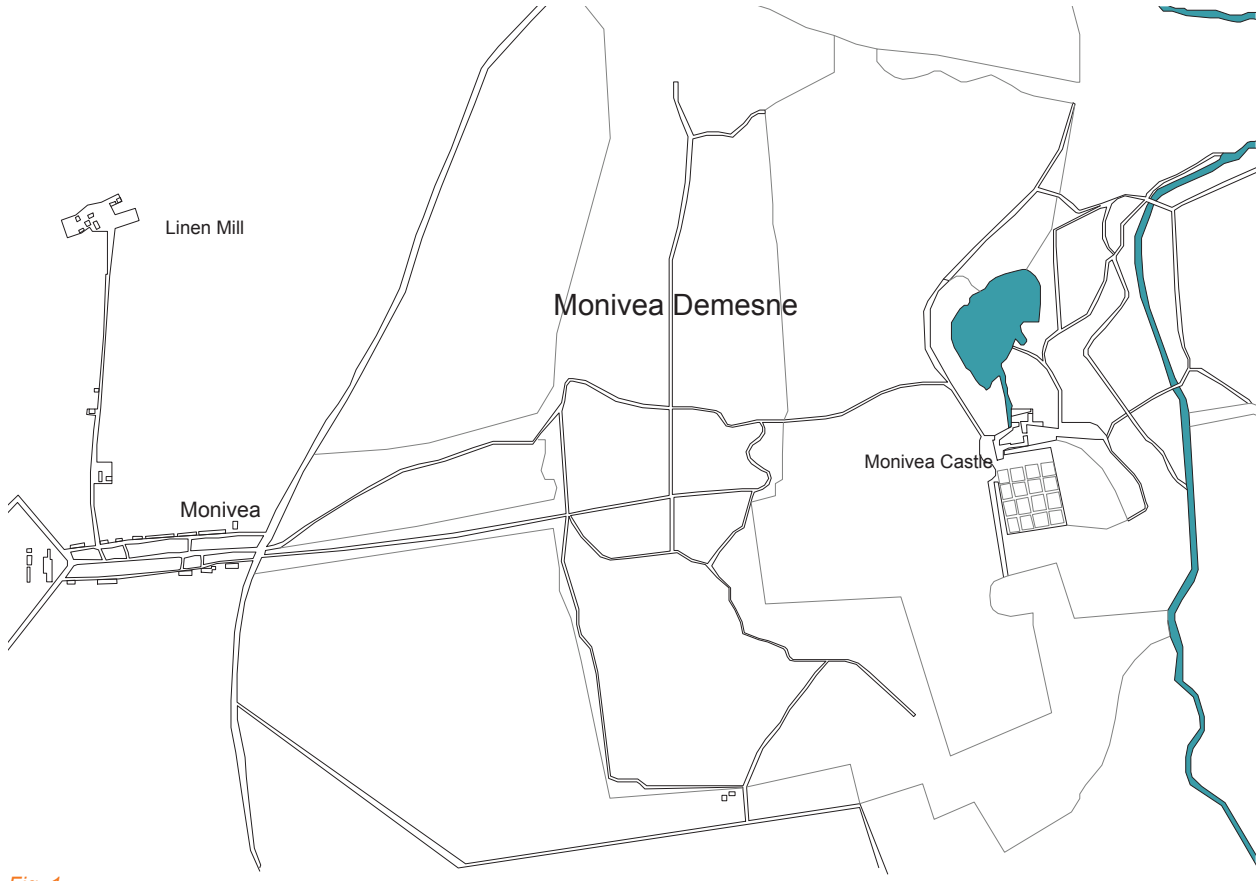


Fig. 1
1:8000 map of Monivea showing its relation to the linen mill, and to the French family's residence at Monivea Castle.

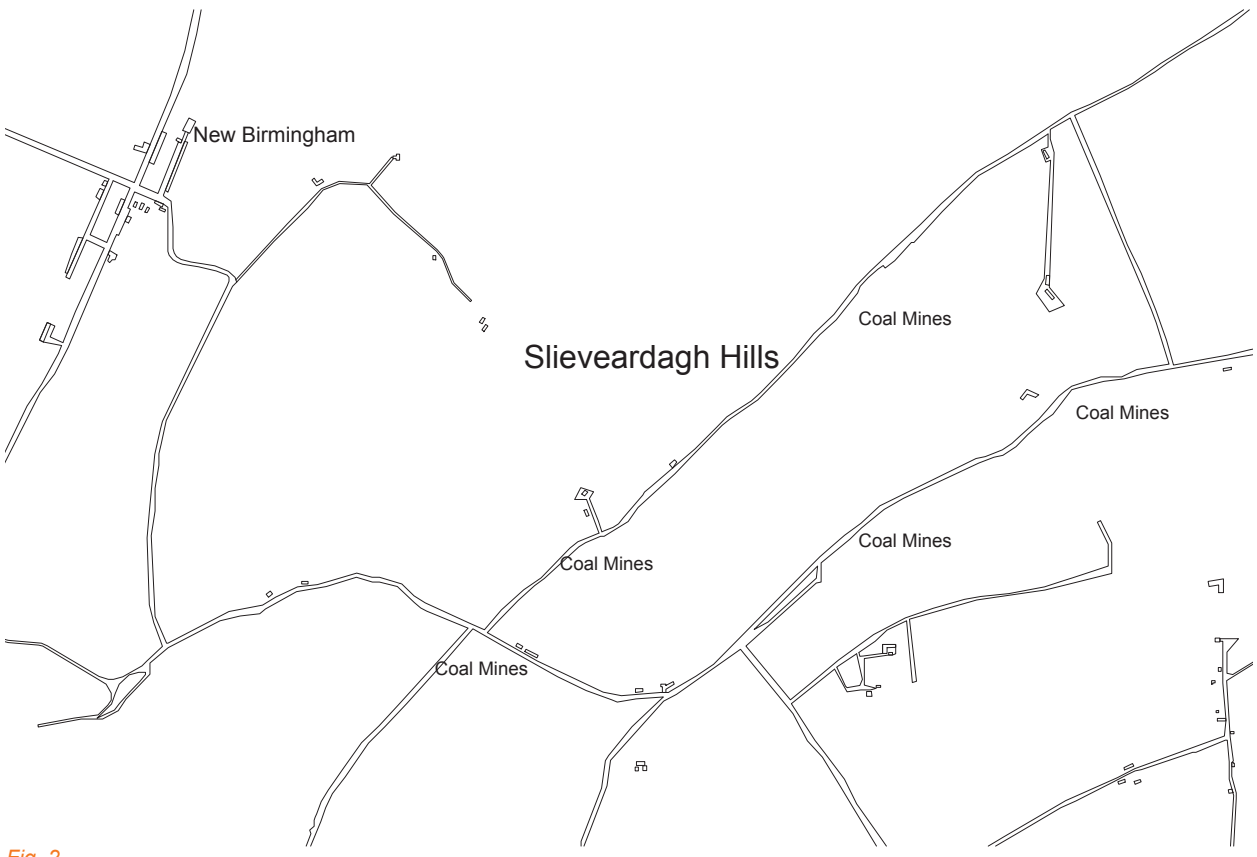


Fig. 2
1:8000 map of New Birmingham showing its relation to the Slieveardagh Hills and the coal mines scattered among them.

Fig. 3
Map of Ireland showing the location of Sir Vere Hunt Bart's home estate of Curragh Chase in relation to the location of New Birmingham

Fig. 4
1:3000 Map of Monivea with a legend to describe the main buildings of the village.

Fig. 5
1:3000 Map of New Birmingham with a legend to describe the main buildings of the village.

transport of coal to and from the village proved difficult, and Hunt's journey to the village from his home estate in Limerick also proved arduous. The village struggled in the sixteen years of its existence as an industrial village and ultimately failed, due to this issue of transport coupled with Sir Vere Hunt Bart's preoccupation with politics and bureaucracy in England. His vision of the project seemed somewhat fantasy compared to the reality of the village's brief troubled existence.

Ultimately Vere Hunt's idealistic plans never materialised. New Birmingham remains now as an indented hamlet, with little evidence of the grandeur of Hunt's plans. In my analysis, the reasons for the failure of the village of New Birmingham were numerous; – its timing was unfortunate due to the Napoleonic Wars, the issue of transport in and around the village, and Vere Hunt's absence from the life of the village all ultimately contributed to the decline.

To put these villages in perspective, I feel it is important to introduce the more successful example of Portlaw, Co. Waterford. It is twenty kilometers northwest of Waterford City and was developed around 1825. The Owenite doctrine was at the height of its international popularity and many philanthropic industrialists tried to adhere to Utopian Socialism in the establishment of planned villages. The firm that established Portlaw comprised of David Malcolmson and his three sons, a family of Quaker industrialists, who saw the benefit of utilising an existing cotton mill near the River Clodiagh for production. Around this, they leased sixteen acres of land on which they built a village for workers to be easily available to the mill, and a canal linking the mill to the River Clodiagh.

The successful planning of Portlaw survived the failure of the cotton industry in the village. The introduction of the railways in Ireland had meant that the canal built for the cotton mill became obsolete, and a number of decades afterward the mill had closed. But the village survived through the introduction of new industries in its place and was able to adapt to these new industries with ease, that is how the success of its planning has been demonstrated. Having had its initial expansion in a haphazard manner, the planning of John Skipton Mulvany has survived through the ages to the point where most original houses still remain today. (See Fig. 6)

I have examined these two examples of failed industrial villages and outlined where the failures have arisen in relation to the change of ownership and their situation in the topography of Ireland. While failures of both Monivea and New Birmingham were also affected by factors outside of their planning, the villages themselves proved unsuccessful in adapting to changes in industry. Monivea had not yet been developed to the point where it could adapt to new industries and thrive on them. New Birmingham's situation had made it difficult for it to really develop and capitalise on its coal production because the transportation of the coal was such an issue. While the ambitions of the villages were that of improvement and development, they had not had enough time under such ambitions to thrive as industrial villages in Ireland.

Stephen O'Brien

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'Portlaw: An Architectural Investigation into the History of the 'Portlaw Roof'' an essay by Niamh Denny (Utopia 7 2015).

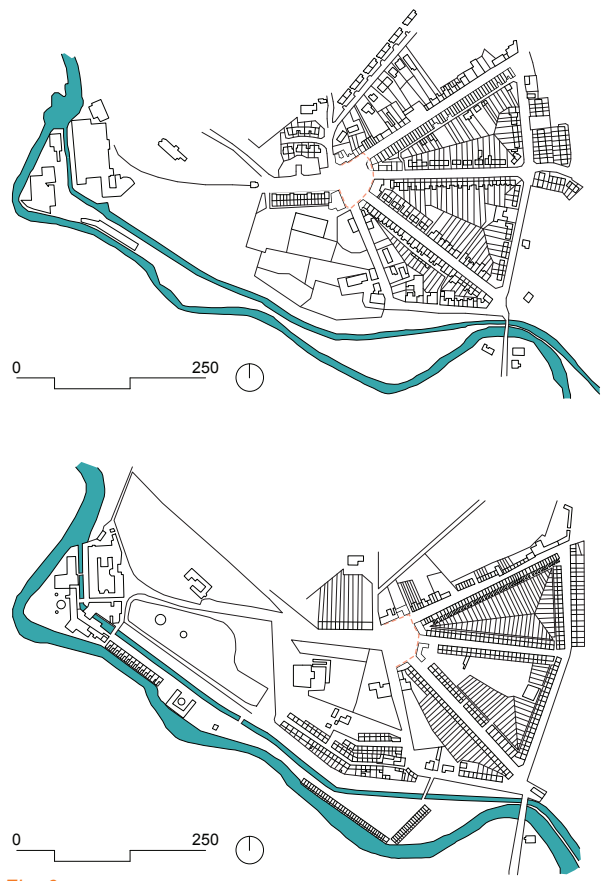

Fig. 6
1:10000 Maps of Portlaw produced by Niamh Denny in 2015.
Top: The layout of the village today.
Bottom: The village as John Skipton Mulvany planned it.

The crescent and the octagon

This essay aims to investigate the planned Irish town of Stratford on Slaney, Co. Wicklow, an early industrial town with a striking double crescent plan. I examine here the history, layout, development and decline of the town. And I continue by undertaking comparative analysis of Stratford on Slaney with other similar crescent and octagonal forms in Irish planned towns.

Edward Stratford, (1736-1801), 2nd Earl of Aldborough, established his model town of Stratford on Slaney in 1774, on a hill above the river Slaney, in west Co. Wicklow. Stratford was known as an entrepreneur and a 'talented amateur architect'; he saw an opportunity on his family's lands in Wicklow to build an industrial cotton producing town in the South of Ireland. Stratford had architectural experience, having previously worked with Robert Adam in London designing 'Stratford Place', close to Oxford Street, a fine example of late Georgian Architecture.

Prior to Stratford's village at Stratford on Slaney, the main manufacturing industries were in the North of Ireland, such as Hillsborough Co. Down. The south of Ireland was mainly an agricultural economy that had fallen stagnant. Stratford saw potential for the development of textile industries in the south due to its climatic conditions; the dampness of the climate of the South provided a suitable environment for the growth of cotton.

From the outset, Stratford strove to establish a model industrial town, developing the residential, public and factory systems; at its height Stratford on Slaney had three churches (Catholic, Protestant and Presbyterian) and fourteen taverns, it had a population of upwards of three thousand. In 1787 the manufacturing trade was said to have begun or 'getting on apace', by 1786 'two ingenious artists' set up a business 'stamping linens and cottons' (Mrs. H. G. Leask,1945) in Stratford. This method was never used before in Ireland and by 1800 Stratford had an established cotton and linen manufacture with calico printing being the dominant trade.

Stratford on Slaney's manufacturing industry saw many changes in hands during its history, in 1789 Stratford leased in the entirety of the village (with the exception of the Church grounds, the parsonage and the field behind) to Messrs Samuel Jameson and Houlton Anderson of Dublin. There were a further number of changes in the ownership of the village until Messrs Orr Smith & Co., originally from Paisley in Scotland, moved to Stratford. They were a successful cotton manufacturing and printing company, by the early 1790's they added calico weaving and printing at Stratford on Slaney. Stratford on Slaney was at its peak in the early part of the nineteenth century, there were over one thousand people employed by Messrs Orr Smith & Co..

The architecture of the housing in Stratford on Slaney was of a simple Georgian style. The housing consisted of one or two floors and each floor had three rooms. The roofs were slated and the windows were sashed and glazed. The housing, although basic, was innovative for its time as thatched cabins were the common living quarters for the poor. The primary house 'Mount Amiens' (Ronald W. Lightnown, 2009) in the town was made up of 5 bays and had 14 rooms, a walled garden, greenhouses, hot houses and offices. The Protestant Georgian granite church was rebuilt by Stratford in 1790.

The most striking aspect of the town plan of Stratford on Slaney is its double crescent plan, this layout was inspired by the town of Bath in England which Stratford visited on several occasions. Bath was a very popular seventeenth century clothing town and was designed by the architect John Wood. Wood created a linear plan for the town and linked geometric spaces such as squares, circles and crescent shapes by a single street lined by terraces. The crescent shape was an innovative urban design in the 18th century. The octagonal, crescent and circle central spaces laid out in Bath were used by Stratford on Slaney as a guideline to create a model industrial town on a smaller scale.

Shown in Fig 1., the first development of the town in 1787 consisted of four streets, laid out at right angles with an octagonal square in the centre. In a later stage the town had further developed; the octagonal square was joined by a street to a crescent of houses. The circle and 'Dublin Street' (Ronald W. Lightnown, 2009) were also introduced. In 1789 the town developed further, consisting of six streets (Baltinglass street, Henniker street, Upper Ormond street, Chapel street, Dublin and Church street), the circle, Aldborough square, Protestant church, Chapel, a half built school and parsonage, principal house 'Mount Amiens', thirty six houses, bleaching greens along the river Slaney, a factory for printing linen, factory attachments and a mill.

The decline in Stratford on Slaney started in the mid nineteenth century. Despite the huge investment from Stratford and his family, the industrial town failed. There were many reasons for this decline - Stratford's death in 1801 meant that the direct responsibility for the village passed to his descendants, there was a decline in the cotton industry in the 19th century, and the Irish Famine of the 1840s led to widespread hardship and economic failure.

The current map of Stratford on Slaney (fig. 2) shows the decline in the clarity of the original urban form. The forge, dispensary, barracks and some of the housing built by Stratford have all disappeared, the original Catholic Church has been replaced. The Protestant church built by Stratford in the late 1700s is one of the few originals to remain.

The distinct crescent and octagonal form of Stratford on Slaney shows the vision and ambition Edward Stratford had for his experimental town, and his ambitions as an amateur architect. My research and investigation into the industrial town of Stratford on Slaney has lead me to further study the history of the crescent and octagonal forms in other planned Irish towns.

Crescent forms:

In 1750 the De Vesci family attained **Abbeyleix Co. Laois** (fig 12) and introduced a new urban layout onto the existing settlement. The village plan hints at a crescent shape form on the west side of the main street. Buildings line the crescent and a market house is located at the centre.

Hillsborough Co. Down (fig 7) also shows the hint of a crescent shaped plan. Both of these towns show variations of a slight crescent plan but lack complete execution.

Tyrrellspass Co. Meath (fig 8) was remodelled in 1820 by Countess of Belvedere. Houses are arranged in a crescent shape form surround a semi-circular green. The crescent shape has a deep and convincing layout. A Street is laid out around 180 degrees and closes the crescent shape.

Mountbellew Co. Galway (fig 11) bears a significant resemblance to Tyrrellspass layout, differing only in its lack of housing on the 180-degree axis.

Octagonal forms:

Experimentation of Irish town plans at a highly sophisticated level started to be thought about and developed around the 1740s and 1750s. Four experimental town layouts that have the octagon shape as the focal point are Johnstown Co. Kilkenny, Slane Co. Meath, Malahide Co. Dublin, and Belmullet Co. Mayo.

Johnstown Co. Kilkenny (fig 9) was laid out in the 1760's and has a defined crossroads with an octagonal space that is the intersection point to the town, and is marked out by four trees.

Slane Co. Meath (fig 3) has a strong octagon space similar to that at Johnstown. The octagon is defined by four identical houses on the transverse.

Belmullet Co. Mayo (fig 4) has an octagonal formal space that is reminiscent of Slane and Johnstown. The main street is a diagonal line that cuts through the octagon and leads straight to the quays. **Malahide** (fig 10) Co. Dublin shows a similar octagonal layout to Belmullet.

The remodelling of the town of **Westport Co. Mayo** (fig 5) dates back to the 1780s. Westport shows a highly sophisticated and ambitious level of town planning with an octagonal main focal point. A canal was constructed with a tree lined avenue known as the 'mall'. Several streets branched off from the mall. The entrance to the demesne, and where the village sits, connects the octagon and mall but in a loose manner.

Ballyhaise Co. Cavan (fig 13) shows a less formal octagonal village centre - it showed great ambition but lacked in the execution, perhaps due to lack of expert supervision. Unfortunately, little remains of the octagonal form today.

Crescent and Octagonal forms intertwined:

Castlewellan Co. Down (fig 6) shows the use of two crescent shape forms to create formal spaces in a town. This is the closest urban form to that at Stratford on Slaney. The upper half semi-circular space was constructed first in the early 1800's. The half crescent from is closed by a street running through at 180 degrees. The second full circular form was constructed in 1810. Two streets cut through the two centre points of the formal spaces. The crescent forms are linked by a main street that cuts through the centre point of both spaces. The full and half circular forms are occupied by buildings, creating a defined formal space.

The use of crescent and octagonal forms was innovative and experimental in many towns in Ireland. The presence of these forms was often a statement of social ambition and taste of the landlord, referencing more grandiose Georgian developments, such as those at Edinburgh and Bath.

Karen Tighe

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'The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland', Vol. 75, No. 1 (Mar., 1945), pp. 24-31. by Ada K. Longfield (Mrs. H. G. Leask). (1945)
Image title: Stratford Family Tomb Baltinglass Abbey
Image credit: Mary Hargaden

Fig. 1
Stratford-on-Slaney, Co. Wicklow

Fig. 2
Stratford-on-Slaney, Co. Wicklow (2016)

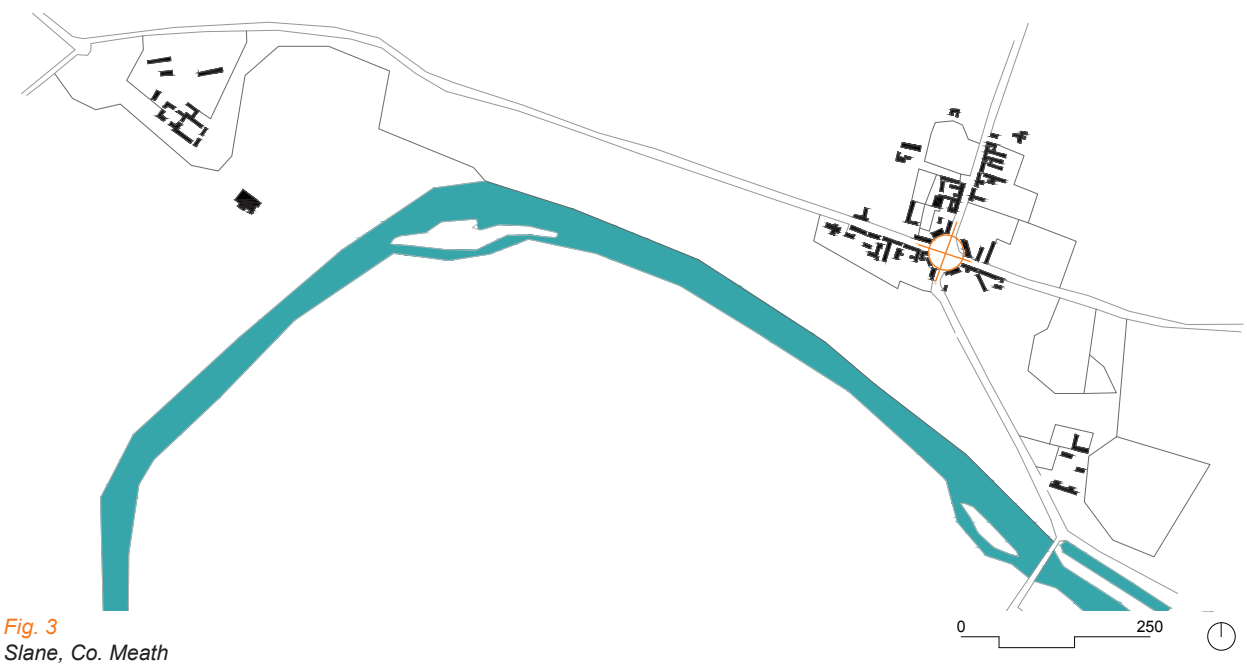

Fig. 3
Slane, Co. Meath

Fig. 4
Belmullet, Co. Mayo

Fig. 5
Westport, Co. Mayo

Fig. 6 (above)
Castlewellan, Co. Down

Fig. 7
Hillsborough, Co. Down

Fig. 8
Tyrrellspass, Co. Meath

Fig. 9
Johnstown, Co. Kilkenny

Fig. 10
Malahide, Co. Dublin

Fig. 11
Mountbellew, Co. Galway

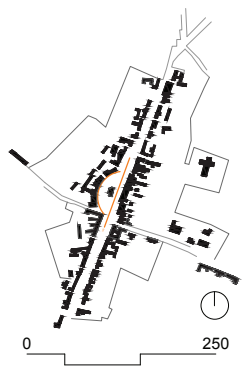

Fig. 12
Abbeyleix, Co. Laois

Fig. 13
Ballyhaise, Co. Cavan

Alexander Nimmo, infrastructure and villages

Alexander Nimmo was born in Scotland in 1783 and, after studying in Edinburgh and St. Andrews, moved to Ireland in 1811 to work for the Bogs Commission, a government body run by the English administration. The breath of Nimmo's influence on the infrastructure of Ireland is striking. He designed roads, railway lines, bridges, piers and planned villages along the western coast. Indeed, the "planning of long, purposeful lines of road was his most important innovation in the west" (Wilkins, 2009).
The diagrams below are a comparison of piers and quays that Alexander Nimmo designed and built, alongside the associated villages or settlements. Many of these piers were built from 1822-1825. In some cases such as Kilalla and Achill Sound, the piers remain as isolated infrastructural elements in the landscape, in other examples such as Knightstown, Binghamstown and Belmullet, the piers Nimmo designed became the anchor for the development of the associated village.

Fig. 1
Pier designed by Alexander Nimmo at Roundstone, Co. Galway

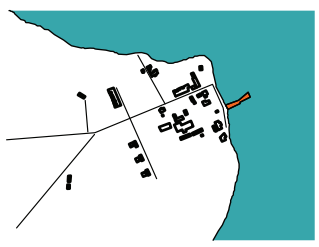

Fig. 4
Knightstown, Co. Kerry
0 600

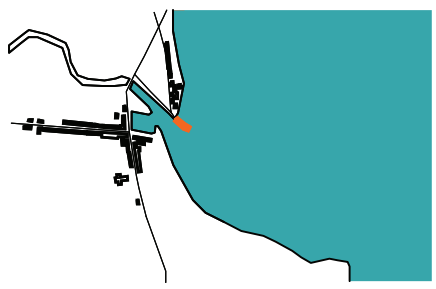

Fig. 5
Carrigaholt, Co. Clare
0 600

Fig. 6
Balinskelligs, Co. Kerry
0 1000

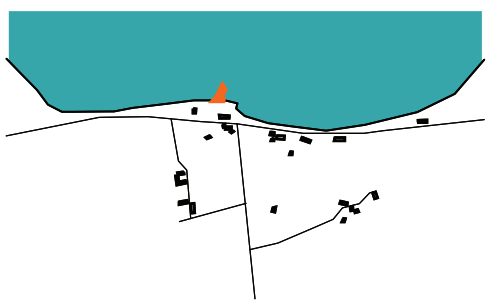

Fig. 10
Ballyvelaghan, Co. Clare
0 300

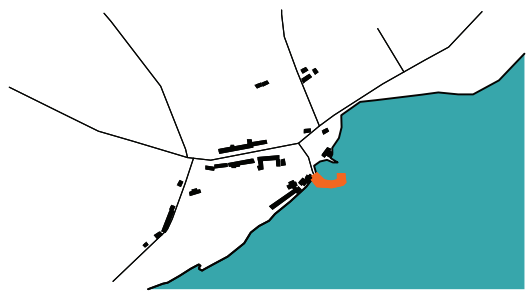

Fig. 11
Liscannor, Co. Clare
0 500

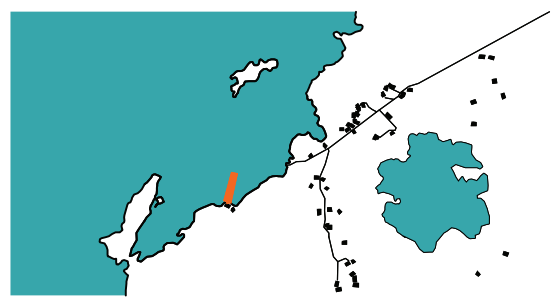

Fig. 12
Rossaveel, Co. Galway
0 600

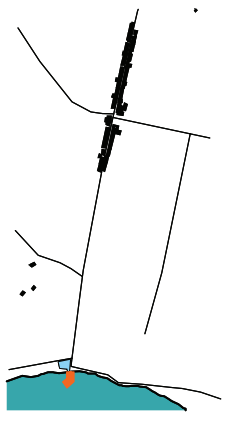

Fig. 16
Binghamstown, Co. Mayo
0 700

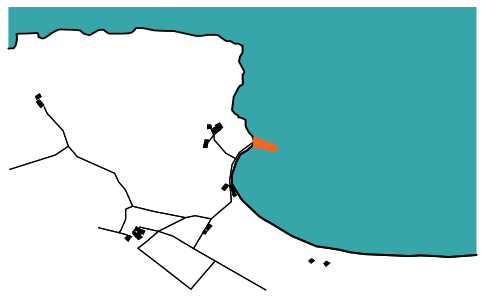

Fig. 17
Old Head, Co. Mayo
0 600

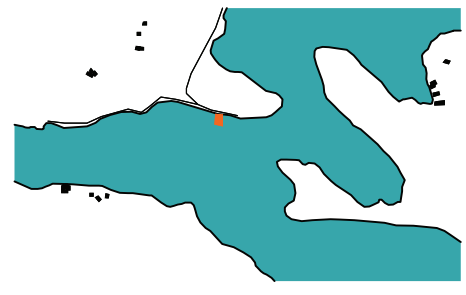

Fig. 18
Achill Sound, Co. Mayo
0 600

Fig. 22
Inishturk,Co. Mayo
0 600

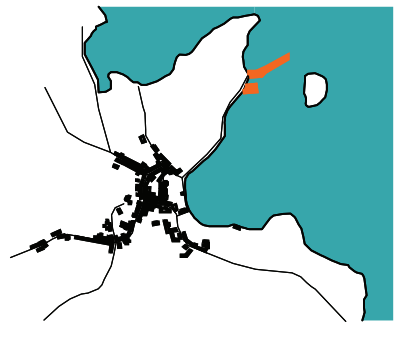

Fig. 23
Killala, Co. Mayo
0 400

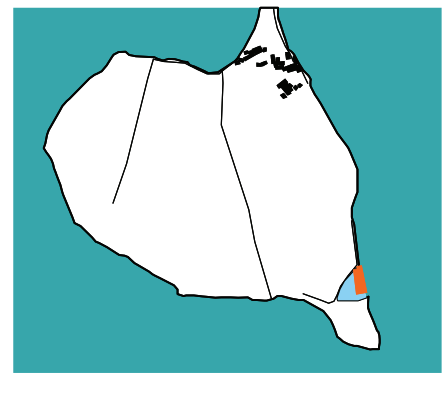

Fig. 24
Raughly, Co. Sligo
0 500

Fig. 2
View down main street of Knightstown, Valentia Island, Co.Kerry. Main street links up directly with the road on the mainland

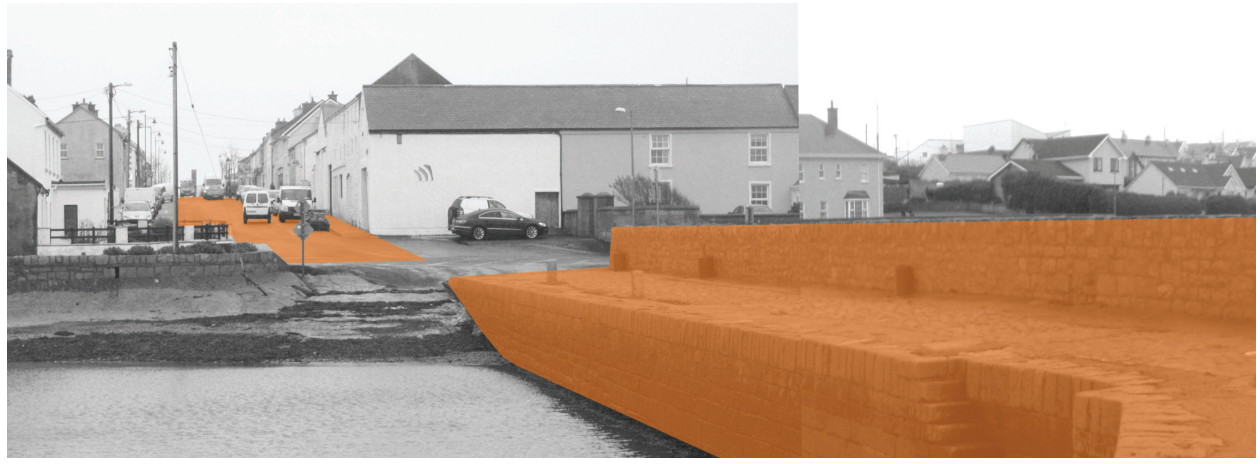

Fig. 3
The Main street of Belmullet links directly to the Pier, that Alexander Nimmo designed in 1822

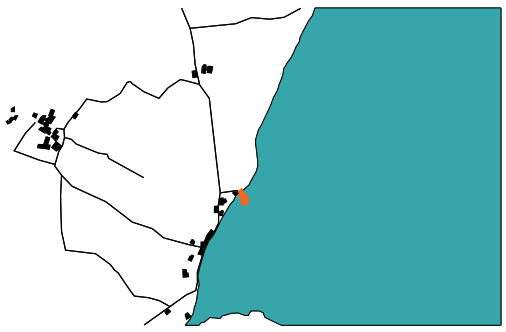

Fig. 7
Brandon, Co.Kerry
0 900

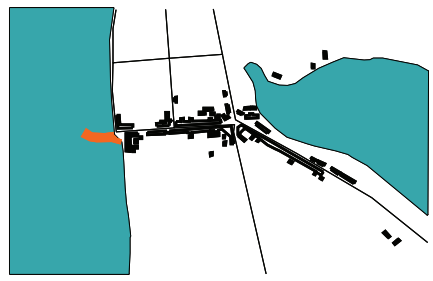

Fig. 8
Belmullet, Co. Mayo
0 400

Fig. 9
Spiddal, Co. Galway
0 600

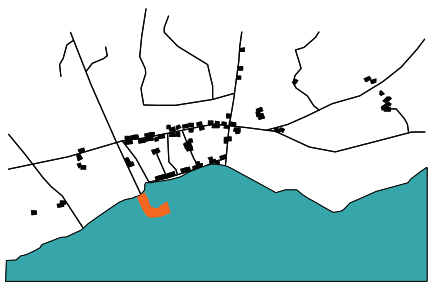

Fig. 13
Barna, Co. Galway
0 600

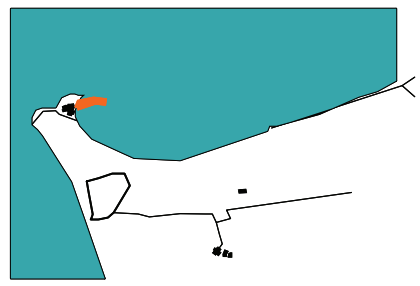

Fig. 14
Seafield, Co. Clare
0 400

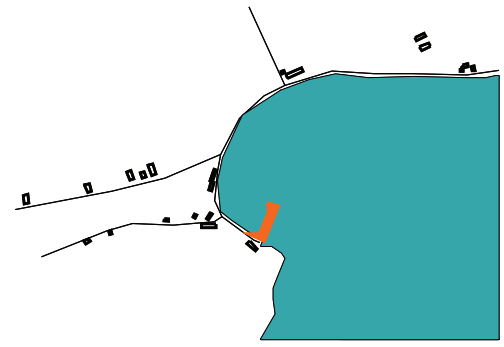

Fig. 15
Kilbaha, Co. Clare
0 300

Fig. 19
Dingle, Co. Kerry
0 700

Fig. 20
Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry
0 600

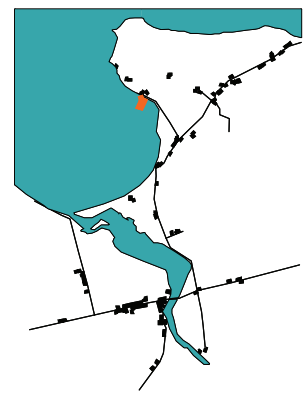

Fig. 21
Doonbeg, Co. Clare
0 900

Fig. 25
Cleggan, Co. Galway
0 700

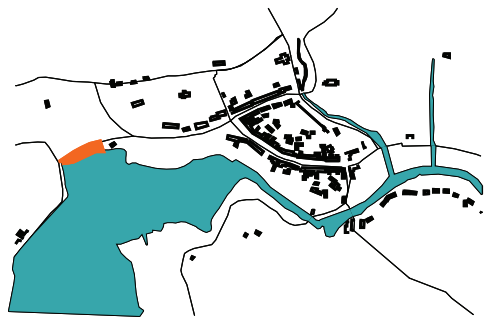

Fig. 26
Clifden, Co. Galway
0 400

Fig. 27
Roundstone, Co. Galway
0 300

> Alexander Nimmo was a true engineer in the real meaning of the term. He was a man of tremendous ingenuity, creative spirit and invention who planned, designed and brought reality to great schemes and projects, construction works, machines and other ingenious devices.
> (Browne, 2009)

Although the Irish famine reached its height in the 1840s, food and resource shortages were common in the proceeding decades. This was especially true on the west coast of Ireland where there was little industry and infrastructure, and the rural community survived primarily on subsistence farming. Although there was significant practice of absenteeism by British landowners, there was a concerted effort by the British government and some landlords to exploit the resources that were available along the west coast of Ireland in the early part of the 19th century. Organisations like the Bogs Commission and the Fisheries Commission were set up to accurately map and ascertain the best way to develop infrastructure such as roads, railways, piers and waterways in the 'western district'. It is clear that there was an economic imperative from the British government to map and develop Irish coastal resources.

The British government surveyed one million acres across twenty two counties, between the years of 1809-1814. The Fisheries Commission was in charge of developing the fishing industry, by building quays and piers all across the country. This was a hugely important part of the development of the west coast of Ireland as famines became more frequent the fishing industry was seen as a way of alleviating the pressure on food resources. Alexander Nimmo lived in Ireland and played a pivotal role in both the Bogs and Fisheries commissions, developing the infrastructure of the west coast.

Alexander Nimmo designed many bridges and piers in almost every west coast county of Ireland, of which many still exist today. There is no doubt that Nimmo was not just an Engineer who was interested in roads, railways and piers, he was also very interested in the bettering of people's lives and developing towns and villages on the west coast.

> …..It strikes me we should now endeavour to congregate the surplus populations into towns, where they could be useful to one another… the towns here are very small in population… and the industry, in like manner, is less
> (Villiers Tuthill - quoting Alexander Nimmo, 2006)

Alexander Nimmo was sent to the 'western district' to improve the infrastructure. He did just that and also promoted the development of new villages, which still exist today. In all cases it seemed Nimmo was looking at the west of Ireland with a macro view. He determined where would be best to place a pier or to build a road and only after this decision did a town develop, usually with the help of local landlords like John D'Arcy, Maurice Fitzgerald or Thomas Martin. He seemed to "become acquainted with the families and familiar with their aspirations for their own estates and for the region in general" (Villiers Tuthill, 2006).

Nimmo's personal interest and investment in the west coast is most evident in Roundstone Co. Galway. After the construction of a pier in Roundstone between 1822-1825, a tenant of the land on which the pier was built sought compensation from the government for the damage and use of his land. Nimmo had on many occasions recommended that a village be established on the Roundstone site, and he used this complaint as an opportunity to do so. Instead of paying compensation to the tenant, Nimmo took over the lease for the land. On the 1st of August 1826 he renewed the agreement with the landlord, Thomas Martin, for two hundred and forty acres of land, that stretched from the quay to Letterduff (see Fig 3). Nimmo divided the land around the Roundstone pier and offered it to tenants. Many of these leases had rules that the tenants had to build "Good dwelling houses with slated roofs and in most instances of two stories high" (Villiers Tuthill, 2006).

Thomas Martin, the landlord for Roundstone, also tried to promote the town as a market village by obtaining licenses for four yearly fairs and weekly markets. Nimmo made Roundstone the centre of public works for the development of the western district, meaning that a lot of the engineers that worked under Nimmo actually resided in Roundstone. Indeed his brother John Nimmo moved to Roundstone and took over the lease for the land after Alexander Nimmo's death in 1832. Carpentry and smithy workshops, a store and office, were all built and rented out to the government bodies at £50 per year. Roundstone thrived under Nimmo's direction, and the imprint of Nimmo's plan is still evident in the village today.

Individually, the small settlements and infrastructure are of limited architectural interest. Nimmo's legacy is in the scope of his work, and the connectivity of the west coast. He was a dynamic designer and engineer, who had a vision for what the west coast of Ireland could be;

Fig. 28
Map of west coast villages that have piers designed by Alexander Nimmo

> I was well aware… of what apparitions were most necessary for the improvement of this country and in conducting them I have been equally anxious.
> (Villiers Tuthill - quoting Alexander Nimmo 2006)

Jack Worrall

Key Sources:

Book '*Alexander Nimmo and the Western District*' by Kathleen Villiers Tuthill
Book '*Alexander Nimmo Master Engineer*' by Noel P. Wilkins
Essay '*Finding Nimmo*', Engineers Journal;Jul/Aug2009, by Jim Browne

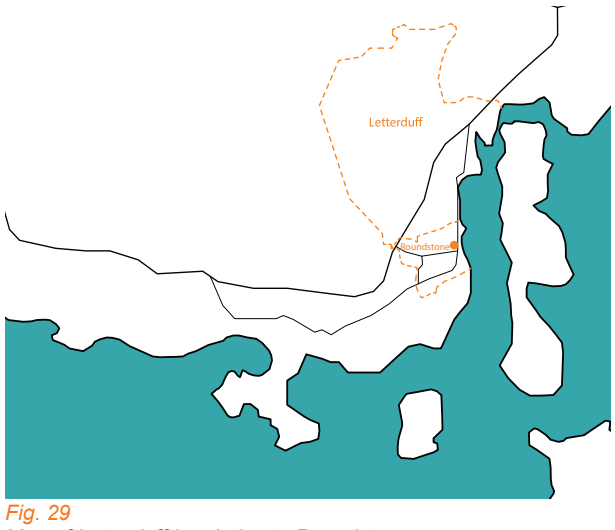

Fig. 29
Map of Letterduff in relation to Roundstone

Fig. 30
Map of Roundstone - 1842

Fig. 31
Map of Roundstone - 2006

POST INDUSTRIAL was produced by Deepka Abbi, Mark Corcoran, Stephen O'Brien, Karen Tighe, Jack Worrall, and our tutor Miriam Delaney. We are extremely appreciative of all who supported the production of this newspaper through our 'Fundit' campaign. We would also like to acknowledge the generous contribution of Dr. Colin Rynne, whose introduction to this publication perfectly frames the nature of industrialisation within an Irish context, and prefaces the work contained within.