Heritage and history: exploring landscape and place in County Meath

P.J. DUFFY

Introduction

Habitat and history are critical elements in understanding our landscape today. The landscape is essentially a legacy which may be conceived of as layers of artifacts and meanings built up over many generations in the same place. There are two segments in the following paper. In the first section there is a general discussion of the meaning of landscape and the way in which we view and comprehend 'space' as consisting of distinctive places. Secondly, we will look more objectively at the canvas of places in Meath and the manner in which we can conceive of a system of territorial landscapes that represent a rational ordering of place over long periods of time.

Places reflect the depth of time – the moulding and shaping of landscape is a product of generational increments resulting in a hierarchy of place from house to farm to townland to parish, barony and so on. There are two levels to understanding landscape and place: where places are topographical facts which we experience on a daily basis and represent in maps and statistics, or photographs perhaps. And there is the more intangible experience of place as, for example, in narrative constructions represented in stories, folklore, film or television. Avoca is a topographical reality; Ballykissangel is a fictive construction of the same place.

Some historians think of the past as being there waiting to be uncovered, as facts to be assembled and told. But the past, like the landscape, is constantly read and re-read, re-told and re-interpreted. Monuments are a good example of representations and "explanations" of the past placed in landscapes, which represent meanings fixed in time that are frequently revised by later generations.

Conceptions of landscape and place

Space, place and landscape represent some of the most important facts in our lives: together with food and shelter these

topographical facts must form part of the fundamentals of life. Our earliest memories are about the spatial learning process, when we have our first practical exercises at home in distance, scale and location. To a greater or lesser extent according to age, life-cycle, income and occupation, life is about constant movement through space from place to place.

While memory is an important part of our psychological makeup, and remembering is a distinctive human experience, place and landscape form a universal material and physical context for memory. The past is not a foreign country but is very much part of our present. Events of the past – big and small – took *place*, in sites and situations, landscapes and environments familiar in varying ways – as places of birth and childhood, of adoption, of work and business, of passing acquaintance or transitory experience: they are the settings of our pasts. In the words of Seamus Heaney, the "nourishment which springs from knowing and belonging to a certain place" is a universal human obsession.[1]

The primacy of landscape is best observed in the search for roots, for family identity. Relating an experience familiar to many Irish-Americans, two brothers from Manchester recently described a journey[2] they made to visit the village their grandmother had left in Romania at the beginning of this century. They had grown up with their father's story about the long journey across Europe and about the place he left behind. It was the manner in which they described their return that illustrated the significance of landscape in our lives: they "discovered" their identity when they saw their grandfather's *grave*, the *village* with its unpaved *streets*, the *railway* where their grandmother had started her journey, the *houses* and villages on the roadside, the *fields* where she had worked. It was as if they were being introduced to their long-lost relatives who had occupied, lived in and moved through this landscape. This is a paean to landscape as the territorial expression of our human identity. Irish-Americans who come to Ireland also want to see the place of their ancestors, to touch the stones, the walls, the fabric of their ancestral landscape – emotionally an experience that seems almost akin to people, who have been adopted at birth, meeting their birth mother for the first time.

In talking of the importance of local landscapes like this, I am talking probably of a kind of organic link between landscape and communities, growing up and into their place, of landscapes as legacies with tangible form, scale and texture. We can talk of

181 - 218

elements of landscape, therefore, like hills and headlands, fields and farmscapes (or familiar local designations like "the bottoms" and "the haggard"), yards and streets, roads and byroads, lanes and boreens, demesne/ parklands, gardens, avenues, lawns and driveways – all expressions in varying ways of long-established spatial ordering of landscape. These are all terms which have a significance and meaning for us, which are essentially part of a language of landscape. Indeed there are many names on places whose everyday meaning is no longer clear – especially names in Irish like *cluain*, or *cloch* or *rath*...: John Montague has referred to this: "the whole landscape a manuscript/ We had lost the skill to read...."[3]

All these bits and pieces of landscape are texts made meaningful with memories, histories, stories. Remembering, for example, is a very spatial experience: *Here* I grew up, *there* I went to school, *here* I made my childhood friends, *there* my ancestors are buried. One could say that growing up is like climbing a hierarchy of ever more distant locations and places. This hierarchy of place-knowledge not only changes with age, but with time and generations. In my grandfather's generation the hierarchy would have been different, and his grandfather (who was born in 1840) would have experienced a much more restricted world.

For community, the landscape's sense of place is also a highly intangible experience: local cultural attributes, customs and traditions, dialect, accent, music perhaps, folklore are all part of the fabric of landscape. And community is made up of different subgroups with different levels of belonging to a place: in Meath in the past there were the big landlords, the large grazier farms, the tillage farms employing labour on the "townland farm", the herds, the labourers, drovers, cottagers....the merchants and townspeople. More recently there is the commuting population and other newcomers to the county. All of these in various mixes add distinction to landscapes, so that Kilcloon district is in many small ways different to Duleek, or Ballivor, or Moynalty. Landscapes are more than mere hills and clay, rivers and grassland.

If identity is connected to landscape and history, belonging may vary among different sections of the community. One can speculate on the nature of belonging to place: the landowning (and/or Anglo-Irish) class moving in a British or European orbit, may have had a superficial connection. Lady Fingall wrote about how the "Irish landlords lived within their demesnes making a world of their own, with Ireland outside the gates".[4] The occupiers

of the big farms whose offspring went away to school may have a different connection with local place to the more restricted local horizons of labourers. Do natives or non-natives have different levels of belonging? Jones Hughes has spoken of the "fleeting nature of many of the labouring communities" in Meath; Jim Gilligan talks of many of the graziers of the south county in the same way.[5]

Meath (and similar "metropolitan" landscapes) is especially interesting because its new commuter population will inevitably have a different relationship with their landscape to the native population: it is for them what might be called their secondary landscape because they have associations with more extensive and far-flung regions and places.

Real world spaces in the landscape: territories in Meath

Knowledge of landscape takes place through the language of territories and a spatial order which is a consequence of our relations with the landscape through time. What we may call a process of "territorialisation" is expressed in the designation and naming of territorial structures (generic and particular). This is an essential part of the vocabulary of landscape which we take for granted today, as we take for granted the words we use in everyday communications: how could we survive, not alone understand where we live, if it did not have at a generic level, "townlands" or "parishes", "farms" and "fields", "streets" and "fairgreens" in towns and villages – all with individual and distinctive names: even "street" or "lane", or "avenue" or "meadow", not to mention "hill" or "bottoms" or "Upper" and "Lower", are part of the language. More recent additions to this vocabulary in newly-emerging suburban landscapes – like "Close", "Downs", "Drive" and "Grove" – are replete with social meaning. Many of these newly named places are using landscape to construct a false sense of rurality, community or place, as for example, in "The Village" or "The Cloisters" or "The Meadows".

There is a need to try to understand the territorial system and how it evolved. Much has been written on Meath's history,[6] reflecting a keen interest in the place over generations. Much of it is written in the tradition of descriptive local history of particular places. Cogan's diocesan history provides tremendous detail on the evolution of the ecclesiastical history of the county. All of these histories are invaluable accounts of the making of individual

and distinctive places. There is, however, a need for an overall perspective (a) to see the local landscape as part of a bigger whole – in Ireland or within the British Isles or Europe and (b) to search for a system of order, a territorial structure, to help us understand the meaning of place in Meath.

Baronies and parishes

These are some of what we might call the "territorial parameters" by which we have delineated and read our landscape in the past. Baronies are historic units of place which have little meaning for today's inhabitants but because they have had meaning in the past and because of their antiquity as lines in the landscape for a thousand years they are important. Like a street curve in the medieval town of Kells, or an old stone wall at the end of a Trim garden, they reflect the territorial-political-property owning priorities of a bygone era which may have shaped successive developments in the landscape.

Some historians accuse geographers of being "blind to environmental changes" in their assumption that "townlands, parishes and even baronies remained constant features of the Irish landscape during succeeding centuries".[7] In fact it could be argued that this is precisely the case, and that geographers rightly emphasise the endurance of territorial entities like baronies, parishes and, in many cases, townlands. Historians assume that landscapes, like societies, could not have remained unchanged with the waxing and waning and moving around of peoples. But the environmental and landscape modernisation and change which have characterised the past four centuries might not have been possible except for the continuity of boundaries laid down for a thousand years. The Norman colonisation – with its subinfeudation, manor-creation and subsequent settlement and agricultural development – was facilitated by the existence of prior and well-established territories. Four hundred townlands (tates) surveyed in 1634 in south Monaghan – before it was enclosed, drained, and before the "modern" landscape was created (and many of whose names were recorded in earlier centuries) – are in most cases identical with the modern townland boundaries.[8]

On the other hand, it is important not to overemphasise the continuity of territorial divisions – and to recognise that over very long spans of time, gradual adjustments and changes did occur. But it is difficult to accept that broad sweeping transformations in territorial order would have occurred. Property

boundaries with taxation, tributary or political significance would have rarely been subject to radical change. Following the Norman settlement and the establishment of common law in counties like Meath, there was a greater incentive for geographical inertia in the maintenance of boundaries.

The baronies are part of this medieval legacy, with unclear pre-Norman precedents. The Norman colonists behaved rationally in adopting whatever territorial realities existed before them, with occasional modifications to suit the requirements of the subinfeudation process. Smyth has examined barony boundaries in Westmeath and shows that the topographical sense of bogs dividing good land served to carve out Gaelic tribal territories which appear to have continued as baronies. "Diocesan, baronial and ancient tribal divisions were all predetermined by the presence of mountain, river, forest and impassible bog".[9] The baronies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Meath were generally of the same order of magnitude: with the exception of Dunboyne and Upper Navan, they clustered around 30,000 acres in extent, reflecting a long-established sense of the productive potential of the land.

On the other hand, Hogan's work of seventy years ago suggests that in Meath, the old *triucha cét* unit had ceased to have any significance before the Anglo-Norman settlement.[10] He has suggested an Anglo-Norman organisation of subdivisions into the newly established shires of the thirteenth century which became the later baronies. It is difficult, however, to assign to them a purely arbitrary administrative origin, without acknowledging some pre-existing structure. In some instances, their persistence as districts of strong regional identity – as in Duhallow and Muskerry in Cork, Bargy and Forth in Wexford – reflects a longstanding social connection with these structures.

Parishes are much closer to the realities of landscape and place up to the present, though their continuing relevance for local identities might require some reassessment. The parish is certainly an important part of the language for reading the landscape. Many of its other features, such as buildings, large farms and demesnes, can best be understood in terms of the parish structure. Many aspects of community life and culture were and continue to be manifested best at the level of the parish.

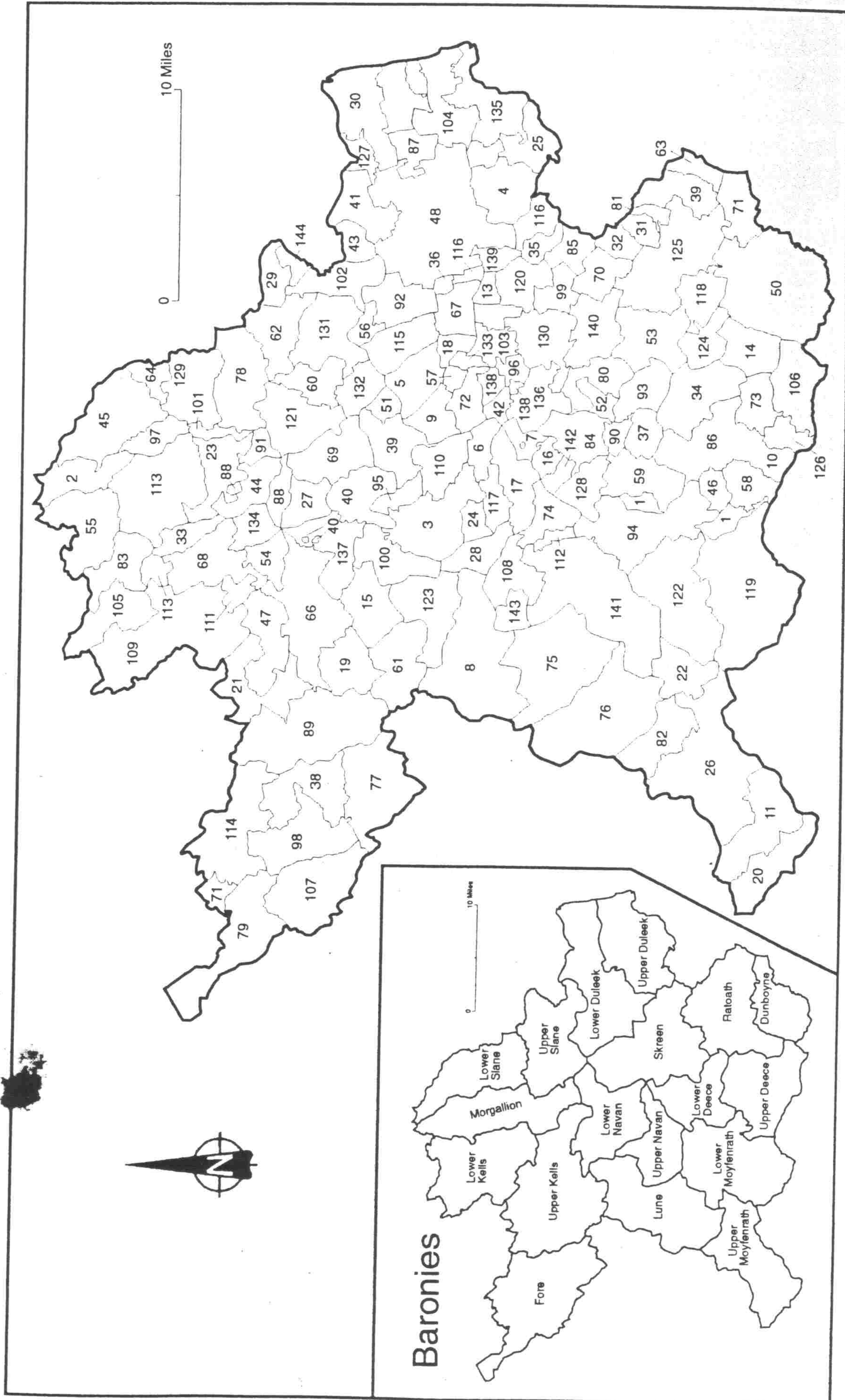
Historically and traditionally parishes represented a semblance of community territory: their scale reflects a preindustrial locally-determined identity, principally a product of restricted mobility

networks. Landscape scale was largely dictated by average distances accessible by foot – the distance between small country towns generally throughout Europe today, for example, reflects the approximate distances of travel to and from market in one day. Small parish churches were probably located within walking distances for the local community.

In Meath and the east of Ireland we have two broad parochial trends which have developed from a common legacy. The basic structure of historic parishes which was inherited from the medieval period was modified mainly through unions in the past few centuries for reasons connected with availability of pastors and size of congregation. Unions of the historic parishes were implemented by the Catholic Church as a result of irregularities in the supply of priests in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For the Church of Ireland, unions were a consequence of very small congregations.

The old historic parishes represent the territorial ordering of small communities for spiritual functions as far back as the beginnings of the feudal colony in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in keeping with European diocesan and parochial structures.[11] Though early twelfth-century church reforms seem to have been confined to dioceses, it is likely that a great many of these parishes echoed an early Christian origin as small monastic foundations. It is notable for example that the vast majority of the historic parishes are Gaelic Irish in origin – anything from 110-115 have Irish (Gaelic) names, suggesting pre-Norman origins. The early monastic church territories probably had linkages with earlier civil units such as tuaths or ballybetaghs.[12] The consolidation of the parochial system went hand-in-hand with Anglo-Norman rural colonisation, resulting in manors and parishes often coinciding.

Fig. 1 shows the civil parishes of Meath as recorded by the Ordnance Survey in the 1830s. Although a small number of the older parishes mentioned by Cogan are missing, the civil parishes, as they became known in the eighteenth century,[13] are representative of the historic medieval parishes in the county. The map shows a tremendously detailed geometry of places which, in spite of their putative pre-Norman origins, resembled the feudal world of England and Europe much more than the Gaelic world to the north and west. There were 144 of these parishes in mid nineteenth-century County Meath, averaging 4000 acres in extent. The Gaelic – English contrast across the Pale is reflected in the parish geography, with a preponderance


0
10 Miles
Baronies
Upper Duleek
Lower Duleek
Upper Slane
Lower Slane
Morgallion
Ratoath
Dunboyne
Skreen
Lower Deece
Upper Deece
Lower Navan
Upper Navan
Lower Kells
Upper Kells
Lower Moyfenrath
Upper Moyfenrath
Lune
Fore

1. Agher
2. Ardagh
3. Ardbraccan
4. Ardcath
5. Ardmulchan
6. Ardsallagh
7. Assey
8. Athboy
9. Athlumney
10. Balfeaghan
11. Ballyboggan
12. Ballygarth
13. Ballymagarvey
14. Ballymaglassan
15. Balrathboyne
16. Balsoon
17. Bective
18. Brownstown
19. Burry
20. Castlejordan
21. Castlekeeran or Loughan
22. Castlerickard
23. Castletown
24. Churchtown
25. Clonalvy
26. Clonard
27. Clongill
28. Clonmacduff
29. Collon
30. Colp
31. Cookstown
32. Crickstown
33. Cruicetown
34. Culmullin
35. Cushinstown
36. Danestown
37. Derrypatrick
38. Diamor
39. Donaghmore
40. Donaghpatrick
41. Donore
42. Dowdstown
43. Dowth
44. Drakestown
45. Drumcondra
46. Drumlargan
47. Dulane
48. Duleek
49. Duleek Abbey
50. Dunboyne
51. Dunmoe
52. Dunsany
53. Dunshaughlin
54. Emlagh
55. Enniskeen
56. Fennor
57. Follistown
58. Gallow
59. Galtrim
60. Gernonstown
61. Girley
62. Grangegeeth
63. Greenoge
64. Inishmot
65. Julianstown
66. Kells
67. Kentstown
68. Kilbeg
69. Kilberry
70. Kilbrew
71. Kilbride
72. Kilcarn
73. Kilclone
74. Kilcooly
75. Kildalkey
76. Killaconnigan
77. Killallon
78. Killary
79. Killeagh
80. Killeen
81. Killegland
82. Killyon
83. Kilmainham
84. Kilmessan
85. Kilmoon
86. Kilmore
87. Kilsharvan
88. Kilshine
89. Kilskeer
90. Kiltale
91. Knock
92. Knockcommon
93. Knockmark
94. Laracor
95. Liscartan
96. Lismullin
97. Loughbrackan
98. Loughcrew
99. Macetown
100. Martry
101. Mitchelstown
102. Monknewtown
103. Monktown
104. Moorechurch
105. Moybolgue
106. Moyglare
107. Moylagh
108. Moymet
109. Moynalty
110. Navan
111. Newtown
112. Newtownclonbun
113. Nobber
114. Oldcastle
115. Painestown
116. Piercetown
117. Rataine
118. Rathbeggan
119. Rathcore
120. Rathfeigh
121. Rathkenny
122. Rathmolyon
123. Rathmore
124. Rathregan
125. Ratoath
126. Rodanstown
127. St. Mary's
128. Scurlockstown
129. Siddan
130. Skreen
131. Slane
132. Stackallan
133. Staffordstown
134. Staholmog
135. Stamullin
136. Tara
137. Teltown
138. Templekeeran
139. Timoole
140. Trevet
141. Trim
142. Trubley
143. Tullaghanoge
144. Tullyallen

Figure 1. Civil Parishes.

of larger parishes in the western baronies of Kells, Fore, Lune and Moyfenrath. The world of larger parishes continues into Westmeath and northwards into south Ulster: in the whole of Clogher diocese to the north (embracing counties Monaghan, Fermanagh and part of Tyrone) there were only 45 civil parishes. Monaghan's parishes averaged in excess of 17,000 acres; Aghnamullen parish in south Monaghan was over 30,000 acres in extent. In contrast East Meath especially in the baronies of Navan, Skreen and Duleek contained some of the smallest units: in Skreen barony, parishes were less than 2000 acres on average.

Graham has mapped 149 church sites in the county, and the locations of more than ninety manorial villages which with the churches marked the central settlements in these old parish territories in the county.[14] Most of these settlements were deserted by the time of the Down Survey and can frequently be detected as earth works under the modern field systems – a reflection of the process of abandonment of obsolete structures with the onset of modernisation since the seventeenth century.

The parishes mapped in Fig. 1 represent an important record of the morphology of places in Meath, showing for example the consequences of geographical inertia in property boundaries: the historic parishes contained titheable property which was held by the church or local manor. For this reason parish boundaries were carefully recorded and jealously maintained from generation to generation, and most comprehensively recorded after the Reformation transfer to the Church of Ireland. In a number of cases anomalies in property boundaries echo from the past, with fragmented pieces of parishes lying isolated from the main body, reflecting an occasional endowment of lands on the local church or some other unique event. Examples are Templekieran in Skreen, Donaghpatrick in Upper Kells, Agher in Deece barony. Even a cursory examination also demonstrates the influence of the angularity of early enclosures and property boundaries on parish morphology, particularly in the strongly tillage parishes within the older Pale in the baronies of Skreen, Duleek and Ratoath. It might be possible to assess the antiquity of some townland/field enclosures here by checking them through the filter of parish boundaries. These contrast with the more flowing topography of parishes in the western districts of the county and in Gaelic regions in Ireland where boundaries followed the natural lines of rivers and streams.

Ultimately, as a result of the small and parochially unviable Church of Ireland population, these old parish territories which

were inherited after the Reformation, became more relict than relevant. An 1868 report on the Church of Ireland highlighted the problems of parishes with inadequate populations where a clergyman "had not enough work to occupy him.... The counties within the old English Pale furnish a great many instances of parishes of this kind, very small in extent and with a population greatly diminished".[15] New parish creations under the Church of Ireland needed an act of parliament. Thus for reasons of convenience, and because the older units had associations with local places of sanctuary and established tithe lists, unions of older parishes were adopted, so preserving the integrity of the original historic parish areas. Today's Church of Ireland parishes are very extensive indeed.

The Roman Catholic parishes (Fig. 2)[16] are more relevant territorially and socially in that they catered for more viable demographic entities. They are much larger than the civil parishes – in keeping with a more modern, post seventeenth-century settlement pattern. It is probable that a combination of custom and tradition, and ad hoc decisions *in situ* by church authorities in crisis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, resulted in the emergence of the Catholic parish structures. In contrast to the Church of Ireland, the Catholic Church had large congregations and, in the early days, inadequate numbers of diocesan clergy: Franciscan and other friars helped out in loosely-arranged unions of the older historic parishes. The following examples from Cogan's *History* are designed to show the main trends in the evolution of modern Catholic parishes in the county.

Ardsallagh with a sixth-century monastic foundation was formally constituted as a parish after the Anglo-Norman colonisation. In 1690 a parish priest was appointed to the parishes of Ardsallagh and Navan; in 1704 the parish priest was registered as parish priest of "Ardsallagh, Navan, Bective and Donaghmore".[17] Soon afterwards, the Franciscan friars in Flower Hill, Navan, were given charge of the parishes of Donaghmore and Dunmoe. Donaghmore (and Dunmoe?) was later permanently united to Navan.[18] In the early eighteenth century, Franciscans in Clonmacduff were given jursidiction by the bishop over the parishes of Clonmacduff, Bective, Rataine, Churchtown, Moymet, Tullaghenoge and Kilcooly, which ultimately became the union of Dunderry.[19]

The parish of Kilmoon in Upper Duleek was an early Christian foundation, became a twelfth-century parish, and was united with Kilbrew under one parish priest in 1690. In the 1704

Figure 2. Catholic Parishes.

registration it was administered with Kilbrew, Crickstown and Trevet, called the union of Curraha in the eighteenth century. Trevet was "united to" Skryne parish in 1823 and Curraha union was allotted the parishes of Kilmoon, Kilbrew, Crickstown, Primatestown (in Kilmoon?), Donaghmore and Greenoge.[20] According to Cogan, "the present union of Skryne comprises the ancient parishes of Skryne, Tara, Rathfeigh, Trevet, Macetown, part of Templekieran and part of Lismullen".[21] Capuchin friars ministered in Slane and surrounding areas in the 1630s. In 1669 an appointment was made to the parishes of Slane and Stackallan. In the 1704 registration a pastor was recorded for Slane, Stackallan, Rathkenny, Garlanstown (Gernonstown) and Fennor. Similarly in Trim, Dominican and Franciscan friars ministered in the town and surrounding districts in the early eighteenth century. In 1704 a priest was registered in the parishes of Trim, Trimblestown, Drimdaly(?), Cloony upon Boyne and Newtown (Newtownclonbun).[22]

In looking at the map of Catholic parishes, it is evident that in many cases the episcopal authorities often disregarded historic boundaries in the interest of administrative convenience: barony boundaries, for example, were frequently ignored. The evidence also suggests, however, that in the midst of the disorder imposed on the Roman Catholic church in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the older historic parishes represented units of stability. They also presumably represented important social territories for local communities, and unions represented a modicum of continuity, though presumably there was local friction within some of the unions. The rearrangements within many unions over the period must have reflected changing conditions on the ground. Interestingly, Cogan used the term "united to" rather than "united with", which may be his personal style, but does imply the maintenance of the identity of the older units. With usage and passing time, as well as reorganisation of landscape and settlement, new names and identities emerged for some unions, as in Curraha and Dunderry. Cogan talks of a parochial house being built in Ardbraccan in the early years of the eighteenth century at a place called "Bohermien" (which he suggested meant "the even road"): "in course of a few years the parish began to be called by this absurd name, because the parish priest lived here. The proper title is Ardbraccan. Surely in Catholic Ireland our priests are not officiating *in partibus infidelium*?"[23] In spite of his deanly indignation, it is still called Bohermeen.

In general, close examination of the map of Catholic parishes shows that in the overwhelming number of cases they are comprised of straightforward unions of the historic parishes. In limited cases small local adjustments were made, such as that adverted to in Skryne above, where older fragmented parishes were consolidated. Summerhill Catholic parish had small boundary adjustments made with neighbouring Moynalvy and Enfield. But parishes like Ratoath, Dunboyne, Curraha, Ardcath, Beauparc, Rathkenny, Lobinstown, Oristown, Kilbeg, Kells and so on across the county are, apart from some very minor modifications, faithful groupings of older places of historic significance in the county.

In Cogan's survey there are numerous references to small chapels being erected throughout the eighteenth century in sites presumably more convenient for the growing rural population and not necessarily connected with the older units: "there were three chapels at that time in the union of Slane: one at Shalvenstown, a second at Leckin, in the parish of Rathkenny, and a third, situated in a quarry, less than a quarter of a mile to the west of Slane. These were mud-walled thatched hovels, without any interior or exterior ornaments ...".[24] Jones Huges has noted that half of the Catholic churches in the county were located in the old parish centres, indicating the strength of local association with the older sacred sites.[25]

Townlands

Townlands bring us closer to the building blocks of place in the countryside. They are small, intimate slices of landscape which are generally taken very much for granted by the inhabitants. In some senses the townland address – used on a daily basis – is as important emotionally and socially as family name. And it is no accident that name and place at this level have had a long association in Ireland. Patrick Kavanagh's writing in the 1920s and 30s was a celebration of townlands – Mullahinsha, Drummerill, Black Shanco.[26] Heaney, poet and countryman-in-origin, expressed well this significance of 'townland'when he first saw it written down in a poem by John Hewitt: "the fume of affection and recognition that came off the word when I saw it written down on official paper (so to speak) was altogether verifying.....something like a premonition of demarginalisation passed over me...."[27] – clearly an affirmation of our local language and sense of place. It is becoming clear that local people more

generally are coming to appreciate the importance of these micro territories again. Together with many elements of local culture, which were formerly seen to be mainly of interest to others – historians, antiquarians and eccentric tourists – townlands and local landscapes are being increasingly re-appraised as part of "our" – ie. the local community's – heritage. This revival of the local may be a reaction to the "globalisation" of tourism or the so-called "commodification" of heritage, or it may be a consequence of many newcomers to local communities becoming sensitive to the value of local place.

Townlands in Meath generally, but especially in the southern half, are very different places to Kavanagh's Monaghan. Here they are presided over by large block houses in which the owners of the townland [farm] lived. A great many of these townlands were – and still are – very empty places, quite unlike Kavanagh's crowded countrysides to the north. But they are important reference points in a world of flat rolling pastures, and in their names they commemorate a depth of experience in the making of the local landscape. Like elsewhere in Ireland their names existed by and large in the seventeenth century, and earlier in medieval documents.

How do the shapes and sizes and names of these small places influence our knowledge of place? The names and their sounds are an intimate part of the landscape of locality : Ballygortagh, Clonlyon, Kilmore and Moynalvy; Moyglare, Balfeaghan, Kilcloone and Drumlargan. Indeed, John Montague has commemorated this poetry in townland names, especially those with Irish names, "sighing like a pressed melodeon" across the landscape.[28]

The Ordnance Survey Townland Index Map is a convenient and inexpensive source to examine aspects of the townland inheritance in any county. The mixture of English and Irish names in Meath obviously speaks volumes of the history of this county and these little places – with landscapes of *-towns* running up against the south Ulster "*drum-*" and *cor-* and *tully-*. Figs. 3 and 4 show the intricate geography of these small, named units in the south-central and south-eastern parts of the county. "English" names have been broadly defined – to include all the Anglo-Norman names (with the suffix *–town*) plus a smattering of more modern names like Woodpark, Summerhill, Great Furze, Knightsbrook, Blackhall, Cabinhill etc. The distribution is interesting: apart from the extensive nature of English names – reflecting presumably the extent of Anglo-Norman originated rural settlement – covering up to half the area in the south

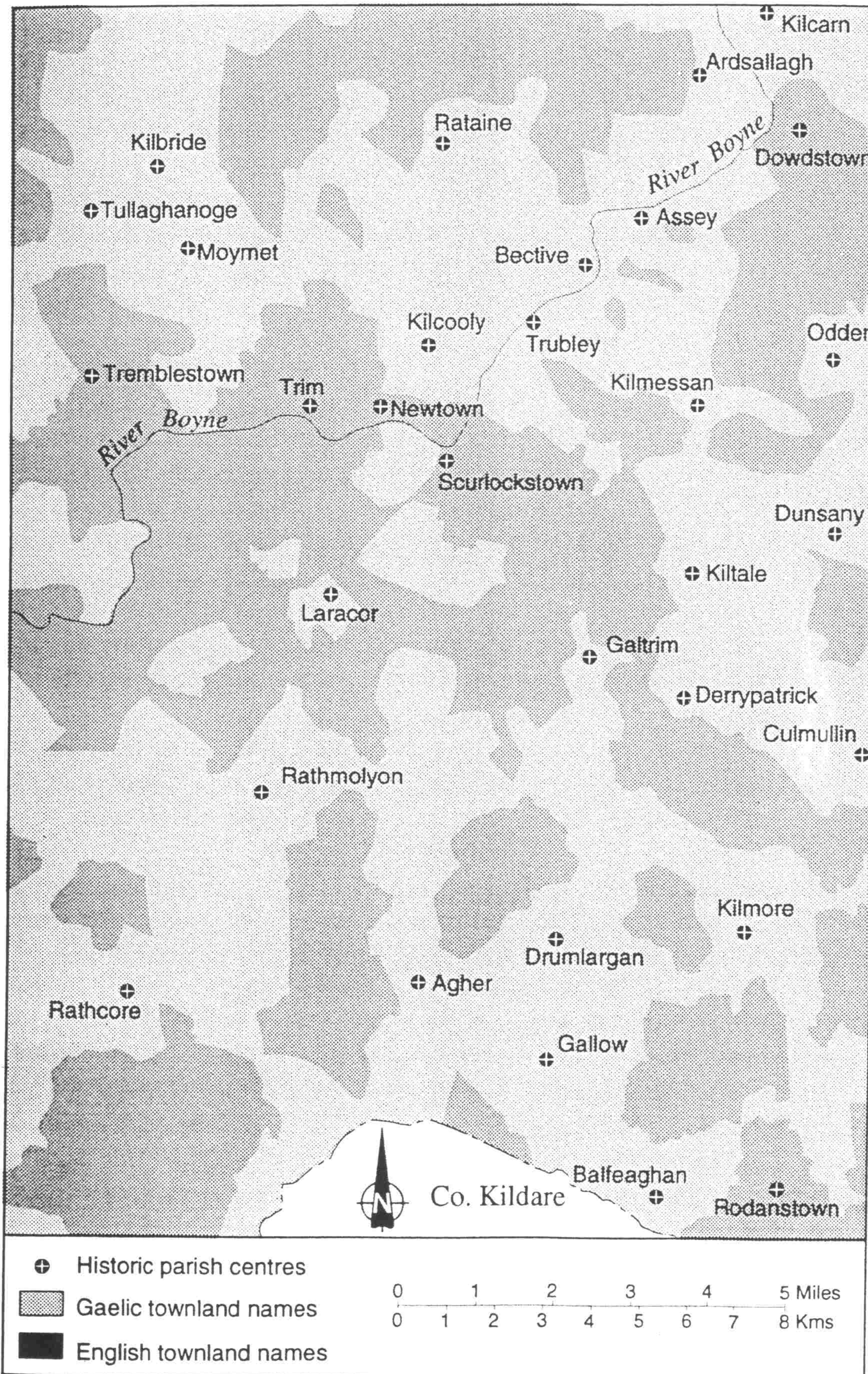


Figure 3. Townland names in south Meath.

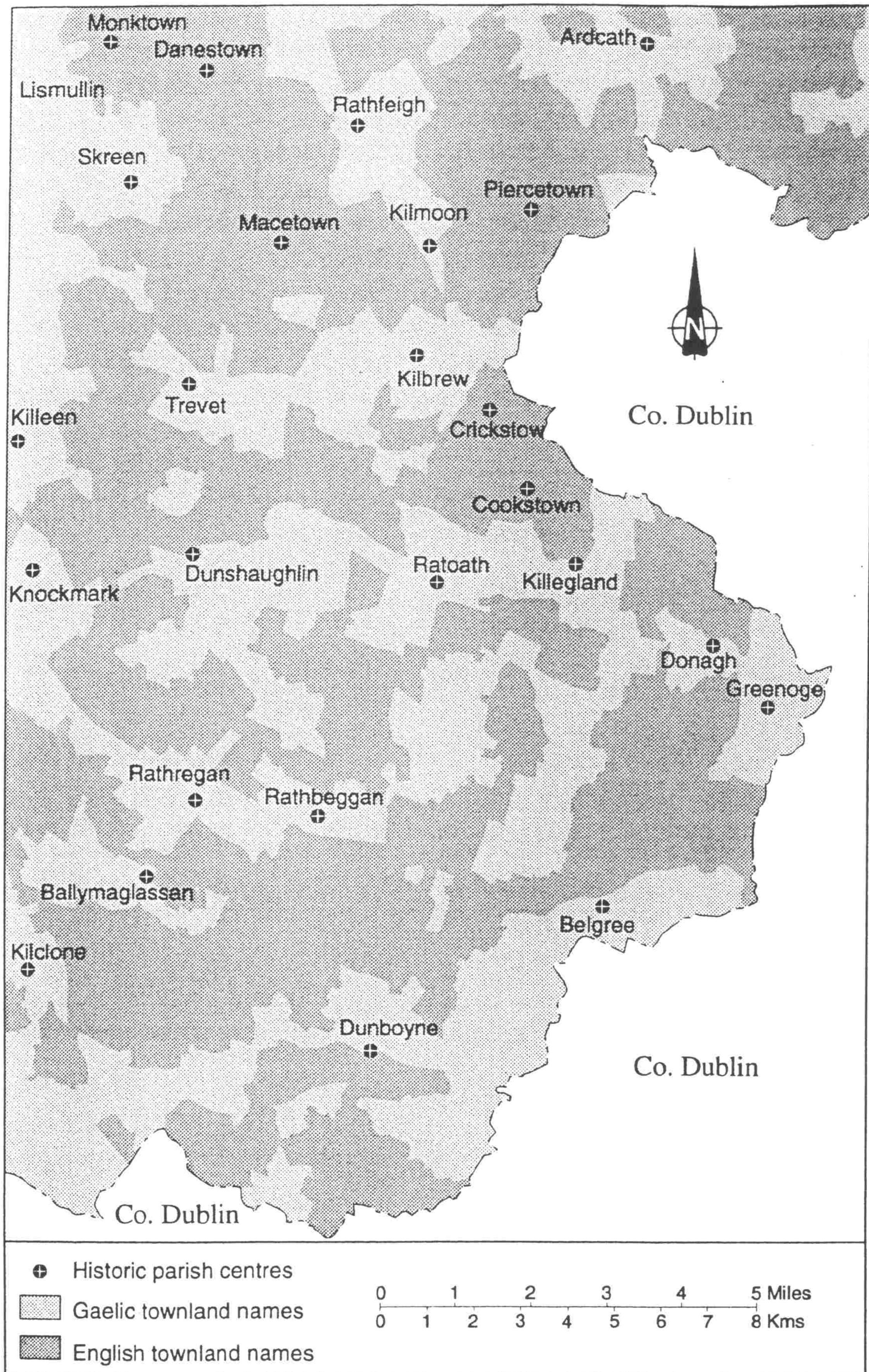


Figure 4. Townland names in south-east Meath.

centre and probably three quarters in the south east, the pattern is not random by any means. There are clear blocks of townlands with English names, with intervening extensive Gaelic named districts. In Fig. 3 Irish townlands dominate in the Boyne valley except around Trim, and it may be that the other blocks of Irish names have some topographical significance. The historic parish centres have been indicated in the maps, nearly all falling in strongly Gaelic-named areas, showing the persistence and antiquity of these territorial entities. The geography of townlands offers some clues about the process of medieval settlement, with suggestions of a clear division between Anglo-Norman and Gaelic settlement structures.[29] Also notable is the earlier mentioned angularity of boundaries, clearly evident in the townland boundaries in Fig. 4.

Farms and fieldscapes

Farms and fields represent the very nuts and bolts of the morphology of local space and place. In the past, farmers were the makers and shapers of our rural landscapes and today they are fundamental in any renewed environmental interest in habitat and heritage because they are the outright owners of our countryside. Their local ways of doing things – whether building their houses, stone walls, gate piers, dividing up fields, planting and laying hedges – have all contributed to the local diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape. There were universal patterns throughout Ireland and the midlands, of course, but there were also regional and local variations on the theme reflecting impacts of local topography and custom. Meath is characterised by large squared fields, the named country houses, the tree-lined avenues, the hedgerow beeches and the generally well-wooded farmscapes, the roadside cottages and, in particular places, the mudwalled thatched houses.

With townlands, the farms and fields, therefore, form an important part of the texture of landscape, its scale, density, and the look of the land. These are all elements of what we know of the familiar landscape, part of its everday language, just like the housefronts and gables and curves of the urban streetscape. Estyn Evans's pioneering *Irish Heritage* established an agenda more than half a century ago which is only at this stage coming to be widely appreciated. And the popularity of the Evans-inspired Ulster Folk Museum and other folklife imitations throughout the island is a response to this growing interest. The chapters in

Evans's book ring out the important elements in local cultural landscapes which were for a long time overlooked in the rush for "modernisation" — fields, fences and gates, village and booley, the peasant house, fireside and food, farm buildings.[30]

Place and landscape at this micro level, of course, are moulded by the built environment – from the large box house built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with sometimes lavish out-offices in cut stone, to the follies, tree-lined avenues and elegant parkland trees.[31] Killyon house, on the Boyne, has a range of features in its demesne: avenue, folly, holy well, monastic site, walled garden, kitchen garden, glass house, courtyard, beeches – all part of the forging of a distinctive landscape over many generations. The Meath landscape's crowning glory is its trees — great oaks and beeches viewed like a rolling forest, for example, from the Dublin road approaching Slane, part of the hedgerow, demesne and large farm legacy of the county.

The best treed landscapes are legacies of generations of careful husbandry by resident estate owners and large farms – places where prosperous people living in the countryside invested in their surroundings. Reading the work of Peter Connell or Jim Gilligan, one can see the role of the farmer – and some of the landowners, of course, more generally, through their estates or farms – in making our Meath landscape.[32] Responding to economic markets, whether in beef or cereals, the decisions they made, the management and husbandry they presided over – not to mention of course the labour they engaged – all resulted in the landscapes we see and identify with. Moyglare farm, on the Kildare border, in the 1780s spent much money planting tens of thousands of beech and lime trees in the hedgerows and pastures – which represent a continuing legacy today. Gormanston was laying out hedges and enclosures, in tillage areas carefully maintaining enclosures, in pasture areas perhaps less so. One of the side effects of pastoral farming was speculation in farms as well as cattle, and many grass districts contained huge empty townland farms – the "howling wilderness" of Bernard Carolan's Dunshaughlin.[33] The landscape of these areas certainly experienced a limited husbandry, contain poor hedgerow boundaries, with limited planting – all evident in the twentieth century in the "untenanted" lands targeted for resettlement by the Land Commission

Meath had swathes of the largest and wealthiest farms in the country in 1850, 1,700 of them valued at more than £50, and their landscape legacy continues to this day.[34] One of the best

ways to appreciate the landscape significance of the large farmsteads in Meath is high on a bus in winter when the trees are leafless. Even in a fairly confined segment of the flatscape of south Meath, winding through twisting back lanes, one sees repeated examples of these large two- or three- storeyed blocks built in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries, like ships floating in enormous pastures, standing high in the landscape and seen through clusters and lines of beeches and limes etched against the sky.

The farms and fields of Meath get smaller the closer one gets to the Ulster borderlands. By the time one reaches mid county, many a Monaghan farm could be fitted in an average Meath field! Here is a notable landscape contrast characterised in apocryphal stories about injured herdsmen being lost for days in enormous fields on extensive grassfarms!

What has been the impact of the generations of labourers – a huge segment of the community of Meath 150-200 years ago – whose blood and sweat actually built the hedgerows and the houses? Their social world was separate from the farmer and grazier, as indeed were their landscapes and settlements. In terms of landscape impact, this landless community sought out the margins before the famine – the bog edges and other poor marginal land, old-established villages in tillage country, the town edges, or some undiscovered or unsupervised lease.[35] In generic landscape terms, the roadside was the landscape in the past (continuing to some extent today) which was one of the less controlled margins for settlement and roadside cabins which were a feature of many places. Residual reflections of these little landscapes can be seen today in the roadside cottages built by various institutions, most notably the County Councils, in the past century to replace the earlier inferior thatched cabins of the landless population.

Field names

One distinctive mark of the local is the intimate baptism of the fields with individual familiar names. In many parts of the countryside, especially in the west of Ireland, field names continue to live in the memory of local farm families – harking back to a time of intensive labour in the fields. This phase in local toponymy has passed with the onset of industrial agriculture, the Common Agricultural Policy and more extensive farming, with consequently less day-to-day interaction with the landscape of fields: the deep knowledge of a field that comes with sowing and scything

a corn crop contrasts fundamentally with the fleeting acquaintance of the combine harvester. Indeed large-scale consolidation schemes in tillage regions, in recent decades especially, has led to the complete disappearance of many older fields.

It is possible to map this systematic naming of farm fields. There are mapping campaigns underway in different parts of the country. The 1938 schools folklore survey collected field names among other items of local interest.[36] Generally these comprise selective records of some of the names in local areas. The following examples from Carnaross and Moynalty parishes are such, probably representing the part survival of a much more extensive legacy. How many of these fields are still remembered in the local areas?

Recorded by pupils of Carnaross and Ughtyneill schools, these field names occurred variously in the townlands of Dervor, Feegat, Portlester, Loughan and Curragh; Hermitage, Tullypole, Ballymacane, Newtown, Ughtyneill, Screebogue and Petersville. Each name had an explanation, ranging from the mundane to the exotic, provided by the pupils (see Appendix). The interesting thing about the names is the large number in Irish in this district where Irish continued strongly in use until well into the nineteenth century. The renderings of some of the names have probably been rectified by the schoolteachers.

From Carnaross:
The Grove Field
The Dark Hollow
Carraig an Bhruach
Cnoc na mBuachaill
The Lime Kiln field
Stirabout Hill
Scheen Hill
The high meadow field
The Clunriagh
The pond field
Sgeach field
The Rock
The Sheep walk
The Nosegay field
Shamrock Field
Rolagh
The pay field
The bush field
Clona Silla
Forts
Moate field
Cruach na muc
Gleann gairid
The River field
Len na bán well [*recte*: léana bán]
Lug na bheanaí
The cré crann hill
The crossroad field

From Ughtyneill:
Club Buidhe [recte: ?claí buidhe]
Lis Art
Whellecous Rock
Gaughan [*recte*: ?gairdín] tobar
Carraig Chruaidh
Clunigar

Fairy Wee
Troman Bush
Fauraí Bhuidhe
Crocan Rua
Buaile beg
Spait
Mollindreimre
Lisakenny
Lisgreine
Loughan Buidhe
Crocan
Mona Lough
Cady's field
Thirteen Meirins
Cnoc an duine boicht

More recently pupils in Knockcommon school near Duleek undertook the mapping of fieldnames in their locality. Fig. 5 shows the naming of the landscape at a very intimate local level within the lattice of townlands and farms. In this case there are very few Irish fieldnames, in keeping with a district where the Irish language must have died out much earlier than in the north of the county.[37] As with all such local naming patterns, (whether in Irish or English) the landscape is labelled or identified by its location relative to each farmhouse or farm (The Far Field, the Top Field, The Bottoms), by its local soil or land use qualities (The Furry field, Well Field, Brick Field), or by local characteristics such as shape or size (The three-cornered field, the 16 acres). Names in Irish in Carnaross, like Carraig an Bhruach, Sgeach field, claí buidhe, Carraig Chruaidh, Crocán Rua, all have the same ordinary or prosaic meanings (as have many of the townland names), but are no less important for that.

Estate Landscapes

Landed estates can play an important part in our interpretation of the landscape today. Although as a result of land reform programmes over the past one hundred years, they have little continuing significance, ownership of the land was important in explaining much of the development of distinctive landscapes in Ireland, Britain and Europe in past centuries. Power and wealth were clearly important influences in the overall shaping of the landscape: the landlords and privileged tenants laid down the property boundaries, large and small, maintained them in wills and covenants, and invested in all the other rudiments of landscape that have been discussed.

With a few exceptions, Meath is not great estate country, as is the case, for example, in south and east Ulster where there was a well-established structure of landowners and tenants rooted in widescale seventeenth-century colonisation. In south Ulster, there

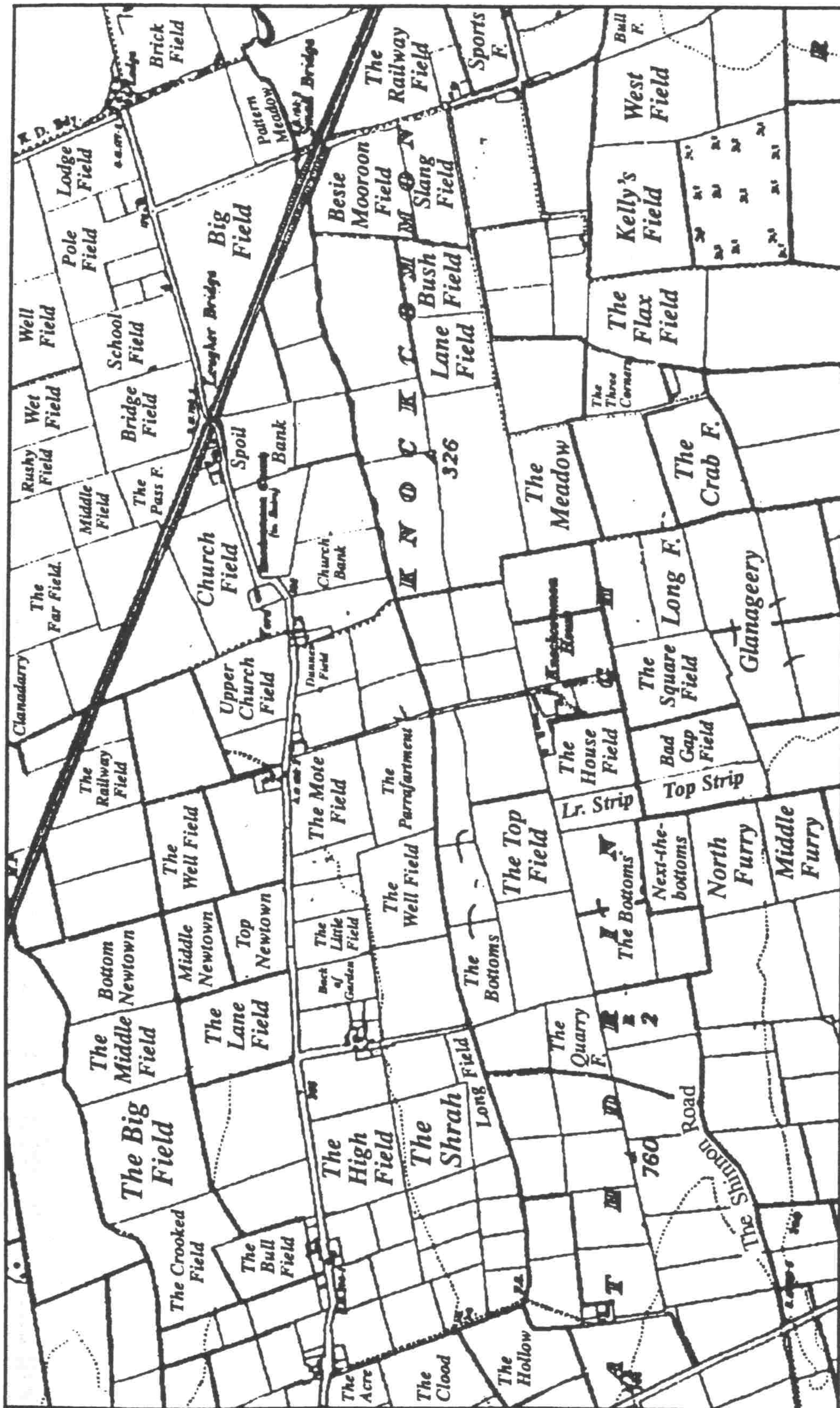


Figure 5. Field names in the Knockcommon district.

were many large landed estates which represented significant slices of landscape where the lives and surrounding local landscapes of thousands of people up to the end of last century were fairly stringently controlled and managed.[38] Meath was characterised by considerably smaller estates, with a highly fragmented leaseholding structure inherited from the middle ages. The large grass or grain tenant farms have probably had a more dominant influence on the landscape of Meath.

Jones Hughes identifies the main trends in landownership and estates in Meath which might have had an influence on landscape management.[39] In 1876, 56% of landowners were nonresident in the county, a trend which was especially notable among the small estate owners. Most of the big estates in excess of £5000 valuation were resident. Conyngham of Slane, Headfort and Darnley also held large estates in England. Absence elsewhere in Ireland or Britain may have resulted in less interest in the Meath property, although, as with Shirley in Monaghan, experience and ideas from English properties were often applied in Ireland.

The bigger estate cores had strong territorial associations with baronies and historic parish centres. These are important spaces, therefore, representing nodes of landscape order from the seventeenth century, but in many cases with roots going back to the medieval manorial economy. Resident estate cores were located on better land and were centres of excellence in farm husbandry and landscape management. Such places are identifiable today in districts in the Boyne and Blackwater valleys, hinging on the old towns of Navan and Kells, as in, for example, the estates of Conyngham, Gerrard of Boyne Hill, Headfort, Nicholson of Balrath, Preston of Bellinter, Boyne of Stackallen, Dillon of Lismullen, Rothwell of Rockfield, Russell of Ardsallagh. The home farms associated with these estates contained some "of the most opulent collections of farm units in nineteenth-century Ireland".[40] On these well managed, favoured estates, with large and valuable home farms, the elegant landscape layouts already referred to survive intact to our time, with many of them continuing as well-equipped stud farms.

New Administrative Divisions

Poor Law Unions (PLUs) and Electoral Divisions (EDs) serve to introduce ideas of deliberate territorial organisation of space for particular administrative purposes in the nineteenth century by

the state, which was the one human agency having the power and resources to carry out such a daring undertaking. They were also a product of the Victorian state taking a more proactive role in social and economic affairs, presaging the beginnings of the welfare state. Established for the relief of the poor through property taxation, this was a subdivison of the landscape into rational divisions based on contemporary ideas of locational and social equity (Fig. 6).

Poorer people in the community would have been increasingly aware of the utility of these areas through the nineteenth century:

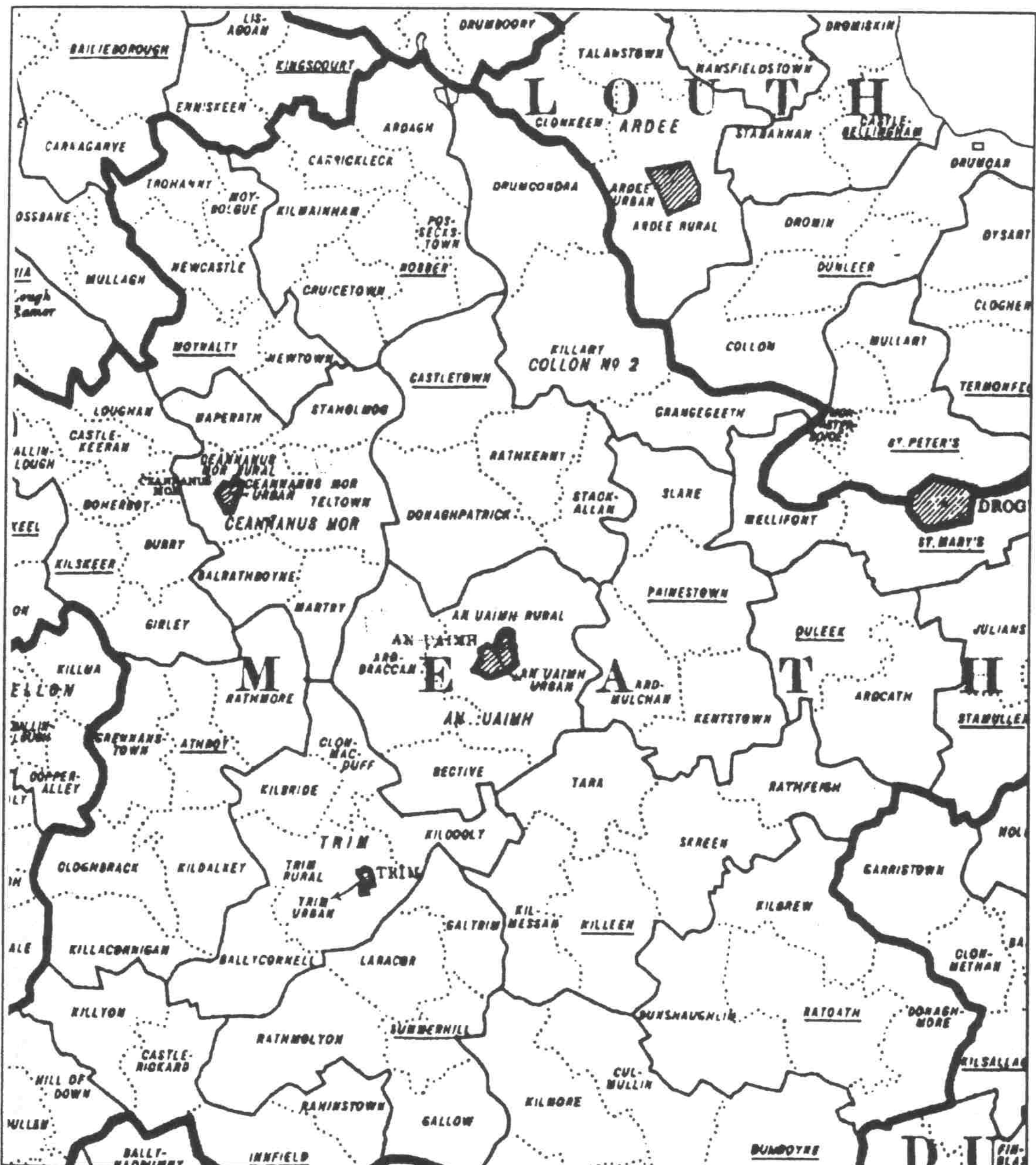


Figure 6. Poor Law Electoral Divisions.

later in the century, for example, lying-in houses were built in selected local areas to improve on home birth conditions, as well as cottages to improve the living conditions of the poorer inhabitants. PLUs consisted of unions of electoral divisions designated to support the centrally-located workhouse, with later dispensary districts to provide a modicum of healthcare to the poorest at local level. These new territories had little relation with pre-existing areas, apart from the logistical use of the townland as the basic building block. The Unions, however, do represent early attempts at delineating the socio-economic and service hinterlands of towns in the nineteenth century: the workhouses in the town centres were designed to provide minimal welfare for the destitute inhabitants of the Union area. This new areal geometry was shaped and controlled to a large extent by those with power, notably the land-rich proprietors and large tenant farmers. The EDs and later dispensary districts are territorial expressions of the dominant conservatism of rural life in the big country of Meath and of the tensions and cleavages between the poor and rich which Connell has argued surfaced in the decades before the famine in Meath. The EDs, which were carefully delineated to take account of the balance of local property interests and rating liability, elected members to the Board of Guardians in the Union – who were invariably representatives of the larger property owners. These spent much of their time protecting their interests so successfully that the large landless constituency became ultimately of little significance in Meath following severe outmigration in the last decades of the nineteenth century.[41] The EDs continue to rank importantly in a community where local politics are as important as football: they form the territorial containers of voters' names which are ticked off with care by election agents outside polling stations on election day.

The Land Commission settlements

The extensive nature of farm structures and the comparative emptiness of the landscape in Meath provided opportunities for one of the biggest experiments in land reform in twentieth-century Ireland. The Land Commission migration schemes from the west of Ireland resulted in the transformation of extensive acres of untenanted empty countrysides from the 1940s to the 1970s, with particular significance for the southern half of the county extending into Kildare. The project involved comprehensive subdivision of large unworked farms and pastures, the building

of new roads, distinctive farmhouses and farmyards, often in small clusters where no settlements existed before. New communities of small farms were inserted in the midst of ranchlands, filling with life what had been empty and comparatively lifeless landscapes (Fig. 7).

Although recent, these new landscapes are redolent of place. They are modern landscapes in the sense that they reflect the application of standard designs by a state agency, which is why one gets a feeling of *déjà vu* when one drives into a Land Commission cul-de-sac roadway or into one the farmyards built in the 1950s. These Land Commission populations represent one of the first major social changes in rural Meath in the past half-century. And they also facilitated the most recent social and

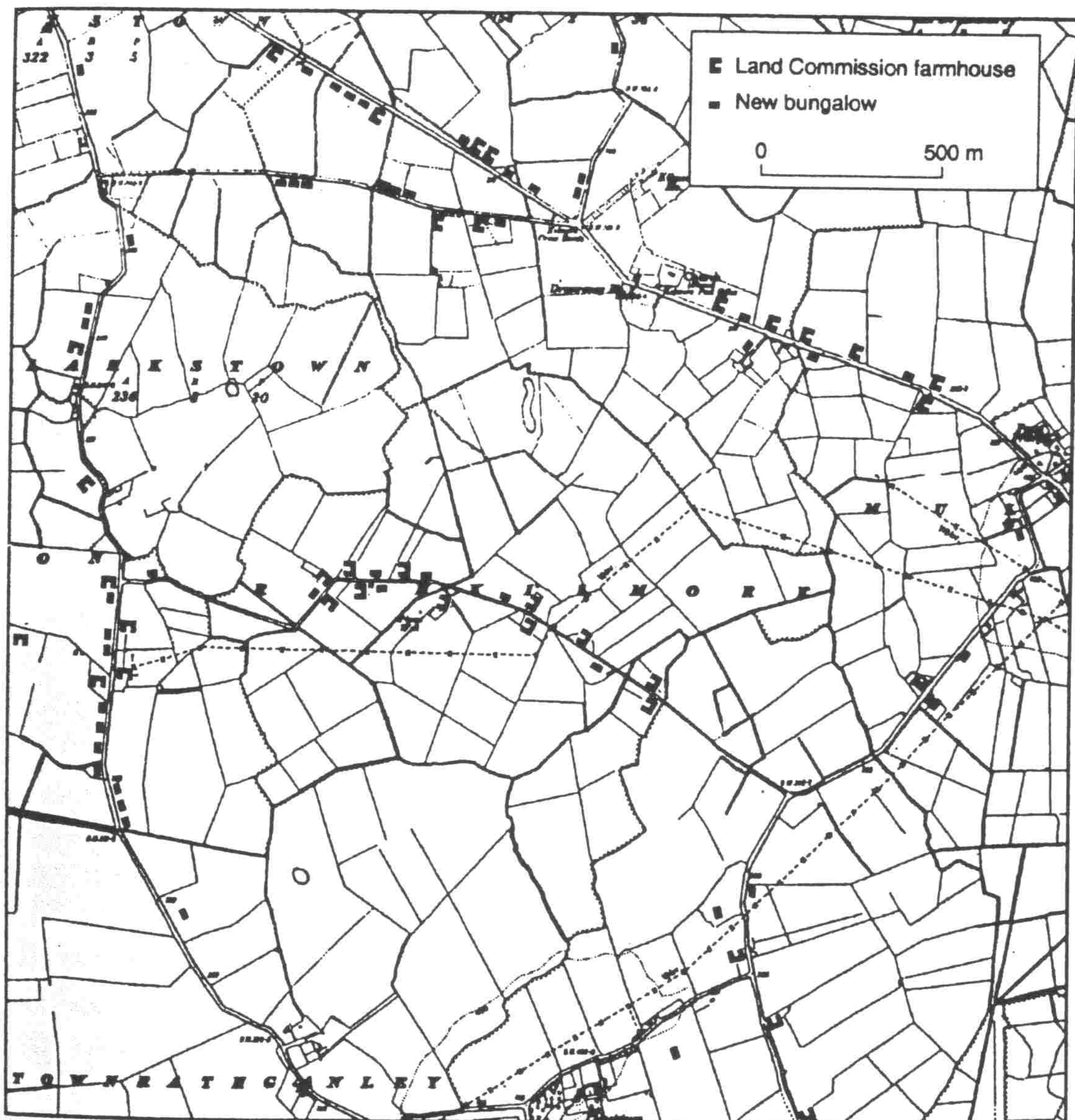


Figure 7. Land Commission settlements, Summerhill district.

landscape transformation in the county which will reverberate through the countryside for a long time to come.

The growth throughout the rural landscape of a rapidly expanding non-local commuter population began in the late sixties. This trend is most evident in the south of the county which reflects the overwhelming influence of the Dublin metropolitan region. Sons and daughters of the Land Commission farmers, as well as in-migrating middle-class commuters, have initiated an extensive settlement regeneration. The landscape expression of this change is the bungalow, located on a half-acre plot, ribboning the by-roads of the county. Significantly a Meath-man, Jack Fitzsimons, has played a noteworthy role in this transformation of the rural landscape and the creation of suites of new micro places in the county.[42] The planning control system in place since 1963 has also been important in shaping the landscapes that have emerged. The standardisation which comes with central planning and the constraints of building lines, well and septic tank locations, have resulted in a replication of rectangular half-acre linear developments along roads. When combined with sometimes derivative architecture, these new Meath landscapes are characterised by repetitive combinations of lawns and gardens, drives, perhaps single or double garages, leyland cypress hedges – an enormous environmental transformation, and the latest layer to meaning in the Meath countryside whose landscape and aesthetic impact in the future should not be underestimated.

Conclusion

Might one suggest that there is a change in sense of place and landscape identity in Meath at present – especially in view of the substantial number of non-natives who have invaded the county? Fintan O'Toole has recently referred to a growing lack of coincidence between the parish as an ecclesiastical unit and a community boundary. Until the present generation, "the parish tied civic and social life together with religious faith and communal identity ... it gave to our sense of place a ritual dimension".[43] This concept of the parish is tested to its extremity in Meath, especially in the rural and suburban commuter fringe of Dublin extending into the southern half of Meath, as well as in other towns and hinterlands throughout Ireland. It is no accident, therefore, that it was the Parish Priest of Trim who, in July this year, drew attention to this change in the significance of the parish. Clearly

there is a huge increase in people who have no regular connection with the parish church (i.e. the parish as a ritual space) and who also have limited social connection (in terms of kinship, roots, or everyday social life). Sense of place for a great many may be different, shallower, perhaps a more transient experience, when the parish is perhaps no longer greatly significant. This is part of the recent history of landscape and place in this region since the 1960s and 1970s. However, time may tell if the local sense of place is more enduring than this: primary school involvement by new families, together with even occasional church attendance, as well as locally-based sports and other leisure activities, may continue to buttress a territorial sense of the local in this age of the Internet and the city commuter.

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank Jim Keenan, Cartographer in the Geography Department, NUIM, for the care and attention lavished on the maps accompanying this paper.

This paper is an expanded version of a lecture delivered to the Meath Archaeological and Historical Society, 10th February 1999, on the occasion of the launch of *Ríocht na Midhe* (1999).

Appendix

The following information on field names is taken from the Schools Collection, Department of Irish Folklore, vol 705, Carnaross NS (pp 1-6) and Ughtyneill NS (7-10). By permission of the Director.

I am grateful to Séamus Mac Gabhann for collecting these names and passing them on to me. I am also grateful for his observations on some of the explanations and renderings of the Irish names. English names with obvious meanings are excluded.

From Carnaross:

The Grove Field:	trees used to grow in it
The Dark Hollow:	contains a lot of trees and there is no light in the daytime.
Carraig an Bhruach:	Bruise hill is very big and there are lanes under it and they are called Carraig
Cnoc na mBuachaill:	Boys of long ago used to gather here and and dance in it
Stirabout Hill:	"It is very soft"; [more likely to do with relief provided during the Great Famine]

Scheen Hill:	Banshees used to be seen here
The Clunriagh:	A high hill with a lot of rocks under it
Sgeach field:	There are a lot of sgeach bushes around it
The Sheep walk:	Long fields with holes under the ditch going from one field to the other
The Nosegay field:	a field for tillage and meadow
Rolagh:	where nothing grows only rushes and weeds
The pay field:	it is a long narrow field
The bush field:	there is a lone bush in the middle of it
Clona Silla:	a garden of saileog
Forts:	There are forts in these fields where fairies and banshees were often heard crying. One field was never tilled because ill-luck would befall anyone who would till it.
Cnoc na molal	?Cnoc na mbuachaillí. The boys of long ago used to gather there.
Gleann gairid:	it is said there was a giant buried here
Len na bán well	[*recte*: léana bán]:
Lug na bheanaí	
The cré crann hill:	Long ago there was an old tree there and it was the cré crann....

From Ughtyneill:

Club Buidhe	[recte: ?claí buidhe]: the yellow dyke because there is yellow clay in it
Lis Art	Art's Fort
Whellecons Rock:	some kind of giant is supposed to have lived here long ago called Whellecons Rock...
Gaughan Tobar	[recte: ?gáirdín]
Carraig Chruaidh	
Clunigar:	long ago horses were trained here
Fairy Wee:	in the evenings when the sun was shining on the corner the fairies were to be seen dancing there
Troman Bush:	there is a elder bush growing along the roadside
Fauraí Bhuidhe:	there used to be yellow grass growing here.
Crocan Rua:	it is a little hill and red sand in it
Buaile beg:	it got its name because every evening the cows used to be milked in that field
Spait	
Mollindreimre:	?Mullach an dréimire – evocative of the landscape (S. Mac Gabhann)
Lisgreine:	means the fort of the sun
Loughan Buidhe:	the yellow lake

Crocan:	this is a field with a hill in it
Mona Lough:	means the bog of the lake – also called the floating island
Cady's field	Called after a man who lived there.
Thirteen Meirins:	There are thirteen meirins [mearings] joining it. There is also a stray sod or fóid seachran in it: anyone who walks on this sod at night would go astray and could not make his way home.
Cnoc an duine boicht:	long ago when the priest hunters were living in Petersville House, they wanted to catch the priest of this parish.... they told an old man that they would give him money if he would pretend he was sick and to send for the priest and when the priest would come they would kill him. The man went to bed and sent for the priest. The priest came and when he arrived at the house the man was dead. The place is called from that day to this – Cnoc an duine boicht.

REFERENCES

1. *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-78*, Faber (London), p136
2. "Sunday Miscellany", RTÉ Radio, April 1998
3. In "A Lost Tradition", *The Penguin Book of Contemporary Irish Poetry*,edited by Peter Fallon and Derek Mahon, 1990, p. 45.
4. Quoted in Peter Somerville-Large, *The Irish Country House – a social history*, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995, p. 355.
5. T. Jones Hughes, "Society and settlement in nineteenth century Ireland", *Irish Geography*, V (2) 1965, p. 92; Jim Gilligan, *Graziers and grasslands – portrait of a rural Meath community*, Maynooth Studies in Local History, 1998.
6. Beginning with Dean Anthony Cogan's magisterial survey, *The Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern*, Dublin 1867, three volumes, and the compilation and up-dating of Fr. John Brady's researches from the 1930s and 40s in *History of the Diocese of Meath 1860-1993* (3 volumes) edited and compiled by Olive C. Curran in 1993. Down through the years many shorter and more local histories have been published: Donnchadh O Meachair, *A Short history of county Meath*, Navan 1928; Jack Fitzsimons, *The parish of Kilbeg*, 1974; Enda O Boyle, *A history of Duleek*, Navan 1989; John Paterson, *Meath and Kildare, an historical guide*, Kingscourt 1981, to name a few.
7. Nicholas Canny, reviews, *IESH*, 1989 (xvi), 117.
8. P.J. Duffy, "Farney in 1634", *Clogher Record*, 1983.
9. A. Smyth, *Celtic Leinster*, Irish Academic Press 1982, p. 10.
10. P. Hogan, 'The tricha cét and related land measures', *PRIA* 37(c) 1928.
11. See M. Hennessy, "Parochial organisation in medieval Tipperary", in W. Nolan, T. McGrath(eds) *Tipperary – history and society*, Dublin, 1985.
12. See P. Power, "The bounds and extent of Irish parishes", in *Féilscríbhinn Torna*, edited by Seamus Pender, Cork, 1947; P. Duffy, "The territorial organisation of Gaelic landownership and its transformation in county Monaghan 1591-1640", *Irish Geography* (14) 1980, 7.
13. Civil parishes were used for civil administrative functions throughout the eighteenth century.
14. B. Graham, "Anglo-Norman settlement in Co Meath", *PRIA* 75 (c), 1975.

15. *Report of the Commissioners on Revenues and Condition of the Established Church of Ireland (1868)*, HC 1867-68, vol. 24, p. 96.
16. This map is based on ESB mss maps in the Russell Library, NUIM, with modifications from Cogan.
17. Cogan, *op cit.*, vol 1, p. 115.
18. *Op. cit.*, p. 130.
19. *Op. cit.*, p. 121, 124.
20. *Op. cit.*, p. 147, 155, 270.
21. *Op. cit.*, p. 276.
22. *Op. cit.*, p. 326.
23. *Op. cit.*, footnote p. 273, vol 11.
24. *Op. cit.*, p. 290
25. T. Jones Hughes, "Landholding and settlement in the counties of Meath and Cavan in the 19th century", in O. Flanagan, Ferguson and Whelan, *Rural Ireland, Modernisation and change*, Cork, 1987, p. 136.
26. From "Stony Grey Soil", *The Complete Poems of Patrick Kavanagh*, edited by Peter Fallon, New York, 1972.
27. From T. Canavan (ed.) *Every stoney acre has a name- a celebration of the townland in Ulster*, Ulster Federation of Local Studies, Belfast,1991, preface.
28. In "Last Journey", *The Penguin Book of Contemporary Irish Poetry*, edited by Peter Fallon and Derek Mahon, 1990, p. 43.
29. See A. Simms, "Core and periphery in medieval Europe: the Irish experience in a wider context", in *Common Ground*, edited by W.J. Smyth and K. Whelan, Cork University Press, 1988, p. 34.
30. E.E. Evans, *Irish Heritage*, Dundalgan Press, 1945.
31. C. Casey and A. Rowan, *The Buildings of Ireland: North Leinster*, Penguin Books, 1993, p. 56.
32. P. Connell, *An Economic Geography of Co Meath 1770-1870*, unpublished MA thesis, NUIM 1980.
33. Jim Gilligan, *Graziers and grasslands – portrait of a rural Meath community*, 1998, p.9.
34. Jones Hughes, "Landholding in Meath and Cavan", *op cit.* p. 118.
35. See P. Connell, *Changing forces shaping a 19th century Irish town: a case study of Navan*, Maynooth Occasional Papers, 1 (1978).
36. Schools Collection, Department of Irish Folklore, UCD.
37. For this information on the Knockcommon fieldnames I am indebted to Enda O'Boyle, who supervised this enterprising survey by his pupils in Knockcommon school approximtely twenty years ago. According to Mr O'Boyle there is a strong residue of Irish or Hiberno-English terms still used in local sayings in the area.
38. See P.J. Duffy, *Landscapes of south Ulster – a parish atlas of the diocese of Clogher*, Belfast 1993; "Management problems on a large estate in mid-nineteenth century Ireland: William Steuart Trench's report on the Shirley estate in 1843", *Clogher Record*, xvi (1) 1997.
39. T. Jones Hughes, "Landholding and settlement in the counties of Meath and Cavan in the 19th century", in O'Flanagan, Ferguson and Whelan, *Rural Ireland, Modernisation and change*, Cork 1987
40. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
41. Gilligan, *op. cit.*; see also Ned McHugh, *Drogheda before the famine – urban poverty in the shadow of privilege 1826-45*, Maynooth Studies in Local History 1998, chapter 3.
42. J. Fitzsimons, *Bungalow Bliss*, Kells, 1976.
43. Fintan O'Toole, *Irish Times*, 16 July 1999, p. 16.