

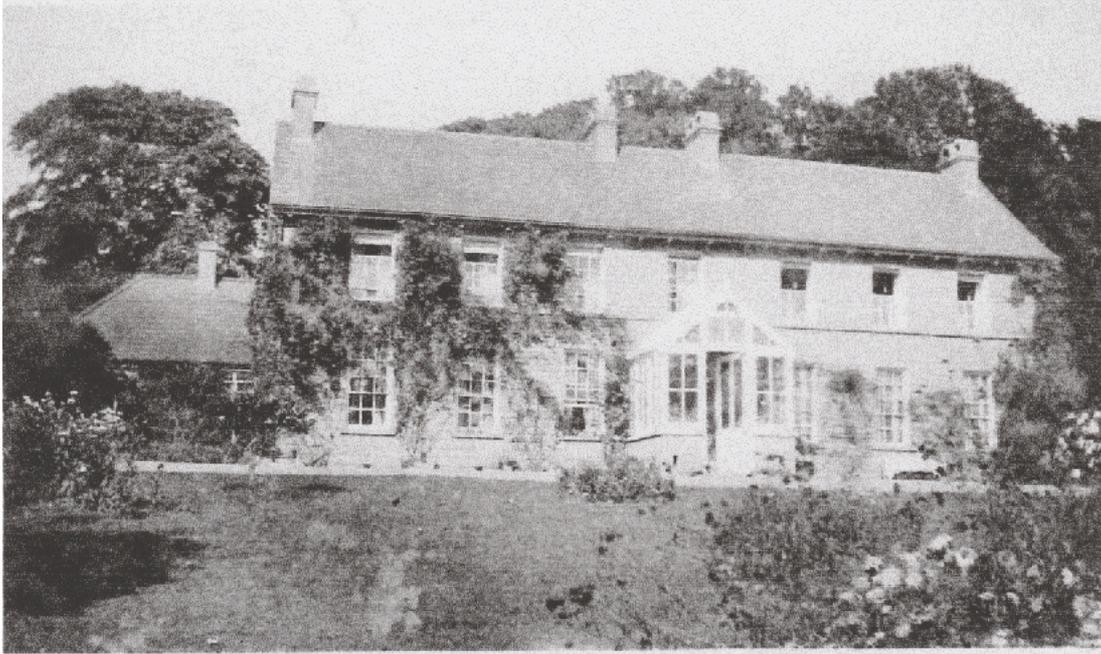
Ardsallagh House, County Waterford, in the 19th and 20th century

The Ronayne Family, farming practices, the
Blackwater River and the way of life.

by John Geary & Ronan Waide
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*Ardsallagh House, mid 1930's
(see also Appendix B)*

Preface

There is an old proverb that says, “when an old person dies, a library is burned”.

Today, with the faster pace of life, there is often very little regard for the folk history of past ancestors. Only by recording this history can we conserve for posterity, a record of what life was like in the past.

For well over a century, many stories and treasured memories had been passed down through the generations about the past history of Ardsallagh House and Estate and of the Ronayne family. Also, very little exists on the ground today (2017), to show that this once beautiful house and farm and treasure of our rural heritage in that lovely stretch of the Blackwater Valley, ever existed.

With all of the above in mind, we have attempted to compile these stories so that they will not be forgotten. This includes records and old photographs in the hope of capturing some of the old ways and the atmosphere of olden days at Ardsallagh. This was at a time when life moved at a different pace and people lived close to the earth and nature. It is basically a story about a vanished “Big House”, the people who lived and worked in it and the vanished way of life in the countryside around it.

It is dedicated to all of the staff who worked in Ardsallagh House and Estate for well over a century and who are sadly no longer with us.

The name “Ardsallagh”

Ardsallagh is an anglicisation of the Gaelic *Ard Saileach*, meaning “Tall Willows” or “Willow Height”. This is presumed to describe a forest covering the hillside which makes up much of the townland of Ardsallagh. The nearby town of Youghal was similarly named, being in Irish *Eo Chaill*, “Yew Forest”.

Note:

For sketch map of location of house and outline of original farm see Appendix E.

For detailed sketch map of layout of original farmyard see Appendix D.

Introduction

The earlier history of Ardsallagh House in County Waterford and Ronayne Family ownership is discussed in detail in the web page, “Ardsallagh House, County Waterford” (see [Sources](#)).

The Ronayne family were located in County Cork from at least the early 17th Century and related families of Ronaynes owned land and property in Cork City and County and West Waterford, from and before this time.

The Ronayne name has always been historically linked to the town of Youghal and they contributed significantly to the business and political life of Youghal over the centuries. Their main residences here were D’Loughtane and Ardsallagh. The Ronaynes of the nearby D’Loughtane House and Townland (cousins of the Ardsallagh Ronaynes) are recorded there in at least the 15th Century, if not before. It is reputed that the Ronaynes of D’Loughtane had the privilege of having the Youghal town bell toll for them on their passing, for good deeds carried out in the late 17th Century in Youghal. They also built Alms Houses for the poor in Youghal in the 19th Century. Therefore the Ronayne name was well respected in Youghal.

Ardsallagh House on the banks of the Blackwater Estuary in West Waterford was completed around 1830 by Dominick Ronayne. He was born in 1790 and before his move to Ardsallagh, was previously living in his father’s house near Dungarvan. At about this same time, the construction of the first timber bridge (designed by Alexander Nimmo) across the Blackwater had commenced, c. 1829. This was at Tinnabinna and only about 1.5 km downstream of Ardsallagh House. With his business and political links to the town of Youghal, the proximity of the bridge, and his cousins in the adjoining townland of D’Loughtane, this may have encouraged Dominick to settle in the Blackwater Valley at Ardsallagh. Prior to this, the nearest bridge connecting counties Cork and Waterford was at Lismore, some 26km upstream, although in early years a rope-drawn barge-like craft (for people and animals) was also used to cross the Blackwater from Tinnabinna to the slob lands on the Cork side. The only other access route to the town of Youghal at that time was the ferry at Monatray or the Ardsallagh to Templemichael small ferry. This first timber bridge was replaced by the renowned metal Youghal Bridge c. 1883 on the same

site. This in turn was replaced by the (present) reinforced concrete new bridge, about 0.7km upstream at Rhincrew, in 1963.

Dominick Ronayne's father was Tobias Ronayne, who lived in Ringville near Dungarvan. Tobias was a brother of Robert Ronayne, who was one of the principal lessors in Tiknock townland (beside Ardsallagh) in 1851. Robert's daughter Grace was the mother of Alice Kennedy of Ballinamultina House, Clashmore, and Alice later married John Ronayne, who inherited Ardsallagh House. The tomb of Robert Ronayne Esq. along with members of the Kennedy family (1850-1928) is located beside the North gable of the RC Church in Clashmore.

Dominick Ronayne's period of residence in Ardsallagh was short. He was MP for Clonmel from 1832 until his death in 1836. He died at the young age of 46 years. It was reported at the time that there were some 100,000 mourners at his funeral. He is buried in Clashmore, County Waterford. This left his wife Olivia in charge. In Griffith's Valuation of c. 1851, Mrs. Olivia Ronayne is shown as the occupier, while the immediate lessor was Lord Stuart de Decies.

Mrs. Olivia Ronayne died in 1856, leaving the house and farm to first cousin John Ronayne. John married 8 years later and continued to live in the house with his wife and family for the next 20 years. Following his death, his wife Alice managed the property until her death in 1906 and by 1908 the ownership had passed on to her eldest son James Francis.

Very little is known about the working of Ardsallagh House and Estate from (and before) the time it was taken over by James Francis Ronayne at the age of 42 years, c. 1908. The remainder of this document will attempt to piece together this forgotten period from various sources such as records and old photographs and stories handed down over the generations. It must be remembered that most of this was a period before electricity, motor cars, tractors, modern conveniences and technology. All indications are, that the way of life and farming practices at Ardsallagh House in the earlier period from c. 1830 to c. 1908, was not much different from those recorded in the remainder of this article, except that it was probably on a much smaller scale. We do know from historical maps that the major improvements to the farmyard only took place after 1840 and were in existence by 1905. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that the famine years intervened and that the main build up and progression of the House and farm probably only took place after John Ronayne married and had a family, i.e. from 1865 onwards. Also, that it further improved from 1908 when his son James Francis took over.

The Ronayne Family in the 19th and 20th centuries

John Ronayne of Ardsallagh House was born in 1819 and married Alice Kennedy of Ballinamultina House, Clashmore in 1865. They are recorded as having 10 children as shown in the following table. John died in 1885 and his wife Alice in 1906.

Name	Born	Died
James Francis (doctor)	1866	1945
Grace Mary	1868	1900
Francis Robert (solicitor)*	1869	1931
Alicia May Kathleen	1870	1942
Mary Josephine	1871	1930 (Sussex, England)
Helen Elizabeth Mabel	1875	1904 (Santa Cruz, USA)
John Robert Uniacke	1876	1878
Kate	1877	1878
Anna Geraldine (Gwendolyn)	1879	1961
Robert Uniacke Kennedy Mansfield	1881	1945

** recorded as being head of family in 1911 Census*

James Francis was a doctor at the time he took over ownership of the house and farm c. 1908. He had graduated from the R.C.S.I. in 1888 and had moved to Liverpool before the 1901 Census. He was therefore not recorded in the Census. This apparently left his younger brother Francis Robert in charge. Francis Robert had graduated with a B.A. from Clongowes Wood College in 1890 and was sworn in as a solicitor in 1894. He was described in both the 1901 and 1911 Census as a solicitor and Clerk of Union.

Records show that only one of the family married. Mary Josephine married Henry de Broca Dawson in 1915 and died in Sussex, England in 1930. Her sister Helen Elizabeth Mabel emigrated to the U.S.A. and became a nun. She died in a convent in Santa Cruz, California in 1904. Her older sister Alicia May Kathleen spent some time in England with her brother James and never married. She died in 1942. The eldest sister Grace Mary seems to have spent her entire life in Ardsallagh and she also never married. She died in 1900. Two other younger siblings died in infancy, i.e. John Robert Uniacke and Kate (both in 1878).

With James Francis in England and Francis Robert practising as a solicitor, it appears to be the younger brother Robert Uniacke Kennedy who remained on in Ardsallagh and who managed the farm on a day to day basis for all of his working life. His brother Francis Robert, who had become a solicitor in 1894, probably practiced in Co. Waterford or the surrounding areas, for most of his life, until his death in 1931. At this stage, James Francis who had been practising as a doctor in England for many years and who had also spent some time in the English Navy, appears to have returned to Ireland. He then practised as a doctor in Ireland and was the Dispensary doctor in Clashmore Dispensary for some time. James Francis and his youngest sister Gwendolyn (Gwen) would then probably have assisted Robert Uniacke in management of the farm until 1945, at which stage both James and Robert died in the same year (James in January 1945 and Robert in August of the same year). This left Anna Geraldine (Gwendolyn) the sole survivor of the eight siblings faced with the difficult task of trying to manage the farm on her own.

Ronayne Family Photographs

The family photographs listed below were discovered in the attic of a relation of Gwendolyn Ronayne's former carer. Due to the deaths of former staff, most could not be verified.



The Ronayne Family c. 1900.

Standing: Francis Robert, Anna Geraldine, Helen Elizabeth Mabel, James Francis, Grace Mary.

Sitting: Mary Josephine, Alicia May Kathleen, Alice (mother)

Not shown: Robert Uniacke - may have taken the photograph.



At least two if not three of the Ronayne brothers with shooting dogs.; Francis Robert, James Francis, and possibly Robert Uniacke c. 1920.



Possibly James Francis Ronayne, in front of the tennis court



Possibly James Francis Ronayne



The eldest of the Ronayne sisters, Grace Mary



Possibly Anne Geraldine (Gwendolyn), the youngest of the Ronayne sisters, c. 1900.



*Unknown; possibly John Ronayne with youngest children
Robert Francis and Anna Geraldine c. 1883*



*A funeral, outside what looks like a hospital; may be the
funeral of John Ronayne in 1885.*



One of the formal rooms in Ardsallagh House c. 1900

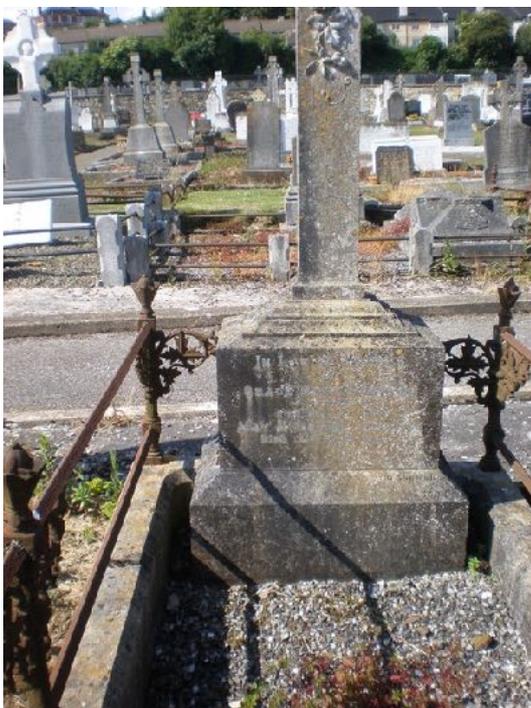


Unknown; it's not clear whether this is in the Ardsallagh area or elsewhere.

Ronayne Family Graves



Burial place of "Ronayne Esq.", presumed to be the tomb of Dominick Ronayne in St, Mochua's Graveyard, Clashmore, County Waterford. Contemporary descriptions of his funeral refer to a family vault with a door, so it's not certain that this is in fact his tomb.



Burial place of some of the Ronayne Family (from John and Alice's time), including Gwendolyn, in North Abbey Graveyard, Youghal, Co Cork.

The House and Farm - General

The house and estate appear to have continued to prosper under the ownership of James Francis from c. 1908 until his death in 1945, at the age of 79 years. He appears to have retained ownership of c. 135 acres of land in Ardsallagh, which included some 22 acres of woodland beside the River Blackwater (located at the western end of the property). This acreage continued up to a more recent sale in 1998, by which time it was advertised for sale with the option to purchase in several lots.

The increase in size of the farm only appears to have taken place in 1902, under a Land Act purchase, because at the time of Griffiths' Valuation, the entire woodland to the west was held in fee by Lord Stewart De Decies and also the Land Steward's cottage and all the lands around it, did not then form part of the Ardsallagh House farm. In c. 1851 the farm consisted of only approximately 76 acres.

By 1905, the original house and farmyard had been greatly improved. This improvement appears to have been carried out under the ownership of James Francis' parents, John and Alice and possibly over a 40 year period. Therefore, when James inherited the property in c. 1908, most of the improvements appear to have been already carried out. Old photographs show that the house had a new two-storey wing added to the east end, which contained a "morning room". Also, a working dairy to the west and a new entrance porch (of timber and glass) to the front of the house. Some new farm buildings had been built to give a working farmyard behind the house and enclosing a gravelled yard. A second large stone barn with timber floored loft had been built on the north-west side of the yard, to complement the existing and adjoining large barn, stables and loft that existed since before 1840. A line of single-storey smaller buildings (poultry houses etc) had been constructed on the north side of the yard. A large hay barn and milking shed had been erected in the field immediately to the west and beside the original barn, as well as some smaller adjoining animal housing. All of these buildings can be seen on the sketch layout of the farmyard in the early 1900's.



The East Wing, containing the morning room and staff quarters.



Staff in front of the Old Barn, 1930's



The Farmyard, 1930's



The Farmyard with the newer barn in the background, 1930's

All indications are that that both the layout of the “Big House” and the original farmyard and buildings were architect designed. The original and later large barns were obviously designed to cater for horses and carriages. This highlights how important horses were in the “Big House” and farm in the 19th and early 20th century. The original barn contained the stables and the later barn a carriage store. There was a unique labour saving device designed for feeding the horses in the

original barn. A system of chutes existed to carry hay and foodstuffs from the loft above to the stables below. In the adjoining newer barn an open plan area was reserved for the carriage store (machinery store in later years) The support beams and timber used in the construction of this newer barn were reputed to have come from the original timber Youghal Bridge, which had been demolished and replaced by the new metal bridge in c. 1883.



Staff in front of the Farnyard



The Hay Barn and Milking Shed, 1930's

The original small garden c. 1840 had been replaced by a 1.3 acre walled garden and this had a full-time gardener. This garden had been laid out with paved walkways and manicured hedges and had fruit trees and fruits and vegetables of all varieties. It had a small glasshouse against the north wall, a glass covered propagating bed in the centre and a very small shed in the Southwest corner. This shed was known as the "bathing box" in the 1930s. It had a door in the high wall, with access to the River Blackwater, where at high tides, the "Gentry" could change and swim in summer. The grounds of the house contained manicured lawns, flower beds, trees and shrubs and flowering rhododendrons. The house was approached by a long and wooded driveway and an area to the east of the house had a tennis court.



Front Drive, looking out on the River Blackwater, 1920's.



Left: Staff in the Walled Garden, 1930's;



Right: Glass-covered propagating beds in the Walled Garden, 1930's

Field Names

In the 19th century all of the fields had names, many in Irish. These names had been passed down through the generations and therefore may not now be accurate. Starting at the Blackwater River and working uphill, the field names were as follows:

The Beannacht¹, (Irish for The Blessing)

The Long Field, Curtin's Field², the Lacha and the Grove,

The Bán Mór, The Little Field (located below the Bán Mór), The Lawn (located East of the main house and incorporated mature trees), The Rang Beag, Tobar Bríde³, Parc Na Leag, The Barn Field and Bóhairnacra (this latter field being adjacent to the local Ardsallagh townland road at the top of the hill).

The Working Farm

The farm itself was probably at its peak in the 1930s and there was a full-time staff of about a dozen people in the house and farm at that time. It was also normal for additional staff to be taken on at harvest time etc. The entire estate, in these years, appeared to be geared towards self-sufficiency as much as possible. Fields of wheat, barley and oats were grown as well as vegetables including potatoes, turnips, mangolds, cabbage and sprouts. In the walled garden, small vegetables and herbs grew, along with apple trees, pears, raspberries, strawberries, carrots, parsnips, cabbage, lettuce and garden peas.

Beside the hay barn was some small animal housing. It appears calves and pigs were reared here, therefore the house would have its own bacon. It also had its own bull which was housed separately in the stables.

On the farm the land was tilled, harrowed and grain sown, all by horses and hand. Later, cutting of the corn (sometimes with three horses), sheaving and stooking and taking in for threshing, was all by manual work. In the late 1920s threshing at Ardsallagh was done completely by horses powering the threshing machine. The grain was then stored in the timber floored lofts. The windows in the loft were wooden louvres for through ventilation. The time involved from cutting to storing in the barns could have taken 3-4 months, depending on the weather. Nowadays, all this can be completed in about 1 day and the grain dried artificially.

¹ This was the name used by drift net fishermen over the generations, for a "berth" or a stretch of river (opposite the Ardsallagh farm), to "pay out" (cast out) their nets, possibly because the fishing boats were blessed in this area.

² There was a ruin of a dwelling house located here on the bank of the Blackwater near the woodland, upstream of the old Boat Quay. This probably reflected the name of a former resident before Ronaynes. There was also a quay of some sort shown near this ruin, on the O.S. 1:2500 map.

³ Tobar Bríde,– this was Irish for "St Brigid's Well", which was located in the same field.



Old type threshing machine at Ardsallagh House, 1928

Hay was also cut by horse-drawn mowing machine with the different stages of turning by hand, cocking and tracing (towing in) by horses to the barns. The whole exercise could have taken up to 8 weeks, allowing for weather and drying-out time in the fields. Nowadays, possibly just a few days, depending on the method used. As well as the horses, a donkey and cart was used at Ardsallagh, for the smaller work in the farm and garden.



Horse-drawn reaping machine, 1930s

In the mid 1900s, when the horses were required to be shod, they were taken to the Forge or Smithy in the adjoining townland of Tiknock. This Forge was located just north of Tiknock School, across a field. The Smithy was a local man, William Moloney. While the Forge could also carry out minor repairs to iron and steel, the leather harness and tackle used on the horses had to be maintained and repaired regularly by the farm staff.

Work in the fields in the mid 1900s was very labour-intensive. There was no precision sowing of root crops in those days and acres of turnips and mangolds had to be "thinned" by hand. The men on the farm would have to tie Hessian sacks around their knees and crawl along the drills "thinning" the excess plants and weeds,

with their bare hands, leaving the stronger plants to grow at the correct spacing, until the whole acreage was completed. This meant days or weeks on their knees and in all weathers. This was the only way to ensure a regular and properly spaced out crop. Later when hand pulled and "snagged" these turnips and mangolds were pulped in winter for animal food, again all by hand.

Another very labour intensive root crop at Ardsallagh Farm was the growing of potatoes. The land was first ploughed by horse drawn plough and the drills opened and prepared with farm yard manure, before sowing the "seed" potatoes. These had been stored for "seed" from the previous year's crop. The seed potatoes were then planted in the drills and later when the plants had grown (and depending on the weather) they had to be sprayed several times to protect them from blight. In the early days this was always done by hand and knapsack sprayer.



Picking potatoes, 1930's

Later they had to be dug, usually using two horses and a "digger". Then came the back breaking work of picking the potatoes and storing them in a "clamp" or "pit" in the fields, for the winter. Here they had to be covered with a heavy layer of straw and earth for frost and rain protection. One disadvantage of the field storage was that they were subject to attack by rats, who (if allowed), would set up "home" in the pits for the winter - with a ready made food supply! However, the staff would use fox terriers to dislodge the rats and then shoot them with shot guns, or if they had enough patience, pick them off with small bore rifles, simply by sitting and waiting for them to come out! When potatoes were removed from the pits for the house kitchen, the pit covering had to be removed and carefully replaced, all adding to the manual labour in this most important food for the "Big House"!

There was also herd of milking cows which were milked by hand twice daily and the surplus milk taken to the creamery. Butter was made in the dairy by hand in wooden butter churns and was pressed into small decorative rolls for the table. In the environs of the farmyard, flocks of hens, turkeys and geese were kept and eggs would be collected daily for house and staff consumption. Poultry would be killed and prepared for the table as necessary. Animal waste and manure was collected and spread on the land and garden as fertiliser. Timber for the open fires in winter came from the woodland and fallen trees were cut by two men using a large "cross cut" saw and then transported to the house by horse and cart.

Work on the farm was very much affected by the weather. In the early days before accurate weather forecasting, people had to rely on their own powers of observation and weather watching. This was a time before radio was available to the general public and even the fastest means of communication available for the Gentry, was by telegram from the nearest town. From stories handed down, it appears that the staff on the farm could predict forthcoming weather events with some degree of accuracy. This was based on observations of nature, the Sun, Moon , cloud formations, wind direction and even bird behaviour. Some of these old sayings and weather lore were as follows:

- “There is a ring around the moon” (indicating rain)
- “There is rain in the sun”
- “That is the wind of the rain”
- “There are storm clouds on the horizon”
- “Mackerel scales and mares’ tails (cloud formations) make tall ships carry low sails”
- “Red sky at morning (dawn), shepherds warning”
- “Red sky at night (sunset), shepherds delight”

Bird behaviour, such as the constant long whistling of the lapwing on the ground in winter, was reported to forecast cold weather, or flocks of rooks “wheeling” in the sky indicated strong winds or a storm coming. Thus, it appears that the staff on the working farm and garden were able to plan their day’s work based on their own weather observations.



Bringing in the cows, 1930's

The “Big House” and Staff

From stories handed down over the generations we can piece together the way of life and daily activities in the House and Farm in the early 1900's. Without electricity, tractors, and modern machinery and conveniences, life on the house and farm was governed by the seasons and the rhythms of nature. There was much manual work involved in the daily chores. The main work on the farm could only be carried out with daylight and between the hours of sunrise and sunset. Winter was particularly difficult with its shorter days and inclement weather. The pace of life generally tended to go with the natural flow and ebb of each season and to speed up with the busyness of Summer and the growing season and slowing down as the evenings shortened and life flowed into the stillness of Winter.



Staff at the Front Porch, 1930's;

In the house itself, the cook had to be up early to get the fire going in the kitchen, to cook breakfast for the gentry and in-house staff. This work continued in the kitchen for all meals throughout the day. There was no commuting in those days and the outdoor staff walked to Ardsallagh House across the fields and lanes to take up their daily chores early. The cows could only be taken in for milking with daylight. The garden and farm staff were governed by the seasons and the weather for plowing, sowing, reaping and harvesting. Feeding the livestock and poultry was a daily chore. The dairymaid looked after the dairy and made butter and looked after the welfare of all poultry and their offspring. The cook used the produce from the walled garden and baked bread and cakes in the solid fuel oven daily. The parlour maids took care of all the domestic duties in the house as well as serving all of the meals to the Gentry and guests in the formal rooms. The coachman/driver took care of all the travel arrangements for the Ronayne family as well as serving as a driver for Dr.

James Ronayne in later years. The gardener, as well as his work in the walled garden, maintained all the house grounds, flower beds, pruning, hedge cutting, shrubbery and lawns. In the early years, the then gardener Harry Glavin lived in a small cottage beside the entrance gates to Ardsallagh House.

In the fields and woods, the horses would be used for all the heavy work and these horses required stabling, feeding and care. Nowadays, this is carried out by modern "horsepower" of a different kind which does not require daily care. When not working in the fields, the farm staff would go to the town of Youghal in a horse and cart to collect foodstuffs and general requirements for the house and farm. Harvest time in the fields brought in extra labour to help with the harvest. It is clear therefore, that without electricity, modern machinery and labour saving devices, all of this manual work and self-sufficiency required staff. Therefore, this would explain the somewhat large staff recorded, for such a modest house of its day.

For a house that was not a "Big House", when one compared it with other large estates of the day, all indications are, that it was run with the same "trappings" and disciplines of the other big houses. It had a definite Upstairs/Downstairs air, where the staff were referred to as "servants" and were required to address their superiors as "Master" or "Miss". Some staff were (in-house) residents and had their own quarters. As can be seen from the list of staff in [Appendix A](#), most had clearly defined roles and titles. The parlour maids were also required to wear distinctive black-and-white "uniforms".

The staff were expected to carry out their duties exactly as requested by their employers. There is a little story told of one member of staff who forgot to post a letter to Ballynatray House Demesne one day. That night she realised her error and got out of bed in the early hours of the morning and crept out of the house and and cycled the many miles of lonely woodland roads in complete darkness, to Ballynatray House and back. This was simply to ensure that the letter reached its destination in time, before her employers found out.



Staff, mid 1930s - see Appendix B

Even in the last years of the "Big House" when a Roman Catholic priest would come and say mass for the last member of the family (Gwendolyn), there was a clear distinction between "Gentry" and "Servants". Following mass, the priest and the visiting "Gentry" would be served breakfast in the formal dining room, while the staff, who had all been attending the same mass, would have to dine in the kitchen.

Of all of the Ronayne siblings in the house, the names of Master Robert and Miss Gwendolyn were most often mentioned by former staff in the mid 1930's. This would indicate that they had the most prominent role in management of the house and farm at that time.

Despite the strict rules, there appears to have been a good atmosphere in the House and a good rapport amongst staff. Other stories relate to mischief and tricks played on one another by the in-house staff. One story told, was that of a new recruit and female member of staff who was expected to arrive to take up a vacant position. Unknown to other staff (and when the Gentry were away) another prominent member of staff dressed up in rags and disguised herself as a "vagrant" and presented herself at the staff quarters as the new recruit. The remaining members of staff were speechless at the sight of this new colleague and also in hearing her dubious "qualifications". After a time and having been shown around her shared accommodation, the "vagrant" could no longer contain her laughter and introduced herself to the shocked staff. This type of mischief was only one of the many tricks that were reported to be common amongst staff in the 1930's. We knew this to be true, because in one staff photograph another member is dressed up in riding gear and a tall hat - just for the photograph!

Inside, the house had an air of "grandeur", with gilt framed paintings and mirrors on the walls, silverware, white linen and lace on the tables and also antique furniture, bookcases and carpets. Lighting was by oil lamps and candles. In later years, before rural electrification, a generator was reputed to have been installed. However this could not be verified. Cooking in the kitchen was carried out on a large solid fuel range. A "gong" was used in the hall to summons the "Gentry" for their meals in the



In-house staff, cook and parlour maid, mid-1930s

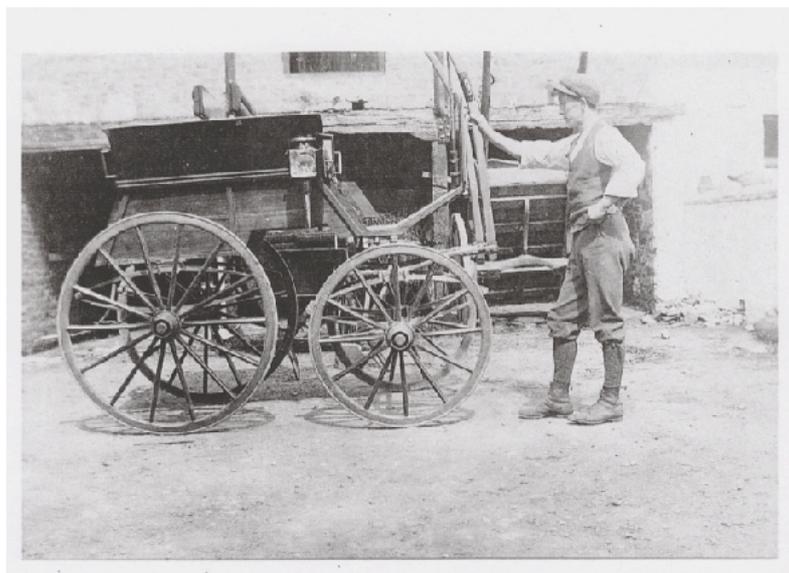
large front dining room, when the staff were ready to serve them. One of the rooms contained a considerable display of historical artefacts such as swords, etc., presumably collected by Dr. James Ronayne during his travels with the English Navy.

From stories handed down it would appear that entertainment of guests and special family occasions, played a big part in the way of life in the “Big House” over the years. Visiting Gentry, business and political guests, relations and friends, would be treated to formal dinner parties or afternoon tea by the Ronayne family.

Crisp linen and lace, special china and polished silverware were always taken out for such occasions with the in-house staff waiting on the tables. Poultry or meat from the farm and fish from the Blackwater River were nearly always available on the menu, because with no electricity or refrigeration, fresh food was more the norm in those years. Fresh salmon in season, was procured directly from the fishermen on the Blackwater, accompanied by fresh vegetables and potatoes from the Walled Garden and all prepared by the cook in the kitchen. Even fresh strawberries and cream, in season, were all available from the farm. For afternoon teas, homemade apple and rhubarb pies and fresh scones with homemade apple and blackberry jam, were all produced by the cook, from the Walled Garden and farm.

Surnames, such as, - Dawsons, Stephensons, Kennedys, Coppingers and Murphys were frequently mentioned by former staff as being regular visitors to the house. However, by the early 1930's, due to deaths and emigration, we can estimate that there were probably only four siblings left at the dining room table and this probably continued for about 10 years. This was at a time when the working farm was estimated to be at its peak and there were a considerable number of staff working in the house.

For transport, in the early days, before a motor car was procured, the house used four wheel horse-drawn carriages. There were candle lanterns on the carriages for



Four-wheeled Carriage, possibly early 1900's

night driving. In later years a motor car with a full-time driver was used. Fishing and shooting, tennis and summer picnics were popular with the various Ronayne siblings and cousins. There was always a presence of shooting dogs and these were mainly spaniels and setters. There was a considerable stock of game on the farm consisting of pheasants, pigeon and rabbits. For salmon fishing, handmade greenheart fishing rods were procured from the renowned rod makers Enright & Sons, Castleconnell, located on the River Shannon. Entertainment in the house was by gramophone, piano and radio and this was operated by rechargeable "wet battery".

At least some of the Ronayne ladies may have had a passion for fox hunting and hunting uniforms were kept at Ardsallagh House. Fox hunting was popular with the West Waterford Foxhounds in the 1900's and nearby Ballynatray House had its own pack of hounds and they hosted regular hunts and subsequent lawn parties. St. Stephen's Day each year would have a big meet of the elite West Waterfords at Clashmore, with tall hats, immaculate uniforms and horses. Hunt Balls were also popular at the time.

Water supply to Ardsallagh House probably came from a natural spring well located north of the house. A small hydraulic ram was in use at this location, right up to the 1960s. "St Brigid's Well" is also shown on the O.S. maps in the same field. This well was a place for visiting by locals on St Brigid's Day in the Spring of every year.

Well over thirty full-time staff were estimated to have worked at Ardsallagh House between c. 1900 and c. 1960. Some of these are listed in [Appendix A](#). The majority of these were from the immediate area or adjoining townlands, thus the estate supported many families and gave very welcome employment in the area. At its peak, in the 1930s, it is estimated that it had at least one dozen people employed in the house and farm, at any one time. However, it would appear that activity in the house and farm greatly reduced (with resulting reduction in staff), following the deaths of both brothers James and Robert in the same year(1945). This resulted in the last of the line, their sister Gwen, having to take over ownership. It was noted that only about five staff remained in the later years, probably from about c. 1950 onwards.

Ardsallagh House and the 17th Century Gold Chalice

When the last of the Ronayne family (Gwen) was unable to attend mass in the years before her death, the local priest would come to Ardsallagh House once a month and say mass in the large dining room downstairs. It would be attended to by members of the staff and their families. A member of the staff would also serve mass at these times.

The chalice the priest used, was probably the famous 17th Century gold chalice that had been owned by the Ronaynes and their cousins for over 300 years. It is recorded that this gold chalice had the inscription "Thomas Ronayne 1637" and that it had been kept at the nearby D'Loughtane House for over 200 years prior to the sale of D'Loughtane. D'Loughtane Estate had a long history of Ronayne ownership (cousins of the Ardsallagh Ronaynes) from at least 1450 to 1856, at which stage the House and lands had to be sold in the Encumbered Estates Court. The D'Loughtane

Ronaynes were Roman Catholics and were reputed to have been sympathetic with outlawed priests in penal times (era of the Mass Rocks) and this was the reason the chalice had been kept hidden there.

After the D'Loughtane Estate was sold, the gold Chalice came into the ownership of the Ardsallagh Ronaynes, where it remained until after the death of Gwen c. 1961. Following her death, it was donated to St. Mary's Parish Church, Youghal, where it continues to be used in the celebration of mass to this day.

The Blackwater River

On the 6 inch O. S. map of c. 1840 there were two fish weirs on the Blackwater River in front of Ardsallagh House and garden. There was also a direct access track from the house to the Blackwater. While this was probably used for heavy farm traffic over the years, it may also have been used for access to the fish weirs. Nearby Ballynatray House were using fish (salmon) traps on the Blackwater for decades and fishing them daily. Salmon fishing was a major industry on the Blackwater River in the 1900s – 1950s. One old photograph shows at least one dozen boats being blessed in front of Ardsallagh House probably in the late 1920s. A small building known locally as "the castle" in the 1930s, remains at the site of one of the fish weir locations to this day. This building was reported to be occupied by a family in the early 1900s.



"The Castle", 1930's

It is known that various types of fish weirs existed on the Blackwater river for hundreds of years and that Estate owners whose lands adjoined the river, used them to catch fish for food. In the mid 1800's, there were several dozen fish weirs on the Blackwater river. There were different types of weirs and being a tidal river, different kinds of fish were taken. This included flat fish, bass, sprats, sea trout, mackerel in season, and salmon. However around 1850, new laws and regulations came into force and weirs had to be licensed. This caused many weirs to be removed on the grounds that they were an obstruction to navigation on the river. By 1905, the fish weirs at Ardsallagh House were no longer showing up on the 1:2500 O.S. map.



*Mixed Fish Weir at Ballynatray with Ardsallagh Farm woods in the background.
(This is not the Salmon Weir.)*

Details of fishing the fixed fish weirs in front of Ardsallagh House in the mid 1800's are not known. However, the nearby Ballynatray House salmon traps were fished daily in the mid 1900's by an Ardsallagh man called John Aherne. John lived in a remote wood ranger's cottage in the middle of the Ardsallagh woods. This was located North of the Ardsallagh farm, but in woods owned by Ballynatray House Demesne. John would row across the Blackwater river daily, to remove trapped salmon from the fish weir at Ballynatray, simply by using a type of landing net from a rowing boat. His remote and secluded cottage can still be seen, in the woods adjacent to the river on the 1905 O.S. map. Deer from the Ballynatray Demesne also appear to have swam across the river and were breeding and roaming free in the Ardsallagh woods in the mid 1900's.

A boat quay was also shown on the mud flats just upstream of the walled garden at Ardsallagh House, c. 1840, therefore it is quite likely that it was used for goods traffic and deliveries to Ardsallagh House and townland. The historical 6 inch map also shows a track from this boat quay across the Ardsallagh farm to an area known as the Grove. This track may once have joined up with a long lane coming off the old Ardsallagh road, which leads to "the ferry" at Templemichael. In his book "Blackwater and Bride", Author Niall O'Brien gives an excellent and very detailed account of navigation and trade on the river (7000 BC– 2007). In the mid 1800s he reports that these small quays were used to offload coal, sea salt and seaweed for manure, or collecting grain or timber from the woods. The boats were known as lighters and were in use all along the Blackwater and Bride, Therefore it can only be assumed that the boat quay at Ardsallagh House was in use in the mid 1800s and beyond.

It is interesting to note that when the Ordnance Survey mapped Ardsallagh in the 6-inch survey of c. 1840, the symbols that they used for the Ardsallagh House Wood and the wood to the north (later owned by Ballynatray) were identical. Both showed mature deciduous trees in each wood. However, in the 25 inch survey of c 1905 the "Ballynatray" wood symbols remained the same, while the mature deciduous trees were gone from the Ardsallagh House Wood, (i.e. from Curtin's Field to The Ferry).

Enormous amounts of timber from the entire Blackwater Valley woods were cut down and taken to Youghal along the rivers Bride and Blackwater in lighters for centuries. These were then shipped to England and the Continent for pipe staves, casks, buildings, shipbuilding etc. It would appear therefore, that the Ardsallagh House Wood was harvested of large trees between 1840 and 1905 and this may have been carried out by Lord Stuart de Decies or his agents. This may account for the track on the Farm from the Grove area to the Old Boat Quay when the felled timber was being taken to the boats. This same wood was later planted with evergreen conifers by the German purchaser, Mr. Koerner around 1968.

Salmon Fishing in the 19th and 20th centuries

Very little is known about salmon fishing on the Blackwater River at Ardsallagh and the way of life that existed there, some 1½ centuries ago. However, from stories handed down and study of census records, it is possible to get an insight into this



Fisherman John Wall and His Family outside his thatched cottage at Ardsallagh, c. 1920's

forgotten period. It is obvious from the records that fishing was a very important means of livelihood for a major number of households in Ardsallagh, in the last years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century.

Fathers, sons and even daughters were involved in a fishing tradition that was obviously handed down through the generations. What is remarkable is the large number of people involved in fishing at the time (see [Appendix F](#)). From this insight,

it is obvious that there were a large number of boats drift net fishing for salmon , in the Ardsallagh area in the early 1900's. This probably reflected the abundance of salmon in the Blackwater River in these early years. However, there appears to have been a steady decline in fish numbers in later years and this decline resulted in a similar drop off in numbers of fishermen on the river.

In the early years the driftnet fishermen were using 20-foot boats, which were also used for other purposes and these required a three-man crew, with two men rowing. In later years with smaller boats and the introduction of small outboard engines (3HP, 2 stroke), the crew were reduced to two men. However, downstream of the old Metal Bridge in the more exposed water it was normally three men per boat.

It is estimated that there were only a few boats left on the river in the Ardsallagh area, by the late 1960's. Some of the fishermen listed in [Appendix F](#) were part time farmers and some were part time fishermen. While the majority were from Ardsallagh and the immediate surrounds, it was noted that some others were apparently "boarders" from outside the area. It is very clear therefore from all of the above, that salmon fishing was a way of life and a major source of employment in the Ardsallagh area, for at least a century. The list of fishermen shown in Appendix F would cover the approximate stretch of the river from D'Loughtane Townland to Tinnabinn Townland.



Blessing of the Salmon Boats, possibly late 1920's

While drift net fishing was the main fishing "industry" on the Blackwater in the 1900's, another method used at Ardsallagh was "Fishing the Drag". Upstream of the old Boat Quay at Ardsallagh Farm was an area known as "The Beannacht" (see Field Names). It is known that these names were used by fishermen for generations and were related to land marks on the shore when drift net fishing. It was here on the mud flats, before the rocky shore, that drag net fishing took place. Many of the fishermen used a track through Ardsallagh House wood to access the fishing area. A

large natural crevice in the rocks was “roofed” to make a day shelter which was known as “The Shanty”. This provided a shelter for fishermen while waiting on the tides to turn or when making tea on an open fire. Two groups of fishermen fished here in season. The season lasted from approximately February until August, with license fees for all types of fishing being paid to the Duke of Devonshire in Lismore Castle. One group was known as “the Farmers” and the other group known as “the Paupers”, - names which are probably self-explanatory! This type of fishing was a considerable “industry” here in the 1900s.

The Blackwater at Ardsallagh Farm was a tidal estuary with the tide going in and out approximately twice in every 24 hours. This gave an average 6 hours filling time to reach high water and an average 6 hours falling time to reach low water level. The tides were subject to the gravity and phases of the moon (and sun) which gave “spring” (high) tides at either full or new moon and “neap” (or more moderate than springs), at quarter moons. In an era long before the Internet, mobile phones or tide tables, the Ardsallagh Fishermen of old knew the rhythms of nature and the ever changing cycles of the tides, in the river, intimately. They knew when to expect the most productive time to fish and when to expect certain water levels and times of turning of the tides, in detail. This was knowledge handed down over the generations and is basically lost to most people today.

The difference between drift net fishing and drag net fishing was that the drag net was “payed out” (or set) using a boat and by fixing one end of the net to the shore,. As the name suggests, after a set time, the other floating end of the net in mid-river, would be dragged or hauled in by rope (in a semi circular shape), containing the caught salmon. With both drag and drift net fishing, it was also reported that in the olden days ordinary nets were being used, which the fish could detect in daylight. This resulted in mostly fishing at night. However, this changed in later years with the introduction of monofilament nets (clear nylon) which the fish could not detect. Following the introduction of these nets most fishing was then carried out in the daytime. Each drag net crew consisted of four men. One man remained on the shore and fixed the net. Two men rowed the boat, while one man remained on the stern of the boat “paying out” the net. All four men hauled in the net.

Fishing in all weathers was cold work and often the only sounds from the river in the dead of night would be the slapping of cold hands on the shoulders, with fishermen trying to keep the circulation going, in their frozen arms and hands. There were no “thermal suits” or thermal boots in these years and the fishermen had to rely on their own clothes and “oilskins” (consisting of a waterproof jacket, over-trousers and wellington boots) to keep warm. Salmon were plentiful in the Blackwater estuary in the 1900’s and in that era it was still possible to catch a salmon up to 50 lbs in weight. It was also a common sight every day to see fish jumping in the river, in those years, as they made their way upstream.

For the names of some salmon fishermen on the Blackwater River in the Ardsallagh area in the 19th and 20th centuries, see [Appendix F](#).

Thatched Houses in Ardsallagh

In the early 1900's many of the fishermen's (and other) dwelling houses in Ardsallagh were thatched houses. They were thatched with local water reed or "spire" harvested from the Blackwater River reed beds at the Clashmore Broads, upstream. These thatched roofs required considerable maintenance, but this was not expensive in these early years with local labour and materials being readily available. Nowadays, better quality reeds are imported from other countries and experienced thatchers are difficult to find. This has resulted in making thatching a very expensive exercise nowadays. However, in the early 1900's, Nature provided all of the raw materials at little cost and some locals were adept and experienced at thatching.



Fisherman's thatched cottage at Ardsallagh Ferry c. 2015

The bundles of harvested reeds were transported downstream from the reed beds in the fishermen's own boats, to the Ferry quay at Ardsallagh. Two boats were involved - one carrying the bundles of harvested "spire" and the second boat towing it. From here they were taken to the houses by horse and cart. Slender hazel rods were cut in the woods, split and pointed and use as "scollops" to pin the thatch to the roof. There was an old saying amongst Ardsallagh fishermen that "the day of the wind is not the day for the scollops". Due to the water reed quality and the maintenance problems , this thatching tradition died out as the years went by and the old thatched roofs were gradually replaced by slates or tiles. This resulted in another vanished way of life in Ardsallagh. At the time of writing, one of the last thatched fishermen's cottages was still to be seen beside the Ardsallagh Ferry quay crossing point to Templemichael. This house was in existence here in the mid 1800s and was formerly the house of one of the last prominent fishing families in Ardsallagh, who had fished the Blackwater for generations.

The Ardsallagh Ferry and Templemichael

At the western extremity of the Ardsallagh House Farm was the ferry to Templemichael. This was where the local Ardsallagh road terminated at the Blackwater River. The ferry probably goes back to the earliest times and it is located in a very historic area with a long historical record. Before the first timber bridge and causeway was completed across the Blackwater River c. 1832 (0.7km downstream of the present 1963 bridge), the ferry at Ardsallagh was a short and safer crossing point in bad weather. The main ferry on the Blackwater was from Monatray to Youghal and this had existed here since at least the 13th century. However, being a wider and more exposed crossing, it could be dangerous in bad weather. In 1649, at least some of Cromwell's army are reputed to have crossed the river at Ardsallagh and attacked the castle at Templemichael with cannon from the Ardsallagh side. The main army are reputed to have crossed at Monatray, to winter in Youghal.

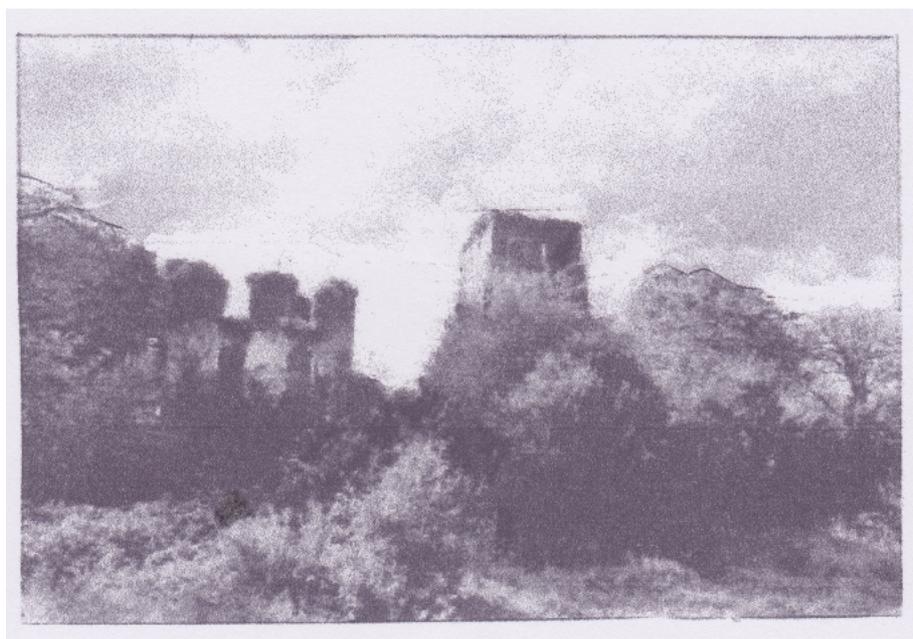


The Ardsallagh to Templemichael ferry crossing area with the old "Ferry Quay" in the background

Templemichael would have been a place of considerable activity for several centuries. It had Templemichael Castle, Templemichael House and fish weir, the Church of Ireland chapel and graveyard, also a Warehouse for the storage of goods and a riverside quay from where the ferry and boat cargo could unload, all located in close proximity. It also had Ballynatray House and large Demesne, the 6th Century Molana Abbey and Glendine R.C. church, all located only a short distance away.

The Fleming family of Ardsallagh operated the ferry here for generations and Tommy Fleming was gamekeeper at Ballynatray in the 1800's. By the middle of the 20th Century, Ballynatray House was reported as still owning over 1,000 acres of land with about 30% of this being extensive woods. From stories handed down, it would appear that the Fleming family were well respected in the area, in particular for their refusal to accept payment when taking funeral processions across to Templemichael Graveyard. In later years Tommy Fleming's granddaughter Catherine (Kitty) was employed at Ballynatray House and spent the rest of her life there. The history of Ballynatray House is covered in detail by Turtle Bunbury (see [Sources](#)).

Kitty's aunt, Nora Keffe, had taken up employment at Ardsallagh House and also spent the rest of her life there. By 1960, she was acting as carer for the last of the Ronayne family line (Gwendolyn). It was during the course of the research for this document that John Geary was fortunate enough to be able to meet up with Kitty Fleming and discuss the Ardsallagh House history and the Ronayne Family with her, only months before she passed away in 2015. Kitty had lived in the Rectory at Templemichael for many years after Ballynatray House was sold.



Templemichael Castle

Templemichael Castle was believed to be a 14th Century Geraldine castle. The last occupant there in the 17th Century was Garralgh Crogagh and it was reported to be the last castle in the area to surrender to Cromwell, when he knocked two sides of the castle down in 1649. The adjacent Templemichael House was reported to be the seat of a Captain Armstrong around the 18th Century and later a Thomas Carpenter Esq., around the 19th Century. The original church of Templemichael was damaged during the 1641 rebellion and a new church (C.O.I.) was built in its place in 1823. This continued to serve as a place of worship to possibly up to half a century ago, but it has now fallen into ruin. The family mausoleum of the Holroyd-Smith family of Ballynatray is located here beside the old church ruin and although now covered with ivy and vegetation (2017), it was still possible to see the old coffins inside through the ventilation slits in the old steel door. This is another poignant reminder of the demise of the powerful landowners in this tranquil stretch of the Blackwater River Valley.

A new R.C. church was built in nearby Glendine in 1871 and from stories handed down, it would appear that some of the staff in Ardsallagh House and their families took the ferry, or rowed across the river here on Sundays, in the early 1900's to attend Church ceremonies on this side of the river. Both C.O.I. and R.C. families are

known to be buried here in the old Templemichael Graveyard. This includes some Ardsallagh House staff family members.

Thankfully, Ballynatray House itself and Demesne have been saved and magnificently restored in more recent years, by a succession of new owners. However, as with Ardsallagh House and the Ronayne family, the Ferry, the Fleming family, the salmon fisherman, Castle, Mansion House, Warehouse and old church, all are no more. Another way of life has gone forever and all that remains here (2017) are the ancient graveyard and the crumbling ruins, the coo of the wood pigeon in the woods and the lonely cry of the heron on the silent Blackwater River.

Childhood Memories of Growing Up in Ardsallagh in the Mid-1900s

Our school days in the mid 1900's were in stark contrast to those of the children of the present day. We walked across the fields and lanes in all weathers, to attend Tiknock National School. Tiknock was the official title given to it by the Ordnance Survey in 1905, although it was always known locally as Tinnock. It was located less than 0.4km east of the Ardsallagh Cross Roads (or D'Loughtane Cross Roads as described on the O.S. map) on the road to Clashmore.

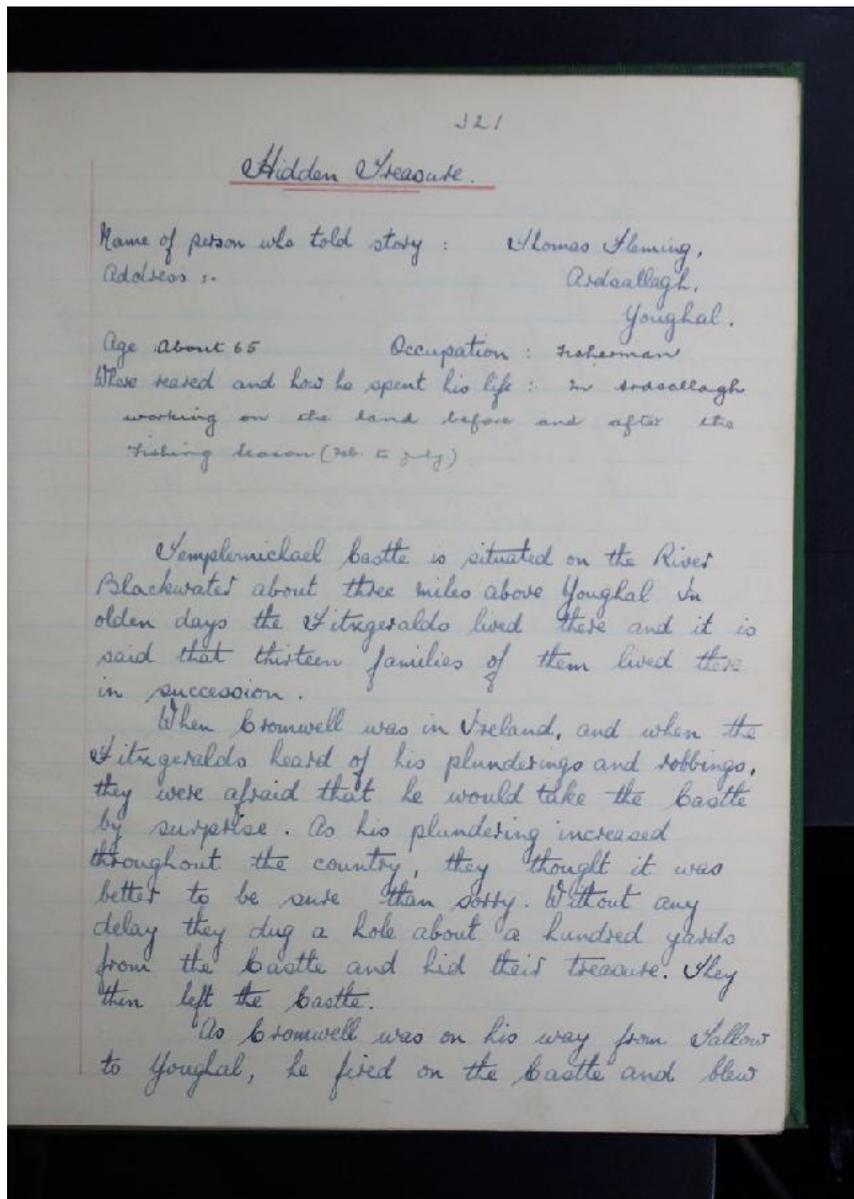
At least we had shoes! The generations before us were reputed to have many children going to school in their bare feet. The school was built in 1896, when it replaced the previous school there. The previous school was reputed to be located only a field away, to the north, in D'Loughtane townland, where William (Willie) Moloney had his Forge. The new school consisted of only one large room with a narrow hall at one end, which served as a cloakroom for coats, etc. There was also a very small coal store at the end of the hall. There were only primitive outdoor toilets. As this was before rural electrification, it had no electricity and no running water. Heating was by one open fire at the end of the room (the teacher's end!)

It had a bare wooden floor and large windows and it was cold and draughty in winter. The toilets were located outside, at the very back of the yard, one for the boys and one for the girls. They were separated by a long high wall. The yard or playground was divided into two, one side for the boys and one side for the girls. The toilets were simply a wooden bench, with a circular hole cut in it and located over a deep pit. Toilet paper was probably torn newspapers. There were no facilities in the toilets for hand-washing!

There were at least 12 known teachers employed at the school, over its lifetime of approximately 75 years. From stories handed down, known teachers names were as follows:

Mrs. Hannon	Nora Herlihy	Miss O'Flaherty
Margaret Christopher ⁴	Miss Connors	Miss Russell

⁴ Margaret Christopher married Patrick (Paddy) Waide (previously Wade) who was the long-serving coachman at Ardsallagh House.



Extract from the Schools National Folklore Collection compiled by the schoolchildren of Tiknock National School in 1938.

Teacher: Mairead, Bean de Uaidh (Margaret Waide)

Story by: Thomas Fleming, Ardsallagh

Occupation: fisherman; age about 65.

Ellen Condon
Mary Murphy

Miss Foley
Miss Lucas

Miss O'Gorman
Mary Nolan⁵

Subjects included, English, Irish, History, Geography, Arithmetic and Religion.

Tiknock schoolchildren took part in a countrywide Schools National Folklore Collection under the guidance of teacher Margaret Waide in 1938. Some excellent

⁵ Mary Nolan was the last teacher to teach at Tiknock School and she married a teacher in the Christian Brothers School, Youghal.

folklore stories from Ardsallagh and the surrounding areas are now published online. An extract from one story by Thomas Fleming, fisherman, Ardsallagh is included here as an example of what is available. The full set of stories by the Tiknock schoolchildren can be viewed online under Ducas, The Schools National Folklore Collection.

Tiknock School was closed for a time around 1960 due to a parental boycott, which forced some pupils to have to go school in Youghal. It was a mixed school and at times had only one teacher. One can only imagine the difficulties of trying to teach the different age groups and classes in the same room! The desks were long wooden benches which could seat up to about eight pupils. There were ink wells in the desks for liquid ink. Writing was by long-handled wooden pens, with a nib which was dipped in the ink as necessary. Copious amounts of blotting paper were used to dry the ink, as it was very slow to dry.

Lunch consisted of milk with bread and butter and jam (if one was lucky). In wintertime the bottles of milk would be lined up on a shelf on either side of the fire to heat. If one was unfortunate enough not to have removed the cork, or that the bottle was too close to the fire, there was a small explosion and no lunch! Little did we realise it at the time, but we were growing up in a world of simplicity, untouched by outside influences. Walking to school in all weathers and the hardships we encountered in our daily lives, in those years, were unknowingly, to be of benefit to us in later years and gave us an inner strength as we later faced the big bad world outside. Tiknock School closed in 1971 when it amalgamated with Clashmore. It was later sold and converted into a private dwelling house. It remains there to this day.



*Tiknock (Tinnock) School c. 2015
converted into a private dwelling house.*

It is difficult to select childhood memories of growing up on the Ardsallagh House Farm in the mid-1900s, simply because there are too many. There is another old proverb that says, “We do not remember days, we remember moments.”

For some reason, most moments that stand out, are related to summer days on the farm and on the Blackwater River. There would appear to be something about the Blackwater River Valley on calm summer evenings, that the tranquil melancholy of the river’s silence enters into one’s soul and memory and never leaves it.

Growing up in Ardsallagh in the mid 1900s was light years away from growing up in the world of today. We lived close to nature and the land, in a time when life moved at a different pace. Although times were tough, there was a freedom and simplicity about it, that does not exist today. In many ways, we had a somewhat idyllic childhood, where nature, the changing seasons and the way of life on the farm, was our early education. We roamed the fields and woods, picked mushrooms in the fields and blackberries in the hedgerows in season. We hunted rabbits, which were very abundant in these early years (before the introduction of the disease Myxomatosis) and fished extensively on the Blackwater and its tributaries. On the Blackwater River we went with John Aherne to fish the salmon weir at Ballynatray Demesne and also with the salmon fishermen to fish The Drag, at The Shanty. Frequently, we came home with very welcome gifts of sea trout for the pot.

For childhood fishing, Gardener Jack Moloney in the Walled Garden of Ardsallagh House provided the tall bamboo to make a simple home made fishing rod. A section of hollowed out suitable branch from an Alder tree in the woods, provided the handle and all that was required from the fishing tackle shop was the reel and line. We cycled to the tributaries of the Blackwater and fished for brown trout with worms on lazy summer afternoons . As we grew older, we graduated to better fishing rods. Nora Keefe in the “Big House” provided a disused and broken professional



A fishing location on a tranquil stretch of the Blackwater River Valley c. 2015

Greenheart fishing rod and which, with home made ferrules, we remodelled into reasonable shore angling rod. Even fishing lures were fashioned from discarded tea spoons with the handles cut off and then fitted with triple hooks. These caught many mackerel as they came upstream in the lower part of the Estuary, when the water warmed up.

In summer also, we dug lugworm on the mud flats between the Walled Garden and the Old Boat Quay and picked crabs in front of Ardsallagh House and The Castle, all for fishing bait. We fished from the same mud flats near the Walled Garden on the first hours of the filling tide and regularly caught enough flat fish to last a family for days. For bigger fish, spinning off the rocks at The Shanty and at Templemichael Quay, occasionally produced large sea bass. In the late summer we went with one of the fishermen in his boat to pick bilberries (known locally as whorts) at the Carnglass "mountain" some 5km upstream of the Ardsallagh Ferry. This was a remote area on the western side of the Blackwater which rose to about 640 feet above sea level, at its highest point. We rowed up the river assisted by the filling tide and came back with the falling tide. This was quite an adventure for very young teenagers being so far away from home for a whole day in a rowing boat.

On the farm in summer, we helped with stooking the corn and haymaking, later riding and guiding the horses as we towed in the large cocks of hay to the haggard, for transfer to the hay barn. We helped with thinning of the turnips and mangolds and storing the potatoes in a clamp. In the Walled Garden, we picked tomatoes in the Greenhouse with Gardener Jack Moloney and learned to distinguish between the different varieties of apple trees such as Golden Delicious and Queen Cox. We were rewarded by the Cook, Nora Keefe in the kitchen with our own "mini afternoon teas" and cake. Back home, there was no radio or television and instead we read library books under the shade of the leafy trees.

And so it was that in our carefree summer idyll all those years ago, we cared little for the history of the Ronayne family or Genealogy. At that stage, both James Francis Ronayne and Robert Uniacke had died and Anna Geraldine (Gwendolyn) was the last of the family line. The history and details of the family was somewhat a mystery, even to some remaining staff. Today, following considerable research, we have solved that mystery and it is now recorded here in this document for posterity.

The Later Years

Following the deaths of both her brothers in 1945, Gwendolyn (Gwen) had become the sole survivor of all the siblings and the last of the line and was left with the responsibility of managing the farm on her own. Within a few years and certainly by the early 1950's, the staff numbers at Ardsallagh House had dwindled to about five key people, all capable of running the farm with a major reduction in farm activity and by bringing in outside labour when required. Gwen appears to have been greatly assisted in managing the farm for this next 16 years after her brother's death, by the loyal remaining staff and it is known that before her death in 1961 at the age of 82 years, she was cared for in Ardsallagh House by one of the in-house staff.

Just a few short years passed after her death before the “Big House” and farm was finally sold and in this short time it appears that Nature was slowly taking over both the house and grounds and the walled garden. Eventually, the house was sold to a foreign national c. 1965 and the “Big House” was fully demolished c. 1967 to make way for a modern bungalow on its site. The 1.3 acre Garden and its contents were cleared and levelled, although the walls were allowed to remain. It brought an end to some 140-odd years of history and also a way of life that existed long before the era of electricity, the motor car and modern technology. Also a time when life moved at a different pace and people lived close to nature and the rhythms of the seasons.

There was also a cottage on the estate which was occupied by the original land steward and his descendants since c. 1903. This was located on top of the hill north of Ardsallagh House. It had a separate access lane from the local road in Ardsallagh townland. This cottage also had a large stone barn with loft and stables on the site. In the earlier days it probably housed horses and hay. The date of 1877 was inscribed in lime mortar render on the inside of the roof of the barn. This probably indicates the date it was built. The cottage was later occupied by the son of the former land steward and his family until his own death in 1976. He had followed in his father's footsteps and had worked in Ardsallagh House until its sale in 1961. The old barn collapsed due to settlement and neglect in the early 1980s. The cottage remains to this day (2015) derelict and forgotten with the access lane completely overgrown.



Left: Land Steward's Cottage, early 1950's
Right: Land Steward's Cottage, 2012

At the time of Griffith's Valuation c. 1851, this former Land Steward's cottage and surrounding lands were being leased by a Patrick Troy from Lord Stuart de Decies. It would appear therefore that Alice Ronayne acquired this cottage and outbuildings and some of the lands surrounding it, to enlarge the Ardsallagh House farm c. 1902. Also it may have been Patrick Troy who built the adjoining large barn and stables there c. 1877.

Another house which was located on the south eastern extremities of the farm adjacent to the “Harbour View”, was the coachman's residence. This was built in 1933-1934 on a plot of land gifted to the second coachman by the Ronayne family. He had been recorded as an in-house member of staff at Ardsallagh House in the 1911 Census. He served as coachman/driver for Dr. James Ronayne and other



Ruined Barn next to Land Steward's Cottage, 2012

members of the family for 50 years, from 1911 up to his death in 1962. This house continues to be occupied by his descendants to the present day.

With regard to the other ruins on the farm on the bank of the Blackwater near "Curtin's Field", this was being leased by a Patrick Curtayne from Mrs. Olivia Ronayne in 1851. It may have been a fisherman's cottage as there was only c. 2 acres of land with the dwelling and the 1905 O.S. map shows a small boat quay beside it. There was also no obvious access road to this remote dwelling.

After the estate was purchased by the Koerner family c. 1965, it was turned into a goat farm, producing goats milk as well as the brand-name "Ardsallagh Goats Cheese". Approximately 33 years later, in 1998, it was put up for sale again, this time with the option to purchase the farm in lots. Some 17 years after this, in 2015, it was advertised for sale again, this time only the lower portion of the farm (which originally contained Ardsallagh house) and excluding the woodland and some land to the west. However, this time it included an adjoining property and land known as "Harbour View". In total some 65 acres was being offered for sale (2015).

While the original Ardsallagh House and Garden had been completely removed in c. 1967, at its sale in 1998 the old 19th century stone barns and lofts appear to have withstood the test of time and progress. When the property was advertised for sale in 1998, it records the original barns remaining, but with major internal conversions, including stables, stores and a loft conversion into an apartment. The original poultry houses appear to have also been retained but advertised as being converted into a residential yard cottage. However, the sales advertisement in 2015 records the dwelling houses and all outbuildings as "all derelict". This would appear to include the "new" 3-bedroom bungalow which was built on the footprint of the "Big House". This is somewhat ironic, considering that a once beautiful house was removed to make way for a small bungalow which was itself now being reported in a poor state of repair.

In 2016, two of the descendants of the "miscellaneous peasants", who had once lived and worked on the estate, were bitten by the family history and genealogy bug, i.e. three generations later. The above article is a summary of their research and memories and of stories passed down through the generations. Not alone is it a record of a once beautiful house and farm, but it is a record of a time and place that no longer exists. (see also back page, "About this Document")

It is therefore perhaps a fitting end to the Ardsallagh House story, to find that at the time of writing (2017), the upper half of the farm has been advertised for sale again. This time it includes the derelict land steward's cottage and barn and some 83 - 88 acres of land. This also includes the wooded area to the West as far as "The Ferry" at Templemichael. This would amount to up to 65% of the original Ardsallagh Farm. This sale will probably finally complete the permanent division of the original Ardsallagh Farm. It will also be the final chapter in the history of Ardsallagh House, since it was first established by Dominick Ronayne almost 2 centuries ago.

On the ground in 2017, Ardsallagh House and Farm are no more. All have been literally erased from the face of the earth and the original Farm is now unrecognisable. By c. 1967 the "Big House" itself, Walled Garden, trees, shrubbery and flowers, had all vanished under the advance of the bulldozer. Gardener Jack Moloney's (and former colleagues') lifetime of grafting and pruning apple and pear trees, disappeared too and the Walled Garden was reduced to a barren wasteland. Not even a flower remained. Well over a century of work on the House and grounds, built up by the now forgotten Ronayne Family and staff, in this rural idyll, was torn away in one fell swoop of the machines. Little of the old was preserved. It is sad to see something once proud and splendid reduced to rubble and one can only wonder about a world that allows such a treasure of our rural heritage to disappear. However, such is the way of the world today and all too often it is the past that is the first casualty on our road to "progress". It might also be fitting to end the Ardsallagh House story with an extract from a poignant and thoughtful song/poem written by the songwriter Wally Whyton, almost half a century ago. He was inspired to write this, after seeing a 200 year old oak tree cut down, to build a house.

Leave Them A Flower
by Wally Whyton, c. 1969

*Leave them a flower some grass and a hedgerow
A hill and a valley, a view to the sea
These things are not yours to destroy as you want to
A gift given once for eternity.*

*You plunder and pillage, you tear and you tunnel
Trees lying toppled, roots finger the sky
Building a land of machines and computers
In the name of progress the farms have to die.*

*When the last flower has dropped its last petal
When the last concrete is finally laid
The moon will shine cold on a nightmarish landscape
Your gift to your children, this world that you made.*

APPENDICES

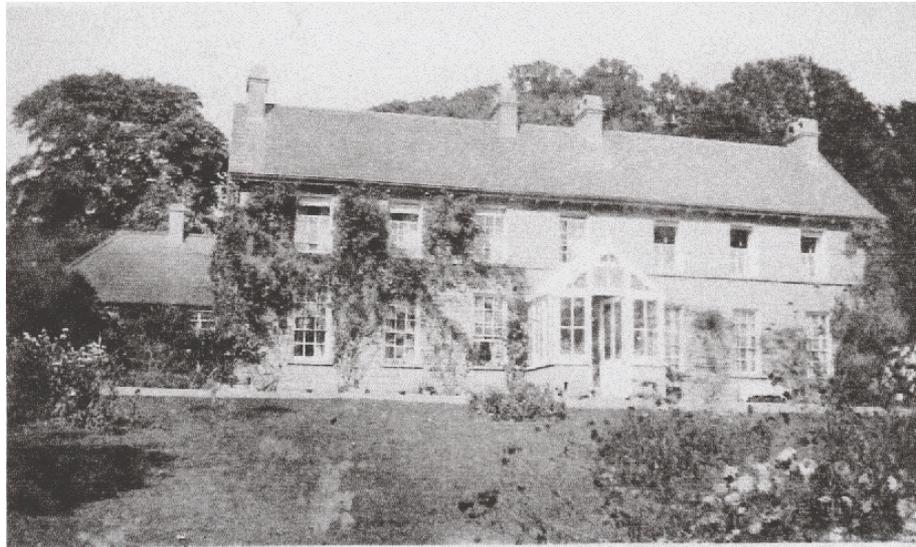
Appendix A: Some full-time staff at Ardsallagh House c1900 – c1960

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>
Laura Crowley	Parlour maid	Cork
Richard Wade	Coachman	Ballinamultina
Harry Glavin	Gardener	Ardsallagh
Hannah Meade	Dairymaid	Waterford
John Geary	Land Steward	Knockanore
James Keane	Farm hand	Waterford
William Guiry	Servant	Waterford
James Tobin	Yard man	County Waterford
Annie Harold	Servant	County Cork
Bridget O'Neill	Cook	County Cork
Lizie O'Regan	Dairymaid	County Cork
Timothy Coughlan	Gardener	Blackrock, Cork
Nellie Power	Parlour maid	Kilmacthomas
Nellie Kelly	Parlour maid	Dungarvan
Danny Gamble	Servant	County Waterford
Annie Harrington	Servant	County Cork
Kitty Lucey	Parlour maid	County Cork
Nora Cronin	Dairymaid	County Kerry
Nora Coughlan	Servant	Ardsallagh
Pats Lynch	Herdsman	Monatray
Johnny Keefe	Farm	Ardsallagh
Nora Fahy	Parlour maid	County Waterford
Kathleen Dee	Parlour maid	County Waterford
Lil Whelan	Dairy Maid	County Waterford
Patrick (Paddy) Wade*†	Coachman	Ballinamultina
Thomas (Tommy) Geary*‡	Land steward	Ardsallagh
Mike Moloney*	Farm	Tiknock
Jack Moloney*	Gardner	Tiknock
Nora Keefe*	Cook	Ardsallagh

*Indicates staff remaining in the later years; †Took over from his brother Richard when Richard emigrated in 1911; ‡Took over from his father John who had died in 1935.

Appendix B: Photographs of Ardsallagh House, its staff and environs.

Some of the photos included in the main text are repeated here for the purpose of providing further details where possible.



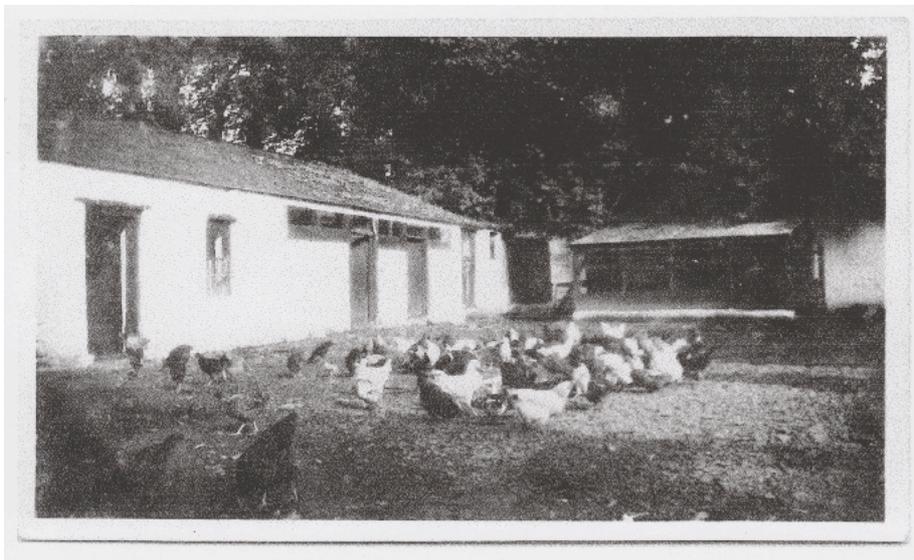
1. Ardsallagh House from the front in the mid 1930s. Formal rooms were to the front, while kitchen, dairy and main staff quarters were to the back (see front cover illustration)



2. East wing of Ardsallagh House, (morning room) and main staff quarters. This is behind the right-hand side of photo 1.



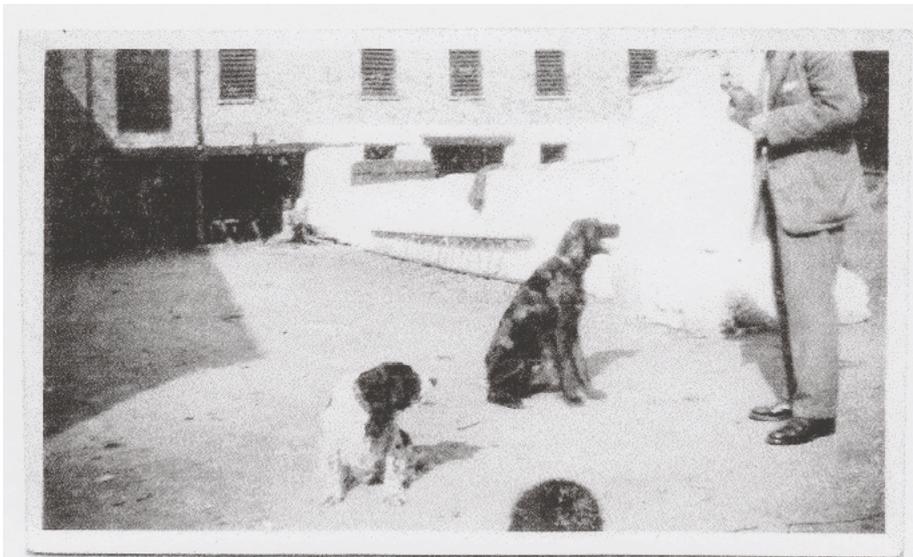
*3. Staff at the front porch of Ardsallagh House
L-R: Jack Moloney, Nora Keefe, Nora Coughlan, Nora Cronin,
John Geary*



*4. The farm yard at Ardsallagh House, 1930s, with the single-
storey poultry houses on the left.*



5. Nora Keefe and Pats Lynch in front of the original old barn, early 1930's. This barn contained the stables.



6. The farm yard with the later barn in the background, early 1930's. Note the windows in the barn are louvered.



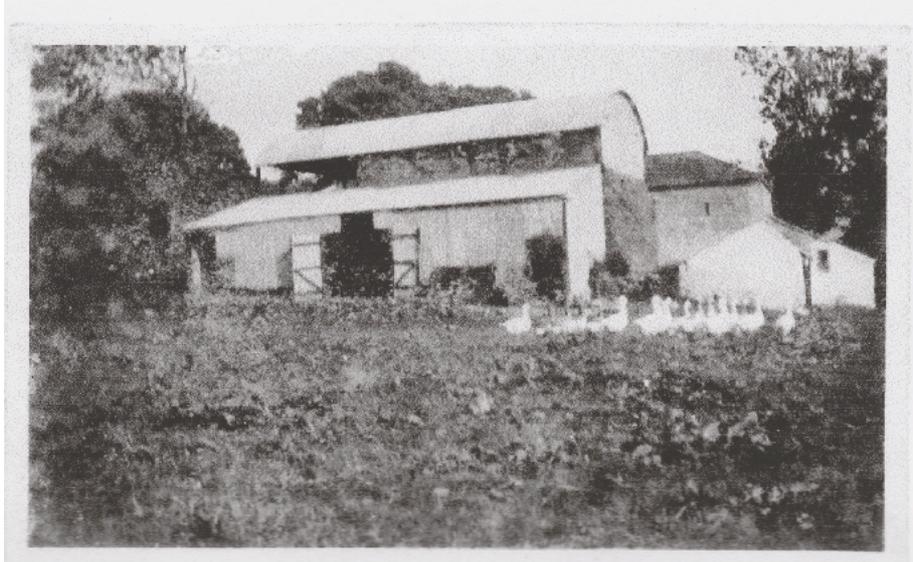
7. "The Castle" (adjacent to the old fish weir) near the main entrance gates to Ardsallagh House. The wall on the left is the boundary wall of the farm facing the River Blackwater. The hill in the background is Tiknock/Tinnabinna, and the Metal Youghal Bridge (1883-1963) is on the right.



8. Pats Lynch (Herdsman) with the farm yard in the background



9. Pats Lynch and dogs. The newer barn can be seen in the background.



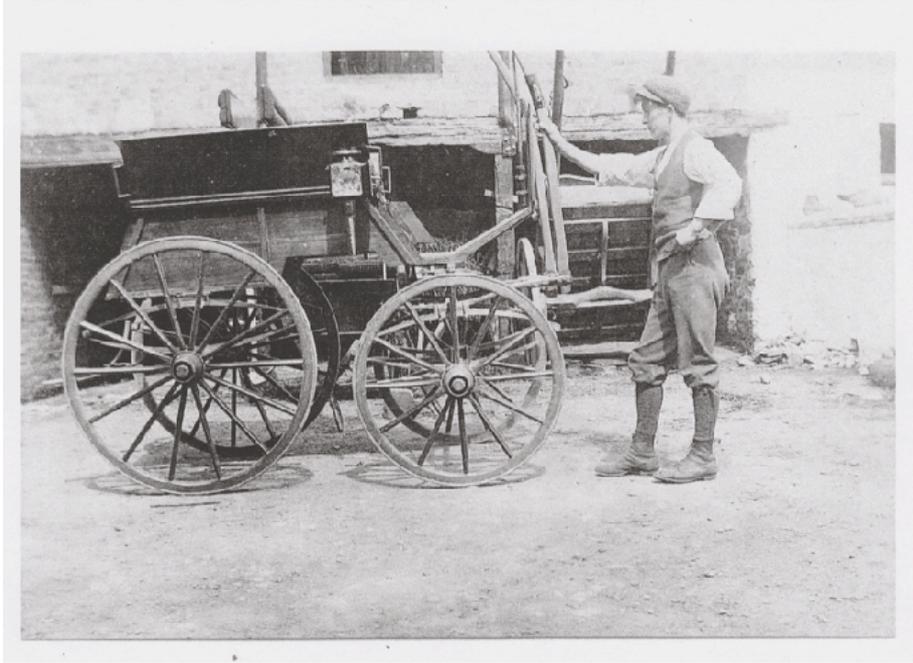
10. Hay barn and milking shed, early 1930s. The building on the rear right is the old barn. Note the flock of geese in the foreground.



11. Front drive, with the Blackwater River below the trees. The distant hillside on the left is Tiknock, and on the right is Rhincrew. c.1920's



12. Blessing of the salmon boats in front of Ardsallagh House, possibly late 1920's.



13. Four-wheel carriage and coachman, date unknown but possibly early 1900's. Coachman may be Richard Wade. Note the carriage store in the background.



14. Possibly James Francis Ronayne, dressed for shooting and with a dog, seated in front of the tennis court.



15. Nora Keeffe, Paddy Wade, Nora Cronin - mid 1930s

16. Nora Cronin, dressed in hunting gear for the photo, at the front of Ardsallagh House - mid 1930's





17. *Nora Keefe, mid 1930's. Nora acted as carer for Gwendolyn Ronayne in the later years.*



18. *Nora Coughlan, Nora Keefe, Nora Cronin, and Pats Lynch in the farmyard, mid 1930's.*



19. Nora Cronin, Jack Moloney, Nora Keefe and Tommy Geary in front of Ardsallagh House, mid 1930's.



20. Nellie Kelly, mid 1930's. Note the walls of the Main House are clad with slates.



21. *Nora Cronin with a flock of turkeys*

22. *Nora Cronin in the walled garden, mid 1930's*





23. Glass-covered propagating beds in the walled garden, mid-1930s

24. Nora Keefe and Pats Lynch





*25 Tommy Geary and Dessie Murphy
(cousin of the Ronaynes) c. late 1930's*



26. Nora Cronin and Jack Moloney feeding turkeys, 1930's



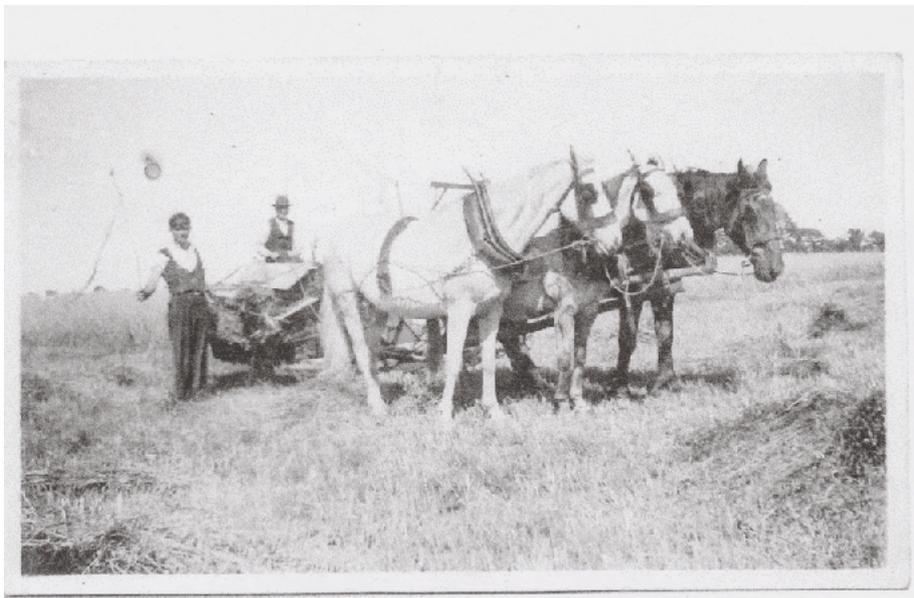
27. Threshing at Ardsallagh House in the 1930's. Including Nelly Kelly? , Jack Moloney, Nora Keefe, Willie Hogan, and Nora Coughlan.



28. Old-type threshing machine (powered by horses) threshing at Ardsallagh in 1928.



29. Cows coming in for milking, mid-1930s. The hay barn is at the back, with the milking shed in front of it.



30. Tim Coughlan and Tommy Geary cutting the corn at Ardsallagh with reaper and binder and horses, mid-1930's.



31. Unknown, unknown, Tim Coughlan, Tommy Geary, and Mike Moloney (with scythe) stooking the corn at Ardsallagh, mid 1930's



32. Tommy Geary with horses and reaper, mid 1930's



33. Tommy Geary, Mike Moloney, and Pats Lynch picking potatoes at Ardsallagh, mid 1930's



34. Nora Cronin with a pair of workhorses, 1930's



35. Going for the cows at Ardsallagh, 1930's

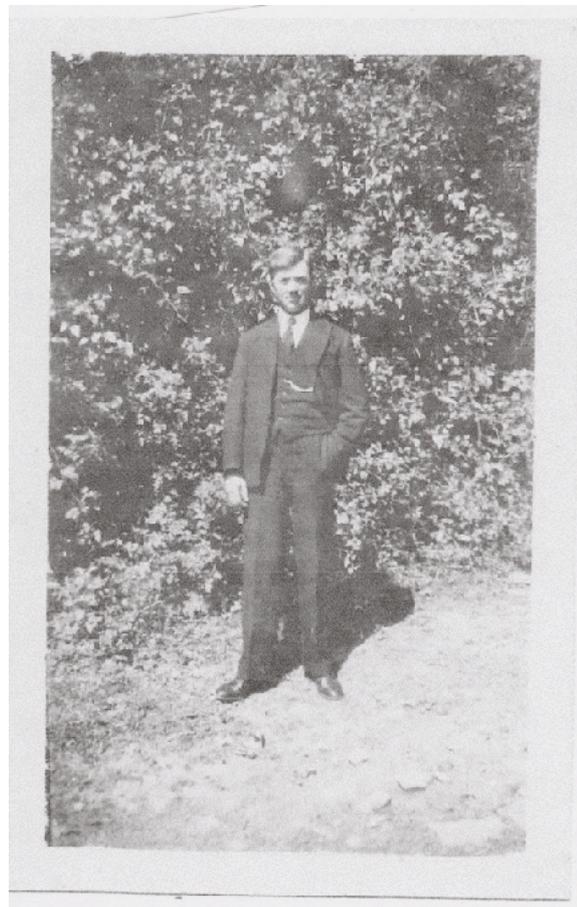


36. The Land Steward's cottage on the farm at Ardsallagh in the early 1950's.



37. The Original Land Steward, John Geary, and his young son Thomas, c. 1911.

38. The later Land Steward, Thomas (Tommy) Geary in the early 1940's





39. Ruin of the former Land Steward's cottage on the farm at Ardsallagh, c. 2012



40. Ruin of the former large barn and stables (c.1877) beside the Land Steward's cottage, c. 2012



*41. Nora Cronin at Ardsallagh House
early 1930's*



*42. Dairy Maid and flock of turkeys in the haggard c. 1930. The
haggard was beside the Hay Barn and the later large Barn.*



43. Nellie Power, parlour maid and young friend at Ardsallagh House c. 1949

44. Nora Cronin with new 1930 bicycle at Ardsallagh House (note the carbide lamp on the bicycle)





*45. The later Land Steward and his family outside his cottage.
c. 1960*

*46. Herdsman Pats Lynch at Ardsallagh
House early 1930's*





47. Mixed fish weir on the Blackwater River (at low tide) with Ardsallagh House woodland in the background late 1970's. The salmon weir (not shown) was upstream of Ballynatray House.

*Photo credits: Nora Cronin⁶, Declan O'Keeffe⁷, John Geary, Ronan Waide
Ronayne Tomb photo from Historic Graves website
Front Cover: Ardsallagh House, c.1900, John Geary
Sketch Maps of Original Farm and Farmyard: John Geary.*

⁶ Nora Cronin took the majority of the photographs in Appendix B with a 1930's Box Brownie camera. She later married staff member Thomas Geary.

⁷ Declan O'Keeffe supplied photos 11, 12, 13 and 14, and the original Ronayne Family photographs..

Appendix C: Sources

Houses of Kinsalebeg - <http://www.kinsalebeg.com/> (2016)

Griffith's Valuation (1851)

Census of Ireland (1901 & 1911)

Historic Ordnance Survey Maps - 6" & 25" - <http://www.osi.ie/mapviewer.html>

Turtle Bunbury - <http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history>

Villiers Stuart - <https://en.w.wikipedia.org> & <http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie>

Blackwater and Bride - Navigation and Trade, 7000 BC to 2007 - Niall O'Brien

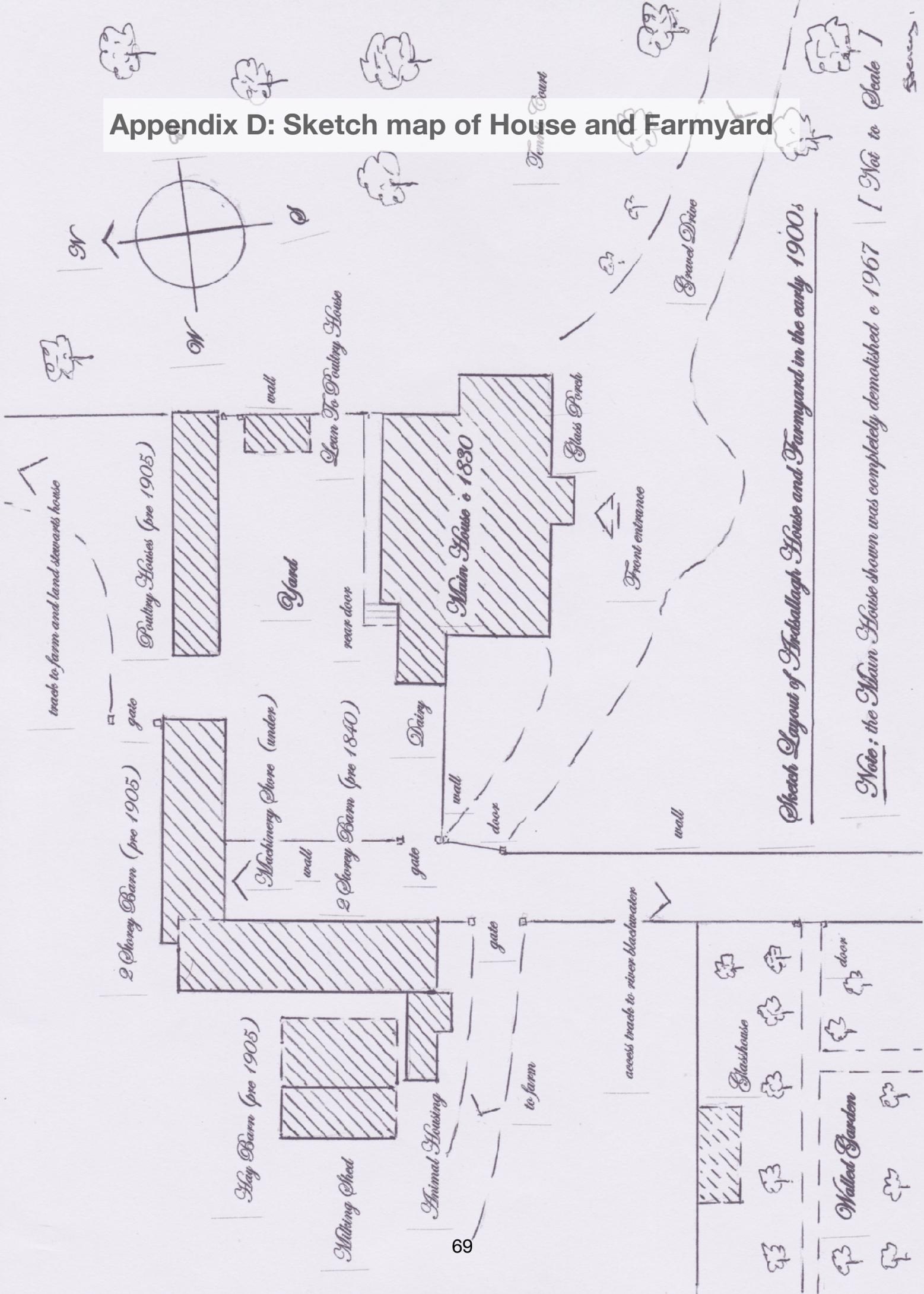
Ardsallagh House, County Waterford - http://www.waider.ie/personal/hairballs/ardsallagh_house.html (2016 and later)

Ronayne Family Photographs - Declan O'Keeffe

Personal contacts and research including childhood memories - John Geary (gearmur@gmail.com)

Personal contacts and research - Ronan Waide (waider@waider.ie)

Appendix D: Sketch map of House and Farmyard

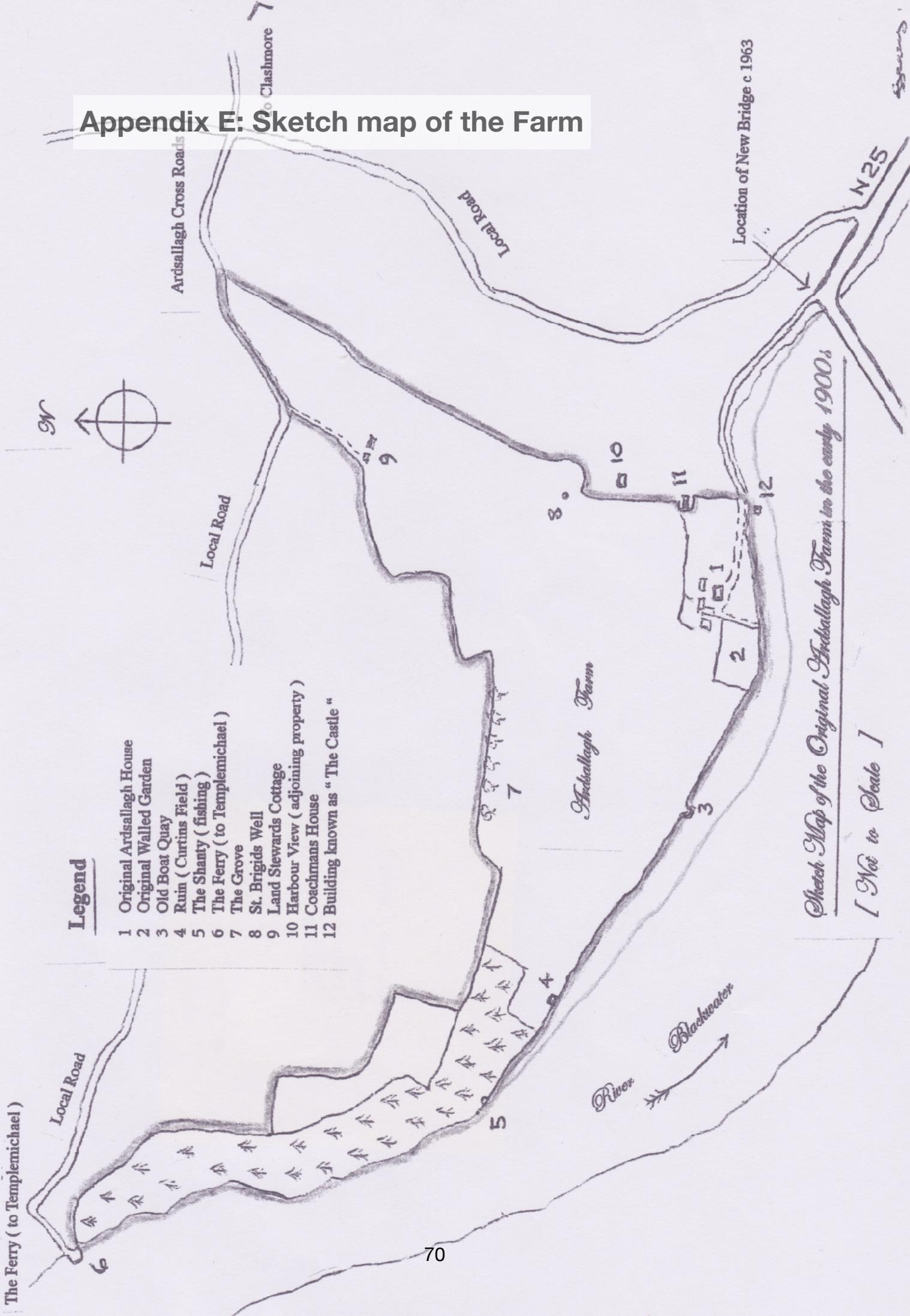


Sketch Layout of Ardaballagh House and Farmyard in the early 1900's

Note: the Main House shown was completely demolished c 1967 [Not to Scale]

Stevens

Appendix E: Sketch map of the Farm



Legend

- 1 Original Ardsallagh House
- 2 Original Walled Garden
- 3 Old Boat Quay
- 4 Ruin (Curtins Field)
- 5 The Shanty (fishing)
- 6 The Ferry (to Templemichael)
- 7 The Grove
- 8 St. Brigids Well
- 9 Land Stewards Cottage
- 10 Harbour View (adjoining property)
- 11 Coechmans House
- 12 Building known as "The Castle"

The Ferry (to Templemichael)

Local Road

Ardsallagh Cross Roads

Local Road

Local Road

Ardsallagh Farm

River
Blackwater

Location of New Bridge c 1963

N25

Sketch Map of the Original Ardsallagh Farm in the early 1900's

[Not to Scale]

Appendix F: Some Ardsallagh Fishermen in the 19th & 20th centuries

(D'Loughtane to Tinnabinnna stretch of the River Blackwater)

Name	Address
Michael Cashman	Ardsallagh
James Cashman	Ardsallagh
Patrick Cashman	Ardsallagh
Patrick Hogan	Ardsallagh
Michael Hogan	Ardsallagh
William Hogan	Ardsallagh
Daniel Hogan	Ardsallagh
John Hogan	Ardsallagh
Michael Fleming	The Bungalow
William Fleming	Ardsallagh
Bridget Fleming	Ardsallagh
Thomas Fleming	Ardsallagh
John Fleming	Ardsallagh
William Fleming	Ardsallagh
Kate Fleming	Ardsallagh
Patrick White	Ardsallagh
Michael White	Ardsallagh
Bat White	Ardsallagh
James Greene	Ardsallagh
James Keefe	Ardsallagh
Jno Keating	Ardsallagh
Bryan Doyle	Ardsallagh
William Flaherty	Ardsallagh
Cornelius Hynes	Ardsallagh
Thomas Keogh	Ardsallagh
James Connell	Ardsallagh
Maurice Keogh	Ardsallagh

Name	Address
Patrick Morrissy	Ardsallagh
Michael Guirey	Ardsallagh
Maurice Troy	Ardsallagh
Michael Galvin	Ardsallagh
James Pumphret	Ardsallagh
William Keating	Ardsallagh
Declan Gazely	Ardsallagh
Patrick Fleming	Ardsallagh
John Fleming	Ardsallagh
David Fleming	Ardsallagh
Patrick Barry	Ardsallagh
Bart O'Brien	Ardsallagh
Thomas McCormack	Ardsallagh
John Cronin	Ardsallagh
Michael Reirdon	Ardsallagh
Michael T. Flynn	D'Loughtane
Patrick Roche	D'Loughtane; <i>dn. P</i>
Patrick Fitzgerald	Tiknock
Patie Merrigan	Tiknock; <i>dn. F</i>
James McGrath	Tiknock
John Wall	Tinnabinna
William Wall	Tinnabinna
Richard Keogh	Tinnabinna
Thomas Keogh	Tinnabinna
John Keogh	Tinnabinna
John McGrath	Tinnabinna
James McGrath	Tinnabinna
Pat McGrath	Tinnabinna
Patrick Keogh	Ardsallagh; <i>dn. P</i>
John Mulcahy	Ardsallagh; <i>dn. F</i>

Name	Address
Danny Fleming	Ardsallagh; <i>dn. P</i>
Tommy Fleming	Ardsallagh; <i>dn. P</i>
Willie Fleming	Ardsallagh
Daniel Doyle	Ardsallagh; <i>dn. F</i>
Pat Doyle	Ardsallagh
James O'Keeffe	Ardsallagh
Tom Fleming	Ardsallagh
John Fleming	Ardsallagh
Johnny Hogan	Ardsallagh; <i>dn. F</i>
Tim Coughlan	Ardsallagh
Pat Coughlan	Ardsallagh
Michael Halloran	Ardsallagh
Tom Halloran	Ardsallagh
Richard Barry	Ardsallagh; <i>dn. P</i>
John Aherne (Ballynatray Weir)	Ardsallagh
Johnny Morrisey	D'Loughtane
Jimmy Roche	D'Loughtane
Tommy Roche	D'Loughtane
Ned Moloney	Tiknock
Paddy Burns	Tinnabinna
Jim Power	Tinnabinna
Martin McCarthy	Tinnabinna
Paddy McCarthy	Tinnabinna
Frank Coughlan	Tinnabinna
Power Family	Pillpark

Where names are repeated, this usually represents a son or another family with the same surname. Only a small percentage of all of the above would have been drag net fishermen. Known drag net crew members in later years are marked either as "dn. P" for "the Paupers" group, or "dn. F" for "the Farmers" group.

Appendix G: Landowners and Occupiers in Ardsallagh in the mid 19th Century

When Dominick Ronayne moved to Ardsallagh c. 1830 he was leasing the farm from Henry Villiers Stuart, a major English landlord who owned over 7,000 acres of land in West Waterford at the time. Henry Villiers Stuart resided at Dromana Estate, beside the River Blackwater and the village of Villierstown in County Waterford. He was granted the title of Lord Stuart de Decies in the Peerage of the United Kingdom in 1839. He was a Member of Parliament for County Waterford (1826 -1830) and Lord Lieutenant of County Waterford (1831-1874). All of the other small landowners and occupiers of houses in Ardsallagh at the time were tenants of the same landlord. As can be seen from the following table (Extract from Griffiths Valuation c. 1851) all of the farms in Ardsallagh at the time were small, except for Patrick Troy (Land Steward's cottage area) and Mrs. Olivia Ronayne, widow of Dominick (Ardsallagh House and area). Also, Lord Stuart de Decies owned all of the woodland (plantation) in the Ardsallagh Townland at this time.

Like other large landowners of the time Lord Stuart de Decies exercised his right of ownership by evicting tenants for non-payment of rent and for other reasons. There was also considerable sub-letting by the person to whom the land or property was leased (middlemen) and they also were known to evict tenants at will. All of this came to an end around 1903 when a Land Purchase Act was introduced by the British Government, for tenant land purchase from their landlords.

As with other parts of the country, there was considerable suffering in the area during the Famine Years c. 1845-1851. In general smallholders and labourers did not have enough to buy what food was available, while at the same time none of the landlords starved! Much anger was directed at Lord Stewart de Decies at the time and at one stage he was chased out of Clashmore by several thousand people outside the courthouse there. The parish of Clashmore included the Ardsallagh townland and it was recorded at the time that there was over a 20% loss in population in Clashmore parish following the Famine. It is interesting to note that some of the smaller landowners and occupiers of houses in Ardsallagh in 1851 show up in later years as prominent fishing family names. Perhaps therefore, the proximity of the Blackwater River and its fishing tradition provided some form of sustenance for some Ardsallagh residents at the time of the Famine.

The following table is an extract from Griffiths Valuation for Clashmore parish and it shows all of the occupiers of houses and land in Ardsallagh townland in 1851. As well as Lord Stewart de Decies, the names of "middlemen" are shown in the Lessors column. The area of land leased by each occupier is shown as A.R.P. on the extreme right of the table. This was the form of Area measurement used at the time and its meaning is as follows:

A = acres; 1 acre = 4 roods (or 4,840 sq. yards)

R = roods; 1 rood = 40 sq. perches (or poles)

P = perches; 1 sq. perch (or pole) = 30¼ sq. yards.

For linear measurement: 1 linear yard = 0.9144 metres.

Name (Occupier)	Name (Immediate Lessor)	Description of Tenament	Area A. R. P.
Richard Smith Esq.	Lord Stewart de Decies	Offices and land	4 3 38
Daniel Fleming	Richard Smith Esq.	House	-
Lord Stewart de Decies	In fee	Land (Plantation)	65 3 29
"	"	"	6 3 5
"	"	"	26 2 27
William Brien	Lord Stewart de Decies	House, offices and garden	0 1 14
William Brien	"	Land	2 1 18
Patrick Troy	"	House, offices and land	99 3 27
"	"	"	14 1 10
John Kehoe	Patrick Troy	House	-
Patrick Brien	"	House and garden	0 0 19
Vacant	Patrick Troy	House and office	-
Thomas Landers	Lord Stewart de Decies	House and land	10 2 25
"	"	"	16 0 39
William Barrett	Thomas Landers	House and garden	0 0 8
Jeremiah Shea	James Fleming	House and garden	0 0 10
James Fleming	Lord Stewart de Decies	Land	10 3 15
Daniel Hogan	Michl & Patk. Hogan	House and land	0 3 39
Michael Hogan	Lord Stewart de Decies	House, offices and land	2 3 1
"	"	"	2 1 29
"	"	"	4 0 35
Richard Hogan (Little)	Michl & Patk. Hogan	House	-
Richard Hogan (Long)	"	House and land	0 3 20
Patrick Hogan	Lord Stewart de Decies	House, offices and land	10 2 38
Patrick Linnehan	Michl & Patk. Hogan	House and garden	0 0 11

Name (Occupier)	Name (Immediate Lessor)	Description of Tenament	Area A. R. P.
Michael Hogan	Lord Stewart de Decies	Land (common)	0 0 21
John Linnehan	“	House, offices and land	19 1 21
Mary Daly	Lord Stewart de Decies	Land	1 2 26
Catherine Daly	“	House, offices and land	1 1 5
Michael Doyle	Lord Stewart de Decies	House, offices and land	21 3 21
David Ronayne	“	Land	2 0 7
“	“	“	1 0 25
“	“	“	1 0 14
“	“	“	1 0 4
Timothy Hayes	Lord Stewart de Decies	House, offices and land	4 0 18
“	“	“	3 0 1
James Kilmartin	Timothy Hayes	House	-
Patrick Sheehan	Lord Stewart de Decies	House and garden	0 0 12
Mary Daly	Patrick Sheehan	House	-
Margaret Keating	Lord Stewart de Decies	House, office and land	0 3 34
Margaret Keating	Lord Stewart de Decies	House, office and land	0 2 24
“	“	“	1 0 24
David Ronayne	Lord Stewart de Decies	House, Office and garden	0 2 4
Timothy Hayes & others	“	Land (common)	0 1 10
Bartholomew Hayes	“	House and garden	0 1 13
Patrick Sheehan	Lord Stewart de Decies	Land	3 0 31
William Fleming and Patrick Fleming	“	House, offices and land and House and land	18 2 7
Michael Connell	“	House and garden	0 1 3

Name (Occupier)	Name (Immediate Lessor)	Description of Tenament	Area A. R. P.
Patrick Kehoe	Lord Stewart de Decies	Land	1 2 6
“	“	“	2 0 39
Thomas Kehoe, sen.	“	Land	6 1 12
“	“	“	8 2 22
John Kehoe, jun.	Lord Stewart de Decies	Land	1 2 16
“	“	“	8 0 20
John Kehoe, sen.	“	House, offices and garden	0 3 27
Michael Mulcahy	John Keogh, sen.	House	-
Patrick Kehoe	Lord Stewart de Decies	House and garden	0 0 17
Thomas Kehoe, sen.	“	House, office and garden	0 0 29
Thomas Kehoe, jun.	“	“	0 0 17
John Kehoe, jun.	“	House, office and garden	0 0 25
Thomas Kehoe, sen. & others	“	Land (common)	0 3 12
Thomas Kehoe, jun.	Lord Stewart de Decies	Land	2 1 8
“	“	“	4 3 18
“	“	Land	2 0 29
John Kehoe, sen.	Lord Stewart de Decies	“	9 2 5
John Kehoe (White)	“	Land	1 1 15
Thomas McGrath	“	“	2 3 0
Patrick Curtayne	Mrs. Olivia Ronayne	House and land	2 0 7
Mrs. Olivia Ronayne	Lord Stewart de Decies	House, offices, orchard & land	76 3 0
Vacant	Mrs. Olivia Ronayne	House	-
Thomas Dennehy	Lord Stewart de Decies	House, office and land	2 3 20
“	“	“	19 2 29

Name (Occupier)	Name (Immediate Lessor)	Description of Tenament	Area A. R. P.
Thomas Kehoe, (labourer)	Thomas Dennehy	House and garden	0 0 26
Richard Kehoe	“	House and small garden	-
Patrick Whyte	“	House	-
Edmund Lynch	“	House and garden	0 0 16
John Walsh	Lord Stewart de Decies	House and land	8 1 0
Mary Foley	Lord Stewart de Decies	House and land	0 2 36
		Total:	528 1 30

Note: Detailed maps with plot reference numbers and accompanying more detailed tables of Griffiths Valuation are available online or in a Library.

About this document:

While researching his family history, Ronan Waide wrote a brief webpage about “the Big House next door” where his grandfather and granduncle had worked as drivers. The intent of the page was something of a lure: perhaps someone would come across it and provide corroboration or further information.

Lo and behold, in January 2017 he was contacted by John Geary, the son and grandson of both former Land Stewards of Ardsallagh Farm. John had spent his childhood at Ardsallagh, but had left it over 50 years earlier. It was when John was researching his own family history and the Ronayne family that he came across Ronan’s web page. John was able to provide personal recollections, anecdotes, and photographs to add character to the bare facts Ronan had sketched out.

To add to all this, John acquired some original photographs previously belonging to the Ronaynes themselves through Declan O’Keeffe, a nephew of a prominent Ardsallagh House staff member. With the combined research and efforts of John and Ronan, a picture began to emerge of the previously undocumented but true story, of the vanished “Big House” and of the Ronayne Family. Also an insight into the olden days and the way of life in Ardsallagh over a century ago.

This document is the result. We hope you enjoy it.

Last revised 06/11/2018