# Cartographic and Historical Sources for Native Woodlands

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Developing a picture of how a particular site has changed down through the centuries is a key component of any native woodland project and will yield a wealth of useful information. For example, a study of successive historical maps may indicate that all, or part of the site may have been under continuous woodland cover since records first began. A study of the original townland name may give clues about the type of trees or woodland present during these earlier times. A review of estate records may indicate the past history of management within existing woodland. All of this information will have a direct bearing on decisions regarding how best to proceed on a particular site, be it to establish new native woodland cover, to enhance existing native woodland, or to convert non-native woodland to native woodland. A historical assessment, coupled with the ecological assessment, also creates a 'package' of information regarding the unique historical, cultural and natural heritage associated with the site. For these reasons, a review of historical records is a requirement under the Forest Service Native Woodland Scheme (NWS) as part of the Ecological Survey and Management Plan.

This Native Woodland Information Note details the various cartographic and historical sources in Ireland relevant to native woodlands.

## INTRODUCTION

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6 inch to 1 mile (1:10,560) scale maps are perhaps the most frequently used source when it comes to assessing the historical woodland cover on a particular NWS site (Fig. 1). However, a significant number of other useful cartographic and written sources are also available. These include town, city and county maps, estate maps and records, valuations and descriptions, as well as journal articles and county histories.

Most of this material can be found in the following archives and libraries:

- The National Library of Ireland
- Trinity College Map Library
- The National Archives
- The Royal Irish Academy
- The County/Local Libraries

Although probably less relevant, further sources of material are held in the Royal Society Antiquaries of Ireland and the Irish Architectural Archives.

A large number of the maps, particularly those contained in estate papers, are also listed in Hayes Catalogue, a copy of which can be consulted in each of the institutions listed above.

**Fig.1:** Tracing the history of woodland cover to the 1830s A.D., Co. Wicklow. (Mapwork for Coillte Old Woodland Survey - Black boundaries: all Coillte properties. Green: Coillte Old Woodland Sites. Blue: Sites with discontinuous forest cover since 1830s. Red: 19th century plantations (planted between 1830s and 1910s). Image reproduced from Garrett & O'Sullivan (2001).



Map 1. Co. Wicklow (1st Edition OS, 1839)



Map 2. Co. Wicklow (3rd Edition OS, 1910)

## THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND

The National Library of Ireland (NLI) Department of Manuscripts has a spacious Manuscripts Reading Room with an extensive collection of maps and plans. Among the notable items in the collection are:

- a map of Europe in a 12th century copy of the Topographia Hiberniae by Giraldus Cambrensis.
- maps by Francis Jobson and Richard Bartlett documenting the English conquest during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and
- plans of fortifications in the period 1685-92 by Captain Thomas Phillips and the Huguenot engineer John Goubet.

Many of these maps are now digitised and available for download at:

- Historic maps of All Ireland are at: https://libguides.ucd.ie/findingmaps/mapshistIreland
- County maps: https://libguides.ucd.ie/findingmaps/mapshistoriccounties

However, the most relevant series of maps are the Down Survey. This survey was directed by William Petty between 1655-57 and included the detailed mapping of baronies and parishes confiscated after the Cromwellian conquest. The maps depict selected items of settlement and topography, such as barony, parish and townland boundaries, as well as rivers, lakes and woodlands.

All Down Survey Maps are now available online along with historical GIS of 17th century land ownership which may provide other avenues to source maps.
These can be found at Down Survey Project website: http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php

Landed Estate papers constitute the other main component of the NLI collection and comprise records generated in the course of the administration of certain landed estates over a period of several centuries. Maps can be found by searching for a county and then using the Subject section to narrow it down to "Land Use Surveys", Administration of Estates" etc.
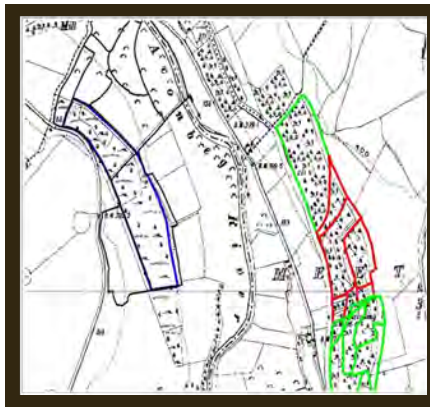Some are now digitised however, the majority are not. See:
(http://catalogue.nli.ie/Search/Results?lookfor=carlow&type=AllFields&filter%5B%5D=topic_facet%3A%22Land+use+surveys%22&filter%5B%5D=topic_facet%3A%22Boundaries+%28Estates%29%22&view=list)

Among the more notable estates represented are:

Balfour (Co. Meath and Co. Louth)
Bellew (Co. Galway)
Castletown (Co. Laois)
Clements (Co. Leitrim and Co. Donegal)
Clonbrock (Co. Galway)
Conyngham (Co. Meath, Co. Donegal, Co. Clare and Co. Limerick)
Coolatin (Co. Wicklow)
De Freyne (Co. Roscommon)

**Fig 2.** Example of a digitised estate map showing woodland map of Clogrennane Demense in Carlow & Laois in 1774. Source: https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000301893



De Vesci (Co. Laois)
Doneraile (Co. Cork)
Farnham (Co. Cavan)
Fingall (Co. Dublin)
Ffrench (Co. Galway)
Headford (Co. Meath)
Inchiquin (Co. Clare)
Lismore (Co. Waterford)
Louth (Co. Meath, Co. Louth, Co. Monaghan and Co. Kildare)
Mahon (Co. Galway)
Mansfield (Co. Kildare)
Monteagle (Co. Limerick)
O'Hara (Co. Sligo)
Ormond (Co. Kilkenny and Co. Tipperary)
Powerscourt (Co. Wicklow)
Prior-Wandesforde (Co. Kilkenny)
Sarsfield (Co. Cork)
Wicklow (Co. Wicklow)
Wynne (Co. Wicklow)

The estate collections usually include correspondence and other personal papers documenting the personal lives and careers of the various members of the landlords' families. Most of the collections date from the 17th to the 20th century.

## TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY MAP LIBRARY

The Map Library established in 1987 and contained in the Trinity College Library is the centre for cartographic materials in the University of Dublin. It holds both rare, older material as well as modern maps, and contains over half a million maps, making it the largest collection of printed maps in Ireland. The collection is particularly strong on maps of Ireland and Britain.

The library is open to the public. Readers who wish to consult maps should apply for a reader's ticket at the Enquiries Counter in the Berkeley Library, or write directly to the librarian.

## THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

The Royal Irish Academy (RIA), founded in 1785, is the principal learned society in Ireland. One of the major research projects funded by the academy is the Irish Historic Towns Atlas - a series of publications on individual towns representing different periods of urban development in Ireland. Each individual town atlas contains a large-scale (1:2,500) colour map depicting the town circa 1840, copies of other historical plans, views and illustrations, and a detailed text section with explanatory maps. Some of these atlases may prove useful (mainly for the smaller towns that have experienced less dramatic expansion and change over the last century) in identifying any surviving vestiges of urban or peri-urban woodland groves or orchards.

The atlases published to date are as follows:

- No. 1 Kildare (1986)
- No. 2 Carrickfergus (1986)
- No. 3 Bandon (1988)
- No. 4 Kells (1990)
- No. 5 Mullingar (1992)
- No. 6 Athlone (1994)
- No. 7 Maynooth (1995)
- No. 8 Downpatrick (1997)
- No. 9 Bray (1998)
- No. 10 Kilkenny (2000)
- No. 11 Dublin, Part 1, to 1610 (2002)
- No. 12 Belfast, Part 1, to 1840 (2003)
- No. 13 Fethard (2003)
- No. 14 Trim (2004)
- No. 15 Derry~Londonderry (2015)
- No. 16 Dundalk (2006);
- No. 17 Belfast part ii to 1900 (2007);
- No. 18 Armagh (2007);
- No. 19 Dublin part ii 1610 to 1756 (2008);
- No. 20 Tuam (2009);
- No. 21 Limerick (2010)
- No. 22 Longford (2010)
- No. 23 Carlingford (2011)
- No. 24 Sligo (2012)
- No. 25 Ennis (2012)
- No. 26 Dublin part iii 1756 to 1847 (2014)
- No. 27 Youghal (2015)
- No. 28 Galway (2016)

Atlases for the following towns are forthcoming: Ballyshannon, Cahir, Carlow, Cashel, Cavan, Clonmel, Cork, Drogheda, Dungarvan, Loughrea, Naas, Newry, Roscommon, Tralee, Tullamore, Waterford and Westport.
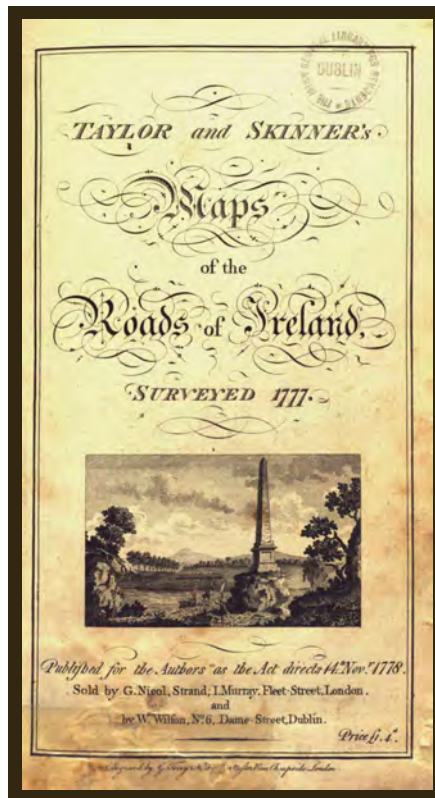


The RIA also holds the original manuscripts of the OS Memoirs. These contain descriptions of parishes visited during the mapping of Ireland at the time of the first OS. Colonel Thomas Colby initiated the written reports, with instructions to compile statistical remarks for every parish dating from his first annual report in 1826. This resulted in a structured report, known as a Memoir, a term used in the 18th century for written descriptions accompanying maps. However, these reports embrace a whole range of subjects other than purely map-related information.

Since 1989, as a joint venture between the RIA and the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, volumes of the extant memoirs for different counties have been published, together with excerpts from the maps and some of the drawings that illustrated the original descriptions.

Alexander Taylor's Map of Kildare (1783) has also been published by the RIA. This shows woodlands throughout the county and the estates to which many were associated. It is also digitised in multiple parts available on the McMaster University Website at: https://digitalarchive.mcmaster.ca/islandora/object/macrepo%3A92714

Also, Taylor and Skinner's road map of Ireland (1777) is digitised and available to download. This depicts the approximate location of woodlands on some roadways, some of which are still identifiable using modern road maps. See: http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/digital-book-collection/digital-books-by-subject/geography-of-ireland/taylor-skinner-maps-of-th/



## THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The first OS of Ireland was authorised by the Duke of Wellington in 1824. During the period between 1824 and the present day, it has created very large quantities of archives, some of which have been transferred to the National Archives of Ireland. These comprise part of the administrative archives, and most of the archives generated by the mapping of the country are at the scale of 6 inches to 1 mile (1:10,560), while town plans are at various scales. Included are items such as registered correspondence 1824-1952, parish observation books, descriptions of trigonometrical stations, boundary remark books, plots of rivers and lakes, etc., as well as the name books, which record evidence on the orthography of the place names.

Probably the most relevant of these archives are the Fair Plans, the original partly coloured drawings prepared on a parish basis, from which the 6-inch maps were traced for printing. Although they themselves were never published, the plans were finished with great care and attention to detail. They are of particular interest in relation to bog, garden, woodland and mountains as well as demesnes which were depicted by appropriate symbols.
General information about the history of OS mapping can also be very useful (Andrews, 1974 & 1975). A very detailed paper on the history and significance of the OS Memoirs, entitled Portraying Donegal: The OS Memoirs, published in the Donegal Historical Society YearBook is also a useful resource (Day, 1999).

## LOCAL LIBRARIES

Most County Libraries have a Local Studies section containing a collection of books and other material dedicated to many aspects of their county. They are usually open to the public free-of-charge. The quality and size of these sections very much depend on the resources of the particular library service and the interest of the local librarian, but some are exceptionally well stocked. Most of the titles primarily deal with the history, archaeology and topography of the county, and will usually include historical and archaeological journals of specific relevance to the county. There may also be other directories, almanacs, topographical dictionaries and unpublished works such as theses and projects.



**Fig 3.** Down Petty Survey (1685) (Source: https://downsurvey.tchpc.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php)

Facsimile copies of early maps or estate papers are less frequent but do occur occasionally. Some libraries hold copies of the Down Petty Survey (1685) and Grand Jury Maps (1787), as well as first edition OS 6,inch maps and their accompanying Letters and Name books. Some OS 25-inch, 5-inch and 10-inch town plans may also be held, as well as maps relating to the Commissioner of Public Works navigations and reclamation scheme of the late 19th Century. There may also be other estate records and land surveys (for example, Griffith's Valuation of 1855) which gives information on land holding in the 19th Century. Griffiths has now been digitised and in some cases, multiple maps are available for an area which depict minor changes in the landscape although these generally relate to land ownership or field boundaries.

## TOWNLAND NAMES AND PLACENAMES

A considerable amount of the topographically descriptive townland names and placenames of the Irish countryside originated during the Early Historic and Hiberno-Norse periods, i.e. from about the 8th Century. Irish placenames indicating woodland are particularly common, especially the ubiquitous doire (often anglicised as derry or oak grove) of which there are over 1,600 examples recorded. Also common are placenames including beith or birch, iúr or yew, and saileach or willow (MacCoitir, 2003). For these purposes, it will be more useful to search by place names rather than family names: https://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/

Finally, the more developed libraries may also have a photographic collection, with an archive of negatives and prints from important local collections. Some of these collections include interesting views of estates or demesnes in the last two centuries, as well as items of antiquarian interest.

For further details, readers should also consult the publications of the Placenames Commission (An Coimisiún Logainmneacha), the Ulster Place-name Society, and the UCD Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore and the National Folklore Collection.

The Placenames Database of Ireland are now digitised and searchable by townland at: https://www.logainm.ie/en/
Also, many parts of School's Folklore Collection are now digitised: https://www.duchas.ie/en Follow "Collections" link. Anything that has been transcribed online by volunteers is now searchable for keywords such as "woods".

Another resource was the Irish Pollen Site Database (IPOL) which contained the metadata of Irish Quaternary pollen sites (e.g. chronology, dating and publication details) which can be located using Google Earth.

## PURCHASING MAPS

The Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) has recently established a web-based national mapping archive service. Through their dedicated website many of their historic maps can now be viewed for free, in particular various editions of the 6":1 mile (1:10,560) scale series. A purchase order may be placed for a hardcopy which will then be delivered by post.

## CONTACT DETAILS

| Institution | Address | Telephone | Website |
|---|---|---|---|
| The National Library of Ireland | Kildare Street, Dublin 2 | 01-6030200 | www.nli.ie |
| Trinity College Map Library | Trinity College, Dublin 2 | 01-6082087 | https://www.tcd.ie/library/map-library/ |
| The National Archives | Bishop Street, Dublin 8 | 01-407 2300 | www.nationalarchive.ie |
| The Royal Irish Academy | 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2 | 01-6762570 | www.ria.ie |
| An Coimisiún Logainmneacha, An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta | 43/49 Bóthar Mespil, Baile Átha Cliath 4 | 01-6473000 | https://www.logainm.ie/en/ https://www.ulsterplacenamesociety.org/ |
| UCD Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore and the National Folklore Collection | Newman Buiding, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4 | 01-716 8216 | http://www.ucd.ie/irishfolklore |
| Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) | Phoenix Park, Dublin 8 | 01-8025300 | https://www.revisitinghistory.com/maps/old-maps-of-ireland/ |

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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