

Bantry Heritage Trail



Ireton's Fort at Newtown



During the 1500s on one of his many visits to the area, the poet Edmund Spenser recommended to the crown that Bantry would be an ideal outpost to build a fort to defend the County of Cork. He wrote, "I would have a hundred of them placed at the Bantry, where is a most fit place not only to defend all that side of the west part from forraine invasion, but also to answer all occasions of troubles to which that country, being so remote, is very subject."

During the parliamentary war, 1652, Cromwell's son-in-law Henry Ireton, acting as Viceroy, set in motion the building of a fort. A small village referred to as New Town grew up around the fort less than a mile from the old town, then known as Ballygobbin. The fort did not last the passage of time and quickly fell into disrepair.

Ireton's Fort

The inhabitants returned to Old Town which then took the name Bantry and Bantry became the largest town in the Barony of Bantry. The area, still known as Newtown, now has at its centre, Wolfe Tone Park, home of the Bantry Blues.

The Tannery Yard

The largest of Bantry's tanneries was located between New Street and Marino Street. The river that circumnavigates Bantry's innovative dolmen shaped library at Bridge Street flowed exposed through the town up until 1832. Its tributary, the Alley River, which flows under the buildings, was utilised for washing the hides. At its peak of operation, the tannery employed as many as 1,000 people. Leather hides were exported from Bantry to Europe from as early as 1200. There was also a demand for leather locally, as in the early 1900s there were at least 13 shoemakers in Bantry town.



The Warner Centre

After the decline of the tannery the Warner family established a bakery, general grocery and hardware store during the late 1800s which thrived until the mid 1900s. At the approach of Christmas it was common practice for housewives to take their Christmas cake, and for the payment of one shilling it would be baked in the cooling bread ovens.

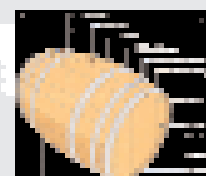
Murder of Land Agent

It was on this site on 24 February 1900 that William Sims Bird, land agent and rent collector, was shot dead in his office. Suspicion focused on a local man who had been evicted from his smallholding by Bird in 1895. He had been in town on the day of the murder but was unable to provide an alibi as to his exact whereabouts. Despite the lack of witnesses and protests and petitions "from most of the influential commercial and official gentlemen in the city of Cork" claiming there was insufficient evidence to warrant a conviction, the accused was found guilty by judge and jury and became the last person to be hanged in Cork on 11 January 1901.



Tennis Courts at Cove, Bantry

Coopers



Coopering, the manufacture and repair of wooden barrels and casks, was once a major trade in Bantry. The art of cask making demanded an apprenticeship of many years. There were two distinct types of cooper. The 'tight cooper' made barrels for liquids. The 'slack cooper' built containers for dry commodities. Casks for gunpowder had wooden straps rather than metal hoops to prevent a spark when being rolled. There was a huge demand in Bantry for wooden barrels in which to pack fish for export. The Nagles and Foleys ran coopering businesses in Glengarriff Road up until the 1950s.



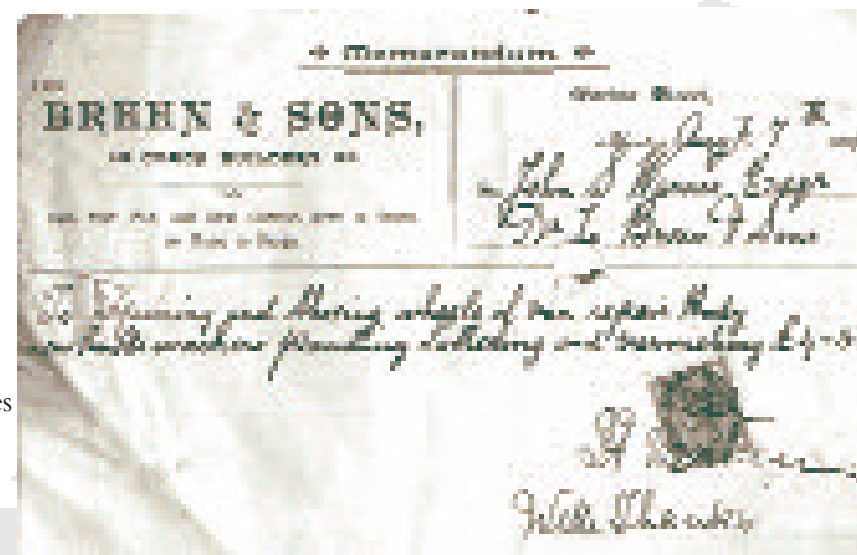
The O'Connor brothers, carpenters, making a wheel for a horse & cart, at their workshop, Glengarriff Road.

Coach Making

Coach Making was a thriving business in Bantry in the early 1900s and there were half a dozen or so workshops around Bantry.

The Breen family had several premises in the town. Mike Breen whose workshops were in

Glengarriff Road was, not only a coach builder, but also an undertaker. It was not unusual for a business to have associated side lines. In this case the art of coach building required many of the same skills as coffin making. Mike Breen had the first hearse in Bantry which ran on solid rubber wheels. The Breens built tub traps, back to back traps and sidecars. As well as being sold locally, many were exported to America. The site of Bantry's last blacksmith's forge is marked by a plaque which can be seen further along Glengarriff Road on the left.



Carriganass Castle

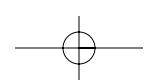
The O' Sullivan Bere chieftain, Dermot O'Sullivan, built Carriganass in 1540. During the 1500s the O'Sullivan clan held hegemony over Bantry Bay and the Beara peninsula. The leader of the clan periodically located himself at Carriganass Castle. The castle, near the village of Kealkil, is comprised of an imposing tower and walled courtyard and stands on the north bank of the Ouvane River. There are three marked walks departing from the castle.

The Three Valleys

The Borlin Valley gives its name to the Borlin Set, known to set dancers all over Ireland and abroad. For the walking enthusiast, Knockboy, accessible from Borlin is the highest peak in Co Cork. The valley lies in proximity to the Cork-Kerry border.

The Mealagh Valley covers an area of 17 square miles between Bantry and Dunmanway and contains many significant archaeological sites. The seat of the O'Donovan clan, Castle Donovan is located on the south-eastern approach to the valley.

Kealkil, the largest of the three valleys, stretches from Keimaneigh in the east to Ballylickey in the west. The important archaeological site of Kealkil Stone Circle is located immediately south of Kealkil village.





Bantry Heritage Trail



Bantry Blues



Bantry Blues GAA Club was established in 1887, three years after the founding of the Gaelic Athletic Association. Club members toyed with the idea of calling the club Robert Emmett's in the 1950s, in keeping with the trend of calling GAA clubs after Irish patriots, but it failed to catch on as Bantry continued to be referred to as the Blues. When the Kelleher Shield was first put up for competition in 1913, the Blues beat Millstreet in the final by 2-7 to one goal. The father of former Taoiseach Jack Lynch, a native of Bantry, brought the shield home some days later on the Cork-Bantry train.

The Blues won the junior championship in 1928 and went on a roll in the 1930s – contesting five intermediate football finals and winning three. Nine Bantry players were on the Carbery divisional side, which won the senior title in 1937. Lean times followed before the Blues won the junior title again in 1972 and followed with the intermediate title in 1975. Donal Hunt and Declan Barron, who were instru-

mental in these victories, won All-Ireland medals with Cork in 1973. The Blues captured their first senior title in 1995 when they defeated Muskerry and added another in 1998 by defeating Duhallow. In recent years Graham Canty has represented Cork with distinction on the national stage.



MAIN STREET, BANTRY, CO. CORK.

Jack McAuliffe

Jack McAuliffe was a legendary 19th century lightweight boxing champion who was born in Bantry in 1866. The McAuliffe family settled in America when Jack was a young boy. Jack honed his pugilistic instincts growing up in impoverished circumstances in Bangor, Maine. McAuliffe, known as 'Napoleon of the Ring' fought in the bare-knuckle era when fighters fought to the finish. One of McAuliffe's toughest fights lasted 74 rounds. McAuliffe retired undefeated lightweight boxing champion of the world in 1893. He died in his 71st year in 1937 at Forest Hills, New York.



The winner, Mr Joe Cremin, with the Bantry Bay Deep Sea-Angling Cup. The Cup was sponsored by Roland Wagner, Beach House, for the Heaviest Gross Catch 1963.



The charabanc went from Bantry to Glengarriff/Kenmare/Killarney on the route known as *The Prince of Wales' Route*. (Edward, Prince of Wales, travelled the route in 1858).

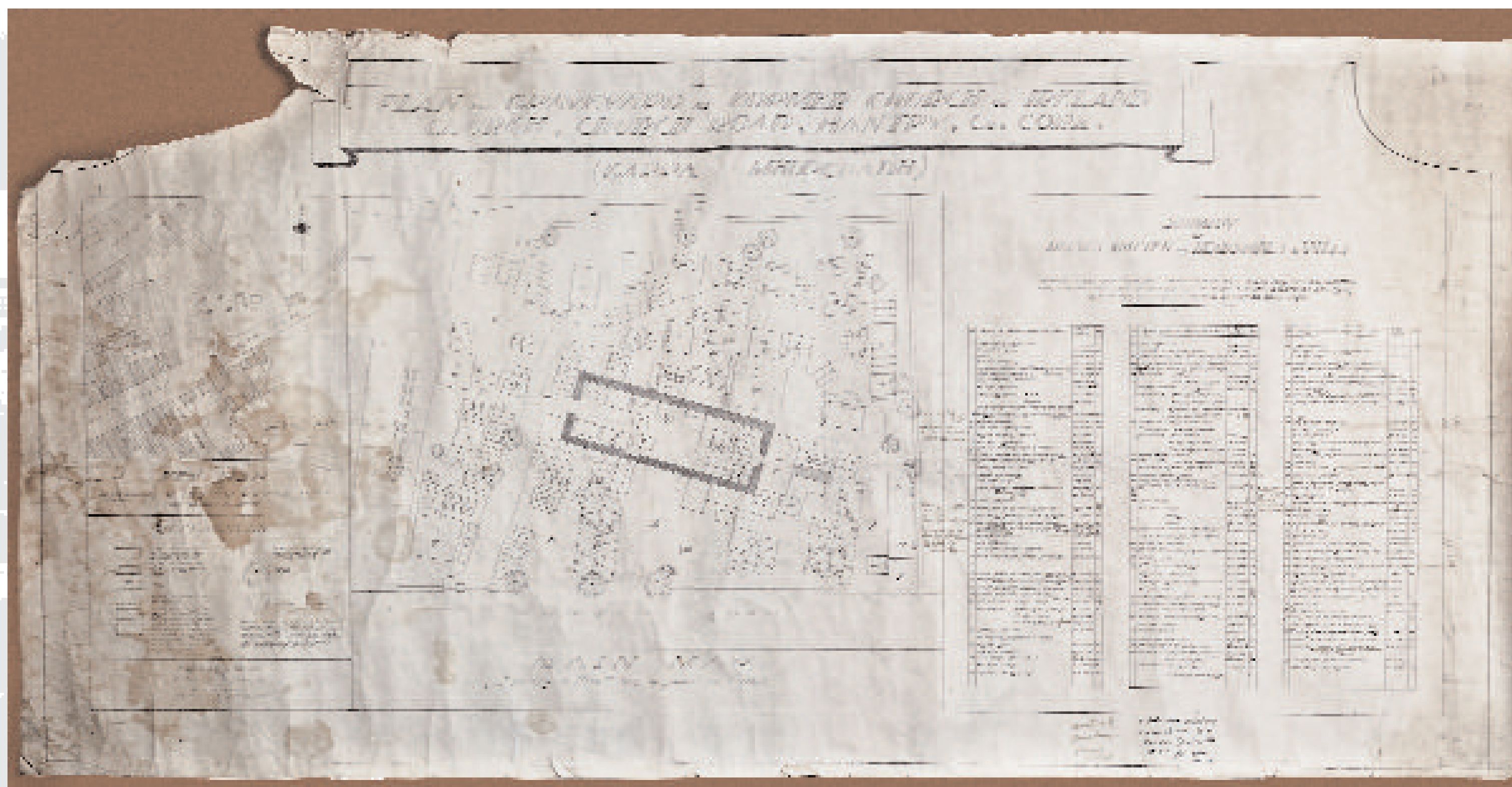
Post Box

The post box located here is dated from the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) as indicated by the insignia of the crown and V.R. The post box on the wall by the entrance to the Presbytery beyond St Finbarr's church (Display 8) dates from the short reign of Edward VII. (1901-1910)





Bantry Heritage Trail



Updated list of burials available in Bantry Library and in Bantry Museum.

Garryvurcha Church & Graveyard Garraí Mhurchaidh (Murphy's Garden)

An Act of Parliament passed in 1704 transferred the ecclesiastical centre of the Church of Ireland parish from Kilmacomogue to Bantry because of a shift in population. A new Church of Ireland church was built at Garraí Mhurchaidh (Murphy's Garden) and opened in 1721. The earliest recorded burial is that of John Hoskin in 1781. The church was in use up to 1818 and was replaced by the present Church in the square. The graveyard continued to be in use for some years by families who had existing plots with the last burial being in 1985. Other burials took place in the Abbey Graveyard

The Site

The church was built on land bordering the north side of what has since been known as Church Road. The rectangular graveyard surrounding the now ivy covered church is enclosed by a well-built stone wall. Two impressive stone pillars flank the entrance on Church Road, from which hang wrought iron gates three metres high.

The plan map and records

In 1955, Paddy O'Keeffe, eminent local historian and businessman, commissioned an engineer to map the graveyard and record details of inscriptions. He recorded the details of 148 people from a total of 77 headstones, tombs and vaults in all parts of the graveyard and from within the church ruins. Burials after 1955 are not included in these records. A more recent inspection of the headstones revealed an omission which is clearly marked on the map but not recorded. Rev Charles Smith, Vicar of the Parish of Kilmocomogue, Died 3rd March 1823, Age 65. Miss Elizabeth Smith d. 24th April 1815, Age 50. Miss Anne Smith d. 20th August 1816 (age illegible)

Some of those listed in the burial records were serving on the HMS Shannon, a coastguard vessel stationed in Bantry Bay.





Bantry Heritage Trail



Market Archway & the English Market

The archway, which is still visible and forms part of the front of O'Donovan's Law Offices, was the entrance to the English market and market house. It was built in 1842 as part of the work carried out through the relief fund. The old market was established during the 1600s. Market Street was the commercial hub of the town prior to the construction of Wolfe Tone Square. The livestock market was held further up just below the Catholic Church in Market Street which used to be much broader at the top end. Cattle, sheep, pigs and ponies were traded. Fairs were held three times a year and a weekly market was held on a Saturday. Those trading at the markets had to pay a toll to the Earl of Bantry.

The long walk, driving cattle, would have started the previous evening and taken all night. The produce market grew to encompass Main Street and reached all the way to the junction with New Street, which was an open river up until the early 1800s. It has been said that the street was filled with butchers who did their slaughtering right there in the street which was "awash in cow dung, blood and sawdust" as a result. Thackeray writes of Bantry in his Irish Sketchbook (1845).

The Main Street with its whitewashed and slated houses "was as usual thronged with the squatting blue cloaks, carrying on their eager trade of buttermilk and green apples, and such cheap wares." Bantry's tradition as a market town has lasted the test of time, being the location for a sizable market which is held in Wolfe Tone Square each Friday.

Pound Lane - Market Street

In the early 1900s, Pound Lane, or Market Street as it is now called, was a busy commercial street with many of the trades carried out in the homes of the people living there. Every trade imaginable was represented on the street, some more than once, the tailor, the butcher, the candlestick-maker. One of the most successful traders on Market Street was Tim Deacy who ran a flour and meal store and a bar in separate premises at the upper end near the church.

PIGOT & Co.'s DIRECTORY 1824 - BANTRY Co. CORK

MERCHANTS, TRADESMEN, &c.

- **Shopkeepers, Traders, &c.****
 Bird, Robt. Jr., fish curer (North Street)
 Bird, R.N., fish curer (North Street)
 Boyce, John, inspector of fisheries (Main Street)
 Clarke and Levers, fish curers (North Street)
 Clarke and Kingston, millers (Bantry Mills)
 Clarke, Thos. grocer, fish curer and tallow chandler (Main Street)
 Connell, John, iron and steel dealer (Main Street)
 Connell, Morgan, corn, coal and salt dealer (Main Street)
 Cripps, James publican (Main Street)
 Cronin, Jeremiah, spirit sealer (Main Street)
 Donovan, J. and Son, rope makers & fish curers (Main Street)
 Flynn, James, flour and iron dealer (Main Street)
 Gill, Wm., tanner (Main Street)
 Godson, John, spirit and porter dealer (North Street)
 Grimstone, John, boot and shoemaker (Main Street)
 Harrington, Timothy, tailor (Strand)
 Kearney, S., Bantry Arms (Main Street)
 Kingsmill, Luke, guager (Blackrock Road)
 Kingston, John, linen draper and spirit dealer (Main Street)
 Kingston, John, baker (Main Street)

- Kingston, John, grocer (Main Street)
 Lanin, Wm., boot and shoemaker (Barrack Street)
 Lavers, Young, spirit & porter dealer (North Street)
 Mahony, Jas., architect (Blackrock Road)
 O'Connell, John, linen draper (North Street)
 O'Sullivan, Morry, draper & grocer (North Street)
 Piddell, John, grocer (Main Street)
 Quirt, John, tanner (near Bantry)
 Slatery, John, fish curer & spirit dealer (Main Street)
 Splane, D., tailor (Barrack Street)
 Splane, Jeremiah, baker (Main Street)
 Splane, Paul, dyer (Main Street)
 Sullivan, Denis, spirit dealer (Main Street)
 Sullivan, John, baker (Main Street)
 Sullivan, Timothy, tobacco manufacturer and spirit dealer (Main Street)
 Vickery, John, linen draper (Main Street)
 Williams, Michl., baker (Main Street)
 Willis, Saml., dyer (Main Street)
 Young, Richd., inspector of linens (Main Street)
 Young, Thos., fish curer (Main Street)
 Young, Wm., tanner & leather cutter (North Street)



Cattle Pound

The area below Garryvurcha cemetery was once where the cattle of the poverty stricken tenants of the Earl of Bantry were impounded and sold in lieu of unpaid rents.



Schools & Education

Prior to the 1831 system of National Schools there were many small privately funded schools in the area. The 1821 Census shows that a total of 333 children were noted as attending school, 86 of which were female.

Small private schools were a natural progression from the previously outlawed "hedge schools" which had consisted of small shelters, a "miserable hovel" a "poor mud cabin" or "wretched hut". (The Relief Acts 1782-93 legalised catholic education) Subjects taught in the private schools were basic numeracy and literacy along with Christian Doctrine and some needlework for girls.

A report of 1826-27 shows that at the time there were 24 Roman Catholic schools in the parish, three were free schools with the rest charging fees. 13 were in the town itself, the largest was a free school in a large slated house in Blackrock road with 84 boys in attendance. This was built with £200 given by Rev. Daniel O'Crowley who also supported a school house in Barrack Road for 60 girls. Next door to this was a smaller pay school of 24 mixed pupils of all religions.



Other schools in the town included a thatched house in Church road, where Anne Hurley taught 35 pupils. Nearby, Laurence Sullivan taught 30 in a "wretched house". At Main Street Richard Sullivan had a slated out office in which he taught 44 children, and Thomas Healy took 45 pupils in a "private house". In Scart road and the Custom Gap Eugene Harrington had 35 pupils in a "thatched cottage" with John McCarthy teaching 46 and William Shea taking in 50 pupils. Round the corner in the Fair Field Daniel Sullivan taught 30 children. In Orchard Lane, Daniel Day had 15 non fee paying children.

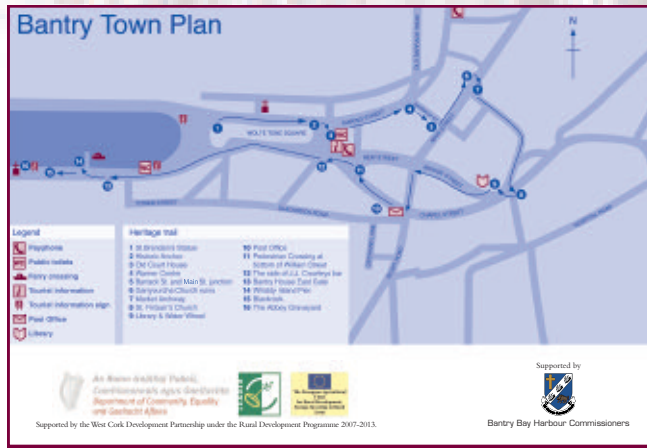
Two Protestant Schools were run by Margaret Godson with 33 children and John Patterson taught 60 in a "good slated house" with financial assistance given by 'The Association for Discourteasing Vice' and 'The Lord Lieutenants Fund'. Mary Godson ran a Protestant pay school at Parade Field for 14 pupils. Mr. Kearney taught Mathematics and "the Classics" to 17 boys at Main Street.

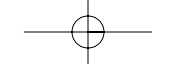
The teachers pay ranged from as little as 20 shillings per annum for a country school teacher to £20 for the Roman Catholic town school teacher. Daniel Day in Orchard Lane was given no income whilst Mr. Kearney at the Classical school received £50 a year.

With the decline in population throughout the parish during the poverty of the pre-famine years, school numbers dropped with only 16 schools listed in 1835. The largest were the male and female schools which were in receipt of grants through the National Board of Education. The great famine of 1845 dealt a final blow to many struggling schools in the area. The Bantry workhouse had provided a school at Carrig na gCat, with 51 pupils in 1858 but attendance dropped to only 27 by 1899. The easing of the most recent great economic stress began to draw people back into agriculture and the surrounding country.

The Rev. George Sheehan set up a school of Industry "for the purpose of affording, to the destitute female youth of the parish industrial instruction and remunerating employment". Adult women were catered for as well as girls with 102 attending in 1855. By 1868 there were 8 national schools in Bantry town, The main boy's school with 110 pupils, was supported by the Catholic church and situated where the church steps are now, being the forerunner to the one at School road (later replaced by one at Seskin). The other 2 National schools had a total of 83 pupils, the workhouse school 20 pupils. 2 Protestant schools, 27 pupils each and 1 Methodist school with 11 pupils.

By far the largest school in Bantry was the new Convent school built by the Sisters of Mercy for Girls. The original school room had been in Marino House but the four school rooms in the new Convent had 352 girls on the roll in 1864. This school was providing free secondary education to the girls of Bantry half a century before the State offered it nationally. But it wasn't until 1959 that Bishop Lucy set up a similar facility for the boys of Bantry.






Bantry Heritage Trail



Custom Gap

The junction of High St., Church Rd. and Scart Rd, locally known as the Custom's Gap is where taxes on livestock passing in and out of the town were collected. It was common for dues on livestock to be taken in kind. The tax was one twelfth, so for every dozen pigs, cattle and sheep that passed, one had to be given over to the Custom House. This steep and narrow road known as Scart Road was the old route into town. This then leads into the Rope Walk which runs beside the Bantry House estate, where one of the old arched entrance gates can still be seen.

High Street

Godson's Folly

The cutting of the rock beyond the Custom Gap was financed by the hotelier Godson to facilitate access from the upper end of town to his hotel on the north side of Bantry Square. The existing road into the town led down what is now Market Street and past Bantry's first Hotel. Determined to ensure his own trade, Godson commissioned the necessary works to make a roadway around the back of the old Fair Field, past the Customs Gap and down into the top of the square, funding the scheme from his own resources. The expense of cutting through the rock was reported to have bankrupted Godson and the site of the cutting entered local lore as Godson's Folly. The roadway was then known as the 'New Line' although it was officially named William Street after William Warner of the butter exchange.

Kilnaruane Stone

The Kilnaruane Stone is located just off the Rope Walk, about a mile to the South west of Bantry town and is reached by a short walk from the road. Over 2 metres high, it is decorated on both sides with early Christian carvings. It is now all that remains of what was possibly an early Christian church and the place name may be derived from the Irish meaning 'church of the Romans'. The carved stone dates from the early Christian period and may be as early as the eighth-ninth century. Two incisions on the top of the stone indicate a missing attachment suggesting it may have been a cross of some form. Two of its faces are decorated with unusual carvings. The south western face has panels showing interlace, a praying or 'orans' figure, a Latin cross, and Saints, Anthony and Paul in the desert. The north eastern face, has an interlace motif, four animals and a boat with four oarsmen and a steersman, rowing through a sea of crosses. The site itself is considered to have been the location of an early Christian settlement which was probably razed to the ground during the Viking invasions c.920 AD.

"Cill" is Church in Irish but is usually translated into "Kil".

Rope Walk

The Rope Walk was the main approach road into Bantry from the southwest before the existing sea front road was built as part of the improvement works undertaken in the early 1840s. Originally it was called Bóthar an Ghalláin (road of the pillar stone) which shows the importance of the Kilnaruane Pillar Stone. As the name suggests, rope was manufactured on the Rope Walk to supply the sailing fleet utilizing Bantry Bay. The road was ideal for making rope as the strands had to be laid out on a straight stretch of road.

Ma Murphy's & Forge



The old forge in the lane at the back of Ma Murphy's bar was one of the last blacksmith's shops in town. One of Bantry's oldest bars, Ma's was established in 1840. The smithy and Ma's had a mutually beneficial relationship, the client of the smithy becoming a client of the bar while he waited for his horse to be shod. Mark Harrington and his son Tom Harrington were the last smiths to work the forge and horses were shod in the yard until the late 1970s.

Warner's Terrace & Butter Market

William Warner, already the owner of proprietary creameries in Killarney, Enniskene and Ballinacarriga, pioneered a consistent blend of butter directed at the export market. As noted in the Commercial Directory of 1892 - "The leading feature of the business is the reception of milk from the cattle farmers on the wild mountainsides surrounding the locality, the butter from which is noted for its finer and more delicate flavour than that produced from meadow-fed cows." In partnership with fellow butter merchant James Manders; he established a centralised butter factory on the site of the current car park.

The premises comprised a large works, covering a considerable area of ground which was divided into the several departments for blending and preserving the butter for the market as well as sawmills and a joinery for making the boxes and firkins (barrels) in which the butter was packed. The machinery was driven by a Roby steam engine.

Warner's Butter Exchange opened in c.1880 and by 1886 employed over 100 men and was producing £2,000 of butter a week during the summer, equal to about 800 tons. In 1911 the property was leased to GW Biggs.



The women of the Coomhola area with their butter at the cross-roads. This was a regular "Butter Market". Some would be sold locally and the remainder would be bought by Warners.

Blackrock Terrace.

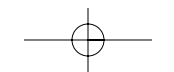
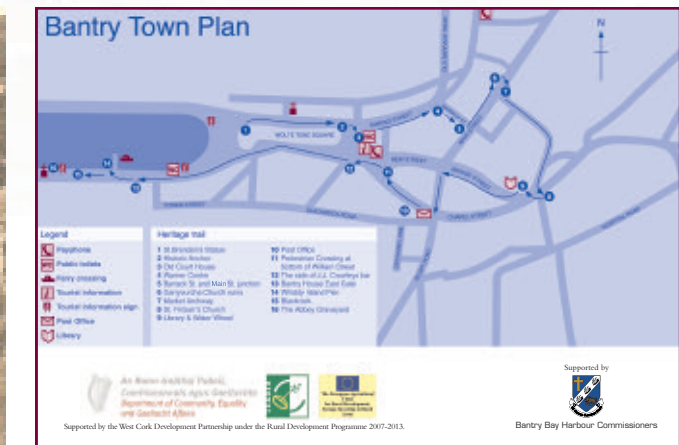
Blackrock Terrace was built by William Warner on land leased from William Henry Hare, 4th Earl of Bantry in 1886. It was originally called Warner's Terrace. Families who lived in the terrace were Trust, Good, Warner, Biggs and Dr. Popham. There was a special water supply brought from Seskin for the 9 houses.



Early 1900s. A family group outside their home at Blackrock Terrace.



Kilnaruane Stone photographed in the 1940s. The markings on the stone are now not as clearly defined, due to weathering.





Bantry Heritage Trail



Fair Day, Bantry New Street and the Square c 1920

The Railway and Commercial Hotel

The Anchor Bar was originally the Water's Railway and Commercial Hotel, established in 1877. Subsequently taken over by the Canty family and renamed Canty's Hotel – "A hotel fitted in every department to promote the comfort of commercial gentlemen, tourists and families visiting the locality, with public and private bars; commercial, billiard and coffee rooms. Attached to the hotel are extensive livery stables with well-appointed cars and steady and reliable drivers to take visitors to various points of interest" – (Commercial Directory of 1892). Canty's was bought by Bill O'Donnell in 1960 and became what is now known far and wide as the Anchor Bar.



Map of Railways from 1895 timetable.

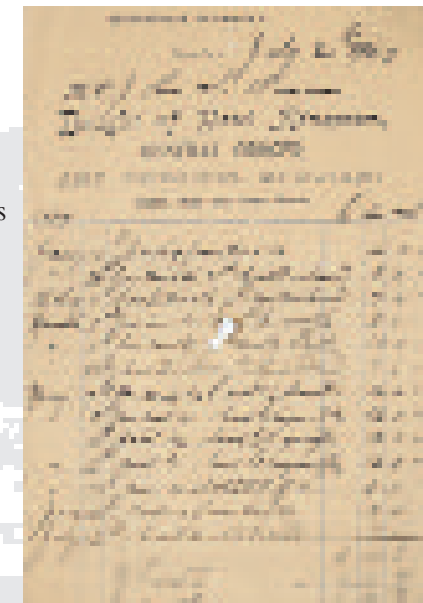


Ready for their cycle on their Penny-Farthing bicycles.

Public Houses & Shops

In the early 1900s there were 52 pubs in Bantry. Many doubled up as shops; the best surviving example is Ma Murphy's in New Street. Ma's still maintains a little snug in the front. This was usually the preserve of lady drinkers.

The Clinic, where all ills were cured, at the back of McSweeney's hardware shop was in operation up until the early 1980s. Another such bar from the 1930s was Kingston's on the corner of High Street and Bridge Street. It sold groceries and sweets over a large white marble counter in the front while it dispensed something a little stronger in the bar in the back.



In 1912 Vickery's Garage, behind Vickery's Hotel, New Street, became the first Ford Motors Dealer in Bantry. From 1926 a very fine showroom, with a large plate glass window, displayed the latest car models. The garage continued business there until 1966.

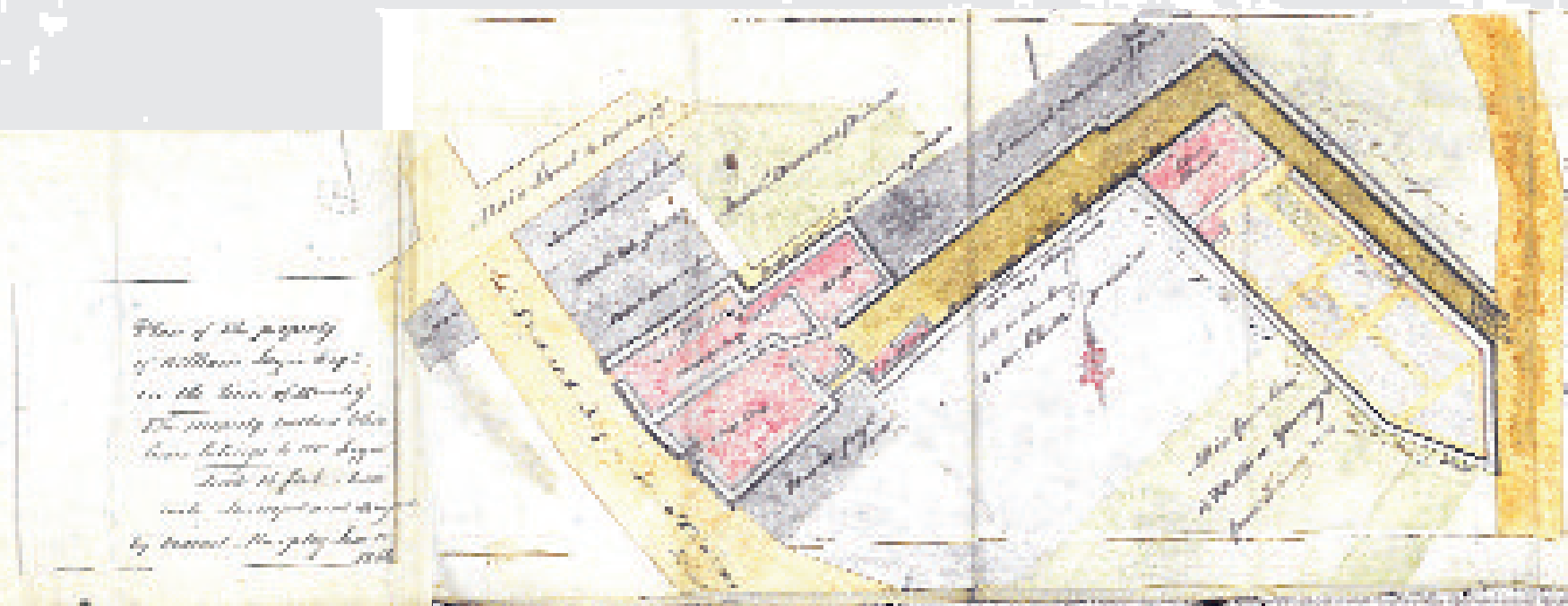
Interior of Vickery's Garage.



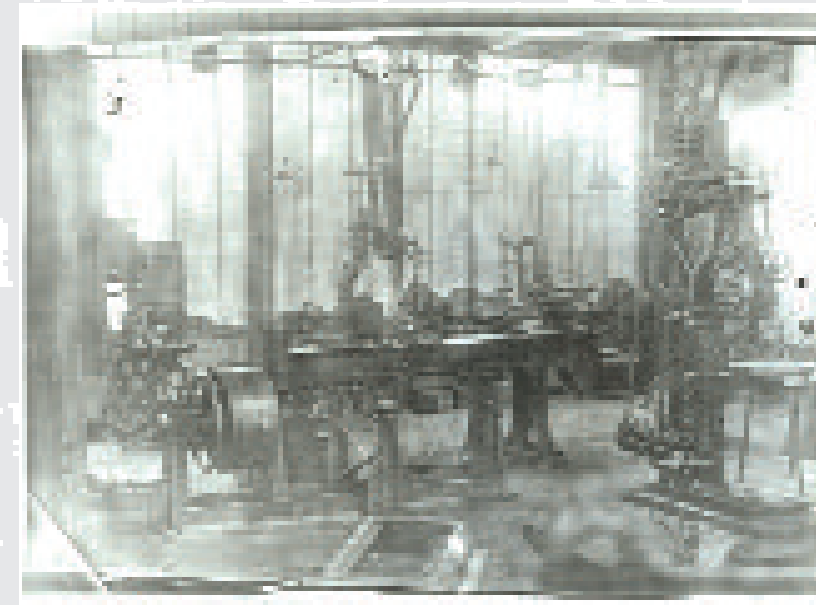
Tim Healy



Arguably Bantry's most famous son, Tim Healy was born in 1855 in what is now the Bank of Ireland. He was a prominent Irish nationalist and became a Home Rule MP in Westminster. Healy was educated by the Christian brothers in Fermoy and worked as a railway clerk in Newcastle, England. Returning to Ireland, he was elected MP from 1880 until 1918. He played a prominent part in the downfall of Charles Stewart Parnell, when he denounced the leader of the Home Rule Party following his affair with Kitty O'Shea. Upon the foundation of the Irish Free State, Healy served as Governor General. He died in 1931. The Healy Pass on the Cork-Kerry border was named in his honour.



1848 Plan of buildings from corner of High Street along part of New Street





Bantry Heritage Trail



Bantry Fair

An Ordinance Survey map of 1842 shows the square area to be approximately half of the present area, with the sea almost level with St. Brendan's Church. After further reclamation from 1881 on, the square became the focus for the monthly fair. Bantry Fair was amongst the largest and best known fairs in the country with several cattle trains leaving from the railway station during the day. With the demise of the railway in 1961, the large cattle fairs also declined. The Friday market although changed in style and content continues to be a busy weekly event.

The Quays

During 1775 Bantry experienced substantial commercial and port development with new quays built. The main quays were lined with some very smart houses and shops and in old maps it can be seen that they extended along what is now New Street. Butter, pork and beef were shipped from Bantry in great quantities. The arrival of the railway in 1881 was of great benefit to Bantry allowing for the delivery of butter and fish to the markets in Cork and bringing tourists to view the sights of Bantry Bay.

Trade and Industry 1600-1845

The natural resources of sea and forest surrounding Bantry provided the means for a thriving economy as least as far back as the early 1600s.

A variety of trades were needed to support the fishing industry and provided additional employment such as coopering, cart building and blacksmithing. A furnace making charcoal and an iron working site, pre-1685 had been established near the Franciscan Abbey. Bantry served as the main port exporting iron ore. Large quantities of timber were needed for iron smelting, leather tanning, shipbuilding and stave making. Before 1700 much of the land surrounding the town was woodland but deforestation was accelerated by a serious shortage of timber in England so, by the time of the Great Famine in 1845, the woodlands had almost completely disappeared.

Coral Sand

The dredging of coral sand from the floor of the bay for use as a manure or soil improver was to be an important part of the economy from at least as early as 1750 and continued up until the late 1950s. Lewis writes in 1837: "The coral sand is little inferior to pure lime and a considerable number of men are employed in procuring it." The sand was used as a fertiliser to replace the chemical content of leached soil. The area of the quay where coral was off-loaded became known as the *Sand Quay*.



Threshing the corn. Neighbouring farmers all lend a hand.

Agriculture

Agriculture on a small scale provided local produce as well as supplying a steady export trade. By 1750 sheep farming was widespread and lucrative in the surrounding area with the Bantry "mutton exceedingly fat and good in its kind". Later, Arthur Young, an agriculturist writes in the late 1770s: "The common stock of the mountains are young cattle bred by the poor people. Their breed is the little mountain or Kerry cow, which upon good land gives a great deal of milk."

The manufacture of coarse linen and cotton began to thrive during the late 1700s and gave employment to several hundred people. These linens called "Vitries," were striped pieces of cloth chiefly used for making bags or sacks for goods. The sales value frequently exceeded £4000 per annum.

Trade with Spain and Portugal

Ships from Bantry took exports of wool, leather, butter and cured meats to the ports of San Sebastian, Santander, Gijon, La Coruna and Vigo. The main import from Spain was wine. Portugal was another strong trading partner; several cargoes of butter left Bantry annually for the ports of Lisbon and Oporto.

The Pirates of Bantry Bay

The pirates who plundered the Caribbean trade routes made safe haven in Bantry Bay, where they were able to use Whiddy Island as a screen when eluding the British navy. The smuggled goods, including seized wine, port and sherry, which these ships brought into Bantry Bay were a welcome and less expensive supplement to other imports and the townspeople traded readily. Many of the pirates, who sailed together with their families, eventually settled in the Bantry area.



repairs and shelter.

Bantry's substantial fish market operated in New Street, from the Square to the Bridewell Lane. There was an icehouse and several smaller shops. The tradition continued right up until the 1970s with fish sold straight from street stalls or carts along this stretch of New Street.

Iron Smelting & Copper Mining

There have been various bouts of mining activity in the Bantry area over several hundred years, predominantly for copper, some with more success than others. With the introduction of heavy machinery during the 1800s mining appeared to be a promising enterprise but in reality it proved largely unprofitable. Tin was imported from Cornwall to mix with the iron and many Cornish miners worked in the copper mines of the mid 1800s. The copper mines at Allihies on the Beara peninsula were by far the most productive. Hollyhill near Bantry town had been worked before the famine and reopened about 1855 but soon closed. Another notable mine of the area was Gortavallig Mine, Sheep's Head. This mine was worked in conjunction with Carravilleen, Killeen and Glanallin Mines. They produced a small tonnage of copper and 2dwt of gold per ton. It was worked between 1840-90.

Scart Barytes Mines

Barytes is a mineral found in abundance in County Cork and near Bantry in particular. The Scart barytes mine was opened in 1876 by an English man but closed again in 1881. It was reopened in 1890 but closed again three years later. It's recorded in 1886 that this mine supplied the paint factory of Mr. Harris of Donemark, Bantry. The transport of the barytes gave good employment in the area and many horses and carts with drivers were hired. The ore was transported to the pier to await dispatch by boat. The ground barytes were bagged and exported in loads of 200-300 tons for porcelain manufacture. Derryginagh barytes mine near Bantry was re-opened in the 1960s for a short time.

Trade & Industry 1800-2007

Fishing

Despite the decline in pilchard shoals, fishing and the curing of fish continued to be a major industry with six or more shopkeepers and merchants in the town combining curing alongside their other business. Specialists at this time were Robert Bird Jnr of Main St, and Robert Bird of North St. Also in North St were Clerke & Levers.

In the post famine years (1850-1900) the Congested Districts board attempted to expand the West Cork fisheries by providing better landing accommodation for the boats. Consequently Bantry developed as a base for boats from all over the southwest coast. Both sail and steam were in use. Large quantities of iced mackerel were sent to England and pickled fish were shipped to the United States. In the early 1940s to 1960s Bantry was a base for Spanish fishing vessels seeking





Bantry Heritage Trail



The pier, which serves Whiddy Island, was built in 1842. A regular daily ferry crosses the 1km channel between the island and Bantry and takes around 15 minutes.



Whiddy Island

Whiddy Island is 5km in length and 1km in width. Vikings raiding the south coast of Ireland in 850 referred to the island as 'Vod ly' meaning holy island. At that stage, there were two monasteries and a priory on the island. In the 1500s, the O'Sullivan Bere clan held sway on Whiddy and built Reenanig castle, the remains of which can still be seen. In the mid 1600s Whiddy Island was bought by a member of an Anglo-Norman family who had settled in Limerick in 1170s, called White who, having prospered on the island was able to buy Bantry House, then Blackrock House.

During the 1700s Whiddy had a thriving pilchard fishing industry, with a fleet of 150 boats, and three 'fish palaces' near the eastern slipway. There were 817 people living on the island at this time. As a consequence of the Wolfe Tone inspired attempted French invasion of 1796 the forces of the English crown built three gun batteries on the island to protect the bay from further invasion.

During the Great Famine (1845-47) the population of Whiddy decreased to about 250 and the Earl of Bantry, a descendent of the aforementioned White, introduced deer farming on the island – taking over much of the good tillage ground. Civil unrest ensued and many people were tried in the courts and some were hung on the infamous 'hanging tree', near the site now known as Gallows Hill. Whiddy currently has a resident population of 30, mainly engaged in fishing and small-scale farming, although it receives many visitors during the tourist season.

Whiddy Island Air Base



The US Navy established a seaplane base on the eastern end of Whiddy Island to monitor German submarines and shipping during WW1. The seaplane base became operational on 25 September 1918 when the first two planes arrived. These US navy planes patrolled the seas around the Fastnet Rock. One of the planes crashed on 22 October 1918; one aviator lost his life.

The base on Whiddy had an operational radio station receiving messages from as far away as America and Russia. In total six US naval planes were based on Whiddy. Following the end of the war in November 1918, the US Navy closed down their operation on Whiddy Island in January 1919. Little evidence exists of the seaplane base today but a small fountain stands as a monument to its whereabouts.

Whiddy Terminal



The oil terminal on Whiddy Island was opened in 1968 by Gulf Oil and it has a nominal storage capacity for 1.3 M m3 of crude oil. The terminal was established at a time when the Suez Canal was closed to shipping. Large crude-oil tankers known as super tankers, sailed from the Middle East via the Cape of Good Hope to the Whiddy terminal to discharge their cargo. With large size and deep draft, many of these tankers could not enter most world ports. However, the deep waters of Bantry Bay suited the extreme tonnage of the super tankers.

The French oil tanker Betelgeuse exploded on 8 January 1979 while unloading a cargo of crude oil at the Whiddy Island terminal with the loss of 51 lives. A high cross, inscribed with the names of the deceased stands in the Abbey cemetery as a memorial. Ownership of the Whiddy terminal was transferred to the Irish Government in 1986. In 2001, it returned to private ownership and is currently (2010) used by Conoco Phillips.





Bantry Heritage Trail



The tanker *Bethelgeuse* and surrounding water on fire. Storage tanks on Whiddy Island in foreground

Blackrock Pier

The location further west along the sea wall is known as Black Rock and was the site of a timber pier. This was where the many sailing ships involved in the busy sea trade berthed from the 17th century onwards until its demise. During the 1800s it could berth at least three large sailing brigs. Immigrant ships such as the 'Dealy Brig' set off to the New World with their passengers, having delivered a cargo of timber. As well as those journeying to the Americas, ships sailed to and from the West Indies and Europe with their cargoes. Some of the stone steps descending to the timber platform used for boarding can still be seen.



Bathing Box

At the Blackrock during the 1920s a "Box" for bathers was created. A shelter for use as a changing area was constructed and the bather could walk onto a diving board and take the plunge. The remains of the diving platform are visible jutting from the sea wall.

THE BALLAD OF BANTRY BAY

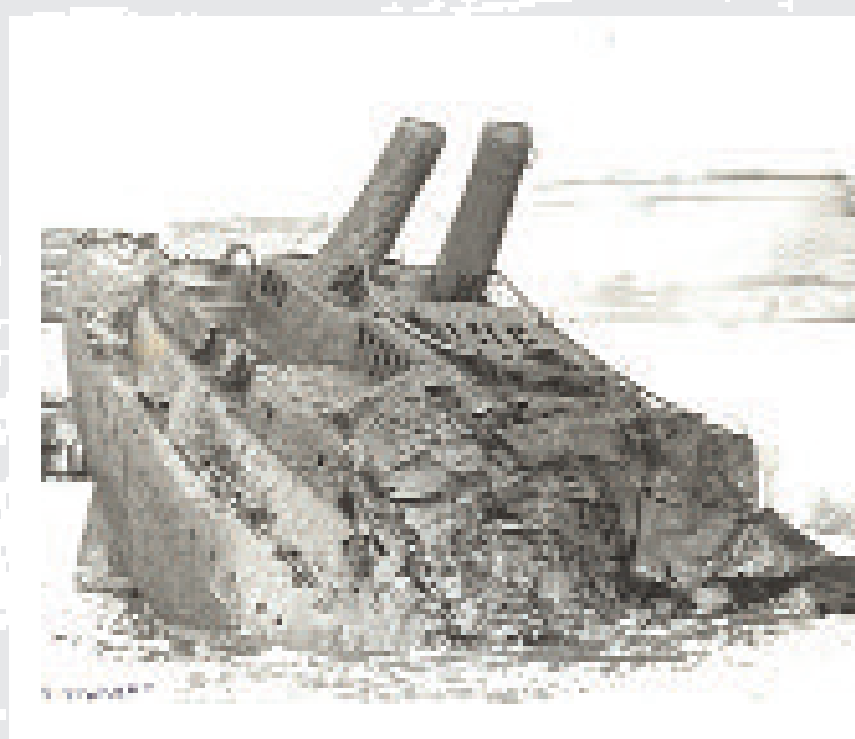
As I'm sitting all alone in the gloaming,
It might have been but yesterday
That we watched the fisher sails all homing
Till the little herring fleet at anchor lay.
Then the fisher girls with baskets a swinging,
Came running down the old stone way.
Every lassie to her sailor lad was singing
A welcome to Bantry Bay.

Then we heard the piper's sweet note tuning,
And all the lassies turned to hear,
As they mingled with a soft voice crooning,
Till the music floated down the wooden pier,
Save you kindly Collecens all! said the piper,
Hands across and trip it while I play,
And a tender sound of song and merry dancing,
Stole softly over Bantry Bay.

As I'm sitting all alone in the gloaming
The shadows of the past draw near.
And I see the loving faces round me
That used to glad the old brown pier.
Some are gone upon their last homing
Some are left but they are old and gray,
And we're waiting for the tide in the gloaming,
To sail upon the Great Highway,
To the land of rest unending,
All peacefully from Bantry Bay.



Children on Bantry Strand - 1926



Part of the hull of the ill-fated tanker before it sank.

Betelgeuse

The oil tanker *Betelgeuse*, sailing under the French flag had been en route from the Arabian Gulf to Portugal, but had been diverted to the deep water of Bantry Bay after a sunken cargo ship had blocked access to the port of Leixoes near Lisbon. The *Betelgeuse* was split in two parts as a result of an explosion and 40,000 tonnes of light Arabian crude oil were spilled into the bay.

The *Cork Examiner* reported: "As the jetty linked to the tanker began to crumble, fears mounted that flames would spread to the 13 gigantic oil storage tanks on Whiddy Island. By daybreak, the danger had abated but throughout the night, terminal staff and fire brigade personnel continuously sprayed the huge tanks to reduce the risk of further explosions." 42 crewmen from the *Betelgeuse* and seven Gulf Oil workers died in the explosion. Two men also lost their lives in the salvage of the ill-fated *Betelgeuse*. Both Bantry Museum and Library hold detailed records of the event and subsequent reports relating to the disaster.

Bantry Town Plan

Legend:

- Telephone
- Public toilets
- Ferry crossing
- Tourist information
- Tourist information sign
- Post Office
- Library

Heritage Trail:

- 1 St. Brendan's Statue
- 2 Historic Archive
- 3 Old Court House
- 4 Warner Centre
- 5 Bantry St. and Main St. junction
- 6 Carrivickla Church ruins
- 7 Historic Railway
- 8 St. Colman's Church
- 9 Library & Water Wheel
- 10 Post Office
- 11 Pelicanian Crossing at junction of Wilson Street
- 12 The site of J.J. Crowley bar
- 13 Bantry House East Gate
- 14 Whiddy Island Pier
- 15 Blackrock
- 16 The Abbey Grounds

Supported by the West Cork Development Partnership under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.



Bantry Heritage Trail



The Great Famine 1845 - 1847

In the early 1800s the conditions in Ireland were beginning to improve as the Penal Laws, which for centuries held the people in bondage, had been abandoned.

In 1821 the population of Bantry was a 3,659 and it had risen to 4,274 by 1831. This was the greatest population known in the town so far. However, living conditions in and around the town were deplorable. Poverty, disease and filth were everywhere. The main roads into town, Scart Road, Quarry Well Road, Creamery Road and Barrack Road were lined with hovels, as also were Blackrock Road and other areas.

In 1836 the road network around Bantry was being developed. The road to Skibbereen was built, as was the tourist road from Bantry to Killarney. Fairs were held for cattle, sheep and ponies and the town developed as a market and service area for the farmers as it continues to be so today. Police barracks, hotels and storehouses were being built. Fishing and dredging of coral sand also gave good employment.

The Dreaded Blight.

The great famine of 1845 - 1847 was certainly the greatest catastrophe ever to befall this country when the potato crop, the only food of the vast majority of the Irish population, was wiped out by the dreaded blight. Bantry and Skibbereen were two of the worst hit areas in the country and the suffering and misery endured by the population of the area was unbelievable. Mr. A.M. Sullivan of the Bantry Band fame recalls *"By 1845 it was a common sight to see the cottier family seated on the garden fence gazing all day long in moody silence at the blighted plot that had been their last hope"*

There had been fourteen partial or complete failures of the potato crop between 1816 and 1842 but the 1845 failure was nationwide. Thousands died locally of malnutrition, fever and starvation even though enough corn, beef, butter pork etc were exported *"as would feed the entire population of Ireland"*. 127,000 acres were under oats in County Cork, 114,000 under wheat and 44,000 under barley, the wheat and oats being almost entirely exported.



ed them from experimenting with alternative foods. The corn grown by the bigger farmers was sold to pay their rents and all was exported.

Throughout Ireland the land was held almost exclusively by the absentee landlords who leased it to middlemen, who in turn divided their portions and let it to farmers making a good living from this practice. The farmers sublet small patches of ground to the cottiers and labourers, usually about one acre with a hovel on it. This patchwork of tiny holdings led to land troubles and evictions. Potatoes were the only food available to the masses, they were easy to grow and cheap to produce. An adult would eat from seven to ten pounds per day. So a family of two adults and four children would eat the total six tons which the acre could produce.

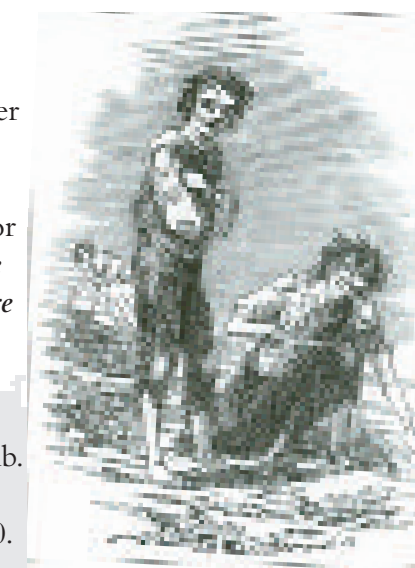
The vast majority of the people were completely ignorant of any other kind of food and their extreme poverty prevent-

Horrific Accounts

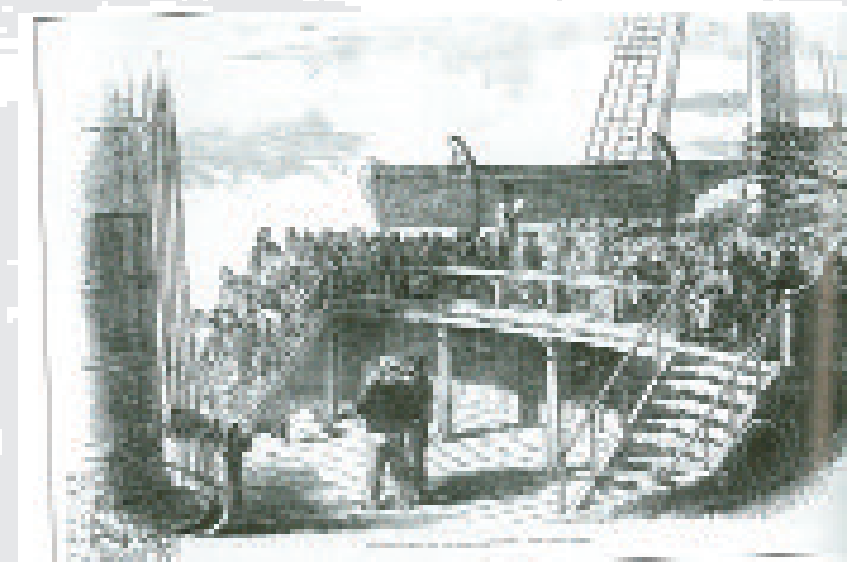
The potato crop was wiped out in 1845 and again in 1846. Part of the 1847 crop was saved. The winter of 1846 was very severe.

In 1847 Joseph Kidd, a 23 year old doctor from London came to Bantry to assist when the local doctor was ill. He wrote: *"In every hut every inmate lay abandoned to their fate, fever and dysentery side by side on the same scanty pile of decomposed straw or on the cold damp earthen floor without food or water. There were cabins where dead bodies lay beside others, barely alive."*

Huge pits were dug in the Abbey, in which the famine victims were buried. Outside the town whole families were often found dead in their cabins, in such circumstances the cabin became the family tomb. Following the famine and resultant emigration the population of Ireland fell from 8 million to 5 million, which is the present population of the island. The population of Bantry town currently (2007) stands at 4,000.



Relief Efforts



Efforts to bring some relief to the starving masses came from two sources, the English government and the local relief committees and were in no way successful.

The people died not because there was a shortage of food but because there were no potatoes and therefore no money to buy the food that was certainly in government stores and in private hands. Eventually the government released Indian meal to depots around the country, not for the sake of giving relief but to prevent speculators from increasing food prices which had already increased dramatically.

Under severe pressure the Labour Relief Act was passed which made money available so that the public works could be undertaken, thereby giving employment to the people.

Soup kitchens were set up around Bantry where soup, of a very poor quality was given out to one and all. One of these kitchens was where the Rowa factory now stands in what was called the soup house field. Another was at Donemark, the huge pot which was used there is still in the same area and now used as a garden pond.

The voluntary Relief Committee's main task was the collection of money by writing to newspapers and people and also informing them of the seriousness of the situation. Rev. Halliwell, Father Barry and the other Bantry priests were very active on the relief committees and collected money and food for the poor. Fr Barry, writing to the papers on February 17th 1847 notes *"The deaths average 50 per day and the Abbey graveyard is so full that they are compelled to bury the corpses in the field adjoining the workhouse."*

The famine led to mass emigration from Ireland. It is estimated that one million left, huge numbers going to Glasgow, Liverpool and America.

At the Abbey graveyard, standing over the site of the pits into which hundreds of bodies of victims of the famine were thrown is a 10 foot high cross. This was erected by Tim Healy and his brother Maurice in 1878.

It is inscribed:
*To mark the famine pits of 1846 - 1848
May God give rest to the souls of the faithful departed.*

Extracted from an account by Donal Fitzgerald, local historian.

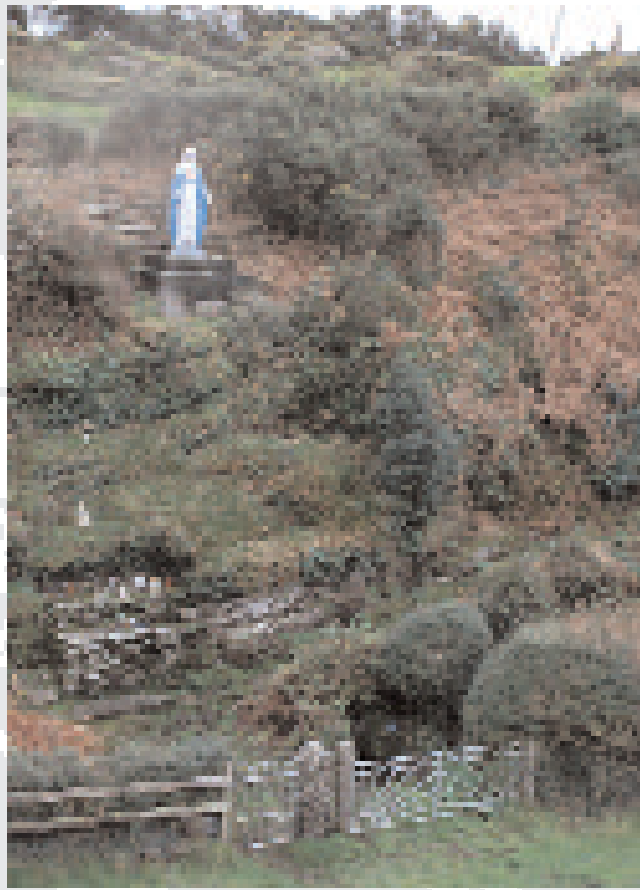




Bantry Heritage Trail



Water, Wells & Springs



There are several Holy wells in the Bantry area. One near Bantry, at Beach, one on Whiddy Island and another at the old church of Kilmacomogue, near Kealkil.

The Lady's Well at Beach was traditionally approached from Beach road and through the fields. This track is now overgrown but the well can be reached by using the marked path of the Sheep's Head Way. The Holy Well has been in use for centuries and has had many cures attributed to it over the years. During Penal times the "Mass Rock" at the site was ideally situated for the secret gatherings where a mass could be said in relative safety. The Well is visited throughout the year but on August 15, "Our Lady's Day" a mass is said there.

The fresh drinking water that supplied Bantry in the past was from several small springs throughout the town and townsfolk would bring a jug or bucket to be filled for the house. Other water would be taken from the river that ran through the town but this became very polluted by waste from the tanneries, woollen mills, butchers and all manner of other sources. In 1867 funds were raised in response to the Bantry Board of Guardians request that a supply of good drinking water should be provided. A well at the quarry, south of Bantry, along with the stream was filtered and piped into a reservoir. A vaulted storage tank was built with a capacity of 50,000 gallons. This was then piped to pumps which were situated around the town. One was in the Square and another at the Market.

Lady's Well, Beach.



Water Pump



The Sheep's Head Way

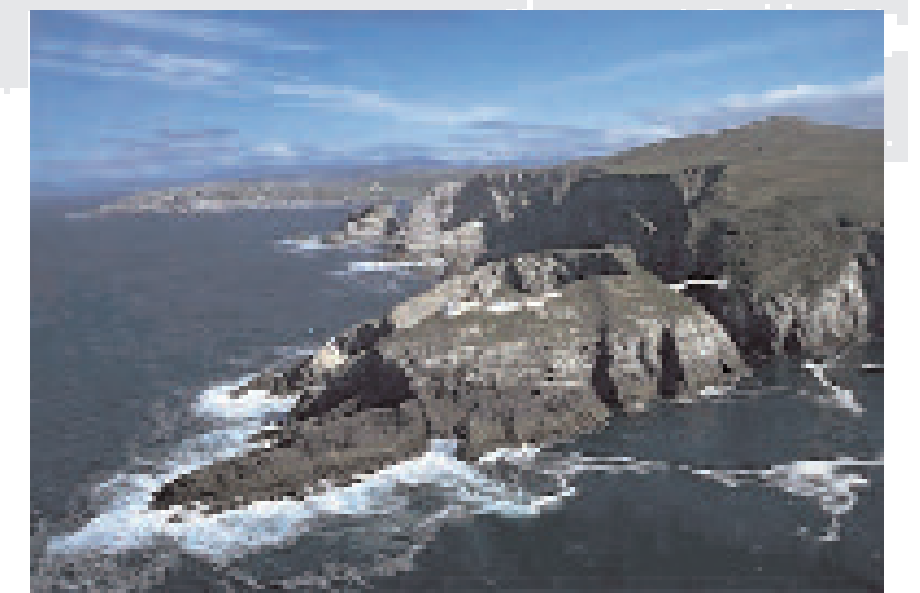
The Sheep's Head Way is a long distance walking route over 150km encompassing the Sheep's Head Peninsula and the general Bantry area. It also connects to Whiddy Island by ferry and to Drimoleague at the east, Mealagh, Kealkil Carriganass linking up with the Beara Breifne Way en route to Gougane Barra. The walker can experience spectacular views from various ridges, shoreline, cliff tops, lake and includes also numerous monastic, archaeological and historical sites.

Within this are there are ten Failte Ireland Loops walks with trail heads at Carriganas, Mealagh, Drimoleague Bantry, Ahakista, Kilcrohane, Blackgate and Sheep's Head. These are colour coded and afford the self guided walker to a wide variety of walking experiences from one to seven hours duration. Consult the guide to the Sheep's Head Way which is available from numerous local outlets, for the Easter routes consult the Drimoleague Hearitage Walkway booklet.

This is predominantly a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and NHA National Heritage Area and was awarded the European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) for the development of sustainable tourism.



Walkers on the Sheep's Head Way with Bantry Bay and Cahal mountains in the background.



Mizen Head showing arched bridge on right.

Mizen Head Signal Station

Southwards in the Atlantic is the Fastnet Rock Lighthouse, Ireland's Teardrop, so called as it was the last landfall seen by many emigrants to America. The Mizen Head is the site of one of Marconi's first Trans Atlantic telegraph stations. Mizen Signal Station had the first Radio Beacon in Ireland in 1931.

Mizen Head Signal Station was built to save lives and prevent shipwrecks off the treacherous rocks at Ireland's most south-westerly point, five miles from Goleen. No longer in operation it is now open to the public.

The Mizen Station was completed in 1910 and was manned until April 1993 when the fog signal station was automated.

Now an award winning Maritime Museum and Heritage Centre, the Signal Station is a ten minute walk along the path, down the 99 steps and across the Arched Suspension Bridge, the Mizen area is famous for its wildflowers and sightings of wildlife, dolphins, whales, seals, gannets, kittiwakes, choughs – the bird migration north-south flight path is just a mile off shore.





Bantry Heritage Trail



Bealach Oidhreachta Bheanntraí

Ceaptar go dtagann an t-ainm Banntraí ó 'Beannt', mac le Conchubhar Mac Neasa agus 'raige' a chiallaíonn 'muintir' nó 'ceantar'. Bhí Conchubhar Mac Neasa ina rí ar Ulaidh timpeall am Chríost, de réir na seandálaíochta. Má's fíor é seo deallraíonn sé go bhfuil muintir Bheanntraí síolraithe uaidh.

Tosnaíonn an Bealach Oidhreachta le Clár 1 atá le feiscint ar an achar ardaithe i gCearnóg Wolfe Tone in aice le dealbh Naomh Breandán. Cuireadh an dealbh suas i 1969. Ón láthair seo is féidir leat an bóthar a fheiscint go dtí sean-ché an bhóthar iarainn agus stáisiún na traenach a tógadh sa bhliain 1892. Bhí an bóthar iarainn idir Banntraí agus cathair Chorcaí ag feidhmiú ó 1881 go 1961. Bhí an chéad stáisiún in aice leis an áit ina bhfuil óspidéal Bheanntraí anois. Saothraíodh ón bhfarraige an suíomh don gcarr-chlós, atá in aice le falla an chalaídh, le déanaí (sna nócaidí). Ón áit seo chomh maith, feicfidh tú scoil náisiúnta Naomh Breandán a tógadh i 1853. Is féidir leat tagairt a dhéanamh do léarscáil an bhaile chun suíomh na gcláracha eile a aimsiú.

Chun dul go dtí Clár 2, is féidir leat siúil ó cheann amháin de Chearnóg Wolfe Tone i dtreo an chinn eile. Le linn duit bheith ag siúil, feicfidh tú eaglais Naomh Breandán an Maraí a tógadh i 1818. Idir an eaglais agus an gabhal, tá an láthair ina raibh 'na sean-Pháláis Éisc'. Is ansan a thógtáir na pilséir chun an ola a bhrú astu. Is ann a chuirtear na héisc eile ar salann agus a thriomaítear iad chun iad a ullmhú don margadh thar lear. Dhéantaí iascaireacht ar na pilséir, abhí luachmhar toisc an ola abhí iontu, ó mhí Iúil go dtí mí na Nollag. Onnmhairíodh an-chuid díobh, chomh maith le h-éisc éagsúla eile, as Banntraí ó 1600 agus níos luaithe go dtí 1842. Tá fianaise ann go raibh tábhacht ag baint le tionscail na h-iascaireachta ar Oileán Faoidé i saol eacnamaíochta an cheantair chomh luath le 1587. Tá cuntais ann go raibh monarcha pilséir á chur chun cinn ar Oileán Faoidé agus go raibh na pilséir á n-onnmhairiú go Enkhuisen san Olainn.

Tiocfaidh tú ar Chlár 2 ar an gcosán ar thaobh na lámhe clé den gcearnóg, congarach don Ancaire Francach. Is féidir leat beatháisnéis Wolfe Tone a léamh anseo. Is uaidh siúd a fhaigheann an chearnóg a hainm. Tá cuimhne Wolfe Tone i mBeanntraí dlúth-cheangailte leis an ionradh gur theip air i 1796. Fuair sé tacaíocht ón bhFrainc chun na Gaeil a scaoileadh ó smacht na Breataine. D'imigh 42 long Francach agus 14000 saighdiúir chun dul go dtí Banntraí ach de bharr na droch-aimsire bhí orthu éirí as an bhfeachtas. Chuir Wolfe Tone dhá fheachtas eile ar bun ach gabhadh é i 1798 ar chósta Dún na nGall. Gearradh piónós an bháis air ach fuair sé bás i bpríosún, i mí na Samhna 1798. Chun Clár 3 a fheiscint, trasnaigh an bóthar i dtreo Oifig na Turasóireachta. Teach cúirte abhí anseo, uair amháin. Bhí bearaic airme agus príosún ann níos luaithe fós. Tá an Clár ar an gcosán ar aghaidh an phríomh-dorais amach. Ar fhalla an fhoirgnimh seo, tá roinnt plaiceanna i gcuimhne tírghráitheoirí ón gceantar.

Lean ar aghaidh ar an dtaobh clé de Theach na Cúirte agus suas Sráid Mharino chun teacht ar an chéad Chlár eile. Ar thaobh na lámhe deise tá an sean-shéipéal Meitidisteach atá ina ionad leighis anois. Is féidir leat na colúin cloiche abhí fé dhroichead an bhóthar iarainn a fheiscint ar an dtaobh clé den séipéal. Lean ar aghaidh suas Sráid Mharino. Bóthar Chóiste Chiarraí an sean-ainm abhí ar an mbóthar so. Tá Lána na Smachtlainne ar thaobh do lámhe clé. Bhí sean-phríosún anseo agus go dtí 1900. Tá Clár 4 níos faide suas an tsráid ar an bhfalla fén stua ar an dtaobh thiar de Ionad Warner. Osclaíonn an stua go dtí clós ina raibh an tionús ba mhó i mBeanntraí uair amháin. Bhaintí úsáid as 'Abha an Phasáiste', a théann fén gclós anois, chun na seithí a ní. Nuair abhí sí faoi lán-tseoil, bhí suas le 1000 duine ag obair sa tionús.

Nuair a tháinig deireadh leis an sudaireacht, chuir muintir Warner bÁCús, siopa grósaera, agus siopa chrua-earraí ar bun ag druidim le deireadh na seachtú aoise déag agus mhair an gnó san go dtí lár an fhicéid aois.

Cas tuathal agus tiocfaidh tú amach i Sráid na Bearaice. Tiocfaidh tú ar Chlár 5 ar fhalla an fhoirgnimh atá ar chúinne na Príomhsráide agus Sráid na Bearaice. Anseo feicfidh tú comóradh ar ghaiscígh spóirt Bheanntraí a bhain clú agus cáil amach dóibh féin, sa bhaile is i gcéin. Roimh leanúint ar aghaidh dhuit, féach ar an bhfoirgneamh ar an dtaobh eile den bPríomhsráid leis na slinnte ar a éadan fós. Uair amháin bhí an stíl chéanna ag baint le fúmhóir na dtithe. Tabhair fé ndeara, chomh maith, bosca an phoist ó ré Victoria, banríon na Breataine ó 1837 go 1901.

Cas tuathal ón ngabhal so agus téir suas an Phríomhsráid agus féach isteach tríd na geataí ar shean-reilig 'Garraí Mhurchaidh'. Tá fothrach teampaill istigh ann abhí in úsáid mar theampall Protastúnach ó timpeall 1720 go 1818. Tá Clár 6 ar an bhfalla agus taisbeánann sé plean agus leagan amach na reilige. Ar aghaidh na háite seo amach, ar an dtaobh eile den mbóthar, tá Clár 7. Tá stua an tsean-Mhargaidh Shasanaigh le feiscint fós ar aghaidh an fhoirgnimh. Tógadh é i 1842 mar chuid des na hoibreacha abhí á maoiniú ó Chiste Faoisimh an Ghorta. Thosnaigh an sean-mhargadh san seachtú aois déag. Bhí díon tuí ar chuid de, a raibh cuailí adhmaid mar thacaíocht aige, a thug fothain de shaghas dos na trádálaithe. Bhí lár-ionad ghnótha an bhaile anseo i Sráid an Mhargaidh sara raibh Cearnóg Wolfe Tone ann in aon chor. Bhíodh margadh stoic ar siúl i láthair leathan taobh thíos d'eaglais Naomh Fionnbarra. Ba, caoirigh agus muca chomh maith le pónaithe, abhíodh á dtrádáil ann. Bhíodh aonach ann trí uair sa bhliain agus margadh seachtainiúil ann gach Satharn. Bhíodh ar na trádálaithe dola a íoc d'Iarla Bheanntraí.

Ar aghaidh leat suas Sráid an Mhargaidh go dtí an gabhal ag an mbarr. Ar an dtaobh eile den mbóthar feicfidh tú Clár 8 in aice leis an mbealach isteach go dtí eaglais chaitliceach Naomh Fionnbarra, a tógadh i 1826. Tógadh na sciatháin i 1846. Bhí an chéad scoil náisiúnta san mbaile suite san áit ina bhfuil céimeanna na heaglaise inniu agus bhí Bóthar na Scoile mar ainm ar an mbóthar so fadó. Beagáinín suas an bother, ar an gcólún ag dul isteach go dtí tithe na sagart, tá plaic a insíonn dúinn go raibh an chéad eaglais chaitliceach i mBeanntraí suite san áit sin. Ar thaobh na lámhe deise den séipéal feicfidh tú céimeanna. Téann siad suas go hÓspidéal Ginearálta Bheanntraí a tógadh ar an suíomh ina raibh Teach na mBocht agus Óspidéal Fiabhrais uair amháin. Tógadh Teach na mBocht i 1845. Le linn an ghorta ó 1845 go 1847, bhíodh an áit seo ag freastal ar níos mó ná 900 daoine ocracha le chéile i dtimpeallacht abhí thar a bheith uafásach. Níl rian ar bith de Theach na mBocht fágtha anois. Tógadh óspidéal áitiúil ar an suíomh i 1927 agus osclaíodh Óspidéal Ginearálta Bheanntraí ann i 1960.

Téir síos an tsráid thar bun na gcéimeanna agus thar an bhfoirgneamh ar thaobh do lámhe clé abhí ina Halla an Bhaile tráth. Beagán níos faide síos, ar an dtaobh céanna, tamall istigh ó thaobh an bhóthair, feicfidh tú an tsean-íoclann. Ar thaobh do lámhe deise tá Sráid an Droichid. Is féidir leat an bóthar a thrasnú go dtí Clár 9 ag an leabharlann agus an roth uisce. Bhí muileann olla agus, níos déanaí muileann plúir ar an suíomh so a dúnadh i 1939. Tá an roth uisce nua ann ó 2000 i gcomóradh an mhíle bliain. Chumhachtaigh an sean-roth uisce na muilte agus chomh maith chuir sé an chéad solas aibhléise ar fail do shráideanna an bhaile i 1912. Fadó bhí abha oscailte san áit ina bhfuil Sráid an Droichid agus an tsráid Nua anois. Bhíodh báid ceangailte go coitianta ag na céanna a tháinig suas chomh fada leis an áit ina bhfuil siopa Supervalu anois. Téir síos Sráid an Droichid agus ar thaobh do lámhe deise, thíos ón roth uisce feicfidh tú teach galánta. Bhí an chéad bhanc i mBeanntraí sa teach so agus uair amháin bhí ceart chun bád a fheistiú ar an abhainn ag gabháil leis an léas.

Nuair a shroiseann tú an cúinne, cas tuathal agus téir suas an tsráid Ard. Ós do chomhair amach, ag barr na sráide sin, tá Bearna na gCustam. Dá leanfa ar aghaidh go díreach bheifé ar an mbóthar go dtí an 'Rope Walk' agus go dtí an Chloch Ghreanta ag Cill na Rómhán a théann siar go dtí an an seachtú céad. Bóthar na nGallán a thugtaí ar an mbóthar so fadó, ainm a léiríonn an tábhacht abhí ag baint leis an gCloch Ghreanta leis na blianta. Bhailítí cáin ar stoc ag dul don aonach ag Bearna na gCustam. Ag barr na sráide, fós, féach tuathal agus feicfidh tú an bóthar ag dul tré chlais sa charraig a dtugtar 'Baiois Ghodson' air. Chuir an t-uasal Godson an t-airgead suas chun bóthar a ghearradh tríd an charraig i dtreo is go bhféadfaí taisteal ó stáisiún na traenach go dtí an t-óstán abhí aige ar an dtaobh thuaidh den gcearnóg. Deirtear gur bhris an costas é agus ó shoin i leith lean an t-ainm 'Baiois Ghodson' leis an áit.

Feicfidh tú Oifig an Phoist ón áit seo agus is ansan atá Clár 10. Téir síos Sráid Liam agus tabhair fé ndeara an clós ar thaobh do lámhe clé. Carr-chlós atá ann anois ach bhí margadh ime ag muintir Warner anseo uair amháin. Osclaíodh an margadh so timpeall 1880 agus bhí níos mó ná céad fear ag obair ann i 1886 agus im gur fiú é £2000 sa tseachtain á chur amach as i rith an tsamhraidh. B'ionann san agus 800 tonna sa tseachtain. Nuair a thagann tú chomh fada leis an trasnú coisithe, féach ar dheis agus feicfidh tú teach tábhairne an 'Ancaire' agus tiocfaidh tú ar Chlár 11 ansan. Tugann sé seo cuntas gairid ar Tim Healy, an Beantraíoch ba cháiliúla riamh, dar le daoine áirithe. Rugadh é i 1855 san áit ina bhfuil Banc na hÉireann anois. Bhí clú air mar náisiúnaí Éireannach agus bhí sé ina theachta i bpairlimint Westminster mar bhall de Pháirtí an Rialtas Dúchais. Chuir na Bráithre Chríostaí oideachas air i Mainistir Fhear Maighe agus fuair sé post mar chléireach iarnróid i Newcastle sa Bhreatain. D'fhill sé ar Éirinn agus toghadh ina theachta é, ó 1880 go 1918. Bhí páirt mhór aige i dtitim tríd Charles Stewart Parnell nuair a d'iompaigh sé ar cheannaire Pháirtí an Rialtas Dúchais tar éis dó súd a bheith mór le Kitty O'Shea. Nuair a cuireadh Saorstáit na hÉireann ar bun chaith sé tréimhse mar Ard-gobhairneoir. Cailleadh é i 1931. D'ainmníodh an 'Healy Pass', ar an dteoirinn idir Corcaigh agus Ciarraí, in omós dó.

Bhí Óstán Iarnróid agus Tráchtála ag muintir Waters san áit ina bhfuil tábhairne an 'Ancaire' anois. Cheannaigh muintir Canty é níos déanaí agus tugadh Óstán Canty air. Ansan cheannaigh Bill O'Donnell é agus d'athraigh an t-ainm arís go Óstán an Ancaire. Ón áit seo, má fhéachann tú suas an tsráid Nua is féidir leat éadan Óstán Vickery, mar abhí, a fheiscint. Is é seo ceann des na hóstáin agus ionaid cóistíochta is ársa sa cheantar - ó 1855 go 2006. Roimh teacht don iarnród go Banntraí bhí seirbhís rialta chóistí á eagrú ag muintir Vickery ó Bheanntraí go Droichead na Banndan agus go Magh Chromtha agus an Neidín chomh maith.

Téir ar ais thar trasnú na goisithe agus lean ort ar an gcosán go dtí go sroiseann tú teach tábhairne J J Crowley. Tá Clár 12 ar an bhfalla ansan.



