

(Mayo North)

15

# I.T.A. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL SURVEY

## NATURAL FEATURES, ANTIQUITIES, HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS, ETC.

BARONY OF Tirawley

TOWN OR VILLAGE None in parish PARISH Lacken COUNTY Mayo (North)

### TOPOGRAPHY

*Brief description of outstanding scenic views in the district, natural attractions, or unusual topographical features.*

Lacken parish comprises the north-eastern corner of Mayo. There is no town or village in the parish, and from the Post Office at Carrowmore, the distance to Killala is five miles, to Ballycastle, seven miles and to Ballina, thirteen.

<sup>along</sup> There is much beautiful scenery in the district, particularly ~~that~~ <sup>on</sup> the coast. Lacken Strand, at low tide, is probably ~~the~~ most delightful scene. This inlet of the sea is protected at the mouth by a large sandbank which forms a natural barrier, and ~~which~~ would completely bar the sea at high tides, but for the narrow channel caused by the Cleenalaghan River, a small stream which enters the sea here. ~~The little parish church is very uniquely situated on the west side, at the commencement of the strand which runs for about a mile out to sea and is almost a mile wide.~~

### GEOLOGY

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*Brief notes on unusual geological features, such as caves, eskers, etc.*

Near the ruin of Castlenageehy, on the west shore of Killala Bay, there are some large holes or caves in the face of the cliffs of rock. These are the homes of the seals which are numerous hereabouts but access to the caves is difficult and can only be achieved from a boat, provided that the sea be calm. The caves cannot be seen easily from the shore. Similar caves will be found on the coast near Creevagh Head on the west shore of Lacken Bay. ~~The caves appear quite large but it is impossible at present to explore them. I cannot trace anybody who has explored them at any time.~~

### MANSIONS, CASTLES AND ESTATES

OF IMPOSING CHARACTER

*Location and brief description. Owner. Past associations. Libraries or art collections? Gardens? Open to visitors? Admission charge?*

Castlelacken, a mansion of considerable size and at one time the residence of Sir Charles Knox, lies now in ruin on the left side of the road near the Catholic parish church at Lacken. It is said that the mansion was erected on the site of an ancient castle of the MacEgans'. Castlelacken seems to have had no important historic or other associations and subsequent to the acquisition of the lands by the Land Commission, the old building is now on the lands of Mr T.A. Loughney.

TOPOGRAPHY. Cent'd.

This strand is two miles to the north of the Post Office at Carrowmore (~~the only post office in the district~~) and the waters of Lacken Bay offer very good and safe swimming for children ~~as well as~~ and for adults.

Benwee, or Kilcummin Head which shelters Lacken Bay on the east, is another very beautiful spot on a clear, sunny day. The prospect here, of massive rocky crags overhanging the sea which foams and rears beneath, also embraces broad Killala Bay for many miles around. ~~Lacken Strand, as seen from here at the mouth of Lacken Bay, presents a gorgeous sight of golden and silver sands.~~

→ Kilcummin Head is best reached by the tarred road which branches to the right at Carrowmore. At the end of about two miles the road becomes rough and before reaching Kilcummin pier, the surface is very rough and stony. ~~This little fishing harbour is most interesting in scenery and historic background. Here, in bygone ages, St. Cummin erected his little stone church, the ruin of which may still be seen and alongside it, the grave of St. Cummin himself. Within a few hundred yards of the pier, it is believed, General Humbert's little fleet carrying the French forces who were to assist the United Irishmen, anchored in August 1798.~~

→ At Park, about a quarter mile beyond St. Cummin's Church at Ballinlena, a narrow passage leads to the Head, the Eire Coast Watchers' Hut being passed on the way.

~~The west side of Lacken Bay offers less in the way of scenic beauty but nevertheless, the coast is quite attractive and from an eminence of grass-covered rock about a hundred yards past Creevagh National School, a splendid view of the Bay is obtainable. From here, as from most elevated sites in the district, the mountains of Sligo and Donegal are plainly discernible on a clear day. Historic Knecknarea and the cairn atop are clearly distinguishable.~~

The many hills to the west and north-west are ideal for the purpose of viewing the surrounding scenery. Perhaps the most notable viewpoint is the hill behind the ruin of Castlelacken. This hill, on which the peculiar structure of rough stones known as the "Gazebo" stands sentinel over the bay, overlooks sea and land for many miles in all directions. The mountains of Killybegs in Donegal are conspicuous on a clear day and following that line of vision to the east, Ben Bulbin and Knecknarea may be seen, the Méascán of Maeve being clearly discerned on the summit of the latter.

HISTORIC SITES Cent'd.

*the area is now*

We are told how St. Patrick, when he had returned to his native land, after his period of slavery in Ireland, beheld in ~~his~~ dreams the maidens of Caille Fechlut beseeching him with outstretched arms to come to their assistance.

Caille Fechlut, or the Wood of Fechlut was a tract of thickly weeded land extending from Lacken Bay in the west to Cross Patrick in the east. ~~and~~ The name is retained in a townland in Lacken parish though now corrupted to Feghill; ~~and~~ almost completely bared of trees.

St. Patrick returned to convert the Irish to Christianity and his many acts in these regions are firmly fixed in local tradition to this day. ~~It is believed that he built a church at Feghill but there is no trace of this building nor is the site known.~~

*DoBrien  
1/6/43*