



Map 5  
Charter boundary-clauses in Warwickshire Arden.

## Murdoch Mackenzie's Charts as a Source for Irish Place-Names

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Over half a century before the first Ordnance Survey maps of Ireland were compiled, Murdoch Mackenzie the elder (d. 1797)<sup>1</sup> completed the remarkable feat of mapping the entire Irish coastline. Earlier he had undertaken similar hydrographic surveys for the British Admiralty along the West Coast of Scotland and in the Orkney and Shetland Islands. His principal works included *Orcades* (eight charts dating to the period 1747–50), *Treatise on Marine Surveying* (1774), *Charts of the West Coast of Scotland* (1775–6), and *Ireland* (fifty-nine charts dated between 1775 and, posthumously, 1800).<sup>2</sup>

His charts, compiled in haste with the aid of a compass, provide a crude but recognizable outline of the coast. Much of the drawing was probably done by eye, so that distortions were inevitable, particularly in areas where his sloop remained but briefly, so that few soundings and sightings were taken. Thus the south coast of Gorumna Island in Connemara is depicted almost as a straight line, whereas in reality there is a large embayment towards the west, while his Mweenish Island bears little relationship to the true shape. Many features are not drawn to scale, e.g. Lettermore is shown as large as Gorumna, whereas it is barely half the size. Places remote from the high sea were least well observed. Thus the mighty fiord-like inlet of Killary is but a pale shadow of itself, and the north coast of the Corraun Peninsula is reduced to a straight line. But these defects are of little account except from a hydrographic point of view. What makes these maps fascinating to the toponymist is that they contain a large corpus of names, many of which were not previously recorded. Most of these names relate to

<sup>1</sup> A brief account of Mackenzie (mis-spelled McKenzie) will be found in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by L. Stephen and S. Lee, XII, 604.

<sup>2</sup> R. V. Tooley, *Tooley's Dictionary of Mapmakers* (1978), p. 409.

small islands, rocks, and other coastal features of a kind normally disregarded by land-based topographers.

In order to test the value of Mackenzie's charts as a source of toponymic information, two sheets (Chart XIII, *The West Coast of Ireland from South Arran Island to High Island*, and Chart XIV, *The West Coast of Ireland from Slyne Head to Achil Head*) were selected for study. Between them (with a slight overlap) they cover the entire West coast of Ireland from the mouth of Galway Bay to Achill Head. All writing was abstracted from the charts. Allowance was made for the overlap, and a handful of descriptives (e.g. Danish Fort, Storehouse, and the like) was omitted. The remaining two hundred place-names, arranged from south to north, are set out below, with the O.S. equivalents (where available) in matching columns. Where the name survives but is applied to another feature (e.g. to a settlement rather than to a bay) that is indicated by the use of brackets. A dash (—) indicates that no corresponding name was recorded by the O.S., while *n.a.* implies that the name could not be checked.

<u>Mackenzie</u>	<u>Ordnance Survey</u>
Arran I.	Inishmore (Aran Islands)
Killaney	Killeany
Straw I.	Straw Isd.
Kilronan	Kilronan/Cill Rónáin
Kilmurvy	Cill Mhuirbhigh
Onacht	Onaght
Branach Isles	Brannock Isds.
Muris	—
Russavil	Rossaveel/Ros an Mhíl
Cuddu	Coddu Rock
Caninoch R[ock]	Cannon Rock
Casleh Bay	Cashla Bay
Kilcrimmin Parish	Kilcummin Ph.
Kilene	Killannin Ph.
Cariglass Point	Curraglass
Barraderry	Barraderry
Carhura	Carrowroe South
Barnacura	—

<u>Mackenzie</u>	<u>Ordnance Survey</u>
Greatman's Bay	Greatman's Bay
Inisvakini I.	Inchamakinna
Annachvaan I.	Annaghvaan
Littermore I.	Lettermore Island
Garomna I.	Gorumna Island
Trabaan Point	Trawbaun
Englishman's R[ock]	—
Live I.	Illaunnownim
Littermullin I.	Lettermullan/Leitir Mealláin
Gulin Head	Golam Head
Bullig	Seal Rock?
Carikelra	Eagle Rock
Carikamachin	Carricknamackan
Knappoch	Crappagh
Inishirk I.	Inisherik
Dyinish	Dinish
Furinish	Furnace
Casheen Bay	Casheen Bay
Lanirach	Illauneeragh
Inishbarahi I.	Inishbarra
Inishtravin	Inish Travin
Rushmuck	Rosmuck/Ros Muc
Ilanrura I.	Illaunmore?
Ilairach I.	Illauneeragh West
Keylesala	Kylesa [ <i>sic</i> ]
Kilkerran	Kilkieran/Cill Chiaráin
Kilkerran Bay	Kilkieran Bay
Ilanbonna I.	Illaunmaan
Ardmore Point	Ardmore Point
Finish I.	Finish Island
Mynish I.	Mweenish Isd.
Mason I.	Mason Island
Cruanakarra I.	St Macdara's Island
Toynyall	—
The Skirds	Skerdmore, Skerdbeg
Carrikameel Rock	Mile Rock

<u>Mackenzie</u>	<u>Ordnance Survey</u>
Cruanakily I.	Croaghnaekeela Island
Ilanacruach Is.	Illaunnacroagh
Ard C[astle]	Ard Castle
Masa Pt.	Mace Head
Fruhilan I.	Freaghillaun
Smiths R[ock]	—
Inishtreh I.	Inishtreh
Birterbui Bay	Bertraghboy Bay
Myris Parish	Moyrus Ph.
Conamarra	Connemara
Part of Galway County	Galway
Cashill Hill	(Cashel)
The Twelve Pins	The Twelve Pins or Beanna Beola
Ilanaguram I.	Illaungorm
Rosroe	(Rosroe Lough)
Inishnee I.	Inishnee
Roundstone Bay	Roundstone
Inishlaken	Inishlackan
Urrisbeg	(Errisbeg East, Errisbeg West)
Urrisbeg Hill	Errisbeg Mont.
Gourteen	(Gorteen Bay, Gorteen Grave Yard)
Carrigoulty R[ock]	—
Murvey Point	(Murvey)
The Bellows R[ock]	Wild Bellows Rock
Ralla	Callow
Ballandown Parish	Ballindoon Ph.
Ballikamila	Ballyconneely/Baile Conaola
Bunowen	(Bunowen Castle, Bunowen Bay)
Fox I.	Fox Isd.
Carikirk	Hen Isd.
Carrikaskilty R[ock]	Carrickscoltia
Ilanora I.	Illaunurra
Sline Hd.	Slyne Head
Dounlochan	Doonloughan
Mannin Bay	Mannin Bay
Ardbear Harbr.	Clifden Bay, Ardbear Bay

<u>Mackenzie</u>	<u>Ordnance Survey</u>
Ardmore	Malmore
Kingston	(Kingstown Bay, Glebe, etc.)
Tarbert I.	Turbot Island
Carrigarone R[ock]	Carrickarone?
Inishark	Inishturk
Omey Parish	Omey Ph.
Omey I.	Omey Island
Achris	Aughrus More, Aughrusbeg Lough
Crua I.	Cruagh
High I.	High Island
Friar I.	Friar Isd.
Cuddu	Cuddoo Rock
Ruilan	(Roeillaun, Roeillaun Rocks)
Claggan Bay	(Cleggan/An Cloigeann)
Furrunach	Fereroonagh West
Inishark	Inishshark
Inish Bofin	Inishbofin
West Quarter	West Quarter
Middle Quarter	Middle Quarter
Clunamore Quarter	Cloonamore
Bofin Harbour	Bofin Harb.
Lyn I.	Inishlyon
Carrickmahoga	Carrickmahoy
Claggan Pt.	(Cleggan Bay)
Claggan	Cleggan/An Cloigeann
Ballinakiel Harbour	Ballynakill Harbour
Fruchilan	Freaghillaun South
Fahey	(Cooannafaha)
Rinveel Hill	Tully Mountain(cf. Rinvyle Castle)
Bradilan	Braadillaun
Rinveel Pt.	Rinvyle Point
Inishbruin I.	Inishbrook
Ilananime I.	Illaunananima
Liahi R[ocks]	Lecky Rocks
Davilan I.	Davillaun
Inishtirk	Inishturk

<u>Mackenzie</u>	<u>Ordnance Survey</u>
Inishtalla	Inishdalla
Ilandachreen	Crump Island
Cuddu.	<i>n.a.</i>
Frechil I.	Frehill Isd.
Inishtegil	Inishdegil More
The Kilery Harbour	Killary Harbour
Inishbarn I.	Inishbarna
Mulrea Hill	Mweelrea [Mountains]
Cahir I.	Caher Island
Mula	Mweelaun Isd.
Calliduin	Killadoon
Buinaha Point	Carrickvegraly
Kilgiver Parish	(Kilgeever Church)
Clare I.	Clare Island
Bunnamachaan	Bunnamohaun
Lechero	Leck
Keil	(Kill)
Glen	(Glen)
Ballitia	(Ballytoohy Beg, Ballytoohy More)
Shanchan	Old Head
Ilaanmore	Island More
Inishlyre	Inishlyre
Dourinisha I.	Dornish more, Dorinish beg
Knuckfeahen	(Thornhill)
Murrusk	Murrisk
Croach Patrick Hill	Croagh Patrick
Kilidyen	Killadangan
Westport	Westport/Cathair na Mart
Kilmena Parish	Kilmeena Ph.
Rosnachelli	Rosnakilly
Munea	Money
Cullin I.	Collan More
Inishgoula I.	Inishgowla
Inishu I.	Inishoo
Inishtirk I. [sic]	Inishlaughil
Inishtirk I.	Inishturk

<u>Mackenzie</u>	<u>Ordnance Survey</u>
Inishdif I.	Inishdaff
Rostrunk	Rosturk
Barizule Parish	Burrishoole Ph.
Row I.	Roeillaun
Laarbaan	<i>n.a.</i>
Rosstirk	Rosturk
Coraan Hill	Corraun Hill
Coraan	(Corraun)
Timragee	Tonragee
Rosnafinna	Rosnafinna Point
Claggan	Claggan
Annach I.	Annagh Island
Inishbegil I.	Inishbiggle
Achil I.	Achill Island
Dunever	(Dooniver Strand)
Kildonel	(Kildavnet; Kildownet Quarry)
Achilbeg I.	Achillbeg Island
Duega	Dooega
Minaan Hill	(Menawn Cliffs)
Dunkenelly	Dookinelly
Slemore	Slievemore
Dochmore	Dooagh
Inishcallaway?	Inisheallaway? Inishgalloon
Moitog Head	Moyteoge Head
Cheem	(Keem Strand)
Achil Head	Achill Head
Dusaghly [or Dusaghty] R[ock]	Dysaghy Rocks
Bils Rock	Bills Rocks

Eighteen per cent of the names are identical with the Ordnance Survey versions, while a further fifteen per cent deviate in a single letter, e.g. *Claggan* instead of *Cleggan*. Another fourteen per cent display a somewhat greater divergence in spelling, e.g. *Coraan* for *Corraun*, *Crua* for *Cruagh*, *Keil* for *Kill*, *Inishlaken* for *Inishlackan*, *Rosivera* for *Rosyvera*. However, just over one quarter of the toponyms differ markedly in spelling from the O.S. versions. These include *Birterbui*

for Bertraghboy, *Calliduin* for Killadoon, *Inisvakini* for Inchamakinna, *Malcombe* for Milcum, *Moitog* for Moyteoge, *Mula* for Mweelaun, and *Ruilan* for Roeillaun.

About six per cent of Mackenzie's place-names were badly corrupted forms of the originals. Thus his *Ballitia* (for *Baile Uí Thuathaigh*) is now represented by the O.S. Ballytoohy, *Lanirach* is now Illauneeragh, and *Cruanakarra* must be based on a misheard *Oileán Mhic Dara* (St Macdara's Island). In the same way, *Ralla* must have come from *Cala* ('a harbour'), O.S. Callow, and *Ballikamila* from *Baile Conaola*, O.S. Ballyconneely, and *Liabi* was probably offered by a toothless informant in place of *Leaca* ('flat rocks'), O.S. Lecky. However, the corruption was not confined to Mackenzie's versions which, in some instances, are far superior to the O.S. readings. Thus Chart XIII makes it clear that the O.S. version Furnace is meaningless and that the second element in this particular name is *inis* 'island', while the initial portion of *Furinish* is probably the prefix *for-*, signifying 'outer'. Similarly, the O.S. name Turbot is a complete misrendering of the Irish *Tairbeart* 'place of portage' (cf. Tarbert in Co. Kerry).

Another six per cent of the names on the charts are identifiable in essence, but either contain or lack some additional element. Thus O.S. Dooagh was preceded by Mackenzie's *Dochmore* (*Dumbach Mór*, 'great sand-hill'), while *Cullin* has become Collan More, *Achris* is now Aughrus More, and *The Bellows* has been transformed into Wild Bellows.

More interesting still are the six per cent of the names which have undergone translation either in whole or in part. Thus O.S. Old Head near Louisburg, Co. Mayo, was rendered by Mackenzie as *Shanchan* (*Seancheann*), clear proof that Irish was still alive in that district in his day. His *Ilaanmore* (*Oileán Mór*, 'great island') has now degenerated into Island More. The O.S. translated *Carikirk* (*Carraig na Circe*) into Hen Island, *Carikelra* into Eagle Rock and *Carrig Murvy* into Murvey Rock. The meaningless O.S. Mile Rock, lying six miles out in the Atlantic to the south west of Mace Head, emerges as a corruption of the tautological *Carrikameel Rock* (*Carraig Mhaol*, 'bare rock'). *Knuckfeahen*, near the base of Croagh Patrick, is given as Thorn Hill on the O.S. map. Mackenzie's version is probably an attempt to render *Cnoc Fiain*, 'wild hill'.

Of equal interest is a small group of places which bore different names in Mackenzie's day. Some of these toponyms were clearly attributed by mistake, thus one of Mackenzie's *Inishtirks* was undoubtedly intended to represent Inishlaughil. Others probably hint at real change, such as the replacement of *Ilandchreen* by Crump Island, of *Rinveel Hill* by Tully Mountain, of *Inishcallaway* (*Inishealloway?*) by Inishgalloon, of *Bullig* by Seal Rock, of *Ilanbonna* by Illaunmaan, and of *Ardmore* by Malmore.

Lastly there is a small handful of toponyms which have no equivalents on the 6" to 1 mile O.S. sheets. These include *Muris* (*Maigh Rois?*) near Rosaveel, *Barnacura* (*Barr na Coirre?*) in Carraroe, *Carrigoulty R[ock]* (*Carraig an ultaigh?*) off the Carna Peninsula, and *Laarbaan R[ock]* (*An Láir Bhán?*) in Clew Bay.

Clearly, Mackenzie's maps do not yield a vast body of hitherto unknown toponyms. What they do proffer, and in good measure, is a large number of alternative anglicisations and spellings which could be useful, when compared with other sources, in elucidating the original Irish forms of many names. Furthermore, they do fill a few blanks in the toponymic map, and in a small number of cases they provide rough renderings of the original Irish forms of some names which appear in English only on the O.S. maps. Like the bogland maps, but in a coastal context only, they provide a useful window into Irish toponymy in the late eighteenth century.