Galway City Medieval Walk

DÚCHAS NA GAILLIMHE
GALWAY CIVIC TRUST

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Rome boasts sev'n hills, the Nile its sev'n fold stream,
Around the pole sev'n radiant planets gleam;
Galway Conation Rome, twice equals these;
She boasts twice sev'n illustrious families;
Twice sev'n high tow'rs defend her lofty walls;
And polished marble decks her splendid halls;
Twice sev'n her massive gates, o'er which arise
Twice sev'n strong castles tow'ring to the skies;
Twice sev'n her bridges thro' whose arches flow
The silv'ry tides majestically slow;
Her ample Church with twice sev'n altars flames,
An heavenly patron every altar claims;
While twice sev'n convents pious anthems raise,
(Sev'n for each sex) to sound Jehovah's praise.

Anon.

Do chéad fáilte go dtí

Siúlóid Mheánaoiseach Chathair na Gaillimhe

Is carthanas é Dúchas na Gaillimhe – Galway Civic Trust i gcathair na Gaillimhe agus é dírithe ar oidhreacht nádúrtha, ailtireachta agus chultúir na háite a chaomhnú agus a chur chun cinn. Is mór againn an leabhrán seo, ***Siúlóid Mheánaoiseach Chathair na Gaillimhe***, a chur i do láthair. Cé gur cathair nua-aimseartha í Gaillimh agus í bríomhar fuinniúil dá réir, tá stair mheánaoiseach na cathrach le sonrú go láidir ar an áit. Go deimhin féin, is beag athrú atá tagtha ar leagan amach na sráideanna ón Meánaois i leith, agus tá seoda stairiúla againn – Halla an Iarla Rua, Eaglais Choláisteach San Nioclás agus Caisleán an Linsigh ina measc – a chuireann an tréimhse sin i gcuimhne dúinn. Is é aidhm an leabhráin seo ná léargas a thabhairt duit ar na háiteanna thar a bheith spéisiúil seo ón Meánaois. Is iomaí cor a tharla i saol na cathrach sa tréimhse seo – seal faoi shíocháin agus faoi rath, seal eile nuair a bhí an saol suaite agus éiginnte; tá cuntas air sin ar fad sa leabhrán. Tá an Mheánaois fite fuaite i saol an lae inniu i nGaillimh agus tá súil againn go bhfaighidh tú comhthéacs agus tuiscint bhreise ar an gcathair, mar a bhí agus mar atá, de thoradh an leabhráin seo.

INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to ***Galway City Medieval Walk***. Galway has a rich and proud medieval history which continues to influence the style and feel of the modern city. As such, this booklet will provide you with a guide to the most important of Galway's medieval sites and also a brief history of this fascinating period in Galway's growth. For ease of use we have devised a walk which starts in the west of the city at Spanish Arch and will bring you to eight of the sites along the way. There is also an option to visit two further sites which lie outside the old city walls. The accompanying map will help to guide you to each site. As an alternative you can devise your own circuit, or indeed, visit any of the ten sites listed individually.

Establishment and Early History of Galway

The town of Galway was established in the medieval period by the de Burgo family. This family was part of an Anglo-Norman invasion which had arrived in Ireland in 1169. In search of new territories, they then began to push westwards across the great river Shannon in the 13th century. Under their intrepid leader, Richard, the de Burgos and their followers made their way to this part of the country around 1230. After a number a battles with local clans, Richard emerged victorious and displayed his new-found power by building a castle on the site of a native Irish fort. He then set about the process of building a town and can therefore be justly credited as the founding father of Galway city.

Over the 13th and 14th centuries the town was laid out to a chequered street plan and enclosed by a defensive wall. This new urban settlement began to flourish as it attracted a number of other French-speaking Anglo-Norman adventurers. These families dominated the

economic life of Galway while continuing to remain loyal to the English crown. By the 15th century, markets, churches, castles and defensive towers were all features of Galway's streetscape. The town underwent a major change in 1484 when it was granted a royal charter allowing its citizens to elect their own mayor. This significant event saw the de Burgos stripped of their automatic power as rule over the town was seized by a group of 14 wealthy merchant families who would come to be known as 'The Tribes of Galway'.

Fig. 1 Aerial view of modern Galway

The following 150 years brought about great prosperity for Galway city as trade continued to increase from Galway's docks. This wealth was reflected in the well-ordered town with its lavish buildings and fine residences which is depicted on the famous Pictorial Map of Galway *c.*1651. Although this sense of wealth and security was shattered by the arrival of Cromwellian forces soon after, the medieval period has left Galway with a rich heritage which continues to influence life in the city today.

The Pictorial Map of Galway

The guiding map for our ***Galway City Medieval Walk*** is a wonderful drawing known as The Pictorial Map of Galway. As you can see, all the locations listed on the walk are visible on this map. It is also worth noting that the general layout of Galway's streets remains largely the same today as it is on this map of over 350 years of age. While the Pictorial Map is more an image of Galway over a number of years, it is said to date from circa 1651, and is probably the single most important document relating to Galway's late medieval and early modern history.

The two surviving original maps, which measure an impressive 2 metres by 1.5 metres, are housed in Trinity College, Dublin and in the James Hardiman Library, National University of Ireland, Galway.

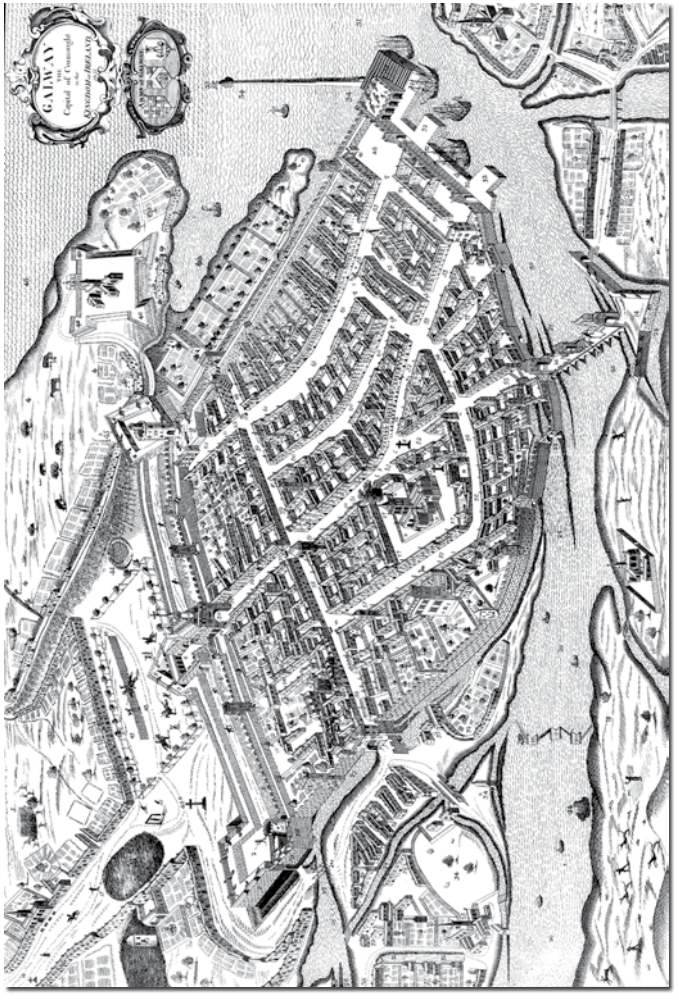

Fig. 2 The Pictorial Map of Galway

CITY CENTRE LOCATIONS

Site 1: Medieval Walls

The walk begins at one of Galway's best known landmarks, the Spanish Arch. The building of the city walls began in 1270 under Walter de Burgo – son of the town's founder, Richard. The walls were designed to provide security for the Anglo-Norman townspeople from the outside world. Over time the walls came to enclose the town of Galway which comprised an area of about 11 hectares. The Spanish Arch is actually a 16th century extension to the medieval city walls and was formerly known in Irish as *Ceann an Bhalla* or The Head of the Wall. It was originally built as a bastion to guard against foreign attack from the sea. It is only in recent times the arch was cut through and was named in honour of the many Spanish galleons which off-loaded their wares at the medieval harbour. It is certainly worth walking through the arch where you will find a good section of see the original line of town walls to the rear.

The citizens of Galway were charged a tax known as 'murage' to pay for the building and maintenance of the walls. During periods when the town was on alert of attack, extra defences were added along their lines. This threat became a reality when 'Red' Hugh O'Donnell from Donegal led an attack on the town as part of native Irish rebellion against English occupation in Ireland in 1597. Much to the relief of the townspeople, however, the sturdy walls prevented his army from making it into the town.

Fig.3 The Spanish Arch

By 1643, the people of Galway were demanding a greater degree of control over their own affairs, and, as such, managed to expel the crown forces from the town. Expecting a wave of revenge, the citizens added further fortifications along the walls. The revenge eventually came in the form of an invading Cromwellian army who laid siege to the town in 1651 and eventually forced the inhabitants into submission through starvation. During the development of the Eyre Square Shopping Centre in the 1980s a further section of the walls was discovered between the remains of two medieval defences known as Shoemaker's and Penrice's Towers. Both the walls and the towers were reconstructed on their original bases and can be viewed in the centre today during opening hours.

Site 2: Blake's Castle

Located at the west end of Quay Street, Blake's Castle was home to another important Tribe family. The Blakes are thought to have been part of the earliest wave of the 1169 Anglo-Norman invaders. This castle was the family's main residence in the medieval town. The family also held extensive lands and castles throughout Galway County and the ruins of their castle at Menlo (which can be viewed on the eastern bank of the river Corrib from Dangan sports ground in the city) is one of Galway's most picturesque landmarks. The family provided Galway with 11 mayors between 1495 and 1651. Blake's Castle also served as the town's gaol from 1686 up to the early 19th century. The building was restored in the 1980s and is now a commercial premises.

Fig. 4 Blake's Castle

Site 3: The Hall of the Red Earl

(Please note that entry to this site is subject to opening hours.)

Situated in Druid Lane, the Hall of the Red Earl is one of Galway's most important archaeological sites. It is associated with the establishment of the town of Galway by Anglo-Norman colonisers in the 13th century, thus making it one of the oldest buildings in the city. It is named after Richard de Burgo, grandson of the town's founding father who as Baron of Connacht and Earl of Ulster was one of the most powerful Irish nobles of his time. Richard was also known as the Red Earl - most probably because of his red hair. The hall was a key municipal building and was used to collect taxes and dues and to dispense justice in the newly established town. Archaeological evidence shows that banquets were also held in the hall. It was the historic equivalent of a revenue office, courthouse, and town-hall rolled into one.

Fig. 5 The Hall of the Red Earl (courtesy of Jack Harrison)

Entering the site it is easy to see the main walls including external buttresses. A row of octagonal limestone columns which helped to support the roof is also evident. Obvious too, is a cross-shaped figure which was actually an anvil base when iron-smelting works took places after the hall had been deserted by the de Burgos. As you can see from the Pictorial Map, the hall is certainly in a state of ruin by the middle of the 17th century. A good idea of what the original hall looked like can be viewed on the exhibition boards on site.

The exact date the hall was abandoned is not certain but it is likely to have happened around the end of the 15th century. At this time the town was granted the right to elect its own mayor and the all powerful de Burgo were voted out of power as well as out of the town! From this point on the other Anglo-Norman families - known as the Tribes of Galway - would share the position of Mayor of the town.

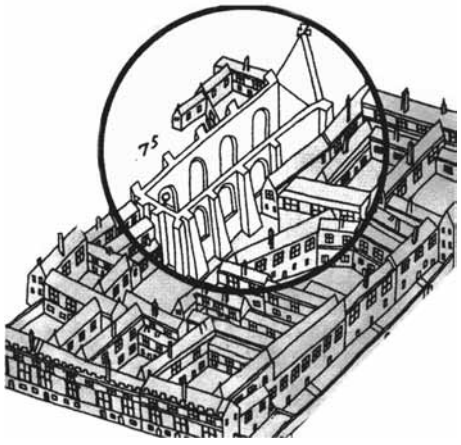

Fig. 6 Hall of the Red Earl as featured on the Pictorial Map c. 1651

Over the centuries, the hall became covered over but was rediscovered in the late 1990s when an extension was planned to the adjoining Revenue Commissioners Office. At this point, archaeologists unearthed over 11,000 artefacts from the site. Many of these, such as bone and pottery, related to the use of the building as a banqueting hall. Some of the more interesting finds unearthed included a wine bottle, a gold cuff link and even part of a human skull!

The rediscovery of the Red Earl's Hall led to a proposed extension to the adjacent Revenue Commissioners offices being completely redesigned to allow for the preservation of the archaeological site. Realising the immense importance of the hall, the offices were instead constructed by the OPW in bridge-like fashion overhead. Concrete and lead were utilised to imitate the stature of the archaeological site while the prominent buttresses of the hall were also replicated in the tasteful office design. Added to this, the hall was housed within glass panelling and a viewing gangway complete with flood-lighting was erected around it. Interpretive panels now explain the significance of the site and artefact replicas are prominently displayed. Today, Galway Civic Trust is delighted to present the site of 'The Hall of the Red Earl' to the general public.

Site 4: Kirwan's Lane

Kirwan's Lane, which connects Quay Street and Cross Street, is perhaps one of the best examples in the city of a laneway which retains the character of the medieval period. Dating back to the 16th century, it is one of only five remaining medieval laneways - out of an original 14 - to still exist in the city today. The lane received its name from the Kirwan family, one of the 14 Tribes. Indeed this number of 14 was important to Galway, for as well as 14 laneways and tribal

families, the city was said to hold various features including towers, gates, bridges and castles which numbered 14.

Fig. 7 Kirwan's Lane

Kirwan's Lane was originally two separate laneways with the section which runs onto Quay Street known as Martin's Mill Lane. This name came from another of the Tribe families who owned a large milling operation in the area. A gateway and small courtyard divided the laneways on the Pictorial Map but they later merged and became known simply as Kirwan's Lane. Although it fell into disrepair over recent centuries, the laneway was restored during major developments in the city in the 1980s. Have a look round for some of the medieval features of the lane, including windows, doorways and stonework which were rebuilt or reproduced at this time.

Site 5: The King's Head

(Please note that entry to this site is subject to opening hours.)

Located on High Street (known as Gaol Street in medieval times), The King's Head is one of Galway's best known pubs. The building which now houses the pub is famous for an association with the beheading of the king of England in 1649. Following the siege of Galway in 1652, it was seized by the notorious Cromwellian leader, Colonel Peter Stubbers from the mayor of Galway. Stubbers appointed himself as the town's military governor and according to legend, was equally feared and hated by the townspeople. It is believed that Stubbers may have been the man who wielded the axe on the head of King Charles I during England's bloody Civil War (1642–49), which pitted Cromwell's Parliamentarians against the monarchy.

Fig. 8 The King's Head

The Pictorial Map shows us a three-storey residence adjoining a five-storey building known as Bank's Castle on the site of the present-day pub. Archaeological evidence has shown, however, that a building probably existed there as far back as the 13th century. A number of features from the medieval building can still be seen in the pub. These include walls and windows and an impressive fireplace, which dates from 1612 and bears the family arms of three of the Tribe families.

Another interesting feature is located over the doorway of the building directly opposite The King's Head. Known as an 'armorial stone', this is a carving dating back to 1615 which bears the crests of the two tribe families - the Ffrenches and the Ffonts. Such stones were often carved to mark a marriage between Tribe families and typically carried the initials of the bride and groom, in this case AF and MF. Indeed, it is well worth keeping a look out for various medieval insignias, plaques and architectural features on the city's buildings as you wander around. You're never too far away from one!

Fig. 9 Armorial Stone

Site 6: St Nicholas' Collegiate Church

(Please note that entry to this site is subject to opening hours.)

The Church of St Nicholas was built in 1320, probably on the site of an earlier church, and is the largest medieval church in constant use in Ireland. It is located just off the western end of Shop Street. The church is dedicated to St Nicholas who was more commonly associated as the patron saint of sailors in medieval times but is probably best known as 'Santa Claus' today. Numerous churches in seaport towns such as Galway are dedicated to the saint. One particularly famous sailor is thought to have worshipped at the church: in 1477 Christopher Columbus paid a visit to Galway. The church was originally linked to a Cistercian order but gained 'collegiate' status when the town received its royal charter in 1484. This meant that it was then run by a 'college' of 8 vicars and a warden who were accountable directly to the Pope. During 16th and 17th centuries the church swung between the Catholic and Protestant faiths. In the years after the sacking of the town by Cromwellian forces in 1652, however, the church fell firmly under the control of new Protestant settlers. Today it continues to operate under the auspices of the Anglican Church of Ireland.

The church was originally built to a traditional cross shape plan in the 14th century. As the wealthy Tribe families competed to add extensions to it however, it ended up with the unusual triple-gable profile which we can see from the car-park end of the church as well as on the Pictorial Map. Outside the church we can also see mermaid carvings on the windows at this end of the church while high above the entrance are a line of wonderful gargoyles which at one time threw off water from the roof.

Fig. 10 St Nicholas' Collegiate Church

Entering into the church, the first medieval feature to meet us is the beautifully carved stepped baptismal font which dates to the late 16th or early 17th century. From here we can move across the nave into the north aisle where it is worth searching for a number of 'vocational stones' on the ground outside the small side chapel. These are gravestones into which are carved the emblem of the deceased's profession. Look carefully and you will find three crowned hammers - the marks of a goldsmith. Other vocational stones in this aisle are those of a carpenter, a cooper, a tailor and a wool merchant. Close by is a holy water stoup or 'benitier' decorated with carved vine leaves which dates to the late 15th or early 16th centuries.

Moving into the central 'crossing' area, see if you can spot a small but wonderfully carved 'manticore' above the pulpit. This symbol of the devil has the head of a man and the body of lion and was used to strike fear into medieval churchgoers. From here, we can now step into the chancel, one of the oldest parts of the building and thought to be part of the original church pre-dating 1320.

Fig. 11 Goldsmith Vocational Stone

You can now move into the Lynch transept which is named after the powerful Tribe family who sponsored this extension in the 16th century. Looking to the left we can see the small 'Chapel of Christ' which contains a coffin-shaped grave slab decorated with crosses. This is the oldest monument in the church and according to legend is the tomb of crusader. Next to this is the 'Lynch Window' which is also a tomb, this one dedicated to Stephen Lynch, a military leader. Either side of this window is the Lynch family crest of a chevron between three clover leaves. The window also holds two angel figures which were originally candle bearers. These beautiful carvings along with a number of others were destroyed by the Cromwellian forces that used the church as a stable after they gained entry to the town in 1652.

Fig. 12 Defaced angel on Lynch Window

There are two other tombs in this transept, also dedicated to Lynch family members. One is an altar-tomb which includes a magnificent canopy with flame-like tracery and a carving of Christ displaying the five wounds. The other is a chest-tomb in the corner of the transept which is falsely claimed to be that of a 15th century Mayor of Galway who is reputed to have hung his son in 1493. According to a popular but unproven local legend, James Lynch Fitzstephen executed his

son Walter for the killing of a young Spanish merchant who had taken an interest in Walter's wife while on a visit to Galway. This tale became such a part of the town's folklore that a memorial was erected just outside the church grounds in Market Street in 1854 to commemorate the 'stern and unbending justice' of Mayor Lynch 'who condemned and hung his own guilty son Walter on this spot'!

When leaving the transept, see if you can find a carving of an angel high up on one of the archways at the junction of south aisle. This is said to be the only example in the church which has not been defaced. Stepping back into the south aisle, note a pillar that differs from the two to the left. This concave-styled support is commonly referred to as 'The Apprentice's Column', owing to the tradition that it was produced by medieval apprentice craftsman as his graduating work of art. We know find ourselves back at the door through which you entered the church and this completes our tour of St Nicholas' Collegiate Church.

Site 7: Lynch's Castle

Lynch's Castle is the finest surviving example of an urban tower-house in Ireland and is the oldest building in continuing commercial use [oldest building where? Ireland or Galway?]. It was home to the most powerful of the Tribe families of Galway and is situated at the very centre of the old medieval town on the junction of Shop Street and Upper Abbeygate Street. The building is thought to date to the late 15th or early 16th century. The stylish carvings and architectural features on the castle are symbols of the wealth and influence of the Lynch family. In fact, this family held the office of Mayor of Galway on 84 occasions between the granting of mayoral status to the town in 1484 and the arrival of conquering Cromwellian forces in 1652.

Fig. 13 19th century engraving of Lynch's Castle

On the castle front, facing towards Shop Street, there are two noticeable [notable?] plaques. The circular one holds the Lynch coat of arms and has a biblical lion below it. The lower plaque bears the royal arms of Henry VII who came to the throne around the same time as the castle was being built. Below this is a rather unusual carving. According to local legend this is said to be an ape holding a child and comes from a story that during a fire in the castle, a pet ape rescued a child from its cradle and brought it to safety.

Close to the top of the building is a line of plain and gargoyle waterspouts which used to throw off rainwater from the roof of the castle. Also on this side of the castle are decorative hood-mouldings over the windows while the original floor levels are indicated by the gun-loops on the corner of the castle. These defensive features show that the Lynch family was on guard against attack from either the

native Irish outside the town walls or from rival merchant families within.

Fig. 14 Lynch's Castle (courtesy of Jack Harrison)

Moving around to the Upper Abbeygate Street facade of the castle, a box-like projection known as a machicolation is the most obvious feature we see. It is thought that this construction would have protected an original doorway below, by allowing missiles to be dropped on any would-be attackers. Above this are two corbels

which probably held a hoist or a bell. Another family crest which can be seen here is that of the Fitzgerald family, who provided the Lynches with military support in the 16th century. Below this again is another biblical inscription in Latin from the Gospel of Luke. The foyer of the building can be visited during the bank's opening hours and is home to an exhibition of photos and information on the castle. A version of the Pictorial Map is also on display here.

Site 8: Eyre Square / The Browne Doorway

Eyre Square is perhaps Galway's most famous landmark. In medieval times it was known simply as 'The Green', and was designed as an open area in front of the main gateway to the town where potential attackers on the city would find little cover. As we can see from the Pictorial Map, jousting tournaments took place here. Although the native Irish were largely kept outside the town, they did manage to influence the Anglo-Norman way of life within. So much so, that in 1527 a by-law was passed forbidding the native game of hurling from being played on the Square. Today, banners featuring the names and coats of arms of the 14 Tribe families - Athy, Blake, Bodkin, Browne, D'Arcy, Deane, Ffont, Ffrench, Joyce, Kirwan, Lynch, Martin, Morris and Skerrett - are often flown in the Square. The square's fountain, known as the Quincentennial Fountain, was installed in 1984 to mark the 500th anniversary of Galway receiving a mayoral charter.

The Browne Doorway is a symbol of the wealth and fashion of the homes of the Tribe families during their rule over the medieval city. The family's mansion was originally located at Abbeygate Street Lower (known in medieval times as Skinner's Street) but by the start of the 20th century had fallen into ruin. In 1905, the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society saved the front of the building

Fig. 15 Coats of Arms of the Tribes of Galway displayed in Eyre Square

and had it relocated to Eyre Square. The decorated style of the structure hints at the riches and luxury which lay beyond this doorway. The Brownes were one of the later Tribe families to come to Galway but became quite influential, due in part, to their association with the powerful Lynch family. Indeed, on the doorway we can the arms of the Lynch family as well as the Browne's own crest of a two-headed eagle. Although the doorway has been somewhat weathered over the centuries it is still a telling reminder of the stately homes which were owned by Galway's medieval ruling classes.

FURTHER LOCATIONS

Site 9: Forthill Cemetery

(Please note that entry to this site is subject to opening hours.)

In medieval times Forthill Cemetery was home to an Augustinian Friary which was located just outside the town walls. Its modern day address is the junction of New Dock Road and Lough Atalia Road, just a short stroll from Eyre Square. The friary was established in the early part of the 16th century but was abandoned shortly before the death of Henry VIII following an edict from the king. The location became the site of a grizzly mass execution when 300 captured sailors of the Spanish Armada were put to death there after their ships floundered on the coastline of Galway in 1588. The fleet was retreating from an unsuccessful attack on England when they ran into disastrous weather conditions off Irish shores. It is said that the Augustinian friars returned to their former home to minister to the condemned sailors before their execution. A plaque commemorating this event can be found in the east boundary wall of the cemetery.

Fig. 16 Entrance to Forthill Cemetery

The site was then incorporated into a substantial military fort at the start of the 17th century upon the orders of Henry's daughter, Elizabeth I. The Virgin Queen wanted to protect the town and its harbour from a potential Spanish invasion and also sought to keep the townspeople in check. The impressive fort measured approximately sixty metres squared with seven metre high walls. Surrounded by a wide fosse and accessed by a drawbridge, it was built to a star-shape plan which was typical of the period. The old Augustinian church was used as a garrison church and indeed due to its previous links the site became known as St. Augustine's Fort.

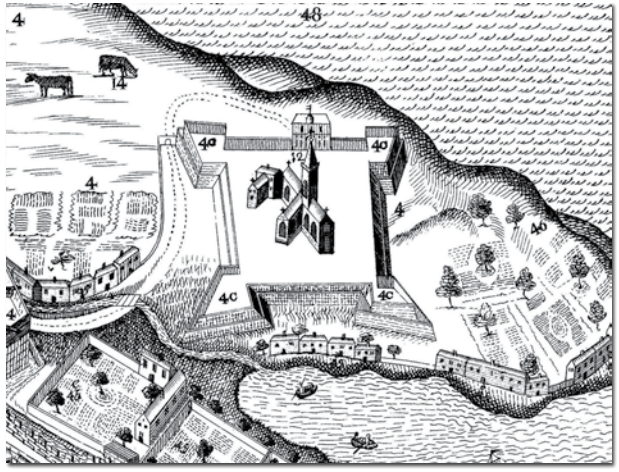

Fig. 17 St Augustine's Fort as featured on the Pictorial Map of Galway

By 1643 and with a widespread uprising in progress, the Protestant and pro-Parliamentarian garrison found itself at war with the Catholic and pro-Royalist population of the town. The townspeople managed to expel the army and capture the fort which they then set about demolishing. This act of rebellion would be severely punished

almost a decade later when the Parliamentary forces of Oliver Cromwell arrived in Galway. By the 18th century, the site became a burial ground and today, having a relative buried in the cemetery is seen by many locals as a sign of being a *bona fide* Galwegian!

Site 10: Bollingbrook Fort

(Please note that this site is approximately 30 minutes walk from Eyre Square.)

Bollingbrook Fort is testament to perhaps the darkest episode in Galway's history. To reach the site, travel up Prospect Hill and continue the length of Bohermore. At the end of this road, turn left onto Sean Mulvoy Road and the fort is located approximately 250 metres down this road on the left-hand side. It is marked by a granite interpretive plaque at the edge of the Mulvoy Park carpark. The fort played a crucial role in the fall of Galway to Oliver Cromwell's forces. The Civil War in England had seen Cromwell overthrow the monarchy, resulting in the execution of King Charles I in 1649.

Fig. 18 Execution of King Charles I

He then set out on a mission of revenge against the Catholic and pro-Royalist population in Ireland, including the townspeople of Galway, for their part in the rebellion of 1641. By 1651, with most of the country at his mercy, Cromwell returned to England leaving his commanders to take the key remaining towns of Limerick and Galway. Arriving in Galway in August 1651, his forces, under Sir Charles Coote, decided against launching a potentially futile attack on the heavily fortified town and instead settled upon a siege strategy. Three interlinked forts - one at Bollingbrook, one at Lough Atalia and a central fort on the site of present-day Bohermore Cemetery - were thus constructed to the north of the town.

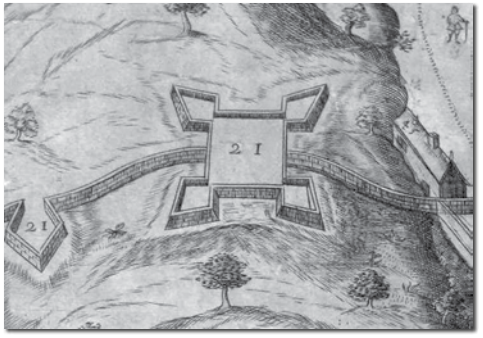

Fig. 19 The Fort as featured on the Pictorial Map of Galway

This siege line, along with a Parliamentarian fleet stationed in Galway Bay, ensured that no supplies could reach the town, nor could anyone escape from it. Almost nine months later, Galway was forced into submission as the ruling Tribes were forced to accept surrender terms. The Cromwellians gave the title 'Tribes of Galway' to the merchant families who signed the terms of surrender, and while this was originally meant as a derogatory label, it has become popularised in the centuries since.

Under the rule of notorious Cromwellian leader Colonel Peter Stubbers, the town suffered terribly as private property and churches were seized, clergy banished and hundreds of the city's poorer citizens were exported as slaves to the West Indies. This event effectively ended the influence of the Tribes of Galway and heralded a long period of decline in the city's power and status. The fort was partly restored by *Dúchas na Gaillimhe* – Galway Civic Trust in 1999. Archaeological finds uncovered there during excavations include musket balls, coins, knives, horseshoes, stirrups and even a cannonball.

Following the Cromwellian siege Galway slipped into a downward spiral for some centuries. Despite gaining its independence from Britain in the 1920s, it would be the latter half of the 20th century before Ireland and Galway were once again on a firm economic footing as foreign investment and tourism brought a new sense of opportunity and confidence to the city. Today Galway is famous both in Ireland and internationally as a cultural and artistic hub. Much of this energy is based on the city's sense of its own past and, in particular, its medieval history, which underpins the heritage of this modern and vibrant city.

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