

Irish Place Names

Most Irish place-names are English versions of Gaelic/Irish language place-names. These place names usually reflect the physical description of the place, be it natural or man made.

Tracing the history or even the location of a place-name is not always an easy task. Ireland is divided into 32 counties, which are in turn divided into baronies and parishes. These parishes are made up of over 60,000 separate townlands each of which are named and some of which are themselves divided. There are also variations between the way certain places are spelled as civil parishes and as ecclesiastical parishes. Researching this topic can be especially difficult for those who are looking for place-names based on the phonetic description. This is often true of those researching the place names of their ancestors who may have been Irish speaking and/or illiterate. The place names of most of the country have been anglicised and though there may be oral evidence of what the place was called in Gaelic, there may not be written evidence. This makes finding and deciphering the meaning of place names all the more complicated.

Despite all these obstacles, however, there is much to be learned by delving into this area of study and there are several very useful sources for doing so. These include the General Alphabetical Index to the Townlands and Towns, Parishes and Baronies of Ireland also known as the Townlands index which is very useful for the initial search. The Topographical Dictionary of Ireland by Samuel Lewis lists all the parishes, baronies, towns and counties in Ireland and describes their local agriculture and industry. It also gives details of the foremost local landowners and of the administration within the area.

O'Donovan's Letter Books and Name Books were both collected during the Ordnance survey of the 1830's. Physical descriptions are given of many of the townlands and many of these descriptions give an indication of where a place-name originated. These should be used in conjunction with the **Ordnance Survey maps**. This material is available in the Special Collections Reading room or in the Information Centre. Another useful source is Deirdre and Laurence Flanagan. Irish Place Names. 910.309415 Fl.1. This may not have the specific place name you are looking for but it gives a good indication to the

Flanagan, Deirdre	Irish place names /	2000	Main Library 910.309415 FLA
McKay, Patrick	A dictionary of Ulster place-names /	1999	Main Library 910.3094165 McK
O Casaide, Peadar	Logainmneacha i bhFearnmhaigh /	1993	Main Library 910.30941697 OCA
Ordnance Survey of Ireland. Placenames Branch.	Liostai logainmneacha Contae Chill Chainnigh : County Kilkenny /	1993	Main Library 910.3094189 ORD
Stockman, Gerard.	Place-names of Northern Ireland /	1992	Main Library 910.3094165 PLA
Ordnance Survey of Ireland. Placenames Branch.	Liostai logainmneacha contae Phort Lairge : county Waterford /	1991	Main Library
Ordnance Survey of Ireland. Placenames Branch.	Liostai logainmneacha contae Luimnigh : county Limerick /	1991	Main Library
Ordnance Survey of Ireland. Placenames Branch.	Liostai logainmneacha contae Lu : county Louth /	1991	Main Library
Spittal, Jeffrey.	A reader's guide to the place-names of the United Kingdom : a bibliography of publications (1920-89) on the place-names of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Channel	1990	Main Library 914.10014016 REA
O'Kelly, Owen	The place-names of the County of Kilkenny /	1985	Main Library Main-Library
Room, Adrian	A dictionary of Irish place-names /	1985	Main Library 914.1500321 ROO
Field, John, 1921-	Place-names of Great Britain and Ireland /	1980	Main Library 914.1003 FIE

Walsh, Paul, 1885-1941	The placenames of Westmeath.	1957	Main Library 413.11(418.15)
Power, P. Canon	Log-Ainmneacha na nDeise = the place-names of Decies	1952	Main Library D 262
Price, Liam	The place-names of co. Wicklow ...	1945	Main Library 413.11(418.4)
Meehan, Joseph	Dysert-Diarmada, or, Irish place-names : their beauty & their degradation /	1919	Main Library 910.309415 MEE
MacGivney, Joseph	Place-names of County Longford : collected from various sources /	1908	Main Library 413.11(418.1)
O Foghludha, Risteard	Log-ainmneacha = dictionary of Irish placenames (7,000) English-Gaelic	[nd]	Main Library DA 1A
O'Connor, Patrick J., Dr.	Atlas of Irish place-names /	2001	Main Library 910.309415 OCO

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