

# Fingal Field Names Project

Comhairle Contae  
Fine Gall  
Fingal County  
Council





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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# CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. The role of the volunteer
3. Getting started - maps
4. Sources for field names
5. Guide to completing the recording sheet
6. Field survey work: some guidelines
7. Field features - useful terms
  - 7.1. Archaeological features
  - 7.2. Natural landscape features
  - 7.3. Industrial, farming & folkloric features
8. Field name origin
9. Useful websites on Irish heritage, history & archaeology

Image opposite:  
Field near Drumanagh, Loughshinny, Fingal.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

**Fingal Fieldnames Project aims to capture the wealth of information about part of our heritage that is in danger of being lost, while also engaging with locals who are the guardians of this rich oral heritage.**

This heritage is a valuable link to the past and is also part of the living cultural heritage of the very varied and diverse Fingal landscape. Every field across the country has had a name at one time or other. This name may have described the topography of the land, the owners, buildings that may have once stood in or close to the field, the purpose of the field, size of the field or some event that took place in the field in a bygone time.

Fingal Fieldnames Project aims to help communities record, log and understand fieldnames in their area. It is hoped that the database created will become an invaluable cultural heritage asset both for the region and for future generations.

Baldongan Church,  
Skerries, Fingal.



## 2. ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER

**The Fingal Fieldnames Project is designed to be a volunteer-led initiative. This manual provides information and guidance to volunteers on all aspects of the project.**

This manual is based on training that was provided by Abarta Heritage during the course of the project. The manual also contains useful information for those that are new to the project to help them to acquire the knowledge, techniques and skills they need to take part.

As a volunteer, **you are free to chose your study area** for this project (provided it has not been surveyed already) and to dictate the pace at which you work. It is advisable, however, to **start surveying in a locality that you are already familiar with**, where you know some of the farmers or landowners, somewhere close to where you live or a place where you have relatives or friends. As you develop more skills in collecting fieldnames, you can then branch out into other localities.

**Some of the more important knowledge and skills that you need are set out in the following sections:**

- **Maps are a key tool** for helping with recording of field names. You should familiarise yourself with maps of the area you are surveying in advance.

- The **Fieldname Recording Sheet** is the key tool for gathering field names and related information. It is important that all volunteers use this form to ensure consistency. **One survey form must be completed for each field.** While it may not be possible to complete every part of the survey form for every field, you should try to be as thorough as possible.
- The project involves engaging **with farmers and landowners.** Walking through fields and farmland can also be an element of the work. This manual presents some guidance about issues like the Countryside Code, Health & Safety and insurance.



### 3. GETTING STARTED: MAPS

**Maps are a key tool for surveying fields and gathering field names. Before you begin surveying any area, it is important to familiarise yourself with available maps of that area.**

Fingal County Council has up-to-date **Ordnance Survey maps** of the county. These show current field boundaries as well as townland boundaries, roads and other features. As part of this project, Abarta Heritage has access to this data and can use it to generate simple and user-friendly maps for volunteers. Townlands are the most suitable basis for surveying field names and we can create maps of individual townlands. These maps can be printed by you at A4 or A3 size.

Once you have printed your townland map, you should **handwrite a number on each individual field** on the map. This will give every field a unique identifier. Although there are no hard and fast rules for this, it is probably best to start in the top left (north-west) corner of the townland and number each field within the townland boundary until you finish in the bottom left (south-east). The example across (Fig. 1) shows how this is done for Ballymaguire townland near Man-O-War.

**Aerial imagery** captured by satellites can complement maps - they give a so-called bird's eye view. Many people find it easier to make sense of a satellite image than a conventional map. There are two main sources of aerial imagery freely available online - Google Maps ([maps.google.ie](https://maps.google.ie)) and Bing Maps ([www.bing.com/](http://www.bing.com/)



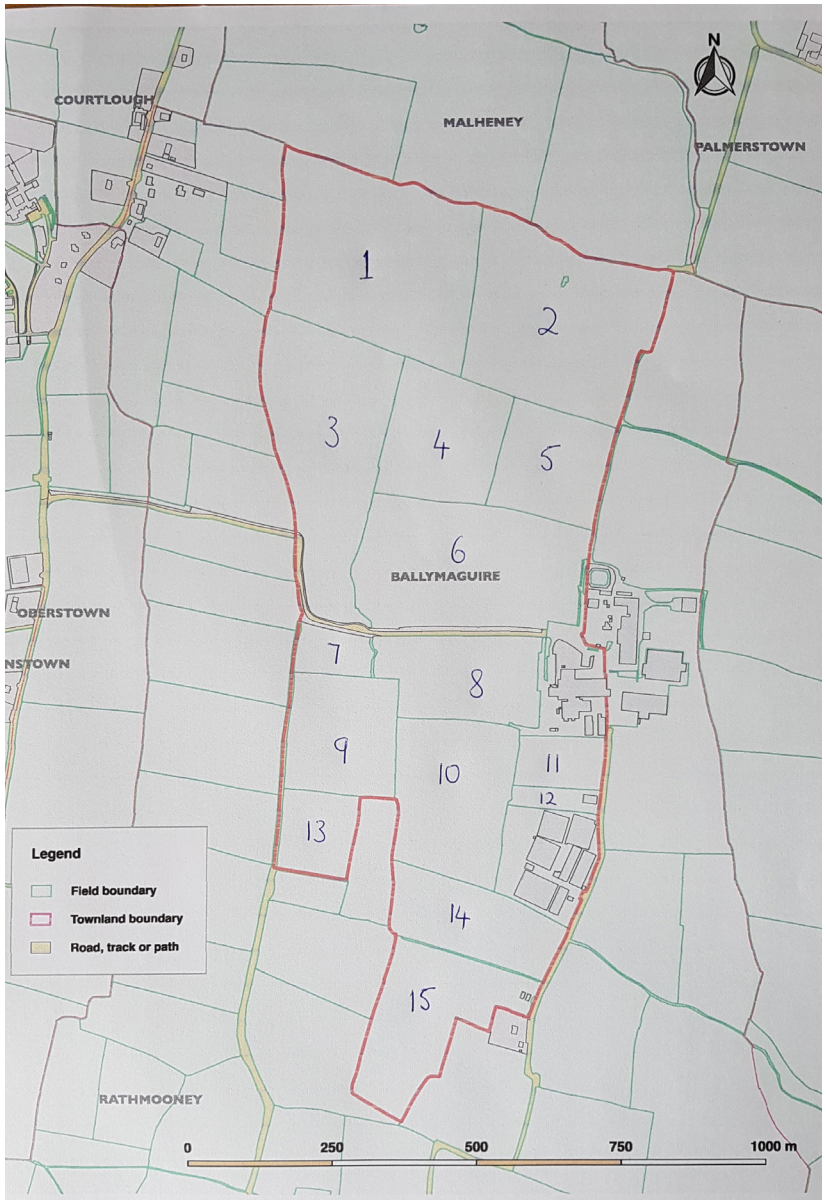


Fig. 1: A sample townland map for Ballymaguire with a handwritten ID number for each field.

[maps](#)). Both provide high quality aerial imagery. It is relatively straightforward to print imagery from both websites.

It is also very useful to know how an area looked in the past. Field boundaries change and what was once farmland is now occupied by housing and industry. **Comparing older maps to modern maps** can give a good indication of where development has taken place and where field boundaries have been removed.

We are fortunate in Ireland to have outstanding resources in the form of the 19th century Ordnance Survey maps. These can be viewed online on a number of platforms. **Geohive Mapviewer** on the Ordnance Survey of Ireland's website - [map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html](http://map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html) is probably the best place to start. The OSI Mapviewer also includes aerial imagery from 2005, 2000 and 1995 which can be useful to track more recent changes.

Alternative online sources of old Ordnance Survey maps include the **Heritage Council's mapviewer** [www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie) and the **National Monuments Survey mapviewer** [webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment](http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment). In each case, you can change the Basemap to one of a number of options.

The historic Ordnance Survey maps come in two forms. The 1st edition **6 inch maps** date from the 1830s while the more detailed **25 inch maps** date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They both show field boundaries, buildings and historic monuments. In addition the 25 inch maps show the field acreages and also minor field features like wells and lime kilns.

Comparing these maps with modern maps can be a very useful exercise and is well worth doing in advance of any survey work, especially for identifying where field boundaries have been removed. You may find it helpful to **sketch former field**

**boundaries onto your modern map** using pencil or a dotted line.

It is also important to know about the different divisions of land - townlands, baronies, parishes - and what they mean for your project. **Townlands** are the smallest administrative unit in Ireland and as such they are a good basis for surveying fields. Although they have existed for centuries, the precise boundaries of townlands were only defined by the Ordnance Survey in the first half of the 19th century. A townland can contain anything between 10 and 50 fields, making it a manageable unit for one person to survey.

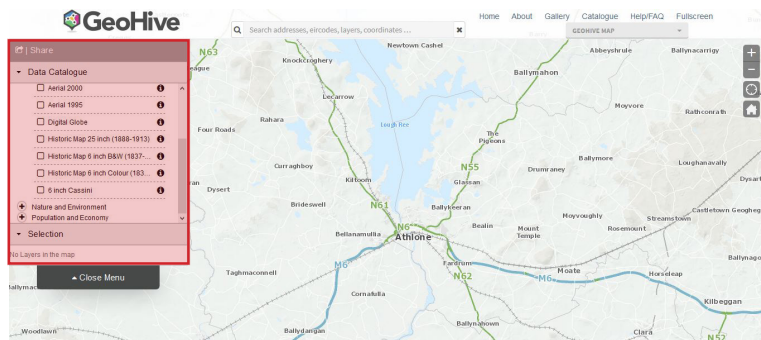


Fig 2: The OSI's Geohive mapviewer. The menu which gives options for various historic maps and aerial imagery is highlighted in red above.

townland

**Baile Mhig Uidhir**  
 genitive: *Bhaile Mhig Uidhir*  
 validated name  
 (Irish)

**Ballymaguire**  
 (English)

Share Tweet Share

**Glossary**  
**baile** *townland, town, homestead*  
 Glossary of words commonly found in Irish placenames »

**Irish Grid**  
 O 20791 57055

**Archival records**  
 View text records (10)

**Permanent link**  
<https://www.logainm.ie/16886.aspx>

COUNTY	Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin
BARONY	Baile an Ridire Thoir/Balrothery East
CIVIL PARISH	Lusca/Lusk
TOWNLAND	Baile Mhig Uidhir/Ballymaguire

Fig. 3: The Placenames Database record for Ballymaguire townland with the county, barony and civil parish highlighted in red above.

## 4. SOURCES OF FIELD NAMES

**Farmers, landowners and others who work the land are the principal sources of information about field names. This is the most important resource available to you. However, there is potential to gather some field names from existing sources in advance of your survey work.**

### **SCHOOLS FOLKLORE COLLECTION**

The Schools Folklore Collection was undertaken in 1937-38 by primary school children across Ireland. They gathered **folklore, stories and local history** from their parents, grandparents and neighbours and recorded their findings in copybooks. These manuscripts have been digitised and can be read online at [www.duchas.ie](http://www.duchas.ie)

Field names and other minor placenames form an important part of the information gathered by pupils. About **150 field names** and a further **50 or so minor placenames** were gathered in Fingal. The coverage varies greatly; in some schools no field names were recorded, while in others several townlands in the vicinity of the school were covered.

A challenge with this information is that there are no maps accompanying the field names; in general only the townland name is mentioned. However, by studying the Schools Folklore information in combination with maps of the area and **speaking to local farmers**, it is possible to pinpoint the location of some

fields named in the Folklore Collection.

Abarta Heritage has compiled all of the references to field names in Fingal from the Schools Folklore Collection into one document. This is available to guide volunteers towards any relevant materials for their study areas.

## **ESTATE MAPS**

Many of the **old landed estates** were surveyed and mapped before the advent of the Ordnance Survey. These maps generally date from the 18th or early 19th centuries. Often richly illustrated, they sometimes have the field names written on them or in an accompanying index.

Some of these estate maps are easy to access. A survey of the Manor of Dunsink in west Dublin carried out in 1831 contains 22 beautiful maps and is held in the **Fingal County Archives** in Swords. A number of these maps include the names of the fields. A map of Newbridge Demesne near Donabate from 1776, on which many of the fields are named, hangs in Newbridge House to this day. Other estate maps, if they exist at all, can be more difficult to access. Nineteenth century maps of the Malahide estate, for instance, are held in the Talbot family papers in the **Bodleian Library in Oxford**.

The **Longfield Maps Collection** is held in the National Library of Ireland and contains over 170 maps from Fingal. Dating from about 1725 to 1860, these were drawn by the firm Longfield, Murray & Brownrigg of Dublin for wealthy individual clients who owned large tracts of land. In general, these maps show field boundaries and in many cases the acreages and names of the landowners or tenants. A small number, however, also contain the field names.

Some of these maps have been digitised and can be viewed

online on the **National Library of Ireland's catalogue** ([catalogue.nli.ie](https://catalogue.nli.ie)). Type '*Longfield Map Collection*' into the search bar and click on the first result that comes up. You can then use the filter on the right-hand side of the page to select maps by county or in the case of Dublin, by barony. If a map in the Longfield Collection has not been scanned and digitised by the National Library, you will need to visit the library to see the original copy. See [www.nli.ie](https://www.nli.ie) for details on how to access material in the National Library.

## 5. GUIDE TO FILLING IN THE RECORD SHEET

**The recording sheet contains 3 sections: Field Location, Fieldname Details and Field Features. One recording sheet should be completed for each field. It may not be possible to complete all sections of the sheet, but you should make the effort to gather as much information as you can.**

First of all, you should enter your own name and number at the top of each sheet to ensure that you are acknowledged as the source of the information.

### **FIELD LOCATION**

This section contains details about the location of the field. You should gather enough information to ensure that anyone who reads the recording sheet in conjunction with the townland map will be able to identify the field in question.

#### **Civil Parish**

You should record the Civil Parish in which the townland and field are located. You can find Civil Parish in which any townland is situated on [gainm.ie](http://gainm.ie) as outlined on page 11 above

#### **Townland**

The townland in which the field is located. You should know this in advance from the maps you have been supplied with and from your own knowledge of the area.



Fig. 4: Field names recording sheet



<b>Surveyor:</b>		<b>Phone no.:</b>	
<b>Field location</b>			
Civil Parish		Landowner's name	
Townland		Landowner's phone no.	
Townland Code		Previous owner (if known)	
Field Map Reference No.		Landed Estate (if known)	
GPS Coords		Audio record made? (Y/ N)	
<b>Fieldname details</b>			
<b>Field name</b>			
Irish version (if applicable)			
Meaning of field name			
Any stories or folklore?			
Fieldname age	20th century <input type="checkbox"/>	1850-1900 <input type="checkbox"/>	Famine/Pre-Famine <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/>
Current use		Field size (acres/hectares)	
<b>Field Features</b>			
<b>Landscape (tick)</b>	<b>Archaeological (tick)</b>	<b>Manmade (tick)</b>	
Bog	Ringfort/ rath	Iron gate	Bridge
Lake	Fulacht fia	Stone piers	Building ruins
River	Standing stone	Stone walls	Drains
Lone tree	Megalithic tomb	Quarry	Lime kiln
Furze	Holy well	Brick field	Well
Bank	Souterrain	Mill	Dwelling house
Other (specify)	Other (specify)	Trig point	Other (specify)
Source of info. (tick):	Current owner	Previous owner	Map/ document

## Townland Code

Each townland in Ireland has a unique 6-digit identification code. This code is especially useful for distinguishing between townlands which have the same name. A simple way to get the townland code is to visit [www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie)

Zoom into your area of interest on the map. On the Layer List, scroll down to Administrative Boundaries and tick the box for townlands. This will show the townland boundaries on the map. Then click on any townland to get its name and ID number.

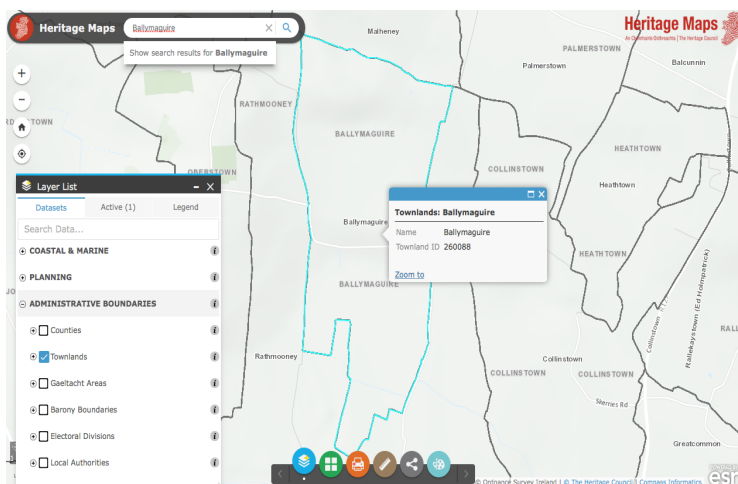


Fig. 5: [heritagemaps.ie](http://heritagemaps.ie) provides a simple way to get the unique Townland ID code for each townland, as this example of Ballymaguire indicates.

## Field Map Reference Number

This is the handwritten number that you assign to the field on your map. See the example on page 9 above. Completing this box is vital as it will allow anyone to cross-reference the recording sheet with the townland map to identify the specific field named on the sheet.

## GPS Coordinates

You can get the GPS co-ordinates (latitude, longitude) for the field from Google Maps ([maps.google.ie](https://maps.google.ie)). Find the field on Google maps and click on it. A box will pop up at the bottom of the screen with the address and the GPS coordinates.

You can do the same on Bing Maps ([www.bing.com/maps](https://www.bing.com/maps)) by right clicking on any location. You should click near the centre of the field to ensure that coordinates for any field cannot be confused with those of adjacent fields.

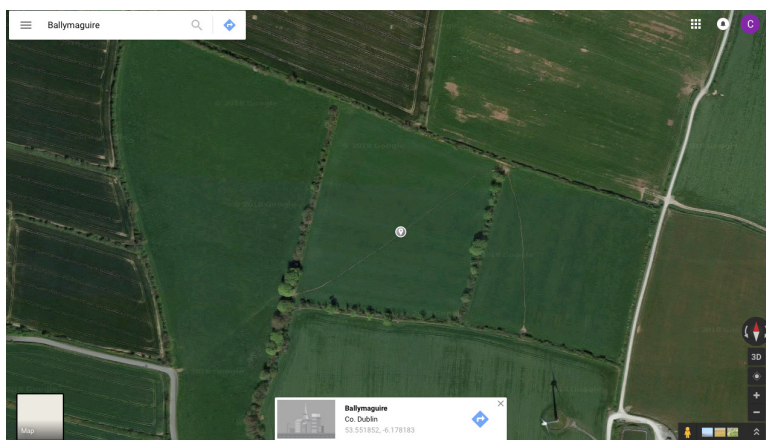


Fig. 6: By clicking on the centre of the field on Google Maps, the co-ordinates of the field appear in the box at the bottom of the screen.

## Landowner Name/ Phone Number

If the landowner is amenable to have their name and phone number recorded on the form, you can include it here. All personal data gathered will be processed and held in accordance with Fingal County Council's Data Protection policies and will not be passed on to third parties.

### **Previous Owner/ Landed Estate**

It can be useful to record the previous owner of the field (if known) or if the field was once part of a landed estate. In some cases, this information can provide clues to the origin and meaning of the field name.

### **Audio Recording**

Volunteers can use their own judgement as to whether it is worth their while making audio recordings of field names. Recording how a field name is pronounced by the farmer or landowner can be useful for more unusual or unique field names, or where a field name derives from Irish. Most Smartphones have a built-in audio recording app that you can use. Advice on how to conduct audio recordings can be found here <https://meitheal.logainm.ie/en/info/recording-audio>

## **FIELDNAME DETAILS**

This is the key section of the recording sheet where you record the details of the field name. Gather as much information as you can from the landowner or from other sources. Ensure that the handwriting and spelling is clear to avoid confusion. Be aware that not all field names may have an Irish version and that in some cases the meaning of the field name may not be clear.

If the landowner has clear knowledge that the field name existed at a certain date, tick the relevant box to record the age of the field name. If you need additional space to record any stories or folklore associated with the field, use the reverse side of the survey form. If you think the story is particularly noteworthy, you can arrange a follow-up meeting with the landowner and perhaps make an audio recording.

## FIELD FEATURES

While the focus of the project is on recording field names, many fields contain very interesting natural and man-made features. Some of these are **archaeological monuments** that date back thousands of years. Others, such as gate posts and lime kilns, relate to **farming practices** of the recent past. **Natural features** like trees and rivers can be important elements of the local landscape.

There is a huge variety of features visible in fields and for practical reasons only the most common features are included on the recording sheet. If you note a feature that is not included on the form, please include it under the 'other' heading and name it. You will need to walk the fields in question in order to identify these features and this will require the permission of the landowner (see Section 7 below).

If you see an interesting feature but are unsure what it is, take a photograph which you can show to other volunteers or experts who can assist with identification. You can cross check archaeological features with the **National Monuments Service online Map Viewer**. This online map shows all of the archaeological monuments in the country along with the field boundaries.



Knockbrack Hilltop, Fingal.

## 6. FIELD SURVEY WORK: SOME GUIDELINES

**Gathering field names requires the co-operation and good will of farmers, landowners, farm labourers, local historians and others. It is important to behave respectfully and with due courtesy when dealing with landowners and carrying out survey work.**

If you don't know the farmer or landowner personally, you should seek out a mutual acquaintance or someone known to them who can make an introduction. You should clearly explain the purpose of the project when requesting their participation. Fingal County Council has provided a letter of introduction for all volunteers which they can give to farmers or landowners to outline the purpose of the project and establish their bona fides.

It is very important that you **seek permission** from the landowner before entering onto private land. If you are walking fields and farmland, you should familiarise yourself with the *Countryside Code* and the *Leave No Trace Principles* (below) and observe these at all times.

It is possible to gather field names by simply **visiting the farmer or landowner in their home** with a map of the area and recording sheets. Walking through the farm and its fields can be useful to gather extra information, especially about field features, and can be an enjoyable part of the survey. However, it is not essential that you visit each and every field for the purposes of the survey.

## THE COUNTRY CODE

1. **Respect the people** who live and work in the countryside.
2. **Respect private property**, farmland and all rural areas.
3. **Park carefully** avoid blocking farm gateways or narrow roads.
4. **Use approved walking routes** where they exist.
5. Where possible **ask permission** before crossing farmland.
6. **Dogs should be kept under close control** and should not be brought onto hills or farmland without the landowner's permission.
7. **Avoid damage to fences, hedges and walls**, use gates and stiles when crossing.
8. **Leave all gates as you find them** (open or closed).
9. **Do not interfere with machinery, crops or animals.**
10. **Protect wildlife**, water sources, plants and trees.
11. **Walk on the centre of tracks**, don't trample vegetation on the edges.
12. **Take your litter home**, even biodegradable items can take years to disappear.
13. **Guard against all risk of fire** and avoid making unnecessary noise.
14. Always **keep children closely supervised** during a walk.

## LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES

1. **Plan ahead** & prepare
2. **Be considerate** of others
3. **Respect farm animals** and wildlife
4. **Travel on durable ground**
5. **Leave what you find**
6. **Dispose of waste** properly
7. **Minimise the risk of fire**



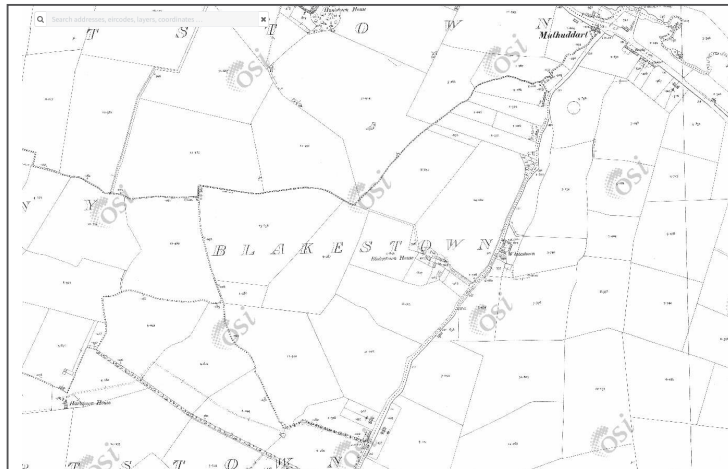
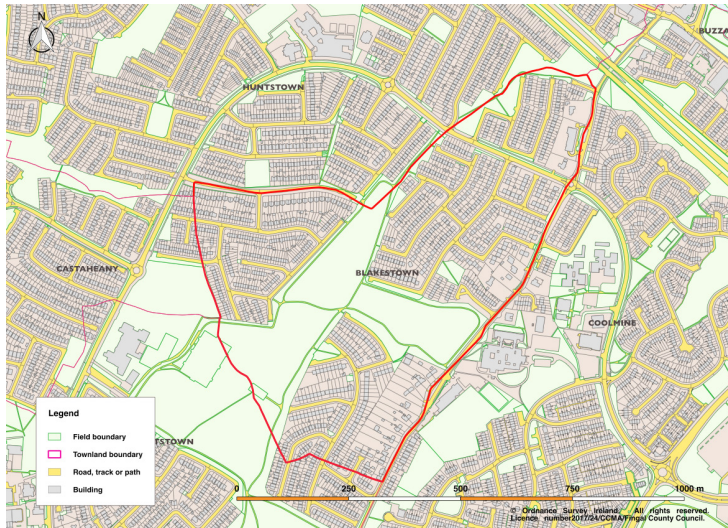
## **RECORDING NAMES OF FIELDS THAT NO LONGER EXIST**

Fingal County has seen rapid change and development in recent decades. In many locations, **farmland has been replaced by houses, factories and roads**. This presents a challenge in terms of recording field names. There are people still amongst us who can remember the names of fields which have now disappeared. They include retired farmers and farm labourers and others who have deep roots in the communities where they still live.

There is no doubt that recording the names of these fields where possible is a worthwhile exercise, even though the fields themselves no longer exist. The first step is to **identify if there are people in your locality who still hold this knowledge**.

Getting these field names down on paper, however, requires a slightly different approach. **Contemporary maps do not show the old field boundaries** and are not suitable. You will need to use maps that show the old field boundaries. The **first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey maps**, published in the early 1900s, are the best resource for this task. They can be viewed online at [www.map.geohive.ie](http://www.map.geohive.ie)

Using the historic 25 inch map alongside a contemporary map can help to **pinpoint the location** of these former fields. An example from Blakestown in west Dublin is shown across. The contemporary map shows that this townland is almost entirely developed, and the green areas are modern open spaces, not fields. However, the 25 inch map shows the field boundaries that existed here prior to housing construction.



Figs. 7 & 8: Using the historic 25 inch map alongside a contemporary map of the same area can help to pinpoint the location of former fields.

## **Remember that you should still stick to the key steps of recording all field names, namely:**

- work on a townland by townland basis
- give every field a unique ID number on the map
- complete one Recording Sheet for each field
- record as much detail as possible about each individual field

In the 'current use' section of the Recording Sheet, you should note the fact that this field has now been developed e.g. housing, factory etc.

A related issue is where field boundaries have been removed resulting in a number of small fields being merged into one field. If you can source the names of the former fields from the landowner or another individual, they should be recorded. In order to do this, each field should be given a unique ID number on your map. The former field boundaries can be indicated using a dotted line.

Recording field names in areas which are now developed or where field boundaries have been removed is more demanding and requires planning, patience and skill. Remember that as a volunteer, only do as much as you are comfortable with. Each field name that you do record is a valuable addition to the cultural heritage of Fingal.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

Participants are responsible for their own safety. It is important that all individuals and groups participating in the project keep a log of the fieldwork that they undertake. There is an onus on each local group to appoint a person to carry out this task. Each volunteer should inform the designated person in their local

group in advance of doing any fieldwork.

From a Health & Safety perspective, if you do intend to walk fields and farmland as part of your survey, it is important to be aware of potential hazards in advance.

### **Hazards could include:**

- Horses, bulls, cattle & other livestock
- Farm machinery
- Barbed wire fencing & electric fencing
- Unstable gates, fences & stiles
- Drains, ditches, rivers & open water
- Uneven, slippery or otherwise hazardous ground

You should avoid taking any unnecessary risks in relation to any hazard to minimise the likelihood of accidents and injuries. Appropriate footwear and clothing, along with a walking stick, are recommended when walking fields. You should not bring dogs onto farmland.

Field, Cottrelstown, Fingal.



# 7. FIELD FEATURES: USEFUL TERMS

**You may come across some of the features listed below while undertaking your survey. Please note the feature and find out as much information about it as possible.**

From when does the feature date? Are there any local stories or folklore associated with it? Does it have an association with any local family or group. Also listed are a couple of more unusual natural features that you may encounter.

## 7.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

- **Barrow:** Circular ditched enclosure, often with an earthen mound in the centre, which covers a burial. Usually dates to the Bronze Age.
- **Bawn:** A defensive structure that would have surrounded a tower house.
- **Bullaun:** A large stone with one or more circular depressions carved into it. Often related to early medieval monastic sites; they may have served as holy water fonts, or may have had a more practical purpose similar to a large pestle and mortar for grinding herbs or minerals.
- **Cairn:** A man-made drystone mound, often covering the chambers of a megalithic tomb.
- **Cashel:** A stone-built circular enclosure, usually dating to the early medieval period. A variation of a ringfort.

- **Cist:** A stone-lined grave or chamber, usually dating to the earlier part of the Bronze Age.
- **Cup-marked stone:** A form of pre-historic art, consisting of a concave depression, no more than a few centimetres across, pecked into a rock surface and often surrounded by concentric circles also etched into the stone.
- **Cursus:** A large prehistoric monument consisting of two parallel embankments.
- **Dolmen/ Portal Tomb:** A megalithic tomb type typically consisting of a simple chamber formed of upright stones, with a large capstone. The monument was then possibly covered with a cairn of small stones or a mound of earth.
- **Fulacht Fiadh:** They commonly survive as a low horseshoe-shaped mound of charcoal-enriched soil and heat shattered stone with a slight depression at its centre showing the position of the pit.
- **Holy Well:** A naturally occurring spring or small pool of water which has been revered locally, often as far back as the pre-Christian era. Their adornment ranges from a few simple stones to larger domed enclosures. They are often associated with a particular saint, folklore or cure.
- **Henge:** A large circular enclosure, usually comprised of earthen banks and ditches, and thought to have had a ceremonial function.
- **Ice House:** Small, rounded structures built on the grounds of large country houses during the 18th and 19th centuries to store ice throughout the year. They were often built partially underground, close to lakes or rivers and sometimes insulated with, soil, straw or sawdust. During the winter, ice and snow would be cut from lakes or rivers, taken into the ice house and used as a source of ice during summer months.

Barnageeragh Cairn,  
Skerries, Fingal.





- **Keep:** The central tower of a castle.
- **Martello Tower:** A circular tower usually positioned on the coastline or riverside. Constructed as a defence by the British army in the wars against Napoleonic France in the early nineteenth century.
- **Mass Rock:** During the seventeenth century, the penal laws were introduced in Ireland which forbade Irish Catholics from practising their faith. Mass Rocks were used by priests to say Mass out in the open where they were unlikely to be discovered.
- **Ogham Stone:** An upstanding stone inscribed with the early Irish script, that usually dates to the early centuries AD. Ogham consists of a series of horizontal or diagonal strokes crossing a vertical central line.
- **Rath/ Ringfort:** Roughly circular enclosure surrounded by one or more ditches with banks of earth or stone. Usually dating to the early medieval period, ringforts are one of the most numerous archaeological sites in the Irish landscape. The enclosures often defended houses and other ancillary structures within it. When the enclosure is constructed of stone it is often termed a cashel.
- **Sheela-na-gig:** Small sculptures of nude females (and occasionally males) exhibiting their genitalia. Their purpose is subject to debate: some believe they were a way of warding off evil spirits, others believe that they were a warning against the sins of the flesh.
- **Souterrain:** A tunnel-like stone passageway, usually dating to the early medieval period. Mainly found in association with ringforts or monastic sites. Thought to have been used for storage or possibly refuge. May feature chambers and multiple passageways.
- **Sweat House:** Dating from the 18th century, sweathouses

(teach allais in Irish) were small, oblong-shaped structures which were used as both a sauna and for medicinal purposes. A fire was lit inside the structure and people's illnesses were thought to be 'sweated out' of them as they sat inside.

- **Togher:** A wooden or stone trackway across boggy or marshy ground.

## 7.2 NATURAL LANDSCAPE FEATURES

- **Drumlin:** An oval or elongated hill believed to have been formed by the streamlined movement of glacial ice sheets across rock debris or till.
- **Glacial erratic:** A large boulder carried by glacial ice and deposited at a distance from its point of origin.

## 7.3 INDUSTRIAL, FARMING & OTHER MAN-MADE FEATURES

- **Benchmark:** A mapping tool which was used throughout the 19th century all over the world. Benchmarks today look like crows feet carved into stone with three prongs extending from a horizontal line. This line was used as a 'bench' to hold a rod which could measure the height above sea level and could be used over and over again.
- **Bleachfield:** Large areas, often around mills that were used to spread out fabric to be bleached in the sun. Common during the intense industrial activity around the turn of the 18th century.
- **Brick Field:** A field that may have had suitable clay for the production of bricks. Evidence in the form of old huts or broken bricks may remain.

- **Bridge:** A bridge over a small stream or river may provide historic information relating to stream development or old road systems.
- **Dovecote:** A structure intended to house pigeons or doves. They may be free-standing structures in a variety of shapes or built into the end of a house or barn. They generally contain pigeonholes for the birds to nest. The birds were kept for their eggs, flesh, and dung.
- **Famine Ridges:** During the 19th century, Irish peasants planted potato seeds in what were known as 'lazy beds' – ridges about 5 foot in width, with a furrow running between each ridge. When the Great Famine took place in 1845-47, these lazy beds were abandoned as the population either died or emigrated and the overgrown ridges now remain in the landscape.
- **Folly:** An unusual, decorative building usually built in the grounds of a large estate as a curiosity and extravagant addition to the estate.
- **Forge:** Where a blacksmith would have created objects from wrought iron or steel by forging the metal, using tools to hammer, bend and cut the metal. While the building itself may not remain, local folklore may suggest that a forge once existed in the field.
- **Gravel Pit:** An area of a field that may have been suitable for the extraction of sand and gravel for construction purposes. A pit may appear as a pond or small lake if the depression has filled with rain water.
- **Hedgerow:** A line of closely spaced shrubs and sometimes trees, planted and trained to form field boundaries. Hedgerows provide shelter and sustenance for many types of wildlife.
- **Iron Gates & Stone Piers:** The gates can be plain or

decorative and may still have some of their original paint. They are heavier than modern gates and will sometimes have the blacksmith's mark imprinted on them. The gates may no longer be in situ but the stone piers from which they hung are often still in place.

- **Killeen (Cillín in Irish):** These are often located outside the walls of a consecrated graveyard and were used to bury unbaptised children and sometimes adults. As the graves are unmarked, the location of a Killeen is often only known to locals through local folklore.
- **Limekiln:** Once a common feature of the rural Irish landscape of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, today, not many survive. Lime kilns are egg-shaped structures in which limestone was heated to a high temperature to produce quicklime. Although the quicklime had many uses, it was primarily used on agricultural land to improve soil quality by breaking up heavy clay.
- **Memorial:** May be a cross or some other structure placed to commemorate a person, group or event.
- **Merged or divided fields:** Where fields have been merged, the names of the smaller, original fields may still be known. Where fields have been divided, new names may have been allocated to them.
- **Mill** (including mill stone, mill wheel, mill race): The remains of mill building are often found dotted along rivers and streams. They were predominantly used for milling flour but had many other functions including the production of cotton and the grinding of bones to make bone-meal fertiliser.
- **Rag tree:** A tree (usually positioned next to a holy well or church site) with strips of cloth or rags tied to its branches as part of a healing ritual. As the cloth unravels and rots so the disease or ailment is believed to fade away.

- **Scratching Post:** An upright post made from timber, stone or metal that livestock use for scratching on.
- **Sheep Dip:** These would usually have been located beside a stream of river and would have an enclosed pen and run for the sheep.
- **Sheep Gap** (or sheep creep): A rectangular hole built into stone field boundary walls to let sheep move from one field to another.
- **Stone Walls:** Although more often found in the west of Ireland where the land is poorer and more stone-filled, fields may be separated by low stone walls where stones have been taken from the ground in order to utilise the land for farming.
- **Stone Quarry:** An area from which stone was extracted in large quantities, usually for construction. A quarry can often have high stone walls, giving the appearance of an amphitheatre.
- **Water pump:** Once used to pump water from a deep well or spring, these are often found in a central location. Although no longer used as a main watersource, they are maintained as a decorative feature within a locality.

## 8. FIELD NAME ORIGIN

The origin of field names can often be found in the original Irish name which may have later become anglicised. The words below can be found in many field and place names around Ireland.

**Achadh:** field  
**Ard:** high

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**Baile:** town/  
homestead

**Beag:** small

**Béal:** mouth

**Bealach:** pass

**Bile:** sacred tree

**Binn:** mountain

**Boireann:** stoney  
place

**Buaile:** pasture  
place

**Bun:** bottom

**Buí:** yellow

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**Carn:** stone heap

**Caol:** narrow place

**Ceapach:** tillage

**Cloch:** stone

**Cnoc:** hill

**Coill:** wood

**Cois:** beside

**Crocán:** rushes

**Cuain:** meadow

**Cúl:** behind

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**Dar:** oak

**Dearg:** red

**Droim:** ridge

**Dún:** fortress

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**Eanach:** marshy

**Eas:** waterfall

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**Fada:** long

**Fearann:** ground

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**Garbh:** uneven

**Gleann:** valley

**Grian:** sun

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**Iúr:** yew

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**Leac:** flag stone

**Leath:** half

**Leacan:** stoney Hill

**Leitir:** wet hillside

**Linn:** pool

**Lios:** fort

**Lochan:** pond

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**Machaire:** plain

**Mam:** gorge

**Mara:** sea

**Móin:** bog

**Mór:** big

**Muileann:** mill

**Mullach:** crown

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**Pobail:** people

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**Reilig:** graveyard

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**Sceach:** hawthorn

**Sceilig:** rock

**Sliabh:** mountain

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**Tír:** place

**Túar:** milking place

**Tulach:** small hill

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**Úachtar:** upper

## 9. USEFUL WEBSITES ON IRISH ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY & HERITAGE

[www.abartaheritage.ie](http://www.abartaheritage.ie)  
[www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)  
[www.archaeologyireland.ie](http://www.archaeologyireland.ie)  
[www.bing.com/maps](http://www.bing.com/maps)  
[www.buildingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie)  
[www.discoveryprogramme.ie](http://www.discoveryprogramme.ie)  
[www.duchas.ie](http://www.duchas.ie)  
[www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)  
[www.fingal.ie/planning-and-buildings/heritage-in-fingal](http://www.fingal.ie/planning-and-buildings/heritage-in-fingal)  
[www.heritagecouncil.ie](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie)  
[www.heritageireland.ie](http://www.heritageireland.ie)  
[www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie)  
[www.historicgraves.ie](http://www.historicgraves.ie)  
[www.irisharchaeology.ie](http://www.irisharchaeology.ie)  
[www.irishwalledtownsnetwork.ie](http://www.irishwalledtownsnetwork.ie)  
[www.logainm.ie](http://www.logainm.ie)  
[www.maps.google.ie](http://www.maps.google.ie)  
[www.megalithicireland.com](http://www.megalithicireland.com)  
[www.meitheal.logainm.ie](http://www.meitheal.logainm.ie)  
[www.monastic.ie](http://www.monastic.ie)  
[www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie)  
[www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)  
[www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie) (National Library of Ireland)  
[www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie)  
[www.pilgrimageinmedievalireland.com](http://www.pilgrimageinmedievalireland.com)  
[www.timetravelireland.blogspot.ie](http://www.timetravelireland.blogspot.ie)  
[www.voicesfromthedawn.com](http://www.voicesfromthedawn.com)  
[www.voxhiberionacum.wordpress.com](http://www.voxhiberionacum.wordpress.com)



Comhairle Contae  
Fhine Gall  
Fingal County  
Council

