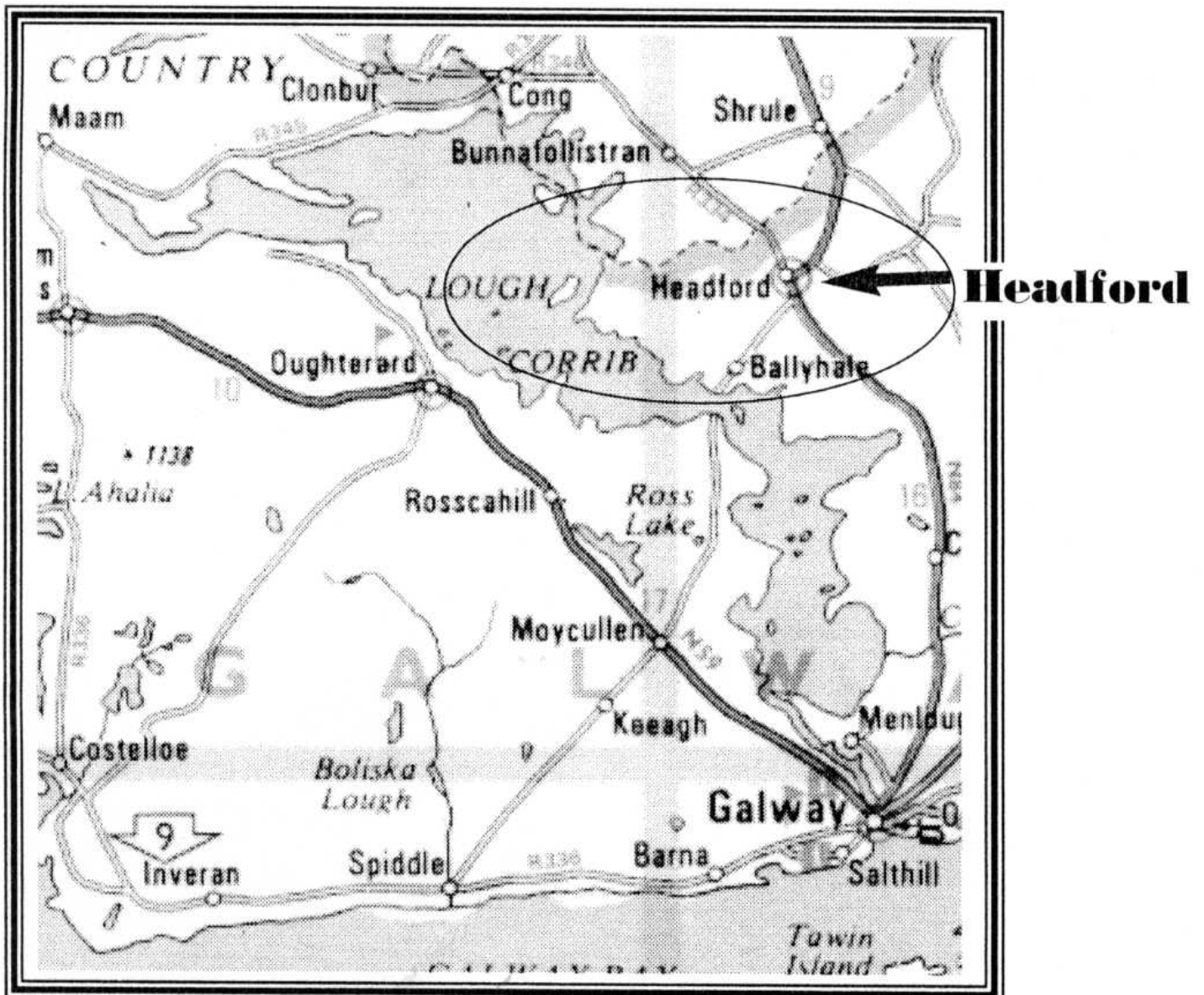


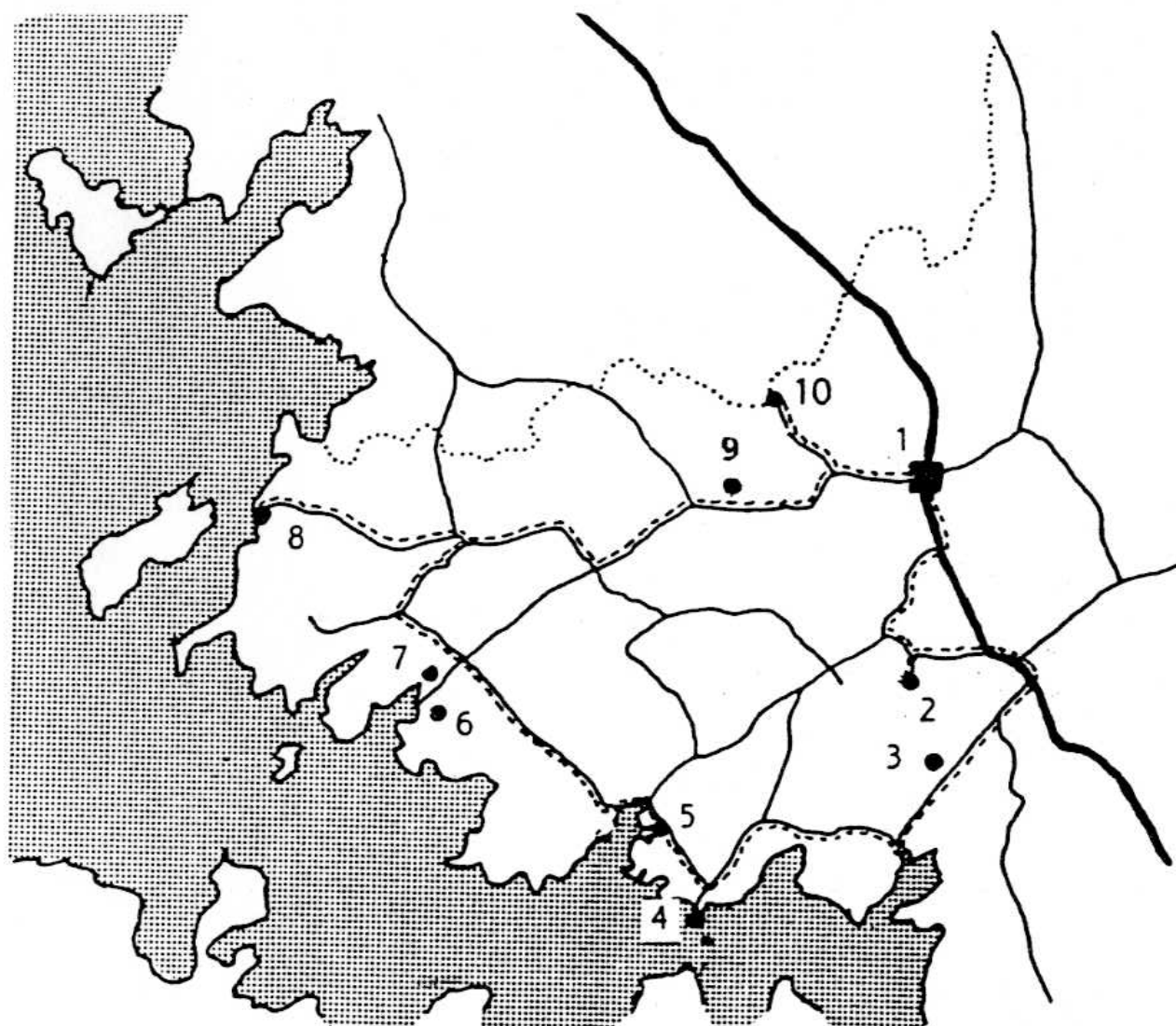
**FOR  
REFERENCE ONLY**

# HEADFORD

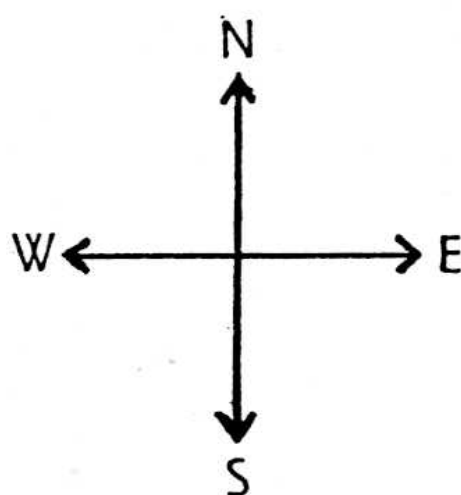


**A Place of Interest**

# Map of Locality



1. Headford
2. Cahergal
3. Cloughanover
4. Kilbeg Pier
5. Cairrigin Castle
6. Annakeen Castle
7. Bronze-Age Cairn
8. Greenfields
9. Killursa
10. Ross Abbey

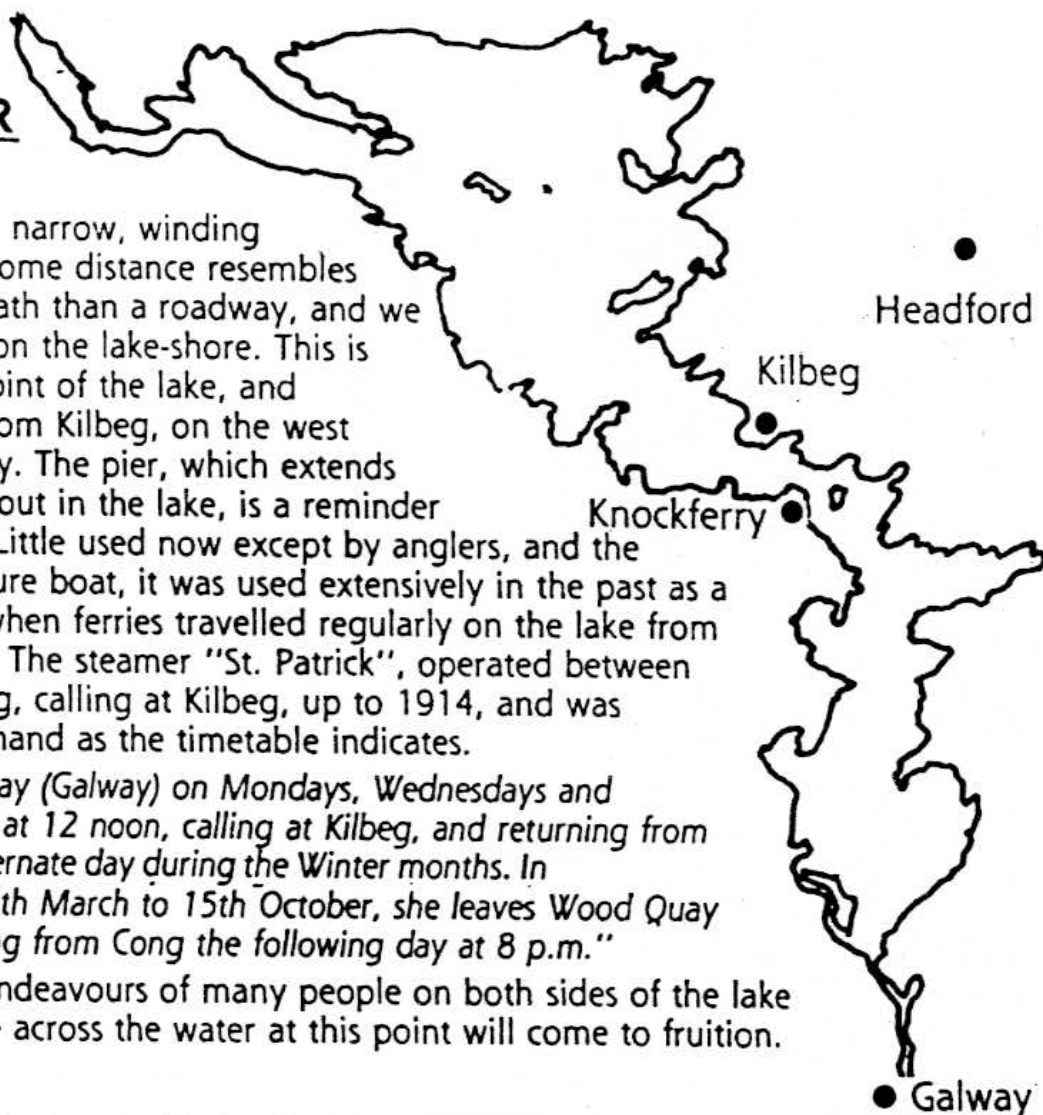


## KILBEG PIER

We continue the narrow, winding road which for some distance resembles more a grassy path than a roadway, and we come to Kilbeg on the lake-shore. This is the narrowest point of the lake, and directly across from Kilbeg, on the west side is Knockferry. The pier, which extends a short distance out in the lake, is a reminder of former days. Little used now except by anglers, and the occasional pleasure boat, it was used extensively in the past as a stopping point when ferries travelled regularly on the lake from Cong to Galway. The steamer "St. Patrick", operated between Galway and Cong, calling at Kilbeg, up to 1914, and was obviously in demand as the timetable indicates.

*"leaves Wood Quay (Galway) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, for Cong at 12 noon, calling at Kilbeg, and returning from Cong on each alternate day during the Winter months. In Summer, from 15th March to 15th October, she leaves Wood Quay at 3 p.m. returning from Cong the following day at 8 p.m."*

One hopes the endeavours of many people on both sides of the lake to build a bridge across the water at this point will come to fruition.



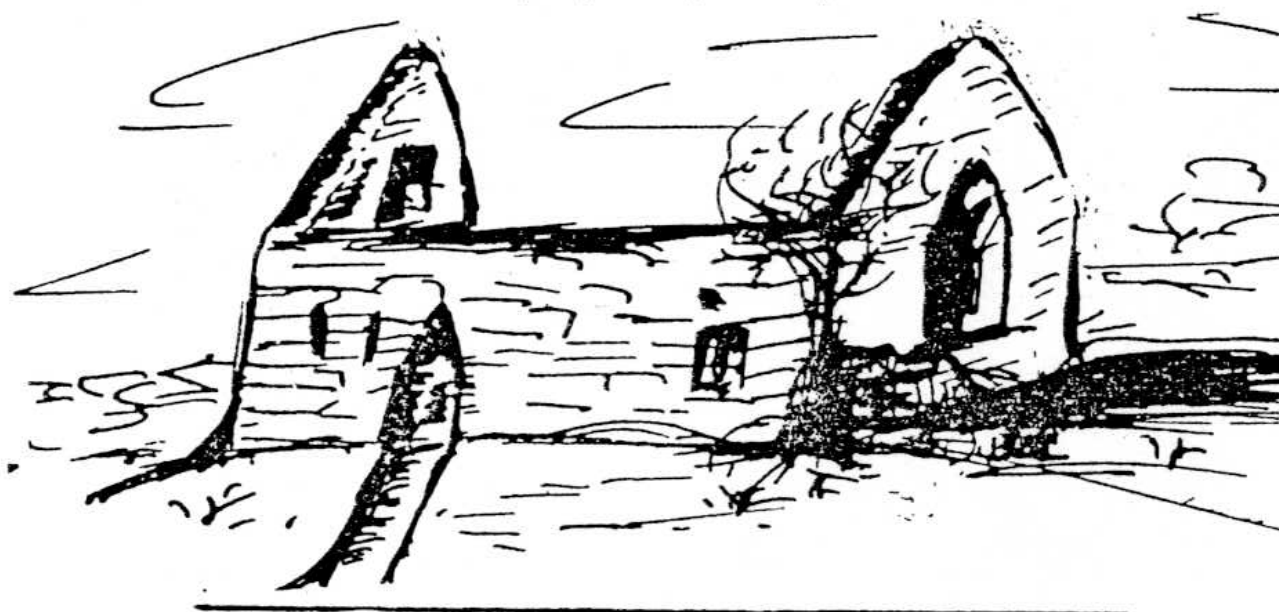
## CARRAIGIN CASTLE

Carraigin Castle is our next stop. It has been a landmark on the eastern shore of the Corrib for almost 7 centuries. For long a neglected ruin, the castle has been restored to its former glory, using the same materials and techniques as the original 13th century builders. Modern comforts have been incorporated without detracting from the charm and simple grandeur of this ancient dwelling, a rare beautiful example of the medieval "hall house."

Despite its massive castellated wall, Carraigin was never a mere fortress, but rather, an elegant home where a land owning family could have security in turbulent times. For 10 generations, the castle was occupied by descendants of its founder, Adam Gaynard III, the grandson of a Norman adventurer who took part in the colonisation of this locality in the early period of the Norman invasion. Sometime in the middle of the 17th century, a period of intense turbulence in Irish history, another military adventurer, George Staunton acquired "the castle and the lands of Cargin which his descendants continued to own until 1946." By then, the castle had long been abandoned, and the roof was stripped in the early 18th century. Much of the stonework was demolished to make lime for the construction of the nearby Georgian mansion. However, due to the efforts of the present owner, the castle has been restored to its original majesty and glory in 1970 — for that we are thankful.

## **KILLURSA**

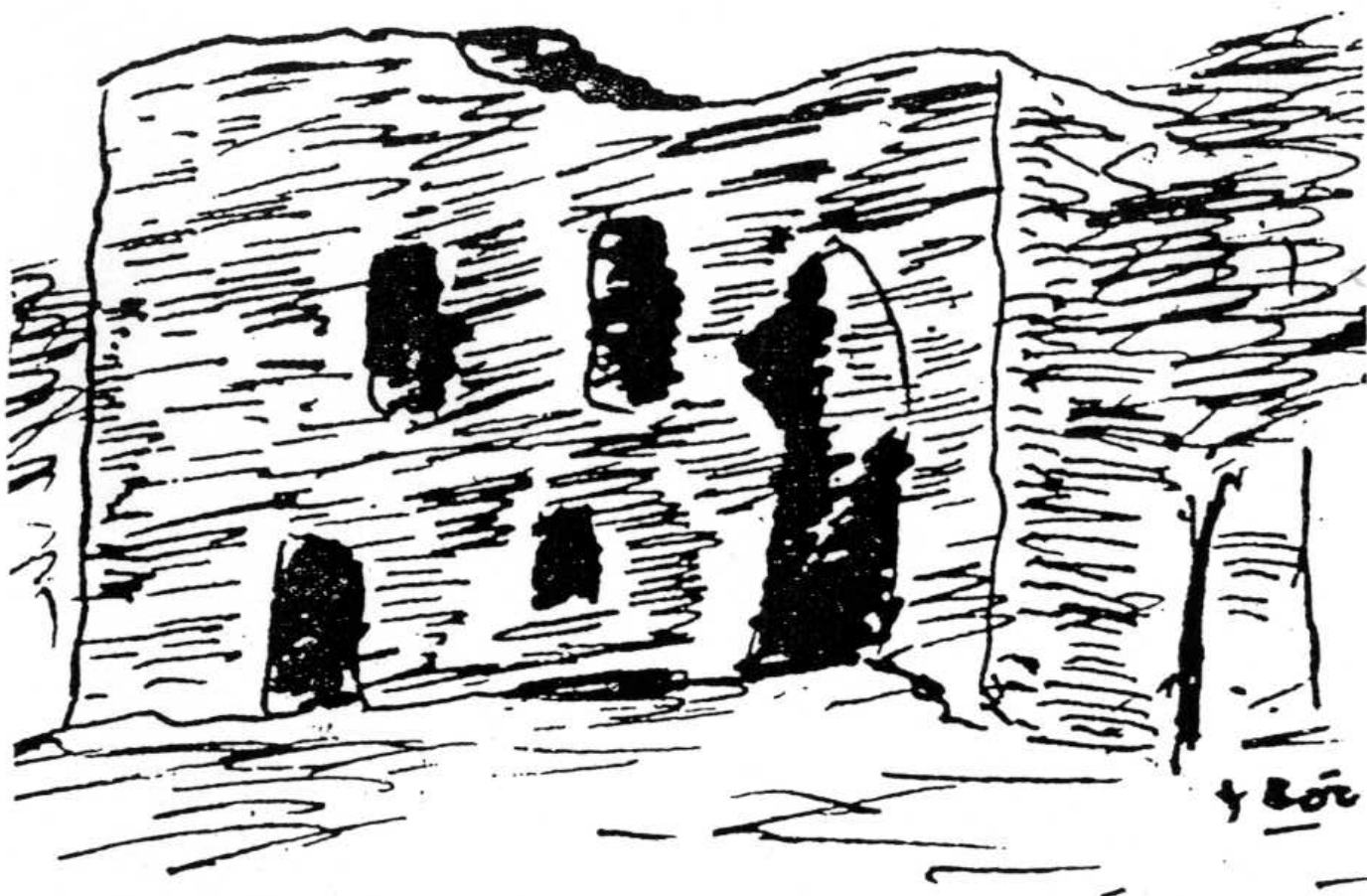
As we return to Headford, we see to our left the ruined church at Killursa, set in an extensive graveyard. The ruin measures 70 feet by 24 feet, and it has a Gothic pointed doorway, and a large mullioned Gothic window, which indicates that the present structure was erected after the Norman invasion, 1169. A wall was built across this church, probably cutting off a section for the officiating clergyman, who has his habitat there. Killursa means the church of St. Fursa whose statue one sees as one enters the graveyard. It was here St. Fursa had the famous visions of the unseen world which grave authors assert inspired Dante to write his "Comedia Divina." Among those visions, Fursa narrates how the holy Bishops Meldan, and Beacan appeared to him, and described the enormous evils of pride, especially spiritual and intellectual pride, and the devastating effect on the soul of disobedience, avarice and false testimony, and they told him that abstinence, and self-denial were unavailing, unless the soul was cleansed from malice and iniquity! This same Fursa is remembered in Peronne, a small town east of Paris. Here he preached in the 7th century and we can see a fine statue of him in the Catholic church in Peronne, and there is also an alleyway and a pharmacy called after him!



## **ROSS ABBEY**

And finally we come to the extensive and imposing ruins of Ross Abbey, regarded by many as the best preserved medieval ruin in Ireland. It was one of 3 friaries built by the Franciscans in the 15th century, Inishserkin off the extreme south west of Cork, Moyne, near Killala, Co. Mayo and Ross here, all within a few years, the date of Ross, being c. 1450. The building itself took many years and there were many later additions. With that date, experts in architecture, such as Champney and Leask are in total agreement. It should be pointed out however, there are some who feel the friary was built many years earlier. The friary as was intended had a quiet existence, and might continue to have it, but for the course of Irish history being changed by the English conquest of Ireland under Henry VIII and his daughter Elizabeth. In 1583-84, Ross was raided by English soldiers and the friars dispersed. The books and altar-plate were either pillaged or destroyed. However, the friars were re-established shortly afterwards by Clanricarde. In 1596, during the 9 years war, the friary was occupied by English soldiers. The community was back before 1601, when the Protestant Archbishop of Tuam was ordered to take over the place, and throw the friars into prison but he sent them a forewarning, so that when the soldiers arrived there was no one to 'take'.





Annakeen Castle

## **GREENFIELDS**

Further north on the lake-shore, is Greenfields, which can be reached by continuing along the narrow winding road as indicated on the map. Greenfields owes its fame to not only having a very pleasant location on the lake-shore, but also it is by far the most important fishing berth on the east shore of Lough Corrib. In early Summer, it is agog with activity as anglers gather from all over the world for the trout fishing, when the mayfly rises. Leading from Greenfields, stretching across the water is a long, narrow roadway. This road was built in the early 1960s, and links Inchiquin, one of the largest islands in the lake, to the mainland. Indeed, according to Wilde, it encompasses an area of 229 acres, and supported 14 families in 1909 (Galway Express, July, 1909). It has associations with St. Brendan, the Navigator, who it is said built a church there. However there is little trace of that building now!

The friary was granted to John King in 1606, with many other friaries and monasteries, but Clanricarde bought him out, and so the friars stayed on. This John King had a son Edward, who was drowned in the Irish Sea in 1637. John Milton mourned him in his poem *Lycidas*. The friary was again raided in 1610, but the community was definitely here in 1617, when a Fr. Donagh Mooney came on visitation. He tells us the office was said in choir, the Guardian preached to the good and edification of the faithful and confessions were heard regularly.

Cromwell landed in Ireland in 1649, and when his hellish campaign was over, there was scarcely a church left untouched. When the soldiers came here, they actually dug up the graves of the dead looking for loot, as they had done elsewhere. In 1698, the Act of Banishment was passed which ordered all Catholic bishops and regular clergy out of the country, unless registered. Ross was raided in that year, doubtless to see if the friars had obeyed the Act!

The friars are mentioned again as being in Ross in 1711, or before it. Until the death of Queen Ann in 1714, religious persecution was severe, afterwards it began to ease, but in 1715 the Stuart, James III, claimant to the throne of England, landed in Scotland and there was a rising there in his favour. This resulted in an enforcement of laws in Ireland, and Ross was raided again.



In 1731 there was an enquiry into the state of "popery" in Ireland, and a report was issued. In this report it read —

"There is a friary belonging to the Abbey of Ross in the parish of Headford. Their number is reputed to be eight who lately removed to the adjoining parish of Shrewel." The following year, Stratford Eyre (one of a family, prominent in Galway City place names) wrote that the friars "had removed to Kilroe about one mile from Ross. Ross was the only abbey in the county in any sort of repair. It is in the estate of St. George."

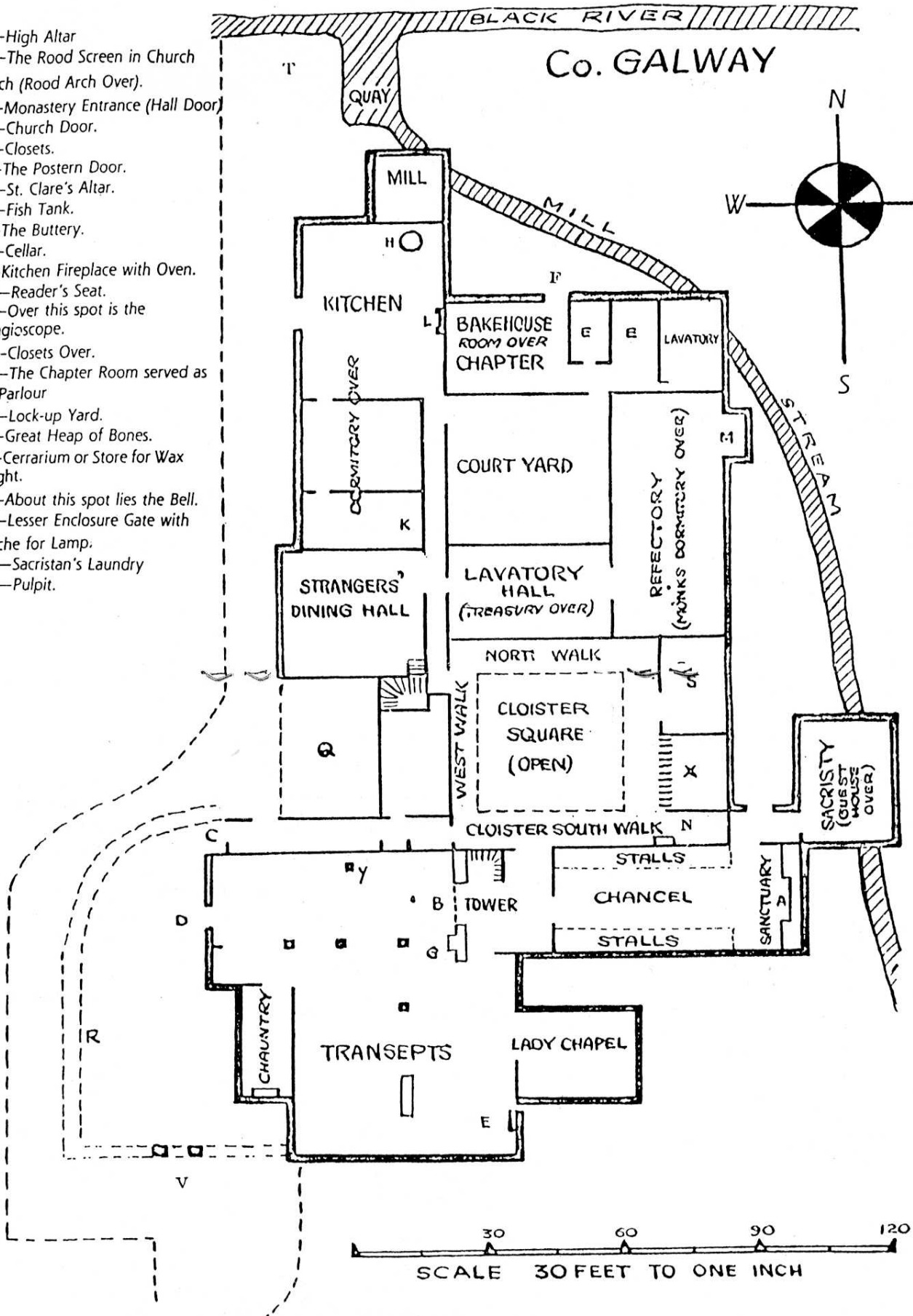
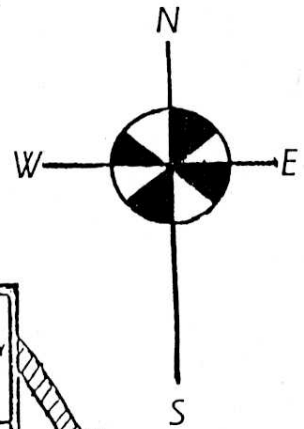
So since the Franciscans were first disturbed here in 1583-84, till they finally left, they had spent only short periods away from their home.

Ross was remote, well off the beaten track, a fact that saved it quite a bit. Yet, it was no backwater, isolated from the rest of the world. The men who lived here were much travelled and learned men, e.g. Fr. Brian Mac Giolla Coinnigh, alias Kilkenny, alias Bernard Conny. He was born in Leitrim, studied in Spain and Louvain, where he was ordained in 1622. He was a chaplain to Irish Troops in Spanish service in the Low Countries, and afterwards spent some time in Rome before returning to Ireland in 1627. He spent a period as Guardian of the Abbey in Galway, and later as Guardian in Louvain, Belgium, before returning to Ross as Guardian in 1641-44. On Sunday, February 13th, 1642, he was in Shrile where he saved Dr. Maxwell, Protestant Archbishop of Killala, his

CO. MAYO

Co. GALWAY

- a—High Altar
- b—The Rood Screen in Church Arch (Rood Arch Over).
- c—Monastery Entrance (Hall Door)
- d—Church Door.
- e—Closets.
- f—The Postern Door.
- g—St. Clare's Altar.
- h—Fish Tank.
- i—The Buttery.
- k—Cellar.
- l—Kitchen Fireplace with Oven.
- m—Reader's Seat.
- n—Over this spot is the Hagioscope.
- o—Closets Over.
- p—The Chapter Room served as a Parlour
- q—Lock-up Yard.
- r—Great Heap of Bones.
- s—Cerrarium or Store for Wax Light.
- t—About this spot lies the Bell.
- v—Lesser Enclosure Gate with Niche for Lamp.
- x—Sacristan's Laundry
- y—Pulpit.



30 60 90 120  
SCALE 30 FEET TO ONE INCH

Ground Plan of the  
Friary of Ross

family and companions from being butchered. In 1656 we find him writing in Spanish to the Order in Madrid for help as the country was in such a desperate state after Cromwell. Some time later, he was taken prisoner and lodged in Inisboffin where he apparently died.

In 1669, Bernard Higin was appointed Guardian of Ross, 20 years previous he was teaching theology in Prague. Andreas Mac an Bheatha (McVeigh) was Guardian here in 1686, in 1663 he was teaching in Rome, having been summoned there from Avignon, in France. At some date prior to that, he was on loan as a teacher to the Franciscans in Bosnia in modern Yugoslavia.

Ross stands in mute testimony to a past both glorious and tragic, but we should never lose sight of the real men who once lived within those now deserted and gaunt walls.

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## **MOYNE**

Another site worth a visit, just outside the boundary of Headford parish is the graveyard at Moyne, 2 miles north of the town on the road to Cong. In the past number of years excavations here have uncovered evidence that this quiet spot was once a hive of activity.

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## **FISHING**

Lough Corrib, the largest lake in the state covers 44,000 acres. It extends from Galway City to Maam in Connemara, a distance of 35 miles approximately.

The vast expanse of water remains unrivalled in Europe for its variety of scenery and amenities.

Fishing is a sport greatly enjoyed by anglers — both native and foreign.

Salmon and trout are the species which attract the anglers. The trout season is open from February 15th to September 30th. Salmon from February 1st to September 30th. Access to the lake can be gained from the many piers on the shoreline — Kilbeg and Greenfields are the most prominent of these.

The visitor will have no difficulty in acquiring full information from the many brochures published by the local Tourist Board.

Boats and boatmen are available locally. One needs only to enquire from local hotels and guesthouses.



## CHURCH SERVICES

Enquire at Presbytery (093) 35448

St. Mary's Church of Ireland, Cong.

## DOCTORS

There are five doctors in the area:

Drs. Thomas and Martina Rea (093) 35523

Drs. Alan and Val Costello (093) 35548

Dr. Kerrigan, Culleen, Headford

## *Useful Numbers*

Anglers Rest Hotel ..... (093) 35528

Lisdonagh House ..... (093) 31163

Kiltra House ..... (093) 35334

The White Horse ..... (093) 35937

Green Acres ..... (093) 35238

Mrs. Hannon ..... (093) 35458

Hazel House ..... (091) 791204

The Ford Crossing ..... (093) 35139

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- Mini Golf can be played on our Par three golf course at Balrickard
- The town also has soccer, rugby and G.A.A. pitches and a tennis court.
- Lough Corrib is approximately 4 miles away and boats can be hired at Greenfields and at Luimnagh.

## **CRUISING & SAILING**

To spend a day sailing or cruising Lough Corrib can be an unforgettable experience. Its unspoiled shoreline, unpolluted waters and numerous islands combine to give one a sense of peace, well-being and wonder, that inevitably draws the visitor back time and time again.

You may book a cruise at the Bord Failte offices in Galway on the 'Corrib Princess'. She carries 72 passengers and has a full bar service.

There are three one and half hour cruises per day which leave Galway at 1 p.m., 3 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. Also at 11 a.m. during peak season subject to demand.

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## **PICNICS**

The many quiet secluded spots along the shoreline are ideal for those who wish to enjoy a picnic in the perfect setting, or visit the bird sanctuary at Rostaff. What better mode of transport than a bicycle to see the surrounding countryside and meet the local people, renowned for their friendliness, warmth and hospitality.

Alternatively, you may go horse riding, simply enquire locally.

For those interested in more active sports, there is tennis, badminton, volleyball, basketball and indoor soccer.

You may go shooting in Winter — in Season.

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