

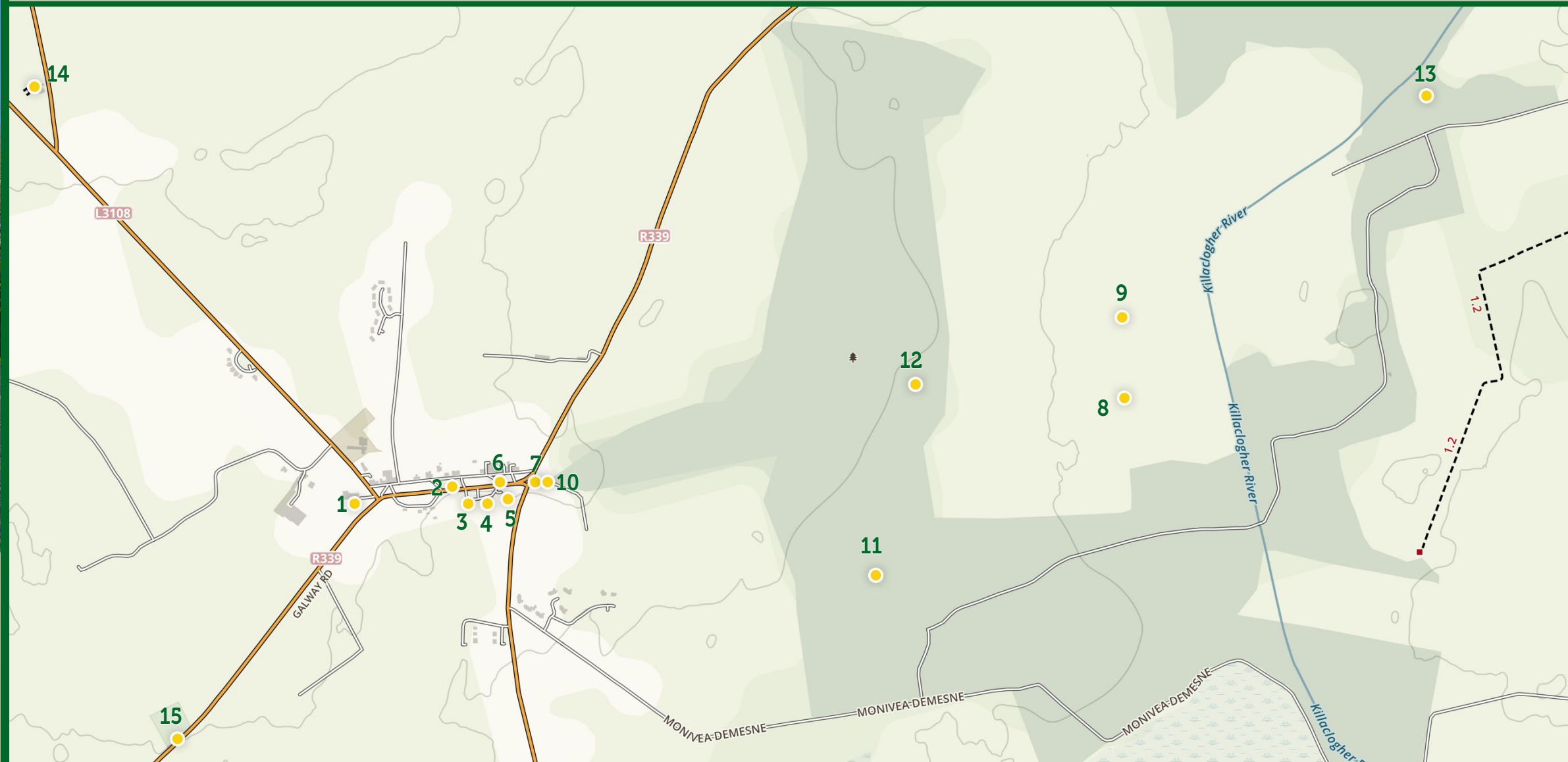
MONIVEA

HERITAGE TRAIL



MONIVEA *Muine Mheá*

Monivea is an attractive village in the heart of East Galway, located c. 30km north-east of Galway City. Monivea village was originally established by the Ffrenches as the village of Newtown and was later named Monivea. The distinctive layout of the village is largely due to the village greens, which were formerly bleach greens used in the local flax industry in the mid-eighteenth century and instigated by the landlord at the time, Robert Ffrench. Trees were planted on the greens in more recent times. Interestingly, but not surprising, the very first building encountered on entering the village, when approaching from the house, was the Church of Ireland church and its associated graveyard, on the left. The rectory was next, and then the former Constabulary Barracks. What survives of the commercial buildings such as shops and public houses are all to the right of the main road through the village. Parking is available in village



1. Charter School 53.3740, -8.7072



The Charter School was built in 1755. Its purpose was to educate children in practical subjects making them into productive workers. It was a three-storey house prior to being lowered for commercial use in the 20th century (now McGivern's store). The ground floor contained a spacious school-room, dining hall, store, large kitchen and parlour. The next floor was occupied by a committee-room, the Masters chambers, a store room and two clean, airy dormitories with 32 beds. The attic had one room which extended the whole length of the front, contained 18 beds but from its extreme size was partitioned due to the cold winters.

2. Bleach Green 53.3743, -8.7036



The centre of Monivea was laid out as a series of flax drying greens in c.1780. The flax drying greens, or bleach greens as they are also referred to, are a significant aspect of the village and are the only physical remains of the once thriving linen industry that took place in Monivea in the past. Robert Ffrench received a grant of £100 from The Linen Board towards the construction of the bleach mill, the purchase of flax seed, looms and spinning wheels and other machinery necessary in setting up the industry.

3. Former RIC Barracks 53.3739, -8.7030



This two-storey building was originally a Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) barracks. It is now a private house. It is uncertain when exactly the RIC first came to Monivea, but a police barracks is depicted here on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1840. At that time, the force was known simply as the Irish Constabulary. During the War of Independence, the RIC in Monivea came under pressure from the local IRA and following a Truce in 1921 the RIC disbanded and a new police force named 'The Civic Guard' was formed. They were subsequently renamed Garda Síochana na hÉireann on 8th August 1923.



Bengarra
Shraugh



Attymon

Athenry

Killimordaly

4. Former Rectory now the Garda Barracks 53.3739, -8.7023



Monivea Garda Barracks is located in an attractive stone building situated beside the ruins of the Church of Ireland. This building was originally the rector's house and was built around 1830 by the Ffrench family for the resident rector. It consists of a three-bay, two storey house with hipped single storey extensions to the east and west gables. The classical designed doorway of the former rectory has elaborate floral motifs to its limestone casement. The original radial-spoked wooden fanlight is of architectural interest. A lightly incised and rather difficult to read inscription near the top left of the stone door frame is said to be that of the stonemason employed in the work - he is thought to be of French origin. A date of 1830, is well cut and is clearly visible.

5. Church of Ireland and Graveyard 53.3740, -8.7015



Old postcard depicting Monivea Church of Ireland

Church of Ireland as it stands today



Ffrench family vault in the Church of Ireland graveyard

Memorial in the Church of Ireland graveyard

The bell tower of Monivea ruined Church of Ireland still stands as an iconic feature in the village today. It was set within its own churchyard which still exhibits many interesting burial monuments. The nave roof collapsed in 1955 and the southeast corner of the bell tower was damaged by a lightning strike in 1979. The damage to the corner of the tower has recently been consolidated, though the fourth pinnacle has not been replaced. It is currently cordoned off for reasons of public safety. Some of the stained glass windows were removed and were installed in Dugort Church on Achill Island, Co. Mayo, while the bell has found a new home in Creggah Church Belfast.

6. Old Weighing Shed 53.3744, -8.7018



from as far away as Oranmore to weigh seaweed. The structure was renovated by FAS CE Scheme workers in 1999.

Some features in the village are a reminder of the past activities of daily life of the villagers e.g. the pump, bog road, weighing shed, old village paths and handball alley. For example, the weighing shed which was originally built in the 1890's by local wood and grain merchant, Patrick C. Kelly. People travelled

7. Entrance Gates to Monivea Castle and Demesne 53.3744, -8.7005



This entrance gate provides access to Monivea Castle and Monivea Wood. It is one of a number of entrances to the estate. Other gates no longer in use can be identified by examining the various editions of the OS maps. This entrance is directly across the Athenry to Mountbellew road from the village providing a clear demarcation between the Ffrenches' private estate and the village. A small gate lodge was originally located inside the entrance gate on the right on entry to the demesne.

8. Monivea House and Monivea Castle 53.3763, -8.6782



Monivea House Front view

Monivea House Rear View Showing O' Kelly Castle Tower House

Monivea House was an eighteenth century mansion with dormers and a medieval tower house at its core. It was built onto an O'Kelly tower house which was acquired by the Ffrenches in the early 17th century. The house was subsequently demolished with only the original tower house and some of the farm buildings remaining today.(not accessible).

9. Monivea Lake 53.3781, -8.6783



As part of their grand landscaping undertakings, the Ffrenches created an artificial lake immediately to the north of the castle. Drainage from the surrounding land drained into the lake. All that remains of the lake today is a small wetland. On occasions when severe flash flooding occurs, the lake can be seen to re-emerge as a shadow of its former self. The

image displays a 1st edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey Map Circa 1894, showing location of the man made lake and Monivea Castle.

10. Monivea Woods 53.3744, -8.7000



Monivea Wood is a wonderful natural amenity on the eastern edge of the village for residents and visitors. There are two marked trails in the woodland, the Historical Trail and the Mass Path Trail and parking facilities. There are several other forest roads that can also be walked and enjoyed. Members of the Ffrench family planted trees and woodland on the estate and to help with drainage in land improvement works. Native trees and shrubs in Monivea Wood include Oak, Ash, Holly, Hazel, Birch and Willow. The uncommon species, Bird Cherry is also present.

11. The Ffrench Mausoleum 53.3723, -8.6876



The Ffrench Mausoleum forms an interesting architectural feature within Monivea Wood. This elaborate structure was built to house the mortal remains of Robert Ffrench who died in Italy in 1896. The mausoleum comprises a private chapel on entry and the burial vault in the basement. The construction of the mausoleum was overseen by Robert's daughter Kathleen whose remains are also in the burial vault. It took four years to construct at a cost of £10,000 which equates to nearly two million in today's economy. The stained glass windows in the chapel were commissioned from Mayer of Munich. The side windows are single lights and bears the Arms of different members of the Tribes of Galway. A key for the mausoleum is available for visitors. Ask in any of the local businesses for details.

12. Ice House 53.3766, -8.6861



An Icehouse located within Monivea Wood is another of the features associated with the designed landscape of Monivea House. It was recently conserved and is preserved as an important built heritage feature for visitors to see. Icehouses were used by the gentry to store ice and other perishable foodstuffs. They were also a measure of a family's status, as to acquire a building such as this suggests certain sophistication. It consists of an egg shaped structure internally, with an earth covering on the roof to prevent temperature rise. Ice may have been gathered from the nearby artificial lake, or bought in, and deposited in the building. A drain hole in the bottom allowed any melted ice and perhaps contaminated water to percolate away. The Ice House can be seen on the way-marked Historical Trail that runs through Monivea Wood.

13. Windmill in Monivea Woods 53.3831, -8.6668



This interesting feature comprises of the well-preserved drum of a windmill. It is located on top of a hillock close to the Killaclogher River and within Monivea Wood (just off one of the forest trails). It comprises of a three-storey structure with opposing doors. A rectangular window is located at first-floor level. Sockets in the internal wall show the position where the wooden stairs was. Windmills have been in use in Ireland since the medieval period but the majority encountered in the countryside today are of eighteenth and nineteenth-century date. The purpose of opposing doors is to allow the miller to exit the building safely. The roof caps of many mills were designed to rotate automatically to take advantage of the wind. Before exiting the building, the miller would always check through a slit above the door to see if the sails had shifted and were rotating outside of the door. If they were, the miller used the alternative exit. Early windmills referred to as post mills, were as the name implies, supported on a stout oak post set into the ground. In these mills, the mill housing rotated around the central post. The later stone drum mills were stationary and it was the roof to which the sails were attached that rotate.

14. Church of the Sacred Heart, Ryehill 53.3833, -8.7194



This cruciform church was built in 1834 and was one of the first churches to be blessed by Archbishop McHale (www.abbeyknockmoy.ie). It is built on a site donated for the purpose by the Reddington Roches. It was badly damaged by lightning in 1881 and major repair work was carried out by Fr John Stephens. Further re-furbishing took place in 1956/1957 and an additional room was added in 2007 as a room for the 'Adoration of the Sacred Heart', a crying room and general purpose space. It was blessed on 19th June 2009. On the east gable is a bell tower, the Bell of which has been replaced with electronic speakers. The exterior walls are pebble dashed and painted. All windows have rendered and painted external surrounds. The grounds are enclosed by a rubble stone wall which is pointed along the front entrance. There is a large parking area to the north and north-west with overflow parking provided on the roadside to the east. A limestone plaque inserted into the roadside wall is inscribed: 'Sacred Heart Church Ryehill Built in 1834', while on the south side of the church is a modern stone plinth with a stone plaque inscribed '1834'

15. Poolboy Graveyard - Burial Ground 53.3686, -8.7140



This graveyard is located on the roadside about 800m from the village in the townland of Poolboy (Pollboy) or Knocktober. It is noted on the first edition OS map as Burial Ground and presents as a large irregular area demarcated by a dotted line. It is now rectangular in plan and is enclosed by a stone wall that overlies and earthen bank. While its early history is unknown the fact that it has an associated well may suggest that it could be a relatively early site. The graveyard straddles the crest of a natural mound providing the topographical element from which the placename Knocktober or 'hill of the well' evolved. This graveyard is known locally as An Cruachan Dubh.

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