



# The Treanors: our family history

**Dave Treanor**

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For the latest information on the Treanors and information on other branches of the family see [www.treanor.co.uk/ancestry](http://www.treanor.co.uk/ancestry).

The cover photograph is of the door to Clonfert Cathedral in East Galway, where many members of the Seymour family worshipped.

## Acknowledgements

My starting point for this research was a short history of the Treanor family written by Dorothy Hearne, who died in 2002. My cousin Desmond Treanor had collected this and other material on our family's origins, much of which he had passed to his son Tim, and I am grateful to both of them for copying it to me. His wife Dorothy and brother Terence were also helpful.

Marny Howe provided information on the descendants of John Treanor, and Helene Dukes told me about the family of his first wife Charlotte Evatt. Michael Williams helped me trace Violet Treanor's descendants and the Douglas branch of the family. Peter Sparks helped with Florence Treanor and the Watson family. Zoe Fleming told me about Louie Treanor.

Veronica Söll sent invaluable research by her mother, Margaret Thompson who was a descendant of William Robinson Treanor.

Without Andrew Schofield I would have none of the information on Margery Treanor

Judie Morris and her mother have researched the Seymours, with a wealth of additional material from David Wilkins and Graham Seymour.

Jan Woods taught me a great deal about how to research my ancestry, and provided the vast majority of what I know of my grandmother's Kerans ancestry.

A number of people we met on our travels were very helpful. Jarlath Canney showed us around Tuam Cathedral and searched the Tuam parish records. Averil Staunton gave information on the family in Ballinrobe. Dymphna and Michael Dunne welcomed us to the ancestral Kerans home in Ahascragh.

I have had the pleasure of meeting some of my father's aunts and cousins who have been

very helpful with photographs and anecdotes.

My thanks to Hilary Temple and her son Nick who provided first hand accounts of the children of Archdeacon James Treanor. Also Derek Treanor and his wife Sue, for their help on Seymour Treanor, and similarly Sheila and her sons Brendan and John. Brendan accompanied me on a fascinating visit to East Galway to see where the Seymours came from. Sheila provided many useful photographs, and her autobiography with stories of her upbringing on a Darjeeling tea estate, and made me very welcome in Galway.

Within my immediate family, my sister Jane provided family photographs and her memories. My daughter Tiffy advised on the design and layout of this book, and my wife Pam has helped, encouraged and supported me throughout the project, accompanying me on trips to Ireland and to meet distant cousins, searching through archives, and around distant cemeteries looking for ancestral graves. Pam sub-edited the book making it more readable and spotting inconsistencies that had to be resolved.

I am very conscious that there will still be inaccuracies, despite my best efforts, and would appreciate your help in correcting them. I hope I have not been too indiscreet in the stories told – the most interesting information often provokes strong feelings.

There are still some substantial gaps – important members of the family of whom we know nothing.

I will endeavour to keep updating the information via our website at [www.treanor.co.uk/ancestry](http://www.treanor.co.uk/ancestry). At some point I hope to produce a further edition of this book.

DT

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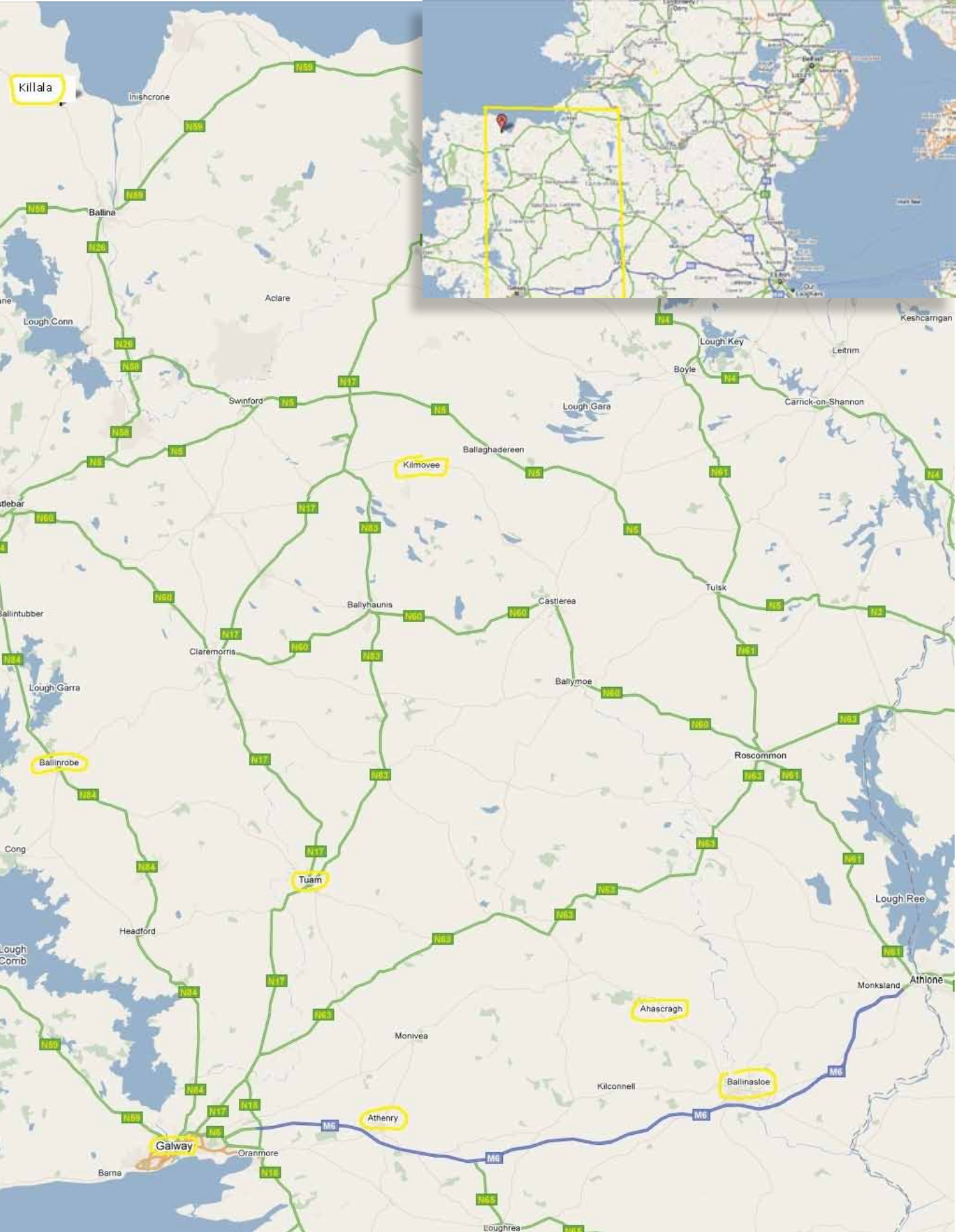
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## PART 1

# Our Origins

### Where did we come from?

Our Treanors were part of the Protestant ascendancy that ran Ireland in the 300 years before the formation of the republic. Family tradition says that our ancestors came down to Connaught from Monaghan in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and settled around Killala in Co Mayo, before spreading though Galway and across the country. The name Treanor can be traced back into ancient Irish history, long before the Reformation separated the Protestant and Catholic communities.

## CHAPTER 1

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# Beginnings

### Foreword

It is strange to think that when I began this tome back in 2008 I knew almost nothing about my ancestors. I could name my uncles and aunts and cousins, most of whom arrived for the annual family gathering at Hanworth Rectory on Boxing Day during my childhood. I struggled with my grandmothers' first names: I knew them as Grannie and Nanna.

This is an account of how we discovered them, and an attempt to learn about their lives. A family tree on its own is frankly rather boring. But I find the story of where we came from quite fascinating, and I hope that this will bring it to life for members of

our family. Perhaps this is something that appeals to people more as they get older. How much easier it would have been to ask my grandparents while they were still alive!

For as long as I can remember I had heard there was a family bible somewhere, with details of the family going back a few generations. The word was that the men were mostly vicars, and those that were not vicars were doctors. So I began by asking my cousin Des if he knew where it was. It turns out that he had it in his attic, and it was from Nancy's in-laws: the McCaul Watsons, and nothing to do with the Treanors.

Then in June 2008, Tim sent me the family trees that his father Des had collected. The Kerans tree was massive, and very hard to read (my father's mother was a Kerans). The Treanor trees were scrappy and did not match up very well. And there was also a one page family history which turns out to have been written by a distant cousin: Dorothy Hearne. The first thing I did was to decipher them all as best I could, and put them onto the genes reunited website. That took a good 10 to 15 hours. But it was dramatically effective.

I was soon in contact with Marny Howe in Western Australia who was researching the Treanors in Co Mayo. She sent me three more

The coast of Co Mayo just West of Killala



trees, and some very useful documentation she had gathered. Our common ancestor is my great great great great (i.e. great x4) grandfather, born in 1749, more than a quarter of a millennium ago! Marny also taught me a few tricks for putting the information together.

Next I was contacted by Jan Wood, who knew a lot about the Kerans: my paternal grandmother's family. She was delighted by the indecipherable Kerans tree from Des which added hugely to the information she already had, and mostly complemented it. Jan is a professional archivist, and was able to read it all. She sent her story of the Kerans family, which was quite inspiring. I was now hooked.

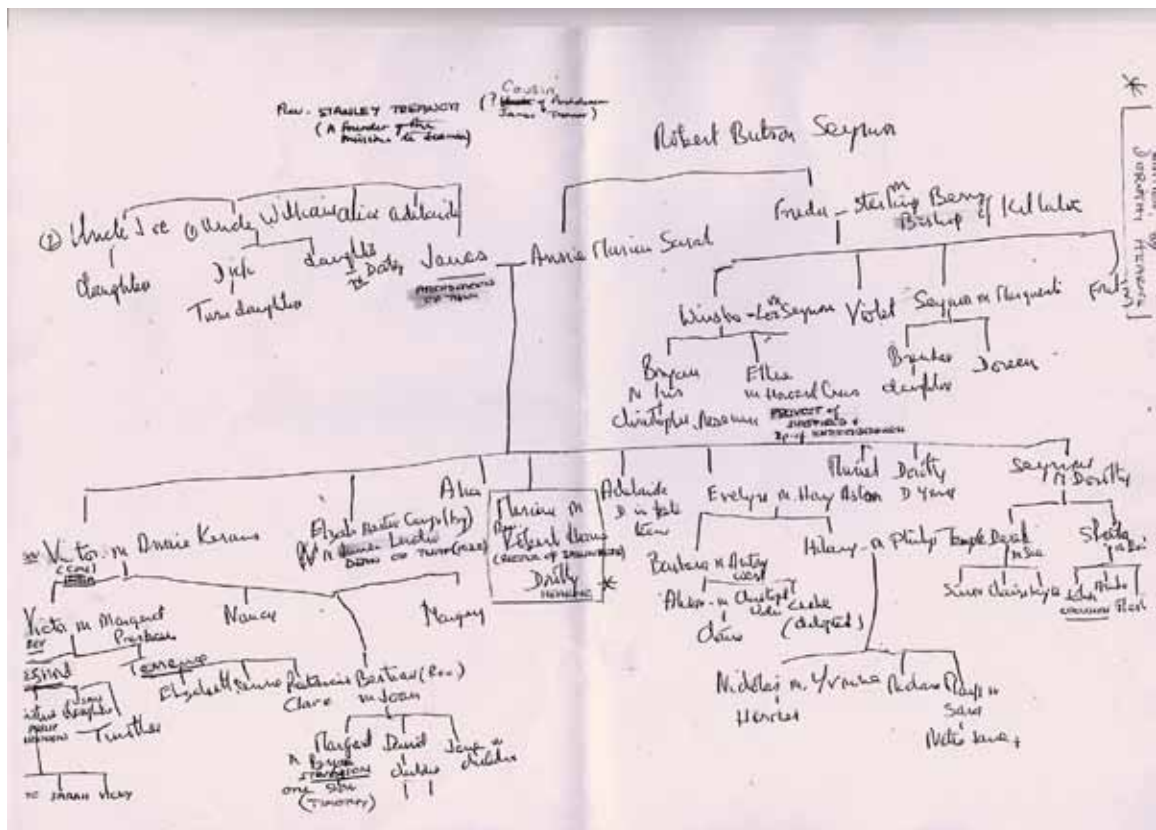
Several others contacted me via the genes reunited website. Soon I had some remarkably well researched information from Veronica on the Nash family (my mother's father), and had learned enough to research the Wagstaffs (my mother's mother's family) pretty much from scratch. The more I put onto the genes reunited site, the faster the information

seemed to pour in. This also took me up quite a number of blind alleys.

I soon discovered that some people seem to “collect” as many relatives as possible, without necessarily taking much care to cross-check their information. I hope a little basic maths will show the need to be a bit selective. We each have two parents, four grandparents, eight great grandparents, and by the time you reach great great great great grandparents, you have 64 ancestors. And that is without exploring any of their siblings. If you try to track the descendants of their siblings as well the numbers soon get astronomical: the 64 ancestors soon breed tens of thousands of distant cousins.

So what do you do? I decided to concentrate on ancestors and their siblings. Initially I was very selective in tracing their siblings' descendants. The four main names in my tree are Treanor, Kerans, Nash, and Wagstaff. So I decided to begin by gathering descendants with those names, plus the

## Dorothy Hearne's tree







on microfilm.

We carefully wrote down every relevant entry, including ones that just might be relevant, word for word, including exact spellings, even where we thought they were wrong. In the early stages of our research I was so excited by each new find that I sometimes forgot to record our sources. Then when conflicting information was discovered subsequently, it was hard to go back and check where our original ideas had come from.

I still do not have all the information I would like, but may well have all the information that is likely to be available on the Treanors from Killala. It is then a matter of interpreting it carefully, and ensuring that



where I make a bold guess I give good reasons, so that if more information does come to light, I can weigh it up against what I already know.

We also examined the graveyards, and carefully recorded word for word what was written on any relevant gravestones, as well as photographing them. And in the process we had some wonderful experiences. We happened to be in Killala at the time of the Humbert talks. Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, head of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, made a speech giving his views on why the Irish had rejected the Lisbon Treaty. So there we were in an historic Protestant cathedral church where my ancestors worshipped, sitting in a beautiful



box pew, at a talk by a prince of the Catholic Church, introduced by a female dean.

He is a fine speaker, and most of what he said was excellent – he talked about the damage done by sectarian violence, and the dangers that could arise from the compromises necessary to bring about a peaceful settlement in Northern Ireland.

He suggested that religion was not just a personal matter: it is social and political. He talked of the huge benefit the European Union had brought to Ireland. But he then set out to show that the Irish rejection of the Lisbon Treaty was due to its failure to incorporate the “*Christian memory*” into its constitution. He was explicit in defining these Christian traditions in papal terms, despite being in a Protestant church: so for

**Sitting in box pews inside St Patrick's cathedral in Killala waiting for the talk by Cormac Murphy O'Connor**

**A fishing boat in Killala harbour**

**St Patrick's Cathedral in Killala**



example, life was sacred from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death.

Killala is a beautiful town, and we easily got deep into conversation with people there, who told us there were still Treanors living in Crossmolina, although nobody could remember them in Killala.

We drove through narrow lanes winding round the farms, and saw the peat cuttings on the moorland overlooking the bay, and the little harbour still full of fishing boats. We gained the personal touch that no amount of searching the internet can ever provide.

Corner of  
Preacher Street in  
Killala



Since then I have visited the addresses where ancestors lived in England, and local libraries and churchyards, taking photographs, and photocopies of key documents. With so many missionaries in the family, the database of incoming ship passengers to the UK has proved very useful. The Lambeth Palace library is also a good source. And the British Library has birth, deaths and marriages in India.

Marny commented on the coincidence that one of William Robinson Treanor's descendants had become part of the British Indian Civil service, just like most of her ancestors. Des was excited to find that so many of the Kerans family had connections

with India, just like his own immediate family.

I do not think this is such a coincidence. When the Irish Free State was formed in the 1920s a lot of Anglo Irish felt uncomfortable in the new country. The Church of Ireland was closely associated with the army, and operated "*within the pale*" of their protection. So it was not unnatural for them to move abroad. The empire was full of opportunities. There are parallels between the British role in the Empire, and its role in Ireland, so they did not feel uncomfortable swapping the Church Missionary Society for the Church of Ireland, or joining the military or civil administration.

Much of our family has origins in Ireland going back for hundreds of years, perhaps even predating the Reformation. In that way it is very different from the Empire, where the British presence was much more recent. The Scots and Irish played a very prominent role in developing the British Empire, in all four corners of the globe. Our ancestors were a part of that.

In the last year I have gathered a great deal of information on the siblings of some of my direct ancestors, and met quite a few of the descendants of my grandfather's brother and sisters. My grandfather's mother was a Seymour, and they have proved an interesting family to research. In the process I have gained a much clearer idea of what life was like in a Protestant family in Ireland in the nineteenth century.

Marriages recur between the same prominent Protestant families generation after generation. The pool of suitable marriage partners must have seemed quite narrow in Co Galway and neighbouring areas. So we find a great many cousin marriages. The Protestant community may have had stronger links to England, Scotland and Wales than

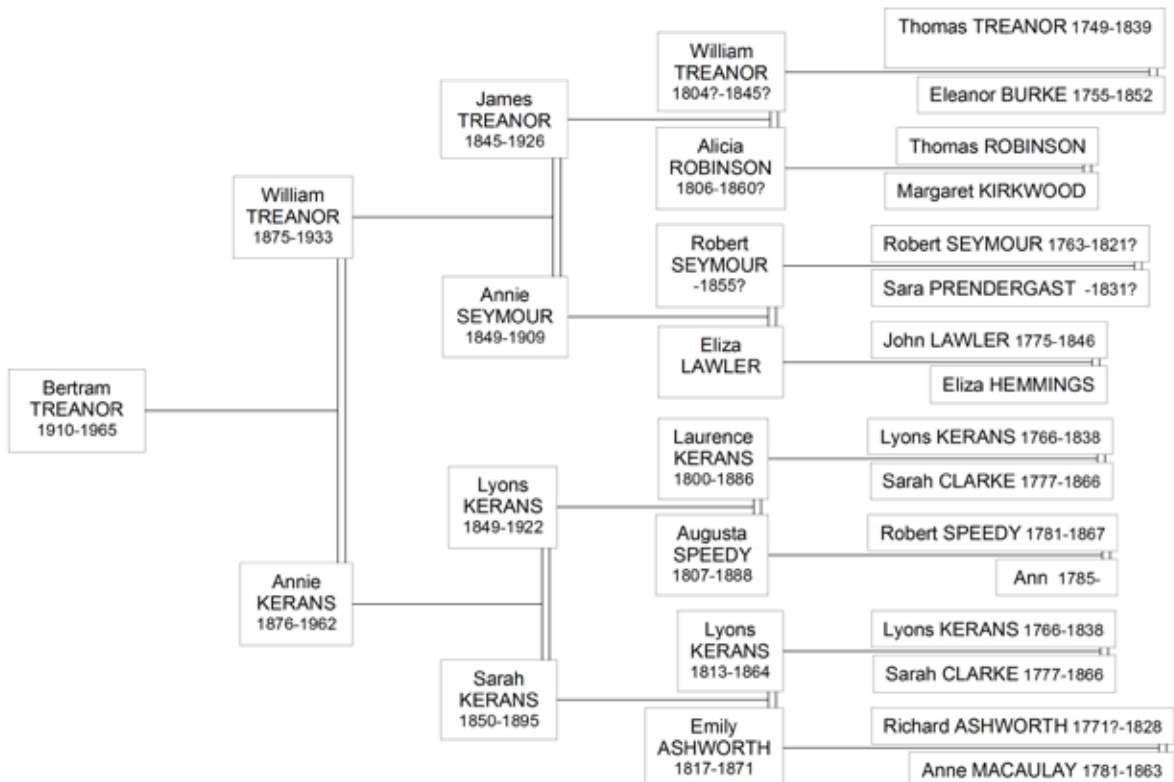
with their Catholic brethren in Ireland.

But it is naïve to think that all Protestants are incomers to Ireland. Some of them, including I believe the Treanors, can trace their origins way back into Irish history. Others, such as the Seymours, Berrys, Cairns (Kerans), and Drurys, were granted landholdings in Ireland as part of a strengthening of the British hold on Ireland at various times over the last 600 years. They held prominent positions in Irish society generation after generation, right down to the separation of the Irish Free State. Everyone knew their position in society and there was little sign of social mobility.

England's relationship with Ireland was remarkably different to that with Scotland or Wales, although each is unique in its own way. The lack of integration is striking. Ireland was a more distant province, and English rule was

more colonial and much more tempestuous in nature. Ireland was affected by many of the same historic struggles as the rest of the British Isles, including Viking invasions, the Norman conquest, the civil war, the Reformation, and the Cromwell era, but there was always a strong sense of "*us and them*". The Irish themselves were rarely united, and at most times one or other of the conflicting parties would be allied to the English crown or Parliament, while others would be forging links to Rome and European Catholicism.

It is a short hop across the sea from Stranraer to Belfast, and consequently the links between Ulster and Scotland have always been strong. Similar but weaker ties to Dublin and the south can also be seen with Liverpool and North Wales. I get the impression that since the industrial revolution working class



Protestantism only really thrived in the more industrialised north of Ireland, where it was much the same as in Glasgow. In southern Ireland Protestantism was an integral part of the class divide.

Following the Reformation, almost all the bishops accepted the Elizabethan settlement, although the vast majority of clergy and laity did not. Consequently in most parishes the Roman Catholic Church thrived as if the Reformation had never occurred. Under James I tolerance was reduced with the import of clergy from England and Scotland to convert the Irish. In the process the Church of Ireland became more doctrinaire and Calvinist than the generally broader minded Church of England with its Anglo Catholic and evangelical wings. It served the English speaking population living within the pale, largely in garrison towns, and almost totally failed to win support from the older Irish aristocracy or any of the much larger Irish speaking population. It is clear from many stories I have read in contemporary newspapers that the Church of Ireland clergy saw the conversion of Catholics as central to their mission, and sometimes stooped to methods we would now see as repugnant. As a result any suggestion of proselytising was met with outrage. Overlaid upon this were the laws preventing Catholics from owning land or holding positions of authority. The same laws applied throughout Britain, but were often ignored in the non English speaking areas of Ireland.

So it is no surprise that our ancestors were churchmen, landowners, and in the military, or in the professions. These were the domain of the Protestant Irish establishment from which they came.

Dave Treanor November 2011

## Where did we come from?

Dorothy Hearne begins her account by speculating on the origin of the Treanors:

*"The Treanors came down to S. Connaught from Killala in N. Mayo. I am told some are buried there but the old graveyard is very overgrown and I could not find them when I looked a few years ago. There is also a Treanor grave, also old and overgrown, in the graveyard around Tuam Cathedral. I was told that in the fifties there were two elderly Treanor sisters running a farm somewhere in N. Mayo. Research in the telephone directory shows a number of Treanors of one sort or another in Co Monaghan and one or two elsewhere. I have always been told the name is so rare they may be mostly connected. Family tradition, unreliable, has them going back to Brian Boru, and I think they are almost certainly Gaelic. I have also been told that the name MacTiernan is another version of it".*

According to a book on Irish surnames by Woulfe "it comes from the ancient Irish name

Outside the house where my father was born, at 99 Moyne Road, Rathmines in Dublin





**1901 census  
showing William  
Robinson  
Treanor's family  
in Roscrea in Co  
Tipperary**

meaning 'champion', literally, 'strong-man': a well-known Ulster surname."

**Records showing  
the 22 non  
Catholic Treanors  
listed in the 1901  
Irish census.  
There were  
1,003 Treanors  
altogether**

I searched for everyone named Treanor in the 1901 Irish census. There were 1,003 of them listed, only 22 of whom were not

Surname	Forename	Townland/Street	DED	County	Age	Sex	Birthplace	Occupation	Religion	Literacy	Irish Language	Relation to Head of Household	Marital Status
Tanner	Kate Jane	Barnah Street	Omeau	Down	25	F	Belfast	School Teacher	Church of Ireland	Read and write		Daughter	Not Married
Tanner	Edith Jane	Barnah Street	Omeau	Down	15	F	Belfast	Scholar	Church of Ireland	Read and write		Daughter	Not Married
Tanner	Margaretta C	Barnah Street	Omeau	Down	13	F	Belfast	Scholar	Church of Ireland	Read and write		Daughter	Not Married
Tanner	Bessie	Main Street	Roscrea	Tipperary	56	F	Co Carlow	Dryer	Methodist	Read and write		Wife	Married
Tanner	Henry	Knockcroaghlan	Askehill Grove	Monaghan	22	M	Co Monaghan	Farmer's Son	I Church	Read and write		Son	Not Married
Tanner	William	Knockcroaghlan	Askehill Grove	Monaghan	18	M	Co Monaghan	Farmer's Son	I Church	Read and write		Son	Not Married
Tanner	John	Knockcroaghlan	Askehill Grove	Monaghan	59	M	Co Monaghan	Tanner	I Church	Read and write		Head of Family	Widower
Tanner	Tom	Main Street	Roscrea	Tipperary	16	M	Co Tipperary	Scholar	Methodist	Read and write		Son	Not Married
Tanner	Ellie	Main Street	Roscrea	Tipperary	24	F	Co Tipperary	Drapers Assistant	Methodist	Read and write		Daughter	Not Married
Tanner	Lily	Main Street	Roscrea	Tipperary	28	F	Co Tipperary	Daughter	Methodist	Read and write		Daughter	Not Married
Tanner	Minnie	Main Street	Roscrea	Tipperary	22	F	Co Tipperary	Teacher	Methodist	Read and write		Daughter	Not Married
Tanner	William	Main Street	Roscrea	Tipperary	63	M	Co Mayo	Dryer	Methodist	Read and write		Head of Family	Married
Tanner	Margaret	John	Lurgan Urban	Armagh	22	F	Co Armagh	Seamstress	Irish Church	Cannot read or write		Bourder	Not Married
Tanner	Walter	New Wapping	North Dock	Dublin	23	M	Tipperary	Engine Fitter	C of I	Read and write	English	Bourder	Single
Tanner	Erin	Kenzworth Square	Rathmines	Dublin	30	M	Co Tipperary	Dryer	Wesleyan Methodist	Read and write		Comic	Not Married
Tanner	Rebecca	Barnah Street	Omeau	Down	48	F	County Dublin	Commercial Traveller Angle Amer on Company	Church of Ireland	Read and write		Wife	Married
Tanner	Ann	Barnah Street	Omeau	Down	19	F	Belfast	School Teacher	Church of Ireland	Read and write		Daughter	Not Married
Tanner	Robert A.B	Barnah Street	Omeau	Down	9	M	Cock City	Scholar	Church of Ireland	Read and write		Son	Not Married
Tanner	Theresa	Barnah Street	Omeau	Down	21	F	Belfast	School Teacher	Church of Ireland	Read and write		Daughter	Not Married
Tanner	Alice May	Barnah Street	Omeau	Down	17	F	Belfast	National School Mistress	Church of Ireland	Read and write		Daughter	Not Married
Tanner	John	Barnah Street	Omeau	Down	52	M	County Down	Commercial Traveller Angle Amer on Company	Church of Ireland	Read and write		Head of Family	Married

Roman Catholic:

- Seven were Methodists from William Robinson Treanor's family, the draper in Roscrea. He was Archdeacon James Treanor's elder brother.

- John Treanor (50) and his sons Henry (22) and William (19) who were farmers from Knockronaghan in Monaghan, and Church of Ireland.

- The family (of 9) of a commercial traveller with the Anglo American Fire Company, in Burmah Street, Ormeau in Co Down who are Church of Ireland, and originated in Cavan, although some of their children were born in Belfast.

Then there are a number of individuals, including

- Ellen Treanor from Tower Street in Pottinger Co Down,
- Walter Treanor (23) an Engine Fitter from North Dock, Dublin, and
- Margret Treanor (22) a "smoother" boarding at Lurgan Urban in Armagh.

Interestingly, Archdeacon James Treanor's family in Ballinrobe is not listed, so we do not have the whole census here. Even so, it is striking how few were Protestants.

This lends credibility to the notion that

"Treanor" is an old Irish name, and that our ancestors probably became Protestant in the distant past, rather than coming in from elsewhere in the British Isles. Dorothy Hearne mentions Co Monaghan as one of the places they may have moved to South Connaught from, and I wonder whether the family of John Treanor from Knockronaghan in Monaghan might be related, particularly because two of the three names (John, William and Henry) are common in early generations of our family. Below is the entry for that family in the Griffiths Valuations.

It is an intriguing idea, but without any real evidence to support it. I looked for parish registers from this area at the RCBL in Dublin, but unfortunately these parishes are missing.

**The Griffith Valuation** was carried out over a ten year period in the mid 1800's to provide the information on which property taxes could be levied. It lists every landholding and every building and identifies the owner and the tenant. It also assesses its value. In the absence of early census data, this has proved a very useful source of information on who lived where in Ireland in the 1850's.

John Treanor  
from Donagh  
in Monaghan in  
Griffiths

4

VALUATION OF TENEMENTS.

PARISH OF DONAGH.

No. and Letters of Reference to Map.	Names.		Description of Tenement.	Area.	Rateable Annual Valuation.		Total Annual Valuation of Rateable Property.
	Townlands and Occupiers.	Immediate Lessors.			Land.	Buildings.	
	KNOCKRONAGHAN. (Ord. S. 6.)						
1	Matthew J. Anketell, .	In fee, . . . . .	Land, . . . . .	74 1 0	52 0 0	—	52 0 0
2	James Mullen, . .	Matthew J. Anketell, .	House, offices, and land, .	2 1 20	1 5 0	1 15 0	3 0 0
3	John Stein, . . .	Same, . . . . .	Herd's ho., off., & land, .	7 3 0	5 5 0	1 0 0	6 5 0
4	Margaret Lowrey, .	Same, . . . . .	House and land, . . . .	6 1 20	4 5 0	0 15 0	5 0 0
5	John & Arthur Magee, .	Same, . . . . .	House, offices, and land, .	33 0 5	22 10 0	1 0 0	23 10 0
—	Unoccupied, . . .	John & Arthur Magee, .	House, . . . . .	—	—	0 10 0	0 10 0
6	David Hust, . . .	Matthew J. Anketell, .	Office and land, . . . .	3 1 25	2 10 0	0 13 0	3 10 0
7	William Lowrey, . .	Same, . . . . .	House, . . . . .	—	—	0 10 0	—
—	Patrick McGeogh, .	David Hust, . . . .	House, office, and land, .	5 0 0	3 10 0	0 10 0	4 0 0
8	John Travnor, . . .	Matthew J. Anketell, .	House, . . . . .	—	—	0 10 0	0 10 0
—			House, offices, and land, .	10 3 15	8 10 0	1 5 0	9 15 0

## PART 2

# Early Treanors

## First two generations and their descendants

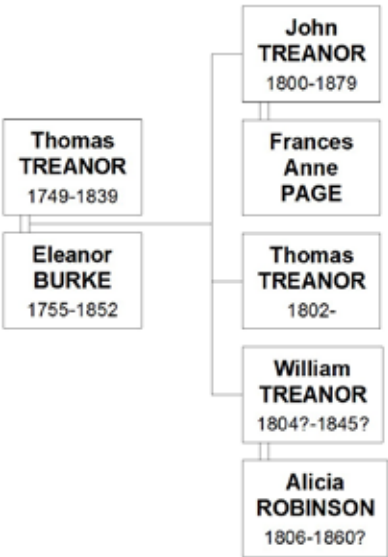
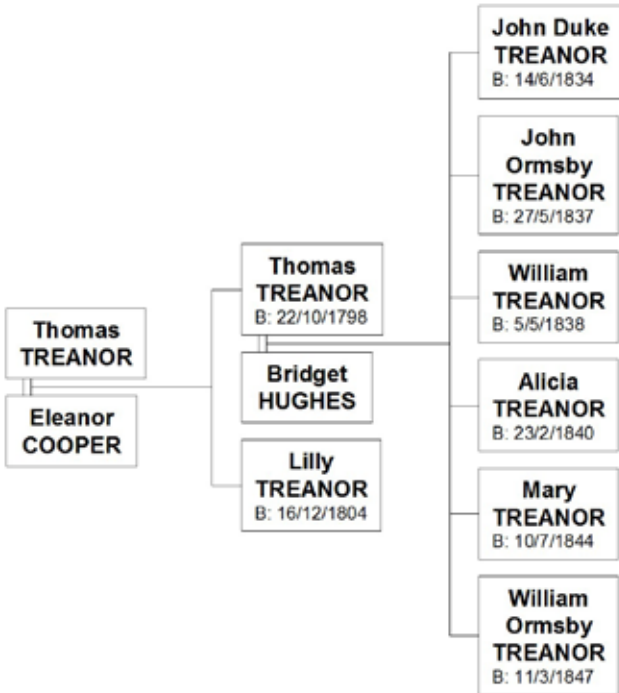
From stories handed down through the family we know a fair amount about recent generations of the Treanors from our own branch of the family. In Part 2 we look at the first two generations, born in Killala, where we know a lot less, and our information depends to a large extent on parish records. This section also traces the descendants of siblings of our direct ancestors from those two generations, and the ancestry of their spouses.

Part 3 deals with my great grandparents in a similar way, and also traces descendants of ancestral siblings. Part 4 is about my grandparents, and Part 5 is about my parents and our immediate family.

# Thomas & Eleanor

## Thomas Treanor 1749-1839

The earliest records we can find of the Treanor family are in Killala, a small town on the north coast of Co Mayo in the north west of Ireland. Thomas Treanor was a farmer. We know that from the clerical records for his eldest son John Treanor. He lived from 1749 to 1839 and was married to Eleanor



Treanor. These are my great great great great grandparents (great x4 grandparents).

And here we come to the first of many puzzles in our story. There appear to be two couples in Killala called Thomas and Eleanor Treanor. One Thomas married Eleanor Cooper and had at least two children, Thomas (1798) and Lilly (1804). The Coopers were a well established Killala family: it is a name that crops up frequently in the parish register.

The other Thomas married Eleanor Burke, or Bourke and had three children: John



(1800), Thomas (1802), and William (1803/5). I believe these are my great x4 grandparents:

We spent many hours searching through every hand written entry in the original Killala parish registers on our visit in August 2009, which are held in the Representative Church Body Library (RCBL) in Dublin. The oldest of these are in a book recording minutes of vestry meetings, and date from the 1790s.

The entries in the registers up to 1845 are often hard to read. The writing was poor, and the ink has faded. Names are spelled in a quite arbitrary manner, with the same parents being identified as Traynor and Treanor in successive birth entries. So it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the same Eleanor was sometimes recorded as having the maiden name Cooper, and sometimes Bourke.

On 6<sup>th</sup> January 1797 there is a Maria born to Richard and Eleanor Burke, maiden name Cooper, raising the possibility that the two Eleanors are the same person. But we are then left to puzzle why two boys called Thomas appear to have survived.

We could not find any record of the birth of William, my great x3 grandfather. It could be one of the completely indecipherable entries; or he might have been born when they were visiting somewhere else; or his baptism might not have been recorded at all. There was no requirement to register births in those days. He could have come from either family.

We have a tree from Margaret Thompson showing William's mother as Eleanor Cooper (1755 - 1852). Margaret is no longer alive so we cannot ask where that information came from. We have one good reason for putting him in the other family, as the son of Eleanor Bourke: according to Dorothy Hearne's notes, William's youngest son James was brought up by his uncle, father of Thomas Stanley



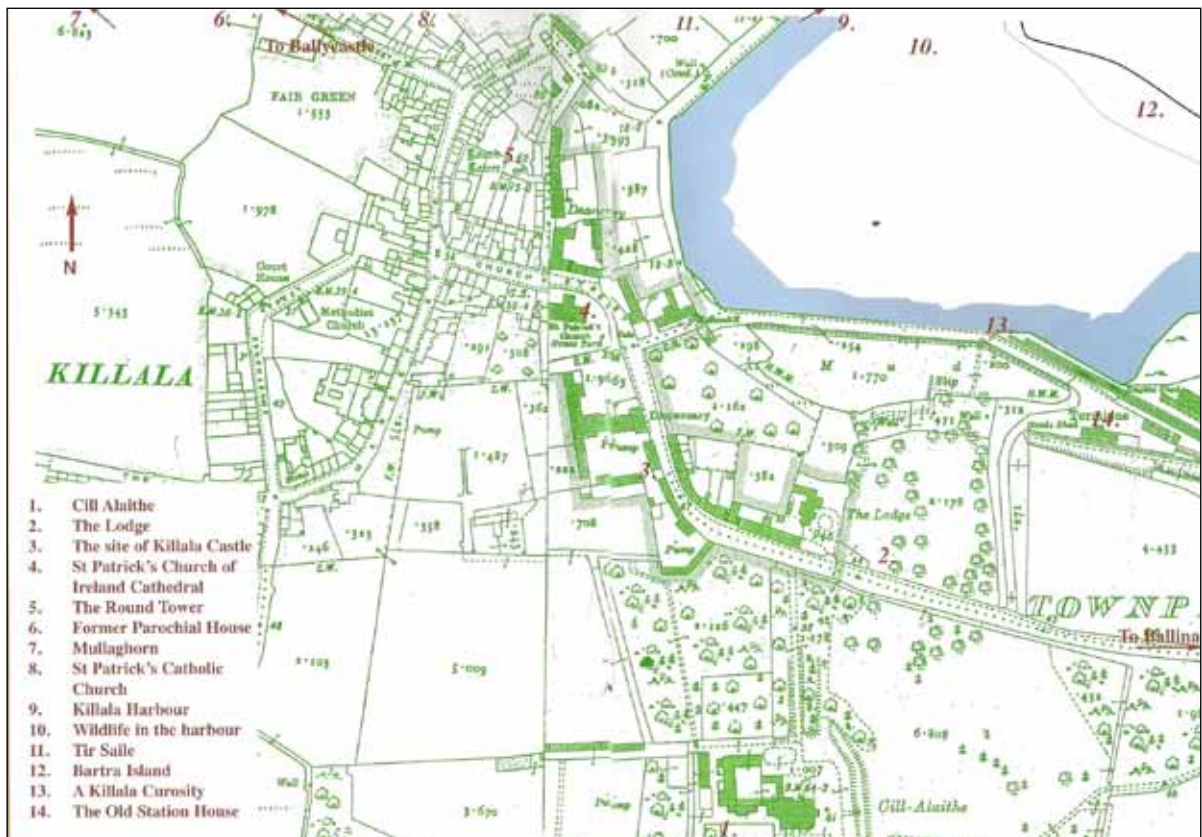
Treanor. This is John Treanor. His birth registration shows John as the eldest son of Thomas Treanor and Eleanor Bourke.

Both Thomas and Eleanor lived to a ripe old age. We found Thomas Treanor's grave in the graveyard at St Patricks Cathedral in Killala, its edge buried by a new pathway, with the writing very worn and partly obscured. We also found his death in the parish register. His was the only death recorded in 1839. His grave says "*Here lyeth the body of Thomas Treanor who left this life the 6<sup>th</sup> day of (Nove) mber 1839 aged 89 years*". We cannot tell which Thomas this refers to. It is interesting to note the spelling – many of the earlier parish records had him as Traynor, or even

Thomas Treanor's grave is partly obscured by the path, near the back wall of St Patricks



The writing on Thomas Treanor's grave is just legible



Town map of Killala from the present day

Trenor. By the time of his death they seem to have settled on our present spelling of the name.

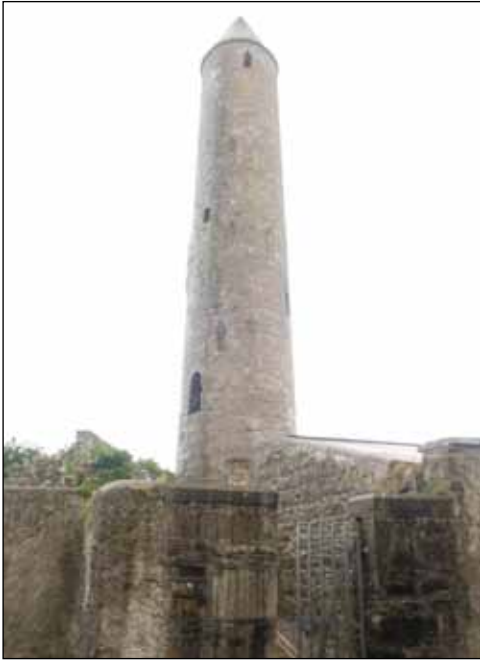
## Eleanor Burke

Bourke is an old name. “At around the time of the Norman conquest of England in 1066, the Normans also invaded Ireland becoming more Irish than the Irish themselves. Many of them settled around Killala Bay, with names like Birke/Bourke (de Burgo), Jordan (D’Exeter), Cotelloe (D’Angulo), Staunton, Barrett, Lawless and Lynott”.

Eleanor had her three children quite late in life. If she really was 97 when she died in 1852, Eleanor would have been 45 when John was born in 1800, and Thomas would have been 61. At the time of her birth there

were no parish records, so age was a matter of personal memory. We have calculated her birth from her age at death. If this is right, she would be born in 1755. In *Irish Ancestry*, John Grenham warns that age at death was often very imprecise “... although it at least gives an idea of how old the person was thought to be by family or neighbours”.

Eleanor died a dozen years after her husband and according to the parish register was buried on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1852. We could not find her grave: only a small minority of the graves have survived. Once again, if there were two Eleanor Treanors, we do not know which of them the death record in the parish registers refers to.



Round tower  
in Killala,  
overlooking the  
River Moy

in the principle streets are well built. The manufacture of coarse linens is carried on to a very small extent, but the principal trade is the exporting of grain, of which the annual average from 1810 to 1820 was 5000 tons, chiefly oats and barley; and the value of the imports, consisting of planks, iron, tar, slates, flax seeds, herring, and sugar, about £5000. The trade was on the increase from 1820 till 1825, but from the improvements of the port of Ballina, what formerly came to this port for the supply of that town is conveyed thither direct by the river Moy, and from 1830 to 1835 the average exports from Killala have not exceeded 3,500 tons, nor the value of their imports £4,000 per annum. A considerable fishery is carried on, in which more than 300 persons are occasionally engaged and for which this is a good station; and large quantities of sea manure are landed at the quay; the pier is very old but has recently been repaired.... The harbour affords good and safe anchorage for vessels drawing eight or nine feet of water, and vessels of 12 feet may get to the anchorage about high water.... The market is on Saturday, and fairs are held on May 6th, Aug 17th, and Nov 8th. Petty sessions are held in a private house every Friday, and a manorial court is held occasionally”.

## Life in Killala

What was life like in Killala during Thomas and Eleanor's time?

Killala is a very old settlement, reputed to go back to the days of St Patrick in 442.

*“In that place, which was given him by the pious liberality of the chiefs of the land, at the southern bank of the river, erected a noble church, and afterwards an Episcopal See called Kill-Aladh, over which he appointed one of his disciples, Muredach by name, as the first Bishop.”*

*Tripartite Life of St Patrick*

There is a round tower, reputedly built on the site of a fifth century monastery, between 1170 and 1238, some years after the main Viking threat had ended.

The town is described in 1839 in Lewis's Topographical Dictionary:

*“The town is situated on the bay of the same name, and on the west bank of the river Moy; it contains about 200 houses, of which those*

The Treanors must have been quite well off, and were active members of the local community. Mrs Thos Treanor was one of 77

Haggard for  
storing grain, at  
the bottom of  
Preaching House  
Street in Killala





LIST OF PATRIMONY AND SUBSCRIBERS TO THE ERECTION OF THIS ORGAN 1838.	
His Grace the Archbishop of Tuam Hon. Rev. Geo. Gore, Dean of Killala Rev. Thomas Sutton, Vicar John Knox, Castle Sea Walter James Bourke, The Quille Mrs. Bourke Lt. Col. Knox, Castle Sea Ernest Knox, Fahy Robert Knox, Castle Sea Roger Palmer Major Gardiner, Farnhill Mrs. Gardiner Rev. B. G. Eames, Curate John Kirkwood Joseph Kirkwood Lt. Col. Kirkwood William Kirkwood, Inf. Charles Nelson, M.D. Charles Kirkwood, Bartra Andrew Kirkwood Miss Kirkwood William, Orow, Belleville William Kirkwood, Greenpark Henry Knox, Netley James Knox, Crosspatrick Miss Goodwin Charles Smith & family Mrs. Thos. Kirkwood, The Lodge Thomas Palmer amr., Summerhill Thomas Palmer jnr., " John Palmer " William Palmer " Rev. Geo. Birmingham, Lackan John Gardiner, Courtinill Robert Kirkwood, Killala Charles Gallagher, Ballina James Ramsey, Killala Frederick Stock Robert Folke James Cooper Mr. & Mrs. Gowan & family William Kirkwood, Helles Mrs. Palmer Bourke Thos. Cooper, daughter & son Mrs. Higgins Miss Nelson	Miss M. Smith Miss Birmingham A. J. Perkins, Ballyvaughan William Perkins, ..... 1838 Peter Nolan, Moyne Rev. David Rodgers Rev. J. Nelson James Perkins Mr. James James Joynt John Stevens G. Farthing J. Kelly George Teamley G. Lindsay John James Edward Bourke Mrs. Thos Traynor jnr. Joseph Cooper amr. Andrew Bourke, Ross The Lord Bishop of Tuam Mrs. Knox, Nappa  ***** Total amount of Subscriptions per above £135-11- 6 ***** Cost of Organ £117 Carriage 10 Various expenses 8-15- 3  £135-15- 3  Rev. & Honble. George Gore, LL.D. Rector. Rev. B. G. Eames, Curate.  Charles Nelson M.D. Churchwardens W. Kirkwood  Jubileatory Choir Fund. collected by Charles Kirkwood, Bartra and Jas. A. Knox, Crosspatrick

The list of contributors to the new organ at St Patrick's includes Mrs Thos Treanor

local people who contributed to the collection to purchase an organ for the cathedral in 1838, organised by Bishop James Verschoyle. This was built by William Telford at a cost of £135-15-3, and is now one of the best preserved organs of its period.

Their children were well educated, with William becoming clerk to the petty sessions, and John going to Trinity College Dublin where he was ordained.

Shortly before the birth of their children, Killala was the centre of a major historic event: the only invasion of Britain since 1066. In 1798 the French under General Humbert landed a few miles up the coast and beat the British at Castlebar. They were joined by Irish rebels, most notably Ferdy O'Donnell "Prince of Pollatormish" and took Killala with very little resistance. The Irish rebels occupied

Peat drying beside the road to Killala from Castlereagh

Killala with the support of the French for 32 days, but were eventually defeated by General Trench with a vastly superior force. The French soldiers were repatriated to France as prisoners of war. The Irish rebels were all slaughtered mercilessly: more than 500 of them. In the days immediately following, another 75 rebel prisoners were tried and most of them executed.

Bishop Joseph Stock, forced to share his palace in Killala with occupying commanders, notes that this was a political act, and not sectarian (*History of the Rebellion 1798*).

The recapture of Killala must have been a shocking event for the young Thomas and Eleanor to live through.

*"In spite of the exertions of the general and his officers, the town exhibited almost all the marks of a place taken by storm. Some houses were perforated like a riddle; most of them had their doors and window; destroyed, the trembling inhabitants scarcely escaping with life by lying prostrate on the floor. Nor was it till the close of the next day that our ears were relieved from the horrid sound of muskets discharged every minute at flying and powerless rebels. The plague of war so often visits the world that we are apt to listen to any description of it with the indifference of satiety; it is actual inspection only that shows the monster in its proper deformity"*

From *French Invasion of Ireland 1798* by Valerian Gibraydoff 1890

