

note on the history of Charlestown.

In the middle of the last century the village of Killybegh in Co. Sligo was an important centre for fairs, markets etc. and served the surrounding area. Charlestown did not then exist. Lord Dillon was the landlord of the Charlestown area - Knox of the Bellehly district.

Dillon's agent was Charles Strickland. The story goes that Strickland asked a favour from Knox's agent which was refused. Strickland vowed that he would wipe out the industry of Killybegh by founding a town beside it. He then issued orders to his tenants to build and those who did not, were removed to other districts. Strickland planned the town as it now is - a stipulation he made was that all houses were to be two-story, slated, of a certain size, etc. which accounts for the similarity of the houses in the town. [One house is 2½ story and is said to have been built for Strickland's bailiff]. There is one house in the town which Strickland allowed rent free for ever - this house was the first built. Strickland promised free rent to the first completed house in order to speed up the work of building his town. The town itself he called Charles' town - now Charlestown. In 1856/1858 Strickland had the present church built to serve the town and area. A plague in the church gives an account of its erection.

Killybegh then declined with the growth of the new town beside it. Strickland got fairs & markets for his new town and those of Killybegh ceased.