

# I.T.A. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL SURVEY

## NATURAL FEATURES, ANTIQUITIES, HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS, ETC.

BARONY OF Murrisk

TOWN OR VILLAGE WESTPORT PARISH AUGHAVALL COUNTY Mayo

### TOPOGRAPHY

Brief description of outstanding scenic views in the district, natural attractions, or unusual topographical features.

The parish of Aghavall which is almost triangular in shape is situated on the southern coast of Glenties Bay, and is bounded by the parishes of Keshbeg and the west, Aghavall and the east and south, and

### GEOLOGY

Brief notes on unusual geological features, such as caves, eskers, etc.

Remains in the north. The most prominent feature of the landscape is <sup>13</sup> Croagh Patrick which rises like a cone above the Glenties shales of Glenties Bay to a height of 2510 feet. The peak is flanked see page 2.

### MANSIONS, CASTLES AND ESTATES OF IMPOSING CHARACTER

Location and brief description. Owner. Past associations. Libraries or art collections? Gardens? Open to visitors? Admission charge?

Mr. Moore, The Estate Office, Westport, would not give me any information regarding Croagh Patrick. Without the permission of Isaac Ligo, who is at present in England. See post card of Moore. The public have no right of access to certain sections of the demesne. May get the required information under the heading from Mr. J. C. Joyce, who eventually

is flanked on the east and west by small mountains and the whole has a fairly conspicuous isolation from the other ranges of the region. Except Patrick is formed mainly of quartzite, with some gneiss and schist. The islands in the bay are stated to have been formed by the dissolution of limestone. The position of the Liffey hills which comes within the parish boundary rises to a height of 1683 feet; Silurian and Ordovician rocks prevail here. The coastline which extends from Woodford Quay to Kilsallagh, a distance of approximately 9 miles, is uneven, but fairly regular and generally low. A fine and beautiful sandy beach stretching from Basteau to Kilsallagh, a distance of fully five miles. The parish is drained by several rivers and small streams. Two of these are the Owenmore River and the Owenree River. The Owenmore River takes its rise on the mountains to the south of Croagh Patrick, and has several small tributaries. A fine the Deepcroft River about one mile south of Drakela Bridge, the two joining the Erriff River which winds its way into Killybeg Harbour at Hasleagh Falls. The Owenree River rises in the rough Nacorea and also a number of small tributaries, principal of which are three long and the

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Borek Heights. After leaving its work area  
 hence it winds its way through pleasantly  
 diversified and wooded country from  
 Blackton Wood, Kappagh and Belclare rapids  
 to the Estuary at Poolgarra. Another important  
 river is the Coora Beg which passes through  
 Westport and enters Lough Bay at Westport  
 Quay. There are a number of lakes the  
 largest of which are Lough Na Corra and  
 Lough Collinse Lake. The forest consists in the  
 main of moorland and bog, the cultivatable  
 area being comparatively small, and it  
 is restricted to the coastal belt (or strips).  
 The main source of livelihood of the  
 country district is sheep and cattle, and  
 their subsidiary products.

### WALKS.

1. Via Quay Road (for view of Coora Beg, Lough Faterick and Lough Bay) and return through Westport Demesne.
2. By the Quay Road to Westport Quay and on to Ross Beg where a number of tall trees are met and on these of which are miniature towers known locally as Granuaile's Towers, a little further on ~~the~~ beyond Belclare Bridge and to the right of the road may be seen the foundation of the ancient castle of Belclare, one of the many possessions of Granuaile O'Malley, 2 mile further is Clonsilla  
see page 1

This point offers a magnificent view of the  
 surrounding country. Turning left at the  
 ruins, Angkor Cemetery to the left is the  
 ruins of which is stands the remains of an  
 old brick tower to have been built  
 by N. Columville. About 1/2 mile to the  
 west bank of the river may be seen the  
 remains of a wall of the old town. Total journey  
 6 1/2 miles approximately.

### Cycle.

1. Via Gray Road - Post box - Belclare to  
 Loloona (3 miles). When for convenience the  
 bicycle may be packed on a donkey  
 for hire. Then follow mountain road by  
 post to the summit of Ocap (800 feet).  
 When a magnificent view may be had of  
 Loloona Bay, its myriad of islets, and the  
 delightfully wooded approaches.

2. Via Gray Road and along the shores of  
 Loloona Bay and on to Nilsadanga. When  
 the mountain comes up to the left,  
 through Gurisk, Lecroy, and Nilsadanga,  
 turning right at Sea Head Cross, a half  
 mile further to the Sea Head beach and  
 of the most beautiful on the west coast  
 of the island. Total journey  
 25 miles.

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From Stearns Hill one mile from Whopora  
 an excellent view may be had which is  
 described by Mackenzie in his "Dutch Sketches"  
 as follows: "Painters like will not fail to see  
 wonderful hues, and the reader will take his  
 picture at his leisure. The Conical mountain  
 to the left is enough Patrick; it is clothed  
 in the most magnificent violet-colour, and a  
 couple of round clouds were exploding, as  
 it were, from the summit. The part of  
 them towards the sea lighted up with the  
 most delicate gold and blue colours. In  
 the centre is bare Island, of which the  
 edges were bright cobalt, whilst the  
 middle was lighted up with a brilliant  
 scarlet tinge, and as I would have thought  
 as in a picture, never having seen it  
 in nature before but looked at her  
 with wonder and pleasure until she had  
 disappeared as the sun sank. The islands  
 in the bay (this was of a golden  
 colour) looked like so many dolphins  
 and whales basking there. The rich  
 park-woods stretched down to the shore,  
 and the immediate foreground consisted  
 of a yellow corn-field, whereon stood  
~~between~~ innumerable stacks of corn, coating  
 immense long purple shadows over the stubble.  
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..... here such beauties lying upon  
English shores it would be a wonderful wonder;  
perhaps if it were on the Mediterranean or  
the Baltic, English travellers would flock to it  
by ~~thousands~~ hundreds; why not come  
and see it in Ireland?

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Murisk Abbey (Conto) and encloses the  
'abbey of Murisk in the fourteenth century.  
It was occupied by the Augustinian  
Hermits, the same order as that which  
occupied the Abbey at Ballinrobe. As it  
had out a large portion of land, it escaped  
suppression until the reign of Queen Elizabeth,  
and then, in 1578, the Abbey and lands  
were granted for 21 years to James  
Greey, brother of the Protestant Arch-bishop  
of Armagh. In 1617 a grant in fee  
was given by James I. to Sir Christopher  
Greey, the Archbishop's eldest son,  
and to him was given 500 acres constituting  
the Manor of Murisk. His grandson was  
convinced in possession by the Cromwellian  
Commissioners in 1655, and his descendants  
lived there until the land was taken  
over by the Public Land Commission.  
Murisk Abbey is mentioned in the  
'Annals of the Composition of 1085'  
as follows:—"In the Pecony of Murisk  
see page 8."

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