UNIT 3

Towns

LESSON 1

Within the Walls

ARCHAEOLOGY
time in transition

IT'S ABOUT TIME 2

Aim(s) To explore the concept of urban living and investigate the development of towns in Ireland since Viking times.

Objective(s) To give the students an understanding of the network of towns in Ireland in terms of their historical development.

Time Period 10th to 19th century.

KEY INFORMATION

Lesson

- The larger Early Christian monasteries performed the principal functions of towns.
- The Vikings set up permanent bases that grew into towns.
- The Normans were Ireland's greatest town builders.
- A strategic part of the plantation process of late 16th/early 17th century was the development of towns.
- The ruling landed elite of the 18th/early 19th century set about rebuilding Ireland's infrastructure, including the development of new towns.
- In the 19th century new towns developed around industry, the railway, tourism and military bases.

Context

- The emergence of civilisation and towns took place around the 4th century BC.
- In Ireland we have a network of town and cities that have a variety of origins and histories dating back to the 10th century AD.

METHODOLOGY & MEDIUM

- Instruction
- Active participation
- Discussion
- **Worksheet 1a** Origins of Principal Irish Towns
- **Worksheet 1b** Map of Ireland
- Requirements: Colouring pencils
- **Student Handout** Development of Irish Towns

SECTIONS

Section 1 Development of Towns
Section 2 Irish Towns—the Historical Background
Section 3 Monastic Towns
Section 4 Viking Towns
Section 5 Norman Towns
Section 6 Plantation Towns
Section 7 Estate Towns
Section 8 Railway, Garrison and Resort Towns

Key Question(s) What do we mean when we describe a place as a 'town'?

Teacher Instruction

Brainstorm the concept of what a town is.

- Mainly a built-up area but with some parks and 'green spaces'.
- Lots of buildings–houses, shops etc.
- Network of streets, avenues and lanes, car parks, pedestrian zones, traffic, buses, taxis etc.
- Town hall, fire station, police station, business offices.
- Lots of people and noise.
- Cinema, theatre, hotels, cafés, restaurants.
- Churches, hospitals, schools.

Whilst we all have an image of what a town is, coming up with a precise definition is more challenging, especially trying to distinguish between a town and a village on one hand and a town and a city on the other.

One way of distinguishing between these forms of human settlement is to grade them under the following headings

- Size of population.
- Number of buildings.
- Number of services.
- Political status.
- Legal status.

How do these criteria apply to the local village/town/city?

Regardless of definition, there is no doubt that towns have contributed a vital role to human history. The quality of a civilizations' urban development is often used as a measure of its state of advancement.

Today, more than half the world's 6 billion people live in towns or cities. Urban centres play a part in all our lives and will continue to be a vital element of human society into the future.

Urban living–where did the idea come from?

Towns first emerged during the 'urban revolution' around 4,000 BC. It is no coincidence that this follows on from when farming was first developed; farming created a food supply sufficient to support a large population not directly involved in its production.

- The urban revolution took place in areas of naturally fertile alluvial soils around the major rivers of the Tigres/Euphrates (Iraq), the Indus (India) and the Nile (Egypt).
- The fertile soil, along with irrigation, allowed high crop yields, which in turn created food surpluses. This allowed people to do other specialised activities apart from farming.
- Thus emerged a market economy and surplus wealth, factors which led to the development of towns.

The river valleys also provided convenient and cheap building material–mud. When this is mixed with straw, shaped into a 'brick' and allowed to dry, it forms an excellent building material. This is the basic building material for the first towns.

The development of towns is a major advancement in social organisation and an important catalyst for the creation of a civilisation.

A civilised society has highly developed resources. These include

- material and spiritual centres.
- complex cultural, political and legal organizations.

These resources are often housed in the 'service' buildings of a town–e.g. churches, temples, market places, civic centres, shops, workshops etc.

Teacher Instruction
Ask the students if they think people who live in towns and cities still consider themselves more 'civilised' that those who live in the countryside? Discuss.

SECTION 2 Irish Towns–the Historical Background

Key Question(s) What are Ireland's first towns?

Teacher Instruction
Distribute **Worksheet 1a** and **1b** to the students. This is a map showing the principal towns in Ireland in 1971 with population of over 3,000 people or with their own Town Council.

If this map was updated to 2009 it would look different as towns are continually growing and changing in character.

Take a look at the map and discuss the general location of the towns as follows

- Many towns are located along the coast, especially where a large river enters the sea. Examples: Cork; Waterford; Wexford; Dublin; Drogheda; Belfast; Galway; Limerick. These are port towns.
- Many towns are located upriver from the port towns. For example, upriver from Waterford on the River Suir are Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel, Cashel, Thurles and Templemore. These are on or close to important crossing points on these rivers. Strategic crossing points on rivers are often places of settlement. Rivers also supplied water to the town for industrial and domestic use.

- Most of the towns are located east of a line from Derry to Cork. There are historic reasons for this concentration (Norman settlement; Ulster plantation; influence of growth of Dublin and Belfast) but it also coincides with the better agricultural land and closeness to nearest trading ports in Britain and on the Continent.
- Very few of these towns are the result of modern planning. Two exceptions are Shannon and Craigavon, both created in the 20th century. The basic urban settlement pattern in this country has deep historic roots.

SECTION 3 Monastic Towns

Key Question(s) Were some of the larger Early Christian monasteries our first towns?

Ireland had a rural-based economy with a dispersed settlement pattern from pre-historic times. People lived in small communities scattered across the countryside in the Early Christian period (400 - 1,000 AD). They lived in enclosed farmsteads –ringforts, cashels and crannógs.

However, some of the Early Christian monasteries were large enclosures with a sizeable population. Both religious and secular people were living in these monastic settlements. By the 10th century some of the major monasteries had

- A concentration of population.
- Important markets.
- Paved streets.
- Artisan (craftsmen) quarters.
- A system of control–though religious rather than civil.

The larger monasteries were the economic and cultural hubs of Early Christian Ireland. Many of them performed the principal functions of towns: *serving a community as market, education, political and cultural centres* (see ***Monks, Monasteries and Monasticism*** T1,U2,L1).

These monasteries lacked a unit of currency but they still managed to be places where people traded and bartered goods. It is recorded that Lusk monastery had a fair by 739 AD. The lack of a formal market economy and a civic authority are two basic reasons why these monasteries fail some definitions of a true 'town'.

Over time some important monasteries declined due to a variety of reasons. Others continued as urban centres–towns such as Kildare, Tallaght, Armagh and Kells. These all owe their origins to an important Early Christian monastery.

The decline of Monasteries

- Vikings raids.
- Increased secular influence.
- Reform of the Church in the 12th century and the introduction of a diocesan parish-based system.
- A new monastic system arrived in the 12th century with the Cistercians (see ***The Cistercian Monastery*** T1,U2,L2),

Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to colour-in on the map the towns which owe their origin to an Early Christian monastery. Then ask the students for feed back.

Ask the students if they can name important Early Christian monasteries which did not become towns *(Clonmacnoise, Monasterboice, Glendalough)*

- Not many became successful towns.
- Date 8th–10th century.

Smaller Towns and Villages

There are many examples of smaller towns and villages that owe their origins to an Early Christian monastery–e.g. Ardmore, Cloyne, Roscarberry. Can you name any in your area? Look up **www.archaeology.ie** and check what monastic sites are in your area. How many of these occur in urban areas? Search for 'ecclesiastical enclosure'; over 500 of these have been identified.

SECTION 4 Viking Towns

Key Question(s) Who were the Vikings?
When and where did they establish towns in Ireland?

The Vikings

The Vikings arrived as raiders in the 8th century. Their arrival marks a change in Ireland. Their raids brought disruption and destruction to the monastic system. But the Vikings soon established fortified ports that grew into permanent settlements. These settlements brought with them economic benefits as they linked Ireland into a wider trading network which extended throughout Europe.

What do we know about the Vikings?

- They were from Scandinavia, especially Norway and Denmark.
- They were active as raiders, traders and settlers in the coastal areas of Northern Europe and beyond, from the 9th until the 11th century.
- They were excellent seafarers and used longships. A reconstruction of one of their ships (the *Sea Stallion from Glendalough*) sailed from Denmark to Dublin (where the original was built) in 2007.
- They had a reputation of being fierce warriors–small expeditions raided Ireland between 795 - 830 AD.
- They built a network of trading posts in Ireland, dealing in livestock, provisions, church treasure and slaves.

Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to colour in the Viking towns on the map. (Limerick; Cork; Waterford; Wexford; Wicklow; Dublin).

Discuss their distribution

- Coastal, where large rivers enter the sea.
- Concentrated on the east and south coast–The Vikings, by settling along the east coast, shifted the economic power base from the Midlands to the east coast, where it continues to the present day.
- Date–10th to 12th century.

Viking Towns–the excavation evidence

In Dublin, important archaeological excavations took place at High Street, Wood Quay and Fishambles Street in the 1960's & 70's. Subsequently, important excavations uncovering evidence of Viking settlement were carried out in Waterford and Cork cities (see ***Beneath the Streets*** T2,U3,L2). More recently, the discovery of a previously unknown settlement at Woodstown, near Waterford, could provide invaluable evidence about early Viking settlement in Ireland (see **www.nra.ie**).

In Dublin the foundations of 150 houses were uncovered

- Many of these were built directly on top of the remains of a previous house.
- They were set in narrow rectangular plots at right angles to the street with post-and-wattle property boundaries.
- They were set back from the street line.
- They occupied the full width of the plot.
- They were rectangular in plan with the narrow side facing street.
- They had wattle-and-daub walls with wattle woven in between upright posts.
- There was a central door opening at either end.
- There was a sunken hearth in the centre of the floor.
- The sleeping area was along the sides of the house.
- They had hipped thatched roofs, supported by four large central posts.

The houses belonged to various craftsmen and traders. The houses they built are similar to those found in Sweden and Denmark. An earthen bank, topped by a wooden rampart, defended the Viking town.

Wooden Viking houses did not last long in Ireland's damp climate. These houses were inhabited for about twenty years before they were pulled down and built over. From an archaeological perspective this is very fortuitous because it builds up layers of 'occupation debris' rich in archaeological information about these houses and the people who lived in them.

Key Question(s) What was the Norman contribution to town building in Ireland?

The first Normans arrived in 1169 AD as mercenaries and by 1200 AD they had conquered two thirds of the country. They built castles to protect themselves and to administer and control their newly conquered territories (see ***Irish Castles Throughout the Ages*** T2,U2,L2). Part of their methods of controlling an area and develop it commercially was to set up towns, either beside a castle or as independent foundations.

Principal Functions of Norman Towns

- To provide a safe place to live–enclosed by defensive walls with mural towers and fortified entrance gates.
- To provide a market centre–to draw in agricultural products from the countryside and sell provisions to farmers.
- To safeguard the Norman colony–the fortified towns acted as secure settlements in an often hostile countryside.

Under the Norman system of social organisation–the feudal system–towns had a special legal and political status. They were also a vital part of the economic system. Towns were established either directly by the King or one of the great lords. A charter granted the town its right to exist within the legal system under the protection of its founder. In return for this charter the town paid a tax to the founder. Towns were therefore an important source of aristocratic income in Norman society.

A charter is a legally binding document incorporating (enabling a group of people to act as one body) a town and specifying its laws. When a town received its charter it was called a 'borough'. A number of towns in Ireland still have their medieval charter with its official seal attached. The town walls not only provided protection but also defined the legal extent of the borough.

Norman Towns

- Norman towns contained streets lined with houses, crammed together side-by-side, with narrow strips of garden to the rear. These individual properties are called *burgage plots*. Each burgage plot was the property of an individual burgher.
- The town and its people were contained within and protected by a substantial defensive wall with mural towers and fortified entrance gates. The average size of a Norman town was 6 - 15 hectares.
- The people who lived in the town were Normans and those who owned a house or business were called burghers. Burghers were important people and could elect a mayor and council to run their town.

At the start, Irish people were not allowed to live inside the walls. Then some towns set up a separate quarter, also enclosed by a wall, where indigenous people were allowed to live. These were called the 'Irishtown' and the name still survives in a number of places.

Manorial Villages
The basic unit of land ownership in the feudal system was the manor. Many manors had a village at the centre where the people who worked the land lived. Important buildings in a village were the lord's castle, the water mill, and the parish church. The lord of the manor administered law and order. These villages did not have the status or privileges of chartered towns and the people who lived in them did not have the social standing of townspeople.

Teacher Instruction
Ask the students to colour-in on their map the towns that owe their origins to the Normans. Discuss the distribution of these towns

- The towns are established in the area of Norman control.
- They were well spread-out across that part of the country.
- There is a concentration to the east–his allowed for trade in and out of the country, particularly with England, an important element of the Norman economy.
- They were strategically based on rivers and coastal points–river crossings are important trading points as well as strategic military positions.
- Date: 12th - 14th century.

- The Vikings coastal towns continued as important settlements under the Normans. For that reason these are not on the above list of Norman foundations. However, they became amongst the most important Norman towns in Ireland, especially Dublin, Waterford, Cork and Limerick.
- The Normans provided the main network of inland towns which still exists in Munster and Leinster.

As centres of dense populations medieval towns were vulnerable to war, famine, disease and fire. The Black Death, in the early 14th century, hit the Norman towns badly depleting many of them of nearly half their population. Fire was common-place as most of the houses were timber built and packed close together. Over time, some towns grew and prospered while others declined and faded away. The reasons for this are varied, for example, Clonmines in Co. Wexford declined when its harbour silted up.

The term Anglo-Norman refers to the descendants of the first Normans. The Normans eventually adopted Irish ways–becoming 'more Irish than the Irish themselves'. How many students in the class have Norman names, like Fitzgerald, Butler, Power?

Gaelic Market Towns
The re-emergence of Gaelic power in the 15th and 16th centuries is reflected in the large number of tower houses (see ***Irish Castles Throughout the Ages*** T2,U2,L2) spread throughout the country. The Gaelic economy was based on pastoral farming and the settlement pattern was dispersed through the countryside. Very few new towns emerge during this period.

Teacher Instruction
Ask the students to colour-in on their map the towns that owe their origins to this period. Discuss the distribution of these

- Very few new towns.
- Located in the west and north, areas beyond Viking and Norman influence.
- Date–15th & 16th century.

Key Question(s) Were towns a feature of the Plantations?

Historical Background

- There is little new town building in Ireland after the Normans established their network.
- The 15th century saw a decline in many towns in Ireland.
- Rebellions: Silken Thomas in Leinster (1534 AD), Desmond Rebellion in Munster (1579 - 1583 AD), Nine Years War in Ulster (1593-1601)–defeat of these lead to the confiscation of large tracts of land by The Crown.
- Queen Elizabeth (reigned 1558 - 1603) feared Ireland might be used by the Spanish as a backdoor to invade England. She therefore attempted to take back control of Ireland for the English Crown.
- After the various rebellions were defeated, the Crown decided to plant loyal protestant English/Scottish settlers on the confiscated lands.

- Laois-Offaly Plantation 1560s
- Munster Plantation 1580s
- Ulster Plantation began 1609

The establishment of new towns was an important feature of the plantation strategy. These new towns would

- be the base from which new settlers could be planted into the surrounding countryside.
- form commercial, legal and military bastions in a hostile environment.
- foster infrastructure development–the building of roads, mills, bridges.
- provide a market place and implement official business and control–barracks, gaols, court houses.

Most of these plantation towns were formally planned and laid out. They were enclosed and protected by a substantial masonry wall pierced with gates at strategic locations. They were usually laid out around a central green or open space–this is often referred to as *'The Diamond'.*

Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to colour in the plantation towns on their maps and discuss the distribution of these towns.

- Main concentration in the north–indicating the success of the Ulster Plantation.
- The Ulster Plantation provided the network of towns in the NE of Ireland.
- The Munster Plantation–established towns at Mallow, Clonakilty, Skibbereen, Macroom & Midleton.
- Laois-Offaly Plantation–Portarlington and Portlaoise.

Key Question(s) Why did landlords establish new towns in the 18th century?

After the turbulence of the 17th century, Ireland entered a new phase of development in the more settled conditions of the 18th century. A period of relative calm emerged with a new landowning elite–the Protestant Ascendancy.

The new protestant landlords were eager builders. At first they built themselves comfortable fashionable country houses set in a rural demesne (see ***The Big House*** T2,U1,L2). Soon a number turned their attention to building a new town (or refurbishing an existing one), usually adjacent to their demesne–why did they do this? Discuss the benefits of a town to a landlord.

The main reasons why landlords established towns was to enhance the value of their estate

- The right to hold a market or fair was often the start of the process.
- Once this right was established the landlord would hope that a commercial centre would emerge with a market house as its focal point.
- If a landlord owned a successful town he could expect a handsome return in terms of rents and leases.

Towns were also seen as improving the security of a district, with a constabulary barracks and a court house as evident proof of this. However, most landlord activity involved rebuilding existing towns. The evidence for this is can be found in the streets of terraced, brick, townhouses ('Georgian') which still survive in many towns and give them an elegant appearance.

Teacher Instruction
Ask the students to colour-in the Estate Towns. Discuss their distribution.

What did Estate Towns look like?

- These Estate Towns were planned along symmetrical lines with straight streets and neat squares.
- Well-proportioned terraced townhouses, showing neo-Classical influences, lined the streets.
- The streets were wide and straight.
- The main square functioned as a market place and often had a market house built in a prominent place.
- A key building was the Church of Ireland parish church (usually built on the site of the medieval parish church).

Many of the existing older towns and cities expanded during this period with the growth of industry and the demand for housing. Most of the older medieval building stock was replaced and new streets emerged with elegant stone and brick built terraces and squares. Today, many of our streetscapes date to this period of rebuilding.

- The fashion of design in the 18th century was neo-Classical. This produced well balanced and proportioned buildings (see ***The Big House*** T2,U1,L2).
- Use of classical features–columns, pediments, etc.
- Sash windows predominate.
- Brick used extensively in towns but not in the countryside.

SECTION 8 Railway, Garrison and Resort Towns

Key Question(s) What kind of new towns emerged in the 19th century?

The growth of industry, the building of railways, the new fashion of tourism and the need to house large numbers of soldiers all provided impetus in the 19th century for new towns and villages. Many existing towns also reaped the benefit of these factors.

Teacher Instruction
Ask the students to colour-in the new 19th century towns. Discuss the distribution

- Along the coast at seaside locations.
- At important railway junctions.

- Blocked from the Continent by the Napoleonic Wars, tourists turned to their own country for holidays. This was facilitated by the many new railways lines.
- The style of buildings in these towns is Victorian–lots of fussy details showing neo-Gothic influences. Hotels and boarding houses were the focus of the resort towns.

In the 19th century the development of the railway brought a huge economic benefit. Towns such as Drogheda, Dundalk and Athlone thrived as a result of the coming of the railway.

With defence now the responsibility of the State there was a growing need for large barracks or garrisons. The presence of a large numbers of soldiers led to the development of some towns–Fermoy was once a Norman feudal manor but owes its present form to a local businessman/landlord John Anderson, who ensured the success of his new estate town by securing the building of a large military barracks there.

In the 19th century the tourist trade began to develop in Ireland. The growing popularity of seaside resorts led to the development of towns beside popular beaches. For example, Ennistymon in Co. Clare expanded from three thatched cabins in 1775 to 120 mostly slated houses in 1814, largely due to the growing tourism industry. The combination of a seaside resort and a railway station promoted commercial development.

WEB LINKS www.

National Monuments Service	**www.archaeology.ie/**
National Inventory of Architectural Heritage	**www.buildingsofireland.com/**
Irish Walled Town Network	**www.heritagecouncil.ie/walled_towns/index.html**
Heritage Towns of Ireland	**www.heritagetowns.com/index.shtml**
Archiseek - Online Architectural Resource	**www.archiseek.com/category/buildings/ireland-buildings**

Origins of Principal Irish Towns

Early Christian Monastic Sites

- Derry
- Armagh
- Downpatrick
- Kells
- Kildare
- Cashel
- Cork

Viking Towns

- Dublin
- Wicklow
- Arklow
- Wexford
- Waterford
- Youghal
- Cork
- Kinsale
- Limerick

Anglo Norman Manorial Centres

- Portrush
- Coleraine
- Larne
- Newtownards
- Dromore
- Newry
- Swords
- Malahide
- Blanchardstown
- Lucan
- Clondalkin
- Tallaght
- Bray
- Templemore
- Mallow
- Fermoy
- Midleton

Anglo Norman Towns

- Carrigfergus
- Downpatrick
- Sligo
- Dundalk
- Ardee
- Drogheda
- Kells
- Navan
- Trim
- Mullingar
- Athlone
- Dublin
- Galway
- Naas
- Loughrea
- Athy
- Wicklow
- Roscrea
- Nenagh
- Carlow
- Arklow
- Limerick
- Thurles
- Kilkenny
- Cashel
- Tipperary
- New Ross
- Clonmel
- Carrick-on-Suir
- Wexford
- Waterford
- Dungarvan
- Youghal
- Cork
- Kinsale
- Tralee

Plantation Towns

- Ballycastle
- Coleraine
- Ballymoney
- Limavaddy
- Derry
- Letterkenny
- Strabane
- Ballymena
- Larne
- Ballyclare
- Magherafelt
- Antrim
- Bangor
- Hollywood
- Cookstown
- Newtownards
- Belfast
- Omagh
- Comber
- Lisburn
- Lurgan
- Dungannon
- Dromore
- Banbridge
- Tandragee
- Armagh
- Enniskillen
- Monaghan
- Keady
- Clones
- Newry
- Castleblaney
- Cavan
- Carrigmacross
- Castlebar
- Longford
- Tuam
- Swords
- Tullamore
- Portarlington
- Birr
- Portlaoise
- Ennis
- Gorey
- Enniscorty
- Tralee
- Mallow
- Fermoy
- Killarney
- Macroom
- Midletown
- Clonakilty
- Skibbereen
- Bandon

Landlord Estate Towns

- Portrush
- Ballycastle
- Buncrana
- Ballymena
- Lisburn
- Lurgan
- Cookstown
- Banbridge
- Clones
- Castleblaney
- Castlebar
- Westport
- Balbriggan
- Skerries
- Malahide
- Edenderry
- Ballinasloe
- Templemore
- Kilrush
- Gorey
- Listowel
- Killarney
- Ballina

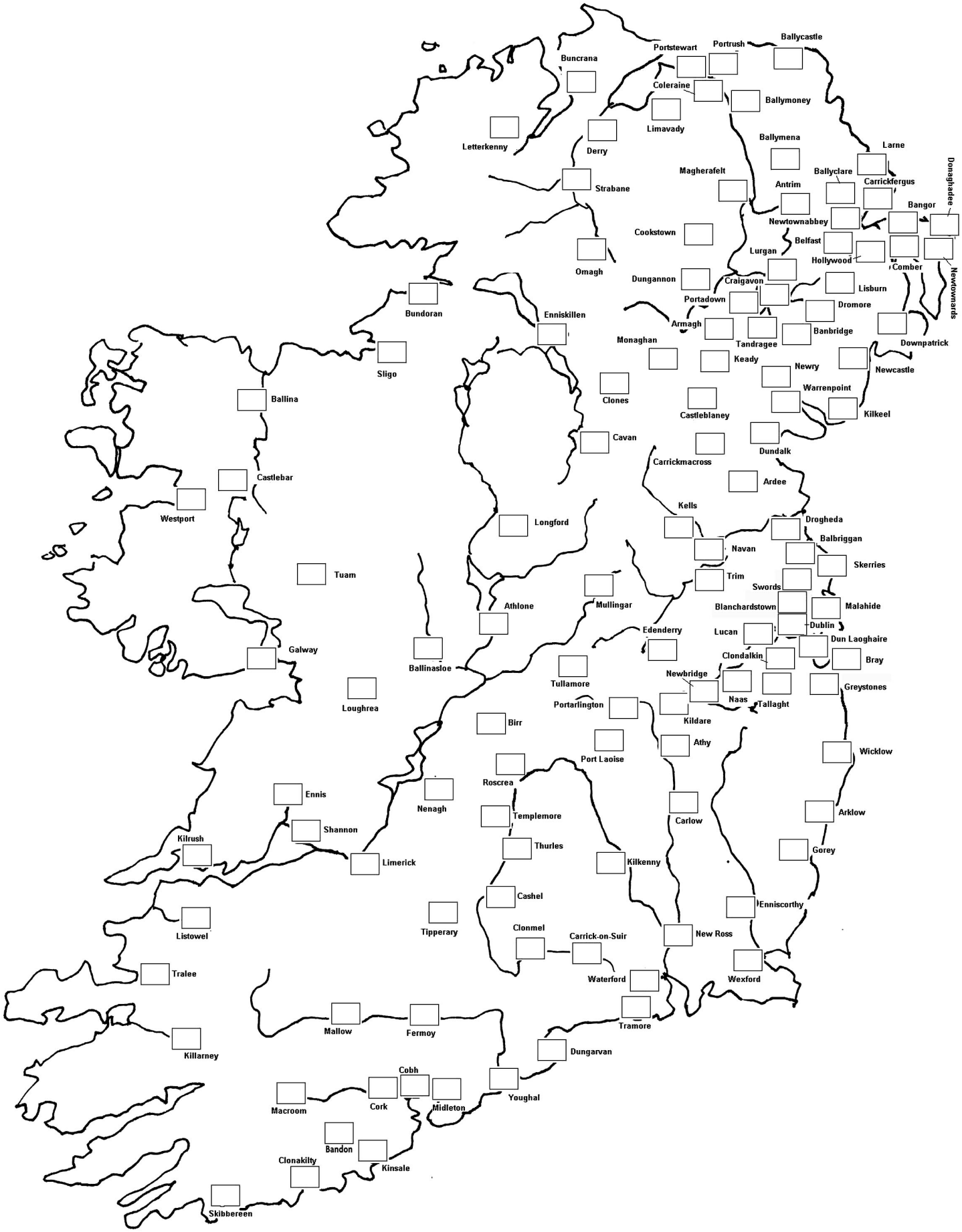
Resort/Railway /Garrison Towns

- Portstewart
- Donaghadee
- Bundoran
- Portadown
- Newcastle
- Warrenspoint
- Kilkeel
- Dunlaoighre
- Bray
- Newbridge
- Greystones
- Tramore (Resort)
- Cobh (Rail)

New Towns

- Newtownabbey
- Craigavon
- Blanchardstown
- Lucan
- Clondalkin
- Tallaght
- Shannon

Map of Ireland

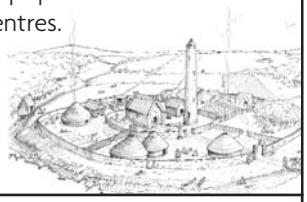


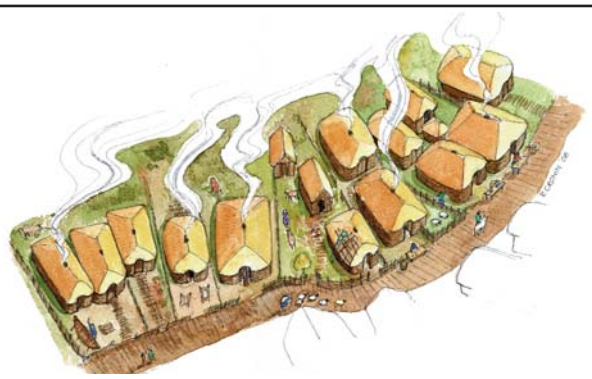
Definition:
A town or city is a densely populated urban area, usually having some form of local government.

- Market place–where goods are bought and sold.
- Employment–where people work.
- Residential areas–large number of people living close together.
- Administrative centre–providing social services
- Focal point for services–hospitals, schools, libraries, bus service.
- Safe place–safety in numbers.

Large Early Christian monasteries had elements of town life.

- Some were large enclosures with a sizeable population.
- Both religious and secular population.
- Economic and political centres.
- Trading places.
- Had street with houses.





The Vikings
Built a network of trading posts some of which grew into towns

- Coastal distribution.
- Concentrated on the east and south coast–the Vikings, by settling along the east coast, shifted the economic power base to the coast where in continues to the present day.
- Trading centres–importance of coastal town in drawing goods in and out of the country.
- Date–10th - 12th century.

Norman towns
The Normans arrive in 1169 and had conquered two thirds of the country by 1200.

- Provide a safe place to live–enclosed by defensive walls with fortified gateways and towers.
- Provide a market centre–to draw in agricultural products from the countryside.
- Provide military bases–the citizens of these towns were ready to fight off attackers–ready-made army.

16th & 17th century Plantations

- Bases from which new settlers could be planted into the surrounding countryside.
- Form commercial, legal and military bastions in a hostile environment.
- Foster infrastructure development–the building of roads, mills, bridges.
- Provide a market place, and implement state business and control–barracks, gaols, court houses.

Estate Towns—new towns established by landlords in 18th century.

- Symmetrical layout.
- Well-designed buildings lined the streets.
- Wide straight streets.
- Main square–often with market house.
- Key building is Church of Ireland parish church.

19th century Railway/Garrison/ Resort towns
The growth of industry, the building of railways, the new fashion of tourism and the need to house large numbers of soldiers all provided impetus in the 19th century for new towns and villages.

20th Century new towns
Shannon, Co. Clare and Craigavon, Co. Armagh.

21st Century–Adamstown, Co. Dublin.