

Guide to Local History Resources for Co. Wicklow



**Wicklow County Council Library
Local Studies Service**

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Local Studies Library

Wicklow Library Local Studies Library is located on Salthouse Lane , Wicklow Town, County Wicklow. It is a reference and research facility dedicated to collecting, preserving and making available material related to all aspects of modern and historic County Wicklow. It provides access to books and other resources on a wide range of topics of relevance to the county.

About this guide

This guide is a listing of the main tools for researching local history in County Wicklow. It lists the main sources available at the Wicklow Local Studies Library, as well as some of the most useful online resources.

While the guide is aimed predominantly at teachers, secondary and third level students, it will be useful for anyone researching the history of their local area.

Local Studies Resources

Local Studies resources include print materials, electronic and digital resources, microfilm and visual items which together document the past activities of individuals, organizations and businesses in County Wicklow, as well as, the topography, geography, local flora and fauna of the county. Below is a listing of some of the main resources housed in the Local Studies Library:

Photographs

Photographs are important primary sources for research, helping us gain a better understanding of the places, lives and communities around us. These visual documents can be used to trace landscape and streetscape changes as they often show buildings, roads, architectural and archaeological features that may no longer exist. Photographs of ‘main streets’ can be used to trace the nature and names of past businesses of a town or village. They can tell us about the dress or fashions at the time, the mode of transport used and so on.



Photograph of Market Square Wicklow Town c ca. 1865-1914 from the Lawrence Collection courtesy of National Library of Ireland

The local studies photograph collection dates from the late 19th century to the present day. The majority of the photos belong to the *Lawrence Collection*. The Local Study Collection also includes a number of 19th and early 20th century souvenir books and pictorials which contain lots of photographs from around the county.

The National Library of Ireland's photographic collection has a vast online photograph archive and includes many photos of County Wicklow. The online collection can be searched at: <https://www.nli.ie/digital-photographs.aspx>

The National Folklore Collection's photographic collection consists of some 80,000 photographs, the majority of which were taken between 1935 and 1970. There are over 380 photographs from various locations in County Wicklow. These are available to view on the Dúchas website at <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbeg>

Postcards

Postcards, like photographs, are a great visual resource for local history research. Postcards often captured what features of a place was distinctive or valuable so often include historic sites, buildings, train stations, public buildings, parks, libraries, and "Main" Streets. They also captured important events, such as the Great Flood of Bray, Co. Wicklow in 1905. The more common the postcard, the more popular it was as a tourist destination so some places are more often captured than others i.e. Powerscourt Gardens & Waterfall, Glendalough and Bray Seafront.



Postcard of the Regatta in Bray c. 1900 courtesy of Wicklow Library Service

Furthermore, postcards were often the main method of communication and the messages written on the back of them can provide an important record of the social history of that time. Caution should however be applied when using postcards for local history as images on postcards would often have been altered or retouched to make them more saleable.

There are over 300 postcards in our local studies collection dating from the late 19th century to the present day.

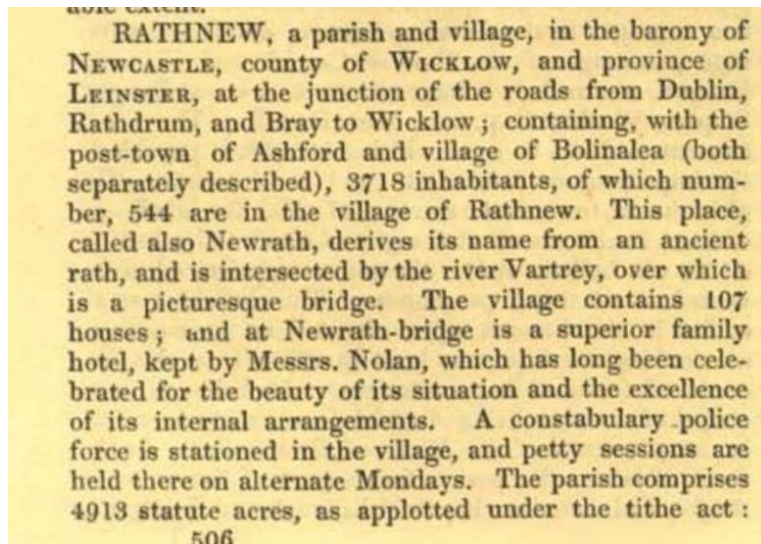
Newspapers

Newspapers are a great source of information for local history. They are a useful primary source for researching local events, deaths, births and marriage notices, sporting events and court cases.

The main newspapers for County Wicklow are the Wicklow Newsletter, the Wicklow People and Bray People. The following newspaper are available to view on microfilm in the Local Studies Library:

Wicklow People	1889-2015
Wicklow Star	1895-1900
Arklow Reporter	1890-1893
Wicklow Post	1935
Wicklow Standard	1900-1901
Bray Gazette	1861-1873
East Coast Express	1936-1938
Bray Tribune	1939-1943
Bray Herald	1905-1927
Bray People	1979-2015
Wicklow Newsletter	1858-1926

Lewis' Topographical Dictionary



Extract from Lewis' Topographical Dictionary describing the village of Rathnew c. 1838

Lewis' Topographical Dictionary, published in 1837, is one of the most valuable sources for the history of early 19th century and pre-famine County Wicklow. Lewis gives details about every town, civil parish, village and main post town, including the number of inhabitants, the names of the principal inhabitants (generally landlords, merchants and professionals), details about the economy, history, topography, market days and much more.

Vol. 1 & 2 are available for consultation in the Local Studies Library or a digital copy can be viewed online at:

<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/digital-book-collection/digital-books-by-subject/geography-of-ireland/lewis-a-topographical-dic/>

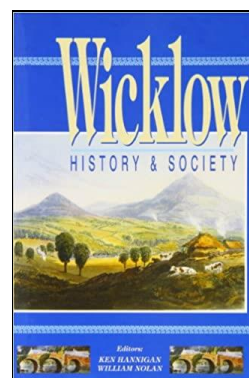
Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland of 1846:

The Parliamentary Gazetteer is similar to Lewis' Topographical Dictionary although more detailed and contains more statistical information. It was published in 1846, on the cusp of the famine, so provides a very vivid picture of Ireland prior to some major demographic and topographic changes.

Hard copies of the Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland can be consulted in the Local Studies Library and online at: www.libraryireland.com

Local History Book Collection

The Local Studies Library holds an extensive collection of reference books relating to many aspects of modern and historic County Wicklow. This includes books on archaeology, education, politics, flora and fauna, architecture, gardens, landscapes, tourism and sport amongst others. The collection also includes travellers' accounts of from those who visited the county in the past, as well as, many town, village and parish histories. The following is a list of the most useful texts for a general study of the history of County Wicklow:



- **The Ordnance Survey Letters Wicklow.** Corlett, Christiaan & Medlycott, John (eds) (2000)
- **The Liam Price Notebooks: The Placenames, antiquities and topography of County Wicklow.** Corlett, Christiaan & Weaver, Mairéad (eds) (2002)
- **Famine in County Wicklow.** County Wicklow Heritage Project (1996)
- **The Last County: The Emergence of Wicklow as a County 1606 – 1845.** County Wicklow Heritage Project (1993)
- **Wicklow Villages: A Historic Guide.** Dargan, Pat (2011)
- **A History of County Wicklow.** Flynn, Arthur (2003)
- **The Book of Wicklow: Town and Villages in the Garden of Ireland.** Flynn, Arthur & Brophy, Jim (1991)
- **General View of the Agriculture and Mineralogy, Present State and Circumstances of the County Wicklow.** Fraser, Robert (1801)
- **A Social History of the Wicklow Uplands.** Gurrin, Brian (2006)
- **Wicklow: History & Society (Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County).** Hannigan, Ken and Nolan, William (1994)
- **The Placenames of County Wicklow.** Price, Liam (1980)
- **The County Wicklow Database 433AD to 2006AD.** Brian White (2006).

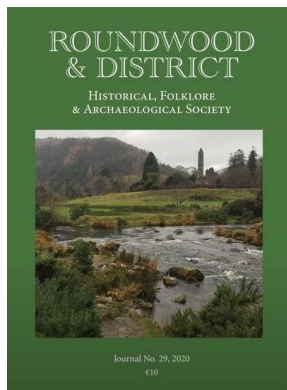
All books in the Local Studies Collection can be searched using the library catalogue at <https://librariesireland.iii.com/iii/encore/?lang=eng>

Local Studies also houses special collections on those individuals who have played a significant role in the history or development of the county. These include **the Synge Collection, Parnell Collection, Erskine Childers Collection and Thomas Moore Collection.** **The 1798 Collection** includes over one hundred texts, which together trace the events, places, people and development of the 1798 Rebellion in County Wicklow.

Journals

Journals are a great source of information for local history. They contain the most up-to-date and detailed information on a particular place or topic. Local history journals often contain articles about places, people and events that never make it into the history books.

There are over forty journal titles in the local study collection. This includes popular national publications such as Archaeology Ireland and History Ireland, as well as, numerous local history journals. These include:



- **Roundwood & District History & Folklore Journal**
- **Carnew Historical Society Journal**
- **Ashford & District Historical Journal**
- **Arklow Historical Society Journal**
- **Bray Historical Record**
- **Journal of the Cualann Historical Society**
- **Bray Journal**
- **Greystones Archaeological Historical Society Journal**
- **Wicklow Historical Society**
- **Journal of the West Wicklow Historical Society**
- **Journal of Enniskerry and Powerscourt Local History**

Wicklow County Council Library Service also provides free access to the **JSTOR Irish Collection** in all of its library branches. This website provides full text access to several notable Irish Historical Journals including History Ireland, Archaeology Ireland and the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

Maps

The Local Studies Library holds a number of maps relating to County Wicklow, including the complete collection of the 1838 Ordnance Survey First edition six inch to the mile coloured maps.



Extract from OS First edition 6" to 1 mile Sheet 25 showing the town of Wicklow, the harbour and Black Castle.

These maps were the first accurate and detailed maps of the county and provide a comprehensive portrait of the Irish landscape just prior to the Great Famine. The maps are beautifully illustrated showing forests, bogs, marshland, archaeological features, settlement patterns, Wicklow's great estates and 'Big Houses', along with schools, coastguard stations and other important infrastructure.

The CD ROM '*Maps of Wicklow Through the ages: A Visual History*' (2016) can be viewed in the Local Studies Library. This resource provides an overview of some of the earliest map depictions of Wicklow from the early 16th century through to the 20th century.

The full suite of Ordnance Survey(OS) maps, both modern and historical, can also be viewed on the online Ordnance Survey mapping tool GeoHive MapViewer <http://map.geohive.ie/>

Griffiths Valuation

Griffiths Valuation is the name widely given to the Primary Valuation of Ireland. This was a property valuation survey carried out between 1848 and 1864 to get as accurate as possible an estimate of the annual income that each property should produce. Wicklow was surveyed between 1852-3 and published 1854.

Griffiths Valuation is especially useful for family history and local history research and is very valuable as a census substitute as the earliest surviving Irish census is 1901. The maps, together with the books, can be used to tell you about where your ancestors lived, the type

of habitation they lived in and the type of land they lived on which, in turn, can tell you a lot about their socio-economic status. Griffiths Valuation can also tell us who the main landowners were in a particular area.

Printed copies of Griffiths Valuation books for Wicklow are available in the Local Studies Library.

The *Askaboutireland* website also provides access to Griffiths Valuation at:

<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/> . Instructions on using and understanding the valuation maps can be found at <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/irish-genealogy/understanding-the-valuation/>

PARISH OF AGHOWLE.								
No. and Letters of Reference to Map.	NAME.		Description of Tenement.	Area.	Rateable Annual Valuation.		Total Annual Valuation of Rateable Property.	
	Townlands and Occupiers.	Immediate Lessors.			Land.	Buildings.		
		AGHOWLE, LOWER. (Ord. S. 42.)		A. R. P.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
1	a	Richard Shea, . . .	Earl Fitzwilliam, . . .	House, offices, and land,	31 3 30	17 10 6	5 0 0	22 10 6
-	b	Vacant, . . .	Richard Shea, . . .	House,	-	-	0 5 0	0 5 0
2	a	Thomas Dowling, . . .	Earl Fitzwilliam, . . .	House, offices, and land,	66 0 19	41 5 0	3 15 0	45 0 0
-	b	Mary Byrne, . . .	Thomas Dowling, . . .	House and garden, . . .	0 0 55	0 5 0	0 15 0	1 0 0
3	a	Thomas Hughes, jun., . . .	Earl Fitzwilliam, . . .	House, offices, and land,	58 0 0	28 0 0	1 15 0	29 15 0
4	a	William Hughes, . . .	Same, . . .	Land, . . .	6 1 23	2 10 0	-	-
-	b			Land, . . .	21 3 25	12 0 0	-	15 10 0
-	3 b			Ho. off. yard, & garden,	0 0 30	0 2 0	0 18 0	-

Sample from Griffiths Valuation Books showing the Parish of Aghowle

Tithe Applotment Books

In the early 19th century people living in an agricultural holdings or farmland over one acre were obliged to pay tithes (one tenth of agricultural produce) to the local Church of Ireland. This information was recorded by the clergy between 1823 and 1837 in Tithe Applotment books.

Tithe Applotment Books are useful for genealogists and historians as they give the names of occupiers of each townland, the quality and amount of land they held and the sums to be paid in tithes. This information can be used to help you build up a picture of your research area and the families living in the area.

The Tithe Applotment Books for the county of Wicklow are available on microfiche in the Local Studies Library and they are also available online from the National Archives website at :

<http://titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie/search/tab/home.jsp>

Trade & Street Directories

Directories were produced for commercial purposes during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries and worked a bit like a modern phone book. They provided a record of the "principal inhabitants" of a community, listing those in a trade or profession or members of the gentry. They are a very useful source for researching the type of trades and commercial

premises that existed in a village or town, they can be used to trace the growing or declining prosperity of a town or can be used simply as a genealogy aid in establishing addresses and occupations of people who lived in the county.

The local studies library holds a number of trades and street directories of County Wicklow. These include:

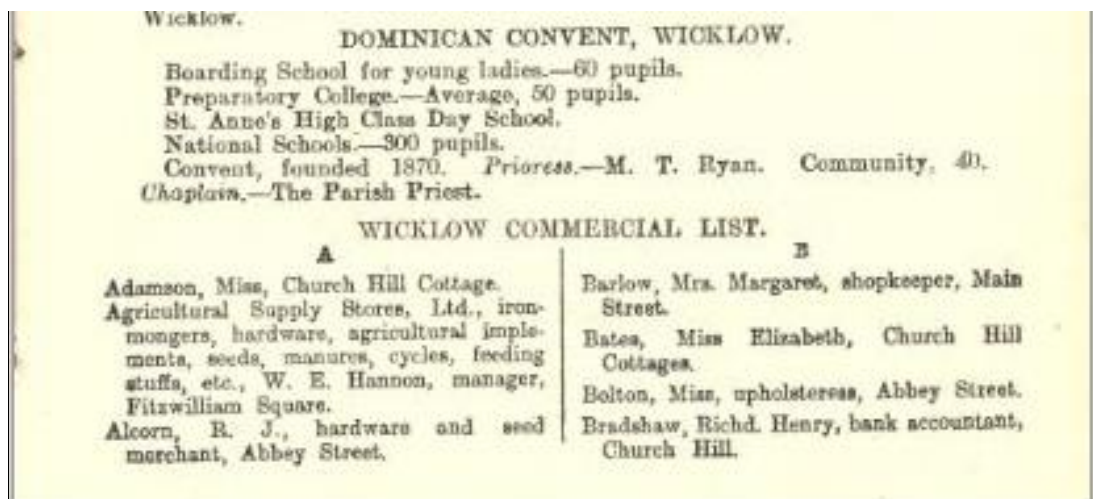
1846 – National Commercial Directory of Ireland by Slater

1879 - Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

1896 - Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

1910 – Porter's Post Office Guide and Directory of the County Wicklow.

1946 - Thom's Directory of Ireland for the Year 1946



Extract from Porter's Post Office Guide and Directory of the County Wicklow for 1910

Thom's Directories from the late 19th and early-to-mid 20th centuries can be searched on the Askaboutireland website at: <http://www.askaboutireland.ie>

Shane Wilson also has some excellent free pages for Irish Directories and he has created a searchable Directories Database too on <https://www.swilson.info/dirdb.php>

Local Study Files

The Local Studies Library maintains a collection of files on subjects of local interest, places and people associated with the county. The files mainly consist of newspaper cuttings, journal articles, souvenir programmes, tourist brochures, pamphlets and other items of ephemera.

Online Resources

Encyclopaedia Britannica

Britannica Online Library is a fantastic resource for school projects, homework and more



detailed research projects. It provides timely, relevant, and trustworthy information. It includes articles, video, photographs, maps and further reading including ebooks.

You can access the Britannica Online Library from *any* PC using your library card number at the link below:

<https://www.wicklow.ie/Living/Services/Libraries/Online-Resources/Encyclopedia-Britannica>

Please visit

https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/adam/Content/7UamUIR_DkGyiVTO2kf9XQ/Text/Britannica%20Guide%202020.pdf for your free user guide.

JSTOR

JSTOR is an online resource which can be accessed in all Wicklow County Council Library Branches free of charge. The Ireland Collection contains journals and other resources in disciplines including history, geography and archaeology spanning from the 1780s to the present. Full-text articles can be downloaded on the library subscription.



FindMyPast

Findmypast is a family history website which provides online access to Parish Records, the



Dog License Registers, Trade Directories, Irish Prison Registers 1790-1924 and much more. The British Newspapers collection includes several local newspapers from 1850 to the present. Findmypast.ie can be accessed in all Wicklow County Council Library Branches free of charge.

Useful websites

AskaboutIreland

The Askabout Ireland website is the showcase of information on Irish history and heritage



which can be found in the collections of local libraries, museums and archives countrywide. The 'Learning Zone' is a dedicated area for primary and secondary school students and contains information on various aspects of Irish history. Wicklow County Council Library Service has contributed web pages on Erskine Childers and J.M. Synge, the Dublin & Blessington

Steam Tram and the Dublin & South Eastern Railway, the Powerscourt Demesne, and the history of Wicklow schools. It has deposited digital copies of Wicklow texts, provides information on the flora and fauna of the county and makes recommendations for further reading. There is a dedicated primary school page which provides information about Anne Devlin and other aspects of Wicklow history.

www.askaboutireland.ie

The Placenames Database of Ireland

Place names are a rich study area for the historian providing clues about the history of our local area, what activities or events took place there or how the area was used in the past. The Placenames Database of Ireland is a website which contains information on Irish placenames in both Irish and in English, as well as providing names of towns, townlands, rivers, and other physical features.

<https://www.logainm.ie>

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) should be the first port of call for anyone who wants to know more about the history of a building or structure erected after 1700. Each building surveyed includes a description and photos and is available on the Buildings of Ireland website.

[www.buidlingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie)

Schools Folklore Collection

The Schools Collection is a fantastic resource to learn about the history of your area. The collection is made up of approximately 740,000 pages recorded by school children from

interviews with their parents, grandparents and neighbours between 1937 and 1939. The information they recorded includes the history of buildings, archaeological monuments, folktales and legends, riddles and proverbs, games and pastimes, trades and crafts, customs, etc.. A number of County Wicklow schools were involved in the project and their original copy books and transcriptions can be viewed on the Duchas website at:

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes>

Heritage Map Viewer

The Heritage Map Viewer is an online map which allows you to view and explore a wide range of built and natural heritage datasets in map form including archaeological, geological and hydrological features, flora and fauna, architecture, soils and more.

<http://www.heritagemaps.ie/>

For further information contact:

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Visit Wicklow Local Studies web pages at:

www.wicklow.ie/Living/Services/Libraries/Local-Studies