



MILLSTREET (*Sráid an Mhuilinn*) is nestled in the valley of the River Blackwater, at the foot of Clara Mountain, in Duhallow, North Cork. The locality was well populated in the Bronze Age and Early Christian period judging by the surviving monuments in the area. In the later medieval period settlement was focused around nearby Drishane Castle, a seat of the McCarthy clan.

The town developed around a small corn mill and a scatter of a few houses in the early 1700's. Its development to what we see today is the result of its success as a market town. It had a weekly pig market held every Thursday, and four annual fairs where livestock of all kinds were traded. The trade in these markets supplied a tannery, where animal skins were treated to make leather. The town's development was enhanced with the rapid development of the Cork-Kerry butter road, one of the main conduits supplying butter from the region to the largest butter markets in the world – the Cork Butter Exchange. By 1837 the town was "one long street, with several smaller ones diverging from it, and contains 312 houses, the greater number of which, though small, are neatly built". Local industries included corn milling, brewery, coal mining, a brickyard, and a weaving mill which operated until 1890. The Great Southern and Western Railway line, with a station to the north of the town, also supported economic development.

Daniel O'Connell was a regular visitor to Millstreet, and at least one repeal meeting is known to have been held in the town. Although relatively small, Millstreet has hosted many other important events which have given the town international fame. The Green Glens Arena is one of the largest equestrian centres in Ireland, and famously hosted the Eurovision song contest in 1993. The town is also justly famous for its surrounding scenic landscape.

Sites to see (Please refer to map overleaf for locations. Sites marked with an asterisk are outside the area covered by the map)

- WALLIS ARMS HOTEL:** Provided accommodation and sustenance to many a weary traveler, the ornate doorway is dated 1879 and bears the coat of arms (shield and wolf's head holding a spear) of the Wallis Family, the local landlords who played a key role in the development of the town.
- MONUMENT:** War of Independence monument unveiled by Austin Stack in 1927.
- BANK OF IRELAND:** Built as the National Bank in 1878. Its Gothic style is unusual for a financial building; the design gives it an air of authority and security.
- BENCHMARK:** Carved into the wall in front of the Bank of Ireland is a mark, known as a crow's foot, which indicates land height above sea level. The arrow is the symbol of the Board of Ordnance and the horizontal line at the top marks the actual level-this mark is 44.0 ft above sea level. All benchmarks are marked on the old 6" OS map.
- AIB BANK:** An imposing corner building built in c.1930 as the Munster & Leinster Bank. It was designed by James F. McMullen, the architect of the Honan Chapel in UCC.
- TERRACE OF HOUSES, Church St:** Built c. 1880. A colourful terrace of single storey houses with decorative brick detail and vertical-paned sash windows.
- STAR BALLROOM:** Opened 1953, the ballroom was in important part of social life in the town during the latter half of the 20th century. It closed in the 1990s.
- RECTORY:** Designed by James Franklin Fuller and built in 1877-1879, this was the home of the local Church of Ireland minister. The main entrance from the road is particularly elegant.



- FAIRFIELD:** The town held four annual fairs which were lively events where livestock of all kinds was traded. A weighbridge and a toll gate were features of the fair field. It is now the town car park.
- ST ANNA'S CHURCH OF IRELAND:** Built in 1798 by J. Wallis of Drishane Castle, it was enlarged in 1807-14 and a bell tower was added. The graveyard has a number of well-crafted tombs and headstones. The church was deconsecrated in 1958 and subsequently demolished leaving the bell tower, a landmark in the town and which now forms the focus of an amenity park.
- POUNDYARD:** One of three pounds in the town, this site reflects the importance of Millstreet as a market town. Pounds were enclosed areas used to keep livestock safe before fairs and markets, they also housed confiscated goods.
- CREAMERY:** Built 1937. Irish co-operative creameries were first established in the 1890s to collect milk from local farmers and flourished in the 20th century. The creamery served a large area and was a hive of activity and social interaction in its day.
- KNOCNAKILLA MONUMENTS*:** This group of prehistoric monuments is located in the hills c.5 km to the south of Millstreet and includes a stone circle, two standing stones and a cairn (stone mound). This was an important focus for ritual practices in the Bronze Age over 4000 years ago.
- ST JOHN'S WELL*:** On the northern slope of Musheru mountain with amazing views of the surrounding landscape. This is a much visited well especially on the saint's feast day on 24th June.
- KERRYMAN'S TABLE*:** From the 1800s, with the establishment of Cork Butter Exchange, a wide network of roads was developed connecting the agricultural heartlands of rural Cork, east Kerry and Limerick to Cork City. These became known as butter roads. Along one of these roads (L1123) c.5km east of the town is a large flat stone known as "The Kerryman's Table" where weary travellers rested and no doubt had a good chat before continuing on their journey.
- DRISHANE CASTLE*:** The fine tower house at Drishane was built by the McCarthys around 1450. By 1725 it was owned by J. Wallis, the local landlord. His family built a more comfortable house adjacent to the old tower. The site was sold to the Sisters of the Infant Jesus in 1909 and the house was turned into a girls' boarding school which closed in 1992. The castle is a National Monument on private land.
- DRISHANE CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD*:** Fragmentary remains of the medieval parish church of Drishane in attendant graveyard on the north side of Drishane Castle demesne.
- ARMY BARRACKS:** Built in 1879-80, on the site of an earlier barracks, to accommodate a force of 70 men. It was damaged during the 1922 conflict and was subsequently converted to a retail shop. Now a private residence, it still retains its original shop front featuring a carved wooden fascia with gold leaf lettering.
- CRONIN'S SHOP:** Built c.1820, this modest sized building represents the main architectural style that gives the town a pleasing appearance – modest, restrained and symmetrical. The shop front on the ground floor features cast iron art nouveau style lettering.
- TANGNEY'S DRAPERY SHOP:** Built in the 1880s, the decorative façade makes the building stand out on the streetscape; original counter and shelves in interior.
- THE MILL:** A flour mill has operated on this site since 1820. It had numerous owners including Maurice Hickey in 1875 who modernised the mill and in 1919, following fire damage and rebuilding, the O'Regan family purchased it and still run the mill today.
- MILLSTREET RAILWAY STATION*:** Built in 1853 for the Great Southern and Western railway. The station retains its original cast iron fireplaces in the waiting rooms. According to local information it was built outside town to avoid the private grounds around the McCarthy O'Leary's home, Coomlogane House [23].
- COOMLOGANE HOUSE (site of):** A grand country house built in 1805 for the McCarthy-O'Leary family. Daniel O'Connell was a relative of the family and a regular visitor. The house site is now occupied by the Green Glens Arena.
- SAINT PATRICK'S CHURCH:** A striking landmark building begun in 1834 and opened in 1838. Built in a typical neo-Classical style to designs by Rev Michael A. Riordan. Quality craftsmanship is displayed throughout including a stained-glass window by the famous Harry Clarke Studio.

Early Medieval Millstreet

Two important arrivals into the Millstreet area around 400 AD had a significant impact. These were literacy and Christianity. This period also saw an increase in population and the development of a vibrant local economy. We know where people lived at this time because they fortified their farmsteads with circular embankments, now known as ringforts. Holy wells and many of the older graveyards near the town are from this period and have been holy places for nearly two millennia.

RINGFORTS

Known variously as rath, lios, dún or 'fairy fort', a ringfort was a circular area enclosed by one or more earthen banks; the greater the number of banks, the higher the status. They functioned as defended farmsteads and date to the Early Medieval period (c. 400-900 AD). The enclosure contained houses, farm buildings and animal pens but also helped protect occupants from cattle raiding which was a popular activity at the time. They are unique to Ireland and are one of the most numerous types of archaeological monuments in the country, with over 45,000 examples identified. There are several ringforts in and around Millstreet, including one in the town itself [26]. Another occurred in the grounds of the Community School. A fine example is visible at Liscahane, adjacent to the R582 road from Cork [35].



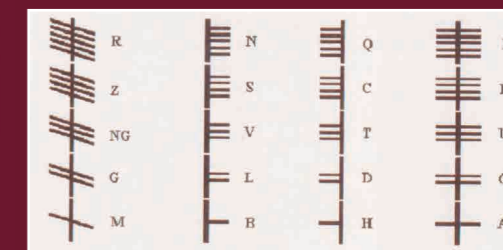
Reconstruction of a high status ringfort surrounded by three banks and ditches.



Two ogham stones found in the souterrain at Liscahane ringfort.

OGHAM STONES

Ogham is a script in which groups of lines or notches inscribed on a stemline represent letters of the alphabet. These inscriptions were cut along the edge(s) of upright stones. Most inscriptions read 'x son of y' (mac/maci/maqi) or 'x descendant of/tribe of y'(mucoi). The language of the inscriptions is the earliest recorded form of Old Irish. A pair of ogham stones was discovered in 1981 in a souterrain at Liscahane to the south of the town. One of these can be seen in Millstreet Museum and is inscribed "Colmann Maci Comggann", the other resides in Millstreet Community School and reads "Croccan Maque Domonigart" providing us with a link to two important people who lived here in the past.



The ogham alphabet formed by groups of incised lines arranged on a central line, usually represented by the edge of a stone.

- PRESENTATION CONVENT (site of):** Convent and national school designed by architect Samuel Francis Hynes. The order left Millstreet 2010 and the convent was subsequently demolished.
- RINGFORT (site of):** An Early Medieval farmstead or ringfort once stood at the junction of Coomlogane Street and the Killarney Road. It was one of the many that occur in the area.
- OLD SCHOOL:** Large two-storey school house with projecting gable ends and brick details, now divided into private dwellings.
- MOUNT LEADER*:** a large country house built for the Leader family in 1833, now a ruin. Remains of the grand entrance survive with an attractive gate lodge adjacent.
- KEEL BURIAL GROUND*:** Union Workhouse burial ground. Most graves are marked by low unincised grave markers
- CARNEGIE LIBRARY:** Carnegie libraries were a charitable educational initiative. Sixty-six such libraries were built in Ireland. This example was built 1912 to designs by Rudolf M. Butler. The building now houses Cork County Council Offices, Millstreet Library and Museum which has interesting artefacts on display.
- VERNACULAR HOUSE:** One of the neatly built small houses which retains its original character and form. It is a good example of what was once a common feature at the edge of towns.
- TUBRID WELL*:** One of three holy wells in the Millstreet area. It became famous in the late 19th century for curing local Parish Priest Cannon Griffin's stutter. Rounds are held weekly in May. At 13 m in diameter, this well is one of the largest in Ireland.
- INCHILEIGH BRIDGE*:** Single-arched, cut-stone bridge over the River Finnow, built c. 1810.
- WORKHOUSE (site of)*:** Built in 1850-52 to a design by George Wilkinson. Some ancillary buildings are incorporated into Millstreet Community Hospital.
- RINGFORT, Liscahane*:** The remains of an Early Medieval farmstead sited on the hillside on the east side of the R582 road.

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MILLSTREET HISTORIC TOWN



Carnegie Library (30)



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CORK COUNTY COUNCIL



<https://purecork.ie/plan-your-trip/tips-info/download-a-map-of-cork>



MILLSTREET Historic Town



16. Drishane Castle and House



3. Bank of Ireland



5. Allied Irish Bank



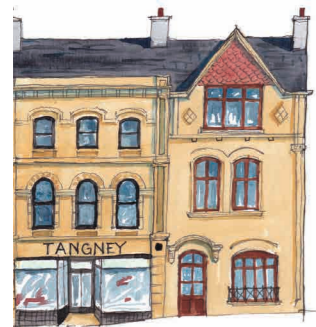
6. Terrace, Church Street



10. St Anna's Church & Graveyard



18. Former barracks



20. Tangney's Drapers



22. Millstreet railway station



24. St Patrick's Church



28. Mount Leader



27. Old School



31. Vernacular house, Killarney Rd.



33. Inchileigh Bridge



32. Tubrid Well

