YOUGHAL (Eochaill)

On hillside overlooking the wide estuary of the Blackwater River. The river provides a safe harbour for ships and this contributed to its original development as a Viking settlement. The annals of AD 864 record that 'a victory was gained over the fleet of Eochaill by the Deisi, and the [Viking] fortress destroyed'. However, no archaeological evidence has been uncovered to indicate the precise location of this Viking *longphort* (fortified naval encampment).

The town was established in c.1215, when Thomas FitzAnthony was granted custody of this area by King John. The town and port grew under FitzGerald patronage, welcoming settlers from southern England and Bristol. In 1224 Maurice FitzGerald founded a Franciscan monastery [6] on the south side of the town. His son Thomas completed the Franciscan establishment in 1260 and founded a Dominican monastery [10] on the north side of the town soon after. The earliest record of the town wall is a charter of 1275 granted by King Edward I for their repair and extension, suggesting the town was walled at some point before this. Youghal was a bustling town in the early 1300s, with a market at the widest point of the Main Street, and a busy port welcoming ships from near and far including England, France and Spain. However, the Black Death (c.1348-56) had a devastating impact on the area, and soon Youghal's fortunes declined. Several murage grants to repair the walls in the 1300s suggest an attempt to revive the growth of the early years. The surviving towers along the west of the wall, and the quayside town wall, were added around this time. The town was now fully enclosed and had a 'base town', also walled, attached to the south.

The College [14], founded by Thomas FitzGerald the eighth Earl of Desmond in 1464, marks another phase of expansion. The continued support of the earls allowed the mendicants of the college to prosper throughout the middle ages and even survive for decades after the dissolution of the monasteries. Attacks following the Desmond rebellion left the town in sorry need of repairs, and Walter Raleigh was given a plantation grant to bring the town back under crown control in the 1580s. Raleigh sold the town to Richard Boyle in 1602. It is Richard Boyle who is credited with the rapid and impressive expansion of Youghal in the 1600s, adding alms-houses [33] and schools and buying up properties across the settlement including the college. The towns defences and port facilities continued to be built up. Boyle's great grandson died without a male heir in 1753 and the lands passed through marriage to the Dukes of Devonshire. Bernard Scalé's map of 1764 shows 273 residences within the town belonging to the Devonshire estate. Though still walled, the town was poorly maintained. Throughout the late 1700s the corporation invested in the improvement of the quays, reclaiming lands along the riverside and allowing for the construction of large warehouses in this area of the town.

In the 19th century, Youghal continued to developed as a commercial town and became an important centre for pottery works. The opening of the train station [3] in the 1860s paved the way for Youghal to become one of the country's best known Victorian tourist destinations.

Today, Youghal retains the essence of its 18th and 19th century streetscape giving the town a strong heritage character and its unique charm. This is further enhanced by a rich stock of traditional shopfronts.

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552 - 1618)
Lord Mayor of Youghal between 1588-1589

Sites to see

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

1. ***LIGHTHOUSE:** Built c.1850 with an impressive domed lantern and attached lighthouse keeper's house.

2. ***BAYVIEW TERRACE:** Originally named Louisville, these fine Victorian seafront houses were built c. 1860 to designs by Dean and Woodward.

3. ***TRAIN STATION:** The Cork and Youghal Railway (C&YR) Company was established in the early 1860s connecting Youghal with Cork City and now forms part of the Youghal Midleton Greenway. A popular route for day trippers, the terminus is set some way outside the town at the strand. The station building has some decorative brick detailing.

4. **GREEN PARK:** The park was established c.1900 and includes some late Victorian elements such as the octagonal bandstand and cast iron fountain.

5. **THE CONVENT:** Imposing former convent overlooking the southern entrance to the town, built in several stages 1834-72, now a school.

6. **SOUTH ABBEY/DEVONSHIRE ARMS HOTEL:** Site of a Franciscan abbey founded 1224. Replaced by an elegant neo-classical style hotel built by the Duke of Devonshire in 1826.

7. **METHODIST CHURCH:** Built in 1880 in a restrained style using local brick.

8. **BARRACKS:** Built c.1840 as an infantry barracks with accommodation for six officers and 180 men. Now part of Youghal Hospital.

9. **TOWN WALLS:** One of the most complete town walls in Ireland, earliest sections built c.1250 AD. You can access the walls and College Garden from Raheen Road for a beautiful short walk with lovely views.

10. **NORTH ABBEY:** Dominican Friary founded 1268. A carved stone tracery window in the west gable wall is all that remains.

11. **11 & 12 NORTH MAIN STREET:** Built c.1780 as a six-bay wide property and divided into two shops in the 19th century. Fine render detailing.

12. **MYRTLE GROVE:** A very rare example of a surviving 16th century urban house. The building is private, but can be seen from the nearby Church grounds [13]. It is one of the earliest, unfortified, still occupied house in Ireland.

13. **ST. MARYS COLLEGIATE CHURCH:** Built c.1220 in gothic style, this is one of the largest medieval parish churches in Ireland. The 13th century oak roof timbers is a rare survival. It also contains the 17th century memorial to Richard Boyle whose effigy reclines over miniature carvings of his wives and children; a colourful memorial in a sombre setting. The church provides an engaging visitors experience.

14. **THE COLLEGE: (now offices)** Founded in 1464 by the Earl of Desmond as a college of choristers and lay brothers for Youghal and surrounding area. Originally known as 'Our Lady's College of Youghal', the building was modified c.1605 by Richard Boyle as a residence. It was heavily rebuilt in 1782.

15. **GARDENS:** Walled 16th century terraced gardens sloping from the Town Walls [9] down to Emmet Place. This is a very rare survival of a walled garden from this date. Now a public park.

16. **FORMER BANK, EMMET PLACE:** Built c.1810 as a bank. Note the carved limestone plaque of the town seal (a ship and tower denoting the fortified medieval harbour).

17. **THE CONVENT:** Former convent and once the parish priest's house, this classical style building is thought to date to the 18th century.

18. **CARNEGIE LIBRARY EMMET PLACE:** Built in the early 1900s on the site of a former Quaker Meeting House. Carnegie Libraries were charitable educational institutions supported by grants from Andrew Carnegie, an American industrial tycoon and philanthropist.

19. **ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH:** Built in 1794 in neo-Gothic style. The interior features Victorian encaustic tiled floors, timber dado panelling and beautifully carved confessionals nestled under a three-sided gallery with organ.

20. **FIELD'S SHOP, 106 NORTH MAIN STREET:** The iconic late 19th century shop, the nameplate is hand painted on the reverse side of the glass and finished with gold leaf.

21. **MERRICK'S SHOP, 83-80 MAIN STREET:** A wonderful historic department store, built c.1900. Although it is now subdivided, the original façade is legible as a cohesive shopfront with fine render detailing.

22. **CLOCKGATE:** Straddling the main street, this landmark clock tower was built in 1777 on the site of the medieval Trinity Gate. It is open to the public and well worth a visit with three floors of fascinating exhibits, including a recreated merchant's shop.

23. **TOWN HALL:** Built in 1779 on reclaimed ground. It was once used as a courthouse and council chambers and continues to function as a public building.

24. **WATERGATE:** Straddling Watergate Street, this gateway marks the only point of access to the quays following the 15th century expansion of the town.

25. **COURTHOUSE:** Built c.1845 possibly to a design by William Caldbeck. Part of the rear of the building, which originally formed part of a pre-existing 17th/18th century customs house which was used as a soup kitchen in response to the famine of 1845-52.

26. **PIER HEAD, MARKET DOCK:** Stone quay built 1770-77.

27. **MEAT SHAMBLES LANE:** Once the site of a meat market or shambles, this narrow lane is characteristic of the medieval streetscape of Youghal.

28. **PRIORY:** The gable wall fronting the street is all that remains of the medieval Priory of St. John, a Benedictine house built in 1306. The gable contains a pointed medieval door opening and a typical medieval ogee headed window of Dundry stone.

29. **PERMANENT TSB BANK:** Built c.1910 this redbrick and render bank is in a distinctive Edwardian style with robust render detailing and casement windows with irregular pane sizes.

30. **FORMER BANK OF IRELAND:** Built in 1840-46 as a combined bank and manager's house. The limestone shopfront contrasts with the red brick façade.

31. **SHOP, 31 MAIN STREET:** This 19th century shopfront retains some wonderful tiled stall risers.

32. **RED HOUSE:** Built in 1703, this building represents the very beginnings of neo-Classical architecture. Constructed of red brick, it would have been a dramatic statement on the streetscape.

33. **ALMS HOUSES:** Built by Richard Boyle in 1613-1634, to provide accommodation for six poor widows. These unusal buildings are a rare survival of late medieval houses. They bare the Richard Boyle coat of arms. Still functions as social housing.

34. **TYNTE'S CASTLE:** A late medieval urban tower house, facing onto the main street. A rare example of an urban medieval tower house.

35. **AIB BANK:** Built 1841-6 and altered c.1910. Note the finely carved limestone shopfront.

36. **136 MAIN STREET:** Wonderful carving evident in the detail of the brackets on the shopfront. The acanthus leaf was a decorative motif popular in ancient Greek architecture and revived as part of the neo-Classical movement.

A medieval town

One of the most impressive aspects of Youghal is the sheer quantity of surviving medieval fabric. Youghal's medieval elite built up a town where urban castles alternated with townhouses, a scene easy to imagine walking past Tynte's castle [34] and the alms-houses [33] on Main Street today, or wandering along the amazingly well-preserved town walls [9]. Around the castles, abbeys and churches, merchants, traders and ordinary citizens lived and worked in premises set within long narrow plots stretching back from the street.
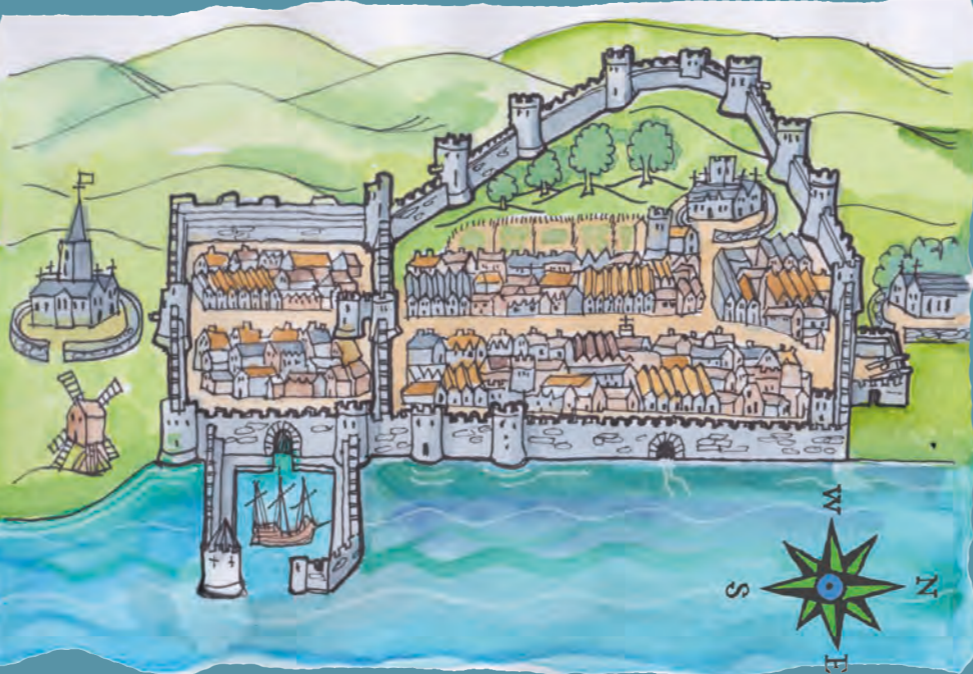
In 1300 there were about 240 of these 'burgage plots' in Youghal and their footprint can be traced in the surviving plot layout and through the archaeological record.

The traders of Youghal had close links with ports in Britain, northwest Europe and the Mediterranean.

The town's thriving market based on the Main Street would have been a riot of smells, colours, and sounds. Archaeological and archival evidence shows that wine, coffee, cider, glass, exotic spices, olives and oils, ceramics, tapestry, silk and other cloth and salt were all imported into the town, while wool, fish, timber, and agricultural produce were exported. By 1353 the Annals of Youghal record that the freemen of Youghal had special privileges in trading of staples like wool, leather, and lead. In 1462 the town was named one of the 'cinque ports', granting it yet more special trading privileges. The port also served a vital military role: troops were landed or embarked here, and provisions for naval and commercial ventures flowed into the town. Of course, with all this economic success came unwelcome developments including an active pirating ring. Youghal contains more above ground medieval monuments than any other town in the county and makes it a fascinating place to visit.

The walled town of Youghal as it may have looked c.1585
(based on the Pacata Hibernia)

Extent of the town of Youghal c.1500

14th century window, the Priory [28]

YOUGHAL
Historic Town

Clockgate [22]

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www.corkcoco.ie/en/explore-cork-county/cork-county-historic-town-maps

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YOUGHAL
Historic Town

Youghal town seal

22. Clockgate

28. Priory doorway

32. Red House

33. Alms Houses

34. Tynte's Castle

Youghal Harbour

C. 0.3 KM

1. Youghal lighthouse

6. Devonshire Arms Hotel

7. Methodist Church

9. Town walls

10. North Abbey

12. Myrtle Grove

13. Boyle Monument, St Mary's Collegiate Church

16. Former bank, Emmet Place

19. St Mary's Catholic Church

20. Field's Shop

C. 0.4 KM

C. 1 KM

C. 1.2 KM

Richard Boyle, First Earl of Cork (1566-1643)

PRINTING WORKS

FIELD

N E S W

100m