



# Westmeath Industrial Heritage Survey: sample visits



GIACOMETTI & BARRY

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AP2009

**SITE NAME**

Westmeath Industrial Heritage Survey: sample visits of 11 sites

**CLIENT**

Heritage Office, Westmeath County Council, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath N91 FH4N

**RMP**

N/a

**PLANNING**

N/a

**LICENCE**

N/a

**PROJECT REF**

AP2009

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**ABBREVIATIONS USED**

DoHLGH	Dept. of Housing, Local Government & Heritage
NMI	National Museum of Ireland
NMS	National Monuments Service
OS	Ordnance Survey
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
RPS	Record of Protected Structures
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
LAP	Local Area Plan

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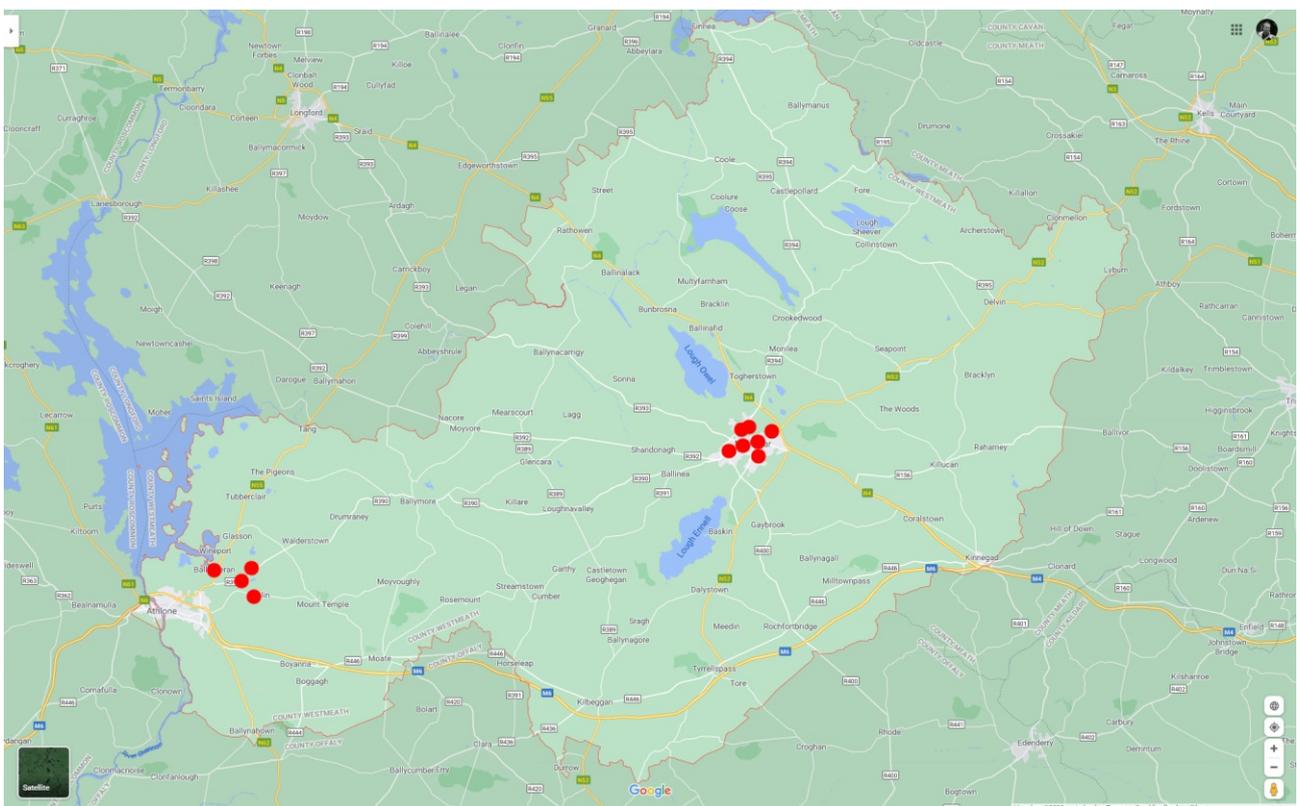
# Section 1 Introduction

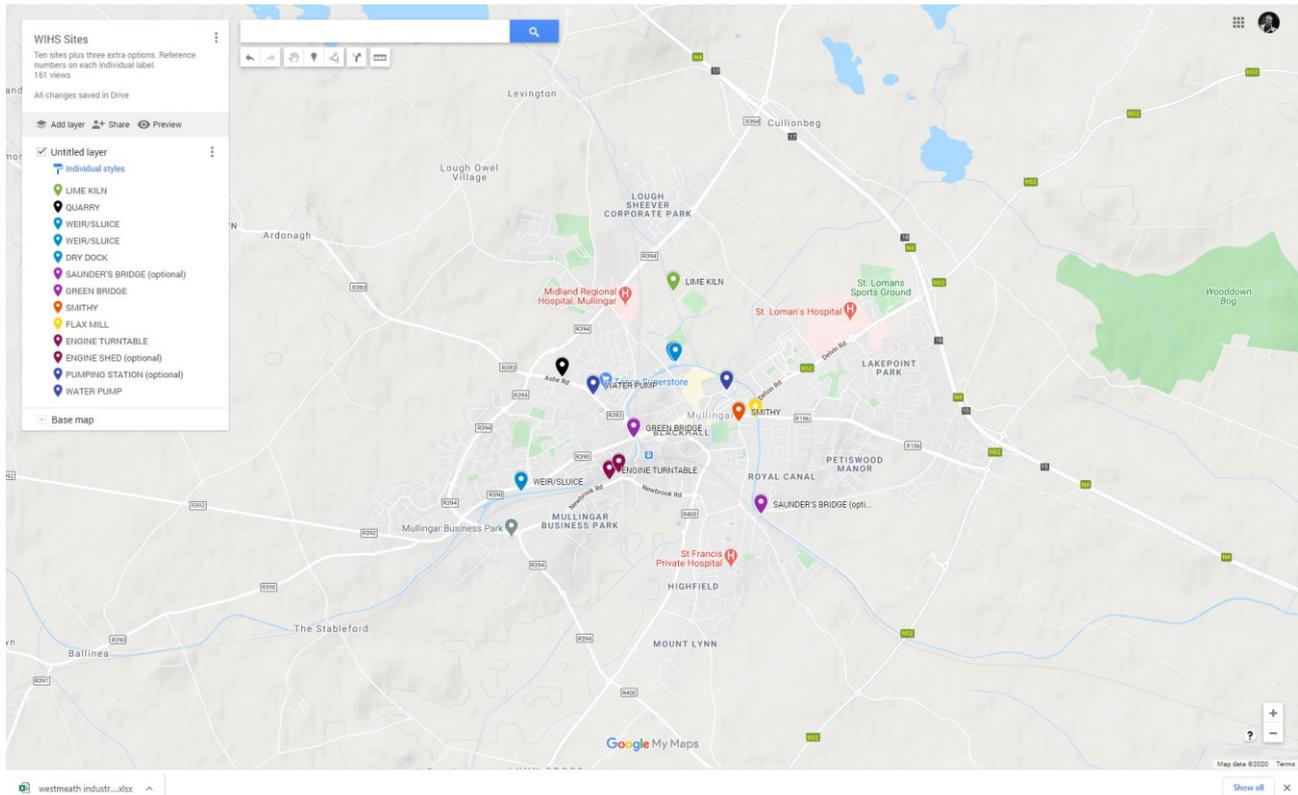
This report describes the results of a sample field survey of eleven industrial heritage sites in Westmeath, located in Mullingar and east of Athlone. This is small sample of the almost 5,000 industrial heritage sites on the Westmeath Industrial Heritage Survey database. Thus, the aim of the project was not only to survey these eleven sites, but also to inform a longer-term plan of surveying all of the industrial heritage of Westmeath in a practical and cost-effective way. Our approach was therefore be to sample a wide variety of sites, in order to be able to make concrete recommendations about how to further develop the survey.

The field survey establishes the survival rates of the sites. Where extant remains were found, their condition was recorded in a similar style to the NIAH. Where industrial heritage has been demolished, the nature of that demolition was also noted.

A further aim of the project was to raise awareness of industrial heritage through a heritage week event. This will take place in 2021. The industrial heritage event we conducted in 2019 in Westmeath was positive and demonstrated public interest in the subject, which is crucial if Westmeath's industrial heritage is to be better protected going forward.

Location of sites visited (red circles)





Detail of sites chosen for inspection in Mullingar

## Methodology

The first stage of this project was to pick the sites. These were selected in consultation with the Heritage Officer, however the key aspects were to pick sites that were close together (for ease of the survey) and broadly representative of the overall survey. No NIAH sites were surveyed as these are already surveyed and published online. RMP sites will, however, as the NMS surveys did not emphasise industrial features.

Twenty-five sites were selected at this stage: 13 in Mullingar and 12 east of Athlone. Only 11 sites ended up in the finished survey, mostly because so many sites had no surviving traces.

Where industrial sites are located on private land, this was discussed with Westmeath County Council, and where necessary permission from any landowners was arranged in advance.

Stage 2 was the pre-visit preparation of the sites. This involved entering the coordinates on a Google Maps navigation programme for ease

of driving directions. Each site was individually looked at to assess what sort of remains might be present and where they might be. For example, in the case of a mill, the locations of former millraces, milltails, millponds, sluices, kilns, corn barns etc. as well as mill buildings were noted in advance. This allowed the efficient on-site recording and assessing of the sites.

Stage 3 was the site visits. As permission to enter sites had not always been possible to arrange, and due to Covid, access to each site was highly variable.

The key records of each site comprised: the condition (i.e. intact, partially-intact, or demolished); the possibility of remains (e.g. full, sub-surface, or none); the visit type (e.g. external only, or internal also); and the components of each site (e.g. a single industrial site may have numerous components each with different levels of preservation). To this will be added a physical description of the site, and a high-quality photo (or multiple photographs where appropriate) of each site. All this information

was entered into a pre-populated form on the same day as the inspection.

The report comprises the survey of the ten sites with photographs. The information will also be supplied digitally to facilitate adding to the Heritage Maps website resource. The surveys and report will reference the Westmeath Industrial Heritage Desktop Survey (2019) and Heritage Council publication 'Recording and Conserving Ireland's Industrial Heritage, An Introductory Guide' (2002). The NIAH guide was used as a template, but the nature of the data collected meant that the NIAH format could not be followed.

## Conclusions

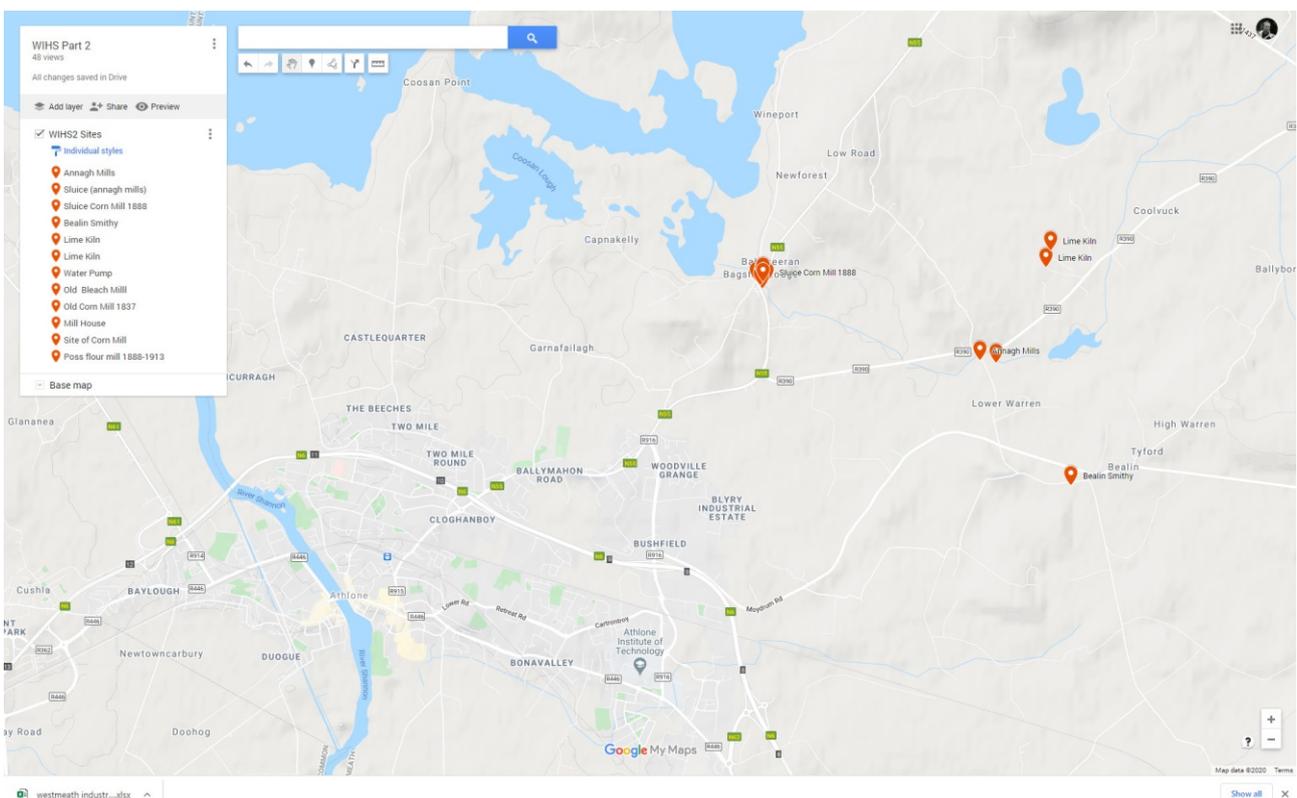
Many of the sites inspected were demolished, filled in, or unable to be located. This is a significant loss of industrial heritage. Sites in urban and commercial areas are under pressure of de-

molition or modification while sites in rural areas are threatened by neglect. The sample size is too small to draw conclusions, but in neighbouring Meath a sample of 257 visited industrial sites noted that 56% of the sites were demolished, and the main source of demolition was roads and commercial development, rather than private development.

The field survey was generally welcomed by landowners and local people who were happy to share their reminiscences of local industrial heritage sites. For example, the owner of the smithy at Bealin responded positively to meeting surveyors and were happy to share information. Due to Covid discussions with landowners had to be minimised and kept at a distance, which undoubtedly resulted in a loss of information.

Sites such as the well-preserved smithies, demonstrated the value of visiting the sites. This would also have been the case with com-

Detail of sites selected for inspection outside Athlone





Saunder's Bridge, one of the sites inspected but not included in the final survey

plex sites such as the water mills, which comprise numerous buildings and features which are frequently on private land, and in some cases

have been partially converted to other uses. It is important that local memory is captured now before such valuable information is lost.

Final list of eleven sites in survey

<b>Name</b>	<b>WIHS</b>	<b>GPS</b>
Forge at Moydrum, Bealin	3650	53.43236, -7.8488
Ballykeeran Mills	469	53.44787, -7.88747
Annagh Mills	76	53.44191, -7.86036
Annagh Sluice	77	53.44168, -7.85831
Mullingar Smithy	3798	53.52538693, -7.33455023
Ashe Road Quarry	3837	53.52885326, -7.35707481
Harbour Road Lime Kiln	4324	53.53953069, 7.33914106
Pumping station, Friars Mill rd	3804	53.52779526, -7.33614138
Friars Mills	3761	53.52779526, -7.33614138
Mullynonny Flax Mill, Mullingar	3769	53.52568942, -7.33238881
Ashe Road water pump	3778	53.52744777, -7.35308421

Site Name	Condition	Possibility of Remains	Visit type
Forge at Moydrum	Intact	Full	Full internal/external
Ballykeeran Mills	Partially intact	Sub-surface	External
Annagh Mills	Partially intact	Sub-surface	External
Annagh Sluice	Unknown	Full	N/A
Mullingar Smithy	Demolished	Sub-surface	External
Ashe Road Quarry	Intact	Full	External
Harbour Road Lime Kiln	Demolished	Sub-surface	External
Pumping station	Demolished	Sub-surface	External
Friars Mills	Demolished	Sub-surface	External
Mullynonny	Demolished	Sub-surface	External
Ashe Road water pump	Possible sub-surface	None	External



## Forge at Moydrum

WIHS REF: 469  
SITE TYPE: Smithy  
OWNER: Ernie Hatton  
TOWNLAND: Bealin/Baylin, Westmeath  
ITM:  
LAT/LONG: 53.43236, -7.8488  
DATES: 1870 and 1910  
SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

### Extant remains:

Two smithies, rear of a small late 19<sup>th</sup> century dwelling, built as part of the estate of Lord Castlemayne. The earlier smithy dated to latest 1870, now replaced by an open shed structure but archaeological remains may be beneath. The later smithy was built in 1910 of limestone, with a brick internal furnace and small chimney. The building runs from north to south, with a large door at the northwest and small windows in the east and west walls. The furnace, trough and tools are intact and in working order and the smithies are still in occasional use. The building is rooved with timber beams and slate.

### Detailed description and history

The smithy was the subject of a recent film “The Blacksmith of Moydrum” and oral history recordings. It is owned by the 4<sup>th</sup> generation, Ernie Hatton and his wife. Ernie still practices metal-working to a lesser extent. His great-grandfather came in 1870 from Carlow to the position advertised by Richard Handcock, 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Castlemaine (later Lord Lieutenant of Westmeath in 1889). His contract was to provide a number of days per week to Lord Castlemaine.

Originally the forge was to the south of the roadside dwelling, where the large open southern shed is in place today. In 1910, a mortared calp-limestone forge was built, marked on the 1888-1913 OS map. It has a brick furnace extending up the southern wall and connected to a large oval granite trough. East of the furnace, a large blue bellows is pumped using a chain and pulley. Under the east facing window, a clamp, purchased for 25 shillings is attached to a bench, its base settled into a hole in the dirt floor. Nearby stands an anvil on which a prosthetic horseshoe, made by Ernie’s father, Richard, rests. The anvil sits on a large tree trunk, allowing the storage of tools around the anvil. By the west window, stands a clamp operated by a large wheel. From the large, wide door, made to accommodate a horse, the floor consists of large oak timber blocks which stop halfway through the forge, a dirt floor surrounding the furnace. It was there that a skittish horse might be prevailed upon to lie down with the help of a bucket of water. On the north wall are two wheels, 150 years old but brand new and never used, made by a local carpenter. Local road-signs and old AA road-signs are kept safe here, as are the old shoe forms from when people would make their own footwear.

The house adjacent to the smithy was one of a series of dwellings assigned by Lord Castlemaine to his staff. The next house to the east was home to the dairymaid and further along were Fitzpatricks, who were stonemasons, and the Brides. The gate at the front of the house was made by Ernie’s uncle. In the yard, Ernie has collected various farm machinery including implements made by his grandfather, with his mark. On the site of the original forge, Ernie prefers to work in the bright, open building. Another anvil is found there.



## Ballykeeran Mills

WIHS REF: 469

SITE TYPE: Mills, sluice, pump, house

TOWNLAND: Ballykeeran, Westmeath

ITM: 607455, 744246

LAT/LONG:

53.44787, -7.88747 Corn Mill Sluice

53.4483, -7.888 Site of Corn Mill

53.44816, -7.88821 Mill house

53.44791, -7.88885 Water pump

53.44761, -7.88831 Old Corn Mill

53.44738, -7.88805 Bleach Mill

53.44791, -7.88804 Site of Possible flour mill

DATE: pre-1837, pre-1888

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

### Extant remains:

- Mill house extant 1837, extended and present
- Old Corn Mill extant 1837 – southwestern wall standing

### Non-extant remains:

- Corn Mill Sluice, under lawn
- Site of Corn Mill extant 1837 and 1888, no surface remains
- Water pump – not visible
- Bleach Mill extant 1837 – not visible
- Site of Possible flour mill under trees – not visible from road

### Detailed Description:

A collection of mills were focused around this mill race and river. The earliest were to the south, a corn mill and bleach mill marked on the First Edition 6 inch map. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1888-1913 map, the bleach mill seems decommissioned. Northeast of these was another corn mill, which was extended on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition map. The earlier corn mill was no longer labelled as such. A southwest to northeast running wall, relating to the earlier corn mill is in-situ. It is located in the townland of Ballykeeran Big and is listed on the RPS 029-014. It is not listed on SMR or the NIAH. A larger un-labelled building, possibly the flour mill, was constructed by the Breensford River by 1888. It was northeast of the earlier corn mill. Any remains are hidden by tree-cover.

The Mill House was viewed from the outside road. The central portion of the house appears externally intact and elements likely remain inside. It was extended on both sides to the northwest and southeast sometime after the 6<sup>th</sup> Cassini Map (1830s to 1930s). An undated photo, copyrighted by the Historical Picture Archive shows the later northeastern corn mill (then marked still in use) which is now gone. The view is facing south-east from the main road and the house would have been to the right of the photograph. As is visible on the Historic 25<sup>th</sup> map, the mill race continued under the main road and ran along the north of the site to meet the mill (shown on the left of the photograph).

At the gate, two segmented mill stones are displayed. The regular segmentation (18 segments) suggests that they are French burr stones which was used for finer grinding and were likely associated with the corn or the flour mills. The internal octagonal piece of stone is possibly made of a less expensive material. According to a Wikipedia entry, one of the mills in the Ballykeeran was also used as an RIC Barracks. Occ. John Murtagh "House, offices, corn-mill, stone and land" (GV).



## Annagh Mills

WIHS REF: 76

SITE TYPE: Corn and Tuck Mills

LOCATION: L5457, Annagh Cross,  
Athlone

TOWNLAND: Annaghgortagh

ITM: 609267, 743579

LAT/LONG: 53.44191, -7.86036

DATE: pre-1837

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

### Extant remains:

- Possible miller's house/renovated mill building
- Tuck mill partially intact, extended
- Mill race bridge partially intact
- Mill race partially intact

### No extant remains:

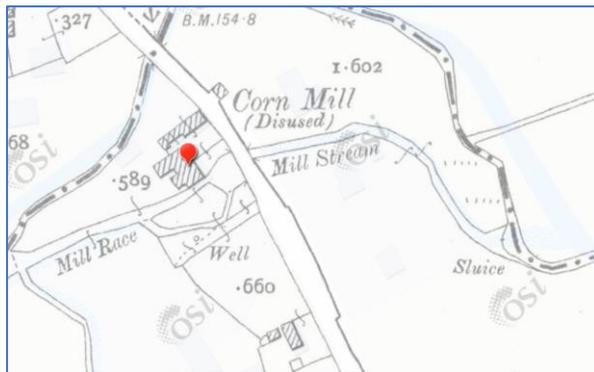
- Corn mill building to northwest
- Mill race partially filled in
- Possible ancillary to east

### Detailed description:

This site was viewed from the main road. The tuck mill building is present as a dwelling in good condition with an extension to the south. The building north of this may have been a miller's dwelling. A possible pond and part of the mill race have been filled in but the bridge for the road under which the mill race flowed is intact. The pond houses an internal hexagonal section of a mill stone. A well near the pond was not visible. On the eastern side of the road, the mill stream has been culverted and filled in and the ancillary building possibly associated with the corn mill has been lost to the widening of the road.

Both of mills, corn and tuck, were on the 1837 map. By the 1888 map, the corn mill was listed as disused and the tuck mill was not mentioned. The mills were noted as sold in 1882 with three pairs of stones, two good kilns and cottages for miller and clerk. Refs in 1611; 1854; 1840; 1882; 1900.

The 1837 map shows the corn mill on the western side of the road and south of it the tuck mill, west of a bridge. The tuck mill is shown as straddling the mill race. On the second edition map, the corn mill is extended to the west and may have an ancillary building on the eastern side of the road.



## Annagh Sluice

WIHS REF: 77  
SITE TYPE: Sluice  
ADDRESS: L5457, Annagh Cross,  
Athlone  
TOWNLAND: Annaghgortagh  
ITM: 609712, 743280  
LAT/LONG: 53.44168, -7.85831  
DATE : -

### Extant remains:

It is possible that the sluice remains intact at this location as no development has taken place.

### Detailed description:

A sluice on Breensford River, which was associated with historic Corn and Tuck Mills, 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was not possible to access but examination of aerial photography suggests that the sluice may survive in this undeveloped landscape.



## Mullingar Smithy

WIHS REF: 3798

SITE TYPE: Smithy

ADDRESS: 2 Millmount Road,  
Mullingar

TOWNLAND: Mullingar

ITM: 644124, 753031

LAT/LONG: 53.52538693, -  
7.33455023

DATE: pre-1888

SIGNIFICANCE: local

### No extant remains:

This is the site of smithy depicted on 1888–1913 25” OS map. It is now occupied by a 20<sup>th</sup> century single-story commercial building ‘Gerry Hickey Motor Factor’. The son of the owner (Gerry Hickey) recalls the building as a 'forge'. However, the building depicted here on the c. 1910 map does not appear to be the same as the existing modern building, in terms of size or layout, and the existing building has no visible signs of every having been a forge. Some remains of the forge may be under the new building.



## Ashe Road Quarry

WIHS REF: 3837  
SITE TYPE: Quarry  
ADDRESS: Ashe Road, Mullingar  
TOWNLAND: Mullingar  
ITM: 642627, 753403  
LAT/LONG: 53.52885326, -  
7.35707481  
DATE :19<sup>th</sup> century

### Possible subsurface remains:

This is the site of a gravel pit depicted on 19<sup>th</sup> century OS maps (First Edition c. 1840 and 25'' 1888-1913) in a field on north side of road. It is currently an undeveloped greenfield site and the former quarry visible as a large irregular depression in the field that is very overgrown.



## Harbour Road Lime Kiln

WIHS REF: 4324

SITE TYPE: Lime kiln

ADDRESS: Harbour Road,  
Mullingar

TOWNLAND: Robinstown  
Tyrell

ITM: 643805, 754602

LAT/LONG: 53.53953069, -  
7.33914106

DATE

### Possible subsurface remains:

This is the site of a lime kiln in field boundary to north of Harbour Road and alongside canal depicted on 1888-1913 25" OS map. There are no visible surface remains.



## Pumping Station

WIHS REF: 3804

SITE TYPE: Pumping station

ADDRESS: Friars Mill Road,  
Mullingar

TOWNLAND: Mullingar

ITM: 644016, 753298

LAT/LONG: 53.52779526, -  
7.33614138

DATE -

### Possible subsurface remains:

There are no visible remains of early 20<sup>th</sup> century pumping station, which replaced a watermill and friary (in ruins in 1837 map). There is a modern private house and access to an apartment complex at site of 'tanks' in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1888 map. There is a car park at location of building opposite tanks.



## Friars Mills: Corn, Tuck and Flour

WIHS REF: 3761

SITE TYPE: Corn, Flour and Tuck  
Mill

ADDRESS: Friars Mill Road,  
Mullingar

TOWNLAND: Mullingar

ITM: 644016, 753298

LAT/LONG: 53.52779526, -  
7.33614138

DATE: 1540

### No extant remains:

20<sup>th</sup> century houses and a carpark are now on the site of former mill buildings. This mill complex is referred to in 1540; 1631; 1796; 1831; 1837; 1854; 1858; 1860; 1871. Occupied by James Daly, "Corn and Tuck Mill, offices and garden" in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Griffith's Valuation). RMP No.: WM019-089013.



## Mullynnehouny flax mill

WIHS REF: 3796

SITE TYPE: Flax Mill

ADDRESS: Dublin Bridge, Mullingar

TOWNLAND: Mullingar

ITM: 644267, 753066

LAT/LONG: 53.52568942, -7.33238881

DATE 1641

### No extant remains:

No visible remains of any earlier building are the site of a 17<sup>th</sup> century flax mill (RMP No.: WM019-089038-) which was documented in 1641, 1661, and possibly 1682. It is now part of a car sales parking lot and/or modern housing development.



## Ashe Road Water Pump

WIHS REF: 3796  
SITE TYPE: Water pump  
ADDRESS: Ashe Road,  
Mullingar  
TOWNLAND: Mullingar  
ITM: 642893, 753249  
LAT/LONG: 53.52744777, -  
7.35308421  
DATE : -

This is the site of water pump depicted on 1888-1913 25" OS map at Ashe Road. It is at the eastern boundary of the Tesco petrol station. There are no visible remains of a pump. A circular iron manhole cover is at location.