



The modern Ballycroy Visitors Centre at Wild Nephin National Park (*image: discoverireland.ie*)



We profile
BALLLYCROY
 “Town of the Stacks”



The film “The Ballroom of Romance” starring Academy Award Winner, Brenda Fricker (above), was shot on location in Knockmoylene, Ballycroy in 1982. (*image: rte.ie*)

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The
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BALLYCROY

Ballycroy, known in Irish as *Baile Chruaich*, meaning “town of the stacks” (of either hay or turf), is an area located in county Mayo situated between Mulranny to the south and Bangor Erris to the north.

The Achill Island Mountains and the Nephin Beg Mountain Range surrounds it, with its coastline facing westwards towards Blacksod Bay. Two rivers run through it, namely the Owenduff River and the Bellyveeny River.

According to tradition, the first settlers in Ballycroy were from the Belgic Damnonii tribe, the Fir Domnann. A number of these tribes later became Kings of Ireland, with several of them continuing to rule from this region up until the time of Saint Patrick. They were succeeded by a Milesian family known as Fiachra O Caithniadh as recorded in the Annals. Chief names remaining in the locality from that period are O'Moynaghan (Monaghan), Mc Fhionain (Gannon), O'Maolphabhaill (Lavelle), O'Lachtain (Loftus), and their variations.

Prehistoric settlement structures recorded within the region include a portal tomb near Claggan Hill and a court cairn in the townland of Drumgallagh. A medieval church dedicated to Enda of Aran once stood here, but has been demolished. Fahy, a nearby townland, is also home to a castle, and the coast of Fahy experienced wrecks of Spanish ships that were part of the Armada in 1588.

In 1654, Catholics who were expelled from Ulster came to Mayo and many of them resettled in Ballycroy and the neighbouring Barony of Burrishoole. They were believed to have landed at Fahy and guided to Ballycroy by the O'Donnell family. Several of these families later converted to Anglicanism.

In the 19th century, Patrick Knight, an Irish engineer, geologist and folklore collector, who was working in the district at the time, described these people as continuing to maintain their Ulster dialect regardless of having intermarried within their community.

Today, this region is renowned for its vast wilderness and has become one of Ireland's National Parks, called the Wild Nephin National Park, Páirc Náisiúnta Néifinne Fiáine, established in 1998. To the west of the mountains lies Owenduff Bog, which is one of the last intact active blanket bog systems in Western Europe. This National Park protects vital habitats and species including alpine heath, upland grassland, heath, lakes and river catchments. Greenland white-fronted geese, golden plover, red grouse and otters are some examples of the important fauna living within this ancient natural environment.

REFERENCES:

www.en.wikipedia.org
www.mayo-ireland.ie
www.nationalparks.ie/wild-nephin

Did you know there are 25 townlands in Ballycroy South:

- Annagh Island
- Bellagarvaun
- Bellaveeny
- Bleanmore Island
- Castlehill
- Claggan
- Claggan Mountain
- Dooreel
- Dooreel (part of)
- Drumgollagh
- Essaun
- Glassillan
- Greenaun
- Illancroagh
- Illanroe
- Inishaghoo
- Kildun
- Lettera
- Lurgandarragh
- Maumaratta
- Owenduff
- Scardaun
- Srahduggaun
- Tallagh
- Tagnanasheffin

Did you know there are 16 townlands in Ballycroy North:

- Augnees
- Bunmore East
- Bunmore West
- Doona
- Drumsleed
- Fahy
- Gortbrack South
- Knockmoyle
- Lagduff Beg
- Lagduff More
- Owenglass
- Sheeanmore
- Srahederdaowen
- Srahnamanragh
- Tarsaghaun Beg North
- Tarsaghaun Beg South

Purchase a history of any townland in Co. Mayo, including lists of people who lived there. Prices start at €25.

Tel. 096 31809 or visit www.northmayoheritagecentre.ie

Wild Nephin National Park, Ballycroy
 (Image: mayo.ie)