

Macreddin Pure Mile

Field names and places of interest

Approaching Macreddin Pure mile from Aughrim direction

1. Nolan's Bank

A number of gentle ascents for this 200m stretch are known as Nolan's Bank. We are unsure how significant is the name, or if it is a family name once part of the locality, but previous generations generally identified this part of the road from Aughrim as Nolan's Bank.

2. O'Hara's Inch

The O' Hara name is one of a number that no longer exist in the locality and this field, owned by Liam Fanning, a descendent of the O' Hara's, has its own claim to fame. A debate in Tompkins pub (O' Toole's) in Aughrim many years ago as to whether the footballers of Macreddin or Aughrim were the better was decided in a match played here. Aughrim players lined out in the name of Tinakilly Rovers as the Team was then known. A very competitive game resulted in a win for the Macreddin side.

3. The Brow

This parcel of land was once a number of smaller fields each with their own name. There was the long Follow, The Bridge Field, Keating's Field and Strahan's Brow. With more modernised farming in the sixties and seventies, and the need for bigger and higher output machinery, smaller fields restricted daily output. And so over the years the four fields gradually became one and today locals are content to call the land The Brow.

4. The Little Bridge

The Little Bridge so called to distinguish it from the Big Bridge close by. A number of small streams make up this little river, one of which forms a boundary between the town lands of Macreddin and Cronawinna. Just before the Big Bridge this river merges with the Ballycreen River and then flows on to Aughrim

5. The Dip Tub

Through this little gate passed thousands of sheep annually for their twice yearly dipping. Winter dipping was compulsory in the eradication of sheep scab and County Council inspectors overseen and made sure all aspects of the regulations were complied with. Summer dipping was a necessity in the control of blow fly. Local farmers organised their slot for the use of the tub and often helped each other to get through big numbers.

6. Strahan's Haggard

Every farmer's yard in older times had a Haggard. This was where winter feed was stored in Ricks and the harvest was brought in for threshing. The Strahan family homestead and yard was here and while the haggard is long gone and Hayshed's replaced the Ricks, to the senior people in the area it is still remembered as Strahan's Haggard gate.

7. St. Credin's Graveyard

The name Moycredin / Macreddin is believed to come from "plain of Cridan", Cridan being a Celtic Christian saint, formally a powerful chieftain at the time of St. Kevin, Glendalough. The word magh means plain. Other variations of the name are Criotan, Credan, Credanus or Cridanus. Indeed the ancient manuscript, 'The Latin Life of Kevin' describes how Credin was killed by his enemies but brought back to life by Kevin. Macreddin was granted to the monastery of St. Saviour, Glendalough, in the 12th century. It was later transferred to the priory of All Hallows and on the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII it was transferred to Dublin Corporation. According to the website of *Omnium Sanctorum Hiberniae*, Saint Criotan of Macreddin is commemorated on May 11th. It states that he was a British saint who came to Ireland as a student and eventually opted to stay in Leinster. It is believed that the monastery was at this site, where the present Macreddin Lower Graveyard exists. The holy water font, which is used for present day cemetery masses here, is believed to date to monastery times as it was found buried on this site.

8. The Fatten field

This field, now a modern day driving range, was known in previous times as the Fatten Field. The origin of the name is not known but possibly as the name implies it was where stock enjoyed lush grazing before they went to market. Older people in the area can remember before the arrival of tractors to Macreddin members of the Strahan Family turning out their horses there after a day's work ploughing or haymaking. There was often a sport horse or two there as well.

9. Reilly's Road

Reilly's road takes you to Sheanabeg and gets its name because on the way there is a small ruin where it is believed a Reilly family lived. This road continues through Cappagh, Rosahane and into Aughavannagh

10. The Fair Green Field

The fair of Macreddin was held in this field three times a year, on Whit Mon, Nov 12th and 26th Dec. Dealers came from far and wide to trade. Entertainment was also provided with musicians, fortune-tellers, match-makers and the like. However the fair was notorious for its faction fighting. Local folklore tells that houses in the neighbourhood had an ash plant or blackthorn stick at the ready for the fairs. In the later years of the fair's existence when some semblance of law and order was introduced, one old lady, a regular attendant was heard to lament, "Twelve O'Clock at the fair of Macreddin and not a blow struck yet. Ah god with the good oul days". The last fair was held around 1880. Charles Stuart Parnell from nearby Avondale was a regular visitor to the fairs.

11. Castle Park

A castle was erected in this area between 1625 and 1629. It was known as Carysfort Castle after Henry Cary who was Lord Deputy at the time. In 1641 the garrison at this castle was withdrawn to Dublin and the castle was then left in the custody of a few unarmed English men. The O'Byrne's intercepted a supply of arms sent to defend the castle and then took the castle.

It is believed that this castle went to ruin in the late 1600's following Cromwell's invasion. Settlers soon moved down to Aughrim as the elevation was high in Macreddin. The 1835 commissioner's report described Carysfort as a "small village, containing a few houses of the humblest class" with a "thinly-scattered population in the neighbourhood, and neither trade or commerce of any kind in the village, and there seems to be no occasion whatever for reviving the corporation."

The Archaeological Inventory of County Wicklow 1989 states all that survives of Carysfort Castle "is a granite wall (L 5m: H 3m) to the SW of St. Brigit's church in the modern graveyard". Locals assume the castle stone was used in St. Brigit's Church

and in Macreddin National School so this wall might not in fact be actual castle remains but be that of the school.

Indeed Macreddin played an important part in political life. In the 17th century it was the headquarters of a Military Depot and Borough under the control of a sovereign and 12 Burgess and had the privilege of returning two members to the Irish House of Commons in College Green in Dublin until the union in 1800.

This field is known as Castle Park.

12. St. Brigit's Church

St. Brigit's Church in Macreddin was the local place of worship, serving a large area, being a curacy of Rathdrum parish before Aughrim parish was established in 1890. This eighteenth century thatched church was burnt down in the 1798 rebellion and was re-built in 1803 by Fr. Kavanagh to the structure it is today.

Macreddin National School was also on this site. In 1889 this school had 30 pupils from an area of 2 – 2.5 miles around the school. The land on which Macreddin School stood belonged to the parish and was originally part of Carysfort Commons. The school closed soon after 1889 with pupils then transferring to Ballycreen or Aughrim.

13. Gallows' Lane

Many young men from the district fought in the battles of 1798, for example; Vinegar Hill or the Battle of Hacketstown and some were executed at this place, known as Gallows' Lane.

14. Macreddin Church of Ireland

A chapel of ease opened here in 1869 to replace the Church of Ireland chapel at Sheana. It was called Chapel of Ease as it was not the main Church (Mother Church) in the Dioceses and was only licensed for Baptisms and Funerals. Marriages took place in the Mother Church which at the time was Balinatone.

The first Perpetual curate (called Rector or Incumbent later in the 1870's) was William St George Sargent – born 1810

The land for the Church building was donated by William Strahan –Great grandfather of Jack King who previously owned the land where Macreddin Village is now built.

The Church was deconsecrated in 1991.