



BAILE STAIRIÚIL

Historic Town



FIODH ÁRD *Fethard*

EOLAS TURASÓIREACHTA *Visitor Information*

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MEDIEVAL WALLED TOWN *Medieval Walled Town*



Walled Towns Day in Fethard August 2009

The Most Complete Medieval Town Wall in Ireland

Fethard has the distinction of having Ireland's most complete medieval town wall, retaining ninety percent of its original length. The Town Wall dates from 1292 when King Edward I of England (ruled 1272-1307) made provision to the burgesses of Fethard for 'the inclosing of their vill and the greater security of Ireland'. Murage grants (from the French 'mur' - a wall) followed in the next two centuries.

The town wall is built of roughly coursed limestone blocks, about 4 feet thick (1.2 metres) and in places over 20 feet (6 metres) high. It runs for 1,100 metres (1,200 yards) and encloses an area of 7.5 hectares (about 18 acres). It had five gates, one of which still stands, and remnants of two others. The wall, which may have been surrounded by an earthen fosse or ditch, comprises three sections: southern (at the Clashawley River), eastern and northern.

Most of the wall visible today may be attributable to the 15th century and the continuous sweep of wall on the north and south-west sides of the town suggest the work of one long, sustained campaign. This would fit with the twelve-year murage grant of 1468-1480.

Conservation of the Town Wall

The southern section was reconstructed by the Friends of Fethard and unveiled in 1993 by President Mary Robinson. The other sections have been the subject of ongoing repairs since 2007, funded under the National Development Plan and administered by The Heritage Council and South Tipperary County Council. Fethard is a proud member of the Irish Walled Towns Network. The town walls of Cashel, Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir are also being restored. The wonderful state of preservation of Fethard's wall is perhaps due to the relative lack of prosperity in the town in the 18th and 19th centuries.

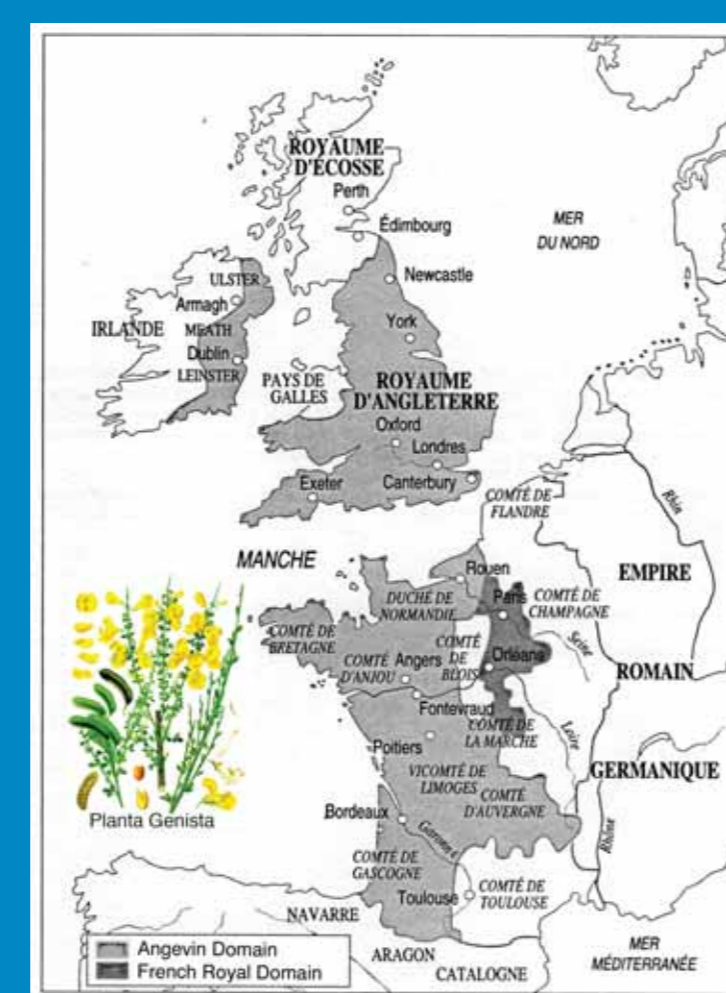
The Borough of Fethard

Walled market towns were set up for taxation and control in various parts of Europe throughout the medieval period. The settlement's borough status meant that legal privileges were granted to merchants and other high-status individuals to become burgesses. Their presence, in turn, was used to entice colonists from England and Wales.

The Anglo-Norman town of Fethard was established as a borough (circa 1208) by William de Braose, seventh Baron of Abergavenny, Wales. The de Braose family originated as Barons of Briouze, Normandy. De Braose had vast landholdings in south Wales and was Lord of Limerick.



The Irish attacking the Anglo-Norman invaders



Angevin Empire c.1200



Normandy, France



Monpezier, France



Caernarfon, Wales

Anglo-Norman families came to Ireland in large numbers following the invasion (from 1169) under Henry II (Plantagenet - his surname), Count of Anjou and King of England whose dynastic ('Angevin') empire extended from Scotland to the Pyrenees. Many of their surnames are still found in large numbers in and around Fethard eight hundred years later, names including: Archdeacon, Barrett, Barry, Bermingham, Blake, Brett, Browne, Butler, Burke, Cantwell, Cody, Collier, Comerford, Condon, Costello, Dalton, Darcy, Dillon, English, Everard, Fanning, Fleming, Fitzgerald, Gaule, Grace, Grant, Hackett, Hayes, Jordan, Joyce, Keating, Lacey, Laffan, Landy, Lawless, Mandeville, Maunsell, Marshall, Mason, Millet, Mockler, Morris, Nagle, Nash, Neville, Nugent, Pierce, Plunkett, Pollard, Power, Prendergast, Purcell, Rice, Roche, Rochford, Russell, Short, Shortall, Sinnott, Stafford, Stapleton, Stokes, Sutton, Tobin, Tyrrell, Wall, Walsh, White.

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