Meath

Julianstown
Heritage Sites

Julianstown

Julianstown as we see it today could be described as a planned village dating from the 19th century but there are references to a parish in the area dating back to the 13th Century. At that time it was called Aney; it later became known as Julianstown perhaps called after Juliana Preston from Gormanston. Alternatively the name may have come from Juliana wife of William Fitzherbert who was in dispute over the lands of Aney in 1227.

The earliest reference to the parish of Julianstown appears shortly after the Norman invasion. Hugh De Lacey held lands in Meath where he divided his estate among his barons. Lands were then granted as endownments on which the early Church of Ireland, St. Mary's Julianstown was built.

Julianstown is mainly agricultural. Limestone is prevalent but the quarries that mined it no longer operate. The presence of the lime kiln in the village harks back to a more industrial time. An important part of Julianstown heritage is the history of milling. In the 19th century fourteen mills operated along the Nanny either flax or cornmills. The Old Mill which occupied a prominent position on the banks of the Nanny and central to the village was shown on an ordinance survey map in 1837.

The village then comprised about thirty houses, a penny post to Drogheda and Balbriggan, a dispensary and a Constabulary Police station.

Julianstown is an area of great scenic beauty with its gentle sloping fields, woodlands and rivers. It is bordered by manor houses and medieval castles which combine to give it an unique heritage. We hope you will meander and enjoy the riches of Julianstown.

Swiss Cottages

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① Swiss Cottages
Main Street, Julianstown

Julianstown village was owned by the Pepper family of Ballygarth Castle.

The Swiss Cottages, a series of six attractive cottages in the main street were said to be based on a design that Major Charles Pepper saw in Switzerland. They were built by him in 1897 for his workers.

The Drogeda Independent 11th June 1887 states that the National League convened a meeting in Stamullen and called on the Drogheda National Guardians (Precursor of Drogheda Borough Council) to reconsider their decision as to Major Pepper's proposition – viz. The building of cottages with their fronts facing away from the public road. "If such a proposition is carried into effect, the majority of labourers will refuse to inhabit such houses. We further say that as these cottages will not be given to men as pauper's dole or charity but will be paid for honestly, it is only just and proper that they should have a voice in the matter". The decision was eventually overturned and the cottages were built facing the road.

As Major Pepper had numerous cottages built both in Julianstown and Stamullen, we cannot be certain that the above mentioned cottages facing the public road are the ones in question. Nevertheless it shows the power of the Irish National League over landlords.

② Courthouse
Julianstown Village

Major Pepper was also responsible for building the Courthouse in 1890. If a fatal accident occurred locally, the body or bodies would be stored overnight in the courthouse.

The last case to be tried in the Courthouse involved a gun-running operation in the Phoenix Park. The men involved were from Meath, hence the trial in Julianstown.

Later the Courthouse became a dispensary, which has since been relocated to Laytown. The Courthouse then became a private home. It is a protected structure.

The Courthouse (left) and Garda Barracks (right)

③ Garda Barracks 1903

There was an earlier Barracks in Julianstown for the Irish Constabulary. It appears on the first edition, Ordinance Survey, 6 inch Maps of 1836, making it an older barracks than that at Drogheda, which dates from July 31st 1837. The term "Royal" was not added until the 1850's.

Major Pepper was again responsible for the establishment of this R.I.C. barracks in 1903. It maintained a commanding position in the village. From the hall door one can effectively monitor the traffic crossing the bridge.

Garda Patrick McAvinia from Cavan was the first man to join the civic guards in Julianstown, He previously served in the RIC but retired from that force in 1917.

There were great difficulties between the pro and anti treaty forces in Meath. Because of this, Garda McAvinia was kept busy patrolling on his bicycle. He got half a crown a month towards his bicycle, which he had to buy himself. Patrols between midnight and 3 am were called "rising patrols".

During the 1920's various government departments imposed non-police duties on the Gardai such as issuing firearms' certificates, acting as school attendance officers, census returns, revising voters' and jurors' lists, compulsory tillage returns, enforcing the law regarding the cutting of thistle, ragwort and docks on lands and the delivering of pension books. Those duties ensured close contact with the community.

4 The Old Mill

The Old Mill is situated in a tranquil setting on the floor of the Nanny River. Over the centuries the Old Mill has been a landmark in the centre of the village. It is believed that a cornmill was in existence at the Old Mill site as early as medieval times and it is also well documented in the Down Survey of 1655. No mention of the existence of a village was given in the Down Survey for the parish of Julianstown which suggests that the Mill was among the first buildings to be built in the area. In 1684 Stephen Ludlow, a clerk in the High Court of Chancery, Ireland was granted land which included the Old Mill.

In the Samuel Slater Commercial Dictionary of Ireland 1846 under the heading Millers, John Moran of Julianstown is listed. The mill was and still is known as Moran's Mill.

Towards the end of the 19th century, due to the importation of cheap grain from America, many Irish flour businesses began to fail. Small mills like the one in Julianstown gradually ceased milling operations. The Moran family who had occupied the Old Mill for many generations sold the site thereafter. It had been a virtuous Mill as it never worked on a Sunday and refused to grind corn which had been stolen.

In recent times the Old Mill was converted into a modern hotel which was later destroyed by fire.

5 Battle of Julianstown 1641

The year 1641 was a tumultous year in Irish history. The Irish Rebellion began as an attempted *coup d'etat* by Irish Catholic gentry. They were trying to force the English administration in Ireland to give concessions to the Catholics living under English rule. During the autumn of 1641 the Drogheda Garrison was under siege by the rebel forces and a relief army of six hundred foot and fifty horse soldiers were dispatched from Dublin. On their way they were ambushed by the rebels under Col. Plunkett at Julianstown. A fierce battle was fought and the government's troops suffered huge losses. The success of the Battle of Julianstown led to widespread rebellion which in turn led to the formation of the "Confederation of Kilkenny" which governed much of Ireland until Oliver Cromwell destroyed it in his invasion of 1649.

6 The River Nanny

The name Nanny would suggest a benign and caring body of water, but in fact the origin of this name is an anglicised version of its original name Ainge, which comes from the word Aingidhe (Aingiall) meaning 'furious or irrational one'. This reveals the true character of the river, as it has often unexpectedly flooded in the past.

The Lime Kiln

The river rises in the Kingstown and Carnuff Great area. In the townland of Gaffney, it is joined by the river "Bradan" (An Bradan), meaning the 'salmon stream'. The Bradan is unusual because it divides. One part joins the Nanny which flows through Julianstown and into the sea at Laytown and the other part enters the sea at Mosney. The two rivers create an island occasionally referred to as 'Inis na Righ', hidden island of the Kings. The Rivers between them carried 16 Corn Mills, 14 on the Nanny , and two on the Bradan. Legend tells us, King Cormack Mac Airt ordered a mill to be built on the Nanny river, establishing the first water-powered Corn Mill in Ireland, at Sandyhall in Julianstown. Further on at Dardistown a second mill provided the brickwork for the most elegant parts of Drogheda.

The Lime kiln was also part of the river's operation in the past. It was a hive of activity at one time. Tradition tells us limestone was quarried from a site where the Julianstown Pitch and Putt is situated. It was then taken to the lime kiln near the river and burned.

In the summer of 1843, a large crowd gathered at this location to meet Daniel O'Connell and triumphantly lead the "great liberator" to Drogheda, where he addressed a huge gathering of people in his fight for the repeal of the Act of Union.

St. Mary's Church Of Ireland Parish Church

The current church was constructed in 1770 on the site of an earlier church, which is described in Dopping's Visitation Book compiled between 1682 and 1685. An unique feature of this church is that services were never suspended and it was always used as a place of worship. The church has been restored, rebuilt and enlarged. The present steeple and chancel were constructed through the generosity of the Pepper family of Ballygarth Castle, Julianstown in the early part of the 20th century. They also provided a rather elaborate altar with the figures of the four evangelists on the front. The church contains seven attractive stained glass windows. One of these depicts Lt. Col. Mc Donnell of Kilsharvan House. It was designed by Michael Healy. Four of the remaining windows commemorate seven officers of the Royal Meath regiment who were killed in World War 1. Another window depicts Christ and Mary Magdalen and is dated 1899. There is a wonderful depiction of the Ascension in four parts in the West end window.

St. Mary's church

The Apostles' Stone

Outside the church is an interesting stone called the Apostles' Stone. According to the records of the National Museum of Ireland, the sculpture was originally located in the chapel of Ballylehane Castle, County Laois, owned by the Hovenden family from 1549 to 1820. It was moved to Dardistown Castle and finally to the church at Julianstown.

The sculpture consists of three stones. Because of its depiction of twelve figures it became known as the Apostles' Stone. The figures appear to be clerics wearing a hood and girdle, some of which have beards and some are clean shaven.

There is a fragment of a High Cross contained in the porch of the church which came from St. Columba's Church, Colpe, Drogheda, dating from the 10th century.

The cemetery is also believed to contain the grave of Mrs. Anne Tandy, wife of Napper Tandy, 1737-1803. He was a merchant, volunteer and radical politician who was born in Dublin.

St Mary's Parish presently consists of the area from the Boyne to the Delvin and inland to Duleek.

Sonairte

8 Sonairte: The National Ecology Centre

Sonairte was established in 1986 by members of the local community concerned about environmental issues.

It is set in a beautiful 18th century group of farm buildings, on the lush grassy banks overlooking the Nanny River. The farm buildings were restored and redeveloped into an ecoshop, cafe, lecture hall and meeting rooms. The walled garden, provides the perfect space for a demonstration organic garden, set in an orchard which dates back at least 200 years. In the orchard there is also a dovecote. In the past, this five sided red brick structure housed up to 350 pigeon nesting boxes.

The eighteenth century farm house on the site has been partially restored with plans to complete the remaining section.

The ten acre site also includes meadows, salt marshes, woodland and a beautiful scenic nature trail, which takes you along the Nanny river and circles around a rath, which legend suggests was the home of Laogh mac Riangabra, Cuchulain's charioteer.

Bee Hive, Sonairte

The Bee Boles

The bee boles in Sonairte date from 1750. These red brick arched alcove bee boles were specifically built to provide winter storage for bees. In the International Bee Research Association's records, four of these sites were found in Ireland. In 1979, two bee boles sites, both arched, were listed at Sonairte. Only one remains today.

9 Ballygarth Castle

This ancient mystical castle overlooking the Nanny river is steeped in history and legend. The earliest documentary reference to it is 1372. Ballygarth was part of the Netterville family estate until the 1641 rebellion, when it became forfeited to the Crown. The Netterville family were then re- established at Dowth.

In 1660, the Pepper family were confirmed in their ownership of Ballygarth Castle and the estate, by Charles II. The Peppers were a Norman family that had settled in Ardee. After 1690, the Ballygarth estate was again confiscated as a result of the Pepper family supporting James II in the Battle of the Boyne. This was a temporary setback and the family managed to regain ownership, which continued in direct line until the death of Colonel Charles Pepper in 1927.

Ballygarth Castle

Ballygarth Castle was constructed over a number of separate building phases. The original three-storey tower house has been enlarged over the years, with a line of crenellations and Gothic details added to the windows. On the eve of Oliver Cromwell's attack on Drogheda in 1649, his army camped on the lawns of the castle.
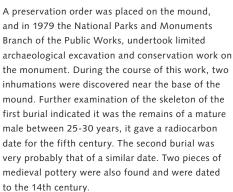
The legend of "the White Horse of the Peppers" has been immortalised in story and later in a play by Samuel Lover, which tells of how the confiscated castle and lands were recovered largely through the saga of a white horse belonging to Ballygarth Castle. A white horse was always kept on the estate as a symbol of their gratitude.

Ballygarth estate is reputed to be the last place in Ireland where oxen were used for ploughing up to 1907. An ox-collar (harness), made by Thomas Oonan of Julianstown, is preserved in the National Museum of Ireland.

10 Iron Age Burial Mound at Ninch

Near Laytown, on the north bank of the river Nanny there is a large burial mound known locally as the 'mote' (meaning earth or dust). Legend tells us that this mound is the burial place of Laogh, Cuchulain's charioteer. In Francis Ledwidge's poem, The Death of Leog, the charioteer says to Conall, "By the Nanny Water where the salty mists weep o'er Riangabra, let me stand deep beside my father".

Iron Age Burial Mound

A preservation order was placed on the mound, and in 1979 the National Parks and Monuments Branch of the Public Works, undertook limited archaeological excavation and conservation work on the monument. During the course of this work, two inhumations were discovered near the base of the mound. Further examination of the skeleton of the first burial indicated it was the remains of a mature male between 25-30 years, it gave a radiocarbon date for the fifth century. The second burial was very probably that of a similar date. Two pieces of medieval pottery were also found and were dated to the 14th century.

Corballis

Old Village of Corballis   11

During the 19th century, Corballis developed into a thriving fishing village so that by the end of that century, there were 23 houses and 127 inhabitants living there. The school house was built to cater for the children of the coastguards who worked in the Coastguard Station nearby. Many people were employed looking after mussel beds which were laid down in the Nanny estuary. There was also a little cottage industry, growing willows in the Legberry stream for making potato baskets. These industries continued until 1937, when the Laytown sewerage scheme was put in place.

Unfortunately the Coastguard Station was destroyed in the Civil War. With the decline in population there was no longer any need for the school and in recent times the building has been renovated and is now a private house.

Ballygarth Dovecote

12 Ballygarth Dovecote

Dovecotes were once scattered throughout the countryside in Europe. The Dovecote was used as housing for doves or pigeons, which were reared on estates and usually ended up on the landowner's dinner table. The eggs and droppings were used as fertilizer.

Pigeons were fed by eating the neighbouring crops and this resulted in many crops being destroyed. To control the damage caused by the pigeons, laws were introduced that restricted the number of birds that could be kept in a flock. In England and possibly it was the same in Ireland, the privilege of owning a dovecote was only conferred upon the lord of a manor.

The traditional view is that dovecotes were introduced by the Normans in the 12th century. The Ballygarth Dovecote appears to be a late 18th or early 19th century structure as it can be seen on the 6 inch maps of 1836.

The Cross at Sarsfieldstown

13

Just north of the Gormanston Apple Service Station at the entrance to a cul-de-sac, one can see part of a cross which was re-erected in 1978 on the site where it had been lying for many years. On it there are carved representations of Christopher Barnwall and his wife Elizabeth Plunkett; both these families were associated with the area.

The shaft of the cross is fitted into a slab, which bears an inscription commemorating repairs carried out by the Bellew family in the 16th century.

In the early 20th century there were references to either this cross or the cross at Keenogue, that they were once sited on the top of the hill known as Croc a Phobail, which is in the adjoining townland of Claristown. The cross may have been moved from Croc a Phobail to the Sarsfield area when a chapel was built in 1805 in Keenogue, about 200 metres from where the cross now stands.

Cross at Sarsfieldstown

The Chapel in Moorechurch Cemetery

14

The ruins of one of the oldest churches in Julianstown can be seen in Moorechurch cemetery. There is no definite date for when it was built but the first reference to Moorechurch Parish appears in the Papal Taxation of 1302. By 1693, it was reported that the 'Church and Chancel were in ruins since 1641'. For some time over those 300 years there must have been a community gathering in this church.

The walls of this ancient church with its nave and chancel can still be seen. It measures approx. 26 metres long by 9 metres wide. A very old gravestone can be seen in the ruins, dating from 1597 and erected to the memory of Genet (Janet) Sarsfield whose family was associated with the townland of Sarsfieldstown nearby. She married into the Talbot family and lived in Dardistown Castle also in the area.

The Chapel in Moorchurch Cemetery

15 Dardistown Castle

Dardistown Castle is an excellent example of a large fifteenth Century Manor House. It was built around 1465, when grants in return for military service were made available to landowners for building fortified houses in the Pale. A grant of £10 was obtained for the building of the castle and just fifty years later, castle and lands were rented for £4 a year by the Talbot family.

The castle is a fortress-like structure, square in shape with each side of the building 44 ft. long with a quadrangular turret at each corner. Many of the rooms have barrel vaulted ceilings.

The first extension to the castle, forming part of the present house was built before 1582 when Dame Genet (Janet) Sarsfield came to live here. A new entrance doorway with a much higher lintel had to be built as Genet was reputed to be the tallest woman in Ireland.

The present front hall, drawing room and dining room date from around 1750. The upper floors were added in two stages between 1800 and 1860.

Dardistown Castle is open to the public and tours can be accommodated. Opening Times: Thursday and Saturday 10.00am–2.00pm. It is advisable to check as it is closed for a couple of months of the year.

T 086 277 4271
W www.dardistowncastle.ie

Dardistown Castle

16 St. Mary's Church Dimanistown

St. Mary's church Dimanistown

In the early 19th century a site for a new church was donated by the Osborne family of Dardistown Castle. This new church was built at Dimanistown on the southern banks of the river Nanny. The old church has now become a community centre.

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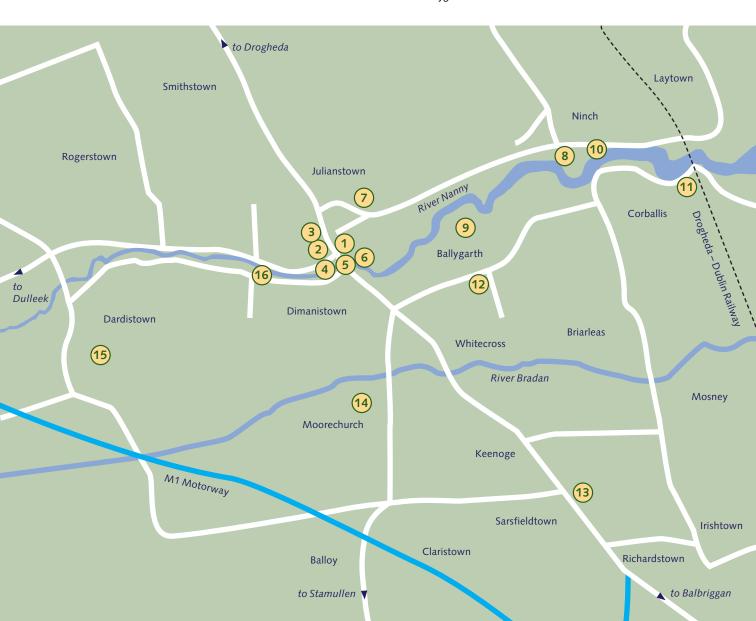Rev. Peter Rutherford, Rector, St. Mary's Church of Ireland

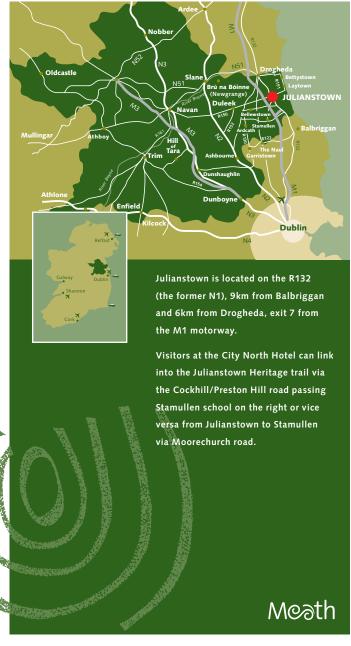Sonairte: Geri Reilly, Luke Van Doorslaer

Julianstown

This map is a guide to many interesting places of historical value in the Julianstown area. Each place is marked on the map from 1–16 starting in the village, giving a brief account of the history. We hope you enjoy your journey through the pages of Julianstown history as much as we did in compiling it.

1. **Swiss Cottages**
2. **Courthouse**
3. **Garda Barracks 1903**
4. **The Old Mill**
5. **The Julianstown Bridge**
6. **Nanny River / Lime Kiln**
7. **St Mary's Church of Ireland**
8. **Sonairte**
9. **Ballygarth Castle**
10. **Iron Age Mound at Ninch**
11. **The Old Village of Corballis**
12. **Ballygarth Dovecote**
13. **The Cross of Sarsfieldstown**
14. **The Chapel in Moorchurch Cemetery**
15. **Dardistown Castle**
16. **St Mary's Church Dimanistown**

to Drogheda

Smithstown

Laytown

Ninch

Rogerstown

Julianstown

River Nanny

⑦

Corballis

Drogheda – Dublin Railway

⑧ ⑩

⑪

③
② ①
⑯ ④ ⑤ ⑥

⑨

Ballygarth

to
Dulleek

Dardistown

Dimanistown

⑫

Whitecross

Briarleas

⑮

River Bradan

Mosney

⑭

Moorechurch

Keenoge

M1 Motorway

⑬

Sarsfieldtown

Irishtown

Balloy

Claristown

Richardstown

to Stamullen

to Balbriggan

Map labels:
Ardee, Nobber, Oldcastle, Slane, Drogheda, Bettystown, Laytown, JULIANSTOWN, Brú na Bóinne (Newgrange), Duleek, Bellewstown, Stamullen, Ardcath, Balbriggan, Navan, Mullingar, Athboy, Hill of Tara, The Naul, Garristown, Trim, Ashbourne, Athlone, Enfield, Dunshaughlin, Dunboyne, Kilcock, Dublin

Road labels: N52, N3, N51, M3, R161, R150, R152, R154, M2, R108, R122, R132, M1, N2, N3, N4, M1, R132

Inset map labels: Belfast, Galway, Dublin, Shannon, Cork

Julianstown is located on the R132 (the former N1), 9km from Balbriggan and 6km from Drogheda, exit 7 from the M1 motorway.

Visitors at the City North Hotel can link into the Julianstown Heritage trail via the Cockhill/Preston Hill road passing Stamullen school on the right or vice versa from Julianstown to Stamullen via Moorechurch road.

Meath

meath partnership

BOYNE VALLEY