Changing Fingal

INCLOSING THE COMMONAGE

Ten Years that Changed the Lusk Landscape Forever

By Aidan Arnold

Lusk Heritage Group

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Introduction

The settlement or village of Lusk originated as an Early Christian monastic foundation established by St. MacCullin in the fifth century. The monastery became a significant religious and economic centre, controlling extensive lands surrounding the settlement. Early monasteries in Ireland often functioned as landholding institutions, overseeing agricultural production and the management of surrounding farmland. These lands were cultivated by local communities who farmed plots while sharing access to common pasture and resources. The layout of the centre of Lusk today still reflects this early monastic landscape. Archaeological research shows that the village developed around a large ecclesiastical enclosure, whose boundaries are preserved in the modern street pattern around Church Road, Main Street, Barrack Lane and the Dublin Road.

Throughout the medieval period Lusk functioned as a religious centre, a local market settlement and a manorial agricultural hub. The surrounding lands included both cultivated fields and areas used collectively by villagers. Evidence suggests that Lusk possessed extensive commons surrounding the village. These lands were almost certainly located on the margins of the cultivated fields around the settlement and were used collectively by local residents.

By the late eighteenth century, Lusk village was a small rural settlement with a large surrounding commonage. The antiquarian Austin Cooper described it in 1783 as *'a small and straggling village consisting only of cabins, with a large commonage'.*

His remark reveals two important features of the community, the poverty of many residents, living in small cabins and the importance of the commons, which allowed poorer households to keep livestock. Commonage therefore acted as a social safety net. Without it, many families would have struggled to survive.

ANNO PRIMO & SECUNDO

GEORGII IV. REGIS.

Cap. 21.

An Act for inclosing Lands in the Parishes of *Tallaght*, *Killsillaghan* alias *Killsoughan*, and *Luske*, in the County of *Dublin*.

[28th *May* 1821.]

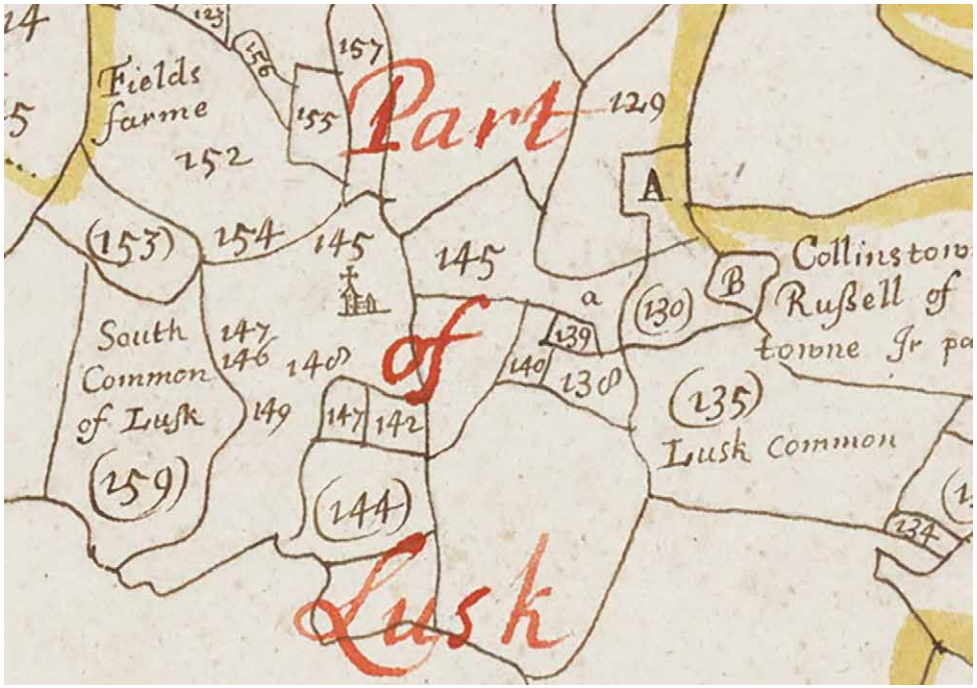
WHEREAS there are within the several and respective Parishes of *Tallaght*, *Killsillaghan* alias *Killsoughan*, and *Luske*, in the County of *Dublin*, several Commons and Waste Lands, containing respectively the Number of Acres in *English* Statute Measure herein-after mentioned; that is to say, within the Parish of *Tallaght*, Seven hundred and eighty-three Acres; *Killsillaghan* alias *Killsoughan*, One hundred and fifty Acres; and in the Parish of *Luske*, Three hundred and twenty Acres or thereabouts, exclusive of the Race Course, which is not intended to be inclosed: And whereas his Grace the Archbishop of *Dublin* is reputed Lord of the Manor of *Tallaght*, in which the Parish of *Tallaght* is contained, and the Right Honourable *William* Earl of *Howth* is reputed Lord of the Manor of *Luske*, within which the Parish of *Luske* is contained: And whereas his Grace the Archbishop of *Dublin*, the Right Honourable *William* Earl of *Howth*, the Honourable and Reverend *Richard Ponsonby*, Dean of the Cathedral Church of *Saint Patrick*, *Dublin*, Lady *Piers Marley*, Lady *Tynte Caldwell*, Sir *Marcus Somerville* Baronet, the Reverend *Thomas*

[*Private.*] 5 *h*

LONDON: Printed by George Eyre and Andrew Strahan, Printers to the King's most Excellent Majesty. 1821.

MAPPING THE COMMONS OF LUSK

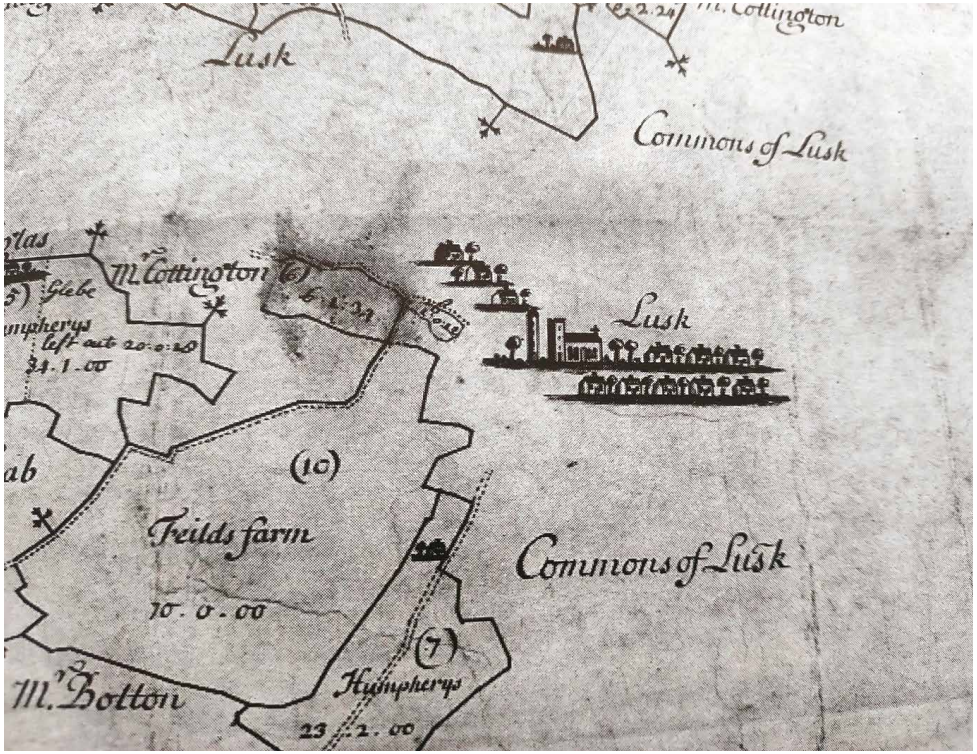
Several early maps provide insight into the structure of land ownership around Lusk. The South Common of Lusk and Lusk Common are recorded on the Down Survey Maps of the 1650s. Lusk commons is listed in the Books of Survey and distribution as 78.0.0 acres while Lough Common measured 005.2.0 acres. Neither were ascribed owners on the handwritten terriers. However, further information shows that the townland of Lough Common was owned by Thomas Delahide of Loughshinny (Catholic) in 1641 and by James Butler, 12th Earl of Ormond (Protestant) in 1670. Interestingly the townland of Racecourse Common was in the ownership of the same James Butler (Protestant) in 1640 but the owner is recorded as John Arthur (Catholic) in 1670. Meanwhile the Earl of Ormond happily held on to the townland of Great Common between 1641 and 1670, the difference being, one suspects that it included 131 hectares of profitable land!



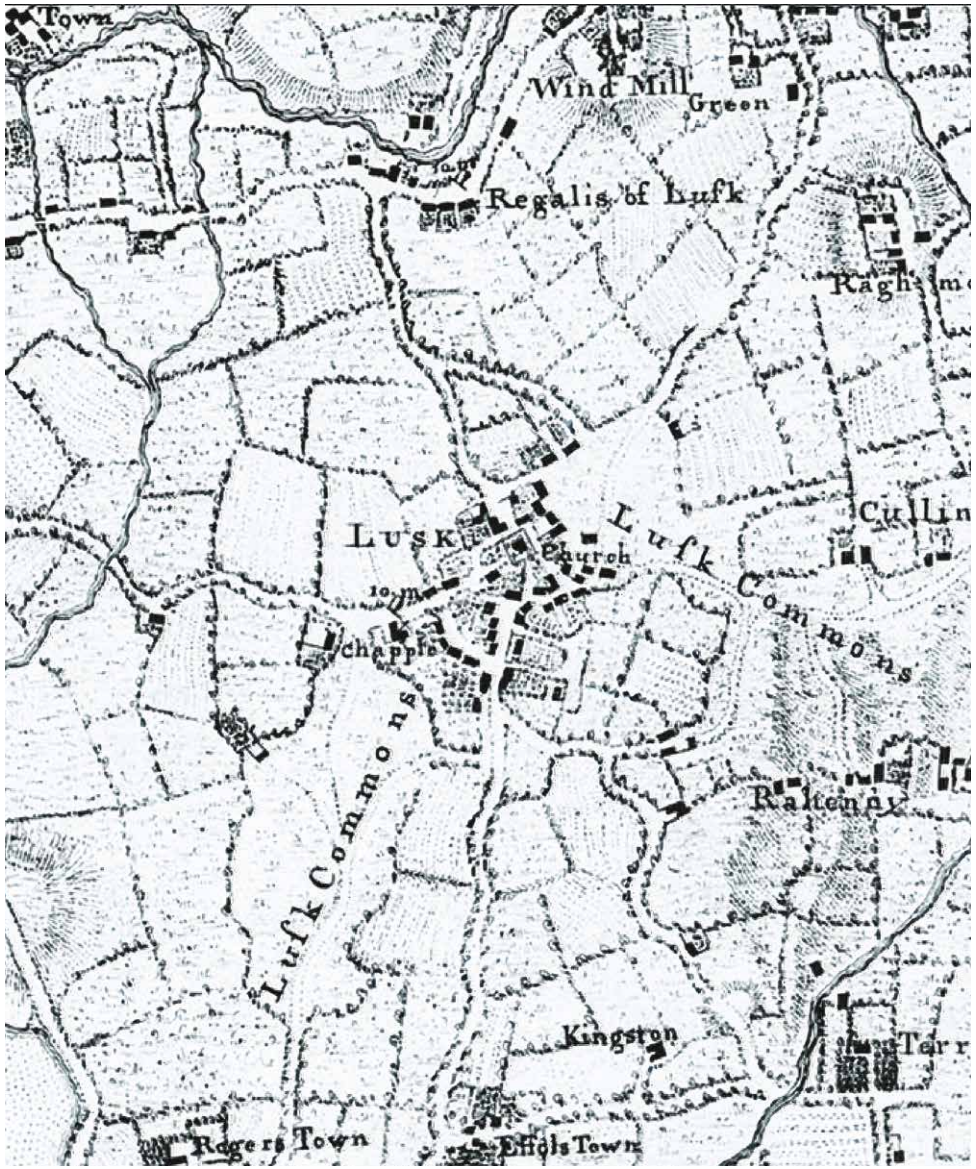
Down Survey Map, Courtesy of the BnF MSS Anglais 1: The Barrony of Nethercross in the County of Dublin by Thomas West and Edward Wilson © Trinity College Dublin

The Commons of Lusk are very evident on Moland's 1716 map. Entitled 'A survey of several Parcells of Land belonging to his Grace the Lord Arch Bishop of Dublin in the Bar. of Nethercross, Parish of Lusk & County of Dublin Containing in all two hundred & seventy areas three Roods & twenty four perches Plantation measure' the map also depicts the farm holdings. These holdings such as Pratt's farm, Humphrey's farm and Field's farm are listed from 23 acres to 70 acres in size.

Another important cartographic source is John Rocque's 1760 map of County Dublin, which shows Lusk surrounded by agricultural land and emerging road networks. The Lusk Commons depicted appear to correlate with Racecourse Commons to the south-east and Great Common to the north where field enclosure seems to have already commenced.

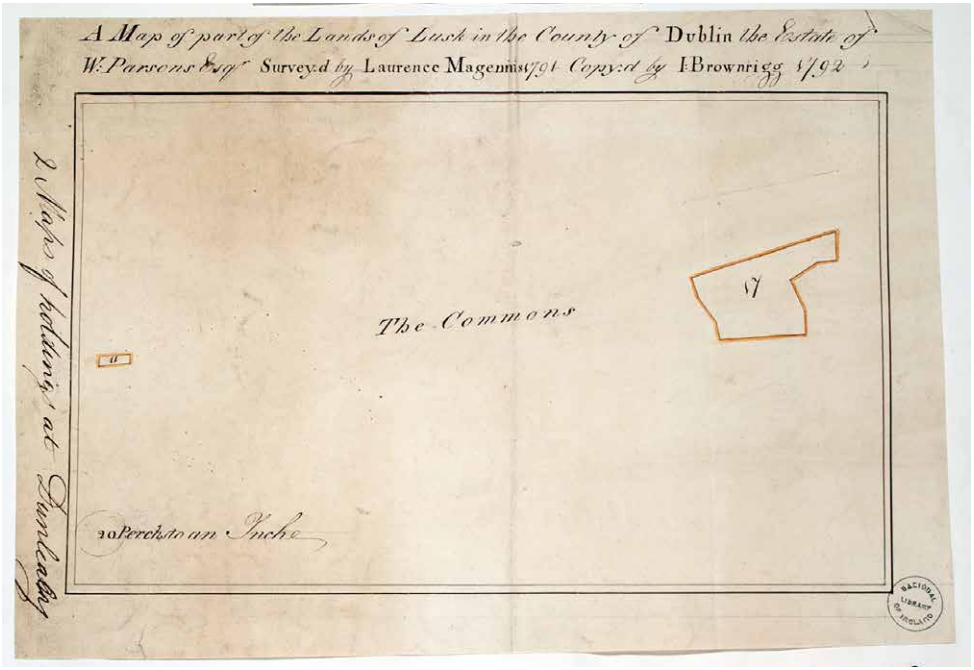


Extract from Moland's 1716 Map © Refauseé and Clark



Rocque's Map, 1760 courtesy of Fingal Local Studies & Archive

One notable document is a 1791 estate map of the lands of Lusk belonging to W. Parsons, surveyed by Laurence Magennis. Such estate surveys were often commissioned by landlords seeking to measure their holdings, assess rents and reorganize agricultural production.



A map of part of the Lands of Lusk, in the County of Dublin in the Estate of W. Parsons Esq. Surveyed by Laurence Magennis 1791. Copy.d by J. Brownrigg 1972. Scale 20 Perches to an Inch. © Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

THE ENCLOSURE OF THE COMMONS

The Ordnance Survey maps (1830s) depict a landscape already reorganized into enclosed fields, especially at the 'profitable land' of Great Common. Much of the land passed into the hands of private owners. Some of these estates had deeper historical roots. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the sixteenth century, lands formerly belonging to the Church were redistributed to Anglo-Norman or 'Old English' loyal families. Among those who benefited were the Barnewall family and the Netterville family, who expanded their estates around Lusk and neighbouring areas.

By the nineteenth century, land ownership in the region had already become highly concentrated. Landlords argued that enclosure would modernise farming.

Common land was often seen as inefficient because grazing was uncontrolled, drainage and investment were difficult, and crop rotation could not be organised. Enclosing land allowed estates to introduce hedged fields, improved drainage and larger commercial farms. This ideology of 'improvement' became extremely influential in eighteenth - and nineteenth-century Ireland.

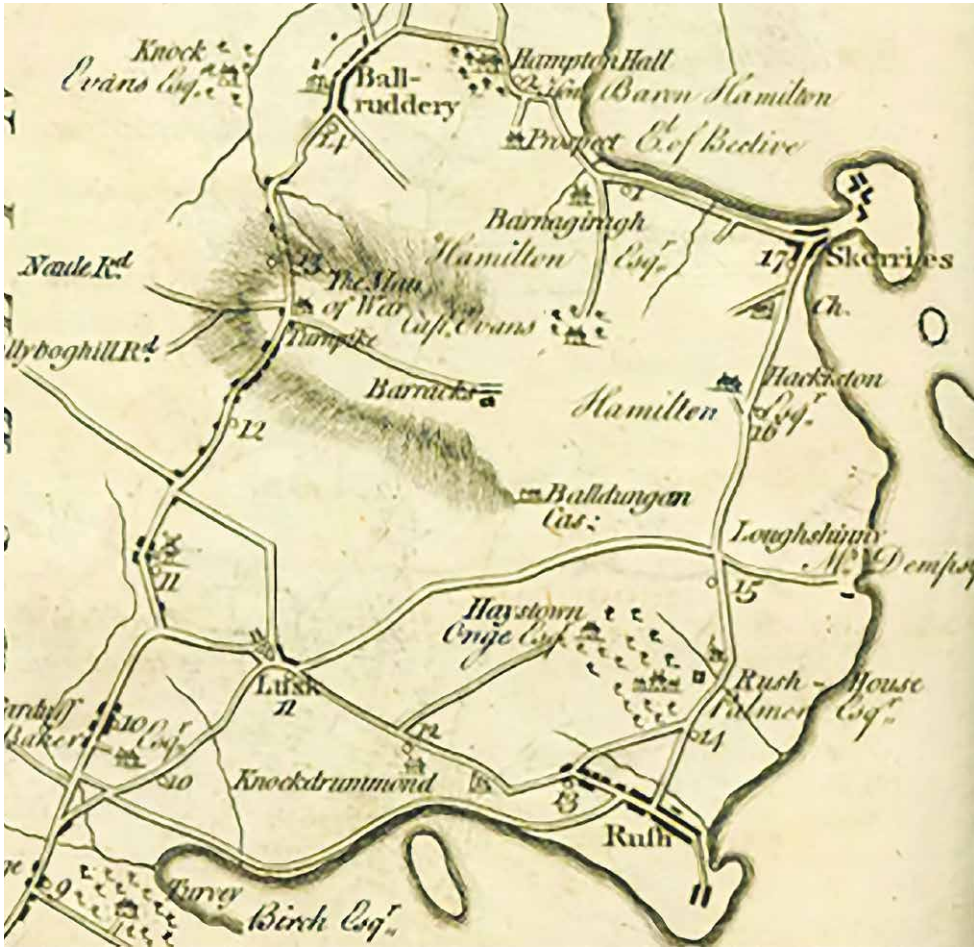
These commonages were not owned collectively in the modern sense; legally they often belonged to the local landlord or manor. However, the people of the surrounding townlands possessed customary rights of use, sometimes stretching back generations. These rights allowed ordinary rural families, especially small tenants and labourers, to keep a cow, graze sheep, cut turf, or collect wood. Without such access many could not survive on their small, rented holdings.

From the late eighteenth century and increasingly in the early nineteenth century, a powerful movement known as 'Inclosure' began reshaping the countryside throughout Britain and Ireland. Inclosure consisted of the legal conversion of land that had previously been used in common into private property bounded by fences, ditches or hedges. In Ireland the process often occurred through landlord initiative rather than formal Acts of Parliament. Commercially minded estate

Field enclosure of the Great Common, First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1837 ©Taillte Eireann

owners increasingly enclosed fields and eliminated traditional common grazing areas in order to introduce more profitable systems of agriculture.

This shift reflected the ideology of 'agricultural improvement', a belief widely shared among the British governing classes that land should be reorganized into efficient, enclosed farms producing higher yields and profits. This is indicated the proceedings of the Committee of the Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland (1841-1846) where George Alexander Hamilton of Hampton Hall, Balbriggan and Lord Ashton are listed among the founder members.



Taylor & Skinner, 1778 courtesy of Fingal Local Studies & Archive

In practice the Inclosure movement greatly strengthened the power of large landlords. When commons were enclosed, the customary rights that local people had exercised for generations could be extinguished or reduced. Historically this had already been a source of tension in Ireland. Earlier in the eighteenth-century landlords had sometimes allowed tenants to use commons as part of their tenancy agreements, but later enclosed the land without reducing rents, leaving tenants worse off. Such actions provoked rural resistance movements like the Whiteboys, whose nighttime raids often involved tearing down fences erected to enclose common grazing land. In the early 19th century, the Insurrection Act (1822-5) was reintroduced by Henry Goulburn, Chief Secretary for Ireland to deal with the agrarian violence. In addition, he created the police force for Ireland with the Constabulary Act (1822) in response to such disturbances.

By the early nineteenth century the balance of power was firmly on the side of landlords. Estate owners and local gentry across the Dublin region — families controlling large estates around Skerries, Balbriggan and north County Dublin — promoted Inclosure because it increased estate income and strengthened their control over land use. In areas such as Lusk the Inclosure of commons fundamentally altered the structure of rural life. Fields that had once been open or shared were gradually divided, creating the patchwork pattern that still characterizes much of the Irish countryside today. Families who had depended on shared grazing land often lost access to it, resulting in labourers and small tenants becoming increasingly dependent upon wages or tenancy rather than on traditional subsistence rights

The Inclosure movement was more than a technical change in farming practice. It represented a fundamental shift in land ownership and power. For communities like Lusk the change was dramatic. The traditional balance between landlord authority and customary community rights gave way to a new system in which land was defined primarily as private property to be managed for economic return.

What appears now as a timeless rural landscape is in fact the

product of nineteenth-century policies that reshaped the countryside and altered the lives of those who depended upon it. Formerly, Lusk and neighbouring communities such as Rush, Skerries and Balbriggan often rented relatively small plots from estate owners. These holdings alone were rarely sufficient to support a family. What made survival possible was access to nearby commons. These rights were rarely written down in formal legal documents. Families connected with the Anglo-Irish landed class controlled extensive areas of north County Dublin, managing the land through agents. Although the commons technically belonged to these estates, tenants continued to exercise traditional rights of use, often stretching back hundreds of years. These arrangements formed an important but delicate balance between landlord authority and local custom.

Among the prominent families were members of the Hamilton estate, whose lands extended across parts of the Skerries and Balbriggan districts. Like many estate owners of the period, they embraced the ideals of agricultural improvement and modern estate management. This not only increased the value of the estate but also enabled landlords to regulate agricultural activity more tightly. In many cases the changes were justified as necessary for progress. However, Inclosure greatly served the economic interests of landlords. By converting commons into private property, landowners could increase their estates, raise rents from tenant farmers, eliminate traditional rights of villagers and convert land into more profitable agricultural production. For poorer residents, the consequences could be severe, with many losing an important source of their livelihood.

AN ACT FOR ENCLOSING

The decisive turning point came with the passage of a local Act of Parliament in 1821 entitled An Act for Enclosing Lands in the Parishes of Tallaght, Killsillaghan (alias Kilsoughan), and Luske in the County of Dublin. The Act established Commissioners to identify, survey, divide and allot the commons and waste lands within the three parishes.

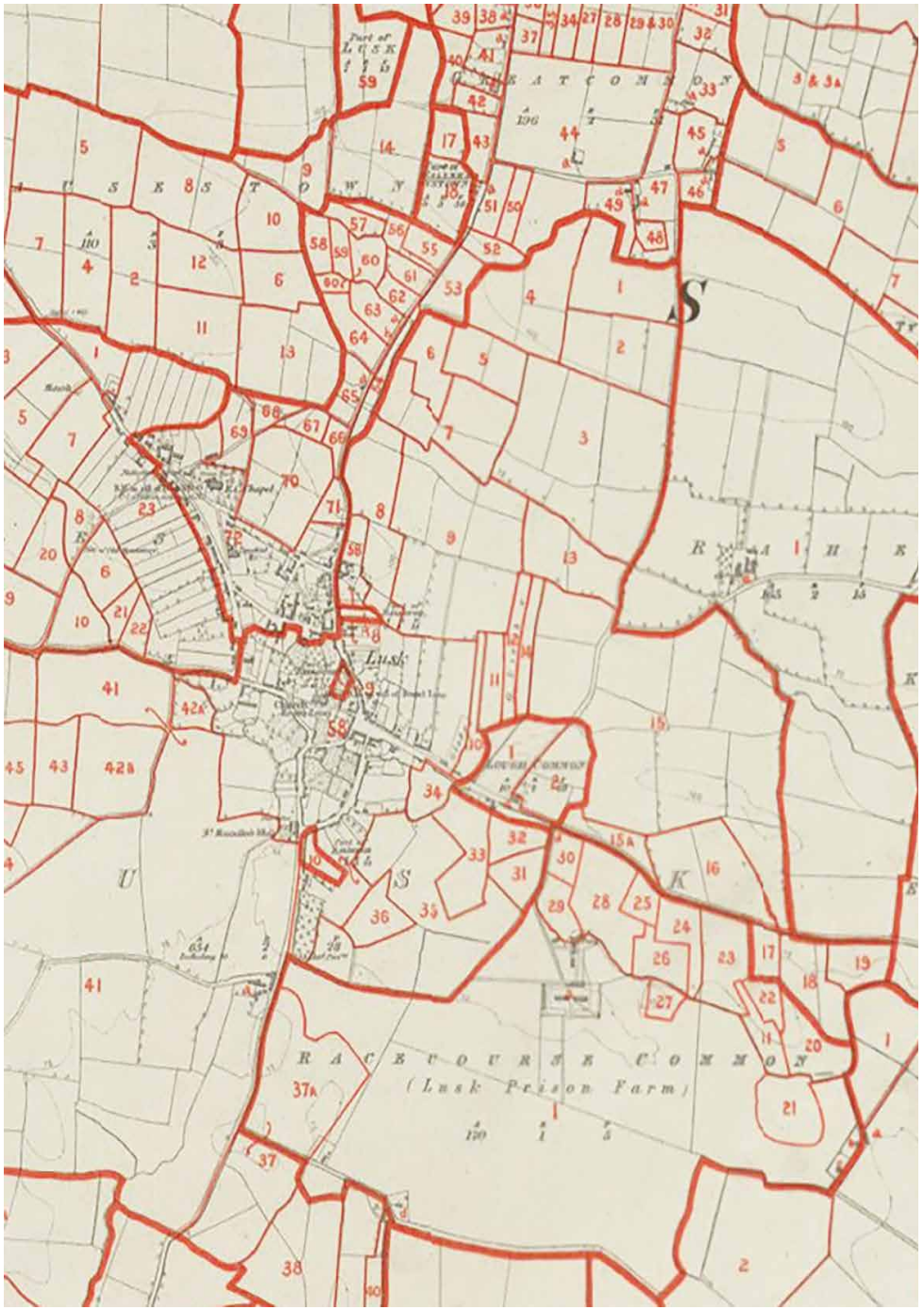
The enclosure of the commons at Lusk was not a single event but a carefully managed legal process that extended over almost a decade. Between 1820 and 1830 the Commissioners appointed under the local Act of Parliament met repeatedly, issued public notices, heard claims from landowners and occupiers, investigated encroachments, ordered surveys, sold portions of the common, and finally published their Award. The surviving newspaper notices and official correspondence provide an unusually detailed record of how enclosure was implemented in one north County Dublin parish.

Beginning with the Commissioners' first meetings in 1821, the process involved receiving claims, investigating customary rights, surveying the commons, resolving disputes, recording encroachments, selling portions of the commons where authorised, and finally issuing the Commissioners' Award in July 1830.

The Commissioners, at a very early staged those responsible for administering the Act warned that anyone failing to submit a claim before the second meeting would lose every legal right over the commons. This illustrates the highly formal legal character of the enclosure process. Customary rights that may have existed for generations would no longer be recognised unless they could be established before the Commissioners in accordance with the Act.

By January 1823 the work had moved from the legal stage to practical surveying. Resistance quickly developed. Morgan Crofton, one of the Commissioners, informed Henry Goulburn, Chief Secretary for Ireland, that surveyors attempting to measure the commons at Lusk had been obstructed by local inhabitants. Crofton requested military or civil assistance so that the survey could proceed, demonstrating that many local residents regarded enclosure as a direct threat to their customary rights.

The Commissioners nevertheless continued their work. During August 1825 they formally perambulated the boundaries of the commons and published precise descriptions of each parcel to be enclosed. The North



Extract Griffith's Valuation Map, Lusk courtesy of Libraries Development, LGMA

Commons, the Lough, Courtduffe Common and Dunganstown Common were all described in detail, with their acreages and boundary landmarks carefully recorded.

The controversy surrounding the process was further illustrated by correspondence from George Hamilton of Hampton Hall, Balbriggan. Writing to Henry Goulburn, Hamilton complained that hundreds of people had established occupations on commons in Lusk and elsewhere, thereby qualifying as forty-shilling freeholders.

His letter reveals how enclosure had become intertwined with questions of political influence and parliamentary elections.

Early in 1826 the Commissioners turned their attention to long-standing encroachments on the commons. They advertised the sale of portions of the commons, heard proofs of title, determined outstanding claims, and by July 1830 formally executed their Award. Public notice was issued inviting evidence concerning buildings, fences and occupations that had gradually extended onto common land. These hearings demonstrate that the enclosure was not simply dividing open land but also resolving decades of disputed occupation and informal settlement. (Appendix 1).

In Griffith's Valuation of 1847-1864, the downland of Great Common was now recorded as a total of 197 acres which were occupied by 135 lessors with the tenement described as house, garden, or land. Values ranged considerably from a garden valued at 5 shillings that Thomas Sullivan leased from Michael Scally to the house and garden worth 19 pounds 12 shillings of William H. Carroll, esq. whose lessor is listed as Common.
Lough Common in contrast is described as a 'Common in the town of Lusk, mostly in holes and underwater, unprofitable'. Despite this Nicholas Hamilton was leasing 4 acres of land from Mark Byrne and Michael Fleming has a house, office and gardens there. Just over an acre of pastureland was listed as common. In contrast 116 acres 1 rod and 8 perches of land are listed as common at Racecourse Common with a net annual value of £90.

The commons that had surrounded Lusk for centuries were progressively transformed into privately owned and legally defined holdings. What had once been shared village commonage became incorporated into the landlord–tenant agricultural system that dominated rural Ireland throughout most of the nineteenth century. The Inclusion Act was presented as a way of modernising farming and land ownership, but it also was responsible for putting an end to a medieval system of communal grazing that had shaped the countryside around Lusk for centuries.

Among the many questions raised by the enclosure of Lusk Common in the early nineteenth century, it is important to mention the deliberate exclusion of the Racecourse Common. The Commissioners' published notice of August 1825 described approximately 254 acres contained within the four principal commons. Their wider responsibilities under the 1821 Act, however, extended to commonable lands, waste grounds, roads and other parcels dealt with during the proceedings. By the time the Award was published in 1830, the total area affected appears to have amounted to approximately 320 acres, exclusive of the Racecourse Common. While the Commissioners appointed under the Inclosure Act dealt with approximately 320 acres of common land at Lusk, that figure was exclusive of the Racecourse Common. That suggests that that area occupied a distinct legal and administrative position long before the Commissioners completed their work.

That exclusion profoundly influenced the later history of Lusk. Had the racecourse been divided and allotted with the remainder of the common, the land would probably have passed into private ownership, as occurred elsewhere under enclosure legislation. Instead, the Racecourse Common remained intact and subsequently became the site of two institutions of national and international importance: the pioneering Irish convict establishment and, later, the British Army's remount depot.

CONCLUSIONS

By the 1830s the principal landowners in the Lusk district included Lord Howth, Sir William Palmer, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Earl of Kingsland, Colonel Loftus, Mr. Forbes and Mr. Byrne. These figures represented a typical mix of Anglo-Irish landlords, aristocrats, and church authorities who controlled much of the land in Ireland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By the 1840s the country faced the catastrophic crisis of the Great Famine, which exposed the vulnerability of rural communities dependent on small holdings and limited resources. While enclosure was not the direct cause of the famine, the earlier restructuring of land ownership had already weakened some of the traditional safety nets that had sustained poorer families.

By the late nineteenth century, dissatisfaction with landlordism had become widespread. The Irish Land War (1879–1882) demanded fair rents, security of tenure and the right for tenants to purchase their farms. This agitation led to a series of land reform laws beginning with the Land Acts of 1881, 1885, and 1903. These acts enabled tenants to buy the land they farmed through government loans.

The Irish Land Commission, established in the late nineteenth century, became responsible for implementing land reform. Its tasks included purchasing estates from landlords, redistributing land to tenants and dividing large farms into smaller holdings. In many parts of Ireland the Commission also acquired former landlord demesnes and redistributed them to local farmers. Over time, thousands of tenant farmers became landowners. The result was one of the most dramatic transformations of landownership in Europe.

By the early twentieth century the landscape around Lusk had been transformed. Medieval common pasture had given way first to enclosed fields and later to owner-occupied farms created through land reform. The surviving field boundaries, laneways and farmsteads visible today preserve the physical record of successive stages in that transformation. Beneath the modern landscape lies the memory of an earlier countryside in which common rights, customary practice and communal grazing shaped the lives of generations of Lusk families.

Nathaniel Hone (with beard) on his farm in Newhaggard, Lusk. The farm was taken over by the Land Commission in 1935. Picture courtesy of Terry Moore, Newhaggard.

APPENDIX 1

The Enclosure of Lusk Common: A Documentary History, 1820–1830

Below is a selection of newspaper reports and stories that it was legally required to publish as part of the legal process of the *Inclosure Act.* These notices were published by *Saunders News Letter* between 1820s and 1830s.

1. The first public indication of the proposed enclosure appeared on 7 August 1820, when notice was given that Commissioners would shortly meet for the purpose of 'dividing, allotting and enclosing the Common'. Although preliminary in nature, the notice marked the beginning of a process that would permanently alter the landscape around Lusk.

NOTICE

IS hereby given, that application will be made, by Petition to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, at the next ensuing Sessions of said Parliament, to obtain an Act for dividing, allotting and enclosing the Commons, Commonable Lands, and Waste Grounds, within the Parishes of Tallaght, Killsillaghan, alias Killsoughan, and Lusk, in the County of Dublin.

Dated this 7th day of August, 1820. 22

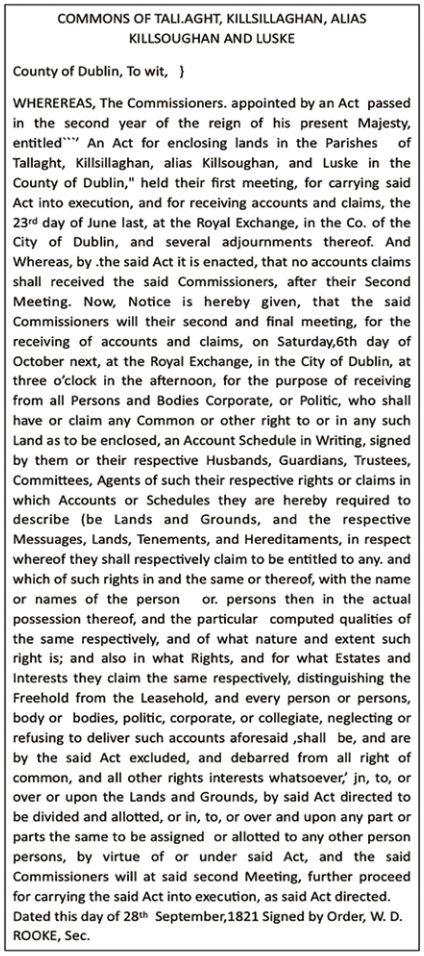
2. Following the enactment of the local Act in 1821, the Commissioners held their first formal meeting at the Royal Exchange in Dublin on 23 June 1821.
Their task was not simply to divide land, but first to establish who possessed lawful rights over the commons.

WE the Commissioners, appointed by an Act passed in the second year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled "An Act for inclosing Lands in the Parishes of Tallaght, Killsillighan, alias Killsoughan, and Lusk, in the County of Dublin," do hereby give Notice that we have adjourned our first meeting, in pursuance of the powers vested in us by the said Act, on Saturday, the 30th day of June instant, at the hour of two o'clock, at the Royal Exchange, Dublin, for the purpose of receiving from all Persons and Bodies, Corporate or Politic, who shall have or claim any Common, or other right to or in any such Land so to be enclosed, an account or schedule, in writing, signed by them or their respective Husbands, Guardians, Trustees, Committees, or Agents, of such their respective rights or claims, in which accounts or schedules they are hereby required to describe the Lands and Grounds, and the respective Messuages, Lands, Tenements and Hereditaments, in respect whereof they shall respectively claim to be entitled to any and which of such rights in, and upon the same, or any part thereof, with the name or names of the person or persons then in the actual possession thereof, and the particular computed quantities of the same respectively, and of what nature and extent such right is, and also in what rights, and for what estates and interests they claim the same respectively, distinguishing the Freehold from the Leasehold.

Dated this 23d day of June, 1821.

MORGAN CROFTON,
JAMES CLANCY,
FRANCIS MAGAN.

3. A further notice published on 14 July 1821 required every claimant to submit, in writing, a detailed description of the lands upon which any right of common depended.



COMMONS OF TALI.AGHT, KILLSILLAGHAN, ALIAS KILLSOUGHAN AND LUSKE

County of Dublin, To wit, }

WHEREREAS, The Commissioners. appointed by an Act passed in the second year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled``` An Act for enclosing lands in the Parishes of Tallaght, Killsillaghan, alias Killsoughan, and Luske in the County of Dublin," held their first meeting, for carrying said Act into execution, and for receiving accounts and claims, the 23rd day of June last, at the Royal Exchange, in the Co. of the City of Dublin, and several adjournments thereof. And Whereas, by .the said Act it is enacted, that no accounts claims shall received the said Commissioners, after their Second Meeting. Now, Notice is hereby given, that the said Commissioners will their second and final meeting, for the receiving of accounts and claims, on Saturday,6th day of October next, at the Royal Exchange, in the City of Dublin, at three o'clock in the afternoon, for the purpose of receiving from all Persons and Bodies Corporate, or Politic, who shall have or claim any Common or other right to or in any such Land as to be enclosed, an Account Schedule in Writing, signed by them or their respective Husbands, Guardians, Trustees, Committees, Agents of such their respective rights or claims in which Accounts or Schedules they are hereby required to describe (be Lands and Grounds, and the respective Messuages, Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments, in respect whereof they shall respectively claim to be entitled to any. and which of such rights in and the same or thereof, with the name or names of the person or. persons then in the actual possession thereof, and the particular computed qualities of the same respectively, and of what nature and extent such right is; and also in what Rights, and for what Estates and Interests they claim the same respectively, distinguishing the Freehold from the Leasehold, and every person or persons, body or bodies, politic, corporate, or collegiate, neglecting or refusing to deliver such accounts aforesaid ,shall be, and are by the said Act excluded, and debarred from all right of common, and all other rights interests whatsoever,' jn, to, or over or upon the Lands and Grounds, by said Act directed to be divided and allotted, or in, to, or over and upon any part or parts the same to be assigned or allotted to any other person persons, by virtue of or under said Act, and the said Commissioners will at said second Meeting, further proceed for carrying the said Act into execution, as said Act directed.
Dated this day of 28th September,1821 Signed by Order, W. D. ROOKE, Sec.

NOTICE.

WE, the Commissioners appointed by an Act passed, in the second year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled " An Act for inclosing Lands in the Parishes of Tallaght, Killsillaghan, alias Kilsoughan, and Luske, in the Co. of Dublin," do hereby give Notice that we have further adjourned our first meeting, in pursuance of the powers vested in us by the said Act, to Saturday, the 21st day of July inst., at the hour of three o'clock, at the Royal Exchange, Dublin, for the purpose of receiving from all Persons and Bodies, Corporate or Politic, who shall have or claim any Common, or other right to or in any such Land so to be enclosed, an account or schedule, in writing, signed by them or their respective Husbands, Guardians, Trustees, Committees, or Agents, of such their respective rights or claims, in which accounts or schedules they are hereby required to describe the Lands and Grounds, and the respective Messuages, Lands, Tenements and Hereditaments in respect whereof they shall respectively claim to be entitled to any and which of such rights in, and upon the same, or any part thereof, with the name or names of the person, or persons then in the actual possession thereof, and the particular computed quantities of the same respectively, and of what nature and extent such right is, and also in what rights, and for what estates and interests they claim the same respectively. distinguishing the Freehold from the Leasehold.
Dated this 14th day of July, 1821.
MORGAN CROFTON,
JAMES CLANCY,
FRANCIS MAGAN.

COMMONS OF TALLAGHT, KILLSILLAGHAN, ALIAS KILLSOUGHAN, AND LUSKE.

County of Dublin, to wit. } WHEREAS, the Commissioners appointed by an Act passed in the second year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled " An Act for enclosing Lands in the Parishes of Tallaght, Killsillaghan, alias Kilsoughan, and Luske, in the County of Dublin," held their first meeting, for carrying said Act into execution, and for receiving accounts and claims, on the 23d day of June last, at the Royal Exchange, in the Co. of the City of Dublin, and several adjournments thereof. And Whereas, by the said Act it is enacted, that no accounts or claims shall be received by the said Commissioners, after their Second Meeting. Now, Notice is hereby given, that the said Commissioners will hold their second and final meeting, for the receiving of accounts and claims, on Saturday, the 6th day of October next, at the Royal Exchange, in the City of Dublin, at three o'clock in the afternoon, for the purpose of receiving from all Persons and Bodies Corporate, or Politic, who shall have or claim any Common or other right to or in any such Land as to be enclosed, an Account or Schedule in Writing, signed by them or their respective Husbands, Guardians, Trustees, Committees, or Agents of such their respective rights or claims in which Accounts or Schedules they are hereby required to describe the Lands and Grounds, and the respective Messuages, Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments, in respect whereof they shall respectively claim to be entitled to any, and which of such rights in and upon the same or any part thereof, with the name or names of the person or persons then in the actual possession thereof, and the particular computed qualities of the same respectively, and of what nature and extent such right is, and also in what Rights, and for what Estates and Interests they claim the same respectively, distinguishing the Freehold from the Leasehold, and every person or persons, body or bodies, politic, corporate, or collegiate, neglecting or refusing to deliver such accounts as aforesaid, shall be, and are by said Act excluded, and debarred from all right of common, and all other rights or interests whatsoever, jn, to, over or upon the Lands and Grounds, by said Act directed to be divided and allotted, or in, to, over and upon any part or parts of the same, to be assigned or allotted to any other person or persons, by virtue of or under said Act, and the said Commissioners will at said second Meeting, further proceed for carrying the said Act into execution, as by said Act directed.
Dated this 28th day of September, 1821.
Signed by Order,
W. D. ROOKE, Sec.

4. The Commissioners reinforced this requirement in a lengthy proclamation dated 28 September 1821. It warned that anyone failing to submit a claim before the second meeting would lose every legal right over the commons. This illustrates the highly formal legal character of the enclosure process. Customary rights that may have existed for generations would no longer be recognised unless they could be established before the Commissioners in accordance with the Act.

5. Letter showing discontent in Lusk re Inclosure and a request that civil or military force be sent to assist the surveyors over enforcement of the commons Enclosures.

21 January 1823: As surveying commenced, local resistance emerged almost immediately. Morgan Crofton, one of the Commissioners appointed under the Act, informed Henry Goulburn, Chief Secretary for Ireland, that surveyors attempting to measure the Lusk commons had been obstructed by groups of local inhabitants living upon or adjacent to the common lands. Crofton requested military or police assistance to allow the survey to proceed, illustrating the strength of opposition generated by the enclosure process.

6. Letter from Morgan Crofton, Harcourt Street, Dublin, barrister, to [Henry Goulburn, Chief Secretary], Dublin Castle, concerning his role as a commissioner for enclosing the commons and waste lands in the parishes of Tallaght, Kilsoughan, and Luske [Lusk], County Dublin. Reports opposition faced by surveyors, when attempting to survey the commons at Lusk, by a group of individuals residing on or near the commons. Requests a civil or military force be sent to assist the surveyors to carry out their work.

Letter from Morgan Crofton, Harcourt Street, Dublin, barrister, to [Henry Goulburn, Chief Secretary], Dublin Castle, concerning his role as a commissioner for enclosing the commons and waste lands in the parishes of Tallaght, Kilsoughan, and Luske [Lusk], County Dublin. Reports opposition faced by surveyors, when attempting to survey the commons at Lusk, by a group of individuals residing on or near the commons. Requests a civil or military force be sent to assist the surveyors to carry out their work.

7. By August 1825 the Commissioners had progressed sufficiently to publish a detailed description of every common to be enclosed within the parish of Lusk.[51] Their notice carefully defined the boundaries and acreage of each common, including the North Commons of Lusk (approximately 175 acres), the Lough Common (just over 10 acres), the Commons of Courtduffe (almost 29 acres) and the Commons of Dunganstown (almost 40 acres).[52] Taken together, these amounted to approximately 254 acres specifically described in the published notice. Other parcels, roads and existing encroachments were dealt with separately during the Commissioners' proceedings and later Awards.

PARISH OF LUSKE, COUNTY DUBLIN,

To wit
Notice is hereby given, that the Commissioners appointed) by an Act Parliament, passed the second year of the reign of his present Majesty, for Enclosing the Commons, Commonable Lands and Waste Grounds in the said Parish, did on the thirteenth day of August instant, pursuant to the directions of the said Act, perambulate the boundaries of the said Commons, Commonable Lands, and Waste Grounds, and ascertain and determine the same to be as follows, viz. :

That all that part of the said Commons, Commonable Lands and Waste Grounds, known the name the North Commons of Luske -is bounded on the North, partly the lands of Collinstown, and partly by the lands of Luske; on the South, partly by the lands Luske, partly the lands of Raheny, and partly by the lands of Tyrrellstown ; the East, partly the lands Rathlucastown, partly by the lands of Knockfergus, and partly the lands Tyrrellstown ; and on the West, partly by the lands of Luske, and partly by the lands called the Regles of Luske, which said Commons contain 175A. 2r. 19p. English statute measure, or thereabouts. That all that part of the said Commons, Commonable Lands, and Waste Grounds, known the name of the Lough, is bounded on the North by parts of the Lands Luske, the Estate Lord Kingsland and Russell, Esq.*on the East and South, by the Lands of Luske, the Estate Barlow, Esq., and on the West, by other parts the said Lands of Luske, the Estate Barlow, Esq., and of Lord Howth, which said Commons contain 10 A(cres) 1 R(ood). 4 P(erches). English statute measure, or thereabouts. And that all that part of the said Commons, Commonable Lands arid Waste Grounds, known by the name the Commons of Courtduffe, is bounded on the North and East by the Lands of Courtduffe, on the South the Lands New Haggard, and on the West partly by the Lands of New Haggard, and partly by the Mail Coach Road, leading from Dublin to Balbriggan, and contains 28A. 3r.. 19P. English statute measure, or thereabouts.

And that all that part of the said Commons, Commonable Lands, and Waste Ground'- known by the name of the Commons Dunganstown, is bounded on the North partly by the Lands Dunganstown, and partly by Lands called the Oeconomy Lands, the South partly by the lands of Stafferstown, and partly by the lands Courtduffe, on the East the lands of Stafferstown, and on the West by the Mail Coach Road, leading from Dublin to Balbriggan and contains 39a. 3R. 30p Royal Exchange Dublin to English statute measure, or thereabouts.

Dated this 26th day of August, 1825

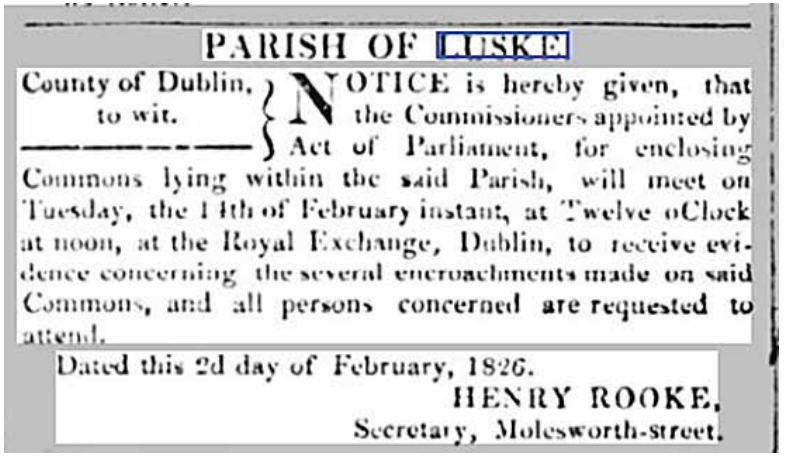
Signed by Order, HENRY ROOKE, Secretary.

PARISH LUSK. County of Dublin,

NOTICE is, hereby given, that to wit. the Commissioners appointed bv Act Parliament, for inclosing the Commons lying within the said Parish, will hold their Meeting adjournment, Monday, the 13th day March next, at the hour of 12 o'clock noon, at the Royal Exchange, Dublin, for the purpose investigating and receiving evidence concerning the several encroachments on the said Commons, and all Persons interested are requested to attend.

Dated this 28th day of February, 1826
Signed by Order,
HENRY ROOKE
Secretary

8. 2nd February 1826. Attention then turned to determining the legality of numerous encroachments that had taken place over previous decades. The Commissioners summoned interested parties to appear before them at the Royal Exchange in Dublin to provide evidence concerning buildings, fences and occupations that had gradually extended onto the commons.



PARISH OF LUSKE

County of Dublin, to wit. } NOTICE is hereby given, that the Commissioners appointed by Act of Parliament, for enclosing Commons lying within the said Parish, will meet on Tuesday, the 14th of February instant, at Twelve oClock at noon, at the Royal Exchange, Dublin, to receive evidence concerning the several encroachments made on said Commons, and all persons concerned are requested to attend.

Dated this 2d day of February, 1826.

HENRY ROOKE,
Secretary, Molesworth-street.

9. George Hamilton's Letter

The enclosure proposals continued to provoke controversy. George Hamilton of Hampton Hall, Balbriggan, complained to Chief Secretary Henry Goulburn that nearly 300 persons had occupied portions of commons at Ballymore-Eustace, Saggart and Lusk, subsequently qualifying themselves as forty-shilling freeholders. Hamilton argued that these occupations threatened the integrity of elections and urged the Government to enforce the enclosure legislation more rigorously.

Letter from George Hamilton, Hampton [Hampton Hall], Balbriggan, County Dublin], to Henry Goulburn, Chief Secretary, London, drawing attention to the fact that nearly 300 'persons of the lowest and worst description' have encroached upon the commons of Ballymore-Eustace, Saggart and Lusk and subsequently have registered as 40s freeholders. Fearing that this considerable body could affect election outcomes and requesting enforcement of the law so as to grant justice to the 'bona fide freeholders'. Mentioning Mr Martin's proposed bill concerning fictitious 40s freeholders, Henry Parnell's original bill and adding that he has written to Lord Liverpool and Robert Peel on the subject.

10. The final stages of the process followed rapidly. During 1826 the Commissioners advertised the sale of portions of the commons, heard proofs of title, determined outstanding claims, and by July 1830 formally executed their Award. With its publication, the medieval system of communal grazing that had shaped the Lusk countryside for centuries came to an end.

SALE OF PARTS OF THE COMMONS OF LUSKE AND COURT DUFFE,
In the Parish of Luske and County of Dublin.

NOTICE
IS hereby given, that the Commissioners appointed by an Act passed in the 2nd year of his present Majesty's reign, for inclosing certain Lands the Parish of Luske therein mentioned, will on Monday, the 29th day of May next, at the hour two o'clock in the forenoon, in the Coffee-room of the Royal Exchange, in the City of Dublin, sell by public Auction, for the purposes in the said Act mentioned, the fee of all that part of the Commons of Court-Duffe, marked in the Map thereof Lot A. containing 28A 3R. 19P or thereabouts statute measure, bounded on the North the Lands Court-Duffe, the estate of Rev. Mr. Baker, on the East partly by the said Lands of Court-Duffe, the estate said Rev. Mr Baker, partly the part of the Lands of Newhaggard, the estate of Lord Kingsland, on the South by the Road from Dublin to Luske, and on the West partly by part of the said Lands of Newhaggard, and partly part of the said Lands of Luske, in the possession of the said Rev Mr Baker.

Also all that part of the said Commons of Court Duffe, marked in the Map thereof Lot B. containing ,32 A 0R- '24 P., or thereabouts, statute measure, bounded on the North partly the Lands of Dunganstown, partly two encroachments of more than twenty years standing and partly the Economy Lands the South partly by encroachments of than 20 years standing, partly by the Lands, of Staffordstown on the East by encroachments more than 20 years standing, and on the West by the high road from Dublin to Balbriggan.

Also, that part of the said Commons of Luske marked in the Map thereof Lot C, containing 16a. 0R.19p. or thereabouts, statute measure, bounded on the North by, the Lands of Luske, the estate of Counsellor Forbes, the South by the high road from Dublin to Skerries, on the East by the Lands of Luske, the estate his Grace the Archlbishop of Dublin, and the West by the road running between the said Lot C, and the Lands of Luske, the estate of the said Counsellor Forbes.

Also, all that part of the said Commons of Luske called the Lough, and marked on the Map thereof Lot D, containing 10a. Or. 4P. or thereabouts, statute measure, bounded the North by a road or passage which separates the said Lot D from the Lands of Luske, the estate Lord Kingsland and Mr. Russell, on the South by part of said Lands of Luske. partly in possession of Lord Howth, and partly in possession of Mr. Barlow, on the East partly by part of the said Lands of Luske, in possession of said Mr. Barlow, and partly by a road or passage between the said Lot D and said part of the Lands of Lusk in possession of Mr. Barlow, and the West by the Lands of Luske, partly the estate of Lord Howth and partly by the estate of Mr. Barlow, including the roads as marked on said Map, all which are more particularly delineated and described on the said Maps thereof, posted in the Coffee-room of the said Royal Exchange.

V. Rev. Patrick (Canon) Kelly, P.P., 1804-1834.
In the Schedule presented to Archbishop Murray in his Visitation of 1831, Canon Kelly states that the site 'was allotted to him and his successors for ever by the Commission appointed by Government for enclosing and allotting the Commons of Lusk'.

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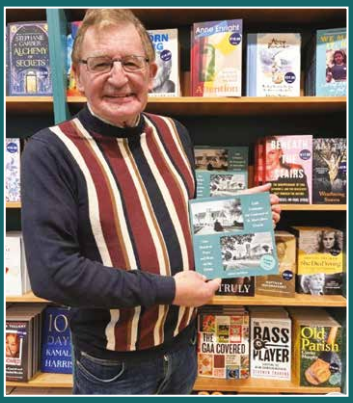

AIDAN ARNOLD

Aidan grew up in Lusk, County Dublin. He is chairman of the Lusk Heritage Group. Coming from a farming background, he has written extensively on local history. His books include *One Hundred Years and More on the Green, Lusk Centenary of St MacCullin's Church, Forgotten History on the Sack of Balbriggan, Lusk through the Ages, Barnewall de Berneval, 800 years a Norman Irish family, The Life and Times of John Rover McCann, Thomas Ashe 100 Year Commemoration, Telling Tales, New Stories from Old Dogs* and *The Schools Collection for Lusk, Milverton, Kilcoskan and Rush.*

Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall
Fingal County Council

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