



Discover  
**Ulster-Scots**  
in Ards and  
North Down



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Borough Council

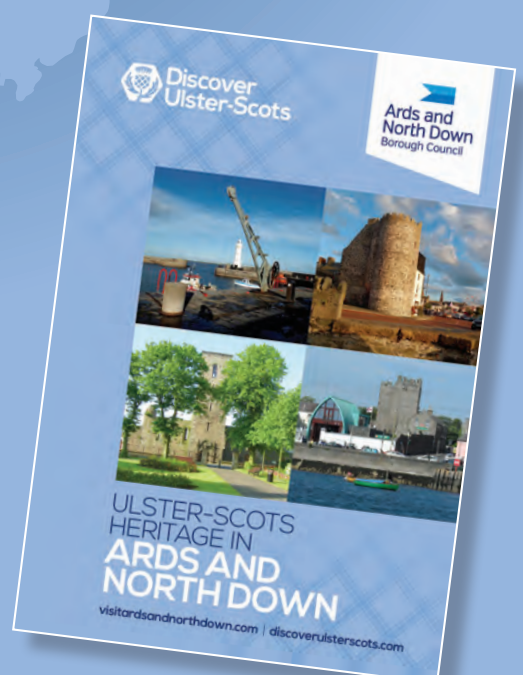
DISCOVER AN HISTORIC

# HEARTLAND OF THE ULSTER-SCOTS

WE'RE JUST 18 MILES FROM SCOTLAND – EACH YEAR  
MANY PEOPLE SAIL BACK AND FORTH. SOME EVEN TRAVEL  
FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO TRY TO SWIM ACROSS.

Most of the people and places in Ards and North Down could be described as Ulster-Scots – our oldest buildings, townlands, coastlines and our most common surnames have a deep and natural connection with Scotland. This is a link which continues to the present day – Scotland's coast can be seen from our shores all year round. Our towns and villages were all developed by the Scottish settlers of the early 1600s.

They brought new energy which built upon the centuries of activity which had come before – by the **early Christians**, the **Vikings**, the **Anglo-Normans** and the **Clandeboyne O'Neills**. These settlers succeeded where **Sir Thomas Smith's** attempt to found an English colony here in the 1570s failed. Everything changed in 1603 when two enterprising Scotsmen struck a deal with **Con O'Neill**, and brought settler families across from May 1606 onwards.



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## THE RIVAL 'FOUNDING FATHERS'

# JAMES HAMILTON

**1559–1644**

- MINISTER'S SON FROM DUNLOP IN AYRSHIRE
- FOUNDING FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
- LIVED AT BANGOR AND KILLYLEAGH
- BOTH TOWNS GIVEN A ROYAL CHARTER IN 1613
- HE REBUILT, AND WAS BURIED IN, BANGOR ABBEY



Sir James Hamilton © National Trust, Castle Ward

### BANGOR

Bangor is an ancient Christian and monastic site. Under Sir James Hamilton the town grew rapidly and by 1611 it contained 80 new houses '*all inhabited with Scottyshmen and Englishmen*'. In 1613 Bangor received a charter of incorporation from the King. In the late 1600s the Ward family of Castle Ward married into the Hamiltons. Busy streets like **Hamilton Road**, **The Vennel** (a common street name in lowland Scotland) and even **Pickie** (an Ulster-Scots word for a young coalfish) carry on the connections. Scottish country dancing was a popular activity at Pickie on Saturday afternoons during the 50s and 60s.



### BANGOR ABBEY

The church contains a fascinating collection of early 17th-century church monuments, including one to **Rev. John Gibson** (d. 1623), the first Protestant minister in the parish, and another to **Beatrix Hamilton** (d. 1633), the wife of his successor, **Rev. Robert Blair**. However there is no memorial to Sir James Hamilton who was buried here in 1644. The cemetery includes 1798 Rebellion gravestones and that of famous Ulster-Scots writer **W.G. Lyttle**, a blue plaque to whom is at 85 Main Street.

[visitardsandnorthdown.com](http://visitardsandnorthdown.com) Tel: 028 9127 0069 (BT20 4JF)



### NORTH DOWN MUSEUM

The Museum, attached to Bangor Castle, is near the site of Sir James Hamilton's original home. Among the Museum's prized possessions is the beautiful set of maps of Bangor and surrounding townlands drawn for Hamilton by **Thomas Raven** in 1625. Another remarkable artefact is a slate sundial dating from 1630 that was once fixed to Bangor Abbey. It was the work of **John Bonar**, a schoolmaster in Ayr, Scotland, whose other sundials can be seen in Scottish museums. Both artefacts can be viewed in the museum's excellent Plantation exhibition.

[northdownmuseum.com](http://northdownmuseum.com) Tel: 028 9127 1200 (BT20 4BT)



### TOWER HOUSE

The Tower House in Bangor is the most important 17th-century port building surviving in Ulster. It was built as a custom-house in 1637 by Sir James Hamilton who had ambitions to develop Bangor into an important port. In more recent times the building has been used as a photographic studio, the Council-run 'Hot Sea Water Baths', and an antiques shop. The building now houses the Visitor Information Centre.

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## THE RIVAL 'FOUNDING FATHERS'

# HUGH MONTGOMERY

1560–1636

- 6TH LAIRD OF BRAIDSTANE, NEAR BEITH IN AYRSHIRE
- LIVED AT NEWTOWNARDS
- FAMILY AT COMBER, GREYABBEY AND PORTAFERRY
- NEWTOWNARDS GIVEN A ROYAL CHARTER IN 1613
- HE REBUILT, AND WAS BURIED IN, NEWTOWNARDS PRIORY



Sir Hugh Montgomery from a 1640 indenture

### NEWTOWNARDS

Originally an important Anglo-Norman settlement, in the early 1600s Sir Hugh Montgomery established his 'headquarters' at Newtownards and with the assistance of his wife **Elizabeth** oversaw the development of the town which by 1611 included around 100 houses '*all peopled with Scottes*'. The town was later acquired by the **Colville** and **Stewart** families. The **Town Hall** was built as a market house around 1770; during the 1798 Rebellion it was held for a time by a party of United Irishmen. The Priory congregation moved to the new **St Mark's** in 1817, one of the best Gothic churches of its kind in the British Isles.



### NEWTOWNARDS PRIORY AND BAWN

In 1244 a Dominican priory was founded in Newtownards. When Sir Hugh Montgomery moved to Newtownards he converted the cloistral buildings of the priory to his domestic residence – **Newtown House** – and had the priory church restored as a place of worship. When Sir Hugh died in 1636 he was buried within these walls in an impressive Scottish state funeral. Newtown House burned down in 1664, but a portion of the bawn wall – from which **Castlebawn** takes its name – survives.

**Court Street (BT23 7NX)**



### MARKET CROSS

Under Montgomery's direction Newtownards became an important market centre. The story is told that in 1607 merchants would travel from Scotland to Newtownards and back in a day to do business. The Market Cross in Newtownards is the second on the site, the first was built under Montgomery's direction as a replica of the one in **Edinburgh**. At the market cross '*all proclamations that come from the Chief Governor of this kingdom*' were issued. It bears the date 1636, the year Montgomery died.

**Castle Place (BT23 7HS)**



### MOVILLA ABBEY AND CEMETERY

On the outskirts of Newtownards is Movilla Cemetery. This was the site of a monastery founded by St Finian in the 6th century which became an Augustinian abbey in the 13th century – the ruins of the abbey stand in one corner of the cemetery. The cemetery includes some memorials to rebels executed in 1798 including **Archibald Warwick** who was hanged at Kircubbin. The **Corry** mausoleum is one of three graves at Movilla to former Provosts of Newtown – **Provost** being a Scottish term for mayor.

**Old Movilla Road (BT23 8HH)**



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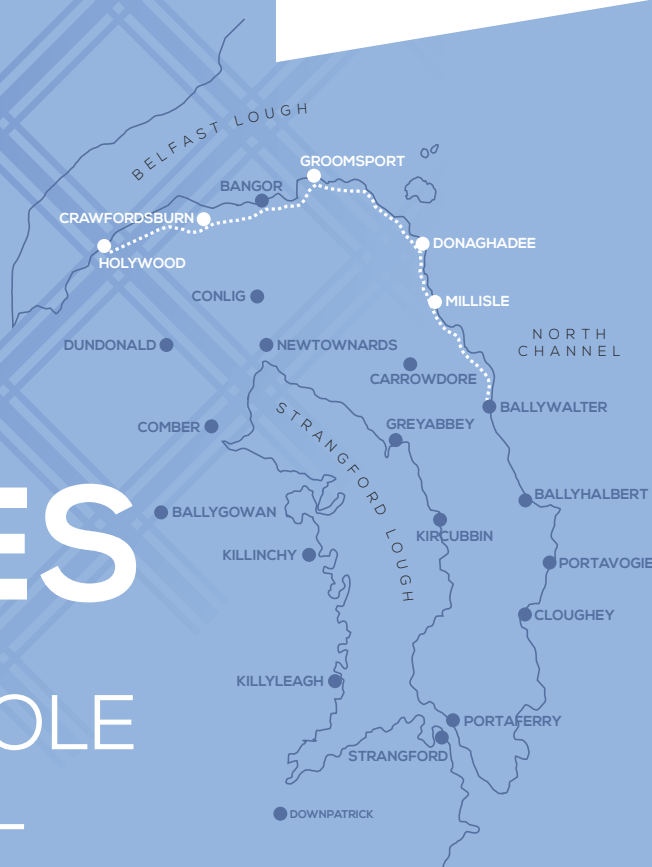


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EXPLORE OUR

# TOWNS AND VILLAGES

FROM THE MAYPOLE  
TO THE WINDMILL



Holywood Priory

## HOLYWOOD

- It is possible that the **Maypole** originated as a Scottish market cross, as shown on the Raven map of c. 1625, on display at North Down Museum.
- The ruined **Priory** was rebuilt by Sir James Hamilton. Presbyterian minister Rev Robert Cunningham became minister here in 1615. In 1644 the Solemn League and Covenant was signed here, now on display at the Ulster Museum.
- **Twisel Bridge** is named after a bridge at the Battle of Flodden. **Lorne House** was named by Henry Campbell after his ancestral home in Scotland.



The Old Inn

## CRAWFORDSBURN

- Named after **Andrew Crawford** from Kilbirnie in Scotland who arrived here in the 1620s. Their Scottish castle was also called Crawfordsburn.
- The **Old Inn** dates from 1614. C.S. Lewis, himself of Ulster-Scots descent and whose writings contain Ulster-Scots references, stayed here.
- **Crawfordsburn Park and Glen** are popular destinations. The Park includes the former Crawfordsburn House, designed by Vincent Craig, brother of Prime Minister of Northern Ireland James Craig. The Craigs were Ulster-Scots.



Cockle Row

## GROOMSPORT

- **The harbour and Cockle Row cottages** are a reminder that Groomsport was the earliest port in North Down, shown on the Raven map of c. 1625. The area was developed by the Kyles and Rosses from Irvine in Ayrshire.
- Departure port for Rev John Livingstone's voyage to London in 1634, in preparation for *Eagle Wing's* attempted voyage to America in 1636.
- **Groomsport House** (now private apartments) was founded by the Maxwells. In the 1800s they led a migration from the Peninsula to Canada.



Donaghadee Harbour

## DONAGHADEE

- According to tradition, St Patrick arrived at **Templepatrick** from Portpatrick.
- The **Parish Church** has a datestone in memory of Hugh Montgomery. His first home was at the **Manor House**, and he developed the **harbour**. In 1616 Montgomery was given a Royal Warrant for the Donaghadee-Portpatrick sea route which remained until the mid 1800s.
- Montgomery tried to rename the town as 'Montgomery', and Portpatrick as 'Port Montgomery'. A **datestone** in Cottage Kitchen commemorates this.



Ballycopeland Windmill

## MILLISLE

- The village grew quickly in the early 1900s.
- **Ballycopeland Windmill** remained in operation until the 1970s.
- The Carmichael family, of Scottish ancestry, helped develop the village. The **Baptist Church**, formerly a national school, has a blue plaque to world-famous author and missionary Amy Carmichael.
- **Woburn House**, just south of the village, was built by John Gilmore Dunbar as his summer residence. The Dunbars originated in Caithness.



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# TOWNS AND VILLAGES

THE MOST EASTERLY TO  
THE MOST SOUTHERLY



1626 datestone on community centre

## BALLYWALTER

- **Whitechurch graveyard** includes some early Ulster-Scots gravestones, eg John Cooper, d. 1608 aged 92, from Kilwinning in Ayrshire.
- King James VI & I authorised James Hamilton to build the **harbour** in 1623.
- In 1626 the first Presbyterian minister - Rev James Hamilton - was appointed. A **datestone** on the community centre commemorates this.
- **Ballywalter Park** (private property) the seat of Lord and Lady Dunleath, was bought in 1846 by Ulster-Scots linen baron Andrew Mulholland.



Harbour

## BALLYHALBERT

- The most easterly point of all of Ireland is **Burr Point**, at the harbour.
- Early maps name the settlement here as 'Talbotstoun'.
- **The old church** dates from Anglo-Norman times, but was rebuilt by James Hamilton. In 1622 Scotsman George Porter became minister here.
- Nearby Balligan church was built in 1704, from materials salvaged from Ballyhalbert, where the original handcrafted roof timbers can be seen.



Harbour

## PORTAVOGIE

- Features in a Raven map of c. 1625, on display at North Down Museum.
- The Boyds of Dean Castle, Kilmarnock, settled here in the early 1600s. Fishing families from Ayrshire arrived around 1750.
- The new beach promenade passes **McCammon Rocks**, the early natural harbour where small boats sheltered for centuries.
- In 1683, William Montgomery recorded fish names – 'lythe' for pollack, 'blockan' for coalfish, and 'bavins' for wrasse, all Scottish and still in use.



Kirkistown Castle

## CLOUGHEY/KIRKISTOWN

- **Kirkistown Castle** is an impressive tower house said to have been built by Roland Savage in 1622. It was acquired by James McGill of Greyabbey and in 1683 it was recorded that he had 'improved this place very much, by building garden walls, and houses, and repairing in and about'.
- **Ardkeen Church of Ireland** includes a memorial to George Francis Savage-Armstrong, the renowned Ulster-Scots poet whose ancestors lived on the Ards Peninsula.



Portaferry Castle

## PORTAFERRY

- **Portaferry Castle** was originally built by the Savages, but restored by the Montgomerys in the 1620s when the families intermarried.
- **Templecranny Church and graveyard** contains the family grave of Bishop Robert Echlin, originally from Fife in Scotland, who lived at the Abbey at nearby Ardquin. 1798 Rebellion fighter James Maxwell is also buried here. During the Rebellion an attack took place on **Portaferry Market House**, which still features the Savage coat of arms.
- **Portico** is a visitor and heritage centre, based in the famous Portaferry Presbyterian Church building which dates from 1841. Some Ulster-Scots information can be found here.



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# TOWNS AND VILLAGES

AROUND THE SHORES  
OF THE LOUGH



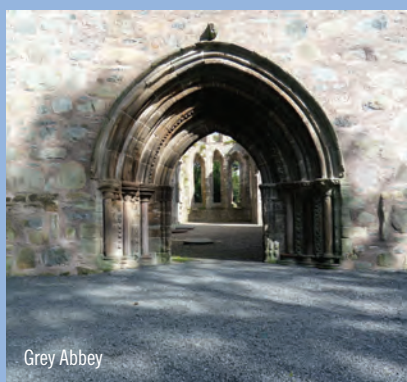
Kirkcubbin Presbyterian Church

## KIRCUBBIN (SOMETIMES SPELLED 'KIRKCUBBIN')

■ Land here leased by Roland Savage to Sir James Hamilton. Scottish families such as the Maxwells settled here.

■ Around 1770 James Bailie established annual fairs and a market. **Kirkcubbin Presbyterian Church**, located at the lough shore, was established in 1777, with Scotsman Rev George Brydon its first minister.

■ Archibald Warwick, a 29-year-old licentiate of the Presbyterian Church, was executed at Kirkcubbin for his involvement in the 1798 Rebellion.



Grey Abbey

## GREY ABBEY

■ The **abbey** was founded in 1193 as a daughter abbey of Holm Cultram Abbey and Melrose Abbey in the Scottish Borders.

■ Restored in the 1600s by Hugh Montgomery for use as a parish church, and continued as such until around 1778. The **historic graveyard** includes the burial place of Rev James Porter, executed following the 1798 Rebellion.

■ James Montgomery established 'Rosemount', also known as **Grey Abbey House**, in 1629. The Montgomery family still live there to this day.



Mount Stewart

## CARROWDORE

■ Carrowdore was the location for the local Ulster-Scots novel *Sons of the Sod*, written by W.G. Lyttle. It is famous for the 'Carrowdore 100' motorcycle road race, and once had the widest main street in Ireland.

■ The Huguenot Crommelin family settled here in the 1700s, acquiring land from the Montgomerys. Their castle is just outside the village (private).

■ Nearby is **Mount Stewart**, the famous National Trust property, founded by the Ulster-Scots Stewart family from Donegal in 1744.



Comber Square

## COMBER

■ **St Mary's Parish Church** stands on the site of the original Comber Abbey, with some early Ulster-Scots gravestones in the surrounding cemetery.

■ Overlooking **Comber Square** is a monument to Robert Rollo Gillespie, a local war hero of Ulster-Scots descent.

■ Comber's architectural heritage includes three **Presbyterian** churches. **Andrews Memorial Primary School** and the converted **Andrews & Sons flax spinning mill**, named for the famous Ulster-Scots family and *Titanic* designer.



Ballydorn Lightship near Whiterock

## KILLINCHY

■ Rev John Livingstone, chaplain of the Countess of Wigtown in Scotland, was invited to Killinchy by Sir James Hamilton in 1630. The congregation worshipped in an earlier church on the site of today's **Parish Church**.

■ **Killinchy Presbyterian Church** is based on an unusual cruciform plan.

■ Ulster-Scots author W.G. Lyttle's famous book *Daft Eddie and the Smugglers of Strangford Lough*, first published in 1890, is a County Down classic. A local restaurant takes its name from the hero of the story.



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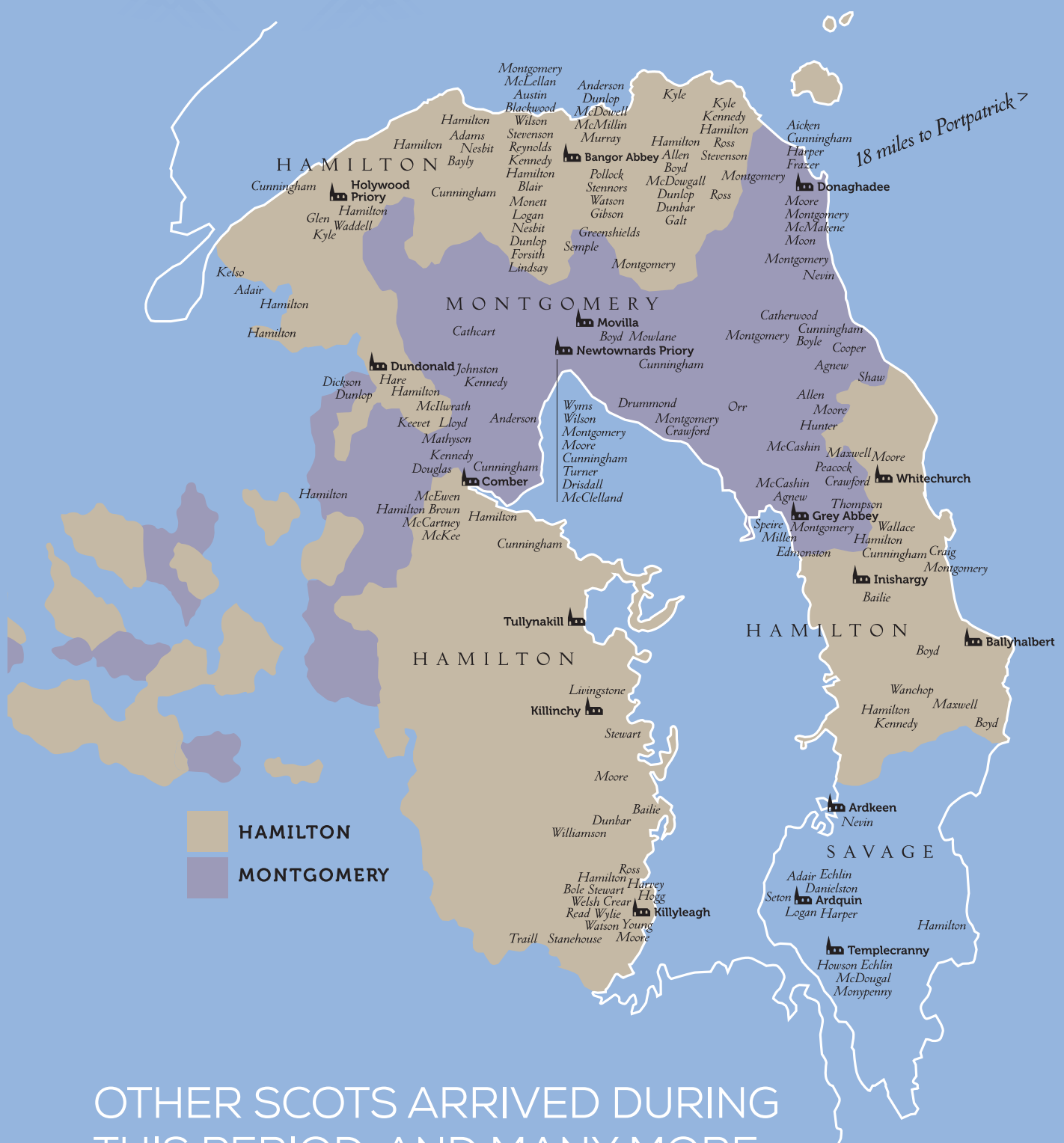


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IS YOUR NAME HERE?

# EARLIEST SCOTTISH SURNAME

**1606–1641:** THE SURVIVING DOCUMENTS OF THE TIME ARE LIMITED. THIS MAP SHOWS WHERE MANY OF THE FIRST SCOTTISH SETTLERS IN ARDS AND NORTH DOWN LIVED.



OTHER SCOTS ARRIVED DURING THIS PERIOD, AND MANY MORE ARRIVED IN LATER YEARS, RIGHT UP TO THE PRESENT DAY.

Sources used for this map include:

- the beautiful Thomas Raven 1625 maps of the Hamilton estates, which are on display at North Down Museum
- *The Scots in Ulster - their Denization and Naturalization* (1954)

Additional sources you can consult include:

- the *Hamilton Manuscripts 1603–1703* and the *Montgomery Manuscripts 1603–1706*
- the 1641 rent roll of the Savage estate, published in *The Savage Family in Ulster* (1888)



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## PLACENAMES

# BURNS, BRAES AND GLENS



Ards and North Down detail from the 1960s Gregg map below

FROM **CRAWFORDSBURN** VILLAGE, TO **CUNNINGBURN** JUST NORTH OF MOUNT STEWART, TO THE **CARRSTOWN BURN** NEAR PORTAFERRY, ULSTER-SCOTS PLACE NAMES CAN BE FOUND RIGHT ACROSS OUR COUNCIL AREA.

### TOWNLANDS

Townlands are large and mostly rural areas which pre-date the Scots settlement. The Hamilton & Montgomery settlement of 1606 was on a townland basis, so most of these names were retained. They also introduced some new Scots-influenced names. A few of these are:

- Gregstown (N'ards)
- Echlinville (Rubane)
- Whitespots (Conlig)

### VILLAGE NAMES

Some of the current names show an obvious Scottish influence:

- **Crawfordsburn**
- **Cunningburn**
- **Kircubbin/Kirkcubbin**
- **Kirkistown**

Other villages have reinstated historical names alongside their more familiar ones:

- **Greba** (Greyabbey)
- **Whitkirk** (Ballywalter)
- **Talbotstoun** (Ballyhalbert)

### STREET NAMES

You can find street names like these across the Borough, some on brown heritage signs:

- **Tay Pot Rae**
- **Hard Breid Rae**
- **Meetin Hoose Brae**
- **Whinney Hill**
- **Coo Vennel**
- **Braeside**
- **Schoolhouse Brae**
- **Heathery Rig Rae**
- **Browns Brae**
- **Wee Dam Road**
- **Calhame Gardens**

### WEE PLACES

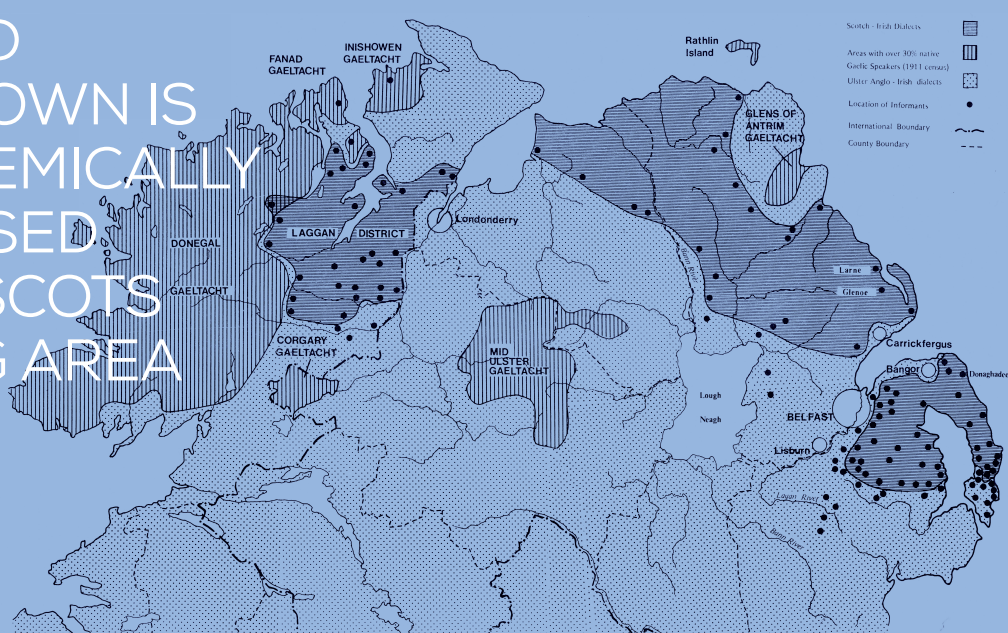
At a smaller scale, many local features also have Ulster-Scots names, known to locals, but few have signage:

- **Crawfordsburn Glen**
- **Stricklands Glen**
- **Selk Rock**
- **Whaup Rock**
- **Pink Brae**
- **Saltwater Brig**
- **Clydesburn**
- **Boretree Island**
- **Ghaist Hole**
- **Rowting Well**

(Ulster-Scots language elements in bold)

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN IS AN ACADEMICALLY RECOGNISED ULSTER-SCOTS SPEAKING AREA

Professor R J Gregg's language map of Ulster, early 1960s (courtesy Philip Robinson)



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