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Title	The Quays of Ballinacurra
Authors(s)	Shotton, Elizabeth
Publication date	2019
Publication information	Shotton, Elizabeth. “The Quays of Ballinacurra.” Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, 2019.
Publisher	Cork Historical and Archaeological Society
Item record/more information	http://hdl.handle.net/10197/27589

Downloaded 2026-11-15 01:58:54

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The Quays of Ballinacurra

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Acknowledgements: Maura Lee West inspired this study by inviting me to have a look at the harbour and meet Ursula O'Mahony, a local historian, who has been generous with both her time and knowledge. The survey encompassed both the quays and associated warehouses, the access to the latter granted by the realtor, Will Lyons of Space Property Group. Thanks also to Nick Bourke, Harbour Master, Port of Cork, who surfaced old documents relating to the quays, as well as Sophie Kelliher and Donal Lennon who helped with the survey and archival work. Most important, thanks to the Cork Historical & Archaeological Society, who funded the survey work that underpins the ongoing research.



Figure 1: Ballinacurra Harbour, n.d. (From archive of Ursula O'Mahoney)

The history of the making of Ballinacurra town, south of Midleton in County Cork, begins in earnest in 1788 with a grant on the 'strand of Castleredmond' by George Broderick, 4th Viscount Midelton, to the Cork merchants John Lapp and John Anderson for 999 years, well documented in Trevor West's book *Malting the Barley: John H Bennett - the Man and His Firm*. West identifies these earliest stores as the Charleston Maltings (Figure 1), now renovated into apartments. The lease was enlarged in 1792 with a grant of £1000 by Lord Midleton, £200 of which was for the building of the first quay wall.[1] This initial stimulus of quay and store was to drive the economy, and the quay-wall building, in Ballinacurra for the next century and a half, and inspired the Cork Harbour Commissioners to build their own quays in the

[1] West, Trevor. 2006. Malting the Barley : John H. Bennett the man and his firm. Cork: Published by Author. pp 30-31.

1820s. By the 1850's, the quays, stores and malting houses were owned by the Bennetts and by 1885 J.H. Bennett began to expand both business and the quay walls until his death in 1935.

The remnants of this malting industry remain, some of it listed on the National Monuments inventory, though much has either been converted to apartments or lies vacant and partially derelict. Yet, the cultural significance of this small village lies not in single buildings but in the interrelationships between river, village, industry, and the larger agricultural landscape that surrounds it, creating an intricate and complex physical and cultural landscape in which these 'monuments' sit. Traditionally overlooked in such a matrix are quays. Yet, in the case of Ballinacurra, these utilitarian constructions underpin the entire evolution of the town and its industrial fabric, thus are critical to any historical study.

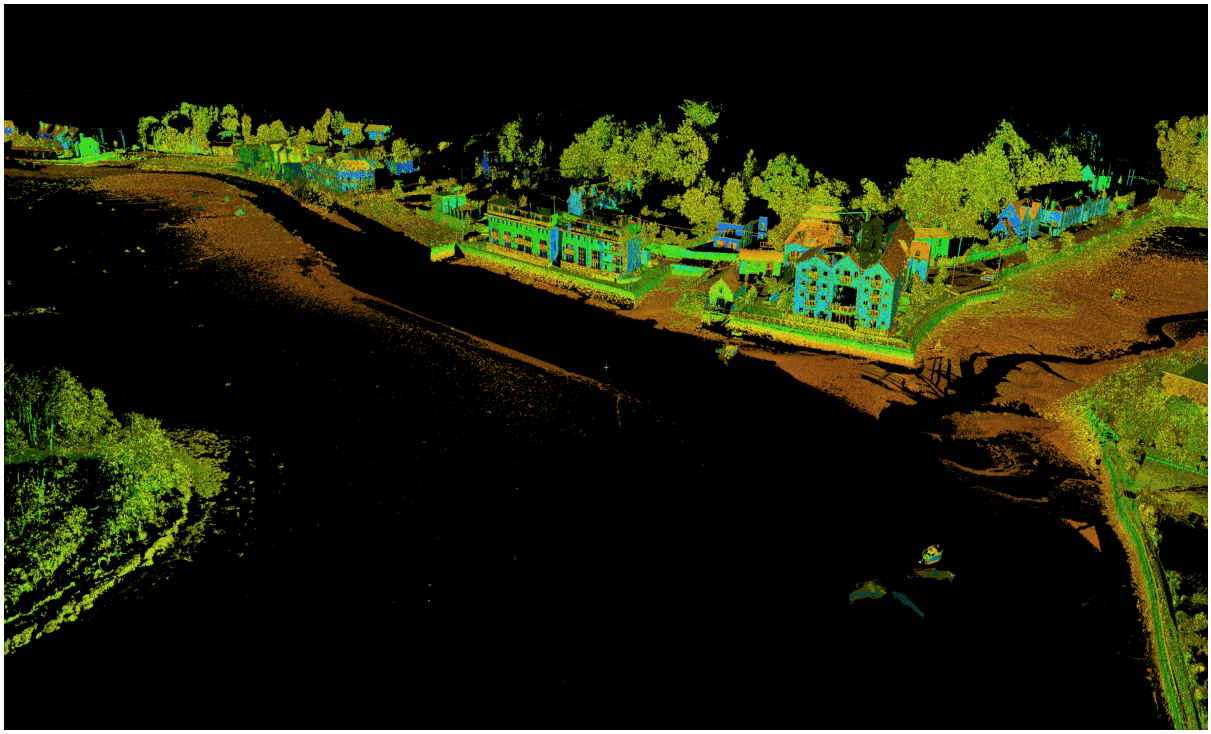


Figure 2: LiDAR scan of Ballinacurra Harbour, 2018 (Shotton, Kelliher, Lennon)

In June of 2018 a team of 3 researchers from UCD spent 4 days documenting the riverine landscape of Ballinacurra, capturing the form of the quays, the industrial buildings, and part of the village itself, much to the bemusement and curiosity of the local population, who were generous with much needed offerings of water, tea, and sometimes beer. The documentation used terrestrial Lidar equipment, which uses lasers to document objects, and included an in-house mid-range scanner and a long-range scanner rented to scan across the width of the river. A total of 53 separate scans were taken reaching from near the tumulus at Ballinacorra house, up river to the pedestrian bridge on the road to Midleton, and along the original spine of the village to the now derelict industrial site of J.H. Bennett. Once merged over the course of several weeks, these scans generated a full-scale three-dimensional digital record of the town, harbour, and industrial buildings in a 77GB file (Figure 2). Land-based objects, such as the warehouses, were easily scanned in considerable detail (Figure 3). Quay walls are more difficult to scan thus, despite a long-range scanner, some of the quay walls near the derelict Cloyne Clay Company site were less than adequately documented. The team will return in the summer of 2019 to capture additional detail using a technique called photogrammetry, where photographs can be used to create a point cloud that can then be merged with the original scan data.

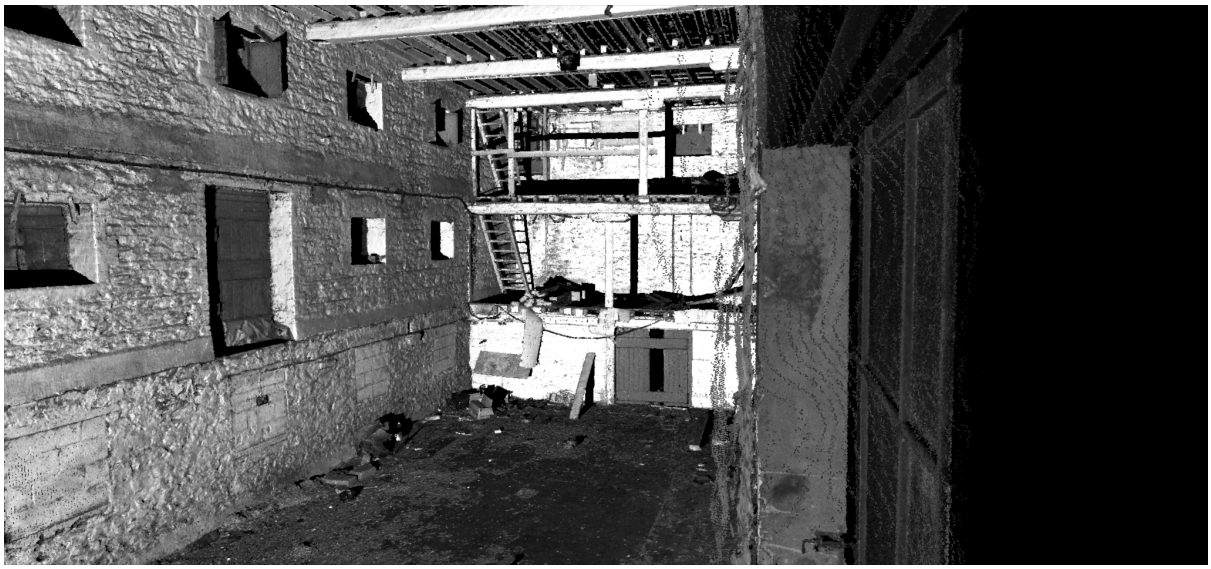


Figure 3: LiDAR scan of shed interior, J.H. Bennett stores, Ballinacurra, 2018 (Shotton, Kelliher, Lennon)

In addition to the survey a cursory review of the Bennett archive in Cork City & County Archives the same week surfaced a drawing of an early concrete quay wall by J.H. Bennett (Figure 4). Material such as this, in addition to photographs and maps, will be used with the scan data to better understand the evolution of the town. The detailed model created through scanning not only serves as an historical record of Ballinacurra but can be used to locate and remodel historic elements of the village that have disappeared by overlaying the model on historic images. Further archival research and modelling work is underway and will be used to build a three-dimensional timeline model of the town, to visually illustrate its evolution.

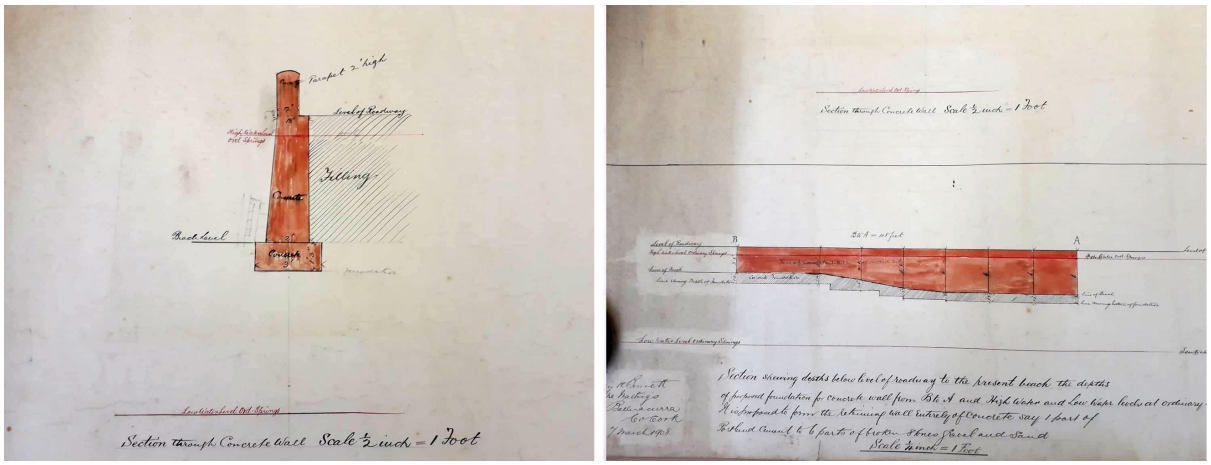


Figure 4: Sketch of concrete quay wall by J.H. Bennett, 1908 (Cork City & County Archives, Bennetts of Ballinacurra IE CCCA/B609/6/B/20)