

Townland names come mostly from Irish, although some come from Scots and English words.

Existing Irish place names continued to be used during and after the Plantation. However, the planters spoke English and Scots, and the administrators and governors of the Plantation spoke and wrote in English. Therefore the names we use today are anglicised versions of the original Irish names. We cannot always tell what they meant in the past.



G.V. Sampson's map of County Londonderry, 1813. Many place names shown on this map are used in the same form today, while others are spelt differently. Some new names have been introduced. (Courtesy of Limavady Borough Council - map donated by Brian Brown)

Meanings suggested for Garbogle, a townland on the Bann, include:

- violent or severe battlefield - *garb eargal* or *garb iorgal*
- rough conical hill - *garb aireacal*
- short or near or bright fortification - *gearrborgeal*

Recently place name experts have linked the name to the early church in the area. They believe Garbogle is likely to come from the Irish *garbh aireagal*, meaning the rough oratory or cell.

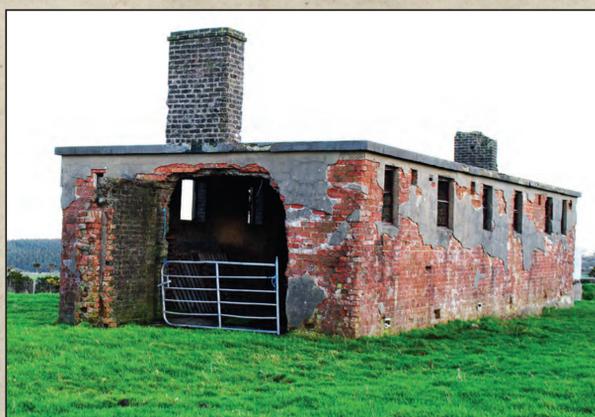
Sconce, a hilly townland, may be an English and Scots version of a Dutch word - *schans* - meaning 'fortress'. It could have been used by planters who had been soldiers in the Netherlands before coming to Ireland. Its oldest Irish name is believed to be *Dún Ceithirn*, Cethern's Fort.



View of Sconce fort from Formoyle, c.1950. The men are preparing the field for planting potatoes. (Courtesy of William King)

Benarees, a coastal townland at Magilligan, may mean:

- grey peak - *beann riach*
- peak of the marsh - *beann na riach*
- peak of the heather - *beann an fraoigh*
- peak of the gallows - *beann na riaga*



The remains of a World War Two American Army base in Heathery Hill, Benarees. This fieldname may support the idea that Benarees means 'peak of the heather'.



Sconce fort (© Crown copyright. Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, and courtesy of NIEA Built Heritage)

John O'Donovan, who researched place names for the Ordnance Survey, was very excited by the hint that Sconce was once known as *Dún Ceithirn*. A fort with this name and in this area is mentioned in Ireland's oldest historical records. He recommended that the Ordnance Survey record the townland's name as Lunnagern, since that is what local people called it at this time. He thought that Lunnagern was a Scots version of Dunkerren or *Dún Ceithirn*.