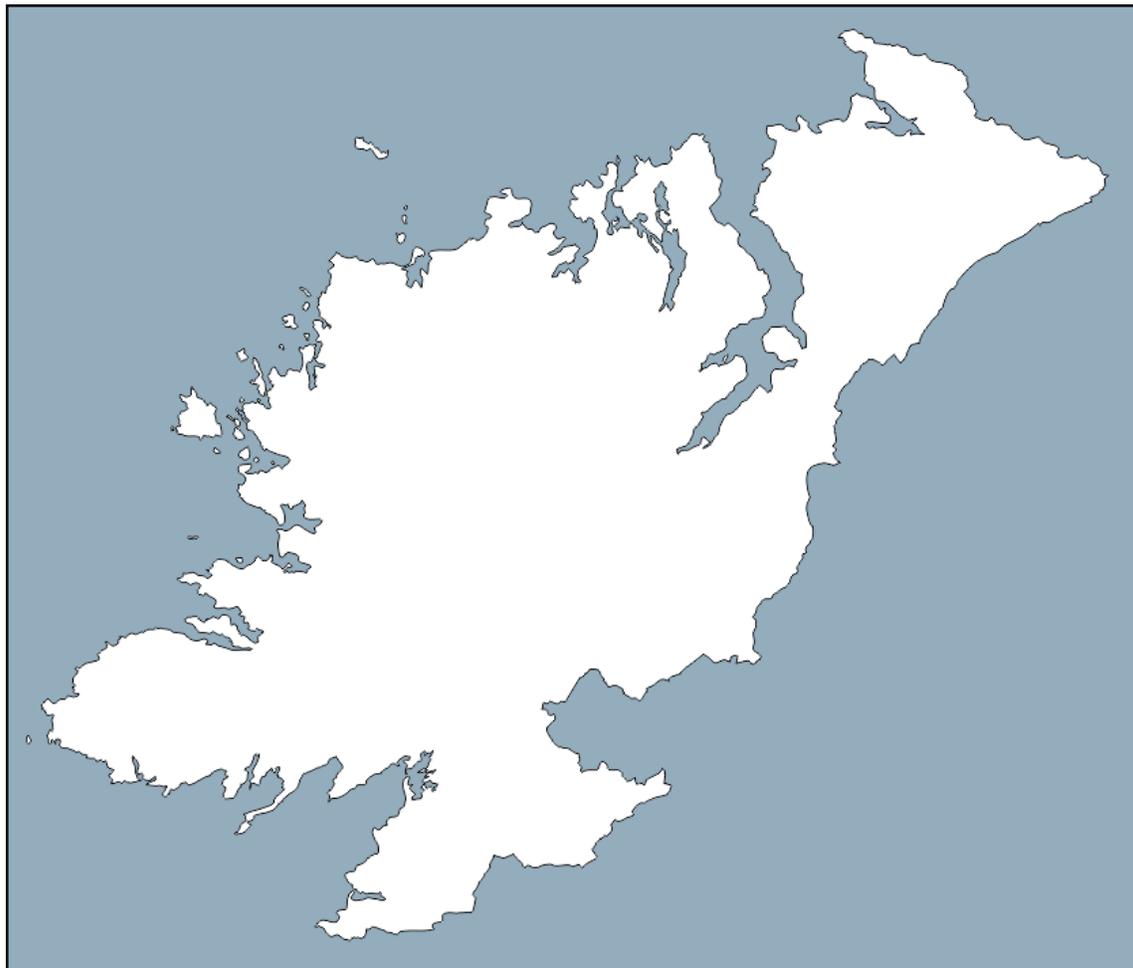


MAPPING BRIAN FRIEL'S BALLYBEG COUNTY DONEGAL

Terms of Reference



September 2022



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017-2022



*An Action of the Culture & Creativity Strategy for County Donegal and an
Action of the County Donegal Heritage Plan funded by
Donegal County Council, Creative Ireland & The Heritage Council
and supported by the Brian Friel Trust*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Brian Friel (1929-2015) was the best-known Irish playwright of his generation and an accomplished short-story writer who had a strong affection for County Donegal. He was born in Knockmoyle, near Omagh, County Tyrone on January 9, 1929. The family moved to Derry when Brian was ten years old. He was educated at St. Columb's College, Derry before attending St. Patrick's College, Maynooth and then training as teacher at St. Joseph's Training College, Belfast. He taught in Derry from 1950 until 1960 when he took leave to pursue a career as a writer. In the late 1960s, the Friels moved from Derry to Muff, County Donegal before settling near Greencastle in County Donegal. He passed away on October 2, 2015 and was laid to rest in the graveyard in his beloved Glenties.

'The Laurels' is Brian Friel's mother's home in Glenties in which he spent time during the summer holidays when he was young. The narrow-gauge railway provided the means of transport that brought him to 'The Laurels' during his summer holidays. Friel's grandfather was the stationmaster in Glenties and the house was originally the station house. When Brian got off the train at the rail terminus in Glenties, he just walked across the road to 'The Laurels'. In *Self-Portrait* (1971), Brian Friel recalled: "When I was a boy we always spent a portion of our summer holidays in my mother's old home near the village of Glenties in County Donegal. I have memories of those holidays that are as pellucid, as intense, as if they happened last week. I remember in detail the shape of the cups hanging in the scullery, the pattern of flags on the kitchen floor, every knot of wood on the wooden stairway, every door handle, every smell, the shape and texture of every tree around the place."

His play *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) is dedicated to "the five brave Glenties women" referring to his mother Christina McLoone and his four aunts who grew up in 'The Laurels' and they have been immortalised as the Mundy sisters in the play. His uncle Barney McLoone served as the inspiration for the missionary priest who returned home in the play. The last McLoone sister, Maggie, lived in 'The Laurels' until her death in the late 1950s when the house was bought by a local family. 'The Laurels' and its inhabitants provided the inspiration for *Dancing at Lughnasa* and when the 1998 film version of the play was released, Brian Friel along with actresses Meryl Streep and Sophie Thompson unveiled a plaque on 'The Laurels' on September 24, 1998. The Brian Friel Trust purchased 'The Laurels' in January 2016 with the intention of restoring it. It is a Protected Structure (#40907430) of national significance and of special architectural, scientific and cultural interest.

Ballybeg (or Baile Beag) – the fictional County Donegal town in which Friel set his works such as *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964), *Translations* (1980), *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), and *The Home Place* (2005) – has become synonymous with, and is based on, Glenties. In the MacGill Summer School brochure (1981), Friel revealed that "A community that celebrates a local writer does two things. Rightly and with pardonable pride, it participates in the national/international acclaim. And rightly, and indeed as importantly, it celebrates itself because the writer is both fashioned by and fashions his people. Because of my own close connections with Glenties – it occupies a large portion of my affections and permanently shaped my imagination." Friel's affection for, and affinity with, Glenties and County Donegal is reflected in his portrayal of Ballybeg and in his accounts of life and landscape in County Donegal. In

that sense, this study seeks to convey a sense of Brian Friel's literary landscape of County Donegal.

The National Library of Ireland now houses two collections of Brian Friel Papers donated in 2001¹ and 2009-2011². The County Library Service also holds an extensive collection of his works including all his plays (many first editions), some first night programmes of his plays, copies of other fictional works, edited volumes and a good body of literary critical works devoted to Friel's work and these can be made available to the researcher(s). St. Connell's Museum in Glenties also has a small display on Brian Friel's life and work. Since 2015, the annual, cross-border Lughnasa International Friel Fest, produced by Arts Over Borders, has celebrated and responded to Friel's life and work.

1.2 Objective

The proposed initiative seeks to undertake an analysis of Brian Friel's literary works and writings to populate the inspirational places (such as Glenties) and the imagined places (such as Ballybeg) portrayed in his work. The study will involve archival research, analysis of Friel's literary works and writings, interviews with key informants and investigation of the built heritage and local landscape. It is anticipated that the research contained in, or original material created as part of, this study will help to inform future interpretation of this site.

This study will contribute to the continuation of "A project to encourage the conservation of landmark historical buildings in County Donegal" (Action 2.5), leading to "the establishment of literary . . . heritage trails to highlight the material heritage associated with these traditions" (Action 1.10) by "Undertak[ing] joint initiatives involving heritage and the arts in County Donegal" (Action 3.7) as set out in the County Donegal Heritage Plan. This initiative will "Support the generation and communication of information on . . . cultural heritage" as advocated in the Heritage Council Strategic Plan (Strategic Objective 3iv). The study will contribute to the achievement of Action 4.2. in the Culture & Creativity Strategy for County Donegal to "explore, research, record and document Donegal's cultural and creative resource" and "investigate and encourage the re-use of historic/vacant buildings for cultural activities" (Action 5.5).

1.3 Aims & Outputs

The aims of this study are to:

- outline Brian Friel's literary associations with Glenties and its hinterland;
- interrogate Brian Friel's writings and literature to establish a database of real and imagined places in his work;
- identify descriptions of characters, places and settings portrayed in his work and their real-life associations;
- provide a comprehensive account of the fictional Ballybeg and its real-life associations with Glenties and the surrounding area; and
- create a map of Brian Friel's Donegal as portrayed in his literary works.

¹ Brian Friel Papers: <http://www.nli.ie/pdfs/mss%20lists/frielb.pdf>

² Brian Friel Papers (Additional): http://www.nli.ie/pdfs/mss%20lists/180_BrianFrielPapers_Additional.pdf

2. RESPONSE TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

Proposals in response to these terms of reference should set out how the study will be approached, methodology and any other relevant matters. The proposal should include:

2.1 Required Skills and Experience

Proposals should contain clear details of the skills and experience of the researcher(s) and the CV(s) of the researcher(s). Details should also be given of the relevant experience including examples of previous relevant work.

2.2 Methodology and Timetable

The researcher(s) shall furnish a method statement and timetable regarding the delivery of the work. It is expected that the proposal will include:

2.2.1 Method statement: including reference material to be used, methodology, consultation planned, data analysis, outline of the study and a detailed timetable. A familiarity with the work of Brian Friel would be an advantage.

2.2.2 A Resource Plan: showing the breakdown of person hours and costs.

3. GENERAL ISSUES

3.1 Timescale

The project will start in September 2022 and will be completed by Monday, February 27, 2023. The researcher(s) appointed must be in a position to begin immediately once appointed.

3.2 Project Management

A steering committee comprising representatives of the Culture Division, Donegal County Council will guide the development of this project. The main point-of-contact will be the Heritage Officer. The steering committee will meet regularly to review progress.

3.3 Budget

The maximum budget for this commission is €10,000 including travel and expenses but **excluding VAT**. Please quote proposed costs excluding and including VAT.

3.4 Insurance

The researcher(s) shall effect and maintain insurance necessary to cover their liabilities under this study.

3.5 Copyright and Confidentiality

The researcher(s) will be required to assign copyright of all research produced including text, illustrations, maps and/or photographs to Donegal County Council. Copyright for any illustrations or other material used should be cleared by the researcher(s). Reproduction or copyright fees for source material will be agreed with, and covered by, Donegal County Council. The study will be made available for public use by Donegal County Council.

3.6 Freedom of Information

Donegal County Council operates under the Freedom of Information Act 1997 and all information held by the Council (including proposals submitted in response to this brief) may be subject to requests under the Act.

3.7 Evaluation of Proposals & Selection of Researcher(s)

Evaluation of proposals will be based on the ability of the researcher(s) to deliver the skills and outputs detailed above within the specified timeframe. Interviews may be held with selected candidates prior to the final evaluation. Donegal County Council is not obliged to accept any proposal or the proposal with the lowest bid, and no person making a submission will be remunerated for any expense incurred in preparing a submission. It is envisaged that the successful researcher(s) will demonstrate:

- (i) an appreciation or knowledge of Brian Friel's work and a familiarity with the sources of information on his writings (20%);
- (ii) proven experience of undertaking historical, archival, literary and/or built heritage research (20%)
- (iii) a clear methodology to establish a database and map of real and imagined places in Friel's work and consultation proposed (40%);
- (iv) experience of report writing and provision of timetable outlining key tasks and milestones (15%); and
- (v) competitive price (5%).

The decision of the evaluation panel will be final.

3.8 Closing Date

E-mailed submissions to heritage@donegalcoco.ie will be accepted prior to the closing date. Submissions may also be sent by post to:

Mapping Brian Friel's Ballybeg
c/o Joseph Gallagher,
Heritage Officer,
County Donegal Heritage Office,
Donegal County Council,
Station Island,
Lifford,
County Donegal.

The closing date for receipt of proposals is 4 p.m. on Wednesday, September 21, 2022.
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Proposals cannot be accepted after this deadline.