

COUNTY CLARE THATCHED STRUCTURES



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Presented by

CARRIG
BUILDING FABRIC CONSULTANTS

to

The Heritage Council

Clare County Council

The Department of
Environment, Heritage &
Local Government





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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Client

Clare County Council in partnership with

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government

&

The Heritage Council



Client Representatives

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Willie Cummins: Senior Architect, NIAH, DoEHLG

Colm Murray: Architecture Officer, The Heritage Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2005, Clare County Council in partnership with The Heritage Council and the DoEHLG issued an invitation to tender for a comprehensive audit of all vernacular and modern thatched structures in County Clare. The tender was in response to Objective 3, Action 3.2 of the County Clare Heritage Plan 2003 - 2007;

Objective 3 - To protect and conserve the best examples of our architectural heritage

3.2 - Complete a country survey of unrecorded built heritage and buildings of local importance in a format that can be amalgamated into the national database

In May of 2005 Carrig Conservation were appointed to carry out the said works. A methodology was drawn up by Carrig and was agreed with the County Council before work commenced in early June.

Overall 95 records were made, comprising both historic and modern thatched structures. Out of these records, 61 vernacular or historic structures were recorded. The remaining 34 records comprised modern thatched structures. Furthermore, 8 of the 34 modern records represent more than one modern structure each where they have been built as part of a holiday home group scheme or models from Bunratty Folk Park. The sum of the additional structures in these 8 records is 48 which mean that altogether 143 thatched structures were found in Clare. Structures with thatch under asbestos or tin roofs were extremely difficult to trace during the course of the survey.



1 INTRODUCTION

This report commissioned by Clare County Council in partnership with the DoEHLG and The Heritage Council was undertaken by Carrig Conservation. The record of Thatched Structures, which accompanies this report, was carried out in accordance with action 3.2 of the County Clare Heritage Plan 2003-2007 'Complete a county survey of unrecorded Thatched Cottages'.

The purpose of completing a county survey of this kind is to collect the information necessary to be in a position to analyse the issues surrounding the present and future role of thatch in the county. This document, the Access database and corresponding location maps represent this information for County Clare and set out to address these issues for the first time. The database, which has 95 records of thatched structures, is provided as a tool for having efficient access to information on each individual building. This information may be utilised to assess particular issues surrounding thatch in Clare.

This report gives details of the teams approach to the survey, a short explanatory on each condition and a summary of findings noticed throughout the duration of the project. Remarks by thatch cottage owners, thatchers and the recorders findings on the field are included into the topics for discussion in Section 6 of this report.

This report is divided into seven sections: Executive Summary, Introduction, Thatching in Ireland, Methodology, Database Overview, Findings, Issues for Discussion to Evolve into Outline Policies and Conclusion & Conservation. There are five appendices at the end of this report: Appendix 1 comprises a list of all persons contacted in an attempt to research information on Thatch and their locations in Clare: Appendix 2 has County Spatial Map, Appendix 3 comprises a thatch Glossary, Appendix 4 contains the Bibliography and Appendix 5 includes information on the Rating Evaluation.



2 THATCHING IN IRELAND

Thatching was the most prevalent roof covering until the 16th and 17th century in Ireland and remained common until the end of the last century. The term thatch has come to describe any form of vegetable roofing material; as such there are many different types of thatch including reed, straw and rush.

The Irish thatched cottage has a significant role in the history of Ireland's heritage and recounts the story of the Irish people and the way in which they lived. This ongoing relationship between the land and its people is essential when understanding the Irish vernacular style that has evolved over centuries.



Vernacular architecture is a tangible part of our Irish heritage which has been somewhat overlooked in comparison to earlier and even later more planned architecture. But the very fact that vernacular architecture is not planned and that the intrinsic elements of it have been handed down through example and word of mouth is what makes it so important in terms of its essentially true Irish content. Vernacular thatched housing is probably one of the most recognisable symbols of Ireland

Variations that occur in thatching methods from region to region, including treatment to ridges, eaves and gables, make thatch significant on a local and regional as well as a national level. In Clare the more traditional method of roped thatch has almost vanished entirely from the county. The method was commonly carried out using locally grown rush which was thrown on the roof, swept over the ridge and tied down by ropes. The most prevalent method and materials seen today in Clare comprises reed (often imported from Turkey) secured to the substructure with hazel scallops. The reed is overlaid upon itself until it meets at the ridge. Often three rows of liggers or more recently wire mesh secure the ridge in place.

The realization that these structures were slowly being erased from the Irish landscape necessitated the need for a country wide system of identification and documentation. No comprehensive survey had been undertaken to establish the number of thatched structures surviving in Clare; how significant they might be in terms of heritage; and what their condition and conservation needs are until now.

2.1 Characteristics of County Clare's Vernacular Thatched Roofs

Almost all are gabled.

The majority are thatched with reed. Some have underlay of another material. The most common underlay is scraw.

The butt ridge detail is most usual for reed roofs and there are usually up to three lines of exposed liggers pinned by scallops immediately below the ridge.

The base thatch coat is, more often than not, sewn to the roof frame with ropes or coarse twine.

In most cases the scraw are supported by horizontal timber slats or rods, fixed over riven, coupled rafters, each set roughly 1 metre intervals.



The internal masonry cross walls defining the bays, rise to the soffit of the roof covering.

Any bay more than 5 metres in width is stiffened by a sturdy framed couple held by a saddle or tie.

The ridge poles of the older roofs are cradled on the saddle. In later roofs, it is pinned between the heads of the rafters.

The rafters are buried in the head of the masonry wall. There is no wall plate.

The few purlin roofs encountered have substantial horizontal members spanning between the masonry cross walls. These support vertically orientated slats or rods and there are no rafter couples except the occasionally found framed couple mid span of the purlins.



3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desktop Research

The first three weeks of the project were spent carrying out desktop research. This comprised library research in the Irish Architectural Archives, Trinity College Library, National Library and the Ennis County Library. Books, articles, periodicals were consulted, such as 'Irish Cottages' by Maura Shaffrey, 'Houses of Clare' by Hugh Weir, 'Ireland's Vernacular Architecture' by Kevin Danaher and part of a MA thesis by Fidelma Mullane on Irish vernacular architecture, to mention just a few.

Soon it was established that very little information survived indicating the number of thatched cottages in Clare or their whereabouts. It was decided that the best method to locate them was to contact individuals, groups and societies in Clare with an interest in vernacular architecture. Archaeological and Historical Societies, County Engineers, Estate Agents, Tourist Offices and Heritage Centres are some of the establishments contacted by post and or telephone. The full list of persons contacted is contained in Appendix 1 of this report.

Seventy five letters, containing a cover letter, map and a questionnaire, were sent out to a pre-selected list of personnel. The system was set up so that anyone with information of thatched structures could fill in the relevant information, mark the whereabouts of the houses on the map and return it to the recording team in a self addressed and stamped envelope. This had about a 35% return rate and proved useful to the research process, helping to create the first leads. These leads were mapped out on the Discovery Series maps for County Clare.

Phone calls were made to various organisations including, insurance companies, authors of Irish vernacular literature, post offices, thatchers, reed suppliers and heritage centres. Probably the most useful of all of these sources were the thatchers themselves who know the area in which they work.



The Internet proved a valuable source with information on thatched holiday homes for rent and for sale.

The Clare County Record of Protected Structures was also consulted and was a helpful starting point for the investigation with the location of eight structures given.

In addition to the letters and phone calls, an advertisement was run on Clare FM Radio Station, asking people to forward information with any ideas of location of thatched cottages around the county. The newspaper, Clare Champion ran an advertisement of a similar nature and notices were placed in local parish newsletters. These proved to be valuable when in the field recording as the majority of thatched cottage owners had heard about the survey and were therefore already familiar with the project.

As much information as possible was found and forged together to gain a comprehensive overview of the situation. After three weeks it was decided that enough information had been gathered for fieldwork to commence.



3.2 Field Surveys

Field surveys were commenced in early July carried out by three recorders Sharon Greene, Elayne Greene and Dick Oram. Dick is one of Ireland's foremost experts in thatch and spent one week recording in order to confirm materials types and styles. Dick remained as an 'on-call' consultant for the duration of the project. The bulk of the recording work was carried out in July and August and as many as three hundred hours were accumulated in the field, working generally as a pair. On reaching a thatched cottage, one recorder would take a written record of the structure/s and site while the other photographed the site, talked to the owner (if available) and mapped the location on the discovery series.



Along the route enquiries were made at post offices, newsagents and garages so as to gain as much information about that area and locate any surviving thatches. Local people living in the vicinity were also asked if they knew of any thatched cottages in the area. This proved to be one of the most successful methods of scouting as the response was immediate and the information and directions given were generally accurate.

Every road travelled was marked on the map with a highlighter pen so as to give a precise overview of the areas that were covered and to prevent duplication.

During the time of the survey the recorders were based at various locations throughout the county to reduce travel time between structures. The first week of field work was carried out in the east of the county, with the recorders based in Killaloe. The second week was conducted in the south west with the recorders based in Kilkee and the third and fourth week was conducted in the northwest, with recorders based in Lahinch. At the end of the project, a final drive was carried out to seek and record any thatched structures that were identified at a much later stage.

3.3 Mapping

It was requested by Clare County Council that the Discovery Map Series published by the Ordnance Survey Office for County Clare be used as the maps for locating the thatched structures. In all there are nine maps 51, 52, 53, 57, 58, 59 63, 64 and 65 which cover the entire county of Clare.

Each structure was mapped as accurately as possible on an Ordnance Survey Discovery Series map with a black dot. Each of the marks was then marked over with a sticker. Two different stickers were incorporated into the mapping system, the first a yellow sticker was used to denote a modern thatched structure or development and a green sticker was used to denote historic or vernacular structures. Finally a unique registration number, which corresponded to the database, was allocated to the structure or development. This unique number was marked onto the sticker.



4 DATABASE OVERVIEW

4.1 Overview

The database created for the purpose of recording all of the thatched cottages has been carefully compiled to act as an effective and efficient reference tool. The database is a Microsoft Access program that should be read in conjunction with this report and corresponds to nine Discovery Series maps of County Clare.

The Access Database was provided by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. It is a simplified version of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) database. Carrig then made a number of alterations introducing a number of new drop-down boxes with thatched related categories. New boxes include categories such as roofing material, entrance, type, residence or holiday home and condition. This was to facilitate searches when complete.

It has been compiled in a manner that provides both essential and useful information to the user. Like any database, it will only remain useful if updated regularly. Information can be added to the database at any time as further information becomes available.

It is possible for the user to extract a large number of reports from the database, such as 'List of Regionally or Locally Significant Structures', 'Number of Modern thatched compared to Vernacular Thatched Cottages,' or 'Type of Roofing Material,' and so on.

Each thatched structure has its own individual record. Each record is broken down into three main sub-categories: 1 - Composition; 2 - Appraisal and 3 - Special Remarks.

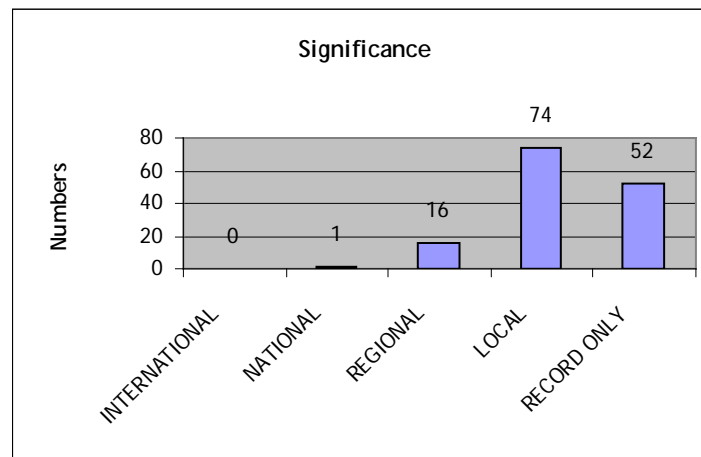


4.2 Composition

This is the general summary box which comprises a detailed description of the structure and its surrounding site. It describes the composition of the structure describing bays, storeys, roof, walls, openings, windows and door type. If entry is gained a description of the internal roof structure, where exposed, and a brief description of the layout and any vernacular fixtures and fittings is given.

4.3 Appraisal

The appraisal comprises a brief summary of any elements or features that merit the structure or site with significance. The appraisal methodology, value rating and categories of special interest are taken from the NIAH handbook. The rating values are International, National, Regional, Local and Record Only. The categories of Special Interest are Architectural, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Social or Technical. The evaluation system and ratings value are included for reference in Appendix 5 of this report.



4.4 Special Remarks

The general box is provided for any extra information that does not correspond with the Composition or Appraisal fields. Included in this section is any historical information the owners have given or otherwise discovered.

4.5 Visual Information

Photographs were taken of each thatched structure. For each vernacular structure, a minimum of two photographs were taken with the first generally denoting the site and the composition of the structures or the front elevation of the main structure. All additional photographs represent features or elements of note within the site or structure. Each photograph has a unique number that corresponds to the structure reference number.



5 FINDINGS

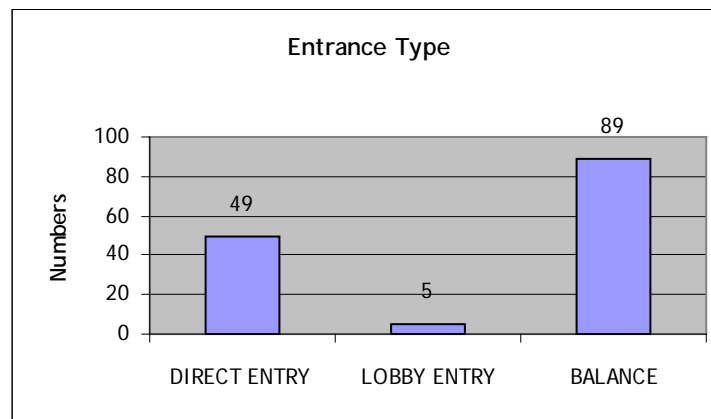
5.1 General

Overall 95 records were made, comprising both historic and modern thatched structures. Out of these 61 recorded vernacular or historic thatched structures. The remaining 34 records comprise modern thatched structures (post 1950). 8 of these 34 modern records each records more than one modern structure (where they had been built as part of a holiday home scheme or as part of the models built for the Bunratty Folk Park). The sum of structures in all these 8 site records is 48, which means that altogether there are 143 thatched structures in Clare.

Variations in style and material were recorded throughout the county. The main variations relate to roof design, thatch material and plan form - lobby entry versus direct entry. Variations observed are discussed below in more detail.

5.2 Direct/Lobby Entry

The two main traditional house plans found in Ireland are direct entry and lobby entry. The main house plan recorded in Clare was the Direct Entry with 49 vernacular structures being recorded as such and only 5 as Lobby Entry. This corresponds with previous evidence from other studies which finds that the direct entry house type is more commonly found in low lying areas where cattle farming was prominent. The front door traditionally faces a rear door which was used for bringing the cattle through when it was time for milking. The lobby entry house was found in highland areas where arable farming was more prevalent. The remaining structures were not categorised due to being non vernacular plans or outbuildings.



5.3 Thatch Material

Traditionally the material used to thatch a house or outbuilding would be whatever crop could be sourced locally which varied from location to location depending on the geography of that region. The three most common materials used as thatch in the west of Ireland are Reed, Rush and Straw. 3 records were found to be now covered with an asbestos roof.



5.3.1 Water Reed

Reed, common along the River Shannon and its tributaries, has long since been the traditional thatching material though most of County Clare. While other counties in the north and east of Ireland are traditionally associated with straw and rush, Clare has always been more associated with Reed¹. However it has been observed in the last number of years that the increased flow of nitrates resulting from the run off from fields has filtered into reed crop areas. This has exacerbated the crops, which are prone to premature decay and has resulted in the turn away from locally grown reed to imported reed. The imported reed is less polluted and therefore is thought to have a longer lifespan. Many of the reed roofs have decorative ridges as reed lends itself to decoration. Ornate decoration is not native to Ireland and would be more associated with English thatched cottages. The introduction of decorative ridges may be influenced by the number of Irish thatchers that have done training courses in the U.K or have been self taught from English thatch books. 133 structures were thatched with reed.

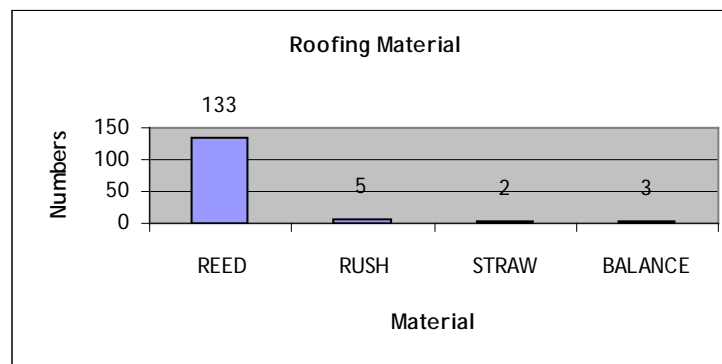
5.3.2 Rush

Rush is a marsh or waterside plant with slender tapering pith filled stems. It appears to have been traditionally used in Clare for outbuildings and more humble structures, where the owner who after cutting it from a local source, would affix it to the roof using rope tied to pegs in the top of the walls. The traditional rush and rope roofs are now scarce as more people are employing thatchers to carry out the work, who are using imported reed. Five structures were found to be thatched with rush.



5.3.3 Straw

Straw of various varieties, oaten straw or wheaten straw have been used throughout Ireland as a traditional roofing material however in Clare today there is little evidence of its former use. This may be due to it not being prevalent at any time or its replacement with imported reed. Only two structures were found to have evidence of straw thatch.

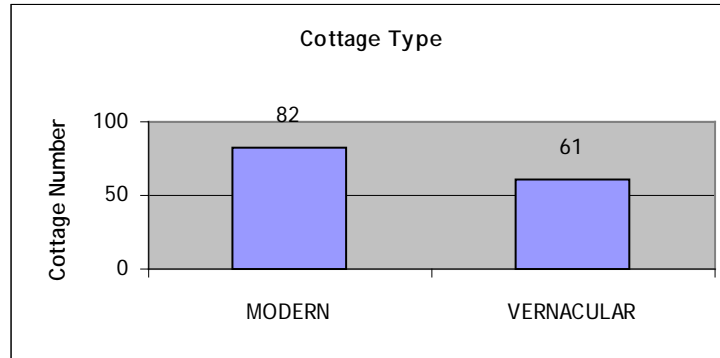


¹ Taken from O Danachair, Caoimhin 'The Questionnaire System Roofs and Thatching' in 'Living Under Thatch' by Barry O'Reilly .



5.4 Modern/Vernacular Cottages

61 structures were found to be historic thatched structures while the remaining records comprised modern built structures built post 1950.

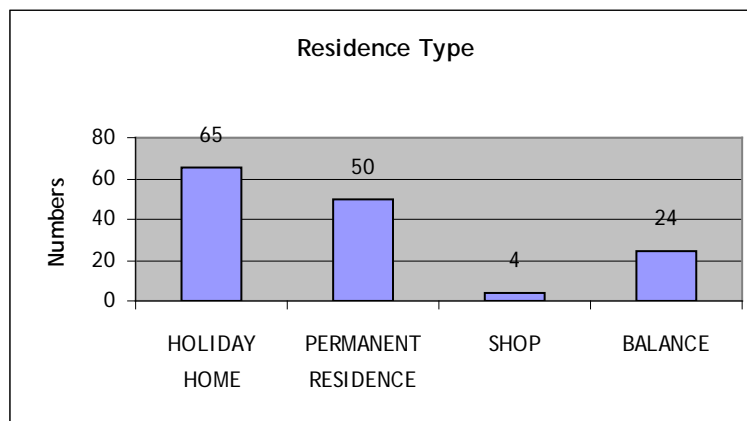


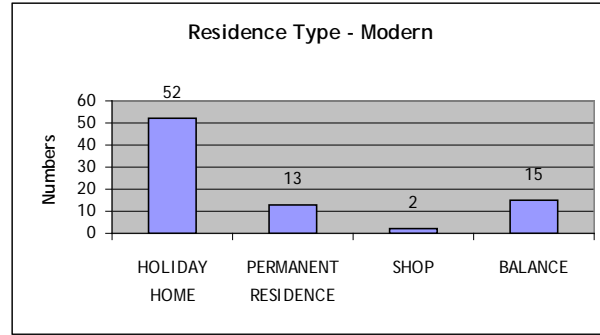
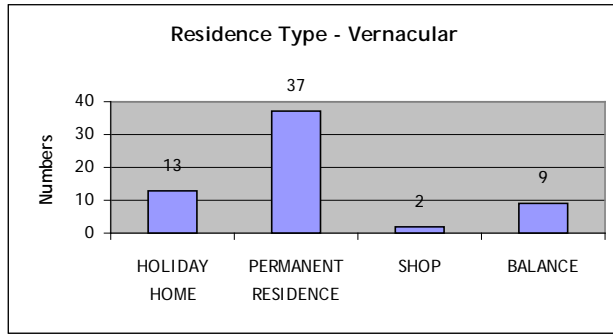
5.5 Modernised Structures

Many historic thatched cottages although vernacular in plan or appearance had been substantially altered or modernised. Many having been successfully conserved or modernised in terms of compatible material and retention of plan, however other structures have been less fortunate. A number of structures had been restored but using cement render for the exterior walls, tin lining laid below the thatch for insurance purposes and uPVC windows installed in place of the traditional timber sash.

5.6 Holiday Home/Permanent Residence

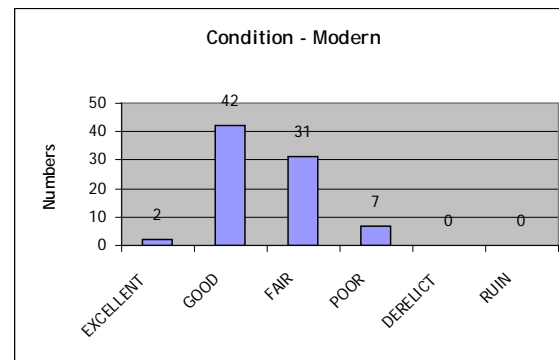
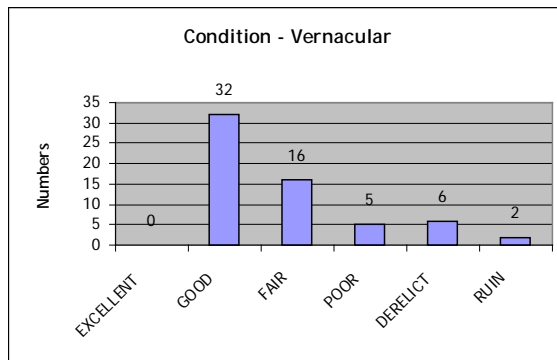
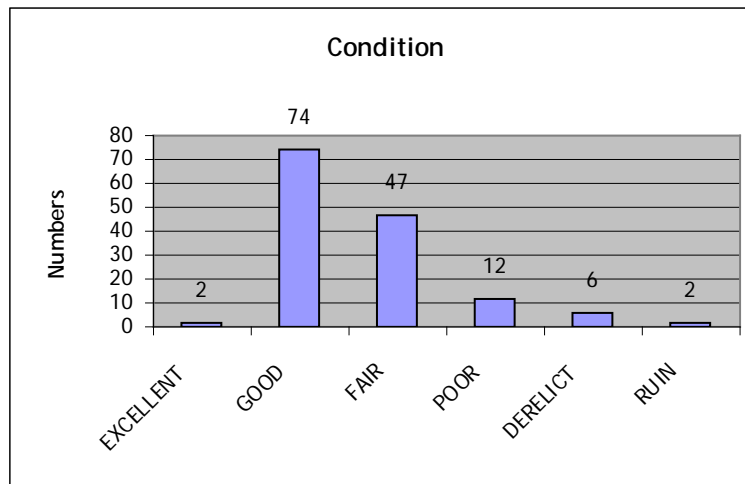
Many of the structures visited appeared not to be lived in permanently. Where possible owners or occupiers were asked what status the house had. Out of all the 143 structures it was found that 50 were permanent residences and 65 were holiday homes. The remaining structures are outbuildings, shops, public houses, restaurants or unconfirmed holiday/permanent residences.





5.7 Condition

The condition of the thatched structures varied throughout the county. However it was recorded that 74 out of the 143 were in Good Condition, 47 in Fair Condition, 12 Poor, 6 Derelict, 2 In Ruin and only 2 recorded as being in Excellent Condition which were just recently thatched and well maintained. These statistics were divided between vernacular and modern thatches and it was found that it was the vernacular structures that were more under threat of becoming derelict or ruinous.





6 ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION TO EVOLVE INTO OUTLINE POLICIES

6.1 Threat to Survival

This document is the first statistical survey of thatch in the county; consequently there are no comparative figures to refer to for a specific account of loss. However the interviews conducted during the course of this survey repeatedly tell the tale of seriously declining numbers within living memory.

A major contribution to this decline is without doubt, the escalating cost of maintenance and changing patterns in agriculture. It seems clear that unless there is substantial government intervention at national or local level, all the historic roofs of County Clare could well be gone before the 21st century is half way through its course.

Thatched roofs have been an important feature of the built environment of this Country for at least three centuries. To abandon this tradition to the past would result in a very serious cultural loss. It is already an all too common experience to note the decaying vernacular cottage now overlooked by a replacement dwelling of a faceless, ubiquitous, suburban style utterly void of any feature that would mark it out as belonging specifically to Clare.

6.2 The Management of Survival

6.2.1 Grants

The need for grants is desperate because most historic thatch roofs in the County belong to people in the lowest income brackets while cost of maintenance continue to rise.

The Department of Environment and Local Government operates a thatching grant but the standard payout is limited to 2/3 of the total cost up to a maximum of €3,800. In exceptional cases of extreme disability this can rise to €6,350.

The Heritage Council distribute a very limited number of discretionary grants while the Local Authorities are statutorily empowered to pay grants at 50% up to a maximum of €13,000.

Currently the cost of a spar coat to a three bay vernacular farm house is in the region of €11,000.

In practice the DoEHLG grant is not enough to benefit most owners. The Heritage Council grant is a help in specific cases but will never be widely effective due to its limits. That leaves the remaining onus on the County Council.

The recently publication by the DoEHLG entitled 'Present and Future Protection of Thatched Structures in Ireland' have set down action plans for Grant Assistance for Thatch structures in Ireland. This publication should be consulted for assist in grant guidelines by Clare County County.

6.2.2 Promotion of Local Building Materials

The management of reed beds. This will entail controlling water quality, controlling water levels and ensuring regular harvesting.

Re-creation and management of coppices for the growing and supply of rods, liggers and scallops for thatch.



Encouraging the use of local stone so that it becomes viable to work in the numerous quarries scattered around the County. At present the Liscannor quarry is the only Clare quarry that continues to supply quality building stone commercially.

Encourage the local production of lime for making appropriate mortar and paint (lime wash) products.

Promote educational events and courses in the manufacture and use of traditional building materials.

Operate planning policies that favour the continuing use of vernacular buildings, protects the setting of these buildings and encourages new uses for empty and derelict examples.

6.2.3 Training

There are only a handful of professional Irish thatchers. Many thatchers are trained in the U.K and introduce English variations and styles into Ireland. Some of the buildings roofs recorded were thatched jobs carried out by untrained personnel.

Training schemes could be set up to teach Irish regional thatching methods. Consideration should be given to setting up a guild of thatchers or getting thatchers to register with the Guild of Master Craftsmen in order to regulate the quality of thatch.





7 CONCLUSION & CONSERVATION

As has been recognised throughout the survey the number of vernacular thatched cottages in Clare is fast dwindling. This is increasingly frustrating as vernacular buildings remember and honour this great Irish tradition of thatching, since the 16th and 17th century.

The decline of numbers occur for a number of reasons, one being the major abandonment or total modernisation of the thatched cottage after the owner is deceased. Many who inherit vernacular cottages in today's world wish for modern spacious homes. A high percentage of these owners completely renovate the old structure beyond recognition or abandon it and build a modern bungalow in its place or on an adjacent site. Another factor is to do with insurance and re-thatching costs, which can be unaffordable to the majority of thatch owners. These costs must be subsidised in order for people to continue to re-thatch their cottages.

It is necessary for an emphasis to be placed on the importance of thatched vernacular structures in Clare as they hold a vital role in the history of Clare's people and their rural lifestyles. In order for our heritage to be remembered there needs to be physical evidence of a living tradition. Without these historical structures in years to come there will be no living evidence of how Clare has developed and architecture has evolved.



Vernacular buildings of all types are an undervalued resource but particularly the Irish cottage. There have been some very successful examples of refurbished cottages that make comfortable family homes or holiday units that are extremely popular with tourists. If this is one way of ensuring and sustaining a future for the vernacular thatched cottage it should be encouraged.

It is imperative that policies be drawn up and enforced without delay to ensure the future protection of the vernacular heritage of County Clare.



APPENDIX 1 - CONTACTS



LIST OF PEOPLE CONTACTED:

An Taisce - The Clare Association of An Taisce - Mrs Anny Wise

Agents and Architects

Alan Carmody, Lisseycasey	Charles Philip, Kilrush
Eugene Mc Donagh, Killaloe	Brian O'Driscoll, Building Services, Doora.
Eilis O'Nuallain, Sixmilebridge	Andy McNerny, New market-on Fergus
Brendan Redden, Miltown Malbay	Ailbe McDonnell, Killaloe
Paddy Moloney, Killaloe	Paul Conroy, Killaloe
Peter Murphy, Liscannor	Phil Barker, Spanish Point
Professional Engineering Services, Killaloe	Ryan Teese Architects, Killaloe
Teresa Droney, Lisdoonvarna	Shane O'Connell, Miltown Malbay
Graham Hull, Architect	Christine Grant, Architect
Lal Quin, Architect	Richard Parke, Architect
Shane O'Connell, Architect	

Estate Agents

Green Valley Properties - Estate Agents.	Peter Kiely, Estate Agents - Killaloe
Philip O'Reilly Estate Agents, Ennis.	

Executive Engineer

Executive Engineer - Tulla	Executive Engineer - Kilrush
Executive Engineer - Ennis	Executive Engineer - Sixmilebridge

Tourist Information Offices and Centres

Ballyvaughan Tourist Office	Ennis Tourist Office
Kilkee Tourist Office, John Williams	Killaloe Tourist Office, Ms Leslie Manson
Kilrush Tourist Office	Cliffs of Moher Tourist Office
Burren Centre - Paddy Maher	Pat Shannon, Cranny Rural renewal Project
Carmel Shannon, Doolin Tourism Co-Op	Sean O'Neill Cooraclare Development
Mike Hogan, Kilikishen Community Group	Carrigaholt Development Association
Pat Hannon, Quin Community Development	Tomas MacConmara, East Clare Heritage Co.
Lal Quin - Shannon Archaeological & Historical Society	
Bob Wilson, East Clare Walking Holidays, Flagmount.	
Michael Flanagan - Ennis Community Development Project	
Jim Connolly, Rural Resettlement Ireland, Mullagh, Clare.	
Michael McDonagh, Miltown Malbay Development Association	
Balyvaughan Community Development C/o Mary Hawkes Greene	
Sonia Schorman - Shannon Archaeological Society, Ennis	



Parish Priests

Ennis, Cathedral and Parish Office, Ennis
Bodyke/ Tuamgraney Parish - Canon Paddy O'Brien
Carrigaholt Parish - Fr. Pat Culligan
O'Gonneloe Parish - Fr. Hugh O'Dowd P.P
Tulla Parish - Fr. Rory McInerney P.P
Feakle Parish - Fr. Michael Hogan P.P
Killaloe Parish - Fr. James Grace
Clarecastle Parish - Fr. Harry Brady

Insurance Companies and Estate Agents

Hickey Clarke and Langan Insurance Brokers, Letterkenny

Clare Champion Newspaper

Clare FM radio station

Thatchers

Tomais Collins, Meelick, Co. Clare	Paul Johnson, Clare
John Brereton, Clare	John Egan, Clare
Jim Halpen, Clare	Chad Bull, Clare
James Lee, Clares	Trevor O'Doherty - Main reed supplier in Ireland
David Gallery, Clare	Rod Duckworth, Clare
Brian Simpson, Fingal	Dominic Gryson, straw supplier.
Liam Broderick, Cork	Mr. Quigley, Clare

Local Area Heritage Network

East Clare Heritage - Gerard Madden
Shannon Archeological & Historical Society - Sonia Schorman
Labasheeda Community Pride

Post Offices

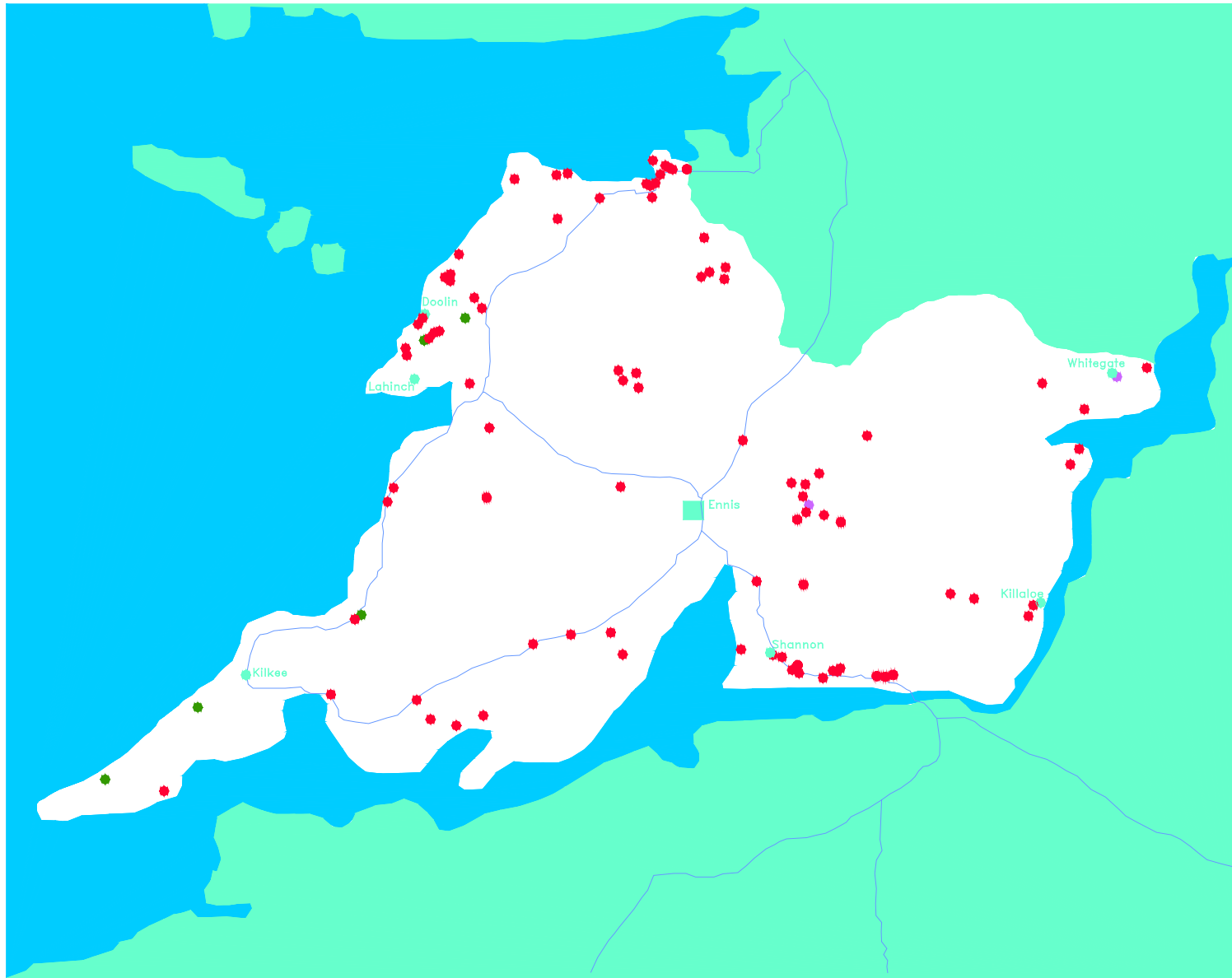
Bell Harour / Broadford / Corofin / Ennistymon / Kilkee / Killaloe / Mountshannon / Carrigaholt / Kilfenora / Liscannor / Miltown Malbay / Spanish Point

Authors on literature regarding thatched cottages

Patrick Shaffrey; Hugh Wier; Barry O'Reilly



APPENDIX 2 - SPATIAL MAP





APPENDIX 3 - GLOSSARY



Glossary of Vernacular/Thatch Terms

Apron: Mono-pitched section constructed as a half ridge to make good the joint under a chimney or window.

Bay: A 'bay' corresponds to an opening in the front wall of a building. A house with a door and three windows is said to be four-bay.

Flashing: Material, usually lead or copper sheeting, which is fixed to areas sensitive to water ingress, below the chimney, wall abutments and valleys in particular, in order to seal the area against moisture.

Fleeking: A decorative application of thatching material below the scraws exposed from below to create a ceiling, usually woven, now very rare.

Jamb wall: A wall or partition which divides the interior space of a structure.

Liggers: Split wooden sticks (mainly Hazel) 4' - 5' (1 - 1 m) used on the outside surface of ridges and in the case of long straw to the eaves and gables, sometimes called sways.

Ridge: The meeting of front and back slopes of the topmost part of the roof:

a) Butt ridge - Finished flush to the surface of the roof with minimal decoration and no wrap over.

b) Flush ridge- The ridge is wrapped over at the ridge and finished flush.

c) Block ridge raised 3" - 4" (100 - 200 mm) above the surface of the roof cut in a straight horizontal line or with decorative edge below bottom ligger.

d) Ornamental Block ridge - Covering laid along apex of roof to bind and protect the main thatch similar to c) shaped to the desired pattern. Patterns include dragons' teeth, diamond, scalloped, clubbed, herring-bone and crossed.

Scraw: Top layer of turf, traditionally sown onto purlins as a substrate for thatch.

Scallop: Split willow or hazel rod, two ends sharpened, twisted in the centre and used to fasten down the liggers and sways.



APPENDIX 4 - BIBLIOGRAPHY



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APPENDIX 5 - RATING EVALUATION



A structure may be considered of special Archaeological, Architectural, Historical, Technical, Cultural, Scientific, Social and Artistic interest under the following criteria:

Archaeological

The NIAH surveys are weighted towards post-1700 structures. Structures that have archaeological features may be recorded, providing the archaeological feature is incorporated within post-1700 elements.

Architectural

An aspiration of aesthetic appeal to its design.

Good quality or well executed architectural design.

The work of a known and distinguished architect, engineer, designer, craftsman.

Well designed decorative features, externally and/or internally.

Interesting volumetric design, externally and/or internally.

Part of an intact terrace or part of a group with a common building line that constitute important features of the streetscape.

Modest or vernacular structures may be considered to be of architectural interest, as they are part of the history of the built heritage of Ireland.

Historical

A significant historical event associated with the structure.

An associate with a significant historical figure.

A known interesting and/or unusual change of use, e.g., a former workhouse now in use as a hotel.

A memorial to a historical event.

Technical

Incorporates building materials of particular interest, i.e., the materials or the technology used for construction.

Incorporates innovative engineering design, e.g., bridges, canals or mill weirs.

A structure which has an architectural interest may also merit a technical interest due to the structural techniques used in its construction, e.g., a curvilinear glasshouse, early use of concrete, cast-iron prefabrication.

Mechanical fixtures relating to a structure may be considered of technical significance.



Cultural

An association with a known fictitious character or event, e.g., Sandycove Martello Tower which featured in Ulysses.

Scientific

A structure or place which is considered to be an extraordinary or pioneering scientific or technical achievement in the Irish context, e.g., Mizen Head Bridge, Birr Telescope.

Social

A focal point of spiritual, political, national or other cultural sentiment to a group of people, e.g., a place of worship, a meeting point, assembly rooms.

Developed or constructed by a community or organisation, e.g., the construction of the railways or the building of a church through the patronage of the local community.

Illustrates a particular lifestyle, philosophy, or social condition of the past. E.g., the hierarchical accommodation in a country house, philanthropic housing, vernacular structures.

Artistic

Work of a skilled craftsman or artist, e.g., plasterwork, wrought-iron work, carved elements or details, stained glass, Stations of the Cross.

Well designed mass produced structures or elements may also be considered of artistic interest.

The recorder considers the Categories of Special Interest to justify the rating value code. Structures which are considered of Regional significance are often attributed with several Categories of Special Interest code.