

NEWSLETTER

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Admiral William Brown of Foxford The National Hero of Argentina

We profile
FOXFORD
in 1838

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*Admiral Brown statue at Foxford (image Oliver Dixon) and (right) locals in
Foxford celebrate Argentina's World Cup Win (image from the irishtimes.com)*



Admiral William Brown – A National Hero of Argentina

As Foxford celebrated in style after the Argentinian World Cup win, we examine the connection between Foxford and Argentina.

William Brown was born in Foxford, Co. Mayo on 22nd June, 1777. After being educated locally he emigrated with his father to America around 1786. His father died soon afterwards of Yellow Fever. By 1796 he had joined the British Navy and had taken command of a merchant ship on Atlantic routes. He was captured by the French during the Napoleonic Wars and spent a number of years in a French prison.

He married Eliza Chitty in England in 1809 and thereafter emigrated to Buenos Aires, taking command of a ship there. By 1814 he had a command in the naval service of the new Argentine Republic and defeated the Spanish in an engagement. His appointment as First Admiral of the Argentine Navy brought many victories.



He defeated the Spanish fleet at the Battle of the River Plate in 1814 and ten years later came out of retirement to lead a number of successful engagements against the Brazilians, which resulted in a peace settlement. His most famous battle, Los Pozos, took place in full view of the people of Buenos Aires with his eleven vessels against the enemy's thirty-one where he achieved yet another victory. The following message was delivered to the fleet before his encounter and shows his true spirit of leadership. *"Sailor and soldiers of the Republic. Do you see yonder floating mountain? They are thirty-one enemy vessels. But do not think that your General has the slightest fear, for he does not doubt your courage and expects you to imitate the Venticinco de Mayo' (the Admiral's flagship). Comrades, confidence in victory, discipline and three cheers for the Fatherland".*

After his final retirement from the Navy in 1845 he lived on his country estate until his death in Boca on 8th May 1857. He is buried in the Recoleta Cemetery in Buenos Aires. Admiral William Brown is still a national hero in Argentina today where monuments, streets, towns, parks to name a few have been named in his honour.

Today, on the east bank of the River Moy, the Admiral William Brown Park and Promenade stands, opened in 2015. The nautical design by Kevin Keegan of Mayo County Council depicts the life of Admiral Brown in a series of bronze plaques. The central focus of the park in Foxford is a bronze statue of Admiral Brown and also a bronze bust located near the Catholic Church, the work of Argentinian sculptor, Vergottini.

Sources:
Exploring Mayo by Bernard O'Hara
Mayo.ie

A brief history of the surname **BROWN/BROWNE**

Browne *De Brún*, more correctly *le Brún* (brown). One of the Tribes of Galway. Other important families of Browne were established in Ireland from the Anglo-Norman invasion onwards. The Brownes of Killarney, who came in the sixteenth century, intermarried with the leading Irish families and were notable for their survival as extensive Catholic landowners throughout the period of the Penal Laws. Yet another important family of the name was of the Neale, Co. Mayo. In that county Browne has also been used as a synonym of (O) Bruen.¹

Brown(e) Settlers from England and Scotland brought over the name Brown(e). Among the ten commonest surnames in England and among the five commonest in Scotland it now ranks among the fifty most common surnames in Ireland. Others of the name came to Ireland in the 17th century including Scottish Browns who established themselves in Ulster, the province where this surname is still most frequent.²

de Brún *de Brune*, Brown, Browne; Norman 'le Brun,' i.e., the brown, from the complexion; an old Norman surname, extremely common in England. The most important families of the name in Ireland in the 16th century were those (1) of Galway, of which the Brownes were one of the 'tribes'; (2) of the Neale, Co. Mayo; (3) of Malrangan, Co. Wexford; (4) of Hariston, Co. Waterford; (5) of Aney, Co. Limerick; (6) of Kilpatrick, Co. Westmeath; and (7) of Dunbrowne, Co. Kerry.³

Of the 327 Brown births in Ireland in 1890 – including variants - 58 occurred in Leinster, 39 occurred in Munster, 214 occurred in Ulster and 16 occurred in Connacht. The counties in which the surname was principally found were Antrim, Londonderry, Down and Dublin.

¹ Extract taken from 'The Surnames of Ireland' by MacLysaght.

² Extract taken from 'Irish Family Surname' by Brian de Breffny

³ Extract taken from 'Irish Names and Surnames' by Rev. Patrick Woulfe, 1993 edition

*A brief history of the townland
of*

FOXFORD

(Béal Easa, meaning the ford
mouth of the waterfall).

There is a stone, presenting the form of a fox, near the eel weir. On the east side of the River Moy, in the west side of the parish.

It contains the town of Foxford. Contains 1, 019 acres, 1 rood, 37 perches, including 22 acres, 3 roods, 1 perch of water. The property of Lord Clanmorris. Agent, Guinness and Co., Kildare St., Dublin.

Let to 70 occupying tenants on leases of lives, at from 35 shillings to £30 per holding yearly. Co. Cess, from 2 shillings 6d. to 3 shillings per acre, annually. It is rated in the Tithe Composition Book, Barony of Gallen, at £36 17 shilling 8d. Tithe withheld by the tenantry. Soil rocky and bad, producing oats and potatoes. Of the tenants, 20 are Protestants, the remainder are Catholics. The town of Foxford is in the west of this townland, on the River Moy, which flows through it.

It contains the Church, calculated to accommodate 250 persons, a Catholic Chapel, accommodating 500 persons, a Police Barrack, a Market and Court House, a Military Barrack, and a pound for impounding cattle. There is a National School, attended by 84 boys and 50 girls; 32 are Protestants and 82 are Catholics. The teacher is paid £10 per annum by the National Board and receives from 1 shilling to 3 shillings 6d. per quarter from each scholar.

At a ford, a short distance below the town, is a huge rock, called Cromwell's Rock, at which spot the Cromwellian Army is said to have crossed the Moy, into North Mayo.

*Extract for Ordnance Survey Letters of
1838*