

# Mayo Heritage

Newsletter

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*Feature article*

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MOUNTAIN

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## Are you interested in tracing your Mayo roots?

If you are interested in professional help to research your family history or are curious about your ancestry, why not contact us? All research can be done remotely.

*Perhaps we can help you!*

Tel: 096 31809 Email: [northmayo@gmail.com](mailto:northmayo@gmail.com) or visit [northmayogenealogy.com](http://northmayogenealogy.com)

*Cover image: Nephin Mountain*

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# Nephin (Nefin) Mountain in North Mayo

**When Hollywood actors descended on the small town of Crossmolina in 2019 to film Wild Mountain Thyme, many wondered why that particular area was selected. Influenced by the verdant scenery of patchwork fields and the majestic Nephin mountain, the location was deemed perfect and the mountain provided a backdrop to many crucial scenes in the film.**

## What do we know about this mountain?

According to legend, when one of the most acclaimed figures of Irish mythology, Fionn McCumhaill (McCool) climbed to the peak of the mountain, he was so impressed by its view that he pronounced it a "paradise". Hence, Nephin (*Néifinn*) is commonly translated as meaning "Finn's Heaven" or "Finn's paradise".

Standing 806m tall (2,646 ft) it boasts as being one of the highest standalone mountains in Ireland. The Nephin Beg Mountain Range contains the mountains of Nephin (its highest peak), Nephin Beg, Slieve Carr, Bireencooragh and Corranabinnia/Cushcamcarragh, among others. The range hosts the Nephin forest, a 4,843 hectares forest.

## A brief history of the surname

### **BRYCE**

This is an old English name long found in Ireland. It, like Bryson, has been used in Donegal as a synonym of Breslin.<sup>1</sup>

This interesting surname derives from the personal name Brice (Latinized as "Bricius"). The name, probably of Celtic origin, was borne by a 5th Century Gaulish saint, nephew of Saint Martin, Bishop of Tours. The name was consequently popular in France during the early Middle Ages and in England and Scotland after the Norman Conquest of 1066.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Extract taken from 'The Surnames of Ireland' by Edward MacLysaght.

<sup>2</sup> Extract taken from [www.surnamedb.com](http://www.surnamedb.com).

Located to the west of Lough Conn the mountain comprises of mica slate and granular quartzite rock. On the north facing side is a corrie (a conical indent formed during the ice age) which is called Fionn McCool's armchair. This distinct 'crater' formation makes it a spectacular and enjoyable climb and it is now safely waymarked to the summit from a point near Lahardane in North Mayo. Depending on the route you take, the total distance is approx. six miles (10km) and the walking time should be approximately 4 hours.

A trigonometrical pillar marks the summit, which offers an amazing view of the surrounding countryside and the vast blankets of bog in the Erris regions. The mountain overlooks Lough Conn and legend has it you can see the mountains of Donegal and Connemara – but the locals say you can see seven counties on a clear day!

Nephin mountain is now listed as one of the many must-see attractions in Co. Mayo. Such is the popularity of the mountain that it was featured on RTE's Nationwide and Eco eye, on a BBC travel show, on NBC news and climbers are even awarded a quirky Certificate from Barrett's in Lahardane, on producing a photo from the summit.

For anyone looking for a deeper insight into Nephin and its surrounds, the book entitled Wild Nephin by Sean Lysaght explores Nephin and the great wild territory of north Mayo in all its richness.

While the movie, Wild Mountain Thyme continues to be viewed across the globe, perhaps the real star of the movie is the mighty Nephin mountain captured in glorious technicolor!

Sources:  
[northmayo.ie](http://northmayo.ie)  
[Irishcentral.com](http://Irishcentral.com)

*Introducing our new initiative*

**FRIENDS OF  
THE NORTH MAYO  
HERITAGE CENTRE**



The Friends of the North Mayo Heritage Centre is an annual subscription.

We have launched this scheme to provide support to our ongoing work in genealogical research and the digitisation of records, as well as the continued delivery of a diverse programme of events and exhibitions throughout the year.

There are several levels of membership, including one for our overseas friends, and all friends enjoy many benefits including discounts on our goods and services, free books and even free tickets to our family events (for family members).

More details and an application form can be found on our website [www.northmayogenealogy.com](http://www.northmayogenealogy.com)

We look forward to welcoming many new friends.

## *Extract from the Ordnance Survey Letters of 1838*

### A brief history of the townland of **DERRASALLAGH/DERRYHILLAGH** (*Doire Shaileach*, oak wood of the shallows)

Located in the south of the parish. Bounded on the north by Killacorraun and Srahyconigaun; east and south by the parish of Addergoole; and on the west by Tristia and Glasheens.

This townland extends to the top of Mount Nephin. It contains 1,832 acres, 0 roods, 12 perches. The property of Sir William Palmer. It is leased to Mr. William Waldron, of Balla, who has it sublet to tenants at £160 yearly for the whole townland, which is mountain, with considerable part arable. There are 44 families living here, all Roman Catholics. Houses are of stone, built chiefly in groups, and the inhabitants are very poor.

In the south-east of the townland, on the boundary, are Nephin More and Nephin West Triangulation Stations. The road from Castlebar to Crossmolina lies through this townland.