

NEWSLETTER

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WINDOW TAX

The tax on daylight

How the half
door helped our
ancestors avoid
the tax!

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THE WINDOW TAX IN IRELAND

In 2013 Ireland introduced a Property Tax, a self-assessed tax charged on the market value of every residential property in the state. However, did you know that property tax in the form of Window Tax prevailed as far back as 1799.

Back then, a property tax, based on the number of windows in a house, was imposed. It was termed a property tax since windows were assumed to be an index of the value of houses.

The window tax, although in existence since 1799 was not repealed until 1851 when strong protests led to its abolition. It became known as a tax on window light hence the reason for the very small number of windows in traditional Irish rural homes of that time.

Fortunately for those who dwelled in tiny cottages with 1 or 2 windows, they were exempt from the window tax.

Houses with up to 20 windows were struck with an annual tax of 4 shillings while houses with more than 20 windows had to pay 8 shillings. In the 18th century, the tax increased where houses with up to 30 windows had to pay a tax of 10 shillings while houses with over 30 windows had to pay the staggering amount of 20 shillings!



The window tax was the origin of the term "*daylight robbery*" as householders blocked up their windows in order to avoid the excess tax, hence robbing themselves of daylight.

Some of those blocked up windows can still be seen today in many Georgian era houses across Ireland. The most notable example of this is the Bank of Ireland building in Dublin. When the Bank took over the building in 1803 after the Act of Union, they retained the architect's design but bricked up the windows to avoid paying the window tax which had skyrocketed. You can still see the bricked up windows of the old buildings today!

Many householders used their own unique and innovative approach to avoid paying the tax by using the half-door as their main entrance.

It was possible to leave the bottom half closed, thus keeping children in and chickens and other animals out; while leaving the top half open, thus maximizing the amount of light coming in.

Because the light coming through was from a door, rather than a window, they avoided paying the tax!

Sources:
www.rareirishstuff.com
www.forgottenireland.com
www.irishcentral.com

A brief history of

CARROWEENY

(*Ceathramhadh Mhaoine*, quarter of the wealth).

Located in the north of the parish of Killala. It contains 408 acres, 1 rood, 27 perches*.

The property of Major Ormsby Gore, and is let to 20 occupying tenants, all Catholics, on a lease of lives at 25 shillings per acre yearly. Co. Cess**, 2 shillings 7d. per acre. Soil, moory, producing oats and potatoes. Bog, plenty. Prevailing Family Names – Cosgrave and McNulty.

* *There are 40 perches in a rood, and 4 roods in an acre.*

** *The County Cess was a form of local taxation. It is derived from the word 'assessment'.*

Extract from Ordnance Survey Namebooks of 1838



BOOK OF THE WEEK

Attractive Mayo Spots

by J.F. Quinn
 €15 (+postage)

A wonderful book that presents the beautiful County of Mayo at its best.

The book is available in hardback format only. It encapsulates both a historical and pictorial history of Co. Mayo.

Available to purchase from Reception or online from the North Mayo Heritage Centre ebay bookstore



Bank of Ireland, Dublin