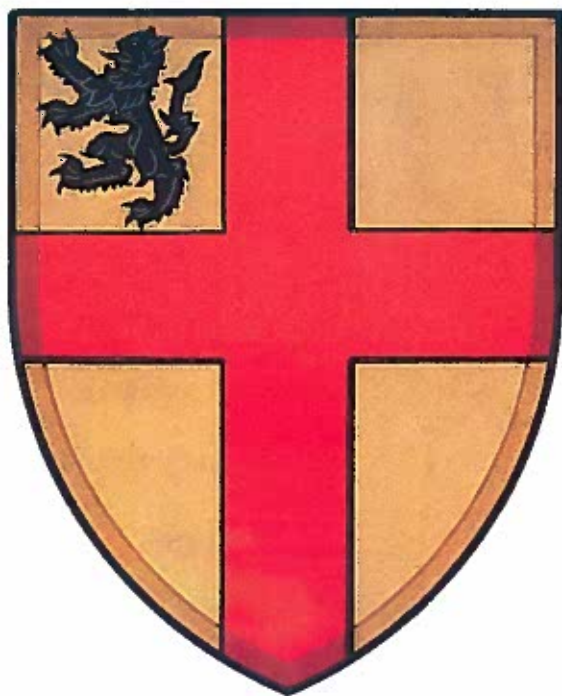


Brief history of an Irish family

# Burke

Burke, along with its variants Bourke and de Burgh, is now by far the most common Irish name of Norman origin; it is estimated that over 20,000 individuals now bear the surname in Ireland, a figure that probably represents only a fraction of the worldwide total.

The first person of the name to arrive in Ireland was William Fitzadelm de Burgo, a Norman knight from Burgh in Suffolk, who took part in the invasion of 1171, and succeeded Strongbow as Chief Governor. He received the earldom of Ulster, and was granted vast tracts of territory in Connacht. His descendants adopted Gaelic laws and customs more completely than any of the other Norman invaders, and very quickly became one of the most important families in the country. In Connacht, which remained the centre of the family's power, new septs were formed on native Irish lines. William Liath de Burgh, a great-grandson of the original William, was the ancestor of the two most influential clans, the MacWilliam Uachtar of Co. Galway, and the MacWilliam lochtar of Co. Mayo. Other descendants founded families which created distinct surnames; 'Philbin' derives from Mac Philbin, son of Philip (de Burgh); Jennings, now common in Co. Galway, is an anglicisation of Mac Sheoinin, son of John (de Burgh); Gibbons, found in Mayo, was originally Mac Giobuin, son of Gilbert (de Burgh).



The motto means  
One king, one faith, one law

There have been many famous individuals of the surname. Edmund Burke (1729-79), born in Dublin, became the most respected statesman of his time, a powerful opponent of both political violence and political oppression. At the other end of the scale comes William Burke (1792-1829), born in Cork, who, with his partner Hare, procured fresh bodies for dissection in Edinburgh medical schools by the simple expedient of murder. 'To burke', meaning to smother, derives from his notoriety. John Burke (1787-1848) and his son Sir Bernard Burke (1814-92) were altogether more respectable. Their works documenting the arms and pedigrees of the gentry and aristocracy, *Burke's Peerage and Baronetage*, *Burke's Landed Gentry*, *Burke's Irish Families*, *Burke's General Armory* (and many others), have been standard reference works for more than a century and a half. Sir Bernard became Ulster King of Arms, responsible for the regulation of arms in Ireland, precursor of the present Chief Herald of Ireland.

Of the many descendants of Burke emigrants who became prominent, perhaps the most worthy of note is Thomas Burke (1740-83), who held large estates in North Carolina, and was deeply involved in the War of Independence. Burke County in North Carolina is named for him.

According to legend, the arms of the family originated during the Crusades, when King Richard dipped his finger in the blood of a Saracen slain by one of the de Burghs, drew a cross on the Saracen's golden shield, and presented it to the victor. The motto 'Ung roy, Ung foy, Ung loy' translates as 'One king, one faith, one law', reflecting the loyalism of the most prominent branches of the family. ●

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*The pub atmosphere is so good in Millstreet that even the horses can expect their mount to join them in a pint of stout.*

portal frame building housing the indoor arena, with a floor space of 80,000 feet, has been built, and with it more stables, meeting rooms, a shopping mall, a smaller school for showing the paces of young horses for sale, media accommodation as well as executive offices and hospitality suite. Old stables have been turned into a welcoming and efficient restaurant open during each major event.

Yet with all this expansion – developments which made the Eurovision event possible here – and with the acquisition by Noel C. Duggan of the former Drishane Convent nearby with its 225 acres of pastureland, its lakes and little rivers flowing into the Blackwater, its thirteenth-century castle and tower, all for transformation into a country house hotel, with all this Millstreet is still about the horse.

The new buildings are surrounded by paddocks. Their out-of-season silences are broken by the voices of stable staff, the rattle of hooves. Horses graze in the meadows, and apprentice grooms saddle up and ride out daily. The development of the main indoor arena as a venue for major popular music events – more than four thousand people thronged to hear Daniel O'Donnell on New Year's Eve – does not eclipse the core business of Green Glens. Indeed, this has now been expanded by the Cork and Kerry Trail Ride, with Noel's son Tom leading visitors out through the hills, along old roads and mountain paths, on a five-day trek ending in Glenbeigh or Kenmare.

This is a spectacular experience: good horses are selected and matched to each rider (who must have some degree of riding ability) and the terrain varies from the taxing to the relaxing. The hidden pathways through the mountains are often old sheep or drover roads, unused and forgotten. They lead to lakes, to ruined castles, to long stretches of forest clearings allowing a bracing canter, to riverside meadows where a gallop is in order.

Along with this Millstreet also offers residential riding courses, with participants, like the Trail riders, staying in the apartments made from the converted 200-year old farm buildings. And all the while the Duggan enterprise is keeping on course. The original family hardware and galvanised iron business is kept going in the town; all the family contribute to the organisation of the show-jumping and other events. At Green Glens, Duggan senior, his wife Maureen and son Tom concentrate on horses. Their ambition is to see that the non-thoroughbred horse industry gains the prominence in Ireland that it deserves, and brings the rewards, discovered elsewhere, along with it. They have seen how the Irish horse is valued in other countries, how it is bought out of Ireland before Irish interests have recognised its potential.

Noel C. Duggan has shown Ireland how the small Irish farmer can produce what the best buyers of other countries want. His enterprise has revived the fortunes of the Irish sports horse, capitalising on a product, an industry, and an enthusiasm which marry the Irish horse and the Irish land to an international market. And in the process he has put a small Irish town on the world map. ●

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