



## Gold seam: Mining the Irish Manuscripts Commission treasure in the Virtual Record Treasury

Dublin Festival of History, 8 October 2022

### The Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland — VRTI

The Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland (VRTI – [www.virtualtreasury.ie](http://www.virtualtreasury.ie)) is an all-island, international project to reconstruct the archives of the Public Record Office of Ireland (PROI) which were almost completely destroyed by fire on 30 June 1922.

Combining historical investigation, archival conservation and technical innovation, the lost archive — which contained records for seven centuries of Irish history — has been re-created through digital technology. The project has reassembled a growing treasury of originals and replacement copies of documents tracked down in over 70 archives from Ireland and the UK and as far away as America and Australia. What is presented now to the Irish public is a vast online resource with over 50 million words of searchable text, over 6,000 maps, 150,000 database records and 2.7 million linked-data entities.

The Irish Manuscripts Commission is proud to be a Core Partner in the Beyond 2022 project. IMC has contributed digital copies of a host of its 208 publications to the Virtual Record Treasury — most notably *The Proclamations of Ireland 1660–1820* (5 vols, 2014) edited by James Kelly and Marian Lyons, *The Civil Survey, 1654–1656* (10 vols, 1931–1961) edited by Robert Simington, and the results of an IMC-sponsored project with TCD, to digitise the contents of the Books of Survey and Distribution, an extensive seventeenth-century survey of land and its owners. The latter sources along with the Down Survey form a ‘gold seam’ of data entitled **Cromwellian Surveys**.

The VRTI is available online and for free to anyone anywhere with an interest in Ireland’s history. The development of the Virtual Treasury over the past five years was funded by the Government of Ireland under Project Ireland 2040 through the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

### Worked examples

Example 1 – The Lucas family, Co. Clare

Example 2 – Dame Judi Dench and Sir Edward Bolton

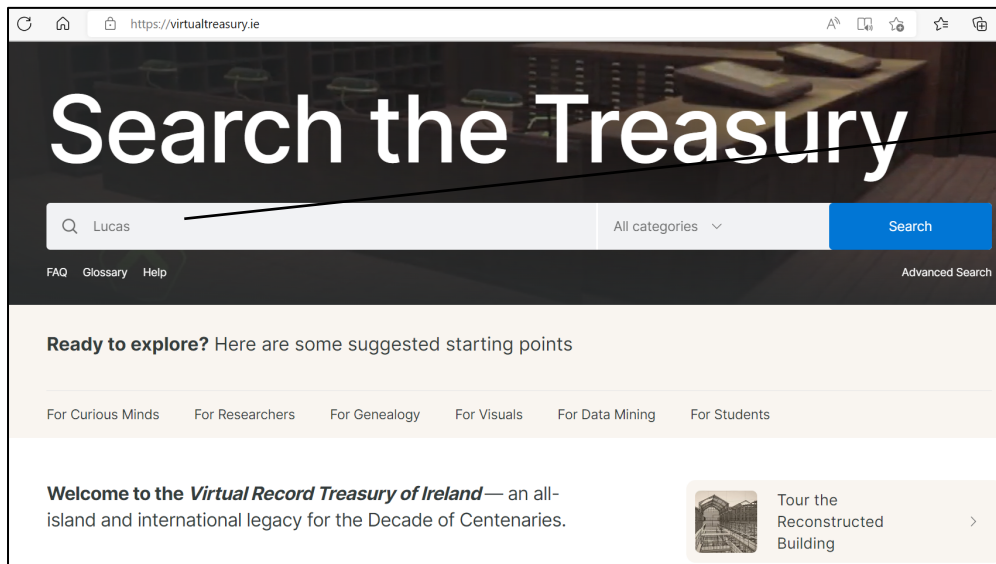
Example 3 – Sir Matthew de Renzy, Co. Offaly

Example 4 – Searching for women in the VRTI

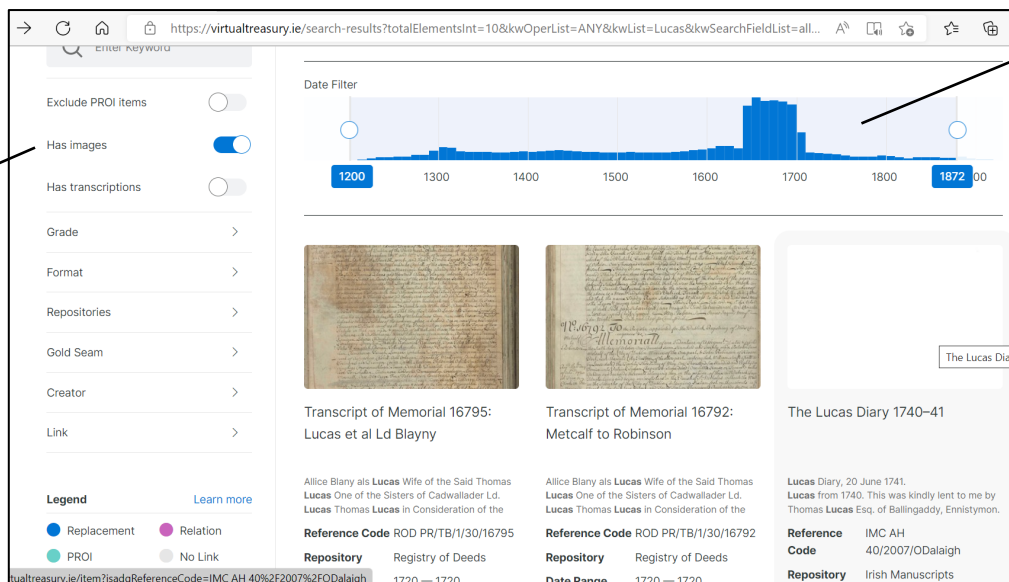
## Example 1: The Lucas family

According to the Dictionary of Irish Biography, Charles Lucas (1713–71), a ‘politician, physician, and writer, was born 16 September 1713, the younger son of Benjamin Lucas (d. c. 1727) of the townland of Ballingaddy, Kilmanahan parish, Corcomroe, Co. Clare, and his wife, Mary (née Blood), also of Co. Clare.’ (This biography is available online at: <https://doi.org/10.3318/dib.004903.v1>)

## Search 1: A simple name search

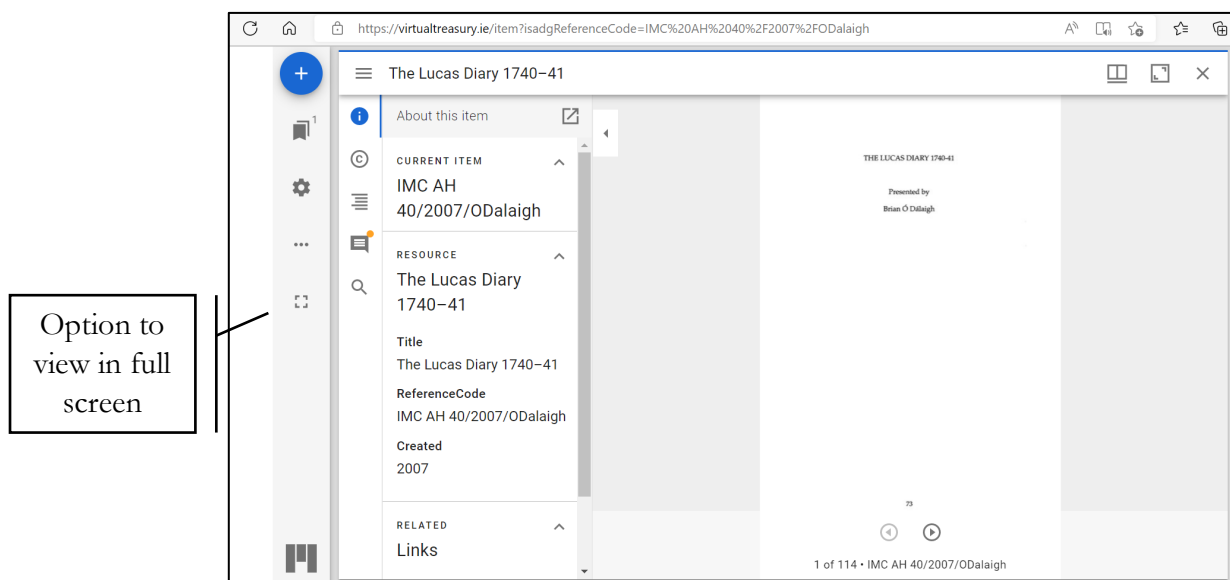


Using the simple name search will lead to *The Lucas Diary, 1740–1*, edited by Brian Ó Dálaigh, which was published in *Analecta Hibernica*, the Irish Manuscripts Commission journal, in 2007 (vol. 40).



Option to in/exclude images

Option to narrow results by date

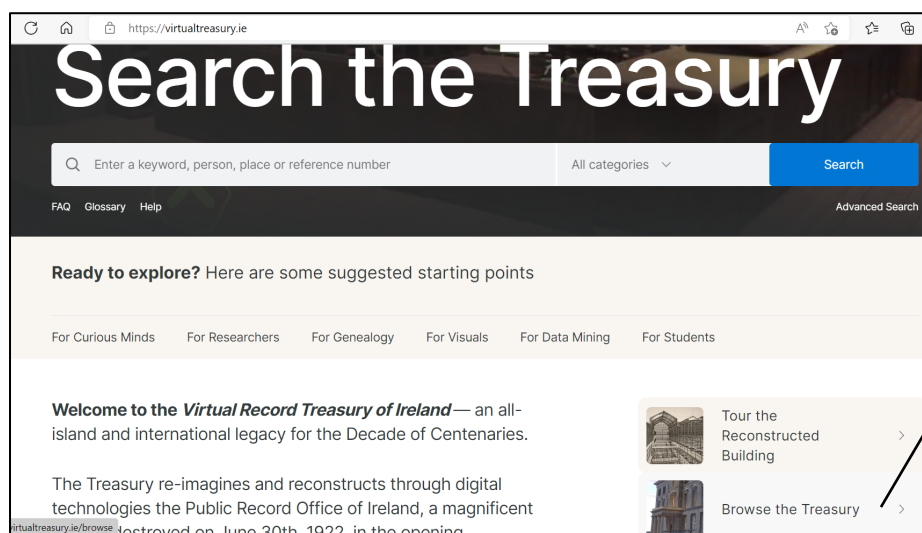


## Search 2: A location search

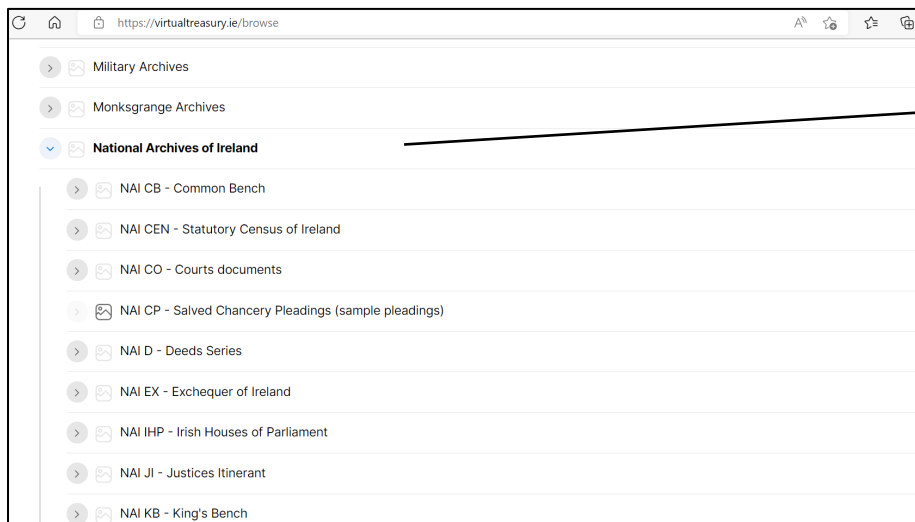
It was not until the first Ordnance Survey of Ireland in the 1830s that the spelling of placenames was standardised. This can make a simple search for a placename relatively unproductive.

In most instances, the easiest way to access land records on the VRTI, such as the BSD, Civil Survey, and Down Survey Maps, is to browse the records, progressing down through the levels from county/townland to the barony or parish.

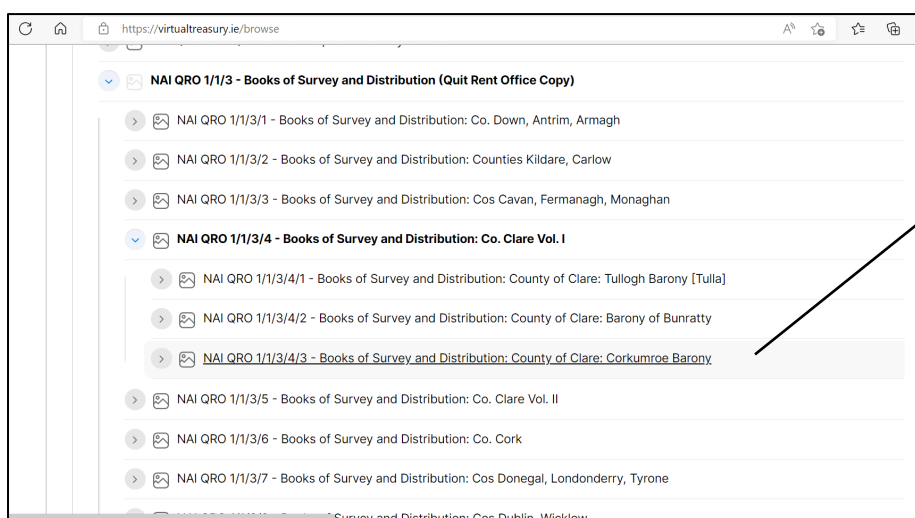
The Lucas residence was in Ballingaddy, in the civil parish of Kilmanaheen, Barony of Corcomroe, Co. Clare.



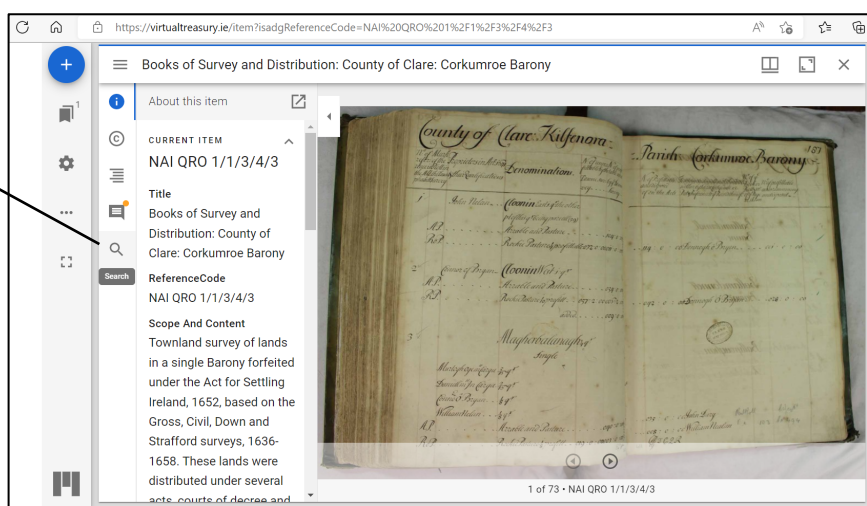
The Books of Survey and Distribution (BSD) for Co. Clare can be located by browsing the VRTI.



Select the drop-down options for National Archives of Ireland and NAI QRO (Quit Rent Office).



Navigate through the drop-down menu to the BSD for Co. Clare (vol. 1), to the Barony of Corkumroe.

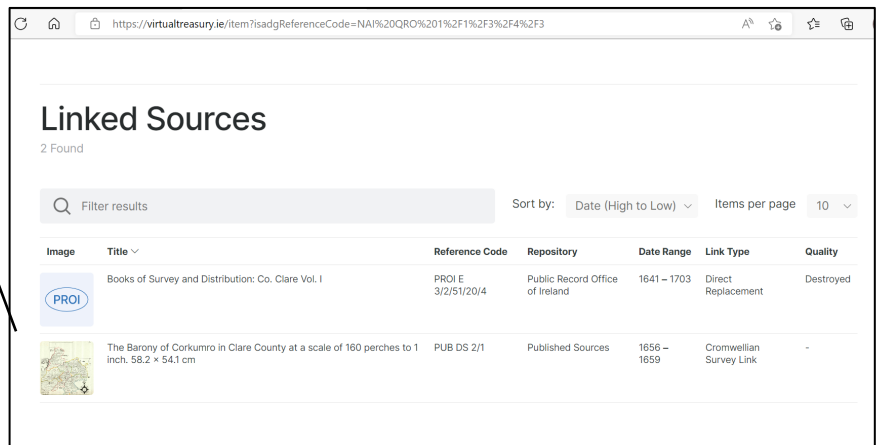


Use the search box inside the Digital Content viewer to locate a reference to Lucas.





### Search 3: Additional sources

It can also be useful to scroll down the BSD page to Linked Sources.



The screenshot shows the 'Linked Sources' section of the VRTI website. It displays a table with two rows of linked sources. The first row is highlighted with a blue background and a 'PROI' icon. The second row has a map icon. The table columns are: Image, Title, Reference Code, Repository, Date Range, Link Type, and Quality.

Image	Title	Reference Code	Repository	Date Range	Link Type	Quality
	Books of Survey and Distribution: Co. Clare Vol. I	PROI E 3/2/51/20/4	Public Record Office of Ireland	1641 – 1703	Direct Replacement	Destroyed
	The Barony of Corkumro in Clare County at a scale of 160 perches to 1 inch. 58.2 x 54.1 cm	PUB DS 2/1	Published Sources	1656 – 1659	Cromwellian Survey Link	-

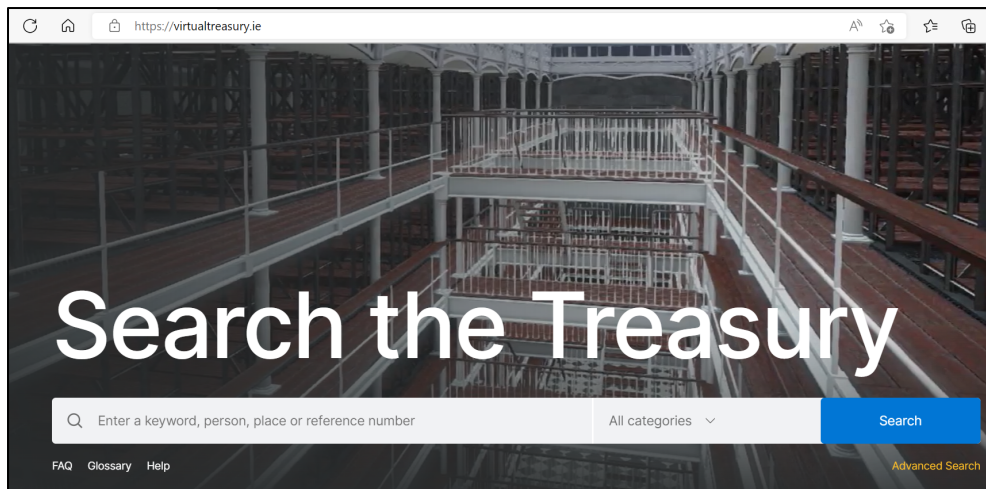
Charles Lucas also appears in other sources on the VRTI, including a transcript of the will of Dr Charles Lucas in the TPC Kirkpatrick collection, held in the Archives of Royal College of Physicians in Ireland (RCPI TPCK 5/3/1/5/7). This is a substitute for the Prerogative Wills of Ireland, destroyed in 1922.

## Example 2: Dame Judi Dench and Sir Edward Bolton

One of Dame Judi Dench's ancestors was lawyer and judge, Sir Edward Bolton (1592–1659), described in the Dictionary of Irish Biography, as 'the eldest of the seven sons and two daughters of Sir Richard Bolton, lawyer and judge, and his first wife, Frances, daughter of Richard Walter of Stafford. ... Bolton owned property in counties Dublin and Meath, and is often described as being of Brazeel, Co. Dublin.'

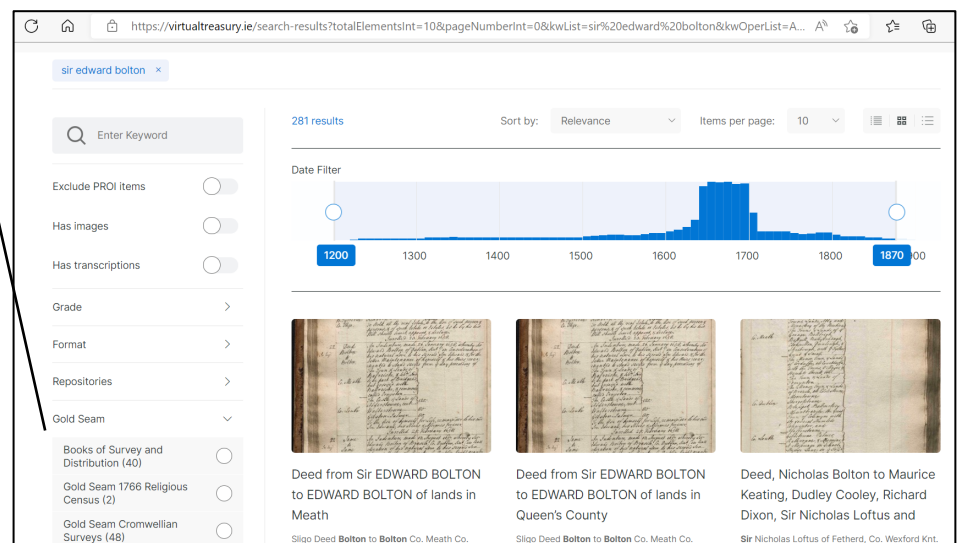
(A biography of Sir Edward Bolton is available online at: <https://doi.org/10.3318/dib.000772.v1>)

### Search 1: An advanced name search



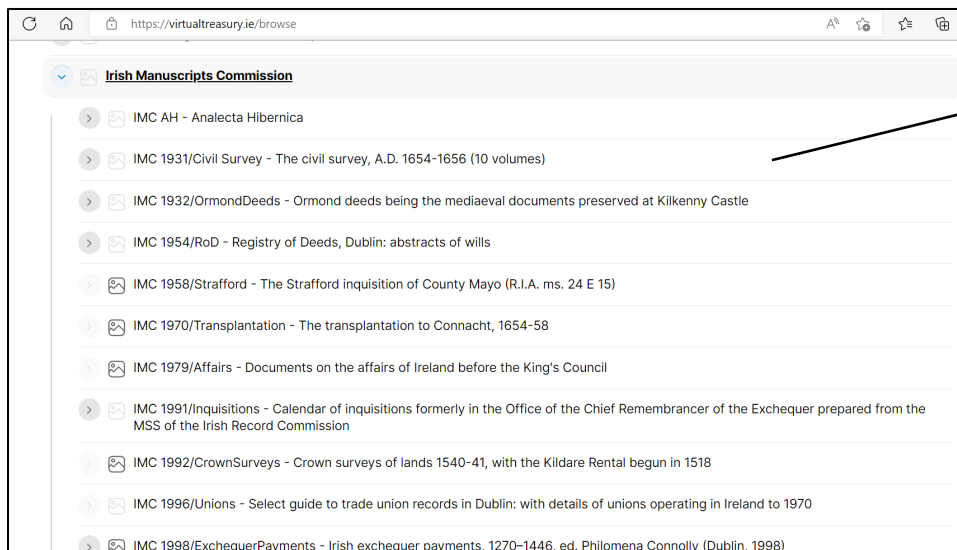
Use the Advanced Search to locate sources relating to 'Sir Edward Bolton' as a phrase.

Filter the results as desired using the left-hand menu. Records include the BSD for Co. Dublin, Barony of Coolocke. The parish of Killostery documents Bolton as owner of 'Brazeile Mount Brazele & Newtowne Brazele'. He also features in other BSD records, including Queen's County, Meath and Louth.



## Search 2: An Irish Manuscripts Commission search

The Irish Manuscripts Commission has donated around 3,740 digital objects to the VRTI. Use the Browse function to explore these records.



This includes the Civil Survey for Dublin (1654-1656), vol. vii, which contains numerous references to the Bolton family.

Other Bolton family records can be found by browsing the Representative Church Body Library and National Archives of Ireland sources on the VRTI. The latter includes extracts from deeds made by John Lodge, which make references to Sir Edward Bolton's transactions.

### Example 3: Sir Matthew de Renzy

Sir Matthew de Renzy (1577–1634), was an Irish planter, customs official, and Gaelic scholar, born in Cullen (probably Cologne), Germany. Working as a cloth dealer in Antwerp and subsequently a merchant stranger in London, he arrived in Ireland in 1606. From 1613, he acquired property in the Irish midlands, which was extended as a result of the plantation of the region in 1619–20. In 1628, he was appointed a Burgess of the plantation town of Banagher. He commissioned maps of his property, which are early examples of Irish estate maps, and reflect his dual roles as planter and burgher of the new town.

(This information is drawn from Annaleigh Margey (ed.) *Mapping Ireland c. 1550–1636: a catalogue of manuscript maps of Ireland* (forthcoming, IMC) and Dictionary of Irish Biography <https://doi.org/10.3318/dib.002468.v1>)

#### Search 1: A name search

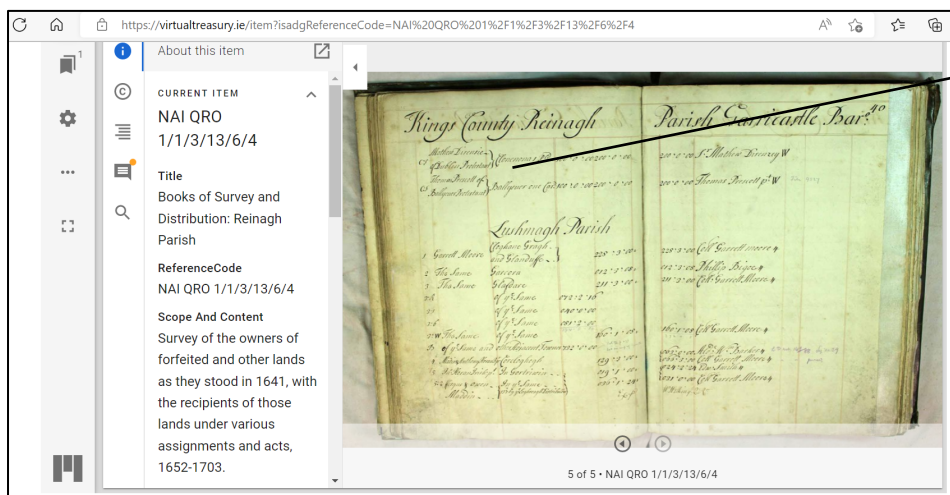
The screenshot shows the 'Search Results' page on the VirtualTreasury website. The search term 'de Renzy' is entered in the search bar. The results show 7197 items. A date filter histogram is visible, ranging from 1200 to 1872. On the left, there are filters for 'Exclude PROI items', 'Has images' (checked), 'Has transcriptions', 'Grade', and 'Format'. A small thumbnail of a manuscript page is shown at the bottom right.

A simple search for de Renzy will result in hits for both 'de' and 'Renzy'.

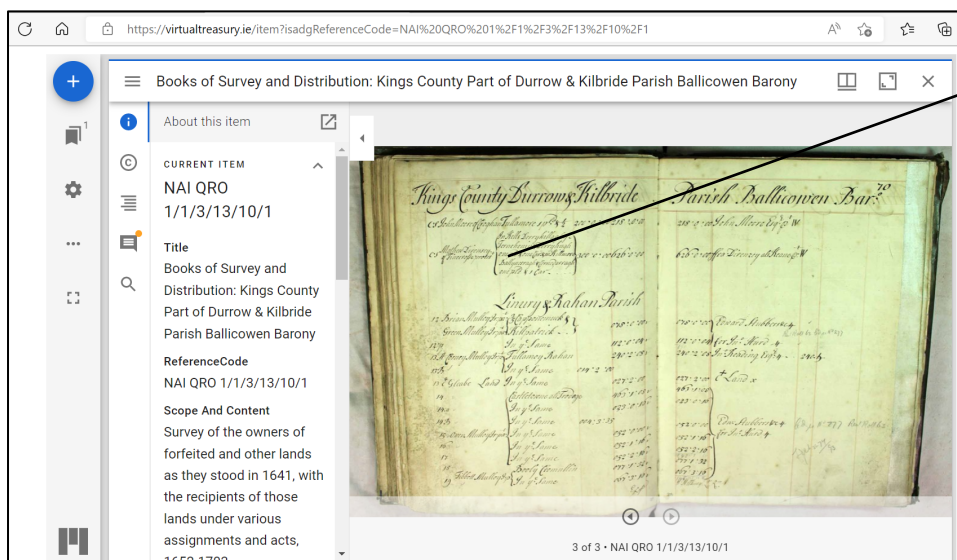
The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Search' page on the VirtualTreasury website. It features a grid of search criteria: 'All', 'Title', 'Transcription', and 'Creator'. Each criterion has a dropdown menu for 'This exact phrase' or 'All of these words', and a text input field for the 'Search term'. The 'Search term' field for 'All' is populated with 'de Renzy'. At the bottom, there is a button to 'Add another search criteria' and a 'Clear all' button.

Search for either 'Renzy' in the simple search, or use the Advanced search to narrow results to the exact phrase.

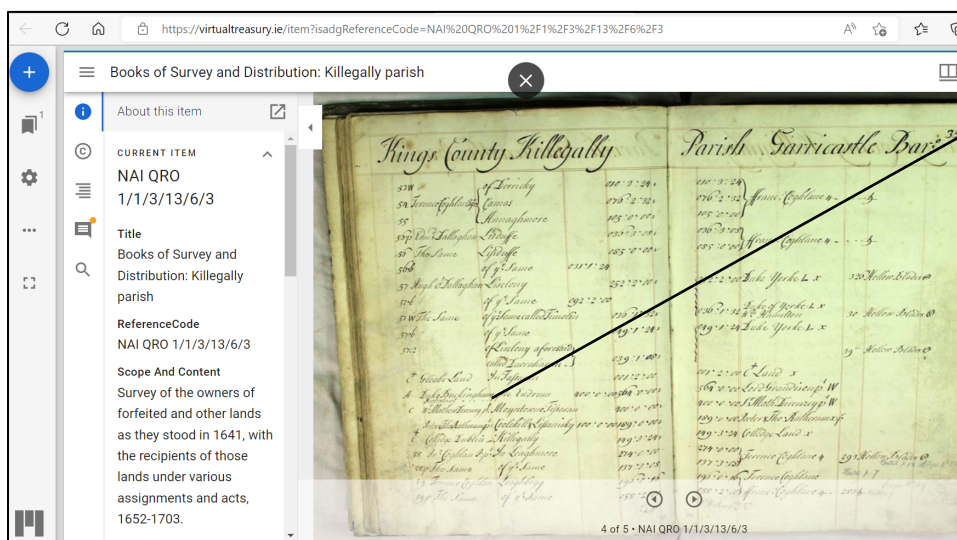
Consider other name variants. Sir Matthew de Renzy features in other sources in the BSD.



Mathew Dirensie of  
Dublin in the parish of  
Reinagh, barony of  
Garricastle.



Mathew Dirensy in the  
parish of Durrow and  
Kilbride, barony of  
Ballycowen.



Mathew Derensy in the  
parish of Killegally,  
barony of Garricastle.



## Search 2: Comparing two sources side-by-side

IMC will be publishing a collection of manuscript maps, edited by Annaleigh Margey, which include Irish maps found in the de Renzy papers. It can be useful to view the BSD alongside relevant maps.

Navigate to the linked source.





https://virtualtreasury.ie/item?isadgReferenceCode=NAI%20QRO%201%2F1%2F3%2F13%2F6

### Linked Sources

4 Found

Filter results

Sort by: Date (High to Low) Items per page: 10

Image	Title	Reference Code	Repository	Date Range	Link Type	Quality
	Books of Survey and Distribution: King's and Queen's Counties	PROI E 3/2/51/20/13	Public Record Office of Ireland	1641 – 1703	Direct Replacement	Destroyed
	The Barony of Garriccastle in the Kings County Admeasured by Thomas Wilson 1657 (Surveyor General copy)	NAI V20 60/95	National Archives of Ireland	1657	Cromwellian Survey Link	Duplicate
	Barony of Garriccastle King's County (PROI copy)	NAI V20 60/102/1	National Archives of Ireland	1657	Cromwellian Survey Link	Duplicate
	The Barony of Garriccastle in the Kings County at a scale of 160 perches to 1 inch. 77.2 x 53 cm	PUB DS 3/42	Published Sources	1656 – 1659	Cromwellian Survey Link	-

Scroll down and copy the URL.

https://virtualtreasury.ie/item?isadgReferenceCode=NAI%20V20%2060%2F95

### The Barony of Garriccastle in the Kings County Admeasured by Thomas Wilson 1657 (Surveyor General copy)

About this item

Admeasured by Thomas Wilson 1657 (Surveyor General copy)

ReferenceCode  
NAI V20 60/95


Scope And Content

Created  
1657

Content Date  
1657

RELATED Links

IIIF manifest  
<https://by2022.adaptcentre.ie/iiif/v1/130214/manifest>



1 of 1 • NAI V20 60/95

Return to your original Digital Content viewer and 'add resource'

https://virtualtreasury.ie/item?isadgReferenceCode=NAI%20QRO%201%2F1%2F3%2F13%2F6

### Books of Survey and Distribution: Kings County [County Offaly]: Garriccastle Barony

Add resource

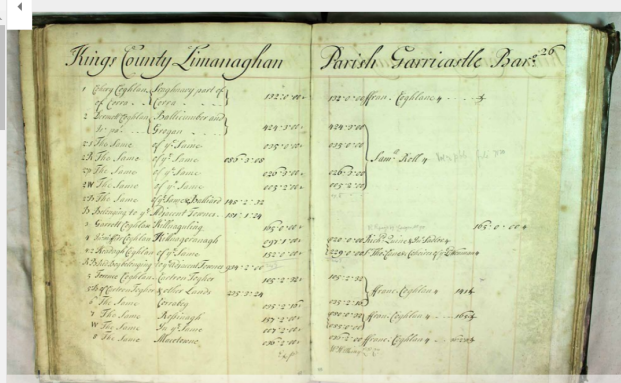
About this item

CURRENT ITEM  
NAI QRO 1/1/3/13/6

Title  
Books of Survey and Distribution: Kings County [County Offaly]: Garriccastle Barony

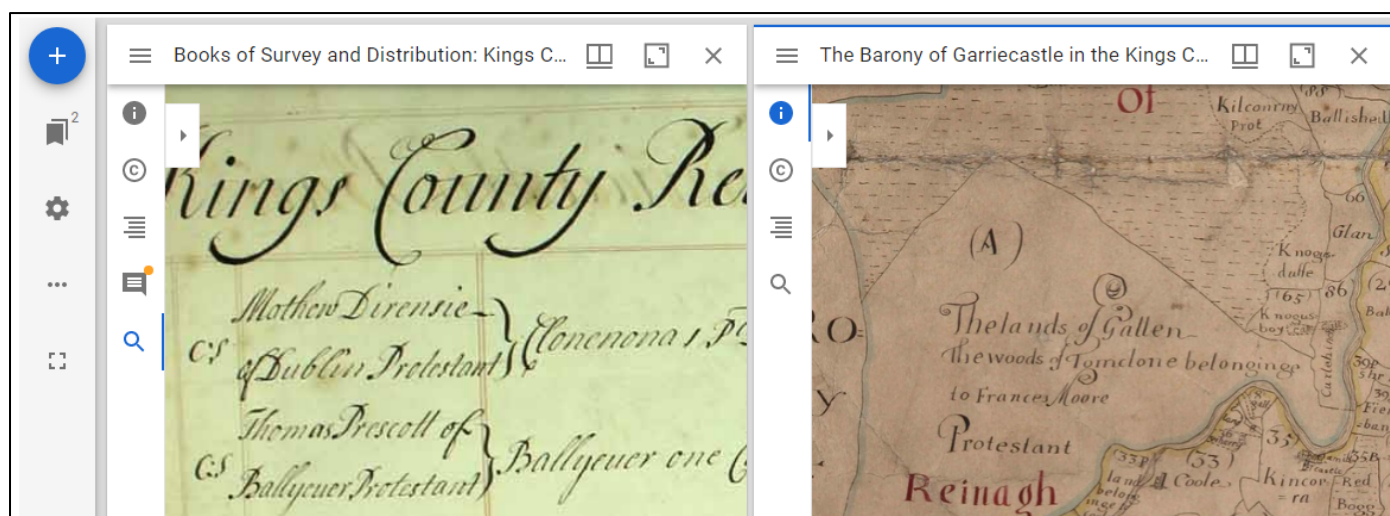
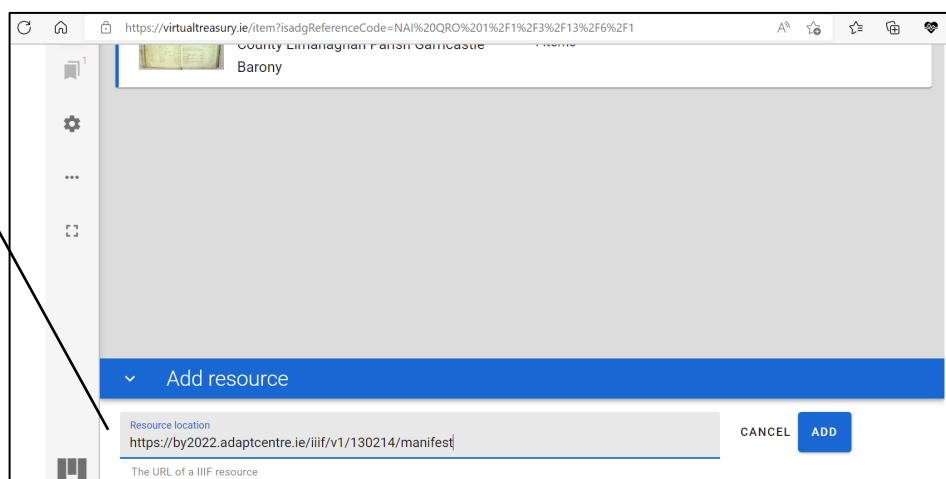
ReferenceCode  
NAI QRO 1/1/3/13/6

Scope And Content  
Townland survey of lands in a single Barony forfeited under the Act for Settling Ireland, 1652, based on the Gross, Civil, Down and Strafford surveys, 1636-1658. These lands were distributed under several



1 of 25 • NAI QRO 1/1/3/13/6

Scroll down to 'add resource' and paste the URL to view the map and manuscript side-by-side.





#### Example 4: Searching for women in the VRTI

Documentation relating to the ownership and transfer of property makes up a significant part of the VRTI, particularly the Cromwellian Gold Seam.

Since women were not usually possessed of property in Ireland prior to the 20th century, they are largely absent from many of the sources found in the VRTI. However, surveying the collection for women's first names can prove fruitful in terms of finding women who owned or inherited property.

The screenshot shows the Virtual Treasury search results for the term 'eliza'. The URL is <https://virtualtreasury.ie/search-results?totalElementsInt=10&kwOp=ANY&kwList=eliza&kwSearchFieldList=all&resultSorting=>. The search results show 269 results, sorted by Relevance, with 10 items per page. A date filter is applied, showing a histogram of results from 1200 to 1872. The left sidebar contains filters for 'Has transcriptions', 'Grade', 'Format', 'Repositories', 'Gold Seam', 'Creator', and 'Link'. The main content area displays three search results: 'DUNGARVAN PAR. REG.', 'Census of Ireland, 1851, [Donegal?], [Leck?] (unknown townland)', and 'Index to the Act or Grant Books and to Original Wills of the Diocese of Dublin from 1800 to 1803'. Annotations highlight the search results, the date filter, and the 'Has transcriptions' filter.

eliza x

269 results

Sort by: Relevance

Items per page: 10

Date Filter

1200 1300 1400 1500 1600 1700 1800 1872 00

Has transcriptions

Grade

Format

Repositories

Gold Seam

Creator

Link

DUNGARVAN PAR. REG.

Census of Ireland, 1851, [Donegal?], [Leck?] (unknown townland)

Index to the Act or Grant Books and to Original Wills of the Diocese of Dublin from 1800 to 1803

Option to narrow results to the BSD.

Option to narrow results by date.

Among the results in the BSD is Eliza Ward, granted lands in the townland of Garristowne in the parish of Killmacomb, Barony of Galtier, Co. Waterford

[https://virtualtreasury.ie/item?isadgReferenceCode=NAI%20QRO%201%2F1%2F3%2F11%2F9](#)

## Books of Survey and Distribution: County Waterford: Galtiere Barony

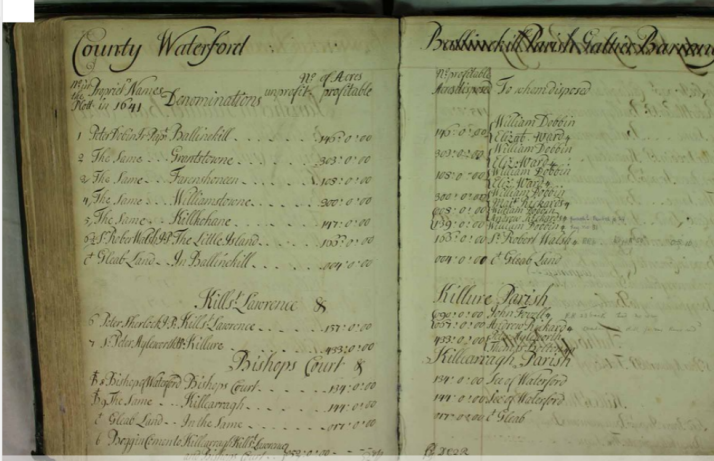
About this item

CURRENT ITEM  
NAI QRO 1/1/3/11/9

Title  
Books of Survey and Distribution: County Waterford: Galtiere Barony

ReferenceCode  
NAI QRO 1/1/3/11/9

Scope And Content  
Townland survey of lands in a single Barony forfeited under the Act for Settling Ireland, 1652, based on the Gross, Civil, Down and Stafford surveys, 1636-1658. These lands were distributed under several acts, courts of decree and



1 of 9 • NAI QRO 1/1/3/11/9