

PORTRAIT OF COUNTY SLIGO

Gareth McCormack

County Sligo may not be a big county but it is blessed with such unique and inspirational scenery that it looms large in defining the character and mythology of the Irish landscape.

The name Sligo is thought to come from the Irish Sligeach meaning "shelly place", and was first attributed to a small settlement established at the mouth of the Garavogue River in the thirteenth century. As its importance as a port grew, so too did the town, and during the Tudor period the town's name was given to the newly created county. The Norman influence can be seen throughout Sligo in the many castles and abbeys they left behind. Modern Sligo is a thriving, multi-cultural town, which boasts a vibrant cultural life and successfully mixes historic buildings with bold, new architectural styles.

Although mountains are at the county's heart, Sligo wraps both arms around the Atlantic. Its coastline is world-famous for the quality of its surfing, a happy by-product of the flat limestone reefs that predominate. Although the county has no great sea cliffs to rival those of other counties on Ireland's west coast, it does have some spectacular coastal landscapes like Mullaghmore Head, and it also boasts some of the prettiest beaches and harbours anywhere on the Irish coast.

The photographs in this book are an attempt to convey a sense of the grandeur of the county's landscapes and the mystery of its historic sites and ruins. Even today many will be surprised to discover wonderful and unexpected secrets: like the ruins of the old ice house on the banks of the Moy, or the little village of Banada with its ruined abbey. It is these hidden corners, as much as Benbulbin or Classiebawn Castle, that make Sligo so special and which are captured in superb detail by the lens of expert photographer Gareth McCormack.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gareth McCormack is a photographer and writer who specialises in landscape and travel imagery. His photographs have appeared in many books and publications worldwide. He lives with his wife Helen, and two children Erin and Geordan, near Enniscrone in west County Sligo.

To see more of his work visit garethmccormack.com.

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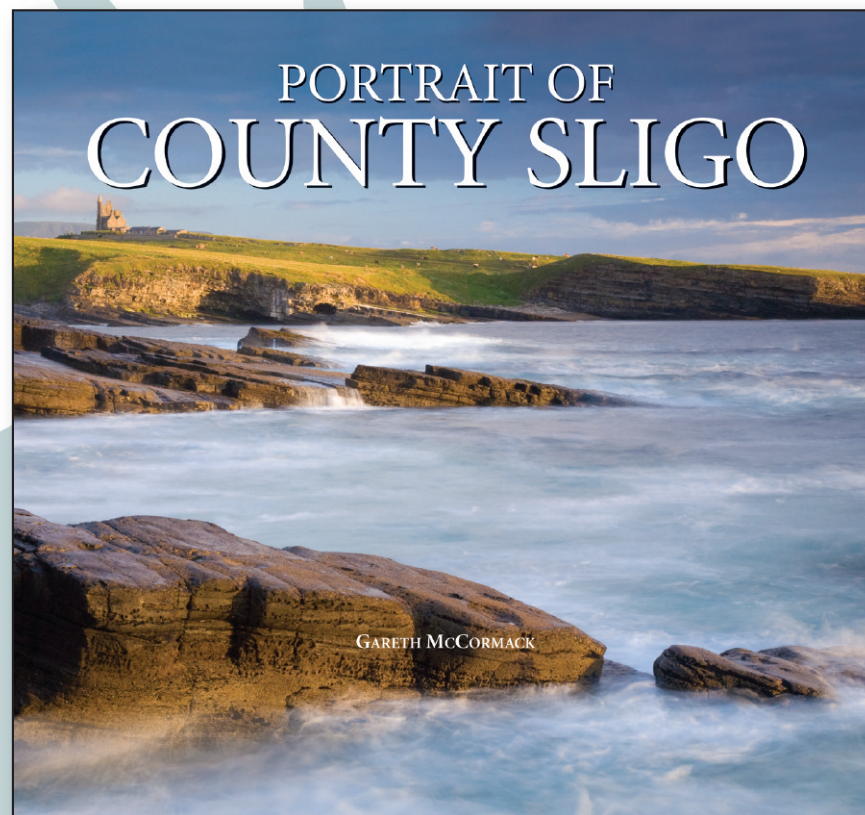
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HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



Format: Hardback, 144 pages, 238x258mm, profusely illustrated in colour throughout.
Price: €19.99
ISBN: 978 1 84114 849 6
Imprint: Halsgrove
Published: April 2010



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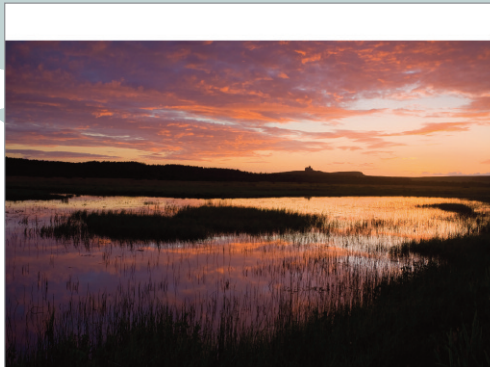
Ninth century High Cross. The spectacularly well-preserved High Cross in Drumcliffe.



Yeats statue. Sculpted by Rowan Gillespie and erected in 1990, the bronze Yeats statue in the centre of Sligo celebrates the poet's life and work.



Classiebawn Castle and Benbulbin.



Bunbulbin sunset.
So in the one has behind Mullaghmore beach, the waters of Benbulbin Lough are only faintly shimmering.
Here, a fiery sunset sunset reflects on its calm waters with Classiebawn Castle silhouetted in the distance.



Mullaghmore Beach.
Looking east across Mullaghmore Beach - or Bunbulbin Strand as it is also known.



Hills east of Sligo. Looking north across Lough Gill from Killerry Mountain to Keelogyboy Mountain.

Example of a double-page spread.