



The Route of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* in County Longford

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County Library, Longford, 22^ú Márta 2016, 7.00pm

Táin Bó Cúailnge: is it fact of fable?

Re Tim Lyons

“He wrote a song about a party he was’nt at before it happened”

Brian O’Rourke

Re Táin Scholars

“Academics who write about a cattle raid they were’nt on 2,000 years after it never happened”

Táin Bó Cúailnge: is it fact of fable?

Scribal note at the end of the *Book of Leinster* version of the *Táin*:

‘I who have copied down this story, or more accurately fantasy, do not credit the details of the story ... Some things in it are devilish lies, and some poetical figments; some seem possible and others not; some are for the enjoyment of idiots’



MAP OF IRELAND (EIRE) to illustrate the Cuchullin Saga.

English Miles 0 5 10 20 30 40 50

General direction taken by Meave's forces in the Táin bó Cúailnge.

The ROUTE of Táin Bó Cúailnge

‘General direction taken by Meave’s forces on the Táin ...’

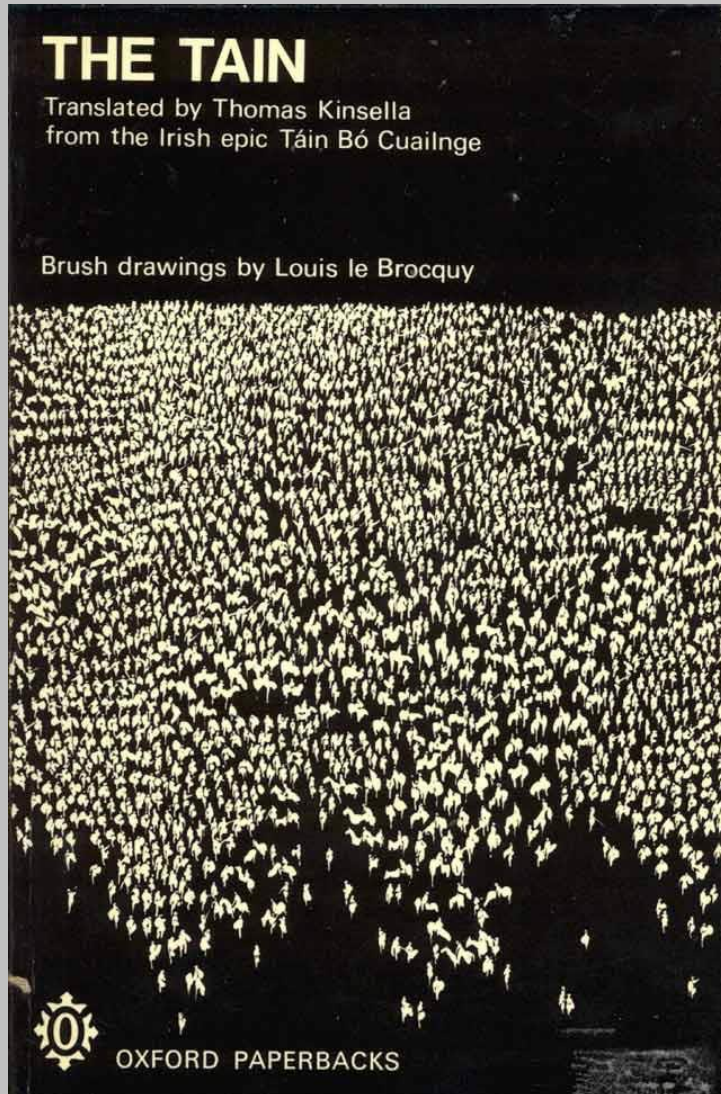
Standish Hayes O’Grady



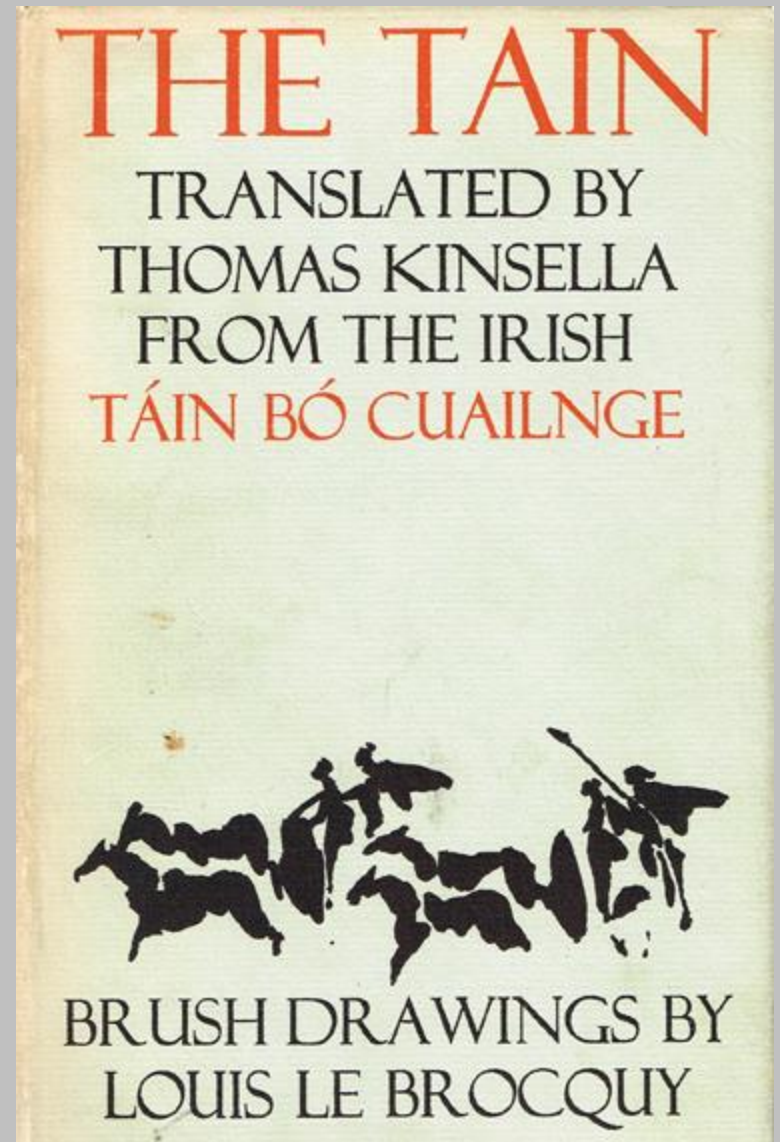
from: Hull, *The Cuchullin Saga* (1898)

George Philip & Son London & Liverpool

Thomas Kinsella

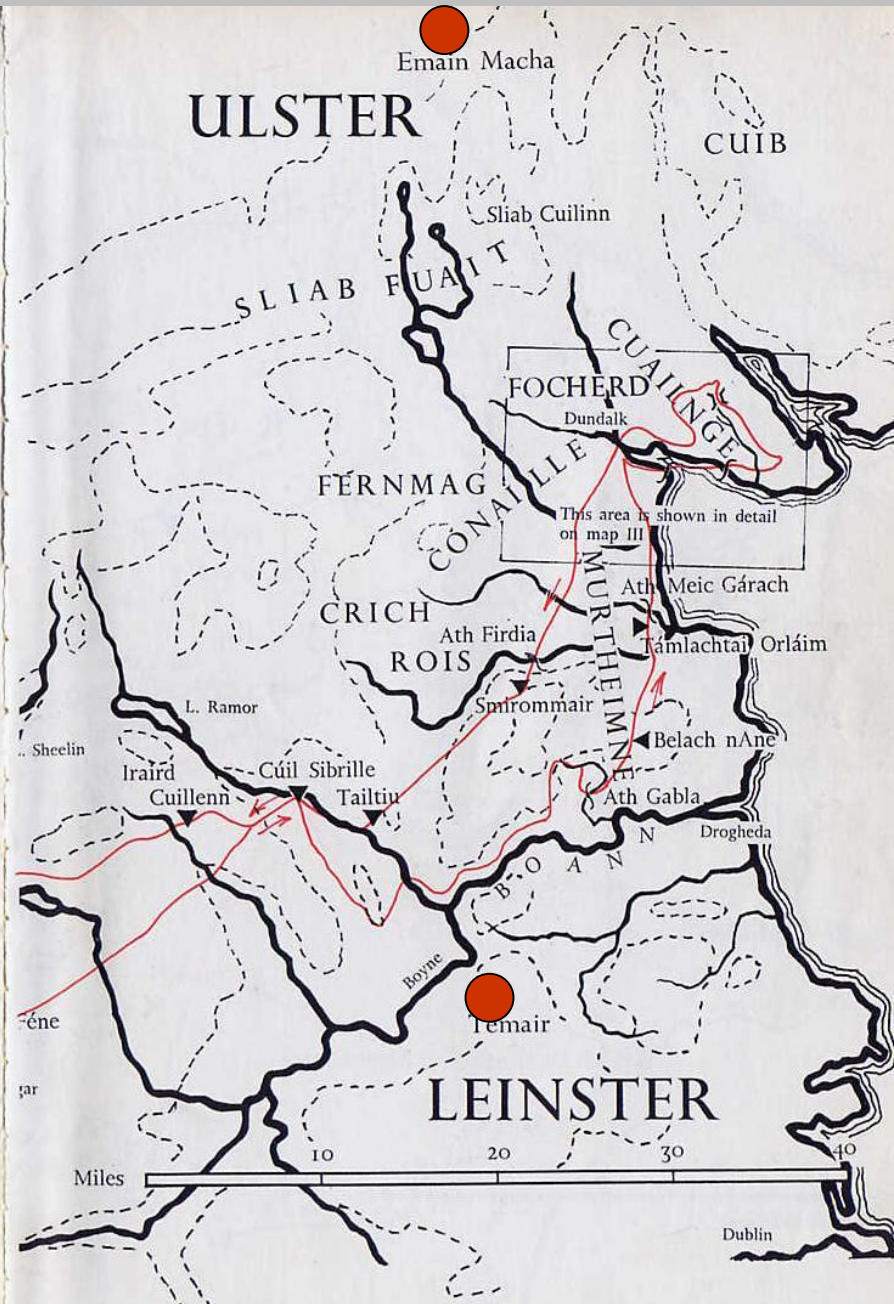
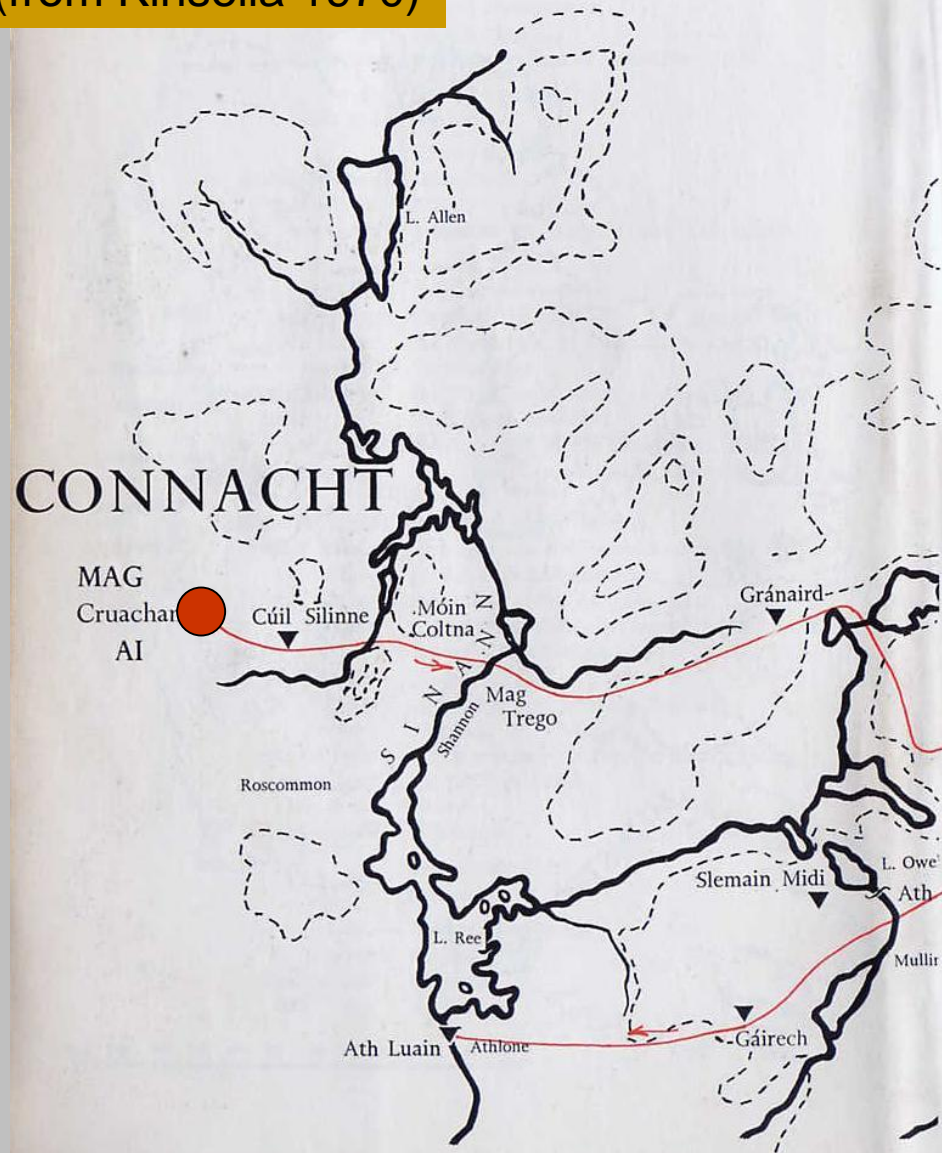


Oxford UP, 1970



Dolmen Press 1969

Route of the Táin
(from Kinsella 1970)



apply to...
rationalisation or fantasy. But there are many names which... scribe's
complete certainty, can be identified with...
Táin's sense of place is on the whole...
sense of place-names and their origin, and... possible to follow the
route of the Táin in all its essentials.

Kinsella 1969, 261

A map of the route is given on pages 294/5. Simplified as it is, it would have been impossible to put this map together without expert help. This was provided by Professor John V. Kelleher and Mr. Gene C. Haley of Harvard University, who have been extraordinarily generous with the fruit of their researches, and with many suggestions. Their findings are by no means adequately represented here, in particular Haley's detailed and meticulous work on the place names of Conaille and Cuailnge (which, with other matter, will be published soon in a Dolmen Press book on 'The Route of the Táin'). The maps in the present work are designed only to give enough information to follow the movements of the story.

A strong element in the sagas is their directness in bodily matters: the easy references to seduction, copulation, urination, the picking of vermin, the suggestion of incest in 'How Cúchulainn was begotten', and so on. This coarseness was a source of some uneasiness to Lady Gregory (Gregory: 'I thought you would not care about Kiltartan'), but

Research on Individual Placenames

Paul Gosling

'Placing Names in TBC' papers

County Louth Archaeological & Historical Journal

Published

- 2011 the river 'Níth' and the ford 'Áth Carpat'
- 2012 the gaps 'Bernas Bó Cúailnge' and 'Bernas Bó nUlad'
- 2013 the ford 'Áth Fhir Diad'
- 2014 the ford 'Áth Lethan'

Forthcoming:

- 2015 the camp 'Finnabair Chúailnge' and the mountain 'Finnabair Sléibe'

The Route of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* Revisited

Paul Gosling

Department of Heritage & Tourism, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology

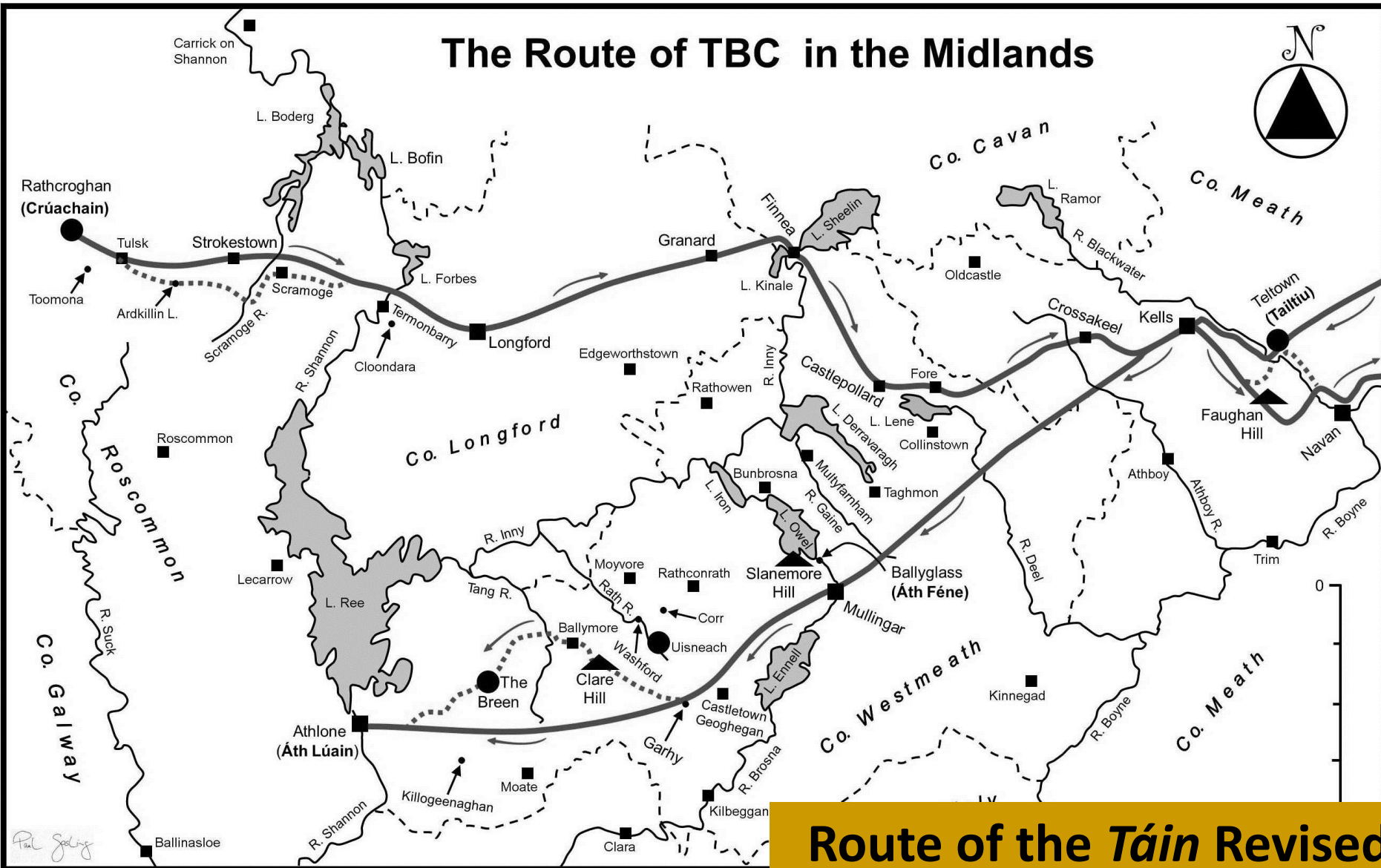
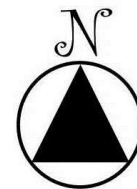
Abstract

This paper focuses on the topographic and toponymic aspects of Táin Bó Cúailnge, specifically the work of Gene Haley and Thomas Kinsella. Their re-construction of the route of Queen Medb's forces from Crúachain (Co. Roscommon) to Cúailnge (Co. Louth) and back is reviewed. Evaluations of and revisions to same are presented.

he has, in effect, published his PhD research. In the meantime, new translations of TBC have appeared in which the topographic aspects of the epic are downplayed or ignored (Neeson 2004; Carson 2007). The paragraphs that follow review the route as reconstructed by Haley and Kinsella (Figs. 1 and 2), examine the evidence underpinning their identifications, and offer re-evaluations as appropriate (Figs. 4–6).

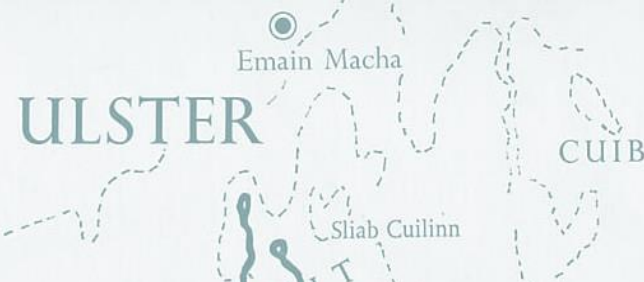
in *Emania: Journal of the Navan Research Group*, Vol. 22 (2014)
Preview available online at <https://gmit.academia.edu/PaulGosling>

The Route of TBC in the Midlands



Route of the *Táin* Revised
Emania Vol. 22 (2014)

Paul Geary



TEXTS of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* as Source for the route

- 'Sligi na Tána in seo ...'
- Known as the 'Itinerary'
- Comprises a list of c.66 obscure placenames
- 'On the Monday after the autumn festival of Samhain they set out. They travelled south-east from Crúachan Aí, by Mucc Cruinb, past Terloch Teóra Crích, past Túaim Móna, past Cúil Silinne, [54 names omitted] past Ánmag, past Deind, past Delt, past Dubglais, past Fid Mór, past Colptha, past Crond in Cúailnge.'

(Recension I, Lines 114-130)





The 'ITINERARY' as Source for the route in Longford

- 'They travelled south-east from Crúachan Aí, by Mucc Cruinb, past Terloch Teóra Crích, past Túaim Móna, past Cúil Silinne, past Fid, past Bolga, past Coltain, past Glúne Gabair, past Mag Trego, past northern Tethba, past southern Tethba, past Tíarthechta, past Ord, southwards past Slais, past Indeóind, past Carn, past Otrach, past Mide, past Findglassa Assail, past Delt, past Delind, past Sailig, past Slaibre, past Slechta (where they hewed down the trees), past Cúil Sibrinne '

(Recension I, Lines 114-130)



Route of the Táin Bó Cúailnge Redux

The 'ITINERARY' as Source for the route in Longford

Crúachan Aí Rathcroghan

Mucc Cruinb

Terloch Teóra Crích

Túaim Móna Toomona

Cúil Silinne Ardkillin L.

Fid

Bolga

Coltain

Glúne Gabair

Mag Trego Clongesh

Tethba By. of Granard

Tíarthechta

Ord

Slais

Indeóind River Inny

Carn

Otrach

Mide

Findglassa Assail

Delt rivers

Delind

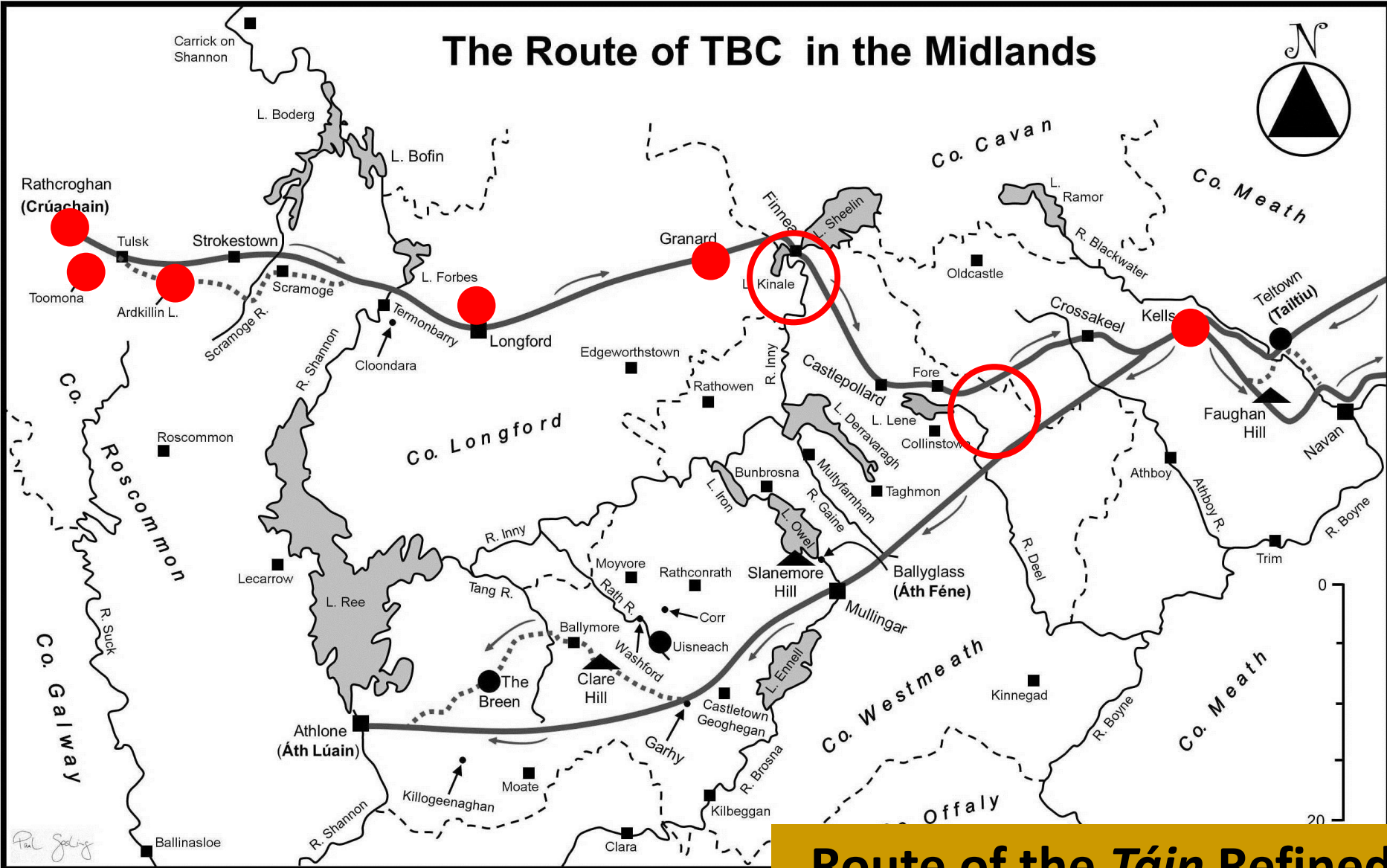
Sailig

Slaibre

Slechta

Cúil Sibrinne Kells

The Route of TBC in the Midlands



Route of the *Táin* Refined

Paul Selig

Route of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*

LORE as a Source for the route

The example of SCRAMOGE

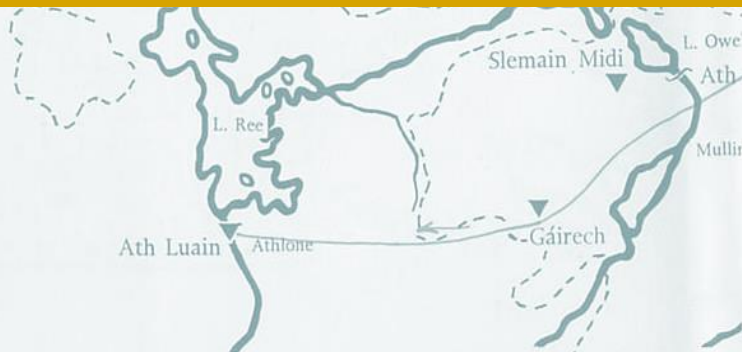
- ‘a woman in Co. Roscommon showed me where the old road ran between Scramoge Gap and the Shannon, over which Meave marched her army. “How do you know it was there?” I asked. “Because my father dug up the flags with which it was paved” she replied’



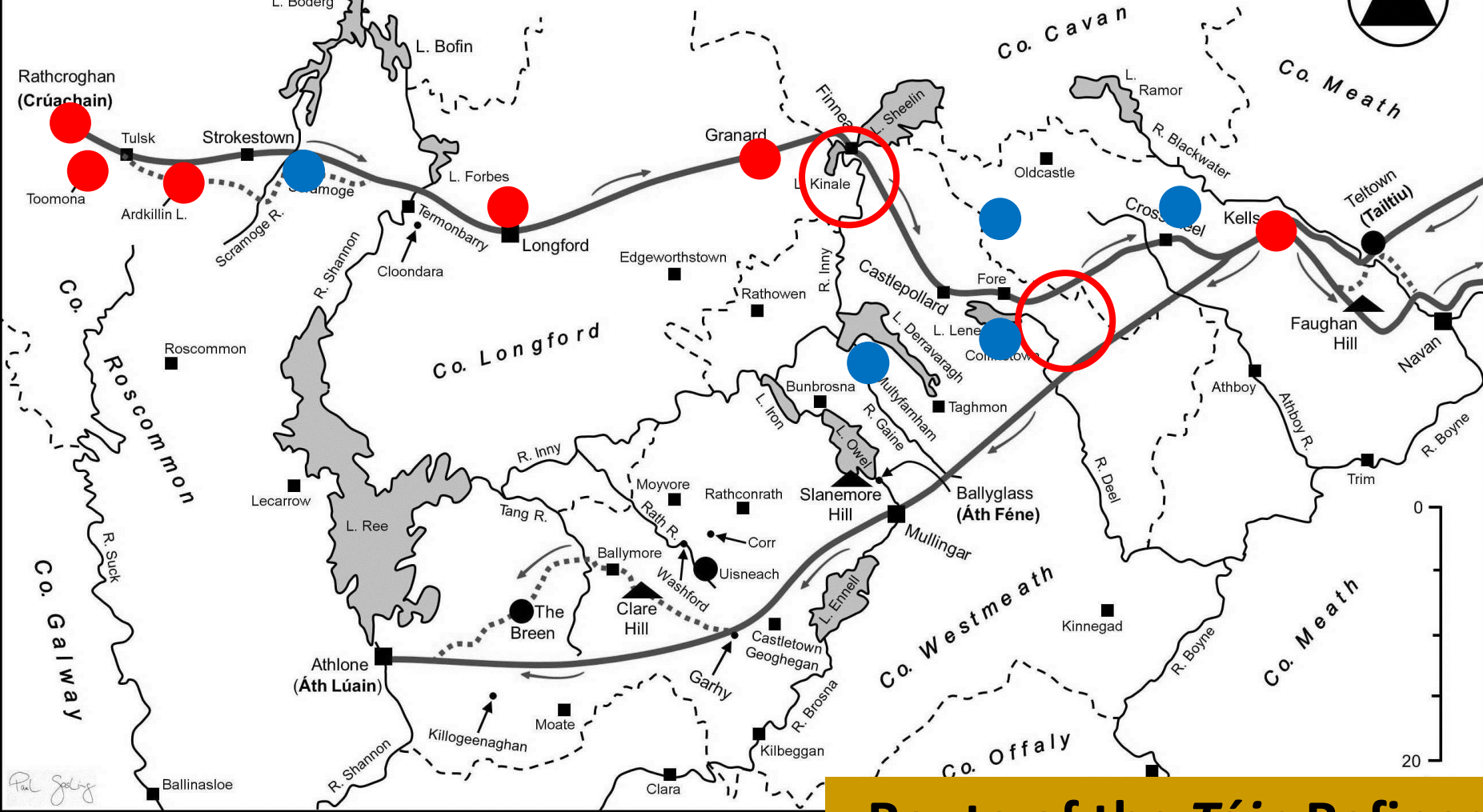
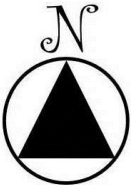
Route of the Táin Bó Cúailnge

Other pieces of 'Route-lore'

- Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath
 - 'Boher na tauna' is mentioned by de Vismes Kane in 1917
- Collinstown, Co. Westmeath
 - 'Bohernatawnagh' is made on 1st ed. Of OS six-inch maps
- Rathmea, Co. Meath is mentioned as place Medb camped
 - 'Queen Medb camped for the night' is a local tradition
- Castle Kieran, Co. Meath
 - 'Medb stopped for the night' is a local tradition



The Route of TBC in the Midlands



Route of the *Táin* Refined

Paul Gilling

Route of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*

Fergus Mac Roich leads Medb's Army astray

' Then after the army has been led astray across bogs and streams, they went and spent the night in Granard in northern Tethba. For the sake of kinship Fergus sent a warning to the Ulstermen who were still suffering from their debility, all except Cú Chulainn and his father Súaltaim. ...

... Then Fergus was given the task of leading the army along the path. He went far astray to the south to give the Ulstermen time to complete the mustering of their army. This he did out of affection for his own kin.

Ailill and Medb noticed this, and Medb said:

“ O Fergus, this is strange. What manner of path do we travel? We go astray to south and to north, past every strange district”

ULSTER

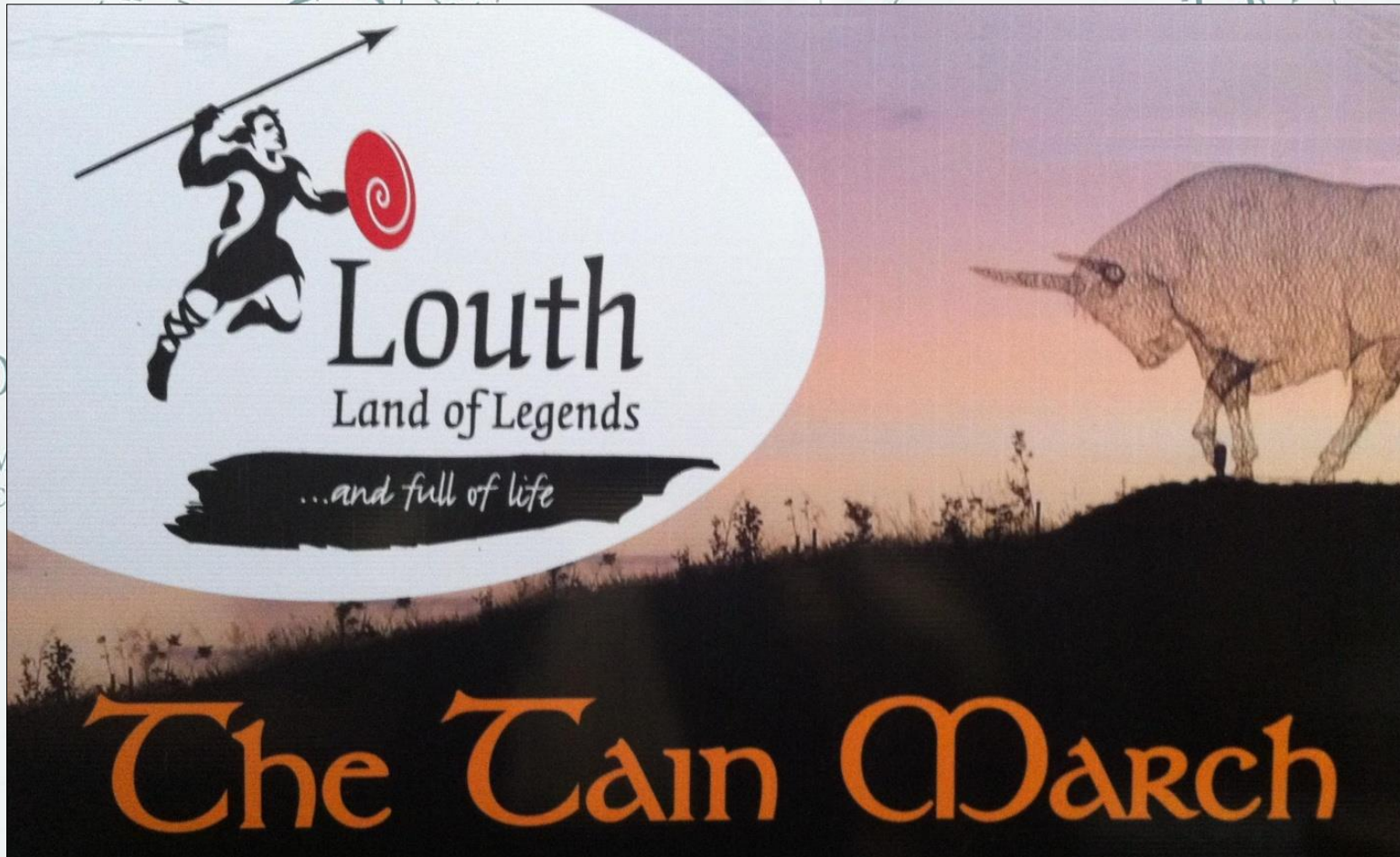
Emain Macha

CUIB

Sliab Cuilinn

Orláim

The Route of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*



Extract from 'The Tain March' publicity poster, June 2011



The Tain March:
a community initiative



‘Buíon’ of troops from the 27th Infantry Battalion, Irish Army, Aiken Barracks, Dundalk on *The Táin March, 2014*

Route of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* Redux

The Táin March 2015

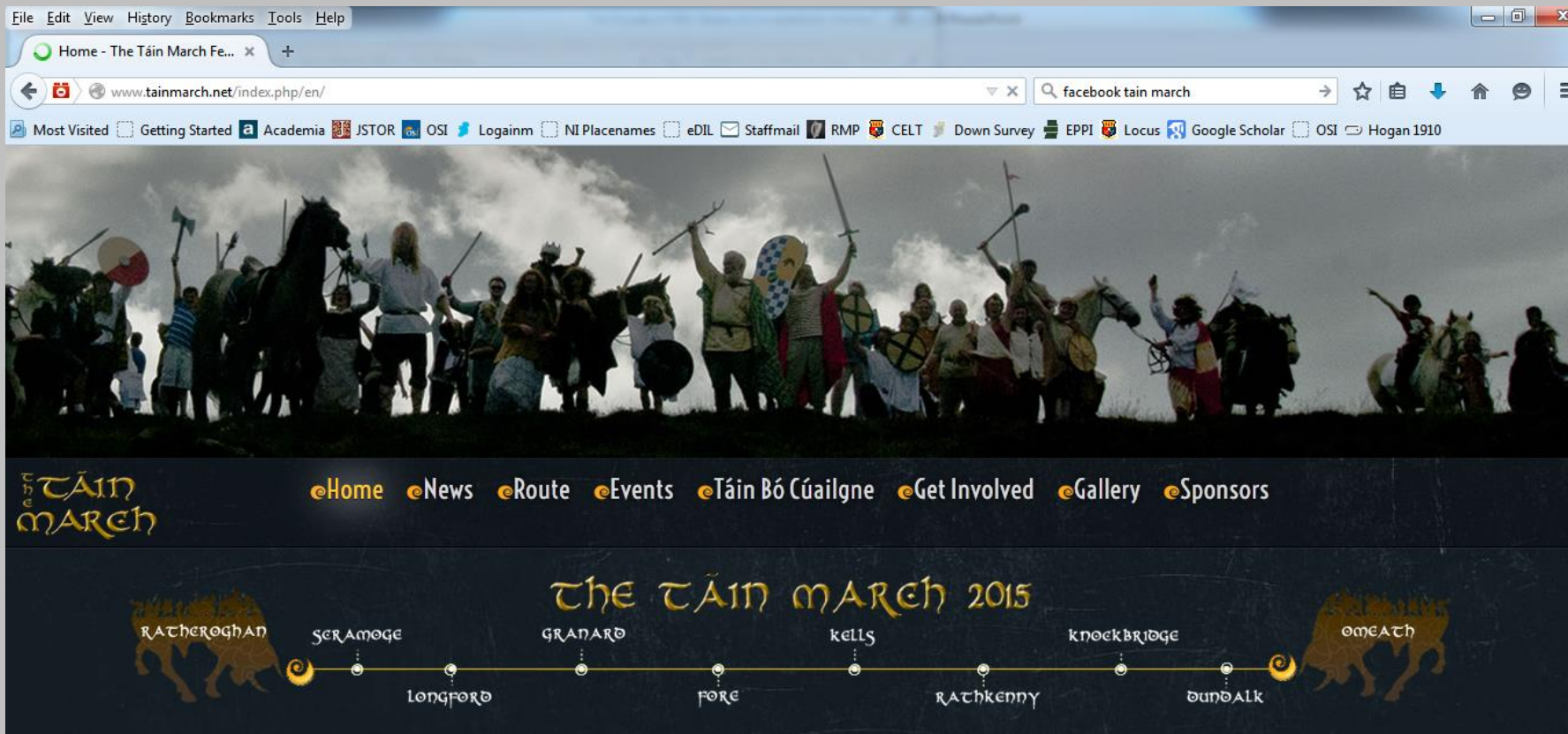
Outline of the Walking Route from Tulsk, Co. Roscommon to Omeath, Co. Louth

Route Calculations:

- a) Distances and times calculated from Google Maps.
- b) Please note that all distances are in kilometres.
- c) Names in capitals indicate the start and finish points each day.
- d) The route from Tulsk, Co. Roscommon (Crúachain) to Oristown, Co. Meath (Taitiu) mirrors the outward journey of Queen Medb's forces in pursuit of the Brown Bull. The route from Oristown (Taitiu) to Omeath, Co. Louth (Cúailnge) mirrors the homeward journey with the captured bull in tow, *i.e.* Queen Medb's forces were moving in the opposite direction, from Omeath to Oristown.
- e) *The Táin March Committee* need to sign off on the 9-day structure before the details of each day's walking are worked out.
- f) It would be important that contact be established with community and business organisations in Tulsk, Scramoge, Longord, Granard, Fore, Kells, Rathkenny, Knockbridge, Dundalk, Ballymakellett and Omeath to ensure that we have their co-operation and support.
- e) Details of each day's route will be fleshed out in the next stage of planning.

Scoping document for the 2015 March!





NEW WEBSITE: www.tainmarch.ie

FACEBOOK PAGE: [Tain March](#)

PHONE: [Tom Laramie 087-2170131](tel:087-2170131)

DATES: [Sat. 28th May - Mon. 6th June](#)

The ORIGINAL *Táin Bó Cúailnge* !

The Brown Bull of Cooley Returns to Tulske

In August 1982 the people of Tulske collected thousands of pounds for their new G.A.A. Park, and hit the headlines at the same time. Radio and T.V. gave wide coverage to their novel means of fund raising. They brought a replica of The Brown Bull back from Cooley to Tulske, where he now rests, awaiting his hours of glory once again during Tulske Festival 1983 (D.V.)

Route of the Táin Bó Cúailnge

Useful Sources

Gene Haley

'Places in the Tain: the topography of the Tain Bo Cuailnge mapped and globally positioned'

-<http://genehaleytbc.wordpress.com>

Edmund Hogan

Onomasticon Goedelicum: ... an index with identifications to the Gaelic names of places and tribes

- Hoggis Figgis, Dublin 1910

- Locus website in UCC

ULSTER

Emain Macha

CUIB

Sliab Cuilinn

Orláim

Dublin