



Archives of Belturbet Corporation

Archives service

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The extant archives of Belturbet Corporation date from the mid-seventeenth century to the nineteenth century.

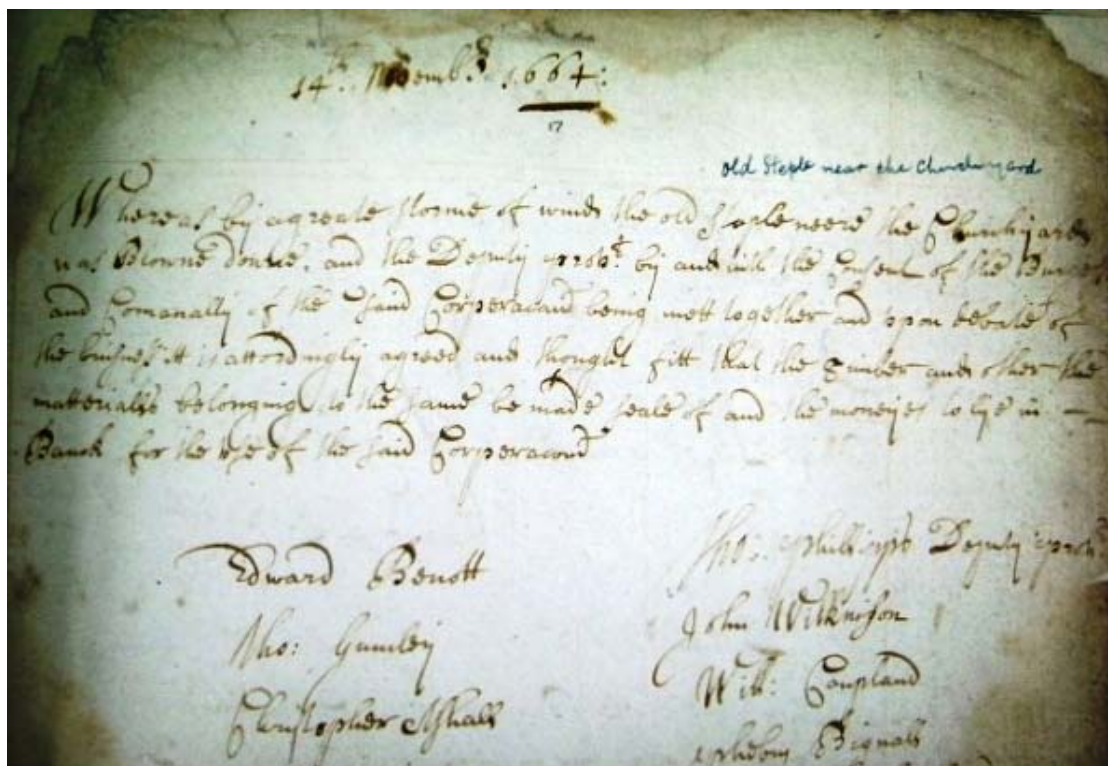
Documents with codes BC/1-2 and BC/5 were deposited at the Public Record of Ireland by Father Owen Francis Traynor, parish priest, Dromahair, County Leitrim, in September 1954. Documents with codes BC/3-4 were deposited there by Father Traynor in October 1956. He had acquired them from Edward O'Reilly, a former Belturbet Town Clerk, who had saved the records from near destruction during a 1940s wastepaper drive. The Public Record Office of Ireland was amalgamated with the State Paper Office to form the National Archives in 1988. The National Archives returned the archives of Belturbet Corporation to County Cavan in early 2006.

Local government has a long history in Belturbet. In 1610, certain conditions were proposed by the lords of the council in England to Sir Stephen Butler, Belturbet, for establishing a market and erecting a corporation. In 1613, Belturbet received its first charter, whereby the King James I, on petition of the inhabitants, and for the purpose of furthering the plantation of Ulster, incorporated the village and its precincts into a borough. The 1613 charter empowered the inhabitants to elect two representatives to the Irish parliament and to hold a court of record every Tuesday, before the provost. By an indenture in 1618 Sir Stephen Butler, in fulfilment of the conditions of the lords of the council, granted and confirmed to the corporation certain parcels of land amounting altogether to 284 acres, also a weekly market and two annual fairs, and a weekly court of record, the whole to be held in fee forever, at the rent of 30 shillings per annum.

Most of the documents comprise minute or entry books of the Corporation and contain a wide variety of information including: lists of names of persons permitted to graze their animals on the town common; records of persons admitted as freemen of the Corporation; records of election of provosts and burgesses; and copies of legal deeds including leases and apprenticeship agreements. Orders passed at meetings form an important part of the records. These often refer to schemes for the improvement of the Corporation including the levying of taxes on inhabitants for the building of roads and rules relating to cleanliness and sanitation. Another topic which arises fairly frequently is regulation of the behaviour of burgesses and freemen. Disenfranchisement was used as punishment, the offence often being the use of abusive language towards town officials or other persons. The document coded BC/4 is a record of court proceedings and names parties involved in legal cases and gives the dates of court sittings and other information. However, these records also include references to other town business and the court book contains similar information to the minute or entry books described above. The same applies to the document coded BC/5 which mostly contains records of the election of

provosts and burgesses. Given this, researchers interested in researching the proceedings of meetings should consult all records in the collection.

Some of the earlier records were written in Secretary hand, as below, and consequently, the untrained eye may find them difficult to interpret.



Secretary hand: Main text of passage begins, 'Whereas by a great storme of wind the old steple near the Churchyard was blowne downe...'

As the archives were held by the National Archives until early 2006, they were marked with National Archives document codes. These have been retained on the archives and in the database detailing the records to accommodate researchers

Collection code	Document code	Date	Description	Size	National Archives code
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who may have consulted them in the National Archives. Researchers citing the archives in publications should use Cavan County Archives Service's document codes, all of which begin 'BC/.'

In the database which details the archives some quotations from the documents are given and are enclosed in quotation marks. The text inside same uses the spelling and punctuation used in the original records.

All of the archives are available on microfilm and public access will usually be via this medium. Given the age and fragility of the original records, access to them will only be given in exceptional circumstances. Researchers who wish to consult the original records rather than microfilm should discuss this with the Archivist at the time of making an appointment to visit the Reading Room.

BC/	1	4 December 1657-c. 1730s	<p>Belturbet Corporation minute book or entry book. Includes varied orders made at meetings; copies of legal deeds including leases and apprenticeship agreements; lists of names of tradesmen permitted to practise their trades in the town; records of persons admitted as freemen of the town; records of income mostly as quarterage, freedom and admittance fees; lists of names of persons permitted to graze their animals on the town common. Entries frequently name the provost, burgesses and freemen of the town.</p> <p>The contents of the volume are varied as multifarious subjects arise particularly in the context of orders made at meetings of the Corporation. Includes Act (4 December 1657) which details rules relating to use of the town common and cutting of turf on town lands; entries (25 March 1661) which recount that persons were presented to the jury at the Clerk of the Market's Court on charges of having a dunghill in the street, digging pits and holes in the street and encroaching upon town lands by building a porch in the street. Punishments also recorded; entry (12 August 1662) which recounts that John Craffton, freeman, because he called the freemen and jury of the town 'stinking jackausses,' and names in opprobrious language, has been committed to the Marshal of the Corporation until further orders have been made; entry (14</p>	c. 450pp	M 3572
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			<p>November 1664) which records that a 'greate storme of wind' blew down the old steeple near the churchyard and that the deputy provost with the consent of the burgesses has decided that the timber and other materials be sold and the monies deposited in the bank for the use of the Corporation; entry (9 June 1668) relating to the provision of land for the establishment of a horse fair around the town common; record (26 August 1669) that the provost, burgesses and freemen of the town met in the town house of the Corporation and removed Thomas Atkins as a burgess and freeman as he is, 'a man of ill name fame and conversation and [is] not fitting to beare any office' within the Corporation of Belturbet; order (25 March 1707) that every inhabitant of the Corporation who owns a house is to send a man with horse and car to draw stones to the pavement [for improvement works]; record (4 May 1708) of the appointment of William Logan, Robert Stanford and John [M...] as overseers of the highways for the coming year. Cost of same to be paid out of town stock; noted (13 January 1709) that at a general meeting of the provost, burgesses and commonalty it was ordered that, 'John Farrelly shall be publically whipt through the towe of Belturbtt. for that he the sd. John Farrelly was apprehended at two of the clock in the Morning on fryday the 6th Jny. fighting a Reeve in the street of Belturbtt. Where a Tubb of Butter had been hid was steeled from Mr Luke Stanford</p>		
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			<p>for other crimes vizt for attempting to brakeing the Goal'; articles relating to a horse race held in Belturbet and run around the town common (c. 1731). Rules include that, 'No horse mare or gelding that shall run for the Plate on the Curragh of Kildare shall run for this race'; noted (5 June 1733) that it was ordered in open court by the provost, burgesses and freemen that a convenient part of the town green be added to the place called the Strea[] and be given to build a house for poor widows. This order passed pursuant to the will of Mrs Mary Manswell, late of Dublin, deceased.</p>		
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BC/	2	3 October 1660- 24 June 1664	<p>Fragment of Belturbet Corporation minute book. Includes entry (3 October 1660) which states that it is ordained by the provost, burgesses and commonalty that papists must remove themselves from the Corporation by a date in December on pain of a fine of 20 shillings for each defaulter. Document is damaged and not all of the text is discernible; order (3 October 1660) that John Broffit be disenfranchised as a freeman for encouraging soldiers to mutiny during the reading of the king's [greeting] and for uttering dangerous words; list of persons admitted to the Corporation to practise their trades including a carpenter and butcher; entry (4 December 1660) which states that Quakers [or members of the Society of Friends] have been trying to take people away from, 'the true worshipping of god and allegiance to his Majesty.' The Quakers have been committed to the Marshal. Ordered that if any Quakers, [bailiffs] or papists attempt to hold unlawful meetings, they will be punished according to the law.</p>	8pp	M 3571
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BC/	3	23 December 1737-10 May 1834	<p>Volume containing records of Belturbet Corporation. Includes accounts (23 December 1737-8 March 1821) of charitable bequest of £100 made to the poor of the Corporation of Belturbet. Spelling of name of donor of bequest varies over time. It is originally Reverend Robert Robesson, rector of the parish of Belturbet, and later becomes Robertson and Robisson. Entries include names of persons to whom donations were made. Some accounts more specifically state that donations were made to indigent persons and orphans from Robesson's bequest. Sums of money were distributed annually; also present are accounts (26 December 1751-[19 September 1819]) of bequest of £50 made by Thomas Johnson or Johnston, Belturbet, deceased, to indigent freemen of the town. Accounts include lists of names of persons who received charitable donations. Sums of money were distributed annually; lists (1 May 1742-10 May 1834) of names of persons to whom tickets were given permitting them to graze their animals on the town common. Gaps are evident in the records; letters of resignation tendered by burgesses of Belturbet Corporation. Includes letter of resignation (20 May 1780) from Ralph Smith, [...ield] Town, county Westmeath, burgess of Belturbet Corporation. Resigns as he is now resident in Great Britain and, consequently, no longer in a position to attend meetings.</p>	c. 110pp	M 3607
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BC/	4	3 February 1740-17 February 1888	<p>Court book of Belturbet Corporation. Records split physically into four volumes by conservator who carried out remedial works during the 1990s. Mostly contains records of court cases including date, names of parties and brief observations, for example, relating as to who is to pay costs, might note that action is withdrawn or carried over to the next sitting of the court. Also present is leather binding that formerly covered part of the records. However, scattered throughout the four volumes are records relating to other business of the Corporation or records of orders passed during court sittings. Includes references throughout to the leasing of Corporation lands to named persons; order (c. October 1742, book 1) that land belonging to the Corporation be rented for five years and the amount raised used to pay for the building of a new session and market house for the Corporation; record (4 October 1743, book 1) that John Bradock and Joseph Reynolds are appointed constables for the ensuing year; record (c. end June-beginning July 1747, book 1) that the sum of 2 shillings be levied on each homestead and burgesses to be applied for the making of highways in the Corporation; entry ([8] May 1750, book 1) that Henery Hardman, freeman, 'did on the 28th Day of April last in the open street insult and abuse Tho. Ellis Esq. Provost.' Hardman was disenfranchised for the offence; record that it was ordered (19 September 1752, book 1) that no dung is to be laid out on the</p>	5 items	M 3573
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			<p>main road or channels in the streets of the Corporation as heretofore, 'But that the same or any sweepings from their doors shall be left between said road & their doors & and the same to be taken away within three days after there left on penalty of one shilling a day'; noted that it is ordered (19 January 1753, book 1) that no one shall thresh or winnow corn or other grain in the market house or street. Penalty of 10 shillings for so doing on the goods and chattels of offenders; later noted that it is ordered (5 November 1763) that any person who in the future has corn threshed or winnowed in the market house shall deposit one shilling sterling in the hands of the foremen of the jury to be forfeited unless they clean away the chaff, straw and other dirt occasioned by same within 24 hours; record (9 October 1753, book 1) of the appointment of town officials. Includes appointment of Thomas Brereton as Marshal; John Dixon and Isaiah Caddam, Junior, as Serjeants Of the Club for this Borough; John Stanford and Jacob Moore appointed to serve as Constables; noted that it is ordered (18 August 1761, book 1) that the sum of £1.1.4 be levied on the inhabitants of the borough for repair of the market cross and stair piers to be paid to the overseers of the work; order (29 April 1766, book 1) that timber will be bought and given to the present town herd, Thomas Nicholson, to build a house on the town common; noted (14 October 1766, book 1) that John Jermyn,</p>		
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			<p>Humphrys Withers and Henry Limox are appointed as 'apprisors' for the Corporation; order (12 October 1771, book 2) which states that the town's inhabitants are to have the pavements opposite their houses to the channel sufficiently paved and repaired within three calendar months on pain of penalty of 40 shillings to be levied by distress and sale of goods of defaulters; record (8 August 1775, book 2) that John Reynolds proposes to roof the town house and steeple 'upon the former plan' for £19 and to maintain same for 5 shillings per annum over 20 years; order (6 May 1777, book 2) that all persons selling turf in the Corporation must do so in loads of Barrack boxes; list (5 June 1812, book 2) of names of persons sworn in as market jury for ensuing year; list (c. 1788, book 3) of names of persons who are permitted to graze their animals on the town common during the ensuing year; several entries in book 4 are records of trade at the town market. Includes reference (24 February 1762, book 4) to sale by James McBride, Keeny, parish of Anna, county Cavan, to Henry Mallen, Beagh, parish of Killenkear, county Cavan, of 'one black mare three years old - with a white reach & two white feet behind for £2.13.0'; texts of oaths (no date, book 4) sworn by town officials upon taking office, being the Constable, foreman or clerk of the market jury, and the Marshal or serjeant of the club; bills (1 January 1888, 17 February 1888, book 4) for items bought of Walter</p>	
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			Gillick, baker, grocer and provision merchant, Diamond, Belturbet.		
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BC/	5	24 June 1778- 24 June 1840	Volume which mostly contains records of elections held to select provosts and burgesses. Also includes entry (5 May 1812) relating to a proposal by Erasmus Smith schools to build a school within Belturbet Corporation for the gratis education of the poor. They plan to spend £300 on the construction of a school on condition that they are granted one acre as a site and to provide a garden for the master. Ordered that one acre adjoining the rector's glebe be granted for same; copies of legal deeds including leases also extant in the volume.	88pp	M 3606
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BC/	6	n/a	Microfilms of BC/1-5.	2 items	n/a
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