

Derrynafulla (Doire na Fola) Oakwood of The Blood  
Coomerkane (com Arcáin) Cirque Of The Little Pig

Beara-Breifne Way  
Slí Bhéara-Breifne



After the loss of Dunboy Castle to the English in June 1602, Donal Cam O'Sullivan, chieftain of Beara, continued to resist the subjugation of his territory. With an army of about one thousand soldiers (many of them *buannachta*, or Connaught mercenaries) he waged a guerrilla campaign against Elizabethan forces.

His men relied entirely for meat, butter and milk on the O'Sullivan *creacht*, or herd, hidden that winter among the woods and valleys of Derrynafulla and Coomerkane. The herd comprised at least two thousand cattle, four thousand sheep and a hundred *gearráin*, or mountain ponies. The Irish did not make hay and the animals depended on winter grazing.

Sir Charles Wilmot had been appointed Governor of Beara. With an army of five thousand men he was to suppress the peninsula and rid it of rebellion. In a strategic attack Wilmot seized the Irish *creacht* in late December, stripping the O'Sullivan camp of a crucial resource. Threatened with starvation, O'Sullivan was forced to abandon Beara, fleeing northwards out of Munster with one thousand followers on December 31st, 1602.

The sick and wounded were left behind in the woods of Derrynafulla. They are reputed to have stoked the campfires for four days, convincing the enemy that O'Sullivan was still in occupation. According to *Pacata Hibernia*, an English account of the campaign, these unfortunates were promptly put to death by Wilmot's soldiers.

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