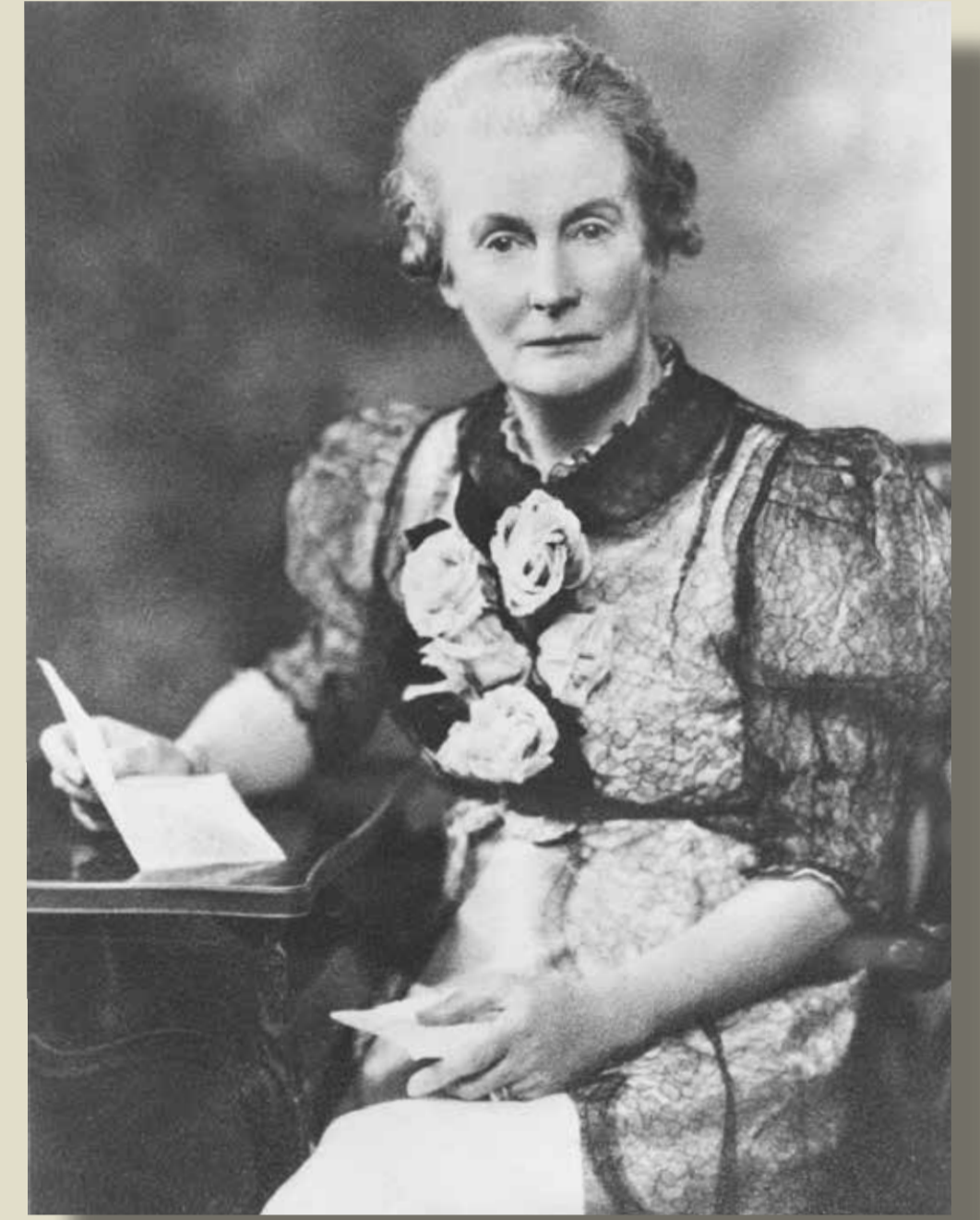


THE ROMANTIC LANDSCAPE

"We laid it on the grey rocks to wither in the sun; An' what should call my lad then to sail from Cushendun: Wi 'a low moon, a full tide a swell upon the deep, Him to sail the old boat – me to fall asleep" *Sea Wrack* by Moira O'Neill, the pseudonym of Agnes Shakespeare Higginson (1864-1955). From her residence at Rockport Lodge, "a house upon the sea sand a white house 'an low'" she could look across the bay to Cushendun that influenced so much of her poetry in "Songs of the Glens of Antrim".

By the end of the 19th century, the wish to escape industrial cities generated interest in the perceived wilderness of the landscape. Dinah Mulock (the author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*) was an early 'explorer' recording her impressions of Cushendun in her travelogue, *An Unknown Country* written in 1887: "Cushendun - the twin village of Cushendall is, if less pretty, decidedly the fresher of the two being more on the open sea."



Moira O'Neill
Courtesy Glenbow Archives NA-1221-1



BELUM.U577 *Grey Day, Cushendun*
James Humbert Craig, 1877-1944
©National Museums NI Collection Ulster Museum



Courtesy of R. McDonnell

The Larne to Stranraer Steamboat Company founded in 1871 brought many visitors to Larne where Henry McNeill ran a thriving hotel business, package tours and day trips. His jaunting cars and charabancs introduced thousands of tourists to the glories of the Glens of Antrim and Causeway Coast. Parkmore Railway Station, which opened in 1889, was the point of arrival from where visitors would be transported onwards to Cushendun.



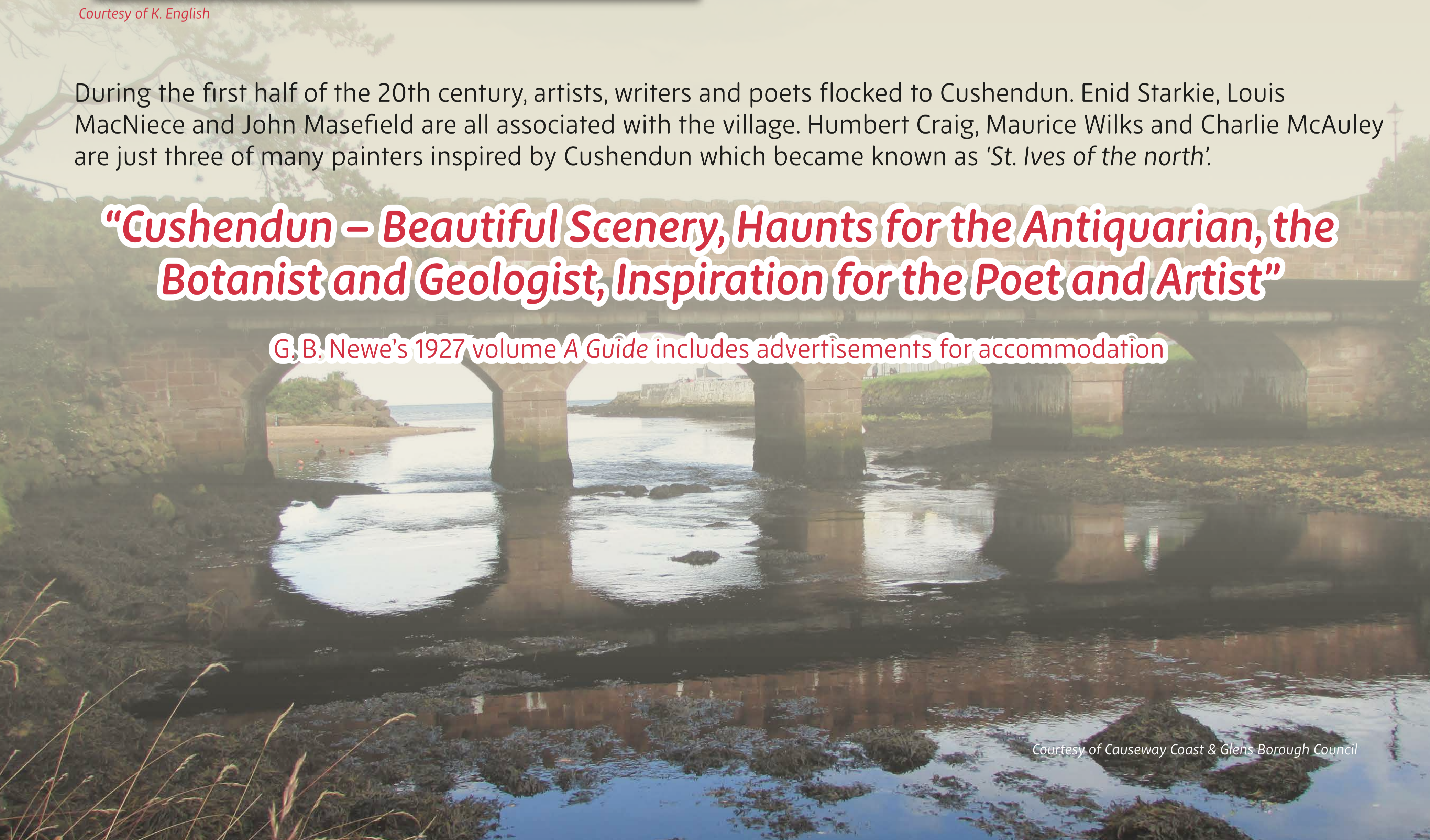
Courtesy of K. English

Those drawn to Cushendun with an interest in archaeology and natural history included members of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club. Francis Joseph Bigger was one such member. A prominent Antiquarian, he is responsible for raising Shane's Cairn above Cushendun in 1908 as a memorial to the reputed burying place of Shane O'Neill, murdered by the McDonnells in 1567.

During the first half of the 20th century, artists, writers and poets flocked to Cushendun. Enid Starkie, Louis MacNiece and John Masefield are all associated with the village. Humbert Craig, Maurice Wilks and Charlie McAuley are just three of many painters inspired by Cushendun which became known as 'St. Ives of the north'.

"Cushendun – Beautiful Scenery, Haunts for the Antiquarian, the Botanist and Geologist, Inspiration for the Poet and Artist"

G.B. Newe's 1927 volume *A Guide* includes advertisements for accommodation



Courtesy of Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council