

AMAZING GRACE COUNTRY

By Suzanne O'Hara

Written to mark Elizabeth Bonker's visit to Buncrana 2024 on the Communication 4 ALL Irish Tour.

Ireland's beautiful Lough Swilly in County Donegal, along the Wild Atlantic Way, was the setting for a dramatic story which changed the life of John Newton, a foul-mouthed slave trader who went on to pen one of the most famous and well-loved songs of all time - "*Amazing Grace*".



Pictured is the "Welcome to AMAZING GRACE COUNTRY" sign. This is the first view of LOUGH SWILLY on the road to Buncrana, County Donegal in the NORTHWEST of Ireland. John Newton the author of the famous hymn Amazing Grace, had a significant life-changing experience near Buncrana, which influenced the creation of the hymn. John Newton PARTICIPATED in the TRANSATLANTIC slave trade. In 1748, he experienced a severe storm off the coast of Ireland while on a ship called THE GREYHOUND. Fearing for his life, Newton prayed for God's mercy. The ship EVENTUALLY reached safety in Lough Swilly, near Buncrana.

SPELL: TRANSATLANTIC **SPELL:** SIGNIFICANT **SPELL:** EVENTUALLY

Where did the ship, caught in the storm reach safety?
BUNCRANA, COUNTY DONEGAL NORTHWEST OF IRELAND

What was the name of the lough?
LOUGH SWILLY

What was the ship called? THE GREYHOUND

What was the purpose of the ship?
TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

What year did The Greyhound reach safety in Bunrana after an Atlantic storm? 1748

How many years ago did John Newton land in Bunrana? 2024-1748= 276years ago

Name a sight that you might observe on the road to Bunrana travelling through County Donegal? BARNSMORE GAP , SURF BOARDS ON ROOFRACKS IN BUNDORAN, THE HILLS OF DONEGAL, BALLYBOFEY & STRANORLAR TWIN TOWNS THAT STRADDLE THE RIVER FINN.

Name another town in County Donegal that begins with B?
BUNDORAN, BALLYSHANNON, BALLYBOFEY

The road trip through Yeats Country (County Sligo) and on to County Donegal is a rural meandering road with glimpses of the coastline along the route, what are your thoughts about the journey through the county Donegal?

Geography



(Image shows Map of The Inishowen Penninsula)

Inishowen (Irish: INIS EOGHAIN, meaning "island of Eoghan") is a PENINSULA in north County Donegal. It is the largest peninsula in all the island of Ireland. The Inishowen peninsula includes Ireland's most northerly point, MALIN HEAD. It is now a well-established tourist route along the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW). The CIRCUIT of Inishowen is 100miles long and easy to follow the "Inishowen 100" signage. A ferry runs from Bunrana to Rath Mullan across Lough Swilly in the summer months when the CHANNEL is calm, and waters are not choppy.

SPELL: INISHOWEN **SPELL:** PENINSULA **SPELL:** CIRCUIT

What does WAW stand for? **WILD ATLANTIC WAY**

How can you cross Lough Swilly in the Summer months? **THE BUNCRANA TO RATHMULLAN FERRY**

Name the most northerly point of the island of Ireland? **MALIN HEAD**

How many miles would you cover if you drove the circuit of Inishowen? 100miles

Can you describe a peninsula? A PENINSULA IS A PIECE OF LAND THAT IS ALMOST ENTIRELY SURROUNDED BY WATER BUT IS CONNECTED TO THE MAINLAND ON ONE SIDE. AN OUTCROP OF LAND THAT EXTENDS FROM THE MAINLAND.

Name another European country that touches the Atlantic Ocean? Scotland/Northern Ireland/England (UK), France, Spain, Portugal. Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Norway.

How did you feel when you first saw the view of Lough Swilly on the Inishowen circuit? _____

Transformation and 'Amazing Grace'

The experience near Bunrana was a turning point for Newton. He REFLECTED on his life and started his JOURNEY toward faith. Years later, he wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace," expressing his GRATITUDE for divine grace and REDEMPTION. The Christian hymn was published in 1779, written in 1772 by Newton who by then was an Anglican CLERGYMAN and poet. It is an IMMENSELY popular hymn and is used for both religious and secular purposes. He lived from 1725 to 1807. One of his final quotes was "Although my memory's fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Saviour."

A sample of the hymn's lyrics are as follows:

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch; like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

SPELL: JOURNEY **SPELL:** IMMENSELY **SPELL:** CLERGYMAN

What is the name of the famous hymn mentioned in this text?
AMAZING GRACE

Who was the author of the hymn?
JOHN NEWTON

What two things did he remember before he died? I AM A
GREAT SINNER AND CHRIST IS A GREAT SAVIOUR

What is the theme of the hymn? GRATITUDE FOR DIVINE
GRACE AND REDEMPTION

What is a synonym for immensely popular? EXTREMELY, VERY,
HUGELY, TREMENDOUSLY, EXCEEDINGLY

What is a synonym for clergyman?
PRIEST/RABBI/CLERIC/CHAPLAIN/THEOLOGIAN/PREACHER/IM
AM/PASTOR.

How old was Newton when he died? $1807-1725 = 82$

What is your favourite line or lyric from the hymn and how did it make you feel? _____

Abolition of the Slave Trade



Newton went on to be a SPIRITUAL mentor for the PROMINENT abolitionist William Wilberforce in his long battle to abolish the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. In 1787 Newton helped WILBERFORCE found the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, more commonly called the Anti-Slavery movement. In 1788, Newton published a PAMPHLET (leaflet/information booklet) called 'Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade'. He began with an apology for his part in the trade and then described what he had WITNESSED during his time as a slave trader DECADES before. Britain finally abolished the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1807 the year of Newton's death.

SPELL: ABOLITIONIST **SPELL:** PROMINENT **SPELL:** WITNESSED

What is a pamphlet? AN INFORMATION BOOKLET/A LITTLE BOOKLET WITH A SOFT COVER

What was the title of the pamphlet? THOUGHTS UPON THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE

Who was the prominent abolitionist Newton mentored? WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

How many years in a decade? 10

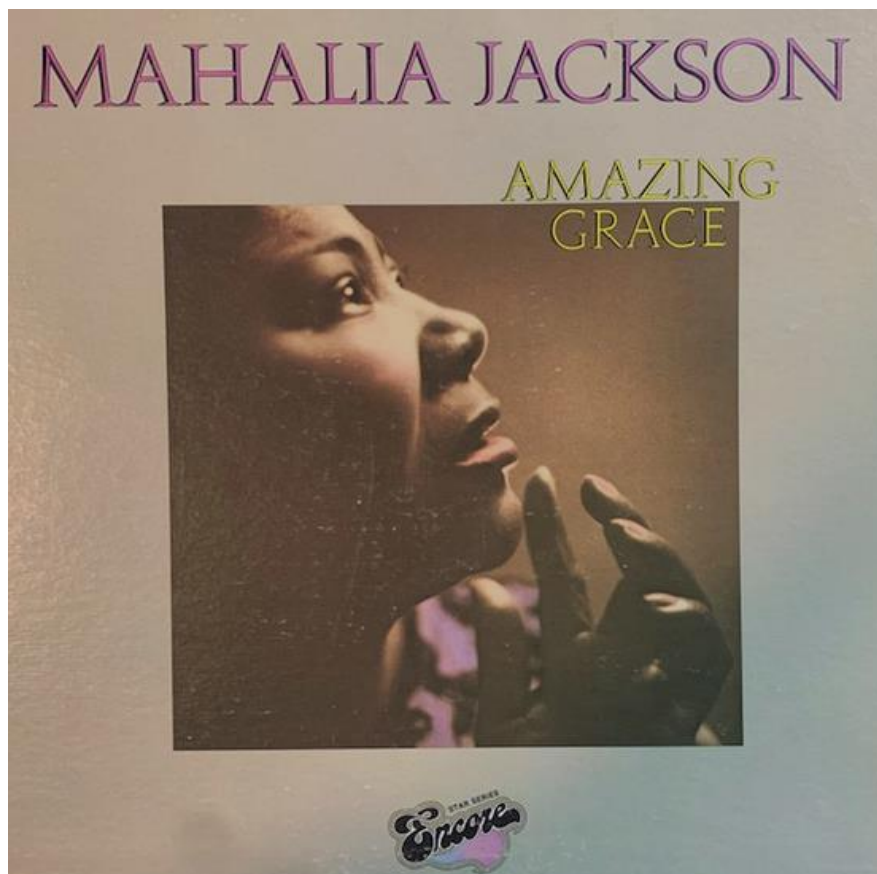
How many years elapsed between Newton's storm experience to when he published his pamphlet? $1788-1748 = 40$ YEARS/IT TOOK FOUR DECADES

What is a mentor? ADVISOR, GUIDE, COUNSELLOR, CONSULTANT, CONFIDANTE

What is a synonym for prominent? FAMOUS, RENOWNED, NOTED, DISTINGUISHED, NOTORIOUS, VISIBLE.

Who would you say is your advisor or mentor? _____

Urban Revival of the Hymn Amazing Grace



Amazing Grace was known to be Elvis' favourite hymn. Elvis was heavily influenced by gospel music. The hymn had a REVIVAL

in the late 40's when MAHALIA JACKSON'S 1947 version received SIGNIFICANT radio airplay, and as her popularity grew throughout the 1950s and 1960s, she often sang it at public events such as concerts at CARNEGIE HALL. ARETHA FRANKLIN earned a GRAMMY in 1973 for Best Soul Gospel performance for her album 'Amazing Grace'. It remains one of the best-selling Gospel albums of all time. Amazing Grace is truly a timeless classic.

SPELL: REVIVAL **SPELL: SIGNIFICANT** **SPELL: FAVOURITE**

Who was heavily influenced by Gospel music? ELVIS PRESLEY

What female artist released Amazing Grace in 1947 ?

MAHALIA JACKSON

What famous concert hall did she play in? CARNEGIE HALL

What city is Carnegie Hall located in? NEW YORK

CITY/MANHATTAN

What female artist won a Grammy for Amazing Grace in 1973 ?

ARETHA FRANKLIN

What does grammy stand for? GRAMOPHONE

In what country are the Grammy Awards held? AMERICA/USA

How do you listen to music? RADIO, YOUTUBE, SPOTIFY...

What is your favourite grammy winning artist or genre?

Buncrana's Commemoration

Buncrana honors John Newton's experience with "Amazing Grace Park" and the INSPIRATIONAL "Amazing Grace Viewing Point." The park features a large anchor SCULPTURE and PLAQUES detailing Newton's story.



The viewing platform story of transformation is symbolised by the transformation of an ugly concrete platform into a beautiful place designed to blend in and ENHANCE the stunning natural beauty of the lough. The MOSAIC design incorporates a representation of The Greyhound Ship, the words 'Amazing Grace' copied for Newtons' own handwriting and broken chains to symbolise the end of Trans-Atlantic Slave trade.

SPELL: INSPIRATIONAL **SPELL:** SCULPTURE **SPELL:** COMMEMORATION

What did the town of Buncrana do to mark Newton's experience? PARK AND VIEWING POINT

What can be found in the "Amazing Grace Park"? A LARGE ANCHOR SCULPTURE AND PLAQUES DETAILING NEWTON'S STORY

What was the viewing point like before its own transformation? AN UGLY CONCRETE PLATFORM

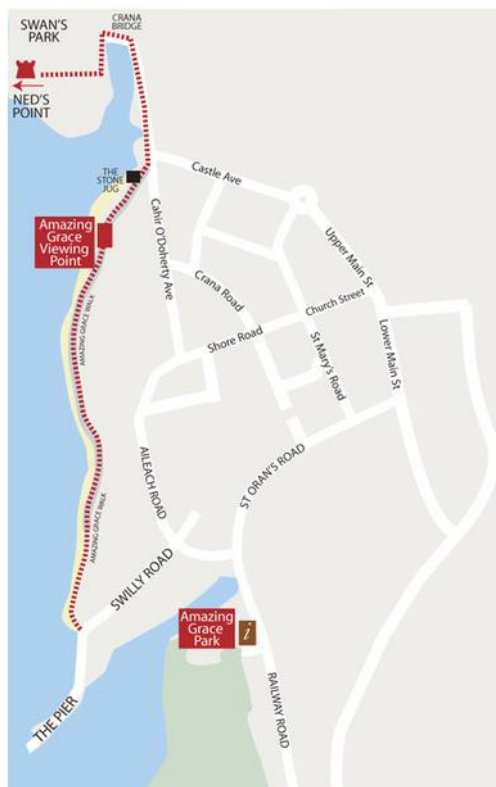
What is another word for enhance? IMPROVE, INCREASE, MAGNIFY, AMPLIFY, BUILD UP, INFLATE, UPGRADE...

What is a mosaic? A PICTURE MADE UP OF SMALL PARTS OF TINY TILES USUALLY INLAYED INTO FLOORS OR WALLS.

What do the acts of sitting in a park or looking at a sea view bring to your mind? PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY

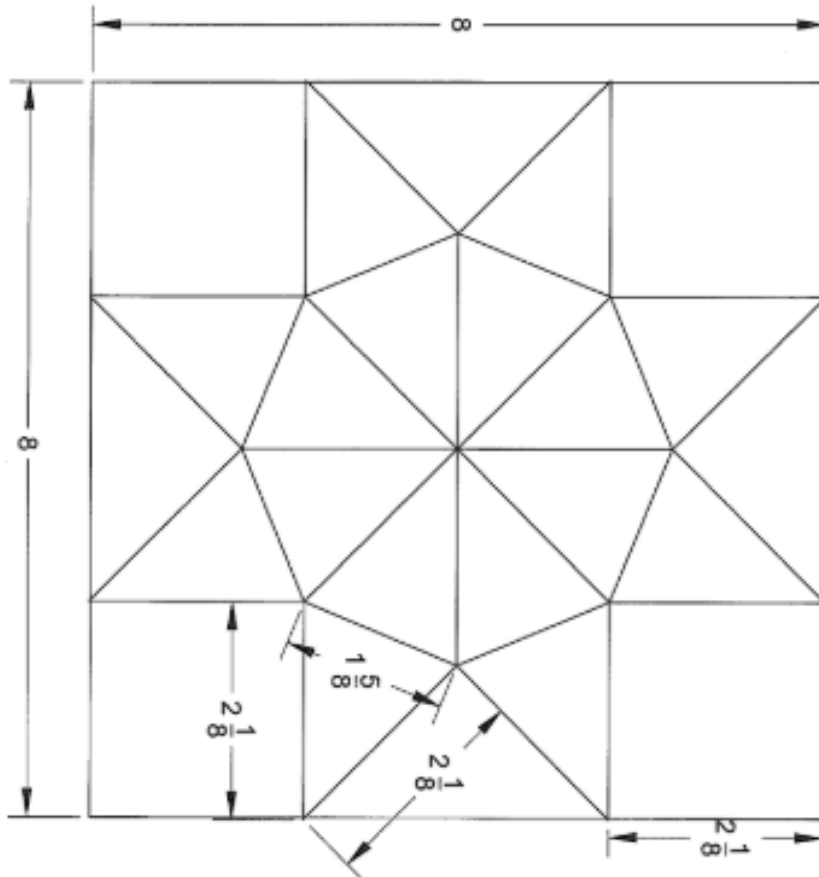
What would you do to bring about the feelings of peace and tranquillity? _____

Welcome to Amazing Grace Country: Buncrana, County Donegal



VAKT Exercises:

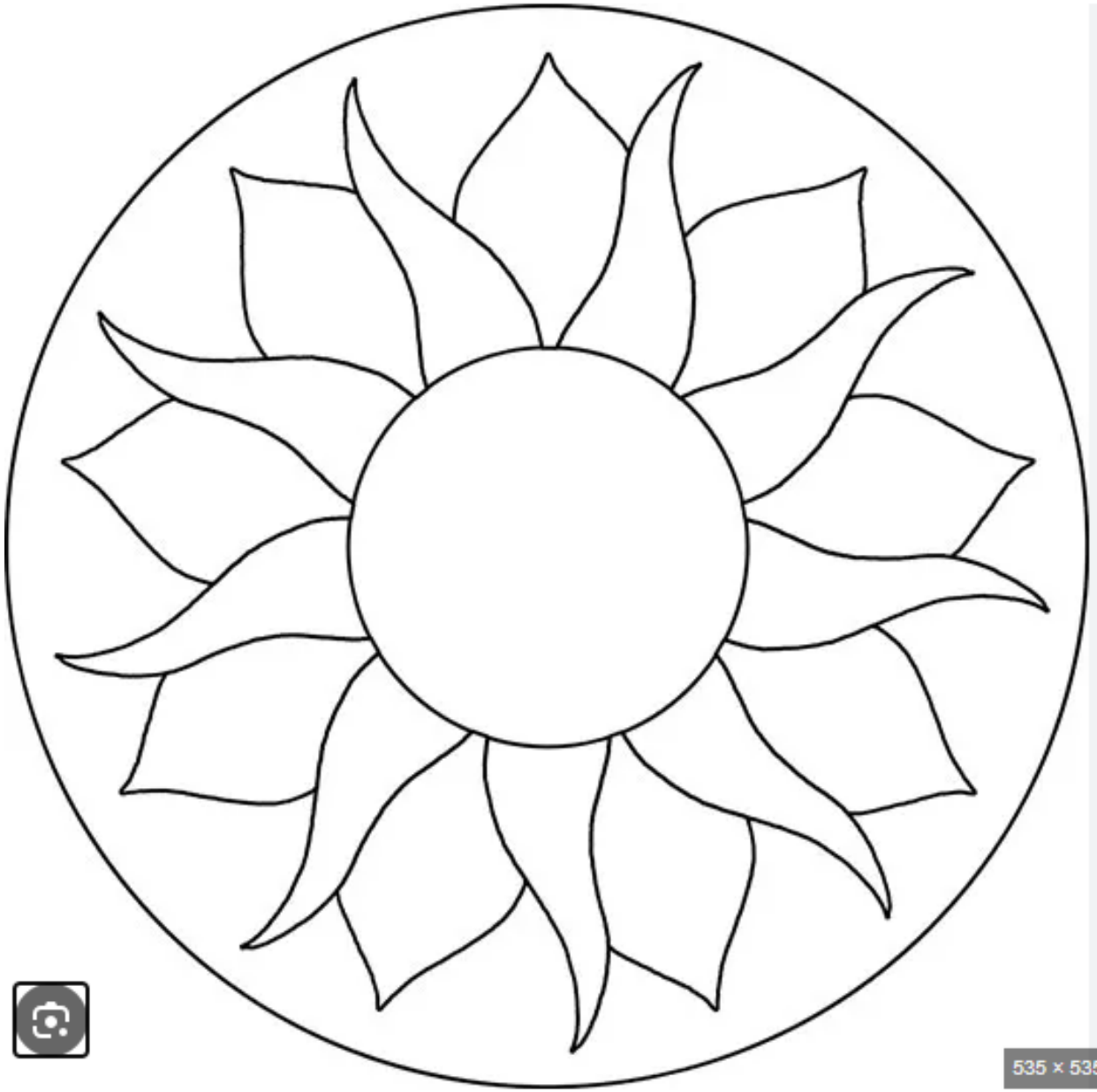
Create a mosaic with glue and paper of different colours cut or ripped into small pieces.



6 squares of $2 \frac{1}{8}$ inches
2 of which you will cut diagonally

16 triangles of $1 \frac{5}{8}$ inches at the
base by $2 \frac{1}{8}$ inches long

Recommended colors are bleu for the
squares and yellow for the triangles



535 × 535

Listen to the Hymn



<https://youtu.be/Rw2VWje6tEo?si=r5ljSRYj8KMg2Gss>

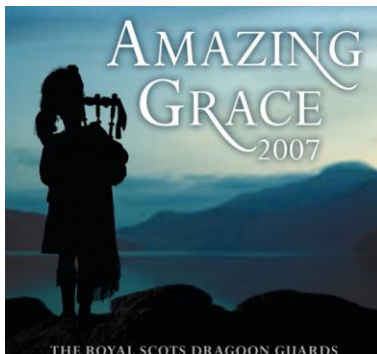
Watch the Story Behind the song here:

[Amazing Grace: The Story Behind the Song from Gregory Bandy](#)

<https://youtu.be/8m8AHHduTM0>

Listen to the Bagpipes version of the hymn:

<https://youtu.be/ojzrkCSwMvo?si=Q2QMPx3aKJOQwv-v>



References:

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<https://www.govisitinishowen.com/directories/driving-routes-inishowen-wild-atlantic-way-donegal/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazing_Grace