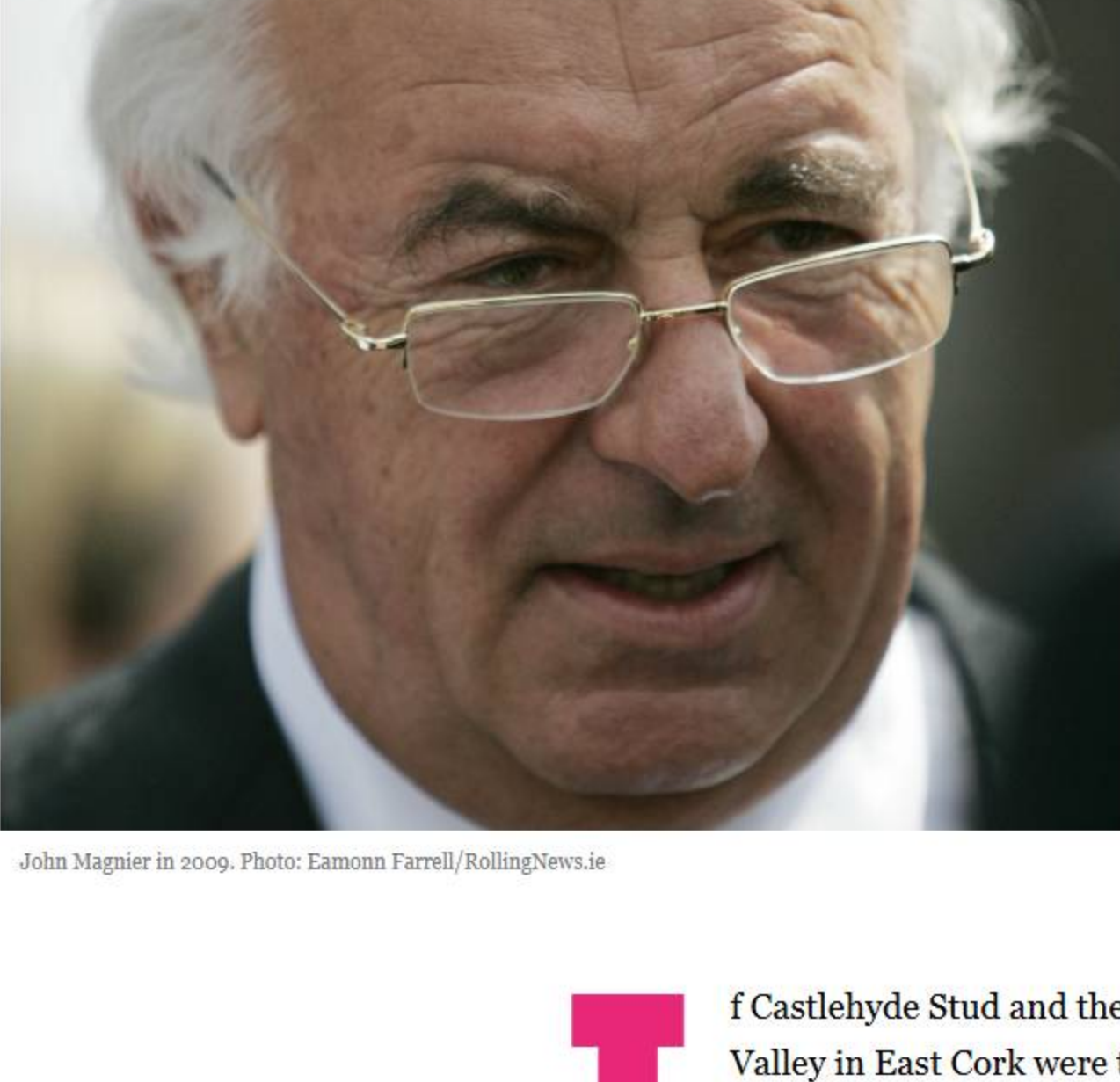




John Magnier in 2009. Photo: Samson Farnli/RollingNews.ie

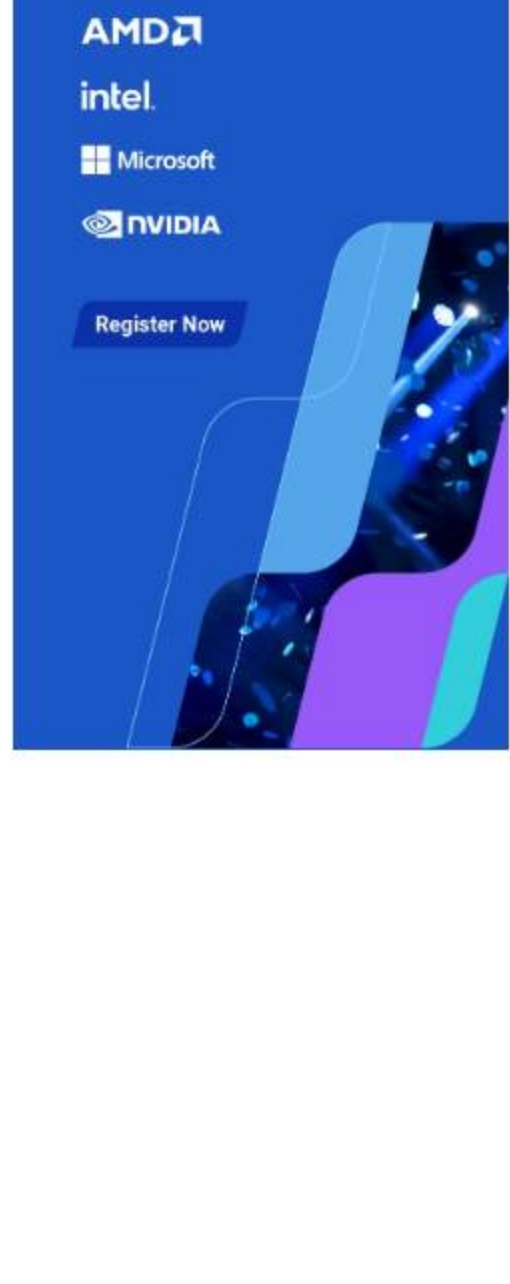
The Magnier map: How much land does the bloodstock dynasty really own in Tipp?

As John Magnier battles construction magnate Maurice Regan over the 751-acre Barne Estate, land registry records and planning filed draw the first map of almost 11,000ac amassed in the Golden Vale by the family behind Coolmore.

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Current Affairs Correspondent



If Castlehyde Stud and the fertile lands of the Blackwater Valley in East Cork were the forging of John Magnier and his Coolmore empire, then the farmland of the Golden Vale in south Tipperary has cemented the legacy of the 77-year-old billionaire's bloodstock empire.

The Magniers have built up an enviable landbank in the Premier County to support their bloodstock business, triangulating between Coolmore's base in Fethard, the racing stables in Ballydoyle – founded by Vincent O'Brien, the father of Magnier's wife Sue – and prime agricultural land to the south in and around Clonmel.

Details of just how much land the family has amassed appears to have eluded central family figures, including Magnier himself, judging by recent hearings in the High Court in the ongoing case concerning the contentious sale of the 751-acre Barne Estate in Co Tipperary.

When figures from previous media articles were put to him on the witness stand about land and farms which he owned in the Golden Vale area, Magnier disputed the findings as "totally false" and "untrue".

He confirmed that "as a family" the Magniers hold substantial agricultural land, including with partners, but said he wasn't sure how much he owned when asked to spell out the extent of his landholdings.

He said it was "very little" as he had five children and 15 grandchildren and also operated in partnerships with employees. Much like Magnier, his son, JP, and son-in-law, David Wachman, could not give a solid number on the overall holdings when in the witness box.

This publication can, however. Following an analysis of dozens of land registry folios and planning files, *The Currency* has linked close to 11,000 acres of land in the county to the Magnier family and companies connected to the Coolmore bloodstock business.

This figure is based on the most up-to-date land registry documents for specific plots of land in the county. It can take time for details of recent land purchases or sales to be registered, meaning that some recent additions or sale of land may not yet be registered.

For example, *The Currency* has not included over 160 acres currently registered to Magnier family members as there is an application on file with Tailte Éireann for the transfer or part-transfer of the land. A further 67 acres, for which there is an application to transfer land to the Magniers, is also not included.

A representative for the family was provided with a full list of folios examined but did not provide any comment on the properties.

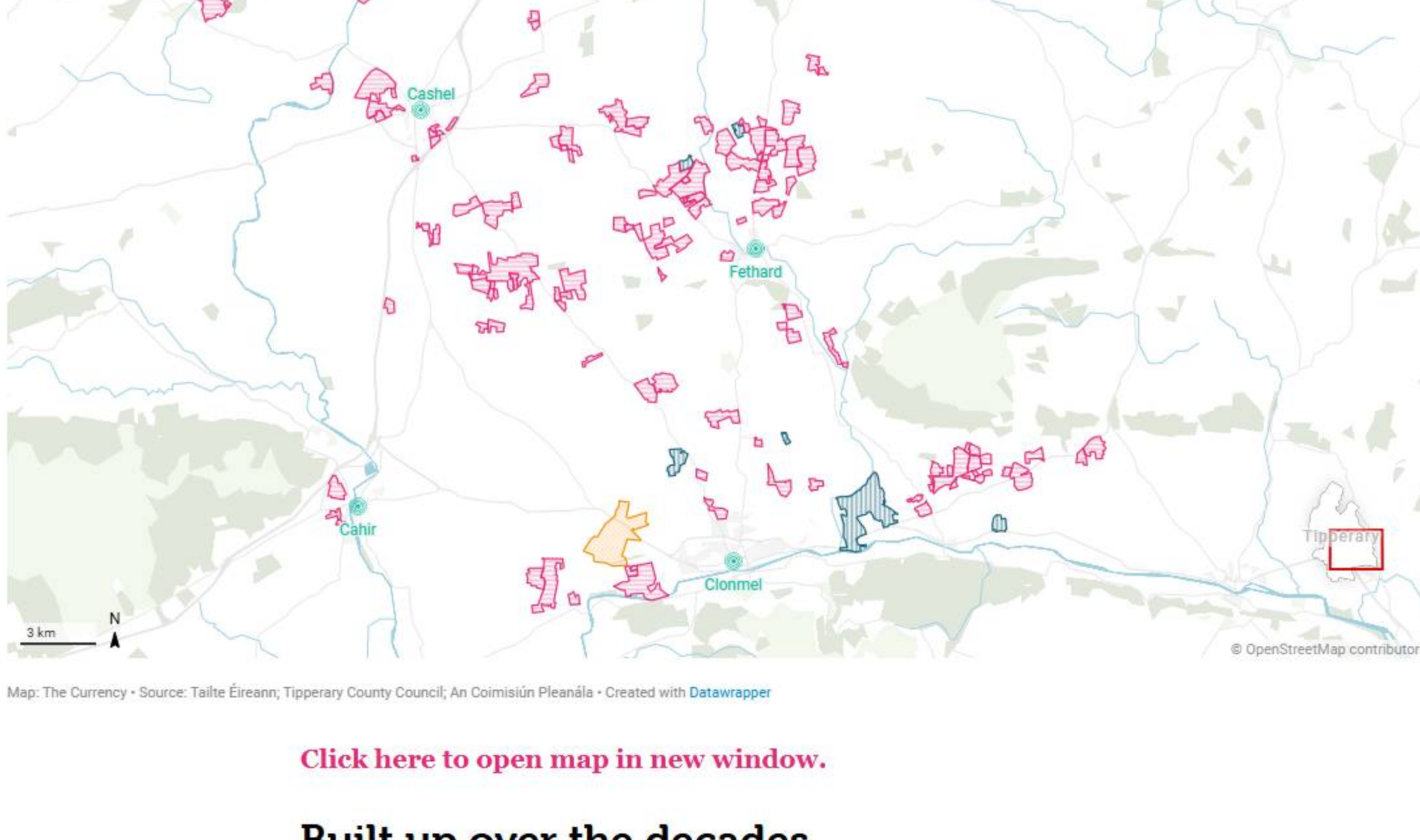
Magnier family and company landholdings in Tipperary

According to folio records, the bloodstock family holds close to 11,000 acres in the county. This far outstrips the US construction magnate, Maurice Regan, who owns closer to 1,000 acres.

■ Magnier Family / Coolmore

■ Maurice Regan

■ Barne Estate



Map: The Currency - Source: Tailte Éireann; Tipperary County Council - Created with Datawrapper

[Click here to open map in new window.](#)

Built up over the decades

The Coolmore spokesperson did confirm that land has been built up over 60 years across three generations, corporate entities, and partnerships with third parties and staff.

Some of this land holds housing for 1,300 Coolmore staff who live in the region. But most purchases serve the bloodstock business at the centre of the buying of agricultural land across the Golden Vale.

There is plenty of land for training and breeding racehorses, and, in any given year, Coolmore has around 2,000 horses on the go. Horses need far more land than livestock, particularly for biosecurity and disease control measures.

As Coolmore advisor Eddie Irvin stated during the Barne trial when called as a witness, it is extremely important for Coolmore to keep paddocks "well spread out" so that "there's no question of any disease spread", should any ever get in among the horses present on the farm.

"They're not particularly efficient grazers, so we have to rotate our paddocks quite a bit," he added. "So, it, by its nature and the sheer size of the business, requires a very significant amount of land."

A large amount of tillage land is also needed for fodder to feed the horses and to produce straw for animal bedding. An estimated 40,000 large round bales of straw are required annually by Coolmore.



The entrance to Coolmore Stud in Fethard, Co Tipperary. Photo: Thomas Hübner

The family is also engaged in beef production, but mainly holds its livestock for pasture management, while around 20 per cent of the land is managed for biodiversity.

The Coolmore spokesperson said that land purchases are typically focused on larger holdings or estates where competition tends not to be from local farmers.

An analysis of folio details shows that much of the land has been amassed since the early 1990s, with close to 20 per cent of identified landholdings in large folios of over 100 acres.

Much of the land registered in the 1990s is in the name of John Magnier and his wife Susan. In total, a little over 1,700 acres in Co Tipperary is registered in John Magnier's name on his own or in combination with Susan, different children or other individuals.

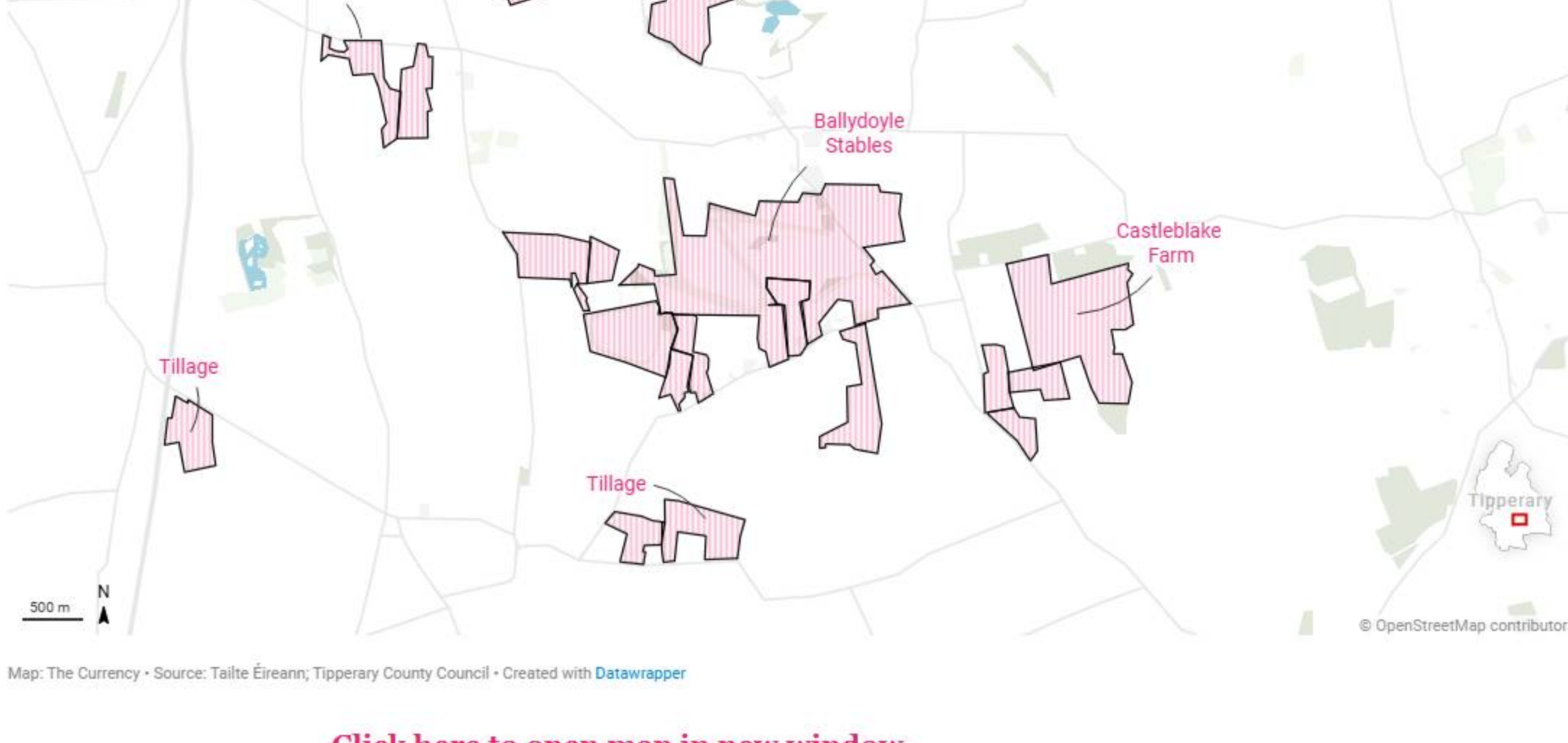
This includes well-known stud farm operations such as Ballydoyle, with close to 600 acres around the stud registered in the name of the pair since the mid-1990s. It is the sister facility to Coolmore Stud and was founded by the influential trainer, Vincent O'Brien.

Close to 260 acres of land in the surrounding areas are registered to Coolmore companies or Magnier's children, with a further near 300 acres in the townland of Castleblake primarily owned by a company.

The family also owns the nearby Lyonsstown Stud, with close to 440 acres registered in family members' and companies' names in parcels. The stud was first bought by Vincent O'Brien in the early 1980s.

Ballydoyle racing stables

The sister facility to Coolmore, Ballydoyle is led by the legendary trainer Aidan O'Brien. Folio records show the Magniers have built up close to 1,500 acres in the area.



Map: The Currency - Source: Tailte Éireann; Tipperary County Council - Created with Datawrapper

[Click here to open map in new window.](#)

The Magnier kids

There is also the stud, 18th-century house, and hundreds of acres of land at Annesgift near Fethard, which went on the market in 1999. According to the *Irish Independent*, the estate sold for close to £7 million (£8.9 million), well in excess of the £3 million guide price.

According to land registry records, over 700 acres of surrounding land in and around Annesgift, which is close to Coolmore, is registered to the Magniers.

Much of the land was first registered in the name of John Magnier before ownership was transferred over to his son, Thomas Vincent, in 2008.

Ownership was then transferred again to Magnier's two other sons, Michael Vincent and JP, in 2019. This appears to be part of a general shift in recent years toward registering land in the names of either Coolmore companies or the Magnier children.

While a large tranche of the land of around 3,000 acres is registered in the name of Irish and offshore companies, close to 6,000 acres of the family's landholding examined by *The Currency* are registered in the names of the Coolmore kids.

Most of these holdings are jointly in the names of JP Magnier and his sister Katherine Wachman, much of it registered in their names since the mid-2010s.

In 2016, for example, 300 acres surrounding Brittas House was put in their names, with a further nearly 225 acres on two nearby farms added to the siblings' holdings in 2018 and 2019.

Significant parcels of land were put in the duo's names across this two-year window, with over 2,400 acres registered to the pair, 1,460 acres in 2018 and nearly 1,000 acres in 2019.

This also includes Bengurragh House on the outskirts of Cahir. The country house and associated buildings came to market in 2018 with 110 acres of fertile free-draining lands. As *Thomas previously reported*, it was acquired at the end of September 2018 for €720,000, the top price paid for any single residential property in Co Tipperary that year.

Close to 335 acres around Silverfort Stud, north of Coolmore, was registered to the siblings in 2018, as was a 350-acre tillage farm at Marlfield Farm near Clonmel previously owned by the Kent family associated with the engineering giant Kentz. Marlfield is beside the Barne Estate, as is nearby tillage land registered to the Magniers.

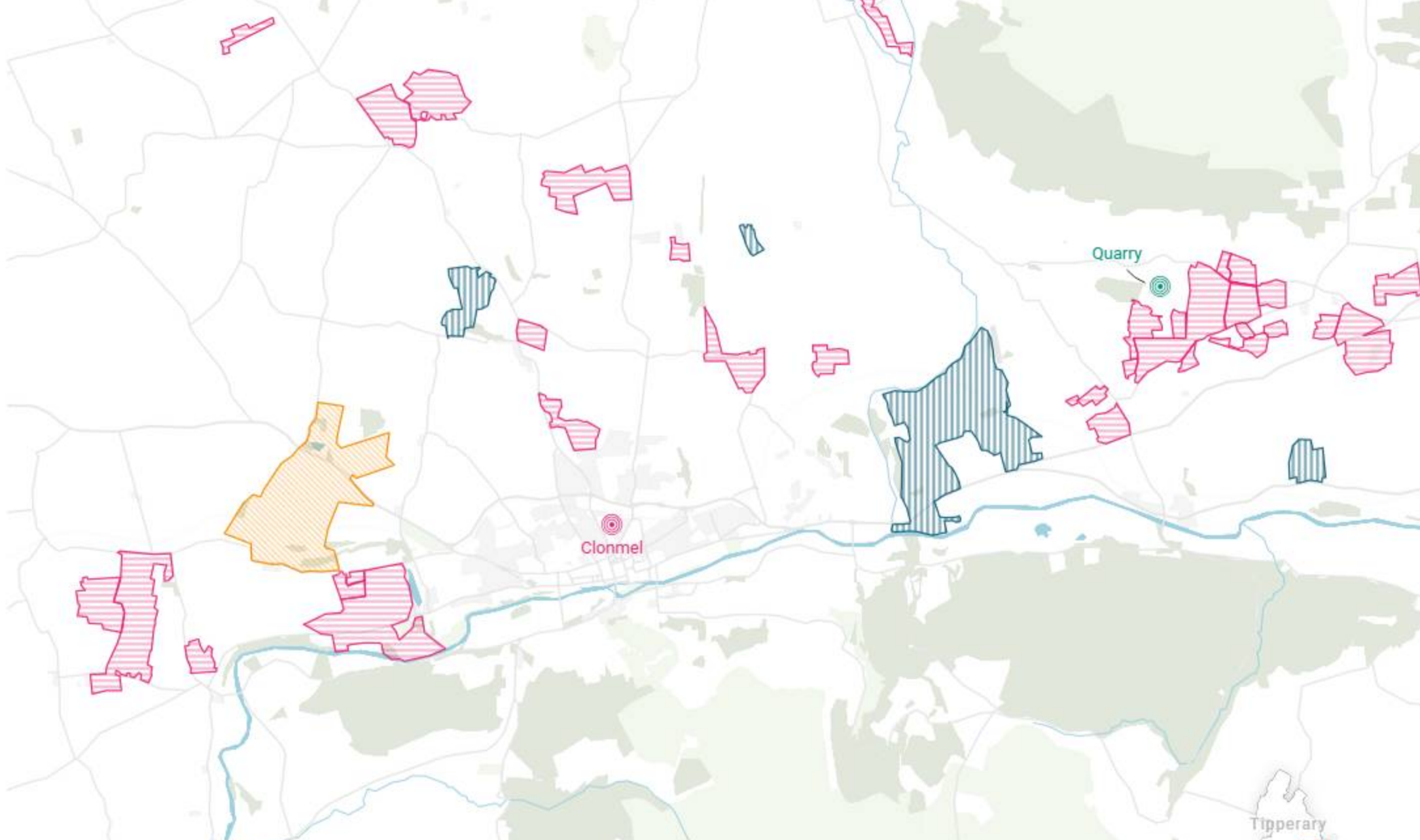
Landholdings in and around Barne Estate

The Magniers own significant parcels of farmland beside Barne, to the north of Clonmel and close to a quarry in Ballyknockane to the east of Tipperary's largest town.

■ Magnier Family / Coolmore

■ Maurice Regan

■ Barne Estate



Map: The Currency - Source: Tailte Éireann; Tipperary County Council - Created with Datawrapper

[Click here to open map in new window.](#)

This trend is also seen in the recent purchases of **land on the Meath-Kildare border** where the family has built up close to 500 acres of prime farmland across multiple connecting plots between Leixlip and Dunboyne. Folio records show that the land bought in that area is registered in the names of JP Magnier and Katherine Wachman.

This includes Ravensdale House, with its 223-acre surrounds just outside modern-day Leixlip, which was snapped up by the family for an estimated €4.75 million in 2015.

The companies

As mentioned above, there is also a large portion of land in the name of companies connected to the family and the Coolmore empire.

Almost 670 acres is registered with a Coolmore company, Shem Drowne Ltd, much of which is close to Ballydoyle. This includes land in and around Castleblake farm, of which Shem Drowne has been the registered owner since 2012.

The farm, which borders the Ballydoyle estates, was previously a rendering plant. It was put up for sale in the early 2010s as the previous owners failed to secure planning permission for an animal waste-disposal facility opposed by John Magnier and other locals. According to planning files submitted by Coolmore companies this year, machinery for Coolmore's tillage operations is now stored at the farm, which is also used for cattle, straw and hay storage.

There is a smaller holding close to Clonmel registered to Melcon Unltd, another Coolmore company. The company is also connected to lands on Mountain Road on the outskirts of Cahir, which is subject to the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT). The company appealed its inclusion in the tax net in 2023, but lost its case.

Close to 1,900 acres is registered to **Linley Investments**, an Isle of Man-registered holding company behind the Coolmore and Castlehyde studs. Much of the land is, as expected, in and around the stud farm itself, including Prospect Stud, one of Coolmore's specialised foaling units. The nearby studs at Silverfort and Annesgift are registered in the names of Magnier's children.

The jewel in the crown - Coolmore Stud

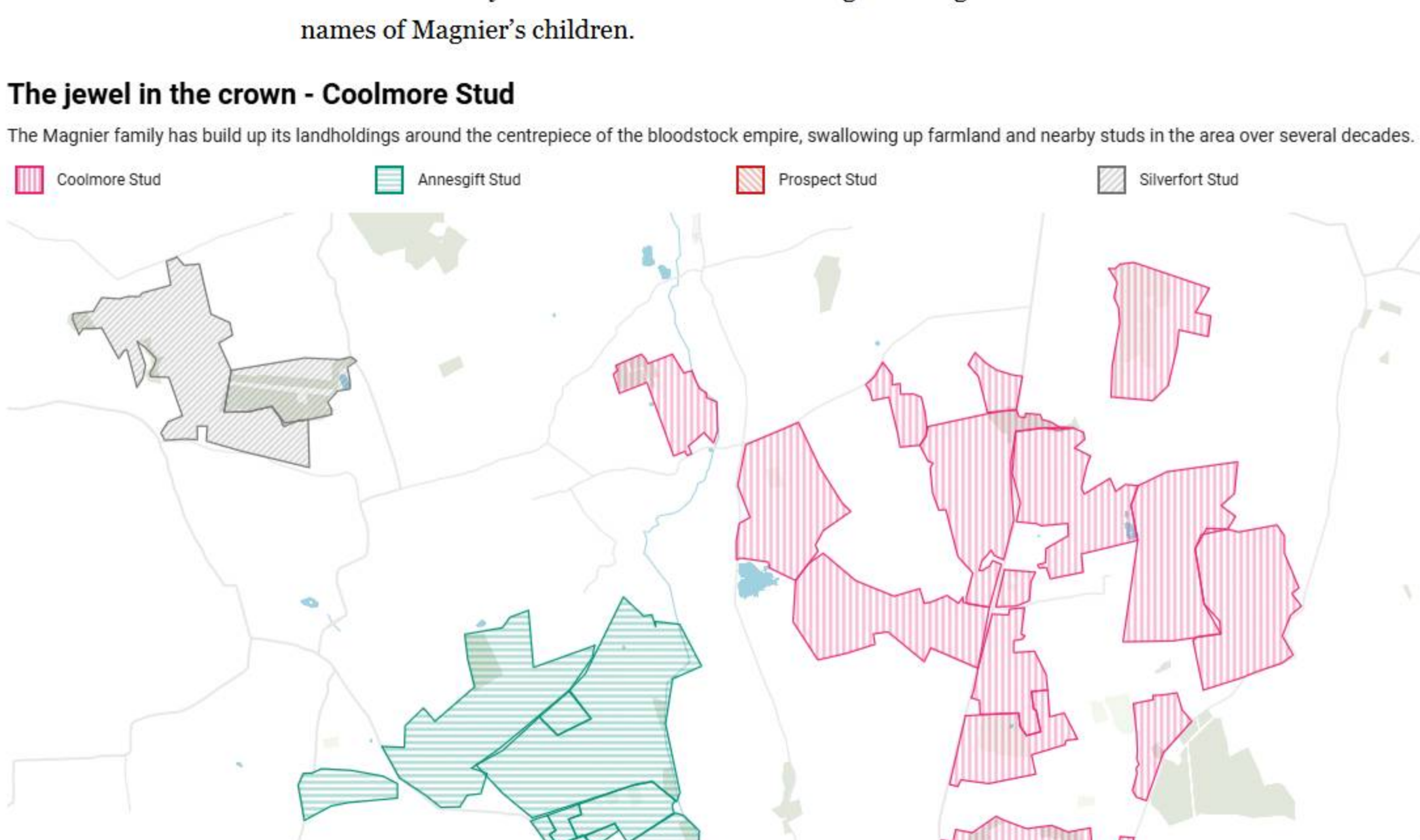
The Magnier family has built up its landholdings around the centrepiece of the bloodstock empire, swallowing up farmland and nearby studs in the area over several decades.

■ Coolmore Stud

■ Silverfort Stud

■ Prospect Stud

■ Silverfort Stud



Map: The Currency - Source: Tailte Éireann; Tipperary County Council - Created with Datawrapper

[Click here to open map in new window.](#)

The Magniers made purchases since the end of 2023 for which folios are not yet available, including the purchase of an estimated 527 acres around Killough Castle near Thurles. The *Farming Independent* reported in 2024 that the land was sold for close to €7.5 million.

Coolmore is backing Marmoris Ltd to build a solar farm on the site, with various locals objecting to plans lodged by the company in January. Planning files show that the land is owned by Lime Tree Farm Ltd, another Coolmore-linked company. It is estimated that the solar project would offset close to 42,000 tonnes of carbon emissions annually.

The Magniers also bought a 64-acre farm at Parkville just outside of Clonmel in early 2024, with various media reporting at the time that the land sold for €2.42 million, or almost €38,000 an acre.

This is above the average price for land last year, however, it was marketed for its development potential due to the proximity to Clonmel and industrial developments in the area, which may have attracted bids from commercial rather than farming interests.

Still, concerns have been **raised locally by some in the farming community** that they are being squeezed out of the bidding for farmland in the county by those with deeper pockets.

Teagasc's latest agricultural land market survey, published with the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland, places the county's land as among the most expensive in the country.

Melcon Ltd has faced opposition from locals and An Taisce to plans to demolish existing derelict buildings at the farm dating back to the 1700s. The planning case is currently before An Coimisiún Pleanála, with files listing JP Magnier as the owner of the land.

In the bordering county of Kilkenny, the Magniers also bought close to 400 acres around Kilree Estate at the end of 2023. A planning application to put up new agricultural sheds in May this year from Rohan Dairies Ltd lists John Magnier as the owner of the land.

If the Magniers win their High Court case and secure ownership of the Barne Estate, this will grow their Tipperary landbank past the 11,000-acre mark.

Further reading

The Regan register – part 1 : How the battle for Tipperary farmland "became personal"



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