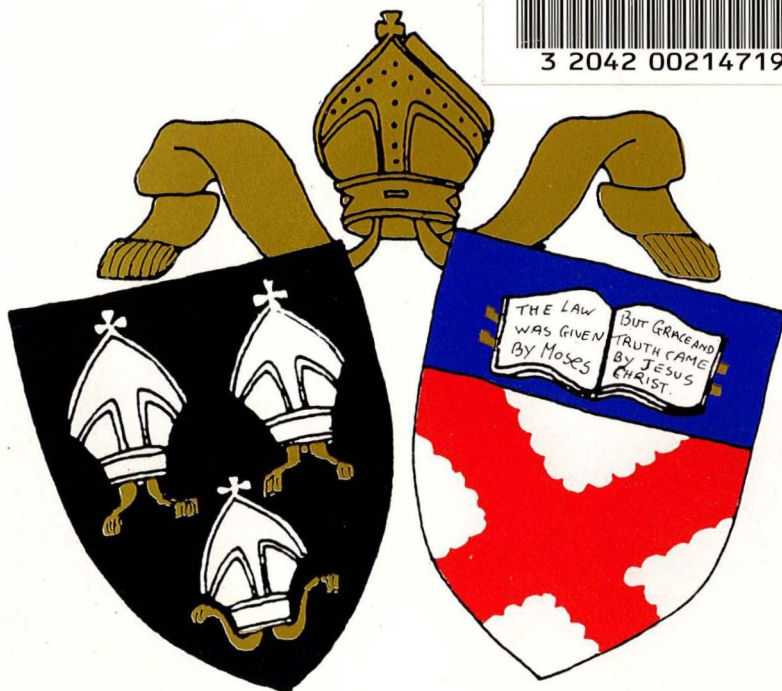


# MEATH AND KILDARE

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## An Historical Guide

# MEATH AND KILDARE

## AN HISTORICAL GUIDE

To Archbishop Robinson,  
The Inter-Anglican Theological  
and Doctrinal Commission  
Ireland July 1985.

Edited by  
John Paterson

Drawings by  
John Flinn

*Donald Meath & Kildare*

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## FOREWORD

Many parish churches in the United Dioceses of Meath and Kildare would merit volumes devoted to those churches themselves such is the wealth of their history and their associations with persons and events in the history of Ireland. Indeed the histories of some of these churches have been written; but the merit of this booklet is that it presents an outline of the history of each church in constant use in the dioceses, and it brings that history to life through the lovely pen-and-ink drawings of the churches as they stand in their characteristic settings.

When we remember that over the past hundred years alone many more than half of the churches in these dioceses have vanished and in many cases their stories and their associations have been forgotten, we realize the debt that everyone interested in local history and everyone with affectionate attachment to the parishes of Meath and Kildare, owes to the Very Reverend John Patterson, The Venerable George Corrigan, and the Reverend John Flinn who have combined their talents as editor, printer and publisher, and illustrator to give us this handsome booklet. We express our most grateful thanks to Mrs Madge Cruikshank for typing and arranging the material, and also those parishioners of Kingscourt Union who have given their time to the tedious work of assembling the booklet.

The historical notes on each church have been researched, compiled and written in most cases by the incumbent of each union of parishes. This work has been painstaking and accurate, and each incumbent has placed us very much in his debt by his generous contribution of time and effort. To each we would express our thanks.

Hopefully this booklet will be of interest to all who from various points of view are aware of the significance of the Church of Ireland in the history of our country, while being of special interest to those who know these churches as familiar parts of the landscape throughout their lifetime, but whose history they have not heard. This booklet can be an exercise in getting to know your neighbour.

Donald Meath and Kildare

## EDITORIAL NOTE

But for the enthusiasm and hospitality of Bishop and Mrs. Caird during the planning and editorial stages this little contribution to diocesan history in the Church of Ireland might never have seen the light of day. In this the Revd John Flinn (whose drawings grace the book), Archdeacon George Corrigan (our ever-patient printer) and myself (the editor) would all concur.

In the editing many people are deserving of my thanks: the clergy of the dioceses who supplied me with most of the original material; and others, lay and clerical, for material for Athboy (Canon F.M. O'Byrne), Athlone (Canon E.H.L. May), Dunboyne (Mrs J. Fisher), Geashill (Canon A.K. Palmer) and Julianstown (Mr. Michael Ward). When all the written material was complete it was kindly read by the historian Miss Helen Roe. Her suggestions for emendation were gratefully accepted but any errors remaining in the text must be accepted by me alone.

Lastly, may I ask readers to bear in mind that this publication only claims to be 'notes' on the history of the dioceses. Due to pressure on space available (450 words per union) much has obviously had to be omitted and references have had to be few. Perhaps the omissions may encourage a fuller book to be produced at some future date.

John Paterson.



## THE DIOCESES AND THEIR BISHOPS

### Meath

The diocese of Meath (including Clonmacnois added in 1568) covers part of counties Kildare, Longford and Cavan, large parts of Offaly, and Meath and Westmeath. The Church of Ireland population is 3,800 and there are sixty churches in regular use.

Christianity in Ireland can trace its origins to the diocese of Meath and the mission of S. Patrick. The Celtic church was essentially monastic and tribal and in Meath (largely coterminous with the ancient kingdom of the high kings) great centres of learning flourished. Clonard founded by S. Finnian in 520 and Clonmacnois founded by his pupil S. Kieran in 544 were among the centres that gave Ireland its reputation as 'the land of saints and scholars'. Other Meath monastic centres at Kells and Durrow have given us illuminated manuscript copies of the gospels that have been the wonder of every age. Kells was host in 1152 to an important synod which set the pattern of Irish dioceses which still largely obtains: the bishop of Meath was to have special rank next to the archbishops and like them was to be styled 'Most Reverend'. From a distinguished episcopal succession list space unfortunately only permits us to mention three names.

James Ussher (1581 — 1656) was a scholar of vast learning. He was an acknowledged authority on a wide range of subjects, including biblical chronology, the writings of the early church fathers, and the early history of Ireland. All competent observers of the period regarded his scholarship with wonder and admiration. Even a century later Dr Johnson wrote: 'Ussher was the great luminary of the Irish Church, and a greater no Church could boast of, at least in modern times'. He became bishop of Meath in 1621 and archbishop of Armagh in 1625. Following the 1641 rising Ussher retired to England and never returned to Ireland.

Thomas Lewis O'Beirne (1747 — 1823), a convert to the church from Roman Catholicism, had a varied and colourful career — student in France for the Roman priesthood; graduate of Cambridge following his conversion; ordained in the diocese of Peterborough; a naval chaplain; pamphleteer, poet and playwright; rector of an English parish; chaplain to the Viceroy in Dublin; lastly bishop of Ossory (1795 — 98) and then of Meath (1798 — 1823). In Meath the Roman Catholic bishop had been O'Beirne's seminary professor but both men were of broad enough sympathies to renew their friendship within the diocese. During O'Beirne's years in Meath he succeeded in stamping out absenteeism among the clergy, in building numerous schools and glebe houses, and in causing over fifty churches to be erected.

William Conyngham, Lord Plunket (1826 — 1897) was ordained in 1857 by, and as private secretary to, his uncle the bishop of Tuam. In 1864 he became Treasurer of S. Patrick's, Dublin, and from that time took a leading part in the affairs of the Church of Ireland. He was the obvious choice for Meath in 1876 and was long remembered in

the diocese for his loving and affectionate disposition. As one of the leading evangelicals of his day it was not surprising that he was a pioneer in promoting movements toward reformation in Spain and Portugal. His interest and actions there forged links between their reformed episcopal churches and the Church of Ireland which remain to this day. While Archbishop of Dublin (from 1884) he was responsible for the founding of the Church of Ireland Training College and also for the consecration of the rebuilt cathedral in Kildare in 1896.

### Kildare

The diocese of Kildare covers part of Laois, a large part of Offaly, and the greater part of county Kildare. The Church of Ireland population is 2,500 and there are thirty churches in regular use.

The early history of Kildare diocese is essentially the story of S. Brigid. Her double monastery, for male and female religious, founded in the late fifth century was typical of early Celtic Christianity with its tribal structuring: the bishop was simply a monk with special responsibility for ordinations. S. Conleth the first bishop had few of the powers of his Anglo-Norman successors in the see. Ralph of Bristol, the first of that long line of English bishops, set it on a path that should have given it considerable importance. He had not allowed for human frailty and that Irish proclivity for internal strife. The many Irish wars impoverished the diocese and episcopal mismanagement of the see lands (mainly neglect and poor business methods) ensured that the only way the bishop could survive financially was by holding in commendam the deanery of Christ Church, Dublin, an arrangement which lasted from 1681 — 1846. In 1846, and in accordance with the Church Temporalities Act of 1833, the see of Kildare was joined to that of Dublin.

In an episcopal succession list which can be traced from the sixth century some names obviously commend themselves for special mention. Ralph of Bristol, bishop from 1223 — 32, rebuilt the cathedral, reorganised the diocese, and introduced mainstream religious orders in preference to the older Celtic communities. Walter Wellesley, from 1529 — 39, was the last of the pre — reformation abbot — bishops. His surname continues to the present day in the family name of the dukes of Wellington. William Moreton, from 1682 — 1705, rebuilt the choir of the cathedral to serve as a pro — cathedral and parish church. It was a poor building that the diocese happily demolished to make way for the fully restored cathedral of 1896. Charles Lindsay occupied the diocese for a period longer than any of his predecessors — from 1804 — 46. His Visitation Book is a fascinating record of his first four years in the diocese and of church life at that time. On his death Kildare was united with Dublin and thus with a line of archbishops such as Richard Chenevix Trench, John Henry Bernard and John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg (to mention only three) whose names are familiar to every Irish churchman and well known through the entire Anglican Communion.

## THE BISHOPS

At the Synod of Kells in 1152 Ireland was divided up into what is still its basic pattern of dioceses. Meath was formed from the consolidation of a number of small dioceses in the area. Prior to the synod some twenty five bishops, beginning with S. Conleth in 520 had served Kildare. 1152 saw new episcopates in both dioceses and we trace both successions from this date, using the lists in 'Healy' and 'Phillips'.

### Meath

1152 Eleutheruis O'Meehan  
 1174 Eugene  
 1194 Simon de Rochfort  
  
 1224 Seodatus (not consecrated)  
 1227 Ralph le Petit  
 1232 Richard de la Corner (Nangle)  
 1250 Geoffrey Cusack  
 1255 Hugh de Taghmon  
 1287 Thomas St Leger  
  
 1321 John O'Carroll (Cashel 1327)  
 1327 William de Paul  
 1350 William St. Leger  
 1353 Nicholas Allen  
 1369 Stephen de Valle  
 1380 William Andrew  
 1386 Alexander Petit  
  
 1402 Robert Mountain  
 1413 Edward Dantsey  
 1430 William Hadsor  
 1434 William Silk  
 1450 Edward Ouldhall  
 1460 William Sherwood  
 1483 John Payn  
  
 1507 William Rokeby (Dublin 1512)  
 1512 Hugh Inge (Dublin 1523)  
 1523 Richard Wilson  
 1530 Edward Staples  
 1554 William Walsh (deposed 1560)  
 1563 Hugh Brady  
 1584 Thomas Jones

### Kildare

1152 Finn O'Gorman  
 1177 Nehemiah  
  
 1206 Cornelius Mac Gelain  
 1223 Ralph of Bristol  
 1232 John of Taunton  
 1258 Simon of Kilkenny  
 1280 Nicholas Cusack  
  
 1300 Walter Calf  
 1333 Richard Howlot  
 1353 Thomas Giffard  
 1366 Robert of Aketone  
  
 1404 John Madock  
 1431 William Edwardi  
 1449 Geoffrey Atherford  
 1464 Richard Lang  
 1474 David  
 1475 James Wal  
 1475 Edward Audley (Rochester 1480)  
 1480 Edward Lane  
  
 1526 Thomas Dillon  
 1529 Walter Wellesley  
 1540 William Miagh  
 1550 Thomas Lancaster (deposed 1555)  
 1555 Thomas Leverous (deposed 1560)  
 1560 Alexander Craik  
 1564 Robert Dale (Daly)  
 1583 Daniel or Donnell O'Neilan

1605 Roger Dod  
 1611 George Montgomery  
 1621 James Ussher (Armagh 1625)  
 1625 Anthony Martin  
 1660 Henry Leslie  
 1661 Henry Jones  
 1682 Anthony Dopping  
 1697 Richard Tennison

1705 William Moreton  
 1716 John Evans  
 1724 Henry Downes (Derry 1627)  
 1727 Ralph Lambert  
 1732 Welbore Ellis  
 1734 Arthur Price (Cashel 1744)  
 1744 Henry Maule  
 1758 William Carmichael (Dublin 1765)  
 1765 Richard Pococke  
 1765 Arthur Smyth (Dublin 1766)  
 1766 Henry Maxwell  
 1798 Thomas Lewis O'Beirne

1823 Nathaniel Alexander  
 1840 Charles Dickenson  
 1842 Edward Adderly Stopford  
 1850 Thomas Stewart Townsend  
 1852 James Henderson Singer  
 1866 Samuel Butcher  
 1876 William Conyngham Plunket  
       (Dublin 1885)  
 1885 Charles Parsons Reichel  
 1894 Joseph Ferguson Peacocke  
       (Dublin 1897)  
 1897 James Bennett Keene

1919 Benjamin John Plunket  
 1926 Thomas Gibson George Collins  
 1927 John Orr  
 1938 William Hardy Holmes  
 1945 James McCann (Armagh 1958)  
 1958 Robert Bonsall Pike

1976 By act of the General Synod Meath diocese is transferred from the province of Armagh to the province of Dublin. In the same year Kildare diocese is separated from Dublin to form the newly created united dioceses of Meath and Kildare.

1976 — first bishop — Donald Arthur Richard Caird (translated from Limerick)

1604 William Pilsworth  
 1636 Robert Usher  
 1644 William Golborne  
 1661 Thomas Price (Cashel 1667)  
 1667 Ambrose Jones  
 1679 Anthony Dopping (Meath 1682)  
 1682 William Moreton (Meath 1705)  
  
 1705 Welbore Ellis (Meath 1732)  
 1731 Charles Cobbe (Dublin 1743)  
 1743 George Stone (Derry 1745)  
 1745 Thomas Fletcher  
 1761 Richard Robinson (Armagh 1765)  
 1765 Charles Jackson  
 1790 George Lewis Jones

1804 Charles Lindsay  
 On his death in 1846 Kildare diocese was united with Dublin in accordance with the terms of the Church Temporalities Act of 1833 as Dublin, Glendalough and Kildare.  
 1846 Richard Whately  
 1864 Richard Chenevix Trench  
 1885 William Conyngham Plunket  
 1897 Joseph Ferguson Peacocke

1915 John Henry Bernard  
 1919 Charles Frederick D'Arcy  
       (Armagh 1920)  
 1920 John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg  
       (Armagh 1939)  
 1939 Arthur William Barton  
 1956 George Otto Simms (Armagh 1968)  
 1968 Alan Alexander Buchanan



## ATHBOY (Meath)

Churches in use: Athboy (S. James), Ballivor (S. Kineth), Kilallon (Clonmellon, S. John)

For a long period from the sixteenth century onwards the archbishops of Armagh were rectors of Athboy and appointed vicars to administer the parish. That the system did not work well is evident from a report on the state of the fabric in Bishop Ussher's visitation of Meath diocese in 1622: 'The Church is ruynous; the chauncell reasonable well repayed'. In the period of the Commonwealth, under Cromwell, some non-conformist ministers were appointed to Church of Ireland parishes. There is an account of one such being appointed to Athboy, the documents relating to which are to be found in the Public Record Office in Dublin:

Upon reading ye Report of ye Committee of Approbation of Ministers, dated ye 22nd instant, whereby it appears that they have conferred with Mr. Samuel Edwards, and find him well testified unto by Sir Erasmus Phillipps, Sir Hugh Owen, and ye other Commissioners for the ejection of scandalous, ignorant, and insufficient ministers living thereabouts, and likewise that they find him to be a person gifted with knowledge and utterance, and (as they hope) experimentally acquainted with ye working of ye Spirit of ye Lord: upon consideration had thereof, it is thought fitt and ordered, That the same Mr. Edwards bee and hee is hereby appointed to preach ye Gospell att ye publike meeting -place at Athboy in ye County of Meath.

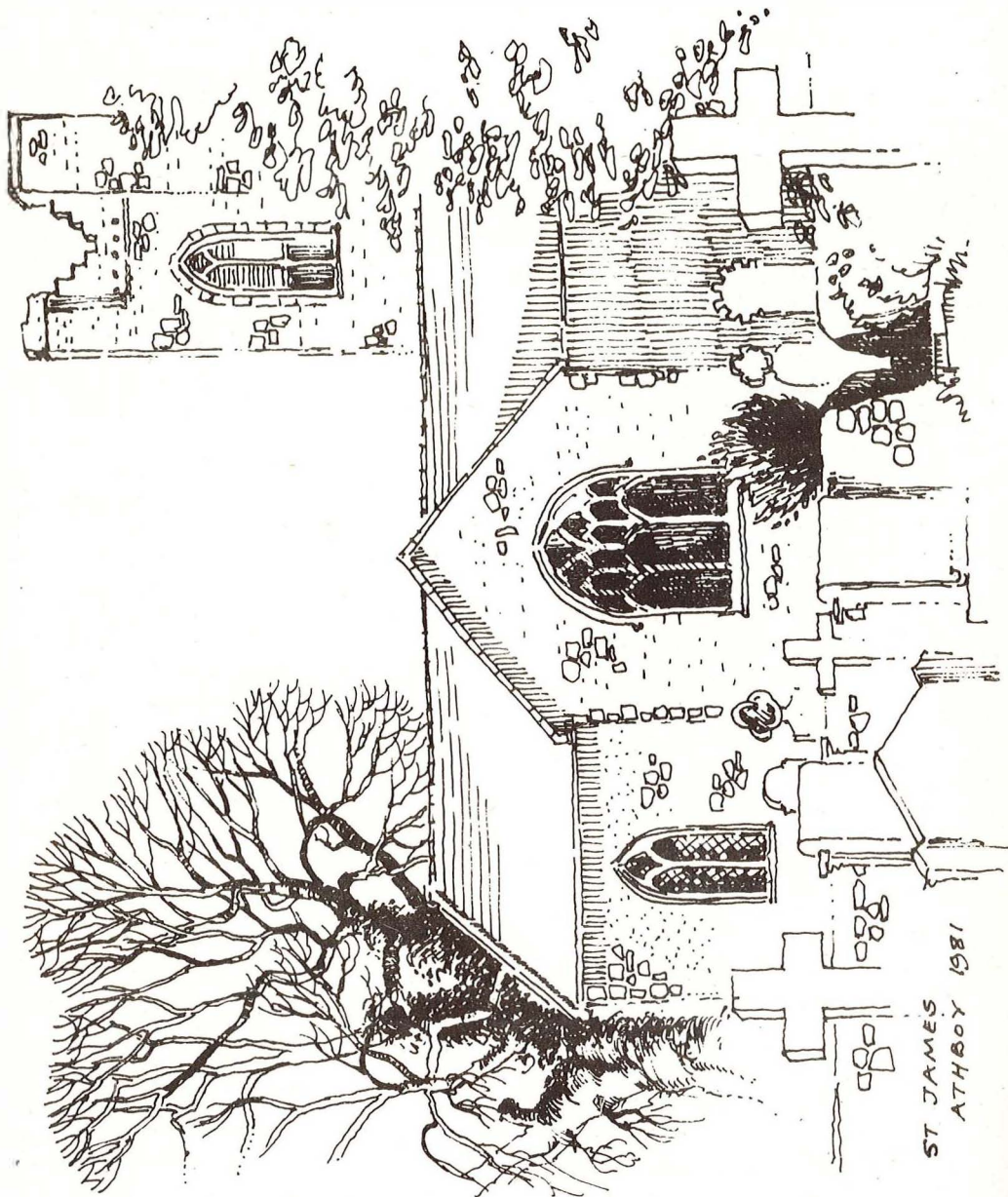
Meath diocese suffered greatly during the 1641 insurrection. Some of the clergy were murdered, others had to leave their parishes and flee for their lives. Athboy suffered its share in all this. Again, in 1798, similar disruptions to church life took place.

Athboy church is the principal church of the union and by far the most ancient. It stands on the site of a Carmelite friary founded in 1317 by William de Loundres. The massive square tower of the church is the only remaining part of the original conventual foundation. There are fragments of an important effigial monument lying outside the church and a fine old font inside.

Ballivor church is an early nineteenth century structure.

Clonmellon church is also early nineteenth century.

Other churches previously in use in the union, at Kildalkey and Girley, have been demolished.





## ATHLONE (Meath)

Churches in use: Athlone (S. Mary), Forgney (S. Munis), Benown.

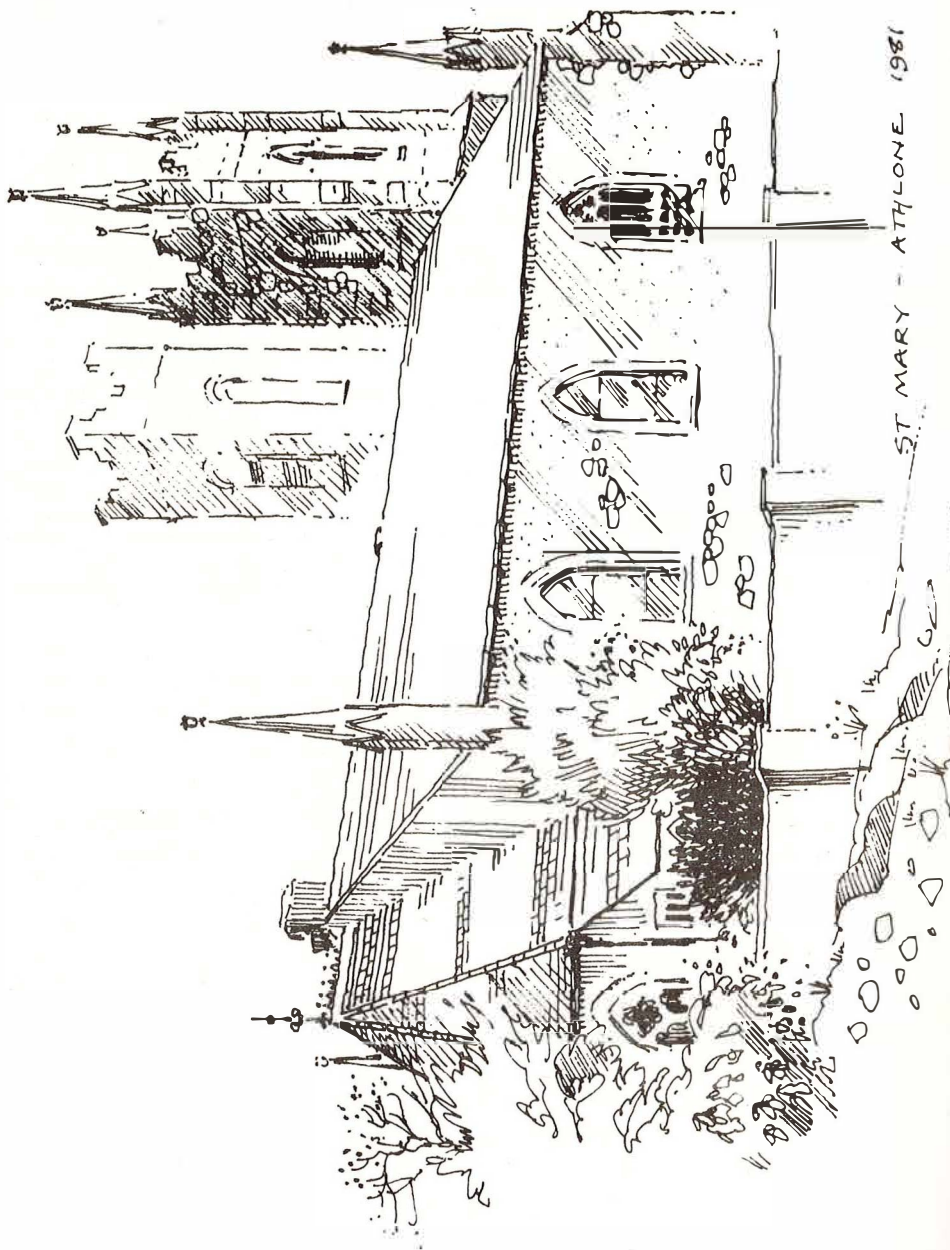
Athlone. Situated in the very centre of Ireland, and straddling the provincial boundary between Leinster and Connacht, Athlone has always known great strategic importance. This is exemplified particularly by the ruins of its once great castle built in 1210 to enable King John to bring sundry noble but recalcitrant nuisances to heel. Also on the Connacht side of the river was the Cistercian abbey of S. Peter (1216) the site of the later (Elphin diocese) church of the same name. In 1940 S. Peter's was transferred to Meath diocese and has since served as the parochial hall. The Dominicans built their friary on the eastern bank of the river in the Meath diocese in 1241. Named S. Mary's it has provided the site of subsequent churches of that dedication.

After the vicissitudes of the reformation period it is not surprising that many Irish churches were in a ruinous state and in need of restoration. 'Healy' tells us that in 1622 a new church was in course of erection at Athlone, built by Lord Grandison. We also learn that large parochial unions were as common in those years as they are today—in 1622 the rector was also responsible for Moate, Clonmacnois and Ballyloughloe. S. Mary's, like most town parishes in the past, provided many of the amenities which today we associate with local government. One such officer, with the descriptive title of the 'bellower', had the responsibility for ensuring that only duly registered beggars were permitted to solicit for alms within the town!

The present church, built in 1816, is described in 'Lewis' as 'a neat edifice, with a square embattled tower; the tower of the old church is still standing, and contains the bell which gave the signal for William's army to cross the river at the siege of Athlone'. Two years after Lewis was writing (1837) the spire of the old tower was blown away during the night of the 'Big Wind'. Inside the church is a number of interesting monuments. At the entrance is the 'Mearing' stone taken from the centre of the old 1567 bridge where it marked the mearing or boundary between the two provinces. On the south wall of the church is a fragment of a stone commemorating Sir Matthew de Renzi (d. 1634) who 'in the Cristian Warre, fought fifty two batailles with great conquest and honour against the Great Turke'. Another to Capt. Richard St. George, Governor of Athlone (d. 1667), is full of such fine titles and attributes that it has been suggested that it should be set to music with trumpets and drums.

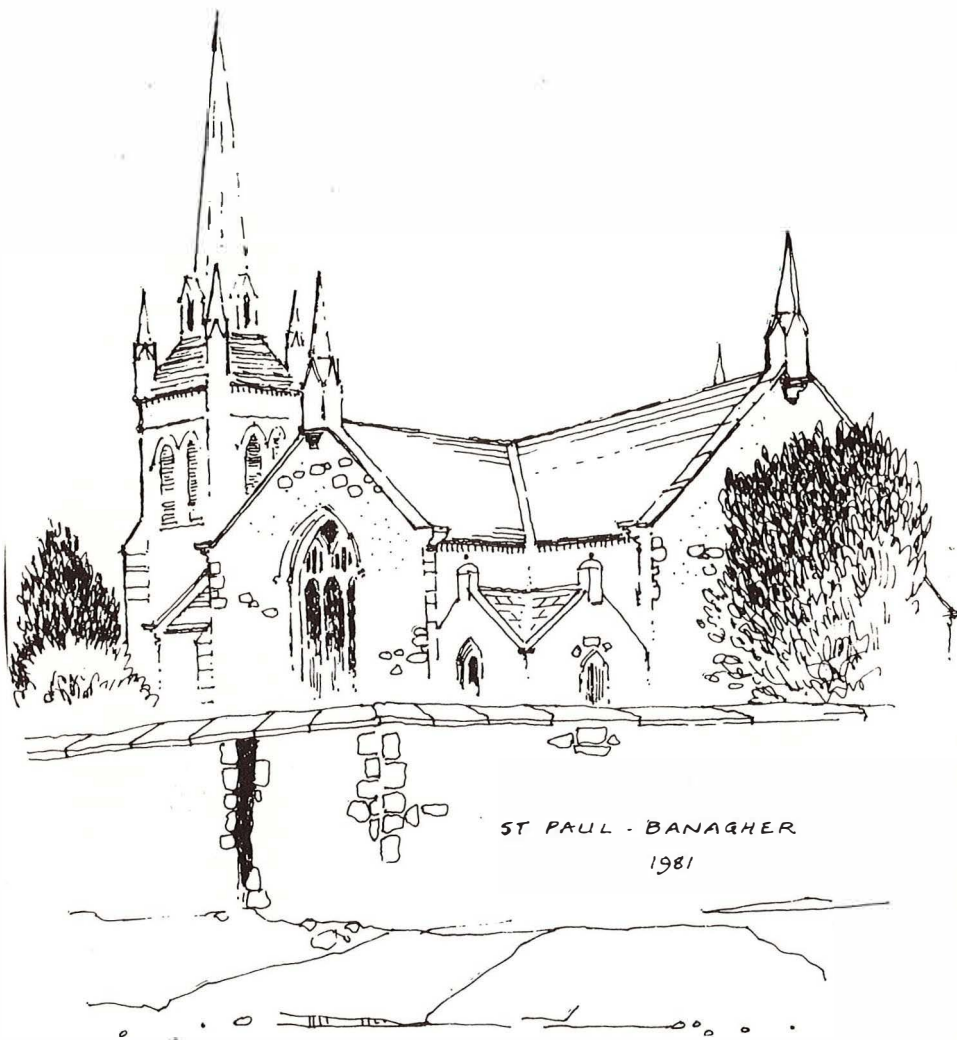
Forgney. Built in 1810 on an ancient site associated with S. Munis the church contains some fine Youghal glass. The 1810 fabric encloses part of the older church in which the Reverend Charles Goldsmith (d. 1747) ministered. His more famous son Oliver was reputedly born at Pallas in the parish.

Benown (or Bunowen) church dates from 1818 and is still complete with box pews. The medieval church ruins lie at the mouth of a stream running into Lough Rea - Bun (base, end or foot) of the Abhain (river), hence Bunowen and Benown.



## BANAGHER AND KINNITTY (Meath)

Churches in use: Banagher (Rynagh, S. Paul), Cloghan, Clonmacnois (S. Kieran), Killoughey, Kinnitty.



Banagher. The ecclesiastical title of the parish of Banagher is S. Rynagh who was a sister of S. Finnian of Clonard. The ruins of the old church are in the centre of the town. The present church stands at the top of the hill on a site donated by the Armstrong family of Garrycastle in 1830. Many admirers of Charlotte Bronte visit it because of its connections with her husband, the Revd A. Bell Nicholls, who is buried in the churchyard. Reared in Banagher and educated at the Royal School, endowed by James I, he brought Charlotte to the town on their honeymoon. On his retirement from the

curacy of Haworth parish, Yorkshire, Nicholls returned to Banagher to live and there he died in 1906. Another distinguished man who probably worshipped in the church was the novelist, Anthony Trollope, who as a civil servant, was stationed in Banagher from 1841 - 1859. The bell, so a tablet records in the porch, was installed by the relatives and friends of Francis Waller and his daughter Georgina who were drowned in the Shannon on their way to church from their home at Shannon Grove.

Clonmacnois, one of the foremost ecclesiastical sites in Ireland, forms part of the union. The site is now in the care of the Commissioners of Public Works. Only one of the seven ancient churches, Templeconnor, where Church of Ireland services are held during the summer months, is still in use. An annual open air service is held on the site every July and to it come people from near and far. Pope John Paul II, during his Irish visit in 1979, was also a pilgrim at Clonmacnois. An ancient crozier of the bishops of Clonmacnois, now in the National Museum in Dublin, was discovered in the masonry of Temple Kieran. The modern crozier of the bishops of Meath is a replica. Its ornamental silver work includes a number of dogs, each holding on to the tail of the one in front. The monastic remains are still extensive and include a number of churches, two very fine high crosses, two round towers and a remarkable collection of early grave-slabs with inscriptions in Irish and Latin. Clonmacnois retained its prestige until the reformation.

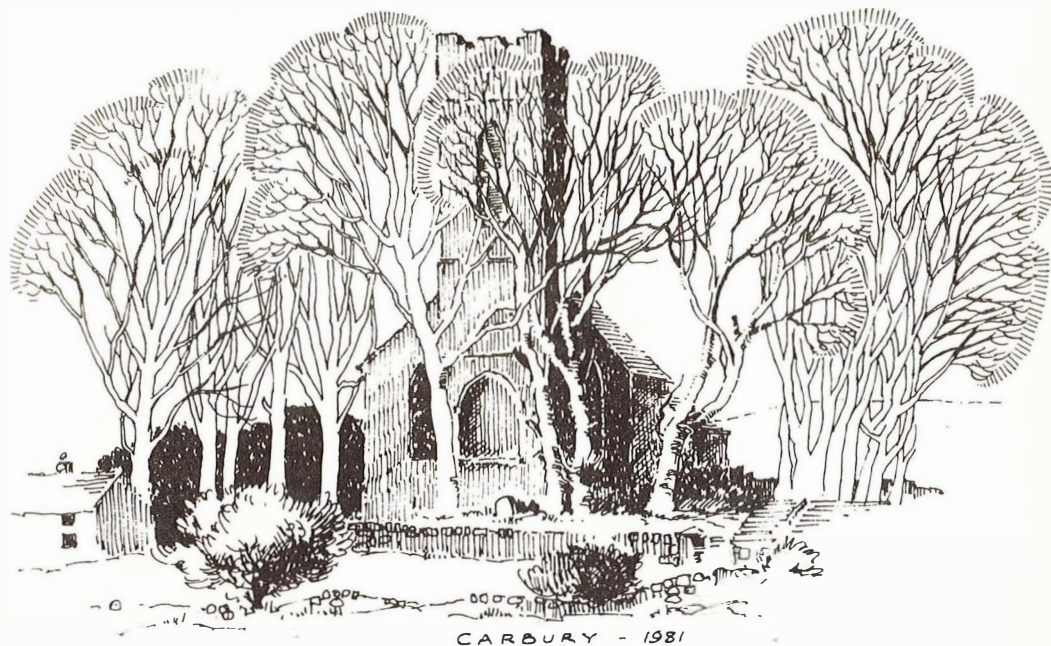
Kinnitty. The ancient abbey of Kinnitty had as its founder and patron saint S. Finnian Cam (sixth century). In the porch of the present church is an ancient stone of considerable antiquarian interest which may possibly date from the ninth century. A finely decorated cross stands as a garden ornament in nearby Castle Bernard. Although its place of origin cannot be accurately stated Kinnitty does seem reasonably likely according to some historians.





Churches in use: Carbury, Rahan (S. Anne), Coolcarrigan.

Carbury church is built on the slopes of Carbury hill, a prominent landmark which commands a panoramic view of the surrounding counties. The hill is crowned by the



fine ruins of the old castle with its massive Elizabethan chimneys. Near the base of the hill is Trinity well, the source of the river Boyne. The present church was possibly built about 1723 but the gable wall and belfry of the earlier church are still standing in the cemetery and much nearer to the castle. Striking features of the present church are a matching stone pulpit and reading desk, brass communion rails and a fine brass 'eagle' lectern for the bible. A most unusual feature, due to the orientation of the church, is that the holy table faces west rather than east.

Coolcarrigan church is modelled on a church at Clonmacnois. Privately owned, by the Wilson - Wright family, it is entered through a lych-gate (one of the few in Ireland). One is delighted by the moat and surrounding vegetation. The stained glass windows in the church are obviously based on designs from the book of Kells while the scriptural

texts on the walls were designed by the famous Irish scholar (and first President of Ireland) Dr. Douglas Hyde. Although the language is English the script is distinctly Celtic.

Rahan. The church is idyllically situated on the former Palmer estate. It is not so inaccessible as is sometimes thought, being seven miles from Carbury and six from Kinnegad. The dedication is to S. Anne, mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary, often regarded as the patron saint of married women. A certain resemblance between Rahan and Coolcarrigan churches has often been noticed. In the church, memorials to the Palmer family abound. One commemorative plaque records that 'the stained glass windows and marble in the chancel of this church have been placed there by Cornelia Prime..... in memory of her mother, daughter of William Lambe Palmer, Captain Eighteenth Light Dragoons'. A window in the east end is copied from Holman Hunt's famous painting 'The Light of the World'. Another portrays our Lord as the good shepherd.

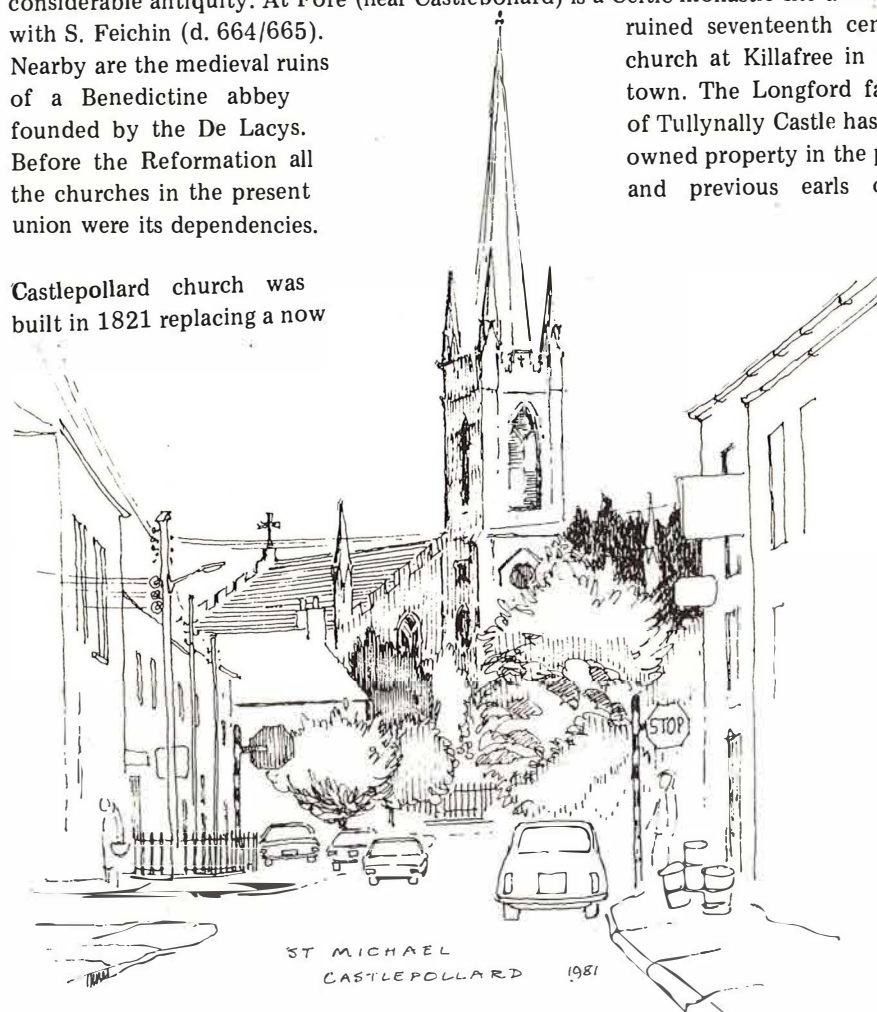




Churches in use: Castlepollard (Rathgraffe, S. Michael), Oldcastle (S. Bride), Drumcree (S. John), Loughcrew (S. Kieran), Mayne (S. Nicholas), Mount Nugent (S. Bride).

Castlepollard and Oldcastle union covers an area of exceptional interest and considerable antiquity. At Fore (near Castlepollard) is a Celtic monastic site associated with S. Feichin (d. 664/665). Nearby are the medieval ruins of a Benedictine abbey founded by the De Lacys. Before the Reformation all the churches in the present union were its dependencies.

Castlepollard church was built in 1821 replacing a now



Longford were closely associated with the church, notably the sixth earl who was renowned for his interest in the arts and as founder of the Gate Theatre.

Oldcastle. The church occupies a position at the highest point in the town. It was built on the site of the original church which can probably be dated to pre-Norman times. There are some fragments of early crosses.

Mayne church, in Co. Westmeath, is on the edge of the extensive bog lying to the west of Lough Derravaragh. Though built only in 1806 it occupies an ancient site. The font, dated 1630, is believed to be of greater age than its inscription would suggest. Octagonal in shape it bears on its sides three mitred heads as well as that of a veiled woman, perhaps an abbess or other religious.

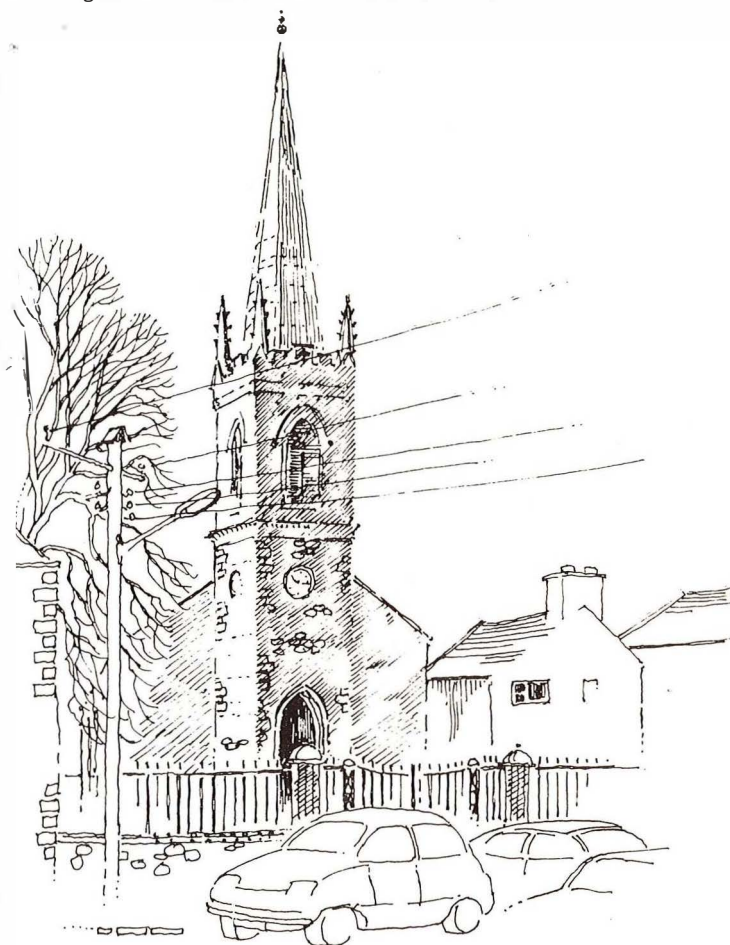
Loughcrew. The old church in the Loughcrew estate lies in ruins. A vicar in the early fifteenth century bore the name of Alexander Plunkett, a name continuing to have associations in the area. Healy describes the present church as 'modern' but this could also be said of all the churches in the union. Bishop O'Beirne (1798 - 1823) was a great encourager of church building and restoration in the Meath diocese.

Mount Nugent, the most northerly point in the parish, in Co. Cavan near Lough Sheelin, forms a boundary with Kilmore diocese. Holy wells in the vicinity have obviously influenced the dedication to S. Bride (Brigid).

Drumcree church, in Co. Westmeath and the most easterly part of the union, was built in 1811.

Some churches in the union have been closed over the years. These include Delvin, the chapel at Collinstown which belongs to the Lyster-Smyth estate, and Foyran (S. Hugh) a tiny church the ruins of which

are not far from Finea. Within living memory the area was served by five Rectors: today there is one. There are parochial schools at Castlepollard and Oldcastle.





## CLANE (Kildare)

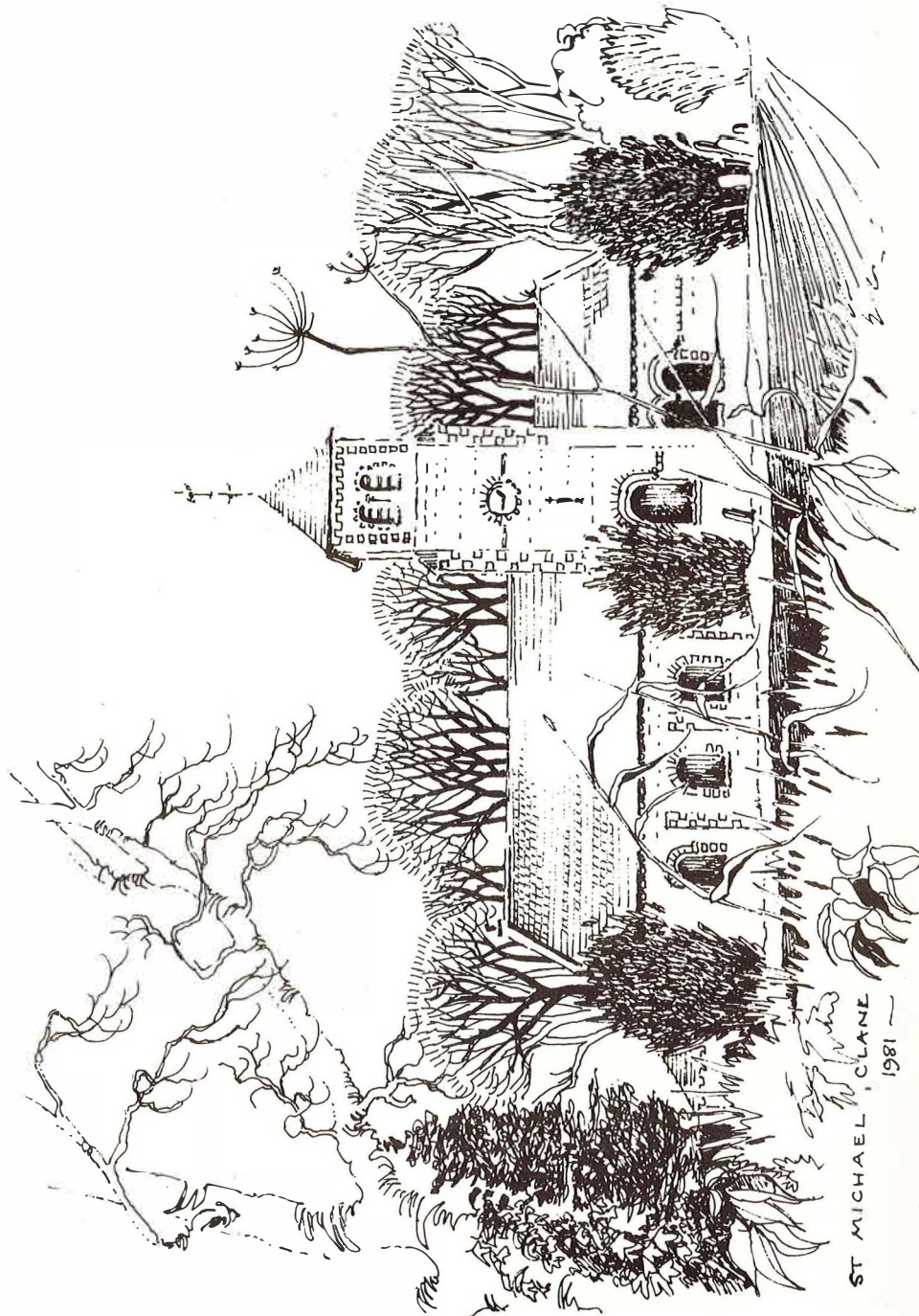
Churches in use: Clane (S. Michael and All Angels), Donadea (S. Peter).

In their origins both Clane and Donadea parishes are said to be celtic foundations. Clane abbey, founded in 520, survived Danish plunderings until in 1272 it was replaced by a new Franciscan convent. This in turn was dissolved at the reformation in 1542. The old church ruins in the village, with an interesting and unusual sixteenth century tomb, are on its site.

Clane (Millicent) church, about a mile from the village, was built on a site donated by Thomas Cooke Trench who lived in Millicent House and who supervised the whole work. The architect was J.R. Fuller and the building was consecrated in 1883. The church is cruciform with a baptistery at the west end, the south transept being carried up into a tower with clock and bell. The church, which is held by many to be one of the most beautiful in rural Ireland, is rich in mosaic, stucco, marble alabaster and onyx. The exterior walls are of local limestone with quoins of Cumberland red sandstone, while inside courses and pillars are of white Bath stone with steps and bases of red Cork marble and granite. Marble from many places adorns the sanctuary and lower levels of the nave. The richly decorated roof timbers are all of Riga oak.

The building is rich in symbolism. The baptistery windows, of five lights, are of Jesus with a child, Noah, Naaman, Nicodemus, and S. John Baptist, all associated with salvation through water. Directly above the font, which itself predates the church and is of great age, is a glorious wheel window with a dove symbolising the Holy Spirit. The pulpit depicts S. Patrick, with shamrock in hand, as preacher to the Irish. On either side stand S. Peter and S. Paul, preachers to Jew and Gentile in the New Testament and, beyond them, Isaiah and Jonah, preachers to Jew and Gentile in the Old Testament. The sanctuary, with its magnificent altar frontals for the holy table, has a finely carved credence niche. More unusual, however, is a marble bason in the Vestry for the washing of the communion silver: this can only be reached when the safe is open and is, presumably, to protect it from being used for meaner purposes.

Donadea church, standing in Donadea wood (a national forest) was consecrated in 1813, the ruins of an older church lying behind the present building. Part of its cost was met by the Aylmer family, the local landlords, and in time past there was a private entrance from their estate. Apart from the box pews the most notable feature of the church is the Aylmer monument removed from the old church. With its front in the south wall of the chancel, but with entrance from the exterior, it is a rare example of a sepulchral monument in full renaissance style and was erected to Sir Gerald Aylmer (d. 1634) and to his second wife Dame Julia Nugent. On the plinth of the sarcophagus are depicted the Church Fathers, SS. Jerome, Gregory, Ambrose and Augustine; above is Sir Gerald, his wife and their two children at their devotions.





Churches in use: Clara (S. Brigid), Ardnurcher, Liss (Lemanaghan), Moate (Kilcleagh, S. Mary).



ST BRIGID, CLARA  
1981

The present union of Clara is made up of six parishes in which, prior to 1927, there were five Rectors. Although the total geographical area is vast, the churches at present operating and the concentrations of protestant population are for the most part so placed as to be within comparatively easy reach of the two towns of Clara and Moate.

There appears to have been a fairly large number of Cromwellian settlers in this district in the seventeenth century and many of the old family names dating from this period are still well represented in the locality. The growth of Moate as a town was largely due to the Quakers whose skills and applications ensured the success of the industries they established. A Quaker 'Monthly Meeting' was held in Moate from 1659. In 1832 Dr Edward Bewley set up as a medical practitioner in the town. A Quaker with a keen interest in agriculture he founded the Moate (or Westmeath) Agricultural Society which still functions and holds an annual show.

Quaker influence was also to be found in Clara. The Goodbody family arrived in 1825 as millers and in 1865 established the jute factory of J. and L.F. Goodbody. For a

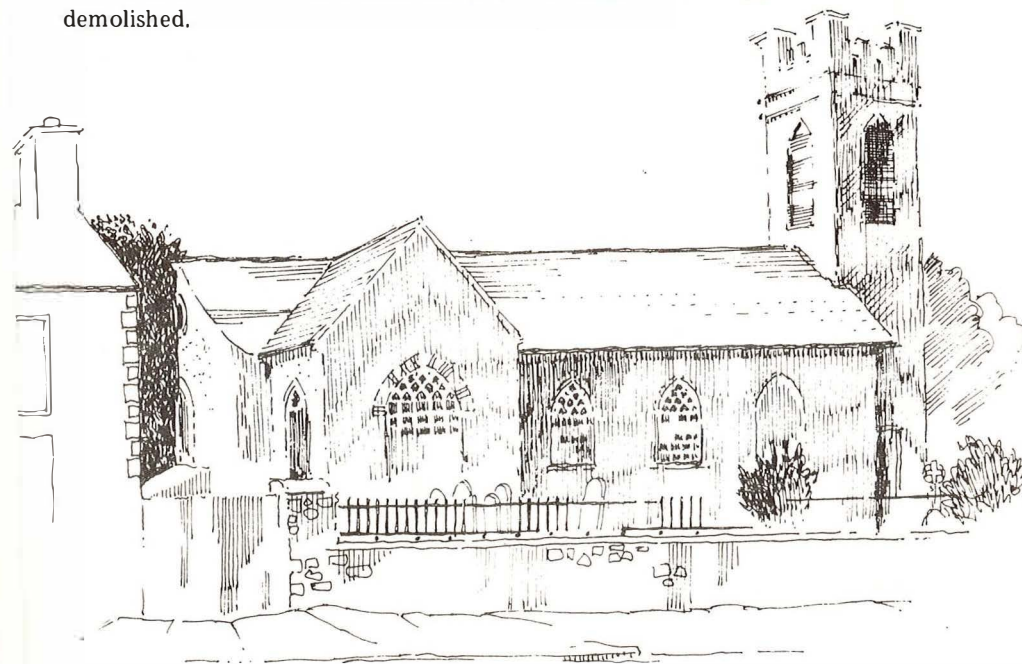
century the greater number of Clara parishioners were employees of this firm. Another parishioner of note was Mrs. Anne Jellico, founder of Alexandra College in Dublin, who lived here where her husband had a mill.

Perhaps the most remarkable rector who worked in the union was the Revd Dr William Maxwell. A cousin of Bishop Maxwell of Meath, brother of a pirate who was later rector of Tullamore, connected with the Revd George Walker (of siege of Derry fame), friend of Dr Samuel Johnston, father-in-law of the hymn-writer Henry Francis Lyte ('Abide with me'), Maxwell was also a scholar of some standing in his own right. He ministered as rector of Ballyloughloe (Mount Temple) and Kilcleagh (Moate) from 1774 - 1800.

**Clara.** The church, built in 1770, is a plain rectangular building with tower and apse but manages to be quite handsome. Its picturesque and impressive setting in trees at the head of the village green has caused it to be listed as a church to be preserved. The brass communion rails and the lectern are particularly fine.

**Moate.** Built in 1788 the church occupies an imposing position in the town. In the early part of the nineteenth century it was enlarged to accommodate the congregations of that time. Cruciform, plain, yet very pleasant, it is the largest church in the union.

**Ardnurcher church** was built in 1822. It occupies an ancient site and has an interesting monument in the porch. **Liss church**, at least the second on the site, was built in 1830. The former churches at Mount Temple, Moydrum and Kilbeggan have all been demolished.



ST MARY, MOATE 1981



## CLONSAST WITH MONASTERORIS (Kildare)

Churches in use: Edenderry (Monasteroris or Castropetre), Clonbullogue (Clonsast, S.Kevin), Rathangan.

Edenderry church, standing on a hill overlooking the town, was consecrated in 1778, the site being a gift of the Downshire family who also presented 'the great bell'. It succeeded a much earlier church just outside the town on the site of Monasteroris abbey founded in 1325 for the Conventual Franciscans by Sir John de Bermingham. Monasteroris is derived from Monasterfeoris, the monastery of Mac Feoris, the Irish name of Sir John de Bermingham. Similarly the name of the present church is also derived from the family: Castropetre is the castle or camp of Peter (Bermingham) a descendant of Sir John. Recent years have seen the church completely restored and fine stained glass windows installed from the closed churches of Ballyburley and Castlejordan. The organ, installed in 1907, is a memorial to John Newcombe, rector of the parish from 1883 -- 1905, possibly the most outstanding name in a clergy list that goes back to 1424.

Clonbullogue. The church is believed to be about three hundred years old, possibly built upon a much older foundation, but parish records only date from 1803. An eminent name associated with the church is that of Jasper Joly who died in 1892. In his will he left twenty three thousand volumes, maps and manuscripts to form a valuable collection within the National Library of Ireland. Many of the items, such as the journals of Captain Cook from 1772 onwards, have been stated to be priceless. Another member of the family was Professor John Joly, F.R.S., a scientist and experimenter with radium (later used in the treatment of cancer). He is also often credited with having been the real inventor of modern colour photography. The church was reroofed and other repairs carried out in 1964.

Rathangan parish records date from 1801 but the present church, dating from 1770, stands on a very old site. An extract from the Visitation Book of Bishop Lindsay of Kildare makes interesting reading about the condition of the church in 1804:

This place suffered much in the rebellion of 1798. Since that time the church has been made a kind of citadel though fortunately it has not been resorted to in any way other than that of worship.... The windows being half built up with loopholes for firing upon an attacking populace, I recommended the Minister to have them covered with painted shutters to resemble glass. As yet the remembrance of the----- (word missing) committed by the rebels is too fresh to be overruled by reason and decency. A middle course seems prudent, and for this reason I advised them by all means to preserve for a time the means of defence, but to conceal it at least from the sight and knowledge of strangers and the female part of the congregation.

Other churches once in use in the union include Thomastown and Ballyburley. This latter, closed in 1972, contained the fine Wakeley monument (a Tudor soldier) now in the National Museum in Dublin.





## DROGHEDA (Meath)

Churches in use: Drogheda (S. Mary), Slane (S. Patrick).



**Drogheda.** Ecclesiastically the river Boyne divides the town between the dioceses of Meath (S. Mary's parish) and Armagh (S. Peter's parish). The present S. Mary's church, built in 1807, is the second to be erected on the site since the one demolished by Cromwell in 1649. Of the earlier buildings, some ruins at the S.E. end of the present church are the sole memorials. The church is surrounded by a spacious graveyard that was once the site of a thirteenth century Carmelite monastery. An ornate grave stone, now set in the south Vestry wall, is clearly dated 1610. The southern wall of the churchyard is part of the old town wall with port holes through it and arched buttresses on the inside. Although the best preserved part of the old town wall, it is now sadly neglected by the Drogheda Corporation with whom responsibility for its maintenance lies.

Slane. On the summit of a high hill on the outskirts of Slane village on the eve of Easter 433 S. Patrick lighted his 'paschal fire'. An outraged King Leary drove over from Tara in his chariot to extinguish both the fire and this obnoxious missionary. The meeting ended amicably. The history of the original church, the direct result of the labours of S. Patrick, begins, therefore, on this hill. But not all meetings here ended so amicably. Slane, like Duleek, suffered its first experience of the marauding Danes in 833 and Dermot, king of Leinster, on his visit proceeded to burn whatever he found there. Subsequent events have reduced to ruins the monastery erected in 1512 by Christopher Fleming, Baron of Slane, and Catherine Preston his wife. These are now the most striking, though not the oldest, of the ruins on the site.

The inconvenience of the site chosen by S. Patrick for the original church encouraged the erection of the present building in the village. It is a small church but beautifully proportioned. Externally a graceful steeple, designed by Francis Johnston and added in 1797, catches the eye. Internally the church is most attractive. On the demolition of Paynestown church in 1960 Slane acquired an imposing doorway which now forms the inner door of the church. From Stackallen church, also demolished in 1960, have come a fifteenth century doorway now set in the west wall, the Barnewall arms on a mural tablet and two stone coffin lids each bearing an ornamental cross. One of the most notable of the rectors of Slane was the Revd Mervyn Archdall who died in 1791. He was author of *Monasticon Hibernicum* (1786) and editor of seven volumes of *Lodge's Peerage* (1789) both works in constant use to this day.





## DUNBOYNE (Meath)

Churches in use: Dunboyne (SS. Peter and Paul), Kilcock (S. Patrick), Maynooth (S. Mary), Moyglare (All Saints), Dunshaughlin (S. Seachnall).



ST MARY, MAYNOOTH 1981

Dunboyne church, built in 1867, is the third on an ancient site. The tower of the first, dating from 1200, can be seen in the graveyard. Inside the church is an ancient font inscribed with the initials S.W./C.E.B./I.W. 1579 linking together the Brady and Weston families. Bishop Brady (of Meath) at this time was also Incumbent of Dunboyne and married Alice Weston. Another font, rather plain, is also in the church and is believed

to be very old. The memorials on the walls belong to the previous church.

Moyglare. This very small attractive church stands on an old site. The altar frontal incorporates a beautifully embroidered old panel depicting the Last Supper on a gold background. The memorials, including that to Robert Shields, in the vestry, are worthy of study.

Maynooth church was originally the private chapel of the Fitzgeralds, earls of Kildare, and was probably attached to Maynooth castle. The old parish church at Laraghbryan (now in ruins) and the chapel of Maynooth were part of a grant made by Strongbow to Maurice Fitzgerald in 1176. In 1770 James, duke of Leinster, restored Maynooth chapel and incorporated in it the east window from Laraghbryan. Also built into the building are carved windows from the Council chamber of the old castle portraying the monkey which occurs in the family crest. The church tower is another link with the past. It formed part of the College of the Blessed Virgin Mary established by Gerald, Earl of Kildare, in 1518 but suppressed, with other religious houses, in 1538. At the back of the church there is a raised dais with chairs for the duke and his family and stools for the footmen. A rather unusual feature is that the dukes would allow no memorials in the church. The pulpit commemorates Canon Blacker (d. 1871) who wrote a privately circulated history of the church and castle.

Kilcock. The old church in the town being in ruins, a new church was built on the Galway road in 1869. It is somewhat similar in style to Dunboyne church but with the addition of a miniature round tower. There is some good stained glass, including the west window depicting the flight into Egypt and the baptism and ascension of our Lord.

Dunshaughlin church was built in 1814 on an ancient site said to have been founded by S. Seachnall, a nephew of S. Patrick. There is a fine carved lintel of ninth/tenth century date. The medieval font has eight panels and is of considerable interest. The pulpit, 1761, came from the chapel of Multyfarnham school in 1930. In the vestry is a drawing of the interior of the church showing box pews and a high pulpit; there are also two fine copper collecting pans with long handles. Recently an orant, one of only three known in Ireland, was found in the churchyard. It is now in the National Museum with a copy belonging to the parish.



SS PETER & PAUL,  
DUNBOYNE 1981



## GEASHILL (Kildare)

Churches in use: Geashill (S. Mary), Killeigh, Ballycommon.

Geashill parish is unique in the present day Church of Ireland in that, by law, its incumbent is automatically prebendary of Geashill in Kildare cathedral. Prior to disestablishment in 1870 such links between parishes and prebends were common - there were eight such in Kildare diocese - but Geashill alone remains in the entire country.

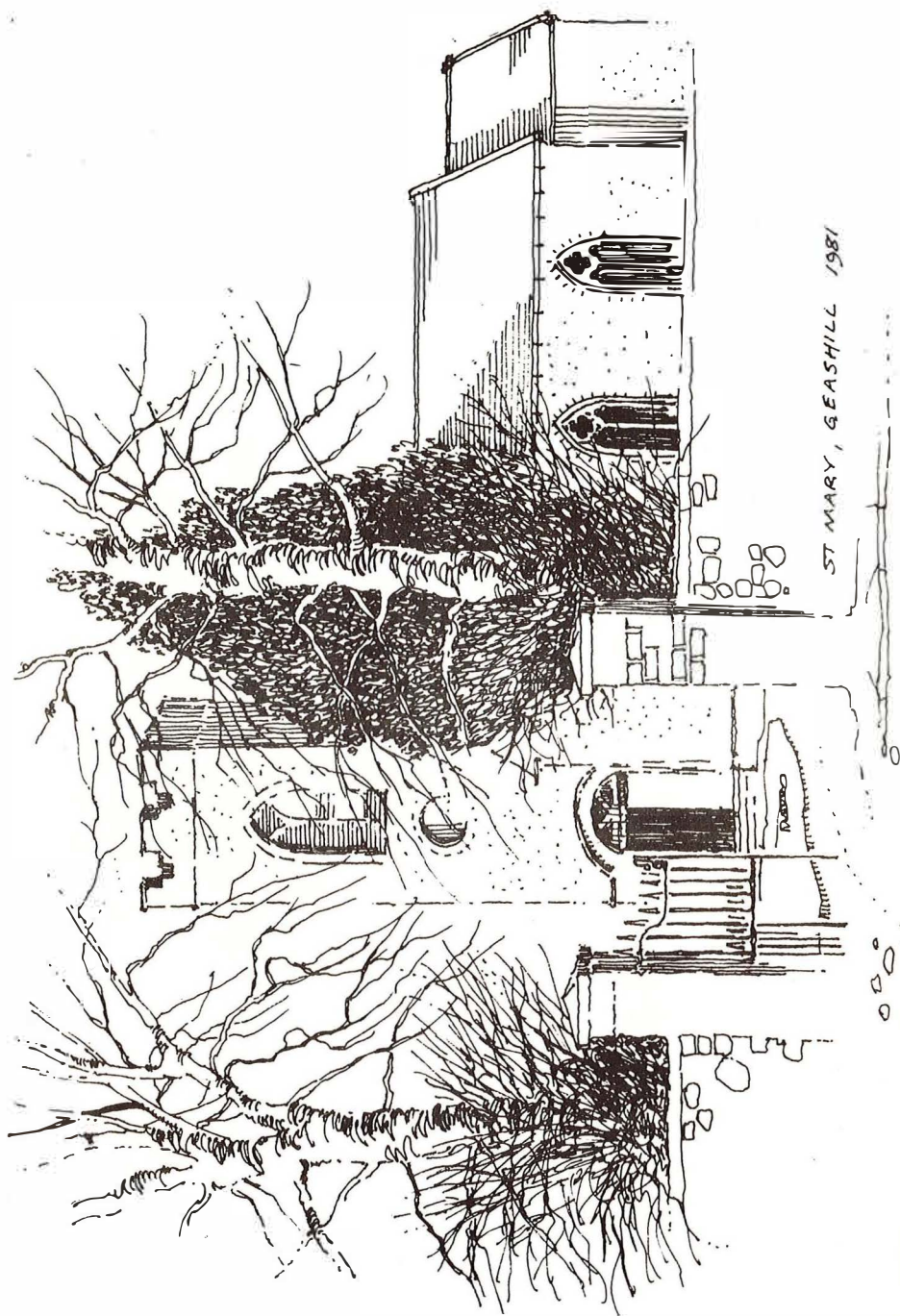
For more than two centuries prior to 1870 the parish had been under the patronage of the Digby family with whom lay the right of nomination of the incumbent. As part of disestablishment, however, each patron was paid by the government to give up its patronage so that the Church could be in a position to frame new methods of appointment appropriate to the changed times. Most patrons agreed and received large sums of money in lieu of their ancient rights. The £4,000 received by Lord Digby for Geashill was not, however, used to bolster up family fortunes. Instead it was given to the Representative Church Body to build up a capital sum for the benefit of the parish on the two conditions that the family retain the patronage and that the incumbent retain his prebend. Both conditions still obtain to the present day.

The church, built in 1815 with help from the Board of First Fruits, replaced an ancient church on the same site. Like most of the period it had box pews and a three-decker pulpit. In 1869 and again in 1891 renovations were made - the chancel enlarged, new pews provided, as well as a pulpit, lectern and choir stalls. The east window was a memorial to the ninth Baron Digby. The church today is in good order since the roof was repaired, the church redecorated and the organ overhauled, all in 1962.

Killeigh (Cill-achaidh - church of the field) was founded by S. Sincheall who died in the sixth century. Prior to the reformation it had an unusual number of monastic houses for such a small settlement - grey friars, Augustinian canons and Augustinian nuns. The present church, which may have been built as early as 1641, is attached to the ruins of Killeigh abbey which are of great beauty. It was 'wholly rebuilt' in 1830 but, despite this, required further major restoration in 1889. Recent improvements in 1962 included new heating.

Ballycommon church, built with a grant from the Board of First Fruits, dates from the early 1820s.

Daingean (Philipstown) was originally a union with Ballycommon. Its small church was closed in 1960 and subsequently demolished. In the churchyard lies the grandfather of 'Lewis Carroll' (the Revd Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) author of 'Alice in Wonderland'. Capt. Charles Dodgson, of the fourth Royal Irish Dragoon Guards, was killed in action in 1803 while stationed in Philipstown.





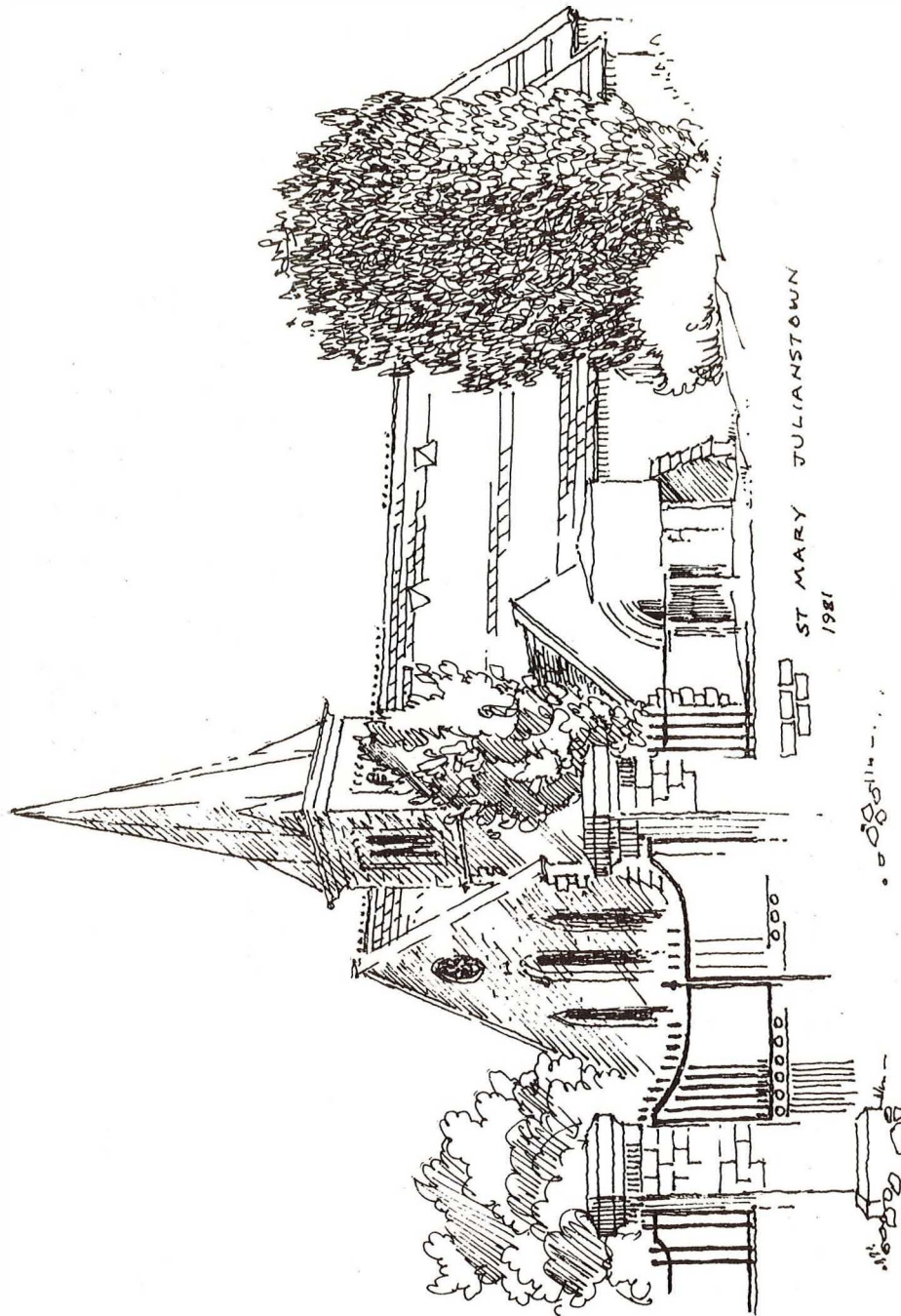
## JULIANSTOWN (Meath)

Churches in use: Julianstown (S. Mary), Colpe (S. Columba).

Julianstown may have received its name from Juliana the wife of William Fitz Robert who lived in the area in the thirteenth century. The 1654 Cromwellian census calls it Gillingstowne. Until the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII Julianstown and Colpe formed part of the Irish possessions of Llanthony abbey in Wales. From then until disestablishment in 1870 the appointment of Julianstown clergy lay with the Moore family of Mellifont (later earls of Drogheda). The parish had two patron days, Lady Day (8 September) from which the church takes its name, and S. Patrick's Day (17 March) which may lend support to the strong traditional associations of S. Patrick with the district. The earliest name in the succession list of clergy is that of William Saundre which appears in a charter dated 1396. The list is very faulty for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but is complete from 1615 onwards. Parish records are complete from 1778 (deaths), 1787 (births) and 1791 (marriages).

The present church of S. Mary was erected in 1770. It then contained the usual three-decker pulpit, had square windows on one side only, and, although there was a large east window, the church, like most of the period, possessed no chancel. There have been restorations on several occasions, most recently the major one in 1910 when the steeple, an enlarged chancel, and an organ chamber with two-manual organ, were all added. In the churchyard is the grave of Mrs Anne Tandy (nee Cannon) the wife of James Napper Tandy (churchwarden of S. Werburgh's, Dublin) whose name is remembered in the ballad 'The wearing of the green'. The rudely carved sides of a box tomb in the churchyard are believed to have come from Ballylethane castle in Co. Laois and to have belonged to a monument, probably late sixteenth/early seventeenth century, of one of the Hovenden family. They were Elizabethan grantees of lands in east Laois or Queen's county as it then was. There is an unusual vessel, perhaps eighteenth century, in the church which serves as a font.

Colpe, according to bardic tradition, is derived from Colpa the swordsman, a legendary hero of Milesian mythology. A large earthwork in the parish, Rath Colpa, is said to be his burial place. Pronounced 'cope' the name has often been used for the whole area south of the Boyne estuary. The present church of S. Columba (taking its name from the Augustinian priory founded by Hugh de Lacy in 1182) dates from 1809 and occupies the site of the priory. Nothing remains of the original buildings but a rather curious stone in the churchyard may have served some purpose in the priory. The Carew family became patrons of the parish in 1603 and the first known rector is Robert Burton who resigned in 1622 from which date the list is complete. The Select Vestry minutes run from 1778 - 1872 at a time when such bodies were responsible for all local government as well as parish affairs.





Churches in use: Kells (S. Columba), Moynalty (S. Mary).

Moynalty church, a pleasant simple building dating from 1819, stands on a medieval site at the end of the village. The well maintained old graveyard slopes steeply down to the river Borora. In 1812 the parishes of Newtown, Kilbeg, Robertstown and Emlagh were united and in 1870 joined to Moynalty. Moynalty itself was united with Kells in 1963.

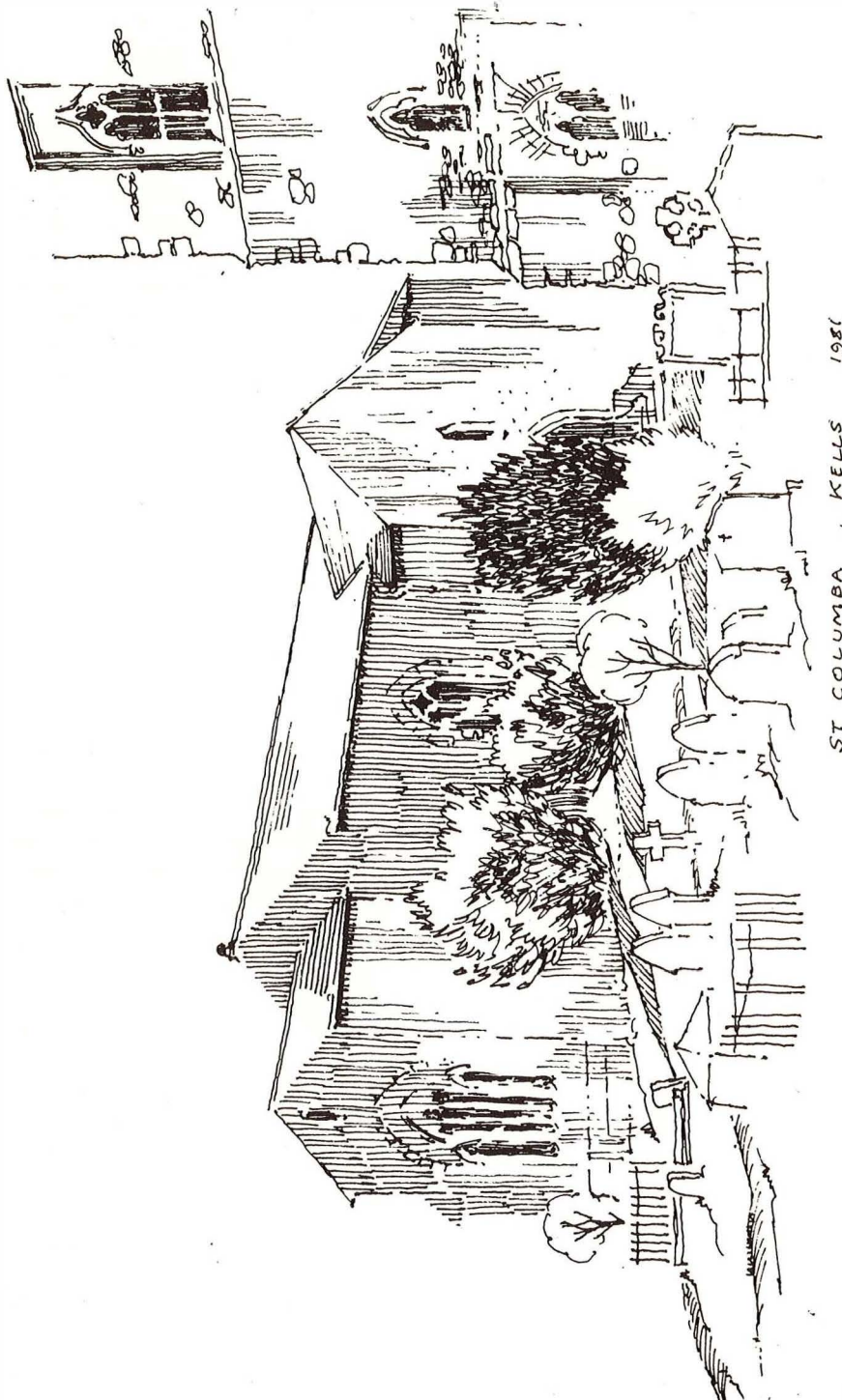
Kells. The site of S. Columba's church on the hill by the river Blackwater has been in continual use for christian worship since 806. The Annals of Ulster record that in that year the Columban monks, driven from Iona by the Vikings, settled in Kells (Ceanannus). In 814 they completed the building of the 'great stone church'. According to 'Leask', the little oratory known as 'Colmcille's House' may be that building.

For over three hundred years Kells was the chief 'house' in Ireland of the followers of Colmcille. Other relics of that period are four high crosses, the base of a fifth, and sundial and a round tower. Whether or not the great ninth century gospel book, the Book of Kells, was made in Kells, it is certain that it was kept there until 1652 when it was sent to Dublin to the Commissioners of the Commonwealth for safe keeping. Subsequently Bishop Jones of Meath presented it to the Library of Trinity College Dublin. A facsimile is on display in the church where the rere gallery has been set out as a guide to visitors with pictures and information about the celtic remains on the site. On the west wall above are three pictures (magnifications by sixteen) of illustrations from the Book of Kells on long loan from T.C.D. Library.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion the celtic Columban site declined in importance but apparently never ceased to be used as a place of worship by local people. During the late medieval period a succession of churches was built and many remnants of carved mullions have recently been unearthed in the surrounding graveyard. The square stone tower dates from the fifteenth century. There are two early medieval graveslabs of considerable importance in the church near the font.

The present church, built in 1778, is a plain building. A spire was added to the Anglo-Norman tower in 1783 by Lord Bective, whose family, the Taylours, still have their seat at Headfort House, Kells. A fine monument of that period, a memorial to Lord Bective's parents, stands behind the reading desk. Other interesting items from closed churches in the area, including part of a font, have found a home in the church.

In the chancel hangs an embroidered banner carried by representatives of the parish on the pilgrimage to Iona in 1963 during the celebrations of the fourteen hundredth anniversary of S. Columba's sailing to the island. It bears the legend 'Volens pro Christo peregrinari' (willing to be a wanderer for Christ): a good motto for present day worshippers in Kells.

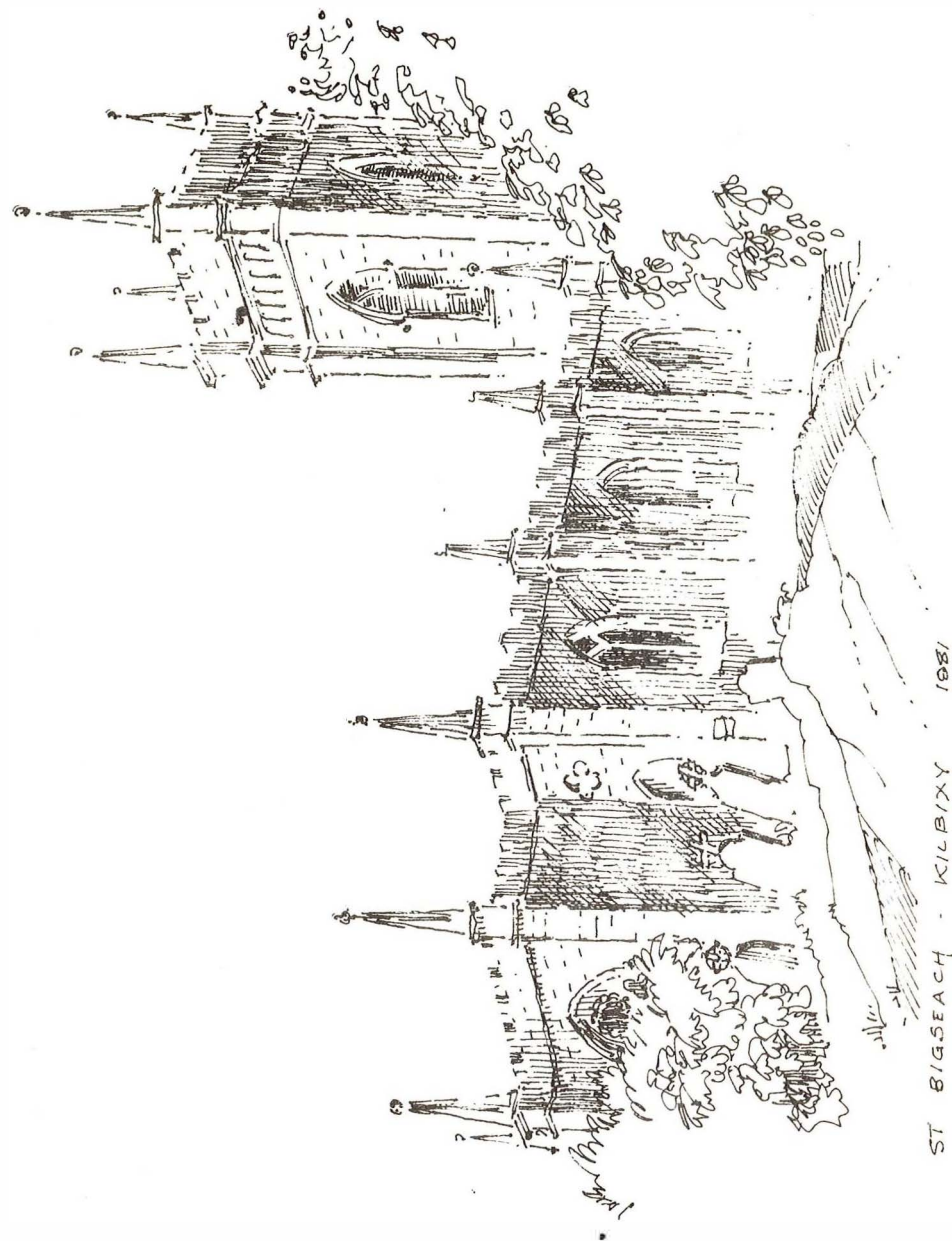


Churches in use: Kilbixy (S. Bigseach), Almoritia (S. Nicholas), Leney.

**Kilbixy** (Cill-Bigseach) derives its name from the church dedicated to S. Bigseach, a virgin who founded here a community of both sexes presided over by an abbess. She has two feast days (28 June and 4 October). Kilbixy had a large church from Norman times when it was the chief town of western Meath. Being an Anglo-Norman citadel on the borders of the pale the town was liable to attack. It was twice razed - in 1430 by O'Neill and the northern Irish and in 1450 by the Mac Geoghegans, and never rebuilt. The present church exterior dates from 1798, the rectory from 1810. The church was very beautiful but in October 1960 the roof collapsed. Restoration being too costly, the building was ingeniously divided: the eastern half became a pleasant little church, with a garden being laid out within the western part. Nearby are the remains of a famous leper hospital and the motte and bailey of the castle of 1192, both erected by De Lacy. The castle was subsequently occupied by Geoffrey de Constantine who founded on his estate the (now ruined) priory of canons regular of Tristernagh. Some distance off is the delightful church of Templecross. Ancient legend relates that a relic lost in Lough Iron was miraculously discovered by a herd of swine which were observed on their hind legs in attitudes of prayer!

**Almoritia.** The present church was rebuilt on the old site in 1816. In 1775 there was no church in use and the parish was under the care of the rector of Rathconrath. The area was so lawless that he was unable to collect the tithes due to him and many of his cattle were mutilated. Receiving many threatening letters he fled to Dublin. Within the parish is the Hill of Ushnagh, meeting place of the five kingdoms of ancient Ireland and fortress of King Tuathol.

**Leney.** The present church was built about 1816 but on an old site probably dedicated to S. Patrick. The former parochial hall was burned down during civil disturbances in the nineteen thirties. It is believed that the rising of 1641 was planned in the ancient abbey of Multyfarnham which had been saved from the dissolution by the earls of Delvin.





Churches in use: Kildare (S. Brigid's cathedral), Kilmeague, The Curragh (Garrison church of S. Paul).

Kildare. S. Brigid (451 - 523), apart from the Blessed Virgin Mary, is the only woman in whose honour an Irish diocesan cathedral is named: such is her importance in the annals and mythology of Ireland. Her first church in Kildare (480) was probably a very humble structure of mud and wattle yet remarkable in that it served a double community of male and female religious and continued so until the suppression of the monasteries at the reformation. The cathedral history, however, presents a sadly uniform record of devastation in which the native Irish must bear as much responsibility for destruction as any invader. The building suffered damage or destruction no less than twenty eight times between the years 708 and 1155!

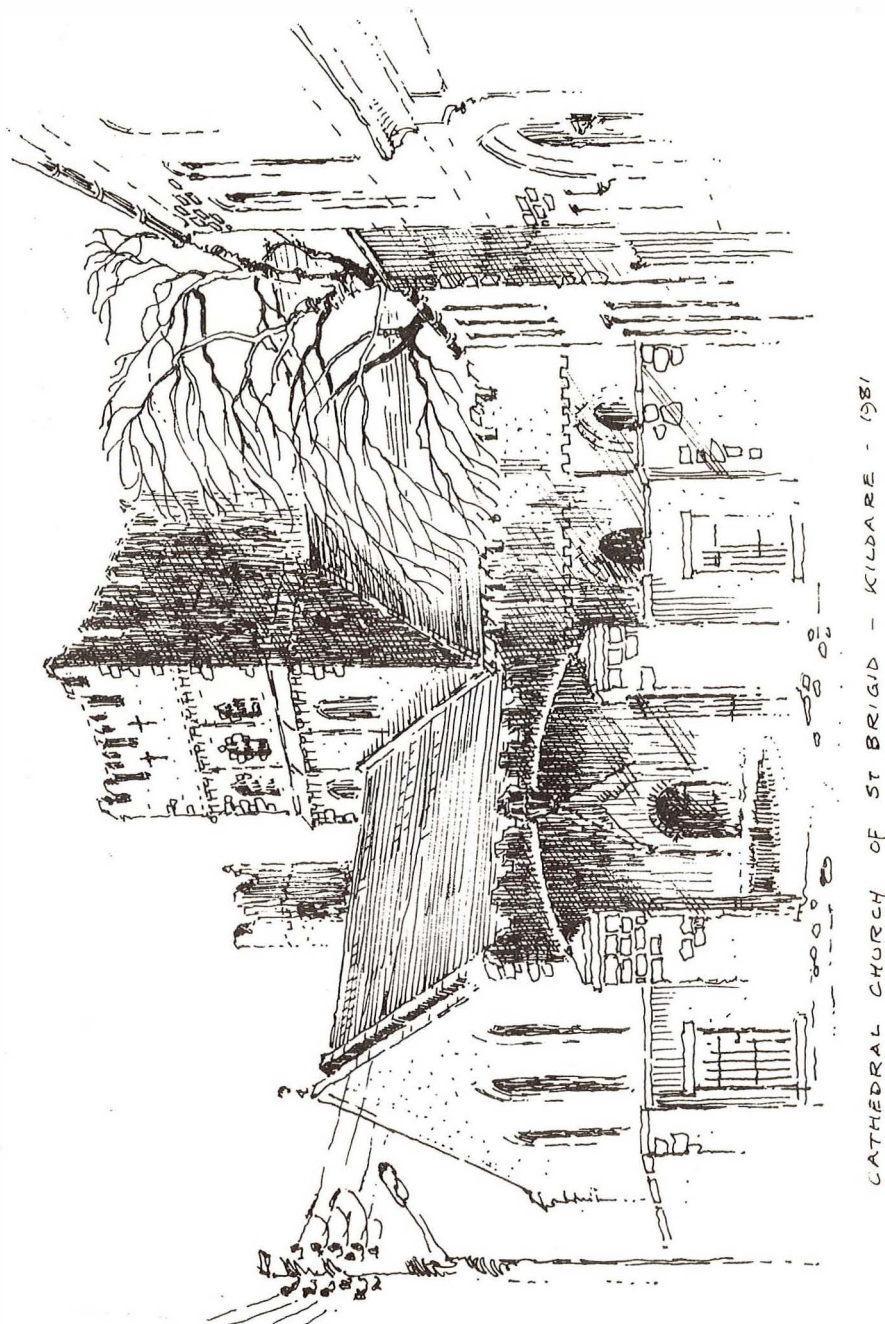
With the appointment of Ralph of Bristol as the first Anglo-Norman bishop in 1223 two things happened: the old celtic male community was subsumed into the new canons regular of S. Augustine and the old cathedral was destroyed to make way for a large new cathedral more in keeping with the ideals and aspirations of Bishop Ralph. Four hundred years later, in 1641, this building too suffered the fate of its predecessors. A poor pro-cathedral was consecrated on S. Peter's Day 1686 (when Thomas Wilson, later 'the saintly bishop of Sodor and Man' was ordained deacon) and this served the diocese for nearly two hundred years. Not until that memorable day on 22 September 1896 was Bishop Ralph's cathedral restored to its original size and design.

The church, because of the vicissitudes of history, has little of great antiquity among its monuments. The overall effect of G.E. Street's restoration is one of simple but rugged grandeur - an effect heightened, both inside and out, by the imposing central tower with its lantern windows. The south transept forms a museum for interesting carved stones and slabs from previous buildings and also for the superb altar tomb of Bishop Walter Wellesley (d. 1539 and a member of the family of the later Dukes of Wellington) which was rescued from near destruction some years ago. The round tower (sixth century base, twelfth century structure) is regarded as one of the finest in the country. Work at present taking place on it may restore its conical cap and thus make it the highest in Ireland.

Kilmeague church, with its tower capped with rather curious claw-like pinnacles, is described in 'Lewis' (1837) as 'a plain building, which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners intend to rebuild'. Since 1961 it has formed part of Kildare Union.

The Curragh. The present garrison church, the second to serve Church of Ireland members of the Defence Forces in the Camp, was the gift of the Methodist Church in 1930. It is a simple building with a bright and cheery interior which is enhanced by gifts not only from the local congregation but also from the Department of Defence. It has formed part of the union since 1978.

Other churches at Lackagh and Feighcullen have been closed, as have Ballysax and Ballyshannon whose parochial areas have been transferred to Newbridge parish.



## KILLUCAN (Meath)

Churches in use: Killucan (S. Etchen), Clonard (S. Finnian), Rochfortbridge (Castlelost)



Killucan church, standing on an ancient monastic site founded by S. Etchen, bishop of Clonard, in the sixth century, was built in 1814. It contains a fine thirteenth century font which was dug up in the churchyard by the Reverend William Falkiner, rector 1892 - 1910, who set it up in the then newly restored church. (It is believed that Bishop Etchen ordained S. Columba).

Clonard, from its foundation in the sixth century by S. Finnian, and until the twelfth century, was one of the most important monastic centres in Ireland. The present church, built in 1821, has an older tower with carved head (perhaps fourteenth/fifteenth century). The font, dated late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries, is worthy of note and attracts much attention.

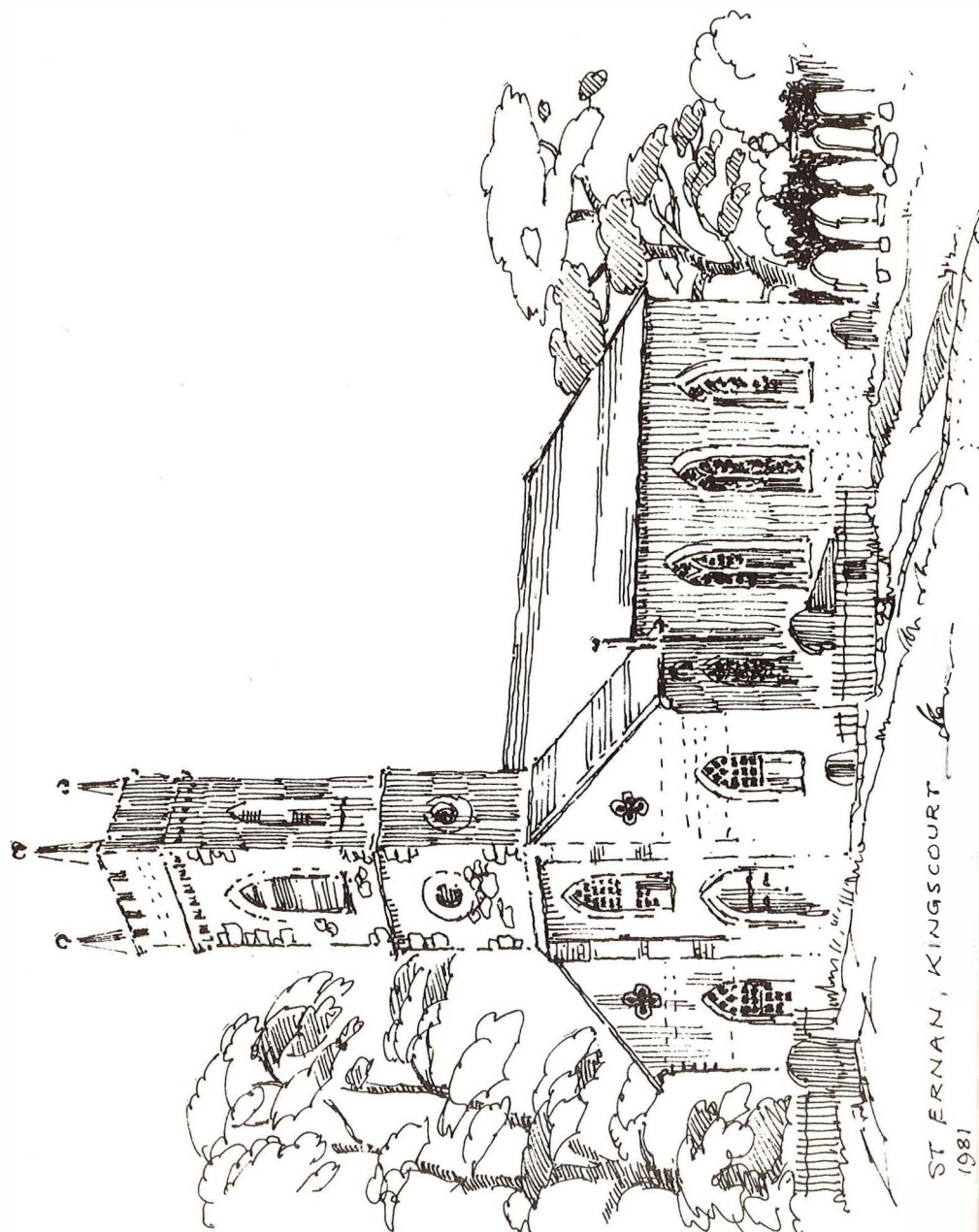
Rochfortbridge. The ecclesiastical name of the parish is Castlelost. Dean Jonathan Swift has considerable connections with the area. He was a frequent visitor to Gallistown House, the home of Baron Rochfort, whose family were generous benefactors to the church over many years.

The parish church at Rathconnell was deconsecrated some years ago and the roof removed. In 1792 Adolphus Cooke, a man well worthy of note, was resident in the parish. He might justly have been described as a charitable eccentric. To this day the Cooke bequest is annually administered by the rector and the Roman catholic parish priest for the benefit of poor Church of Ireland and Roman catholic parishioners. Cooke believed that when he died he would turn into a fox! His vault, in Rathconnell graveyard, therefore, is worthy of note. It is built in the shape of a beehive. At ground level there is an aperture - big enough to let air in but small enough to keep dogs out!

Castlejordan and Kinnegad churches are closed.







## KINGSCOURT (Meath)

Churches in use: Kingscourt (Enniskean, S. Ernan), Syddan (S. David), Drumconrath (S. Peter), Moybologue (S. Columba).

Kingscourt parish forms the most northerly outpost of the diocese of Meath, extending into two (secular) provinces and bordering on three dioceses. Like many, the parish lays claim to remote antiquity and a founding by S. Ernan (died seventh century) but known history can only be traced from 1554, the present town from 1763 and its church from 1780. The church, standing on a hill overlooking the town, has undergone many modifications down the years: first, from the square pews and two-decker pulpit against the south wall, to the removal of this latter into the east window and the making of long narrow pews with 'upright uncomfortable backs'; secondly, in 1866, the opening of three windows in the north wall, elevating the chancel, flooring with encaustic tiles, placing the font at the main door and dividing the old pulpit between the north and south sides of the church; and thirdly, in 1892, a renovation which left the building essentially in its present shape by replacing the old flat ceiling with a pitched roof of pine.

The clergy list can be traced without break from 1723 but one man stands out from all the others. Robert Winning was local Presbyterian minister in the town from 1812 and was, in 1842, nominated by the Crown to be rector of the parish. (The eighteenth century records of the parish tell of stipends being paid to the 'dissenting minister' to care for the parishioners but Winning's appointment and ordination to serve immediately as incumbent may be unique in the annals of the Church of Ireland). He was a well-known evangelical and Irish scholar whose work in connection with the Irish Society in teaching local people to read (using Bishop Bedell's Irish Bible) was to lead, in 1853, to the founding of the Irish Church Missions. Despite being a controversialist of a type unknown nowadays, he was yet respected by all classes and creeds who erected the massive headstone over his grave in the churchyard.

The office of parish clerk ceased at disestablishment in 1869. Many were men exemplary in office but Bishop O'Beirne (1799 Visitation) had hard words to say of some including the clerk of Kingscourt who was 'a well-conducted man, but the worst clerk in this or any other diocese'!

Syddan parish in pre-reformation times was part of the abbey of S. Thomas in Dublin. Lewis records a church built in 1753 but this was entirely replaced by the present church consecrated in 1881.

Drumconrath takes its name from the high rath which commands a view of Dundalk bay. The church, dating from 1766, is described as a 'plain neat structure'.

Moybologue, named after the ancient Firbolgs, formed part of Kilmore diocese and Bailieborough parish until it was transferred to Meath in 1877. Lewis (1837) says that a new church was then being built.



Churches in use: Monasterevan (S. John), Nurney, Ballybrittas (Rathdaire, Church of the Ascension).

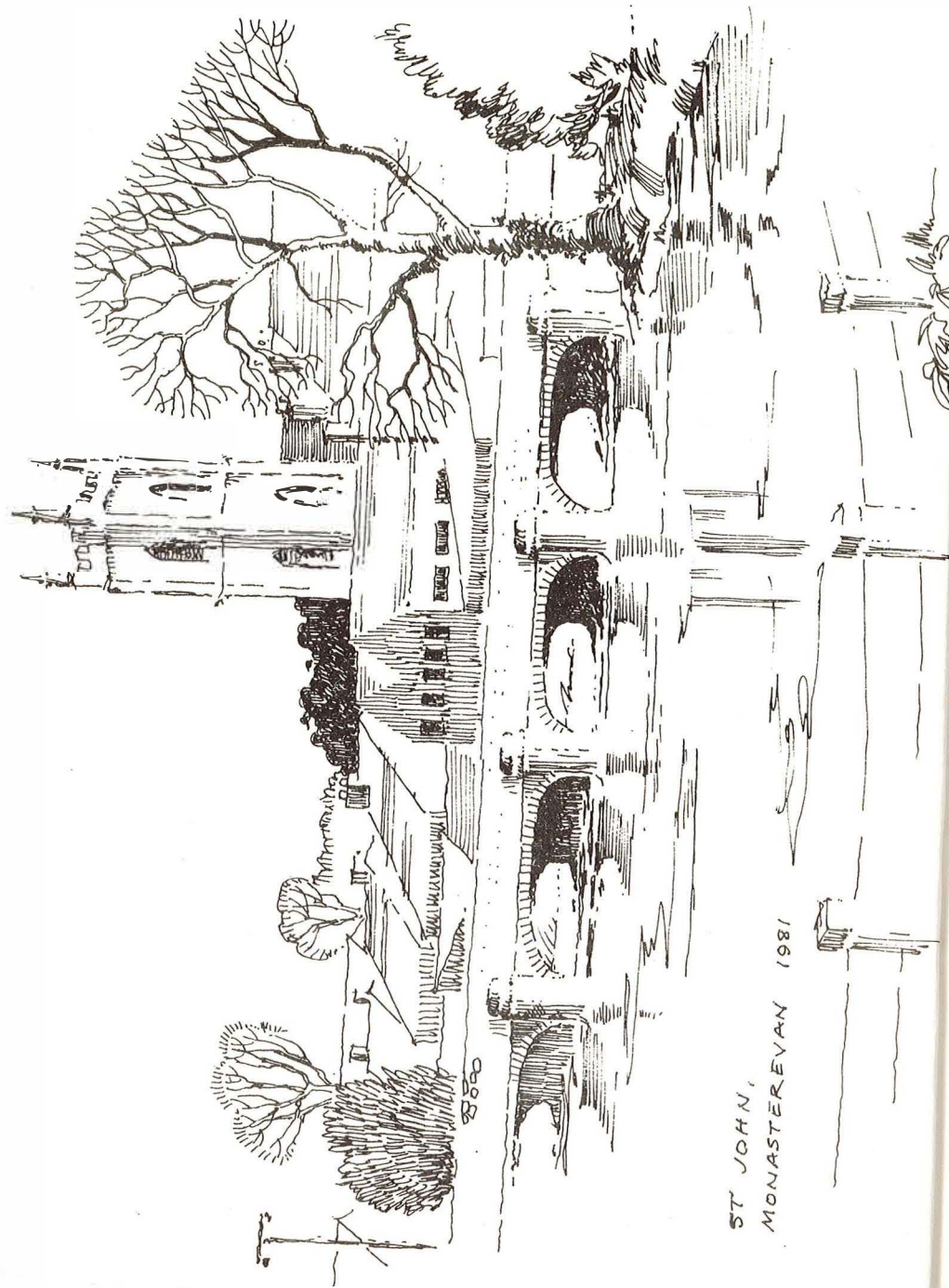
**Monasterevan.** The town derives its name from a monastery settled by S. Eimhin in the seventh century. In the twelfth century it was refounded as a mitred abbey whose abbot sat as a baron in the Irish Parliament until the dissolution of the monasteries at the reformation. The monastic estate then passed into lay hands, first to Lord Audley, then to the Loftus family (Viscounts Ely) and thence by marriage to the Moores (earls of Drogheda). Moore Abbey is now a home for retarded children.

The present parish church, replacing an earlier church on the estate, was (a plaque records) 'built by Charles, Earl of Drogheda, and consecrated May 8th 1772'. Another date, 1826, on the gallery, suggests alterations at that time (perhaps the gallery itself) and this is supported by 'Lewis' (1837) who describes the church as having been 'recently' repaired. The church today takes much of its internal appearance from a renovation at the end of the nineteenth century. Another plaque indicates that 'the Pulpit - Prayer Desk - Communion Rails - Candle-Standards and marble steps were placed in the church in memory of the third Marquess of Drogheda, died 1892'. The pulpit is carved with the emblems of the four evangelists while the font has the emblems of an ark, a star, the letters IHS (Jesus), and a dove. A fine two-manual organ is in memory of the Marchioness of Drogheda who died in 1896. The splendid wrought-iron entrance gates to the churchyard came from one of the Moore estates.

Nurney church, a plain stone building, was, according to 'Lewis', 'in progress of erection' in 1837. Until disestablishment Nurney parish formed part of the corps of the prebend of Nurney in Kildare cathedral.

Rathdaire church is situated close to the village of Ballybrittas which is celebrated for a battle fought in the reign of Elizabeth I between the army of the Earl of Essex and the Irish chieftains O'Dempsey and O'Moore in which Essex was defeated. From the circumstances of the chieftains cutting off the plumes worn by the English the scene of the conflict has passed into history as 'The Pass of the Plumes'.

Originally there was no church in the village, it being served from nearby Lea, but in 1887 the present remarkable building was erected in memory of George Adair and John George Adair of Bellegrove, Ballybrittas. The whole project, in Hiberno-Romanesque style, was carried out by Cornelia, widow of John George Adair, using decorative wall motifs similar in design to those on the walls of the Adair estates at Bellegrove and in Co. Donegal. Over the west door are the emblems of the four evangelists and a celtic cross. The building, cruciform in design, has a semi-circular apse. The whole interior effect is one of great spaciousness despite the relatively small size of the building. The lectern is a memorial to the Reverend A. O'Connor who was a fluent Irish speaker. Cornelia Adair, whose concept the building is, died in 1921.





## MOUNTMELICK (Kildare)

Churches in use: Mountmellick (S. Paul), Clonaslee (S. Manman), Coolbanagher (S. John), Rosenallis (S. Brigid).



One of the largest parishes in the diocese, it owes its relatively high protestant population to seventeenth century Quaker settlers who founded a linen industry and caused Mountmellick to become known as 'the Manchester of the midlands'. The grouped parishes, with neighbouring Kinnitty (Meath), forms the southern boundary of the united dioceses. A modern two-teacher school serves about seventy primary schoolchildren in the parish.

Mountmellick church is the largest in the group and occupies an elevated site in the town. Erected in 1828 at a cost of £1516, the vestry and spire were added in 1870. Before disestablishment Mountmellick was a chapel of ease to Rosenallis. Architecturally S. Paul's is a fine building giving a sense of space and light. Other notable features include the delicate carving on the communion rails and the brass candelabra-style form of lighting.

Coolbanagher church would be considered a remarkable building in any parish. Replacing a church destroyed by fire in 1779, James Gandon (architect of the Four

Courts and the Custom House in Dublin) designed S. John's at the invitation of Lord Carlow and saw it consecrated in 1785. Subsequent alterations in a different style were the high Victorian chancel (1869) and the pitched wooden roof which replaced the original barrel-vault roof in 1870. Within the church may be seen a drawing by Gandon of his proposed interior and included in it are the Dean of Kildare (Robert King), Lord Portarlington and Gandon himself. The unusual and richly ornamented font was acquired for the church in 1936/7 by the then rector, the Revd Dudley Fletcher. It had been found on a rockery in Emo Park and may have come from the vanished medieval church of Ardrea. In 1967 the interior was restored and the exterior replastered while in 1980 classical-style urns similar to Gandon's originals were placed in the niches in the walls.

Rosenallis. On a raised site at the entrance to the village stands S. Brigid's church, where the saint is supposed to have founded a settlement. The church, built in 1797, and with tower and spire added in 1816, cost £1155. Major repairs in 1980 cost parishioners (generously supported by Roman catholic neighbours) no less than £14,000. In the churchyard lies Roger Byrne, reputedly the heaviest man in Ireland. His headstone reads that his 'coffin and contents weighed fifty two stones. He died in his fifty fourth year'. Half a mile from the church is an old Quaker burial ground in which is buried William Edmundson 'the first member of the Society of Friends who settled in Ireland'. He died in 1712.

Clonaslee church is situated at the foothills of the Slieve Bloom mountains and occupies a prominent site at the head of the village. The original foundation dates from the seventh century but the present church was built in 1814 at a cost of £1015.





## MULLINGAR (Meath)

Churches in use: Mullingar (All Saints), Portnashangan (S. Mary), Moyliscar (S. Nicholas).

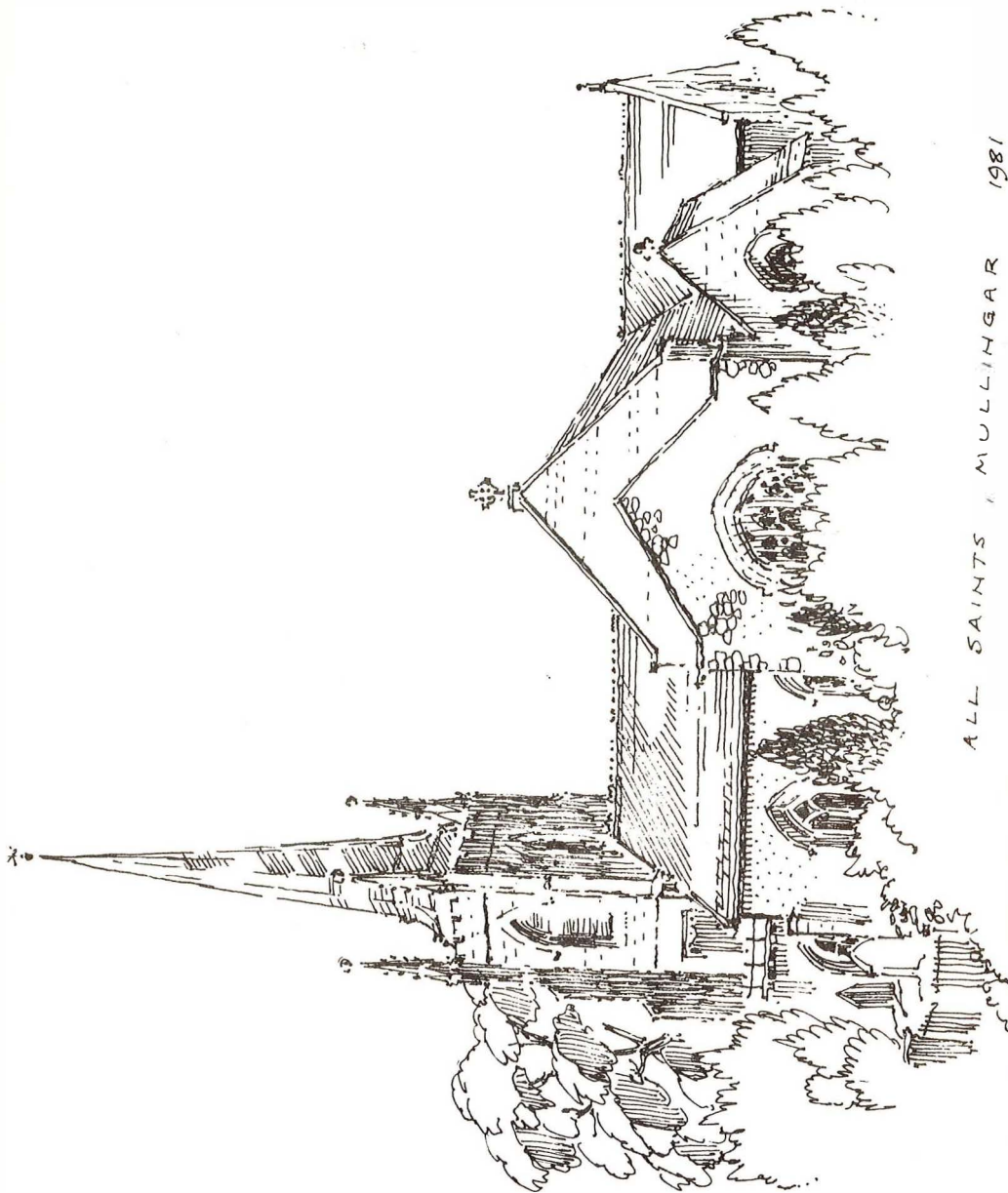
Mullingar. The church of All Saints is first mentioned in 1202. It was subsequently incorporated in the Augustinian priory of S. Mary which was established in the vicinity by Ralph le Petit, bishop of Meath. A list of rectors and vicars dates back to 1343.

A report in 1662 states that 'the Church is reasonably repayed; the chauncel is ruinous'. A major reconstruction took place between 1679 and 1682 when some of the stonework of the old priory was used in the building. This structure, which had a thatched roof, continued in use until 1814 when it was enlarged by the addition of transepts, a spire being added to the tower. It was also at this time that the present rectory was built adjacent to the church grounds.

In 1860 during the incumbency of the Reverend John Hopkins the seating capacity was extended by the construction of galleries in the transepts and the addition of a vestry room. Hopkins died in 1864 and the large and colourful east window is a memorial to him erected by the parishioners. He was succeeded by the Reverend John Parsons Reichel, D.D., who later became bishop of Meath. It was during his time that a large bell was installed in the tower to replace two smaller ones in use since 1722. It was said of this bell that 'it is a larger and finer bell than any Church has in Ireland and perhaps in England too'. Weighing forty two hundredweight it is inscribed 'John Parsons Reichel, Vicar, J. Murphy, Founder, Dublin, Glory to God in the highest'. In 1876, when Dr Francis Swift, Dean of Clonmacnois, was rector, the church was completely refurnished, the galleries removed and modern seating installed. The fine parochial hall at the church gate was built in 1888 mainly through the munificence of the Dean and other members of the Swift family.

The church contains some fine stained glass windows, especially that in the south transept depicting the Ascension. It is a memorial to Dean Swift erected by his wife Charlotte. A restoration of the church begun in 1960 is now almost complete and many improvements have been made both to the building and to the surrounding churchyard. The removal of plasterwork from the interior has revealed some interesting features including evidence of previous design and alteration. The considerable cost involved has been borne almost entirely by the voluntary subscriptions of the parishioners and townspeople of Mullingar.

Mullingar parish formerly contained four other churches or chapels of ease at Balliclin, Kenny, Hopestown and Church Island, the ruins of which can be seen today. It was not until 1944 that a union of parishes took place when Portnashangan (built in 1824 and still retaining the royal arms of William IV), with Portloman and Taughmon were added to Mullingar. The closed church of Taughmon (S. Munna) is preserved by the Board of Works. It is extremely old and has a stone roof which was badly cracked before 1730 and is still causing problems two centuries later. In the early eighteenth century the clergyman lived inside the steeple. The Georgian rectory, later sold, was reputed to be badly haunted and a room was at one time bricked up. In 1958 Moyliscar (the gift of Mrs. Ann Marie Tottenham in 1880) and Enniscoffey also became part of the union.



Churches in use: Naas (S. David), Kill (S. John), Rathmore (S. Columbkille).

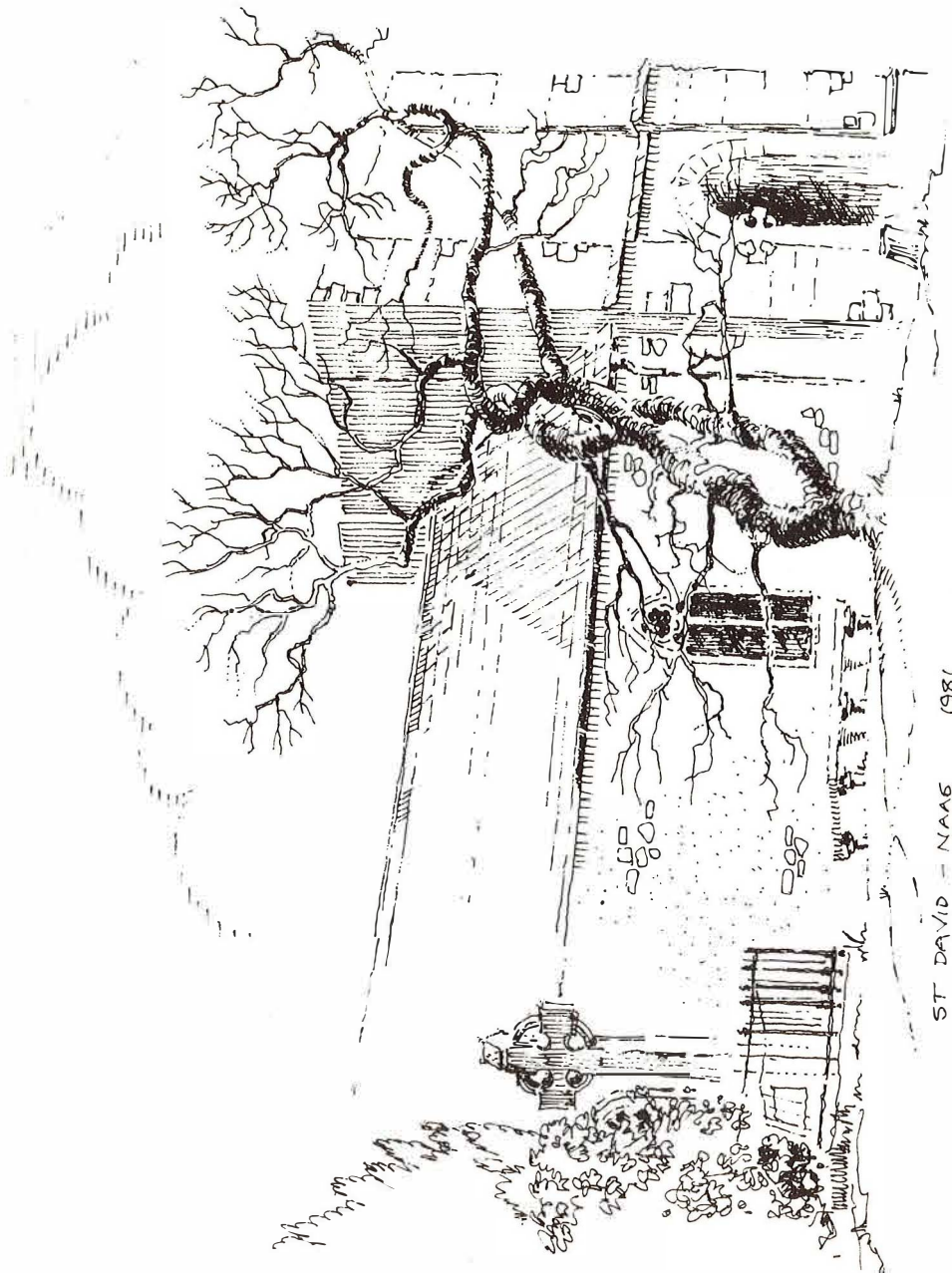
Naas, to the modern traveller journeying to Cork or Waterford, has the appearance of being a nineteenth century market town with but little history. Nothing could be further from the truth and it is indeed astonishing that so little of its former glory has survived. For Naas (Nas na Riogh) was a royal and historic town, the capital of the kings of Leinster and the scene of many great events in the history of county Kildare. Before the reformation no fewer than four great churches with their ancillary buildings dominated the town. Only one of them remains - the present parish church of S. David. Totally vanished are the churches of the Augustinian canons regular and of the Augustinian and Dominican friars. Of the great houses that must once have known the sounds of revelry only S. David's castle (until recent years the old rectory) now remains.

The barony of Naas was granted by Henry II to William Fitzgerald in the year 1176 and about that time the first church must have been built. Its dedication to S. David probably suggests Welsh settlers among the Anglo-Normans. The ancient baptismal font in the present church is a superb example of early thirteenth century work and was probably contemporaneous with the earlier building.

The present barn-type church with its chancel is only a fragment of its former glory. In pre-reformation times the church was of considerable size and dignity and was endowed with great possessions. Sufficient fragments of architectural details remain to attest to this. For example, on the north side of the church there are two ancient window openings, both, until recently, fitted with wooden window sashes which occupied the position of what should have been stone tracery. Whitewash further concealed the details of the columns and capitals, yet also fortuitously preserved them for a modern restoration (a memorial to the Earl of Mayo) which could pay anxious regard to their authenticity of style. Characteristics in the mouldings of the capitals suggest links with Christ Church cathedral in Dublin and thus a late twelfth century date.

Kill church is a pleasant building (1821) with tower and spire occupying a dominant position in the village. A notable interior feature is its fine chamber organ (a gift of the late Lady Mayo) which has reversed black and white notes.

Rathmore church is a simple mid eighteenth century building, situated, as its name implies, beside a rath of exceptionally fine proportions.





Churches in use: Navan (S. Mary), Donaghpatrick (S. Patrick), Kentstown (S. Mary), Tara (S. Patrick).

The area covered by the union contains sites going back right to the very founding of Christianity in Ireland.

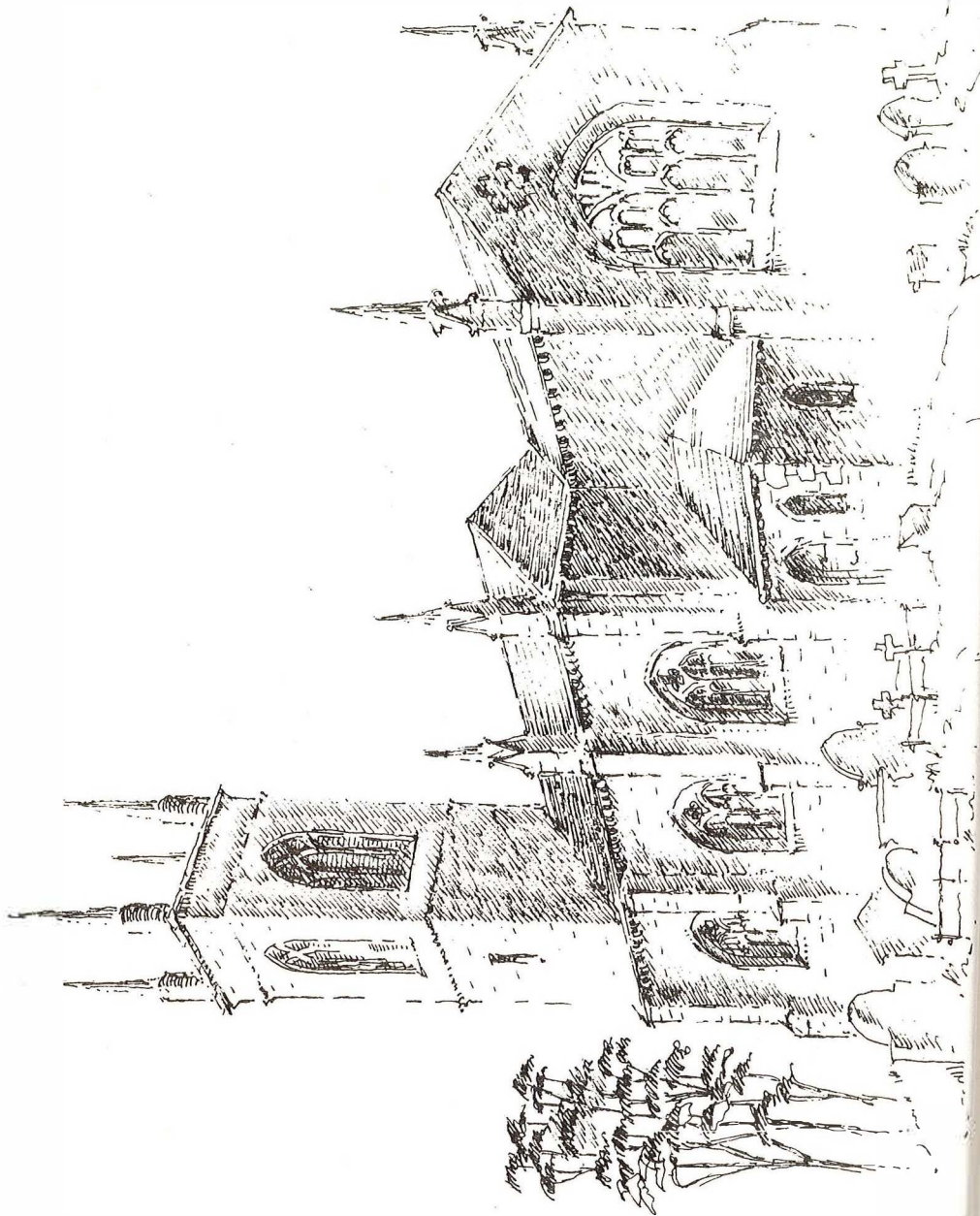
Donaghpatrick church, beside the river Blackwater, has a fine tower dating from Norman times but the remainder of the very attractive building is Victorian, being completed in 1897. In the church are a fine bell and font, with memorials to the Everard family in the porch. The grounds contain souterrains (artificially-made underground chambers possibly pre-Christian) and standing stones (Tara also has these) as well as a medieval font.

Tara, the seat of the ancient Irish High Kings, has had a succession of churches on its site. The present church, completed in 1823, replaced a much larger building.

Kentstown. This attractive church has a fine interior and a good pipe organ. The Somerville family have had a long connection with the building: the first baron built the tower in 1799 and the family is well represented in stained glass, especially in the circular east window. The effigial slab of Sir Thomas de Tuile (ob. 1363) is of very great interest for its illustration of costume and hair-style of the period and there are also interior wall monuments of note.

Navan, the largest and principal church in the union, gets its dedication, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the Norman abbey which succeeded a celtic monastery where the Boyne and Blackwater rivers meet. After the dissolution of the monasteries the chapel of the old abbey continued to be used until its total destruction in the 1641 rising. The new church was erected early in the eighteenth century, probably on the site of one of the ancient parish churches of the abbey. In 1747 the Huguenot, Daniel Cornelius Beaufort, became rector. He was succeeded by his son Daniel Augustus (father of Sir Francis inventor of the Beaufort wind scale) who retained the living until 1818. In his time first the tower and then the much enlarged church, with its fine ceiling and medieval font, were built.

The parish records of all these churches, and of others once in use but now closed, make interesting reading. Ardraccon was the parish church for the palace of the bishops of Meath: now it is closed and its bells stolen, but its interior furnishings have been given new life in the church at Florencecourt, Co. Fermanagh, restored after a fire. Since 1950 three other churches, Lismullen, Castletown Kilpatrick and Kilshine have also been closed. Preston (secondary) School moved from the town to join with Wilson's Hospital at Multyfarnham in 1969 but a fine modern national school with growing numbers now serves the parish.





Churches in use: Newbridge (S. Patrick), Carnalway (S. Patrick), Kilcullen (S. John).

Newbridge church, with tower and spire, was built in 1828 in the early English style, the semi-circular apse with fan shaped roof being added in 1870. The apse windows are the gift of Lt. George J. Playfair, RHA, in memory of his wife Lucy Osborne who died aged 22, in 1877. Another memorial to a young wife, Margaret Hoyle, who died in 1887, aged twenty six, was erected by her husband Hugh Boyce who served in the nineteenth Princess of Wales Own Hussars. The font and reading desk chair were gifts to the church in 1905 and the fine two manual organ in 1907. Probably the most famous rector of the parish, for forty six years, was Canon D.H. O'Connor, who, in addition to his parochial duties, ran a private school for many years.

Carnalway. The church, a neat edifice with tower and spire, was rebuilt on its original site in 1891. The Reverend J.O. Hannay (the novelist George A. Birmingham) was rector of the parish from 1918 - 1921. In his book 'Pleasant Places' he has written, 'Carnalway Church was very tiny, but very attractive, except for the tower which was older. It was built in the Hibernia-Romanesque style being a copy of the ancient chapel of King Cormac at Cashel'. Among the stained glass windows is a notable one by Harry Clarke made in Dublin in 1921 depicting S. Hubert the patron of hunters and a memorial to John Percy O'Connor La Touche, and his wife Lady Annette Louisa. The porch window, in memory of George and Anne Cooper of The Hermitage, who died together in March 1895, is inscribed with verses from the Nunc Dimittis. An interesting tablet in the north transept commemorates an army officer who fell while charging insurgents at the battle of Kilcullen Bridge in 1798.

Kilcullen, commonly known as the 'Yellow Bog church' is neither in the town nor even close to the site of Old Kilcullen with its round tower, early cross shafts and ruined twelfth century church. The present church was built in 1815. Its circular stained glass windows are an interesting and unusual feature. The organ dates from 1907 and, like the pulpit, is a memorial to members of the Blacker family.

Two churches in the union recently closed are at Ballysax (S. Paul) and Ballyshannon (S. James). Ballysax church, with its square embattled tower crowned with pinnacles and spire, and very attractively sited, was erected with help from the Bord of First Fruits in 1826. The interior has a fine east window of the ascension and some interesting memorial tablets. Ballyshannon church was a plain structure built in 1796.



ST PATRICK CARNALWAY - 1981



Churches in use: Portarlington (S. Paul), Cloneyhurke, Lea.

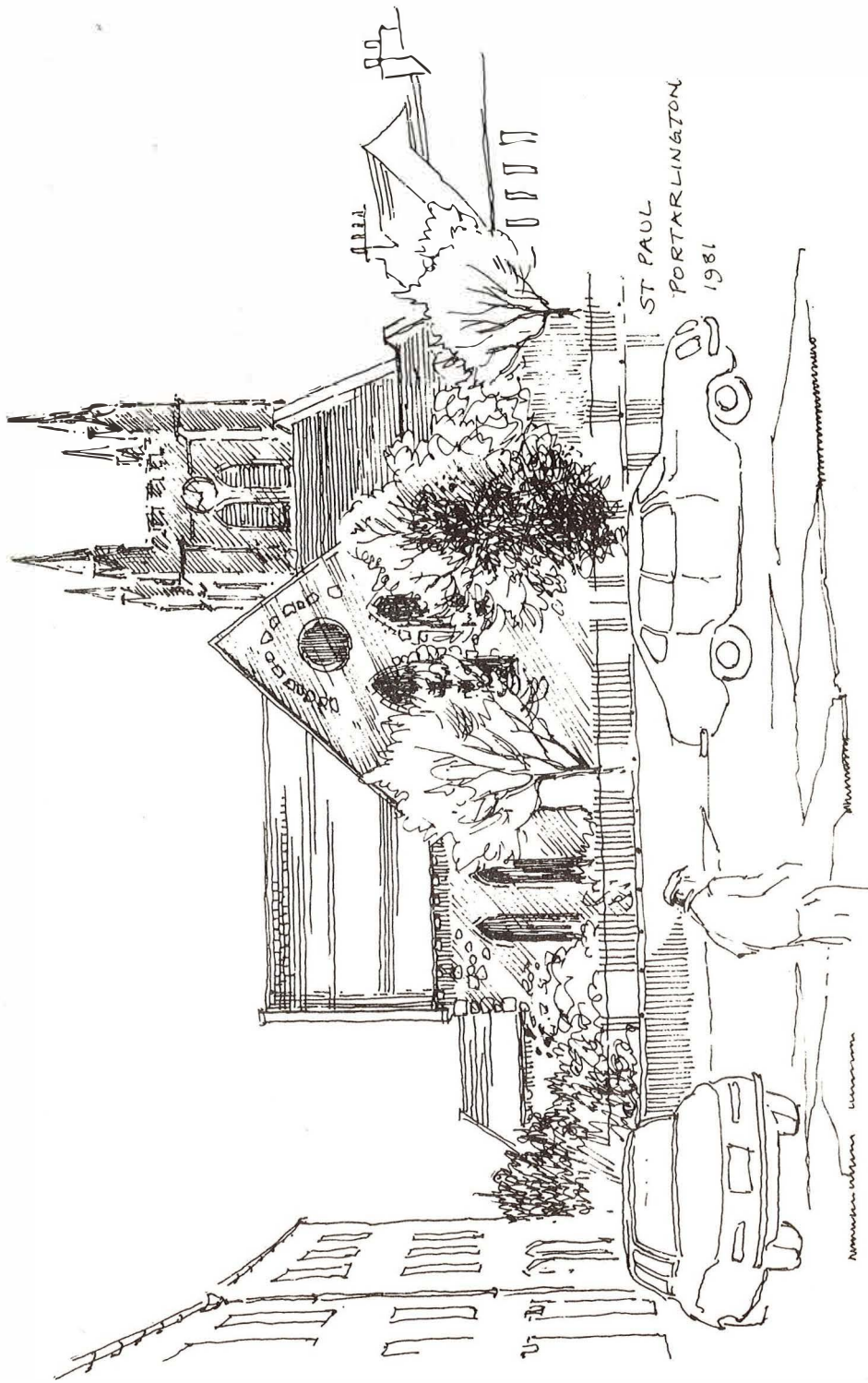
Portarlington. Most Huguenot settlements in Ireland arose as a direct result of persecution in France following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685. Portarlington was different. Here the settlement comprised mainly retired soldiers who came with Henri Massue, Marquis de Ruvigny, and later Lord Galway. In return for his support at the Boyne, Aughrim and Limerick, King William III granted Massue the right to settle Portarlington with his Huguenot soldiers: the first of them arrived in 1694, and records are complete from that date.

Two churches were built by Lord Galway - a French church (now S. Paul's) and an English church (S. Michael's) which is now the parochial hall. Initially services in S. Paul's were indeed in French and followed a Calvinist form. In 1702, however, parliament put the churches and schools, as well as the appointment of clergy and teachers, under the control of the bishop of Kildare, and conformity to the established church (albeit with the liturgy in French translation) was required. Bishop Moreton's letter is still in existence: it caused the resignation of the local pastor, Benjamin de Daillon, and his replacement with one willing to conform, Anton de Bonneval. From then, and until disestablishment in 1870, S. Paul's was a chapel of ease within the parish of Lea. In the year 1816 services ceased to be said in French. A further link with Lord Galway, by this time a Lord Justice, is to be seen in 1715 in his persuading Princess Wilhemina Carolina of Wales (later consort to George II) to donate valuable gifts, including a bell, to the 'Église conformiste' at Portarlington.

In 1857 the church was entirely remodelled and rebuilt as it is today. Unfortunately, in the rebuilding it is thought that most of the graves of the early Huguenot settlers were disturbed and their gravestones broken, so that although there is a complete record of all burials in the registers, there is no evidence in the graveyard of where they were buried. The earliest tombstones only date from 1737. S. Michael's, the English church, was closed for worship shortly after the rebuilding of S. Paul's.

Portarlington, in the eighteenth century, was famous for its schools - of which at one time there were sixteen - and also for the purity of the French spoken in them. It is claimed that the Duke of Wellington and, later, Sir Edward Carson received at least part of their education at Arlington School (now Travel Goods Ltd.).

Lea church was built on a new site in 1809, the older ruins being still visible beside Lea castle. Cloneyhurke church, on a site given by the Warburton family of Garryhinch, dates from 1827 and replaced an earlier church in the townland of Cloneyhurke. Ballykean church was demolished in 1978.





## RATHMOLYON (Meath)

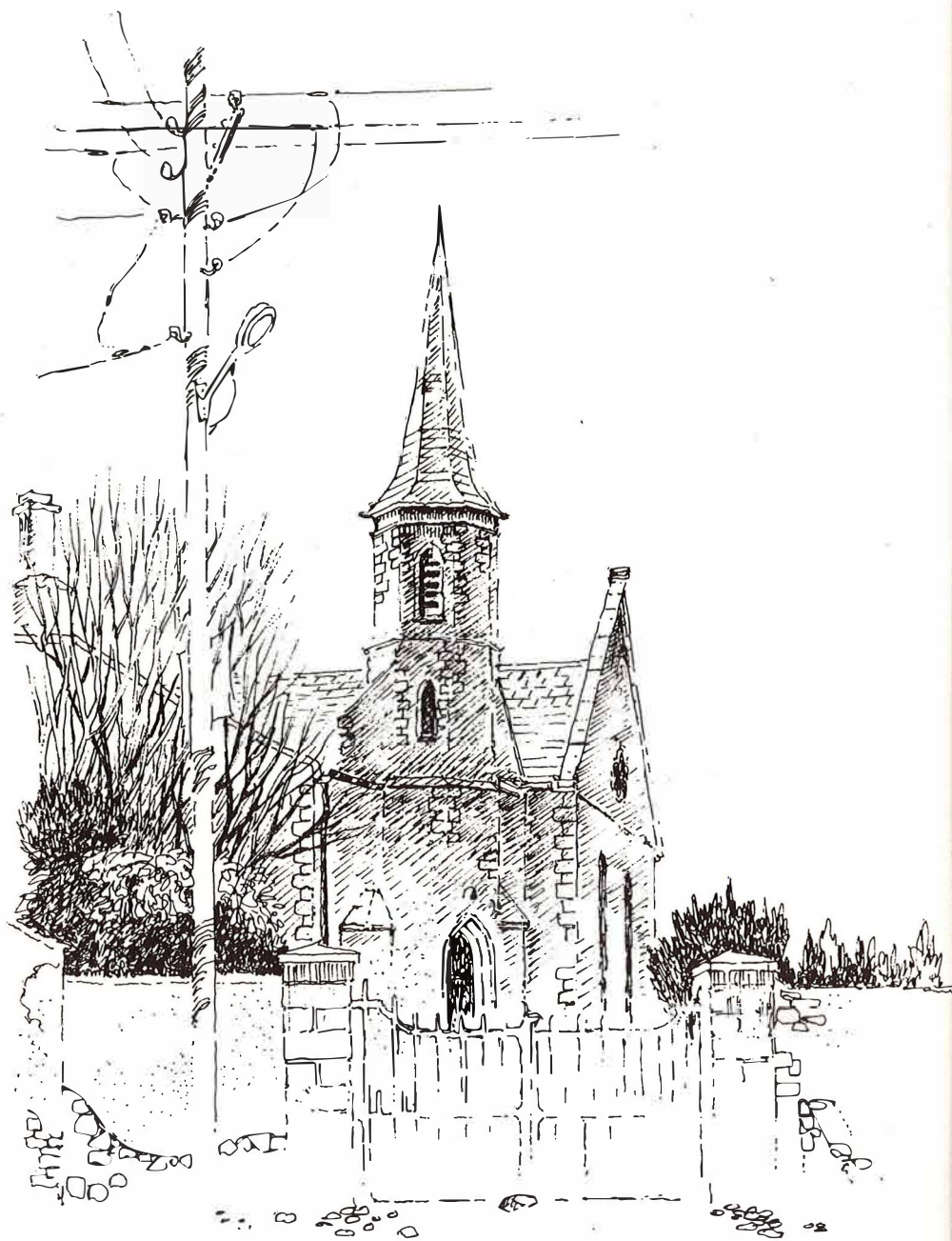
**Churches in use:** Rathmolyon (S. Michael and All Angels), Agher, Rathcore (S. Ultan)

Rathmolyon, the principal of the three churches now in use, was built in 1797 and is a pleasant building in the centre of the village. The interior immediately tells of the best known family in the parish: Fowler memorials abound, commemorating a long line of distinguished soldiers. But the most illustrious member of the family remembered here was a churchman. Robert Fowler, son of an archbishop of Dublin, was bishop of Ossory in the eighteenth century. He brought further distinction to the family by marrying Louisa Gardiner daughter of Viscount Mountjoy. The rather unusual spire of the church was erected as a memorial to the bishop. The parish has a strong Church tradition and a very active school.

Agher church is notable for having had Jonathan Swift as its distinguished incumbent from 1699 - 1745 but no memorial to him remains. The present church was built in 1804 by the Winter family in whose estate it was situated. The east window, made in Dublin at the end of the eighteenth century by Thomas Jervais, is worthy of note as being the second-earliest known piece of Irish-made stained glass. Its subject, Saint Paul preaching to the Athenians (also in Rathcore), is one very rarely depicted. Originally in the chapel of Dangan castle it was presented to the church by the Wellesley family when the castle became ruinous. Interestingly, therefore, it links the church with another famous man - the Duke of Wellington. The Communion silver was presented by Hercules Langford Rowley thus linking it with the family who owned the fine house at Summerhill. This house, now burnt down, was for a time leased to the Empress Elizabeth of Austria. It is encouraging to note, that while the congregation in Agher church in 1804 was forty, today the family service exceeds this figure.

Rathcore. The date of the church seems not to be known. It was certainly there in 1733, may even be older, and architecturally blends well with the surrounding countryside. The interior is enhanced by some rather beautiful hanging brass lamps and is very carefully maintained by the parishioners.

Until recently there was a fourth church in the union at Castlerickard. It was a rather pleasant building though of uncertain date.



ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS - RATHMOLYON

Churches in use: Trim (S. Patrick's cathedral), Bective (S. Mary), Galtrim (S. Mary the Virgin).

Trim. Sometime in the year 433 Lomman, a priest and friend of S. Patrick, sailed up the Boyne to visit Fedilmid, chief of Atha Truim (ford of the alder). There he was given land on the summit of the hill above the river on which he built a crude mud and wattle structure - the first church of Saint Patrick in Trim and the site of the present cathedral. During the Danish and Norman invasions Trim suffered severely.

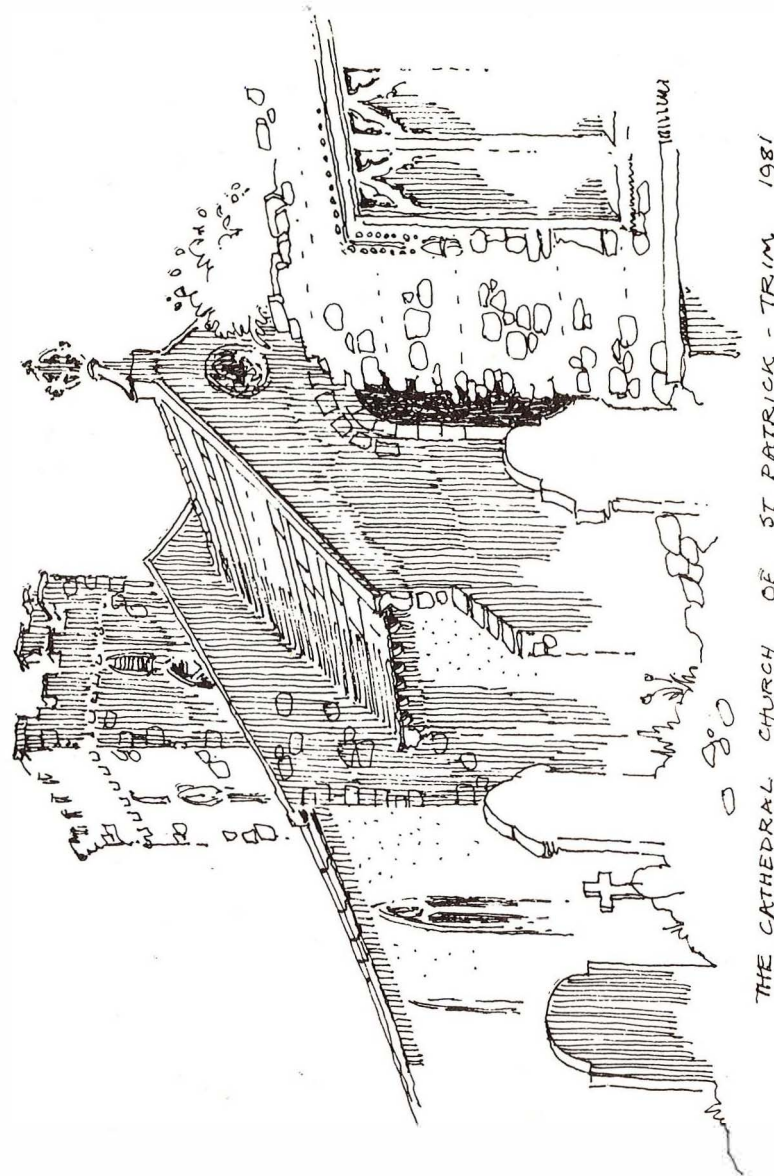
In the year 1111 Meath was placed under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Clonard. With the appointment of Simon de Rochfort (1198) the see was moved from Clonard to Newtown Trim (1202). He introduced the Augustinian order and made their new church his cathedral which it remained until the suppression of the monasteries at the reformation.

Saint Patrick's, the parish church, was taking splendid shape in the fourteenth century, as a window in the ruined chancel suggests. The present tower is dated from the mid-fifteenth century, probably during the residence in Trim castle of James Butler as the King's lieutenant. In 1612 the parish of Trim was annexed to the bishopric of Meath to supplement the episcopal salary, the bishops appointing vicars to care for the parish, but no attempt was made to make the church into a cathedral. The building suffered severely during the 1641 insurrection, the beautiful chancel being reduced to a ruin. In 1660 a partial restoration was made of the nave but not the chancel. Not until 1803, under bishop Thomas O'Beirne and vicar William Elliott, was the church rebuilt to its present dimensions (which are smaller than its pre-reformation predecessor). The present sanctuary only occupies the western extremity of the old chancel but the old tower, still in good preservation, was incorporated into the new structural scheme.

The porch contains a number of interesting carved items. There is a fifteenth century piscina adapted by Dean Butler to serve as a font: on it are the royal arms of England, the personal arms of Richard Plantagenet duke of York, and those of James Butler earl of Ormonde. There are also good eighteenth century mural monuments.

On S. Patrick's Day, 1955, the parish church of Trim was raised to cathedral status thus providing the diocese with a mother church for the first time since the reformation. In 1959 a diocesan hall was built close to the cathedral.

Bective parish was incorporated as part of Trim union in 1935. S. Mary's church, replacing Bective abbey which had become ruinous, was built in 1851. In 1949 Laracor, where Jonathan Swift was rector and which had a good eighteenth century font and some carved fragments of fifteenth-century date, was joined to Trim. Galtrim became part of the union in 1971. Galtrim church appears to have been erected in the first years of the eighteenth century and reconstructed in 1800. The church at Kilmessan has been closed for some years.



THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PATRICK - TRIM 1981



## TULLAMORE (Meath)

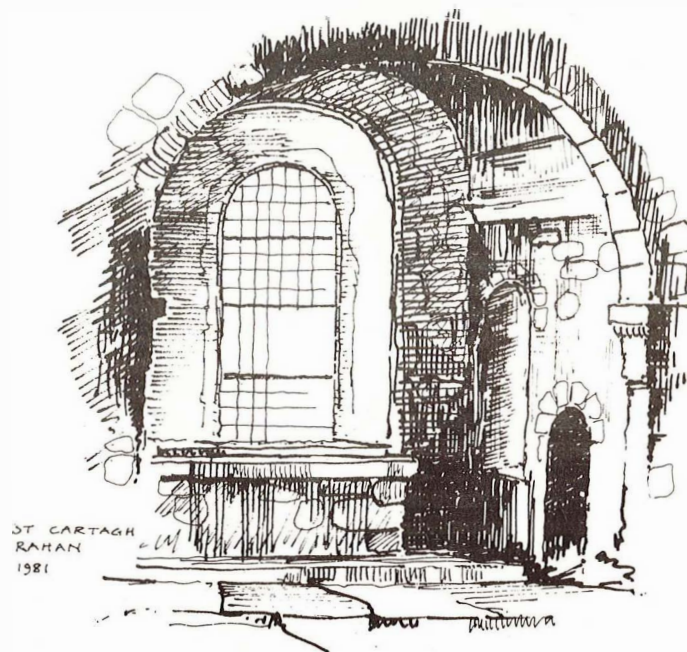
Churches in use: Tullamore (S. Catherine), Durrow (S. Columba), Newtown Fertullagh (Christ Church), Rahan (S. Carthach), Tyrrellspass (Clonfadforan, S. Sinian).



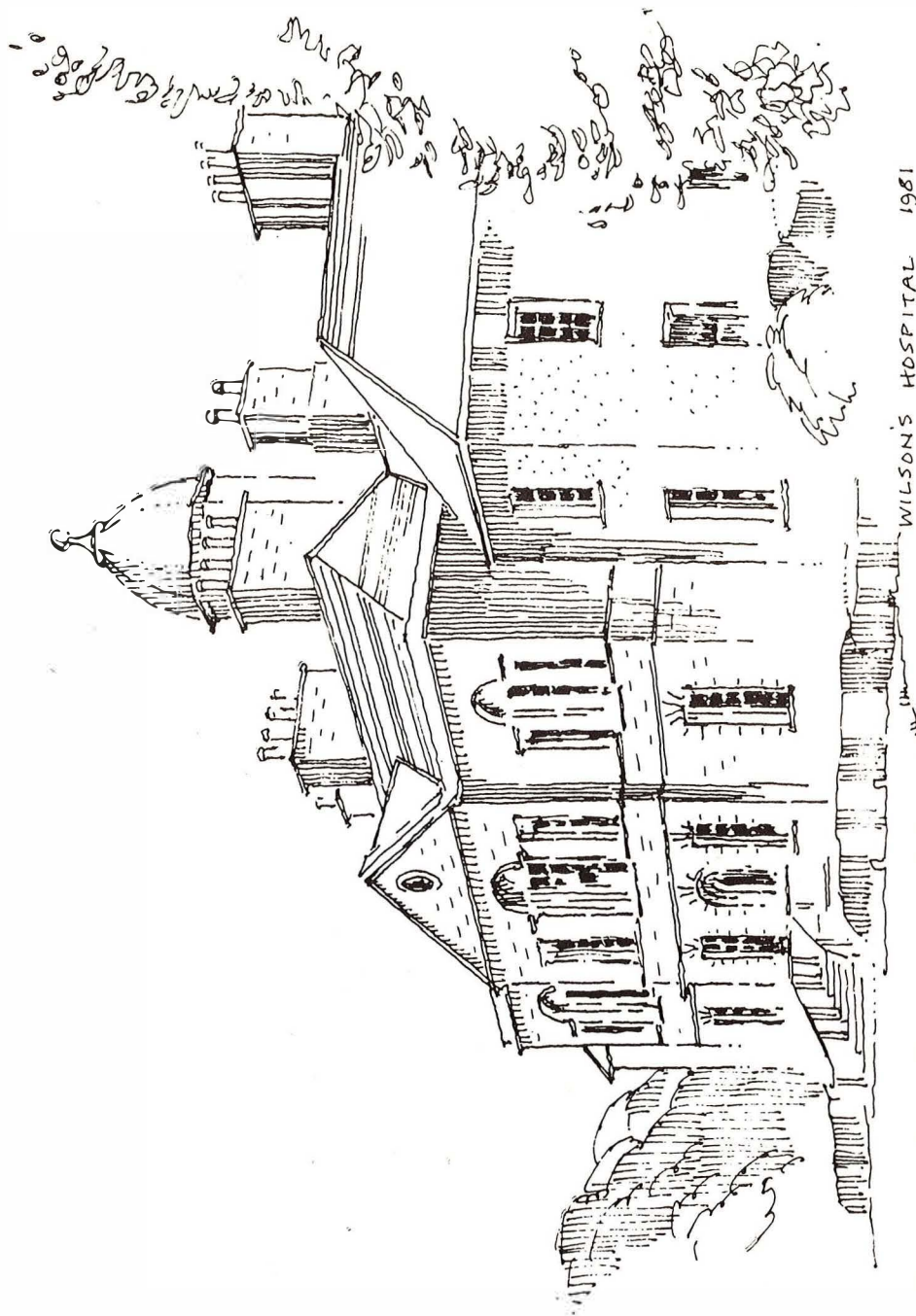
Tullamore up to the close of the seventeenth century was 'but a small place' consisting almost entirely of thatched houses and cabins. It was rebuilt in 1785 after a fire. The proper ecclesiastical name of the parish is 'Kilbride' and the ruins of the old parish church can be seen near the canal at Ballycowan: it is recorded in 1568 that the old church of Kilbride was fallen into ruins. Apparently there was no permanent church in the town for the next one hundred and fifty years until, in the early eighteenth century, the mother of the first Lord Tullamore built a protestant chapel in the town on a site commonly called 'The Shambles'. In 1806 the Select Vestry, meeting in this chapel, reported that the 'Parish Church (Kilbride) is in ruins and Divine Service has not been performed therein within the memory of man'. A petition was, therefore, sent to the Lord Lieutenant and the Privy Council that the 'cite' (sic) of the parish church at Kilbride be removed to a more convenient situation. It is worth noting that the Easter Vestry was still being held in the ruined church, no doubt for legal reasons. The existing church is a good example of how urbanisation moves even places of worship.

Within the vicinity of Tullamore are to be found some of the most ancient and important ecclesiastical sites of the early celtic church: old Lynally (one of the wealthiest), Durrow (of high cross and book fame), and Rahan. This last has two churches, one in almost perfect preservation and now joined to a later church built in 1732. The romanesque building has a remarkable chancel arch and a beautiful circular window. This window gave light to a room between the chancel and the roof, in which the priest resided. Under these monastic giants little Tullamore village was of small import, part of Durrow parish, eventually getting Kilbride as a convenient place of worship. Not until 1815 was the large new church of S. Catherine erected on the 'tulloch' or hill after which the town is named. Built to a design by Francis Johnston it is considered to be one of the finest churches in the diocese.

In 1883 new Lynally was added to Tullamore, new Durrow in 1924, Rahan in 1951, with Tyrrellspass and Newtown Fertullagh completing the union in 1973. Tyrrellspass church, overlooking the village green, has featured in many pictorial calendars. It contains a monument notable for its description, 'gifted with a masculine understanding', but which commemorates a remarkable woman, the Countess Belvedere, founder of the village orphanage. Christ Church, Newtown, succeeds an earlier church. It has some early records and a brass tablet to a warrior missionary who gave Uganda its native bible.







## WILSON'S HOSPITAL, MULTYFARNHAM (Meath)

### WILSON'S HOSPITAL (Meath)

Wilson's Hospital founded under the will of Andrew Wilson was completed in 1761. The whole Hospital is a Palladian complex, the main building comprises a central block built round a courtyard. Curved corridors join this block on the west side to a fine Concert Hall and on the east side to a similar classroom and dormitory building. Within the main building a very fine chapel with balustered balcony occupies a central position. The central spire is reminiscent of the work of Thomas Ivory, the dormitory wing is believed to be the work of James Pentland. The school had an annual income of £2,000 from rents and from this rich endowment was to maintain up to 150 boys in 'diet, clothing and firing' until the Trustees judged it proper to put them out apprentices to handicrafts and trades or callings.

Through time the school became a national school, a secondary school to Intermediate standard, to Leaving Certificate Honours standard. In 1969 through amalgamation with Preston School, Navan, girls were admitted.

In 1798 rebels hoping to rally and join the French force under Humbert took over the school but were routed in a gallant but foolish attack on a well armed company of Highland troops. Coincidentally the television series 'The Year of the French' was partly filmed at Wilson's Hospital: it re-enacted in the courtyard scenes which might well have happened in the historical event. A plaque at the front gate records the original occasion.

The Trustees and Guardians of Wilson's Hospital are the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin with the Bishops of Tuam, Meath and Kilmore. The Warden is always an ordained clergyman of the diocese. The Church connection is therefore very strong. Within the traditional atmosphere change and development continue. There is now the capacity for over 250 boarding pupils, both boys and girls.



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### Kildare

- Comerford, M. Collections relating to the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, 3 vols. 1884  
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 — Reports of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (Ireland) 1837

## THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESES

The year recorded after each name is that of appointment to present office.

- CAIRD, Most Reverend Donald Arthur Richard, M.A., B.D., (1976), first bishop of the united dioceses of Meath and Kildare, translated from Limerick.  
 ALLEN, Samuel Joseph (1975), Curate in charge of Carbury union (Kildare).  
 BARRETT, John Alan Gardiner (1969), Incumbent of Navan union (Meath) and Canon of Meath.  
 BERESFORD, John Claudius William, M.C., M.A., (1954), Incumbent of Naas union (Kildare) and Canon Precentor of Kildare cathedral.  
 BOYLE, Richard Henry, M.A., Ll.B., (1960), Incumbent of Banagher union (Meath) and Canon of Meath.  
 BREDIN, Thomas Andrew Noble, M.A., (1979), Incumbent of Trim union (Meath) and Dean of Clonmacnois.  
 CORRIGAN, Thomas George (1970), Incumbent of Kingscourt union (Meath) and Archdeacon of Meath.  
 CRAWFORD, Arthur Edward, M.A., (1966), Incumbent of Clara union (Meath).  
 DAY, Philip Maurice, M.A., H.Dip.Ed., (1976), Incumbent of Mountmellick union (Kildare) and Canon of Kildare cathedral.  
 DURAND, Sir Henry Mortimer Dickon Marion, (1979), Bishop's Curate of Kilbixy union (Meath).  
 FINNEY, Charles William, (1972), Incumbent of Clonsast union (Kildare) and Archdeacon of Kildare.  
 FLINN, John Robert Patrick, (1976), Incumbent of Castlepollard and Oldcastle union (Meath).  
 GILLMOR, Samuel Frederick, (1979), Incumbent of Clane union (Kildare).  
 HAMMOND, James Francis, (1979), Incumbent of Dunboyne union (Meath).  
 HENEY, William Butler, (1973), Incumbent of Newbridge union (Kildare) and Canon Treasurer of Kildare cathedral.  
 HUDSON, Thomas George, B.A., (1972), Incumbent of Monasterevan union (Kildare).  
 JACOB, Joseph, (1980), Incumbent of Geashill union (Kildare) and Prebendary of Geashill in Kildare cathedral.  
 Mac DOUGALL, Iain William, M.A., (1958), Incumbent of Mullingar union (Meath) and Canon of Meath.  
 Mc KEON, James Ernest, B.A., H.Dip.Ed., (1964), Headmaster and Warden of Wilson's Hospital, Multyfarnham (Meath).  
 NELSON, Allen James, (1975), Incumbent of Julianstown union (Meath).  
 OLDEN, Aidan Ronald Cuming, M.A., (1960), Incumbent of Kells union (Meath), Canon of Meath and Prebendary of Tipper, S.Patrick's, Dublin.

PATERSON, John Thomas Farquhar, M.A., B.D., (1978), Dean and Incumbent of Kildare cathedral union (Kildare).

POWER, Ivor Jonathan, (1981), Incumbent of Athlone union (Meath).

SLATOR, Edward Douglas Humphreys, M.A., H.Dip.Ed., B.Ph., (1980), Bishop's Curate of Rathmolyon union (Meath).

TOBIAS, Edwin John Rupert, M.A., (1977), Curate in charge of Killucan union (Meath).

WATERSTONE, Albert Thomas, B.A., B.D., (1964), Incumbent of Tullamore union (Meath) and Canon of Meath.

WOODS, Edward Christopher John, B.A., (1978), Incumbent of Portarlinton (Kildare) and Canon Chancellor of Kildare cathedral.

Clergymen with permission to officiate

within the united dioceses

CLARKE, Robert James, Wilson's Hospital, Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath.

CRAIGIE, Douglas James, Green Acres, Cullen, Beauparc, Slane, Co. Meath.

KIRKPATRICK, Ivan Ridley, Goodwins Hill, Batterstown, Co. Meath.

LAMB, Francis Adam Johnston, Woodfield, Clara, Offaly.

MAY, Ernest Herdman Langton, Barrettstown, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.



