

Kilmichael Parish

THE PARISH OF KILMICHAEL is situated in the southern side of the Barony of Muskerry between the Lee and its tributary, the Bride. The name has an ecclesiastical origin and means the Church of Michael, that is, Michael, the Archangel, to whom the original Cill was dedicated. This Church stood in the churchyard that still bears the name Kilmichael.

The feast-day of St. Michael is the 29 September, and this day was in former times held in great veneration by the people of Kilmichael and surrounding parishes. Rounds were performed in the old cemetery, and an air of sanctity marked each year's anniversary. During late years the commemoration has degenerated to the holding of so-called Sports, and the venue has been transferred to a local cross-roads. Thus, a fine old religious tradition has been perpetuated in a new and less worthy style.

Before Christian times, Kilmichael district bore a different name, but to trace the origin of this older name it is necessary to delve a little into ancient history.

In the early years of the third century a king named Cairbre Musc gave his name to six territories in the province of Munster. Of these only one, Muscraidhe Mitne, or alternatively, Muscraidhe Floinn Lua, has come down to our time as a place name. The agnomen Floinn, genitive of Flann, was added in course of time as it was conquered by a chief called Flann. Who was this Flann? As there has been a certain amount of confusion concerning his identity, it may be pertinent here to clarify this hitherto obscure section of Irish history.

It has been suggested that Flann was an alternative name for Criomthan, father of Aodh and Laoghaire, later mentioned. All this speculation was caused by a preconceived idea that Flann was an ancestor of the Cineal Aodha O'Mahony, whereas he was a member of the Cineal Laoghaire tribe, being son of Laoghaire himself. He is definitely described as Flann Laoi, so that decides once and for all who conquered the territory along the Lee, and gave his name to it as Uibh Flann Laoi.

At the end of the fifth century a king named Eochu (Eochy), breaking away from the royal house of the kings of Munster, founded for himself a kingdom in the present County Cork. This extended roughly from Cork Harbour to the confines of Drimoleague and from the Bandon to the Lee. This territory came to be known as Uibh Eachach from its founder Eochy. Eochy had a son named Criomthan (Griffin), who succeeded him as king of the new territory, but there were only two kings of this newly formed kingdom, for Criomthan's two sons divided their patrimony.

The portion extending eastward from a line running from Enniskean to Crookstown, and then to Donoghmore, was allotted to Aodh and this territory came to be known as Cineal Aodha (modern Kinelea). The portion to the west of this line, and which included what are now known as the parishes of Kinneigh, Fanlobbus, Kilmurry and northward to Donoghmore, came under the rule of Laoghaire, another son of Criomthan's. I shall not here enter into the question of the seniority of Aodh or Laoghaire. Suffice to say that the division appears to have been carried out in a friendly manner, and that the new subdivisions worked in harmony for hundreds of years.

At this time the parts of County Cork north, west and northwest of Cineal Laoghaire, were occupied by independent tribes. The chiefs of Cineal Laoghaire, anxious to expand their possessions, made war on their neighbouring chiefs, or mayhap it was the

neighbouring chief who was the aggressor, but at any rate the sequel was that Flann, son of Laoghaire, conquered the southern part of Muscraide Mitne, that is, the part bordering Macroom and along the Lee towards Crookstown.

This new acquisition came to be known as Muscraide Fhloinn, from its conqueror, and a part of it, roughly corresponding to the present parish of Kilmichael, got the name of Uibh Flann Luadh or Laoi. Thus the parish of Kilmichael was originally called Uibh Flann Luadh or Ifflanloe, as it is written by English historians.

The word Uibh here means territory, and was a common tribal designation in old times. Compare Uibh Laoghaire, the territory of Laoghaire, a chief of the Cineal Laoghaire of the seventh century.

In passing, I may emphasise the fact that Muscraide Ui Fhloinn, as given by some uncritical writers, is an incorrect rendering of the Irish form of the modern name of Muskerry. Since this territory was conquered by Flann nearly four centuries before surnames were introduced, it is obviously improper to introduce the Ui or O, symbol of surnames.

Some writers, relying on this false etymology, go so far as to say that Muskerry was once ruled by a clan, or tribe, called O'Flynn. Among those historians was William F. T. Butler, M.R.I.A., (of South African fame), who makes this naive statement in his book *Gleanings from Irish History*. The true fact of the case is that the great O'Flynn clan is a myth, though there may have been a sub sept of the name in the district. The O'Flynn of Cork are descended mainly from a Corcalee chief.

Having now sketched how Kilmichael originated from Uibh Flann Luadh, we can proceed with its history. The two tribes of Cineal Aodha and Cineal Laoghaire lived in peace with one another, and later expanded westward to the sea and northwards to the borders of Kerry. A chief of the Cineal Laoghaire was raised to the kingship of Munster, and a chief of Cineal Aodha was also elected King of Munster. This latter chief was named Maolmuadh, anglicized Molloy. Maolmuadh was opposed by Mahon of the Dalgais and later by his brother, Brian, known as Brian Boru. In the course of these struggles, a battle was fought near Macroom, at a place called Bealach Leachta, in the year 978. Here Brian was the victor and Maolmuadh retreated from the field of battle back through Bearna Dearg at Sleaven.

We are told that Maolmuadh (or Malloe) was killed after the battle, being found hiding in an alder hut. Hitherto the place of his death had not been identified. Luckily, research has, I claim, enabled me to locate the scene of Maolmuadh's last stand.

A pro-Dalcassian chronicler, referring to the death of Maolmuadh, says he was buried on the north side of a hill '*on which the sun never shines*', this last phrase representing a biased writer's exaggeration. Where was this alleged hill? I suggest it is that hill on the northside of Moneycuskar, between the latter townland and that known as Mount Music. This part is now called Ballina, but in olden days it was known as Lackmalloe (Leacht Maolmuadh), the burial flag or monument of Maolmuadh.

In those old days when a king or chief was slain, a leacht, or monument, was raised on the spot where he fell. He may have been buried elsewhere, but the stone marked the place of his demise.

I have failed to trace the leacht, but it undoubtedly disappeared in the course of cultivation down the centuries, and may now be broken up or buried under earth. It is gone, as the name Lackmalloe had gone from living memory, till my fortuitous discovery

has revived it as an historic place-name.

The name Moneycuskar means alternatively, the shrubbery (muine) or bog (moin) of slaughter or strife, an appellation that signifies a scene of conflict. The name Tobar na Fearnan, which still exists, is suggestive of the growth of alder there in bygone days, which supplied the name alder hut, or Bothan-na-fearnan, to the historian.

In identifying Lackmalloe, I have corroborations from different sources. In Kilmichael graveyard there is a headstone to which I shall refer later on and on which are engraved the words: 'This is the burial place of the O'Mahonys of Lackmalloe'.

In a map copied from the original in the Bibliotheque Nationale Paris, kindly lent to me by Mr. J. Burke, ex-N.T., Toames, I found the name Lackmalloe, and thirdly, in a MSS. entitled *Civil Survey Muskerry, A.D. 1650*, Lackmalloe and Moneycuskar are given as one ploughland. It would be interesting to know how the name Ballina came to supplant the old historical name. Further research may explain its origin. It was probably brought in by some planter in the seventeenth century.

The defeat of Bealach Leachta had no significant effect on the Kilmichael district, as Brian made peace with Cian, son of Maolmuadh, and for another generation the parish continued to be ruled by Cineal Laoghaire chiefs, but a change was coming.

After the battle of Clontarf the chiefs of Cineal Aodha and Cineal Laoghaire ended their four hundred years' friendship and fought a bitter civil war. In the battles that ensued Cian, head of the Cineal Aodha, and Domhnal, the chief of Cineal Laoghaire, fell, and the new chief of Cineal Laoghaire, being eventually worsted, resolved to abandon his territory and, with a great following of his tribe, he moved into Kerry and conquered territory in the Killarney district, where the tribe later took the surname O'Donoghue.

All the old territory of Uibh Eachach was once more united under one chief, namely, Mahon, son of Cian, and Uibh Flann Luadh was governed by him from Rath Raithleann, the royal residence, and his descendants later took the surname O'Mahony.

This condition of affairs continued for some three hundred years, and in the meantime the O'Mahony tribe had been divided into the Carbery Branch and the Western O'Mahonys, because of the encroachments of the McCarthys and O'Donovans. About the year 1300, the Carbery chief extended the hand of friendship to some of his kinsmen of the west. He gave territory to three of them in Muskerry. He gave to one, Tadgh an Oir O'Mahony, the territory of Uibh Flann Luadh, consisting of twenty-eight ploughlands. Thus an O'Mahony sub-sept was formed.

The O'Mahony of Uibh Flann Luadh (Ifflanloe) were sometimes styled O'Mahony an Oir, from their progenitor. They were governed by their own chief, who was subordinate to the O'Mahony of Rath Raithleann, who was later known as the O'Mahony of Carbery, Bandon being the chief stronghold.

Afer a short period the MacSwineys, fighting for the McCarthys, encroached on the O'Mahonys of Muskerry. The date of the coming of this Donegal family is variously estimated from 1320 to 1460, and probably their domination of the district was cumulative and could not be assigned to any particular period. They succeeded in establishing themselves in the district and were entrenched in three castles, i.e., Mahshanaglas, Carrig Diarmuid Og and Cloghdha. The O'Mahonys were forced to pay tribute to the McCarthys, the overlords of the MacSwineys, but were allowed absolute ownership of their lands and continued to elect their own chiefs, at whose inauguration they had to pay a chiefry. This practice continued till after the conclusion of the O'Neill rebellion in 1602.

During their sway of nearly three hundred years the O'Mahonys of Uibh Flann Luadh were governed by fourteen chiefs in the following order: Tadhg an Oir, Finghin, Diarmuid Buidhe, Diarmuid, Donogh, Diarmuid, Eoghan, Diarmuid, Sean, Diarmuid, Sean, Diarmuid, Concobhar an Chrochair, Domhnal.

Domhnal, son of Concobhar, took part in the O'Neill rebellion, and was attainted in 1602. The account of the Attainder is given in a Patent Roll of James II (1605), which says: 'Grant from the king to Sir William Taaffe of the entire territory of Ifflanlua West Muskerry, twenty-eight caracutes, the lands of Donal MacConogher O'Mahon, late of Ifflanlua, gentleman, for treason attainted.'

We do not know when the dispossessed Domhnal died, but he was succeeded by his brother Donogh. He continued in possession of some lands, namely, Knockowran (Mount Music), and Gortacurrig, as well as Teereaveen and Cloghmacow in the parish of Kilmurry. The amount of land confiscated is given as 4,782 acres, then valued at £441 per year.

To those who may wish to follow the fortunes of this family further, names may be interesting. Donogh had a son, Cian, who had a son surnamed Cian an Chrochair, who lived about 1719, and about whom Domhnal-na-Tuille, the tribal bard of the McCarthys, composed an elegaic poem.

This Cian had two sons, one Concobhar, or Cornelius, who entred the Spanish service, rose to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and died in 1776. He left a legacy to his nephews and nieces. The other brother was Liam, nicknamed Liam Mor Ban, and from him are descended that branch of the family now known as O'Mahony Ban.

This Liam had a son Cian Mor Ban, whose descendants still live, and a brother, Cornelius. In that headstone in Kilmichael graveyard, which I have mentioned, the wife of Cornelius O'Mahony is interred. The date of her death was 30 August 1777.

Cian Mor lost his possession later, presumably, as he went to live to Killowen, near Bandon, where he got lands from his Bandon namesake, who had then a small territory in that district. The subsequent history of the family is not of general interest, and so I leave the story of Kilmichael and its chiefs.

Having traced the history of the chiefs, it would be meet to tell of their clansmen. When Domhnal MacConcobhair lost his possessions by attainder his clansmen, who, I may mention, had various surnames, as now, continued as tenants of the incoming planter. Apparently Sir William Taaffe did not long retain Uibh Flann Luadh for we are told in an Inquisition of James I (seventeenth century), that Cormac, son of Cormac Mac Dermod MacCarthy, Lord of Muskerry, purchased twenty-three ploughlands of Ifflanlua from Sir Thomas Hooper, who had probably bought out Taaffe's interest.

In 1656 there was still a part of the parish in McCarthy hands, while the western part had come into the possession of that arch grabber, the Earl of Cork. The McCarthys hung tenaciously to their lands through wars and revolutions, and when they finally went down in the Williamite war their estates were forfeited, and passed into the possession of the Colthurst family. In the meantime, the old clan or tribal system had been gradually orientated, and when Kilmichael came finally into the possession of the English planter, the clansmen

became tenants at will, and thus began their long fight against cruel landlords, which terminated in tenant ownership under the Ashbourne and Wyndham Land Acts.

KILMICHAEL PLACE NAMES

Having now given the outlines of the history of Kilmichael, I would like to turn to consideration of its place names.

On the north side of the parish there are five townlands, including:

Anahaley, Inchisine, Inchisingan and East and West Toames. These form part of the old parish of **Macloneith**, a burial ground of the same name being still in use. It is peculiar that in the Paris map I have referred to in the part of Kilmurry parish between Dunmarklann and Ballymichael, the townland of Kilbarry is marked 'Maclonehy part'. Macloneith is now an integral part of Kilmichael.

The generally accepted derivation of Macloneith is Magh-cluain-eich — from Magh, a plain; cluain, a meadow, and eich, genitive case of each, a steed. This last syllable could, however, easily be made and stand for Aodh, a man's name. The word would then mean, the plain of Aodh or Hugh's meadow.

Inchisine. Inse means a meadow or level land, near a river. Sine (saighean) is given by some as meaning a fishing net. Saighean also could mean attack or assault, and may have reference to attack on Maolmuadh, who fell in the locality. This word could then signify either the inch of the net, or the inch of the attack.

Inchishinane. Means the inch of the ants, from sianan, an ant.

Anaghahilly (Anahely). Is derived from Eannach, marshy ground near a river, and Aibhle, a woman's name. This Aibhle was a great sportswoman, according to local lore. Ahila also stands for a stone house.

Toames is apparently derived from Tuama, a burial mound, composed of large flag stones. I have not been able to trace the site of the alleged tomb. Cultivation has, I expect, been responsible for its disappearance. The plural form of the name would suggest more than one tomb but I am confident it arose from the fact that the town-land is divided into East and West Toame, and so we get the two Toames. There is a Toames near Dunmanway, and here the remains of the old burial mound exists.

Cooldaniel means the recess, or cul, of Daniel. We do not know who this Daniel was, and conjecture would be useless.

Gortacurrig, east of Cooldaniel, the field (tilled) of the marsh, from Corrach, wet, rough land.

Moneycuskar, south of Cooldaniel, means either the shrubbery (muine) or the bog (moin) of slaughter. Native speakers incline to the O sound which would suggest a bog existed here though most of the townland is high and dry at present. Local seanachuithe pronounce this Moinair-a-cueeskur (Moinfhear a' choiscir), the meadow of the strife or slaughter, and attributed the name to the fact that hurling matches used to be played here in ancient times and were scenes of strife. It is interesting to note that a field near Cahir, Ballineen, has got a similar name and for a similarly assigned reason. Here in this locality, too, a battle

(Carraigdurteacht) was fought in the year 1232. Hurling contests may have been strenuous in the old days, but to say they were fields of slaughter is carrying the imagination to extreme heights of allegory.

It seems to me that the modern name in both instances is an example of superimposition. The tradition of an ancient fight lingered but got confused in the minds of people, and when the field of battle became a scene of athletic prowess, the idea of greatness was transferred to the deeds of the later generation.

Ballina or Lackmalloe, to which I have already alluded, is east of Moneycuskar.

Mountmusic, east of Ballina, is almost a literal translation of Knockowran (Cnocamhrain), the hill of song. Some thought this may have been derived from a family named Foran, who once lived in the district; but in 1656, while still in the possession of Donogh O'Mahony, brother of Domhnal Mac Concobhair, the attainted chief, it was known as Cnoc amhrain.

Lackineen, which lies east of Mount Music, means the leacht or flagstone of Finghin. Who was this Finghin? I suggest he may have been Finghin, son, of Tadhg an Oir, who was the second chief of Uibh Flann Luadh.

Kilnarovanach is south-east of Mount Music. This means the church of the Romans, indicating that a church was founded there by some Roman, or foreign order, so called to distinguish it from the churches of the native priests or Culdees.

Terelton lies further west. Tir means land and Elton is a saint's name. He gives his name also to Elton, County Limerick. It is said he stayed here a while on his way to Kinsale. In the Paris map this townland is given as Terrekeane. This would, seem, to mean Cian's land from Cian, a man's name. Cian was a common Christian name in the O'Mahony family. There was one famed man of this name Cian-an-Chrochair, who flourished about the year 1719.

Rosnakilla is south-east of Terelton, and is equivalent to the wood of the church, from Ros, a wood; and Cill, a church.

Ardaneneen, eastward from Rosnakilla, means the height of the daughter, from Ard, a height, and Inghean, a daughter. A tradition runs that a man lived here who had a large family consisting exclusively of daughters. This word has four syllables when pronounced by a native speaker. In 1656 it was known as Ardaneneen and Gearryna-gowne, from Garry (Garra) a garden, and gowne which may mean of the calves, or the smith.

Greenville lies south of Ardnaneen. This is a translation of an older name Killglass, the green church. The name Tullach Glas, the green hillock, appears in the title deeds of a land-holder in this townland.

Knockane, west of Greenville was known in 1656 as Cill-na-gCnocan (Killnaknochane) or the church of the little hills. In the same period to the west was **Knockanekinmorry**. This is written Knockanmurry in the Paris map. The name is obscure but appears to signify the hillock of Murray (Cnocan Muirithe). The name Murray is still in the neighbourhood.

Lackareigh, south of Greenville, is got from Leaca, a hillside, and riabhach, grey; grey hillside.

Further south the word grey again comes into **Gurranreigh**, which means grey grove, from Garran, a grove or small wood. At the southern end of this ploughland, near an old lios, there is a place called Eachros from Each, steed, and ros a wood. The wood of the steeds.

Barnadivane lies west of Lackareigh and is derived apparently from Bearna, a gap, and Divane, a man's name.

Renacaharagh is a word which is variously spelled in English. It means the Re (table-land) of the cathair or fort (compare Derrynacaharagh, the oak wood of the fort, near Dunmanway). Forts are plentiful in this locality, and there is a remarkable collection in Gurranreigh.

Lisnacuddy is north of Renacaharagh. This is thus derived. Lios, a fort; cu, a hound, and duibhe, genitive of dubh, black; the whole word meaning the fort of the black hound and there is a tradition of a black hound which used haunt it and was the terror of passers-by. Black dogs and cats occur frequently in folklore as guardians of places and buried treasures. An alternative explanation for this name is the fort of Cuddihy, a mythical giant whose grave was pointed out. The name, however, does not admit grammatically of the introduction of a personal name, and so I think the black hound 'holds the fort'.

Deshure, which is West from Lisnacuddy, is a name that has caused trouble to etymologists. To my mind it means Dos, a copse and iubhair, a yew tree, that is the yew tree wood. Iubhair is pretty common as an integral part of place names. We have Ballaghanure and Gurraneure in the parish of Enniskean.

Maulbrack, which is south of Deshure, is derived from Meall, a round-topped hill, and breac, speckled.

Slieveowen is further south, and signifies Owen's mountain or moorland. Who was this Owen? There are the remains of a grave with gallawns, or large flag stones, at the south side of this plough-land. This is called Leabhadh Eoghain, Owen's bed, and marks the burial place of some important person of old times. Tradition has been busy with this name. It is said that Owen was killed at Ballivilone, near Kinneigh, and caoined or lamented at Coinnleeone, a half-mile to the west, and buried in Slieveowen, a pretty tale probably originating in the recurrence of the name Owen or Eoghan in three different places.

Owen may have had some connection with Ballivilone, which I explain as Baile Bhile Eoghain, the place of the tree of Eoghan (bile was given as a name for remarkable trees), but I do not agree that Coinnleeone has any connection with funeral dirges. It obviously means the coinnlee or stubble of Owen, who may have been any ordinary man. It seems a pity, however, to destroy the romance of tradition.

Slieveowen, as a name, is not mentioned in 1656 survey. The townland given for this part is called Moneyregullane, or Muine, shrubbery; re, level high land, and gallan, flag stones, possibly referring to those flag stones of Leabhadh Eoghain. The fact that Slieveowen was not known in 1656 would seem to suggest that Eoghan died after this time.

Clashbreedawn. Clais-braighdan, or the hill of the prisoners or hostages, an indication of a site where hostages were kept in ancient times.

Shanacashel, which is further south is made up of the words Sean, old, and caiseal, a stone fort.

Carrigboy is the English form of Carraig buidhe or yellow rock, probably got from the yellow colour of the local rock got from infiltration of peat.

Haremout is a direct translation from the old Irish name of Cnoc an girr fhiaidh — cnoc, a hill, and gearrfiadh, a hare.

Coolacleevane, east of Haremout, means the recess of the basket, or alternatively, cradle.

Mamucky, which is west from Shanacashel, is almost Irish in its sound and signifies Magh, a plain, and muice, genitive of muc, a pig. The plain of the pig. The humble pig gives its name to many places. With Mamucky there formerly went a place named Gortgrenah (Gort greine), sunny field.

Johnstown is known in Irish as Killanna. This is generally accepted as meaning Cill and Eana, a form of John; in the widely held belief that most church names are derived from personal names. This is not always so, and I suggest that Cill eannaigh is the proper rendering, from Cill, and eannaigh, genitive of eannach, marshy ground, an explanation that would conform with local conditions.

Carraigdangan called Moneygorm, formerly, is west of Killanna. Carraigdangan is Irish in its sound and means firm rock, or haply, the rock of the daingean, or strong fort, Moneygorm means the blue or dark shrubbery.

Kilnadur, south of Carraigdangan, can be explained as Cill-na-dtor, the church of the tors or towers. Perhaps the original church, built of wood, had little towers or turrets. The name could also apply to the character of the terrain, tor then meaning a tuft or bush, and the name may mean the church surrounded by shrubs or bushes.

Cusdub, west from Coolacleevane, is apparently from Cos, a foot, and dubh, black. This may refer to the foot of a hill, or may refer to a plant of that name, growing there. Cus, however, could be a variant of Cuas, a hollow, and dubh, black; the black hollow; which seems to suit the conformation of the land there. Cos is also given as a small land division.

Clonmoyle lies north of Cusdub, and is an anglicized form of. Cluain maoile, or the meadow of the maol or hornless cow,

Dromleigh, further east, is from Drom, a ridge, and liath (leigh), grey.

Cooldorrihy, which means dark recess, from Cul and dorcha. dark; a contrast to the grey of the townland west of it.

I have included the principal place names of Kilmichael, but may have overlooked some. However, I feel a list of Kilmichael place names would not be complete without referring to the Kilmichael of the famous ambush. Kilmichael is here a misnomer. The actual fight took place at the confines of Haremout and Shanacashel at the place that was known as Dereen-a-Bharraigh, Dorin-a-Bharraigh. The little oak wood of Barry, or Barry's oak wood. What a coincidence that another Barry should be associated with the spot. General Tom Barry, the hero of Kilmichael.