

Before the erection of this church Mass used to be celebrated in a thatched barn which was located about half a mile to the north, in the townland of Newtown. This old barn is still standing and the field in which it is situated is known as the Chapel Field. On the corner stone of the wall is the inscription “1737 T.L.”. It is still remembered locally that Mass was celebrated here in penal times and that the initials are those of Tom Langeran. (*see picture page 114*). This was marked as a “chapel” on Taylor’s map of 1816. The old schoolhouse was built about 1835 under a bequest from Lord Castlecoote, previous to which there was no school building and classes had been held in the chapel.

The field directly behind the burial ground, and at present the property of the parish, is known as the monastery field. Here in 1835 a small monastery for Cistercian monks was founded on land given to them by Mr. Fitzsimons. This was known as Mount Saint Bernard and was occupied by some of the community from Mount Mellary. Only four years before this all the Irish and English monks had been expelled from France and they were at this period seeking a suitable location in which to reorganise their community life.

Mount Saint Bernard was described as a neat house and a farm of about 20 acres. Two monks resided here and worked uncommonly hard and for long hours on very meagre fare. In addition they used to go around soliciting help to build a school. It was intended at first to increase the numbers of the community, but the project does not appear to have been successful, as by 1845 the house had been evacuated by the Order and was occupied by the curate of the parish, Rev. P. Doyle. By 1856 it had become ruinous and was apparently demolished soon afterwards. It does not appear on the Ordnance Survey map of 1871. Not a trace of this house has survived but against the boundary fence is a roofless carthouse or barn which was there during the occupation of the monks and was likely built by them. One of the monks was Bro. Macarius Moore, a tailor by trade.

Just above the bridge is a spa well which over two hundred years ago enjoyed a period of popularity with wealthy invalids and others who could either journey to Kilmashogue and drink the water fresh from the spring or purchase it bottled in the city.

It was first noticed about 1748 and was considered to be superior to that of Templeogue which at that time was losing its curative properties. Kilmashogue spa however was never accorded the popularity of Templeogue, probably because of its remote situation and difficult access. The spa is easily located by the brown deposit left by the water as it flows into the adjoining brook.



Lower bridge in Kelly's Glen.

A few hundred yards upstream is another smaller bridge which bears the inscription

DI SVORE AMABILI

On the former bridge the date 1850 refers apparently to the alteration but the original bridges with the Italian inscriptions are older and were probably erected at the beginning of the century as part of the improvements scheme of Mr. Calbeck. The translation of these inscriptions reads

DI LA SOPHANNIE

— To my Sophannie, and

DI SORE AMABILI

— To my beloved sister.

According to Weston St. John Joyce they were intended as memorials to Calbeck's deceased sister. I was informed by the late Mrs. Calbeck of Pembroke Rd. that they were always known as the sisters' bridges.



Spa well, Kilmashogue.



Pillar Stone, Glencullen.



Remains of St. Patrick's Chapel, Glencullen.

had successfully attacked the barracks. On approaching Glencullen, rifle men were deployed to surround the barracks. The police were called upon to surrender and refused, whereupon an exchange of rifle fire commenced, which did little damage to either side. When a party got onto the roof and opened up a hole in preparation for an attack from above the inmates surrendered. Enriched by the arms and ammunition from the barracks, the Fenians then marched over Glencullen Mountain taking the prisoners with them. Capt. Lennon, on seeing one of his men urge on a straggler with the butt of his rifle, drew his revolver and threatened to kill the first person he found insulting or abusing a prisoner.



Old R.I.C. barracks, Glencullen.

In a field beside the road opposite to Glencullen House is a large pillar stone of white quartz about 6 feet in height.

In the village is a fine granite church built in 1908 and a short distance away in the burial ground is the old church, now roofless, which fell into disrepair when the new one was built. This bears a tablet with the inscription "St. Patrick's Chapel erected A.D. 1824 to the Honour and Glory of God".

Chapter 9

Cruagh to Glendoo and Glencullen



THE most direct route to Glendoo is that from Rathfarnham through Ballyboden and Rockbrook but for those who do not object to a more roundabout approach at a higher altitude the road across Cruagh Mountain is recommended. This branches left from the Glencree road at the point where the latter emerges onto the windswept Featherbed Bog, just five miles from Rathfarnham and drops for over a mile across the face of Cruagh Mountain with magnificent views northward over the Dublin plains. Whichever route is followed the way leads to the site of the tea rooms named Fraoc Halla opposite to which is the road to Glendoo and Glencullen. This road immediately crosses the Owendoher River by a bridge which was widened and straightened recently but which was formerly a most dangerous hazard on this long steep hill. It has been the scene of several fatal accidents which are commemorated by rough crosses set in the parapet. Much of the timber in this area was cut down during World War I and at that time a tree also disappeared which bore the initials of a number of Abbey actors who had visited here in the early days of that theatre and left this memento of their visit.

For over a mile from here the road ascends between steep wooded or heather clad slopes. On the right and separated from the road by a pleasant green sward flows the mountain stream of Owendoher, beyond which rises the steep flank of Cruagh Mountain with its plantation of larch and spruce. This road through Glendoo and Glencullen was constructed in 1840 by Mr. Fitzsimons, a local landowner, previous to which there was no means of access to

Glencullen from this side of the mountains. There was indeed a track of sorts which lay on the other side of the stream but this led only to the cottage which can still be seen high up on Glendoo Mountain and which was then occupied by a gamekeeper employed by Mr. White of Killakee. I was informed by Colonel Fitzsimons, a descendant of the man who built the road, that it cost all of £127 for 3 miles of road including culverts and walls.

Half a mile beyond the bridge the plantation on the right terminates at a point where the brook comes splashing down from the heights above, defining the boundary between Cruagh and Glendoo mountains. A track follows the course of this stream upwards and is the most convenient route for the ascent of Cruagh Mountain. This track can be followed until the gradient becomes somewhat easier, when it is advisable to cross over to the other bank and continue along the cleaned firebreak outside the forestry fence. This fence presently turns off at right angles and after following it for another three hundred yards a small pile of stones will be seen nearby on the left, marking the highest point in this extensive heatherclad upland.

From this spot, 1,714 feet high, there is a fine distant view northward of the city and suburbs but the area lying nearer to the mountains is obscured by the slope of the hill. In the foreground to the east are Kilmashogue and Tibbradden and the Three Rock and Two Rock mountains. To the west is Mount Pelier and further away the high summits which bound the far side of Glenasmole.

To the south west and only half a mile away is Killakee Mountain, another great flat area, where the turf is gradually being eroded away by the elements, leaving islands and hummocks of heather-clad bog in a sea of weathered quartz and gravel. The highest point here, 1,761 feet, is also marked by a small pillar of stones. The view from Killakee hardly justifies a special visit, except for those who



The Butter Well in 1985.

A short way past this laneway is Glencullen Village from which roads lead to Stepside, Kiltiernan and Kilmalin. The lands of Glencullen were at one time the property of the Abbey of St. Mary the Virgin. After the Reformation they were held by the Fitzwilliams of Merrion who sold them about the end of the seventeenth century to Mr. Thos. Fitzsimons whose descendants continued to reside there down to recent years. Glencullen House is situated in a picturesque setting on the south side of the village. Here resided during the last century Christopher Fitzsimons D.L. who was clerk of the Crown and Hanaper and a Member of Parliament. He was married to a daughter of Daniel O'Connell.

Beside the entrance to Glencullen House on the site later occupied by the dispensary was the constabulary barracks which was attacked and captured by the Fenians on 6th March 1867. The party, under Capt. Patk. Lennon, had assembled at Rathgar the night before and marched through Dundrum and Stepside where they

southern side of this village there was formerly a fine ringfort which was known from time immemorial as Old Glencullen House but no remains of it can be traced on the site and not even a memory of it survives. The same fate, unfortunately, befell a megalithic tomb which was situated on a little summit over the main road and just past Brockey village. This was known as Leaba na Saigh (The Hound's Bed) and was covered with a large stone ten feet long and eight feet wide. A drawing of this ancient monument was published by the Royal Society of Antiquaries in 1855, some years before it was completely cleared away. It is now regarded as a natural formation of boulders.



Leaba na Saigh or The Hound's Bed in 1855.

The next laneway on the right leads down by some farmhouses to Glencullen River and was part of an old road leading to Boranaraltry. In a field beside this land was a holy well known as the Butter Well, which was visited by those suffering from stomach disorders. In former times dairy vessels were washed with its waters as a precaution against the loss of butter by witchcraft, which no doubt accounts for the title of the well. Another well known as Fanny's Well, used only for domestic purposes, is at the side of the lane, outside the field.

intend to continue on the further half mile down an easy dry gradient until they strike the Feather Bed Road. The view to the south of Cruagh is cut off by the high ground sloping away towards Glendoo Mountain. This elevation is a little less than a mile away across a great flat bog which is very easy to cross in dry weather but a much easier approach to Glendoo Mountain is from the new bog road in Old Bolies on the Glenree side of the Feather Bed. If it is not proposed to visit either Killakee or Glendoo mountains the return to Glendoo valley should be made by the same route.

Tibradden Mountain

Lying along the left-hand side of the glen is the long ridge of Tibradden Mountain rising to a height of 1,540 feet. The fine old timber which covered the lower slopes of this mountain was nearly all cut down during The Emergency but much of this has since been replanted. The ascent of Tibradden can be made either by leaving the road just past the cottage or following the track in the belt of old trees, three quarters of a mile further on. The area in between is not recommended as it is covered with deep heather which conceals a treacherous rocky slope dangerous to the most careful climber. In addition it is now cut off by forestry fences erected for the protection of the young plantations. A well defined path traverses the entire length of this ridge, with fine views into Kelly's Glen on the far side and over Kilmashogue to the city and bay.

The highest point of Tibradden Mountain is marked by a circular grassy mound composed of stones in which is an ancient burial place known locally as Niall Dhu's Grave. This site was opened up in 1849 by members of the Royal Irish Academy when it was found to contain a pottery vessel in a stone lined cist. A fragment of another vessel was found among the stones of the mound. The



Tibradden mountain.

existing remains, which were recently restored by the Board of Works, now comprise a circular compartment ten feet in diameter, open to the sky, and entered by a very narrow passage. Around the wall of the compartment is a narrow shelf or seat and in the middle of the floor is the rectangular cist which contained the burial. This was formerly covered with a flat stone which is now missing. The circular compartment which is neatly built of small stones is an unusual feature and it is not at all clear that this was part of the original monument.

A little to the south is an area of huge tumbled rocks which can provide shelter from wind and rain on the worst of days. On a vertical face of one rock is carved a cross and a crowned figure with upraised arms. The cross is seventeen inches high and has expanded terminals of a type commonly used in early Christian times but the figure is rather unusual. It suggests the figure carving found on early slabs but may possibly be quite recent work done by local stonecutters in the last century.

A report made in 1837 describes a number of small circles to the south of the cairn but a detailed examination over a wide area has failed to locate any trace of them.



Bornaraltry village.

The village of Brockey is next passed, situated in a hollow below the road and approached by a laneway on the right. The arrangement of this group of thatched houses and outoffices surrounded by little gardens and loose stone walls is very suggestive of the villages along the western seaboard. On the



Brockey village.

A little more than a hundred years ago this district was noted for its barren aspect and the extreme poverty of its inhabitants. There was no road or lane of any description between here and Glencullen village and no arable land except little patches between the rocks which scarcely repaid the labourer for the immense trouble of cultivating them. The principal occupation was the manufacture of brooms or besoms from the heath of the adjoining mountain and even this they had to procure in spite of the strict watch kept to prevent them. Conditions have changed much since then. The road built by Mr. Fitzsimons is now a main tourist highway and the many new houses and well cultivated plots are evidence of a contented and industrious community. It is remarkable that the fields on both sides of the Glencullen river are divided into very small plots and strips by fences and low baulks, a remnant of the ancient and uneconomic system called rundale, which was the result of repeated subdivision of the original holdings. This was probably the only place in Leinster where these conditions still existed.

On the far slope can be seen the compact village of Boranaraltry which is reached by a steep byroad branching off on the right and descending to cross the bridge below. This road continues on across the face of Glencullen Mountain to serve the old granite quarries which are such a conspicuous landmark on the far side of the valley. These quarries which once supported so many families are now almost deserted and the hillside, both above and below them, is rapidly disappearing under a blanket of afforestation. To the west of the quarries a passage has been left through the plantation to give access to the higher part of the mountain for turf cutting and other purposes. In one of the fields below the quarry is a small ringfort. In 1836 when O'Curry was collecting place names in connection with the Ordnance Survey he recorded a place called Baile an Araldaigh in Glencullen. This is probably identical with Boranaraltry and would indicate that this place was associated with the family of Harold who held large areas in County Dublin down to the seventeenth century.



Rock carvings, Tibbradden.

This hill is called Tibroden on many old maps and documents and on Taylor's Map of 1816 it is named Garrycastle. In documents of the seventeenth century it is named Tibroden alias Killmainham Begg because it was formerly held by the Priory of Kilmainham.

At the upper end of Glendoo is a high granite rock upon which an inscription was cut in recent years. This reads "O'Connell's Rock 23 July 1823". According to Col. Fitzsimons, who got this work done, the local people of that day were celebrating Garland Sunday in the usual way, by an excursion to the mountain to pick fraughans followed by a dance at the dance floor and a few barrels of stout. Daniel O'Connell was visiting his daughter, who was married to a Fitzsimons of Glencullen House. When he saw the assembled crowds he addressed them from this rock.



O'Connell's rock.

Glencullen Valley

The road through Glendoo continues to wend its way, confined between steep rocky slopes and with pinewood obscuring the view in front, but once this plantation is passed it emerges into an open green valley with a view extending over Glencullen village to the



Glencullen valley.

hills beyond. To the left of the road the ground rises away towards the great flat top of Two Rock Mountain nearly a mile away. The highest point of this mountain, 1,763 feet above sea level, is distinguished by a great cairn of stones called the Fairy Castle, thirty yards in diameter and about ten feet high. No enclosing kerb can be seen and there is no evidence that it has ever been opened. It probably contains a chamber built of large stones similar to that on Seefin Mountain. Southward of this is a large outcrop of rock and further to the south the two smaller ones which can be seen from the Glencullen side and give the mountain its name. On the lower slope of the Two Rock Mountain formerly known as Slieve Gearr, there is an oval enclosure sixty four yards long and containing in the centre the foundations of a small square building. Against the inside of the enclosing bank are remains of two more structures.



The author with friends at Fairy Castle, Two Rock Mountain.