

Cappamore

Abington · Annagh · Murroe · Glenstal · Barrington's Bridge

CAPPAMORE derives its name from *Ceapach Mór*, the Large Plot of Land Laid Down for Tillage. Breandán O'Ciobháin of the Irish Placenames Commission defines *ceapach* as an area cleared of trees in order to accommodate tillage. This is the largest town in the north-eastern part of the county even though it contained only a population of 765 inhabitants in 1986. In 1837 the district of Cappamore included the parish of Tuoragh and part of the parishes of Doon and Abington.

CASTLE GARDE, almost two miles south-east of Cappamore, is a nineteenth-century house which incorporates a medieval tower house within its framework. This latter structure was enlarged and restored in the baronial style by Waller O'Grady in the 1820s. James Pain may have been the architect as the castellated two-storey Gothic-style house attached to one side of the tower-house resembles his, and his brother's, work elsewhere in the counties of Limerick and Clare. The work is typical of the baronial trend of house building popular at the time and has the appearance of a lofty keep and ramparts. The original castle, known as *Kass Lanengard*, *Castle ne Gaurde*, or Castle Guard, was a Geraldine stronghold but little appears to be known of its earlier history. During the *Civil Survey of 1654* the Earl of Bath was in possession. Henry Baylee and his son, John, were listed as its *tituladoes* in 1659. The castle changed hands several times before it became an O'Grady property. The present owner, Hugh Thompson, inherited Castle Garde from the O'Gradys.

THE PARISH OF DOON was the haunt of a famous *rapparee*, Eamon an Chnoic O Riain, Edmund of the Hills O'Ryan, during the early eighteenth century. Towards the end of that century more than 100 acres of bog moved from one townland into two others; destroyed thirteen cabins, and killed the inmates of five of them.

THE RYANS OF MUNSTER derive their name from *O Maoilriaghain*, the descendant of *Maolriain*, the Follower of *Rian* or *Riaghan*. The family originated in Leinster

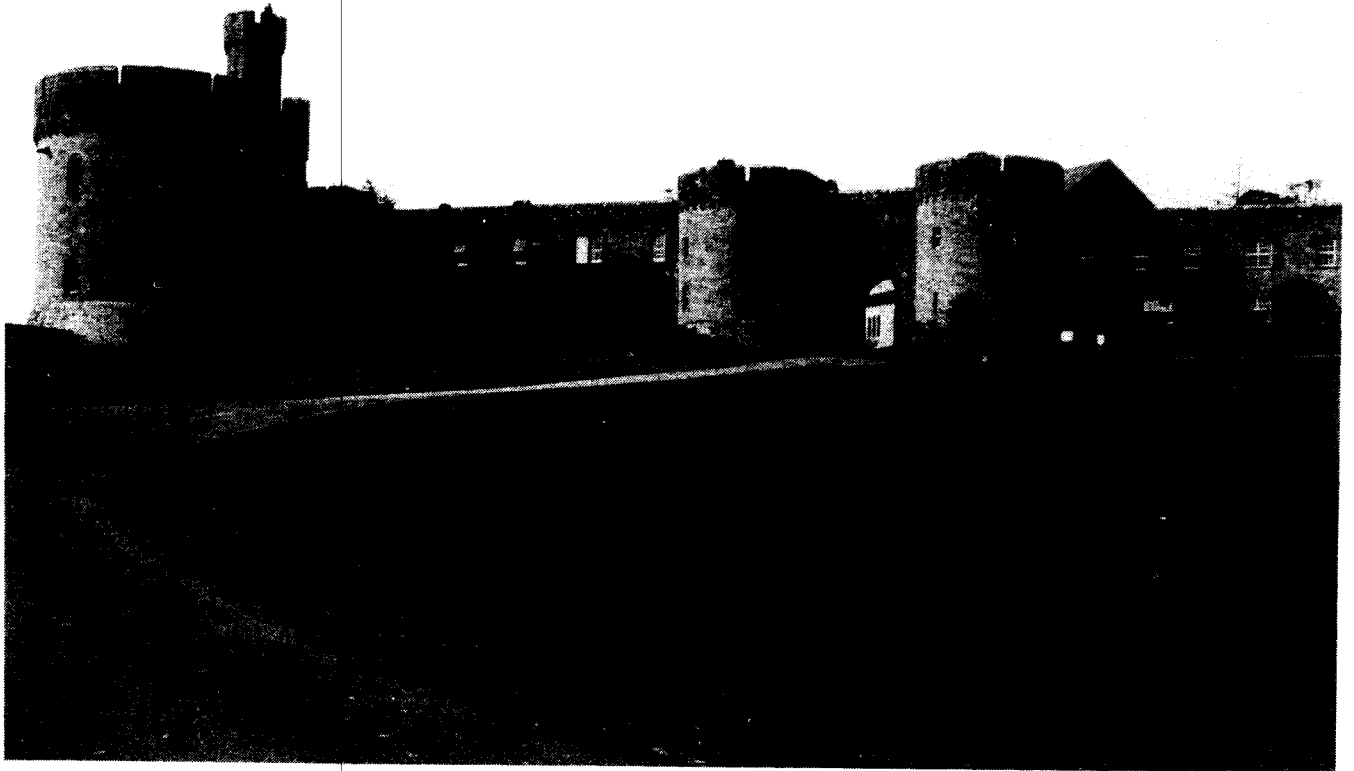
but settled in *Uaithne-Tire* and *Uaithne-Cliach*, now respectively the barony of Owney in County Tipperary and the barony of Owney Beg in County Limerick, in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The Ryans became a numerous and powerful family in this region, along the Limerick-Cork border. In 1610 William Ryan surrendered his holdings in the barony of Owney O'Mulrian to James I and received them back by letters patent. During the confiscations of the seventeenth century the family lost their property. By 1890 the Ryan surname had become the eighth most common surname in Ireland. It is now the most numerous name in County Tipperary and has been listed as one of the 200 commonest names in the United States of America. Variants of the Munster surname include *O Maoilriain*, *O'Mulrigan*, *O'Mulryan*, *O'Mulrean*, Mulryan, Mulroyan, Mulryne, Mulrine, Mulrain and O'Ryan. The original Ryan surname originated in *Ui Dróna*, the Barony of Idrone, County Carlow, as *O Riaghain* or *O Riain*, meaning the descendant of *Riaghan* or *Rian*. The surname is confused with *O Ruaidhin*, the descendant of *Ruaidhin* (the diminutive of red) a Connaught family name.

DOON, like Cappamore, was located in the old parish of Doon, the patron saint of which was St. Fintan of *Dunbleschiaie*, the brother of St. Findluga of *Tamlaght Finlagen*. St. Fintan's feast-day was observed on 3 January and his holy well was the scene of devotions into modern times according to *The Book of Saints* (1921) compiled by the Benedictine monks of St. Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate. Like many other early Irish ecclesiastical sites St. Fintan's sixth-century foundation ceased to exist some time before the eleventh century.

LORD STANLEY donated a two-acre site, rent-free, to the Catholic population of Doon village in the 1830s. By 1837 a Catholic church had been erected on a small hill which, like Doon, nestled into the south-western slopes of Gortnageragh. A Church of Ireland church had been built in 1800, quite possibly on the site of an earlier foundation as Eamon an Chnoic O Riain was buried in its small church-yard. Samuel Lewis described

the land of the parish as remarkably rich in some areas but poorly developed and prone to flooding by the Dead and Mulkear rivers. Another nearby river is called after the townland through which it flows, *Beál-Áth-Bò*, the Mouth of the Ford of the Cow. Over 150 years ago fine quality freestone was quarried here for use in public buildings under construction in Limerick City, and elsewhere, and large quantities were shipped abroad, mainly to England.

TUOGH derives its name from the word *Tuath*, a District. In the 1820s Rev. R. Fitzgerald wrote: "The parish of Tuogh Island, in the union of Abington is in the diocese of Emly, and contains 1067 acres of land. In this parish situated on the river Mulchair, was the ancient mansion of the Hayes family, and also Tower-Hill, a fine house and demesne belonging to the Rev. Rickard Lloyd". John O'Donovan explained in 1840 how Tower Hill got its name when he wrote: "This hill is called Tower Hill, which name is also extended to the townland of Tuogh, and which the hill obtained, it is said from three towers that formerly stood on it, whose site is occupied by Towerhill House, the seat of Wm. Lloyd, Esq., built in 1800 at the expense of £1,500. These towers probably, were the yokes or follies erected either as ornaments, or as objects of no consequent utility, but for the purpose of employing, during the building of them, such persons as were in a state of extreme want, and had no daily engagements in work, which might afford them a means of obtaining the necessaries of life". O'Donovan also recorded a *cillin*, or children's burial-ground, known as *Cill Mhuire*, Mary's Church, in the western extremity of Pallisbeg townland; St. Brigid's Well, *Tobar Brighde*, or Toberbreeda, in the eastern part of Tuogh townland" within a short distance to the north of the road running through this townland"; and the remains of a church in Tuogh of which only the eastern gable remained in 1840. By then the "foundation of the rest of the building is not traceable ... there is a small building attached to the south side of this ruin which is on a line with the east gable and runs southward ... this appears to be coeval with



Glenstal Abbey.

Marsh. In 1840 Annagh Old Church, in the northern part of the townland, was described as a ruin about 60 feet by 20 feet, with walls reaching to a height of 10 feet. Fred Bourke of Clonlara told me that Annagh was a favourite meeting-place, or battle-ground, for those early nineteenth-century faction-fighters, the Ryans and the Coffeys.

MURROE is located quite close to the Tipperary border, below the foothills of the Slievefelim Mountains which still form the north-eastern boundary of Abington parish. Murroe derives its name, the Russet Plain, from the red sandstone area on which it was built, and owes its past prosperity to the Barrington family with whom it had a long association. In 1811 a Catholic church was built in the village. During the 1880s Lord Cloncurry had a series of evictions carried out on his holdings in the area. The Land League came to the aid of the dispossessed tenant farmers and erected huts to house the homeless people. Canon John Hayes, the founder of *Muintir na Tire*, a rural community-based co-operative organisation was born in one of these huts, in Murroe, in 1887.

THE CLARE GLENS is the name of the region through which the Clare River flows, along the length of a magnificent red sandstone gorge, creating many attractive cascades, waterfalls and pools en route. The Barrington family owned the Glens until 1927

when they donated them to the Limerick and North Tipperary county councils.

GLENSTAL CASTLE was built for Sir Matthew Barrington (1788-1861) who left the city in 1818 to reside at Clonkeen House near Barrington's Bridge. He purchased the Carbery estate for £30,193.74 and commissioned the Pain brothers to design a house for him in the townland of Glenstal. He subsequently rejected their plans and employed William Bardwell, a London architect, who produced an alternative design and suggested changing the location of the house to the townland of Garranbane, White Nag. The original name, Glenstal Castle, was retained. Work on it commenced in 1837 and the first part, the Windsor-style round-tower, gatehouse and long facade, were completed by 1839. Work on the house stopped until 1846. It continued under the direction of a Dublin architect, named Dargan, who implemented Bardwell's design, and John Kelly, who supervised the work from 1847 to 1849. In 1853 Joshua Hargraves, a Cork architect, was employed to continue the work. He modified the Bardwell plans and completed the house. Work continued on parts of this massive sandstone structure as late as 1880 and, under the Barringtons, the estate and gardens were a constant hive of activity. The main building is a large Windsor-style square keep, or tower, three storeys high, joined by a lower range of

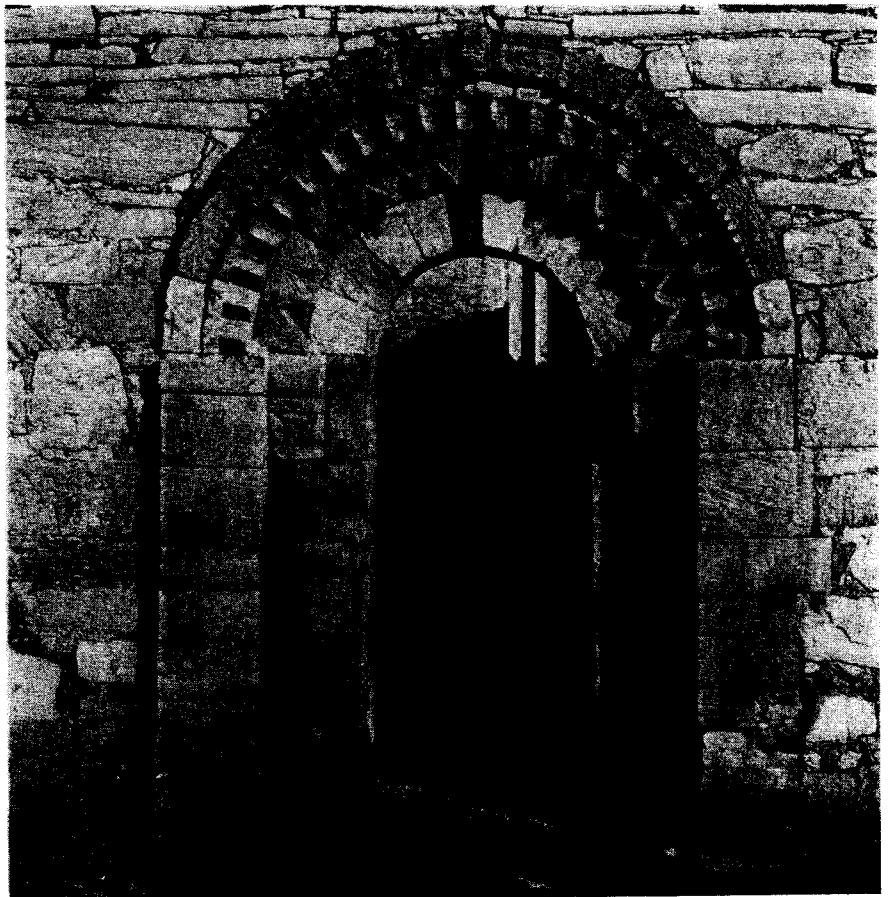
buildings to a round tower. Its entrance door is flanked by stone figures of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine while another stone figure, that of a soldier, mans the look-out tower. A local man, named White, carved the main drawing-room doorway which is a copy of the Romanesque doorway in Killaloe Cathedral. Another local, Sheil, may have done the carving in the octagonal-shaped library with its central pier containing a stone fire-place and a stone-ribbed vault springing from carved capitals.

THE BARRINGTON FAMILY lived in Glenstal Castle until the 1920s. Their relationship with the locals deteriorated during the War of Independence. The castle was raided for arms in 1920 and the Tricolour put on its flag-pole. On 14 May 1921, Winifred Barrington, Sir Charles Barrington's only daughter, was mortally wounded in an I.R.A. ambush. She died later that day in her own home. Her boyfriend, Captain Biggs, was a Black and Tan officer. The attack was an attempt to assassinate Biggs as Winifred and he returned, by car, from Killaloe to Glenstal. Winifred was wearing a Black and Tan cap, as she travelled, and was mistaken for a Black and Tan. Biggs ran for cover and was killed before he could return fire.

GLENSTAL ABBEY is now the name of Glenstal Castle. The Barringtons offered the house to the new Free State Government as an

"well-preserved Romanesque ... with bulbous capitals, a decorative pillar and a head at the top". This small ancient structure is located in the middle of a graveyard. It was founded in the sixth or seventh century by a St. Modimoc or St. Mó-Díomóg. In 1089, it was plundered by Ruaidhri Ua Conchobhair and Domhnall Ua Maeleachlainn who "scarcely left a single head of cattle" in Munster and carried off many captives. In 1111 it was incorporated into the diocese of Emly, and in 1200 its revenue was used to support the Bishop of Emly's table. Some time after that it was handed over to the Cistercians of Wothney Abbey. This church was in ruin by 1657 but it must have been repaired some time afterwards as it was used as a Church of Ireland church until 1762, when it was damaged by the Whiteboys. A vandal carved his initials on the Romanesque doorway in 1779.

CALEB POWELL (1793-1881) lived at Clonshavoy, near Murroe until William Hartigan Barrington purchased it some time after 1858. William's descendants were still living there a century later. When Robert Cussen bought a book over thirty years ago, in a Limerick bookshop, he found lists of presentments, made by the Grand Jury of the County of Limerick. Some additional pages had been bound between two lists, and on examination he found memoranda written by Caleb Powell. There were posthumous memoirs composed by Caleb who having "derived some instruction and much amusement in the perusal of posthumous memoirs, I have resolv'd to record in the interest of those who shall become entitled to my papers and manuscripts after my decease, some facts within my knowledge connected with those gentlemen of the County Limerick who plac'd by me on the Grand Jury during my occupation of the Office of Sheriff (a barren eminence upon which I was fixed quite unsolicited by me) ...". Caleb then provided a series of short pithy, witty biographies of each man he had selected for his Grand Jury of 1858. His thumbnail sketches throw an interesting — one wonders how true! — light on well-known names; Davy Roche was an expert in procuring young peasant girls for the 4th Lord Carbery; Hugh Massy O'Grady committed suicide when he discovered his sister Nina had been seduced by her brother-in-law; Colonel John Vandeleur's parents' first marriage was invalid; John White of Belmont was very much under the control of the priest; Samuel Frederick Dickson was an honourable eccentric of a penurious disposition; Henry Lyons of Croom was a self sufficient coxcomb; and several other Grand Jurors mentioned, by Caleb, are referred to elsewhere. Robert Cussen wrote an enlightening article



Romanesque doorway of Clonkeen Church.

based on the Powell Papers in *North Munster Studies* which was produced by the Thomond Archaeological Society, and edited by Etienne Rynne, in 1967. Caleb Powell was descended from Robert Powell, a Cromwellian officer, who received extensive land grants around the City of Limerick. He was married to Georgina Waller, Prior Park, County Tipperary and had one son and four daughters. He was a liberal, witty, humorous, enlightened, broadminded, and, in his writings, somewhat mischievously malicious man.

THE GREAT HUNGER did not affect this area as seriously as it did others. Work on Barrington's Glenstal Castle and on roadworks instigated by Caleb Powell offset the worst effects of the famine. On 25 March, 1847, in *The Times*, Lord Monteagle spoke deplorably and earnestly of the idleness of the Irish people, and their reliance on others and their mendicant propensities. Unproductive works were the hallmark of the Great Hunger. Bridges and piers for which there was no purpose or necessity, and roads that began where there was no need for them, and led to nowhere in particular, were constructed.

THE IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY, previously known as the Irish Volunteers, organ-

ised companies in 1913-1914 from which they later developed a battalion organisation which was then further divided into brigades. The county had four battalions in 1916; a Limerick City battalion, a Doon-Castleconnell battalion, a West Limerick battalion and a Galtee battalion. All of which, including four Clare battalions, formed the Limerick Command under Michael Colivet. The threat of conscription led to an increase in membership for a while in 1918, but few of these new members became active once the threat had passed. After the War of Independence many of them qualified for I.R.A. pensions, claiming that they had worked in intelligence, and undercover, during the Troubles. They were known as the "piss-pot" volunteers because they had, presumably, spent the war years hiding under their beds, clutching chamber-pots. Between 1919 and 1921 the county had three active I.R.A. brigades, the West Limerick, Mid Limerick and East Limerick Brigades.

SOURCES

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