NOTES

Two Unrecorded Standing Stones in West Limerick

Court, Kildimo

This standing stone is situated on a hillock in a pasture field in an area of low lying land one kilometre west of the Ferry Bridge and ninety metres south of the N69 road. O.S. six inch Sheet No.12, 376mm from the western margin and 333mm from the southern margin. It is not recorded in the Ordnance Survey six inch sheets or the Discovery Series Map No. 65 (1996), nor has it been previously noted. This stone is 213cm in height, 38cm in width and 20cm in thickness. It is aligned south-north and due to the stone being used by cattle as a scratching post, it leans towards the north. There was considerable prehistoric activity in the area with a wedge tomb at Clorhane, 1.5 kilometres to the south. This is a region of good quality land that was likely very attractive to these early settlers. From the stone there are good views of the countryside to the north and south, but to the east and the west there are small hills.

Cloonyclohassy, Shanagolden

This standing stone is situated on a hill in a pasture field, O S 6 inch Sheet No. 19, 74mm from the western margin and 430mm from the southern margin. It is 136cm in height, 36cm in width and 26cm in thickness. The stone is not recorded in the Ordnance Survey six inch sheets or the Discovery Series Map No. 64 (1996), nor has it been previously noted. It is situated one kilometre to the east of two standing stones of a similar size described in *NMAJ* vol. 42, 2002, pp 177-8. This suggests significant

Fig. 1. Court Standing Stone.   **Fig. 2.** Cloonyclohassy Standing Stone.

Bronze Age activity in the area, a district of good farmland. The stone is aligned southwest by northeast towards Knockpatrick Hill which may have some ritual significance for these early farming communities. The hill is on the edge of the escarpment of the west Limerick hill-country, west of Shanagolden village on the Kerry Hill road. From the stone there are considerable views of the surrounding countryside to the north and the east. Much of the area around the stone has become depressed due to the activity of cattle using the stone as a scratching post.

<div align="right">**Gerard Curtin**</div>

A Milestone at Belvoir School

The ruins of Belvoir School (Fig. 1) are situated on the former Belvoir estate in the townland of Clonlea, Co. Clare roughly between Kilkishen and Sixmilebridge.[1] A plaque on the ruined building states that Belvoir National School was erected by D. J. Wilson in 1835. However, there was a school on this site as early as 1824.[2] David J. Wilson, owner of the Belvoir demesne, was a Catholic landlord. In the early nineteenth century it consisted of approximately 3,000 acres.[3] Wilson was very concerned to improve the life of his tenants; he was not only instrumental in building the school at Belvoir but also established one at Coolycasey and was intimately involved with John Scott Vandeleur in setting-up and running the Ralahine project. This was a visionary attempt to improve the lives of the labourers on Vandeleur's estate. Wilson also seemed to enjoy building and undertook a large programme at Belvoir, where, unfortunately, he incurred unmanageable debts. He built a Gothic style chapel beside Belvoir House, linked to it by a windowed screen wall, to show his appreciation for his wife's devotion during a long illness in the years 1862-3.[4] He died in 1864 and is buried in a private graveyard within the Belvoir estate.[5] The house is now a ruin but the chapel survives and is used.[6]

Belvoir school was built at a T junction where the road running along the eastern side of the Belvoir estate met with the road skirting the southern boundary. The situation of the school is clearly shown on sheet no. 43 of the 1842 Ordnance Survey map. A very interesting milestone is set onto a wall, outside the school, but milestones were not shown on the 1842 maps. It is clearly visible to anyone travelling from north to south along the road on the eastern edge of the estate. However, it is not very obvious to anyone travelling along the southern route but as it was put in place when traffic moved at the pace of a horse this is not strange. On the 1842 map there is another building shown where the road which runs east to west meets the road which runs north to south. The remains of this structure would lead one to believe that it was a forge. Therefore this must have been a very busy area when Wilson had the milestone erected. Surprisingly, the milestone does not indicate directions nor does it state the distances to the various towns and villages listed, perhaps because the journeys from the stone to

---

[1] O.S. Sheet 58 of the Discovery Series, grid reference R 525 703.

[2] Diarmaid Ó Donnabháin, 'Belvoir Model Agricultural School (1835-1866)', in *The Other Clare,* xi (1987) pp 29-35.

[3] Brigid Clesham, 'The Wilson-Lynch Papers' in *The Other Clare,* xxv (2001) pp 19-21.

[4] Mark Bence Jones, *Burke's Guide to Country Houses, Ireland* (London, 1978) p. 40.

[5] Clesham, 'Wilson-Lynch Papers', p. 19.

[6] Hugh Weir, *Houses of Clare* (Whitegate, 1986) pp 40-1.

Fig. 1. Belvoir School

some of the places mentioned was not direct and would therefore be difficult to measure.

The milestone is approximately four feet (123 millimetres) in height and is made from limestone. The towns and villages listed upon it are as follows: Sixmilebridge, Broadford, Tulla, Limerick, Killaloe and Ennis. There is a heading under which the miles to each of these destinations could be listed, but as already stated, it seems that this was never done. (Fig. 2).

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank Mr. Val Cashman, a member of the Thomond Archaeological and Historical Society, for bringing the milestone at Belvoir to my attention.

Charlotte Murphy

Fig. 2. Milestone

Rabbit Warrens in Medieval Co. Limerick

Rabbits were introduced into Ireland by the Normans in the 12th century and were kept both for their meat and their fur, which was used to trim clothing.[1] The meat was seen as a delicacy in the medieval period because of its rarity, so possession of a warren was a

---

[1] See http://www.enfo.ie/leaflets/Hares%20and%20Rabbits.htm, for the introduction of rabbits; for other background detail in this paragraph see Tom Williamson, *Rabbits, Warrens & Archaeology* (Stroud, 2007).

status symbol for the aristocracy. The warren was sometimes kept close to the house inside a deer park, but could also be remote within an estate because a warren was often a profitable way to use suitable marginal land. Warrens were usually enclosed to contain the animals and often they contained artificial mounds specially created for them to burrow into. Medieval rabbits were less hardy and easier to control than the present day ones that have adapted to the Irish climate and become a pest. The word warren only lately came to mean a system of underground rabbit burrows; originally it was a catchall term for small game animals. Thus the many royal grants of 'free warren' given to lords should not be read as implying the presence of rabbits. Such a grant was, however, usually interpreted as giving the right to establish a warren. The medieval word for a warren was coneygarth or *cuniculus/cunicularium* in Latin.

According to Ó Maolfabhail four Co. Limerick placenames contain the coneygarth element, Conigar in Lismakeery parish, Conigar in Mungret parish, Nicker near Pallasgreen and Kylenagoneeny in Oola parish. Of the four the Mungret Conigar is less certain because the early forms of the name seem to have another root, *cnoc*, and it only took its present form in the 18th century. The other three names were in place by the mid-seventeenth century, so it is likely that they originated in the high medieval period.[2]

Documentary references to Limerick warrens are scarce. A post mortem inquisition into the extent of Thomas Fitz Maurice's estates in 1298 states for Shanid that, 'there is nothing from warrens, because the rabbits are destroyed by foxes'.[3] The same inquisition, however, makes no mention of warrens on his other Co. Limerick estates of Newcastle, Killeedy and Glenogra. An inquisition into Thomas de Clare's estates in 1288 lists two warrens worth 2 shillings in Any.[4] The Butlers had many warrens on their Tipperary estates but none is listed in an extent of their Co. Limerick estate of Caherconlish, which did have that other manorial status symbol a dovecote.[5] The partition of the lands of Sir John Multon in 1342, contained within the *Gormanston Register*, mentions a warren at 'Lymor' (unidentified), while the same document contains two placenames that may refer to warrens: 'the Holdconyngere', within the manor of Norlac (Aherlow) may be 'the old coneygarth', while 'Gortkony' is presumably, 'the field of rabbits'. The latter lay in Lecdoun (Lickadoon) and contained 15 acres, sufficient for a small warren.[6] In 1302 Maurice de Rochford requested and received permission from King Edward for a warren in Tobernea. This may, however, have been a grant of free warren. The reference is an English summary of the document so which Latin word was used for warren is unknown to this writer.[7]

There are two recorded court cases involving warrens. On 29 March 1311 at an assize of gaol delivery in Limerick, Robert Sweyn and Thomas Bretnagh were found not guilty of the charge that 'they by day and night commonly destroyed the rabbits in the warrens of master John le Jeofne and John le White, to the estimate of one mark'.[8]

2 Art Ó Maolfabhail, *Logaimneacha na hÉireann Imleabhar I, Contae Luimnigh* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1990) pp 136 & 138.

3 H.S. Sweetman, *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland 1293-1301* (London, 1881) p. 259.

4 H.S. Sweetman, *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland 1285-92* (London, 1879) p. 205.

5 Newport White (ed.), *The Red Book of Ormond* (Dublin, 1932) pp 154-8; the estates with warrens are Thurles, p. 70, Moycarkey, p. 57, Ardmayle, p. 63, Leghwall, p. 120 and Grenagh p. 125.

6 J. Mills. & M.J. McEnery (eds), *Calendar of the Gormanston Register* (London, 1916) pp 112-15, see also the article in this journal identifying Dungrot castle as the centre of Aherlow manor.

7 http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue search term Tobernea.

8 Herbert Wood and Albert Langman (eds), *Calendar of Justiciary Rolls Ireland I to VII years of Edward II* (Dublin, not dated) p. 203.

On 12 November 1313 another assize in Limerick found Maurice and David Gerveys not guilty of the accusation that 'they are accustomed by night to take and steal the rabbits of Adam, son of William in his warren at Conykyn'.[9] In neither case is it possible to identify the location of the warrens, though Conykyn is clearly a lost rabbit placename. Rabbit skins are mentioned in the 1309-10 murage grant for the walling of Adare, which contains a long list of various customs to be charged on goods entering the town. The entry reads '½d for every hundred skins of lambs, martens, goats, hares, rabbits, foxes, cats or squirrels'.[10]

Clearly rabbits played a small but significant part in the medieval economy of Co. Limerick however, as yet, no warrens have been identified archaeologically.

Brian Hodkinson

The Old Methodist Preaching-house in Adare

Whether or not John Wesley ever preached under the aged ash tree close by the ruins of the Franciscan friary in Adare, 'in or about the year 1756', we do know that a class or Methodist society existed there by the late 1770s. This was either initiated or enhanced by an influx of Palatine tenantry into the Dunraven estate, close to Adare, following the inevitable scattering, after 1760, of the original settlers around Rathkeale. As the number of Methodists increased, the holding of the classes in private houses was impractical so a somewhat larger premise was found. Writing in what is known as the *Green Book* in the 1860s, Caroline, the Second Countess of Dunraven, quoting no source, stated that the western end of the parish church of St. Nicholas, then being used for Church of Ireland services, was used at one time as a Methodist meeting-house.

For some unknown reason that arrangement proved unsatisfactory and by the 1790s the Methodists in Adare were on the lookout for some more permanent premises. Sir Valentine Richard Quin, the proprietor of the Adare Estate, offered a site and the new meeting-house (or more correctly, the preaching-house) was completed by 1797. The site chosen was on the northern side of the turnpike road in the townland of Gortaganniff, adjacent to St Nicholas's Church and the graveyard (Fig. 1). It is in the middle of the present 5th fairway of the Adare Manor Golf Club. That building served the needs of the Methodist community for almost the next eighty years. But changes were taking place in that particular area of the estate. When the current loop of roadway, between the Golf Lodge and the Lantern or Limerick Lodge was built in the mid 1800s, following the completion of the Manor House, the turnpike road ceased to be. That section of the estate was then walled off and the preaching-house, by then called a chapel, was right in the private pleasure grounds of the earl and his family. This state of affairs was a source of embarrassment to the Methodists as they arrived for Sunday service and possibly an intrusion into the lives of the inhabitants of the Manor. A solution was near at hand. In 1870, Edwin, the 3rd earl, offered a site and money to the Methodists to move to a new location. The offer was accepted and the foundation stone of the present church was laid in January 1872 and the building was completed in late 1873. Soon afterwards the preaching-house or chapel was razed to the ground.

[9] Ibid. p. 307.

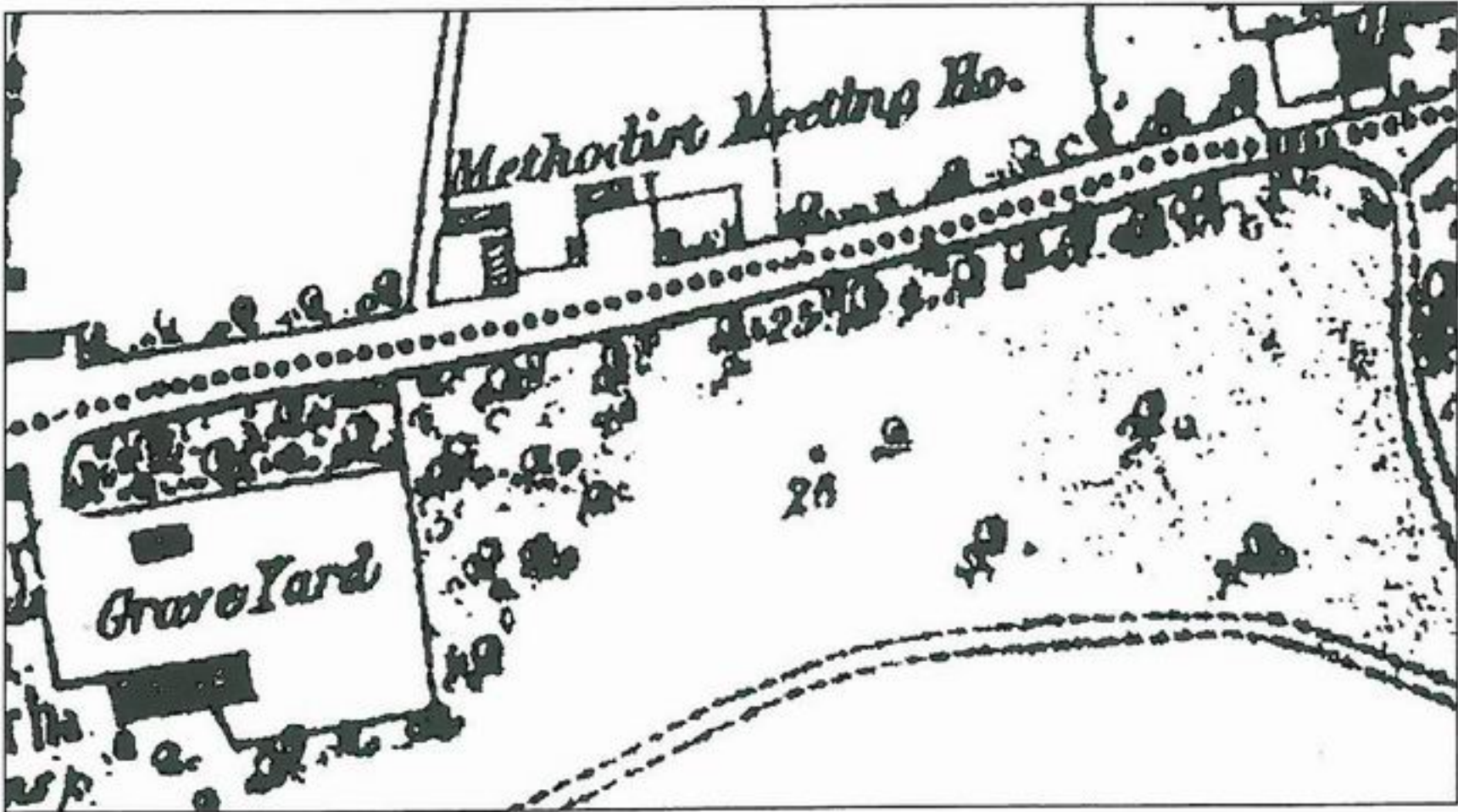[10] J. Begley, *The Diocese of Limerick: Ancient and Medieval* (Dublin, 1906) p. 214.

Fig. 1. Location of Old Methodist Preaching House (OS Map 1842)

50 feet overall length by 20 wide

Porch

Adjacent site plan
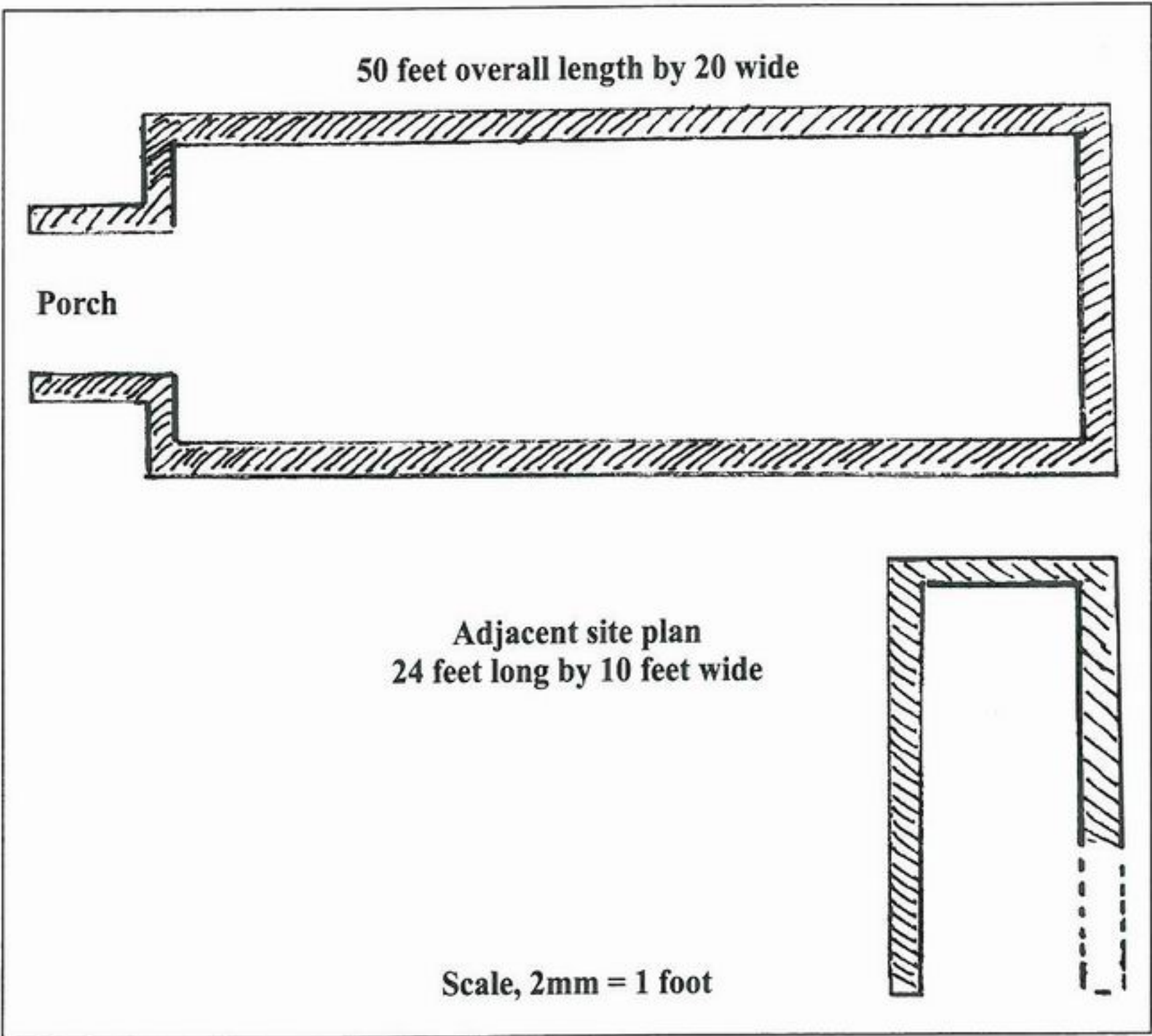24 feet long by 10 feet wide

Scale, 2mm = 1 foot

Fig. 2. Approximate ground plan, 2009

The Methodist historian, Rev. Dudley Levistone Cooney, says that it was a simple gable-ended building, and not unlike that which is still in use in Ballingrane (built some years before Adare), but without a porch. In very warm summers the underground foundations of the chapel are visible. The last occasion was in June 2005. I contacted the Rev. Paul Kingston, the resident Methodist minister in Adare, and we visited the site, armed with a measuring tape and camera but without any map to guide us. The camera was of no use as height was needed to take any worthwhile photograph. It is clear from the foundations examined by us on that occasion that there was, in fact, a porch; measuring roughly 3 metres by 1.5 metres while the main church was rectangular in shape, roughly 15.25 metres long by 6 metres wide. At a distance of about 0.75 metres to the south there was evidence of further foundations, 3 metres wide by 7.3 metres long running due south from the chapel. To the west there was evidence of a minor roadway.

The location of the 1797 preaching-house gives rise to an interesting question. Why was that particular site chosen rather than, say, near the ruins of the Trinitarian Abbey where some houses are shown as well as the inn used as a clubhouse by the County of Limerick Fox-hunting Club, and dated prior to the year 1810, in plate no. 3 in the *Green Book*. When the building of a Methodist place of worship was first mooted in the 1790s, and discussions were underway with the landowner, the area subsequently chosen was a centre of much activity. The old medieval church of St Nicholas was still in use for protestant services; the turnpike road (with its attendant toll-house near the corner of the graveyard) carried its share of traffic between the city and the country to the west, while a small number of tenements still existed there. This conundrum will be considered anon.

Milo Spillane

Free Dental Service

The Limerick pig market was one of the most important in Munster owing to having four bacon factories beside it. It also served a rather unusual purpose as it was here a man named 'Sequah' practised both as a dentist and doctor about fifty years ago. He was a very striking personality, with long hair brushed back almost to his shoulders. He drove to the markets every evening about 3.30 o'clock in a most elaborate equipage which resembled a glorified stage coach. On top was seated a band or orchestra which played, if not sweetly, at least very loudly while he waved to those on the sidewalk. Arrived at the markets, the horses were removed and the driver's seat soon became a dentist's chair, to which he invited anyone who wished to have teeth extracted free of charge. It was surprising how many availed of the offer. I do not know if cocaine had been introduced at the time but he certainly did not use it and the band overhead drowned the cries of the patients.

From a lecture by **Mr Joseph Keyes** to the *Old Limerick Society*, May 1945 (*Limerick Leader* 23 May 1945).