More Place-Names Of Mid Limerick.

THE PARISH OF MANISTIR

BY DAVID CANTWELL. (Member)

King Turlough O'Briain founded a house of the Cistercian Order on the banks of the river Camogue near Croom about the middle of the twelfth century. He endowed it with extensive lands; indeed it is clear from the generosity of his benefactions that he envisaged a monastery of magnificent proportions for the times that were to follow. His vision was not an empty dream for towards the end of the fourteenth century it is estimated that it housed a community of from a thousand to fifteen hundred monks. A hundred and fifty years later the edict of Henry ordering the dissolution of the monasteries heralded its doom. In 1578 the last of its lands had been confiscated and given to Warham St. Leger, and in October of the following year Malby's troops sacked and looted the Abbey, slaying and scattering the monks and making a shambles of the entire enclosure. By 1600 it was an empty shell, "a broken chancel with a broken cross," though a few of the brethren who had survived the slaughter still clung furtively to the ruin and the neighbourhood.

A not insignificant part of its endowments lay about and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Abbey; from these monastic mensal lands was formed the Parish of Manister, much as it is in area and boundaries to-day. It thus owes its origin, as well as its name, the Parish of the Abbey, to the zeal and munificence of an Irish Prince.

In 1640, the year to which details of the Civil Survey refer, the Parish of Monasterneey, the form of the name used in official records, was almost identical in area with that of to-day. Clochnamanagh was then a part of it but Kilonehan was still an individual parish. At the beginning of the eighteenth century under the slight relaxation enjoyed as a result of the Catholic Relief Bill of 1702 the parishes of Fedamore and Manister were united and remained so until about 1860 when they again became separate units in the diocesan organisation. Kilonehan, which had been a part of Croom during the penal period became at this time a townland in the newly independent parish of Manister.

All during the difficult penal years, from 1702 onwards, a thatched mass-house which stood by the roadside a short distance to the west of Lacka-Cross, served the needs of the people in the Manister part of the united parishes. In 1825 the present church of St. Michael was built and an unusual if not unique feature was introduced into its building, it was lofted. This loft was used as a schoolhouse for the children of the parish until 1850 in which year a new school building was erected in Bally-Martin. It is said that two priests of its time are buried in the field beside the site of the old mass-house, the sole indications of
which, and these evident to the eyes of the curious only, being some slight irregularities in the surface of the ground.

Many of the place-names of the parish are associated in one way or another with the Abbey. This is as might be expected, but they lose nothing of their importance or antiquarian interest on that account. Some derive from historical and semi-historical personages and incidents which have arisen from century to century back into the hinterland of history nearly two thousand years ago. Many of them are wrapped round with oral tradition while others yield a sidelight on the lives and works of the people who survived here in the distant days when the place-namers were busy.

As far as it has been possible to do so, the entire topography of the parish, townland, field, well residence and otherwise has been included, the secondary names being listed (a), (b), (c), . . . under the townlands in which they occur.

Three baronies are represented in Manister, Cois Maighshe, the Maigue-side; Deise Beag, the smaller district of the Deise Folk, known in English as Small County; and Pobal Briain, the country of O’Brian’s people.

BALLYCAHANE. Baile Ui Chathain, O’Kane’s place of residence. There was a church here before the erection of the abbey. This church with its lands formed part of the endowments of the Cistercian foundation made by John in 1185 when Duke. Scanlan, the villain of the Colleen Bawn tragedy, was placed under arrest at Ballycahane Castle.

(a) The Keamore. An Chamhaoir, the Morning Star, a small stream flowing southward from Ballycahane bog into Lochnagirre.

(b) Maryville. A late eighteenth century residence of which the attached lands once formed part of the adjoining townlands of Kildonel and Kileurley.

BALLYGRIFFIN. Baile Ui Griafo, O’Griffy’s place of residence.

BALLYLUSKY. Baile Loiscethe, the scorched or burnt place, so called from the practice of burning the grass and surface soil of the fields with a view to improving the land.

(a) Clohane

(b) Clehane. (a) Clochan and (b) Cloichean both meaning the stoney place, two points on the Croom-Crequor road in this townland.

BALLYMACSCRADEN. Baile mac Scraidin, the place of residence of the sons of Scraidin. This is a later version of Cluain meic Scraidin, the meadow of the son of Scraidin which was part of the endowment of the Abbey as “confirmed” by King John in his charter dated November, 1200. This ancient form of the name arises again in the inquisition which immediately preceded the confiscation in 1578 . . . “lands and a weir for eels at Cluain meic Scraidin.”

(a) Barnett’s Well. Tobar Bearnait.

(b) Borenacockmuca. Boithrin na Cac-muice, the boreen of the pigs’ dung. During the nineteenth century, before and after the famine, there were upwards of a dozen little dwelling houses quite close together on the side of this boreen where it joins the Croom-Manister road near the latter village. Each house had a very small enclosed yard in which, to help eke out an existence, a pig and occasionally two were raised. The presence of so many
pigs in so narrow a confines thus gave rise to the name which in its true significance is a scorching comment on the social and economic wretchedness of the time. The boreen was an old highway and is still traceable to Athlacca, some six or seven miles away; it was the route taken by the Manister Company of Fenians to the attack on Kilmallock barrack in March of '67.

(c) Clashnamarve. Claith na Marbh, the trench of the dead, a field which tradition says was the site of the battle in 1369 between Brian Cath-an-Aonaigh and the FitzGeralds.

(d) Powlacro. Poll an Chro, the pool of the blood, a pool on the River Camogue beside Clashnamarve above.

BALLYMARTIN. Baile Mairtin, Martin’s place of residence.

(a) Coonakoom. Cuinne an Chuim, the corner of the defile or gloomy place; a sharp turn on the road near the Castle Cross.

BALLYREGAN. Baile Uí Riogain, O'Regan’s place.

(a) Cooclavinsan. Cul na bhfuinsean, the angle of the ash trees.

CAHIRDUFF. Cathair Dubh, the black fort. This is the Caherduff dubh of the list of lands with which the Abbey was endowed, the duli being probably a personal name. It is spelled Cahercliffe in the inquisition list of 1578, the cl being obviously a misreading of d. There are many forts in this township, including three fort sites the circular wall of which, long since demolished, are outlined in golden circles when the field buttercups are in bloom; at other times the sites are not easily discernible. Here also are two small kerb-bound circular mounds known as the graves and near them is a fulacht Finn or cooking place of the Fianna. Three large stones nearby are thought to have been part of a megalithic alignment.

(a) The Castle. This is a large pile of stones which obviously formed part of a building that stood there. It occurs on Mr. O’Donnell’s farm in a field, which without any apparent justification, is known as the Orchard. In 1640 Garret Byrne held the lands of Caherduff and lived hereabout. The pile of stones may well have been his castle and the orchard one of its amenities.

(b) Garrane Beg. Garan Beag, the small shrubbery, a field which until quite recently was part of the parochial lands.

(c) Powl. Poll, a pool, a hollow place, a field name.

(d) Sheenavaneogue. Sidhé na bhFeannog, the fairy mound of the scald crows. This mound was partially opened upwards of a century ago and a sword and axe, both of iron, were found in it. It is thought that it was the burial site of soldiers slain in the 1579 battle between Malby and the Earl of Desmond and that it thus marks the scene of the conflict, but while it may have served this purpose it was undoubtedly a mound sacred to the sidhe or fairy-folk, partly gods, partly men, of a very early people.

(e) The holy stones. Na clocha beannuithe. Three stones, rough flags, set side by side in the grass margin by the road midway between Manister village and Lacka Cross. A legend says that they were used as a weighing scales by the abbot to show that a simple prayer was more efficacious than a large material gift.
DRUMLOGHAN. Probably Druim Lachan, the ridge or hill of the ducks, but possibly Druim Leacan, the ridge of flagstones.

(a) Alston. This is a residence name and dates from the early nineteenth century. The lands of Alston were part of the adjoining townlands of Drumloghan and Feeroo. A large part of this district was thickly strewn with rather large stones and hence the name.

(b) Powlavadroo. Poll an Mhadra Rua, the foxes' den, a field name.

GURRANE. Garan na Manach, the garden or shrubbery of the monks. The lands of Gurrane were an endowment of the Abbey.

(a) Corabul Cross. The Irish form of this name has already been given as Crosaíre Cúil na Cupoige, the cross of the angle of the docks, but a still older form was Bearna Cúil na Cupoige, the gap of the docks. It is the point on the road where the parishes of Croom and Manister meet.

(b) Cillín an Imris, the little church of contention. This was in Corabul adjoining Gurrane, but its site, and indeed its name, are now unknown locally.

(c) Coonasalee. Cuinne na Sallígh, the angle or corner of the sally-tree, a field name.

(d) Fort Elizabeth. The name of a residence built by a member of the Croker family.

(e) The Shanawillan. An Sean-mhúileann, the old mill. This is a field name but it notes the location of the "mill-seat" mentioned in the Civil Survey and is in Corabul.

(f) Sruhanemaatarra. Sruthan an tSearraigh, the streamlet of the foal. This flows from Lochnagirre and is for portion of its course the boundary between Gurrane (Manister) and Croom.

KILANAHAN. This name is in the highest degree of probability a variation of Kilcanahan, Cill Onchon, the Church of Onchu, a sixth-seventh century saint. The church here named in honour of him and probably founded by him was centre of a parish which survived into the mid-seventeenth century. It was destroyed at the beginning of the war of 1641. Within the small parish there were two churches, Cill Onchon Mor and Cill Onchon Beag, the major and the lesser church, the site of the latter being now represented only by a ruinous circular caiseal a short distance from the major foundation. Major-General Patrick Purcell "of the Cruach" had Kilcanahan in 1640, while O'Hurley of Knocklong, a member of the family of the martyred Archbishop, held it in 1598.

(a) Gleann Glioighine. Probably Gleann na gCloigini, the vale of the little tinkling bells. The name and its location have been long since forgotten by the people but the place was in the parish of Kilcanahan.

KILONEHAN. See Kilcanahan above.

(a) Bettyville. A residence name. The lands of this house were part of the ancient parish of Kilonehan.

(b) St. Senan's Well. Tobar Sionain, a holy well beside the church site of Kilonehanmore.
KILCURLEY. This is the Ceall Mecenel—(i) Cill mo Choirlr or perhaps (ii) Cill mele Coiril, (i) the church of my (Saint) Cyril or (ii) of the son of Cyril—which is found in the list of churches bestowed in 1185 on the Abbey. It is written as Kilkerely in later documents. The church site has disappeared but tradition still points out where it stood.

KILDONNEL. Cill Donail, the church of Donal; it is in all probability the Kileconnel in the list of the Abbey endowments.

KILLEENOUTHY. (i) Cillin Uchta according to Joyce, meaning the little church of the hill-breast. (ii) Cill Fhionsnneachta, the church of the wine-red snow, according to Westropp who explains the name with a legend which says that a saint was slain at the door of his church here when the ground was deeply covered with snow. The blood of the saint tinged the snow a rich wine-red, hence the name. (iii) Cill Fhionnacha, the church of Saint Flinnacha. Westropp says it was also known as Teampull na Sceach, the church of the thorn-bushes, and it has long been known locally as Cealitar, a graveyard.

(a) Monairahille. Moinear na hAidhile, the meadow of the cooper’s adze. A field name.

(b) Powliona. Poll Una, the pool in which Una was drowned; a deep pool near Lochnagirre.

KNOCKNAGRANSHY. Cnoc na Grainse, the hill of the grange or barn. It is sometimes called by its English form, Grangehill. This was Abbey land. Grange as such, and as "grane," "grain" and granshy" is found incorporated in place-names in every locality in which there was a Cistercian Abbey.

(a) Boreennagoth. Boithrin na gCat, the booren of the (wild) cats.

(b) Knockbeg. Cnoic Beag, the little hill. A field name.

(c) Lochcasey. Loch Ui Chasaigh, O'Casey's lake. This is a hollow which forms a temporary lakelet after periods of heavy rain. From this locality eastward to Loch Gur was once O'Casey territory. It is said that the lakelet or hollow gets its name from a member of that family who was drowned there.

(d) Tempal na Webana. Teampall na Webbana, the church of the Webbs. The Webbs were of Cromwellian stock; one of them got large grants of land in Webbsboro, Kilkenny. Nothing remains of the teampal, which was probably a small private chapel but what appears to have been a burial vault.

(e) Terry Ailt. This is a field and is said to have got its name from the anti-tithe organisation which flourished under that title in Clare in the twenties and thirties of the last century.

(f) Tubberlachteen. Tobar Laichtin, St. Lachteen's well, a holy well at which rounds used be made. It is built round and roofed over with stone and on a flag inset above its doorway one reads "Erected by James Keating of Grange Hill in the year of Our Lord 1788." The waters of this well were so powerful that they were harnessed to work a horizontal mill.

LACKA. Leaca an Grianain, the hill-slope of the sun-house. This townland was also part of the Abbey endowment. The grianan is a small ring fort with a miniature embankment, and is situated in an ideal position to catch all the
sunlight possible while at the same time it is sheltered on all sides by the surrounding leaca.

(a) The Fluckery. An Fluchra, the wet place, a field name.

(1) MANISTER. Mainistir, the Monastery or Abbey. This is the form of the name now invariably given to the parish and to this townland.

(2) MONASTERENEY (and other phonetic renderings). Mainistir an Aonaigh, the Abbey of the assemblage (assembly place).

(3) MONASTER de MAGIO and MONASTER MAYE. That is “of the Maigue.” (cf. “de fergio,” of the Fergus, “de Surio” of the Suir). These were the forms of the name used in ecclesiastical references to the Abbey.

(a) Abbeyville. A residence name, the attached lands were part of the “plow-land of the Abbey.”

(b) Aonach Beag (Ena Beg), the small assembly (place). It is immediately to the south of the Abbey and is the authoritative site of the battles of 1369 and 1579.

(c) Aonach Cairbre, Cairbre’s assembly. This is a gentle eminence on the right bank of the river and directly across from the Abbey. It was, perhaps, the site of the aonach convened in honour of Flisha Muileachan, King of Munster, about the middle of the third century, and at which Flinn and the Fianna helped to entertain the royal visitor. The particular Cairbre of the place-name has not been identified.

(d) The Burnt Cross, a cross-road near the Abbey. Three members of a family named Boland, tithe proctors, were imprisoned in their home here in 1830 and burnt to death.

(e) Camogue. An Chamog, the little winding stream.

(f) Cineal Meigean, (the district of) the race of Meigean. This is said to have been the ancient name of the territory in which the Abbey was built. A note in “Onomasticon Gaedelicum” taken from Sweetman’s Calendar of Irish State Papers, year 1200, says “Cenel Meighean in which is Monasterenaghe (is) in c. Lymeriche,” and then Father Hogan adds his personal note: “Cenel Meigean = (?) Cineal mBegain.”

(g) Coona na Spride, Cunne na Spride, the ghost’s corner, a point in the immediate neighbourhood of the monks’ road eastward to their farms at Lacka etc.

(h) Cudmore’s Leap. The Cudmores lived at Manister in the beginning of the nineteenth century. One of them gave an extraordinary long jump over the river Camog but at which point is now unknown.

(i) Drehideen-a-fooka, Droichidin an Phuca, the little bridge of the pooka, on the Manister-Clorane road.

(j) Ford of the Chariot of Fergus, Ath Caraid Fheargusa, a shallow on the river immediately below the Abbey bridge. The personal name here is that of Fergus Mac Roigh, the Red Branch hero “whose honour rooted in dishonour stood” when he sided with Maeve against the Ulstermen. Cruachan of Connacht, Emhain Macha of Ulster and all the pageantry and cruelty of the Tain war are here linked in a Munster place-name.

(k) The Lady Pool, a pool below the Ford of the Chariot. Nothing is known of the lady.

(l) Powl Ciarmuda. Poll Ciarmuda, Carmody’s pool. This pool is east of the
Abbey; midway between the latter and the tail of the pool, a flagged causeway extending diagonally more than half-way across the river was discovered some twenty years ago during drainage work. The flagged passage was doubtless a ford to facilitate the monks in their journeys to and from their farmlands.

(m) River View, a modern residence.

PARKAREE. Pairc an Righ, the field of the King.

(a) Aughbwæ, Ath Bui, the yellow ford.

(b) Parkanare. Probably (i) "Pairc an Air, the field of slaughter, or (ii) Pairc an Fheir, the grassy field. The local pronunciation of this name makes the final syllable rhyme with "car."

(c) Spring Lodge, a local residence name.

RATHMORE. Rath-mor, the great fort. This was the hosting place of the Danes who challenged Turlough Maol O'Brien in 1138. The rath stood about the still existing Geraldine peel tower but all traces of the original earthworks have vanished.

(a) Boherfole. Bothar Phoil, Paul's road. This branches northward off the Manister-Fedamore road.

(b) Boherowen. Bothar Eogain, Owen's road. Another branch road parallel to Boherfole above.

(c) Bohernamonagh. Bothar na Manach, the monk's way, another branch road running south-easterly to Glenogra. According to tradition it was the route followed by the monks to their daily labour on the abbey lands at Glenogra and its neighbourhood.

(d) Drumin. An Druimin, the ridge, the field of the ridge.

(e) The Veldown. ?An Meall Donn, the brown knoll. The configuration of the land here, however, does not endorse this suggested Irish form of the name.

SKEEHANAGH. Scoechnach, the place of the whitethorns, abounding in thorn bushes. This townland was in the seventeenth century and later subdivided into Scoechnach Mor and Scoechnach Beag, the greater and the lesser bushy places. At the beginning of this century, men working in a sandpit here uncovered two crouched burials almost side by side. The burial chambers were intact including the cap-stones. The skeletal remains were buried in an adjoining part of the worked sandpit.