

# 'Desecration' at

**A**N ACT OF "DESECRATION" at Kilquane Graveyard, Athlunkard, one of the oldest religious sites in the Limerick-Clare area, has been condemned by the members of St. Senan's Historical Society, Limerick.

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# 'graveyard of traitor'

BY TED GALE

Ten trees there have been axed and their stumps have been scorched.

It is not known who is responsible.

The graveyard, which is near the river, just beyond the Shannon Banks Housing Estate, has historical connections with the Siege of Limerick and contains the remains of the old church of Cill Chuain, believed to have been built in the 6th century.

## Legend

Probably the best known person buried at Kilquane Cemetery was Philip McAdam, who, according to popular legend, sold the Ford at Carrig A Clouragh nearby to the Williamite army besieging Limerick in 1691.

The grave of this man was visited by generations of Limerick people subsequently—and not to pay their respects—while a couplet was written about him, as follows:

"Here lies the body of Philip the traitor,  
Who lived a fisherman and died a deceiver"

It was alleged that the MacAdam family, who came from Blackwater, had obtained land as a reward for Philip's betrayal.

But they later produced documentary proof that they had land in the area prior to the alleged act of treachery.

Also buried at Kilquane is a Fr. Moloney, who was chaplain to Sarsfield's Jacobite forces during the 1690-1691 Sieges, and believed to be the last Catholic priest to celebrate Mass in St. Mary's Cathedral.

His gravestone, now disintegrated, could be seen up to

about two generations ago.

A number of Germans, who died during the building of the Shannon Scheme, are also buried at Kilquane.

## Vandalism

A letter from Mr. P. J. Galvin, P.C., chairman, and Mr. K. Hannon, secretary, on behalf of St. Senan's Historical Society, states that it is "with feelings of sadness and despair that we bring to the notice of the public the vandalism that has occurred in recent times in the old churchyard of Kilquane, an historic enclosure fitted delightfully against the backdrop of the old, familiar hills of Clare.

"Now it is an odious smudge. The yew trees are gone, fallen to the axe of the destroyer.

"Their fire-blackened stumps remain, pitiful reminders of the rich greenery that once gave life to this sacred spot, where so many

of our ancestors await the Resurrection.

"At least one fine monument lies cracked and broken, apparently by the heat from the burning yew branches

"What utter desecration—and at a time when the conservationists are crying out for our co-operation."

## Appeal

An appeal is made to those responsible to plant a yew tree in place of each one destroyed.

"Thus they may be considered as fulfilling a sacred duty while renewing for the eyes of posterity the trees which have for so long been regarded as emblems of eternity."

The members of St. Senan's Historical Society feel that their stand in this matter could prevent some other cherished site from suffering a similar fate.

