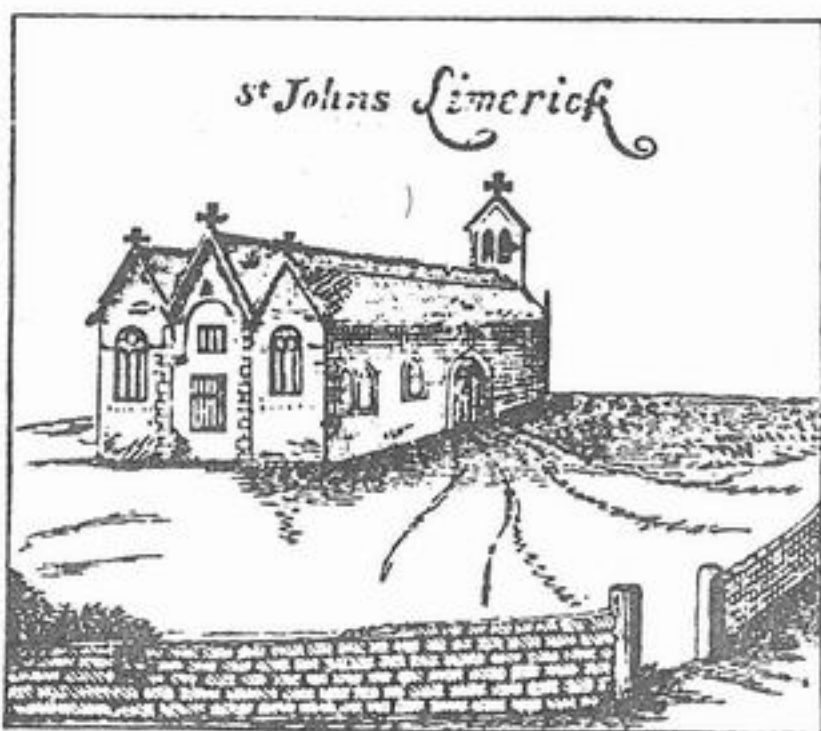


in the habit of perambulating Ireland, edifying the people with descriptions of the Holy Places, and with glowing accounts of the valorous achievements of the Crusaders'.

Archdeacon Begley noted that the Knights Templar had a house in the diocese of Limerick during the twelfth century but that it was suppressed in 1307. Ferrar, in his history, states that they were instituted around the year 1118 and that their house in Quay Lane, Limerick, was dedicated to St John the Baptist.⁹ These two sources would seem to indicate that Garryowen could have been linked with the Knights Templar during the twelfth century. While Archdeacon Begley held that the Hospitalers or Knights of St John of Jerusalem, mentioned in 1856, did not have a house in the diocese, others¹⁰ held that they did and so this much debated question remains open. In all of the debate, however, it is clear that the link between Garryowen and St John the Baptist is long-standing and solid.

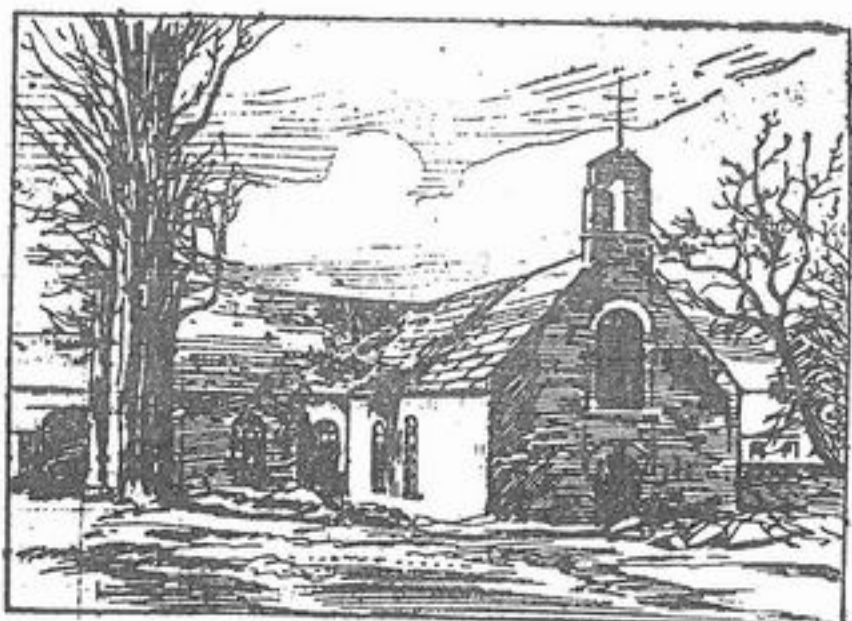
ST JOHN'S MEDIEVAL CHURCH

The medieval history of St John's church is hard to trace due to scarcity of source material. The various taxation lists give us an idea of its importance *vis-à-vis* the other churches of the diocese and its history. At the end of the seventeenth century we get the first description and drawing of St John's. It comes



2 The medieval church of St John as depicted in Thomas Dineley's *Journal*

3 The eighteenth century church of St John, from a drawing in the *Munster News*, 23 June 1894



Denis Connors, in St John's Churchyard on 15th December. In the same tomb also lie buried Rev. Owen Sullivan who was curate to this said Dr. John Leahy and also the Rt Rev. Dr Daniel O'Kearney, Bishop of Limerick. The tomb is situated near the East Wall towards the South East end of the Churchyard'.²⁸ Care of the parish, subsequent to Dr Leahy's death, was given jointly to Fr Laurence Connall and Fr John Creagh, with the bishop, Dr Lacy, as parish priest. The Rev. James White notes that at that time the bishop got half the 'emoluments' and the other two priests a quarter each.

Having been raised to the status of bishop's parish, St John's now began to attract more diocesan attention. On 4 August 1759 Bishop Lacy died. Four days after his death Dr John Creagh, dean of the chapter and parish priest of St Mary's, 'sent to all the members of the Chapter who were alive as also to all the pastors of the Diocese to assemble together at St John's Chapel near the gates of Limerick at eleven o'clock in the morning in order to elect a Vicar Capitular. The next day, August 9th, all met and put forward Dr John Creagh, Dean and PP St Mary's, to be Bishop.'²⁹ However, Dr Daniel Kearney, a professor at the Sorbonne in Paris, was appointed and consecrated bishop on 27 January, 1760, in Thurles, and pronounced bishop of Limerick in St Mary's on 31 January. In May of that year he was inducted as parish priest of St John's by the Rev. Michael Hoare, ex-provincial of the Dominicans, on the authority of the archbishop of Cashel. Despite the gesture of being pronounced bishop of Limerick in St Mary's rather than St John's, the pre-