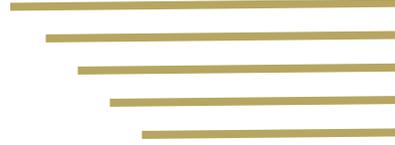




NATIONAL HERITAGE WEEK

Sunday, 25th August 2024



Kiltullagh Killimordaly

HERITAGE SOCIETY

EXPLORING THE BUILT HERITAGE
OF KILTULLAGH VILLAGE

FACEBOOK

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EMAIL

kkheritage@outlook.ie

Introduction

Kiltullagh is a small village in County Galway, about six miles east of Athenry, on the old Galway to Dublin road. Many of the sites, for example schools, a church, a forge, and a pound, are found in villages across the country. Despite this, it is important for the local community to be aware of, and knowledgeable about the built heritage sites in their vicinity.

With the main aim of highlighting some of the numerous heritage sites in the area, the Kiltullagh Killimordaly Heritage Society has organised a walk around the village of Kiltullagh on 25 August 2024, as part of National Heritage Week. This walk will step back into the past, exploring the village's routes and roots.

Kiltullagh Killimordaly Heritage Society

Kiltullagh Killimordaly Heritage Society is a voluntary organisation that was formed in July 2024. Our aim is to research, record, preserve, and protect our local history, as well as our built, cultural, and natural heritage within our community.

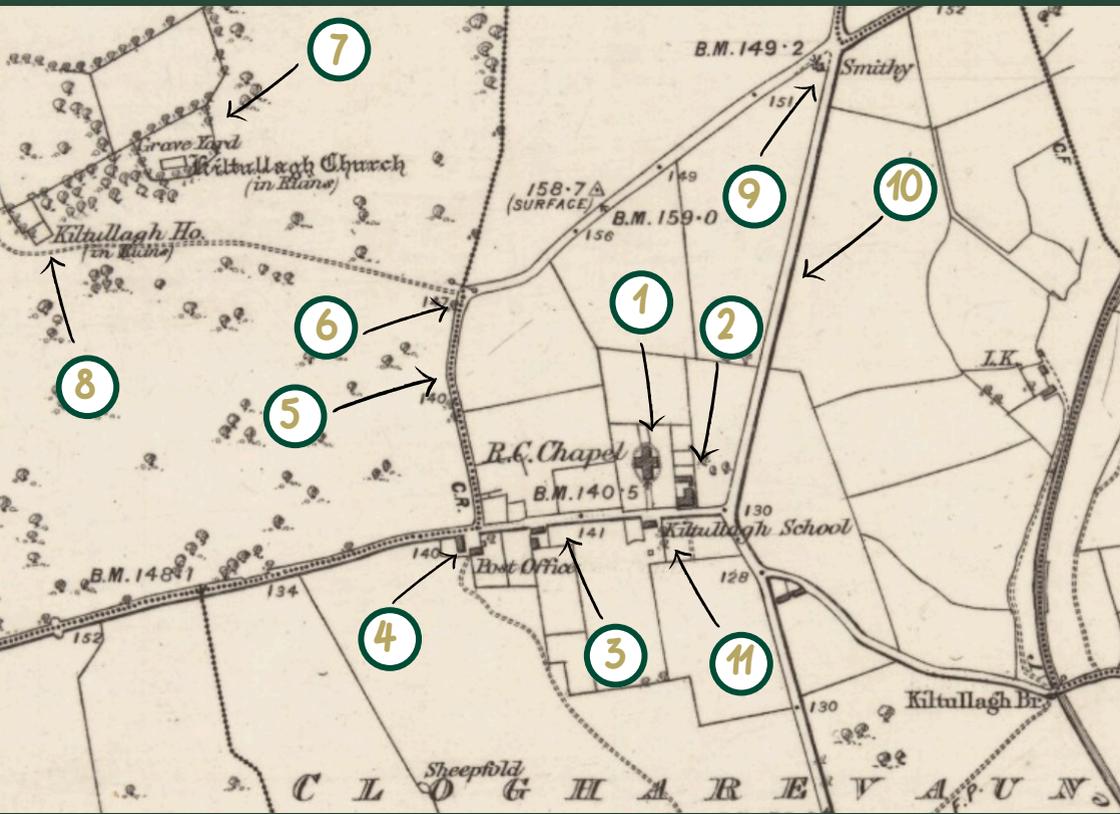
Membership

If you would like to become a member of the Kiltullagh Killimordaly Heritage Society, please email us at kkheritage@outlook.ie





Map of Kiltullagh walk



- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| ① | The church | ⑦ | The graveyard |
| ② | The site of the old parochial house | ⑧ | Kiltullagh house |
| ③ | The pond | ⑨ | The forge |
| ④ | Ward's pub | ⑩ | The road from the forge to the village |
| ⑤ | The road from Ward's pub to the forge | ⑪ | The schools |
| ⑥ | The coffin rest | | |

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01 The church

The Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Cahalan, who served as the parish priest of Kiltullagh-Killimordaly from 1836 to 1861, was instrumental in the building of Saints Peter and Paul's Church, laying its foundation stone on 29 June 1840. During the Great Famine, he devoted himself to alleviating the suffering of his parishioners. In 1855, he was granted special leave to travel to Galway to raise the funds needed to complete the church. Fr. Cahalan passed away on 1 September 1861 and is buried outside the Chancel of the church he so faithfully helped to build.

In the mid-1940s, Fr. Dunne (who was parish priest at that time) commissioned Evie Hone, the well-known stained-glass artist, to paint a set of Stations of the Cross. When they were completed, they were collected in Dublin by Maneen (John) Kavanagh, who had a hackney service in the parish. The Blake family of Rathville House donated the paintings to the church. In 2013, six of the 14 paintings were stolen from the church. The six paintings were recovered from waste land in Edenderry in 2016.

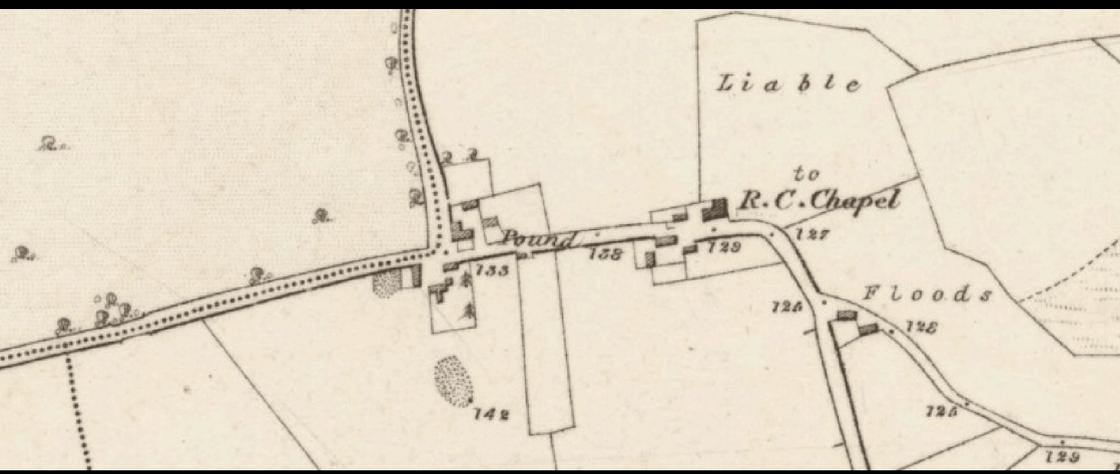
There are two paintings in the church by Richard King, a well-known stained-glass artist who also excelled in oil paintings.



02 The site of the old parochial house

The old parochial house was on the bend in the road, where the gate of the current parochial house is located (see the photo for '01 The church' above). This is the house that was occupied by Fr. Dunne from 1931 to 1967, as well as by many of his predecessors. Prior to the construction of the current church, part of this house may have been used as a church. The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map, which was surveyed in 1838, shows an R.C. Chapel at this spot (see the map for '03 The pound' below).

The front garden of the current church, which was replaced with tarmacadam, can be seen in the foreground of the photograph. The old parochial house was knocked down in about 1968, shortly after Fr. Glynn became parish priest in 1967.



03 The pound

Pounds were common in most villages in pre-famine times. It was a place where stray animals, found wandering the roads or in neighbouring fields, were kept until their owners paid a fine to have them released. This fine helped to cover the pound keeper's costs for watering and feeding the animals, as well as compensation to the landowners where the animals were found and for any damage, they caused. If the animals weren't claimed within a set period (usually three weeks), they were taken to the nearest market and sold. The proceeds of that sale were then divided between the pound keeper and the impounder.

It was reported in the *Freeman's Journal* dated 16 December 1846 that 'the pound of Kiltullagh has been literally crammed with cattle.'

“pound” of Kiltulla has been literally crammed with cattle. If the owners of these cattle could pay their last May rent, it might be right to compel them, but if they be in a state of starvation, and consequently unable to pay it, they ought not to be pressed at this awful season of destitution.

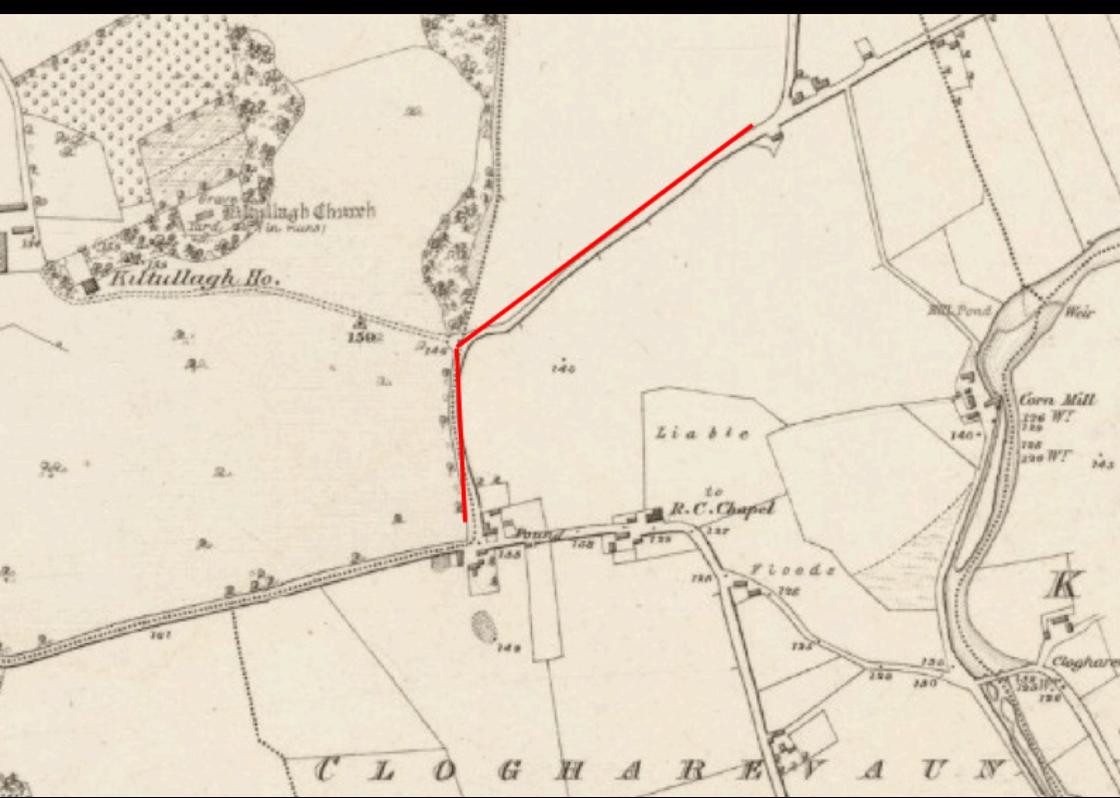


04 Ward's pub

It is said locally that Ward's pub dates back to the 17th century. Indeed, the 1821 census records Thomas Higgins as a 'farmer and spirit retailer' at Poletullane (Kiltullagh). He lived there with two children, two labourers, two servants, and one visitor. It is likely that this refers to what is now called Ward's pub.

In the late 1800s, the pub was owned by the O'Connor family. William O'Connor married Bridget Whelan from Athenry in 1902. William died shortly afterwards, and Bridget (Delia) married Bernard Ward of Kilarrive. So, the O'Connor pub became Ward's. O'Connor's (Ward's) was also the post office in the late 1800s/early 1900s. In the 1901 census, Sarah O'Connor was an assistant postmistress and James O'Connor was a 'GPO letter carrier'. At a later stage, the post office was taken over by Doyles, who lived across the road.

In 1916, the Irish Volunteers at Moyode (who were taking part in the 1916 Rising) obtained food and tobacco at Ward's, writing an IOU to Ward and promising to pay what they owed when they won.

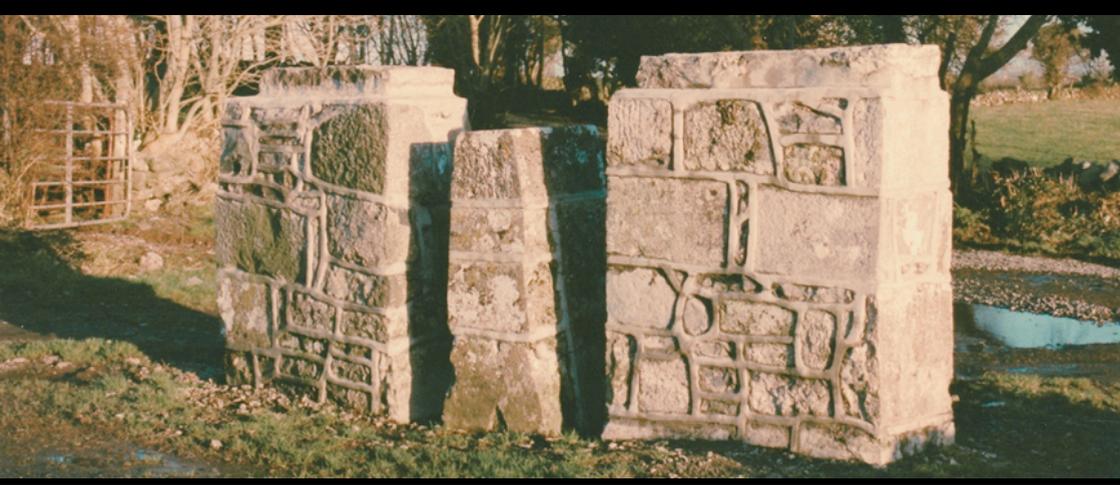


05 The road from Ward's pub to the forge

This section of road is very old, and relatively unchanged from it's original form. On the OS map surveyed in 1838 (above), it was the main road from Galway to Dublin (and there was no road from the forge to the village – see later). This road is also shown on the Taylor and Skinner road map from 1777, and the 1819 map of William Larkin.

By the 1960s, this old road had become completely overgrown and impassable. That issue was addressed in the late 1990s when work was done to make the road accessible.

There is a bench mark on the side of the road, and another one at the forge. A bench mark is a mark established at a point of known elevation and is then used as a basis for measuring the elevation of other features in the area. The bench marks on this road are shown on the 25-inch OS map surveyed in about 1890, and were used for mapping purposes.



06 The coffin rest

The coffin rest at Kiltullagh is a rare and unusual feature. The age or function of the structure are not known. It may have been a resting place for the coffin carriers on the way from the church to the graveyard. Alternatively, it may have been a resting place for the coffin so that the priest could offer prayers, at a time during the Penal Laws when a priest was not allowed to enter the graveyard. It is also possible that it served both functions.

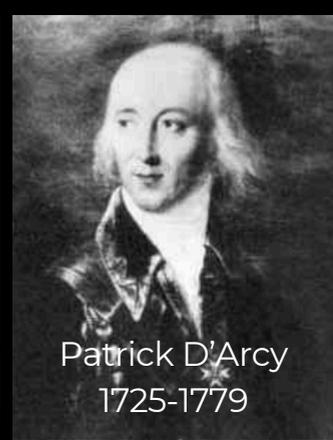
Other coffin rests, for example in Ardpatrick, Co. Limerick, or Killaan, Co. Galway, are located at the boundary wall of the graveyard. These were probably used for prayers before burial.



07 The graveyard

The graveyard in Kiltullagh is very old, and is still in use. Virtually nothing remains of the medieval church that once stood here. The photograph shows the remaining wall before it was repaired in the late 1990s. Until relatively recently (about 1940), there were more extensive ruins of the church on the far left as you enter the graveyard. These are described in a letter written by Thomas O'Connor to John O'Donovan in 1838 (commonly called the Ordnance Survey Letters). O'Connor says of Kiltullagh graveyard, 'in which stand two portions of the side wall of an old church'. He estimates that the church was about 65 feet long by about 21 feet wide. He also suggested that the church was 'erected at a period not at all far back in time.'

The earliest headstone dates from 1714, and there are many other headstones dating from the 18th century. The headstone inscriptions were recorded in a book, *The memorial inscriptions and related history of Kiltullagh, Killimordaly and Esker graveyards* (ed. Con Mulvey), published in 1998, and can also be viewed online at galway.ie/graveyards.



DB Kiltullagh house

Kiltullagh House was built in about 1700 by a descendant of James Riveagh D'Arcy, a Mayor of Galway who died in 1603. It is said that the stone for the house was obtained from a castle on the site, which belonged to Donal McSwinie. It was one of the first houses in Ireland that was built in the transition period of living in castles to living in houses. Pistol loops were incorporated into the windows, maintaining a defensive feature of a castle in the house. The second-floor windows are also higher, giving the impression that the house is bigger. There were many notable members of the family, including Patrick D'Arcy, a member of the British parliament in 1640; Martin D'Arcy, who was high Sherriff of Galway in 1635; and Patrick D'Arcy who was a well-known mathematician in the 18th century. As the family remained catholic, many of them went to France to be educated as a result of the Penal Laws.

John D'Arcy was the last occupant of the house. It is said that he vacated the house in about 1818, because he couldn't bear the loneliness after his wife died. He moved to his estate in Connemara and founded the town of Clifden. The D'Arcy family had introduced flax growing to Kiltullagh, and it was while drying flax in the basement that the house at Kiltullagh caught fire and was destroyed, probably sometime in the 1820s or 1830s. It is said locally that the fire could be seen for miles around. However, no newspaper reports of the fire have been found.



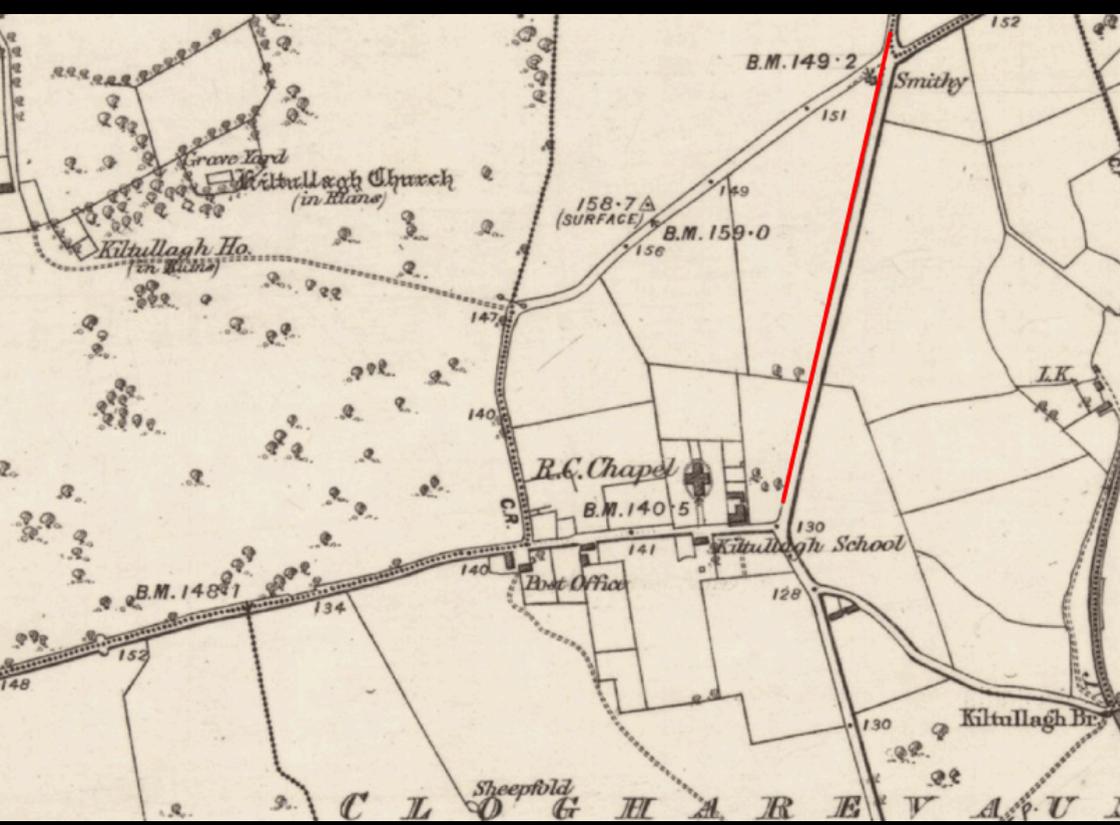
09 The forge

From the 1880s, the forge was operated by three generations of the Murphy family. It is shown as a 'smithy' on maps from around that time. While the building is shown on the first edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1838, there is no indication that it was a forge, although it probably was, as there are no windows in the building, making it unlikely to be a house. In many cases, a forge was also located close to a road for easy access to people using the road.

The stone wheel across the road from the forge, which is associated with it, was used by the blacksmith for putting the rim onto the wheel of a cart.

The Schools' Collection, part of the National Folklore Collection, UCD, contains further information with regard to tools used at a forge and cures associated with forges at Brackloon

(<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4602669/4594062>), and Esker (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4602675/4594447>).



10 The road from the forge to the village

This map was surveyed in about 1890 and shows a road from the forge to the village. Compare this with the map surveyed in 1838, when this road didn't exist (see the map for '05 The road from Ward's pub to the forge' above).

It is said locally that Lord Dunsandle had this stretch of road built in the 1850s to avoid passing Saints Peter and Paul's Church on his way to visit his mistress in Attymon. Of course, he would also avoid being seen through the village and would steer clear of Fr. Cahalan's house, which was beside the church.



// The schools

The first school on this site was established in a former dwelling house in 1856. That house was located between the two current buildings. When the tennis court was being built in the early 1970s, the stones from that old house, which wasn't visible as a house at the time, were used to build a wall at the tennis court.

From 1856 to 1899, the school had a chequered history. In 1899, a grant to build a new school was obtained, and the current Parish Hall (old school) was built. During construction, classes were held in the teacher's residence in Kilarrive.

The new school (on the right in the photograph) was built in 1958 and the old school was used as a Parish Hall, with several extensions added in the 1970s/1980s. During the 1960s, when renovations were being made to the new school, the old school was used for classes.

There have been several extensions to the new school.

**KILTULLAGH KILLIMORDALY
HERITAGE SOCIETY
KILTULLAGH HOUSE**



**DIGITAL STORYMAPS: SCAN QR CODE
TO EXPLORE THE BUILT HERITAGE OF
KILTULLAGH VILLAGE**

