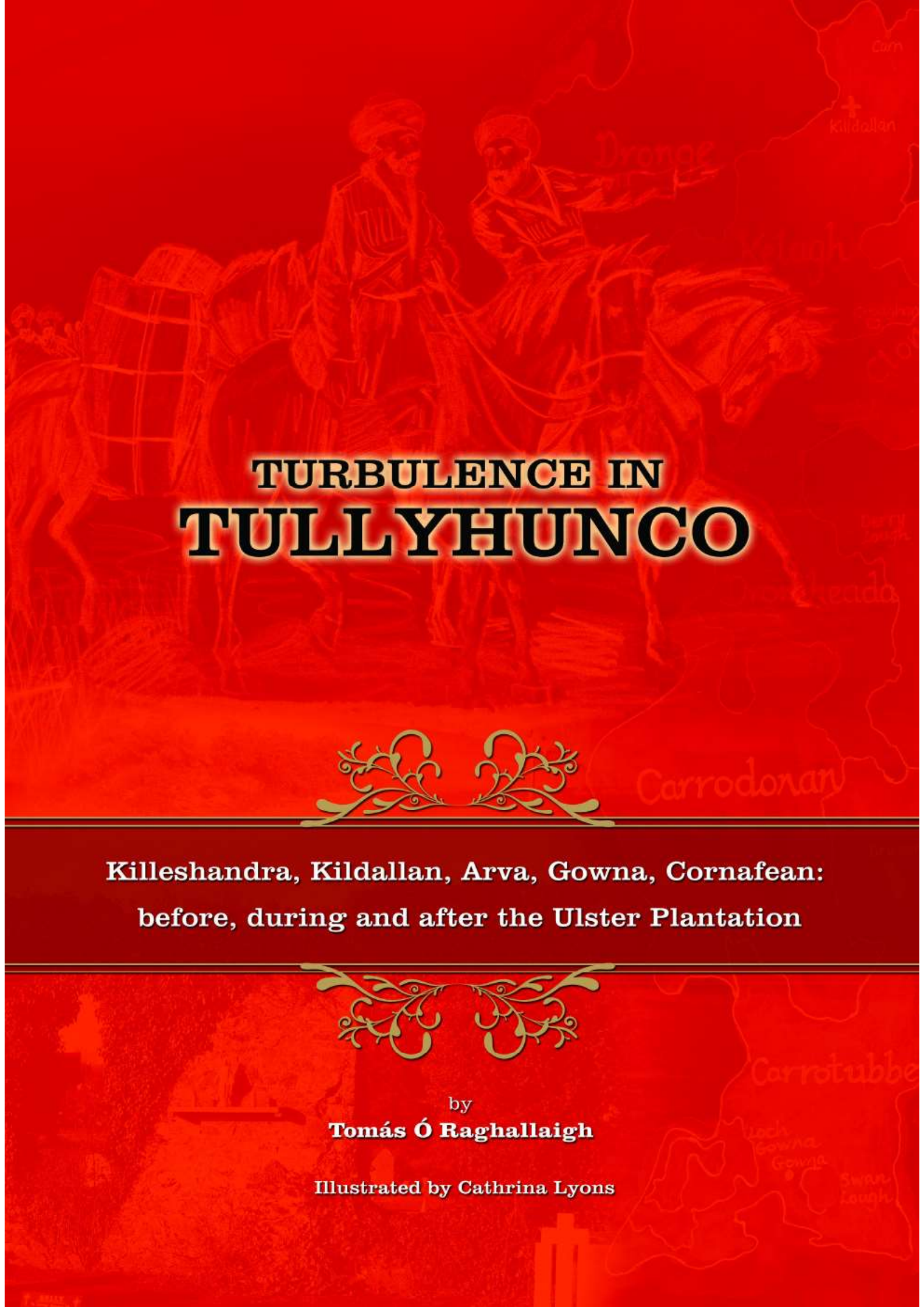

TURBULENCE IN TULLYHUNCO

Killeshandra, Kildallan, Arva, Gowna, Cornafean: before, during and after the Ulster Plantation

by

Tomás Ó Raghallaigh

Illustrated by Cathrina Lyons

TULLYHUNCO

Dr onge: Brian Mc Kier nan

Kelagh: John Achmootie

Clonyn: Claude Hamilton

Dromheada: Alexander Achmootie

Carrodonan: John Browne

Clonkine: Alexander Hamilton

Car r otubber: Alexander Hamilton

TURBULENCE IN
TULLYHUNCO

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I dedicate this book to the memory of the generations of people who have struggled on the drumlins to provide a living for themselves and their families.

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What's it all about?

Growing up in Killeshandra in the 40s and 50s, you couldn't help knowing that there were two races of men: Catherlicks and Praudesins, US and THEM. They, the Protestants, worshipped in different Churches, went to different schools, and had their own social life, with functions in their own halls, and dances that went on till two in the morning, while ours ended at midnight. So you simply didn't get to meet Protestant girls. To help us know which side we belonged to, we were given distinctive names. Their lads got exotic labels ranging from Alan and Albert to Victor and Ezekiel, while we had to do with Seán or Séamus or Packie-Joe! And while our girls got holy names like Agnes, Margaret, Brigid or Maureen, theirs were Lily or Iris, Hazel or Heather. Altogether a very successful system of Apartheid, two groups of people living side by side in harmony, but not mixing socially.

Of course you met them and interacted with them, especially in farming and other agricultural activities, at fairs, markets and agricultural shows, queuing for the creamery, or in the forge on wet days where everyone went to get their horses and asses shod, where the crack was mighty and a fella might learn a thing or two if he kept his ears open. But religion or politics were never on the agenda. Some of them worked on the country to supplement their farming income. Nowadays we'd call it 'agricultural contracting'. So you met them when they came to plough or harrow, to cut the furrows or to mow. As there were no mobile phones, you had to go on your bike to book them, so you met their mothers, fathers, wives or sisters. All very friendly, good-humoured, a way of life shared, they were just like ourselves.

And yet there was a certain uneasiness in the air, a sense that maybe all this friendliness was just politeness. It was hard to put your finger on it, just as it is hard now to describe it. But you learned, almost unconsciously, to be circumspect if there were Protestants in the company, just as you learned to moderate your language if there were girls or women in the company.

It wasn't just people who were Catholics and Protestants - there were Protestant places and Catholic places, a 'place' being a farm of land. We knew that Protestants wouldn't be pleased if a Catholic bought one of their places, and of course we wouldn't be pleased if they bought one of ours. It was taken for granted that you'd employ an auctioneer from your own side to sell your place. You'd even have an undertaker from your own side to bury you when you died! There was a third category of place, 'a good Protestant place.' You caught a glimpse of these when you went with a cow to the bull - all the bulls, except one, were Protestant! A good Protestant place would have a stone-walled, slated house, lawn and flower-garden to the front, vegetable garden and orchard to the back, stone-walled, slated out-offices, a big hayshed, horses and machinery, a large herd of cows ... and a bull in the field. This was at a time when many small farmers lived in mud-walled, thatched houses and built their hay and corn in *pikes* (stacks) or ricks in the haggard.

Yes, we had two races of people living parallel lives in peaceful harmony. And yet there were hints of other things. We could hear them 'drumming up' in preparation for the Twelfth out at Killegar on a fine July evening when we were making hay in the upper meadow. There were stories, too, of 'walks' and incidents nearer home earlier in the century.

We learned History at school, but it was very nationalistic, all about the 700-year struggle against the English, with little about the complexities of human relationships. All military and political stuff, wars and treaties, plantations and battles. The Island of Saints and Scholars invaded by the Danes, whose depredations were ended by our hero, Brian Ború. High kings with opposition, until the traitor Diarmaid MacMurrough brought the Normans in. How brave Irish rebels fought against the foreigner, culminating in the Rising of 1916 and the War of Independence to give us an Ireland '*not free merely, but Gaelic as well, not Gaelic merely, but free as well*.' … or so they told us!

'Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas' is the only line of Virgil I remember from my Leaving Cert. days. Roughly translated, it runs, 'It's well for him who can understand why things are the way they are.' For more than fifty years I have been trying to sort all this out in my mind, to work out what kind of society we have here in Killeshandra, and how we've come to be the way we are.

Starting out on this project, I intended to write a history of Killeshandra from the Ulster Plantation to the present time. But then I stumbled on a strange phenomenon, Tullyhunco, a tiny, viable, functioning Gaelic Irish statelet being taken over by a modern state, England, a state that was bent on changing the entire way of life of the area, the ownership of the land, the economy, farming methods, and the religion, language and culture of the people. Just at a time when England itself was merging with Scotland to make Great Britain, which, in turn was on its way to becoming a super-state, The British Empire, the most powerful political and military set-up on earth. A fascinating study, but a task for which I am totally inadequate. But then, 'fools rush in …'. This account of our past is written from a male, peasant, Gaelic Irish, Catholic viewpoint, because that is my background. I look forward to 'balancing statements' (to borrow a phrase from the Revenue Commissioners) from people who have different viewpoints.

Chapter 1

Tullyhunco: Before the Plantation

A Gaelic State

Tullyhunco or Teallach Dhonnchadha, was a tiny, semi-autonomous state in late medieval Ireland. It was a long narrow strip of land stretching from Kildallan in the north to the shores of Lough Gowna in the south, and from the New Bridge near the Holy Rosary Convent in the east to the Leitrim border in the west, and at another point, from near Arva Road station to Arva. It included the modern parishes of Gowna, Killeshandra and Kildallan, excluding Tomregan. The Rí Tuaithe was a member of the McKiernan family who ruled Tullyhunco from their residence on the Hill of Croghan for hundreds of years. In Irish, Tullyhunco was Tullach Dhonnchadha. Tulach is a variant of teallach, which means a hearth or fireplace. It may be related to teaghlach, which means a family or household, in the sense of a nuclear family gathered around the hearth, as against the extended family of the clan. The family in question was that of Donnchadha Mac Tighearnáin Uí Ruairc, and presumably the Donohoes, O'Donohoes and O'Donoghues are the modern descendants of this Donnchadha. The Tighearnán was probably Tighearnán Mór Ó Ruairc whose wife, Dervogilla left him for Diarmaid MacMurrough, an episode that is reputed to have resulted in the Norman Invasion. The modern McKiernans, Kiernans, Tiernans and MacTiernans are descendants of these, while the MacMaistir family, who were airchinnigh or managers of church lands, were ancestors of the Mastersons.

A Quiet Backwater

Tullyhunco was a quiet backwater of Gaelic Ireland, surrounded by native statelets and detached from the English Pale, which was only about twenty miles away in the Oldcastle area. Culturally and intellectually it connected to the greater Gaelic World which extended from the Sceilligs off the coast of Kerry to the Hebrides and Highlands of Scotland. This world would have welcomed the learned classes of poets, medical men and lawyers, the aesdána, to study or discuss their disciplines, so there was an ongoing sharing of ideas, as well as of poems, songs and stories. On the other hand, the Church provided a window to England and Christian Europe. Because Ireland was a patchwork of small, poor states, none of them would have been able to endow a university; so clerical students and novices for religious orders went to places like Oxford, St Andrew's, Paris, Rome, and later on to Louvain. These returned as priests or religious to preach the faith and conduct the Christian liturgy. Ironically, they would have been more familiar with continental Europe than with the Old English of the Pale. (The Old English were descendants of Normans who settled in Ireland in the 1200s).

Native, but European

The Irish were not as detached from Europe as were other 'native' races who came under tremendous European pressure after 1500 AD. Many people from races like the Aztecs, Maya and Inca, and the Red Indians of North America, who were coming into contact with Europeans for the first time, died from European diseases like tuberculosis over a relatively short number of years. The Irish had already been exposed to these diseases, and over many generations had built up a fair degree of immunity. Moreover, at a political and military level they had 'friends' in Europe, powerful interests who would derive benefit from the native Irish maintaining a degree of independence from England. Because of the fragmented patchwork pattern of Gaelic states, English kings were unable to field a massive army that would deliver a once and for all knockout blow to a unified Irish state.

To See Ourselves …

The people of Tullyhunco would not have seen themselves as Irish in the sense that we think of ourselves as Irish. True, they would have been well aware that they were part of the greater Gaelic world which included most of Ireland as well as the Islands and Highlands of Scotland, just as we are aware that we are part of the greater Anglo-American world which encompasses most of North America as well as Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Nor were they Europeans. Indeed, Europe as a concept did not exist at the time: it was Christendom, and they felt part of it. They certainly wouldn't have seen themselves as Cavan men or women. County Cavan was a new English institution including O'Reilly's East Breifne and a slice of O'Rourke territories, Tullyhunco and Tullyhaw, which now form the 'neck' or 'panhandle' of the county. The English hived off this area from the recalcitrant and 'uncivilized' O'Rourkes and attached it to the territory of the more accommodating and better-anglicised John O'Reilly. Incidentally, they also hived off the baronies of Knockninny and Clanawley and made them part of the new county of Fermanagh.[1] The people of Tullyhunco knew they were part of Breifne, West or East, but apart from the burden of taxes, they probably wouldn't have thought much of it. Essentially, the people would have seen themselves as Tullyhuncans, if I may coin a name. The only reference in literature that I can find is a poem to the O'Reilly circa 1629 where the file (poet) refers to them as Donnchadhaidh.[2]

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1 Mac an Ghallóglaigh, Breifne 1971, p. 230.

2 James Carney: Poems to the O'Reillys.

Man with Boat

On the ground: A Changed Landscape

The landscape itself has changed almost beyond recognition in the last four hundred years. Come with me a few miles out the Cavan Road from Killeshandra as far as Seán Brady's engineering works in Drumgoa. In front of us is a stream dividing Drumgoa from Dernacross which has flowed for thousands of years, draining the bog at the upper end of Drumconlester into Portaliffe Lake (Mill Lough on the OS map). If we move a couple of hundred metres in the direction of Killeshandra we find ourselves in the hollow below Magee's. The stream is now on our left and a couple of metres above the level of the road. It continues above the level of the road until it passes under the road and emerges on our right in Thompson's field, where it is still above the level of the land. All along this stretch the water of the stream is kept in place by a solid ditch or dyke which prevents it from flowing into the broad valley on our right. From my youth, I have been fascinated by dykes in Holland and Java, but never realised that there was one in the next townland. Four hundred years ago this broad valley was full of peat bog up to the level of this stream.

From around 1700 to 1900 our ancestors swarmed into this valley, cutting away the peat for fuel until there was very little left. To prevent the stream from waterlogging their activities, they dyked it along this short stretch, and this now gives us an idea of how deep the bog was at the time. I recall my father telling of a spot in Kinkeel bog where the bank was 57 slanes deep, a slane being the length of a sod of turf. If we take this to average eight inches (20cms), it would mean that the bank was 38 feet (5.7m) at its deepest point. This bog stretched all the way across to Kinkeel and the Derries and all the way into Killeshandra, though, of course, Killeshandra hadn't yet been built. Similarly, the mill race which drains Portaliffe Lough into the Bawn Lough is above the level of the Arva road and St Brigid's graveyard. Indeed, when in full spate after a period of heavy rainfall it can overflow onto the Coragh Road opposite Hastie's gate. This indicates the height of the bog before it was cut away. All the drumlin hills in the area were surrounded by bogs like this, so the landscape was like a sea of bog and lake, with drumlins of fertile land scattered like islands all over the place.

This observation seems to be confirmed by a passage in the 1629 Inquisition report on the Hamilton Estate:

> *'The ancient bounds of the said proporcon are as follows……..*
> *Shancarron boundinge upon the pole* (townland) *of Corlismoir on the Southeast, meared by a running brooke; Dromgoun boundinge upon the Marahill, meared by a running brooke from Gartenardoris northward to the logh and on the north boundinge upon Derrie thorow a great mosse and boige; Drungoa boundinge upon Derrie, parcel of the island lande, on the east meared thorow a great boge; Kyllaghe* (Keelagh?) *also boundinge upon Derrie parcel of the island lande, on the east meered thorow a great boge; Killaghe (Keelagh?) also boundinge upon Derrie, on the southeast thorow a boige and a logh; Gartenadoris boundinge upon Marahill meered by a running stream throw a boige ……. Clonkein alsoe meered on the east of Corlilsmore unto the river, upon the south meered by a running brooke falling into the maine river; Drombesse boundinge upon the southwest part of Drumgubruskie* (Drumkillrooske) *thorow a great moose, etc.'*

An abundance of great bogs and 'mosses', islands, running brooks, streams and loughs are in evidence …… 'Water, water everywhere!'

Another feature absent from the modern landscape is woods. On the Bodlean map of the barony in 1609, there are many woods, especially in the north-west between Ardlougher and the Woodford river (an Ghráine), and from Bruse mountain, on the one hand, and Lough Gowna and the Leitrim border on the other. Apart from the more fertile lowlands along the Woodford, and in the vicinity of modern Arva and Gowna, these areas would have been virtually uninhabited. They would have been a happy hunting ground for people from neighbouring areas, and for hippie-like fianna, nomads who lived by hunting and fishing. All this would change with the Plantation, when woods, bogs, mountains and lakes became the property of the undertaker, thrown in as a bonus so to speak, along with the 1000 good acres.

The Hill of Croghan

There was a certain aura about the Hill of Croghan. In The Festival of Lughnasa, Máire Mac Néill associates the Celtic god Crom Cruach or Crom Dubh with various pagan sites, notably Cruach Phádraig (Croagh Patrick), which was originally Cruach Crom. Dinneen in his dictionary defines cruach as a symmetrically shaped mountain, and *cruachán* as a little hill or mound. Various cruachán sites like Rathcroghan in County Roscommon, associated with Queen Maeve, were royal sites, and Croghan Hill was probably one of these. Intriguingly, an adjoining townland is Shancroghan, ie. Sean-Chruachán or the old Croghan. Was this an earlier sacred site? Other sites associated with the god Crom were Darragh Fort in Templeport, a pagan shrine where St Patrick toppled 'Crom Cruach and his sub-gods twelve,' also Ballyheady and Rann Point where festivities were held on the last Sunday in July, the festival of Lughnasa. The O'Rourkes, who claimed all Breifne from Lough Gill to Lough Ramor were traditionally inaugurated on the Hill of Croghan. Irish kings were not crowned but were presented with the *Slat Shealbha* or wand of office by the druid, and in Christian times by the abbot of the local monastery; and they were also draped in the mantle of office. So Croghan would have had a powerful mystical association which gave legitimacy to an incumbent, much as coronation in Westminster Abbey or Rheims Cathedral gave authority to English or French monarchs. The McKiernans had a special position as guardians of the Hill of Croghan which gave them a unique status. They were, of course, a branch of the O'Rourkes, but in the inauguration stand-off of 1470 they prevented O'Donnell of Donegal and his allies from installing The O'Rourke as chieftain of Breifne.[1]

The Government and the Taxman

Most of us get on with our lives without much reference to the Government except to complain! It was the same in Gaelic Ireland. The government was McKiernan in his residence on the Hill of Croghan, with his advisers and various hangers-on. He would have had a Ceithearnach Tigh, or palace guard of lightly-armed soldiers, most of whom would have been members of his extended family. They would act as a police force for the tuath (state), keep order at feiseanna and aonaigh (assemblies and fairs), and provide a bodyguard for McKiernan when he went on circuit to each baile an bhiataigh. As Rí Tuaithe, McKiernan and his family would have been respected and revered by the people in a way that we today would find hard to understand. In effect, they had a special place in society, that of a royal family. Subordinate to the rí tuaithe was the Biatach, who administered and lifted taxes from approximately sixteen townlands. The biatach was expected to wine and dine the rí tuaithe and his retinue a couple of times a year when he called to collect his taxes.

The 1608 survey identifies a baile an bhiataigh at the following sites: *Croghan with 16 polls (townlands), Clonkyne with 16 polls, Carn with 14 polls, Portiliff with 22 polls, Killagh (in Kildallan) with 20 polls, Portlongfield with 16 polls, Mackan with 16 polls and Bruise and Bruskanboy with 28 polls*.[2]

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1 Parker: Two minor septs, Breifne 1995, P. 585

2 Nallen: Breifne 1999

The fact that it was not a money economy didn't mean that there were no taxes. Maura Nallen quotes John O'Reilly where he lists the taxes due to him as taoiseach of East Breifne in 1584. Out of every eight polls (townlands)

> *'One fat beefe for the spending of his house, one horse for himself, one for his wife.' In addition, sub-chiefs, the MacBradys, Gones* (Smiths)*, McEnroes and Jordans had to provide for three-quarters of the year, one foteman* (worker) *from each townland 'to keep his cattle, reap and bynd his corne, to trashe, hedge and ditch for the said O'Reilly'* as well as providing *'three-quarters of a fat beefe out of every townland and one fat porke out of every two townlands.'*

Traditionally, the McKiernans would have paid taxes to the O'Rourkes just as the Smiths, Jordans, Bradys and McEnroes had paid to the O'Reillys. However, in 1584 when the English put County Cavan together, they took Tullyhunco off the O'Rourkes and gave it to the O'Reillys who were allowed *'to retain all the rights previously enjoyed by the O'Reillys in Clonballykiernan (Tullyhunco) and Tullagha (Tullyhaw).'* This was a delightfully vague clause, as O'Reilly's rights were never clearly defined, and it is quite possible that after 1584 McKiernan didn't pay taxes to either O'Reilly or O'Rourke. But prior to this McKiernan would have collected taxes from each biatach when he went on circuit. The biatach, in turn, would have collected from each of the sixteen or so bailte bó (townlands) under his jurisdiction. So the tribute moved from the townland to the biatach, to McKiernan, then to O'Rourke, who in turn owed dues to O'Donnell of Donegal, each one taking a cut along the way. As Jonathan Swift put it:

> *Little fleas have lesser fleas*
> *Upon their backs to bite them.*
> *And lesser fleas have smaller fleas,*
> *And so ad infinitum.*

Taxes were paid in kind, a beef animal or a fat pig or a side of beef or pork. Or in man-days, i.e., a meitheal of men from the sixteen townlands would go to the lord's place to till the land, or harvest the corn, or do whatever seasonal work was in hand. The idea of owing 'a day' to someone persisted right up to the 1950s, and indeed even to the present day, and it was a matter of honour and honesty to give a man a day if you owed it to him. Or you could send your able-bodied son or a workman. I wonder did the townlands send their best workmen to *'bynd the king's corne,'* etc. They probably did, because the honour of the townland was at stake, and it would have added to a man's prestige to be picked for the job. The last vestige of tax in kind was the oats, or 'oats-money' paid by Catholic farmers to feed the priest's horse. This was collected in Killeshandra Parish up to about 1958, even though the priest had long since abandoned the horse in favour of the motor car.

Fairs or assemblies

An tAonach (Fair) would have been held a couple times a year, at Samhain and Bealtaine, November and May, probably on the Hill of Croghan. The great and the good would assemble to meet the Rí Tuaithe, McKiernan himself, accompanied by his file (poetic spin-doctor) and breitheamh (legal advisor). Sitting as Rí Tuaithe with his learned men on the sacred Hill of Croghan, McKiernan would have commanded a great deal of respect; and fair and wise decisions delivered in dramatic and colourful language could be quoted at assemblies the length and breadth of the Gaelic world, and would have greatly enhanced the prestige of their authors. I suppose the most famous judgment of them all was the early medieval *'to every cow its calf, and to every book its copy'* which is regarded by literary people as the first law of copyright ever promulgated. Nearer home, Eoghan na Féasóige O'Reilly, chieftain of East Breifne (1408-1449) was the source of a number of ordinances, decrees, judgments or guidelines directing how people should conduct their business with one another. A note at the end of the entry for 1419 in the Annals says:

> *'Is é an tEoghanso do chum na statuideis an mBreithne do thoil tuaithe agus eaglaise dá bhfuilid fir Bhreithne.'*

i.e. this is the Eoghan who composed the statutes to which everyone in Breifne, both citizens and clergy, consented. Unfortunately, none of these decrees was ever written down and we really don't know what they said, though there are various references to them. But such was their wisdom and common sense, that many generations later people were still doing deals in accordance with them. Parker says that Henry Piers, in *A Chorographical Description of the County of Westmeath in 1685*, which is a description of agricultural practices, '*mentions a custom used by the country people concerning the sharing of crops, which they called the law of Owen with the beard*.'[1]

The Rí Tuaithe would adjudicate on disputes between the citizens in accordance with Brehon Law or common sense. We don't know a lot about the native laws in the later Middle Ages as most of the extant law tracts were written many centuries earlier. But the lawyers, part of the learned class, would have studied these, handed them on from generation to generation and adapted them to the needs of local situations and the times they lived in. The chieftains were military and political men, rather than lawyers.[2]

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1 Parker: Cavan a Medieval Border Area. P. 45 in Cavan: Essays on the History of an Irish County, Ed Gillespie.

2 Nichols: Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the Middle Ages.

Mercenary Soldiers: Na Gallóglaigh[1]

The more powerful kings like O'Neill and O'Donnell, O'Reilly and O'Rourke would have had at their command a body of mercenary foot-soldiers from the Scottish Highlands, the *Gall-Óglaigh* or, as the English called them, *Gallowglasses*, or more contemptuously, *Redshanks*. However, these guys were no laughing matter - big mountainy men wielding the massive Claymore (Claíomh Mór), a two-handed sword, or the battle-axe that could split a man like a meat-cleaver. Not as destructive as our modern weapons, but effective in its day. Ciarán Parker says 'After Enri MacCaba's (Henry McCabe's) death in Longford in 1460, he was buried in Cavan, and the annalists record that two hundred and eighty axe-carrying relatives attended the obsequies.'[2] *Or as de hÓir records it*, 'Do bhí ceithre fichid déag do thuaghaibh in a shochraide an lásoin.'[3] The gallóglaigh were similar to the Swiss, and other men from poor, mountainous areas who made a living by fighting for foreign armies, just as the Himilayan Gurkhas have done in the British and Indian armies in our own times. Families like the McCleans, Galloglys, Sweeneys and, especially in Cavan, the McCabes are descended from these Scottish mercenaries. These are the troops that would have been billeted on the people during the winter, so that they could be available for war when the season opened up in the summer. Indeed, this is probably where the idea of billeting for the Fianna (the High-King's standing army in the stories) came from. A small rí tuaithe, like McKiernan, would not have been able to afford to hire gallóglaigh.

Tullyhunco in History

We have a fair outline of the history of the ruling O'Reilly family of East Breifne in the late Middle Ages and of the O'Rourkes, rulers of West Breifne. These were important families whose activities feature in the annals, and who had sufficient wealth to employ *filí* to sing their praises. The McKiernans, the branch of the O'Rourke clan who ran the little tuath, or statelet of Tullyhunco were only a minor family. Ciarán Parker has trawled through the sources to throw some light on them and their neighbours, the McGoverns of Tullyhaw in the late Middle Ages (1200-1500).[4]

We learn from the Annals that, way back in 1257:

1257 *'Concabhar Ó Raghallaigh do éag I gCloic Locha hUachtair; agas Mata Ó Raghallaigh do ghabhail tighearnais ina ionad,'* i.e., Conor O'Reilly died in Clough Oughter and Matthew O'Reilly became lord in his place.

Then, in the same year, *'Conchabhar mac Tighearnáin uí Ruairc do mharbhadh do Ghiolla Bearaigh ó Lámhduibh tré fhuráileamh Mhata uí Raghallaigh agas inghine mhic Caisdealbhaigh,'* i.e. Conor McKiernan was killed on the instructions of Matthew O'Reilly and Costelloe's daughter.

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[1] Duffy: The World of the Gallowglass.

[2] Parker: Cavan: Essays on the history of an Irish county, p 45.

[3] de hÓir: Annala as Breifne, Breifne, 1970.

[4] Two Minor Septs of Medieval Breifne, 1995.

1258 Domhnall Mac an Ghallóglaigh says that the first explicit reference to a MacTighearnain chief of Tullyhunco was in 1258 when Magrath Mac Tughearnain, chief of Teallach Donnchadha, was killed by Donnell O'Rourke.[1]

1259 De hÓir says that in the following year, 1259, *'Domhnall mac Tighearnain uí Ruairc do mharbhadh do Theallach nDonnchadha a cCruachain ó cCumróin do dhíol madhma na Beithighe air.' i.e.*, Dónal McKiernan was killed in Tullyhunco at Croghan as a result of an attack by [Dónall] na Beithighe [O'Reilly].

1383 Aodh ó Néill, ally and fellow-campaigner of O'Connor, was killed by the English, *'agas tuath Teallaigh nDonnchadha agas críoch Mhathghamhna uí Raghallaigh do loscadh le ceithirn uí Chonchabhair,'* i.e. the precinct of Tullyhunco and the territory of O'Reilly were laid waste by O'Connor's troops. 1383 would have been a year to remember in Tullyhunco and East Breifne.

1419 Aodh Buí mac Tighearnáin uí Ruairc, king of West Breifne, died, and Art macTaidhg mhicUalghairg ui Ruairc was inaugurated as king at Croghan by mac Raghnaill, mac Samhráin agas mac Tighearnáin, all of whose lordships were held by Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh, Eoghan na Féaseoige.[2]

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[1] Mac an Ghallóglaigh: Breifne 1989-90, footnote p 62.

[2] de hÓir: Breifne, 1970.

Chapter 2

Gaelic Ireland: The People and their Lives

We know very little about the lives of the ordinary people who lived in the Kildallan, Killeshandra, Cornafean, Arva or Gowna areas before the Ulster Plantation. They wrote nothing down, so history is silent about them. They had a rich store of mythology and folklore, but when their language changed from Irish to English very little of this crossed the divide. They built timber-framed houses and used wooden vessels and wood-and-iron tools, all of which rotted and rusted and disappeared into the landscape. Their sole legacy would appear to be the ring-forts, the 'fairy forts' of our childhood, which were in fact the dwelling-places of our ancestors five hundred years ago. Some of them lived on crannoga (artificial lake dwellings), and there are quite a few of these in the area. Since they are under water, usually shallow, boggy water, chances are that the wooden and iron artefacts and other remains of human habitation are well-preserved and that archaeological excavation will throw some light on the period.

Gaelic-speaking people had lived on these drumlins for perhaps two thousand years. They had evolved a system of farming and a way of life that was influenced by, and in harmony with the landscape, soil and climate. There are almost no written descriptions of farming practices on the drumlins in late medieval times. The fact that many Irish words were still in use in our own times to describe farming tools, practices and customs suggests that some of these practices were in use before the Plantation, and enables us to make an intelligent guess at what things were like before 1608. The smaller drumlins may each have been occupied by a single, extended family, i.e. grandparents, parents and children, with perhaps some aunts, uncles and cousins. This, of course, is pure speculation. There could have been two or more families sharing the townland.

Nor is it clear whether all the inhabitants belonged to the saor-aicme (free class): perhaps some of them belonged to the daor-aicme (unfree class). This latter was broadly equivalent to the feudal serf, though they had considerably more freedom than the European serfs had. There would certainly have been a lot of heavy, manual work to be done; and the presence of an underclass of cheap labourers would have appealed to the powers-that-be in any society.

One thing we know is that the drumlin would have been farmed as an economic unit. It wasn't divided into fields by hedges and ditches. The land did not belong to anybody: it was communal property, and individual families had the right to occupy it or to share it with one or more other families, each family having the right to graze so many cattle on it. Cattle were the wealth, and it was the ownership of cattle that gave a man and his family status in the community. As recently as the 1940s and 50s the size of a farm was reckoned by the number of cows it would feed, rather than by the acreage. So a man with a six-cows place would be better marrying than one with a three-cows place! The daor (unfree person) owned no cattle, so his status was very low, as he was economically dependent on others to employ him. There was no clear distinction between

work and play as there is in modern, developed societies. People joined together to herd the cattle, and there must have been plenty of work for young and old to keep them out of the bogs and marshes which surrounded the drumlin on every side. The drama associated with a beast falling into a hole or sinking to its belly in a bog only ended with the advent of cheap electric fencing in our own time.

Tillage Farming

Land was set aside for tillage on a temporary basis by fencing it off to keep the cattle out. Posts were pointed and driven into the ground eight inches to a foot apart (20-30cms). Lengths of bushes, probably blackthorns, were woven in and out between them. This was probably topped off with whins to discourage the cattle from scratching against them. The posts were made of alder or even birch, wood which was soft and easy to work and would last for a year or two, after which it would be used as brosna (firewood) and the tillage patch would be 'let out' to pasture, a term used in English locally until tillage farming ended in the 1950s. I can remember my father, way back in the 1940s, making a gallant effort at excluding our farmyard hens from a field of oats by weaving whin bushes vertically in and out of strands of barbed wire. In the days before working gloves had been invented this was a slow and tedious task, and I'm sure farmers of five hundred years ago had to solve similar problems. Men would have spent much of the winter and early spring digging the ground with loys. The loy was a spade with a long handle and a massive, wedge-shaped boss onto which a blade, sometimes a foot (30cms) or more in length, was attached. The loy was well designed for digging the heavy, clayey soil of the drumlins, and it continued in use right up to the 1950s. Frost would break up the lumpy soil, and it would have been harrowed by dragging bushes over it. Oats were the main crop, which would have been grown on raised beds or ridges, and this would have given a greater depth of soil and provided drainage to prevent water-logging. In the 1950's I saw farmers make 'tracks' in an oats field to aid drainage. These were shallow furrows about ten or twelve feet apart to take any run-off which failed to soak into the impervious soil. The soil, though heavy, was fertile and was especially good for growing oats, so good yields could be expected. Harvesters would have used a toothed sickle, and five handfuls, tied together with a strap, made a sheaf. This was still being done on the drumlins in the 1940s and '50s.

My recollection of these farming practices seems to be corroborated by Patrick Masterson of Bruse, who was interviewed by E. Estyn Evans of the Irish Folklore Commission in September 1945:

> *'Bruse Hill, in Bruse townland, used to be run 'in coor', and there were few fences and the arable plots were all through other.'*

He spoke of a field called 'the boley' where the cattle used to be gathered in at night, and he recalled the phrase which derived from this practice - those fields where cattle had been folded and which gave good crops were said to have been 'well boleyed.' Boley is the Irish word buaile, a field or building where cattle are kept for milking, a palisade, a byre, etc - the medieval equivalent of the milking parlour.

Evans also says:

> *'I gathered a good deal of information about the corn harvest. Some corn was still sown in ridges or 'lands' of varying widths, commonly about nine feet, but the standard width in the old days had been four and a half feet. When shearing with the goose-toothed sickle, the hooksman would put his hook in before grasping the handful of corn he was cutting, From one to three handfuls, but normally two, were needed to make the sheaf, which was tied near the butt, 'as tight as a fiddle-string, so that you could not put the toe of your boot under the band. A crack hooksman would reckon to build forty stooks a day, each consisting of ten standing sheaves and two heading sheaves (hudders). The hudders, which were placed head down and opened out like a cloak, were tightly tied on while the harvester placed his head against the stook.'* [1]

The Meitheal

All the men of the townland would have worked together at all seasonal activities. There would have been plenty of fun as the work progressed, and male rivalries would be channelled into contests to see who would do the most work, or put the best finish on the work, or could solve problems that arose, either by sheer strength or clever thinking. Even when the system of land-holding changed after the Plantation, the custom of going in comhar (Comh-ár meaning 'ploughing together') persisted into our own times, with neighbouring farmers sharing horses and machinery to their mutual benefit. They shared their time, too, when a meitheal of men would assemble at one farmer's place to work together on tasks like setting or digging potatoes, reaping or threshing oats, making a rick or pike of oats or hay in the haggard - any task where many hands would make light work, while at the same time providing a social outing. Patrick Kavanagh captures the mood in *Threshing Morning*:

> *O it was a delight*
> *To be paying bills of laughter*
> *And chaffy gossip in kind*
> *With work thrown in to ballast*
> *The fantasy-soaring mind .....*
>
> *I'll be carrying bags today, I mused,*
> *The best job at the mill*
> *With plenty of time to talk to our loves*
> *As we wait for the bags to fill.*

[1] Evans: Gleanings from County Cavan, 1978.

House, Home and Haute Couture

The homestead was the ring-fort surrounded by a single or double ditch with a trench on the outside. Quite a few of these survive. I am most familiar with Smith's fort in Drumconlester which has a single ditch, and Maguire's fort in Ardragh with a double ditch. There is also a fort on Gibson's land in Eonish which was probably a home of the ruling O'Reilly family. We really have no idea what they would have looked like in their hey-day because they were made of perishable materials, but they were probably both comfortable and beautiful. A thousand years earlier, c. 650 AD people were building comfortable, well-insulated, double-walled houses with upright oak posts at eight-inch centres carefully interwoven with peeled hazel rods whose ends were concealed on the inside, giving a smooth and attractive basket-like finish, the cavity between being filled with brushwood to provide insulation. We know a good deal about this from the excavation of Deerpark Farms at Glenarm, Co. Antrim in 1986-87. Archaeologists estimate that it required 4000 hazel rods, averaging two metres long to build the walls alone, i.e. five miles of hazel rods to build one house.[1]

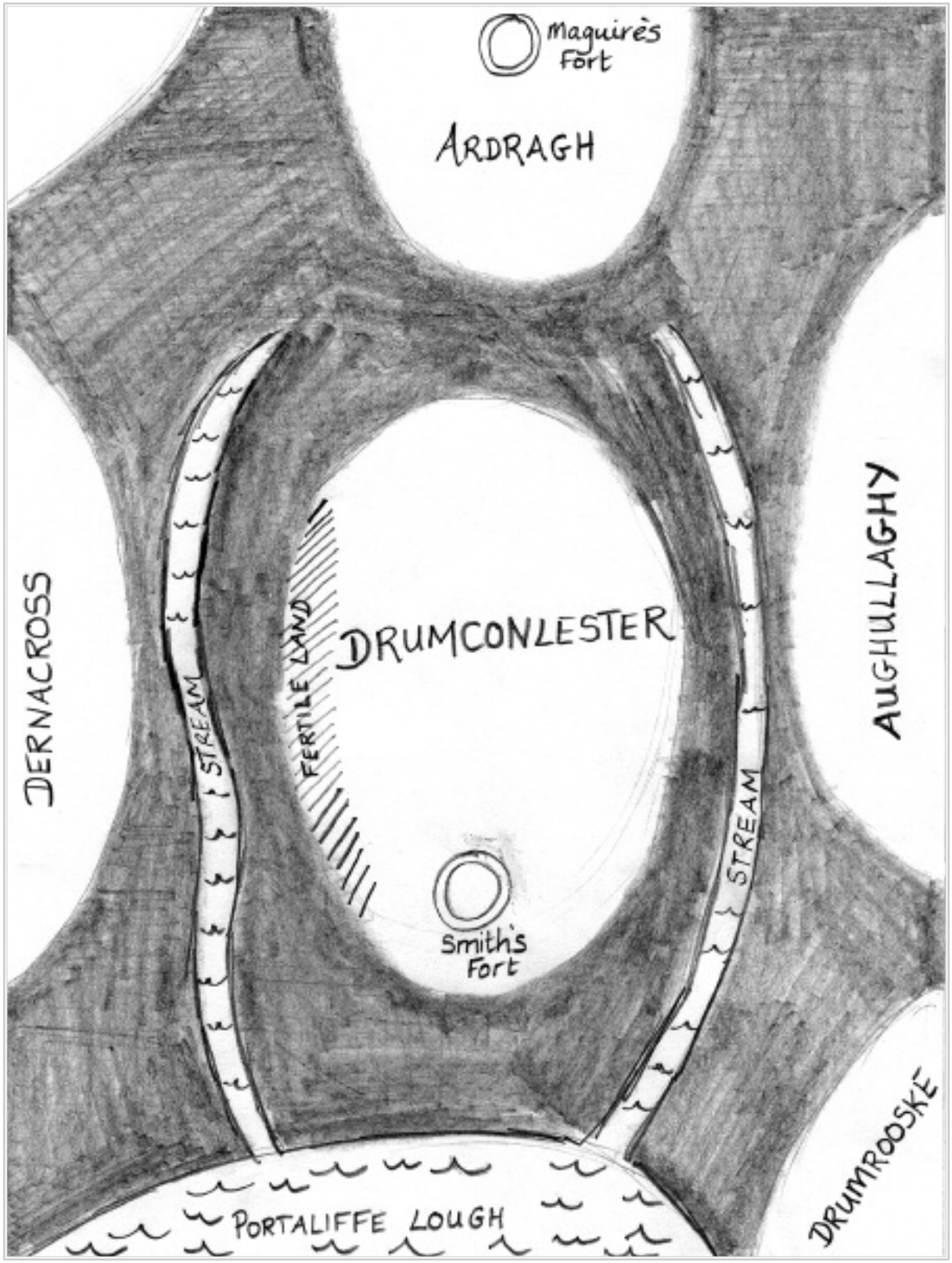
This discovery is corroborated by earlier excavations of early medieval sites at Moynagh Lough crannog in Co. Meath, Ballinderry No. 2, Co. Offaly and a royal site at Lagore, Co. Meath. Though there is a dearth of archaeological information on Gaelic Irish habitations in the late Medieval period, it is probable that there were comfortable, rectangular, hip-gabled houses thatched with reeds inside each of the ring-forts. We know that many people can live comfortably together in small houses, but it is possible that some families lived in houses outside the ring-fort and that the rath (fort) was the homestead only of the dominant family.

House-building would have used a technique similar to that used in fencing off the tillage areas, but much more skilful and using more durable materials. The construction was probably done by a skilled craftsman, *a saor adhmaid*, literally a wood craftsman or carpenter. The *saor crainn* or tree craftsman may have had the task of felling the timber and preparing it for use. There was also the *saor cloiche* or stone mason, but only some churches, monasteries, tower-houses or castles were built of stone at this time. Apart from the fact that they would be much more expensive, they were probably less comfortable than the timber houses. The craftsmen gave rise to the surname Mac an tSaoir which was anglicised as McIntyre or MacAteer or Carpenter.

Some travellers described the dress of the Irish. William Good, writing in 1566, says that men wore:

> *'linen shifts* (shirts?)*, woollen jackets and plain breeches close to their thighs, and a mantle fringed with an agreeable mixture of colours, which they would wrap around themselves and sleep on the bare ground. Women* [wear] *mantle cloaks down to their ankles, load their heads with several ells of fine linen rolled up in wreaths, as they do their necks with necklaces, and arms with bracelets.'*

[1] Chris Lynn: Early Medieval Houses in the Illustrated Archaeology of Ireland, ed. Michael Ryan.



Bogland Drumlins Water Fertile Land

Domhnall Mac an Ghallóglaigh quotes Francisco de Cuellar, a survivor of the Spanish Armada, who spent six weeks in McClancy's castle at the north-western fringe of the O'Rourke territory in 1588. Describing the people there, he says:

> *'They live in huts made of straw. The men are big-bodied with handsome features and limbs, active and nimble as roe deer; they eat but one meal in the day and that at night. Their usual food is butter and oaten bread. Their drink is sour milk, having none other they do not drink water which is best of all. On feast days they eat some half-cooked flesh meat without bread or salt, such being their custom. They dress after their fashion with tight hose and short coats made of very coarse goats' hair. They cover themselves with cloaks and wear their hair down to their very eyes. They are great pedestrians and very enduring as regards to fatigue. They sleep on the ground on freshly-cut rushes full of water and frost. The most of the women are very handsome, but ill-arranged, wearing only a shirt and a cloak which covers them entirely, and a linen cloth which they double closely about the head, tying it in front. They are very laborious and domestic after their fashion.'* [1]

Sixty years later, in 1646, Monsignor Massari, a papal diplomat at the Confederation of Kilkenny was offered a bundle of rushes and a blanket as a bed when he visited Lismore, modern Crossdoney. The Franciscan friary in Cavan town was, *'a marvellous structure in the Ulster fashion, the church cells, refectory and all other apartments being of wood roofed with sods.'* He encountered more sod houses near the Meath border, *'all built and covered with sods some three arms in length, others five or six, so well fitted together that neither sun nor rain, no matter how heavy could penetrate them.'* [2]

In 1607, the Baron of Delvin who was on the run in the woods in the vicinity of Clough Oughter was dressed as a *'woodkerne in mantle and trouses.'* Woodkerne or *Ceithearnach coille* could have been bandits, or possibly humble woodcutters. Back in the late 1200's, some woodcutters slain by the Ó Sirideáin were dressed in clothes made of skins.

Questions about a Townland

In my home townland of Drumconlester there is a feature that has puzzled me since my youth. Along the eastern slope of the drumlin, just above the lane, runs a seam of fertile, permeable land, unlike the sticky boulder-clay in the rest of the townland. Rushes don't grow there, though they will elsewhere, if they are let. And cattle can be out-wintered on it without going to their ankles, or deeper, in muck. It extends over parts of three current holdings. I'm now wondering whether this is land that was 'well-boleyed', to use a phrase of Patrick Masterson's, over a period of hundreds of years in the later Middle Ages. Housing or corralling cattle here would make sense, because there was land shelter away from the prevailing south-west

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[1] Mac an Ghallóglaigh: Leitrim 1600-1641, Breifne, 1971, p 234.

[2] Gillespie: Faith, family and Fortune in Cavan: Essays on the History of an Irish county.

[3] Manning: Clough Oughter Castle, Breifne, '89-'90, p 26.

winds, and people liked to be ‘tóin-le-gaoth’, or ‘backside to the wind’, as Séamus Heaney so nicely translated it. Indeed, modern settlement has followed the same pattern along the eastern side of the hill. The total area of this seam would hardly exceed five acres, or two hectares. The one remaining medieval feature is Smith’s Fort, a ring-fort slightly north-east of the highest point on the hill, which would have given it some land shelter. I’m not sure why people built their homes on the tops of hills. Perhaps, like their modern counterparts, they liked the view and wanted to show off their wealth! I can remember a narrow, sunken road which gave access to the fort via a guttery gap facing due east, and there was a well in the vicinity, which Paddy Smith drained away when he lowered and widened the laneway to his home in 1942. My guess is that in pre-plantation times the leading family lived in the fort, while outside at a lower level other families, perhaps two or three, lived in houses, maybe in a cluster like a clachan, and corralled their cattle on the near-by eastern slopes.

Though the people farmed the land as a unit, this was not a commune. Each individual family owned their own livestock, and had the right to graze so many cows or goats. They may even have occupied their own buaile (pronounced boo-il-yi), as the corral was called. There may have been landless people in the townland with no grazing rights, but depending on the others for employment. Each buaile would be fenced off for a few years at a time. The cows would be brought in for milking morning and evening, with vulnerable animals kept in at night to protect them from foxes, wolves, eagles or other predators. No doubt, any horses, asses, mules or jennets would have been sheltered there too. Wooden sheds with roofs of sod or scraw would have provided shelter in the very cold winters of the time. The housing of cattle would have been conducive to foot-rot, or loch sciobóile (perhaps loch sa buaile?). After a year or two the ground in the buaile would be well tramped and manured (well-booleyed), and it would be time to commission a new one. The old one would be prime land for tillage, and would be set up in wide ridges for oats, root crops or vegetables, though the potato did not arrive on the drumlins until after the Plantation. We know that flax was exported from pre-plantation Ulster, but where it was grown, or how much, is not clear.[1]

After two or three years of tillage, fertility would have been depleted, the fencing would be rotting, so the land would be ‘let out’ to grazing until its turn for ‘boleying’ came up again. I am assuming - without any evidence - that only the boleyed land was tilled, that the boleying, in fact, was part of the tillage rotation. However this would provide only a few acres a year for grain and vegetables for the whole townland, so perhaps other areas were cultivated as well. In any event, most of the drumlin must have been under grass, probably grazed by cattle tethered to stakes, as goats used to be tethered up to fifty years ago. Preserving grass as hay or silage was not an option at the time, so the cattle must have been grazed throughout the winter, even in the mini ice-age of the early 1600s.

[1] Cullen: An Economic History of Ireland since 1660.

In summer, the ‘bottoms’ in the valley floors to the east and west bordering on Dernacross and Aughullaghy, as well as the low lands along the south facing Ardragh, would dry out and produce a good crop of grass. These were areas of shallow peat with a tough scraw on top. Cattle couldn’t be tethered there, or they would puncture the scraw and sink. So they had to be herded every summer day by the old people and children to prevent them from getting into the drains or wandering into the deep bogs down towards Portaliffe Lough, or under Ardragh hill. As none of these bottoms was far from the home place, the cows could be brought home every evening for milking, maybe tethered on the drumlin overnight, and milked again in the morning before being taken off again to graze in the bottoms. There was no need to set up an Alpine-style chalet as in Austria or Switzerland, or indeed in the mountains of Donegal, but they probably put up a *seal-foscaidh*, or temporary shelter to protect themselves from the rain while they kept a constant eye on the cattle.

For the children, it was an opportunity to run barefoot through the fields, to explore, to look for birds’ nests and animals’ lairs and burrows, to eat sorrel, cress and other wild herbs, to gather strawberries, raspberries, crab-apples and blackberries, though the flood would probably be up again and the season ended before sloes or hazelnuts were ripe. It was an opportunity, too, to jump the stream, or walk the plank, or swing from the branches of a willow tree to reach Aughullaghy or Dernacross, to meet the neighbouring children, have fun and games, maybe quarrel and fight, but, at any rate, learn to socialise. The old folks would not be idle either. Apart from providing meals, they could do light handcrafts like sewing, knitting, darning, weaving or making creels, baskets or handles for tools. Of course, they would pass on stories and lore, as well as skills to the younger generation. This scenario may sound romantic, idyllic, bucolic, but some of those young people would have died of childhood diseases like measles, mumps, meningitis or diphtheria, while many of the over-fifties would have suffered from arthritis, rheumatism, gout or other painful ailments, not to mention all those who were blind, deaf or otherwise disabled at a relatively young age.

The old system of farming which I have attempted to reconstruct probably survived the plantation for several generations. This townland and its neighbours were never really planted, in the sense of being colonised by outsiders. But ownership of the land passed from the people to the landlords, who gradually imposed a new system of land holding on their tenants, a system that persists to this day, fossilised forever when the tenants bought back their lands under the various Land Acts a hundred years ago. The new system individualised possession of the land, and broke up the collective farming of the drumlin, though neighbouring farmers continued to cooperate on a voluntary basis. The new system replaced the complex community relationships with a simple landlord-tenant relationship. This was more manageable in a modern, cash-based economy, but was probably relatively less efficient, less productive and less in harmony with nature than the older system.

Trades and Occupations

An important craftsman was *an gabha*, the blacksmith. Iron would have been smelted at source near Redhills or Swanlinbar and traded far and wide. Local blacksmiths would have shaped it into a great variety of tools and implements: knives, billhooks, axes, loys (spades) and ploughshares, though there was probably very little ploughing done at this time. As there were no hard roads and iron was expensive, it is unlikely that the blacksmith would have shod many horses. The blacksmiths gave us the surname MacGabhann, anglicised as MacGowan or Smith or Goane.

Coopering was an important trade in medieval times. Vessels and containers of all kinds from barrels to pails to bowls and drinking vessels were made of wooden staves held together with wooden hoops, not unlike the kipper barrels that could be seen in shops in the 1950s. Recalling the past in 1945, Patrick Masterson says:

> *'The nicest work of all was done by the noggin-weavers who fashioned the thin bands that held the staves of the noggins together; this task was not undertaken by the coopers. The bands were made of ash, the wood being beetled after soaking in water. Narrow strips of ash similarly produced were used to make corn sieves.'* [1]

Mgr Massari, was unwilling to share the communal drinking mugs used by the Franciscans in Cavan town in the 1640s, and opted instead to use his own silver cup which he brought everywhere with him. Some vessels were hollowed out of solid wood, either by turning on a lathe or otherwise.

'B'fhearr liom féin mo ghréasai bróg,' sighed the lovesick girl in the song: *(Beidh Aonach Amárach i gCondae an Chláir!)*, and there must have been shoemakers to make fine shoes and boots for the rich. Indeed some taoisigh levied a tax on shoemakers, compelling them to provide a specified number of pairs of shoes for themselves and their household kerne (soldiers). Most families probably made their own footwear, and the poor may have gone barefoot. One of the tests for entry to the Fianna was to be able to remove a thorn from your foot while running, a feat which suggests that not everyone wore shoes!

Many of the craftsmen may have lived on crannoga (artificial islands) along the Erne, which was the main artery into this part of the country. Other crannog-dwellers probably made their living by fishing, as there must have been an abundance of fish in the pollution-free rivers. We know that salted fish was exported to the continent, but it isn't clear whether this included freshwater fish or was exclusively sea-fish. Poor people probably fished and hunted regularly to supplement their diet, and they had a great variety of traps and snares to catch fish, birds and wild animals.

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[1] Evans: Gleanings from County Cavan.

Transport

Boat-building was an important skill in a region where water transport was the easiest way of getting about. When Donal O'Sullivan Beare and his fellow-refugees found their way blocked by the Shannon, and local people afraid to assist him, his men killed twelve of their horses and stretched the hides over wicker frameworks which they had hastily constructed using light trees interwoven with sally rods. In two days they made two boats to ferry the entire party over the broad river. Philip O'Sullivan Beare, writing in Lisbon twenty years later, tells how the smaller boat carrying ten of the O'Malleys sank in midstream with all hands because it was overloaded and wasn't properly constructed. The other boat was able to carry thirty men with the remaining horses tied to the stern swimming behind them. This boat made several trips, carrying men, women and children. Even when a disorderly scramble ashore capsized the boat, they were able to re-float and re-use it. When it had served its purpose, O'Sullivan took the precaution of destroying it lest it be of use to his enemies.[1]

The fact that such a large and reliable boat could be built at short notice under emergency conditions suggests that people were adept at making currach-like craft, and that perhaps it was not a specialised skill. True, O'Sullivan and his people came from the southwest coast where naomhóga (currachs) were being made until recently. But there is no reason to believe that the skills were not widely distributed throughout the country. The craft in which Tim Severn travelled on 'The Brendan Voyage' from Kerry to Donegal, to Scotland, the Faroes, Iceland and Greenland was very similar to the one described by O'Sullivan. It's a fair guess that these currachs were in widespread use in the later Middle Ages, though the evidence isn't there as far as I know. The raw materials used were flimsy, and rotted easily, and I don't know of many references in literature. Manus Ó Domhnaill, Chieftain of Donegal, met the Lord Deputy on Lough Uachtair in 1435 but I don't think there is any description of the boat in which he travelled. However, the boat taking Bishop Bedell and his fellow prisoners to Clough Oughter in1641 was hewn out of one piece of timber, i.e. a 'dug-out'. It is noteworthy that the technique used in building a wooden house, making a frame for a boat or erecting a fence all involved the interweaving of light rods between heavier poles.

On land, most people would have travelled on foot everywhere they went, the better-off people on horseback. Goods would have been transported on pack animals, asses, mules or jennets, while very poor people would have carried burdens on their backs.

All in all, we know very little about the day-to-day life of people at the time. No-one could have imagined that an entire system would have collapsed so quickly. And in any event the educated classes would have had little time for the lives of ordinary people. Men like Geoffrey Keating, Michael O'Cleary and indeed the earlier filí and annalists were very keen to tell the history of the country, but anything we learn about the poorer classes has to be deduced from snippets of incidental information. One such snippet tells how a group of woodkerne sailed to the mainland from Clough Oughter castle in search of firewood. They were waylaid and murdered. Their

[1] Ellis: Eyewitness to Irish History, P. 87.

Niamh Cinn Óir from Tír na nÓg

Fionn Mac Cumhail and the Salmon of Knowledge

attackers then donned the skins in which they were clothed, gained access to the castle and captured it.

Women's Work

Along with caring for children and cooking food there were many other tasks that fell to the women of the household. One of these was grinding the corn for the porridge or oaten bread. This was done with a 'saddle-quern', a slow and laborious job which involved moving the grinding stone forward and backward over the saddle stone. Less common, but far more efficient, was the bee-hive quern which used rotary motion, and so took less energy to turn. Churning the soured milk to make butter was another laborious task which had to be done on a regular basis. Spinning, weaving, knitting and sewing were jobs that women took pride in doing. We don't know how, or by whom, flax was processed. When doing dull, monotonous tasks like threshing with the flail, grinding corn on the quern or churning, they had songs to beat to the rhythm of the work, like *Amhrán na Cuiginne*, the song of the churn. These helped to relieve the monotony and build up a spirit of comradeship with their fellow-workers.

Dropouts: Stories of the Fianna

There were dropouts from society too - idlers and layabouts of all sorts, prodigal sons who had fallen out with their fathers, draft-dodgers in times of war, petty criminals or worse who were dodging justice, poets and free spirits. Stories about these characters got conflated with the earlier tales of Celtic mythology to give us the cycle of tales called the Fiannaíocht. These tell of adventures in woods and on mountains and have some of the loveliest nature-poetry in literature. James Clarence Mangan may have got his idea for the poem, *'The Time of the Barmicides'* from the Fiannaiocht:

Through city and desert my mates and I
were free to rove and roam,
Our diapered canopy the deep of the sky
or the roof of the palace dome.
O! ours was that vivid life to and fro
that only sloth derides.
Men lived life so, long long ago
in the time of the Barmicides.

These people would have taken to the woods where they lived short, adventurous lives, hunting and fishing, perhaps thieving from the settled community, or begging in the very harsh winters which were prevalent in the 1500s and 1600s. Tales tell of the Fianna carrying on their adventures and hunting in summer, and being 'ar coinnmhead ar Mhuintir na hEireann ó Samhain go Bealtaine,' i.e. billeted on the people, with free board and lodgings from November to May. It is likely that this element of the Fianna stories was based on the billeting of gallóglaigh (troops) by the local kings during the winter months, a form of taxation that was quite unpopular. The king's personal bodyguard of horsemen probably resided near him on his own estate.

The drop-outs in the woods were the antecedents, and possibly even the ancestors, of later itinerants, tinkers, travellers, and were probably loathed and envied by hard-working, settled people. It is likely that they were the real-life basis for much of the Fiannaiocht cycle of tales: stories of their hunting adventures, life in the woods and on the lakes and mountains. There were certainly plenty of these physical features in Tullyhunco, while the name Corr na Féinne (Cornafean) suggests a hill where the Fianna used to meet. Archaeologists working on the route of the Cavan by-pass discovered a number of 'Fualachta Fiadh,' cooking places associated with the Fianna. So perhaps stories of the clash between Clann Mórna and Clann Baoiscine were based on contemporary gang warfare fought with bravery, malice, treachery, and loyalty in the forests of medieval Ireland. Certainly the itinerant and settled people would have had no trouble following the exploits of Fionn Mac Cumhaill, Goll Mac Morna and company because there were people in the woods in their own time whose life-styles were somewhat similar. There is no doubt that the Fiannaiocht tales remained popular with the ordinary people as long as the Irish language survived, and some memories of them were present in English-speaking times. The stories were up-dated on an on-going basis, and one collector of folklore in Donegal recorded a story about 'Fionn agus an traein.' These stories were enjoyed by the common people, and were the equivalent of the TV soap operas of today. The aristocracy had more up-market stuff, *Scéalaíocht na Ríthe* (Tales of the Kings), and *An Rúraíocht,* a cycle of tales that includcd the saga of Maeve and the Brown Bull of Cooley, Cú Chulainn and Ferdia, Déirdre and the Sons of Uisneach - tales of chivalry and savagery befitting an aristocratic military class.

Fairies and Ghosts

Another source of stories was the *sidhe* (pronounced 'shee') or fairies. We get our ideas of fairies from Shakespeare's Ariel in *The Tempest*, or indeed from our own William Allingham, from Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal who actually spent the year 1837 at school in Killeshandra, though he doesn't seem to have enjoyed the experience:

> *Up the airy mountain, down the rushy glen,*
> *we daren't go a-hunting for fear of little men.*
> *Wee folk, good folk, trooping all together,*
> *green jacket, red cap and white owl's feather.*

He didn't understand Irish, so he didn't realise that the fairies in Irish folklore were not supernatural spirits, but rather a race of human beings who lived a parallel life to ordinary people. When the Celts first arrived in Ireland they displaced a brilliant bronze-age people who produced many of the beautiful bronze swords and spears as well as the gold lunulae, torques, and bracelets that we can see today in our National Museum. These people, the 'Tuatha de Dannan,' (Any connection with Drumerdannan?) could very well have been the basis of the stories of the Sidhe and their pots of gold at the end of the rainbow, who could carry you off to

their secret abode in the hills if you were out alone at night - the 'cure' being to turn your jacket inside-out, and they would have to let you go! They could steal a human child, or even a grown-up and leave a delicate 'wastrel' in their place. They could take the milk from your cow, or the butter off your churn. And of course there was the Bean Sí (Banshee), the fairy woman who lamented piteously whenever someone was about to die. All-in-all, a crowd to be wary of, folk you shouldn't upset by cutting down their fairy bushes, or disturbing their fairy rings, as some fungus formations were called. Belief in the fairies crossed over the language divide, and all of these things about the fairies were firmly held by some people right up to our own time.

As if this wasn't enough of the scare-stuff, there was a vast store of ghost stories to enliven the scene. And of course there was great demand for these horror stories, the scarier the better, as today's TV producers know.

Work and Leisure

Peasant societies would make no distinction between work and leisure and the two were inextricably linked - work could be fun and fun could be work as long as the company was jolly. But they did have formal feasts, especially the great pagan feasts of Samhain, Lughnasa and Bealtaine. Old Celtic tales associated with Hallowe'en (Samhain), the start of the Celtic New Year, told of how the spirits of the dead were released from the underworld at midnight on Oíche Shamhna so that they were free to roam about the places they loved on earth for a single, twenty-four hour period every year. It isn't clear how seriously people took these stories. Young people certainly treated them with considerable irreverence, and took the opportunity to pretend to be mischievous spirits so that they could play tricks on their neighbours and generally make a nuisance of themselves. The Irish brought these customs to America, where they were adapted to the local scene, and have come back to haunt us as 'trick-or-treat' every Hallowe'en! No one who genuinely believed the stories would dare to behave like this.

May Day (Bealtaine) was a date to look forward to. Many of the old customs had been 'Christianised', and were all the more cherished for this. People still garlanded holy wells, brought in boughs of the May Bush, as blossoming whitethorn was called, set up May altars in honour of the Virgin Mary, and carried out a variety of other rituals. By far the biggest social event of the year was the Festival of Lughnasa, known locally as 'Domhnach Sunday' or 'Rann Sunday', the last Sunday in July.[1] Huge crowds of young people would gather at Rann Point, walking long distances from east and west, or travelling by boat on the Erne from upstream or downstream to enjoy the bonfire, the eating and drinking, the dancing, singing and courting. This was the ancient equivalent of the Fleadh Cheoil, or modern outdoor concerts, a chance for young people to get away and enjoy themselves free from adult supervision. Many a lad and lass must have met their life partner on Rann Sunday, and the distances people travelled ensured that many, especially girls, would have settled down quite far from home. And I suppose we can surmise

[1] MacNeill: The Festival of Lughnasa.

that mothers would have been slow to allow their daughters go there unsupervised:

Is a mhaithirín, an ligfidh tu chun aonaigh mé?
Mother dear, will you let me to the fair?
A Mhúirnín Ó, ná héalaigh é!
Darling dear, don't ask me!

Christian feasts would have been celebrated with church ceremonies, especially Lá Fhéile Mhuire san Earrach, The Feast of the Annunciation, 25 March, and Lá Fhéile Mhuire sa bhFomhar, The Assumption, 15 August. Mid-summer was celebrated with bonfires on the eve of St John's feast, a custom that survived up to the early 1900s.

Health & Sickness

When we talk of 'Health' nowadays we spend most of our time talking about hospital and other medical services that help us to get well when we are sick. In rural Ireland during the Middle Ages people depended on folk remedies which were available in their own communities. Many of the cures were potions made up using certain herbs, and these recipes and skills were passed down by practitioners from generation to generation. In the townland of Marahill there is a field traditionally known as *The Doctor's Meadow* because of the abundance of medicinal herbs in the surrounding hedges. Other cures were based on rituals and incantations which were probably of great antiquity going back to the pagan past, though in many cases Christian prayers had replaced the pagan incantations. I quote one such incantation in the appendix. Some of these remedies were popular up to our own time, when they were replaced by modern medicine. Indeed, quite a few people still resort to the traditional cures for certain ailments.

While we have very little historical or archaeological evidence from the period, it is fair to assume that people in the scattered rural communities enjoyed a healthy life-style, at least in comparison with that of the citizens of overcrowded European cities of the period. We know that they were fond of washing themselves and bathing in rivers and lakes at a time when even the wealthy in European cities seldom washed. Their very isolation would have minimised the risk of infection, and there are few references to the Black Death or other epidemics in the annals. One such reference under the year 1447 tells how the unfortunate Féidhlim mac Seáin mic Pilib (brother of Eoghan na Féasóige, chief of East Breifne) *'do ghabháill a bhfeall re fear ionaid an rígh a nÉirinn, agas a éag don phláigh a nÁth Truim,'* i.e. was treacherously seized by the king's deputy in Ireland, and died of plague in Trim.

Social Services

Gaelic Ireland had a well-developed system for looking after the poor, the old, the sick, or anyone in need who had no family members to care for them. This was organised through the Church, and each parish or religious congregation would have a Teach Aoidh or boarding house

to provide lodgings for strangers, or a Teach Spidéal, hospital, or rather hospice, which would have provided nursing rather than medical care. The system was financed by income from church lands which were managed by a Coarb or Airchinneach (erenach). This was a hereditary position of great prestige, and the incumbent was chosen by members of the erenach family. The word survives in the name Mac an Airchinnigh, anglicised as MacInerney or MacEnerney or Nerney. Locally, by far the most prominent of these were the O'Farrellys of Drumlane who managed 32 townlands, some of them in Kildallan Parish. There were two townlands in Kildallan and one in Sheanroe (Killeshandra), probably under the management of the MacMaistir (Masterson) family who were erenachs in the McKiernan lands. Nearby Tomregan (Ballyconnell) and Kilmore each had six townlands of erenach land dedicated to the care of the poor and the needy. This is not to suggest that everything was run properly all the time. But the system was up and running until it came to a sudden end on 6 March 1605, when all *'the farms, termons or hospitals'* of Co. Cavan were granted to Sir Garret More of Mellifont.[1]

Ancient to Modern: The End of an Era

Gaelic Ireland is often regarded as 'medieval'. In fact, it would be more accurate to call it 'ancient', because, except in one important respect, religion, it had skipped the Middle Ages. It had adopted and adapted Christianity without adopting Feudalism, urbanisation, trade and commerce or other aspects of medieval life; but had kept its ancient language, laws and customs which developed organically over the centuries to suit the changing times. Michael Richter concludes:

> *'It seems clear that Ireland developed quite differently in many essential respects from Continental Europe. It is impossible to reach a full understanding of Ireland's past without recognising and appreciating this fact.'*[2]

The Modern World suddenly burst in on Tullyhunco in 1610. By the standards of economically more-advanced peoples, their way of life would have been seen to be primitive and inefficient. But it was what they were used to, and it had served them well down the generations. Now all this was about to change: their way of life was to be swept aside rather suddenly by forces more modern and more dynamic; and they would find their world turned upside down in the upheaval.

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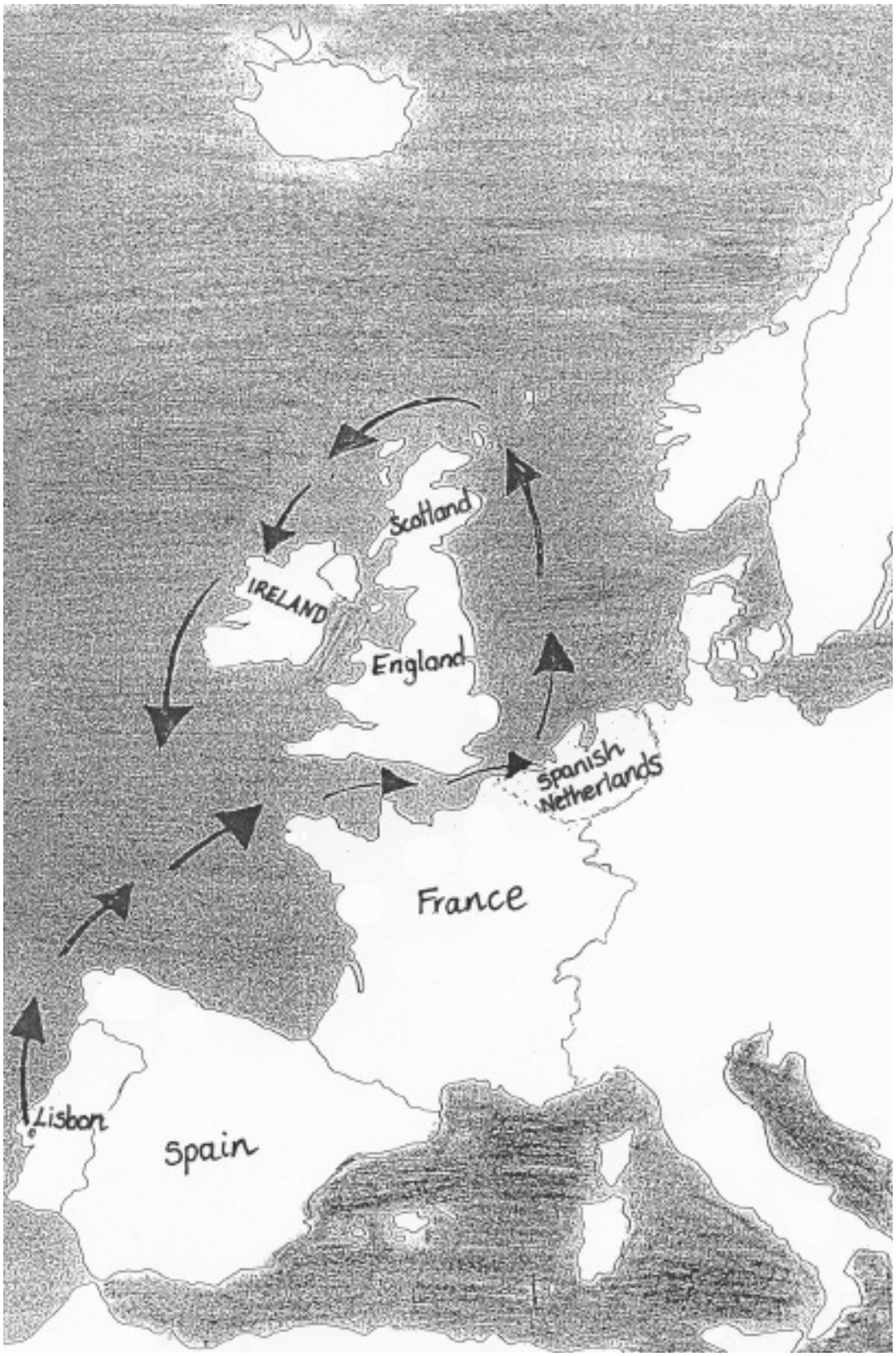
[1] Logan: Medieval Hospital System in Breifne, Breifne, 1970.

[2] Richter: Medieval Ireland



The Route of the Spanish Armada 1588

Chapter 3

The Plantation

Why Plant Ulster? - The Spanish Threat

Spain was a new phenomenon, a global power. King Philip of Spain owned important possessions in Europe, including Spain itself, the Netherlands (today's Belgium and Holland) and southern Italy, all of America from Florida, Texas and California in the north, right down to Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America, except Brazil, which was claimed by Portugal. Spain also held the islands of the West Indies and The Philippines, called after the king himself. This was an empire on which the sun never set, the most powerful state on earth, the USA of its day. Little England, by contrast, was ruled over by an ageing queen, considered a heretic by the pope, who had excommunicated her in 1570, and illegitimate by most of the princes of Europe, with the result that she had never got a consort to provide her with an heir. There were Catholics in England whose loyalty could not be trusted, and then there was Ireland!

England had helped the Protestant rebels in the Netherlands, while daring English pirates like Sir Francis Drake had attacked Spanish treasure-ships on the Spanish Main - as the Caribbean Sea was known at the time - and had handed over the loot to a grateful queen, who duly knighted him for his services. The Spaniards were determined to take over England. The English look back on the reign of Elizabeth as a 'golden age,' but it wouldn't have seemed like that to people at the time – the English lived in the shadow of the Spanish threat.

The Armada

Spanish soldiers had a fearsome reputation. When ordered to move against Protestant rebels in the Netherlands, the Duke of Alva said, *'I have tamed men of iron: I will make short work of these men of butter!'* The brutality was shocking, even by the standards of the day. In his *Massacre of the Innocents*, Pieter Breugel painted Herod's soldiers in Spanish battledress. This was the army that was kicking its heels in Dutch ports in 1588 waiting for the Armada, a huge fleet of 130 ships, most of them troop-carriers, to ferry them across to England. The ships never reached the Netherlands, but if the Spanish army had landed in England, the country would have been at their mercy. The Queen and her ministers were quaking at the prospect of invasion and conquest by Spain. Only the sea and the weather and the small English fleet had saved the people from its fury. All England knew that the Spaniards could come again.

The Nine Years War

To keep the Spaniards out, Ireland had to be secured at all costs. And the cost was enormous. The Ulster chieftains, O'Neill and O'Donnell, Earls of Tyrone and Tirconnell to the English, had held out against successive English armies from 1594 to 1601. When a large Spanish force landed at Kinsale in December 1601, England was alarmed. If the Spaniards took control of Ireland it would be virtually impossible to dislodge them, and the homeland would be vulnerable. Fortunately for them, their commanders Mountjoy and Carew won the Battle of Kinsale. Afterwards, English armies laid waste large areas of Ireland, especially Ulster, and the Irish leaders were too weak to resist. O'Neill was forced to sign the treaty of Mellifont in 1603. The horrors of the campaign in Ireland, as recounted by returning soldiers, as well as stories of Protestant refugees arriving in London from the Netherlands were probably the source of Shakespeare's description of war in Julius Caesar:

> *Blood and destruction shall be so in use*
> *And dreadful objects so familiar*
> *That mothers shall but smile when they behold*
> *Their infants quartered at the hands of war.*
> *All pity choked with custom of fell deeds...*

The Nine Years War, as we now call it, was by far the most expensive that England ever fought. In relative terms, more expensive in men and materials than World War I or World War II, two million pounds spent in five years, army after army destroyed by disease and starvation, as much as by the Irish rebels. But England was fighting for its very life as an independent kingdom. The sum of £20,000 was all that was left in the treasury when Lord Burghley died in 1598. So when James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603, the cupboard was pretty bare and the country had been impoverished by taxation and conscription. Perhaps we get our image of the 'canny', stingy Scotsman from James I who was described as 'the wisest fool in Christendom.' Surely there was a less-expensive way of making Ireland secure?

The Flight of the Earls

The treaty of Mellifont was a surprisingly good deal for 'The Arch-Traitor,' O'Neill, for it effectively turned the Irish princes into local landlords, while taking away their political and military power. But it was a good holding strategy for a war-weary English government, short of resources and in no position to resist further Spanish intervention. The New English, as the recent settlers in Ireland were called, were outraged. Having subdued the country at great sacrifice to themselves, they wanted to get their hands on the wealth of the country, i.e. the land. They accused O'Neill and others of intrigue with the Spaniards, and generally made them feel insecure, with the result that they fled to the Continent in September 1607, leaving the way clear for the confiscation and plantation of Ulster.

The Grand Plan, 1608

A grand scheme was drawn up which would avoid the pitfalls of previous plantations. The scheme appealed to King James. Planting strong colonies of English-speaking Protestants loyal to the Crown would secure the province militarily. They would keep the natives in check, discourage the Spaniards, and make the Gallóglaigh, the mercenary soldiers from the wild Scottish Highlands, redundant. This would cost the exchequer nothing - indeed rents from the landlords would swell the royal coffers, so badly depleted by the recent wars. Irish land would also pay off army veterans who had taken part in Irish campaigns. A win-win situation for everyone - except the native Irish.

The key people in the scheme were the *Undertakers* who, in return for getting a large area of land at a very reasonable rent, undertook to comply with a number of strict conditions. They were to live on the land themselves, build a strong stone castle with a *'bawn'*, or wall, around it, clear all the native Irish off the land ('ethnic cleansing,' we'd call it today), bring in English-speaking Protestant tenants from England or Lowland Scotland, house them in stone, English-style houses in a village beside the castle, provide an adequate supply of arms and ammunition and train the tenants in their use. In short, the plan was to graft patches of English culture on to the landscape of Ulster, and hope that they would 'take.' *Servitors*, men who had served in the army or civil service, got smaller grants of land, and could take Irish tenants. Irish grantees, families who had been consistently loyal to the English during the recent war, could also take Irish tenants. Finally, the Established Church would take over all Church buildings and land.

Tullyhunco, with the exception of a small area in the north-west, was divided among five Scottish undertakers, so, in theory, all the native people should have been cleared off this land.

Plantation in the Modern World

We are inclined to think of 'Plantation' as something that happened in the past, something that we read about in History. But there have been hundreds of plantations in our own time, in the past 50 or 60 years. So there was nothing unique about the Ulster Plantation. Perhaps if we study the attitudes and actions of planters, settlers and natives in various situations in modern times, it will help us to understand the behaviour of their counterparts in Ulster 400 years ago.

In 1950 the Chinese invaded Tibet, and took over that vast country. Many millions of Chinese have poured in since, and have swamped the few million Tibetans. They banned the Buddhist Religion, destroyed temples, opened mines and quarries, felled whole forests of trees, set up industries, built towns and cities, roads, airports and railways. Whether the Tibetans like this or not, it's happening; and Chinese language and laws prevail, while the Tibetan language, laws, religion, age-old customs and way of life are suppressed. On the other hand, modern economists would see this as 'progress', that Tibet was hopelessly backward, under-developed and poor and that all this activity will bring prosperity, and benefit the Tibetans themselves, as well as the Chinese and the world in general. Is it acceptable that indigenous people should occupy valuable assets like land and minerals, and keep others from exploiting them?

At the time of the break-up of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, many Jews bought up land in Palestine with a view to setting up a homeland. These settlements expanded, and when the political and military situation destabilized, Jewish secret societies attacked and terrorised local Arab Palestinians and forced many of them from their homes and land. Eventually the state of Israel was set up with outside help, and today a strong population of Jewish people has been planted in Palestine, and new Jewish settlements are still being built.

Similar plantations have been carried out in the past fifty years by the Indonesian government on the island of Boreno, and the Philippine government on the island of Mindinao. These are only a few of the many plantations that are taking place in our own time. Basically, a plantation involves large numbers of outsiders moving systematically into an area without reference to the people already living there, or the impact on their way of life. Invariably, the natives are in a weak position and the colonists and their promoters are strong. This is what happened in Ulster, and in Tullyhunco, four hundred years ago. One can only hope that the descendants of modern settlers and the descendants of the natives will be on good terms in 400 years' time.

For Their Own Good

The Plantation took the land from the people who had occupied it from time immemorial and gave it to a small number of undertakers who were set up as landlords. Not just the good agricultural land, but bogs, mountains lakes and woodlands, which the Irish people enjoyed so much, would henceforth be owned by the landlord. This capitalist form of ownership, 'the right to use and dispose of land as belonging to oneself, and to deprive all others of its use,' was a concept totally alien to the Gaelic Irish. To them, nobody 'owned' the land: they occupied it, managed it, and farmed it in accordance with ancient laws and customs, and it was periodically redistributed among them in accordance with the same laws and customs. To Sir John Davies and other architects of the plantation, this was a backward, barbaric and inefficient system which needed to be replaced by a modern, 'civilised' method of land ownership. They genuinely believed that this would benefit everyone, including the Irish who would lose their land in the process! Like all conquerors, they were convinced of the superiority of their way of life, and of the barbarity of those they conquered.

Four hundred years on, many people in the western world believe that capitalism is superior to all other economic systems, and should be promoted in the developing world. In The *Mystery of Capital*, published in 2000, Hernando de Soto identifies the need for individual ownership, so that people can use their property as collateral to borrow money and create wealth. In a letter in *The Irish Times* on 19 February 2010, Joe Manning, Sierra Leone Honorary Consul to Ireland, says:

> *'I believe the fundamental problem is the system of land tenure in many parts of Africa. Land is not owned by the individual, but by 'the people', and administered by the tribal or chiefdom elders. The individual is allotted a portion of land for a period, usually two or three years. After this, the land reverts to the chiefdom and will lie fallow for a number of years. There is no incentive for the farmer to improve his land because he will have to relinquish it after a few years.'*

This is remarkably similar to what Sir John Davies wrote in Cavan in 1609 extolling the virtues of ownership of land: *'Every man shall have a certain home and know the extent of his estate, whereby the people will be encouraged to manure their land with better industry than heretofore hath been used, to bring up their children more civilly, to provide for their posterity more carefully.'* Of course, he ignores the fact that the land will be given only to a few privileged people.

Mr Manning goes on to lament another disadvantage under which Africans today labour: *'Nor can the farmer use the land as collateral if he wants to invest in livestock or equipment. There is no market in land so that potentially progressive farmers are stymied.'*

Proponents of Capitalism, however, seldom see the downside, i.e. that traditional peoples do not have the skills to manage and repay debt, with the result that they can easily be exploited and finish up in poverty. Even today when we are familiar with the idea of lending and borrowing, many people have difficulty managing their finances, and find themselves heavily in debt. Shakespeare wrote The *Merchant of Venice* about the time of the Ulster Plantation. Here we meet Shylock, the archetypal banker, and Antonio, the hapless entrepreneur who falls into his clutches. The audience in the Globe Theatre would have empathised with Antonio because many of them would have had experience of debt problems. Some people in Tullyhunco seem to have borrowed unwisely. In the depositions of 1641 victims of atrocities cite debt as a motive for violence, i.e. that natives who owed large sums of money to settlers were willing to kill or drive out their creditors, or at least were determined to get their hands on the ledgers, so that they would not have to repay their debts.

A Maths Lesson: Surveying and Measuring

All about Statute Acres, Norfolk Acres, Irish Acres, Plantation Acres, Townlands, Ballyboes and Ballybetaghs.

When I was a young fellow doing my Inter. Cert., our History teacher told us that at the time of the Plantation there was no standard or 'statute' acre, that the size of an acre varied from county to county in England, depending on the number of yards in a perch (otherwise known as a pole or rod). Norfolk had seven yards in a perch, giving it forty-nine square yards in a square perch, multiply that by forty to get a rood, and multiply that again by four to get an acre, a **Norfolk Acre** with 7840 square yards, the largest acre in England (A Statute Acre = 5.5 x 5.5 x 40 x 4 = 4840 square yards). Anyway, since no size of acre was specified, the planters took Norfolk acres, which were thereafter called **Irish Acres**, or so the teacher told us!

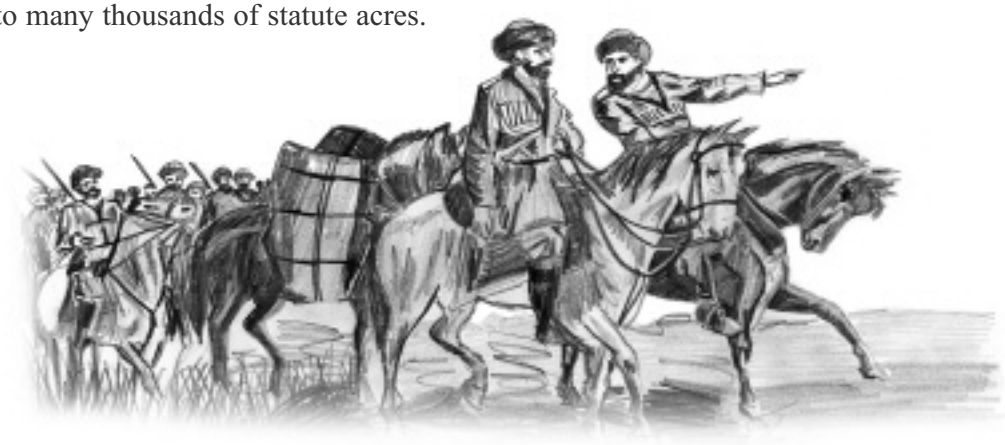
But the Irish didn't think in terms of area - it was a concept foreign to them. As cattle farmers, they were more concerned with what stock a given area of land would feed. So their basic unit was the **Ballyboe** (Baile Bó, a place for cattle), the forerunner of our modern townland. How big was a ballyboe? How long is a piece of string? The area varied enormously, depending on the quality of the land, the topography, physical features, and local traditions. As a rule, the better the land, the smaller the ballyboe, because a smaller area of land would feed the same amount of cattle. In Tullyhunco, topography often decided the size - the drumlin, surrounded by bogs and

lakes and streams, was a natural ballyboe. To complicate matters further, in Cavan the ballyboes were called **polls** (as in 'perch, pole or rod), and in the diocese of Clogher they were 'tates.'

A cluster of ballyboes, usually sixteen, made a **Ballybetagh** (Baile Biadhtaigh), defined by Dinneen as, 'hospitaller's land, one-thirtieth of a barony or triocha céad, 480 Irish acres', though I think he may have got his sums wrong, because elsewhere he equates a céad with one-eight of an Irish acre.

Plantation mappers did not measure the land - they surveyed it. This involved using local knowledge to define the boundaries of ballyboes and ballybetaghs. These they plotted on a map, and assumed that a ballyboe contained sixty acres of productive land, irrespective of what its actual area was. When they multiplied this by sixteen, the number of ballyboes in a ballybetagh, they got 960 plantation acres, not far from the 'proportion' of a thousand acres granted to an undertaker. Very often the undertaker simply took over the old ballybetagh. Because of this process, plantation acres vary enormously, depending on the area of the old ballyboe. Later on, the Cavan poll was devalued somewhat and reckoned to be equivalent to only fifty acres. This would have required twenty polls to make up a proportion.

One could conclude simply that a proportion of 1000 acres would consist of sixteen to twenty townlands, of unknown area; and with bogs, lakes, marshes and mountains thrown in, could amount to many thousands of statute acres.



The Planters Arrive

Under the Plantation of Ulster, five Scottish settlers got grants of land in the *Barony of Tullyhunco* in 1610. Over the next ten years they, or the people to whom they sold the lands, arrived in the area with their tenants from Scotland and began to set themselves up as functioning landlords in the area.

To arrive here at all must have been a daunting task. Writing in 1937, Robert Lloyd Praeger describes Lough Oughter as: *'... maze-like, ... a complicated tangle of land and water.'*[1] But in 1610, before the Erne drainage schemes of the 1800s, there was far more water, with lakes, bogs and swamps everywhere, and few places to ford the rivers safely. A modern economist or planner would say that there was no infrastructure whatsoever - no towns, no roads, only bridle-

[1] Lloyd Praeger: The Way That I Went.

paths and cow tracks across the unfenced countryside or along the fringes of the forests. And the distance! For settlers arriving at Larne or Carrickfergus, Tullyhunco must have seemed a long way away. We can imagine them travelling in covered wagons like the pioneers crossing the great prairies of America in the 1800s. But it would have been almost impossible to take wheeled vehicles all the way, so they probably came in a convoy, riders on horseback, each trailing a pack-horse behind loaded with provisions for the journey, clothing and utensils, tools and linen tents - and a few outriders front and rear to provide protection.

A Hazardous Journey

In the same way that the American pioneers were frequently attacked by native American 'Indians', the new colonists were subject to attack by the native Irish. Some of these were dispossessed land holders who set up as 'Raparees,' and carried out a systematic and organised campaign to make life difficult for those who had taken their lands. But the bulk of them would have been opportunistic 'chancers', poor, marginalised people living in the woods and taking advantage of the long lines of communication to rob the newcomers. None of those who harassed the planters would have been shown any mercy, and would have been killed on the spot, or hanged if captured. They *did* make life difficult and dangerous for the newcomers, with the result that places like Tullyhunco were much less attractive for colonisation than areas farther to the North-East.

Undertakers were required by the terms of their contract to come and live on the land, and they were in a position to offer poor young Scotsmen good land in Ireland at very low rent, which would enable them to better themselves and have a higher standard of living for themselves and their families. It wasn't easy for these young men to persuade wives or potential wives to make the hazardous journey and come to live far from home among a hostile population. After the experiences of the Nine Years War, as reported by soldiers serving in Ireland, the country had a terrible reputation for savagery. Of course they didn't report impartially on atrocities carried out by English armies in Ireland. After the Battle of Kinsale, Lord Mountjoy laid waste vast areas of Ulster, but Tullyhunco usually escaped the attention of marauding armies, due to its waterlogged isolation.

'The Humbler Followers'

Rev Andrew Stewart, Presbyterian minister of Donaghadee 1645-1671, and himself the son of a settler, did not have a very high opinion of the humbler followers of the undertakers, of whom he says:

> *'From Scotland came many, and from England not a few; yet all of them generally the scum of both nations, who for debt or breaking or fleeing from justice, or seeking shelter, came hither; hoping to be without fear of man's justice in a land where there was nothing, or but little, as yet, of the fear of God.'*

While we should take such a righteous judgment with the proverbial grain of salt, there is no doubt that the colonisation of Ulster was not for the faint-hearted.

The Natives

From the point of view of the natives the Plantation must have seemed a disaster, though we only get a faint hint of this from the writings of the colonists or the promoters of the project. Sir John Davies himself acknowledged their anger and frustration when he wrote:

> *'They seemed not unsatisfied in reason, though they remained in their passions discontented, being much grieved to leave their possessions to strangers, which they had so long after their manner enjoyed.'* [1]

No wonder Chichester, a member of the council, wrote to Sailsbury in September 1610:

> *'To displant the natives, who are a warlike people, out of the greatest part of six whole counties is not a work for private men who seek a present profit.'*

Again Chichester alludes to the frustrations of the displaced natives:

> *'They sell away both corn and cattle and when they are demanded why they do so their answer is that they know not what else to do with them, nor to what place to carry them, the portion of land assigned to each of them being too little to receive and feed them [the cattle].'*

He goes on to say that the Irish are arming themselves and forging pikes; and he is worried at the prospect of a rebellion.

A year later, in the autumn of 1611, Sir George Carew reported that the Plantation had

> *'gained a little life, but mainly from the presence and assistance of the natives, who were willing to become hewers of wood and drawers of water rather than be removed from their native districts'* [2]

[1] Hayes-McCoy: Sir John Davies in Cavan. Breifne, 1960.

[2] Hill: Plantation of Ulster

What they got

[See map inside front cover]

1. ***Sir Alexander Hamilton*** of Endervike in East Lothian got the largest grant of 2,000 acres, to be created into the manor of Clonkine and Carrowtubber, with 600 acres in demesne. In practice, this could have grossed up to 12,000 acres, including woods, bogs and lakes, somewhere between 32 and 40 townlands. This estate would eventually become Castlehamilton. **Clonkine** (centred on the modern townland of Corr) stretched in a narrow band from the present-day Castlehamilton to Keevy Cross and Shancor. It included Ardragh, Lahard, Quivvy, Shancor, Drumcullion, Drumgoon, Drumgoa, Keelagh, Drumbess, Drumkeerin, Drumroe, Drumhilla, and a few other townlands that I cannot at present identify. **Carrotubber** (modern Cortober) stretched from Bruse mountain to the Longford border on the shores of Lough Gowna. Presumably it bordered Clonkine, and was bounded on the East by the River Erne, and on the West by the lands granted to John Brown. It included Behey, Bruse, Gurteen, Sallaghan, Knockaghy? Nalosty (Losset?), Corratubber, Aghaveans, Portanure, Fyhora, Aghaknock and several other townlands that I cannot identify. This gives him a very long, narrow strip of land running from Castlehamilton to Lough Gowna.

2. His son, ***Sir Claud Hamilton*** of Dunbartonshire, got 1,000 acres stretching from Drumerdannan west to Derryvela (Dunaweel?) on the Leitrim border, and including Derreskit, Disert, Derrylakyn (Laheen?), Portaliffe, Derrygid, Tawlagh (or Cornaclea), Clooneen, Drumerdannan, Gurteen, Drumkerril, Cloncose, Drumbo, Drumully, part of Drumcartagh and a few other townlands that I cannot identify. These were to constitute the manor of **Clonyn** or **Taghleagh**, with 300 acres in demesne.

3. ***Alexander Achmootie*** (or Auchmothy), from East Lothian, got 1,000 acres to be created into the manor of **Dromheada**, with 300 acres in demesne. This is a compact group of townlands along the Leitrim border. Maura Nallen has identified the following townlands: Drumhart, Dernaweel, Derrylane, Loughnafin or Rockfield, Corradarren, Drumbullion, Aghnacorr, Tully, Sallaghan, Portlongfield, Drumcrow North, Drummany, Bohora, Drumkilroosk, Ardra and Drumroe. There are a few others, while Crinowe (Creenagh) and a quarter of Bohora, 60 acres, are excluded, presumably as glebe land reserved for the church.[1]

4. His brother, ***John Achmootie***, got 1,000 acres mainly in Kildallan parish, including Tonaloy, Drumany, Aghabawn, Croghan, Mullachdoo, Aughnacreevy, Mackan, Keilagh, Claragh, Kildallan, Listiernan, Kilnacross, Killygreagh, part of Drumcartagh, the manor of **Keilagh**.

[1] Nallen: A Study of Eight Townlands, Breifne 1999, p19.

There are several others, while Bocade and the quarter of Claragh, 60 acres, are excluded.

5. ***John Browne*** got 1,000 acres between Bruse Mountain and the Leitrim border, the Manor of **Carrowdownan**, which included the following townlands, as identified by Maura Nallen: Ticusker, Brankill, Corlisbratten, Corhanagh, Drumlarney, Gartylough, Farrangarve, Drumalt, Cormore, Lacken, Carroneary, Castlepoles, Cordonaghy, Carrodownan, Drumcrow South, Drumberry, Corran and Drumyouth.

6. ***Brian M'Kergeran*** (McKiernan) was the only Irishman who got a grant of land in Tullyhunco under the Plantation, the portion of **Dronge**. It consisted of eight poles, or townlands, nominally 400 acres, but with woods, bogs and mountain land included it would have been several multiples of that. It extends from Derrinlester, Drumlara and Ardlougher to the Woodford River (an Ghráine). A wild, heavily-wooded, thinly-populated area. Bodley's map shows woods in every single townland, and bogs in many. McKiernan mustn't have valued it greatly, for he sold it to James Craig in 1615.

In Three Parts

Eventually, all Tullyhunco, like ancient Gaul, would be in three parts. By 1631, Sir Francis Hamilton, son of Sir Claud, owned all three Hamilton proportions, and lived in Castlehamilton beside the new village of Killeshandra. Sir James Craig had bought up the two proportions of the Achmootie Brothers, as well as the portion of Brian McKiernan, and lived in his strong castle on the Hill of Croghan. Alexander Acheson, later to become Earl of Gosford, bought John Browne's proportion, but neither he nor any of his descendants ever came to live on it.

Chapter 4

Progress is Reported 1611-1631

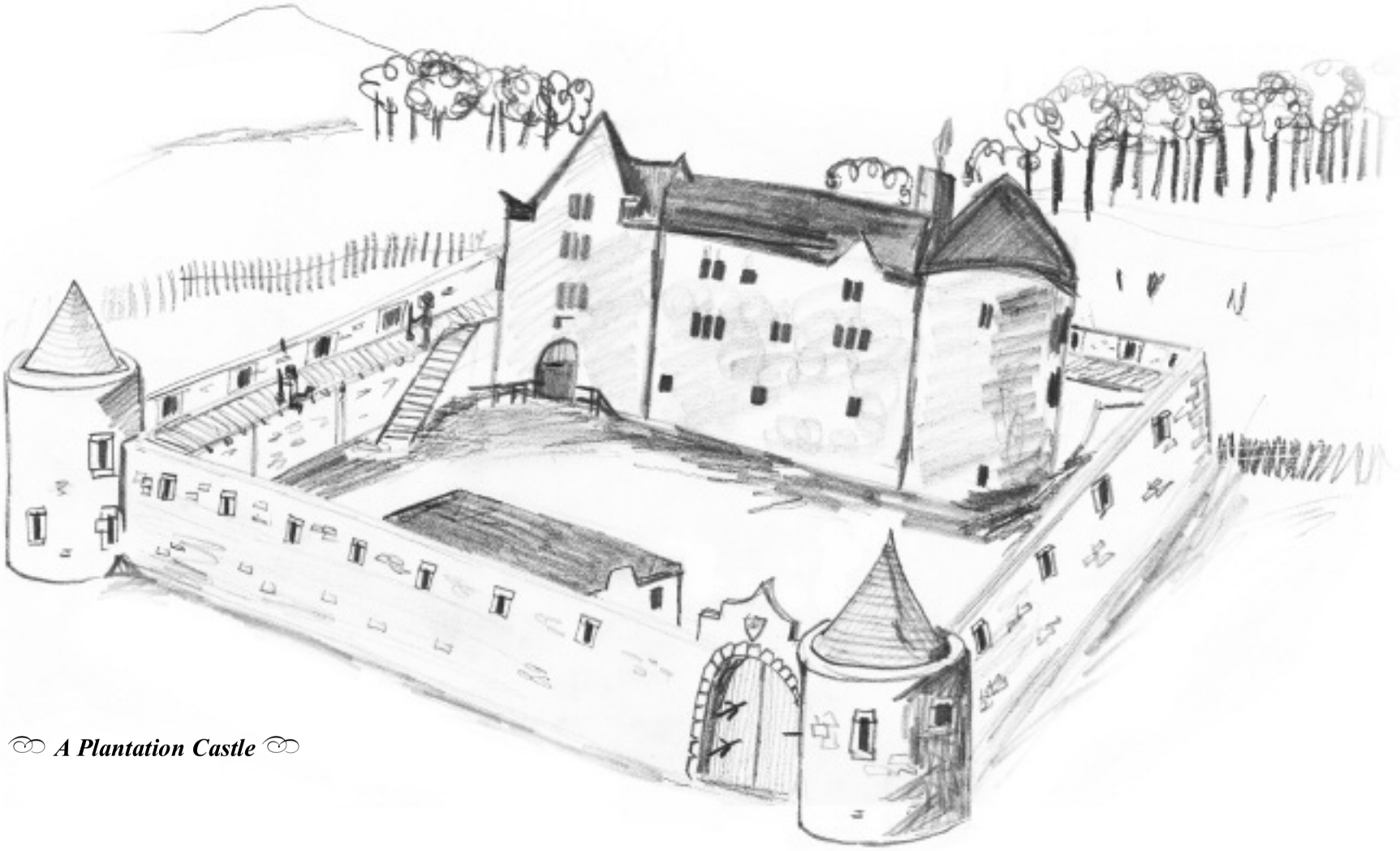
From 1611 on the government sent inspectors to report on the progress of the plantation, with a view to putting pressure on the undertakers to get on with the job. Their reports throw a good deal of light on the early years of the plantation. Throughout Ulster the plantation got going in fits and starts, with numbers fluctuating over the first ten years. Some good progress was reported in 1611 and 1612, but in the following two years there was a great deal of uneasiness, with rumours of the Irish plotting rebellion, arming themselves and forging pikes. By 1615 we hear that the leading conspirators had been caught and executed, and in the second half of the decade numbers had begun to pick up again. We can read between the lines that the Irish were not as docile as had been expected, were offering some resistance to being moved off their lands, and were threatening more trouble. This made it difficult to attract tenants, especially to far-off Tullyhunco. It wasn't just the lack of tenants that was slowing down the plantation - many undertakers took land with a view to selling it on to make a quick profit.

Perhaps the most realistic of the reports is that of August 1622, when Sir Francis Annesley, Knight and Baronet and Sir James Perrot, Knight, did a survey of Tullyhunco which assessed the progress of the Plantation at the end of its first decade. The undertakers waffled on about what they had done, and they rounded up all the British males and all the arms they could find to parade them in front of the inspectors. The inspectors listened, looked and reported.

The Hamilton Lands
[Referring to Proportions 1 & 2 in 'What They Got' - Chapter 3, p 41]

Of the five Scots who got land in Tullyhunco, Claud Hamilton was the only one who actually came to the country. He immediately took possession of his own proportion of Clonyn or Taughleagh (extending from Drumerdannan to Dunaweel), as well as his father's two proportions of Clonkine and Carrotubber (extending from Keelagh, ie Castlehamilton, to the shores of Lough Gowna).
In 1611, Sir James Carew reported:

> *'Sir Alexander Hamilton, 2000 acres in the county of Cavan, has not appeared. His son Claud took possession and brought three servants and six artificers. Is in hand with building a mill, trees felled, raised stones and hath competent arms in readiness'*



A Plantation Castle

[Then he adds] *'Besides, there are arrived upon that portion since our return to Dublin from the journey, as we are informed, twelve tenants and artificers who intend to reside there and build upon the same.'* [1]

We can gather from this last sentence that the undertaker was under pressure to fulfil his contract, but was finding it difficult to attract tenants.

Sir Claud sold his own proportion, Clonyn or Taughlagh (from Drumerdannan to Dunaweel) to John Hamilton (no relation) on 30 October 1611, and he in turn sold it to William Lawder of Belhaven in Scotland on 14 December 1614. William died on 30 March 1618, and two days later his son and heir, Alexander sold it back to Sir Alexander Hamilton, father of the original owner, who left it to his grandson, Sir Francis, on 20 July 1621. Claud appears to have died later in 1618, leaving a considerable amount of unfinished business after him. We know this because another plantation inspector, Sir Nicholas Pynner, reported in 1618 that the lands of Sir Alexander were being held in trust for his grandson, Francis Hamilton, by Francis's mother, Jane, as his father was now dead. She was living in Castle Keelagh (Castlehamilton), a strong castle, four storeys high with flankers and turrets. It had a bawn 60 feet square surrounded by a wall 12 feet high. He mentions 31 British families settled on the lands and a town with 34 houses nearby inhabited by British settlers, the first mention of the town of Killeshandra. In 1631, all 3000 acres of the Hamilton lands would be re-granted to Sir Francis and created into the Manor of Castle Keelagh.

Putting together various pieces of information, we can say that Claud, in the seven or eight years that he was in possession of the lands (1610-1618), had sold his own proportion, built a strong castle at Castlehamilton on the fringe of his father's estate, and encouraged his tenants to build their own houses on the hill of Killeshandra. That poll (townland) was church land, and Claud held 'the *advowson* [the right to select and name the person to be appointed to a vacant church benefice or living] *and right of patronage of the rectory or church of Kilshandrie or Kiltawnagh*.' We learn from the reports and inquisitions that the weekly market in Killeshandra was changed from Monday to Wednesday, and that fairs were held on St Simon's, St Jude's and St Barnaby's Days.

It was also proposed to have *'a weekly market every Saturday, and two fairs yearly, on Ascension Day and St Andrew's Day, at a place called Serebagh, in the proportion of Carratubber.' The 'towne of Serebagh'* is probably Scrabby, now Gowna, the name being derived from the Irish Scraith Bhuí, meaning yellow scraw or layer, a physical feature present on Scrabby Hill and other hills in the vicinity.

[1] Hill: Plantation of Ulster.

1622 Carrowtubber and Clonekeyne (Castlehamilton to Lough Gowna). Here we find '*a very strong bawn* [wall] *of stone and lime, with four flankers* [towers at the corners] *and within it a very strong castle, four storeys high, long since finished.*' Sir Claude Hamilton's widow and her new husband, Captain Forbes, and her family were living in it. Four British-born fee farmers had estates on the land. *'Three of these appeared before us but some of them are not resident, and much of the land is occupied by the Irish.'*

1622 Killeshandra: *'Near the aforesaid castle there is a village called Killishander consisting of twenty houses inhabited with British families.'* The inhabitants complained that they had gone to great expense in building their houses and planting themselves on the land, because they had been promised freehold estates by Sir Claude, but they hadn't got the estates. He was now dead, his heir (Sir Francis) was under age and they were worried about their title. According to the terms of the Plantation, the undertaker should have built an English-style village for his tenants. This was what was done in Belturbet, Bailieborough and Cootehill, where today we have well-planned Plantation towns. But Sir Claude had told the tenants that if they built their own houses he would give them freehold land. So they built them themselves, probably higgledy-piggledy along the top and steep north side of a Cavan drumlin, from the present site of the Lough Bawn Hotel to the Ulster Bank (see Skinner and Taylor map of 1778). A nightmare for builders, planners and engineers ever since!

1622 Clonyn: This was Sir Claude's own proportion, extending from Drumerdannan to Dunaweel. His widow and her husband, Captain Forbes, and their heir (Sir Francis) are in possession of it. A bawn of stone and lime with two flankers is being built with a house of stone and lime within it. Mr George Lowther, a fee farmer of 288 acres is living there with his family, and presumably running the estate. Lowther is probably a variation of Lawder, and perhaps this George is a descendant of William who had bought this place in 1614. In all, land has been let to twelve British families. *'But they are not all resident and much of this proportion is occupied by the Irish.'*

1622 The Muster: (where all British men on the plantation were lined up with their arms for inspection by the commissioners).

> *'There appeared before us out of ... Clonekeyne and Carrowtubber ... and Clonyn ... together with the inhabitants of Killasander the number of 78 British men of all sorts with arms, viz 24 shot and 54 pikes and half-pikes, besides some swords and daggers.'*

1629 In the inquisition of 1629, George Lawder is named as a freeholder of two townlands; and we learn that the *'bawn of lime and stone'* is in Derendrehid, and that it is 120 feet by 60 feet and 10 feet in height with a two-storey stone house with four turrets at each quarter.

The arrival of Sir James Craig in 1610

[Referring to Proportions of Achmootie Brothers, 3 & 4 in 'What They Got', Chapter 3, p 41]

In 1611, Carew, the inspector, reports that the Achmootie brothers *'have not appeared. James Craig is their deputy for five years, has brought four artificers of divers sorts, with their wives and families, and two servants. He had already built a castle 35 feet high surrounded by a wall 240 feet in circumference.'* Incidentally, Pynner's survey some eight years later gives the dimensions of the bawn as *'75 feet square, 16 feet high and four round towers to flank the wall. He hath also a strong and large Castle the length of the bawn, 20 feet broad within the walls and five storeys wide.'* To complicate matters further, there is still another set of dimensions in the 1622 survey (see below). Can we reconcile the figures?

But back in 1611, *'He [Craig] was in the process of raising stone to build a mill; and trees felled; a walled house with a smith's forge built; four horses and mares upon the ground; with competent arms.'* In fact, Craig had already bought Dromheada and Kelagh before he left for Ireland, so, though he owned the land, he did not disclose this fact to Carew.

Who was James Craig?

Hill says: *'Craig came with the king's household to England in 1603, but from what district north of the Tweed we have not discovered. In the year now named he had a grant of the clerkship of the Wardrobe in reversion after Robert Tyas and Bevis Thelwall. In the meantime until his turn for holding the office would come, he was given that of assistant to the Clerk of the King's Great Wardrobe. In the following year there is a warrant to deliver to him sufficient stuff for his yearly livery. This servant was soon distinguished by other and much greater marks of the Royal favour, including the dignity of knighthood, and grants of land throughout various parts of Ireland, North and South.'*[1]

The above quotation would seem to suggest that he was some sort of master-tailor to the king, but in reality he may have had a more serious role. Initially, King James did not feel secure on the throne of England. As he himself rather colourfully puts it, *'the Highest Bench is the sliddriest to sit upon.'*[2] James was well aware that there were those in England who resented him as a foreigner, and he must have been mindful of what had happened to his mother, Mary Queen of Scots. So James Craig was probably one of the loyal Scotsmen that he took with him to London to be his eyes and ears - the Clerkship of the Wardrobe may have been just a sinecure, a cover for his real function.

Six or seven years later, when the king feels secure in his job, he rewards his loyal servant with a knighthood and grants of land in Ireland. Not content with this, we find Craig wheeling and dealing, buying Drumheada from Alexander Achmootie on 14 August 1610, and Kileagh two

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[1] Hill: Plantation of Ulster.

[2] James VI: The True Law of Free Monarchies, 1598.

days later from John Achmootie. All these were probably now based in London, which may be why he arrived at Croghan shortly afterwards to claim his property accompanied only by four tradesmen, their wives and families, and two servants. His undertaking required him to clear the Irish off his lands, and to build a village to house his English-speaking, Protestant tenants. This was not feasible.

Writing to the Earl of Northampton in November, Chichester observes:

> *'the Scottishmen come with greater port* [show] *than the English, and better accompanied and attended, but it may be with less money in their purses; for some of the principal of them upon their first entrances into their precincts, were forthwith in hand with the natives to supply their wants; and in recompense thereof promise to get license from his Majesty that they* [the natives] *may remain upon their lands unto them* [the Scottish Undertakers] *which is so pleasing to that people* [the Irish of Ulster] *that they would strain themselves to the uttermost to gratify them* [the Scotch]*, for they are content to be become tenants to any man rather than be removed from the place of their birth and education, hoping as he conceives at one time or other, to find an opportunity to cut their landlord's throat.'*

Craig seems to be the kind of Scotsman that Chichester referred to, because, as soon as he arrived, he let much of the land to the McKiernan family, the traditional rulers of the territory, effectively setting them up in middle management, and involving them actively in the plantation enterprise. In effect, he did a deal with the McKiernans which allowed him to use their status in the community to put the entire native population working on his behalf, paying him rent, and enabling him to concentrate on building a fortress on the Hill of Croghan, presumably using native labour. For a stranger like Craig to come in and plant himself on the Hill of Croghan must have seemed a sacrilegious affront not only to the McKiernans, but to the Irish people in general. But then, as Sir John Davies would say, there wasn't much they could do about it. In any event, they came to terms with the situation, and did a deal with Craig. Even the townland of Croghan itself was let to Brian Bán McKiernan.

Brian McKiernan's Portion

[Referring to Portion of Brian McKerignan (McKiernan), 6 in 'What They Got' Chapter 3, p 42]

A member of the old ruling family, Brian McKiernan had received a grant of this property from the crown. Interestingly, the eight townlands assigned to this Irishman namely, Dring, Cornacrum, Cornahaia, Clontygrigny, Derrinlester, Drumlara, Ardlougher, Kiltynaskellin and Killygorman, would have contained much wet, boggy and mountainous land. One would wonder why Craig would have wanted to buy it, unless he got it for a song. This sale may very well have been part of a package deal he did with the McKiernans, which allowed them to stay on as tenants and manage their ancestral lands, though in a subordinate position. It certainly was convenient when, thirty years later in 1640, he acquired 2784 Irish acres (nearly 6000 statute acres) just across the

The towne (town) of Serbagh: Gowna today

Arva: The Market House

Digging with the Loy at the Ploughing Championships, Castle Hamilton, 3rd May 2010

(Ruins) St. Brigid's Church, Killeshandra 1795

Jacobean Church 1688

Croghan Presbyterian Church 1742

The Relic in Kildallan with the Church of Ireland in the background and Carn Ringfort in the distance

Smith's Fort, Drumconlester

border in Leitrim which was contiguous to these lands in Cavan, and was the basis of the present Killegar Estate.[1] Here, in the townland of Longfield, he planned to build the village of Craigstown beside the old castle of the O'Rourkes.

It is hard to reconcile the purchase of McKiernan's land by Craig with the report of an inquisition of 14 March 1630, which says that when he died on 4 September 1622, Brian Bane McKiernan was seised (owner) of seven poles and three pottles of land in Dronge, Conecrome, Killeneskealan, Dirrenlester, Mullaghduffe, Clonty Killegorman and Clonkeen. It names four McKiernans as his heirs, and says that *'the premises are held in free and common socage* [tenancy without military service] *from the king.'* [2]

A New Castle

Back in 1610, Craig concentrated on building a secure new plantation castle on the summit of Croghan hill. He should have cleared the Irish off the land and replaced them with English-speaking Protestants from Scotland. But this wasn't feasible, as he couldn't get enough Scottish tenants to farm the huge areas he now owned, and of course he couldn't afford to leave them idle. Indeed the Irish were willing to pay much higher rents than the English or Scots. It must have been obvious to successive plantation inspectors that Craig was blatantly ignoring the conditions of contract under which the lands had been granted. But if Sir James was in favour in court, who was going to bring him to book? As late as 1629, there is no mention of any British families settled as tenants on the lands. Presumably, the servants and artificers and their families were based in the security of the castle.

It is fair to assume that the Irish continued to farm the land in the traditional way, treating the townland as a unit. But the fact that Craig built a corn mill and established fairs and markets indicates that he was endeavouring to move the people into a more modern, cash economy.

Craig's lands in 1622

Drumheda and Killagh: Sir James Craig had *'a strong bawn of stone and lime 83 foot long, 46 foot broad, 12 foot high beside four large round towers for flankers at each corner.'* (The ruins of one of these flankers can still be seen on the hill of Croghan). Within the bawn is a strong castle of stone and lime 60 foot long, 20 foot broad within the walls, four storeys and a half high. The surveyors emphasise the strength of the building, both stone and timber. They also mention another building, almost as high as the bawn wall used as a stable, and other out-offices, *'covered with timber to walk upon or set small pieces* [guns] *upon it.'* They add that *'Sir James Craig, his wife and family are and have been long resident in the castle. And there is good manurance of tillage ... and great store of cattle upon the land'*. All this suggests a very strong castle and a thriving manor farm. Then there are statistics of freeholders and leaseholders but *'not all are resident and some of these lands are set to the Irish'*. Interestingly, there are three cottagers, each with a house and garden and the promise of a lease.

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[1] Godley: The History of the Killegar Estate, Breifne 2004, p 239.

[2] Mag Uidhir: Breifne 1991, p 285.

The Muster: *'21 families of British besides his own family.'* In the castle there are arms viz. muskets and callibers, 30 pikes and half-pikes besides swords and pistols etc.

John Browne's Proportion

[Referring to Proportion 5 in 'What They Got', Chapter 3, p 42]

John Browne had got the proportion of **Carrowdownan** (from Cordownan into Arva). Carew reported that in 1611 he had sent an agent *'who took possession, set the lands to the Irish, returned to Scotland, and performed nothing.'* Some time later, probably in 1612, Browne sold the land to Archibald Acheson, who would later become Earl of Gosford. In 1619, Pynner reports that, *'Upon this there is a bawn of clay and stone 90 foot square, 8 foot high with four flankers. It stands in a remote place upon a mountain, has no gate to it, nor anybody dwelling near it and decayed already.'* Is this the 'Cordownan Fort' we know today? There follow statistics of fee farmers and leaseholders, among them one with 12 acres and a mill as well as four cottagers, each of whom has a house and some grazing. Is this the beginning of the village of Arva? In all there are 14 families of British, but they are not all resident. Then the inspectors add: *'and the most part of this proportion has always been and still is, occupied by the Irish.'*

The Muster: *'There appeared before us 19 persons of all sorts, armed with three callibers*, *15 pikes and one halbert.'* The English on this proportion complained about James Aughmoty and Mr Archibald's agent there, saying that some English had been put out of their estates, allegedly for letting land to the Irish, only to find that the same land had afterwards been let to the Irish, presumably by Mr Acheson's agent.

Tullyhunco in brief in 1622

The overall picture of Tullyhunco in 1622 is of two undertaker families holed up in strong castles at Croghan and Castlehamilton while George Lowther lives in another fortified house, probably in Derrindrehid. There are twenty British families in Killeshandra and the rest dispersed around the countryside, and all of them are deeply discontented with their lot. The Irish are still in occupation of the great bulk of the land, and presumably paying a high rent on it.

Building Boom

The activities of Craig and Hamilton must have given rise to the biggest building boom the area ever saw. Two large castles, four storeys high, each with a 60-foot square bawn around it, a mill and a village of thirty-four stone houses, probably a windmill, all built in a few short years. This must have required a small army of workers to quarry and dress stones, raise sand, burn lime and cart the raw materials to the building sites. Likewise, timber for scaffolding, roofing, floors and furnishings had to be felled, sawed and carted to the sites. And on the sites, all the digging, wheeling, mixing and heaving - building is a labour-intensive task! And yet there were only a handful of Scottish workers in the area, many of them artisans, i.e. skilled tradesmen. We can only assume that a large number of native Irish were employed as labourers, and some, perhaps, as builders. This, of course, was not envisaged in the original plan of plantation which aimed at clearing the natives completely off the undertakers' lands and replacing them with English or

Scottish tenants. But from the planters' point of view, it solved the immediate problem of labour shortage. It probably eased native discontent somewhat by giving able-bodied men of the lower, landless classes a chance to earn a bit of money, thereby giving them a small stake in the plantation. But it was a security risk, just as letting the land to the former landholders was a security risk.

We may ask how all this activity was financed. Did the undertakers themselves pay for it out of their own resources, or was it paid out of rental income from the estates? The vast bulk of the tenants were Irish, and we know that they were willing to pay high rents in order to be allowed to stay on their ancestral lands. It is fair to assume that the Plantation gave rise to an economic boom with full employment and everyone beavering away - the tenants and sub-tenants working hard to have produce to sell in the fairs and markets, enabling them to pay the rent and stay on the land, while tradesmen and labourers were busy on the building sites. We don't know what the attitude of the native 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' was, but they had little choice but to get on with it. Life was probably hard for them, especially in years of bad harvests. On the other hand, for those who had invested in the Plantation, this was what it was all about: a wasteful, barbaric way of life being replaced by a modern, civilised one, where everyone was gainfully engaged in work to create new wealth and a better standard of living.

The 1620s and '30s

It is idle to speculate on how things would have panned out had the events of 1641 not taken place. But that should not deter us from assessing what life was like for all concerned in the years leading up to it. By 1628, the Government realised that it was futile to insist that the natives be cleared off all the undertakers' lands. So they allowed the undertakers to set aside a quarter of their land as a sort of reservation for them. It isn't at all clear whether any attempts were made to implement this new directive in Tullyhunco, but in any event it would have left the threat of further evictions and displacement hanging over the Irish. There were further surveys and inquisitions, but, though they give us valuable information, they reveal no radical change from 1622 onwards. The Plantation must have been a terrible culture shock to the Irish. Gone was their old, familiar, traditional way of life, to be replaced by hassle and uncertainty, with English-speaking foreigners coming in and throwing their weight around. Many of them must have been evicted, especially on the Hamilton lands in the vicinity of Killeshandra, and around Derrindrehid.

The majority who were allowed to stay on their ancestral lands were forced to pay rent to the new landlords, and all the evidence points to very high rents being paid by the Irish. They had been used to paying taxes to their Gaelic-Irish rulers, but the level of plantation rents was exorbitant by comparison. Of course they were also liable for tithes to the Established Church. Gone too, were the traditional social service props which helped the sick, the poor and the needy: this was a much harsher regime which had little time for idlers, layabouts or other unproductive members of society.

The Irish had lost their ancient churches, in Kildallan and Killeshandra, where a strange liturgy was now being conducted in a foreign language, while the priories at Drumlane and Trinity Island had been closed and handed over to planters. In many ways the Irish would have been despised as a 'native' people, ignorant and backward, with little respect shown for their ancient language, customs or way of life by the new landlords. William Bedell stood out from the rest, because he respected their language and culture. On the positive side, the people managed, for the most part, to stay on their lands. In this the McKiernans showed leadership by coming to terms with the situation and doing a deal with Craig. Craig and Hamilton put their rental income to work, by embarking on a massive building programme that gave employment to many able-bodied young men.

Many of the settlers got a rather raw deal. Those in Killeshandra had to build their own houses, a huge undertaking at the time, and they didn't get the leases they were promised. On Archibald Acheson's estate at Arva, some tenants were evicted and their places let to the Irish. Time and again the settlers on all the estates complained that the landlords had failed to honour their contracts.

The real winners in all of this were the undertakers, the landlords, who had been given great power over the lives of everyone on their estates, and who were poised to become very wealthy. Acheson lifted rents from his tenants, but he never came near the Arva area and put very little back into it. Craig and Hamilton *did* come to live and they *did* plough back their rental income to develop and modernise the place. Of course they lived in luxury, while some of the natives and settlers were poor. But, to paraphrase the prophet Amos, their revelry would come to an end in 1641.

Chapter 5

Religious Matters

Before the Plantation

It was well over a thousand years since St Patrick's time, and Christianity was well established in Gaelic Ireland, though the name 'Island of Saints and Scholars' might be a bit flattering, especially in the later Middle Ages. In practice, Christianity had reached an accommodation with the pagan Gaelic culture of the people, so that elements of paganism thrived alongside an active Christian Church. The Church had adapted many pagan customs like the annual pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick, the mid-summer celebrations on the Eve of the Feast of St John, and many local pattern days at holy wells, and had given them a Christian form. But some of the great events of the year were still the pagan feasts of Bealtaine (1 May), Samhain (1 November) and Lúnasa (last Sunday in July).

The Marriage Laws of the Church were never adopted, at least not by the upper classes. It was easy under Brehon Law for either husband or wife to divorce their spouse and marry someone else, while children born outside marriage had the same rights of succession and inheritance as those born within wedlock. (Henry VIII would have had fewer problems had he been operating under Brehon Law!) Compulsory clerical celibacy, introduced into the wider church around 1200 AD, was not rejected in Gaelic Ireland, but it was not taken too seriously. Eirannach families, like the O'Farrellys of Drumlane, were hereditary managers of church lands, with the status and privileges, as well as the duties and responsibilities that went with the job. These included the care of the old, the sick and the needy. So there was considerable lay control of church affairs. The Church was popular among a traditional, conservative people. There was no great spiritual or intellectual movement on the ground calling for reform or radical change. Savonarola, Luther, Calvin and the others were light-years away. Even the Act of Supremacy passed by the Irish Parliament in 1536, which made Henry VIII Supreme Head of the Church in Ireland, would not have caused a ripple in Tullyhunco.

Something of a Mystery

The question of why the Reformation failed among both the Old English, the descendants of the Normans who had settled in Ireland hundreds of years earlier, and Gaelic Irish has fascinated historians for generations. Planners of the Plantation saw that there was an opportunity to convert an ignorant and savage people. All that was needed was enlightened evangelisation to persuade the people to adopt the true religion. The Church would be reformed and would play its part in civilizing the native people. So when the new regime took over the old churches like Killeshandra or Kildallan, and monasteries like Drumlane or Trinity Island, it would have been reasonable to expect that the people would continue to worship as they had always done. This did not happen. In fact, they shunned the new forms of worship in these places, and only went there for the purpose of burying their dead. Why? Perhaps it was that, following the Council of Trent,

Catholic missionaries had got there first and had evangelised the people along the lines of the Counter-Reformation. The result was that when the plantation got under way it was already too late to evangelise them along Protestant lines.

The Louvain Connection

The Northern Renaissance was a great revival of learning and culture which arose in the Netherlands and Germany in the 1400s. One could say that it originated in a spiritual movement started by Gerard de Groote, who founded the Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life in Zwolle around the year 1400. The movement, the *Devotio Moderna* as it came to be called, involved a lot of prayer and meditation, preaching, teaching and discussion about the meaning of life and the truths of religion. The essence of this new devotion is probably best expressed in the *Imitatio Christi* (The Following of Christ), by Thomas a' Kempis, an Augustinian monk, and former pupil of the Brethern of the Common Life, as was the great scholar Erasmus. The Imitatio was first published in 1415, and became what we would now call a 'best-seller.'

The majority of the people were illiterate, but they too could become involved by listening to sermons, attending retreats and contemplating holy pictures in churches. We can get a flavour of these from a few masterpieces that have survived, like the *Descent From the Cross* and *The Entombment* by Rogier van der Weyden (1400-1464) or the *Portinari Altarpiece* by Hugo van der Goes (1440-1482). The deep devotion of the period is also evident in the *Nativity of Jesus*, a pen-and-ink drawing by Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533), which can be seen in the Chester Beattie Library in Dublin Castle. In today's materialistic world we are inclined to look at such pictures as works of art, and to forget that they were designed as tools to arouse religious fervour and to lead people to God.

The spirit of the Devotio Moderna was still alive and active when students from Ireland began to arrive in Louvain in the 1500s and 1600s. In fact, the religious ferment had intensified since Martin Luther, another Augustinian monk, had posted his *Ninety-Five Theses* on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg in 1517. In Elizabethan times, Irish Catholic students had found their way to Louvain, and in the 1570s or 1580s an 'Old English' Meath-man named Nugent was professor of Theology there. It was into this deep vein of spirituality that a new wave of students, this time Gaelic Irish, would tap.

The Coup of the Century: Poets into Priests

The military collapse of Gaelic Ireland at Kinsale in 1601 was the end of an era - the Middle Ages had suddenly ended. The Gaelic kings were out of a job and the Bardic families, who had been their *Fili*, or poetic spin-doctors for hundreds of years, were suddenly unemployed.

Over the course of a century, from 1601 to 1695, the ruling classes of Gaelic society - rí, rí tuaithe, taoiseach, tiarna, king, chieftain, lord - and their various sub-strata were reduced, stage by stage, to the status of peasants. Many of them were able to re-invent themselves as landlords under the Plantation. Then, when opportunities presented themselves, they attempted to

reverse the plantation - in 1641 and again in 1688-92. These attempts were unsuccessful, and by 1695 their descendants were poor peasants. The let-down was inexorable, but it was a long-drawn-out affair.

For the filí (poets), on the other hand, it was all very sudden - there was no soft landing. They had been VIPs in Gaelic society, rather like the journalists of today. The new English-speaking undertakers had no appreciation of their skills, and considered them idlers and layabouts. The fili, for their part, looked upon the new gentry with contempt - they were *Bodai faoi hataí*, ignorant upstarts without culture or refinement. The English/Anglo-Irish government had a terrible 'set' on them. 'Irish Rhymers' they contemptuously labelled them - useless layabouts, lumped in with other undesirables. When our own John Kearnan, sheriff in West Cavan, was given a grant on 20 March 1588, he was given powers to act

> *'for the defence of the territory, the public weal of the inhabitants, and the punishment of malefactors: to prosecute, banish and punish by all means malefactors, rebels, vagabonds, rymors, Irish harpers, bards, bentules, carrowes, idle men and women, and those who assist such'.* [1]

Bentules were travelling women of ill-repute, and carrowes were gamblers. The contempt of the 'New English' for 'rymors, Irish harpers and bards' is made clear by associating them with undesirable elements and trouble-makers. On the other hand, we can look on it as a back-handed compliment. These were the educated class in Gaelic society, the intellectuals who were well-informed and articulate, the moulders of public opinion. Any government planning a Cultural Revolution will target the intellectuals and strive to eliminate or neuter them. And a cultural revolution is what successive English governments aimed at, to 'civilise' the Irish, which meant anglicising them, destroying their language and culture, and assimilating them into English culture. The filí stood in the way, and had to be got rid of.

For their part, the filí reacted in various ways. Some continued to seek patronage of the new Gaelic Irish landowner class, e.g. the O'Reillys. The Kerry poet, Aogán Ó Rathaille even sought patronage of Valentine Brown, a planter. Others reacted angrily to their fallen state and gave us some of the most powerful poetry in the Irish Language. Some took part in a silly, unreal poetry contest, *Iomarbháigh na mBárd*. And some went to Louvain ……

The Franciscans managed to recruit a significant number from bardic families, Ó Cléirigh, Mac a' Bhaird, Ó hEoghusa, Ó Maoilchonaire, (anglicised as Cleary, Ward, Hussey, Conroy respectively), men steeped in the language, literature, rhymes and rhythms of the Bardic Schools. These young men were admitted into the order, taken to Louvain or to other colleges, trained in the Franciscan way of life and given a modern, third-level education. They were then set to work translating devotional works, catechisms and lives of the saints, as well as producing original

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[1] Andrew Breeze: An Irish Etymology for Bentule, in Studia Hibernica, 1998-99.

religious works of their own. They bought a printing press and set it up at St Anthony's, the Irish college in Louvain, and sent a steady stream of books and pamphlets back to Ireland. The deep spirituality of this material, in the beautiful language of master-craftsmen, must have had a profound and uplifting effect on all who read it, or heard it being read. Though most of the people were illiterate, they had a rich oral tradition with a keen ear for rhymes and rhythms, songs and stories.

The Harsh Reality

The secure affluence of the Spanish Netherlands (modern Belgium and Holland) was a far cry from the impoverished and marginalised life of the Gaelic Irish, who had lost their churches and monasteries, including the churches at Killeshandra and Kildallan, the Augustinian priory at Drumlane, the Premonstratentian priory on Trinity Island, the cathedral at Kilmore and the Franciscan abbey in Cavan town, all of which had either been closed down or taken over by the established Church. True, they looked forward to a restoration:

I mainistir naoimh, beidh céir ar lasadh ann,
Is Aifreann Dé go sollúnta sóch,
Ag canadh Te Deum gan baol ná eagla,
Gidh do bhéithir gur searbh an sceol.
(Wax candles burning in holy abbeys,
God's Holy Mass solemn and comforting,
Te Deums sung without fear or danger.)

But for the moment, this church-less church had to make do as best it could. And this is where the poets, re-invented as scholars and evangelists, proved very effective. There were many Franciscans on the ground in Ireland looking after the spiritual needs of the people. When it was safe to do so, they operated openly, living in abbeys in Cavan town, where they had been actively serving the people for more than three hundred years[1], as well as in Fenagh and Dromahaire. They moved from townland to townland, offering Mass in people's homes, administering the Sacraments, preaching and teaching. Unlike the regular clergy, the friars were not confined to any parish or diocese, and we do not know where those operating in this area came from. Officially, Tullyhunco was part of the newly-created County of Cavan, and was not far from Cavan town. But its people would have had a greater affinity with the O'Rourkes of West Breifne, so it is possible that the friars came from Co. Leitrim. There is a record of a Fr O'Rourke, a friar, being killed in his habit while leading the rebels in a skirmish near Killeshandra in 1641, hardly the kind of activity one would expect from a follower of St Francis! Of course the downside of recruiting members of the bardic families was that they belonged to the class that was most vehemently anti-Plantation and anti-British; while the spirit of the Counter-Reformation made them anti-Protestant as well.

[1] Mooney: Breifne, 1958.

In times of persecution when the hunt was on, they led dangerous lives, and many who were caught were put to death, but they could blend into the general population and become invisible to the authorities. The primary purpose of the Franciscan order was to bring the Good News to the poor, to live among the poor and infirm and to serve them. The fact that they were celibate meant that they had no wives or families to support or worry about. These men would have used the spiritual books to bring enlightenment and solace to the people whom they served. In this way the new religious devotion was spread surreptitiously among the people of the drumlins, and with it a stiffening of determination to remain faithful to the 'One, True, Catholic and Apostolic Church' whatever the cost in suffering, privation or humiliation in the future. For the first half of the 1600s, the spiritual needs of the Catholics of Tullyhunco were being reasonably well looked after, in spite of enormous difficulties.

Historical Research

Some Franciscan scholars were keenly aware that the Gaelic order was finished, and were frantically striving to salvage what they could. They sent a young scholar, Micheál Ó Cléirigh, to Ireland to collect manuscripts and bring them back to Louvain. When he arrived, he set up shop in Ireland, hired three lay scholars, and formed the 'Four Masters' to write the History of Ireland from the earliest times to the present, using Gaelic Irish sources. At the same time Geoffrey Keating, who was probably ordained priest in Bordeaux, was writing *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, a history of Ireland from the earliest times to the Norman Invasion. He also wrote poetry lamenting the state of the country, as well as religious works. These are only a few of the many writers who endeavoured to salvage a record of the past from the ruins of Gaelic culture, and to strengthen people's faith in the Catholic Church. Thus, the collapse at Kinsale catapulted young men from a culturally conservative backwater into a centre of modern learning and Counter-Reformation thought. The result was a great and sudden renaissance in Gaelic learning, literature and historical research. Louvain tuned into the wavelength of Gaelic Ireland, and used the most powerful modern medium, the printed word, to bring the Word of God and the doctrines of the Counter-Reformation to the people.

The effect is hard to evaluate, but the Protestant Establishment certainly had no comparable facility for getting through to the Gaelic-speaking population. Both sides saw this as an effort to save the souls of the people, though in truth it was really a contest for hearts and minds, and the question was who would get there first. Franciscan missionaries were risking their lives, so they didn't advertise their activities. But it is likely that they were active in Tullyhunco, alerting the people to the dangers of heresy and Protestantism, long before the established church began its fumbling efforts to convert them.

Efforts to Establish the Established Church

We really know nothing about the activities of the ordinary parish priests in places like Killeshandra or Kildallan. There must have been considerable confusion in the few years between the Treaty of Mellifont and the Flight of the Earls (1603-1607). Robert Draper, an Englishman appointed Bishop of Kilmore by the Government in 1603, was an Irish speaker, and the hope was that he would evangelise the people in their own language. There would have been

pressure on the local priests to conform to the new order, and they may very well have done so, at least nominally.

Then the Planters came - English-speaking Protestants, with English-speaking ministers - and the native Irish felt excluded. By this time, the contest for the hearts and minds of the Irish had probably been decided: they would stay with the Catholic Church, even though its structures had broken down and no bishop was appointed by Rome between 1607 and 1625. Adam Watson, who came as minister to Sir Alexander Hamilton's lands at Killeshandra and presumably took over the 'Church in the Old Fort,' had another difficulty. The 1611 survey notes that he *'was not yet allowed by the bishop.'*[1] Was Bishop Draper, the new Protestant bishop of Kilmore, just squaring up to the landlord, who appointed Watson, or was he concerned, perhaps, about his doctrinal orthodoxy? In any event, the matter must have been resolved, because the same minister was still in place in the 1626, when he got a grant of a glebe in Killeshandra.

Henry Jones, born in Dublin in 1605, and educated at TCD, was vicar of Killeshandra from 1631 to 1633. He later became vicar and Dean of Kilmore (1637-45), and was one of the commissioners charged with the task of taking depositions from refugees in the aftermath of the Rising of 1641. He published *The Cavan Remonstrance* in London in 1642, which gives us an insight into the Rising from the point of view of the settlers. He later became vice-chancellor of TCD and Bishop of Clogher, and, after the Restoration, Bishop of Meath.[2] He was a brother of Theophilus Jones, the Cromwellian officer who accepted the surrender of Clough Oughter in 1653. What Adam Watson was doing from 1631 to 1633 we do not know, but he was again installed as rector in 1633.

The English-speaking ministers who came with the planters did nothing to endear themselves to the native people. English-style church taxes meant that everyone had to pay a tithe of one-tenth of the produce of all arable land for the upkeep of the Church, as well as dues for christenings, marriages and funerals. Worse still, the Act of Uniformity compelled everyone to attend official church service every Sunday. Failure to turn up could mean a fine of twelve pence. So people were forced to pay a tax for a service they did not want in a language they did not understand, and they were severely penalised if they did not avail of the service. They considered the system corrupt and exploitative - a money-making racket. Yet for the Church it was a real dilemma - there were very few planters as yet to support it, the ministers had wives and families to keep, and the churches and manses had to be kept in repair. For example, the cathedral of Kilmore was refurbished in 1620 using recusancy fees levied for non-attendance. So the Church needed the natives, even if the natives did not need the Church and detested it for its impositions.

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[1] Alan Ford in Cavan: Essays on the history of an Irish county.

[2] Leslie and Crooks: Clergy of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh.

Another factor that contributed to the alienation of the native population from the Established Church was the wholesale confiscation of the airchinneach lands where, as Patrick Logan puts it, *'in normal times, the poor were fed and sheltered and the aged helped when in need in medieval Breifne.'* He adds*, 'I have not been able to find one case in the records, in which the airchinneach lands were used by the new owners for the help of those in need.'* [1]

Thomas Moigne, Bishop of Kilmore from 1612 to 1628, was typical of the new order. An Englishman himself, most of the ministers he appointed were English or Scottish, and at the time of his death he owned a 2000-acre estate with a castle and village near Cavan town, an area still known as Moynehall.

William Bedell and some of his contemporaries certainly understood the need to provide Gaelic-speaking ministers as pastors in Irish-speaking areas. When he became Provost of Trinity College he set about training student ministers to speak Irish, and when he came as Bishop of Kilmore in 1628 he had a policy of appointing Irish-speaking pastors to Irish-speaking parishes. And, of course, he also employed Irish scholars to assist him in the task of translating the Bible into Irish. He made strenuous efforts, too, to rein in over-zealous ministers, like his chancellor, Cook, who were abusing the system by using 'recusancy' fines on those who failed to attend Protestant services as a means of raising revenue. This probably contributed to his general popularity, especially among the Irish who would later call him 'the best of the English.' But by 1628 it was already too late to convert the natives. The establishment of the official Church went hand in hand with the Plantation, and to the Irish it was part of the same process.

'The Hungry Sheep Look Up…'

There weren't enough Gaelic-speaking Protestants to provide parsons, just as there weren't enough Old-English Protestants to provide parsons in English-speaking areas. Thus, though the Established Church, the Church of Ireland, took over the entire plant-and-machinery of the Church, they didn't have the personnel on the ground to provide for the spiritual needs of the population. As John Milton put it concerning contemporary England, *'The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed.'*[2] At the same time, the State, for very good political reasons, was doing its utmost to prevent the Catholic Church from providing spiritually for the people. As a result of all this, religion in general fell into decay. Neither Old English nor Gaelic Irish supported the Protestant Church financially, so the buildings fell into disrepair, and there were not enough ministers of any denomination to service the spiritual needs of either Protestants or Catholics.

As the dust settled after many wars, plantations and rebellions, attitudes had hardened, with the Gaelic Irish and Old English faithful to the old Catholic Church, now reinvigorated by the Counter-Reformation, while the New English remained staunchly Protestant.

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[1] Logan: Medieval Hospital System in Breifne, Breifne 1970.

[2] Milton: Lyciadas.

Chapter 6

The Big Bust-Up: The Rising of 1641

The Background

The Rising of 1641 is probably the most contentious event in Irish History. Charles I had been king of England, Scotland and Ireland since 1625 - three separate states, each with its own parliament which represented the great and the good, but not the common people. His father, James, ran a tight ship, and kept state finances under control. Charles, however, was chronically short of money, seeking it wherever he could. Wealthy Irish Catholics, mainly 'Old English' families, put up money for him at the behest of Thomas Wentworth, the Lord Deputy. The quid pro quo was that they would get 'The Graces,'. These were concessions to enable them to practise their religion freely, and freedom from recusancy fines which were imposed on those who did not attend Protestant worship, something that was required of them under the Act of Uniformity. Charles took successive tranches of money from the Catholics, but a parliament of virulently anti-Catholic landowners was never going to pass 'The Graces' into law. Still, an uneasy but unofficial compromise was reached: Charles got the money, and the administration quietly turned a blind eye to Catholic worship.

The Pressures Build Up

Wentworth squeezed every possible interest group to get revenue for his royal master. He came up with a new plantation scheme, this time in Connacht. The titles of many land-owners were of doubtful validity, and talk of a new plantation set off alarm bells. In England, things were hotting up, too. Charles wanted to levy new taxes, and taxation is universally unpopular. In parliament, especially the Commons, the old landed gentry were being out-numbered by a new landed class whose ancestors had got monastery lands under Henry VIII a few generations back. These were traditionally strongly anti-Catholic, as they feared that any reversal of the dissolution of the monasteries would call into question the validity of the titles to their lands. Another rising force was the emerging merchant classes, who had accumulated great wealth by trade and commerce, and who were totally opposed to an inefficient and corrupt king and government creaming off some of their profits in taxation. To add to the pressure, it was rumoured that Wentworth was planning to raise an army of Catholics in Ireland to strengthen the king's hand.

The Scottish Covenanters

In 1638, Presbyterian activists (the Covenanters) spotting a weakness in the king's position, put on the pressure at the right moment, and got their way. Effectively they staged a coup d'etat while professing loyalty to the king. Of course it was treason; but the king was too weak, and had to compromise. Some Irish Catholic landowners, both Old English from the Pale as well as Gaelic Irish from Ulster, conspired to do something similar in Ireland. The idea was to put pressure on Charles to grant 'The Graces' and to confirm their land titles. The Gaelic Irish

element probably hoped to recover some of the lands lost by their families during the Ulster Plantation. It is important to remember that all of these would have been 'loyal' to Charles. After all, only families who had supported the English during the Nine Years War were allocated lands in the plantation. They were not seeking to overthrow Charles, nor were they seeking an independent, Catholic Ireland. Their principal aim was to act as a counter-weight to the Scottish Covenanters and the Puritan pressures building up in England. But they unleashed forces which they could not control. Soon the top blew off the volcano, and all three of Charles's kingdoms were plunged into a bloody and bitter civil war. Libraries of books have been written on this subject, and my few sentences cannot hope to deal with the Civil War in all its complexities.

But for the people of Killeshandra and the surrounding areas, indeed for all the people of Ulster, settler and native, Protestant and Catholic, the Rising of 1641 resulted in a decade of terror, war, destruction, displacement and starvation.

The Plan and How Things Went Wrong

The conspirators' plan was to seize certain strong points throughout the country on 23 October 1641, and use these as bargaining chips with the king. The most important of these was Dublin Castle, but that plan was betrayed and most of the leaders in Dublin were caught and killed. However, many of the Gaelic Irish leaders in Ulster, including some prominent members of the O'Reilly family, moved on the same night and took control of strong points, including Clough Oughter Castle, where they tricked the constable into handing over the keys. Whatever the aims of the conspirators, they soon lost control of the situation, and it developed into a jacquerie, a peasant revolt, where the seven deadly sins ran rampant and terrible atrocities were committed by people on all sides. We are familiar with such catastrophes in our own time, when law and order breaks down, and the human tendency to evil manifests itself. Pogroms against minority communities, and inter-racial violence are all too familiar to us: the Germans' treatment of Jews and Gypsies, Muslims and Hindus in India, Palestinians and Jews in the Holy Land, Hutu and Tutsi in Ruanda and Burundi, Serbs, Croats and Muslims in Bosnia and other states of the former Yugoslavia. These are just a few of the many conflicts in our own times where dark forces were unleashed and people were killed, plundered, terrorised or displaced for a great variety of reasons, or for no reason at all.

Why the Terror?

The initial brutalities inflicted on the settlers by the natives would have been motivated by racial and religious animosity, certainly, but also by greed and envy. The planters were the conquerors, and they had a better standard of living and more wealth than the Irish, especially the poorer Irish. So it was a matter of killing them or terrorising them and driving them off so as to get their hands on money or property. Some of the Irish would have been very poor indeed, and mobs of these would have stripped people naked just to get their clothing. Fifty years earlier, Pierre de Cuellier, a castaway from the Spanish Armada, saw his fellow-sailors stripped naked by the local 'savages' on Streeda Strand, near Sligo. Indeed, he himself was later stripped of his clothes, and went about naked for many days covered only by a straw mat. There were people, too, who owed money to their settler neighbours. So they killed or abused the creditors to solve the problem. It

was an opportunity for those who harboured grudges, or had been wronged by settlers when the latter were in a more powerful position: when roles were reversed the injured party took revenge. All these, and many other motivations, have pushed people, often sane and reasonable people, to do terrible deeds in our own time - and the stories we read in the depositions of escaped settlers are eerily similar to reports of investigations into modern atrocities.

The first casualty of war is truth, and it is now generally accepted by historians that the initial reports of massacres of settlers in Ulster were grossly exaggerated, and that these exaggerated numbers were reinforced by historians and propagandists for many generations. In fact, the numbers reported killed would have far exceeded the total number of settlers in Ulster at the time. This does not mean that the experience of those who suffered was less horrific. So while we drastically revise downward the numbers killed, abused, displaced and expelled from the country, we must not make the mistake of playing down the trauma of those who actually suffered these atrocities; nor, indeed, the dehumanising effects on those who perpetrated them. It is important to keep in mind that vile deeds were not committed on one side only, and that if we read only the depositions, we get only one side of the story.

23 October 1641

The O'Reillys feature prominently in the action in the early days of the Rising, the McKiernans hardly at all. The ruling O'Reilly family had emerged from the Ulster Plantation as substantial landowners, so they were still VIPs in the new County of Cavan. It is clear, however, that they were involved in the conspiracy that led up to the rising, because on the very first day, 23 October 1641, Maelmóra O'Reilly (afterwards known as 'Myles the Slasher') went to the house of Arthur Culme in Innishconnell on the mainland opposite Clough Oughter Castle and tricked him into handing over the keys of the castle. The unfortunate Arthur was immediately seized and imprisoned on the top storey, while Owen O'Reilly took over his job as constable. Within the next few days, various members of the O'Reilly family, accompanied by bands of followers reminiscent of the old ceithearnach tighe (the chieftain's bodyguard) galloped around the country as if they owned the place. Indeed, they claimed to have the king's authority for what they were doing when they took over all the strong points in the county and disarmed the settlers. They seem to have kept the situation under control in the early days, and there was no immediate breakdown of law and order.

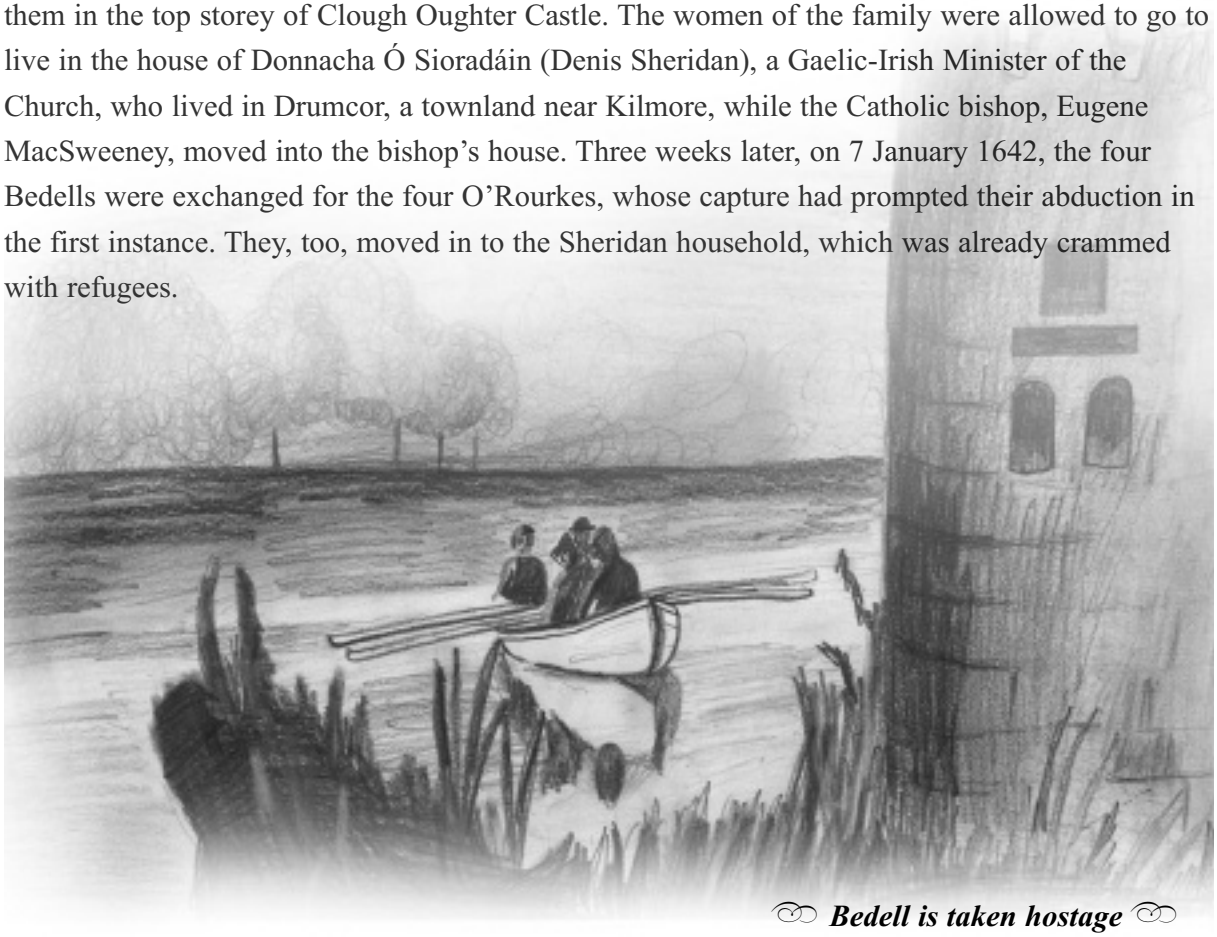
Though most of the plantation castles fell without a struggle, there were two exceptions, both near Killeshandra. Unlike many of the undertakers, both the Hamiltons at Keelagh and Sir James Craig at Croghan had fulfilled the terms of their contracts by building a strong castle with a bawn around it. They had provided muskets and gunpowder, as well as other arms, and had trained their followers in their use. So when the bust-up came, they withdrew their tenants inside the bawn, and with provisions for six months in store, they prepared to sit out the siege secure in the knowledge that no enemy dared come within a musket-shot of their walls.

Refugees

Unfortunately for them, their neighbours were not as well prepared. In Leitrim things got nasty early on, and planters were forced to flee for their lives. Law and order broke down, and soon everywhere between Killeshandra and Jamestown was in rebel hands. Terrified refugees began to arrive in Killeshandra, and soon there were 700 at Keelagh and 120 at Croghan. Their harrowing tales must have undermined morale, and there were more hungry mouths to feed. Whenever the rebels put on the pressure, huge numbers were confined within walls only 60 feet by 60 feet, with implications for health, hygiene and sanitation. Myles O'Reilly sent his father, Edmond, to take the castles. He was joined by a force of the O'Rourkes from Leitrim, so that together they made up 2000 men. A formidable force, but without military training or discipline they would only be a rabble. Indeed, some of them may already have been responsible for atrocities against the planters of Leitrim. Without artillery the rebels hadn't a hope of taking the castles. Nor could they afford to sit down and starve the castles into submission, because feeding 2000 men would require vast quantities of food, which they hadn't got. When Hamilton heard of their approach, he burned down his own village of Killeshandra to deprive them of shelter near his castle. We can only imagine what the first settler inhabitants of the village thought when they saw their homes, and their dreams, go up in smoke, especially as it was they themselves or their parents who had built the houses.

Bedell is Taken Hostage

In a daring move, Hamilton and Craig sallied forth from the castles, attacked the rebels' encampment and captured four leaders of the O'Rourkes. In retaliation, Edmond O'Reilly went to Kilmore and took Bishop Bedell, his two sons and stepson-in-law hostage and imprisoned them in the top storey of Clough Oughter Castle. The women of the family were allowed to go to live in the house of Donnacha Ó Sioradáin (Denis Sheridan), a Gaelic-Irish Minister of the Church, who lived in Drumcor, a townland near Kilmore, while the Catholic bishop, Eugene MacSweeney, moved into the bishop's house. Three weeks later, on 7 January 1642, the four Bedells were exchanged for the four O'Rourkes, whose capture had prompted their abduction in the first instance. They, too, moved in to the Sheridan household, which was already crammed with refugees.

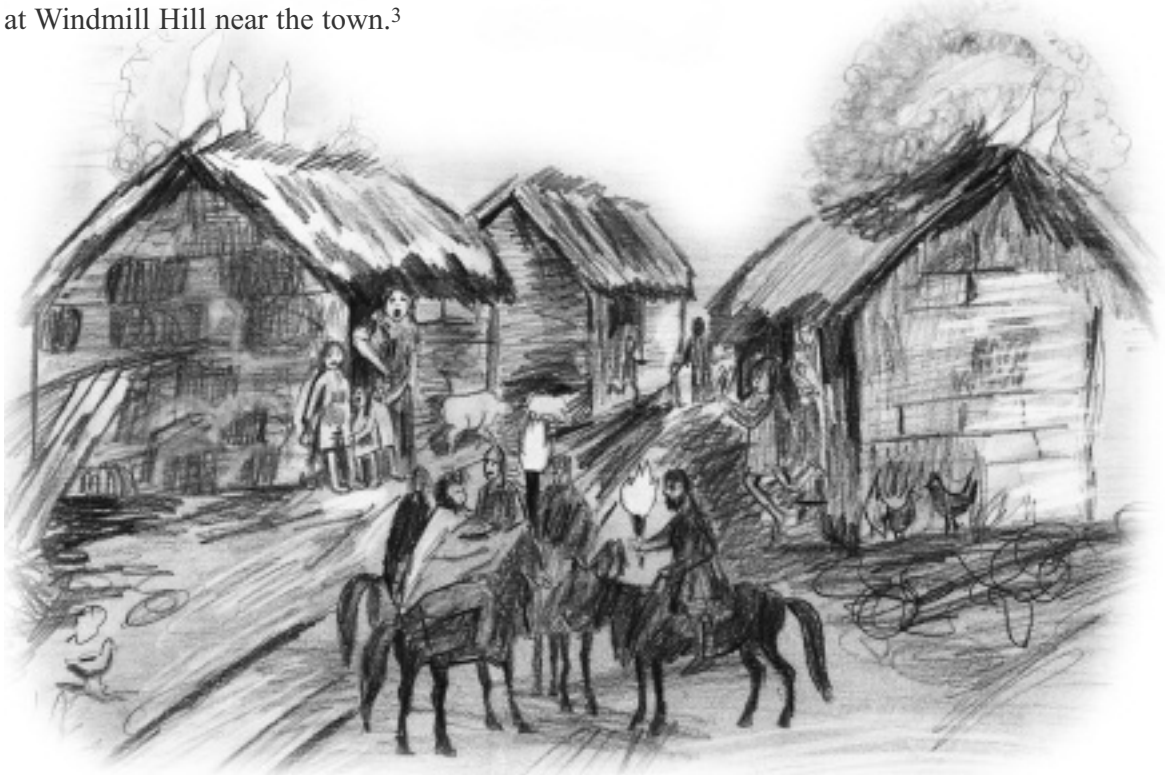


Bedell is taken hostage

The Bishop contracted fever and died on 7 February[1]. Though Bedell was lamented by native and planter alike, Bishop MacSweeney was initially reluctant to allow him, 'a heretic', be buried in consecrated ground. He was promptly over-ruled by the O'Reillys, who gave him a military funeral. In a graveside oration, he was dubbed, 'Ultimus Angolorum', the Last of the English, or the Ultimate Englishman. Or was it 'Ultimus et Optimus Angolorum', the Last and Best of the English?[2] Either way, there is no doubt that in an age of extremism and bigotry, he stood head and shoulders above his contemporaries as a charismatic and capable Christian gentleman. As his coffin was being lowered into the grave, a Catholic priest who was present was heard to pray, *'O sit anima mea cum Bedello!'* May my soul be with Bedell!

The Siege Continues

Meanwhile, back in Killeshandra the horror story continued. To prevent the rebels from sheltering in the woods, Hamilton burned the countryside for a radius of three miles. This scorched earth campaign would have cleared out any natives still living in the area, forcing them to take refuge in more remote areas. It would also have involved the destruction of food supplies, leaving the local population facing starvation. For the besieged, too, it removed the option of raiding for food in the vicinity of the castles. Skirmishing continued. A Fr O'Rourke, a friar, was killed in his habit while leading the rebels, and two important men, Owen O'Rourke and Philip O'Reilly, were taken prisoner. To help his father capture the castles, Myles O'Reilly withdrew from the siege of Drogheda and marched to Cavan, where he was joined by a force from Leitrim and by 300 men from Westmeath under Robert Nugent. This force was driven off after a skirmish at Windmill Hill near the town.[3]



Scorched Earth Policy *(Burning the countryside)*

[1] Manning: Breifne, 1989-90, p 33.

[2] Scott: Cavan, 1609-1653, p 35.

[3] Gallogly: Killeshandra and 1641 Rebellion, St Brigid's Church Rededication, 1977.

The Three Sisters

There is a very strong tradition in the area concerning the tragic fate of the Three Sisters. The story goes that Mc Kiernan ambushed a contingent of Scottish cavalry as they forded the River Erne upstream of Trinity Island. The Scots were completely wiped out, and they and their horses were buried on a small island which since then has been called "Scotch Island". Hamilton was holding Mc Kiernan's three daughters hostage in his castle. In revenge for the killing of the Scottish horsemen, he took the three daughters out, and hanged them on three Spanish Chestnut trees in the castle grounds. These three trees were ever afterwards pointed out as "The Three Sisters'.

Belturbet

What follows is one of the horror stories of the rising. Rev Henry Jones, former vicar of Killeshandra, tells us that Myles O'Reilly was so annoyed at his failure to take the castles that he went to Belturbet and had 60 English settlers thrown from the bridge into the Erne.[1] The drowning of planters features in quite a few stories of atrocities in various parts of Ulster around this time. Drowning was a traditional way of executing criminals in Gaelic Ireland. The Norse pirate, Turgéis or Turgesius, was drowned by Mael Seaclainn, King of Meath in Lough Owel. Seán na gCeann, keeper of His Majesty's gaol for Leitrim in 1612 and later High Sheriff of Leitrim, executed his victims by driving them blindfolded into Lough Scur.[2] Nearer home, there is a tradition that a robber was drowned in Pullagoddy (Poll an Ghadaí, The Robber's Pool), a small lake near Nancy's Cross, outside Killeshandra. In our own time, during outbreaks of inter-racial violence, there is a tendency to revert to traditional methods of execution when killing opponents.

In a tit-for-tat operation, Sir Francis Hamilton took 100 foot and 30 horse to Deriwily on the Leitrim border, where he surprised 60 natives in a wood at dawn. He killed 27 and hanged 14. The remainder escaped, but were intercepted by Sir James Craig, who killed ten and hanged four.[3] The fact that these people had been sheltering in a wood at dawn in early Spring suggests that they had been displaced, probably by Hamilton's recent burnings.

Surrender

Inside the castles, things were getting increasingly desperate, and yet they held out. One hundred and sixty people had died in Croghan, and on 8 April Sir James Craig himself died. On 4 May a deserter named Barlow told the Irish of the plight of the besieged in both castles, so Philip Mac Hugh O'Reilly with 2000 men surrounded both castles. They cut off the water supply to Croghan by throwing a dead dog and the body of a man into the well that supplied it. In Keelagh, they had killed and eaten their cows, their horses and their dogs, and were now eating the hides of animals killed months earlier. Soldiers were threatening mutiny and some had deserted, while Sir Francis himself was sick. They were hopelessly cut off from the outside world, and the relief they had hoped for had failed to materialise. They sued for terms and surrendered on 4 June 1642, having held out in desperate conditions for more than seven months. In an agreement drawn up by the O'Reillys and the O'Rourkes on the one hand, and Sir Francis Hamilton, Sir Arthur Forbes, Master Bedell and Master Price on the other, the Irish guaranteed the two garrisons safe conduct to Drogheda. On 15 June, Sir Francis Hamilton marched out of Keelagh Castle followed by about 1200 men, women and children, under escort by the O'Reillys. They were welcomed by the Mayor of Drogheda Henry Tichborne on 22 June and most of them continued on to Dublin.[3] The Plantation of Tullyhunco had come to an inglorious end.

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[1] Henry Jones: The Cavan Remonstrance, London, 1642.

[2] Mac an Ghallóglaigh: Leitrim 1600-1641, Breifne, 1971.

[3] Gallogly: Killeshandra and 1641 Rebellion, St Brigid's Church Rededication, 1977.

Eoghan Rua Ó Néill

With the departure of the planters, Killeshandra disappears off the radar of history, at least for the time being. There was plenty of military activity in the general area for the next eleven years, but we have no idea how all this impacted on the local population. Shortly after the surrender of Keelagh and Croghan castles, Eoghan Rua Ó Néill (Eoghan Roe O'Neill), renowned in Europe for his defence of the city of Arras, arrived in Donegal from the Netherlands with a small cadre of officers. He picked the best of the fighting men available and moulded them into the Army of Ulster, one of the most effective fighting forces in Britain or Ireland at the time. While building up his army, and when resting between campaigns, Eoghan Roe used to withdraw to the Cavan lakelands, where he was at home with his cousins, the ruling O'Reilly family, and where enemy armies were unlikely to venture because of the difficult nature of the terrain.[1] Shortly after arriving in Ireland, he set up his camp in Cavan, and at various locations around the county, including Knockanore, near Ballinagh and at Lismore, Crossdoney. There he trained his raw recruits for the next couple of years, while flexing his muscles by making forays into North Connacht, North Leinster and South Ulster.

In 1643 Sir Henry Tichborne, the governor of Drogheda who had welcomed the Killeshandra refugees the previous year, invaded Cavan. He fought a battle at Ballyhaise, and approached Belturbet, before retreating towards Meath laden with booty. By 1646, O'Neill had set up his headquarters on Gallmagh Hill near Lough Sheelin, and it was from here that he marched through Cavan Town on his way to a great victory over Munroe at Benburb in August. He continued to operate from this base for more than a year. Late in 1648, he moved his headquarters to Lisnamaine, a couple of miles the Killeshandra side of Belturbet, (on a hill overlooking Lannigan's well, where today the Killeshandra-Belturbet road joins the Ballyconnell-Belturbet road). The following November, on his way from Derry, where he had engaged with the Ulster Scots, he was taken ill, and died at Clough Oughter. The Castle there, an impregnable fortress, was central to all this, and seems to have been a hub of activity all those years. Hugh O'Reilly, archbishop of Armagh, lived there from 1650 until his death in January 1652, and he held a council of the bishops of the province of Armagh there in July 1651. Presumably, all these activities took place in the house on the mainland in Inishconnell.[2]

The Articles of Lough Oughter

The Cromwellian armies, having conquered the rest of Ireland, were closing in on the Cavan lakelands and on the remnants of the Army of Ulster by March 1653. The Irish commander, Colonel Philip MacHugh O'Reilly, agreed terms (known as The Articles of Lough Oughter) with Colonel Theophilus Jones, and surrendered the castle on 27 April, the last stronghold in Ireland to yield to the Cromwellians. The rebellion of 1641 was finally crushed. O'Reilly and his soldiers were allowed to emigrate to the Spanish Netherlands, where he commanded a regiment of the Spanish army. He died there, and is buried in Louvain. Colonel Jones blasted the south-facing wall of the castle, and it remained there, a picturesque ruin, until the OPW did a comprehensive conservation job on it in the 1980s.

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[1] Casway: The Ulster Refuge of the Northern Army, Breifne, 2006.

[2] Manning: Breifne, 1989-90.

On The Ground 1642-1653

We do not know what happened on the ground in the years after 1642. Who ran the show when the planter landlords were dead or gone? Did the McKiernan family attempt to re-establish themselves, or was the countryside under a kind of martial law? Did the people rebuild their homes and resume the cultivation of the land? How many of them had been killed or had died of hunger and hardship in the winter of '41-'42, and how badly traumatised were the survivors? Some experts estimate that two out of every three people in Ireland were killed in the war, or died of hunger, malnutrition or disease in that terrible decade.

The population of Tullyhunco, so near to a centre of military activity, probably suffered worse than average. For the people in the fields, armies were bad news. Even a friendly army could attract the attention of the enemy, who might rob and plunder, rape and pillage, and scorch the earth. All armies needed horses and food, and pack animals like asses and mules. In the 1600s armies generally lived off the country and commandeered anything they needed. A division of Eoghan Rua's Army of Ulster, which moved from north Longford to the borders of Connacht in March 1649, were described as 'devouring caterpillars' by Ormonde in a letter to Inchiquin.[1] Even if they paid for the goods in gold coins, it made food scarce for the civilian population. A small hoard of fifteen English and Spanish coins dating from the 1500s and early 1600s, found by Land Commission workers Patrick Flynn and John Burns in Deramfield (only a mile from Clough Oughter) in 1945, suggests that armies on the move carried some cash with them.[2]

Armies, too, were notorious as spreaders of disease. War was no picnic, and for the men, women and children of the civilian population it was HELL. Large areas of England and Scotland suffered terribly during the Civil War, while parts of Central Europe, especially Germany, were devastated by the Thirty Years War from 1618 to 1648. Ireland was similarly devastated by the campaigns of 1641 to 1653.

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[1] Casway: The Ulster Refuge of the Northern Army, Breifne, 2006.

[2] Kenny: The Deramfield Hoard, Breifne, 1982.

Chapter 7

The Planters Return

To Hell or to Connacht!

In 1653, Cromwell banished all Catholic landowners to Connacht and Clare, which would effectively be made into a huge reservation in which to confine the Irish. The once-wealthy Irish now found themselves in a much-reduced state. Huge blocks of land were given to pay soldiers, civil servants and the 'adventurers' who had risked their money towards crushing the rebellion in 1641. These people had no desire to work the land or even to manage it. So there was no pressure on Irish people of no property to move west. 'To Hell or to Connacht' did not apply to them, because they would be needed as cheap labour by the Landed Gentry, the Cromwellians, a new breed of landlord who would dominate life in Ireland for the next couple of hundred years. The natives of Tullyhunco belonged to the landless class, and their numbers must have been greatly depleted, and their morale extremely low if fifty percent or more of them had died in miserable circumstances in the previous decade.

Landlords Return and Rebuild

The heirs and descendants of the planter landlords, the Hamiltons and Craigs, returned to a land devastated by war. Moreover, they blamed the Irish for their family misfortunes, and were in no mood to trust them again. Investment was needed, but they were short of cash, so they let large areas of land to a new type of planter families. These were strong farmers from Scotland and England who took land on very favourable terms, and were willing to invest their own money in developing it. This was the real beginning of the Ulster Plantation, the origin of the 'good Protestant places' that I mentioned in my introduction. It was where well-off farmers took a lease 'in perpetuity' of a manageable area of the best land. This meant that as long as the annual rent was paid, they and their heirs would own it forever. Then they sub-let some of it to provide rental income, and developed the rest, farming it in a hands-on fashion. These were the men who introduced new methods of crop cultivation, new breeds of cattle, and in due course, crop rotation and the large-scale cultivation of flax. They built substantial houses, with orchards, vegetable gardens, lawns and flower gardens, hired farm workers and domestic servants, had a vote in parliamentary elections, sat on juries, and were involved in their local church and the county militia. This was the class that ambitious young Protestant men could aspire to move into, or marry into, though a social-climbing match could meet with strong parental opposition in a class-conscious society.

Maura Nallen cites the case of James Young, a farmer who lived in Cormore, not far from Arva, and who got a lease of 124 acres in the neighbouring townlands of Colebawn (Coolbawn) and Dromore. For £20 and a rent of five shillings per acre per annum, a total of £61 yearly rent, he and his heirs could hold the land forever, provided the rent was paid.[1] This deal gave him security of tenure, while it gave ready cash and an assured annual income to the landlord.

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[1] Nallen: A Study of Eight Townlands…, Breifne, 1999.

These ‘strong farmers,’ in turn, favoured Scottish or English tenants, to whom they sub-let the land on favourable terms, and whole townlands, even whole blocks of townlands, were let exclusively to them. Thus, bit by bit, the Irish were pushed towards the margins - they became an under-class in their own country. This did not happen suddenly. The drastic fall in population meant that at first there was plenty of land to let, while Tullyhunco was still a long way from Larne or Carrickfergus, and prospective tenants were afraid that they could be trapped in another 1641-style rebellion.

1664: A Snapshot in Time

The Hearth Tax was a form of property tax levied in 1664 to raise revenue. Like all property taxes, it hit the rich rather than the poor. In theory it was a tax of two shillings on every hearth, but in practice that meant every chimney, or every flue emerging from every chimney. Poorer people who lived in small thatched houses didn’t have a proper chimney, just a hole in the roof to let the smoke out. Indeed, they may have done much of their cooking outside, and if they had a hearth inside, they could easily cover the hole in the roof with scraws or thatch when the taxman was around! Therefore, the majority of households probably do not appear on the tax roll, and many townlands are completely absent. The roll of taxpayers gives us a good idea of where the better-off people were living, and if we analyse the names of the householders, we can deduce where the natives and the planters were living. Similarly, by comparing names with those of earlier planter families as they appear in muster rolls and other documents, we can conclude that few, if any, of the tenants or artisans who were involved in the first phase of the plantation in Tullyhunco came back after Cromwell had re-conquered the country.

The Hearth Money Rolls of 1664 give an indication of considerable recovery and reconstruction in the previous decade.[2] Dame Mary Craig, has returned to Croghan, though her relationship to the late Sir James is not clear. Her house, Croghan Castle, has two chimneys. Three others, Thomas Hugh, Thomas Prick and Alexander Trotters also have houses in Croghan. Sir Francis Hamilton has re-established the family seat at Castle Hamilton, where there are six chimneys. Ambrose Bedell, son of the late Bishop, is in residence in Carn in a house with four chimneys, while John Charlton’s house in Aghabawn has three.

In the village of Killeshandra, William Johnston and Thomas Twidie (Tweedy?) have two chimneys each. So, ten years on, a few ‘Big Houses’ have been restored. Killeshandra, too, has been re-built and is functioning. Twenty-six houses are occupied, but only two by people with Gaelic-Irish surnames, Edmond Mac Maister and Teige O’Duinin. Throughout Tullyhunco there are another 100 to 130 planter households. About a third of these are in Kildallan, well-dispersed, but with small clusters around Croghan, Aghabawn, Mackan and Raleigh. Another third were dispersed throughout the countryside with clusters here and there. On the Hamilton estates there is a block of land less densely populated but entirely occupied by settler families. This includes Coronea, Aghaknock, Drumroe, Drumkeeran, Drumcon, Corr, Gartinardress and Corlis.

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[2] McKiernan: The Hearth Money Rolls for Tullyhunco and Tullyhaw, Breifne, 1960.

Again, there may have been Irish families there, but living in poorer-quality houses and in a subordinate social situation. On the shores of Lough Gowna is a smaller, more compact cluster in Scrabby, Sallaghan, Aughaveans, Corfree, Annagh, Cloone and Cornamuckla.

By far the greatest concentration of settler households is in a block of country south-west of Killeshandra. Yewer, The Bawn, Aghavadrin, Creenagh and Coragh were glebe lands belonging to the Church. Adjoining these were Drummany, Portlongfield, Dunaweel, Cappagh, Sallaghan, Drumhart, Corradarran, Drumbullion, Tully and Bohora, all part of the old Drumheda estate. Significantly, there are hardly any households in all those townlands with positively Gaelic Irish surnames, except Patrick O'Reilly in Bohora. There is no mention of the McKiernans, who occupied most of these townlands in 1629[1] or the Mastersons, O'Reillys or other Irish family surnames. It is probable that the Irish have been ejected completely and that the planters are now dominant in an area that was almost exclusively occupied by the Irish a generation earlier in 1629. Ulster Plantation, Phase 2, is well under way.

The Williamite Wars

Stability and prosperity continued for the next twenty years up until the Williamite Wars. Bourk's Almanac of 1684 lists Killeshandra along with Belturbet and Cavan as the only places in the county which have patents for a fair three times a year.[2] And the beautiful new Jacobean Church was opened in 1688. It was in November of that year that the 'Glorious Revolution' took place in England when King James II was overthrown and replaced by his daughter, Mary and her husband, William of Orange who were Protestants. Ireland, with the exception of Derry and Enniskillen, was occupied by forces loyal to King James - the Jacobites. After the siege of Derry in 1689, the Williamites pushed southwards. A force of 100 Jacobite soldiers had occupied and fortified Croghan castle. In April 1690, a strong force of Enniskilleners under Colonel Wolseley, supported by a Danish regiment under Colonel Hartman von Erffa marched from Belturbet, which they had already captured, and surrounded the castle. Unlike the seven-month siege of 1641-42, the action lasted less than twenty-four hours. The garrison surrendered on terms and marched off. There were few casualties on either side.[3] The sound of gunfire at Croghan must have made the civilian population very nervous. The years 1685-1691 was a period of great instability, with armies on the march and Protestants fearing that they would be massacred; while Catholics were facing a very uncertain future.

After the War and the Scottish Famine of 1695, immigration increased rapidly, as starving refugees from Scotland and the North of England swarmed into Irish ports. Gradually they made their way south-westwards, and many impoverished Scots were glad to accept tenancies here to provide a better living for themselves and their families. The landlords welcomed them with open arms.

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[1] Hill: Plantation of Ulster.

[2] Crawford: The Heart of Breifne, 1984, p 59.

[3] Wilsdon: Plantation Castles on the Erne.

Religion 1650-1700: The Catholics

Catholics sometimes look back with nostalgia on an age when their ancestors gathered secretly with their priests to offer Mass at Mass Rocks. The reality may have been far worse. Cromwell and his followers were determined to stamp out the Catholic religion, and subjected it to fierce persecution after 1653. Every bishop, priest, monk and friar was persona non grata in the country and, if caught, was liable to imprisonment, deportation into slavery, or death. As Bishop MacSweeney said, they were forced *'to roam through the wilderness and maintain and live in woods and caves, hungry, thirsty, cold and badly clothed to assist the scattered flocks.'* In fact, the aged and ailing Eugene MacSweeney was the only bishop left in the country, and he was holed up somewhere on the slopes of Sliabh an Iarainn in Leitrim. Spies were everywhere, for this was a totalitarian state. In an area like Tullyhunco, where a few hostile landlords owned and controlled everything, it was virtually impossible for a priest to meet the people, not to mention offering Mass or instructing them in the Faith. The active church which serviced their spiritual needs with priests and friars moving from townland to townland prior to 1641 was only a distant memory. Private and family prayer, especially the Rosary, probably substituted for the liturgies of the Church in many cases. However, it is likely that their religious needs were met increasingly by recourse to old pagan customs, beliefs and cures which had survived in the culture of the people. As James Kelly puts it: *'They possessed a rich spiritual life that encompassed visits to holy wells and patterns, and a diverse range of cures, folk remedies and sympathetic magic.'* [1] Many of these practices must have seemed bizarre to their Protestant and Presbyterian neighbours, who, ironically, would have seen the Catholic Church as the source of all superstitions!

Few, if any, Catholics would have seen the Established Church as an attractive option. Not that they would have been wanted there. By this time, it was accepted that it should serve the settlers only. Indeed, many of the latter believed that the Irish were beyond redemption! The death of Cromwell in 1658 and the Restoration of Charles II two years later gave the Catholics some hope, but their situation remained precarious, as the execution of Oliver Plunkett, archbishop of Armagh, at Tyburn in 1677 showed.

The Established Church

We know little of the life and liturgy of the Established Church in this area at the time. During the period of the Cromwellian Commonwealth James Layng (Lang) was appointed minister at Killeshandra in 1651. He had been ordained in Scotland, and was paid £50 a year, which was raised to £60 in 1656 and £120 in 1658. We do not know where he stood on doctrine or liturgy at this time, but at the Restoration in 1661, he was collated (appointed) as rector and vicar. He went to Kildallan as rector later that year. His son John followed a similar career. He had been Commonwealth Minister in Ballymote and Belturbet, was ordained priest by a bishop in 1660, and served in various parishes before coming to Killeshandra, where he was vicar from '74 to '78. The Restoration of Charles II in 1660 restored bishops and the Anglican liturgy to their former pre-eminence, and it would have been necessary for ministers who had served under the Commonwealth to adjust to the new dispensation. But people with Presbyterian leanings were deeply unhappy, and had begun to set up their own congregations.

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[1] Kelly in Cavan: Essays on the History of an Irish County *ed.* Gillespie, P. 131.

Rev Lang's successor as vicar, Robert Hassard, was born in Co Fermanagh and educated at TCD. It was during the tenure of William Cunningham (1682-1692) that the new Jacobean church was built and opened in 1688. It was then, too, that the Catholic James II succeeded to the throne in 1685, before he was ousted by his son-in-law, William. This was a period of turbulence and anxiety for everyone. Rev Cunningham and his wife Penelope Saunderson were Scottish. She received a pension of £100 compensation *'for their great losses occasioned by the siege of Londonderry.'* Anthony Iveson was vicar from 1692 to 1705.[1]

The Presbyterians

Lindsay T. Brown says that some time after the rebellion had been suppressed in 1653, a Presbyterian congregation was established in the vicinity of Killeshandra (Croghan, perhaps?). The precise date is not known, but the local minister, Rev Samuel Kelso left, fearing another rebellion. Throughout the 1690s a new wave of Scottish settlers came to the area, and in 1697 they appealed to the Ulster Synod for a regular supply of preaching for Killeshandra. One gets the impression that they were an isolated community in South Ulster at the time - new immigrants from Scotland, poor and 'pushy,' competing for land with other Protestants who had been established in the area for a generation, struggling to pay high rents and tithes, but finding fellowship and solace in the local Presbyterian congregation. Their isolation would have been relieved somewhat in 1701 when a new Congregation was formed in Monaghan, and Killeshandra Presbyterians were put in its care. They probably contributed a lot to the vigour of the Ulster-Scots element in our local language.

What I have written above is greatly understated in one respect: it gives hardly a hint of the religious passions, and the racial and political animosities of the period.

[1] Leslie and Crooks: Clergy of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh.

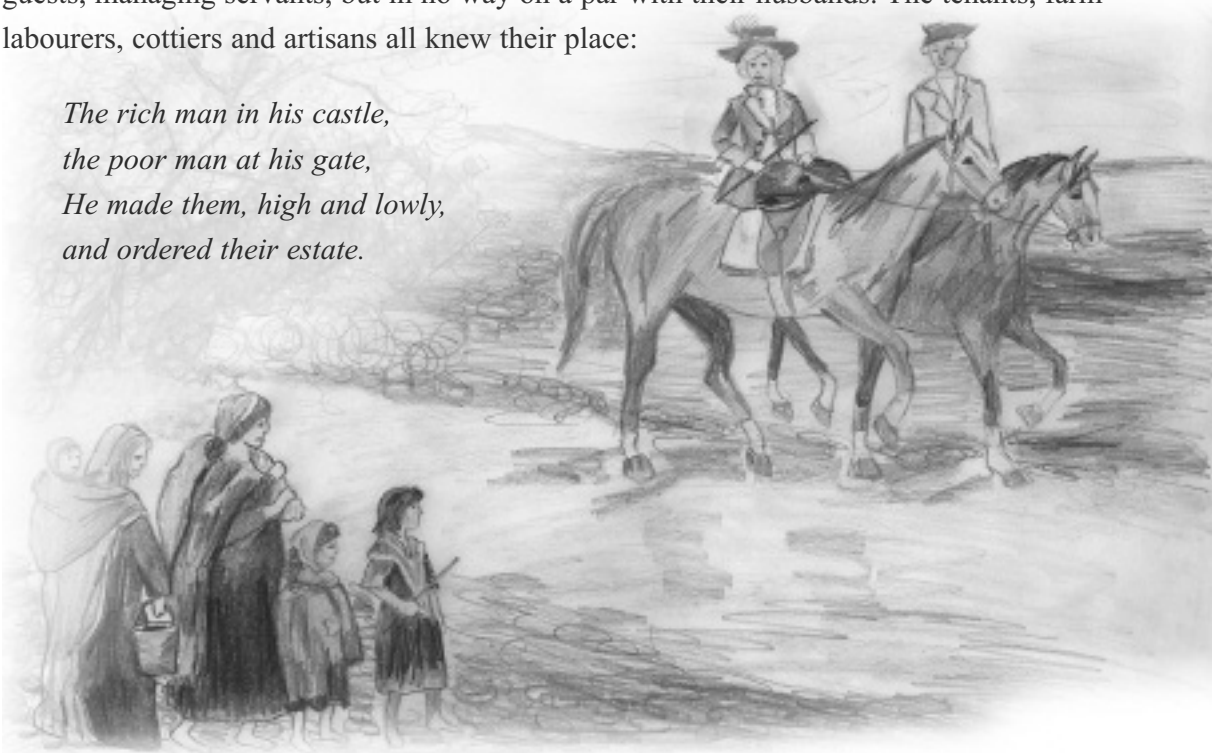
Chapter 8

The Lost Century: 1695 - 1795

In many ways the 1700s are the forgotten century of Irish History. Nothing exciting happened, no wars, no rebellions - everything was quiet. It was the century of the Ascendancy, when the landlord class ran the show. Effectively they owned everything, ruled everything, decided everything - and everything was in their own interests. The vast bulk of the people, Catholic, Protestant or Presbyterian, owned nothing. Mainly they were tenants on the landlords' estates. Our peasant ancestors worked hard day in day out, year in year out throughout their short lives to eke a living from the heavy soils of Cavan to feed themselves and their families and to pay rent at the market rate to the landlord. In fact paying the rent was the priority; it came before feeding oneself and one's family. If you didn't pay the rent you were out, and your way of living was gone and you could beg or starve. Some were farm labourers going to the hiring fairs in May or November seeking board and lodgings and a small sum of money for six months in return for their labour. There were cottiers too, who rented their cottage and small garden, grew potatoes and grazed the cow along the road. The landlord's house and estate was a hive of activity and a great source of employment. The farm steward, farm workers, coachmen, gardeners, butlers, cooks, maids and servants were all employed and housed in or around the castle and were sure of a square meal when many outside the demesne wall were on the verge of starvation much of the time.

For the most part people's station in life was decided by their birth. Gentlemen were born into a life of affluence with certain social and political responsibilities, but they had opportunities for education, travel and recreation that the lower classes could hardly dream of. Ladies, too, had their place in society - relative luxury with responsibilities for running the big house, entertaining guests, managing servants, but in no way on a par with their husbands. The tenants, farm labourers, cottiers and artisans all knew their place:

The rich man in his castle,
the poor man at his gate,
He made them, high and lowly,
and ordered their estate.



Nobody saw anything wrong with this - it was the natural order of things that wealth and poverty should live cheek-by-jowl. Today, though we think we believe in equality, we tolerate terrible poverty at a global level. Religion reinforced the attitude of acceptance, encouraging people to endure the hardships of this life in the expectation of happiness in the next. No wonder that Karl Marx would call religion 'the opium of the people.'

'Thou shall not steal,' was a favourite commandment of the rich, and honesty was a virtue hammered home by countless preachers who saw nothing wrong with the exploitation of the poor. The notion that all men are equal, not to mention women, hadn't occurred to anyone at this time. Of course many of the poor stole from the landlords and from the rich and from one another, risking eternal damnation in the next life and jail or deportation or hanging in the here-and-now.

'Thou shall not kill' wasn't always heeded either. Life was cheap and murder and assassination were common, as was duelling for the gentry and faction fighting for the poorer classes. The law took its toll too. Magistrates, drawn from the landlord class and lacking any knowledge of the law, sentenced men to death for murder, rape, membership of secret societies, stealing or poaching. The gallows in Cavan town was busy. Of course the rules of evidence weren't strict, and people were sometimes framed for crimes they hadn't committed.

In spite of all this, the bulk of the people led peaceful lives and never got involved in crime or violence. They lived short precarious lives, often suffering from malnutrition, starvation or disease, often seeing their children die young or in infancy from a host of diseases. This didn't mean that they had no joy, no fun - far from it!

An Incorrigible Race!

By 1695, the ruling class, The Ascendancy, had come to the conclusion that the Irish were impossible. Time after time in the previous one hundred years they had come back to challenge the status quo and to threaten the security of the state. They had been crushed at the end of the terrible Nine Years War (1594-1603), only to rise again in 1641 and massacre decent people of planter stock who had been actively civilising and christianising the country. Cromwell had put them down, and had taken their lands and wealth, yet they re-emerged to back the Catholic King James against the Protestant William of Orange in the bloodiest war ever fought in Ireland (1688-1692). It was time to stifle them once and for all. So a series of laws, The Penal Laws, were passed to keep them poor, ignorant, and above all, powerless. This they effectively did over the next fifty years, when the Catholic people of Ireland were reduced to the status of a poor, ignorant peasantry. In the early years too, it was hard for them to practise their religion, as priests were restricted, and bishops and members of religious orders totally banned.

The Protestant landlords expected that the Catholics would rise again if James' son ever returned to claim the throne, and there were scares from time to time, notably in 1715 when Queen Anne, the last of the Protestant Stuarts, died. When James' grandson, Bonnie Prince Charlie, *did* come

back in 1746, the ascendancy class were agreeably surprised that the Irish did not rebel. It seemed as if they had been so ground-down by the penal laws that there was no more fight left in them. After this, the landlords felt more secure in their power and possessions, so they abandoned the old fortified plantation castles, and built comfortable modern mansions. These feature prominently on the Taylor and Skinner Road Map of c. 1778, with big houses along the Dublin-Sligo road at Lisnamandra, Bingfield, Lismore, Gartinardress, Lahard, Castlehamilton, Croghan, Drumlara and Makin. Another side-effect was that the laws against the Catholic religion were no longer rigidly enforced, and gradually fell into abeyance. Priests could operate openly, and a thatched Mass-house was built in Coronea (the old graveyard is still there) near the Mass-rock in Drumyouth.

The Forgotten Famine[1]

Another reason why Ireland did not rise up in support of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1746 was that it hadn't recovered from the famine of 1740-41, now almost forgotten because it has been eclipsed in folk and historical memory by the more recent 'Gorta Mór or 'Great Famine' of 1846-47, though the 1741 famine was probably at least as devastating. By the 1730s, Ireland's poorer classes were already heavily dependent on the potato as their staple food, and huge acreages were grown. It was the custom to dig the crop throughout the winter according as they were required to feed the family and farm livestock. Potatoes were a subsistence crop, not like oats or flax, cash crops grown to pay the rent.

On the night of 27 December 1739, disaster struck. On the coldest night of the century, the ground froze to a depth of eighteen inches, and the entire potato crop of the country was destroyed. We don't know how bad it was, as contemporary records are sketchy, but in folk memory it was referred to as 'Bliain an Áir', the Year of the Slaughter. Maura Nallen notes a huge rise in the number of deaths recorded in Killeshandra Protestant Church records for that year:

> *'In the two years preceding the famine of 1740, the average number of deaths for the Protestant parish was 8. In 1740 however, 40 persons were buried, 17 girls, 16 boys and 7 married women.'*

But she points out that losses among the poorer Catholic population must have been much heavier, though of course there are no Catholic Church records for that time.[2] Killeshandra and the adjacent parishes, like the rest of the country, did not recover for generations.

Incidentally, one result of the 1741 experience was that henceforth potato growers dug their crop in October before the frosts set in, and preserved them in pits ('preta-hapes', we used to call them) covered with dry rushes and topsoil, a practice followed by the two remaining traditional potato growers in the district to this day.

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1 Dickson: Arctic Ireland..

2 Nallen: A Study of Eight Townlands, Breifne, 1999, p. 44.

Inward Migration

On the ground, Catholics were not trusted, and Protestants of any persuasion were given preference in every walk of life. There was huge inward migration from Scotland and England into Ulster in the 1690s, and this accelerated during the Scottish and North of England Famine of 1695, when tens of thousands of refugees arrived in the ports on the North-East of Ireland. This was the point when the Scots became the majority in the province. Indeed, it is ironic that many of our ancestors might have arrived in Ulster, not as arrogant planters, but as destitute refugees. The descendants of the Scots and English who settled in Antrim, Down and the Bann Valley continued to drift South-West for several generations, attracted by the availability of land at a reasonable rent and under the favourable conditions of the 'Ulster Custom,' which allowed them to sell their goodwill in a place to an incoming tenant. It may have taken some of them a generation or more to reach here. So it is quite probable that many of the ancestors of the current Protestant population of Kildallan, Killeshandra, or Gowna parishes did not arrive from Scotland or England until a hundred years after the Ulster Plantation. The ongoing inflow of migrants enabled landlords to give Protestants preferential treatment in the allocation of tenancies, so they gradually moved the indigenous population to the more marginal areas, and gave the best lands to Protestants. Thus the original plantation aim of forming islands of English-speaking, Protestant culture in Gaelic Ulster was belatedly being accomplished, with blocks of Protestant townlands being established around the villages of Killeshandra and Arva, and in the area in between. Smaller Protestant enclaves were established in the Gowna and Kildallan areas, with the rest of Tullyhunco being left, more or less, to the natives. Needless to say, they did not take too kindly to their marginalisation - but that's another story.

The landlords welcomed the newcomers, as they were considered more industrious than the native Catholics, and many of them had skills in spinning, weaving and processing linen, an industry that was growing in importance as a money-spinner. Indeed, it was a French Hugeunot, Louis Crommelin, who put the industry on a modern footing in Lisburn, and wrote a book which was to become the handbook on the processing of linen for many generations. An analysis of surnames suggests that hardly any of the first generation of planters returned to the area after the events of 1641-42. They had had their bellyful of Ulster!

Limited opportunities

Career options for young men in the 1700s were rather limited. Land was scarce, but a get-up-and-go young man could negotiate a lease of three lives, i.e. 99 years if he was a Protestant, or one life, 33 years for a Catholic. Such a lease would give security against the fluctuations of the market. If prices and rents rose, the value of the lease appreciated and the tenant prospered. In a falling market, on the other hand, his rent would be too dear, and he would face eviction. Nobody questioned the absolute right of the landlords to extract the maximum from their property; so they could, with impunity, squeeze their tenants for rent to the extent that they were reduced to subsistence level. Poorer tenants had no lease at all, and were merely tenants at will, always six months in arrears, so the landlord could evict them any time for no reason at all, and they had no legal redress. Some of the better landlords, like Lord Farnham, managed their estates well, and insisted that holdings be viable, i.e. that a tenant would be in a position to support his family in

reasonable comfort and still pay the rent. Other landlords allowed their tenants to sub-divide their holdings. The result was that a viable holding was sometimes divided up to give a place to several sons, each of whom would build a house, marry and have a family. This would bring increased rental income to the landlord in the short term, but for the families involved it promised starvation down the line.

Large families lived on the edge of starvation all the time, and there was a mini-famine every July, after the last of the old potatoes had been consumed and before the new crop was ready for harvest. The situation probably improved after 1740, because so many had died in the famine, and there was the same acreage of land to feed a smaller population. Of course it wasn't as simple as that - landlords would tend to push up rents, making it necessary to grow a higher ratio of cash crops. Then there were the ever-present uncertainties of weather and crop failures. On the bright side, people were reasonably sure of a good supply of fuel. With every tenant holding went a plot of turbary, a turf-bank. So every summer they went 'on the bog' to cut, foot, wind-row and stack the turf, before drawing it home on asses-and-creels, to provide a cosy fire for the winter.

The Hiring Fair

For landless men or women the prospect was even bleaker. While young, strong and healthy, they could offer themselves for work at the hiring fair of Cavan in May or November. A six months contract as a servant boy or girl would ensure they had a roof over their head and a bite to eat until Mayday or 'Hollentide' (Hallowe'en) came around again. The quality of the fare varied enormously - some employers were mean and exploitative and their servants were poorly fed and housed, while others were generous and caring. Protestant boys and girls had better prospects than their Catholic counterparts - they might get taken on at the landlord's castle or at the local rectory, while some Protestant farmers would employ only Protestants as servant boys and girls. Generally speaking, those in positions of power considered Protestants more reliable, honest and industrious than Catholics; but able-bodied Catholics willing to work would not be out of a job. To get married, they might rent a rood or half-an-acre of ground, build a two-roomed cottage and settle down to rear a large family on spuds and buttermilk, the cow being grazed 'on the long acre', as the roadside was called. But they were snookered in every way: emigration to England or America wasn't an option at this time, and Catholics couldn't even join the army because they were forbidden to carry arms.

A popular song of the time 'An Spailpín Fánach' canvasses another option.
'An Spailpín' (casual labourer) says that no longer will he go to the hiring fair:

ag díol ná ag reic mo shláinte.	offering myself and my health for sale.
Ná ar margadh na saoire	Nor at the slave market
Im' shuí cois balla	sitting at the foot of the wall
I'm scaoinse ar leath-taobh sráide.	A wastrel by the side of the street.
Bodairí na tíre ag tíocht ar a gcapaill	The big-shots come riding
á bhfiafraí an bhfuilim híreálta.	asking if I've been hired.
Ó téanam chun siúil tá an cúrsa fada!	O get moving man! The journey's long!
Seo ar siuil an spailpíni fánach.	Here goes the casual workman

He dreams of a better life:

Ní fheicfear corrán ina láimh chun bainte	No more I'll lift a hook to reap
Súist na feac beag rámhainne	flail to thresh, or stubby spade to dig
Ach bratach na Fraince os cionn mo leapan	But the flag of France above my bed
Is píce agam chun sáite.	And a long-handled pike to stab with.

In the Irish Brigade

Quite a number of young men from this area seem to have taken the option suggested by the Spailpín Fánach. Eoghan Ó hAnnracháin lists a dozen or so men from Killeshandra, Kildallan, Drumlane and surrounding areas who turned up in the Hotel Royal des Invalides, a home for broken soldiers of the French Army, between 1699 and 1752.[1] Because the details were taken down by French-speaking secretaries, perhaps from Irish-speaking veterans, some of the spellings may seem strange! Some of the applicants may have exaggerated their ages to strengthen their case for admission. In any event, most people at the time would not have known exactly what age they were.

Simon Quernan [Kiernan?] admitted 19.11.1699, aged 32, a native of Co. Lietron, soldier in Ruorke's company, Lee Regiment, where he served 14 year ... His sight is very incommoded by a fluxion which came on him in the course of service; married at Béthune. Admitted on convalescence. On 23 January 1700 admitted permanently by order of Monseigneur. Died on 31 December 1739. [aged 72].

Edmond Reilly, admitted 08.05.1705, aged 70, a native of county Kaven, soldier in Lichtenstein's company, Greder alemand regiment, where he served 7 years, and previously 12 years in the regiments of the king of England's Guards and Dillon …. His left shoulder is very incommoded by a blow of a stone which he received at the siege of Landau and which makes him unfit for service. Died 4 February 1709 at Tournai on detachment.

[1] Ó Hannracháin: Breifne Men in the Hotel Royal des Invalides, Breifne, 2002.

Hugo Bredy, admitted 02.01.1710, a native of Drumlahan [Drumlane] County Cavan, soldier of Dudley Fitzgerald's company, O'Donnell regiment, where he served 20 years, which is since the Irish troops arrived in France … and he says he served previously for 3 years in Ireland. His broken-down state and weak sight make him unfit for service.

Alexandre Atéchisem, admitted 02.10.1711, aged 30, a native of Kelichandre [Killeshandra], soldier in Anthony's company, Berwick regiment where he served 4 years, his left hand is crippled by a gunshot wound received at the siege of Benasque in Spain which makes him unfit for service; he comes from a company of invalids which is at Strasbourg; blacksmith by trade.

Flany Rilly [Flann Ó Raghallaigh/Flann O'Reilly], admitted 05. 06. 1711, aged 40, native of Cuynanore [Slanore?], Kilmore, trooper Irish regiment of Nugent where he served 18 years … his left hand is crippled by a sabre-stroke he received at the battle of Ramillies … now in the company of invalids in Amiens. Died in Arras, 10 March 1712.

Charles Nestall [Nesdale?], admitted 16.02.1714, aged 64, native of Clichandra [Killeshandra], County Cawen, brigadier in Cooke's troop, Nugent regiment,where he served 28 years … He is very incommoded by his weak sight which, added to his wounds and other infirmities makes him unfit for service. Died 28 November 1728.

Francis Johnson, admitted 05.11. 1716, native of Killichandré County Cawen, soldier in lieutenant-colonel Plunkett's company, Irish regiment of O'Donnell, where he served 20 years. He is very incommoded by epilepsy which, added to his weak sight, makes him unfit for service. Married in Douay. Died 28 November 1734, at the hospital of Peronne on detachment.

Patrick Farely, admitted 21.03.1726, aged 38, native of Romlahane [Drumlane] county Cavan in Ireland, lieutenant in the first brigade of half-pay officers of the Irish regiment of Berwick commanded by sieur O'Hanloni in garrison at Aire, where he served 6 years in that quality, and previously18 years as lieutenant, cadet and ensign in the Irish regiment of Berwick. His wounds, added to his weakness of spirit, falling into dementia, make him unfit for service. Admitted as officer on the orders of Monseigneur De Breteuil; married in Paris. On 20 July 1740, he was expelled and struck from the registers for having insulted, being familiar with (tutoyer) and threatened Captain Lee, on duty, at the citadel of Amiens. On 31 July 1743, he was rehabilitated by order of the Dauphin. Died on 15 February 1745 at Andres being a lieutenant on detachment.

John Corine, admitted 13.06.1726, aged 70, native of Kerkelin [Carrigallen] Co. Leitrim, soldier in Charles Dillon's company … where he served 37 years. Discharge is dated 29 May last. He has lost his right eye and his left eye is very weak; this, with his wounds, makes him unfit for service. Died 11 May 1729.

Edmond Bredy, admitted 20.10.1740, aged 70, native of Kildalanne … trooper in Frank Nugent's troop … where he served 15 years and previously 30 years in the Infantry regiment of Berwick. He holds an absolute discharge to be admitted to the hotel. Has weak sight and several old wounds. Died 12 May 1742.

Only a tiny percentage of those who joined the French army would have turned up at the Hotel Royal des Invalides. Many would have died on service, while many others would have been discharged from the army and would have settled down to civilian life in France. So it is fair to conclude that there was probably a steady trickle of young men from this area joining the Irish Brigade in the first half of the 1700s. From the 1760s on, there were better employment opportunities at home for able-bodied young men, especially in the linen industry, so there wasn't the same pressure on them to go soldiering abroad to make a living.

Catholics joined foreign armies because the Penal Laws forbade them to carry arms at home. There was no such restriction on Protestant men, so it is probable that some from this area joined the king's army to fight in the continental wars of the time. Indeed it is likely that some of them would have turned up at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, just as their Catholic counterparts turned up at the Hotel Royal des Invalides. We meet one such veteran in the parson's house in Goldsmith's Deserted Village:

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch and showed how fields were won.

Military historians and nationalist propagandists have tended to romanticise the exploits of the Irish Brigade:

When on Ramillies' bloody field,
The baffled French were forced to yield,
The victor Saxon backward reeled,
Before the charge of Clare's Dragoons!

But for Flann O'Reilly, Anthony Reilly or Lucas Flood the experience of the battle of Ramillies and the regiment of Clare was probably a much more painful memory, just as the memories of Goldsmith's broken soldier were painful.

Chapter 9

Religion in the 1700s

The Protestants

The religious patterns laid down in the Ulster Plantation persisted throughout the 1700s - indeed, they could be said to have persisted right down to our own times. In the 1700s, Protestants were the people with power - the king, the lord lieutenant, members of parliament, government officials, solicitors and barristers, army officers, the local landlords and gentry, the schoolmaster and parson, all were Protestants. Their church owned all the cathedrals, churches and rectories; and they were conspicuously wealthy, because they were entitled to collect tithes from every landholder in the country, viz. one tenth of the produce of all arable land. They had schools in the parishes, and secondary boarding schools, like the Royal School in Cavan, to educate landlords' sons, so that they could become landlords, estate managers, parsons, bishops, schoolmasters or men of trade and commerce. Only Protestants could enrol in Trinity College, the only university in the country. Some Protestant tenants, cottiers and labourers, were only marginally better off than their Catholic counterparts, but they were led to believe that they were far above the natives in every way. Their church was not evangelical - after Bedell's time, they made little effort to convert the Catholics. And so they went to church on Sundays secure in the knowledge that the God whom they worshipped, and whose Word they listened to, approved of them.

On the other hand, a contemporary source gives us a much kindlier view of the official Church. In *The Deserted Village* Oliver Goldsmith paints a picture of the village parson, generally believed to have been his own father:

A man he was to all his country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place.
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain
...
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all
...
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

A Snapshot in Time: The 1733 Visitation

Many of the vicars of Killeshandra in the 1700s were renowned scholars and churchmen. Hugh Skellern, an Englishman, who was vicar of Killeshandra from 1705 to 1729 had graduated from Cambridge in 1694 and had got an MA from TCD in 1701. During the incumbency of his successor, William Henry, the 1733 visitation of Kilmore parishes took place. From the report of this inspection we learn that the roof of the church in Killeshandra, which had been built in 1688, is 'shingled,' i.e. covered with thin pieces of wood laid in overlapping rows. The area around the communion table was laid with marble and had rails around it. In Kildallan the roof was also shingled, while the communion area had rails around it and the floor was laid with flag stones. The graveyard there was fenced and planted, though this is probably the ancient 'Relic' that had been there since pre-plantation times. There was no glebe house in either parish so it is unlikely that the vicars or rectors were resident. The Lord's Supper was celebrated only twelve times a year in Killeshandra, with 90 communicants from 80 families, while in Kildallan it was only four times a year with 80-100 communicants from 50 families. In Kildallan there was a licensed schoolmaster who taught as many as thirty-five boys, some at the minister's expense.[1] The picture we get is of absentee vicars or rectors, learned men who conduct a Communion service once a month or once a quarter, but do not have much contact with their flocks. Certainly not the picture painted by Goldsmith of the hands-on clergyman and the welcoming parsonage. This was the Church which John Wesley and the Methodists would seek to reform later in the century.

William Martin, who succeeded William Henry in 1664 at the age of forty, was born in Dublin, and after a brilliant academic career was appointed Professor of Hebrew at TCD. He was also appointed Prebend of Mulhuddart ard in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin in 1764, which meant that he got a salary from the tithes of Mulhuddart parish for the duties he performed in the Cathedral. When he died at St Stephen's Green in 1787 he was buried in St Patrick's and his monument can be seen there today. He left £60 in his will to build a parish school in Killeshandra. It is unlikely that he ever resided in Killeshandra.

William Hales: A Man of his Time

The period from 1787 to 1831, when William Hales was vicar of Killeshandra, was a turbulent time in many ways. Locally, the linen industry went from boom to bust, and there were periodic outbreaks of sectarian violence, with sectarian tensions just below the surface all the time. Hales was a distinguished scholar and writer, and some of his works reflect the pressures on the established Church. His appointment coincided with the opening of the first Methodist Church in the parish at Drumbullion, and *Methodism Inspected*, which he wrote in 1803-05, reflects his concerns at this development. It was hard for a well-educated man like him to understand why huge crowds would throng to hear rather poorly-educated Methodist preachers talk passionately in plain, colloquial English rather than listen to his learned sermons. On the other hand, he was alarmed at the rising power of papism. Catholics had been freed from most of the penal laws by the Catholic Relief Acts of the 1790s, and were becoming more assertive in their demands for emancipation and equal treatment.

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[1] Roulston: The 1733 Visitation of Kilmore, Breifne, 2006.

Hales's *Letters on the Tenets of the Romish Hierarchy* is probably a reaction to the growing influence of that church and the threat that this posed to the established order. He was one of the leading intellectuals in the Dublin of his day, and after a distinguished academic career had been appointed professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages in Trinity in 1782. Today, he would be considered bigoted and intolerant, but he was only defending the safe, secure and privileged world in which he grew up, and which seemed to be beset by dangers on every side. Apart from the populist Methodists who were preaching to the poorer classes, many Presbyterians and a few Protestant intellectuals were flirting with daft and dangerous ideas like the rights of man, equality and democracy. Already the American colonies had been lost, and were functioning as The United States, a democratic republic, where some Irish Presbyterians had cousins living. In 1789 France exploded into revolutionary anarchy which forced the privileged classes to flee the country and inspired a bloody rebellion in Ireland in 1798. Talk of equality for Catholics alarmed Protestants who feared a repeat of the widespread massacres which they believed had taken place in1641. At the close of the century, the dominant position of the established church, and the privileged position of its members in society must have appeared precarious in a changing world. William Hales was a man of his time.

The Methodists

John Wesley was an ordained minister of the Church of England, and had no intention of setting up a separate church. His brother Charles started the Holy Club in Oxford University, where the members joined in scripture readings, prayer and meditation. After John joined the club, he felt moved to go out and preach the Good News in an enthusiastic and evangelical style. The leaders of the Church of England, public school and university educated men from wealthy backgrounds, were aghast at this vibrant, exuberant, populist way of preaching, and soon Wesley found that he was denied access to Anglican pulpits. Nothing daunted, he took his message to the people, preaching in town squares, at fairs and markets, even in fields. This appealed to the poor and the new artisan classes in the cities at the start of what would later be called the Industrial Revolution. The scripture reading, hymn singing and preaching drew huge crowds, and many were converted. Soon Wesley's preachers were travelling all over England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, even America. Not all were well-educated, but they spoke the language of the people with conviction and sincerity and appealed to people's emotions.

Methodism was probably first introduced into Cavan and Leitrim by newly-arrived artisans and entrepreneurs connected with the linen and iron industries, and was soon well established in the Corlespratten area, where there is still a Methodist community today. The first Methodist church in the area had been established by 1785 in Drumbullion. For the next fifty years, Methodist preachers arriving on horseback at fairs and markets in the bustling and prosperous towns of Arva and Killeshandra created a great stir. They were a new ingredient in an already volatile mix of class and creed - landlords, tenants, cottiers, labourers, servants, Protestant, Presbyterian, Catholic. Their flaming evangelism drew huge crowds of people of all denominations, and many were converted. Their message appealed to the poorer Presbyterian and Protestant classes, labourers, scutchers, spinners, weavers and other textile workers, rather than to the better-off farming class. Not unlike the Presbyterian immigrants a hundred years earlier, they found solace

and fellowship in a religion which encouraged them to live simple and godly lives, and promised salvation at a time when there were many trials and uncertainties. Few Catholics would have converted to Methodism, though they would have been made welcome. By this time, religion was clearly divided along racial lines: Catholicism or Papism, was for the Irish, while Protestantism, in whatever form it came, was for the settlers. Catholics in general welcomed disputes among Protestants, and would have been happy that the Church of Ireland was upset by the arrival of the Methodists. The official church and especially the local vicar was quite unpopular with Catholics and Presbyterians, because tenant farmers had to pay tithes of one tenth of the produce of all arable land. Indeed Protestant tenant farmers also resented this tax at a time when the Church of Ireland and its ministers were conspicuously wealthy. For members of all denominations, Methodist preachers, like the flamboyant Gideon Ouseley, provided a welcome element of drama and excitement to community life.

The Presbyterians

The Presbyterians were neither one thing nor the other. More Protestant than the Protestants, they were still discriminated against. True, they could own property and carry arms. They had their own churches, schools, manses and graveyards. But they couldn't sit in parliament, on grand juries, even on town councils; and they couldn't send their sons to Trinity. In many ways they were denied their civil rights, and were like second-class citizens. And they resented this, because they knew that they were morally superior to the smug, half-way-house Protestants, not to mention the ignorant, illiterate and superstitious Papists. They had the Calvinist work-ethic, where people were expected to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and better themselves in life, which ensured that they accumulated wealth and influence. They were big on education, too. It was necessary to be literate in order to read the Word of God, so they established schools to teach their children. More than the other groups, literacy filtered well down the line. Of course, if you can read, you will read more than Sacred Scripture, so Presbyterians were more open to ideas via newspapers, printed pamphlets, letters and other correspondence, and therefore more open to change and innovation of all kinds. Since their sons couldn't attend Trinity, they were sent to Edinburgh, or to Leiden in the Netherlands, where they were imbued with Calvinist teachings, and returned home to reinforce the faith of their people and to exhort them to live in righteousness, and not to be contaminated by the temptations of the world. They knew that they were right to pursue godly lives; and if, in the process, they acquired worldly wealth, they saw this, not as a love of material things, but as a sign of God's approval of their righteousness.

In the early 1700s, the Presbyterian immigrants who had arrived some ten years earlier were beginning to find their feet and get well established in this area. A local man, James Tait, was ordained in Killeshandra on 10 May 1705. He attended the Ulster Synod on a regular basis, and his reputation there was very high, so it was no surprise that in 1724 he was chosen as its Moderator. The community was flourishing, and many young men were entering the ministry. Samuel Irwin was ordained in 1718, and William Faris was licensed in 1725. In 1728, there was a proposal to include Killeshandra in the Dublin Presbytery, but Rev Tait successfully opposed the move. When he died the following year, there was no minister until 1732 when James Hamilton arrived; and he left in 1733. Rev George Carson was ordained in 1735, and he served

until his retirement in 1780. At this time the congregation was growing, though it was scattered over a wide area. Many of its members were prosperous, too, as they were involved in the linen industry. The present church at Croghan was built in 1742, so it is the oldest church of any denomination still in use in the area. When Rev Carson died in 1782, he was interred in a flanker (corner tower) of the old castle at Croghan [see back cover]. His tombstone was there until recently, when it was taken inside for safe keeping.

The Catholics

About 1712, George Ormsby, magistrate for Co. Leitrim, wrote to the government:

> *'I reckon that all our unhappiness and misfortunes proceed from the priests to whom the greater men communicate their designs and they stir up the common people to execute them. Nor do I believe we shall ever be safe or quiet till a wolf's head and a priest's will be at the same rate. Such a time I remember and then there was not a quieter populace in the world'* [1]

The Catholics or papists, (both Gaelic Irish and Old English), who were the original inhabitants of the country, were now dispossessed and down-and-out. They had lost the land, and the cathedrals, churches, abbeys and monasteries. Everything! But they clung to the old religion, now reinforced with Counter-Reformation missionary zeal; so, for the next two hundred years, we find a church functioning, often surreptitiously, without churches.

Young men went for education to seats of learning like Paris, Rome, Louvain or Salamanca, having got some sort of classical education from hedge-schoolmasters at home. On the Continent, they experienced the glories of Catholic liturgies celebrated in magnificent cathedrals, churches and abbeys. Here, they imbibed modern Catholic Theology, with its emphasis on refuting the errors of the Protestant Reformation. Then they returned to transmit the Faith to the impoverished Catholics of Ireland.

No Churches

They had no churches, so they moved quietly from townland to townland, holding a 'Station' in each. Here, all the neighbours gathered into one house, where the priest heard Confessions, preached, offered Mass and talked with the people. If possible, he took donations or oats for his horse, if he had one. The people were poor in material matters, and were poorly educated, and it is unlikely that they took an active part in the liturgies. But they were deeply spiritual, and much given to private devotions, especially the Rosary, the popularity of which was probably due to the influence of Dominican monks in the area. Sometimes throughout the 1700s, Mass was offered at a Mass Rock, whether regularly, or on special feast-days, or in times of danger, hostility or crisis is not clear. The only Mass-Rock site in this area is in Drumuth (Drumyouth), but it was replaced by a thatched Mass-House in nearby Coronea probably in the 1730s.

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[1] Mooney: Breifne, 1961, p. 335.

Whenever conditions were favourable, priests would have endeavoured to minister to their flocks, and the fact that there are no references to priests in this area does not mean that they weren't there. They wouldn't have been anxious to publicise their activities, and in any event, the church had no bishop or bureaucratic system at the time.

Fr Owen Traynor lists some of the Parish priests who ministered in Killeshandra Parish at that time.[1] Philip Fay appears briefly on a petition to Rome in 1675. John Smith is entered on the 1704 Penal Registration list as parish priest of Killeshandra. He had been ordained in Dublin in 1678 by Bishop Patrick Plunkett of Meath. The laws were at their greatest intensity in 1704, and it is significant that Fr Smith resided at Coronea, where the first post-penal chapel would later be built, and which was close to the Mass-Rock in Drumyouth. It would be interesting to know what arrangements he had for offering Mass. On 16 April 1708, the Sheriff of Co. Cavan took recognisances from Hugh Drumm, PP of Killeshandra. His guarantors that he would take the Oath of Abjuration were James Reilly of Doogra and Edmond Morris of Ned. The undertaking seems to have been quietly ignored until 1715, the year of a Jacobean scare after the death of Queen Anne. On 26 April of that year, the Grand Jury at a session in Cavan requested the government to estreat the recognisances, which would mean that the guarantors would lose their bail money. The outcome of the case is not known - but it illustrates how the nervous jitters of the British monarchy could make life difficult for an obscure parish priest in Killeshandra. On the other hand, only for this incident we would never know that the man existed, just as we know nothing about any other Killeshandra priests up to about 1730.

The next documented pastor of Killeshandra was John Pronty who graduated with distinction from Salamanca in 1730. He first appears on a list of Kilmore clergy in 1750, but Fr Traynor believes that he probably came to Killeshandra straight after ordination. If so, he had a long innings. During his tenure things began to ease as far as Catholic worship and practice was concerned. After the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie at Culloden in 1746, the authorities felt more secure, and there was less open hostility to the Catholic religion, and only an occasional bigoted landlord or official would put obstacles in the way of people practising their faith. In practice, the penal laws were allowed to fall into abeyance, though they were not repealed until much later in the century. Fr Pronty built the first Catholic chapel in Coronea on a site given by the Crosson family, not far from the Mass-Rock in Drumyouth. He died in his home near Killeshandra in 1787, and was buried on Christmas morning in the old graveyard near the town.[1] A few people carried the plain coffin covered by a white sheet.

This sounds very timid and low-key, but it is significant that the priest was allowed to live near the Protestant town of Killeshandra, possibly at Millbrook in Drumroosk, where Hastie's house now is, overlooking the present St Brigid's Church and graveyard. Perhaps he was a diplomat as well as a scholar; but in any event, a thaw had set in. The first Catholic Relief Acts had been passed in 1778 and 1782. There was a huge social and intellectual gap between such highly-educated priests and their illiterate and impoverished flocks. Fr Pronty must have been at least 90

[1] Traynor in St Brigid's Souvenir of Rededication, 1977.

years of age when he died, but in his later years he had a curate to assist him, probably from as early as 1766, when the religious census returns two priests for the parish, and certainly from 1782 when Charles McKiernan was recorded as curate.

The dynamic and reforming Denis Maguire had been bishop since 1770, in a diocese *'that had been without a resident bishop since the days of Eugene McSweeney in the middle of the 17th century.'*[2] So there had been little supervision of the clergy, little organisation, everything very patchy, hit or miss, depending on the education, competence, motivation and zeal of the individual priests. Now the Church was functioning relatively freely and openly, and there was a better supply of priests to minister to the people.

The next pastor of Killeshandra was Edmond O'Reilly, usually known as Father Edward or 'Father Ned', who was a native of Kilmore, near Murmod, in Upper Killinkere. He may have been ordained priest at home, before going to Salamanca to complete his studies. He paid 730 reales enrolment fee to the Irish College there in 1774, and was still there in 1777. Back in Ireland, he appears on the Catholic Qualification Rolls of 1782 as Vice-pastor of Kilsherdany, near Cootehill. When Fr Pronty died in 1787, Fr Ned came as PP to Killeshandra, swapping places with local curate, Charles McKiernan, who went as vice-pastor to Kilsherdany. He lived in Drumcrow with his nephew, Charles O'Reilly, and a niece who kept house for them. With Fr Ned, the Catholic Church in Killeshandra began to emerge from the era of the Penal Laws. Fr Pronty's little thatched chapel in Coronea was re-designed as a 'cross-house', and slated. He built a thatched schoolhouse in the chapel yard and brought a Miss Fitzsimons from Killinkere to teach there, the first Catholic school in the parish. The ruins of the old St Brigid's Church, which he built near Killeshandra, still stand in the graveyard, and the school which he built nearby in the chapel yard served the boys and girls of the area until 1925. When he died in 1814, the Church in the parish was well organised.

Linen, Prosperity and Sectarian Tensions

For the landed classes, the 1700s were a time of peace, prosperity and security. The hunger and hardship were experienced by the poorer classes. By the 1760s, the population had recovered from the disastrous famine of 1740, and was being augmented by inward migration mainly of Presbyterian textile workers from the north east. Encouraged by Linen Board and landlords, entrepreneurs organised the scutching of flax, and the spinning, weaving and bleaching of linen yarn. There was employment for men, women and children, because the linen industry was extremely labour-intensive - the land had to be cultivated, the flax sowed, pulled, retted, dried, scutched, bleached, spun and woven, so the whole area was a hive of activity. There were thriving flax markets in Arva and Killeshandra, and market houses were built in both towns at this time. The inscription on the market house in Killeshandra read:

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[1] Cunningham: St Brigid's Souvenir of Rededication, 1977, and Breifne, 1961.

[2] Gallogly: The Diocese of Kilmore 1800-1950.

Erected for the benefit of this town
and vicinity at the sole expense of
Nicola-Ann widow of the late
Rich: Jackson Forkill-Lodge. C: Armagh
ESQ Daughter and co-heiress of
Arthur-Cecil-Hamilton
Castle-Hamilton ESQ 1790

An advertisement in the *Belfast Newsletter* in 1764 offered tenancies and parcels of land to anyone willing to settle in the Killeshandra area. The aim was to attract people with textile skills to rent cottages for spinning and weaving, bringing in industry and boosting landlords' income. But it was also designed to attract tenant farmers who would be willing to pay higher rents than the current incumbents. Gradually the competition for land intensified, so that when a lease expired, the tenant was forced to increase the rent or face eviction. A tenant-at-will could be evicted at any time in favour of someone willing to pay a higher rent. There was no security of tenure and evictions were common. Landlords favoured Protestants, as they were considered loyal and reliable. Presbyterians were valued for their skills and industry, but they were rather petulant. They resented having to pay tithes and high rents and were conscious of their rights. They were willing, too, to up sticks and emigrate to America, a new 'Promised Land,' where land was rent-free and they could carve out a new life for themselves on a new frontier.

At the bottom of the pile were the dispossessed Catholics. They were much freer now to practise their religion, and a minority of them were prosperous either as tenant farmers or skilled textile workers. But the vast majority were poor. They were still in a majority, but only marginally so. The Religious Census of 1766 shows the barony with 365 Protestant families, and 490 Catholic families while the figures for Killeshandra parish are 259 Protestant and 293 Catholic families. So, the planters and their followers formed more than 40% of the population, they owned all the land and occupied most of it, including the best land. The Ulster Plantation had been firmly established in Tullyhunco.

As the century progressed, the competition for land led to increased levels of sectarian strife. Clashes between secret societies, the Protestant Peep o' Day Boys and the Catholic Defenders in the 1790s, culminated in the burning of Ballinagh in 1794, an action in which the Killeshandra militia took part. During one of these outbreaks, Fr Ned's new church at Portaliffe was burned down, but it was re-built later, and served the parish until 1863. The century closed in bloodshed, with the rebellion of the United Irishmen and the French invasion which ended at Ballinamuck in 1798.

Hardly a happy note on which to end, but perhaps one that helps us to understand how we have come to be the way we are.

Overview

The plantation of Ulster introduced a population of English-speaking Protestants into Tullyhunco. But the change was much more fundamental than that. It replaced an ancient, traditional form of land holding and farming with a modern capitalist system - an exploitative form of capitalism. In effect, the land and all the natural resources of the area were taken from the people and given to a small number of landlords. For almost three hundred years the descendants and successors of these landlords enjoyed a very privileged way of life. They owned the land, and had power over everyone who lived on it, native and settler alike. Capitalism put the people to work and modernised the area, but the surplus wealth was creamed off in rents by the landlords who were able to live in great luxury while the poorer tenants were on the breadline, and landless people went hungry much of the time.

Landlords favoured Protestant tenants, so they occupied the better land and had a higher standard of living than the Catholics. This unequal treatment led to envy on the part of the majority Catholic population who regarded the Protestants as a privileged class, even though they too had to pay rent to the landlords and tithes to the Church. As the population increased and competition for land became intense in the 1700s this envy led to sectarian clashes from time to time. Protestants felt under threat, and memories of 1641 were kept alive. They tended to join the various militias which were officered by the landlord class, and this gave them a feeling of security and status. The Catholics, on the other hand, tended to form secret societies to counter the power of the landlords. The ever-present threat of sectarian or agrarian violence made life more difficult for the many who were finding it hard to earn a living for themselves and their families.

The Land Act of 1881 and subsequent laws, especially the Wyndham Land Act of 1903, dismantled the system of land holding and gave the land to the tenants. The tenants became ‘peasant proprietors’, and their descendants have had ownership of their lands for 100 years. Indeed the landlords are now little more than a vague memory.

Aside from mixed marriages, Catholics did not convert to Protestantism, nor did Protestants convert to Catholicism. However, it is fair to say that both converted to Capitalism, so much so, that many are now as enthusiastic about the rights and privileges of private property as the landlords ever were!

It is now 400 years since the first Protestant settlers arrived here in Tullyhunco. They have been here almost as long as the White Man has been in America. For generations, the two groups have been living side by side in easy harmony - but apart.

What about the future? Is it time for integration?

Appendix: The Language We Speak

The language we spoke in Killeshandra in my youth was something of a wildflower meadow. It was English, indeed, but with a rich mixture of words and phrases and turns of speech from a variety of sources including Irish, Ulster-Scots, Hiberno-English and Heaven only knows what else! Since Irish is a distinctive language, it is relatively easy to identify the words derived from it, so I start there, and afterwards try to sort out the others, which are dialects of English, or related to it.

Iarsmaí na Gaeilge i dTeanga Tullyhunco

The Irish language did not die out suddenly in Tullyhunco. Three hundred and fifty years after the Plantation, we were still using many Irish words and expressions in our ordinary speech, though of course we didn't know they were Irish. Some of the words that I explain below were suggested to me by Richard Morgan who compiled a list of Irish words in use in his youth in his native Templeport. Many others I got from an article written by Pádraig ua Corbaidh of Doire, Cill na Seanrátha, more than twenty years ago. This article is cited as a source by Prof. Terry Dolan in his *Dictionary of Hiberno-English*. Other words I could recall from my own youth. I have searched through Dinneen's Dictionary to check on the meanings. Needless to say, I will be delighted to hear from any Killeshandra person who can add to my list.

A young boy was a gawsin [garsún] and a young girl a gahela [gearrchaile]. If you were in bad humour you'd be crusty [crosta, cross], you might have a cawr [cár] on your face, or a pus on you [pus, the lips, the mouth, generally in contempt], or you might be sitting there gernin' [ag gearán, complaining], and you'd be lucky if you didn't get a poltóg, which is a clout on the ear!. A kind-hearted person would be very laughy [lách], and if you thought a person was too generous to someone else, you might say sarcastically, "Boys, but you're loughy!". You might be called 'an auld slaub' if you weren't tough enough at work or on the football field, or when negotiating a deal [slab, slaib, mud, a soft-fleshed person] But you mightn't give a feck [faic; a jot, a tittle, a small amount]. Or you might let a galdar out of you [golghair, a yell]. He'd get an odious gunk [gonnc, a snub or disappointment]. And if he saw the pair of ye coggerin' [ag cogarnaigh, whispering] in the corner he'd tell you to whisht or hisht [Bí I do thoist! Be silent], or to shut your gawb [cáb, mouth]. If your feet were in the way, you might be asked to move your spaugs [spág,a clumsy or lame leg, a long, flat foot].

If you were starving, weak with the hunger, you'd have the furgortar [féar-ghorta] and if you died suddenly they'd say, that you went donny [dainid, an indeclinable adjective meaning sad, pitiable], and they'd come to the corp-house for the wake!

[corp, a dead body]. Of course, the Banshee [Bean-sí, fairy woman] would have already lamented for you before you died. Indeed, a neighbour would probably have heard her when going on his cailey the night before [céilidhe, an evening visit, a friendly call], and he'd surely have heard her coming from a spree [spraoi, what would be called a 'soiree' nowadays!] in a neighbour's house where a quarter-barrel of porter might have been consumed! Nobody would dare to say that the Banshee was only pishtrogues or superstition [piseog, witchcraft, sorcery], because everyone seemed to take her seriously.

You could be sick with some auld trake [truic] or another, but if you had the skitter [sciodar, purge, diarrhoea], you wouldn't use that word in polite society, though you might call a useless wee fellow a little skitter [sciodar, a scuttler, mean, contemptible person]. A person with a heavy cold would be coughin' and plugherin' [plúchadh, act of squeezing, smothering, suffocation, asthma]. If you were lying there motionless, they'd say, The poor craythure, [créatúr, a creature] there wasn't a giog or a geog out of him. Indeed they might give you a drop of The Craythure to revive you, this being a codename for poteen [poitín, illicit spirits]. Whatever the ailment of man or beast, someone would make up a dhroosle to cure it [a mixture, or potion: I don't know the source of the word]. A humpy fellow would have a crooch on him [cruit, a hump] and he'd be told to take the little juke off him [diúc, a hump].

Another word we used to hear was a hate, [a shéad: séad here meaning a thing, anything, but in a negative sense, i.e. nothing], e.g. I don't know a hate about it!
If it was nearly dark, there wouldn't be a stime of light, or you wouldn't see a stime [stoim, a small particle], and there would be no question of making a running dull [dol, a knot]. It could teem rain or you could teem the spuds [taom, to rain heavily or pour water off]. A poor family might live in a wee pruh of a house [prochóg, a wretched hovel], or they might put up a sheughfosky of some kind to give them shelter [seal foscaidh, a temporary shelter]. If there was a thick smur of rain [smúr or smur, mist, vapour, a cloud of dust,etc], someone might say it was a drawchy day, or even that they felt drawchy [perhaps, droch-chaoi, e.g. Tá droch-chaoi orm:, I'm in a bad way].

Farming and the countryside seem to have been the themes where Irish survived longest, and this linguistic continuity may suggest a degree of continuity in farming practice from pre-plantation days. The planters would certainly have introduced many farming practices, but native farming methods, developed to cultivate the difficult drumlin soils over a period of hundreds of years, would have been useful to the newcomers, too. Neighbours would go in core [obair i gcomhar, working in partnership] to do many, many jobs. And there was comhar land, i.e. common land on the top of Bruse Mountain. A mehel of men would gather for sowing, reaping, threshing, etc. [meitheal, a working party]. Cattle with foot-rot had luskabolis [loch, a glandular swelling. Sciobóile, of the barn, presumably because the ailment was associated with the housing of cattle]. You would sthrig [striog] a cow to get the last drops of milk from her. A maiden sow was a kaysogue [céis, a young sow]. A ploughshare was a sock [soc], you dug the heavy, drumlin soil with a loy [laí], and when mowing with a scythe, you held the two durnyns [doirnín, projecting scythe-handle, handle on top of spade, etc.]. For guggering spuds you used a steeveen

[gogaireacht, the act of placing seeds in the holes made by the stíbhín]. A paureen [póirín, a little seed] was a very small potato that you could drop in the hole that your father made with the steeveen when you were guggering! Turf were cut with the slane [sleán], and dung was put out with an ass-and- bordocks [portóg, a creel with a hinged base]. A slipe was an un-wheeled vehicle on two runners, like a sleigh.

Hurrish! Hurrish! [hurais] called the pigs, and Chauk-Chauk! Chuck-chuck-chuck! [Tiuc nó Diuc!] the hens, while the cat would come for Peesh-peesh![Pís!]. A clayvin would catch a bird for the pot [cliabhán, a cradle, a basket, a cage], there were scaldies in the nest [scalltán, an unfledged bird] and pinkeens in the streams [pincín, a minnow]. The seed-stalk of grass was a cushhug [coiseog, a straw, a blade of grass, a reed], a ragwort a boughlin [buachalán, rag-weed], and the elder tree a boortree. [boltraí]. A blade of slaurlus [slánlus, lesser plantain] could be put on a cut to stop the bleeding and help to heal the wound. In a marshy spot there might be a shaking scraw [scraith], or you might cut scraws to thatch a roof. To get surer footing on a shaking scraw, you could make a sparish, a kind of platform of twigs and branches. A culvert of stones or logs-and sods was a kesh [ceis]. Going through a guttery gap, you might get stuck in the glaur [glár, mud], and you'd certainly come away with clauber [clábar, mud] on your clogs. Children were often sent out about the hedges to gather brusna [brosna, broken wood for firing] or for a few kippeens to light the fire [cipín, a little stick], and the hot coals of the fire were the greesh [gríos, heat, fire, embers, hot ashes].

Two greetings often heard were direct translations from Irish: God bless the work! [Báil ó Dhia ar an obair!], and 'God save all here', or sometimes, God save all in here!, [Báil ó Dhia anseo isteach!]. An interesting phrase was, 'the cock-step [coischéim an choiligh] on the dunghill' to describe the lengthening of the days around the first of January. Someone exaggerating the extent of their poverty would be, 'making the poor mouth' [Béal bocht] There were many proverbs, too that were direct translations from Irish, but I suspect that these could have been learned as 'headlines' at school, rather than from folk memory.

The names of almost all the townlands are anglicisations of Irish place-names, though it is sometimes difficult to make out what the original place-name was. In addition, there were quite a few local names that were purely Irish in meaning. Pullagoddy is a little lake near Nancy's Cross, or 'adjacent to the Bawn', as the old song put it. There is a local tradition that a robber was drowned in this lake: maybe he was executed. And Poll an Ghadaí means The Robber's Pool. There is a crockyn behind O'Dowd's house in Derries Upper, another on Curran's land in Creenagh, and yet another in Drummully West, going east from the back-gates of the Convent. And there were probably others. Cnocán is a little hill, and it would have been pronounced "crockyn" in the local dialect. Tóchar is a causeway, a raised way or embankment, and this is exactly what The Toher between Kinkeel and Derries Lower is. The Giant's Grave in Gartinowl was the Corrick, [carraig, a rock], the old graveyard in Kildallan The Relic [reilig, a cemetery] and there was a Corn of stones at Ballaheady [carn, a heap, a cairn] A line of hills in Kildallan is called the Mollywees [Na Mullaí Bhuí, the yellow hilltops - perhaps they were covered in whins!]. Gobna [Gob an Átha, the point of the ford] was the old name for The Foxholes Point.

Some grammatical forms crossed over from Irish, notably the present continuous tense of the verb to-be, e.g. 'I do be here every day', 'They (do) be working there off and on, He bees in the pub every night.'

Furnenst That!

The Lallans Dialect that the Planters and later settlers brought with them from Scotland also left its mark on the English spoken in this area fifty years ago. Of course, colloquial words and phrases have been disappearing from the language with the advent of radio and television, not to mention texting and tweeting or foreign travel! The phrase, *furnenst that* means 'as against that' or 'on the other hand'. If you were cleaning a drain, you would first *stank* the water by making a stank, or dam upstream leaving you a dry stretch to work on (cf. the English verb, stanch or staunch, meaning to stem the flow of). In a dry summer, the wheels of the cart would get *gaizened*, i.e. the timber would dry out; and furniture makers would gaizen, i.e. season, the timber. If you did *a gwid turn* for someone they'd say, *'Yer a clinker!'*, and that was the height of praise. To blether was to talk nonsense, and *to girn* was to frown or contort one's face, or complain in a whining voice. (this may be derived from the Gaelic/Irish gearán, to complain).

The floor was the *flure*, and the door the *dure*, and you could go to the *wid* for a *loch* of sticks, and you'd surely get wet if you fell in the *sheugh*. If you needed to be careful, you'd be told to take it *conny*, and a person who was cautious with the money, or generally careful, or averse to taking risks would be said to be conny.

'Where's the key? *I'm after giving it to you!*', is a snatch of dialogue which I heard today. It is an example of the 'After-Perfect', an Ulster-Scots grammatical form that we use all the time. 'I'm just after doing it!' means I have just done it.

The Ulster-Scots were no yes-men! Indeed there was a tendency to avoid a simple yes or no answer: Would ye like a cup of tea? I would!, or Aye, I would! Did you milk the cows yet?. No, I didn't!

A *cot* is a boat, and a *codger* is a young fellow. A *great man* is a clever device or a labour-saving device, e.g., 'This internet thing is a great man!'. You'd *be* to do it your way! Means you insisted on doing it your way. Returning from a social gathering, you might be asked, *'Who all were there?*' If a cold, dry East wind was blowing, the weather would be *haskie*, but in May you might get a light *skiff* of a shower, and in summer you might hear a *brattle* of thunder. Someone churning might ask you to take a *brash*, i.e., a turn at the churning. *Brawn* was a delicious meat dish made by boiling the head of a pig., and *beestings* were the first, cholesterol-rich milk of a newly-calved cow. A *slipe* was a sledge-like vehicle on two runners, very useful on steep slopes. A *gansey* was a pullover, called after the Channel Island of Gurensy, just as the English word jersey was called after its bigger neighbour.

Some verbs had a strong or irregular past tense: we *driv* cattle to the fair, nails into timber, and we even driv cars and tractors! 'He swore in Cavan that I *kilt* his cow,' is a line of an old song. And we often heard kilt instead of killed. I once heard of a man who *wrought* in a certain place when he was young, i.e. worked as a farm labourer.
If a jug on the table or a chair on the floor was unsteady and in danger of tipping over, you'd say it was *coggles*ome or *rickety*. A funnel was a *tun-dish*.
The wild rose on which hips grew was the *buckey-briar*, and freckles were *fern-tickles*.
An untidy woman was *a clatty aul' trollip*.
A *clash-bag* was someone who couldn't keep a secret.
A child who spoke in a cheeky manner was *givin' guff*.
If you were busying yourself, or working aimlessly rather than methodically, you were *truffin' about*.
If you got *a trimmin*' or *a drubbin*' or *a scutchin*', you had been beaten up, though someone who *got an ojous scutchin*' would have suffered a terrible ordeal of any kind, like a severe illness. A bad drubbin would *make a limiter of you*, meaning to cripple or disable.
A *sned* was a scythe, or the shaft of the scythe, as against the handles which were the durnyns. You would sned around the corners of the meadow before the mowing machine would arrive. A farmer would *snig-in* the hay by putting a rope or a trace around a cock and attaching it to a horse or pony so that it would slide along the ground. In the same way, you could snig out timber in the wid.

I am not sure of the origins of some of the above words and phrases and forms of speech, or whether they are English, Irish or Ulster Scots. I hope some of my readers will be able to enlighten me.

Thank You

To my wife Patricia who supported me in the project and was always on hand to help me with technical hitches. She was meticulous in proof-reading the script and suggested many changes to make it more reader friendly.

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I have acknowledged many of my sources in footnotes throughout the book. At local level, I found Maura Nallen's *Study of Eight Townlands in the Parish of Killeshandra* a valuable source of information. Similarly Ciarán Parker's *Two Minor Septs of Medieval Breifne* and Francis McKiernan's *The Hearth Money Rolls for Tullyhunco and Tullyhaw*. There are many references to our area in the prolific research of Daniel Gallogly (Domhnall Mac an Ghallóglaigh).

Finally, I thank you who buy the book and read it - I hope you will find it interesting.

I have tried to convey the attitudes of the time in the language of the time. This may seem out of place in the more tolerant and the more politically correct world in which we live, but it is essential if we are to understand our past.

Turbulence in Tullyhunco is a study of the Ulster Plantation in Tullyhunco, a tiny Gaelic-Irish state which extended from Carn, near the present Slieve Russel Hotel to the shores of Lough Gowna, and was ruled by the McKiernan Family from their residence on the Hill of Croghan. This book attempts to reconstruct what life was like for the Irish on the eve of the plantation, to record the arrival of the planters and to assess the impact of this on the native population.

The Rebellion of 1641 is one of the most contentious events in Irish history, and there was plenty of action around Killeshandra, with Castlehamilton and Croghan castles under siege for seven months. After the Cromwellian re-conquest of the country, the planter families returned with a new set of followers, and colonisation resumed. This turbulent century ended with the Williamite wars, after which another wave of immigrants arrived from Scotland and the North of England.
The author, Tomás Ó Raghallaigh, a native of Killeshandra is a retired teacher, and has had a life-long interest in History, Archaeology and the Irish Language.

The book is illustrated by Cathrina Lyons, a teacher in Farnham National School.

The 'Flanker' on the hill of Croghan - the sole relic of the Plantation in Tullyhunco

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The Mass-Rock at Drumyouth

Coronea: The Old Graveyard, site of the post-penal Chapel and Schoolhouse