

National University of Ireland  
Maynooth



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Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

**Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne and his church-building  
programme in the diocese of Meath 1798-1823**

by

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## Summary

The first quarter of the nineteenth century was a time of great change and uncertainty in Ireland. The rebellion of 1798 was followed in 1801 by the Act of Union, which brought about legislative and ecclesiastical union from Britain. If the Church of Ireland was ever to make a success of its mission in Ireland, it was in these early years of the nineteenth century. On the eve of this opportunity Thomas Lewis O'Beirne, an Irish convert and former Roman Catholic seminarian, was translated from the diocese of Ossory to the see of Meath. Availing of compensation monies, ecclesiastic bursaries and gifts or loans from the trustees of the Board of First Fruits, the bishop began twenty-five years of infrastructural change and pastoral reform on a scale not seen in any diocese in the history of the reformed church.

This study has not one, but two main concerns. The first is to set out, for the first time, a full as possible account of the infrastructural changes instituted and maintained by Bishop O'Beirne during his time in the diocese of Meath. The second is to record by architectural inventory, what remains of the churches built or rebuilt during his episcopate. The latter is particularly pressing, as already, a number of those buildings no longer dress the landscape and several others, due to their current dilapidated state, will soon disappear.

In order to gain an understanding of this spate of church building and reform, it is first necessary to investigate the bishop himself, his background, career, views, political and religious associates. Hence, O'Beirne is the subject of the first chapter. To fully appreciate the scale of O'Beirne's work in Meath and provide some historical context, the second chapter sets out the extent of the diocese and provides an overview of its history. This includes land distributions made at the time of the dissolutions, the resulting arrangement of parish patronage and tithe impropriations and the role of some of O'Beirne's episcopal predecessors. Chapters three and four concentrate on the infrastructural changes brought about by O'Beirne. Chapter five examines the contribution of parish patrons, tithe impropriators, congregations and parishioners at large.



## Table of contents

Acknowledgements		i
List of tables		ii
List of plates		v
List of illustrations		vii
List of maps		viii
List of charts		ix
List of church plans		x
List of appendices		xii
Abbreviations		xiii
Glossary of terms		xv
Introduction		1
Chapter 1	Thomas Lewis O'Beirne <i>c.</i> 1747-1823	12
Chapter 2	The Church of Ireland diocese of Meath: an overview of its structure and infrastructure from before the Reformation to 1792	40
Chapter 3	Improvements to clerical residence, glebe houses and glebe lands, 1798-1823	75
Chapter 4	Church-building, rebuilding, enlargement and repair: facilitating improvements to pastoral care in the diocese of Meath, 1798-1823	121
Chapter 5	The contribution of patrons, impropiators, congregations and parishioners: church repair, maintenance, furnishings and other essentials	180
Conclusion		232
Inventory	Architectural inventory of O'Beirne churches, 1800-23	240
Appendices		322
Bibliography		343

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## List of tables

Table 2.1	De Lacy land grants in Meath during the late twelfth century	45
Table 2.2	Hiberno religious houses in what became the Church of Ireland diocese of Meath	46
Table 2.3	Non-Hiberno religious houses in what became the Church of Ireland diocese of Meath	48
Table 2.4	Archdeacons of Meath, 1539-1800	54
Table 2.5	The simultaneous religious and civil offices held by Archdeacon John Garvey, 1559-95	56
Table 2.6	The state of the diocese of Meath, 1622	61
Table 2.7	The extent of pluralism among the lower clergy in the diocese of Meath, 1622	64
Table 2.8	The legacy of churches and chapels under the patronage of Bishop George Montgomery as surveyed in 1622	66
Table 2.9	The state of the diocese of Meath, 1682-5	70
Table 2.10	Infrastructure of the diocese of Meath, 1792	73
Table 2.11	Infrastructure of the diocese of Ossory, 1792	74
Table 3.1	Bishops of Meath during the eighteenth century	81
Table 3.2	First Fruits loans and gifts disbursed to clergymen in the diocese of Meath for building or purchasing a glebe house, 1804-22	103
Table 3.3a	First Fruits gifts disbursed for purchasing glebes in Ireland, 1801-22	106
Table 3.3b	Glebe lands procured in the diocese of Meath by means other than the First Fruits fund, 1806-18	107
Table 3.4	Board of First Fruits: gifts advanced for purchasing glebes in the diocese of Meath, 1802-22	109
Table 3.5	First Fruits gifts and loans disbursed for building glebe houses in Ireland, 1801-22	111
Table 3.6	Samples of annual values/estimated incumbent income and the effect on First Fruits loans and gifts for building glebe houses, 1801-22	112

Table 3.7	New parish unions and perpetual curacies formed in the diocese of Meath, 1800-21	116
Table 4.1	St Patrick's, Ardagh: an example of conflicting information between the sources	122
Table 4.2	The state of churches in the diocese of Meath, 1806	126
Table 4.3	Rectories and chapelries in the diocese of Meath with no infrastructural provision, 1806	128
Table 4.4	Funds for rebuilding All Saints, Mullingar, 1813-23	139
Table 4.5	First Fruits returns of monies disbursed for building, rebuilding or enlarging churches in the diocese of Meath, 1807-22	145
Table 4.6	Churches built, rebuilt, enlarged or substantially repaired in the diocese of Meath and not mentioned in First Fruits returns, 1799-1823	147
Table 4.7	Time-lag between the granting of First Fruits funds and the consecration of churches in the diocese of Meath, 1802-23	151
Table 4.8	O'Beirne's use of the Boulter and Evans funds for the support of clergymen: 1807, 1818, 1819	163
Table 4.9 (a)	Ussher's account of the state of the union of Fircall & its churches, 28 May 1622	165
Table 4.9 (b)	Bishop Dopping's visitation of Ballyboy, 1682-5	166
Table 4.9 (c)	Ecclesiastical report of the province of Armagh: diocese of Meath & union of Fircall, 3 October 1806	167
Table 4.9 (d)	Ecclesiastical report of the province of Armagh: diocese of Meath & union of Fircall, 15 September 1819	169
Table 4.9 (e)	Document of consecration: St Cormac's, Ballyboy, 11 October 1824	170
Table 4.9 (f)	Archiepiscopal visitation of the union of Fircall in the diocese of Meath, 10 August 1826.	171
Table 4.10	O'Beirne churches: structural and other problems, 1826	173
Table 5.1	Repair and maintenance of St Mary's, Athlone County Westmeath, 1799-1821	184
Table 5.2	Tithe ownership in parish unions and perpetual curacies where the diocesan held patronage	188

Table 5.3	Tithe ownership in parish unions where the crown held patronage	189
Table 5.4	Tithe ownership in parish unions under lay patronage	190
Table 5.5	Funds for the building, furnishing and maintenance of demesne churches	193
Table 5.6	Funds for the building, furnishing and maintenance of rural churches	199
Table 5.7	Funds for the building, furnishing and maintenance of village churches	211
Table 5.8	Funds for the building, furnishing and maintenance of urban churches	217
Table 5.9	St Catherine's, Tullamore: pews reserved by subscription, 2 Aug., 1809	222
Table 5.10	St Mary's, Navan: pews purchased by subscription, 16 June 1818	224

## List of plates

Plate 1.1	St Paul's, Manhattan, New York	18
Plate 3.1	Wilson's Hospital, Multifarnham, County Westmeath	82
Plate 3.2	The episcopal palace at Ardraccan, County Meath	83
Plate 3.3	Glebe house at Skryne, County Meath	105
Plate 3.4	Glebe house at Vastina, County Westmeath	113
Plate 3.5	Glebe house at Kentstown, County Meath	113
Plate 4.1a	St Mary's, Galtrim, County Meath	124
Plate 4.1b	Date stone of W entrance tower to St Mary's, Galtrim	124
Plate 4.2	All Saints, Mullingar County Westmeath	138
Plate 4.3	St Michael's, Castlepollard, County Westmeath, E elevation	143
Plate 4.4	St Catherine's, Tullamore, King's County, N elevation	144
Plate 4.5	Stonework of All Saints, Mullingar	152
Plate 4.6	St Brigid's, Vastina: exposed rubble courses and remnants of render	153
Plate 4.7	St Patrick's, Tara, County Meath: exposed interior walls	153
Plate 4.8	Leney, County Westmeath: interior N wall	154
Plate 4.9	St Patrick's, Drakestown, County Meath: interior NW corner	154
Plate 4.10	St Kieran's, Ballymaglasson, County Meath	154
Plate 4.11	St Patrick's, Drakestown	154
Plate 4.12	Composite of carves stones reused in the building of St Patrick's, Darkestown	155
Plate 4.13	St Patrick's, Tara, S elevation	156
Plate 4.14	St Ernan's, Enniskeen, County Cavan, SW aspect	156
Plate 4.15	St Columba's, Kells, County Meath, S elevation	157
Plate 4.16	Leney, S elevation	157
Plate 4.17	St Mary's, Killeagh, County Westmeath, N elevation	158
Plate 4.18	St Mary's, Navan, County Meath, N elevation	160



Plate 4.19	Composite of St Catherine's, Tullamore, S elevation	161
Plate 4.20	Date stone of St Patrick's, Drakestown	162
Plate 4.21	Date stone of St Seachlain's, Dunshaughlin	162
Plate 4.22	St Cormac's, Ballyboy, County Westmeath, SE aspect	165
Plate 5.1	St Ultan's, Ardraccon, County Meath	195
Plate 5.2	St Mary's, Kentstown, County Meath	198

## List of illustrations

Illustration 1.1	Thomas Lewis O'Beirne <i>c.</i> 1747-1823	13
Illustration 1.2	James Gillray's caricature 'Visiting the sick,' 1806	20
Illustration 4.1	St Mary's, Navan, County Meath, N elevation, <i>c.</i> 1756	160
Illustration 4.2	Early nineteenth century sketch of St Catherine's, Tullamore, S elevation	161

## List of maps

Map 2.1	Ireland <i>c.</i> 700 A.D. <i>Midhe</i> and <i>Brega</i>	41
Map 2.2	The sees of Meath before the consolidation of the diocese in the early thirteenth century	44
Map 3.1	Clongill glebe, 1826	108
Map 3.2	Distribution of glebes procured in the diocese of Meath during the O'Beirne episcopate, 1798-1823	110
Map 3.3	Distribution of glebe houses purchased or built during the O'Beirne episcopate, 1798-1823	115
Map 3.4	Changes to the structure of livings in the diocese of Meath during the O'Beirne episcopate, 1798-1823	117
Map 4.1	1837 Ordnance Survey map of Monknewtown, County Meath	130
Map 4.2	Distribution of churches built, rebuilt, enlarged or substantially repaired in the diocese of Meath during the O'Beirne episcopate, 1798-1823	150
Map 4.3	Improvements to glebes, glebe houses, churches and the structure of parishes in the diocese of Meath during the O'Beirne episcopate, 1798-1823	179

## List of charts

Chart 3.1	Improvements in the number of glebe houses and glebe lands in the diocese of Meath, 1798-1823	119
Chart 3.2	Improvements in clerical residence in the diocese of Meath, 1798-1823	119
Chart 5.1	Patronage: First Fruits gifts disbursed to churches in the diocese of Meath, 1800-23	229
Chart 5.2	Patronage: First Fruits loans disbursed to churches in the diocese of Meath, 1800-23	229
Chart 5.3	Patronage: First Fruits gifts and loans disbursed to churches in the diocese of Meath, 1800-23	230
Chart 5.4	Patronage in parishes of the diocese of Meath where churches were built or rebuilt without aid from the First Fruits, 1800-23	230
Chart 5.5	Overall importance of patronage in relation to church-building and rebuilding in the diocese of Meath, 1800-23	231

## List of church plans

Plan 4.1	Letter and accompanying drawings from J.F. Fuller to the churchwardens of Ballyboy, 31 July 1808	168
Plan 1	Ardagh, St Patrick's: ground-plan, n.d.	242
Plan 2	Athlone, St Mary's: ground-plan, 1869	244
Plan 3	Ballyboy, St Cormac's: ground-plan, 1866	245
Plan 4	Ballymore, St Owen's: ground-plan, 1808	247
Plan 5	Castlecor, St Brigids: ground-plan, n.d.	249
Plan 6	Castlejordan, ground-plan, n.d.	250
Plan 7	Clonard, St Finian's: ground-plan, showing proposed vestry room, 1834	254
Plan 8	Clonfad/Tyrrellspass, St Sinian's: ground-plan, 1861	256
Plan 9	Donaghpatrick, St Patrick's: ground-plan, 1864	258
Plan 10	Drogheda, St Mary's: ground-plan, n.d.	259
Plan 11	Drumcree, St John's: ground-plan, n.d.	261
Plan 12	Enniskeen, St Ernan's: ground-plan, 1866	266
Plan 13	Forgney, St Munis's: incomplete ground-plan, 1845	268
Plan 14	Gallen, St Mary's: set of plans, 1845	269
Plan 15	Kells, St Columba's: ground-plan, n.d.	271
Plan 16	Kentstown, St Mary's: ground-plan, n.d.	273
Plan 17	Kilcleagh, St Mary's: ground-plan, n.d.	276
Plan 18	Kilkenny West, St Canice's, set of plans, n.d.	277
Plan 19	Killeagh, St Fiach's: ground-plan, 1869	279
Plan 20	Killiconnighan, St Kinneth's: ground-plan, n.d.	280
Plan 21	Killoughey, St Eoughy's: incomplete ground-plan, n.d.	282
Plan 22	Kilshine, St Sinch's: ground-plan, n.d.	285
Plan 23	Mayne, St Nicholas's: ground-plan, n.d.	292
Plan 24	Mullingar, All Saints: ground-plan, n.d.	294

Plan 25	Newtown Fertullagh, Christ Church: ground-plan, n.d.	297
Plan 26	Painestown, St Mary's: ground-plan, n.d.	300
Plan 27 (a)	Rathconnell, St John the Baptist: ground-plan, 1855	305
Plan 27 (b)	Rathconnell, St John the Baptist: plan for a new chancel and vestry room, S & E elevations, n.d.	305
Plan 28	Skryne: ground-plan, 1839	308
Plan 29	Stackallen, St Mary's: ground-plan, 1858	311
Plan 30	Tullamore, St Catherine's: ground-plan, n.d.	318
Plan 30	Vastina, St Brigid's: ground-plan, n.d.	320

## List of appendices

Appendix 1.1	Protest against the defeat of the Irish Act of Union, 14 May 1799	322
Appendix 3.1	Church of Ireland congregations recorded in fifty-three parishes of the diocese of Meath, 1802-04	323
Appendix 3.2	Church of Ireland families recorded in eighty-one parishes of the diocese of Meath, 1733, 1804 & 1818	325
Appendix 3.3	Building accounts for the glebe house at Skryne, County Meath, 1810-13	328
Appendix 3.4	Glebe augmentation in the parish of Clongill, County Meath, 1802	329
Appendix 3.5	Glebe lands in Church of Ireland livings in the diocese of Meath, 1807-26	330
Appendix 3.6	Board of First Fruits: loans and gifts advanced for building glebe houses in the diocese of Meath, 1804-21	334
Appendix 4.1	Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne: memorial tablet	336
Appendix 4.2	Procedures to be followed during the consecration and dedication of churches	337
Appendix 5.1	Twenty additional churches now identified as having under considerable restructuring during the O'Beirne episcopate of the diocese of Meath, 1798-1823	339
Appendix 5.2	Church of Ireland families in the diocese of Meath, 1818	342

## Abbreviations

Aug.	Augustinian
<i>Archiv. Hib.</i>	<i>Archivium Hibernicum</i>
B.L.	British Library
B.M.	British Museum
D.R.O.	Devon Record Office
E	east
Frans.	Franciscan
Frans. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Order	Third Order of St Francis
Frat. Cruciferi	Fratres Cruciferi
H.R.O.	Hampshire Record Office
<i>I.H.S.</i>	<i>Irish Historical Studies</i>
<i>Jn, Eccl. Hist.</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
Knights Hosp.	Knights Hospitaller
L.B.C.A.	Luton & Bedfordshire County Archive
LD	Longford
L.P.L.	Lambeth Palace Library
MH	Meath
N	north
n.a.	not available
N.A.I.	National Archives of Ireland
n.c.	not catalogued
n.d.	no date
N.L.I.	National Library of Ireland
NE	north-east
n.p.	no page
NW	north-west
N.G.I.	National Gallery of Ireland



<i>N.I.A.H.</i>	<i>National inventory of architectural heritage</i>
n.p.	no page
N.P.G.	National Portrait Gallery
N.R.O.	Northampton Record Office
<i>O.D.N.B.</i>	<i>Oxford dictionary of national biography</i>
O.P.W.	Office of Public Works
P.C.	Perpetual curacy
<i>P.R.I.A.</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy</i>
P.R.O.	Public Record Office (Ireland)
P.R.O.N.I.	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
Q.U.B.	Queen's University Belfast
R.C.B.	Representative Church Body
Revd	Reverend
S	south
S.C.C.A.	Sheffield City Council Archives
SE	south-east
S.P.	State papers
SW	south-west
T.C.D.	Trinity College Dublin
T.N.A.	The National Archives, Kew
U.N.	University of Nottingham
U.C.D.	University College Dublin
V.M.B.	Vestry minute book
W	west
WH	Westmeath

## Glossary of terms

Apsidal	Semi-circular or polygonal extension
Arcade	Series of arches on the same plain, supported by columns, colonnettes, pilasters or piers
Ashlar	Blocks of accurately dressed, cut, squared and finished stone
Base-batter	Slope from the perpendicular
Balustrade	Series of balusters between pedestals, forming a type of parapet
Battlement	Parapet with higher and lower alternating parts
Bay	Regular structural subdivision of a building between the main supporting timbers of its long axis
Bellcote	A small gable, usually over the W end of a church, in which the bell is hung
Blank	With no openings or with a sealed recess to maintain the symmetrical appearance of a wall
Blind	See blank
Block-and-start	With regular projecting blocks
Breakfront	Having the line of its front broken by a curve or angle
Buttress	Projecting masonry, built to support a wall or corner
Capital	Topmost member of a colonnette, column or pilaster, often ornamented
Capstone	A stone laid horizontally atop upright stones
Carriage opening	An opening large enough to facilitate the passing of a carriage
Casement	Window frame of metal or timber, having the sash hung vertically so that it may open inwards or outwards
Castellated	Decorated with battlements to give the appearance of a castle
Caulked	Made watertight by pouring a sealant over
Celtic cross	Carved stone cross having a vertical shaft and horizontal arms with a circlet at its center
Chair-rail panelling	Panelling from chair-back height to floor. Also called dado-rail
Chamfered	Having the sharp edges cut away

Chancel	The liturgical E of a church, containing the sanctuary and altar. In large churches it may also contain the choir
Clasping buttress	Standing square on plan at the corner of a building
Colonnette	Small column
Collar	A horizontal transverse timber that connects a pair of rafters at a height between the apex and the wall-plate
Coloured glass	Coloured in very light shades of blue, green, yellow and pink
Coping	Top course of sloping masonry to throw off water
Corbel	A projecting stone supporting a truss, beam, arch or any superincumbent load
Corner buttress	Set at the corner of a building, at an angle of 135° with the walls
Cornice	Crowning projecting moulding
Coursed rubble	Stones roughly dressed and laid in deep courses
Crenellated	See castellated
Crow-stepped	Stones forming steps on a battlement, the highest being the crow-step
Cruciform	Cross-shaped, a church with transepts
Cusped	Projecting point formed where the foils meet in Gothic tracery
Dark glass	Opaque glass having the colour of slate
Diagonal buttress	See corner buttress
Dressings	Stones forming the surround of an opening, often projecting from the wall
Drip-moulding	A dressing over an opening to throw off water
Drip-stone	See drip-moulding
Drop-arch	Pointed-arch with its centers on the springing-line and with the span longer than the radius
Eaves Dentils	Horizontal series of small blocks, continuous or closely set and projecting beyond the naked of the wall at eaves level
Faculty	Permission to hold more than one living or permission to be absent from one's living
Finials	An ornament at the top of a pinnacle, gable, pier, spire, canopy or post
Foil	A lobe or leaf-shaped curve formed by the cusping of a circle or arch. The number of foils is indicated by a prefix; trefoil, quatrefoil, cinquefoil,

	multifoil
Four-centered arch	Perpendicular openings with upper central arcs having centers below the springing-line, flanked by two arcs with centers on the springing-line
Fractables	Cope on a gable wall carried-up as a parapet; stepped gables
Gablet	A buttress or pinnacle with a small gable-shaped motif
Geometric tracery	Consisting mainly of circles or foiled circles
Header	A stone with its longer dimension buried within the wall and its shorter face exposed
Head-stop	Label-stop carved to resemble a human head
High-relief	A sculpted form that projects more than halfway from its background
Hipped roof	Roof with all sides sloping and meeting at the hips
Hood-moulding	See drip-moulding
Incised	A motif or design cut into the surface of its surround
Keystone	A central wedge-shaped stone at the crown of an arch, sometimes with a carved motif or date inscription
King-post trusses	An upright post set on a tie-beam or collar and rising to the apex to support a ridge-piece
Kneeler stone	Large stone set at the top of a wall to finish the eaves
Label-moulding	See drip-moulding
Label-stop	An ornamental boss at the ends of a hood-moulding
Lancet	A tall, narrow, pointed-arched window aperture with one or more lights of similar shape
Lateral buttress	A buttress standing at the corner of a building on axis with one wall
Latin cross	Three topmost arms of equal length with a longer bottom arm
Lattice	Lozenge-shaped
Light	An aperture through which daylight passes
Lintel	The beam over an aperture, carrying the wall above and spans between the jambs
Louvers	Usually of timber. Narrow horizontal strips, facing downwards and outwards, each overlaps the one below, permitting the circulation of air while throwing off water
Lunette	Portion of a vertical plain beneath a segmental or semi-circular arch,

	bounded by the springing-line
Mullion	Vertical post between the lights of a window
Naked	The main plane of a building's façade
Nave	The main body of a church, between the W wall and the chancel
Oculus	Circular opening or recess
Ogee	A double-curve, bending one way and then the other
Parapet	A low wall at the edge of a drop
Parish clerk	A layman employed to assist in the management of the parish
Perpendicular tracery	Also called bar-tracery. Formed of upright, straight-sided panels above the lights of a window
Pilasters	Shallow pier or rectangular column that projects slightly from a wall
Pinnacle	Tapering stone found atop the corners of a church tower or buttress, often surmounted by a finial
Pitched roof	The most common type of roof with gables at both ends
Plain glass	Clear and uncoloured
Pointed-arched	Any type of pointed arch but especially a two-centred or equilateral arch when the radii of two arcs are equal to the span
Quatrefoil	See foil
Quoins	Angular courses of stone laid at the corners of a building, usually laid alternately as headers and stretchers. Used to dress and strengthen corners
Raised verge	Slight projection formed by a pitched roof over the naked of a gable wall
Random rubble	Rough stones of irregular shape and size, laid in random order with no courses and held together with mortar
Rector	A parochial clergyman, who may have been entitled to part or all of the tithes
Render	The finish applied to a surface not intended to be exposed. See roughcast
Reredos	Ornamental facing behind an altar. It may be painted, carved or panelled
Reticulated tracery	Formed of circles drawn into ogee shapes at top and bottom to give a net-like appearance
Rib vaulting	A series of open arches or ribs with an infill laid between them to create vaulting
Ridge-comb	Also called a ridge-crest. An ornamental covering of tile, clay or metal that seals the apex joints between both sides of a pitched roof

Ridge-piece	See ridge-plate
Roll moulding	See hood-moulding
Roughcast	Exterior plaster comprising lime, sand, water and small pebbles. Thrown over render before it has dried
Roundel	Circular window-opening or circular glazed light
See	A diocese under the jurisdiction of a bishop
Segmental-headed	An arch with it's center below the springing-line
Shoulder-arched	Flat arch or lintel supported on corbels with quadrants above, rising from the jambs
Snecked	Rubble courses broken by smaller stones called snecks
Spandrels	Spaces between the outside of an arch and its surrounding frame
Springing-line	Horizontal plane from which an arch begins to rise upwards
Sprocket	Small triangular or wedge-shaped piece
Stained glass	The fitting together of various shapes of richly coloured glass using strips of lead to form a picture or pattern
Stretcher	A stone with its shorter dimension buried within the wall and its longer dimension exposed
String course	Stone course projecting from the surface of a wall
Surround	The frame of an architectural feature
Switchback mullion	Mullions with alternating sharp ascents and descents
Three-centered arch	Depressed arch with two arcs struck from the springing-line with a central arc struck from below
Tie-beam	The main transverse timber that connects the feet of the principle rafters or the blades of a truss
Tithes	The tenth part of all produce, in money or in kind that was paid to the church
Tooled	Small indents made on stone by the mason
Transept	An arm set at right-angles from the N and S of the nave or hall, giving the building it's cruciform shape
Trefoil	See Foil
Tripartite	Vaulting on a triangular plan having three parts
Truncated	With top removed

Truss	Rigid structural framework, usually made of timbers, that bridges a space, each end resting on supports at regular intervals and providing support to the longitudinal timbers that carry the rafters. Often defines bays
Tuscan columns	Column of the Tuscan Order
Tympanum	Area above an opening, filling the space between a door and the point of the arch
Venetian-arched	Semi-circular arch framing two semicircular-headed lights and separated by a colonnette above which is a roundel in the space between the tops of the smaller arches and the main intrados
Vestibule	Enclosed ante-room or entrance hall
Vicar	A parochial clergyman, not entitled to receive tithes
Visitation	Annual report on the state of the parishes in a diocese, including an account of its buildings and clergymen
Wall-plate	Longitudinal timber on which roof trusses, rafters or joints rest
Y-tracery	A mullion branching into two forming a Y shape

## Introduction

The first quarter of the nineteenth century was a time of great change and uncertainty in Ireland. The rebellion of 1798 was followed in 1801 by the Act of Union, which brought about legislative and ecclesiastical union from Britain. However, the Church of Ireland, though an arm of government and led by government appointees, many of whom were members of prominent Anglo-Irish landed families, in one key respect was not thoroughly united with the Church of England. While the fifth article of the union declared the Irish and English churches united as one Protestant episcopal church, the Irish element was to remain outside the remit of Canterbury. Despite petitions from the Irish hierarchy (an effort in which Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne played a prominent role) to place the Irish church under the primacy of Canterbury, the anomaly persisted, and the Church of Ireland retained its name and remained the established church in Ireland until it was disestablished by Gladstone's Irish Church Act in 1869. Nonetheless the enactment of the union brought considerable financial benefits to the Church of Ireland and treasury monies were made available for purchasing glebe lands and building glebe houses and churches. If the Church of Ireland was ever to make a success of its mission in Ireland, it was in these early years of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> On the eve of this opportunity Thomas Lewis O'Beirne, an Irish convert and former Roman Catholic seminarian, was translated from the diocese of Ossory to the see of Meath. Availing of compensation monies, ecclesiastic bursaries and gifts or loans from the trustees of the Board of First Fruits, the bishop began twenty-five years of infrastructural change and pastoral reform on a scale not seen in any diocese in the history of the reformed church.

O'Beirne represents the possibilities of what could have been achieved for the Church of Ireland. His career, from a Roman Catholic seminary to the Church of Ireland episcopate of the see of Meath, and his unsurpassed achievement in church building and pastoral reform, was symbolic of the state church's capacity to

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<sup>1</sup> See Joseph Liechty, 'Irish evangelicalism, Trinity College Dublin, and the mission of the Church of Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century' (Ph.D. thesis, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1987).



attract able and energetic converts and place them in leading positions, in this important period of the church's history. This could have been expected to have earned him more notice than he has received, and it seems extraordinary that until now, Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne has been so strangely neglected.

This study has not one, but two main concerns. The first is to set out, for the first time, a full as possible account of the infrastructural changes instituted and maintained by Bishop O'Beirne during his time in the diocese of Meath. The second is to record what remains of the churches built or rebuilt during his episcopate. The latter is particularly pressing, as already, a number of those buildings no longer dress the landscape and several others, due to their current dilapidated state, will soon disappear.

In order to gain an understanding of this spate of church building and reform, it is first necessary to investigate the bishop himself, his background, career, views, political and religious associates. Hence, O'Beirne is the subject of the first chapter. An early biography appeared in Richard Phillips's *Public characters of 1799-1800*.<sup>2</sup> A later biographical piece was furnished by Canon John Healy in 1908.<sup>3</sup> Another is James Kelly's entry in the *Oxford dictionary of national biography*.<sup>4</sup> Additional short biographical notes by other authors are acknowledged in the bibliography appended to this thesis, and the extent to which they have relied upon each other is obvious. The most recent biographical account of O'Beirne has been published by the present author, aided by the bishop's last will and testament, lately discovered at the the National Archives, London.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Phillips (ed), *Public characters of 1799-1800* (London, 1807), pp 149-65.

<sup>3</sup> John Healy, *History of the diocese of Meath* (2 vols, Dublin, 1908), ii, pp 104-63.

<sup>4</sup> James Kelly, *O.D.N.B.*, 'Thomas Lewis O'Beirne (1749-1823)' (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/20438>) (12 Dec. 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Caroline Gallagher, 'Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne of Meath (c. 1747-1823): politician and churchman' in *Riocht Na Midhe*, xx (2009), pp 189-208; Caroline Gallagher, Amendments to Oxford dictionary of national biography, 'Thomas Lewis O'Beirne (1749-1823)' (<http://www.oxforddnb.com>), Oct. 2009.

Contemporary and subsequent comment portrayed O'Beirne as a controversialist and a man who sought and gained the acquaintance of the most influential figures of the time. This is substantiated within the primary sources by several personal and official letters to holders of high ecclesiastical and political office. There is no great collection of O'Beirne papers in any repository, and all letters used in the following chapters have been found in the official or family papers of the persons to whom they were written. In his correspondence with various notables such as Primate William Stuart, Archbishop Charles Broderick, Edmund Burke, Lord Castlereagh, Earl Fitzwilliam, the duke of Portland, Lord Hardwicke and Baron Colchester, O'Beirne, without reservation, voiced his opinions on the failings of government in matters relating to Ireland, the Church of Ireland and the management of the Roman Catholic church in Ireland. While all of his correspondence shows that he was a man of strong opinions, and was a giver rather than a seeker of advice, this is nowhere more obvious than in his lengthy letter to Charles Abbot in 1801.<sup>6</sup> This letter sets out O'Beirne's advice on how the ecclesiastical affairs of all religions should be managed in Ireland. He pointed out the need for new legislative measures, to compel Church of Ireland clergy to reside and attend one cure. He stressed the need for new glebe houses, enhanced glebes, new churches and a school in every parish. O'Beirne also recommended that Roman Catholic priests and ministers of the dissenting religions should be paid a government stipend.<sup>7</sup> This letter also leaves no doubt that the improvements he intended to pursue in his own diocese were of his own initiative and invention. This is not to suggest that he intended to work outside the existing framework, but that the framework should be improved, in order to allow all Irish bishops to improve the state of the Church of Ireland within their dioceses. The letter is signed by O'Beirne alone. There is no evidence to suggest that he consulted with other Irish bishops on any of the proposals he put forward at that time. Indeed, there is nothing to suggest in any of the bishop's letters that he worked or consulted closely with his ecclesiastical peers or superiors, at any time.

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<sup>6</sup> O'Beirne to Abbot, April 1801 (T.N.A., Charles Abbot, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Colchester papers, 1799-1814, MS P.R.O., 30/9/163, ff 138-64).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

O'Beirne's other correspondence for the period under study has facilitated an examination of his plan to increase the visibility of the Church of Ireland in the most physical sense, by building glebe houses and churches throughout the diocese.<sup>8</sup> This material sheds considerable light on O'Beirne's efforts to secure funding on a large scale, not only from First Fruits but also from a number of long forgotten episcopal bursaries. The letters have been found in several repositories in Ireland, England and the United States of America. Full details are contained in the bibliography.

O'Beirne's views on the absolute necessity for clerical residence, dedication to pastoral care and the importance of religious observance were made clear in his published sermons, charges to the clergy in the dioceses of Ossory and Meath, and in his visitation observations. His printed works are housed in the National Library of Ireland, and episcopal visitations at the Representative Church Body library, Dublin.

To fully appreciate the scale of O'Beirne's work in Meath and provide some historical context, the second chapter sets out the extent of the diocese and provides an overview of its history. This includes land distributions made at the time of the dissolutions, the resulting arrangement of parish patronage and tithe impropriations and the role of some of O'Beirne's episcopal predecessors. Sixteenth and seventeenth century manuscript sources from Lambeth Palace Library, the National Archives, London and Daniel Augustus Beaufort's contemporary survey of the diocese are the main primary sources used here. Gwynn and Hadcock's works, Hogan's *Onamasticon goedelicum* and Brendan Scott's recent study of the Tudor diocese of Meath are among the printed sources used to impart some idea of the chronological development and management of the diocese from early times to the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> O'Beirne to Archbishop Stuart, 21 May 1804 (L.B.C.A., Wynne of Tempsford papers, MS WWY 994/36).

<sup>9</sup> Aubrey Gwynn, *The medieval province of Armagh from 1460-1546* (Dundalk, 1946); Aubrey Gwynn & R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval houses: Ireland* (London, 1970); Edmund Hogan, *Onamasticon*

Chapters three and four concentrate on the infrastructural changes brought about by O'Beirne. Numerous manuscript sources are used here to illustrate the bishop's approach to stamping out pluralism and non-residence among his clergy, and the opposition he met in implementing his intentions in that regard. However, his efforts were aided to some extent by supportive landlords and the treasury. The former offered glebe lands and sites on which to build glebe houses and churches. The latter, through the trustees of the Board of First Fruits, provided gifts and loans. However, parishioners and congregations also contributed towards the building and rebuilding of churches by means of a cess. This was a vital element in the process that has, until now, been given little consideration. The Representative Church Body library houses several important manuscript sources relating to O'Beirne's improvements in Meath and all have been extensively used here. However, all these documents are official in nature and nothing offering a personal perspective on the O'Beirne period has been found. There are many documents concerning the condition of several parish churches, the collection of parish rates and papers of licence regarding the transfer of clergymen.<sup>10</sup> 'The returns of Protestants in Meath diocese, 1802-03', was commissioned by O'Beirne and used as an aid in his reorganisation of the diocese.<sup>11</sup> Although only half of the entire survives, it is nonetheless a valuable source. A diocesan volume of proprietors, denominations of land and observations compiled by John Pollock of Mountainstown, under instruction from O'Beirne in 1811,<sup>12</sup> and a visitation notebook in the bishop's own hand entitled 'The state of the diocese of Meath in the year 1818' greatly contribute towards a better understanding of the state of individual parishes and the improvements made during the period under study.<sup>13</sup> There are also a number of records relating to individual parish visitations throughout the O'Beirne incumbency, including a personal account, found among his private papers, of a

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*goedelicum* (Dublin, 1918); Brendan Scott, *Religion & Reformation in the Tudor diocese of Meath* (Dublin & Portland OR, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Papers relating to individual parishes, 1537-1956 (R.C.B., MSS D7/10/1-46).

<sup>11</sup> Returns of the Protestants of Meath diocese, 1802-03 (R.C.B., MS D7/12/2.2).

<sup>12</sup> Pollock survey, 1811 (R.C.B., MS D7/7/1).

<sup>13</sup> The state of the diocese of Meath in the year 1818 (R.C.B., MS D7/157).

visit to the Athboy Union.<sup>14</sup> While the unavailability of original First Fruits funding manuscripts persists, the board's returns to government and returns of the auditors of public accounts are used in these chapters and are detailed in the bibliography. Neither is free of the error of omission. However, the gaps can be largely filled by the Representative Church Body's collection of vestry minute and account books. In fact it is in the vestry minutes and parish accounts alone that the scale and true cost of parochial infrastructural improvements is most clearly seen. Vestry minutes have also proved invaluable to the substance of chapter five, which examines the contribution of parish patrons, tithe impropiators, congregations and parishioners at large. Again, it is these particular manuscripts that provide flesh for the bones of all other relevant sources.

To place O'Beirne's ecclesiastical reforms in the context of their time and broader environment, state papers, government bills and statements of account pertaining to this period in Irish and Church of Ireland history have been used here. The Rebellion papers at the National Archives of Ireland contain some entries relating to areas in the diocese of Meath.<sup>15</sup> The *Bill for enforcing residence of spiritual persons on benefices in Ireland, 1808*<sup>16</sup> is a single example of a series of sources throughout the period that offers information relating to church funding and reform.

Samuel Lewis's *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* has been useful in some respects.<sup>17</sup> However, the volumes are not without error, particularly in respect of amounts disbursed by the First Fruits and the dating of churches. Other directories used here include John Bateman's *The great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*, U.H. Hussey De Burgh's *The landowners of Ireland: an alphabetical list of the owners of estates of 500 acres or £500 valuation and upwards in Ireland*. Burke's *A genealogical and heraldic dictionary of the peerage*

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<sup>14</sup> Athboy visitation, n.d. (R.C.B., O'Beirne, private papers, MS D7/2/1/1).

<sup>15</sup> Rebellion papers (N.A.I., Callendar [sic] 106, 4. no. 27), p. 396.

<sup>16</sup> *Bill for enforcing residence of spiritual persons on benefices in Ireland, 1808*, H.C. 1806 (18), i, 13.

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (2 vols, London, 1837).

*and baronetage of the British Empire* and *A genealogical and heraldic dictionary of the landed gentry of Great Britain and Ireland* have been consulted to verify the names and holdings of a number of landlords in the diocese.<sup>18</sup>

The fifty-seven churches long attributed to the O'Beirne episcopate and the additional twenty identified by the present study are the most evocative symbols of what it was possible for the Church of Ireland to achieve at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The immediate environment and architectural composition of each church indicates the influences of its broader historical framework. Most church sites had been long established, some since early Christian times, others since the formation of the civil parishes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This pre-existing arrangement was largely left undisturbed during the O'Beirne episcopate, except in cases where the parish was over-large and presented problems of proximity for the congregation and clergyman. The simplicity or complexity of the style of church buildings, their size and ornamentation were greatly determined by funding. As is shown here in chapter five, the financial wherewithal required to build, furnish and maintain a church was often little connected to the means or extent of the Church of Ireland congregation. Urban churches of the time were generally larger, spired and more externally ornate than their rural counterparts. To address these issues, one must consider the contribution of not only the Board of First Fruits, but also the financial assistance raised from within the parish. All churches have been located and photographed by the author, and are presented here, together with architectural descriptions, in the final section. Casey and Rowan's *The buildings of Ireland: north Leinster* and the Office of Public Works *National inventory of architectural heritage* have been used as aids.<sup>19</sup> Errors and omissions in both are noted here and appropriate amendments made.

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<sup>18</sup> Bateman (reprint, Leicester, 1971); Hussey de Burgh (Dublin, 1881); John Bernard Burke (15<sup>th</sup> ed., London, 1853); Sir Bernard Burke (4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2 vols, London, 1863).

<sup>19</sup> Christine Casey & Alistair Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: north Leinster* (London, 1993); *National inventory of architectural heritage* ([www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah)).

The current state of research and bibliography of the Church of Ireland for this period comprises many valuable works. However, no work relates the aspects of church-building and material Protestant culture within the environment of change immediately following the Act of Union. All secondary works consulted during this study are included in the bibliography. Some have proved invaluable in providing background information, thereby contributing towards the contextualisation of O'Beirne and the diocese of Meath. They require particular mention here. Desmond Bowen's work emphasises proselytising leaders and the divisions and suspicions between Protestant, Catholic and convert.<sup>20</sup> Toby Barnard's *A new anatomy of Ireland: the Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* examines the life and experience of Irish Protestant peers, squires, gentlemen, soldiers, shopkeepers, servants and women. The ways in which Protestants sought to retain their social and economic ascendancy are examined. Although the work ends in 1770, it is invaluable as an indicator of the legacy of life and living passed on to Irish Protestants, of whatever social group, in the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Barnard's *Irish Protestant ascents and descents, 1641-1770* also proved most useful on two counts. First, it is an invaluable collection of essays exploring the lives of 'ascendancy' Protestant living in Ireland from the seventeenth century to 1770. Secondly, the origins and connections of several prominent Meath families are given attention.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the same author's *A guide to sources for the history of material culture in Ireland, 1500-2000* has been of great use, due to its references to church architecture, building materials, funerary art, estate houses and demesnes.<sup>23</sup> Barnard's assertion that details of furnishings are hard to uncover, have proved correct.<sup>24</sup> Apart from the R.C.B. inventory of church plate, there is nowhere any catalogue of furnishings to be found, and only in cases where gifted furnishings carry neat brass plates with the name and date of the donor is there any way of knowing from whence it came.

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<sup>20</sup> Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland: a study of Protestant-Catholic relations in Ireland between the Act of Union and disestablishment* (Dublin, 1978).

<sup>21</sup> Toby Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland: the Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (New Haven & London, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Toby Barnard, *Irish Protestant ascents and descents, 1649-1770* (Dublin & Portland OR, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Toby Barnard, *A guide to sources for the history of material culture in Ireland, 1500-2000* (Dublin, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> Toby Barnard, *A guide to sources*, p. 49.

The notable work of Alan Acheson has provided a valuable example of denominational history, examining the general situation throughout the history of the Church of Ireland.<sup>25</sup> His chapter on the Georgian church between 1730 and 1822 is an important piece relating to the general state of the Church of Ireland during the period studied here; its evangelicals and the overcrowded, lobbyist, nepotistic clerical order.<sup>26</sup> This particular chapter also includes detail of the church's machinations and clerical organisation from the lowest curacy to the heights of an archbishopric. D. H. Akenson's *The Church of Ireland: ecclesiastical reform and revolution, 1800-1885* is another excellent general history that provided much background detail and aided the process of contextualisation.<sup>27</sup>

A. P. W. Malcomson's work on Archbishop Charles Agar, though bordering on the hagiographical, often at the direct expense of O'Beirne, is a valuable biography of Agar in the context of the religious and political environment during the opening years of the nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup> The family power base of 20,000 statute acres in Kilkenny, was directly related to the five seats the Agars could control in the Irish House of Commons and is indicative of their considerable parliamentary advantage. Agar's ancestry and familial connections offer a striking alternative to those of his contemporary, Thomas Lewis O'Beirne and thus Malcomson's work enhances rather than debases O'Beirne's accomplishments, *albeit* unwittingly.

John Healy's *History of the diocese of Meath*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1908) is a most important work on the diocese. The volumes comprise episcopal biographies, useful lists of clergymen, church buildings, notable items of plate and commentary on the state of affairs in the diocese over time. However, Healy's work was written

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<sup>25</sup> Alan Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland, 1691-2001* (Dublin, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 66-137.

<sup>27</sup> D.H. Akenson, *The Church of Ireland: ecclesiastical reform and revolution, 1800-1885* (New Haven, 1971).

<sup>28</sup> A.P.W. Malcomson, *Archbishop Agar: churchmanship and politics in Ireland, 1760-1810* (Dublin & Portland OR, 2002).



more than one hundred years ago, and the ground covered is in need of some correction, a fresh perspective and considerable updating.

*Ríocht Na Midhe*, the annual publication of the Meath archaeological and historical society has published numerous articles relevant to the research project. Several authors have contributed pieces on the many landed estates of counties Meath, Westmeath and Cavan. Useful pieces have also been written on civil disturbance and rebellion, Catholic and Protestant clergy and the sectarianism of the nineteenth century. These include Brian Gurrin's 'The Union of Navan in 1766' and 'Navan, County Meath in 1766'. The articles are a study of the 1766 religious census, conducted by the parish rector Daniel Augustus Beaufort, and they have been most useful in offering approximate figures on the numbers of Church of Ireland members in the diocese.<sup>29</sup> Gurrin made the reasonable point that as Beaufort had a great interest in demographics, his census returns are likely to have a higher degree of accuracy than those made by most of his contemporaries.<sup>30</sup> As a statistician, Gurrin provided an excellent database. His interpretation, explanation and use of the returns have been invaluable in understanding the religious composition of the area at that time.

The purpose of any research project is to examine the current state of research and produce an original work that contributes to the current bibliography of the chosen topic. As seen here, there exists an amount of primary material relating to Thomas Lewis O'Beirne's reform of the diocese of Meath from 1798 to 1823, much of it created by the bishop himself. His correspondence, clerical charges and observations indicate his views on all manner of religious and political situations pertaining to his diocese and to Ireland in general. In order to produce a study of the diocese of Meath during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, many other factors required consideration. The examination of church buildings and their funding and the study of contemporary sources generated by parliament,

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<sup>29</sup> Brian Gurrin, 'The union of Navan in 1766' in *Ríocht Na Midhe*, vol xiv (2003), pp 144-69; Brian Gurrin, 'Navan county Meath in 1766' in *Ríocht Na Midhe*, vol xv (2004), pp 83-100 respectively.

<sup>30</sup> Gurrin, 'The union of Navan', p. 146.

parliamentarians, government offices, Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy and landed families, have provided additional material that has enabled an examination of the broad and narrow context at parochial, diocesan and national level.

## Chapter one

### Thomas Lewis O'Beirne c. 1747-1823

The physical evidence of the O'Beirne episcopate is well illustrated by the many glebe houses and churches that still stand, many in their entirety, throughout the diocese of Meath. In this first chapter, the bishop's character, influences, attachments and views are examined by way of his published works and the surviving manuscripts relating to his visitations and correspondence, the correspondence of his immediate family and some letters to and from lower and higher clergy. The majority of his surviving letters were written to Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Castlereagh, O'Beirne's longtime patron the duke of Portland and Archbishop William Stuart of Armagh. The material throws light on his position in the whig circle and indicates the use he made of his offices and political connections and the use those connections made of him.

Thomas Lewis O'Beirne (Illustration 1.1) was born into a Roman Catholic farming family at Farnagh in Longford about the year 1749. Following some years at the Jesuit seminary of Saint Omer in France, he left for England, where he attended Trinity College Cambridge, was ordained in the Church of England and embarked on a career that took him to America during the War of Independence. He was a noted scholar, orator and political writer, who sought and gained the confidence and friendship of leading political whigs of the day. Although he abandoned Catholicism and often criticized the superstitions of Romish practice and clergy, he aligned himself with politicians who were sympathetic to some measures of Catholic relief. His talents and contacts gained him the bishoprics of Ossory and Meath, where he earned a reputation as one of the most effective reforming bishops of the first quarter of nineteenth century Ireland. No record remains of his parentage or their connections but the careers and marriages of his siblings reflect affluence and social standing which indicates that they too were Protestant.



Andrew Dunn, c. 1800

N.G.I. 6314

As mentioned in the introduction, O'Beirne's earliest biography appeared in *Public characters of 1799-1800*.<sup>1</sup> In the extant edition, Phillips noted that several important corrections relative to 'material points connected with the early part of his Lordship's life and connections' were included. One can reasonably assume the corrections were furnished by the bishop himself. This suspicion can be well justified by the nature of the corrections, all of which denote O'Beirne as being chief of one of 'the most ancient and respectable of the Irish families of the province of Connaught'.<sup>2</sup> There are many genealogical and contemporaneous claims in the Phillips biography that, due to the absence of official evidence, are impossible to either verify or discredit. In the interests of objectivity, one must also be wary of attributing these details entirely to either O'Beirne or Phillips. One such claim states that Thomas Lewis attended the Roman Catholic diocesan school of Ardagh in Longford town.<sup>3</sup> There is no record confirming the existence of a diocesan school in Ardagh during the period in question, but there are few records

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Phillips, *Public characters*, pp 149-65.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

relating to any aspect of the Ardagh diocese at that time. One assertion cannot be considered other than erroneous. It is claimed that O'Beirne attended the school 'until the class to which he belonged went off to Trinity College, Dublin, in the year 1763'.<sup>4</sup> Trinity College did not admit Roman Catholics until 1793. Without exception, boys attending a Roman Catholic diocesan school were of the Catholic religion and ineligible for a Trinity education. They were in any event, most likely to continue their studies at a European seminary, as was the case with O'Beirne and his brother Denis. Whatever the reliability of Phillips's work, it is worth continuing with the details of his O'Beirne biography and, where possible, correlating the information with other sources.

Thomas Lewis was the eldest of four brothers. The second brother Denis took Roman Catholic Orders in France and was parish priest of Templemichael in the town of Longford, when Thomas Lewis was rector there.<sup>5</sup> The third brother John, according to Phillips, served the office of high sheriff of the county of Longford and commanded the light infantry company in the militia of that county. 'He is married to Miss Peacocke, daughter of Sir Joseph Peacocke, Baronet of the county of Clare, and niece to Lord Castle Coote and Sir Eyre Coote.'<sup>6</sup> Although John O'Beirne did in fact marry Eliza Peacocke in 1800<sup>7</sup>, there is no official record of him having ever occupied the post of high sheriff. However, in 1797 a Captain John O'Beirne, of Longford Kady Regiment, wrote in protest against 'the shameful way the Orange boys, headed by Officers in full Yeomanry uniform, treat the Catholics'.<sup>8</sup> A note included with this protest, gives O'Beirne as the brother of Thomas Lewis, who at that time, was bishop of Ossory.<sup>9</sup> The fourth brother Andrew, served and died as an officer in the East India Company.<sup>10</sup> It is likely that Andrew's position with the company was secured through his brother's English connections. Due to the careers and marriages of these two brothers, it is likely that

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> James McNamee, *History of the diocese of Ardagh* (Dublin, 1954), p. 793.

<sup>6</sup> Phillips, *Public characters*, p. 152.

<sup>7</sup> J. B. Burke, *A Peerage & baronetage of the British Empire*, p. 784.

<sup>8</sup> Callendar 106 4, no. 27 (N.A.I., Rebellion papers, p 396).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.150.

<sup>10</sup> Phillips, *Public characters*, p. 152.

they too were Protestant. This notion is not so tenuous as it may first appear. O'Beirne also had at least two sisters, both of whom were Protestant. Revd Thomas De Lacy, Church of Ireland archdeacon of Meath, was the son of O'Beirne's sister. Another sister, Catherine Molloy Shaw of Ardandra Castle County Longford was also Protestant.<sup>11</sup> None are identifiable on the convert rolls.<sup>12</sup>

Thomas Lewis and Denis attended their religious studies for the Catholic priesthood under Jesuit instruction at the college of Saint Omer. Due to the laws prohibiting such an education for Irish Catholics, students often used assumed names and although neither brother was recorded as having attended, their education at the college has not been disputed.<sup>13</sup> Authors are generally agreed that Thomas Lewis left Saint Omer's owing to ill health, although the extent to which they rely upon each other for this information is obvious. A letter of introduction, written by his college mentor Patrick Joseph Plunkett on 6 June 1768, supports this assumption and indicates there was nothing untoward attached to the young student's departure:

The bearer, Mr. O'Beirne, is a young gentleman of this house who returns to Ireland to recover his health by breathing the native air for some time. His promising parts and amiable qualities have made him dear to all the members of the society in which he lived, and particularly to me. I love and esteem him exceedingly. Every civility shown to him, I shall acknowledge as conferred upon myself.<sup>14</sup>

The relationship between pupil and mentor continued without malice on either side. When O'Beirne became Church of Ireland bishop of Meath in 1798, Plunkett was Roman Catholic bishop of the same diocese. They lived only two miles apart, Plunkett in Navan and O'Beirne in the palace at Ardbraccan. They were on good terms. In fact, while taking the waters at Bath in 1803, the O'Beirnes were visited by Plunkett, who encouraged the sickly Thomas Lewis to persevere with taking the

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<sup>11</sup> Last will & testament of Thomas Lewis O'Beirne, 12 Nov. 1819 (T.N.A., MS Prob 11/1673, f. 223); Gallagher, 'Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne: politician and churchman', p. 190.

<sup>12</sup> Eileen O'Byrne & Anne Chamney, *The convert rolls: the calendar of the convert rolls, 1703-1838* (Dublin, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Geoffrey Holt, *Saint Omer's and Bruges colleges, 1593-1773, a bibliographical dictionary* (Norfolk, 1979), p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Transcribed in Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 112.

waters.<sup>15</sup> Nigel Yates has written of other comparable occurrences and attitudes of ecumenism between Church of Ireland and titular bishops in the last quarter of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth century. Yates particularly noted the donation of £100 from the Church of Ireland's Bishop Hervey of Derry towards the building of the Roman Catholic Long Tower church; a set of fifteenth-century vestments gifted by Chenevix, the Church of Ireland bishop of Waterford and Lismore to his Roman Catholic counterpart; Percy, the Church of Ireland bishop of Dromore, sitting down to dinner with the titular bishop of the same diocese.<sup>16</sup>

The chronological order of events for the immediate years following O'Beirne's departure from Saint Omer's is much disputed by authors.<sup>17</sup> Nor is there any reference indicating his reasons for changing religion. In fact, some writers claim he had been ordained a Romish priest and that it was he who performed the marriage between Maria Fitzherbert and the future George III in 1785, and that he had never received Church of England orders at all.<sup>18</sup> It was indeed possible for both Thomas Lewis and his brother to have been ordained in Ireland before leaving for the continent. This was a facility often offered to young men prior to their clerical education, as if ordained, they could support themselves to some extent by performing baptisms and marriages for a fee.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, correspondence between the author Maria Edgeworth and O'Beirne, his wife and daughters, indicates a close friendship between both families over a lifetime. Edgeworth was related to the Fitzherberts through her aunt Margaret Ruxton Fitzherbert of Blackcastle, County Meath.<sup>20</sup> At the time of the royal marriage, Thomas Lewis served the parish of Stamfordham Northumberland, which was but twelve miles distant from the town of Hexam and the country estate of Beaufront, the seat of

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<sup>15</sup> Jane Ormsby O'Beirne to Anne Caroline Tottenham La Touche, 28 Sept. 1803 (MS in the possession of David A. La Touche, New York).

<sup>16</sup> Nigel Yates, *The religious condition of Ireland, 1770-1850* (Oxford, 2006), p. 253.

<sup>17</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 113-6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114; Anthony Cogan, *The diocese of Meath ancient and modern* (3 vols, Dublin, 1870), ii, p. 186; W. Fitzpatrick, *The sham squire, jottings about Ireland about seventy years ago* (London, 1866), no 26, n.p.

<sup>19</sup> L.W.B. Brockliss, P. Ferté, 'Irish clerics in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: a statistical study' in *PRIA*, 87c (1987), pp 527-72.

<sup>20</sup> Augustus Hare (ed.), *The life and letters of Maria Edgeworth* (reprint, Gloucester, 2007).

Maria Fitzherbert's uncle and marriage witness, Henry Errington.<sup>21</sup> However, even when these connections are viewed together with the position O'Beirne held within the whig and regency circle, the contention that he performed the marriage cannot be proven.

On leaving Saint Omer's it is generally agreed that Thomas Lewis spent a number of months in London. According to Phillips, it was during that time he became acquainted with Dr Hinchcliffe, bishop of Peterborough and master of Trinity College, Cambridge. The friendship and influence of Hinchcliffe was the catalyst that 'changed the whole tenor of his life'.<sup>22</sup> Through Hinchcliffe O'Beirne met Dr Cornwallis, archbishop of Canterbury, to whom he recanted the errors of popery.<sup>23</sup> With the encouragement of Cornwallis and under the auspices of Hinchcliffe, O'Beirne continued his education at Trinity College Cambridge.<sup>24</sup> He took orders in the Church of England on 6 June 1773 and received the living of Grendon in Northamptonshire, a parish belonging to his former college and under the patronage of his friend and mentor, Dr Hinchcliffe.<sup>25</sup> In light of the letter of introduction given by Plunkett on 6 June 1768, it was precisely five years to the day from leaving the Catholic seminary at Saint Omer to being ordained a priest of the Church of England. Three years later, Lord Howe was appointed commissioner and commander in chief of the expedition to America. Hinchcliffe secured for O'Beirne the position of private secretary to Howe and chaplain to the fleet.<sup>26</sup> This posting Phillips described as 'the situation that may be said to have led to all his future fortunes' and Healy asserted 'served to bring the young ecclesiastic into notice'.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Stephen Leslie (ed.), *Dictionary of national biography* (63 vols, London & New York, 1889), xix, p. 170.

<sup>22</sup> Phillips, *Public characters*, p. 154.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 113; Henry Longley, *Northamptonshire and Rutland clergy* (London, 1941), p. 107.

<sup>26</sup> David Crooks, 'Succession lists of the clergy of Ardagh' (provisional reproduction and updating of the succession lists for the diocese of Ardagh of 1932 by Canon James Blennerhassett Leslie) (R.C.B., unpublished typescript, n.p.).

<sup>27</sup> Phillips, *Public characters*, p. 155; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 113.



The American expedition brought Thomas Lewis to notice on two counts. In St Paul's church, Manhattan (Plate 1.1), on the Sunday following the great fire of New York in 1776, he preached what was described by Phillips as a remarkable sermon on the 'purest sentiments of charity and brotherly love'.<sup>28</sup> O'Beirne's sermon advised the congregation to 'be of one heart and one mind and the Lord will bring you again; every man to his heritage and every man to his land.' He also cautioned '...fear thou the Lord and the king and meddle not with them'.<sup>29</sup> He followed by condemning the revolutionaries and stressing the debt owed by the survivors to the British forces:

... your British friends... the brave and generous servants of your king... flying to the assistance of their fellow subjects, in the midst of the flames at the hazard of their lives, exerting every nerve to preserve your dwellings and possessions and tearing from the hands of the dark incendiaries the instruments they had prepared for your destruction.<sup>30</sup>

Plate 1.1 St Paul's, Manhattan, New York



Caroline Gallagher

29 Nov. 2008

The sermon was almost immediately published in New York, giving O'Beirne a public platform among the literate and displaying his powers of rhetoric to political

<sup>28</sup> Phillips, *Public characters*, p. 155.

<sup>29</sup> O'Beirne, *An excellent sermon preached in Saint Paul's church New York* (New York, 1776), n.p.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

and ecclesiastical circles in England.<sup>31</sup> In 1778 Howe resigned his American commission and returned to England with his chaplain. Howe had failed to support the Saratoga campaign. Instead, he sailed to Chesapeake Bay with the intention of taking Philadelphia. The campaign was successful, but he failed, as he had in New York, to crush George Washington. Howe's conduct and capacity as commander in chief was called into question in England. O'Beirne wrote and published a pamphlet defending Howe's actions and lacerated what he termed the 'inauspicious' London government together with 'the destructive measures hitherto pursued by a weak, ignorant ministry'.<sup>32</sup> He showed no restraint in his attack on the first lord of the admiralty who, instead of sending reinforcements to the relief of thirty thousand British subjects in America, kept 'forty sail of the line perfectly equipped' and ' idly waving in the harbour of Portsmouth, for the entertainment of fops and holiday dames'.<sup>33</sup> This publication again brought notice to the author and marked him out as a political writer of some talent and acerbity and particularly impressed the leaders of the opposition. In 1779, Lord Howe repaid O'Beirne's public display of loyalty by having him appointed to the crown living of West Deeping in Lincolnshire.<sup>34</sup> The position he came to enjoy within the inner circle of whigs was well recognised, as can be seen in Gillray's caricature from 1806 (Illustration 1.2), where O'Beirne, then bishop of Meath, is portrayed wearing a symbol of the Roman Catholic persuasion, a rosary.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> O'Beirne, *A candid and impartial narrative of the transactions of the fleet under Lord Howe with observations: by an officer then serving in the fleet* (London, 1780), n.p.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Kelly, 'Thomas Lewis O'Beirne', *O.D.N.B.*

Illustration 1.2 James Gillray's caricature 'Visiting the Sick,' 1806



James Gillray, 1806

National Portrait Gallery, NPG D 12871

O'Beirne's connection with the opposition whigs including the duke of Portland, Edmund Burke and Lord Fitzwilliam, brought him into contact with John Almon, the English political pamphleteer and publisher.<sup>35</sup> Over the next few years, O'Beirne wrote several pseudonymous letters against Lord North's administration, under the name 'a country gentleman.' He also wrote political comment under his own name.<sup>36</sup> All were published by Almon. In 1782 the Rockingham party came to power, the duke of Portland was appointed lord lieutenant in Ireland and O'Beirne, having proved his usefulness to the whigs, came to Dublin as his chaplain and private secretary.<sup>37</sup> When Portland became first lord of the treasury in 1783, O'Beirne returned to London to serve the same position. As his political friends were either in power or coalition for some time, there was no need of political writings and O'Beirne published nothing for the duration. His mind was somewhat occupied with other matters, as in the same year he received his university degree and on 1 November he married Jane Stuart, niece of the earl of Moray, at St

<sup>35</sup> Phillips, *Public characters*, p. 156.

<sup>36</sup> O'Beirne, *a short history on the last session of parliament, with remarks* (London, 1870); O'Beirne, *Considerations on the late disturbances, by a consistent whig* (London, 1780); O'Beirne, *Considerations on the principals of naval discipline and naval courts martial* (London, 1781).

<sup>37</sup> Phillips, *Public characters*, p. 158; Longley, *Northants & Rutland clergy*, p. 107.

Margaret's Church, Westminster.<sup>38</sup> They had one son and two daughters.<sup>39</sup> His daughters did not marry. His son Francis Lewis married one Rebecca Hamilton of Philadelphia. Although the union did not last, it provided the bishop with three grandchildren and subsequent great-grandchildren, who may also have had issue.<sup>40</sup> Neither the marriage, nor Francis Lewis's children are mentioned in the bishop's biographical notes, or in any extant correspondence. While female siblings may have been ignored at that time, recording the issue of a male heir was standard. The bishop's grandchildren may have gone without mention owing to the strained relations between father and son. The omission may also have been caused by the fact that Francis Lewis married into a family where the Jewish religion came through the female line. The terms of the bishop's last will and testament indicate that it may have been a combination of both. Francis Lewis was to receive an annual allowance of £300 from his father's estate. However, the disbursements were to terminate immediately should any other, a creditor for example, attempt to lay claim to the money. The same stipulation applied should the said Francis Lewis 'at any time take back and rehabit with his present wife'.<sup>41</sup> Whatever the reason for the bishop's upset it was not carried forward through the generations, as his daughter Henrietta Emily, provided for her nephews in the terms of her will.<sup>42</sup> In fact, the bishop's granddaughter lived with her aunts at Warfield Lodge Berkshire.<sup>43</sup>

When Portland's term at the treasury ended in December 1783, he appointed O'Beirne to the two valuable English livings of Whittingham and Stamfordham at

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<sup>38</sup>T. L. O'Beirne and Jane Stuart (St Margaret's Church Westminster, Marriage Register, vol 55, no 625, 1 Nov. 1783, n.p.).

<sup>39</sup>Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 122; Crooks, Ardagh succession list, n.p.; Gallagher, 'Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne: politician and churchman', p. 190.

<sup>40</sup>Robert Winder Johnson, *The ancestry of Rosalie Morris Johnson* (2 vols, Wisconsin, 1905), i, p. 58; The Jacob Radar Marcus Centre of the American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union college, Cincinnati, Ohio, 'Franks & Hamilton' ([www.americanjewisharchives.org](http://www.americanjewisharchives.org)) (11 June 2007); Gallagher, 'Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne: politician and churchman', p. 190.

<sup>41</sup>Will, 12 Nov. 1819 & codicil, 25 Nov. 1819, ff 222, 224.

<sup>42</sup>Last will & testament of Henrietta Emily O'Beirne, 15 June 1844 (T.N.A., MS Prob 11/2073, f. 288).

<sup>43</sup>Marriage settlement between Major A.H.S. Mountain & Jane O'Beirne. 1837 (Hertfordshire Archives, MS DE/LS/B570).

seven hundred pounds a year.<sup>44</sup> O'Beirne did not devote himself entirely to the pastoral care of his flock but returned to writing political commentary and involved himself in raising opposition to William Pitt's plan for a commercial union with Ireland.<sup>45</sup> Throughout his years as rector in Northumberland he continued to offer advice to Portland and also advised Earl Fitzwilliam. This is evidenced in a letter to Fitzwilliam in 1785 where he furnished the earl with details of hereditary revenue for the year ending on Lady Day 1784.<sup>46</sup> In the same letter O'Beirne mentioned that '...the duke [Portland] wishes me to be in town a day or two before the business comes before the house of lords. I shall have a statement of its receipts & management ready...'<sup>47</sup> Due to a bout of ill health in the winter of 1785 and around the time of the controversial royal marriage, he moved for some time to the continent. Then, resigning his English livings he returned to his home parish in Longford, where he awaited the livings of Templemichael and Mohill to fall vacant. It appears that O'Beirne was never of a robust constitution. In 1787 he travelled to Paris where he consulted a French physician, whose best advice was to take the waters at Aix la Chapelle.<sup>48</sup> O'Beirne does not appear to have abandoned clerical duties entirely however, and on a visit to Roscommon in 1788, preached a sermon at the Sunday school.<sup>49</sup> In 1791, on a longstanding promise from the duke of Portland, the archbishop of Tuam appointed Thomas Lewis to the benefices of Templemichael and Mohill, where his brother Denis was Roman Catholic parish priest.

In his work *History of the diocese of Ardagh*, the Roman Catholic bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise James McNamee, hinted that O'Beirne, while rector of

<sup>44</sup> Phillips, *Public characters*, p. 161; Kelly, 'Thomas Lewis O'Beirne'.

<sup>45</sup> O'Beirne, *A gleam of comfort to this distracted empire, in despite of faction, violence and cunning, demonstrating the fairness and reasonableness of national confidence in the present ministry* (London, 1785); O'Beirne, *The proposed system of trade with Ireland explained* (Dublin, 1785).

<sup>46</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 29 May 1785 (S.C.C.A., Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments, WWM F 64/117).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> O'Beirne to Portland, 26 Mar. 1787 (U.N., William Henry Cavendish Bentinck correspondence, MS Pw F 7243, p. 1).

<sup>49</sup> O'Beirne, *A sermon preached for the benefit of the Sunday school at Roscommon on Sunday September the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1788* (Dublin, 1788).

Templemichael, may have offered many material inducements to his brother should he 'abandon the faith of his fathers' and join the Church of Ireland.<sup>50</sup> He also charged that Thomas Lewis was somehow responsible for his brother never being given a Catholic bishopric.<sup>51</sup> The earlier work of Philip O'Connell offers an entirely contrary notion. There is no evidence that the O'Beirne brothers enjoyed other than good relations and O'Connell claimed that Thomas Lewis and Lord Castlereagh attempted to make an application to Pope Pius VII to secure Denis the Roman Catholic bishopric of Kilmore in 1800.<sup>52</sup> Such a proposal by a lord of the British establishment and a Protestant convert was not as anomalous as it may appear. The papacy was no supporter of Napoleon I and regarded England as its powerful ally. Pius also had no objection to the later proposal of an English government veto against Catholic episcopal candidates who were considered politically unreliable.<sup>53</sup> The pope also maintained there was no opposition between a democratic form of government and the constitution of the Catholic church.<sup>54</sup> This assertion ignored the fact that in the context of England and Ireland, although the government was elected, the privilege of actually occupying a seat in parliament did not extend to members of the Roman church.

McNamee also suggested that although Denis O'Beirne 'commanded admiration and respect', an *opprobrium* was attached to the O'Beirne family, due to the religion adopted by Thomas Lewis.<sup>55</sup> As shown above, Thomas Lewis was not the only member of his immediate family to convert to Protestantism. In fact, it seems likely that Denis was alone in remaining loyal to Rome. The comments made by McNamee show no understanding of the religious toleration between the churches and indicate no appreciation of the broader international political intricacies during the period in question. In the interest of fairness however, it must

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<sup>50</sup> McNamee, *Ardagh*, p. 793.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 794.

<sup>52</sup> Philip O'Connell, *The diocese of Kilmore, its history and antiquities* (Dublin, 1937), pp 530-1.

<sup>53</sup> G. D. Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, London & New York, 1995).

<sup>54</sup> Catholic encyclopedia, ([www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)) (10 May 2006).

<sup>55</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Jan. 1828.

be pointed out that his ideas were probably affected by the reduced ecumenical spirit in Ireland during the time of writing.

O'Beirne abstained from political writing during his time at Templemichael. However, one thing is clear. He was not content to live out the remainder of his life as a rural clergyman of lower rank. He kept correspondence with his political friends Portland and Fitzwilliam. Portland was kept informed of disturbances in Ireland and, in August 1794, O'Beirne wrote of rumours that the Irish parliament was to be dissolved.<sup>56</sup> It is not clear if this was a reference to a 'union', that is, the possibility of a legislative union, or a comment on a general recognition that Pitt's mainland administration was in difficulty. Extant letters from O'Beirne to Portland, who was Pitt's home secretary, and Earl Fitzwilliam in 1794, indicate O'Beirne was privy to dealings of the London government that were not publicly known. During this time, he kept the coalition whigs informed on the state of government in Ireland and matters of agitation. The political relationships he had formed over the years and his continuing contact with them, probably made him the best connected and most informed rural rector in Ireland. His letters to Fitzwilliam, as the earl was about to become lord lieutenant of Ireland, reveal O'Beirne's political and religious ambitions and indicate his awareness that employment in the former would of course, lead to personal advancement in the latter. However, when O'Beirne's correspondence with Fitzwilliam is compared with letters from Fitzwilliam to Portland, it becomes plain that while he was given a definite impression that Fitzwilliam's appointment had been signed and sealed, this was not in fact the case.

In June 1794 Fitzwilliam agreed to a coalition between the whigs and Pitt as they all shared the same view regarding Napoleon and the necessity of restoring the monarchy in France.<sup>57</sup> Fitzwilliam informed Portland that he was not willing to serve in the London cabinet and though prepared to go to Ireland, he could not

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<sup>56</sup> O'Beirne to Portland, 12 Aug. 1794 (U.N., MS Pw F 7244); O'Beirne to Portland, 23 Aug. 1794 (U.N., MS Pw F 7245/1-2).

<sup>57</sup> Fitzwilliam to Portland, 23 June 1794 (U.N., MS Pw F 3765/1-2).

immediately take office in Dublin.<sup>58</sup> In August, he apologised to Portland for delaying his decision on the Irish appointment 'beyond any degree of decency' and declared himself ready to undertake the position.<sup>59</sup> On 20 August 1794 O'Beirne was convinced that his friend and political ally Earl Fitzwilliam was to become lord lieutenant in Ireland:

The certain account which I have received this day, of your Lordship's appointment to the government of this Country, has relieved my mind from great anxiety, and will, when communicated to the public, be equally consolatory to every man, who felt for the safety & peace of the Kingdom... The moment is doubtless critical, and our situation alarming; but with conduct and energy, and immediate exertion I have no doubt of your Lordship's being very shortly enabled to restore to us quiet and security.<sup>60</sup>

O'Beirne was obviously anxious to return in an official capacity to the centre of power in Dublin, and in the same letter he requested to be considered for the position of private secretary to Fitzwilliam.<sup>61</sup> He reminded the earl that he had held the same appointment during Portland's tenure and was so anxious that the current lord lieutenant Westmorland be replaced, he suggested that if Fitzwilliam could 'not immediately take possession of the government in person', then possession should be taken 'by your [chief] secretary'.<sup>62</sup> He also asked that Fitzwilliam consider granting his brother John O'Beirne the office of gentleman of the bedchamber.<sup>63</sup> There is nothing in O'Beirne's letters to indicate that the Fitzwilliam appointment was uncertain. However, simultaneous correspondence between Fitzwilliam and Portland indicates that there was no certainty about the lord lieutenancy. Two letters in August and one in September indicate that Pitt's foreign secretary Lord Grenville had not yet given any decision on the matter as the proposition had met with 'a sentiment of chagrin and vexation'.<sup>64</sup> Although Fitzwilliam asked O'Beirne to furnish him with details of the management of the

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Fitzwilliam to Portland, 10 Aug. 1794 (U.N., MS Pw F 3768).

<sup>60</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 20 Aug. 1794 (S.C.C.A., MS WWM F 29/1, p. 1).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Fitzwilliam to Portland, 11 Aug. 1794 (U.N., MS Pw F 3769); Fitzwilliam to Portland, 15 Aug. 1794 (U.N., MS Pw F 3770); Fitzwilliam to Portland, 8 Sept. 1794 (U.N., MS Pw F 3772/1-2).



lord lieutenant's household, neither Pitt nor King George III were made aware of the possibility of his appointment.<sup>65</sup> At that point in time the deal was being negotiated solely between the home secretary Portland and the foreign secretary Grenville. O'Beirne does not appear to have been aware of any doubt surrounding the appointment. His letter dated 6 September acquainted Fitzwilliam with every detail relating to arrangements of the lord lieutenant's household, both official and domestic.<sup>66</sup> The most comprehensive detail was offered on the manner of making various official appointments. Details of official robes, duties and salaries were furnished and the earl was forewarned that due to the 'spewy soil and dykes of stagnant water' surrounding it, 'the House in the Park' where he was expected to reside, was the most unhealthy place in Ireland.<sup>67</sup>

O'Beirne also advised on more serious matters of a political nature and his advice underpins claims that word of Fitzwilliam's appointment was a cause of considerable opposition within 'the old Castle faction'.<sup>68</sup> The then lord lieutenant earl of Westmorland, the chancellor John Fitzgibbon and the speaker Foster were all opposed to Fitzwilliam, on account of his views in favour of Catholic emancipation. For several months before his arrival in Dublin, Westmorland insisted that he himself would hold the next session of parliament. Meanwhile O'Beirne was further assured by a relative of Fitzwilliam and former chancellor of the Irish exchequer George Ponsonby that the Fitzwilliam appointment would indeed proceed.<sup>69</sup> Although the sources do not indicate if anyone other than Portland, Fitzwilliam and Grenville were aware that nothing had been actually settled, the fact that O'Beirne was not fully informed is obvious. However, he was not alone. In England, the Fitzwilliam appointment was also believed to have been settled and the Reverend George Drummond Hay, prebendary of York cathedral and son of the

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<sup>65</sup> Fitzwilliam to Portland, 8 Sept. 1794; Fitzwilliam to Portland, 8 Oct. 1794 (U.N., Pw F 3774); Gallagher, 'State & domestic arrangements in the household of the lord lieutenant of Ireland, 1774-1775', in *Archivium Hibernicum*, lxii (2009), pp 236-43.

<sup>66</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 6 Sept. 1794 (S.C.C.A., MS WWMF 29/7, pp 1-4).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 7 Oct. 1794 (S.C.C.A., MS WWM F 29/9, p. 1).

late archbishop of York, canvassed Portland to speak in his favour regarding the post of first chaplain to the Dublin administration under Fitzwilliam.<sup>70</sup>

Westmorland's claim of continued power and Fitzwilliam's claim of being ready to replace Westmorland were exacerbated by the delay of any official announcement on the matter. Westmorland cannot be accused of falsehood. He had received assurances from Pitt himself that there was no possibility of his being recalled from office. This was understandable, as Pitt was not approached until late in the year. The claims and counter-claims gave time to members of the Westmorland faction such as the chancellor John Fitzgibbon and John Beresford, the first commissioner of the revenue, to 'raise a Protestant party' to protect themselves 'from the persecution...to which they will be exposed by his [Westmorland's] removal'.<sup>71</sup> In September, Beresford took himself to London 'to manage this point'.<sup>72</sup> The Westmorland lobby approached the king and Pitt with their objections and for a time the Fitzwilliam appointment was officially in doubt. O'Beirne's letter to Fitzwilliam of 1 November 1794 is full of detail and regret in this regard;

Whatever his creatures may insinuate to Mr. Pitt, or however foolishly or arrogantly he may prefer their interested remonstrances, he will find that the peace and quiet of Ireland is absolutely in the hands of those who looked with pleasure and with hope to your Lordship's coming here. What the effects of their disappointment may approve, it is impossible to foresee.<sup>73</sup>

In late October Fitzwilliam wrote to O'Beirne to reassure him. O'Beirne replied; 'your letter of the 21<sup>st</sup>...delivered my mind from a great deal of uneasiness...'<sup>74</sup> However, as late as December, a letter from Fitzwilliam to Portland clearly indicated the appointment was still in some dispute. Its final settling somewhat depended on Pitt who, according to Fitzwilliam, was intent on some 'advancement' for John Fitzgibbon, a man who vehemently opposed the earl. If Pitt

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<sup>70</sup> George Drummond Hay to Portland, 21 Aug. 1794 (U.N., MS Pw F 3419).

<sup>71</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 6 Sept. 1794, p. 6.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 1 Nov. 1794 (S.C.C.A., MS WWM F 20/10, p. 4).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

did not relent on this point, Fitzwilliam intended to refuse office, protesting that any advancement for Fitzgibbon 'would give him such weight in the eyes of all Ireland and lessen me so exceedingly that I should not think it safe, in these critical times, to undertake the government.'<sup>75</sup> Pitt eventually sanctioned the appointment and though it was a short-lived term of office, Fitzwilliam was sworn in as lord lieutenant of Ireland in January 1795. If O'Beirne ever suspected that his London friends had not been entirely honest with him during those months, he was shrewd enough to give no indication of it. On the contrary, he cautioned Fitzwilliam that perhaps 'his [Westmorland's] patron [Pitt] had acted a deceitful part with your Lordships friends in England'.<sup>76</sup>

O'Beirne took it upon himself to advise Fitzwilliam that key political and ecclesiastical appointments be given to 'confidential friends' and that when removing officials from office or granting 'lesser places', great care must be taken to ensure that 'nothing like punishment or private resentment must be discovered'.<sup>77</sup> In what could be viewed as a measure of punishment for John Beresford's stance against Fitzwilliam, O'Beirne proffered the idea that in the Irish ecclesiastical circle the vacant archbishopric of Tuam<sup>78</sup> 'and the several curative employments which the Beresfords have of an inferior description, would be a good means for this negotiation'.<sup>79</sup> As a churchman, O'Beirne expressed concerns for the future well-being of the Church of Ireland; 'But the great thing will [be] to take care that whatever connections shall be made, the establishment & the national Church shall be effectually secured'.<sup>80</sup> The tone and content of this letter indicates that O'Beirne feared that the security of the Church of Ireland was in greater danger from the Westmorland faction than from a new administration with a known degree of

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<sup>75</sup> Fitzwilliam to Portland, 7 Dec. 1794 (U.N., MS Pw F 3777).

<sup>76</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 1 Nov. 1794, p. 3.

<sup>77</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 6 Sept. 1794, p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> O'Beirne to Portland, 23 Aug. 1794.

<sup>79</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 6 Sept. 1794, p. 5.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Roman Catholic sympathy. This is concurrent with Henry Grattan's feeling that to indulge Roman Catholics would not injure the Protestant religion.<sup>81</sup>

The situation in France dominated imperial politics and was the main subject of correspondence between Portland and Fitzwilliam. Revolution was anathema to O'Beirne and his connections and after 1789 some degree of pro-Catholicism became part of the anti-revolutionary stance.<sup>82</sup> O'Beirne's support for the Catholic cause was measured however and he was not comfortable with the notion of full emancipation for Catholics at that time. He had issues with Grattan, whom he felt, pushed that ideal too vigorously in parliament and he urged Fitzwilliam to speak with Portland on the matter;

..while G [rattan] and other friends are still with you, to endeavor to inculcate to them and to impress upon them the same temper which you so wisely, and with such [ ] regard to your unfortunate country, are determined to preserve.<sup>83</sup>

O'Beirne's concern regarding Grattan's overt stance on emancipation was compounded not only by Grattan's alliance with O'Beirne's London friends but also by his alliances in Ireland ;

But certainly it will not become those who have made common cause with your Lordship & the Duke of Portland, to contribute, by their conduct in parliament, or by stirring up such questions as may add to the problems... they are connected here & consult very much with men of very different principles with themselves, and who will one day betray & divide them, unless I am very much mistaken.<sup>84</sup>

It is obvious that although O'Beirne was a committed whig, he did not support full emancipation and had suspicions of Fitzwilliam's intentions in the matter. The above passages indicate O'Beirne's political astuteness of the general state of affairs. His assessment of Fitzwilliam obviously led him to believe that the new lord lieutenant could be led by Grattan. By committing his advice to paper, O'Beirne was in effect, disassociating himself from whatever might ensue as a

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<sup>81</sup> D.G. Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, p. 106.

<sup>82</sup> R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1989), p. 260.

<sup>83</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 1 Nov. 1794, p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 4-5.

result of the relationship. As it transpired, O'Beirne's fears were justified. The disastrous fifty days of Fitzwilliam's tenure need not be detailed here.<sup>85</sup> In summary, Fitzwilliam ignored the wisdom of his private secretary. Within two days of arriving in Dublin in January 1795, he dismissed several holders of high office. Among them were the solicitor general, the attorney general and John Beresford.<sup>86</sup> Although O'Beirne had advised him to place 'confidential friends' in key positions, he also promoted a degree of caution. It is likely that Fitzwilliam received much advice from many Irish politicians who sought to advance themselves in the new administration, and other acts of recklessness and disregard for any instruction from London ensued. Fitzwilliam's plan for total emancipation was worked out with support from Grattan, who promptly introduced a bill to that effect.<sup>87</sup> The immediate result was Fitzwilliam's recall. The furore caused by Fitzwilliam's actions during his short tenure in Ireland, and the fact that O'Beirne had warned against those actions, did not result in the end of communications between the two. O'Beirne sat through the debate on the bill presented by Grattan on 4 May 1795 and the following morning wrote to acquaint Fitzwilliam of the proceedings and outcome.<sup>88</sup> The division was eighty-four for the bill and one hundred and fifty-five against. O'Beirne also reported there was no violence.<sup>89</sup> In quoting correspondence of the old castle faction, Deirdre Lindsay has thrown some light on this.<sup>90</sup> There was no need for uproar in parliament, as a general committee had been formed by those in opposition to the bill; '120 good men and true were ready to oppose Mr Grattan... and there was a strong possibility it would go to 140'.<sup>91</sup> With this level of assured support, those opposed had good reason to expect a victory and no need to cause furore during the debate. There was also however, some degree of confusion

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<sup>85</sup> See Deirdre Lindsay, 'The Fitzwilliam episode revisited' in David Dickson, Dáire Keogh, Kevin Whelan (eds), *The United Irishmen: republicanism, radicalism and rebellion* (Dublin, 1993), pp 197-208; David Wilkinson, 'The Fitzwilliam episode, 1795: a reinterpretation of the role of the duke of Portland' in *I.H.S.*, xxix (1995), pp 315-39.

<sup>86</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland* p. 263.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 5 May 1795 (S.C.C.A., MS WWM F 30/60, p. 1).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> See Deirdre Lindsay, 'The Fitzwilliam episode revisited' in David Dickson, Dáire Keogh, Kevin Whelan (eds), *The United Irishmen: republicanism, radicalism and rebellion* (Dublin, 1993), pp 197-208.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

among Westmoreland, the marquis of Downshire and their allies. The appointment of a whig who made no secret of his views in favour of Catholic emancipation to lead the Irish parliament, was in itself something more than a shot across the bow of the hardline Protestants at Dublin Castle and the Ascendancy class in general. It threatened the established structures of power, those who held that power and those who relied upon the power-brokers for protection and advancement. The sackings that took place under Fitzwilliam actually removed some of the most powerful from office. When the appointed envoy is one whose policy differs so drastically from that which is long established, it is scarcely a wonder that the result is confusion, and a fear that the old order no longer has the support of mainland government or crown. At Dublin Castle, there were those who were no longer sure what was expected of them. The marquis of Downshire wrote; 'I do not know what to do – my principles are the King's Government – they can be no other – but I would like to know whether this can be the King's Government or not'.<sup>92</sup>

As has been shown, O'Beirne offered much advice to Fitzwilliam in the summer prior to the earl's Dublin appointment. During this time he also began to actively pursue advancement in his ecclesiastical career. The vacancy of Tuam in the summer of 1794 and the inevitable clerical shuffling its filling would create was evident to O'Beirne. By October he had withdrawn his earlier request to act as Fitzwilliam's private secretary while still agreeing to act as first chaplain; 'I must again take the freedom to decline all necessary considerations for myself in that employment'.<sup>93</sup> When viewed in conjunction with O'Beirne's political advice to Fitzwilliam, this attempt to involve himself only as first chaplain to the administration is further evidence of his reservations about the earl's intentions for the management of Ireland. Some time between August and October 1794 O'Beirne's reservations became manifest. Perhaps it was during these months that he became aware that neither Fitzwilliam nor Portland had been completely honest with him. Whatever the reason for his change of mind regarding the post of private

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> O'Beirne to Fitzwilliam, 7 Oct. 1794, p. 1.

secretary, his shrewdness and ambition led him to take steps in order to secure his future within the Church of Ireland. He had already received assurance of Fitzwilliam's intention of putting him on the bench.<sup>94</sup> The dioceses of Clonfert and Killala were in line for new bishops, and the conferring of Tuam on Beresford left the diocese of Ossory vacant and in the gift of Fitzwilliam. O'Beirne explained that Clonfert would be 'a considerable loss' to him. Killala, by virtue of distance was incompatible with the situation of a first chaplain based in Dublin and so he requested that he be appointed as Bishop of Ossory.<sup>95</sup> He got his way, but not immediately and Fitzwilliam insisted that he should serve both as first chaplain and private secretary. O'Beirne was finally elevated to the see of Ossory on 1 February 1795.

After his ascension to the Irish bench, O'Beirne's correspondence, while still offering some comment on general political matters, indicated many of his views on ecclesiastical matters that arose in connection with the Act of Union and subsequent church acts. For the first time, his concerns for the contemporary situation and desires for the future well-being of the Church of Ireland were presented in detail. As a parish clergyman, O'Beirne's extended absences while in the service of Portland and Fitzwilliam must be acknowledged. However, his former shortcomings in pastoral care had no bearing on his sympathies when dealing with the matter in his dioceses. Charges to his clergy, first in the diocese of Ossory and later in Meath, leave no doubt about his policy on the persistent problem of clerical non-residence:

... you must begin by repairing to, and remaining in your respective cures. Let me not have the mortification to hear it said, that you are of the number of those clergymen, who avail themselves of every frivolous and trifling pretext, either of business, of convenience, or indulgence, to fly from their duty and abandon their posts. Let me not be told that you are seen idling in the capital... and running the round of dissipation and levity, which... it is melancholy to see even the most thoughtless of the votaries of pleasure, pursue with such scandalous perseverance.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> O'Beirne, *A circular address to the clergy of the diocese of Ossory* (Dublin, 1797), pp 11-12.

It was from his newly secured position on the episcopal bench that the bishop began to air his views on the Roman church in Ireland, without any regard for the opinions or policies of the whigs. O'Beirne was greatly in favour of the Roman Catholic seminary at Maynooth by virtue of it removing the necessity for Irish Catholic families to educate their sons in the seminaries of France and Spain, where 'in addition to their religious prejudices they will imbibe those civil prejudices...and excite domestic disturbances in Ireland'.<sup>97</sup> He also favoured Maynooth, as he believed its institution brought the opportunity 'to bring the education of the Roman Catholic clergy...into contact with the government'.<sup>98</sup> He believed it a necessary alternative to the diocesan seminaries established in Ireland since 1782 and felt no Catholic priest should be assigned to a parish 'but those who have certificates that they have been educated at Maynooth'.<sup>99</sup> The seminary at Kilkenny, instituted by Bishop Troy, was particularly singled-out by him as;

...a system of exclusive education... to multiply their clergy beyond calculation... The students of these seminaries do not reside in them, but come there occasionally and at stated periods from all parts of each diocese, they must spend the greatest part of their time among their parents and friends and acquiring habits of idleness and of all the vices, which abound among their own class, and must, of course, become a profligate and abandoned priesthood.<sup>100</sup>

The first president of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, Thomas Hussey, bishop of Waterford and Lismore, was educated at the Irish college in Seville and acted as chaplain to the Spanish embassy in London until 1803. Hussey was entrusted by the crown, the government and particularly by the duke of Portland to take charge of the new Irish seminary. It is not known if O'Beirne, through his longstanding connection with Portland, advised on the appointment. Hussey proved less compliant than expected, and in his pastoral letter of 1797 he denounced government interference in the ecclesiastical discipline of the Roman Catholic church.<sup>101</sup> In consequence he was asked to resign the presidency of Maynooth and

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<sup>97</sup> O'Beirne to Castlereagh, 27 Apr. 1799 (P.R.O.N.I., MS D3030/739, p. 8).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>101</sup> Nigel Yates, *The religious condition of Ireland 1770-1850* (Oxford, 2006), p. 38.



when he refused, was dismissed on grounds of non-residence.<sup>102</sup> As a result of this affair O'Beirne declared the Maynooth board of trustees to have been 'improperly constituted' and mooted the inclusion of the Church of Ireland 'archbishop of Dublin as metropolitan, the bishop of Kildare as diocesan and some additional officers of the crown'.<sup>103</sup> He also suggested that no meeting of the trustees take place unless the majority present was Protestant.<sup>104</sup>

The introduction of a legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland was formally decided on 21 December 1798, and the lord lieutenant of Ireland was instructed to relay the decision;

...to all persons with whom he may have communications on the subject... and that the conduct of individuals on this subject will be considered as the test of their disposition to support the king's government.<sup>105</sup>

O'Beirne was given notice of the government's intention by letter from Lord Castlereagh on 28 November. His reply of 3 December expressed his strong support for the proposal; 'It will be a proud day for the British Empire if a measure, planned with such wisdom and brought forward with such pure interests, shall be crowned with success'.<sup>106</sup> A legislative union gave O'Beirne the opportunity to put forward his ideas for the future security and position of the Church of Ireland. The uniting and identifying the churches of England and Ireland according to article five of the Act of Union was of particular interest to him, although his suggestions on the matter have been much misrepresented. According to the fifth article

The churches of that part of Great Britain called England, and of Ireland, shall be united into one church, and the archbishops, bishops, priests &c. of the churches of England and Ireland, shall from time to time be summoned to, and entitled to sit in convocation of the united church, in like manner, and subject to the same regulations as are at present by law established with respect to the like orders of the Church of England; and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the said united church shall be preferred as now by law established for the Church of England; and the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the Church

<sup>102</sup> P. J. Corish, *Maynooth college 1795-1995* (Dublin, 1995), p. 27.

<sup>103</sup> O'Beirne to Castlereagh, 27 Apr. 1799, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> Cabinet minute, 21 Dec. 1798 (N.L.I., Lord lieutenant's correspondence, MS 886), p. 510.

<sup>106</sup> O'Beirne to Castlereagh, 3 Dec. 1798 (P.R.O.N.I., MS D3030/389, p. 1).

of Scotland, shall likewise be preserved as now by law established for the Church of Scotland.<sup>107</sup>

The bishop wished the unification of the churches to go further. He mooted that there be established 'a metropolitical prominence in the see of Canterbury on the united church of the whole Empire'.<sup>108</sup> Hitherto this has been interpreted as O'Beirne's desire to suppress all the archbishoprics of Ireland and make them suffragans of Canterbury.<sup>109</sup> But in fact, O'Beirne used the term 'metropolitical prominence' and not precedence. A misinterpretation of language has led to the belief that he advocated Canterbury as the exclusive metropolitanship, leading to the suppression of all other archbishoprics. This is understandable, as any reference to an ecclesiastical metropolitanship is automatically deemed to indicate the chief see with precedence over all other archbishoprics. However, O'Beirne was well practised in the careful choice of language and in the same letter he went on to state '...still the archbishoprics of Ireland must continue to be invested with all their present privileges and jurisdictions...'<sup>110</sup> The deserved importance of this last passage has so far been passed over by authors who claim that O'Beirne's proposal that Irish archbishoprics be suppressed was ignored, when in fact, he did not make any such suggestion.<sup>111</sup>

Another example of the bishop's precise use of language is evident in his understanding of the meaning of a legislative union. The Roman Catholics had long insisted that 'the established religion ought to be that which prevails among the

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<sup>107</sup> Castlereagh, *Speech of the Right Honorable Lord Viscount Castlereagh in the Irish House of Commons, Wednesday 5 February 1800, on offering to the house certain resolutions proposing and recommending a complete and entire union between Great Britain and Ireland* (Q.U.B. Printable pamphlet No 1, Document 0371, p. 56).

<sup>108</sup> O'Beirne to Castlereagh, 13 Nov. 1799 (P.R.O.N.I., MSS D3030/1050 with attachment 1123, p. 9).

<sup>109</sup> See W. A. Phillips, *History of the Church of Ireland from the earliest times to the present day* (Oxford, 1933) p. 288; G. C. Bolton, *The passing of the Irish Act of Union: a study in parliamentary politics* (Oxford, 1966), p. 88; A. P. W. Malcomson, *Archbishop Agar*, p. 565; Yates, *The religious condition*, p. 42.

<sup>110</sup> O'Beirne to Castlereagh, 13 Nov. 1799, p. 11.

<sup>111</sup> See for example, Yates, *The religious condition of Ireland*, p. 42; Malcomson, *Archbishop Agar*, p. 567

majority of the people'.<sup>112</sup> A full legislative union between Britain and Ireland would render both populations as one, place Roman Catholics in the minority, the newly united church in the majority, and thereby remove the Catholic argument by turning it against itself, while 'our church will be unassailable to our adversaries and none of them will dare to disturb or subvert the establishment...'<sup>113</sup> As O'Beirne put forward the idea that union would render the Church of Ireland the majority church and entitled without argument to be recognised as the national church, he probably hoped that its failed mission would be less evident to government and crown, as any pockets of religious dissention might have been in Great Britain. During the preparations for union, he pressed other suggestions aimed at reducing the control the Roman Catholic church had over the education, conduct and payment of its clergy and the influences the same clergy exerted over their congregation.

The proposition of a government power of veto over the appointment of Roman Catholic bishops in Ireland, O'Beirne claimed to have discussed with the duke of Portland and his former mentor and Catholic bishop of Meath, Dr Patrick Joseph Plunkett, as early as 1782.<sup>114</sup> He put forward a plan to Castlereagh, suggesting what he deemed appropriate government remuneration for Romish clergy of all ranks. According to the bishop, establishing a provision for the entire 'Roman Catholic clergy that would make them independent of their people' was imperative.<sup>115</sup> Such an arrangement would give the crown and government unprecedented jurisdiction over the Roman clergy. He advocated a ban on parish appointments for those educated in European seminaries as 'the foreign priest will not fail to represent the Maynooth priest as half a heretic, as a government, instead of a Roman priest'.<sup>116</sup> He failed to acknowledge that church of Ireland clergy could also have been seen as government clergy. O'Beirne also wrote 'the exclusion of regulars from all parochial situations and employments I consider as indispensably

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<sup>112</sup> O'Beirne to Castlereagh, 13 Nov. 1799, p. 10.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> O'Beirne to Castlereagh, unspecified date 1799 (P.R.O.N.I., MS D3030/1507, p. 1).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

necessary,' and he proposed that no new student be admitted to any order of regulars or nunnery.<sup>117</sup> At that time, Nano Nagle's teaching order of Presentation sisters had been active in the Cork area for more than twenty-years. Had O'Beirne's proposal been adopted, the order would have died and other teaching orders such as the Loreto and Mercy sisters, and the order of Christian Brother could never have taken hold in urban areas of Ireland during the early years of the nineteenth century. O'Beirne's views on the subject indicate his keen understanding of the obvious; if the education of the Catholic young was influenced by Catholic orders of sisters and brothers, the chances of making converts of the coming generations would surely be reduced.

Although O'Beirne encouraged his clergy to make converts of the Catholics in their parishes and promoted the reading of the bible to Catholic children in schools, nothing has been found in his remaining correspondence to suggest he considered the printing of the bible in the Irish language. There is certainly no mention of it in his recommendations to Charles Abbot. What is clear, is that he did not support the emerging forceful form of evangelicalism or promote the securing of converts by any means. While he must have been familiar with the views of William Magee, nothing has been found in O'Beirne's writings to throw any definitive light on the degree to which the philosophies of the two churchmen agreed or differed in attitudes relating to conversion. However, their distaste of the superstitions attached to Roman Catholicism and the shortcomings of the Church of Ireland's lower clergy were mutual.<sup>118</sup> O'Beirne favoured what one might call a more holistic approach to conversions; 'If you want to convert the Roman Catholics you must get to know them, visit them inside their humble roofs, attend their sick

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>118</sup> See *The charge of the Right Reverend Thomas Lewis, lord bishop of Ossory, to the clergy of his diocese in his annual visitation, 1796* (Dublin, 1796), pp 18-47; *A charge delivered at his primary visitation, in St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, on Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> of October, 1822* (London, 1822), pp 11-12; Joseph Liechty, 'Irish evangelicalism: Trinity College Dublin, and the mission of the Church of Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century' (Ph.D. thesis, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1987), p, 258.

beds...'<sup>119</sup> His clergy were instructed to lead by expressions of kindness and good example and by the most basic forms of interaction;

Making converts, is a matter of another nature. As it is generally managed, it is a bustle of silly vanity or self interest, to encrease [sic], by every artifice, and by every method however unlawful, or unbecoming, the number of diciples [sic], without any endeavours to better their morals – it is to proselyte, and not to reform. This belongs not to the temper of our church. We have not so learned the truth That is in Christ Jesus... But we exercise no tyranny over any man's conscience: We make no monopoly of the blood and merits of Christ, nor contract those arms That were expanded for the redemption of the human race.<sup>120</sup>

If we hope to succeed in our good cause, we must come down to an emulation with them, in exertions only worthy of that cause. An emulation, not of envy or strife; not of angry controversy, or disputation; not of any intemperance of proselytism, where the idle contest is merely to swell the numbers of nominal votaries, without making better Christians, or better subjects...<sup>121</sup>

In early 1799 when O'Beirne had been further elevated to the see of Meath and following the defeat of the proposal of union in the Irish parliament, he again expressed the view to Castlereagh that there was nothing to fear from Catholics being admitted to parliament, provided the full legislative union was enacted. 'I can see no possible danger to the Protestant establishment in either countries [sic] from such a regulation, under the proposed system of union, although I might fear the consequences of it under the old system'.<sup>122</sup> This was not an opinion shared by many Protestants, and as the year progressed, the Catholic question became more problematic. While there is nothing in the correspondence between O'Beirne and Castlereagh to indicate that the latter favoured full emancipation, the bishop recognised the views of Protestants and encouraged Castlereagh to abandon any consideration of Catholic inclusion, as 'any idea of bringing forward the Roman Catholics' would encourage the Protestants 'in their opposition to the measure [union]'.<sup>123</sup> O'Beirne's main concern at that time was to secure the position of the Church of Ireland and that security depended on the passing and enactment of the union. 'I shall take care to represent to the clergy how effectively they, above all

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<sup>119</sup> *Charge to clergy of Ossory, 1796*, p. 52

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>122</sup> O'Beirne to Castlereagh, 31 Jan. 1799 (P.R.O.N.I., MS D3030/579, p. 1).

<sup>123</sup> O'Beirne to Castlereagh, 1 Oct. 1799 (P.R.O.N.I., MS D3030/993, p. 1).

others, are interested in the success of the measure'.<sup>124</sup> To this end, the bishop, like many others compiled and arranged the distribution of a protest against the defeat of the union proposal and in support of its passing.<sup>125</sup> This protest O'Beirne submitted to Castlereagh for approval, together with a list of notable and influential persons of property and influence in Meath, whose signatures were expected. It is reproduced in Appendix 1.1. When that question was finally settled, O'Beirne earnestly set about assessing the state of his diocese and preparing for its improvement.

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<sup>124</sup> O'Beirne to Marshall, 14 May 1799 (P.R.O.N.I., MS D3030/772 A, p. 1).

<sup>125</sup> O'Beirne to Marshall, 14 May 1799 (P.R.O.N.I., MS D3030/772B).

## Chapter two

### The Church of Ireland diocese of Meath: an overview of its structure and infrastructure from before the Reformation to 1792

The history of the Church of Ireland has been well documented by numerous authors and there is neither scope nor need for new or renewed comprehensive analysis here.<sup>1</sup> Lists of clergy, short episcopal biographies and composition of parish unions pertinent to the particular diocese of Meath were generally well covered by John Healy early in the last century, while the Tudor period was recently given the attention of by Brendan Scott.<sup>2</sup> However, if only by way of introduction to the O'Beirne episcopate, it is appropriate that some explanation of the country and the diocese up to the year 1798 should be included in this work. The scholarly debate in relation to what was known as the Norman invasion of Ireland and its settlers continues. The term 'invasion' is no longer used. The terms 'Anglo-Norman' and 'Cambro-Norman' have been disputed, and the contention that settlers were not of any one national or ethnic origin, challenges the basic term 'Norman'.<sup>3</sup> With this in mind, an attempt has been made here to eliminate these recognised traditional terms.

The diocese of Meath traces its origins to the early Celtic church when it was one of the country's five provinces, the province that held the site of the high king of Ireland at Tara. This claim is important in itself as it indicates that from the earliest times, church, politics and family were intertwined. The interrelation was not peculiar to Ireland, but was common throughout the Christian and non-Christian world. As Map 2.1 illustrates, the geographical area known as the middle kingdom incorporated the territories of Midhe and Brega and roughly corresponded to the modern counties

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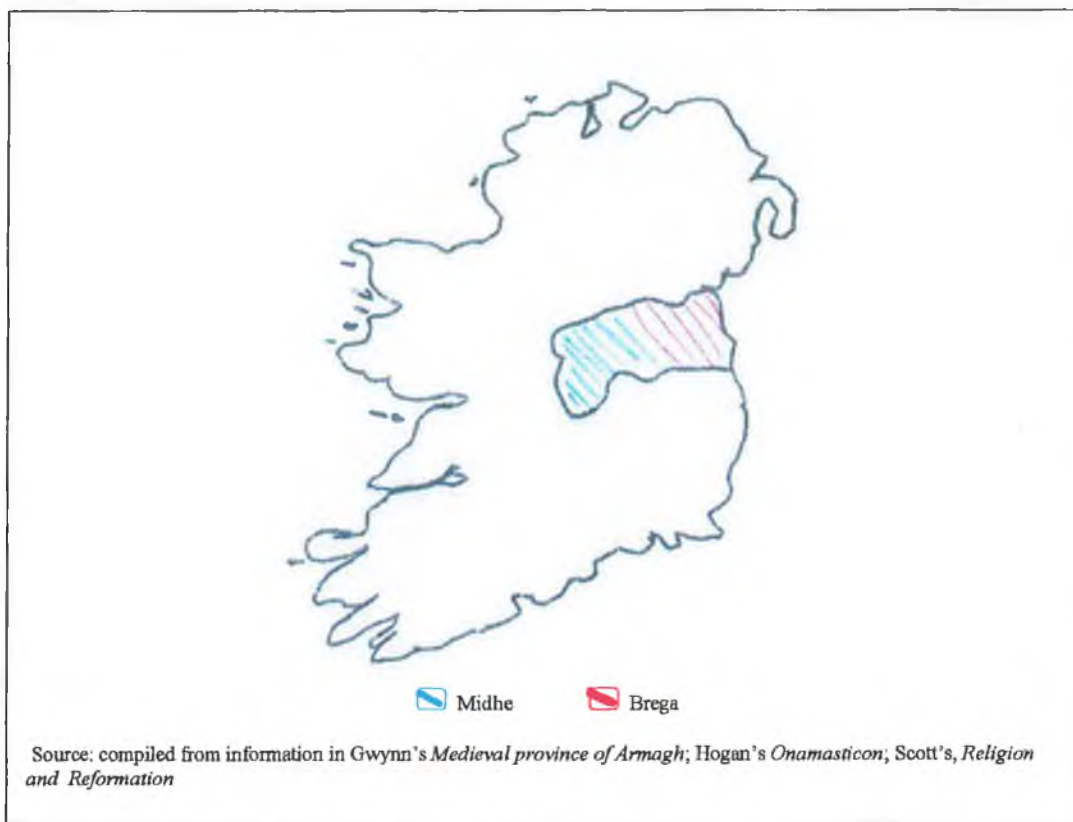
<sup>1</sup> See for example J.T. Ball, *The reformed Church of Ireland 1537-1886* (London & Dublin, 1886); Thomas Olden, *The Church of Ireland* (London, 1895); W.A. Phillips, *A history of the Church of Ireland from the earliest times to the present day* (3 vols, London, 1933); D.H. Akenson, *The Church of Ireland*; Alan Ford, James Maguire & Kenneth Milne (eds) *As by law established: the Church of Ireland since the reformation* (Dublin, 1995); Alan Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*.

<sup>2</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, i, ii; Scott, *Religion and Reformation*.

<sup>3</sup> Seán Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Ireland: an encyclopedia* (New York & Oxford, 2005), pp 17-17.

of Meath and Westmeath. It also included parts of Louth, Dublin, Longford, Kildare and King's County.

Map 2.1 Ireland c. 700 AD: Midhe and Brega



In Tudor times, by an act of state, the Church of Ireland became the established or official church in Ireland. There is no attempt here to investigate, assess or argue the causes of failure regarding the religious Reformation in Ireland or in the diocese of Meath, as such perspectives and theories of Reformation historiography have been put forward by authors including Brendan Bradshaw, Nicholas Canny, Colm Lennon, Helen Coburn-Walshe and many others.<sup>4</sup> Rather, the purpose of this chapter is to offer a review of the contributory factors that over time resulted in the state of the diocese as it was at the end of the eighteenth century.

<sup>4</sup> Brendan Bradshaw, *The dissolution of the religious orders in Ireland under Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 1974); Nicholas Canny, 'Why the Reformation failed in Ireland: *une question mal posée*', in *Jn. Eccl. Hist.*, 33 (1979), pp 423-51; Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth-century Ireland: the incomplete conquest* (Dublin, 1994); Helen Coburn-Walshe, 'Responses to the Protestant Reformation in sixteenth-century Meath', in *Ríocht na Midhe*, 8 (1987), pp 97-109.



Meath is outlined from the status of province to its demotion to the category of diocese at the Synod of Rathbreasil in the year 1111. The religious influence and infrastructural changes brought by its overlord Hugh de Lacy are briefly visited as are the effects of the dissolution of religious houses, from the perspective of lost revenues. These factors are relevant, as they all contributed to the state of the diocese as it presented itself to the new faith in the sixteenth century. Following the dissolution of monasteries, the distribution of monastic lands proved that interrelations between politics and family took precedence over the relationship between politics and church, despite the fact that the Church of Ireland was declared the established church and therefore inextricably linked with the offices and auspices of state. The penal laws of William and Mary, though not always enforced, had negative effects on the Church of Ireland, particularly in the way its members and clergy were regarded by the Roman Catholic majority. From time to time there were outbreaks of civil disturbance when churches and clergymen were targeted. In 1745 the bishop of Meath, Henry Maule, reported a threatening hand bill found pinned to the church door of a Dublin church. It began 'a notice to all Protestant vermin'.<sup>5</sup> These episodes increased from the 1760s, when agrarian societies became more active. There was a lack of financial support from government. The indifference of parish patrons and the lay appropriation of tithes hampered the development of the church and the income of its clergy. Pluralism, non-resident clergy and the parochial appointment of several clergy without the benefit of a formal education in divinity studies further combined to retard the diocesan infrastructure and limit the Church of Ireland mission.

It is said that in the fifth century Saint Patrick founded the first Irish bishopric at Armagh. It remained the only fixed episcopal see for 650 years. The Celtic church did not conform to the style of church organisation then prevalent in western Christendom. There was no diocesan structure and Irish bishops exercised episcopal function either from within the monasteries under the jurisdiction of the monastic abbot, or wandered about the countryside. During the second quarter of the

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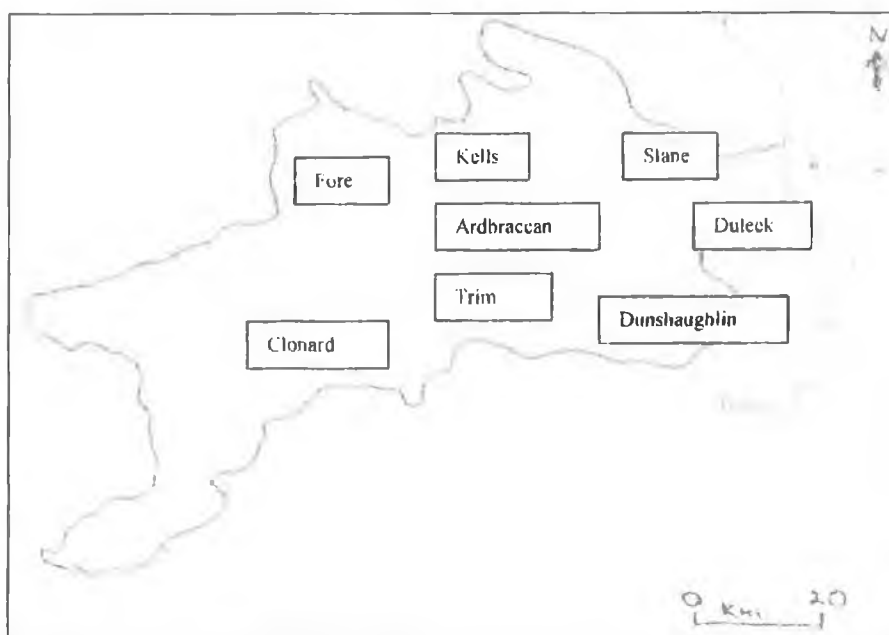
<sup>5</sup> Letters & correspondence, Charles II-George III, 19 Sept. 1745 (T.N.A., SP 36/68), f. 144.

sixth century the title of bishop was dropped in favour of abbot. Even Armagh fell in line with the rest of the Irish church and became first and foremost a monastic centre until its archbishopric was restored in the twelfth century. Early in the eleventh century, Sitric the Christianised Dane brought the Roman-style of church organisation to Dublin and other Danish strongholds in Ireland. The Dublin churches of Saint Werburgh and Saint Audeon were dedicated to non-Irish saints. The choice of patron saint was indicative of Danish opposition to the Irish church. Sitric's bishops, though mostly Irish, were educated abroad, consecrated at Canterbury and operated under the discipline of the Anglo-Roman church. These bishops of Dublin, Limerick and Waterford all refused to cooperate with Cellach who held the primacy of the Celtic church at Armagh. In 1111, Gilbert, the Danish bishop of Limerick presided over the Synod of Rathbreasil when steps were taken to divide the church into twenty-four dioceses, in addition to the primatial see of Armagh. At the Synod of Kells and Mellifont in 1152, the Irish church was detached from Canterbury and affiliated to Rome when Cardinal John Papano came from the Holy See, bringing with him four *pallia*, for the provinces of Armagh, Dublin, Tuam and Cashel. There was no *pallium* for Meath and the status of province was lost. In recognition of its former station as a royal seat and ecclesiastical see, some appeasement was made by designating Meath the senior bishopric within the province of Armagh. Its bishop was given the archiepiscopal title of 'Most Reverend'. Twenty-one other Irish dioceses were consolidated, their extent largely based on territorial boundaries of dynastic families and centred on established monastic sites. Meath comprised eight episcopal sees: Duleek, Clonard, Kells, Trim, Dunshaughlin, Ardraccan, Slane and Fore. As Map 2.2 indicates, the southwestern area held no episcopal sees beyond Clonard. At the Synod of Kells, all but Duleek and Kells were consolidated and the see of Meath was located at the cathedral of Clonard.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Scott, *Religion & Reformation*, p. 27.

Map 2.2 The sees of Meath before the consolidation of the diocese in the early thirteenth century



Source: B.J. Graham, 'Medieval settlement pattern of Anglo-Norman Eastmeath', in R.H. Buchannan, R.A. Butlin & D. McCourt (eds), *Fields, farms and settlements in Europe* (Ulster, 1976), pp 38-47 at p. 42

In October 1171, Hugh de Lacy, the fifth Baron Lacy arrived in Ireland with Henry II. By providing the king with the service of fifty knights, de Lacy became the king's tenant-in-chief and was given a charter for the entire kingdom of *Mide* which comprised c.325,000 hectares.<sup>7</sup> To establish his lordship and secure control, de Lacy employed the system of subinfeudation. Gaelic kings were replaced by settler barons, knights, men-at-arms and retainers on whom de Lacy could rely.<sup>8</sup> For example, Deece was granted to Baron Hugh de Hussey and Delvin to Gilbert de Nugent.<sup>9</sup> Although incomplete, *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland* gives some indication of the new lordship's extensive infringement on Gaelic lands<sup>10</sup> (see Table 2.1). Although there must have been some earlier arrangement of parishes, when localised reorganisation began in earnest, the settlement of these lands brought changes in

<sup>7</sup> James Mills, M.J. McEnery (eds), *Calendar of the Gormanston register* (Dublin, 1916), p. 6177; Michael Potterton, *Medieval Trim: history and archaeology* (Dublin & Portland OR, 2005), p. 69.

<sup>8</sup> Evelyn Mullally (ed.), *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland: La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande* (Dublin & Portland OR, 2002), p. 133.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134; Potterton, *Medieval Trim*, p. 71.

<sup>10</sup> Mullally (ed.), *The deeds of the Normans*, pp 133-4.

population that resulted in the formation of what we refer to as civil parishes.<sup>11</sup> Many of these survived as parish or parish unions, at least in name, well beyond church disestablishment and into the present century.

Table 2.1 de Lacy land grants in Meath during the late twelfth century

Lands	Grantee
Ardnurcher)*	Meilyr Fitzhenry
Creewood & Slane*	Baron Richard de Fleming
Lands & honours of Delvin*	Gilbert de Nugent
Emlagh Becon to the north of Kells	Thomas de Craville
Kilbixy*	Geoffrey de Costentin
Navan* & Ardbraccan*	Gilbert de Nangle
Rathwire* [alias Killucan]	Baron Robert de Lacy
Rathconaty*	Adam Dullard
Rathkenny*	Baron William Petit
Skryne*	Adam de Feipo
A rich fife	Richard Tuite
Good & Pleasant land	Richard de la Chapelle
Lands & honours	William de Musset
A fine territory	Baron Hugh de Hussey

Source: Mullally (ed.), *The deeds of the Normans*, ll 3133-3172, pp 133-4  
 \*Parish names surviving to nineteenth century

de Lacy's organisation resulted in the formation of several seigniorial manors. A relationship between family and church was continued in that many manors were located at early Christian church sites. Graham lists Clonard, Kells, Fore, Slane, Duleek and Skryne<sup>12</sup> as manorial sites.<sup>13</sup> In 1216, the bishop of Meath Simon de Rochfort, brought the sees of Kells, Slane, Clonard and Dunshaughlin into his diocese.<sup>14</sup> In 1206 de Rochfort moved his see to Newtown Abbey at Trim, the stronghold of Hugh de Lacy, where it remained until the reign of Henry VIII.<sup>15</sup> The

<sup>11</sup> For changes in settlement patterns see P.J. Duffy, 'The shape of the parish', in Elizabeth Fitzpatrick & Raymond Gillespie (eds), *The parish in medieval and early modern Ireland: community, territory and building* (Dublin & Portland OR, 2006), pp 33-61 at p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Skryne was once an episcopal see, but along with others was incorporated and fixed at Clonard sometime prior to 1152. See Cogan, *The diocese of Meath ancient and modern*, i, pp 6 & 57.

<sup>13</sup> Graham, 'Medieval settlement pattern', p. 42.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Thompson, *Statistical survey of the County of Meath, with observations on the means of improvement; drawn up for the consideration, and under the direction of The Dublin Society* (Dublin, 1802), p. xvii; See Healy, *History of the diocese*, i, p. 78, for an unreferenced mention of a bishop of Kells in 1202.

<sup>15</sup> Scott, *Religion & Reformation*, p. 27.

pre-Reformation lordship also increased the number of religious houses in the territory. Tables 2.2 and 2.3 are compiled from a number of printed sources and indicate the Hiberno religious houses extant in what became the diocese of Meath; the extent of the religious houses established by the newcomers and the sites of existing Hiberno religious houses where the newcomers also founded houses between 1172 and the dissolution or suppression that began in 1539.<sup>16</sup>

Table 2.2 Hiberno religious houses in what became the Church of Ireland diocese of Meath

House	Acreage	Order	Founded	Founder
Abbeysrule Flumen Dei Queen's Co.,	450	Cistercian	Before 900s	O'Ferrals
Ardagh LD	n.a.	Early Irish	400s	St Patrick
Ardraccan MH	n.a.	Early Irish	500s	St Breccan
Bective MH	1,600	Cistercian	1147	Murchad O'Melaghlin
Clonard MH	n.a.	Early Irish	500s	St Finnian
St Mary's nunnery	n.a.	Arroasian canonesses	1144	Murchad O'Melaghlin & St Malachy
St Peter's	273.5	Arroasian canons	1144	probably founded both
Clonmacnoise King's Co.,	c.1,250	Early Irish	500s	St Ciaran
		Culdee	1031	Conn-na-mBocht
		Augustinian or	1163	Dermot
		Arroasian canons	1026	O'Melaghlin
		Early 1000s	1167	Unknown
Nunnery	n.a.	Rebuilt		Dervogilla O'Ruairc
Donaghmore MH	n.a.	Early Irish	400s	St Patrick
Donaghpatrick MH	n.a.	Early Irish	400s	St Patrick
Dulane MH	n.a.	Early Irish	400s	St Carantoch
Duleek MH	n.a.	Early Irish	500s	St Cianan
St Mary's	n.a.	Arroasian canons	c.1140s	Muircertach O'Kelly & St Malachy
Dunshaughlin MH	n.a.	Early Irish	400s	St Sechnall

<sup>16</sup> Mervyn Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum* (Dublin, 1786); John Ryan, *Irish monasticism: origins and development* (New York, 1931); Hogan, *Onomasticon*; John O'Donovan, *Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the earliest period to the year 1616* (Dublin, 1848-51), J.F. Tyrrell, *Plundered abbeys of Westmeath* (no place, 1912); Gwynn & Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*.

(continued) House	Acreage	Order	Founded	Founder
Durrow King's Co., St Mary's Nunnery Augustinian priory	1,000+ n.a. n.a.	Early Irish Augustinian canonesses Augustinian canons	500s c.1144 after c. 1144	Aedh macBrendain & St Colmcille Murchad O'Melaghlin & St Malachy O'Melaghlin & St Malachy
Dysart WH	n.a.	Early Irish	700s	St Tola
Emlagh MH	n.a.	Early Irish	600s	St Breccan (not of Ardraccan)
Fennor MH	n.a.	Early Irish	400s	St Nectan
Fore WH	n.a.	Early Irish	600s	St Feichin
Gallen King's Co.,	70 n.a.	Early Irish Arroasian canons	400s 1140-8	St Canoc MacCoughlan & St Malachy
Hare Island MH	n.a.	Early Irish	500s	St Ciaran
Inan MH	n.a.	Early Irish	800s	Untraced
Inchbofin WH	n.a.	Early Irish	500s	St Rioch
Inchmore MH	n.a.	Early Irish Arroasian canons	400s Untraced	St Liberius Untraced
Kells MH St Mary's Nunnery St Mary Magdalene	n.a. 600+ n.a. n.a.	Early Irish Aug. canons Aug. canonesses Leper hospital	500s 1140-8 1140-8 Before 1117	St Colmcille St Malachy St Malachy Untraced
Kilbeggan WH	c. 820	Cistercian	Untraced	MacCoughlan
Killeigh King's Co.,	n.a. 200+	Early Irish Arroasian canons	500s 1140-8	St Sinchell St Malachy
Kilskeer MH Nunnery	n.a. n.a.	Early Irish Early Irish	Untraced Untraced	Untraced Untraced
Lynn WH	n.a.	Early Irish	600s	St Colman
Navan St Mary's MH	700+	Early Irish	Untraced	Untraced
Rahan King's Co.,	n.a.	Early Irish	600s	St Cartach/Mochuda
Ratoath MH	n.a.	Augustinian canons	Untraced	Untraced
Skryne MH	23.5	Early Irish	600s	St Colmcille
Slane MH	n.a.	Early Irish	400s	St Patrick
Trevet MH	n.a.	Early Irish	500s	Probably St Colmcille
Trim MH St Mary's Nunnery	n.a. c. 900 n.a.	Early Irish Arroasian canons Arro. canonesses	400s 1140-8 1140-8	St Patrick St Malachy St Malachy

Source: compiled from information in Gwynn & Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*

Table 2.3 Non-Hiberno religious houses in what became the Church of Ireland diocese of Meath

House	Acreage	Order	Founded	Founder
Ardnacranny WH	1 carucate	Carmelite friars	c. 1291	Robert Dillon
Athboy MH	4	Carmelite friars	1317	Wm. de Loundres
Ballyboggan MH	5,112	Aug. canons	1100s	Jordan Comin
Ballymore nunnery WH	c. 1,170	Aug. canons Cistercian	1218 1475	Untraced Walter de Lacy
Beybec MH	n.a.	Cistercian cell	1100s	Walter de Lacy
Calliaghstown MH	n.a.	Aug. canonesses	1195?	Walter de Lacy
Clonmacnois***** King's Co.,	n.a.	Secular college	1459?	Untraced
Clonard *** MH	272	Aug. priory	1183-6	Hugh de Lacy
Colpe MH	n.a.	Aug. canons	c. 1182	Hugh de Lacy
Donaghpatrick *MH	n.a.	Knights Hosp.	Untraced	Untraced
Drogheda MH	c. 276.5	Frat. Cruciferi	1100s	Walter de Lacy
St James's	n.a.	Untraced	Before 1302	Untraced
St Mary's priory	c. 10.5	Carmelite friars	Before 1309	English inhabitants
Duleek** MH	n.a.	Aug. canons	c. 1180	Hugh & Walter de Lacy
St Mary Mag.	n.a.	Knights Hosp.	c. 1202	Untraced
Fore* WH	2,000	Benedictine	c. 1186	Hugh de Lacy
Fooran nunnery WH	n.a.	Untraced	Before 1605	Untraced
Gageborough nunnery King's Co.,	n.a.	Untraced	1200s	Matilda de Lacy
Hare Island* WH	n.a.	Aug. canons	1100s	Dillons
Kells St John's**** MH	c. 137	Frat. Cruciferi	1100s	Walter de Lacy
Kilbixy WH	n.a.	Knights Hosp.	1192	Untraced
Kilbride (Trim) MH	n.a.	Untraced	Before 1195	Untraced
Kilkenny West WH	c. 360	Frat. Cruciferi	1100s	Tyrrells or Dillons
Killeen MH	n.a.	Secular college	Early 1400s	Sir Christopher & Lady Joan Plunket
Killeigh* King's Co. Nunnery	n.a.	Aug. canons Aug. canonesses	Untraced Untraced	Untraced Untraced
Kilmainhambeg MH	950	Knights Hosp.	Untraced	Walter de Lacy
Kilmainhamwood MH	c. 1,000	Knights Hosp.	1200s	Prestons
Lismullin nunnery MH	2412+	Aug. canonesses	c. 1240	Avicia de la Corner
Mullingar WH	63.5+	Dominican friary	1237-8	Nugents or Petits
St Mary's priory	630+	Aug. canons	1227	Ralph Petit Bishop of Meath
Multifarnham WH	49	Frans. friars	1200s	Wm. Delamer or Wm. Fitzherbert
Navan St Mary's* MH	n.a.	Aug. canons	1100s	Jocelin de Angulo
Oder nunnery* MH	605	Aug. canonesses	1195	Barnwell

(continued) House	Acreage	Order	Founded	Founder
Ratoath* MH St Mary Magdalene	n.a. 40	Secular college Aug. canons	Before 1186 Untraced	Hugh de Lacy Hugh de Lacy
Skryne* MH	n.a.	Aug. friars	1341	Lord Francis de Feipo
Slane* MH	100 1	Secular college Frans. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Order	1512 1100s	Chris. Fleming Baron & Baroness Slane
Tara MH	n.a.	Knights Hosp.	1212	Untraced
Tobercormick WH	c.60	Dominican friary	1488	Edmund de Lantu
Trim** SS Peter & Paul	100	Diocesan cathedral	c.1202	Bishop Simon de Rochfort
St Mary's, male & female	756	Aug. canons & canonesses	1188-91	Hugh de Lacy
St. John Baptist	76	Frat. Cruciferi	After 1202	Bishop de Rochfort
	n.a.	Dominican	1263	Geoffrey de Geneville
St Mary's Priory male & female MH	c. 131	Franciscan	Before 1318	Rufus de Burgo or Plunkett
	n.a.	Knights Hosp.	Untraced	Untraced
Tristernagh WH	c. 900	Aug. canons	c. 1210	G de Constentin

Source: compiled from information in Gwynn & Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*  
\* Previously established Irish houses

The Reformation began early in Meath, with most religious houses being suppressed, seized or surrendered in the years 1539 and 1540.<sup>17</sup> Only the Franciscan friars at Trim, Multifarnham and the diocesan cathedral at Trim, were restored under Mary I.<sup>18</sup> Abbeyshrule, Colpe and the Franciscan friars at Trim survived until the reign of Elizabeth I.<sup>19</sup> Due to lack of definitive records, particularly in the Hiberno period and because some allowance must be made for possible misinterpretation of settler records, it cannot be claimed that the information in Tables 2.2 and 2.3 is comprehensive or entirely free of error. Despite this, there is sufficient data to give some important indicators. Of the ninety-one religious houses appearing here in Tables 2.2 and 2.3, forty-eight were founded by early or subsequent settlers. Acreages are available for only thirty-eight of the total. However, these figures alone amount to in excess of 25,000 acres and give at least a minimal idea of the property held by the

<sup>17</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 260, 97-8 & 256 respectively.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 125-6, p. 166 & p. 260 respectively.



pre-Reformation church throughout the diocese of Meath and indicate to some degree the extent of potential, albeit latent, revenues denied the new reformed church after dissolution. It is hardly necessary to mention that the lay impropriation of tithes had consequences throughout the island. Tithe ownership was given to individuals as a means of reward or as a path to secure loyalty to the crown, in much the same way as monastic lands were distributed. For example the Cistercian abbey at Mellifont in the diocese of Armagh was dissolved on 23 July 1539.<sup>20</sup> The land, and a great proportion of the tithal income were later leased by the crown to Gerard Moore, who was also created viscount. Moore had proved his worth and loyalty by defending the property against the Irish, and in so doing 'relieved many of her Majesty's subjects' and 'gave an example to others and relief to the whole county Louth.'<sup>21</sup> Mellifont comprised at least 5,000 acres, five watermills, several fisheries and boats. The abbey was also responsible for the maintenance of ten rectories.<sup>22</sup> Diverting its income and its value to lay hands deprived those ten rectories of a great deal in monetary terms. In the late eighteenth century, the diocese of Cashel, where there had been many important monastic foundations, found itself bereft of rectoral income from twenty-eight of its parishes and three of its vicarages.<sup>23</sup> At that time the diocese comprised 155 parishes. To be at the loss of income from thirty-one or one-fifth of its parishes may, on the face of it, not appear too serious a handicap. However, in terms of parochial income, the situation rendered Cashel third poorest of the four Irish archdioceses. Tuam was the most impoverished.<sup>24</sup>

The reformed Church of Ireland largely followed the organisational structure adapted in the thirteenth century as described by Brady and latterly, by Scott.<sup>25</sup> It comprised four provinces or archbishoprics; Armagh, Dublin, Tuam and Cashel. A

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<sup>20</sup> Archdall, *Monasticon*, p. 485.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Fr Colmcille, *The story of Mellifont* (Dublin, 1958), p. 197.

<sup>22</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 140.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel Augustus Beaufort, *Memoir of a map of Ireland illustrating the topography of that kingdom & containing a short account of its present state, civil & ecclesiastical: with a complete index to the map* (London, 1792), pp 104-37.

<sup>24</sup> Malcomson, *Archbishop Agar, churchmanship & politics in Ireland, 1760-1810*, p. 203; Akenson, *The Church of Ireland*, pp 92-4.

<sup>25</sup> John Brady, 'Anglo Norman organisation of the diocese of Meath' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, lxxvii (1946), pp 233-8 at p. 236 & Scott, *Religion and Reformation*, p. 29.

province had a number of dioceses under its jurisdiction; each led by a bishop. The dean oversaw the diocesan cathedral chapter and was the bishop's deputy. Archdeacons were also part of the upper diocesan clergy. Each diocese was divided into a number of rural deaneries. The office of the rural dean was held by a clergyman of the deanery who could be relied upon to carry out the bishop's instruction within the parishes of his deanery. Although his efficiency of function depended on several prevalent conditions of his locality, it also required a resident and committed diocesan. At the bottom of the organisation, on a parish level was the rector or vicar and, finally, the curate.

The bishop's ecclesiastical duties included officiating at confirmations and ordinations and he was expected to encourage reform by certifying suitable lower clergy for induction. He was expected to ensure that religious services were conducted regularly and was required to inspect standards of religious practice. During the annual visitation a bishop examined and reported on the state of church buildings, their contents and environs. Apart from his diocesan duties, the early reformed pale bishop was expected to handle civil disturbance and to defend the march areas and the diocesan boundary from Gaelic incursion. In 1530 Edward Staples, master of the hospital of Saint Bartholomew in London and one time chaplain to Henry VIII was appointed bishop of Meath by Pope Clement III.<sup>26</sup> As a supporter of the ideals of reform, his episcopate straddled pre- and post-Reformation Meath. Like his fellow bishops, Staples was expected to encourage religious reform among his congregation and also assist in the political administration of the diocese and its defence against incursion. Evidence of his political and administrative leanings are to be found in state papers that record Staples as one of the first to propose the title king of Ireland for Henry VIII.<sup>27</sup> He was also involved in the practice of surrender and regrant during the 1540s and asserted that the occupier William Darcy had no right to the Mortimer lands on the 'manor of Rathwere'.<sup>28</sup> The

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<sup>26</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 271.

<sup>27</sup> *State Papers: Henry VIII* (11 vols, London, 1830-52), iii, p. 30.

<sup>28</sup> Bishop Edward Staples to Thomas Boleyn, earl of Wiltshire, n.d. (P.R.O., London, SP 46/130, f. 26).

diocese, though mostly within the pale heartland, extended to the marches and suffered from Gaelic incursion. Kells and Athboy for example, were susceptible to attack and Staples, like the previously mentioned Bishop Brady, incurred considerable debts in securing the defence of his house and his country.<sup>29</sup> His debts mounted considerably during the Geraldine threat of 1539, when he was required to command garrisons of men in defence of the lordship.<sup>30</sup>

Hugh Brady, Bishop of Meath from the 1560s to the 1580s, was also engaged in government business and military service, at his own expense, throughout his episcopate.<sup>31</sup> Evidence of his being active in the process of surrender and regrant during the 1560s was found in his correspondence with regard to one Oliver Sutton of Richardstown in Kildare. Sutton was 'now seeking a fee farm grant of the Augustinian Friary of the Naas and of the Nunnery of Kildare'.<sup>32</sup> In 1565, Brady complained to William Cecil 'I am presentlie compelled to go into the Earl of Desmonds countrie, leaving my owne function and busyness behind me undone'.<sup>33</sup> Seven years later the lord deputy in Ireland, Lord Fitzwilliam, commended Brady for prowess and bravery on the battlefield by risking his life 'in driving oute the rebels'.<sup>34</sup> On 2 August 1572, the bishop wrote to the chief baron about an expected attack in his diocese; 'The place we should repair to is Moynalty....I will make what numbers I can ready'.<sup>35</sup> With such demands of civic and military duty, it is scarcely any wonder that the Church of Ireland in Meath did not much improve during his episcopate. However, when not preoccupied by concerns of military defence, the bishop appears to have attended to the religious state of his diocese. His diocesan report of 1576 was forwarded to Elizabeth I by Sir Henry Sidney. While one must

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Scott, *Religion & Reformation*, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> Brady's munitions debt to Elizabeth I was inherited by his widow. Geoffrey Fenton, Sir Henry Wallop & Archbishop Adam Loftus wrote to Walsingham to plead favour on her behalf in 1584; See W.M. Brady, *State Papers concerning the Irish Church in the time of Queen Elizabeth I* (London, 1868), pp 80-1, 87-8 & 81-2 respectively.

<sup>32</sup> Bishop Hugh Brady to the Earl of Sussex, 23 Jan. 1565 (B.M., Cotton Mss. Titus B, xiii, Art. 56, f. 165).

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Scott, p. 60.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in W.M. Brady, *State Papers*, pp 9-10.

bear in mind the fact that Sidney was a close friend and ally of the bishop, his good recommendation is worth a mention. In a letter accompanying the report, Sydney assured the queen that Brady conducted his visitation 'going from church to church himself'.<sup>36</sup>

The Irish bishops were not expected to defend the country alone. In 1583 Queen Elizabeth wrote to John Whitgift, bishop of Worcester, requiring the provision of horse and armour by the bishop, dean, chapter and clergy, for service in Ireland.<sup>37</sup> In the 1590s, the same John Whitgift, then archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to the bishops of his province to provide 300 horsemen and 285 foot-soldiers to muster at West Chester in preparation for service in Ireland.<sup>38</sup> Later bishops, though not expected to provide military forces or fight on the battlefield, were distracted from ecclesiastical duty by matters of local and national government at either Dublin Castle or the royal court itself.

In Meath, there was no cathedral, no chapter and no dean. The archdeacon served as the bishop's deputy and although St Patrick's, Trim was regarded as the centre of the church in the diocese, the archdeacon was based at Kells and held the rectory there until disestablishment.<sup>39</sup> His chief responsibilities were the induction and discipline of clergy and the administration of church property. The archdeacon also presided over his own court, for the hearing of spiritual cases. In the sixteenth century, several Irish-speaking archdeacons were appointed. Their command of the native language was a useful aid to many bishops who were either English born or who spoke only English.<sup>40</sup> According to Healy, between the monastic dissolutions of 1539-40 to the year 1800 nineteen archdeacons were appointed to the diocese of Meath.<sup>41</sup> As illustrated in Table 2.4, between dissolution and 1661, being incumbent

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<sup>36</sup> Sir Henry Sydney to Elizabeth I, 28 Apr. 1576 (B.M., Cotton MSS. Titus. B. x).

<sup>37</sup> Queen Elizabeth I to Bishop John Whitgift, 29 Sept. 1580 (L.P.L., Fairhurst papers, musters of the clergy, MS. 2009).

<sup>38</sup> Archbishop Whitgift to the diocesans of the province of Canterbury, 4 Mar. 1595 or 1596, f. 64.

<sup>39</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 276.

<sup>40</sup> Scott, *Religion & Reformation*, p. 30.

<sup>41</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 277.

of the archdeaconry almost invariably led to a bishopric or as in the instances of John Garvey, Randolph Barlow and John Bramhall, an archbishopric.

Table 2.4 Archdeacons of Meath 1539-1800

Year	Archdeacon	Translated to
1540	John Chambre	n.a.
1558	Robert Luttrell	Deprived by Elizabeth & died in prison c. 1578
1559	John Garvey	Bishopric of Kilmore in 1585 and archbishopric of Armagh in 1589
1603	Owen Wood	n.a.
1606	Thomas Moygne	Dean of St Patrick's in 1608 and bishopric of Kilmore & Ardagh in 1612
1608	John Ryder	Bishopric of Killaloe in 1612
1613	Randolph Barlow	Archbishopric of Tuam in 1627
1633	John Bramhall	Bishopric of Derry in 1634 and archbishopric of Armagh in 1661
1634	Robert Ussher	Bishopric of Kildare in 1635
1644	Arthur Ware	n.a.
1661	Ambrose Jones	Bishopric of Kildare in 1667
1678	William Jones	n.a.
1681	Henry Cottingham	n.a.
1698	James Moorecroft	n.a.
1723	George Lewis	n.a.
1730	William Smyth	n.a.
1732	James Smyth	n.a.
1759	Charles Stone	n.a.
1799	Thomas De Lacy	n.a.

Source: Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 277; Canon J.B. Leslie, *Clergy of Dublin & Glendalough: biographical succession lists* (Belfast, 2001), for details relating to Luttrell, Garvey, Moygne, Ryder, Barlow, Bramhall, Ussher & Ambrose Jones see pp 840-1, 656, 911, 1029, 374, 418, 1133, 776 respectively

By any standards and for whatever reason, there were a number of churchmen who simultaneously held an inordinate number of offices. From the founding of the Church of Ireland and England and regardless of ecclesiastical rank, the practice of pluralism or the holding of more than one office, was rife. The cause of pluralism, particularly in Ireland, has been long attributed to the lack of willing or suitable clergymen. However, from at least Elizabethan times, there was clerical opposition to any measure leading to the abolition of pluralities. In 1584, John Whitgift archbishop of Canterbury, argued in favour of pluralities as they were 'not against anie parte of

the holie scriptures'.<sup>42</sup> A government bill to abolish pluralities in 1601 was opposed by Whitgift and his fellow ecclesiastics Benjamin Charier prebendary of Canterbury and Michael Murgatroid, master of the faculties.<sup>43</sup> The practice was by no means confined to the lower clergy. As shown in Table 2.5 Archdeacon John Garvey held several overlapping offices between 1559 and 1595, all the while retaining his post as archdeacon of Meath.<sup>44</sup> With such an extensive portfolio, it is not surprising to discover that Garvey was not resident in his Meath rectory or archdeaconry.<sup>45</sup> John Ryder was also a pluralist. Before becoming bishop of Killaloe in 1613, he simultaneously held the archdeaconry of Meath, was prebendary of Geashill in the diocese of Kildare and also served as Church of England rector in the parish of Bermondsey, Surrey.<sup>46</sup> Randolph Barlow was yet another. He became archbishop of Tuam in 1629 and retained the archdeaconry of Meath *in commendam* during his archbishopric.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> John Whitgift to Elizabeth I, n.d. 1585 (L.P.L., Fairhurst papers, 1577-1640, MS 2004, ff 14-15).

<sup>43</sup> John Whitgift to Elizabeth I, 19 Nov. 1601, ff 12, 17-18 & 31.

<sup>44</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 277; Leslie, *Clergy of Dublin & Glendalough*, p. 656.

<sup>45</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, i, pp 201-2 where Garvey has also been cited as an intermediary during negotiations with Shane O'Neill who had led several incursions into the district of Meath.

<sup>46</sup> Lesley, *Clergy of Dublin & Glendalough*, p. 1029.

<sup>47</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 277.

Table 2.5 The simultaneous religious and civil offices held by Archdeacon John Garvey, 1559-95

Year	Offices held
1559	Archdeacon of Meath
1560	Archdeacon of Meath & prebendary of Tipperkevin St. Patrick's Cathedral
1565	Archdeacon of Meath, prebendary of Tipperkevin St Patrick's Cathedral & dean of Christchurch Cathedral
1567	Archdeacon of Meath, prebendary of Tipperkevin St. Patrick's Cathedral, dean of Cathedral & chaplain to the earl of Sussex
1576	Archdeacon of Meath, prebendary of Tipperkevin St. Patrick's Cathedral, dean of Christchurch Cathedral & privy councillor
1585	Archdeacon of Meath, prebendary of Tipperkevin St. Patrick's Cathedral, dean of Cathedral & bishop of Kilmore
1589	Archdeacon of Meath & archbishop of Armagh

Source: Leslie, *Clergy of Dublin & Glendalough*, p. 656; Healy, *History of the diocese*, i, pp 192, 201-2, ii, p. 277

In 1799, soon after his translation to Meath, Bishop O'Beirne appointed his nephew Thomas De Lacy, the son of a bricklayer and whom he had educated himself, as archdeacon of the diocese. Nepotism in the appointment of the diocesan archdeacon was not a new practice. In the case of O'Beirne and De Lacy, the appointment was indicative of not only the value of religious connections *per se*, but of the value of connections within the established church in particular. The archdeacon was also the nephew of a Roman Catholic parish priest, Denis O'Beirne. Had De Lacy been allied to his Roman Catholic uncle, there can be no doubt, he would never have commanded a salary of £3,000 a year or lived the gentleman's life, as he did in the established church. The particular case of Archdeacon De Lacy and his uncle was highlighted many years later in the British House of Commons during a debate on church temporalities in Ireland.<sup>48</sup> In the same debate, it was claimed that

<sup>48</sup> *Hansard* 3, i [etc.] *Hansard's parliamentary debates*, third series, 1830-91 (lxxv, London, 1844), c. 598.

De Lacy, the Protestant archdeacon died 'enormously wealthy', while an archbishop of the Roman Church, Dr Troy of Dublin, died in apostolical poverty, 'his wealth amounted to 10½d'.<sup>49</sup> It was reported that De Lacy's Romish uncle, Father Dennis O'Beirne died in similar financial circumstances.<sup>50</sup>

Although the number of chapeltries, curacies, parishes and unions changed considerably over time, the number of rural deaneries remained almost constant from the Reformation to the time of disestablishment. In 1622 there were twelve deaneries in Meath; Ardnurcher, Clonard, Clonmacnoise, Duleek, Fore, Kells,<sup>51</sup> Loughsuewly, Mullingar, Ratoath, Skryne, Slane and Trim.<sup>52</sup> In 1685 they remained as before.<sup>53</sup> At some point the rural deanery of Ardnurcher was abolished and its parishes brought under Mullingar.<sup>54</sup> The office of the rural dean was intended as an early means of strengthening church administration and episcopal administration in particular. Meath's rural deaneries were first proposed at the synod of Kells in 1152 when several small sees were amalgamated. The papal legate Cardinal Paparo decreed that on the death of a village bishop, the see should in future be served by a rural dean. In 1216, the then bishop of Meath Simon de Rochfort adopted and enforced Paparo's decree by changing the sees of Clonard, Kells, Slane, Skryne and Dunshaughlin into rural deaneries.<sup>55</sup> In Ireland, the office lapsed somewhat until its restoration by Bishop Berkeley of Cloyne in the eighteenth century.<sup>56</sup> During the 1790s, Bishop Thomas Percy of Dromore appointed rural deans on three-year tenure.<sup>57</sup> This policy must have given a clergyman political and pastoral incentive and offered him an

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., c. 599.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> In 1854 Kells was divided into two rural deaneries, upper and lower. See Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 281.

<sup>52</sup> Scott, *Religion & Reformation*, p. 75; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 281-339.

<sup>53</sup> C.C. Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's Visitation Book 1682-1685' in *Riocht na Midhe*, v, no. 1 (1971), pp 33-39; v, no. 2 (1972), pp 4-13; v, no. 3 (1973), pp 4-11; v, no. 4 (1974), pp 99-103; vi, no. 1 (1975), pp 3-13.

<sup>54</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 321-331 relates the composite parishes in the rural deanery of Mullingar, with no mention of the amalgamation of the two deaneries in question.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Thompson, *Statistical survey of the County of Meath*, p. xvii.

<sup>56</sup> W.G. Neely, 'The clergy, 1780-1850' in T.C. Barnard & W.G. Neely (eds), *The clergy of the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000: messengers, watchmen & stewards* (Dublin & Portland OR, 2006), p. 147; Malcomson, *Archbishop Agar*, p. 204.

<sup>57</sup> Malcomson, *Archbishop Agar*, pp 204-5.



opportunity, albeit temporary, to rise above the lower parochial position and prove his worth to the diocesan. Archbishop Charles Agar reintroduced the office to the archdiocese of Cashel and between 1795 and 1800, Archbishop Newcome did likewise in Armagh.<sup>58</sup> Rural deans were beneficed clergymen of the diocese and rural deanery in which they held office. They were the communicators between the diocesan and the parish clergy. It was their duty to inspect church buildings, glebe houses, glebe lands, churchyards, 'communion tables, pulpits, desks, pews, vestments, books and all things necessary for the decent celebration of divine serve'.<sup>59</sup> A rural dean submitted an annual report to the diocesan registrar one month before episcopal visitation. This report was to include all parish details named above and in addition, a signed and dated declaration of the whereabouts of all clergymen, both resident and non-resident.<sup>60</sup> As the purpose of the rural dean's report was primarily to assist with the diocesan visitation, one could surmise, at least in the case of less diligent bishops, that reports from rural deaneries may in themselves have offered a sufficient proxy in assessing the annual state of a diocese.

In theory, direct pastoral care on a parish basis was the domain of the local rector or vicar. In reality, as will be shown below, it was often left to a pluralist curate or even, in exceptional cases, to a Roman Catholic clergyman. Throughout diocesan history, in Meath and elsewhere, these offices were difficult to fill and it was even more difficult to enforce residence. Many clergy were found absent or residing on other benefices within the diocese or even in other dioceses. This meant the curate was alone in serving the church on a local level. In theory, a parochial clergyman's financial wherewithall came from tithes and fees for the performance of services such as baptism and marriage. In practice however, due to the lay impropriation of tithes or the withholding of tithes, parish clergy were generally in receipt of the small tithes only, or, in many cases, in receipt of no tithe income at all.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 199; Akenson, *The Church of Ireland*, pp 6-8 & 131-2; Neely, 'The clergy, 1780-1850', p. 147.

<sup>59</sup> Malcomson, *Archbishop Agar*, p. 204.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

Between the Reformation and the end of the eighteenth century, the diocese of Meath continued to change infrastructurally. It was usual for bishops to create or restructure parishes and parish unions as they saw fit. Churches were built or rebuilt. The connection between church, politics and family continued as churchmen from prominent families with political connections or service advanced to the ecclesiastical bench, while lower clergy were appointed by the crown, the bishop or the lay patron of the parish. The diocesan visitations of 1622 and 1682-5 and a brief description of Meath from 1792 below illustrates the changes, persistent problems and advances of the diocese under some of its bishops whose legacy was inherited by Thomas Lewis O'Beirne at the end of 1798.

Although part of the diocese of Meath in the early sixteenth century lay well within the pale, a number of its parishes, Kells and Athboy for example, were in march areas. Its aristocratic families such as the Flemings, Plunketts, Prestons and Barnewalls were involved in the political and ecclesiastical life of the diocese. The landholding Cusack, Netterville, Bathe and Dillon families were active in prominent and trusted government office.<sup>61</sup> Sir Patrick Barnewall occupied the position of master of the rolls and Sir Thomas Cusack served as the lord chancellor and lord justice in the 1550s.<sup>62</sup> Following the monastic dissolutions the Flemings were granted the religious lands at Slane that were founded by the family in the twelfth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>63</sup> The Dillons were allowed religious lands not only of family foundations at Ardnacranny and Kilkenny West,<sup>64</sup> but also those at Abbeyshrule and Kilbeggan.<sup>65</sup> Thomas Cusack's loyalty was rewarded by grants of monastic lands at Beybec, Clonard, Duleek, Lismullin, Skryne and Trim.<sup>66</sup> Alienation of church lands to the laity was not always an act of crown or government. In 1544 the then bishop of Meath, Edward Staples, reduced the long-term assets of the church by the sale of

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<sup>61</sup> Keith Waters, 'The rise of the Meath gentry, c. 1172-1450' (M.Phil thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1999).

<sup>62</sup> Scott, *Religion and Reformation*, p. 22.

<sup>63</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses*, pp 275, 361.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 286-7 & 213.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 125-6 & 137.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 128, 163-4, 173-4, 322, 301-2 & 196 respectively.

ecclesiastical land to Anthony St Leger, without royal permission.<sup>67</sup> Staples further impoverished diocesan income by alienating the patronage of the parish church at Painestown to one Patrick de la Field 'and his heirs forever'.<sup>68</sup> He gave lands at Ardbraccan to Richard Christian the diocesan registrar, and lands at Julianstown to Thomas St Lawrence of Howth.<sup>69</sup> Bishop James Ussher recorded his predecessors Hugh Brady (1563-83), Thomas Jones (1584-1605), Roger Dod (1606-8) and George Montgomery (1611-20), as leasing tithes and revenues from church lands in several areas of the diocese.<sup>70</sup> The loss of revenue from land was not the only product of lay involvement in the realm of ecclesiastical affairs. In earlier times, the infrastructural link between church and laity was firmly established through the practice of church building on secular lands. Families who built and endowed churches became parish patrons with the power of advowson.<sup>71</sup> Early and subsequent English settlers continued the practice, by building churches for their own use and that of their servants and tenants.

After the Reformation, many families, including recusants, retained parish patronage and continued to exercise advowson by presenting clergy for induction. The retention of these privileges often worked to the disadvantage of the new religion. English clerics were reluctant to minister in Ireland, as the value of the stipend and general conditions were less attractive than in England. Besides, there was little sense in inducting English-speaking clergy to a mostly Gaelic-speaking population. This, together with a lack of pale-born clergy, meant a living would remain vacant or was filled by a Gaelic-speaking clergyman. The situation was compounded by recusant patrons who took the latter option, or presented candidates of a conservative, Roman Catholic leaning, who were not likely to encourage reform.

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<sup>67</sup> James Morrin (ed.), *Calendar of patent & close rolls of chancery in Ireland, Henry VIII-18<sup>th</sup> Elizabeth* (Dublin, 1862), pp 105, 106, 122.

<sup>68</sup> Griffith (ed.), *Calendar of inquisitions*, p. 206.

<sup>69</sup> C.R. Elrington, 'A certificate of the state and revennewes of the bishopricke of Meath and Clonmackenosh' in *The whole works of the Most Rev. James Ussher, D.D., Lord Archbishop of Armagh, and primate of all Ireland, with a life of the author, and an account of his writings* (17 vols, Dublin, 1847), i, pp liii & lvii respectively.

<sup>70</sup> Elrington, 'A certificate of the state and revennewes', pp liii-lix.

<sup>71</sup> Duffy, 'The shape of the parish', p. 45.

In 1604, Bishop Henry Jones complained that at least fifteen benefices in the diocese were in the patronage of recusant patrons who ‘...place curates of their own choosing without sufficient maintenance, neither do they keep in repair...the chancels of their churches’.<sup>72</sup> Some years later in 1622, the diocesan survey undertaken by Bishop James Ussher showed that the diocese continued in a state of some dishevelment and with very many more parishes under recusant patrons and impropiators than indicated by Bishop Jones. As illustrated in Table 2.6, Ussher’s visitation gave fifty-six papist and twenty-five lay Protestant patrons. These figures may not present the true picture, as there were eighty-three churches and chapels where patronage was not indicated.

Table 2.6. The state of the diocese of Meath, 1622

Rural deanery	Church		Patron						Tithes	
	In use	Ruin (not in use)	Crown	Archdeacon	Bishop	Primate	Lay	Recusant	Lay	Recusant
Ardnurcher	2	15	0	0	16	0	0	0	10	16
Ballymore Loxeudy	7	14	0	0	8	0	0	2	7	9
Clonard	3	6	0	0	1	0	0	5	4	0
Clonmacnoise	2	7	0	0	10	0	0	0	3	6
Duleek	15	8	0	0	0	1	8	5	16	3
Fore	10	6	2	0	0	0	1	8	2	13
Kells	1	14	1	4	2	0	0	6	3	4
Mullingar	10	17	0	0	4	0	8	7	11	6
Ratoath	6	8	4	0	0	0	2	4	12	4
Skryne	14	20	11	0	0	0	3	7	14	12
Slane	10	13	2	0	8	0	1	9	6	3
Trim	12	14	1	0	5	2	2	3	11	6
Total	92	132	21	4	54	3	25	56	99	80

Source: Compiled from information in ‘A certificate of the state and revennewes’, pp lxii-cxxiv

As the above figures vary from those in the accounts given by Healy and Elrington, some explanation is necessary. Healy’s interpretation on the state of churches and chapels of ease as recorded in Ussher’s visitation of 1622, differs from what appears in Table 2.6 here. There is no way of knowing the criteria applied by Healy to reach his conclusions. A simple criteria has been used by this author. Where

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Scott, *Religion & Reformation*, p. 139.

Ussher's visitation described a church or chapel having both church and chancel standing and covered, or where either church, chancel or porch were standing and covered, it is classed as having been 'in use'. This is a valid classification, as services or readings were held at sites where any part of the building remained standing. Where all parts were down or uncovered, the term 'ruin' is applied. In addition, not all the classification figures in Ussher's synopsis as published by Elrington agreed with those in the visitation schedule itself and an attempt at correction and modification has been made here. When figures in the visitation synopsis are totaled they differ from the total number of entries contained in the schedule. According to the synopsis, there were two dignities, fifty-one rectories, sixty-three vicarages, seventy-nine curateships and forty-three chapels of ease, together totaling 238.<sup>73</sup> In contradiction, the schedule comprises 243 entries, beginning with the number two and duplicating the number 183.<sup>74</sup> The synopsis stated the number of rectories as fifty-one, while the schedule recorded fifty-six.<sup>75</sup> There were sixty-three vicarages and two vicarages where the appointees held the title of curate incumbent.<sup>76</sup> Of the 241 entries relating to churches and chapels of ease 139 were ruined, thirty-three in part ruin and fifty-nine were in good repair.<sup>77</sup> The schedule made no comment on the churches of Athlone, Enniskeen, St. Thomas's Loxeudy, Kilbride, Oldcastle, Fercall or Archidcorum.<sup>78</sup> Empar, Villapagan and Vastina had neither church nor chapel.<sup>79</sup> There was not one church or chapel in the country between Tullamore and Birr.<sup>80</sup> Despite the returns, the bishop stated 'All the Churches specified in this Certificate are fitt to be builded repayred and reedified'.<sup>81</sup> As Ussher did not specify the physical condition of any church or chapel in the synopsis, this statement may have been made

<sup>73</sup> 'A certificate of the state and revennewes', p. cxxv.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. lxii & p. cxiii respectively.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. cxxv & pp lxii-cxxiv.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp xliii-cxxv. Healy uses the synopsis and makes the distinction between the definitions of a curacy, i, p. 257.

<sup>77</sup> 'A certificate of the state of the revennewes', pp xliii-cxxv; Healy, *History of the diocese*, i, pp 242-3 gives 31 in part ruin, 49 in good repair and gives no figure whatever for those ruined.


<sup>78</sup> 'A certificate of the state and revennewes', pp lxxxi, cxiv, cxvi, cxviii, cxxi.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. cxiv.

<sup>80</sup> This is specifically noted by Healy, *History of the diocese*, p. 243.

<sup>81</sup> 'A certificate of the state and revennewes', p. cxxv.

as an announcement of good intention or in the hope that the synopsis would be taken as a fair representation of the returns contained in the schedule.

Although Ussher indicated 110 recusant patrons and impropiators by this symbol , close examination of the returns indicate a further twenty-six were also held by recusants. It is interesting to note that of the fifty-nine buildings in good repair, thirty-four had recusant patrons or impropiators.<sup>82</sup> Sixteen of the thirty-three in part-ruin had patrons or impropiators not of the Protestant faith and of the 139 in ruin only fifty bore the recusant symbol.<sup>83</sup> Although Ussher's visitation does not classify all incumbents or curates, several are classed preacher, reader or deacon. The preaching ministers were generally men of some education, often described in the certificate as a 'M<sup>r</sup> of Artes' [sic]. It was expected that they be well versed in the dissemination of the bible and Book of Common Prayer. The reading ministers were permitted to read from the bible, but not permitted to pass comment.<sup>84</sup> There were seven deacons, serving eighteen appointments.<sup>85</sup> In seventy-two cases the incumbent was non-resident and in no fewer than eighty instances the curate was absent.<sup>86</sup> Of all the churches and chapels listed in the visitation, only fifty-two had a clergyman who resided full-time.<sup>87</sup> One notable absentee was Luke Ussher, cousin of the bishop of Meath. He held the parish of Kentstown from 1622, but resided in Armagh as archdeacon of that diocese.<sup>88</sup> As can be seen in Table 2.7, pluralism was the predominant practice. Only fifteen rectors or vicars, and two deacons held a single appointment, while seventy-two rectors or vicars, and seven deacons served 223 churches and chapels between them. It must also be remembered that these livings were not all in the diocese of Meath.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp lxii-cxxiv.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp lxii-cxxiv.

<sup>84</sup> See 'A certificate of the state and revennewes', pp lxii-cxxiv, where twenty-eight were described as preachers & twenty-four as readers.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., pp lxxv, lxxvi, lxxxiv, lxxxvi & cxvii; Healy, i, p. 250 states Oliver Plunkett who served both Clonabreany and Diamore was also a deacon who did not receive orders until 1623.

<sup>86</sup> 'A certificate of the state and revennewes', pp lxii-cxxiv.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., pp lxii-cxxiv.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. lxii.

Table 2.7 The extent of pluralism among the lower clergy in the diocese of Meath, 1622

Clergymen		Number of appointments held by each	Total number of appointments held
Rectors/Vicars	Deacons		
15	2	1	17
17	1	2	36
21	2	3	69
10	2	4	48
4	0	5	20
2	0	6	12
3	0	7	21
Total 72	Total 7		Total 223

Source: 'A certificate of the state & revennewes', pp lxii-cxxiv

It is not possible to proffer exact figures on the number of parishes where services or cure was performed. While Ussher described many of his clergy as men of good life and conversation, he specified only 112 churches or chapels where some form of cure was actually served on a regular basis.<sup>89</sup> The good character reference may be an indication of the moral calibre of clergyman found in the diocese during the Ussher episcopate. However, it was not made clear if divinity studies formed any part of their education. As seen above in Table 2.7, there were seven deacons recorded as incumbent or curate. This was also retrospectively evidenced in returns made to the royal visitation held at Trim in 1633, where several clergymen were recorded as not taking Holy Orders 'until long after the date of their appointments'.<sup>90</sup> Healy expressed some surprise at the parochial appointment of deacons.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, these appointees, by virtue of being accepted into deacon orders, had proven to some extent their interest in pursuing a clerical life. By the singling out of six in deacon orders or no orders at all, Healy seems to have made the assumption that all others described as 'Bachelor of Artes', 'M<sup>r</sup>. of Artes', 'a Cambridge man' or indeed with no reference to his education at all, were actually ordained in holy orders. In the absence of comprehensive ordination lists, this assumption must be treated with some caution.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp lxii-cxxiv.

<sup>90</sup> See Healy, *A history of the diocese*, i, pp 249-50, where several examples are given.

<sup>91</sup> Healy, *A history of the diocese*, i, pp 249-50.

Despite the state of the churches and the absence or pluralism of clergy, services of some description were held in many part-ruined churches. In Navan for example, where the church was in good condition but the chancel ruinous, Mr. William Phillips ‘preacheth every Sunday’.<sup>92</sup> Thomas Lees, a preaching minister held four appointments, Ballygarth, Moorechurch, Julianstown and Stamullen.<sup>93</sup> Although the churches of Moorechurch and Stamullen were ruined and their chancels ‘indifferently repayed’ [sic], Lees ‘dischargeth all the cures carefully’.<sup>94</sup> At the time of visitation, Bishop Ussher had held the see of Meath for just one year. Therefore the state of churches in episcopal patronage was the legacy of his predecessor George Montgomery (1611-1620). Montgomery was elevated from dean of Norwich to the sees of Derry, Raphoe and Clogher by James I as a result of services rendered by his brother Hugh. He organised the settlement of many Scottish tenants on his episcopal lands in Derry and Donegal and was a commissioner appointed to the strategic planning and implementation of the plantation of Ulster.<sup>95</sup> He was translated to Meath in 1611 and continued to hold the diocese of Clogher. Over the years, Montgomery was largely absent from Meath. This, combined with a benign attitude to Roman Catholics who took the oath of allegiance during the reign of James I, was reflected in the diocese by the numbers of papist patrons and impropiators.<sup>96</sup> Ussher’s schedule indicated over two recusant patrons to each Protestant patron and while there were ninety-nine Protestant impropiators of tithes, there were eighty recusants.<sup>97</sup> As illustrated in Table 2.8, Bishop Montgomery’s absence from the diocese also had a negative effect on the state of the fifty-three churches and chapels to which he presented the clergyman. Of these only five were in good condition, five were in part ruin and the remaining forty-three were entirely ruined.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. lxxxiv.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., pp lxiii-lxiv.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. lxiv.

<sup>95</sup> Michael Perceval-Maxwell, *The Scottish migration to Ulster in the reign of James I* (London, 1973), p. 69.

<sup>96</sup> Following the death of Bishop Roger Dod in 1608, the see remained vacant until the consecration of Bishop George Montgomery in 1611; Healy, ii, p. 271.

<sup>97</sup> ‘A certificate of the state and revennewes’, pp lxxx-cxxiv.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp lxxx-cxxiv.



Table 2.8

The legacy of churches and chapels under the patronage of  
Bishop George Montgomery as surveyed in 1622<sup>99</sup>

Church or chapel	Good	Partly ruinous	Ruin
Almoritia		1	
Ardagh *	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Ardnurcher		1	
Athlone	1		
Ballyloughloe			1
Baskney *			1
Benowen *			1
Clonard		1	
Cloncall *			1
Clonfadloran			1
Cloney *			1
Clongill			1
Clonmacnoise	1		
Dallenalley *			1
Disarte			1
Drakestown			1
Drenidaly *			1
Dromcallan *			1
Drumranny	1		
Dunmoe		1	
Dysartaley			1
Eglismegan *			1
Enniskeen *	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Fircall			1
Forgney *			1
Gallen			1
Kilbridemoylan *			1
Kilbride Pilate		1	
Kilbridetangan * Conrey *			2
Kilcleagh			1
Kilcromreagh*			1
Killaghbye *			1
Kilmanahan *			1
Knough			1
Lemaghangan			1
Loughbraccan			1
Loxeady	1		
Monghwall*			1
Moyagher			1
Newtown Fertullagh			1
Newtown Kells			1
Rathcore			1
Rathenge *			1
Rathleyne * Ballyboy *			2
Rathewe *			1
Reynagh			1
Taghmon			1

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

Church or chapel (continued)	Good	Partly ruinous	Ruin
Tissauran			1
Trim	1		
Trimblestown *			1
Wherry			1
Total	5	5	43

Source: 'A Certificate of the state and revennewes', pp lxxx-cxxiv

Among the clergymen of the Montgomery episcopate was the rector of Kells and archdeacon of Meath, Randall Barlow.<sup>100</sup> The rectory of Nobber and three chapels of ease in Duleene belonged to his rectory and all four buildings were ruined.<sup>101</sup> Barlow's curate the Scottish preacher William Smyth resided and preached at Kells every Sunday.<sup>102</sup> He was also curate of Moynalty and incumbent of Newtown Kells, Sthalmogue, Knough and Kilpatrick; the last two in the rural deanery of Slane.<sup>103</sup> Even the most eminent ecclesiastic, Archbishop Christopher Hampton of Armagh and primate of all Ireland, did not manage to establish exemplary parochial order in his parishes of Kilmoon and Athboy. The parish of Athboy, albeit in the marches, was under his auspices and although 'Mr. William Smyth an Englishman M<sup>r</sup> of Artes a good preacher of good life and conversacion' resided and was 'careful of his charge', the church was 'ruynous' and the chancel no better than 'reasonable well repayred'.<sup>104</sup> The archbishop's other appointee was a preaching minister Roger Danby, who resided at Kilmoon. It is not likely that the rectory was fully served however, as the church was wholly ruined, its chancel ruinous and Danby also acted as chaplain to the lord chancellor in Dublin.<sup>105</sup>

As the seventeenth century progressed, the Church of Ireland was hampered by rebellion, the *interregnum* of Oliver Cromwell and changes of monarch. Many Protestants fled to England. Clergymen also fled, leaving their churches to ruin or to

<sup>100</sup> See Healy's succession lists, *A history of the diocese*, ii, pp 276-338; D.W.T. Crooks & T.R. Moore, *Clergy of Clogher, biographical succession lists* (Clogher, 2006).

<sup>101</sup> 'A certificate of the state and revennewes', pp lxxxvii & xc.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xciv.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp lxxxvii, lxxxviii, xciv, xcvi.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxxxii.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxiii.

Roman Catholic priests.<sup>106</sup> During the reign of James II, for example, in Meath as elsewhere, a considerable number of parishes were in crown patronage. When these parishes fell vacant, the crown left them so.<sup>107</sup> During the 1641 rebellion, the then bishop of Meath, Anthony Martin, took up residence in Trinity College Dublin and did not return.<sup>108</sup> Following Martin's death in 1650 the see remained vacant for ten years, including and beyond Cromwell's term as lord protector of England and Ireland. In 1660 Henry Leslie was translated to Meath from the diocese of Down and Connor. He died the following year and was succeeded by Henry Jones, whose episcopate lasted twenty years.<sup>109</sup> Jones, previously bishop of Clogher, had Cromwellian connections worth noting. His brother Colonel Michael Jones served in Cromwell's army, became governor of Trim and acquired some 400 acres well within the Pale in the barony of Navan as a result of his military service.<sup>110</sup> The bishop himself acted as scoutmaster general to Cromwell and was said to have fought in battle.<sup>111</sup> Following the restoration he transferred allegiance to Charles II and was promoted to Meath from Clogher in May 1661.<sup>112</sup> During his term in Meath he was assisted by his brother Ambrose Jones, who held the archdeaconry of Meath and the rectory of Kells until 1678.<sup>113</sup> The manner in which Bishop Jones administered the diocese is largely unrecorded but is best evidenced in the returns of Bishop Anthony Dopping's visitation of the early 1680s. Dopping's figures, like those of Bishop Ussher, reflect the state of the diocese at the outset of his episcopate.

Bishop Dopping was translated from Kildare to the see of Meath in 1682 and almost immediately set about ascertaining the state of his diocese. Although there are

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<sup>106</sup> Healy, *A history of the diocese*, i, p. 331.

<sup>107</sup> Healy, *A history of the diocese*, i, p. 320; William King, *The state of the Protestants in Ireland under the late King James's government; in which their carriage towards him is justified, & the absolute necessity of their endeavoring to be freed from his government, & of submitting to their present majesties is demonstrated* (Dublin, 1730), p. 221.

<sup>108</sup> Healy, *A history of the diocese*, i, p. 277. However, Healy also states Bishop Martin fled to Dublin 'on the usurpation of Cromwell', ii, p. 271; J.B. Leslie, *Clergy of Dublin & Glendalough*, cites him as Provost of T.C.D. in 1643, long before the usurpation, p. 876.

<sup>109</sup> Healy, *A history of the diocese*, ii, pp 270-1.

<sup>110</sup> Aidan Clarke, *Prelude to the restoration in Ireland: the end of the commonwealth, 1659-1660* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 189.

<sup>111</sup> Crooks & Moore, *Clergy of Clogher*, pp 11-12.

<sup>112</sup> Leslie, *Clergy of Dublin & Glendalough*, p. 12; Healy, *A history of the diocese*, ii, pp 270-1.

<sup>113</sup> Healy, *A history of the diocese*, ii, pp 277 & 282; Clarke, *Prelude to the restoration*, p. 189.

some gaps and unanswered sections in the Dopping returns, particularly relating to patronage and tithes impropriation, the survey provides sufficient information to enable some reasonable assessment of the infrastructure and state of the diocese at the end of the seventeenth century (Table 2.9). During the rebellion of 1641 many church buildings had been attacked. More than forty years later, after the restoration and during the reign of Charles II, at least one hundred and three of those churches remained in a ruinous state. However, according to the visitation book (1682-1685) services or religious practice of one kind or another continued in forty-nine ruined buildings, and in over a dozen other affected parishes the cure was served in a private house.<sup>114</sup> In Stackallen, a parish of twenty Protestant families, where the crown and Mr. Barnewall, a papist of Crickstown held patronage, 'Mr. Serjeant Osborne built a private place' where services were performed and where a sermon was preached 'every Sunday' by the rector Edward Parkinson who resided at Ardee, or by the resident curate Thomas Greene.<sup>115</sup> This appears to have been no makeshift arrangement as the thatched building erected beside the ruined church contained 'Bible, C. P. Book...desk, pulpit, moveable table, font in church...flagon, chalice, registers'.<sup>116</sup> Despite the efforts of parish clergy to perform some sort of cure, the ruinous state in which so many churches were left for so long must be regarded as illustrating the deficit in the infrastructural management of Bishop Henry Jones. Nowhere was this more evident than in the parishes where the bishop was patron. As stated above, Dopping's visitation returns omit details of patronage in many parishes. This means that the figures given here may in fact offer a more favourable view of parishes in episcopal patronage than is deserved.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book 1682-1685' in *Riocht na Midhe*, v, no. 1 (1971), pp 28-39; Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book 1682-1685', v, no. 2 (1972), pp 8-13; Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book 1682-1685', v, no. 3 (1973), pp 3-11; Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book 1682-1685', v, no. 4 (1974), pp 98-103; Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book 1682-1685' vi, no. 1 (1975), pp 3-13.

<sup>115</sup> Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1973), p. 5.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>117</sup> Only churches and chapels specifically returned as having no cure are included here, regardless of the state of ruin or total absence of a church or chapel.

Table 2.9 The state of the diocese of Meath, 1682-5

Rural Deanery	Church		Patron					Tithe ownership		
	Good	Ruin	Crown	Crown & R.C.	Bishop	Primate	Lay	Church	Lay	Papist
Ardnurcher	2	17	0	0	10	0	6*	n.a.	12	0
Ballymore Loxeudy	5	13	3	0	14	0	5	n.a.	12	3
Clonard	2	9	0	2	5	0	2	n.a.	8	0
Clonmacnoise	0	9	0	0	9	0	0	n.a.	2	0
Duleek	6	22	3	2	2	1	10	n.a.	23	0
Fore	2	18	1	16	2	0	1	Vicars choral 3	11	10
Kells	2	18	3	6	6	0	1	n.a.	4	0
Mullingar	4	26	0	6	9	0	12	Incumbent & Hospital of Dublin	21	0
Ratoath	1	12	9	3	0	0	1	n.a.	9	0
Skryne	1	28	11	6	8	0	1	n.a.	19	0
Slane	1		23	4	7	0	2	n.a.	8	0
Trim	1	33	6	3	12	2	2	n.a.	13	0
Total	27	228	40	51	84	3	34	5	142	13

Source: Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1971-5)  
 \* In dispute between the bishop of Meath and the earl of Mountrath

There were 176 chapels and churches where no cure was served, although clergymen were listed in 110 cases as having charge of the cure. Of the 102 churches and chapels under episcopal patronage, there was no duty performed in at least forty-eight.<sup>118</sup>

Much has been written on the failure of the Church of Ireland to secure church-buildings and resident clergy in all of its parishes. In the interest of fairness and regardless of contemporary difficulties such as lack of roads and considerations of transport or population, it is unreasonable to allow the presumption to endure that the Church of Ireland should have secured the provision of church buildings and resident clergymen in every single parish. It must be pointed out that certainly in the

<sup>118</sup> Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1971), pp 28-39; Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1972), pp 8-13; Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1973), pp 3-11; Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1974), pp 98-103; Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1975), pp 3-13.

first half of its history in the diocese of Meath and elsewhere, Church of Ireland sites inherited from the Roman Catholic era were often located in very close proximity to each other. The returns of both Ussher and Dopping name numerous parish churches within two miles of each other. Such parishes were nonetheless returned as having a church in ruins and a vacant or non-serving cure, even in parishes where the neighbouring cure was served within two miles.<sup>119</sup>

Of the 273 parish churches and chapels of ease for which returns were made to Bishop Dopping, no cure was served in at least 176, despite appointments having been made in, at minimum, 110 of them.<sup>120</sup> This included the parish of Kilmoon, in the patronage and impropriation of the archbishop of Armagh.<sup>121</sup> Although the archbishop had appointed Jocelyn Barnes as curate, no duties were performed.<sup>122</sup> The crown was sole patron in at least forty parishes.<sup>123</sup> Cure was not served in nineteen of these.<sup>124</sup> Lay patronage was recorded in forty-three parishes; twenty were held by Lord Drogheda and in accordance with the act of settlement clause that vested 'all Popish advowsons in the crown', fifty-one parishes were held jointly between Roman Catholic patrons and the monarch.<sup>125</sup> Dopping recorded eighteen of these as serving the cure and mentioned no impediment offered by the papist patrons apart from the parish of Kiltale where 'Lord Dunsany keeps the Rectory by force from the incumbent, though excluded from it by the Act of Settlement'.<sup>126</sup> As Dopping does not complain of Romish ceremonies being conducted at any of his churches or chapels, these approximations can be taken to indicate the cure of the Church of Ireland was served somewhat better in parishes where papist and crown held patronage, than in parishes where the crown was sole patron. Church income from

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<sup>119</sup> 'A certificate of the state and revennewes', pp lxii-cxxiv; Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book (1971-1975)'.  
<sup>120</sup> Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1971-5).  
<sup>121</sup> Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1971), p. 35.  
<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>123</sup> Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1971-5).  
<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>125</sup> Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1973), p. 11.  
<sup>126</sup> Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1972), p. 5.

126 parishes was lost through lay impropriation, thirteen of which impropiators were recorded as papist.<sup>127</sup>

Whatever efforts were made by Anthony Dopping in aiding the recovery or furthering the cause of the Protestant religion in the diocese of Meath, they must have been hampered by the accession of the Roman Catholic monarch James II in 1685. Although upon his arrival in the south of Ireland in March 1689, James II pardoned many Protestants and later issued a proclamation declaring religious freedom for all, his policy regarding the Church of Ireland has been described by Simms as one of 'passivity'.<sup>128</sup> As Protestant sees fell vacant, they were to remain so, their revenue going to the crown.<sup>129</sup> At a local level the policy had a similar effect on parochial clergymen. In Meath, following the death of Richard Duddle, his livings were seized by the commissioners of the revenue;

The Bishop [Dopping] did what was in his Power towards supplying the Cure, and according to his Duty appointed a Curate, assigning him a Salary according to the Canons, but the Commissioners would not allow him anything; and though the Bishop endeavor'd it, and petition'd both the Commissioners and Barons of the Exchequer, yet he could never get anything for the Curate. This was a Precedent, and the same as practis'd in all other cases: All the Absentees Cures had no other maintenance than the voluntary Contributions of the poor plunder'd Protestants...<sup>130</sup>

King's claims and sentiments were supported from reported situations in other parts of Ireland. In the 1690s Lord Clarendon wrote to the primate about the deplorable state of the Church of Ireland throughout the country. The archbishopric of Tuam was abandoned for three years, the bishopric of Down for six.<sup>131</sup> Clarendon claimed the lack of Church of Ireland clergy forced Protestants to seek the pastoral care of Romish priests or non-conformist preachers; the very complaint not made by Bishop Dopping in earlier years.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1971-5).

<sup>128</sup> J.G. Simms, *Jacobite Ireland, 1685-91* (Dublin, 2000), p. 28.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>130</sup> King, *The state of the Protestants of Ireland*, p. 222.

<sup>131</sup> Simms, *Jacobite Ireland*, p. 28.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, quoting from Lord Clarendon's correspondence, p. 28 & fn 36, p. 29.

The next available survey of the diocese is that conducted by Daniel Augustus Beaufort at the end of the eighteenth century. His assessment published in 1792 gives some indication of the management and infrastructural changes that took place during the eighteenth century on a county by county basis.<sup>133</sup> However, he offers nothing on the state of the churches or the residence of clergy. The extent of pluralism was also avoided by him. At the time of the report, the Honorable Henry Maxwell had held the see for twenty-six years. Table 2.10 gives figures for the six counties in which the diocese held parishes, the number of parishes, benefices, churches, glebe houses and glebe lands.

Table 2.10 Infrastructure of the diocese of Meath, 1792

County	Acres	Parishes	Benefices	Churches	Glebe Houses	No glebeland	Rectories Impropr.	Totally Impropr.
Meath	324,420	147	59	44	19	15	38	24
Westmeath	222,750	59	31	20	6	14	14	7
King's County	102,000	16	7	11	3	2	12	4
Cavan	9,400	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Longford	4,300	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
Kildare	750	1 (part of)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	663,600	224	99	77	29	32	64	35

Source: Beaufort, *Memoir of a map of Ireland*, pp 35, 41, 61, 63, 65, 116

In 1792 the primate presented to two parishes, the bishop to sixty-nine, the crown to eighty-one and thirty-seven were in the gift of the laity.<sup>134</sup> By way of comparison, the diocese of Ossory, (Table 2.11), though less than half the area of Meath, was proportionately in the same state, with the exception of total tithe impropriation. Thirty-five Meath benefices were in total lay ownership, while in Ossory only one benefice was totally impropriate.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Beaufort, *Memoir of a map of Ireland*, pp 41-122.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.



Table 2.11      Infrastructure of the diocese of Ossory, 1792

County	Acres	Parishes	Benefices	Churches	Glebe House	No glebeland	Rectories Impropr.	Totally Impropr.
Kilkenny	281,900	120	45	28	11	12	31	1
Queen's County	60,000	15	10	7	4	0	5	0
King's County	4,100	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
Total	346,000	136	56	36	15	13	37	1

Source: Beaufort, *Memoir of a map of Ireland*, p. 122

From the time of the Reformation, the Church of Ireland improved little in its infrastructure and management. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was given an opportunity to redeem itself. Government monies were provided for building and rebuilding churches. Through acts of parliament, further government funding was made available to provide housing and glebe lands to encourage and provide for a resident body of parish clergy. Over time, the diocese of Meath fared no better than many other dioceses. However, during the vital period of the early nineteenth century, it was led by Thomas Lewis O'Beirne, a bishop who availed of all opportunities to institute and execute an infrastructural reformation of his own. Chapter three begins the examination of his efforts.

## Chapter three

### Improvements to clerical residence, glebe houses and glebe lands, 1798-1823

O'Beirne was translated from Ossory to Meath in November 1798. While it cannot be presumed that O'Beirne was unconcerned about the 1798 rebellion in Meath or indeed in Ireland as a whole, there is little mention of it in what remains of his correspondence. Strictly speaking there is no direct mention of it at all. His letter of petition relating to the support of the union, dated 14 May 1799, offers some idea that following the Fitzwilliam affair and the events of 1798, and that 'the various disasters and calamities that have so uniformly succeeded each other, for such a series of years, in this distracted country...' necessitated that the legislative union must be realised.<sup>1</sup> In his letter to Castlereagh, the bishop had no real idea as to what extent the Church of Ireland classes had been disturbed by the troubles, but undertook to use the annual visitation as an opportunity to acquaint himself with the situation.<sup>2</sup> However, he did mention 'Lord Bective's abandoning the County...in which he seems to be joined by his brother'.<sup>3</sup> By then more than a year had passed since the rebellion and the bishop's utmost concern was securing the passing of the union. However, the list of names attached to the petition, may indicate that the most influential members of the Protestant ascendancy class had left the county to reside in Dublin (see Appendix 1.1). On the other hand, most of those named were members of parliament and therefore most likely to be found in Dublin whatever the state of affairs in the counties, and it cannot be assumed that they left their country seats owing to disturbances.

There were problems in Meath from at least 1792, with the advent of the Defenders. The years leading up to rebellion were years of Defender activity. A counter-active group, the County of Meath Association, was formed in 1793.

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<sup>1</sup> O'Beirne to Marshall, 14 May 1799 (P.R.O.N.I., MS D3030/773A).

<sup>2</sup> O'Beirne to Castlereagh, 1 Oct. 1799 (P.R.O.N.I., MS D3030/933, p. 1).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

According to Oliver Coogan, the association comprised armed Protestant and Presbyterian gentlemen, lower clergy, gentry, magistrates and farmers.<sup>4</sup> Coogan's article is somewhat sensationalist in its descriptions of events. However, the fact the Protestants formed a society to defend themselves against the activities of a Catholic society provides in itself, some evidence that all was not well between the religions in Meath. Liechty's thesis suggests that the events of 1798 left an indelible impression on the Protestants of Ireland and encouraged the Church of Ireland to think in terms of pursuing its mission.<sup>5</sup> Irene Whelan's work provides more than ample evidence of the spread and popularity of evangelicalism.<sup>6</sup> The archiepiscopal visitation of 1826 gave the first signs of Church of Ireland members attending services and communion in numbers worth remarking upon. This was particularly evident in some areas of Westmeath and King's County.<sup>7</sup> As will be shown in the following chapters however, there were but few members of the Church of Ireland in Meath who extended their religious fervor by contributing to the building of their parish church.

During the opening years of the nineteenth century a number of circumstances combined to facilitate the improvement of the physical state of the established church in Ireland. The Act of Union in 1801 united the Irish church with the Church of England; some measures were taken to enforce clerical residence by giving archbishops and bishops certain powers of sequestration and deprivation, and the meagre and underutilised funds of the First Fruits were enormously enlarged by government monies to facilitate the purchase of glebe lands, the building of glebe houses and the building or rebuilding of churches. Although Bishop O'Beirne utilised funding from every available quarter in the improvement of the diocese, the main financial wherewithal for glebes and houses came from the treasury and was administered through the trustees of the Board of First Fruits.

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<sup>4</sup> Oliver Coogan, 'Sectarianism in Meath, 1792-98' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, x (1999), pp 92-124 at p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> Liechty, 'Irish evangelicalism', p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Irene Whelan, *The bible war in Ireland: the 'second Reformation' and the polarization of Protestant-Catholic relations, 1800-1840* (Dublin, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Archiepiscopal visitation, 10 Aug. 1826 (R.C.B., MS D7/1/2\*).

Prior to the Reformation, First Fruits was a rate of payment in proportion to the first year's income from an ecclesiastical dignity or benefice which was paid to the pope. After the Reformation, First Fruits became a part of the revenue due to the crown. The tax was generally known as the First Fruits and twentieths in Ireland, and persisted through the reigns of Elizabeth, James and Charles I.<sup>8</sup> In 1704 Queen Anne released the tax in England to a board of trustees who were to administer and disburse the First Fruits for the infrastructural improvement of the Church of England. Following the exertions of Jonathan Swift, the queen agreed the same for the Church of Ireland c.1711.<sup>9</sup> The disbursements were to be used for building churches and glebe houses, purchasing glebes and impropriated tithes for the augmentation of smaller livings, and for providing every incumbent with an income of at least £150 per year. In theory, the First Fruits fund was intended to have at its disposal the sum of £20,000 each year.<sup>10</sup> In the early nineteenth century shortly after the Act of Union, some measure of increased funding was introduced and in 1808 unprecedented financial support was instituted by Prime Minister Perceval to the sum of £10,000 for that and the following year. Between 1810 and 1816 the sum increased to £60,000 per year. In 1817 the monies were reduced to £30,000 per year and after 1821 reduced further.<sup>11</sup> The trustees of the Board of First Fruits comprised the lord chancellor, archbishops, bishops and other dignitaries. The trustees were empowered to make decisions on the allocation of all improvement funds. The process from application to allocation was often protracted and Bishop O'Beirne, who served as a trustee in the early years of the nineteenth century complained; 'We have many meetings, but we get on but a very little way'.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Samuel Percy Lee, *The present state of the established church or ecclesiastical registry of Ireland, for the year 1814* (Dublin, 1814), p. 103.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Olden, *The Church of Ireland* (London, 1895), p. 377; Christopher J. Fauske, *Jonathan Swift and the Church of Ireland, 1710-1724* (Dublin & Portland OR, 2002), pp 30-31.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>11</sup> Stewart J. Brown, *The national churches of England, Ireland and Scotland 1801-1846* (Oxford, 2002), p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> O'Beirne to Archbishop Stuart, 21 May 1804 (L.B.C.A., Wynne of Tempsford papers, MS WY 994/36, f. 2).

Before proceeding with the third and fourth chapters, some notes on well-known sources previously used by scholars will be helpful. As is usual, it is difficult to find a mutual consentient among all sources, whether primary or secondary. However, the manuscript sources relating to this work generally differ by omission rather than offering conflicting evidence. Other observations must be made, particularly in relation to Samuel Lewis's *Topographical dictionary of Ireland* and the second volume of Canon John Healy's *History of the diocese of Meath*.<sup>13</sup> The sums disbursed by the Board of First Fruits towards glebe house and church-building given by Lewis do not always agree with the manuscript sources or figures published by the direction of government. For example, in the parish of Newtown Fertullagh the government returns state that the Board of First Fruits gave a loan of £650 and a gift of £100 towards the building of a glebe house.<sup>14</sup> Lewis's figures however indicate the board's loan amounted to £600 and no mention is made of a gift.<sup>15</sup> Healy published a list of improvements to glebe lands, taken from an unnamed and undated document in 'Bishop O'Beirne's own handwriting in a book preserved in the Record Office, Dublin.'<sup>16</sup> Although the list bears a strong resemblance to O'Beirne's handwritten notes of 1818,<sup>17</sup> it is not one and the same and in some points differs from other primary sources. For example, Healy noted that references to glebe improvements in the four perpetual curacies of Mayne, Stonehall, Clara and Drumraney were erased in the original document. Readers may take Healy's note as an implication that none of these improvements were implemented. However, government returns clearly state that the glebe was enhanced at Stonehall in 1822 when John McLoughlin Esq received the sum of £256 5s. for 20 acres.<sup>18</sup> The document used by Healy did not include improvements to glebes at Rathconnell or Clongill. These livings were also omitted from O'Beirne's 1818 list. However, the £200 for glebe improvement at Rathconnell in

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<sup>13</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, ii; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii.

<sup>14</sup> *Accounts relating to the church establishment of Ireland, 1801-1822, no. 4, loans and gifts advanced for building glebe houses* (hereafter *First Fruits returns, 1801-1822*), p. 18, H.C.1823 (135 241), xvi, 103.

<sup>15</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 434.

<sup>16</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 152.

<sup>17</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 105.

<sup>18</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-1822*, p. 27, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 111.

1803 and the disbursement of £364 for the same purpose at Clongill in 1809 were both recorded in government returns.<sup>19</sup> Finally, Healy included a glebe garden in the town of Moate that does not appear in any other primary source. In view of the fact that some documents pertaining to the early years of O'Beirne's episcopate are no longer available, there is little option here but to rely on Canon Healy's quotations from those manuscripts. In addition to glebe improvements mentioned above, Healy offered much detail concerning the effects the 1798 rebellion had upon the clergymen of the diocese, the damage sustained to churches and clergymen's houses and to Bishop O'Beirne's initial enquiries into the state of the diocese, which were taken shortly after his translation from Ossory at the end of that year.<sup>20</sup>

The manuscript sources of the Board of First Fruits are extant, though not available for study. Fortunately, this situation has been somewhat, though not entirely counteracted by that body's annual returns as submitted to the auditor of public accounts in Ireland. The returns, while stating the amount and to whom given, did not include the glebe acreage for which the procurement monies were provided. However, to a great extent that information was recorded in the diocesan returns of 1806.<sup>21</sup> Glebe enhancements after that date were noted by O'Beirne in his notebook of 1818.<sup>22</sup> The Board of First Fruits was not the only source of finance used by the bishop. There were some land exchange arrangements made with landlords and in a few parishes, episcopal legacies were used to purchase or extend glebes.

In the spring of 1801 Bishop O'Beirne penned a considerable document to Charles Abbot, later 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Colchester, who had just then become the chief

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<sup>19</sup> *Accounts from the trustees of the First Fruits in Ireland, 1801-1811* (hereafter *First Fruits returns, 1801-11*), p. 7, H.C. 1811 (129), v; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 26-27, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 110-111.

<sup>20</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, see especially ii, pp 130-147.

<sup>21</sup> *Papers relating to the established church in Ireland, no. 5, diocese of Meath, 1806* (hereafter *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*), pp 45-76, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>22</sup> *Visitation, 1818*, pp 2-105.

secretary in Ireland.<sup>23</sup> This manuscript not only detailed the state of the established church in Ireland, with all its shortcomings, but also contained the bishop's remedial proposals, some of which were adopted by government on a national level. The manuscript was delivered to Abbot in April 1801; its date was an indication of O'Beirne's sense of urgency in putting the case of the Irish church before the new administration as early as possible.

This chapter will explore to what extent O'Beirne followed his own advice as suggested to Abbot and will evaluate the success of his methods and use of episcopal powers in reforming the diocese. The chapter also assesses the infrastructure of the Church of Ireland diocese of Meath at the end of the eighteenth century and traces the changes and developments instituted and pursued by the bishop regarding glebe lands, glebe houses, clerical residence and the configuration of parishes. The building, rebuilding, repair and maintenance of churches were other major elements in O'Beirne's restructuring. The church programme is detailed in chapter five and the current state of the architectural remains are recorded in a separate section.

Non-residence and the deficiencies in lands and buildings were bound together in a mutually dependent circle. Glebe lands were a source of income for the clergyman and provided sites for building. Houses and churches were of no practical use if sufficient glebes could not be procured. Residence could not be demanded in a parish with no glebe house, and housing was useless if the clergy refused to reside, were unable to reside due to appointments held in other livings, or could not afford to contribute to the costs of building a house. Clergy could not be effective if the church was dilapidated beyond use and a church was of no value if the clergyman was not resident or neglectful in his duty. Although O'Beirne's methods of enforcing residence were ultimately successful, the process was gradual and not unhampered. The degree to which all improvements depended upon

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<sup>23</sup> O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 1801 (T.N.A., Charles Abbot, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Colchester papers, P.R.O., 30/9/163, ff 149-164).

enforcing clerical residence cannot be overstressed. For this reason, the causes, effects and consequences of non-residence on the restructuring of the diocese are presented throughout this chapter. The aim in this chapter and also in chapter four is not to merely document changes and improvements but to also offer an evaluation of O’Beirne’s success in the various areas of restructuring within the broader national framework.

During the eighteenth century thirteen bishops served the diocese of Meath (Table 3.1).<sup>24</sup> Although the see was vacant for less than one year during that period, there were few enduring general improvements. However some contribution was made to diocesan facilities through the efforts of a few individual bishops.

Table 3.1 Bishops of Meath during the eighteenth century

Duration	Bishop
1679-1705	Richard Tennison
1705-15	William Moreton
1716-24	John Evans
1724-27	Henry Downes
1727-32	Ralph Lambert
1732-34	Welbore Ellis
1734-44	Arthur Price
1744-58	Henry Maule
1758-65	Honourable William Carmichael
1765-65	Richard Pococke
1765-66	Arthur Smyth
1766-98	Honourable Henry Maxwell

Source: John Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 272-3; T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin (eds), *A new history of Ireland, maps, genealogies, lists* (Oxford, 1984), ix, pp 407-8

Henry Maule (1744-58) was an advocate of the charter school system and established one such institution for boys near the see house of Ardraccan in 1747.<sup>25</sup> Wilson’s Hospital at Multifarnham (Plate 3.1) was also founded during Bishop Maule’s episcopate, when funds bequeathed in the respective wills of one

<sup>24</sup> Evans Fund (Armagh Public Library, Evans Fund papers, MS K1 II 14); Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 272-3.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Milne, *The Irish charter schools 1730-1830* (Dublin & Portland OR, 1997), p. 347.



Andrew Wilson and his nephew William Wilson came available.<sup>26</sup> The hospital, school and chapel were opened in 1761 to house forty elderly men and one hundred and fifty boys.<sup>27</sup> The building has survived into the twenty-first century and has for some time operated as the diocesan secondary school.

Plate 3.1 Wilson's Hospital, Multifarnham, County Westmeath<sup>28</sup>



Source: *N.I.A.H.*, (14 Apr. 2008)

Bishop John Evans (1716-24) had plans drawn up for the building of a new see house at Ardraccan (Plate 3.2). He died before those plans were acted upon and bequeathed £1,000 for the execution of the project.<sup>29</sup> Arthur Price (1734-44) oversaw the erection of the north and south wings of the building, but the house was not completed until the episcopate of O'Beirne's immediate predecessor, the Honourable Henry Maxwell, youngest son of Lord Farnham of Cavan. The building remained in use as the episcopal palace of bishops of Meath until 1884 when it became a private residence. The building still stands as the primary symbol of Maxwell's contribution to the built heritage of the diocese.

<sup>26</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 95.

<sup>27</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 96.

<sup>28</sup> O.P.W., *An introduction to the architectural heritage of County Westmeath* (Dublin, 2007), p. 37.

<sup>29</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 92-3.

Plate 3.2 The episcopal palace at Ardbraccan, County Meath



Caroline Gallagher

1 Aug. 2004

The episcopal visitations of the eighteenth century to which Healy referred no longer exist and those mentioned, while giving an overall view of the state of the diocese, offer no detail on individual parishes.<sup>30</sup> Healy's synopsis of the 1768 visitation of Bishop Henry Maxwell reads as follows;

From it we learn that non-residence, which has so often been noticed as one of the evils of the Church, had again become exceedingly prevalent, and that no less than forty-nine parishes in the diocese were without a resident clergyman. There were seventy-one churches in repair.<sup>31</sup>

If Healy's figures are correct, it could be supposed that Bishop Maxwell oversaw the building or repair of at least six churches between the years 1768 and 1792.<sup>32</sup> However, as mentioned above, in the absence of the document of visitation, it is prudent to apply the usual *caveat* and consider the possibility of figures having been misread or records being incomplete. It is difficult to attribute the persistence of clerical non-residence to the mismanagement of Bishop Maxwell, who had so recently taken charge of the diocese, or to his immediate predecessors Bishops Smyth and Pococke, both of whom held the see for a very short time. The seven-year tenure of the Honourable William Carmichael is not documented, nor did Healy offer an opinion on his character or efforts. That said, when Meath is considered within the general context of the state of the Church of Ireland at that

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp 95 & 103.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., ii, p. 103.

<sup>32</sup> See Beaufort, *Memoir of a map of Ireland*, pp 41-122.

time, in which bishoprics frequently changed hands, it is unsurprising that clerical absenteeism and other faults should have continued to such an extent.

The lack of substantive material from the Bishop Maxwell episcopate renders the survey of the diocese conducted by Daniel Augustus Beaufort at the end of the eighteenth century as the only other source where a synopsis of the most important elements of diocesan structure was recorded.<sup>33</sup> Beaufort's report, based on a county rather than a parish basis, indicated that although Bishop Maxwell had held the see for twenty-six years, the low proportion of churches and glebe houses, compared to the number of parishes and benefices, leave little doubt that many improvements remained outstanding. Thirty benefices were without a church of any description, sixty-four had no glebe house and in thirty-two benefices there was no glebe land whatever.

It is hardly necessary to repeat how the loss of the power of advowson and the ownership of tithes hampered the church in terms of lost revenues, the appointment of suitable clergy, pluralism, non-residence and the stipend. However, it is worth stressing Bishop O'Beirne's annoyance regarding the related matters of poor or total lack of financial provision for incumbents and curates, absenteeism, the refusal of patrons to permit the union of small, unviable parishes and lackadaisical standards of practice in some parishes where the crown or Lord Drogheda held the gift of appointment or ownership of tithes. In 1803 the bishop complained to his archbishop:

I shall have an addition to those numerous Nonsences [sic], which, under the Patronage of the Crown, and that of Lord Drogheda are the greatest nuisance of this Diocese, and are altogether useless to any purpose of Religion or Civilisation.<sup>34</sup>

Contrary to what one might perhaps expect, O'Beirne made no similar complaints of the largely Roman Catholic Plunkett family. At Killeen, the Fingall

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> O'Beirne to Archbishop Stuart, 2 Nov. 1803 (L.B.C.A., WY 994/26).

Plunketts held sway and in the union of Castlecore and Oldcastle members of another Roman Catholic branch of the Plunkett family had been parish patrons before the enactment of the penal laws. In O'Beirne's time, Lord Dunsany, a Protestant Plunkett, was deemed 'the legitimate patron' and impropiator of tithes in the union. He presented the Revd Frederick Knipe and Revd Halpin as vicar and curate respectively.<sup>35</sup> Both clergymen were resident and held their appointments for many years.<sup>36</sup> In Loughcrew one John Plunkett held the tithes.<sup>37</sup> During penal times, the Protestant, Dunsany branch of the Plunkett family was required to swear that the lands and property of Roman Catholic kinsmen belonged to Lord Dunsany. Elizabeth Plunkett, Countess of Fingall, quoted an undated letter of the period, which was written by a Dunsany to his cousin at Killeen;

My Dear Fingall, I am now an old man and shall have soon to meet my Maker. I do not want to go to Him with a lie upon my soul. Could you not get someone else to swear that the land and property are theirs?<sup>38</sup>

One of O'Beirne's first projects was to enquire into the number of Church of Ireland members residing in the diocese.<sup>39</sup> In 1802 the diocesan registrar was instructed to obtain particulars of all Protestant families. The quality of returns varied from parish to parish and records for no more than fifty-three parishes survive. However, they have been reproduced here in Appendix 3.1. In almost all cases the information included every member of the household; family, apprentice and servant alike. Many single names are listed and it is not prudent to conclude whether all of these constituted an individual household. It is likely that many such named were servants in the preceding household. Some interdenominational marriages were cited, but as the accuracy of all returns depended upon the local knowledge of the clergyman, the citations cannot be regarded as definitive. The

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<sup>35</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 54-6.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp 54-6; Archiepiscopal visitation, 10 Aug. 1 826 (R.C.B., MS D7/1/2\*, p. 24).

<sup>37</sup> Visitation, 1817 (R.C.B., MS D7/1/1, p. 27).

<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth Plunkett, Countess of Fingall, *Seventy years young: memoirs of Elizabeth, countess of Fingall, told to Pamela Hinkson* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dublin, 1991), p. 104.

<sup>39</sup> Protestant census, 1802-03.

extant record was published by Canon Ellison,<sup>40</sup> who was of the opinion that the survey may have been compiled to ascertain the numbers of children eligible for confirmation.<sup>41</sup> Although where a particular point was made of listing only children, the list included all children regardless of whether they were of confirmation age or not. Ellison's belief may have stemmed from the fact that in some parishes, for example Duleek, the returns comprised children only.<sup>42</sup> Gurrin has pointed out that religious censuses of the eighteenth century enquired into the ages of all persons over and under twelve, as a matter of course.<sup>43</sup> However, in 1802, the Revd Francis Pratt Winter, vicar of Rathconnell, apologised for the delay in submitting the census of his parish, as the necessity 'to ascertain the age of each individual' was initially not known to him. Winter declared his parishioners were not familiar with disclosing their age and many proved 'disagreeable' when pressed.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps O'Beirne was planning a confirmation tour. Whatever the case and although the actual queries do not survive, it is likely that there were a number of reasons behind the bishop's commissioning. As a forward thinking individual, it is most likely that he intended the survey for use as a means of familiarising himself with his diocese and as a basic tool in planning improvements. The bishop, perhaps aware of the survey's shortcomings, may have used its findings to some extent in his restructuring, but in terms of assessing the changes in Church of Ireland membership, he looked elsewhere. Gurrin has discussed how the national religious census of 1731 and the contemporaneous inquiry into the state of popery in Ireland has long puzzled historians.<sup>45</sup> On examining all available evidence and having considered the paucity of surviving figures, Gurrin concluded that there was no full, national religious census taken in Ireland in 1731.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, bearing in mind local factors and the suspicions and concerns of Roman Catholics during the time of its taking, Gurrin considers the 1766 census, ordered by the House of Lords, to have

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<sup>40</sup> C.C. Ellison, 'Early nineteenth century lists of Protestant parishioners in the diocese of Meath' in *Irish Ancestor*, v, nos. 1 & 2 (1973), pp 37-53 & pp 113-126 respectively.

<sup>41</sup> Ellison, 'Early nineteenth century lists of Protestant parishioners,' no. 1 (1973), p. 37.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>43</sup> Gurrin, 'The union of Navan', p. 147.

<sup>44</sup> Ellison, 'Early nineteenth century lists of Protestant parishioners,' no. 2 (1973), p. 125.

<sup>45</sup> Gurrin, 'Navan County Meath', pp 93-98.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

been deficient to an unquantifiable extent.<sup>47</sup> As already stated, O'Beirne employed census data as an indicator of demographic patterns. With Gurrin's conclusion in mind, it may be noted that O'Beirne apparently held the same opinion, as he consulted the 1766 census hardly at all and took his comparatives almost exclusively from figures compiled as a result of the episcopal visitation of Welbore Ellis in 1733.<sup>48</sup>

Kerby Miller has written of the exodus of all religions from Ireland to North America between the 1780s and 1840.<sup>49</sup> In the years 1815-19 immediately following the end of the Napoleonic wars, the emigration of middle and higher class ascendancy Protestants from the counties outside of Ulster, became a cause for concern among those left behind.<sup>50</sup> Attempting to consider the effect of the 1798 rebellion on the Church of Ireland population in the particular diocese of Meath is hampered by the lack of figures from O'Beirne's 1802-04 census. His efforts were probably curtailed by the fact that there were so few resident clergymen to act as enumerators. This is borne out in the returns, where it can be seen that with the exceptions of Agher and Clonard, no returns were made for parishes where the clergyman had fled during the disturbances (Appendix 3.2). Parishes for which figures are available over all three surveys, show that over the period of this eighty-five years, the number of Church of Ireland families rose, fell and often rose again. It is not possible here to offer reasons for this in every case, and the time-frame between 1733 and 1818 is too great to offer any credible conclusion. Where parish returns were made in both 1802-04 and 1818, the number of Church of Ireland families fell in eighteen parishes, increased in fifteen and remained the same in two parishes. There were increases and losses in ten rural parishes and four village parishes. The urban archdeaconry of Kells increased its number of families from 109 to 185. In the towns of Enniskeen, Navan, Trim and Tullamore, the number of

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>48</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 127-134; Protestant census, 1818 (R.C.B., MS 49/6).

<sup>49</sup> Kerby A. Miller, 'No middle ground: the erosion of the Protestant middle class in Southern Ireland during the pre-famine era' in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, xlix (1986), pp 295-306.

<sup>50</sup> Kerby, A. Miller, *Emigrants and exiles, Ireland and the Irish exodus to North America* (New York & Oxford, 1985), p. 194.

Church of Ireland families dropped. Owing to their proximity to the capital city, Navan and Trim may have been affected by the demise of the Irish parliament at Dublin Castle. At Tullamore, work on the great expansion to the town and the extension of the Grand Canal from Tullamore to the Shannon, instigated by Lord Charleville, had peaked in respect of employment opportunities for craftsmen. This resulted in the departure of many. By 1826 however, and although the number of Church of Ireland members had emigrated to America, leaving the parishes of Stonehall, Multifarnham, Enniscoffey, Moylisker and Castlelost, the numbers had increased in Athboy, Castlecor, Killeagh, Castlejordan, Fircall, Lynally, Kilbeggan, Athlone and Reynagh, and remained the same in eleven other parishes.<sup>51</sup> The numbers of Roman Catholics were reported as having increased in thirty-one parishes, and remained static in a further thirty-three.<sup>52</sup> The number of dissenters, though decreased in four parishes, they did not change in fourteen and increased in Enniskeen and Killeagh.<sup>53</sup>

Although figures for only fifty-three parishes are available from the 1802-04 census, many of those included benefited during the O'Beirne episcopate, regardless of the numbers in congregation. Parishes with a sizable Church of Ireland membership, such as Tullamore, could be expected to have secured new glebe lands, a glebe house and church.<sup>54</sup> However, Enniscoffey, where there were no more than forty-four in the congregation, also acquired a glebe, glebe house and church.<sup>55</sup> The parishes of Ratoath and Agher, where the Church of Ireland members numbered no more than twenty-six and twenty-eight respectively, each benefited

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<sup>51</sup> Visitation, 1826.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 6, 19, 27, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90, 103, 111. Note: Due to an Act of Council, 3 Mar. 1818, that united Enniscoffey with Kilbride Pilate, the returns on the glebe and glebe house for Ennisoffey are entered under the parish name of Kilbride Pilate. For confirmation of the union & church building see (R.C.B., MS D7/157, p. 73) & for confirmation of the procurement of glebe & building a new glebe house see (R.C.B., MS D7/157, pp 106-8).

<sup>55</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 6, 19, 27, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90, 103, 111.

from a new glebe house and church.<sup>56</sup> The case of Agher and its circumstance may be put forward as an example of the parochial difficulties faced by O'Beirne and also as an illustration of how crown patronage could usurp episcopal authority through the central offices of civil government. In Agher, the glebe improvement was assisted by the exchange of lands in cooperation with the local landlord, Mr Winter. Winter also 'rebuilt and finished' the church 'in the handsomest manner'.<sup>57</sup> The curate, Revd John Kellett, discharged the duties of the parish for a number of years and succeeded the Revd John Ravel Walsh as rector in 1808.<sup>58</sup> Walsh, owing to persistent non-residence, fell out of favour with his bishop and resigned the crown living in 1802, only to have it restored to him by the crown, despite O'Beirne's protestations.<sup>59</sup> Walsh made no attempt to secure funds for building a house and it was not until 1813 that Revd Kellett, for whom the bishop wished to secure the living in 1802, succeeded in obtaining a First Fruits loan of £168 and a grant of £450 with which to build a glebe house.<sup>60</sup> Kellett remained as resident incumbent until his death in 1848 and was an example of the type of committed clergyman whom O'Beirne sought to institute into all livings of the diocese.<sup>61</sup>

As Meath had no cathedral, it was without a dean and chapter. Therefore, the diocesan's most elevated ecclesiastical assistant was its archdeacon. The pluralist rector of Kells and archdeacon of Meath, Charles Stone, also held a parish in O'Beirne's former diocese of Ossory. O'Beirne lost little time in appointing his own nephew Revd Thomas De Lacy to succeed Stone as archdeacon in 1799. Of course, one may view this appointment from one of two standpoints. It could be seen as plain nepotism and while it must be remembered that in 1799 there was no indication of what was to come in terms of government funding towards improving

<sup>56</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 11, 18, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95, 102; Visitation, 1818, pp 34-35.

<sup>57</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 34.

<sup>58</sup> O'Beirne to the Honourable C. Lindsay, 21 Mar. 1802 (B.L., Irish papers - civil engagements, MS 35733, f. 115); Revd W.A. Reynell, n.d. 'Clerical promotions by the crown in Meath diocese' (R.C.B., Reverend William Alexander Reynell papers, notebook 4, MS D7/12/1.6.4, p. 14); Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 301-302.

<sup>59</sup> O'Beirne to the Honourable C. Lindsay, 21 Mar. 1802, f. 115.

<sup>60</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 18, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 102.

<sup>61</sup> Reynell, 'Clerical promotions by the crown in Meath diocese,' notebook 4, p. 21.



the buildings and property of the Church of Ireland, O'Beirne's appointment of De Lacy could also be viewed as the most likely measure to ensure the support of the archdeaconry throughout his episcopate.

O'Beirne's charges to the clergy of Ossory leave no doubt of his dissatisfaction with those who did not attend their living and duty.<sup>62</sup> Due to there being no chapter in the diocese, it was the archdeacon's remit to act as president of the diocesan synod, of which every incumbent was a member.<sup>63</sup> The appointment of De Lacy to the office therefore assured the bishop of an ally in his intention to improve the number of resident clergy and encourage the appropriate serving of cures. In 1868, de Lacy and his term as archdeacon of Meath were described thus:

De Lacy rode & De Lacy kept the field against all comers... & made his curates, like his horses, earn their oats. De Lacy was rich & ran not into debt, & gave money to the poor, & milk to the sick, & in cholera times stayed at his post & did his duty as a Christian & a gentleman by the bedside of the dying, & thus the name of De Lacy, in spite of his hunting, & in spite of his change of religion, is yet respected in Kells.<sup>64</sup>

It appears that De Lacy was one of the most worthy clergymen in the diocese at that time. The above testimonial reinforces that made after his death in 1844, when the member of parliament for Sheffield held him up as a worthy example of the Irish clergy by praising the archdeacon's largesse; 'he spent a large private fortune in acts of charity and was much beloved in his neighbourhood'.<sup>65</sup> These public praises made no mention of whether the archdeacon's acts of charity or other financial generosityes depended upon the religious affiliation of the recipient. De Lacy's last will and testament however, evidenced a religious bias that surpassed the zeal of an

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<sup>62</sup> O'Beirne, *The charge of the Right Reverend Thomas Lewis, lord bishop of Ossory, to the clergy of his diocese, in his annual visitation, 1796* (Dublin, 1796); O'Beirne, *A circular address, 1797*.

<sup>63</sup> Lee, *The present state of the established church, 1814* (Dublin, 1814), p. 127.

<sup>64</sup> 'The church establishment in Ireland', in *The Freeman's Journal church commission* (Dublin, 1868), pp 79-80.

<sup>65</sup> *Hansard 3, lxxv [etc.] Hansards parliamentary debates, third series, 1830-1844* (vol lxxv, commencing with the accession of William IV, 7&8 Vistoriae, 1844, lxxv, comprising the period from the adjourned debate on Church Temporalities, Ireland, p. 594.

average convert.<sup>66</sup> Bequests were conditional on the beneficiaries remaining loyal to and marrying within the established church. It was also stipulated that all marriage unions required the consent of De Lacy's trustees;

..Thomas Mulvey one hundred pounds a year & one hundred pounds & fifty pounds...provided he shall continue to be a member of the Protestant Church as now by Law Established... but in case that he shall not continue in such religion or that he shall intermarry with a Roman Catholic...the annuity will be no longer payable.<sup>67</sup>

The same stipulations applied to Mrs Elizabeth Williams of Boyne View, her children and subsequent generations 'so long as they shall all remain Protestant'.<sup>68</sup> Even the Shaw family of Ardandra Castle in County Longford, who were relatives of the archdeacon, found their bequests bound by these terms.<sup>69</sup> The imposition of such conditions, as an attempt at securing loyalty to the Protestant faith was a sign of the times and, despite his uncle's often expressed views on the superstitious nature of the Roman Catholic religion, the bishop had, on at least one occasion, expressed a preference for encouraging the flock by means of good living and good example, rather than by the use of 'every artifice, and by every method however unlawful, or unbecoming'.<sup>70</sup>

The numerous causes and effects of clerical non-residence on the whole of the Church of Ireland from the time of its inception have been long acknowledged and discussed. Civil disturbance, deficiencies and non-cooperation of parish patrons, problems relating to the payment or collection of tithes, the inauspicious stipend, poor or total lack of housing, insufficient glebe acreage, pluralism and the plain inanition of clergymen all contributed to the continuing state of the established church, which, in 1801, was described by its metropolitan Archbishop

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<sup>66</sup> Last Will & Testament of the Venerable Thomas De Lacy, 24 Nov. 1843 & codicil, 26 July, 1844 (T.N.A., P.R.O., Prob 11/2001).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., f. 295.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., ff 295-6.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., codicil, f. 298. The blood relationship between Mrs Margaret Shaw, nee Molloy, of Ardandra Castle and Thomas De Lacy is evidenced in Bishop O'Beirne's last will & testament, f. 224.

<sup>70</sup> O'Beirne, *Charge to the clergy of Ossory, 1796*, p. 59.

Stuart as 'the most scandalous Christian denomination in Europe'.<sup>71</sup> Shortly after his appointment to the see of Clonfert, Bishop Christopher Butson, who had ministered in Ireland since 1774, complained to the Irish lord lieutenant of the general bad state of his new diocese and described the clergy as 'scandalous men in scandalous livings'.<sup>72</sup> The complaints and good intentions of upper ecclesiastics were of no consequence and there was no hope of change without the support of government and parochial clergy.

In his charge to the clergy of Ossory in 1796, O'Beirne had set out his terms and demands as episcopal mentor of the diocese. He put forward the qualities and performance expected of a parochial clergyman of the established church. The duties of a resident minister were to include;

... a constant & scrupulous attention to the individuals who compose our own flock; to acquire an intimate acquaintance with their persons & their families; to make *our voice* so familiar to them, by frequent converse & intercourse, that they may *know it as the sheep knows the voice of the true shepherd*; to yield to every necessity, & embrace every occasion of giving private monition & exhortation to the sick & to the well; to teach & admonish the one, to alleviate the sufferings, soothe the sorrows, awake the contrition, animate the hopes, strengthen the faith & calm the dying moments of the other; to go about *constantly doing good*, visiting frequently from house to house, accommodating differences, & promoting quietness, peace & love among all who are under our charge...<sup>73</sup>

One may suspect the bishop's charge was to some extent ignored as the following year he issued the circular letter quoted here in chapter one, in which ministers were chastised for non-residence and the leading of idle, frivolous lives in the city of Dublin.<sup>74</sup> When O'Beirne was translated to Meath at the end of 1798, his clergy had reason other than business, convenience or indulgence keeping them from their livings. Although the rebellion of 1798 had been quashed early on, many Church of

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<sup>71</sup> See Edward Brynn, 'Some repercussions of the Act of Union on the Church of Ireland, 1801-1820' in *Church History*, xl, no. 3 (1971), pp 284-296 at p. 289 ([www.istor.org](http://www.istor.org)) (12 June 2008).

<sup>72</sup> Butson to Hardwicke, 10 Sept. 1805 (B.L., Hardwicke papers, MS 35762, f. 42); Butson to Hardwicke, Mar. 1806 (B.L., Hardwicke papers, MS 35766, f. 344); W.J.R. Wallace (ed), *Clergy of Dublin & Glendalough, biographical succession lists compiled by Canon J.B. Leslie* (Belfast, 2001), p. 452.

<sup>73</sup> O'Beirne, *Charge to the clergy of Ossory, 1796*, pp 44-45.

<sup>74</sup> O'Beirne, *A circular address, 1797*, pp 11-12.

Ireland parish churches were damaged on the insurgents' route to Tara and several Protestant clergymen either fled or were routed from their houses. Healy described the destruction in County Meath as follows;

Hence we find that the houses of Protestants, especially of clergymen, were special Objects of attack, and that along their line of march all the churches were wrecked, and the Bibles and service books destroyed. For miles around the district of Tara, not a church or a glebe-house escaped. In Tara itself, the curate was murdered, and the interior of the church destroyed.<sup>75</sup>

Clergymen and parish clerks fled from the County Meath parishes of Knockmark, Agher, Galtrim, Kilmore, Kilbrew and Athboy. In Dunboyne, Reverend Duncan's house was ruined and the parish clerk lost his life.<sup>76</sup> There were further skirmishes at Wilkinstown, Moynalty and Clonard. Similar instances took place in Westmeath where the chaplain of Wilson's Hospital, though wounded, escaped death through the intervention of the local Roman Catholic parish priest.<sup>77</sup> Healy also wrote 'During the disturbance it was found impossible to collect any tithe, and as a consequence practically all the clergy of Meath were left for that year without any income'.<sup>78</sup> As the rebellion was confined to a very few days in May and a further four days in July however, the rebellion cannot have been the sole reason for Easter tithes not being settled. It is likely the sums due in March or April were not collected or were withheld owing to a prevalent pre-rebellion atmosphere.<sup>79</sup>

It cannot be unreasonable to argue that for several clergymen, it would have been foolhardy to remain at their posts. However, incumbents who attempted to persuade the bishop that the rebellion was the sole cause of *absentia* were given little or no quarter. One long-term absentee gave previous disturbances as the reason for not attending his duty. Revd William Ould, rector of Rathcondra, a parish patronised by Lord Belvedere, fled to Dublin as far back as 1775 when

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<sup>75</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 106-7.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., ii, p. 107; Oliver Coogan, 'Sectarianism in Meath, 1792-98' in *Riocht Na Midhe*, x (1999), pp 92-124 at p. 117.

<sup>77</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 107.

<sup>78</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 108..

<sup>79</sup> For details of 1798 disturbances see Oliver Coogan, 'Sectarianism in Meath, 1792-98' in *Riocht Na Midhe*, x (1999), pp 92-124; Michael Slavin, *The book of Tara* (Dublin, 1996), p. 128.

insurgents slaughtered his cattle and threatened him with the same fate.<sup>80</sup> Ould informed O'Beirne that he had secured a chaplaincy at the Rotunda lying-in hospital, with the permission of the lord primate, the archbishop of Dublin and the bishops of Meath and Kildare.<sup>81</sup> The chaplaincy was yet another addition to the clergyman's appointments; he simultaneously held the vicarages of Ballykean and Killaderry in the Kildare diocese.<sup>82</sup> His hospital post was likely secured due to the fact that his father Sir Fielding Ould was master of the same institution.<sup>83</sup> O'Beirne was not impressed by Ould's connections, permissions or excuses and denounced the clergyman thus; 'Mr. Ould to be particularly cited to account for his abandoning this parish in the manner he has done, and injuring it as well in its spirituals as temporals'.<sup>84</sup> Despite the bishop's efforts, William Ould remained absent from Rathcondra and it was not until 1819 that the Board of First Fruits granted his successor, Revd Potter, a loan of £450 and a gift £350 to build a glebe house in the parish.<sup>85</sup>

The rebellion was not always quoted as the reason behind non-residence. In answering O'Beirne's early enquiries into the state of the diocese, the crown-appointed incumbent of Dunboyne described his house as 'an old cabin'.<sup>86</sup> Another crown appointee at Loughcrew voiced his refusal to live in the 'very wretched thatched cabin' in which his predecessor had resided.<sup>87</sup> In Killucan where Bishop Maxwell was patron at the time of rebellion, the glebe house was occupied by soldiers, while the rector resided in another living in the archdiocese of Tuam. His

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Healy, ii, p. 136.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Healy, ii, p. 136.

<sup>82</sup> Wallace (ed.), *Clergy of Dublin & Glendalough*, p. 947.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Healy, ii, p. 136.

<sup>85</sup> See *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 72, H.C. 1807 (78), v, where Ould is returned as being resident on another benefice in King's County; See also Wallace, *Clergy of Dublin & Glendalough*, p. 947, where he is said not to have served the King's County parishes of Ballykean & Killaderry in the diocese of Kildare after 1800; Visitation, 1818, p. 97; *Papers relating to the established church of Ireland: Diocese of Meath, 1820* (hereafter *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*), pp 92-93, H.C. 1820 (93), ix; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 19, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 103.

<sup>86</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 140.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 140-141.

curate was housed in the nearby town of Kinnegad.<sup>88</sup> In Ratoath where the crown and Lowther family held patronage, Revd Lancelot King Conyngham was particularly untruthful in his returns. However, Conyngham's dishonesty was not undiscovered. O'Beirne noted; 'His manner of answering my query respecting his terrier<sup>89</sup> deserves animadversion, as does indeed the whole style of his answers, and particularly his asserting that he performs occasional duty, and concealing from me that he was residing in England'.<sup>90</sup> The errant Conyngham was an example of O'Beirne's success as by 1806 he was recorded resident in his parish and discharging the duties.<sup>91</sup>

In his charge of 1800, O'Beirne again made known his intolerance of non-residence with additional vigor; 'my determinations are therefore fixed. In no instance will I excuse the residence either of the incumbent or his curate, where there is a church, and in what so many are pleased to call and to make, non-cures'.<sup>92</sup> His opinion on the subject and his intentions to enforce residence, no matter what the local conditions, were boosted by the appointment of William Stuart as archbishop of Armagh in 1800. The new primate provided O'Beirne and other Irish bishops with a reforming metropolitan who was anxious to improve the state of the Church of Ireland and the conduct of its ministers. Stuart expressed an opinion that the promise of government monies for the improvement of glebes and buildings would prove wasteful on an undisciplined clergy. The first step in discipline was to address the problem of non-residence;

For I know not how we are to enforce any kind of discipline, if the parochial clergy may without reproach or inconvenience, abandon their houses and live where they please... Nor shall we be able to proceed in building churches and houses.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>89</sup> A terrier was a return made by an incumbent concerning the state of church property in his living.

<sup>90</sup> Quoted in Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 136.

<sup>91</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 58, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>92</sup> O'Beirne, *Charge of the Most Reverend the lord bishop of Meath to the clergy of Meath at his annual visitation* (Dublin, 1800), p. 13.

<sup>93</sup> Stuart to Elliot, Apr. 8, 1806, quoted in Brynn, 'Some repercussions of the Act of Union', p. 292.

It is certainly worth arguing that pluralism and absenteeism were abetted by the fact that very little was demanded from incumbents beyond conducting divine service and performing the sacraments according to the rubric. The responsibility for all matters concerning church buildings, contents, parish registers, church yards, environs and all similar forms of parochial matter, fell not to the clergyman, but to the churchwardens.<sup>94</sup> Indeed it was the duty of the wardens and not the incumbent to ensure that services and sacraments were conducted in the parish; ‘Churchwardens, by their oath, are to present, or certify to the bishop or his officers, all things presentable by ecclesiastical law, which relates to the church, to the minister, and to the parishioners’.<sup>95</sup> Two churchwardens were appointed in every parish. Wardenships were made and held under oath by common law and not through the spiritual court. Although custom differed from place to place, it was usual for the parishioners and minister to reach a mutual agreement, though in some cases, the parishioners or vestry chose one warden and the minister, the other.<sup>96</sup> While the non-resident incumbent was commonplace, parochial residence was demanded of the churchwarden; ‘No person living out of the parish, although he possesses land within the parish; may be chosen as churchwarden, because he cannot take notice of absences from church, nor disorders in it...’<sup>97</sup> This statement, taken by Samuel Percy Lea from Bishop Gibson’s comprehensive work on the legal rights and duties of clergy, *Codex juris ecclesiastici Anglicani*,<sup>98</sup> underlines the parochial importance of the churchwarden over that of the minister. O’Beirne suggested that churchwardens should be encouraged ‘to carry an Information into the Courts of Law against every Incumbent not resident in his parish; or if he should hold two Parishes by Faculty, not residing 80 days in that Parish in which he has not established residence...’<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Lee, *The present state of the established church, 1814* (Dublin, 1814), pp 32- 61.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 33-5.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>98</sup> Edmond Gibson, *Codex juris ecclesiastici Anglicani* (2 vols, London, 1715).

<sup>99</sup> O’Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 1801, f. 158.

Such limited responsibility also enabled clergy to hold several concurrent livings. In Ireland, although permission or faculty was required to hold more than one appointment, there was no fixed rule prescribed by any canon or attached to archiepiscopal permission, and some favoured clergymen were granted permission to hold 'five or six livings fifty miles distant from each other'.<sup>100</sup> The uniting of parishes posed yet another impediment. Episcopal unions, when properly configured, amalgamated poor livings to provide sufficient income for a clergyman. However, it was not unknown for parishes of reasonable or good income to be so united in order to create a substantial living for a clergyman with influential connections. At a time when an incumbent in the diocese of Meath could expect a yearly income in the very low hundreds, the union of Kenmare in the diocese of Ardferd and Aghadoe combined 'three distinct and valuable rectories' to realise a benefice worth £1,000-£1,200 a year.<sup>101</sup> Lay patrons were also known to obstruct the formation of parish unions. In 1801, Lord Drogheda, already cited by O'Beirne as a nuisance to the diocese of Meath had 'not fewer than 37 Parishes in the Neighbourhood of the Bog of Allen so small as not to maintain any one respectable and independent Clergyman but he refuses to unite any one of them.'<sup>102</sup>

As bishop of Ossory, speaking on the practice of non-residence, O'Beirne charged his clergy 'you should never have looked to reap where you never meant to sow'.<sup>103</sup> Despite the traumas experienced by the clergy of Meath in 1798, O'Beirne did not consider those experiences as sufficient reason for non-residence. Clergymen were asked to relay their reason for absence in advance, to allow the bishop time to consider all possible manner of remedy. Clergy who did not provide adequate answers or who did not answer at all were marked out for visitation. Those who did not present for visitation were cited to an adjourned visitation. If a clergyman did not attend the second summons, the bishop was empowered to take proceedings against him. If pursued, these proceedings resulted in the clergyman

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., f. 52.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> O'Beirne, *Charge to the clergy of Ossory, 1796*, p. 59.



losing his parish and his stipend. In 1798 Meath comprised ninety-nine benefices. When O'Beirne arrived in the diocese, all but twenty-five of its incumbents were found to be absent.<sup>104</sup> By 1806 absentees were reduced to forty-seven, ten of whom resided 'sufficiently near to their respective benefices to discharge their duties'.<sup>105</sup> This shows a reasonable improvement in fewer than eight years, and although O'Beirne eventually succeeded in his wish for an almost entirely resident clergy, there was a resistance to the policy throughout his tenure. In 1806 in the parish of Tara, the process of deprivation had begun against the crown incumbent Revd John Rogers.<sup>106</sup> Of the forty-seven non-resident clergymen in that year, only two were absent without leave and Rogers was alone in having proceedings taken against him.<sup>107</sup> It is not known if he was deprived, died or left the parish of his own accord. Whatever the case, the Revd Henry Irvine succeeded him at Tara in 1810 and served the parish until 1839.<sup>108</sup> In 1820 the Revd Richard Vincent of Loughcrew was admonished for non-residence and a mandate was issued against him.<sup>109</sup> He was not deprived, however, but succumbed to the bishop's wishes, and in 1821 the Board of First Fruits granted him a loan of £1,275 and gifted £100 to build a glebe house in his parish.<sup>110</sup>

In 1808 the measures taken by government to enforce clerical residence in Ireland provided archbishops and bishops with certain powers of monition and sequestration. However, procedures were complicated and protracted over the course of three years. As late as 1820, O'Beirne complained that the length of time taken to reach the point of sequestration allowed the errant clergyman every opportunity to ignore first and second monitions. When the third phase of actual sequestration became imminent 'the person returns himself as resident' and might

<sup>104</sup> O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 180, f. 158.

<sup>105</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 76, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 46-76.

<sup>108</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 299.

<sup>109</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*, p. 86, H.C. 1820 (93), ix.

<sup>110</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 19, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 103.

appear 'in his Benefice but one day in every week'.<sup>111</sup> In the matter of residence, even those clergymen who enjoyed the bishop's favour and personal friendship were allowed little latitude. Revd Mungo Henry Noble of Clongill was one of O'Beirne's most trusted ministers who, during the bishop's absence, represented the diocesan at hearings of the grand jury.<sup>112</sup> In 1809, with a First Fruits gift of £400 and loan of £350, a glebe house was being built for him in the soon-to-be-united parishes of Kilshine and Clongill.<sup>113</sup> In the same year, Noble inherited the estate of his relative Robert Waller at Allenstown, which was situated in a nearby parish.<sup>114</sup> He attached the surname Waller to his own and intended to reside at the estate's four-storey Georgian mansion rather than at the glebe house of his living. Although O'Beirne assured Waller 'whatever I can do to accommodate you, shall be done to the very utmost of my authority', he also reminded him of an incumbent's obligation under law to maintain residence in his parish; 'when the house shall be finished, it will be impossible for me to assign any satisfactory reason for your not residing in it nine months in the year'.<sup>115</sup>

Owing to his previous employments and involvements at Dublin Castle, O'Beirne was on familiar terms with certain landlords in his new diocese. It would take time to form relationships with others. The cooperation of landlords was vital, not only for O'Beirne, but for all diocesans, as land was required to form a glebe, build a glebe house, church or parochial school. On post-Reformation church sites, land was also needed to provide consecrated burial grounds. As several parishes were in the patronage of the crown or the bishop himself and therefore not in the hands of the local landlord, some extra effort was required to persuade landowners who held neither tithe nor advowson to make land available to the church. Although O'Beirne criticised the obstructions placed in his path in livings where patronage or

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<sup>111</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*, pp 96-97, H.C. 1820 (93), ix.

<sup>112</sup> O'Beirne to Waller, 20 May 1810 (R.C.B., MS D7/2/1.2, p. 1).

<sup>113</sup> Kilshine and Clongill were united by act of council in August 1809. See Visitation 1817, p. 4; Visitation, 1818, pp 6-7; Archiespiscopal visitation, 1826, p. 24; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 292.

<sup>114</sup> Burke, *Landed gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*, ii, p. 1597.

<sup>115</sup> O'Beirne to Waller, 23 Mar. 1809 (R.C.B., MS D7/2/1.2, p. 2); *Bill for enforcing residence of spiritual persons on benefices in Ireland 1808*, p. 13, H.C. 1806 (18), i.

tithes were held by Lord Drogheda or the crown, not many patrons and even fewer impropiators contributed to any significant extent. The crown held sway in at least thirty-four benefices.<sup>116</sup> Lord Drogheda had power of advowson and ownership of tithes in thirty-seven parishes that comprised at least ten unions.<sup>117</sup> Incumbents of crown livings often secured their position as a political favour, lobbied through relatives or influential connections at Dublin Castle and not by virtue of clerical education, suitable qualification or dedication to duty. Lord Drogheda paid scant attention to the ecclesiastical matters of his parish unions. His curate at Duleek was without any stipend in 1818, as was his curate of Knockcommon.<sup>118</sup> The same situation held in the chapels of ease at Grangegeeth and Monknewtown where Lord Drogheda made 'no allowance for a curate'.<sup>119</sup> It was not until 1813 that some concession was given by Lord Drogheda, when he allowed the episcopal union of Julianstown, by joining the denominations of Julianstown, Moorechurch, Stamullin and Clonalvey.<sup>120</sup> In 1816 he consented to the formation of the Duleek union of parishes comprising, Duleek, Dowth, Tymoole, Ardcah and Knockcommon.<sup>121</sup> These episcopal unions were not permanent, but lasted no longer than the incumbency of the clergyman *in situ* at the time the union was instituted by the bishop. While there is no recorded case of such a union being reversed, the temporary amalgamation of parishes left Lord Drogheda, and others like him, with the facility to effectively dissolve the union by replacing one minister with another.

The practice of non-residence, though often connected with pluralism, was also fed by the inadequate financial circumstances of appointees. The building of a glebe house was not the responsibility of the established church, the congregation, the parish patron or the impropiator of tithes. It was the remit of the clergyman himself. Owing to the number of incumbents holding more than one benefice, not possessing the financial wherewithal or being absent for any other reason, many

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<sup>116</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 2-105.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., pp 15-16.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>120</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*, p. 80, H.C. 1820 (93), ix.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

parishes were without such a house. Although the canons of the Church of Ireland gave the episcopal court certain powers to enforce residence, the absent clergyman, if deprived of his living by his bishop, was entitled to appeal to the metropolitan court, the court of delegates and even to the king in council.<sup>122</sup> Despite the prevalence of non-residence, bishops were reluctant to begin proceedings against incumbents, as the process was not only lengthy but also expensive. Even O'Beirne, who suffered no excuses and relentlessly pursued a programme of establishing residence, refrained from instigating official proceedings against incumbents, with only very few exceptions. The bishop of Leighlin and Ferns, Euseby Cleaver, complained of this protracted and expensive procedure in his efforts to enforce residence.<sup>123</sup> In his observations on the state of the church, Joseph Stock, the bishop of Killala and Achonry, drew attention to a contemporary case of non-residence then before the commissioners of review and expressed his hope of the case concluding in favour of the ecclesiastical authorities, thereby establishing a precedent and rendering future cases unnecessary. If, on the other hand 'the decision in that Case should be otherwise, it may become advisable to apply to the Legislature to enact some Law for enforcing the Residence of the Clergy in Ireland.'<sup>124</sup> In the same report, although Bishop O'Beirne expressed satisfaction with the laws as they stood, he went on to admit '...there are at present instances in this Diocese of great encouragement to refactoriness & opposition in this essential point of discipline...'<sup>125</sup>

Despite the continuance of absenteeism and pluralism throughout the Church of Ireland from the time of its inception, Bishop O'Beirne implemented and persisted with a plan to render both obsolete. His measures of dealing with errant clergy, as described above, when combined with a campaign of procuring glebe lands and building glebe houses, was largely successful, although the success was gradual rather than immediate. In 1801 the established church in Ireland comprised

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<sup>122</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 192, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 192, 342, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

2,436 parishes, over 1,123 benefices, but only 436 glebe houses.<sup>126</sup> The onus on an incumbent to build his own house at his own expense two years after his appointment persisted until Archbishop Robinson of Armagh (1765-94) instituted the system whereby 'the whole expence' was charged on the incumbent's 'Immediate Successor, with a partial reimbursement to progressive Reduction of the charge upon each subsequent Incumbent.'<sup>127</sup> Where a glebe house was already in existence, but in need of repair, the incumbent was enabled 'to charge his Successor in certain cases for the Repairs'.<sup>128</sup> This did not mean an incumbent could build without any charge to himself, as only after his death and when a settlement had been reached with his successor, were the monies reimbursed to his surviving family. These measures may have been of use to alleviate financial pressures on those already appointed, but surely acted as a disincentive for successors, who were, in effect, obliged to repay the building and repair costs of their predecessors. In 1801 the oppressive conditions relating to the building of glebe houses were described as follows;

... every Incumbent after two Years possession of a Benefice without a Glebe House is compellable to expend two Years Income in Building and his Family are not reimbursed in full till 3 Years after his Death; upon which event the Successor also finds that the Instalments for building, and the payment of the Charges for Presentation, Institution and First Fruits also swallow up the whole profits of his Living for two or three Years after he has obtained Possession of it.<sup>129</sup>

It was not until some seven years after the Act of Union that the convolutions associated with house building were a little reduced by the provision of large government loans and smaller gifts administered through the trustees of the Board of First Fruits. Aided by government *largesse* and ancillary funds, in 1818 O'Beirne recorded the building or purchase of no fewer than sixty-seven glebe houses (Table 3.2).

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<sup>126</sup> Unattributed gloss, O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 1801, f. 52.

<sup>127</sup> O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 1801, f. 53.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

Table 3.2 First Fruits loans and gifts disbursed to clergymen in the diocese of Meath  
for building or purchasing a glebe house, 1804-22

Year	Parish	Incumbent	Amount	
			Loan £	Gift £
1804	Kilbeggan	W Marshall	0	100
1809	Ballyloughloe	Thomas English	675	100
1809	Killucan	H Wynne	0	100
1810	Castlelost	Samuel Lucas	400	400
1810	Drogheda, St Mary's	Charles Crawford	150	450
1810	Painestown	Brinsley Nixon	625	100
1810	Slane	Thomas Brownrigg	500	100
1811	Clonfadforan	Hemsworth Ussher	300	400
1811	Clongill	Thomas Sutton	350	400
1811	Drumranny	J Alexander	50	450
1812	Ballymore	Edward Donovan	50	450
1812	Athlone, St Mary's	J W Steerling	500	100
1812	Clara	S Gresson	50	450
1812	Durrow	Edward Pepper	50	450
1812	Julianstown	Robert Shanley	400	400
1812	Killallon	G L Gresson	750	100
1812	Mayne	Richard Vavasour	50	450
1812	Mullingar	T Robinson	675	100
1812	Tissauran	H Mahon	0	100
1813	Agher	J Kellett	168	450
1813	Donaghpatrick	George O'Connor	600	200
1813	Kilkenny West	William Bryon	500	300
1813	Kilmore	William Gorman	500	250
1813	Laracor	Blaney Irwine	550	200
1813	Moylisker	Meade Dennis	500	200
1813	Moymet	George Alley	400	400
1813	Newtown	Wentworth Shields	650	100
1813	Newtown Fertullagh	H Rochfort	450	350
1813	Rathconnell	F P Winter	232	400
1813	Ratoath	L K Conyngham	900	100
1813	Taghmon	Bond Hall	300	400
1813	Vastina	T Robinson	900	100
1814	Skryne	Stephen Ratcliffe	900	100
1814	Killeagh	Thomas O'Rourke	50	450
1814	Dunboyne	R Hamilton	500	300
1814	Oldcastle	Thomas F Knipe	500	300
1814	Churchtown	Roger Ford	210	400
1814	Tara	W H Irvine	750	100
1814	Tullamore	P Gouldsbury	450	350
1814	Rathmolyon	Conway Benning	0	100
1814	Kentstown	J Toler	625	100
1815	Castletown Delvin	H Fitzgerald	320	400
1815	Galtrim	John Low	300	400
1815	Knockmark	William Liddiard	675	100
1815	Moyglare	Thomas Jones	390	400
1815	Stackallen	George Hardman	650	100
1816	Ardnurcher	H. Usher	1,150	100

Year (cont.)	Parish	Incumbent	Amount	
			Loan £	Gift £
1816	Kilbixy	John Jephson	50	450
1817	Leney	Daniel Ward	37 10s.	337 10s.
1817	Stonehall	R Lockwood	50	450
1818	Athboy	Robert Tronson	1,050	100
1818	Ferbane	H Fitzgerald	50	450
1818	Tryvett	Bigoe Henzell	500	300
1819	Kilcleagh	A Rolleston	500	300
1819	Rahan	F Ennis	50	450
1819	Rathbeggan	J Mathews	100	450
1819	Rathcondra	F A Potter	450	350
1820	Ballymaglasson	W Gorman	600	200
1820	Drakestown	R Longfield	900	0
1820	Dunshaughlin	G L Irvine	562 10s.	100
1820	Kilbride Pilate	John Hales	150	337 10s.
1821	Almoritia	James Hamilton	600	200
1821	Ardagh	J McCauseland	37 10s.	337 10s.
1821	Loughcrew	R B Vincent	1,275	100
1822	Killiconnighan	Joseph Green	50	450
Total			26,707 10s.	17,612 10s.

Source: Visitation, 1818, pp 106-7; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 18-19, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 102-3

It is worth mentioning that of all the new glebe houses built by parochial clergy during O'Beirne's episcopate, twenty-seven, or more than one-third, were erected by ministers who held their living by episcopal appointment.<sup>130</sup> It is not known how the glebe house at Killoughey was funded. The house at Colpe was rented from James Brabazon of Mornington.<sup>131</sup>

Despite the revised conditions of building and the loans or gifts of the First Fruits, a parish clergyman was required to put himself to considerable expense in the erecting of a glebe house and offices. The works undertaken by Revd Stephen Ratcliffe at Skryne (Plate 3.3) is a case in point. The First Fruits gave a loan of £900 and a gift of £100 towards the cost of building in 1814.<sup>132</sup> As can be seen by Ratcliffe's building accounts (Appendix 3.3), the total sum expended amounted to £1,938 3s. 6½ d.

<sup>130</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 1-104.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 23-25.

<sup>132</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 18, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 102.



Source: *N.I.A.H.*, (6 Aug. 2009)

The house-building project was paralleled by the procurement of glebe lands and wide-scale building, rebuilding and repair of churches. Before the Act of Union the Board of First Fruits gave by gift, that is, a grant not requiring repayment, £200 for the purchase of glebelands in the parish of Clonlost.<sup>133</sup> In 1802, £100 was gifted towards the building of glebe houses in the parishes of Kilbeggan, Killucan, Loughcrew and Tara.<sup>134</sup> In the same year Kilbeggan and Killucan were also gifted £200 each for the purchase of glebe lands.<sup>135</sup> One year later, Rathconnell was gifted the same amount for the same purpose.<sup>136</sup> This information would seem to indicate the immediacy with which O'Beirne began his reforms. However, in 1814 the commissioners for auditing public accounts declared their finding of several recurring errors in the First Fruits accounts over a period of several years. For instance, it came to light that the board had debited monies from their accounts upon allocation and not actual disbursement of funds.<sup>137</sup> As a result, dates given for the purchase of glebe lands and glebe house-building correspond with years of allocation, not actual disbursement of funds and in general, may bear no

<sup>133</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-11*, p. 8, H.C. 1811 (129) v.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8, H.C. 1811 (129) v.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6, H.C. 1811 (129) v.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7, H.C. 1811 (129) v.

<sup>137</sup> *Commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland 1813-1814* (hereafter *Public accounts, 1813-14*), pp 203-205, H.C. 1814 (129), vii, 373-375.



resemblance whatever to the actual commencement or completion dates of purchase or building.<sup>138</sup> Adjustments made in accounts in 1814 show that of the four house projects allocated funding that year, only in Killucan was the work complete.<sup>139</sup> The same accounts indicate that although funds had been granted to five parishes, no glebes had been procured in any of them.<sup>140</sup> Whatever the errors in First Fruits accounts or delays in building and procurement of lands in the early years of the century, the 1823 returns to the House of Commons show the diocese of Meath to the forefront of completed purchase and building (Tables 3.3a & 3.3b). Note that direct quotations from the footnoted sources are transcribed into the third column of Table 3.3b.

Table 3.3a First Fruits gifts disbursed for purchasing glebes in Ireland, 1801-22

Diocese	£	s.	d.
Meath	8,398.	11.	8.
Killaloe & Kilfenora	7,000.	0.	0.
Elphin	4,971.	0.	7.
Limerick, Ardfert & Aghadoe	4,600.	0.	0.
Down & Connor	4,450.	0.	0.
Tuam & Ardagh	3,700.	0.	0.
Armagh	2,550.	0.	0.
Cloyne	2,450.	0.	0.
Ferns & Leighlin	2,150.	0.	0.
Dublin	2,100.	0.	0.
Clonfert & Kilmacduagh	1,865.	17.	6.
Cashel & Emly	1,850.	0.	0.
Ossory	1,650.	0.	0.
Cork & Ross	1,100.	0.	0.
Killala & Achonry	1,050.	0.	0.
Kildare	1,000.	0.	0.
Dromore	976.	0.	0.
Clogher	900.	0.	0.
Kilmore	650.	0.	0.
Raphoe	650.	0.	0.
Waterford & Lismore	500.	0.	0.
Derry	200.	0.	0.
Total	54,751.	9.	9.
Source: <i>First Fruits returns, 1801-22</i> , p. 29, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 113			

<sup>138</sup> *Public accounts, 1813-14*, pp 203-205, H.C. 1814 (129), vii, 373-375.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 188-190, H.C. 1814 (129), vii, 358-361.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

Table 3.3b Glebe lands procured in the diocese of Meath by means other than the First Fruits fund, 1806

Living	Acres Roods Perches			Means of procurement
Ballygarth	3	0	0	n.a.
Skryne	2	0	0	Land exchange
Moyglare	½			Henry Arrabin Esq, parish patron
Rathcore	46½			Bishop Evans fund <sup>141</sup>
Clonfad/Kilbride Weston	22	0	0	'a newly acquired glebe' <sup>142</sup>
Newtown Fertullagh	20	0	0	'out of a diocesan fund' <sup>143</sup>
Castletown Kildellan	15	0	0	Lands granted by Lord Sunderlin <sup>144</sup>
Ballymore	30	0	0	Granted out of the See lands <sup>145</sup>
Moate/Kilcleagh				House, offices & garden in the town. <sup>146</sup>
Colpe	7	0	0	Jas. Brabazon gave glebe at Mornington <sup>147</sup>
Donaghpatrick	18	0	0	Mr Everard, parish patron
Total	164	0	0	

Source: Source: *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 69 & p. 71, H.C. 1807 (78), v; Visitation, 1818, pp 5-6, 18, 33-34, 43, 105; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 26-27, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 110-111; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 152-3

The process of securing glebes began with an agreement between incumbent and landholder. With the bishop's approval an application was made to the trustees of the board of First Fruits. Following the board's consent, the funds were disbursed to the landholder and the legal transfer of lands was completed. As glebes were purchased or rented with gifts from First Fruits, there was no financial demand

<sup>141</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 43 states 46½a. of the Rathcore glebe was purchased with monies from the Bishop Evans fund. As the bishop did not give an exact date for the procurement and did not include it in his list of glebe improvements up to 1818, the glebe may or may not deserve inclusion in this table.

<sup>142</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 69, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71, H.C. 1807 (78), v; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 26-27, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 110-111. The latter was specific in stating that Revd John Vignoles was granted £200 for the procurement of 20a of glebe by the Board of First Fruits. However, in the former report Bishop O'Beirne stated 'A glebe of 40a is now purchasing for this benefice, out of a diocesan fund'. In the absence of diocesan fund accounts for the period, it is not possible to conclude which is correct. Lewis's *A topographical dictionary*, gave a glebe of 41½a, ii, p. 434.

<sup>144</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 71, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 153. The glebe garden in the town of Moate was not listed in any extant primary source.

<sup>147</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 53, H.C. 1807 (78), v; Visitation, 1818, pp 23-5 & p. 105. The former gave Colpe glebe at 3a, while the latter, written by Bishop O'Beirne in 1818, gave 10a. O'Beirne also included Colpe in a list of improvements to glebes. This would suggest an increase of 7a to the glebe of this parish at some point during the intervening years.

made upon the parishioners.<sup>148</sup> This is made clear in vestry minute and account books where in no case is any reference made to parish monies being used to pay glebe rents or make repayments on purchased lands. O'Beirne also made use of the Archbishop Boulter fund to enhance the glebelands of the diocese. At Clongill in County Meath, a 'treaty' for lands was agreed between O'Beirne and the landholder, David Thompson.<sup>149</sup> The document transcribed in Appendix 3.4 is an example of how such a transaction was conducted. The result of this reorganization of the glebe into a single parcel of land is seen in Map 3.1 below.

Map 3.1 Clongill glebe, 1826



Source: (Meath County Library, Gormanston Map, 1836, Sheet 12)

Of the £54,751 9s.9d. disbursed for the purchase of glebes in Ireland between 1 May 1801 and 1 May 1822 the diocese of Meath received £8,398 11s. 8d., with which lands were purchased in twenty-five parishes (Table 3.4).<sup>150</sup> This

<sup>148</sup> See *First Fruits returns, 1801-23*, pp 26-27, H.C. 1823 (135 214), xvi, 110-111.

<sup>149</sup> 'Clongill: Mr Noble's case, as to a treaty for augmenting the glebe-lands of the parish of Clongill', 9 June 1802 (R.C.B., MS D7/10/13/1, n.p.).

<sup>150</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 29, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 85.

brought the total glebe holding in the diocese to just above 5,000 acres (Appendix 3.5).

Table 3.4 Board of First Fruits: gifts advanced for purchasing glebes in the diocese of Meath, 1802-22

Year	Parish	To whom paid	Acres of glebe purchased	Amount £
1802	Kilbeggan	- Lambert esq	21a 2r 0p	200
1802	Killucan	Earl of Longford	35a 2r 38p	200
1802	Painestown	Bishop of Meath	29a 0r 0p	200
1803	Castlelost	Bishop of Meath	22a 0r 0p	200
1804	Rathconnel	James Nugent esq.	20a 0r 0p	200
1808	Moylisker	Revd Meade Dennis	20a 0r 0p	200
1809	Newtown Fertullagh	Revd John Vignoles	20a 0r 0p	200
1809	Durrow	H.R. Stepney esq.	25a 0r 0p	450
1809	Dunboyne	Revd R. Hamilton	15½a	350
1810	Clongill	Revds Sutton & Noble	n.a.	364
1810	Kilkenny West	Rt. Hon. W. Handcock	15a 0r 0p	300
1811	Moymet	Lord Shelbourne	10a & 'a few perches'	400
1811	Tullamore	Earl of Charleville	4½a	350
1812	Ballymaglasson	H. Hamilton esq.	20a 0r 0p	200
1813	Killeagh/ Loughcrew	- Napier esq.	20a 0r 0p	450
1815	Ferbane	John King esq.	-	450
1816	Kilbixy	Lord Sunderlin	20a 0r 0p	450
1816	Leney	R.M. Reynell esq.	22a 0r 0p	450
1817	Rahan	Revd C. Fetherston	-	450
1820	Killoconnegan	Earl of Darnley	15a 0r 0p	450
1820	Ardagh	Luke White esq.	10a 0r 0p	450
1820	KilbridePilate/Enniscoffy	Gustavus Rochfort esq.	16a 0r 0p	450
1821	Kilbrew	W. Murphy esq.	11a 1r 7p	350
1821	St. Mary's Drogheda	Revd Charles Crawford	n.a.	378 6s. 8d.
1822	Stonehall	John McLoughlin esq.	11½a	256 5s. 0d.
Total			384a +	8,398 11s. 8d.

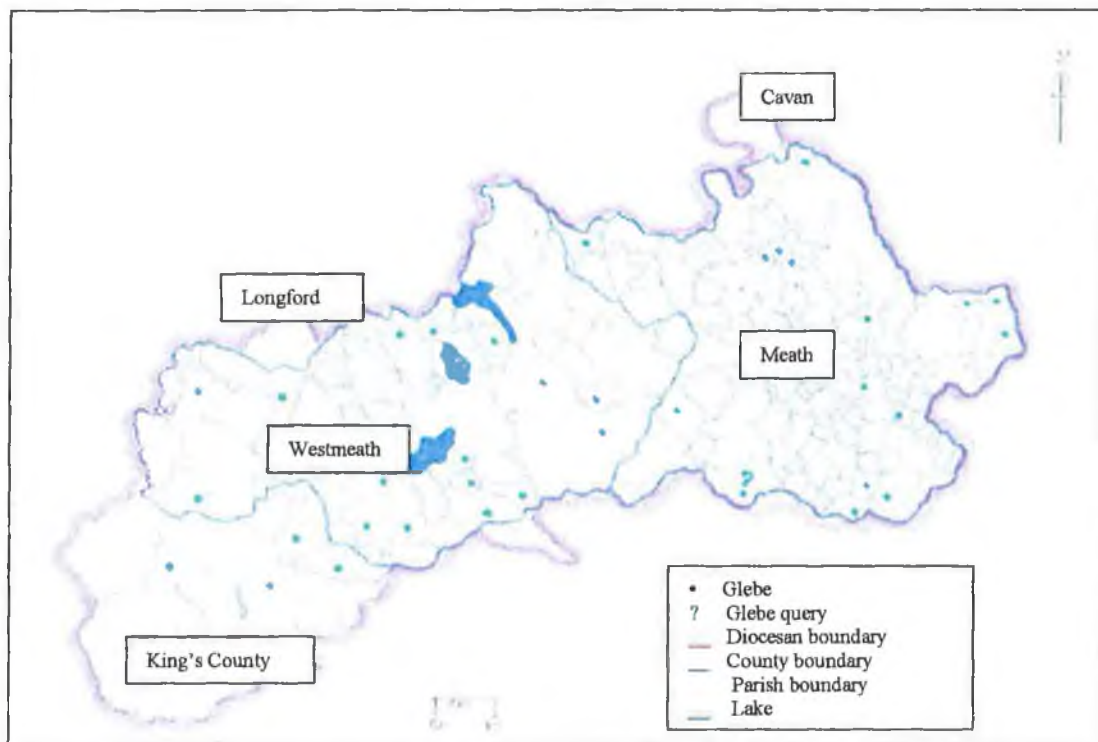
Source: *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 46-75, H.C. 1807 (78), v; *Visitation, 1818*, pp 2-105; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 26-27, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 110-111; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 152-3

In the same period Meath secured £44,320 or more than one-sixth of the national total of £252,889 10s. with which sixty-five glebe houses were built.<sup>151</sup> Final adjustments were published in 1823 and are detailed parish by parish for the diocese of Meath in Appendix 3.6. The extension of glebe lands was not always

<sup>151</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 17-24, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 85.

dependent on First Fruits funding. In some instances glebes were improved through land exchange, with the cooperation of local landlords, using monies from diocesan funds. As already mentioned, a land exchange was negotiated with a Mr Thompson, of the parish of Clongill. Thompson held the lands on a lease for three lives from the bishop of Killalla and monies were drawn from the Bishop Evans fund to augment the parish glebe from thirteen to thirty-one acres.<sup>152</sup> The procurement of glebes was pursued throughout the diocese and their distribution is illustrated here in Map 3.2.

Map 3.2 Distribution of glebes procured in the diocese of Meath during the O'Beirne episcopate, 1798-1823



Source: *Ecclesiastical returns, 1806*, pp 46-75, H.C. 1807 (78), v; *Visitation, 1818*, p. 105. Note: the MS carries unsigned glosses of a later, unspecified date; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 18-19 & 26-27, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 102-3 & 110-111.

<sup>152</sup> Clongill: Mr. Noble's case, as to a treaty for augmenting the glebe-lands of the parish of Clongill, 9 June 1802, n.p.

The availability of grants or gifts alleviated some of the expense borne by incumbents who undertook to build a glebe house, and as can be seen in Table 3.5, the diocese of Meath was again foremost in securing first Fruits monies.

Table 3.5 First Fruits gifts & loans disbursed for building glebe houses in Ireland, 1801-22

Diocese	Loan			Gift			Total		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Meath	26,707	10.	0.	17,612	10.	0.	44,320	0.	0.
Killaloe & Kilfenora	12,617	0.	0.	11,287	10.	0.	23,904	10.	0.
Ossory	17,359	5.	0.	5,737	10.	0.	23,096	15.	0.
Down & Connor	10,428	10.	0.	10,300	0.	0.	20,728	10.	0.
Cloyne	17,525	0.	0.	2,550	0.	0.	20,075	0.	0.
Tuam & Ardagh	12,733	0.	0.	7,125	0.	0.	19,858	0.	0.
Limerick, Ardfert & Aghadoe	10,852	10.	0.	7,400	0.	0.	18,252	10.	0.
Armagh	11,037	15.	0.	6,700	0.	0.	17,737	15.	0.
Kilmore	15,200	0.	0.	2,412	10.	0.	17,612	10.	0.
Ferns & Leighlin	9,329	0.	0.	7,782	0.	0.	17,111	0.	0.
Cork & Ross	11,393	15.	0.	4,350	0.	0.	15,743	15.	0.
Dublin	9,667	0.	0.	3,900	0.	0.	13,567	0.	0.
Cashel & Emly	7,782	10.	0.	3,237	10.	0.	11,020	0.	0.
Killala & Achonry	6,755	0.	0.	3,350	0.	0.	10,105	0.	0.
Waterford & Lismore	6,164	0.	0.	1,700	0.	0.	7,864	0.	0.
Raphoe	4,937	10.	0.	2,487	10.	0.	7,425	0.	0.
Elphin	3,420	10.	0.	3,725	0.	0.	7,145	10.	0.
Clogher	5,331	5.	0.	1,612	10.	0.	6,943	15.	0.
Clonfert & Kilmacduagh	3,377	10.	0.	3,125	0.	0.	6,502	10.	0.
Dromore	4,140	0.	0.	1,987	10.	0.	6,127	10.	0.
Derry	3,525	0.	0.	600	0.	0.	4,125	0.	0.
Kildare	1,355	0.	0.	1,550	0.	0.	2,905	0.	0.
Total	142,357	10.	0.	110,532	0.	0.	252,889	10.	0.

Source: *First Fruits returns, 1801-1822*, pp 17-24, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 101-108

Samples of high, middling and low value livings and their loans are illustrated in Table 3.6. Gifts or grants were also disbursed by the First Fruits. These did not require repayment and were also based on the living's annual value or estimated income. In most, though not all, cases where a valuation was low, the gift was far greater than the amount loaned. In the living of Loughcrew, where the clergyman's house had been described as 'a very wretched thatched cabin', the

valuation of £850 was among the highest in the diocese.<sup>153</sup> The incumbent, Revd Richard Vincent, while securing a large loan, could obtain a gift of no more than £100.

Table 3.6 Samples of annual values/estimated incumbent income & their effect on First Fruits loans & gifts for building glebe houses, 1801-22

Parish	Annual value £	Loan £	Gift £
Loughcrew	850	1,275	100
Slane	450	500	100
Julianstown	200	400	400
Churchtown	105	210	400
Kilbixy	22	50	450

Source: *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 18-19, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 102-103

At the lower end of the valuation scale, the living of Kilbixy stood at no more than £22. This was reflected in Revd John Jephson being awarded the gift of £450 and required to pay back a small loan of £50.<sup>154</sup> Loans were advanced under condition of repayment in instalments 'at the rate of £6 per cent per annum from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of July, twelve months after the advance'.<sup>155</sup> Structured loans and gifts enabled clergymen to greatly improve their living conditions. The thatched cabins complained of in O'Beirne's initial enquiries were replaced by glebe houses such as those seen in Plates 3.4 and 3.5. As can be deduced by examination of Appendix 3.6, the house-building programme does not appear to have followed any specific geographical pattern. No fewer than half the houses were allocated First Fruits funding between the years 1812 and 1815, and 1813 was the year when monies were granted towards fourteen glebe houses; the highest number in any single year.

<sup>153</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 140-1.

<sup>154</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 19, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 103.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 100.

Plate 3.4 Glebe house at Vastina, County Westmeath, c. 1813



Source: O.P.W., *An introduction to the architectural heritage of Westmeath*, p. 76

Plate 3.5 Glebe house at Kentstown, County Meath, c. 1814



Caroline Gallagher

14 July 2006



Although seventy-two<sup>156</sup> glebe houses were eventually built in Meath, not every minister was willing to provide a house for himself, and O'Beirne placed a number of his clergy 'under an injunction to build'.<sup>157</sup> To achieve a standard of quality certain stipulations were made regarding building materials:

It must be of stone and lime, or brick and lime, and timbered in the roof and the floors... with Oak or fir timber (bog oak excepted) and covered with slate, shingles or tiles; except livings under £100 per year, on which such houses or buildings may be covered with thatch.<sup>158</sup>

The incumbent prepared and presented a memorial and plan to the trustees of the First Fruits.<sup>159</sup> These documents were required to detail 'the length, breadth, height and thickness of the walls...with the number of stories...with the situation of the ground on which the same are to stand'.<sup>160</sup> The submission was to be signed by the incumbent and two credible witnesses. A certificate of approval was granted by the trustees of the First Fruits and the plans returned to the incumbent. Following allocation, loans were disbursed piecemeal, when stages of building were certified by the bishop and as with any type of mortgage, loans were repaid in instalments.<sup>161</sup> Upon completion, the incumbent was obliged to have the building viewed and valued by two witnesses, who, under oath, returned 'a true, just and faithful account and estimate of the said buildings and improvements'.<sup>162</sup> Map 3 provides an illustration of the distribution of new glebe houses throughout the diocese. Testament to the suitability of materials, quality of workmanship and success of the building programme in the first quarter of the nineteenth century is reflected in the fact that almost all of these buildings continued in use as glebe houses long after church disestablishment and well into the second half of the twentieth century. Most survive today as private residential dwellings.

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<sup>156</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 150.

<sup>157</sup> For examples see, *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 49, 51 & 53, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>158</sup> Arthur Browne, *A compendious view of the ecclesiastical law of Ireland, being the substance of a course of lectures read in the university of Dublin* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dublin, 1803), p. 133.

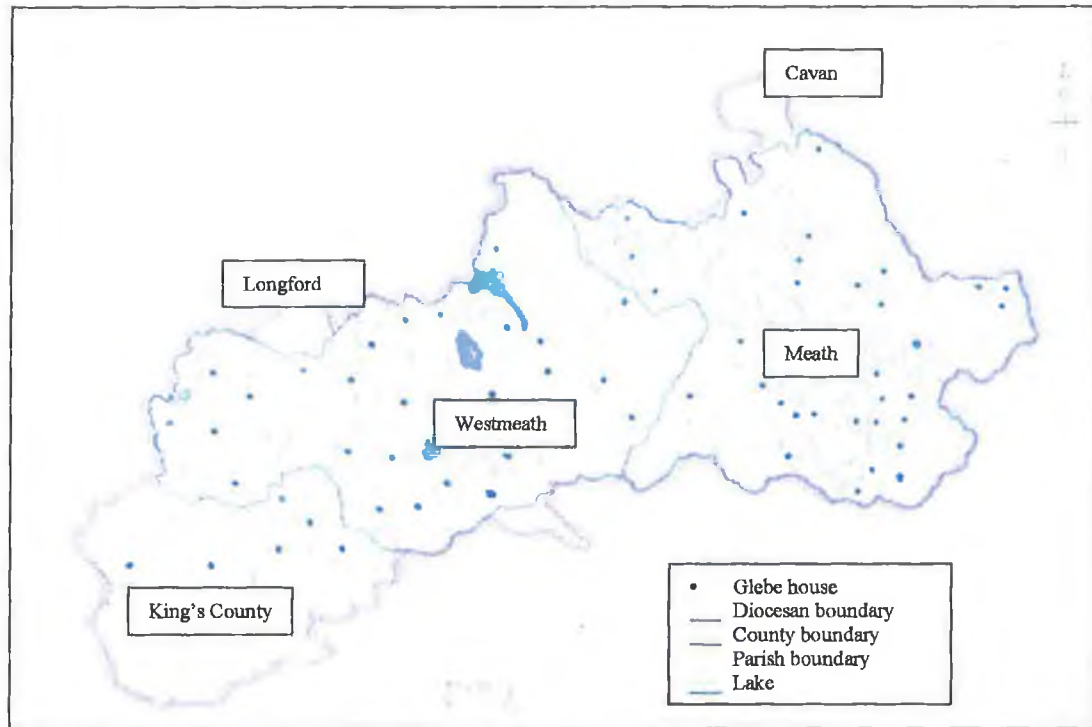
<sup>159</sup> For examples see, *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 49, 55 & 57, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>160</sup> Browne, *A compendious view*, pp 132-133.

<sup>161</sup> See *Public accounts, 1813-14*, pp 188-191 & 206-207, H.C. 1814 (129), vii, 358-361 & 376-377.

<sup>162</sup> Browne, *A compendious view*, p. 135.

Map 3.3 Distribution of glebe houses purchased or built in the diocese of Meath during the O'Beirne episcopate, 1798-1823



Source: Visitation, 1818, pp 106-107. Note: the MS carries unsigned glosses of a later, unspecified date; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 18-19, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 102-103.

Over time, O'Beirne made changes to the structure of just over twenty-five per cent of the livings in the diocese of Meath. There were three ways of effecting change in the composition of a living; the creation of a new union of parishes by episcopal decree, by act of council or by the naming of a perpetual curacy. Eleven unions were formed by act of council, eleven by episcopal union and the four perpetual curacies of Mayne, Clara, Stonehall and Rahan were created (see Table 3.7 & Map 3.4).

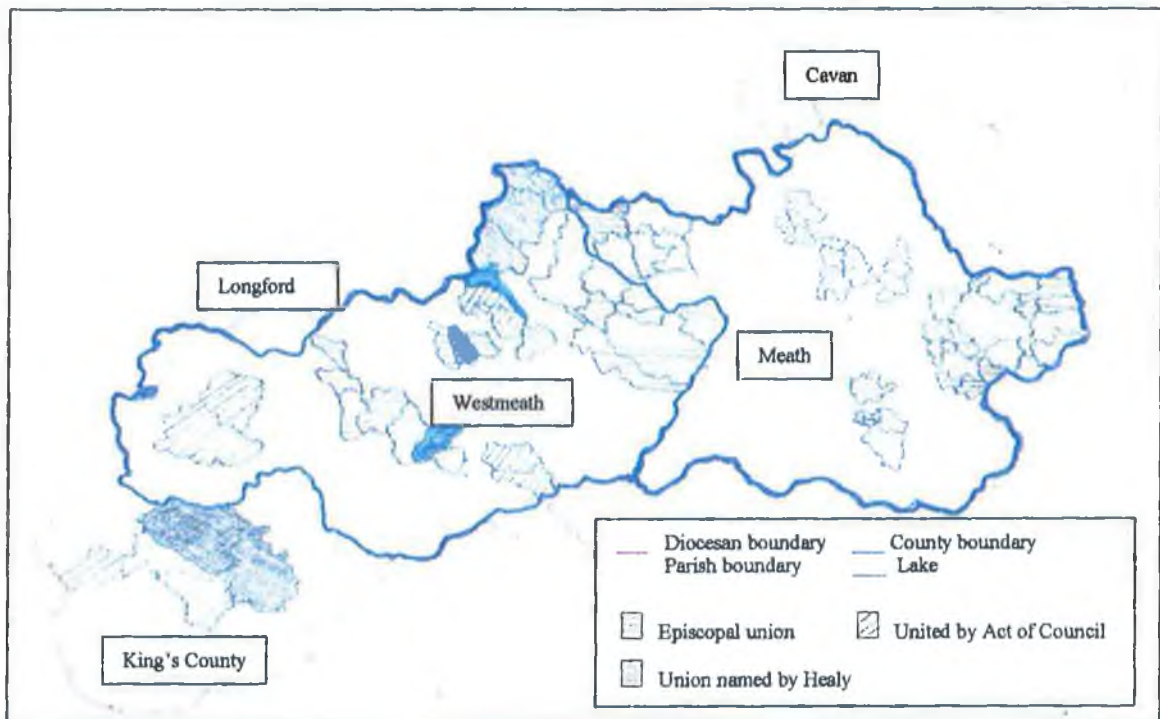
Table 3.7 New parish unions and perpetual curacies formed in the diocese of Meath,

1800-21

Living	Denominations	Type of union or perpetual curacy	Year
Stackallen	Stackallen, Gemonstown, Dunmoe	Act of council	1800
Oldcastle	Oldcastle, Castlecor	Episcopal union	1800
Donaghpatrick	Donaghpatrick, Kilberry	Act of council	1801
Kentstown	Kentstown, Danestown, Ballymagarvey	Act of council	1801
Newtown	Newtown, Robertstown, Kilbeg, Emlagh	Act of council	1802
Ballyloughloe	Ballyloughloe, Drumrany	Act of council	1804
Tissauran	Tissauran, Killegally, Wherry	Act of council	1804
Mayne	Mayne, Lickbla, Foyran	Perpetual curacy	1805
Kilmessan	Kilmessan, Macetown	Episcopal union	1805
Kilmoon	Kilmoon, Leckno	Episcopal union	1807
Clara	Clara, Lemanaghan	Perpetual curacy	1808
Kilshine	Kilshine, Clongill	Act of council	1809
Multifarnham	Multifarnham, Taghmon, Stonehall	Act of council	1809
Stonehall	Separated from Multifarnham before 1818	Perpetual curacy	n.a.
Churchtown	Churchtown, Dysart, Carragh chapelry	Act of council	1809
Rahan	Rahan newly separated from Fircall	Perpetual curacy	1810
Knockmark	Knockmark, Culmullin, Kiltale	Act of council	1811
Julianstown	Julianstown, Clonalvey, Moorechurch, Stamullin	Episcopal union	1813
Almoritia	Almoritia, Piercetown, Moyvore/Conry	Episcopal union	1813
Duleek	Duleek, Knockcommon, Ardcah, Timoole, Dowth	Episcopal union	1814
Colpe	Colpe, Kilsharvan	Episcopal union	1815
Loughcrew	Loughcrew, Clonabreaney	Episcopal union	1815
Portnashangan	Portnashangan, Portlomon	Episcopal union	1816
Drumcree	Drumcree, Kilcumney, Disartale, Killuagh	Episcopal union	1818
do.,	Killagh	Episcopal union	1821
Enniscoffey	Enniscoffey, Kilbride Pilate	Act of council	1818
Delvin	Delvin, Clonarney, Ballycoyne chapelry	Episcopal union	1821

Source: Visitation, 1817, pp 2, 4, 6, 8-10, 12-15, 27, 30-31, 38-40; Visitation, 1818, pp 5-7, 15, 17, 19-21, 23-25, 28, 30, 54-56, 58-59, 64-65, 67-71, 73, 88-89, 96-99; Archbishop's visitation, 1826, pp 24-25, 27, 29-30, 37-39, 41; Healy, *History of the diocese*, pp 283-339

Map 3.4 Changes to the structure of livings in the diocese of Meath during the O'Beirne episcopate, 1798-1823



Source: Visitation, 1817, pp 2, 4, 6, 8-10, 12-15, 27, 30-31, 38-40); Visitation, 1818; Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826, pp 24-25, 27, 29-30, 37-39, 41; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 283-339.

O'Beirne and his contemporaries on the Irish bench were fortunate in that their episcopacies coincided with a generous treasury. O'Beirne's great success lay in relentlessly pursuing a policy of clerical residence that by definition required a glebe house in every living. The result of O'Beirne's effort to enforce residence among incumbents is best illustrated by comparing his returns in answer, first to the government enquiries of 1806, and then to those of 1820:

1806 On these [92] benefices, 45 incumbents actually reside. Of the 47 [clergymen] who do not reside, 10 have no glebe-houses... 19 have other benefices on which they reside & hold by faculty. 13 are absent with permission; 2 without permission; 2 benefices are vacant; and 1 is a sinecure. There are... 37 glebe-houses, 75 glebes, and 75 benefices without glebes. There are 54 [benefices] without glebe-houses, and 17 without glebes.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>163</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 76-77, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

1820 On these [101] benefices 79 incumbents actually reside. Of the 22 [clergymen] who do not reside, 2 have no glebe-houses... 10 have other livings on which they reside & hold by dispensation, 6 are absent with permission, 2 without permission; 1 benefice is vacant, and 1 is a sinecure. There are... 83 glebe-houses, 95 glebes, and 6 benefices without glebes. There are 18 [benefices] without glebe-houses and 6 without glebes.<sup>164</sup>

Beaufort's survey of the 1790s neglected to enquire into the element of non-residence; Healy was not specific in the matter of figures; and the initial report sought by O'Beirne is no longer available. However, in his statement and recommendations for remedy to Charles Abbot in 1801 the bishop confirmed that only twenty-five clergymen were resident in the diocese of Meath at the end of 1798, after the rebellion.<sup>165</sup> In 1823, owing to some months *inter episcopo* between the death of O'Beirne and the appointment of his successor Nathaniel Alexander, no diocesan report was submitted to the House of Commons. In February 1824 however, the full extent of O'Beirne's programme of enforcing residence was evidenced in the returns that indicated the compliance of eighty-six incumbents, an increase of sixty-one. Of the thirteen who did not reside, one had no glebe house, eight resided by faculty on other livings, two were masters at the diocesan school at Multifarnham and had permission to reside there and two resided for half the year. In addition, Archdeacon De Lacy resided at the archdeaconry at Kells, while a curate served in the related parish of Kilskyre. Only Kilbride Veston was described as 'not competent to support a clergyman' yet even there the cure was served by a curate from an adjoining parish.<sup>166</sup> There were eighty-five glebe houses<sup>167</sup> and ninety-two glebes.<sup>168</sup> The improvements during O'Beirne's tenure are further illustrated in Charts 3.1 and 3.2.

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<sup>164</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*, pp 96-97, H.C. 1820 (93), ix.

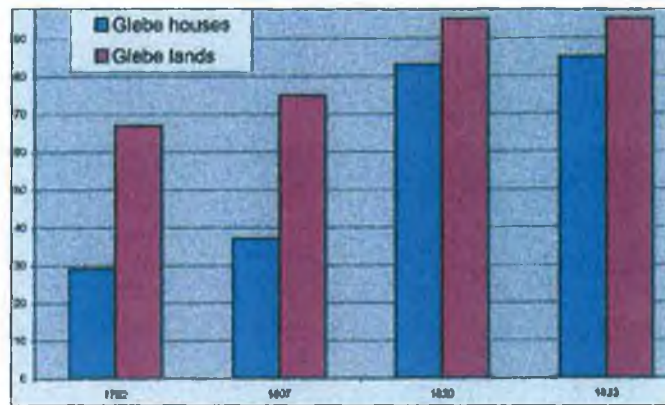
<sup>165</sup> O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 1801, f. 158.

<sup>166</sup> *Returns to an order of the honourable House of Commons, dated the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1824; -for A list of the parishes in Ireland, with the names of their respective incumbents; and distinguishing those parishes in which the incumbent is not resident* (hereafter *A list of the parishes in Ireland, 1824*), pp 59-61, H.C. 1824 (246 436), xxi, 280.

<sup>167</sup> Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826.

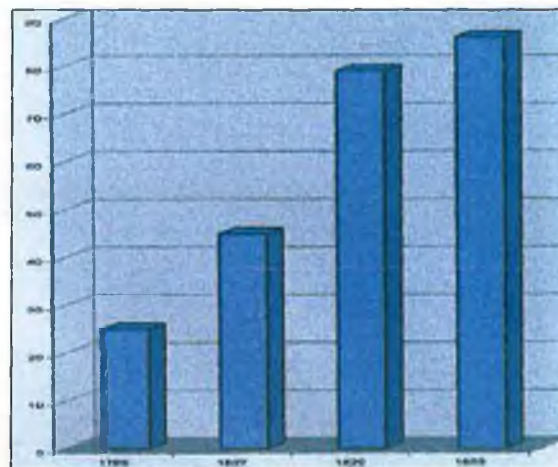
<sup>168</sup> *Statement of number of acres belonging to the church in Ireland*, pp 5-7, H.C. 1824 (402 436 462), xxi.

Chart 3.1 Improvements in the number of glebe houses and glebe lands in the diocese of Meath, 1792-1823



Source: Compiled from information in Beaufort, *Memoir of a map of Ireland*, pp 41-122; *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 76, H.C. 1807 (78), v; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 17-24 & p. 29, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 101-108 & 113; *Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826*; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 151-2.

Chart 3.2 Improvements in clerical residence in the diocese of Meath, 1798-1823



Source: Compiled from information in O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 1801, f. 158; *Papers relating to the established church in Ireland*, p. 76, H.C. 1807 (78), v; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 17-24 & p. 29, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 101-108 & 113; *A list of the parishes in Ireland, 1824*, pp 59-61, H.C. 1824 (246 436), xxi, 285-287.

By comparison, the 1824 report returned the neighbouring diocese of Kildare, as having twenty-nine clergymen absent from its fifty-five livings. Thirteen were absent without permission. Several of those resident were described as 'living

in house of his own procurement'.<sup>169</sup> As Kildare was the diocese from which the First Fruits received the fewest applications, these figures are not remarkable. The diocese of Killaloe and Kilfenora also comprised fifty-five livings and came second to Meath in its funding for building houses. However, in 1824 eighteen of its clergymen remained absent, only four with permission.<sup>170</sup> From these figures one might justifiably draw the conclusion that funding and building were not sufficient in themselves. To ensure improvement in the number of resident incumbents in benefices capable of supporting a clergyman, a concerted and persistent effort on the part of the diocesan was also required, such as was the case in Meath.

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<sup>169</sup> *A list of the parishes in Ireland, 1824*, pp 46-49, H.C. 1824 (246 436), xxi, 272-5.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 51-55, H.C. 1824 (246 436), xxi, 277-81.

## Chapter four

### Church-building, rebuilding, enlargement and repair: facilitating improvements to pastoral care in the diocese of Meath, 1798-1823

Increasing numbers of resident clergy, the building or procurement of new glebe houses and the enhancement of glebe lands went hand in hand with an unprecedented spate of church-building, rebuilding, enlargement and substantial repair. As with other improvements of the period, government loans and gifts were made available for the purpose and administered through the Board of First Fruits. The degree to which each diocese availed of the opportunity to improve the condition and number of its houses of worship varied. In Meath, Bishop O'Beirne pursued a church-building policy that was unsurpassed by any other diocesan at any time. His church programme encompassed not only the building itself. The state of the entire site including its churchyard and boundary were remarked upon by the bishop and he requested that deficiencies be addressed. O'Beirne also used the gradually improving built infrastructure and numbers of resident clergy as a means of bettering the standard of pastoral care and encouraging adherence to the rubric of church practice on a parochial level. This chapter explains the process of applying for First Fruits funding and the vestry restrictions placed by law, upon parishioners who were not members of the Church of Ireland. It traces the extent of the church-building programme in the diocese, examines the types of church built and offers some idea of the actual cost of building. It also assesses the success of measures implemented in improving pastoral care in a diocese of new or improved churches, extended glebe lands and new glebe houses where clergymen were more often found in residence than ever before.

As in the previous chapter, it is necessary to make some observations on particular sources. The *National inventory of architectural heritage*, Samuel Lewis's *Topographical dictionary of Ireland* and the second volume of Canon John



Healy's *History of the diocese of Meath* are not without discrepancy or error.<sup>1</sup> Errors in the national inventory pertinent to this chapter relate to the inaccurate dating of churches. Such incidences will be clarified during the course of the chapter as necessary. The sums disbursed by the Board of First Fruits towards church-building and rebuilding given by Lewis do not always agree with the manuscript sources or figures published by the direction of government. Some discrepancies have also been noted between Lewis's years of construction for individual churches and the dates indicated in government returns or recorded on the buildings themselves. The same applies to information given by Canon Healy. Table 4.1 uses the parish of Ardagh near the border of counties Meath and Cavan as an example of how the sources differ or are deficient in relating elements of vital information.

Table 4.1 St Patrick's Ardagh: an example of conflicting information between the sources

Source	Year funded	Year built	First Fruits gift £	First Fruits loan £
R.C.B., MS D7/157	1802	not given	500	n.a.
First Fruits returns to government	n.a.	1806	500	0
Samuel Lewis	n.a.	1812	0	900
Canon Healy	n.a.	1806	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Visitation, 1818, p. 13; *Ecclesiastical report, 1807*, p. 51, H.C. 1807 (78), v; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5, 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89, 95; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, p. 40; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 286

O'Beirne has long been credited with overseeing the improvement of fifty-seven churches during his episcopate of Meath. No more than forty-seven of these were returned by the First Fruits in its annual reports to government.<sup>2</sup> The bishop identified the remaining ten in a list attached to his 1818 visitation notebook.<sup>3</sup> However, by means of a thorough examination of the entire notebook, vestry minute books and accounts, government returns and fieldwork, a further twenty

<sup>1</sup> *N.I.A.H.*; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i & ii; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii.

<sup>2</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-6 & 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90 & 95.

<sup>3</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 108-9.

have been identified here. This brings the total number to seventy-seven. The degree to which the secondary sources rely upon each other regarding the fifty-seven is obvious.<sup>4</sup> These sources and even the figure given on the bishop's memorial tablet (see Appendix 4.1), most likely relied upon O'Beirne's own claim to that number, in the lists given by him in the 1818 notebook.<sup>5</sup> Although the *discrepantia* between sources renders the definitive dating of many church improvements difficult, in the following discussion there is no instance of incompatibility where any date of funding, building, rebuilding, enlargement or repair, places a church outside of the O'Beirne episcopate.

While some information relating to repaired churches given here is taken from Lewis and the 1818 notebook, vestry minute books and parish accounts have been extensively used to corroborate other sources and to provide stand-alone evidence of their own. It must be stressed that the twenty additional churches identified are buildings where substantial work and not minor repairs or general maintenance was undertaken. For example St Mary's at Galtrim County Meath has been included due to the addition of a steeple in 1800 (Plates 4.1a & 4.1b). Examination of the building indicates that this date applies to the tower only rather than to the whole, as has been suggested by the *National inventory of architectural heritage* and the database of *Protected structures*.<sup>6</sup> The addition of the steeple in 1800 not only adds Galtrim to the existing O'Beirne list, but indicates that its enhancement was possibly the earliest church improvement of his episcopate.

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<sup>4</sup> Kelly, 'Thomas Lewis O'Beirne'; Clergy of the Church of England Database, 'O'Beirne, Thomas Lewis (1779-1791)' (<http://eagle.cch.kcl.ac.uk:8080/cce/persons/DisplayPerson.jsp?PersonID=3461>) (16 Jan. 2008); Yates, *The religious condition*, fn. 115, p. 94; Malcomson, *Archbishop Agar*, p. 186; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 154, 163.

<sup>5</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 108-9.

<sup>6</sup> *N.I.A.H.*,

Plate 4.1a St Mary's, Galtrim, County Meath



Caroline Gallagher

22 Oct. 2008

Plate 4.1b Date stone of W entrance  
St Mary's, Galtrim



Caroline Gallagher

22 Oct. 2008

As seen in chapters two and three, from the time of the Reformation, the churches of the established religion were often damaged during times of rebellion and insurrection. Although there had been some funding available for rebuilding churches, neither the parochial congregations nor the largely absent clergy made any successful attempt to rectify matters to a significant extent. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, many churches throughout Ireland remained in a state of decay. The bishop of Derry, Alexander Knox made an appeal for immediate funds to repair churches in his diocese, as many were in a state of actual collapse and their congregations had begun to attend Methodist meeting houses.<sup>7</sup> The bishop of Limerick, Ardfert and Aghadoe reported no fewer than forty-nine of his ninety benefices without churches.<sup>8</sup> The diocese of Meath was returned as having ninety churches in its ninety-two benefices. Of these, fifty-seven were stated to be in perfect or complete repair. Sixteen were described as being in good repair. Nine were in as good repair as was possible to make. Only eight churches were returned in bad repair and only one was ruinous.<sup>9</sup> However, it must not be concluded that only two benefices were without churches or that a necessity for the extensive church-building programme pursued by O'Beirne should be immediately called to

<sup>7</sup> Knox to Hardwicke, 26 Oct. 1802 (B.L., Hardwicke papers, MS 35736, f. 258).

<sup>8</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 236-259, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 46-77, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

question. As can be seen in Table 4.2, close examination of the returns to government clearly state that while seven extensive parishes had more than one church, the twelve livings of Killarvey, Innismot, Ballygarth, Assey, Rathbeggan, Ballymaglasson, Moymet, Portlomon, Multifarnham, Kilbride Pilate, Churchtown and Dysart had no church of any description.<sup>10</sup> It must also be pointed out that in 1806 no fewer than twenty-three of the fifty-seven churches returned as being in perfect order, had only been lately so made.<sup>11</sup> According to the First Fruits returns of 1823, where funding was detailed on a year by year basis, the churches at Ardagh, Colpe, Mayne, Vastina, Rathcondra and Tisauran were the only buildings to have been in receipt of funding by 1806.<sup>12</sup> It could be assumed therefore that the remaining seventeen found an alternative source of finance. The most likely alternative source was the local landlord, congregation or parish at large. More complete details of alternative funding is the remit of chapter five. It must be remembered that these returns were made two years before the government purse was substantially loosened in 1808 and a church recorded in perfect repair was a description relative to its time. It should also be borne in mind that these descriptions were made by ministers who, like Lancelot King Conyngham of Ratoath, may have wished to offer the best possible report of their parish to their bishop, in the hope that the actual state of the church might not be discovered. As will be shown, in many cases the vestry minute books offer a different perspective on the state of churches in the diocese.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 51, 53, 55, 59, 1, 67, 69 & 73, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 46-77, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>12</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-6 & 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90 & 95.

Table 4.2

## The state of churches in the diocese of Meath, 1806

Church	Perfect repair	Good repair	Bad repair	'Good as is possible'	Ruin	No church
Agher	1					
Almoritia		1				
Ardagh *	1					
Ardraccan	1					
Ardnurcher	2					
Assey						1
Athboy	1					
Athlone	1					
Ballygarth						1
Ballyloughloe & Drumranry	2					
Ballymaglasson						1
Ballymore *	1					
Castlejordan			1			
Castlelost	1					
Castlepollard	1					
Castlerickard	1					
Churchtown						1
Clonard			1			
Cloncall	1					
Clonfadforan	1					
Clongill	1					
Clonmacnoise		1				
Colpe *	1					
Delvin		1				
Donaghpatrick *	1					
Drakestown		1				
Drogheda, St Mary's *	1					
Drumconrath		1				
Drumree				1		
Dunboyne *	1					
Dunshaughlin		1				
Duleek		1				
Durrow	1					
Dysart						1
Enniskeen	1					
Fircall		2	1	1		
Innismott						1
Julianstown	1					
Kells	1					
Kentstown *	1					
Kilbeggan				1		
Kilbride/Oldcastle	2					
Kilbride Pilate						1
Kilkenny West & Bunowen		1				
Killallon	1					
Killarvey						1
Killiconnighan *	1					
Killucan/Rathwire *	1					
Killygally/Tissauran **	2					
Kilmainhamwood *	1					
Kilmessan				1		
Kilmoon			1			

(continued) Church	Perfect repair	Good repair	Bad Repair	'Good as is possible'	Ruin	No church
Kilmore		1				
Kilnegaranagh	1					
Kilshine					1	
Kilskyre *	1					
Kiltale/Galtrim	1					
Kinnegad				1		
Knockmark			1			
Laracor		1				
Leney & Kilbixy **	2					
Loughcrew *	2					
Mayne*	1					
Moyglare			1			
Moylisker		1				
Moymet						1
Moynalty				1		
Mullingar				1		
Multifarnham						1
Navan	1					
Newtown *	1					
Newtown Fertullagh *	1					
Nobber	1					
Painestown	1					
Portloman						1
Raddonstown	1					
Rathbeggan						1
Rathcondra *	1					
Rathconnell	1					
Rathcore	1					
Rathkenny		1				
Rathmolyon	1					
Ratoath		1				
Reynagh/Gallen		1				
Skryne			1			
Slane	1					
Stackallen				1		
Syddan	1					
Taghmon			1			
Tara				1		
Trim *	1					
Tullamore	1					
Tryvet/Kilbrew *	1					
Vastina *	1					
Total	57	16	8	9	1	12

Source: *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 46-77, H.C. 1807 (78), v

\* Denotes recent improvements. Note: The churches are listed in order of their appearance in the returns

In addition, O'Beirne furnished a list of eleven rectories and two chapelries 'without Churches, without Glebe Houses, without Glebes, and without any

Ecclesiastical Income whatever' to provide for a curate (Table 4.3).<sup>13</sup> All were entirely inappropriate in the Church of Ireland laity, with the exception of Enniscoffey, a rectory in the union of Kilbride Pilate, where the Revd Dean Blundell could not afford a second clergyman of any station to serve the outer regions of the union. In this case, although it is nowhere made clear, the meagre annual income of £60 was probably allotted to Revd Thomas Robinson who performed occasional duties.<sup>14</sup>

Table 4.3 Rectories & chapelries in the diocese of Meath with no infrastructural provision, 1806

Rectory or chapelry	Benefice	Impropriator
Bective	Bective	L. Bolton esq
Brownestown	Kentstown	Sir Marcus Somerville
Donore	Rectory of Mellifont	Lord Drogheda
Enniscoffey	Kilbride Pilate	Revd Dean Blundell
Fennor	Painestown	Blaney T. Balfour esq
Foneylystown & Staffordstown	Foneylystown & Staffordstown	John Dawson esq
Killalton	Killalton/Teltown	Robert Bollow esq
Mornington chapelry	Chapelry of Colpe	Lord Drogheda
Moyvore	Moyvore	Marquis of Headfort
Newtown chapelry	Chapelry of Mellifont	Lord Drogheda
Odder	Tara	- Crowe esq
Stonehall	Multifarnham	Marquis of Headfort
Tristlekerrin	Tristlekerrin	Marquis of Headfort

Source: *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 76-77, H.C. 1807 (78), v; *Visitation, 1817*, pp 7, 11, 13 & 38; *Visitation, 1818*, pp 15, 19-20, 23-25, 28-29 & 73; *Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826*, pp 3, 7, 10, 13 & 33

The case of the penultimate entry in Table 4.3 is not without a degree of ambiguity and requires some explanation. Newtown was one of the twin chapelries of Grangegeeth and Monknewtown, situated near Tullyallen to the immediate north-east of the demesne of one Blaney Townley Balfour at Townley Hall near Drogheda. These two were entered in Meath diocesan visitations from at least the

<sup>13</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 76-77, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>14</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 68-69, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

1620s.<sup>15</sup> The first indication of the chapelries belonging not to Meath, but to Armagh, appeared in 1814, when they were replaced by the building of a new church at Tullyallen. In March of that year, O'Beirne wrote to William Stuart, archbishop of Armagh, '...it will give me great pleasure to oblige your commands to consecrate Tullaghallan [sic] Church. I mean to write to Mr. Balfour on the subject...'<sup>16</sup> In May, the archbishop received a further letter from O'Beirne to inform him that the consecration had taken place and that the bishop was 'very much pleased with everything [he] saw inside and outside, at the Church of Townly Hall'.<sup>17</sup> Although the church was funded by a First Fruits gift of £800, the funds were disbursed, not to the Meath diocesan, but to the lord primate, and the returns were listed in the diocese of Armagh.<sup>18</sup> O'Beirne did not include the church under any *alia* in his list of improvements to the diocese of Meath.<sup>19</sup> However it appeared in his visitation of 1817 as belonging to Armagh, and in his visitation notebook of 1818 as having a new church, but with no mention of Armagh.<sup>20</sup> Tullyallen was another former chapelry of Mellifont and in the diocese of Armagh.<sup>21</sup> The contiguity of Grangegeeth, Monknewtown and Tullyallen was a likely reason for incorporation, thereby facilitating the group with a new church at Tullyallen and bringing the first two chapelries out of the diocese of Meath and into that of Armagh. The 1826 archiepiscopal visitation of Meath gave no information on Grangegeeth and Monknewtown beyond clearly stating that they were, at that time 'chapelries of Armagh'.<sup>22</sup> However, ambiguity persisted and while Lewis firmly placed Monknewtown in 'part of the ecclesiastical division of Tullyallen' and therefore in the diocese of Armagh, in 1908 Canon Healy included both as part of the Slane union of parishes, stating that the union 'seems to have been made in the eighteenth century'.<sup>23</sup> As can be seen in Map 4.1, where the church is circled in

<sup>15</sup> Elrington, 'A certificate of the state and revennewes', i, p. lxxviii; C.C. Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1973), p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> O'Beirne to Stuart, 13 Mar. 1814 (L.B.C.A., MS WY994/84).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

<sup>19</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 108-9.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15; Visitation, 1817, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 126-127, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 211-212.

<sup>22</sup> Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, p. 671 & ii, p. 389; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 289.



red, the Ordnance Survey of County Meath in 1837 firmly placed the church of Townley Hall in Monknewtown, within the Meath county boundary, and therefore most likely within the Meath diocese. Currently, there seems to exist an understanding that Monknewtown is part of the Slane union of parishes, in the diocese of Meath, while the Townley Hall church, in the village of Tullyallen, is in the diocese of Armagh.<sup>24</sup>

Map 4.1 1837 Ordnance Survey map of Monknewtown, County Meath<sup>25</sup>



Source: see fn 25 below

In the absence of actual First Fruits documents, the process of application for funding to build or rebuild churches described here has been taken, in the main, from John Finlay.<sup>26</sup> It is certainly worth noting that the process described by Finlay largely corresponds with recommendations proffered by O'Beirne to the chief secretary in Ireland, Charles Abbot, in 1801.<sup>27</sup> Unlike similar contemporary publications,<sup>28</sup> Finlay's work is particularly valuable, as churchwardens in Ireland were bound by enactments that were peculiar to the country. Specific examples

<sup>24</sup> Conversation with Nel Jensma, Churchwarden, Slane Union, 20 Nov. 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Gormanston map of County Meath, 1837 (Meath County Library, sheet 19).

<sup>26</sup> John Finlay, *The office and duties of churchwarden and parish officer in Ireland, new edition, with a supplement containing a reading on the act of parliament of the Seventh, George Fourth, c. 72, which will be in force on the first day of January, 1827* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dublin, 1827).

<sup>27</sup> O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 1801, f. 161.

<sup>28</sup> For example, R.B. Anderdon, *A practical treatise on the duties of churchwardens* (London, 1824); Humphrey Prideaux, *Directions to churchwardens for the faithful discharge of their duty* (London, 1830); Charles Greville Prideaux, *A practical guide to the duties of churchwardens in the execution of their office, with lists of cases, statutes, canons, &c* (London, 1843).

from the diocese of Meath have been pieced together from information found in Bishop O'Beirne's correspondence, his visitation notes and returns of the diocese. However, the formulaic nature of these sources warranted further investigation. As will be shown, proceedings from meetings of the Catholic Association and other nineteenth century published works have brought some interesting perspectives and difficulties to light.<sup>29</sup>

At this juncture is necessary to offer some explanation of terminology. The First Fruits disbursement returns made no distinction as to whether a church was to be built or rebuilt. The difference in category has been found in O'Beirne's visitation notes, where he generally regarded a 'rebuilding' as a new church on the site of an old church, while a 'built church' was a new church on a new site.<sup>30</sup> Where an older church was enlarged, such as those at Trim and Navan, O'Beirne also used the term 'rebuilding'.<sup>31</sup> The trustees of the Board of First Fruits sanctioned and disbursed monies for the building or rebuilding of churches by either loan or gift. The general tendency was to allow one or the other. In Meath, only the urban churches of St Mary's Drogheda, St Catherine's, Tullamore and St Mary's, Navan, benefited from both loan and gift.<sup>32</sup> The term loan refers to sums that were repaid by instalments over time. Gift monies were sums that did not warrant repayment and were disbursed to the diocesan.<sup>33</sup> To avoid semantic confusion, the term 'gift' rather than 'grant' is used here. Though meaning one and the same, 'gift' was the term adopted in official returns. In a few instances, the local landlord undertook the loan repayments, but generally the onus to repay loans fell upon the parishioners in the form of an additional church-building cess. It should be explained that an examination of government returns indicates that no First Fruits church loans were disbursed in the nineteenth century until after 1808, when the

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<sup>29</sup> For examples see *Hansard, 2, The parliamentary debates... published under the superintendence of T. C. Hansard*, new series, 1820-29 (vol. vii, London, 1823), cc 1147-98; *Proceedings of the Catholic Association in Dublin, from May 13, 1823 to February 11, 1825* (London, 1825); James Godkin, *Ireland and her churches* (London, 1867).

<sup>30</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 109 & p. 108 respectively.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>32</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 6 & 9, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90 & 95.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 5-9, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-93.

treasury purse was further endowed.<sup>34</sup> It is possible to argue upon this point from two perspectives. It may be said that until this time, no parish was pressurised into applying an additional cess upon itself towards the rebuilding of the place of worship. It can also be said, that as soon as funding on an unprecedented scale became available, the establishment sought to make as much use of it as possible. As parishioners, Roman Catholics, who constituted the majority in all parishes and Dissenters, of whom there were very few, were required to contribute to the church-building cess, and in 1807 Bishop O'Beirne welcomed the prospect of a much enhanced and more liberal provision of government monies as 'no adequate fund can be expected to be raised by a parochial cess, from the small extent of the parishes, or by contributions, from the poverty of the parishioners'.<sup>35</sup> This statement appears to suggest a degree of understanding on the part of the bishop and some level of empathy with the plight of the majority of the population, who were Roman Catholic. However, and although O'Beirne had little patience with clergy who were reluctant to improve church buildings, his communication with Charles Abbot in 1801 leaves little doubt of his first concern, the safety of his parochial ministers;

I never knew a part of the kingdom where a clergyman did not expose himself to hatred, to danger, by resorting to the provisions of the Acts of Parliament for repairing churches, or where he was not deserted or opposed by his Protestant parishioners when the sums to be raised amounted to anything considerable beyond the settled cess for clerk's and sexton's salary...<sup>36</sup>

While this quotation seems to put forward the notion that there was a good deal of opposition in the parishes, O'Beirne made but very few mentions of resistance in his Meath visitations.

The process of building, rebuilding or enlarging a parish church could extend over a number of years, and several statutes relating not only to the provision of government funds, but also to the duty, responsibility and burden

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 10-16, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 94-100.

<sup>35</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 78, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>36</sup> O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 1801, f. 161.

placed upon churchwardens and vestries were peculiar to Ireland.<sup>37</sup> In general and by agreement of an assembled vestry, the initial step in applying for First Fruits monies was taken, in writing, by the minister and the two churchwardens of a parish. This was known as a memorial. Not many of these survive and owing to its rarity, the memorial prepared by Kinnegad vestry in 1821 is reproduced here in full:

The Memorial of the Minister Church Wardens and Protestant Parishioners of the Chapelry of Kinnigad [sic] in the Diocese of Meath, Sheweth: That the church of the said Chapelry having been originally ill built & of perishable materials & being now very old & in a very ruinous & dangerous state it is very unfit for the accommodation of the Parishioners as at Divine Service, & being incapable of being permanently repaired it is found necessary to take it down that the Inhabitants of said Chapelry being in general poor & the extent of the lands Subject to Cess limited – Memorialists find themselves totally unequal to levy off the lands of the Chapelry a Sufficient Sum to build a new church. That under these circumstances your Memorialists are Induced to apply to your board for Aid. That Memorialists tho unable to advance the whole Sum necessary for the above purpose are yet ready to repay the Sum of One Thousand Pounds Sterling by Instalments according to the regulations of the Act made for that Purpose if advanced to them. That Memorialists beg leave to refer to their Bishop for the trust of these allegations & Memorialists will pray.

By Order: Rob<sup>l</sup> Noble. Minister  
John D'Arcy  
John Higgins. Church Warden  
Barrington Smith. Church Warden  
Sam<sup>l</sup> Hill  
Tho<sup>o</sup> Lee  
Tho<sup>a</sup> Gill.<sup>38</sup>

The application included a plan of the proposed church and a projection of building costs.<sup>39</sup>

Vestries were summoned to settle upon a cess, either by an announcement after divine service, or, in parishes where there was no existing church, by a notice posted in the nearest market town. A copy of the notice was delivered to 'three householders of the said parish or union'.<sup>40</sup> The sum of cess agreed was certified by churchwardens or 'two Protestant inhabitants', relayed to the ordinary of the diocese, who gave his approval. The plan, estimate of costs and amount of

<sup>37</sup> Finlay, *The office and duties*, p. 116.

<sup>38</sup> Kinnegad vestry minutes, 24 Apr. 1821 (R.C.B., MS P. 239.5.1, pp 2-3).

<sup>39</sup> Finlay, *The office and duties*, p. 119.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

assessment was next approved by the bishop and subsequently forwarded to the trustees of the First Fruits.<sup>41</sup> The trustees then granted monies in compliance with 49 George 3, c. 103. s. 4 which stated:

..it shall and may be lawful for the said trustees and commissioners forthwith to advance and pay to the persons applying under the said recited act, out of any money or funds intrusted [sic] to the care of the said trustees and commissioners, such sum or sums of money as they shall have previously signified to be in their opinion fit and proper to be applied in the erection or building of any such church...<sup>42</sup>

The loan was disbursed in three equal parts to the persons named in the certificate of cess agreement. The first part was paid in advance of the commencement of any work. The further parts were released in two installments when building progress was certified by the diocesan.<sup>43</sup> Repayments, with a fixed rate of interest, fell due 'within twenty-one days after the first day of July in every year' until the debt was settled.<sup>44</sup>

While existing primary sources give an impression of the initial proposal coming directly from the parishioners, through their churchwardens, it is unwise to presume that such proposals came unprompted. In cases where vestry, wardens or parochial clergy did not choose to build a church under 10 Geo. 3, c.6 and 40 Geo. 3, c.83, the diocesan had the power to compel them to do so, and lackadaisical bishops were, in turn, held accountable under law to their archbishop.<sup>45</sup> O'Beirne's returns to government and personal notes, if taken at face value, could lead one to assume the almost universal eagerness of parishioners. Although he wrote to Charles Abbot of the unwillingness of wealthy Protestant farmers and traders to keep the parish church in ordinary repair,<sup>46</sup> the 1818 visitation notebook is the only other extant record in which he expressed dissatisfaction with the reticent

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp 119-120.

<sup>42</sup> 49. George 3, c. 103. s. 4; John Finlay, *The office and duties*, p. 121.

<sup>43</sup> Finlay, *The office and duties*, p. 121.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 120; 49 Geo.3, c. 103, s. 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Hansard*, 3, *Hansard's parliamentary debates*, third series, 1830-91 (vol xxiv, London, 1831), cc 85-86. HC Deb 27 Apr. 1830, vol xxiv, cc 85-86; Finlay, *The office and duties*, pp 116-117.

<sup>46</sup> O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 1801, f. 161.

parishioners of Rathcore who refused to 'consent to any additional cess'.<sup>47</sup> Of Kilskyre, he wrote 'the parishioners have proposed applying for a new church' and at Duleek, 'the parishioners are building a new church'.<sup>48</sup> In Rathcondra he noted 'A church, old, and too small for the parishioners, who wish to have it rebuilt'.<sup>49</sup> Similar observations were made of almost all parishes where improvements were made to the house of worship.<sup>50</sup> Despite the bishop's assertions and taking into account the Roman Catholic/Church of Ireland dichotomy in terms of population, it is highly improbable that a majority of parishioners in any parish were in agreement on the matter. However, and as O'Beirne was well aware, owing to the procedure involved in applying for church-building funds in Ireland and the laws relating to parish vestries, the voice of the dissenting parishioner was not heard. The consent of the majority of Protestants in a parish was all that was required to pursue a First Fruits loan for building, rebuilding or enlarging a church.<sup>51</sup>

Desmond Mooney has identified 1813-16 and 1819-23 as years during which there were episodes of protest against tithes in the county of Meath.<sup>52</sup> In 1815, warrants were issued to recover tithes in a number of areas. This resulted in riots at the Trim races and the pattern day at Lloyd, near Kells.<sup>53</sup> This was also the year when Ribbonmen were said to have murdered a man at the fair of Ardemagh, because he would not join them.<sup>54</sup> As the objections and disturbances caused by the payment or withholding of tithes and the general parochial cess caused much furore over time, it is reasonable to expect similar objections to a cess raised for the repayment of First Fruits loans provided for the building of churches. Godkin described the protests at Easter vestry meetings when the Roman Catholics contended 'that they ought not to be compelled to pay for the sweeping of the

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<sup>47</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 43.

<sup>48</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*, pp 77 & 81 respectively, H.C. 1820 (93), ix.

<sup>49</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*, p. 93, H.C. 1820 (93), ix.

<sup>50</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 1-104.

<sup>51</sup> *Hansard, 3, Hansard's parliamentary debates*, third series 1830-91 (vol xxiv, London, 1830), c. 6.HC Deb 27 April 1830, vol xxiv, c.6,

<sup>52</sup> Desmond Mooney, 'The origins of agrarian violence in Meath, 1790-1828', *Rtocht na Midhe*, viii, no. 1 (1987), pp 45-67.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 56-57.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

church, the washing of the surplice and even for the bread and wine... which was an outrage upon their consciences'.<sup>55</sup> However, apart from a few instances, little has been discovered in the Church of Ireland primary sources regarding protests of non-Anglican parishioners against the church-building cess. Perhaps there was some employment opportunity for parishioners during the term of building and the economic value to the labourer may have kept protests to the cess at a minimum. However, a situation existed in law and in practice that offers some other explanation for the anomaly. While Roman Catholics were entitled to attend vestry meetings and even to hold the position of churchwarden, according to law they were long prohibited from 'voting at the election of Church-wardens' and 'excluded from voting in vestry for the repairing of churches'.<sup>56</sup> As parishioners, rate-paying Roman Catholics were, by common law, members of vestry but, contrarily, by statute, they were;

... disabled in Ireland from voting on five subjects of vestry deliberations; first, the rebuilding of a church;- secondly, the repairs of it;- thirdly, the demising or disposal of the income of any estate belonging to it;- fourthly, the salary of the clerk;- fifthly, the election of any Church-warden.<sup>57</sup>

Roman Catholics could only voice their objection on the above subjects by taking a case before the quarter sessions.<sup>58</sup> It is hardly necessary to point out that this was a course of action not commonly taken. The cost of such an exercise would have been prohibitive in many parishes where the majority of the population had neither the confidence of spirit nor the financial wherewithal to pursue the matter. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when the spate of church-building and rebuilding was at its height in Ireland and the repayment of loans came due or began to fall into arrears, increased cesses were levied in numerous parishes. These increases were also put to vote at vestry and in 1823, an act confirmed, 'The disqualification of Roman Catholics from voting at vestries...respecting these

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<sup>55</sup> Godkin, *Ireland and her churches*, p. 274.

<sup>56</sup> Finlay, *The office and duties*, p. 125; *Proceedings of the Catholic Association in Dublin from May 13, 1823, to February 11, 1823* (London, 1825), pp 23- 24; 20. Geo.3. c.58. s. 83 & 12. Geo.1. c.9. s.7 respectively.

<sup>57</sup> Finlay, *The office and duties*, p. 25.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

assessments'.<sup>59</sup> In the same year, the Catholic Association declared its intention to take Roman Catholic grievances relating to the church-building cess within its remit. On Wednesday 21 May a complaint against an unnamed Westmeath parish was brought before the association. Daniel O'Connell stated that the Board of First Fruits had granted seven hundred pounds towards the building of the parish church. In addition, it was alleged that two hundred pounds was levied upon the parishioners and a further two hundred was about to be demanded, although no church had yet been built.<sup>60</sup>

There is further evidence that the process of church-building was not as efficient or cost-effective as the sources most closely involved with the matter appear to suggest. An example of this can be found in the case of All Saints church in Mullingar. The returns of the established church in Ireland state that Revd Thomas Robinson, who held his parish by crown promotion,<sup>61</sup> received a First Fruits loan of £1,200 in 1815.<sup>62</sup> There are no other government loans or gifts recorded for Mullingar.<sup>63</sup> This may give an impression that the building of All Saints (Plate 4.2) cost no more than £1,200. There is no episcopal reference to Mullingar until 1818, when O'Beirne wrote in his visitation notebook 'The church being incommodious, and threatening decay, the parishioners agreed to assess themselves under the late act for a loan of £1,200 which has been granted them by the Board of First Fruits to rebuild the church on a new plan'.<sup>64</sup> In the year following he reported 'A new church is now building by the parishioners, assisted by a loan from the trustees of the First Fruits; the old church having become ruinous, and having been too small to contain the congregation'.<sup>65</sup> Four years had passed since the granting of the loan, but the church was not yet finished. In 1821 *Saunders's Newsletter* reported 'The Lord bishop of Meath attended by the Rev Mr

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125; 4. Geo.4, s. 16.

<sup>60</sup> *Proceedings of the Catholic Association*, p. 8.

<sup>61</sup> W. A. Reynell, Clerical promotions by the Crown in Meath diocese, n.d. (R.C.B., MS D7/12/1.6.4, p. 18).

<sup>62</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 5-6 & 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90 & 95.

<sup>64</sup> *Visitation, 1818*, p. 65.

<sup>65</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*, p. 89, H.C. 1820 (93), ix.



Pakenham as chaplain, arrived in Mullingar on Saturday last in order to consecrate the church; but unhappily some circumstance occurred which prevented its accomplishment'. However the church was 'licensed' by the bishop.<sup>66</sup> Although the preventative circumstance was not explained, the building was certainly not fit for consecration at that time. A clearer picture of the actual situation has been found in other sources, and is shown below.

Plate 4.2

All Saints, Mullingar, County Westmeath



Caroline Gallagher

28 May 2009

One of the nineteenth century's most commonly used surveys is Lewis's *Topographical dictionary*. As stated already, Lewis's work contained many inaccuracies and his account of All Saints in Mullingar was not without error.<sup>67</sup> However he offered some interesting figures on the actual cost of building the church and how the sum was raised. According to Lewis, it was 'rebuilt on an enlarged scale...at an expense of £3,554, of which £2,261 was raised by parochial assessment, £185 was a donation from the trustees of the Blue Coat Hospital and the remainder a loan from the late Board of First Fruits'.<sup>68</sup> The Mullingar vestry minutes, while recording the annual sums expended on the church throughout the

<sup>66</sup> *Saunders's Newsletter*, 4 Aug. 1821, quoted in Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 163.

<sup>67</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, pp 411-2.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

period (Table 4.4) make no mention as to whether the persistent, rising costs were ever challenged by the vestry.<sup>69</sup> This is a more informative account than that found in the First Fruits returns or O'Beirne's notes and somewhat corroborates the situation as detailed by Daniel O'Connell at a meeting of the Catholic Association in 1823, when it was claimed that no fewer than seven church-building cesses amounting to the sum of £5,540, had been levied upon the parishioners of Mullingar between the years 1813 and 1820.<sup>70</sup> According to the vestry minutes the sum fell somewhat short of that amount, but by 1823 the total amount paid by parishioners was in excess of £6,000.

Table 4.4 Funds for rebuilding All Saints Mullingar, 1813-23

Year	Means of funding	Amount		
		£	s.	d.
1813	Parochial cess	15	0.	0.
	Parochial cess	300	0.	0.
1814	Parochial cess	750	0.	0.
	First Fruits loan	1,200	0.	0.
1815	None recorded	n.a.		
1816	Parochial cess	252	15.	4.
	First Fruits loan <sup>71</sup>	1,000	0.	0.
1817	Parochial cess	666	13.	4.
	Parochial cess for Edward Dibbs, parish clerk, due to the demolition of his two houses	200	0.	0.
1818	Parochial cess	666	0.	0.
1819	Parochial cess	252	15.	4.
1820	Parochial cess	1,800	0.	0.
1821	Parochial cess	623	5.	1½.
1822	Parochial cess	72	0.	0.
1823	Parochial cess	72	0.	0.
	Parochial cess	22.	18.	4.
	Parochial cess	424.	16.	8.
	Total	8,318	4.	1½

Source: Mullingar V.M.B., 1813-23, pp 41-127

O'Connell's complaint has been reproduced here in full, and while his talent for rhetorical ascerbity was put to good use, the piece is worthy of consideration if

<sup>69</sup> Mullingar vestry minutes, 1806-24 (R.C.B., MS P. 336.4.1, pp 2-138).

<sup>70</sup> *Proceedings of the Catholic Association*, pp 24-5; John O'Connell (ed.), *The select speeches of Daniel O'Connell M.P., edited with historical notes, etc.*, (2<sup>nd</sup> series, Dublin, 1868), p. 218.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, see pp 69, 71 where the total disbursed from the First Fruits is given as £2,200.

only to emphasise the fact that ecclesiastical sources of the time were somewhat selective in their recording of the parochial difficulties encountered in the pursuance of church-building;

In the town of Mullingar it was determined to pull down the old church, and erect a new one, and it was the general calculation that with the materials of the old and about One Thousand Pounds, a new one could be built, and accordingly in 1813, an assessment was made of nine pence per acre, which produced the sum of 360*l*; in the year 1814, another levy of 1s 9d per acre, which produced the sum of 860*l*, making with the former a total of 1200*l*, which the parishioners thought was quite sufficient for the purpose with the old materials; but no, for in the following year another levy of 300*l* was made; there was then in hand 1520*l*; and by way of managing that sum with prudence instead of building the church by contract, they very economically engage to erect it by the salary of 200*l* per annum, out of the pockets of the parishioners. Finding the taxing trade went on so well, in the following year, 1817, another assessment of 1s 6d per acre was ordered; from this was received the sum of 740*l*, but still they were not satisfied, for in 1818, the sum of 740*l* more was levied. Well, one would have thought that by this time there was no decent pretence for any further levy, but no such thing; in the year 1819, another sum of 740*l* was levied, and they had then an amount of Three Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty Pounds: still rapacity kept pace with the successful levies, and in 1820 a further sum of Eighteen Hundred Pounds was demanded being an assessment of Three Shillings and Eleven Pence per acre. The clergyman it was alleged, lost 400*l* in speculating on timber, and poor Dibbs the Parish Clerk having the shell of a cabin that stood in the way of the new church it was found necessary to induce him to submit to its removal by presenting him with Two Hundred Pounds in lieu. The frequency and amount of these levies became at length so alarming that a gentleman having a few acres of land, found himself in 1820 called upon (in addition to all the former levies) to pay the sum of Ten Pounds: he refused, and under the 54<sup>th</sup> of the late King, he was immediately distrained for his audacity: he was not however so passively inclined, and he issued a replevin. The matter was decided for the traverser, by the King's Bench, and the Chancellor refused the application of the Minister with costs.<sup>72</sup>

The unsatisfactory situation at Mullingar outlived O'Beirne, and the triennial archiepiscopal visitation of 1826 recorded 'The chancel of the church has not been finished. The roof is defective and the walls constantly damp'.<sup>73</sup> In 1827, twelve years after being granted the £1,200 loan, the parish still owed the Board of First Fruits £1,013 15*s.*, and the installment of £42 5*s.* for that year had not been paid.<sup>74</sup> With such a history of parochial burden, it was scarcely a wonder that in the same year the church was stripped of its lead by robbers. The lead was replaced at the

<sup>72</sup> *Proceedings of the Catholic Association*, pp 24-5.

<sup>73</sup> Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826, p. 228.

<sup>74</sup> *The fifteenth report of the commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland (Dated 24 February 1827): Instalments in repayments of loans advanced for building churches, 1826-1827* (hereafter *Public accounts, 1826-27*), p. 77, H.C. 1827 (246), xi.

expense of the parishioners, when the Easter vestry levied an exorbitant cess of £800 14s. 3d. on the parish for that purpose.<sup>75</sup>

Difficulties pertaining to church-building were also a cause for concern in other dioceses. The public accounts audit of 1813-14 found that two sums of £500 appropriated for churches at Dingle and Glynn in the united diocese of Limerick, Ardfert and Aghadoe, were 'never applied to that purpose'.<sup>76</sup> In 1809, £600 was given by the First Fruits to build a church at Ballysax and another £600 to build at Feighcullen in the diocese of Kildare.<sup>77</sup> Notwithstanding the bishop's certification that both were 'properly and sufficiently built',<sup>78</sup> it was discovered in 1813 that building work had not even begun. This meant that while the first instalment for each church was given before work started, the remaining monies were released upon the bishop's certification of progress. His certification was false. When questioned by the commission of auditors, the Kildare diocesan stated that he had made a decision to delay the building work as he found the First Fruits money 'was far from being sufficient'. Instead, he invested the falsely collected sums, 'each bearing interest at 6 per cent,' until such time as the capital and accrued interest permitted the undertaking.<sup>79</sup> The commissioners imposed no penalty, but instead concluded;

although these reasons for deferring for a time the building those Churches may be just and wise, of which the Bishop was and is the best judge, yet we however think that whenever any unforeseen difficulties occur to prevent or retard the execution of the objects of appropriation, these difficulties should be reported without delay to the Trustees, who might thereon exercise their discretion as to the propriety of disappropriating the Grant, that the money, if actually issued, as in the present instance, should be refunded, as we think that its being suffered to remain in the hands of the bishop, *even at interest*, is an application of it contrary to the views of the Legislature and of the Board of First Fruits.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Mullingar V.M.B., 17 Apr. 1827, p. 160.

<sup>76</sup> *Public accounts, 1813-14*, pp 204-205, H.C. 1814 (129), vii, 374-375.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205, H.C. 1814 (129), vii, 375.

<sup>78</sup> 25 Geo. 2 c. 63 decreed that First Fruits church-building monies could be released only on foot of a bishop's certificate wherein he declared the church 'properly and sufficiently built'; *Public accounts, 1813-1814*, p. 203, H.C. 1814 (129), vii, 373.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205, H.C. 1814 (129), vii, 375.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

Three years later, the churches remained unbuilt and despite the auditor's recommendation that the trustees of the First Fruits disappropriate or withdraw monies not immediately put to use, the funds were still in the hands of the bishop of Kildare. He was again brought before them. On this second occasion, he claimed that following his previous appearance in 1814, he had sought to contract the two buildings at a most specific cost of £802 16s. and £810 1s. 11d. However, he claimed that due to a tax being laid on timber and glass in that year, the work was again delayed.<sup>81</sup> This being his second calling to task, he prudently declared that the accrual of interest was currently favourable and in the light of this, the building of both churches would commence early in the coming spring.<sup>82</sup>

The Board of First Fruits generally advanced loans in the hundreds of pounds for the building of rural churches or those erected in small villages. Sums disbursed for urban parishes were somewhat more considerable.<sup>83</sup> The church in receipt of the largest loan in the country appears to have been that of St George's at Hardwicke Place Dublin. Designed by Francis Johnston and consecrated in 1814, the First Fruits disbursed £5,000 in 1809 and a further £3,500 in 1811.<sup>84</sup> The gift allowed, a mere £500, was less than that given to many small rural parishes and reflected, the wealth and perhaps, though not necessarily, the willingness and generosity of the parishioners of its adjacent Georgian squares. In the diocese of Meath, the churches commanding the highest loan were St Michael's at Castlepollard (Plate 4.3) and St Catherine's Tullamore (Plate 4.4). William Dutton Pollard was given a loan of £3,000 towards the erection of St Michael's in 1819.<sup>85</sup> Pollard and Lord Longford of the nearby Tullyally Castle undertook to repay £1,000 of the sum between them.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Fifth report of the commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland 1817-1817* (hereafter *Public accounts, 1817*), p. 100, H.C. 1817 (116), viii.

<sup>82</sup> *Public accounts, 1817*, p. 100, H.C. 1817 (116), viii.

<sup>83</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 10-16, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 94-100.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 94; Christine Casey, *The buildings of Ireland: Dublin* (New Haven & London, 2005), pp 120-122; 'Parish of St. George & St. Thomas' ([www.georges.dublin.anglican.org/history.html](http://www.georges.dublin.anglican.org/history.html)) (21 Jan. 2009).

<sup>85</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>86</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 54.



Caroline Gallagher

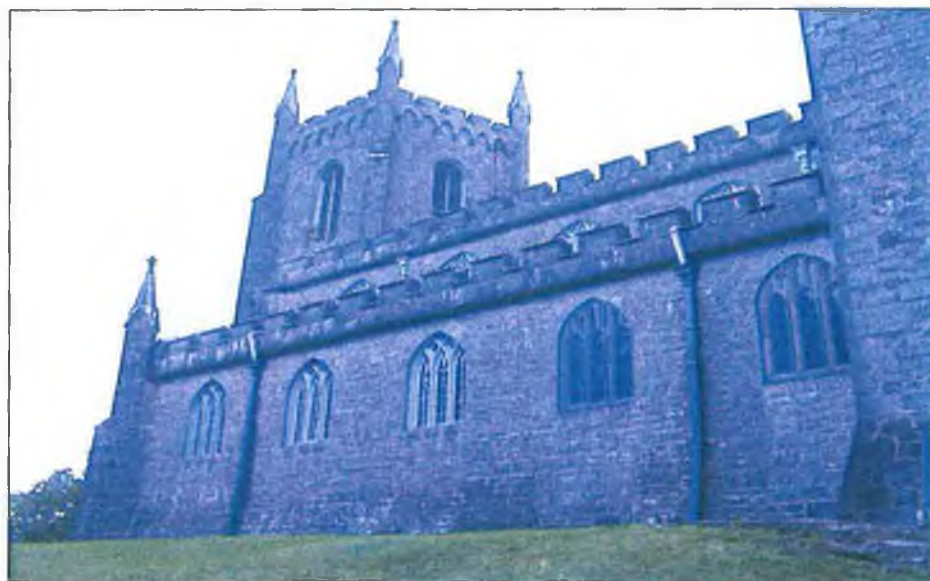
4 July 2005

Three First Fruits loans of £1,000, together with one gift of £600 and another of £200, were disbursed to Thomas Acres, a developer engaged by Lord Charleville, to oversee the development of Tullamore town.<sup>87</sup> The excess of £4,000 was paid by Charleville,<sup>88</sup> who incorporated a sizable family vault into the structure of the church. The five-bay building was the most spectacular in the diocese.

<sup>87</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 6 & 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90 & 95.

<sup>88</sup> *Visitation, 1818*, p. 79.

Plate 4.4 St Catherine's, Tullamore, King's County, N elevation



Caroline Gallagher

3 July 2006

As with securing glebe lands and building glebe houses, the building, rebuilding or enlargement of churches followed no particular pattern of deanery, barony or county. As mentioned above, neither the First Fruits returns nor O'Beirne's visitation notes represented the total extent of improvements to churches during the period. The forty-seven included in First Fruits returns are given here in Table 4.5, together with the year and amount of disbursement. It should be noted that Tullamore was not the only parish to secure funding on more than one occasion. The church of Kilshine, however, was the only rural church to receive monies more than once. Killucan/Rathwire was alone among village churches in its receipt of more than one loan. St Mary's, Drogheda and St Mary's, Navan were both funded on two occasions.

Table 4.5 First Fruits returns of monies disbursed for building, rebuilding or enlarging churches in the diocese of Meath, 1802-22

Year	Church	Rural Deanery	Barony	County	Gift £	Loan £
1802	Ardagh	Slane	Morgallian, Lower Slane	Meath	500	0
1802	Kilbride/Castlecor	Fore	Demifore	Meath	500	0
1802	Killiagh	Fore	Fore	Westmeath	500	0
1802	Rathcondra	Ballymore	Rathconrath	Westmeath	500	0
1804	Mayne	Fore	Demifore	Westmeath	500	0
1804	Tissauran	Clonmacnoise	Garrycastle	King's County	500	0
1804	Vastina	Ballymore	Moycashel	Westmeath	500	0
1806	Colpe	Duleek	Duleek	Meath	600	0
1807	Churchtown	Ballymore	Rathconrath	Westmeath	600	0
1807	Kilshine (1 <sup>st</sup> gift)	Slane	Morgallion	Meath	600	0
1808	Stonehall	Mullingar	Corkaree	Westmeath	600	0
1809	Ballymaglassan	Ratoath	Ratoath	Meath	600	0
1809	Clonard	Clonard	Upr. Moyfenragh	Meath	0	400
1809	Drogheda, St Mary's	Duleek	Lower Duleek	Meath	0	500
1809	Drumrany	Ballymore	Kilkenny-West	Westmeath	600	0
1809	Gallen	Clonmacnoise	Garrycastle	King's County	600	0
1809	Leney	Mullingar	Fartullagh, Moyashel, Maherademon	Westmeath	0	350
1809	Skryne	Skryne	Skryne	Meath	0	500
1809	Tullamore (1 <sup>st</sup> gift)	Ardnurcher	Ballycowan	King's County	600	0
1811	Bunowen	Ballymore	Kilkenny-West	Westmeath	600	0
1811	Ballyloughloe	Clonmacnoise	Clonlonan	Westmeath	0	400
1811	Castlelost	Mullingar	Fartullagh	Westmeath	800	0
1811	Drumcree	Mullingar	Kilcumny	Westmeath	0	850
1811	Killucan/Rathwire (1 <sup>st</sup> loan)	Clonard	Farbill	Westmeath	0	1000
1812	Tullamore (1 <sup>st</sup> loan)	Ardnurcher	Ballycowan	King's County	0	1000
1813	Rathbeggan	Ratoath	Ratoath	Meath	800	0
1813	Dunshaughlin	Ratoath	Ratoath	Meath	0	500
1813	Navan	Trim	Trim	Meath	0	1100
1813	Tullamore (2 <sup>nd</sup> loan)	Ardnurcher	Ballycowan	King's County	0	1000
1815	Almoritia	Ballymore	Rathconrath	Westmeath	0	600
1815	Ballyboy	Ardnurcher	Ballyboy	Westmeath	0	900
1815	Killucan/Rathwire (2 <sup>nd</sup> loan)	Clonard	Farbill	Westmeath	0	200
1815	Kilmoon	Duleek	Upr. Duleek	Meath	0	500
1815	Mullingar	Mullingar	Fartullagh	Westmeath	0	1200
1816	Kilcleagh	Clonmacnoise	Clonlonan	Westmeath	0	857
1816	Killoughy	Ardnurcher	Ballyboy	King's County	900	0



Year (cont.,)	Church	Rural Deanery	Barony	County	Gift £	Loan £
1816	Kilshine (2 <sup>nd</sup> gift)	Slane	Morgallion	Meath	200	0
1816	Knockmark	Skryne	Lwr. Deece	Meath	900	0
1816	Navan	Trim	Trim	Meath	600	0
1816	Oldcastle	Fore	Demi-Fore	Meath	0	1000
1816	Tullamore (3 <sup>rd</sup> loan)	Ardnurcher	Ballycowan	King's County	0	1000
1817	Duleek	Duleek	Lwr. Duleek	Meath	0	1500
1817	Ratoath	Ratoath	Ratoath	Meath	0	805
1818	Enniscoffy	Mullingar	Fartullagh	Westmeath	900	0
1818	Moynalty	Kells	Lwr. Kells	Meath	0	1000
1819	Castlepollard	Fore	Demi-Fore	Westmeath	0	3000
1819	Drogheda, St Mary's	Duleek	Drogheda Borough	Meath	600	0
1819	Dunshaughlin	Ratoath	Ratoath	Meath	0	200
1820	Drakestown	Slane	Morgallion	Meath	0	532
1820	Killiconnigan	Trim	Lune	Meath	0	700
1820	Tara	Skryne	Skryne	Meath	0	500
1820	Tullamore (2 <sup>nd</sup> gift)	Ardnurcher	Ballycowan	King's County	200	0
1821	Kilbeggan	Ardnurcher	Moycashel	Westmeath	0	200
1822	Kilskyre	Kells	Upr. Kells	Meath	0	466
1822	Kinnegad	Clonard	Farbill	Westmeath	0	333
Total					14,800	23,093
Source: Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1971-5); <i>First Fruits returns, 1801-22</i> , pp 5-6 & pp 11-12, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90 & 95-96; Visitation 1817						

The remaining thirty churches are listed in Table 4.6. Quotations given in the observations column have been taken from O'Beirne's 1818 notebook.<sup>89</sup> It should be understood that many improvements were given no specific date by O'Beirne, beyond his assertion that the work was carried out at some point between 1799 and 1818. Vestry minute books have been of much help in this regard and some dates are taken from Canon Healy.<sup>90</sup> The distribution of building works conducted at church sites during the period are illustrated in Map 4.2. A full treatment of the means by which all seventy-seven churches were built, rebuilt, enlarged, substantially improved, furnished, maintained is given in chapter five.

<sup>89</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 1-104.

<sup>90</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 285-332.

Table 4.6 Churches built, rebuilt, enlarged or substantially repaired in the diocese of Meath & not mentioned in First Fruits returns, 1799-1823

Date	Church	Built	Rebuilt	Repaired	Ornamented	Observations
1800	Galtrim				1	
1801 1815 1816	Kentstown		1		1	'lately put into complete repair, & handsomely finished with a steeple as well as inside & outside ornaments' <sup>91</sup>
1801	Moyglare			1		'The church has been lately put into complete repair' <sup>92</sup>
1802	Durrow			1		'lately put into good repair' <sup>93</sup>
1806	Kilmainhamwood	1				'Church newly built by a gift of £500 from Trustees of the First Fruits' <sup>94</sup>
c. 1806	Slane				1	'lately much ornamented both within & without' <sup>95</sup>
1810	Forgney		1			The widow of the Late Lord Rosse 'has highly ornamented the church & added to it a handsome steeple of cut stone' <sup>96</sup>
c. 1811	Newtown Fertullagh	1				'Church was built by parishioners during the last incumbency' <sup>97</sup>
1815	Stackallen <sup>98</sup>	1				
1818	Dunboyne		1			'lately rebuilt' <sup>99</sup>
c. 1818	Rathconnell				1	'New church [1799], ornamented with a copper covered steeple' <sup>100</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Kentstown V.M.B., 1801, 1815, 1816 (R.C.B., MS P. 441.5.1, pp 97, 115, 117); Visitation, 1818, pp 19-20 & 109.

<sup>92</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 33-4; Moyglare vestry minutes, 1801, 1803-7, 1809, 1811, 1813 (R.C.B., MS P. 558.5.1, n.p.).

<sup>93</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 78.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 3 & 108.

<sup>95</sup> Slane V.M.B., 24 Apr. 1806 (R.C.B., MS P. 869.5.2, p. 65); Visitation, 1818, p. 8.

<sup>96</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 89 & 109.

<sup>97</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 91.

<sup>98</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 289.

<sup>99</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 39; Dunboyne V.M.B., & accounts, 1802-13 (R.C.B., MSS P. 560.5.1-2, n.p.).

<sup>100</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 66; Rathconnell V.M.B., & accounts, 1800-2, 1811, 1815, 1818 (R.C.B., MS P. 240.5.1, pp 1, 5-7 at end of book).

Date (cont.)	Church	Built	Rebuilt	Repaired	Ornamented	Observations
c. 1818	Rathkenny			1		'just into complete repair' <sup>101</sup>
c. 1818	Wherry				1	Ornamented with a steeple, 'but the work is going on slowly & has been only carried as high as the second belting course' <sup>102</sup>
1820	Ardnurcher			1		'parishioners have assessed a considerable sum for putting the church in complete repair' <sup>103</sup>
c. 1820	Kilmessan			1		Renovated c. 1820 <sup>104</sup>
1820	Rathaspick		1			First Fruits loan of £200 for enlargement in 1820 <sup>105</sup>
1822	Ballymore <sup>106</sup>		1			First Fruits loan £800 <sup>107</sup>
1822	Castlejordan		1	1		First Fruits loan £1,000 <sup>108</sup>
c. 1822	Kilskyre <sup>109</sup>		1			First Fruits loan £466 <sup>110</sup>
1822	Portnashangan <sup>111</sup>	1				
1823	Athlone, St. Mary's					First Fruits loan £1,000 <sup>112</sup>
1823	Painestown		1			Gallery added & Steeple roofed & repaired by £400 loan from the Board of First Fruits <sup>113</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 14.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, pp 74-5; Horseleap V.M.B., 4 Apr. 1820 (R.C.B., MS P. 411.5.1, p. 5).

<sup>104</sup> Architectural heritage of Ireland, 'Protected structures of Meath' ([www.meath.ie/LocalAuthorities/Heritage/ArchitecturalHeritage/ProtectedStructures/file.6838.pdf](http://www.meath.ie/LocalAuthorities/Heritage/ArchitecturalHeritage/ProtectedStructures/file.6838.pdf)) (27 Jan. 2009).

<sup>105</sup> Rathaspick V.M.B., 1819-20 (R.C.B., MS 599.5.1, n.p.)

<sup>106</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 109.

<sup>107</sup> Ballymore Killaire V.M.B., 17 Dec. 1822 (R.C.B., MS P. 398.5.1, pp 178-9).

<sup>108</sup> Castlejordan V.M.B., 1822 & 16 Apr. 1827 (R.C.B., MS P. 234.5.1, pp 3, 24).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>110</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>112</sup> St Mary's Athlone V.M.B., 4 Feb. 1823 (R.C.B., MS P. 392.28.6, p. 3).

<sup>113</sup> Painestown & Ardmulchan V.M.B., 1823 (R.C.B., MS P. 868.5.2, loose First Fruits receipts); Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 454; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 289.

Date (cont.)	Church	Built	Rebuilt	Repaired	Ornamented	Observations
n.a.	Agher		1			'rebuilt & finished in the handsomest manner by the late Mr Winter' <sup>114</sup>
n.a.	Clonfad		1		1	'steeple was left unfinished, but Mr Boyd, who married the Dowager Lady Belvedere, is preparing materials for building a very handsome one' <sup>115</sup>
n.a.	Donaghpatrick	1				£500 from the Board of First Fruits <sup>116</sup>
n.a.	Enniskeen		1		1	'rebuilt & ornamented with a steeple' <sup>117</sup>
n.a.	Kells		1			'lately rebuilt' <sup>118</sup>
n.a.	Kilbrew <sup>119</sup>		1			
n.a.	Kilmore			1		'now in complete repair' <sup>120</sup>
n.a.	Trim		1			'lately rebuilt' <sup>121</sup>

Source: see fms for this table

<sup>114</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 34 & 109.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp 72 & 109.

<sup>116</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 4-6 & 108.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., pp 12 & 109.

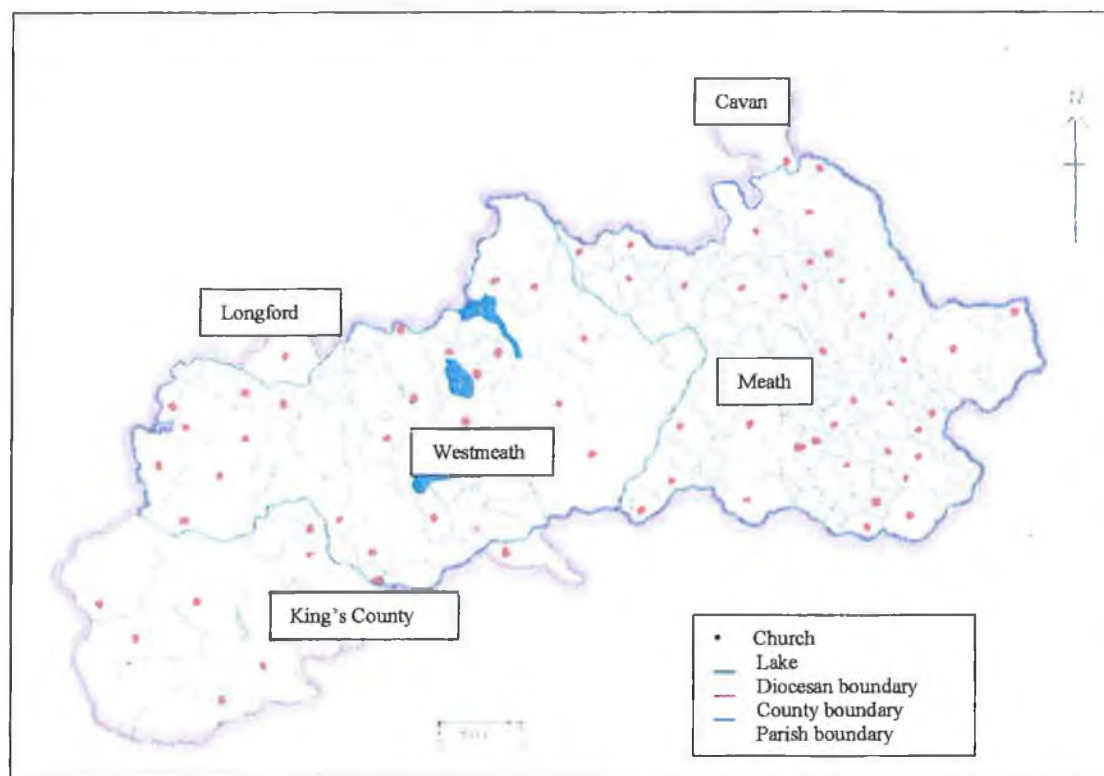
<sup>118</sup> Portlomon & Portnashangan V.M.B., 1822 (R.C.B., MS P. 337.5.1, pp 1, 6-7).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>120</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 32.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., pp 40-2 & 109.

Map 4.2 Distribution map of churches built, rebuilt, enlarged or substantially repaired in the diocese of Meath during the O'Beirne episcopate, 1798-1823



Source: Visitation, 1817; Visitation, 1818, pp 1-107; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-6 & pp 11-12, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90 & 95-96; V.M.B., various parishes; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 454; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 292-312; *N.I.A.S.*; 'Protected structures of Meath'

([www.meath.ie/LocalAuthorities/Heritage/ArchitecturalHeritage/ProtectedStructures/file.6838.pdf](http://www.meath.ie/LocalAuthorities/Heritage/ArchitecturalHeritage/ProtectedStructures/file.6838.pdf)) (21 Jan. 2009)

Records offering dates of consecration are few. Some references were given by Healy and others have been found in vestry minutes and are reproduced here in Table 4.7. Where consecration is mentioned in vestry books, it is usually to record the fee of around five guineas paid to the diocesan registrar.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Kinnegad V.M.B., & accounts, 1824, p. 17; Benowen V.M.B., 16 Oct. 1824 (R.C.B., MS P. 393.5.1, p. 18); Clongill & Kilshine V.M.B., 24 Mar. 1818 (R.C.B., MS P. 34.5.1, p. 12).

Table 4.7 Time-lag between the granting of First Fruits funds & the consecration of churches in the diocese of Meath, 1802-23

Year funded	Church	Year consecrated		Year funded	Church	Year consecrated
1802	Kilbride/Castlecor	c. 1808 <sup>123</sup>		1811 1815	Killucan	Not before 1816 <sup>124</sup>
1807 1816	Kilshine	1818 <sup>125</sup>		1815	Ballyboy	1824 <sup>126</sup>
1808	Stonehall	1816 <sup>127</sup>		1817	Ratoath	1821 <sup>128</sup>
1809	Ballymaglassan	1816 <sup>129</sup>		1817	Duleek	1826 <sup>130</sup>
1809 1812 1813 1816 1820	Tullamore	1816 <sup>131</sup>		1820	Killiconnigan	1823 <sup>132</sup>
1811	Bunowen	1824 <sup>133</sup>		1822	Kinnegad	1823 <sup>134</sup>

Source: see fms for this table

As can be seen from this table, several years may have elapsed between the year of funding and year of consecration. It should not be assumed however, that the congregation went without religious services during the intervening years. While a church was required to meet certain standards before an act of consecration could be permitted, it has already been shown by the example of Mullingar that a church not yet meeting the criteria could be licensed for worship. Licences were also issued for alternative buildings when an old church was rendered unusable during building works or when a church was demolished to facilitate the building of a new church on the same site. This was a practice that continued through the years, as in 1902,

<sup>123</sup> Mount Nugent V.M.B., 1808 (R.C.B., MS P. 421.5.1, n.p.).

<sup>124</sup> Killucan V.M.B., 1815 (R.C.B., MS P. 238.5.2, p. 141).

<sup>125</sup> Clongill & Kilshine V.M.B., 24 Mar. 1818, p. 12; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 292 gives 1812.

<sup>126</sup> Consecration of church at Ballyboy (R.C.B., MS D7/10/5).

<sup>127</sup> Stonehall & Multifarnham V.M.B., 7 Sept. 1816 (R.C.B., MS P. 340.5.1, p. 1).

<sup>128</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 302.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 304.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>131</sup> Tullamore V.M.B., & accounts, 10 Sept. 1816 (R.C.B., MS P. 912.5.1, pp 83, 99).

<sup>132</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 312.

<sup>133</sup> Benowen V.M.B., 16 Oct. 1824, p. 18.

<sup>134</sup> Kinnegad V.M.B., & accounts, 1823, p. 17.

while a new church was being built at Skryne, a licence was issued to hold services in the parish schoolhouse.<sup>135</sup>

In general, the building materials, size and ornamentation of the church depended not only on the wealth or willingness of the parishioners, but also on the effectiveness of the churchwardens in the collection of the cesses levied. In most parishes even the most jealous supporters of church-building chose to reuse materials from the older parish church, or to erect a building of limestone rubble, rather than of expensive stone. In Mullingar, where the process was lengthy and expensive, the building was ornamented with a steeple and spire, but it was not built of cut stone. (Plate 4.5).

Plate 4.5

Stonework of All Saints, Mullingar



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27 Aug. 2005

Plate 4.6 illustrates the limestone rubble and the remnants of rendering used in the construction of the church at Vastina, and is typical of many others. The inferiority of the material, as opposed to that used in Mullingar is immediately obvious. As a form of weather protection, the walls were generally rendered by rough-cast or

<sup>135</sup> Licence for divine service in Skryne schoolhouse, 24 Apr. 1902 (R.C.B., MS D7/10/41.1).

harling. Many were subsequently pebble-dashed or the old rendering removed and the stonework repointed.

Plate 4.6 St Brigid's, Vastina: exposed rubble courses and remnants of render

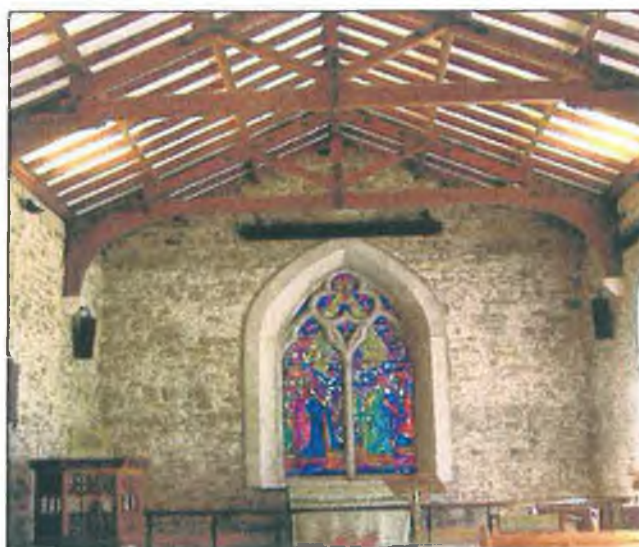


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25 June 2006

The internal plaster has been removed from St Patrick's, Tara (Plate 4.7), where the walls probably once bore a resemblance to the interior of the church at Leney (Plate 4.8), or St Patrick's, Drakestown (Plate 4.9).

Plate 4.7 St Patrick's, Tara County Meath: exposed interior walls



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July 5 2007



Plate 4.8 Leney, County Westmeath:  
interior N wall



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Plate 4.9 St Patrick's, Drakestown County  
Meath: interior NW corner



Caroline Gallagher 7 Aug. 2006

Churches varied in size and plan and by and large did not exceed the requirements of accommodating the congregation. The smallest two-bay churches of Ballymaglasson (Plate 4.10) and Drakestown (Plate 4.11) accurately reflect the size of the Church of Ireland congregations in both parishes. Ballymaglasson had four Protestant families, and the church at Drakestown served the eight families in the union of Drakestown, Kilpatrick and Knowth.<sup>136</sup>

Plate 4.10 St Kieran's, Ballymaglasson



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Plate 4.11 St Patrick's, Drakestown



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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., pp 128-9.

Several vestry minute books record the reuse of stone in the building or rebuilding of churches. Drakestown is an excellent example of how materials from an older church were put to use in an attempt to save on building costs. While it is not possible to quantify the extent to which churches were built from recycled stone, the composite Plate 4.12 details the walls of Drakestown, which hold several carved fragments of late medieval date, from earlier buildings and monuments at the site.

Plate 4.12 Composite of carved stones reused in the building of St Patrick's, Drakestown



Caroline Gallagher

7 Aug. 2006

Several churches from O'Beirne's episcopate are no longer standing and the folio of building-plans is incomplete. However, when existing plans and the results of field work are viewed together (see Architectural inventory) a general, though reasonable idea of the size of church built during the period is clearly seen. Of the seventy-seven churches identified, it is possible to offer the number of bays for fifty-four. Fifteen comprised two-bays, twenty-nine comprised three-bays, six comprised four-bays. Only St Catherine's Tullamore had five-bays and the churches of Kilcleagh, Mullingar and Slane were transepted buildings. St Patrick's at Tara (Plate 4.13) provides a simple example of a three-bay church, while St Ernan's, Enniskeen, in the town of Kingscourt, County Cavan (Plate 4.14) is more elaborate, befitting its urban setting and congregation of one hundred and nine families.<sup>137</sup>

Plate 4.13

St Patrick's, Tara, S elevation



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6 Aug. 2006

Plate 4.14

St Ernan's, Enniskeen, County Cavan, SW aspect



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16 Oct. 2005

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

Four-bay churches were built at Kells (Plate 4.15) and in the rural area of Leney (Plate 4.16). Kells had been an important site since early Christian times and was the parish church of the archdeaconry. In 1818, there were one hundred and eighty-five Church of Ireland families in the union.<sup>138</sup>

Plate 4.15

St Columba's, Kells, County Meath, S elevation



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17 June 2006

Plate 4.16

Leney, S elevation



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20 Aug. 2005

The extent of the four-bay building in the rural area of Leney is accounted for by virtue of the size of its congregation. Apart from regular members of the congregation, the church was built to accommodate almost two hundred boys and

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

men from the charter school and Wilson's Hospital at Multifarnham.<sup>139</sup> St Mary's, Killeagh (Plate 4.17) in the town of Moate, is one of the more unusual buildings of the time, with its bowed chancel, three-bay nave and single-bay N and S transepts.

Plate 4.17

St Mary's, Killeagh, County Westmeath, N elevation



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27 August 2005

Only in a few cases are the actual architects or builders of these churches known. First Fruits returns, merely recorded 'Architect's salary' for the years 1811-21 and no name or names were given.<sup>140</sup> For the diocese of Kildare, there was mention of one 'Mr. Bowden, the Architect of the Board of First Fruits' in the returns of the public auditors in 1817, though it is not made clear if he was responsible for Kildare alone.<sup>141</sup> It is possible that the First Fruits provided pattern books of ground plans and measurements, although no definitive evidence of the practice has been found in the diocese of Meath until the 1860s, when most of the plans and drawings were signed by Welland and Gillespie or James Rawson Carroll.<sup>142</sup> In the early nineteenth century some vestry minutes record a name for

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 96.

<sup>140</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 31-32, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 115-116.

<sup>141</sup> *Public accounts, 1817*, p. 100, H.C. 1817 (116), viii.

<sup>142</sup> Church plans and drawings (R.C.B., Portfolio 23) (hereafter Portfolio 23).

the architect at work on the parish church. The vestry at Dunshaughlin recorded its choice of architect as Patrick Byrne of Dublin.<sup>143</sup> This was a project in receipt of First Fruits monies and the element of vestry choice suggests that the First Fruits provided neither plan nor architect. The architect of St Patrick's, Tara was one Michael Mealis.<sup>144</sup> At Rathconnell 'McLeish, Architect' drew plans and oversaw the building of a new vestry room in 1819.<sup>145</sup> Kells vestry sought the opinion of 'Mr Gill' and other architects before beginning work on the church in 1807.<sup>146</sup> F. J. Fuller was the architect of the church at Ballymore.<sup>147</sup> Vestries record payments made to their named architects out of parish funds. This suggests that during the period under study, vestries were not obliged to engage the services of architects in the employment of the First Fruits.

Dr Daniel Augustus Beaufort has been documented as the architect and overseer of the rebuilding of St Mary's Navan.<sup>148</sup> He was also the incumbent at Navan from 1765-1818.<sup>149</sup> Although some alterations may have taken place before and since Beaufort's time, Illustration 4.1 and Plate 4.18 offer an indication of the degree of restructuring undertaken during the early nineteenth century.

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<sup>143</sup> Dunshaughlin V.M.B., 20 Jan. 1819 (R.C.B., MS P. 559.5.1, p. 223).

<sup>144</sup> Tara V.M.B., 29 Mar. 1821 (R.C.B., MS P. 439.5.1, p. 61).

<sup>145</sup> Rathconnell V.M.B., 11 Apr. 181, p. 25 at back of book.

<sup>146</sup> Kells V.M.B., 31 Mar. 1807 (R.C.B., MS P. 192.5.2, p. 25).

<sup>147</sup> Portfolio 23, 31 July, 1808, Ballymore.

<sup>148</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 47-9;

<sup>149</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 312.

Illustration 4.1

St Mary's, Navan, County Meath, N elevation c. 1756<sup>150</sup>



Source: Arnold Horner, *Mapping Meath in the early eighteenth century* (Wicklow, 2007), p. 19

Plate 4.18

St Mary's, Navan, N elevation



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14 May 2006

St Catherine's, Tullamore was designed by Francis Johnston and its erection was probably overseen by Lord Charleville's developer, the previously mentioned Thomas Acres. Illustration 4.2 shows its dramatic position on Hop Hill, overlooking the town. However, as can be seen by the composite Plate 4.19, the drawing bears only a passing resemblance to the actual building.

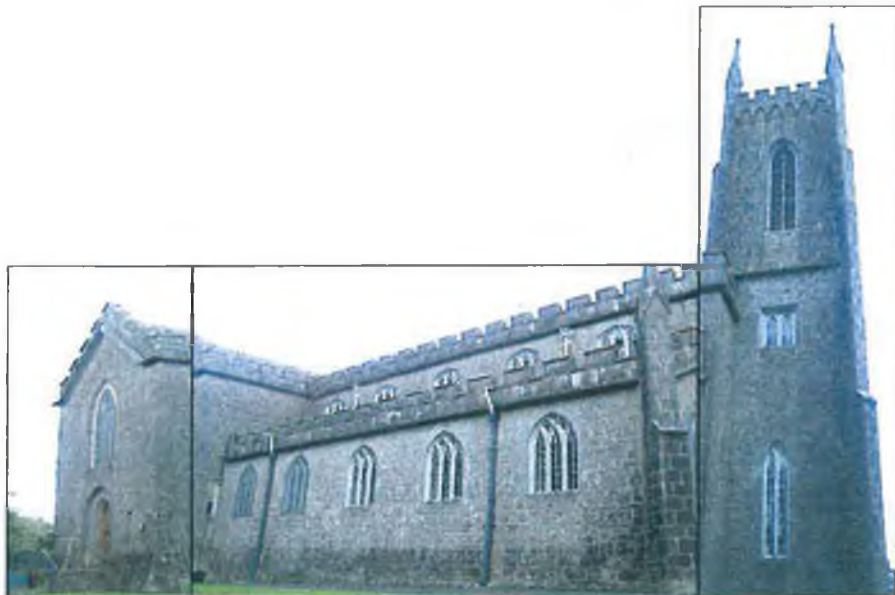
<sup>150</sup> Arnold Horner, *Mapping Meath in the early eighteenth century* (Wicklow, 2007), p. 19, reproduced from a map of Navan '...by direction of ye Rt Honble the coheirs of the Rt Honble late earl of Ranelagh decsd in 1756'.

Illustration 4.2 Early nineteenth century sketch of St Catherine's, Tullamore, S elevation<sup>151</sup>



Source: Reproduced in *An introduction to the architectural heritage of County Offaly* (Dublin, 2006), p. 50

Plate 4.19 Composite of St Catherine's, Tullamore, S elevation



Caroline Gallagher

3 July 2006

<sup>151</sup> O.P.W., *An introduction to the architectural heritage of County Offaly* (Dublin, 2006), p. 50.



The names of stonemasons, carpenters, roofers and labourers are also found in vestry minutes. Although not every vestry recorded these details, there is nothing to indicate that the craftsmen and labourers were other than local. Drakestown and Dunshaughlin are unusual in that builder and mason were recorded in the date stone. Robert Wiggins was the builder of Drakestown (Plate 4.20) and James Graham was the mason at work on the church of St Seachlain, Dunshaughlin (Plate 4.21). The pedimented doorcase at Drakestown, under which the date stone is set, is obviously from an earlier building and provides another example of how stone was reused at the site.

Plate 4.20 Date stone of St Patrick's, Drakestown



Caroline Gallagher

7 Aug. 2006

Plate 4.21 Date stone of St Seachlain's, Dunshaughlin



Caroline Gallagher

17 May 2006

Finlay stated that a church could not be built unless there was sufficient endowment to support a clergyman.<sup>152</sup> A particular situation in Meath may suggest that a church could be built and put to use without endowment. At Benowen, a perpetual curacy of Ballymore in Westmeath, O'Beirne was not discommoded by the stipulation set out in Finlay. In 1811, the First Fruits gifted £600 towards the building of a church there.<sup>153</sup> The bishop's notebook of 1818 gave the Revd G. Caulfield as the serving clergyman.<sup>154</sup> In 1819, the church was 'newly built' and O'Beirne had appointed one Revd Irwine, who resided nearby and performed the duties despite the fact that the 'Endowment [was] not yet completed'.<sup>155</sup>

Perpetual curacies were more likely to be affected regarding endowment and as can be seen in Table 4.8, O'Beirne made use of the bequests of Primate Boulter and Bishop Evans to provide emoluments when necessary. It should be explained that as extant records are scarce, the figures given here are useful in determining that funds were secured for some specific years only. It is not clear if the Boulter and Evans funds provided continuous income for the curacies through all the intervening years. While that is a reasonable conclusion, it cannot be claimed as definitive.

Table 4.8 O'Beirne's use of the Boulter & Evans funds for the support of clergymen: 1807, 1818-19

Benefice	Year	£	Fund
Ardagh	1818	40	Boulter
Castlejordan	1807	70	Boulter
Clara	1818	20	Boulter
Durrow	1807	20	Boulter
	1818	60	Boulter
Forgney	1818	n.a.	Boulter
Kilbeggan	1818	n.a.	Evans
Killiagh	1807	60	Boulter
	1818	40	Boulter
Killiconnighan	1807	60	Boulter
	1818	60	Boulter
Kilmainhamwood	1807	50	Boulter
	1818	50	Boulter
	1819	50	Boulter

<sup>152</sup> Finlay, *The office & duties*, p. 161.

<sup>153</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>154</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 95.

<sup>155</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*, pp 94-5, H.C. 1820 (93), ix.

Benefice	Year	£	Fund
Kinnegad	1807	n.a.	Boulter
	1818	19 5s. 6d.	Boulter
Mayne	1807	n.a.	Boulter
	1818	n.a.	Boulter
	1819	40	Boulter
Rahan	1807	40	Boulter
	1818	n.a.	Boulter

Source: *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 67, 69, 71, H.C. 1807 (78), v; *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*, pp 77, 86, H.C. 1820 (93), ix; *Visitation, 1818*, pp 4, 13, 47, 59, 60, 63, 75, 78, 90, 95

A church was not deemed ready for consecration until it was ‘pewed, and furnished with a reading desk, Common Prayer [Book], and a great Bible, and one or more surplices, as also with a pulpit and cushion, a font, and a communion-table, and with linen and vessels for the same’.<sup>156</sup> Notice of the intended consecration was to be posted on the door of the church at least three days before the ceremony, and the building was to be kept closed ‘till the bishop comes, and till it be opened for his going in’.<sup>157</sup> The bishop was to be received outside the church by the clergyman, churchwardens and ‘some of the principal inhabitants, who presented him with a petition of consecration’.<sup>158</sup> The entire process was governed by rubric, which was described in detail by Finlay and is transcribed here in Appendix 4.2.

Although a First Fruits loan of £900 had been approved to rebuild St Cormac’s church in the south west of the diocese at Ballyboy, King’s County, in 1815 (Plate 4.22), it was not ready for consecration until October 1824, by which time Bishop Nathaniel Alexander had succeeded O’Beirne.<sup>159</sup> As a succinct example of the improvements brought about to parishes with a long history of inadequate church buildings, the state of the church at Ballyboy, over a period of two-hundred years, is detailed chronologically below in Tables 4.9 (a)-4.9 (f) and Plan 4.1. All have been transcribed in the same order and manner as found in the printed documents or manuscripts.

<sup>156</sup> Finlay, *The office & duties*, p. 162.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; Consecration of church at Ballyboy.

Plate 4.22

St Cormac's, Ballyboy, County Westmeath, SE aspect



Caroline Gallagher

17 Aug. 2006

Table 4.9 (a) Ussher's account of the state of the union of Fircall &amp; its churches, 28 May

1622<sup>160</sup>

No.	Cure	Curates	Valuation	XXth	Value	Resident	Churches
199	Fircall in the Kings Countie. Collatine. The lo. Bp. of Meath patron. S' Willm. Colley [Papist] Knight and the Executo <sup>rs</sup> of S' William Sarsfird Knight and the Widow Cosgraue [Papist] of Dublin farmo <sup>rs</sup> of the rectorie	Mr. Neale Moley a native a M <sup>f</sup> of Artes and a preacher of good life and conversacion.	26 <sup>h</sup> 13 <sup>s</sup> 4 <sup>d</sup> Ir.	26 <sup>s</sup> 8 <sup>d</sup> Ir.	50 <sup>h</sup> ster.	He resideth	The Church and Chauncell ruynous
208	Eglismeanan	The Vicar of Fircall	Taxed w <sup>th</sup> the vicarage of Fircall	Taxed w <sup>th</sup> the vicarage of Fircall	Valued w <sup>th</sup> the vicarage of Fircall	Resident in Fircall	The Chappells ruyned
209	Rathleyne	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>
210	Ballaboye	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>
211	Dromcallan	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>
212	Dallenalley	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>
213	Killaghbye	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>
214	Kilbridemoylyn in the Kings Countie. All these are Chappells of ease belonging to the vicarage of Fircall num. 199.	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>	<i>do.</i>

<sup>160</sup> Elrington, 'A certificate of the state & revennewes', pp cxvi-cxvii.

Table 4.9 (b) Bishop Doppings visitation of Ballyboy, 1682-5<sup>161</sup>

206. Ballyboy. Chapel of Fircall, value 100li	
How is the cure supplied and how often	Cure supplied once a fortnight by Thomas Lindsay
Who is Parish Priest	Edward Molloy
What Popish Schoolmaster	James Hawley
What number of Protestants	Thirty families
Extent of Parish	Extent 4600 acres
Church and Chancel repaired	Church repaired since 1682, chancel down
Catechising and Book of Canons	None
Bible, Surplice, Common Prayer Book	Bible, no C.P or surplice
Reading Desk, Font of stone, Pulpit	Desk, pulpit, no font
Communion Table railed in, Carpet of silk, a linen Cloth, silver Chalice, pewter Flagon	Table railed but ill
Registry for burial, etc.	n.a.
Bells, windows glazed, floor paved, roof with slates or shingle	Church not plastered
What Chapels in the Parish	n.a.
Impropriator	n.a.
How long the Church and Chancel have been out of repair: by what means	n.a.
Churchyard fenced in	n.a.
Inscriptions	n.a.
Glebe	453 acres
Other remarks, added at a later date	A conventicle of Anabaptists kept here by Hutchinson, living at Edenderry. One family of Quakers. All in the barony of Ballyboy. On Jan. 13 <sup>th</sup> . 1692 eight Protestant families, rest Papist both here and at Killoughey

<sup>161</sup> Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's visitation book' (1973), pp 3-4; Ellison, 'Bishop Doppings visitation book' (1974), p. 6.

Table 4.9 (c) Ecclesiastical report of the province of Armagh: diocese of Meath & union of Fircall, 3 October 1806<sup>162</sup>

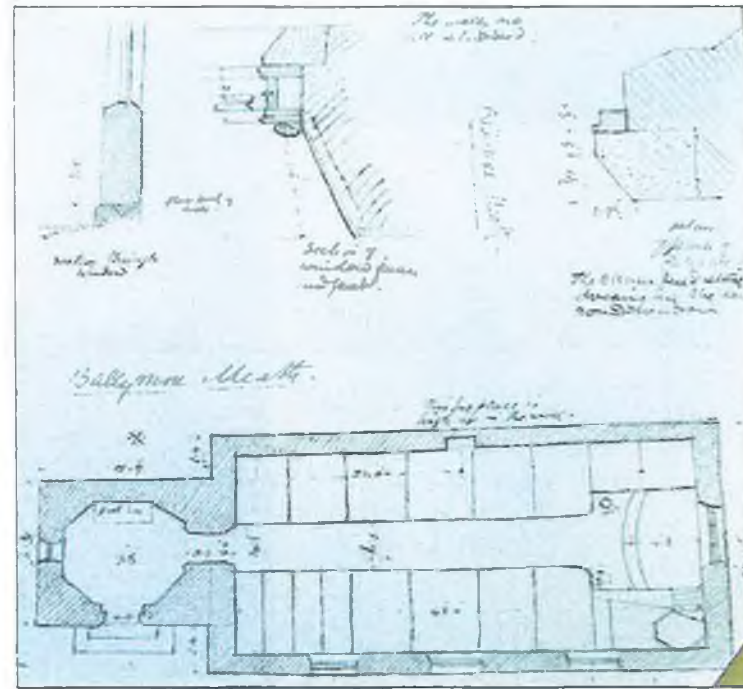
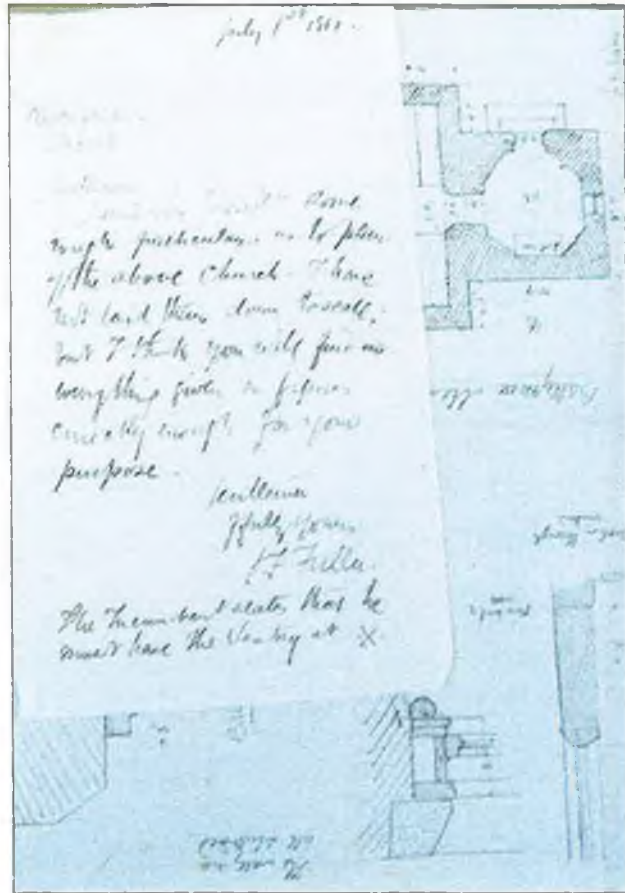
No.	Number of Denominations in each Parish	Name of BENEFICES & DENOMINATIONS; no. of PARISHES in each Benefice; Their distance from each other; The estimated Extent of such as are contiguous	INCUMBENTS, Whether having cure of souls; whether Resident; If not Resident, for what Cause; & by whom the Duties are discharged	BENEFICES, whether United, & by what Authority	No. of CHURCHES; Whether in Repair, & in which of the Parishes they stand	GLEBE HOUSES; In what Parish; - what Glebe Lands; - Whether contiguous; - How far removed from each other, & from the Church, or site of the old Church
75	8	<p>Fircall Vicarage</p> <p>Ballyboy Vicarage</p> <p>Killnaghey Vicarage</p> <p>Lynally Vicarage</p> <p>Rahan Vicarage</p> <p>Eglish Vicarage</p> <p>Drumcullin Vicarage</p> <p>Contiguous:</p> <p>Bally Boy 4496a</p> <p>Killaghey 7021a</p> <p>Lynally 1735a</p> <p>Rahan 4205a</p> <p>Eglish &amp; Drumcullin 8774a</p>	<p>Rev<sup>d</sup> Tho<sup>s</sup> Kemmis; Resident; has cure of souls; &amp; discharges the duties, assisted by 4 curates</p>	<p>This great vicarage was dissolved by the King's Patent, 13<sup>th</sup> June 15<sup>th</sup> Chas 1<sup>st</sup>, &amp; erected into 4 Vicarages; v.z. Bally- boy, with 453a of glebe Killaghy, with 528a; Drumcullin with 465a; and Lynally, with 593a. But, notwithstanding the King's Patent, The Earl of Mountrath, The Patron, has continued to present to it, as to the sole Vicarage of Fircall. The last Institution was 21<sup>st</sup> June 1796. It is evident that it should be disunited, as it would make excellent provision for at least 4 resident Vicars; but the Patron must consent to the disunion. Its length, 19 miles; breadth, from 3½ to 6 miles</p>	<p>4 Churches: 1 in Bally Boy, in tolerable repair: 1 in Lynally, in indifferent repair: 1 in Rahan, in good repair: 1 in Eglish, in good repair also. A conditional Grant has been made by the board of First Fruits, of £500, for building a Church in Killaghey, on obtaining an Act of Council for building it on a new site, as petitioned for by the Incumbent &amp; Parishioners; but the Patron not giving his consent, no application could be made for this Act; &amp; this Parish, of 7021a, &amp; a glebe of upwards of 641. &amp; an extensive Protestant population, has been left without a Church to this day.</p>	<p>A Glebe House, with necessary offices, on a glebe in Killaghey of 641a 1r 31p. In Rahan, a glebe of 45a 1r 0p. In Bally Boy, a glebe of 339a 1r 10p. In Lynally, a glebe of 323a 2r 10p. In Eglish &amp; Drumcullin, a glebe of 292a 3r 34p How these glebes came to be different from the Grants of Charles 1<sup>st</sup>, does not appear</p>

<sup>162</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 70-71, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

Plan 4.1

Letter and accompanying drawings from J.F. Fuller to the churchwardens of Ballyboy,

1 July 1808<sup>163</sup>



<sup>163</sup> Ballyboy misc papers, 1 July 1808 (R.C.B., MS Portfolio 139.2).

Table 4.9 (d) Ecclesiastical report of the province of Armagh: diocese of Meath & union of Fircall, 15 Sept. 1819<sup>164</sup>

No.	Number of Denominations in each Parish	Name of BENEFICES & DENOMINATIONS; no. of PARISHES in each Benefice; Their distance from each other; The estimated Extent of such as are contiguous	INCUMBENTS, Whether having cure of souls; whether Resident; If not Resident, for what Cause; & by whom the Duties are discharged	BENEFICES, whether United, & by what Authority	No. of CHURCHES; Whether in Repair, & in which of the Parishes they stand	GLEBE HOUSES; In what Parish;- what Glebe Lands;- Whether contiguous;- How far removed from each other, & from the Church, or site of the old Church
79		<p>Fircall – a vicarage, including the following denominations, viz.</p> <p>Ballyboy Vicarage  Killaghey Vicarage  Lynally Vicarage  Rahan Vicarage  Eglish &amp; Drumcullin Vicarage</p> <p>Bally Boy 4496a  Killaghey 7021a  Lynally 1731a  Rahan 4025a  Eglish &amp; Drumcullin 8774a  (all contiguous)</p>	<p>Rev<sup>d</sup> Tho<sup>s</sup> Kemmis; Resident at Killaghey; has cure of souls; &amp; discharges the duties, assisted by 5 curates.</p> <p>The curates all resident; their salaries are 75<i>l.</i> a year.</p>	<p>This great vicarage was dissolved by the King's Patent, 13<sup>th</sup> June 15<sup>th</sup> Chas 1<sup>st</sup>, &amp; erected into 4 Vicarages; viz. Bally-boy, with 453a of glebe Killaghy, with 528a; Drumcullin &amp; Eglish with 465a; and Lynally, with 593a. But, notwithstanding the king's patent, the earl of Mountrath, the patron, has continued to present to it, as to the sole Vicarage of Fircall; the last institution was 31<sup>st</sup> [sic] June 1796. It is evident that this benefice should be dissolved, as it would make ample provision for at least four resident vicars; but as it is not to be expected that the patron should consent to it, the next best thing would be to erect each of the churches, Killahey excepted, into a perpetual cure, but the glebe was purchased by the trustees of the First Fruits.</p>	<p>Four churches: one newly-built in Killaghey; one in Ballyboy, rebuilt: one in Lynally, shingled-roof, in indifferent repair: one in Eglish, in tolerable repair.</p>	<p>A Glebe House, with necessary offices, on the glebe of Killaghey of 641a 1r 32p.</p>

<sup>164</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1820*, pp 90-91, H.C. 1820 (93), ix.



Table 4.9 (e) Document of consecration: St Cormac's, Ballyboy, 11 Oct. 1824

In the Name of God, Amen. Whereas a Church hath been erected out of the funds of the first fruits on the Site of the old Church in the Parish of Ballyboy, in the Diocese of Meath, containing within the walls thereof Sixty feet or thereabouts from East to West, and in Breadth from North to South Twenty five feet or thereabouts. And Whereas the said Church is now adorned [illegible] and furnished with all things decent and necessary for the Worship of God. And whereas the Minister, Churchwardens and Parishioners of the said parish have humbly requested of us to separate the said Church from all Common and profane use, therefore Nathaniel, by divine providence Lord Bishop of Meath [is] willing to Comply with their pious and religious intention in this Behalf and proceeding the Consecration of the said Church to the Worship of God above and the Celebration of Divine Service and we Grant, Will and Ordain that from henceforth forever public prayers be Openly read in the said Church According to the Liturgy of the United Church of England and Ireland as by Law Established. The Word of God sincerely propounded and preached the Sacraments Administered and that all other matters be done and performed Which by the Laws of God and Canons, and Constitution of the United Church of England and Ireland can or may be done towards divine Worship to the Glory of God and the increase and prosperity of the Church And we do ordain, decree and declare that the said church shall and ought to be the Parish Church to and for the use of the Parishioners of the Parish of Ballyboy forever hereafter and that it shall have and enjoy, And we accordingly do as far as in Us lie and by Law. We are enabled by these present [illegible] Confirm and Establish the same to all intents and purposes in All and Singular the privileges accustomed in such Church as Competent to any Parish Church founded of old within our Diocese of Meath and we do also Consecrate the said Church to the honor of God and to holy use, by the Name of the Parish Church of Ballyboy. And we pronounce, decree and declare that the same hath been and is so Consecrated and that it ought to remain so to future time. Nevertheless, We always reserve to ourselves and our Successors, Bishops of Meath, the Power of Visiting the said Church when we or they shall think it our Office to do so in Order that we may see that the same be taken care of with repairs and ornamented and that all things be Observed therein Canonically and orderly All and Singular which matters we reserve – But as to the rest of the premises, We decree and Confirm the same for us and our Successors, Bishops of Meath as much as in Us lie by Law we can. In Testimony Whereof we have caused an Episcopal Seal to be hereunto affixed this 11<sup>th</sup> day of October in the Year of Our Lord One thousand, Eight hundred and twenty-four.<sup>165</sup>

Signed by:	Nath Meath	Geo Brabazon
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<sup>165</sup> Parchment of consecration for the church at Ballyboy (R.C.B., MS D7/10/5).

Table 4.9 (f) Archiepiscopal visitation of the union of Fircall in the diocese of Meath, 10 Aug. 1826<sup>166</sup>

Name of BENEFICES & DENOMINATIONS; no. of PARISHES in each Benefice	INCUMBENTS, Whether having cure of souls; whether Resident; If not Resident, for what Cause; & by whom the Duties are discharged	No. of CHURCHES; Whether in Repair, & in which of the Parishes they stand	GLEBE HOUSES; In what Parish;- what Glebe Lands;- Whether contiguous;- How far removed from each other, & from the Church, or site of the old Church	Observations
Fircall Vicarage	Revd Thos Kemmis, Vicar. Resided 6mths last year	1	None	Church good. Attendance at divine service = 90. N <sup>o</sup> of Protestant families increasing. N <sup>o</sup> of R.C. families stationary. No dissenters.
Ballyboy Vicarage	Revd Chas. Burton. Curate. Resides. Not licenced.	Rebuilt	None	'The church is most creditable in its whole appearance & is furnished with all requisites for due Administration of Divine Worship. Pulpit & Communion furniture, Velvet. – for the Communion, Silver Chalice & Salver, Diaper Cloth & Napkin, very fine folio Bible & prayer Books & 4 quatro D <sup>o</sup> all good order belong to the Church. The Church Yard is well fenced with a Wall. No dead body has been buried in the Church or within 12 feet of Walls occurring the last year – Divine Service is regularly performed on Sunday at 12 noon & 6 o'clock afternoon. The Minister & Congregation are punctual to the appointed hour – The average N <sup>o</sup> of Attendants on Divine Service about 90 – The Sacrament is Administered 6 times a year, from 40 to 50 attend – they & the N <sup>o</sup> of Congregation are increasing – they are generally furnished with prayer Books. – the N <sup>o</sup> of families of the Established Church are increasing – The Children in N <sup>o</sup> about 25 are regularly Catechised on Sunday by the Curate – Terrier supposed to be lodged by the vicar – John Jackson the Parish Clerk is qualified – John Marry, the Parish Schoolmaster is pretty well qualified & is a regular attendant at Church & the Holy Communion – There is a Parochial Schoolhouse, about 40 Children attend the School Master – they pay some trifle. There is no other provision for educating Children in the principles of the Established Church in this Parish. There is a Registry regularly kept in a book & a Copy on parchment annually transmitted – Baptism is Administered as prescribed by the Rubric & in Church where

<sup>166</sup> Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826, p. 32.

(continued)					possible – The sick are diligently Visited & the Holy Communion Administered to them – Matrimony is Solmenised in Church & in Canonical hours. The Vestry Acc <sup>ts</sup> are regularly settled on Easter Monday. The N <sup>o</sup> of Roman Catholick families are stationary & No Protestant Dissenters in this parish’.
Killaghey	Vicarage	Revd John Dunn. Curate. Resides nearbv. Not licenced.	1	New	Church good. Attendance at divine service = 50 in summer, 30 in winter. Communion 4 times a year. N <sup>o</sup> . of Protestant and R.C. families stationary. No dissenters. ‘No burial yet in the new churchyard’.
Lynally	Vicarage	Revd Chas. Turpin. Curate. Resides	1	None	Church very old & much too confined. Attendance at divine service = 50 in summer, 30 in winter. Communion 4 times a year. N <sup>o</sup> of Protestant & R.C. families ‘rather increasing’. No dissenters.
Rahan	Vicarage			New	
Eglish	Vicarage	Revd Jos. Barnes. Curate. Not licenced.	1	None	
Drumcullin	Vicarage				
Signed by Leslie Gressan, Rural Dean					

It would seem that building materials, workmanship and architectural competence were not always of the best. The repercussions of this began to appear as early as 1826, when the archiepiscopal visitation noted damp and other more severe structural defects in several churches erected during the O'Beirne period. Of the thirty problem churches reported upon in 1826 and set out in Table 4.10, only Rathcore, Castlerickard and Moylisker were not built, rebuilt or enlarged during the O'Beirne episcopate. In less than twenty years therefore, there were problems, some cosmetic but many structural, in twenty-seven of the seventy-seven churches identified. Damp due to defective roofing or delay in roughcasting had always been problematic with old churches, and it is surprising that more effort was not made to eliminate the causes during the works of O'Beirne's time.

Table 4.10 O'Beirne churches: structural and other problems, 1826

Church	Observation
Ardagh	'Church requires painting, porch window-sash and 2 for steeple'
Ardnurcher	'tolerable repair... roof and flooring of 2 or 3 pews not sound'
Castlecor	'ceiling a little broken'
Castlepollard	'the steeple admits damp'
Castlerickard	'some of the floor and all window frames and sashes are very bad... no bell on belfry'
Churchtown	'needs slating attended to'
Donaghpatrick	'Roof bad due to bad tiling methods'
Duleek	'Church good but spire and south wall need repair'
Durrow	'undergoing repair'
Enniscoffey	'Church very good except for slates'
Kentstown	'Church in tolerable repair. Needs new door and repair to roof and steeple'
Kilbeggan	'wants a roof for belfry'
Kilbrew	'The church is in good repair outside, but the inside in an unfinished state owing to the negligence of the architect'
Kilcleagh	'wants painting inside'
Killiconnighan	'Church good being new, but admits damp, the walls not yet being roughcast'
Kilmainhamwood	'Church damp and not aired... needs painting and roof repairs'
Kilmoon	'Church good, but outside needs painting'
Kilskyre	'Church good though a little damp'
Knockmark	'Church undergoing repair inside and out'
Loughcrew	'bad repair inside and out'
Mayne	'Church outside in bad repair and roof warped'
Moylisker	'Church underwent thorough repair last summer'
Mullingar	'The chancel of the church has not been finished. The roof is defective and the walls constantly damp'
Navan	'roof admits damp in heavy rain and is to be coppered immediately'
Painestown	'Church good, needs a little repair'
Rathconnell	'tolerable repair in and out and in ongoing repair with a spire in progress'

(cont..) Church	Observation
Rathcore	'Church good, but stove badly placed and the bell in ringing strikes the roof'
Stonehall	'Chancel needs to be pulled down and rebuilt in consequence of an open [sic] in the wall, which cannot otherwise be remedied...roof bad due to its bad construction'
Tara	'Church good, save a small crack in one of the walls, reported by an architect to be of consequence'
Trim	'Needs paint, but new Gallery first in autumn'
Source: Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826, pp 2-3, 8, 10-11, 13-15, 17-19, 22-25, 27-31, 34, 39 respectively	

While defects in the structure of church buildings were common, the stipulations relating to articles of a material nature seem to have been well met, with no more than a few exceptions. Although there were problems of access to the church at Ardagh, where the 'Minister and congregation [were] obliged to climb over walls and ditches', no great complaint was made regarding the necessities required to decently conduct services of divine worship.<sup>167</sup> However, there were a few cases of want. The church at Killallon had no font.<sup>168</sup> At Loughcrew, the church was also likely to have had no font as 'Baptism [was] generally administered in a private house, but according to the Rubrick'.<sup>169</sup> Only the 'upper classes of the congregation' in Ardnurcher were 'furnished with prayer books', although the poorer class was soon to be supplied with same.<sup>170</sup> At St Beccan's, Kilbeggan, the Holy Communion was given four times a year, although the church had 'no cloth or velvet furniture or [communion] table'.<sup>171</sup>

As has been shown in this and the previous chapter, Bishop O'Beirne made full use of government funding to improve the glebes, glebe houses and churches in the diocese. He also used his position as diocesan to encourage and enforce clerical residence. However, a resident, well-housed clergyman with a new church in his parish was of little use to establishment and congregation, if he did not serve his

<sup>167</sup> Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826, p. 6.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

cure with diligence, an understanding of scripture and the rubric of church practice. Pastoral care was an element of clerical responsibility long expounded by O'Beirne as critical to ensuring the future of the church. Matters of clerical education, the holding of services, observing church festivals, administration of the Holy Communion, visiting the sick and the general and religious education of young members of the congregation were all related to pastoral care and their importance was stressed throughout the diocese.

In his visitation sermon to the clergy of the diocese of Ossory in 1796, O'Beirne charged his ministers to examine their motive for embracing their profession. Was the intention to devote themselves to the service of God and the salvation of the souls in their charge or, attracted by 'the riches of the fold and not safety of the sheep,' had they taken orders 'to secure the comforts, conveniences and enjoyments of an easy, indolent and independent life'?<sup>172</sup> He put forward his opinion that the decline of the Roman Catholic church in many European countries at the time of the Reformation was due to the misconduct and idleness of the Roman Catholic clergy, and he intimated that the culpable neglect of parochial duties among contemporary clergy of the Church of Ireland could lead to a similar outcome for the Irish establishment.<sup>173</sup> O'Beirne was not alone in this assertion. In 1795, Adam Averell, the Church of Ireland minister, turned Wesleyan, attributed the successes of the Roman Catholic church to the zeal of its clergy. In 1813, James Daly, warden of Galway, stated that owing to the shortcomings in pastoral care, the Protestants of Connemara had turned to Roman Catholic priests to baptize their babies, marry their daughters and bury their dead.<sup>174</sup>

As Bishop of Ossory O'Beirne had encouraged his clergymen to lead their congregations by example and to emulate their Roman Catholic counterparts;

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<sup>172</sup> O'Beirne, *Charge to the clergy of Ossory, 1796*, p. 22.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>174</sup> Ball, *The reformed Church of Ireland*, p. 108.

... pay a constant and scrupulous attention to the individuals who compose our flocks; to acquire an intimate acquaintance with their persons and families; to make our voice so familiar to them by frequent converse and intercourse... to yield to every necessity, and embrace every occasion of giving private monition and exhortation to the sick and to the well; to teach and admonish the one, to alleviate the sufferings, soothe the sorrows, awake the contrition, animate the hopes, strengthen the faith and calm the dying moments of the other; to go about constantly doing good, visiting frequently from house to house... give baptism to infants, catechetical instruction to the rising generation... burial to the dead.<sup>175</sup>

Between 1800 and 1822 the urges to the clergy of Ossory were often repeated to the clergy of Meath.<sup>176</sup>

In his extensive report on the state of the Irish church in 1801, O'Beirne expressed concern to Charles Abbot that the clergymen of the established church in Ireland 'have but too generally degenerated into an indifference to their pastoral duties'.<sup>177</sup> The bishop pointed out that the restraints recently removed from the priests of the Roman Catholic faith gave the popish religion a great advantage over the Church of Ireland and proposed that if any improvement was to be secured for the established religion, a formal clerical education should be mandatory for all those intending to take Orders.<sup>178</sup> In an attempt to motivate and educate his parochial clergy, O'Beirne, as Bishop of Ossory, organised monthly lectures on topics of religion, and occasionally chapters from the New Testament were translated from Greek to English and discussed under the guidance of theological experts.<sup>179</sup> It has been said that clergymen attended these lectures 'who probably had not for twenty or thirty years, looked into the original text'.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> O'Beirne, *Charge to the clergy of Ossory*, 1796, pp 44-45.

<sup>176</sup> O'Beirne, *Charge to the clergy of Meath*, 1800; O'Beirne, *Charge of the Most Reverend the lord bishop of Meath to the clergy of his diocese at his annual visitation* (Dublin, 1804); O'Beirne, *A charge delivered to the clergy of the diocese of Meath at the annual visitation*, 1816 (Dublin, 1816); O'Beirne, *Circular letter of the lord bishop of Meath to the rural deans of his diocese*, 1821 (Dublin, 1821); O'Beirne, *A charge delivered to the clergy of the diocese of Meath at the annual visitation on Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1822* (Dublin, 1822).

<sup>177</sup> O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, Apr. 1801, f. 150.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, ff 150, 155.

<sup>179</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine & Historical Chronicle*, xcii (Jan.-June 1822), p. 471. Note: this entry was part of a premature obituary. In a later supplement to cxii, the obituary was withdrawn, see 'Supplement to cxii, Part 1', p. 577.

<sup>180</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, xcii (Jan.-June 1822), p. 471.

The infrequency of church services may have been justified during a time when church buildings were inadequate or non-existent. When O'Beirne was translated to Meath at the end of 1798, it was unusual for parishes to administer Holy Communion more than four times a year, and apart from Christmas Day and Good Friday, church festivals were generally not observed.<sup>181</sup> In addition to regular Sunday service, O'Beirne ordered services in all major churches of the diocese on Wednesdays and Fridays and enquired into the discrepancy between the returned number of attendants at church and the reported number of communicants.<sup>182</sup> It would appear however, that by the end of his time in Meath, there were weekday services in very few churches. The visitation of 1826 returns weekday services for Mullingar and Tullamore only.<sup>183</sup> There was a greater observance of church festivals, although it was by no means universal, with Christmas Day, Good Friday and the first Sunday in October being those most observed.<sup>184</sup> Visitation of the sick in their homes and the administration of Holy Communion to them was a common improvement in pastoral care during the O'Beirne episcopate. In 1826, several parishes, for example Rathmolyon, reported 'The sick are diligently visited and the Holy Communion administered to them'.<sup>185</sup> It should be said that the more than favourable reports of all parishes in the diocese as furnished by rural deans to the archbishop, could well give rise to a suspicion that any parochial shortcomings were ignored.

O'Beirne also concerned himself with the quality of the *curriculum* offered in schools, and he dismissed the official returns on education: 'tho' [sic] correct in form [they] are found to be substantially untrue'.<sup>186</sup> His early enquiry into the state of the diocesan school at Trim resulted in a discovery of the shortcomings of the institution and an admonition of its schoolmaster, Revd Mark Wainwright.<sup>187</sup> The

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<sup>181</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 141-2.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, p. 142.

<sup>183</sup> Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826, pp 28, 35 respectively.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 1-42.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>186</sup> O'Beirne to Charles Abbot, 7 Apr. 1801 (T.N.A., Charles Abbot, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Colchester Papers, MS P.R.O., 30/9/128, f. 56).

<sup>187</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 142.



circumstances of the children at Wilson's Hospital were a cause of considerable consternation to O'Beirne from the perspective of education and the general conditions in which the boys were kept. On a visit to the school in 1810 accompanied by Mr Edgeworth of Edgeworthstown, he found;

Every place was dirty; the Boys universally so, and we saw upwards of Twenty of them with sores in their Heads, hands and feet... the Potatoes were almost raw; the few Boys who attempted to peel them could not succeed, and the rest labourd [sic] to eat them without feeling. In their mugs was scarcely a quarter of a pint of Milk.....the Monitors were totally at a loss how to proceed, and the classes were all in confusion....I found the same scarcity of Books in the School, from which Mr Radcliffe had been so severely reprimanded last year...<sup>188</sup>

Four years later, the educational problems persisted at Wilson's and the bishop again wrote to his archbishop to request the provision of a mature master, well practiced in the art of teaching and with 'a knowledge of the country, and of its manners, and with the modes of dealing with the people of it'.<sup>189</sup> A few months later, a new superintending master had been appointed and the management of the institution was put on an entirely new footing. All but fifty acres of the lands were leased, the profits of which were put to a new system of education for the boys, with the intention of preparing them to qualify as shoemakers, tailors, weavers, or for positions as parish clerks and schoolmasters in parochial schools.<sup>190</sup>

O'Beirne insisted that every clergyman should establish a school in his parish. If it was claimed that a schoolmaster could not be found, the clergyman was instructed to teach school himself.<sup>191</sup> With or without a parochial school, an incumbent was expected to catechize children, if not at a parochial school, at a Sunday school. By 1826, there was a school in most parishes of the diocese.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> O'Beirne to Archbishop Stuart of Armagh, 17 Apr. 1810 (L.B.C.A., Stuart Papers, MS WY 995/17).

<sup>189</sup> O'Beirne to Archbishop Stuart, 11 Jan. 1814 (L.B.C.A., Stuart Papers, MS WY 994/81).

<sup>190</sup> O'Beirne to Archbishop Stuart, 13 Mar. 1814 (L.B.C.A., Stuart Papers, MS WY 994/84);

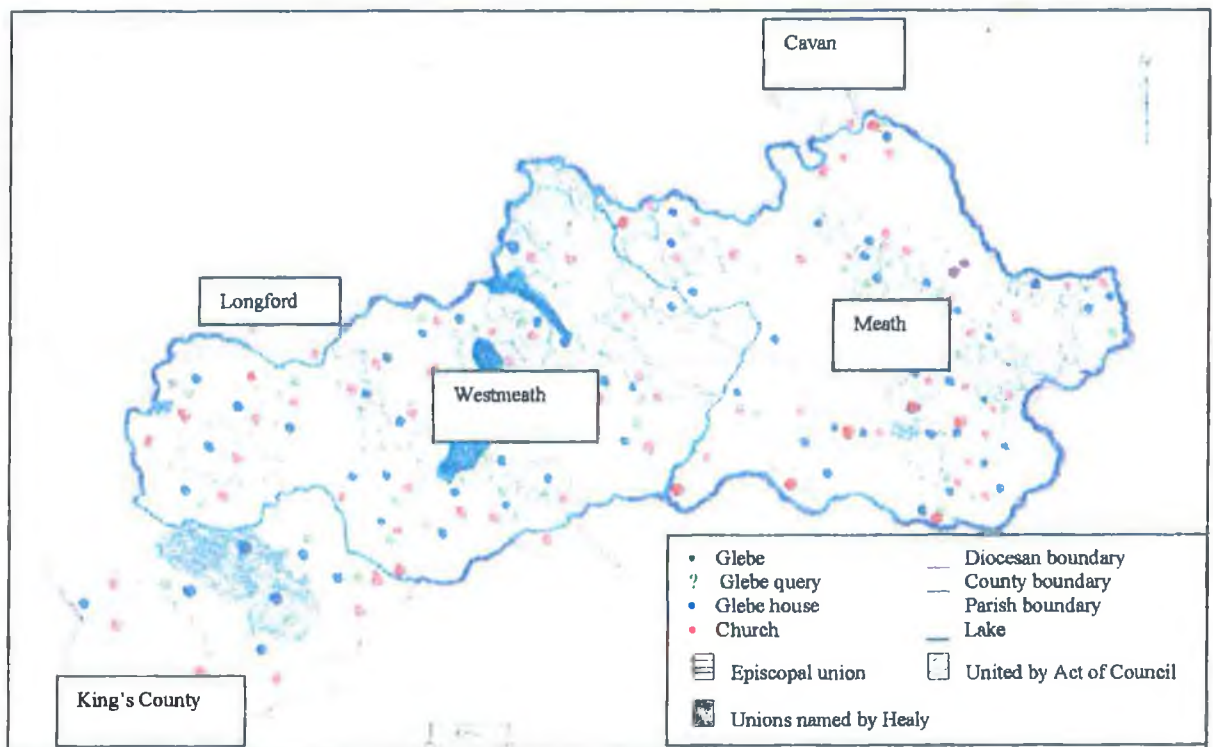
O'Beirne to Archbishop Stuart, 2 May 1814 (L.B.C.A., Stuart Papers, MS WY 994/96).

<sup>191</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 143.

<sup>192</sup> Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826, pp 1-42.

Between the end of 1798 and early 1823, the diocese of Meath had undergone a period of restructuring that was unprecedented. New parish unions were formed. There were very considerable improvements in the number of resident clergy who resided in a great number of new glebe houses with enhanced glebes. These clergymen performed their duties in no fewer than seventy-seven new, rebuilt, enlarged or substantially repaired churches, and children received a basic education in a greatly increased number of parochial schools. The full extent of these changes is best illustrated in Map 4.3.

Map 4.3 Improvements to glebes, glebe houses, churches & the structure of parishes in the diocese of Meath during the O'Beirne episcopate, 1798-1823



Source: *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 46-75, H.C. 1807 (78), v; *Visitation, 1818*, pp 4-7, 15-16, 30, 39, 58, 73, 89, 94, 97, 99, 105-109; V.M.B., (R.C.B., MSS P. 40.1.2-912.5.1); *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-6, 11, 18-19, 26-27, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90, 95, 102-103, 110-111; *Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826*, pp 20-25, 27, 29-30, 37-39, 41; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, p. 589, ii, p. 454; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, pp 283, 289, 292-3, 295, 297, 299, 315, 317, 319, 322-325, 328.

## Chapter five

### The contribution of patrons, impropiators, parishioners and congregations: church repair, maintenance, furnishings and other essentials

The first point to be reiterated here is the distinction between patrons and impropiators. Patrons were those who held the power of advowson, that is, the power to appoint a clergyman to a parish. Impropiators or tithe owners were those to whom tithes were paid. By the period under study, the entire tithe income in many parishes was paid directly to the clergyman and formed the greater part of his income. However, there remained several parishes in which the tithes were in lay ownership. In such situations, the lay impropiator was obliged to provide a salary for the clergyman and perhaps allow him the smaller tithes or a portion of the whole. The second important point is to revisit the distinction between parishioners and congregations. Parishioners, as understood in law, were all property holders, of all faiths, who resided in a parish, and were entitled to attend vestry meetings in their civil parish, the smallest unit of local government. The term 'congregations' refers to parishioners who held property, resided in a parish, were entitled to attend vestry and who were members of the established church. While the contribution expected of parishioners towards the upkeep of the parish church is known to some extent, the financial support provided by patrons, impropiators and congregations has, to date, received less attention. In order to present a clearer picture of how parish churches were furnished and maintained, this chapter sets out tables of patrons and impropiators for each parish and a further series of tables and appendices denoting the works carried out at each church and the sources from which monies were secured to facilitate those works, the necessary furnishings and subsequent maintenance.

Here, as previously, the remarks on discrepancies between, and errors in, the sources continue to apply. The *National inventory of architectural heritage* is

particularly culpable as a number of dates are incorrect, architectural descriptions incomplete or inaccurate and, in some instances, the liturgical east does not appear to have been kept in mind by the surveyor. These problems have been corrected here and are referred to in footnotes where necessary.

Earlier chapters have illustrated the success of Bishop O'Beirne's efforts in maintaining a constant and active clerical presence in the parishes of his diocese, procuring glebes, building glebe houses and building, rebuilding and enlarging churches. Glebe houses were in effect private dwellings, in that the parishioners, while obliged to contribute towards the upkeep of the clergyman or incumbent by the payment of tithes, bore no *onus* regarding the building and maintenance of his residence. This can be verified by the examination of vestry minute and account books, where in no case is there any reference to a glebe house being built or maintained out of the parish cess. However, this was not the case with the parish church.

It is evident from surviving vestry minutes that during the O'Beirne episcopate, almost every parish church underwent some sort of repair. The works were financed by government monies, individual subscriptions and a parochial cess. The additional twenty are included here because in each case, the parish vestry embarked upon, not minor, but some considerable repair or refurbishment (Appendix 5.1). Although the First Fruits returns, the auditors of public accounts reports, and episcopal visitation notes are useful in some respects, in many instances they provide only skeletal information regarding the board's own disbursements and it is in parish accounts and vestry minutes that the most telling detail is to be found. Of the forty-nine parish unions and perpetual curacies for which vestry minutes and annual accounts survive, forty-one offer considerable detail on the manner in which churches were built, furnished and maintained. Except in cases where local landlords undertook to improve churches at their own expense, vestry minute books record decisions to build, rebuild or enlarge churches as matters resolved in vestry and by vestry. However, as O'Beirne considered his

clergy responsible for the state of the churches, the probability of episcopal influence upon the minister to produce a memorial in request of building monies cannot be discounted. There is, in fact, some evidence of this being the case. In 1806 the church of Knockmark, County Meath was returned as being in bad repair.<sup>1</sup> In 1818 it was being rebuilt with the aid of a First Fruits gift of £900. It is clear from the bishop's visitation notes that he considered the improvement at Knockmark due to the efforts of the new incumbent Revd William Liddiard. It is also clear that the earlier state of affairs he considered due to the negligence of Liddiard's predecessor; 'the church was suffered to go to ruin by Mr Rogers, the last incumbent'.<sup>2</sup> O'Beirne credited Revd Henry Wynne with rebuilding the church at Killucan, due to 'his influence with his parishioners'.<sup>3</sup> Although the parishioners made improvements to the church of Newtown Fertullagh, O'Beirne wrote that it stood without a steeple due to 'the present rector [who] has not influence enough with them, though wealthy, to ornament it with a steeple'.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Act of Union in 1801 resulted in some departures among the landed class, several families remained in the counties of the diocese, or at least retained interest their Irish estates. In a see largely within the Pale where the landed estates were richest and continued prominent, it is reasonable to expect that patronage, impropriation or ownership of tithes as well as location influenced the financial arrangements surrounding the building, furnishing and maintenance of churches. However, expectations are not always well met and this chapter examines by exactly what means churches were built and equipped with all things necessary for divine service and whether patronage and tithe ownership had any bearing on the provision of furnishings and maintenance. While some churches are given individual attention because their cases are of particular interest, an extensive discussion of each of the seventy-seven is not a viable proposition here. In the stead of an unduly lengthy treatment, each church and all of its financial detail together

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<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 57, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>2</sup> *Visitation, 1818*, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

with a complete record of its building, furnishing and maintenance are presented in tables and appendices.

As seen already, parishioners, regardless of religious affiliation, were responsible for the upkeep of churchyards and for repairs to church buildings, apart from the chancel, which was the remit of either the minister or the impropriator.<sup>5</sup> In the 1830s Samuel Lewis reported many of Ireland's churches to have been lately repaired through First Fruits funding.<sup>6</sup> However, the board did not allot monies for repair during the early nineteenth century and the idea to provide funds for such a purpose continued to be opposed in 1810 by Archbishop Stuart of Armagh.<sup>7</sup> The primate contended 'I think the difficulty of procuring money from the vestries will be much increased if this plan be adopted even under any limitation'.<sup>8</sup> It is difficult to see the validity in Stuart's argument if taken at face value, as several vestry minutes clearly indicate that the cost of church repairs was generally estimated and included in the annual cess; alternatively, the surplus, often referred to as the overplus, from each annual cess was automatically put to use for repairs.<sup>9</sup> Stuart's stance was more likely to have been based on a belief that if government monies were used to repair churches, fewer requests to build or rebuild would be forthcoming from the vestries. It is also possible that had the repair option been given to the First Fruits, its board may have proved better disposed to that choice, rather than to the disbursement of larger amounts for building, rebuilding or enlargement. Vestry minute books record the almost constant battle with repairing old buildings, and when the opportunity to provide new or rebuilt churches throughout the country was given it would have been foolhardy to let that facility pass without use.

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<sup>5</sup> Browne, *A compendious view*, pp 181-182.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*.

<sup>7</sup> Stuart to Broderick, 23 June 1810 (N.L.I., MS 8869).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> For examples see Ballymore Killare V.M.B.; Clonard V.M.B., 1795-1932 (R.C.B., MS P. 235.5.1); Donaghpatrick V.M.B., 1804-1872 (R.C.B., MS P. 58.5.1); Dunboyne V.M.B.; Forgney V.M.B., & general register, 1798-1836 (R.C.B., MS P. 395.1.1); Kentstown V.M.B., 13 (R.C.B., MS P. 441.5.1); Killyconnighan V.M.B., 1809-1861 (R.C.B., MS P. 588.5.1); Moyglare V.M.B., 1800-1870 (R.C.B., MS P. 558.5.1).

If the Church of Ireland is considered by vestry notes and accounts in relation to the annual *gamut* of church repairs alone, any notion that the establishment indulged itself in unnecessary church-building during this time may be dismissed. At St Mary's, Athlone for example (Table 5.1), the vestry struggled with repairs from at least 1799 until 1821, when the decision was finally taken to forward a memorial 'to the Lord Bishop of Meath, praying for a grant of £800 to be obtained from the Board of First Fruits to enlarge and new roof the Church.'<sup>10</sup>

Table 5.1 Repair and maintenance of St Mary's, Athlone County Westmeath, 1799-1821

Year	Repair & maintenance	Cost to parishioners by means of a cess
1799	Repairs to steeple Slater	£30 £4
1801	Three pews to accommodate the military. Seats & doors of the gallery to be repaired. Stairs to be repaired. Slater	n.a. n.a. n.a. £4
1802	To repair storm damage & other exigencies. Slater	£14 4s. 4d. £4
1803	Spire to be secured in a permanent manner by coppering. To Mr Bland to secure the timber of the bell. Slater	£200 1½ Guineas £4
1805	Repair of the belfry Slater	£10 £4
1806	New handrail, sleepers, uprights, landing & 2 coats of paint for gallery stairs. Continued repair of the belfry & securing the bell. Raising, pinning & dashing churchyard wall. Slater.	£11 7s. 6d.  £4 4s. 3d. £4
1807	Making a floor over the bell & repairing the ground floor of the church. Slater.	£37 11s. 4d. £4
1809	To Thomas Burchall for making a new gate. To Mr Lennon for hanging new gate. To Mr Burchall for pulling down the vestry room & filling-up the door. Slater.	£30 1 guinea £2 16s. 10½d. £4
1810	Slater. Flooring.	£4 n.a.
1811	Slater. 3 coats of paint.	£4 n.a.
1813	Slater. Work on porch & stairs & repairs to the whole of the cornice.	£4 £24 10s.

<sup>10</sup> St Mary's Athlone V.M.B., copy, 15 Feb. 1821, p. 3.

Year (cont.,)	Repair & maintenance	Cost to parishioners by means of a cess
1814	Slater. To John Clancy for opening the pews on one side of the church. To Owen Reilly Mason for rebuilding a wall.	£4 £2 n.a.
1815	Slater. Repair damp over the church door.	£4 n.a.
1816	Slater.	£4
1817	Slater.	£4
1818	Slater.	£4
1819	Slater. New communion table.	£4 n.a.
1820	Slater.	£4
1821	Slater.	£4
Source: St Mary's, Athlone V.M.B., pp 1-30 & 1-3 respectively		

It should be noted that Athlone was one of several parishes to retain a slater at an annual salary, in much the same manner as a sexton or sextoness. In Mullingar, the sum of £6.16s.6d was allotted each year, over several years, prior to a levy for an entire new roof in 1813.<sup>11</sup> At Laracor, 'Francis Malone, Slator [sic] hath agreed to keep the Slating Work on the Church of Laracor in good repair for one Year from this Date finding all materials for which said Malone is to receive a Salary of two Guineas'.<sup>12</sup> Although the church of Benowen was new, a loose slip of paper in the vestry minute book provides evidence of a similar arrangement for regular repairs to the roof;

I Richard Glass do engage to keep the roof of the Parish Church of Benowen in repair, and perfectly weather proof for the term of seven years for three pounds ten shillings per annum from this day.  
Richard Glass.  
Benowen. April 1823.  
Witness: James P. Murray'.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Mullingar V.M.B., 1806-12, pp 2-33, 41.

<sup>12</sup> Laracor V.M.B., 22 May 1804 (R.C.B., MS P. 594.5.1, p. 35). For further examples see Tara V.M.B., 27 Apr. 1824, p. 73; Kilkenny West V.M.B., 1800-06, 1813-17 (R.C.B., MS P. 339.1.1, pp 7, 10, 12, 53-65).

<sup>13</sup> Benowen V.M.B., Apr. 1823.



In 1818 O'Beirne updated the figures of Church of Ireland families in the diocese.<sup>14</sup> His account gave no more than 3,769 families (Appendix 5.2). When these figures are rightly taken into account, the importance of the parochial cess becomes obvious. The small numbers of families in most parishes suggest that despite unprecedented government funding, there was not a parish in the diocese, excepting perhaps Tullamore and Portneshangan, in which the most modest of churches could have been built, kept in repair, or have had the loans repaid, without the cesses collected from the parish at large.

Parochial salaries and the provision of items of material culture within the church was the responsibility of all those who held property in the parish and therefore were liable to pay the parochial cess. The cloths for communion table, pulpit and reading desk, cushions, font, chest for alms, all communion items, including the bread and wine, minister's surplice, large volume bible, books of common prayer, book of homilies, table of degrees and ten commandments, bell, bier for the dead, public pews and books of register, were among the items paid for by parishioners; their procurement being the responsibility of churchwardens.<sup>15</sup> With the unprecedented scale of government gifts and loans towards building and rebuilding parish churches that prevailed in the early years of the nineteenth century, one could reasonably expect a Protestant, whether lay patron, impropiator or a less elevated member of a congregation, to have been anxious to offer an individual contribution and have his name engraved on some item other than a family pew. The opening of subscription books was generally an attempt to encourage members of the congregation to purchase a family pew, and the vestry minute books do not record any other advances made to invite individual subscriptions towards the procurement of the many essential items of furnishing. The vestry minutes also support the hypothesis that there was a lack of contributions from tithe owners and parish patrons for the building, rebuilding, furnishing and maintenance of parish churches. Excepting the ruinous chancel at

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<sup>14</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 127-34.

<sup>15</sup> Browne, *A compendious view*, p. 180.

Kilkenny West and modest repairs to the same at Kilshine, there is no mention of any vestry approaching the impropiator or patron with a view to securing financial aid.<sup>16</sup> This gives a definite impression that the vestries had no expectation of financial supplement from those who appointed the minister or received a tithe income from the parish.

In the seventy-seven unions and curacies considered, the bishop was patron of twenty-six parish unions and nine perpetual curacies. In several such cases the rector or vicar of the parish to which the curacy was affiliated was permitted to nominate the curate, although it is likely that the union incumbent made the appointment under episcopal consultation. The crown patronised twenty-seven unions and was challenged by Lord Dunsany for the patronage of Kentstown.<sup>17</sup> Kilmoon was shared by crown and primate.<sup>18</sup> In twenty-two unions and one perpetual curacy, the power of clerical nomination was in the hands of the Protestant laity and in Kilkenny West the clergyman was appointed by the pluralist and non-resident Revd William Bryan, who also held the rectory of Kilcronaghan in the diocese of Derry.<sup>19</sup> As can be seen in Tables 5.2-5.4 not all unions were held outright. The bishop shared nomination rights with the crown in five unions and with Lord Drogheda in one.<sup>20</sup> Although some tithe owners could not be traced, the identification of a sufficient number indicates that advowson and impropriation appear to have rarely gone hand in hand.

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<sup>16</sup> Kilkenny West V.M.B., 1808-09, pp 24, 29-30, 33-35; Clongill & Kilshine V.M.B., 1823, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 19-20.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96; Tallaght, (<http://www.chaptersofdublin.com/books/Handcock/tallaght1.htm>) (15 June, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 64.

Table 5.2 Tithe ownership in parish unions and perpetual curacies where the diocesan held patronage

Church	Other patron	Tithe ownership & rents
Almoritia	None	n.a.
Ardagh Perpetual Curacy	None	Bishop
Athlone, St Mary's	None	Partly held by incumbent at rent of £1 6s. 8d.
Ballyloughloe	None	At rent of £1 1s. 10d.
Ballymore	None	Bishop
Benowen Perpetual Curacy	None	Bishop
Castlepollard	None	Incumbent, earl of Meath & vicars choral of St Patrick's Christchurch Dublin at rent of £14 5s.
Churchtown	Crown	n.a.
Clonard	None	Joseph Ashe & incumbent
Cionfad/Tyrrellspass	None	n.a.
Drakestown	Crown	Incumbent & rectors of Kilshine & Nobber at Quit rent shared with Castletown Kilpatrick
Drogheda St. Mary's	None	Lord Drogheda & incumbent
Drumcree	Lord Drogheda	At a rent of about £3
Drumrany Perpetual Curacy	None	Incumbent of Ballyloughloe at a glebe rent of £33
Enniscoffey	None	Blundall family
Enniskeen Perpetual Curacy	None	Bishop
Forgney Perpetual Curacy	None	Bishop
Gallen	None	Messrs Bowes-Daly, Thompson & Judge
Kells	None	Archdeacon
Kilbeggan Perpetual Curacy	None	Lambert family
Kilcleagh/Moate	None	At a rent of £1 1s.
Kilshine	Crown	n.a.
Kinnegad Perpetual Curacy	None	Incumbent of Rathwire/Killucan
Mayne Perpetual Curacy	None	Marquis of Westmeath & incumbent of Rathgraffe at a rent of £3
Newtown Fertullagh	None	Bishop at a glebe rent of £13 16s. 11d.
Painestown	Crown	Incumbent
Portnashangan	None	n.a.
Rathaspeck	None	n.a.
Rathwire/Killucan	None	n.a.
Stackallen	Crown	Incumbent
Stonehall Perpetual Curacy	None	Marquis of Headfort at a glebe rent of £10
Tissauran	None	At a rent of £2 9s. 2d. shared with Wherry
Trim	None	Bishop & incumbent
Tullamore	None	Lord Norbury & incumbent
Wherry	None	Incumbent & Revds. J. Armstrong & H. King at a rent shared with Tissauran

Source: Visitation, 1818; Archiepiscopal visitation 1826; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*

Table 5.3 Tithe ownership in parish unions where the crown held patronage

Church	Other patron	Tithe ownership & rents
Agher	None	Incumbent at quit rent
Ardnurcher	None	Lord Downshire
Ballymaglasson	None	Incumbent at quit rent of £15
Churchtown	Bishop	n.a.
Drakestown	Bishop	Incumbent & rectors of Kilshine & Nobber at quit rent shared with Castletown Kilpatrick
Dunboyne	None	Incumbent of Mullingar
Dunshaughlin	None	Incumbent at quit rent of 20 guineas
Kentstown	Disputed by Lord Dunsany <sup>21</sup>	Incumbent at quit rent of £3 & crown rent of £1 10s.
Kilbrew/Tryvet	None	Incumbent at quit rent of £19 10s.
Killeagh	None	Incumbent at quit rent of £3 11s. 11d. shared with Loughcrew
Kilmainhamwood	None	Papist representatives of the late Lord Beaulieu
Kilmoon	Primate	Incumbent
Kilmore	None	Incumbent with a quit rent
Kilshine	Bishop	n.a.
Kilskyre	None	Incumbent
Knockmark	None	Lord Dunsany & incumbent
Loughcrew	None	E. Rotherham & incumbent, <sup>22</sup> at quit rent shared with Killeagh
Moynalty	None	Incumbent at small quit rent
Mullingar	None	Blue Coat Hospital Dublin
Navan	None	Incumbent at crown rent of £30
Painestown	Bishop	Incumbent at quit & crown rents shared With Kentstown
Ratoath	Lowther family	Incumbent, vicar of St Mary's Athlone & Mr Law at quit rent of £55 9s. 6d.
Skryne	None	Incumbent at quit rent of £11 12s.
Slane	None	Incumbent
Stackallen	Bishop	Incumbent
Tara	None	Incumbent & Lord Dunsany at quit rent of £7 10s.
Vastina/Castletownkindellan	None	Sir William Lambart Cromie & incumbents of Churchtown & Vastina <sup>23</sup>

Source: Visitation, 1818; Archbishopal visitation, 1826

<sup>21</sup> See John Caillard Erck's *Irish Ecclesiastical Register* (Dublin, 1830), p. 279, where it was reported that Randall, Lord Dunsany challenged his right to advowson in the ecclesiastical court in February 1816 and the lord chancellor found in his favour.

<sup>22</sup> Edward Rotherham was named by Lewis in 1837 & may not have been the lay impropiator during O'Beirne's episcopate. See Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 313.

<sup>23</sup> W. L. Cromie was named by Lewis in 1837 & may or may not have been the lay impropiator during O'Beirne's episcopate. See Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 311.

Table 5.4 Tithe ownership in parish unions under lay patronage

Patron	Church	Other patron	Tithe ownership & rents
Henry Arrabin	Moyglare	None	Incumbent at crown rent of £3 14s. 8d.
Lord Belvedere	Rathcondra	None	n.a.
Lord Darnley	Killoconnigan	None	Lord Darnley
Lord Drogheda	Colpe	None	Lord Drogheda & curate
do	Drumcree	Bishop	At a rent of about £3
do	Duleek	None	Lord Drogheda & Incumbent at quit rent of 5s. 8d.
do	Kilmessan	None	Lord Drogheda & incumbent
do	Rathbeggan	None	Lord Drogheda & incumbent
do	Rathconnell	None	Lord Drogheda & Incumbent
Lord Dunsany	Castlecor	None	n.a.
do	Kentstown	Disputed with crown	Incumbent at quit rent of £3 & crown rent of £1 10s.
do	Oldcastle	None	Earl of Westmeath at rent of £1 18s.
Thomas Everard	Donaghpatrick	None	Everard & incumbent
Gifford family	Castlejordan	None	Gifford family
Messrs Hussey, Ashe & Fisher	Galtrim	None	Mr Hussey & incumbent
Thomas Hussey	Rathkenny	None	Incumbent & Lord Drogheda
Lord Kilmaine (continued)	Castlelost	None	Partly incumbent at a glebe rent of £26.5s & another of £9 18s. 6d.
Lowther family	Ratoath	Crown	Incumbent, vicar of St Mary's Athlone & Mr Law at quit rent of £55 9s. 6d.
Earl Mountrath	Ballyboy	None	Lord Downshire <sup>24</sup>
do	Killoughey	None	Lord Downshire <sup>25</sup>
Sir John Piers	Leney	None	Sir John Piers
George Stepney	Durrow P.C.	None	Lord Norbury

Source: Visitation, 1818; Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826

For the purpose of this discussion, churches can be divided into four categories; demesne, rural, village and urban. Each category of site is separately examined here in order to determine the extent to which patrons and impropiators

<sup>24</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, p. 123.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

contributed towards the building, furnishing and maintenance of their church and to what degree the Church of Ireland congregations contributed. Despite the contributions of individuals towards the building, rebuilding, furnishing and maintenance of parish churches, the vestry minutes clearly document the importance of the parochial cess. Although population figures for members of other denominations during the period cannot be ascertained, the tables accompanying each category of church give some indication of the small numbers of Church of Ireland families within the parishes.

Although a demesne church was quite distinct from a private chapel, it might be expected that the holder of a landed estate would furnish and maintain a church that stood within the walls of his home farm and served his family, upper servants and Protestant tenantry. However, the six demesne churches identified and detailed here in Table 5.5 show that in no case did the landlord of the estate have the power of advowson and only in Durrow, a perpetual curacy of Tullamore, was the landlord also the owner of tithes. While Bishop O'Beirne reported that Mr Fox, the previous landlord at Durrow, originally built the church at his own expense and in the episcopal visitation notes of 1818 stated the building to have been 'lately put into good repair and is furnished with everything necessary for divine service', the bishop offered no information as to how this came about.<sup>26</sup> The board of First Fruits did not include Durrow as a beneficiary of its disbursements between the years 1801 and 1822.<sup>27</sup> Lewis, however, reported that in 1802, First Fruits gifted £450 and also disbursed a loan of £50 to Durrow.<sup>28</sup> As there are no surviving vestry minutes or accounts and no estate records, it is not possible to put forward a definitive answer as to how the church was refurbished, furnished or maintained during the period in question. At Ballymaglasson, Loughcrew and Rathbeggan, the parishioners at large furnished and maintained the church, with no support from their patron or impropiator. Only in the parish union of Slane was the owner of the

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<sup>26</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 78.

<sup>27</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-9, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-93.

<sup>28</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, p. 590.

demesne recorded as having made a contribution to the considerable building works and ornamentation of the church.

While O'Beirne acknowledged that St Patrick's church, Slane had 'been lately much ornamented both within and without', he credited the incumbent Brabazon Disney with having 'obtained a loan and gift from the Trustees of the First Fruits' to finance the improvements.<sup>29</sup> Here again, no such disbursements have been found in the published versions of the board's returns to government and Lewis does not attribute any improvements at all to St Patrick's, Slane during the O'Beirne episcopate.<sup>30</sup> It is only in the vestry minutes that considerable improvements were recorded together with a detailed account of how those building works were financed. These records show that Lord Conyngham of Slane Castle financed the building of a new steeple and contributed £25 towards a new bell in 1806.<sup>31</sup> Two years later, *albeit* for his own use, he undertook to build a gallery at the west end, provided the parishioners were willing to 'engage to alter and fit-up the body of the church according to the plan given by Mr. Johnston'.<sup>32</sup> The architect mentioned was none other than Francis Johnston, who had recently designed the house of Mr Balfour at Townley Hall. There were other contributions from members of the congregation. Thomas Williams offered £100 towards refurbishments in 1805 and Robert Rigmaiden bequeathed the sum of £100 which was 'applied to the repairs of the church in' 1813.<sup>33</sup> As can be seen in Appendix 5.2, two of the six churches had a reasonable number of families in the congregation, yet, in at least four and most likely in all six, an annual parochial cess was levied to furnish and maintain the church (see Table 5.5).

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<sup>29</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-9, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-95; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, pp 561-2.

<sup>31</sup> *Slane V.M.B.*, 1800-62, pp 65, 67.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 53 & 104 respectively.

Table 5.5 Funds for the building, furnishing & maintenance of demesne churches

Church	Landholder	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
					Parishioners	Congregation
Ballymaglasson	W Murphy	Crown	Lord Downshire	First Fruits gift £600. <sup>34</sup>	Cess. <sup>35</sup> Silver chalice & paten inscribed with the name of Revd Thomas Tucher [sic]. <sup>36</sup>	Not recorded
Durrow P.C.	Lord Norbury	G. Stepney	Lord Norbury	Mr Fox, of Durrow <sup>37</sup>	Not recorded	Not known after Mr Fox.
Loughcrew	Mr Napier	Crown	Incumbent & Edwd. Rotherham	Not known.	Cess. <sup>38</sup>	Not recorded
Rathbeggan	John Standish	Lord Drogheda	Incumbent & Lord Drogheda	First Fruits gift £800. <sup>39</sup>	Cess. <sup>40</sup>	Not recorded
Slane	Lord Conyngham	Crown	Incumbent	Steeple funded by Lord Conyngham. <sup>41</sup>	Cess. <sup>42</sup>	£100 from Thos Williams. <sup>43</sup> New bell part funded by Lord Conyngham. <sup>44</sup> New E window, new sashes, furniture, books & surplice. Conyngham built W gallery. <sup>45</sup> Legacy of £100 from Robert Rigmaiden to keep church in repair. Pews by cess & subscription. <sup>46</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>35</sup> Ballymaglasson V.M.B., 1812-69 (R.C.B., MS P. 557.5.1).

<sup>36</sup> Inventory of church plate for the diocese of Meath (R.C.B., uncatalogued, unpaginated) (hereafter Inventory of church plate); although the inscription conveys an impression that Tucher gifted the items, the vestry minutes indicate he was reimbursed £16 19s. 7½d. from a parish cess, Ballymaglasson V.M.B., 1812, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 78.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>39</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>40</sup> Rathbeggan V.M.B., 1817-59 (R.C.B., MS P. 563.5.1, pp 3, 9, 11, remainder unpaginated).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 Apr. 1806, p. 77.

<sup>42</sup> Slane V.M.B., 1800-62.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 Apr. 1805, p. 53.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 Sept. 1806, p. 67.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 Feb. 1808, p. 77.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 Apr. 1813, p. 104; 21 Apr. 1813, pp 108-9.



(continued) Church	Landholder	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
					Parishioners	Congregation
Stackallen	Lord Boyne	Bishop & crown	Incumbent	n.a.	Not recorded	Not recorded
Source: V.M.Bs.; Visitation, 1817; Visitation, 1818; Inventory of church plate; <i>First Fruits returns, 1801-22</i> , pp 5-11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-95						

The parish church of Ardraccon, (Plate 5.1) in crown patronage, was built and financed by O'Beirne's immediate predecessor Henry Maxwell in 1777,<sup>47</sup> and although it is not one of the seventy-seven O'Beirne churches, its location within the episcopal demesne warrants some mention of how it was maintained during O'Beirne's tenure. According to the vestry minutes St Ultan's, Ardraccon, required very little maintenance from the time of its erection by Bishop Maxwell in 1777.<sup>48</sup> In 1805 and 1816 the wooden spire of the free-standing stone tower was painted at the cost of £19 10s. 7d. and £20 10s. respectively.<sup>49</sup>

Plate 5.1 St Ultan's, Ardraccon County Meath



Caroline Gallagher

28 Aug. 2002

In 1811 two local masons, Michael Shepherd and John Farrelly, were contracted to enclose the churchyard with 'a 4ft wall of Lime and stone – 4ft high and 2ft Broad'.<sup>50</sup> The church was painted in 1813 and 1818.<sup>51</sup> While vestries in other parishes throughout the diocese spent yearly sums on roof repairs, the church at Ardraccon required no

<sup>47</sup> Lewis, i, p. 42; Healy, ii, p. 313.

<sup>48</sup> Ardraccon V.M.B., & accounts, 1767-1814, 1815-26 (R.C.B., MSS P. 50.5.1; 50.5.2, pp 169-219 & 3-64 respectively).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 16 June 1805, accounts 1818, p. 185 & p. 23 respectively.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 31 Mar. 1812, p. 215.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 20 Apr. 1813, accounts 1818, p. 219 & p. 33 respectively.

such work until 1818 when the modest sum of £3 15s. 6d. was paid to William West 'for slating the church and offices'.<sup>52</sup> This may well have been due to the simplicity of the roof, as with a free-standing tower, the complications of marrying and maintaining flashings between hall and tower were avoided. The only other items recorded as purchased during the entire O'Beirne episcopate were five new prayer books in April 1811.<sup>53</sup> Of course, there were also the clerk's and sexton's salaries, bread and wine for the communion and the refurbishment of the schoolhouse. All were financed, as in other parishes, by the parochial cess. It seems a little incongruous that the bishop not only occupied the demesne in which the church stood but was also in receipt of £3 glebe rent,<sup>54</sup> yet he was not recorded as having contributed in any way to ease the parishioners annual burden. Unlike his predecessor and successor however, O'Beirne did occasionally attend vestry meetings.<sup>55</sup>

The reasons for his attendance at vestry in 1808 were first, to instruct the churchwardens to print and post a copy of the licensing laws in every public house in the parish, and secondly, to ensure that the 'barbarous custom' of whiskey drinking in the graveyard during funerals be no longer tolerated.<sup>56</sup> The ineffectiveness of the parish overseers in this regard was evidenced in the bishop's attendance at a vestry meeting more than three years later. In this further attempt to keep drunkenness as far from the demesne and episcopal palace as possible, O'Beirne also instructed that a new line of road be built between the church and the glebe house and that the existing road between the demesne gate known as Kells Gate and the village of Ardbraccan be closed to all, except in the immediate hours of public service or parochial meetings. Under no circumstance was the existing route to be used either on foot or horseback to facilitate those attending funerals. This was not a request nor a matter put forward for resolution

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., accounts 1818, p. 33.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 16 Apr. 1811, p. 211.

<sup>54</sup> Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826, p. 22.

<sup>55</sup> Ardbraccan V.M.B., 3 Apr. 1804, 8 Apr. 1806, 24 Mar. 1808, pp 175, 196, Ardbraccan V.M.B., 21 July 1811, 1819, pp 3, 39.

<sup>56</sup> Ardbraccan V.M.B., 24 Mar. 1808, p. 196.

by the vestry but was declared by O'Beirne and written in the minute book as an order 'given under my hand and episcopal seal'.<sup>57</sup>

A rural church may, by and large, have served a similar type of congregation as the demesne church and some, such as Kentstown, Kilshine and Moyglare stood but a very few yards from the demesne wall. It should not be taken for granted that country congregations comprised only landlords, upper servants and Church of Ireland tenants. Not all adult members of Protestant households depended on the land or the big house for an income. In the perpetual curacy of Mayne, while the congregation included a farmer, coachman, servant, gardener, steward and gamekeeper, there was also a miller, soldier, carpenter, publican, hat-maker, postmaster, brick-maker, shoemaker, mason and blacksmith.<sup>58</sup>

In 1818, Bishop O'Beirne recorded Kentstown (Plate 5.2) as having 'been lately put into complete repair and handsomely finished with a steeple and inside as well as outside ornaments and all necessary for the decent celebration of divine service'.<sup>59</sup> While the vestry minutes noted several general repairs to the church, there was no mention of the parishioners erecting a steeple.<sup>60</sup> Before and after 1815, the cess at Kentstown varied between 2*d.* and 1*s.* per acre.<sup>61</sup> However, in 1815, 'to finish repairs necessary to the church,' the levy was set at an inordinately high rate of £1 per acre.<sup>62</sup> It is likely therefore that the major improvements were carried out around that time. Sir Marcus Somerville of the Somerville estate, though neither patron nor impropiator, was the largest landholder and occupier in the parish. Somerville had an extensive demesne and as churchwarden, he was, to a considerable extent, laying the cess upon himself.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 21 July 1811, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> Mayne V.M.B., and registry, 1808-19 (R.C.B., MS P. 420.1.1, pp 11-15).

<sup>59</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 19-20.

<sup>60</sup> Kentstown V.M.B., 1801-18, pp 97-127.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

Plate 5.2

St Mary's, Kentstown, County Meath



Caroline Gallagher

4 Aug. 2006

As can be seen in Appendix 5.2, many rural parishes contained few Church of Ireland families. Although there was scarcely a parish that did not accommodate at least one Protestant family of substantial means, it was in country areas that the parochial cess was most vital in the repayment of First Fruits loans that had been secured in order to build or rebuild a parish church (Table 5.6). Some of the most obvious examples where even general maintenance would have been difficult without a parochial cess were Almoritia, Donaghpatrick, Drakestown, Galtrim, Kilbrew, Kilmainhamwood, Knockmark, Moyglare and Rathkenny, where the number of Church of Ireland families stood below ten. A further twelve parishes served fewer than twenty families and in no more than thirteen parishes did membership of the established church rise in excess of thirty families.

Table 5.6 Funds for building, furnishing and maintaining rural churches

Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Agher	Crown	Incumbent	Mr. Winter <sup>63</sup>	Cess. <sup>64</sup>	Voluntary contributions <sup>65</sup>
Almoritia	Bishop	n.a.	First Fruits loan £600 <sup>66</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Ardagh P.C.	Bishop	Bishop	First Fruits gift £500 <sup>67</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Ardnurcher	Crown	Lord Downshire	Parishioners <sup>68</sup>	Cess of 2½d per acre for new steeple. <sup>69</sup> Cess £190 to complete steeple & spire. <sup>70</sup> Cess for new gallery. <sup>71</sup>	Not recorded
Ballyboy	Earl Mountrath	Incumbent & Lord Downshire	First Fruits loan £900 <sup>72</sup> Parishioners <sup>73</sup>	Cess. <sup>74</sup>	Not recorded
Ballyloughloe	Bishop	n.a.	First Fruits loan £400 <sup>75</sup> Parishioners <sup>76</sup>	Cess. <sup>77</sup>	Not recorded

<sup>63</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 34; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, gives the date as 1804, i, p. 18.

<sup>64</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, p. 18.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

<sup>68</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 74-5.

<sup>69</sup> Horseleap V.M.B., 4 Apr. 1820, p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 23 May, 1822, p. 6.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 30 July, 1822, p. 6.

<sup>72</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>73</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 77.

<sup>74</sup> Ballyboy V.M.B., 19 Oct. & 13 Nov. 1813 (R.C.B., MS P. 225.5.2, pp 17 & 39); Visitation, 1818, p. 77.

<sup>75</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>76</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 94.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Ballymore P.C.	Bishop	Bishop	First Fruits loan £800 <sup>78</sup>	Cess to repair church. <sup>79</sup> Rebuild churchyard wall. General repairs. Paint the church & flag the aisle. Build 4 seats, slating, roughcast the church. New surplice & repair old. New bible, Common Prayer book & pulpit cushion. Bible & one prayer book. <sup>80</sup>	Not recorded
Benowen P.C.	Bishop	Bishop	First Fruits gift £600 <sup>81</sup>	Cess to repair ceiling, roof & chair. New seats, kneeling stools & communion table. <sup>82</sup>	Lord Castlemaine - 1 cup, 1 tankard, 2 plates. <sup>83</sup>
Castlejordan	Gifford family	Gifford family	First Fruits loan £1,000 <sup>84</sup> Parishioners <sup>85</sup>	Cess. <sup>86</sup>	Not recorded
Churchtown	Bishop & crown	n.a.	First Fruits gift £600 <sup>87</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Colpe	Lord Drogheda	Incumbent & Lord Drogheda	First Fruits gift £600 <sup>88</sup>	Not recorded	1815, silver-plated chalice & paten gifted by Henry Smith. <sup>89</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Ballymore Killare V.M.B., 17 Dec. 1822, pp 178-9; First Fruits returns did not record funding this church, see *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-95.

<sup>79</sup> Ballymore Killare V.M.B., 1802-22, pp 80-179.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 Mar. 1803, 21 Feb 1804, 1806-07, 9 Mar. 1808, 17 Feb. 1810, 6 Feb. 1811, 20 Apr. 1813, 17 Jan. 1818, 13 Apr. 1819, 8 Feb. 1820, pp, 80, 86, 95, 110, 119, 123, 133, 151, 157, 161 respectively.

<sup>81</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>82</sup> Benowen V.M.B., Easter & 3 Apr. 1820, pp 2-6.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 Apr. 1821, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> Castlejordan V.M.B., 17 Apr. 1822 & 16 Apr. 1827, pp 3 & 24.

<sup>85</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 60.

<sup>86</sup> Castlejordan transcripts of records, 1769-1874 (R.C.B., MS P. 234.28.1); Visitation, 1818, p. 60.

<sup>87</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Inventory of church plate.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Donaghpatrick	Thomas Everard	Incumbent & Mr Everard	First Fruits [loan] £500 <sup>90</sup>	Cess. <sup>91</sup> Improve churchyard wall & ditch. Church painted. E window repairs. Slating. Cloth for communion table. Gravel for churchyard. Church door altered & porch plastered. General repairs. 3 new seats. 1 seat & 3 benches. New piers. New Bell, roof repairs & painting inside of church. 2 new surplices & a blind for the E window. Roof repairs. <sup>92</sup>	Not recorded
Drakestown	Bishop & crown	Incumbent & bishop	First Fruits loan £532 <sup>93</sup>	Not recorded	1822, silver collecting plate gifted by Revd Longfield 1824, silver chalice gifted by Revd Longfield, Henry Owens & John Dyas <sup>94</sup>
Drumcree	Bishop & Lord Drogheda	n.a.	First Fruits loan £850 <sup>95</sup> Parishioners & Mr Smith of Barbavilla <sup>96</sup>	Cess. <sup>97</sup>	Loan partly repaid by Mr Smith who also contributed further & made the church 'an ornament to the country & a credit to the establishment'. <sup>98</sup>

<sup>90</sup> See Visitation, 1818, pp 5-6 where O'Beime did not give a date for the rebuilding of Donaghpatrick; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, p. 483, noted that a new hall was added to the tower of the old church in 1805. Note: as there is no mention of repayments to the First Fruits and no individual was found credited with repaying a loan, it is reasonable to suggest the £500 was gifted.

<sup>91</sup> Donaghpatrick V.M.B., 1804-22, pp 2-117.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 14 Nov. 1804, 8 Apr. 1806, accounts 1806, accounts 1808-9, 4 July 1809, 30 Apr. & 28 May 1811, 26 May 1813, 13 Apr. 1819, 24 Apr. 1821, 9 Apr. 1822, pp 2, 6-7, 16, 31, 46, 47, 53, 73, 93, 102.

<sup>93</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>94</sup> Inventory of church plate.

<sup>95</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>96</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 64.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.



(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Drumranny P.C.	Bishop	Incumbent of Ballyloughloe	First Fruits gift £600 <sup>99</sup>	Not recorded	1804, silver chalice gifted by Lord Sunderlin. <sup>100</sup>
Enniscoffey	Bishop	Blundall family	First Fruits gift £900 <sup>101</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Forgney P.C.	Bishop	Bishop	Countess of Rosse	Cess. <sup>102</sup>	Church enlarged & steepled by the Countess of Rosse <sup>103</sup>
Galtrim	Hussey, Ashe & Fisher	Bowes-Daly, Thompson & Judge	n.a.	Not recorded	Not recorded
Kentstown	Crown v Lord Dunsany	Incumbent	First Fruits gift £100 & loan £625 <sup>104</sup>	Cess. <sup>105</sup> New churchyard wall & general repairs to church. New bell & hanging of same. <sup>106</sup>	c.1801-20, 4 silver-plated collecting plates & flagon from Sir Marcus & Marianne Somerville. <sup>107</sup> 1810, 2 silver patens gifted by Thomas Meredyth. <sup>108</sup>
Kilbrew	Crown	Incumbent at a crown rent	Not recorded	Cess. <sup>109</sup> Work continuing inside church, vestry room slated, new surplice, pulpit cushion & carpet for chancel floor. <sup>110</sup>	Not recorded

<sup>99</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>100</sup> Inventory of church plate.

<sup>101</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>102</sup> Forgney V.M.B., 1802-10, n.p..

<sup>103</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 95; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, p. 633, corroborates O'Beime in this & gives the date as 1810; Forgney vestry minutes & general register, 1798-1835 makes no mention of the Dowager's contribution.

<sup>104</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 19-20.

<sup>105</sup> Kentstown V.M.B., 1801-18.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 Apr. 1801, Easter 1815, Easter 1816, pp 97, 115, 117.

<sup>107</sup> Inventory of church plate. Note: although undated, this item was presented during the O'Beime episcopate as Marianne Meredyth married Sir Marcus Somerville on 1 Oct 1801 & died in 1821. See Somerville family at <http://thepeerage.com> (21 May 2009); Sir Richard Phillips, 'Ireland' in *The monthly magazine or British register*, lii, Part ii (1821), p. 384.

<sup>108</sup> Inventory of church plate.

<sup>109</sup> Kilbrew V.M.B., Easter 1824 (R.C.B., MS P. 553.5.1, pp 1-2) records the works not yet complete; Visitation, 1818, pp 1-2 & 109.

<sup>110</sup> Kilbrew V.M.B., Easter 1824, pp 1-2.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Kilkenny West	Reverend Wm. Bryon	n.a.	Parishioners <sup>111</sup>	Cess. <sup>112</sup> Annual roof repairs 1800-33 <sup>113</sup> General church repairs. Dashed church, dashed & repaired vestry roof, new vestry door, vestry painted, repairs to churchyard wall, new seats. New registry book. New cloth for table, brush, lock, panels for church door & seats, repairs to vestry room. Paneling & lock, repairs to reading desk, new cloths for pulpit, reading desk & communion table, six chairs for vestry room, repairs to churchyard wall, new roof on chapel & repairs to church roof. House built for parish clerk. <sup>114</sup>	Ten pews by subscription <sup>115</sup>
Killeagh	Crown	n.a.	First Fruits gift £500 <sup>116</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Killoughey	Earl Mountrath	Lord Downshire	First Fruits gift £900 <sup>117</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Kilmainhamwood	Crown	Roman Catholic representatives of the late Lord Beaulieu	First Fruits gift £500 <sup>118</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>112</sup> Kilkenny West V.M.B., 1783-1833.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., March 1807, Apr. 1808, 6 Apr. 1811, 1 May 1811, 30 Nov. 1812, 14 Apr. 1817, pp 14, 21, 44-5, 47, 50-1, 65.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 1 May 1811, pp 44-45.

<sup>116</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 1801-22, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>118</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 4; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 170, gives the year of building as 1803; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-95, makes no mention of a disbursement for Kilmainhamwood.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Kilmoon	Primate & crown	Incumbent	First Fruits loan £500 <sup>119</sup> Parishioners <sup>120</sup>	Cess. <sup>121</sup>	Not recorded
Kilmore	Crown	n.a.	Not recorded	Cess. <sup>122</sup>	Not recorded
Kilshine	Bishop & crown	n.a.	First Fruits gifts £600 & £200 <sup>123</sup> Upwards of £2,000 from John Pollock for church, spire & furnishings. <sup>124</sup>	Cess. <sup>125</sup> Glass, ropes, repairs to yard wall. Prayer books, cost of pulling down the church at Clongill. Stud church walls. Church furniture. Repairs to ditch, slating, gravel. Consecration fee. Stud E & W ends of church, excluding damp & finish churchyard wall. New piers & gate, slating, leveling yard. Internal & external church repairs. Dash & paint the church, repay Revd Sutton for repairs to chancel. <sup>126</sup>	1802, silver-plated chalice & paten gifted by Revd Noble. <sup>127</sup> 1815, chalice gifted by John Pollock of Mountainstown. <sup>128</sup>
Knockmark	Crown	Incumbent	First Fruits gift £900 <sup>129</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded

<sup>119</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>120</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 21.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 32.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

<sup>124</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 7.

<sup>125</sup> Clongill & Kilshine V.M.B., 1807-23.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 June 1811, 1815 accounts, 16 Apr. 1816, 24 Sept 1816, 8 Apr. 1817, 24 Mar. 1818, 13 Apr. 1819, 4 Apr. 1820, 24 Apr. 1821, 9 Apr. 1823, pp 4, 8-16, 18.

<sup>127</sup> Inventory of church plate; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 266.

<sup>128</sup> Inventory of church plate; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 266.

<sup>129</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Leney	Sir John Piers	Sir John Piers	First Fruits loan £350 <sup>130</sup> Incorporated Soc., £200. Wilson's Hosp., £200 Parishioners <sup>131</sup>	Cess. <sup>132</sup>	1808, silver paten gifted by Alexander Murray; 1816, silver chalice gifted by the above named. <sup>133</sup>
Moyglare	Henry Arrabin	Incumbent	n.a.	Cess. <sup>134</sup> Church repairs, new gate, books & surplice. Repairs to church & yard. New churchyard wall. Dash churchyard wall, paint, book binding. Slating one side of church. Repair N roof, rafters, point S wall. Roof repairs, whitening & gravel. Repairs to ceiling & vault door, walls stripped & replastered, new window casing, sashing & glazing same. Improvements to vestry. Slating, new floor gate & bible, church dashed. <sup>135</sup>	Not recorded
Mayne P.C.	Bishop	Incumbent of Rathgraff & Marquis Westmeath	First Fruits gift £500 <sup>136</sup>	Cess. <sup>137</sup> Slater, surplice, church books, churchyard gate, communion plate, communion table & cloth, pulpit & all necessities for divine service. New bell. <sup>138</sup>	Not recorded

<sup>130</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>131</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 90.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Inventory of church plate.

<sup>134</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 33-34.

<sup>135</sup> Moyglare V.M.B., 6 Apr. 1801, 11 Apr. 1803, 3 Apr. 1804, Apr. 1805, 7 Apr. & 7 Oct. 1806, 1809, 23 Apr. & 16 Nov. 1811, 1813, n.p.

<sup>136</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

<sup>137</sup> Mayne V.M.B.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 19 Apr. 1808 & 1812, pp 1-2, 11.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Newtown Fertullagh	Bishop & crown	n.a.	Parishioners <sup>139</sup>	Cess. <sup>140</sup> Roof repaired. Roof slated. Church repairs. All pews repaired or rebuilt. Church repaired & painted, new books & vestry book. New pews. <sup>141</sup>	Not recorded
Painestown	Bishop & crown	Incumbent	First Fruits loan £400 & parishioners <sup>142</sup>	Cess. <sup>143</sup> Steeple, new roof & new gallery at W end. <sup>144</sup>	Not recorded
Portneshangan	Bishop	n.a.	Site & church gifted by Mr Jas. Gibbons, Ballinagall <sup>145</sup>	Not recorded	1823, Silver chalice, flagon & paten, probably gifted by James Gibbons. <sup>146</sup>
Rathaspick	Bishop	n.a.	First Fruits loan £200 & parishioners <sup>147</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Rathcondra	Lord Belvedere	n.a.	First Fruits gift £500 <sup>148</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Rathkenny	Thomas Hussey	Incumbent & Lord Drogheda	Church put in complete repair by parishioners <sup>149</sup>	Cess. <sup>150</sup>	Not recorded

<sup>139</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 91.

<sup>140</sup> Newtown V.M.B., (R.C.B., MS P 911.5.1).

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 9 Apr. 1802, 2 Apr. 1804, 1 Apr. 1805, 18 Apr. 1808, accounts 1808, 22 Apr. 1811, pp 314, 320, 322, 336, 338, 341.

<sup>142</sup> Painestown & Ardmulchan V.M.B., in which are loose receipts from the Board of First Fruits for instalments received; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 454.

<sup>143</sup> Painestown & Ardmulchan V.M.B.

<sup>144</sup> Lewis, *A topographical dictionary* ii, p 454.

<sup>145</sup> Portlomon & Portnashangan V.M.B., 11 Jan. 1822, 1824, pp 1, 6-7; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 468 states site & £1,892 gifted by Gibbons, £277 gifted by Sir Richard Levinge & £738 gifted by First Fruits.

<sup>146</sup> Inventory of church plate.

<sup>147</sup> Rathaspick /Rathowen V.M.B., 27 Nov. 1820 (R.C.B., MS P. 599.5.1, n.p.).

<sup>148</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

<sup>149</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 14.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Rathconnell	Lord Drogheda	Incumbent & Lord Drogheda	Bishop Maxwell £500 Parishioners raised £197.10s 6d <sup>151</sup> Steeple gifted by Richard Reynell of Reynella <sup>152</sup>	Cess. <sup>153</sup> 2 crimson velvet cushions with silk tassels. Silver-plated chalice, flagon & paten. Crimson cloths for communion table, pulpit & readers desk. Complete the church, make a pathway & enclose churchyard. Extensive repairs to church & coppering of steeple. Repairs to church. Internal alterations, repairs & additions. New vestry room, stud E & W walls of church & repair steeple. <sup>154</sup>	4 boxed pews by subscription at 20 guineas per pew <sup>155</sup>
Skryne	Crown	Incumbent	First Fruits loan £500 <sup>156</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Stonehall	Bishop	Marquis Headfort	First Fruits gift £600 & parishioners <sup>157</sup>	Cess. <sup>158</sup> Church repairs. Further repairs to the church. Repairing & ornamenting the church. <sup>159</sup>	Not recorded
Tara	Crown	Incumbent & Lord Dunsany	Site gifted by Lord Ludlow or Lord Tara. First Fruits loan £500 & parishioners <sup>160</sup>	Cess. <sup>161</sup> Old church - buttresses to E gable, walls repaired 'due to damp', new bell rope, surplice. New bell. <sup>162</sup>	Not recorded

<sup>151</sup> Rathconnell V.M.B., 10 Apr. 1798 (R.C.B., MS P. 240.5.1, p. 3).

<sup>152</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 66.

<sup>153</sup> Rathconnell V.M.B.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., accounts 1800-1802, 6 Apr. 1801, 15 Apr. 1811, 15 Apr. 1815, 23 Mar. 1818 (R.C.B., MS P. 240.5., pp 1, 5-7 at end of book, 46, 56, 61).

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 2 Apr. 1804, p. 27.

<sup>156</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90; MS D7/157, p. 69.

<sup>158</sup> Stonehall & Multifarnham V.M.B.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 17 Apr. 1814, 8 Mar. 1815, 13 Apr. 1819, pp 3, 5, 13.

<sup>160</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; Visitation, 1818, pp 28-9.

<sup>161</sup> Tara V.M.B.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 19 Apr. 1808, 24 Apr. 1810, pp 12, 28.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Tissauran	Bishop	n.a.	Site gifted by Colonel L'Estrange. Steeple built by subscription & cess <sup>163</sup> First Fruits gift £500 <sup>164</sup>	Cess. <sup>165</sup>	Not recorded
Vastina	Crown	Incumbents of Churchtown & Vastina & Sir William Lambart Cromie	First Fruits gift £500 <sup>166</sup> Parishioners <sup>167</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Wherry	Bishop	Incumbent & Revds H. King & J. Armstrong	Steeple by cess & subscription <sup>168</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Source: see footnotes for this table					

<sup>163</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 97.

<sup>164</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

<sup>165</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 97.

<sup>166</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

<sup>167</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 92.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Sir Marcus Somerville of Kentstown was not alone in his *largesse*. While Table 5.6 clearly shows the degree to which the parishioners at large were obliged to contribute through the annual cess, and through additional cesses that were set during the year to meet arising necessities, sizable gifts from individuals towards church improvements are also evident. One fact worthy of note is that of the ten parishes where individuals contributed large amounts of money or the land on which to build a new church, six were in the patronage of the bishop. At Forgney, the countess of Rosse enlarged the church and built the steeple.<sup>169</sup> Richard Reynell built the steeple at Rathconnell.<sup>170</sup> John Pollock of Mountainstown contributed upwards of £2,000 for the building and furnishing of Kilshine.<sup>171</sup> James Gibbons of Ballinagall gave the site and built the church at Portneshangan.<sup>172</sup> Colonel L'Estrange of Streamstown Castle gave the site at Tisauran.<sup>173</sup> There were individual subscriptions towards the steeples of Tisauran and Wherry.<sup>174</sup> In no parish was either the patron or impropiator recorded as having contributed anything towards the building, furnishing or maintenance of the church. There are no extant records to inform how the remaining churches were maintained, though again, it is likely that the parish cess was the means of finance.

Moving to the third category, the sixteen village churches were also mainly reliant on the parochial cess for furnishing and maintenance (Table 5.7). Only in the villages of Castlecor, Castlelost, Clonfad/Tyrrellspass and Gallen were individual contributions substantial.<sup>175</sup> Ironically these were parishes with some of the highest number of families in the congregation. Gallen and Killiconnighan are particularly notable. The church at Gallen was built on a site gifted by one of the parish impropiators, Dennis Bowes-Daly, and the communion plate for St Kinneth's at Killiconnighan was provided by the wife of the patron and impropiator, Lord

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>172</sup> Portlomon & Portneshangan V.M.B., pp 1, 6-7.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>175</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 56, 71-72; Mount Nugent V.M.B., 10 Feb. 1816, n.p.



Darnley.<sup>176</sup> As Appendix 5.2 illustrates, these were parishes with relatively healthy Church of Ireland populations. The parishes of Kilmessan and Ratoath, where the number of Protestant families stood at no more than six and five respectively, relied most heavily on the parishioners at large and those at Ratoath shouldered the additional burden of repaying a loan of £805 to the board of First Fruits.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 103-4; Inventory of church plate.

<sup>177</sup> Rebuilt in 1820, funding not given, National inventory of architectural heritage, Kilmessan Church of Ireland, available at (<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=ME&regno=14329013>) (7 July 2009); *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

Table 5.7 Funds for the building, furnishing and maintenance of village churches

Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Castlecor	Lord Dunsany	n.a.	Site gifted by Nugent of Bobsgrove <sup>178</sup> Vestry room, tower & ditch to enclose the churchyard also at the expense of Mr Nugent of Bobsgrove. <sup>179</sup>	Cess. <sup>180</sup> Cloths for pulpit, readers desk & communion table, new Communion table, cushion for pulpit, surplice, & <sup>30</sup> . Communion cup & plate, fringe, vestry book & registry, poor box. Repairs to church. Repairs to belfry & <i>louvres</i> . <sup>181</sup>	Not recorded
Castlelost	Lord Kilmaine	n.a.	Site gifted by Rochfort of Rochfort <sup>182</sup> First Fruits gift £800 <sup>183</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Clonfad/Tyrrellspass	Bishop	n.a.	Steeple from Mr Boyd husband of Dowager Lady Belvedere <sup>184</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Clonard	Bishop	Incumbent & Joseph Ashe	First Fruits loan £400 & parishioners <sup>185</sup>	Cess. <sup>186</sup> Church repairs. Remove & refit slates in a fit manner, repair all floors, new backs on three pews. <sup>187</sup>	Not recorded

<sup>178</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 56.

<sup>179</sup> Mount Nugent V.M.B., 10 Feb. 1816, n.p.

<sup>180</sup> Mount Nugent V.M.B., n.p.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 18 Feb. 1811, accounts 1811, 20 May 1820, 13 Nov. 1821, n.p.

<sup>182</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 71.

<sup>183</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>184</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 72.

<sup>185</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89; Clonard V.M.B., 24 July 1809, pp 23-4; Visitation, 1818, p. 60.

<sup>186</sup> Clonard V.M.B.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 17 Aug 1818, 13 Oct. 1818, 13 Apr. 1819, 13 May 1819, pp 40, 42, 47, 53-54.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Dunboyne	Crown	Incumbent & Hamilton family	Parishioners <sup>188</sup>	Cess. Repairs to roof, bell, masonry, porch & windows. Repair roof & church. Slates. New roof. Raise & plaster walls. Works continued. Further works on church. New vestry room. Finish & paint church. New stove. Repairs to steeple & new spire. Finish vestry room, Build new gallery. <sup>189</sup> Whitewash & paint church. Repair roof, door & door-case, New surplice & tippet. <sup>190</sup>	Not recorded
Duleek	Lord Drogheda	Incumbent & Lord Drogheda	First Fruits loan £1,500 <sup>191</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded
Dunshaughlin	Crown	Incumbent & crown	First Fruits loans £500 & £200 <sup>192</sup>	Cess. <sup>193</sup> New bell. <sup>194</sup>	Not recorded
Gallen	Bishop	Denis Bowes-Daly of Cuba Court, Cloghan; Thompson & Judge of Shillestown	Site gifted by Bowes-Daly <sup>195</sup> First Fruits gift £600 <sup>196</sup>	Cess. <sup>197</sup>	Not recorded

<sup>188</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 39.

<sup>189</sup> Dunboyne V.M.B., accounts 1800, accounts 1802, accounts 1803, 20 Sept. & 3 Oct. 1804, 5 June 1805, 15 Apr. 1806, 7 Apr. 1807, 26 Apr. 1808, 7 Apr. 1809, 23 Apr. 1811, 20 Apr. 1813; Dunboyne V.M.B., book 2, n.p.

<sup>190</sup> Dunboyne V.M.B., 24 Mar. 1818, accounts 1820, 4 Apr. 1820; Dunboyne V.M.B., book 2, n.p.

<sup>191</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>192</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; Dunshaughlin V.M.B., 5 July 1813, p. 194.

<sup>193</sup> Dunshaughlin V.M.B.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, accounts 1799-1800, p. 143.

<sup>195</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 103-04.

<sup>196</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>197</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 103-04.

( continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Kilbeggan	Bishop	Lambert family	First Fruits loan £200 Parishioners <sup>198</sup>	Cess. <sup>199</sup>	Not recorded
Killiconnigan	Lord Darnley	Lord Darnley	First Fruits loan £800 <sup>200</sup>	Cess. <sup>201</sup> Church repairs, new bible, books bound. General repairs. <sup>202</sup>	1823, silver chalice, flagon & paten gifted by the Countess of Darnley. <sup>203</sup>
Killucan/Rathwire	Bishop	n.a.	First Fruits loans £1,000 & £200 <sup>204</sup> Parishioners & subscriptions <sup>205</sup>	Cess. <sup>206</sup>	Pews by subscription <sup>207</sup>
Kilmessan <sup>208</sup>	Lord Drogheda	Incumbent & Lord Drogheda	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Kilskyre	Crown	Incumbent	First Fruits loan £466 <sup>209</sup> Parishioners <sup>210</sup>	Cess to procure all proper necessities <sup>211</sup>	Not recorded

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>199</sup> Kilbeggan V.M.B., (R.C.B., MS P. 409.5.1).

<sup>200</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>201</sup> Killiconnighan V.M.B.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 13 Apr. 1819, 4 Apr. 1820, pp 18, 27.

<sup>203</sup> Inventory of church plate.

<sup>204</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; Killucan V.M.B., 13 May 1811, p. 111.

<sup>205</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 62.

<sup>206</sup> Killucan V.M.B., 8 Oct. 1810, p. 108.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 28 Mar. 1815, p. 137.

<sup>208</sup> Rebuilt in 1820, funding not given, National inventory of architectural heritage, Kilmessan Church of Ireland, available at <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.asp?type=record&countv=ME&regno=14329013> (7 July 2009).

<sup>209</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>210</sup> Kilskyre V.M.B., 7 Jan. 1822 (R.C.B., MS P. 47.5.1, p. 187).

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 23 Aug. 1824, p. 198.

( continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation
Kinnegad P.C.	Bishop	Incumbent of Killucan	First Fruits loans £333 & £1,000 <sup>212</sup> Parishioners <sup>213</sup>	Cess. <sup>214</sup> Stove & metal flue, fixtures, glazing, new bell. <sup>215</sup>	Not recorded
Moynalty	Crown	Incumbent	First Fruits loan £1,000 <sup>216</sup> Parishioners <sup>217</sup>	Cess <sup>218</sup>	Not recorded
Ratoath	Crown & Lowther family	Incumbent, vicar of St Mary's, Athlone & Law family	First Fruits loan £805 <sup>219</sup> Parishioners <sup>220</sup>	Cess <sup>221</sup>	Not recorded
Source: See footnotes for this table					

<sup>212</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; See Kinnegad V.M.B., 9 Nov. 1821, p. 7, where it is recorded that a loan of £1,000 was given by the First Fruits; Visitation, 1818, p. 2 also gives the figure £1,000.

<sup>213</sup> Kinnegad V.M.B., 24 Apr. 1821, p. 2.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, accounts 1823, p. 17.

<sup>216</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>217</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 2.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>220</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 35.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

In 1813 the vestry at Dunshaughlin agreed a cess of £42 per year for a period of seventeen years to repay the First Fruits loan of £700.<sup>222</sup> The parish was unusual as unlike most other parishes, the cess set in 1813 appears not to have been subsequently raised to accommodate the vagaries of builders, tradesmen or over-optimistic estimates. The accounts for the new village church were finally settled in 1821 following a protracted arbitration that concerned the contracted local carpenter, Peter Early.<sup>223</sup> The church of Dunboyne was not unusual in its long history of annual repairs, nor in its small congregation of twenty-eight Church of Ireland families.<sup>224</sup> In 1804 when carpenters at work on the roof reported the building too 'dangerous and unsafe to continue Divine Service', the vestry resolved to 'receive proposals for raising the walls, new roofing, slating and plaistering [sic]'.<sup>225</sup> The sum of £204 or 10*d.* per acre was to be raised off the parish 'without loss of time'.<sup>226</sup> Over the following three years the cess was set at £92, £118 and £152.<sup>227</sup> In 1809 £38 10*s.* was needed and in 1811, £138 was levied in order to repair the steeple and erect a spire.<sup>228</sup> Two years later the cess overplus was used to begin building a gallery and in 1814 £3 was levied to complete it.<sup>229</sup> A total sum well in excess of £700 had been cessed upon the parish at large. There is no record of either First Fruits funding or individual contributions from among the congregation. In this parish the entire sum was borne by the parishioners at large.

We come now to urban churches. While generally sited in a town where some landlord held a great proportion of the property within the parish, the church also served a congregation of shopkeepers, merchants, millers, lawyers, bankers, physicians and so on. It was in urban parishes where Church of Ireland families were most numerous and where the level of contributions from individual members of the congregations could reasonably be expected to have been high. However, several of

<sup>222</sup> Dunshaughlin V.M.B., 23 Oct. 1818, pp 195-6.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 195-240.

<sup>224</sup> Dunboyne V.M.B., 13 Apr. 1790-16 Apr. 1798, n.p.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 Sept. 1804 & 3 Oct. 1804, n.p.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 Oct. 1804, n.p.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 Aug. 1805, 15 Apr. 1806, 7 Apr. 1807, n.p.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 Apr. 1809, 23 Apr. 1811, n.p.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 Apr. 1813, 19 Apr. 1814, n.p.

the eleven towns in which churches were built or rebuilt during the O'Beirne episcopate fared no better in terms of individual support than their demesne, rural or village counterparts (Table 5.8) despite the fact that in seven towns of the diocese Protestant congregations numbered one hundred or more families (Appendix 5.2). For example, the parish of St Mary's Drogheda, with no more than forty-one families, had a reduced congregation if compared to the rural parishes of Newtown Fertullagh, Ballyloughloe or Tissanran. Six of the eleven village churches exceeded St Mary's in terms of Protestant families (Appendix 5.2).

Table 5.8 Funds for building, furnishing and maintaining urban churches

Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation/Clergy
Athlone St Mary's	Bishop	Incumbent at a crown rent of £1. 6s 8d <sup>230</sup>	First Fruits loan £1,000 <sup>231</sup>	Cess. <sup>232</sup>	1816, one restored silver chalice gifted by Revd Robert Handcock D.D. <sup>233</sup>
Castlepollard	Bishop	Earl of Meath & St Patrick's Christchurch vicars choral.	First Fruits loan £3,000 <sup>234</sup> Lord Longford, Mr Pollard & parishioners <sup>235</sup>	Cess. <sup>236</sup>	Not recorded
Drogheda St Mary's	Bishop	Incumbent & Lord Drogheda	First Fruits gift £600 & loan £500 <sup>237</sup> Parishioners <sup>238</sup>	Cess. <sup>239</sup>	1815, silver-plated chalice & paten gifted by Henry Smith. <sup>240</sup>
Enniskeen P.C.	Bishop	Bishop	Parishioners <sup>241</sup>	Cess. <sup>242</sup>	Not recorded

<sup>230</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 97.

<sup>231</sup> St Mary's Athlone V.M.B., book 1, 4 Feb. 1823, p. 3; St Mary's Athlone V.M.B., book 2, 20 Feb & 31 Mar. 1823 (R.C.B., MS P. 392.5.1, pp 44, 47).

<sup>232</sup> See Table 5.1 above.

<sup>233</sup> St Mary's Athlone V.M.B., book 2, 16 Sept. 1816, p. 1; Inventory of church plate.

<sup>234</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>235</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 52-54.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>238</sup> St Mary's Drogheda V.M.B., 8 Apr. 1804 (R.C.B., MS P. 404.5.1, n.p).

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Inventory of church plate.

<sup>241</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 12.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.



(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Furnishing & maintenance	
				Parishioners	Congregation/Clergy
Kells	Bishop	Archdeacon	Parishioners <sup>243</sup>	<p>Cess.<sup>244</sup>  Rearrange chancel, rebuild &amp; buttress S wall &amp; re-roof S side.  New vestry room &amp; corresponding room at the opposite side.  A new building for the gallery staircase &amp; a new building on the opposite side to correspond.  Convert the present gallery staircase &amp; the present vestry room to four pews of equal size.  The church ceiling to be coved in the Gothic style.<sup>245</sup>  Chimney sweep, repairs to masonry, woodwork, plaster, floors roof &amp; bell, painting.<sup>246</sup></p>	Not recorded
Kilcleagh/Moate	Bishop	Not known	<p>First Fruits loan £857<sup>247</sup>  Parishioners<sup>248</sup></p>	<p>Cess.<sup>249</sup>  Enlarge churchyard, repair &amp; paint pews, windows, churchyard gate &amp; railing.  New eave troughs &amp; water spouts.  Staunch damp walls &amp; paint ceiling.<sup>250</sup></p>	Pews by subscription <sup>251</sup>

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., pp 1-2.

<sup>244</sup> Kells V.M.B.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 10 Apr. 1803, 6 Apr. 1805, pp 11-12, 17-18.

<sup>246</sup> Kells account book, 1818 (R.C.B., MS P. 192.7.2, pp 6-8).

<sup>247</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; Kilcleagh V.M.B., 1 Jan. 1816 (R.C.B., MS P. 412.5.1, p. 66).

<sup>248</sup> Kilcleagh V.M.B.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 11 Apr. 1814, 8 Apr. 1822, pp 61, 181.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 22 Apr. 1817, pp 81-83.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Parishioners	Furnishing & maintenance Congregation/Clergy
Mullingar	Crown	Vicar of Rathgraff Blue Coat Hosp. & Earl Westmeath	First Fruits loan £1,200 <sup>252</sup> Parishioners <sup>253</sup>	Cess. <sup>254</sup> Roof repair. New prayer books, binding old bible & prayer books. Repair the churchyard wall. New roof & repairs to church. Continued works to the church. £200 to Edward Dibbs in compensation for pulling down his two dwellings in order to make sufficient space to enlarge the church. £3. 6s. compensation to Owen Browne due to injury he sustained upon the church scaffolding. Defray expense incurred by church wardens. £1,800 to liquidate debts & finish the church. £424.16s. 8d. to further liquidate debt & make repairs to church roof. <sup>255</sup>	Pews by subscription <sup>256</sup>
Oldcastle	Lord Dunsany	Earl of Westmeath	First Fruits loan £1,000 <sup>257</sup> Ornamented & spired by Mr Napier <sup>258</sup>	Not recorded	Not recorded

<sup>252</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; V.M.B., 24 Oct. 1814, p. 55.

<sup>253</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 65.

<sup>254</sup> Mullingar V.M.B.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 Apr. 1806-30 Mar. 1812, 24 Apr. 1810, 20 Apr. 1813, 10 Aug. 1813, 12 Apr. 1814, 20 Aug. 1817, 27 July 1818, 14 Mar. 1820, 4 Apr. 1820, 1 Apr. 1823, pp 2-33, 38, 41, 49, 77, 81, 93, 97-98, 127.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 Aug. 1821, pp 113-4.

<sup>257</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

<sup>258</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 54-56.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Parishioners	Furnishing & maintenance Congregation/Clergy
Navan	Crown	Incumbent at a crown rent	First Fruits gift £600 & loan £1,100 <sup>259</sup> Subscriptions. <sup>260</sup> Steeple partly funded by subscription. <sup>261</sup> Earl of Bective, Sir Marcus Somerville & Revd D. A. Beaufort, £50 each. <sup>262</sup>	Cess. <sup>263</sup> Church & steeple repairs. Hang the great bell, boarded cover on steeple, pin & dash the church walls. <sup>264</sup> Finish steeple, repairs to roof, new prayer books & register. Paint the church ceiling. Church repairs. Sand & paint the five windows, glaze & paint Belfry window to give an appearance of Portland stone. New roof for steeple. Staunch & finish the steeple. Usual repairs. Repair & preserve the church organ. Two new surplices. Law costs in a suit taken by Owen Madden & Charles Curry, masons. Paint internal church walls & wood-work. Repair & regulate the steeple clock. New bell. <sup>265</sup>	Pews by subscription. <sup>266</sup> 1810, silver chalice gifted by Thomas Meredyth. <sup>267</sup> Gallery erected by Lords Ludlow & Tara. Episcopal throne erected by the bishop. <sup>268</sup>

<sup>259</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90; Navan V.M.B., book 2, 16 June 1813 (R.C.B., MS P. 442.5.2, p. 70).

<sup>260</sup> Navan V.M.B., books 1 & 2 (R.C.B., MSS P. 442.5.1 & 442.5.2); Visitation, 1818, pp 47-49.

<sup>261</sup> Navan V.M.B., book 2, 20 Apr. 1802, p. 330.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 July 1818, pp 131-2.

<sup>263</sup> Navan V.M.B., book 1.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 Apr. 1802, 20 Apr. 1804, pp 325, 344.

<sup>265</sup> Navan V.M.B., book 2, 8 Apr. 1806, 17 Dec. 1807, 12 Apr. 1809, 13 Apr. 1811, 12 May 1815, 20 Oct. 1818, 3 Feb. 1820, 1 May 1821, 1823, pp 1 & 5, 14, 24, 44, 95, 141, 159, 169, 187-8).

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 June 1818, pp 129-131.

<sup>267</sup> Inventory of church plate.

<sup>268</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 47-49.

(continued) Church	Patron	Tithe ownership	Funds for building	Parishioners	Furnishing & maintenance Congregation/Clergy
Trim	Bishop	n.a.	Bishop & parishioners <sup>269</sup>	Not recorded	'Rich coverings for the Pulpit, & <sup>oo</sup> , & <sup>oo</sup> , and books of expensive binding, gifted by the earl of Mornington from his chapel at Dangan <sup>270</sup>
Tullamore	Bishop	Incumbent & Lord Norbury	Site given by Lord Charleville. <sup>271</sup> First Fruits gifts £500, £600, £200 & loans £1,000x3 <sup>272</sup> £500 gift from Revd Ponsonby Gouldsbury. <sup>273</sup> Lord Charleville & parishioners <sup>274</sup>	Cess <sup>275</sup>	Pews by subscription. <sup>276</sup>
Source: see footnotes for this table					

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., pp 40-42; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, pp 643-5 credits the bishop's gift.

<sup>270</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 40-42.

<sup>271</sup> Tullamore V.M.B., & accounts, 18 July 1806, p. 5.

<sup>272</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-6, 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90, 95.

<sup>273</sup> Tullamore V.M.B., & accounts, 18 July 1806, p. 7.

<sup>274</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 79; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, pp 652-3.

<sup>275</sup> Tullamore V.M.B., & accounts, 15 Apr. 1811, 18 Oct. 1818, pp 27 & 54.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 2 Aug. 1809, pp 19-20.

St Catherine's, Tullamore was coupled with Durrow, and with the exception of Ardnurcher and its chapelries, had the greatest number of Church of Ireland families of any parish in the diocese.<sup>277</sup> It was the largest church built during the period in question and benefited more than any other in terms of government funding and individual subscription. Revd Ponsonby Gouldsbury, who had served the parish since 1799, gifted £500.<sup>278</sup> Pews were allotted by subscriptions of ten, twenty or thirty guineas.<sup>279</sup> In order to generate as much revenue as possible from the sale of pews, no more than two families were permitted to share one seat.<sup>280</sup> A 'subscription book' was opened and by 1809 twenty-one pews costing thirty and twenty guineas had already been reserved (Table 5.9). The board of First Fruits gifted £1,300 towards the cost of St Catherine's and gave loans totaling £3,000.<sup>281</sup> Lord Charleville, in addition to repaying the loan amount, contributed a further £3,000.<sup>282</sup>

Table 5.9 St Catherine's, Tullamore: pews reserved by subscription, 2 Aug. 1809

Pew	Thirty guineas	Pew	Twenty guineas
1	John Killaly	1	Mrs Wilson
2	Francis Berry	2	Mrs Crawford
3	George Slator	3	Samuel Collins
4	Thomas Acres	4	J.B. Tabuteau
5	Richard Deveral	5	Rosboro & Wilson
6	John Grier	6	Coghill & brethren
7	[ ] Wilson	7	James Ridley
8	Samuel [ ]	8	Ms Dogherty & Dr. Brereton
9	Mrs O'Flangan	9	Misses Crow
10	Curate	10	R & S McMullen
		11	Michael Cuddy

Source: Tullamore V.M.B., & accounts, 2 Aug. 1809, pp 18-20

Without detracting from Charleville's generosity, the erection of St Catherine's on the imposing site of Hop Hill overlooking the town was most certainly the architectural *pièce de résistance* of Tullamore, which, under his guidance, was

<sup>277</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 127-134

<sup>278</sup> Tullamore V.M.B., & accounts, 18 July 1806, p. 7; Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 331.

<sup>279</sup> Tullamore V.M.B., & accounts, 2 Aug. 1809, pp 18-20.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>281</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-6, 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90, 95.

<sup>282</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 79.

then undergoing some considerable development. Charleville's generosity was acknowledged by Revd Gouldsbury and the congregation when a public show of gratitude was presented before him in 1815 and recorded in the vestry minutes:

..for those munificent and repeated donations which have enabled [sic] us to build one of the most beautiful and commodious Churches in this Country; and for this we are no less indebted to your Lordships judgment in the arrangement of the plan, than your generous assistance in the execution of it... We trust, my Lord, it will remain for many ages a memorial of your Lordships liberality, as well as an ornament and support of our happy Establishment...<sup>283</sup>

Although exceptional in its scale and ornamentation St Catherine's was not the only church built as part of an urban development project. St Michael's at Castlepollard, while funded by a loan of £3,000 from the First Fruits, was the centerpiece of the restructuring of Castlepollard, as undertaken by William Pollard, who inherited the family estate of Kinturk in the early years of the nineteenth century.<sup>284</sup> Pollard was aided in his efforts not only by the parishioners and the First Fruits, but also by his neighbour Lord Longford of Tullyally Castle. Between them, Pollard and Longford undertook to repay £1,000 of the loan.<sup>285</sup>

St Patrick's, Trim and St Columba's, Kells were two churches of some importance in the diocese. The former, although without a chapter, was recognized as the cathedral church. The latter was important in that it was the church of the archdeaconry. As detailed information for the rebuilding, furnishing and maintenance of these churches is minimal, in their stead, the church of St Mary's, Navan is worth consideration, given its situation in the town less than two miles from the bishop's palace, and a church in which he regularly preached before a congregation of up to sixty-seven families.

The parishioners at Navan bore the cost of providing salaries for several parochial servants. In addition to the usual sums needed to pay a parish clerk, sexton

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<sup>283</sup> Tullamore V.M.B., & accounts, 1815, p. 85.

<sup>284</sup> ([www://buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=WM&regno=15302036](http://www/buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=WM&regno=15302036)) (13 July 2009).

<sup>285</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 52-54.

and schoolmaster, the parishioners employed an organ-blower or bellows-blower, organist, watchmaker and a bell-ringer who also acted as gravedigger.<sup>286</sup> The organ-blower and sexton were both dressed at the expense of the parish, the sexton's uniform being 'a wide coat of strong blue Cloth, with a large scarlet cape and girt [girth] buttons'.<sup>287</sup> Although Navan had fewer Church of Ireland families than any other town in the diocese, excepting St Mary's, Drogheda, its church-rebuilding project secured more individual contributions than any other. First Fruits disbursed a gift of £600 and a loan of £1,000.<sup>288</sup> To this was added £50 each from the earl of Bective, Sir Marcus Somerville and the incumbent and architect Revd Daniel Augustus Beaufort.<sup>289</sup> The steeple was part funded by subscription and Lords Ludlow and Tara funded the gallery.<sup>290</sup> A silver chalice was gifted by Thomas Meredyth and the bishop provided an episcopal throne.<sup>291</sup> In addition twenty-three pews (Table 5.10) were purchased by subscription.

Table 5.10 St Mary's, Navan: pews purchased by subscription, 16 June 1818

Pew	Name	Pew	Name
1	Rector	2	Lord bishop of Meath for throne
3	Barry family of Boyne Hill	4	Barry family of Kilcarn
5	John Metges	6	John Ruxton
7	Mrs Cusack of Rathaldron	8	Thomas J. White
9	Revd. F.D. Hamilton	10	Major John Williams
11	Mr James Morgan	12	Portrieve – paid by Corporation
13	Town clerk – paid by Corporation	14	Mr James McLoughlin
15	Servants of Revd. Mr Barry	16	William Dillon
17	Held jointly by the sexton, James, John & Elizabeth Barry & their families	18	Thomas Morgan
19	John Smith	20	George Kenyon
21	Captain Charleton	22	Mrs Nelligan
23	Henry Hazelwood		

Source: Navan V.M.B., book 2, 16 June 1818, pp 129-31

<sup>286</sup> Navan V.M.B., books 1 & 2, 1750-1805, 1806-1869.

<sup>287</sup> Navan V.M.B., book 1, 16 Apr. 1805, p. 351.

<sup>288</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90; Navan V.M.B., book 2, 16 June 1813, p. 70.

<sup>289</sup> Navan V.M.B., book 1, 20 Apr. 1802, pp 131-2

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 Apr. 1802, p. 330; Visitation, 1818, pp 47-49.

<sup>291</sup> Inventory of church plate; Visitation, 1818, pp 47-49.

As noted previously, it was the remit of the incumbent to keep the chancel in good order. In Meath, there was one instance where the clergyman was prevailed upon to fulfill his duty in this respect and another where he was allowed to circumvent the regulation. In Kilkenny West Revd Richard Butler Bryan served the parish, but Revd William Bryan was the appointed, though non-resident, incumbent. In a letter of complaint to the primate in 1808, the churchwardens reported that the chancel had fallen and that neither vestry nor bishop could compel the incumbent to rebuild it.<sup>292</sup> If the primate made an attempt to settle the matter, he did not meet with success. In 1809, one of the churchwardens, John Hogan wrote to both Revd William Bryan and the lay impropiator;

... I have not the honour of knowing you, but I am inclined to conclude that had you seen the indecent, to say ruinous state of our church, in consequence of the Chancel having been so long neglected, you would have prevented this appeal to you. It is not for me to give my opinion as that it lies with the Rector or lay Impropiator to repair, and of this opinion are the parishioners. If you think otherwise and mean to dispute it, I shall esteem it a favour of your letting me know it as soon as convenient, that we may have the point determined before the season of repairs goes by.<sup>293</sup>

In July, Bryan promised to bear what he considered 'his proportion of the Expenses of repairing the Chancel' and requested the wardens to obtain estimates for the work and decide upon a cess for the remainder.<sup>294</sup> While the estimates were sought and the work was projected to cost £68 5s., the vestry informed Bryan that it continued to consider the parish not 'liable to the repairs of the Chancel and therefore decline taking any part in them'.<sup>295</sup> The final resolution is not made clear, though some arrangement was reached, as by May of 1811 the church at Kilkenny West was refurbished and new pewed.<sup>296</sup> By way of contrast and although the sum was much less, the vestry at Kilshine was not at all unwilling to reimburse Revd Thomas Sutton the £5 5s. 5d. he expended in repairing the chancel of St Sinch's.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Kilkenny West V.M.B., 6 Nov. 1808, p. 24.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 20 Apr. 1809, pp 29-30.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 24 July 1809, pp 33-34.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 8 Aug. 1809, p. 35.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 16 Apr. & 1 May 1811, pp 44-47.

<sup>297</sup> Clongill & Kilshine V.M.B., 9 Apr. 1923, p. 17.



If viewed in contrast to the widespread and violent protest of the later tithe wars of the 1830s, local or indeed national resistance to the parochial cess seems to have been both minimal and comparatively benign. In the previous chapter it was suggested that members of the Church of Ireland alone were allowed speak on matters relating to church-building. Therefore, opposition to cesses levied for building, furnishing and maintenance went unrecorded except in parishes where objections were raised by Church of Ireland members. The case of objection lodged against the Mullingar vestry and its several years of elevated cess as publicised by Daniel O'Connell was not the rarity it might first appear to have been. While the Mullingar minutes made no reference to local objections, other vestries recorded years when it would not have been prudent to declare a levy. There were other parishes where the poverty among parishioners prevented the tax being set. In only one parish did the vestry document the parishioners absolute refusal to pay any cess. In 1819 the vestry of Donaghpatrick, a parish within a few miles of the episcopal palace;

Resolved that the Rector be empowered to lay a Statement of the people of Oristown, Telltown and other townlands refusing to pay Cess, before the Bishop, to request his advice as to the manner of proceeding against them.<sup>298</sup>

Eight years later, the parishioners continued to resist and the vestry recorded that the cess collection 'has proceeded very slowly' and immediate steps were needed to recover the sums outstanding.<sup>299</sup> The assistance of the local constable was secured at a cost of 14*s.* 2*d.* and by Easter of 1820, the arrears of £48 16*s.* 9*d.* had been paid.<sup>300</sup> There was a further problem in 1822 when legal proceedings taken against defaulters in the townland of Oristown cost the parish £21 9*s.* 3*d.*<sup>301</sup>

At other times in other parishes the vestry was unable or deemed it imprudent to declare an annual cess. This was true of Kells in 1808,<sup>302</sup> and Tullamore in 1816.

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<sup>298</sup> Donaghpatrick V.M.B., 28 May 1811, p. 47.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 6 Oct. 1819, p. 82.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 24 Apr. 1820, p. 85.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 1 Apr. & 4 June 1822, pp 115-17.

<sup>302</sup> Kells V.M.B., 20 Sept. 1808, p. 36.

When the earl of Charleville was unable to advance £1,000 towards the building of St Catherine's, Tullamore the vestry concluded that raising the sum on the parish was not practicable.<sup>303</sup> Yet, in a year when Charleville and the parish at large were in a state of financial disadvantage, the incumbent Revd Ponsonby Gouldsbury was not charged the small sum of 3*d.* and the amount was taken from the parish fund 'for 2 Brass hooks to hang up Mr Gouldsbury's Cane in Reading Desk'.<sup>304</sup>

Storm damage to the new demesne church of Rathbeggan in 1822 reduced the building to a state of near ruin. An architect's report recommended that an entire wall of the church should be taken down and rebuilt. However, at the Easter vestry a degree of caution was adopted 'in consequence of the pressure of the present times'.<sup>305</sup> The minister and churchwardens were reluctant 'to over pressure the farmers with a heavy tax' in one year and sought a contractor who would accept payment in instalments over two years. This resulted in the cess being reduced to 8½*d.* per acre.<sup>306</sup>

While church-building and cess collecting appears to have gone relatively smoothly in most parishes of the diocese, there were some instances of unhappy relations between churchwardens and tradesmen. There were also some episodes of vandalism. The building works at Forgney were marred by the manner in which the builders conducted their work. The project was reported as having been 'shamefully protracted', the church exposed 'to the most disgraceful treatment, sacrilege and robbery,' and the minister subjected 'to every species of insult'.<sup>307</sup> The carpenter contracted to St Seachnail's, Dunshaughlin was threatened with replacement in the spring of 1818. On Christmas Eve the same year his work was not yet completed and the churchwardens complained 'what he has done, has several deficiencies'. The following month the situation was put before an arbitrator.<sup>308</sup> A lawsuit was taken

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<sup>303</sup> Tullamore V.M.B., & accounts, 26 Feb. 1816, p. 103.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, accounts, p. 111.

<sup>305</sup> Rathbeggan V.M.B., 16 Apr. 1822, n.p.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> Forgney V.M.B., Aug. 1811, n.p.

<sup>308</sup> Dunshaughlin V.M.B., 12 Apr. & 24 Dec. 1818, 20 Jan. 1819, pp 218, 220, 223.

against the churchwardens of Navan by stonemasons Owen Madden and Charles Curry, who claimed their accounts had not been settled in full. The committee appointed to examine the parish and masons' accounts, found in favour of the parish and declared the masons were not due 'any sum of money what so ever'.<sup>309</sup> Slane was the only parish of the diocese to record persistent vandalism. In the autumn of 1818 a vestry meeting was called to discuss the problem and determine a solution by considering 'the most effectual means of putting a stop to such shameful & disgraceful outrages as have from time to time been committed on the Church, repeatedly breaking the windows thereof.'<sup>310</sup> The meeting was well attended and no fewer than seventeen members contributed towards a reward of £50 sterling. The sum was offered to anyone who would provide the names of the perpetrators and bear witness in order to secure a criminal conviction. £22 sterling was offered to any person who was willing to 'give such private information' that would lead to a conviction.<sup>311</sup>

There is no question that Bishop O'Beirne's church-building programme was at least as successful as the other infrastructural improvements of his episcopate. While the significance of tithe impropriation, particularly in terms of lay ownership, cannot be measured to reach any satisfactory conclusion, except to say that the name of an impropiator appears but once in the contribution columns of the above tables, the influence of patronage, not in terms of direct and personal financial contributions, but in terms of securing government funding, is clearly illustrated in Charts 3-5 below.

Parishes where patronage was shared fared badly in terms of First Fruits funding and the board disbursed gifts and loans to six times the number of parishes where patronage was definitively and singularly held by bishop, crown or lay person (Charts 5.1 & 5.2). Furthermore, while twenty-three percent of parishes in receipt of First Fruits monies were patronised by the crown and twenty-one percent by the laity,

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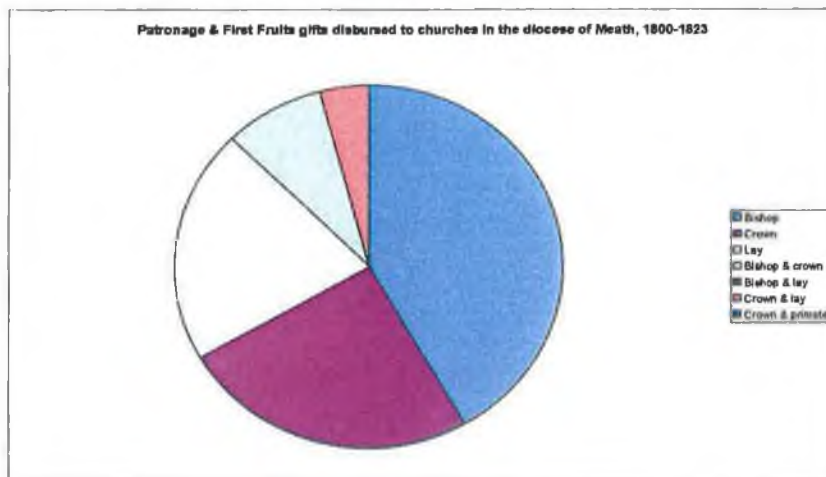
<sup>309</sup> Navan V.M.B., book 2, 3 Feb. 1820, pp 155, 159.

<sup>310</sup> Slane V.M.B., 20 Oct. 1818, p. 133.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

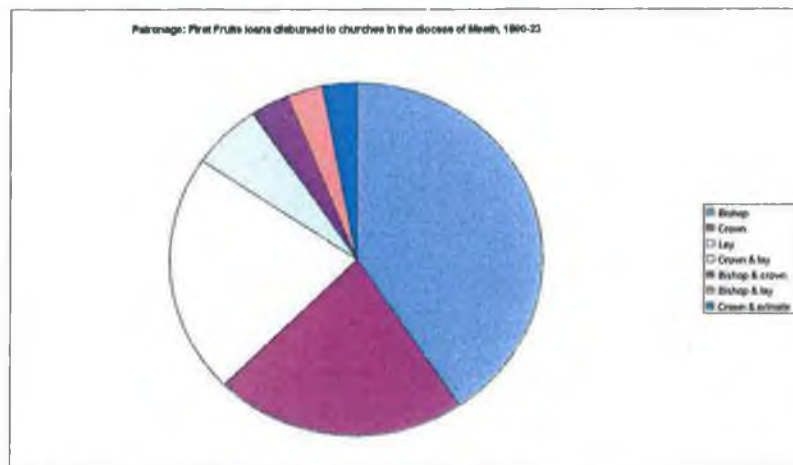
in forty-two percent of parishes, the bishop was the patron and appointed the clergyman (Chart 5.3).

Chart 5.1 Patronage: First Fruits gifts disbursed to churches in the diocese of Meath, 1800-23



Source: *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90; Visitation, 1818, pp 1-104; V.M.Bs., for the diocese of Meath (R.C.B., MSS P. 40.1.2-912.5.1).

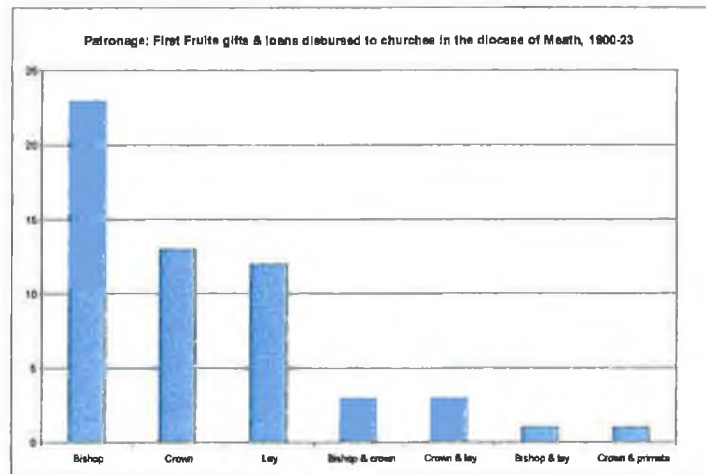
Chart 5.2 Patronage: First Fruits loans disbursed to churches in the diocese of Meath, 1800-23



Source: *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; Visitation, 1818, pp 1-104; V.M.Bs., for the diocese of Meath (R.C.B., MSS P. 40.1.2-912.5.1).

Chart 5.3

Patronage: First Fruits gifts & loans disbursed to churches in the diocese of Meath, 1800-23

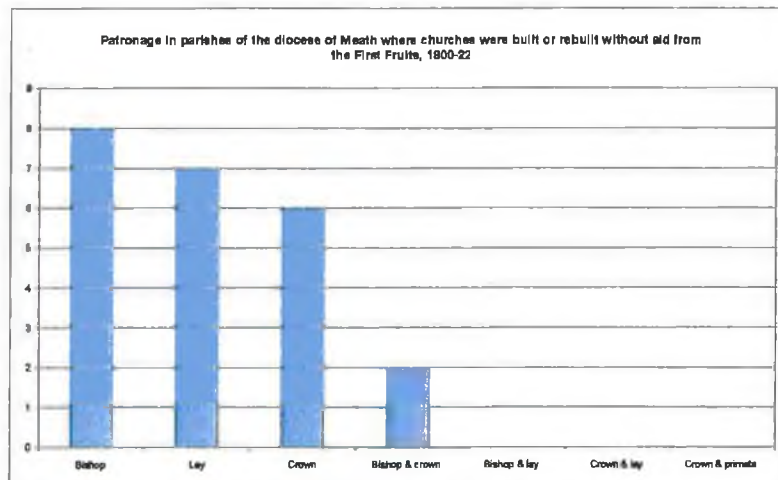


Source: *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-6, 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90, 95; Visitation, 1818, pp 1-104; V.M.Bs., Meath (R.C.B., MSS P. 40.1.2-912.5.1)

Of the twenty-three parishes where churches were built or rebuilt without First Fruits monies, eight were in episcopal patronage, seven in the laity, six in the crown and two were in the joint patronage of crown and bishop (Chart 5.4).

Chart 5.4

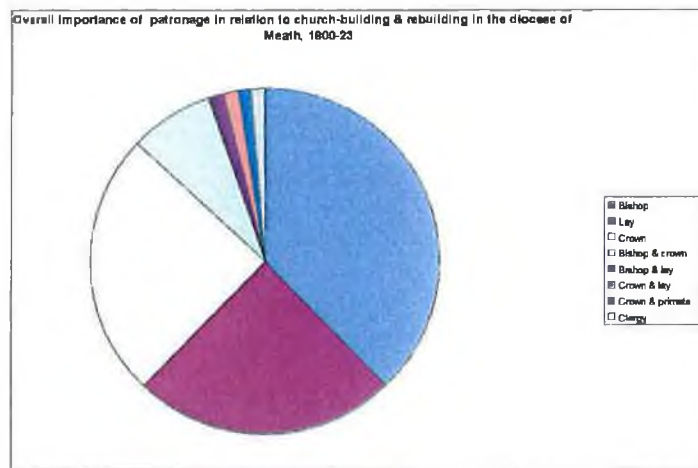
Patronage in parishes of the diocese of Meath where churches were built or rebuilt without aid from the First Fruits, 1800-23



Source: Visitation, 1818, pp 1-104; V.M.Bs., (R.C.B., MSS P. 40.1.2-912.5.1)

When all seventy-seven new or rebuilt churches are viewed, not in terms of funding alone but also in terms of patronage (Chart 5.5), no fewer than twenty-nine were held exclusively by O'Beirne. He shared patronage in a further seven. In nineteen parishes the crown held patronage and shared Kilmoon with the primate and Ratoath with the Lowther family. The Church of Ireland laity patronised nineteen livings and in Kilkenny West Revd William Bryon appointed the clergyman.

Chart 5.5 Overall importance of patronage in relation to church-building & rebuilding in the diocese of Meath, 1800-23



Source: Visitation, 1818, pp 1-104; V.M.Bs., (R.C.B., MSS P. 40.1 2-912.5.1)

As stated above, vestry minute books convey an impression that the decision to build or rebuild the parish church lay with the vestry. However, it has been shown that the bishop attached some importance to the role of parochial clergy in securing and maintaining a respectable place of worship. In addition, when data from a broader spectrum of sources is studied, it is clearly seen that the bishop was patron of thirty-eight percent of the seventy-seven parishes in which churches were built or rebuilt, with and without government funding. It is clear that some efforts were made by congregations to furnish and maintain the parish church and there cannot be any disputing the sizable contributions made by a number of individuals. However, it must be concluded that by and large, churches were funded, furnished and maintained by the parishioners at large through the parochial cess, and in no parish did the majority of those parishioners comprise members of the Church of Ireland.

## Conclusion

The main aims of this research have been to investigate Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne and to record the extent of his infrastructural improvements to the diocese of Meath, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The popular notion that he was the only member of his immediate family to convert to Protestantism has been dispelled here, and this study is the first to draw on family wills, including his own, as part of biographical detail. In as far as possible, O'Beirne's life has been traced from its origins on a Longford farm to the Roman Catholic seminary of St Omer, and his subsequent conversion, and taking of Orders in the Church of England. This study follows the political connections O'Beirne made for himself and how those connections were fostered and maintained to secure his seat on the Irish episcopal bench and the see of Meath in particular.

O'Beirne's correspondence, while illustrating his tactfulness, also leaves no doubt of his tenacity when in pursuit of an objective, whether political or ecclesiastical. This is especially evident in his correspondence with leading political figures, to whom he unashamedly put himself forward for office, and through whose influence he eventually secured his episcopal appointments. His translation from Ossory to the primary diocese of Meath at the end of 1798 was a significant personal advancement for a former Roman Catholic. He took up residence in Meath early in 1799 and his last overt political stance was to support the Act of Union. There is nothing to indicate that his efforts to improve the state of his diocese were spurred by anything other than his own wish to contribute towards the security of the future of the established church in Ireland. When the union came into being and the Dublin parliament was dissolved, O'Beirne concentrated on his diocese and did not involve himself to any significant extent in political argument, except when it concerned the church. His correspondence offers no indication, with the exception of his archbishop, that he sought out like-minded reformers, or made close relationships with any of his colleagues on the Irish bench.

While the early years of the nineteenth century were those in which the Church of Ireland was given its only substantial opportunity of establishing itself in terms of the built landscape, it must not be forgotten that since the reign of Queen Anne in the early 1700s, some degree of financial assistance from the First Fruits had been at its disposal. Between 1786 and 1800, 124 glebe houses were built, 59 glebes were procured, and 102 churches were erected throughout the whole of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> These figures alone provide some sort of measuring stick by which to evaluate the success of Thomas Lewis O'Beirne in the diocese of Meath during the first quarter of the new century. Aided by government monies and changes in the laws related to the financing of glebe houses, improvements were made to 72 such houses, 25 glebes were extended and 77 churches were built, rebuilt, extended or substantially refurbished. Between 1801 and 1822, Meath came at the top of all First Fruits records in terms of disbursements: £44,320 was given towards the building of glebe houses; £8,398 11s. 8d. for the procurement of glebe lands, and £37,892 was disbursed to churchwardens for the building or rebuilding of churches.<sup>2</sup> These achievements were unmatched by any other diocese. In addition, O'Beirne restructured 27 livings. This was a measure that almost eradicated the chronic problem of clerical pluralism and absenteeism, by increasing the number of resident clergy from 25 to 79.

The significant findings of this study in terms of the period are several. First, the sheer scale of glebe enhancement, glebe house and church-building has been demonstrated, together with the drive for pastoral reform. The extensive union of Fircall in King's County, at the south-west of the diocese, comprised in excess of 40,000 statute acres. The union included included Ballyboy (Tables 4.9 a-f) and is an appropriate example of how infrastructural changes made during the O'Beirne episcopate, improved a parish where low standards had prevailed since 1622.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 126-127, H.C. 1807 (78), v.

<sup>2</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 17-24, 29, 9 & 16, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 101-108, 113, 93 & 100 respectively.



Between 1800 and 1819, two glebe houses and two new churches were built in the union, and the cure was diligently served by a resident incumbent who was assisted by no fewer than five resident curates. Secondly, the research has produced considerable evidence of a widespread and distinct lack of generosity on the part of most major landholders, tithe impropiators or lay patrons. Very few proprietors gifted glebe land to the parish. It was more usual to sell, rent or exchange a few acres. While glebes could not have been extended without some level of co-operation from landowners, their gestures of support cost them little or nothing, and where acres were sold or rented to the church, it resulted in profit to the owner. Thirdly, it is plain that the monies disbursed by the First Fruits went but part way in financing improvements to church buildings. Evidence from vestry minute books not only lead to this finding, but also to the conclusion that except in a handful of cases, First Fruits loans were repaid and churches were furnished and maintained by parishioners at large and not by the Church of Ireland congregations. Strong evidence of this is presented in chapters four and five, and All Saints, Mullingar, has been detailed as a specific example of the total cost of building a church (Table 4.4).

The findings of this study give rise to several questions which cannot be answered here, but which may set an agenda for further research. For example, what was the psychological impact of all this activity on the Church of Ireland congregations? The constant presence of a resident, diligent clergyman, a new and impressive glebe house with sufficient glebe land, and regular church services, conducted in a church in perfect repair, must have boosted the morale of church members in every parish. It must also have had particular effects on the Roman Catholic parishioners, who were obliged to contribute towards church-building by means of additional cesses. Although vestry minute books are an invaluable source in determining the actual cost of building, furnishing and maintaining a church, apart from recording a few instances of vandalism and disputes with tradesmen,

they do not offer any assistance in determining to what degree the improvements uplifted the spirit of the church's laity in Meath. Neither do they indicate to what extent resentments were felt or manifested among members of the Roman Catholic faith. Further research is therefore needed from the Roman Catholic perspective during this period.

Changes to the Church of Ireland population for the period under study and the reasons behind changes have proved difficult to estimate, although it is evident that the numbers of families increased, then fell, and in several parishes, increased again before 1826. Whatever situation prevailed regarding Protestant emigration during these years, it does not appear to have had any adverse effect upon the glebe house or church-building programmes in the diocese. The increasing number of resident clergyman ensured that glebe houses continued to be built. The number of cess-paying Roman Catholics in a parish and not the number of Protestants in the congregations is what was important in ensuring that the building of churches continued. Bearing this in mind, it is not altogether surprising that in the years between the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 and 1823, nineteen glebe houses were built, and thirty-five churches were built, rebuilt or enlarged.

Many studies have been written on the rise of and the causes taken up by the Catholic Association. None have considered in detail how the new visibility achieved by the Church of Ireland in the early years of the century may have driven the popularity or agenda of the Catholic Association. Bishop O'Beirne set out to ensure the future of the Church of Ireland by improving its infrastructure and pastoral care. However, the effects of his achievement must have been short-lived, as soon after, full emancipation was granted to Catholics, and in the 1830s, the building of Roman Catholic churches began in earnest. The effect of emancipation on Church of Ireland members, coming so soon after this period of extensive infrastructural improvement and buoyancy, is another specific subject that is yet to

be explored. There also remains a need to study how long the O'Beirne legacy of improved pastoral care continued along the lines of his recommendations, or to what extent his methods and standards may have been swept aside by the fervor of evangelicalism.

Until now, the physical remains of the O'Beirne churches have not been collectively recorded. Although some buildings have completely disappeared from the landscape, what remains has been photographed and presented here, together with individual architectural descriptions. The errors and omissions found in contemporary published sources and the degree to which subsequent published sources have relied upon them have been pointed out. The shortcomings of the most modern official sources have also been discovered and given mention. These realisations have come about due to extensive fieldwork and prove the point of its necessity.

Although the building of so many churches had a most definite impact on the landscape that is still seen today, they were generally small buildings in the Gothic style, of no more than two or three bays, and bore no resemblance to the more elaborate churches designed by the Semples for the Dublin archdiocese in the late 1820s and 1830s.<sup>3</sup> The buildings comprised a simple hall and tower. The tower was generally in three stages and it was the third or belfry stage that was most evident on the surrounding rural or urban skyline. For this reason, a church with a tower and preferably heightened further by a spire, rather than a simple bellcote, was favoured by the bishop.<sup>4</sup> Urban churches, while often built on an elevated site, presented as impressive structures on the outside, though were most often relatively unadorned inside. Decorative plasterwork was not a feature of most churches, regardless of their location. There are of course, some exceptions. The most notable

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<sup>3</sup> Cormac Allen, 'The Semple temples: the church architecture of John Semple and Son' (M. Arch. Sc. thesis, U.C.D., 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 6-7, 12, 19-20, 22-23, 54-56, 66, 72, 74-75, 90-92, 95, 99.

is St Catherine's, Tullamore. Its site, high above the town, its great dimensions, array of stained glass windows on two levels and internal decorations, make it one of the most impressive in the country. It was, of course, largely built at the expense of Lord Tullamore, as part of his development of the town.

Church architects were generally unrecorded, although some notable names are mentioned in vestry minute books. St Catherine's, Tullamore was designed by Francis Johnston, who also designed the four-stage tower of St Patrick's, Slane. J.F. Fuller was the architect of St Cormac's, Ballyboy and Daniel Augustus Beaufort drew plans for the rebuilding of St Mary's, Navan. Cold and damp proved problematic, even with newly built churches. According to the vestry minutes these issues were a result of inept roofing practices. In an attempt to eliminate draughts and preserve warmth, many churches had no window openings on the N elevation, and the pews were generally of the boxed-type, for the same reasons. Often, but not in every case, a stove was installed in the center of the church, as a means of providing winter heat. Some affluent landlords built a gallery to the W end of the hall, in which a fireplace was installed for their own comfort. In the 1860s, when the prospect of disestablishment was in the air, a spate of church refurbishment was undertaken. At that time the architects Welland and Gillespie recommended the removal of boxed pews and the provision of a stove in all churches. Extensive fieldwork has confirmed that apart from a few items of church plate, in terms of contents, little remains from the early nineteenth century. Therefore, for the future, there is a present need to at least compile inventories of current contents. The results of this research pertain to but one diocese. It could and should be used as a template for other studies of other dioceses, so that a more complete picture of the efforts made by the Church of Ireland in its window of greatest opportunity may emerge.

Finally, it may be noted that much of the writing on the history of religion in early nineteenth century Ireland has focused on interdenominational rivalry, controversy, and conflict, and these were certainly important features of the period. However, there is a danger that such a focus tends to overlook other, quite contrary tendencies. For instance, the relationship between Thomas Lewis O'Beirne and Dr Patrick Plunkett was remarkable. During O'Beirne's years as a seminarian, Plunkett was his mentor. When O'Beirne was translated to the see of Meath, Plunkett was its Roman Catholic bishop. The two lived in close proximity to each other at Navan. While this research has shown that they enjoyed a congenial friendship in their respective posts, the full extent and nature of that relationship remains to be explored. Current secondary sources maintain that Roman Catholic church-building in the diocese of Meath did not amount to much until the 1830s. However, it has not been made clear what improvements or refurbishments were made to existing Catholic churches between the end of the 1700s and 1823. During fieldwork conducted during research for this thesis, evidence of the simultaneous erection of Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic churches was noted in the parishes of Dunshaughlin, Clonard and Killiconnighan. Examination of the Catholic records may show other parishes where this occurred, or, other parishes where some sort of improvements to churches of the two religions were simultaneous. Such a study would prove invaluable on a number of fronts. It would throw considerable light on the personal, and more importantly, the working relationship between the two bishops. It could answer some of the questions raised above, regarding the psychological impact of Church of Ireland improvements on both religions. If Bishop Plunkett's building improvements are found to coincide with O'Beirne's improvements in individual parishes, there must have been a positive impact on the morale of the Catholic laity. As the letters of O'Beirne's wife and daughters show, the relations between the two bishops extended to taking the waters at Bath together. It is hardly likely then, that the simultaneous building or improvement of

churches caused trouble between the two men. It is possible however, that there was some sort of agreement between them on the subject.

At a time when the Church of Ireland had its greatest opportunity to make its mark, the relaxation of several penal laws had also increased the possibilities for Roman Catholics, and the effort in pursuit of full emancipation had not been abandoned. During this period the diocese of Meath was led by two bishops who once belonged to the same religion and whose relationship does not appear to have been marred by the conversion of one to Protestantism. The uniqueness of their relationship and the unprecedented position in which that relationship placed the diocese of Meath, must be further examined.

## Architectural inventory

In compiling this inventory, architectural advice has been sought from Dr Edward McParland of Trinity College Dublin and the restoration architect, David Sheehan of Sheehan and Barry, Dublin. While some information comes from the *N.I.A.H.*, the architectural descriptions offered here are much more comprehensive than those found in that survey. It must also be made clear that apart from gallery-fronts, floor tiling and chancel rails the churches described in the following pages contain almost nothing from the early nineteenth century in terms of plasterwork, pews and other furnishings.

Plans for less than half of the O'Beirne churches survive and many of them are undated. Ground-plans where boxed pews are drawn, for example St Owen's, Ballymore are early or relatively so. Ground-plans where the boxed pews have been replaced, for example St Ernan's, Enniskeen, are generally from the 1860s, when, prior to disestablishment, churches underwent refurbishments.

All plates, unless otherwise referenced, are the photographs taken by the author during the course of fieldwork.

1 Agher

The church which was rebuilt in the early nineteenth century was replaced c. 1902 by the present church of two bays with a three-stage tower.<sup>1</sup>

2 Almoritia, St. Nicholas's



W

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,



E



N



S

Rebuilt partly by a loan of £600 from the First Fruits in 1815.<sup>2</sup> Three-bay hall, three-stage W tower and projecting chancel to the E. Vestry to NE corner is a later addition. Tower is of limestone rubble, with limestone ashlar detail in projecting string courses, raised parapet, crenellations in the English-style and pointed pinnacles with ball finials. Pointed-arched door opening to N side of tower with dressed limestone block-and-start surround having timber battened door with timber battened tympanum. Oculi at second-stage of tower and pointed-arch openings with timber louvers in cut limestone surround at the third or belfry stage. The hall is roughcast rendered over a cut stone plinth. Tower of

<sup>1</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 109.

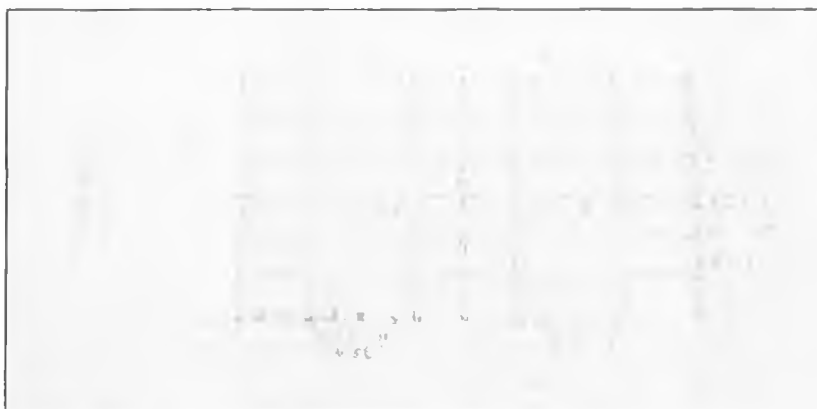
<sup>2</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.



coursed limestone with cut limestone corner quoins. Pointed-arched window openings with cut stone surrounds and sills, having stained glass set in single-lights. Blank N wall. Pointed-arched single-light, stained glass E window with limestone surround and cut limestone sill. Pitched slate roof with raised limestone verges and cast iron rainwater goods.<sup>3</sup> Still in church use.

### 3 Ardagh, St Patrick's

Plan 1 Ardagh, St Patrick's: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Part funded by a gift of £500 from the First Fruits in 1802 and consecrated in 1806.<sup>4</sup> Nothing remains of this church.

<sup>3</sup> Buildings of Ireland: National inventory of architectural heritage, 'St Nicholas Church of Ireland church, Almoritia, County Westmeath', (<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=WE&regno=15401725>) (21 July 2009).

<sup>4</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89; Healy, ii, p. 286.

4 Ardnurcher



Built by the parishioners in 1820.<sup>5</sup> Three-bay hall and three-stage, limestone rubble W tower. The tower is detailed with ashlar limestone, projecting string courses, a parapet cornice and crenellations in the Irish-style. Pointed-arched segmental-headed doorcase at N of tower with chamfered limestone surrounds and timber battened door having timber battened tympanum over. Blind pointed-arched window openings with cut stone surrounds to the second-stage. Third-stage pointed-arched window openings, with limestone surrounds and cut limestone sills, having timber Y-tracery louvers. The hall is of limestone rubble, rendered in roughcast with limestone corner quoins. Pointed-arched window openings to S elevation with Y-tracery windows, having diamond panes of coloured glass. Blank N wall except for one small square-headed sliding sash window to the W end. Pitched slated roof with raised limestone verges and cast iron rainwater goods.<sup>6</sup>

5 Athlone, St. Mary's



Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

<sup>5</sup> Horseleap V.M.B., 4 Apr. 1820, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> National inventory of architectural heritage, 'Ardnurcher Church of Ireland church, County Westmeath', (<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=WE&regno=15403129>) (21 July 2009).



E

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

Plan 2 Athlone, St Mary's: ground-plan, 1869<sup>7</sup>



Source: Portfolio 23

Rebuilt in 1821 with a First Fruits loan of £1,000 and parochial cess.<sup>8</sup> Three-bay nave, later polygonal chancel and three-stage W tower of limestone. The tower is string-coursed and dressed with limestone, having clasping buttresses, battlemented parapet and corner pinnacles with finials. Pointed-arched segmental-headed doorcase at W face of tower, with hood mouldings, label-stops and timber battened door having timber battened tympanum. Ashlar string courses and oculi openings at second-stage, having hood mouldings and label-stops. Wooden louvers to belfry stage, with hood mouldings. Pointed-arched window openings to hall with limestone surrounds, cut limestone sills hood mouldings and label-stops. Polygonal chancel added in 1869. E gable is roughcast, having ashlar detail and three pointed-arched openings with cut limestone surrounds and cut limestone sills. Pitched slate roof on hall and chancel, raised limestone verges and cast iron

<sup>7</sup> James Rawson Carroll's plan for a new chancel, 1869, Portfolio 23.

<sup>8</sup> Athlone V.M.B., 1823, p. 3; P. 392.5.1, pp 44, 47.

rainwater goods.<sup>9</sup> Four-stage tower from a church of earlier times stands to the SW. Still in church use.

6 Ballyboy, St Cormac's



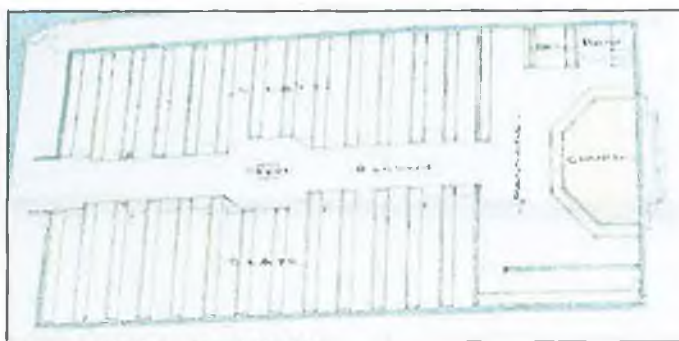
NE



SW

Plan 3

Ballyboy, St Cormac's: ground-plan, 1866<sup>10</sup>



Source: R.C.B., Portfolio 23

Rebuilt by a First Fruits loan of £900 given in 1815 and a parochial cess.<sup>11</sup> Three-bay roughcast rendered hall and two-stage W tower with porch. Pointed-arched door opening to N tower with triple roll-moulded surround having hood and label mouldings, surrounded by stone plaque and oculus. Second-stage with ashlar limestone string courses, pointed-arched window openings to belfry. Corner pinnacles. Pointed-arched window

<sup>9</sup> Buildings of Ireland: National inventory of architectural heritage, 'St Mary's Church of Ireland church, Church St, Athlone, County Westmeath', (<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=WE&regno=15009330>) (21 July 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Welland & Gillespie's plan to change seating arrangements, 21 July 1866, Portfolio 23.

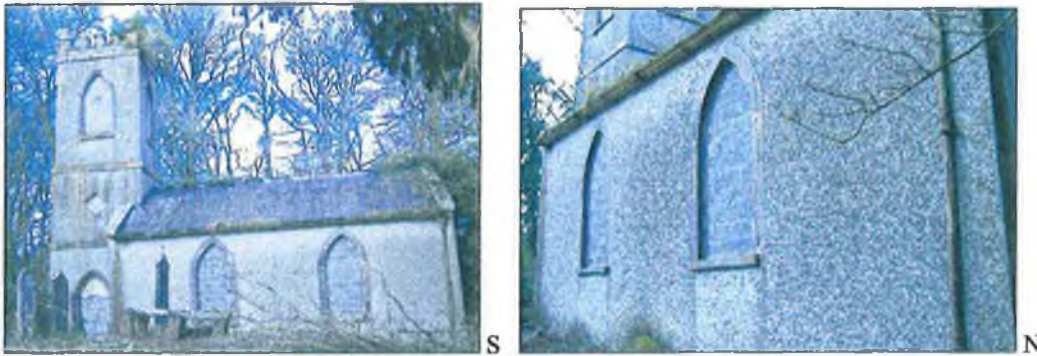
<sup>11</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; Ballyboy V.M.B., 1813-18; Visitation, 1818, pp 77, 109.

openings to hall with cut stone surrounds, S having four, N having three. Tudor-arched E window with tooled stone surround, surmounted by round-headed louvered vent opening with tooled block-and-start surround. Now in ruins.

7 Ballyloughloe, Holy Trinity

Nothing remains of the church that was rebuilt by a First Fruits loan of £400 given in 1811 and parochial cess.<sup>12</sup>

8 Ballymaglasson



Built by a First Fruits gift of £600 given in 1809 and parochial cess.<sup>13</sup> Two-bay hall with three-stage W tower, all roughcast rendered. Tower with ashlar limestone string courses, castellations and corner pinnacles. Pointed-arched door opening to S tower, having cut stone surround. Second-stage diamond opening with cut stone surround. Third-stage belfry with pointed-arched openings, having stone dressings to what were louvered openings. Hall bays with limestone surrounds. E window opening with cut stone dressings. Pitched slate roof with limestone copings and cast iron rainwater goods.

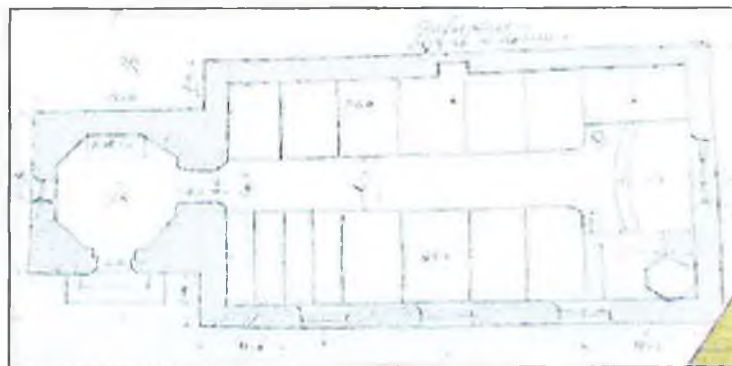
<sup>12</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; Visitation, 1818, pp 94, 109.

<sup>13</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90; Ballymaglasson V.M.B., 1812-69; Visitation, 1818, p. 108.

9 Ballymore, St Owen's



Plan 4 Ballymore, St Owen's: ground-plan, 1808<sup>14</sup>



Source: Portfolio 23

Rebuilt by parochial cess and a First Fruits loan of £800 granted in 1822.<sup>15</sup> Three-bay hall with three-bay W tower, having crow-stepped parapets and pointed corner pinnacles. Built of coursed limestone rubble with flush dressed limestone quoins to the corners and cut limestone trim, date plaque and cut limestone string courses to the tower. Pointed-arched door opening to S tower having chamfered limestone surrounds and cut stone hood moulding over. Square-headed window openings at second-stage, having chamfered cut limestone surrounds and cut limestone sills. Pointed-arched window openings at belfry stage having chamfered limestone surrounds, cut limestone sills and hood moulding over. Hall with three pointed-arched window openings to the S, having chamfered dressings and sills of cut limestone and cut limestone hood moulding over. Blank N wall with center chimneystack. Triple-light pointed-arched E window opening, having cut stone intersecting tracery, chamfered limestone surround and hood moulding

<sup>14</sup> J.F. Fuller's ground plan of Ballymore Church of Ireland, 31 July 1808, Portfolio 23.

<sup>15</sup> Ballymore V.M.B., 1802-22, pp 178-9; Visitation, 1818, p. 109.

over. Raised stone verges to E and W gable and a projecting cut stone eaves course. Now in ruins.

10 Benowen, St Canice's



NE



S

Built by a First Fruits gift of £600 given in 1811 and parochial cess.<sup>16</sup> Two-bay hall with three-stage NW tower, having raised parapet over eaves dentils course with English-style crenellations and pointed corner pinnacles. Shallow chancel to SE. Built of limestone rubble. Hall roughcast rendered above a cut stone plinth. Projecting string courses and cut stone detail to tower. Pointed-arched door opening to S tower with cut stone surround and having drip-stone moulding over with carved label-stops and timber battened door. Small dressed pointed-arched window opening to NW side. Dressed quatrefoils to second-stage. Pointed-arched openings to belfry stage, with cut stone surrounds and timber louvers. Pointed-arched window openings to S hall with cut stone sills and surrounds and modern wooden frames, with clear glass. Blind pointed-arched recesses with cut stone sills and surrounds to N wall. E window with cut stone sill and surround, having modern timber casement windows and clear glass. Pitched slate roof with raised limestone verges to gable ends and cast iron rainwater goods. Still in church use.

<sup>16</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90; Benowen V.M.B., 1820; Visitation, 1818, p. 108.

11 Castlecor, St Brigid's



Plan 5 Castlecor, St Brigid's: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Built by parochial cess. The site, vestry room and tower were gifted by Mr Nugent of Bobs Grove, c. 1816.<sup>17</sup> Only rubble remains.

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<sup>17</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 56, 108; Mount Nugent V.M.B., 1816.



12 Castlejordan



Tower at SE

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,



Plaque

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

Plan 6 Castlejordan: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Rebuilt by parochial cess and a First Fruits loan of £1,000 given in 1822.<sup>18</sup> Only the tower remains of the two-bay church. Three-stage entrance tower with crow-stepped battlements and corner pinnacles having ball finials over. Roughcast rendered walls with limestone ashlar corner buttresses, projecting string courses and date plaque. Pointed-arched door and window openings with ashlar limestone surrounds, hood-mouldings over, drip-stones and carved label-stops.

13 Castlelost, Christ Church

<sup>18</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp, 60, 109; Castlejordan V.M.B., 17 Apr. 1822, p. 3.



Source: *Westmeath Examiner*,  
7 June 2007

Built on a site given by Mr Rochford of Rochford. Funded by parochial cess and a First Fruits gift of £800 given in 1811.<sup>19</sup> Two-bay hall with three-stage W tower, having a raised parapet with English-style crenellations. Roughcast rendered walls with cut stone corner quoins. Cut stone string courses to the tower and a cut stone eaves course continued around E elevation as a string course. Tower of limestone rubble with dressed pilasters to the corners, having cut limestone crenellations over. Pointed-arched door opening to N of tower having timber battened double-doors and timber battened tympanum over. Pointed-arched window opening to W of first-stage having cut stone dressings, modern timber frame with plain glass. Second-stage having oculi with cut stone dressings, modern timber frames and plain glass. Belfry stage has pointed-arched openings, having cut stone dressings, modern timber windows and plain glass. Pointed-arched window openings to the hall, having cut stone dressings, Y-tracery and diamond panes of plain glass. Pointed-arched E window, having cut limestone dressings, cusped triple-lancets, quatrefoils and diamond panes of plain glass. Pitched slate roof with clay ridge tiles, raised stone verges to E and W gables and cast iron rainwater goods. In use as a private residence.

<sup>19</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 71, 108; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.



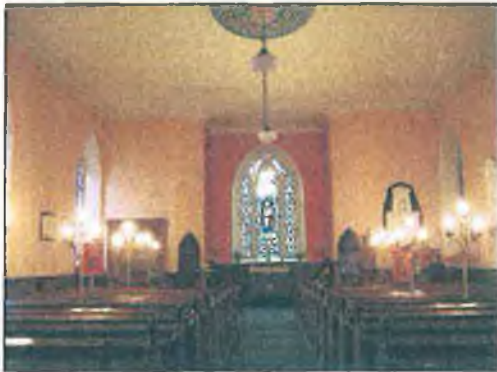
W



E



N



W gallery to E chancel



E chancel to W gallery

Rebuilt by Lord Longford, Mr Pollard, parochial cess and a First Fruits loan of £3,000 given in 1819.<sup>20</sup> Built on a plan to the N. Three-bay hall with three-stage tower having a castellated parapet with corner pinnacles, with an ashlar limestone spire on octagonal plan over. Rule-and-line render to walls of front façade, roughcast render elsewhere. Entrance tower is flanked by pointed-arched window openings with timber Y-tracery. Parapets above having corner pinnacles at either end. Pointed-arched entrance door opening to S face of tower, having moulded ashlar limestone surrounds with hood moulding over, timber battened double-doors with timber battened tympanum over. Square-headed tripartite windows to first-stage of tower. Clockface above at second-stage. Belfry with pointed-arched openings having louvered vents. Pointed-arched window openings to hall, having intersecting timber tracery and diamond, coloured glass. Three

<sup>20</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 52-54, 109; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

graded pointed-arched windows to chancel gable comprising a central window with intersecting timber tracery and stained glass, flanked by pointed-arched openings with timber Y-tracery and coloured glass. Hood mouldings with label-stops over all. Pitched slate roof concealed by castellated parapets. Stone cross to apex of parapet on S chancel wall. Cast-iron rainwater goods. Simple interior, with plastered walls, plastered ceiling and wooden paneling. Gallery with box pews and two cast iron fireplaces. Still in church use.

15 Churchtown



W tower

Built by £600 gifted by the First Fruits in 1807.<sup>21</sup> All that remains is the three-stage tower. Built of limestone rubble with ashlar trim, including pilasters to the corners, a projecting string course between each stage and dressed openings. Pointed-arched door opening with ashlar block-and-start surround. Oculi to second-stage with ashlar surrounds. Pointed-arched openings at belfry stage. Corbelled parapet with Irish-style battlements over. Corner pinnacles with ball finials over. Remnants of cast iron rainwater goods.

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<sup>21</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89; Visitation, 1818, p. 108.

16 Clonard, St Finian's,



W



E



N

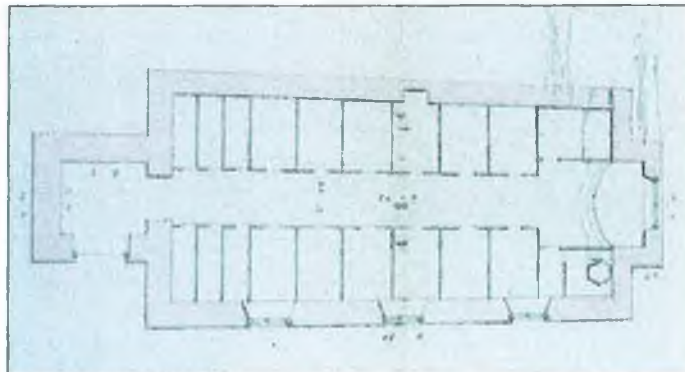


S



Stone carved head, set above louver opening at belfry stage, S face of tower

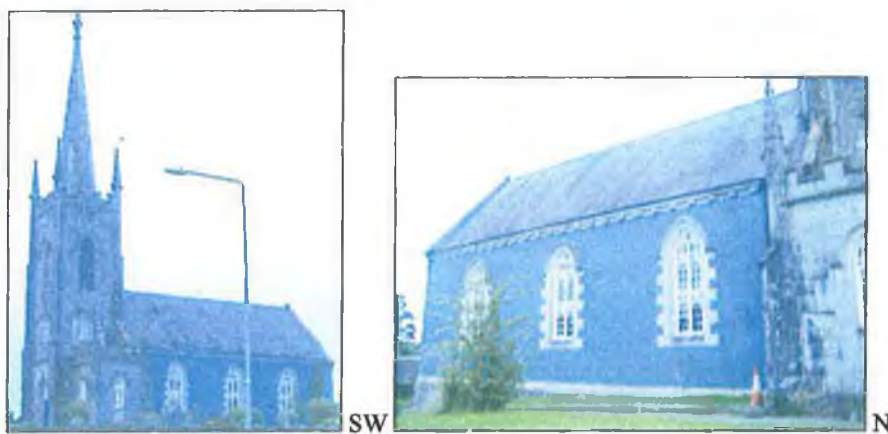
Plan 7 Clonard, St Finian's: ground-plan showing proposed vestry room, 1834



Source: Portfolio 23

Rebuilt by parochial cess and a First Fruits loan of £400 given in 1809.<sup>22</sup> Three-bays with three-stage W tower with projecting string courses and vestry room at NE. Roughcast render, except for vestry room where coursed limestone rubble is exposed. Timber battened double-doors with fanlight above set in pointed-arched opening with limestone dressings to S face of tower. Date plaque. Dressed roundels, decorated with quatrefoil to second-stage. Stone dressed pointed-arched openings at belfry stage, having timbered louvers. Small medieval stone head set above S louver. Eaves dentils course to parapet with battlements over. Corner pinnacles having ball finials. Hall with ashlar limestone corner quoins. S wall having wooden traceried windows set in pointed-arched openings, with stone sills and surrounds. Plain glass. Shallow E chancel with round-headed opening having cut stone sill and surround, intersecting Y-tracery heads, square panes and plain glass. Chimneystack rises between hall and chancel. Blank N wall. Vestry room square-headed W opening with stopped chamfer moulding and timber battened door. Small pointed-arched opening to N having stone sill and surround, timber frame and plain glass. Pitched slate roof with raised limestone verges to hall and chancel gables. Cast iron rainwater goods.

17 Clonfad/Tyrrellspass, St Sinian's



<sup>22</sup> Clonard V.M.B., 1809, pp 23-24; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89; Visitation, 1818, p. 109.



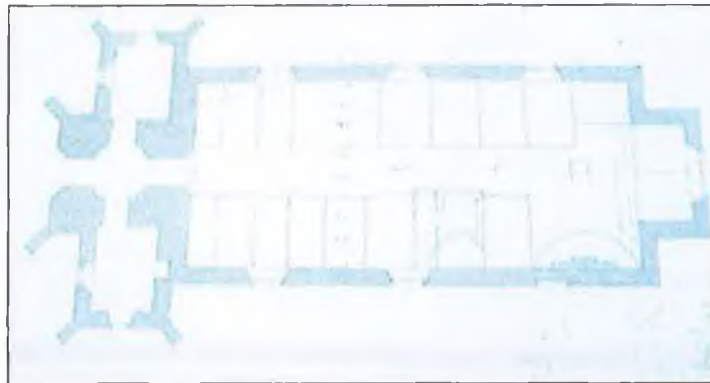
W gallery to E chancel



E chancel to W gallery

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

Plan 8 Clonfad/Tyrrellspass, St Sinian's: ground-plan, 1861<sup>23</sup>



Source: Portfolio 23

Substantially rebuilt before 1818 and enhanced with a heavily ornamented steeple, the gift of Mr Boyd, husband of Dowager Lady Belvedere.<sup>24</sup> Three-bay hall with three-stage W tower. Tower has corner pinnacles with carved head detail, battlemented parapet and a spire on an octagonal plan. Single-bay side vestibules with battlemented parapets and corner pinnacles with carved head detail flank the tower entrance to NW and SE. Rule-and-line rendered walls to hall with cut stone detailing. Tower and side vestibules built of cut limestone. Diagonal buttresses to tower and vestibules. Pointed-arched opening to tower with moulded limestone surrounds, decorative timber double-doors, large fanlight over with reticulated tracery and clear glass. Square-headed triple-light windows to first floor of tower with hood moulding over. Pointed-arched openings to belfry, with louvered vents

<sup>23</sup> Welland & Gillespie's plan to change seating arrangement, 1861, Portfolio 23.

<sup>24</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 72, 109.

and hood mouldings. Pointed-arched openings to hall, with paired cusped lights, reticulated tracery and coloured glass. Four-light window to chancel, with perpendicular tracery and coloured glass. Pitched slate roof with decorative stone eaves course, raised stone verges with fractables. A combination of cast iron and modern rainwater goods. Simple gothic interior with open truss timber roof, plastered walls, wainscoting and painted panels. Plaster rib-vaulting to the ceiling of the entrance porch. W gallery. Still in church use.

18 Colpe, St Columba's



S



N

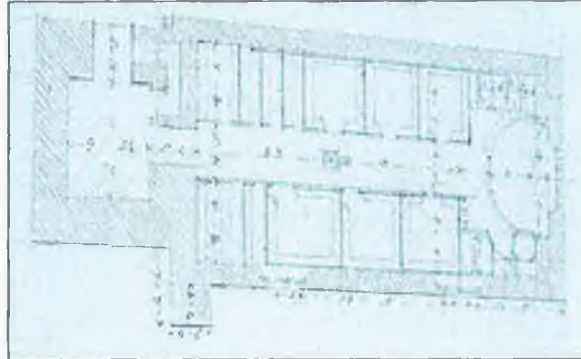
The First Fruits gifted £600 towards the building of this church in 1806.<sup>25</sup> Three-bay hall with two-stage W tower and vestry room to NE. Roughcast rendered with limestone eaves course. Pointed-arched door opening to S tower with chamfered limestone dressing and timber battened door. Blank oculi to first floor. Pointed-arched window openings with timber louvers to belfry stage. Protruding string courses. Castellations with pointed corner pinnacles above. Pointed-arched openings to S hall with chamfered tooled limestone surrounds, timber Y-tracery windows and plain glass. N wall blank. Triple-light traceried E window with roundel over. Vestry room with Tudor-arched door opening and chimney stack. Pitched slate roof with raised verge to E gable. Cast iron rainwater goods. Currently in business use.

<sup>25</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89; *Visitation, 1818*, p. 108.



19 Donaghpatrick, St Patrick's

Plan 9 Donaghpatrick, St Patrick's: ground-plan, 1864<sup>26</sup>



Source: Portfolio 23

The hall of this church was demolished and replaced in 1896. In the visitation of 1818 Bishop O'Beirne recorded a sum of £500 from the First Fruits.<sup>27</sup>

20 Drakestown, St Patrick's



SW



N



E chancel to W tower

<sup>26</sup> Plan to change the seating arrangement, 1864, Portfolio 23.

<sup>27</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 5-6.

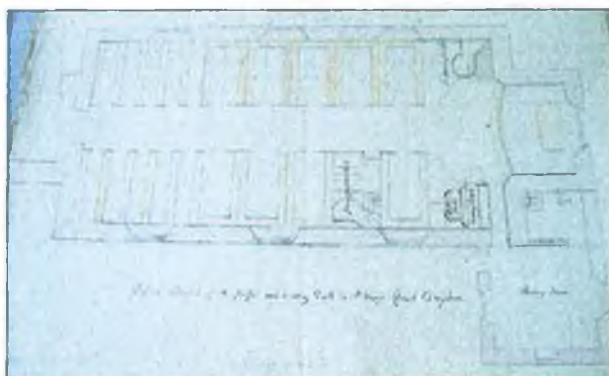
Built by a First Fruits loan of £532 given in 1820.<sup>28</sup> Two-bay hall with three-stage W tower. Built of limestone rubble with projecting string courses to tower. Pointed-arched door opening to S face of tower, with carved limestone surround, comprising flanking pilasters with plaque and pediment above. Pointed-arched opening to W face of first-stage. Medieval windows inserted to S, W and N faces of second-stage. Belfry stage with pointed-arched openings, having brick dressings, limestone sills and louvered vents. Castellations with corner pinnacles above. S wall with pointed-arched window openings, having brick surrounds and limestone sills. Pointed-arched E window opening, having brick surround and limestone sill. Fragment of female in fifteenth-century dress inserted in wall above E window. Blind pointed-arched window openings to N wall, having brick surrounds and limestone sills. Pitched slate roof with raised limestone verges to E and W gables. Cast iron rainwater goods. Now in ruins.

21 Drogheda, St. Mary's



Plan 10

Drogheda, St Mary's: ground-plan, n. d.

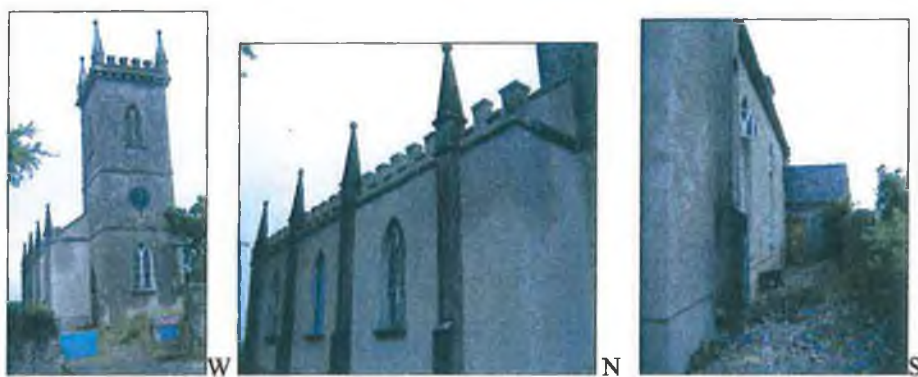


Source: Portfolio 23

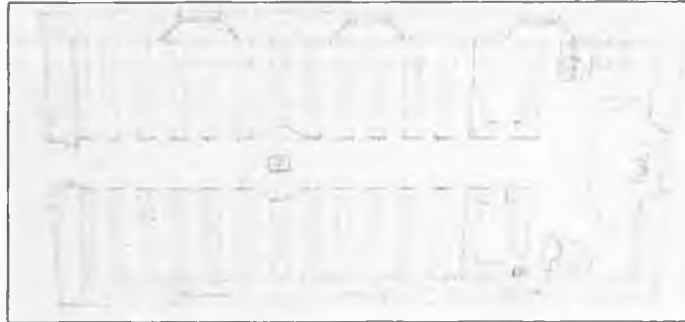
<sup>28</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

Rebuilt by the parishioners and a First Fruits loan of £500 given in 1809 and gift of £600 in 1819.<sup>29</sup> Three-bay hall, projecting E chancel and three-stage W tower with spire and vestry room to the SE. Built of limestone rubble. Tooled limestone corner quoins to hall and tower and limestone ashlar pediment surrounds to gables. Pointed-arched door opening to N of tower, with ashlar limestone chamfered surround, timber panelled door and timber tympanum, with carved stone plaque above. Carved limestone hood moulding to W tower window and blind door opening to S face with block-and-start brick surround. Square-headed window openings to second-stage of tower with block-and-start brick surrounds, limestone sills and louvered shutters. Pointed-arched window openings to third-stage louvers, with limestone surrounds and hood moulding. Battlement with pointed corner pinnacles. Pointed-arched hall window openings, with smooth render surrounds, limestone sills, limestone tracery, leaded-lights with coloured glass, protected with fine-mesh metal screens. Pointed-arched E window opening, with smooth render surround, limestone sill, triple-light limestone tracery, having stained glass. Vestry has a date of 1909. Square-headed triple-light W window opening to vestry, with limestone tracery and surround. Square-headed door opening to S face of vestry, flanked by single-light window openings to E and W. Pitched slate roof to hall, protruding chancel and vestry. Cast iron ridge-comb to hall. Tooled limestone coping to gables, with raised verges to hall, chancel and vestry. Chimneystacks to chancel and vestry. Cast iron rainwater goods. Currently in business use.

22 Drumcree, St John's



<sup>29</sup> *St Mary's Drogheda V.M.B.*, 1809; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 6, 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90, 95; *Visitation*, 1818, p. 109.



Source: Portfolio 23

Rebuilt by Mr Smith of Barbavilla, parishioners and a First Fruits loan of £850 given in 1811.<sup>30</sup> Three-bay hall with three-stage tower and single-bay vestry room to SW. Built of limestone rubble. Hall and first stage of tower roughcast rendered. Pointed-arched door opening to NE face of tower, with cut limestone surround and studded, battened timber double-doors having studded timber battened tympanum over. Single gothic-arched window to W face of first-stage, with copper and brass clock-face above to second-stage. Oculi to S and N faces of second-stage. Pointed-arched louvers set in limestone surround with limestone sills at belfry stage. E face slated. Battlemented parapet, having eaves dentils course, pointed corner pinnacles and ball finials. Projecting string courses between stages. Three pointed-arched openings to N hall, with limestone sills and buttresses between each bay, having pointed pinnacles with ball finials over. Two with timber Y-tracery and clear diamond panes. One with stained glass. Three modern timber replacement windows and chimneystack to S hall. Pointed-arched window to chancel gable, with limestone sill and stained glass. Square-headed doorcase to W face of vestry, with brick surround and timber battened door. Lancet window to E face of vestry, with brick surround and modern, plain glass. Modern timber and plain glass conservatory to SE corner of E elevation. Pitched slate roof. Protruding string eaves course, with battlements above. Cast iron rainwater goods. In use as a private residence.

<sup>30</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 64, 109; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

23 Drumranny



Nothing remains of this church which was rebuilt by a gift £600 from the First Fruits in 1809.<sup>31</sup>

24 Duleek, St Cianan's



Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

Rebuilt by a First Fruits loan of £1,500 given in 1811.<sup>32</sup> This building has been much modified in recent years. It originally comprised three-bays with three-stage entrance tower to W and vestry room to SE. Pointed-arched door opening at N face of tower, having cut and tooled chamfered limestone surround, timber battened door and hood moulding with label-stops. Blank pointed-arched window opening to S face of first-stage, having limestone surround, limestone sill, hood moulding and label-stops. Square-headed blind openings to second-stage, with limestone surrounds, limestone sills, hood moulding and label-stops. Third-stage lancet openings, having limestone surrounds, limestone sills, hood mouldings and label-stops, with timber louvers. Projecting limestone string courses between stages. Parapet with eaves dentils course, crenellations, corner pinnacles with

<sup>31</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90; Visitation, 1818, p. 108.

<sup>32</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; Visitation, 1818, p. 109.

decorated finials and finished with cut limestone quoins and a spire on octagonal plan. Pointed-arched window openings to S hall, having limestone surrounds, hood mouldings and modern timber frames with clear glass. Pointed-arched blind window openings with limestone sills and hood mouldings are recent decorations to N elevation. This wall was originally blank. Pointed-arched E window opening, having limestone surround, limestone sill and triple-light with plain glass and projecting limestone string course over. Square-headed door opening with cut limestone surround and timber battened door to E face of vestry room. Cut limestone corner quoins. Small pointed-arched window opening to vestry, having limestone surround, limestone sill, modern timber frame with plain glass. Small circular chimneystack. Pitched slate roof with raised verges. In use as a restaurant.

25 Dunboyne, SS Peter & Paul

Nothing remains of the church where the rebuilding was funded by parochial cess over several years.<sup>33</sup> It was replaced by a new church on the same site in 1866.

26 Dunshaughlin, St Seachlain's



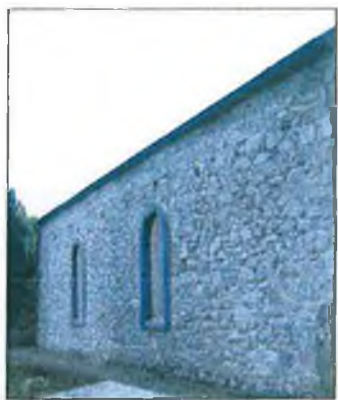
Rebuilt by the parishioners and First Fruits loans of £500 and £200 given in 1813 and 1819 respectively.<sup>34</sup> Three-bay hall with three-stage W tower and protruding chancel. Roughcast rendered hall, tower and chancel. Pointed-arched door opening to S of tower,

<sup>33</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 39; Dunboyne V.M.B., 1800-18.

<sup>34</sup> Dunshaughlin V.M.B., 1799-1821, pp 143-240; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95; Visitation, 1818, p. 109.

having moulded limestone surround, hood moulding over with carved label-stops. Timber battened double-doors with timber battened tympanum over. Louvered oculus to second-stage. Ashlar limestone string course between second-stage and belfry. Belfry with large arch-pointed openings, having cut limestone dressing and cut limestone sills, hood mouldings and louvers. Ashlar limestone string course to castellations. Parapet with eaves dentils, corner pinnacles and *fleur-de-lis* finials. Pointed-arched openings to S hall, with tooled limestone surrounds and cut limestone sills. Y-tracery windows with cast iron diamond paned windows, having plain glass. N hall is blank, with modern pump-house. Large pointed-arched opening to chancel, with tooled limestone surround, cut limestone sill, having triple-light intersecting-tracery window with stained glass. Pitched slate roof to hall and chancel with raised verges to gables. Cast iron and modern plastic rainwater goods. Still in church use.

27 Durrow, St Columba's



N



S



W entrance



Medieval stone head

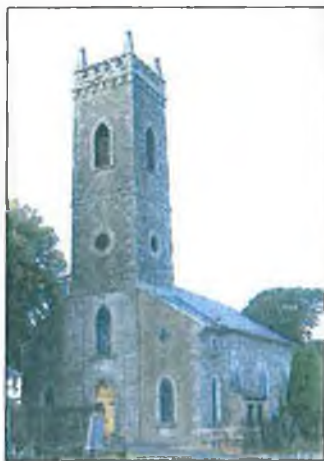
Recorded in 1818 as having been put into good repair and furnished by the parishioners.<sup>35</sup> Two-bays with bellcote to W entrance. E and W walls built of coursed limestone rubble. N and S walls rising to courses. Brick chimneystack to S wall. Round-headed window openings to N and S elevations, with tooled limestone surrounds and sills. Square-headed door opening to W, with elaborate limestone surround, having keystone and scroll brackets supporting cornice surmounted by three urns. Timber paneled door. Medieval stone head inserted to W wall, beneath bellcote. Round-headed E window opening, with tooled limestone surround and sill. All window openings shuttered from the exterior. Pitched slate roof with raised verges to E and W gables. Cast-iron rainwater goods. In the care of the O.P.W.

28 Enniscoffey



Nothing remains of the church to which the First Fruits gifted £900 in 1818.<sup>36</sup>

29 Enniskeen, St Ernan's



SW

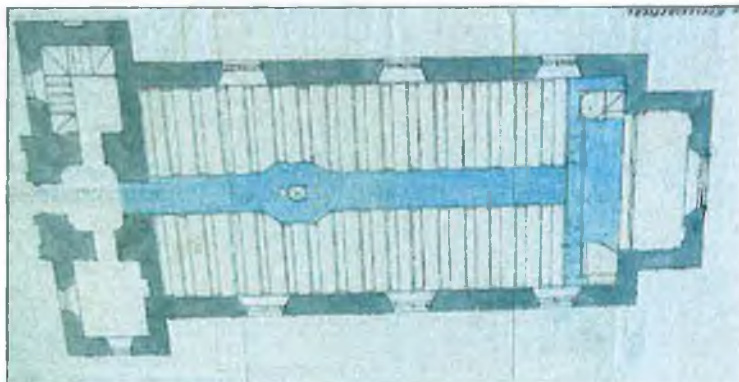


N

<sup>35</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 78.

<sup>36</sup> *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90; Visitation, 1818, p. 108.





Source: Portfolio 23

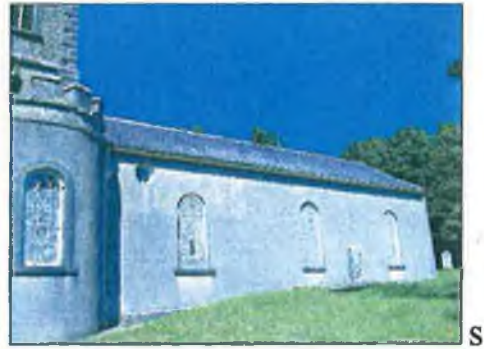
Recorded by O'Beirne in 1818 as having been rebuilt and ornamented with a steeple at the expense of the parishioners.<sup>38</sup> Three-bay hall, projecting E chancel and two-stage tower rising from W gable entrance, being flanked by single-bay side vestibules. Built of coursed limestone, with cut limestone quoins to hall, tower and chancel. Block-and-start cut limestone dressings to all window openings. Ashlar limestone dressing to center section of vestibules, NW and SW sections with roughcast render. Pointed-arched entrance door opening to W gable vestibules, having block-and-start cut limestone dressing, tooled, chamfered limestone surround, timber battened double-doors with timber battened tympanum and plaque over. Flanked by pointed-arched single-light stained glass windows, having limestone surrounds and cut limestone sills. N face vestibule with pointed-arched blind opening, having cut limestone sill. Small pointed-arched blind window opening above. S face vestibule with pointed-arched window opening, with cut limestone sill, center panel of stained glass, surrounded with leaded diamond panes. Small pointed-arched blind opening over. First floor vestibule with pointed-arched window opening, with cut limestone surround and cut limestone sill. Single-light window with two stained glass panels, surrounded with leaded diamond panes. Flanked by quatrefoils, N having leaded diamond panes, S having stained glass. First-stage of tower with louvered oculi to N, S, E and W. Belfry stage with large arched-pointed louvers to N, S, E and W. Castellated parapet with pointed corner pinnacles and ball finials. N and S nave with pointed-arched window openings, Y-tracery windows with leaded diamond panes. Chancel with pointed-arched triple-light window, having intersecting tracery and stained glass. Pitched slate roof to hall.

<sup>37</sup> Welland & Gillespie's plan to change seating arrangement, 1866, Portfolio 23.

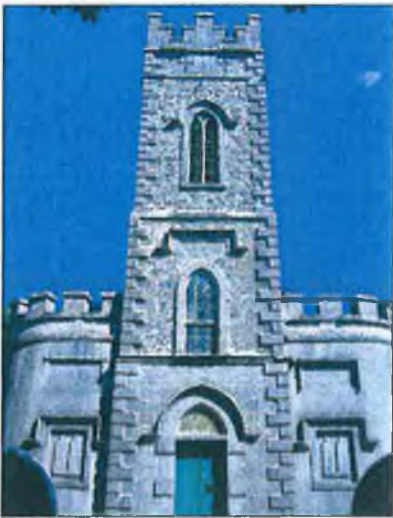
<sup>38</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 12, 109.

Hipped slate roof to chancel. Rising verge to W gable with kneeler stones to eaves. Small pump-house to S hall. Cast iron rainwater goods. Still in church use.

30 Forgney, St Munis's



Source: *N.I.A.H.*,



W

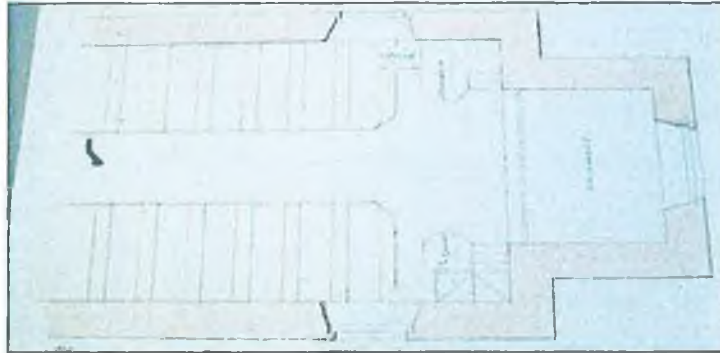
W gallery to E chancel

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,



E chancel to W gallery

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,



Source: Portfolio 23

This church was enlarged and steepled by the Countess of Ross in 1813.<sup>40</sup> Three-bay hall, three-stage W tower flanked by castellated single-bay bowed vestibules and projecting E chancel. Roughcast rendered hall, chancel and vestibules. Cut stone string courses to side vestibules at eaves level. Dressed ashlar limestone to first-stage of tower, rendered limestone walls to other stages, all having tooled limestone corner quoins with chamfered edges and projecting cut limestone string courses. Carved limestone plaques and decorative limestone carvings to W face of vestibules, the carvings surmounted by carved limestone label mouldings. Pointed-arched door opening to W face of tower, having block-and-start surround, timber battened double doors, fanlight with intersecting timber tracery hood moulding and label-stops. Rounded-headed window openings to N and S bows of vestibules, with cut limestone surrounds, cut limestone sills and having six-over-six timber sash windows, with intersecting tracery to upper sash. Pointed-arched window opening to W face of tower at second-stage, with cut limestone surround and carved limestone label moulding over, having nine-over-six sash window. Pointed-arched openings to belfry stage, with dressed limestone surrounds, cut limestone sills and Y-tracery timber louvers, surmounted by carved limestone hood mouldings. Ashlar limestone panels to W face, having a pair of incised Bottonée-cross motifs. Castellated parapet, having Irish-style crenellations with cut stone copings over. Round-headed window openings to N and S hall, having cut limestone surrounds, cut limestone sills and leaded diamond panes of coloured glass. Oculus near eaves level, to W end of N and S hall, having timber frame and plain glass. Round-headed, single-light chancel window with cut limestone surround, cut limestone sill, having stained glass. Pitched slate roof to hall, having raised cut stone

<sup>39</sup> Welland's plan for changes to pulpit and reading desk, 3 Oct. 1845, Portfolio 23.

<sup>40</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 95, 109; Date plaque on W face of tower.

coping with kneeler-stones to eaves of E gable. Hipped slate roof to chancel. Cast iron rainwater goods. Interior painted walls, having low paneling to hall and chancel. Timber king-post trusses, paneled gallery. Still in church use.

31 Gallen, St Mary's



N, c. 1940

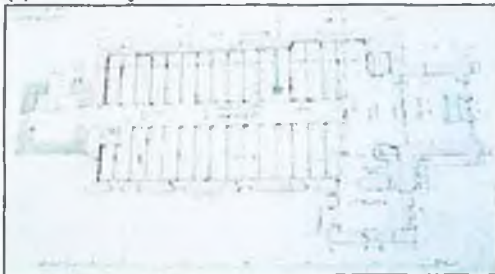


S site

Source: uncredited photograph in Cloghan parish calendar (Ferbane, 2000)

Plan 14 Gallen, St Mary's: set of plans, 1845<sup>41</sup>

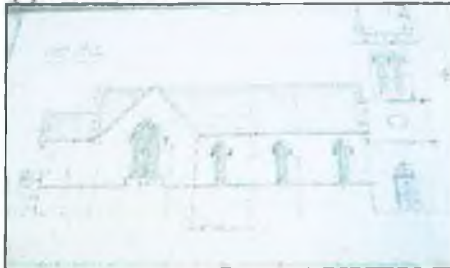
(a) Ground-plan



(b) S elevation



(c) N elevation



(d) E & W elevations



<sup>41</sup> Proposed changes to the church of Gallen, 28 Aug. 1845, Portfolio 23.

Nothing remains of this church. Its site, in the village of Cloghan was given by Mr Bowes-Daly. The First Fruits gifted £600 towards its building in 1809.<sup>42</sup>

32 Galtrim, St Mary's



The steeple was added in 1800.<sup>43</sup> There is no record of how it was funded. Hall with three-stage W tower and vestry room to N elevation. Buttressing to E end of N and S elevations and to E elevation. Roughcast rendered, with chamfered limestone corner quoins to hall. Pointed-arched entrance door opening to W face of tower, having tooled limestone surround and timber battened double-doors. Second-stage with plaque surmounted by carved label-moulding. Narrow ogee openings to N and S face. Pointed-arched window openings at belfry stage, with tooled limestone surround and Y-tracery timber louvers. Castellated parapet with pointed corner pinnacles and *fleur-de-lis* finials. Blank N hall. Vestry with pointed-arched door opening to W face, having chamfered, tooled limestone surround with timber battened double-doors. Pointed-arched window opening to N face, having tooled limestone surround, tooled limestone sill and leaded diamond panes of plain glass. Pointed-arched E window having exterior shutters. Square-headed window opening to S elevation, having cut limestone block-and-start surround with carved label moulding over and exterior shutters. Pitched caulked slate roof to hall and vestry. Rising verges to E and W gables. Cast iron rainwater goods. Not in use.

<sup>42</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 103-4, 108; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

<sup>43</sup> Date plaque on W face of tower.

33 Kells, St Columba's



S



W



E

Plan 15 Kells, St Columba's: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Recorded in 1818 as having been rebuilt by the parishioners.<sup>44</sup> Roughcast render on coursed limestone. Gable-fronted, comprising four-bay nave with single-bay E chancel

<sup>44</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 1-2, 109.

and projecting entrance bays to N and S elevations. Three-bay flat-roofed projecting entrance block to W with chamfered corners, comprising central breakfront with pointed-arched door opening having chamfered limestone dressing, intersecting tracery fanlight and timber battened double doors, flanked by single-bays with sash lancet windows with plain glass, having cut limestone sills and hood mouldings. Lancet to N and S face of breakfront having cut limestone sill, square leaded panes having coloured glass and hood moulding. Flight of cut stone steps to N nave projecting entrance bay, with pointed-arched door opening, having chamfered limestone surround, timber battened door and intersecting tracery fanlight with plain glass. Cusped single-light above, having block-and-start ashlar limestone surround and stained glass. Large pointed-arched window openings flank entrance door opening, with block-and-start ashlar limestone surround, cusped stone tracery, one having stained glass, the other having square leaded panes with coloured glass. S nave with pointed-arched window openings, having block-and-start ashlar limestone surrounds, cusped paired lancets with quatrefoil, having square leaded panes with coloured glass. Triple-light lancet window, flanked by single lancets to chancel, having ashlar limestone surrounds and hood mouldings. Stained glass. Pitched slate roof. Cast iron water goods. Still in church use.

34 Kentstown, St Mary's



SE



N



Chancel

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,



Source: Portfolio 23

In 1818 Bishop O'Beirne recorded St Mary's as having been put into complete repair and finished with a steeple. The same notes classify the church as rebuilt. The works were financed by parochial cess.<sup>45</sup> Three-bay hall, three-stage tower, projecting porch to N hall and apsidal chancel to E. Roughly dressed stone walls with string courses to tower. Round-headed door opening to N tower face, having tooled limestone surround and timber battened door with plaque over. Roundels to N, S and E of second-stage. Small square-headed window to W face, having four plain glass panes. Pointed-arched openings to belfry stage, having tooled limestone surrounds and Y-tracery louvers. Balustrade with pointed corner pinnacles. N hall with paired round-headed window openings, having ashlar dressings and stained glass. Porch with round-headed door opening, having ashlar surround and timber battened door. S hall with three paired round-headed window openings, having ashlar dressings and stained glass. One round-headed sash window with plain glass. Cast iron railings enclosing the Somerville vault at W end. Apsidal chancel with central rose window, having ashlar surround and stained glass. Venetian-arched side window openings, with ashlar dressing and stained glass. Pitched slate roof with raised stone verges to W hall and porch. Cast iron rainwater goods. Still in church use.

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<sup>45</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 19-20, 109; Kentstown V.M.B., 1810-18, pp 105-127.





Rebuilt with a loan of £200 given by the First Fruits in 1821 and parochial cess.<sup>46</sup> Only part of the tower remains. Roughcast rendered, having ashlar limestone corner dressings. Remnants of E hall wall attached to tower is of limestone rubble. Pointed-arched door openings to N and S elevations, having ashlar, chamfered limestone surrounds, with hood mouldings. Pointed-arched door opening to W elevation, having tooled limestone surround. Square-headed door opening to E. Square-headed window openings to N, S and W elevations of second-stage. Third-stage with pointed-arched window openings to N, S, E and W elevations, having chamfered limestone surrounds, chamfered limestone Y-tracery and hood mouldings.

<sup>46</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 90, 109; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

36 Kilbrew/Tryvet



Nothing remains of the two-bay hall and two-stage tower that was rebuilt by the parishioners and completed c. 1824.<sup>47</sup> Demolished 1895.<sup>48</sup>

37 Kilcleagh, St Mary's



Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

<sup>47</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 109; Kilbrew V.M.B., 1824, pp 2-11.

<sup>48</sup> Unreferenced drawing from Margaret Nugent, 'Kilbrew house' in Dermot Oates (ed), *Curraha jubilee, 2000* (no place of publication, 2000), p. 58.



W gallery to E chancel

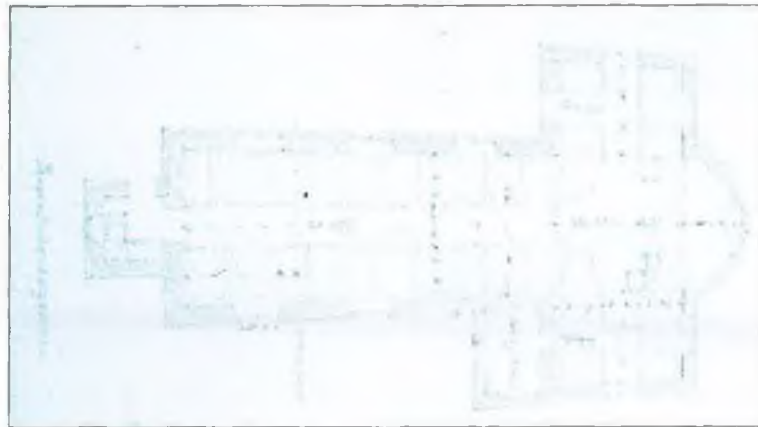
Source: N.I.A.H.,



E chancel to W gallery

Source: N.I.A.H.,

Plan 17 Kilcleagh, St Mary's: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Rebuilt by the parishioners and a loan of £857, given by the First Fruits in 1816.<sup>49</sup> Three-bay nave, single-bay transepts to the N and S, curved chancel to the E and slender two-stage W tower. Vestry protrudes from W wall of S transept. Built of limestone rubble with roughcast render to the S nave and tower. Pointed-arched door opening to the N face of tower, set in a raised square-headed surround, with timber battened double-doors. Pointed-arched openings to belfry stage, having limestone surround, cut limestone sills and timber louvers. Raised parapet having Irish-style crenellations with cut stone copings over. Pointed-arched window openings to W elevation, the nave and to the end elevations of transepts, with brick over-arches, cut limestone sills, having timber sliding sash windows

<sup>49</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 109; Kilcleagh V.M.B., 1816, p. 66; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

with intersecting-tracery heads. Pointed-arched window openings to the E elevations of transepts, having cut limestone surrounds, cut limestone sills, brick arches over, with triple-light coloured glass windows. Pointed-arched door opening to W face of N transept, having chamfered limestone surround, with timber battened double-doors. Square-headed window opening to W face of vestry, having cut limestone sill, timber frame four-over-two sliding sash window with plain glass. Pointed-arched window opening to the chancel, having cut limestone surround, cut limestone sill and Y-tracery coloured glass window. Pitched slate roof with raised verge to the W gable and with a projecting corbelled eaves course. Curved slate roof to chancel. Cast iron rainwater goods. Painted interior walls, having moulded ceiling cornice and ceiling roses. W gallery with paneling to floor. Still in church use.

38 Kilkenny West, St Canice's



SW

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

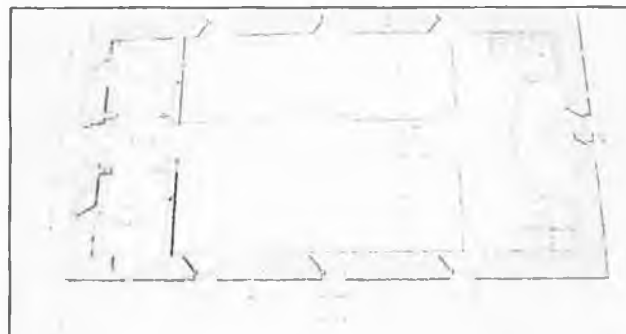


NE

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

Plan 18 Kilkenny West, St Canice's: set of plans, n.d.<sup>50</sup>

(a) ground-plan



<sup>50</sup> Portfolio 23.

(b) W elevation



(c) E elevation



(d) S elevation

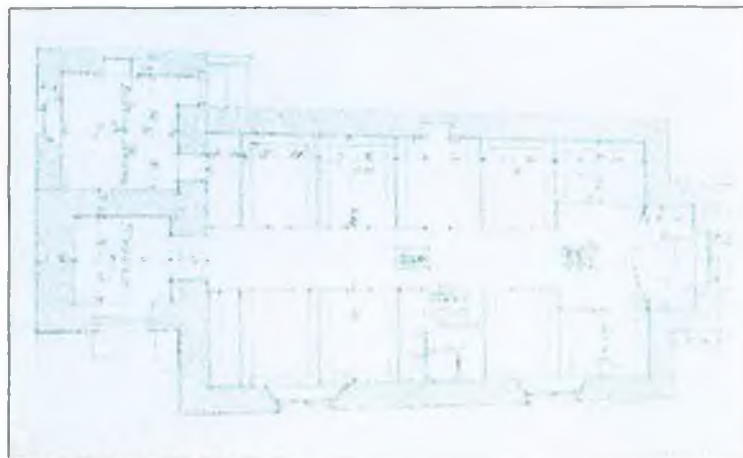


Now ruinous, this church was new roofed by the parishioners and the chancel repaired during the O'Beirne episcopate.<sup>51</sup> Three-bays with bellcote to the W end. Built of coursed limestone rubble, having cut tooled limestone corner quoins, over a stone plinth. Round-headed door opening to the W, with tooled limestone surround and flanked by slender round-headed window openings, having tooled limestone surrounds and cut limestone sills. Small ogee-headed window opening above W door, having tooled limestone surround. N and S elevations with slender round-headed window openings, having tooled limestone surrounds and cut limestone sills with tooled dressed discs beneath. E elevation with Venetian-arched window opening, having tooled limestone surround and cut limestone sill. Raised stone verges with kneel-stones to the E and W gables.

<sup>51</sup> Kilkeny West V.M.B., 1807-17, pp 14-65.

39 Killeagh, St Fiach's

Plan 19 Killeagh, St Fiach's: ground-plan, 1869



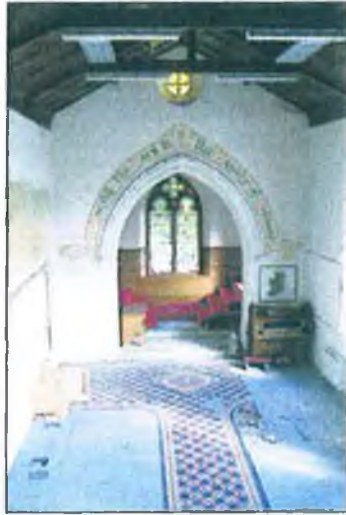
Source: Portfolio 23

Nothing remains of the church which was built by a First Fruits gift of £500, given in 1802.<sup>52</sup>

40 Killiconnighan, St Kinneth's



<sup>52</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 108; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

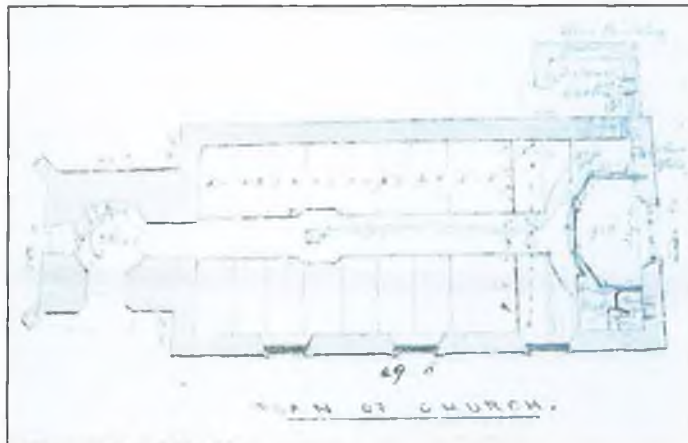


W gallery to E chancel



E chancel to W gallery

Plan 20 Killiconnighan, St Kinneth's: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Rebuilt with a First Fruits loan of £700, given in 1820.<sup>53</sup> Three-bay hall, limestone ashlar dressed three-stage W tower, with limestone spire on octagonal plan, projecting E chancel and projecting vestry to E end of N elevation. Rendered walls to hall and chancel. Diagonal buttresses and projecting string courses to tower. Tudor-arched door opening to S face of tower, having cut chamfered limestone surround, hood moulding with label-stops, timber battened double-doors with plain glass fanlight over and plaque above. W face with square-headed window opening, cut limestone surround, tracery and square panes of clear glass. Square-headed window openings to second-stage with cut limestone surrounds,

<sup>53</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 109; Killiconnighan V.M.B., 1819, p. 23; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

having two rectangular panes of plain glass. Pointed-arched window openings to belfry stage, with cut stone surrounds, hood mouldings over, label-stops and Y-tracery timbered louvers. Battlemented parapet with squared corner pinnacles set on the diagonal buttresses, having sloping capstones over. Pointed-arched window openings to S hall, with cut limestone surrounds and sills, hood mouldings with label-stops and paired cusped lights having square panes with plain glass. N elevation blank. Projecting vestry with pointed-arched door opening to W face, having cut limestone surround and timber battened door. Small pointed-arched window to E face of vestry, with timber sliding sash windows, having intersecting tracery to the head, square panes and plain glass. Pointed-arched openings to N and S faces of chancel with ashlar sills and square panes with coloured glass. Pointed-arched E window with cut stone dressings and hood moulding with label-stops, having paired-lights, with quatrefoil over and square panes with coloured glass. Oculi to E and W gables, E having clover-leaf cross motif and ochre glass, W having cross motif and crimson glass. Pitched slate roof to hall, chancel and vestry. Cast iron raised ridge-comb to chancel. Cast iron rainwater goods. Interior walls painted, having no decorative plaster. Timber panelled ceiling with coupled-rafter trusses. Timber chair-rail panelling to chancel. Timber W gallery. Now in the care of FÁS.

41 Killoughey, St Eoughy's



NW

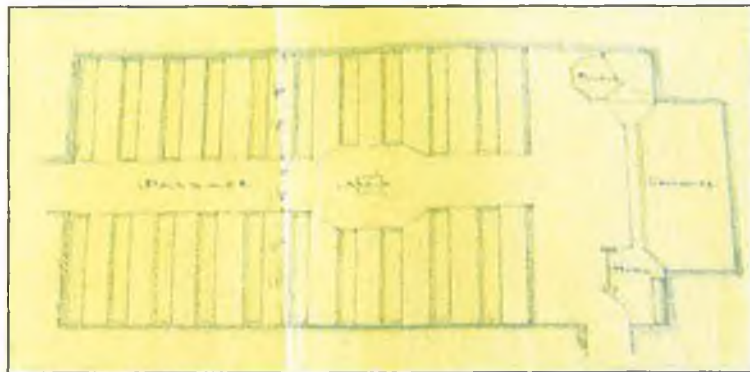


S





Plan 21 Killoughey, St Eoughy's: incomplete ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Built by a gift of £900 given by the First Fruits in 1816.<sup>54</sup> Three-bay hall, two-stage buttressed W tower having limestone ashlar spire on an octagonal plan, projecting E chancel and projecting vestry at E end of S elevation. Roughcast rendered walls. Projecting string course between stages of tower. Tudor-arched door opening to W face of tower, having cut chamfered limestone surround with hood moulding over, label-stops and plaque above with drip-moulding. Timber battened double-doors with timber battened tympanum over. Pointed-arched window openings to N, S and W of belfry stage, having limestone surrounds and timber louvers. Crenellated limestone parapet with pointed pinnacles. N hall with pointed-arched window openings, cut limestone surrounds and cut limestone sills, having Y-tracery windows and diamond panes of plain glass. S hall originally blank, now having three small modern pointed-arched window openings, concrete sills and timber frames with diamond panes of plain glass. Vestry with small square-headed modern window opening to E, having cut limestone sill and diamond panes of plain glass. Square-

<sup>54</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 108; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

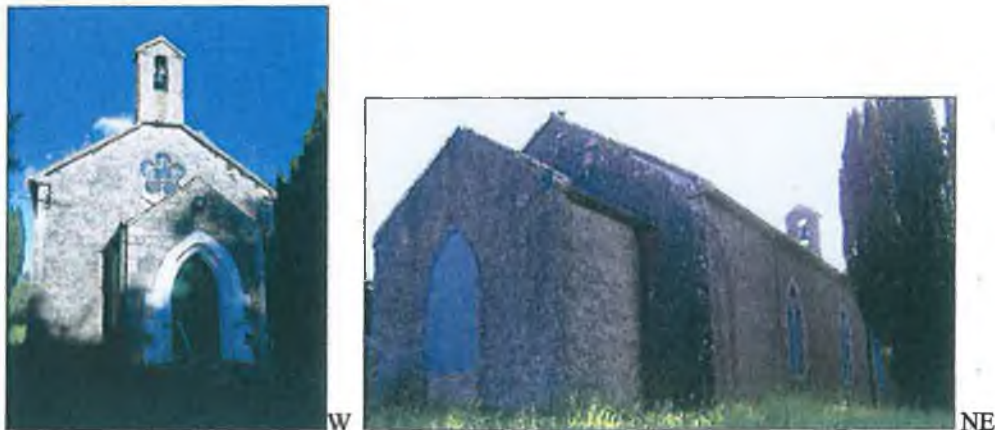
headed modern door opening to W face of vestry, having modern timber paneled door. Brick chimneystacks to S hall and S gable of vestry. Pointed-arched E window with cut limestone sill, intersecting Y-tracery window, having diamond panes and plain glass. Pitched slate roof to hall, chancel and vestry. Cast iron rainwater goods. Interior walls painted and timber paneling retained in the vestry room. King-post trusses support the roof. In use as a private residence.

42 Kilmainhamwood, St John the Baptist



In 1803 the First Fruits gifted £500 towards the building of this church.<sup>55</sup> The church was demolished in the early 1960s and the stone used in the building of the boundary wall surrounding its graveyard.

43 Kilmessan, St Mary's



<sup>55</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 4, 108; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 170.

Rebuilt in 1820. No record remains of how the work was financed.<sup>56</sup> Three-bay hall with bellcote and projecting W porch. Projecting E chancel with projecting vestry room to SE. Built of squared, dressed limestone, having roughcast render to hall, chancel and vestry. Three cut stone steps lead upwards to pointed-arched door opening at W face of porch, having ashlar moulded limestone surround, partly dressed with ashlar limestone block-and-start, having timber battened double-doors. Pointed-arched window openings to N and S faces of porch, having tooled limestone dressings and with external steel shutters. Rose window to W gable over door opening, having ashlar limestone dressing and stained glass. Pointed-arched window openings to N and S hall, with ashlar limestone block-and-start surrounds, cusped paired-lancets and quatrefoil with stained glass. Pointed-arched E window with ashlar limestone dressing and external steel shutters. Pointed-arched door opening to W face of vestry room with ashlar limestone surround, having block-and-start ashlar limestone dressing and timber battened double-doors. Pointed-arched window opening to S face of vestry room, having ashlar limestone dressing and external timber shutters. Short, round, stone chimneystack rising from S vestry gable. Pitched slate roof to hall, chancel and vestry. Raised stone verges with kneeler-stones to E and W hall gables and to E chancel gable. Cast iron rainwater goods. Now in community use.

44 Kilmoon, St Munna's



Entrance



N

All that remains of this church is a section of the N wall. St Munna's was rebuilt by the parishioners and a First Fruits loan of £500, given in 1815.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> National architectural inventory, 'Kilmessan Church of Ireland, Kilmessan, County Meath', at (<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&countv=ME&regno=14329013>) (20 July 2009).

<sup>57</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 21, 109; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

45 Kilmore, St Patrick's

Nothing remains of this church which was recorded by O'Beirne as having been put into complete repair by the parishioners.<sup>58</sup>

46 Kilshine, St Sinch's



Plan 22 Kilshine, St Sinch's: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

John Pollock of Mountainstown financed the spire and furnishings. The parishioners paid a cess over several years and the First Fruits gifted £600 in 1807 and £200 in 1816.<sup>59</sup> Two-bay hall with three-stage W tower and ashlar limestone spire on an

<sup>58</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 22.

<sup>59</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 7, 108; Clongill & Kilshine V.M.B., 1816-25, pp 9-20); *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

octagonal plan. Hall of squared coursed limestone rubble, having roughcast render to S elevation. Tooled limestone corner quoins to hall and tower, the latter having string courses between stages. Pointed-arched door opening to S face of tower, with chamfered limestone surround, hood moulding and label-stops, surmounted by a lozenge plaque. Pointed-arched window opening to W face, having ashlar limestone dressings and reticulated leaded panes. Square-headed window openings to N, S and W faces of second-stage, having ashlar limestone dressings, paired lights with reticulated leaded panes. Pointed-arched window openings to belfry stage, having ashlar limestone dressings, hood mouldings with label-stops, cusped paired-lights with quatrefoil and timber louvers. Castellated parapet, having castellated corners with pointed pinnacles. Pointed-arched window openings to S hall, with ashlar limestone dressings, having cusped paired-lights, quatrefoil and reticulated leaded panes. Cast iron railing enclosing Pollock vault to E end. Pointed-arched blind window openings to N hall, with ashlar limestone dressings and Y-tracery. Pointed-arched window opening to E elevation, with ashlar limestone dressings, having cusped triple-lights, quatrefoils and reticulated leaded panes. Pitched slate roof. Cast iron rainwater goods. Now in ruins.

47 Kilskyre, St Schiria's



NE



N

Rebuilt by the parishioners and a loan of £466 given by the First Fruits in 1822.<sup>60</sup> Three-stage hall with three-stage W tower, having flanking bays and ashlar limestone spire on an octagonal plan. Exposed limestone rubble to hall with ashlar limestone corner buttresses. Roughcast render to tower and flanking bays. Pointed-arched door opening to W face of tower having chamfered limestone surround. Pointed-arched window openings to

<sup>60</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 109; Kilskyre V.M.B., 1820-25, pp 183-204; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

flanking bays with cut limestone dressings, having castellations with pointed gablet pinnacles rising from buttresses and *fleur-de-lis* finials over. Pointed-arched windows to belfry stage having ashlar limestone dressings, hood mouldings with label-stops and Y-tracery timber louvers. Battlemented parapet, having pointed gablet pinnacles with *fleur-de-lis* finials. Pointed-arched window openings to N and S hall with ashlar limestone dressings. Pointed-arched window opening to E elevation with ashlar limestone dressings. Castellations to E gable with corner buttressing and pointed gablet pinnacles with *fleur-de-lis* finials. Now in ruins.

48 Kinnegad, St John the Baptist



NW tower



W tower



N tower



E tower



Plaque

Nothing remains at the site where the church was rebuilt by the parishioners and loans of £1,000 in 1821 and £333 in 1822.<sup>61</sup> In 1954, when the church was being demolished the parish priest of Coralstown, Revd Crinion, the Roman Catholic bishop of Meath John Anthony Kyne and James McCann, the Church of Ireland bishop of Meath and Clonmacnoise came to what was, in light of the time, an unusual arrangement. The three-stage tower and spire of St John the Baptist, Kinnegad, was taken asunder and rebuilt at its present situation on the NW wall of St Agnes's Roman Catholic church at Coralstown. In its current position the tower comprises Tudor-arched door opening with chamfered cut limestone surround to W face of first-stage, having cut, tooled limestone plaque over. N and E faces with pointed-arched window openings, having cut, tooled limestone dressings, hood mouldings with label-stops and single-light windows of stained glass. Square-headed window openings to N and W faces of the second-stage, having cut, tooled limestone dressings and timber louvers. Pointed-arched window openings to belfry stage having cut, tooled limestone dressings, hood mouldings with label-stops and timber louvers. Battlemented parapet with pointed gablet corner pinnacles and *fleur-de-lis* finials. Ashlar limestone spire on an octagonal plan, having a cross finial. Constructed of dressed limestone with corner buttressing, having string courses between stages.

49 Knockmark



SW tower face

<sup>61</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 109; Kinnegad V.M.B., 1821-27, pp 2-31; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

Only the tower remains at Knockmark. The hall was dismantled before 1908.<sup>62</sup> The First Fruits gifted £900 towards its building in 1816.<sup>63</sup> Three-stage tower of squared coursed limestone rubble, having projecting string courses between stages and ashlar limestone corner dressings. Pointed-arched door opening to S elevation, having chamfered limestone surround and hood moulding with label-stops. Elaborately decorated memorial to W elevation, dedication unreadable. Pointed-arched window opening to N and S elevations, having ashlar limestone dressings. Recessed panel to S elevation of second-stage. Pointed-arched openings to belfry stage, having ashlar limestone dressings and timber louvers. Battlemented parapet with pointed corner pinnacles. Cast iron rainwater goods to N elevation.

50 Leney



S



S hall

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,



E chancel to W



W to E chancel



N aisle from E chancel

<sup>62</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 304.

<sup>63</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 108; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.





N aisle and vestry entrance from W



E chancel with rails and floor tiling still intact.

Rebuilt by the parishioners, the Incorporated Society, trustees of Wilson's Hospital and a loan of £350 which was given by the First Fruits in 1809.<sup>64</sup> Four-bay nave with three-stage W tower. Roughcast rendered walls with projecting string courses to tower. Pointed-arched door opening to S face of tower with chamfered, cut limestone surround. Pointed-arched window opening to W face, with cut limestone surround. Oculi to N, S and W faces of second-stage, having cut limestone dressings, timber quatrefoils and timber louvers. Raised parapet having English-style crenellations. S nave with pointed-arched window openings with cut limestone sills and single-light windows, having remains of leaded square panes and coloured glass. N nave with round-arched paired window openings, having ashlar limestone surrounds and leaded single-lights with square panes of coloured glass. Shouldered-arched door opening to vestry, flanked by single-light lancet windows, with leaded square panes of coloured glass and set in ashlar limestone surrounds. Pointed-arched E window opening with brick surround, having triple-light geometric window with plain glass. Stone Celtic cross to apex of E gable. Raised stone verges to E and W gables. Cast iron rainwater goods to tower. Interior with pointed-arched arcade to N of nave, supported on Tuscan columns. Much of the interior brick-work and rubble courses are exposed, particularly around the chancel-arch and the chancel itself. The chancel floor tiling and chancel-rail remain intact. Now in ruins.

<sup>64</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 90, 109; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

51 Loughcrew, St Kieran's

Nothing remains of the church recorded by O'Beirne in 1818 as having been new roofed and put in complete repair by the parishioners.<sup>65</sup>

52 Mayne, St Nicholas's



SE

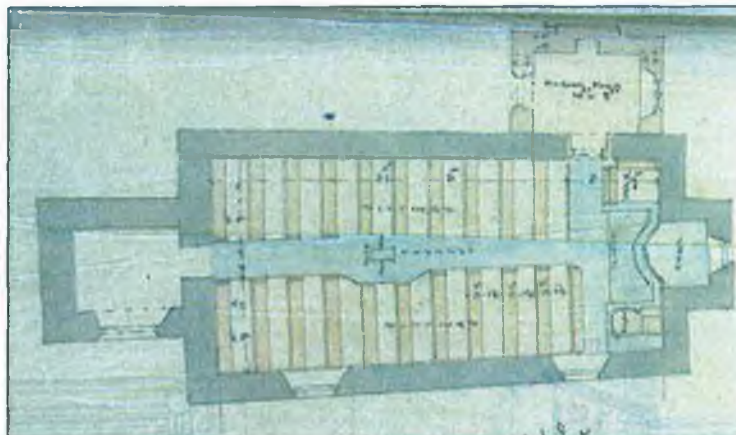
N



SW

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

<sup>65</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 58-9.



Source: Portfolio 23

Built by the parishioners and a gift of £500 given by the First Fruits in 1804.<sup>66</sup> Two-bay hall, three-bay W tower, with projecting E chancel. Vestry to E end of projecting N hall. Cement rendered hall and chancel over projecting stone plinth. Tower of limestone rubble, with ashlar limestone detail, including projecting string courses and parapet. Pointed-arched door opening to S face of tower, with chamfered limestone surround, hood moulding having drop-shaped label-stops. Timber battened door with fanlight of Gothic tracery, having plain glass. Small square-headed window opening to W face, having four square panes of plain glass. Ashlar limestone quatrefoil mouldings to second-stage. Pointed-arched window openings to belfry stage, with ashlar limestone dressings having Y-tracery timber louvers. Ashlar limestone parapet, crenellations with pointed corner pinnacles having ball finials over. Pointed-arched window openings to S hall with cut limestone dressings and Y-tracery windows, having stained glass. Four round-headed and paired window openings to projecting N elevation, having ashlar limestone block-and-start surrounds, square leaded panes and coloured glass. Square-headed door opening to E face of vestry room, having ashlar limestone surround and timber paneled door. Chimneystack to N vestry gable. Pointed-arched window opening to E chancel, having tooled limestone dressings, Y-tracery window with diamond leaded panes of coloured glass. Pitched slate roofs. Raised stone gable verges. Buttress to N hall at vestry bay. Moulded limestone corbels to projecting N hall and E face of vestry, supporting cast iron rainwater goods. Not in use.

<sup>66</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 108; Mayne V.M.B., 1808-12, pp 1-11; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

53 Moyglare

Nothing remains of the church described by O'Beirne in 1818 as having been lately put into complete repair by the parishioners.<sup>67</sup>

54 Moynalty, St Mary's



Rebuilt by the parishioners and a loan of £1,000 given by the First Fruits in 1818.<sup>68</sup> Two-bay hall with three-stage tower to the NE. Exposed random limestone rubble walls with cut, tooled limestone corner dressings. Projecting string courses to tower. Pointed-arched door opening to E tower face with chamfered cut limestone surround, hood moulding with label-stops and timber battened double-doors, having battened timber tympanum over. Pointed-arched window openings to NE and SW faces of tower, with cut limestone dressings, having sliding sash windows with intersecting Y-tracery head. Recessed quatrefoils having ashlar limestone dressings to second-stage. Pointed-arched cut limestone dressings to window openings at belfry stage, having timber louvers. Parapet with crow-stepped crenellations, having pointed corner pinnacles. Pointed-arched window openings to side elevations of hall, with moulded cut limestone dressings, intersecting Y-tracery, quatrefoils and square panes of plain glass. Pointed-arched chancel window opening with moulded, cut limestone dressings and intersecting Y-tracery window, with quatrefoils, having square panes of plain glass. Pitched slate roof. Modern rainwater goods. In use as Credit Union.

<sup>67</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 33-34; Moyglare V.M.B., 1801-13.

<sup>68</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 2, 109; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

55 Mullingar, All Saints

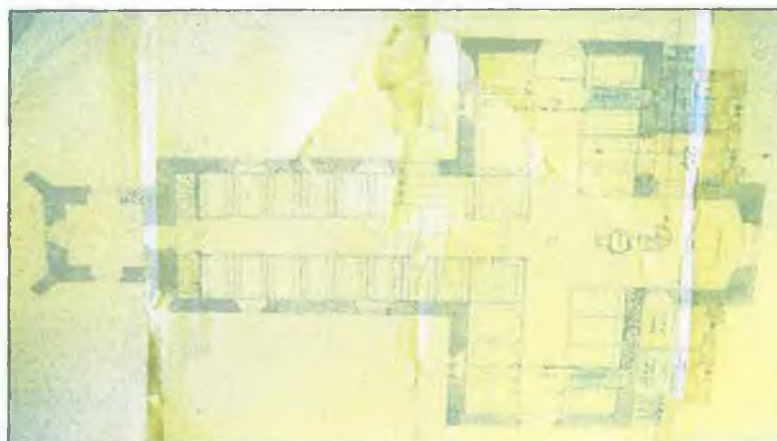


SE



E window

Plan 24 Mullingar, All Saints: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Rebuilt by the parishioners and a loan of £1,200 given by the First Fruits in 1815, on a simpler plan than now exists.<sup>69</sup> Two-bay nave having single-bay transepts to the N

<sup>69</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 109; Mullingar V.M.B., 1806-30, pp 2-201; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

and S, chancel to the E. Double-height, two-bay vestry to the S face of the chancel, added c.1860. Three-stage tower to the W, having clasping diagonal corner buttresses, rising to decorated pointed corner pinnacles over a crenellated parapet, having English-style battlements, with a spire on octagonal plan. Nave, chancel and transepts constructed of limestone rubble, changing to ashlar limestone construction over where the height of chancel and gable was raised, c.1878. Vestry constructed of coursed snecked and squared limestone rubble. Tower constructed of ashlar limestone with extensive cut limestone dressings, with projecting string courses between stages. Pointed-arched segmental-headed doorcases to N and S faces of tower, each having hood moulding, label-stops, timber panelled double-doors and carved cut limestone coat-of-arms over. Pointed-arched window opening to W face with hood moulding, label-stops and having single-light stained glass window. Small square-headed window openings to second-stage, with cusped paired-lights having square leaded panes with plain glass. Second-stage window opening to S face now converted into a door opening, having modern metal spiral staircase. Pointed-segmental-headed window openings to belfry stage, having hood moulding, label-stops and timber louvers. Pointed-arched window openings to nave, having chamfered limestone surrounds, moulded hood mouldings, label-stops and Y-tracery windows with stained glass. Pointed-segmental-headed multi-light Perpendicular Gothic windows to transepts and chancel, added c.1860, having cut stone tracery, hood mouldings, label-stops and stained glass. Pointed-arched door opening to vestry with chamfered cut limestone surround, having timber battened, studded door. Pitched slate roofs with crested clay ridge tiles, raised cut stone verges with kneeler-stones to gable ends. Cut stone Celtic cross to apex of chancel gable and apex of N and S gables. Chamfered stone *fleur-de-lis* to vestry gable. Moulded cut stone eaves cornice. Cast iron rainwater goods. Still in church use.

56 Navan, St Mary's



N



SE

Rebuilt by subscription, parochial cess and a First Fruits loan of £1,100 in 1812 and gift of £600 disbursed in 1816.<sup>70</sup> Three-bay nave, three-stage tower to W, projecting chancel to E and single-height vestry room having single-bay and set in corner between E end of S wall and S face of projecting chancel. Projecting bay to N nave. Limestone rubble walls, squared and snecked, with ashlar limestone dressings. Projecting string courses to tower. Diagonal buttressing to nave, projecting bay and chancel. Bay-defining buttresses to S nave. Pointed-arched door opening to N face of tower with moulded cut limestone surround, hood moulding and head-stops. Timber battened double-doors having timber battened tympanum over. Tudor-arched multi-light perpendicular window above, having dark glass and set in block-and-start surround with square-headed moulding over. Disused clock recess above. Pointed-arched window openings to belfry stage, with cut limestone dressings and timber louvers set in intersecting Y-tracery. Clock-face set between louvers on W face. Pointed corner pinnacles. Four-centred-arched window openings to nave, with ashlar limestone surrounds and mullioned Perpendicular-style windows, having stained glass. Projecting N bay with flight of stone steps and cast iron railing leading upwards to three-centred segmented-arched door opening with square-headed dressing, having timber paneled door. Four-centred-arched mullioned window opening above, with ashlar limestone surround and Perpendicular-style window, having stained glass. Four-centred-arched mullioned window opening to chancel, with cut limestone dressing, having Perpendicular-style window, with dark glass. Vestry with pointed-arched door opening to S face, having timber battened door. Lancet window openings to S and E vestry faces, set in cut limestone block-and-start surround, having single-light windows with diamond panes of clear glass. Double-pitched and hipped slate roofs with eaves dentils course. Cast iron rainwater goods. Still in church use.

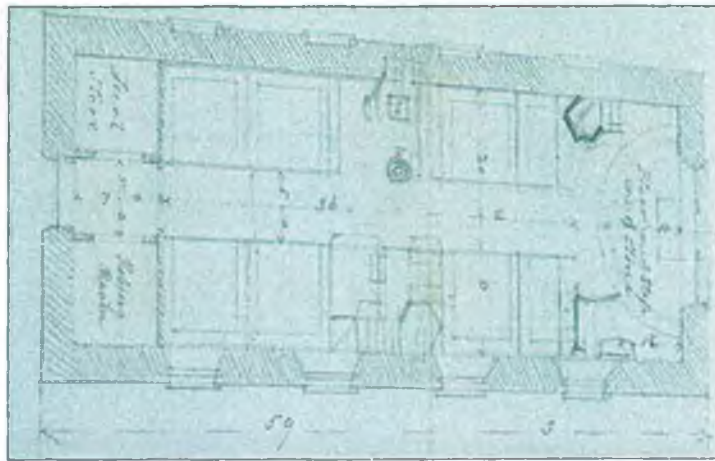
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<sup>70</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 109; Navan V.M.B., books 1 & 2, 1802-23, pp 330-334 & 1-188 respectively; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 6, 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90, 95.

57 Newtown Fertullagh, Christ Church



Plan 25 Newtown Fertullagh, Christ Church: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Recorded by O'Beirne in 1818 as having been rebuilt by the parishioners. The vestry minutes support this.<sup>71</sup> Three-bay hall to NW, chancel to SE, single-height polygonal vestry set between hall and chancel at SE corner. Three-stage tower to NW, having projecting moulded string courses between stages. Roughcast rendered with extensive cut limestone trim, including clasping buttresses to corners of hall and between bays. Pointed-arched door opening to S face of tower, with cut limestone surround, hood moulding and pointed label-stops, having timber paneled double-doors with timber tympanum over. Blind recessed oculi to second-stage, having ashlar limestone dressings. Pointed-arched window openings to belfry stage, having ashlar limestone dressings, with hood mouldings and label-stops. Timber louvers with Y-tracery. Battlemented parapet with pointed corner pinnacles. Pointed-arched window openings to hall, with cut limestone surrounds, hood mouldings,

<sup>71</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 91; Newtown V.M.B., 1802-11, pp 312-341.



label-stops and having Y-tracery windows with diamond-panes of plain glass. Three graded lancet window openings to chancel, having tooled limestone surrounds and square panes of coloured glass. Square-headed door opening to S face of vestry, with chamfered cut limestone surround, having timber panelled door. Square-headed window opening to E face of vestry with modern sliding sash window, having four square panes of plain glass. Pitched slate roofs, with rising stone verges to hall and chancel. Cast iron rainwater goods. Not in use.

58 Oldcastle, St Bride's



W



NE

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,



S



W to E chancel

Rebuilt with a First Fruits loan of £1,000 in 1816. The spire and other ornaments were gifted by Mr Napier of Oldcastle.<sup>72</sup> Three-bay hall, three-stage tower having ashlar cut limestone spire on octagonal plan. Projecting vestry room to NW hall at chancel end. Exposed coursed stone to tower, entrance gable and vestry, roughcast rendered hall, chancel and vestry, with cut limestone corner quoins. Projecting string courses to tower. Pointed-arched doorcase to SE face of tower, having ashlar limestone surround with hood moulding, label-stops, timber battened double-doors with timber battened tympanum and cast iron lamp over. Clock-face to SE at second-stage and dressed oculi to other faces. Pointed-arched window openings at belfry stage, having limestone dressings, with hood mouldings and label-stops, Y-tracery and timber louvers. Crenellated parapet having Latin cross in high-relief to parapet dressing at entrance face, pointed corner pinnacles having crockets. Pointed-arched window openings to SW hall with cut limestone dressings, hood mouldings, label-stops, Y-tracery windows having coloured glass. NE hall having two pointed-arched window openings with cut limestone dressings, hood mouldings, label-stops and Y-tracery windows having coloured glass. Quatrefoil window opening to center bay, having ashlar limestone surround with diamond panes of clear glass. Slated projecting chancel window having cut limestone surround with hood moulding, label-stops, ashlar limestone block-and-start outer dressing, intersecting Y-tracery window with coloured and stained glass. Single-height, single-bay vestry with square-headed cut limestone doorcase having chamfered lintel and timber battened door to SE face. Pointed-arched window opening to SE face, with chamfered limestone surround having diamond panes of clear glass. Pitched slate roof to hall and vestry with raised stone verges. Modern rainwater goods. Still in church use.

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<sup>72</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 54-56, 109; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

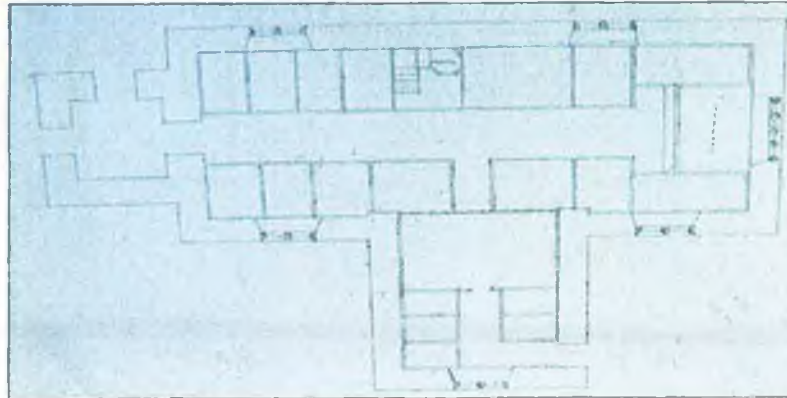
59 Painestown, St Mary's



S

Source: Un-referenced cover photograph in Conor Brennan, *Bits & pieces of Yellow Furze parish* (Navan, 2000).

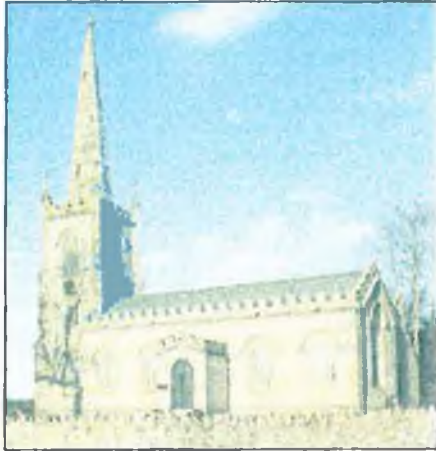
Plate 26 Painestown, St Mary's: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

The parishioners new roofed the church, built a steeple and new gallery with the help of a £400 loan disbursed by the First Fruits c. 1823.<sup>73</sup> Demolished in the 1950s.

<sup>73</sup> Painestown & Ardmulchan V.M.B., loose papers and First Fruits receipts; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, 454.



SE



E

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

The site and church gifted by Mr James Gibbons of Ballinagall in 1822.<sup>74</sup> Although Gibbons is the only subscriber acknowledged in the vestry minutes, Samuel Lewis attributes gifts of £277 to Sir Richard Levinge and £738 to the First Fruits.<sup>75</sup> Five-bay hall with single-bay, single-height, gable-fronted porch to center of S and N elevations of hall. Three-stage W tower with clasping diagonal corner buttresses, having a spire on octagonal plan. Constructed of snecked dressed limestone with extensive ashlar detail. Pointed segmental-headed door opening to W face of tower, having studded timber battened double-doors with studded timber battened tympanum over. Pointed-segmental-headed window openings to N and S faces of tower, with chamfered reveals, hood mouldings, label-stops and having triple-light perpendicular windows with coloured glass. Paired square-headed window openings to second-stage with chamfered reveals, stone mullions and hood mouldings with label-stops. Clock-face over second-stage window of S face. Pointed-segmental-headed window openings to belfry stage with cut stone switchback mullions, hood mouldings, label-stops, cut stone Perpendicular tracery, and modern leaded windows. Raised parapet with English-style crenellations and corner pinnacles having decorated finials. Pointed-segmental-headed window openings to N and S hall with cut stone switchback mullions, chamfered reveals, hood mouldings, label-stops and triple-light Perpendicular windows having coloured glass. Pointed-segmental-headed chancel window opening with cut stone switchback mullions, chamfered reveals, hood moulding, label-stops and five-light window having Perpendicular tracery with coloured glass. Recessed oculus over chancel window, having stone tracery and coloured glass. Pitched slate roof behind

<sup>74</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 108; Portlomon & Portnashangan V.M.B., 1822-24, pp 1, 6-7.

<sup>75</sup> Lewis, ii, *A topographical dictionary*, p. 468.

continuous battlemented parapet with eaves cornice. Cast iron rainwater goods. Modern single-height extension to N. In use as a restaurant.

61 Rathaspick, St Thomas's



Built by parochial cess and a First Fruits loan of £200, which was disbursed in 1820.<sup>76</sup> Three-bay hall and three-stage tower to NW having single-height single-bay vestibules with castellated parapets and pointed corner pinnacles having decorated finials over. Roughcast rendered with ashlar limestone detailing. Pointed-arched door opening to NW face of tower with cut limestone block-and-start trim, having timber battened double-doors with timber tympanum over. Pointed-arched window openings to flanking bays with limestone dressings and Y-tracery windows having latticed panes of coloured glass. Blind oculi to second-stage. Pointed-arched window openings to belfry stage with Y-tracery and timber louvers. Raised castellated parapet with dentils course and pointed corner pinnacles having decorated finials over. Pointed-arched window openings to hall with limestone dressings, having Y-tracery latticed windows with plain glass. Pointed-arched window opening to SE chancel gable with cut limestone surround, ashlar limestone outer dressing with block-and-start, hood moulding, label-stops and cusped arched triple-light window with cut stone Geometric tracery having diamond panes of coloured glass. Pitched slate roof with projecting stone eaves course and raised stone verge to chancel gable. Not in use.

<sup>76</sup> Rathaspick V.M.B., 1819-28.



S of tower



E to W



Bowl of early stone font, roughly set upon rubble stone plinth

All that remains is the three-stage W tower, W wall and part of the N wall. St Beccan's was built by the parishioners and a First Fruits gift of £800, which was disbursed in 1813.<sup>77</sup> Tower constructed of coursed limestone rubble having cut limestone dressings. Pointed-arched door opening to S face of tower, having moulded limestone surround, hood moulding and label-stops. Pointed-arched window opening to W face with ashlar limestone dressings, having Y-tracery window with timber louvers. E face of tower with square-headed door opening that once led to hall. Quatrefoils to N and W face of second-stage having moulded surrounds and timber louvers. Pointed-arched window openings to N and E faces of belfry stage, N opening with cut limestone surround and Y-tracery with timber

<sup>77</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 108; Rathbeggan V.M.B., 1818-22, pp 3-n.p.; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.

louver, E opening having ashlar limestone surround, hood moulding, label-stops, Y-tracery and timber louver. Raised parapet having castellations, dentils course and moulded corner pinnacles. Bowl of early stone font having carved corners. The bowl still used by the Brindley family of Rathbeggan House.

63 Rathcondra



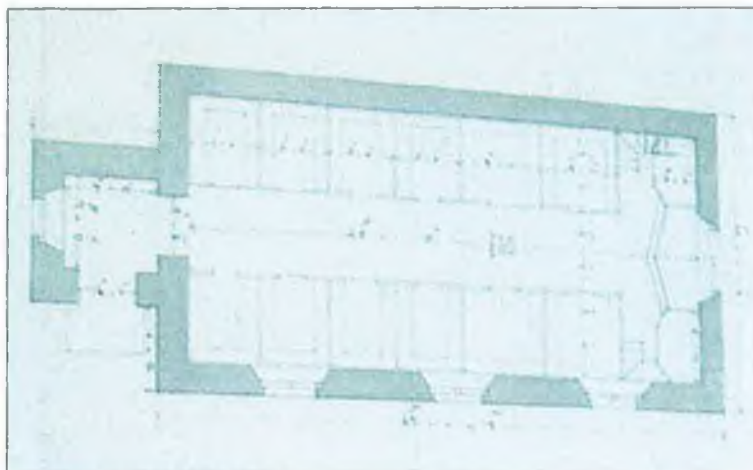
Nothing remains of the church that was gifted £500 by the First Fruits in 1802.<sup>78</sup>

64 Rathconnell, St John the Baptist



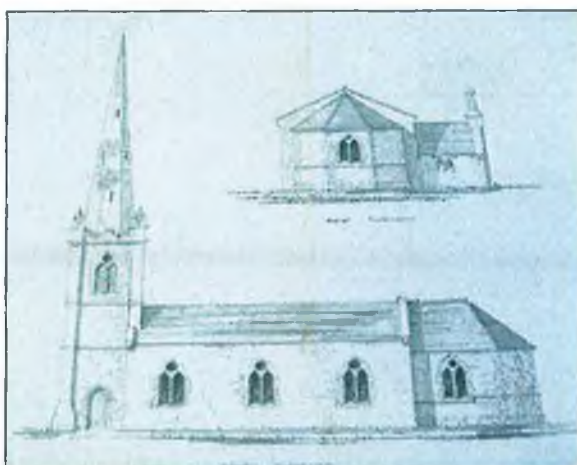
<sup>78</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 108; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

Plan 27 (a) Rathconnell, St John the Baptist: ground-plan, 1855



Source: Portfolio 23

Plan 27 (b) Rathconnell, St John the Baptist: plan for new chancel and vestry room, S & E Elevations, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Nothing remains of the church that was built with the help of £500 from O'Beirne's immediate predecessor Henry Maxwell c. 1798 and a parochial cess. By 1803 the church was in need of major repair and required the addition of a vestry room. Those works were financed by parochial cesses over several years. The steeple was gifted by Richard Reynell of Reynella.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 66; Rathconnell V.M.B., & accounts, 1800-23, pp 3-71 & pp 5-28 at back of minute book.



65 Rathkenny, St Canice's

Nothing remains of the church that was recorded by O'Beirne in 1818 as having been put in complete repair by the parishioners.<sup>80</sup>

66 Rathwire/Killucan, St Etchen's



Rebuilt by the parishioners, individual subscriptions, a First Fruits loan of £1,000 in 1811 and a further loan of £200 in 1815.<sup>81</sup> Three-bay hall with three-stage W tower having clasping corner buttresses rising to pointed corner pinnacles having sprockets and an ashlar limestone spire on octagonal plan. Victorian extensions to chancel and projecting porches to chancel ends of N and S hall. Clasping buttresses to N and S of chancel gable. Limestone rubble construction to hall and chancel. Limestone rubble construction to tower with extensive cut limestone trim. Pointed-arched door opening to S face of tower having chamfered cut limestone doorcase with hood moulding and decorated label-stops. Timber battened door having timber battened tympanum over. Date plaque above with squared-drip-moulding and label-stops. Deep-set square-headed window opening to second-stage of S face, having cut limestone block-and-start dressing with cusped paired-lights having squared panes of coloured glass. Pointed-arched window openings to belfry stage, with chamfered limestone surrounds, moulded hood mouldings, label-stops and window opening with staged cusped tracery having timber louvers. Raised castellated parapet having dentils course. Four Tudor-arched window openings to N elevation of hall, with cut stone surrounds. Two windows having paired-lights with cusped heads, quatrefoil and squared

<sup>80</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 14.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 62, 109; Killucan V.M.B., 1809-15, pp 99-144; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

panes of plain glass. The other two being Y-tracery paired-lights with stained glass. N elevation porch with drop-arched door opening, having square moulding over and carved corner lintel roses and recessed timber herring-bone door. Boiler-house extension to N face of N porch having square-headed timber battened door. Three Tudor-arched window openings with cut limestone surrounds to the S hall, one having staged paired-lights with cusped tracery head, quatrefoil and squared plain glass, the other two having Y-tracery paired-lights and stained glass. Tudor-arched window openings to N and S elevations of first chancel extension, having cut limestone surrounds and single-light stained glass windows. Tudor-arched window opening to E chancel gable with cut limestone surround, block-and-start limestone dressing and Y-tracery window having stained glass. Pitched slate roofs having overhanging eaves with exposed rafter ends, raised ridge-comb to hall and chancel. Raised stone verges to gables. Carved Celtic cross to apex of S porch at S gable. Cast iron rainwater goods.

67 Ratoath, Holy Trinity



N of tower with remains of N wall

The three-stage W tower and lower section of the hall walls are all that remain. Rebuilt by parochial cess and a loan of £805 from the First Fruits, given in 1817.<sup>82</sup> Roughcast rendered with limestone dressings. Pointed-arched chamfered door opening to S face of tower having hood moulding and label-stops. Elaborate memorial to W face, from which the dedication has been removed. Pointed-arched opening to N face with cut limestone surround. Recessed rectangle to N face at second-stage. Pointed-arched window

<sup>82</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 33, 109; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.

openings to belfry stage, having ashlar limestone surrounds, openings to N and E having timber louvers. String courses between stages. Castellated raised parapet having pointed corner pinnacles. Cast iron rainwater goods to N face.

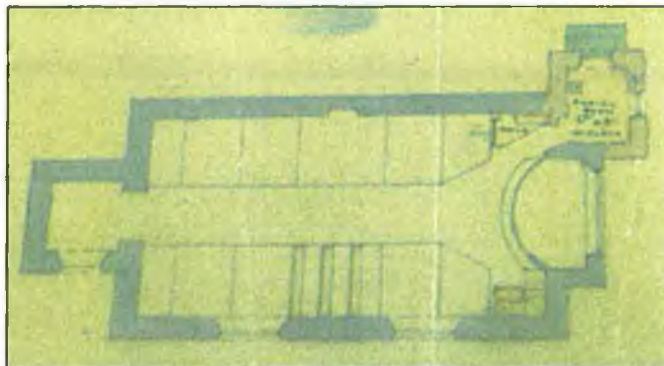
68 Skryne



Remains of W tower

Plan 28

Skryne: ground-plan, 1839



Source: Portfolio 23

Only part of the tower remains. In 1809 the First Fruits disbursed a loan of £500 towards building a new church.<sup>83</sup>

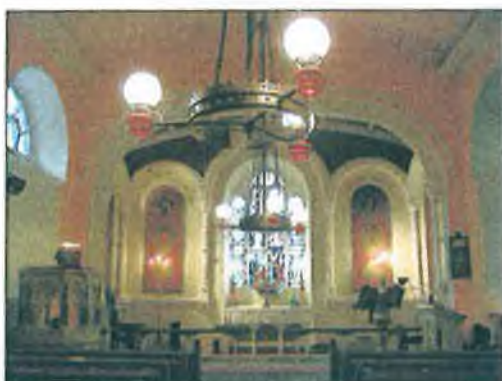
<sup>83</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 108; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.



NE



S



W gallery to E chancel



E chancel to W gallery

Rebuilt by parochial cess and subscriptions from Lord Conyngham, Thomas Williams and Robert Rigmartin.<sup>84</sup> Cruciform, having four-stage tower to N, S transept and projecting single-height vestry room to W end of nave. Roughcast rendered nave, transept and vestry, snecked limestone tower, having ashlar limestone fourth-stage. Pointed-arched chamfered limestone door opening to N face of tower with block-and-start limestone dressing having studded timber battened door with decorated timber tympanum over. Chamfered limestone lancet window opening to E face having Y-tracery and louvered vents. Date plaque to N face at second-stage having tooled limestone surround and drip-moulding with label-stops over. Square-headed window openings to third-stage having cut limestone surrounds, block-and-start dressings, paired lights having cusped tracery and louvered vents. Belfry stage in two sections, lower with clock-face to N, E and W faces,

<sup>84</sup> Slane V.M.B., 1801-17, pp 24-129.

upper having pointed-arched window openings with chamfered limestone dressings, cusped intersecting Y-tracery, quatrefoils and louvered vents. Raised crenellated parapet and clasping buttresses rising to pointed corner pinnacles having *fleur-de-lis* finials over. Extended lunette window openings to N nave and chancel end of S nave, having ashlar limestone dressing to arch.<sup>85</sup> Block-and-start dressing below springing-level to N opening at chancel end. All having stained glass. Lunette window opening to W end of S nave having ashlar limestone dressing and coloured glass. Round-arched quatre-light E window with block-and-start cut limestone surround and sill, having stained glass. Square-headed door opening to E face of S transept with modern cement surround having timber panelled door. Round-arched window opening to S face of transept with cut limestone sill, having stained glass. Two ogee-arched window openings to S face of W vestry with ashlar limestone dressings, cut tooled limestone sills, sliding sash timber casements having intersecting-tracery heads and square panes of clear glass. External timber battened decorative shutters. W face of vestry inset with fragments of early stone carvings transferred from St Mary's church at Stackallen. Chimney stack rising from apex of S vestry gable. Ogee-arched window opening to N vestry face with ashlar limestone dressing to head and block-and-start dressing below springing-level, sliding sash timber casement having intersecting tracery head and square panes of clear glass. External timber battened decorative shutters. Ogee-arched door opening with ashlar limestone dressing to head and block-and-start ashlar limestone dressing below. Timber panelled double-doors with tracery fanlight having clear glass. Pitched slate roofs. Raised verges to gables. Cast iron rainwater goods. Painted interior walls having a continuous ceiling-cornice, painted tongue-and-groove chair-rail paneling, moulded chancel-arch with slender Tuscan columns having first-pointed gothic capitals, round-arched reredos having same and with painted panels of sacred motifs. Early twentieth-century richly-veined pink and grey Connemara marble pulpit and reading desk, transferred from St Mary's church Painestown in 1958. Timber-fronted W gallery supported by four clustered shafts, coming forward at the centre with decorated cusped panels and with three-bay Gothic arcade, quatrefoils in the spandrels, further cusped panels and roped borders.<sup>86</sup> Cast iron fireplace. Still in church use.

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<sup>85</sup> *N.I.A.H.*, erroneously describes the extended lunettes as Diocletian. I am indebted to Edward McParlan for the correction.

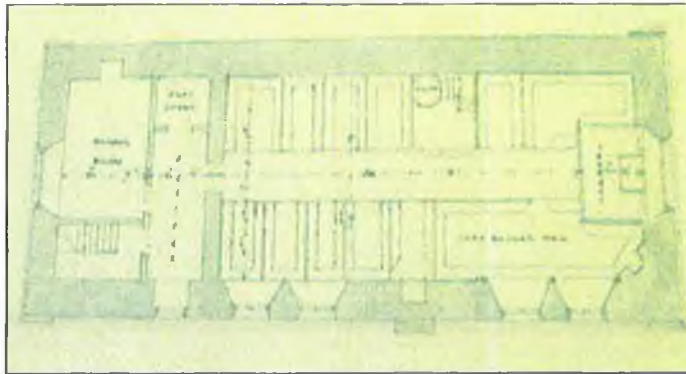
<sup>86</sup> Christine Casey & Alistair Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: North Leinster* (London, 1993), p. 474.

70 Stackallen, St Mary's



Stone carvings taken from the demolished church of St Mary, Stackallen and placed in W vestry wall of St Patrick's, Slane

Plan 29 Stackallen, St Mary's: ground-plan, 1858



Source: Portfolio 23

Nothing remains of the church that according to Healy was built in 1815.<sup>87</sup> Stackallen was demolished in 1959 and some of its stone carvings were removed to St Patrick's, Slane where they can be seen in the W wall of the W vestry.

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<sup>87</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 289.

71 Stonehall, St John the Baptist



Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

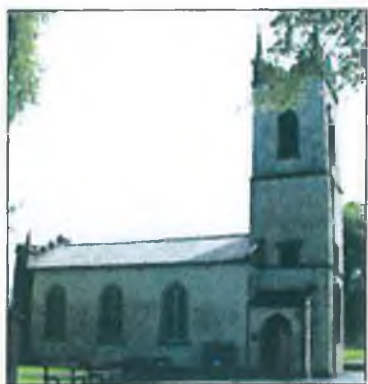


Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

S tower and steeple

Built by the parishioners and a First Fruits gift of £600 disbursed in 1808.<sup>88</sup> Three-bay hall with three-stage W tower, having ashlar limestone spire with arrow-slits and apsidal chancel. Roughcast rendered walls to hall with ashlar limestone detail. Limestone rubble tower with ashlar limestone detail, including corner buttresses and string courses. Chancel constructed of limestone rubble. Pointed-arched door opening to S face of tower with date plaque over. Quatrefoil window opening to second-stage. Pointed-arched window openings at belfry stage. Raised parapet with Irish-style crenellations and corner pinnacles. Pointed-arched window openings to S hall. N Hall blank.

72 Tara, St Patrick's

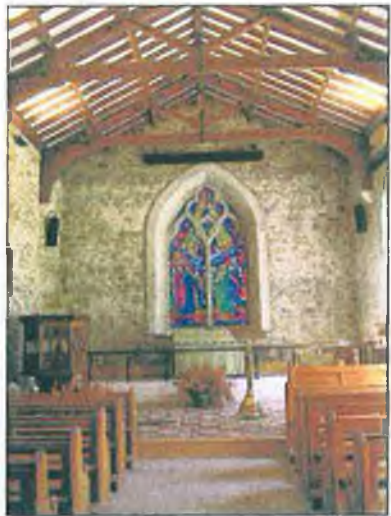


N

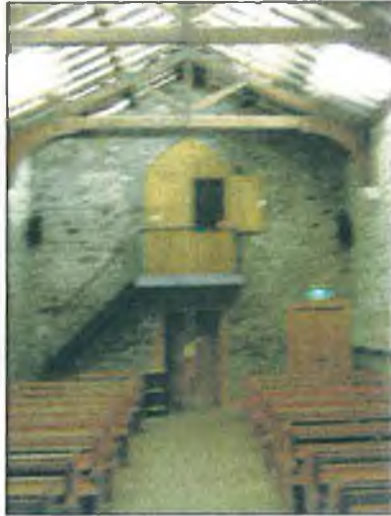


S

<sup>88</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 69, 108; Stonehall V.M.B., 1814-19, pp 3-13; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 6, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 90.



W to E chancel



E chancel to W

Built by the parishioners and a First Fruits loan of £500 which was disbursed in 1820.<sup>89</sup> The site was gifted by Lord Tara. Three-bay hall and three-stage tower, flanked by projecting entrance porch to the N and projecting vestry room to the S, both being of single-height. Constructed of limestone rubble having roughcast render to the hall. Ruled-and-lined render to the tower, porch and vestry. Clasp buttresses to E elevation. Projecting limestone string courses to tower. Pointed-arched door opening to N porch with timber battened double-doors and fanlight over, having diamond panes of coloured glass. Single-light staged lancet window to W face of porch having cut limestone sill and modern panes of frosted glass. Blind pointed-arched cusped triple-light Geometric stone window surround inserted into W face of tower. NW vestry with single-light staged lancet windows to W and S faces, having cut limestone sills and modern panes of frosted glass. Square-headed window openings to second-stage having ashlar limestone surrounds, having twin-lights of plain glass. Pointed-arched window openings to belfry stage with ashlar limestone surrounds, Y-tracery and timber louvers. Parapet having dentils course below. Crenellations with pointed corner pinnacles having ball finials. Pointed-arched window openings to N and S hall, N hall openings blind with intersecting tracery painted-in. S hall openings with cut limestone dressings, sills and Y-tracery windows with diamond panes of plain glass. Battlemented E elevation with pointed-arched window opening having cut limestone dressings, paired-lancets set in Geometric tracery and stained glass by Evie Hone, c. 1935. Pitched slate roofs with raised limestone verges. Cast iron rainwater goods. Plaster has been

<sup>89</sup> Tara V.M.B., 1817-24, pp 50-73; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95.



removed from internal walls to reveal coursed limestone. Modern staircase has been added to W end of hall and leads to projection-room in second-stage of tower. King-post trusses on moulded limestone corbels support the roof. Currently in the care of the O.P.W., and used as the interpretative center for the Hill of Tara heritage site.

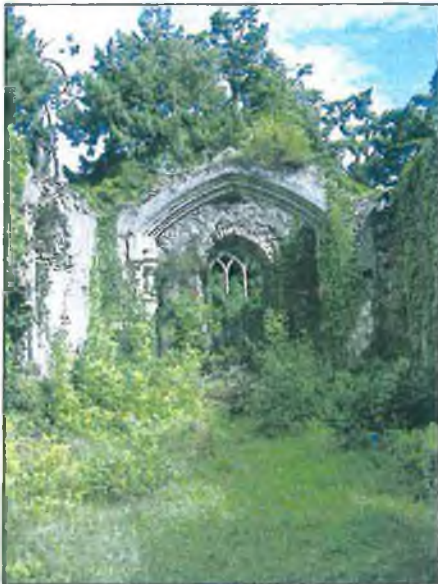
73 Tissanuran



S



N



W to E chancel



E chancel to W tower

Built by parochial cess and subscriptions on a site gifted by Colonel L'Estrange of Kilcummin. The First Fruits disbursed a gift of £500 in 1804.<sup>90</sup> Three-bay hall, three-stage W tower and projecting single-height vestry to N elevation at chancel end. Roughcast rendered. Pointed-arched door opening to S face of tower having cut limestone surround,

<sup>90</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 100, 108; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

hood moulding, label-stops and timber battened double-doors with timber battened tympanum over. Small pointed-arched window opening to N face of tower. Square-headed window openings to S and W faces at the second-stage, only that facing S is dressed with ashlar limestone, hood moulding and label-stops, having cusped paired-lights and timber louvers. Pointed-arched window openings to the belfry stage, those facing S and E are dressed with ashlar limestone having hood moulding and label-stops over and timber louvers. Raised castellated parapet having pointed corner pinnacles. Projecting cut limestone string courses between stages. Three pointed-arched window openings to S hall with chamfered moulded limestone surrounds, hood moulding, label-stops and having paired-lancets with quatrefoil. Two pointed-arched window openings to N elevation, having cut limestone sill and paired-lancets with quatrefoil. Pointed-arched door opening to N face of vestry, no dressings remain. Small single-light pointed-arched window to E face of vestry. No dressings remain. Pointed-arched E window opening having chamfered limestone surround and intersecting Y-tracery. Cut limestone eaves course, raised verges to hall and vestry gables. Chimneystack rising from apex of vestry N gable. Cast iron rainwater goods. Moulded chancel-arch to interior springing from polished stone colonnettes.

74 Trim, St Patrick's



SE



NW

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,



SW



Plaque

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

Rebuilt by the bishop and parishioners in 1802.<sup>91</sup> Three-bay side elevations to nave, single-bay chancel to the E, projecting gabled porch to the N, fifteenth century castellated tower to the NW corner having lateral buttressing with slit-openings, projecting string courses and dentils course below parapet. Sneaked limestone walls with buttressing and ashlar limestone dressings to corners. Pointed-arched entrance door opening to W face of tower with chamfered carved limestone surround, hood moulding, head-stops carved with shamrocks, timber battened double-doors having trefoil window opening with leaded diamond panes of stained glass over. Square-headed single-light window opening above, having ashlar limestone dressings and cast-iron louvers. Smaller pointed-arched door opening to W of entrance, approached by three ascending cut stone steps, with ashlar limestone surround and timber battened door, having recessed rectangular date plaque over. Small square-headed window opening to E face of tower, having ashlar limestone surround and cast iron louvers. Pointed-arched window openings to upper stage of tower having ashlar limestone dressings, staged twin-light, stone mullions and louvers. Clock-face inserted between louvers on S face. Ogee-headed window openings to all faces of tower just below the parapet, having ashlar limestone dressings and louvers. Three pointed-arched window openings to the S nave, two to the N nave, with block-and-start ashlar limestone dressings, having paired-lancets with trefoils above and leaded diamond panes of plain glass. Pointed-arched window opening to W elevation with ashlar limestone dressing, hood moulding with head-stops, one male, one female, tracery having four cusped lancets with six quatrefoils over and stained glass. Pointed-arched Perpendicular-style window opening to E elevation with carved stone tracery and four cusped lancets of stained glass. Small trefoil just below apex of E gable having ashlar limestone surround and stained glass. Shouldered-arched door opening to E face of projecting vestry at chancel end, with ashlar

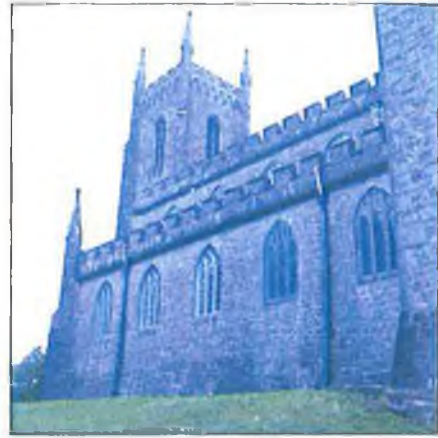
<sup>91</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 40-42, 109; Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, ii, pp 643-5.

limestone dressings and timber battened door. Small rose-window with ashlar limestone dressing and stained glass above to E face gable. Single-light lancet window to W face of vestry at nave end, having ashlar limestone block-and-start surround below springing-level and stained glass. Square-headed window opening to N face of vestry at chancel end, having ashlar limestone block-and-start dressing and stained glass. Small rose-window to N vestry gable with ashlar limestone dressing and stained glass. Chimneystack rising between vestry roofs. Pitched slate roofs with raised limestone verges to all gables. Carved stone wheel-head cross rising from apex of E chancel gable. Cast iron rainwater goods.

75 Tullamore, St Catherine's



W tower



S



N



E



NW gallery to SE chancel

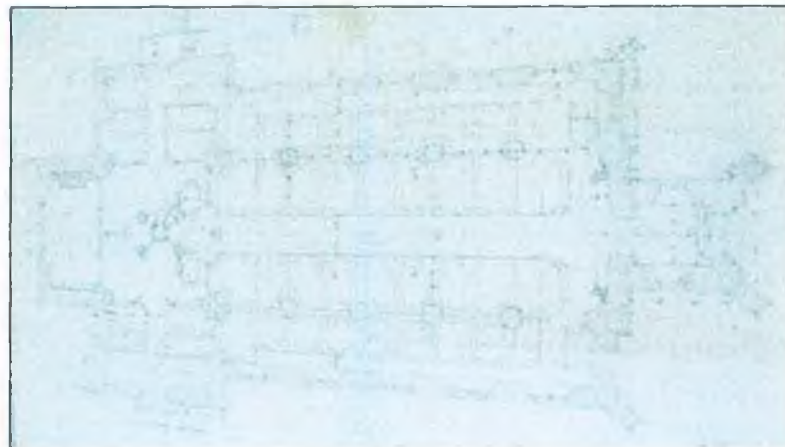
Source: *N.I.A.H.*,



Nave from SE chancel to NW gallery

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

Plan 30 Tullamore, St Catherine's: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Built largely by Lord Charleville who in addition to gifting the site and a considerable subscription of more than £3,000, also undertook to repay First Fruits loans

totaling £3,000. Reverend Ponsonby Gouldsbury gifted £500 and the First Fruits disbursed gifts totaling £1,300.<sup>92</sup> Cruciform with side-aisles, five-bays to nave and three-stage entrance tower to NW. Random coursed limestone walls, buttresses and base-batter. Tower buttresses rising to raised battlemented parapet with castellations and pointed corner pinnacles having decorated finials over. Continuous battlemented parapet at two levels of nave. Extensive ashlar limestone detail throughout. Single-height single-bay battlemented recessed vestibules flank W entrance, having diagonal buttresses, pointed corner pinnacles with decorated finials over. Pointed-arched door opening to W face of tower with chamfered limestone surround, timber battened double-doors on casters and carved timber tympanum over. Plaque above with hood moulding and label-stops. Cusped paired-lancet lights to N and S faces having square panes of coloured glass. Square-headed window openings to second-stage having cusped paired-lights with square panes of clear glass. Pointed-arched window openings to belfry stage having Y-tracery and timber louvers. Beading course below parapet. Pointed-arched window openings to upper and lower levels of nave, upper being Tudor-arched, having stone tracery with cusped heads, lower having stone intersecting Y-tracery and quatrefoils, both levels having stained glass. NW transept with flight of steps ascending to recessed door opening having inner and outer pointed-arch, block-and-start surround below springing-level, timber battened door with timber battened tympanum over and flanked by single-lancets with stained glass. Pointed-arched geometric-tracery window above having triple-lights and stained glass. Pointed-arched window openings at two levels, the lower having paired-lancet with rose above and stained glass, the upper being Tudor-arched having Y-tracery and squared panes of clear glass. Similar arrangement to SE transept, excepting the pointed-arched window opening has triple-light lancet with rose over, having stained glass. SE elevation with Tudor-arched door opening to vault at base-batter level, having timber battened door. Pointed-arched chancel window opening having triple-light lancet with triple roses over and stained glass. Pitched slate roof behind upper battlements. Cast iron rainwater goods. Interior walls painted. Rib vaulting and flat panelling to ceiling. Pointed-arched arcading to side aisle and timber gallery and organ to SW end having carved cusped panels. Still in church use.

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<sup>92</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 79, 108; Tullamore V.M.B., 1806-20, pp 5-168; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5-6, 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89-90, 95.



S



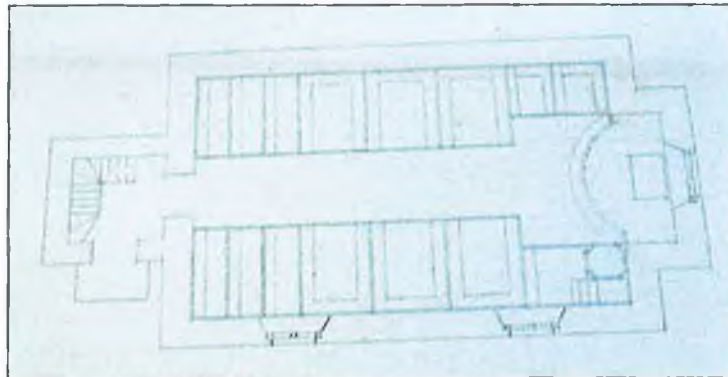
NE



E

Source: *N.I.A.H.*,

Plan 31 Vastina, St Brigid's: ground-plan, n.d.



Source: Portfolio 23

Built by parochial cess and a gift of £500 given by the First Fruits in 1804.<sup>93</sup> Two-bay hall with two-stage truncated W tower. Roughcast rendered with cut stone string courses to tower. Pointed-arched door opening to S face of tower, now blocked. Blind oculus to W face. Blind oculi to second-stage. Pointed-arched window openings to S elevation having cut tooled limestone dressings, now blocked. N elevation is blank. E elevation having large

<sup>93</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 92, 108; *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, p. 5, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89.

modern square-headed carriage opening with steel shutters. Projecting cut stone eaves course and pitched corrugated metal roof. Now used as a workshop.

77 Wherry

Repaired and ornamented with a steeple by the parishioners c. 1818.<sup>94</sup> Nothing remains.

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<sup>94</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 99.



## Appendix 1.1

### Protest against the defeat of the Irish Act of Union, 14 May 1799

Noblemen, clergy gentlemen [illegible] & in which lists of the county of Meath, as indeed the purport of certain resolutions, published in the newspapers and assuming to be the sense of the county on the proposal of a legislative union with Great Britain, feel it a justice we owe ourselves to protest against such assumptions, and to claim a right of expressing our own judgment on a measure that so materially affects our general and individual interests.

We cannot contemplate the various disasters and calamities that have so uniformly succeeded each other, for such a series of years, in this distracted country, without being impressed with a conviction that something is essentially and radically defective in our political system, and that some more effective measures must be resorted to, than have been hitherto provided, to remedy the events to which the state is so constantly exposed.

In the proposal of a legislative union as promising to be conducive to this happy end, we [illegible] [illegible] us for our independence or our interests; nor can we comprehend how such a measure can be either injurious or degrading to either of the parties, which the terms both as to constitution and commerce, are to be discussed and settled by each nation, exercising its own independent powers of deliberation and discussion.

We agree with some of the best and wisest measures in both kingdoms in conceiving the strongest hopes that a union so attained would remove every cause of distrust and jealousy between the two countries' that it would consolidate the powers and resources of the Empire and preclude its common enemy from all hope of converting our divisions into an instrument of separation; that it would open a prospect of composing those religious [illegible] and dissensions, to which we can trace too much of the public misery; and that it would introduce among our people, English capital, English manufacture, English industry, habits and manners.

Under these impressions we trust that whenever His Majesty shall, in his wisdom, think proper to communicate to our legislature the [illegible] of the enlightened and temperate deliberations of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain on this momentous question, it will be received with the attention that is due to the common Sovereign, and to the parliament of a country with which we wish forever to be united in affection and interests; and we expect that in giving it a full and dispassionate discussion, our representatives will manifest to both kingdoms that they have nothing in view but the peace and prosperity of Ireland as inseparable from the peace and prosperity of the Empire.

Persons from Meath now in Dublin who it is thought will sign:

Lord Darnley	Lord Boyne	Lord Sheffield
Lord Landsdowne	Lord Sherborne	Mr. Dillon
Colonel Bligh	Mr. C. Rowley	Colonel Burrowes
Mr. Nugent	Bishop of Meath	Reverend Mr. Murphy of Athboy
Mr. Lambert	Lord Essex	Lord Maxwell
Mr. Clements	Mr. Ruler	Lord Darby

Source: (P.R.O.N.I., Castlereagh papers, MSS D3030/773A & B).

Note: Transcribed as found in MSS

### Appendix 3.1

Church of Ireland congregations recorded in fifty-three parishes of the diocese of Meath, 1802-04 & their improvements

Parish	Members	Glebe	House	Church
Agher	28		•	•
Ardagh	68	•	•	•
Castlerickard	23			
Castletown-Kilpatrick/Drakestown	56			•
Clonard	123			•
Clongill	22	•	•	
Drumconrath	103			
Duleek [only children enumerated]	73			•
Enniskeen	355			•
Julianstown	28		•	
Kells Union	335			•
Kentstown	79		•	•
Kilmainhamwood	30			•
Kilskyre	144			•
Laracor	164		•	
Moynalty	146			•
Navan	235			•
Newtown, Kilbeg, Robertstown & Emlagh	50		•	
Painestown	52	•	•	•
Raddenstown	61			
Rathcore	95	•		
Rathkenny	9			•
Rathmolyon	143		•	
Ratoath	26		•	•
Skryne	67	•	•	•
Slane	184			•
Syddan Union	73		•	
Tara	55		•	•
Trim	445*			•

Parish (continued)	Members	Glebe	House	Church
Ballyboy	343			•
Castlejordan & Ballyboggan	159			•
Clonmacnoise	28			
Drumcullin	100			
Eglis	206			
Killoughey	102		•	•
Lynally	151			
Rynagh & Gallen	544			•
Tullamore-Kilbride	1,044	•	•	•
Ballyloughloe	91		•	•
Clonarney & Killough	68			
Drumrany	100		•	•
Enniscoffey	44	•	•	•
Kilbride-Pilate/Pass of Kilbride	11			
Kilcleagh	310	•	•	•
Killua & Killallon	300	•	•	
Killucan & Rathwire	160		•	•
Leney	129	•	•	•
Lacken	2			
Tyfarnan	12			
Kilmacnevin	24			
Templeoran	67			
Moylisker	157	•	•	
Rathconnell	141	•	•	•
Total	7,565			
* includes 50 Charter School children				

Source: *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 58, H.C. 1807 (78), v; (R.C.B., MS D7/157, pp 2-109); *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 5, 11, 18-19, 26-27, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 89, 95, 102-103, 110-111; Ellison, 'Early nineteenth century lists' in *The Irish Ancestor*, v, nos 1 & 2 (1973), pp 37-53 & pp 113-126 respectively.

## Appendix 3.2

Church of Ireland families recorded in eighty-one parishes of the diocese of Meath,  
1733, 1804 & 1818

Parish	Families 1733	Families 1802-4	Families 1818
Agher	n.a.	8	10
Almoritia	16	n.a.	7
Ardnurcher & its chapelries	n.a.	n.a.	225
Assey	n.a.	n.a.	4
Athboy	n.a.	n.a.	62
Athlone, St Mary's	n.a.	n.a.	144
Balroddan	13	n.a.	12
Ballygarth	n.a.	n.a.	2
Ballyloughloe	90	56	58
Ballymaglasson	0	n.a.	4
Castlecor	1	n.a.	56
Castlejordan & Ballyboggan	27	34	34
Castlelost	18	n.a.	51
Castlepollard & Mayne	100	n.a.	126
Castlerickard	3	4	7
Castletown Delvin	16	24	27
Castletown-Kilpatrick/Drakestown	8	16	8
Churchtown	8	n.a.	13
Clonard	32	36	32
Clonfad/Tyrrellspass	3	n.a.	37
Clongill & Kilshine	4	6	n.a.
Clonmacnoise	18	7	10
Colpe	14	n.a.	19
Donaghpatrick	7	n.a.	6
Drogheda, St Mary's	24	n.a.	41
Drumconrath	n.a.	32	29
Drumcree	10	10	30
Drumranny	n.a.	n.a.	13

(continued) Parish	Families 1733	Families 1802-4	Families 1818
Duleek	n.a.	n.a.	43
Dunboyne	n.a.	n.a.	28
Dunshaughlin	23	n.a.	20
Enniscoffey	6	3	12
Enniskeen & Ardagh	52	138	109
Fircall	116	142+	189
Forgney, Bunowen, Ballymore & Nougheval	73	n.a.	105
Galtrim	3	n.a.	7
Innishmott	n.a.	n.a.	1
Kells Union	94	109	185
Kentstown	12	19	16
Kilbeggan	34	n.a.	54
Kilbixey, Portlomon & Portneshangan	17	n.a.	34
Kilbrew	6	n.a.	8
Kilcleagh	n.a.	n.a.	108
Kilkenny West	12	n.a.	41
Killallon	5	77	83
Killiconnighan	8	n.a.	20
Killucan & Rathwire	70	51	127
Kilmainhamwood	4	7	3
Kilmessan	8	n.a.	6
Kilmoon	7	n.a.	11
Kilmore	18	n.a.	14
Kilskyre	n.a.	32	33
Knockmark	10	n.a.	6
Laracor	n.a.	56	38
Lemanaghan	9	n.a.	70
Leney *	10	40	67
Loughcrew	60	n.a.	63
Moorechurch	n.a.	n.a.	9
Moyglare	17	n.a.	7
Moylisker	n.a.	19	20
Moynalty	14	n.a.	24

(continued) Parish	Families 1733	Families 1802-4	Families 1818
Moyvore	20	n.a.	1
Mullingar	100	n.a.	98
Navan	36	101	67
Newtown, Kilbeg, Robertstown & Emlagh	19	16	10
Newtown Fertullagh	17	n.a.	65
Nobber	8	n.a.	18
Oldcastle	38	n.a.	92
Painestown	16	17	17
Rathbeggan	8	n.a.	4
Rathcondra	9	n.a.	10
Rathconnell	n.a.	38	34
Rathcore	6	30	26
Rathkenny	7	5	2
Rathmolyon	16	39	30
Ratoath	35	12	5
Reynagh & Gallen	22	n.a.	109
Skryne	16	14	16
Slane	20	65	37
Stackallen	23	n.a.	20
Syddan Union	20	27	20
Taghmon	n.a.	n.a.	13
Tara	n.a.	12	11
Tissauran	n.a.	n.a.	47
Trim	n.a.	130	101
Tullamore & Durrow	89	317	234
Vastina	5	n.a.	14
Wherry/Ferbane	20	n.a.	40
Minimum total of families	1,650	1,749	3,769
Source: Visitation, 1818, pp 2-109; Ellison, 'Early nineteenth century lists' in <i>Irish Ancestor</i> , v, nos. 1 & 2 (1973), pp 37-53 & pp 113-126 respectively * Includes 50 Charter School children			

### Appendix 3.3

#### Building accounts for the glebe house at Skryne, County Meath 1810-13<sup>1</sup>

Measurement of the Mason work at Skreen glebe-House for the Revd S. Ratcliff.			Description	£	s.	d.
Perches	Ft	In.				
809	17	9	of Mason work in house & Offices @ 12s. 4d. ft.	94	9	6½
	386		Turning of pargeting funnels @ 2d. ft.	3	4	4
	402		Turning stone of Offices @ 4d. ft.	2	2	10
	527		Turning of quoins	6	11	9
	165		Run of eve [sic] course to house	1	7	6
	326		Run of rearals	2	14	4
	221		Run of splayed lambs [lambrequins]	1	16	11
	472		Setting cut stone	3	18	9
			2 large elliptic arches in Barn & Coach House @ 13/6	1	7	0
			80 Inside Brick Arches @ 3s.	12	0	0
			36 Outside Brick Arches @ 3s.	5	8	0
			4 Schome Brick Arches @ 2s.		8	0
			2 Large Brick Arches		8	0
			4 four inch Arches @ 1s.		4	0
			10 hook stones with Irons leaded-in @ 2s.	1	0	0
December 14 <sup>th</sup> 1810 Chas Heny. Sillery				138	16s.	11½d.
An account of cash expended by the Rev <sup>d</sup> Stephen Radcliffe rector of Screen in building a glebe Hse & Offices on the Glebe of said parish as accounted by admeasurement made by me Chas Hen <sup>y</sup> Sillery, measurer & architect.						
			To excavation of foundations of House, Area, Yards, Offices collected	71	15	4
			To mason work of stone & brick in House, Offices & Area wall collected	548	17	6
			To Carpenter work in House & Offices collected	677	7	1½
			To Sleators [sic] work on House & Offices collected	152	6	3
			To Stone Cutters work inc. Chimney pieces, Case window stools, spud stones, eve [sic] course, Chimney tops, steps to Hall Door & from Area to yard & flagging the Kitchen	94	16	4½
			To Iron Mongers bills inc. nails, locks, Grates, sash fastenings, sash weights, pully boxes, shutter knobs, thumb latches, Iron Gate to Yard, - Iron Gate to back interance [sic]	120	7	6
			To Plaistering [sic] & cornices in the House & plaistering offices collected	112	5	4
			To Glaizing [sic] the house & Offices	23	10	4½
			To Painting the House & Offices	21	17	6
			To Paving Area with Stone & Casement with brick on edge, or tile, except the Kitchen which is flagged	22	14	6
Chas Hen Sillery Arch <sup>t</sup> Dec <sup>r</sup> 20 <sup>th</sup> 1813 Arch <sup>t</sup> fees				1,845	17s.	9½d.
				93	5s.	9d.
				1,938	3s.	6½d.

<sup>1</sup> Skryne glebe house, 14 Dec. 1810 & 20 Dec. 1813 (R.C.B., Skryne loose papers, MS D7/10/41.1).

## Appendix 3.4

### Glebe augmentation in the parish of Clongill County Meath, 1802

The Bishop of Meath wishes to augment the glebe-Lands of the Parish of Clongill in his Diocese (of which the Revd. Mungo Henry Noble is Rector) – by the addition of some Lands lying contiguous thereto.

David Thompson Esq is Tenant to the adjoining Lands under a Lease for Three Lives or 31 Years from the Bishop of Killalla – who is Seized in Fee – and Mr Thompson is willing to Sell his Interest in 6 or 7 Acres of his Holding – and his Landlord (the Bishop of Killalla) has agreed to make a Lease in fee-farm of the part wanted to augment the Glebe Lands, & to Fine down the Rent to 5d an Acre.

The late Bishop Evans by Will left a certain Fund to Purchase Lands for the Augmentation of Glebe Lands in the Diocese of Meath – And out of that Fund the present Bishop intends to carry the above Treaty into effect as the Glebe Lands of the Parish of Clongill contain little more than 13 Acres on which the Bishop had directed a Parsonage House & Offices to be built and would be too small for the use of the Incumbent especially as the Glebe Lands do not lye together but in different divisions apart from each other.

That an Acre or thereabouts of the Glebe Lands lies in a distant part of the same Lands held by Mr Thompson, and which is more than Half a Mile from any part of the Glebe Lands & in the Heart of Mr Thompson's Lands and Mr Thompson is willing to exchange an Equal part of his Lands more contiguous to the Glebe Lands in lieu of the part so detached & surrounded by his lands.

Counsel is requested to Advise How the Matters above stated are to be carried into effect – And How the different Interests of the Bishop of Killalla & Mr Thompson are to be ascertained – in point of the Value, or otherwise – with his particular directions upon the Whole.

[A different hand continues with the following]:

#### Copy Opinion

I have read this Case – And think Mr Thompson may either Surrender his Interest, in that part of his Farm intended for the Glebe to the Bishop of Killalla, who may then Demise, either in the Fee Farm, or for Lives Renewable for Ever, on such Terms as the Bishop of Meath may think reasonable as Trustee, under Bishop Evans Will: or Mr Thompson may Demise back to the Bishop of Killalla, that part of his Farm intended for the Glebe of Clongill, and then he and the Bishop of Meath may agree on the Terms. - As to the Exchange, as the part intended to be exchanged is so small as one Acre. I think all the Formalities required by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ann Chap 10 need not be pursued. I think the usual Deeds of Exchange entered into between Mr Thompson, the Bishop of Kildare and the Rector of Clongill will answer which.

Deed of Exchange must be approved by the Bishop of the Diocese with his Dean and Chapter under their Common Seal.

Ger'd. O Farrell.  
9<sup>th</sup> June 1802.  
Harcourt Street.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Clongill: Mr Noble's case, as to a treaty for augmenting the glebe-lands of the parish of Clongill', 9 June 1802 (R.C.B., MS D7/10/13/1).



## Appendix 3.5

Glebe lands in Church of Ireland livings of the diocese of Meath, 1807-26<sup>1</sup>

Living	Parish	Acres	Roods	Perches
Agher	Agher	7	0	0
Almoritia	Almoritia	28	0	0
	Piercetown	12	0	0
Ardagh	Enniskeen	10	0	0
Ardraccan	Ardraccan	37	0	0
Ardnurcher	Ardnurcher	55	0	0
	Kilcomragh	103	0	0
	Kilmanaghan	52	0	0
Assey, Balsoon, Killagh & Clonamey	Killagh	13	0	0
	Assey	2	0	0
Athboy	Athboy	9	2	6
	Girley	1	2	0
Athlone, St Mary's	Athlone	8	0	0
Ballygarth	Ballygarth	3	0	0
Ballyloughloe	Ballyloughloe	31	0	0
	Drumranny	30	0	0
Ballymaglasson	Ballymaglasson	20	0	0
Ballymore	Ballymore	30	0	0
Balroddan	Raddonstown	0	2	0
Benowen	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Castlejordan & Ballyboggan	n.a.	0	0	0
Castlelost	Castlelost	22	0	0
Castlepollard	Castlepollard	20	0	0
	Faughy	4	0	0
	Mayne	3	0	0
Castlerickard	Castlerickard	10	0	0
Churchtown	Churchtown	14	0	0
Clonard	Clonard	40	0	0
Clonfad & Kilbride Veston	Clonfadforan	20	0	0
Clongill	Clongill	19	2	30
Clonmacnoise	n.a.	50	0	0
Colpe	Kilsharvan	3	0	0
	Momington	7	0	0
Delvin	Delvin	14	2	0
Donaghpatrick	Donaghpatrick	18	0	0
	Kilberry	6	1	37
Drakestown	Drakestown	5	0	14
	Knough	3	0	30
	Kilpatrick	6	0	23
Drogheda, St Mary's	n.a.	0	0	0
Drumconrath	Drumconrath	9	1	26
Drumcree	Drumcree	36	1	15

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 46-75, H.C. 1807 (78), v: Visitation, 1818, pp 2-105; Archbishopal visitation, 1826.

(continued) Living	Parish	Acres	Roods	Perches
Duleek	Duleek	0	2	0
	Clonalvey	21	0	0
	Stamullin	3	0	0
	Dowth	30	0	0
Dunboyne	Dunboyne	16	0	0
Dunshaughlin	Rathregan	23	0	0
Durrow	Durrow	25	0	0
Dysart	Dysart	12	0	0
Enniskeen	Enniskeen	35	0	0
Fircall	Killaghey	641	1	32
	Rahan	45	1	0
	Ballyboy	339	1	10
	Eglish/Drumcullin	292	3	34
Forgney	n.a.	0	0	0
Gallen	Gallen	137	0	0
Galtrim	Galtrim	6	0	0
	Colmolyn	9	0	0
Grangegeeth & Monknewtown	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Innishmot	n.a.	0	0	0
Julianstown	Julianstown	19	2	15
	Moorechurch	4	0	25
	Ardcath	27	0	3
	Tymoole	6	1	25
Kells	Kells	882	0	0
Kentstown	Kentstown	4	0	0
	Danestown	1	2	0
	Ballymagarvey	4	2	0
Kilbeggan	Kilbeggan	21	2	25
Kilbixy	Kilbixy	20	0	0
Kilbride Pilate & Enniscoffey	Enniscoffey	20	0	0
Kilkenny West	Kilkenny West	15	0	0
Killallon	Killallon	36	0	0
Killiconnighan	Killoconnighan	15	0	0
Kilmainhamwood <sup>2</sup>	Kilmainhamwood	0	0	0
Kilmessan	Kilmessan	12	0	0
Kilshine	Kilshine	13	0	0
Kilskyre	Kilskyre	22	0	0
Kilmoon & Leckno	Kilmoon	36	0	0
	Piercetown	7	0	0
Kilmore	Kilmore	12	1	9
Kinnegad	Kinnegad	30	0	0
Knockmark <sup>3</sup>	'a small portion'	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Laracor	Laracor	21	0	0

<sup>2</sup> In 1818 O'Beime stated the want of glebe land in the parish of Kilmainhamwood was due to the lands of the late Lord Beaulieu had fallen to a Papist who refused under any circumstances to gift, sell or rent to the established church. This accounts for the fact that according to his statement of 1807 20a of glebe were promised but the lands were never secured. See Visitation, 1818, p. 4 & *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 47, H.C. 1807 (78), vi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, p. 57, H.C. 1807 (78), v. There was no other mention of glebe land for the living until Lewis's statement in 1837, where 21a at Knockmark and 5a at Culmullin were given. See Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, pp 239-40.

(continued) Living	Parish	Acres	Roods	Perches
Leney	Ballinaleck	22	0	0
Loughcrew <sup>4</sup>	Loughcrew	20	0	0
Moyglare	Moyglare	4	3	0
Moylisker	Lynn	20	0	0
Moymet <sup>5</sup>	Moymet	10	0	'a few perches'
Moynalty	Moynalty	13	0	0
Mullingar	Mullingar	1	3	0
Multifarnham, Stonehall & Taghmon	Multifarnham	3	0	0
	Stonehall	11	2	0
	Taghmon	40	0	0
Navan	Navan	9	2	0
	Donoghmore	0	2	0
Newtown	Kilbeg	16	0	0
Newtown Fertullagh	Newtown	40	0	0
Nobber	Nobber	40	0	0
Oldcastle	Oldcastle	7	0	0
	Kilbride	29	0	0
Painestown	Painestown	21	2	0
	Armulchan	2	0	0
Portloman & Portnashangan	Portnashangan	3	0	0
Rathbeggan <sup>6</sup>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Rathconnell	Rathconnell	24	1	0
Rathconrath	Rathconrath	22	0	0
Rathcore	Rathcore	47	2	0
Rathkenny	Rathkenny	1	0	0
Rathmolyon	Rathmolyon	36	0	0
Rathwire alias Killucan	Killucan	40	0	0
Ratoath	Ratoath	6	0	0
Reynagh	Reynagh	94	0	0
Skryne	Skryne	24	0	0
Slane	Slane	12	0	0
Stackallen	Stackallen	9	0	0
	Gernonstown	12	0	0
Syddan	Syddan	20	0	0
	Killarvey	4	0	0
	Mitchelstown	4	3	0
	Stahalmock	9	0	0
	Cruicestown	24	0	0
Tara	Tara	8	3	15
	Killeen	52	0	0
Trim	Trim	185	2	0
Tryvet & Kilbrew	Kilbrew	11	1	7
Tullamore alias Kilbride	Tullamore	4	2	0

<sup>4</sup> The 20a at Loughcrew appeared to have been in use by the incumbent, although the Napier estate was in minority. The papers concerning the glebe were completed at some date between 1807 and 1818. See Visitation, 1818, p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 43-44..

<sup>6</sup> The first mention of a 7½a glebe at Rathbeggan was made in Lewis's *A topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 489.

(continued) Living	Parish	Acres	Roods	Perches
Vastina alias Castletown Kindellan	Vastina	15	0	0
Wherry	n.a.	394	0	0
Total		5,013	3	21

Source: Except where otherwise footnoted the information in this table is taken from *Ecclesiastical report, 1806*, pp 46-75, H.C. 1807 (78), v: Visitation, 1818, pp 2-105; Archiepiscopal visitation, 1826

### Appendix 3.6

Board of First Fruits: loans & gifts advanced for building glebe houses in the diocese of  
Meath, 1804-21

Year	Parish	Incumbent to whom the monies were paid	Loan £	Grant £	Annual value £
1804	Kilbeggan	W Marshall	0	100	n.a.
1809	Ballyloughloe	Thomas English	675	100	550
1809	Killucan	H Wynne	0	100	n.a.
1810	Castlelost	Samuel Lucas	400	400	260
1810	Drogheda	Chas. Crawford	150	450	100
1810	Slane	Thos Brownrigg	500	100	450
1810	Painestown	Brinsley Nixon	625	100	450
1811	Drumrany	J. Alexander	50	450	60
1811	Clonfadforan	Hemsworth Ussher	300	400	150
1811	Clongill	Thomas Sutton	350	400	175
1812	Mayne	Richd. Vavasour	50	450	60
1812	Durrow	Edward Pepper	50	450	40
1812	Killallon	G.L. Gresson	750	100	500
1812	Athlone	J.W. Sterling	500	100	330
1812	Clara	S.Gresson	50	450	80
1812	Julianstown	Robert Shanley	400	400	200
1812	Mullingar	T Robinson	675	100	478
1812	Tissauran	H Mahon	0	100	n.a.
1813	Ballymore	Edwd. Donovan	50	450	112
1813	Agher	J. Kellett	168	450	84
1813	Kilkenny West	William Bryon	500	300	300
1813	Moymet	George Alley	400	400	200
1813	Laracor	Blaney Irwine	550	200	350
1813	Moylisker	Meade Dennis	500	200	380
1813	Donaghpatrick	Geo. O'Connor	600	200	400
1813	Newtown	W. Shields	650	100	500
1813	Taghmon	Bond Hall	300	400	150
1813	Ratoath	L.K. Conyngham	900	100	600
1813	Vastina	T. Robinson	900	100	600
1813	Newtown Fertullagh	H. Rochfort	450	350	260
1813	Rathconnell	F.P. Winter	232	400	116
1813	Kilmore	W. Gorman	500	250	315
1814	Skryne	Stephen Ratcliff	900	100	600
1814	Killeagh	Thos. O'Rourke	50	450	60
1814	Dunboyne	R. Hamilton	500	300	300
1814	Oldcastle	T.F. Knipe	500	300	250
1814	Kentstown	John Toler	625	100	450
1814	Churchtown	Roger Ford	210	400	105
1814	Tara	W.H. Irvine	750	100	500
1814	Tullamore	P. Gouldsbury	450	350	220
1814	Rathmolyon	C Benning	0	100	n.a.
1815	Galtrim	John Low	300	400	150

Year (cont.)	Parish	Incumbent to whom the monies were paid	Loan £	Grant £	Annual value £
1815	Stackallen	George Hardman	650	100	500
1815	Delvin	H. Fitzgerald	320	400	160
1815	Moyglare	Thomas Jones	390	400	195
1815	Knockmark	William Liddiard	675	100	450
1816	Kilbixy	John Jephson	50	450	22
1816	Ardnurcher	H. Usher	1,150	100	798
1817	Stonehall	R. Lockwood	50	450	60
1817	Leney	Daniel Ward	37 10s	337 10s	n.a.
1818	Tryvitt/Kilbrew	Bigoe Henzell	500	300	289
1818	Athboy	Robert Tromson	1,050	100	700
1818	Ferbane	H. Fitzgerald	50	450	n.a.
1819	Rahan	F. Ennis	50	450	60
1819	Rathconrath	F.A. Potter	450	350	292
1819	Rathbeggan	J. Mathews	100	450	60
1819	Kilcleagh	A. Rolleston	500	300	300
1820	Ballymaglasson	W. Gorman	600	200	430
1820	Dunshaughlin	G.L. Irvine	562 10s	100	350
1820	Drakestown	R. Longfield	900	0	800
1820	Kilbride Pilate	John Hales	150	337 10s	100
1821	Almoritia	James Hamilton	600	200	400
1821	Loughcrew	R.B. Vincent	1,275	100	850
1821	Ardagh	J McCausland	37 10s	337 10s	n.a.
1822	Killoconegan	Joseph Green	50	450	100
n.a.	Colpe	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
n.a.	Killoughy	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Source: *First Fruits returns, 1801-22*, pp 18-19, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 102-103.

Note: Annual value was the sum a living was deemed to be worth, a percentage of which was due to the First Fruits

## Appendix 4.1

### Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne: memorial tablet

Near this Place are interred the Mortal Remains of  
The Most Reverend and Right Honorable  
THOMAS LEWIS O'BEIRNE, D.D.,  
Lord Bishop of Meath,  
The Chief Objects of whose Life were  
To promote Happiness in his Family by Affection and  
Benevolence,  
And to diffuse Piety and Holiness through his Diocese,  
By guiding and directing his Parochial Clergy  
In the Performance of the Awful Duties  
Incumbent on them as Ministers of the United Church.  
During the 25 Years that he presided over this See  
There were erected in it  
72 Glebe Houses and 57 Churches  
He died February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1823,  
Aged 76 Years.

Note: Removed from St Ultan's, Ardracran and erected at St Patrick's Trim

## Appendix 4.2

### Procedures to be followed during the consecration and dedication of churches

'The bishop is to be received at the west door, or at some other part of the church, or churchyard, which is most convenient for his entrance, by some of the principal inhabitants. If the church to be consecrated be a new church built in an old parish, then to be met by the minister of the place, the Church-wardens, and some of the principal inhabitants.

At the place where the bishop is received, a petition is to be delivered to him by some of the persons who receive him, praying that he will consecrate the church. The petition is to be read by the register [sic]

The bishop, his chaplains, the preacher, and the minister who is to read divine service, together with the rest of the clergy, if any other be present, enter the church and repair to the vestry, or (if there be no vestry) to some convenient part of the church, where as many as are to officiate put on their several habits; during which time the parishioners are to repair to their seats, and the middle aisle is to be kept clear.

As soon as the church is quiet, the bishop and his chaplains, with the preacher and the minister who is to officiate, and the rest of the clergy, if any other be present, return to the west door, and go up the aisle to the communion table, repeating the twenty-fourth psalm alternately as they go up, the bishop one verse, and they another. The bishop and his chaplains go within the rails; the bishop to the north side; the minister officiating goes to the reading desk, and the preacher to some convenient seat near the pulpit.

The bishop, sitting in his chair, is to have the instrument or instruments of donation and endowment presented to him by the founder, or some substitute; which he lays upon the communion table.

The presentation of such an instrument is, of course, not needful if it be in a new church in an old parish. After the special prayers appointed to be read by the bishop for the commencement of this service, and immediately before the service of the day begins, the sentence of consecration is to be read by the chancellor, and the bishop sitting in his chair during the reading thereof; it is then to be signed by the bishop, and by him ordered to be registered, and then laid on the communion table. The service then proceeds; and the sermon being ended and all who do not receive the Holy Communion returned, and the door shut, the bishop proceeds in the communion service, and he and the clergy having made their oblations, the Church-wardens collect the offerings of the rest of the congregation'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Finlay, *The office & duties*, pp 162-4.



## Appendix 4.3

Document of consecration: St Cormac's, Ballyboy, 11 October 1824

In the Name of God, Amen. Whereas a Church hath been erected out of the funds of the first fruits on the Site of the old Church in the Parish of Ballyboy, in the Diocese of Meath, containing within the walls thereof Sixty feet or thereabouts from East to West, and in Breadth from North to South Twenty five feet or thereabouts. And Whereas the said Church is now adorned [?] and furnished with all things decent and necessary for the Worship of God. And whereas the Minister, Churchwardens and Parishioners of the said parish have humbly requested of us to separate the said Church from all Common and profane use, therefore Nathaniel, by divine providence Lord Bishop of Meath [is] willing to Comply with their pious and religious intention in this Behalf and proceeding the Consecration of the said Church to the Worship of God above and the Celebration of Divine Service and we Grant, Will and Ordain that from henceforth forever public prayers be Openly read in the said Church According to the Liturgy of the United Church of England and Ireland as by Law Established. The Word of God sincerely propounded and preached the Sacraments Administered and that all other matters be done and performed Which by the Laws of God and Canons, and Constitution of the United Church of England and Ireland can or may be done towards divine Worship to the Glory of God and the increase and prosperity of the Church And we do ordain, decree and declare that the said church shall and ought to be the Parish Church to and for the use of the Parishioners of the Parish of Ballyboy forever hereafter and that it shall have and enjoy, And we accordingly do as far as in Us lie and by Law. We are enabled by these present [?] Confirm and Establish the same to all intents and purposes in All and Singular the privileges accustomed in such Church as Competent to any Parish Church founded of old within our Diocese of Meath and we do also Consecrate the said Church to the honor of God and to holy use, by the Name of the Parish Church of Ballyboy. And we pronounce, decree and declare that the same hath been and is so Consecrated and that it ought to remain so to future time. Nevertheless, We always reserve to ourselves and our Successors, Bishops of Meath, the Power of Visiting the said Church when we or they shall think it our Office to do so in Order that we may see that the same be taken care of with repairs and ornamented and that all things be Observed therein Canonically and orderly All and Singular which matters we reserve – But as to the rest of the premises, We decree and Confirm the same for us and our Successors, Bishops of Meath as much as in Us lie by Law we can. In Testimony Whereof we have caused an Episcopal Seal to be hereunto affixed this 11<sup>th</sup> day of October in the Year of Our Lord One thousand, Eight hundred and twenty-four.<sup>1</sup>

Signed by: Nath Meath

Geo Brabazon

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<sup>1</sup> Parchment of consecration for the church at Ballyboy (R.C.B., MS D7/10/5).

## Appendix 5.1

Twenty additional churches now identified as having undergone considerable restructuring during the O'Beirne episcopate of the diocese of

Meath, 1798-1823

Church	Year	Description	Funding
Ardnurcher	1818	Church put in complete repair	Cess. <sup>1</sup>
	1820	New steeple and spire.	Cess at 2½d per acre. <sup>2</sup>
	1822	Completion of steeple and spire; new gallery.	£190 to be paid in instalments to the builder Mr Booth from future cesses. <sup>3</sup>
Athlone St Mary's	1805	Repair of the belfry and spire.	Cess increased by £10.
	1806	Raising the walls of the church.	Cess increased by £4.
	1807	Coppering of belfry and spire.	Cess.
	1809-13	Roof re-slatted, flooring replaced, porch, gallery stairs & rail replaced, church painted (three coats), repairs to whole of the cornice.	Cess.
	1814	Rebuilt one church wall; pews opened on one side of the church.	Cess raised to £56. <sup>4</sup>
Drakestown	1820	Rebuilt	Loan from Board of First Fruits. <sup>5</sup>
Dunboyne	1803	Church slated.	Cess of £36.12s 5d.
	1804	Raising the walls, new roofing, slating & plastering.	Cess of 10d per acre.
	1805	Continuing 1804 works.	Cess of £92.
	1806-07	<i>do.</i>	Cesses of £118 & £152.
	1809	New vestry room.	Overplus of cess.
	1811	Repair steeple & erection of spire.	Cess of £138.

<sup>1</sup> Visitation, 1818, pp 74-75.

<sup>2</sup> Horseleap V.M.B., 4 Apr. 1820 (R.C.B., MS P. 411.5.1, p. 5).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 23 May 1822, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Athlone V.M.B., 16 Apr. 1805-18 April 1814 (R.C.B., MS P. 392.28.6, pp 6, 21-22, 25, 27-28).

<sup>5</sup> *Accounts relating to the church establishment of Ireland, 1801-1822*, p. 11, H.C. 1823 (135 241), xvi, 95. Note; how the loan was repaid is not certain, though likely to have been by parish cess; Revd. W.A. Reynell's 'Clerical promotions by the crown in Meath diocese' (R.C.B., MS D7/12/1.6.4, p. 20).

(continued) Dunboyne	1813	New gallery.	Overplus of cess. <sup>6</sup>
	1818	Church painted & whitewashed.	Cess. <sup>7</sup>
Durrows	1802	Church put in complete repair.	First Fruits loan £50 & gift £450. <sup>8</sup>
Galtrim	1800	New steeple.	n.a.
Kilkenny West	1809	Repairs to chancel.	£68.5s, the remit of Rev. Bryan.
	1811	Repairs to church roof & wall, vestry repairs, new pews, church dashed.	Cess £39.13s 6d.
	1812	Partly new roof the church.	Cess £15.5s 1½d.
	1813	New gallery.	Cess. <sup>9</sup>
Kilmessan	c. 1820	Renovated.	n.a. <sup>10</sup>
Kilmore	c. 1818	Put in complete repair.	n.a. <sup>11</sup>
Kilskyre	1822	New church.	Annual cess to repay First Fruits. <sup>12</sup>
Loughcrew	c. 1818	New roof & put in complete repair.	n.a. <sup>13</sup>
Moyglare	1806	Slated one side of roof & replaced rafters on N of roof, pointed S wall.	Cesses £27.3s 6d & £47.12s 9½d respectively.
	1811	Walls & ceiling stripped & replastered, works done to vestry room.	Cesses of £19.4s 5d & £39.18s 8½d respectively.
	1813	New floor, church dashed, new gate.	Cess. <sup>14</sup>
Newtown Fertullagh	1802	Church re-slated.	Cess 5d per acre.
	1804	All pews replaced.	Old pews auctioned to part pay, the rest by subscription from owners of new pews.
	1808	Church further repaired & painted.	Cess.
	1811	Church further repaired & additional pews.	Cess £109.0s 8d. <sup>15</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Dunboyne V.M.B., 12 Apr. 1803, 20 Sept. & 3 Oct. 1804, 5 June 1805, 15 Apr. 1806 & 7 Apr. 1807, 7 Apr. 1809, 23 Apr. 1811, 20 Apr. 1813 (R.C.B., MS P. 560.5.1, unpaginated).

<sup>7</sup> Dunboyne V.M.B., 24 Mar. 1818 (R.C.B., MS P. 560.5.2, unpaginated).

<sup>8</sup> (R.C.B., MS D7/147, p. 78); Lewis, *A topographical dictionary*, i, p. 590.

<sup>9</sup> Kilkenny West V.M.B., (R.C.B., MS P. 339.1.1, pp 35, 43-47, 51, 53).

<sup>10</sup> Buildings of Ireland (<http://buildingsofireland.ie/nihe/search.jsp?type=record&county=ME&regno=14329013>) (16 June 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Kilskyre V.M.B., (R.C.B., MS P. 47.5.1, p. 187).

<sup>13</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> Moyglare V.M.B., 7 Apr. & 14 Oct. 1806, 23 Apr. & 16 Nov. 1811, Easter 1813 (R.C.B., MS P. 558.5.1, unpaginated).

<sup>15</sup> Newtown Fertullagh V.M.B., 22 Apr. 1802, 2 Apr. 1804, 18 Apr. 1808, 22 Apr. 1811 (R.C.B., MS P. 911.5.1, pp 314, 322, 336, 338, 341); see also Visitation, 1818 where Bishop O'Beirne reported the church as having been rebuilt during the incumbency of Rev. John Yeats, 1805-11, p. 91.

(continued) Church	Year	Description	Funding
Painestown	1823	New gallery, steeple repaired & re-roofed.	Annual cess £16 to repay First Fruits loan of £400. <sup>16</sup>
Rathaspeck	1820	Church enlarged 18ft at E end.	Cess to repay £200 First Fruits loan. <sup>17</sup>
Rathconnell	1801	Complete the church, make a path to it & enclose churchyard	Cess 2d per acre
	1804	Extensive repairs & coppering of steeple.	Cess £102.4s 7d
	1811	Necessary repairs to church.	Cess £23.4s 4½d
	1815	Internal alterations, repairs & additions.	Cess £30.19s 2d at 1d per acre
	1818	New vestry room, stud E & W walls of church & repair steeple	Cess £60.6s <sup>18</sup>
Rathkenny	1818	Church put into complete repair.	n.a. <sup>19</sup>
Slane	1805	Sash windows & new E window.	Cess.
	1806	New steeple & new bell.	Steeple at expense of Lord Conyngham, bell part-paid by Conyngham & part by cess of 2d per acre.
	1808	New gallery, body of church altered & refitted.	Gallery at expense of Lord Conyngham. Other works by cess.
	1809	Roof & steeple repaired, all pews replaced with single seats.	Cesses of £26 & £100 respectively.
	1813	Church repaired, vestry room re-roofed, church, vestry room & steeple dashed.	Part paid by Rigmartin [Rigmairden] legacy & part by cess of 10d per acre.
	1817	Steeple re-lofted, new water-spouts.	Cess 1¼d per acre. <sup>20</sup>
Stackallen	1815	Church built, 1815. <sup>21</sup>	n.a.
Wherry	1818	New steeple.	By cess & subscription. <sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Loose receipts & invoices in Painestown & Ardmulchan V.M.B., 1824-1825 (R.C.B., MS P. 865.5.2); Visitation, 1818, pp 18-19; Lewis, *Topographical dictionary*, ii, p. 454.

<sup>17</sup> Rathaspeck V.M.B., 27 Nov. 1820 (R.C.B., MS P. 599.5.1, unpaginated)

<sup>18</sup> Rathconnell V.M.B., 6 Apr. 1801, 15 Apr. 1811, 15 Apr. 1815, 23 Mar. 1818 (R.C.B., MS P. 240.5.1, pp 11, 46, 56, 61).

<sup>19</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Slane V.M.B., 23 Apr. & 17 June 1805, 24 Apr & 22 Sept. 1806, 8 Feb. 1808, 4 Apr. & 30 Oct. 1809, 20 Apr. 1813, 7 Oct. 1817 (R.C.B., MS P. 869.5.2, pp 55, 57, 65, 67, 77, 86, 89, 105, 129).

<sup>21</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese*, ii, p. 288.

<sup>22</sup> Visitation, 1818, p. 99.

## Appendix 5.2

### Church of Ireland families in the diocese of Meath, 1818

Parish	No.	Parish	No.	Parish	No.
Tullamore & Durrow**	234	Clonfad*	37	Kilmoon*	11
Ardnurcher & its chapelries*	225	Slane*	37	Tara*	11
Fircall	189	Castlejordan*	34	Agher*	10
Kells*	185	Kilbixy, Portlomon, Portneshangan*	34	Clonmacnoise	10
Athlone, St Mary's*	144	Rathconnell*	34	Newtown	10
Killucan/Rathwire*	127	Kilskyre*	33	Moorechurch	9
Enniskeen & Ardagh**	109	Clonard*	32	Drakestown*	8
Reynagh & Gallen*	109	Drumcree*	30	Kilbrew*	8
Kilcleagh*	108	Rathmolyon	30	Almoritia*	7
Benowen, Forgney & Ballymore***	105	Drumconrath	29	Castlerickard	7
Trim*	101	Dynboyne*	28	Galtrim*	7
Castlepollard & Mayne**	100	Delvin	27	Moyglare*	7
Mullingar*	98	Rathcore	26	Donaghpatrick*	6
Oldcastle*	92	Moynalty*	24	Kilmessan*	6
Killallon	83	Dunshaughlin*	20	Knockmark*	6
Lemanaghan	70	Killiconnighan*	20	Ratoath*	5
Leney*	67	Moylisker	20	Assey	4
Navan*	67	Stackallen*	20	Ballymaglasson*	4
Newtown Fertullagh*	65	Syddan	20	Rathbeggan*	4
Loughcrew*	63	Colpe*	19	Kilmainhamwood*	3
Athboy	62	Nobber	18	Ballygarth	2
Ballyloughloe*	58	Painestown*	17	Rathkenny*	2
Castlecor*	56	Kentstown*	16	Innishmott	1
Kilbeggan*	54	Skryne*	16	Moyvore	1
Castlelost*	51	Kilmore*	14	Cruicestown	0
Tissauran *	47	Vastina*	14	Moymet	0
Duleek *	43	Churchtown*	13	Kilbride Weston	Not known
Drogheda, St Mary's*	41	Drumranny*	13	Kilshine/Clongill*	Not known
Kilkenny West*	41	Taghmon	13	Stonehall*	Not known
Wherry*	40	Balroddan	12	* Parish union where the church was built, rebuilt or substantially repaired.	
Laracor	38	Enniscoffey*	12		

Source: Visitation, 1818, pp 127-34

Note: not all parishes in the diocese were included in these returns.

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## Thomas Lewis O'Beirne: published papers, sermons and charges

*An excellent sermon preached in St. Paul's church, New York, before the Right Honorable Lord and General Howe, the commodores, generals, colonels, and all other inferior officers belonging to the british [sic] army, there residing. By the Reverend Mr. O'Beirne... upon the first Sunday after the attempt to burn New-York, being the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Sept. last. In which you have an account in a note, of the damage done to the churches, and other public buildings, in this flourishing city. Printed at the desire of the congregation (New York, 1776)*

*A candid & impartial narrative of the transactions of the fleet, under the command of Lord Howe, with observations: by an officer then serving in the fleet (London, 1780)*

*A short history of the last session of parliament, with remarks (London, 1780)*

*Considerations on the late disturbances, by a consistant whig (London, 1780)*

*Considerations on the principals of naval discipline, & naval courts martial (London, 1781)*

*The generous imposter: a comedy as it is now performing at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (London, 1781)*

*A letter from an Irish gentleman in London to his friend in Dublin, on the proposed system of commerce (Dublin, 1785)*

*A gleam of comfort to this distracted empire, in despite of faction, violence & cunning, demonstrating the fairness & reasonableness of national confidence in the present ministry (London, 1785)*

*A sermon preached for the benefit of the Sunday School at Roscommon on Sunday September the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1788 (Dublin, 1788)*

*A sermon preached in the parish church of Longford on Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, 1793, being the day appointed for the general fast (Dublin, 1793)*

*A sermon (on Luke xix, 41-44), preached in the church of Longford on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 1794; being the day appointed for a general fast (Dublin, 1794)*

*The charge of the Right Reverend Thomas Lewis, Lord Bishop of Ossory, to the clergy of his diocese in his annual visitation, 1796 (Dublin, 1796)*

*A sermon preached at St. Mary's Kilkenny, Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, 1797, on the providential dispersion of the enemy's fleet, & the deliverance of this Kingdom from the threatened invasion (Dublin, 1797)*

*The charge of the Right Reverend T.L. O'Beirne, D.D. Lord bishop of Ossory to the clergy of his diocese, delivered at the annual visitation, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1797 (Dublin, 1797)*

*A circular address to the clergy of the diocese of Ossory by the Right Reverend Thomas Lewis O'Beirne (Dublin, 1797)*

*A sermon preached before His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant & both houses of parliament on Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 1798 (Dublin, 1798)*

*A sermon preached before His Excellency John Jefferies, Earl Camden & the members of the Association for Discountenancing Vice & promoting the practice of virtue & religion; in St. Peter's church on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1798 (Dublin, 1798)*

*Sermons preached on several occasions, to which are added three charges & a circular address to the clergy of the diocese of Ossory on the state of Ireland in the year 1797 (London, 1799)*

*Charge of the Most Reverend the Lord Bishop of Meath to the clergy of Meath at his annual visitation (Dublin, 1800)*

*Charge of the Most Reverend the Lord Bishop of Meath to the clergy of his diocese at his annual visitation (Dublin, 1804)*

*'A letter to Dr. Troy titular Archbishop of Dublin on the coronation of Bonaparte by Pope Pius II'. Roman Catholics, xxi (Dublin, 1805)*

*'Sermon preached in the parish church of Navan at a visitation held there in September 17<sup>th</sup> 1801, by the Right Reverend & the Right Honorable the Lord Bishop of Meath'. Catholic Affairs (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), ii (Dublin, 1811)*

*A letter to the Right Honorable George Canning on his proposed motion on Catholic Emancipation (Dublin, 1812)*

*A letter to the Earl of Fingal by the author of the letter to Mr. Canning (Dublin, 1813)*

*A charge delivered to the clergy of the diocese of Meath at the annual visitation 1816 (Dublin, 1816)*

*Circular letter of the Lord Bishop of Meath to the rural deans of his diocese (Dublin, 1821)  
A letter from an Irish dignitary to an English clergyman on the subject of tithes in Ireland (Dublin, 1822)*

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Elrington. C. R. (ed) *The whole works of the Most Reverend James Ussher, D.D., Lord Archbishop of Armagh & primate of all Ireland, with a life of the author, & an account of his writings* (17 vols, Dublin, 1829-64)

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King, William. *The state of the Protestants in Ireland under the late King James's government; in which their carriage towards him is justified, & the absolute necessity of their endeavoring to be freed from his government & of submitting to their present majesties is demonstrated. With an appendix of acts of parliament, proclamations, letters, & original papers, etc.*, (Dublin, 1730)

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