

## **KILLONE ABBEY**

Killone Abbey, the picturesque ruins of which stand on a verdant slope of Killone Convent of which we have authentic record in the medieval diocese of Killaloe. It was built by Domhnall Mor Briain, King of Thomond at the same time as he built Clare Abbey (1189) and both foundations were generously endowed with both lands and rents in the county by the same benevolent monarch.

The situation beside a picturesque and lovely lake is ideal. Far more legend is attached to this convent than of history. We read in the Annals of Inisfallen that Slaine, daughter of Donnchadh O Briain, abbess of Cill Eoin, the most pious, most charitable and most generous woman in Munster died in 1259 A.D.

During the Reformation years, the traditional lands allotted to the convent by the pious and generous Domhnall Mog O Briain were "granted" by Elizabeth of England to his descendant Connor, as reward for the latter's renunciation of his Catholic and Gaelic heritage. for loyalty to the Crown, the Protestant religion and the English title "Earl of Thomond". In a lighter vein, we are glad to hear that now and again the soft zephyrs of romance breathed even through the austere cloisters of Killone. O Dalaigh in 1617, writes of a lady, Honora Ni Bhriain, a nun of Killone, who fled from the convent with Sir Roger O Shaughnessy of Gort, who had a son and daughter but who later got a Papal dispensation for her lawful marriage to him. No doubt they lived happily ever after.

Local seanachais tell the story of how the Mc Donalds of the Georgian Mansion of Newhall, overlooking the now derelict Convent, the nuns had fled before Ireton's Ironsides in 1651.

Mc Donald, himself, began to suspect the theft of wine from his cellars. Servants set to watch were each night lulled to sleep, by strange haunting music at midnight, and each morning more wine was found to be missing. At last McDonald himself, head of the household, decided that he himself would keep watch in the cellar. He, it seems, was immune to the soporific effects of the siren song, for from his hiding place he saw a most beautiful golden-haired maiden appear at the stroke of midnight and fill a golden flagon with wine.

It was the "muirioch' or mermaid of the lake. Forgetting his chivalry in his anger the Lord of Killone fired his duelling pistol at the thirsty damsel, who fled, leaving a bloody trail from the cellar to the lake, which immediately turned crimson as it has done every seven years since, or so the old timers would have us believe. On her way, the wounded maiden showered curses on the McDonald family, foretelling that their seed and breed would pass from Killone.

## **THE PASSING OF THE ASCENDENCY AND THE WAR OF INTAPENDENCE**

### **IN KILLONE**

A notable feature of the convent ruins of Killone is the vault of the McDonalds, under the beautiful east window; over the cut limestone doorway is the coat of arms of the Me Donald Family, a ship in full sail, a dolphin leaping, showing that the McDonalds were originally landlords of the Western Isles. The gravestones on the vault floor are a history lesson in dim eerie light.

At random they read thus:-

Ensign Theobald McDonald of Newhall, of his majesty's 97th Regiment of Foot-  
died April 7th, 1782.

Captain Frederick McDonald R.N. of Newhall died Feb. 4th, 1828 and many more in a similar vein. They show plainly that the loyalty of this family was to England. They lived in Ireland but felt nothing for her.

Outside in Gods fresh air, the headstones tell a different story. Some conjure up exciting periods in history. One imposing tombstone with the Barrett coat of arms, reminds us of a small white stone, one of countless similar ones all in neat lines among the geometrical paths and flower beds, far away, in Flanders fields where the poppies grow. There a single brave Darraghman lies among the countless graves of French Poilus, making one the dreadful waste of World War I. The headstone in Killone simply says, Jack Barrett, mort pour la France. His story is a romantic one. Jack was a civil servant in Dublin when the War broke out in 1914. Not wishing to miss the greatest conflict in history, he crossed to France, and down to Marseilles to enlist the Foreign Legion. In the best Beau Geste style, he was shipped to Sich Bel Abbey in Algeria across the Mediterranean, where on the Sahara Sands he was licked into shape no doubt, by the equivalent of Sergeant Lejaune. He must have been an outstanding soldier, for, he was soon promoted "lieutenant", a rare honour for a foreigner.

Jack arrived in France, just in time for the terrible Somme battle. Like many a young second Lieutenant, he lasted just a week. The news of his death in action and his Croix du Guerre arrived together in Barnagecha.

In the hallowed ground of Killone lies Frank Barrett, O.C. Mid-Clare Brigade, Irish Volunteers during the war of Independence. Frank was a true patriot, and the Brigade under his leadership, engaged successfully in many daring actions against the R.1.C. and the British military notably the disarming of the British patrol in Ennis on 24th June, 1920, the capture of Ruan R.1.C. barracks and the ambush at Nonreal. Frank took the Republican or Anti Treaty side during the Civil War and high rank of O.C. First Western Division, Oglagh Na h-Eireann. Frank was one of the senior republican officers at the staff conference in the cottage at Knockanaffrin, in the Comeraghs in the Spring of 1923 when the anti-treaty side was hard pressed in Munster. The republicans were surrounded by a Free State cordon and Liam Lynch, commander in chief of the Republican forces was mortally wounded as he escaped with Frank Barrett and others across the mountains. Lynch's death brought the civil war to an end. Frank died, a young man, in 1933, his health broken by hardships endured while campaigning and in prison. An interesting point is that, the headquarters of the Oglagh na h-Eireann during the War of Independence was Cragbrien House, one of the ascendancy houses already mentioned in this history. The arms captured in Ennis and Ruan were stored there and the administrative work was done there. It was in Cragbrien house, also that the men on the run often slept, all with the knowledge and consent of the landlord's agent, Captain Stackpoole Mahon. He too, could see the writing on the wall, the old order changing, yielding place to the new.

**NEWHALL**

From the top of the hill overlooking the placid blue waters of Killone, one can see through a vista of stately oaks and beeches, the splendid Georgian mansion of Newhall, seat of the McDonnells of lowland Scots origin. They were landlords of broad acre in this parish, and although we hear of the harshness of some of these landlords, we forget the many benefits they conferred on the localities where they resided. They left us splendid examples of the best architecture of the Georgian period. What a pity that some of these fine houses were wantonly destroyed during the war of independence. The trees, lawns and gardens of Newhall were spaced and planned by the landscape gardeners of the highest repute. What a pity that the trees so lovingly tendered in days gone by, have in our own times been ruthlessly felled and the lovely vistas turned into unlovely wilderness. The gardens of Newhall had head gardeners and an assortment of under gardeners. The stable yard had coachmen and grooms. In the grounds one may still see the headstone of a Derby winner "Turco" simply carved there. The lady of the house trained cooks, parlourmaids, and housemaids.

In 1879, the Land League was founded. Charles Stewart Parnell, in O'Connell Square in Ennis, down the road two short miles from Newhall, gave his famous advice to the tenants of Clare on how to treat 'grabbers'. Many of Colonel McDonald's tenants from Newhall, Dickey Stackpoole's of the other big house at Edenvale and Stackpoole Mahons from Craigmorien would be among them. Soon the land acts would give the land back to the people and the ascendancy from the big house would leave. The last division of land in the locality was done by Mr. Costelloe's Coalition Government about 1948. This comprised many hundreds of acres of prime alluvial soil which had been reclaimed from the Fergus estuary at Islandavanna and Island McGrath in the 1870's. The building of a massive dyke four miles long brought an influx of labourers to the place and thirsty men of evenings made local publicans prosperous.

The fine reclaimed land was for many years the property of the Fergus Reclamation Company, until its division gave welcome strips of five or six acres each to small farmers in Killone parish.

From another big house in Killone Parish, from Knockanira this time, Eamonn De Valera, President on the run of a defeated Republic was driven in a morning in 1923 to address his people in Ennis historic square, O'Connell Square. The Long Fellow's trap was driven by Ignatius Barrett from Barnageeha. When the Freestate bullets began to fly, a brave lady, also a Barrett of Barnageeha, stood in front of her President to receive herself the bullet meant for him.

We must have been an unruly lot, we Killone people in the days of British rule. We had actually two R.1.C. barracks with two sergeants and two garrisons of peelers to keep us in check. The R.1.C. founded by Sir Robert Peel, hence the nickname was as much soldiers as policemen in their bottle-green uniforms with the crowned harp cap badge. Huge men, they looked formidable with baton and bayonet, swinging from polished belt and carbine slung on shoulder. They were expected to keep Dublin castle notified about all the activities of the local Sinn Feiners, as well as seeing that we had licences for our dogs and did not stay on at Johnny Monahan's or James Moloney's after ten o'clock. Most of them were amiable good humoured Irishmen, just like those they were to police.

An attack in 1860 was made at Newhall Cross on a body of R.1.C. escorting a prisoner named Sheedy to Newhall barracks. The culprit had been caught making a drop of poteen, an ancient and highly respectable activity in the West. A man was shot dead by the police in this attempted rescue.

Both barracks were evacuated by the R.I.C. in 1920 and those few R.I.C. men who had not resigned, joined The Fans in the strongly fortified barracks of the big towns. Newhall R.I.C. barracks, with hundreds of similar small rural barracks, was burned by the Volunteers, in the Fall of 1920. A new Ireland was being born.

## **SPECIAL FEATURES**

## **GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE On PARISH OF KILLONE**

A prominent feature on the map of South Clare is the roughly triangular Fergus Estuary running due South to meet the larger Shannon Estuary. The old Parish of Killone lies to the west of this Fergus Estuary, near its apex at Clare Castle. In the records of the diocese of Killaloe, Killone is only half a parish, the full title being Clare Abbey and Killone. Despite officialdom, lay or clerical, the Killone or Ballyea people have always looked on themselves as a parish on its own. Killone has indeed contributed first class hurlers to the great Clarecastle senior teams of the past - names like Paddy and Mick Markam, Joe O'Connell, Jimmie Arthur, Frank Hogan, Haulie O'Shea spring to mind. In spite of that, their loyalty has been to their own junior As or Bs, and hurling is only one facet of their independence.

The land formation of Killone is varied and picturesque. As the contours on the ordinance maps show, the countryside rises very gradually from the sea level tidal marsh outside the embankment at Islandavanna. Inside is the flat rich land reclaimed from the Fergus over a century ago. This fertile estate was once the property of the Fergus Reclamation Company and bumper crops of wheat were grown here. Fine cattle too were herded by the company's employees for sale later at the fat auction pens of DeCourcy Limited, Limerick.

The reclaimed estate was divided some years ago among the small holders of Killone and provided them with very welcome grazing and meadowing.

Moving inland West and not on a very much higher level than the sloblands we mentioned, we come to the good level limestone land of Tiermaclane, only fifty feet or so above sea level. Tiermaclane is mentioned by our great poet Brian Merriman in *Cuir na Mean Oidhe Tirmhaclain na Mbanta Meitne* - Tiermaclane of the fat plains. We were lucky to escape so lightly, remember what he said of *Dooraand Gauras*.

Near Ballyea cross-roads, the limestone plain peters out to give way to the shale and millstone grit of West Clare. This type of rock runs all the way under the great highland of moorland and hill pasture which rises gradually through Cahera, Kilmaley, Lissycasey to its peak at Mountcallan in Inagh. However, the rest of the parish boundary forms just low foothills to that great highland of the west. Ballyea itself and the townlands of Darragh, Bansha, Lismulbreeda, Drimeen, Dromadrehid and Knockanira are mainly little rolling green hills with gurgling streams running through the valleys on their way to the Fergus below. On the edge of the parish at its highest point of four hundred feet or so, is a patch of moorland where turf was cut a few years ago. These banks at Bansha are now cut away. Therefore Killone people go further up the highland to Bouleynagleragh in Kilmaley parish to cut turf.

A picturesque feature lying at the foot of these rolling hills is Killone lake with its terraced limestone eastern shore, and its historic remains described in our history section. A stiff, almost impervious yellow clay subsoil is not a great incentive to tillage, although during the Emergency Killone people produced their quota of wheat. Since then, tillage in the area has been negligible. Dairying is and was the main agricultural industry. Indeed, one of our placenames, *Islandavanna Oilean an Bhainne* - the Island of the Milk testifies to the generous yield of 'our cows in the past. In the neighbourly days of yore, the women brought their consignments to the house where the firkin was filled with yellow

farmer's butter - Moloney's Public house in Drumquin was a collection centre for Daly's of Cork, butter exporters.

In the early thirties, a branch creamery in Darragh provided a more efficient alternative to stellas wide pane and hand-skimming. The milk was separated here and the butter fat sent daily to be churned at the central creamery in Ennistymon. The skim milk was returned to the supplier and encouraged pin production. Nowadays, in the name of rationalization, the huge bulk of all the milk in the district is sent daily by road to far away Charleville, while petrol prices soar.

The Cliff Quarry at Lismulbreeda provides chips for the roads of the County. Adjacent to this quarry there is a fort on the lands of John Collins where a very large area of Co. Clare can be seen - from portion of counties Tipperary and Limerick, particularly Mungret area where the cement factory is situated.

An enterprising young man, Anthony O'Neill of Kilmorane, runs a prosperous furniture factory. His trucks carry suites of attractive and novel design and sound workmanship to dealers all over the country.

Another young entrepreneur, Mr. Sean Scanlon, has a thriving engineering workshop.

Those of our young people not engaged in the family farm are absorbed in nearby factories in Ennis or Shannon. Outsiders have found Killone parish an attractive place to live and the ribbons of smart new bungalows are creeping along our roads. The local school will soon have a fourth teacher - an encouraging sign of growing community and a happy change from the day of the one-way ticket from Ennis Station.

## PERSONALITIES



## **STEPHEN JOSEPH MEANEY**

Stephen Joseph Meaney is easily our most prominent representative in the two revolutionary movements of the last century - The Young Ireland effort and what it later evolved into, - The Fenian Rising. Both have influenced the trend of Irish history up to the 1916 rising and the subsequent guerilla warfare.

Stephen Joseph Meaney, was in the best tradition of '48 - an intellectual, poet, journalist and writer of unusual talent and a selfless idealist and patriot. He was a worthy comrade of that brilliant band of poets, authors and journalists of Young Ireland, of Davis, Duffy, Mitchel and O'Doherty.

Meaney was born at Newhall or to call it by its original Irish name "Killone". After education at an Ennis "academy" as they were called at the time, he became a cub reporter and became distinguished as a most capable shorthand writer when little more than fifteen years old. Possessed of a lively imagination and a fine facility for expression, Meaney began to write poetry, some of which was published in the "Clare Journal" and in the Dublin Weeklys'. Encouraged by the good reception accorded to his creations, the youthful poet published a volume of poetry in 1841. This he dedicated to Sir Michael O Loughlin Baronet, Master of the Rolls of Drumconora House.

Stephen Joseph Meaney became more prominent during 1843-1844 the zenith of O'Connell's public career. This was the period of the monster Repeal meetings in such places as Tara, and Mullaghmast where O'Connell held out such high hope, hope that was to be dashed hopelessly down after the Clontarf meeting was cancelled. As chief of the reporting staff of the Freemans Journal, a high position for one so young, Meaney's job was to keep close to the great Kerryman and report his eloquence in demand for Repeal. His tact and facility in reproducing the Liberator caused Meaney to be known as "O'Connell's reporter". This did not prevent Meaney with many of the young intellectuals of the day from becoming disillusioned with the aging O'Connell, and from being thrown into the arms of Young Ireland and the Confederate clubs into the camp of armed revolution as opposed to the moral force method of O'Connell, John Mitchells' powerful appeals, together with the spontaneous uprising of the peoples of Europe in 1848, especially the "Saris Barricades" made the Young Ireland Leaders even more determined advocates of physical force. Mitchell, had, as he had publicly forecast forced the Government publicly and notoriously to pack a jury to convict him. He had forecast too that his comrades would after his (Mitchells') transportation set themselves more diligently than ever to the task of inducing the people to procure arms with the object of a general uprising in the Harvest.

Mitchell was proud of the fact that after he himself had been removed from the scene and his newspaper "The United Irishman" suppressed, the Young Ireland Leaders, in the persons of Kevin

O'Doherty, Richard Dalton Williams established a newspaper - "The Tribune" to take the place of the fiery Co Down man's one.

Stephen Joseph Meaney became sub-editor of the new paper and a prolific contributor to it. The Tribune's Leaders, especially those from the pen of Stephen J. Meaney fearlessly exposed and attacked British chicanery in Ireland and courageously demanded freedom. Meaney clearly and unequivocally demanded that Irishmen arm and prepare for the decisive struggle in the fall. Another trenchant and fearless Nationalist newspaper, "The Irish Felon" appeared on the scene equally unpopular with the authorities.

The circulation of the Tribune and of the Felon were obstructed in every way by the police, the papers being, forcibly taken from the sellers by police and detectives.

On Monday July 8th, 1848, the editors of both Young Ireland papers were arrested. Two days later the police raided Trinity Street in force and confiscated the offending papers not only from the newsagents and newsboys, but from those of the public who had bought and paid for them. A large crowd gathered. Two representatives of the Tribune and the Felon - Meaney on behalf of the former and Joseph Brennan for the latter decided to challenge the legality of the seizure by the police. The two newspapermen themselves took bundles of their respective papers, went among the crowd and boldly offered them for sale. Meanwhile they loudly proclaimed the outrageousness of this piracy and the authorities. The police tried to snatch the papers from the daring pair who stoutly resisted. The crowd cheered a scuffle developed. The officers (complained that they had been kicked and punched and the newspapermen were arrested. Brennan, who allowed his glib tongue free rein had his case sent for trial. Meaney, defended professionally was set free on his own recognizances.

The young Clareman however, was now under the vengeful eye of the Castle. Shortly afterwards the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended. The Young Ireland leaders went on the run and the two firebrand newspapermen, Meaney and Brennan were both arrested in the West where they were stirring up rebellion.

Stephen spent the next nine months as an unwilling guest of the government in Belfast, Newgate and Kilmainham jails. After his release from jail, Meaney followed his profession in the South of Ireland as Editor and for several years afterwards was chief of staff of the Liverpool Daily Post and Journal.

About 1858, at the time of the founding of the Fenian Brotherhood, Stephen Joseph Meaney joined the millions of Irish who had been pouring into the States since Black 47. He became editor and owner of the "Commercial". This newspaper was published at Toledo, Ohio where Stephen had settled. His thirst for Irish freedom had not been slicked and the man from Killone became centre of the Fenian Brotherhood circle in that area. At the third National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood, Meaney represented Ohio on the committee which was to draw up a constitution for the government of the Brotherhood, with presidency, Senate and louse of Deligates - on the model of the constitution of the United States. Stephen was duly elected senator of the government of the Brotherhood.

When the inevitable split came in the ranks of the American Fenian Brotherhood, Meaney was one of the three Senators who refused to secede from the organisations original object to devote all its energy to supporting, with men, arms and money the fight for an Irish Republic on Irish soil. He went on widespread tours of the U.S.A. organising and recruiting for the Fenians.

At the great "Jones Meeting" on the 4th March, 1866, he formulated resolutions conveying the sympathy and support of the American citizens with the Irish people in their forthcoming struggle for freedom.

In the Autumn of 1866 Meaney went to England to visit some members of his family. The British Government showed itself in an especially tyrannical light with a callous disregard for international law, even for the tenets of natural justice. Stephen Joseph Meaney was arrested in London and committed for trial on a charge of treason felony. Before the commission in Dublin in April, 1867, Meaney was found guilty by the jury of making treasonable speeches in New York and of offering Fenian papers for sale. An American citizen over whom the British had no jurisdiction, was charged with treason against the British Government, in a city where the British writ did not run.

The Fenian movement threw up a remarkable number of the most despicable characters, informers, who were prepared to betray their comrades for English Judas money. So little self-respect had they, that they were prepared to broadcast their own infamy by testifying in the courts against those who had trusted them, thus proclaiming themselves perjurers and renegades. One of this infamous band was Joseph Devaney actually a secretary of Shields Fenian circle in New York, sent to Dublin by a British agent to testify against Meaney. To the credit of the presiding judge, Baron Hughes, he refused to sentence Meaney, maintaining correctly that the court had no jurisdiction in his case. However, the court of Error reaffirmed the verdict of the jury and the British had their 'pound of flesh'. During his wait for sentence, the prisoner had been approached by government agents with the offer of acquittal and blood money if he would give evidence against the Fenians who had come ashore from the Fenian ship "The Erin Hope" at Helvick, Co. Waterford. How little these government agents knew of the character of Stephen J. Meaney, if they believed he would bring himself down to the level of Pierce Neagle, Corydon or Massey.

On Friday, 21st June, 1867, Meaney was asked the usual question by the clerk of the court, whether he had anything to say before sentence of death was passed upon him. His speech from the dock in reply, ranks with the impassioned oratory of Emmet or Meagher. He spoke with bitterness and scorn of the governments abortive attempts to corrupt his high honours and inveigle him, by his own act, to heap infamy on his name for successive generations.

"Did he believe that by an act of secret turpitude, I would open my prison doors only to close them the faster on others who may, or may not have been my friends; or did he imagine that he had found in me a Massey, to be moulded and manipulated in the service of the crown, or a Corydon to have his conscience and cupidity made the incentive to his baseness?"

And the lacerating verdict from a stainless and idealistic character on the miserable informer Devaney -

"But how shall I speak of the informer Mr. Devaney? What language should be employed to describe the traitor - spy, the man who adds to the guilt of perfidy to his associates, the deep and damning curse of perfidy to his God the man, who eating of your bread, sharing of your confidence, holding as it were your very purse strings, all the time meditates your overthrow and pursues it to its accomplishment. How proud the wretch, who, under pretext of agreement to your opinions, worms himself into your secrets only to betray who on the same altar with you pledges his faith and fealty to the same principles - and then sells faith and fealty and principles and you alike for the unhallowed Judas guerdon. Of such on his own confession was the distinguished upholder of the British Crown

and Government, Mr. Devaney. Every sentiment, in his regard, of the country he has dishonoured and the people

he has humbled, will be one of hate and horror of the informer; every sigh sent up from the hearts he has crushed, and the homes he has made desolate, will be mingled with execrations of the very name. Every heart throb in the prison cells of the land where his victims count time by corroding thought every grief that finds utterance from these victims, amidst the indignities of the convict gangs in the quarries of Portland, will ascend to Heaven freighted with curses on the Neagles, Devaneys, Masseys, Gillespies and Corydons - and the whole host of mercenary miscreants faithless to their friends and recreant to their principles who have taken their perfidies to leaven, seeking to make an accomplice of their God".

Stephen then dwelt on the hypocrisy of the British public and press who loudly condemned injustice in the government of other countries and deplored the shameful treatment of political prisoners in Neapolitan jails. These self-righteous critics ignored the infamous treatment meted out in British and Irish jails to the Fenian prisoners. He cited the case of a young Dubliner who had been tried and convicted at the same session of the commission at which Stephen had been tried. In the short intervening few months, Sunday after Sunday in the dreary and stark prison chapel he had watched poor young Stowell fail and droop under the harsh treatment until at last Meaney was not surprised to hear that his poor friend had been released to die at home.

Passing from the treatment of prisoners, Meaney began his protest at the injustice of his, an American citizen, being tried for what he said on American soil to an American audience about aiding Ireland's effort to win freedom.

"I protest against the monstrous, the transparent frauds that would seek in ninety years after the evacuation of New York by the British, to bring the people of New York within the vision and venue of a British jury in a British law court. I protest the supposition that ninety years after the last British bayonet had glistened in an American sunlight, after the last keel of the last of the English fleet ploughed its last furrow in the waters of the Delaware or the Hudson, would restore that same city of New York, it's peoples and it's institutions to the dominions of the Crown and government of Great Britain.

At the end of his stirring speech (which we have quoted sparingly from) Meaney refuted the 'calumny' by the Attorney General that he was one of the plunderers living on Fenian money. This barefaced lie ranked even more in the heart of one who had spent his money as well as his energy in Ireland's cause.

The splendid patriot from Killone was sentenced to the unbelievably harsh sentence of fifteen years penal servitude.

### **Seamus Kelleher - Poet who resided in the Parish**

Seamus Kelleher teacher, poet and Gaelic scholar was born sixty-five years ago in Ballyvourney, West Cork. Educated in the local National School, where he developed a great love of the Irish Language. During his final year in the Primary School, the Principal of the school requested him to sit for a public examination to obtain a place in a Preparatory College. This he did, doing all subjects through Irish. The results were first place in the College for Seamus. He studied there for six years and qualified as a primary teacher.

His first school, Fergus View Cahera on the outskirts of this Parish and he stayed in lodgings in Lismullreeda. He stayed there for a number of years but with the changing times he moved to a house in Drimeen where he stayed for a number of years also. He strolled the roads each evening after his day at school and chatted to each and every person he met. On these walks he composed many poems. He loved the country-side, where he found most of his inspiration for writing poems.

He moved back to his native county of Cork, where he became Principal of a large school near Mitchelstown. He has written many poems which can be found in the primary school books of the present day. He has made many recordings of his poetry. which we have heard from time to time on Radio Telefis Eireann. He always cycled from Clare to Dublin when making these recordings. He still visits County Clare and visits the people whom he came in contact with. He now drives a Morris Minor Car.

## ST. JOHN'S WELL

In a grove on the shore of the lake, east of the convent lie the quaint pretty well, altar and bathing tank once the scene of far-famed pattern.

Leaning against the loose stones round the well is a small eighteenth century slab on which is carved in relief the Crucifixion with letters INRI above and a chalice at the sides. Below in incised letters is cut the following:-

*Erected to the glory  
of God and in honour of St. John.*

A short distance from the well is a low square enclosure. It is about 6' square sunk into the ground and built of dry walls. A paved track leads from the well to the enclosure.

Near the well is a large altar of loose stones, a couple of steps ascend to it. Inserted in front of it is a big slab on which is inscribed: -

*This Altar  
built by Anthony Roch,  
Merchant, Ennis, 1731.*

**This script, undated and unsigned, was given to Clarecastle Heritage by Fr. Pat Malone, PP, Clarecastle on 31 October 2023. He had been given it years ago when he was in Clarecastle as a curate.**

