

I.T.A. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL SURVEY

NATURAL FEATURES, ANTIQUITIES,
HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS, ETC.[BARONY OF *Kilnamanagh Upper*]TOWN OR VILLAGE *Borrisoleigh* PARISH *Borrisoleigh* COUNTY *Tipperary*
(or Glankeen)

TOPOGRAPHY

Brief description of outstanding scenic views in the district, natural attractions, or unusual topographical features.

The parish of *Borrisoleigh* lies about mid-way between the towns of *Kenagh* and *Thurles*, and, for the most part, extends on either side of the principal pass through the mountain barrier that divides North Tipperary from the rest of the county, and, through which runs the *Kenagh-Thurles* road, roughly bisecting the parish. The little town of *Borrisoleigh* lies on this road at the southern entrance to this pass and the

GEOLOGY

Brief notes on unusual geological features, such as caves, eskers, etc.

limestone predominates all over the parish, but among the hills between *Borrisoleigh* & *Templederg* are outcroppings of rock which show traces of iron. Some of the hills near the village of *Borrisoleigh* are believed locally to contain copper

MANSIONS, CASTLES AND ESTATES

OF IMPOSING CHARACTER

Location and brief description. Owner. Past associations. Libraries or art collections?
Gardens? Open to visitors? Admission charge?

None of note.

ANTIQUITIES

Abbeys, Castles, Fortresses, Round Towers, Early Churches, Sculptured Crosses, Stone Circles, Ogham Stones, Cairns, Souterrains, Pillar Stones, Cromlechs, Forts, Rathes, Moats, Tumuli or ancient monuments of any kind. Exact location of each with short description, noting condition, etc. Relate local legend or tradition associated with building or object. State if in charge of Office of Public Works. Right of way to public? Admission charge (if any). Name and address of caretaker, or where key is kept.

Old Church of Glankeen

A mile and a half north of Borrisoleigh is the old churchyard of Glankeen. It is situated halfway up the western slope of the glen upon which it takes its name (The Beautiful Glen). Of the church, only 3 portions of walls forming a rough square remain. There is no trace of window or other opening & it would be even difficult to determine the size of the church from the remnants standing.

St. Cuilan founded the monastery of Glankeen "among his own people" in the 6th Century. It appears to have survived until in 1485 Archbishop Cragh made it a vicarage of the Cistercian abbey of Holy Cross, there after probably served as a parish church. In the 16th Century it became the burial place of the great local family of the de Burgos or Burkes, whose descendants still bury within the walls of the old church (I could find no trace of the stone bearing the epitaph given in "Fr. Kennys' Glankeen of Borrisoleigh," p. 22).

On the inside of one of the remnants of the walls of the old church is a coat of arms and an inscription on a slab above a table stone Burke tomb. The inscription is in raised Roman characters and reads:

"Quisquis in hacce oculos vertis monumenta
parumphe siste, lege, discce et vivere, discce
mori. Natus eram coelo, mundum per cuncta
secentus. hinc pulsum, illinc jure abigendus eram.
Tu mundi illecebras sapiens vitare memento,
coelica Regna tibi quaere. Precare mihi.
Patricius Kerin me fabricavit. 1626."

"whoever you be who cast your eye upon these monuments, pause awhile, read, learn to live, learn you to die. For Heaven born I have in all things the world pursued. From here expelled, I should of right be from there repelled. Remember you, beware. Shun the world's allurements and Heavenly Kingdoms seek. Pray for me. Patricius Kerin made me 1626."

On the tablestone underneath this, inscribed round the border and continued on the bottom half of the stone is the Latin epitaph of Walter de Burgo, "once the valiant & wise defender of the land of Ireland" & his wife Shilla O'Dwyer of the powerful Irish family of Kilmacanogue.

(Plain sheets of foolscap paper to be used, if necessary, for recording additional information).

[See Page 400]

HISTORIC SITES

Royal Seats, scenes of historic events—battles, mass meetings, historic festivals, &c. Location.
Landowner. Historical or traditional notes.

Genian "Hill-out" at Rathcardan

Among outcropping rocks in the townland of Rathcardan is the opening to a roughly-hewn tunnel ~~in the~~. One can only enter a short distance now as it has been filled up with stones. But the passage is said to extend well over a hundred yards to come up under the hearthstone of the house of Mrs. Waddick, Drungill, Borrisoleigh who owns the lands on which it is situated $2\frac{1}{2}$ mls. west of Borrisoleigh. The people of this district were very active in '67 and marched to Barnane (the Devil's Bit). Their plans had leaked out, however, and they were cornered by the British troops but [see Page Seven]

HISTORIC HOUSES; BURIAL PLACES

(a) Birth places or one-time residences of distinguished Irishmen or other personalities. Location and description. Present owner or occupant. (b) Burial places of distinguished personalities.

The Gleeson Brothers of Borrisoleigh:

A remarkable family was brought up in the house, next door to Coffey's licensed premises in lower St. Borrisoleigh, now occupied by Linda Warren. There were four brothers of whom Brig. Gen. John Gleeson earned a big reputation in the American Civil war on the Confederate side while Paddy "Battleaxe" Gleeson became mayor of Long Island and was also mayor of New York for a period of about 6 months. The other two brothers were officers in the Confederate Armies. Their father Mick Gleeson was a small farmer in the townland of Rathmoy (Parish of Drum) on the Barnane estate and was evicted in the '40's of the last cent. He brought his young family to the house in lower St. Borrisoleigh where he opened a small shop selling meal. He became known as "Mick the Mealman". ~~He died~~ It is not thought that his sons received much schooling and they emigrated to America as soon as they were old enough. John returned with his brother, Capt. Joe, & his wife to take part in the Rising of '67, but with their experience of military matters, did not [see Page Eight]

SPAS OR MINERAL SPRINGS

Spas formerly in use. Location and present condition. Access. Right of way to public?
Mineral content and curative properties so far as known locally.

Iron Spas at Pallas:

There are numerous iron springs on the left hand side of the road between Pallas Cross roads and Dunfield Bridge 3 miles S. West of Borrisoleigh. One of these, alongside a "looken" on the lands of Mr. Denis Finn, Drungill was, according to the local people, built around with stonework which has now altogether disappeared. The waters do not appear to have been ever analysed but appearance & taste would suggest that their mineral content is high.

CURIOSITIES

Curious objects, structures, monuments, landmarks, sights, etc. For example, Wishing stones or "chairs," freaks of nature (i.e. grotesque rock formations)—in fact, any scene or object which may be regarded as queer, quaint or mirth-provoking. Location and description. Any story or legend to be related.

Rock at Cronarone:

About 4 miles west of Borrisoleigh is a rock, apparently an outcrop, underneath which, legend says, the treasure of the Barons of Borrisoleigh Castle is buried. It is on the lands of Mr. Pat. Kinase, Cronarone, and along the roadside. In 1909

the rock was blasted by young men from Borrisoleigh in search of the treasure. An agreement drawn up between these "prospectors" ^{and the Kinases} and stamped with a Sinn Féin stamp is in the possession of Mr. N. O'Carroll, hower St. Borrisoleigh. The agreement provides that the treasure if found will be divided equally among the farmer & the others. Abbreviated inscription on Glanbeek Tombstone:

In the Glanbeek graveyard, which contains the ruins of the old monastery is a tombstone bearing the following inscription (see photograph)

H R L S H N R Tombstone. Here lies Henry
H N I Y 1741 Hunt (died in 1741) year

It is about a foot high and 10 yds. from the entrance to the graveyard.

CUSTOMS, PATTERNS, ETC.

Brief account of old customs, traditional cures, etc., still practised in the district. Pilgrimages to Holy Wells, Shrines, etc. Patterns.

St. Cuilan's Well, Glananooge

High up on a hillside overlooking the Nenagh-Thurles road, little more than a mile north of Borrisoleigh is the holy well of St. Cuilan, founder of Glanbeek monastery. There were seven mounds around it on which people prayed but these have now disappeared. Many people still visit it to pray for cures of various ailments but there is no pattern or special day for visiting it. According to tradition the well is said to have changed across the valley from its original situation on the opposite hillside on the lands of Mr. John Doyle in the townland of Co. Lane, where the hollow it occupied is pointed out. It was at this well hidden in a hollow tree that the "Bearnan Cuilan" The Bell Shrine of St. Cuilan was discovered in the 18th Cent. This tree is said to have been held almost in veneration and there are many legends about it. ^{near} The present well is on the lands of Mr. M. Kelly, Glananooge, Borrisoleigh. ^{no right way.}

(Signed)

Surveyor.

DATE 21/5/45

I.T.A. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL SURVEY

AMENITIES AND GENERAL INFORMATION.

TOWNS AND VILLAGES (Other than Seaside)

BARONY OF Kilnamanagh UpperTOWN OR VILLAGE Borrisleigh PARISH Borrisleigh COUNTY Tipperary
(Glanbehen)

Location and brief description.

Population 550 (approx.)

Borrisleigh is a small country town 6 mls. West of Templemore & 2 1/2 north of Thurles on the Thurles Baneagh Road along which most of the town stretches. From a square in the centre two streets branch off. The Catholic Church is situated in well kept grounds is situated in the square. It's housing is widely assorted in style but not of pretensions; the few shops are small but not shabby and the whole town has a sleepy, mellow appearance.

Is there a Town Hall? None Location -

Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds. Brief description:

None.

Brief comments on water supply and sewerage:

Water Supply: There is a piped water supply from a well near the town good all the year round.

Sewerage: There is also an efficient sewerage system, effluent through septic tanks in a stream some distance from the village.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Nearest station Templemore Distance 6 miles Bus? on Baneagh Thurles Bus routePublic lighting by—Electricity? Yes Gas? -

DANCING

Dance hall Borrisleigh Hall Proprietor John Kenny, O'Connell
Borrisleigh

CINEMAS AND THEATRES

Cinemas None Pictures shown (nights) -Theatre None Kind of shows (Drama, Comedy &c.) -

LIBRARIES

Public Libraries

Branch of Carnegie Library
in Borrisleigh National School.

Private Lending Libraries

Torch - Mrs. M. Noonan, Church St.,
Yoyle - Miss M. Kennedy, O'Connell St.,

CHURCHES AND SERVICES

Church

The Sacred Heart, Borrisleigh Services (Sundays) 9 & 12

6 (2) Keltinore (Parish of Drom) Ch. O. P. 12

~~There~~

POSTAL FACILITIES

Location of Post Office

Church St., Borrisleigh

Business (? M.O., Telegraph, Telephone)

Full Business

BANKING

Banks

National Bank, Templemore visits
on Wednesdays, also Hunter &
Leinster, Thurles.

SPORTS AND PHOTO SUPPLIES

Sports Dealers

None

Photographic Stores

None

SWIMMING POOLS AND BATHS

Swimming Pool?

"The Sandtrap" Location Av. Pallas (2 miles)

Public Baths?

None

Location

This is a concrete dam erected on the river to prevent
sand being carried to the lower reaches of the river. It makes an excellent
swimming pool and is very picturesquely situated.

SOCIAL CLUBS, CULTURAL SOCIETIES, &c.

Social Clubs *Catholic young men's club, (Billiards
Table Tennis, cards)*

Cultural Societies *none*

INDUSTRIES AND HANDCRAFTS

Industries *none*

Handcrafts or Cottage Industries (Give names of craftsmen, employer, &c.):

none

PUBLIC MONUMENTS

(Brief description; inscription to be quoted)

none

IMPORTANT PUBLIC BUILDINGS

(Give brief notes on architectural features)

The Church of the Sacred Heart, Borrisokane is a cruciform, Gothic church without tower or steeple. Its interior is beautiful all its stained glass windows depict religious scenes and some of them are especially beautiful. There is a fine altar of white Italian & green Connemara marble and also a fine pulpit.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

none

HOSPITALS

none

FAIRS AND MARKETS ; HALF-HOLIDAY

Monthly fairs and markets *One annual Fair - 25th Nov*

Weekly market day *Pig market Wednesday* Half-holiday *Thursday*

GARAGES AND PETROL STATIONS

J. Greig, O'Connell St., Garage & Petrol station

CONVEYANCES FOR HIRE (Owners) :

Taxis *Greig's garage, M. Kennedy, The Square.*

Motors (Touring) *none*

Boats (State type) *none*

Bicycles *none*

Caravans *none*

Horses *none*

CAMPING SITES

(At principal holiday resorts)

Location *none*

Landowner

Local Improvements Committee *none*

Secretary

(Signed)

P. J. Tully
Surveyor

DATE

Village: Borrisoleigh

Parish: Borrisoleigh

Co. Tipperary.

Topography (contd.)

parish extends about 2 miles south of it into the rich plains of the "Golden Vein". The greatest length of the parish North-South is about $6\frac{1}{2}$ mls., & greatest width $5\frac{1}{2}$ mls. North of the town of Borrisoleigh is a district of broad hill-sides, sprinkled with the gold of purple, rising to heights around the 1,000 ft. mark. Highest mountain is Knockanorra on the N.-E. boundary of the parish. South of the town is rich low-lying wooded land peopled by prosperous small farmers. In the hilly districts little clumps of trees up along the broad slopes hide small farmhouses, many of them thatched. The six-mile stretch of the Nenagh-Thurles road north of the town where it winds through the steep, narrow mountain pass is very picturesque. About 2 miles west of the town the River Clodiagh tumbles down its rocky bed through a wild ravine to join other tributaries of the Suir. Upstream from Pallas Bridge on the road to Upperchurch are some lovely scenes, miniature waterfalls, wild profusion of flowers & vegetation & stately conifers along the edges of the ravine.

The view from Knockanorra is extensive. The broad plains of Tipperary stretch away south to Clivenhamon and the Galtees which stretch round in the west until they recede behind the nearer hills of the St. Felin & Silvermine ranges. Just to the left of Killybeg Hill - a dense tree clad hump-back breaking the smooth regularity of the plain to the S.-W. - can be seen the Rock of Cuskel, Templemore & Thurles can also be easily distinguished. To the east & south east the low, distant ridges of the St. Aulagh Hills stretches into Keshigo's & Kil Kenny. Northwards between the nearby hills is glimpsed the plains of north Tipperary and Lough Derg can be clearly seen.

Cycling: The only road in the parish to be cycled with comfort is the main Nenagh-Thurles road which is 14 mls. from Borrisoleigh. The Borrisoleigh - Templemore - Thurles triangle is about 24 mls. road & the roads are level and good.

Walks: From Borrisoleigh via Pallas Cross Rds to Pallas Bridge then up ~~up~~ about a mile along the picturesque Clodiagh river to the Upperchurch road & back to ~~Nenagh~~ Borrisoleigh via Pallas (about 5 mls) Any of the roads north of the town make very pleasant walking.

Village: Borrisoleigh Parish: Borrisoleigh Co. Tipperary
Antiquities (contd.)

Some of the local people say that this is the burial place of "Sheila na Guira" (see report on Cullinhill castle below) but this appears to be ridiculous. The coat of arms above the monuments bears the motto "Spes mea in Deo est." (my hope is in God) ^{It is a combination of the de Burgo & O'Dwyer crests.}

The designs on Tombstones ~~between~~ with dates roughly between 1770 & 1820 are interesting. (see Photographs forwarded) They are very neatly carved and there are figures of hour-glasses, winged hearts, and angels with trumpets etc.

The whole graveyard has recently been cleaned up and is in a fairly neat state.

Cullinhill Castle.

This castle is ~~situated~~ about 3 miles N.W. of Borrisoleigh and is most impressively situated on a rugged, Rocky hill 200 ft. above the main road to Kenagh and almost overhanging it. It was a two storey building now in a ruinous state with much of the E. & S. walls gone. The foundation is cut out of the solid rock which forms part of the north sidewall to a height of about 7 ft. and the masonry just sits on top of it. This portion of the building is about 30' by 60 ft. & has pointed gables. Two tall chimneys stick up like long square fingers to a height of about 40 ft. Adjoining the north sidewall was a strong square building about 30' x 30' now almost levelled. It was apparently a doojon or keep.

This is said to have been a stronghold of the O'Dwyers, Irish chieftains of the Kilmamagh territory, erected in the 13th Cent., though the greater part of the ~~existing~~ ruin now standing would appear to be of later date 15 or 16th Cts. It must have figured prominently in the constant strife between the O'Dwyers and the de Burgos from the advent of the latter around 1200 until the end of the 15th Cent. when peace was made between the two families and the Walterhead of the de Burgo family married Sheila a woman of the O'Dwyers. The castle is particularly noted for its association with the legend of Sheila na Guira (Sheila of the Dwyers). There

are many traditional stories of cruelties perpetrated by this Amazon still told in the locality.

Some of them appear in Dr. Callanan's "De Burgos or Bourkes of Gleagh". This book identifies Shilda ma Guira with the abovementioned monument but it seems well proven (Glance of Borrisoleigh by F. Kenny pp. 20-22) that this cannot be so. Although F. Kenny describes her as "mythical" he does not explain the local traditions concerning her which are very vivid and cannot be entirely fiction. X

The legends would seem to indicate that Shilda operated from Cullahill Castle during the strife between the Dyers and De Burgos or Bourkes - possibly sometime in the 15th Cent. Most of the stories are of cruelties perpetrated on captured de Burgo retainers and tell how she took them to bed with her at night and killed them the following morning by rolling them down the precipitous slopes from the castle in a barrel into which spikes were driven. She is also said to have killed women, even her own daughters, by hanging them head downwards from the battlements and pouring molten lead on them. They also set her down as a kind of witch who had the power of ~~transforming~~ assuming the shape of a hare. She is said to have been shot while looking out through a window of the castle by one of her own soldiers.

The castle is on the lands of Mrs. Connors, Cullahill, Borrisoleigh and an old roadway leads to within 100 yds. of it.

De Burgo's Castle Borrisoleigh

On the east bank of the stream which flows underneath the bridge in Chapel St., Borrisoleigh stands the old castle of Borrisoleigh. The ground floor is vaulted, the arch being rather pointed, and is open at the East end where the end wall of the building has completely disappeared. It is a large apartment about 60 ft. by 20 ft. The north & west walls have disappeared above the top of the arch portion of the S. wall to a ~~height~~ remains and abutting it at the S.-W. corner is a square tower about 15 ft. square & rising to a height of about 60 ft. The E. wall of this tower blends into the S. wall of the principal portion of the building in a concave curve. The only remaining window openings and the loophole variety in the

Village: Borrisoleigh

Parish: Borrisoleigh

Co. Tipperary

Antiquities (contd.)

abutting tower. The walls are grouted and 208 ft. thick. It is situated on the property of Mrs. M. Cormack, my house, Borrisoleigh, and adjoins a vegetable garden. The vaulted ground floor opens on a yard and is used as a stable for horses by country people coming to the village for horses. Part of the castle was torn down in the 18th Cent. to build a distillery.

Inserted in a wall of Mrs. M. Cormack's residence "my House is a tablet dated 1643 and bearing in Roman lettering (see photo forwarded) the following inscription: Richd. Bourke - alibi Hurly. Marmorum carum surgat opus facit hospes et hostis. Hospes in amplexus, sed procul hostis eat." Translation from "Gleaner of Borrisoleigh": "Friend and foe make this marble rise. Come friend to arms; the enemy begone."

The first de Burgo built a castle in Borrisoleigh about 1200. and it became the principal seat of the family in the district & it is to this that the town of Borrisoleigh owes its origin. For centuries there was intermittent strife between the de Burgos and the local Irish chiefs, the O'Drizers of Kilnamanagh but eventually the de Burgos or Bourkes became "more Irish than the Irish themselves" and in the early 15th Cent. or late 15th Cent. the heads of the two families made "an eternal league of friendship by oath on the Holy Cross" the true cross relic of Holy Cross abbey. all through the wars and confiscations that followed the Bourkes of Borrisoleigh were treated as Irish. - Mr John Dunbar, P.P.,

Mrs. M. Gleeson.

On the lands of Mr. P. Kavanagh, lower Pallas is the site of another old castle said to have belonged to the de Burgos only a few pieces of grouted masonry mark the site.

"The Valley of the Black Pig"

There is a tradition in the locality that "The Valley of the Black Pig" runs north west from Borrisoleigh towards Katteragh and on towards Borris. There is not much trace of except in the

Village: Borrisoleigh Parish: Borrisoleigh Co. Tipperary

Antiquities (contd.)

Townland of Ross about 12 miles from Kenagh where a long hollow resembling a wide ditch is pointed out. There is the usual legend about its having been roated up by a monstrous Black Pig. This probably an ancient territorial boundary.

Tomulus in Lower Pallas.

Two miles S.W. of Borrisoleigh along the road between Pallas Cross Roads and Ashfield Bridge on the lands of Mr. P. Kavanagh Lower Pallas is a cone-shaped hillock or mound of stones and clay. There are local stories of buried treasure in it.

The Bearman Cuilan, the Bell Shrine of St. Cuilan of Glankeen said to be a remarkably fine example of 11th cent. Irish workmanship is in the British Museum. During the Penal days it was preserved in a hollow tree near the original site of St. Cuilan's Holy Well on the lands of Mr. Dwyer, ~~Coolman~~ Coolman. Also beside the site of this well is a field known as the "Church Field", the site of an early Christian church founded by St. Cuilan. No trace of this remains. The old name of the townland was Kilcuilane.

Historic Sites (contd.)

an old ship's gun which they had taken from Fortakelly Castle (Parish of Upperchurch) saved the day. It was loaded with scrap iron & fired one shot - sufficient to cause the military to retire to Templemore and give the Fenians the opportunity to escape. This gun, probably the only piece of artillery used by the Fenians is in a collection in Thurles under the care of the Town Clerk.

The "Valley of Death"

About 2 mls. N.W. of Borrisoleigh where the Kenagh road passes through the townland of Ross the sheer slopes rising on either of the road are naturally terraced. This was the scene of numerous ambushes during the Black and Tan trouble and was called the "Valley of Death" by the British forces. They never drove through it, ambush or no, without riddling the hillsides with machine-gun and rifle fire. Many of them were killed making the passage through this dally.

Village: Borrisaleigh Parish: Borrisaleigh Co. Tipperary
Historic Houses etc.

encourage it. John stayed for a while with the famous Fr. Kerigan of Templederg and his brother Joe left to join the Papal armies. John returned to America.

Patk Gleeson was Mayor of Hong Island up to its fusion with New York & was for a period of a few months Mayor of the entire city. He was known as "Battleaxe" Gleeson. Mr. M. O'Connell, Lower St., Borrisaleigh has in his possession a large poster picture of Mayor Gleeson as well as some election literature. I was not able to obtain locally any dates concerning the family. Mr. T. Burke N.T., and some other people still resident in Borrisaleigh are related to the Gleesons.

Customs, Patterns, etc.

Tubberkirawn.

About a mile from Borrisaleigh on the road to Templemore is a holy well known as "Tubberkirawn" Ciaran's Holy Well. It is on the lands of Mr. Patk. Kennedy Summerhill Borrisaleigh & within a few yards of the roadside. The waters are very pure & hard. It has a reputation for the cure of various eye troubles. The cure is effected by bathing the eyes with the water and praying at the well. There is no local tradition extant connecting the well with St. Kieran.

According to the owner the water is efficacious as a weight reducer. It is impossible to fatten animals which drink the water, and some of the local people who are in fear of becoming over corpulent drink it in the mornings.