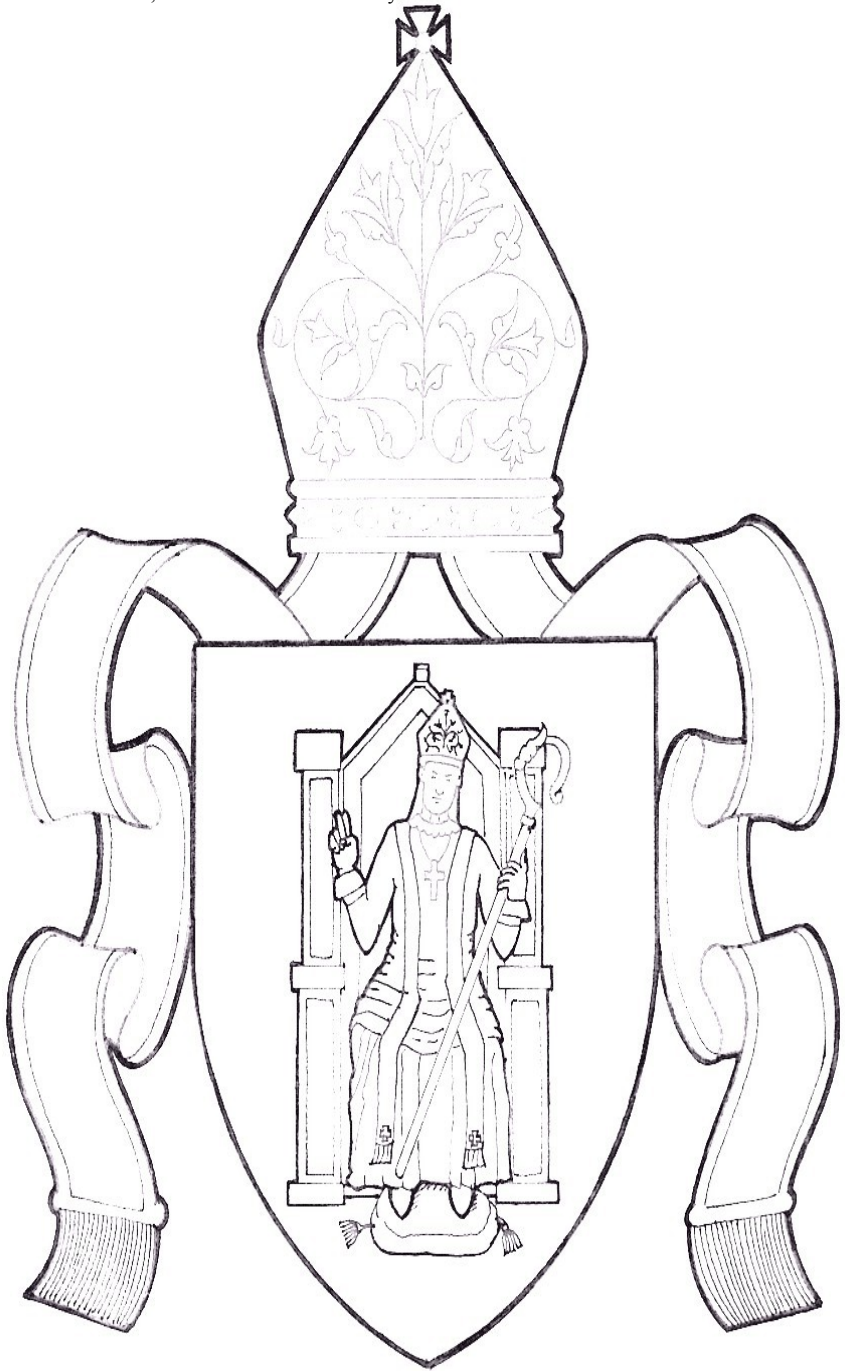


**St. Finbarr's Church  
Carrickmacross**

# **A History**

**Robert G. Kingston**



## Preface

These notes make no claim to originality. They are simply Canon Leslie's Succession list<sup>1</sup> of the Clergy of Magheross (Carrickmacross) Parish interlaced with material from other books and web sites written by people who know about the history of the area. These are put together with some personal reflection to help the author understand the heritage he has entered into and it is hoped they will give as much pleasure in the reading as was enjoyed in the compiling. There is no effort here to be academically accurate, or critically detached or unconcerned with the human weaknesses which are all too evident. If anyone is offended by unfair criticism, by what is included incorrectly or by inexact reference to what is quoted please ask the author to make correction or apology.

It may be asked why there is so little mention of the post Reformation Roman Catholic Church or other churches in the area, or indeed other local Church of Ireland parishes. It is because these are so well dealt with by competent authors elsewhere and reference has been made to some of these in the bibliography and references. Also, other than Mr. Sutcliffe's account, there seems to be no history of Carrickmacross Church of Ireland Parish and we hope in time to give a similar treatment to Magheracloone, Ardragh, Donaghmoyné, Kilanny, Inniskeen and Cooderry.

Thanks are due to Mrs Rosaleen Colman, Mr Malachy Connolly, Mr Kevin Mulligan, Dr Raymond Refousse of the RCB Library. Canon Cecil Mills and others who have commented on the drafts and added information available to them. Any confusion and the many mistakes that remain are, of course, my responsibility.

Robert Kingston

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1 Clergy of Clogher, Leslie, J.B. Eds. Crooks and Moore 2006

## Description

On the northern edge of the plains occupied by counties Louth, Meath and Westmeath, just behind the first lines of drumlins, lies the town of Carrickmacross. Drumlins are low gravel hills deposited by the retreating glaciers of the last Ice Age with steep sides and waterlogged valleys some with shallow lakes. The underlying limestone rock under the Monaghan drumlins allows few of the rivers to run overground for any great distance. The drumlins southern line roughly coincides with the boundaries of the ancient Province, or Cuige, of Ulster. Running right across the island between the mountains of south Down and Donegal they form a natural line of defence which is penetrable but with difficulty.

A 19<sup>th</sup> century article puts it like this:

“A glance at the map will show that this province is three parts surrounded by sea and that the remaining boundary or land frontier, of Ulster, which may be roughly defined by a line drawn from Dundalk to Ballyshannon, on the Bay of Donegal, gives the shortest traverse from sea to sea. The western half of this line is occupied by the waters of Lough Erne, which form a complete defence from Ballyshannon to Belturbet, a distance of nearly fifty miles; while the chain of the Few mountains, rising in front of Dundalk, along the outmost part of the Pale, covered a considerable portion of the other, or eastern half. The interval in the centre was protected by the counties Monaghan and Cavan, a district of low, wooded hills, interlaced with a perfect net-work of bogs and lakes, through which there was but one road—that by Carrickmacross, in the Barony of Farney, which thence came to be called the "Gap of the North.”

Carrickmacross, Carrig Macaire, Ros, variously translated as the "Rock on the wooded plain"<sup>2</sup> or the "Rock on the plain of Ross", developed on one of the most eastern of the few roads which could more easily be made and maintained through the drumlin country from the plains to the south up into the heart of Ulster. So from the earliest times its environs had a strategic significance.

Carrickmacross itself cannot claim to be the first settlement or the most important religious site in the area. Donaghmoynne would seem to have a better claim to that honour. First of all Donaghmoynne was close to the seat of the ancient kings of Oriel at Mamnan Castle and secondly its claim that St. Patrick

2 The Illustrated Dublin Journal, Volume 1, Number 35, May 3, 1862

3 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. P.517



had visited it and appointed its first bishop (hence the ascription 'Domnach') gave it priority over any other holy site in the area which could not make such claims. Carrickmacross, as distinct from Magheross, is basically a 17<sup>th</sup> century Plantation town, but over time it eclipsed all the more ancient settlements in the area becoming in time the principal town of south Monaghan.

## Origins

Carrickmacross has roots that go back much further than the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At the foot of the hill below St. Finbarr's Church where a bridge, much narrower than the one which exists today, has crossed the Proules river for centuries there has been human settlement since at least the sixth century. One suggestion is that the Proules is named after a local land agent in the 1800's but Peadar O'Caside suggests Proules is a mispronunciation of the Irish word "Prochlais" meaning "Caves", which he says is very appropriate given that the Proules runs through several caves as it makes its way to Carrickmacross. So, more correctly it should be called "Abhainn na Prochlaise"<sup>4</sup>. While it appears to be a small enough stream now, at one time it provided the power for a mill and its significance may well have been even greater than that in more ancient times. The earliest extant map of the area drawn by Thomas Raven in 1634<sup>5</sup> depicts the Proules as a long wide expanse of water, almost an elongated lake, as it approaches the bridge. This lake was created by the sluice which stood just beside the bridge.

There were steep banks on the northern side of the Proules which have been smoothed out over the centuries but which in earlier times formed a natural line of defence. The Carrig Macaire Ros is a good description of the top of the steep slope that looms over the river near the bridge, though Livingstone<sup>6</sup> states the name refers to a large limestone hill outside the town quarried away to nothing in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by lime burners.

To the south of the Proules is the area of Magheross and the ruin of Magheross Church. The derivation of the name Magheross, or Macaire Ros opens an interesting sidelight on the nature of history for those who say history is to do with facts. The name Magheross is a solid enough fact but Breathnach<sup>8</sup> points out that there at least six possible derivations of the name, none of them without problems. History does not just deal with facts it has to look at how

4 O'Casaidé, Peadar, Macalla. 1979. p.4

5 Survey of the Bath Estate, Raven, Thomas 1634

6 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. 1986 P.517

7 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. P.517

8 A Heritage Guide to Carrickmacross. P. Breathnach. Tidy Towns. 1996. P.32

facts are connected and the meanings of and the real consequences of those facts. Therein lies the problem and the fascination. It seems most likely Magheross originally referred to the 'Plain of Ros'.

Magheross is the site of an ancient Holy Well, the Tobar Inver, now buried under a grassed over area but located almost beside the river just to the east of what was the old narrow bridge. The importance of this well most likely predates the coming of Christianity and is reputed to have been visited, if not settled beside, by a St. Finbarr which gave the area Christian significance. Inver is an anglicised corruption of the name Finbarr. Magheross is the settlement that grew up around this holy place on which a church was built, reputedly originally by Finbarr himself.

It is interesting that recent local knowledge names this as "Croppies Well" the scene of all sorts of local gatherings for amusement, drinking, gambling and fighting, and does not seem to know of the Finbarr connection. In other places, as for example St. Maclruain's Well in Tallaght, church and state officials in the 1800's closed the local holy wells because the 'Patterns' or festivals held at them led to general disorder and immorality. St. Finbarr's well, now marked by an ornamental steel tree, seems to have been filled in for health safety reasons.

## St. Finbar

Eoin Neeson in "The Book of Irish Saints"<sup>9</sup> lists seven different St. Finbarr's as being venerated in Ireland. Mr. Sutcliffe reminds us that St. Finbarr is not just an Irish saint's name. There is also a Finbarr who was Bishop of Caithness and Sunderland and who is venerated on the Hebridean island of Barra off the west coast of Scotland. Finbarr, or Fionn Barra, meaning, in Irish "fair haired Barra" or "the fair haired one from Barra" is therefore a favoured name for Irish saints and it is not certain exactly who the Magheross Finbarr is. Livingstone<sup>10</sup> seems to suggest that the various appearances of Finbarr may all stem from the one source. He tells of how "the cult of St. Finbarr originated among the Dal Fiatach, an Ulaid people, at Movilla in the north east corner of Co. Down where the saint may have lived. From here it spread to many parts of Ireland, including Cork, where St. Finbarr was especially venerated."<sup>11</sup>

The people of Cork's neighbouring diocese of Clonyne would be delighted with this version believing, as they do, that the promotion of the Cork Finbarr, and

9 The Book of Irish Saints. Eoin Neeson. 1967. Mercier Press. Cork.

10 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. P.517

11 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. P.517

with him the fortunes of Cork diocese at the expense of Cloyne, had more to do with local ecclesiastical power struggles than any involvement of a real Finbarr. Despite this, we would have to say that the Monaghan Finbarr is very likely not the same Finbarr who is commemorated in so many ways in Cork City and Gougane Barra at the source of the River Lee. However. The Cork Finbarr's true name was Lochan,<sup>12</sup> Finbarr being merely a pet-name. Linking lowly Lochan to Finbarr did Cork Diocese no harm at all in its ultimately successful struggles to dominate neighbouring Cloyne and maybe something similar occurred with Magheross. By claiming a relationship with Finbarr it gave itself a leg up in promoting itself over the more ancient Donaghmoynne. In later times Donaghmoynne lost out even further when the Norman/English abandoned the Motte and Bailey they built in Donaghmoynne in favour of the Castle in Carrickmacross.

## Magheross Church

The most ancient building today in Magheross is the old St. Finbarr's Church. The current ruin on the site dates from the 1500's and is thought to be the third or fourth building erected on this spot. Livingstone,<sup>13</sup> without giving further reference, tantalisingly links a predecessor of this Reformation period church to the "Cellrois in provincia Maughodorum" mentioned in Adamnan's "Life of St. Columba". The Archaeological Inventory of Co. Monaghan<sup>14</sup> records that the monastery was burnt in 685CE which may have involved a previous construction on this site. The Proules River may well mark the northern boundary of the settlement that grew up there, stretching along what is now Mullinary, which was established long before any developments north of the river.

The Conservation Management Strategy Report produced by Gifford for Monaghan County Council in 2007 states that

"The earliest reference (to Magheross) comes in the Life of Colmeille (c. 700AD), when Magheross was described as being in the territory of Mugdorna who occupied much of the land between Castleblayney and Carrickmacross. Later, the church was associated with the people called Fir Rois, whose territory covered much of south Monaghan. There are references to two priors of the Fir Rois who are likely to have been resident at Cell Rois/Magheross; a Maenach (ca. 825) and Maelbadraig (ca. 845). Later still, the church lay within the territory of the O'Carroll

12 The Book of Irish Saints. Eoin Neeson. 1967. Mercier Press. Cork.

13 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. P.517

14 Stationery Office, Dublin 1986



and MacMahon kingdoms. The first written reference to Magheross comes in c.1541 – ecclesia parochialis Sancti Finini de Ros, alias Machair Royes, that is Magheross in the Diocese of Clogher." The CMS report also quotes Grace Moloney (unpublished) as recording the following: "For a period in the 12th century, the see for the area was the Abbey of Louth (Flanagan 1980, 225). After the dissolution of religious houses in the Reformation period, the tithes for the parish of Magheross were held by the Abbey of Louth and the hospital of St John in Ardee. Later, James I granted ownership of the Magheross church lands to the Bishop of Clogher, and it was sold it under the Church Temporalities Act to the Porter family (Shirley 1879, 534), bringing it into private hands."

If you look at an Ordnance Survey map of Monaghan you will observe that the line of the street through Mullinary is continued up hill and down valley almost without a bend for about ten miles to just beyond Shantonagh. Such direct routes elsewhere have been identified as Celtic roads, brought into use when people walked or perhaps moved by horse from place to place "as the crow flies". They were replaced in more recent times by more twisting roads which were designed to be as level as possible to allow for horse-drawn vehicles. Such straight roads could also have been pilgrim ways or military roads. One wonders about the significance of this particular road and the positioning of Magheross. The popularity of the Finbarr cult, and the religious and social significance Tobar Inver, may well have caused the location to become the focus of a monastic community and place of pilgrimage.

Magheross, as well as being the name of the settlement on the Proules, was also the name given to a very large parish. Shirley<sup>15</sup> lists more than sixty townlands in Magheross Parish. Together with the parishes of Donaghmoine, Magheraclone, Inniskeen and Kilanny, this made up most of the area known as Farney, itself part of the old Irish kingdom of Oriel. Farney took its name from ancient settlers, the "Fir Fennaige" who Livingstone<sup>16</sup> tells us came here from Lough Ooney in west Monaghan. Alternatively Breatnach<sup>17</sup> says Farney derives from the Irish word "feanach" which means an alder wood.

Donaghmoine, with its links to St. Patrick, and Magheross, with its Finbarr connections, are products of the independent Celtic church of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. After the invading pagan Danes themselves became Christians and still later, on the arrival of their Norman cousins with their strong European

15 Some Account of Farney. E.P. Shirley. Pickering, London 1845

16 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. 1986. P.517

17 A Heritage Guide to Carrickmacross. P. Breathnach. Tidy Towns. 1996. P.10



church links, the early Irish church lost its independence and this is reflected locally in that by the early 1100s Donaghmoyno and Magheross were controlled by the Abbey of Ardee with its Norman connections. Livingstone<sup>18</sup> summarises these changes by saying that: "The church of St. Finbarr served the Carrickmacross area down the centuries, and like many Irish churches it assumed a monastic character which persisted until the twelfth century reforms in the Irish church." Even if this monastic character was initially Celtic, it later became more Western Latin as Ardee was an Augustinian foundation.

Those twelfth century reforms can be traced back to perhaps one significant event. In 1040 a Dane called Sitric was, according to the coins he had struck, "rex" (king) of Dublin, though, according to other contemporaneous accounts, he was or "dux" (leader). He caused a fellow Dane, a cleric called Donatus, to be installed as Bishop of Dublin and together they began the building of Christ Church Cathedral. Donatus died in 1074 and his successor, named Patrick, was consecrated not by the the Irish Primate in Armagh but by the English Primate in Canterbury. Patrick bound himself to "obey him and his successors in all things pertaining to the Christian religion". This insult to the authority of Armagh and the ancient Irish church and the shift to accepting English authority is a key moment. Initially it linked the Danish territories to English church influence and subsequently to the influence of the wider Western Latin church. From this time on native Irish clergy could not be found in many, and certainly few important, Irish parishes, where there was strong outside influence. We note that this is five hundred years before the Reformation which most people seem to associate with the take over of the Irish church and its buildings by invaders and foreigners. Carrickmacross is different in this regard in that the power of the MacMahons ensured Irish clergy continued to serve in Magheross down to and even beyond the Reformation.

## The Middle Ages

From the year 1100 through to about 1400 we have found very little direct information about what was happening, church-wise, in the Carrickmacross area. There was, however, a great deal going on in the relationships between the See of Armagh, the Abbey of Ardee and the area that would ultimately become the Diocese of Clogher all of which had major impact on this locality. Ireland was officially divided up into twenty four diocese by the Synod of Rathbreasil in 1110. However, there were many diocese before this time as well as Bishoprics which were directly under the control of the Abbots of the more powerful monasteries. St. McCartin (said to be a companion of St.

<sup>18</sup> The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. 1986. P.517

Patrick and who is generally credited to have founded Clogher around 493), Moran, (Abbot of Clogher in 843 and who in the Annals of Clonmacnoise is called Bishop and is said to have died while a captive of the Danes,) and Ailill (named as Scribe, Abbot and Bishop in 869,) in reality were probably only "Bishops" of a small local area in the presence of many other such bishops. There were many types of organisation, apparently, in the Celtic church and one of the purposes of Rathbreasil was to try and put some sort of order on all this. The fact that subsequent Synods had to be held to refine the Rathbreasil decrees shows how slowly change actually took place on the ground.

The Diocese of Clogher, as defined in 1110, stretched from the River Blackwater on the east to Galloon in the west and from Slieve Beagh to Slieve Largy, near Sixmilecross. The area later known as County Monaghan was not included; it was part of Armagh Diocese. Thus Magheross was in the sphere of influence of Armagh, but also, of course, influenced by the powerful Abbey of Ardee. Soon after this the Bishop of Clogher, possibly Bishop Christian O'Morgair, apparently moved his seat from Clogher to Louth under the influence of Donough O'Carroll, the King of Oriel. This meant he was moving into the Armagh diocesan area where his brother, Malachy, was Bishop and Primate of All Ireland. It is argued that this move was intended to suppress a number of smaller previously existing dioceses in the Oriel area who did not much like the new centralised arrangements. The Bishops of Clogher from 1135 to 1197, O'Morgair, Erda O'Kelly, Maelisa O'Carroll, Cistin O'Muccaran and Maelisa O'Mulkerin were actually known as Bishops of Louth or Oriel but their authority stretched right up into what is now Fermanagh and parts of Tyrone. However, living in Louth left them subservient to the Archbishop of Armagh in whose diocese Louth lay, and on perhaps not so easy terms with the powerful Abbott of Ardee who would have claimed authority over at least the Farnley area.

In 1197 this complicated and creaky arrangement fell apart and the Bishop of Clogher moved his seat back to Clogher. Part of the reason may have been that attempts had been made by people in Fermanagh to install a rival Bishop. Then, as now, Louth seems a very long way from the Augher valley! and those at one end of Clogher can feel those at the other end have very different concerns. Louth then stayed with (what later became) Monaghan and was put with (what later became) Fermanagh and part of Tyrone to define the diocese of Clogher. However, the story does not end there. In 1252 the Louth part of the diocese was again put with Armagh, forming the diocesan area more or less as it is today. One last twist to this particular saga is that six hundred years later in 1850 on the death of Bishop Loftus of Clogher the (Established Church) diocese was found to have no money and was linked again with Armagh. This

lasted until 1886, after the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, when local people in Clogher put the funds together to re-instate their own Bishop.

One curious little anomaly was that Ardstraw, to the north of Clogher, which had a Bishop of its own and maintained itself as a diocese until taken over by Clogher was later, in 1285, forcibly seized by the Bishop of Derry. Small ecclesiastical areas, such as Ardstraw or Farney were pulled to and fro in the power struggles between more powerful prelates. So while the simple devotions of the ordinary people continued to be faithfully offered in Magheross Church and at the Tobar Inver and places like them, those who controlled their destinies, and who even at that time were largely foreigners to them, worked out their various intrigues.

Tensions in the church were matched by changes in the political arena. In the 13<sup>th</sup> Century the O'Carroll Clan which had ruled the Kingdom of Oriel for centuries and had weathered a century of Norman pressure and attacks from neighbours, were defeated and supplanted by the MacMahon's. The new rulers never achieved the cohesiveness of the O'Carrolls and Oriel, in effect today's County Monaghan, was divided into smaller fiefdoms.

Donaghmoyn, now a small village about two miles north of Carrickmacross, had once been the seat of the Kings of Oriel. Under the MacMahons this changed. They built their main "Dun" or fort on raised ground just to the west of the still tiny settlement of Magheross. Livingstone<sup>19</sup> states that in the late fourteenth century a branch of the MacMahon's settled at a fort on the Lurgans. This is up the very steep hill at the other end of Mullinary from the Tobar Inver and perhaps more secure than the Magheross site. They lived in dangerous times partly from the threats of their own kinsmen in the other MacMahon lands to the north but mainly from the invading Normans. Farney lay just to the north of the "Pale" the area secured by the Anglo Normans and so was constantly under threat.

While the MacMahons of Farney claimed to be the rulers of the area authority in the Church had shifted from the native Irish clergy to the Prior of the Norman/English monastery of Louth. In some ways the changing authority structure of the church demonstrates most clearly the tensions that there were between the local Irish tribal system and that of the invading Anglo Normans, spreading their influence with the cross in the one hand and a sword in the other.

In 1421 the rather cloudy ecclesiastical history of Magheross, in particular, and

19 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. 1986 P.517



the Farney area in general bursts out into the clear light of day as the book "De Annatis Hiberniae" tells us that on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October of that year John McCarvill [Maccearbail] was appointed by the Pope to the perpetual Vicarage of the Church of Ros. The value of the living to the Vicar was 6 marks<sup>20</sup>. Unfortunately the clear light of day reveals a dark tangle of complicated intrigue.

In 1432 Vicar McCarvill is noted to be keeping a concubine<sup>21</sup>, but we do not know the lady's name and though he is still titled "Perpetual Vicar" we know that in 1428 Gilbert O'Sneehy [O'Sichigi] was appointed to the Vicarage on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Canon Leslie notes that he was probably the Gilbert O'Scheyg "of the Diocese of Clogher, Clk. (i.e. Clerk in Holy Orders), who had interfered in 1411 with the rectorial rights of this parish and of Donaghmoine<sup>23</sup>. In line with the general outline we have already given, Canon Leslie notes that at this time the Rectory seems to have belonged to the Prior of Louth, which is confirmed, for example, in the article entitled "A Charter of Donatus, Prior of Louth"<sup>24</sup> by H. J. Lawlor. He states: "Among the Fiant of Queen Elizabeth, there is a lease to John Wakely of certain "rectories and spiritualities " which had belonged to the suppressed monastery of Louth. The list of them includes "Megherosshe and Donagmayne." There is also a lease to Edward Moore," which mentions, among other denominations, " the rectory of Maghyrcloo, in Inferny, half the rectory of Rosse, called Maghyrrosse, in Inferny, lands of Capperaghe, with half the parsonage of Donnaghenny, in Inferny." Here Donnaghenny appears to be an alias of Donagmayne, and Rosse is expressly stated to be an alias of Maghyrrosse. "Thus the Rós and Douenacmain of this Charter (the charter of Donatus) are undoubtedly the parishes of Magheross (in which is the town of Carrickmacross) and Donaghmoine, both in the barony of Farney, Co. Monaghan. It is not without interest to observe that Wakely's lease proves that before the sixteenth century they had returned to the ownership of the Priory, from which they were alienated by this Charter." So the parish of Magheross changed hands on a number of occasions and while we do not know the exact dates of these changes these transactions prove the involvement of the Prior of Louth in the running of the parish at least for some years during the hidden medieval period.

We might pause to sort out here the terms "Vicar" and "Rector". These English

20 DeAnnatis Hiberniae i.22

21 Calendar of the Register of John Prene, Archbishop of Armagh

22 De Annatis Hiberniae i.34

23 Calendar of the Register of Nicholas Fleming No. 151)

24 Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Aug. 1915 Volume xxxii, Section c, no. 19



words derive from the Latin terms "vicarius" meaning someone who stands in for someone else and "rectus" which is the perfect participle of the verb "rego" which means to straighten out or rule or get things right. Vicars have no authority of their own merely standing in for the person who has appointed them to the job. So, for example, the Pope is referred to as the "Vicar of Christ" deriving all his authority from the Master he serves. A Rector on the other hand is the right person in the right place at the right time having all rights and privileges attaching to the position! However the real difference between Vicars and Rectors concerned money. The Rector had the right to any income from the church lands while Vicars, who were dependant on the Rector for their position, were glad to take whatever money was handed on to them. Curiously some Church of Ireland clergy today (often in wealthier parishes of a particular theological outlook!) like to be called Vicar rather than Rector, not seeming to realise the diminution of status this implies. Vicars were not much better than the badly abused "Curate's Assistants" of later centuries. This situation also led to the abuse whereby greedy lay people as well as clergy often sought, sometimes violently, the "rectorial rights", keen to get the income but having no intention of doing any of the work needed to preach the Gospel or help the parish improve. Instead they put in poor, less well connected clergy to do the real work of the church.

The next thing we know is that twenty or so years later - in 1450 - John O'Sheehy [O'Shig], is recorded as being the Perpetual Vicar of Rosse, as his name is mentioned in the Diocesan Register of Armagh on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, when the Primate, the Archbishop of Armagh and most senior dignitary in the Church ordered someone called Philip to be admitted herenach (which more or less means a lay Rector, or holder of Church lands) of the lands of Rosse in place of Maurice, a Canon of Clogher, who was being deprived, presumably because of bad conduct of some sort.

In 1458 we hear of a dispute about who is the Vicar of Magheross. On the 27<sup>th</sup> June the Primate wrote<sup>25</sup> to "Roger, Bishop of Clogher and the clergy of Clogher and specially those in Ferneway" on behalf of Donaldus O'Sedeghan, Perpetual Vicar of Rosse against Peter O'Connallyn, who obtained by false representation a Papal Rescript and who is "to be published and treated as an intruder." Rather threateningly the entry adds "The Secular Arm of M'Mahon and O'Rayly to help". So, we have the Primate in Armagh's appointee, O'Sedeghan, set against the Pope's appointee, O'Connallyn, and the Primate calls on the MacMahons and O'Reillys to support his man. It is interesting to note that Bishop Roger Maguire was the last Irishman to be appointed Bishop for a considerable time, his successors all being English monks and at least one

25 Calendar of the Register of John Prene, Archbishop of Armagh, 16

of them, John Courcey, being of Norman descent.

About this time monks from European, as distinct from the old Irish monastic, orders began to be introduced. The MacMahon brought Franciscans to Monaghan in 1462. The friars emphasised the power of preaching and this was obviously a novelty in Clogher. The Annals of Ulster for 1454 has an entry which states: "A sermon was preached this year on the Clochcorr in Fermanagh by Tadhg Ó Donnchadha . . . I wrote that because it is known to me that that sermon . . . is talked about by a multitude of persons."<sup>26</sup> Lengthy sermonising was obviously not much indulged in by the ordinary parish clergy.

In 1484 one Thomas is named as Vicar of Rosse followed in 1528 by John O'Crain. Then in 1530 there is a bit more excitement as it is mentioned that a Patrick O'Sheehy [O'Sygi], who had been appointed Vicar, had not been ordained in the appointed time and was forced to vacate the parish. (D.R. Arm.). So in that same year of 1530 James McCran was appointed Vicar by the Archbishop of Armagh. Not surprisingly Mr. O' Sheehy did not take all this lying down and, with others, we are told he "disturbed" Vicar McCran in the possession of the parish. McCran complained to the Primate who placed O'Sheehy under interdict. However, that part of the problem seems to have been sorted out because O'Sheehy, or another of the same name, appears to be herenach in 1534<sup>27</sup>.

But then the plot grows thicker. If the Primate appointed McCran in 1530 the Pope also made an appointment in the same year of a Thomas Makaj (McKay?) who was appointed to the Vicarage "vacant by the death of Patrick O'Sygi at the Roman Court". Patrick O'Sheehy does not seem to have been satisfied with getting the income from the rectorial lands he also wanted the ecclesiastical authority as well, taking his ease all the way to Rome where he lost out to the grim reaper. It looks as if McCran just lost out.

Thomas Makaj bound himself "for the first-fruits" on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1530. Binding himself for the first fruits means that he agreed to pay an annual fee for the pleasure of holding his office, and it seems it had to be paid from the first "kind" of money or whatever other way the tithes were paid to him. He also received the Vicarages of Kilanny and Moybologue, and the Rectory of Inniskeen as well as being made a Canon of Kilmore<sup>28</sup>. Canon Leslie is not given to much personal comment in his books preferring to let the facts speak for themselves but here he adds: "The evils of pluralism were as great in pre-

26 Quoted on Clogher RC Diocesan Website. History Section

27 Diocesan Register of Armagh

28 De Annatis Hiberniae i.45

Reformation times as after." This goes back to our mention of Vicars and Rectors. Not content with taking the income from one parish many clergy became Rectors of a number of parishes again collecting the dues for their own purposes and paying a number of poorer clergy to do the pastoral work. These pluralists were a great evil in the reformed Church of Ireland but were apparently only picking up where the pre-Reformation church left off.

The next mention of Magheross Parish in the old records is for 1541 when we are told that John McGrayn, the Vicar, deceased in this year and Adam (or Odain) M'Abairde was appointed Vicar by the Primate on the 28<sup>th</sup> September<sup>29</sup>. The current ruin in Magheross, as we have noted, was constructed about ten years after this, and though damaged and rebuilt in subsequent times probably looked similar to the way it appears now and probably still displays elements of Vicar McGrayn's efforts.

## The Reformation

Mr. Sutcliffe<sup>30</sup> points out that the current Magheross Church dates from the Reformation period and from a time of political turmoil in the area as the MacMahons, the ruling family, struggled to maintain their authority. 1550, its likely date of building, was nine years after Henry VIII of England had made himself King of Ireland. At this time the newly appointed Archbishop of Armagh, John Kite, a friend of Cardinal Wolsey, complained to Wolsey about the barbarity of both the Gaelic and Anglo-Irish committed to his charge and of the general neglect of church buildings.<sup>31</sup>

It may indeed be more than just neglect. Describing a slightly later period but with pictures that help us understand the background to resistance to the beginnings of 'stone-building' type settlement in the area The Illustrated Dublin Journal, Volume 1, Number 35, May 3, 1862 states the following:

In the days of Queen Elizabeth Ulster was termed, by an Act of Parliament passed for extinguishing the name of O'Neil "the most perilous place in all the isle." For their greater security the O'Nials, with much shrewdness and policy, instead of attempting to strengthen their country with castles, forbade any to be built. And, carrying out this plan of rendering their country untenable to an invader, for want of cover and supplies, they discouraged agriculture, and kept their people to a wandering, pastoral life. Their dwellings are described as having

29 Diocesan Register of Armagh.

30 Sutcliffe, Rev John, Parish History (printed privately)

31 The Course of Irish History. eds. T.W. Moody and F.X.Martin. Mercier Books. Pp. 171 & 172.)



been made of wattles, or boughs of trees, covered with long turves or sods of grass, which they could easily remove and put up as they wandered from place to place in search of pasture, following their vast herds of cattle, with their wives and children, and removing still to fresh lands as they had departed the former. They lived, according to "Spenser's State of Ireland," chiefly on the milk of their cows. The aggregate of families that in one body followed a herd, was called a "creaght." In other parts of Ireland there was much of strictly pastoral life, in many respects similar, which was called "Boolying," in which the owners of cattle and their families passed much of the year in the wilds and mountains with their cows, but, unlike the nomadic population of Ulster, they seem to have had fixed habitations to return to. The evils flowing from this unfixed wandering life of the "Creaghts," must be very evident. It induced, of course, a natural indisposition to submit to positive regulations. The difficulties, however, of abolishing this mode of life were great. The freedom of the woods and wilds has charms which even those who have left civilization to taste of, find it difficult to abandon, and are known often to have preferred to all the luxury of settled life.<sup>32</sup>

We have not been able to establish who laid the foundations and built the old St. Finbarr's. It was certainly during the time of the Reformation but it does not seem to have been built by people who had accepted the Reformation. It seems to have been built either by the MacMahons or by the Abbey of Ardee adjacent to a existing church which may have been a ruin. The threat of Reformation, though still far removed from this area, acted a stimulus to the local churches in many places to revitalise themselves at this period and the building of the old St. Finbarr's may have been the fruit of such a response. It could be evidence of the seeds of what later became the Counter-Reformation. The fact that the MacMahon's burned it in the 1620's for military reasons might suggest it was built by Ardee Abbey.

About forty years after the church was first built the MacMahons abandoned their fortified dwelling (a ringfort at the Lurgans and moved to Lisanisk lake. Livingstone<sup>33</sup> puts this in the context of the MacMahon's cultivating good relations with their English neighbours in the Pale and the administration in Dublin. Ever Mac Con Uladh MacMahon "moved his residence to Lisaniskey where he reared his family according to the English fashion."<sup>34</sup> However,

32 The Illustrated Dublin Journal, Volume 1, Number 35, May 3, 1862

33 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. 1986. P.518

34 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. 1986. P.518



alternatively, Breathnach<sup>35</sup> states that about 1590 all the MacMahon chieftains in Monaghan took to living in crannogs. Crannogs are dwellings on artificially created islands in lakes and the site of a crannog in Lisanisk lake can still be identified. He explains that "the crannog was located at the end of the lake nearest the town and the causeway to it commenced at a point almost directly in front of the lakeside lodge. The foundations of the house discovered and measured in the last century indicating that it was 18 metres long and 13 metres broad." However, it still seems strange that they would have moved to a crannog to "live after the English fashion". Again, while crannogs may have offered reasonable security in ancient times they were hardly much defence in the face of Elizabethan military technology.

The brochure produced by the archaeologists who investigated the proposed route for the N2 Carrickmacross bypass in 2003 puts this move in the context of the new political realities. They recount how County Monaghan was formed in 1585 from the five ancient baronies of Trillick, Dartrey, Monaghan, Cremorne and Farney by the English administration. They state that Farney was leased back to the MacMahon family and in 1590 the MacMahon moved their headquarters to a crannóg on Lisanisk Lough. Around this time the Lisanisk ringfort appears to have been strengthened. The brochure has a fascinating diagram of the crannog as it would have been in the 7<sup>th</sup> century C.E. and shows how the fortifications were strengthened at a later stage by the addition of extensive rings of earth banks and dykes.

However, neither a strongly fortified crannog, or even the best equipped castle, if they had had one, could have shielded the MacMahons and Farney from the violent changes to come. These changes were brought about by a number of factors: a new breed of young English adventurer (with an attitude not much different from his counterpart today flying over to let off steam at a weekend stag party) arriving to try out land he had acquired for two pence an acre (such as Walter Devereux the first Earl of Essex, who never quite got as far as the land he had been granted in Farney), the financial scandals connected with the issuing of debased coinage in Ireland which brought financial ruin to many at the time, the increasing pressure being brought on the Old Irish and the Anglo Irish to conform to English ways, all these led to the Nine Years War which ruined the country and ultimately changed it forever. But perhaps those disasters could have been absorbed if on top of them all had not come religious changes which affected not just the higher echelons of the church but the daily practice of peoples religion. The upper echelons in the Irish church had endured many changes, such changes indeed had been a recurring theme of Irish church life, but these had caused barely a ripple among ordinary church

35 A Heritage Guide to Carrickmacross. P. Breathnach. Tidy Towns. 1996 P.11

people. The Reformation in Ireland was different. In England, Holland and Germany it was seen as the more than welcome throwing off of meddling foreign influence and an opening up of new opportunities to think, to investigate, to explore and to trade. In Ireland it was seen as another intrusion into ordinary life by unwelcome foreigners who had brought little but misery into their lives and the lives of the generations before them. The religious enthusiasts on all sides who would come to vie for the souls of the ordinary people had little interest in the real needs and longings of the powerless. This made the Reformation in Ireland different from the religious changes which had gone before.

With a wonderful talent for turning up marvellous contemporaneous quotes, Ramsey Colos<sup>36</sup> puts it this way:

"With the passing and enforcement of the Act of Supremacy it is not surprising that the religious element became a more significant feature in the life of the people, and gradually grew to be a fruitful source of trouble. The spirit of reform was in the air and under its influence a breeze developed into a hurricane. The Protector was not satisfied to limit to England alone, his activities in regenerating the subjects of the King; he must needs extend the field of his operations to Ireland. In doing so he unwittingly stirred up a nest of hornets".

We quote Colos again:

"In 1551 the bishops were summoned before the Lord Deputy, Sir Anthony St Leger, who had been instructed to hand them the new English liturgy, which, though it professed to be written in a tongue "easily understood of the people" was compiled in a language as strange to the native Irish as was Latin. Stringent orders were issued that the liturgy should supersede the Latin service book in every diocese. The result was an uproar of protest. St. Leger, whose sole object was to ensure, if not peace, the semblance of peace, did what he could to pacify the people. He not only permitted high mass to be said at Christ's Church, in Dublin, but he also attended the service himself. To make a face of conformity he put out proclamations "for the use of the Prayer Book; stating that an English version should be used where English was spoken, and an Irish one where otherwise; but the Irish one was not used."

But St. Leger who a year later was ordered back to London, found compromise, which may have worked in the temporal sphere, had little place in

36 <http://www.lynx2ulster.com/UlsterTimeLine/>

21 <http://www.lynx2ulster.com/UlsterTimeLine/>

the sphere spiritual. Archbishop George Browne, an ex-monk and radical reformer was not prepared to give an inch. St. Leger, tired of controversy, tried to silence him, and irritably said: "Go to, go to, your matters of religion will mar all", and handed him "a little book to read", which the horrified ecclesiastic found to be "so poisoned as he had never seen to maintain the Mass, with transubstantiation and other naughtiness".

St Leger's successor, Lord Deputy Sir James Crofts, seems to have been an equally fair minded man, though of a different outlook, and he also "became impatient at the task allotted to him, and wrote to the Council deploring the action of the busy-bodies. " If the Lords of the Council", said he, "had letten all things alone in the order King Henry left them, and meddled not to alter religion, the hurley-burleys had not happened." (Colos)<sup>37</sup>

But the "hurley-burleys" brought about by enforced religious change did happen and nearly tore the country apart. Sir James Crofts was an astute diplomat who worked desperately for a quiet life for the country he was sent to govern and, no doubt, for himself as well. If he had problems with the Irish they were as nothing compared to those he had with the enthusiastic English Protestant reformers who made their way to Ireland and the even more enthusiastic Scotsman the Pope sent as his appointee to the vacant Archbishopric of Armagh, who brought with him the Jesuits and led an able campaign of opposition to change.

In 1549 Thomas Cranmer and the other scholars he consulted had produced the first Book of Common Prayer. It amounted to an adapting and translating into English of the Monastic "hours" the three hourly services as used by the Benedictines, together with a reconstruction and translation of the Mass according to Reformed principles. In comparison with later editions it involved few changes from the Latin service books. Prayers through Mary, invocation of the saints and prayers for the dead were all included in the first Book of Common Prayer. The major changes were the translation into English and the concept that the bread and wine at communion become the Body and Blood of Christ through the faith of the worshipper rather than through the action of the celebrant. But this book did not make it to Ireland. It was replaced in 1551 by the much more radically Protestant second Book of Common Prayer, which was a hundred years later to be rejected by the English church, for a more middle of the road prayerbook.

But it was the radical book which was the first to make it here and Colos<sup>38</sup>

37 <http://www.lynx2ulster.com/UlsterTimeLine/>

38 <http://www.lynx2ulster.com/UlsterTimeLine/>



recounts its arrival in Ireland:

"The new liturgy was publicly read in Christ's Church, Dublin, in 1551, and in the same year the Primate (Dowdall) consented to hold a conference with the Protestant authorities at St. Mary's Abbey. .... The Primate, who was attended by a large number of his suffragans, appeared as the Defender of the Faith, while Staples, Bishop of Meath, acted as the Protestant champion. Browne, Archbishop of Dublin, was not present, no doubt being notified that his controversial methods were more likely to irritate than to convince his opponents. Sir James Crofts, at whose instigation the meeting was held, followed the proceedings with much interest and was occasionally appealed to on various points. The discussion, as might be expected, led to no modification of views on either side. Dowdall, when Staples asserted that the Church of Rome had erred, indignantly exclaimed: "Erred! the Church erred? Take heed lest you be excommunicated." "I have excommunicated myself from thence already," replied Staples. A conference conducted on such lines served no good end. (As Dowdall himself admitted, it wasted time when two parties so contrary met", and the conference broke up much in the same manner as when Dowdall flung out of the Council chamber on a previous occasion when asked to accept the liturgy, shouting as he went: "Now shall every illiterate fellow read Mass". (Colos)<sup>39</sup>.

Dowdall, the consummate professional cleric, need not have worried too much. Four hundred years later the clerical caste in all traditions maintains its hold. The de-clericalisation of the church was certainly an aim of some the reformers but it remains unfinished business even in the most radical Protestant groups. Another aim of the reformers was to produce a liturgy which could be followed by uneducated people so that they might seek to become better educated. Dowdall was also forgetting that part of the reason for the Reformation were allegations (now being hotly contested) that some pre-Reformation clergy, who had little or no Latin, rhymed off rubbish from pages which were indecipherable to them as they celebrated at the Lord's Table.

All this "hurly-burly" swirled around in the background of the lives of those who worshipped in St. Finbarr's church during its first forty years. Initially it would have had little impact. The MacMahons were secure enough in their control of Farney to ensure that the local clergy and the Latin Mass remained in place but in the end even they could not protect the area from change bearing events which had their origins elsewhere.



## The Ulster rebellion

All this change and especially the overhearing and insensitive attempts to impose the Reformation on a suspicious and alienated people drove the country to armed resistance. Shane O'Neill, though educated with and on familiar terms with members of the English administration, was pushed into open rebellion. The war dragged on for nine years culminating in the Flight of the Earls and the destruction of the old Irish clan system. Magheross and St. Finbarr's did not escape unscathed.

As we have suggested the MacMahons retained a tight grip on Farney, Livingstone<sup>40</sup> says this lasted at least until the death of Ever MacMahon in 1619. But it may have lasted even longer because it was not until late in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century that the English overlords secured any kind of influence in Farney. Officially the Queen had delivered Farney into the hands of the Earls of Essex in May 1576 along with major estates in Antrim. The first Earl, Walter Deveraux died in the September of that year soon after his assault on Antrim to gain the lands granted to him by the Crown there turned first to farce and then to failure - see Colos<sup>41</sup> who gives an entertaining account of this ill-fated adventure. His son Robert then became the second earl and inherited Farney along with the other estates. A favourite of Queen Elizabeth he was appointed Lord Lieutenant and initially fought a long campaign in the mid-lands and south of Ireland. In 1599 he turned north partly to deal with the Earl of Tyrone, a thorn in the side of the Crown, but also to attend to his Farney Estate.

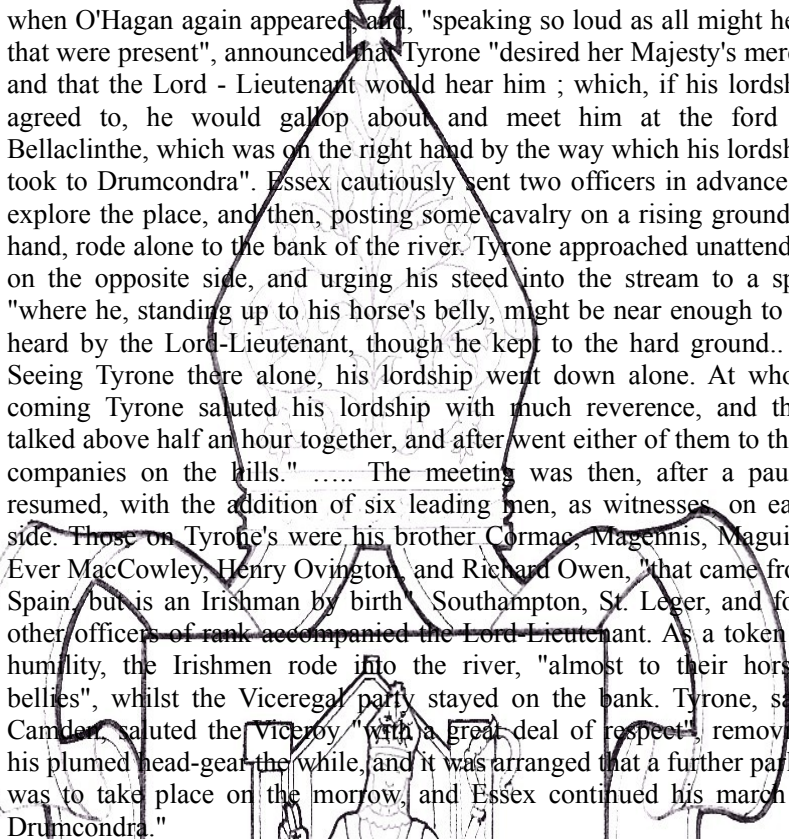
Colos<sup>42</sup> takes up the tale of the weird encounter between Essex and Tyrone just south of Carrickmacross.

"On the 28th August the Lord-Lieutenant left Dublin for Farneys "lakes and fells", which he had inherited under letters patent to his father from the Queen, and by placing a garrison at Donaghmoyne he no doubt hoped to secure his own as well as to annoy Tyrone. Travelling through Navan and Kells, Essex arriving at Castle Keran, mustered an army of 3700 foot and 300 horse, and none too soon, for Tyrone himself was in Farney, with an army nearly 11,000 strong. When Essex arrived at the River Lagan, where it bounds Louth and Monaghan, Tyrone appeared with his forces on the opposite hills. . . . On the day following, Essex offered battle, the offer being ignored, and Tyrone renewed his request for a parley. A garrison was placed at Newrath, and next day the army moved towards Drumcondra. They had marched but a short distance

40 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. 1986 p.518

41 <http://www.lynx2ulster.com/UlsterTimeLine/>

42 <http://www.lynx2ulster.com/UlsterTimeLine/>



when O'Hagan again appeared, and, "speaking so loud as all might hear that were present", announced that Tyrone "desired her Majesty's mercy, and that the Lord - Lieutenant would hear him ; which, if his lordship agreed to, he would gallop about and meet him at the ford of Bellaclinthe, which was on the right hand by the way which his lordship took to Drumcondra". Essex cautiously sent two officers in advance to explore the place, and then, posting some cavalry on a rising ground at hand, rode alone to the bank of the river. Tyrone approached unattended on the opposite side, and urging his steed into the stream to a spot "where he, standing up to his horse's belly, might be near enough to be heard by the Lord-Lieutenant, though he kept to the hard ground. . . . Seeing Tyrone there alone, his lordship went down alone. At whose coming Tyrone saluted his lordship with much reverence, and they talked above half an hour together, and after went either of them to their companies on the hills." ..... The meeting was then, after a pause, resumed, with the addition of six leading men, as witnesses on each side. Those on Tyrone's were his brother Cormac, Magennis, Maguire, Ever MacCowley, Henry Ovington, and Richard Owen, "that came from Spain but is an Irishman by birth" Southampton, St. Leger, and four other officers of rank accompanied the Lord-Lieutenant. As a token of humility, the Irishmen rode into the river, "almost to their horses' bellies", whilst the Viceregal party stayed on the bank. Tyrone, says Camden, saluted the Viceroy "with a great deal of respect", removing his plumed head-gear the while, and it was arranged that a further parley was to take place on the morrow, and Essex continued his march to Drumcondra."

Colos<sup>43</sup> continues:

"Sir Henry Wotton, private secretary to Essex, was chosen to carry on negotiations, and a better could scarcely have been selected. .... It is evident that Tyrone's tone at the meeting was higher and more decisive than is generally supposed, for he demanded that the Catholic religion should be tolerated ; that the principal officers of State and the judges should be natives of Ireland; that he himself, O'Donnell, and the Earl of Desmond (his own creation) should enjoy the lands of their ancestors; and that half the army in Ireland should consist of Irishmen."

Despite the detail recounted by Colos<sup>27</sup> apparently from contemporaneous documents there is a strong local tradition, distrustful of English civil service documentation, that insists all this took place at Essexford on the

43 <http://www.lynx2ulster.com/UlsterTimeLine/>

27 <http://www.lynx2ulster.com/UlsterTimeLine/>

Carrickmacross to Dundalk road. Whatever the exact location soon after this Essex returned to England and, having been charged with treason, died in the Tower of London in 1620 in probably not very pleasant circumstances. Farney was officially "seized by the crown" and on the ground the MacMahons continued to rule as if nothing had happened.

It was during this campaign that Magheross Church was used, for a short time, as a garrison post by the English, being one of the few stone buildings in the area. As a consequence the MacMahons are believed to have burned the church to prevent it being used in this way again. The MacMahon's were obviously walking a tight rope at the time. On the one hand they did not want to attract too much adverse attention from Essex while on the other needing to keep in with Tyrone and the other Irish leaders. The sacrifice of their church building seems to have been enough to keep them in favour with the one and not cause too much disfavour on the other.

In this case history repeated itself because Mr. Sutcliffe records that according to a stone plaque inside the tower the MacMahons also burned Magheross Church down again during the 1641 rebellion to prevent it being used as a defensive position by the English.

During the eighty years from 1541 through to 1622 we have no record of who the clergy were in Magheross though we can be certain they were acceptable to the MacMahons. In 1535 the Pope had appointed Hugh O' Cearbhallain Bishop of Clogher. In 1542 he renounced the authority of the Pope and accepted that of the King. The Pope promptly appointed Raymond MacMahon though O' Cearbhallain remained in possession of the See. Canon Leslie<sup>44</sup> believes MacMahon may have taken possession during the time of Queen Mary but from this time to 1605 there is confusion about to who exactly exercised authority as Bishop. Initially Bishop Cornelius MacArdghail, appointed by the Pope, and the notorious Bishop Miler McGrath, who had been initially appointed by the Pope to Down but was later appointed by Queen Elizabeth to Clogher, vied with each other for power.

The next Bishop, Montgomery, who had been a Chaplain to his fellow Scot, and fellow Gallic speaker, King James I, was appointed by James to Clogher (along with Derry and Raphoe) on June 13<sup>th</sup> 1605. He never seems to have exercised authority in Farney being Bishop of Derry and, from 1610, Bishop of Meath at the same time. In reality he had much more concern for his own estates and interests, so at this stage the Pope's appointee may have exercised the real authority in the diocese.

44 Clergy of Clogher, Leslie, J.B. 2006. p.8



The tensions between the Irish and so-called 'old English' on the one hand and the new settlers on the other at this time are illustrated from the other end of the diocese in a contemporary State Paper:-

Examination of Shane McPhelimy O'Donnelly, taken before me, Sir Toby Caulfield, Knight (22 Oct., 1613).

“Shane McPhelimy O'Donnelly saith that about the end of May last, upon the Sunday, he was at Mass at the glen in Bryan Maguire's country, between the county of Fermanagh and Tyrone, where Tirlagh MacCrudden, a friar there, lately come from beyond the seas, said the Mass, and was preaching the most part of the same day; and in his sermon he declared that he was sent from the Pope, to persuade that they should never alter their religion, but take the Pope to be their true head, and rather go into rebellion than to change their religion; and that the English service proceeded from the seducement of the devil.”<sup>45</sup>

Bishop Montgomery died in 1621 and was succeeded by James Spottiswood, D.D. - a very different character. Canon Leslie puts it this way: “He exercised himself to recover for the See (of Clogher) some of the See lands which had been alienated before his time, and he improved the revenues of the bishopric. This led to some unpleasantness.”<sup>46</sup> This “unpleasantness” involved him being accused of the murder of the High Sheriff of County Fermanagh, of which he was acquitted, but he was obviously not a man to be messed with. In his own “Memoir” he suggests, and subsequent writers have agreed, that he was more sinned against than sinning but he does seem to be the one who began to apply the new order to his diocese. He and his new clergy would see themselves as agents of a new kind of society: town and industry based, law and order based, individualistic and entrepreneurial as compared to the clan based, Brehon Law based, more communal, rural and honour based Irish society. Their religion was one expression of these new values which had emerged through years of struggle in the English Reformation and brought great improvements there but which were largely alien to Ireland.

Some time earlier the townlands of Kilmactrasna, Magheraboy The Glebe of Derryolam, Magheross, Mullanarry formed the ancient Termon of Magheross, granted by King James I to George, (presumably Montgomery) Bishop of Clogher.<sup>47</sup> These would have formed the basis of the income of the Parish, after the Bishop and various 'Impropriators' had had their cut from the income. The

45 An Historical Account Of The Plantation In Ulster At The Commencement Of The Seventeenth Century, 1608-1620. Hill. George (various reprints)

46 Clergy of Clogher, Leslie, J.B. 2006. p.16

47 Summary of Shirley Papers. PRONI (online .pdf)

collection of the tithes (reckoned on the basis of what a tenth part of the income should be in a good year) from the tenants was a source of tension and indeed violence down through the following centuries. The amounts may not have come to much at the time but in later centuries they made the parish one of the wealthiest in the diocese. As an aside it is interesting that King James (the first of England but also the fourth of Scotland) the instigator of this system in Magheross preferred to speak Scots Gallic even after he ascended the English throne. His instructions would have had to be translated into English to be conveyed by his courtiers who would have to have them translated back into Gaelic to be understood by his Irish subjects.

In 1622 a Royal Visitation (according to Leslie) or Archbishop Ussher's visitation (according to Shirley<sup>48</sup>) records that "M'Donnell is Vicar". He is described as "a reformed Irish priest, who is non-resident", and that the value of the Vicarage is £10. The tithes apparently were being shared between St. Mary's Abbey in Louth and St. John's Hospital (in effect another monastery) in Ardee and Ussher records "they take up all ye great tithes & leave ye vicar only ye small." The Church he says is ruinous and there was no house or Glebe. Shirley discovered that in 1634 the living was worth £40 per annum but when the present Glebe called "Derryolim" was granted by the Bishop to the Vicar I have not ascertained". He continues

"It appears by a Terrier in the Registry of the Bishop of Clogher dated Sep. 20, 1771 that the Glebe house of Maghe Ross was built in the year 1695 of lime and stone, and thatched with straw, and in 1726 an addition was made thereto; the Glebe contained 112 acres 38 perches and was considered an old one."

Its not clear exactly who M'Donnell's congregation were, whether they were Irish or English settlers for it was hardly both. Nor do we know where M'Donnell led worship if he led it at all given that he was "non resident". There were probably other "unreformed" priests faithfully continuing to serve but where they did this and what rite they followed we have not found out. In saying he was a "reformed Irish priest" could mean that he had conformed to the new Prayer Book and reformed faith but more likely meant that he was willing to say he was loyal to his Bishop who perhaps had rejected Roman authority (but that was hardly his concern) and that he did everything else exactly the same way that it had been done before – an Irish solution to an Irish problem not of their own making.

In 1621 King James I of England confirmed the third Earl of Essex, who would have been about thirty at the time, in his "ownership" of Farney which was

48 Some Account of Farney. Shirley 1845. P.163

hardly the way Ever MacMahon saw it. Sir Edward Blayney, governor of Monaghan, was keen that Essex would come and take control of Farney. However, it was not until about ten years later that Essex showed any interest. Around 1630 a Castle and surrounding wall were built on top of the hill across the Proules river to the north of Magheross.<sup>49</sup>

Three years later the Third Earl of Essex took up residence in the Castle but did not stay long. Livingstone tells us that the following year he employed a surveyor, Thomas Raven to survey the Farney Estates. As far as Carrickmacross is concerned he reports that along with the Castle there was an Inn which was the only house with a slated roof, windows and chimneys, as well as a dozen or so houses which were thatched cottages with no windows or chimneys. Raven says that there were another dozen cottages along with the ruined church in Magheross. Livingstone states that "Even in the days before the rebellion the Irish population lived in some numbers in the town of Carrickmacross." This would seem to suggest there was some degree of willingness in people to work together at this stage and contrasts with the situation in 1717 many years after this rebellion when "The inhabitants of the town at that time were Protestants, and the Catholics who carried on business there during the day were obliged to lie outside the walls at night"<sup>50</sup>

The advertising blurb for H.A. Jefferies book, "The Irish Church and the Tudor Reformations" summarises this period as follows: "Without indigenous support, Elizabeth's reformation foundered. In the face of the widespread continued attachment to Catholicism and the increasing political alienation from the Elizabethan regime, the established Church found its congregations haemorrhaging until by the early 17th century the Church of Ireland was the custodian of ruined church buildings staffed by a skeleton-crew of mainly British-born pluralists."<sup>51</sup> Yet this begs the question of why a church which was, we would have to agree, such an appalling mess survived at all and what exactly was in the minds of those who served it well and those others who abused it to their own enrichment. How come a church which has such an awful history developed such a very good way of doing theology, while in the years of this development the theology did little to inform and moderate those who were perpetrating the abuses. How come there is on our own day any attraction to the church which is the descendant of this travesty of a church?

Essentially the Reformed church of Elizabeth was an attempt to organise a church which would be recognisably "catholic" in its ministry, sacramental life

49 Livingstone. P. The Monaghan Story. p.518

50 History of Monaghan for 200 years. Rushe. Denis Carolan

51 [www.fourcourtspress.ie](http://www.fourcourtspress.ie)



and devotional practice, and a “Via Media” in its willingness to accept a degree of devotional practice and theological interpretation along a middle way between the extremes of “Catholicism” and “Protestantism”, but which would also be a “national” church with its first loyalty to the nation and its secular “powers that be” as ordained by God, rather than to an “international” church which often had very different political concerns and which, from time to time, could become the victim of its own power and be corrupted by its self perceived unassailable precedence. Looking back on the flux in Elizabethan Church in Ireland from our own perspective in our own days of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century when the relative “authority” of church and state in the Irish Republic is under such scrutiny is truly fascinating. In fact we have never found a satisfactory answer to the key question of Elizabeth’s time. Is the church to be over the state, or subservient to the state, or alongside as a “chaplain” and faithful servant to the state, or utterly opposed to the state. The “models” of church in recent times in Vatican City, Lutheran Germany, Anglican England or Communist Poland mirror all these positions, they grew out of particular situations and we still do not know which is “best”. Perhaps there is good and bad in all of them. Further, in Elizabethan England these questions were being formulated in tandem with the development of the root ideas of the modern “nation state” an entirely new concept at that time.

## Canon Boyle - fact and fiction

The Royal Visitation of 1634 records that Richard Powell had resigned the Vicarage in 1627. Nothing more is recorded about him. His successor Robert Boyle was instituted on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1628 as Vicar of Carrickmagriffin (as it is called in the First Fruits return) and Magheraclooney obviously by the efficient Bishop Spottiswood. Boyle was also appointed as Prebendary (which means he had the right to sit on the Chapter of the Cathedral) of Tullycorbet by faculty (R.V. 1634). The value of the Carrickmacross appointment by then was £40, four times the 1622 figure. Robert Boyle was only later ordained deacon, on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 1628, and was priested on the 27<sup>th</sup> November that year leaving one to wonder about his preparation for ministry, his theological credentials and the quality of his preaching and pastoral care. On the other hand, like most of his background he would have known the Bible intimately, would have practised family and private prayer as a matter of course, using the 1552 Book of Common Prayer as his guide, and would have been well versed in the theological controversies of the time. Although Trinity College in Dublin had been founded in 1592 largely for the education of clergy not everyone had the time or means to enter it. Along with Carrickmacross and Magheraclooney, Aghnamullen was added to his responsibilities in 1629.

In that year he complained to the authorities that he could not get in to Magheracluone or Aughnamullen churches because they had been taken over by the local Roman Catholic people who had set up altars in them. An Order in Council was made that Lord Blayney should remove the altars, no doubt replacing them with the wooden tables favoured by the reformers, and change the locks, giving the new keys to Canon Boyle. This suggests that Canon Boyle had major problems securing places of worship and holding worship in them.

Thirteen years into Canon Boyle's ministry in the area the worst fears of his flock were realised. Livingstone<sup>52</sup> tells us that Colla MacBriain MacMahon, grandson of the Ever who moved to Lisanisk, gathered a group of leaders at the crannog on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1641 to finalise plans for another attempt to drive out the English. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> October they rounded up all the settlers in the town and surrounding countryside, including Canon Boyle and his family, and imprisoned them in the Castle and other houses in the town.

Evelyn P. Shirley<sup>53</sup> quotes the deposition given after the rebellion by Canon Boyle.

“Robert Boyle Clerk, Vicar of Carrickmagherosse deposeth that on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October last past, Owen O'Murphy of Tullescanoe County of Monaghan, Gent: Ross McEaughlin McMahan of the Parish of Magheracluony in the same Gent: and about 30 or 40 more notorious rebels, came in rebellious and tumultuous manner to this deponants house at Derryollom in the same County and violently kicked at the door”.

Shirley also mentions as parishioners of Boyle a Richard Blayney M.P., Robert Branthwait, Essex's agent who was living in the Castle at the time, a Cope family, John Jackson the tailor, Thomas Aldersey the butcher, Thomas Trine a peddler from Scotland and various clerks and civil administrators. Lewis's Survey in 1837 (and others) states that a Mrs Barton and her children were burned in the Castle at this time. “It was leased by the Earl to Mr. Barton, whose wife and children were burnt, with the castle, by the insurgents of 1641, while he was attending his parliamentary duties in Dublin, as representative of the county of Monaghan.” This is quoted by many other authors but seems to be an error and may refer to the Jacobite/Williamite war half a century later.

Hamilton<sup>54</sup> in addition lists many others: Mr. William Williams, Lord Essex's

52 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone 1986. P.519

53 Some Account of Farney. E.P. Shirley. Pickering, London 1845 P.133

54 The Irish Rebellion of 1641 with a History of the events which led up to and succeeded it. Hamilton Ernest. Pub. Murray, London 1920

seneschal, Mr. Gabriel Williams, the brother of the last-named, Mr. Ishell Jones, his brother-in-law, Mr. Hollis, the manager of Mrs. Usher's estate in Farney, Mr. Morris, clerk to Sir Henry Spottiswood, and Thomas Geddes. Thomas Clark, Thomas Osborne, a shepherd, John Morris, Philip Farley, a farmer, Miles Powley, William Wood, George Green, Ralph Seacombe, John Hughes, a labourer, Edward Bell, Edward Crutchley, Robert Ray, Richard Gates, Richard Taylor, a shepherd, John Walmisley, Richard Musgrave, William Musgrave, Henry Wylie, George Harrison and Thomas Young. Hamilton lists those who escaped as Anthony Atkinson, Mr. Branthwaite's servant, who was put into Redmond Burke's house, where Mr. Branthwaite himself had been since October 23, and Mr. Robert Boyle, the Minister of Carrickmacross. He quotes Mrs Montgomery, who also survived, as saying there were one hundred and eight people imprisoned. Most of these were probably Canon Boyle's parishioners at the time.

The following week some prisoners were moved to Monaghan while others were held locally in the Castle, the Inn of Margaret Cesar and some other houses. Initially the prisoners were treated well but on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 1642 after the Irish forces suffered a major defeat in Ardee many of the prisoners were killed.

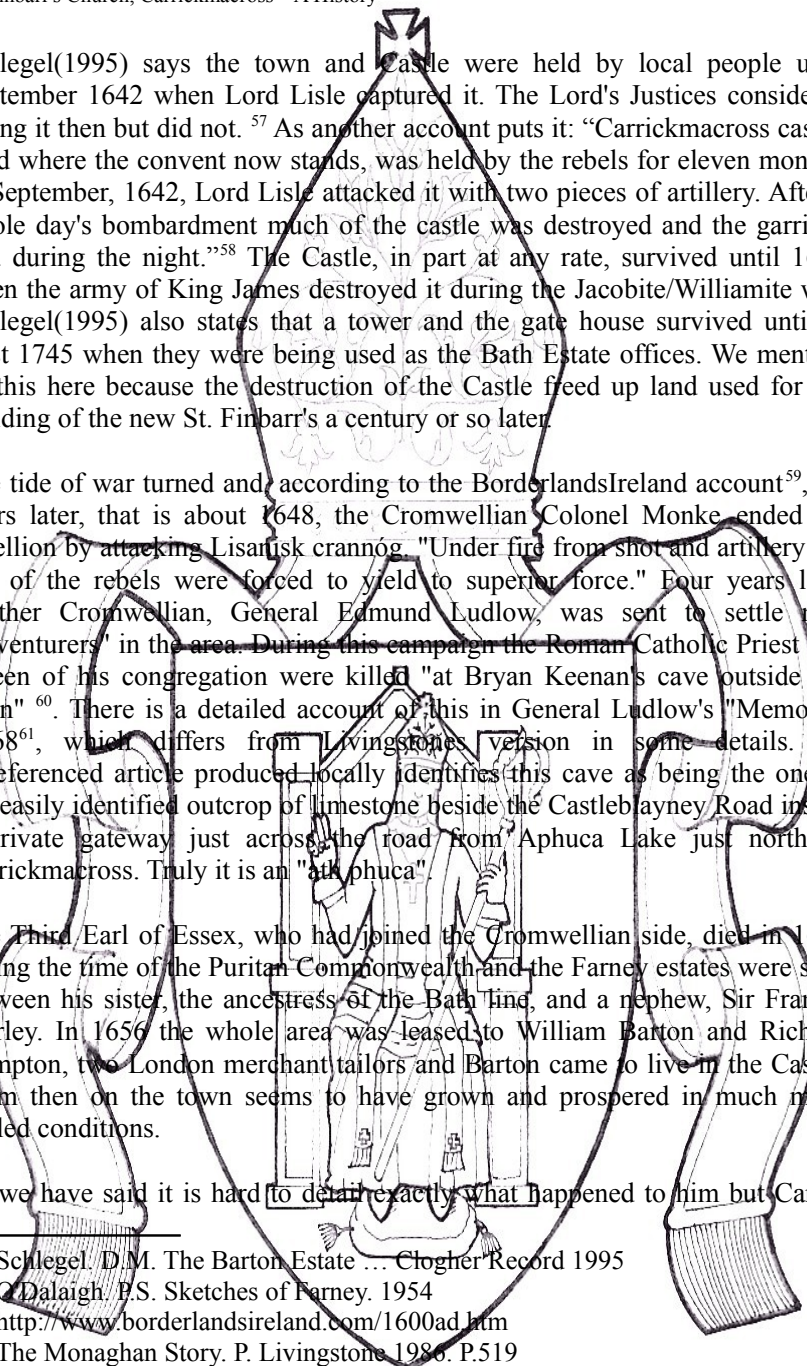
Shirley<sup>55</sup> quotes the deposition of Anthony Atkinson, servant of Branthwaite who escaped in the turmoil. He tells how (on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of January last, being Sunday afternoon) Mr. Boyle, Minister of our town, Mr. Williams ... and myself were in the House of Margaret Cesar conferring at the Fire side about the then present troubles we were in, but having not been there above half an hour, there came a great many about it of the rebels ... wherof entered the room we were in, and upon the first sight drew their weapons, as swords and skeins, offered to stab & wound us" ... "Mr. Boyle was presently taken away and put into his own chamber." ... The account goes on to give gory details of the killings but obviously Canon Boyle escaped though we are not told how this happened.

Livingstone<sup>56</sup> lists a number of Irish people "who had been kind to the settlers in the troubles." Patrick McQuillan, "who occupied Richard Blayney's house after his execution in Monaghan in 1642" the widow Callan, Brian O'Dyffy the constable, William Kelly, Richard Fahy, servant of Branthwaite; Patrick O'Connellly. Perhaps Canon Boyle owed his life to one of these but it also may be that because of his work or his character he may have become a respected member of the community and so was spared.

55 Some Account of Farney. E.P. Shirley Pickering, London 1845

56 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone 1986. P.519





Schlegel(1995) says the town and Castle were held by local people until September 1642 when Lord Lisle captured it. The Lord's Justices considered razing it then but did not.<sup>57</sup> As another account puts it: "Carrickmacross castle, sited where the convent now stands, was held by the rebels for eleven months. In September, 1642, Lord Lisle attacked it with two pieces of artillery. After a whole day's bombardment much of the castle was destroyed and the garrison fled during the night."<sup>58</sup> The Castle, in part at any rate, survived until 1689 when the army of King James destroyed it during the Jacobite/Williamite war. Schlegel(1995) also states that a tower and the gate house survived until at least 1745 when they were being used as the Bath Estate offices. We mention all this here because the destruction of the Castle freed up land used for the building of the new St. Finbarr's a century or so later.

The tide of war turned and according to the BorderlandsIreland account<sup>59</sup>, six years later, that is about 1648, the Cromwellian Colonel Monke ended the rebellion by attacking Lisarusk crannóg. "Under fire from shot and artillery the last of the rebels were forced to yield to superior force." Four years later another Cromwellian, General Edmund Ludlow, was sent to settle new "adventurers" in the area. During this campaign the Roman Catholic Priest and fifteen of his congregation were killed "at Bryan Keenan's cave outside the town"<sup>60</sup>. There is a detailed account of this in General Ludlow's "Memoirs" P.168<sup>61</sup>, which differs from Livingstone's version in some details. An unreferenced article produced locally identifies this cave as being the one in the easily identified outcrop of limestone beside the Castlebayney Road inside a private gateway just across the road from Aphuca Lake just north of Carrickmacross. Truly it is an "Aphuca".

The Third Earl of Essex, who had joined the Cromwellian side, died in 1646 during the time of the Puritan Commonwealth and the Farney estates were split between his sister, the ancestress of the Bath line, and a nephew, Sir Francis Shirley. In 1656 the whole area was leased to William Barton and Richard Hampton, two London merchant tailors and Barton came to live in the Castle. From then on the town seems to have grown and prospered in much more settled conditions.

As we have said it is hard to detail exactly what happened to him but Canon

57 Schlegel, D.M. The Barton Estate ... Clogher Record 1995

58 O'Dalaigh, P.S. Sketches of Farney. 1954

59 <http://www.borderlandsireland.com/1600ad.htm>

60 The Monaghan Story. P. Livingstone. 1986. P.519

61 <http://books.google.ie/book>

Boyle suffered problems from all sides during his lifelong ministry in Magheross. We know that when he was arrested by the rebels in 1641 he was, he claimed, “plundered of property worth £1520” according to a Deposition in Trinity College Dublin<sup>62</sup>. Shirley (1845) quotes the TCD Deposition as stating “the same Rebels rushed in and took away of this deponants goods one fowling piece,, one brass pistol, two Rapier staves, and one pike staff, and at the same time took away a burding piece from a neighbour to whom he had lent it, (and besides) in books £100. In leases lands and debts £400. household stuff £140. Wearing apparell and plate £50. Corne and hay £180. Cattell £350. Building £300. Suma (total) £1520. besides my yearly estate amounting to £200. p<sup>r</sup> an<sup>m</sup>.” £1500 was a considerable sum of money in 1641. The tithes he was entitled to per annum amounted to £40 and from that he was expected to fund various public projects such as caring for abandoned children, draining roads, ordering church buildings and so on as well as providing for himself and the parish.

Mrs Montgomery of Donaghmoine whose husband the Rev James Montgomery was killed in the rebellion claimed only £703. She tells how “when the Rebels were beaten at Ardee by the English Army, they came all to Carrickmacross, and there they killed her husband, and said they would not leave a minister alive in Ireland, because, as they said, the English Army killed all their priests at Ardee.”<sup>63</sup> However, Canon Boyle did survive.

According to the Commonwealth Papers of Ministers of the Gospel, in 1658 or 1659 David Weir was appointed Commonwealth Minister at Carrickmacross at £80 "from the day that his weekly pension ceased." This may mean that he had been a Cromwellian Ironside and had received a pension on being demobilised which he received until he was appointed a Minister.<sup>64</sup> One year later Weir is gone and John Eaton was Minister of the Gospel here on the tithes-let for £40. However we are told that as he had "a great charge of children" he petitioned the Council for Iniskeen and "Donaghmoine" to be added to his responsibilities and this was granted to him on the 31st July of that year.<sup>65</sup> But a few months later on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1660 it was ordered that Robert Boyle should be restored to his livings where he remained until he resigned in 1664. He is listed in an Order which appeared in the Commonwealth Papers.<sup>66</sup> "Money issues out of Tythe," dated the 30<sup>th</sup> September 1660. "Robert Boyle had been Minister

62 Deposition of 1641 in T.C.D.

63 Some Account of Farney. E.F. Shirley. Pickering, London 1845

64 Commonwealth Papers. Min. of the Gospel A/91, p. 102

65 Comonwealth Papers. Seymour's Transcripts, p. 138

66 Commonwealth Papers. Seymour's Transcripts, Vol. a/25

of Carrickmacross, Derriolan and Magheraclaoney before the rebellion, and is to get the bonds given for the tythes of these parishes". Again Boyle was fortunate, many Episcopalian ministers had to flee the country during the Cromwellian period and some lost their lives. The Puritan ministers, Weir, the old soldier, and Eaton, with his "great charge of children" are heard of no more and Boyle comes back to his living exactly five months after Charles II restored the monarch to England. Leslie seems to think Boyle was recognised as a Commonwealth Minister but the reference he gives<sup>67</sup> does not seem to fit with the changed situation in late 1660.

After two years of being a prisoner, or on the run, and five months of uncertainty the future must have looked much brighter for Canon Boyle as he recommenced his ministry in Magheross. He had no Glebe and no usable church in Magheross but he must have been hopeful about sorting out these problems as he began to gather a new congregation. Even more certainty was added when the 1662 Prayer Book, the final (until the recent spate of change) edition of the Book of Common Prayer, was introduced. This was a much more middle of the road book as compared to that of 1551 and found acceptance from those who would have taken the Royalist side during the Commonwealth, as well as with moderate Puritans and even some Calvinists. It was a compromise but also a tool for unity which together with the Authorised Version of the Bible remained the familiar wording of Anglican worship worldwide down to the 1960's.

According to Lewis Topographical Dictionary of Ireland published in 1837 the census taken in 1659 recorded the total population of Monaghan was recorded as 4083 - 3649 Irish and 434 English. This seems an incredibly small number and we have double checked as to whether it refers to the town or the county but, unless Lewis is mistaken the number seems to stand and whether it was because of the years of war and disturbance or because of the culture and native farming methods the county could only sustain a tiny population.

In 1661 we hear of the very first Curate's Assistant to be appointed to assist the Vicar of Magheross. He was also Curate of Magheraclaoney and Aughnamullen. His name was William Harvey who held an M.A. and who went on to be Vicar of Kilbeggan in Meath Diocese.<sup>68</sup>

Total confusion surrounds the use of the term Curate. Strictly speaking the person in charge of a Parish is responsible for the Cure of Souls and so is the Curate. Any assistants there might be should be called 'Curate's Assistant' but

67 Commonwealth. Papers. Seymour's Transcripts, Vol a/25, pp.329,331

68 Leslie, Clogher, P.117



through careless usage, and because the 'Curate' might also be known as Rector, Vicar or Parish Priest the assistants came to be known commonly as the Curate. Its an example of a common phenomenon in the English whereby words come to mean exactly the opposite of what they originally meant! Also it is interesting in the case of Mr. Harvey that he had an M.A. Generally Curates (we will follow careless convention and drop the Assistant bit!) were from poor backgrounds and not that well educated and often stayed in the one parish for virtually all their ministry never being promoted to being Rector. In the case of absentee Rector's the Curate was often paid a small percentage of the tithes, the Rector (who sometimes was not even ordained) pocketing the rest, and were left to live perhaps in lodgings or poor quality housing while doing all the pastoral work of the parish.

The next Curate was the Rev Alexander Sharpe. He arrived in 1664 and, Leslie tells us<sup>69</sup>, was licensed on the 12<sup>th</sup> April that year. While Rectors were 'collated' which resulted in them holding their parishes more or less for life Curates were licensed by the Bishop, sometimes for long sometimes for very short periods, giving them no security at all. Mr. Sharpe had been ordained Deacon the month before he arrived and was made Priest a year later while still in Magheross. He was still Curate in 1666 and while we know nothing else about him we know another Curate, James Colden was licensed for Magheross in 1688. The fact that Sharpe was ordained shortly before he arrived means that Canon Boyle granted him a Title in other words he gave him his first chance to work in a parish and accepted the responsibility of 'training him on the job'. Mr. Sharpe as a Deacon would not have been much use to Canon Boyle for the first year, he could not celebrate Holy Communion, give a blessing, or do many other functions of ministry so Magheross at that stage must have been seen as a suitable training ground for a somewhat raw recruit.

Canon Leslie<sup>70</sup> conjectures that Boyle was the father of the Roger Boyle who became Bishop of Clogher in 1672 and of Richard Boyle who became Bishop of Ferns. He bases this on the fact that Bishop Roger Boyle contributed generously to the rebuilding of St. Finbarr's. Leslie also has information that an old Parish Register of Magheross, which is no longer available to us, tells us that he was buried on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 1665<sup>71</sup>.

Let's pause again this time to indulge in some fiction and to try to picture the kind of person Canon Boyle might have been and the daily experiences he might have had in his early days in Carrickmacross. We imagine a large

69 Leslie, Clogher, P.280

70 Leslie, Clogher, P.40

71 Leslie, Clogher, P.78

broken-down patched-together single-storey house in Derryolam where the Glebe was located from earlier times. We picture a ruddy-faced stoutish character in a brimmed hat and long cloak, breeches and riding boots gathering his family and maybe a servant or two together in the early morning for family prayers and a cup of milk and porridge before attending to his livestock and land. Perhaps he then has to put them all into a cart to drive them along the lane up the hill to the Mullinary mud track that passes for a main road. They pass through Mullinary with its poor hovels on either side of the track to the stone bridge where they turn right into Magheross where they avoid the angry looks of the native Irish who live in the hovels there. They tie up the horse behind the church and when the small congregation has gathered he reads the Morning Prayer Service he is just beginning to be familiar with while the clerk responds using the only other Book of Common Prayer that is available. He wonders again how the clerk survives in such an Irish area knowing that the fees from the burials he oversees are probably an attraction but suspecting that while the clerk is "conforming" in attending Morning Prayer just maybe he also slips off to hear Mass wherever it is being held.

Morning and Evening Prayer at the time meant many different things to different people, and certainly to what they mean to us today. To the state authorities attendance was a measure of conformity or loyalty in the willingness of people to join in the state prayers, the prayers for the King's or Queen's Majesty. To the clergy they were the opportunity to read the Scriptures to those who had never heard them and to convert them by their preaching. To the settlers it was an expression of their community and their identity. To the native Irish it was an insult to their faith and an imposition but the only way, for those who had any money, of avoiding paying fines.

After he has delivered his family and another family who have moved into the area back to the Glebe house he has a quick meal of cheese and bread before saddling up the horse and heading for Evening Prayer in Aughnamullen. Holy Communion is only celebrated at Christmas and Easter and on one or two other Sundays and so he does not need the Table which he knows has disappeared yet again from the church. As he makes his way up the post road to Shantonagh he is on constant look out for the Raparees who are reputed to be lurking in the area and he notes how the drains on the road need attention. If only he could find suitable Church Wardens to organise the Tithes properly so that he could begin to repair the roads and improve the overall quality of life in the area. Perhaps then those who view him with such contempt might begin to see the value of a church which is fully integrated into the life of the community and organises the ordinary people to run their own affairs without the overbearing interference of clerics or clan chiefs. But these idealistic notions with which he

entered Holy Orders seem a world away from the realities of life where the ordinary people long for the return of the old order in which they knew their place, and everyone else's place.

Having arrived in Aughnamullen in the early afternoon he finds the church once more barricaded against him and the few faithful souls who have braved the elements. Having held Evening Prayer in the nearest friendly house he is met by a deputation of local people who have a grievance about the fact that a foundling child had been discovered in a ditch earlier in the day who they believe has been brought from another parish and who they will have to find the wherewithal to maintain. After protracted discussions it is agreed that a local family will take the child and that he will arrange to have sufficient provisions gathered from a levy on the area to help them look after it. One of his more able parishioners agrees to supervise this and, as he is respected by all the families in the area despite his "conforming", everyone goes away happy.

Canon Boyle is a tough man who sees himself leading a pioneering faithful remnant of the "elect" in a "strange land" of people benighted by superstition and fear. He is leading "strangers and pilgrims" in a "naughty world" where the evil one has taken over. The prayers he leads in Morning Prayer with its prayers for the Sovereign and for protection against all enemies are not just against the Spiritual enemies Scripture speaks of but the enemies who might lie in wait along the road home or who will bring in foreign help to overthrow the authority of the Crown to which has given his allegiance and for which he has literally fought on occasion.

And yet despite being a stranger he has many points of contact with the wider community as well as with his active parishioners because he has temporal as well as spiritual responsibilities. He is a cog in the wheel of the civil administration the Crown seeks to apply. Hatred from some, requests for help from others, complaints about infrastructure and community development, his caring for his own sick parishioners and his responsibilities for the orderly burying of all the dead, his supporting the poor especially widows and orphans bring him in daily contact with all creeds and classes. While he knows the unpopularity of the tithes and the near impossibility of trying to collect them he cannot tell people that they do work in England and he cannot know that they were the forerunners of rates and local taxes which were as much for roads ditches, burying the poor, caring for "foundlings", deserted children, as much as for maintaining the parish church and paying the clergy.

The unsolved riddle of Canon Boyle is why he was not killed in 1642 along with so many others in the area. Reformed clergy were specifically targeted in



retaliation for the killing of priests, he was in the very house in which many of the settlers were killed, but he was not harmed. There is no obvious reason why he should have survived unless, as has been suggested, it was to do with his personal standing in the area.

The successful setting up of Select Vestries and appointing of Church Wardens who were basically responsible for collecting the tithes and administering them properly lay some decades in the future. Unless he was of a family that could afford him an annual allowance he had to farm to feed himself and his family. Boyle seems to have been good at this. Boyle's preaching which would have been robust and forthright and rooted in the daily struggle to wrestle a living from an inhospitable land would have been more rooted in the Old Testament than in the New and would have laboured the call from God for them to accept their hard lot as "God's chosen people" required by God to carve out God's kingdom in a land which could be a land of milk and honey though surrounded and harried by the Canaanites, the benighted people of the land. Readings like that from Nehemiah 4 where the Jews build the new Jerusalem "did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other"<sup>72</sup> must have seemed relevant to their situation.

## Enter the Gentry

Boyle's successor in Magheross lasted less than a year in the position. George Maekullo (McCullough) was instituted as Rector of Carrickmacross and Vicar of Aughnamullen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June according to the First Fruits lists. But he resigned from Carrickmacross on being made Rector of Tullycorbet and Aughnamullen in the November of that year. His short entry in Canon Leslie's list is interesting because he is the first cleric associated with Magheross to be called "Rector".

In 1684 we have the first mention in the Diocesan Roll of a family name that has had an intimate involvement in Clogher diocese down to the present. In that year Nicholas Montgomery was instituted as the Vicar of Carrickmacross and Magheracloney on November 5<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> depending on which source we believe. Mr. Montgomery moved here from his previous parish of Muckno (Castleblayney) where he had served for two years. He was married and we know of two sons both of whom became soldiers. Hugh became a Captain of Horse under William III and Robert also served as a Captain in "the Army". Mr. Montgomery is listed as having served as Vicar in Magheracloney until 1687 though he was replaced in Carrickmacross in 1679 by a namesake

72 The Book of Nehemiah 4.17

## Andrew Montgomery.

In the Montgomery Papers it is stated directly that "The Rev. Nicholas Montgomery, ... was appointed Rector of Mucknoe, Co. Monaghan, Oct. 31st 1662, and Vicar of Carrickmacross (or Magheross) and Magheracluone, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> 1664. His son, Rev. Andrew Montgomery, was appointed Vicar of Carrickmacross in Oct. 1679"<sup>73</sup>. However Shirley is, in fact, less clear, he states: ... "It is curious that a Nicholas Montgomery, A.M., a kinsman, no doubt, immediately preceded him in both charges which he had held from the year 1644"<sup>74</sup>.

Having taken over in Carrickmacross in 1679 Andrew Montgomery became Vicar of Magheracluoney in 1687, to which was added Kilanny in 1702. He was the third son of a Nicholas Montgomery of Derrybrusk, in which parish Andrew began his ministry and Shirley surmises that he must be a kinsman of his predecessor in Magheross. He is stated to be "a good preacher, hath wife and children and a good living and stock at Carrickmacross, he is well loved and in great respect."<sup>75</sup>

In another extract from "The Montgomery Papers" we read:

The Rev Andrew Montgomery A.M. was admitted vicar of Maghe Toise, or Carrickmacross, in the year 1680. He rebuilt the Glebe house at Deryolim as appears by a mutilated inscription found there in 1841.

In the interior of the tower of the old Magheross church there is the following inscription engraved on stone with the crests of Barton, Hill, Montgomery and a bishop's mitre: "This Church was ruined in the rebellion of 1641 and rebuilt in the year 1682 at the expense of the Rev. Dr. Roger Boyle of Clogher, William Barton Esq., and Andrew Montgomery Vicar of this parish."

It may be uncertain as to where the "reformed" and "unreformed" Christians of Magheross were worshipping after the destruction of the church in 1641 but after its 1682 rebuild this building remained in use until 1788 when it was very definitely being used by the "reformed" congregation the Irish Catholics, and dissenters, in other words anyone who would not accept the "established" church having been subjected to the various Penal Laws, since 1661. These forced Roman Catholics, for example, to make their own clandestine arrangements for worship at mass rocks and buildings such as the tiny chapel on the Lurgans with priests who were constantly on the move because of the

73 The Montgomery Manuscripts

74 Some Account of Farney Shirley.E.P. 1845. Pp. 163, 164, 171, 172, 173)

75 The Montgomery Manuscripts P.388

persecution. It was not unknown also for Irish people to "conform" to the reformed church which came to be called the Established church or the Church of Ireland, turning up on occasion for Morning Prayer or paying the required fine, while secretly attending Mass and regarding themselves as truly Roman Catholics.

There does not seem to be much direct evidence about what happened in the Parish during the Williamite/Jacobite war known here as "the War of the Two Kings" which led to the Battle of the Boyne. The background to this 'war' is such a tangle and seems to have such little impact on Carrickmacross that we will largely ignore it. During this time you had some 'loyal' settlers siding with the Catholics in support of King James', rightful king but suspected of being really a Catholic, opposed by other settlers supported by 'Dissenters' who favoured William's Protestant credentials or were worried that James might return seized land back to its rightful Irish Catholic owners. The confusion is illustrated by the fact that there are different views as to whether the first skirmish of the 'war' took place in 1688 or 1689. This was the 'Battle of Drumbabagher' which resulted in the killing of the High Sheriff of Monaghan, Major John McKenna, who was a Catholic. In 1688 there is evidence in other parts of Monaghan that the settlers were moving into secure areas<sup>76</sup> and perhaps this happened in Carrickmacross as well. We know that after the Williamite wars two families those of Neil O'Hugh and Patrick Murphey<sup>77</sup> lost their homes in Magheross for supporting the Jacobite cause. Many of those who supported the Williamite side were ultimately not satisfied with the rewards they were given and they began to emigrate to the United States of America especially from among the Presbyterian Dissenters.<sup>78</sup> In Glaslough we know that the Rector the Rev Charles Leslie acted with the Williamites but sympathised with the Jacobites. Mr. Montgomery would have been from a similar social strata as Mr. Leslie and perhaps found himself in a similar situation?

The Williamite wars brought disturbance once again to the town and it was during this time that Essex Castle was destroyed as we have already noted. (The convent of St. Louis now occupies this site)<sup>79</sup>. This seems to be the incident mentioned in Lewis' Survey of 1837 but, we think wrongly attributed to the 1641 rebellion, "the castle of the Earl of Essex was burned by the insurgents, killing the wife and children of Mr. Barton (the Irish Parliamentary representative for County Monaghan) who was attending to his duties in

76 History of Monaghan for 200 years. Rushe. Denis Carolan P.9

77 History of Monaghan for 200 years. Rushe. Denis Carolan P.16

78 History of Monaghan for 200 years. Rushe. Denis Carolan P.36

79 [www.carrickmacross.ie/html/About\\_Carrick/history.asp](http://www.carrickmacross.ie/html/About_Carrick/history.asp)



Dublin.” Shelegel sees no evidence for anyone having been burned in this destruction and says that in fact Barton, who was leasing it from the Bath Estate at the time, had, in fact, handed himself over to the Williamite administration in Dublin because he was afraid he might have been thought to be a Jacobite sympathiser. Lewis also states that the stones from the destroyed castle were used to build the Market House. The Barton name appeared on the stone recording the rebuilding of the Magheross church after the 1641 rebellion and is associated with many estates in the Monaghan area. A William Barton is listed in the Parish Records of Magheross as having been godparent to the son of the Robert Hill whose is also known to have been a parishioner at the time.

The Curate from 1669 to 1674 was Ralph Barlow. He is also listed as being the Rector of Drumsnatt until he died in 1707 and he seems to have held both positions at the same time – so he was a “pluralist”. What is more interesting is that Barlow was 'Attainted' according to “King's Lists” in 1689 which means that he was accused of being a supporter of King William by the Irish Parliament which was called in that year by King James II who had come to Ireland from his exile in France to try and regain his throne.

During Mr. Montgomery's incumbency there were other strange goings on that he may not have been aware of but which would have changed things for him if they had occurred. In a book entitled “Longleat: the Story of an English Country House (London, 1978) by David Burnett he has a reference to Carrickmacross. He tells us that “In 1694 a Polish baron had written to Thomas (Thynne, 1st Viscount Weymouth) asking if he could lease 4,000 acres and the Irish estate town of Carrickmacross in order to settle 200 Protestant families from Silesia. Thomas consented, but the agreement was cancelled when the baron announced his intention to demolish the town and rebuild it in the Polish style”<sup>80</sup> It took nearly nearly four hundred years for Polish people to arrive in Carrickmacross in any great numbers.

Again in Mr. Montgomery's time the Viscount Weymouth school was founded. The PRONI introduction to the Shirley Papers tells us that “Thomas Thynne, 1st Viscount Weymouth was responsible for setting up this free school, in his moiety of the town of Carrickmacross. The Viscount Weymouth Grammar School was to establish a fine reputation, staying in existence until 1956. Under its original deed of trust of 1711 (D3531.1/4 p. 22), Lord Weymouth conveys to ‘... Thomas Dawson of Armagh, Esq.; Marmaduke Coghill of Dublin, LLD.; Francis Lucas of Dublin, Esq.; Robert Cope of Laggall [Loughgall], Co. Armagh, Esq.; Samuel Dopping of Dublin, Esq.; Francis Dobbs of Carrickmacross,

Esq.; and Bryan Osborne alias Morbury of Thomastown, Co. Louth, Esq.;... the school and schoolmaster's house lately built in Carrickmacross; and assigns, for the schoolmaster's support, a rent charge of £70 out of the lands lately occupied by Richard Fitch, Gent. Annexed are statutes (in 18 sections) for the government of the school. The master is to be a University graduate, "well skilled in Humanity, Grammar Learning and Practical Mathematicks who shall... conform to the... Church of Ireland. Children from the barony of Farney are to be taught gratis; others to pay the fees paid in the free schools of Dublin and Drogheda."<sup>81</sup>

Francis Dobbs seems to have been a key player in many of the developments going on around Carrickmacross at the time. On the 12<sup>th</sup> April 1714 he is listed among the "Justices of ye County of Monaghan" to whom were sent copies of "A declaration banning Roman Catholics from carrying arms".

The "Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720-1940"<sup>82</sup> states that the building of the school was in the nature of a commission given to the architect John Curle to convert the old Bishop's residence at Carrickmacross into a school. This raises the question of which Bishop's actually resided in it and for how long. The property obviously belong to the Bath Estate. The 'fighting Bishop' John Leslie, Bishop of Clogher from 1661 to 1671 lived in Glaslough, where he had built Castle Leslie, as did his successor Robert Leslie, who died within a year of his appointment. The next Bishop was Roger Boyle who Canon Leslie's list suggests was son of Robert Boyle, Rector of Carrickmacross. Roger became Bishop in 1672 and died in Clones in 1687. This seems to suggest he lived in Clones towards the end of his time. However, he is the Boyle who gave generously to the rebuilding of St. Finbarr's Church, Magheross in 1682. This could well be because it was his father's old church and within his Diocese, but perhaps also because he was living in the area at that time. However, what is more likely is that it was the Roman Catholic Bishop's residence. When Bishop Boyle died King James II was on the English throne and he transferred all the income and privileges of Clogher to Bishop Patrick Tyrrel, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Clogher. It seems likely that it was he who was living in the building before he was deprived again four years later, in 1691, after the accession of King William. This means that for four years Rector Andrew Montgomery, a Protestant, served in Carrickmacross while his official Bishop, Patrick Tyrrel, a Roman Catholic lived in the same small town. The situation also throws light on why, over the next fifty years or so, there was such paranoia among parishioners of St. Finbarr's about their security.

81 Introduction to the Shirely Papers. PROM 2007 (online .pdf)

82 <http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/1380>

Despite the heavy weight committee set up to run the school and the explicit instructions Lord Weymouth sent his Irish agent for building it - "I intend the school house shall be slated and made a convenient house, which will draw scholars and benefit the town; therefore the timber must be oak."<sup>83</sup> - things did not go smoothly. The PRONI Introduction continues

"But Thomas was an absentee landlord, and ten years elapsed before he discovered that his agent has embezzled the building fund and repaired an existing building. The school was eventually built, and its syllabus,... included "Oratory, Virtue, Surveying [and] Antiquities"... . The stern language of ... [its] ninth statute [enjoined]: "The master shall make diligent enquiry after such as shall break, cut or deface or anywise abuse the desks, forms, walls or windows of this school, and shall always inflict open punishment on all such offenders".

Rector Montgomery provided the chalice for the church which still remains in use. It is six and a half inches high and three and three quarter inches in diameter. It is inscribed: "The Gift of the Reverend Mr. Andrew Mountgomery to the Parish of Maghaross for ye use of ye sick". While the Hallmark is indistinct it is professionally assessed as being from the late seventeenth century.

Mr. Montgomery married a Susanna Dobbs. Their daughter Elizabeth died on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1716 aged 23 which Leslie says is recorded on a tombstone in the graveyard, presumably meaning Magheross. Though in the recent survey done in Magheross there is no stone with that inscription another passage in the Montgomery Papers states: "The area of the old church contains among other sepulchral inscriptions the following: Here lieth the body of Miss Elizabeth Montgomery daughter of Mr. Andrew Montgomery Minister of this parish who departed this life the 9<sup>th</sup> day of June in the twenty-third year of her age and of our Lord 1716.

Another of their daughters married John Forster of Tullaghan, the eldest son of the Rev. John Forster. This would make her a forebear of the Forsters, later Baronets of Coolderry. The Montgomery tombstone at Derrybrusk is thought to be that of the Rev. Andrew.

By this time there were beginning to be enough immigrant Protestant land owning families, who no doubt also had retainers, to create a social network sufficient to create a viable parish system. Like Commonwealth Minister Eaton before them the clergy seemed to have been blessed with "a great charge of

<sup>83</sup> Introduction to the Bath and Brownlow Estate Papers. PRONI 2007 online .pdf



children" but they seem to have had better opportunities to bring them up and marry them off to what they would have perceived to be social equals in their neighbouring areas. At this stage the favoured title for the Rector seems to be Minister rather than Priest, (as would be more typically Anglican) indicating that if they were not Calvinists they were certainly very low church in their outlook. The emphasis was on the Scriptures, on preaching and praying rather than on the Sacraments. The church building would have been very bare, the worship without music or decoration, everything very serious and earnest. The Established church was therefore growing further and further away from the ordinary people. They were developing as a class apart with its own confidence and sense of purpose which had little to do with "the people of the land".

Denis Carolan Rushe<sup>84</sup> has some interesting reflections and quotations relating to the early days of Carrickmacross. He states: "The attempts to colonise the Barony of Farney with English or Scotch planters had failed, and except in the town of Carrickmacross there was no element of the population favourably affected towards the government. The landlords were absentees, and consequently the Raparees had a very friendly people to quarter themselves amongst.

The inhabitants of the town at that time were Protestants, and the Catholics who carried on business there during the day were obliged "to lie outside the walls" at night. The following petition, dated 17th December, 1717, was forwarded to the Government by some inhabitants of Carrickmacross:

To His Grace Charles Duke of Bolton, Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland.

The humble petition of Francis Dobbs and Edward Dixie, Esq., on behalf of themselves and the inhabitants of Carrickmacross  
Sheweth

That there are many proclaimed Tories, Robbers and Rapparees who do infest the above County and parts adjacent and convenient. Many robberies and barbarous murders have been committed to the great damage and sorrow of the country, and are often harboured by the Popish inhabitants near said town, and lately are growing so insolent as to appear publicly in great numbers well armed and mounted. Your Petitioners therefore in order to suppress said robbers and murderers most humbly pray that your Grace will be pleased to order that an active Quartermaster or Sergeant and eight Dragoons be forthwith quartered at Carrickmacross aforesaid, whom your Petitioners with great submission humbly conceive may be conveniently detached from Atherdee, Dundalk or Monaghan, and may be of great service at Carrickmacross,

84 History of Monaghan for 200 Years. 1660-1860" Rushe. Denis Carolan P. 40

especially if orders are given them to obey the Civil Magistrate, and your Petitioners do promise to provide convenient quarters there for that number of Dragoons and that they shall be supplied with other necessaries at moderate rates. And your Petitioners will ever pray Francis Dobbs and Edward Dixie”<sup>85</sup>

In other words: We are living in fear of our lives and we don't trust our neighbours, even though business is remarkably good and we can conduct it on our own terms. Will you provide troops to protect us but allow us to give them their orders and we won't charge you too much for their food and keep! - an illuminating insight into the kind of parishioners the clergy of the time were dealing with and the circumstances in which they lived.

In 1719 or 1720 Thomas Warren became Vicar of Magheross and Magheraclooney on the 19<sup>th</sup> March. Brady<sup>86</sup> states that his father, the Rev Joshua Warren, was Prebendary of Killanully in Cork from 1689 to 1696. Leslie<sup>87</sup> notes that Prebendary Warren is also stated by Brady to have been Vicar of Carrickmacross but he cannot see where he would have fitted in! Mr. Warren's mother, Elinor Lightburne was daughter of the MP for Trim, and his brother Stafford (named after their father) was Rector of Donaghmoyne. Thomas was born in Co. Meath, educated at a Mr. Jones School in Dublin and then proceeded to T.C.D on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1700 aged 16. He gained his BA in 1704, his M.A. in 1707 and Burchaell and Sadler's "Alumni Dublinenses" he entered the Irish Bar in 1709. Leslie doubts this. He was Rector of Tydavnet from 1709-20 during which time he married Frances, daughter of John Bolton, Dean of Derry on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1718. He died on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1740. He had four children and it is interesting to note that his first son, Thomas, was educated by Mr. Folds at his school at Carrickmacross before going to T.C.D..

Mr Warren seems to have taken his brother Stafford on as his curate in 1726 a position he held until 1743. He had been made Rector of Donaghmoyne in 1715 where apparently he stayed until 1751 so his curacy in Carrickmacross was a sideline. However, given that in 1740 the Archbishop of Armagh ordered him to reside in Donaghmoyne "within six months" the bright lights and high society of Carrickmacross must have tempted him away from Donaghmoyne rather too much.<sup>88</sup>

Denis Rushe has a reference to this period:

85 "History of Monaghan for 200 Years. 1660-1860" Rushe. Denis Carolan P.41

86 Brady, Records of Cork iii.,263

87 Leslie, Clogher, P.127

88 Clogher Clerty. Leslie. P 173

"At Carrickmacross, in 1723, on a Coroner's Jury – the only sort of Jury Catholics could serve on, and then only when there were not enough Protestants available – there were six Catholics – viz., Art O'Neill, Edmond Carrolan, James Carrolan, and Randal McDonnell. The handwriting of the four literates is exceedingly good and shows evidence of great care in their schoolmaster's teaching. The signatures of the last three are very neat, and bear a marked contrast to the scribble in which these pages were originally written by their last descendant in Monaghan."<sup>89</sup>

Here we see that in comparison to the chaos of, for example Canon Boyle's time, the courts are working smoothly with Roman Catholics being tolerated, just about, some of whom had been highly educated in the hedge schools which were making their appearance. This was just before the vicious and unfortunate Penal Laws began to be passed and applied against Roman Catholics, Presbyterians and anyone else who did not conform to the Established Church. Beginning in 1726 and lasting through to 1782 they were the product of a desperately insecure administration which saw potential treason and rebellion around every corner.

After Mr. Warren's death the parish remained vacant for about a year. Then on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 1741 Hamlett Obines, was collated to Carrickmacross and Magheraclooney<sup>90</sup>. Collation in ecclesiastical terminology means to be appointed by a Bishop but it involves examination and gathering information about the candidate to be sure his of his suitability. Mr. Obines had entered T.C.D. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1720, aged 18, having been educated by a Mr. Clark, at Lisburn. He was awarded his B.A. in 1724 and M.A. 1727, was ordained Deacon on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1729 and was Priested on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1730 (D.R.) Having been curate in Clogher from 1732-6, and Rector and Vicar of Derrybrusk (the Montgomery's parish) from 1735 to 1736 and Vicar of Dromore from 1736-41 he arrived in Magheracross to take on what by now must have seemed a fairly plum parish. He had quite a short stay here as he died in 1750 aged only forty eight.

In 1750 William Coddington, was collated to the Parish on the 6<sup>th</sup> June (D.R.) He was a Dubliner having been educated by a Mr. Scott, before he entered T.C.D. on June 24<sup>th</sup> 1715, aged 17. A B.A. 1719, and M.A. 1722, followed and he was ordained Deacon on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1723 and was Priested for the Curacy of Clogher in 1726. His career path followed very closely that of his predecessor. He went on to be Vicar of Drumsnatt and Rector of Kilmore 1729-

89 History of Monaghan for 200 Years. 1660-1860" Rushe. Denis Carolan P. 43

90 First Fruits Rolls



41, and Rector and Vicar of Drumore from 1741-50 before coming to Magheross. His first wife was Eliza, daughter of Henry Bellingham, of Castlebellingharn and after her death he married Mary. He died in 1767 and in his Will made on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1767 he asked to be buried beside his late wife Mary. He left the residue of his estate to his son William charging him to pay 10 shillings "to each registered widow of Magheross, Sarah Evans, otherwise Reilly, only excepted." One wonders what it was that the Widow Evans had done to be singled out like this, but more importantly it shows that by now the clergy were developing funds for the well being of their parishioners, in particular those who were in financial difficulties.

## From Gentlemen to Scholars

There followed the twenty seven year ministry of John Campbell who came to Magheross in 1767 or 1768 and vacated it by death on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 1795 (D.R.) His father was a schoolmaster (Leslie uses the term Ladmagister) somewhere in Connaught and John was educated by his father until he entered T.C.D. on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1739 aged 14. He was obviously a bright student because he became a Scholar in 1741. He went on to receive his B.A. in 1743 but there is no record of a Masters degree. The next we hear of him is that he was Curate of Drumachose in 1755, when he went back to Galway to find a wife. He married (M.L. Dec. 2, 1755) Alicia, the second daughter of Robert Mason, of Masonbrook, Co. Galway, as he is then described as of "Newtownlimavady. His son Robert was also ordained and married a local, Sophia, daughter of Adam Noble, of Longfield, Co. Monaghan who was High Sheriff of Monaghan. According to the inscription on a tombstone in Magheross which still exists he died on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1795, aged 68, years and his wife on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 1811 aged 79. A son and daughter are also buried there.

In 1775 the Parish received a gift. Inscribed inside the front cover the first Select Vestry book is declared to be the gift of Thomas Clement, Esq. It is a large leather bound volume with a securing strap and was obviously designed to last for many years. The first meeting listed was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> April 1775. Henry Brickell, of Carrick McRoss, was elected Church Warden and Silvester Ravorty of Aghlile is to be Sidesman. It is recorded that £15 stg. is to be levied of the Parishioners for Edward Higgins for his salary as Clark and a further £15 is to be collected for repairs to the church. The minute is signed off by the Rev. Mr. Campbell, Vicar.

There are annual minutes of Vestry meetings from then on, being what we would now call, the Easter Vestry meeting, but occasionally there are other

meetings, sometimes a postponed Easter Vestry meeting and very rarely one other meeting for some special reason. Generally they make very dry reading simply listing who was elected and what was to be levied for salaries and repairs. This is the way it should be, officially vestry minutes should only record decisions that are made. However, sometimes parishes appointed a chatty secretary who discloses who said what and those who disagreed. While this breaks the rules it makes for much more interesting reading and throws light on what was really going on in the parish. Unfortunately only very rarely, until more recent times when things open up a bit, do the Carrickmacross secretaries trouble themselves to record more than the bare details.

It was during Mr. Campbell's ministry that the present St. Finbarr's Church was built in Carrickmacross.

The first hint of this in the Vestry minute book is found on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April 1782. After William Daniel (Sen.) of Carrickmacross and Owen Marten of Mullaboy were elected Church Wardens it was 'also enacted that the sum of Forty Pounds Sterling be levied of the Parish as a fund for the Purpose of either Rebuilding the Old Church or the building of a new one'. Those who signed this minute were Mr Folds, Curate, William Daniel, Js. Daniell, Jn. Farley, Christo Carroll and John Taylor.

Other sources put the first moves for the building of the new church at an earlier date. In Canon Leslie's book his notes attached to the Carrickmacross list of clergy wrongly state that "the present church was built in 1695 and rebuilt in 1779". He gives no sources for this information. This error is carried over in an article written by the Rev. R. Whitehead in an article written for the local historical journal "Macalla". In the subsequent issue of Macalla there is a most interesting article signed by "L.O.M." in which the author corrects this mistake with great precision. He refers to the Bath Papers preserved at the Bath Estate in Longleat in Wiltshire in England where there is a letter dated 1777 (LOM wrongly dates it as 1977!) from "the Protestant community in Carrickmacross to Lord Viscount Weymouth". The letter describes the allegedly decayed condition of their parish church in Magheross and appeals for assistance in building a new church. They say "That your Lordship's petitioners have been at great expense repairing it from time to time and are apprehensive of its becoming a greater burden upon them. That besides the expense of repairs, and the great appearance of ruin, such is the distance of the said church from the main body of the town of Carrickmacross, at all times inconvenient, that the Congregation cannot well give a proper attendance to Divine Service thereat, but in the midst of a Popish country the Parishioners are obliged to discontinue

such attention to the Worship of God according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of Ireland.”

They tell how the Bishop of Clogher has visited the church and backs their appeal and continue

“That in a rough calculation there are five hundred Protestant parishioners in said parish, tho ready to contribute in their small proportions to so great and laudable undertaking find themselves utterly unable to execute or undertake such a task without the assistance and encouragement of the Great Land Proprietors”. The silver tongued yet sadly importunate petitioners then flatter the absentee Viscount with what people may say about a Carrickmacross enhanced with a worthy Church building. “That your Lordship's petitioners conceive it would be both necessary and ornamental to have the Church rebuilt in said town which is a good Market Town and improved of late into great figure and trade, and the only town now in a very large diocese wanting a church of suitable figure and convenience. May it please your Lordship to take Petitioners present care into your good and charitable consideration and grant them such assistance to the rebuilding the same as to your Lordship shall seem most meet, and Petitioners as in great duty will pray. Signed: John Campbell, Vicar; Thomas Clement, John Folds, Clerk; Robt. Lubson; John Moore; Wm. Daniell; Anthony Fidgan; Jas. Patterson; John M Korlie; Jn Ruxton; Richard Bashford; Robt. Jackson Surveyor of Excise; Henry Brichall; Christopher Richardson.

There is a backing letter from the Bishop dated the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1777. After echoing the points made by the parishioners he adds that “the Vicar has already pulled down the old Glebe House and built a new and substantial one at considerable expense on the premises under my direction and orders.”

The Vestry Minute Book records a meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 1785 when it was agreed that £2:5s:6d be aid for the plan for a new church, unfortunately we are not given the name of the architect to whom this was paid. The following year on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1786 there is a special meeting when it was agreed that “£100 be Cessed on and levied off the several townlands and Inhabitants of said parish towards building said new Church.”

There were then, apparently, various documents sent to and fro referring to a possible new church before matters came to a head. In 1786, nearly ten years after the original approaches, Lord Weymouth subscribed £113-15s -0d towards the building of the new church and on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1787, in a list of new leases being issued to tenants of the Bath Estate, a number of “cabins” are let on temporary leases with the stipulation that they may be repossessed and



demolished "if it is agreed to build a new church". The houses listed are numbers 3 and 4 Carvers Lane, and numbers 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 Bridge Street. In 1788 it is noted on the Rent-roll that numbers 4 and 5 Carvers Lane (in this document referred to as "The English School") and numbers 6 to 12 Bridge Street were levelled "for the new church." However, there was another agenda as well, to widen the road and improve the look of the town. Bridge Street, still at that time only 18ft wide was to be widened to 30ft and slated houses were to be built "indeed there has not anything been thought of that will be a greater improvement to the Town". A further twist was that in 1793 a number of tenants had their rents refunded because in fact their promised houses had not been built and possibly never were.

On page 60 of the Vestry Minute Book we learn that it was proposed that "Henry Burn" is to build the church for £600. Page 61 bears a table giving details of the costs amounting to £532:5s:2d. However on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 1790 not only do we discover that they had learned how to spell Mr Byrne's name properly but that he is giving them trouble. "It is further enacted that Henry Byrne shall and will on or before Tuesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of August next Do complete and finish said church pursuant to his agreement and ..... for the purpose and in default thereof it is enacted that the said Mr Campbell after the said third day of August Do proceed in Law with all convenient speed on the said Henry Byrne."

The style of the church is described by some authorities as 'Planter's Gothic' though other writers deny there is any such style! Its adherents describe the style as "introduced in the early seventeenth century by settlers from England and Scotland who built many parish churches throughout Ireland, a few of which survive unaltered: one of the best examples of which is said to be St. Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry".<sup>91</sup> If any church on this island looks more different to St Columb's it must be St Finbarr's which has a simple, solid, blocky appearance and elsewhere is described as 'squat, solid and austere' in comparison to the complexities of St. Columb's. But style, like beauty is largely in the eye of the beholder. Dr David Lawrence describes it as: "It is a simple nave and tower church with a narrow sanctuary, too small to be termed a chancel, externally square but internally a semi-circular apse."<sup>92</sup>

According to the 1787 leases then the present St. Finbarr's Church in Carrickmacross, as opposed to Magheross, was built beginning in 1788 after the demolition of a row of houses along the present Farney Street and down Bridge Street. Bridge Street was widened considerably, particularly as a

91 [http://travel.viamichelin.com/web/Culture/Ireland/Art\\_and\\_Culture-Architecture](http://travel.viamichelin.com/web/Culture/Ireland/Art_and_Culture-Architecture)

92 Lawrence. Dr David. The Diocese of Clogher Stained-Glass Windows 2009

number of houses intended to built down its east side never were built. Mr. Sutcliffe states that “On the 20th April 1788 plans to build a new church at the cost of £ 600 were approved. Services and meetings were held in the Market House at the other end of the town until the new church was completed.” “On 8th April 1788 it was decided that the roof slates, windows and doors of the old church should be sold.”<sup>93</sup>

Even though the Select Vestry moved the place of worship from Magheross up the hill to the new St. Finbarr's parishioners seem to have continued to bury their dead their. There is evidence for Church of Ireland families also burying in Carrickmaclimm, which is now the Presbyterian Graveyard some miles out in the direction of Shercock, in 'Bully's Acre' at the corner of Clough Valley on the Crossmaglen Road, and a very small number at the new St. Finbarr's. The fact that it seems to have been built on the top of a large rock probably made it unsuitable for further burials.

With increasing prosperity, alarm at the brilliance of Irish soldiers and commanders in the service of European enemies and a diminishing sense of insecurity from 1782 the Penal Laws were beginning to be repealed starting with Education. Four years later Carrickmacross was the first town in Monaghan to build a post-Penal Catholic Church - St. Mary's Church was completed in 1786. The church remained in use until 1866. A new street, consisting of 57 houses, leading from the Main Street to St. Mary's Church was completed in 1791 - first called Dawson Street, the street was later renamed New Street and later still and as it is known today - O'Neill Street.

Mr. Sutcliffe tells us that in May 1790 a meeting was held in the Market House to decide on the allocation of the pews. The pulpit and reading desk were at the east wall, pews were nearly six feet wide and families were to build their own. The size was calculated to facilitate ladies dresses.

Seven years after the new St. Finbarr's was built Mr. Campbell died and the Rev. William Pinching was collated to Carrickmacross on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 1795 (D.R.) He was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge and received an M.A. in 1781. He was Master of Carrickmacross Grammar School from 1787 to 1805 but was ordained Priest by the Bishop of Ossory in March 1795<sup>94</sup> (Oss. S.R.) after which he took up the position of Vicar. Mr. Pinching died in 1825 and was buried at Carrickmacross.

In 1793 it was agreed by the vestry that £50 should be raised for the building

93 Sutcliffe. Rev John, Parish History (printed privately)

94 Diocesan Registry of Ossory

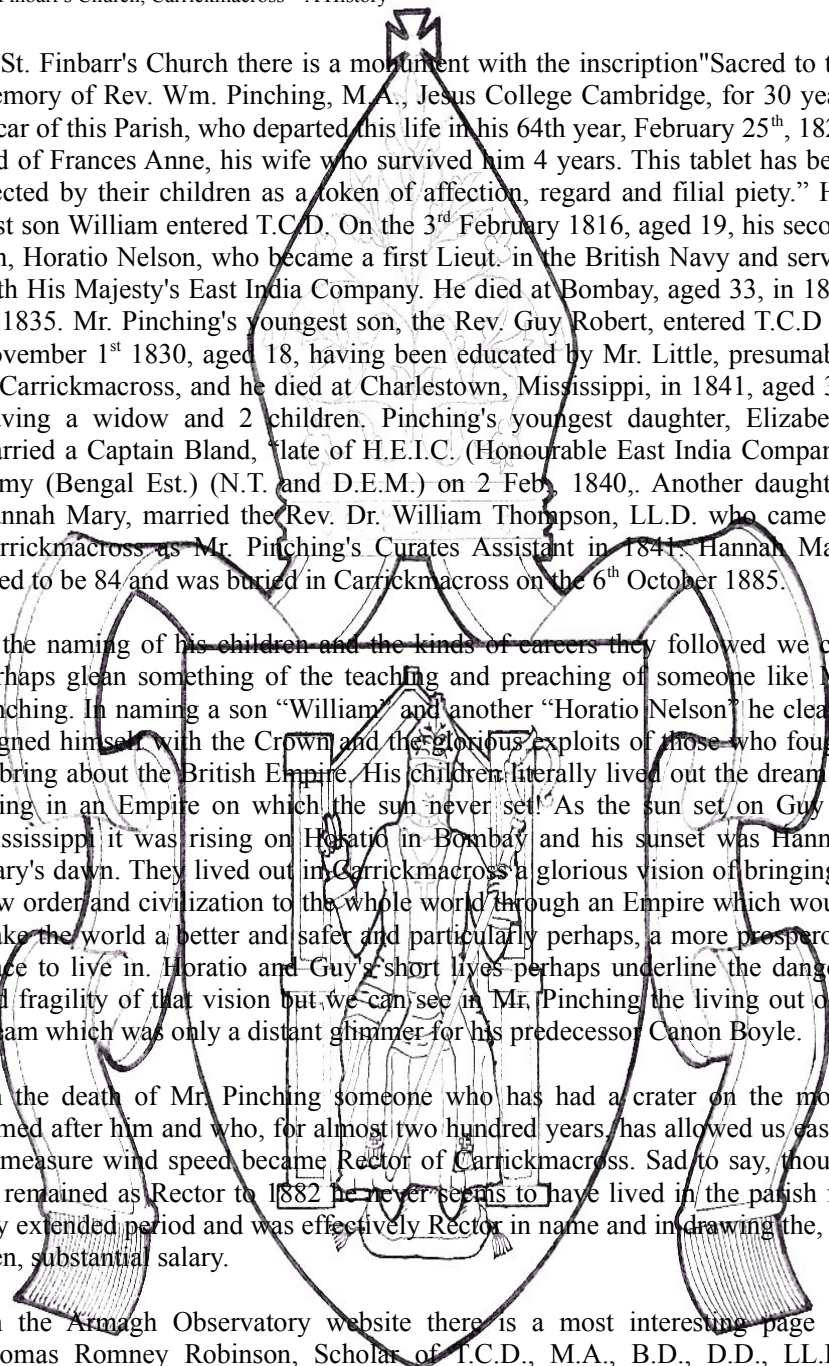
of a spire. For two years there is no further mention of it but in 1795 Mr Pinching is recorded as having been given extra money to get the spire completed. On the 29<sup>th</sup> June 1795 Henry Byrne and William Thompson make a proposal to “erect a spire on the Tower of the Church of Carrickmacross in the following manner – the spire is to be an octagon .... thirty five feet high sheeted with boards and overlaid with copper of six pound sheets, the uprights to be six inches by four mortised into a frame of six inches by ? with strong iron bolts and screws.” The wooden steeple was later replaced by a stone one.

In 1799 it is recorded in the Vestry Minute Book that the gallery is to be repainted, that part of the burial ground wall will have to be taken down and replaced and that a bell and a clock are to be purchased. It is interesting that there is no mention of any problems caused by the 1798 rebellion which features prominently in the vestry minutes of other parishes at the time. This is all the more interesting in the light of the fact that on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1803 there is a rare special meeting at which the topic of discussion is the raising of sufficient money to pay sixteen men for an army to defend “the United Kingdom” which was a very new political reality at the time. The raising of this money was probably in lieu of the vestry being unable to find sixteen suitable men to go and serve in that army. A few months later on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1804 there is another special meeting with an even more urgent tone in which they discuss what the Church Wardens should do for “the best means of providing for the safety of the cattle and other stock in the Parish in case of an invasion”. There was obviously a high state of alert and even panic about a French invasion. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> April of the same year at the regular Vestry meeting things have cooled down somewhat as they are back to discussing the more humdrum matter of the spire and the need to rebuild it. Obviously giving Mr Henry Byrne a second chance in allowing to build the first spire after he had proved dilatory in completing the church had yielded more shoddy workmanship on the tower.

However in 1805 the feverish fear and excitement about invasion had cooled so far that the Parish is being charged with a £20 fine because they have not provided men to join the reserve army.

In 1823 the Vestry Minute for the 31<sup>st</sup> March, the regular annual meeting, gives a short but interesting glimpse into the other responsibilities of the Church Wardens and Vestry in hard times. We are told that “it is also the unanimous opinion of the Parishioners present that the money laid on last Easter for the purpose of providing a stove (for the church?) be applied to the uses of the Parish in purchasing coffins for the Dead and maintaining the children left upon the Parish together with other necessary expenses”.





In St. Finbarr's Church there is a monument with the inscription "Sacred to the memory of Rev. Wm. Pinching, M.A., Jesus College Cambridge, for 30 years Vicar of this Parish, who departed this life in his 64th year, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1825, and of Frances Anne, his wife who survived him 4 years. This tablet has been erected by their children as a token of affection, regard and filial piety." His first son William entered T.C.D. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1816, aged 19, his second son, Horatio Nelson, who became a first Lieut. in the British Navy and served with His Majesty's East India Company. He died at Bombay, aged 33, in 1834 or 1835. Mr. Pinching's youngest son, the Rev. Guy Robert, entered T.C.D. on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1830, aged 18, having been educated by Mr. Little, presumably in Carrickmacross, and he died at Charlestown, Mississippi, in 1841, aged 30, leaving a widow and 2 children. Pinching's youngest daughter, Elizabeth, married a Captain Bland, late of H.E.I.C. (Honourable East India Company) Army (Bengal Est.) (N.T. and D.E.M.) on 2 Feb. 1840. Another daughter, Hannah Mary, married the Rev. Dr. William Thompson, LL.D. who came to Carrickmacross as Mr. Pinching's Curates Assistant in 1841. Hannah Mary lived to be 84 and was buried in Carrickmacross on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1885.

In the naming of his children and the kinds of careers they followed we can perhaps glean something of the teaching and preaching of someone like Mr. Pinching. In naming a son "William" and another "Horatio Nelson" he clearly aligned himself with the Crown and the glorious exploits of those who fought to bring about the British Empire. His children literally lived out the dream of living in an Empire on which the sun never set! As the sun set on Guy in Mississippi it was rising on Horatio in Bombay and his sunset was Hannah Mary's dawn. They lived out in Carrickmacross a glorious vision of bringing a new order and civilization to the whole world through an Empire which would make the world a better and safer and particularly perhaps, a more prosperous place to live in. Horatio and Guy's short lives perhaps underline the dangers and fragility of that vision but we can see in Mr. Pinching the living out of a dream which was only a distant glimmer for his predecessor Canon Boyle.

On the death of Mr. Pinching someone who has had a crater on the moon named after him and who, for almost two hundred years, has allowed us easily to measure wind speed became Rector of Carrickmacross. Sad to say, though he remained as Rector to 1882 he never seems to have lived in the parish for any extended period and was effectively Rector in name and in drawing the, by then, substantial salary.

On the Armagh Observatory website there is a most interesting page on Thomas Romney Robinson, Scholar of T.C.D., M.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D.,

F.R.A.S, F.R.S, etc.etc. absentee Rector and non-complier with the efforts to bring the Church of Ireland through the trauma of disestablishment.

Everything seems to be strange and remarkable about Thomas Romney Robinson. He was the eldest son of Thomas Robinson a Portrait Painter and his wife Ruth (nee Back). He was given the name of Romney after his fathers Art Master. He had a first Christian name of John, which he discarded. By age two it is claimed he was enjoying having the poetry of Wordsworth read to him. He published a respectable enough book of poetry at twelve and while his later publications and notes cover many rows of library shelving they were mainly scientific works relating to astronomy though he was also an accomplished academic theologian.

Robinson was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1792 in Antrim and moved with his family from Dromore to Lisburn and Belfast where he was educated by a Dr. Bruce. He entered T.C.D on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 1806, the year his book of poetry was printed. He was made a scholar in 1808, Bachelor of Arts in 1810, became a Fellow of T.C.D. In 1814, was awarded an M.A. In 1817 and a Bachelor of Divinity in 1822. He received a D.D. In 1825 and an LL.D. In 1863. The Clogher Diocesan Register lists Dr. Robinson as being Precentor on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1821 though he was not a diocesan clergyman at the time. While he was Precentor he appointed Astronomer to the Armagh Observatory which was largely funded by the Archbishop of Armagh. In 1825 he resigned the post of Precentor to be collated to the Parish of Carrickmacross where he arrived on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1826. He remained Rector until his death on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1882 when he was over 90 years of age. He never actually lived in Carrickmacross and is said to have visited it about once a year.

For all his wonderful achievements in the area of science and technology from the Church of Ireland's point of view his half century of involvement with Carrickmacross can hardly be counted beneficial. In other parishes during his time clergy of the Evangelical Revival and, to a lesser extent in Ireland, those of the High Church Oxford Movement were beginning to take the business of preaching the Gospel and tending the church much more seriously. Many parishes began to benefit from this care. At disestablishment, when the Crown Government decided in 1870 to strip the Church of Ireland of most of its assets most of the clergy of the church put the payoff they received, in the case of Carrickmacross this Annuity was declared at £734 16s. 3d, into a central Fund. The plan was that all the annuities together would be invested and administered by a group of Trustees to be known as the Representative Church Body. This was the foundation on which the survival and development of the Church of Ireland has depended ever since. From the R.C.B. Investments the clergy were

to be paid and the financial affairs of the church be arranged. To their great credit virtually all the clergy of the church surrendered their Annuity to the R.C.B. with the exception of Dr. Robinson and a handful of others. To be fair to him he was seventy eight at the time and his main concern was that the Armagh Observatory, of which by then he was the Director, would survive given that the Archbishop of Armagh, its benefactor, had lost most of his income as well. It is quite likely that he used his Annuity to keep the Observatory going but this was not much help to the Church of Ireland or to Carrickmacross Parish.

During Dr. Robinson's absentee incumbency Lewis Topographical Survey, published in 1837 gave a detailed account of Carrickmacross. It states that it is

“a market and post-town, and a parish, in the barony of Farney, county of Monaghan, and province of Ulster, 20 miles (S. E. by S.) from Monaghan town, and 40 (N. W. by N.) from Dublin city; containing 12,610 inhabitants, of which number, 2970 are in the town.”

“This place derives its name from its situation on a rock and from one of its early proprietors, and is the only town in the barony. The barony was granted by Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Essex, who resided in the castle here, part of the walls of which are still standing in the garden of W. Daniel, Esq.”

“The town is situated on the mail coach road from Dublin to Londonderry, and, consists of one principal street, with some smaller streets or lanes branching from it; and contains about 560 houses, many of which are of respectable appearance. A considerable retail trade is carried on with the surrounding country; and soap, candles, brogues, and coarse hats, are manufactured in the town, in which there are also a tan-yard, a brewery (employing 100 men), and a distillery. Distillation was carried on here to a considerable extent before the Union, for 20 years, after which it very much declined; but, in 1825, a large distillery was erected, which makes 200,000 gallons of spirits annually, consuming in the manufacture about 25,000 barrels of grain, including malt, which is made in the town.

“The general market is held on Thursday, and one for corn on Wednesday and Saturday: the number of pigs exposed for sale at the market, during the season, is very great; they are principally purchased by dealers from Dundalk, Newry, and Belfast, for exportation. Fairs are held on May 27th, July 10th, Sept. 27th, Nov. 9th, and Dec. 10th; those in May and December, the latter of which is for fat cattle, are the largest. The market-house stands in the centre of the main street, and was built out of the ruins of the castle. Petty sessions are held every alternate week; and here are a constabulary police station and a county Bridewell on a



small scale, but containing the necessary accommodation for the separation of prisoners.”

“The parish, which is also called Magheross, contains, according to the Ordnance survey, 16,702¼ statute acres, including 299 of water, 15,068 acres are apportioned under the tithe act, and there is a great quantity of bog.”

“The living is a vicarage, in the diocese of Clogher, and in the patronage of the Bishop; the rectory is impropriate in Col. Willcox: the tithes amount to £969. 4s. 7½ d., of which £323. 1s. 6½ d., is payable to the impropriator, and £646. 3s. 1d., to the vicar. The church is a neat stone edifice with a tower and spire, having a good clock with four dials. The remains of the old church are still standing: it was built in 1682, to replace the one that was destroyed by fire in 1641. There is a Glebe-house, with a Glebe of 112 acres.”

“The Roman Catholic parish is co-extensive with that of the Established Church, and is the benefice of the Bishop of Clogher, who resides in the town: there are three chapels, situated at Corduff mountain, Coreareagh, and Carrickmacross, the last of which is a handsome building, erected in 1783. There is also a Presbyterian meeting-house.”

“A free grammar school was founded here by Lord Weymouth in 1711, and endowed with £670 per annum: it has been disused for some years, but the school-house is being rebuilt by the Marquess of Bath a descendant of the founder. (There are) two national schools at Carrickmacross; six schools, situated at Mullaghcroghery, Cornassassinagh, Carrickmaclim, Corraghery, Corduffkelly, and Cargamore, aided by annual donations from E. J. Shirley, Esq; a school supported by subscriptions, and two other schools, in which the pupils are taught gratuitously. About 780 boys and 670 girls are taught in these schools, and about 470 boys and 230 girls in 13 private and hedge schools; there are also three Sunday schools.”

“A dispensary was established in 1823; there is also a mendacity society; and a savings bank was instituted in 1831 by the Marquess of Bath and Mr. Shirley: the amount of deposits, in November, 1835, was £1503. 14s. 3d., belonging to 81 depositors, the number of whom is rapidly increasing.”<sup>95</sup>

While Carrickmacross Parish was subsidising Armagh Observatory, and no doubt benefiting mankind greatly with all the marvellous scientific discoveries made there in the time of Dr. Robinson, other people were getting on with the real work of the church. Dr. Robinson's Curates obviously carried the burden and heat of the day while he employed himself observing the stars on cold

95 Lewis Topographical Survey, 1837.

nights and, as the Armagh Observatory website assures us, Dr. Robinson “was not idle, and hated losing good evenings, as happened several times in 1875 when the gas supply failed because of a blockage in the street main, and the circles of the telescope could not be illuminated.”<sup>96</sup> One wonders if the gas supply in Carrickmacross might have suited him better.

While Mr. Sutcliffe informs us that Dr. Robinson's name appears at least once each year in the Preacher's Book during his time as Rector there were seven hundred and fifty baptisms recorded in the Baptismal Register all of them presided over by his Curates. This is just one measure of the size of the parish and the amount of work that needed to be done.

There is a striking photograph still available taken on what seems to be the occasion of the official opening of St. Patrick's Church, Ardragh. A number of formally suited gents stand in striking poses on the hill between the gate and the church. One of these may be Dr. Robinson who took a great interest, apparently, in the building of the church. There are differing accounts of the origins of St. Patrick's and Church of Ireland involvement in those origins, which we may explore at a later time, but what we do know is that Dr. Robinson asked the architect of Ardragh, William Slater, in 1868, to draw up ambitious plans (given the size of the site) for a complete rebuild of St. Finbarr's including a side aisle and polygonal chancel. These plans are in the possession of the Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland and, while never used, show the confidence and wealth of the parish at the time. They building, while neat, was to be wider and more elaborate with a much finer steeple. The plans, of course, were never used and the kind of confidence they showed was severely dented by the trauma of disestablishment which came a few years later. Despite his infrequent appearances in Carrickmacross Dr Robinson obviously wished his parish to have a church more Gothic than Planter's Gothic.

Dr Robinson seems to have been fortunate in his Curates. Leslie's dates are not always clear but going by the Baptismal Register from February 1836 to March 1841 the Curate was John William Small. He was followed from April 1841 to November 1859 by William Thompson. Next, from March 1860 to July 1869 the Curate was Thomas St. Laurence (or Lawrence) Smith, who is listed as the occupier of Derryolam Glebe in Griffiths Valuation, followed in January 1870 by Richard Galbraith who ultimately succeeded Dr. Robinson.

Mr. Small was the son of a Dublin Lawyer. He was awarded his B.A. By

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.arm.ac.uk/history/moore/Part02.html>

T.C.D. In 1827 and an M.A. in 1832. Leslie<sup>97</sup> does not record where he went after he left Carrickmacross but his daughter Anne Honoria was baptised by him on November 30<sup>th</sup> 1840, his address given as Derryolam Glebe, which means he was living in the Rectory, and maybe he felt it was time to move on to a parish of his own.

The Rev Dr. William Thompson was born in Co. Antrim and entered T.C.D. on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1825, aged 16. He gained his B.A. In 1831, an LL.B. in 1856 and an LL.D. in 1857 making him a surprisingly well qualified Curate and indicating the financial strength of the parish of the time. It's been a long time since a Rector, not to mind a Curate of Carrickmacross had more earning power than a lawyer. But then, perhaps it was not the money he was interested in. His second wife, Hannah Mary, was the daughter of Rector Pinching who as we have seen died in 1885 aged 84.

The large grave which stands alone between the steps and the Convent School wall at the church entrance is the Thompson family grave. The stone mentions that William is the curate of the parish and records his wife Eliza's death. She was his first wife and after her death he married Mr Pinching's daughter. On the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1885 Hannah is recorded as having been buried in the grave aged 84. Dr Thompson was buried here in 1859.

There is a window in Carrickmacross Church in Dr. Thompson's memory which tells us that he died on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1859 having been Curate of the Parish for eighteen years. He was buried on the 11<sup>th</sup> November by the Rev J.F. McCormick the Curate of Donaghmoine and there is no record in the church registers of Dr. Robinson having attended the funeral. In a strange turn of fate Mr McCormick's memorial was brought from Donaghmoine Church when it was closed and is now on the Convent wall opposite St. Finbarr's Church side door.

During this time "the town was heavily affected by the Great Famine and the population dropped from 2,711 in 1841 to 1,779 in 1891. This period saw the construction of the Workhouse and Fever Hospital on the Shercock Road"<sup>98</sup> The Rev. James Mulligan, a Roman Catholic Priest, gives a description of Carrickmacross in 1845. He writes: "The small farmers live on potatoes and milk. It is considered that he is a very fortunate man if he has milk for his family. He sells his butter and never uses oatmeal in his house. It is thus obvious that oatmeal plays a quite secondary role in the household economy of the poorer classes, and that the primary meal consists of potatoes." The failure

97 Leslie, Clogher, P.128

98 Draft Carrickmacross Town Development Plan 2006 – 2012 P.226



of the potato crop was all the more devastating because of this.

About this time changes in worship and a greater acceptance of music, colour, light and movement were beginning in the Church of Ireland. Up to this time, for example, stained glass windows were frowned on as coming near to, if not actually, breaking the second commandment. The representation of figures, and in particular representations of Jesus and most certainly representations of God were not approved of. Some people would say that this was a consequence of a strong Puritan strand within the Church of Ireland but in the mid 1800's this was beginning to weaken and a desire to brighten up churches and worship began to grow. Dr Robinson would have been well aware of the Oxford Movement and the Gothic Revival which combined at a practical level with new technologies and the industrial revolution to fuel these changes.

In Carrickmacross evidence of this comes in the 1860's when two stained glass windows were ordered from James Powell & Sons of London. They are two matching windows mid-way down the church. The south side centre left lancet is Christ the Good Shepherd, on the right side of the window The Good Samaritan. On the north side of the church left opening is Christ the Sower and on the right side Christ blessing children.

In 1847 a Charles Winston rediscovered an ancient method of making coloured glass and when he published his research his ideas were picked up with great enthusiasm by the Powell's. Carrickmacross might have been a long way from London but the Powell windows in St. Finbarr's are among their earliest work showing, perhaps, how aware Dr Robinson was of such new breakthroughs. We can imagine the excitement of parishioners knowing that they were involved in benefiting from the cutting edge of new technology.

Dr David Lawrence who surveyed the windows in recent times is not as enthusiastic about them as Dr Robinson must have been. We quote:

“There are two interesting early Powell's windows at the church dedicated to St. Fin barre in the centre of the busy town of Carrickmacross. ... The fenestration suggests a date not much earlier than 1840. ...

“The two windows date from 1860, which was a time of uncertainty and change at Powell's. Although the fruits of Winston's research had been around for thirteen years, Powell's lacked stained glass designers equal to the challenge of exploiting the exciting possibilities that this new glass had opened up. ...

“The Carrickmacross windows are a world apart from Burne-Jones designs which had driven Ruskin ”wild with joy”. There is much use of

machine-pressed glass for the rather heavy ornamental panels above and below the central medallion scenes and the colours are plain and primary – red, blue and white.<sup>99</sup>

Lawrence's belief that the current windows were put in after the 1840's fits in well with various improvements being made to the building at the time and in particular the building of the Vestry room. Joseph Welland was a Belfast Architect who was undertaking some major projects at that time. St. Thomas's church on the Lisburn Road in Belfast, a very distinctive and distinguished building is his work. Again, no doubt, Dr. Robinson would have been well aware of his capabilities and Welland designed the vestry room which was added in 1854 with his trademark of a shouldered arch doorway.

It also seems that the church organ was acquired about this time. As the church moved away from the puritan plainness and simplicity of its 18<sup>th</sup> century founding fathers towards the more fussy and decorative (and catholic) clutter of the Victorians music, singing and organ came to be acceptable. The St. Finbarr's organ has a plate indicating that it was built by 'Henry Willis London'. Henry Willis was born in 1821 in London. He died on the 11th February 1901, He was an organ player and builder, who is regarded as the foremost organ builder of the Victorian era. The Wikipedia website tells us that Willis was the son of a North London builder, and he learned to play the organ with some help from Attwood, the St Paul's organist. In 1835 Willis was articled to organ builder John Gray for seven years. During this time he invented the manual and pedal couplers which he used throughout his later career. He also became organist of Christ Church Hoxton, which was the first of a series of organist posts; later at Hampstead Parish Church, and for nearly thirty years at the Chapel-of-Ease, Islington. He was renowned for always arranging his business trips so he could return by Sunday to play for service. Following his apprenticeship he worked for three years in Cheltenham, assisting an instrument maker W E Evans, who specialised in free reed instruments. Willis later attributed his personal skill in reed voicing to this experience. Willis met Samuel Wesley at Cheltenham, and this led to the re-building of the Gloucester Cathedral organ in 1847. Willis had become an independent organ builder and commented; "It was my stepping stone to fame...I received £400 for the job, and was presumptuous enough to marry".<sup>100</sup>

Again Dr. Robinson seems to have been behind this and was aware of the best quality workmanship available at the time. We have not worked out the exact date of the Carrickmacross Organ but it would seem to be amongst his earliest

99 Lawrence. Dr David. The Diocese of Clogher Stained-Glass Windows 2009

100 Interview with the Musical Times 1898 (as quoted on Wikipedia)

instruments. Later in his career Father Willis was a leader of the movement which added all sorts of 'interesting' sounding stops to organs which could make them sound like anything from a full orchestra to a brass band. One fees he would have thoroughly approved of the modern electronic organs which by using 'sampled' noises can sound like anything from a baby crying to a helicopter flying. Those who favoured the pure organ sound of the old German organs regarded such additions as decadent and corrupting. The relatively simple instrument in St. Finbarr's could hardly be labelled with either of these tags.

A notable local member of the Church of Ireland, though not of the parish was buried in Bully's Acre in 1863. The Wikipedia website tells us: Patrick Byrne, or Padraig Dall Ó Beirn, who was born blind c.1784 in the parish of Magheracluone. After the Belfast Harp Festival of 1792 various attempts were made to revive the playing of the Irish harp.

“An Irish Harp Society was established in the city and a harp school for young blind boys set up. Patrick was enrolled as a pupil in the harp school in 1820. The Belfast Society records him as graduating in 1821 “having acquired 'considerable proficiency on the instrument (60 tunes)” “He then moved to London playing in various houses of the nobility and in 1829 was presented with a silver medal by the Shakespearian Club of Stratford on Avon in recognition of his abilities. From 1837 to 1845 he was based in Scotland where he played before Queen Victoria and received a warrant as Irish Harper to Prince Albert. “Byrne returned to Ireland in 1846/47 and was employed by the Shirley family as their harper. He is recorded in several contemporary newspaper articles as being a celebrated and accomplished musician. “He died in Dundalk on 8 April 1863 and is buried in Carrickmacross. Patrick Byrne’s final resting place - in what is now known locally as ‘bully’s acre’ - is marked by a slate altar-tomb. The old style of playing the Irish harp – a tradition stretching back over a thousand – also died out with Patrick Byrne, “the last of the great Irish harpers”<sup>101</sup>

Dr. Thompson's successor as Curate was the Rev T. S. L. Smith M.A. Having served as Curate for ten years he died on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 1869 aged 38 years according to a tombstone just behind the Vestry Room in St. Finbarr's Churchyard. He was followed into the Curacy by the Rev Richard Gabraith. It's interesting that the tombstone refers to him as 'Clergyman of this parish' which seems to indicate that the fact that he was only Curate did not take away from the perception that he was their 'Clergyman'.

101 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick\\_Byrne\\_\(musician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Byrne_(musician))



## New Beginnings - Disestablishment

The excellent Dublin Diocesan Website include a page entitled “ A Brief History Disestablishment (1871) - Modern Times”. It gives this summary:

“With the growth of democratic feeling in the mid to late nineteenth century the anomalous position of the Church of Ireland as the established state church in an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country came increasingly into focus. The Tithe war (1831-6) highlighted the resentment of Roman Catholics and others at the injustice of being obliged to pay tithes to support a church of which they were not members. Inevitably, the church moved towards disestablishment, which took place on 1 January 1871, and ended both state support for the Church of Ireland and parliamentary authority over it. The Church of Ireland therefore became responsible for its own governance, led by the General Synod, with its financial management carried out by a Representative Church Body. With disestablishment, the last remnant of tithes were abolished and the church's representation in the House of Lords at Westminster also ceased.”<sup>102</sup>

The Wikipedia entry on the Church of Ireland gives this background:

“When Ireland was incorporated in 1801 into the new United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Church of Ireland was also united with the Church of England to form the United Church of England and Ireland. At the same time, one archbishop and three bishops from Ireland (selected by rotation) were given seats in the House of Lords at Westminster, joining the two archbishops and twenty-four bishops from the Church of England. In 1833, the British Government proposed the Irish Church Measure to reduce the 23 archbishops and bishops who oversaw the Anglican minority in Ireland to a total of 12 by amalgamating sees and using the revenues saved for the use of parishes. This sparked the Oxford Movement, which was to have wide repercussions for the Anglican Communion.

“As the official established church, the Church of Ireland was funded partially by tithes imposed on all Irish subjects of the Crown. Irrespective of the fact that the adherents of the church were never more than a small minority of the populace, the population at large was expected to pay for its upkeep. Following the defeat of Catholic arms in 1691, no armed resistance was to be expected to this discriminatory policy. Nevertheless, peasant resentment of the tithes occasionally boiled over, as in the "Tithe War" of 1831/36. Eventually, the tithes were ended,

<sup>102</sup> [http://dublin.anglican.org/dioceses/a\\_brief\\_history\\_disestablishment\\_1871\\_modern\\_times.php](http://dublin.anglican.org/dioceses/a_brief_history_disestablishment_1871_modern_times.php)

replaced with a lower levy called the tithe rentcharge. The last remnant of the tithes was not abolished until disestablishment in 1871.

“The Irish Church Act 1869 (which took effect in 1871) finally ended the role of the Church of Ireland as state church. This terminated both state support and parliament's role in its governance, but also took into government ownership much church property. At the establishment of the state Church, no compensation was given to Catholic clergy by the state who suffered loss by the seizure of Church property; at its disestablishment, compensation was provided to clergy by the state. On both occasions, parishes faced great difficulty in local financing after the loss of rent-generating lands and buildings. The Church of Ireland made provision in 1870 for its own government, led by a General Synod, and with financial management by a Representative Church Body.<sup>103</sup>

One result of disestablishment was the setting up of new diocesan and parochial structures based on a democratic parliamentary model. At the parish level the basic layer of organisation was the General Vestry list. This list was first made in Carrickmacross in 1870 and seventeen names are listed. James Ambersley, J.F. Collins, James Cromie, John Gardner, Isaac Clasby, John Hurst, John Leviston, James Lang, Sarnuel Lewis, James MacDonald, Clement Nelson, Henry Reburn, James Reburn, Thomas Shaw, Alexander White, Henry Witherington, Thomas Woods are listed as having signed up in 1870 though others soon joined them. In a way these are the founding fathers of the newly organised, post-disestablishment parish. The Reading Desk in the church is the gift of the Witherington family in more recent times.

As mentioned in the quotation above Church of Ireland clergy were offered a generous lump sum by the state at the time of disestablishment. The majority of the clergy did not keep this money for themselves but selflessly put it into a fund the capital of which was to provide the interest from which the clergy would be paid in the future. This formed the basis of the funds later administered by the RCB, the Representative Church Body, and was the financial foundation which allowed the Church to survive. There is a reference to Dr Robinson under the Report of the Commissioners of Church Temporalities in Ireland under Schedule 2 List of Archbishops, Bishops and Incumbents commuted up to 31 December, 1874, Entry No. 9 "Carrickmacross or Magheross Dr Thomas Romney Robinson, the Observatory, Armagh." "Net Value of Living of Commutant: £734 16s 3d Amount of Commutation agreed on (including 12 % bonus) £3,390 19s." However there is no reference to Dr Robinson having put this considerable sum into the capital fund. As was stated

<sup>103</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church\\_of\\_Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Ireland)

by my source for this: 'It would appear that due to being of advanced years, Dr Robinson retained his Annuity arising from the Commutation.' Dr Robinson was thus one of the very few clergy who kept the money for himself (as was his right to do) rather than offering it for the greater good of the church. It is sad to have to admit that there were clergy like this in the Church at this crucial time but Dr Robinson's final actions in this matter were in line with his treatment of the parish over a fifty year period.

Canon Cecil Mills points out that over a period of years the writer Brendan MacWilliams, in his regular column in the 'Irish Times' newspaper mentioned Dr. Robinson on a number of occasions referring to scientific experiments he had conducted in Carrickmacross. This would seem to mitigate against the contention that Dr. Robinson was largely an absentee Rector. However, given the fact that he did not occupy the Rectory, as far as we can find, that he rarely signed the Preachers Books and virtually never appears in the Baptism or Burial registers does seem to point to a lack of regular involvement, even if he was very much involved in the bigger developments which took place elsewhere.

After Dr. Robinson's death in 1882 his last Curate, the Rev. Richard Galbraith was instituted to the Parish on the 8<sup>th</sup> May. We notice that he was "Instituted" rather than collated, in other words he was the first Rector to be appointed to the Parish after disestablishment and the introduction of the new democratic systems introduced with the setting up of the R.C.B. for the running of the church. Instead of being "collated" by the Bishop, the Bishop from now on had to share the process with clergy from the diocese and laity from the diocese and the parish. A democratically elected "Board of Nominators" made up of these elected clergy and laity nominated their choice to the Bishop who had the final say but not the first choice in the appointment.

After the disastrous disinterest of people like Robinson chosen by Bishops from among their cronies or for political or financial gain the people of the parish and the diocese could now claim to have a say in the appointing of their leaders. The contrasting background, style of ministry and interests of Dr. Robinson and his successor could hardly have illustrated the out come of these changes more clearly.

Mr. Galbraith was a product of Trinity College, Dublin as was Dr. Robinson. He achieved his B.A. (with a Junior Moderatorship in Maths which means that he was a top class scholar), and gained his Divinity Testemonium in 1856. This was a professional qualification in theology which was newly introduced to make sure that all clergy had a high standard of education in Theology. Prior to



this Bishop's could theoretically collate anyone to a parish even someone with no theological education whatsoever. Mr. Galbraith gained his M.A. in 1869. He had been ordained a deacon in 1856 and was priested in 1857 while serving as a Curates Assistant in Cork. From Cork he went as a Church Missionary Society Missionary to India and became the Principal of the Robert Mooney Institute, at Bombay from 1858 to 1865.

Mr. Galbraith then returned to Ireland and was made Curate's Assistant of Ballymoyer in Armagh Diocese from which he moved to Drumachose before becoming Curate's Assistant of Carrickmacross in 1869. On the death of Dr. Robinson in 1882 he was elected Rector but things obviously did not work out. He resigned on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 1883 and became a Missionary in Northern Texas where he remained until 1893.

We do not know the reason for Mr. Galbraith's departure but generally speaking it is not easy for a Curate's Assistant to become Rector of the same parish. Peoples attitudes to an Assistant and a Rector are different and the leadership a Rector has to show is very different from the way an Assistant must fit in with a higher authority. As well as this at the time the Church of Ireland was settling down to the new democratic arrangements with nominators, Diocesan Synods, more powerful Select Vestries and so on and it was not easy for everyone to adapt to these changes. But perhaps Mr. Galbraith's departure was for other reasons. It has been observed that once people go away to serve as missionaries they find it very hard to settle back into the tedium of ordinary parish life. Someone has commented that returning missionaries often seem to be burned out or dissatisfied with the relative lack of challenge in their home churches. Whatever the reason it must have seemed like a sever set-back that a parish like Carrickmacross, which probably regarded itself as a very important parish at the time, would find the Rector, whom they had had a big part in choosing, leaving them after such a short time.

However, there may have been another reason "The Summary of the Shirley Papers"<sup>104</sup> recounts

"Conservative and landlord interests made efforts to ensure that Protestants (that is Church of Ireland, as distinct from Presbyterians and Roman Catholic) did not join the Land League. A newspaper report, dated 3 January (1887), told of a meeting of parishioners called by Rev. P. (sic) Galbraith, Church of Ireland clergyman of Carrickmacross. He read a letter which he had sent to local Land Leaguers, objecting to their rules and objectives. This received the approval of all at the meeting."

If this Rev P. Galbraith is in fact the Rev. Richard Galbraith then he obviously had very strong political opinions and was not afraid to influence his parishioners towards his way of thinking which would hardly have made him very acceptable to the rest of the community. He was attempting to swim against a very strong current of political change which made itself very clear in a by-election in 1833 and subsequent elections which went totally against the landlords and their supporters. Whatever the reason it was something significant which must have made the Texas of the 1880's look more attractive than Co. Monaghan.

Mr. Galbraith was also something of a pamphleteer and protagonist on behalf of the Church of Ireland. His works may not fill as many shelves as those of his predecessor and his interests were somewhat narrower but in 1876 he published a Pamphlet "An Antidote to Plymouth Brethren" and also "Blow the Trumpet" another pamphlet against "The Brethren." Mr. Galbraith obviously had the Brethren movement firmly in his sights. It had formed as a low-church break away from the Church of Ireland and appealed to a particular strand of devotion within the church, at times enticing away quite a few members.

Writing in the Parish Report of 1912 the then Rector, Canon Moffett, wrote "On Ascension Day, May 16<sup>th</sup> at Kerrville, Texas, U.S.A., my predecessor Rev. Richard Galbraith, passed to his rest. Even after the lapse of 29 years there are many of all classes in this place who hold his name in affectionate remembrance. That he won a similar place in the hearts of the men of his adopted country will appear from a few sentences which I transcribe from the local paper of Kerrville "No man could have exemplified the duties of the Christian religion better than he. He did not talk his religion, he lived it, and so his life became a power for good. After all this is what counts ... The light of his beautiful life shone as the light shines naturally and noiselessly. He did not sound his trumpet before him as the hypocrites do. There are things he did and gifts he made that no one but God knows about.""

Leaving aside the journalists slight misquotation of Scripture and the implication that Mr. Galbraith had left his trumpet behind him in Ireland, Mr. Galbraith seems to have had a better relationship with the wider community in Texas than he had in Carrickmacross.

After Mr. Galbraith's sudden departure in 1883 the Rev. Benjamin Moffett was instituted to the parish on the 20<sup>th</sup> June.<sup>105</sup> He was son of a John Moffett of Merville in Sligo and he was educated in T.C.D. He was made a Scholar of the

house in 1864 and was awarded his B.A. (with a Senior Moderatorship in Classics) in 1865. He was a teacher, for a time in Portora School in Enniskillen and then as Headmaster of Foyle College, although he was ordained during this time. He was instituted as Rector of Carrickmacross in 1883 and served here until 1914. As well as being Rector he was also made the Chancellor of the diocese in 1904. He never married and died at the Glebe House at Derryolam in Carrickmacross on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1914, aged 69. He was interested in local history and published "A List of the Pupils of Visct. Weymouth's Grammar School, who entered T.C.D. from 1706-1909, with Notes, &c." published by Tempest Press in Dundalk in 1911.

Canon Moffett presented the current graveyard known as God's Acre to the parish as by that stage there was little space left for new graves in Magheross Churchyard. Canon Moffett had apparently bought some land at Drummond Otra in a beautiful, if rather steeply sloped location overlooking Lisanisk Lake. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1892 part of this land, to be known as God's Acre, was conveyed to the Trustees of the Church of Ireland, the R.C.B., and was consecrated as a burial ground by the Bishop of Clogher on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 1894.

In his annual report to the Parish from the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1894 Chancellor Moffett writes

"I venture to repeat here a suggestion which I made a short time ago in the Church – that the Graveyard be known among us as God's Acre. This old fashioned, but now uncommon, name will at once distinguish the place from other burial grounds in the neighbourhood and also serve as a perpetual reminder to us that the departed members of the Body of Christ are still one with us in the Communion of Saints and that their bodies, no less than their souls, are in the hands of God 'till the Day break and the shadows flee away.'"

The Moravian Church, with which the Church of Ireland is now in full communion has always called their graveyard's 'Gottes Acker' or God's Acre. Originally from what would now be the Czech Republic Moravians had separated from the Roman Catholic Church in the late 1300's, long before the Reformation, and survived despite severe persecution. There are no other graveyards called God's Acre as far as we can ascertain outside Moravia and other places where Moravian missionaries worked and we still do not know why Canon Moffett saw it as 'uncommon' but 'old fashioned'.

In contrast to Dr. Robinson Canon Moffett seems to have been an incredibly diligent pastor. During his time the parish produced an annual report in which



he wrote long commentaries on the life of the parish. We have a bound copy of the 1884-1898 reports and the 1912 and 1913 editions to hand still. There is enough material for another book in analysing Canon Moffett's views on church and political life. In this report, along with financial reports and other matters, he lists the round of worship. There was an 8.30am Holy Communion service every Sunday and Holy Day. Morning Prayer was read every morning at 9.30am and on every Sunday at 11.30am. It was followed on the second and fourth Sunday's by Holy Communion. There was Evening Prayer every day at 5.30pm and on Sundays at 7pm. The Litany was read every Wednesday night at 8pm and was followed by a Lecture. There was Sunday School every Sunday at 10.15am and regular Bible classes and he kept a Library from which parishioners could borrow books every Saturday from noon to 1pm. Spiritual Counsel was offered after every service and by appointment.

The 1912 Parish report which he dated June 21<sup>st</sup> tells us that there were two hundred and seventeen church members “including a few accustomed worshippers from neighbouring parishes and some members of other communions who are at present practically identified with us” He states there were 53 communicants at Christmas and 54 at Easter and an average of five on other days - figures not very different from those of 2016. Some people are obviously opposing his celebrating Holy Communion so often, as he points out “These figures ought to be noted by those who doubt the advantage of increased opportunities for approaching the Holy Communion. In the year ending April 1884, when the celebrations were little more than monthly and when we had a larger population the average was 16.”

In this report he encourages parishioners to more generous financial support and complains about new a new Insurance Act which is going to increase costs. He commends the men of the Men's Society who visit the old and infirm, collect money for the School and the Missions, distribute the Parish Magazine and managed “a Rifle Class, which for some weeks in the winter served a good purpose among the young fellows of the town!” In comparison our Table Tennis club of today looks very tame.

The 1912 Report also mentions that major work had to be done on lopping the very tall trees which stood alongside the Church. The work was very expensive and in the process a workman was injured almost fatally, though it is noted that has since returned to work.

The next year's report tells of how numbers of worshippers are increasing but income is dropping complaining that “it is simply a dishonourable position for any one to avail himself of religious ministrations to which he contributes

nothing.” In that year they are discussing getting a new clock because the old one has not worked for many years and the Bishop and local opinion are constantly 'remonstrating' about it. He gloomily expects it will cost over £100 and they will have to have a special Sale of Work to raise the money. He holds forth for three pages of the Report about the importance of Baptism and the fact that the average delay between birth and Baptism in the parish is 41 days. The reason given for delay he says is the time it takes for women to recover after childbirth, but bachelor that he is, he cannot understand this quoting a missionary to the Inuit at Hudson Bay in Canada where mothers think nothing of carrying babies 150 miles on their backs to have them baptised. He seems to reckon Christians in Carrickmacross have it too soft.

Despite the somewhat school-masterly nagging tone of his Reports a successor, the Rev Richard Whitehead, speaks of Canon Moffett as being universally loved by his own parishioners and the wider community. Canon Cecil Mills remembers that part of our scripture in Magheross School and the diocesan scripture examination each year, was 'Moffett's Catechism' a question and answer little book that the Canon had produced. He writes that he still remember some of the answers! Perhaps the Catechism was written on the same desk on which these words are being word-processed. It is a magnificent roll-top desk that Canon Moffett bequeathed, along with so much else, to the parish.

After Canon Moffett's death in 1914 the Rev. Thomas Stewart Watson was instituted to the parish in March. (D.R.) Again a student of T.C.D. he gained his B.A. (with a Junior Moderatorship in History and Political Science) in 1886. He was awarded a Divinity Testimonium in 1887 and was ordained Deacon in 1887 by the Bishop of Kilmore to serve as Curate's Assistant in Boho in Clogher. He was Priested in 1888 and served as Rector of Clogh from 1891 to 1903. After a spell in Clontarf he came to Carrickmacross. During his time Inniskeen and Kilanny parishes was joined to Carrickmacross in 1923. He became Prebendary of Donacavey in July, 1927 though this was combined with his continuing as Rector of Carrickmacross. Canon Watson and his wife Annie had five daughters and a son. Their eldest daughter, Kathleen married Joseph Witherington of Annaeroft on the 11<sup>th</sup> August 1926. Joseph and Kathleen lived at Belle Vue Carrickmacross but sadly she was dead within a year being buried in God's Acre on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 1927 by Canon Maurice Stack.

Canon Watson's second daughter Edith married the Rector of Kilshannig in Cloyne, the Rev. Frederick Charles Hill. This is now part of the Mallow Union of Parishes and it was part of Rector Kingston's responsibilities before he came to Carrickmacross. His daughter Nora married a James Hanna from Holywood

Co. Down and she had a son Desmond who was ordained and was Rector of Dromore Co. Down. Another son Henry joined the Malaysian Colonial Service and died as a Japanese Prisoner of War. Another daughter, Hester Adelaide gained a B.A. From T.C.D. and was the Headmistress of Rochelle School in Cork, dying in retirement in 1976 in Delgany Co. Wicklow. Canon Mills has very helpfully commented on the rather confusing entries in Leslie's list. He mentions that another daughter, Nannie Jane, born 3rd August 1905, became Matron of the Church of Ireland Divinity Hostel when the Rev Michael Ferrer was 'Warden'. She held this position into Canon John Brown's time as Warden in the 1960's. Nan had reared the child of her sister, Kathleen Witherington, who had become a vet and lived in New Zealand.

Canon Mills recollection is that Canon Watson's daughter Nora was married to Denis O'Dea Hanna, well known as a church architect. Mr Hanna designed the present baptistery in St. Finbarr's in memory of the Wells family. These were connected with the firm of solicitors in the town which is now known as "Wells O'Carroll". Before that, the font was in the middle of the aisle (where Canon Mills was baptised by Canon Whitehead, with Canon Stack, then living in retirement, also present). The Watsons, Canon Mills believes, had two sons, the first, Benjamin, killed in the First World War, while, as we have noted, the other, Henry died in the Second.

Canon Watson's burial entry in the Carrickmacross Burial Book records "The Rev Thomas Watson, Vicar of Carrickmacross was buried October 26<sup>th</sup> 1937, aged 76 years." His wife Annie had died a year previously but her burial is not recorded in Carrickmacross. A newspaper report on his funeral is pasted in one of the Parish Registers. It tells us:

"The attendance at the funeral of the Rev. Canon T.S. Watson, Carrickmacross, Rector in that Parish for almost a quarter of a century was representative of the professional, commercial and public life of the town and the surrounding districts. There were sympathisers from distant parts and the clergy of the Diocese in Graduate robes, walking in a body, led the immense cortege. The remains were borne on the shoulders of residents.

"Canon Watson had completed his 50<sup>th</sup> year in the ministry of the Church of Ireland. He was President of Carrick and District Old Age Pensioners Committee, a member of the District Jubilee Nursing Association and secretary for 30 years of County Monaghan Protestant Orphans' Association,

"The Bishop of Clogher, the Right Rev. Dr. J. MacManaway, DD performed the Last Service assisted by the Rev. Canon Stack (Magheraclone) and Professor O'Connor (Magheraclone).



The report then goes on to list the members of his family and other close mourners, followed by a list of the clergy of the Diocese who attended, followed by a paragraph listing the 'general public' who attended including Major Shirley and the Right Rev. Monseigneur McKeown, P.P., H.R. Meacock the Headmaster of the Grammar School, the staff and pupils of the Grammar.

The Rev. Thomas Henry Roysse had been the last full curate in Carrickmacross between 1881 and 1883 and was not replaced. However, in 1923 Lucas William Henry Dickson who had been ordained in the Church of England was made headmaster of the Weymouth Grammar School and assisted Canon Watson as part-time curate until he moved to Durham in 1926.

The Rev George William Allen Howard who came to Carrickmacross as Rector in 1937 was a native of Cookstown and was educated at St. Catherine's College in Cambridge which he entered in 1909. He was made Deacon in 1912 in Armagh and Priested in 1914. Having served various curacies and having been a Chaplain during the First World War he was Rector of Donagh before coming to Carrickmacross, Inniskeen and Killanny in 1937. He retired only three years later in 1940 and died on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 1941 aged only 59 years.

Mr. Howard was followed by the Rev. Richard Whitehead who was Rector here from 1940 to 1959. He was born in 1884 in Roscrea, Co. Tipperary and served in the First World War with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He was injured and invalided out of the Army in 1917. Three years later he was made Deacon and in 1922 was ordained Priest. He started his ministry as Curate's Assistant in Clones and served in eight parishes as Curate or Rector before coming to Carrickmacross in 1940. St. Patrick's Church in Donaghmoynne was added to Carrickmacross in 1953. Mr. Whitehead remained until his retirement in 1959 having been made Prebendary of Devenish in 1958. After retirement he lived in Dublin and died on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1965. His wife Mona died in Dublin in 1978. In Canon Cecil Mills recollection Inniskeen was closed and de-consecrated during Canon Whitehead's time though the 'Clergy of Clogher' dates this as having happened in 1970.

We pass quickly over the more recent clergy. The Rev R. Bertram Livingstone was Rector from 1959 to 1963. During his time Magheraclone and Ardragh were added in 1961. He was followed by the Rev William Butler Heney 1963 to 1973 who retired in recent years having become the Archdeacon of Kildare. Canon James Jackson Stevenson served here from 1973 to 1984. During his time Donaghmoynne and Killanny were closed and de-consecrated in 1976.

The Incumbency of the parish remained vacant from 1984 to 1987 and because of the decline in the number of parishioners it seemed unlikely that the Parish would again be in a financial condition to support a full time minister. The Rev Henry Hubert Boyland was made Bishop's Curate in 1987 and under his care by 1990 matters had improved to the point where he was made Rector. He remained as Rector until his retirement in 1993. He was followed by the Rev John Leslie Sutcliffe who was in Carrickmacross from 1994 to 2001 and who in turn was succeeded by the Rev David Cole, Rector from 2001 until his retirement in 2006. The current Rector is the Rev Robert George Kingston who was instituted to the Parish in April 2007.

## The Present Building

Viewed from the main square of Carrickmacross St Finbarr's Church sits at its southern end in an elevated position. Behind the church the ground falls away steeply to the Proules River and the Convent, on the site of the Castle, sits on the slope.

There is a heavy decorative fence to the north and high stone and lime mortar wall elsewhere surrounding the grounds around the church. As it was built on rock there is little space for graves and the few that exist are necessarily shallow. There are headstones belonging to Canon William Thompson's (or Thomson) family, to the Rev. Lawrence Smith, to a thirteen year child named Barbara Murant, to a Mrs Fanny Clarke and an elaborate monument to a J. Evatt, just to the west of the Tower. There is also a memorial tablet commemorating him inside the church. He was a land agent to one of the estates during the 1800's.

Despite the changes made in the late 1800's the building is still of a very simple shape, the only external embellishment being the semi-circular chancel and the square tower. This is topped by an elegant stone steeple with a little decoration at the top, but no cross. On the top level of the tower there are four matching clock faces. The original clock workings are gone and have been replaced by an electronic movement which is controlled from a central location in Dublin. This controls the timing, co-ordinates the four faces and peals the bell on the hour and at service times on a Sunday. The new movement was presented in 1995 by the family of Benjamin Howell who had wound and maintained the previous movement for over forty years. Mr Howell had a watch-making and jewellery business on the Main Street for many years and his sons Ray and John followed him into the business.

The roof of the church was re-slatted in 1989 by the generosity of the family of

John Richard Townshend and was dedicated on the 8<sup>th</sup> October in that year by the Bishop of Clogher. John Tonwshe[n]d is buried in God's Acre Graveyard where there is a headstone to his memory.

In 1854 the Vestry Room, to the south east of the church, was added by the eminent Belfast architect Joseph Welland. It was built in a very confined space which limits its usefulness but it features a shouldered doorway which was this architect's signature and an elegant chimney for the underground piped-water heating system installed at that time. A few years before, in 1845, Welland is believed to have produced unsigned drawings for a Gallery which seems to have been constructed at that time, but which, of course, was later demolished.

Entrance to the church is through one of the two doors at the base of the tower (which were donated, along with the re-slating, by Mrs May Townshend in memory of her husband John Richard Townshend in 1989) or the door of the Vestry Room which is in memory of Mr Frank Cooper. Between the entry in the tower base there is a swinging set of doors over which there is a War memorial. This commemorates Richard Bell, Thomas Howell, Henry Reburn and Benjamin Watson (son of Canon T.S. Watson?) who were killed in the First World War and Mary Cooper and Harry Watson, (brother of Benjamin?) who did in WW II.

The alignment of the church is unusual, (instead of the chancel being to the east and the nave running east to west, as is more usual, the chancel is to the south and the nave runs south to the main door at the north end. This was probably to do with the shape of the original site and the difficult ground, though possibly also to give the church a commanding position and aspect at the head of the town market square. The acoustic of the interior is surprisingly good, aided perhaps by the semi-circular chancel which acts as a reflector for the sound.

The fine roof timbers are uncovered providing an interesting overhead design and a cold draughty atmosphere, now alleviated by the excellent under-seat heating. The roof timbers are in a modified "Queenpost" design. The main feature of this design is the two vertical uprights which which added strength to the rook and allow for a greater span than the single upright "Kingpost" design. In this church the main cross beam has extensions which sit on supporting stones in the walls giving a greater sense of height in what is actually quite a low building. There could be another book written to explain the intricacies in the design of these roof timbers, but we just note that if these timbers are original, or even if this is the original design, it is closely matched by similar building in North America at about the same time as this church was built in



the 1780's.<sup>106</sup>

There is no choir as such, though there are some pews, opposite the reading desk, which are set at right angles to those in the main body of the church. These have served as choir pews in the past. The original box pews were replaced by bench pews in the mid 1800's and are placed on raised platforms which run the full length of each side and across the front. The floor of the chancel is raised by another two steps providing kneeling room at the Communion rail which runs across the mouth of the chancel. The pulpit is at the south east corner, just inside the door to the Vestry room and the Organ, built, as noted in more detail elsewhere, according to its name plate by Henry Willis of London is on the opposite side to the pulpit. It is a small instrument with one manual and pedals and with six sets of stops. It was gift from General Porter and, according to notes that were provided at the rededication service of the organ on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September 1955, it was first erected in the West Gallery by Messrs. Telford & Telford of Dublin between September 1861 and April 1862. In 1897 the gallery was taken down and in May the following year the organ was re-erected in its present position. At that time the instrument was cleaned and the pallets re-leathered. In October 1917 the Feeders were re-leathered and in June 1928 the organ was cleaned, rewired and tuning slides were fitted onto the metal pipes. During the war years of 1939 to 1945 the instrument was neglected and between July 11<sup>th</sup> and August 16<sup>th</sup> 1955 renovation was carried out on the instrument by Messrs R. E. Meates & Son, Ltd., of Dublin.

The service leaflet goes on to say that no tonal changes were made except for a slight loudening of the Bourdon and the bass Open Diapason pipes. One new pipe was provided for the treble of the fifteenth; all the pallets were re-leathered, new ivories were provided for the manual and the pedal-board was re-levelled. In addition to the cleaning and renovation of the organ an electric blower was installed, the gift of Mr W. J. Kenny.

The organ has tracker action and a flat and non-radiating pedal-board. The seven draw-stop knobs are placed horizontally above the manual. The writer comments that:

“The general effect of the organ was always pleasing, but the recent overhaul and regulation has enhanced the beautiful tone quality of each individual stop as well as the ensemble. The church has a very small reverberation period which makes “full organ” extremely precise and brilliantly clear. The renovation of the organ was carried out at a cost of £130, and the parishioners of Carrickmacross can be justly

<sup>106</sup> Analysis and Drawings Shed Light on Trusses. Robert Foley, Becket, Mass. 2006

proud of a fine instrument which is completely adequate for all the demands of Sunday and Special Services”

We have tried without success to get further information about the mysterious origins of this organ.

**ORGAN SPECIFICATIONS**

Manual compass: CC-F	54 Notes
Pedal compass: CCC-F	30 Notes

**GREAT ORGAN**

1. Stopped Diapason	Wood	8ft
2. Open Diapason	Metal	8ft
3. Dulciana (Bass derived)	Metal	8ft
4. Harmonic Flute	Metal	8ft
5. Fifteenth	Metal	2ft

**PEDAL ORGAN**

6. Bourdon	Wood	16ft
7. Great to Pedal		

2 combination pedals  
Total number of pipes: 288

Canon Mills recalls: “I remember very well the remaking of the organ in 1955. Trevor Whitehead, the Rector’s youngest son, now deceased, gave a recital. He was a seriously good organist with a gold medal from the Dublin Feis.”

The tablets on the walls are to various clergy as mentioned earlier and agents of the large Estates in the area. One tablet to a Mrs Henry, at one time the primary teacher in Donaghmoyne, was brought into St. Finbarr’s when Donaghmoyne church was closed.

Dr David Lawrence<sup>107</sup> believes that the present window frames were placed in the older openings in the 1840’s. Four of the windows have simple coloured patterns in glass and three have depictions of various Bible scenes. The middle window on the east has two panels, one of the Good Shepherd, the other of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. He believes this was made by the James Powell and Sons studio of London in 1860. This window and the one opposite it were presented in memory of the Rev. Dr. William Thompson LLD “18 years Curate of this Parish”. The further window on the east is signed by the Harry Clarke Studios of Dublin in 1937. Again there are two panels depicting the Feeding of the Five Thousand. He does not believe this was actually made by Clarke himself. To quote:

107 Lawrence. Dr David. The Diocese of Clogher Stained-Glass Windows 2009

In 1930, six months before his death, Harry Clarke set up Clarke Studios and it continued operating until 1973. Although the intention was that it would continue in the Clarke tradition, the firm's work seldom had the originality or inspiration of the artist from whom it took its name. An example of the firm's work can be seen at Carrickmacross: it is colourful but formulaic.”

He might also have added that it is spoiled by being made with a heavy, rather dark glass and having been placed being on the northern side of the church in the shade of the large Convent School building. This window was presented by the family of the Rev. Canon Thomas Stewart Watson, B.A. in memory of him and his wife Anna Clarke Watson.

On the opposite side of the church there is another illustrative window in the centre depicting the Sower and Christ blessing children. This window is typically sentimental Victorian in its impact being also of Powell design and manufacture.

Over the centuries various items of silver have been presented to the church for use in worship. Apart from what is in regular use these items are in a bank vault. The most famous of these is a large chalice of what is believed to be Florentine design and was presented to the church by the Shirley Family. We like to think that it is medieval and has an interesting story attached to it but unfortunately it is broken and unusable and too exclusive to be repaired. Apart from the delightful little chalice provided by the Rev Andrew Montgomery in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century all the other items are relatively modern but most useful for their purposes as flagons, patens, communion spoons and chalices. There are also two pix boxes for the Communion bread. One of these was given in memory of James Arthur Mills father of the Rev. Canon Cecil Mills, Rector of Killybeg in Dublin Diocese who has told us that his father was a hardware merchant – hence the cross of nails on the little box. He was born in 1898, and came to Carrickmacross in 1931. He died in 1974.

These items enhance our worship today and remind us those who gave them and of all, known and unknown, who have contributed to making this church such a unique and beautiful place in which to gather, to wonder and to adore.

## Derryolam Glebe

The Rectory is now a modern house on the road to Drumconrath and was built after the sale of Derryolam Glebe which had housed Rectors and Vicars back into the Middle Ages. Derryolam, from the Irish 'Doire Foghlain' meaning the



'Grove of Learning' points to an ancient connection with teaching perhaps even in Celtic times. There have been a number of houses built on this site the present one being a four storey red-brick building which is now protected structure No. 41300361 in the County Monaghan Development Plan 2007-2013.

Derryolam seems to have been associated with the Church as a Glebe going right back into medieval times. It is recorded that the Glebe was granted by James I to Bishop Montgomery in the 1620, being one of the townlands of Magheross. The fact that it is already known as the Glebe suggests it has borne this title going back into history. Canon Boyle was living in the Glebe when he was arrested with the other settlers in 1641.

We have already noted that according to a stone tablet found in the 1800's Rector Andrew Montgomery had rebuilt the Rectory in 1680, the year after he became Rector and how according to Shirley<sup>108</sup>

"It appears by a Terrier in the Registry of the Bishop of Clogher dated Sep. 20, 1771 that the Glebe house of Maghe Ross was built in the year 1695 of lime and stone, and thatched with straw, and in 1726 an addition was made thereto, the Glebe contained 112 acres 38 perches and was considered an old one"

Whether these three rebuilds produced the present building is not clear.

In Griffiths Valuation the occupier of the Glebe is the Rev. Thomas St. Leger Smith but the "Immediate Leesor" to sixteen of the tenants listed for Derryolam townland is the Rev. R. Robinson. In other words Dr Robinson who was nominally Rector of the Parish but living in Armagh and working in the Observatory was drawing the rents on the Glebe lands as well as receiving the income from the Parish.<sup>109</sup>

The present house is a substantial four storey redbrick building set back in its own grounds from the Shercock Road, just past the Workhouse. There is a basement just below ground level and there are also rooms in the attic space. The driveway which now comes down to the road is modern. Before the Shercock Road was constructed access was by a long lane from in front of the house over the Proules and straight up to Mullinary a few hundred yards beyond the turn for the Durgans hill.

On the hill behind the present house there is a large circular earthwork, now covered in trees, identified as 031-/01/6 MO031-008 on the 2007 Monaghan

108 Some Account of Farney. Shirley 1845 P.163

109 Griffiths Primary Valuation Name Index - 1861

Development Plan 2007-2013. There is also a Ringfort (Rath or Cashel) designated in the same townland as 031-006/1 MO031-030. These are probably ancient inhabited sites though defensive rather than ecclesiastical.

Canon Boyle and Mr Montgomery are documented as having farmed the land and perhaps other Rector's did too, though no doubt many just rented it out. The last person to keep animals on the Glebe is said to have been Canon Bertie Livingstone who had some cattle and, some say, pigs!

Despite all its convoluted history, for generations of Rectory families and especially for their children, Derryolam Glebe was a wonderful family home. Canon Cecil Mills writing in February 2011 tells of how “Just a few weeks' ago I met Mona Whitehead's nephew, who updated me on all sorts of things, but mainly his own enjoyment of the train sets of his cousins on the top floor of the Rectory!”

For various reasons the Select Vestry came to the decision in the 1970's that the upkeep of the house was beyond the means of the parish so the decision was taken to sell it. It is now used by P. Rogers and Sons Architects as their offices and its exterior has been sensitively maintained so that it looks little different to photographs taken forty and more years ago.

## Graveyards

There have been at least five graveyards associated with the two St. Finbarr's Churches over the centuries.

## Magheross

This is the graveyard surrounding the original St. Finbarr's Church. It was in use from ancient and possibly even pre-Christian times until the late 1800's. Those buried there include at least two Roman Catholic Bishops of Clogher as well as reformed clergy and laity of all backgrounds. One particularly interesting sequence is that in grave MROS\_00022 <sup>110</sup> 'Hic jaçent exuviae morales Hugonis O'Reilly Romano Catholicici Episcopi Clogherensis obiit die 3tia 9bris, 1801 .....' while in MROS\_00023 'Here lyeth interred y body of Francis Dobb of Carrick-macross esq. Ann. Domini 1717 in 32 year of his age .....' and in MROS\_00024 'Underneath this stone were interred The Rev. John Campbell, late Vicar of this parish who died the 3<sup>rd</sup> dau of Feb. 1796 aged 68 years .....

<sup>110</sup> Ó Mearáin, P., 'The inscriptions of Magheross cemetery', in Clogher Record, vol 5, no. 1 (1963)

## St. Finbarr's

After the building of the new St. Finbarr's in the late 1700's the majority of parishioners seem to have continued to bury in Magheross. In the course of time a number of people were buried beside the new church. There are some headstones and an enclosure but there is also evidence of unmarked graves. The practice soon ended presumably because of the shallow soil in the church site.

## Bully's Acre

This was the pauper's graveyard for Carrickmacross and the area in which those who died in the Workhouse were buried. It is located at the beginning of the Crossmaglenn Road at the far end of Farney Street from St. Finbarr's. There was, apparently, a lane that ran from the Workhouse at Derryolam up the back of Gallows Hill to Cloughvalley and down to Bully's Acre completely bypassing the town in order that the citizenry would not have to view the bodies being brought for burial. We know that Padraig Dall Ó Beirn, the blind harpist and a member of the Church of Ireland, though not perhaps of the parish, was buried in Bully's Acre as there is a headstone to him there and there may have been poor members of the parish buried here as well.

## Carrigmaclim

As Magheross began to fill in the 1800's a number of families, especially from the western side of the Parish seem to have buried in Carrigmaclim in what is now regarded as the Presbyterian graveyard. Those who buried there may have long associations with the area even though they had moved house into Carrickmacross. But again this does not seem to have been large enough to allow everyone burial.

## God's Acre

Because of the pressure of space in other graveyards we have noted how, in the 1890's, Canon Benjamin Moffett provided this plot on his lands at Drummond Ota for a new graveyard for parishioners. This is the graveyard which is currently in use by the parish. Canon Moffett's own single plot grave with a stone that matches the simple monument to him in the church is a suitable tribute to one of the most effective clergy which ever served the parish and who left such a on it. Details of the families connected with this graveyard can be found on the Parish Web site.



# Schools

## The Viscount Weymouth Grammar School

We have already noted the beginnings of this school in the 1680's and of how, though a totally separate institution, from time to time it impinged on the life of the parish. Having a Grammar school was of obvious benefit not only to the young men of the town but to the town itself in making it well known to those pupils from outlying areas who attended it. It would also have enhanced the standing of the parish and the local clergy who would have been visitors, and, at times, teachers in the school.

The history of the school has been fully dealt with by Michael Quane.<sup>112</sup> Quane was a civil servant in the Department of Education who wrote many short books and articles on historical schools in Ireland. The article on the Weymouth School is out of print but is available on [www.jstor.com](http://www.jstor.com).

The architect who built the school has been identified as John Curle<sup>113</sup>: Architect possibly of Scottish origins, who was active in Cos. Fermanagh, Louth, Meath and Monaghan in the late 1690s and the first quarter of the 18th century. John Curle, mason, of 'Bewly' (Beaulieu, Co. Louth) was admitted a freeman of Kells, Co. Meath in 1697 with consent for his son Richard to become free when he wished. His earliest recorded work is a plan for the conversion of the former residence of the Bishop of Clogher in Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan, into the Viscount Weymouth Grammar School. Curle provided plans for alterations to the back of the building in 1698. Lord Weymouth who had wanted his agent to find 'some good architect from Dublin' to design an entirely new schoolhouse, was dubious about the choice of Curle. 'I could have wish't you had given me some account of him,' he wrote to his agent, John Fitch, 'as to what buildings he has made, where he lives... and whether he undertakes to build by the great Fitch must have reassured him, as Curle's plans were carried out, though not in a satisfactory manner.

As we have noted from time to time clergy served as teachers or even as Headmaster of the school and would have taken part in the life and worship of the parish. When there were large numbers of boarders in the school they would have come to worship in the church and so there is a strong recollection,

112 Quane, Michael. The Viscount Weymouth Grammar School, Carrickmacross. Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquities of Ireland, Vol 86.1 (1956) pp. 27-51

113 Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720-1940 <http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/1380>

for good and otherwise, with the parish in the minds of some ex-pupils.

The fortunes of the school varied from time to time. They were at a low ebb at the time of Lewis's Topographical Survey. The surveyors note that:

“A free grammar school was founded here by Lord Weymouth in 1711, and endowed with £670 per annum: it has been disused for some years, but the school-house is being rebuilt by the Marquess of Bath, a descendant of the founder.

Another connection, if it can be called that, between the school and the church is the alleged sporting activity mentioned in a number of sources whereby pupils tried to hurl stones from the grounds of the school over the roofs of the intervening properties to hit the clock face.

Between 1910 and 1912 under the direct of the architect John Francis McGahon alterations were made to the west wing of the school as well as other renovations being undertaken. Because of falling pupil numbers the school was closed in 1955.

## Magheross School

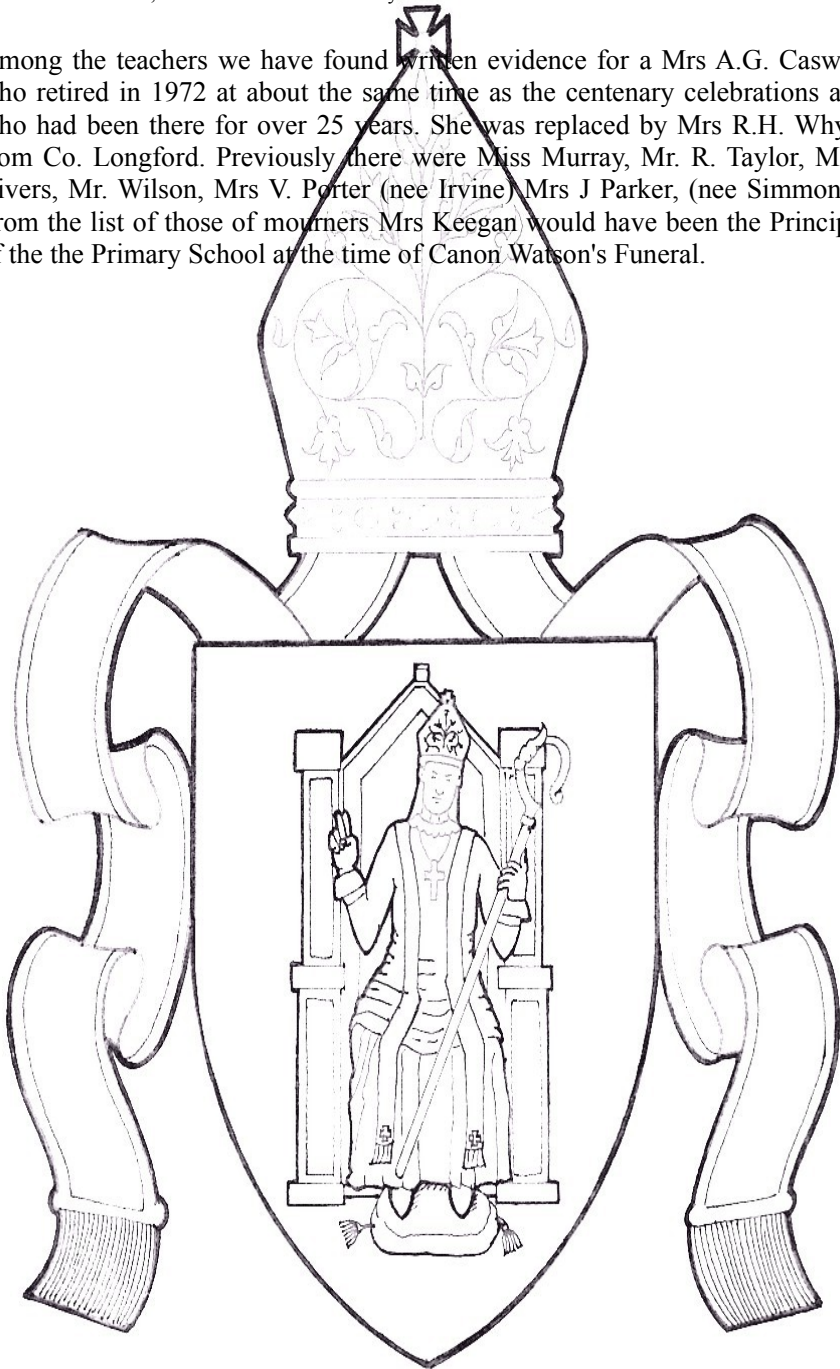
This primary school was provided for the Protestant children of the area by the Shirley Estate in 1872. It celebrated its centenary on the 4th March 1972. Although the school was never the property of the parish and was not just for Church of Ireland children it did have a close relationship with the parish and a special service was held in St. Finbarr's to make the occasion of its centenary.

Prior to this we know that there were many different schools in Carrickmacross linked to the names of different teachers. For example Mr Warrend sent one of his sons, Thomas, to a school run by Mr Folds. When the new St. Finbarr's was being built we have seen that in 1788 4 and 5 Carvers Lane known as "The English School" were demolished to make space for the church. There seems to be no evidence of a parish sponsored primary school at any stage, perhaps because the Weymouth and the other private schools were perceived to provide for the needs of the congregation.

The Magheross School building remained the property of the Shirley family and when the school was amalgamated with Kingscourt in the 1990's to form the Cabra Central School it reverted to Estate use.

Past pupils of the school included Miss Mary Cooper who died in a Japanese prisoner of war camp when nursing Canon H. Cecil Mills who is rector of Killiney Parish in Dublin Diocese, Canon Robert Braden who serves in Portrae on the Isle of Skye as a priest of the Church of Scotland.

Among the teachers we have found written evidence for a Mrs A.G. Caswell who retired in 1972 at about the same time as the centenary celebrations and who had been there for over 25 years. She was replaced by Mrs R.H. Whyte from Co. Longford. Previously there were Miss Murray, Mr. R. Taylor, Miss Rivers, Mr. Wilson, Mrs V. Porter (nee Irvine) Mrs J Parker, (nee Simmons). From the list of those of mourners Mrs Keegan would have been the Principal of the the Primary School at the time of Canon Watson's Funeral.





## Abbreviations used by Leslie

D.R. = Diocesan Register

Cal. Reg. Flem. - Calendar of the Register of Nicholas Fleming. There is a new edition of this, Brendan Smith (ed.), The register of Nicholas Fleming, Archbishop of Armagh, 1404-1416 (Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, 2003)

Reg. Prene - Register of John Prene, Archbishop of Armagh, 1439-43. The register is among the Armagh Diocesan registry papers in PRONI.

S.R. - Subscription Roll

N.T. - ?

D.E.M. - Dublin Evening Mail

Erck - J.C. Erck, Irish Ecclesiastical Register (published in a number of editions between 1818 and 1830)

A.F.M. - John O'Donovan, Annals of the Four Masters

Morr. - James Morrin, Calendar of the patent and close rolls of chancery in Ireland (Dublin, 1861-63)

F.F. - First Fruits Rolls

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