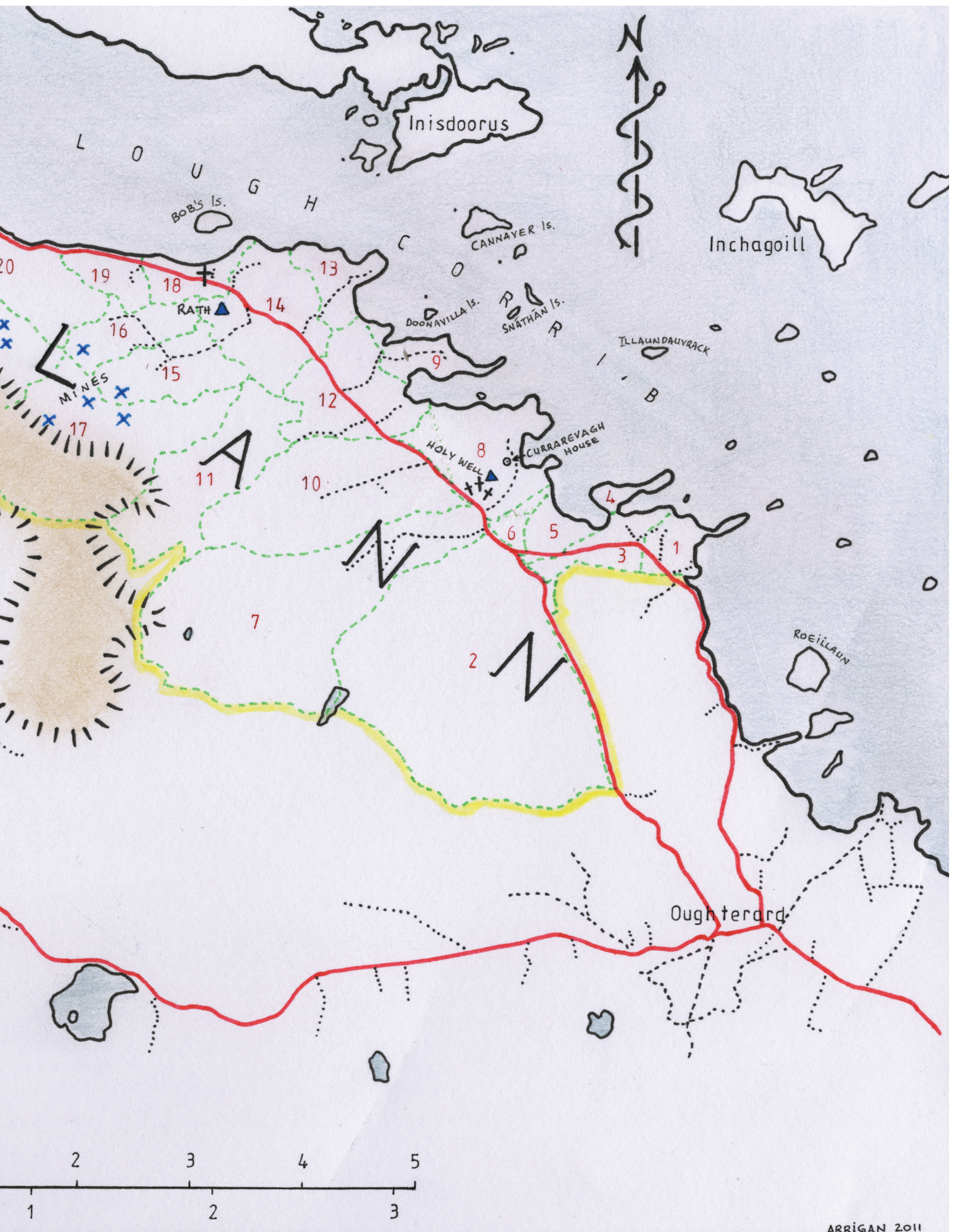


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A Valley Remembers
GLANN

Kilcummin Parish Our Lady of the Valley
Golden Jubilee Celebration
European Funded Project

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Foreword

I am grateful for this opportunity to express congratulations to all involved in the production of this book. The idea was first mooted in early 2010 as people began to meet in Glann to discuss and plan how the 50th anniversary of the present Church in Glann, Our Lady of the Valley, might be celebrated.

As I look on back on that occasion. I express here my deep appreciation of so many in the community who gave of their time, talent and energy to ensure the day would be one to remember for a long time. I am sure you will enjoy the collection of photographs from that occasion printed else elsewhere in this book.

It is important to remember those who went before us. Those who, in the years following on the tragedy of the Great Famine, built the church of St. Bridget in Glann. The foundation stone for that church was laid by Archbishop John McHale of Tuam on the 4th June 1852.

We are grateful to them and to those who continued with the building of the present church which sits on the same site as the original. Their love of God resulted in many sacrifices for their faith.

On a personal note, I was and am so delighted to have been involved in the celebrations on August 15th 2010. On the occasion, three trees were planted and blessed by Bishop Martin Drennan, Fr. Sean Manning and myself. May others one day find shelter beneath them – when we ourselves have wandered away to the heart of God.

*Listen and hear the prayers,
The footsteps of generations, the faces
gone before us – young and old
who have walked here
by the lakeshore
in the search of their God—
In this place
where stone has been placed upon stone
over Gods earth
to remind us
of the mystery that lies beneath and beyond
our human journey.*

Le Beannacht agus Buíochas,

Fr. Jimmy Walsh



Golden Jubilee Organising Committee.

Introduction

Glann is a rural community on the scenic southern shore of Lough Corrib, due north west from Oughterard village.

This book aims to give the reader an insight into the rural heritage of Glann and its people, the “Glanners”. We look at the present people, and at those that passed along the fields and villages of the area over the centuries, particularly in the past 150 years.

The area has a rich heritage, much of it in danger of being forgotten, such as old place names, old field names, old sayings, old traditions and old ways of doing things.

The idea of documenting this heritage arose out of the “Celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Glann Church” in 2010. Many hours of meeting, talking, reminiscing, asking, searching, pestering, writing and compiling have gone into creating “The Book”. It is an attempt to gather as much information as possible, so that it is preserved in one booklet form for future reference and for posterity. It is probably impossible to ‘turn over every stone’ and relate everything accurately—we will be forgiven for that. We would like to thank all those that loaned their time, photographs and memories and those that contributed in any way.

Finally it is hoped that this book will be an interesting, entertaining and informative read, that will be given pride of place on the book shelves of Glanners worldwide.

*History of Glann Churches*¹

Writer's View of Oughterard – 1843

William Makepeace Thackeray travelled through Oughterard on his way to Clifden. He commented on the contrast between, “the healthy looking people in the huge servant house hotels of the gentry and the cowed country people, shy, sly and silent.” Many peasants held their land under the conacre system which gave them the right to occupy the land but not the right of conveyance by will or lease. In the Oughterard area the people rented from a rood to two roods of land which neither their capital, nor their acquaintance with agricultural science enabled them to render productive. The potatoes that they planted and on which they lived were seldom in sufficient quantity to last the entire year. An extra burden was also placed upon them when they were compelled to give their principal crops of oats and barley to the payment of their rents to the landlord and tithes to the Protestant Church.

Famine in Glann: 1845-1848

During these years of devastation the people of Newvillage found themselves destitute. They petitioned the Viceroy Marcus Haytesbury. They informed him “that there were 300 families in their region, a total of 1500 persons in all, without food. They were obliged to sell their animals and corn to pay their rent.”

They recommended that relief works should be established immediately to relieve their suffering. The relief works they had intended were the building of roads which would give access to Lough Corrib which would in turn allow business people to transport goods down the lake to Galway City. Bóthar na Míne

was built giving access from Glann down the Tonwee Road to Oughterard.

Anthony O’Fflahertie M.P. visited Glann and he witnessed the plight of the people. He was informed that ten people in one household alone died of hunger that year and the rest were living on turnips. He condemned publicly the sheer neglect by the Government. He was also appalled when he discovered that money voted by the Government for relief of the poor and hungry was finding its way into the pockets of officials and food exporters at the time.

Robert Browne, Rector of the Protestant church, wrote a series of letters to the *Galway Vindicator* in which he said, “If such is the dreadful conditions of a locality, where so much exertion has been made by the Catholic and Protestant clergy as well as the few resident gentry belonging to it, for the protection of the poor against starvation, what must be the dreadful fate of the other contiguous districts which from their remote and isolated situation, render it impossible for the clergy to procure for them the least relief.”

George Fortescue O’Fflahertie, Lemonfield, wrote to the Poor Law Commission in October 1851 and spoke about, “a district brought to the very edge of pauperism by the united action of six years past of famine, pestilence and taxation.”

It was in a climate like this that the Irish Church Mission flourished in the Glann / Oughterard area. The missionaries preyed on the physical weakness of the people and set up several Soup Kitchens and Soup Schools. You can easily understand why the people were enticed by the spiritual and temporal aid offered. Many converted to the Protestant religion.

¹ The above article was mainly compiled by Mary Kyne, Claremount, Oughterard, except where otherwise footnoted.

Concern of the Catholic Clergy

The priests of Oughterard were now concerned about the plight of their parishioners who had come under the influence of Dallas and Reverend John O'Callaghan, two extreme propagandists. They wrote long letters to the *Galway Mercury* stating their case and begged the people of outlying areas for financial assistance. They implored their fellow priests to come and help them convert the people back to catholicism. The Vicar general, Reverend B.S. Roche, and Fr. Godfrey Mitchell came to Oughterard in June 23rd 1850. they preached to the people making references in their sermon to the Old and New Testaments proving to their congregation that they too had knowledge of the Bible. Gradually, the people returned to the Catholic faith.

ST. BRIGID'S CHURCH, GLANN 1852

Archbishop John McHale laid the foundation stone of the Glann Church on 4th June 1852. The ceremony took place in the presence of about three thousand people. The Annals of the Vincentian Fathers record that "at the conclusion of the ceremony their cheers re-echoed from the surrounding hills. The people now resolved to die with their children rather than accept the relief which was offered on the condition of sending their children to the school of the proselytisers."



Old church

The newly erected church at Glann was used for some time as a school room until the people built a slate roofed school at Gort Na Shingaun (Antfield) close to the church. This is shown on the 1880s Ordnance map of the area to be just inside the current gate at the western boundary of the road and Church Grounds.

Christopher St. George of Tyrone (in south Galway) who owned 15,777 acres of land in the Connacht region gave the land for both sites to the Church

authorities. A local landlord named Petrie donated £50,000 towards the building of schools in the area. Martin Quinn, 27 years of age, a young graduate from Galway University was appointed teacher.

St. Brigid's Church – Site/Description²

Site

The site for the church is in the townland of Gortnashingaun or Antfield, six miles from Oughterard, towards the North West, overlooking Lannaun Bay. The site area is 1 acre and 40 perches.

The boundaries to the site are as follows: to the West, single stone wall with shelter belt of larch, spruce and fir; to the North, sod fence and low wall mearing of Morgan Lydon's holding; to the South, masonry wall, eight perches, with iron gate entrance on public road to the Hill of Doon.

The church of St. Brigid was built about 1852–53, and according to tradition was largely financed by the Vincentian Fathers, Phibsboro, Dublin in order to counteract the spread of "souperism" in the district.

Description

The archives describes the church building as follows: a small rectangular church, masonry walls, limewashed, with a slated roof. It contains curvilinear triple lancet gothic windows on the East side (coloured glass) and Western gables. It has two gothic latticed windows with coloured glass in the sanctuary area. The church also has three lattice plain glass windows on the North and South Walls. The building consists of a Nave 19' x 19' and 19' x 11', and an inside wooden porch 19' x 5' 6". It has a pitch pine altar, memel rafters, open sheeted ceiling, with wainscoting 4' in sanctuary to ceiling. The building has no sacristy and there is only one entrance.

The church accommodates 150 persons.

Abstract of Title

By Lease of 11th March 1852 (with map) Christopher St. George, MP Tyrone House, gave site of 1 acre 40 perches to Reverend Michael A. Kavanagh P.P. Kilcummin, for the lives of himself, Fr. Kavanagh, and Robert O'Sullivan (the tenant who joined in the Lease) OR 31 years, whichever was longest, at yearly rent of ten shillings. No record of any renewal and title now presumed possessory.

Title Deeds

A certified copy of Memorial of above deed is the only title deed available, and this is in the Galway Diocesan Archives.

Rent

There is no record of the ten shilling Lease Rent ever having been paid.

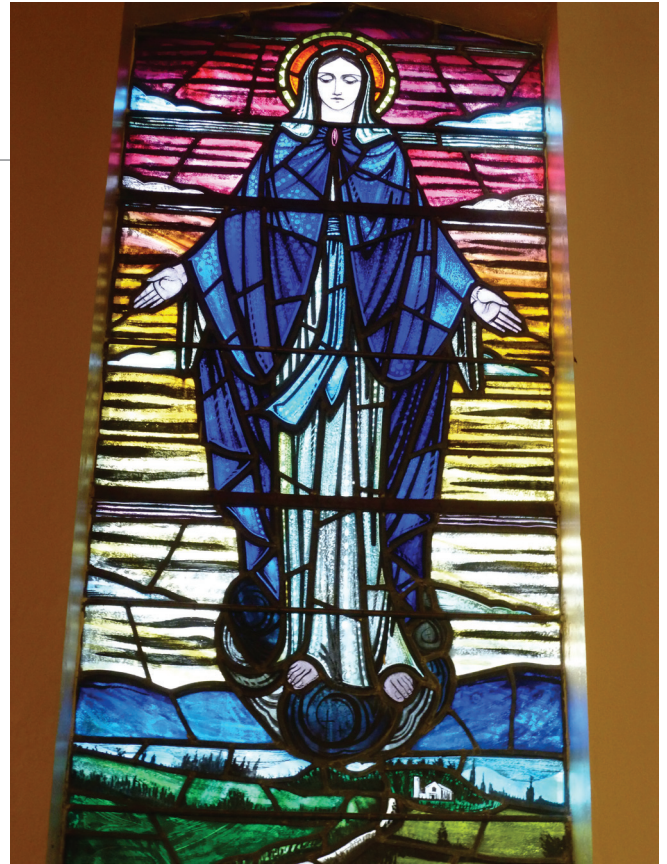
Endowment

No Endowments. Maintained by Door Collection on Sundays.

Consecration and Dedication of Church

There is no record of the exact date of Dedication. Titular, St. Brigid (Decree S.C. Rites, 1920)

(End of Diocesan Archival Information)



OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY CHURCH, GLANN

This new building replaced St. Brigid's Church. It was opened on 25th March 1960 and dedicated by Dr. Michael Browne, Bishop of Galway, on the 15th of August, to Our Lady of the Valley. Due to the exposed site the windows are on the leeward side. The roof is copper. The Architect was Simon J. Kelly. Over the front door of the church there is a beautiful stained glass window depicting Glann Valley with Our Lady in the foreground. This window was very kindly donated by the Joyce Family, Shannawagh, in memory of their son Tom.

In more recent times a second stained Glass window was installed in memory of Fr. Colman and Fr. Michael King from Farravaun. The Metzgar family from Idaho in the USA donated this.

The Altar was donated by Eamonn King. The Parish Priest at the time was Fr. Thomas McCullagh.

