

# *Le Chêile*

*Community Magazine*



**January 2021**

**No. 390**

## EDITORIAL

This edition of Le Chéile marks the 47th year of the publication of a community magazine by Clane Community Council, having commenced in January 1974. Needless to say the virus has presented us with many problems over most of the past year. Most of the community groups with which we have worked have had to go into shut down. This covers a wide range of organizations including sports groups, residents associations, community activists and volunteers of every type.

The Community Council has had to work over the internet and restrict its operations to a minimum with limited outdoor contact. The Christmas Lights, some Tidy Towns undertakings, like the refurbishment of the grounds around the Garda Station, which was undertaken in co-operation with members of the local Garda, are examples. Maintenance of the Graveyards is another example.

Hopefully the vaccine will help in getting things back to normal. In the meantime we must all continue to do our best to keep the ship afloat while observing the requirements of social distancing, reduced contact, etc.

Monday 25th of January is the due date for the AGM of Clane Community Council, the 48th. All the indications are that it will have to be by zoom. Wishing everyone a happy & successful New Year

**The Abbey Cemetery (on Sallins Rd.)**

**1700-2010**

**Tony McEvoy**

The above article is taken from

“A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN CLANE & RATHCOFFEY” on the suggestion of its editor Seamus Cullen. It was published in 2011 by Clane and Rathcoffey Ecclesiastical History Committee. The 27 chapters were written by eleven different authors .

A small number of the books are still available on contacting The Parish Shop in the Main Street in Clane.

You will find it on pages 4 to 8. Other chapters may be published in Le Chéile in future months if the Corona virus is still curtailing our efforts.

We welcome suggestions from readers to get us through these difficult times and keep the show on the road.

### CLONGOWES CEMETERY

Where in Clane would you find buried, together, a Frenchman and a Pole? The answer is at the cemetery in Clongowes. The remains of the early Fathers at

#### **EDITOR'S DEADLINE**

The deadline for receipt of material for the January issue of Le Chéile is

**Monday 25th January**

To 142 Loughbollard please.

Tel. 045-868474.

Get Le Chéile on [www.clanecommunity.ie](http://www.clanecommunity.ie)

Clongowes were transferred from the graveyard of Mainham to the Jesuit plot in 1866 and are marked by a handsome Celtic cross at the head of the main path. They include Fr. Claudius Gautard S.J., a Frenchman, and Fr. Casimir Hlasko SJ., a Pole. Fr. Gautard came to Ireland before the restoration of the Order. Between 1798 and 1800 he officiated as chaplain to the religious of George's Hill Convent in Dublin. He lived for some time at Clongowes Wood following its establishment in 1814 and died there on October 25th 1821. Fr. Hlasko, born in Poland in 1782, was a professor of natural philosophy and dogmatic theology and reached Dublin in 1820. He taught in Clongowes, where he died on January 27th 1831, aged 49.

In the best cosmopolitan tradition of the Order, the national culture stood only to benefit by exposure to the best of Europe. What might seem more of a surprise in its own way, is that the parish of Clane was well represented in this cultural milieu, in that no less than two very eminent Jesuit Fathers in the Clongowes community of the time were members of local families. This fact may go a long way towards explaining the Jesuits' choice of Clane for the establishment of their first college in Ireland. Fr. Charles Aylmer was

born in Painstown on August 29th, 1786. He distinguished himself in many publications. In 1814, he assisted at the formal re-establishment of the Order by Pope Pius VII in Rome with four of his Irish brethren, including Fr. Bartholomew Esmond, also a native of Clane. Later that year, Fr. Esmond and others under the direction of Fr. Peter Kenny S.J. the newly appointed Irish Sub-Provincial [and recently Vice-President of Maynooth] established Clongowes Wood College. Fr. Aylmer was appointed Provincial in 1817 for five years and died in Gardiner Street on July 04th 1849, aged 63 years. Fr. Bartholomew Esmond S.J. was a son of Colonel John Esmond, United Irishman, a medical doctor at Clane and leader of the insurgents at Clane and Prosperous on the first night of hostilities, May 23rd, 1798. John Esmond was hanged at Sackville Bridge in Dublin on June 14th, 1798. Dr Bartholomew Esmond SJ was an eminent theologian and a confidant and adviser to J.K.L., Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.

This article was originally published in *Le Chéile* in February 1980.)

### **The Abbey Cemetery (on Sallins Rd.)**

**1700-2010**

**Tony McEvoy**

The original Ordinance Survey of 1838 shows the Friary ruins in the middle of an open field thirteen times as large (9.234 Acres) as the walled-in area of the present cemetery. There is no reference to its incorporating a grave-

yard. This contrasts with the “Church and Graveyard” description, referring to the old Church of Saint Michael, situated off the Village Green at the end of the Main Street, opposite its junction with the Prosperous Road. The Church of St. Michael had, from



the time of the consecration of the new Church of St. Michael and All Angels at Millicent in 1883, remained roofless until reconstructed as the Abbey Community Centre by Clane Community Council and officially opened in 1986. The attached churchyard had been the main burial ground for the people of Clane, of both traditions, from the earliest times. Its restricted size and the fact that every square inch had been used over and over again for burials was one of the main reasons why the move was made to Millicent in 1883. There was no room for expansion. The attached graveyard was officially closed for burials from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1914 by order of the Local Government Board. However, following a resolution from Naas Number 1 District Council an extension was granted for one year to 1<sup>st</sup> April 1915.

A study of the gravestones in the Abbey Cemetery on the Sallins Road shows that it was only subsequent to 1915 that it came into intensive use as a burial ground. This is in keeping with the fact that the 25 inch map of 1913 still shows the Friary ruins out in the

middle of a large agricultural field with the familiar boundary walls of the cemetery and the long entrance drive leading up from the road not yet having been constructed, nor any of the trees having been planted. There had been a number of burials within the walls of the ruin and 30 existing gravestones testify to this. While the gravestones within the ruins date back to the early 1700s, there are no gravestones outside the ruins which predate 1915. The 25 inch map of 1913 shows a sharp outline on all sides to the ruins of the Franciscan Friary and there are no gaps depicted anywhere, including on the western end. This, and the fact that it was out in the middle of a large agricultural field, suggests the walls had sufficient height all around to exclude farm animals. Within living memory the walls on the western end of the ruin (the side nearest the road) have not been above ground level. One would have to query whether this is where the stones came from in order to build the boundary wall.

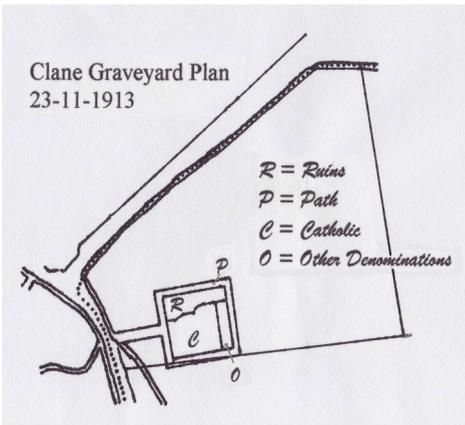
The townland of Abbeylands, which extends from the right hand boundary hedge of the avenue leading to the Old Rectory, later O’Neills’, and from there back to the Liffey, incorporates almost 70 acres and was originally comprised of 5 fields. It is now totally built over and traversed by the Relief Road. “Abbeylands House” is a name that can mislead as it is situated outside this area and is actually in Clane Townland. When the ruins and cemetery were walled-in the southern boundary wall, or that nearest to and running parallel to the Liffey, was built along part of the original field boundary hedge. The field of almost nine and a quarter acres, in the middle of which the Friary ruins were situated on the various maps between 1838 and the early part of the last century, extended between the right hand hedge of the avenue leading up to Abbeylands House and the southern boundary wall of the present day

cemetery. In addition to the walled graveyard, which is now approaching its hundredth year, the original field of over nine acres included the areas now occupied by the sewerage pumping station, the Eircom station beside it, the green open space through which the path leading to the Shopping Centre runs and most, if not all, of the Shopping Centre itself. The area within the boundary walls of the graveyard is 2 roods and 30 perches (3,326 square yards or just under three quarters of an acre). Its area was dictated by the dimensions of the Friary ruins and their distance from the southern boundary of the field in which they were situated. (The southern wall was built along the line of this field boundary hedge.)

The length of the ruin on the 1838 map is longer, coming a little further in the direction of the Sallins Road. This observation is supported by the fact that the ground immediately west of the ruins, in their present foreshortened state, maintains a higher level (that of the general floor area within the ruins) and that a row of trees, only the stumps of which now remain, was planted along the line where the western boundary wall of the ruins would previously have existed. A careful

examination of this line of tree stumps shows that they back up a line of heavy stones just showing through the sod, indicating the position of what might be interpreted as an external wall at this western end of the ruins. Just at this distance the ground level drops leaving a level strip running by the outer wall which is 15 feet wide. There are indications of a further demolished wall running parallel to that just described about 9 feet back in from it. This line is also backed up by three stumps. At a similar distance back again there is a further remains of a demolished wall with one similarly associated tree stump. All three are parallel. There are no question marks over the latter wall as roughly one foot of it was left above ground level when the demolition was carried out. Between the two rows of tree stumps to the west of the ruins there is a row of 9 graves backing up to the graveyard wall where the original plan had been to have a path instead. There are 7 gravestones in the extended 'floor area', which along with those within the ruins generally, make a total of 30 and span the era dating from just prior to the closing of the Clane Churchyard in 1915 back to the early 1700s.

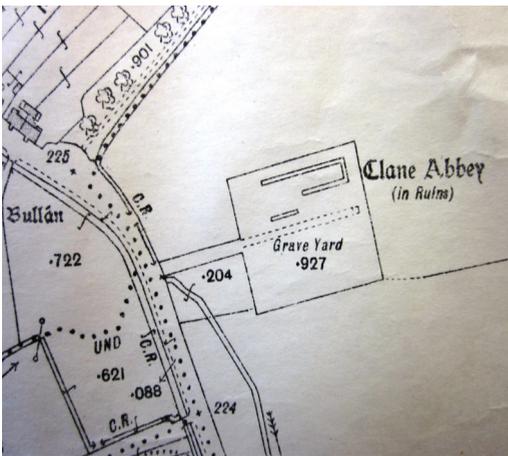
There are currently 240 grave markers throughout the cemetery, 145 to the right of the central avenue and 95 to the left, including the 30 within the area of the ruins. A tall Celtic cross marks the grave of 'Very Rev. Fr. Laurence J. Kehoe, Parish Priest of Clane from 1926 – 1948, who died 20<sup>th</sup> July 1948 aged 78 years. R.I.P. Fr. Kehoe is the only priest recorded as buried in the graveyard, In accordance with tradition his stone is engraved on its west facing side. Equally in accordance with tradition, all other stones face to the east and the rising sun. All others, except two that is. According to the County Council's original design, drawn up on 23-11-1913, there were to be no burials within 15 feet of the boundary wall but it was to be reserved for a path to go



right around the full cemetery. This original proposal was apparently dropped at some later stage in

favour of the present central avenue. Proceeding down the left side, where the 15 foot path was intended to continue—in fact it was intended to continue right around the graveyard—there are 15 graves in two rows of seven and eight. Across the far end there are four graves where the originally intended path would have come from behind the ruin towards the altar. There are 37 graves in the area between the

originally positioned —implying that the stones were lifted out, but mysteriously they are nowhere to be found! A few have fallen over, base and all, but can still be read. Two have fallen face down. There are also fragments within the Friary ruins from a shattered gravestone. This stone, which was the second oldest in the graveyard, was to a person named Murphy from “Clain”, who died in April 1755. It was vandalized in the last decade. In addition there are numerous quite large stones within the ruins which may have fallen from the walls or may have been used as grave markers by families who could not come up with the price of an inscribed stone. The general pattern however, indicates that being buried within the ruins was a practice of the well to do, who for one reason or another choose not to be buried in the local churchyard of St. Michael’s. This continued until the latter closed down in 1915. There are two stones from the 1700s, at least these are the only two with readable dates. One dates from 1755 and was referred to earlier as having been vandalized. The oldest readable stone dates from 1738, when it was erected by Fr. Andrew Ennis, P.P. of Clane, to the memory of his brother James Ennis, who died in 1719, his wife Joan, who died in 1729 and her mother Mary who died in 1732. There are 14 stones to the memory of people who died in the 1800s. A further 14 within the ruins are in the category of “illegible”, “fallen on their face” or “missing apart from the stump”. This brings the total within the ruins, or within the area to which the ruins extended, to 30. All pre-date the opening of the newly walled in graveyard for burials. This followed on the final closure of the graveyard at the Village Green in 1915. The oldest stone outside the extended ruins area is from 1917 to Herbert Delamare Whyte of Viewmount, though there is reference on another stone



ruin and the central avenue, totalling 65. Note that the earlier maps and the Council’s 1913 drawing of the ruins not only show them extending further westwards, as already described, but also splaying southwards as they do so to include the Alexander Westlake stone of 1875. This brings all pre 1915 stones within the ruins.

The grave markers are largely of inscribed stone though iron and wood are also used in a limited number of cases and there is one moulded in concrete. A number of the older gravestones within the Friary ruins have completely lost all legibility. In a number of cases the stones are missing and all that remains is the grooved base in which a stone was

to a child who died in 1914, aged 3 years. This stone was erected to a total of 8 family members, the first of whom listed died in 1952 and the last in 1973. The ownership of the townland of Abbeylands, with its 70 acres in five large fields goes back to the Revd. Cutts Harman in 1766 (presumably resident in the old rectory at Abbeylands House). The 9 acre field, in the middle of which the Friary ruins were situated, was registered to Simon Luttrell under the Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Act 1891 : County Kildare Folio 2299. This was re-registered to Patrick Clinton of Capdoo, a farmer, on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1908. He died on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1910 and his wife Mary Clinton became the registered owner on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1912. For a consideration of £100 a portion of the 9 acre field, comprising 2 roods and 30 perches, statute measure, was transferred to Folio Kildare 3932 on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1915 and registered in the ownership of the Rural District Council of the Naas Number 1 Rural District, Naas, County Kildare. This was finally re-registered to the County Kildare Board of Health on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1933.

In 1987 a major extension was made to Mainham Cemetery. For over a decade various options were being considered as the available space in the Abbey Cemetery was rapidly running out. The lands where the Soccer and Rugby Clubs and Otomy Estate are now situated were acquired by Kildare County Council with this possibility in mind. Eventually the expansion of the cemetery in Mainham was decided upon and this was facilitated by the Jesuit community at Clongowes. Only a limited number of families with established burial rights at the Abbey Cemetery have been buried there in the intervening years. Respect for the dead and a sense of connection with departed members of our

families and community are qualities which do credit to people of every place and every time. Graveyards should be kept to the highest standard. This is possibly even more important as they enter into diminished use.

Starting in 1993 and continuing to January 2003, the Community Council in Clane had the benefit of being in a Community Employment Scheme under FAS. Maintenance work in the graveyards of Clane, Mainham and Bodentown was one aspect of the works approved. Regular grass cutting and the spraying and control of weeds was carried out in the Abbey Cemetery. Prior to this period the graveyards of the county were cut once or twice a year by a man using a scythe or strimmer. Over the years the Cypress trees, which had been sown in the early years of the last century, had become hugely overgrown and high banks of earth and other discarded materials had built up by the boundary walls following work carried out on graves. Conscious of the need to raise standards to a higher level and deal with many problems, A public meeting was called by Eamonn Mahony on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1995. This meeting took place in a room in the Convent. There were about twenty in attendance. Eamonn Mahony was appointed Chairman, Peter Kenny Secretary and Fran Connolly (R.I.P.) Treasurer. The Works Committee included Dan O'Connell, Paddy Baker (R.I.P.), Pat Ward, Tom Baker, Joe Campbell, Ruban Thomas (R.I.P.), Michael Doherty, Tony McEvoy, Des Marron, John Delaney, JP Holligan, Paddy Moore, Matt Hayes, and Sean Cribbin. There was no shortage of people coming forward to offer help and supply mechanical and material assistance – people such as Andrew Davin, the Doherty family, PJ Sheridan, John Daly of Clane Garden Sheds, Chris

McIntyre, etc. Huge work was undertaken. Trees were removed and replaced, having first cleared away the banks of earth. The avenue, which had been a morass in wet weather, was reinstated and overlaid with tarmac. Water was installed. The ivy was cut back with high lift assistance made available by Andrew Davin. A tool shed was installed and tools acquired. An altar was put in place. A man was hired to do the maintenance work hider to done by FAS. The public expressed great satisfaction with the new look of the whole place and they were very supportive in their financial assistance to meet the expenses involved in ongoing maintenance. Blessing of the graves takes place in November and a Graveyard Mass is said in June, both of which attract a huge attendance. The Franciscans continue to come and celebrate Mass each year on the Feast of Portiuncola .

In March 2005 the Abbey Graveyard Committee, after ten years of diligent service, requested that they be relieved of further responsibilities by the Community Council. This they were happy to do and a new subcommittee was added to their list -the Abbey Graveyard Committee. A number of the Council members were already involved in the work and others who were not on the Community Council were happy to continue as they had been. As with all its subcommittees, a list of members for each particular year is published in the March issue of the Le Chéile magazine. The current members are: Des Drumm (Chairman), Tony McEvoy (Secretary), John Briody (Treasurer), Tom Cleary, John Delaney, Mark Moffat, Phil McCormack and John O'Brien. New members will always be required and are encouraged to volunteer their services. In addition to ongoing maintenance the present committee has undertaken a number of works over the past five years. The 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coming of the Franciscans in

1258 was celebrated in 2008 with the installation of signage to mark the event. With the help of Joe Horan, removable protective grating was fitted around the altar and new gates were erected at the entrance. Repairs were carried out to the boundary wall at points where some stones had become detached. Ivy was cut at ground level around the ruins. With assistance from Joe Campbell, amplification is provided for religious services. The campaign to have some essential conservation work done to the ruins of what is one of the oldest Franciscan Friaries in Ireland continues 15 years on by the current committee.

### Gravestone of Fr Keogh

