

## THE PARISH OF NEWCASTLE.

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**SITUATION.** This Parish is situated in the Barony of Glenquin, with the exception of the Townland of Kilruddaan, which is in Shanid Barony. It is bounded on the east by the Parish of Ardagh and Grange; on the south by Monagay Parish and a detached part of Ardagh; on the west by a part of Ardagh and on the north by a part of Rathronan. The Town of Newcastle is situated principally in this Parish.

**NAME.** Newcastle, called by the Four Masters Caislen Nua, received its name, according to Archdall and subsequent writers, from a Castle erected here by the Knights Templars. Part of this erection is said to enter into the building of the house of Mr. Furlong, Agent to Lord Courtney.

I here append Archdall's words together with a few notices relating to Newcastle from other authorities:-

Archdal's Mon. Hib. V.II, p.435, R.I.A.  
Newcastle.

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In the Barony of Conillo. The Knights Templars erected a Castle here, hence its present name, adjoining which a walled town insensibly sprung up and at length became a Corporation, but in process of time it fell to decay and is now in ruins. (Smith's MS.).

Gough's Camden:-

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At Newcastle, in Conillo Barony, a great mart between Kerry and Limerick and many of the inhabitants wealthy, the Knights Templars erected a Castle adjoining to which a walled incorporated town sprung up, but it is now in ruins (Archd. 435). It was formerly a place of consequence and succeeded by a handsome market town, built round a square with the neatest and best Church in the County, built by Lord Courtney 1777, who has fitted up one of the Castles for his residence (Farrar 450 & 452; Wilson 165). Near Newcastle are the magnificent ruins of Castle Maghan (Wilson 361).

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From Smith's Collections for Limerick (MSS. R.I.A.). The second Siege of Limerick (1691):-

"The enemy had strong Castles, as Newcastle and Gortnibur-bid in the west of this Country, which obstructed the communication from the camp into Kerry. From hence they frequently ravaged the country and burned Ballingarry and Brury" etc.

Caislen Nua (Newcastle) - Annals 4 Masters. 41

A.D. 1579. \*\*\* (See Limerick at this year, p.465, for the whole of this article).

In the same week, the Earl of Ormond marched at the head of an army into the Territory of the Geraldines and proceeded as far as the Newcastle, whence he carried off all the cattle and other spoils that he was able to seize upon in the country. He then returned home without receiving battle or opposition, because at that time the Earl (of Desmond) and his relatives were in Kerry.

Fitzgerald, in his History of Limerick (Vol.I) has the following:- 42

(p. 374) "Newcastle is a Rectory and Vicarage. \*\*\*

"The name of the place according to Archdall was derived from the Knights Templars having erected a Castle here (p.375) adjoining which a walled town insensibly sprung up and at length became a corporation, but in process of time fell to decay."

On the south is a very handsome Church and tower, built in 1777 (p.376) at the expense of Lord Courtney, which contains a painting of his Lordship's Arms and on a tablet the following inscription:-

"Ut benefactorum pietas et munificentia  
Posteris innotescant;  
Gulielmum vice comitem de Courtenay  
Haec memorat tabula  
Hujusce ecclesiae fundatorem."

"The Church stands close to the walls and fortifications of the Knights Templars and one of the Castles is fitted up as a residence for Lord Courtney's Agent."

In the Glebe of Churchtown in this Parish are the ruins of a Church which is not more than one hundred and fifty years old; it is situated near Newcastle to the left of the road leading from that town to Ardagh. It was twenty two feet in breadth on the outside; its length cannot be determined, as 43

the east gable is totally destroyed. The south wall is destroyed with the exception of a small fragment near the south west corner. The west gable is surmounted by a small round-headed belfry. Of the north wall twenty feet near the west end remain.

There is a Holy Well called St. David's Well in the Townland of Newcastle (or Castle Demesne) in the Earl of Devon's pleasure garden.