

# I.T.A. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL SURVEY

## NATURAL FEATURES, ANTIQUITIES, HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS, ETC.

BARONY OF Upper Connello

TOWN OR VILLAGE Ballingary PARISH Ballingary COUNTY Limerick

### TOPOGRAPHY

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

From the hills north and west of Ballingary, very lovely views are to be had. One east lies a vast fertile plain stretching to Kilmallock and Knocklong. West and north lies another plain stretching to Limerick and the Shannon. Unrivalled views may be had from summit of Knockfierna, the peak of which is 980 feet. It is one of the most picturesque parishes in the Limerick

### GEOLOGY

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

The land is mainly of old red sandstone but very occasional pockets of limestone are to be found in eastern end of parish. Knockfierna is of course entirely volcanic and the stone from here was in great demand for mill stones - hence the disappearance of the great cairn from summit of the hill. Land is excellent for tillage purposes and abundant crops are produced.

### MANSIONS, CASTLES AND ESTATES

#### OF IMPOSING CHARACTER

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

While there are no houses of imposing character, there are several very lovely old late 18th century houses.

Kennilworth Castle. In very picturesque surroundings, two miles south of village (see picture) Built in 1796. The castle portion was added in 1820. Very nice grounds and gardens. Not open but no objection to interested parties. Residence of Col & Mrs Worledge.

Ballyknockane House. One mile east of village, beside road. A quaint old house. Was formerly the residence of the Scullan family one of whom achieved notoriety through his association with the Colleen Bawn. Residence of Miss Reynolds. Not open.

Ballynac House. Was a grand Georgian House. In very bad state of repair. Owned by Mr P. Byrnes. Was seat of a very old family named COX. Three miles S/E of village.

## ANTIQUITIES

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

**BALLINGARRY CASTLE.** In the village and approached by a laneway. A most picturesque building and prominent land mark. Ref: Westropp's Churches & Castles of Co. Linc. 335 Ballingarry page 223. This was a very early castle but was remodelled early in last century and made into a residence for local clergyman (6 of 9.) Rev J. Gibbins. In excellent repair. Lower portions used as a slaughterhouse and abode for cattle, and in a filthy state. Property of Mr J. O'Connell, Butcher, Ballingarry. The castle consists of a main wing and turret. It would be roughly 40 x 28 feet. Main wing 60 feet and turret 20 feet high. 86 steps lead to battlements and these are in three sections, probably due to the fact that castle was raised from time to time. All the steps are perfect, and are lighted by numerous slit windows. There are very many apartments all of which are small. It was three storeys high, and vaulted, turned over twigs, traces of which remain. There are several trefoil headed windows, all well cut and in good repair. See picture. No care. It was a de Laay stronghold. Walls 3 feet thick.

**WOODSTOCK.** Ref: Westropp's, etc (340) Page 224. On lands of Mrs J. O'Grady, Woodstock. A short distance east of village and on right bank of a brook. Known locally as "BUNASTOIA". A very strong, square tower, 15 x 21 feet inside, walls 5 feet thick. Nestling in a hollow, floor of lower apartment is under ground level. A very wide door with segmental arch of sandstone looks north. Very strongly vaulted, turned over twigs, traces of which are distinctly visible.

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

There is an upper storey but there is no approach to this from inside. In E. wall near N. end is a narrow opening which must have served as a door and was probably served by a ladder. In this



SEA ANGLING

Brief notes on fishing grounds :

[Crossed out section]

Kinds of fish to be caught :

[Blank lines]

Owners of boats, type of boats, and charges per day :

[Crossed out section]

Bait available locally ? ..... Fishing tackle ? .....

Representative of B.S.A.S. or other sea angling Assn. ....

[Blank line]

GOLFING

Name of Club <sup>nearest</sup> Adare 6 miles No. of holes 9

Situation and brief description of course :

One of the loveliest inland courses in Ireland, set amidst beautiful woods and medieval ruins.

Name of Professional .....

Is there a clubhouse on course ? Yes Licensed ? No

Green fees (Visitors) : Per day 2/6 Per week 10/-

Newcastle West Golf Club is about 7 miles distant and is also a popular course.

# ACCOMMODATION

*Copy Typed & filed  
in 2nd.*

BARONY ~~Shanid~~ Upper Connello

COUNTY Limerick

PARISH Ballingary.

TOWN OR VILLAGE Ballingary.

HOTELS	NUMBER OF				Licensed	REMARKS	RESTAURANTS AND CAFÉS
	Guest Bedrooms	Baths	Lavs. (state kind)	Public Rooms			
<u>The Hotel (Mrs Stewart Drainer)</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> <u>Flush</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>yes.</u>	<u>Particulars supplied to me. not seen.</u>	
<u>GUEST OR BOARDING HOUSES</u>							
<u>None</u>							

DATE 4/6/44

(Additional Forms to be used if necessary)

(Signed) P. G. Lynch  
Surveyor.

# CASTLES.

V

WOODSTOCK.  
Contd.

storey are four very unusual narrow windows. About 5 feet long and five inches wide, with rounded heads, all of sandstone. There are several patches of limestone in walls, probably repairs. All corner stones are of sandstone. Tower about 30 feet high from floor level. It was a de Lacy castle. In reasonably good repair. No care. Probably 16th century building.

LISAMOTE. Westropp, etc. (341.) Page 224. Adjoining the house of Mr Daniel Mc Enery, Lisamote, two miles north of Ballingarry. A picturesque and prominent landmark. A 16th century structure. A spiral stairs, intact, of 76 steps to battlements leads from left inside door which is pointed and located in E wall near S/E angle. It is of five stories, 1st and 2nd vaulted, both showing traces of twigs over which they were turned. In 3rd story there is an old fireplace. Castle was inhabited up to opening years of last century & is in excellent repair. Many slit windows light the stairs. In the larger apartments the windows were large & of the square type. A very splendid view of the countryside can be had from the battlements, which are 60 feet high. The walls were close on 6 feet thick & the base of castle which is sloped is about 21 x 18 feet. In the lower apartments pigs are housed and the place is in a filthy condition. About or near the castle was a moat of which there is now no trace.

## CROMLECH.

On the northern slope of Knockferna in a line between house of Jos Fitzgerald and summit is the site of a very large cromlech which was smashed to atoms by treasure hunters. Foundations measure approx 16 x 8 feet. This work of destruction was carried out very many years ago but as far as is known nothing was found.

# CHURCHES.

II

KILMACOW. Ref:- Westropp's 686 of Co. Linc (190) Page 410

Two miles east of Ballingarry on Broom road in centre of an old burial ground stands the ruin of the early church of Kilmacow, dedicated to St Colman. Lies on N/E slope of Knockfierna. It measured about 60 x 20 feet. West end entirely gone and some of side walls. The east end is intact & has a pretty round headed sandstone window. In N. wall is a second round headed window while in the S. wall was a third which is now damaged. There was a pointed door in S. wall, now built up. In order to keep the memory of this St Colman alive, the P.P. (Canon Wall) had a stained glass window with a representation of him (Colman) installed in the very pretty parish church of Ballingarry. Ruin in good repair as some pointing & clearing was done some time ago through the endeavours of P.P. and some parishioners whose relatives are buried about it. Approached by a sound passage & is about 150 yards S. of road.

BALLINGARRY. Ballingarry was a very ancient parish and its first church was located in the disused burial ground in centre of village and adjoining church of Ireland. Only some fragments and a few feet of N. wall remain.

SHANAVAUGHA. <sup>Shanboha?</sup> At extreme S/E tip of parish lies an old burial ground of this name, in centre of which stood an old church. Old residents remember when a considerable portion stood but only about 10 feet length of wall of fine high now remains. On this has been set a very ancient solid sandstone font, discovered some years ago when grave yard was being levelled and tidied up. Measures about 18 ins across and 9 deep. Very roughly hewn. Graveyard which is on roadside stands on northern slope of a steep hill. Not far from the parish church of GREENAGH.

on the hill top, a few acres in extent, which has never been known to go dry.

The district was very well "planted" during the time of Elizabeth and Cromwell and many of the favoured families still survive. There are several pretty houses of the late 18th century type in the neighbourhood, ~~all~~ <sup>most</sup> of which are well kept and nicely situated. Although no Palatine settlement was made here, a number of families of that strain settled in the district and are represented by the following names; Sparling, Ellice, Switzer and Shine.

On the hillsides and also near the village there is a good deal of ~~waste~~ waste land which could be turned to good advantage if planted. It would also greatly beautify the countryside and add to its charm. Most of this land could be procured at a nominal figure from the owners. Much of it too perhaps could be planted with hops as it would appear was done centuries ago as some stray plants of these latter are to be seen in the region of site of Kilmacow Abbey - planted no doubt by the monks from latter.

The R. C. and C. of S. churches are both extremely pretty, the former is on a very grand scale, with chancel, nave and south aisle, built of old red sandstone, cornered with limestone. It has a very graceful spire which is visible for very many miles.

The church of Ireland, located in centre of village is a quaint old building, erected early in the last century and houses a very valuable and lovely set of church silver of the 17th century. The grounds are nicely planted and extremely well kept.

The convent of Mercy is a fine old building, formerly a country seat, occupying a prominent site and commanding a wide view.

On raised ground opposite it, stands the rectory another fine house, very well kept. Rector Rev Mr Moore.



has been laid on land provided by Very Rev. J. Canon Wall, P.P., who is deeply interested.

A short distance to south east is picturesque and historic KNOCKFIERNA, associated for generations, if not for all time, with the Fairies in whom countless people in the area firmly believe. A few years ago a sensation was caused by a report that numbers of the little folk had been seen in the region of Ballyknockane. Thousands of people came from far and near in hope of catching a glimpse but they were sadly disappointed. Widespread searches were made and much damage was done to property. It would appear the report was started by the proprietor of a newly opened shop in the district who reaped a rich harvest for about a week.

This hill was the centre of pagan worship and the local god was DONN FIRRIU, after whom the hill was named. Situated in centre of a vast plain, magnificent views may be had from any point. In the distant north may be seen Limerick with its spires and shafts from which the Shannon like a silver ribbon twists and winds westward to Foynes. All about is a complete ring of hills, with a few hillocks here and there viz. Fox Hill near Broom and Duntryleague hill near Gallyally.

On a clear day it is possible to discern the Magillicuddy Reeks over Foynes hill, very blue and unred-looking.

There are countless forts in the parish but none worthy of note. The following names occur and would give an indication of this: - Lisduane, Liskenett, Lisamote, Frankfort, Spring fort, Fortwilliam.

Radiating from the village are many pretty walks and cycle trips, the roads being of good surface but rather hilly. One particularly charming walk leads over the hills to north and is known as "Boen Treanta" It was the old road to Rathkeale but is now disused although the boundary fences of earth banks still remain. It skirts an unusual lake

CAIRN.

On the summit of Knockfierna 950 feet up is the base of an immense cairn, believed to have been built over the mouth of the crater. The rocks, which are abundant on the hill sides are of course, volcanic and are of the large boulder type with smooth surfaces.

The cairn was approximately 15 yards in diameter but its height now is no more than 6 feet. The stones of which it was made were ideal for conversion into mill stones and so they were in great demand for such purpose and slowly but surely the cairn diminished.

Very easily approached from any point and the climb is well worth while as magnificent views are to be had to all points of the country.  
to hunch sites.

KILSHANE ABBEY.

On the lands of the COMBAH beside village to east, stood this very fine Abbey. Old residents remember portions of it distinctly. Most of it collapsed some time in the 50's of last century but some maintain it was the "night of the big wind," it was a Franciscan House and closely resembled the Franciscan Abbey at Adare. There is absolutely no trace of it now as the collapsed masonry was <sup>used</sup> to build walls etc in the territory adjoining. Some years ago Bombah was doing some digging in a field and came across several skeletons, apparently of the monks. The graves were closed in and not further disturbed. The townland of Kilshane is comprised of Bombah's land only, to the extent of about 15 acres and this it would seem was the ground formerly attached to the Abbey. Just across the road to north is St John's Well, associated with the above.

KILMACOW ABBEY.

On the side of Knockfierna, between Kilmacow burial ground and the summit stood Kilmacow Abbey, of which there is now no trace. Little or nothing is known locally of its history except that the old people of present day used hear their parents and grand. parents talk about its destruction during a great storm.

KILMACANEARLA.

Short distance ~~east~~<sup>north</sup> of Knockfema and east of Kilmarow is Kilmacanearla where there stood a very large religious foundation about which little is known. Hard surface, which was probably the foundation in lands of Mr. C. Leaney.

KILMILL.

One mile south of Ballygarry in townland of Kilmill, there stood an early church dedicated to St Michael as name would indicate. Its site is believed to have been on the land of Mr. G. O'Keefe beside Kilmill cross roads. No trace now.

Ballygarry.

Ballygarry, territorially one of the largest parishes in the Diocese of Limerick, might also deserve the honour of being the most picturesque and antiquated.

The little village with a population of about 400 is perched jauntily on the side of a hill, its main street, winding, narrow and steep. While a close up view might reveal much picturesque decay, so evident in many of the country villages, viewed from the north, or from the side of the hill, it closely resembles a little Italian town, in its setting of trees, tall houses and narrow streets.

Within the memory of some of the older people, Ballygarry had a population of over 700 people, busily engaged weaving, nail making, coopering, tailoring, boot-making and manufacturing wooden plates, specimens of which I possess.

The Irish Country Women's Association, a flourishing branch of which exists in the district is doing much to revive some of these old trades and a spinning wheel (wooden) has been provided by a member (Mrs Worledge) and a plantation of willow



**GAMES AND RECREATIONS**

Name of Club or Committee concerned with the following :  
 (In each case give location of sports ground or recreation hall)

Gaelic Football *yes* } grounds adjacent to village

Hurling *yes.* } at the DOWNS. Fenced.

Handball *yes. (Rue of Santa Bks)* Handball alley? *yes.*

Soccer */*

Rugby */*

Cricket */*

Hockey */*

Bowls */*

Bowling (on public roads) */*

Lawn Tennis *yes at ODELLVILLE* Kinds of courts *3 green.*

Croquet */*

Billiards */*

Badminton */*

Table Tennis */*

Bridge Club */*

Other games or recreations (inc. "Cross Roads" dancing) *yes. At several places throughout parish, particularly at Glenwilliam Cross roads and at Kilmore Bridge near Greanagh.*

**ATHLETICS AND CYCLING**

Name of Club..... Events held under rules of.....

do. ....

**ANNUAL EVENTS**

Give list of annual events held in the town or parish, naming promoters (Clubs, etc.) in each case. Include pilgrimages and patterns.

*Chawkes Cross P. to P. Promoters County Linc Hunt.*  
*Liskennett P. to P. Broom Stairies.*  
*St Patrick's Day Procession Conducted by local clergy.*  
*Ballingary Sports Meeting (Hasson) Local Committee.*

DATE *4/6/44*

(Signed) *P. J. Lynch*  
 Surveyor.

**I.T.A. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL SURVEY**

**AMENITIES AND GENERAL INFORMATION.  
TOWNS AND VILLAGES (Other than Seaside)**

BARONY OF Upper Connello

TOWN OR VILLAGE Ballingany PARISH Ballingany COUNTY 400 Limerick

Location and brief description. Population 400

A very prettily situated village on the side of gently sloping hills and at western foot of Knockferna. Viewed from the neighbouring heights it has all the appearances of an Italian village, with its setting of trees, narrow street and tall houses. Lies on the junction of the Rathkeale/Brunce and Broom/Newcastle West roads. A very old and historic spot.

Is there a Town Hall? No Location —

Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds. Brief description:

None. There are several pretty walks over the nearby hills. Particularly "Boreen Dreanta" which was formerly the old road to Rathkeale. Stretches over the hills from which are very lovely views of surrounding country.

Brief comments on water supply and sewerage:

None. Sewerage pipes were laid down many years ago but the scheme for supplying water was dropped and so the former scheme was rendered useless. Water supplies from wells near village.

**PUBLIC SERVICES**

Nearest station RATHKEALE Distance 6 miles Bus? RATHKEALE.

Public lighting by—Electricity? E. S. B. Gas? —

**DANCING**

Dance hall The Hall Proprietor Daniel O'Shea  
Ballingany.

**CINEMAS AND THEATRES**

Cinemas The Hall Pictures shown Occasionally  
(nights) by travelling cos.

Theatre The Hall Kind of shows Concerts, plays, etc. by  
(Drama, Comedy &c.) travelling cos.

LIBRARIES

Public Libraries *Branch of County Library in National School, Ballingary & also in National school, Gleanagh.*  
Private Lending Libraries *Mercy Convent, Ballingary.*

CHURCHES AND SERVICES

R.C. Church *Ballingary* Services (Sundays) *8.30 & 11.30*  
*do. Gleanagh. 9.00 & 11.30.*  
*old time all the year round*  
Church of Ireland  
*Ballingary* *11.30*  
*official time*

POSTAL FACILITIES

Location of Post Office *Main St Ballingary.*  
Business (? M.O., Telegraph, Telephone) *All branches.*  
*At Gleanagh cross roads there is a sub P.O. for sale of stamps etc & for dispatch of **BANKING** & parcels.*

Banks *The Provincial Bank (sub office) Wednesdays*  
*The National Bank do. do.*

SPORTS AND PHOTO SUPPLIES

Sports Dealers *The Medical Hall None.*

Photographic Stores *The Medical Hall, Main St.*

SWIMMING POOLS AND BATHS

Swimming Pool?..... Location.....

Public Baths?..... Location.....

## SOCIAL CLUBS, CULTURAL SOCIETIES, &c.

Social Clubs *Irish Country Women's Assoc.*

*A very flourishing branch doing excellent work in rush & willow basket making, leather work, rug making, spinning exhibitions (Mrs Wollidge) & all classes of needlework.*

Cultural Societies *Branch of Gaelic League.*

*Ballingarry Dramatic Class*

## INDUSTRIES AND HANDCRAFTS

Industries *Dairying is chief industry. First class creamery at Glenmilliam. Horse breeding carried on at several places. Corn crushing carried on at Creamery and Switzers Mills, Woodstock. Saw milling also at latter place. In village tailoring and shoe making carried on.*

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

*It is hoped to revive the basket making industry and recently a plantation of willows has been made, on ground presented by Very Rev J. Canon Wall, P.P., who is deeply interested in all such things*

## PUBLIC MONUMENTS

(Brief description; inscription to be quoted)

## IMPORTANT PUBLIC BUILDINGS

(Give brief notes on architectural features)

*R.C. Church Ballingarry. A very lovely building of old red sandstone, covered with limestone, having a pretty spire, visible for many miles around. It was begun in 1872 by Rev Jas Knight, C.C. Church of Ireland. One of the loveliest little churches in the county. Built over 100 years ago of red sandstone and having a fine old belfry. There is housed some beautiful 17th century <sup>church</sup> silver.*

## SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

*Mercy Convent Ballingarry: - National School for Girls.  
Secondary School, Ballingarry.  
National School for Boys, Ballingarry.  
N.S. for Boys & N.S. for Girls at Greanagh.*

## HOSPITALS

*Nearest Hospital at Broom - 7 miles*



**FAIRS AND MARKETS ; HALF-HOLIDAY**

Monthly fairs and markets.....

Weekly market day..... Half-holiday *Wednesday.*

**GARAGES AND PETROL STATIONS**

.....  
.....  
.....

**CONVEYANCES FOR HIRE (Owners) :**

Taxis *John Daffy, & Ken Williams, Ballyingarry.  
Michael Dwyer, Ltd premises, Ballyingarry  
Daniel Hennessy, (Stackrey) Ballyingarry  
John O'Brien, Lymnagh, Bowree, Co. Linn.  
Michael Power, do. do. do.*

Motors (Touring).....  
.....

Boats (State type).....  
.....

Bicycles.....  
.....

Caravans .....

Horses.....  
.....

**CAMPING SITES**

*(At principal holiday resorts)*

Location..... Landowner.....  
.....  
.....

Local Improvements Committee.....  
Secretary .....

DATE *4/6/44* (Signed) *J.P. Lynch*  
Surveyor.

## HISTORIC SITES

Royal Seats, scenes of historic events—battles, mass meetings, historic festivals, &c. Location.

Landowner. Historical or traditional notes.

**KNOCK FIERNA.** This was a centre of Druidical worship to the god Donn Firinn, after whom the hill is called. Some of the older people firmly believe this hill is still the home and headquarters of the Fairies, after whom they maintain, the hill has been called. By others it is called the hill of truth as <sup>when</sup> rain is nigh ~~and~~ its peak is covered with clouds. (Cnoc Firinne' - R. 56.)

## HISTORIC HOUSES; BURIAL PLACES

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

Glenwilliam Castle. Two miles south of Ballynary in very lonely surroundings is this picturesque old house. Built in 1796 by a member of the widespread MASSY family it passed in 1858 to an Edward Atkinson of Enniskillen. See picture. It was, in his young days, the home of Lord Atkinson<sup>son</sup>, of Edward, Attorney General for Ireland 1892 & 1895-1905., M. P. for Derry 1895-1905 and Lord of Appeal in ordinary from 1905 till his death.

The Bridge, Ballynary. At the bridge Ballynary, in the house now occupied by the Ed O'Brian, there lived "The Great O'Brian" a famous hedge school master of latter 18th cent. He was a United Irishman and had Lord Edward Fitzgerald to visit him in this house, prior to rising of 1798 → (vide Worthies of Thomond by Robert Hood)  
PAROCHIAL HOUSE, Ballynary. Here resided a famous P. P.

## SPAS OR MINERAL SPRINGS

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

in the person of Father Don Shanahan who was pastor for some years after 1870. He raised and led to Rome a company of Zouaves, in 1869 to help the Pope against Garibaldi. This house was formerly a fortified dwelling, built in 1690. It has been greatly altered and modernised. It can be considered one of the oldest Priests' residences in the country. It was a de Laey house. It might be possible to see it, to right of picture showing blund & Knockferna.

NO Spas or Mineral Springs

## CURIOSITIES

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

Any story or legend to be related.

Doorway, Ballyknockane. At Ballyknockane, one mile from Ballingany on road to Broom is a very lovely doorway of beautifully dressed sandstone and in horse-shoe shape. Just inside fence it attracts the attention of all passers by who ask "What is it" Locally it is now known as "The-what-is-it" It was built in 1821 as the entrance to a forge and only this well in which the door is situated, now survives. See picture.

## CUSTOMS, PATTERNS, ETC.

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

St Patrick's Well. Three miles south of Ballingany, on roadside near Lees Cross, (Ballyneale) surmounted by a life size statue is the Well of St Patrick, to which a pilgrimage in processional form takes place on feast of Saint each year. Adjoining the land of the Mark Lynch, Ballyclan. Very well kept.

St John's Well. Beside the village and adjacent to site of Kilsbane Abbey is St John's Well. Approached by a stile from main road, a few yards to north of which, it lies. Frequented by the old people. No cures attributed.

Sundays Well. In a triangle formed by upper and lower roads leading to village, from east, is Sunday's Well or Lady's Well. Frequented by many old people. No cures attributed.

(Signed)

P. J. Lynch.

Surveyor.

DATE

9/1/44.