

Rath-Iomghain le Muire sa Bhfor

RATHANGAN :

Its Churches

and Schools

PRICE

ONE SHILLING

RATHANGAN CONVENT SCHOOLS

Structural Steelwork and Entrance Gates

Manufactured and Supplied

by

SMITH & PEARSON
Ltd.

NEWCOMEN WORKS, DUBLIN

RY 332700

Rathangan : The Outline

of Its History

Seabharlann Cho.
Dara
Class
Cont
Price

IT WOULD NOT be possible within the scope of these few pages to attempt even a summary of the history of Rathangan : that history has been well written by Bishop Comerford in his *Collections*, vol. II, p.p. 42—51, by Lord Walter Fitzgerald in the *Kildare Archaeological Journal*, vol. V, p.p. 131—63, and Fr. Seosamh O Muirthile, S.J., in his typed notes supplied during the U.C.D. Extra-Mural Course held in the Bord na Mona Camp, Killentomas, in 1952. The barest outline must suffice for our present purpose.

Rathangan town stands in the ancient parish of that name now incorporated with Kildare. The town is built on the River Slate : that river is called the Barrow or the little Barrow from Rathangan Bridge. The parish of Rathangan is in East and West Offaly : the town and most of the parish are in East Offaly. Offaly is called after O'Connor Fahy, who was the chief of that territory in former times. Rathangan is Rath Iomghain, or Iomghan's Fort. Iomghan means Wounder : there were several Iomghans in ancient Ireland : who this particular Iomghan was is not known.

The Rath is in the field adjoining the ancient churchyard surrounding the present Protestant Church, and lying to the right of the road leading from Rathangan to Edenderry. O'Donovan who visited it in December 1837 describes it as follows : " this mound is at present planted, and is . . . about 180 feet in diameter and measures from its base to its summit, slantwise, about 42 feet, which would probably make about 28 feet in the perpendicular. It is encircled by a large ditch, which is about 738 feet in circumference, and a fosse on the south and east side."

The Four Masters record that about 807 A.D. Flaithusa, son of Cinaedh, Lord of Uí-Failghe, was slain at Rath Imghain.

The manor of Rathangan came into the possession of the De Vesey's soon after the English invasion : probably it was they who founded the castle which with their other possessions passed in 1316 into the hands of John Fitzthomas, first Geraldine Earl of Kildare. In 1329 on the 7th July Richard, third Earl of Kildare, died in Rathangan and was buried at the Grey Abbey, Kildare.

In March 1535 during the Rebellion of Silken Thomas, Rath-

angan Castle was taken by the English, but not long after it was recaptured by Silken Thomas by the following ruse: "Thomas caused a drove of cattle to appear timely in the morning hard by the town of Rathangan. Those who kept the castle suspecting it to be a booty were drawn for the most part out of the castle and were surprised by Thomas who lay in ambush, and the greater number of them slain."

By the month of July the castle appears to have been re-taken by Government forces.

In 1546 many of the Geraldines took up arms against the Saxons in revenge for their expulsion from the country . . . they plundered Ballymore-Eustace and Rathvilly and all the country around: they also plundered Rathangan and carried away on that occasion a countless number of cows.

Rathangan Castle stood near the present Rathangan Lodge.

Recording the death of Margaret O'Carroll, wife of O'Connor Fahy in 1451 the Four Masters describe her as "the best woman of her time in Ireland, for it was she who gave two invitations of hospitality in the one year to those who sought rewards, that is poets, minstrels and mendicant friars." One of these feasts took place at Killeigh, at which 2700 people were entertained, and the other at Rathangan, and "she gave the second invitation to all who came not to the first, on the feast of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady in the Harvest." The feast of the Assumption of the B.V.M. 15th August was therefore the festive of the church and parish.

In a poem entitled "The Victories of Hugh son of Shane O'Byrne" written about 1560 Rathangan and its neighbourhood are referred to: "The vigorous exertions at Bailegaidhi (Ballygaddy) caused us to give thanks to the King of Heaven. Grainsioch Unserd (Puncher's Grange) was plundered by you; Cuilmuine (Kilmoney) is put out of form. We heard a news that raised your fame; Rath-Iomdhain (Rathangan) you consumed, Cluain Bolg and Bothar-Cuill (Boherkill) were plundered, and to the spoil taken at Fiodh Cuilinn I compare no booty."

In 1744 the Earl of Kildare granted a lease forever and 929 acres to a Mr. Boyle Spencer. The castle which probably had become ruinous after the 1641 Rising was demolished about 1765, and with the materials Rathangan Lodge was built close to its site by Mr. Spencer who also built Rathangan House.

In 1798 Rathangan was garrisoned by a Company of the South Cork Militia under Captain Langton, and a Yeomanry Corps under Captain James Spencer, agent to the Duke of Leinster. On Saturday 26 May the Insurgents of Rathangan and the surrounding district under Captain Doorley attacked the town in great numbers,

and many of the loyalists were slain. The Insurgents attacked Rathangan House which had been barricaded; they gained admittance and piked Captain Spencer to death on his own stairs. Two days later a detachment of the Dragoon Guards under Colonel Mahon, and the City of Cork Militia after a hard struggle drove out the Insurgents.

Captain Doorley was a young farmer who lived at Lullymore. The farm was surrounded on all sides by the Bog of Allen, and there was only one passage. Three of his family took part in the Insurrection. The family tombstone in the old churchyard at Rathangan reads: "Erected by Thady Doorley in memory of his son Michael Doorley who departed this life on 26th December 1808, aged 36. May he rest in peace. Amen. Also John Doorley who died 1798 aged 27 years. And the above Thaddeus Doorley who died 1821, aged 126 years."

THE CHURCHES OF RATHANGAN

THE FIRST CHURCH of which we know stood on the site occupied by the present Protestant Church: a small portion of the walls were until recent times to be seen to the east of the present building. The Church was dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the festival of the church and parish was kept on the 15th August. The church was founded probably by the Anglo-Normans, possibly by the Fitzgeralds to whom Strongbow had granted the County Kildare Baronies of Offaly, excluding the town and manor of Kildare which belonged to the de Vescis.

The chapel of the Penal times stood immediately inside the Demesne Wall where the high canal bridge stands. Two venerable trees stood in front of the chapel: they were studded with nails for notices, and ties for horses, and were cut down only thirteen years ago. There was a circle of yew-trees there also until recent times. This chapel was built about 1700, as we learn from a return of November 1731 which states that "the Mass-house of Rathangan where the priest of Kildare officiates has been built above thirty years." It is marked on Noble and Keenan's Map of 1752.

The chapel which immediately preceded the present Church of St. Patrick was on the same site. It was mud-walled and thatched. The site on which it stood was formerly a gravel pit. There was no room at the rear or at the front: it was surrounded by houses;

there was until recent times a lane at the left as you went up to the site. Parents of parishioners still living spoke of it as the Old chapel, and the present St. Patrick's Church which replaced it as the New chapel. That the old chapel had a South Gallery is shown by the following document :

RESOLUTIONS of the SUBSCRIBERS to the GALLERY on the SOUTH END of the OLD CHAPEL of RATHANGAN, regarding the building of a NEW GALLERY in the EAST END OF the NEW CHAPEL.

At a meeting of the Subscribers to the Gallery in the South End of the Old Chapel, held at the house of Pat Slevin on the 12th day of January 1817, John Corry in the chair, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to, viz :—

1st. We resolved that we, the undersigned members of said Gallery do continue and unite in a body to erect a gallery in the East end of the New Chapel, with equal expense to each subscriber.

2nd. We resolved that the Gallery in the Old Chapel aforesaid be valued by competent judges, or otherwise sold by auction, and the net proceeds of said Gallery (or materials if found fit) do go to the building of the New Gallery to the credit of the original subscribers of the Old Gallery, or their immediate successors, providing at the same time that if any members or member to said Old Gallery, should wish to decline to become members for the New Gallery, such member or members are to be paid in money a fair proportion arising from the sale or value of said Old Gallery, and on being paid such portion, any member or members, are fully and completely disqualified from having a seat on, or any claim whatsoever to the New Gallery, or any other branch of their family, except such as may come in as subscribers.

3rd. We resolved that the children of each and every subscriber, who branch off by marriage, or otherwise become housekeepers on their own account, are not entitled to seats on said New Gallery, except they come in as subscribers.

4th. We resolved that as there will be room for a few more subscribers on the New Gallery, than were on the old one, we are ready and willing to receive in our body as many more of our respectable fellow parishioners, as it will appear to us, there may be accommodation for, providing at all times that such persons be first proposed and after approved of, by the original subscribers or a majority thereof.

5th. We resolved that an accurate estimate, of the probable expense of building said New Gallery, be made that it may be known how much each member will have to advance.

6th. We resolved that this meeting do adjourn to Sunday the 19th inst. and that such person or persons, as until then may be proposed, will on that day be approved of, or not, and that each, and every member be prepared to pay in the amount of his subscription on Sunday the 26th day of January, to Mr. Dan Morrin, whom we appoint to act as our treasurer.

7th. We resolved that any person not complying strictly with the above regulations cannot be considered a member.

8th. We resolved that these our resolutions be inserted on the Chapel Book, and that Thomas Kelly do act as our secretary.

Given under our hands this 12th day of January, 1817.

Thomas Kelly.	Edward Cross.	John Morrin.
John Corry (Jnr.).	Pat Kelly.	Michael Morrin.
Pat Slevin.	Michael Connor.	Peter Morrin.
Tim Shaughness.	Simon Farrell.	Daniel Morrin.
John Dinnel.	John Farrell.	William Flood.

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH

ST. PATRICK'S Church, Rathangan was founded on St. Patrick's Day, 1816. That fact is commemorated on a horizontal limestone flag, 6 feet by 3 feet, attached to the west wall of the tower, and inscribed :

Haec Domus Dei Domus orationis cunctis populis—Is.56.7v.

The first stone of this chapel dedicated to St. Patrick was laid on the 17th day of March 1816, by the Rev. G. Mooney.

The entire edifice has been raised in nine months notwithstanding the general depression and consequent distress of that time.

It may be looked on by posterity as a monument of the generous energies and cordial liberality of all ranks and persuasions of the people.

A Domino factum est istud

Ipsi laus et honor in aeternum.

The subsequent career of Father G. Mooney has not been traced. In Dr. Doyle's List of Diocesan Clergy of 1820 there is only one Fr. Mooney, to whom Dr. Doyle refers as "Rev. Mr. Mooney of, Iclieve, Ballinakill, C.C. Rathcoffey," that is Clane. This Fr.

Mooney seems to have been born at Brandera Cross, Ballinakill parish, and to have been John Mooney who was a student of Carlow College, 1 September, 1816 to 1 July, 1917. In May, 1818 Fr. John Mooney received the Dominican habit for the Convent in Kilkenny. C.C. Clane 1820; it is he probably who is referred to as C.C. Clonogue in a letter of J.K.L. of 2 February, 1827 to Fr. Martin Doyle, P.P. He seems to be identical with Fr. Francis Mooney who was C.C. Clane for the second time from 1837 until he became Adm. Ballyfin about 1842, Francis possibly being a second name or his name in religion. In 1847 Fr. John Mooney became P.P. Rosenallis where he built the parish church about 1863. He died in April, 1876. He was a kinsman of the late Mother Angela Mooney, of Presentation Convent, Kildare, who was second Mother General of the Presentation Order in this diocese.

The bell in St. Patrick's Church measures 3 feet 4 inches by 5 feet 11 inches inside and is inscribed J. Murphy, Dublin, 1857.

The graceful bell-tower was designed by Mr. Dunne, father of the late Fr. John Dunne, P.P. Borris who died in 1931. The building of the Tower was begun 1 July, 1869.

The Organ, the Sanctuary Lamp and the Statues of the Sacred Heart and Blessed Virgin Mary were given during the pastorate of Rev. Dr. Murphy, V.G. and the curacy of Fr. James Hughes, 1896-1901. They were the gift of Mrs. Carroll, nee Doyle, who was born where Mr. James Pitt is now. She lived and died in the U.S.A. About this time too the stained windows were given. The fine marble altar and communion rails were erected about 1900. The two marble holy water stoups were given by the Cullen family of Guidenstown and the Flood family of Thomastown.

The site of the Church of St. Patrick though still very restricted and barely sufficient for its purpose, was tastefully laid out, and the entrance and approach to the church, lined with trees, are singularly beautiful.

It is hoped that at a future date it may be possible to give some particulars regarding the ancient churches of Cloncurry, Cappinargid, Lullymore—founded by St. Patrick—Inch an Earl, Knavenstown, Ellistown, and Dunmurry, where Downey who was killed at Gilbert Rath is buried.

CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION

On Monday, 14 February, 1955, His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Keogh, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, visited the site and marked out the position of the proposed church. The architect of the church was in attendance, as were an t-Athair P. Mac Suibhne, P.P. and Fr. T. Kennedy, C.C. The design of the church is in Irish traditional

style, and the work is being done by local craftsmen, under Mr. Andrew Cross, Drumsree, contractor. Work on the site began on 21 February. The foundation stone was prepared by Mr. Walsh and Son, Carlow and is inscribed as follows :

D.O.M.
Huius Ecclesiae
Beatae Mariae Virginis in Coelum Assumptae dicatae
Hunc Lapidem Primarium
Benedixit ac Collocavit
Rev. mus et Ill. mus Thomas Keogh Epus Daren. et Leighlinen.
In Festo omnium Hiberniae Sanctorum
A.D. MCMLV.

THE FOUNDATION SCRIPT

The following is the Script of Parchment enclosed within the Foundation Stone of the Church of the Assumption, Sunday, 6 November, 1955 :

Anno Domini MCMLV

Sanctissimo Domino Nostro Pio Papa XII Felicissime Regnante.
Excellentissimo Viro Joanne T. O Ceallaigh Rei Publicae Hiberniae
Faustissime Praeside
Illustrissimo ac Reverendissimo Domino Thoma Huius Sanctae
Kildarensis et Leighlinensis Ecclesiae Episcopo
Reverendissimo Domino Jacobo J. Conway, Praelato Domus
Sanctitatis Vicario Generali ac loci Muinebheag Parocho
Reverendissimo Domino Gulielmo Miller, Praelato Domus Sanctitatis
Suae Vicario Foraneo ac loci Pontis Novi Parocho.
Admodum Rev.º Petro Mac Suibhne Kildar. et Rathangan Parocho.
Rev.º Thoma Kennedy huius loci Rathangan Vicario
Ampla Stipante Reverendi Cleri Corona
Insigni Praesente Virorum Praeclarorum turma necnon Sororum
B.V.M. de Mercede in Monasterio Sancti Joannis prope astante
habitantium.
Ac Creberrima Celebrante Fidelium Laeta
Caterva Dominica Die 6º Mensis Novembris in Festo Omnium
Hiberniae Sanctorum.
Ill. mus ac Rev. mus Dominus Thomas Episcopus Hic imponit in
Muro Novae Ecclesiae in Honorem Beatae Mariae Virginis.
In Coelum Assumptae Sub Invocatione etiam Sancti Patricii Hiber-
niae et Prioris Ecclesiae Patronae Aedificandae

Rite Benedictum. Lapidem Angularem
Hac Chartula Inserta cum nummis Istis tam Sacris quam Publicis
et ut Fieri solet, Aliquibus Ephemeridibus Hodiernis.
Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam et Piam Rei Memoriam.
Amen.



Sigillum Sti Patricii Ecclesiae
Rathangan.



Sigillum Stae Brigidae
Ecclesiae Kildare.

TRANSLATION OF SCRIPT

In the year of Our Lord 1955

Our Most Holy Lord, Pope Pius XII most gloriously reigning.
His Excellency Sean T. O'Ceallaigh, being under happiest auspices,
President of the Republic of Ireland.

The Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lord, Thomas being
Bishop of this Holy Church of Kildare and Leighlin.

The Right Rev. James J. Conway, Domestic Prelate of His Holiness.
Being Vicar-General and Parish Priest of Muinebheag.

The Right Rev. William Miller, Domestic Prelate of His Holiness.
Being Vicar-Forane and Parish Priest of Droichead Nua.

The Very Rev. Peadar Mac Suibhne being Parish Priest of Kildare
and Rathangan.

The Rev. Thomas Kennedy being Curate at Rathangan, while an
Ample Ring of Reverend Clergy encircle in support a Distinguished
gathering of Illustrious Men.

As well as of Mercy Sisters of the adjoining Convent of St. John.
Joyfully a crowd of Christian Faithful throng closely around.

On Sunday, 6 November, Feast of All the Saints of Eire, The
most Illustrious and most Rev. Lord Thomas the Bishop here
placeth in the wall of the new church to be built in Honour of the
Blessed Virgin Mary Assumed into Heaven.

Under the invocation also of St. Patrick, Patron of Eire and of the
Former Church, the corner-stone of Foundation, duly Blessed, in
which has been put this Parchment, together with those minted
coins of Church and State and as is the custom, some newspapers
of today.

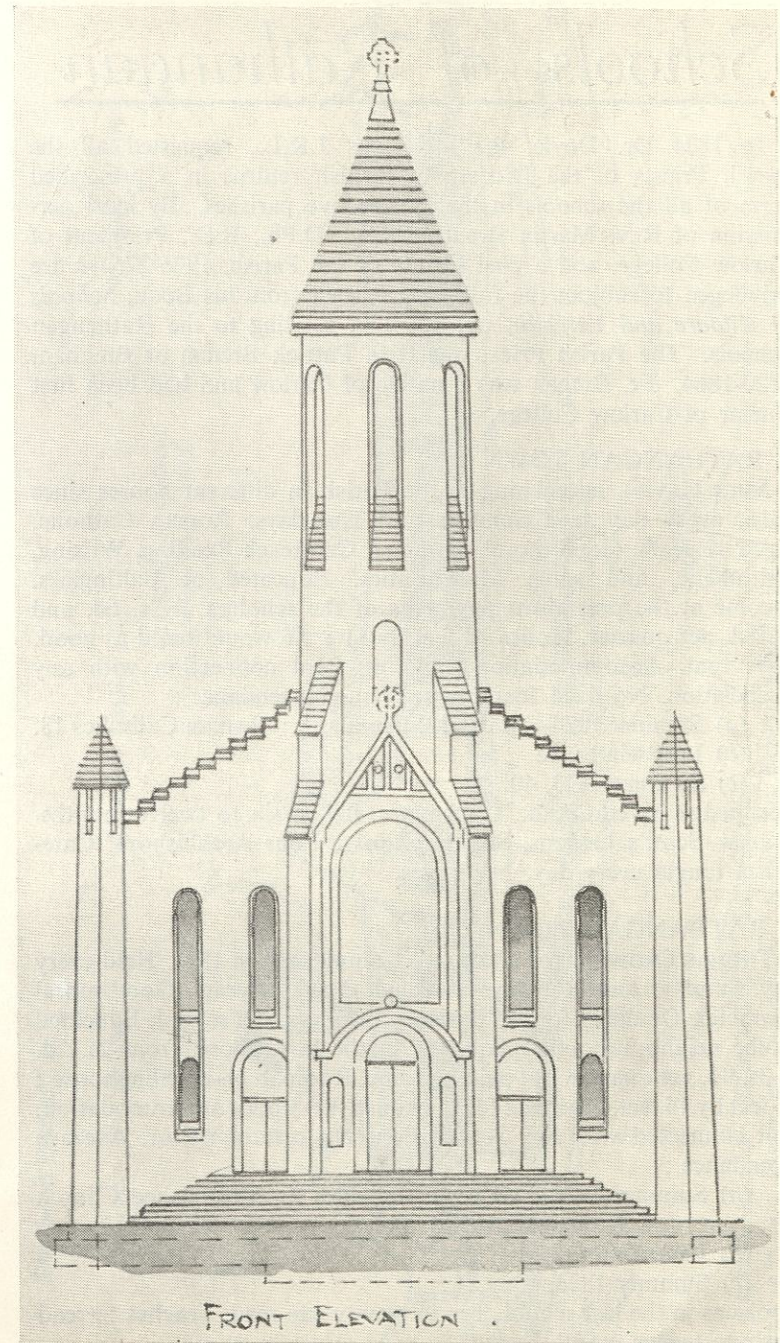
Unto the Greater Glory of God and the Dutiful Memory of the
Act. Amen.



Seal of St. Patrick's
Church, Rathangan.



Seal of St. Brigid's
Church, Kildare.



Church of the Assumption

Schools of Rathangan

In 1824 Dr. Doyle, the illustrious J.K.L., requested all the Parish Priests of the Diocese to furnish returns in a prescribed form of all the schools in their respective parishes. By kind permission of Rev. Martin Brenan, M.A., D.Ph., B.D., President of Carlow College, and a past Curate of the Parish, 1926-27, we are privileged to subjoin the following extract from his Book, *Schools of Kildare and Leighlin*, pp. 180-189, relating to the Rathangan Schools. The Parish Priest was Rev. Patrick Brenan or Brennan, 1820-1864. Fr. Brenan was a native of Carlow and had been first Bursar of Carlow College.

5. RATHANGAN TOWN

JOHN GAVEN. Is teaching in the Parish in different houses since 1816, every day save Sundays and Holydays. Roman Catholic. Aged 42 years. Good moral character. Can teach Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and some Mathematics. Educated at Baltinglass. Income at the precarious payments of the scholars at 2s. 6d. and 6s. 8d. per quarter. House 13 feet by 11 ; £6 would build as good. Pays rent. Accommodation middling. Not connection with any Association. No fixed Inspector. Average attendance :

- (a) Summer 1824—Males 13, Females 5 ; Roman Catholics 18.
- (b) Last winter, 32.
- (c) Summer 1823, 40.

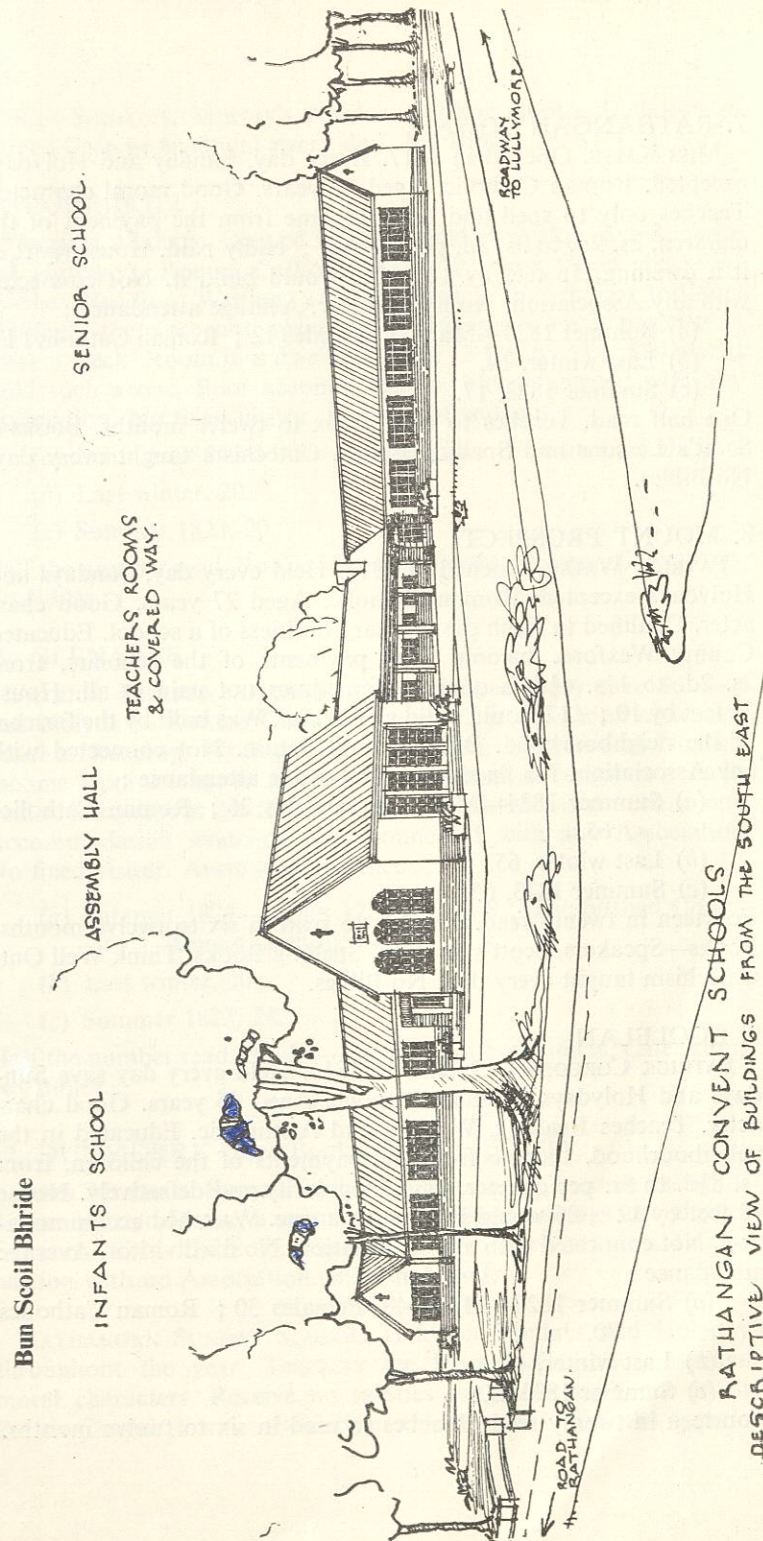
Ten in twenty can read. Teaches to read in six to twelve months. Books—Scott's Lessons, Spelling Books. Four Archbishops' Catechism taught every day. No Bibles.

6. RATHANGAN TOWN

THOMAS CROWLEY (or CRONLY). Commenced in 1821. Held every day, Sundays and Holydays excepted. Aged 40 years. Good moral character. Qualified for the ordinary business of a school. Educated in the neighbourhood. Income as in the last school, from 2s. 2d. to 3s. 9d. per quarter, not paid by some. Room in his dwellinghouse ; 15 feet by 14 feet. Pays rent for the house. Very poor accommodation. Not connected with any Association. No certain visitor. Average attendance :

- (a) Summer 1824—Males 15, Females 9 ; Established Church 1, Roman Catholics 23.
- (b) Last winter, 24.
- (c) Summer 1823, 48.

Books as in the last school. Ten in twenty can read. Teaches to read in six to twelve months.



7. RATHANGAN TOWN

MISS KEEFE. Opened in 1817. Every day, Sunday and Holydays excepted. Roman Catholic. Aged 30 years. Good moral character. Teaches only to spell and read. Income from the payment of the children, 2s. 2d. to 3s. 3d. per quarter; badly paid. House (part of it a dwelling) 16 feet by 12; £20 would build it. Not connected with any Association. No fixed visitor. Average attendance:

- (a) Summer 1824—Males 5, Females 12; Roman Catholics 17.
- (b) Last winter, 14.
- (c) Summer 1823, 17.

One half read. Teaches to read in six to twelve months. Books—Scott's Lessons and Spelling Books. Catechism taught every day. No Bibles.

8. MOUNT PROSPECT

PATRICK WALSH. Opened in 1812. Held every day, Sundays and Holydays excepted. Roman Catholic. Aged 27 years. Good character. Qualified to teach the ordinary business of a school. Educated County Wexford. Income from payments of the scholars, from 2s. 2d. to 11s. 4½d. a quarter, sometimes not paid at all. House 36 feet by 10; £12 would build a such one. Was built by the farmers of the neighbourhood. Bad accommodation. Not connected with any Association. No fixed visitor. Average attendance:

- (a) Summer 1824—Males 39, Females 26; Roman Catholics 65.
- (b) Last winter, 65.
- (c) Summer 1823, 65.

Fourteen in twenty read. Teaches to read in six to twelve months. Books—Speakers, Scott's Lessons, Spelling Books, Think Well Ont. Catechism taught every day. No Bibles.

9. COOLELAN

PATRICK CORCORAN. Opened in 1816. Held every day save Sundays and Holydays. Roman Catholic. Aged 45 years. Good character. Teaches Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. Educated in the neighbourhood. Income from the payments of the children, from 1s. 8½d. to 5s. per quarter, paid irregularly and defectively. House 18 feet by 12; £6 would build such a one. Wretched accommodation. Not connected with any Association. No fixed visitor. Average attendance:

- (a) Summer 1824—Males 40, Females 30; Roman Catholics 70.
- (b) Last winter, 47.
- (c) Summer 1823, 50.

Fourteen in twenty read. Teaches to read in six to twelve months.

Books—Speakers, Murray's Reader, Spelling Books, Imitation of Christ. Catechism taught every day. No Bibles.

10. BOHERKILL

MICHAEL MARTIN. Opened in 1820. Held every day save Sundays and Holydays. Roman Catholic. Aged 70 years. Good character. Teaches Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, though not too well qualified—therefore not approved of. Income from 2 pence to 3 pence a week. Room in a dwellinghouse, 13 feet by 11; £10 would build such a one. Poor accommodation. Not connected with any Association. No fixed visitor. Average attendance:

- (a) Summer 1824—Males 6, Females 5; Roman Catholics 11.
- (b) Last winter, 20.
- (c) Summer 1823, 20.

Half the number read. Books—Spelling Books, Primers, Catechisms. No Bibles.

11. GLENAREE

PATRICK KIERNAN. Opened 1819. Held every day save Sundays and Holydays. Roman Catholic. Aged 21 years. Good character. Teaches Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. Educated at Nenagh. Income from 2s. 2d. to 5s. per quarter from the scholars; badly paid. House about 12 feet square; £6 would build such a one. Accommodation wretched. Not connected with any Association. No fixed visitor. Average attendance:

- (a) Summer 1824—Males 12, Females 8; Established Church 2, Roman Catholics 18.
- (b) Last winter, 20.
- (c) Summer 1823, 24.

Half the number read. Books—Spelling Books, Primers, Catechisms. No Bibles.

12. DUNMURRY (Blue Book Summary, p. 620.)

JOHN MURRAY. Roman Catholic. Pay school. Income 1s. 8d. to 4s. per quarter. House, a room in a mud cabin. Average attendance: Summer 1824—Males 15, Females 1; Roman Catholics. In connection with no Association. Bible not read.

RATHANGAN SUNDAY SCHOOL. Held on Sundays and Holydays throughout the year. Teachers are Roman Catholics, excellent moral characters. Receive no salaries or gratuities. Teach in the Parish Chapel. Form a Society in themselves. Under the superin-

tendance of the Parish Priest and his Curate and under it always. Average attendance :

- (a) Summer 1824—Males 165, Females 159 ; Roman Catholics 324.
- (b) Last winter, 300
- (c) Summer 1823, 450.

2. RATHANGAN TOWN—PROTESTANT SCHOOL

MISS POWELL. Opened 1820. Held every day, Sundays excepted. Protestant. Aged 30 years. Good moral character. Teaches only to spell and read. Income, from the payment of the children, 11s. 4½d. per quarter. School, a room about 12 feet square, part of her dwellinghouse. Pays rent for it. Decent accommodation. Not connected with any Association that I know of. No certain visitor. Average attendance :

- (a) Summer 1824—Males 7, Females 11 ; Established Church 13, Roman Catholics 5.
- (b) Last winter, 18.
- (c) Summer 1823, 18.

One half read. Can teach to read in six to twelve months. Books—Speakers, Imitation of Christ, Spelling Books. No Scripture of any Version.

Fatuer Brennan here elaborates a plan of primary education which he suggests for the whole country and continues as follow2 :

But if this plan, or some other one like it, be not adopted, then the Parish Priest of Kildare will have to lament that upwards of twelve hundred children under his spiritual jurisdiction, have been rejected by the State as unworthy of its care, and left to seek a precarious education by means equally degrading to the State and to human nature, and which when so obtained, it will be hard to determine whether it be a Blessing or a Curse.

N.B.—From the report of a school being kept in Rathangan, consisting of a small number of female children by a lady in that town, I applied at the school or that which was reputed to be it, and could find no person in it.

In the Roman Catholic Church, Kildare and Rathangan form but one parish.

Oath.—I, Patrick Brenan, do swear that I have inquired, with due and reasonable diligence, into the matters contained in the above Returns ; and I do further swear, that the statement therein made, as to each Head respectively, is the truth, according to the best judgment that I have been able to form upon the subject.

Sworn before me, JOHN CASSIDY, a magistrate of the County of

Kildare, residing at Monasterevan, this 28th day of August, 1824, by the above-named.

Signed and Returned to His Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of Education in Ireland this 30th day of August, 1824.

PATRICK BRENAN,
Roman Catholic Parish Priest.
MICHAEL NOWLAN, *Curate.*

The numbers in schools of Kildare and Leighlin extracts refer to th eparish as a whole.

THE BOYS' SCHOOL

In 1826 Fr. Patrick Brenan, P.P. of Kildare and Rathangan, built a school for girls 48 ft. by 21 ft. at the left hand of the Church entrance gate within the Church grounds. In 1830 he built a similar school for boys at the right hand side. A handsome limestone slab over each entrance gives the titles, "Parochial School 1826," and "Parochial School 1830." In the latter school many future priests were taught. Here under his own father as school-teacher the future poet William A. Byrne, who wrote *A Light on the Broom*, received his first lessons. As befits one who takes his pen-name, William Dara from Kildare's plains, he sings of Allen's bog, of turf-clamps, of peat-sods' blaze, of brown bog-pools where pewitt and siskin cry, of purple heath, of broom and whim and bog-land. He loves the song of birds, the thrushes' wild piping, the lilt of the lark at morn with all the promise of Spring. He tells of a dream in which he heard the Gaelic speech, and woke to find the rapture gone, his tongue "tangled in these Teuton runes." He voices his yearning prophet-like :

That is no tongue for slaves
So let it toss on chainless waves
Till time and justice marching on
Shall see the foes of freedom run,
Then shall the ocean surging up
Fling back the Gael his golden cup.

As becomes Kildare, too, he sings of Brigid :

The Dove that was to nest
Among the oak boughs of Kildare
Where still her blessings rest.

He sings of the Catholic Faith :

And prayer is here to give us sight
To see the purest ends.
Each evening through the brown turf-light
The Rosary ascends.

Then we have rest so sweet so good,
The quiet rest you crave,
The long deep bogland solitude
That fits a forest's grave.

The long strange stillness wide and deep
Beneath God's loving hand,
Where wondering at the grace of sleep
The Guardian Angels stand.

His name will be remembered for his sweet lyrics, fragrant of the Faith, full of the quiver of wings, redolent of peat and bog.

The School did duty until the present two-roomed Boys' School under the National Board was built in the Rath Field near the entrance to the Old Church Foundation. The School was completed in 1911. The building itself cost £618, while the enclosing of the School cost £137-3-3.

THE GIRLS' SCHOOL

At the end of May 1875, four Sisters of the Mercy Order came from Alton near Shrewsbury in England to begin a foundation in Rathangan for the purpose of teaching the girls of Rathangan and visiting the poor of the district. The Alton Convent had been founded from Carlow. Two of the Sisters were daughters of a Mr. Keogh or Kehoe, a wealthy merchant of Francis Street, Dublin, and were related to the Parish Priest of Kildare, Father Nolan. A sister of theirs was one of another group who went from the same Convent to found the Mercy Convent in Borris-in-Ossory. On the Feast of the Assumption that year Dr. Lynch, Coadjutor-Bishop of the Diocese, visited Rathangan and, addressing the congregation at Mass, announced the glad tidings of the coming of the Sisters, welcomed them to the Parish and invoked God's blessing on their work. At this time a fifth Sister had come from Alton to complete the foundation. They took up residence in the building now known as the Old Convent. Prior to this it had been known as Tottenham Green : it was the property of a Mr. Pim, whose wife was a Miss Hanks, and from whom Father Nolan bought it.

For some time before the Sisters came it had been the residence of the Rathangan Curate : on the coming of the Sisters he went to live in the present Curate's house.

An Infant School was needed, and Mr. Thomas Lucey, brother of Mother Stanislaus, asked their uncle, James Dunne, of Ballybrittain, to come to the rescue. He gave £100, with which the School was built. It was completed in 1886. A brass tablet in the Infants' School records James Dunne's donation and the date of his death, 23 Aug. 1886, and asks the pupils' prayers for his soul. Mr. Dunne was of the same family as Fr. Dunne, P.P., Borris. The Daly family, who had several trades between them and who lived at that time where Mr. Ml. Dawson lives now built and completed the school.

These Schools are now being replaced by Scoil Bhríde.

A Dail Eireann Report for Wednesday 31 Oct. 1951, Vol. 127, No. 1, gives the following as the dates of foundation, and Roll numbers for the six schools of Kildare and Rathangan :

Rathangan Boys, 1908, Roll No. 15957. Rathangan Convent, 1875, Roll No. 11336. Kildare Monastery, 1884, Roll No. 12747. Kildare Convent, 1903, Roll No. 15599. Boston, 1869, Roll No. 10212. Barnaran, 1870, Roll No. 10454.

The Architect of the new School is Mr. Frank Foley, B.Arch, M.R.I.A.I., of Messrs. Buchan, Kane and Foley, Architects, 59 Merrion Square, Dublin, and the General Contractors, Messrs. Moran Bros., St. Anthony's, Tallaght, Co. Dublin.

SCOIL BHRIDHE RATH

IOMDHAIN

THE building of the new Convent Schools for Girls and Infants at Rathangan marks a further step in the programme of the Department of Education to provide modern school buildings throughout the country. A Government grant was provided to offset a considerable proportion of the cost, and the balance was provided by subscriptions from the people of the parish.

Under the guidance of An t-Athair P. MacSuibhne, P.P., Kildare and with the assistance of Rev. T. Kennedy, C.C., a scheme was set afoot to replace the old school buildings. The fine site was provided by the nuns of St. John's Convent of Mercy.

In designing the schools, every recent advance in planning and construction was adopted, but the use of native Irish materials is, of necessity, reflected in a traditional quality in the design, not out of keeping with its rural setting. For Rathangan is a townland where the old Irish way of life still lingers, and it may well be that out of the fostering of such deep rooted Celtic culture there will grow the seed of Ireland's second artistic spring. If the Building expresses something of the natural development of the traditional Irish idiom, it will be all the more suitable as a background for the educational activities of a new generation.

The School is planned to provide accommodation for 372 pupils together with Domestic Economy Room, Assembly Hall, Teachers' Rooms, Cloakrooms and Toilets. The Infants classrooms and Senior classrooms are located in separate wings of the building with the Assembly Hall and Teachers' Rooms in a central position. Separate playspaces are provided for infants and senior pupils with covered playsheds for use during inclement weather. The senior playshed, owing to the limitations of the site, had to be unincorporated as part of the main building, but in this position serves as a useful covered way. A large chair store is provided under the Assembly Hall stage, and a turf store and bicycle shed are planned in the grounds. Two entrance gateways are provided, one leading from Rathangan, the other from the road to Lullymore.

In the Infants' school there are four classrooms each for 48 pupils and in the Senior school five classrooms are planned to accommodate a total of 182 pupils. The aspect of all classrooms is towards the south-east and large windows ensure that all rooms enjoy the maximum amount of morning sunshine, and extensive clerestore windows allow for adequate and easily controlled cross-ventilation.

In the decorative scheme generally, light pastel shades are adopted with an avoidance of strong contrasting colours, to ensure a restful effect on the eyes.

In the construction of the building, cavity wall construction is adopted throughout, as this is the most effective method of ensuring a completely dry and warm building. The roofs are finished with small Irish slates, and the barges and eaves courses are carried out in reinforced concrete. Galvanised steel windows are provided to reduce the cost of maintenance to a minimum. The floors of the entrance halls and toilets are finished in terrazzo, and in corridors and cloakrooms thermoplastic tile flooring is adopted to give a resilient and hard-wearing floor of attractive colouring. Classrooms and Assembly Hall are finished with hardwood flooring.

The Assembly Hall is provided with a full size stage and chair store and is equipped with stage curtains, switch board, and stage lighting fittings. Outward opening steel french windows are planned as effective emergency exits, as well as serving to link the Hall with the playspace, for drill and other activities.

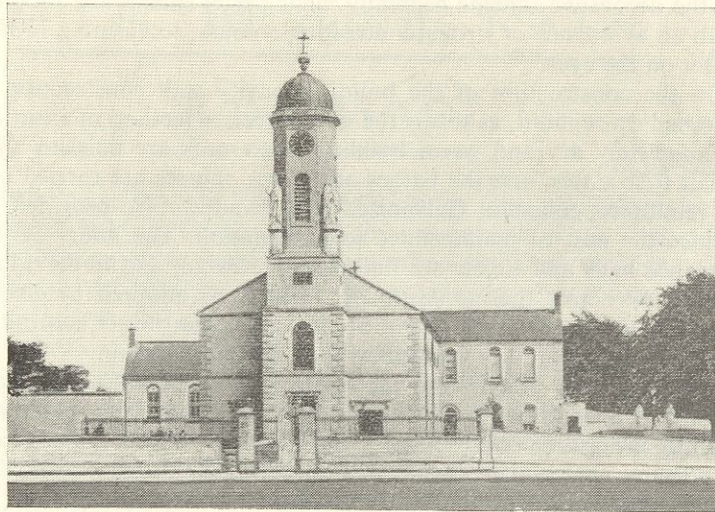
The entire building is heated by means of a boiler, burning turf, which is automatically fed through a Mona Jet Burner with thermostatic control. Water is supplied to toilets, drinking fountains and Domestic Economy Room, by means of an electrically operated pressure pump, from a well on the site.

The Domestic Economy Room is equipped with a solid fuel cooker, as well as an electric cooker for demonstration purposes. In addition to the standard type of stainless steel sink, a special sink for laundry demonstration is provided. A hot press with hot water cylinder and immersion heater is planned, adjoining the cooker, and two storage rooms are located of the Domestic Economy Room fitted with extensive cupboards and shelving, for the equipment used during classes. On an upper floor is provided an additional small room to serve the dual purpose of Demonstration Bedroom, Medical Inspection and Dentist's Room. Electric clocks are provided in all the principal rooms. In the classrooms small, open bookshelves are provided to serve as the nucleus of a school library.

In the planning and lay-out of the Schools careful consideration was given to setting of the building beside the new Church now in course of construction. As far as practicable the natural features of the site were retained, and it is hoped that when new trees are planted, and the grass has grown again, the School will appear an integral part of an attractive Irish country scene.

FRANK FOLEY
Architect

DUBLIN



St. Brigid's Church

TILING, TERRAZZO &
"ACCOTILE"

IN THE NEW SCHOOLS EXECUTED BY

VERSO BROS.
LTD.

9 BELVEDERE COURT

DUBLIN

Phone 42178

Congratulations

from

DENIS KING & Co.

LIMITED

Builders'

Providers

★

5 LEINSTER STREET

DUBLIN, C. 17

'Phone: 61968

NUPRO LIMITED

Manufacturers of
NUSTACK Stacking Chairs
(Reg. Design)

*offer their congratulations
on the opening of
your new school*

IRISH TEXTILE LEATHER LTD.

RATHANGAN
Co. Kildare

*EXPORTS OF ALL KINDS OF
TEXTILE LEATHERS
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD*

HOME MARKET SOLICITED

**WE SUPPLY
ALL BUILDING MATERIALS**

including
Timber, Joinery, Plumbing, Sanitary Ware,
Ironmongery, Grates, Ranges, Paints, Wall-
paper, Bricks, Claygoods, Cement, Asbestos
Goods

●
SAW MILLS, CREOSOTE AND JOINERY WORKS,
DRYING KILNS, NORTH WALL, DUBLIN

●
T. & C. MARTIN, LTD.

D'OLIER HOUSE, DUBLIN

Phone: 71571 (16 Lines)

E. W. HOSEY & SONS

*Electrical
Contractors*

89 Lower Clanbrassil Street
DUBLIN

and

4 Belton Terrace, BRAY

'Phone: Dublin 53404 and Bray 2755

SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS

and

BEST WISHES

from

MORAN BROTHERS LTD.

General

Building Contractors

"ST. ANTHONY'S," TALLAGHT

Co. Dublin

on the opening of Scoil Bhríde

'Phone: 342257

'Phone: Muinebeag 243 (Priv. Ex.)

'Grams: Manning, Bagenalstown

Joinery and Furniture

for Scoil Bhríde

supplied by

THOMAS MANNING

Joinery and Furniture Manufacturer

**Church and School Furniture of all descriptions by
skilled craftsmen**

Estimates Free

**Joinery Manufacturer to numerous Public
Authorities**

**Architects Drawings and Specifications
faithfully executed**

Contractor to Board of Works

Personal and Prompt Attention to all Patrons