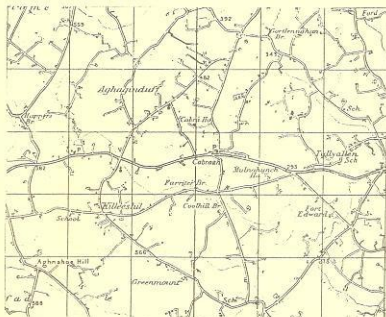


Paróiste Cill Íseal - Míleois 2000

Aifreann Buíochais ins an
Gleann na hAltóra, Achadh Cinn Dubh
3 Meán Fomhair 2000



Parish of Killeeshil - Millennium 2000
Mass In Thanksgiving in the
Altar Glen, Ackinduff
3 September 2000

COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET
OF
MASS IN THANKSGIVING

IN
THE ALTAR GLEN, ACKINDUFF
SUNDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2000

Fr James Crowley P.P. - Celebrant

Fr. Robert McKenna P.P. - Co-celebrant

Fr. Patrick Smyth P.E. - Co-celebrant

Fr. Kevin Donaghy M.Sc. - Homilist
(Principal St. Patrick's College, Armagh)



Edited By Brendan Holland

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FOREWARD

This first week of September 2000 is a very important week in the history of the parish of Killeeshil. We have sought forgiveness from Almighty God and each other. We have sat down together in a celebration meal and now, today, we celebrate the Mass in our Altar Glen in thanksgiving and in remembrance of the past.

Today we have vivid memories of the afternoon in 1989 when our much loved Cardinal O'Fiaich revelled in the atmosphere of this Holy Ground. We remember his stirring homily, his oft-repeated slogan of the day. "It is the Mass that matters." I have no doubt that his message that day has lived in the memory of all who were present and is perhaps his most important legacy to the people of the parish.

As we meet in thanksgiving we remember with profound gratitude the heroic sacrifices that were made to preserve and hand on the faith that we share today. Despite the centuries of persecution and the most determined efforts to stamp out the faith; despite the Famine - perhaps the greatest peace-time disaster in known history - and it's dreadful aftermath, they remained faithful.

The word "remember" is one of the most significant words in the English language. If we have no memory of what happened in the past, then we have no roots. If we have no roots, we have no relevance as a separate people. Another immensely significant word is "hope". If we have no hope for the future, we are cut off from what the future holds which would be the ultimate disaster.

Today, therefore, we acknowledge formally what happened in the past and we move on to face the future. The last 50 years have been a traumatic time for us all. We have moved out of a hundred years of poverty flowing from the Famine. After nearly 40 years of violence, and sectarian conflict, we now have a peace process, if not yet a lasting peace. We are also trying to recover our equilibrium after the shameful revelations of the past decade and much media hostility.

Now we must put behind us the uncertainties, the feelings of inferiority and the hatred engendered by so many acts of cruelty and revenge. We are entering a period of burgeoning prosperity and confidence. We must make sure that a mature Christian faith and devotion to the Mass keep pace with the rest. We are, when all is said and done, a Eucharistic people.

I am deeply grateful to Brendan Holland for preparing this commemorative booklet. I'm sure it will be treasured in every household in the parish. I express sincere thanks also to the many people who have worked together in so many ways to make this week a week to remember.

I pray God's blessing on you all.

JAMES CROWLEY P.P.



ACKINDUFF ALTAR GLEN

Introduction

"Where as, it is notoriously known, that the late rebellions in this Kingdom have been contrived, promoted and carried on by Popish Archbishops, Bishops, Jesuits, and other ecclesiastical persons of the Romish clergy. And for as much as the peace and public safety of this Kingdom is in danger which said Romish clergy do, not endeavour to withdraw his Majesty's Subjects from their obedience but do daily stir up, and move sedition and rebellion to the great hazard of the ruin and desolation of this Kingdom"

So began one of the provisions of new legislation in 1704 that has come to be known as the Penal Laws which were designed to exile and outlaw all Roman Catholic Clergy, from the humble Curate to the Archbishop or Bishop of every diocese. From the 1620's a series of Laws had been introduced so that Catholics could not own property, bear arms, educate their children or even own a horse over £5.00 in value.

It was in this climate that even the act of attending Mass became an offence - thus the need for the celebration of the Holy Sacrament in places such as the glen of Achadh Cinn Dubh. Bishop Hugh McMahon of Clogher, later Archbishop of Armagh, recorded, *"Over the countryside people might be seen signalling to each other on their fingers the hour that Mass was to begin in order that people might be able to kneel down and follow mentally the Mass being celebrated at a distance"*.

The Early Church in Killeeshil

Open air worship was a common feature in Ulster, and, particularly in Tyrone where the defeated O'Neills fled to exile in 1607. Prior to the defeat of O'Neill the Catholic Church in rural Ireland was barely recognisable from that which has existed in this and the last century. Although there was a hierarchy of Bishops and Parish Priests their remit and influence lessened the further one travelled from Drogheda and Dublin. There was even open hostility between the O'Neills and the Archbishop of Armagh because under the old Celtic system the Franciscan and Dominican religious orders had more influence over those who wielded power - the Clan Chieftians. Acts of worship were centered mainly around Friaries and, in some cases they also provided education for the young children.

In rural areas such as Killeeshil and Ackinduff the locals would have worshipped in a wooden framed, mud walled church on the site of what is now St. Paul's Church of Ireland church or in the Franciscan Friaries in either Terenure or Donaghmore. Indeed the parish of Killeeshil is mentioned in Irish Church records as far back as the early 1300's when it is referred to as 'Ekellisill' in the Calendar of Documents, Ireland under the heading, 'Ecclesiastical Taxation of Ireland 1302 - 6. It is also probable that they would have buried the dead in Killeeshil. In many ways the Catholic Church at that time had developed differently and distinctly from the Church in England or mainland Europe. It was common for priests to have partners and children who, in some cases even succeeded their father into the priesthood. Worship was mixed with superstition and old Celtic rites where visits to Holy Wells and places of healing were common. This was not encouraged by the Archbishop of the diocese who, in pre-reformation times, was based in Drogheda and not Armagh. There was little that the Archbishop could have done as his authority was either ignored or even challenged by the friary priests who gave their primary allegiance, not to Rome but to their local Chieftain - in our case the O'Neill. The fact that many of the Bishops in Armagh were of old English families did not help.

The Plantation and its Aftermath

The use of the Altar Glen as a place of worship would only have commenced after the Flight of the Earls in 1607. It is difficult to be exact about when the glen was first used as a place of worship as the general parish area of Killeeshil was very thinly populated by today's standards. For example, there were only three families in the townland of Ackinduff in 1607 when the land became the property of an English soldier named Samuel Hill. He received the land and many other townlands in the district as payment for his services to the Crown. In effect, he was the first landlord of Ackinduff.

The influence of the Religious Orders and Friaries still remained after O'Neill's defeat and they were still in existence for a further 150 - 200 years although their power and influence waned at the expense of the mainstream church. By the 1620's the first effects of the Penal Laws began to be felt but the freedom to practice the Catholic faith varied greatly. In 1613 the Intermuncio to Flanders, now in Belgium, sent Rome a very upbeat report on the state of religion in Ireland. He claimed that the Penal Laws were not being enforced and nearly all the population were openly professing their religion. By 1629 the then political powers turned their attention at one point to Lough Derg and attempted to close it as a place of pilgrimage. They ordered it to be demolished and *"have all the other superstitious statues and materials cast into the lough"*. A new law was introduced penalising the hearing of Mass to the tune of 200 crowns for a first offence and further attendance risked life in prison. At this time Plantation caused a movement of population away from lowland areas to more hilly barren uplands such as Ackinduff, Clonavaddy and Aughnagar began and we can therefore assume that it was around this time, or perhaps a little later that the Altar Glen was to become a permanent place of worship.

The Catholic Church had a short lived revival in its fortunes as, in the 1640's, England became convulsed in its own civil war. The immediate descendants of the dispossessed Irish Chieftains saw their opportunity and rebelled in 1641. Many gruesome atrocities were carried out on the

newly arrived settlers from Scotland and England. The anger of the dispossessed Irish was exemplified in an incident that took place in nearby Ballydonnelly "Castlecaulfield". Sir Toby Caulfield invited Phelim O'Neill to dinner. At that time he resided in the castle at Benburb having, until then, accepted the new rules of the victorious English. On meeting Sir Toby Caulfield at the door of his home in Castlecaulfield he took him prisoner to Benburb where he was killed and so began the rebellion of 1641.

Cromwell

Revival of the churches fortunes ended with the arrival of Sir Oliver Cromwell, the victor of the English Civil War. He was of puritan stock and was vehemently opposed to the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland and he set about his task of wiping it out with relish and with religious zeal. The 1650's were a dark period in the history of the Irish Catholic Church and, no doubt, the increasing peasant population in Ackinduff and the area generally worshipped in great fear and trepidation.

The location of the glen was very suitable for its purpose; an unusually steep sided small valley surrounded on three sides by higher ground. Lookouts would probably have been posted on what is now known as Kelly's hill on the top of Ackinduff and other surrounding hills to warn of the approach of soldiers and militia. It is likely that the glen would have been heavily wooded and would have provided cover for the priest and his flock in the event of being discovered.

As the years rolled by in the 1600's the area became more heavily populated and those who would have attended Mass in the glen would have come from as far away as Altaglughan to the North, Edenfore and Ballyreagh to the West, Drumfad and Mullyroddan to the South and from Reaskmore and Drumnafern to the East.

The 1660's brought the arrival of Oliver Plunkett as Archbishop of Armagh. He was determined that the influence of the hierarchy would be extended to the whole of the diocese and he reorganised parish boundaries and appointed Parish Priests. The famous Fr. Bryan McGurk spent the first 12 years of his priesthood in Aghaloo and Killeeshil as well as Carrickmore, then known as Termon Magurk. This reorganisation led to increasing conformity in the acts of worship and regular dispensing of the sacraments.

This reform came at the expense of the Friaries whose influence was now well on the wane. They did not give up easily however and the row between the Franciscans and the Dominicans over the right to beg for alms in certain areas led indirectly to the ultimate execution and death of Archbishop Oliver Plunkett. The authorities used the in-fighting in the Catholic Church to their advantage and, in fact, one of the main witnesses against the Archbishop was a Franciscan priest, Edmund Murphy, who concocted the evidence the government needed to seal the Archbishops fate. He was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn in 1681.

The Penal Days

The death of Archbishop Oliver Plunkett was shortly followed by the accession of a Catholic King, James II to the throne of England. This brought some temporary relief to the Catholic Church but his reign was so short lived that there was no time to replace the Altar Glen in Ackinduff with a Church. By 1690 he had been defeated at the Battle of the Boyne and English rule in Ireland was complete. The outcome of these events had dire consequences for the Catholic Church in Ireland including the residents of Ackinduff. The Penal Laws were reintroduced with renewed vigour and the Altar Glen continued to provide the only place of worship in the Parish apart from a penal altar site in Reaskmore.

The altar site in Reaskmore has been described as a small, remote place, concealed by bushes, where Mass was celebrated in Penal days. The site of this altar is in a field, now owned by Tony Burns, in Reaskmore. Little is known of its history but it is referred to on official surveys of the area in the penal days. A historical reference has also been made of a Mass Rock or Garden in Edenfore but this has been difficult to substantiate. Mention has also been made of a Mass Rock in the townland of Killeeshil in Carson's Glen. It is unlikely that both the site and the Altar Glen were in use at the same time, as they are located so close to each other. It is, perhaps, more likely that a Mass Rock or Garden would have been in use in the more western reaches of the parish as, without transport, the journey to the Altar Glen from Ballynaghey (Ballyahaye) or Bockets on foot would have been difficult, to say the least.

If we accept that there were three Mass sites in the modern parish at this time, then it is perhaps an indication of the huge growth in population from the early 1700's onwards. Communities became more settled and demand for land increased. The only option open to those who wanted to start out a family on their own was to move in greater numbers to the upland areas of Killeeshil, Galbally and Cranlome. Life had become more difficult for the peasant farmers and weavers. Measures were introduced to prevent candidates for the Priesthood being trained abroad. Attempts were made to expel members of religious orders and the regular clergy from the country. Although never fully introduced, it displayed the attitude of the government at the time towards the clergy as it was clear to them that their loyalties still lay with the exiled King James.

By 1698 only 3 Bishops remained, illegally, to minister to their flocks. Over 400 Priests were deported from the country. Proposals to have Catholic children raised as Protestants were rejected by the government in London, as was the proposal of the Irish parliament that any priest caught in the country should be branded on the face with the letter P. This punishment was then amended by the Irish Privy Council to that of castration. This was also rejected in London but "*The Act to Prevent the Further Growth of Popery*" of 1704 was very comprehensive and the most notorious of all the Penal Laws. Its provisions included that the only profession that Catholics could enter was that of medicine and they could not inherit property. In addition, they could not marry a protestant nor, in law, could one become the guardian of minors and by 1727 all Catholics were deprived of the vote. All priests were obliged to register their name, address, age, parish and the date and place of their ordination and the name of the ordaining Bishop. Those who defied these regulations were ordered to leave the country. An inducement to the

clergy to convert to the established church, Church of Ireland, was offered to any priest in the form of a pension of £20.00 per year and a further regulation was introduced that no priest could keep a curate.

So, as we can see, as the new century dawned in 1700 the Parish Priest of Killeeshil, Father Bryan O'Lefarty did not look forward very optimistically to the decades ahead. The constraints of the Penal Laws had more affect in Ulster than elsewhere in Ireland due to the overwhelming influence of the Church of Ireland and its members in the locality and therefore the laws were used more vigorously against the Catholic Church. The numbers of priests decreased dramatically and places of worship were few. Life was hard for the clergy and people alike of the parish of Killeeshil but that did not deter them from practising their faith in their simple but sincere ways.

The increasing restrictions on the clergy became such that priests began to veil their faces while saying Mass so that they would not be known to their congregation. The need for secrecy and discretion was such that betrayal to the authorities was a constant threat to life itself. Priest hunters and denouncers became commonplace and Bishop MacMahon reported the practice of saying Mass at night with only the parents present as, in some cases, they could not trust their own children not to betray them.

The toleration of Catholicism diminished even further with the formation and upsurge of organisations such as the Peep O'Day Boys and, much later, the Orange Order. Despite the threats from these organisations there were still differences of opinion within the Catholic Church between Bishops and clergy over the appointment of priests and ecclesiastical superiors. There was open defiance of the Bishops right to make clerical changes in the diocese and disputes dragged on, sometimes for years.

By 1731 the government carried out a survey to find out the 'number of Mass Houses and Popish Chapels, and the number of priests officiating in each, and also the number of reputed Friaries and Nunneries and Popish schools' in each parish. The survey revealed that there were only 7 Mass Houses in the whole of the Ulster part of the Armagh diocese. However, despite all the trials and tribulations there was great resilience displayed by the clergy and people who were determined to hold onto their faith. The survey reported on the dismal state of the church in Ulster. Never before, or probably since, has the fortunes of the Catholic church been at such a low ebb. This dire situation wasn't helped by the increasing sectarianism and animosity felt by Protestants who would complain at the cheek of Catholics, whom they regarded on a par with negro slaves in America. By 1741 Archbishop Bernard MacMahon of Armagh was forced into hiding from the authorities. But, as the 1740's progressed and times got better economically, the Penal Laws were relaxed or began to be ignored by the authorities and, The Catholic Church grew in confidence, so much so, that by the 1750's and 60's they contemplated the building of churches.

Tullyallen's First Chapel

A number of Mass houses were built which guaranteed mass at fixed times and, in many ways, became the social centre of its time. In this respect, the parish of Killeeshil took the lead in the area and in 1768 a new church was built in Tullyallen. It has since been taken down, stone by stone, and rebuilt in its original form in the Ulster American Folk Park near Omagh.

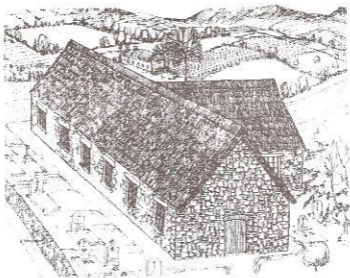
The local landlord was James, Earl of Charlemont who was in the course of preparing his estate for sale to the Burges family. On the 10th April 1770 a 31 year lease on the property was granted to Charles McDonnell, "*gent of Drummafern*" by the Earl of Charlemont through his representative and brother, the Hon. Francis Caulfield. It is worth noting that the church in Tullyallen was one of the first Catholic churches to be built in this part of Tyrone and was due, in no small part, to the liberal views of the Earl of Charlemont who favoured Catholic Emancipation - some 60 years before it was actually granted! The first parish priest to reside in the annex to the new Chapel was Fr. McCarron from Aghaloo. He was friendly with a Mr Alex Ramsey, a prosperous local tenant, who provided the corner of the field on which the Chapel was built, next to the old Omagh/Dungannon coach road.

A Religious Census taken in 1766 by the Church of Ireland authorities revealed that there was a total of 273 families in the parish, of which 168 were noted as "Popish", 24 were Church of Ireland and 81 were Presbyterian and that Fr. McCarron resided in the area as the "Popish Priest".

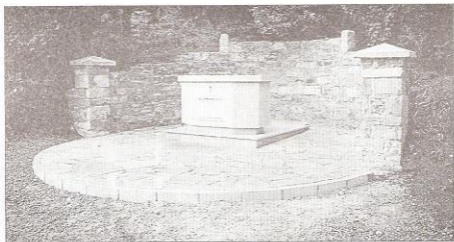
By a strange coincidence the Church of Ireland built its first church in Killeeshil in the same year as the Catholic Church in Tullyallen - 1768. The site chosen was the old ecclesiastical centre of Killeeshil parish, surrounded as it was by a graveyard, as it still remains today. This coincidence begs the question as to whether there was a quid pro quo arrangement between the Church of Ireland authorities, Fr. McCarron, Mr Alex Ramsey and, perhaps, the Earl of Charlemont, whereby the Catholic Church was allowed to build in Tullyallen and the Church of Ireland to build in Killeeshil on what was previously Catholic Church property. This arrangement, if it did take place, would probably have settled any outstanding grievance held by the Catholic Church. One is also tempted to arrive at this conclusion as Roman Catholics continued to be buried in the cemetery of the then new Church of Ireland church for another 100 years. It would seem that this burial facility to local Catholics may well have been part of that arrangement.

Some of our parishoners today can identify direct ancestors who are buried in Killeeshil. Mr Vincent McCann's great-grandfather, Owen McCann, died 19th March 1862. This illustrates that people from Ballynahaye (Ballynahackey) used St. Paul's Graveyard until the church in Aughnagar was built.

Despite the upturn in the churches fortunes the Catholic population had to endure intermittent hangings, shootings, burnings and floggings from gangs of wreckers. One of these gangs was based locally in Castlecaulfield and they were often used by greedy landlords to move unwilling tenants out of their homes and farms to make way for new tenants who were prepared to pay the increased rent.



**Tullyallen Church, as constructed in 1768.
(Illustration courtesy of Ulster American Folk Park)**



Social History

Living conditions for the majority of the locals in and around Ackinduff would have been very basic indeed. Meat or bread would rarely have been included in their diet. The common foods were stir-about made from oatmeal, potatoes in their various forms and a meal called "boxty" which was a mixture of animal blood and oatmeal made into cakes and cooked over an open fire. There were people in each locality who specialised in bleeding cattle by opening a vein in the animal's neck and collecting the blood in a suitable dish. Naturally the animals did not flourish very well in these circumstances.

Apart from working the land the people of Killeeshil and surrounding areas would have supplemented their income by growing flax to make linen. Dungannon was surrounded by bleaching greens at this time. Most houses in the area had a woollen or linen loom and the income derived from these activities was used to pay the rent. Turf would have been cut on the border between Ackinduff and Cranlome, near to the O'Neill farm where Martin and Eamon O'Neill and families now reside. Entertainment was provided by the people themselves in their own simple homes and a drop of "mountain dew", or as it was then known, "Uisce Bheatha", would often be introduced to the proceedings. Such events would have included marriages, wakes, music sessions or celdhe. The seanchai or storyteller was welcome in most houses with his range of stories on the subjects of ghosts, fairies and tales from long ago, handed down orally from generation to generation. In these times, the 1760's the Irish language was still used in everyday conversation but this period would have marked the beginning of its demise.

Parochial Boundary Changes

Killeeshil parish was, of course, much bigger in those times than it is today. It wasn't until 1837 that the townlands of Clonavaddy, Altaglushan, Reclain, Dernaseer, Moohan, Derryalskea, Cross, Galbally, Glenburrisk, Glenbeg, Gortindarragh, Gortnagoley, Kerrib, Aughnaskea, Sessiadanaghy, Crocknaclia and Tomagh were transferred to the parish of Donaghmore. The parish also included the townlands of Altmore, Camaghy, Largylea and Shanmaghery which are now in the parish of Pomeroy. The map on page __ illustrates the size of the parish in the late 1700's.

The last 4 decades of the 18th century were times of great change. Economic prosperity brought better quality housing for those who could afford it. The rise in international trade, the War of Independence in America and the French Revolution had their effects even in Killeeshil. The presbyterian community in particular produced men of radical ideas who were influenced by these great world events. This radicalism led to the formation of the United Irish movement. Their main convention of the period was held in nearby Dungannon in 1782 and one of the leading lights locally in that movement was the Rector of Clonanese Presbyterian church.

The Volunteer and United Irish organisations found little favour with the Catholic hierarchy and, after the doomed revolt of 1798, the Bishops urged their congregation's support for the Act of Union. How ironic that 200 years ago in Killeeshil we had Presbyterians supporting Irish independence and Catholic authorities in favour of political and economic union with Great

KILLEESHIL PARISH - OLD AND NEW

- D1. CLONAVADY
- D2. ALTAGHRIAN
- D3. BECLAIN
- D4. DEANSEER
- D5. MOOHAN
- D6. BERRYALSKIA
- D7. CROSSCANNAGH
- D8. GALBALLY
- D9. GLENBIRIK
- D10. GLENGED
- D11. GORTBRIDGE
- D12. GORTGOLA
- D13. KERRIN
- D14. ALIHWASKIA
- D15. SESSADUNARY
- D16. CRICK TRACTIA
- D17. DONAGH

- P1. ALTAKORE
- P2. CANAGRY
- P3. LARDYLEA
- P4. SHANNAGHERY

- 1. AGHAGINDIT
- 2. AGHINHER
- 3. AGHINAGAR
- 4. AGHINABE
- 5. AGHINISH
- 6. BALLYNASHAYE
- 7. BALLYWARD
- 8. BUCKETS
- 9. CABRAGE
- 10. CLONAVADY
- 11. CLONAVADY
- 12. CLONAVADY
- 13. COOHILL
- 14. CROGH
- 15. CULLINAGH
- 16. CULLINAGH
- 17. CULLINAGH
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- 44. DEERINAGH
- 45. DEERINAGH



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Key: 1 - 45 : Townlands of Killeeshil Parish
 D1 - D17 : Townlands in Donaghmore -
 (Formerly in Killeeshil Parish to 1837)
 P1 - P4 : Townlands in Pomeroy -
 (Formerly in Killeeshil Parish to 1837)

Britain. For the residents of Ackinduff and the surrounding townlands worship was still held in the Altar Glen, though by this time under lesser threat from official authority. The 18th century ended with the Catholic church's fortunes much improved than that of the beginning of the century.

A New Century Dawns

The turn of the century and the years preceding it marked an explosion in the population, due mainly to more efficient and organised farming methods and crop cultivation, including flax for linen production, oats and potatoes. The population of the parish, as recorded in the Religious Census of 1766 and again 80 years later by the Irish Parliamentary Gazeteer, had trebled to 4985 people residing in 910 houses. It was recorded in the Gazeteer that *"a Roman Catholic place of meeting in the open air is attended by 750 and, in the Roman Catholic parochial arrangement, is united to a similar place of meeting."* This reference to two open air sites means that there must have been two popular places of worship, one being the Altar Glen in Ackinduff and the other must have been in the west of the parish, perhaps in Edenfore. After all the needs of the people in the eastern end of the parish were catered for by the new church in Tullyallen. In 1834 the second census records the population in the parish of 4844, comprising 2890 Roman Catholics, 1429 Presbyterians, 480 Church of Ireland and 45 other Protestant dissenters.

The quality of life for the Mass goers of the Altar Glen was gradually improving as were roads and general communications. The main westerly route from Dungannon to Omagh and Enniskillen passed through the parish via Cottons Corner, Tullyallen, Killymaddy, Farriter, Killeeshil and onward to Ballygawley via Aghnahoe. Education was now being provided on a more regular basis, mostly at hedge schools and in the church in Tullyallen where the children would use chalk and a slate to write upon. The standard of education varied enormously from basic English and mathematics to the classics including Latin and Greek. It is believed that the church in Tullyallen was used as a school during the week.

The area entered a relatively peaceful era, punctuated by the occasional sectarian clash or faction fight, often heightened by the influence of drink. A relatively common practice of the time was the inhaling of ether which could be purchased relatively cheaply in the towns and villages of East Tyrone. It was the marijuana of the early 1800's and produced a state of intoxication relatively quickly after inhaling. The people of the early 1800's also got high!

At the end of the Napoleonic War in 1815, Ireland suffered from a significant economic depression due to the downturn in demand for linen, meat and other agricultural products. This recession would have hit the people of Ackinduff hard and an examination of the parish and other records shows an exodus of people from the area. It is not clear whether they emigrated or moved to the growing city of Belfast or other expanding large towns. Close examination of the parish records of the time also illustrate, even by today's standards, an extraordinary high number of illegitimate births. Ecclesiastical reports of the time complain of the decline in moral standards and general church attendance and even in the practice of the faith. This situation spurred the church authorities into action with much greater emphasis placed on church teaching of doctrine

through the catechism. The behaviour of some priests provided a poor role model for their congregation and again the church authorities were quick to take action by having them demoted or replaced. We should'nt judge them too harshly from this distance as life was hard and unrelenting. The priest laboured under a huge responsibility providing not only spiritual assistance but advice on legal, family and financial matters. He was usually the only educated person in the area.

The Tullyallen Fight of 1824

The burgeoning population presented new problems as competition for land became more intense and sectarian. The locals took great pride in their church in Tullyallen but this was not shared by local Orange Order members in nearby Castlecaulfield. Matters came to a head on the 12th July 1824 when the Castlecaulfield LOL decided to parade past the church from the direction of Parkanaur via Cottons Corner. On hearing of their plans the locals decided to take a stand and prevent what they felt was the certain destruction of their church. According to Mr Crossley,

Local Magistrate and agent for Col. Verner, *"About 1000 men were entrenched behind ditches, armed with guns, pistols, swords, pitchforks, scythes and bayonettes on top of poles (and) there appeared to be a leader to every 30 or 40 men and a young man of respectable appearance seemed to have command of the whole"*. According to local tradition when the Orangemen got to Cottons Corner they ran towards Carnteel in fear of the large crowd of armed men. Mr Crossley acted as an intermediary between the Catholics and the Orangemen and promised Fr. Goodwin, curate in the parish at the time, that the Orangemen would not pass the church. The crowd dispersed except for about 100 locals and then Mr Crossley led the Orangemen past the church and a half hearted scuffle took place. Both sides claimed victory; the Orangemen having marched past the church and the locals having saved it from destruction. The event is commemorated in a poem called "Tullyallen Fight 1824".

The Altar Glen

Another poem entitled "Midnight Mass in the Altar Glen" was composed and dictated by a local who was seriously ill in St. John's Nursing Home, Belfast. The poem describes the scene in Christmas of 1829, the year of Catholic Emancipation. It has been described by elderly people over 50 years ago as a good picture of the glen when it was used for Mass and was fully wooded.

Midnight Mass in that hallowed glen;
An altar stood nigh that uneasy brook,
Like a fairy palace with candles gleaming
Through terraced rows of oak and beech,
The berried holly a background making,
By nature sprayed with Yuletide snow;
Like bridal curls from expanding branched
In wavelets fell the mistletoe.

The skies seemed rested on majestic maples
That rose like pillars in St. Peter's, Rome;
And isled the valley, a transept making,
And twinkling stars light the leafy dome.
Kneeling peasants on the verdant carpet
Swayed in prayer and their faces shone
Like shepherds watching their Saviour's coming
With eyes of faith on the altar stone.

The "Adoro Te" nights' stillness awakened
In rolling cadence through that lone dell;
And phantom figures outlined in darkness
Bowed in prayer at the Sanctus bell.
With Chrismed hands the Host uplifted,
The Babe of old was stabled there;
And from bank and brook in rustic setting,
Guardian angels joined men in prayer.

The night is past, the clouds are lifted;
Deserted now is that sacred shed,
The trees are felled and the thrush is missing.
Our faithful fathers all are dead;
But we their children still revere it,
The glen of the green and trampled sod,
That served of yore as Church and Altar,
For mass and praises raised to God.

The Great Famine

The idyllic scene painted by the author did not speak of the increasing misery of many of the tenant farmers, farm labourers and their families. The tradition of sub-division of already small holdings, a rapidly expanding population's over reliance on the potato, an uninterested government in the plight of the poor were the ingredients of a disaster waiting to happen. And it did. It happened everywhere. In September 1845 a Donaghmore farmer reported how his crop of potatoes were almost wiped out by blight. For the following three years the Great Famine descended like a plague over the whole island. Ackiduff and Killeeshil were effected just like every other area. The options for the poor were stark - emigrate or die.

A programme of road-building and public works offered some income to the poor and hungry but it was too little too late. The effects were devastating. Disease, fever, dysentery, tuberculosis - they all took their toll. The combination of death and emigration reduced the Catholic population of the parish to some 400 families by the 1860's and a further decline occurred as the century progressed, mainly through emigration.

Throughout these dark days the Altar Glen continued to be used for worship. This same period witnessed a renewal in the Catholic Church's determination to reorganise and strengthen its influence at the expense of the religious orders and to get its house in order. Archbishop Paul Cullen was appointed to the diocese in 1850 and he set about his work with missionary zeal and determination. Clerical transgressions were censured and a new code of discipline was introduced. Emphasis was placed on education, temperance and devotion both in the Church and in the home. The growth in schools produced more candidates for the priesthood and by the latter half of the century the Church became the dominant influence in ordinary peoples lives.

New Church in Ackinduff

Local tradition speaks of the sanctity of the Altar Glen being abused, presumably by local thugs but by the middle of the 19th century plans were afoot to build a new church in the townland. Eventually after much discussion the Parish Priest, Fr. Hugh McCrystal negotiated a site from the Goughs, the local landlord. This site was said to be half way between St. Paul's Church in Killeeshil and St. Joseph's Church in Ackinduff which must have meant that it was close to where Malachy and Leo Holland and families now reside. Stones were transported to the site but building plans were halted on objections from the local Church of Ireland minister who, apparently felt that the site was too close to St. Paul's church. This version of events is based on oral tradition and has not been checked or substantiated by local historians.

However pressure was mounting from Armagh to have a church built in the area. Local feelings in the Western end of the parish were that a suitable site near Hoppers Bridge would be suitable but a site could not be negotiated there. Fr. James McCrystal, the new Parish Priest selected the site in Ackinduff where St. Joseph's Church now stands and the foundation stone was led on the second Friday of November 1861. By coincidence it was also the 'fair' day in Ballygawley. The Chapel was completed in 1862 and the belfry tower was added at the beginning of the 20th century, around 1905. This marked the end of the regular use of the Altar Glen as a place of worship.

Aughnagar gets a new Church

The decision to site the new church in Ackinduff caused anger and consternation in the townlands of Aughnagar, Cranlome, Ballynahay and Bockets. A committee was formed was chaired by Dr. Simon Donnelly of Aughnagar and included James O'Brien, Morgan O'Brien, Owen Murphy, John (The Burn) Mulgrew, Bernard O'Neill, Francis Donnelly and Ned Conlan. They quickly decided, with the assistance of the residents of Altaglushan, Tulnavern and Legaroo, townlands of Donaghmore and Aghaloo parishes respectively, to build a new Church in Aughnagar. The local landlord was a Dr. Kennedy a Presbyterian minister from Stewartstown who willingly gave the site, proclaiming "I will not refuse my good tenants a place to worship their God". Men from the 4 townlands of the parish set about building the Church and, it is said, a local youth called Terence McElgum carried the first stone in a bag as he did not have a horse and cart. John Mulgrew supervised the works and, apparently, when the workmanship did not come up to

standard, he kicked down the offending wall. The total costs for the whole structure was about £100. As much of the work including the making of the doors and windows, the ironwork and other tasks were carried voluntarily by locals.

Fr. McCrystal was not exactly popular in Aughnagar and he knew it. Local feelings ran high when it was reported that he had remarked while riding past, "that building will make a fine barn for somebody when it is finished". His popularity decreased even further when it was revealed that he had taken possession of a Chalis and Missal to Ackinduff Chapel, donated from America by a man called Tierney who was originally from Bockets. The row was on and Fr. McCrystal allegedly told Dr. Donnelly's committee "to keep their sacrilegious hands off them" or, "to keep their unholy hands off them". The chalis and missal were lost to Aughnagar Church and the whole unfortunate episode left a well of resentment and ill feelings which took generations to lessen. Permission was given by the Archbishop of Armagh to have Mass said in the new Church by Fr. O'Brien. This was a cause of great rejoicing and the local bard revered the moment in poetry.

"Our Church bell is ringing, the skylark is singing
while down from the heather in thousands they come;
And O'Brien at the Altar, why boys should we falter
the fight it was long but the victory is won".

The tone of this verse illustrates the deep feelings engendered by the whole dispute by the use of the words fight and victory. In any case the people of the Western end of the parish got what they wanted and explains how a relatively small parish like Killeeshil ended up with 3 churches.

The Altar Glen Revisited

Many of our older generation, including John Doran of Ackinduff, can relay interesting stories about the Altar Glen. For example, a Peter Grimes was a Mass-server who responded in Latin on behalf of the congregation. This Tridentine form of the Mass would have been used in those days and had been used until the reforms of Vatican II. At that time the Altar itself was covered with a thatch roof and a photograph of that still survives today, courtesy of Miss Marian Quinn of Ackinduff.

After the building of the Churches in Ackinduff and Aughnagar the glen was used off and on for the Church holiday of Corpus Christi, usually in May or June, and a sung procession was held from the Church in Ackinduff to the glen where Benediction was held and the procession duly returned to the Church. This tradition continued until about 20 years ago.

In 1954, Marian Year, the Assistant Curate of the parish, Fr. Patrick O'Brien from Caledon was the main driving force behind the building of the stone Altar and walled surround. He travelled with Barney Holland R.I.P. (Chapel Barney) and Terry Kelly R.I.P., both of Ackinduff, to Downpatrick to inspect a similar Altar site. The stonework was carried out by Mr Peter Cavanagh R.I.P. of Aughlish, assisted by Pat Hamill R.I.P. of Ackinduff. Other local men

involved in assisting on the project were John Doran, John Anthony McBride R.I.P., Edward Holland R.I.P. and Johnny Holland R.I.P. - all from Ackinduff.

In 1989 we were graced with the visit of Cardinal O'Fiaich, himself a noted historian, who regaled us with stories of the harsh penal days and gave us an interesting insight to the problems of the then Parish Priest Fr. Brian O'Leferoy and of St. Oliver Plunkett. Unfortunately his subsequent and last visit to our parish for Confirmation in 1990 pre-dated his death by only 10 days. A video record of his sermon in the Altar Glen was kept and distributed around the parish at the time.

The visit of Cardinal O'Fiaich marked the ecclesiastical highlight of Killeeshil, a tribute from the Archbishop of Armagh to the sacrifices and heroic efforts of all our ancestors throughout this parish. The visit was organised by our own Parish Priest, Fr. James Crowley, who has been closely associated and involved with many major developments in the parish of Killeeshil during his 16 year stay with us. He is the second longest serving Parish Priest on record in the parish of Killeeshil and we look forward to having him with us for many years to come. When the history of this parish is rewritten, perhaps 50 or 100 years from now, his name will loom large as a true servant of his people and one who has put pride back in ourselves and in our parish.

This brings us to this special weekend as we celebrate the Millenium. The new Altar before us today incorporates the Altar stone erected by Fr. O'Brien in 1954 and has been designed and installed to celebrate the millenium - 2000 years of Christianity. The Christian message brought to us by St. Patrick 1500 years ago and, kept alive through trials and tribulations is, thank God, still as relevant today as it has ever been. In the last year this parish, through the guidance of our Parish Priest, Fr. James Crowley, has taken on the role of sponsor to the parish of Zaffe in the Republic of Benin in West Africa. On the 28th July 2000 Sr. Ekaete Ekop of the Medical Missionaries of Mary wrote to us, as follows;

"Dear Friends, we have been able to do so much because of your support and more than generous contributions. Sr. Rose has shared with us her encounters with you and how interested you are in our mission. The needs in the area are many; women are still very much second class citizens with no voice in the activities of the village or even in the decisions taken about them. Teenage pregnancies with associated difficult deliveries are rampant, school drop-outs (especially among the girls) are on the increase due to lack of funds, childhood mortality is high and housing facilities are in appalling conditions. There is still alot to do to build up the scope of our services and to improve the lot of the people we are beginning to know and love".

As a final reflection on where we are and where we have come from listen, if you will, to the words of a gentleman called Thomas Reid who on the 21st June 1822, having returned from Australia, travelled from Brantry through Killeeshil parish to Ballygawley and compare it with the words of Sr. Ekaete;

"Rode many miles today through Tyrone, northward by Ballygawley and saw nothing but dirt, poverty and wretchedness. The country abounds in hills, here called mountain, covered with heath and strewed with miserable hovels, to each of which are attached a few yards of badly cultivated ground, which only makes the barrenness that prevails the more conspicuous

Many of their hovels were constructed by placing long sticks in a slanting position against a high bank and covering them with scraws (sods); these were afterwards thatched with heath as they did not project above the level of the heathy bank, they could not be easily discovered or distinguished by a stranger until he came close upon them. The doors of these huts, if doors they can be called, are formed by two perpendicular sticks and five cross ones, somewhat resembling a gate of rude workmanship having the interstices filled with ropes made of straw, worked in after the manner of a basket.....

As far as I can collect from private friends and other persons well acquainted with the country, the number of children in a cabin is seldom less than four, and that it would average about five which, with the parents, would give at least seven to every cottage or house I have invariably found the increase of children in Ireland to be in an inverse porpotion to the means possessed by their parents to support them".

History teaches us many lessons; it often repeats itself. If it has taught us anything then it is to learn from the past and to not live in it. Bitterness and feelings of resentment belong in the past and there they should stay. We must judge all the people and all the parties in the times that they lived in and not by the standards of today. We must not judge harshly but rather, wisely. If we do, the future is ours.

Editors Note:

I hope you have enjoyed this summarised version of the history of our parish and, in particular, The Altar Glen. It is written as a history of the Catholic parish of Killeeshil. It is not a general history of the area which, if we summon the energy, can be carried out by the formation of a Historical Society.

APPENDIX 2

ENGLISH	IRISH	EXPLANATION
Cunningham	Ó Cuinneagáin	The Tyrone family of this common name is actually Conaghan (O Connagáin) but was anglicised to Cunningham as it sounded similar.
Daly	Ó Dálaigh	Originated in Co. Westmeath. The family were known as hereditary poets and were closely associated with literature. Was originally anglicised as Dawley, which is how it sounds in Irish. Ballygawley owes its name to this family meaning house of the Dalys.
Devlin	Ó Doibhlin	An old Tyrone family, descended from Nial of the Nine Hostages. Close kin of the Donnellys and were hereditary sword bearers to the O'Neill and part of his cavalry.
Devine	Ó Daimhín	A leading Fermanagh family until the 15th century, closely associated with the founders of the village of Clogher, its original Irish name being Clochar MaenDaimhín.
Donnelly	Ó Donnghaile	Also an old Tyrone family, a sub-sept of the O'Neill clan who gave their name to Ballydonnelly, now Castlecaulfield. The Donnelly chief was traditionally marshal of O'Neill's army and were famous in pre-plantation times as soldiers.
Dorean	Ó Deoráin	Originated in Co's Down and Armagh, particularly around Dromara. Name in Irish means an 'exiled person'.
Doyle	Ó Dubhghaill	The word Dubhghaill in Irish means dark foreigner and was used to describe Vikings or Norsemen. Could also be associated with McDowells who were galloglasses (mercenary soldiers) from the Hebrides. Scottish form is McDougal or simply Dougal.

APPENDIX 2

ENGLISH	IRISH	EXPLANATION
Fox	Ó Sionnaigh	Means son of the fox and was sometimes anglicised as McAtinney. Has been associated with the South Tyrone area for centuries.
Gillen	O Goilláin	A sub-family of the O'Neills the Goilla part of the name means 'lad' or young man. Long associated with the old Gaelic territory of CinéalEoghain.
Gormley	Ó Goirmleadhaigh	Descends from Niall of the Nine Hostages and were found mainly in Mid-Tyrone. Sometimes anglicised as Grimley, Gorman or Grimes.
Hamill	Ó hAghmaill	Another family descended from Niall of the Nine Hostages. Family ruled territory in South Tyrone and from 12th century were known as poets and learned men. Has also been anglicised as Hamilton.
Hegarty	Ó hEigceartaigh	Sept of Cinéal Eoghain under the O'Neills and were based in South Derry area, known in Gaelic times as Loughinsholin.
Holland	Ó hAoláin	Anglicised to Holland in Tyrone, Monaghan and Galway. Hyland in Leinster and Hoohan elsewhere. Earliest reference in this area was a William McHoulin who was included in a list of petitioners for the Franciscan cause in 1670's. Cardinal O'Fiaich mentioned on one of his last visits to the parish of a Fr. Holland from Killeeshil who was one of St. Oliver Plunkett's clergy.
Hughes	Ó hAodha	Means descendant of Hugh and was sometimes anglicised as McHugh. Name is common in Armagh and Monaghan where it was sometimes anglicised as Hoye.

APPENDIX 2

ENGLISH	IRISH	EXPLANATION
Kelly	Ó Ceallaigh	There may be as many as 10 different septs of the name as it is common throughout Ireland. The local sept are thought to have originated in Loughinsholin, South Derry. Means descendant of Ceallach.
Loughran	Ó Luachráin	Came to Tyrone about 1430 from Armagh. Family famous for close association with Franciscans and many priests of this name were common in O'Neill era.
McBride	MacGoillaBhrigde	Gaelic name meaning son of the devotee of St. Brigid. Originated in Co. Donegal and were important ecclesiastical family in Medieval times.
McCaul	MacCathmhaoil	This old Tyrone family was sometimes anglicised as Campbell or McCawell, the latter sounding similar to the original Gaelic pronunciation. Common in East Tyrone as Campbell.
McCann	MacCanna	Originated in Armagh and has long been associated with the southern shores of Lough Neagh, where the family were Lords of Clanbrussil.
McCaughey	MacEachaidh	Also anglicised as Haughey and Hackett, the family is exclusive to Ulster, but mainly Tyrone.
McDonald	MacDhomhnaill	Most of the local families derive from Somhairle (Sorley) MacDonald's family who were famous galloglasses for the O'Neills. Settled at Knocknacloy (Dermanaught) and rendered their services to O'Neill. Also anglicised as McDonnell and McGonnell.
McKenna	MacCoinaith	The family is closely associated with North Monaghan, the Truagh area in particular. Dispossessed in 1606 by the Plantation because they refused to pay rent.

APPENDIX 2

ENGLISH	IRISH	EXPLANATION
McMullan	MacMhaoláin	Said to originate from counties Antrim and Down but mainly the former and previous to that from Scotland.
McGee	MacAoidh	Means son of Hugh and is found in most Ulster counties. May have originated in East Antrim - hence Islandmagee or alternatively as a sept from Tír Connail (Donegal).
Mallon	O Mealláin	Derived from the ancient Irish word 'Meall' meaning pleasant, this family originated from North Tyrone and South Derry. With the Mulhollands the Mallons were joint keepers of St. Patrick's Bell and were prominent in the O'Neill era.
Nugent	MacUinseann or MacGoilla Seanáin	The first Irish name is the commonly accepted form but the second is a Tyrone name which was anglicised to Nugent or Gilshenan, or Gilsenan, meaning 'son of the devotee of St. Senan'.
O'Hagan and Hagan	Ó hÁgáin	Originally based near Tullyhogue the family were hereditary brehons to the O'Neills and inaugurated the O'Neill as King of Ulster. Powerful family before the Plantation who lost everything after Kinsale.
O'Neill	Uí Néill	Descendant from Niall of the Nine Hostages this powerful family were all powerful in Ulster except for the O'Donnells of Tír Connail. Several sub-septs of the family in Antrim and Armagh. The most powerful of all the O'Neill's fled Ireland in 1607 and with them the last vestige of Gaelic power in Ireland.
Owens	MacEoghain	Anglicised as Owens, McKeown, Hoynes, Hynes, Hinds and Owenson, the family originate in Fermanagh, an ecclesiastical family associated with the Maguires.

APPENDIX 2

ENGLISH	IRISH	EXPLANATION
Quinn	Ó Coinne	The single most common family name in Tyrone, they descend from Niall of the Nine Hostages. Acted as quartermasters in charge of supplies for the O'Neills in both war and peaceful times. Was locally pronounced 'Queen', reflecting its Gaelic pronunciation.
Rafferty	Ó Raithbheartaigh	Meaning 'wealder of prosperity', it is thought they originated in Sligo and Donegal and is one of the most common family names in Tyrone.
Reilly	Ó Raghallaigh	Were once the ruling family in the Kingdom of Breffni (Cavan) and were heavily involved in trade, so much so that Irish money was known as reilly. Their wealth gave rise to the phrase 'the life of Reilly'.
Small	Ó Caoilte	Meaning small, slender or thin it was anglicised for its literal meaning rather than how it sounded. Sometimes anglicised as Kilty.

Editors Note: I apologise if your family name is not included but the pressures of time and space mean that this is the best attempt - for now.

Source: The Book of Ulster Surnames by Robert Bell

The Glens of Ackinduff

In days gone by, our faithful men, with courage brave enough,
 Assembled in the lonesome glens, that lie in Ackinduff.
 From the virtues of those noble men, who joined of one accord,
 To build an altar in The Glen, where God might be adored.

A sacrifice most sublime, that gives to God such praise,
 By British laws was deemed a crime, in those dark and penal days,
 Despite those laws, no Sunday was let pass,
 But the people met within The Glen to hear the Holy Mass.

A priest with pale and worn face, for youthful ones were scarce,
 Disguised would travel to The Glen to offer Holy Mass.
 The watchers on the wooded slopes kept crouched with anxious fear,
 To warn the priest and faithful flock if soldiers would come near.
 The soldiers were commissioned round, each priest and flock to chase,
 But strange to say, they never found that lone and sacred place.

Thank God those days are past, but let's not forget the trials men went through,
 For hence that sweet, beloved spot should be remembered too,
 Some memorial should be erected, however rude and rough,
 To mark the place where God was praised so long in Ackinduff.

TOWNLAND NAMES IN THE PARISH OF KILLEESHIL

ENGLISH	IRISH	EXPLANATION
Aghaginduff	Achadh Cinn Duibh	Field of the black head.
Aghintober	Achadh an Tobair	The field of the small spring well.
Aghnagaar	Achadh na g-orr	Field of the cranes or herons.
Aghnahoe	Achadh na h-Uaighe	Field of the grave or cave.
Aughlish	Each Laise	Stable for horses.
Ballynahaye	Baile na h-Aithe	Town of the lime kiln.
Ballyward	Baile an Bhaird	Wards town.
Bockets	Buacaide	A round hill.
Cabragh	Cabrach	Bad, waste land.
Cloontyclevin	Cluainte Sleibhin Cluainte Clamhan	Slevin's meadows or Meadows of the bare grass.
Cloontyfallon	Cluainte Fallamhain Cluainte Fallamh	Fallon's meadows or Empty or bare meadows.
Coolhill	Cul Coille	Back side of the wood, most southern townland in parish.
Cranlome	Cran Lom	Place of leafless or bare bushes.
Cullenfad	Cullion Fada	Long strips of land covered with holly.
Cullenramer	Cullion Ramhar	Thick or close holly wood.

APPENDIX 6

ENGLISH	IRISH	EXPLANATION
Cullentra	Cull an t-Sratha	Hill back of valley along riverside.
Dergenagh	Dearganach	Red marsh ground.
Derryhoar	Doire Uar	New oak grove, not long planted.
Dristernan & Dretolt	Driosarnan & Droichead Alt	Blackthorn shrubbery. Bridge of the steep glen side.
Drumfad	Druim Fada	Long ridge.
Drumnafern	Druim na Bhfearn	Ridge of the alder trees.
Edencrannon	Eadan Crannain	Hill brow of the trees.
Ennish	Innis	River meadow, smooth pasture along a river.
Farriter	Fearanlochtrach	Low lying land.
Flasglasnagh	Fas Glaiseach	Wilderness or streamlets.
Gorey	Guaire	Abounding in long grass.
Gortlenaghan	Gort Luineachan	Lenaghan's field.
Killeeshil	Coilliseal	The lower wood / low church.
Killylevin	Coill Uí Leibhin	Levin's wood.
Killymaddy	Coill a Mhadaigh	Dog's wood.
Killymoyle	Coill na Maoile	Wood of the homeless cow.
Lisfearty	Liosfearta	Fort of the graves.
Lisgallon	Lios Gallain	Gallon's Fort or Fort of standing stones.
Lurgacullion	Lurg a chillinn	The long hill of the holly.

APPENDIX 6

ENGLISH	IRISH	EXPLANATION
Mullaghbane	Mullagh Bán	White summit.
Mullysilly	Mullach Bfinigh	Hill of the willows.
Mullyrodden	Mullach Rodain Mullach Rodan	Summit of the little road or Summit of the ferruginous or spa spring.
Mulnahunch	Mullach na h-Uinsinne	Hilltop of the ash tree.
Reaskcor	Raisc Corr	Marsh where cranes gather.
Reaskmore	Raisc Mor	Big morass or swamp.
Stakernagh	Stacan Acadh	A place where stakes or posts were cut.
Terenew	Tir An Fheadha	District of the woods.
Tullyallen	Tulaigh Alainn	Beautiful hill.
Tullyvannon	Tul an Bheannain	Summit of the little peak.

Source: Meaning of Townland Names in the Parish of Killeeshil (Townland Names of County Tyrone - Compiled by P. McAleer, 1936)