

Extracts from some chapters in the forthcoming history of Clontuskert.

From the chapter, *The Priory of St. Mary at Clontuskert*

The Priory of the late 1400s would have presented a very different profile to anyone looking from the Ballinasloe-Lawrencetown road, than it would to the onlooker of today. The buildings then on view would have been almost twice as extensive as the buildings currently on view. All of the domestic buildings, the living-quarters of the Canons, stood on the south west side of the Priory, the side nearest to the present main road. These buildings were two storeys high and may have been roofed with thatch or slates, although no slate fragments were found during the excavations. All that remains of these buildings are the foundations of the main walls, which had been hidden for centuries beneath mounds of rubble and the numerous burials which had taken place in this venerated cemetery. However, it is still possible to trace the outline of the various rooms and to make a good estimate as to their possible use in the heyday of the Priory.

From the chapter, *The Seymours of Somerset*

The attack which led to Hugh Larkin's arrest was as a result of notices which he had pinned on Simeon Seymour's door, which stated that unless Seymour abided by the Terry-Alts' demands to reduce rents and improve wages, he would be murdered. There were further attacks, one of which involved the breaking down of Simeon's door and threats being issued to the Seymour household. Among those involved was Darby Goode, who escaped arrest and subsequently fled to England.

From the chapter, *Clontuskert, a Sporting Parish*

Five weeks later, on October 28th 1889, a hurling tournament was held on the historic hill of Aughrim. One of the umpires, also known as goalkeepers at that time, was Michael Curley of Clontuskert. Michael Callaghan and Henry Mariner were the respective captains of Clontuskert and Ganaveen. The Western News, describing the Ganaveen versus Cappataggle game, stated that "never before was witnessed a game with such pluck and determination, and nicer striking and pucking, while the catches were a sight, and the 'free hangs' a caution". The umpire's voice was heard at every moment with admonitions such as, "Steady boys, be cool, hit the ball and nothing else". Amongst those taking part were, Pat Callaghan, Michael Callaghan, Michael Curley, John Shiel, Denis Reynolds, and John Kelly - all Clontuskert - Henry Mariner, Patrick Gilligan, Tom Grealish, Darby Goode, and Thomas Kenny - all Ganaveen.

From the chapter, *The Grand Canal*

The horses towing the barge were led across the newly-constructed wooden bridge over the Shannon with the ceremonial barge floating in their wake. Crowds lined the canal banks as the boat moved past Clonfert, Kylemore and Clontuskert, before reaching Ballinasloe Harbour late in the evening. Numerous stops were made along the way to allow the dignitaries to examine different aspects of the works such as locks, bridges, aqueducts, loading platforms and the tow paths on both sides of the canal.

From the chapter, *Education in Clontuskert*

Michael O'Neill left the Boys' School also at the end of September 1858 and a Mr. William Kelly was accepted on trial and became teacher of a mixed school - boys and girls - and Clontuskert School remained a one-teacher school until he left in 1866. The school seemed to be falling into disrepair and in 1857 the house and premises needed to be generally repaired although it is not known if this was carried out. In 1859 the Manager requested that the chimney shaft should be raised in order to remove smoke. In the following year the records indicated what needed to be done – “repair of roof, smoke at present coming into schoolroom from teacher's apartments to be prevented – grate for fireplace to be provided – whitewash”.

From the chapter, *The Church of Ireland Parish*

The church is built upon a small hill and is approached by a road along a pronounced embankment. The surrounding graveyard is circular, which may signify a pre-existing pre-historic site or the use of a natural drumlin to provide an elevated position. The present Church was built in 1818 at a cost of £830 15s 41/2d, by way of a gift by the Board of First Fruits. No loan was raised. In 1832 divine service was celebrated twice on Sundays in summer and once in winter and the sacrament was administered four times a year. A new bell was recorded as having been bought in 1832 and presumably housed in the bell tower.