



# A Walking Tour of Clonegal



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### St. Fiaac's Church of Ireland (No. 1)



St. Fiaac's Church was built in 1819 on the site of a former Church and the graveyard around it has gravestones dating from 1777. The Church was built in the Gothic style with Tower and Belfry and under the supervision of Mr. John Bowden, Architect. The parish embraces parts of Counties Wicklow, Wexford and Carlow.

Three double stained glass windows depict the Good Samaritan, a scene from the Good Shepherd and the third window depicts the Resurrection scene.

Rector: Reverend Michael Stephenson, Bunclody, Co Wexford.

### Wesleyan Church (No. 2)



The Wesleyans were part of the Methodist community. The church in Clonegal was built in 1834 with a public subscription of £240. It had Gothic Windows and was part of what was known as the Newtownbarry Circuit. This is now a private residence.

### St. Brigid's School (No. 3)



St. Brigid's NS, which was built on an elevated site in 1952, occupies a focal point in the village. A refurbishment of the school building took place in 2010 and in 2014 a new extension was added to incorporate an ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) unit.

It is a 7 teacher co-educational school (6 permanent and 1 part time teacher) under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Currently there are 118 pupils on roll. The school has a strong Catholic ethos, but welcomes children of all religions and none. In keeping with Department of Education Guidelines the school is managed by a Board of Management.

Each classroom is equipped with an interactive whiteboard, teaching laptop, visualizer, children's laptop/computers and a well-stocked class library. The children are extremely involved in the development and upkeep of the gardens and have been awarded our 4th Green Flag. The School is currently working on its 5th Green Flag.

### A Former Convent (No. 4)



A community of Brigidine nuns lived in this house in high street. It was consecrated circa 1809 by the then Parish priest of Clonegal Fr, Purcell. Among the members of the congregation was a great Aunt of Cardinal Spellman's the famous Cardinal Archbishop of New York who has other associations with the parish. A member of the local Sinnott family of Coolroe was also one of the sisters. The convent closed in 1861 and a number of the sisters are buried in the local cemetery. This is now a private residence.

### St. Brigid's Hall (No. 5)



It began its life in 1834 as the National School for the village. One of the great and most popular activities now hosted in this community centre is the House of Song and Story. It attracts huge crowds on the 3rd Monday of every month.

In 2006 the local community saw their hall receive extensive renovations improving on all facilities. There is a lovely stairway which is wide and bright. The kitchen area is very modern and there are also toilets upstairs. Next door to the kitchen is the IT Room which houses 12 computers. These are used a great deal by the primary school as they have broadband and a projector. St Brigid's Community Centre now hosts the Clonegal After-Schools children.



### Stone from over Window of Abbeydown in church wall (No. 6)

(Left of steps to church on entering, close to the road)



In pre Cromwellian times an Abbey once stood in the townland of Abbeydown in a place known as the Abbey meadow just outside village. A stone from over the window of this Abbey is built in an inverted position into the wall of St. Brigid's church. It is the only remaining part of the Abbey.

### St. Brigid's Catholic Church (No. 7)



Built in 1824 by Hickeys, Kilcarrig.

The ancient parish was Barragh and Moyacomb. The church of Barragh was destroyed by Cromwell's soldiers in 1650. The word Moyacomb is from the Irish Magh-da-Chon meaning the "Plain of the two Hounds". It is the ancestral patrimony of the O' Neill's of Leinster. The village of Clonegal on the river Derry was near where the coach roads from the midlands, Kildare and Dublin converged.

It is often asked why the church is so big (Barn Type) and the reason is that it was constructed around the previous thatched chapel then in use. When the church was completed the old building was taken out through the doors of the new church. This old church had in turn replaced another thatched church which had been situated about a mile up the road to Monaghan in a place called Knockafagh (the long hill) the stone for the church came from a quarry in Monaghan. The ceiling has beautiful work done by Italian artisans. The bell tower is pointed with four miniature spires. The most important feature of the Sanctuary area is the paired Corinthian columns, flanked by pilaster and surmounted by an open pediment.

Parish Priest: Fr. Thomas O'Byrne, Parochial House, Myshall, Co. Carlow.

### The Banks lane (Cul-de Sac) (No. 8)



The Banks Lane is cul-de-sac and leads to the rear entrance to the Huntington estate. It was originally known as the Sandbanks lane it leads to the rich sand banks on the river Derry. This was once a favourite picnic area. The sand has since been quarried commercially but it is still a beautiful walk.

### St. Brigid's Well (No. 9)



On the advice of Mr. Patrick Hickey on whose land the well known as Tobair Bríd was situated. A committee was formed to re-decorate and restore the well. This occurred during 1998 & 1999. The well was blessed by Fr. Joseph Fleming on 6th of February 2000.

### Pennybrook Bridge (No. 10)



This bridge straddles a stream of the same name which forms the boundary between the townlands of Clonegal and Kilcarrig. Little is known about the origin of the title. The bridge is famous in local folklore for an appearance by old Nick himself, joining a local man to smoke a pipe.

### Mesh goat on the green (No. 11)



This sculpture was secured by local woman Dorchas Rothwell and was funded by Clonegal Tidy Towns Committee. It is the work of renowned artist Rubert Till who is famous for this unique style of sculpture.

### Wicklow Way Park – Plain of the 2 hounds – Famine pot. (No. 12)



On this site once stood a shop owned by the white family. Well known local historian the late Willie White was a member of this family. It was given by him to the Tidy Towns Committee. Ben Dunne and Robert Morrehead first developed it into the Wicklow Way car park.

### Site of first Dispensary in Co. Carlow (No. 13) (house above the Weaver's cottages)



Dr. George Rogers Medical officer and Registrar operated a dispensary in Clonegal circa 1880s. This dispensary is believed to be the first such dispensary in Carlow. These dispensaries were provided for under the Poor Law system. Clonegal was part of the Shillelagh poor law union.

### Weaver's Cottages (No. 14)



The Weavers Cottage, a 17th century construction by Alexander Durdin was built for local weavers. Originally there was a row of 6 cottages. This cottage would have been part of the cottage industry prior the mechanisation of the craft. Set facing onto the main street of the village of Clonegal, the cottage comprises a pair of semi-detached, two-bay, single storey dormer cottages with attic conversion. Within spinning wheels, looms and shawls woven on site are all visible to the visitor.

Through enormous work in recent times, the garden to the rear of the cottage once again contains the traditional vegetables that were consumed at the time of the occupancy of the Weaver's Cottage. Depending on the time of year, visitors may find staples such as potatoes, cabbage, carrots, parsnips, onions, leeks, with herbs such as chive, tarragon, mint, rosemary and plants like blackcurrants, raspberries, gooseberries, and strawberries.

### Moll Burkes Well (Our Lady of the Wayside) (No. 15)



The well in the Main Street is known as Moll Burke's Well. Moll cleaned this well for the use of travellers passing through the village and it is now adorned by a statue of Our Lady of the Wayside. Moll was also the last person in the parish to use the Irish spinning wheel.

### 1798 farmhouse (No. 16)



Though now bearing a slate roof, this was one of the last thatched farmhouses in the village and is the only remaining farmhouse that is structurally identical to its original build. It is known to have stood as is in the village in 1798.

### Hanging Stone & Church of Ireland Rectory (No. 17 & 18)



This stone is in the Arched entrance to the yard beside what once was the Church of Ireland Presbytery and earlier the home of the Captain of the Yeomen In 1798 this was the home of Captain De Renzy and the stone marked an execution site. The hangman who carried out the executions was Bob Young.



### Former Church of Ireland Primary School Moyacomb (No. 19) (School closed 1967 - Now a Fuel Yard)



Moyacomb School was built with public subscription in 1834. It was connected to the London Hibernian Society which provided it with books and paper. It closed in 1967.

### Former Garda Barracks & Ball Alley (No. 20)



This historic house was built in 1686 by Sir Lawrence Esmonde as part of the Huntington Castle Estate and built on the site of a Druid settlement. At one time it was a shoe makers and a saddlery and once a sweet shop. From 1924 – 1934 it was a civic garda barracks and was visited by General O'Duffy, co-founder of the civic guards in 1926.

### Huntington Castle (No. 21)



Huntington Castle, Clonegal, County Carlow, the ancient seat of the Esmonde family is today one of Ireland's historical treasures.

The Castle was built in 1625 as a garrison on the strategically important Wexford to Dublin route. After 50 years the soldiers moved out and the family began to convert it into a family home. Many generations of the family subsequently added various extensions and details giving the effect of a truly unique and interesting building. In the 1970's the basement was converted into a temple to the Egyptian Goddess Isis, and the present generation continue to renovate and improve where possible.

The Castle is still a family home and is open to the public during the summer months. Presently lived in by four generations of the Durdin-Robertson family, descendants of the Esmondes, the castle is set in picturesque countryside at the foot of the Blackstairs Mountains.

### Riverside walk (No. 22)



This walkway was developed by the Clonegal Tidy Village committee in the 1990s as part of the on-going enhancement of the natural features of the village. It features a picnic area, a way finder and a visual of the wild life to be seen in the area.

### Weighbridge (No. 23)



This was once part of a weigh bridge, erected by the local community to weigh livestock. The livestock were weighed outside and the weights read in the house. In its last years of existence, a local pig buyer used it when purchasing pigs from the community. The weighing scales were accidentally broken and then dismantled.

### Plaque on home of Fenian Hero T Donohoe (No. 24)



T Donohoe was a prominent figure in the Fenian movement. He was transported to Van Diemens land. He later escaped and went to America where he died in poverty. Now Sharoe restaurant.



### Old Coach House (No. 25)



The Coach House now a private house still contains the original arch over the door. Coaches were housed here. Clonegal was the meeting place for two coach roads, one from the midlands via the Black Lion and one from County Wexford. The Palistrade Hotel was nearby to look after the coach passengers.



## 1798 memorial on the bridge (No. 26)



This Plaque was erected in 1938 by a 1798 memorial committee. Canon Harvey Bradish, a relative of Bagnal Harvey one of the figures of the Rebellion spoke at it's unveiling.

## Clonegal Bridge (No. 27)



Clonegal Bridge was built in 1780. It originally had only three arches. The Arches and the Parapet was faced and coped with granite.

## Millrace Stream under road at Watch House (Johnstown) (No. 28)



The Millrace stream now underground in Johnstown once powered a corn mill, the ruins of which are still there on an adjacent farm. A distillery and an Ironworks were also operated from this site. These ruins are now located on private property.

## The Watch House (No. 29)



The river Derry forms the boundary between Wexford and Carlow, and divides the village of Clonegal in two. The part of the village in Wexford is known as The Watch House. The name comes from the fact that when the 1798 Rising commenced a hut was built at the Water House cross which was manned by Yeomen or soldiers day and night. A person bringing an animal to the fair of Carnew had to get a permit at the Watch House cross, and if he failed to sell he had to get another permit from the Yeomen in Carnew to bring the animal home.

## The Forge stone (No. 30)



This stone commemorated local blacksmith Michael Connors who was a Pikeman in 1798. He fought along side Mylie Doyle another local man at the Battle of Arklow. Doyle was Killed and Connors wounded in Ballyellis. He crawled to within a few hundred yards of his home after the battle where he died.



## Ben Mulhall Complex (No. 31)



Ben Mulhall was a local teacher in the National School in Clonegal. He was known well for his wonderful sportsmanship and talent both in Gaelic football and hurling. Originally from Tullow, Co Carlow, Ben dedicated much of his life to the community of Clonegal whilst serving as principal of the local school. His talent and ability together with his passion for the game rubbed off on the local children who had great success at under -14 level.

The facilities include dressing rooms, toilets and showers whilst upstairs is a large recreation area. In all there are 11 acres of ground which includes two soccer pitches and one GAA pitch. There is lots of room for parking. The grounds are nestled into the corner of three counties, Wexford, Carlow and Wicklow although its physical location is Wexford. Standing at the entrance gate at the top of the hill one has a wonderful panoramic view of all the fields and indeed of the three counties and the beauty they hold.



*An old sepia toned photograph of the Riverside in Clonegal - date unknown*

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