EMYVALE VILLAGE TRAIL HISTORY OF EMYVALE

Emyvale is situated at the heart of what is frequently referred to as 'McKenna Country'. It was close to here that the McKenna clan had their principal base from the 12th to the 17th century, with most of the clan graves and the McKenna High Cross situated nearby. According to tradition the McKennas first arrived in the 8th century and history records that, by the twelfth century, they had established a semi-independent kind of 'buffer state' between the O 'Neill's to their north and the McMahons to their south. The earliest recorded Chieftain was a Patrick McKenna who fought alongside Hugh O'Neill at the battles of Clontibret in 1595, the Yellow Ford in 1598 and Kinsale in 1601.

Listed as the biggest village in Monaghan, Emyvale is situated 11km north of Monaghan town on the main N2 road to Aughnacloy.

BLACK WATER REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The Blackwater Regional Partnership is a Cross Border Joint Committee between Armagh City and District Council, Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council and Monaghan County Council aiming to develop and implement a sustainable integrated rural development strategy through a partnership approach and to encourage cross border co operation between the three Councils, the private and community sector.

Funding Acknowledgement

Blackwater Regional Partnership is part financed by the European Union through the Interreg IIIA programme managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the ICBAN Partnership.

Blackwater Regional Partnership

Irish Central Border Area Network

INTERREG IIIA

Project part financed by the European Union

Emyvale
VILLAGE
BLACKWATER HERITAGE TRAIL

1. McKenna Chieftain's Graves

Several of the McKenna chieftains are buried in the Old Donagh Graveyard, including Phelimy McKenna and his four sons, who were massacred by Cromwellian followers in 1666. A fifth son, Major John McKenna, who escaped that massacre, later went on to lead the Irish forces at the Battle of Drumbanagher in 1689, and he is also buried here. It is also the final resting place of Fr. Charles McKenna, who was chaplain to the Irish Brigade that fought for the French at the Battle of Fontenoy in Belgium in 1745. Finally, the truly remarkable William 'Bully' McKenna was buried here in 1816. His son John, better known as 'Don Juan McKenna', fought as second-in-command to General Bernardo O'Higgins during the Chilean War of Independence with Spain.

2. Prince Edward Island Connection

In 1830, the local parish priest Canon Patrick Moynagh arranged the emigration of over 60 families from Donagh, Glaslough and Emyvale to Prince Edward Island in Canada, to start a new life. Many of these were relatives of others who had previously emigrated first to Glasgow then later Canada. This mass 1830 emigration to Prince Edward Island was instrumental in bringing about the current close ties between the two regions.

3. William Carleton

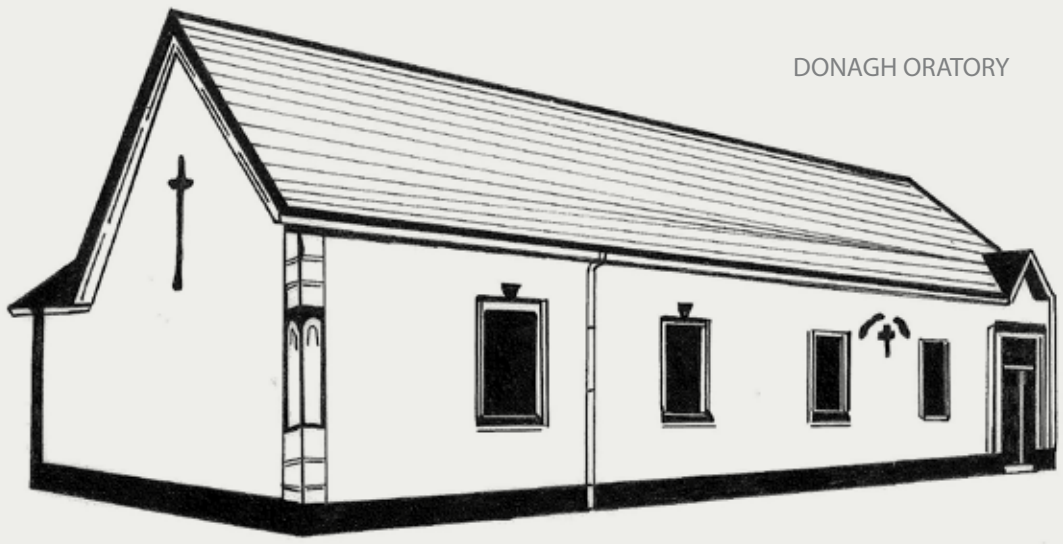
William Carleton, the well known Irish novelist, received his classical education from a Fr. John Keenan at Glenann between 1812 and 1815. The house where he stayed was beside St Mary's Church but this no longer exists. It was here that Carleton found inspiration for one of his best known stories 'The Fair of Emyvale'.

4. Silver Hill Duck Factory

This family owned business was founded over 40 years ago by Ronnie and Lyla Steele and still provides valuable employment for both the village and the surrounding area. In 1973 Silverhill was the first Irish poultry farm to be given approval for export to the E.U. and the Silver Hill Brand is now widely known throughout Europe, China and beyond. The current management is committed to good environmental practice and in 2004 was the overall winner of the Thermal Energy category at the Sustainable Energy Ireland Awards.

5. Emyvale Leisure Centre

Emyvale Leisure Centre was erected in 1985. The original building was a 'Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Preaching House and Mission School, AD 1836', but in later years it was used as a Dance Hall. It even housed a 'Hedge School' in 1837 for both Catholic and Protestant children. The name-stone of the former Methodist Church was re-instated on a plinth near to the main door of the current building.



DONAGH ORATORY

6. Donagh Oratory

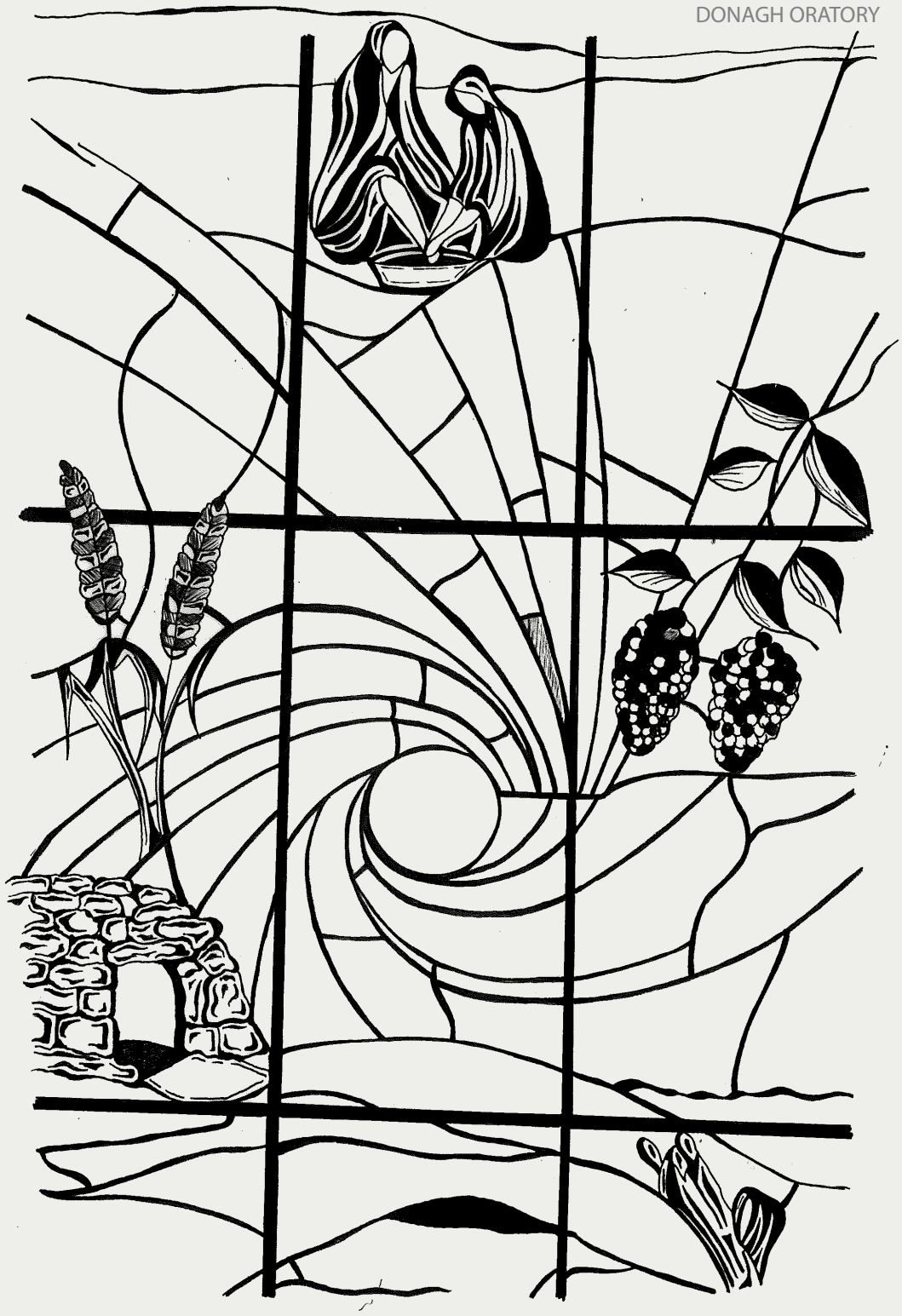
Donagh Oratory stands at the junction of Main Street and Glaslough Road. The Oratory was originally a petty sessions Court House but was burned down during the War of Independence in 1921. It has since been used as both a Concert Hall and Dance Hall before being converted to an Oratory in 1971. The Oratory was rebuilt in 1999 and includes a beautiful interior stained glass window as well as a replica of the McKenna High Cross.

7. The High House

The High House is a significant building on Main Street and is also situated on one of the oldest sites in the village. Interior building renovation work here in 1959 unearthed the remains of a Bronze Age tomb.

THE HIGH HOUSE

STAINED GLASSES WINDOW
DONAGH ORATORY



8. The Blue Bridge

This beautiful bridge is situated 2km west of Emyvale and is reputed to be one of the best designed bridges in the area. It was built by Matthew Anketell in 1801 and was one of William Carleton's favourite resting places and is mentioned in his story 'The Fair of Emyvale'.

9. The Castle Field

This was the site of the original McKenna Castle, built in 1591. Following the 1652 'Cromwellian Settlement', ownership of the castle was transferred to the Anketell family in 1655 and they went on to build the first 'Anketell Grove at the site. The family later moved the house to occupy a site opposite St Patrick's Church at Corracrin.

10. The Cealdragh

The Cealdragh was the name given to the non-Christian burial place for children who died before being baptised. It is situated 1.5km to the west of the village, between Castle Field and the Blue Bridge. Previous excavation has also revealed evidence that smelting may have been undertaken at this site in earlier times.

11. St Patrick's Church, Corracrin

St. Patrick's Church was built in 1811 on land then owned by the Leslies. Some say the Leslies deliberately allowed the Church to be built there to spite their neighbours the Anketell family. The Leslie Family had lost the village of Emyvale to the Anketells in a card game, circa 1750. The graveyard currently includes over 80 memorials to McKenna family members – the largest concentration of McKenna graves in any one cemetery in Co. Monaghan.

12. Tully Forts and Crannog

Tully Fort, situated roughly 1km south-east of the village, was the main McKenna headquarters from the 12th to the 17th century. It is believed that originally there were three forts and a crannog in this area, however only a small section of the northern fort is now all that remains. The forts were destroyed on three separate occasions; firstly by Mountjoy in 1602, then twice during the 1641-49 rebellion, after which McKenna moved his headquarters to nearby Portinaghy. Tully Fort is currently in private ownership.

13. Emy Lough

Emy Lough, situated just 2km east of Emyvale village, is reputedly associated with St. Enda, who later founded his famous monastery on the Aran Islands. It is also believed that a stone cairn on a submerged crannog within the lake marks the burial place of the great chieftain Patrick McKenna. Emy Lough is also a fine game angling lake and boats are available for visiting anglers.

14. St Mary's Church, Glenann

St Mary's was built by Canon Patrick Moynagh in 1837. Unfortunately the new church lost its roof shortly after it was completed during a freak storm. Inside St Mary's there is some fine artwork behind the high altar which was undertaken by a number of travelling Italian students during the WW1 period