

# KYLE AND KNOCK

*Extracted from "The Diocese of Killaloe – An Illustrated History" by Ciarán Ó Murchadha*

## **Ballaghmore**

Kyle and Knock is unique among Killaloe parishes in being situated in three counties (Tipperary, Offaly and Laois) and two provinces (Munster and Leinster). It is also unusual in owing its existence to the greatest parochial rearrangement of the nineteenth century diocese. Prior to 1846, the old parish of Kyle was administered with Roscrea, while Knock was part of Corbally and Bournea. Following the death of its parish priest, Fr. Peter Cleary, however, Corbally was dismembered: just two townlands remained with Bournea, the greater portion going to Roscrea and the remainder added to Knock, which was formed into a separate parochial with Kyle. The first parish priest of Kyle and Knock was a Fr. O'Connor, who lived in the townland of Kilcreamon in Offaly.

St. Lua's Church at Ballaghmore (Bealach Mór, the Great Road) is situated on the Sli Dála, the ancient road from Tara that marks the eastern boundary of Killaloe diocese. St. Lua's, a cruciform building, dates to 1812, before the formation of the modern parish proper. In its original condition St. Lua's closely resembled other churches built in Killaloe diocese around the same time, in having Georgian-type windows, and rounded-off angles at nave and transepts.

In 1879 Fr. John Gleeson had the first ceiling installed in the church. In 1904 a large mission cross was erected in the grounds of St. Lua's Church in commemoration of mission held there by two Holy Ghost priests in 1904. This is the last mission cross erected anywhere in Killaloe. In 1950 Fr. Martin Kirwan of Ballaghmore, became the first priest from Laois to be ordained for Killaloe diocese. St. Lua's Church was re-roofed and renovated extensively in 1978 to plans drawn up by McMahon, McMahon and Hickey of Limerick, the main contractors being Hogan and Woulfe of Birr.

## **Knock**

St. Patrick's Church at Knock was built in 1877 during the pastorate of Fr. Kennedy, builder being a mason from Errill, whose skilled still be seen on the cut limestone of the west gable and belfry. St. Patrick's replaced a rickety thatched chapel which faced in an opposite direction from the present structure, a building that is referred to in the inscription on a silver chalice still preserved at St. Patrick's: 'Rev. T. Bannon, P.P. Nock,' along with the date 1833. The site for St. Patrick's was donated by a Captain Gibson of Rockforest, who also permitted the use of his quarry for the extraction of building materials, without charge.

A distinctive feature of this rectangular church is its dressed stone facade. The stained glass windows over the altar at the eastern end were donated by a Miss Fermoye. The church was renovated in 1984, the contractor being Thomas Breen of Knock. The Work was largely confined to necessary structural repairs; although the bell was removed from its belfry and set in a steel frame at the back of the church.

In this parish lies the old monastery of Clonfert Mulloe, which is the only location other than Killaloe parish that has associations with the diocesan patron, St. Molua. It is likely that the twelfth century reformers made a point of stretching the diocese eastwards to include this important site. In the nineteenth century St. Molua's trough was taken from Clonfert Mulloe to the grounds of Ballaghmore Church. A chalice for Kyle church is in diocesan custody. It is about 18 cms in height and carries the inscription 'Parochia de Kile anno dom. 1778.

Since 2005 Kyle and Knock has been administered by the priests of Roscrea parish.