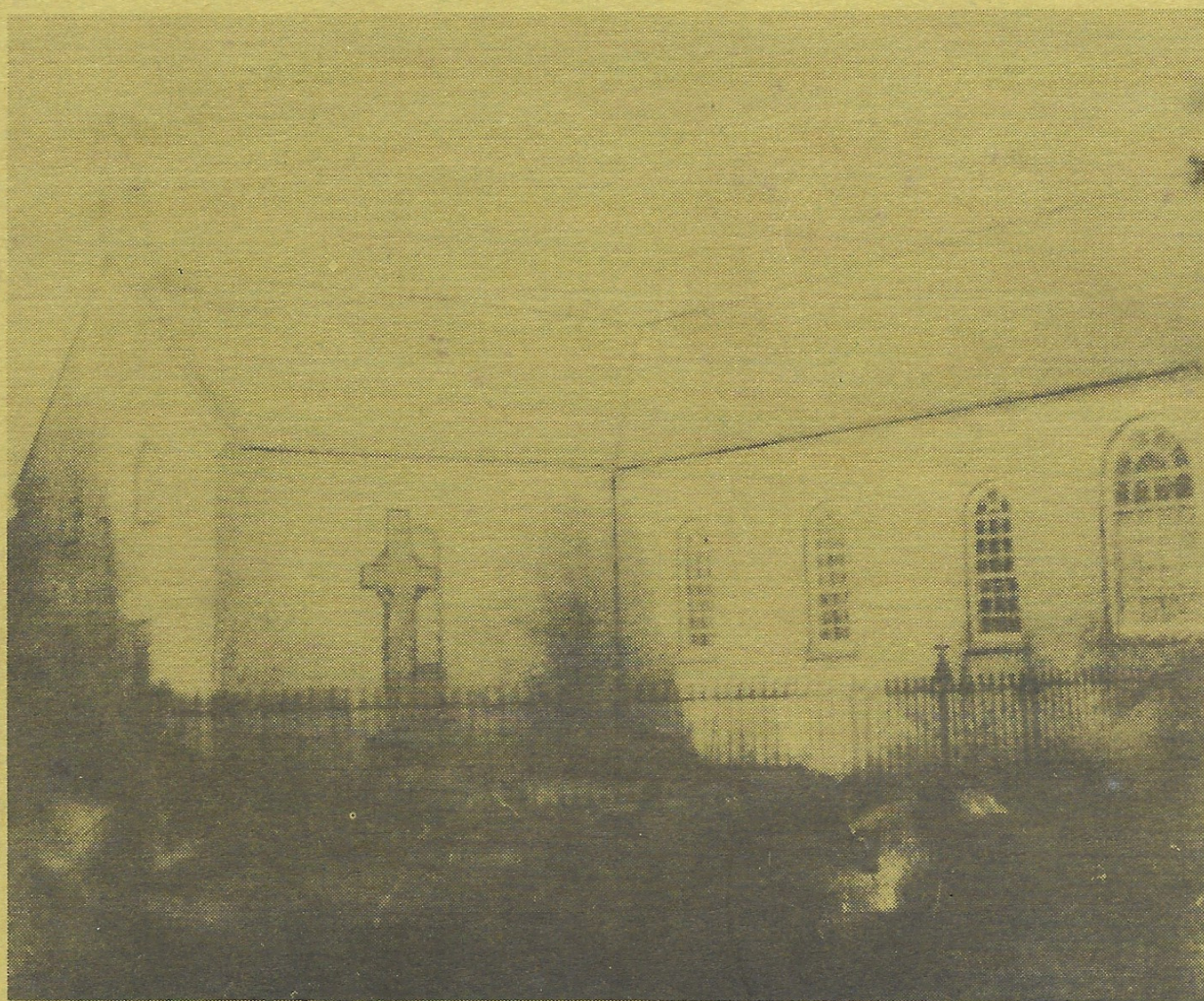


Graigue Cemetery & Chapel

Mountmellick, Co. Laois



Renovated 1990 — 1993

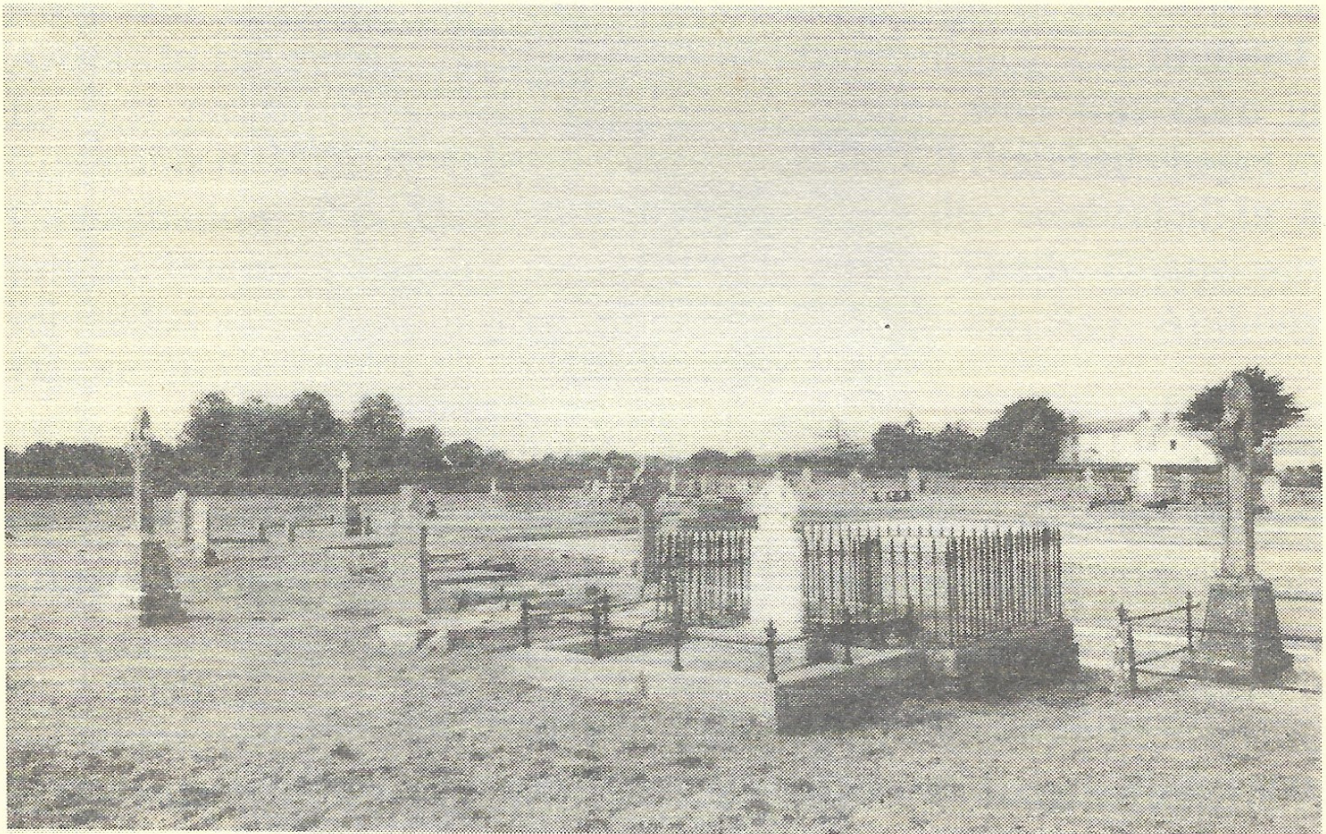
Graigie Cemetery & Chapel

Mountmellick, Co. Laois

Restored and Renovated 1990 — 1993

Opened 27th August, 1993

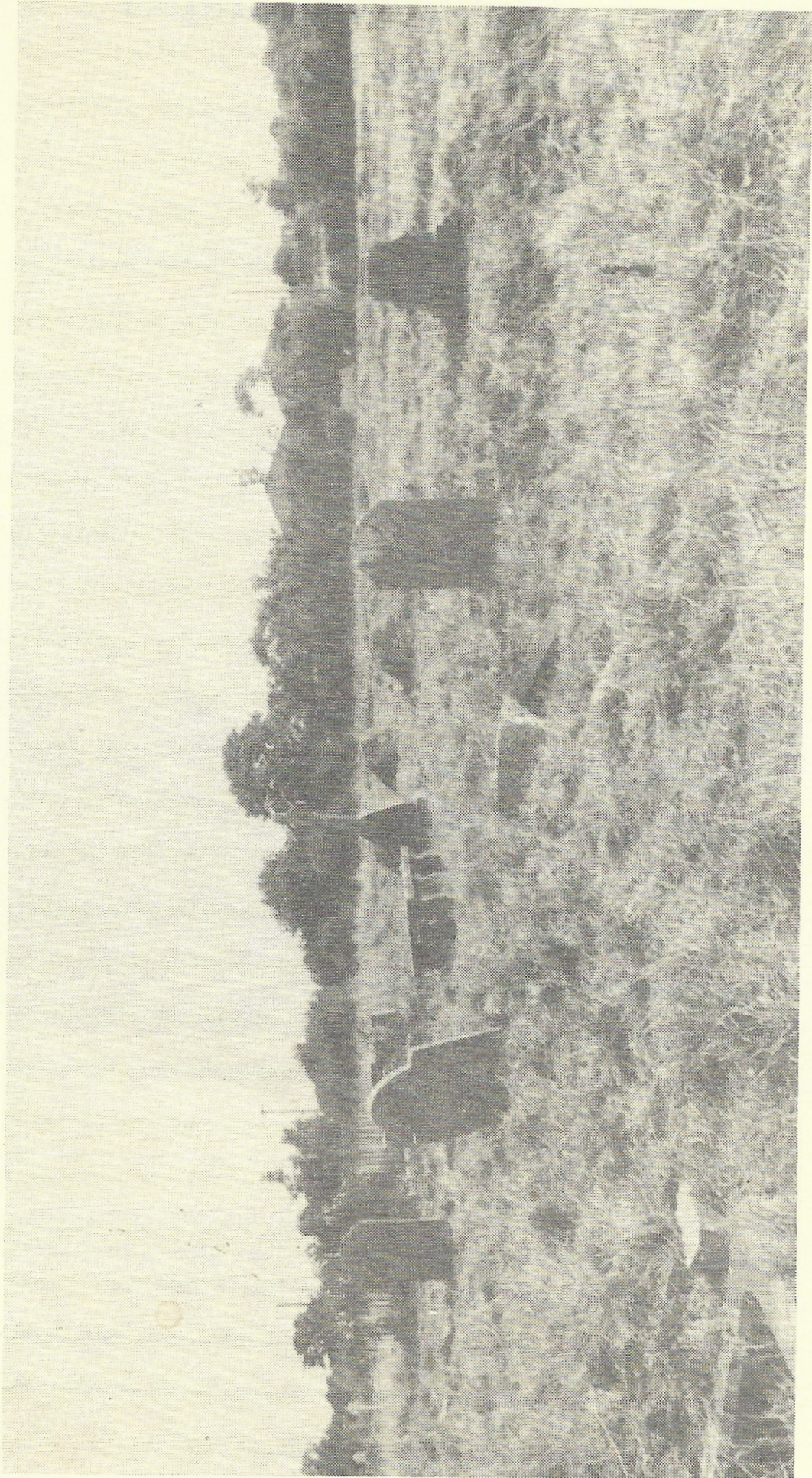
Mass at 7.30pm celebrated by Rev. Fr. MacNamara, P.P.
and Rev. Fr. Bernie, C.C.



The renovated graveyard, with the original Parochial House in the right background.

Photographs used by kind permission of Arnold Crawford Studios, Mountmellick and Michael Scott. Map and list of graves prepared by Helena Somers and Niamh Scott. Text by Alan Dunne.

Cover: St. Peter's Chapel, Graigue.



Graigue Cemetery in 1989: Derelict headstones in very poor condition, overgrown with grass and weeds — the sad remains of over 200 years of history.

Outline History

BEFORE 1770, Mountmellick town was situated in two separate parishes. The greater part of the town was in the ancient parish of Rosenallis while the part known as Irishtown was in the parish of Ardea. In the year 1770, the parish of Mountmellick was founded. Its first parish priest was Rev. Thady Duane who was born in Rosenallis in 1733. At the time, there was a small thatched chapel in Clonaghadoo, but Mass in town was generally celebrated in a private house. Upon his death in 1807, Rev. Thady Duane was succeeded as parish priest by his nephew and curate, Rev. Anthony Duane, (born 1780).

According to Canon O'Hanlon's "History of the Queen's County", Rev. Anthony Duane built and opened in 1812, St. Peter's Chapel in Graigue. Local tradition, however, has it that this chapel was begun much earlier, and that the first Mass was celebrated there on Christmas Day, 1800, before the chapel was completed. There is no doubt, though, that the land on which the chapel and graveyard are situated were in the possession of the church long before 1800, with the oldest legible gravestone dating from 1755.

A parochial house, which can be seen from the graveyard, was also built during Anthony Duane's time as parish priest. It is now owned by Mr. R. Steenson. Upon his death in 1833, Rev. Anthony Duane became the first parish priest to be buried within the walls of St. Peter's Church. \

His successor was Rev. Andrew Healy (born 1792), also buried within the chapel walls in 1864, the year in which Rev. Thomas Murphy (1816-1882) became parish priest.

Rev. Thomas Murphy had the present parish church, St. Joseph's, built and it was opened in 1878. St. Peter's Chapel, in Graigue, now ceased to be used for celebrating Mass. The graveyard, however, continued in use until the early years of this century, with the most recent headstone dating from 1925. The present cemetery, in Acragar, was opened in 1905.

When St. Joseph's was opened in 1878, the boys school was transferred from the Catholic Institute to Graigue Chapel. It remained there until 1910, when a new Boy's school was opened on a site in Davitt Road, where the parochial house is now situated.

The chapel was also in use from early times for Christian Doctrine classes on Sundays, being attended by up to 550 students, (1824). This continued until 1883, when the old Convent school was opened in Bridge Street.

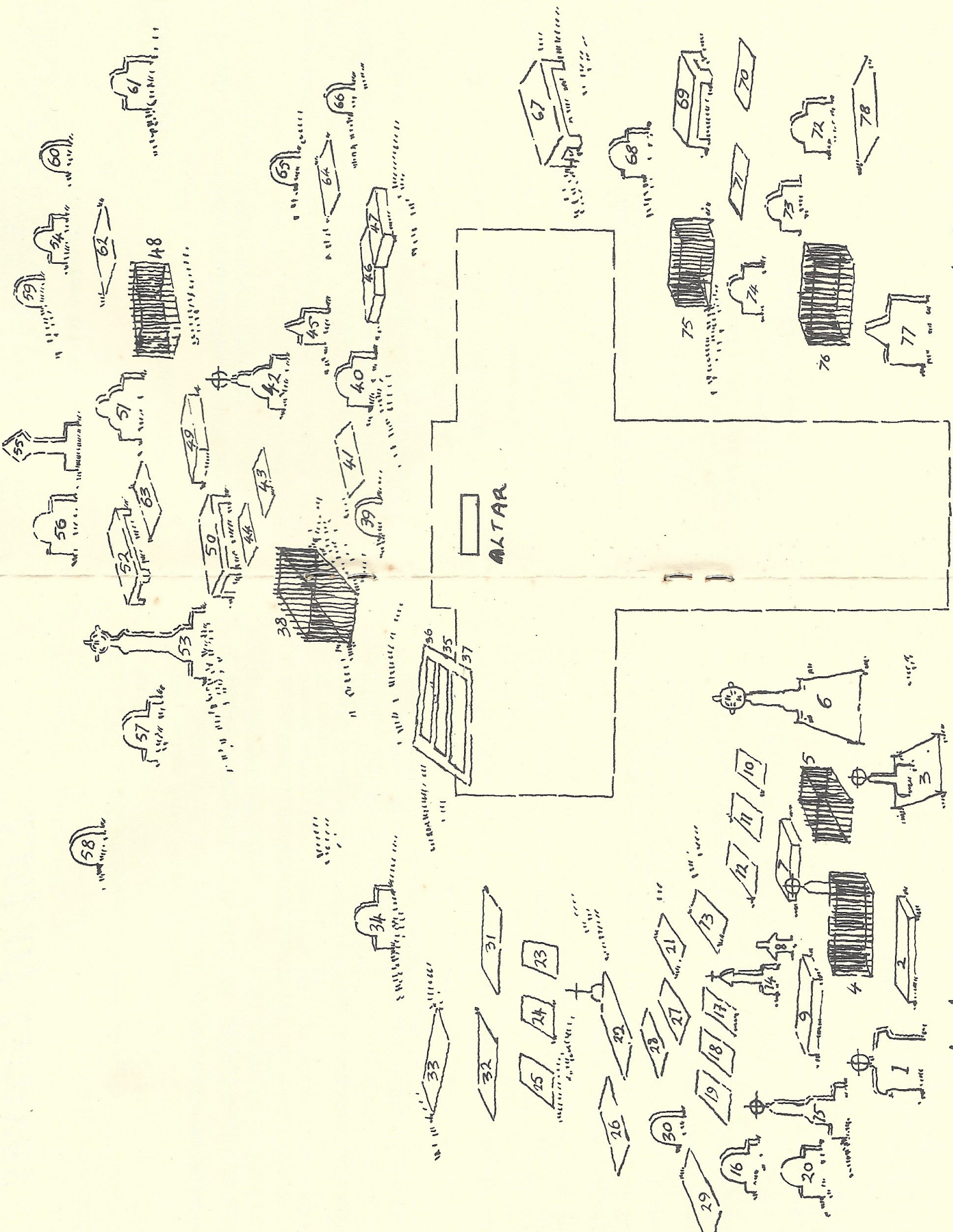
After 1910, the chapel, which was now in a bad state of repair, was no longer in use and was demolished with much of its stone being used by Laois County Council for road building. From the early years of this century, the cemetery gradually fell into disrepair and eventual dereliction. It was cleaned up to a small extent on several occasions and the foundations of the old chapel walls were recently exposed.

The present renovation is the first comprehensive attempt to restore and establish a maintenance programme for what has long been recognised as a major part of the heritage of our town.



List of Graves

1. Richard Foran, Brittas, 12th January, 1905, age 69.
2. Rev. Matthew Byrne, Graigue, 1st August 1801.
3. Margaret Teresa, 9th April, 1897. Age 38. Also Margaret Anne, 1883.
4. Patrick McEvoy, 2nd July, 1887, Age 72. Johanna McEvoy, 28th October, 1874, Age 52. Edward McEvoy, 27th February, 1888, Age 35. Patrick McEvoy, 30th July, 1881, Age 25. Martin McEvoy, 31st July, 1880, Age 22. Mary McEvoy, 17th March, 1884, Age 23. Catherine McEvoy (Sr. Angela), 27th February, 1904, Age 41 all from Derryguile.
5. Mrs Margaret Lalor, 22nd June, 1851, Age —. Son Patrick Lalor, 30th March, 1837, Age 31. William Lalor, 15th February, 1864, Age —.
6. Patrick Conran, November 14th, 1901, Age 64.
7. ?—.
8. Michael Richardson, Mary 24th, 1881, Age 69. Anne Richardson, October —, 1854, Age 34 and children Mary, John, Anne and Briget.
9. Briget Boland, 8th December, 1915, Age 71.
10. Anne Conran, October 1808, Age — also William.
11. John Jordan, 9th September, Age —.
12. Daniel McDaniel, 21st August, 1904, Age —.
13. Timothy Gorman, April 27th, 1822, Age 81.
14. John Rigney, 22nd January, 1861, Age 72.
15. William Walsh, 3rd July, 1882, Age 85.
16. Patrick Lalor, 10th October, 1886, Age 51.
17. ?—.
18. ?—.
19. Mary Gorman, 1st January, 1820, Age 30.
20. Mary Delaney, 29th April, 1830, Age 30.
21. ?—.
22. Elizabeth Carberry, 6th June, 1886, Age 58.
23. Denis Darcy, 1881, Age —.
24. ?—.
25. ?—.
26. Francis ?, 1808. Age —.
27. Rev. Thady Duane, April 9th, 1807, Age 74.
28. Redmond Rork, 4th May, 1793, Age 58.
29. Joseph Brophy, 31st March, 1813, Age 58.
30. Fr. O'Duane, — part of Rev. Thady Duane's headstone.
31. Mary McEvoy, 7th June, 1800, Age 69.
32. Vilemime Dunne, November —, Age 60.
33. Jane Connellan, April 6th, 1846, Age 45.
34. ?—.
35. Rev. Andrew Healy, P.P., born November, 1792, Ordained June 1810, Appointed P.P. on January 1833, Died 12th Mary, 1861, Age 72.
36. Very Rev. Anthony Duane, P.P., Born 4th May, 1780, Appointed P.P. 1807, Died 16th January, 1833.
37. Ann Crendy, 1799.
38. ?—.



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39. James Keenan.
40. Patrick Mahan, 9th May, 1867, Age 68. Grandfather James Mahan, 28th May, 1845, Age 76.
41. ?—.
42. Arthur Curran, 2nd December, 1925, Age 78, Margaret Curran, 30th September, 1889, Age 40.
43. ?—.
44. ?—.
45. Arthur McDermott, in memory of Elizabeth Mary, 17th October 1863, Age 19.
46. William Brock, June 1798, Age 18, hanged.
47. Edward Brock, May 1818, also Anne 4th February, 1856, Age 84.
48. Julie Day, 6th May, Age 41.
49. Mary Barrington, 1755, Age —.
50. William, Cristina and Helen, April 1818 (year of Our Lord).
51. Catherine Keating, 15th December, 1812, Age 85 also Ambrose who died young.
52. Patrick Dunne, August 13th, 1838.
53. James Maguire, 4th November, 1839.
54. Margaret Hannay, February 2nd, 1828, Age 55.
55. John Conroy, 15th Mary, 1844 Age 20, also Anne 12th March, 1862, Age 47.
56. Esther Barlow, September 19th, 1826, Age 28.
57. Catherine Flanagan, April 13th, 1884, Age 58.
58. John Hickey, 22nd December, 1879.
59. Joseph Young, July 25th, 1885.
60. Margaret Bergin, October 16th, 1849, Age 63. Also Hanagh, February 8th, 1848, Age 16.
61. Michael Duggan, 24th Mary, 1861, Age 78.
62. —?
63. —?
64. —?
65. Eliza Flanagan, March 8th, 1833, Age 40. Brother and Sister died young.
66. —?
67. Gabriel — Age 18.
68. John Strong, December 25th, 1831, daughter Elizabeth July 6th, 1824, Age 40.
69. Mich. Dunne, September 26th, 1817, Age 51.
70. Mary Caine, 7th July, 1887.
71. —?
72. Ellenor Dunne, November 30th, 1829, Age 67.
73. Briget McDonald, 16th September, 1836, Age 34.
74. George Fleming, 1863, Age 18, died in America.
75. —?
76. Elizabeth Beirne, September, Mary Bradshaw, 3rd January, 1883, Mary Beirne, August, Age 96.
77. Bernard Molloy, July 27th, 1866, Age 70.

Notable Headstones

- (a) Mary Barrington 1755 — the oldest legible headstone (49).
- (b). William Brock 1798 (46) — of the eleven people hanged in Wolfe Tone Street in 1798, there are two traditions regarding their burial. According to one of these, nine are buried in the Ivy Chapel in Acragar, and two, Willie Brock and Daniel Dunne are buried in Graigue. According to the second tradition, five are buried in the Ivy Chapel and six at Graigue, five in one grave and Willie Brock in another.
- (c). Rev. Thady Duane 1807 (27) — the first parish priest of Mountmellick parish buried outside the chapel walls.
- (d). Very Rev. Anthony Duane 1833 (36) — Second parish priest, buried inside the chapel walls.
- (e). Rev. Andrew Healy 1864 (35) — the third parish priest.
- (f). There is also one other priest buried in Graigue, Rev. Matthew Byrne 1801 (2).

The numbers in brackets refer to the list of headstones and the map on pages 5-8 of this booklet.



The Restoration

THE present restoration was started in the summer of 1990.

The work to be done included the following:

- marking the outline of the chapel walls.
- repairing gravestones and monuments where possible.
- cleaning and reprinting headstones where possible.
- levelling the ground and sowing lawns.
- repairing the wall at the rear of the cemetery.
- cleaning the hedge at the side of the cemetery.
- cleaning and painting railings.
- laying paths.
- concreting the floor of the chapel.
- building an altar.

Weekly work nights were organised during the summer months, when there was always a good attendance. An enormous amount of work has been completed, and still much remains to be done. It is intended to continue in the same manner as before until the project is finally concluded. The committee would like to extend its gratitude to the many workers and helpers for their dedication, time and effort, and to those whose generosity helped this project come so far:

- the people of the Social Employment Scheme who did much of the work on the remains of the chapel.

- those people who worked on earlier cleaning and restoration projects.

- those people who supported the project financially by their contributions to Church Gate Collections and the raffle.

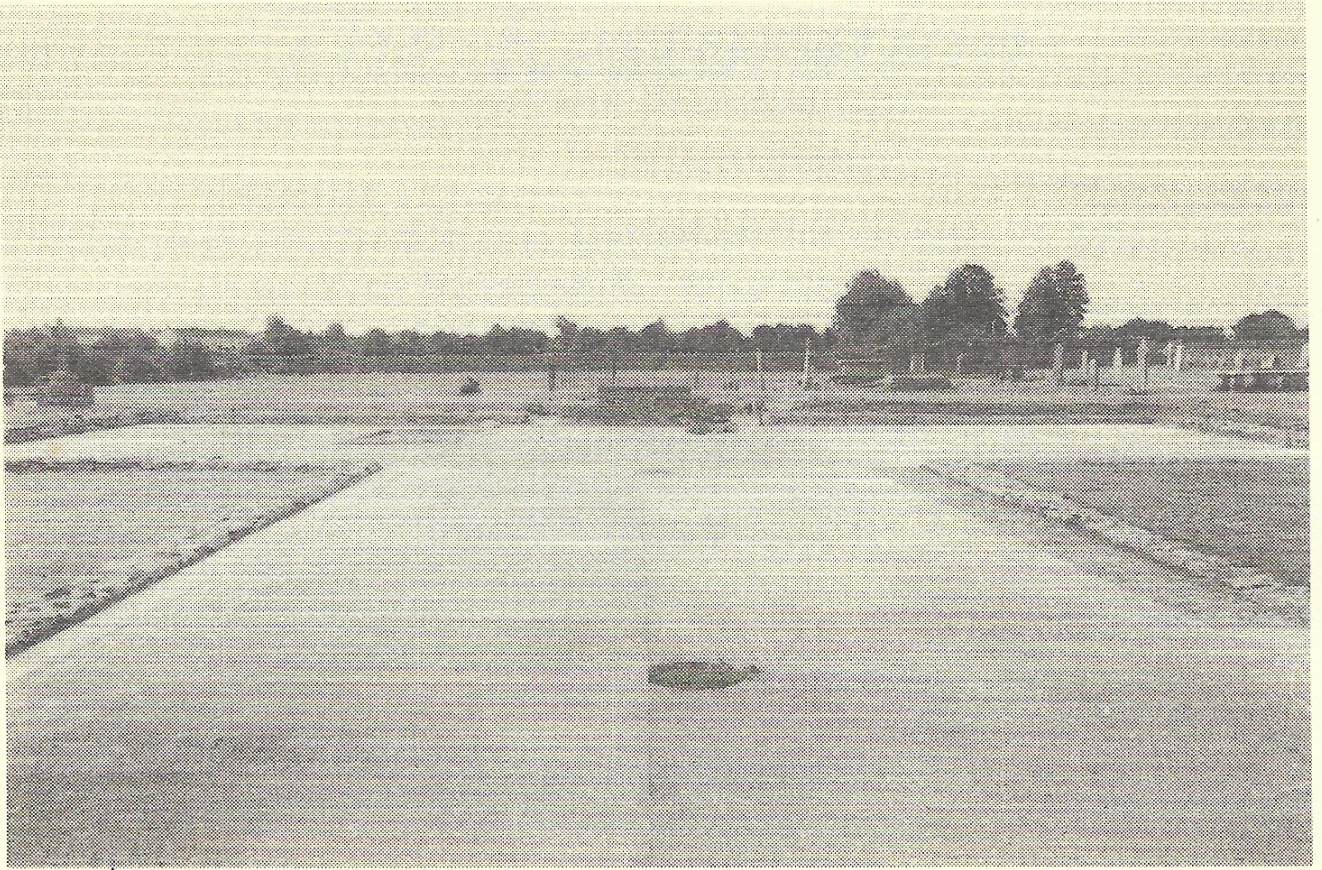
- and especially those people, far too many to mention, who generously donated materials, money, machinery and their time to the project.

The contribution of all those people is sincerely appreciated and it is hoped that the restored graveyard will stand as a suitable monument to their efforts.



Above and Below: Two views of the cemetery after the restoration. The photo above shows much the same view as that on Page 2.





(Above): A view of the concreted floor and the remains of the walls of St. Peter's Chapel, with the newly completed stone altar.

(Below): A firing party at the grave of Willie Brock, 1948, 150 years after the 1798 Rising.



