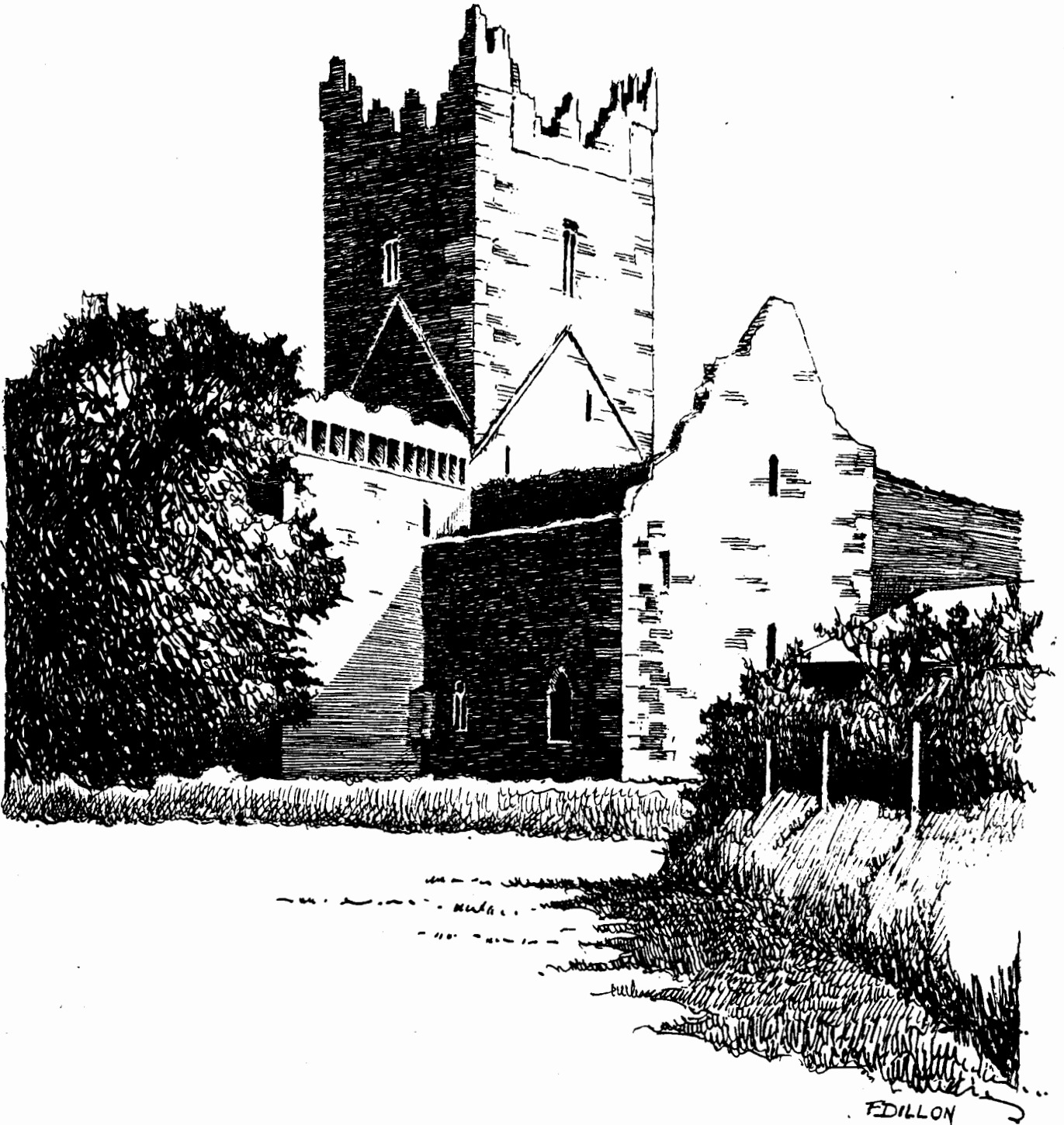


Old Waterford Society

DECIES

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C O N T E N T SPage No.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| 3. | Editorial. | |
| 4. | Plus ce change 1891 - 1991 . | |
| 5. | Waterford Diocese, 1096 - 1363 (Part II). | Sr. Assumpta O'Ne |
| 17. | As Others Saw Us: Sir William Brereton's Visit to Waterford, 1635. | Julian C. Walton |
| 23. | The Down Survey Maps of Co. Waterford: The Barony of Gaultier. | |
| 39. | The Waterford Room | Patricia Fanning |
| 43. | Book Review: Walled Gardens, by Annabel Davis-Goff. | Elizabeth Kirwan |
| 46. | Report of Annual General Meeting and Membership List. | |

FRONT COVER:

Our cover illustration shows Jerpoint Abbey in Co. Kilkenny. One of the most important and spectacular Cistercian monasteries in Ireland, it was founded in the twelfth century, though the great square tower of the church was not added until the fifteenth century. It is justly famed for the excellence of its sculptured cloister and tombs.

We wish to express our sincere thanks to Waterford Corporation and to Waterford Regional Technical College for their valued assistance in the production of this issue.

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Only a few years ago, the study of local history was regarded as a hobby suitable only for small and generally (but not always) amiable groups of mildly eccentric enthusiasts. This situation is rapidly changing. The public at large is learning through the mass media of the potentially disastrous consequences of neglect of the environment on the one hand and of unplanned development on the other.

This change of attitude is to be seen at a number of different levels. The importance of making future generations aware of their debt to the past is reflected in the emphasis on local studies in the new Junior Certificate History syllabus. There has been a spate of local histories and personal memoirs emanating from the Waterford area in recent years (one is reviewed in this issue). Parish history societies and heritage centres (Ardmore and Tooraneena are examples in this county) are using the past to create a new esprit de corps for the present. The developing interest in tracing one's ancestors is bringing a higher profile to the Waterford Heritage genealogical centre in Jenkin's Lane. The past year has seen the formation of a Waterford Civic Trust and an East Waterford Development Committee. Our local authorities, frequently the target of criticism, have also been playing their part, and the role of Waterford Corporation has been particularly impressive in recent years. Our county and municipal libraries have local history sections of which any library could be proud (see Patricia Fanning's article, below).

To be sure, there is also a strongly utilitarian aspect of this change in attitude towards the past. However, as our economic prospects become ever more uncertain it is only commonsense to bring greater numbers of tourists to our county by making its towns and countryside more interesting and enjoyable to visit.

The battle on behalf of the past is, of course, far from won. Sometimes public attitudes hardly seem to have changed at all. Even as we go to press our local papers tell us of the shameful pollution of Tramore beach and of a controversial new road to be built in the Comeragh mountains.

It is surely the function of our Society to involve itself on one side or another in all that affects our past. Our heritage needs our support, and we in turn need to renew our strength by the addition of fresh recruits. Many of our most active members are now battle-scarred veterans, and we need to go out and tap the immense goodwill that undoubtedly exists towards our aims in the younger generations.

The production of a local historical journal does not become any easier. From humble beginnings, DECIES grew impressively in size and quality, but to maintain this standard for three issues per year, published on schedule, has proved increasingly difficult. This will be the only issue for 1991. It is intended to bring out two issues in 1992. Meanwhile, happy reading.

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Plus ce change.....1891 - 1991

Life has changed radically for Waterfordians in the last hundred years - or has it? The following notices appeared in our local papers during the year 1891.

EMIGRATION. Important notice to emigrants. Assisted passages to Western Australia £7.0s.0d. Passage to Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide £13.0s.0d. Passengers booked to any Railway Station in America at lowest rates and by best ships. Call or write: JAMES McGRATH, Passenger Agent.

ALL MEN WHO WISH TO MARRY, and be happy, should see the MAGIC MIRROR. It may concern them. Impediments to marriage, on account of ill health etc. removed, and words of advice and warning of importance to all men. Sealed in envelope, any address, on receipt of one stamp. Address: Mr. Howell, 4 Fitzallan Square, Sheffield.

THE FAVOURITE SOAPS

Davis's best Tallow Crown. Contains no injurious ingredients; will not injure the most sensitive skin nor the most delicate fabric; contains superior washing qualities. It defies competition.

Davis's Saturday. Is a cheap soap, a hard soap, and a good soap. It will not run away in the wash tub, it lathers freely, contains no deleterious ingredients, and is far superior to the ordinary cheap soap sold at the same price.

FRENCH SPECIFIC TREATMENT. For the speedy and certain cure of all nervous affection, blushing, bodily weakness, lowness of spirits, and want of muscular strength, and general debility; also loss of brain and nerve power; these and various ailments easily cured by the new French mode recently introduced into this country. Full details on receipt of stamped addressed envelope. All persons can procure the remedy, which is prepared as a lozenge, at a small cost, and by this means and following the hygienic rules laid down, which are simple, restore themselves to a perfect state of health and vigour.

PLAGUE OF RATS. Thousands have been killed by SANDFORD'S RAT POISON, which is said by Farmers, to be the best and most effective ever introduced. Mr. Bliss, farmer, Helsthorpe, Leighton, writes: "That from one dressing he found 136 dead rats next morning". J. Long Esq., of Carlton, states he found over 300 rats killed by using a tin of the poison. Price 1s.2d., 2s., 3s., and 5s. per tin, of Sandford & Son, Sandy, Beds. A trial solicited. Save your wheat ricks by dressing them with Sandfords Mice Poison.

10s. REWARD. Strayed from the Fair of Dungarvan, 17th Dec. 1890, a 1½ year old heifer. Description. Red yellow, having several large white spots on her sides, with one immediately behind the fore-leg on the milker's side, and another on the opposite side, reaching upon the hip (before the hip); a white spot about the middle of the tail, with thick short horns for her age. Any person who may have her in possession will please give information to the owner: John Kett, Pulla Parish of Dungarvan.

Waterford Diocese, 1096 - 1363 (Part 11)

Sr. Assumpta O'Neill.

CHAPTER TWO: Episcopal Succession (1135 - 1222).

In 1152, seventeen years after the death of Waterford's first bishop, the synod of Kells met.¹ It was at Kells that final form was given to the work begun at Cashel (1101) and continued at Rathbreasail (1111), the pallia were presented to the four archbishops of Armagh, Dublin, Cashel, and Tuam, and the number and extent of the suffragan sees fixed.² Thus the plan laid out nearly fifty years earlier by Gilbert of Limerick in his treatise 'De statu ecclesiae' had at last materialised.³ The Irish church now had a central authority vested in the metropolitans, with the archbishop of Armagh as their primate directly subject to the Pope. The lack of such a central authority had been the main weakness of the eight-century reform in Ireland which left the constitution of the Irish church precisely as it had been.⁴ At the synod of Kells there were present the bishops of Lismore and Waterford.⁵ This means that after the death of Malchus the arrangement made at Rathbreasail, constituting a single diocese of 'Lismore or Waterford' had been set aside. The bishop of Lismore at Kells was Giollachriost O'Conairche, a Cistercian monk, one of those whom St. Malachy had sent to Clairvaux for training in 1139-41. On his return to Ireland he became the first abbot of Mellifont, and in 1151 or 1152 was appointed bishop of Lismore by Pope Eugenius III who had been a monk with him at Clairvaux.⁶

Tostius, bishop of Waterford in 1152:

Of the bishop of Waterford at Kells we know nothing beyond his name - Tostius - from which Ware concludes that he was a Dane.⁷ We do not know when or where he was consecrated. As late as 1145 the Danes of Limerick sent Patrick, successor of Gilbert, to Canterbury for consecration but we have no evidence of a similar move by the Danes of Waterford in the case of Tostius.

The separation of Waterford and Lismore was ratified at Kells when two distinct dioceses were named, both subject to Cashel. This arrangement was probably acceptable to both parties concerned. A similar situation obtained in the Danish cities of Dublin and Limerick at that time.⁸ Even this settlement at Waterford and Lismore left problems unsolved, for Ardmore too claimed that it should have a bishop. In 1172, twenty years after Kells, the suffragan sees of Cashel included Lismore, Waterford, and Ardmore.⁹ The latter diocese, which must have been very small in extent, was still in existence in 1210, but after that nothing is heard of it.¹⁰ 'The manor of Ardmore' henceforth appears only as a bone of contention between Lismore and Waterford.¹¹

The initial stage of the Irish reform was now successfully completed. The implementing of the programme would no doubt have given rise to many minor problems even in the normal course of events. But the movement was disrupted less than twenty years after the synod of Kells when 'there came into Ireland, Henry son of the Empress, most puissant king of England . . . and he came to land at Portlairgi.'¹²

The Norman invasion, reported by the annalists in so detached a manner, had an adverse influence on the Irish reform movement, since it introduced into the ecclesiastical as into the political sphere a divisive principle - that of racial discrimination - where strength could come only from unity. This effect was not immediately discernible, and in the early years of Norman infiltration, Irish and Norman ecclesiastics seem to have co-operated with each other in working out the programme of reform.¹³ This is not surprising in view of the fact that from the beginning, Norman influence had been effective in shaping the policy of the reformers.¹⁴ Malchus, first bishop of Waterford, had been trained at the Benedictine monastery at Winchester and it was to him that St. Malachy came for guidance before taking his place as reform leader. We can safely say that the reforming bishops before the invasion were on amicable terms with their Anglo-Norman brothers and that this state of affairs continued for some time afterwards. The Norman influence on the reform policy must not, however, be exaggerated. It has been pointed out that the reformers in England were merely applying the principles that Cluny had been teaching for nearly 200 years.¹⁵ But 'the Cluniac movement, like other similar developments in history, accomplished what it did because it found everywhere large numbers in a frame of mind prepared to act on its suggestions. So it was in Ireland. Inspiration, advice, example, may have come from abroad, but the driving force which effected the ecclesiastical revolution of the twelfth century came from within the Irish church'.¹⁶

The Norman invasion also introduced into ecclesiastical life the disharmony arising from the struggle for possession of land - a particularly invidious situation when the major part of the income of almost all bishoprics and abbeys was drawn from landed property.¹⁷ Anglo-Norman bishops did their best to absorb the lands of neighbouring Irish dioceses, and in Waterford this aspect of the situation became particularly troublesome in the thirteenth century. In Waterford too the new orders introduced by the invaders - Templars and Hospitallers - became extensive landowners and their houses centres of Norman influence.¹⁸

Augustin O'Sealbaig (1175-82):

Waterford became very early a Norman centre. It was at Waterford in 1175 that Pope Adrian's bull, the famous "Laudabiliter", was read for the first time in Ireland together with the confirmatory brief of Pope Alexander III.¹⁹ There was a meeting of bishops for the occasion, but we do not know the name of the bishop of Waterford at the time. It is, in fact, likely that the see was vacant, as in the autumn of that year King Henry II appointed at the council of Windsor an Irishman, Magister Augustin, and sent him to Ireland with St. Laurence O'Toole to be consecrated by the archbishop of Cashel.²⁰ This was the first occasion on which a king of England exercised his authority in the appointment of an Irish bishop.²¹ Lanigan points out that Henry on this occasion acted very judiciously by not placing a foreigner over the church of Waterford and by not having Augustin consecrated in England but directing him to the metropolitan whose suffragan he was to become.²²

Augustin's surname was O'Sealbaigh²³, which leads us to believe that he was a member of the ecclesiastical Cork family of that name.²⁴ His title 'magister' means that he had obtained a master's degree, perhaps at Paris or possibly at Oxford which was just then beginning as a university. In 1177 Bishop Augustin was a subscribing witness to the charter of Henry II granting to Robert Fitzstephen and Milo de Cogan the kingdom of Cork.²⁵

In the same year he witnessed the foundation charter of the Abbey of St. Thomas near Dublin, a house of Victorine canons founded by William FitzAldelm, Henry's representative in Ireland.²⁶ He also witnessed an undated grant of lands in Crook by Gilbert of Essex to the Cistercian abbey of Dunbrody, a grant which later brought about a lawsuit between the Cistercians and the Templars.²⁷ In 1179 Augustin was among the six Irish bishops who attended the Lateran council and in his journey through England had to take an oath that he would do nothing prejudicial to the king or his kingdom.²⁸ This bishop's death is recorded by the Ulster annalists in 1182.

Anonymous Bishop (died c.1199):

For eighteen years after Augustin's death, we have no record of the name of any bishop of Waterford. We know that the see was vacant at some time during those years,²⁹ but in January 1200, Giraldus Cambrensis, preaching before Innocent III, recalled that 'a good Irish bishop who is now dead' had testified in his favour the preceding year.³⁰ As Waterford is the only see known to have been vacant in 1200, the reference is probably to a bishop of Waterford. This anonymous bishop initiated the controversy with Lismore,³¹ which continued with varying intensity for more than a century and a half and was not satisfactorily concluded until the union of the sees in 1363. This bishop died before 1200, probably 1199.³²

Robert I (1200-22):

Bishop Robert I was appointed to the see of Waterford sometime before 1200, and on August 24 that year was one of the witnesses to the marriage of King John at Angouleme.³³ In September of the same year he witnessed a charter of John at Alencon.³⁴ The name of Robert occurs again in a grant which he made as Bishop of Waterford to the canons of St. Mary Oseney, near Oxford, of the church of Kiltinan.³⁵ The grant is undated and attempts at dating it have not been altogether successful.³⁶

Relations between Waterford and Lismore deteriorated during Robert's episcopacy, particularly on the accession to Lismore of Malachy, a Cistercian monk.³⁷ Bishop Malachy was elected about 1202 or early in 1203. The reaction of Robert is described in a letter of Pope Innocent III dated 5 November 1203. It is addressed to the archbishop of Tuam and the bishops of Kilmacduagh and Ferns.³⁸ We learn from this letter that when Malachy as bishop-elect of Lismore was preparing to visit the apostolic see, the bishop of Waterford violently seized him, despoiled him wickedly, personally struck him 'even to the shedding of blood', and, as a final humiliation, had him imprisoned, fettered and beaten.³⁹ The Pope, since he 'cannot or should not dissimulate about the audacity of such presumption' pronounces sentence of excommunication and adds that Robert is to be compelled to restore to Malachy peaceful possession of the church and diocese of Lismore.

The Pope's letter makes it clear that not only Robert himself, but also his predecessor, had invaded and occupied the diocese of Lismore. But it seems clear from this letter that when Bishop Felix of Lismore resigned in 1202,⁴⁰ the papal legate at the time, Cardinal John of Monte Coelio, entrusted the see of Lismore, at least temporarily, to Bishop Robert.⁴¹ There is a discrepancy here between the decision of the legate and the reversal of that decision by the Pope, who had Malachy consecrated, and sent confirmatory letters to the dean and chapter of Lismore.⁴² Pope Innocent certainly seems to have been favourably impressed by Malachy, and was also, no doubt, influenced by the account of the shocking behaviour of the bishop of Waterford, whom he could hardly have considered fit to rule one see, still less two.

The ambiguity arising at this stage occurs again later when successive bishops of Waterford produce, in support of their claims, letters purporting to be those of the legate, and the bishop of Lismore with equal emphasis declares them to be forgeries.

The acrimonious dispute thus initiated continued with varying intensity for the next century and a half. The story sounds scandalous, perhaps, to modern ears, and it is important to view it in its setting. The conflict between Lismore and Waterford was political as much as, or perhaps more than, ecclesiastical. The Danish see of Waterford had become an important centre of Norman influence, and was acquiring ever more

power and importance from continued royal patronage. Lismore, on the other hand, represented the Irish tradition, and had, besides, the advantage of size and of ancient prestige. The aim of Waterford was to expand into and absorb the diocese of Lismore, as Dublin succeeded in doing with Glendalough.⁴³ Lismore temporalities constituted an attractive lure for the considerably poorer see of Waterford. It is true that Waterford at the time was the second port in Ireland (Ross being first) and handled an extensive trade with England and the continent.⁴⁴ Nevertheless a comparison of the valuations of the two sees as given in the taxation lists of the end of the century reveals a vast difference in their resources.⁴⁵ Total valuation of Waterford amounts to £125-17-8, while that of Lismore comes to £711-8-2.⁴⁶

There is no record of the death or resignation of Bishop Robert, but on 19 October 1204, the king gave his assent to the election of David, cousin of the justiciar, Meyler Fitz Henry, provided he be one of those named.⁴⁷

David (1204 - 1209):

David, the new bishop, was a cousin of the justiciar, Meyler Fitzhenry.⁴⁸ In the year before his election, King John had granted him the church of Dungarvan.⁴⁹ In the winter of 1204, a busy one for John, David witnessed several of the King's charters as the elect of Waterford.⁵⁰ In September 1205 he appears again as witness, but had been consecrated bishop in the meantime.⁵¹ We know nothing however, of the place and circumstances of his consecration, but we find that he vigorously pursued his predecessor's policy towards the diocese of Lismore. Again Pope Innocent III gives the details. The relevant letter is dated 26 June 1212, when Bishop David was already dead and the controversy had reached a new peak of intensity under his successor. The Pope opens his long letter by giving a resumé of the progress of the dispute under David's episcopate. "When the dispute arose between our venerable brother of Lismore and David, then bishop of Waterford, we entrusted it in a manner agreed upon, to our venerable brothers the bishops of Killaloe and Cork and our beloved son the archdeacon of Cashel."⁵² (The letter here referred to, written while Bishop David was still alive, was not registered and is not extant). The Pope goes on to describe how the judges-delegate, "desiring to execute our mandate diligently", cited the bishop of Waterford to appear before them and answer the charges made against him by the bishop of Lismore. When the time came, Bishop David produced letters, purporting to be written by Cardinal John, excommunicating Bishop Malachy of Lismore. The latter, says the Pope, was able to prove that these letters were in fact forgeries. This he did "by comparing them with other letters of the Cardinal". Having heard this much of the dispute, the judges appointed another day for the further hearing of the case. Before the appointed day came, however, Waterford was once more vacant, the bishop having been killed, as the Pope expresses it, "at the instigation of the devil by some of Satan's satellites". We know from the annals that the assassination of David was carried out by one of the Ui Faolain of Decies.⁵³ Neither the Pope nor the annalist gives any hint as to the motive behind the act, and it remains an open

