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AN APPRECIATION OF TAGHMON

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BY

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INTRODUCTION:

I have always had a deep interest in my home village of Taghmon, Co. Wexford, so it was with great enthusiasm that I approached a more detailed study of the visual ingredients that to to make up this unique village.

It was because of a concern for its future development that I recorded by means of photographs and drawings the visual evidence of its character today. This concern prompted me to call my study "An Appreciation of Taghmon" rather than merely a visual history. Much of the visual evidence of its past history has long since disappeared, but in so far as it has affected the development of the character of the village I have included it here.

CHAPTER 1 - HISTORY:

Taghmon came into existence in the sixth century A.D. when St. Munn or Munnus founded a monastery here. He is said to have performed many miracles. The only visible evidence of St. Munn remaining today are a stone well, Tobermunna and a Celtic Cross. St. Munn's Cross (Fig. 3) stands in the grounds of the present Protestant Church. The cross appears to have been the victim of vandals at some stage since the shaft is missing and one of the arms is broken. There is a legend that Cromwell inflicted this damage but there is no evidence to substantiate this. As it stands now the cross is eight feet six inches high of which the base takes up about half. In 1979 the existence of the cross was celebrated by the publication of a calendar by Williams Bakery, Taghmon Limited.

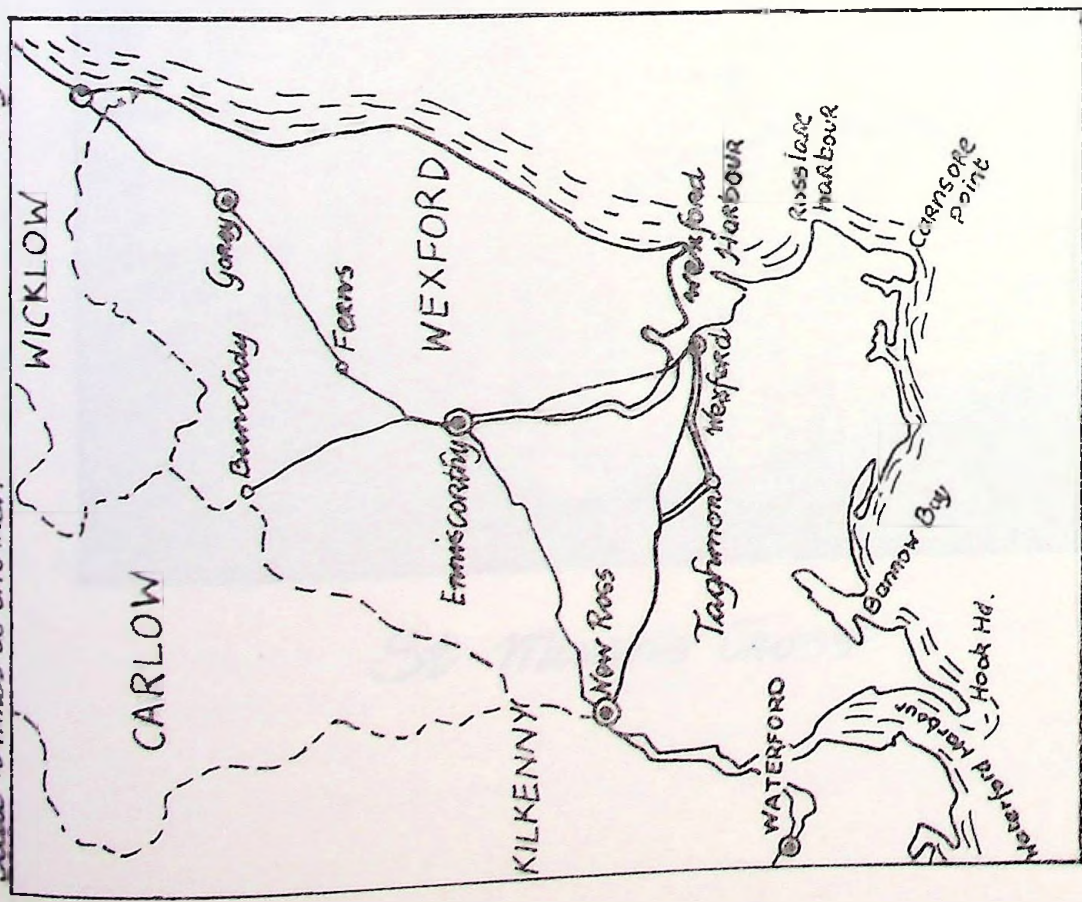
In 825 Taghmon was plundered by the Danes. The settlements were then "only a collection of a few mud huts protected by wattles".^I There were also a few scattered mission stations surrounded by forest. There is an area outside Taghmon which is known as Forest to this day, but any evidence of extensive plantings of trees have long since vanished. This area was the subject of a lot of controversy in 1278 as to who actually owned it.

After the death of William, Earl Marshall in 1219, the whole of Leinster was divided among his five daughters. Sibilla the youngest was given Kildare as her dowry, then valued at £100,155.4d. a year, as well as some smaller properties including Taghmon which was valued at £7,165.2d. a year. The controversy about Forest arose when Agatha de Mortimer, Sibilla's daughter laid claim to it as part of her inheritance. The forest was at that time occupied by William and Jean de Valence who claimed it as their own. Agatha eventually gained possession of the forest. The forest was of oak and in the 17th Century the shipbuilders of Bristol had it cut down to use in their ships and as there were no roads at the time the timber was marked with the owners name and during the autumnal floods floated down in rafts along the waters of the Pill until it came to the Scar of Barrystown.

John Duns Scotus is said to have been born in Taghmon and to have studied in St. Munn's school. He was in Paris in 1304 where he astonished the learned Professors of the Sorbonne with his brilliance.

Scale 10 miles to one inch

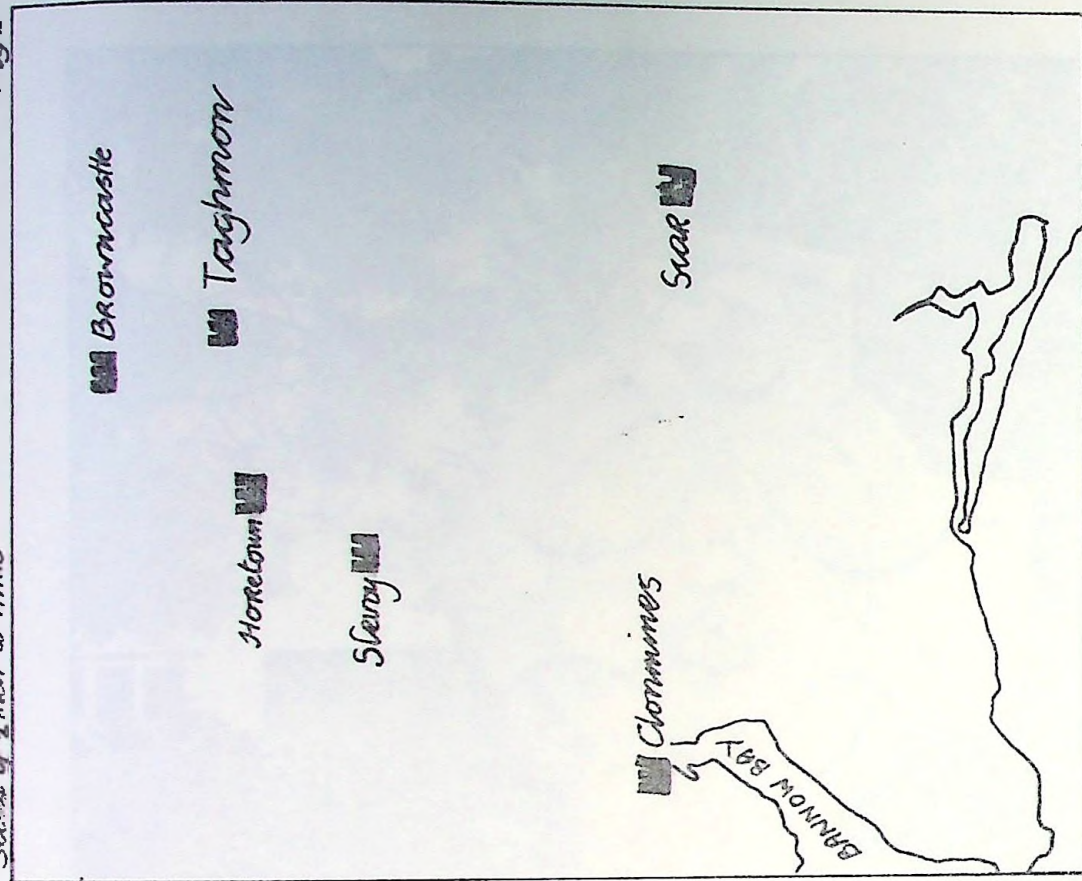
Fig 1



Position of Taghmon in Co. Wexford.

Scale of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to 1 mile

Fig 2



Castles on Pitt River.

Fig 3



St. Munni's Cross

The Pill river which has since been reclaimed was of strategic importance to the English in the 15th Century. An Act was passed in the reign of Henry VI (1441) for "building towers upon the waters or river of Taghmon in the County of Weysford".

In a description of the Province of Ireland written towards the latter end of Queen Elizabeth I's reign (1558 - 1603) the writer describing County Wexford says:-

"the south part, as the most civil part, is containd within a river called Pill, where the annoyentest gentilmen, descended of the first conquerors, do inhabit".

The Pill which flows into Bannow Bay was fortified by Scar, Barrystown, Clonmines, Slevoy and Browne's Castle (Fig. 2). At that time, when it rained or at high tide, the river overflowed its banks and the waters spread over a vast extent of lowland. The swamps thus created made it hard for the Irish to transport cattle belonging to the English which was their main objective.

In 1600, Taghmon was burned by the Kavanaghs and their accomplices the O'Byrne's of Wicklow led by "the wolf of the mountain" Fiach McHugh O'Byrne. The force consisted of about 1200 foot and horse soldiers and they burned everything between Taghmon and Bannow.

The following is a description of Taghmon in 1684:

"This Taghmon is an antient Corporacon and was governed by a burgamaster and burgesses. It is now quite waste in a manner, there being but a ruineous old Castle and a small parish church in repaire and about a dozen cabbins yet still it sends two Burgesses to Parliament Taghmon was a corporate borough by order of James I (1603 - 1625) as also were Bannow, Clonmines, New Ross, Fethard, Enniscorthy and Gorey. Taghmon sent two members to Parliament until the Union in 1800 the last members being Lt. Col. Chas. McDonnell and Robert Rutledge of Bloomfield, Co. Mayo.

The land in 1684 was described as being of limestone "and yields good corne and grasse", "the said Corporacon, and the land thereof for ye most parte is of ye inheritance of William Hoare of Harperstowne Esqre. of an ancient English family, whose chiefe seate is Harperstowne".

Although the headquarters of the rebels in the rising of 1641 was Shielbeggan, the principal inhabitants of Taghmon and the neighbourhood were participants in the rebellion. A great deal of land around Taghmon changed hands at this time, from Catholic to Protestant owners. Lands owned formerly by the Cheevers and Conneings passed into the hands of a few Protestants - a lot of it going to the Bishop of Leighlin and Ferns, and also to William Hore and Thomas Holmes.

Cromwell who had such a devastating effect on the rest of Wexford, seems to have overlooked Taghmon in his passage of destruction. He did, however spend three nights in the Castle of Harperstown near Taghmon, seat of the Hore family and is supposed to have been very loath to leave because of the delicious water obtained from a well there. Hore of Harperstown is said to have preserved his estate when Cromwell passed through by feigning sickness and shutting himself up in his castle at Taghmon to avoid opposing "the usurper" when the battle of Lambstown was fought. This battle was fought in October 1650 in the parish of Whitechurch, Glynn on the west of the Slaney and was the last engagement between the confederates and Cromwell in Co. Wexford. The Irish were defeated by Ireton with such slaughter that the ditches are said to have run red with blood for two days.

'The account of Taghmon given by Mr. Arthur Young in his "Tours through Ire. in 1776" is not very flattering. He notices as extraordinary that there was actually a bed at the inn, on which he put his clothes, but that the stable had neither rack nor manger; "the hostel" he says, "would have made a very passable castle of enchantment in the eyes of Don Quixote".

In the rebellion of 1798 many of the tombstones and crosses in St. Munna's churchyard were destroyed by what W. Hore in his "History of County Wexford" calls the "fanatics of that time". There are no records of any fighting taking place in Taghmon but Col. John Moore and his army was marching towards Taghmon with the object of capturing it when he was diverted by an attack on Wexford town by the rebels.

The following is a description of the village and neighbourhood in about 1842 given in Lewis' "Topographical Dictionary" -

"The town consists chiefly of two nearly parallel streets intersected obliquely by two others; and, in 1831 contained 237 houses some of which are neatly built. It's chief trade arose from its situation on a public

thoroughfare, which has been recently diverted into the new line of road from Wexford to New Ross; and it is now chiefly dependant on the number of its fairs, of which not less than 23 are held in the year. A market for salt butter only is held every Tuesday and Friday during the season, and the fairs are well attended A chief Constabulary police force is stationed in the town and petty sessions are held on alternate Wednesdays.

The parish comprises 7,946 statute acres as applotted under the Tithe Act, and principally under tillage; the soil is fertile and the system of agriculture improving, there is very little waste land, and the bog of Slevoy is now under cultivation. Limestone of good quality is found at Poulemarle and is quarried for agricultural uses and for building. The principal seats are Harperstown, the residence of W. Hore Esq., Slevoy Castle of Lieut. Col. Pigot; Hillburn of J. Hatton Esq., and Coolcliffe of Col. Wm. Cox".

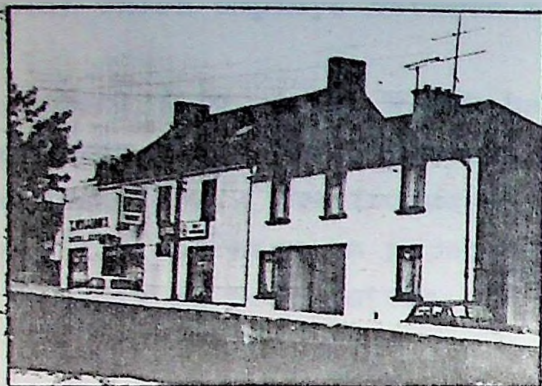
..... "at Forrest, about a half a mile from the town, is a place of worship for the Society of Friends; about forty children are taught in two public schools, of which the parochial school is supported by the Incumbent, who also pays the rent of the school house, a school chiefly for females is partly supported by a society of ladies. In these, and in three private schools about 200 children are educated".

In 1848 Griffith's valuation of this parish was - land 8,734 a. 3R.10p. Annual value £5,002 1s 1d. Annual value of houses deducting one third £547s 18d. Total Value of land and houses £5,549 19s 1d.

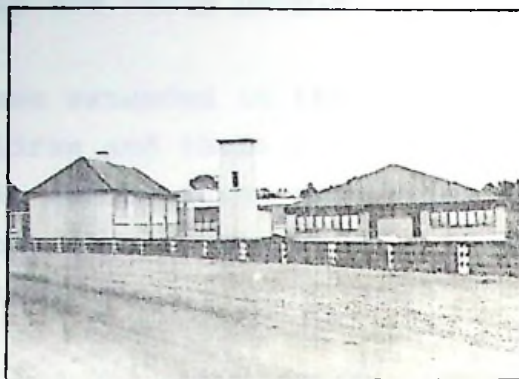
In 1906 Walter James Hore Ruthven, Baron Ruthven of Freeland sold the property he owned in Taghmon thereby ending a long involvement by the Hore family in the affairs of Taghmon. The buyers were Edward Brennan, James Cullen and Gregory Walsh.

Taghmon today has changed little since the early twentieth century. In 1911 the population was 555 and in 1971 the population was about 500. The village has been something of a revival with the building of a new housing estate but there is very little local employment for these people. The nearest centre of employment is Wexford town where a lot of people have jobs.

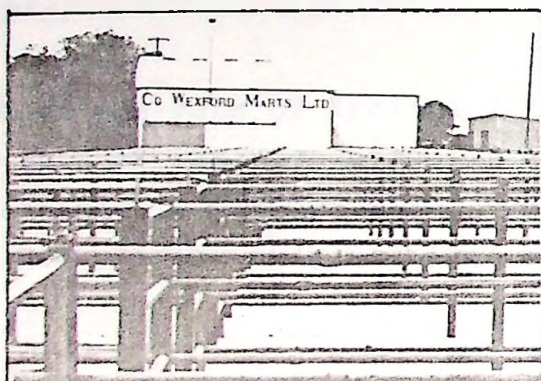
Fig 4



(a) Williams Bakery



(b) National School



(c) Cattle Mart



(d) Bank of Ireland



(e) Garda Station



(f) Post Office

The main source of employment in the village is Williams Bakery (Fig. 4 (a) which employs between thirty and forty people.

Taghmon school (Fig. 4 (b) which has been extended in the past few years educates about three hundred children and there are nine teachers employed there now. The increase in the school going population is due in part to the increase in population but also to the closure of two smaller schools at Traceystown and Trinity.

The main source of revenue for the shopkeepers is the influx of country people for the cattle mart held every Monday. The cattle mart (Fig 4 (c) replaces the old fair days, a feature of the village until the 1960's.

A branch of the Bank of Ireland (Fig. 4 (d) employs about ten people and the rest of the population is largely self employed. There is a Garda Barracks in Taghmon with two guards stationed here (Fig 4 (e) and the Post Office (Fig 4 (f) is run by Mrs. Carroll.

Scale: 25" to 1 mile

Fig. 5



CHAPTER II:

(a) ENTRANCES:

Taghmon is a market town and a study of its map shows how important it is to the surrounding countryside - it radiates out from a central area to embrace the land around.

The village can be approached from seven different entrances and these entrances give the visitor an indication of the character of the rest of the village.

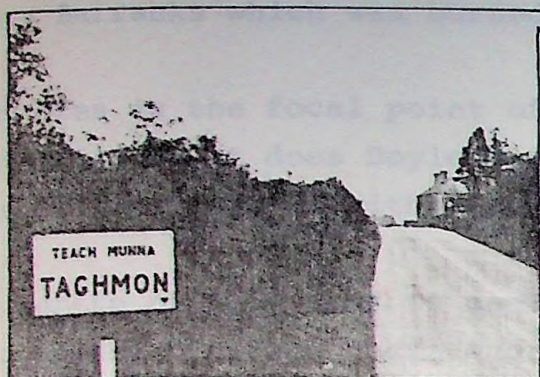
Entrances are subject to change over the years - like everything else, and a comparison of the entrances to Taghmon is an interesting study of changing times. The entrance to Taghmon from the New Ross Road is one which has not changed a lot in recent years (Fig. 5(a)). The approach is well lined with trees and as the road rises fairly sharply there is little indication that a village is at hand until one is almost in it. This follows the pattern of entrances to villages long ago where there was a definite break from countryside to town. The entrance from the Wexford road is in complete contrast to this (Fig. 5 (b)). The approach is lined with bungalows instead of trees and at the immediate entrance there are very few trees at all creating a wide open area that conveys none of the intimacy of a country village. This is also a problem with some of the other entrances. The entrances from Forest (Fig. 5(c) and Brownescastle (Fig. 5 (d) while being fairly well lined with trees themselves, look onto a very open area, the grounds of the new school. The same is also true of the entrance from Clohultagh (Fig 5 (e) and Hillburn (Fig 5 (f) but not to the same extent. At the Hillburn entrance, the problem is more one of age. Here is a new housing development on the outskirts of the village creating a new entrance and with effort it could develop into an attractive lead into the village. The last entrance is from Mahony's Row and provides almost the same view as that from the Wexford Road.

(b) CENTRAL AREA:

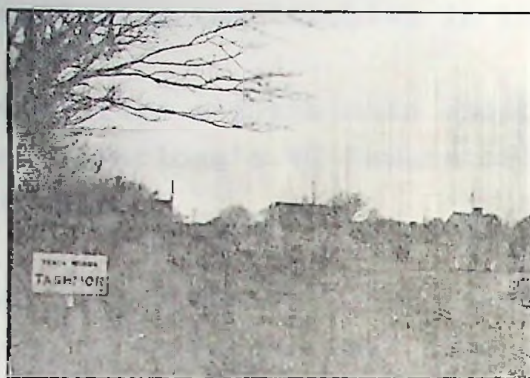
The central area of Taghmon is known as "The Square" (Fig 6 (a) and the four main roads converge here. In fact, it is not square shaped, at all, but triangular.

Entrances

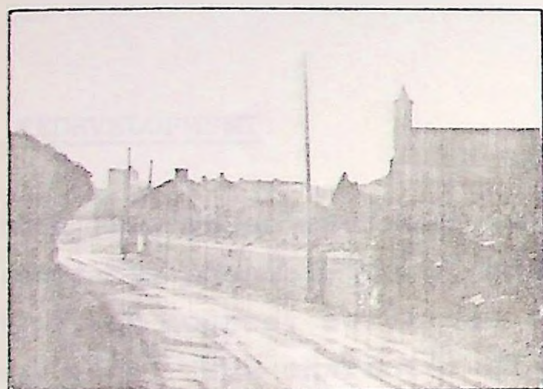
Fig 5



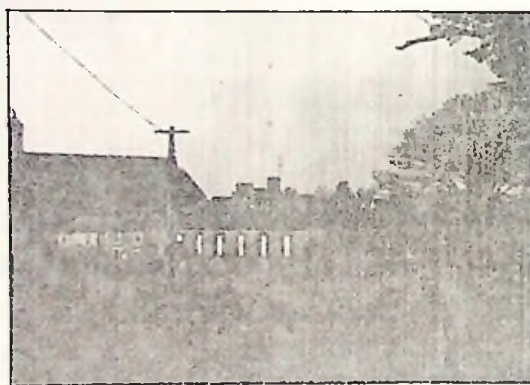
(a) from New Ross Road



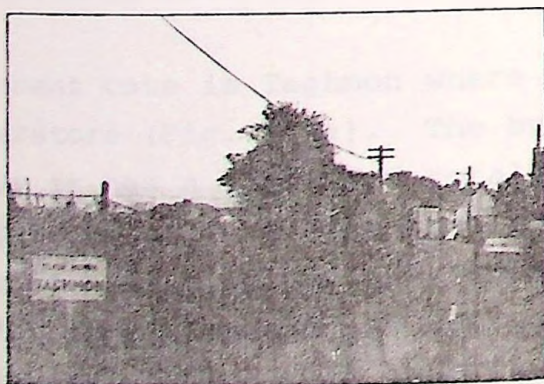
(b) from Wexford Road



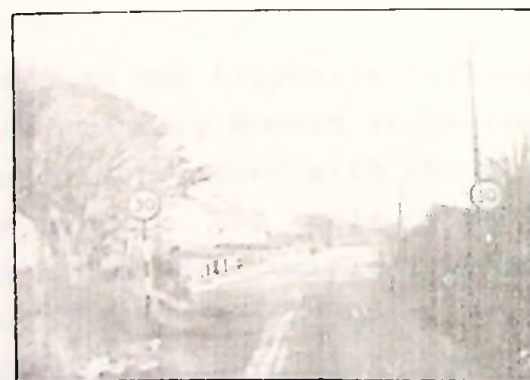
(c) from Brown's castle



(d) from Forest



(e) from Clohultraigh



(f) from Hillburn

In former years the Courthouse and Constabulary Barracks were sited around the Square but today the courthouse has been converted to a dwelling house and the Doctor's house stands on the site of the Constabulary Barracks which was burned down during the troubles in the twenties.

This area is the focal point of the village and the main shopping area containing as it does Doyle's drapery, Furlong's VG Superstore, Donohoe's pub and Ledwith's general store.

The centre of this area is dominated by the water trough which had fallen into disuse over the years and is now converted to hold sign posts and is planted out with flowers during the summer months (Fig. 6(b)). The actual square itself is now mainly used as a car park and is the site of three day Mardi Gras festival of Irish music held in August.

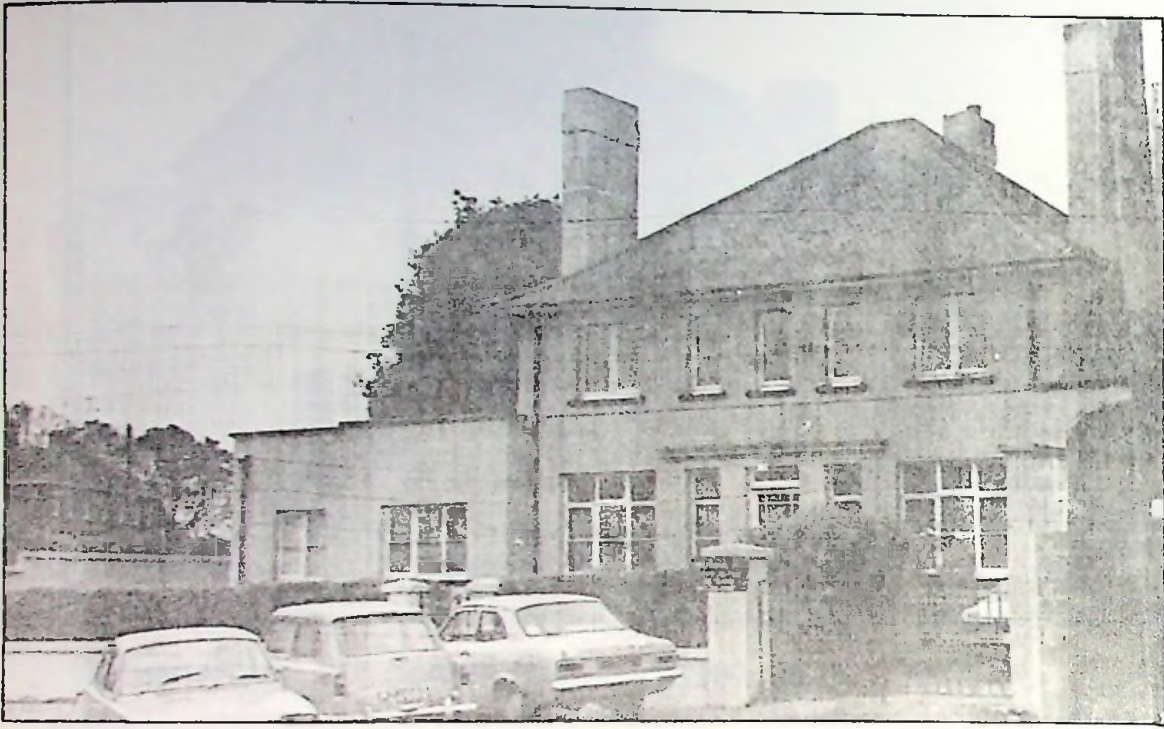
(c) REDEVELOPMENT:

Taghmon like other villages is subject to change and this sometimes presents the possibility of redeveloping a derelict area. Such development is, of course, desirable but it is debateable whether the change is always good. The character of a village is expressed usually by the buildings in it and every effort should be made to maintain the character of an area. A new building can be modern in expression and yet fit in comfortably with the existing buildings.

A recent case in Taghmon where this does not happen is Furlong's VG Superstore (Fig. 7 (a)). The building is very modern in design, unfortunately it has a flat roof totally out of character with the attractive line of pitched roofs in the rest of the street. The scale of the windows and neon sign is also out of keeping with the small vertical windows and modest nameplates of the rest of the shops. It is obvious that economic pressures must play an important role in deciding what type of design is chosen for new buildings but it is a pity that aesthetic values do not play a large part also, as it is the visual effects of economic planning that will effect the surrounding environment for years to come (Fig 7 (b)).

Redevelopment does not affect shopping areas solely. Houses that are no longer lived in must be pulled down as they become a serious hazard and there is also the need for careful planning in this area. A suburban bungalow does not fit into the character and feeling of terraced housing. So it is with the bungalow near the ruins of the castle (Fig. 8 (a)).

Fig. 6



(a) Doctor's House looking out onto Square

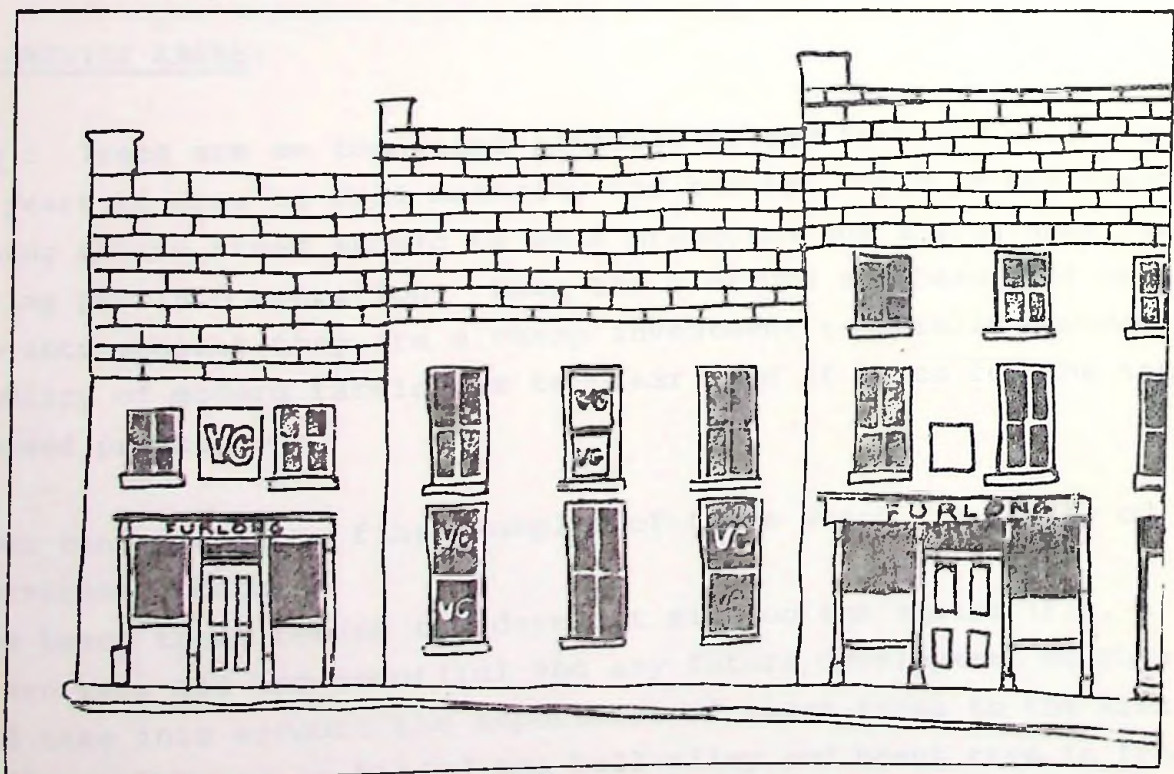


(b) Water-trough on Square

Fig 7



(a) Furlong's VE Superstore, Main St.



(b) Proposed development

A large resource area is lost simply to accommodate a single storey structure which is out of place with its surroundings. It is situated beside a garage which also has a disquieting effect on the rest of the street. The garage is set in off the street and destroys any continuity within the street.

In addition to the sites that have already been redeveloped in recent years there are numerous sites that could be used for new building schemes. It would be desirable if these sites could be used to alleviate the housing situation and lessen the need for large housing estates. There is a large derelict area beside the square which because it is in such an important position it needs immediate attention. This area would have room for one or two houses with garden space to the back (Fig. 8 (b)).

The so called 'back street' is another area ripe for re-development. It may not be feasible to build houses here as the area is used as yard space but at least a wall could be built to replace the less attractive ruins here (Fig. 8 (c)).

(d) AMENITY AREAS:

Trees : Trees are an important resource to any town and unlike buildings take years to grow to full maturity and beauty. This is one reason why existing mature trees should be well protected and a programme for tree planting put into operation. When the pleasure and beauty of trees are taken into account they are a cheap investment especially nowadays when the policy of modern farming is to clear land of trees for the sake of increased production.

Taghmon can boast some fine examples of trees which are worthy of preservation orders:-

- a) The beech trees behind the derelict site on the square (Fig. 9 (a)). They are very old and beautiful and any future development of this site should take into account the importance of these trees to the area.
- b) The evergreen trees behind the ball-alley and beech tree in front (Fig. 9 (b)). The trees to some extent mask what is otherwise a fairly ugly building. The ball-alley is situated near the school and is a meeting place for the school children. The trees provide much needed shelter in the summer days.
- c) Trees both evergreen and deciduous around fair green (Fig 9 (c)).

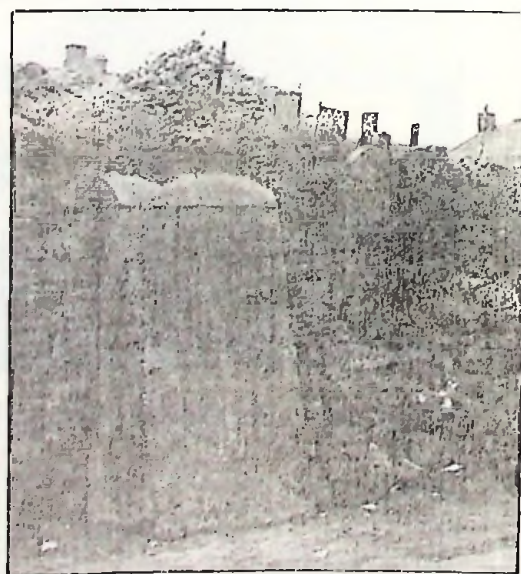
Fig 8



(a) Bungalow, Main St.



(b) Derelict site on Square



(c) Stream St. - ruins

Trees

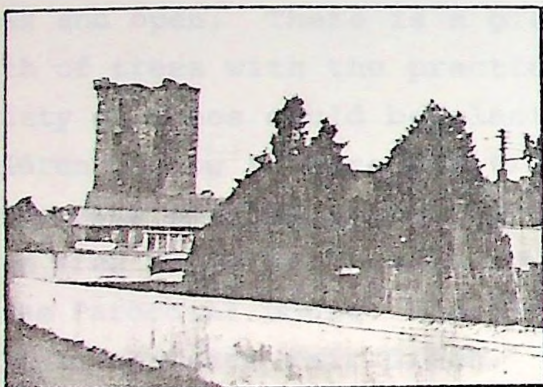
Fig 9



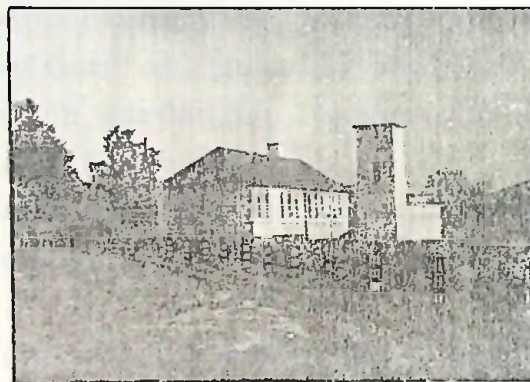
(a) Square



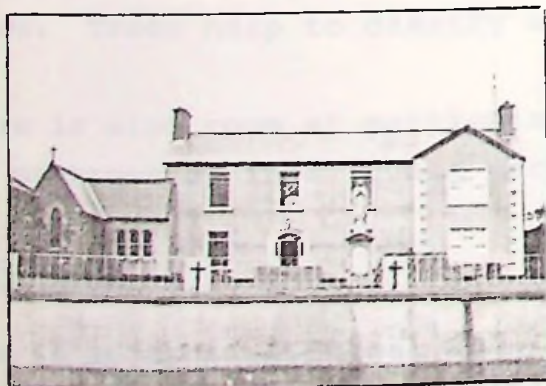
(b) Ball Alley



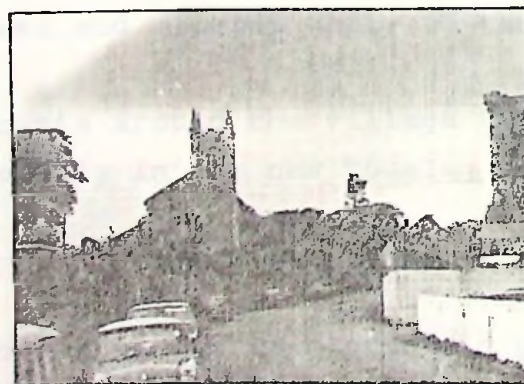
(c) Fair Green



(d) Area leading to New School



(e) Parochial House



(f) Field opposite Fair Green

There is obvious scope for more planting here but those already there should be preserved. The cherry trees are particularly beautiful in spring.

Besides the need to preserve trees already growing, a tree planting programme could be implemented in the village. The trees we plant are as a part of our heritage as buildings. They are an expression of our love of nature and in order to create a beautiful environment for future generations trees must be planted now.

There is great scope in Taghmon for the planting of trees. It is doubly important for Taghmon since it is built on an exposed hill. There are three main areas where trees would add to the overall beauty:-

a) Area leading up to new school (Fig. 9 (d)). This area is particularly bleak and open. There is a great opportunity to combine the educational worth of trees with the practical effect of creating shelter. A great variety of trees could be planted with gardening lessons for the school children on how to care for trees and shrubs.

b) Opposite this site are the grounds of the catholic church and this is an area where some small low growing trees could be planted in front of the Parochial House (Fig. 9 (e)).

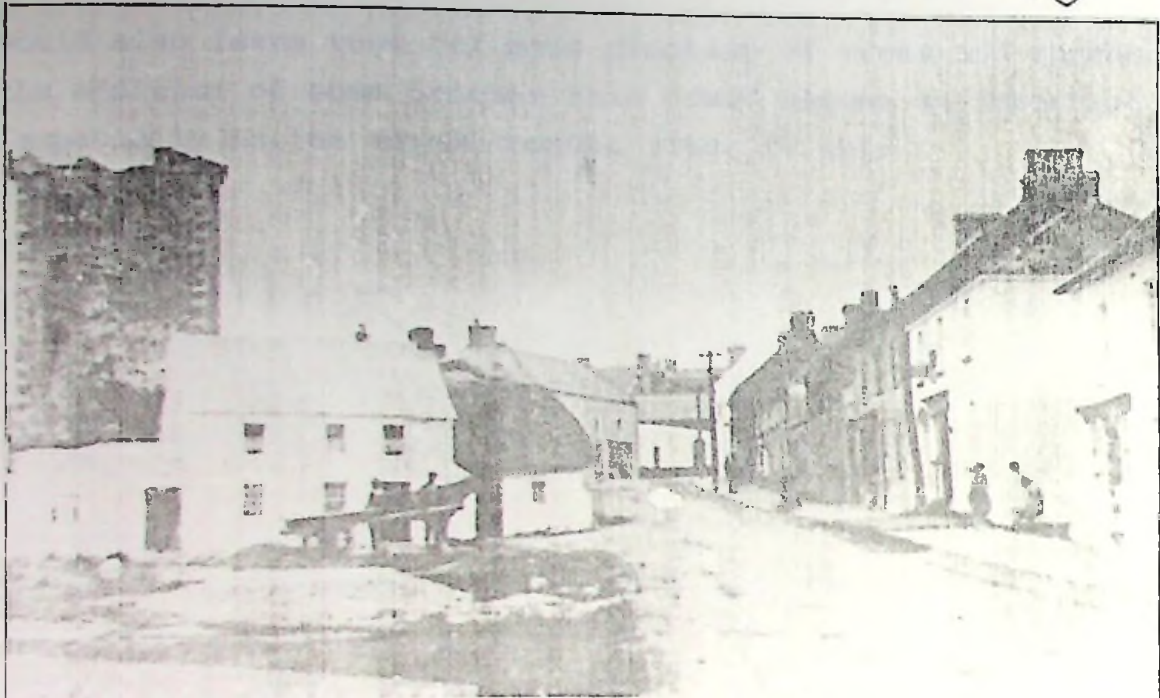
c) Field opposite Fair Green. A few rows of evergreen trees here would provide much needed shelter (Fig 9 (f)).

Most of the entrances to Taghmon would benefit from the planting of some trees. Trees help to clarify an area and provide unity to the landscape.

There is also room at particular points around the village for the planting of trees by individuals particularly in the new housing estate.

FAIR GREEN

This is an area which was open at one time (as seen from old photograph) and as such was used as a cattle dealing green (Fig. 10 (a)). In 1951 it was decided to build a monument here to commemorate those men executed in the civil war. This area is now closed off by walls and the monument has been built but the area is now effectively closed off from the public. The area is seldom used and has become overgrown. It could be made more attractive by lowering the wall to about a foot. This would keep motor traffic out but there is still the problem of stray horses and cattle. This could be overcome by erecting a wooden fence of some sort or wire. This would also leave room for more planting of trees and shrubs.



(a) Fair Green, an early photograph



(b) Monument, Fair Green, 1978.

25

25

This would also leave room for more planting of trees and shrubs. With the addition of some benches this could become an important meeting place especially in the summer months (Fig. 10 (b)).

CHAPTER III:

LIVING AREAS:

A) Older Residential Areas:

Generally the older residential areas have great charm and character. This is achieved by the restraint in the use of materials and simplicity of design. The houses all relate to one another although they may differ in design. A great unity is achieved in the terraced houses (Fig. 11 (a)), something that is missing in the newer semi detached housing estates (even though these houses are all of the same design).

Terraced housing fit into the character of the village and even though the houses are packed together there are numerous ways of breaking up the line and giving access to gardens at the back. The most common way is the arched entrance leading to the back. This leaves plenty of room for vehicles to reach the backs of houses while at the same time conserving the unity of the street.

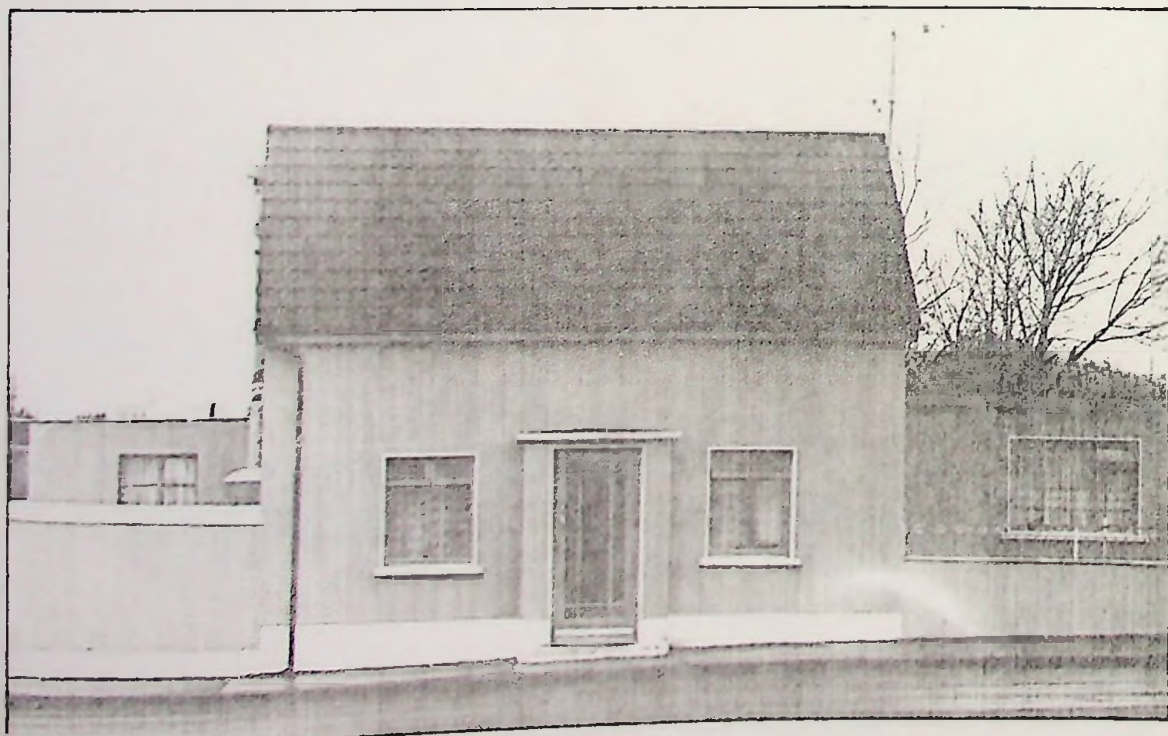
There are two examples of older housing estates in Taghmon. The oldest is the group of cottages in Mahony's Row. These could be classed as an old form of housing estate (Fig. 11 (b) (c)). The cottages are basically of the same design and while they are generally to be found scattered around the countryside they blend well into the village. They make a nice gradual flowing entrance because they are grouped in the shape of a crescent. The cottages are well maintained, painted with strong colour which helps unite the overall effect while giving each cottage an individual identity.

The second housing estate is the group of houses built by the Council in 1942. These differ from the cottages in that they are arranged in terraces of four houses whereas the cottages stood in their own grounds (Fig. 11 (d) (e)). They also have individual garden space in front, unlike the cottages. The houses are fairly attractive the basic design being helped by the use of small panes for the windows, but a slight sense of disunity is creeping in here because the houses are placed so far apart. The planting of trees would help this but would block access to the back of each individual house.

Fig 11



(a) Terraced, housing, top of Stream St.



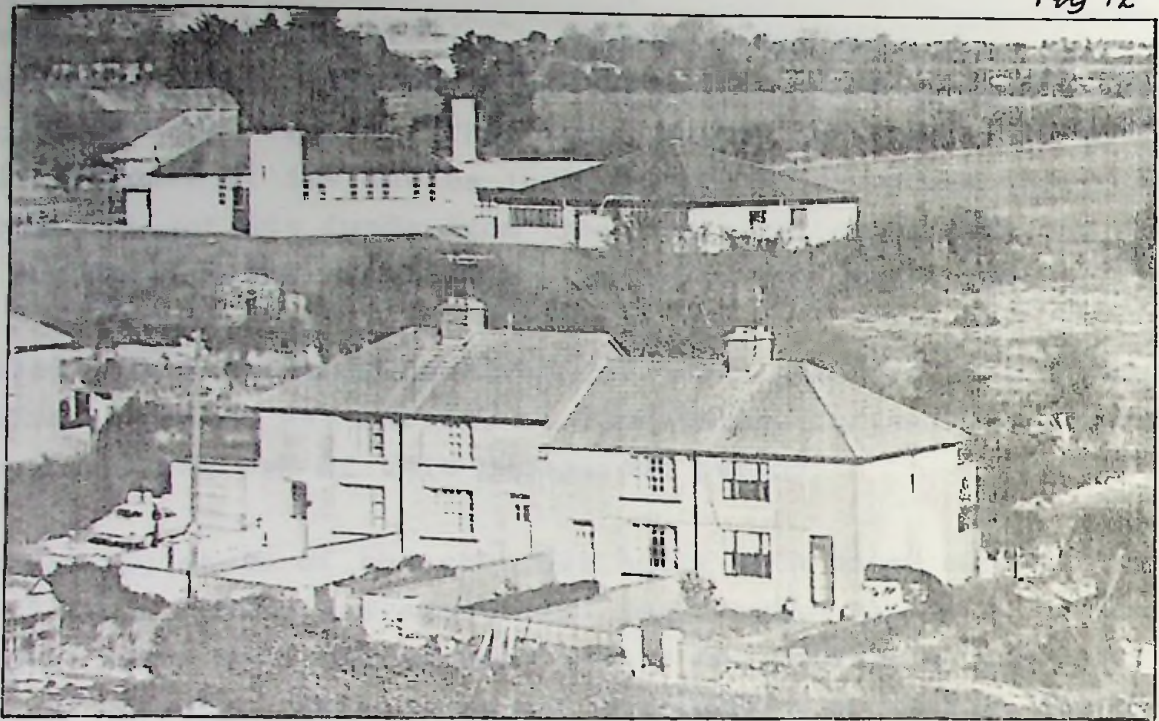
(b) Cottage

B) New Housing Estate:

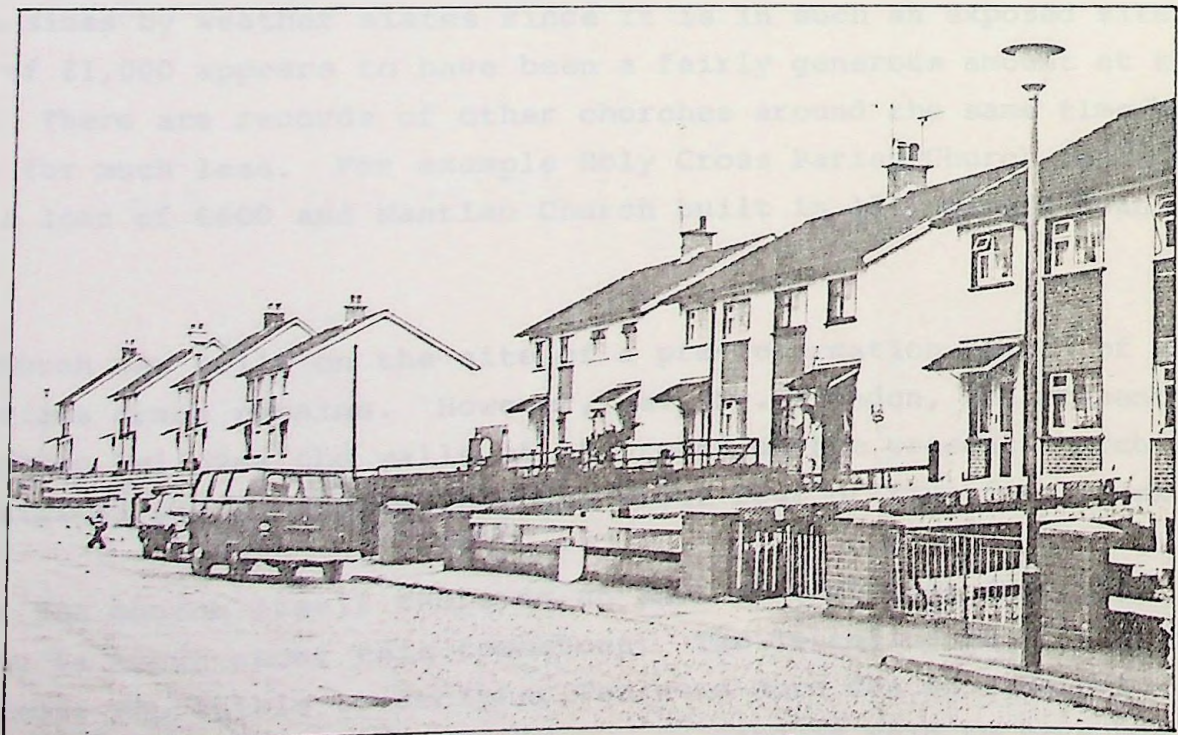
The most recent council housing estate was built in 1975, on the outskirts of the village. It reflects the trend of modern housing schemes and at a glance could belong to any town or village in Ireland. The houses are all of the same design but lack any real unity and do not relate to the surrounding environment (Fig. 12 (a & b)). The fact that they are semi-detached means they use up valuable land and one feels that the housing needed could have been provided by filling in derelict sites around the village.

There is no allowance made for the planting of trees and because traffic can drive in and out of the estate it causes a hazard to children. The need for individual garden space in the front and back is doubtful and it would have been better to provide a common playing green for children to play in.

Fig 12



(a) Housing, Stream St.



(b) New Housing Estate, Monastery Avenue.

CHAPTER IV: BUILDINGS OF INTEREST

1) St. Munna's Church (Fig. 13 (a) - Church of Ireland.

The protestant church was built in 1819 with a loan of £1,000 from the Board of First Fruits. This board was first established in Ireland in 1711 and part of its duties included the building and repair of churches. It got its funds from the tithes collected from the congregation and from grants supplied by the Irish Parliament from 1771.

From 1810 - 1816 the board received £60,000 a year from the Government. In 1817 this amount was halved, so Taghmon was fortunate in building its church at the end of this prosperous period.

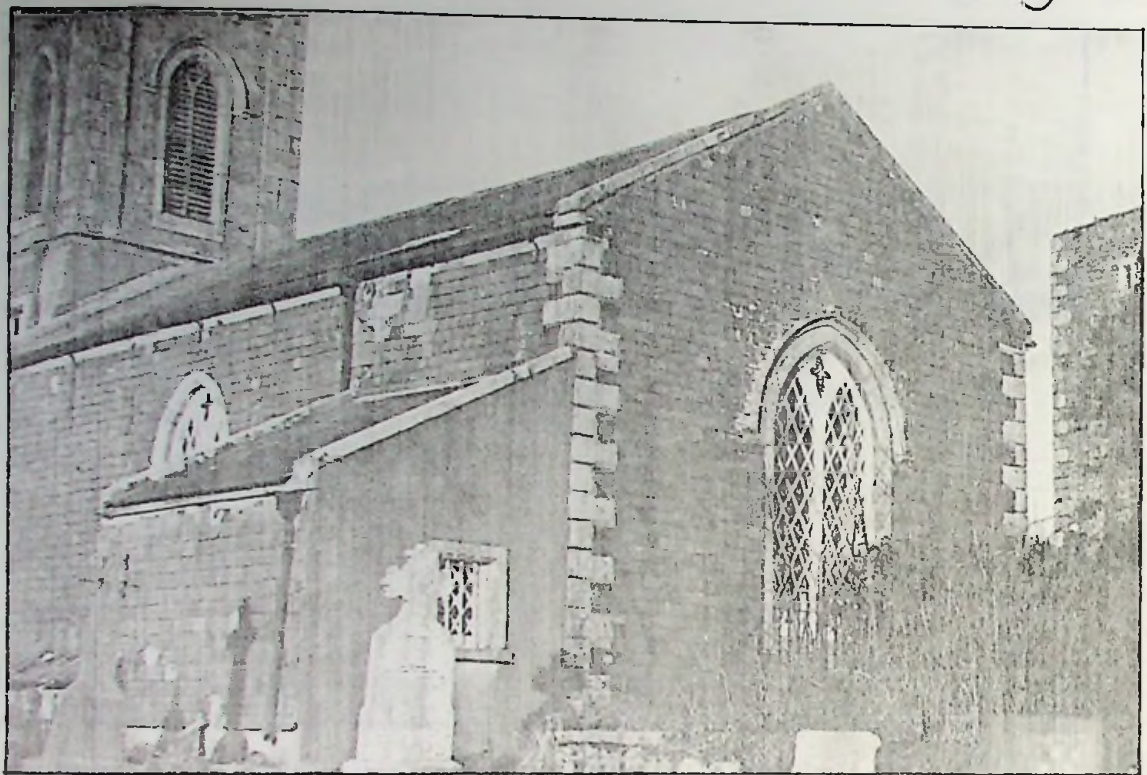
The prevailing style of the churches built with money supplied by the Board of First Fruits was simplified Gothic with square tower and pinnacles, walls with clumsy battlements and pointed windows with elementary tracery. This genre was so widely used that it represents a style of its own - First Fruits Gothic (Fig. 13 (b & c)). Taghmon Church is typical of the style. It is unusual in that it is covered on three sides by weather slates since it is in such an exposed site. The loan of £1,000 appears to have been a fairly generous amount at the time. There are records of other churches around the same time being built for much less. For example Holy Cross Parish Church built in 1821 with a loan of £600 and Nantian Church built in 1817 with a loan of £800.

The church was built on the site of a pre-reformation church of which no obvious trace remains. However, Rev. Mr. Brandon, the present Rector of Taghmon believes the walls of the tower of the present church may be the original walls because they are about four or five feet thick.

Within the church itself there is an ancient tombstone (Fig. 14). Nothing is known about this tombstone. The lettering on it is Gothic but almost impossible to decipher. The word Hore can be made out - a Patrick Hore was parish priest in and is said to have been buried in the church so it may be his tombstone.

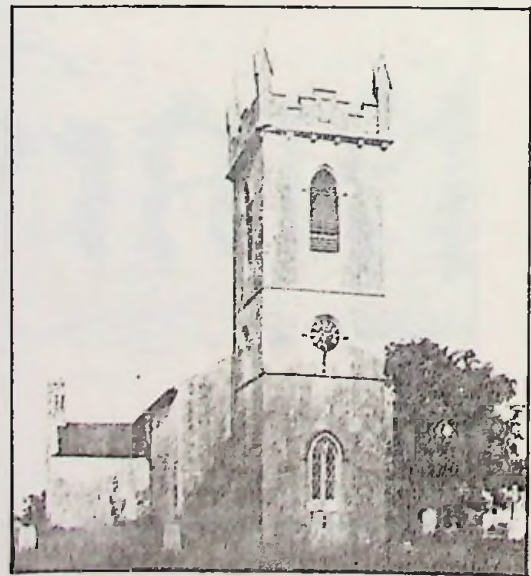
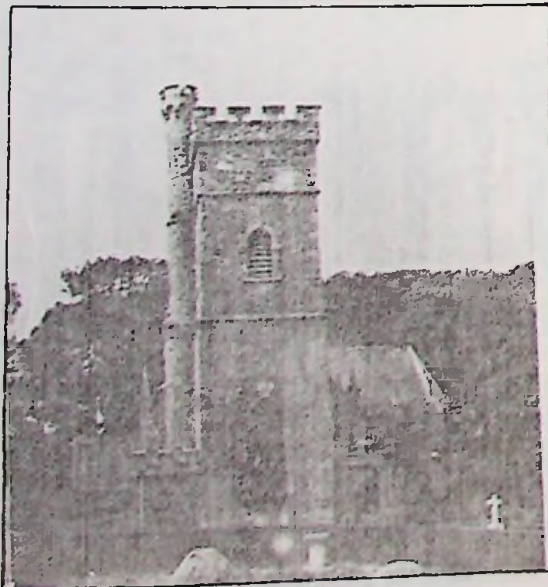
There are numerous plaques on the walls of the church commemorating prominent members of the community. There is a plaque to Thomas Francis Lyte who wrote the famous hymn "Abide with me" and was curate in Taghmon in 1815.

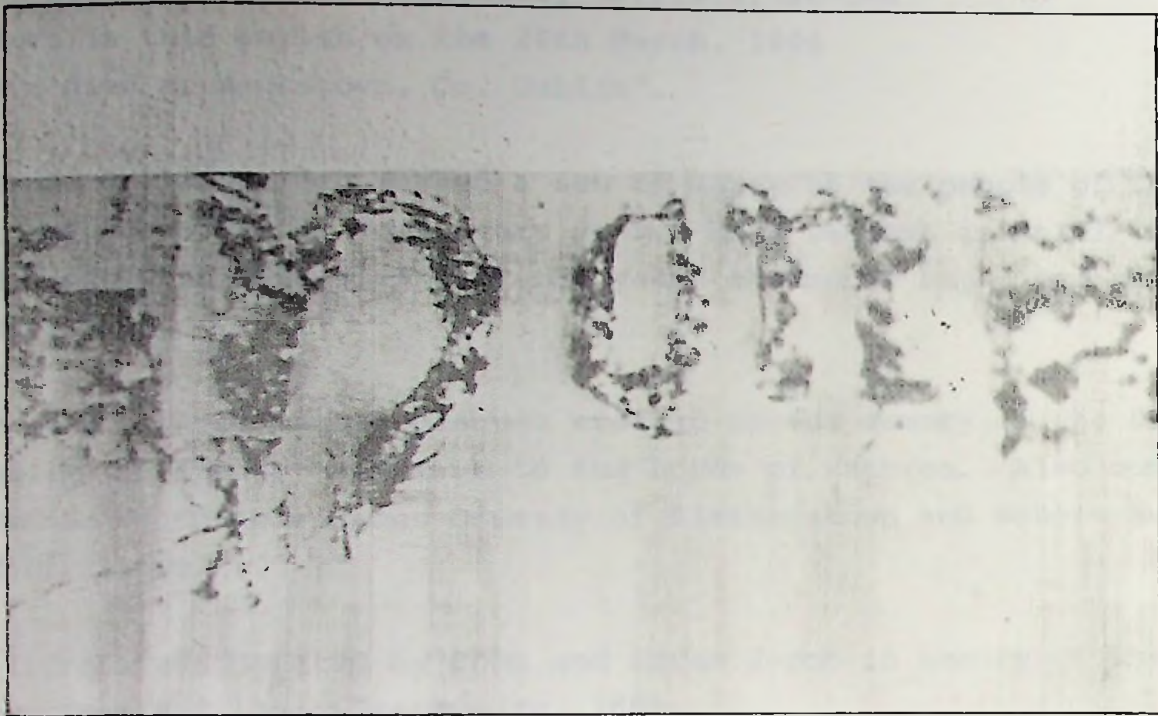
Fig 13



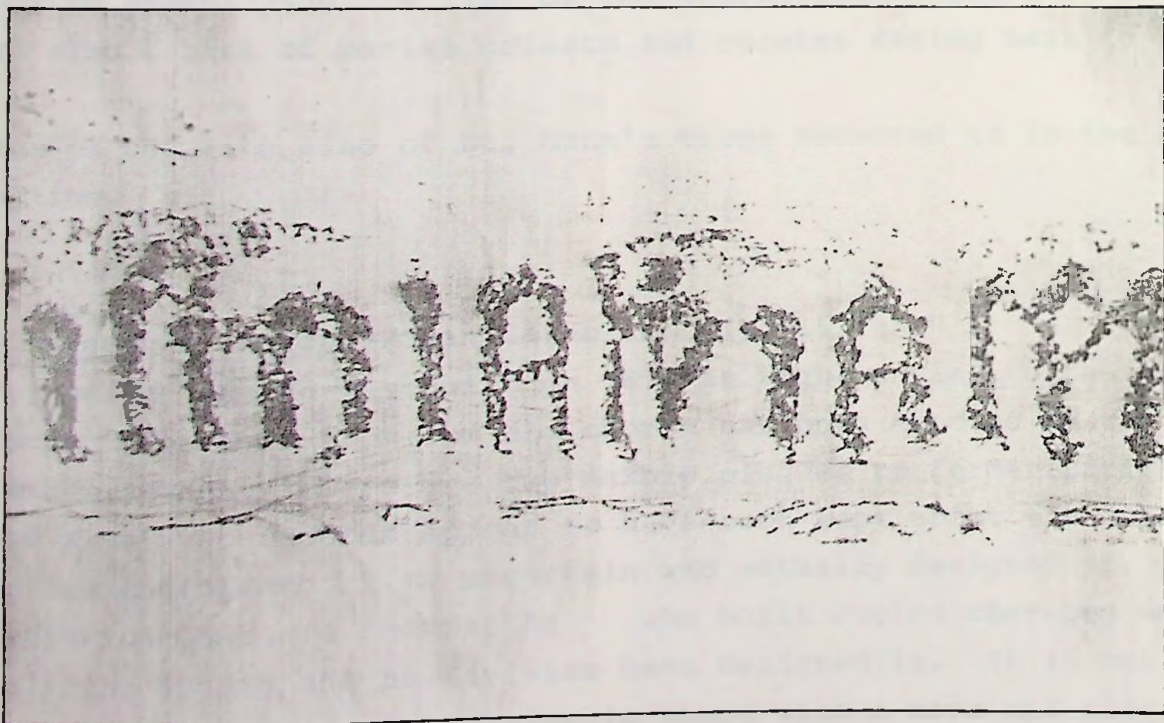
(a) St. Munno's Church

(b) Church of similar style





Lettering on tomb - the name HORE



Lettering - unidentified

Another plaque reads:-

"The interior of this church was renovated in the year 1893
In memory of Daniel Cullimore, Barrister-at-Law
Born in this parish on the 20th March, 1804
Who died at Monkstown, Co. Dublin".

Daniel Cullimore bequeathed a sum of money to the people of Taghmon to buy coal for the poor every year. This bequest is still in operation although with inflation over the years the money buys less and less coal every year.

There are three marble plaques erected to the memory of the Stannard family, related by marriage to the Lords of Ruthven. Also commemorated are the Honourable James O'Grady of Plathanstown and Robert Audley Byron of Orristown.

A lectern was donated by John and Sarah Jacob in memory of their father Rev. Thomas J. Jacob, rector in 1865.

The graveyard surrounding the church contains many old gravestones dating back to around 1750. A list of the gravestones appears in the Appendix and also a list of parish priests and curates dating back to 1315.

This is the site also of St. Munn's cross referred to in the history section.

B) St. Fintan's Church (Roman Catholic) Fig. 16 (a)

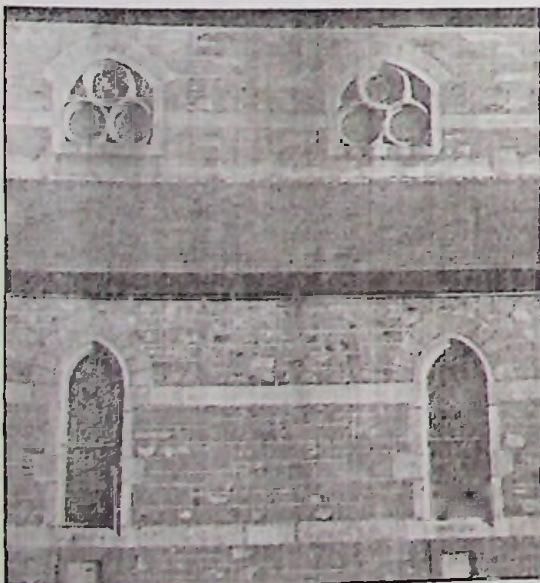
The present church was built in 1871 at right angles to the old thatched church. The bell from the old church has been erected at the back of the new church. There are two marble plaques to former parish priests here also. No records appear to have been kept about the building of the new church and it is uncertain who actually designed it. There is a suggestion that a MacCarthy who built Pugins churches may have built the church and he may also have designed it. It is built in the Gothic style and is rectangular in shape with a nave and side aisles and with a tower centre entrance.

The materials used in the building are red and golden stone with granite quoins. The granite is said to have come from Kiltegan. Granite is also used in the columns inside the church. The walls are plastered and painted and the walls behind the altar are decorated with

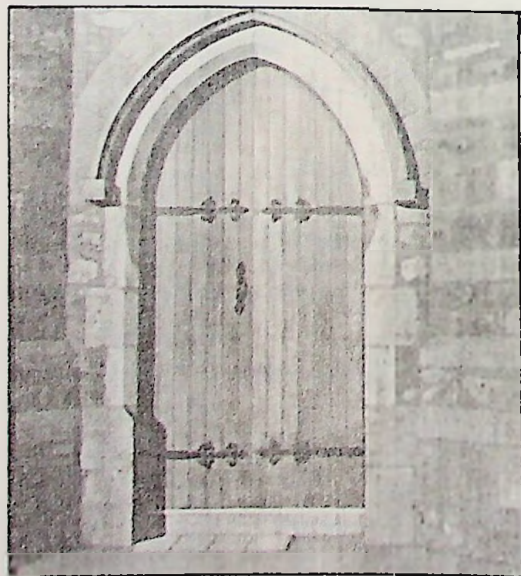
Fig 15.



(a) St Fintan's Church

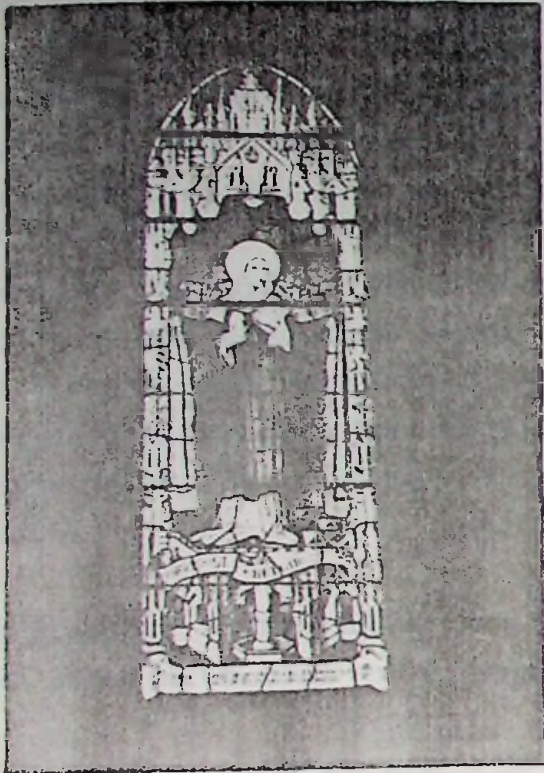


(b) Windows of side aisle

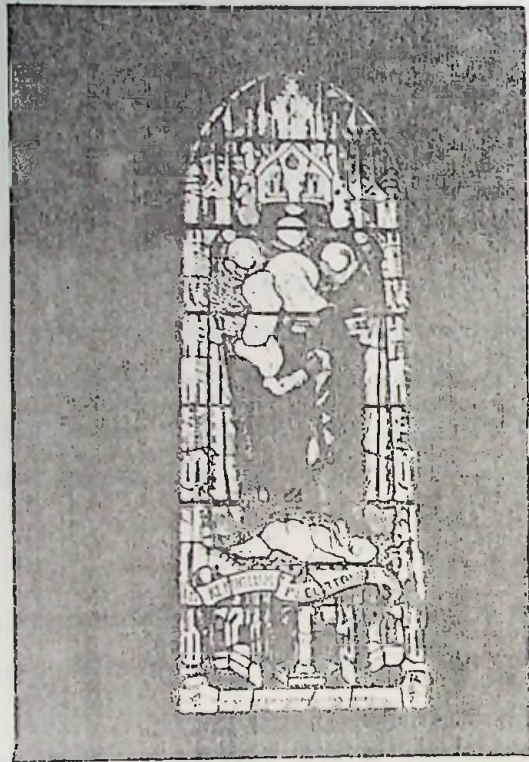


(c) Main Doorway

Fig 17



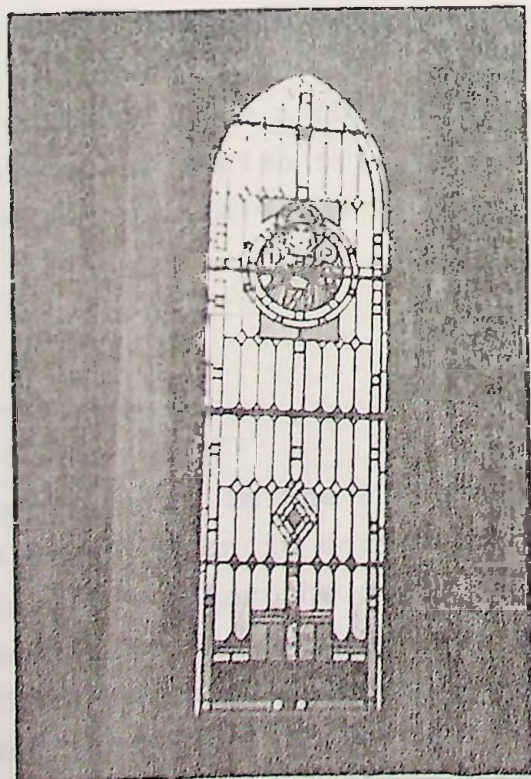
(a) St. Brigid



(b) Our Lady and the Christ



(c) St. Fintan



(d) Window, side aisle 36

mosaic which was added around 1915 by Italian artists.

The church cost about two thousand pounds to build and the expenses were reduced by the fact that the parishioners volunteered to help with the buildings. They also donated the stained glass windows for the church. The three at the back of the altar are large and very impressive and honour St. Brigid, Our Lady and the Child and St. Fintan respectively. St. Brigid was donated by the Rossiter family, Our Lady & the Child by Ed. Fortune and St. Fintan by Gregory Walsh.

There are ten side aisle windows (five on each side) installed some years ago, they are made with amber and white glass with blue coloured borders and green centre vertical line with monogram in each window (Fig. 17 ()). They also bear the names of the donors at the end of the window. The windows over the granite columns are composed of three small circular windows.

The steps up to the altar are Sicilian marble and the altar is made of caen stone with four reddish marble columns in front.

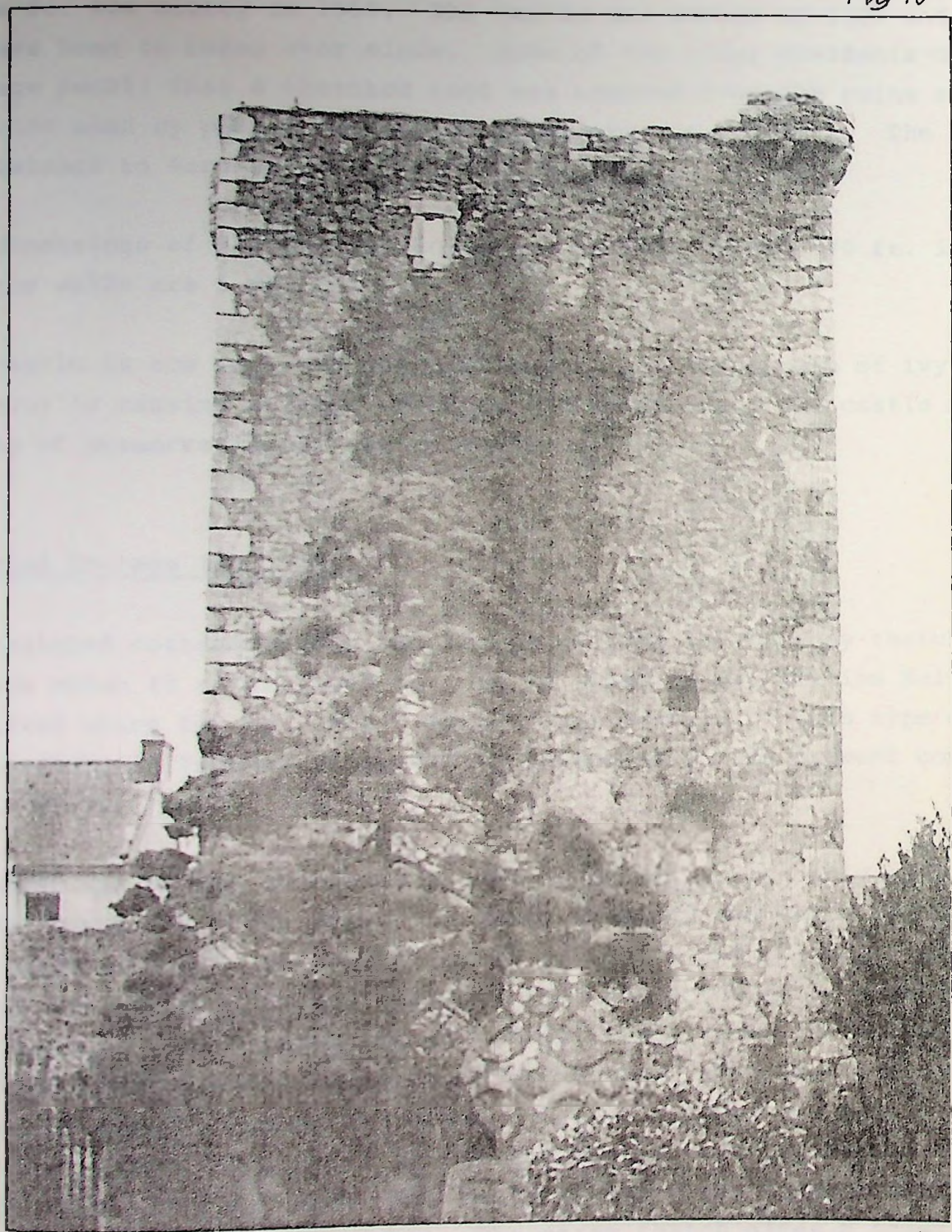
There are two side altars - St. Joseph's and Our Lady of Lourdes, also made of caen stone.

The church was re-decorated in 1965 when some of the mosaic at the back of the altar was covered with marble and the high altar converted.

Two former parish priests are commemorated with marble slabs in the church. One to Canon John Scallan who was parish priest, from 1815 - 1849 and another to Rev. William Murphy who laid the foundation stone of the new church in 1869.

C) Taghmon Castle (Fig. 18)

This castle is said to have been built early in the fifteenth century by the Hore family when the masons employed on it earned three half pence a day or a peck of wheat. In 1470 after the death of Sir Gilbert, fifth Baron Talbot, the castle passed into the hands of his brother John Earl of Shrewsbury and Wexford. There is no evidence to show that the Talbots ever lived in the castle and as it does not appear to have been the residence of any family, it was probably regularly garrisoned.



Taghmon Castle

The custody of the castle and 60 acres adjoining it was granted by Edward VI in 1547 to William Hore Esq. of Haperstown, Knight of the Shire for the county in 1559. The castle was burned in 1600 and seems to have been in ruins ever since. Some of the older residents of the village recall that a thatched roof was erected over the ruins and the interior used by people working in a tannery, on wet days. The castle now belongs to Bart Brennan.

The dimensions of the present tower are 44 feet by 32. 70 ft. in height and the walls are 5 ft. thick.

The castle is now in a bad state of repair and the growth of ivy on the exterior is causing a large crack in the structure. The castle is worthy of preservation if not restoration.

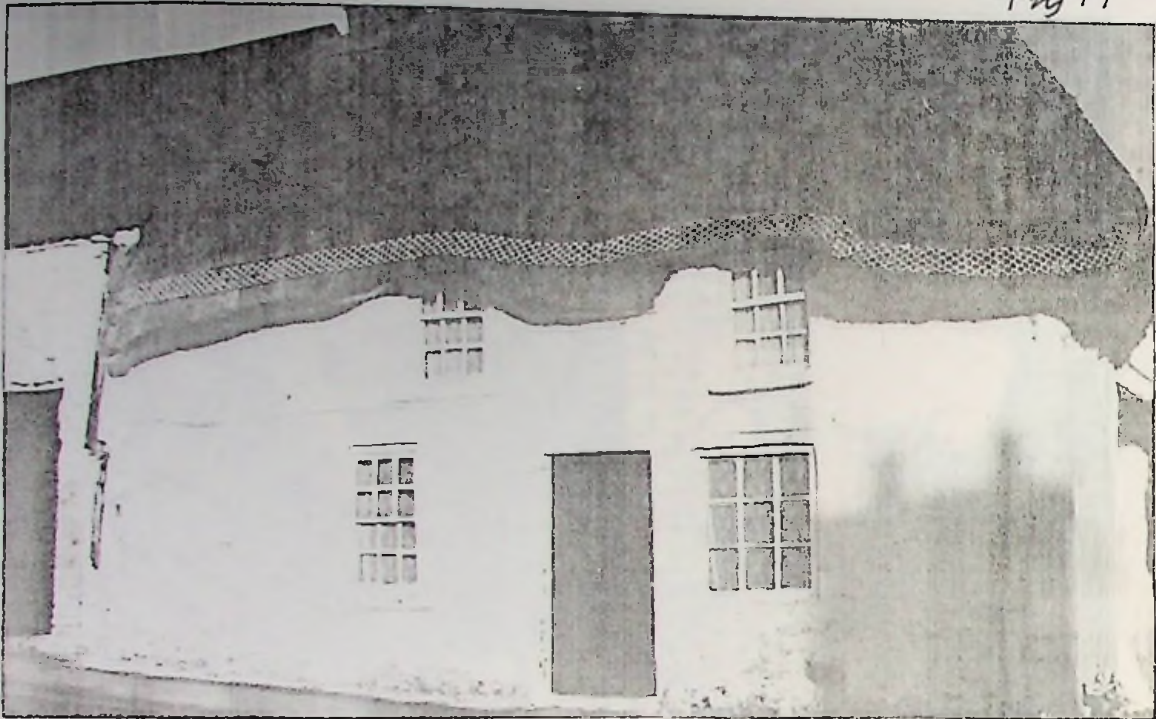
D) Thatched Cottage (Fig. 19)

The thatched cottage at the top of the village is the only thatched cottage which is still lived in. It is owned by Mr. William Kelly who has lived there for 60 years. As the last example of this type of Architecture in Taghmon it should be preserved in its present condition at all costs.

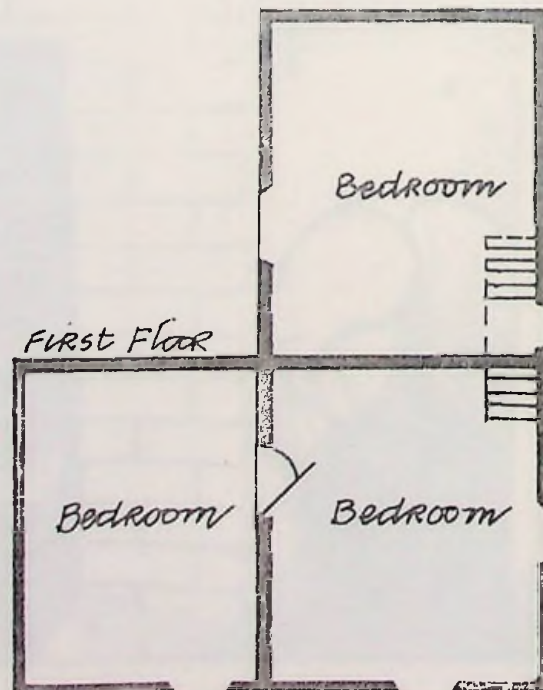
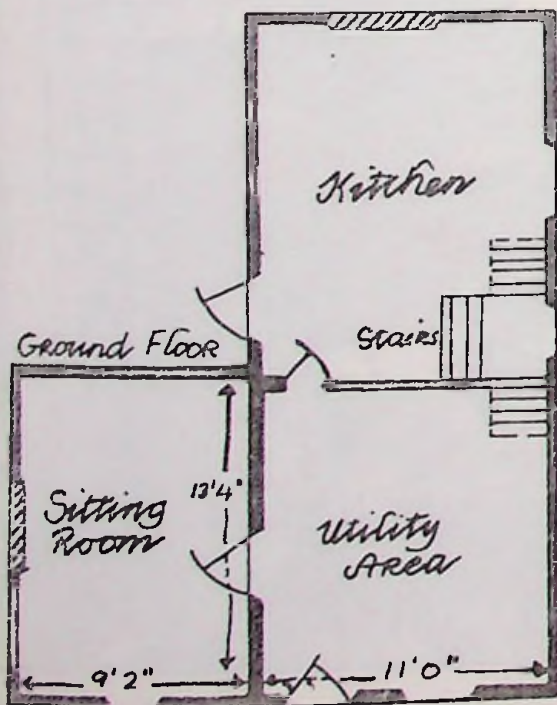
The exact age of the structure is not known but is probably a few hundred years old. The walls are built with mud and white washed in the traditional manner. The restraint of materials and the relationship between the white walls and thatched roof gives the house great charm and vitality. The windows are all of different sizes and arranged at irregular intervals on the front of the house. The thatched roof appears to grow on top of the house and crawls over the edge to partly cover the window. Thatch is an ancient way of covering houses and it is a craft that is dying out. Mr. Kelly thatched the house himself and keeps it in excellent condition. The straw thatch gives a sense of warmth and comfort to the house - thatch is warm in winter and cool in summer. The house is two storey which is common in similar thatched houses in Co. Wexford.

The interior of the house is equally delightful. It contains three rooms on each floor (see plan). The walls are approximately 6' high and 2' thick. The front door leads to a utility area from which a door on the left leads into a sitting room.

Fig 19

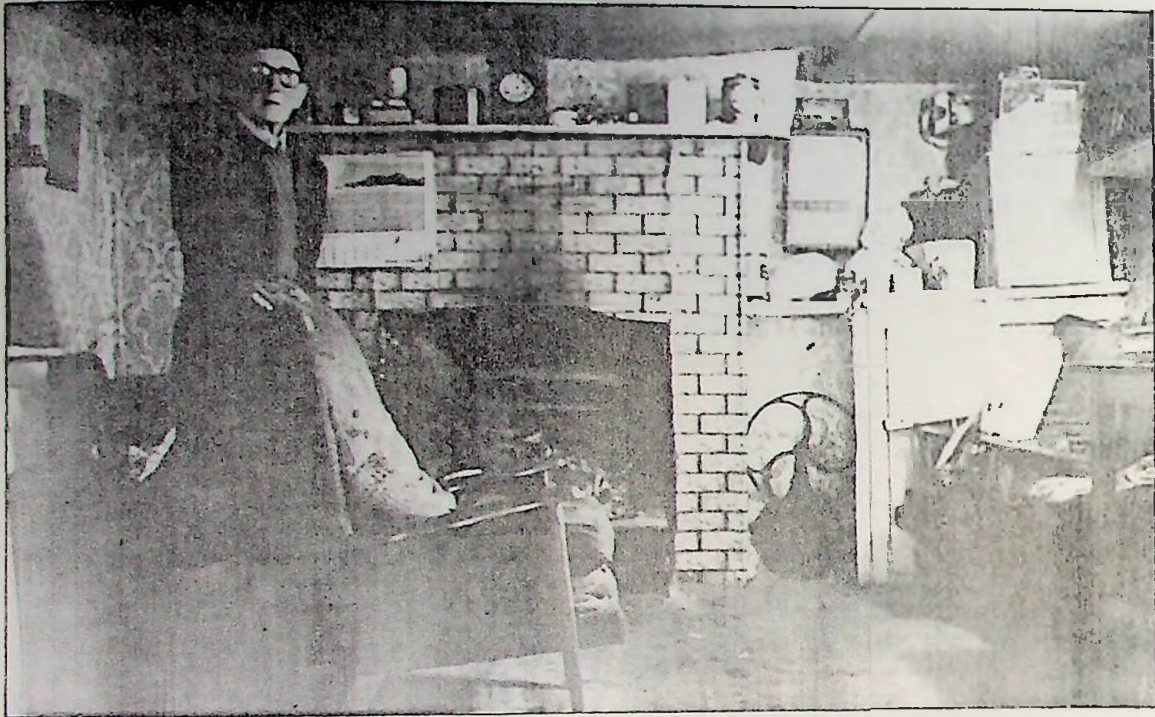


(a) Willy Kelly's Thatched Cottage

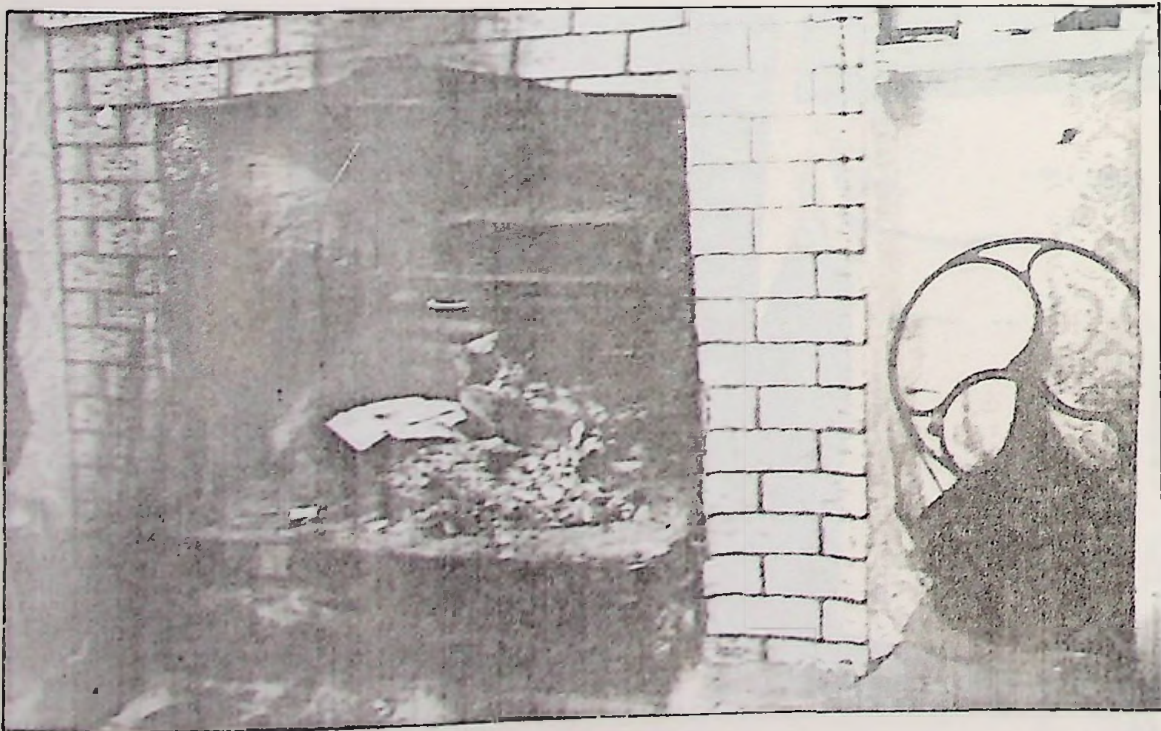


(b) Plan of Cottage

Fig 20

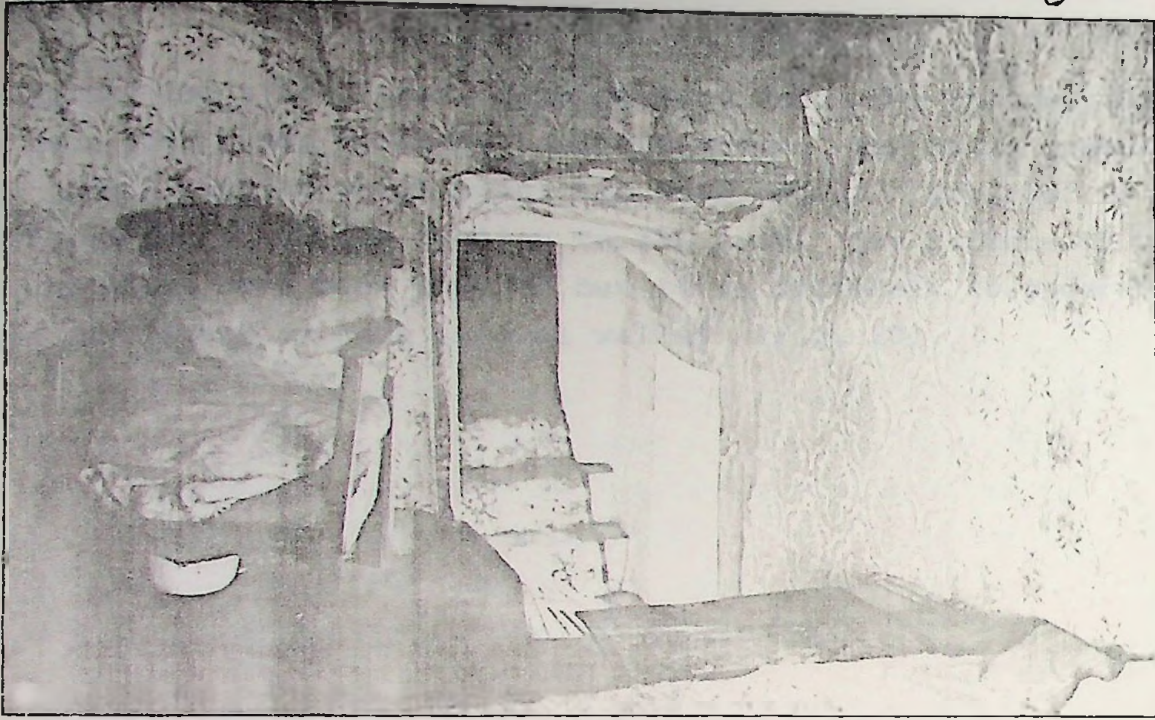


(a) W. Kelly in kitchen of his cottage

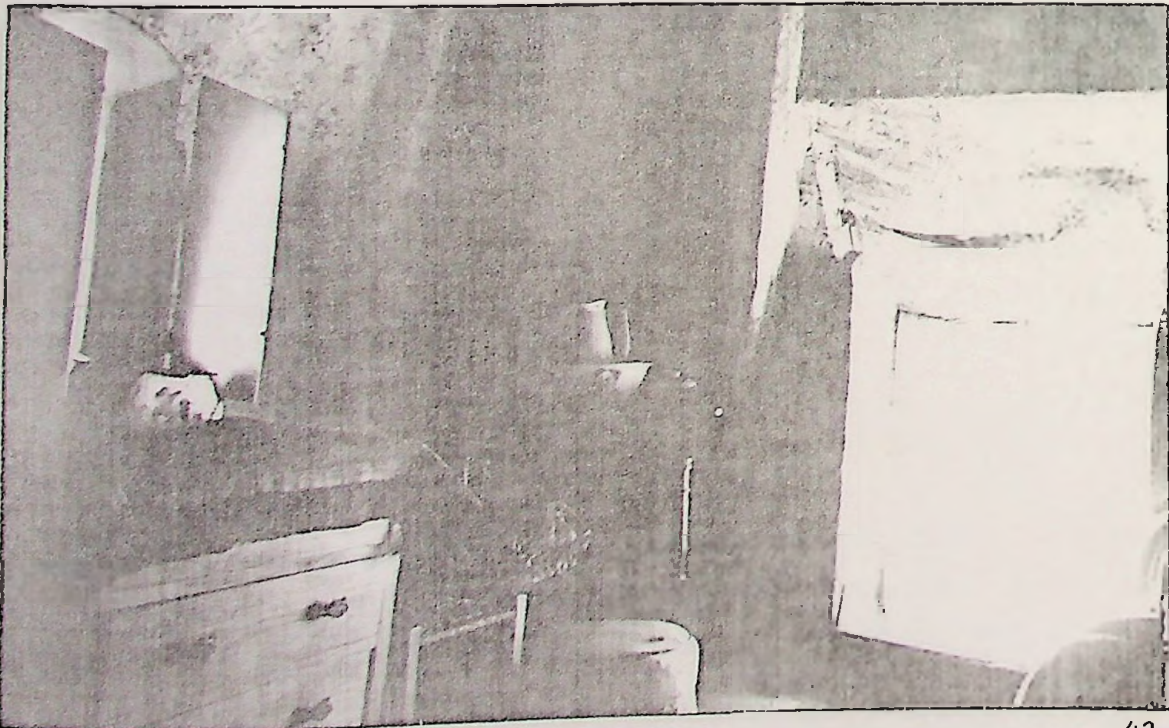


(b) Fireplace in kitchen.

Fig 20



(c) Upstairs bedroom looking onto stairway



42

(d) Upstairs bedroom.

Opposite the front door another door leads into the kitchen. Here there is a large fireplace with an old fashioned fan built into the back of the fireplace.

A stairway leads to a small landing from which the stairway divides and each side leads directly into a bedroom. The walls upstairs are only 4 ft. high at which point the roof begins. The roof is very uneven giving a bulbous feeling to the room. The rafters of the roof and the walls have been papered but it is difficult to understand how paper can adhere to such unlevel walls! (Fig. 20).

CHAPTER V: THE FABRIC OF THE VILLAGE

A) Materials:

The materials used in a village are of great importance to the overall 'feel' of the community. The type of materials will vary from area to area and the use of local materials in building in an area gives it a great distinctive character.

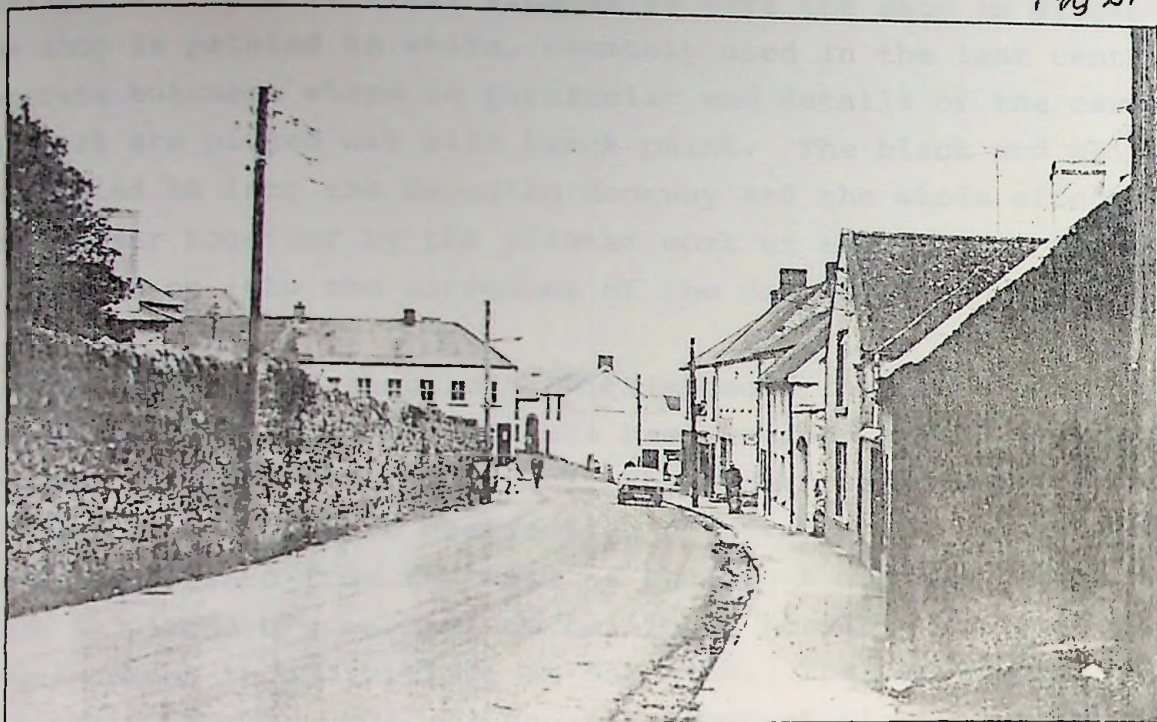
There are many examples in Taghmon of walls, especially, built from local materials. The stone found around Taghmon is of attractive yellow and red hues and helps unite the rest of the building (Fig. 21 (a)). The castle is also built with stones of this type as is the Catholic Church although here the stone is scudded over (Fig. 21 (b)). Stones of the same type should be used when repairing these walls instead of concrete which is common in some places.

The materials used in the buildings are also important. Most of the older houses and shops are plastered over with cement roughly and any new buildings should strive to integrate with the materials used in the surrounding buildings. The smooth plastered walls of a modern bungalow do not integrate with the rough white-washed walls of the older houses as is the case opposite Fair Green (Fig. 21 (g)). Generally the older plastered walls are more attractive in a small village than the more vivid pebble dash. The older houses owe their aesthetic success to a restraint of materials which creates a sense of unity within a street and the close relationship between materials used in individual houses.

B) Shopfronts:

In Taghmon there are three old Shopfronts which seem to have been built by the same hand. They are Furlongs sweet shop, the Castle Bar and Donoghues pub (Fig. 22). In each case the brackets are of the same style and the fanlight over the doorway one of the same proportions. The evidence of old photographs (early 20th Century shows that at one time most of the shops in Taghmon were similar to these few remaining examples

Fig 21



(a) Stone wall from local materials



(b) Wall of St. Fintan's Church - the stone is scudded over.

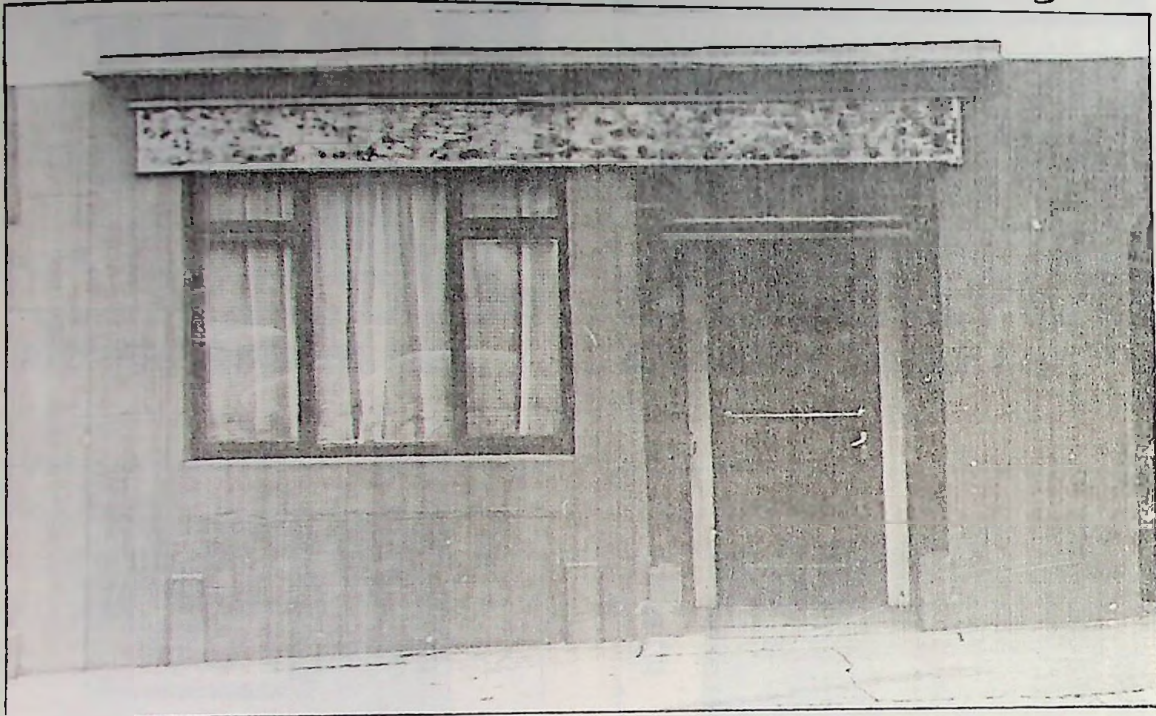
A shop very similar to these others is Ward's butcher shop (Fig. 23 (a)). It has the added beauty of four tiny arched windows to make up the fanlight and long vertical windows to give the shop an elegant look. The shop is painted in white, commonly used in the last century to decorate butchers' shops in particular and details of the carving in the woodwork are picked out with black paint. The black and white painting is carried on into the Georgian doorway and the whole effect is drawn even closer together by the plaster work at the foot of the shop which is carried on into the surrounds of the doorway.

Another interesting shopfront which appears in photographs taken at the end of the last century and which has remained almost unchanged is Whelan's Lounge Bar (Fig. 23 (b)), the modern nameplate being the least attractive part of this distinctive shopfront. The whole shopfront is projected forward from the wall of the house making a verandah around which is placed a wrought iron railing - possibly produced by one of the forges common in the village at one time. The verandah is supported by columns. The windows are Georgian, characterised by small window panes which would be even more attractive had they been painted in white. The Georgian doorway is placed on the centre and the fanlight is divided into a semi-circle of small windows. The village contains numerous examples of what Sean Rothery in his books on Irish Shops calls 'house shops'. The only way of distinguishing these shops from ordinary houses is the larger than usual windows placed near the door with perhaps a small display of goods in the window. (Fig. 23 (c)). These shops have no nameplate and usually do not advertise the goods they have for sale - there is no need to since they cater for local people who know exactly what they have to offer. Taghmon unlike some villages and towns is not plagued with an embarrassment of advertising although it might be in the future.

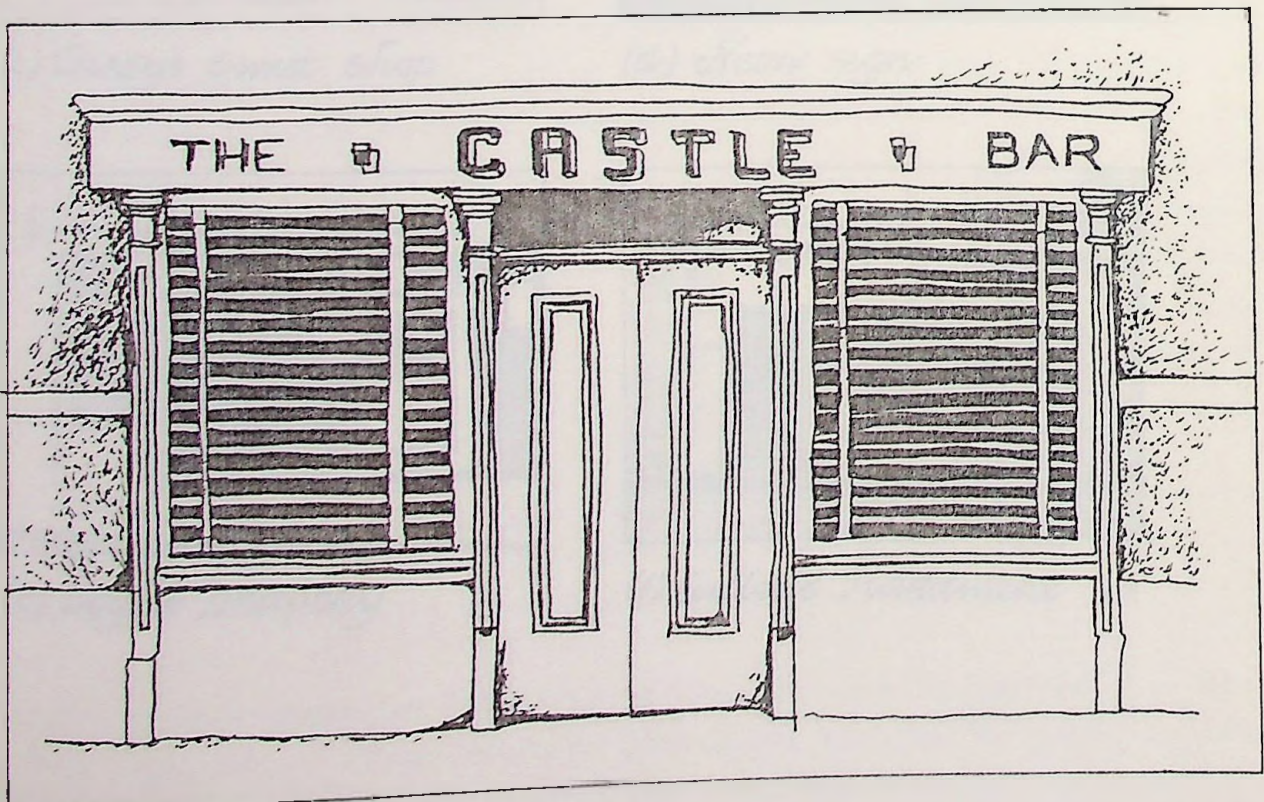
The attachment of some of the grocery shops in particular to large chains of shops which have branches in most towns in Ireland has seen the growth of competitive advertising of doubtful aesthetic value. It is difficult to avoid this since these chain stores have a national advertising system which is common to all their branches throughout the country.

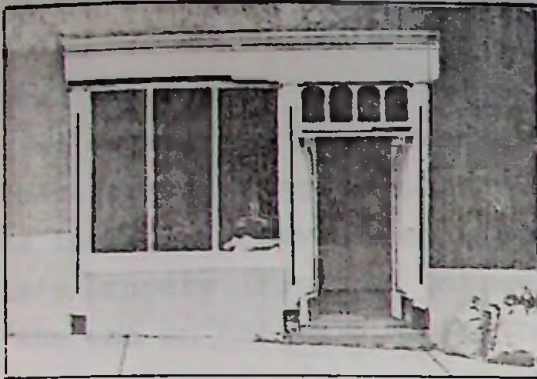
The worst effect of the influence of this advertising is the growing number of neon-lighted shop signs. These signs usually lack any character and the lettering used is devoid of any style (Fig. 23 (c)). The need for such signs is difficult to justify in these days when there is so

Fig 22

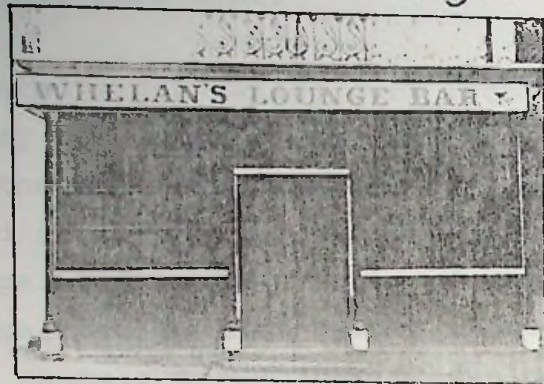


(a) Donohoe's pub.

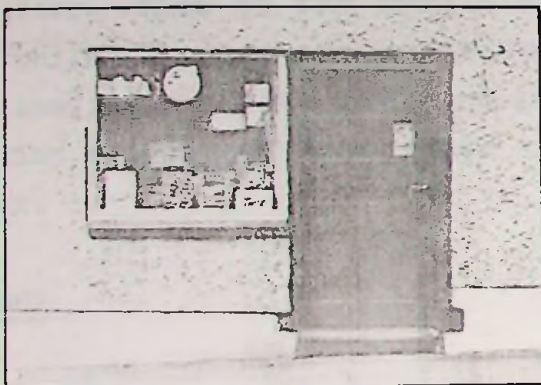




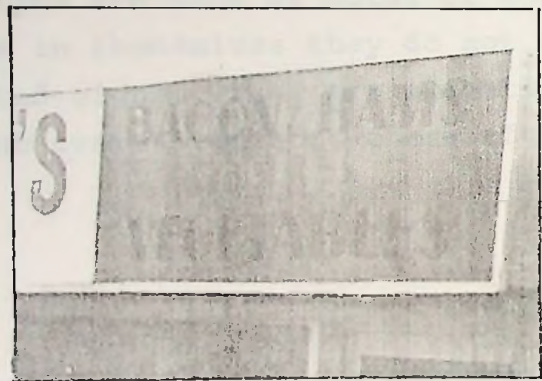
(a) Ward's butcher shop



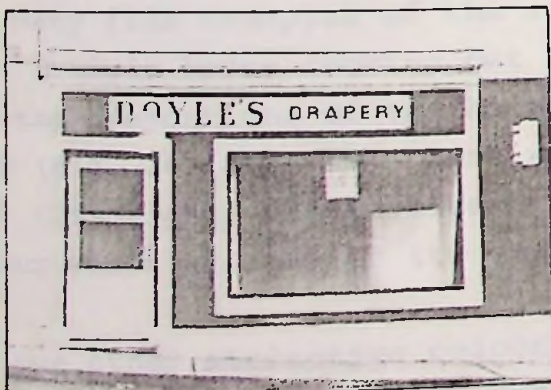
(b) Whelan's Lounge Bar



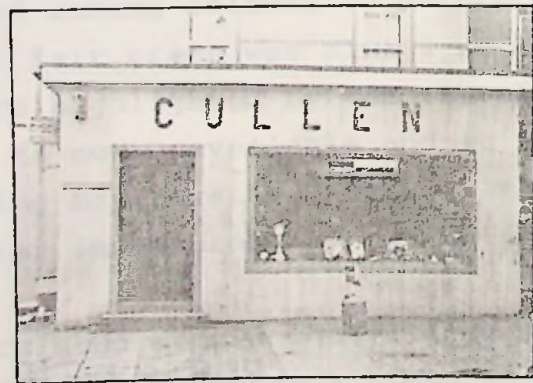
(c) Carty's Sweet shop



(d) Neon sign



(e) Doyle's Drapery



(f) Cullen's Hardware 48

much publicity about an energy crisis and even more so in a small village where everyone knows where to buy what they want.

It would be a pity to see neon lighted signs taking over from the hand-painted sign which has a very strong tradition in Co. Wexford. It is at least encouraging to note that the only two examples of hand painted signs in Taghmon have been executed in recent years. The signs on Doyle's Drapery (Fig. 23 (d)), was painted by Sean Roche of Wexford town and the one on the Castle Bar was painted by Liam Byrne, a local man. This hand painted sign replaces an example of another traditional form of sign, that of mock marble lettering. The pub used to belong to the Keating family and their name has only recently been removed from over the door. Most of the remaining signs are made of metal of some sort and while they are not unattractive in themselves they do not excite the imagination like the hand-painted signs. They are slightly disconcerting and do not contribute to the overall effectiveness of the shop-front.

C) COLOUR:

There is a tradition in Ireland for the use of strong and bright colours in decorating our buildings. This use of strong colour creates an atmosphere of lightness and gaiety. Taghmon is no exception to this. There are many fine examples of the use of strong colours to decorate houses. Mrs. Brady's house looking out onto fair green was always well maintained and the proportions of the house are highlighted by the use of a pink-wash (Fig. 24 (a)). This pink wash is now unavailable and it is a pity that this highly distinctive building may have to undergo a change of colour which will alter its character immeasurably.

Various other attractive colours are used around the village especially on the shops. Ledwith's is painted blue, Shannons - cream (Fig. 24 (b)), and Furlong's shopfront is blue and yellow (Fig. 24 (c)).

The use of pebble dash to decorate the outside of houses became popular some year ago and it seems to have prevented the use of paint on these buildings. But there is no reason why the pebble dash cannot be painted over, in fact it is very attractive and full of vitality.



(a) Mrs. Brady's house.



(b) Quigley's Grocery Shop



(c) Furlong's Sweet Shop

D) STREET FURNITURE:

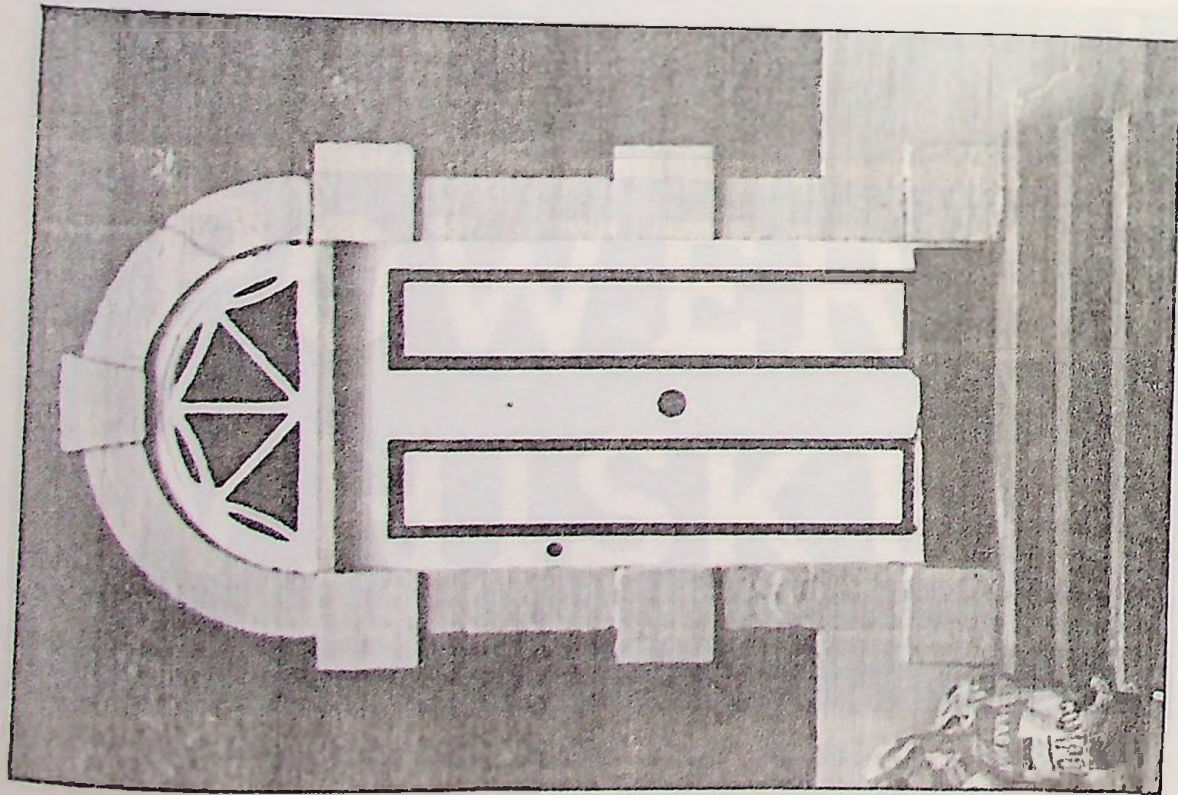
Street furniture includes those small items like lamp posts and water fountains which can add or detract from the overall beauty of a street. Doorways and windows can be included here and it is obvious that the introduction of a radically different type of window or door can alter the whole character of a street. This is why the large single paned horizontal windows of Furlong's Superstore is so out of place in a street where the windows are small paned.

Doorways are an attractive feature in a street, especially the older Georgian doorways (Fig. 25). They express individual tastes in their use of details and yet relate well to each other because of the use of the same basic design and scale.

There are some fine examples of water fountains in the village (Fig. 25). They are very old but in good working order. They have been painted in very bright colours which draws attention to them in a busy street. Street furniture can also attract the eye for a very different reason. The presence of an unsuitable piece of furniture has a disrupting effect on the street. The main offender in Taghmon is the telephone kiosk in the main street. (Fig. 25). It is placed in a very prominent position but would serve its purpose just as well in a less prominent place. The window panes are mostly broken and the paint is chipping off the frame. Overall it is an unattractive piece of furniture and takes away from the rest of the street.

E) ADVERTISEMENTS:

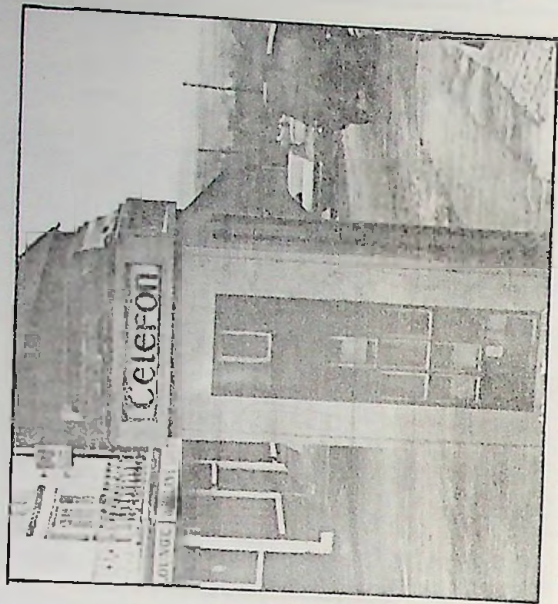
The over-use of advertising is a development of modern life when so many large companies are competing to sell their products to the consumer. Modern advertising takes the form of being big and brash to attract the customer but there are so many advertisements of this nature that the end result is a bombardment of visual material and the effect of any particular one is minimal. With this emphasis on largeness a lot of more attractive means of advertising is overlooked. For instance, there is very little use made of banners - projecting from walls. This is a very effective way of advertising since it can be seen from either direction a long time before one reaches the shop and not just in front of the shops as most conventional forms take. A few of the spirit firms



(a) Georgian Doorway

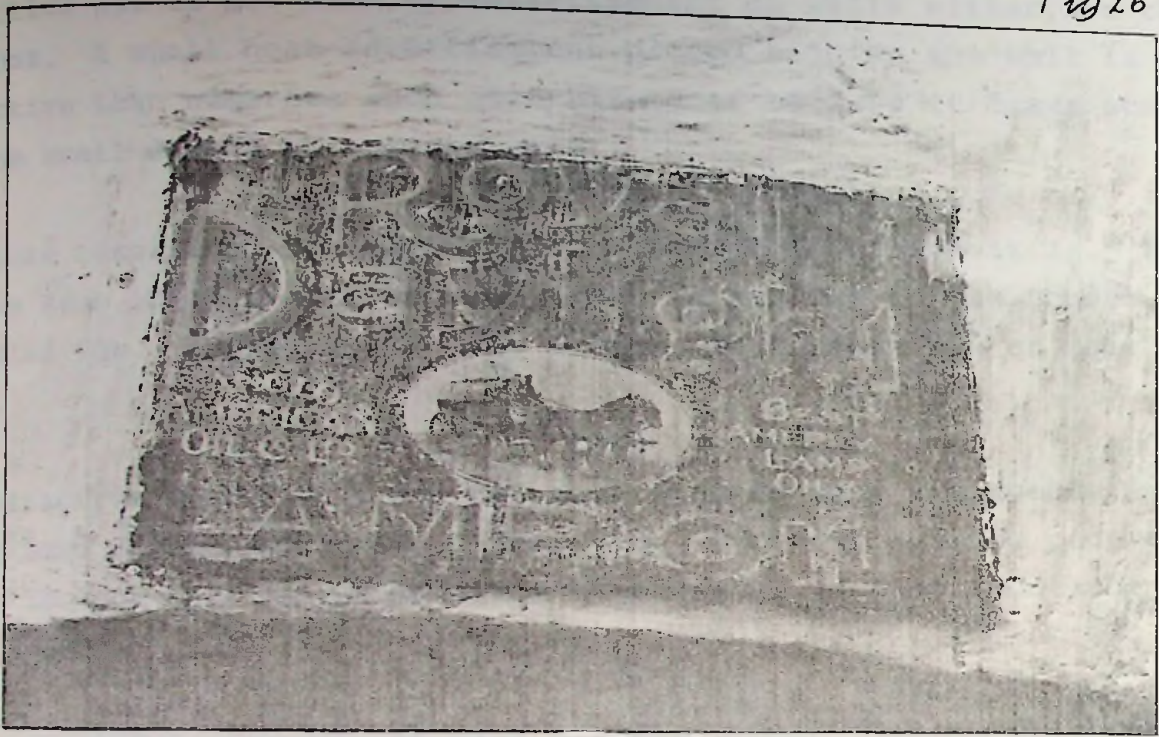


(b) Water Fountain



(c) Telephone Kiosk

Fig 26



(a) Ad. for Royal Daylight oil



(b) Power's Whiskey ad. from side wall of Castle Bar

have neon lighted signs of this type, but they do not show the imagination and individual character of this type of pub-sign from years ago. Effective use is not made of advertisement on walls either, for the above reasons. A small neat advertisement placed high on the wall is much more effective than numerous such advertisements because it draws attention to one small detail on a large wall.

The more restrained the advertising the more effective it is. The use of the same ad. repeated several times is jarring to the senses and uncalled for, if the public know already what goods are on sale in the shop.

The attractive bill board notices seen outside most newsagents in past years have disappeared also. They were effective because people knew where to look for the information they wanted to know about the up to date news.

There are a few examples of nece old ads around Taghmon which have survived the passage of time. The oldest seems to be one for - Royal Daylight Lamp Oil, over the archway into O'Donnell's yard (Fig. 26). There is a more recent one for Phoenix Ale on the side wall of the Castle Bar (Fig. 26), and one for Castrol Oil on the side wall of the Post Office which once had a petrol pump.

TRAFFIC AND WIRESCAPE:

These are two exclusively modern problems so I have grouped them together. Because Taghmon is off the main Wexford, New Ross road, heavy traffic is not a problem. The main problem with regard to traffic is finding enough parking space for local vehicles. The square and outside the church are the main areas for parking but it would be desirable if cars could be accommodated out of view. This is especially true for people who have to find parking space for their vehicle overnight. Up to now they can only park their cars on the streets outside their houses. Here one can see the great advantage of having terraced housing with common access to the back - where cars could be parked out of view from the public. Continuous traffic and the presence of cars causes tension and real danger especially to children - so it would be an advantage if traffic and humans could be kept apart as far as possible.

Fig 27



Wirescape and Traffic

WIRESCAPE:

The increase in the use of electricity has caused its own problems in towns and villages - that or wirescape. In the beginning the presence of a few telegraph poles and overhead wires were not too offensive to the eye, but over the years their presence has increased considerably resulting in a cluttering up of streets with poles and wire creating an air of chaos and tension. This is also a problem in Taghmon. I had difficulty in taking some of my photographs for this study because of poles and wires getting in the way. (Fig. 27). There is no reason why electricity and phone cables cannot be put underground. It has been done in other places notably Tyrells Pass, winner of the Tidy Towns Competition.

TIDINESS:

Tidiness can improve the appearance of a place considerably without costing anything but time and effort. It does not involve the collection of rubbish but the general upkeep of public and private holdings.

CONCLUSION

THE TRADITIONAL IRISH VILLAGE IS FAST DISAPPEARING FROM THE LANDSCAPE. THERE IS A LOT IN THIS CULTURAL INHERITANCE THAT IS WORTH PRESERVING.

IT IS THROUGH EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS THAT AN AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT WILL BE LEARNED BY THE NEXT GENERATIONS.

TAGHMON IS A TYPICAL IRISH VILLAGE IN A TRANSITION PERIOD WHERE A LOT WHICH IS VALUABLE MAY BE LOST THROUGH LACK OF AWARENESS.

I HOPE THAT THIS STUDY WILL IN SOME WAY HIGHLIGHT THE EXCITING ASPECTS OF THE VILLAGE WHICH SHOULD BE CHERISHED AT ALL COSTS.

A P P E N D I X

PARISH PRIESTS FOR TAGHMON , ROMAN CATHOLIC -1644 to 1915 ^I

I644 Rev. Patrick Hore
I690/I740 Venerable Gregory Downes
I740/'69 Rev. Pat. Redmond
I769/89 Rev. Malachy (Loftus) Brennan
I790-I801 Bryan Murphy
I801-I815 Rev. Thomas Doyle
I815-49 Rev. John Scallan
I849-'66 Rev. Loftus Brennan
I866-'96 Very Rev. William (dean) Murphy
I896-I914 Very Rev. P.M.(Canon) Furlong

PARISH PRIESTS AND CURATES FOR TAGHMON - 1315 to 1915

(Ferns Clergy and Parishes by Rev. J. B. Leslie 1936)

1315 Stephen Walrand
1317 John de Sutton
1348 Gilbert de Sutton
1352 John Esmond
1355 Robert Grimston
1358 John Galtrym
1363 William de Gunthorp
1379 John Keten (or Ketyne)
1395/6 Robert de Brayton
1400 Thomas Shell
1400/1 John Wysebech
1400/1 Robert Keten
1404 John Swayne
1418 John Rider
1421 Robert Keten (or Keytown)
1524 Nicholas Keting
1539 Walter Rowcester
1540/1 Daniel Walsh
1567 William Devereux
1657 Adam Wilkinson
1662 Humphrey Good
1678 Nicholas Boothe
1691/2 William Bintenwood
1714 Roger Vigours
1735 Andrew Hamilton
1785 Robert Hawkshaw
1813 Simon Little
1823 Ralph Boyd
1840 William Scott
1847 John Hailey
1865 Thomas John Jacob
1876 James Peed
1878 Robert Burnett
1900 Thomas Brownell Gibson

CURATES

1780/6	Fred Draffens
1815	Henry Francais Lyte
1817	George Jones
1840	George Richards
1865	William Dawsley
1865	John Gifford Jacob
1872	Nathaniel Switzer
1878	John Mathews
1881	Henry Rennison
1885	Peter Wilson
1891	Garrett Rennison
1897	William Raymond Evans
1915	Thomas William Lowe

The following is a list of professional and business people in Taghmon in 1885

Catholic Church

Very Rev. Dean William Murphy P.P., Rev. James Walsh C.C.
Rev. Mathew Sinnot C.C.

Protestant Church

Rev. Henry Rennison, Rector

Post Mistress

Sarah Percival

Petty Sessions Court

Second Thursday in each month - Stephen Prendergast clerk

Civil Bill Officer

Joseph Dally

Dispensary Doctor

John C. Pigott ,

Relieving Officer

Michael Murphy

Royal Irish Constabulary

George E. Holmes, district Inspector

George Fitzgerald, Head Constable.

George Larkin, Sergeant

National School

William Bennitt, Master

Mary Jane Codd, Mistress

Protestant School

Sarah Percival, Mistress

Inland Revenue

J. Murphy, Ride Officer

Under Land Agent

Darby Ryan

Cricket Club

Henry J. Bell, Captain

George E. Holmes, Sec. and Tres.

BUSINESS BRANCHES:

Bakers and Flourdealers

Mary Boggan, Mary Kirwan, Nicholas Murphy, Richard Ward

Bill Posters

Luke Byrne and Sons

Bootmakers

P. Lacey, G. Larkin, J. Walsh

Carpenters:

Pat and Phil Doyle, D. Eway, J. Hanton, J. Howlin, J. Parle

Butchers:

John Fortune, Richard Ward

Coal Dealers:

Mary Boggan, James Kennedy, Mary Murphy

Coopers:

Edward Tobin, James Whelan

Drapers:

Mary Brown, Mary Cooney, James Keating, Misses. Kearns, Jane Reville

Dressmakers:

Mrs. Brennan, Misses. Furlong, M. Kehoe, K. Kirwan, Mrs. Parle

Emigration Agent

James Keating

Family Grocer

Rd. Keating, Stephen Prendergast

Grocers and Spirit Dealers:

Bart Brennan, John Heffernan, James Keating, Richard Kelly

Edward Murphy

Harness Makers

James Johnston, Nicholas Larkin

Insurance Agent

Stephen Prendergast

Masons

William Martin, Pat Rossiter

Newagents

Rd. Keating, James Whelan

Post Car Owners

John Brown, John Kavanagh

Provision Dealers

James Kennedy, M. Murphy, Ann O'Connor, Jeremiah Ryan

Seed and Manure Merchants

John Brown, Jas. Keating, Stephen Prendergast

Smiths

John Fitzharris, Jas. Kearns, William Lannon, D. Slator

Spirit Dealers only

Bridget Bert, Ann Murphy

Tailors

James Furlong, Thomas Leonard, James Moore, James Pender

Tin Smith - John Connolly

Undertaker - John Brown

The following is a list of gravestones in St. Munna's Church,
Taghmon - which I have been able to decipher.

1. John Kavanagh 1776 - aged 75 years
2. Ann Fitzpatrick 1786
3. Bridget Keating 1786
4. Crane 1792 - aged 68
5. Robert Hawkshaw, son of Rector 1790
6. Cox Family Graves
John Cox formerly Coolcliffe
and Mary Cox alias Hore died 1795
daughter Eliz. Draffen 1833
General Sir John W. Cox K.C.B. born 1821 died 1901
John Cox, Coolcliffe 1793
son Allan Cox 1810
son Col. Sir W. Cox 1864, Monkstown Dublin
7. Hore Ruthven Family graves
Walter Hore 1795 (disturbed 1777)
Walter Hore Ruthven 1878 - aged 94
Honourable Mrs Blackwood 1836
Ponsonby Hore 1834 aged 65 years
8. William Doyle 1801 sister Mary Murphy
9. Henry Green 1801
10. Mary Summers 1803
11. James Cooney
also James Cooney of Rivertown 1819
Thomas Cooney of Ross 20th January 1826
12. Arthur Miller Esq. late Major of 6th Reg. of
13. Richard Ward 1853
14. James Howlin for father died 1856
sister Mary Howlin 23
his relatives Laurence and Mary Howlin
15. Thomas Jacob rector 1871
16. Mary Wickham 1870 (Coolcull)
father John 1878
also John 1915
17. Rev. Nath. Switzer 1878

18. Lizzie Keating, Taghmon 1905
James Keating 1911
wife Anne 1920
sons Willie 1921
John 1933
19. Georgina Browne, Newtown Road 1914
20. Sinnott, 1924
21. Michael Murphy, Coolcull 1924
22. Mary Anne Rhynehart, Harristown 1925
23. Michael Wickam, Youngstown
to brother James died 1902
wife Mary 1918
himself 1924
Richard Wickham 1924
daughter Mary 1923
son John 1942
Pat 1951
24. Mary Rhynehart 1925
25. Walter Boggan, Grootown 1934

There are other, more up-to-date headstones, but these are easily found by anyone interested.

Fig 28



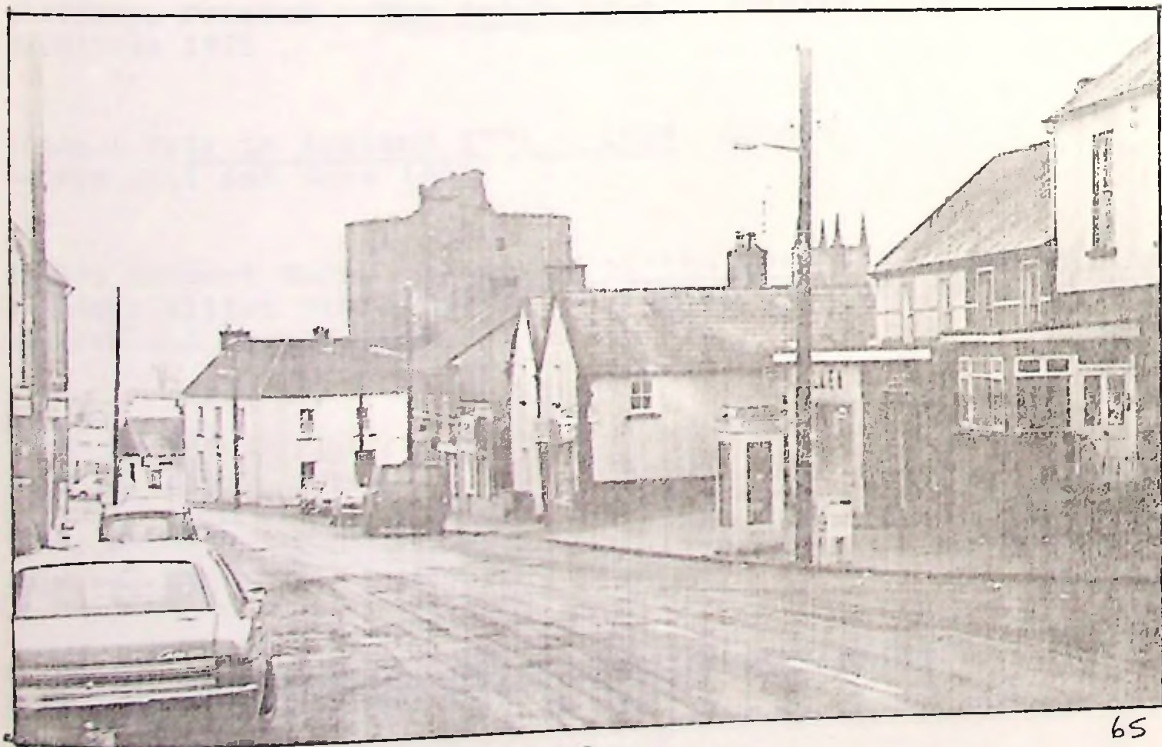
(a) View of Taghmon, late 19th- early 20th Century



(b) The same view, 1979



(a) Meeting of the Hounds - Main St. Taghmon, circa 1900



(b) Main St. Taghmon, 1979

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