

TANDRAGEE

Some Historical Notes

By K. KILPATRICK

The town of Tandragee was the ancient headquarters of the O'Hanlon family. The name usually interpreted as meaning "back to the wind" probably derives from it's exposed site on the hillside where it receives the full benefit of the prevailing winds from the south and west. The town of Tandragee, stands in the townland of Ballymore (Big town) which also gives its name to the parish.

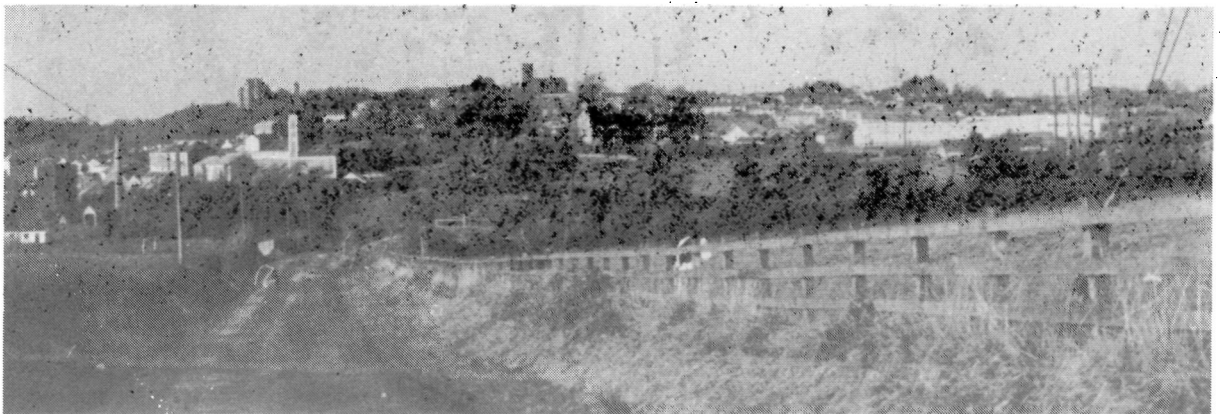
The Manor of Ballymore (1,500 acres) was granted to Oliver St. John on December 28th, 1610. Oliver St. John was a member of a noble Wiltshire family. He had first come to Ireland in 1601, had received in succession a number of appointments to high office including president of Munster and Master of Ordnance. He had fought at the Battle of Kinsale. The lands of the Manor of Ballymore had belonged to Sir Oghie O'Hanlon. According to George Hill's "Historical account of the Plantation of Ulster, "Sir Oliver St. John master of Ordnance was granted "the Castle and Town of Tonregie, otherwise Ballymore, Mullabedy, Tullagh — Hugh, Darrowgallen and Lisbane, one balliboe each; Cargines 2 balliboes; Mullaghglasse, Tawnereogh, Tawnatee, Coronaght, and Creenaghbegg one balliboe each; Lisray ½ balliboe; in all 1,500 acres. Rent £12 English. The premises are created the manor of Ballymore with 600 acres in demesne and a count baron".

In 1622 a survey of the Plantation in Co. Armagh gives the following description of St. John's estate, (by then he had become Lord Grandison): ". . . upon a proportion of 1,500 acres called Ballemore hath the Lord Grandison, built one castle of lyme and stone 33 foot in length and 29 foot broad and 3 stories high, with an addition of building 33 foot in length and 20 foot broad, making it a strong and comodious dwelling being compassed about with a Bawne of lyme and stone, a on the North side 14 foot square and a lyme platforme adjoining to the house, on the rock on the south side with flankers. There are in the same Bawne one Faucon and 2 Fauconetts of brasse mounted, and Armes within the castle, shoth, and pike for 40 men. Adjoining to his house there is a pleasant parke paled round about 3 miles compasse.

Neer the said castle there is builded a handsome Church 60 foot in length and 24 in breadth well furnished with seates, Communion Table, Capp, font and a good Bell.

There is also a markett towne just under the castle with 27 houses built in the English fashion making a fair large street inhabited with English, furnished with pike and Calliver.

Adjoining the towne are two watermills under one roof upon the River Cowsher".





"Ulster Welcomes Connaught" Banners to welcome the Connaught Rangers who visited the town in 1912



Ballymore Parish Church, pre 1926. In 1926 the walls were stripped and the original stonework repointed

The Tandragee area was one of the favourite haunts of the outlaw Redmond O'Hanlon. The following interesting note appeared in the Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Society of Ireland Vol IX in 1889 — "Tandragee Church.

The following is a copy of a Paper, sealed in a bottle, which was enclosed in a box in an old vault in the Parish Church, Tandragee:- "This box contains the bones of Henry St. John Esq., Lord of the manor of Ballymore, and of his daughter. He rebuilt the church of Tandragee and built this vault. He was murdered by a party of banditti, called Tories, at Drumlin Hill, near Knockbridge, on Tuesday the 9th day of September 1679, by being shot through the forehead, and was buried in this vault on Tuesday the 16th of the same month. By tradition of the old inhabitants of this parish, it appears that upon opening this vault for his interment, the body of his daughter who had died some time before, was found lying near the entrance and out of her coffin, having, it is supposed revived after being locked up here. The old church which was built by Lord Grandison in 1622 was ruined by the Rebellion of 1641 and having been rebuilt by the above gentleman and becoming too small for the Congregation, it was pulled down in February 1812, in order to be rebuilt, when these bones were collected by Wm. Loftie Esq. and again deposited in this vault — Tandragee February 10th, 1812. Rev. Thomas Carter, rector; Rev. Leslie Creery curate; Wm. Loftie Esq., R. Greenaway, church wardens".

The cost of the new church (1812) was £2,200 and it was dedicated to St. Mark. Trancepts and chancel were added in 1846 and bells were installed in the tower in 1889.

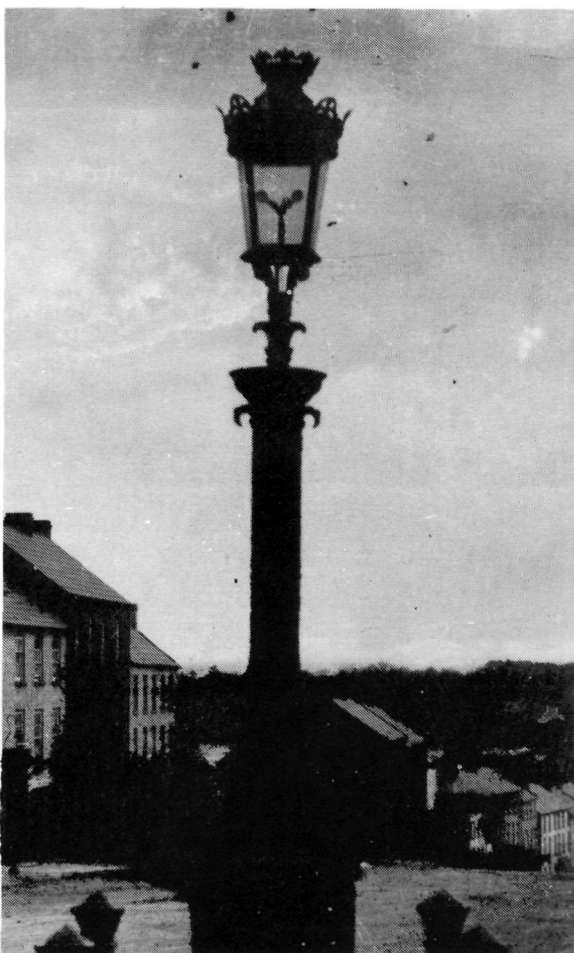
Tandragee's motto "No Pinch" is thought to date back to the 18th century when owing to the "wise and kindly" management of the Sparrow family and the Manchesters, who came into the estate through marriage, there was "full and plenty" for all and no pinching or saving.

Methodism in Tandragee dates back to the early 1740's. John Wesley was a frequent visitor to the town. In 1747 two local men, James Kershaw and William Irwin of Cargans, made the long and difficult journey to Dublin to hear John Wesley preach.

One of the outstanding figures in Methodism was a Robert Strawbridge, a native of Co. Leitrim who came to live in Tandragee. He married a Miss

Pyper in 1764 and shortly after emigrated to South Carolina. Strawbridge is recognised as the founder of American Methodism.

Tandragee Presbyterian Church dates from 1829. Opened on May 22nd of that year it cost £689.7.2. St. James' R.C. Church built in 1852 by the then Parish Priest Rev. Edward Campbell was consecrated by Most Rev. Dr. Dixon, Catholic Primate of All-Ireland assisted by the Rev. Dr. Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin who later became Ireland's first Cardinal.



"Coronation Lamp" in its original site (where the War Memorial now stands). Erected in 1902 to commemorate the accession of Edward VII it now stands at junction of the Ballymore and Portadown Roads and Church Street Tandragee

Tandragee Baptist Church dates from 1867.

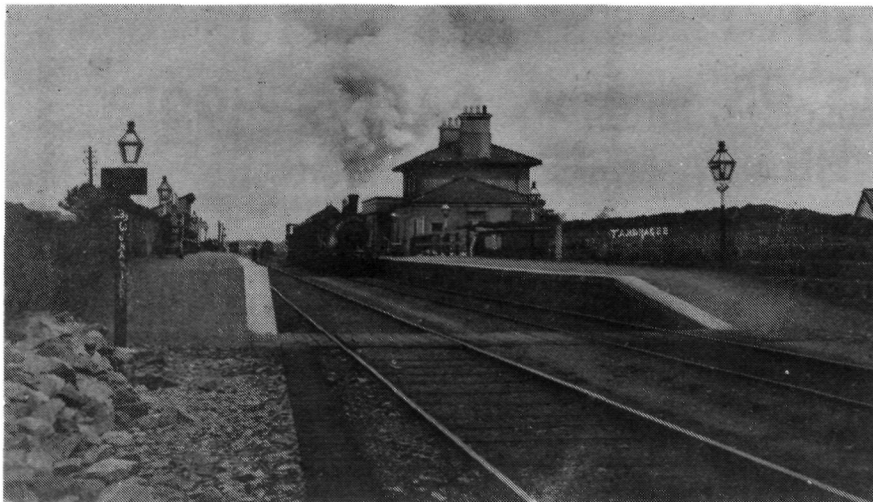
In 1836 about 580 boys, 440 girls and 100 infants were being educated in schools in Tandragee, Corenagh, Ballymore and Cargans. At an annual festival in 1835 more than 2,000 children were entertained by Lord and Lady Mandeville. One other school in Tandragee was described as being "the first infant school in Ireland". The original St. James' Primary School dates back to 1887, being replaced in the 1960's. The present County Primary School

was built in the early 1930's and the County Secondary School — now Tandragee Junior High School — was declared open on New Years' day 1963 by the Governor of Northern Ireland Lord Wakehurst.

However, High Schools are nothing new in the area, for in 1814 Rev. Henry Ashe, Rector of Acton and his brother Rev. Isaac Ashe advertised a "Private Boarding School which taught among other subjects "Latin, Greek and "writing"!".



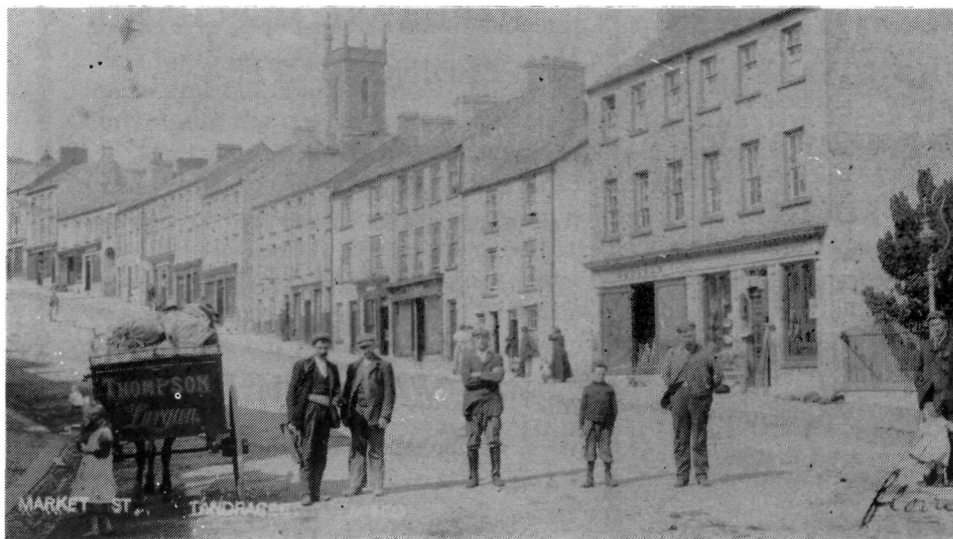
Drive way known as "Duchess Walk" leading from rear entrance of the Castle to the meadows



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Madden Station
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Tandragee Presbyterian Manse
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Market Street, C. 1900
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