

A Brief History of Killenard

Killenard is a small rural area situated on what is widely considered to be one of the Sli Daile, one of the five ancient roads of Ireland. The geographical area encompassed by Killenard consists of the townlands of Ballycarroll, Ballybrittas, Rathmiles and Tierhogar.

In the 1600s a windmill was built on the highest part of the surrounding area in the townland of Rathmiles. Wheat produced by local farmers was brought there and ground on a commercial basis until its business declined around 1850 due to the advent of steam power. Its ruins still stand about 15 feet high, somewhat reminiscent of a monastic round tower, at the top of the aptly named Windmill Hill.



One of the first large houses recorded in the area, Mount Henry, was built by Edward Skeffington- Smyth in 1820 and it is a wonderful example of Georgian Architecture. The nearby Gardeners cottage with its distinctive stone wall was built in 1830.

In 1829 the Church of Ireland Lea Church was built two hundred metres west of the windmill and services are still held there on a regular basis. The remains of John George Adair, (pictured above)

the infamous landlord and owner of Glenveagh Estate in Donegal, are buried here. Jack Adair, as he was better known, also owned two large ranches in America where he was held in high regard by his business associates. Nevertheless the cowboys in his employ were said to be less impressed by his arrogant attitude.

The Catholic church of Cill an Aird was built in 1835 and this was followed in the 1840s by the construction of a small school on its grounds. In the 1880s a larger school was built close to the church entrance and this building is still in use today as part of the Killenard Community Centre.

In times past, people attending mass in Cill an Aird would frequently use the “Mass path”, a right of way that led from the Lea Church through the fields that now comprise the Heritage Resort, and out to the church where the Thatch Public House now stands. At the beginning of the Mass path stood the remains of an old two story house, commonly referred to as the Fairy House, and several accounts of supernatural events were associated with it. It was eventually demolished in its entirety in the early 1970s.



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