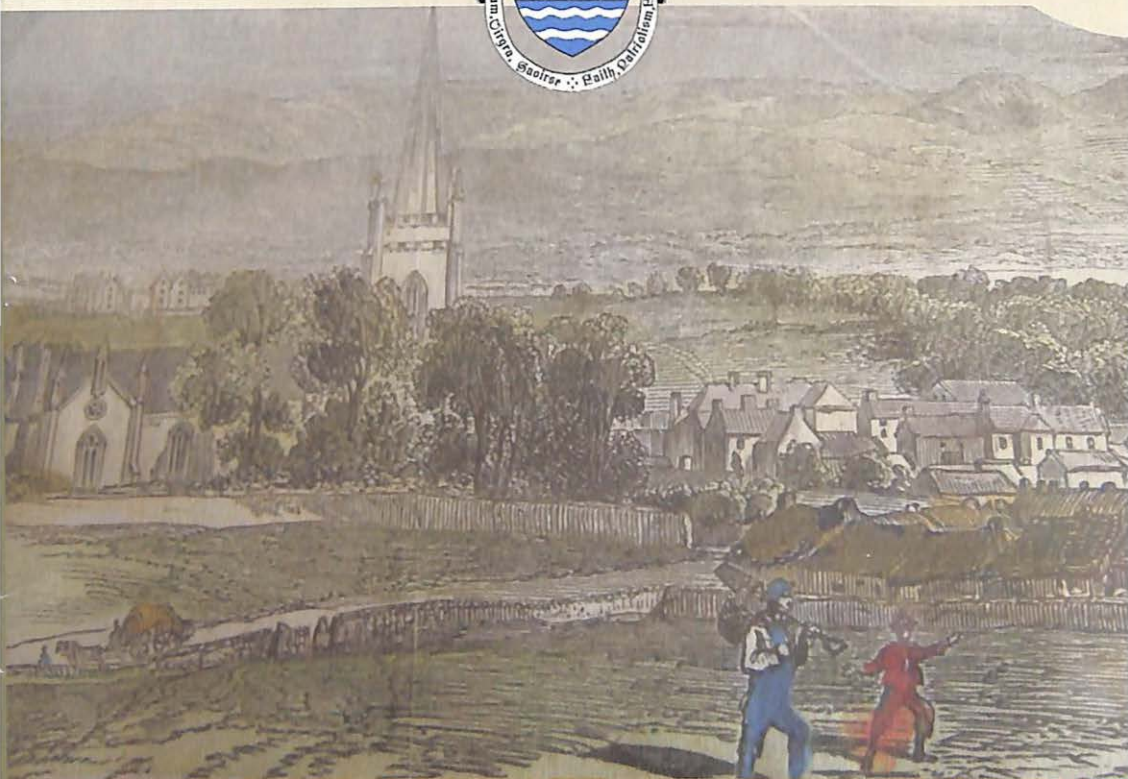


Includes  
Trail Map



# TIPPERARY

## Historic Town Trail

*A walk through over 800 years of history*

# Welcome to Tipperary

## Foundation

The town of Tipperary was established around 1200 by the Norman William de Burgh. Tipperary was important enough in the 13<sup>th</sup> century to give its name to the county and growth was helped when Augustinian friars came to the town around 1300. However town walls were not built and Tipperary suffered a long period of decline. Events in the 16<sup>th</sup> century all but destroyed the town as decades of war centred on the forested Glen of Aherlow, a stronghold of rebels against the crown.

## Recovery

The wars of the 17<sup>th</sup> century resulted in new land owners, one of whom was Erasmus Smith (1611-91), who founded a grammar school for sons of his tenants on the site of the Augustinian Friary. His school flourished until the early 1920s. Urban growth was slow in the 18<sup>th</sup> century but among the men who settled in Tipperary and established families was Christopher Emmet (1702-43) who had a medical practice. His grandson the patriot Robert Emmet led a failed rebellion in Dublin and was executed in 1803.

## Growth

Tipperary railway station was opened in 1848 and once the worst effects of the Great Famine were over, the town enjoyed a sustained period of growth, especially in the 1870s. Above everything else, Tipperary's growth and prosperity depended on the milk produced in the rich agricultural land, the Golden Vale. After Cork city, Tipperary's butter market was the most important in the United Kingdom.



Church Well

## Conflict and Community

In 1889 and 1919, events in Tipperary had national importance. Between 1889-91, 'New Tipperary' became a unique part of the Irish land war and thirty years later, the Soloheadbeg ambush, just outside the town, began the Irish War of Independence. Following Independence, economic recovery was slow. Tipperary largely had to rely on its own resources. Milk production remained important, now centred on Tipperary Co-operative Creamery, established in 1908 and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century a major part of the town's economy. In the 1930s a national community development organisation *Muintir na Tire* was founded by a local priest Fr John Hayes (1887-1957) and this spirit of co-operative enterprise continues to inspire the community.

## Setting

The primary attraction of the town of Tipperary is its setting. Spread across a hill facing south, the town is a short drive from Slievenamuck and the Galtees, twin guardians of the famed Glen of Aherlow. In the words of a local poet, the relationship between these two elevations is like that of a 'fond mother guarding a child'. Before there was a town, there may have been a well that gave its name to both town and county. This was the Well of Ara (in the Irish language *Tiobraid Árann*, which became Tipperary), of importance to travellers as they moved between the two most important places in the region: Cashel of the Kings and the monastery of Emly.



Tipperary from the Clonmel Road c.1900

# Maid of Erin

This site has been vacant since the night of 13th November 1920. Earlier that day, at the height of the War of Independence, several British soldiers were killed in an ambush in the Glen of Aherlow. Two houses stood on this site, one of which, the home of P.J. Moloney, Sinn Fein member of Dáil Eireann was burned in retaliation. Both houses were destroyed and never rebuilt. In October 1918, the Moloney house was the venue for the meeting that organised the 3rd Tipperary Brigade of the Irish Volunteers, one of the most active IRA units in the War of Independence. Near here are four others sites of interest in the story of Republican Tipperary.

The driving force behind Republicanism was the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret oath-bound society dedicated to full Irish independence. In Tipperary the key person was William Benn who lived across the road from this display in No. 3 Church Street and in whose house many important meetings took place. On your right as you walk up O'Brien Street, is a plaque marking the site of the Tivoli, where on 10 May 1914, the Irish Volunteers were organised in Tipperary

A short distance towards the centre of Main Street and marked with a commemorative plaque is the site of the house in which John O'Leary (1830-1907) and his sister Ellen (1831-89) were born and grew up.



John O'Leary



Sir John O'Shannassy

Finally, and centuries back in time, across the road at 35 Main Street, the Emmet family home, where the father of Robert Emmet (1778-1803) and Thomas Addis Emmet (1764-1827) was born in 1729. In contrast was the career of Sir John O'Shannassy (1818-83) who lived at No. 2 Church Street while serving his time to the drapery trade before emigrating to Australia in 1839. He prospered there,

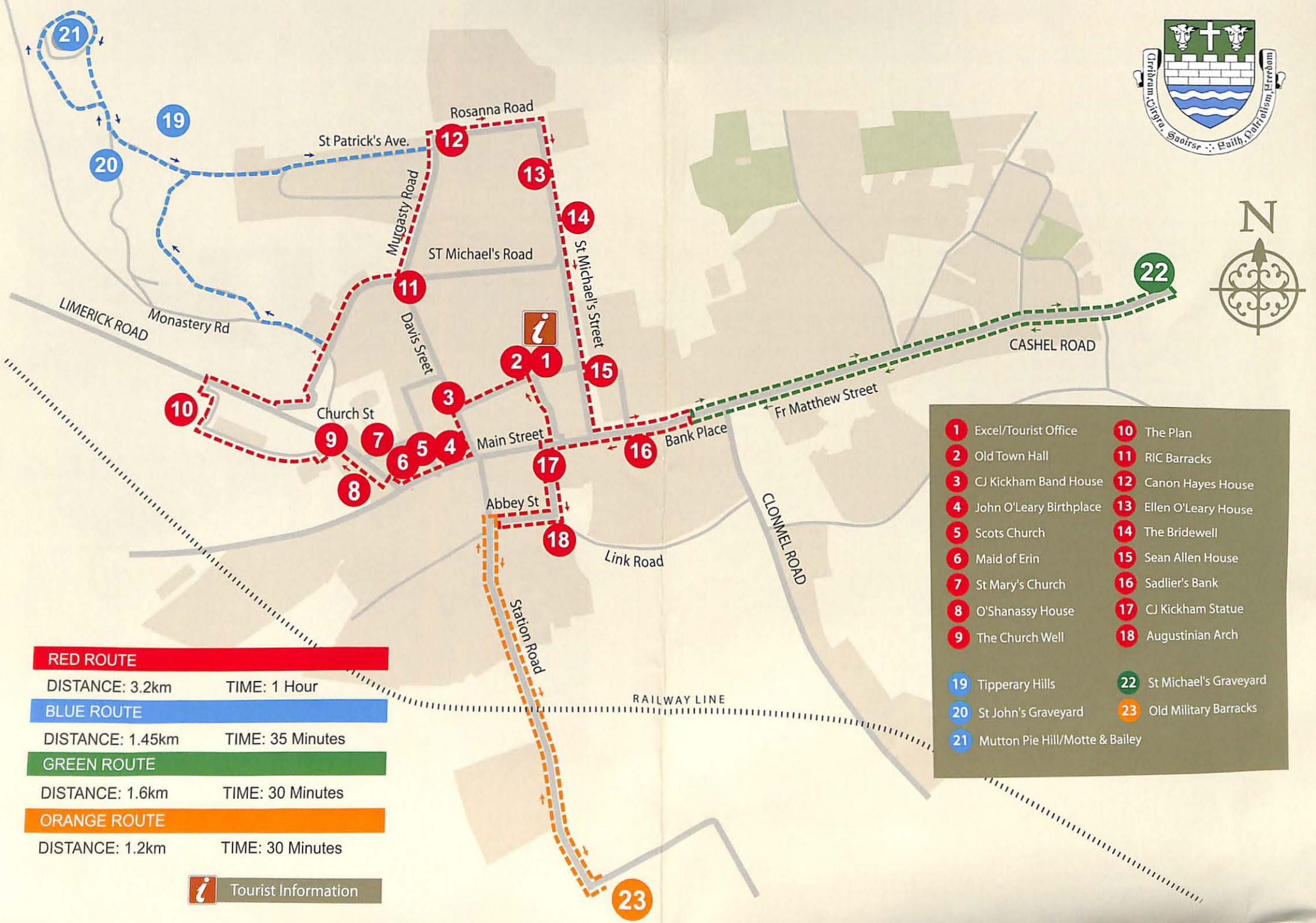
becoming a successful merchant and three times premier of the state of Victoria. He visited Tipperary in October 1866 to great acclaim by a section of opinion but with demonstrations of displeasure by others who believed that he had sold out.



Manchester Martyrs postcard



Robert Emmet commemorative stamps



**RED ROUTE**

DISTANCE: 3.2km      TIME: 1 Hour

**BLUE ROUTE**

DISTANCE: 1.45km      TIME: 35 Minutes

**GREEN ROUTE**

DISTANCE: 1.6km      TIME: 30 Minutes

**ORANGE ROUTE**

DISTANCE: 1.2km      TIME: 30 Minutes



- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Excel/Tourist Office            | <b>10</b> The Plan               |
| <b>2</b> Old Town Hall                   | <b>11</b> RIC Barracks           |
| <b>3</b> CJ Kickham Band House           | <b>12</b> Canon Hayes House      |
| <b>4</b> John O'Leary Birthplace         | <b>13</b> Ellen O'Leary House    |
| <b>5</b> Scots Church                    | <b>14</b> The Bridewell          |
| <b>6</b> Maid of Erin                    | <b>15</b> Sean Allen House       |
| <b>7</b> St Mary's Church                | <b>16</b> Sadlier's Bank         |
| <b>8</b> O'Shanassy House                | <b>17</b> CJ Kickham Statue      |
| <b>9</b> The Church Well                 | <b>18</b> Augustinian Arch       |
| <b>19</b> Tipperary Hills                | <b>22</b> St Michael's Graveyard |
| <b>20</b> St John's Graveyard            | <b>23</b> Old Military Barracks  |
| <b>21</b> Mutton Pie Hill/Motte & Bailey |                                  |

The 1870s in Tipperary town was a decade of urban development. With a post-Famine economic recovery in full flow, the town not only got a new town hall, military barracks and banks but in keeping with the region's reputation for lawlessness, a large new police station. In 1871, comparing police levels in Irish and English counties, Tipperary had the highest concentration of police – an astonishing one policeman for every 194 inhabitants.

*Some stones were thrown we can't deny;  
Some harmless squibs were fired about;..  
But the peelers got such fright;  
In their anger hot they fired buckshot;*

From a ballad about an episode in Tipperary in 1889.

Built around 1876 and designed to withstand attack, there was an independent water supply and still to be seen are the mural features allowing the entrances to be fired on from within the building should the natives become too revolting. The shots that started the War of Independence on 21st January 1919 in Soloheadbeg were fired at two constables stationed in this barracks.



RIC in 1870s

In March 1922 following the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the RIC left Tipperary, a departure not without incident as they were shot at as they marched to the railway station. Local Volunteers opposed to the Treaty took over the barracks but in July they were defeated by government forces and the barracks was badly damaged. The new police force, the Garda Síochana was not able to occupy the building until 1927. A new garda station was opened in 1993.

Across the road was the Church of Ireland rectory, built in the 1860s and now the offices of the Town Council and named for Dan Breen (1894-1969), one of the local leaders in the War of Independence. In the nineteenth-century therefore, this general location represented the power and status of church and state.



St Michael's Road c.1900



Dan Breen Poster

## Fenian Rising

On Tuesday 5th March 1867, Tipperary town was in an uproar as rumour spread that Fenian rebels were gathering to stage an uprising. The following day around one hundred and fifty men armed with pikes and some guns, gathered at an ancient fort in Ballyhurst just outside the town on the Cashel road. Leading the rebels was Fethard-native Thomas F. Bourke (1840-89). His family had taken him to the United States when he was ten and as he was in New Orleans when the American civil war began, he joined the Confederate side. Taken prisoner at Gettysburg in July 1863, he was not released until the war ended two years later. His work as a Fenian organiser brought him to Britain and then to Ireland early in 1867.

## Thomas F. Bourke

Along with some forty others captured with him, described as 'very few farmers' sons, servant boys, tradesmen and labourers of the town', Bourke was taken to Tipperary Bridewell. A week later, handcuffed in pairs and under military guard, the Fenian prisoners were marched to the railway station and taken to Clonmel. Bourke, looking pale and ill, was transported by carriage. Along with other Fenian leaders, Thomas F Bourke was tried for high treason in Dublin in April 1867. By then he was described as being lame and looking much older than his age which was just twenty-seven. He was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged and quartered. A great deal of pressure on the government caused commutation of the sentence to penal servitude for life. Released in 1871 he was sent back to the United States where he died, not having reached his fiftieth birthday.



1890 Conspiracy Trial

## Irish Civil War

Following various inquiries, changes were made to the prison system and by 1886, Tipperary Bridewell was closed. In the summer of 1922, during the Irish Civil War, when government forces captured the town, Republican prisoners were held briefly in the Bridewell. After many years of neglect Tipperary Bridewell was refurbished and today serves as offices.

## Courthouse

The courthouse and bridewell (gaol) located to the rear, were built around 1841. The most famous trial held here was in September 1890, when twelve of the leaders of the New Tipperary struggle, including five MPs and Fr David Humphreys CC, were tried for conspiracy.



The Bridewell

## Bridewell

This name comes from a specific gaol in London and became applied to lock-ups generally. The new bridewell arranged in two blocks with the keeper's house in the middle and with exercise yards to the rear, had twelve cells for males and four for females. Most of those locked up had battles with alcohol. They lost. During the Famine years, Tipperary bridewell was under particular pressure as vagrancy increased and for many people being locked up at least meant being fed. Individuals charged with serious offences were held in Tipperary bridewell before being taken to Clonmel or Limerick.

Canon John Hayes (1887-1957) was born in Murroe Co Limerick to a family evicted from their farm in 1881 during the Land League agitation. It is an odd coincidence that the two priests, Hayes and Humphreys, that had the greatest impact on Tipperary, while belonging to different generations, were from the same parish, Murroe in County Limerick. Also, both families were evicted from their farms on the Cloncurry estate during the first phase of the land war in the early 1880s, experiences that undoubtedly shaped each man in different ways.

Ordained in 1913, John Hayes served nine formative years in Liverpool before returning to work in various parishes in Cashel diocese. Influenced by European social movements, he turned his enormous energy and enthusiasm to promoting community development at a time when poverty and bitterness from the civil war were very real.

Working as curate in Tipperary 1934- 46, in 1937 Father Hayes founded Muintir na Tire, a movement to promote economic and social co-operation. Self-help was central to his philosophy and had a positive impact on a people used to expecting government to provide solutions. He was parish priest of Bansha 1946-1957, during which time, Bansha was to the forefront in community development. For example it was one of the first places in rural Ireland to get electricity.

Canon Hayes House, built in 1940 was purchased by Muintir na Tire in 1955 and is head office of the voluntary movement that continues to advocate community development and promote the crime prevention programme 'Community Alert'.



Canon John Hayes

## Sadleir's Bank

Originally the town house of James Scully (1737-1816) of Kilfeakle, a very wealthy catholic farmer and businessman, who established a private bank in this building. His grandson John Sadleir (1813-56) of Shronell took over and as the Tipperary Joint Stock Bank, several other branches were established. Sadlier also entered politics and was MP for Carlow (1847-53) and Sligo (1853-56). Initially Sadleir was part of a group of Irish MPs trying to act independently in parliament to promote Irish and catholic interests

(known as the 'Pope's Brass Band').

John Sadleir used his bank and his extensive contacts to speculate and over-extend the bank's resources, especially in railway shares. He also purchased very large amounts of land, including part of the ancient Butler (Glengall) estate in Cahir, when the market was flooded after the Great Famine. By 1856, with a web of lies and forgeries about to overwhelm him, on 16 February John Sadleir committed suicide in London by taking poison. The economic consequences of this banking disaster were felt for decades. In Tipperary Town funds collected for the building of a new parish church were lost. In Dickens's Little Dorrit published between 1855 and 1857, Merdle the banker and in Trollope's The Way We Live Now (1875) the banker Augustus Melmotte, are each based on John Sadleir. Subsequently, this building housed the Clanwilliam Club, a home from home for gentlemen of the region.



John Sadleir



Sadleir's Bank

### Abbey Grammar School

The grammar school was built on the Augustinian site, using some of the stones from the ruins. It opened in 1681 but within a short time was closed as the town was caught up in the war between catholic King James and his protestant son-in-law William of Orange. Both town and school were destroyed by fire in 1691. By 1702, there was a new grammar school, which lasted until 1820 when it was rebuilt. This third school on the site was burned in an accidental fire in 1941. After surviving through all or part of four centuries, the grammar school closed in 1922 because of the civil war. It was intended to reopen the school but circumstances changed. Past pupils include John O'Leary (1830-1907) Fenian; Michael Slattery (1783-1857) RC archbishop of Cashel; historians and writers Standish James O'Grady (1846-1928), G.H. Orpen (1852-1932) and Nicholas Mansergh (1910-91).

### Charles J. Kickham

Charles J. Kickham (1828-82) is a Tipperary icon. Born in Mullinahone, he worked closely with John O'Leary on the Fenian newspaper the Irish People and like O'Leary spent several years in an English prison. Kickham, in poor health, was released in 1869.



Charles J. Kickham

Kickham's novel Knocknagow or The Homes of Tipperary (1879) is the Tipperary novel and a classic exposition of nineteenth century Irish rural life. This statue, unveiled in November 1898 by John O'Leary, was the work of John Hughes (1865-1941). Placing this monument in Tipperary town reflected its Republican tradition.

*My name is Patrick Sheehan,  
My years are thirty-four,  
Tipperary is my native place,  
Not far from Galtee More*

Not Kickham's best work but the work that matters most in this part of the county.

### Augustinian Abbey

Founded c.1300, the last remaining trace, an arch, was destroyed in 1958. Even though the Abbey was suppressed c.1540 on the orders of Henry VIII, the Augustinian friars maintained a presence in the town until 1847, when the last resident prior Fr Nicholas Roche OSA, a Wexford man, died in Tipperary and is buried in the grounds of the parish church. In 2006 a memorial arch was erected on the Abbey school grounds to commemorate the Augustinian contribution to Tipperary.

### Erasmus Smith

With the conquest of Ireland by Oliver Cromwell, there was a revolution in land ownership. This is well illustrated by what happened in this part of Tipperary town. There was a forcible transfer of land ownership from Ryan an Irish catholic to Smith an English protestant. Smith used some of his wealth to endow three grammar schools for sons of his tenants whom it was assumed would be protestant. The three schools were in Galway, Drogheda and Tipperary.

### Fr David Humphreys

In the late nineteenth century and continuing into the 1930s, a sustained campaign was fought to allow catholics benefit from Smith's educational endowment. A key figure in this campaign was Fr David Humphreys (1843-1930) who was curate in Tipperary 1885-95 and after whom the Abbey school is named. By an act of the Irish parliament in 1938, Smith's educational endowment was divided between catholic and protestant interests. The Irish Christian Brothers managed the Abbey until 1994 and the school continues under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. In 2000 President Mary McAleese, unveiled a memorial celebrating the diverse nature of the history of the Abbey which continues a centuries old tradition of education on this site.

In the eight hundred or so years of the history of Tipperary parish, there have been several burial places for its inhabitants. Opened in September 1914, St Michael's Cemetery is the most recent and still referred to as the 'new cemetery'. There are references to burials in the Augustinian Friary in the seventeenth century. Recorded burials in St Mary's go back to the eighteenth century and unrecorded, much earlier. St John's the Famine Graveyard was opened in 1847.

However, in the middle ages, what is now the parish of Tipperary was a number of smaller parishes – Clonpet, Cordangan, Corroge, Kilshane, Templenoe and Tipperary. Each of these had its own parish church and burial ground. Some of these forgotten ruins are still to be seen. St Mary's therefore was the site of the parish church and graveyard of this much smaller parish of Tipperary and it was not until the Great Famine that additional burial ground was designated in The Hills.



Military Graves

Of most interest in St Michael's is the Republican Plot, unveiled on Easter Sunday 1930 and burial place of some of the officers and men of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade of the Irish Volunteers (IRA). In the Irish War of Independence (1919-21), this 3rd or South Tipperary brigade was among the most active in the country. It is a tragedy that it was the subsequent civil war (1922-23) that brought death to some of those remembered here. The cemetery is also the final resting place of James McDonnell, one of the two members of the RIC shot in Soloheadbeg on 21st January 1919, the action that began the War of Independence. Also buried in this cemetery are a number of British soldiers who died 1914-21.



Republican Plot

## 'A Long Way to Tipperary'

Written by Jack Judge in 1912, this became the British First World War song. Its popularity was increased by the thousands of soldiers who passed through Tipperary during these years, many housed in temporary quarters. Later in the war Tipperary Barracks became a rehabilitation centre for wounded soldiers, thereby bringing home to the local population the horrors of the Western Front. During the War of Independence, soldiers and Black and Tans (ex-soldiers recruited to augment the police) engaged with the IRA and a number of Republican prisoners were murdered while in military custody. In the summer of 1922, during the Irish Civil War, the barracks was destroyed. Among the remaining features are a water tower, the perimeter wall and a tiny section of the officers' quarters, now dedicated as a peace memorial. Some of the site was developed as a sports facility by the local GAA club Arravale Rovers and opened in 1962. It is dedicated to the memory of Sean Treacy, killed fighting in the War of Independence.



An eviction during the 1840's

## Military Barracks

During times of political strife, such as 1848, soldiers were stationed in the town in requisitioned quarters but there was no proper accommodation. This was also the situation in 1866-67 when the Workhouse was used during Fenian panic – an effort by an oath-bound secret society to overthrow British rule. In March 1867 one of the locations for insurrection was Ballyhurst on the outskirts of Tipperary. A permanent military barracks seemed like a good idea, close to the railway station, and the first soldiers arrived in 1879. Over the next forty three years, troops from some of the most famous regiments in the British army, such as the Seaforth Highlanders, the Connaught Rangers and the Rifle Brigade, served a rotation in Tipperary.

## Workhouse

Built in 1839-41 by Denis Leahy to a standard plan by George Wilkinson at a cost of around £6,000, Tipperary Workhouse had accommodation for 700 paupers. This building was to be a last resort for the poor of mid-west Tipperary and east Limerick. To make sure that this charity was not taken advantage of, conditions in the workhouse were made as difficult as possible.

## Great Famine

Less than a decade later, because of the Great Famine, Tipperary Workhouse was crowded with the despairing and the dying. By mid-1850, over 1,000 people were crowded into the main buildings; another 3,500 were accommodated in and around the town in rented shelter and another 5000 or so were given what was called 'outdoor relief'. For a lucky few 'assisted emigration' to Australia was a promise of a new and better life, at least for their children. For the rest, untold numbers died and were buried in St John's Famine Graveyard in The Hills.

## Saol Nua (New Life)

The poor law or workhouse system continued into the 1920s. In the 1870s a chapel was built and the Sisters of Mercy began nursing, laying the seeds of a health care system. The saddest inmates were those who as children had become blind because of inadequate diet during the Great Famine. During the First World War, the British military again occupied the Workhouse.



The Officers Quarters c.1900

Built in 1832 to replace a church which had 'a steeple of brick, tho' it be itself of stone'. Undoubtedly there were several earlier churches on this site, all dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Information is scant but it is probable that this has been an ecclesiastical site for some eight centuries. A rare reference, from 1336, mentions an attack led by one of the O'Briens and that the town was burned, as was the church of Tipperary 'with men and women in it'. In June 1753, at a time when heiresses being kidnapped and forcibly married was not uncommon, Susannah Grove was famously abducted by Henry Grady, helped by some friends, from the church during Sunday divine service.

Of most interest inside St Mary's is the wonderful Arts and Crafts stained glass depiction of the Magi adoring the infant Jesus. This is by A.J. Davies (1877-1953) who trained at the Birmingham School of Art and was part of the Bromsgrove Guild, a famous Arts and Crafts company in Worcestershire. Of interest also is the memorial to pupils of the Abbey Erasmus Smith Grammar School who died in the Great War.

The churchyard is much older than the present church. Among the interesting graves are those of Christopher Emmet (1702-43) the patriot's grandfather and Ellen O'Leary (1831-89) sister of the Fenian. Many members of the Sadleir family are also buried here, including James (1792-1864) whose son John (1832-1919) emigrated to Australia in 1852. He joined the Victorian police and was in charge of the operation that captured Ned Kelly in 1880.

A short distance is Churchwell, of pleasing design and an important source of water for the town in the past but with no ecclesiastical associations other than proximity to St Mary's. Erected in 1833 by Stafford O'Brien (1783-1864), landlord of that part of Tipperary.



St Mary's (Church of Ireland)



The O'Leary Family Grave



Church Well Inscription

## William O'Brien

The freehold of New Tipperary was purchased by William O'Brien (using his Russian-born wife's money) and the property was given to trustees to administer. To mark the centenary of New Tipperary and with a mixture of local and European funding, the Dalton house was restored to its original condition.

## New Tipperary

Consisting of 57 houses and a shopping arcade, building began in the autumn of 1889, with labour provided on a rota basis by people from neighbouring parishes. Large numbers of extra police were drafted in, some of whom spent their time 'shadowing' or watching very closely the local leaders, one of whom was Fr David Humphreys, a curate in Tipperary. The expense of building New Tipperary and supporting evicted tenants was largely paid for by Irish emigrants in America and Australia. The high point was 12<sup>th</sup> April 1890, when the William O'Brien Arcade was opened. This was the centre-piece of New Tipperary and provided shops for some of the business people evicted from 'Old Tipperary'.



Police shadowing Fr David Humphreys

## Plan of Campaign

Tipperary's claim to fame is its role in the national struggle for the rights of tenant farmers. Conquest and settlement had resulted in a huge gap between landlords who owned the land and tenants who farmed the land. Organised in 1886, the 'Plan of Campaign' was a new phase in the Land War. On various estates, tenants co-operated and offered what they thought was fair rent. Many landlords accepted. A few did not. By 1889, tenants on a Cork estate were about to get their way when the government intervened, determined to break the 'Plan' by backing the landlord.

## Smith-Barry

Leading this attack on the 'Plan' was A. H. Smith-Barry MP (1843-1925). He owned land in Cork and England. More to the point, he also owned 9,000 acres in Tipperary, including the centre of Tipperary town. In 1889, encouraged by Nationalist leaders William O'Brien MP and John Dillon MP, tenants in Tipperary struck back by deducting a percentage of their rent to help the Cork tenants – in other words, a kind of sympathy strike. Smith-Barry began eviction proceedings but his tenants made the extraordinary decision to abandon their homes and shops in the town and move to this vacant site and build 'New Tipperary'. In all some 250 tenants were caught up in the agitation.

## Parnell

Up to November 1890, nationalists maintained a united front. Their leader Charles Stewart Parnell was opposed to the Tipperary agitation but kept silent. However, the divorce of Katherine O'Shea revealed her long-standing relationship with Parnell. Opinion in both Ireland and Britain was divided. Fund-raising for New Tipperary was diverted and nationalists spent the next decade fighting each other. In May 1891, in Chester, Smith-Barry received a deputation of his tenants, anxious to secure a settlement and return to their homes and businesses. Over the next few years, most tenants went back to 'Old Tipperary'.



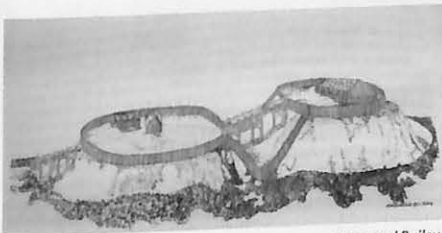
Abandoned homes and shops of Old Tipperary

## Norman Motte

The most striking feature is the Norman motte, clearly artificial looking, one of several local examples and constructed in the early 1190s by the first wave of Normans into the region. This example in Murgasty, known as 'Mutton Pie' and locally as 'Cup and Saucer' was probably secondary to the example a little to the north-east in the townland of Tipperaryhills but which unfortunately was destroyed by quarrying. Tipperaryhills motte had the advantage of proximity to a lake, long since drained. Needing immediate protection as they sought to hold an area, the Normans picked existing high ground and quickly improved its defences with ditches and ramparts and wooden structures to provide shelter. In Tipperaryhills, there was also a 'Bailey', a raised and defended area but lower than the motte. The great historian of the Norman Invasion of Ireland was G.H. Orpen (1852-1932), educated at the Abbey Erasmus Smith grammar school in Tipperary town and whose early introduction to these historic mounds was probably here.

## William de Burgh

Responsible for these fortifications and presumed founder of the settlement that developed into Tipperary town, was William de Burgh (d.1205). Along with a handful of other Normans such as Theobald FitzWalter the founder of the Butler family, de Burgh obtained large grants of land in Tipperary and Limerick. William de Burgh founded the Bourke/Burke family in Ireland, gave his name to 'Clanwilliam' and founded the great Augustinian Priory of Athassel, where he was buried.



Motte and Bailey

## Murgasty

This townland, 151 acres of valuable grazing land close to the town, was created in 1731 when it was fenced off and leased from the Smith family by John Damer, nephew of the richest man in Ireland. Like the Smiths, the Damer family prospered from the upheavals in Ireland during the second half of the 17th century. In 1830, Murgasty reverted to the Smith heirs, the Smith-Barry family. In 1948, some of the area was taken into public ownership by the Town Council, which body purchased The Hills from the Smith-Barry family. Six years later Clanwilliam FC leased part of the site to develop as a pitch. Founded in 1879, Clanwilliam is one of the oldest rugby clubs in the country.

## The Hills

Many towns have public parks. Typically these are flat, laid-out and regulated. Tipperary has 'The Hills'. This area of sand and gravel, left by the last Ice Age was for centuries used for grazing cattle and quarrying. More poetically:

*Ages ago some Titan made  
These hills and hollows with careless spade,  
Idly flinging great tons of sand  
Hither and thither with careless hand.*

In the nineteenth century, confusingly perhaps, The Hills stretched from the townland of Murgasty to the townland of Tipperaryhills and as an area used by townspeople for recreation included Carrownreddy Lake, some fifteen acres of water for fishing, swimming and duck shooting. Michael Rafter, born in this town in the early nineteenth century described how in his youth, he and his friends delighted in playing war games on The Hills. They subscribed to the common idea of the period that what are now known to be Norman fortifications, were 'Danish' that is built by Vikings. Consequently, they organised themselves into gangs of 'Irish' and 'Danes' and spent happy hours waging their battles up hill and down dale. Time passes but Rafter's 'green velvet sod' at the summit is still there as it was nearly two centuries ago, for the visitor to look about him and daydream.

## Famine Graveyard

In 1847 during the Great Famine, it was felt that St Mary's churchyard, the town's burial place, could not accommodate the volume of deaths in Tipperary Workhouse and so a new famine graveyard was opened and dedicated to St John. Tipperary Workhouse opened in 1841 to provide relief for the very poor of mid-west Tipperary and east Limerick. Looked at today, this graveyard shows little evidence of the scale of burials during these years. Casualties were highest in 1849-50, following years of deprivation and with the impact of infectious diseases on a weakened population.

During the eight months October 1849 to May 1850, around 1,400 people were buried here, of whom some 500 were children. St John's continued to serve as a burial ground for some of the longer established Tipperary families. Up to 1907, St John's was a focus for Republican parades, especially on the November anniversary of The Manchester Martyrs, executed in 1867. This was always an important event in the town.

## Fever Hospital

A reason for this site as a famine graveyard was its proximity to the town's fever hospital, founded in the 1830s and demolished in the 1940s. It was located on the other side of the stone wall and for a few years after their arrival in Tipperary in 1864, it was where the Sisters of Mercy founded their first school in the town. After removing to their present location, the building was briefly vacant before being taken over by the Christian Brothers who arrived in Tipperary in September 1868. They remained at this location until 1941, providing education for generations of Tipperary boys, including Sean Tracy (1895-1920), hero of the War of Independence.





# Tipperary Historic Town Trail

The town of Tipperary was established around 1200 by the Norman William de Burgh. Tipperary was important enough in the 13th century to give its name to the county and growth was helped when Augustinian friars came to the town around 1300. The primary attraction of the town of Tipperary is its setting. Spread across a hill facing south, the town is a short drive from Slievenamuck and the Galtees, twin guardians of the famed Glen of Aherlow. In the words of a local poet, the relationship between these two elevations is like that of a 'fond mother guarding a child'. Before there was a town, there may have been a well that gave its name to both town and county. This was the Well of Ara (in the Irish language *Tiobraid Árann*, which became Tipperary), of importance to travellers as they moved between the two most important places in the region: Cashel of the Kings and the monastery of Emly.



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