

(Mayo East)

## I.T.A. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL SURVEY

NATURAL FEATURES, ANTIQUITIES,  
HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS, ETC.BARONY OF GallenTOWN OR VILLAGE Swinford PARISH Kilconduff COUNTY Mayo

## TOPOGRAPHY

*Brief description of outstanding scenic views in the district, natural attractions, or unusual topographical features.*

The area, which is a large one, is made up of three districts, Swinford, Meek's, and Midfield. The latter are known as two half-parishes, Meek's lying slightly south-west and west of Swinford town and Midfield south and slightly south-west of it. Taking the River as one parish, its limits are approx. 2 miles north of Swinford to H. May and 5 miles south of the town to Castleson (Midfield area). West from Swinford for almost 4 miles (to Ardham-Meek's area), and east for about 3 miles in the direction of Charlestown. The parish's greatest length is from Tully in the N.E.

## GEOLOGY

*Brief notes on unusual geological features, such as caves, eskers, etc.*

Most of the parish is of drift-covered limestone and again of peat formation. The drift area is of long hills and humped hills sometimes drumlin-like in character. Chief amongst the geological aspect is the appearance of several small sand and gravel ridges like miniature eskers. One lowland is called Eskers. A good few of these short abrupt ridges are being quarried.

## MANSIONS, CASTLES AND ESTATES

## OF IMPOSING CHARACTER

*Location and brief description. Owner. Past associations. Libraries or art collections? Gardens? Open to visitors? Admission charge?*

Brobegon Park House, now owned by the sisters of Meery and run by them as a daying and poultry school. This was the residence of the Brobegon family, the last of whom resided here about 1865. Anthony Brobegon occupied the place in the late 18th century. He was succeeded by Sir William Brobegon who was M.P. for the county. His man owned the Park and many townlands around it. In 1815 he granted building leases to the people of Swinford (then Swinford) which was at that time only a tiny thatched village. Sir William died unmarried circa 1840. The estate then passed into the landed estates court and in 1852 it was purchased by Major Hugh Brobegon who died in 1864. His real name was Higgins which he changed to Brobegon. He was succeeded by his son Major Gen. Sir John Palmer Brobegon who died in Switzerland 1922. The estate had descended to the Park, Rathscallow, Kiltinny, Tappan and Swinford. About 1920 the house and 20 acres were sold to the sisters of Meery by the Congested Districts Board and the remainder of the lands, approx. 200 acres, vested in trustees for the benefit of Swinford town - for grazing and other purposes, the profits for town improvements.

The house, which has been added to by the present owners, is a solid, square, plain-facaded three-storey building with basement.

to the southern boundary of Midfield - a distance of slightly over 10 miles. Lough is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  M. north-east of Swinford town.

By the many main roads radiating from Swinford the parish limits are roughly: Ballina road  $2\frac{1}{2}$  M. north-west. Charlestown road 3 M. east. Kilkelly road 5 M. south-east. Midfield road, 6 M. south (to Linn crossroads). Kiltamagh road  $4\frac{1}{2}$  M. south <sup>south-west</sup> (to Kinniffe bridge). Bohola road 3 M. south-west (to Kellymiller bridge). To Ardaraun in Ireland is 4 miles west.

In scenic beauty the area has nothing of outstanding interest and ~~rather~~ <sup>not much</sup> diversity in attraction. The district is principally one of low rolling hills which at Castlebaragh in Midfield and Kiltuice (near Swinford) reach their highest altitudes of 300 to 350 feet.

In the north-east parish corner is a flat stretch of bogland and this level area extends <sup>in green fields</sup> west along the R. Moy which forms the parish boundary for much of its southern limit. Kiltuice Hill with its caverns dominates this area.

Swinford town, busy and commercial, lies in the centre of the northern part of the parish. Scenically it is rendered more pleasant by its background of woods and the tree-studded acres of Roaboyan Park behind the town.

Keltick area has the Moy and Guesstien rivers flowing by green and brown-tiled low hills. The round-tower, a landmark for many miles, dominates the lowlands.

Midfield has green hill, bog and rocky-moorland. The Linnage river - in reality a small stony-bedded stream flows through the area. A few small lakes are in south-east Midfield.

A maze of roads covers the whole parish.

A fairly good viewpoint is that from the caverns on Kiltuice Hill, 2 miles from Swinford. Just to the east is the small lake of Kiltuice. Beyond it, faintly visible, the houses of Charlestown. Away beyond this to the north-east, is a large area of lowland with bog and green field and patches of forest and innumerable houses. The mountains of Kesh in Co. Digo rise up in two distinct peaks. Beyond them the plain goes as far as eye can see to the outline

of the Western Slieve mountains beyond Riverstown.

North and north-east the Slieve gauls or Osc mountain range stretches away to the east; the Killasser foot hills are only a few miles away - Swan can is the dominant feature of this landscape.

North-west are the Yoxford hills and south of them Queen Hill rises above the lowlands. Away beyond Yoxford the peaks of Kephin moor is predominant. To the west, in near view is Swinford, enshrouded in trees. South and south-west the lowlands stretch away, dotted with homesteads; Slieve Kesh rises from the plain to a height of over 800 ft.

From the cottages on the high ground in Rabawn there is also a fairly good view. In the north the Slieve gauls range, the Killasser hills with Swan can, the Yoxford hills, Kephin and its neighbouring peaks. The lowlands with Wicklow round tower; Slieve Kesh in near view to south-west and far away beyond it the conical tip of Coagh Patrick. In the south the lowlands stretch away to the horizon and to the east the view is broken by long rolling hills.

From Swinford - Rabawn is about 3½ miles.

A round trip by bicycle could be made from Swinford to Cloanquellan Bridge (2½ m. north-west), then turning off main road to the left and continuing through Ballintemple, Oldcastle, Ardham and Spaddegh - through the Wicklow district (round tower) and out to main Swinford/Balala road near Ballymule bridge - then crossing the road and continuing by side-road to Kineff, across to main Swinford/Kiltinagh road and into the midfield area through Knockeen. Turn left at cross-roads, by midfield church, through Castlebasnagh (cashels) and north into Swinford. Total distance of perhaps 15 miles.

The Wicklow Hill cairns and view can be made by turning off (to the right) the main road east to Chelvestown and following the road that goes by the hill. Return journey by going further east and turning into Swinford on main road by Lillmore school.