

MATEHY CEMETERY

– An Ancient Chieftain’s Fortress

And it’s District

By Michael V.
Dorney,
Loughane West

The circular shaped stone wall enclosed cemetery is not just another one of those old graveyards that are to be found in almost every parish in Ireland. It is a place of antiquity, of folklore and legend. The coordinates are 51.952782, -8.655081.

Its history is traceable back to the invasion of the Normans. Matehy’s place name is not just connected to the legend of the moving graveyard. Its roots go back longer and deeper than that.

“Magh” in Irish means plain or level land and “teicheadh” is understood to mean run or flight. The name Matehy, as we know it

today has been modified and the following are older forms of the name Moymacheht in 1301 (Dinneseanchas 11, pp, 65, 67) Magmachethyt in 1302-06 (papal taxation) and Maghmactechady in the 14th century Pipe Roll of Cloyne and from those three we gather that



the old form of the word was “Mag mac Teichthig “, - the Plain of the sons of Teictech. Thus Matehy comes from the original Irish meaning Magh Mac Teichteach, (the plain of the sons of Teictech) as it was written in the records in the year 1300. With traditional folklore, we can speculate that the dubious figure of Teictech was an ancient Irish warrior who ruled in his fort at Matehy in pre-Christian times.

Several words, particularly place names, have suffered modification through popular usage over the centuries, so it not surprising that the Mac was dropped to leave us with the inflected shorter word Magh Teichtig, and then written as Matehy in English. Later on folks concocted the meaning of Matehy as the “moving plain of land following the legendary story, in Penal Days, told in folklore of the “moving graveyard “ from Loughane West over the Shournagh River across Gurth, into Gilcaugh to its present location in Matehy.

Matehy Graveyard, by virtue of its commanding position on a ridge high over the Shournagh, is overlooking the countryside and its circular layout corresponds with the design of the preChristian period and the early times of the church in ancient Ireland. There is of course, a considerable base of opinion among learned scholars that we did have Christianity, particularly in Cork and Kerry, at the time of the coming of St Patrick, or at least that the evangelisation of the south was coeval with St Patrick. Comparatively little is known about pre- Christian Celtic paganism because the evidence for it is fragmentary, due to the fact that the Celts who practiced it wrote nothing down, and nor the Druids, unlike the early Greek and Roman scholars and monks in the early Christian period.

The advent of parish organisation by Rome coincided with the coming of the Normans from France in the years 1169 to 1172 and these events of history are highly relevant in the matter of establishing that Matehy was an early parish of the church. Following papal approval and the Synod of Kells in 1152, the old monastic structure was changing in Ireland. By 1172, there was a new system of the church organising areas into units of administration called parishes. There is the Copy of Agreement, dated roughly 90 years after the landing of the Normans. There is a riddle between the two documents i.e., Copy of the Agreement and the Decretal Letter, and full clarity remains unsolved.

Firstly, I want to say the only church property mentioned in the Decretal Letter of 1199 connected with Matehy is Killeenvarna, understood to have been situated in the present townland of Killeen, in Vicarstown, less than a mile from Matehy Graveyard. We presume that the site of that little church was in the lands owned by Mr and Mrs Michael Desmond and/or Maurice and Kit Cogan (nee Ambrose) , Killeen. Kit recalls finding old church stone remnants near their farm,yard some years ago while upgrading the old buildings. The Decretal Letter was a list or returns of all church property in the then newly organised parishes in Ireland. The absence of Matehy as a church building in the Papal documents is strange when we consider the mention of

Matehy Church in a Copy of Agreement made on July 13th1262, between the Bishop and John de

Cogan who appears to have lived around Mourneabbey at that time and was some relation of Milo de Cogan, one of the two Norman barons among whom Henry II divided the kingdom of Cork in 1172.

Milo de Cogan left no surviving son. There is a record of a Richard de Cogan who received a large grant of land in Muskerry and the John, in question, mentioned in the Copy of Agreement which granted him right of patronage of Matehy Church, is understood to have been one of Richard's sons or grandsons. Rights of patronage were important to the early Norman families. The site of Matehy church at the time of the merger of the three parishes Inniscarra, Matehy and Carrigrohanebeg., in 1600 was within the walls of the graveyard of Matehy. There is no record in the archives of the diocese of Cloyne, earlier than 1641, to show the exact site, but it is reasonable to assume that the parish church building in 1600 was the ruin now in the graveyard and shown in the photographs.. Matehy was a separate Catholic parish over 400 years ago.

The first Parish Priest of the newly organised parish was Fr. Edmond Murphy who lived at Gurth, or Gortadonoughmore as the town land was known then, not far from the site of the present graveyard at Matehy. Here again, we have the place name of the town land, Gortadonoughmore -field of the great church, or former battlefield in which the great church was built-blending with the pre-Christian place name of the district, Magmachethyt, suggesting the ancient character of this area.



Gurth or Gort for short (594 acres), has three ring forts and also has today the remains of James & Pat Ryan's paper mills, (photo opposite), which were the second last paper mill to cease production of

paper, include paper bags, paper twines, wrapping, blue and purple machine bags, etc. in Co Cork, in 1910.

Across the road, near Turpin's Rock and west of the Tinny House (in photo below), there are some ruins still remaining of the fourteen workman cottages, which accommodated the families of the mill employees. There are minimum remains of the stone wall belong to the mill, which is hidden in the trees and scrub which lies across the Shournagh River and across the now



disused Cork and Muskerry Light Railway line path. The rope foot bridge over the Shournagh River was swept away in a bad flood in December 1948 and it was never replaced. This bridge connected the Old Gurth Road known as the Goate's Pass (a laneway path) with the Butter Road (kerry Road). It passed the work houses and spiralled uphill. It passed by the high camp field on the hill just behind Mrs Pam and Mr Jim O'Regan's house. This 2.77 acre field has astonishing summit views and was a resting place and base for troops on their way to the Siege and Battle of Kinsale, in 1641. There is another camp field based in South Inniscarra.

The Graveyard Legend

During the Penal days Mass was being celebrated in a permitted Masshouse in Matehy. This building had a mud floor, mud and stone walls with a thatched roof. It was so small; some of the congregation had to line themselves along the outside wall of the house. The mass house was located between the present church and the road. Priest hunters were rife at the time. The devout and terror stricken congregation were bent down in reverence in the small Masshouse. At the opportunistic moment, Fox, a Cromwellian soldier, slipped inside the Masshouse. Fox cut off the priest hands as they were raised at the



Captain Fox's Solitary Headstone at Loughane

Consecration during the Mass and he slayed the sagart with a single brandish of his sharp sword. He dashed out and off on horseback with his soldiers and they rode down Matehy hill in haste. Fox was pursued by an angry mob following his fast departure from Matehy Chapel. His horse stumbled and he fell. Fox broke his neck and dropped dead. He was buried at Loughane . Remains of his headstone are there to be seen today. This particular portion of Crowley's farm land is still referred to today as the "cofinfield" which is covered with a small grove of tall trees and which has never been tilled. It is believed that there are at least three Cromwellian soldiers buried in Loughane graveyard today.

It happened to be May Eve. That night all the corpses kicked off their clay, rose up, picked up their tombstones, took flight and reinterred themselves in a corner of the old Matehy graveyard, convenient to the chapel. They left the Cromwellian soldier, General Fox solitary at Loughane. Fox's Bridge, at the bottom of the hill is the site of General Fox's place of death having fallen off his horse which stumbled and this is where the Fiddlers Brook stream and the Shournagh River meet.

Cork County Council built the new Gurth road and bridge in 1962, east of the spot near Dorney's inch field, where supposedly a human footprint was embedded in a large flat rock in the Shournagh River, following the graveyard flight. The story is that this was one of the headstones that was dropped into the Shournagh River waters, during the flight of the dead.



Photo above: Example of a horse scratching stone @ Crowley's Loughane and the Grove of Fir trees in the background showing the location of the old Graveyard and small chapel ruin

Derry and Philomena Crowley explained there is evidence of a rectangular stone building and stone foundations on the raised mound within the trees, adjacent to the burial headstone. This was probably the site of a little church which is referred to in the early maps of this area.

It's said that Loughane is derived from Irish (Lough-ín), meaning little lake or pond, but it is also argued that it's origin comes from Lough Anne or the Lake of Anne, either-way the lake that once existed in this valley is now dried up. The region is rich in early remaining raths, generally circular, some square, maybe with subterranean galleries. Pillar stones or dallans (gullans) are also numerous. Loughane was commonly known as Clonkerkin or Cloherkin and traditionally this region was an extension of Matchy Parish. There is also a Mass Rock near Mrs Frances and Mr Ken Mitchel's farm driveway at Loughane, Blarney.

Caption Fox and the Moving Graveyard - Poem

Matchy graveyard is special one

A place of mourning for everyone

Historic legends happened here

Retold by generations, give a cheer

Fox rode in with his gang

*Burst open the door with a bang
Walked up the aisle with a devilish grin
He drew his sword sharp and thin
Cut off the priest's hands with a swing
Fox excited the church and began to sing
"Good one" Foxy, bellowed his group
Fox punched the air with a whoop
The congregation devised a plan
And after Captain Fox they ran
Now Captain Fox was at a river
But his horse began to quiver
A dog ran out in front of the gang
Fox hit the floor with a bang
The men arrived with pitchforks and knives
A battle to death took many lives
Fox was taken to Loughane Graveyard
They grabbed their gravestones and picked them up
They dragged and dragged them through the muck
Flying up the hill they quickly raced and made their final resting place
Matehy graveyard is a special one
Listening to Foxy's story is so much fun*

By Rebecca Murphy, Vicarstown National School project.

The fort of Lisnaraha (Lios na Reatha), the court of the forts near Loughane, is one of the largest and finest in the area. It is an impressive structure, internally measures 225 feet in diameter and has a rampart of generally 15 feet in width. For centuries myth

and folklore about the supernatural and magic powers, surround these Bronze Age structures. Often being referred to as Fairy Forts many have crypts and subterranean chambers, which probably added to the stories and legends. There are caves on a farm north of this fort at Killowen on the boundary of Dawstown townlands. The farmer in question lost his dog in the caves and has since covered the opening with large rocks. The caves were used as escape routes. The forts are generally positioned on high ground with a commanding view of the countryside. Lios na Ratha is no different. In 1864, it was visited by a Colonel A Lane Fox, FSA and Richard Caulfield Esq, FSA. They investigated Lis na Ratha by survey and excavation, aided by a single labourer with a long bar, spade and pick. The exploration lasted for a duration of two days. The following is a summary of their findings; 95 paces in diameter from the interior slope to interior slope, 21 feet from the crest of the parapet to



Lisnaratha Ring Fort

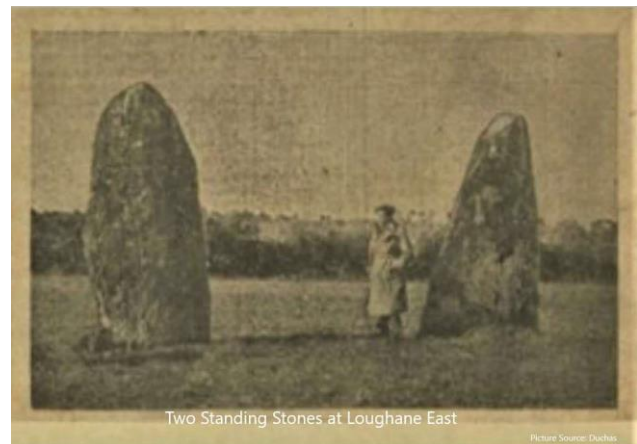


Outer slope of embankment with moate above.

the bottom of the ditch. The ditch itself is 34 feet wide and it is 11 feet to the parapet. There are two openings, one to the South and one to the North East. A small chamber was found 2 ft 10 inches below the surface. It was 5 foot 9 inches to the bottom of the chamber which had an arched opening 2 ft. wide. An iron clinker, charcoal and small bone fragments were found in that chamber. These findings were presented at a meeting of the Young Men's Society on March 9th 1865 in Bandon, entitled "Remains of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Ireland". From my own knowledge of the site there was a water source near the Southern opening, which would be quite common.

According to the six inch Ordnance historic map there is a "Monaister" across the road two fields to the north east a field roughly square in shape. It may have been a site of a church. There are many Fulacht Fia, which are pre historic horse shoe shaped cooking mounds containing blackened stones and charcoal black clay usually near a small stream of water. These were areas for cooking with fire and hot stones. There are numerous forts also in the district like Gurth, Gilcaugh, Kilclough and Ballyshoneen. Some people call them a lís or rath or fairy forts.

Folklore also has it that two giants were trying out their strength and they were throwing stones across the Shournagh River valley from Cloughphilip and they landed in the middle of a field in Loughane a few feet apart. One of these stones have since fallen during heavy rains, however a picture exists on Duchas Website showing the two stones standing in what is now the Killowen FC pitches in Loughane. The previously mentioned Lane Fox and Caulfield report that there was evidence of up to twelve other standing stones which indicated that this was once a stone circle and not just two Gallauns.



Single standing stone in 2022 (left) and previous standing stones early 1900s (right) at Loughane East



Standing stone at Anna Riordans Farm at Gurth

Pictures show the single stone as it stands today and the two stones as Lane Fox and Caulfield would have witnessed in 1864, one 9ft and the other 11ft high, standing 9ft.9in. apart in Loughane East and also a smaller standing Stone in Courtbrack village (picture right).



Old R.I.C. barracks in Loughane



Courtbrack Village standing stone

Incidentally, there was an old RIC barracks in Loughane East. It was said to be three storeys high but now is two, still exists but is derelict since the 1990s. In more recent times this was used as a dwelling from the early/mid 1900's by the Cotter family.

Loughane has a Mass Rock (Carrig an Aifrinn) used as an isolated high altar in the mid-17th century Ireland during Cromwell's campaign against the Catholic Irish at Ken and Frances Mitchell's home and farm driveway. Ken's mother, Margaret recalls on purchasing the farm in 1959, that they held an open air mass (with the bishop's permission) and invited relatives, friends and new neighbours serving tea, cakes and refreshments similar to the satations. The only other open air Mass held recently was in the early 1990s at which a large crowd attended. At the end of this boreen there was a dance platform across the road on the banks of the Shournaugh River. A bigger dance platform was located at Fox's Bridge cross roads.

The legend of Matehy in Vicarstown was recorded in a poem- "The Plain Of The Flight" which paints a surreal celestial picture of a persecuted people taking a stand as the distressed spirits left their graves at night from Loughane, when the priest killer, Fox was buried there next to them.

The Plain Of The Flight

"And for nearly a mile, over meadow and bawn
Over hedges and ditches, and garden and lawn,
Rushed a skeleton host, with their bones shining bright,
Ghastly and grim, in the mountain's pale light,
Some were dancing in circles, in elfin delight,
Some were struggling in shrouds, that encumbered their flight,
Some were bearing their tombstones, like trophies of state
And each skeleton breast bore its own coffin plate."

(Legends of Cork, T.Crofton Croker & Jas. Lyons Anvil, 1988.)

John Cronin, Matehy ,a local poet wrote a verse in his song "Sweet Vicarstown"

"There's a monument there of Penal Ages,
When the Yeomen hunted the sagart down,
In lone Loughane, sleeps the sagart's slayer.

The graveyard shifted to Vicarstown.”

According to local tradition, St Senan had a monastery in the parish of Inniscarra on the banks of the River Lee, where the old Inniscarra Graveyard is now situated. Matehy, now in Inniscarra parish, must surely have been in the designs of St. Senan, but perhaps was not Christianised until a century or so later when the tribal kings targeted by the evangelists, handed over their duns or forts on the high ground overlooking the river valleys, for the siting of early churches. Matehy cemetery site is on a summit on a high ridge and has almost full panoramic views. To the north there is the Shournaugh valley, Whitechuch is in the distance, with Berrings to the south. Donoughmore is to the West and Hollyhill and Templehill is to the east. It is Fox’s Bridge spanning over the Shournaugh River that connects Matehy, Courtbrack and Donoughmore.

Matehy was a separate Catholic parish over 400 years ago.

During Penal times of secret hedge schools and Mass being celebrated in hiding, there was a totally separate “sagart killing” incident at the Mass rock at Ballyshonin near “the Yellow House” and the Sheep’s River, which is not to be linked and not to be confused with the “Flight of the Graveyard from Loughane to Matehy” incident. Here on a separate occasion, a priest and his alter server were murdered by the yeomen, while celebrating open air Mass at the rock.



The Church Ruin.

Matehy parish church, now in ruin and roofless, remained functional until the parish merged with Inniscarra and Carrigrohane beg.

Destroyed following King Henry VIII's failed Protestant Reformation in Ireland. The land and wealth of the Catholic Church was confiscated. The ruin's



remaining gable at the south end measures roughly eight meters high into the sky and the side walls are three meters in height and one meter thick. It is sheltered on the north east by two large macrocarpa cypress and six yew trees. There is a one meter wide entrance doorway and cone shaped window openings party filled up with fallen stone and clay. The cone shaped window space is supported with red sandstone coping and limestone arching. There are two wide alcoves on each side. Except for the coping area at windows and doorway, it seems local field stone, whatever could be found ,was used especially in the middle section of the ruin when being built. On the western wall there is a stone step stile to climb over as well as the normal entrance gates. On the front stone wall you can see the sappers mark or the crow's foot, as it is sometimes called. This mark was used to measure the height of the land above sea level.



The present church, St Joseph's was built, across the road , in 1870-75, when Rev.Linsay Murray was the parish priest of Inniscarra. He was a renowned Gaelic scholar. In his obituary which was printed in the Cork Examiner newspaper on Monday, 25th May 1891. he was described as "the oldest priest in Ireland". He was 91 years of age.

He is buried in Cloghroe Church grounds. The curate at Matehy-Cloghroe at the building of the church was Rev. Tim O'Connell,C.C. who died Parish Priest of Castlemartyr in 1893. When he was transferred to Mitchelstown in 1878 he was a leading light in the Land League on behalf of the tenants of the Kingston estate.



Matt O'Brien of Gurth, (his relations live and some farm at upper Cloghoe today), a young man drew stones for the building of the church from his father's land on the south of the Kerry Road.

Two mile west of the cemetery, there is Tober an Aifreann or Tober Na Mna Fionn (Well of the Fair Woman, Tobar na mBan) as it locally called at Kilclough Matehy (mid Cork Archaeological inventory 9278). The historical reference is (W537 796) OS 62 (W3.9, N 20.0) “defiled” and deserted because a woman/ was found drowned there in the 19th century while praying rounds there. This is a large rectangular shaped well, surrounded by



modern 3 foot high and 2 and half wide red sandstone walls and a stone pillared entrance, 31 inches wide and now missing the iron gate. The rusted metal iron gate hinges are still present. This well is situated on the leafy narrow hill road and is not dedicated to a saint. However, it is believed Mass was celebrated here in Penal Times as it was previously known as “Tobar an Aifreann”. It is 10 feet long and 5 foot 4 inches wide. Holy wells were popular gathering places of pilgrimage up to the 20th century in Ireland. The clear water is 9 inches deep, flows north west and enters the Shournagh River near Knockane Bridge. According to the landowner, Mr Michael Flynn his information gathered as a very young boy from the Drummys, is that a fair haired women apparently travelled from the Kerry bounds beyond Ballyvourney a long distance by donkey or cob to pray and drink the water (do the rounds turning sun- wise direction i.e .,left to right) at this well. She was desperate in search of a cure for her epilepsy and her ill health. On her arrival she collapsed and drowned in the well that night and was only discovered next morning by locals, Mike and Mary Drummy. She was waked in their small stone cottage farm house (now demolished) up the nearby lane, rear side of the well. This well is also situated near Leahy’s cross roads. There brothers, Pat and Thady Leahy lived in a small stone cottage which is now demolished also. They had a prized puck goat on hire for stud in the old days. The well site was cleaned up a few years ago by Cork Co Council and they unearthed a horse’s skull which had a large bullet hole. This well had great volume and purity down through the years and never failed in living memory except during one very dry summer. Most local farmers did not have drilled wells of their own. Horses and donkeys drew water out from the well on the roadside daily. Local neighbours drove cattle to drink from the well. Towards the south of Matehy Cemetery there is St Judes Well at Callas, Berrings. The practice of visiting and celebrating water wells goes back well before the arrival of Christianity, with the Druid’s traditions celebrating fire, air and water, which played much significance to our ancestor’s lives.

Fame and Glory

Matehy cemetery contains the remains of famous people, like the poet and Young Irelander, Denny Lane (1818-1895) who wrote songs like “Kate of Araglen” and “Carrigdhoun”.

Carrigdhoun is a political song and it tells of the flight of an Irishman, similar to the Irish Jacobite army soldier's departure under Patrick Sarsfield from Ireland to France in 1691. They were called the "Wild Geese". More broadly the term "Wild Geese" is used in Irish history to refer to Irish soldiers who left to serve in continental European armies in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Denny Lane is buried in Matehy near the gate entrance, under a high Celtic cross headstone erected to his memory by Cork Historical and Archaeological Society. He was an Irish nationalist, poet and businessman. The poem was originally called "Lament of the Irish Maiden". A Brigade Ballad with the air –"The Foggy Dew"

Carrigdhoun Lyrics.-

On Carrigdhoun the heath is brown,
The clouds are dark over Ardnalee,
And many's a stream comes rushing down
To swell the angry Owen Na Buidhe.
The moaning blast is sweeping past
Through many a leafless tree,
But I'm alone for he is gone,
My hawk has flown, ochone mo chroidhe.
The heath is green on Carrigdhoun.
Bright shone the sun over Ardnalee
The dark green trees bent trembling down
To kiss the slumbering Owen na Buidhe.



That happy date, 'twas but last May
 Tis like a dream to me,
 When Donal swore,aye o' ver and o' ver,
 we'd part no more aye o'er, mo chroidhe.
 Soft April showers and bright May flowers
 Will bring the summer back again,
 But will they bring me back those happy
 hours
 I spent with my brave Donal then ? Tis
 but a chance, for he's gone to France
 To wear the Fleur-de-Lis.
 But I'll follow you, my Donal Dhu,
 For still I'm true to you, mo chroidhe



Denny Lane's Uniform on show with his picture in background, at Fitzgerald's Park Museum Mardyke, Cork

The story of Denny Lane, an only son, is of course well known. He was one of the young men who broke away from Daniel O'Connell's Repeal policy and he favoured the more vigorous policy propounded by Thomas Davis, John Mitchel, William Smith O'Brien and others. He was a founder of The Nation newspaper. The new movement reflected the mood of the country at the time; namely loss of faith in O'Connell. His epitaph reads a quote from his friend Thomas Davis, which he always wanted,- "He served his country and he loved his kind".



There is also a Fenian metal headstone to the memory of Bartholomew Mullins, a carriage builder and IRB man who had a coach building business at Warren's Place (now Parnell Place) Maylor Street. The Iron headstone was made by his son, Joseph.

A Funeral from Tower to Matehy Cemetery in 1834.

The farmer, Mr O'Brien referred to in the article on the right, from 1834, still has relatives living and farming in Upper Cloghroe today.

This event would have preceded the Tithes Tragedy at Loughane Bridge in January 1836, and gives us insight into the prevailing tensions in the area during that period. The lament mentioned in the article on the right, was written by the parish priest of Blarney, Fr.Matt Horgan, who also wrote the dirge, "The Widow of Mathey", in 1838, recorded in the Irish Language, (Maynooth, Irish Academy Collections, Corpas Stairiuil na Gaeilge, 16001926, www.ria.ie).

- A plaque remembering the two deceased, from that Tithes Tragedy in 1836, Dan O'Mahony and Richard Hudson has been placed on the bridge at Loughane West, and is shown in the picture below. 1

1835 Excerpt from Cork Weekly Examiner

The agent, Cross, figures in another of Fr. Matt's ballads. Very Rev. Canon Murphy told me the following story about Cross. A funeral was coming from Tower, near Blarney, to Matehy, and as they were coming near Matehy, Phil Cross with his gang crossed the road, on his way to seize the cows of Mr. O'Brien, of Gurth, a farmer, for tithes. The men of the funeral left the coffin on the ground in charge of the women, and pursued Phil and his gang and routed him, rescuing O'Brien's cows. In the melée, Phil assaulted O'Brien, and for this was tried in Cork, and sent to jail and lost his commission of the peace. This gave rise to the following lament. "Mna Docta na Dairinne, as Caome Iuib Crof, so cionn a b'airdium a cCorca, 1834."



It is believed that the upper public house, the one next to the graveyard was originally built as a Vicar's residence at the time when the Rector lived in Inniscarra. The land behind this pub was owned by the postmaster Mr. Michael O'Flynn in the 1960s sold on in recent years. It was glebe land in the old Protestant records. These old records appertain to the Protestant organisation of

Matehy as a parish which once stretched to the extreme end of Inniscarra as far as Dripsey. The Strand Bar once housed the Vicar and the land behind it was called the Glebe, where he grazed his horses. East of the cemetery lies a path which is known as "The Mass Path". This is the path that the people from Gurth used to travel to mass as a shortcut across the fields.

In the Church of Ireland organisation there were two parishes up to recent times. Matehy was spelt Mattehy in 1659, Mattehey, and Mattea in the records. Other later Protestant records had a Vicar there, subject to the Rector at Inniscarra. It reverted to Catholic ownership after Gladstone's Disestablishment Act, 1.1.1871.

Some families, especially the Downings, O'Sheas, the O'Callaghans and O'Connors built considerably high stone wall enclosures, two feet thick, around their graves.

In this final resting place, there are several O'Callaghans, many of whose relations reside in the Vicarstown, Ballyshoneen and Kilclough townlands west and south of Matehy graveyard. Another very old headstone is marked either 1757 (which would make it older than Anglins) or 1767 was erected to Matt Dolohery and his brother Darby. This family it is understood resided at the Courtbrack side and is now extinct. Also extinct are the Bob Richardson family. Bob, who is buried there, came from Killowen and being a relative, took over the Twomey farm land next to the cemetery and the now demolished old national school in the 1960s. The old school house site was in the Twomeys ownership going back years and is now a Church car park. A new school was built in 1966 nearby, west beyond the T junction.

Along the south and east side there are McCarthy families, relations live in the Model Village, Dripsey: Downings from Courtbrack whose relations reside in Grenagh, Hegartys descendants live in Gilcaugh. There are headstones there of the Dorneys and O'Mahonys from Loughane, dating from 1803.

One of the principle landlords in Loughane West was John Spread and in Matehy parish at that time were Philip Crosse and Charles McOwen Carthy. It was said the number of people in Matehy parish in the census taken and compiled perhaps carelessly, was only 206 in 1659 of which only five were English. The population figures were vastly increased in 1837 when the C.I. parish of Matehy or Mathea (it is spelt both ways in the documents) had 2156 inhabitants. It was said, the Lanes of Cloughphilip appear to have been a considerably well-to-do family.

One of the Lane headstones is to Rev. Maurice Lane, P.P. of Matehy, but the inscription is not quite correct. Fr. Maurice Lane was parish priest of Inniscarra parish from 1816 to 1822. It was during his pastorate of the parish that Berrings church was built. Berrings is the oldest of the three present churches in the parish, namely, Cloghroe, Berrings and Matehy. Priests were buried in Matehy at that time. There was no reserved section for Church of Ireland at Matehy, unlike the Inniscarra Graveyard, near the banks of the River Lee.

Next to Lane graves are very old headstones to Healy 1792, Barrett 1791; Mahony 1787; Riordan 1774; Denis Twomey 1766; John Murphy 1789, etc. The Register at Matehy was held by Miss May Hayes and dates from 1896. The first death recorded was of Patrick Hegarty, aged 19, of Bandon Road Cork. The second was that of a ten year old girl, Margaret Kelleher of Blarney Street. A book prior to the present register dated from 1878 is now in the registry section, "Matehy".

Within the ruin, is a partly fallen stone inscribed Rev. Diarmuid O'Donoghue, the second parish priest of Inniscarra. He and his predecessor Rev. Teigo O'Donoghue, were penal day's priests of this parish. On the south end and inside of the ruins are the Ambroses, connected to the Riordans, relatives live in Gurth and the "Butter Road" or Kerry Road. Their roots in the Matehy area go back many generations. There also is buried Sean Riordan, who died a young man, son of a great local historian in the area, Michael Riordan. Michael had a resourceful fund of local knowledge and he was a local farmer, very interested in tradition and local history. There are headstones to Caseys (no record) who died in 1757 and 1798. Timothy O'Callaghan, Watercourse Road, and his son, their deaths were dated 1781 and 1798 .respectively; and also a Daniel McCarthy of Blarney Lane who died in 1789. Many of those who come to pray at Matehy for their dead reside in the north side of the city, Blarney Street, Clogheen and Kerry Pike districts.

The clearest old headstone in Matehy dates back to 1766, erected to Thomas Anglin, who must have some connections with the O'Callaghans of Donoughmore, because also on the same stone there is the name Darby O'Callaghan, Donoughmore. Anglin is buried in what appears to be the old part of the graveyard, i.e. the south and east side of the ruin.

Other old local families buried include the Blakes of Vicarstown, Dan and Juliann Donovan, Murphys of Gilcaugh and Mallow, Harkins, Murrays, Dilworths, Linehans , O'Regans, Buckleys, Days, O'Learys, Sheehans, Barrys, Kellehers, Ryans, the Hennessys of Gurth , the O Callaghans of Gilcaugh, the O'Sullivan of Gilcaugh. A summary of the local families shows that clergy, song writers, hurlers, bowl players, farmers and Irish freedom fighters, whose names were once household words in this area, are resting peacefully side by side with other unsung heroes in this hallowed and rocky burial place. Mathey Cemetery in the past thousand years was an ancient warrior's fort, a chapel grounds and today it is a graveyard, renowned forever in history, mythology and local folklore.

Sources and extracts – Legends of Cork, T.Crofton Croker & Jas. Lyons Anvil, 1988.

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Duchas folklore school collection

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