



The top photo shows the open and completely unprotected window access to the interior of the church. The lower photo was taken through the open window

# Holy Trinity Barn Church Kildoagh



**Holy Trinity, Barn Church, Kildoagh  
needs your help!  
Please!**

It is rapidly deteriorating through lack of simple and relatively cheap maintenance. A small amount of money spent now repairing the roof, boarding up the windows properly and protecting it from further vandalism would be a stitch in time and may save a lot more than nine!

THIS IRELAND

by Elgy Gillespie

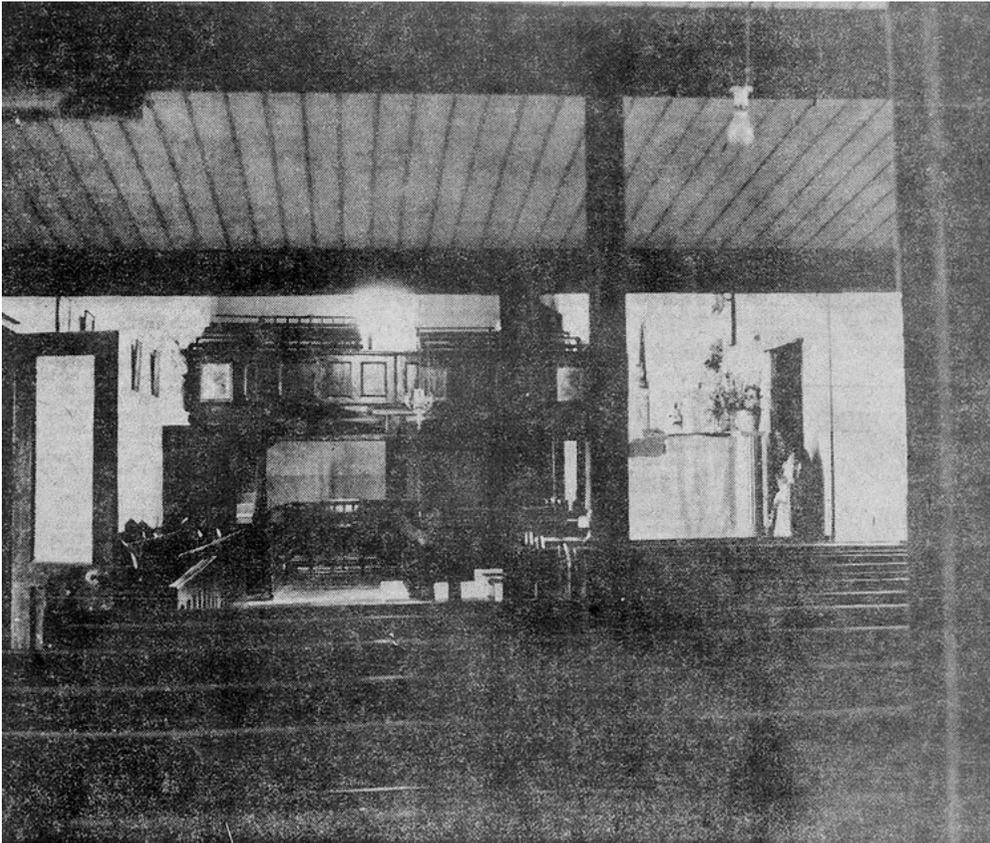
## Kildoagh Barn Church

Barn Churches are few and far between now around the country – and those that survive have generally undergone a good deal of structural monkeying about. But as the commonest form of early Catholic Church they were both simple and dignified – looking rather like a lot of Presbyterian Churches in the North – and for much the same reasons.

Kildoagh Parish Church is reckoned to be one of the best remaining examples. It is near Templeport, Bawnboy, in County Cavan and is “single cell” like most northern or north-western examples – rather T-shaped along the lines of Grange’s very pretty survivor on the Cooley Peninsular in Co. Louth. Further examples are Cratloe, near Bunratty, with its 17th century door case, and the one Kinvarragh, Co. Galway. Like all of them it has coursed rubble masonry, rendered in lime plaster, and then thoroughly cemented over in recent times – though Grange has happily escaped this fate.

It has gable ends and six pointed windows with elaborate tracery and the plain sort, called churchwarden glazing on the back windows.

The unique features of Kildoagh Church are its two doors and two galleries, one for men and one for women. This cannot have been that unusual when it was built – in 1796 under the Rev. Dom, Patritius Maguire according to the tablet outside – since they were often



double-galleried in the north-west, particularly in Donegal. But it is virtually the last one surviving in that shape.

The Altar is in the middle of the back wall, so that the congregation face each other across an unbridgeable gap. One pew connects the entrance doors but this is only used for funerals, when they put the coffin there.

“A building most moving in its austere dignity and in the testimony it bears to a bygone but vital phase of history; of international importance” runs the survey report on Co. Cavan made by An Fóras Forbartha’s researchers. Something of a cloud hangs over its future. Catholic churches rapidly expanded in size and architectural ambition and the barn has been supplanted for well over a century and a half. This one may not escape the fate of the others.

This article and the photograph on page 2 have been taken from the Irish Times dated Tuesday 2nd December 1975. The photo is credited to William Garner & An Fóras Forbartha.

The photo at the top of this page is from one of the post Cards published and sold in McPartland’s shop in Bawnboy before the 1939 - 45 emergency but still available in the 1950s.

The photo on the front cover was taken in 2008. Note the ‘missing’ window in the photo above.

### What can we do now?

We can spend a few hours replacing the broken slates and board up the windows properly.

The park in front of the church has recently become a place for hay, straw and silage lorries to be unloaded as well as the tipping of loads of gravel and stones. Only a short time ago a road sweeper tipped its surface dressing sweepings in front of the church.

It would only take someone’s foot to slip off a clutch while loading gravel to demolish a wall. A fence two or three metres in front of the building could be a reasonable and inexpensive protection against such a disastrous event

Don’t leave it any longer, decide to do something about this important building and DO IT!