



Extract from Samuel Lewis' Topographical Dictionary 1837

ROSSCARBERY, a market and post-town and parish, and the seat of the diocese of Ross, partly in the barony of IBANE and BARRYROE, and partly in the Western Division of the barony of EAST CARBERY, county of CORK, and province of MUNSTER, 32 miles (S. W.) from Cork, and 158 (S. W.) from Dublin on the road from Cork to Skibbereen; containing 8714 inhabitants, of which number, 1522 are in the town. The town, which is wholly within the Western Division of East Carbery, is situated on the southern coast, at the head of an extensive creek called Ross harbour, and occupies the summit of a gentle eminence; it consists principally of a square and four small streets, containing 282 houses, mostly of indifferent appearance, and retains but few vestiges of its ancient importance. The manufacture of coarse linen was formerly carried on to a very considerable extent, but has latterly greatly diminished, and the inhabitants are chiefly employed in agriculture and in fishing. Near the town are the extensive flour-mills of Mr. Lloyd, in which more than 5000 barrels of fine flour are annually made. The harbour, situated about half a mile to the west of Dundedy Head, occasionally affords shelter to small vessels, but only in moderate weather; the entrance is nearly dry at low water, and at high water it is rocky and dangerous, especially when the wind is from the sea. On the bar are ten feet at high water of spring, and eight feet at neap, tides. The harbour itself is almost useless from a ridge of sand hills which has accumulated nearly to the height of 12 feet, and extends across the entrance, leaving only a channel of a few yards in breadth on the west side, through which the tide rushes with great rapidity. The inner bay, which is more than a mile in length and about half a mile broad, is, on the receding of the tide, a dry firm sand, and might be reclaimed at a moderate expense. A

new line of road has been carried across the bay by a raised causeway, 400 yards long, and connected with the mainland by a bridge at its western extremity. The bay is celebrated for the great numbers of silver eels which are taken in it during the summer months. The market is on Wednesday, but is indifferently supplied; and fairs are held on Aug. 26th, and the 19th of Sept. and Dec. The market-house is an old building in the centre of the square. A constabulary police force is stationed here, and at Milk Cove is a coast-guard station, which is one of the three that constitute the district of Skibbereen. Petty sessions are held every Wednesday, and a court for the manor of Ross every three weeks, at which debts not exceeding 40s. are recoverable. The court-house is a very neat building; adjoining it is the police barrack.

The parish comprises 12,535 statute acres, of which 1288 are tithe-free; about three-fourths of the land are arable, and the remainder, with the exception of a portion of bog and waste, is in pasture. The surface is very uneven, rising in some parts into hills of considerable elevation: the soil, though light, is fertile; but, except on the lands of Mr. Townsend (*Probably William Townsend [504], an accomplished agriculturalist, who died in 1816*) and other resident gentlemen who have adopted every improvement in husbandry and the use of the best farming implements, the system of agriculture is in a very backward state: much of the land is cultivated by the spade, and manure is carried to the field on the backs of horses. Several large slate quarries have been opened, of which some produce slate of very superior quality; and copper ore and manganese abound in almost every part, but no efficient means are employed to work them to advantage. The principal seats are **Cahirmore, the residence of T. Hungerford***, Esq.; Derry, of the Rev. H. Townsend (*Rev Horatio Townsend [5D00]*); Castle Downeen, of R. Smith, Esq.; Milleen, of the Rev. W. Jennings; Millfield, of Lieut. Lloyd, R.N.; Farley Cottage, of T. Hungerford**, Esq.; and The Hill, of Capt. W. Starkie. The living is a rectory, in the diocese of Ross, partly appropriate to the vicar choral, and partly to the dean and chapter, in trust for the economy fund of the cathedral: the tithes amount to £776. 19. 4., of which £434. 0. 11. is payable to the vicar choral, and £342. 18. 5. to the dean and chapter. About 130 children are taught in five public schools, of which the parochial male school is supported by the dean and chapter and the vicar choral; the parochial female school-house was built by Lord Carbery; and an infants' school is supported by Miss Townsend [5D10]. There are also four private schools, in which are about 120 children; and two Sunday schools. The Rev. S. Jervois, in 1786, bequeathed £400, the interest of which is annually divided among the Protestant poor, and £10 annually, which is paid as apprentice fees with the most deserving boy and girl in the Sunday school. The Rev. T. Hoare, the present vicar choral, has also given by deed £500, the interest of which is annually divided among the most necessitous poor of the parish. On an island which was formerly joined to the mainland are the ruins of Downeen castle; and at Ballyvoureen are the remains of an ancient house in the Elizabethan style, formerly the residence of the Copinger family. At Temple Faughnan, about a mile and a half from the town, are the ruins of a house erected by the Knights Templars in 1301, and modernised in 1712. Adjoining the town are the remains of the abbey founded by St. Faughnan: the side walls of the choir of the church, rudely built of unhewn stone, are still standing; on the south side are the remains of a circular arch, and adjoining the ruin is the tomb of the Rev. J. Power, who died in 1831: it is much resorted to by pilgrims. In the south wall of the cathedral is an old carved head, said to be that of St. Faughnan. Banduff castle, built by the O'Donovans, and afterwards called Castle Salem, was an extensive building with a walled park and more than 300 acres of oak wood, all now destroyed. In the grounds of Tinneel are the remains of a cromlech. The Rev. Horace Townsend [5D00], author of the Statistical Survey of the county of Cork, is resident at Derry, in this parish.

* *Hungerford connection also with Richard Townsend [315].*

** *Catherine daughter of Mary Townsend [506], who married Thomas Somerville, married Thomas Hungerford of Farley Cottage*