

52/991.

Draft - Clare County Development Plan,

Clare County Council,
Planning Dept.,
New Road,
Ennis,
Co. Clare. V95 DXPT



To whom it concerns

Re suggested increase in car parking facilities, particularly in the area marked TOU 2 on the map.

The accompanying notes inform this reader that "Land adjoining the Diamond Rocks are zoned for car parking use?"

The rocks in this vicinity are the Duggerna Rocks, on which are situated the 'Pollock Holes', natural swimming pools that have their waters renewed with each tide. Nearby is the "Diamond Rocks Cafe" but the Diamond Rocks proper are further west, near Knockroe Point, and can be viewed from above while doing the Cliff Walk.

In the same area, TOU 2, a sea stack marks the site of a "Reserved Monument."

On the Ordnance Survey Map, sheet 63, it is merely marked 'Fish Pond', but is and has been known locally as 'Lady Isabella's Pond'.

This Isabella was the wife of Charles Mac Donnell of Kilkee, descended from the Mac Donnells of Antrim who were introduced into Clare as a result of an earlier marriage settlement. A Donal Mac Donnell, deprived of his hereditary lands in Antrim, settled at Kilkee, where he obtained leases of several lands from his kinsman Lord Clare. His son, James of Kilkee was a Captain in Clare's Dragoons in the army of King James II. In 1718, his son Charles married Isobel O'Brien, the only daughter of Christopher O'Brien of Ennistymon, who too had been a Captain in Clare's Dragoons in the army of King James.

Although she conformed religion-wise to the ways of the Establishment, she remained Irish-Gaelic at heart.

Eugene O'Curry says of her that "she was a very liberal patron of the Munster bards".

From the time of their wedding in 1718, Charles and Isabella lived in Kilkee House. Thos. J. Westropp in his notes on "Kilkee (Co. Clare) and its neighbourhood", North Munster Antiquarian Journal (1911-1913) refers to it as Kilkee Castle.

Although more than two centuries have passed since her death, in 1788, Isabell's name lives on in Kilkee. Not a trace is left of the old building 'on the hill in the angle of the West End', but Westropp draws attention to a feature known to many, without their knowing its history. He writes in "Kilkee (Co. Clare) and its neighbourhood":

"there is a rath, low ring mound, and a peel tower of the Mac Sweeney (which with the addition of the Mac Doonnells has left not a trace) on the hill in the angle of the West End. At the foot of the western slope, near Duggona, there is, however, an interesting relic of the castle, its embanked fish pond, which untold hosts of visitors pass without notice. It is a great oblong hollow (giving its dimensions which he further on corrects) fed by a little stream which now runs undammed in a forest of yellow iris."

In Part IV of 'Kilkee (Co. Clare) and its neighbourhood' there is an addendum:
 Kilkee Fish Pond (All capitals)

"The dimension of this got printed wrongly. They were intended to be '350 feet by 110 feet'. I can now give a careful plan. It may be seen that the pond is bounded to the north and south by parallel earthworks, but it is not easy to fix the actual length. The north mound

4.

is exactly 300 feet long, the south about 340 feet to 350 feet. The actual basin was 21 to 24 feet wide, but when full it must have been from 66 feet to 54 feet wide. The plan gives a clearer notion of the arrangement. In all it is about 370 feet by 110 feet. About a quarter of a century ago it was called 'Lady Isabella's Pond'. She is said to have been a O'Brien.

In 2022, it is still called 'Lady Isabella's Pond', although shown in the Ordnance Survey maps as "Fish Pond".

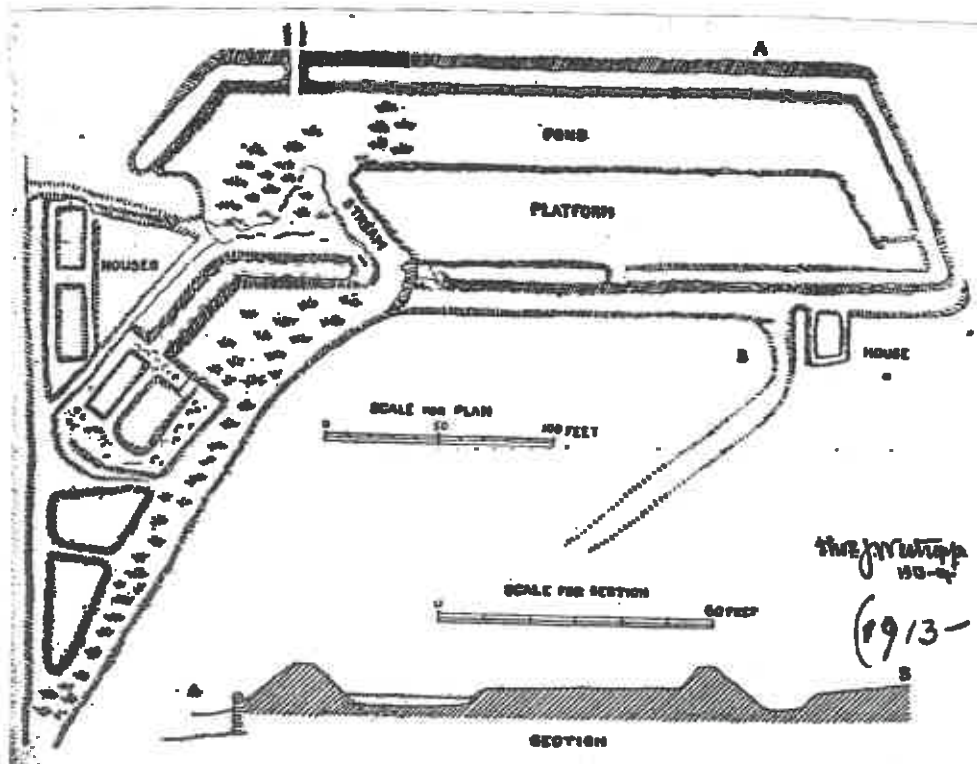
The title 'Lady' was not conferred on her by the Establishment but by the people, who must have deemed her worthy of honour. Long may the tradition endure.

(Lobel, Isabella, Elizabeth are variants of the Hebrew name Elisheba)

As a Kiltree person, of at least fifth generation and now an octogenarian, I feel duty bound to bring this matter to your attention.

Le me as,
Pádraig de Barra

A copy of Westropp's plan is enclosed
P. de B.



the fragments
 MS-4
 (1913-1914)

SECTION
 THE ANCIENT FISH-POND.