



KANTURK (*Ceann Toirc* -Boar's Head) the main market town for Duhallow, is nestled at the confluence of the Dalua and Allow Rivers in North Cork. This area, the core of the ancient barony of Duhallow, was under the control of the Gaelic MacCarthy MacDonagh lords in the late medieval period, with their base in Kanturk. However, due to debt and their involvement in the 1641 Rebellion the clan lost their land to Sir Philip Percival in the 1650s. Kanturk then became the possession of his descendants, who received the title Earls of Egmont. Whatever town had been established by Percival was destroyed during the Williamite Wars in 1691. But the town was rebuilt and by the middle of the 18th century was described as "in a thriving condition, several well-built houses having been erected in it." The new town grew up around two adjoining fording points on the Dalua and Allow Rivers, some 1.4 kilometres north of the castle. The fords were replaced by stone bridges built in the 1700s [1, 2]. By the 1830s there were 238 houses in Kanturk, and a population of 1,349 inhabitants. The town, much improved in the 19th century by Egmont and his agent Edward Tierney, now had a courthouse [10] with bridewell, a market house [16], a workhouse [23], a hotel [6] and an impressive new street named Egmont Place [5]. Many houses were rebuilt. The local economy was based on weekly markets, a small commercial centre at Strand Street, and some industrial activity including a brewery and flour mills. By the 1841 census the population had grown to 4,388 inhabitants. As the 19th century progressed the arrival of the railway bolstered the local economy further [21]. The Egmont estate, including the town, was sold to the tenants in 1892. The 20th century saw Kanturk continue to expand its commercial services, especially for the local agricultural sector, despite a population decline. The large creamery in Bluepool processed dairy products from the hinterland. Kanturk, like many of our towns retains much of its well-proportioned classical streetscapes with symmetrical lines of windows and doors, giving the streets a harmonious appearance of classical proportions. Today, Kanturk continues its role as the chief town in Duhallow and remains a focus for social and commercial life.

Sites to see (sites marked with an asterisk * are outside the scope of the map)

- KANTURK BRIDGE:** Built in 1760, only six of its seven semi-circular limestone arches spanning the River Dalua are visible. Public toilets, flushed by the river, and a small prison cell were originally incorporated into the abutments under the bridge. Another unusual feature is the poem carved along the coping stones of the parapet wall.
- GREANANE BRIDGE:** Limestone road bridge with six semi-circular arches spanning the River Allow. It was built in 1745 by the Earl of Egmont with the assistance of the Grand Jury, a forerunner of the County Council. This bridge and Kanturk Bridge were both widened on their upstream sides in the 19th century with similar style arches.
- NATIONAL BANK:** The former bank, now used as offices, has an interesting façade with original sash windows, a timber panelled door and moulded render around the door and windows.
- ST PETER'S CHURCH:** Built in 1858 and designed by Welland and Gillespie in a neo-gothic style with carved limestone detail and fine decorative bellcote. Now in private ownership
- EGMONT PLACE:** Formally laid out in the early 19th century comprising of two terraces of two-storey houses divided by Earl Street. The houses, in typical restrained classical style, are three bays wide with a central fan-lit door. The building (Burke's) on the corner of Egmont Place and Earl Street was formerly a coach house and then a police barracks.

- EGMOUNT HOUSE/EGMONT ARMS HOTEL:** Built in 1824 at the north end of Egmont Place [5]. The house is two-storeys over a basement so that the front door is approached by a flight of steps from the street. The door has a neo-Classical surround with a fine fanlight and Ionic capitals.
- BOURKE'S MILL/QUARRY HOUSE MILL:** Built in the early 19th century and used for coach building and later as a corn mill. Stores associated with this mill were used as auxiliary workhouse accommodation in the 1840s.
- SITE OF BARRY'S/SHARADEEN MILL:** A 4-storey corn mill once stood here. It was built in the early 1800s probably on the site of a 17th-century mill owned by Sir Philip Percival. The millrace was taken from a weir 650m upriver. Site now part of the town park.
- FOOTBRIDGE:** Stone arched bridge with cast iron railing. A plaque over the centre arch is inscribed "Erected by/ Sir Edwd. Tierney, Bart./A.D. 1848". The railing bears embossed shields with the coat of arms of Edward Tierney, Egmont's agent. It is known locally as the *metal bridge*.
- COURTHOUSE:** Built in 1824 on land donated by the Earl of Egmont. It was designed by James and George Pain on a standard plan for courthouses at that time. Built of limestone it has some fine original features, such as the central Venetian window and the internal court room fittings. Behind the courthouse is a walled-in bridewell where prisoners were held during court appearances.
- CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION:** Built of limestone in a neo-gothic style in 1860-67. It was designed by architect John Hurley and built by John O'Callaghan. It replaced a smaller church that stood a short distance to the east. The interior and exterior are elaborately decorated. It stands prominently overlooking Church Street. The size and grandeur of the church demonstrates the growing wealth and confidence of Catholics at this period. In the church grounds is a tall bell tower built in 1870. Stone gateway pillars on the street below are from the earlier church.
- SISTERS OF MERCY CONVENT:** Built in 1868 for the Sisters of Mercy as a convent and girls school. The simplicity of the façade contrasts with an impressive three stage entrance bay of finely cut limestone.
- MARKET SQUARE:** A market house stood here in a small island complex at the junction of three roads as early as 1657. It was replaced in the late 1600s and again in 1747. Then in 1838 the present market house [16] was built in Strand Street when the old market place was reduced in size by the construction of town houses and the old market house demolished.
- FORMER NATIONAL BANK:** Built in the 1860s as a bank and later became a draper's shop and then a library. It stands out in the streetscape because of its striking red brick façade of three storeys with contrasting grey cut limestone quoins, eaves and shopfront.
- FORMER BANK:** Former bank incorporating a bank manager's residence, built in the early 20th century with characteristic render finish and projecting eaves. The entrance doorway is set in an angled corner.
- MARKET HOUSE:** Known locally as the 'clock-house' this market house was built 1838 by the architects James and George Pain. The building has a prominent cupola on the roof with a clock made by Mangan's of Cork and a gift of the Earl of Egmont.
- TRADES UNION HALL:** Former trades union hall- a limestone plaque on the building reads "KANTURK/TRADES UNION/1881". Kanturk was at the forefront of the organised labour movement in Ireland at that time.
- VERNACULAR HOUSE:** This represents the many smaller, modest one-storey houses that lined the approach roads into the town in the 19th century. These houses were generally thatched. The thatch here is now covered by corrugated iron sheeting.

The Mac Donogh/Mac Carthys and Kanturk Castle

The Norman conquest of North Cork in the early years of the 13th century was halted by the resurgent Gaelic clans of Duhallow. Notable amongst these were the Mac Donogh Mac Carthys, whose territory was centred around the Kanturk area. In later medieval times the Mac Donogh Mac Carthys, along with the O'Callaghans, O'Keefes and Mac Auliffes, dominated control of this part of Cork. However, the 1580s and 1590s were difficult times for Gaelic Ireland with the defeat of the Desmond Rebellion followed by the Battle of Kinsale fiasco in 1601. Nevertheless the system of surrender and regrant allowed many clans to retain their lands, including the Mac Donogh Mac Carthys. Dermot mac Owen emerged as leader of the clan in the early 1600s, ruling until his death around 1620 when his son Dermot Óg assumed the lordship. Dermot Óg ruled until the outbreak of rebellion in 1641. This, and the subsequent Cromwellian conquest, proved disastrous for the clan and by the 1650s most of their lands were in the ownership of Sir Philip Percival, an English financier.



Unfortunately, no documentary evidence survives regarding the construction of Kanturk Castle. It can be dated by its architectural style to the first decades of the 17th century. It was probably started by Dermot mac Owen and continued by his son Dermot Óg. It was never fully finished; there is no plaster finish on any of the internal walls. The fact that the Mac Donogh Mac Carthys lost their lands in the 1650s may explain this. The money for building the castle was

derived from mortgages of their lands by Dermot mac Owen and his son in the 1620s and 1630s, and these mortgages effectively bankrupted the family.

Kanturk Castle represents an intermediary stage between a defensive castle and a comfortable country house, having features of both. It is a *fortified house*. It has with numerous gun loops (openings) for shooting out through with hand-held firearms. These are strategically placed in the window embrasures to cover the ground-floor doorway on the east side. Another defensive feature is the continuous machicolation or projection on the top of the walls that enabled defenders to fire downwards on anyone approaching the building. In plan form, Kanturk Castle is a four-storey rectangular block with five-storey towers at each corner. The main entrance door is on the first floor in the centre of the west elevation, and there is a ground-floor door on the opposite wall. The wooden stairs were contained in the north-west tower. All the internal

floors were wooden, and apart from the ground-floor, all the windows are large- the interior was well lit. It was also comfortable, as there are numerous fireplaces. Thus, the building stood in marked contrast to the narrow ill-lit tower houses of the 15th and 16th centuries. The first-floor entrance door is notable in having a classical surround finely cut in local limestone, indicating the introduction of Renaissance ideas into native Irish buildings in the early 17th century.

- BLUEPOOL LOWER & UPPER:** During the 18th and 19th centuries the population of Irish towns increased with the need for manual workers in industries like flour milling and with work for servants and shop assistants. To accommodate this growing population the approach roads to many towns were lined with terraces of small one-storey usually thatched houses [18]. The 1842 Ordnance Survey map shows such an arrangement along both these streets. Apart from one example [18] the remaining houses of this type are all now reroofed and modernised but still retain much of the original character of the streetscape.
- KANTURK CASTLE*:** A fortified house built for the MacDonogh MacCarthys in the early 1600s. This building combines the desire for well-lit and spacious living space and the need for defence.
- KANTURK TRAIN STATION:** The Banteer-Newmarket railway line was opened in April 1889 by the Great Southern and Western Railway (GSR), creating a vital link between Kanturk and the rest of the country. The line was closed permanently in 1963. The single storey station building, water tower, and station masters house remain, all in ruins.
- POSTBOX:** This cast iron post box was erected c. 1915 and bears the royal insignia, "G.R.", of King George V.
- KANTURK WORKHOUSE:** The Workhouse was built in 1844 to the design of George Wilkinson. It stood on a six-acre site on the western outskirts of the town. It was burnt accidentally in 1850 and rebuilt. It was burnt again in the 1920s and the site is now occupied by Kanturk Community Hospital and a housing estate. Part of the enclosing wall of the workhouse can still be seen along Millview Road behind a carpark.

KANTURK Historic Town Map



Kanturk Bridge [1]



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www.corkcoco.ie/en/explore-cork-county/cork-county-historic-town-maps

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FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

www.kanturk.ie/historic-sites/

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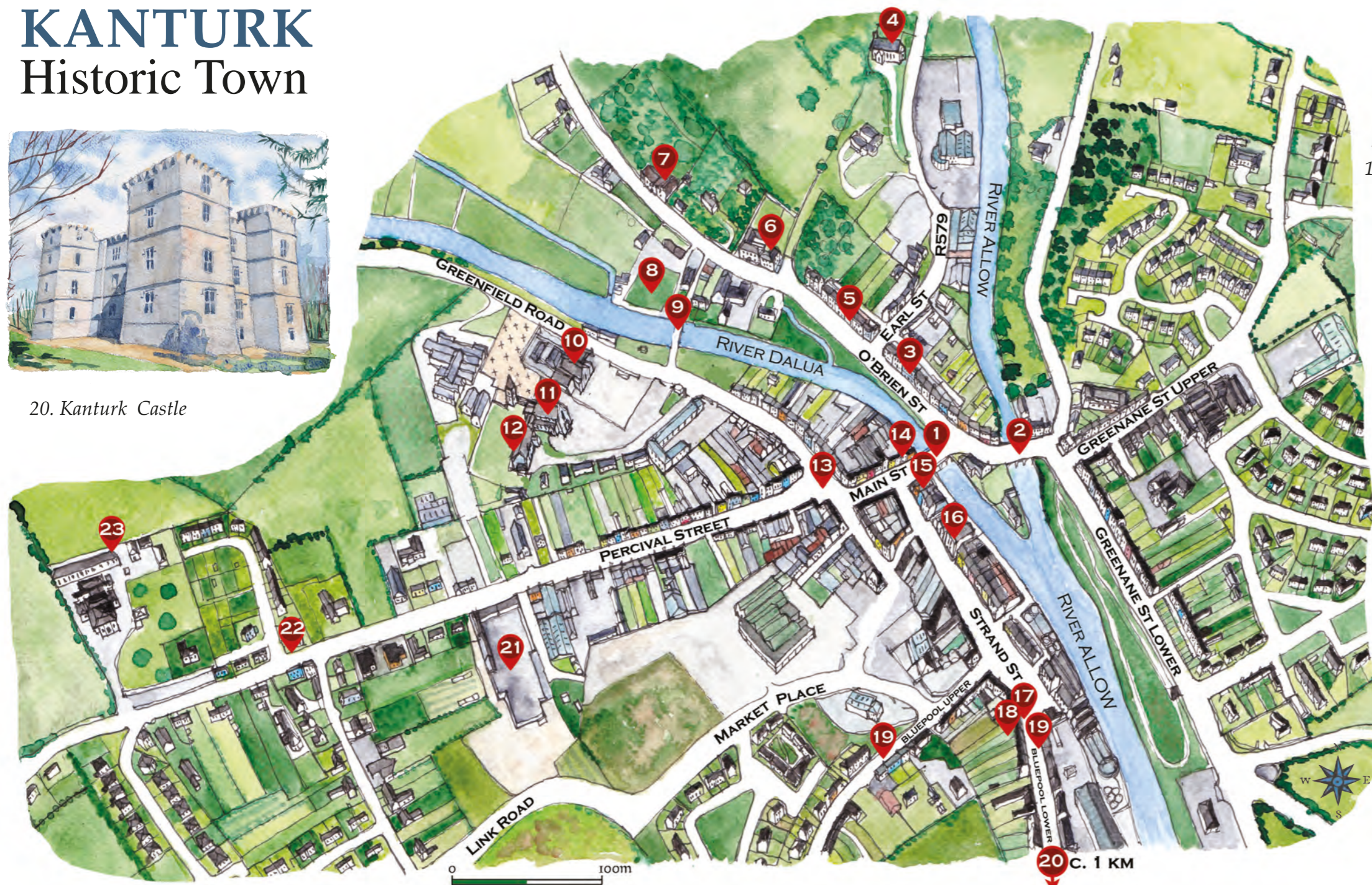




KANTURK Historic Town



20. Kanturk Castle



18. Vernacular house & 17. Trade Union hall



22. Post Box



16. Market House



12. Sisters of Mercy Convent



11. Church of the Immaculate Conception



4. St Peter's Church



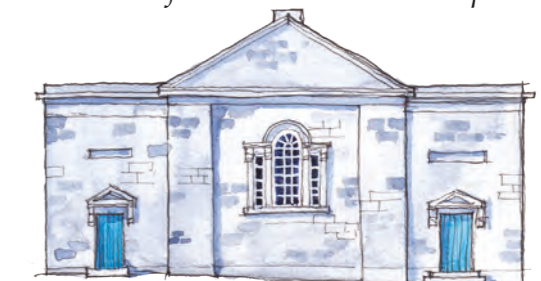
5. Egmont Place



6. Egmont House



9. Tierney Coat of Arms



10. Kanturk Courthouse

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