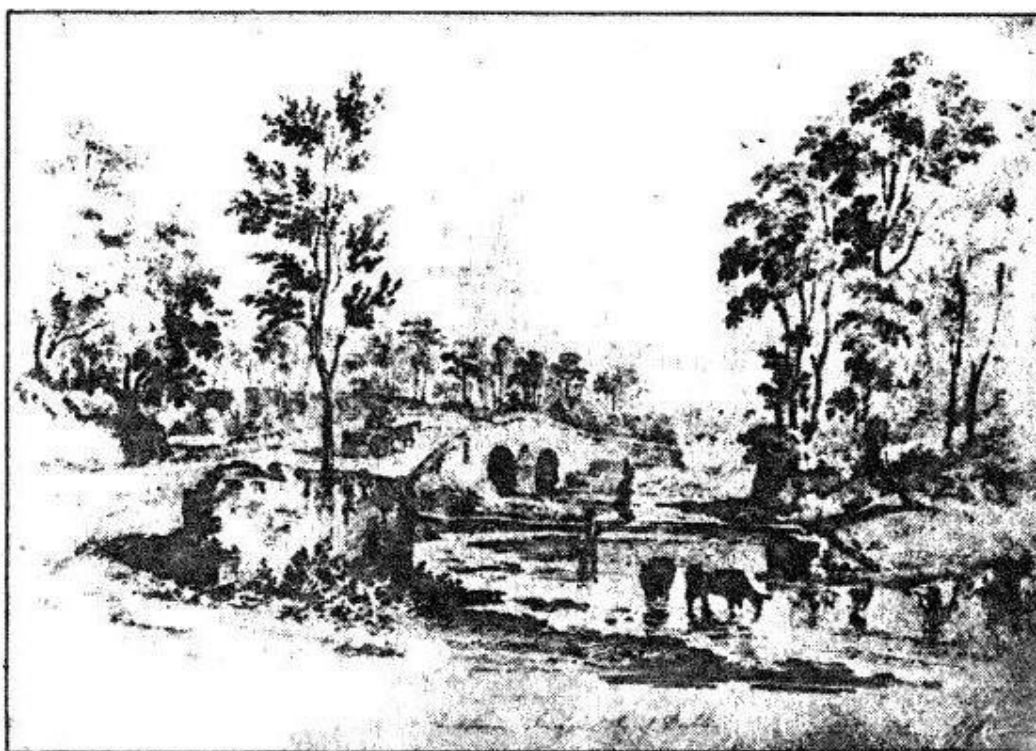


# *Rathmichael Historical Record*

**The Journal of the Rathmichael Historical Society**



**The Old Bridge, Loughinstown**

**Rathmichael Record**  
**Editor: M. K. Turner**  
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## Editorial

The most important event in the life of the Society to date took place in the first month of 1977. Having worked for its five years on an informal basis during which time it had founded an Annual Course in Field Archaeology, and had established a Journal or Record issued yearly, the Committee considered that the time had come to put the Society on a more formal basis. A Constitution was, therefore drawn up and a meeting of all members called at which the Rules were read, submitted for approval and adopted.

Despite the late arrival of summer this year and its early end, our programme of summer visits, well-planned and varied, once again was blessed with good weather. Nevertheless, the attendance on these summer Sunday afternoons continues to be poor. The one exception this year was an 'extra' held on a Saturday which attracted quite a crowd, not because of the day, but because the venue was Kilruddery, home of the Earl & Countess of Meath, where we had a very pleasant afternoon being shown around the famous 17th/18th century gardens. Perhaps the time has come to substitute evening walks for Sunday afternoons, as suggested before?

### Field Archaeology Course

During the last week in August the third Annual Course in Field Archaeology was held. This year the director was Mr. Leo Swan, aviator photographer and lecturer in Bolton Street College of Technology. As in previous years, this course was a great success, and it is especially good and heartening to see many friends made during the last two years coming back again. The site chosen for survey this year was in the townland of Ballybetagh in the parish of Kiltiernan. The name is an interesting survival from feudal times when the 'betaghs' (from Irish 'biotach' = food provider) grew food for the lord of the manor and are believed to have lived together in a community.

Bray seems to provide most of the material for comments on local events this year.

St. Paul's Church (C of I). It is always sad when an old and loved church becomes redundant and it is no longer possible to maintain it. The fact that it is happening all over the country makes the situation no less sad. St. Paul's Church, Bray, ceased to have services held in it at Easter, 1977. We must be glad that Canon Scott, one-time Rector of Bray whose book "The Stones of Bray" is so much in demand today, is no longer here to see this. In a chapter in his book on the history of this church he states that when, in 1863, the newly-built Christ Church was consecrated and made the Parish church, it was suggested by some that the roof of St. Paul's be removed, and that it be allowed to go to ruin. But wiser counsels prevailed: Canon Scott concludes his chapter "No church could be better loved than St. Paul's church has been all these years by its congregation...may it never cease to be equally beloved".

For the sake of Canon Scott who did so much for Bray, as well as for those who love St. Paul's today, we must hope that some suitable use may be found for it which will not detract from the dignity it has gained through its centuries of Christian worship from the days (who knows ?) of St. Patrick to the present.

Turkish Baths. Another well-known Bray building - the one-time Turkish Baths on the Quinsborough Road, has been falling into ruins for some thirty years or more. This bizarre structure with its many minarets (looking like flower buds on long stalks about to burst into blossom) was built by William Dargan, sometimes called the father of Bray on account of all he did for that town, beginning with its railway. A.L. Doran in his "*Bray and its Environs*" says it was built by a Dr. Barter; but its original purpose does not seem to have suited the inhabitants for very long and it became by turns a Concert Hall (with excellent acoustic

properties), Assembly rooms for a variety of Activities - religious and secular- and, finally a Picture House. For the first part of its life it was brightly painted, but about the turn of the century, Doran says that the then owner had the building “thoroughly renovated and decently shrouded the vestiges of its once gay exterior under a dun, but serviceable coat of cement”.

Bray is missing a wonderful chance in allowing this building to go to ruin - just now when everything Victorian is returning to favour. It does not need much imagination to see what an attraction this place could be as well as serving a useful purpose as a much-wanted hall. Bray should be proud of its connection with William Dargan, in whose honour and in gratitude for his work for the whole country, the National Gallery in Merrion Square was erected with his statue standing beside it.



The Jamestown Cross

## Summer Visits

**Sunday May 15th**

### **Jamestown Cross - Kilgobbin Church, Cross and Castle**

The Jamestown Cross: “An extremely curious cross” is how O’Reilly summed it up when he wrote at length about it in JRSAI 1901. It stands in the townland from which it takes its name, beside a well which he described as “a rude crypt lined with two undressed granite boulders and partially roofed by two small undressed leacs”, in the middle of what was once an old road between the Kiltiernan-Stepaside and the Carrickmines-Sandyford roads. What remains of this old road, bordered by hedges and overgrown with shrub and trees, is dark and muddy, the ground underfoot trampled by cattle seeking shade and water from a sluggish stream at the side. It is reached by crossing two fields, through courtesy of Dublin County Council, whose office entrance is on the Kiltiernan-Stepaside road.

When first seen this cross appears to have almost a sinister quality and even gives a feeling of revulsion. It is crudely formed and ugly. On its West or South west side a large shapeless figure occupies its full width - on the other, the dark side, O’Reilly described what he saw as a single circle in the centre of the cross with 2 inch wide unconnected mouldings down the sides, and his opinion was that this circle formed a link with other circle-bearing crosses in the area, e.g. Blackrock, Tully and Kill. Experts today, however, interpret this side differently, believing it to show another figure.

In his efforts to find out something about the cross and its origins, O’Reilly does a fine bit of detective work. Starting with the assumption that the cross and well must have been associated with an ancient church which would have been named originally after some Celtic saint, he found support for this in a study of townland names, early church records and the fact that there appeared to have been an old graveyard nearby, a fact at first only guessed by him, but later confirmed.

First, while the name of the neighbouring townland of Ballyogan was an old one and a church was recorded here in 1302, Jamestown was not an old name and O’Reilly was able to reason (by somewhat tortuous steps not necessary to follow here) that originally it had formed part of the townland of Ballyogan. When he found that Ballyogan was formerly called Ballymochain, he had the clue he wanted to the identity of the patron of the church and well, i.e. St. Cain, brother of St. Kevin of Glendalough and well known in Co. Wicklow tradition, whose feast day is May 1<sup>st</sup>.

It was now clear that after the church and its saintly founder had vanished from the memory of man, but while the well continued to be visited by pilgrims on May 1st, a better-known saint whose feast fell on that same day i.e. St. James, was substituted and gave his name to the well and thence to the townland.

Reference - JRSAI 1901 “*Free-standing Crosses and Sepulchral Leacs in the Dublin Half-Barony of Rathdown*”.

Jamestown House - Now in ruins, this once fine house is situated between the Kiltiernan-Stepaside road and the remaining portion of the ancient roadway in the middle of which stands the cross. It had two large walled-in gardens and a park-like stretch of field in front. When and by whom was it built?

In the Middle Ages a castle stood here, and in 1460 in the reign of Edward IV, the statute Rolls, record that “O’Byrne and Esmond Tibbot O’Toole with a great host of Irish had

attacked the Castle of Jamestown belonging to Morice Walshe of Kilgobbin and rased half and more thereof to the ground. Ordained that Morice have 4/4 from every ploughland in the Barony of Rathdown ... for the reconstruction of the Castle, etc.”.

Kilgobbin Church: The original church on the high mound is first mentioned in 1179 under the name Technabretnach, translated “the house of the Welshmen (called Kilgobban). The founder can only be surmised. It may have been St. Gobban from Kerry whose mother was a sister of St. David of Wales and whose name survives in the church of St. Gobban on the shores of Tralee Bay. One of his brothers was the founder of the well-known St. Multose’s Church, Kinsale.<sup>1</sup>

This early church was in ruins in 1641 and the church whose remains we see here was built to replace it in 1703 by Archbishop King.<sup>2</sup> In 1824 this church was in a bad state of repair - the two parishes of Kiltiernan and Kilgobbin were united and the newly built Kiltiernan church (C. of I.) thenceforth served them both.

References      1. JRS AI 4th quarter 1891  
                     2 Mant’s “History of the Church of Ireland”

Kilgobbin Cross: The tall mutilated granite cross found buried in the churchyard in the last century and re-erected has already been mentioned in the 1975 issue. We need only add that it was Dr. F.E. Ball, in his *History of Co. Dublin, Part 3*, who noted that both faces of the cross (although “dimly seen”) showed the Crucifixion, which today can no longer be seen. He added that the figure was clothed in the long garment generally accepted as a sign of early work. T. J. Westropp’s detailed drawing of the west face which accompanies the text brings this out very clearly. (Compare the Rathmichael cross on which the short garment indicative of later work is seen.)

Kilgobbin Castle: This castle is situated not far from the church on the Stepside-Sandyford road, in the grounds of a private house. A typical high tower of the Pale with its south and west walls still standing, it is built of granite and was thatched. It was probably built by Henry Fitzadam Walsh in the 15th century. The Walshs were the third owners of the land since the Conquest, following on after the Hacketts who succeeded the first settlers, the Harolds. In the 17th century Sir Adam Loftus of Rathfarnham inherited Kilgobbin (possibly through marriage) and the castle had a stormy time during the 1641 Rebellion when a tenant of Sir Adam Loftus, Matthew Talbot, was living there. It was besieged by General Monk and when it was captured he placed a garrison there. A field nearby is still referred to by the locals as the “battlefield” in memory of these stirring events. During the 18th century it continued to be occupied by a succession of owners, and is said to have had a pack of foxhounds.

The castle had an unusually long life, surviving into the 19th century. In 1835 the Rev. George Cuthbert Described it as “the pride of this little place till last winter - a very perfect castle except for a long breach in the side caused, no doubt, by General Monk’s artillery. No ivy and no trees. It survived until last winter when a large part of it fell.” The Reverend gentleman mentioned in particular the spiral staircase of solid stone perfectly preserved with not a step wanting, and two small flights of stone steps leading to two embattled turrets, also in complete repair. Two small apartments were, he said, known as “money rooms” locally and were believed to hold treasures guarded by unseen spirits.

Legends were woven round these “money rooms”. Local people believed the castle to be possessed by unearthly tenants, one of them a man in heavy armour who tramped at dead of night past the cottage doors to and from the castle - the other a lady in a white night robe, who glided noiselessly to the ruin, to emerge with her apron filled with something which the

people said was gold. A poor man named Moran once became rich by an ingenious trick to foil the spirit of the castle and get the treasure. Having learned in a dream where it was hidden and that a life must be lost in the finding, he went one night taking his pet dog with him killed it and found the treasure. He then went to live some distance away, allowing himself to grow rich gradually. Other families, too, have had their wealth attributed to nocturnal trips to the castle.

References – F. E. Ball - History of Co Dublin, Part III

“History of Kiltiernan” by O’Morchae. (Unpublished - R C B Library)

### **Sunday - June 19th - Dalkey Island**

The weather for this, our second visit to the Island, was perfect as it was for the first time - a brilliant sun with just a pleasant little breeze. A Festival of Blessing the Boats taking place in Bullock Harbour brought a large number of people over to the island. We must have walked most of the 23 acres without seeing a sign of the goats for which it is famous, although ten of them are said to be still there. Several had to be removed as they had grown wicked and attacked people

While only goats live here today, Dalkey Island has been inhabited by man on and off for a very long time. Excavations have shown it to be the earliest settlement (with only one other, Lough Gur, Limerick) yet known in the southern part of Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

At the time the church was built there was probably a colony of fisher folk here. Hundreds of years later it is recorded in the 13th century that “a certain man of Swoseford(?) for the theft of an ‘anchor’ fled to the chapel of the island” (for sanctuary). In the 14th century the rent for its grazing brought in 12d a year to its owner, the Archbishop of Dublin.<sup>2</sup>

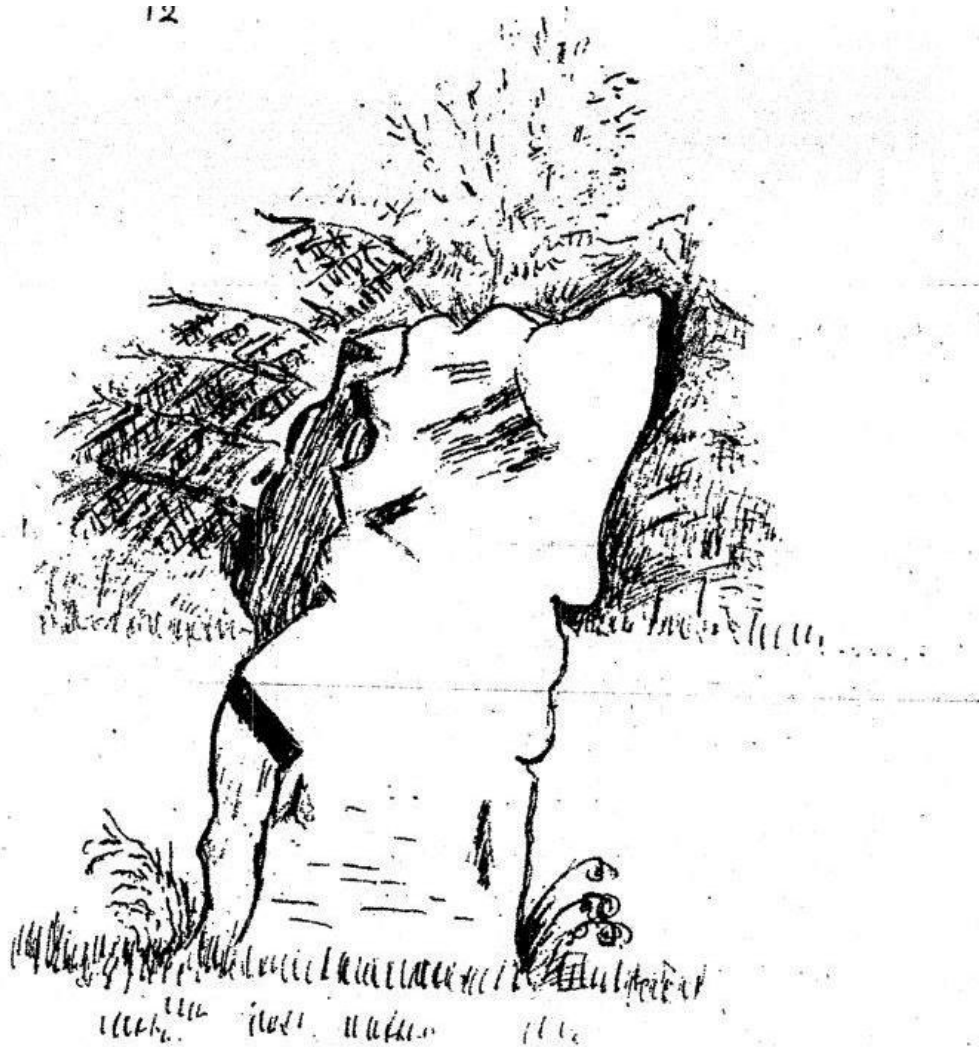
Our main objective was the location of the second cross-inscribed rock which P. Healy states was first recorded by Professor G. F. Mitchell only a few years back<sup>3</sup> This we found quite close to the well-known one facing the West door of the church, in the same outcrop of rock, rather less clearly marked. It measures 32 in. in length and breadth and is similar to the other, but without its outer ring.

References – 1: P. Harbison - JRS AI Vol 103 1973 - “The Earlier Bronze Age in Ireland”

2: Archbishop Allen’s Register

3: P. Healy - JRS AI Vol 103 1973 “Early Christian Graveslabs”.





Glencullen Pillar Stone

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**Sunday July 24<sup>th</sup> – Glencullen Area**

Pillar Stone. Weather mixed, sunny and fresh with occasional showers. Parking the cars at Fox's public house, we walked to the Pillar stone standing in a field about 200 yards on the way to Enniskerry from the cross-roads. The Stone is, surprisingly, quartz, not granite. It measures almost 6 feet over the ground and roughly 3 feet across each of its four sides. It is said that attempts to find how much of it lies underground by digging many feet down proved unsuccessful. Col. Fitzsimon tells me that his great-grandfather caused a trench 31 feet deep to be dug round the stone with the object of finding how much lay underground, but had to admit defeat.

Newtown Mountain - Betty O'Brien and Dicky Pilkington were our guides here when we left the road for the open hillside some 2-300 yards east of the cross-roads. We were shown a number of stone circles, some of them with smaller circles (hut sites?) inside them; a fort or 'barrow' with its dyke on the inner side of the ring which encircled a high mound and another Pillar Stone. A cromlech mentioned by Dr. Ball is now acknowledged to be either a fake or a chance conglomeration of boulders. Many things have vanished from this area, due to the activities of the workers in the quarries e.g. a dolmen (as drawing of which by du Noyer is reproduced by Borlase in his "Dolmens of Ireland") once stood on the townland of Ballybrack (Kilgobbin Parish) not far from the Glencullen crossroads.

Ballyedmunduff - Walking down from Newtown Mountain we hit the road between it and the Two Rock Mountain at the Pitch and Putt, across the top of which is the most direct route to the grave, less than half-way tip the mountain. This way being prohibited when play is in progress, we had permission to use the recently made Forestry road further on. This, if longer, is much easier walking than the direct approach through deep heather, furze and bracken concealing peaty holes made in planting the trees.

Ballyedmunduff (called after the townland) is a wedge-shaped Gallery Grave. Borlase gives a good drawing of it (before, it was excavated) which shows its formation clearly, and a description taken from a "good ground plan and elevation of the monument in the O.S. sketches". He quotes O'Curry as saying "I doubt if we have met so perfect a pagan grave in any other counties hitherto examined. It was discovered 4-5 years ago (1832?) by Alderman Blacker of St. Andrew's Dublin, It was then a tumulus, but now the earth is cleared away and the grave is to be seen"

#### References

Estyn Evans "Prehistoric and Early Christian Ireland" P 109  
P. Harbison "Guide to the National Monuments of Ireland" P 70

### **Saturday September 10th – Kilruddery**

Our visit to Kilruddery was an inspired 'extra' to our summer programme, and it proved splendidly successful. The weather was perfect and the larger than usual number of members and friends who came had a very pleasant and interesting afternoon. We are very grateful to Lord and Lady Meath for giving up their time (how often are they asked to do this?) to show us their historic place. We also owe thanks to Mr. Peter Aspell for his help. It is difficult to mention this name without commenting, on its age, in one of its forms, Archbold. Archbold held the lands of Kilruddery long before the Brabazon family came here.

Gardens with their roots in the 17th century are very rare in this country but the authors of "Lost Demesnes" state that at Kilruddery "there still exists the most complete late 17th or early 18th century formal garden in the country" and elsewhere it is stated that the twin canals are unique in these islands. The gardens and house have recently been described in detail in Country Life (June 14 and July 21 1977), but a few items might be noted here which are of local interest. The first concerns Sir Richard Morrison, the architect who designed Kilruddery House in 1820, as well as many other important houses in the country, and whose name has been coupled with that of Francis Johnston as the leading architects of the day. He and his son, William Vitruvius lived in Old Connaught Avenue in a house long since destroyed by fire, called Walcott, probably built by himself in the late 18th century. The house was rebuilt but the second one suffered the same fate, and the site is now being used as a school for itinerants.

A hitherto unknown Bray man, Pobje, did the fine plasterwork in the ceiling of the present diningroom. It would be interesting to know what other work he did. Two pictures have a special interest for the Historical Society. They are of the Kilruddery Hunt by the Earl of Meath, whose favourite meeting place was the 18th century Inn in Loughlinstown renowned for its hospitable board, its claret and venison as well as for the feats of horsemanship of its owner, Owen Bray, and of Johnny Adair of Kiltiernan, all celebrated in song.

Out in the garden, what strikes the amateur gardener most forcibly - perhaps because it is not usually mentioned, the experts concentrating on the 17th/18th century layout - is the luxuriant growth here of trees and shrubs and the number of comparatively rare plants thriving. Lord Meath told us that tree ferns used to grow in the wood to the west of the canals. A fine group of *Eucryphias* is almost hidden away near the "Angles" and an enormous *Arbutus*, noted by the Rev. G. N. Wright in his *Guide to Co. Wicklow* c.1822, is still there! The Reverend gentleman also noted what I have been saying, i.e. "every tree in the demesne appears to wanton in the luxuriance of its situation, for they have all outstripped the usual limits of their growth". Add to this a *Cassia Corymbosa* in full flower in the open, gigantic tree *pæonies* and much more.

### **Sunday, September 25th - Enniskerry**

**Onagh Dolmen.** - A warm mellow autumn day and the fact that two of our chosen sites were new to almost everyone made a good close to the season.

The Onagh dolmen is situated just inside the townland of the same name where it borders that of Glaskenny and is found by leaving the Enniskerry-Glencree road where the signpost points to Knockree Hostel 1½ miles. Follow the narrow twisting road till Glaskenny House is seen on the left. The next farm belongs to Mr. McNulty in whose field is the dolmen. Cars may be parked a little further on at the Youth Hostel. The dolmen, visible from the road, lies in a collapsed state against the boundary wall of the field adjoining the house on the West. The two "portal" stories, 10 ft. and 5 ft. respectively, face NW— the capstone, one end on the ground, measuring approximately 12 ft. x 10 ft. x 2 ft. Borlase, in his "Dolmens of Ireland", says that the country people call it "Donncadh Dearg" and Mr. McNulty says that it is still so called - but no one knows why.



**Parknasilloge**. A most interesting little tomb. First impressions are that it seems too small and too perfect to be real. It is situated in a field between the two arms of a drive leading to the right off the Enniskerry-Glencree road (at a point where the long steep hill from Enniskerry begins to level out and there is a group of council houses) to the farmhouse of Mr. and Miss Maguire.

This tomb, was first recorded by O'Curry of the OS Letters in 1837 as follows: "A perfect unmutilated cromlech here. There is first a square enclosure 36 ft. x 18 ft. Ten of the stones which form the enclosure remain, but those on the S. side have been removed. Immediately within them is a small circular enclosure unbroken and consisting of ten large stones, some laid flat but deep in the ground, others set on edge. In the centre of this circle is the cromlech, consisting of a horizontal flag 5 ft. square, 12 in. thick, supported by three rude stones placed on edge lengthwise: one on the left, one on the S. and one on the E. each 5 ft. long and 2 ft. 2 in. high. The space between the side stones is 2 ft. and thus a cavity is formed 5 ft. long, 2 ft. broad and 2 ft. high. It is open at the W. end, but completely closed at the E end by the supporters." It is unfortunate that O'Curry gave neither the arrangement nor the measurements of the stones forming the rectangle.

Scott, writing in 1913, found "very little of the fine stone circle", but, also, does not say how much. Today, nothing remains of either the outer rectangular enclosure or of the inner circular one, except that on the N. side the ground is raised to give a suggestion of a saucer-shaped depression.

**Killegar**: - Approaching by the Killegar road south of the Scalp we parked the cars at the Riding Stables from which point we could get to the churchyard by walking straight across two fields entered over a low wall. The churchyard we found considerably cleaned up and no longer the terrible jungle it was the last time we were here.

The old church is splendidly situated on a height with the ground falling away to the SE and Enniskerry. Only parts of the N & S walls of the chancel remain of what was once an important church, of which O'Curry of the O.S. in 1837 could trace the boundary walls of the nave, and the whole surrounded by the vestiges of an immense mound.

In early medieval times Killegar is always mentioned with Glenmunder (Ballyman) and some think that it and neighbouring Anaghaskin were dependent chapels. First mentioned in 1174 (Celladgair), as early as 1228 it was noted as "among the Irish" which meant that it was difficult to get anything from it or to look after it, and after 1530 it is not heard of again.

The origin of the name remains a puzzle, but it goes back a very long way as recently discovered when Kenneth Nicholls found a note of it in the Book of Leinster as early as the 5th century. This was a reference to a St. Breachan of Shankill in Ui Briuin Cualann, a relative of St. Finbar of Killegar.

**Grave Slabs**: - Several of the ancient grave stones known as the Rathdown leacs have been found here, and were included in an article in JRSAI 1957, illustrated with his own drawings, by P. Healy. Using his numbering we found –

No. 12 a cross-inscribed slab which used to stand outside the S. wall, now placed inside

No. 13 still in the chancel - 2 sets of concentric circles, a cupmark in each.

No. 14 a very small but interesting slab with the Crucifixion on one side and concentric circles and a cupmark on the other, was removed for safety and brought to the Museum by Peter Pearson about 1972.

No. 22 a photograph by O'Reilly reproduced by Healy, is all that remains of this slab which disappeared in 1913.

On our visit we found, placed on the N. Wall, a hitherto unrecorded granite slab very thick and measuring 19" x 11". Roughly in the shape of a cross, it shows on both sides two circles with a raised boss in the centre.

Outside, about 12 feet from the chancel on the S side, stands a cross-base quite undecorated and measuring 21" x 21" and 12" high with a mortise 10' x 9'.

Reference JRSAX vol LXXVXI Part 1. pp. 75 1957.

## Winter Talks – 1977

**January 24th** - Following on the Annual General Meeting, in interesting talk illustrated with excellent slides was given by Joan Delany on a fortnight's motor tour of Normandy and Brittany in 1976. The talk had the intriguing title of "St. Patrick goes to France"—St. Patrick turning out to be the name of the ferry which brought herself & husband & car over.

After motoring through Normandy where they visited St. Michael's Mount with its abbey church crowned by a spire, she comments, "an earlier age also created stones pointing upwards to the sky. Brittany is, of course, the place to see menhirs. At Ploumanach we had no difficulty in believing that dolmens originated in Brittany - natural rocks looking like dolmens are everywhere and are given pet names by the Bretons, such as, the Turtle, Napoleon's Hat etc. The first genuine megalith we saw was at Tregastel. It is called an Allée Couverte, rather similar to Labbacalle in Co. Cork".

**February 21st** - "Wetlands Discovered" was the title of a talk given on this subject by Mr. Ryan of the (then) department of Forestry and Wild Life.

**March 21st** - Dr. Maurice Craig's illustrated talk entitled "How old is it" began by explaining how and when the medieval castle yielded place to the non-fortified house. On the much-discussed question of the distinction between a castle and a house, he said that one difference was that in the former the stairs were of stone, while in the latter they were of wood. The talk was well illustrated with plans of houses chosen among the not-so-well-known ones of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, many more of which exist than is often supposed.

In conversation, Dr. Craig mentioned one of our own houses which he had noticed on his way that evening after he left the main road, and which he would like to have had the time to look at more closely. This was Mullinastill House, a little gem of Georgian architecture, first mentioned in 1735 and probably built by one of the Lawless family.

**October 20th** - An illustrated talk entitled *Identification of Field Monuments by Aerial Photography* was given by Mr. Leo Swan. A fascinating lecture, lavishly illustrated with infra-red, black & white and coloured slides, began by tracing the early days of flying with balloonists operating in Dublin in the 18th century, including their rescue when they inevitably came down in the sea!

Early experiments in aerial photography featured pigeons with cameras strapped to their bodies, arranged to take exposures at intervals. Early planes, when they arrived, were not conducive to good results, as much of the plane appearing as of the object. Coming to more sophisticated times, Mr Swan demonstrated over and over, how objects incapable of being seen on the ground, became clearly visible from the air, e.g. a road showing an apparently quite unnecessary curve could be seen by the camera to be following the line of an ancient enclosure. His own camera had been able to discover in an already well documented area not one, but several enclosures hitherto unknown.

The speaker drew attention to the different techniques used in aerial photography, e.g. the use of infra-red and black and white as well as colour, each of which has its particular purposes.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this lecture was the reference to Armagh where the lecturer demonstrated how the patterns of buildings and streets today seems to follow the contours of ancient habitations, showing the continuity of life in a remarkable way. Just as modern excavations are proving almost daily the truth of events recorded in the Old

Testament and apt to be lightly dismissed as myths, so the camera in the air is showing up the past.

**November 17<sup>th</sup>** - Our last talk of this year was given by Mr. Patrick Healy. The lecturer has for many years made this area in the southern part of Co. Dublin the subject of special study, and those of us who live here are particularly indebted to him for his detailed examination of the crosses and gravestones peculiar to this area. These, now known as the Rathdown crosses and slabs, and illustrated with his own excellent drawings have, over the years, been the subject of articles in JRSAL.

The title of this talk *Under Two-Rock Mountain*, proved delightfully deceptive. An enthralled audience wandered with him, helped by numerous slides, backwards and forwards, “up the airy mountain and down the rushy glen” to places as far apart as Whitechurch with its curious “Wartstone” and Glencullen House where the family of the present owner, Colonel O’Connell-Fitzsimon, has lived for some 300 years and whose connection with Daniel O’Connell the Liberator is shown in the first part of the surname.

In between these two extremes we were shown a collection of interesting objects, varying from dolmens and gallery-graves, 2,000 odd years B.C. to the boulder known as O’Connell’s rock (half-way between Glencuillen cross-roads and the Pine forest, from which the great man in July 1823 is said to have addressed a crowd of people gathered for the annual frochan-picking) and the cottage in which Countess Marciewitz once stayed.

Few, if any, among the audience had any idea of the wealth of objects of antiquarian and historical interest to be found in this area reasonably well known to them.



## Since first I made my Count

Anna Doherty.

26 years ago.

“It will always be a glad memory to me that I saw Shanganagh at its best. At least I fancy it was at its best that morning for I cannot fancy it looking more beautiful. There were thin transparent screens of haze floating in the air, and through them, as if seen at the bottom of a vast lake of the clearest water, smooth lawns and pastures showed along the valley in fifty different shades of softened emerald, until the grass melted into the heather on the engirdling hills. And out to the rim of the eastern sky lay the sparkling sea...”

Thus William Bulfin described the Vale of Shanganagh in the early part of this century, and up to fifteen years ago this description of the beautiful valley in which lies Shankill, was still apt. Alas, now, many of the “smooth lawns and pastures and meadows” are no more, and no longer can one so easily get those heart-lifting views of the “heather on the engirdling hills or the sparkling sea”. In the early post-war years one could stand at almost any point in the village and be aware of the surrounding environment of hills and sea - Shankill then was like George Elliot’s delightful Raveloe, nestling in wooded county at the foot of the hills.

Approaching Shankill from Dublin as one reaches the railway bridge the road winds away down through the village from the wooded distance with blue pyramid of the Great Sugar Loaf Mountain blocking the horizon. The tree-covered slopes of Carrickgolligan (or Catty Gollagher as we call it) and the green pastures of Chantilly rise westwards, while to the east lies the sea – a unique setting.

In those early post-war years Shankill seemed to me a remote and tranquil place – yet within reasonable distance of the city and its distractions.

It seemed more orientated towards Wicklow and Bray rather than Dublin. They would speak of it as if it were London or some other far away city. “Are you going to Dublin?” they would say, never to “town” or to the city. There were few commuters then. It seemed as if time had stood still here despite the fact that it lay on a main road. It was an old-world village intersected with laneways and pedestrian ways where chickens pecked about the doors, dogs lay stretched in the sun and there were even a few ducks to be seen swimming in the dyke. It was a small self-sufficient community - most people worked in the immediate neighbourhood with local farmers or in Watson’s Nurseries in Ballybrack. Practically every household cultivated a small vegetable plot and kept a few hens. Milk was available locally – bee-keeping common. The village shops provided everything one needed. The daily newspapers, bread, meat etc., and provisions were delivered - one never thought of shopping elsewhere. There was also a drapery shop in the village in those days.

The traffic then was relatively light, no double-deck buses, no juggernauts. There was a petrol shortage, it is true, but the era of affluence (or effluence) had not begun and few possessed motor cars. The tram puffed in from Harcourt Street at well-spaced intervals and one could journey to the city in a civilized, leisurely manner over the great viaduct at Loughlintown through wooded pastureland and the beautiful Druid’s Glen. The station in Shankill in charge of Mr. Delaney was always very well kept with its decorative flower beds and smart paintwork. There was also a pleasing vegetable plot alongside the approach railings. Everybody one met was friendly and courteous - no one ever passed another without a greeting. It was a truly neighbourly place. The population, according to the Census Returns for 1946 numbered 616 - in 1971 the figure was 2,629.

There was an air of contentment. Much pride was taken in growing things, and exchanges of fruit and flowers were common. Everyone seemed to live more out of doors then. It was usual to see people gathering firewood, seaweed, helping local farmers with hay at harvest time, sowing potatoes, black-berrying and picnicking in the locality - and everyone walked. There were numerous rights of way through the village and the fields, access paths to the beach, bridle paths where one could ride or ramble in a pleasant carefree way. It was perfectly safe to bicycle.

Looking back over the years what comes to mind as the greatest difference between then and now was the quality of "silence" that seemed to envelop the village. This now seems gone for ever as the traffic roars by. Against this pervading tranquil silence one could hear the lovely country sounds -a hen proclaiming she had laid an egg, a cock crowing, the lowing of cows going in to be milked, the bleating of sheep and lambs in Spring. At night the vixen's call or the screech of an owl, barking dogs in the distance, and always the sound of the sea pounding against the cliffs. The wild life, too, seemed more varied and abundant in those days. Great flocks of plover or lapwings and curlews would take over the winter fields and one could hear their plaintive calls. Redwings and field fares and other members of the thrush family were quite common winter visitors. Flocks of goldfinches, greenfinches and chaffinches would visit the shrubberies and wood plantations - these all seem quite scarce now. The ditches were lined with primroses, foxgloves and wild violets.

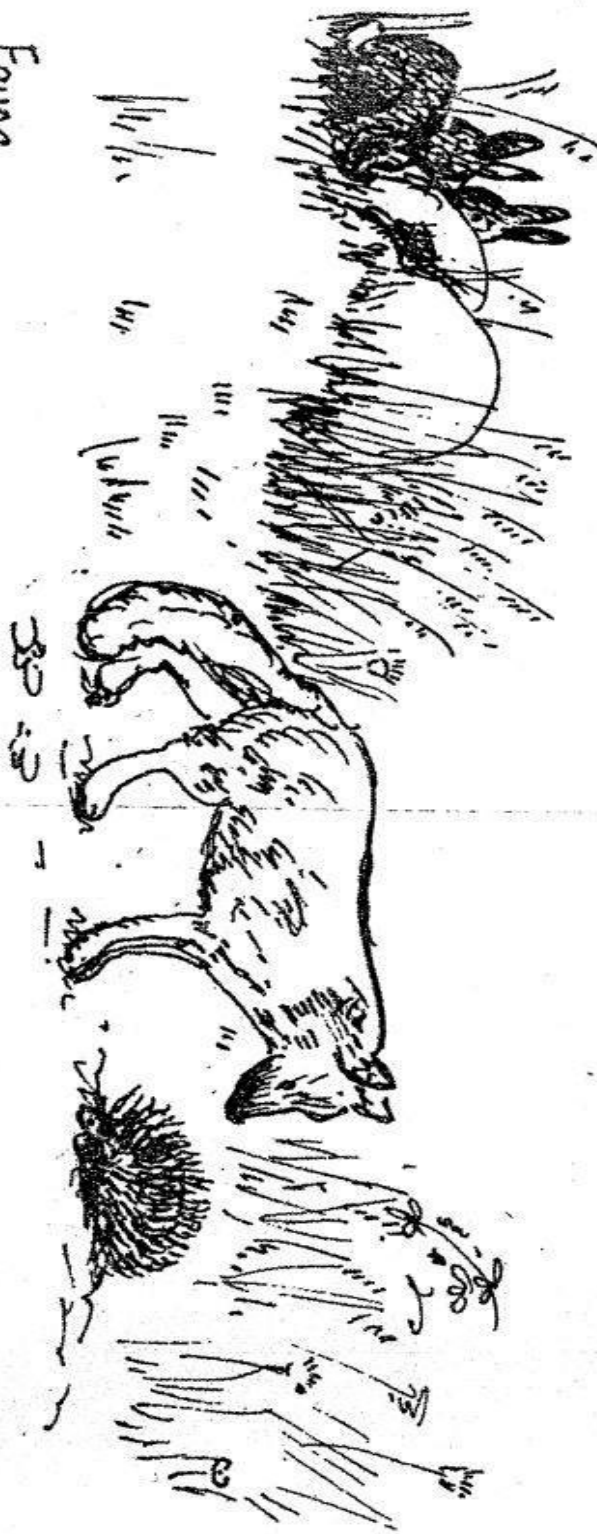
While the village was a close entity there were many links between it and the surrounding houses which dot the local lanes. These houses with their paddocks and gardens had an aura of their own. Here was evidence of a graciousness and way of life that is no longer possible. One could still get help in the house and garden and many of the houses were beautifully maintained, with manicured lawns and tennis courts.

The Sea Road or Quinn's Lane as it was then called, once had a great green gate across the entrance which although never closed, was a reminder that this lane was still a comparatively new development. (It was named, I believe, after a Mr. Quinn who lived in Claremont (Dorney Court Ed.)) It meandered down to the sea through high hedges of wild cherries, blackthorn, hawthorn, ash, elder, sycamore and holly all intertwined in summer with woodbine, convolvulus, blackberry etc. Throughout the seasons the hedgerows were a source of food and shelter for the many birds, rabbits, hedgehogs, stoats and small rodents which were then quite common. Two squirrels could be seen regularly in the trees in "Rosedale". (I believe they have been seen again in recent years). Pheasant bred in the meadows backing on to Woodbrook. It was quite a common sight to see badgers rooting at dustbins at night time.

When one turned off the main road down the lane one was instantly aware of the fresh sea air often accompanied by the heady perfume of woodbine, mayflower, elder and the dog roses which abounded in the hedges, or the smell of new-mown hay from the surrounding meadows. In those days the roadway was a true farm lane, narrow, with no footpaths, no public lighting or sewage. The surface was rutted earth, and in summer its marl clay was like cracked leather.

In winter it became a stream, culminating in a large lake just before the entrance to Clontra. This lake extended right across the low-lying fields to Corbawn, and here could be seen herons and wild swans. In the very bad winter of 1963 this whole area was frozen over for at least three months and became a great ice rink. Hundreds of starlings and other small birds were found dead when the ice thawed out. In the bad winters great flocks of tits and waxwings would invade the area.

Fauna



In these days there were about eleven families living along Quinn's Road. Some, like Aubrey House, Clontra, Rosedale and Locksley with their pretty gate lodges, lay screened behind high hedges and tall trees. The fields on the south side of the lane stretched away towards Woodbrook and Bray head. Shanganagh Castle rose above the trees in the foreground looking on moonlight nights like a fairy-tale castle with its towers and turrets still intact clearly seen against the dark trees and pale green fields. Behind the castle there was then much woodland since reclaimed for corn crops and grazing. This area abounded in wild life. At dusk one could see great wraith-like barn owls gliding across the fields in search of prey. Foxes and badgers inhabited the hollow ditches and the old abandoned railway bank which was later levelled. Being very well drained, its tarry shingled surface provided an ideal habitat for numerous vetches, wild thymes, centaury, bedstraw and crow'sfoot. It was a bee's paradise.

From the old Harcourt Street Railway Line bridge "rights of way" led across the fields to the beach and to the signal box which marked the junction of the railway lines.

The end of the lane turned abruptly to the sea. The remains of an old brickworks and limekiln guarded the access to the shore. In the early sixties the County Council demolished the brickworks wall, but the limekiln is still to be seen. There was a pathway right along the cliffs from Killiney to the North Beach at Bray - a very pleasant walk

At low tide some remains of the old Martello Tower which once stood on the cliff just south of Clontra could quite easily be approached. I am told that it had been blown up in 1912 by British Army engineers. The local children now call it "Crab Island" for obvious reasons.

While the winters then seemed very extreme, the summers seemed long and sunny. The surrounding fields were grazed by sheep and cattle. In summer the cattle were milked in the fields and the sheep shorn. There was a lovely pastoral Arcadian quality to farming then - no E.E.C. regulations. The large field where now are the houses of Shanganagh Grove, was bisected by the old abandoned Harcourt Street Railway Line. It formed a huge grassy platform or embankment and was a favourite place for "tray-sledding" by the local children. One borrowed a tray and used it to slide down the bank. This field provided huge crops of mushrooms each year and had its own resident corncrake. I remember the night before the builders moved in, walking barefoot through the long grass following his call. A huge harvest moon hung overhead and behind lay Shanganagh Castle gleaming like a medieval tower in the moonlight. The imminent arrival of the bulldozers lent a note of poignancy to this romantic scene. Next day the hedges were uprooted and the top sward removed, the railway bank was levelled and the corncrake gone. (This year someone told me that a corncrake was heard behind Ravenswell).

With the final disappearance of the railway line went the masses of red, white and pink Valerian which had grown along it, together with other wild flowers such as scabious, coltsfoot, vetches, etc., and when the County Council took over the road, (which they, did by compulsory order in 1958) they sprayed the remaining road verges with weed killer, finishing off the "Queen Anne's Lace", the foxgloves, winter heliotrope and many other hedgerow flowers, once such a feature of the area. Now this lovely lane has been widened, surfaced, 'Improved' and developed. The loss of many mature trees and the hedgerows has reduced the shelter belts which once protected the area from the harsh sea winds. It is now more exposed and it is consequently more difficult to get certain shrubs and flowers to grow. The water table, too, has been lowered, due to the new drainage system. Fortunately, the end of the lane has not been developed, and is still near enough to its original state. What was once an enchanting sheltered lane enclosed by high hedges has now become a tarmacadamed impersonal suburban road lined by rows of identical houses, criss-crossed with ugly telegraph and ESB poles and showing little evidence of the supposed planning control. There is no

cohesion between the jumble of estates mushrooming in this once beautiful setting. Development has been piecemeal. From a closely-knit rural village, Shankill is now becoming a sprawling, dormitory suburb. It could have been arranged differently. The height of houses could have been controlled - low-rise housing would have helped to keep the hills and sea in view. The trees and hedgerows could have been incorporated in the building schemes. The abandoned Harcourt Street line could have been preserved as an amenity walk or linear park, the pedestrian rights of way retained.

Shankill's story over the last quarter of a century is the same as that all the villages within a radius of ten to twelve miles of the city centre. How can a village hold on to its identity in the face of the relentless march of suburbia?



Shangnanagh Castle from Quinns Road, 1953, Bray Head in the background.

It would be interesting to know how many Church of Ireland churches in use today can lay claim to have been the first to be built after the Reformation? Glancing at the Shell Guide the other day I noted that Kilbrogan church near Bandon, Co. Cork, built in 1610 claims to have been the first Protestant church built in Ireland. St. Paul's church, Bray, which dates to 1609, just beats this record (up to the present year).

The early 17th century was not a great time for church building; the old churches dating from Celtic days were still soldiering on although many were already beginning to feel their age and the occupational hazards of the times, and few were to survive the Rebellion of 1641. When the dust of this and the following Cromwellian interregnum had settled and with the King back in England, an Act of Parliament was passed permitting parishes without a church to be united to one that had, the parishes keeping their ancient boundaries intact.

300 years may seem quite a respectable age without wishing to go further back into the past, but continuity of worship holds a great appeal and thus it was important to find that the 1609 building was not on a new site and this Canon Scott managed to prove. In his book, "The Stones of Bray", he devotes a chapter to St. Paul's in which he shows us, step by step, how this was done. By combining his intimate knowledge of early church and other documents with his wide and thorough acquaintance with the locality, he had no difficulty in proving that the church of 1609 was built within a very ancient graveyard where once had stood a Celtic church.

In the Ordnance Survey Letters, 1837, O'Curry had guessed that the churchyard dated at least from pre-Reformation times, and this was unexpectedly confirmed when, during repair work in modern times, so many bones were found under the floor of the nave that it was obvious that the present church had been built on the site of an old cemetery. The fact that no trace of the old church remained in no way affects the argument. The builders in 1609 most probably made use of its stones in their work, as we know happened, e.g. in Delgany where David La Touche was permitted to take the stones of the old church of St Mogoroc for the building of the present one in 1789.

Canon Scott knew that "Church of Bre" (by which name, a incidentally, St. Paul's was known until 1869) was head of a Rural Deanery of that name as far back as 1280, and that, still further back in 1207, a church called "Derdeach" headed a list of churches and chapels in his Manor of Bray, granted by the lord of the Manor, Walter de Riddlesford, to a convent founded by him at Grane, near Castledermot, Co. Kildare, where he had land. He also knew that Archbishop Alen (16th century) had equated these two churches, so it only remained to show that the Church of Bre (Bray), alias Derdeach, was the one whose site is now occupied by St. Paul's. De Riddlesford's castle was here and Scott reasoned that the church beside it would be the most likely to have become the chief one in the area.

The old name of the Church of Bray - 'Derdeach' - calls for some explanation and is in itself an indication of the antiquity of the original church. Derdeach is not a proper name. It means literally 'house of oak' or 'house of wood' (from daire = oak and teach = house) and was commonly used as a general name for a church, perhaps when the founder's name was forgotten, although it is sometimes seen in conjunction with a saint's name. It is well known that in the early centuries of Christianity in Ireland, the churches were made of wood and that stone was not commonly used (except, no doubt, in the west where it was the most readily available material) until about the 9th century. Bede, writing in the 8th century, describes the churches of the Irish saints as "built of hewn oak thatched with reeds, after the Scots (the Irish) manner<sup>1</sup>."

Not many years after the building of the present church we get a glimpse of it in the Visitation Records of 1615. As might be expected it was noted as being in good repair. But the most interesting observation made was that an Irish vicar - Moris Birn (or Maurice Byrne) was in charge and conducted the Services in that language. This was the tardy fruit of a policy begun over forty years before in the reign of Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup> when the idea of preaching to the Irish in their own language was first suggested. Through the Chancellor and Treasurer of St. Patrick's Cathedral Irish type had been provided and an order obtained for the printing of the Book of Common Prayer, but for some reason the plan never got off the ground, and only the Catechism in Irish was printed<sup>2</sup>.

Now, early in the reign of James I, it was ordained that the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments should be taught the people in their own language and at long last the Book of Common Prayer was printed in Irish in 1608, just the year before the church was built. Thus, the vicar would now be able to read the whole Service in Irish although, as he was only, a 'reading minister', and therefore not qualified to preach, he would have to read one of the set sermons or 'homilies' provided. One wonders what difference, if any, these changes made on the congregation? As it numbered only 16 in 1630, the odds are that it made little!

Fifteen years later a new vicar is in charge and not, we may take it, an Irish-speaking one. Simon Swayne was vicar of Bray and Rathmichael, and served as curate in three other parishes - Kill, Kiltiernan and Tully, all of which had suffered damage in a recent severe storm which had also affected the Church of Bray.

Simon Swayne built a house for himself on part of the Rathmichael glebeland of 18 acres, probably on or close to one that was there in 1547. (Bray, surprisingly, had no glebe house and only 6 acres of land.) The house, known then as "Carraigeen", is still there. and is one of the most attractive in the parish. Eleven years later however, rebellion broke out in 1641 and it was badly damaged when attacked by a large number of rebels seeking to kill the vicar, who was then forced to flee to the supposed greater security of Lehaunestown Castle in Tully, one of his curacies. (Historians make a mistake when they say that he went to Loughlinstown Castle). Here he was again attacked, the castle set on fire, several of those in it killed and he himself was badly burned in both legs and lost an eye<sup>3</sup>.

It is not recorded whether the Church of Bray suffered in the Rebellion. Once it was over and the Puritan Party in charge of affairs the Established Church found itself under a cloud, forbidden to use the Book of Common Prayer at its services, etc. etc. When finally those in authority found time for the re-organisation of the Church as they planned, one of their ministers, Jacob Rouse was appointed to Bray and Rathmichael, for which he received a salary of £100 per annum, six times as much as Simon Swayne had been getting. There was no stinting in Church matters under the new regime. Two years later the King returned to England, the Puritans were out of power and it looked as if everything was back to square 1. Not quite, however. The old Celtic churches, many of them in poor shape before the Rebellion, faced with dwindling congregations and falling into ruin, were never used again. While their boundaries remained the same, parishes with ruined churches were now united with one that had a church fit for worship. It was in this way that the Church of Bray became head of a union comprising the parishes of Old Connaught, Kiltiernan and Rathmichael, a union which was to last for some 200 years.

If we want to know what the church looked like at this time we have only a reproduction of a tiny sketch found by Canon Scott on a map of 1692. Drawn, it would seem, from the S W angle, it shows a plain rectangular building with three windows on the south side, a large door on the west, and over it, a belfry. No sign of a chancel, although in the 1630 Visitation records it is noted as being 'in reasonably good repair'. Kiltiernan old church is another example of



this; possibly the explanation is that a portion of the nave was screened off to act as a chancel? Inside, the church would have been whitewashed - in 1757 a sum of 6/7 is recorded in the accounts as having been spent “for whitening the church and also for lime”. There was probably an assorted collection of seats, benches and pews. By 1725 all the “seats or Pews” together with the names of those in the United Parishes to whom they had been allotted, were written down in an old Register “that Unity and Amity be kept up” and were copied into the new Register by the Rector in 1747. Six of them were listed down each side of the nave, the most important people having the pews next the chancel. Sliding down the social scale “the 6th seat or Pue on ye North side...together with ye two little seats or Pews at ye West end of ye said church under ye gallery belongs to ye Parish for the Poor”.<sup>4</sup>

During the 18th and 19th centuries very many changes were to take place transforming the appearance of the church. In the 100 years of peace which followed the Battle of the Boyne the congregation, which had numbered only 16 in the first part of the 17th century, must have increased considerably. Canon Scott describes the many alterations and additions to the church carried out over a long period - the tower with its spire seen in the well-known 18th century print, the gallery, the transepts and the choir. It was not until 1869, after extensive alterations, that the church received the name by which we know it today.

In 1827 the Rev. G. N. Wright, in the course of a tour round Wicklow and the neighbourhood of Bray, in which he made many interesting observations, noted that “The Church (of Bray) is large and comfortable and ornamented with a steeple and spike” (my dictionary defines a steeple as a tower with a spire). “Divine Service”, he adds, “is attended in summer by numbers of persons of rank and respectability, the neighbourhood being still a fashionable bathing place”.<sup>5</sup> As most people are inclined to believe that it was the coming of the railway in 1832 that made Bray, this remark may surprise them. Only six years after the Rev. G. N. Wright’s visit, the spire was removed and the tower ornamented with crenellations and with pinnacles at the four corners as we see it today.

### **Some Rectors of Bray in the 18th century.**

Among those who held the Rectorship of Bray were two men who, in their day, were held in high regard for their scholarship. In 1746, a year after the death of Swift, a friend and former colleague in St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Dr. John Lyon, was appointed to Bray. A keen antiquary and historian, Dr. Lyon, had worked with Swift in the Cathedral and Monk Mason, in his “History of St. Patrick’s” says of him “There is no one to whom the Irish antiquary is more indebted to his diligence we chiefly owe the preservation of whatever remains of the ecclesiastical antiquities of Dublin”. In his last illness Swift was confided to the care of Dr. Lyon who, on his death, took steps to preserve his memory, to see that his manuscripts were in safe keeping, and had a death mask taken which was given to the Hospital founded by Swift, St. Patrick’s.

In 1751, six years after his appointment to Bray Dr. Lyon was made Prebendary of Rathmichael and immediately built in that parish the attractive house called Cherrywood, close to the old Glebehouse of Carrigeen built by Simon Swayne over 100 years earlier. Since the Rebellion this house had not been in use by the Church and was probably in the hands of tenants, as it was more than 100 years later when the Church got it back again to become the Rectory once more for a few years. From this time on for over 100 years Cherrywood served as the glebehouse for Bray and Rathmichael and was lived in by those Rectors of Bray who also held the Prebend of Rathmichael.<sup>6</sup> In 1866 two years after the new church of Rathmichael was built, on the death of the then incumbent the Rev. John Hunt, it was sold.

When in 1764 Dr. Lyon resigned from Bray and Rathmichael he left an inventory of the things in his house at Loughlinstown which he was leaving for the incoming Prebendary, Dr. Beresford. This list gives us an interesting glimpse of the things considered necessary in a gentleman's house at that time. In reply to a letter from Dr. Lyon, Dr. Beresford writes: - "I received your letter, and went to Rathmichael to see what things you left there...the locks (which I believe, you told Mr. Fitzgibbon and me that you would leave on Fixtures), the Dresser, the Bedsteads, the Baconrack, the Brewing vessels, the furniture of the Dairy, the Bottle-drainer, oak chest, Bin for Oats, Barrows, Spades and Fork, I will keep and account with you for them when you please."<sup>7</sup>

Four years later the Rev. Thomas Leland came to Cherrywood as successor to Dr. Beresford. Considered one of the finest scholars of his day, one of the most illustrious Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, to the Library of which he made many important and valuable additions. Dr. Leland numbered among his friends and correspondent Lord Charlmont, Dr. Johnson, Edmund Burke, etc. It was Burke who urged him to write a History of Ireland which he did, starting and finishing it while in the Cherrywood Glebehouse, helped no doubt by the peace and quiet which he found there. He was a prominent and active member of the Dublin Society and it has often been stated that he planted the shrubbery at Cherrywood (although I have never been able to trace the origin of this statement)

His portrait was painted by the fashionable portrait painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and was engraved. A photograph of this engraving hangs in the Vestry room of Christ Church, Bray.<sup>8</sup>

#### References -

- 1 Bede "History of the Church of England" p183
- 2 "A History of the Church of Ireland" by Johnston, Robinson and Wyse Jackson
- 3 1641 Depositions - MSS TCD
- 4 Vestry Minutes of the United Parishes of Bray, old Connaught, Kiltiernan and Rathmichael.
- 5 G. N. Wright "Guide to Wicklow"
- 6 Ecclesiastical Reports
- 7 Domville Papers - National Library
- 8 Constantia Maxwell "Dublin under the Georges"

## **Course in Field Archaeology**

**1977**

The third annual Course in Field Archaeology took place at Rathmichael School from 22nd to 26th August.

This Course was recognised by the Department of Education for Personal Leave for National teachers.

There was a full enrolment.

Mr. Leo Swan directed the Course this year.

Field work was done at Ballybeetagh by kind permission of Mr. James Lenehan.

The evening lectures were given by:

Mr. Thomas Fanning

“Excavations at Reask”

Mr. Breandán Ó Ríordáin

“Excavations in Dublin”

Dr. George Eogan

“Excavations at Knowth”

Mr. Leo Swan

“Location and Identification of Field Monuments by  
Aerial Photography”

Mrs. Joan Duff

“Museology”

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