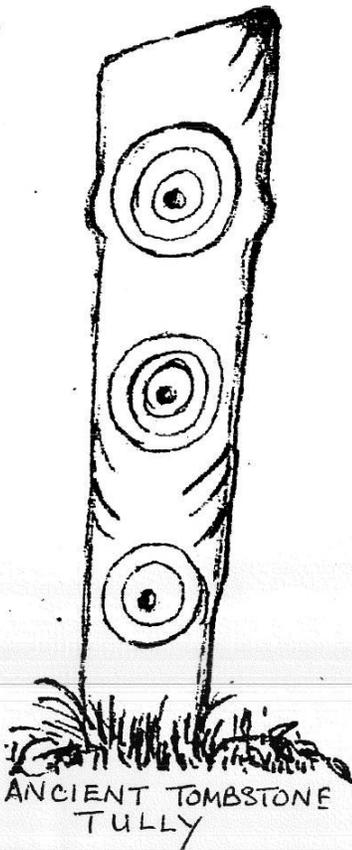


1973/4

RATHMICHAELE

HISTORICAL

RECORD.



ANCIENT TOMBSTONE
TULLY

1973/4

Rathmichael Historical Record January 1975

Editorial

For a number of reasons the "News Sheet" which should have been out in May, 1974, with notes on the past Winter Season and giving details of the coming Summer programme, was held up. We apologise to those who took the time and trouble to give us such full notes on their talks to the Society, and feel sure that the contents of this "Record" (to give it a better name) will fully make up for the delay, at least as far as they are concerned.

Because of this delay, notes on our activities during the summer just past - where we went and what we saw - will be included in this issue which will be a double one.

It was good, while visiting the old Rathmichael graveyard one day, to find men at work cutting the grass and generally tidying-up and to be told that the County Council is now undertaking the clearing of all old graveyards throughout the country. In this area, Tully and Killegar at least as well as Rathmichael, have been done. In the case of the last names, it has enabled us to see yet another tombstone, only just over the ground, dated 1740 and, we believe, unrecorded up to now.

On the subject of gravestones, we heard only recently that a small early stone (No., 14 in P. Healy's list of the Rathdown Leacs - JRSAI 1958 and described as "A circular cross-head with vestigial arms") had been removed from the old church at Killegar and brought for safety to the Museum by Peter Pearson about 2-3 years ago. No wonder that Joan Delaney and the writer failed to find this stone when there in 1972, hacking our way through the briars!

It is sad to hear that the house called Beechwood at Loughlinstown is to be demolished. This, as no doubt many of you are aware, was very well known in the 18th century as Owen Bray's Inn, and a favourite meeting-place of the Kilruddery Hunt. A song of that name, commemorating an actual hunt that took place in 1744, names many places very familiar to us today. One place - Bushe's Groves - which has puzzled editors is very easily explained. From 1730-1746 the Rev. John Bushe was Rector of Bray and lived in the family house at Corke where his better known relative, Chief Justice Bushe, was also brought up. Well-known as this song is, probably few realise that it ant-dates by half a century the famous "D'ye ken John Peel".

Many ditties were written about this Inn, its landlord, and its great huntsman, Johnny Adair of Kilternan. Johnny was the son of Robert Adair of Hollybrook, Bray, whose heiress granddaughter married a Hodson and brought the property to that family. Either Robert himself or his youngest son of the same name is said to have been the inspiration of the song "Robin Adair".

Dean and Mrs. Delaney dined at the Inn on their way home after a visit to the Usshers near Wicklow, and she pronounced it very good.

In the early years of the last century it was turned into a private house, facing away from the road, a wall and a long avenue made.

Sesquicentennial - 150 years ago last June, the Mining Company of Ireland was formed. It took over the Ballycorus Lead Mines, already in existence for some time, and many other mines throughout the country, including coal mines in Cork and Tipperary.

The Mining Company did much good in the neighbourhood, giving employment to many and subscribing generously to local charities.

Winter Talks – 1973/74

History of Mining in Ireland

Dr. John S. Jackson
December 6th, 1973.

Mining and quarrying in Ireland extends back into the dimness of antiquity. The earliest settlers, the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age people, who came to Ireland in about 6,000 B.C. were fishermen and hunters who made from flint a variety of objects, such as arrow-heads, spear-heads, scrapers. They used loose flint pebbles from the seashore and lake shore but there is, to-date, no evidence of their mining or quarrying material.

In the Neolithic or Late Stone Age period, which ranged from about 3,000 B.C. to 1,600 B.C., polished stone axes were used, amongst other purposes as grubbers for breaking and cultivating the soil, for these people were Ireland's first farmers, and at least two open-cast mines from which raw material was extracted have been recognised and also axe 'factories' associated with these mines.

The two mines are at Tievebulliagh, near Cushendall in Co. Antrim, and on Rathlin Island, off the north Antrim coast. Here the hard splintery local stone, porcellanite, was quarried, roughed into crudely shaped axes and later smoothed and sharpened and finally polished all over, operations requiring great skill and expertise.

These axes were used virtually over the whole of Ireland and were also exported to Scotland and to the south of England - probably the earliest example of Ireland's export trade. A similar axe factory probably existed in the Portrane area of Co. Dublin where the local stone, the Lambay porphyry, was used.

During this period the building of the great megalithic tombs had started - dolmens, chambered cairns and the great tumuli of Loughcrew, Newgrange, Knocknarea and many other areas throughout the country.

At Queen Maeve's tomb on Knocknarea, near Sligo, many of the statoliths or standing stones of the satellite graves around the great cairn are made of local limestone, roughly hewn and transported from close by.

Immediately below the summit of the mountain are shallow quarry workings, or primitive open casts, from which limestone, identical to that in the standing stones, was raised. These are the oldest recognisable limestone quarries in the country.

During the Bronze Age, 1,600 - 250 B.C., copper was mined at many localities, but particularly in the south and south-west. The mines were usually adits (horizontal drivings) or drifts (inclined drivings), rarely extending more than twenty-five or so into the cliffs or mountain sides and usually five or six feet high.

On Mount Gabriel, near Schull in West Co. Cork, stone mining mauls made from beach cobbles from Schull Harbour have been found in abundance, usually broken and discarded.

At nearby Derrycarhoon similar mauls were found, together with a primitive wooden ladder, wooden shovels and a wooden pipe made in such a way as to suggest a primitive pump for dewatering the workings, for here one of the workings extended downwards to a vertical depth of sixty feet. The mines were excavated by fire-setting, heating the rock wall by fire and quenching it with water, and the charcoal from some of the mines at Mount Gabriel has recently been radiometrically dated to 1,500 B.C. that is of very early Bronze Age.

Similar mines have been found on the south Waterford coast and at Coad Mountain, near Derrynane in Co. Kerry and primitive workings, possibly extending back to this period, are also known at Avoca, now obliterated by later working.

The vast output of gold ornaments during the Bronze Age is well-known from the collection in the National Museum. The source of the native gold is not known with certainty but Gold Mines River and the nearby Aughrim River possibly supplied some of this material in the form of alluvial, or 'float', gold, and old placer mines are known in this area.

It is also probable that native gold was obtained from the weathered gossans of ore bodies exposed at the surface, possibly at Avoca and other localities. Recent work by analysts from Stuttgart, however, has demonstrated that some of the gold used is not of Irish origin, and that some of it possibly came from Central Europe.

Little is known of the iron mines of Iron Age date 250 B.C. to 500 A.D. It is most probable that bog iron ore was used from the bogs and marshes and also possibly clay-ironstone washed out as loose nodules into the stream beds draining the Millstone Grit and Coal Measure areas of the country, North Co. Cork, Limerick, Castlecomer, Slieveardagh, Arigna, Slieve-an-Ierann, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim and others.

In early Christian times much stone was quarried to build the small oratories and later the beautiful Irish Romanesque buildings and the Celtic high crosses.

Here local stone was used as far as possible and it is interesting to note the Dingle peninsula Old Red Sandstone in the building stones of Gallarus near Ballyferriter, the great high crosses of Moone and Castledermot made from the nearby Leinster granite, the Romanesque doorway of the Nun's Church at Clonmacnoise made from local Carboniferous limestone, and the early Romanesque doorway of Killeshin Church, made from the local Millstone Grit.

In medieval times sporadic mining took place, but it was not until the late sixteenth century that mining on a large scale was initiated, this time for iron. It was during this period, from about 1610 to 1640, that the great bulk of our native woodlands were felled to provide charcoal to generate the heat required to smelt iron in furnaces with forced draughts.

Most of the raw ore came from the Old Red Sandstone and from the bog iron ore, with which it was mixed before smelting. This mining and smelting boom ended in the mid 17th century, when the woodlands were virtually exhausted.

At this time also Silvermines was operating as an important source of lead and silver and the Wandesfords had come to Castlecomer to work the clay ironstones for iron production, and, subsequently, the anthracite coals of the district, an activity was continued by the same family up to 1967.

During the eighteenth century many mines were worked, including those at Muckross, Killarney, Avoca, and during the last century mining activities reached large scale proportions, activities closely connected with the field work and geological mapping of the Geological Survey of Ireland, founded in 1845.

Earlier work had been carried out by the Natural History section of the Ordnance Survey, founded in 1825, under Captain Portlock, by Sir Richard Griffith, who, in 1838, had published the first printed geological map of Ireland, and by Thomas Weaver, geologist to the Avoca Mines, who between 1818 and 1839 published maps of over half the country, including the east, south and west.

And so into the twentieth century, and a spectacular renewal of mining activities with sophisticated methods and techniques of prospecting and mining.

Early Railways in Ireland.

**Kevin Murray.
Ed., Railway Record
February 5th, 1974.**

Ireland's first railway, from Westland Row to Dún Laoghaire (then Kingstown) was opened in 1834; and there was soon talk of extending to Bray. The Kingstown-Dalkey extension, worked on the Atmospheric system, opened in 1844, and in the same year, a large-scale plan was formed for a main line to Wexford and Waterford. There was also a scheme for a suburban line from St. Stephen's Green to Rathfarnham and Enniskerry, but the Famine and other events hindered railway-building, and the various schemes were combined and altered to become, eventually, the Dublin & Wicklow Railway Company.

After much trouble, the line from Harcourt Road, Dublin to Bray, and from Dalkey to Bray, was opened in July 1854, and to Wicklow in October 1855. The Harcourt Street terminus came into use in 1859.

It had been hoped to make the whole Wexford line an Atmospheric one, but when that system failed to prove itself, the Kingstown-Dalkey section was converted to locomotive traction and re-opened in July 1856, the original Westland Row line being leased by the Wicklow company, thus bringing the whole Dublin-Wicklow railway under one management. Later extensions were to Wexford and Waterford.

At first, the Harcourt Road-Bray and Bray-Dalkey lines were single track, but increased traffic caused their doubling very soon. The junction at Shanganagh was dispensed with by laying an extra track thence to Bray, giving three tracks abreast - single for the Westland Row trains, and double for the Harcourt Street line (the first Woodbrook "halt" was on the Westland Row line only).

Services were generally hourly, so that Bray had at least two trains per hour with Dublin. There were of course extra trains at peak times, and full services for summer and special days. Bray prospered, having such handy connection with Dublin, and the company did well out of the traffic.

In the Killiney-Bray section, coast erosion was a problem, the line having been laid at the sea's edge on clay cliffs. Abstraction of gravel led to many prosecutions, but in 1915 the line was moved well inland to a new site, the Killiney-Shanganagh portion being doubled, with a new Woodbrook station.

On the Harcourt Street line the fine viaducts at Loughlinstown and Dundrum still stand; they are of local stone, and are fine examples of the skill of the time of their erection.

The original Kingstown line directors early adopted a policy of encouraging commuter traffic by low fares and many concessions, so that residence in their district would be encouraged. The Wicklow company in the main continued this policy, but the Harcourt Street line did not attain the same amount of business, perhaps because the directors looked rather to their main line business, and the latter was expensive to operate through Counties Wicklow and Wexford. The Harcourt Street line was always the main line, and the principal long-distance trains ran that way, the Westland Row line being regarded as the branch.

The talk went beyond the title to include all prehistoric and early historic remains in the Rathmichael area. '*Rathmichael area*' means, roughly, the 6" Sheet 26 (OS) with Rathmichael in the centre. The monuments of the area were illustrated and their relationship to the main colonizing movements in Ireland outlined.

The first large-scale colonization was carried out by farmers arriving on the beaches of Mayo, Sligo and Donegal from the West coast of France before 3,000 B.C. Their principal remains are the court cairns, built where they landed, and over the following 1,000 years or so, spreading across Ulster to Scotland. The court cairns were communal graves, possibly family burial places with each tomb representing a farming family's vault where the bodies were either cremated or inhumed. A breakaway group from the first area of colonization spread down the East coast from mid-Ulster around the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. and possibly continued on into Wales and Cornwall, the evidence for these people are their portal dolmens, burial tombs like the court cairns, good examples of which are found in the Rathmichael area. The portal dolmens in the area are at Ballybrack, Kiltiernan and Brennanstown. All the tombs are in stream-side settings, marking perhaps an expansion into the valleys from the upland ridges where their ancestors in Ulster farmed. In each case the tombs have capstones held up by a back stone and two large portals. Brennanstown is particularly big (it possibly even had a second chamber); the cap on the Kiltiernan tomb is so large that the portals have collapsed. Flint tools found at Ballybrack and Kiltiernan are similar to tools found in the Ulster court cairns confirming the place of origin of the colonists in this part of the country. And pottery found at Zennor in Cornwall is very like pottery found at Kiltiernan - evidence of where their descendants went.

The next major colonization of the country was by people from the West coast of France and burying their dead in passage graves like the one in Newgrange and further west in Loughcrew and Carrowmore. Though the entry point for these people was on the East coast and their tombs cap many of the Dublin and Wicklow hills, they left no evidence of their passing in the Rathmichael area. Their way of life was quite different from that of the farmers who built the portal dolmens; their tombs are often decorated; they could possibly have lived in village groups, and their ancestors in France are known to have used bronze tools.

The wedge tombs at Kattygollagher and (just out-side the Rathmichael area) at Ballyedmonduff are the monuments of the bronze-using colonists who succeeded the stone-using builders of the portal dolmens in the Rathmichael area, around 2,000 B.C. Again, the tombs are megalithic in a great many cases - as at Kattygollagher - but can be made of smaller stones as at Ballyedmonduff. These tombs represent part of yet another movement of people from the West coast of France, this time landing initially in the South West, in Cork/Kerry/Clare, and spreading North Eastwards across the country.

The colonization of the country by bronze-using people was in two main parts - the second being in the Northeast (possibly from Scotland or the North of England) by people burying their dead with urns, very often the urns being of the type called food-vessels. A stone cist containing an urn was found at Jamestown; it is possible that there was an urn burial in the grounds of Old Conna Hill House. A final monument of the Bronze Age is a standing stone at the eastern entrance to Glencullen, similar to standing stones found in the Southwest of the country.

The last pre-historic colonization of Ireland is by iron-using people from about 300 B.C. on.

One group came possibly from Spain, landing on the West coast and building massive forts like those on the Aran Islands.

Another group came to the East coast via Yorkshire bringing La Tène art.

The history of these and other iron-using groups has still to be sorted out. They left their mark on the Rathmichael area - ring-forts, the family farm dwelling of these people, can be found in a number of places including one not far beyond Puck's Castle; there is a hill-fort close to Rathmichael, and Rathmichael itself was sited in another hill-fort.

Circular enclosures surround the early churches in the area - those buildings being the fruit of the conversion of the Irish to Christianity - as at Tully, Ballyman, Killiney, Kilternan and Rathmichael itself.

The frequent destruction of these churches marks the arrival on the East coast of the Vikings. After them came the Normans - but with both of these groups we leave the prehistoric period for the more exact history of people with names and identifiable and datable battles.

Maps

**Andrew Bonar-Law
March 19th, 1974.**

Andrew Law told us about the early maps of Ireland.

The earliest was 1560 where the shape of the country was more or less a rectangle, with a straight Western coast-line.

Next came Mercator (1595) with a more accurate South and East coast-line, to be followed by-Speed (1612), Jansson and Blaeu (1640).

It was not until after the Down Survey that Sir William Petty published his *Hiberniae Delineatio* in 1685, , and Ireland finally assumed her correct shape.

Beginning with a sheet for Rocque's Survey of Co- Dublin, 1760, Mr. Law produced for examination by the audience a number of maps of the neighbourhood.

The earlier of these were interesting in that they gave us an idea of the road pattern of the area, but for practical purposes, the large scale Ordnance Survey 25" and 6" to the mile provided the most detailed picture of this area as it was 100 years ago.

Summer Outings – 1974

June 23rd.

Kilcronee, Fassaroe and Ballyman.
B. Murphy.

- (a) **Kilcronee** - Here we saw the ruins of an early Celtic church presenting some unusual features.

Kilcronee estate, in which the church is situated, has fine trees setting off a 19th century mansion. It belongs to the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God who have five Houses in Ireland. Brother Benignus, who is their historian, very kindly told me what he knows about the place, going back to the 17th century, when the Cromwellian Sir William Flower was granted 200 acres of the lands of Kilcronee and many other places for the sum of £616.

The present house was built about the middle of the last century by Humphrey Lloyd, Provost of Trinity College Dublin. Finding it inconvenient to live so far from his work, he eventually sold it to the D'Arcy family - the brewers - several members of which lived in it. From 1937-46 Kilcronee was run as a Country Club. In 1955 the Order of St. John of God bought it and renamed it St. Joseph's.

- (b) **Fassaroe** - Here we looked at the St. Valerie cross (named after a nearby house) with its strange neckless heads, similar to those on the Blackrock cross and on the shaft of the broken Kiltuc cross. Heads are said to have played a very important part in Celtic belief and they occur in all kinds of odd places.

This cross, according to a 19th century traveller who stayed with friends nearby, was not always situated where it now is, but had been brought here from a neighbouring glen - obviously Ballyman.

We noted that a quern and a font which had been beside the cross until very recently, were missing.

- (c) **Ballyman** - In the SE corner of the old church we checked that the broken fragment of an ancient gravestone decorated with herring-bone pattern is still in situ, built into a recess or aumbrey- (this stone is No.16 in P. Healy's list of the Rathdown Leacs in JRS&I 1958). No. 15 in this list which had been used as a lintel over the East window was removed to the Museum in 1940.

Ballyman Church and Well are named after St. Kevin of Glendalough, and it is very tempting to equate this place with the unidentified Cluain Duach where he founded his first church after leaving the school at Kilnarnagh near Tallaght.

Kenneth Nicholls put forward the suggestion some time ago that Ballyman was probably the original church of Old Connaught, being replaced when it became untenable and "among the Irish", by the church whose ruins are to be seen in Old Connaught Avenue. This would explain why there is no early mention of the latter.

July 14th.

**Puck's Castle, Ringforts & Wedge-Tomb
K. Turner and B. Murphy**

- (a) **Puck's Castle** – while the origins of this castle are obscure, it seems likely that it was built by a member of the Dawe family recorded in the early 14th century and in the 16th as renting land in his Manor of Shankill from the Archbishop of Dublin. And in 1530, Archbishop Alen mentions, in connection with his Manor, “a castle called Dawston there”.

The name by which it is known today may have something to do with the legend of a fairy piper said to flit from rock to rock playing his pipes until finally disappearing down the souterrain.

- (b) **The Double Ring-fort or Hill-fort** – on a height overlooking Rathmichael. It is now so overgrown with the trees of the Forestry Department, that very little of it can be traced. It must have been an important place at one time.

Another small ring-fort close to the road to the SW of the Hill-fort, is also hard to trace, overgrown with furze and bracken.

- (c) **The Dolmen** - situated on the SE slope of the hill off Ballyman Lane, has long been known to antiquaries, and a drawing of it was done by George Petrie in 1820. Today it is classified as a Wedge-tomb.

September 15th.

**Dalkey Old Churchyard and Island.
K. Turner**

This was the highlight of the season with perfect weather for our visit to this fascinating island whose 23 acres hold so much history. Excavations disclose that it was inhabited 3,000 years ago by people with their domestic animals and there are remains of a pre-historic promontory fort. In early Christian times a church was, built (now in ruins). From the 12th century the island formed part of the Archbishop of Dublin's Manor of Shankill; and, in 1326, after a devastating raid carried out by the rebels from the mountains, was the only part of the Manor able to pay him rent for the grazing – 2d! In the opening years of the 19th century, a Martello Tower and accompanying fortification were built to meet the threat of a French invasion.

On a boulder, close to the West end of the church, is carved a cross similar to those found in Syria.

October 13th.

**Mount Venus Dolmen & Kilmashogue Gallery
Grave,
B. Murphy**

- (a) **Mount Venus Dolmen** - The length (21') and weight (45 tons) of the colossal capstone are almost identical with those of the Kilternan dolmen. Estyn Evans calls it a Portal-Grave, but it has not been supported by its uprights since it was first recorded.
- (b) **Kilmashogue** - A short climb up this hill brings one to a clearing in another of the Forestry Department's plantations, and gives a superb view over the country to the West.

Barry Murphy showed us the remains of a wedge-grave, complicated by later burials.

Some cleaning-up could well be done here, or it will disappear under the rapidly encroaching bracken and furze.

R.H.R.



DOLMEN - BALLYBRACK

