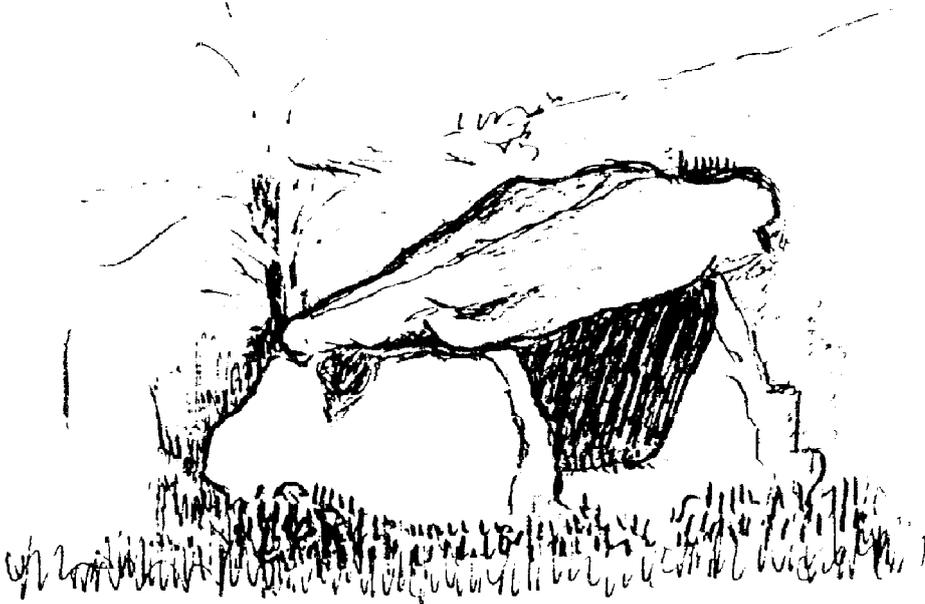


Rathmichael Historical Record

The Journal of the Rathmichael Historical Society



WEDGE TOMB - RATHMICHAEL -

Rathmichael Record

Editor: M. K. Turner

1980 1981



Winter Talks – 1980

Friday, January 18th -

The Annual General Meeting was held on January 18th when the following officers and committee were elected:-

President - Mr Gerard Slevin

Committee: -

Hon. Secretary - Mrs Joan Delany

Mrs M. K. Turner

Hon. Treasurer - Mr James McNamara

Miss Mary Treston

Col D. Boydell

Mr. P.J. Corr

Mr. R.C. Pilkington, as the longest-standing member of the Committee, retired temporarily.

Following on the business of the meeting, an illustrated talk entitled *Excavations at Killeel* was given by Mr. Conleth Manning. This talk was particularly interesting to students of the Archaeology Course who had themselves done some work on this site. There was a good attendance.

Friday, February 15th -

Our President, Mr. Gerard Slevin, Chief Herald of Ireland, gave a very interesting talk on *History in Bookplates* with many fascinating illustrations.

Friday, October 17th -

An illustrated talk entitled "Irish Ceramics" was given by Mrs. Maireád Reynolds of the National Museum.

Friday, November 21st

For the second time Mrs. Betty O'Brien, one of our members, gave us an illustrated talk. The subject tonight - *Some pre-Norman Churches in South County Dublin*, was especially interesting to those of us who are already familiar with some of the churches mentioned. We know that these have recently been studied in considerable detail by the speaker.

We would like to take this opportunity to offer our congratulations to Betty O'Brien on gaining her M.A. (UCD) degree in Archaeology a few months ago. We look forward to further talks from her.

SUMMER VISITS

Saturday, May 24th 1980 - Rathfarnham Area

A typical May day, sunny but cool. We drove first to Glensouthwell, the grounds of which adjoin on the east St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham. At the top of a long drive stands a fine early 18th century house, built in 1709 probably by Sir Robert Southwell who, it would seem, was an important official in the Revenue Department. The Southwell family is said to have come over to Ireland with William of Orange, but is difficult to trace today. In 1787 a Captain William Southwell was living in this house and the beauties of the place were extolled by writers who mentioned in particular the delights of a breakfasting room in the glen called Merlin's Cave.

Through the glen flows a stream, tumbling down from the Three Rock Mountain, crossed by a charming little bridge made of rough boulders. The trees in the glen - mainly beeches and chestnuts - are very fine and the place has always been known for its rhododendrons.

The front of the house is the original part, the back having been added on at some period, the reverse of the usual custom. The present owners have been obliged to lower the high chimneys of the period, and to remove the slates which once covered the side walls.

On the left of the house as one approaches is a Folly which the owners believe was formerly an icehouse, later built up as a Folly.

In a field on the right of the avenue not long after entering the grounds, stands a well-known dolmen or rather part of one as the capstone is missing. Today it consists of three tall upright stones only. Dalton who, in his *History of County Dublin*, 1838, calls it a Brehon Chair says:- "There is no stone where the seat should be, but a very large one lies beside it, resting in an inclined position on smaller ones". Dr. Ball in his *History* reproduces a sketch by Beranger which shows, beside the three uprights, a large boulder balancing precariously on two very small stones, and adds, "There was formerly near it ... what was evidently the covering stone".

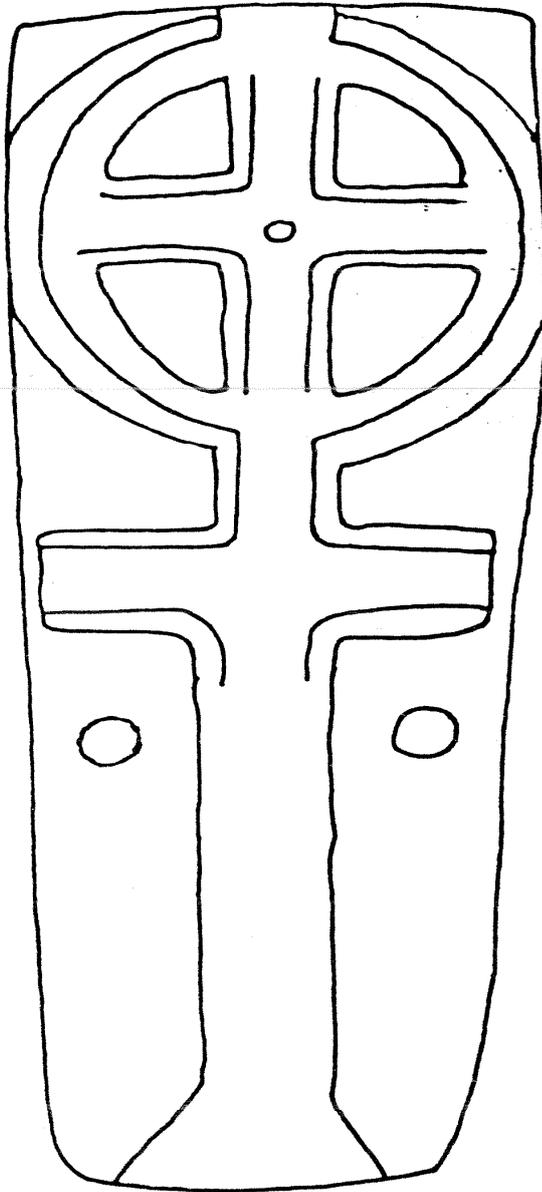
Whitechurch - A good half mile north of the present Church of Ireland church of the same name lie the ruins of the parish church, sometimes called Alba from the colour of the robes

worn by the monks of St. Mary's Abbey to whom it belonged from early Norman times. Sometimes it is called by the rather puzzling name 'Kilhunsinn' which a friend has tentatively suggested may mean 'ash-trees'. (Another example of this name occurs in Strongbow's charter of 1172-4 - Lessnahuinnseinn).

This is not a very interesting church as it exhibits no sign of a very early origin. There is no door in the west end, the only one being in the north wall; an original chancel has a very small pointed arch, and the east window is large and square. All these details can now easily be seen as Council workmen have been employed for some time in cleaning the building and clearing it and the surrounding graveyard from the briars and tangled grass, etc., in which they were formerly smothered.

Despite the present appearance of the church, the site is evidently an ancient one as, besides the exciting discovery by the workmen of a 5 ft. pillar stone inscribed with two crosses, not long ago Paddy Healy found a hitherto unrecorded slab with diagonal lines, somewhat similar to the other stones found at church sites in the Barony and now known as the Rathdown leacs. Disappointingly, the old Font which Dalton found there in 1838, seems to have disappeared for ever.

On the way to Larch Hill dolmen at which we had a quick look as we had been there before, we stopped at the C. of I. church to see *The Wartstone* as it is called or cross-base which lies on the grass verge at the road-side just mid-way between the two entrances to the church opposite. Close to the mortice which must once have held the shaft of a cross, is inscribed a very small cross with splayed extremities, exactly similar to that on the north wall (exterior) of the old Dalkey church, on the east cross at Tully and on a small triangular fragment of stone found by P. J. O'Reilly at the Kill church, but now vanished. O'Reilly says that crosses of this description may date from anywhere between the 5th and 8th centuries and adds that they are "invariably associated with memorials of the dead or with inscriptions asking a prayer for the dead who gave, or the craftsman who wrought, the object on which they occur".



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Early Christian Grave Slab from Whitechurch

Saturday, June 28th

Drogheda- (Report by Patrick Corr)

We met Mr. Jim Garry as arranged, at 4.00 p.m. on the Dublin Road - all 7 of us! After a short talk by him on the street, we proceeded to St. Lawrence's Gate, standing across a busy highway, with some remnants of the old City walls still showing. This was followed by a visit to the Augustinian Abbey and (via the Magdalene Tower) St. Peter's Church where we saw (inter much alia) some skeleton tomb covers, and got an interesting summary of the histories of both. We then re-crossed the Boyne and were shown another surviving church. This is beside the point where Cromwell first breached the walls.

Cromwell's 'visit' was remembered again at the next stop after climbing up 'The Mound' to Millmount Fort where he was strongly resisted. It has been restored fairly recently and provides a panorama near and far of much interest. At the base of the mound we ended our tour in the Millmount Museum. It is small, but all the space is chock-full of a variety of exhibits, ranging from portraits and pictures down to old-style kitchen utensils and mouse traps. It included a display of banners, etc. one group of which brought much delight to our President who had been concerned with these a week or two earlier, but had never expected to find them here 'in the flesh' in Drogheda.

Our time was too brief to do justice to the little museum. It would well repay another visit, either individual or collective.

Saturday, July 26th - An Archaeological Afternoon –

A Cashel at the Scalp and Ballybetagh Burial Mound:

Dicky Pilkington was our guide, and our host to tea at 'Kingston Grove' afterwards. The weather was good and we had a very pleasant day or 'Archaeological afternoon'.

We went first to Ballybetagh to see the Burial Mound, well-known to students of the Archaeology Course who spent some time a couple of years ago examining it under the guidance of Leo Swan. Ballybetagh Bog, the site of the one-time lake over to the west of the mound, where the bones and antlers of hundreds of the Great Irish Elk were found in the last century was pointed out. From here we continued on the road to Killegar, turning off it into a field on the left where we parked the cars and walked into the pine woods above the Scalp.

After about a quarter of a mile we came to the remains of a substantial cashel, hidden in the thick bracken and ferns. (It is marked on Rocque's map of County Dublin). This cashel, the entrance to which seems to have been on the east side, must have been a formidable fort at one time with walls probably 13 ft. to 15 ft. in height. Most of its stones have been lost long ago, doubtless to the quarriers.

Saturday, September 27th - Chester Beatty Library -

Members of the Society visited, by arrangement, the Chester Beatty Library in Ballsbridge. We were most courteously and helpfully received by Dr. Patrick Henchy and Mr. David James, who devoted their afternoon to us.

There is no need to recount here the wealth of original manuscripts and objects which the Library contains - such information is readily available elsewhere - but it is important to record that the visit was one of the best attended summer trips that the society has organised. Should we try more often to set our own antiquities against a distant horizon?

Excavations At Killeel - Conleth Manning

Two seasons of excavation were undertaken here in the Summers of 1977 and 1978. The work was financed by Kildare County Council, the guardians of the church ruin, with the assistance of volunteers from the County Kildare Archaeological Society and the Rathmichael Historical Society.

The interior of the church and a strip, 1 metre wide, around the outside of the walls were excavated to the level of the original floor. Four main phases of activity were recognised.

Phase 1. The eastern part of the nave was found to be the remains of an early mortar-built church without antae, This was a small single-cell church with trabeate doorway, the lintel of which survives and round headed east window, the heads of which survive rebuilt into the south wall of the nave. This church might be as early as the 10th century. An early granite grave slab was also found.

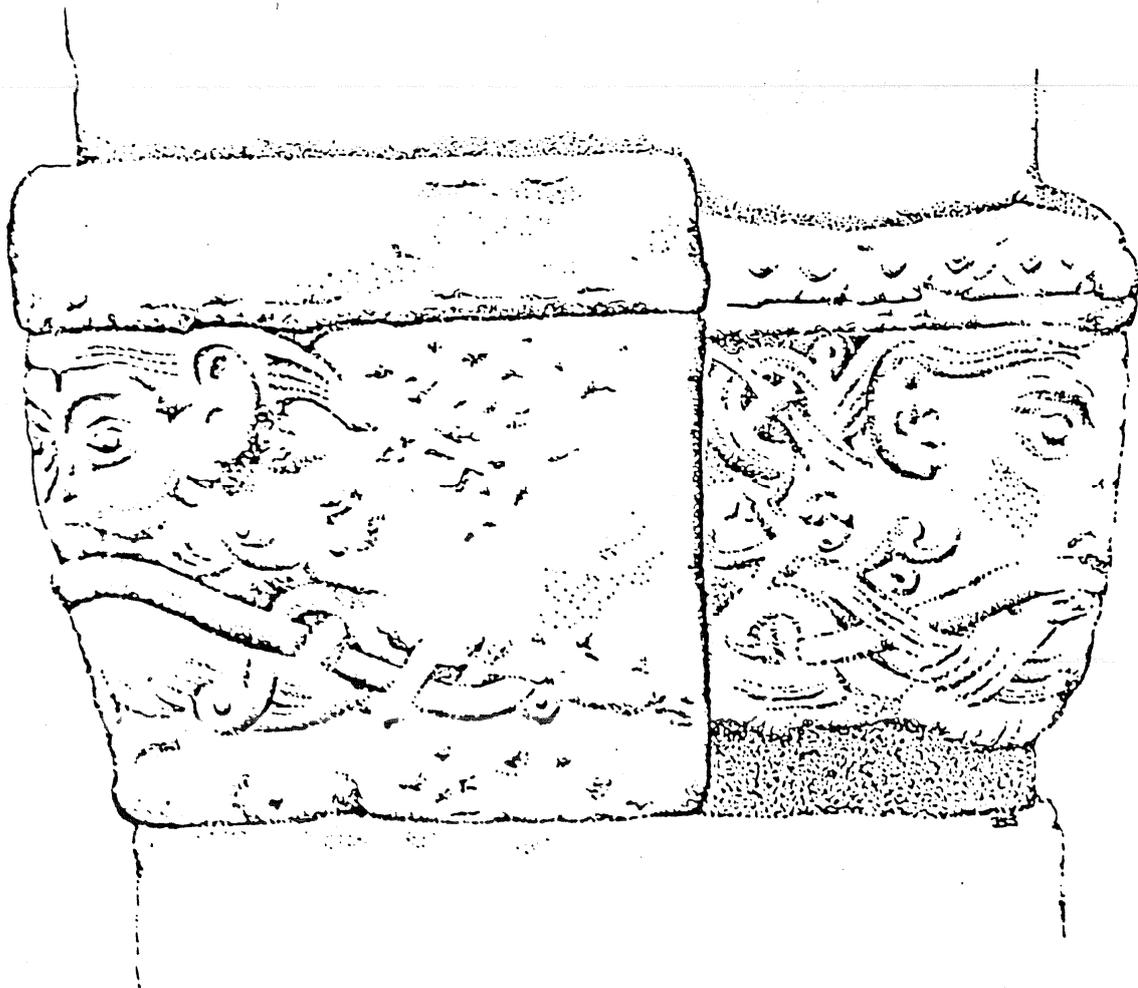
Phase 2. In the twelfth century a magnificently carved Romanesque chancel arch was added to the earlier church. The piers of this arch were reconstructed from fragments found in situ and others from the nearby farmyard in the 30s by H. G. Leask. The figured scenes represented

include Adam and Eve, Samson and the lion, Jacob and the angel, David and Goliath, a dancer or acrobat and an ecclesiastic. Further pieces from the arch were uncovered in the excavation and rebuilt into the nave extension. These were two stones with chevron ornament and a very interesting piece showing a clothed figure with a cow's head and holding a staff. This appears to represent St. Luke the Evangelist.

Phase 3. In medieval times the parish was under the control of the Knights Hospitallers who had a preceptory at Kilteel, some remains of which survive. The nave was extended westwards and a new and larger chancel was added probably in the thirteenth century. This church had doorways in the north walls of both nave and chancel. Fragments of green-glazed ridge tiles belonging to this period were found and part of a grave slab.

Phase 4. The church became ruined by the beginning of the seventeenth century and is so recorded in diocesan visitation accounts of the period. However, the excavation uncovered evidence that the church was reroofed for a short period in the mid to late seventeenth century. An undisturbed layer of roof collapse dating to this period was found over the interior of the nave and beneath it were burials inserted while the church was in ruin in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century. The walls were plastered also at this stage and the north door of the nave was blocked up and a new door opened in the west wall. Broken glass from the windows was recovered and it was possible to reconstruct some complete ridge tiles from the fragments found.

Fragments of medieval and post-medieval pottery, clay pipe fragments, brass shroud pins and other iron, bronze and stone finds were recovered. Of particular interest was a piece of green porphyry imported from some ancient Roman site - possibly for insertion in an altar. After the excavation the walls were repointed and conserved, the edges of the excavation were graded and the excavated area covered with a layer of chippings.



Irish Ceramics - Mairéad Reynolds

Ceramics have been made in Ireland for over 5,500 years. For much of the time this meant the production of simple domestic and funerary ware all made from Irish clay.

The potter's wheel was not introduced into this country until Norman times..With it came a new attitude to the craft. While the individual rural potter continued to make unglazed storage and cooking pots for the local market, the specialist potter established himself in urban areas, and made the new wheel-turned lead-glazed ware.

With the introduction of a delftware factory to Belfast in 1688, Irish ceramics entered an industrial phase. Delftware, creamware, porcelain, "china" and glazed earthenware factories were established throughout the country. Although many of them were encouraged by the Irish Parliament and the (Royal) Dublin Society, few were able to compete with cheap importations.

Throughout much of the 19th century there was the constant struggle to renew the Irish ceramic industry. There were successes such as Belleek in the industrial field and Vodrey in the artistic, but real success for the Irish industrial and craft ceramics came in the twentieth century.

History in Book-plates - Gerard Slevin

The Book-plate, as we know, is a piece of printed paper placed inside the cover of a book to indicate its ownership. It could be said that you might as well write your name on the book, but the lecturer showed that the formal action of preparing a plate caused people to think about themselves, and identify themselves, in many ways.

The book-plate is almost as old as the printed book. Approaches to its design have varied greatly over the centuries. Up to the third quarter of the nineteenth century most book-plates were of a heraldic character. The reason for this may not be far to seek: the people who owned books were very likely those of property and had armorial bearings. How better to proclaim your ownership than by putting your heraldic insignia on your book? The presentation of the coat of arms, the design of the plate itself, varied with the period. Thus some book-plates are classified as Jacobean because they show the solid furniture designs of that age; others are

described as Chippendale, in which solidity has given place to ribbon and floral designs. During the next century the heraldic theme, though it continued, yielded place to intriguing designs which expressed the interests, hopes and fears of book owners who wished to identify their property and to commemorate themselves. The phrase ex libris had become an established part of the English language.

The illustrations were drawn largely from the two important collections of book-plates preserved in the National Library of Ireland, the Wilkinson and the Chamney.



Castletown of Upper Ossory.

Field Archaeology

The sixth Course in Field Archaeology was held 18th to 22nd August 1980, during which excavation continued at Ballyman by kind permission of Mr. John Leeson, and was directed by Mrs. Elizabeth O'Brien and Mr. Leo Swan. A Medieval iron working area has been found probably associated with the nearby Early Christian/Medieval church of Ballyman. 29 students enrolled and a bus was needed for the excursion to the Boyne Valley, where Dr. George Eogan showed the group around Knowth excavations and Professor M. J. O'Kelly conducted a tour of New Grange. Finbar McCormick fascinated the students with a seminar on animal bones which may be found on excavations.

The evening lectures got off to a good start with Mr. Richard Warner, Assistant Keeper of Antiquities, Ulster Museum. On Tuesday 19th Dr. Peter Woodman spoke about his excavations at Mount Sandel and showed his collection of microliths found there. Dr. Seamus Caulfield speaking on Prehistoric Settlement, also gave a pre-view of his adventure in going by helicopter to Dun Briste. Professor O'Kelly practically got a standing ovation for his descriptions of excavation of New Grange and his pictures of the sun shining into the tomb for a short time on the shortest days of the year. Mr. Liam de Paor brought the Course to a close with an excellent talk about excavations at Inis Cealtra.

Once again Irish Cement Limited gave a financial contribution for which we are very grateful.

Miscellanea - 1980

Turkish Baths, Bray

The work of demolition begun in 1979 was completed in the early part of 1980 with the final removal of every stone of this building, unique in Ireland, which has been a feature of Bray for over a century.

It was built for Dr. Barter of Blarney by William Dargan who did so much for Bray, in 1859. A recent publication "Bray Architectural Heritage", names the architect as Sir John Benson, architect of the first Dublin Exhibition. A. L. Doran in his "Bray and its Environs" 1903 (now, of course, out of print) says that the project proved too ambitious for Bray and the building lapsed into a series of Assembly Rooms for hire. The east and west wings were rented as meeting places for the Plymouth Brethren and the Friends, while the large centre room could be hired for public entertainment. He adds, "Of late years the present proprietor has had the building thoroughly renovated, and has decently shrouded the vestiges of its once gay exterior under a dun but serviceable coat of cement".

Most Bray people remember the Turkish Baths as a Picture House, which it became in the '30s, but before that, it made a fine Concert Hall with excellent acoustics. The destruction of this exotic building of Moorish design at a time when Victorian architecture is in high favour is hard to understand.

Sherrington

Another demolition here in Shankill, a sad ending to a fine house but, perhaps, a "merciful release" after years of humiliation as the offices of a caravan site.

Sherrington was the home of Miss Caroline Erck since she inherited it from her uncle and aunt, Cot. and Mrs. Wentworth Erck in the early years of this century. They had lived here since about the 1860s. It was built c. 1825 and, although on this account, preceded the Victorian Age, the image it had acquired during the last 100 years, was certainly a Victorian one. This is not the place to try to assess that image or to pay more than a passing tribute to the part played by Miss Erck in the affairs of the whole neighbourhood. In those days less affluent than today, no one would lack help if she could give it - in return she was loved and respected by all.

Some of us older people remember the formal calls on newcomers to the area, with visiting cards; the games of croquet or Lexicon according to the season of the year; the afternoon tea-parties round the dining room table with china and Indian tea poured out by the hostess herself (even when past the age of 90), the home-made cakes, hot scones with jam, usually strawberry or raspberry, grown in her own garden. There were twelve guests, and no one who received an invitation would think of refusing - it was almost a royal command!

A small brass tablet in Rathmichael close to the south door and at the end of the pew she always occupied, simply records that Caroline Erck died in 1958, aged 97. That is all she would have wished.

Cross-inscribed Slab.

An exciting find was made this spring when council workmen employed in cleaning and clearing the old church and churchyard of Whitechurch, Rathfarnham, discovered a hitherto unrecorded slab or pillar stone inscribed with crosses.

The newly found stone is a fine one - A tapering slab measuring exactly 5 ft. long by 21 inches wide at the top and 12 inches at the bottom. The top portion shows a Greek (equal-armed) cross in a circle with beneath it and continuing from it, a Latin cross coming down all the way.

Similar to Fairy Hill slab. (p. 4)

Book Reviews - 1980

Two books on Bray appeared this year - "Bray Architectural Heritage" and "A Drink from Broderick's Well" by Colbert Martin.

Bray Architectural Heritage - This little book is a report of a survey of the architecture of Bray, its churches, houses, shops, hotels, etc. Its 94 pages are packed with interesting details as we follow our guide street by street. As well as 39 illustrations we are given a list of books on Irish architecture and various aspects of it, another list of books (mostly out of print) for further information, and a most useful 12 - page glossary of architectural terms. Surely good value of £3.00

The main object of this book - the 4th in the National Heritage Inventory series undertaken by An Foras Forbartha - is to focus our attention on buildings of architectural merit in our own locality which it is hoped, rather naively perhaps, may lead to their conservation. How ironical then that it should appear just as the brightest jewel in the crown of Bray's Victorian heritage was finally demolished and every stone removed!

Bray is a fine town with many good shops, excellent residential areas, good hotels - but there is a lack of something which we may call romance or glamour which could so well have been supplied by the exotic, Moorish-style building which began in 1859 as the Turkish Baths, later to become the Assembly Rooms and, finally in the 30s a Picture House. Unique in Ireland, this had been a feature of Bray for 120 years.

In the Preface to this book we are told that it is only a preliminary survey or record intended to arouse interest, the idea being eventually to issue a revised and extended version, with local help. Realizing this, I feel, however, that I must draw attention to one omission, i.e. that of Little Bray Castle from which the main street in Little Bray gets its name. This was, demolished in, I believe, 1938. On p. 1 it is stated that there were 2 castles in Bray in late medieval times - there were, however, 3.

A Drink from Broderick's Well - by Colbert Martin

The author has chosen the period from 1900 to 1939 when the outbreak of World War Two ended an era, to depict life in Little Bray - a period of time which he describes as one of simple living, uncorrupted by television, when people made their own entertainment and the young

boys could find all the outlet they wanted for their energy in the People's Park and down by the river.

As the author claims, this is not a history. It may be best described as a kaleidoscopic view of people and the events in the daily life of those who had drunk of Broderick's Well and were thereby qualified to be called Braymen. From an old book on Bray I find that a "tailor named Broderick lived close to the Weir in the Valley of Diamonds early in the 19th century and made suits for many gentlemen whose grandsons would disdain to wear a coat made in a cottage". To quote yet another source, the Valley of Diamonds, just west of Little Bray, got its name from the Bray river, seen at the broadest part of the valley, flowing on to the sea "sparkling and flashing in the early sunlight like diamonds of the purest water" (Ward and Locke's Guide p. 59)

WINTER LECTURES Friday, January 23rd

At the Annual General Meeting held in the Burton Hall the following Officers and Ordinary Members of the Committee were elected:-

President - Mr. Gerard Slevin, Chief Herald of Ireland

Hon. Secretary - Mrs. Joan Delany

Hon. Treasurer - Mr. Nicholas Healy

Ordinary Members - Mrs. Kathleen Turner

Miss Wendy Guilford

Mr. P. J. Corr

Miss Wendy Guilford

Mr. Damien McGarry

Mr. Kevin O'Rourke

Following on the business of the meeting, an illustrated talk was given by Mrs. Turner entitled "Some Old Houses in the Area".

The houses of which slides were shown included those of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries - Old Connaught House, Old Conna Hill, Jubilee Hall, Wilford, the Old Glebe, Cherrywood, Mullinastill, Loughlinstown House, the modern Shanganagh Castle, Clontra and Beechgrove.

The Speaker showed how, when and where development started in the area under discussion, that is from Bray to Loughlinstown; how the medieval castle or tower house gave way gradually to the unfortified house; and of how, in the 19th century, a variety of styles in house-building prevailed - some newly-erected, some of 18th century origin adapted to the fashion of the day.

Friday, February 27th at 8. p.m. in the Burton Hall

An illustrated talk was given by Dr. Daniel Kelly entitled "The growth of Irish Woodlands"

This was the worst night of the season with a SE gale accompanied by heavy rain, and very cold. About 30 persons attended despite the weather and, to judge by the questions asked after the lecture, were greatly interested.

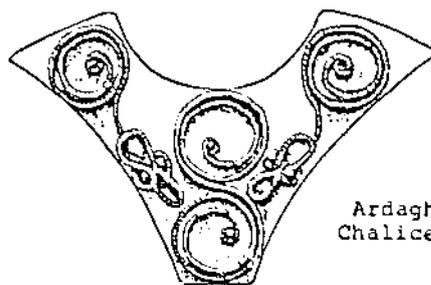
The speaker said that thousands of years B.C. the country was almost entirely covered with forests, but, as there was no documentation, we can only know what trees were there by means of the pollen deposit, and by the bogs which preserved the wood. He showed very interesting slides of the pollen, saying that the amount of pollen produced by trees varied considerably. For example, hazel catkins produced thousands of pollen-grains each.

From this pollen we know now what trees existed in Ireland, brought over probably at the time when we were linked with Britain .and the Continent of Europe. Oak and yew stand out prominently as forest trees. Elm, ash and holly were also there. The wood of the yew was used for making bows, and was largely planted in churchyards. We still find the yew common, especially in Kerry where the arbutus from the Mediterranean seeds itself freely.

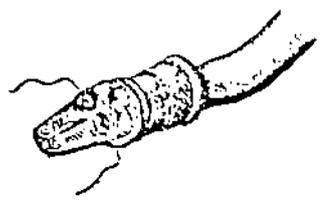
The Brehon Laws protected trees, exacting punishment for damage to them, fines being paid in cattle. Ireland lost her trees gradually. The coming of the Iron Age about 700 B.C. enabled trees to be readily felled, so that by 300 A.D. the forests of Ireland had very considerably dwindled.



Cross of Cong



Ardagh
Chalice



Friday, March 27th at 8 p.m. in the Burton Hall.

An illustrated talk entitled “A Look at Irish Metalwork” was given by Mrs. Joan Delany.

There are places in Ireland where the remains of prehistoric mines are to be found. One is on Mount Gabriel in West Cork. About 2,000 B.C. at the beginning of Ireland's Bronze Age, personal ornaments were being made of thin beaten gold, decorated with geometric designs. Later, gold bars with various forms of cross-section were twisted to make torcs, armlets and earrings. By 1,200 B.C. metal objects were being cast in moulds. Bronze was used for cauldrons, shields and large pins, not to mention tools and weapons. These were produced for home use and also for export.

The demand for bronze decreased when the Celts arrived, bringing with them iron technology and their own styles of decoration, in particular that called La Tene, which with its trumpet spirals and curvilinear abstract designs, influenced Irish Art for many centuries. In the Brougher hoard (1st century B.C.) there is a gold tore such as can be seen around the neck of the Celtic god Cernunnos on the Gundestrup cauldron in Copenhagen, which is of similar date. The god holds another tore in his right hand and a ram-headed snake in the left. Although this latter monster does not appear on any Iron Age object found in Ireland, it is to be found in Christian metalwork right down to the 12th century. Many decorated objects survive from this early period - a bronze trumpet, horse bits, pennanular brooches. The art of enamelling was also introduced in pre-historic times.

With the coming of Christianity a new wealth of designs and themes was available, which inspired artists and craftsmen to produce by the 8th century great works of art, such as the Ardagh Chalice and the Tara Brooch. Using every known technique of metalwork, these objects have not been equalled in skill to the present day.

The Vikings added their quota of influence, and by the 12th century another great period of production gave us the numerous shrines, for example that of St. Patrick's Bell and the Cross of Cong. Highly decorated croziers were also made at this time.

After the Norman invasion much mass-produced metalwork was imported from France and the Irish artists seem to have gone underground until the 17th century. Charles I gave the Goldsmiths of Dublin their charter in 1637 and Georgian silver became and has remained

world-famous.

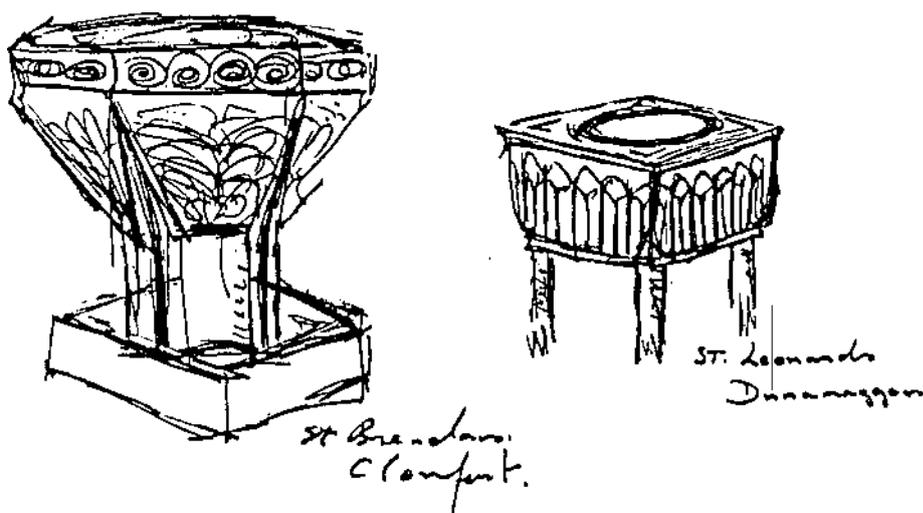
Ireland now has a well-established tradition of contemporary metalwork. For example at Boher Church in Co. Offaly, the 12th century St. Manchan's shrine holds pride of place; it is now paired with a fine modern tabernacle.

Joan Delany

Friday, October 23rd in the Burton Hall.

An illustrated talk entitled "Irish Medieval Baptismal Fonts" was given by Mr. Damien Mac Garry.

The Christian rite of Baptism is referred to, and the rubrics described, in Irish manuscripts of the early medieval period now surviving in continental libraries but no mention is made of the use of a font. The introduction of Christianity into Ireland did not lead to the building-of great cathedral churches in the continental style, with baptisteries either detached or adjoining the church, but rather to smaller and more parochial buildings perhaps indicative of the more fragmentary episcopal structure of the Celtic Church and without identifiable areas reserved for Baptism. It seems from the present level of research of the writer and others interested in the medieval baptismal font in Ireland that no identifiable baptismal vessels from the early church



survive -

if

they ever existed. It is possible that some of the crude granite basins and bullauns to be found on some early sites may have been used for the baptismal rite but this cannot be asserted with any certainty. The first positive statement which refers to the use of the font occurs in Giraldus

Cambrensis' report of the Synod of Cashel in 1172 in which a directive is given to the Irish that, amongst other requirements, the font must be used for the rite of baptism.

The surviving medieval fonts found in Ireland are all of stone, though there are records indicating the existence of certainly *one* font of brass in Waterford. The surviving fonts are largely native in origin with the exception of a group of fonts of a type referred to as "cushion capital" from their similarity to a capital type in use in the mid to late 11th century such as in the crypt of the Cathedral Church of Worcester. This group of fonts, scattered in the eastern portion of the country from Wexford to Louth, are probably the earliest fonts extant in Ireland in terms of date, being imports constructed of West of England stone and dateable to the late 11th century.

What may be regarded as the earliest native font is a finely decorated Romanesque tub font in St. Laserian's Church in Wicklow town, whose shape is archaic but from its overall style suggests a date c. 1200 A.D. A study of a medieval baptismal fonts of Ireland shows that while the overall font shapes are common to Ireland, Britain and the continent of Europe, the decorative schemes are essentially native in form and even produce schemes of mixed origin as in the c. 15th century font at St. Brendan's Cathedral, Clonfert, which has archaic palmette decoration of English style and trumpet spirals in the tradition of the illuminated manuscripts.

No review, however brief, of the Irish medieval font would be complete without mention of a group of fonts found in the diocese of Ossory. The group all of local black limestone are of the type sometimes referred to as *Tournai* after the great font of that French town. Square, supported by a centre column and four turned shafts at the corners, the type is found in many places, but the Ossory series is of particular interest as it appears to be the only area in the country with a particular coherent style of font. The Ossory fonts of this type are substantial, calculations suggest a weight of up to 3/4 of a ton for the bowls of some, but all decorated with arcading on the sides though some variations of arcade style occurs. While the main body of the group may be dated to the early 13th century, the square polypod form survived in Ossory to be used in the fine carved font at Thomastown, discovered by the writer, and dateable from armorial evidence to the first quarter of the 16th century (OKR 19 80).

The conclusion one reaches about the medieval font in Ireland is that there is a remarkably rich survival of fonts displaying a diversity of shape and decoration but which all in one way or

another are essentially native in character.

Damien C. Mac Garry

Friday, November 20th at 8 p.m. in the Rathmichael Church

An illustrated talk was given by Dr H.S. Corran “An introduction to Industrial Archaeology”.

Dr. Corran knows all about his subject. He was, of course, the founder of the *Guinness Museum of Industrial Archaeology*. The lecturer began by stressing the historical value of this aspect of archaeology, and, after a general summary of the subject, he explained how one may discover objects of interest in any locality. The Ordnance Survey 6” maps are very helpful as they go into a considerable amount of detail.

Slides to illustrate his talk included some of fine museums in Germany and Austria, which latter country, despite its small size, had one particularly good museum.

As well as slides, Dr. Corran brought with him a selection of books which he has collected on the subject and a number of photographs to show us. Among the latter was one of special interest to those of us who live in Shankill, and to all who are familiar with the well-known chimney of the Ballycorus Lead Mines. This photograph shows the one-time Shankill Railway Station with the siding used by the trucks bringing the lead ore from Glendalough (whence it was obtained after the vein of ore had dried up at Ballycorus, about 1850) to the smelting works at Ballycorus.

Summer Visits

Sunday, May 17th - "A Natural History Walk"

This walk was devised by Dicky Pilkington who, in the end, was unable to come himself and asked Lady Ainsworth to take his place. The weather was miserable, very heavy and bitterly cold showers followed one another from over the hills to the west with remorseless frequency. Driving along the Ballybetagh road from Kilternan we parked the cars in a field on the left where the riders from the Killegar Stables exercise their horses.

This was the time for the gorse, and never has it blossomed so wonderfully as this year. We strolled up and down either side of the bridle-path, picking little flowers to identify them later from the books, until the worsening weather made it impossible to continue. About twelve persons turned up - better weather would, almost certainly, have induced many more to come.

Sunday, June 21st - Blessington Area

Our guides here were Damien McGarry and Rory O'Farrell. The meeting place was outside the Downshire Arms in Blessington. The weather was perfect from start to finish and we had a wonderful day as well as a very interesting one.

First to Burgage - the old name of Blessington - to see St. Mark's cross. After that to Ballymore Eustace to the Church of Ireland church just short of the town. This church is most picturesquely situated on a height above the road, entirely surrounded by beautiful trees, most of them lime which is unusual. Close to the church is a large granite High Cross, and not far off, and almost submerged in the long grass, a small one with one arm broken.

Immediately inside the church is a very large, plain, quite undecorated font on a pedestal. Further in, is the effigy of a knight in chain armour, a member of the Anglo-Norman Fitz-Eustace family from whom the place gets its name.

Sunday, July 19th - A Walk around Shankill Village.

Meeting as usual, at the Rathmichael Schoolhouse, we left the cars there and set out on foot to see what we could discover about our village of Shankill.

First we looked at the Schoolhouse itself and heard that it was built in 1892 when it was moved

here from Loughlinstown where it had been since about 1830, in the building now well-known as the Silver Tassie, on land given by the Domvile family. The historian Dalton in 1838 states “In the village of Loughlinstown is a school for about 70 children, supported by the Protestant curate, (i.e. the Rev. John Hunt living in Cherrywood House) and by private subscriptions”. In 1964 the school was enlarged as part of the celebrations connected with the centenary of the modern Rathmichael church - the old part being now used as an Assembly Hall, the Burton Hall in memory of the first rector. The Stonebridge road which we crossed to enter the village was constructed soon after the coming of the railway (Harcourt Street Line) in 1854. A Mr. John S. Sloane, writing in the Dublin Literary Gazette in 1858, described the road which he took from the station to get to the Old Rathmichael graveyard, as “going across the valley to meet the old coach road from Loughlinstown to Bray”. This road may have been constructed to facilitate the transport of lead ore coming from Glendalough, from a siding in the station, to its destination, the Smelting Works at Ballycorus.

Down the Library road which, when the library was built in 1912, stopped there, only fields lying between it and the Stonebridge road until it was continued in the 1930s. The library, recently drastically re-organised by the council, had been run on the proverbial shoe-string, and had been put to many uses; for example, it had served as a Court-house, a Polling station and for Mass. From here it is only a step to the village green which also had a face-lift recently, transforming it from a dull and worn patch of ground occasionally used for kicking a football, into a fine piece of emerald-green turf - the pride of the village.

On the way to the oldest part of the village, Tillystown, we pass the Old Folks' Club house built in 1979, near where the stream known as the dyke ran its sluggish course impeded by the usual tin cans, bottles, etc., until covered over in 1976. Tillystown, otherwise known as the Lower Road, dates from the 1860s when the local landlord, Sir Charles Domvile, evicted his tenants for refusing to pay the increase of rent demanded by him. Mr. Tilly of Chantilly took pity on them and gave them a piece of his land close to the main road. In this way began the modern village of Shankill which was at first known as Tillystown. The ancient settlement and medieval village of Shankill lay much further west on the slopes of Carrickgollogan.

Turning right at the cross-roads, we come to the old Shankill school which Fr. Healy noted in his diary that he had opened one day in 1867 with 38 pupils. From here we come to the main road by Harry Moloney's garage, once the forge in the days before the horse was ousted by

the motor car. There was a coach-building industry in Shankill then. A coach-house belonging to Tony Tierney's grandfather, still there, forms one side of a charming little corner of old Shankill, hidden away, with its white-washed walls and boxes of geraniums and nasturtiums reminding one of somewhere in the Mediterranean.

On the way back to our meeting place we pass the old Post Office, on the railway bridge, one part of a double house, each with its own drawbridge-like approach to the door over a steep drop. Here the sweet-scented jasmine used to grow from which I got a cutting from Mrs. Nelson, the Post Mistress.

Passing St. Anne's Church, I remember it being built in the 30s. I believe the foundation stone was laid in 1932, and that building was finished in 1936. The land for it was given by Mr. Field of Shanganagh Park House (now Rathsallagh housing estate). Mr. Field's grandfather, a builder from the Curragh, is said to have built the old house. The trees on the piece of land given for the church were all cut down with the exception of the few now standing at the road junction. These owe their life to the pleadings of Colonel Taylor's wife of Lisnalurg, Corbawn Lane. She was a talented water-colour artist and knew the value of trees in a landscape, and could not bear to see them felled.

Sunday, September 20th Dublin Castle - The Genealogical Office.

Invited by our President, we were welcomed by him on arrival at the Genealogical Office and were each given a typed sheet stating some "facts about the Office. Its records go back to 1552 at which date its predecessor, the Office of Ulster King of Arms was instituted. Since 1943 it is administered by the Department of Education and is under the direction of the Director of the National Library.

The Heraldic Museum contains a variety of objects not usually associated with heraldry, but which demonstrate how it can be used in a practical and aesthetic way, e.g., glass, china, seals, etc. Upstairs, the Library was eagerly examined and browsed over by the visitors. Most unexpectedly it supplied us with a tiny, but exciting item of local interest. It was Wendy Guilford who drew out a volume by chance. It was entitled "Abstract of Presentments at Michaelmas Term 1818" and, opening it at random she found on p. 6 the following - "John Farran, Esq. and David Towson, to make a curb wall to the footpath along the mail coach road from Dublin to Bray, between the turn at Cauban-lane and Mr. Farran's entrance-gate, all on the

lands of Shanganna, and Parish of Rathmichael, in said county £21.1.4.”

Book Review *Dún Laoghaire, Kingstown*. Peter Pearson, assisted by Anne Brady and Daniel Gillman, O'Brien Press 1981, 176 pp.

This is the second volume in the publishers' Urban Heritage Series, an enterprise which deserves our gratitude and applause. I much enjoyed the first, about a city, Cork, which I knew as a child, and I have equally enjoyed this study of a township which I came to know as a man. Whether the brevity of Dun Laoghaire's history is an advantage or a handicap for an author is, I suppose, a matter of opinion. If it be the first, Peter Pearson has used the benefit skilfully, if it be the second he has overcome the difficulty admirably. We know virtually nothing about the dun of Laoghaire. We know that there was for centuries a little fishing village called Dunleary.

Then, suddenly -in the context of history the passage of a century is sudden -came Kingstown, and Dun Laoghaire. As the author says, "it is one of the few towns" in Ireland to have started from nothing and reached maturity all within seventy-five years of the nineteenth century."

When the Queen visited in 1849 she was thirty years of age and Kingstown was twenty-eight. Both matured with the ensuing decades. Essentially Victorian, then, the Township was and is. Mr. Pearson writes well and informatively of the making of the great harbour, of the erection of a remarkable number of churches, of the mushrooming of fine houses and terraces, of the people who lived in them, and of some who didn't. His eye for architecture is matched by a nice awareness of the social and historical. In 1823, during the time when the stone for the harbour was being cut and carted, "there were 1,000 workers, some with their families, living in huts on Dalkey Commons without sanitary facilities or running water." Round the middle of the century Kingstown was described as "the wealthiest and most popular township in Ireland." Yet in 1872 "out of 41,820 feet of streets and roads which should have sewers, only 15,000 feet had sewers which actually worked."

One likes a book which answers questions that had been lurking unformulated in one's subconscious. I knew that before St. Michael's came into existence Catholics went to mass in Cabinteely. It seemed a long way; now I learn that they may instead have attended mass on the convict hulk, the Essex, which lay in the harbour. I learn too that the remarkably fine Presbyterian church owes its origin to the fact that the engineers in charge of the harbour works were Scots of that faith. The first Methodist church was established by fishermen from Devon

who settled in the area. And I cannot omit Mr. Pearson's mention of one ecclesiastical structure which would" certainly arouse wonder in anyone who knew of its existence but not its origin. "In the present Garda barracks, which was once a convent of the Poor Clares, there is still a very fine groin-vaulted Gothic chapel."

A word or two about technical matters. The book is splendid in format - decoratively hard-covered, wide of margin, generously illustrated. I can find no printed price, but a shop sticker on the copy I happen to have says £13.80. If a subsequent paper-back edition were possible the price might fall within the buying competence of a wider circle. If I suggest a few minor corrections for such an edition I do so humbly rather than crankily. The name of the Institution is the Public Record Office, not Public Records Office. In the heraldic achievement on De Vesci Terrace the figures support the arms of Lord de Vesci, not his crest. The lion over a house in Leinster Terrace is couchant, or lying down, not seated.

How good it is that the nature and value of our heritage is now being so ably studied. Things have changed since 1836. What a to-do there would be to-day if it were proposed to drive a railway line through a Martello tower which was believed to have been built on the site of Laoghaire's fort.'

Gerard Slevin

Parliamentary Gazetteer Of Ireland 184 4-5

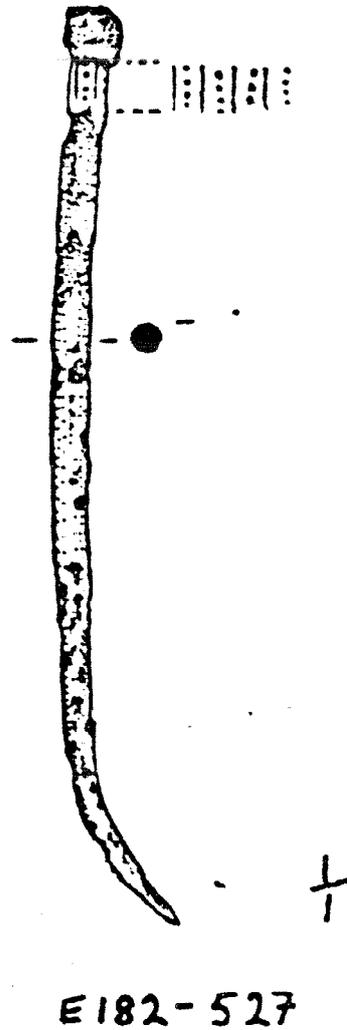
Rathmichael a parish, 2 miles north-west by north of Bray, and on the coast of the barony of Rathdown, Co. Dublin, Leinster. Length, eastward, 3 miles; extreme breadth, 1¼ miles; area, 2,808 acres 9 perches. Pop, in 1831 1,296; in 1841 1,447. Houses 233. The western district is mountainous, and partially waste; but the other districts lie low, consist of good and well-cultivated land, and are, to a large aggregate extent, disposed in villa and demesne grounds. The Scalp is on the western boundary; the Loughlinstown rivulet traces most of the northern boundary; and the Ballycorus lead-mines, lead-works, and shot manufactory, are situated in the western district. A height which overhangs the Scalp has an altitude above sea-level of 793 feet; and two heights respectively on the north border and on the coast have altitudes of respectively 158 and 62 feet. A Martello tower stands on the coast; and the workhouse of the Rath-down Poor-law union stands in the interior. The principal seats are Springmount, Shankill, Aghmore cottage, Crankeen. Shanganagh castle, Shanganagh cottage, Ballybrat cottage, Ellerslie, Sherrington, Lord house, Shanganagh Castle, Springfield, Silvermount, Shankill lodge, Claremount*, Shankill house, Emerald, Mullinstill house, Airhill house, Home, New-Brighton, Clifton+; Shanganagh house, and Cherrywood house. Three concentric Druidical circles are situated in the north. The road from Dublin to Bray passes across the eastern district. This parish is a rectory, a prebend and a separate benefice, in the diocese of Dublin. The tithe composition, £250; glebe, £54.19s 6d. Gross income, £304. 19s 6d, nett, £290 14s 2d. Patron, the diocesan. The incumbent holds also the stipendiary curacy of Bray. There is neither church nor chapel in Rathmichael; and the Protestant inhabitants attend the church of Bray. In 1834, the Protestants amounted to 174, and the Roman Catholics to 1,109; and two daily schools -one of which was wholly supported by an yearly grant of £30, with some other advantages, and by the proceeds of an annual charity sermon at Bray had on their books 63 boys and 39 girls. In 1843, the National Board had a school in Rathdown workhouse.

Shankill., a hill, a hamlet, and several residences, in the parish of Rathmichael, barony of Rathdown, Co. Dublin, Leinster. The hill terminates the range of summits which extends eastward from the Three-Rock mountain; and. it lifts a little conical summit to the altitude of 912 feet above sea-level. The lead-mines, smelting furnaces, and shot tower of Ballycorus, are picturesquely situated on the skirt and at the base of the hill. The hamlet of Shankill stands 1¼ miles east of Ballycorus, and 1½ north-east of Bray. The residences which bear the name of Shankill are Shankill castle, Shankill house, and Shankill lodge, and are situated within ¼ of a

mile of the hamlet.

* now Dorney Court + now Saint Alfonso and Dunsandle

The 7th Summer School 1981 - Courses in Field Archaeology attracted a good number of students. Excavations continued at Ballyman with Mr. John Leeson's kind permission. The evening lectures were as interesting and scholarly as ever.



Bronze lobe-headed stick pin with some decoration, recovered during 1981 excavation season at Ballyman. The pin is of a type common in Ireland between the tenth and thirteenth centuries A.D.

Course A

Monday August 10th to Friday August 14th inclusive.

£20.00 fee Includes admission to all Course C lectures.

Morning sessions commence at 10.00 hours and end at 13.00. Afternoon sessions run from 14.00 to 17.00 hours.

Programme

Monday August 10th
Morning Lecture on the recognition of Field Monuments.
Afternoon Exercises in surveying.

Tuesday August 11th
Morning The techniques of excavation explained and demonstrated.
Afternoon On site.

Wednesday August 12th
Whole day on site.

Thursday August 13th
Whole day Tours of local historical sites.

Friday August 14th
Morning On site
Afternoon Recording finds: drawings and reports

Course B

Monday August 17th to Friday August 21st inclusive.

£20. fee includes admission to all Course C Lectures.

Morning sessions commence at 10.00 hours and end at 13.00. Afternoon sessions run from 14.00 to 17.00 hours.

Programme

Monday August 17th
Morning Lecture on the techniques of excavation.
Afternoon On site.

Tuesday August 18th
Morning On site. Seminar on soils by Gabriel Cooney M.A.
Afternoon On site.

Wednesday August 19th
Morning On site. Seminar on bones by Finbar McCormick
Afternoon On site.

Thursday August 20th
Whole day Tours to Knowth, Newgrange and other sites.

Friday August 21st
Whole day Surveying and excavation

Course C

Monday August 17th to Friday August 21st inclusive.

£5.00 fee includes all lectures.

Lectures commence each evening at 20.00 hours.

Programme

Monday August 17th
Excavations at Boora Bog.
Michael Ryan M.A., National Museum of Ireland.

Tuesday August 18th
Donegal Project. Brian Lacey B.A., Magee University, Derry.

Wednesday August 19th
Gold Working in. the Bronze Age. Professor George Eogan, University College Dublin.

Thursday August 20th
Neolithic tombs in Ireland.
Professor Michael J. O'Kelly, University College Cork.

Friday August 21st
The Celtic approach to art.
Professor Etienne Rynne, University College Galway.

All evening lectures will be held at Rathmichael School, Shankill, County Dublin.