

## ANTIQUITIES

Abbeys, Castles, Fortresses, Round Towers, Early Churches, Sculptured Crosses, Stone Circles, Ogham Stones, Cairns, Souterrams, Pillar Stones, Cromlechs, Forts, Raths, Moats, Tumuli or ancient monuments of any kind. Exact location of each with short description, noting condition, etc. Relate local legend or tradition associated with building or object. State if in charge of Office of Public Works. Right of way to public? Admission charge (if any). Name and address of caretaker, or where key is kept.

To Castlehill

- ① Wedge-shaped Megalithic Tomb - Not in charge of O.P.W. Permission to view is readily given by landowner who lives immediately beside it. The monument is situated in the townland of Castlehill,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  mls S.W. of Ballycroagh Post Office. The structure originally consisted of a long gallery, lying E-W, its sides built of double rows of standing flags, the whole having a maximum length of 25 feet. Internally the chamber was divided into two apartments by a transverse slab. The East end was closed while the West was left open. The whole structure was roofed with large flat cap-stones but only one of these now remains. This monument belongs to the well known group of wedge-shaped megaliths and in date probably belongs to the Early Bronze Age (2000 - 1500 B.C.). It is well preserved and very imposing in appearance. The side stones are in places nearly 6 feet high and the cap-stone measures 8 feet x 6 feet. ~~Locally it is called the "Giant's grave" and is supposed to have buried under it a golden chalice.~~ It is known that about 100 yrs ago a poor old man lived in the chamber for many years. (Fig 1).

- ② Megalithic list grave - Not in charge of O.P.W. Stands beside the road on commonage. It consists of a rectangular list 16 feet long and 5 feet wide formed of slabs of stone set on edge which were once covered with flat cap-stones, of which only two now remain in position. The list was originally covered with a tumulus of earth the base of which remains visible still. This structure also probably belongs to the Bronze Age ~~but without excavation it would not be possible to be certain.~~ (Fig. 2). It lies in Castlehill townland 300 yds N. of No. 1. above.

- ③ Megalithic Tomb at Claggan. - Not in charge of O.P.W. Permission to view is readily given by land-owner who lives beside it at "Home Farm". It lies 400 yds N. of Rock House, Claggan and is 100 yds east of the road. It originally consisted of a wedge-shaped chamber 10 feet long with a maximum width of 5 feet. The sides are formed of massive flags at some points 6 feet high. This chamber is open at the E end and closed at the West. It was roofed by one huge flat cap-stone which measures 12 feet x 10 feet and is 3 feet thick. Its weight at a modest estimate would be 25 tons. This has now however slipped out of position and lies on the ground leaning against the south side of the chamber. This monument is also of the Bronze Age. ~~(Fig. 3)~~ (Fig. 3).

- ④ Megalithic Tomb at Drumgollagh. - Not in charge of D.P.W. permission to view it readily given by landowner who lives beside it. This large and very imposing monument is made up of two chambers. The entrance is at the east end. In front of it some stones remain to show that at one time there was a sort of fore-court. The jambs of the doorway are formed of two very large slabs nearly 8 feet high. This gives access to a square chamber whose walls are of large blocks of stone set on edge. The back end is completely closed by 3 large slabs. Behind this was the completely closed second chamber the sides of which are again formed of large slabs. This part is roofed by a very large flag whose maximum dimension is about 15 feet, with an average thickness of 2 feet. On its upper surface along the western edge are three small cup-like hollows. These "cup-marks" as they are called, are often found on bronze age and later monuments and so far have not been satisfactorily explained. The many suggested explanations nearly all agree that these markings probably have some ritualistic significance. They are not natural markings, but have been cut into the stone by human agency. The total length of the structure is nearly 30 feet. The outer chamber has now been converted into a cow-house. The original sides have been in no way interfered with and now form the walls of the house. A roof of turf and thatch has been added and the cow can just barely ~~scrape~~ get thro' between the door portals. The monument is situated in the townland of Drumgollagh and is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  mls by Road N.E. of Rock House, Claggan. (Fig. 4).

- ⑤ Cross Inscribed Stone - Not in charge of D.P.W. permission to view it readily given by landowner who lives beside it. It stands in the townland of Kildara and is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mls due N. of Rock House, Claggan. A road which passes west gate of Rock House runs N. and ends within 100 yds of the monument. The stone has a maximum height of 5 feet 6 inches. The section is rectangular and measures 1' 8" x 11". Near the top on the west face a circular area  $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep has been excised from the stone leaving a raised cross occupying the hole. This is what is called a freckle cross. The diameter of the circle is 1 foot. Otherwise the stone is quite free of any other kind of marking or inscription. Some small boulders are loosely piled up about its base. Locally it is called the "Giant's grave" and the site also has this name on the 6" maps of the O.S. It is very difficult to suggest a date for such a monument as this, but it may be taken for granted that it belongs to the Early Christian period. (Fig 5).



⑥ Cross Inscribed Stone at Castlehill. - Not in charge of D.P.W. Permission to view it readily given by Mr Crowley, the land owner who lives in a cottage 300 yds away. The stone is situated in the townland of Castlehill and is  $\frac{3}{4}$  ml (by road) S.W. of Holy Trinity Church of Ireland. ~~In this case~~ The stone is 7 feet high, 2' wide and 6" thick. Both faces are ornamented.

The West Face - At the top of the stone is a small incised Latin cross whose arms, head and foot were decorated with expanded ends. Lower down than this and occupying a more central position on the stone is another Latin cross also incised with its ends terminating in outward curves giving a more decorative appearance.

The East Face - At the top is a small cross confined in a circular excised area. This differs from the Kildara cross (see above) in having, at the crossing of the arms, a raised circular knob in the centre of which is a conical hollow. The vertical incised stem with out-curving ends was probably added later so as to convert the Greek cross into the Latin form. Below this and near to one side of the stone another small and badly executed Latin cross with out-curving terminals is incised.

A few years ago (about 15) a small cairn of stones surrounded the base of this monument. The landowner carried them away to build a fence a shortly afterwards the cross fell from lack of support. It lay on the ground for a number of years till about 8 years ago the farmer's sons decided to erect it. ~~It was done~~. It occupies its former position approximately but it is not now known whether it is correctly oriented or not as the original orientation was forgotten at the time of reconstruction. This stone also belongs to the Early Christian period. (Fig. 6).

⑦ Church at Faby. - Not in charge of D.P.W. Right of way by roadway leading to graveyard surrounding it. It is situated on the very shore of Black-Sod Bay and is  $\frac{1}{2}$  mls by road S.W. of Shranamanagh Bridge. The walls and gables of this structure remain to their full height but owing to the accumulation of graves and debris, the apparent height of the side walls is now only about 5'. The building was 60' long by 20' wide. It is oriented East and West. There are 2 doors 20' feet from the west gable one being in the N. side wall and the other directly opposite in the S. wall. The doors have pointed heads and are carried out in cut stone work of very simple but effective design. The walls are 3' thick. All the remaining window openings, except that in the east gable, have square heads, (Fig. 7a). The east window however

Fahy Church could. - Has a pointed head formed of two ogee curves. The spandrels have triangular sinkings in the centres of which are hemispherical raised knobs. On the inside there is a wide embrasure over which is a plain flat relieving arch. (Fig. 7 b.).

On the N. wall inside and near the door is a font set into the masonry. The font itself is carved from a large block of sandstone. Over it is another block which is carved into a pointed arch again with ogee curves. Here the spandrels are left plain. (Fig. 7 c.).

At the west end of the church there was either a gallery or an over-croft for in the N, S, & W. walls there are projecting plain corbels which carried the floor. At this point too the side walls rose higher and had square headed windows to light this upper floor.

At both east and west ends at ground floor level there are arcades in the side walls. These have plain square heads.

The few architectural details which survive suggest a date in the late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries as the time of erection of this church.

No traditions survive locally regarding it and Knox merely mentions it in his Notes on the Dioceses of Tuam, II. (1904), 346. where it is called Doona church.

Surrounding it is an extensive graveyard still in use. Here may be observed the custom of leaving clay pipes and tobacco on the graves. Every grave is piled high with these pipes and inside the old church ruin are stacks of them collected and dumped in there. On a very recent grave (about a week old) I examined some of the pipes & found them full of carefully cut plug tobacco!!! So strong is the custom that even present scarcity of tobacco has not killed it. These pipes are always referred to as "forty-threes" because the figures 43 are stamped on the sides of the bowls - this is evidently the maker's trade mark. Others bear the name of a Scottish factory.

Outside the church on the N. side, and outside the area of the graveyard, are 9 or 10 graves of sailors who were washed up on the shore during the 1914-18 war.

~~Fahy lake, an extensive stretch of water formerly only 300 yds from the church ruin, has been drained and is no longer in existence.~~

⑧ Fahy or Doona Castle - This is situated beside the church just described. Not in charge of O.P.W. Permission to examine it readily given by landowner (Mr Daly) who lives in the house beside it. The structure is ~~in~~ in a very ruinous state and only fragments of the walls of what must once have been a very extensive building now remain. No architectural details survive from which to gauge the date of erection.



Bally or Doona Castle Contd. - Like all other castles in this part of Mayo, it is said by local tradition to have once belonged to Grannia Uille and to have been built by her. She may have owned it, but it is likely that it was built much before her time. Very little is known of its structure but according to Knox, Don Alonso de Leyva, one of the leaders of the Spanish Armada, whose ship was wrecked on the coast of Ballycroy in 1588, occupied it with his men, but embarked on another ship when Sir R. Bingham marched against the castle.

As to its destruction, Maxwell supplies a clue. According to him a rick of turf, which was built against the castle wall, accidentally took fire and the whole rick was burnt out. The great heat of this fire caused the walls to crack resulting in almost total collapse of the great tower.

Underneath the fallen rubbish of the castle there are said to be underground cellars and the entrance to these is still visible tho' now blocked up. ~~There is also a tradition to the effect that a pass inside the main entrance a quantity of Spanish gold is buried, hastily concealed by the men of the Armada when Bingham advanced on them, and owing to superstitious fears it has never been searched for!!!~~ This is supposed to be the place figuring in The Dark Lady of Doona.

References: - Knox: History of Co. Mayo, (1908), 221.

Maxwell: Wild Sports of the West, (1832), 303.

Maxwell: Dark Lady of Doona

⑨ Temple Emma (old church) - Not in charge of D. P. W. permission to view it readily given by landowner who lives beside it. It is situated in a glen 3 miles by road N.E. of Ballycroy post office. The ruin consists of fragments of the walls of a very small church. No details survive but from the character of the masonry it may possibly be as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century. The lower courses of the walls are composed of huge stones - a characteristic of the earliest church buildings. Nothing seems to be known of it. Knox merely mentions it in Notes on the Dioceses of Tuam, (1904), 346.

Traces of the jamb of a door are observable on one side and in the surrounding old graveyard is a very rough grave stone with a small roughly inscribed Latin cross.

Locally it is called "Temple Emma" which is probably a misreading of the Gothic printing of the name on some of the O.S. maps where the Gothic E could easily be misread for the letter C, thereby making the word Emma instead of

Temple Eumna contd.

as it should be, Eumna.

A local tradition survives to the effect that the church was founded by a follower of St. Patrick. Patrick's follower, who is described as a Friar, departed from the Reel with instructions from the saint directing him to found a church at the spot where a misstep should befall him. The Friar set off northwards and when crossing a stream in this ~~very~~ part of Ballycrogh parish, a deer, which the Friar was driving before him and which was laden with the man's books and properties, broke his leg and could go no further. The Friar accepting this as the sign set to work and erected Temple Eumna. ~~It is said locally that the tracks of the deer's hooves were visible on the surface of some rocks beside the stream but now a heavy layer of peat has grown over and obscured them.~~

In Maxwell's day the church was as ruinous as it is now and the graveyard was then disused. In Wild Sports of the West, p. 160 it is said that "more than two centuries had elapsed since it (graveyard) had been abandoned," which indicates that it was in existence around the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, but as mentioned above, the masonry indicates a far earlier date.

- ⑩ Holy Well in Binnmore Townland. — This well is situated 100 yds S.W. of Temple Eumna. The saint originally connected with it is no longer known locally, but up to about 20 yrs ago a sort of pattern was held at it on every August 15<sup>th</sup>. This custom has now almost ceased, tho' the well is ~~continually~~ continually visited by individuals. Only married women come to it now for it is believed to be very efficacious in bringing about a safe delivery at childbirth. Immediately after marriage all the local women visit it and continue to come once a fortnight or oftener till the child is born and this practice is followed at every pregnancy. ~~Saturday is now regarded as being the best day for making visits.~~ The station is made in the following way: — Shoes are removed on reaching the well and the pilgrim begins by washing his feet in the adjacent stream. Then she makes 7 complete circuits of the path which surrounds the well, each time taking up a pebble. A stop is made in front of the well in each round and a cross is marked with the pebble on an upright



Bunmore Well Contd.

rudely carved stone cross which stands over the well. ~~But~~ The cross is scribed on another flat stone lying at the base of the standing cross. (From continuous scribbling of these crosses always on the same spot the two stones are now very deeply incised.) The pebble is then cast on to a heap of these which has collected beside the well. The rounds are made by walking from left to right and during each circuit "Our Father" & "Hail Marys" are recited. On completion of the 17 rounds, the pilgrim again washes her feet and dons her shawl and the act of devotion is then complete. ~~If she sees a live fish either in the well or in the stream her request is granted.~~

~~Two traditions remain locally regarding the well. One is to the effect that the position now occupied by the well is not its original one. It now lies immediately north of the road leading to Temple town whereas formerly it was to the south of this road. The original position is ~~now~~ marked by a cairn of stones. Some ~~visitors~~ came when the well was in this position and desecrated it, whereupon the well immediately vanished from that spot and sprang up in its present position.~~

~~The other tradition explains why the cross which stands over the well leans sideways. On one occasion a woman famed for holiness came to do a station and immediately when she had completed it, the cross bowed down to show her that her petitions had been granted & the cross has remained thus ever since.~~

Maxwell in Wild Sports of the West, p. 161, devotes a whole chapter to a legend current in his day regarding an episode which took place at this well. According to him the patron of the well was St Catherine, but this saint is not now associated with it. Maxwell's legend describes the coming to the well of a beautiful young pilgrim who was murdered by the Red <sup>PEDLAR</sup> Pedlar. Years after, the pilgrim's husband came - he was a De Burgo - and found before him the Red Pedlar who had returned to the scene of his crime. The pedlar paid with his life, and ~~his body was~~ ~~blasted~~ ~~and~~ ~~charred~~ ~~by~~ ~~lightning~~ ~~from~~ ~~heaven~~. The story is very well told and elaborated by Maxwell.

(Figure 8) ~~is a rough sketch of the well.~~