

ANTIQUITIES

Abbeys, Castles, Fortresses, Round Towers, Early Churches, Sculptured Crosses, Stone Circles, Ogham Stones, Cairns, Souterrams, Pillar Stones, Cromlechs, Forts, Rathes, 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.

① Burrishoole Abbey. - Situate 2 mls N.W. of Newport on the east bank of the Burrishoole river half a mile down stream from Burrishoole Bridge. This is a National Monument in charge of the O.P.W. The caretaker, George O'Malley, Burrishoole, lives in a cottage 500 yds east of the Abbey. Entrance free.

~~Majority of the~~ A very considerable portion of the abbey ruins remain. On the north side is a square area which was the site of the domestic buildings, cloisters etc. South of this and oriented east-west ~~is~~ is the church which is divided into nave and chancel by the tower. On the south side of ~~the~~ the nave is a south transept.

The northern range of domestic buildings is very ruined and of this there survives only the north wall and portion of a cloister arches. The north wall, tho' it remains to a height of about 15', is almost devoid of interest as its windows and architectural features are very much defaced. Outside the E end of this wall are fragments of the walls of a small cell. To the cell and the north wall of the domestic buildings are the older parts of the abbey. The cloister arches are a later addition. There are 6 round headed arches carried on undecorated piers, each arch having a wide splay on the east side. The arches are low being only 4' 6" from base to centre of head. Over them the wall rises to a height of about 15'. This wall is carried out in cut ~~stone~~ limestone coursed ashlar masonry. High up over the cloister is a simple round headed window opening.

When it was decided to build the church the south side of the cloisters and the domestic buildings were removed to make way for it. The nave and chancel were then built, ~~but the walls of the domestic buildings do not bond into the walls of the church.~~ The next addition was the south transept, ~~and its walls also are not bonded into those of the nave. Acc~~

~~to this~~ ^{which} ~~transsept~~ is gained thro' two pointed arches decorated with very simple mouldings and supported by a central cylindrical column. The last addition was the tower which is merely built inside the church walls and is not bonded with them. Its western corner blocks half of one of the arches giving access to the south transept.

The nave. The door to this is in the W. gable and is ~~formed with~~ ^{has} a simple cut stone dressing with a pointed head. Over it is a small window which had a round head and which lighted an upper room or overcroft. The floor of this room was carried on cornels which still project from the walls on the inside. The west gable and side walls remain to their full height.

The tower. This is the full width of the nave (which is an unusual feature) and rises to a height of 35 feet. Two pointed arches of plain squared dressed stone give access to the chancel. On the south side

(Plain sheets of foolscap paper to be used, if necessary, for recording additional information).

③ Antiquities could

not doing so was excommunication. The Berrishoole community ~~was~~ either did not know of this prohibition or else disregarded it until the year 1485, for in the Bull of Innocent VIII addressed to William Joyce, Archbishop of Tuam in 1486, it is stated that it was only a short time before that the petition of the Berrishoole Community to be absolved from the excommunication which they had incurred, was presented to the pope. The Archbishop was directed to absolve them.

In February 1580 the Abbey was fortified and garrisoned by Sir Nicholas Malbie of the English forces. A Captain and 100 men were left at the Abbey. From this onward the Abbey suffered as most other religious houses did but the monks seem to have lived on there in spite of all difficulties to the end of the 17th century. In 1731 there were 20 friars connected with the Abbey but none of them seem to have lived in it. In 1756 there were only 5 Dominicans in the district. The last known Dominican who was connected with the Abbey was Fr Francis Burke who is believed to have died between 1731 and 1785. Tradition says, however, that a Friar Horan lived at or near the Abbey in the early years of the 19th Cent.

References: Knox: History of the County of Mayo, (1908), 95, 108, 154, 189, 190, 244, 249, 250, 300, 301.

Knox: Notes on the Diocese of Tuam, (1904), 10, 83, 86, 89, 131, 170, 271, 393.

Rev. H. O'Donnell: Berrishoole Abbey (Catholic Truth Soc. pamphlet).

② Mediaeval Town of Berrishoole. -

In 1580 Sir Nicholas Malbie was petitioned (by the local Chieftain who had submitted to him) to have a town founded at Berrishoole. This must have been done for local tradition as to the existence of such a town is strong. Beside the Abbey were two castles one on each bank of the river. The sites of these can still be traced. There was a market place enclosed by a high wall traces of which remain to the N.E. of the Abbey. At the entrance to this was a market cross on which the tradition states those coming and going from the market had to lay their hands and swear that the accounts of their dealings were correct. This was so that tolls could be correctly assessed for a toll had to be paid on each transaction. A field still called "Cross" (because in it the market cross stood) is said to have been the graveyard of the town and tillage operations have disclosed bones and graves in it from time to time. The river and port facilities here were, according to Malbie, able to take a ship of 500 tons. When the centre of population moved east to where Newport now stands, the name "Newport" was given to it to distinguish it from Berrishoole which was the old port. (Ref. Knox: Hist. of Mayo, (1908), 189)

③ Mediaeval Convent for Nuns. - This was beside or very near the Dominican Abbey but its site cannot now be certainly

recognised and there is little other than local tradition to show that it ever existed. Traditions are at variance as to the time and exact place of its founding. Some say that the small ruined cell at the N.E. corner of the Abbey ruins was part of the convent, others, that the ruined church 300 yds south of the Abbey was where the convent stood. It is doubtful if either of these suggestions is correct. It is unlikely that the church authorities would have allowed the building of a convent for nuns within the Abbey precincts (i.e. the cell at the N.E. corner) and for other reasons, which will follow later, the ^{ruined church} is unlikely to have formed part of the convent. However the founder of the convent was one Honoria de Burgo, possibly the daughter of Richard son of Jaksing Burke, one of the de Burgos, whose castle stood near by on the bank of Burrishoole river. In 1563 the convent was founded and Honoria de Burgo & her nuns earned a great reputation for their work among the poor etc, and when the convent cupboards ran short they were miraculously refilled. The life in the convent was peaceful till 1580 when the house was entered by an armed band of English soldiers probably at the time that Malbil garrisoned the abbey, and the nuns had to fly but were able to return later. This happened several times till at last in 1653 after ill-treatment by Cromwell's soldiers, she and some others died of wounds and exposure. Honoria de Burgo is said to be buried under the tower of the Abbey.

Ref:- Rev. H. O'Donnell: Burrishoole Abbey (Catholic Truth Soc. pamphlet)

④ Coolygreen Church: - This ruin is situated 300 yds south of the Abbey ruins. Not in charge of O.P.W. Permission to view it readily given by land owner who lives beside it. The Irish name by which it is known locally is "Ceampull Cúl le Zearín", (i.e. "the church with its back to the sun"), and seems to have arisen because the only doorway is on the N. side and hence it faces N. and therefore has its back to the sun. It is said by some local traditions that this is the ruin of Honoria de Burgo's convent, but this is unlikely as the building seems never to have been other than just a church and there are no indications of domestic quarters near it. The only architectural detail surviving is a piece of cut stone window dressing now lying in a small chimney near the E. end. This seems to indicate a date in the 15th century and was probably the parish church founded by O'Malley previous to the founding of the Dominican Abbey.

The structure is 66' long E-W internally and 15' wide. Much of the west gable remains & is heavily clothed in ivy. The east gable is gone. Walls are 3' 6" thick. The door was near the west end of the N. long wall and opposite it on the inside of the south wall was a niche with a pointed roughly

arched head. East of the door on the N. wall were two small square windows each one only 6" x 6" and 9' apart. Very little architectural detail has survived so the ruin is of little interest.

- ⑤ Carrigahowley Castle :- This is also called Rockfleet castle. This is situated 2 mls west of Burreishole Bridge and is right on the sea coast $\frac{3}{4}$ mls from the main road. It is not in charge of the O.P.W. It has been recently taken in charge by Owen O'Malley who lives beside it in ^{ROSSYVERA} Rossyvera Ho. The key can be had on application and entrance is free.

It is a very uninteresting structure consisting merely of a square keep 47 feet high and built on the very edge of the sea so that when the tide comes up it sometimes floods the ground floor. Inside, the various rooms are small and cramped. To gain access to the top an awkward scramble up 10 feet of wall must be made before the spiral stair is reached. This leads to the top which was once the largest chamber and the only one provided with a fireplace. It had a pointed gabled roof. Around the edge of the roof was a parapet wall which gave access to the bartizan projections on two of the corners. It is almost devoid of architectural interest. It is said to have been built by the de Burgo around 1400. (See illustration in Leask: Irish Castles (1941), 107.)

- ⑥ Liosmore Fort :- This is situated in the centre of the townland of Roskeen South $3\frac{1}{2}$ mls west of Burreishole Bridge and 1 ml south from the main road to Hallrenny. Not in charge of O.P.W. permission to view it readily given by land-owner who lives beside it. The chief interest of this fort lies in the fact that it contains a very good souterrain. Originally, this was an L-shaped structure but at some time one of the arms was unroofed and the flag stones used for some other purpose. This part now appears as a deep, long and wide trench which leads to the entrance to the second arm. The latter is now 20' long, 5' wide and 5' 6" high and seems to have been longer originally but a collapse of the roof prevents complete exploration. The side walls are built of very rough stones without mortar and are corbelled inwards towards the top to facilitate roofing with comparatively small cap stones. The south side of the fort is occupied by a rectangular structure just barely traceable now. This measures 36' long x 20' wide. The 6" O.S. map marked this as "Chapel, site of" but no tradition as to the presence of a chapel or Mass-house remains in the neighbourhood. It is more likely that this was a large hut-site and is probably co-eval with the fort itself. The fort is 90' in diam. and its rampart is 6' thick. The interior area is raised above the surrounding field and the whole is encompassed by the remains of a fossé. (Fig. 2).

⑦ Fort & Souterrains in Shanvallyhugh Td. - In the townland of Shanvallyhugh

an eighth of a mile east of Burreishole Bridge and 200 yds north of the main road to Newport is a fort in which there are two fine souterrains. NOT in charge of O.P.W. Permission to examine it may be had from the landowner, John MacDonnell, who lives beside the fort.

The fort itself is small being only 45' in diam. Its rampart is very ruinous and is now just barely traceable in the field. There are two modern field walls built right across it. The entrance to one souterrain, which is ~~the~~ the better of the two, is near the N. side of the fort. It is necessary to crawl on hands & knees thro' the opening but once inside, ~~the~~ the height is 5' 6", width 5' and the length is 18'. From the inner end a low passage leads to the right but after 5' a blank wall is met with. To proceed further one must ascend thro' a square opening in the roof. There are then 4 steps leading down again into the inner chamber. This is 13' long, 0' 3" high and ^{has} a maximum width of 5'. Walls of both chambers are corbelled and the roof finally closed with small cap-stones. The trapdoor and steps are merely a defensible protection for those who had retreated in there from pursuing enemies. The moment the enemy's head appeared thro' the trap-door one blow would easily dispose of him. This type of defensive obstruction is typical of the souterrains of southern Galway & North Clare. The second souterrain is L-shaped and has no obstruction in any part of it. It is 5' 6" high inside, 5' wide and has a total length of 28'. Its walls also are corbelled. (Figs. 3 & 3A.).

⑧ St Dominick's Well. - This is situated in Kiltarnagh Td 1 ml east of Burreishole Bridge and 300 yds N. of the main road to Newport. A recently erected Celtic Cross stands beside the well and so it is easily visible from the main road. The most peculiar feature of this well is that it was originally a souterrain, and of this there can be no doubt whatever. Furthermore the souterrain was within the fauch of a small earthen fort the ramparts of which are now only barely traceable. The soil which originally covered the roof of the souterrain has been removed and one large cap stone taken from the centre of the roof. The whole interior of what was originally the souterrain chamber is waterlogged to a depth of 3'. This is now the "well" and tho' situated on the top of a high hillock, it never runs dry even in the hottest summers. Leading into the "well" is a narrow passage 2' wide & 3' deep now also unroofed. At its outer end are four steps of built stones leading to the floor of the passage. This of course was the entrance to the souterrain. The souterrain chamber measures 15' long & 7' wide and the internal height originally was 7' inside. How the

souterrain came to be looked upon as a holy well will probably never now be solved. The whole townland is called Kiltarnight but the land in the vicinity of the well is called "Kiltarnet". This may come from "Cill 2 Sarnait", i.e. Sarnait's church. Sarnait's pedigree is given in Sheed and Ward: Irish Texts, III, 102 where she is described as a holy woman whose ^{FLOUWIT} ~~flood~~ would have been about 600 A.D.

O'Donovan in the O.S. letters mentions her and says a church of hers exists on the Aran Islands and that she had many close relations in the district on the N. side of Clew Bay. It is just possible then that on the site of St Dominic's Well, Sarnait's church stood, possibly even within the rampart of the fort which was not an unusual thing in the early days of the church in Ireland. When the church had disappeared the water-logged souterrain may have been looked upon by the people as the saint's holy well and so the religious attachment to the site may have continued. Later in 1469 when the Dominican House was established at Burrishoole, St Dominic's name may have become in some way associated with the well. At any rate it is now unquestionably looked upon as St Dominic's well.

A sort of pattern and flapper sports is held here every year on St Dominic's Day, 4th August. About 20 yrs ago a high Celtic cross was erected here by the late John Lavelle of Furnace, Newport. He had returned from America and on visiting the well claimed to have seen the Blessed Virgin standing on the spot now occupied by the cross. It was because of this he got the cross erected. The station begins at the cross, starting from which the pilgrim walks 7 times clockwise round a path which makes a circuit of the cross and well. The path is 66 paces round. Having finished the 7th round at the cross he then goes on his bare knees from that to the end of the entrance passage to the well, a distance of 6 yards. He stands upright again, descends the steps and walks to the brink of the well. Having taken a sip of the water he returns to the cross and leaves an offering (safety pins, rags, ribbons, iron washers etc) and the station is then complete. The well is said to be efficacious in curing all kinds of diseases but mothers make special stations there on ~~the~~ behalf of babies who are slow in learning to walk. (Fig 4).

9 St Marcán's Church. - A church ruin and graveyard are situated in the townland of Rosclave 2 mls S.W. of Newport town. The ruins are of no interest. Nearby are a few humps on the ground which are said to have been a church of St Brigid. Among the various lists of saints etc., there is no mention of a Marcán nor is it known whether the St Brigid of Iildane is the saint connected with the other ruin or not. St Marcán is supposed to have had a castle here too. The following legend is still told in the neighbourhood concerning the two churches & the two saints: - St Brigid and Marcán did not get on well together and thro' the cause of the dispute is not known part of their alleged conversation is as follows -

Brigid: "Zo rabó loc i n-áir do éireleáir."

Marcán: "Má bíonn, zo rabó leigias dunge is beidiz agy."

Brigid: "Ná rabó má ficeann síd mo cill-ze ur a mbeid agy."

Marcán: "Ná rabó ná yai mbeid corp i n cill-ze."

Brigid: "Má's ead, zo mta d'áiréoz é."

Translation. B: "That there may be a lake in the place of your castle"

M: "If there is any tree in a wood in the place of man and beast."

B: "May there not be a day you see my church in this way 'land'."

M: "May there never be a day that there will not be a dead body in your church."

B: "If there is, that it may be a stonking."

Thro' the ritual of coming to Marcán's lake, (which is now an inlet of the sea) has died out long ago it is said that pilgrims driving cattle before them had to take a circuitous route of many miles so as to avoid a sight of Brigid's church on the way. Likewise it is said that every day a dead bird can be found in on the side of Brigid's church.

10 St Barbara's Well. - This is situated in the townland of Bquadeeny about 500 yds east of Borrisokane Abbey. It is beside the house of Francis "Mullin" one of the owners. The well is merely a small well surrounded by a few stones. In Irish it is called Zobair na Síe (the well of the sign) and the following legend is related: It happened one day that a certain woman was asked why he wanted to marry her and received the answer, "Because of your

beautiful eyes." Whereupon she plucked out her two eyes and cast them on the ground at his feet. Instantly a well sprang up on the spot. When the chief had gone away in disgust she washed in the well and received back her sight. A hundred yards south of the well is a little enclosed garden called "Cillin" and said to have been the site of her church. No trace of a building remains, but in the centre of the garden is a horse-shoe shaped mound of stones and this is called St Barbara's bed. When a pilgrim comes he makes 7 rounds of the well reciting Our Father and Hail Marys and then proceeds to the "Bed" and makes 7 rounds there. He then returns to the well and bathes his eyes. The station is then complete and if his faith is good his eye troubles are no more. I was told by O'Malley that quite recently a blind woman made the station and after she had returned home said him word that she could see again. The name Barbara comes from the local Irish name of the saint which is "Barróg". Venerable St Barbara was a Brevy is known in any of the lists of saints or "Martyrologies".

⑪ Two Standing Stones - There are situated on the top of a hill ^{TIRENAR} 200 yds south of the main road and $\frac{1}{4}$ ml west of Tironeat church. They form a conspicuous landmark from the road. The stones are two large standing flags of red sandstone and are placed edge to edge ~~as~~ only 2' apart. Both stones are 4' 6" high and one is 4' wide and the other 3'. It is not possible to say without excavation what their purpose was. They may have formed part of an alignment the other stones of which are now gone. (Fig. 5)