

ANTIQUITIES

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

Abbey at Bofeenaun.

A couple of hundred yards westward of the modern church at Bofeenaun, (nine miles Crossmolina) are the remnants of an ancient abbey. Tradition has it that a St. Finan was connected with this foundation but I am unable to determine the period of erection and the founder's name cannot be found recorded.

It is established that this was a house of Conventual Franciscans and there is evidence of the earlier existence of other dwellings.

The church apparently was of reasonable dimensions but is now represented merely by the east gable and portion of the north wall. The gable was struck by lightning some forty years ago and is on the verge of complete collapse.

In this eastern gable is a rectangular window of well cut stones with still some signs of the cross formed by ^{a mullion} perpendicular and horizontal sash stones which divided the window into four smaller sections. The window, according to Knox, is of late date.

The ruin is not in care of the O.P.W. and may be inspected. The landowner is Mr Martin Geraghty, Bofeenaun.

St. Kieran's Church at Addergoole.

In the old graveyard by Lough Conn, within a short distance of Lahardane and a little over six miles from Crossmolina, is an ivy-covered ruined church with which the name of St. Kieran is associated.

Knox, dealing with ecclesiastical facts prior to the sixteenth century, says that this was a typical parish church of the period. The doorway in the south wall may yet be seen but otherwise the church is in a state of advanced decay.

The church ruin is not in the care of the Office of Public Works and the caretaker of the graveyard is Mr John Conlon who lives nearby.

Knockfarnaught - Forts, stone circle, cromlech.

Less than half a mile past Lahardane, on the Bofeenaun road side is a 300 foot height known as Knockfarnaught. On the western side of this hill are two forts and near the lower fort is a cromlech, the flat top stone of which measures 5'3" x 4'9". On the north eastern side is a stone circle comprised of a number of large stones. This land is owned by local farmers who will not object to the examination of the forts etc by visitors.

On the opposite side of the road is a large, elevated fort known as Lissnagorp (Lios na gCorp). This is thought to be the burial place of a large number of warriors slain during the battle between the armies of Queen Maeve and Noctua, the local queen. The landowner is Mr Harrison of Massbrook.

Ancient Castles.

TOPOGRAPHY (Continued).

wooded valleys, the brilliant sheen of the lakes, whilst in every direction, the supremacy of Nephin is challenged by a score of massive craggy mountains of the Nephin and other ranges.

A remarkably striking view is that obtained from the hilltop on the road which joins Bofeenaun and Massbrook; the most unpoetic soul must stir to the surrounding, enchanting beauty which so unexpectedly presents itself. Far-stretching Lough Conn of the many little green islands and sheltered bays contrasts very pleasantly with Lough Lavally (or Pollamaria Lake) which is tucked in here among the hills; the occasional clump of trees add a welcome splash of colour to the view and the nearby mountains constitute a most fitting background.

The district around Beltra Lake also offers many very attractive sights.

Lahardane, six miles from Crossmolina, sixteen miles from Castlebar (twelve via Windy Gap), and thirteen from Ballina, is the nearest approach to a village in this parish.

Mansions and Estates. Cont'd.CASTLEHILL HOUSE.

Castlehill House, a mansion of no great age and indeterminate architecture was the home of a family named Walsh before changing hands a couple of times in latter years and is now owned by a Mr Rivaz who is at present living in England.

The house is vacant and of no particular interest. Fruit and vegetables are grown in the garden of two acres and the larger portion of the estate lands have been acquired by the Land Commission.

The caretaker, Mr John Walsh, will allow visitors to view the place free of charge.

ANTIQUITIES Continued.

(Castlehill)

This castle is mentioned in the Annals of the Four Masters as having been destroyed by O'Donnell in A.D. 1526 when the Tirconail chieftain also laid waste the castle at Crossmolina.

A huge block of crumbled masonry marks the early existence of a keep at Knockmaria, near Lahardane but here also, no tradition or legend appertains to the ruin. Gold and silver coins were discovered near here many years ago. The landowner is Mr John MacHale.

The natives of the Terrybawn district near Pontoon, will point out the supposed site of an ancient castle near the shore of Lough Conn. A popular local legend tells of the tragic romance of a young girl who eloped to wed her lover and came to live at the castle. Her brothers, furious at this defiance of their father's wishes, surprised and slew the young husband on the hills where he had been hunting. Returning to the castle, they threw the gory head of her husband to their sister. Utterly demented, the girl ran from her home and drowned herself in the lake.