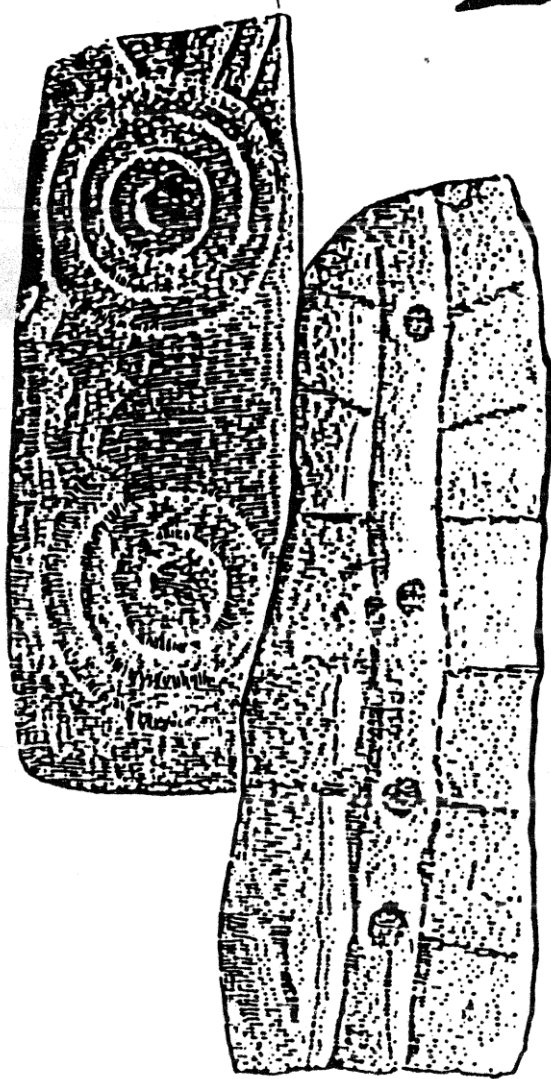


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# *Rathmichael Historical Record*



**1987**

**The Journal of the Rathmichael Historical Society**

**Rathmichael Historical Record**

1987

**Editor:** Joan Delany Assisted by Rob Goodbody

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## **Rathmichael Historical Record 1987**

### **Editorial**

It has been decided not to reproduce the Secretary's report for 1987 in this volume as it is largely taken up with a summary of the events of the year and these are considered in detail on the pages which follow.

The one other issue which the Secretary covered was the purchase of a slide projector by the Society. At the AGM in January it was decided that this should be done and our treasurer, Howell Evans, a keen photographer, kindly investigated the choice of models on the market and made a purchase on our behalf of a Reflecta projector. Members will have noticed that most slide projectors have short cables which always seem to ensure that the speaker cannot reach the screen or lectern while holding the remote control. This problem has been overcome by Damian MacGarry who has adapted the projector by fitting a detachable cable which has sufficient length for all of our needs.

We no longer need to rely on the generosity of members such as Joan Delany for the loan of a projector - except for unusual occasions, such as our final event of the year, when John Redmill spoke to us about the Casino at Marino and its recent restoration. His was a most impressive presentation, using two slide projectors and two screens to great effect.

### **28th January 1987 11th Annual General Meeting**

The 11th Annual General meeting, held in Rathmichael School, was chaired by our President, Wendy Guilford and attended by twenty-six members. Reports were presented by the Secretary and the Treasurer.

Howell Evans, the Society's Treasurer showed that the Society's accounts are in good order, each of our bank accounts being in credit. The Society took out a loan to publish the second edition of Mrs Turner's book *If You Seek Monuments* in 1984 and the balance was paid off during the year using funds from the auction of some of Mrs Turner's paintings which was reported in the 1986 Rathmichael Historical Record. The "book" bank account is now £175 in credit.

As Betty O'Brien, our Director of Excavations, was not able to be present, the accounts for the field work were presented by Etain Doyle.

There was one motion to the meeting, that the Society's subscriptions be increased. The subscription rates have remained unchanged for four years, during which time costs have increased significantly. It was proposed to increase subscriptions to £8 for family membership and £6 for individuals, while the student rate remains unchanged at £1.

In accordance with the rules of the Society one Committee member may not stand for re-election at the AGM and this year Albert Mason stood down. The following names were proposed for the officers and committee for 1987:

	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Seconder</b>
<b>President</b>	Wendy Guilford	Oliver Lloyd	Con Maxwell
<b>Secretary</b>	Rob Goodbody	Oliver Lloyd	Con Maxwell
<b>Treasurer</b>	Howell Evans	Oliver Lloyd	Con Maxwell
<b>Editor</b>	Damian MacGarry	Oliver Lloyd	Con Maxwell
<b>Committee</b>	Paddy Healy	Con Maxwell	Millicent Slevin
	Etain Doyle	Con Maxwell	Millicent Slevin
	Alison Riseley	Con Maxwell	Millicent Slevin
	Terry Levin	Howell Evans	Con Maxwell
	Sylvia Desmond	Joan Delany	Damian MacGarry

There being five candidates for the four non-officer positions a ballot took place and Paddy Healy, Etain Doyle, Alison Riseley and Terry Levin were declared elected. There being just one nomination for each of the officer positions the candidates were elected unopposed.

During discussion it was proposed that the Society should purchase its own slide projector, rather than relying on the good will of individuals who have kindly lent their equipment. This was agreed.

Following the business meeting we had a most enjoyable evening of members' slides of historical interest.

**24th February 1987**  
**The Walls Of Dublin**

Paddy Healy

Our meeting this month took place in the hall at St James's Church, Crincken, due to double booking in Rathmichael, and our speaker was Paddy Healy. The earliest wall of Dublin was an earthen bank, built in about 900 AD, as Paddy described to us in his lecture. This bank was uncovered during the excavations at Wood Quay, along with two later earth banks. It was not until about 1100 AD that Dublin's first stone city wall was built near the river, and eventually the city was enclosed by walls on the other three sides. The walls were defended by more than thirty towers and gates, though the city only covered 18 hectares (44 acres).

Dublin Castle was an important part of the city's life and defences, and building started in about the year 1204. Paddy showed slides of the remains of the original castle walls and towers that were uncovered in recent archaeological excavations, showing it to have been a strong castle with a large surrounding ditch. These defences rarely needed to withstand attack, and the storming by Silken Thomas in 1534 was the only major siege.

This well-researched talk was illustrated by a great collection of slides showing the surviving fragments of the walls, gates and towers, including many reproductions of old drawings and paintings depicting now-vanished portions. Each tower or gate had its own occupier, and apart from use as houses, a great variety of activities took place in them over the centuries, including shops, printing houses and gaols. The audience was amazed at the amount of the city wall which could still be seen, and to hear that more is probably preserved under ground. Unfortunately, despite greater awareness of the need to preserve these remains, the gradual destruction of the surviving sections of the old city wall is still taking place.



***The Royal Hospital, Kilmainham***  
*Drawing by Barbara Stone, reproduced with permission*

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**25 March 1987**

**The Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, - its History and Restoration**

**Colm McCormick**

Colm McCormick is President of the Cualann Historical Society, and partner in Costello, Murray and Beaumont, the architects for the restoration of the Royal Hospital. This gave him a unique position to assess how the history of the hospital would influence its restoration.

An Early Christian church and hospital at Kilmainham was dedicated to St Maighneann who was renowned for his care of the sick. Later came a monastery run by the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem which was taken by the crown on the dissolution of the monasteries. In 1680, the Duke of Ormond, aware of the large numbers of older soldiers in the army, established the Royal Hospital. The building was finished in four years to the designs of William Robinson and was modelled on French ideas, the hospital at Chelsea coming later.

Over the years a significant amount of alterations, additions and restorations was carried out. Francis Johnston was responsible for a major restoration in the early years of the 19th century. The recent restoration was far more comprehensive than originally intended and included the installation of a lift shaft in the space formerly occupied by a chimney breast and the reconstruction of the stairs with a concealed frame of steel. In all of these works it was considered to be of prime importance that the new works should not take from the original 17th century building while at the same time adapting it to modern standards. In such a way was the lift shaft introduced and facilities such as wheelchair ramps. It is ironic that more thought is put into providing access for the disabled now that the building is no longer used as a home for old soldiers.

This talk gave us all a new light on the Royal Hospital and it is not possible to visit the building now without reflecting on the huge amount of care that went into its restoration.

**1st April 1987**

**The Wind And Water Mills Of The Liffey Basin**

**William Dick**

The speaker is an industrial archaeologist who has been studying the mills in the Dublin area for many years. He gave us a fascinating and detailed account of a tremendous number and

variety of mills on the Liffey, the Dodder, the Poddle, the City Watercourse and various tributaries as well as various windmills in the vicinity. While not many mills survive that lend themselves to photography it is important to examine the remains at first hand, and this talk proved the point.

There were many mills along the Liffey and more still on the tributaries, particularly on the Dodder and the Poddle. The Poddle, along with the City Watercourse, had provided Dublin with its water for many centuries and also drove a large number of mills up to the early years of the twentieth century.

Mr Dick included a great deal of background information on how mills work and how they were affected by changes in technology. As early as the 1730's the smaller mills started to suffer from competition from the larger mills, as the improvement in the road systems facilitated the transport of larger quantities of grain. From the early 19th century the power of these and other mills was supplemented with steam power and gradually the use of water wheels virtually died out. It was surprising to hear of the variety of mills that were scattered through the district, including not only corn mills, but others producing paper and gunpowder, weaving, fulling and dyeing cotton and linen, and turning the drums in laundries and dye works.

Complementing the water mills there was a surprising number of wind mills in places such as Rathgar and Donnybrook and even in the city centre where a large one stood at Windmill Lane off George's Quay and another survives within the Guinness brewery.

### **9th-10th May 1987** **South East Clare Area**

#### **Weekend outing led by John Bradley**

Our annual weekend outing was based in Ennis this year and once again John Bradley kindly agreed to lead us. We met at Birr and had a look at the grounds of Birr Castle before heading on to Portumna. Here we looked at the ruins of Portumna Priory, a small, neat structure which was built in the 15th century by the Dominicans on the site of a 13th century Cistercian foundation. Nearby is the ruin of the 17th century Portumna Castle which was built in 1618 by the Earl of Clanricarde and was burned in 1826.

Entering Clare we travelled to Tuamgraney, near Scarriff, where stands the oldest church in Ireland which is still in use for public worship. Tuamgraney church was built about 969 and altered or rebuilt about the year 1000 by Brian Boru. Some of the church is later than this, but the original flat-lintelled west doorway remains with its faint trace of an architrave carved onto the stones around the door. The doorway also narrows towards the top in the style of the time and the church has projecting antae at the western gable.

We spent the night in Newpark House, near Ennis, a 17th century house on its own farm. There we heard that a carved stone face had recently been discovered on a rock in a field nearby. Early next morning we went to explore and found an enigmatic face with large ears of date as yet undiscovered.

Sunday's scheduled itinerary included a visit to the Franciscan Friary at Ennis. This building has been much altered over the years, not the least of which was its conversion to a parish church in the 17th century when, presumably, the tower was altered from the more typical tall, slim Franciscan style.

Another Franciscan house was at Quin and this is still reasonably intact. Quin Friary was built in the 15th century on a site which had previously been occupied by churches and a castle. The late twelfth-century castle was destroyed in the 13th century and significant traces of it remain, particularly the bases of three of the massive corner towers, now marking the corners of the friary. The visitor to Quin could be forgiven for not realising that there are traces of decorative plaster remaining on one of the walls and these were drawn to our attention by our guide, John Bradley. Also at Quin there is a magnificent view from the top of the tower and the remains of a substantial area of deserted village may be discerned in the adjoining field.

We also visited Dysert O'Dea with its fine Romanesque doorway, the remains of a round tower and the 12th century cross. From the cross we could see a tower house which looked in good condition, complete with slate roof and a flag flying. Those who had visited here before could recall the castle in ruins not long ago.

Our final port of call on this tightly-packed weekend was Killaloe. At the cathedral we inspected the oratory with its corbelled stone roof and Romanesque doorway as well as the cathedral itself. Within the cathedral there are several carved stones of interest, most particularly the only stone known to exist with both ogham and runic script. Killaloe also has

a stone-roofed oratory in the grounds of its Catholic church, as if for balance and fair play. This oratory, dedicated to St. Molua, was originally located on Friar's Island nearby in the Shannon. When the hydro-electric scheme was under way in 1929 Friar's Island was to be submerged and the oratory was carefully dismantled by the Commissioners of Public Works and re-erected in the grounds of the church.

This was a busy weekend and a highly successful one. Our thanks go to our guide, John Bradley and to Damian and Edie MacGarry who organised the event.

### **23rd May 1987**

#### **Lucan And Lucan House**

##### **Led by William Stuart**

For our May outing we went to Lucan where we were the guests of William Stuart of the Lucan Historical Society. William showed us around the village of Lucan and explained its history from medieval times to more recent days. It is surprising that while we all felt we knew Lucan William was able to show us new aspects of the village that are never obvious to the passer-by.

Close to the village there is what appears to be a tower house and this is the remains of the 16th century house of the Sarsfield family. This tower is in the grounds of its successor, the fine 18th century mansion of Lucan House. Lucan passed through a number of ownerships during the medieval period and in the 16th century it came into the hands of the Sarsfields. The great soldier Patrick Sarsfield, who is best known for his foray during the siege of Limerick in 1691, was probably born at Lucan. The property passed by marriage from the Sarsfields to the Veseys and in 1772 one of this family, Agmondisham Vesey, designed and built the present Lucan House, now occupied by the Italian ambassador.

We were lucky enough to be given a tour of Lucan House and to savour its sumptuous 18th century interiors, now restored by the Italian government. We also saw the beautifully kept grounds and from there we crossed the Liffey and toured the northern bank as far as the bridge. This structure looks extremely elegant from the river and like so many bridges it cannot be appreciated by those who are passing over it.

**28th June 1987**

**Visit To The Carlow Area**

**Led by Paddy Healy**

Our trip to the Carlow area actually began in county Kildare when we visited Castledermot. Our guide for the day was Paddy Healy and he introduced us to the wealth of monuments at the site of St. Dermot's church. These ranged from a hogsback stone to the round tower, with its atypical battlemented top. The surviving remains of the ancient church itself consist of a Romanesque doorway in two orders, the style of which has been mimicked in the door of the modern church on the site. The Romanesque doorway is, in fact, a reconstruction and forms a fine feature in the middle of the churchyard. Pride of place are, of course, the high crosses, of which there are two which survive along with the base of a third. Paddy showed us the different scenes depicted on the crosses, some of which occur on both crosses, such as the loaves and the fishes and Adam and Eve. These crosses display a mixture of pictorial representations from the scriptures along with purely geometrical designs.

While in Castledermot we called in at the Franciscan friary which dates from the beginning of the 14th century. An oddity which was visible in the burial ground was a grave slab with a cadaver carved on it. This is one of a small number of this type of grave slab which may be seen around Ireland.

Crossing the border into Carlow we went to see the huge portal tomb at Brownshill. This has now been fenced off from the adjoining farm land and is approached by a pathway along the edge of the field. It is well worth the visit, being a spectacularly large tomb, making our local portal tombs at Kiltarnan and Brennanstown seem comparatively small.

Calling in to Carlow itself we went to view Carlow Castle. This is the remains of a 13th century castle, with the typical rectangular layout with large drum towers at each corner. At some time in the 19th century someone attempted to carry out some alterations to the castle using gunpowder to remove unnecessary walls and succeeded in demolishing half of the entire structure! This means that what is presented to view is a fine cross-section through an early Norman castle and this may be seen to advantage from across the river, avoiding the need to approach too close to the surviving remains. Finally, we went across another county boundary to visit Killeshin church in Laois. This church exhibits a very fine Romanesque doorway in four orders, with a gabled hood above. The sandstone of the doorway is carved

with intertwined figures and animals. Nothing visible remains of the round tower on this site which was demolished in the early 18th century.

**6th to 10th July 1987**  
**Art and Archaeology Course**

With attendance of thirty, the course in Art and Archaeology was very successful. After an introduction to art and archaeology there were lectures on Irish metalwork, high crosses, theory of and practice of archaeology and local history. The group visited “Treasures of Ireland” in the National Museum, the Chester Beatty Library, Local crosses and Killiney old church and Martello tower.

J.D.

**26th July 1987**  
**Coolbanagher And Emo Court**

For our July outing we went to explore a corner of county Laois which is associated with James Gandon, starting with Emo Court. This is a large mansion-house in substantial grounds and it only shows to the passer-by as a long stone demesne wall alongside the road leading to Mountmellick. It was built in about 1790 for the first Earl of Portarlington to the designs of James Gandon and it is the only house of this size to have been designed by that eminent architect. The house was occupied since about 1930 by the Society of Jesus and since 1969 it has been a private house again.

We were fortunate to have been shown around Emo by its present owner, Mr Cholmeley-Harrison. He had previously lived at Woodstown House near Waterford which he let for the summer of 1967 to Jackie Kennedy. This aroused so much interest that long after she had left Woodstown there were sightseers peering through the windows. In the interest of privacy Mr Cholmeley-Harrison decided to move and, happily, Emo was for sale. The house needed attention following architectural abuses which spanned most of the life of the building and he has carried out a great deal of restoration, including repairs to the floor in the rotunda. This floor had been inlaid originally but it had been cut to accommodate an altar when the Jesuits had a chapel in the building. The floor has now been carefully restored but as the centre was missing there was no clue as to the original design and Mr Cholmeley-Harrison has placed his own coat of arms there instead.

Close to Emo is the Church of Ireland church of Coolbanagher which was also designed by Gandon for the Earl of Portarlington. The church was altered in the 1860's when a description stated that it "was built 80 years ago by an Italian architect"! The imprint of Gandon is evident on the building as it is on the tomb of Earl of Portarlington in the churchyard. This is a delightful little church and there is a drawing by Gandon on display which shows it as it was in its original form.

## **13th Rathmichael Summer School, 1987**

**10-21 August 1987**

Once again, the Rathmichael Summer School brought its combination of Field Courses, excavation and evening lectures and was a great success.

### **Excavation**

As the excavation at Ballyman had reached its conclusion last year work was started at a new site this year, at Dundrum Castle. The archaeologist who was director of excavations at Ballyman was Betty O'Brien and we are very happy to continue our association with Betty as she is now director of excavations at Dundrum.

This is a late 16th century castle consisting of a main building which interconnects with a smaller tower and both sections now stand as roofless shells. It is known that there was a castle at Dundrum since the 13th century and the various owners over time are reasonably well documented. The original castle was abandoned at the end of the 15th century and reoccupied by a branch of the same family a century later.

At the moment the castle is owned by David Newman Johnson and as he intends to restore it some archaeological investigation of the site is required before any of this work could be undertaken.

Work began at the castle at the beginning of August and concentrated on three sides of the smaller tower. To what is now the front of the castle a cutting was excavated in the corner between the two parts of the building. A dramatic find emerged early on when part of a human skull was unearthed close to the surface. This was of comparatively modern date and was removed from the site by the Gardaí for examination. Further down a cobbled layer was discovered, probably dating from the time of the later castle. In excavating this section two small circular gun-loops were uncovered in the wall of the tower.

To the side of the building a second cutting revealed a cobbled layer running alongside the building.

At the back of the castle a cutting was excavated and revealed some important aspects of the buildings. An opening at the base of the tower was uncovered and proved to be the exit from a garderobe chute and the castle wall was found to have a distinct batter. A wall which projects to the rear of the castle was known to be of modern date, but excavation showed that

it was resting on an earlier wall which seemed to be part of the original castle, possibly from the 13th century. An intriguing structure which formed part of this wall was built of stone and projected to each side of the wall. This was a rectangular structure with two slots within it, each of which was nearly three metres in depth, the bottom of each slot following a curve. This proved to be part of the structure associated with a drawbridge which would have formed part of the defences of the original castle.

This was a most exciting season of excavation and we look forward to a further season next year.

### **Field Courses**

Two field courses were held this year, during the weeks commencing 10th and 17th August. The change in location of the excavation has led to some new arrangements and this year the classroom-based part of the courses took place in Holy Cross School in Dundrum. Once again Leo Swan was the Director of the Summer School and he carried a great deal of the workload of instructing the students on the courses. The courses were well attended and all seem to have derived a great deal of benefit from them.

### **Evening lectures**

The evening lecture series, hosted as usual by Leo Swan, was a great success again, having a tremendous variety of topics from a range of speakers.

### **17 August 1987**

#### **Irish Souterrains**

#### **Richard Warner**

“Souterrains form an important part of the Irish Early Christian monuments, and owe their existence to the reality that life at the time was brutal and short”. So started this assessment of this type of monument which is well known, but probably little understood in the public mind. Dr Warner gave a background explanation of the nature of society in Early Christian times, showing how inter-tribal strife was at least partly due to the numbers of footloose and idle sons of the nobility who carried out raids, much as was to happen again in the eighteenth century.

The morphology and typology of souterrains was explained in detail, including three types of construction: tunnelling, spoil pit type with a large chamber off which are tunnels, and the trench construction, which is like “cut and cover” construction. Finally, the use and distribution of souterrains were explained. Souterrains are not found in all parts of Ireland. They are always at Early Christian sites, but not in all sites. Their distribution is haphazard and difficult to understand. Their use seems more clear cut, though. Theories that they were for storage do not seem to be realistic. The original explanation of them as shelters from attack seems to be the only answer, and this is lent support by the recent use of souterrains by the North Vietnamese to avoid heavy bombing during the war with the United States.

### **18 August 1987**

#### **Excavations at Pre-Historic Copper Mines on Mount Gabriel**

##### **Billy O’Brien**

The earliest mining and metal working in Ireland was about 4,000 years ago and archaeologists have wondered about the source of the metals in the early spear blades, axes etc. Analysis of the metals has been attempted to try to identify the ore deposits. In Britain, the intensity of later mining has tended to destroy the earlier traces, but in Ireland traces have survived. The Mount Gabriel group of primitive mines is to be found on the Mizzen peninsula in Co. Cork. These represent one of a number of ore deposits in south west Ireland which include lead, zinc, manganese and iron, but principally copper and barytes.

The copper mines at Mount Gabriel are the earliest known in north west Europe. The ore was so poor in grade that the sites were not disturbed by later mining. Each mine was cut into the hillside, generally for a distance of about 6 metres, rarely as far as 12 metres. This distance was limited by the method which involved building a fire against the rock face and heating it, then throwing water on it. This would be repeated until the rock shattered.

Excavation at some of these sites has revealed a great deal of information about the mining processes. Generally, dates of about 1700 to 1500 BC have been found, placing the mines in the later stages of the Irish early Bronze Age. This was an important period in south west Ireland and has left a large quantity of field monuments.

## **19 August 1987**

### **Field Work in the Midlands**

#### **Geraldine Stout**

Geraldine Stout of the Sites and Monuments Record, Office of Public Works, described a project undertaken to survey archaeological material in the midlands. Trainees were used on an AnCO scheme to survey the Barony of Ikerrin, in which they identified some 600 monuments. In the following year they surveyed another two baronies. The method involved checking through old maps looking for antiquities marked on the map as well as enigmatic boundaries and features. The Ordnance Survey letters and notebooks were checked, and any published sources that could be found. The project worked in three teams, one indoors and the others in the field. The field workers were supplied with survey equipment, and produced plans of monuments found during the survey. This was preferable to attempting to describe features in mere words.

Out of the information collected it was possible to carry out analysis on some of the results. The diameter of ring forts was assessed, and 70% were found to fall in the range of 27-34 metres. The distribution of medieval manor sites was also undertaken along with several other studies. This kind of work in the field should be immensely useful and illuminating through its ability to shed new light on the quantity and distribution of monuments in the field, and it is an added bonus that further studies are carried out as a spin-off.

## **20 August 1987**

### **The Landscape in Archaeology**

#### **John Feehan**

John Feehan never fails to bring a new approach to any subject and in this talk he treated us to the natural scientist's view of archaeology. He concentrated in particular on the geology of monuments, but brought in other scientific disciplines such as botany. The geological side included examination of the type of stone used in various monuments and suggested reasons for the results. He observed that carving and decorative work in the Irish Romanesque is always executed in sandstone. This includes the work on Cormac's Chapel at Cashel where the local limestone was ignored in favour of sandstone from at least 30 miles away. The

probable reason is that the craftsmen would have come from elsewhere and would have wanted to use stone similar to that which they normally used.

Probably only a small fraction of archaeological remains have been discovered to date and because the sample is so small we need to document all the information in detail as systematically as possible. This should include not only monuments but also habitats, peats, hedgerows and so forth. Only by doing this can we sort out what is likely to be important and identify the genuine monuments and the clues to their interpretation. Bullauns, for instance, tend to be found in granite, which does not hollow out naturally. Similar hollows may be found in limestone of natural origin. Sheelagh na gigs may be shown to occur on the edges of the land occupied by the Irish in the 15th and 16th centuries, and always face out into hostile territory. Can this explain something about their purpose?

There are plants to be found that are survivors from an earlier period. The medieval uncrisped parsley is not found anywhere but on the sites of medieval gardens. Hemlock and greater celandine were used for medical purposes and also survive from an earlier period. We need to be able to recognise these and draw from them the inferences regarding earlier occupation of a site. These examples demonstrate the contribution that an environmental scientist may bring to the study of archaeological sites as well as showing the breadth and depth of the speaker's knowledge.

### **21st August 1987**

#### **Preliminary Archaeological Survey of Co. Galway**

##### **Paul Gosling**

In Galway the National Archaeological Survey was contracted out to Galway University. The purpose of the survey was to find all field monuments in the county and report their condition. As such, this was not to be a full survey of the county. To carry out the survey a system of recording sheets was adopted which included information about the grid reference, townland, parish, ordnance sheet, category of monument and its listing, ownership, access, printed sources etc etc.

The survey found that not all monuments are shown on the Ordnance Survey maps and the shortfall varies according to the monument type. In particular, some 33% of souterrains found were previously unrecorded and a staggering 80% of fulacht fian. In dealing with the types of

monument found the speaker revealed a fascinating wealth of detail. Ring forts tend to be on the eastern slopes, with the entrance on the downslope side. Despite stories about these never being touched in the past for reasons of superstition, air photography has shown that vast numbers have been destroyed. Even so, Ireland still has a comparatively large proportion of its monuments visible above ground level. More than half of our monuments are still traceable compared with only 10% in Britain and 4% in Germany. There is no room for complacency though!

### **26 August 1987**

#### **Visit to Dundrum Castle**

#### **Betty O'Brien**

On the evening of Wednesday 26th August Betty O'Brien conducted a tour of the excavation at Dundrum Castle so that members who were not able to take part in the work at the castle could have a chance to see it for themselves.

### **5th September 1987**

#### **A Victorian Evening and Cartographic Exposition**

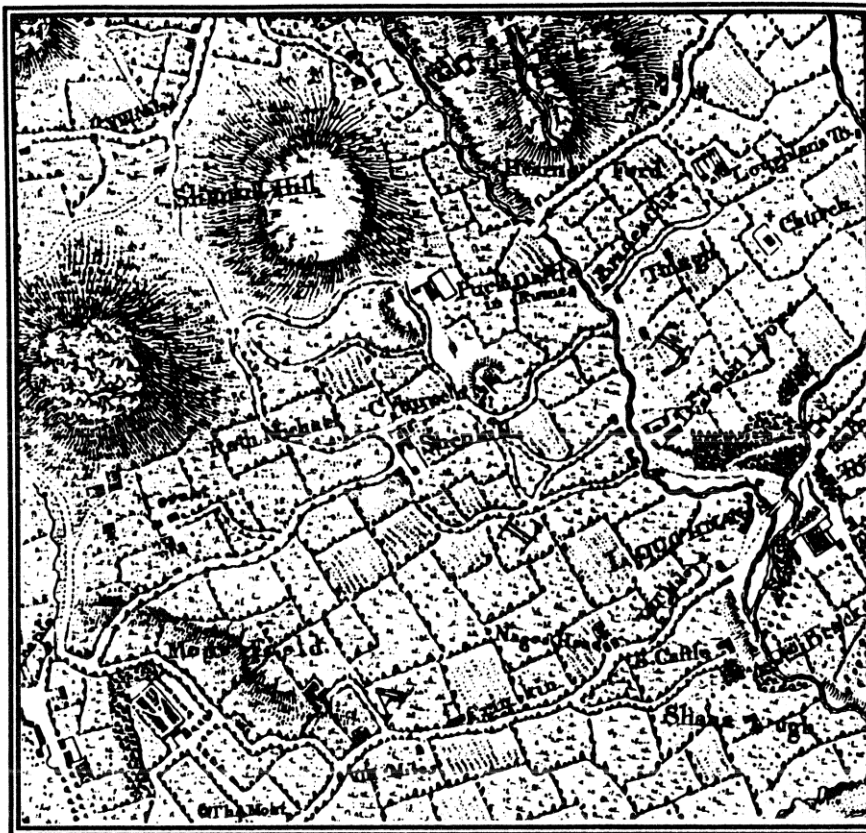
#### **At Aravon School, Old Conna Hill**

This year we were very kindly given the use of Aravon School again for our fund-raising event. To suit the magnificent building we decided upon a Victorian Evening and we were fortunate to have had contributions from a number of talented people to bring a suitable flavour to the occasion. A recital of Victorian writings was given by Alan Grainger of the Rathmichael Parish Dramatic Society, George Morrison put on a display of old photographs, Theodora Fitzgibbon demonstrated a range of Victorian recipes while Rosemary Brown treated us to some flower arranging from the period and Tony Armstrong showed a great selection of old slides of the area.

As if that was not enough we ran an exhibition of old maps in parallel with the event. This included a wide variety of examples of the cartographer's art ranging in period from about 1600 to the 1940's. Amongst these were maps of the south east Dublin area from various periods showing how maps progressed over time and showing how the area had changed. The

unusual exhibits included 17th century maps of Ireland and a military map produced by the British army for use in the event of an invasion of Ireland during the Second World War. We are grateful to all who helped in the production of this display, particularly Andrew Bonar Law.

The event was run as a combination of a social event and a means of raising funds to assist in the running of our field work. It was successful on both counts and our thanks go to Mr. Basil Nulty of the school governors for offering the use of the school and to Mr and Mrs O'Malley who were our hosts on the premises.



*From the Cartographic Exposition:*

*An extract from John Rocque's map of county Dublin (1760) showing the future site of the modern village of Shankill This may be seen towards the bottom of the map near the words "Nag's Head". The fork in the road below the name is the one where St. Anne's Church stands today.*

*[KB. West is at the top of the map]*

## **19 September 1987**

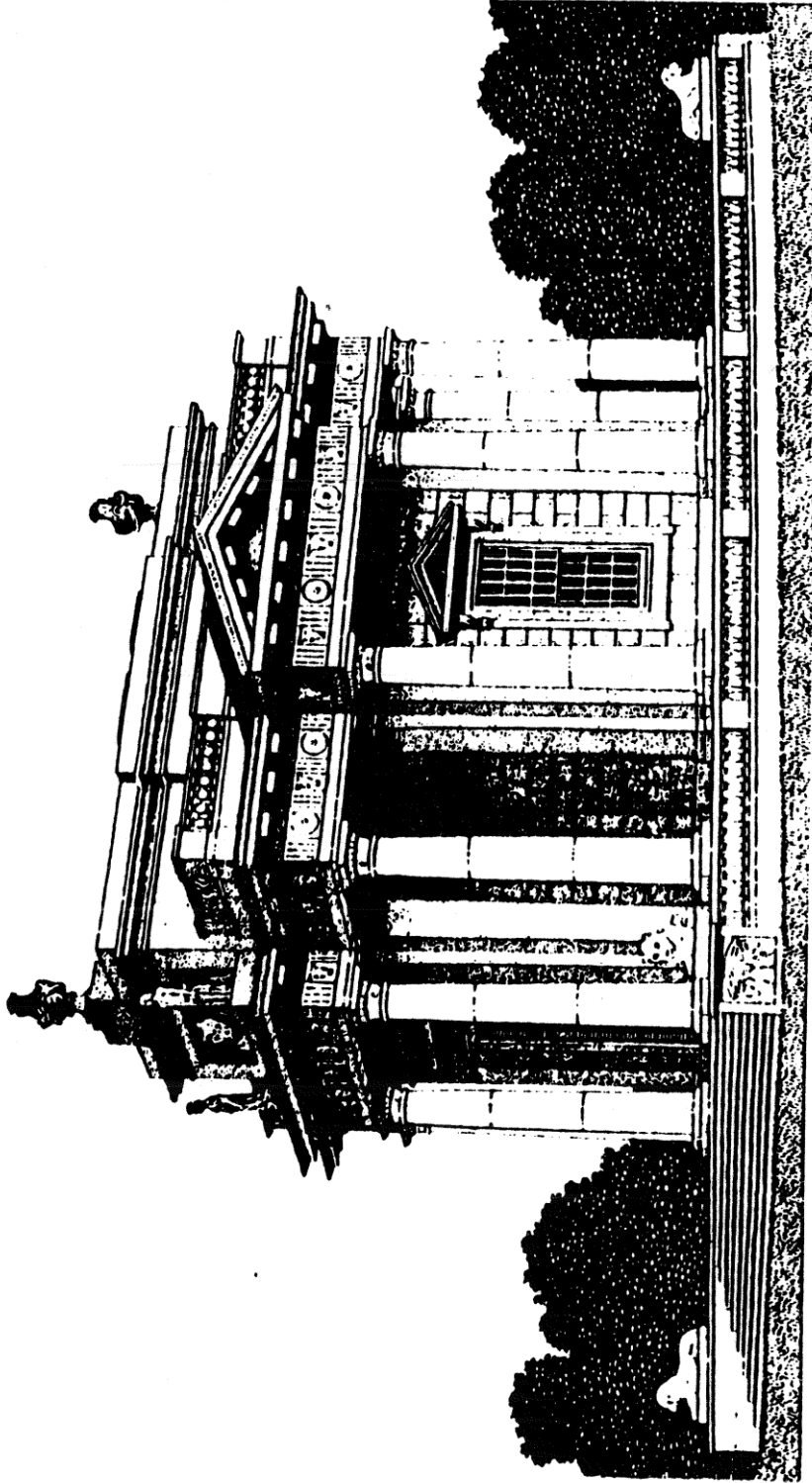
### **Heritage Day: Outing to Rathmichael and Exhibition**

To mark Heritage Day we had a two-pronged event. This consisted of an outing to Rathmichael and an exhibition at Shanganagh Park House.

The outing began at Puck's Castle Lane and we walked down through Rathmichael Wood to view the hill fort, pausing to look over the fence at the small ring fort in the field near the road. The cover of gorse and trees on the hill fort detracts badly from the impression of the monument and on this particular day this was considerably worsened by heavy rain.

Joan Delany was to help at Shanganagh Park House and Paddy Healy would take a group on the outing to the Hill Fort etc. But Paddy had a very bad cold, so it was suggested that they exchange duties. Only about eight people turned up at Puck's Castle Lane and after seeing the Hill Fort we were drenched. Not surprisingly, decided to forget about the rest of the tour and went back to Shanganagh Park House.

Those who had elected to staff the exhibition were spared the torrential rain! There we exhibited panels explaining something of the history of the Shankill area with particular emphasis on the townland of Rathmichael.



*The Casino, Marino*  
*Drawing by Michael Craig, reproduced with permission*

**11th November 1987**  
**The Restoration of the Marino Casino**

**John Redmill**

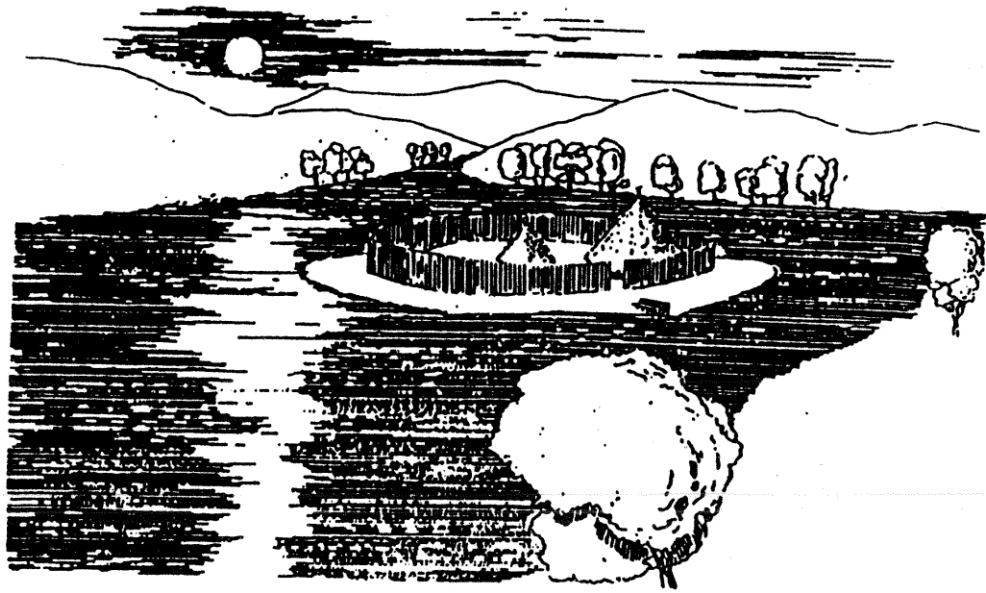
Our speaker is an architect who specialises in the restoration of older buildings and in recent times he has been involved in the restoration of the Casino at Marino along with Austin Dunphy. For this talk he adopted the unusual technique of using two slide projectors and two screens and it worked to great effect.

The Casino was built by the Earl of Charlemont in the grounds of his house known as Marino. Charlemont was very keen on architecture and had studied the great classical buildings while on a grand tour in Italy. Here he met the eminent English architect, William Chambers, and as a result of their friendship Charlemont used Chambers as the architect for his town house in Rutland Square, now the Municipal Gallery, and his seaside house at Clontarf. The principal collaboration between the two men, however, was the casino, which they decided to design and build as the most perfect example of neo-classical architecture.

Construction work started in 1758 and it was nearly thirty years before the building was completed. Despite his close involvement in this building and other works for Charlemont and for others Chambers never came to Ireland and the building of the casino was carried out under the superintendence of Simon Vierpyl.

The restoration of the building was carried out in full recognition of the Casino's status as an internationally important work of art. Plasterwork, inlaid floors, stonework and all other aspects were carefully researched before any work was carried out and this included taking scrapings from the original layer of paint in each room so that the colour scheme would be just as it had been originally.

This is a very exciting project on a most exquisite building and John Redmill's presentation has given us all a much deeper understanding of its history, construction and restoration.



EXCAVATIONS AT  
MOYNAGH LOUGH, CO. MEATH  
1980-1989

JOHN BRADLEY

*Drawing reproduced with permission of John Bradley*

**14 October 1987**

**Reconstructing an Irish Crannog**

**John Bradley**

Few archaeologists get a chance to build a replica of a major structure that they have excavated. In this account, John Bradley told us of how he excavated the crannog at Moynagh Lough in Co Meath and then built a crannog at the new heritage park at Ferrycarrig, Co Wexford. The talk was in two parts, the first of which explained the concept of crannogs and when and how they were built. Concentrating in particular on Moynagh Lough, he described the structure of the crannog and how it was built up from sods, clay, sand, earth, stones etc, along with a palisade to hold it together. Construction was dated to about 625 AD by means of dendrochronology. Discoveries at the site included leather and metal working areas, glass, bone objects and a house site.

In the second part of the talk, John Bradley told us about the Ferrycarrig National Heritage Park, which is situated just outside Wexford. On a site of about 6 hectares left over from a road project by the County Council a collection of reconstructed monuments has been assembled. The crannog required an astonishing quantity of material, brought by 4 lorries a day for six weeks, even though the water was fairly shallow. How the original version was built by hand, carrying the material into the lake on rafts, can only be imagined! To make sure that the construction was as realistic as possible a great deal of research was drawn upon. This made sure that the walls of the house and the surrounding palisade were of the right materials and the right height and that the overall design was as near to the original as could be managed.

### **Three Cheers!**

[a congratulatory note on the graduation of Paddy Healy, MA, University College, Galway,  
1986]

Oh Paddy dear  
and did we hear  
True news now going around?  
How you had got a high degree  
For digging in the ground.

If so, well sure take off our hats  
And throw them on the sod  
For now well have to treat P.H.  
As a sort of minor god.

C.M.

## Miscellanea

The loss of buildings is usually a sad issue to record, but is often announced in this Miscellanea section. It is all the more upsetting when the loss is through vandalism and this year we lost one of our libraries. Cabinteely library burned down in November following an arson attack which started the blaze in the central desk, where the local history collection was held, and everything here was destroyed. While the fire gutted the building and left it roofless, many of the books survived the burning to be irreparably damaged by smoke and water, including the history section at the far end of the building from the outbreak. Dublin County Council is examining its position with a view to rebuilding the library.

Happier news comes from Shankill where an older house has found a new use. Some years ago Dublin County Council purchased a substantial amount of land in Shankill for housing and it was intended to demolish Shanganagh Park, a house which dates from the late 1820's. We are happy to say that the house has now been refurbished and it was officially opened on 1st May as a community centre. The Rathmichael Historical Society was represented at the opening by Joan Delany.

Dublin County Council is beginning to prepare a new Development Plan for its area and has approached the historical societies around the county seeking comments on possible buildings to be included on their lists of structures to be preserved. The committee will be giving this full consideration over the next while.

### **Shankill Station 1977-87: Ten Years On**

The year 1959 started on a gloomy note for the people of Shankill with the closure of the former Dublin and Wicklow, later Dublin and South Eastern Railway mainline between Harcourt Street and Shanganagh Junction. The present route from Westland Row (Pearse Station) is still referred to as the coastal branch.

Within a short time the pressure was on for a replacement station on the coastal route, due to the shortcomings of the replacement bus service; but with no station before Killiney the trains passed the catchment area of the old station. Prior to the closure trains took just thirty minutes to Harcourt Street and a few minutes more to Westland Row. The bus service was scheduled to cover the same distance in one hour.

Over the years Shankill grew, with the green areas being gradually filled up with housing developments, but still had to wait for over seventeen years for the new station to be built.

In February 1977 work was started on a site to the north of the Corbawn Lane bridge with the cutting sides being cut away for the construction of the two 137-metre platforms to accommodate a six-coach train. The foundations for the booking office and footbridge started to rise from the late-winter mud. The footbridge was put into position at the end of May.

The summer timetable of 1977 was the first to feature the new station, with train crews advised that until the opening, care was to be taken to avoid early departures from Killiney on northbound trains.

On Friday, June 10th, the station was officially opened by the then Taoiseach, Liam Cosgrave. He travelled out from Pearse station, as part of that year's general election campaign in a specially-prepared push-pull train. (How many of our members remember those Spartan days of the pre-DART days?)

The station settled down to business under the care of Vinnie Mullin initially before the arrival of Depotman Tommy Kearney, a former driver, who worked over the full opening hours. These were from 0700 to 2000 on Mondays to Fridays with an early closing at 1500 on Saturdays. At that time there was no Sunday service except in July and August in some years only. He was joined in 1979 by John Cotter, each man alternating weekly on early and late turns. With the coming of the DART in July 1984 Tommy retired from the railway service and he died shortly afterwards before he could appreciate his retirement in full His place in the booking office was taken by George Mitchell who had transferred from Dun Laoghaire. George has since emigrated to the U.S.A. and was replaced by Damien Frawley.

Philip R. Booth

### **Lehaunstown Camp, 1793-1799**

In 1793 Britain was at war with France. Both military and political leaders foresaw a French attack on the British Isles, which they thought would come via Ireland. The result of this was the setting-up of several camps in various parts of the country. One of these camps was to be sited near the capital for its defence. Lands were leased at Lehaunstown from Mr. Barry Lawless and in May 1795 the first laying-out of the camp was finished and between 4,000

and 5,000 soldiers marched in. The camp was spread over 120 acres and consisted of 125 houses, wooden huts and canvas tents. The Hibernian Journal of June 24th records ,ffor the feeding of the troops a market was held in the camp every Monday. The country people were encouraged to bring provisions and a guard was stationed there to ensure fair trading”. 1795 passed and the camp began to look like a permanent fixture until the French arrived in Bantry Bay. The troops at Lehaunstown Camp were directed south to meet them with the help of Lord Cloncurry’s father, who lent £45,000 for the march. When the French ceased to be a threat at Bantry the troops returned to Lehaunstown. The camp had no great concern with the 1798 uprising, but such a depository of arms came to the attention of Henry and John Sheares, who on July 12th 1798 were charged with high treason for planning to take the camp at Laughanstown. The Sheares brothers were found guilty on the evidence of Captain Armstrong of the King’s County Militia based at the camp.

The Freeman’s Journal of October 2nd 1798 records the last military operation conducted by the camp: “Saturday night the house of a farmer named Mooney near Carrickmines and within a mile of the camp was attacked by some desperadoes, who met with resistance, set fire to the place. A shot fired from the house brought a party of ancient Britons from the camp, who by the light of the flames discovered the miscreants retreating and four were secured”.

In April 1799 it was announced that the camp at Laughanstown was broken up\* but a guard of 300 military were stationed near the place, In due course these also departed and the land reverted to its original purpose.

### **References:**

Ball, Francis Ellington: Loughlinstown and its History Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland Vol. XXXI, Part 1, p. 83 (1901)

Murray, Kevin Loughlinstown Camp Dublin Historical Record No. VII (1944-5)

Albert Mason

## **Rathmichael: A Parish History**

by Kathleen Turner, edited by G. O. Simms, 1987

One will never forget the small white-haired old lady who had no difficulty in getting over a highish gate if it lay between her and a historical object she wished to see. One learned with surprised admiration that she was also a sailor, could fly an aeroplane, and maintained an interesting garden. This remarkable energy and width of interest flowed into her founding of the Rathmichael Historical Society.

But to the book itself. We note immediately that it is complimented by the editorship of so fine a scholar as Dr. George Otto Simms, and is graced by a foreword from the pen of the Most Reverend Dr. Donald Caird, Archbishop of Dublin and a former rector. If by chance you are inclined to dismiss this co-operation as necessary courtesy, then take and read. If by rare chance you should have thought that the history of a single country parish might be dull reading you will be surprised by an account of changes in religious practice in Ireland from pre-Norman times onward. There is much to interest the student of social history. In the middle of the last century, for example, a scandalised Rathmichael vestry appointed a set of overseers who were “to take prompt measures for the suppression of Tippling in Public Houses in this Union and to prevent them from retailing Beer or Spirits at hours during which Divine Service is being celebrated”. A genealogist and lover of intimate family history will leaf happily through the lengthy tenth chapter, an account of some interesting houses in the area and the people who lived in them.

The presentation of the work - coffee-table A4 lengthwise, if I may so describe it - is attractive and many pages are enhanced by delightful illustrations. It is a pleasure to browse, and be informed. I cannot but steal a line from Dr. Caird’s foreword. Kathleen Turner “was never content simply to repeat the accepted wisdom on issues where further investigation could throw greater light”. We have been rewarded.

Gerard Slevin