

## ANTIQUITIES

*Abbeys, Castles, Fortresses, Round Towers, Early Churches, Sculptured Crosses, Stone Circles, Ogham Stones, Cairns, Souterrans, 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.*

### DUN BRISTE.

The most mysterious and for that reason perhaps the most interesting antiquity in this parish is the ruin of a stone building which may be seen on Dun Briste, a rough perpendicular rock which stands fully three hundred feet in height and an equal distance out to sea from the mainland. That Dun Briste at one time formed part of the headland would seem borne out by the fact that there is in the mainland, an indentation which appears to correspond exactly with a wedge-like prominence on that part of the rock which faces this indentation. Furthermore, every one of the many different layers of rock which comprise Dun Briste has a counterpart in the face of the Downpatrick precipice. I understand that several vain attempts have been made to scale the rock but as yet, it remains unexplored. With the aid of binoculars and telescope borrowed from the Eire Coastwatchers whose hut stands nearly opposite this strange phenomenon, I carefully studied the jumble of stones which the naked eye can clearly perceive on the top of the rock. Even with this assistance however, it is impossible to identify the nature of the building. The most that I can say is that on the south west side there is what appears to be just a heap of stones and on the eastern side, the vestiges of a wall three or four feet in height.

### ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, DOWNPATRICK.

Only a very slight trace remains of this foundation, that being in the bare stumps of the walls. It is impossible to estimate the age of the building which is roughly fifty feet in length and twenty two feet broad. In one corner is a heap of stones said to be the stones of St. Patrick's Altar and near the church is a mound of stones, similar to those used in the walls of the church, which has been variously described as St. Patrick's Castle, a steeple and an altar.

It is traditionally believed that the saint was in the habit of ascending this monument to pray and that it was here he prayed that Godruig the tyrant who resided on Dun Briste (then attached to the mainland) might be forever separated from him. This earnest prayer had immediate and startling effect, for on the following morning it was discovered that the Dun, and with it the wicked tyrant, had been completely cut off from the mainland. Thus did this isolated rock, from which there was no temporal escape, become the "Dun Briste" or "Broken Part".

To-day the legend of Godruig has been confused with another concerning a second tyrant named Crem Dubh who was supposed to have forfeited his soul to the devil but was rescued at the last moment by St. Patrick and an army of angels.

East of the church, near some ruined buildings which were part of the old coastguard station, is part of an ancient wall of great strength. This great wall must have been erected for the protection of some fort or castle and O'Danevan, without seeing the place, says it is possible that the ruin on Dun Briste is that of an English castle which was guarded by this strong wall.

Downpatrick Head is four miles north of Ballycastle and the landowner, Mr Niall McCormack, M.C.C., Carrmure, Lacken, Ballina, will not object to visitors entering on his land.

Apart from archaeological features, Downpatrick will delight the visitor in the many wonderful scenes to be viewed here.

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ANTIQUITIES continued.BALLINGLEN CASTLE.

In the townland of Ballinglen the ruin of an old Norman Castle will be seen at the far bank of the river, on the right hand side of the road when about two miles from Ballycastle. A road to the right leads up to the farmhouses near the castle. The thick strong walls of the castle, now crumbling visibly, are about fifty feet high and thirty square. It is believed that the castle was erected by the Barretts and seized by the Burkes in later years.

The ruin is credited with the usual complement of secret passages but I could not find any trace of them. A stone staircase leads upwards but this is impassable beyond the first storey.

The castle is on the lands of Mr Sean Purcell, Ballinglen and visitors are free to explore it.

ANCIENT CHURCH AT EILLEEN.

Three miles from Ballycastle and a short distance to the south of Downpatrick, the mere stumps of the walls indicate the existence of an ancient church known as Teampall na gCailleasadh Dubha - Temple of the Hags, or literally translating, The Temple of the Black Hags.

PORTNAHALLY CASTLE.

This castle, of which only a portion of a wall remains, is supposed to have been erected by the Barretts, probably around the sixteenth century. The ruin is on the lands of Mr P. Healen and is situated on the seashore about one and a half miles from Ballycastle, in the direction of Downpatrick.

STONE CIRCLES.

About one mile from Ballycastle, on the Downpatrick road, a stone circle will be seen near the roadside on the lands of Mrs Kate Garvin.

At the rear of Mr Burke's residence, about a mile from Ballycastle and in the direction of Ballina, two circles of large stones may be seen from the roadside.

RATHS AND SOUTERRAINS.

Earthen forts will be found in large numbers in this parish but they carry no traditions or legends nor do they appear to deserve a detailed account.

What appear to be the entrances to artificial caves or souterrains exist at Ballyglass (on Mr Patrick Munnally's land, within a few hundred yards of Ballycastle) and on the hillside at the back of Ballinglen castle - one on the lands of Mr Walter Burke,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile N.W. of castle and another  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile S.W. on the lands of Mr Tom Burke. The entrance to these chambers have been fully or partly blocked up owing to the danger to sheep and cattle.

"Cranneg" at Glencalry.

Traces of what may have been a very early foundation have been discovered on the lands of Mr John Healy, Glencalry, 14 miles southwest of Ballycastle. Whilst working in a vegetable garden, Mr Healy discovered a number of timber stakes rising from the boggy soil and on excavating further, it was found that a number of these stakes which were in cases, two and three feet tall, were ranged around in the form of a rough circle. Underneath was discovered a floor of timber which had rotted considerably. Several articles, including timber needles, some a few inches long and portions of a quern stone were taken from the remains.

It seems that there were two separate constructions for further excavations have brought to light a similar foundation a few yards away. Paved passages of stone have also been unearthed.

Some of the recovered objects and a description of the findings have been submitted to Dublin experts but the matter rests there although it is almost two years since the discovery was first made.

Mr Healy will permit visitors to view the Cranneg.

*W. Butler*  
30/6/43.

ANTIQUITIES - CONTINUED.DOONFEENY CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD.

Proceeding from Ballycastle on the main road and in a north westerly direction, the ancient church of Doonfeeny is sighted when about two and a half miles from the town. A narrow road on the left side passes by the churchyard which is only a few hundred yards from the main road.

The ruin is in a bad state of preservation, half the southern wall having disappeared entirely and the other walls are sadly demolished. Inside, it appears to have measured approximately forty five feet by twenty five but I am unable to state the period of construction. In this respect it may be of assistance to observe that the eastern gable contains a tall (approx. 6 feet) window, six inches or so wide and rounded on top on the outside and inside, about four and a half feet broad, twelve feet high, the sides being of cut stone and coming to a point on top.

In the burial ground at the opposite side of this by-road and about fifty yards from the church is a tall stone standing almost twenty feet in height less than a foot in breadth and a couple of inches thick. The stone inclines to the east and I believe that on the north west side, a cross about two feet long and under it, a smaller cross and some ornamental designs have been inscribed. It is impossible however to confirm this (if O'Coner - O'Donovan's colleague needs confirming) since the stone is defaced and mass-covered.

The old church was built within an earthen fort from which it takes its name.

To view the church and stone at close quarters it is necessary to wade waist-high through the nettles and undergrowth of the churchyard and burial ground.

Caretaker is Mr T. Haverin, Doonfeeny and the ruin and stone are not in the care of the O.P.W.

FILBRIDE, ANCIENT CHURCH.

This ruin is a little over ~~two~~<sup>two</sup> miles north east of Ballycastle and is reached via the Downpatrick road, turning right at the end of  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile, left for another mile and a half and then to the right.

This church on the inside, measured about fifty feet by twenty and like the majority of similar ruins in this area, is in a bad state of preservation. I understand the church is a sixteenth century building but this information is not from a very reliable source.

Here, as at Doonfeeny, nettles and other weeds growing waist high must be waded through, the ruin not being in the care of the O.P.W. although a local man is paid to keep the place in order.

About a quarter of a mile up the hillside to the east of the church and on the lands of Mr James Farrell, a stone, one and a half feet broad and a few inches thick rises to a height of five and a half feet from the ground. I have seen a sketch of this stone showing three crosses inscribed thereon but neither the local people nor myself could discern the incisions owing to the fact that the surface is roughened and messy.

At the rear of Mr Farrell's house nearby the traces of an old church, said to have been used during 1798, may be seen. The site of the wall will be easily discerned and there too is a large flat stone slab, obviously the altar.

In a small field to the south of the burial ground and within a few yards of the first mentioned church, an earthen mound marks the site of an ancient castle said to have been built by the Barretts.