



Medieval Monasteries.

Parish of Bagenalstown

CARA DÉ

Volume 1, Issue 4

Donore

Donore or *Dun uabhair* –the fort of pride was the site of a ringed fortress, the inner ring of which is shown in the O.S Survey maps of 1839. Sadly these remains were obliterated in recent times.

The Archaeological Inventory of Co Carlow lists two sites for Donore numbers 480 & 481..

According to the Annals of the Four Masters; in the year 1042 AD, a preying excursion by the Ui Cinnsealaigh into Ui Barraiche territory resulted in the complete slaughter of the invaders, including the heir to the lordship of the Ui Cinnsealaigh.

St Lappan (feastday 3rd November founded a monastery here (481) in the 8th century, the foundation was known as Kilmolappogue. *Tobar Molappogue* a holy well nearby is associated with the saint..

During the summer of 2002 our archaeological survey of the site using non intrusive methods found that the ringed fort referred to earlier was once triple ringed with a water filled ditch between each ring, fed by the stream now piped underground. This would imply that here was the local centre of power and authority in the early years of the 1st millenium. Many of the later monastic buildings were built within the earthen banks of the original ringfort.

The monastic foundation known as *Cill molapog* began in the 8th c as four small support buildings with timber frames, clay and wattle walls and thatched roofs. In the following century five more buildings were added, two of which were small churches.

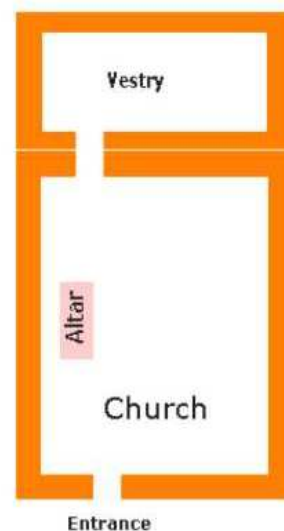
These early buildings were located in the middle of the present field. In the 10th century newer buildings moved closer to the existing public road and included; a small schoolhouse, a stone church and a kitchen. An unusual feature of the church is that it is almost square in plan, measuring 26'L x 24'W. The ruins of this church can still be seen.

In the following century a vestry/sacristy was constructed alongside the east wall of the church with a connecting doorway. A long refectory was built at right angles to the earlier kitchen. Interestingly enough the refectory was partly lofted as sleeping accomodation.

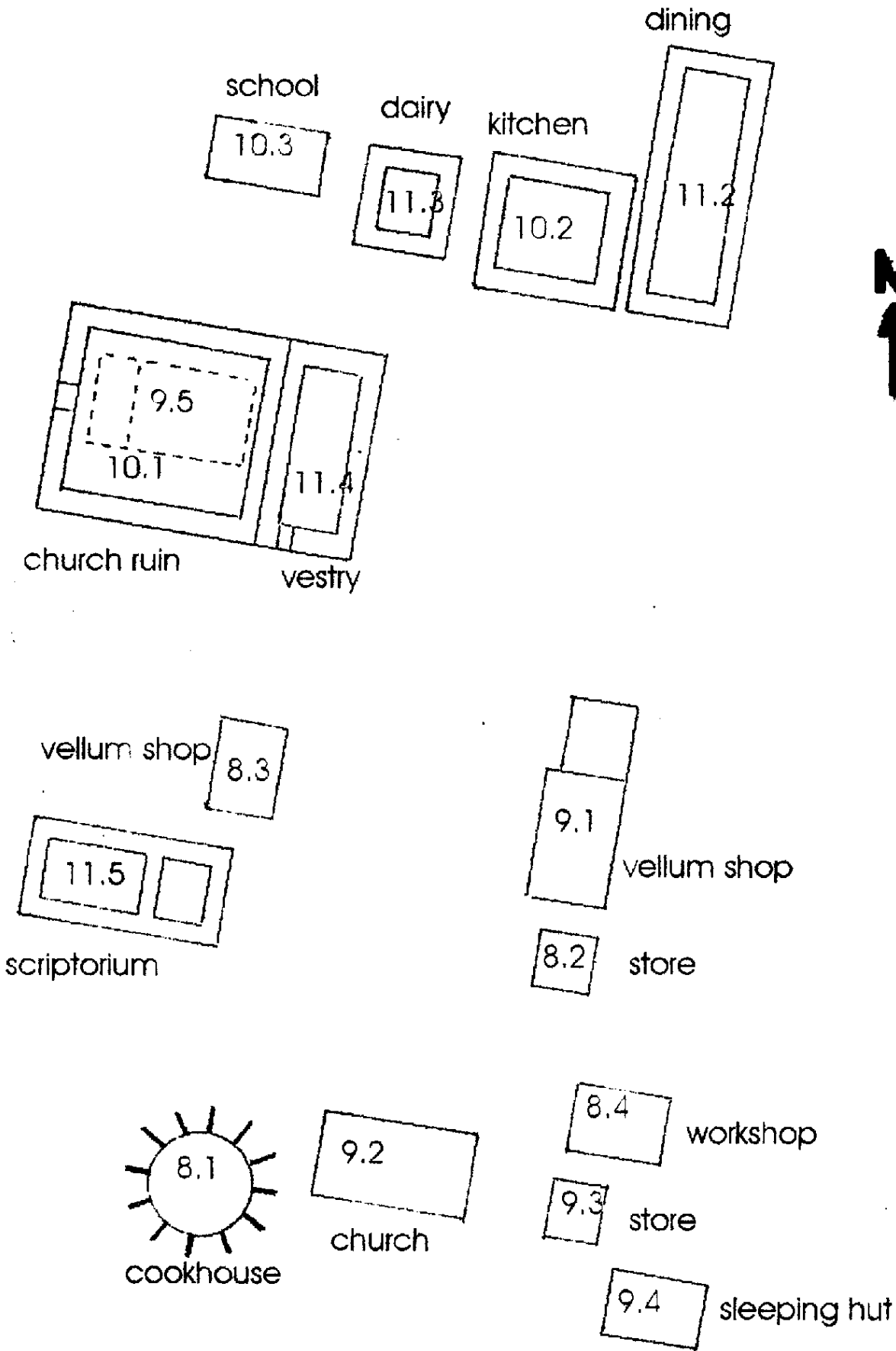
Other 11th century buildings include a scriptorium and a dairy.

Another ruin about 1 Km further East is also known as Kilmolappogue Church (OPW 480) was found to have been a 15th C parish church, used for worship for about two hundred years. Orientation E-W with altar at E end, entrance at W. Area at W end partitioned off from church for vestry/sacristy. Four windows each side, two high slit windows over altar at E side. Architecture very similar to Dunleckney Church (Issue 1)

Church Ruin (OPW 481) - 10.1 & 11.4



Plan of church
10.1 / 11.4



Monks Graveyard

Note; Building code is;
Century-building number. eg 9.4 denotes; 9th cent/ 4th building for that century.
Single outline denotes ; timber framed building.
Double outline denotes ; stone walled building

Plan of Donore Monastic Site

**Monaster at Kilmolappoge (Donore, Bagenalstown)
Key to Buildings (internal dimensions)**

Century	Bld Num	Type	Use	Century	Bld Num	Type	Use
8th	1	Timber. Circular 15' dia	Cookhouse	10th	1	Stone 26' x 24'-6"	Church (present ruin)
	2	Timber. 9' x 6'-6"	Sleeping Hut		2	Stone. 14'-6" x 12'-6"	Kitchen
	3	Timber. 14' x 8'	Vellum Workshop		3	Stone	School
	4	Timber. 14' x 9'	Workshop				
				11th	1		
9th	1	Timber. 18' x 11'	Workshop	2	Stone. 33' x 9'-6"		Dining Room
	2	Timber. 22' x 12'	Church	3	Stone. 9' x 7'		Dairy
	3	Timber. 8' x 8'	Store	4	Stone. 24' x 11'		Vestry (present ruin)
	4	Timber. 13' x 9'	Sleeping hut	5	Stone. 13' -6" x 8'		Scriptorium
	5	Timber. 15' x 12'	Church				
10th	1	Timber. 16' x 9'	School House				

480 DONORE

OS 16:14:2 (336,77) 'Kilmolappoge Church (site of)' OD 200-300 27188,15963

Church (site) Approximately rectangular area defined by low banks with few protruding stones (c. 19m E-W, c. 10.5m N-S). Human bones uncovered in quarry to N of structure and reburied nearby. Name suggests possibly early foundation.

16:74

12-7-1987

481 DONORE

OS 16:14:1 (272,103) OD 100-200 27119,15989

Ecclesiastical remains Named as Kilmolappoge Church and Holy Well on 1839 OS 6" map, probably a mapping error, since this name is given to another site (no. 480) on the 1938-9 ed. Present remains consist of irregular but possibly originally circular platform (47.7m E-W, 54m NNE-SSW) enclosed by fosse with external bank, best preserved at W (D of fosse 1m below ext bank; W 6m; ext H of bank 1.3m; W c. 7m). Causeway at NNW. Foundations of rectangular granite structure (Dims c. 11m x 5m) off-centre of enclosure, orientated ESE-WNW with possible entrance at W.

16:69

21-8-1987

Extracts from the

Archaeological Inventory
of
Co Carlow.

OPW