



Early Christian Sites

Parish of Bagenalstown

CARA DÉ

Volume 1, Issue 1
Dunleckney.

In the old graveyard close to Dunleckney Manor are the ruins of two churches. The ruin to left of entrance gate is a Church of Ireland parish church built in the 18th c. Services were transferred to the present St Marys early in the 19th c.

The featureless ruin to the right (now completely ivy covered) is much older and probably pre-Reformation. The juxtaposition of two churches on the same site is unusual and undoubtedly due to the Bagenal family being members of both churches in earlier times. According to local tradition during the Penal Law period, the bell of the C of I church was rung ½ hour before Sunday mass.

The internal dimensions of the older church are length; 75'-6" and width 23'-0". All of the chiseled stonework surrounding the windows and door has been removed, with the exception of the two lancet windows in east gable. A stone wall with doorway acts as a partition between the vestry and the main body of the church. Walls at 3'-9" thick at gables and 3'-6" elsewhere are unusually thick. There is no window in the west gable.. The roof was initially thatched. A timber gallery at the West end seems to have been a later addition. In the east wall is a plaque to the memory of two parish priests of the late 18th cent. (*see page 3*)

About the middle of the 18th c, RC services were transferred to a newly constructed timber church at Knocknacorra near the town but still on the Dunleckney estate. This church was located next to a row of lime trees which still grow there.

(When examining this site which is now pasture we had the impression that many of the heavy timber

beams were either made in a shipyard or salvaged from a wreck, quite possibly brought up the Barrow from New Ross or Waterford)

The temporary church was in use for about 80 years and was demolished when the present St Andrews church was built early in the 19th cent on a site granted by the Newton family. This site originally included the De la Salle Academy, the brothers' house, the presbytery and the site once occupied by Keenan Bros engineering works.

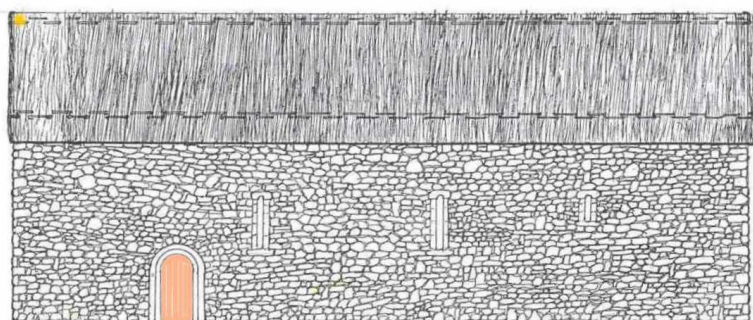
The road system in the vicinity have been changed greatly. If we imagine an 18th early 19th century traveler coming from Rathellen. The road would continue straight on (ignoring the present railway) until intersecting with the present back road to Carlow. Onward again until the road forked, taking the right fork for Curracruit /Fenagh and the left via Dunleckney Cross to Newtown. The last section of this old road is now blocked off with an iron gate next the graveyard entrance.

The Ordnance Map shows a Father Pender's Well now disused is located between the church at Knocknacorra and the Manor. The priest's house was also located nearby.

The present road linking the junction at Kilcarrig to Rathduff Cross and known as 'the new road' locally was constructed by the Newtons early in the 19th c.

Dunleckney had a chapel of ease located at Kildrenagh for many centuries. (See Issue 2)

Dunleckney Church 15th cent

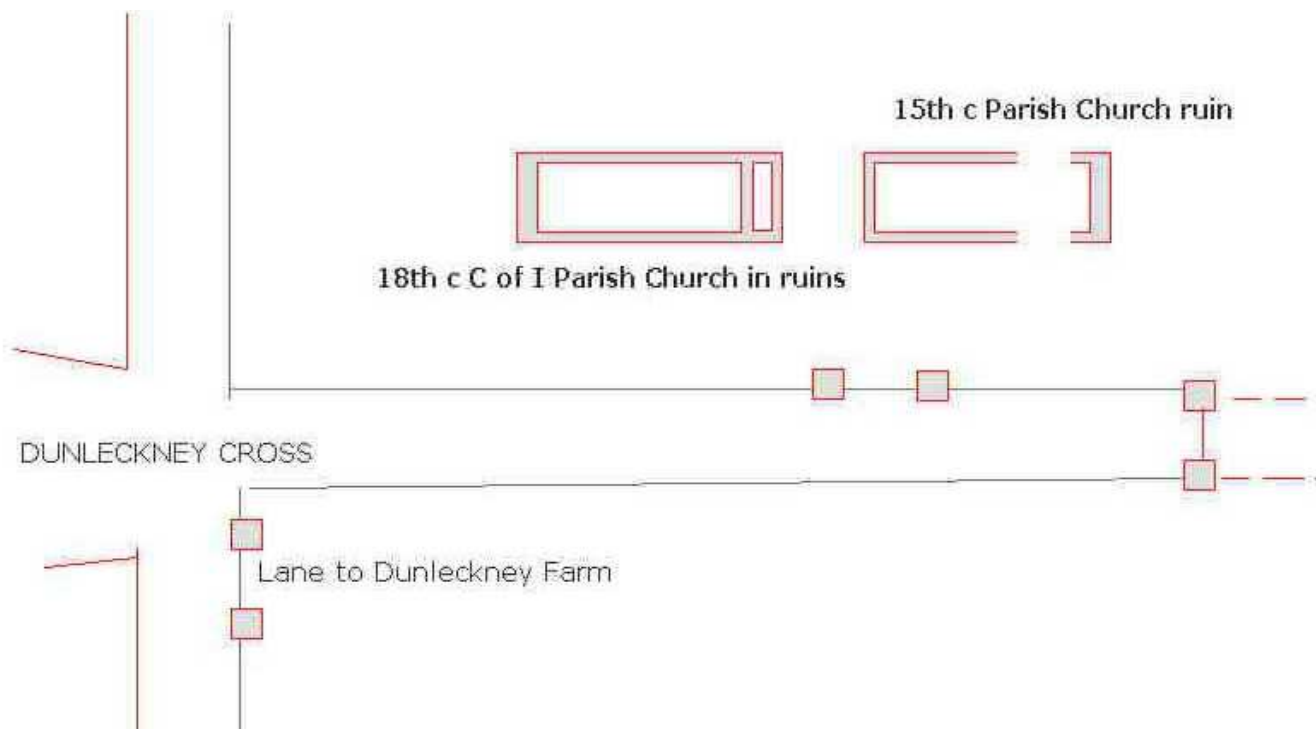


South Elevation



East Elevation

This church has many features not previously encountered locally. Notably the 'half way up' partition wall with door separates the vestry from the main body of the church. The walls are up to 3'-9" at gables and never less than 3'-6". Since 33" should be sufficient thickness for random rubble bedded mortar, the thickness here is puzzling. All windows taper from 60" inside to 7" outside, giving the building a fortress like appearance. However its effectiveness as a fortress is negated by having had a thatched roof!



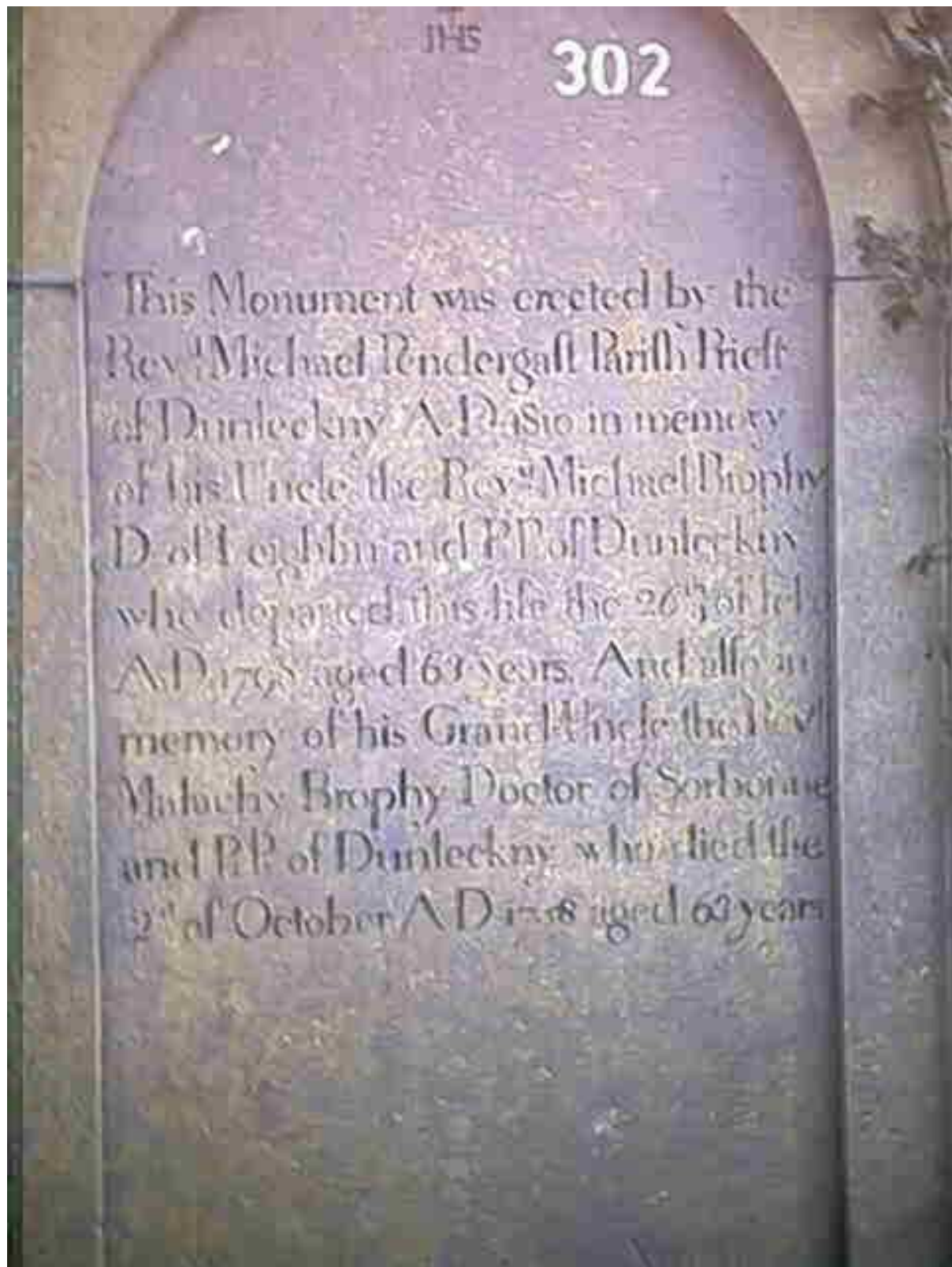
**539 BOHERMORE/DUNLECKNY
(Dunleckney Borough)**

OS 16:6:2 (346,388) '*Dunleckney Church, (in ruins),
Graveyard*' OD 200–300 27192,16292

Church Present remains of church consist of ivy-covered walls of rectangular structure (8.7m N–S; 24.7m E–W; wall T .95m) (max H of gable walls 6m; of side walls 4m). Gaps in N and S walls. E gable pierced by two deeply splayed lancets. Round arch at E end of N wall. Large almost square granite font in corner. Granted to nunnery of Graney (Kildare) in 1207. (Bradley 1989, 22)

16:85(02)

Extract from Archaeological Inventory of Co Carlow



This monument was erected by the Rev Michael Prendergast Parish Priest of Dunleckey AD 1810 in memory of his uncle Rev Michael Brophy D(iocese) of Leighlin and PP of Dunleckney. Who departed this life the 26th of Feb AD 1796 aged 67 years.

And also in memory of his Grand Uncle the Rev Malachy Brophy, Doctor of the Sorbonne and PP of Dunleckney who died the 2nd of October 1758 aged 63 years.