



Early Christian Sites

Parish of Bagenalstown

CARA DÉ

Volume 1, Issue 2
Kildrenagh

Kildrenagh /Kildreenagh –Cill Droighneach meaning the church of the *blackthorn* or *sloebush*. Pre monastic remains here include several *bullaus*. Our survey also found four round stone walled dwellings dating from 2nd century BC to 4th c AD. The site is associated with a St Mernoc (d 635 AD), who is also associated with Kilmarnock in Scotland. *This St Mernoc is mentioned by Adaman in his life of St Colmcille.*

The church at Kildrenagh is known to have been a chapel-of-ease to Dunleckney Church

The earliest monastic buildings found during our survey were dated to the 9th century. Buildings continued to be added during the following three centuries. The outline of a ruined stone building can still be seen close to the road boundary fence. (See Carlow Inventory ref 488) .

Kildrenagh Celtic Cross.

A 10/11th c stone cross and a stoup were uncovered early in the 19th c when a road was being constructed from the Newtown road to Ballywilliamroe bog by Capt Bruen of Oakpark. The workmen proudly re-erected this cross at a bend in the road in their own free time it is said, where it still stands. The granite cross is unfortunately incomplete but resembles other monastic crosses in the region. A Christ figure form the central panel with various crucifixion symbols ie ladder, hammer, nails etc on the side panels. *A more complete version of this design can be seen at St Mullins.*

The stoup beneath the cross collects water running off the adjacent field. The well is known as the 'wart well' locally.

Bullaun Stones.

The site is rich in early remains which are of pre Christian date. Notably the large rocks with hollowed out recesses known as *bullaus*, which were used in olden times to grind corn. Two of the bullaus are sited to south of church ruin. Another is in the roadside fence of the field opposite the church ruin ie to the East. The fourth example which is much smaller is beneath a bush in the same field.

Monastery.

A small monastic community was founded in the 9th c. The earliest buildings were timber framed with clay and wattle walls. During the 11th c several stone buildings followed. One of these a building with a central dividing wall. On one side of this wall was a single room running the length of the building while the other side sub divided into three small rooms. This layout would suggest a school house. The 11th c also saw a small building thought to be a dairy.

In the 12 th c the buildings corresponding to present ruins were constructed ie a small church in the Romanesque style, a dormitory and a building for cooking and dining. All of these monastic buildings were located in the 'church field', also under the present lane and immediately inside the fence in the field opposite.

Graveyard

In the 'church field' next to the church ruin are several monks graves. Further down slope and nearer to the three bullaun stones is a medieval cemetery. Burials took place here between the 8th and 16th c. In one period of 5 months in the 14th century, 27 plague victims were interred here.

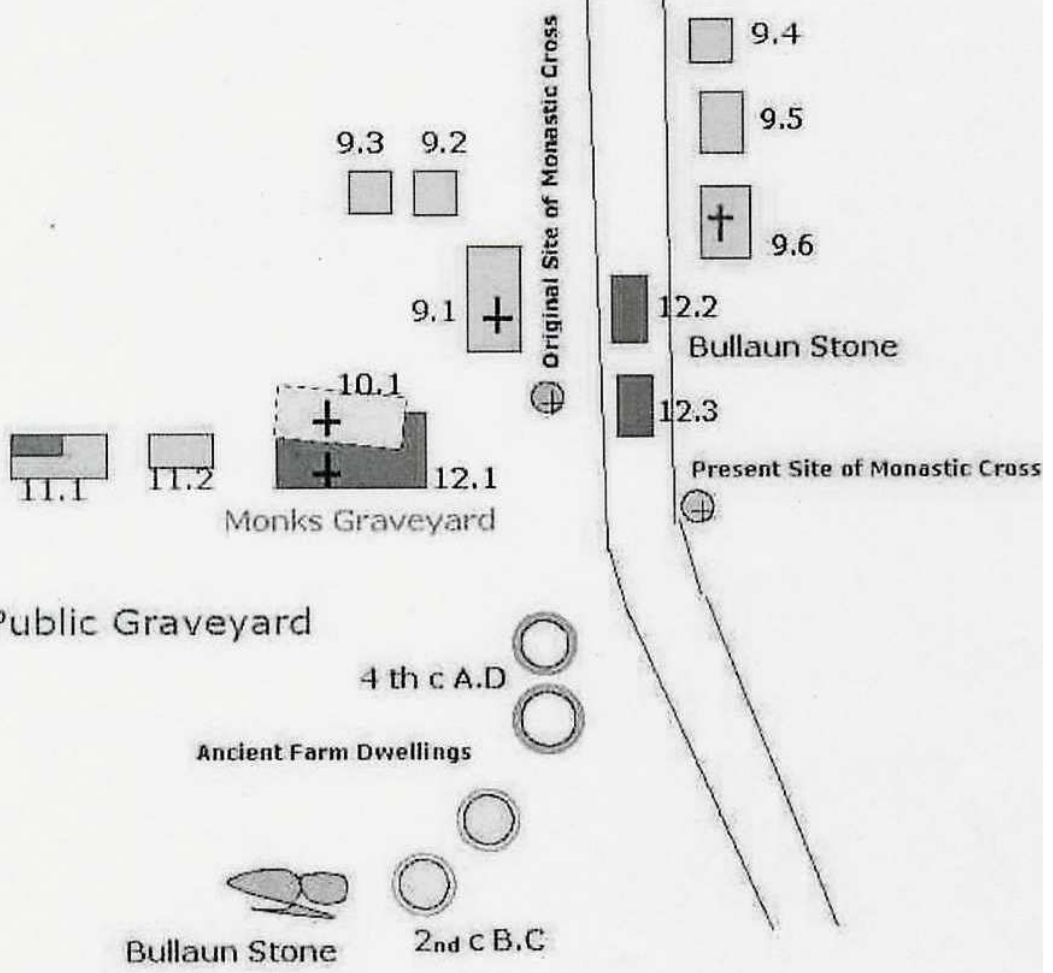


Kildrenagh

Farm House & Yard



Lane



Not to Scale

Kildrenagh Monastic Site

Key to Buildings			
Cent	Bld Num	Type/ Size	Use
9th	1	Timber 23'-6" x 8'-6"	Church
	2	Timber 8' x 8'	Sleeping
	3	Timber 7'-8" x 6'	Sleeping
	4	Timber 6' x 6'	Workshop
	5	Timber 10' x 6'	Cooking/eating
	6	Timber 12' x 4'	Oratory
10th	1	Stone 18' x 10' in dia	Church
11th	1	Stone 22' x 16'	Schoolhouse
	2	Stone	Dairy
12th	1	Stone 21' x 13'-6"	Church
	2	Stone 12' x 8' in dia	Dormitory
	3	Stone	Cooking/eating



Markout of 12th c Parish Church (present ruin)



Markout of 11th cent Schoolhouse with 4 rooms