



FÁILTE

Cuirimid fáilte roimh chách chuig an eagrán nua seo den nuachtlitir. It has been a busy six months for the Annaghdown Heritage Society since we last published our newsletter. The Townlands project is progressing steadily and details can be viewed on the webpage annaghdownheritage.ie/townlands. A survey of the gravestones in Corrandulla Cemetery is complete, and matching photographs are in production.

A summer outing to Portumna Workhouse and Castle was enjoyed by all who ventured to East Galway on June 15. The Society opened its newly-refurbished Heritage Room to the public on the following weekend for the Corrandulla Show. A large crowd passed through and appreciated the special exhibition of postal material which commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Post Office in Corrandulla village. This was followed in August by the Heritage Week event 'A History of Annaghdown in Objects'. The Society AGM took place on September 25.

The first gathering of the autumn was for a workshop in October entitled 'Reading Old Maps' and was facilitated by Paul Gosling, GMIT, and Eoin O'Neill, Galway City Museum. Paul circulated several maps, both old and new, for group analysis while Eoin reviewed some of the resources available online. The large audience from far and near found the evening's activity passed all too quickly! The workshop was followed in November by a 'Genealogy Meetup'. All with an interest in family history were invited to attend. People were encouraged to share family lore with each other, while Society officers Paul and Irene circulated among groups and provided guidance. A most enjoyable evening was had by all and discussion was followed by the consumption of copious amounts of tea. A further such meetup is scheduled for December. The final event of the autumn will be a lecture by Christy Cunniffe, Galway County Council Community Archaeologist, on the subject of 'Religious and Secular Iconography on 18th- and 19th-century Funerary Monuments'.



It is clear from the above that the Society is proactive in promoting heritage and genealogy in the community. We thank all who continue to give their time and resources enthusiastically to further these objectives. Membership of the Society is open to all and costs €10 per annum. You can follow our activities on Facebook and

Twitter and by visiting our website. Nollaig shona agus Athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh go léir.



Figure 1. Exterior of the north wall of St. Cathaldus' Church

ST. CATHALDUS' CHURCH, CORRANDRUM

Joe McDermott

At the eastern end of the parish of Annaghdown, in the townland of Corrandrum a short distance from the Tuam road, across from the school lies an unobtrusive little known monument. It is a poorly preserved rectangular church of approximately 11th or 12th century date, though it may be even older. Although it is extremely difficult to date with any accuracy, since most of its architectural characteristics have sadly disappeared, there are some features which help in its dating. It is typical of medieval churches rather than Early Christian. Cyclopean type architecture is present - massive blocks used in its construction especially in the lower sections of the walls. No evidence of antae remain - blocks that jut out at the external corners which would give it an even earlier date. Its orientation is east-west with the remnants of a window in its eastern gable where the altar would have been. Its internal measurements are 13.2 m by 6.3 m which is large for a church for this period. However, its measurements are roughly in harmony, that is, 2:1. There are traces of a window and possibly a doorway in its south wall and it would have had a trabeate doorway in its western gable. This was a simple doorway consisting of two upright pillars or cut blocks topped by a stone lintel, sloping inwards towards the top. See (O'Flanagan, OS Letters, 1927 Vol. 1, 223). An example of this exists in St. MacDara's church on MacDara's Island in Connemara. The original height of the church is impossible to ascertain. There are burials both inside the church and around its perimeter and indeed these occur beneath the existing byroad. They are oriented east-west suggesting Christian burials. It was the practice to wish to be buried in proximity to the local church.

A number of prayer-stones also exist within the church -

small sliotar sized sandstone balls which pilgrims brought to offer prayers in thanksgiving or to seek a petition. Spin them clockwise to bring luck or anticlockwise – the way of the devil – to bring misfortune on someone! Some burials were examined by archaeologists during recent road improvements. Hopefully, a report will be available sometime in the future.

To the south-west of the church lies a children's burial ground (CBG), now much overgrown. It is an L-shaped area. The grave markers, which undoubtedly came from the church walls lie in semi-orderly north-south lines with an orientation east-west. See (O'Flanagan, 1927 Vol. 1, 224). Many relatives of families from the surrounding area lie buried here. A number of ancient house sites also exist at the south of the church and one is said to adjoin the south wall.

So what of our St. Cathaldus or Cathal, for whom the church is named? There is no indication as to why this church is named after him. He was born near Rachau close to the Tipperary-Waterford border sometime in the 7th century and came from a well-known affluent family as most of the saints and senior clergy of the time did. He was sent to the monastery of Lismore under the tutelage of St. Carthage. This monastic school, although it had been established for only a very short time, had already acquired widespread fame, and had attracted students from all parts of England, Scotland, and from several continental countries besides. Following a glorious period of study and teaching at Lismore, Cathaldus rose to become Ard Easpog of the area around Dungarvan. He succeeded St. Carthage and he established a settlement at Rahan.

In 666AD according to the legend, he embarked on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. On his return he was shipwrecked off the southeast coast of Italy at a place called Taranto. He managed to make it ashore and began to preach to the native population who had relapsed into paganism. He is reputed to have restored the sight to a blind man on the outskirts of the town which no doubt helped him in his dealings with the local population. They had been previously converted to Christianity by St. Mark the Evangelist. He remained here, established a settlement and became their bishop. He also established a cathedral which exists there to this day. Taranto cathedral was sacked by the Saracens in 927. Indeed, the entire city of Taranto was razed to the ground. It was rebuilt by the Byzantines in 967. A new cathedral was built in 1071. During the course of rebuilding, workmen uncovered a marble tomb in which lay an incorrupt body in archbishop's clothes. It had a gold cross on which was inscribed: 'St. Cathaldus of Rahan'. The workmanship was clearly of Irish origin. The tomb also held a stick of Irish oak.

The relics were encased in the high altar and later placed in a silver shrine which was encrusted with gems and precious stones. His feast day in Italy is celebrated on May 10th - in Ireland it is March 8th. Few Irishmen who carry the name Cathal realise that their patron saint is much better known and revered in Italy possibly more than St. Patrick is in Ireland.

The following was written by a US army officer: 'In early summer of 1944 I arrived in Taranto, Italy, as a Staff Officer

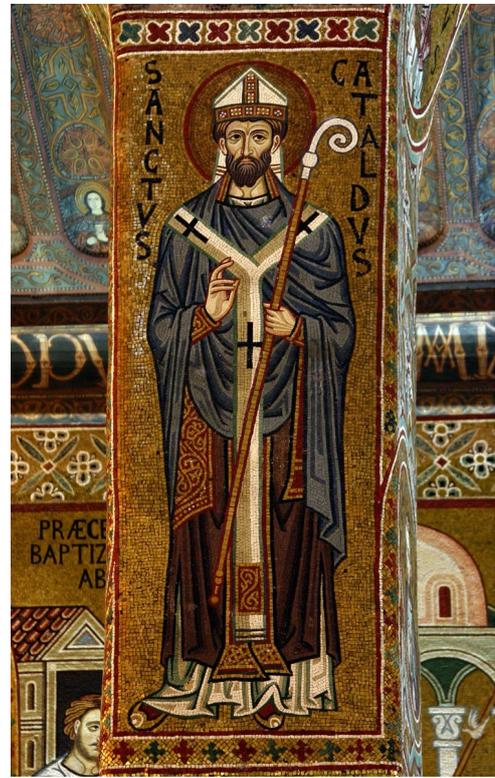


Figure 2. Depiction of Saint Cathaldus

of the Eighth Army. The next morning, I was urgently summoned to assist an American soldier who had driven his jeep into the path of a procession of Italians who were celebrating the feast of their local saint. Since nobody was hurt, the situation was quickly adjusted. I was able to deal with it in Italian, aided by the presence of a local priest. Between us we calmed the excited people and rescued the soldier from his awkward predicament. In conversation later, the priest informed me that the Saint was Cathaldo (Cathaldus) and it was common knowledge that he was Irish. I wondered at the time whether this unusual fact was so well-known in Ireland.'

The most valuable biography of the saint which we possess was written in the seventeenth century by an Italian Franciscan named Bartolomeo Moroni. As this work professes to be based on very ancient codices and manuscripts of the Church of Taranto, we must conclude that it contains a good deal that is accurate and trustworthy.

St. Cathaldo (Cathaldus) is invoked against plagues, drought and storms. Perhaps we should pay more attention to him here now! Many of his miracles were attributed to the city of Taranto.

*Hibernia gave me birth, thence wafted over,
I sought the sacred Solymean shore.
To thee Taranto holy rites I gave,
Precepts divine; and thou to me a grave.*

- St. Cathaldus



Figure 3. This map shows the road through Cloonboo going east/west and joining the road towards Cregg at Drumgriffin

TRAVEL TO GALWAY FROM CLOONBOO AND THE ANNAGHDOWN AREA BEFORE 1870

Evelyn Stevens

In 1812 the ‘Commissioners for Enquiring into the Nature of the Bogs of Ireland’ published detailed maps of the Bogs, along with reports of how useful they might be for reclaiming for agricultural use. The map of the Cloonboo area shows the bogs and also the roads and houses in the area. Whether the houses are shown in their correct locations is not clear.

A map made by the Ordnance Survey in 1839 shows the houses and roads in their exact locations, with the road in the same orientation as on the bog map. The N84 Headford Galway Road was not yet in existence, not being built until 1870. The road through the village from north to south was the boren that goes through Greaney’s bus yard. For people in the area to get to Galway they would have had to travel to Claregalway and on from there to Galway. This is spelled out in detail in the following letter from John Cahill of Woodpark House, written in 1822 to William Gregory, Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant:

Sir

Permit me to suggest to you for the consideration of the Irish Government in its benevolent arrangements to relieve the distressed by public work, one of the most beneficial and necessary improvements which has ever taken place in Ireland, a Road through the great Curragh or Moore which separates this extensive and populous Wheat Country, Annadown, from the Market of Galway. The distance in a bird-eye line is about Six Miles while the road is upwards of fourteen, performing the Segment of a Circle not unlike a Horseshoe. Besides, this new Road (which has been in contemplation for a Century) if produced northerly for about a Mile, would fall in with the Headford Road, and not only connect that Town but the whole County of Mayo, so much the nearer, with the Town of Galway, while the working at so essential a public improvement would relieve the poverty of the Peasantry of this Parish (the Census upwards of 7000) and enable them for ever after to avail themselves of the proximity of the Market of Galway in all weathers.

I had the honor to address you on the 8th ulto furnishing my recount of the management of your very charitable remittance to me for the relief of the distressed of Woodpark & c., and of mentioning to you the state of the two old Quays

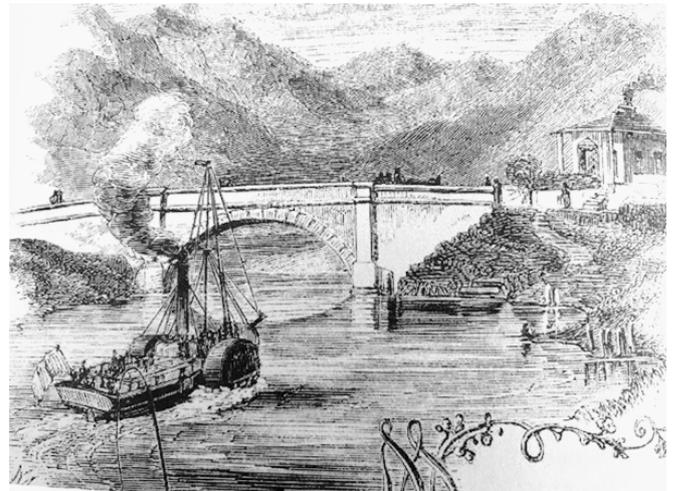


Figure 4. Steamer arriving at Maam from Galway, 1854

of the Harbours of Oldbury & Annadown on Lough Corrib, in the repairs of which your Engineer Mr. Nimmo, has on the 28th, authorized my expending 40 £.

I have these works in progress, and was gratified much when the Gentlemen whom Mr. Nimmo sent here last Saturday, to pay the workmen and inspect the works, assured me they consider the excavations & wharfs I am doing, admissible. I hope Mr. Nimmo will also authorize my clearing the inlets to these Harbours. I suppose Ten to Fifteen Pounds would effect it. I have the honor to be Sir, with the most profound respect & gratitude Your very humble servt., John Cahill.

The alternative would have been to go west to Annaghdown or Shankill (Oldbury in Mr. Cahill’s letter) and go by boat to Galway. We all know about the boat full of people that left Annaghdown to go to Galway in 1828 but sadly sank. According to Mary Mulvihill in her book ‘Ingenious Ireland’ there was a sailing fleet of trading ships on Lough Corrib run by Captain Lynch who built the lighthouse at Ballycurrin in 1775. As well as commercial traffic on the lake there was a steamer service for passengers from the 1850s. The drawing shows a steamer from Galway arriving at Nimmo’s house at Maam in 1854. (From Maria Edgeworth’s book ‘A Tour of Connemara’). It seems likely that this was one of the boats that took people and goods from Annaghdown and Shankill to Galway. The new road with its 2 bridges must have been a huge boon to the people of this area. It is hard to imagine the difference it made to them.

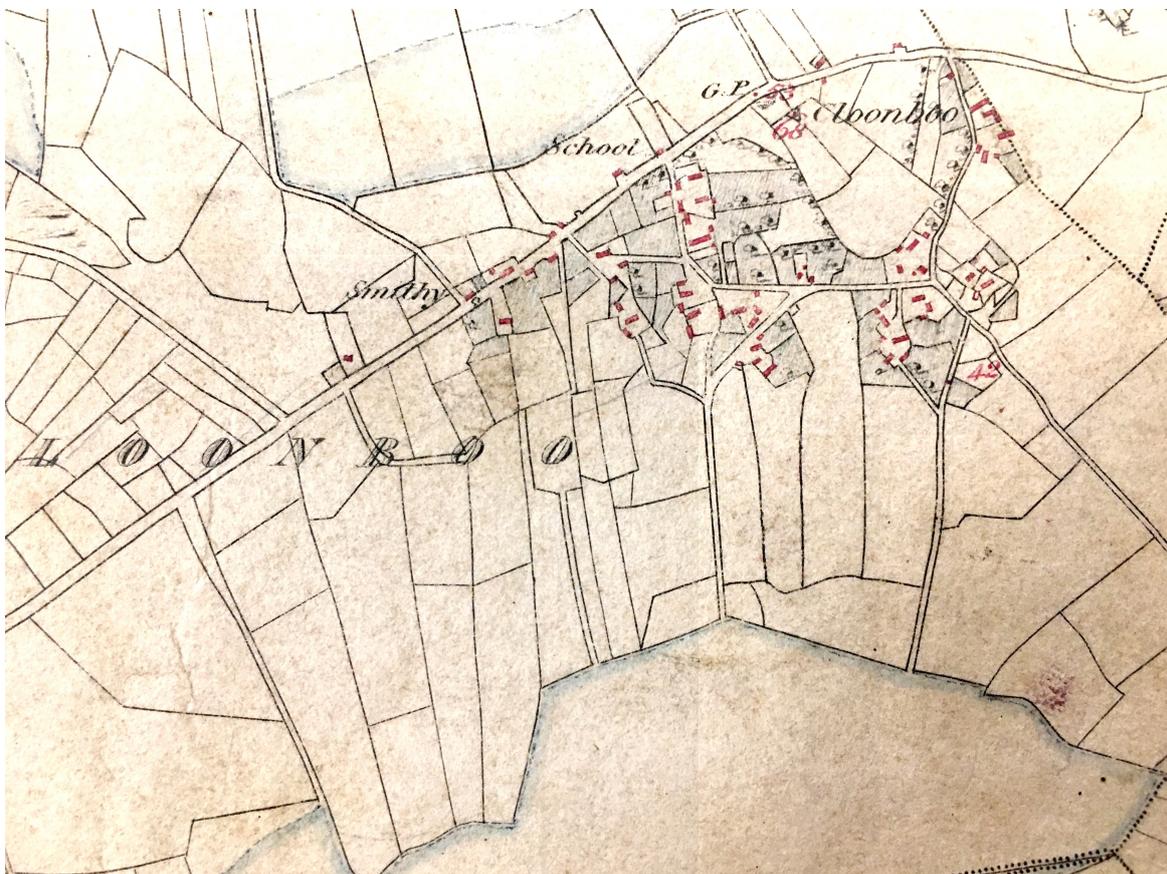


Figure 5. Cloonboo as shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map, 1839



Figure 6. Overview of the area on the first edition Ordnance Survey map, 1839