

Towards Interpreting Local Monuments and Ruins

By Des Cowman

Introduction

The origin of this was a talk, 'Your Friendly Local Ruin' at a HTAI conference entitled 'Sources for Local History in the South-East' held in Waterford in October 1985. While the specific information then conveyed was based on experience in the Waterford hinterland, much should be relevant for the rest of the countryside (urban areas excluded). The purpose of this article then is to suggest some ways in which pupils' interest in their own environment can be harnessed to develop evidence-based skills through the interpretation of visual data as distinct from the written word. The article falls into three main sections, plus a bibliography.

The word 'ruin' implies the use of mortared stone. However, the vast majority of buildings in Ireland from the first mesolithic settlement onward were made of wood or mud and have vanished without trace. The earliest stone buildings were on religious sites and a few may date, back to the ninth century. These, however, are exceptional and (apart from round towers) most early ecclesiastical ruins date only from the 12th century and are due to continental influences. Likewise, from about 1200AD the Normans introduced the custom of building mortared walls in conjunction with stone residences. Generally speaking, therefore, the only 'ruins' are the fortified castles and church buildings starting in the 12th century; undefended houses beginning in the 17th century; and, from the 18th century on, industrial ruins.

Church buildings will be considered in the second section following with suggestions as to how surviving features may be used to interpret their various phases of development. The third or fourth section, likewise, will suggest various ways in which domestic buildings' with or without fortification may be dated, plus any addendum on industrial structures. The first section, however, deals with the surviving field monuments of the millennia which preceded the introduction of mortared stone.

Field Monuments

Whatever the intrinsic interest of neolithic burial places, iron age earth-works, etc., individually the only scope they present for investigative work is for the archaeologist. They can, however, act as a powerful stimulus to the historical

imagination. They have to be envisaged as they originally were, in forest clearings or on outcrops above the tree line. While the siting of sacerdotal monuments may not follow any logic that is familiar to us, we can form some consideration of defensive strategies. Thus, a ring fort overshadowed by a hill can be used to interpret the range of iron-age weaponry (having made due allowance for the possibility of interceding trees!). Some structural analysis can also be attempted - e.g. is the material in the bank the same as in the present surrounding area; could a souterrain have been constructed within it; has any folklore been preserved in local place names or traditions? The same would apply to early Norman earthworks.

Any further use of field monuments for simulative or interpretive purposes would involve placing them within their contexts. For instance, a neolithic burial place only becomes significant when seen as typical of, variant from, or exceptional to a particular pattern. Pupils would therefore have to be provided beforehand with background information on the generality of such sites and some training given as to how to recognise patterns (see paragraph three of Bibliography). While this might also apply to stone alignments of different shapes, it probably can not be used for the most common field monument in the South-East - individual standing stones. Apart from the few ogham inscribed ones, the rest are updateable and it is difficult to know what conclusion to draw from the fact that they usually stand near the middle of 18th/early 19th century field systems!

Other field monuments suffer the disadvantage of being limited in exposure. Quite a number of bronze age cist burials have been discovered in ploughing. If notified, the site is simply recorded, artifacts rescued and ploughing continues. In many parts of the country ploughing regularly reveals patches of blackened earth and stones which disappear, as Spring progresses, under vegetation. All one can say is that over there was a *fulacht fiadh* once used for primitive cooking. If one may stretch even further the definition of field monument, a more worthwhile exercise might be looking for the distinctive flint waste which characterised the first two-thirds of man's occupation of Ireland. Contrary to popular image, the most common use of weaponry would seem to have been for fishing. Therefore, level sites above good coastal or riverine fishing locations are the most likely locations for finding flint waste churned up in winter or spring ploughing. The typical flint may be identified, not by its colour, but by its homogenous density which as a siliceous material resembles the feel of chipped or

broken glass. Discovering such waste can be reward enough in itself without hoping to aspire to higher skills.

The suggestion here, therefore, is that field monuments are too specialist an area to be dealt with by the pupils we would generally have in mind - i.e. the pre-Inter Certs. However, the new Vocational and Transitional courartifacts and monuments are available in the hinterland of the school.

Ecclesiastical Ruins Most church ruins fall within one of the three phrases of building or adaptation - c. 1150 to 1300; 1450 to 1550; 1750 to the present. The dates, of course, are approximate and there are exceptions.

That the Irish monks were capable of great feats of stonework and of masonry in the 250 years before c. 1150 is attested by the high crosses, by the round towers and by the few surviving stone churches along the west coast. However, the buildings which now occupy most early church sites are usually of a later date. That such buildings may have had wooden predecessors may be inferred from a number of indications. The presence of an ogham stone may suggest that the site had pre-Christian origins (- these were actually incorporated into the structures of some much later churches in Waterford). The name 'Kill-' followed by a personal name can indicate a founder of uncertain date over the 600 years or so prior to 1200. A round tower or inscribed cross can give a more specific dating indicating that the site was in use between the 9th and 12th centuries. This would make it worthwhile looking carefully at the stonework in the base of the walls for variation of stone size. The early stone churches tended to be built of much larger rocks than it was customary to use later and the base of the original structure- may still be traced (fig. 1). In some instances, more of the early wall may have survived and there are a few places where most of the smaller original church was incorporated in a later building. These can be distinguished by the presence of antac (fig. 2) which are extensions of the side walls beyond the gables. These apparently were recreations in stone of the structural techniques used in making wooden churches. If so much of the early walling has survived, it might be worth looking for the original door and window openings. Though they may now be blocked up, they may be identified by the simple straight lintel stone above and the door should be somewhat wider at the base than at the top. However, sites where such early detail has survived, tend to be well written-up so that further information should be readily available (see bibliography below).

From about 1150 changes in church architecture began to happen very quickly. First came the introduction by St. Malachy of continental styles, most readily identifiable by the semi-circular tops of doors and windows. The stonework was often carved in elaborate detail with particular emphasis on the door, the sides of which were often stepped back for effect. Just as this Romanesque style was developing into an art-form, the Normans arrived and introduced their own church architecture. Its main readily identifiable features are pointed doors and windows. As they extended their influence through the country they took control of the earlier churches and sometimes modified them to suit their own architectural tastes (fig. 3). Romanesque architecture, therefore, covered a fairly limited timespan and for most of the 13th century the prevalent style was Norman Gothic.

The Normans generally took over the older territorial divisions and imposed a parochial system upon them. Sometimes they adapted buildings on existing church sites and sometimes they used new locations, particularly in conjunction with the building of castles. Often when a castle and church ruin are in reasonable proximity to one another, both date from the 13th century (the medieval village street generally ran between the two). These churches tend at present to be proposed to leave the teacher more free to make use of whatever survives or to have gone through many phases of rebuilding. It is very hard to distinguish these phases as the same pointed arching for doors and windows continued in use up to modern times. The characteristic double or single bellcote above the gable is of little help either in providing a date. It is a pity, therefore, that dateable features are lacking in what is probably the most common type of ruin in the Irish landscape - viz. overgrown walls in a scarcely used graveyard. One can only say that it might date from the Norman reorganization of the 13th century. If the graveyard, however, is considerably higher than the land outside it, this suggests a long period of use for interments. Some in the South-east show a pattern of being one field in from a road which curves around them which suggests that they might originally have been in a large circular enclosure of pre-Norman type; a few of these also show the characteristics for earlier church sites mentioned above.

No such difficulties attend the interpretation of thirteenth century monastic sites and indeed it is often possible to separate features of the early part of the century from later features. This applies particularly to windows. In places where a lot of light was required, like behind the altar, several of the pointed windows were usually

clustered together to give the familiar pattern of three or five lancet windows separated by masonry walls splayed inwards to admit more light (fig. 4). A refinement of this was introduced in the mid 13th century when the dividing walls were replaced by single columns of slender stone mullions. As a further refinement, instead of mere pointed tops some acquired a more decorated trefoiled or other design (fig. 5). This was sometimes reflected in other features like the various types of wall niche. By and large, however, the 13th century monasteries were relatively simple buildings without the elaboration which was added in the 15th century.

The intervening 14th century was one of warfare and plague. The population dropped and little new building work was done. In the early 15th century, however, what is known as 'The Gaelic Revival' took place and with it a fairly vigorous period of rebuilding which had some distinctively Irish characteristics. The new church buildings, or refurbished old ones, were strengthened with short stepped buttresses (fig. 6). The larger clusters of mullioned windows, instead of merely ending in points or trefoils, had the mullions arching across one another to form a delicate pattern of stone tracery. As the century progressed, this tended to become even more elaborate with the intertwining mullions being carved to form quadrefoil and foliated patterns. While this could not be done on single-light windows, the reverse-circled ogee pattern tended to replace the simple point or trefoil, and for extra effect, cusps were often added. By the end of the 15th century a hood moulding became common on the outside which gave horizontal emphasis, but presumably also helped to keep rainwater from running down the walls into the window (fig. 7). The most distinctive feature of 15th century rebuilding, however, was the addition of belfry towers to existing churches.

The towers seem to have become a status requisite for every aspiring monastery. Even mendicants like the Franciscans inserted soaring towers in the middle of their austere narrow churches built two hundred years earlier. Many of them were placed free standing in the transept divide or at the division between nave and chancel. In the new monasteries of the 15th century, of course they were part of the original design. One can judge the aspiration of the establishment by the number of holes in the vaulting of the towers for the bell rope(s) to pass through. These presumably indicate the number of bells. Some towers had niches built into the wall below the bell chamber, seemingly to encourage the breeding of pigeons for the refractory table! These 15th

century bell towers were frequently topped by the distinctive 'Irish' stepped crenellations, which probably were more decorative than defensive (fig. 8). Most of this church building and restoration would appear to have been completed by 1500; forty years later they were officially closed down. Many were put to other uses but not maintained and gradually fell into ruin. The decline of the parish church was slower but was well under way by the end of the century. They had become the property of the established church of the Elizabethan reformation. The practice up to then was for the clergy to look after the chancel of each church while the parishioners were to keep the nave in repair. However, there were far too few reformed clergy to look after these churches, particularly in country areas, so naturally enough, the local people did not bother about their part of the maintenance. By about 1700, such churches as remained in use were mainly confined to the larger towns: throughout the country side, almost all the old monasteries and parish churches lay in ruins. Very few have since been restored. However, they did continue in use for burials, many of which took place within the walls of the church ruin. So popular does this seem to have been that the ground level has been raised by several feet in many churches. The headstones are not a good guide to the number of such interments as they did not come into use until about 1720 and even then only for the richest and most aspiring families. The vast majority of those buried in any old churchyard have no permanent markings.

From the early 18th century a gradual reorganisation of both Catholic and Established Church took place. It began in the larger towns where the latter began to renovate or build anew from about 1720 on. The Catholic church was not in a position to do this until some fifty years later and few new Catholic churches were erected in the countryside until after c. 1800. The first new churches in many rural parishes therefore were of the Established religion and reflected a major reorganisation which had begun about 1770. Clergy were appointed to parishes and every attempt made to force them to reside there. Some of the old churches that stood on important locations like crossing points of rivers were selected for initial restoration from a fund called 'First Fruits'. There was not always enough money to restore in the entirety the older parochial or monastic churches, so that at present many a Church of Ireland church now stands in the chancel or nave of a 13th or 15th century building.

Once the key areas were thus being served by the Established church, other old parochial centres could be considered. Some rationalisation took place, and new focus

points were chosen for church building. Where the old sites were still relevant but the churches too ruined, it was decided to erect new buildings adjacent. The Board of First Fruits provided C500 for each of these new churches. A plan was apparently put into circulation of the kind of church that could be built for that money, and while there were often local embellishments on it (where local resources permitted), the basic profile is still identifiable in so many sadly ruined 'Protestant' churches around the country. Sometimes only the tower is left, but more usually the rectangular walls still stand, with or without roof and glazing. If its grounds are shared with a medieval ruin, its ancestry is clear. If not, one can only judge by the elevation of the churchyard above the surrounding land. If it is about the same, the ruin is on a location selected between 1790 and 1820 or so. If the church enclosure is surrounded by more modern building, then a rough guide may be the observation that the north side of the churchyard is lower than the rest. This suggests a medieval origin when it was believed that it was 'unlucky'(!) to be buried in the shadow of the church so that only suicides, unbaptised babies and travelling paupers got buried there.

Most Catholic churches now in use are of the 'triumphalist' phase of the late 19th century and are not yet(!) in ruins. Some of them have evidence of an earlier 19th century church nearby - a bellcote on a gable wall still serving as a belfry; a rectangle of old masonry; or an adjoining portion of churchyard with pre-famine headstones. Nearby may stand a current or disused 'protestant' church which indicates how the 19th century revivalists wanted to identify with medieval ancestry. This is rendered particularly clear by the mid and late 19th century vogue for pseudo-medieval trappings such as pointed doorways, lancet windows (13th century revivals), an elaboration of the 'rose' window type often included above medieval lancet or mullioned groupings, and a triumphant reassertion of the floriation above mullioned window behind the main altar. The main advocates of this, certainly in the south-east, was the 19th century medievalist architect Pugin, and his disciple MacCarthy.

Castles

As military targets, castles tend to survive less well than ecclesiastical buildings. This applies particularly to the castles of the rich and powerful who exercised authority dating back to the first waves of Norman settlement. Most castles of the 13th century were far more substantial than anything subsequently built. These comprised of outer walls made strong enough to survive assault or battering, fortified by protruding

towers at strategic points like corners and entrance. While these were well capable of surviving the casual warfare of the 13th, and even of the 14th centuries, the retrenchments that were forced on many of the feudal barons meant that their castles were often dilapidated by the later 15th century. Inside the defensive walls most buildings had been of wood and did not survive, but at some stage most early castles acquired a strong stone keep which acted as a secondary line of retreat. Since these were habitations they lasted reasonably well into the age of gunpowder. With the increasing efficacy of artillery, particularly in the 16th century, defences against a long military siege became less relevant. The 14th century, therefore, represents a greater break in castle-building tradition than it does in church building. Castles with strongly fortified outer defences tend to belong to pre-gunpowder age of the 13th century. While some such castles were built in particularly strategic locations in the 15th century, the most domestic buildings that were fortified from then on were simple made proof against casual attack. This took the form of a tower house, much like the earlier keep, but with a mere shell of wall surrounding it which frequently had not survived. It is often difficult to distinguish therefore between a decayed 13th century keep, with or without enclosing walls, and a 15th-16th century towerhouse. Generally the former are bulkier and the defensive loops or openings in the walls are suitable for crossbow rather than musket (fig. 9). However, earlier keeps may sometimes have been adapted to the gun-powder era by the insertion of musket loops and only careful examination of the masonry will identify this. Most of these towers, however, simply have straight slits or loops at the corners which seem to have been designed more for lighting mural stairs and passages than for defence so that these are of little diagnostic help. Upper storey windows, however, offer a better guide and generally follow the same principles as outlined for church windows. Thus a mullioned window, ogee topped with hood moulding would clearly indicate a 16th century provenance, with due regard to the possibility of it being an insertion into an earlier keep, Likewise, the survival of stepped crenellations will normally indicate a 15th-16th century building where the stonework is consistent with that in the rest of the wall.

Many builders of stone residences in the late 16th and early 17th centuries had learned from the experiences of the Desmond rebellions and the Nine Years' War. For the majority, who tried to remain neutral in those upheavals, the danger was from casual groups of looters who were availing of the civil breakdown to plunder whatever was

most valuable. These could most easily be dealt with by machicolations projecting over the doorway, or bartizans at the corners providing a line of fire down the more exposed walls. Various improvements in hand-held guns in the late 16th century meant that a barely noticeable hole, aligned within to give fire at a critical point such as towards unwelcome visitors at the door, became a useful form of defence against casual raiders. Such holes through stones forming an integral part of the building generally places it to within a decade or two on either side of 1600.

A further feature of the late 16th century was the introduction of the chimney. Like modern central heating, it added so much to the comfort of the householders that most tower houses built from the end of the 16th century had a fireplace and chimney incorporated in the upper storey living quarters. Indeed these were sometimes added to earlier keeps and towers - with a consequent weakening of the structure, producing some peculiar outlines in present-day ruins. Other later attempts to mollify the purely defensive structures of tower houses by the insertion of mullioned windows to provide light on lower floors, often proved equally damaging to the fabric of the structure.

Those tower houses that have survived best, therefore, are those that were abandoned or remained unaltered either through poverty, conservatism or indifference.

One structural feature that is often cited as dating evidence is the presence of wicker centring in vaulting or window embrasures (fig. 10). Vaulting was a structural necessity in a defensive building such as keep or tower house. Firstly, it served a structural function. The soundest way of building a five or six storey structure was to make a solid integrated base, the heavy walls being held together by a bridging vault. On this a superstructure of three or four storeys could be built with thinner walls, though generally thick enough to incorporate a mural stairs. Occasionally a second vaulting would be added above to provide double reinforcing for the structure. The 'ideal' arch sprang as a segment of a circle from each of the lower walls meeting with a slight likoint so that any weight from above would compress and consolidate the vaulting which would be maintained in turn by the sturdy lower walls. This simple technique goes back to pre-Norman times (e.g. Cormack's Chapel, Rock of Cashel) but reached its peak in the late 13th and later 15th- earlier 16th century castles and tower houses. In the former it would seem that some care was taken to conceal the constructional techniques: the latter was a more expedient age so that where evidence of wicker centering still survives it is more likely to belong to this later period.

As the 17th century progressed the emphasis was increasingly placed on comfort with a declining emphasis on defence once the casual warfare and raiding of the previous century declined. The type of mullioned windows which previously had been confined to the upper stories could now be placed downstairs. Height was no longer essential so that residences of two stories were constructed, such as were already familiar in the walled towns. Fireplaces appeared in most rooms but followed the convention of tower houses and were placed on the outer wall. This produces the characteristic outline of the 17th century house with roof-ridge running straight between chimneys that rise up over the gables (fig. 1 1). Symmetrical sets of mullioned windows with hood mouldings would complete the picture of such a typical country house, with perhaps a dilapidated tower house nearby now only used as a shelter for cattle.

By the end of the 17th century house builders had come to realise that it made more sense to have the fireplaces on inner walls. This changed the outline, allowing for a sloping hipped roof up to the chimneys with the ridge then running straight between them. It was also realised that if the roof projected out beyond the walls, in the absence of guttering, the water would be thrown clear of the walls, keeping the house drier. This also obviated the need for hood mouldings. Ruins of the early 17th century houses may thus be distinguished from those of the early 18th century although neither are very common. The big surge in house building did not take place until the mid 18th century when the financial rewards of the agricultural revolution began to manifest themselves. Some structural modification of the earlier houses became possible with increased supplies of iron and lead. The latter could be used as flashings enabling one roof to be joined to another at right angles. Thus houses were no longer forced by considerations of roofing to be mainly rectangular. The iron could be cast as guttering so that an exaggerated roof overhang was no longer necessary. New developments in glass-making also produced small sheets of smooth glass relatively cheaply which could be cut into rectangles for windows or into other shapes for decorative 'fan light' effect over a main door, for instance. Thus emerged the classic Georgian facade, although few of the original windows or doors have survived, even in continuously occupied houses, since the later 18th century. The overall style, however, continued in general use through most of the 19th and indeed is currently undergoing a revival.

The houses of the majority of the people up to the late 19th century were made of more perishable material and so do not provide good ruins. Once a thatched mud-walled cabin is abandoned its decline is rapid and within two decades little is left except a grass covered elevated rectangle with an occasional fuchsia bush or wild rose sole testament to a long departed horticultural effort. Sometimes, however, outhouses or garden walls were built of dry stone and, if undisturbed, will have outlived the original habitation.

Notes on Industrial Ruins, etc. Whereas castle and church ruins provide evidence of the changing political, military, cultural and social history of many centuries, few industrial ruins are more than two hundred years old. The empty shells of most have few diagnostic features and so only reflect in an abstract way changing economic and technical circumstances with little surviving evidence of their social dimension. However, industrial archaeology is a popular study, particularly in Northern Ireland, so teachers should at least be aware of the forces that caused the growth and later decline of local mills, warehouses, etc.

The vast majority of the industrial ruins in Ireland are post- 18th century industrial/agricultural revolution. In the 1780s the Irish parliament actively encouraged tillage and milling. Many of the derelict corn mills dotted around standing near little streams in tillage areas date between then and about 1846. The abolition of protection for the corn growers in 1848, however, allowed for the importation of cheaper continental and American corn. Probably few mills were built after this while the existing ones continued to grind for the local market. By the 1880s a number of factors had combined to bring about the gradual ruin of these small mills. Most important was the opening up of the prairies in America so that cheap wheat from there could be brought by rail to the east coast ports and across the Atlantic by steam ship. Impetus was given to this by a series of bad summers in the late 1870s so that the rural mills had little local corn to grind anyhow. Businessmen in the ports had meanwhile seen the opportunity of grinding the American wheat themselves using steam rollers rather than the less efficient circular stones. Some of the small mills survived up to the First World War by crushing wheat and barley for animal fodder. The majority, however, were by then in ruins. Their deterioration would appear to have been quite rapid with wall, roof and floor timbers rotting quite quickly (perhaps because there were invariably placed in damp locations). The water wheels and

driving mechanisms were generally of wood also and suffered a similar fate so that all that is left of many of these mills of c. 1780-c. 1840 provenance is an empty shell, an overgrown watercourse leading to the wheel-pit, and perhaps the upper and lower sections of the circular grinders made out of sandstone or conglomerate.

Less spectacular, but far more common in richer farm lands are the lime kilns. The reason they were so numerous is that burned lime travels very badly. Rain or other contact with water will cause it to effervesce violently. Lime, dung, seaweed or alluvial mud were the only known fertilisers until guano began to be imported from the mid- 19th/early 20th century. It is not possible on structural evidence to date these lime kilns, so that one can only place them from the beginnings of intensive farming in the later 18th century possible to the agricultural crisis of the late 1870s.

Less common are the various factory-type buildings of the late 18th/early 19th century. The majority made textiles although some manufactured paper, beer, glass or metal ware. Almost all were powered by waterwheels as cheap steam technology did not become available until after c. 1830. Usually these early buildings are mere empty shells with nothing to indicate to what use they might have been put although it is most likely that a multi-storied building with a lot of windows on each floor once manufactured textiles. If it had less emphasis on light it may have been a warehouse although one would not expect to find these in parts of the countryside where they would have no economic basis. A square stone or brick chimney beside an industrial ruin would generally indicate an enterprise dated anytime between c. 1830 and World War One; usually there will be some local tradition about such later industries. The economic circumstances that brought about the ruin of each of these industries are of course varied. Some of the earlier ones failed to survive the lifting of protection in the twenty years or so after the Act of Union. Others did not survive the increased competitions from imports distributed on the growing railway network - many small breweries, for instance failed to adopt the new technology which Guinness were employing and distributing by rail. Many cotton mills closed because they could not get supplies during the American Civil War. Ruined engine house with round Cornish chimneys associated with metal mines are a legacy of the discovery of more accessible mineral resources, first in America in the 1860s and then in Africa. No one simple cause, therefore, brought about this range of industrial ruins.

A similar range of circumstances underlies many of the other types of ruin such as derelict wharves, farm outbuildings, police and military barracks, forges and smithies, work-houses, national schools, etc. Throughout the dairying counties, many small creameries stand abandoned because of the introduction of bulk collection in the late 1960s and '70s. The prosperity of those years brought a new crop of abandoned traditional farm houses as a 'bungalow bliss' epidemic hit the agricultural community. Accompanying this was a strange desire to replace the stone or earth banked 'hedges' (features of agricultural revolution) with ranch-type fencing, now happily rotting. Elsewhere in these hedges stand the remains of many a fine set of gate piers, one remaining, the other have been torn away to allow a wider opening for bigger agricultural machinery.

These are changes which show an intensity to the past. Over the first half of the 19th century the problem was sometimes an excessive 'sensitivity' which can often confuse the modern observer. New mills were built with crenallated tops and false cross-bow loops to give a fashion 'romantic' effect. Many creations of the period appear from the distance to be 13th century castles but on closer inspection prove to have large symmetrical windows all round the ground floor and totally useless towers studded round for decorative effect. Monasteries were titivated to look more 'picturesque' and round towers were given anachronistic crenallations. Only by the practice of observing can one judge the authentic from the synthetic.

Bibliography

This article set out to give some general principles for interpreting ruins and would be unnecessary if a more comprehensive single guide were available. The information here is based on my own observation in the Waterford area in the light of a variety of printed sources.

If one were to arrive in an area as a stranger and wished to locate the local monuments/ruins, the best beginning would be the 1/2 inch O.S. map which is on general sale and has the main antiquities marked in Gothic script. For further identification of these, touring guides such as those published by Shell and the A.A. give a summary of what is known about each. For a more comprehensive listing however, one can buy cheaply from the Planning Department of each County Council the *County Development Plan* which should contain a listing of all known sites with location references. The presentation of these varies greatly from county to county but

they should be a useful resource. It is unlikely, however, that they will give even an outline history of the monument/ruin - such will normally have be found elsewhere. The County Library should provide a good starting point. Most libraries in recent years have been building up collections of local material including County histories and indexing them. Ideally one should merely have to look-up the alphabetical index for the reference number which will lead to whatever book or article, original or photocopy, has information about each site. If this facility is not available then a visit to one of the large libraries (c. g. university libraries) will lead to Hayes *Sources for the Study of Irish Civilisation*. Volume IX of this massive works contains, for each county, an alphabetical listing of townlands and what has been published in journals about each up to about 1960. If that yields nothing about a particular site, then a check through the indexes of the National Library is called for. If that too is blank, then the site you are interested in is one of the vast majority in the country about which nothing has been published. Anybody who puts together any interpretation of such sites, therefore, is doing something completely original!

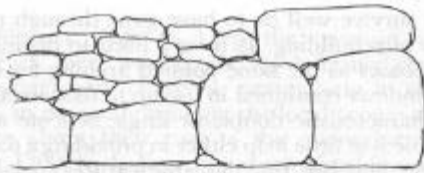
The most important locations through the country are designated 'National Monuments' and Peter Harbison's guide to these is readily available. It also give, a brief bibliography of each site. For a general description of uses, siting, etc. of field monuments, beautifully illustrated and most readable, the booklet *Irish Field Monuments* can hardly be surpassed. It was issued free to schools in 1935 by the Commissioners of Public Works. For greater detail, Sean O Riordan's *Antiquities of the Irish Countryside* (first published 1942 and many times reprinted) may be regarded as the standard text and is still available in paperback. So too is the useful and readable *Early Ireland, a field guide* by A. Weir, published 1981. There are of course a great number of specialist books and articles of an archaeological nature many of which are prohibitively expensive: perhaps the most useful relatively inexpensive synopsis of archaeological research in Herity and Eogan's *Ireland in Prehistory*, first published in 1977. Some parts of the country are, of course, fortunate enough to have published surveys of field monuments available locally. In this regard, a model of what can be provided in any area was provided by the Roscrea Heritage Society who collaborated with ANCO in a local survey. The result is the exemplary *Archaeological Survey of the Barony of Ikerrin, 1984*, which includes within its scope church sites and castles as well as field monuments.

For more general reading on church and castle ruins, any of the standard books on Irish architecture should prove useful. A good illustrated introduction, perhaps would be Maurice Craig's booklet *Architecture in Ireland* published by the Dept. of Foreign Affairs in 1978. For a more detailed study Craig's *The Architecture of Ireland from the Earliest Times to 1881-1982*, is excellent. A number of more specialist studies are also available such as Stalley's *Architecture and Sculpture in Ireland 1150-1350*, 1971 and *The Churches and Abbeys of Ireland*, 1976, by de Breffney and Mott. However, Leask's three volume classic *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings* first published between 1955 and 1960 has been republished and is still available. It deals exclusively with medieval sites. Essential reading on ruined castles is Leask's *Irish Castles* many times reprinted since it first appeared in 1941.

Many other books have been published over the years on Irish monuments and ruins. The listing above is based on books currently available in the shops at reasonable prices. While none of them provides a diagnostic guide towards dating features in church and castle ruins, they do provide a multitude of examples of the interpretative suggestions I have made plus information on the many exceptions to my generalisations. However, none of it means very much until one gets out and does the field work for oneself first of all before trying it out with pupils. For them, there is an immense satisfaction to be had from transforming a meaningless jumble of stone into a living record of man's activities in the past in their own neighbourhood.

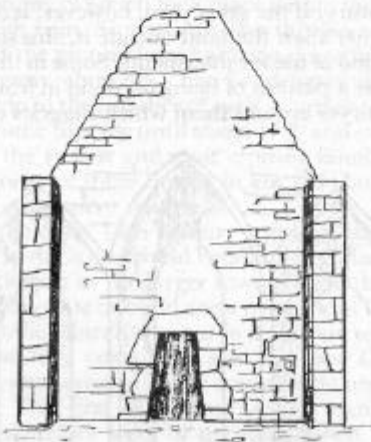
Finally, I would like to thank Mrs. Susanne Brophy for translating my crude words into eloquent drawings.

Fig. 1



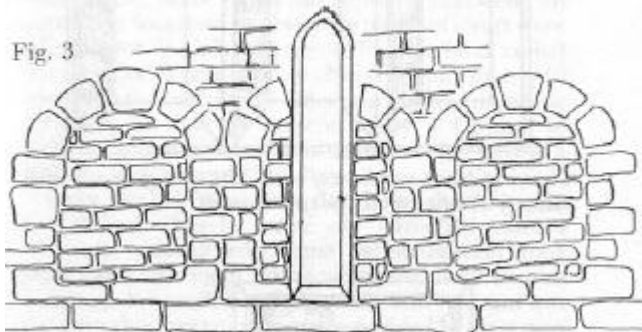
Possible 11th or early 12th century church (large stone) used as base for building later medieval church.

Fig. 2



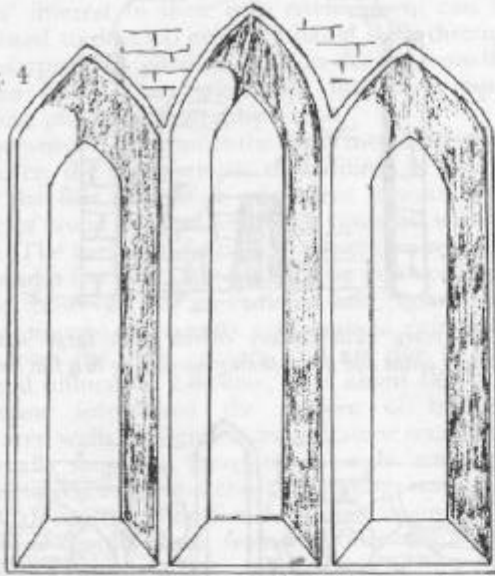
11th or early 12th century church with large stones, protruding antae and door opening narrowing to a flat lintel.

Fig. 3



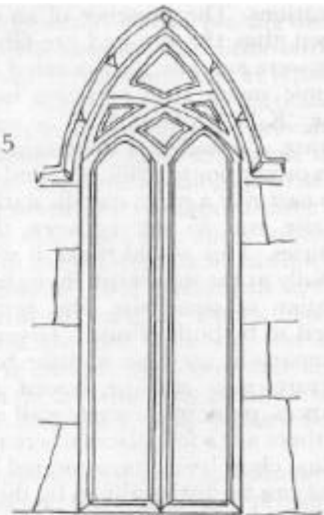
Blocked-up late 12th century round-headed Romanesque window with 13th century lancet insertion. (Based on example at Jerpoint, Co. Kilkenny).

Fig. 4



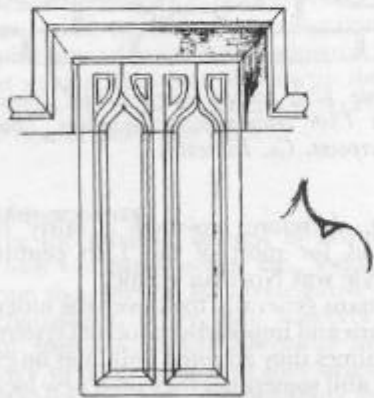
Cluster of lancet windows of early 13th century church with masonry dividing walls splayed inwards.

Fig. 5



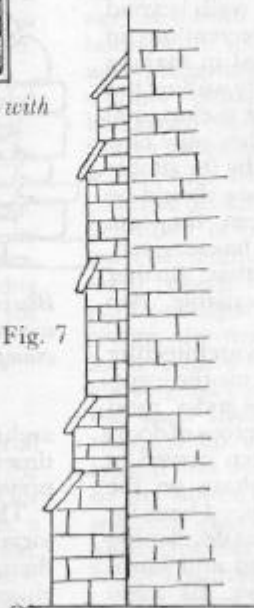
Later 13th century introduction of stone mullions dividing lancet windows allowing for ornamental tracery above.

Fig. 6



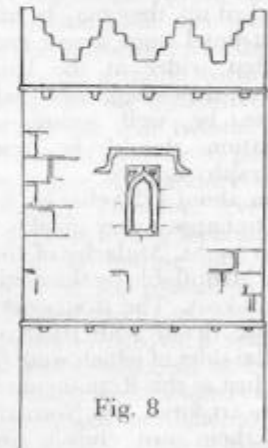
Ogee headed ope with hood mouldings above, typical of 15th century churches, castle-residences up to early 17th century. Detail of ogee with decorative cusp added where the reversed arcs meet.

Fig. 7



15th century Stepped buttress of church revival period.

Fig. 8



15th century belfry with typical stepped crenallations, horizontal string courses and hood moulding over window ope.

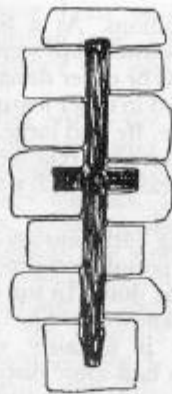


Fig. 9

Loops for bow and arrow in 13th century wall.

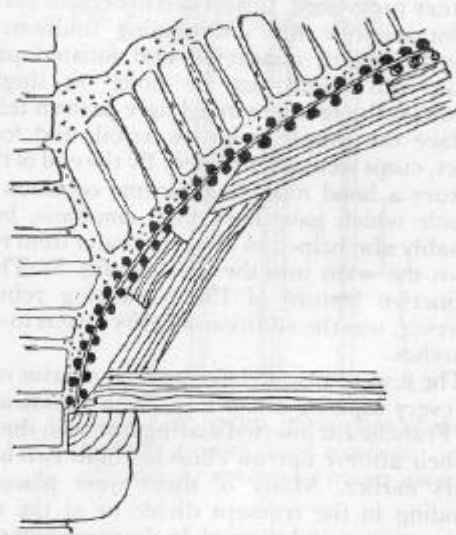


Fig. 10

Process of creating an arch to support superstructure. While vaulting made like this was used between the 12th and 16th centuries, survival of the wickerwork embedded in the mortar generally suggests the later centuries.

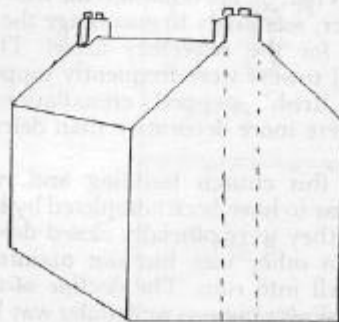


Fig. 11

Outline of 17th century house with chimneys set in straight gables. Hood moulding over windows and doors would have been continued, partly because eaves tended to be shallow.