

ANTIQUITIES (contd.)

will have you believe that when a fish was caught in the trap, a bell automatically rang in the Abbey to announce the new & welcome arrival. The nearby bridge is guarded at each side by a finely-wrought arched gateway, over one of which is carved the head of King Roderick O'Connor &, over the other, that of the last Lord Abbot of Cong.

The STONE MONUMENTS which are littered throughout this parish are numberless, & comprise of cairns, forts, souterrains, long stones etc.

Sir Wm. Wilde absorbs most or all of them in his effort to prove that the Battle of Moytura took place here, but, other than his account, there seems to be no history or tradition attached to more than a few, such as Inishowen Caher. Ferguson, in "Rude Stone Monuments" says that: "the Firbolgs advanced from the plains of Meath as far as Cong, where the first battle was fought, (with the invading Tuatha De Danaan) &, after being fiercely contested for four days, was decided in favour of the invaders. The second battle was fought seven yrs afterwards, near Sligo (Northern Moytura) . . ." But Ferguson, as would appear from a later passage, bases his knowledge on the contentions of Wilde.

The following are amongst the principal antiquities of the kind mentioned remaining to-day:-

Killower Cairn - "Carn Eochy": Wilde believed that this giant cairn was the mound erected by mourning Firbolgian warriors over the grave of their King, Eochy, who was slain in the great Battle of Moytura by the three sons of Nemhed Mac Badhrai - the three warriors also dies of their wounds. But this great cairn has not been known by any name other than Killower in local tradition - Carn Eochy has definitely been identified in Co. Sligo. Killower is the largest carn in the W. of Ireland, about 30' high over the elevated ground on which it stands, a little to the N.E. of Loch Mask House & about 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. from Cong. The base of the cairn was surrounded by an earthen rampart of enormous girth, inside which was a formidable circle of large flagstones. The rampart is now much damaged & only three of the flagstones are still erect. The man-made cairn was built with loose stones & boulders, & it seems reasonably safe to assume that a tomb or, perhaps, artificial apartments

Nymphsfield Circles: Five stone circles were supposed to exist at Nymphsfield, about $\frac{1}{2}$ m. from Cong, on the right-hand side of the Ballinrobe road. Two of them are visible from the roadside, facing the Protestant rector's house. Two more will be found in the adjoining fields behind, & the fifth is either so dilapidated as to be unrecognisable or else barely traceable. The two seen from the road are enclosed by iron railings. The first consists of 22 standing stones, 15 of these being large flags, & is about 16 paces in diameter. The second is at the far side of the same field &, within the surrounding rail, about 18 stones, 8 of them large & irregularly shaped, form an almost perfect circle; this circle, about 15 paces in diameter, is built on a mound & surrounded with trees.

The third circle is in the field adjoining the second, at the rere, &, amidst thorn bushes & briars, six stones remain on the margin of the circle which is about 40' in diameter. The other is in the centre of the field behind the first circle & appears to have been much larger

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than its fellows; about 12 stones are standing. None of these circles betrays the possibility of having contained a dolmen.

Ballymagibbon Cairn is seen to the left of the road, nearing Cross, when travelling from Cong. It resembles the Killower cairn in form, but is considerably smaller. Wilde says that it contains a large but inaccessible cave.

"Carn an Aoinfhir" - One-Man Cairn - so called by Sir Wm. Wilde to fit the narrative of the Moytura Battle, is in the townland of Tonaleesaun, about 1 1/2 m. N.E. of Cong. It is overgrown with bushes & grass & damaged to a large extent, & both N. & S. openings are blocked up; circumference is about 90 paces. Wilde recovered a magnificent specimen of an ornamented clay urn, containing ashes, presumably of a cremated warrior, from this cairn; the urn is preserved by the R.I.A. Near this cairn is a huge stone circle containing a souterrain.

"The Field of the Hurlers": The fields E. of Nymphsfield are supposed to be the ground on which the champions of the two opposing armies, Firbolg & De Danaan, engaged in a great hurling contest before the real battle started. All this area is strewn with monuments of varying descriptions.

NOTE:

A more complete & detailed account of the stone monuments, forts etc., would be both desirable & interesting. - but would occupy some more weeks of intensive exploration & study, & would occupy a great deal of space.

Long Stone of The Neale: This pillar stone stands to a height of over 4' where the roads fork a little to the south of The Neale - it is passed on the road from Cong & the turn to the right leads back to Cross. The object of the stone is unknown. Wilde says that the Fir Bolg king stood here at one stage of the battle, & he also suggests that it may be the "Lia-Lugha", the stone marking the grave of the son of King Nuada.

SOUTERRAINS: Amongst a large number of artificial caves or souterrains in this parish, the most important are Lisheenard, Cosluchoga, Attyrickard, Kildun, Knock, Lackafinna, Neale, Cahirphaetre, Knockalassa, Killower, Caher Riobaird, Lacaun & Carrowbaun. It is hardly necessary to describe each, & besides, the task of exploring most of them would be a huge task since they are almost all overgrown with scrub & weeds, & in some instances, closed up or partly ruined. A well-informed guide, of which there are very few in the locality, would certainly be needed in order to discover them.

Lisheenard - Lisin Ard (the "small high fort") - is in the Ashford Demesne, to the right of the avenue leading to Mr. Leonard's house, from which it is a couple of hundred yds distant. The souterrain is under a large circular rath which is now almost completely demolished & stripped of the hazel trees which surrounded & concealed it. Two damaged openings to the cave are seen within a few yds of each other. The cave is of the crooked class & was measured by Sir Wm. Wilde at 27' from the E. entrance to the crook or turn to the S., the next section being 24' long. The height of the passage is generally about 6'.

Kildun: This souterrain is at the side of the road leading from Cross to The Neale & is built inside a large fort. Entering through the narrow souterrain opening, a chamber over 20' long is reached; this ends in a narrow, tunnel-like passage at the end of which a

ANTIQUITIES: SOUTERRAINS (Contd.)

perpendicular shaft rises to a level platform a few ft. higher up. Beyond the platform is another somewhat larger chamber containing, in one corner, a cupboard-like recess & in the roof, a small ventilating hole. As is usual in these structures, roofs are made of huge flat slabs, perfectly fitted, & the walls are of medium-sized stones that are not laid in courses but, nevertheless, firmly built without cement or mortar. Kildun cave runs in a S.W.-N.E. direction, without turning but for the vertical shaft.

Attyrickard Cave, near Cross E., & within a few minutes of the Castle-church of the same name, is another straight cave, having no turning or angle.

Caher Riobaird, a 40 yds sq. enclosure surrounded by a dry-stone wall, is about 3/4 m. E. of Killower Cairn. There is a trabeated doorway in the 6' wall & inside is a well-built souterrain.

INCHAGOILL - Inis a' Ghaill Chraibhthigh, "The Island of the Devout Foreigner (or Stranger)", almost 5m. to the S.W. of Cong in Loch Corrib.

(Note: This being the busiest fishing season on the lake, I could not conveniently visit the island since every available boat is engaged by anglers. This description of the island & its archaeological treasures is, therefore, compiled from Sir Wm. Wilde's "Loch Corrib", Hayward's "The Corrib Country", Fr. Neary's booklet, the narrations of local persons, & other sources. O'Donovan treated of Inchagoill under Galway, in which county it is situate, in Vol. III, p.46.)

It is readily apparent that Inchagoill is easily the most interesting island on the lake, not merely historically, but also for prettiness & for the lovely views of lake, mtn & woodland which it affords. An ancient burial ground, situated near the narrowing centre of the island contains two small early-Irish churches & a monumental stone bearing what is acknowledged to be one of the first Christian inscriptions in Ireland.

Teampull Phadraig, St. Patrick's Church, is that on the N.E. side & is small & plain & in size, construction & appearance, obviously of the primitive type. Dr. Petrie, referring to this bldg in "Round Towers" says "That this church is of the age of St. Patrick, as is believed in the traditions of the country, & as its name would indicate, can, I think, scarcely admit of doubt."

It consists of nave & chancel, but without trace of an arch or other dividing feature, which, it may be assumed, it did not ever have. Internal dimensions are 29'7", the chancel occupying a space 11'7" by 8'8", the nave 17'11" by 11'10". The little church is in a very ruinous condition, with no trace of window openings remaining, but the massive character of the Cyclopean walls is still evident, with signs of mortar on the interior only. The narrow primitive doorway, square-headed & having inclined jambs, is in the W. gable & is surrounded by a massive lintel, 4'8" wide. The jambs, formed of squarish uncut stones, incline inwards from a width of 24 1/2" at the sill to 22 1/2" at the lintel.

A few paces from the doorway of St. Patrick's Church is the celebrated Lugnaedon Stone, one of the most valuable early Christian stone monuments of its kind in Ireland. Wilde's description, which still applies, says: "It is a single four sided obelistical pillar, of hard, greyish Silurian stone, unhewn, slightly cambered, broad at the base, where it measures 10", & gradually decreasing from 6 to 5 inches on the inscribed side".

It rises to a height of about 2'4" over the ground,

OTHER ANCIENT CHURCH RUINS: "Cong", wrote Colgan, in the 17th century, "was celebrated for divers churches." The truth of this observation is visible in the numerous church ruins which are found everywhere about Cong & The Neale. Fr. Neary, in "Notes on Cong & The Neale", says: "Cong & The Neale are remarkable for ten old churches erected here from the 6th to the 18th century: Teampuill Phadraig, Teampuill-na-Neeve, Killarsagh, Cross-East, Kilmolara, Ballinchalla, Kilfrauchaun, Inishmaine, Cong & Cahirnacole." He mentions, as reasons for their present ruinous state, the destruction caused by Danish raiders in 835 and 925 & by combined Irish & Anglo-Irish forces in 1204, as well as other frequent attacks. But even though most of these bldgs are now almost completely ruined, they still reveal architectural styles ranging from the simple primitive to the beautifully elaborate.

KILLARSAGH: This ruin, in Ballymagibbon townland, between Cong and Cross & about 2½m. from the former, is of a tiny bldg, about 24' by 16'. In Wilde's time (middle 19th centy) this had a beautiful small round-arched window, now much reduced. The founder, St. Fursa, is celebrated as founder

ANTIQUITIES: KILLARSAGH (contd.)

of churches & monasteries in Ireland & on the Continent, but it is for the imagery of his language & his remarkable visions that he is principally dealt with by the chroniclers. His burning visions are said to have greatly influenced Dante & he is remembered in "a dozen different memoirs of various ages acclaiming him all over the Continent of Europe." (Reeves).

KILFRAOCHAUN: This is one of the most interesting of all the ruins in the locality & its appearance alone is ample proof of its great age. It is in an old cemetery in the townland of Dowagh, or Dumhae, & lies to the right of the Cross-Neale road, being only a couple of hundred yds from the former. Wilde described it as one of the very oldest Cyclopean churches in Ireland. It is 18' long inside & 12' broad at the W. end - widening to 14' at the east. The western doorway is square-headed, with massive lintel & inclined jambs that are smooth on the inner faces. As in St. Kevin's Kitchen at Glendaloch, there was an upper apartment, the floor of which was supported on corbels. Unlike the Glendaloch & other oratories, however, this floor was of wood. There is no knowledge or tradition as to the founder or date of origin of this tiny oratory, though the old name for it was Cill Ard Craobh na Naomh - The Church of the Old (or Ancient) Branch of the Saints. Tradition asserts that the clay with which Cong Abbey was consecrated was brought from Kilfraochaun. Wm. Wilde pays homage to "a very memorable man in his day & generation, Dick Blake," who "taught me to ride, keeping my 'hands low on the saddle' - what skilful directions for shooting, & training setters & pointers, you gave me; & with what pride you used to see me shoot the rising trout from off the bridge of Cross ... years age." Blake was buried within the precincts of this little church & was renowned as a duellist. He was of the Garracloon (Cross) family, of which General George Blake, who went to aid Humbert at Killala, also was a member.

KILMOLARA: This ruin, near The Neale, has little of architectural or other interest excepting a point-arched, mullioned window & some old tombs of the early 18th centy. There was a church at Kilmolara in 1558, at which Kerval O'Kelly officiated, but there is no account of its founder or period of erection.

BALLINCHALLA - commonly called Ballyholla. A grant to Lord Clanrickard in 1606 described this as being, even then, a ruin. Sir Wm. Wilde, however, said that the ruin was of no great antiquity, whilst O'Donovan, in explaining the place name, says: "The place at which the original Church of this parish is situated is called, in the Annals of the Four Masters at the year 1224, Cala Locha Measca, i.e. the Callow of Loch Mask". Neither gives any account of the ruin. It is on the left of the road leading into Inishmaine & about 4 mls from Cong. Dimensions are, approx., 40' x 18' & it possesses two point-arched window-openings. In some records it is referred to as a convent, abbey or monastery, & the time Clanrickard acquired it, it belonged, with adjoining lands, to the Benedictine nuns of Kilcreevanty. Hayward, in "The Corrib Country", blithely asserts that: "in the little Abbey of Ballinchalla, Cathal of the Wine Red Hand first thrust into the world with that crimson paw by which he was to be for ever known in the pages of history." Cathal Crowdearg would certainly appear to have been born in this district around Loch Mask, but I do not know where the author unearthed such positive information. This statement may well be quite true, however, though it is very questionable.

ANTIQUITIES (contd.)

There are other church sites & ruins in the parish, though of much less tangible interest.

CAHIRNACOLE: The ruined church at Cahirnacole, or Musicfort, near The Neale, is a relic of the Penal Days of the 18th century & was formerly a parish church. It is a long narrow bldg, about 50' x 13' & is concealed amidst scrub & limestone rock without path or roadway leading to it. The W. end was built against a bank, thus providing a natural gallery & the rubble masonry & clay structure denotes the expedient nature of its origin. This "Mass House", for such it must have been in those days when all the nobler churches were closed or destroyed, had been in disuse for a century & a quarter.

Close by is a huge "Mass Rock" on which, it is said, Mass was celebrated before the church was built.

CASTLES: To attempt a detailed account of the dozen or so ancient castles or fortresses in this parish would be an endless task involving a great deal of examination, research & labour which, though desirable, would occupy far too much time &, ultimately, prove largely redundant in this survey. A short description of the principal structures & a brief account of the chief events associated with each, must, of necessity, suffice in the interests of time, space & usefulness.

The majority of, if not all, the existing ruins are Anglo-Norman bldgs & their foundation may be traced mainly to the conquering de Burges & de Berminghams, who, during about ten years of fierce strife early in the 13th century, greatly succeeded in subduing the Irish septs of the district & immediately consolidated their gains of land & other possessions by building strong defensive fortresses. The succeeding centuries saw the almost complete "Gaelicization" of these adventurers & there are innumerable stories of intermittent uprisings, battles, skirmishes, conspiracies, reprisals & counter reprisals during which Gael & Anglo-Norman often fought side by side against other native armies as well as against those of later invaders. That the native chieftains & kings had their fortresses & castles too is readily gleaned from history & tradition, but the old Irish castles have almost all disappeared or been replaced by the conqueror's square keep.

CONG CASTLE: There is no trace remaining of Cong Castle, nor can the site of this ancient bldg be pointed out with any certainty, though a spot called Toneacashlaun, close to the abbey, is believed to contain the foundations of an early building.

The Burkes apparently held the castle from the early part of the 13th century & that family was in occupation there for some centuries. Edmond Burke of Cong was an unsuccessful claimant for the MacWilliamship or chieftaincy of the de Burgo clans at the election at Rausakeera, Kilmaine, in 1595. The inauguration was conducted under the aegis of Red Hugh O'Donnell.

LOUGH MASK CASTLE: Of the existing ruins, that of Loch Mask Castle is the most important. It is, in common with most of the Irish "castles", a tall well-fortified keep, occupying an elevated site on a rocky plateau & overlooking a broad expanse of Loch Mask, the surrounding countryside & the rugged mountain background on the far side of the lake. The high chimneys & lofty gables of the tower are a conspicuous landmark from the lake side &, though now in a roofless, ruinous state, it yet presents an appearance of massive strength.

The entrance is through a doorway of well-cut stone in

ANTIQUITIES: LOCH MASK CASTLE (contd.)

the E. wall &, just inside, a winding stone stairway leads upwards, past the floorless spacious apartments, on to the battlemented roof. Machicolations defend three corners & the water was carried from the roof by some well-carved gargoyles. In ascending the winding stairs, two splendid fireplaces will be observed in the opposite wall. Both are constructed on a massive scale & tastefully sculptured. On one of these decorated fireplaces the names of Thomas & Ellen Butler & the date, 1618, are cut in large characters & on the other, which is ornamented with floral carving is the date 1615. The Castle is well lighted by a number of mullioned windows, quadrangular in form. (An architectural description of this castle is, I think, supplied by Mr. Leask in his "Irish Castles".)

Loch Mask Castle, or Ballyloughmask, was built about 1237 & was rebuilt or renovated at least once - by Thomas Burke during 1615-1618, as suggested by the dates on the fireplaces. Richard de Burgo, it appears, acquired the castle & manor of Ballyloughmask from John Fitzthomas Fitzgerald in 1299. This branch of the Burke family was known as MacWilliam Iochtar, the Lower MacWilliam. This family was responsible for a hideous crime which took place in the year 1338. Edmond Burke, son of the Red Earl, was appointed guardian of Elizabeth, then aged seven, daughter of the Dun Earl, William Burke, who had been slain at Belfast in 1133. Elizabeth inherited all her father's vast possessions of lands & valuables & the Western Burkes, the sons of William Burke of Loch Mask Castle, plotted to seize the guardian & seek to possess themselves of the properties. Edmond Albanach of Loch Mask thereupon found henchmen to capture his cousin Edmond at the Augustinian monastery at Ballinrobe, whither they brought him to Lough Mask Castle. Next night he was brought to Ballyndeonagh Castle, some miles distant, & on the third night he was transferred to Earl's Island in L. Mask. The Archbishop of Tuam hastened to the island & endeavoured to liberate the prisoner, with whom he was associated in the government of Connacht. Whilst he was in conference with the Burkes, the Stauntons who were acting as custodians over Sir Edmond, grew frightened lest he should be released & punish themselves. They secretly placed the unfortunate man in a sack which they weighted with stones & then cast into the lake. This shocking murder caused serious repercussions & greatly affected the subsequent history of Connacht. Edmond Albanach was forced to flee & remained a fugitive for many years, though it seems that the family did not forfeit their castle & lands at Ballyloughmas.

Brian O'Connor attacked Edmond Burke & burned the Castle in 1412. In 1416 Edmond Burke plundered the country of Mac Feoraish (de Bermingham) around Athenry & captured de Bermingham himself, bringing him back to Loch Mask where he imprisoned him in the castle. The fortress was captured in 1571 by Fitton, Clanrickard & others. About 16 years later the Burkes were ousted from the Castle for a short spell but, in 1588, they forced Comerford's garrison to leave & installed the Blind Abbot as The MacWilliam (Burke). The murderous Bingham attacked the castle some time later & hanged seven of the Burkes & an O'Donnell & granted the place, with 13 quarters of land, to Richard Sassenach Burke. Sir Tristram Beresford owned the castle in 1699 & since then it has frequently changed hands, being now owned by Mr. Patk. Daly, who resides in nearby Loch Mask House.

Mr. Daly readily grants free access to the ruin.
3½ mls. Cong. 5 mls. Ballinrobe.

INISHMAINE CASTLE: The site & very meagre remaining vestige of this castle are still recognised at Inishmaine, about 4 mls from Cong. It was a de Burgo fortress & an old record relates that Inishmaine was plundered by Richard de Burgo & Hugh O'Connor, son of King Roderick, in 1227. That the castle

ANTIQUITIES: INISHMAINE CASTLE (contd.)

was occupied in 1589 is proved by a report that a secret meeting was held there in that year at which Walter na mBuille (Mully) - Wat of the Blows - , The Blind Abbot, O'Flaherty & Joyce were present. • It was then owned by Mac Tibbot Burke.

THE NEALE CASTLE: This has completely disappeared & its site is not known for certain, though it was probably in the Neale Park. It was also a de Burgo castle, of the Mac Meylet branch. Fitton, Clanrickard & Thomond captured this, with Loch Mask & other castles, in 1571, but the Burkes soon resumed occupancy. The first Englishman to settle in Mayo, John Browne, got possession of the Castle in 1583 & the Marquis of Sligo & Lord Kilmaine are both descended from the Brownes of the Neale. Three young Burkes who had been detained at The Neale as hostages were taken to Ballinrobe & hanged by Bingham in 1586. The eldest of the boys was only 14 years old & they were denied the consolation of a priest.

In 1589, John Browne, by then Sheriff of Mayo, was ordered, with the sub-sheriff, to attack the Burkes, who were creating considerable disorder at the time. Bingham ordered the measure to be taken, but he did not participate himself. Walter na mBuille made an unexpected attack on the sheriff's party, in which Brown himself, Daly the sub-sheriff & 25 others of that side were killed.

In 1641, the refugees from Killala were sheltered at The Neale Castle on the night before the Massacre at Shrule. Bingham remained on at the Castle, thus barely avoiding certain death.

CASTLE & CHURCH of CROSS EAST - ATTYRICKARD: At Cross East, about 1 ml along the Kilmaine road from Cross village, is the ancient church with attached quadrangular tower, of which no history or tradition is definitely known. The name of the place, Attyrickard, has been interpreted by Wilde to mean Ait Tighe Riocard - the "Site of Richard's House" - and from this he deduced that the church & tower were probably constructed by the Burkes. The tower is variously described as a belfry, place of retreat by the clerics in times of danger, & also as a castle of the Burkes, the Clan Sheoinin branch, who lived here from the commencement of the 15th century to the middle of the 17th century.

The tower, although now much reduced, has an appearance of great strength & measures 25' x 16' with walls over 3' thick. There is a small narrow window-ope in each wall & a pointed doorway leads from the church, at the west end of which the tower stands. Internally, it consisted of an upper & lower chamber, a square opening in the stone ceiling giving access from the latter to the floor above. The church measured about 40' by 20' internally & has a fine point-arched twin window in the E. gable.

AHALAHARD CASTLE: This ruin is visible from the N. side of Cong vill. & is but 1/2 ml. or so distant in a northerly direction. Situated amidst the rough rock-strewn country which is so distinctive a feature of the isthmus between the two lakes, this massive keep is constructed of well-cut limestone slabs & rises to an impressive height, its walls having a graceful batter & rounded at the corners.

Part of the parapet remains, with well-wrought machicolation. Other interesting features are the shapely windows with decorative carved mouldings, the low-built garde-robe in the north wall & the remarkable loop-holes at the angles. Beyond the curtain wall there is a small tower or similar structure with a dome-shaped corbelled roof &, to the right of this, the remains of a domestic or other such bldg of considerable size.

Ahalard Castle belonged to the Bourkes & was given by

AHALAHARD CASTLE (contd.)

them to the MacDonnells who were their mercenary allies in war. The newcomers were established there in 1586 at latest & ten years later, Clanrickard attacked & captured the castle, but speedily left it when informed that Red Hugh O'Donnell was approaching with a much bigger army. Latterly the castle was owned by Sir Richard O'Donnell, who sold to Sir Benjamin Guinness, after which, in recent years, the property was acquired by the Irish Land Commission.

BALLYKINE CASTLE: The history of this castle, from the latter end of the 16th century at least, is almost that of Ahalahard. It was a Burke stronghold & was given by them to the MacDonnells as reward for their services in battle. Earlier though, as its name suggests, it was owned by the O'Kynes, a native sept. In 1571 it was captured by Fitton, Clanrickard & the Earl of Thomond. The ivy-covered ruin stands within 20 yds or so of the avenue at Ballykine, a strange architectural jumble that shows several styles & reconstructions. There is a rectangular doorway on the N. side with huge lintel & on the W. side, a one-time elliptical-headed, though now greatly breached doorway. The rectangular tower is vaulted & obviously of later date than most of the main structure, since they are not bonded together. The trabeated doorway which leads to the first floor of this tower has inclined jambs & double lintel stones that are obviously several hundreds of years older than the castle itself. It is but one-half the dept of the wall & on the inner side, is a similar but larger doorway. A winding stairway is seen to lead to the top of the tower from the second floor. Three great buttresses joined by two tall arches support the east wall of the bldg.

Ballykine Castle is situate in the wood of that name now controlled by the Forestry Division, Irish Land Commission. The simplest way to reach it is via Clonbur (3 mls Cong), thence via the avenue to the right at the Protestant Church for a mile or so.

Turloch Mor O'Conor & his son, King Roderick, are believed to have had castles, perhaps several of them, in Cong or district, but no site is unequivocally identifiable as belonging to them. Cathal Crovdearg, the illegitimate son of Turloch (some say of Roderick) & successor to Roderick as King of Connacht, is believed to have been born at a castle near Loch Mask.

Other castles mentioned in history or tradition existed at Creevagh (Kilmolara), Muckrussaun, Castletown, Kilnamadra, Castletown (Ballyholla) & Castleknock (Caislean na Cuille). Of these, however, there is some doubt as to sites, or, where the location of the castle is definitely known, only a bare fragment, if any, remains.

CHALICES, CROSSES etc.: The parish Catholic clergy of Cong have in their possession some beautiful chalices & other religious relics. The most prized is, perhaps, the unique little (silver-gold?) chalice of three separate parts which are screwed together. It is 5" in height, the cup being but 1 1/4" in diameter, & the base 3" in diameter. The nature of its construction is, in itself, a reminder of the Penal Days when the disguised & hunted priest was compelled to carry all such objects about with them, concealed on their persons. Cardinal Moran was enraptured with the chalice & suggested that it be re-consecrated & used occasionally, which was done.

A heavy solid silver chalice, with an inscription, "The gift of Mrs. Julia Burke to the Abbot of Ross 1729", was

ANTIQUITIES: CHALICES, CROSSES etc. (cont'd.)

presented by a parishioner to a former P.P. It was found amongst a collection of old possessions, black & flattened out, but, in the hands of the silver-smith, it recovered much of its former lustre & shape.

"Patrick Prendergast, Cong, caused me to be made as a gift from Julia Chambers" is the translation of the Latin inscription on another chalice. Patrick Prendergast, who died in 1829, was the last Lord Abbót of Cong. A chalice at The Neale church was, as its inscription tells, made in Ireland for a Canon Regular, parish priest of Kilmolara & Ballinchalla, now in Cong parish, in 1753. A beautiful delicately-chased chalice, of the Spanish type of workmanship, with the Sacred Heart etched on one face of the hexagonal base - an inscription on the edge of the base informs that it was made for the Augustinians at the Priory of the Holy Rood, Ballinrobe, in 1663 - was found at Cross East in 1926,

Father Neary, P.P., Cong, also has a curious carved crucifix which he bought recently after the death of the old woman who owned it & who had used it, as a charm against sore throats & other sicknesses. A very crude representation of the crucified figure of Christ, with nailed feet, rests on a seat carved from the upright portion of the cross. Hammer, nails, pillar, ladder, spear, scourges, cross-bones & skull, & the cock & pot, are grouped about the crucified Saviour. The wood is bog oak, burnished to a sheen from long usage. The cross is 12" long & bears the date 1733. The cock & pot is symbolic of the legend, of which there are at least two versions, connected with the death & promised Resurrection of Our Lord. One version is that two Roman guards on the Hill of Calvary were boiling a cock when one, who had heard the rumours circulating as a result of Christ's promise, asked the other whether he believed that Jesus would rise again on the third day. The other replied that there was as much chance as of the dead cock rising from the pot to crow. At this the cock rose from the pot & crowed loudly. The second version is substantially the same but that Judas & his wife were the principals instead of the two guards.

MARKET CROSS at CONG: This monument stands at the foot of the incline which is the main street of Cong. The limestone shaft is about 3' high, 1½' wide, & 4' thick, & is surmounted by a single stone shaped to form the two short arms & a vertical lug extending from a central half-circle. The date 1350 is carved at the bottom of the shaft, at the back. The cross is only about 15 years old & was placed there about 1930 by the Foy family of sculptors to replace the previous cross which had been broken by the collision of a motor car. That former cross had not been the original Market Cross either as this had been broken through the malicious bigoted agency of a Protestant clergyman named Crampton in the last century. Portions of the original may be seen at Mr. Peter Foy's house at Cong; the present Cross is a faithful reproduction.

The shaft is fitted into a broad limestone plinth - the original measuring 16" in height & 3' by 2½' on the upper face. An inscription on the front of this base, now much worn & traced with difficulty, but copied on the modern shaft, is translated thus: "Pray for Nichol and for Gillibard O'Duffy who were Abbots of Cong." The inscription is worded in Irish, though not in Irish characters but in the block-letter text of the 14th centy. period. Numerous members of the O'Duffy family were distinguished ecclesiastics & abbots at Cong & the Market Cross is believed to mark the spot where a just judge was slain about the year 1350.