**NUI MAYNOOTH**
Ollscoil na hÉireann Ma Nuad

# THE SOCIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL ROLE OF CRANNOGS IN EARLY MEDIEVAL IRELAND

by

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**APPENDICES**
**AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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# Contents

iii

# Figures in Volume 2

**Fig. 1.1** A medieval illustration from *Nauigatio Sancti Brendani*, depicting Brendan and his companions landing on an 'island', before they discover when they light a fire on his back, that it is the whale, Jasconius. The medieval legend of Saint Brendan the navigator, popular throughout medieval Europe, tells of the saints voyages around a series of fantastic and otherworldly islands and reveals some insights into the perception of islands in the medieval imagination. (Source: unknown manuscript, reproduced in James Harpur, Sacred tracks; 2000 years of Christian pilgrimage (London, 2002), p. 41.

**Fig. 2.1** Distribution map of crannogs in Westmeath, Co. Westmeath, indicating location of sites named in catalogue.

**Fig. 2.2** Map showing local landscape of Ballinderry crannog, No. 1 (Source: Hugh O'Neill Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannóg no. 1' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 43c, (1936), Fig. 1)

Fig. 2.3 Plan of Ballinderry crannog No. 1 (Source: Hugh O'Neill Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannóg no. 1' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 43c, (1936), Pl. XIII)

Fig. 2.4 Hiberno-Norse wooden gaming board found on Ballinderry crannog No. 1 (Source: National Museum of Ireland)

Fig. 2.5 Viking sword found on Ballinderry crannog No. 1 (Source: National Museum of Ireland)

Fig. 2.6. Map showing location of Derrynagarragh crannog, on Bishop's Lough, Co. Westmeath

Fig. 2.7 Map showing location and landscape of Doonis crannog, on Doonis Lough, Co. Westmeath. This remarkably isolated site was located in river callows beside Lough Ree, and appears to have been occupied in the Late Bronze Age and the early Middle Ages, perhaps contemporary with the early medieval monastic islands on Lough Ree.

Fig. 2.8 Photograph of Doonis crannog, on Doonis Lough, Co. Westmeath

Fig. 2.9 Photograph of early medieval Dryderstown crannog, on Lough Annala, in the Dysart Lakes complex, Co. Westmeath

Fig. 2.10 Plan of Dryderstown crannog, on Lough Annala, in the Dysart Lakes complex on the River Deel, Co. Westmeath. The site is a cairn of stone and earth, enclosed within a palisade at the northwest side. The site has produced a rich early medieval artefact assemblage (including copper alloy brooches, pins, strap ends, as well as a tenth century Viking silver ingot. (Source: National Monuments Section, Dept. of Environment and Local Government).

Fig. 2.11 Map showing location and landscape at Lough-a-Trim (Knockaville twd) crannog, Co. Westmeath, located close to the barony boundary. The site was dug into in the nineteenth century and produced a range of early medieval finds, including bone combs and a pennanular brooch.

Fig. 2.12 Distribution map of crannogs on Lough Derravarragh, Co. Westmeath

Fig. 2.13 Photograph of Ballynakill 2 crannog on the west shore of Lough Derravarragh.

Fig. 2.14 Plan and section of Ballynakill 2 crannog on the west shore of Lough Derravarragh, Co. Westmeath. This is a small cairn of stones on the modern grassy shore. Prior to drainage, it would have been a low-cairn crannog in knee deep water, possibly (with its 'partner' at Faughalstown 1 across the lake) controlling a crossing point on the lake.

Fig. 2.15 Photograph of Coolure Demesne 1 crannog on the north shore of Lough Derravarragh.

Fig. 2.16 Plan of Coolure Demesne crannog 1, Lough Derravarragh, Co. Westmeath. The site was a massive cairn of stone (with a mid-cairn overlooking a level terrace on the south side), enclosed within a plank and roundwood palisade. Early medieval objects recovered from the site include a fifth to seventh century enamelled plaque, ninth to tenth-century bronze ringed pins, and ninth to tenth-century silver armlets, ingot fragments and balance scales. Its impressive architecture also suggests a high-status role, supported by historical evidence that suggests that the lordly or royal site of the Uí Fiachrach Cúile Fobair was here on the north shore of Lough Derravarragh, so both the raised ringfort and the crannog were probably royal residences.

Fig. 2.17 View of interior of Coolure Demesne 1 crannog, looking across the cairn's surface towards the midden, palisades and location of early medieval finds.

Fig. 2.18 Photograph of Derrya 1 crannog, Lough Derravarragh. In the early Middle Ages, a person standing here would have known of the raised ringfort and crannog of the Uí Fiachrach Cúile Fobair on the lake, of the early medieval church and crannogs at Cell Toma in the distance, and perhaps also of the early medieval church and holy well at Knockeyon, the mountain rising above the skyline 7 miles to the southeast.

Fig. 2.19 Plan and cross-section of Derrya 1 crannog, Lough Derravarragh. The crannog was a small, low platform of stones and earth in ankle deep water, accessible by a low, narrow causeway. This causeway provided a person walking on to the site with an excellent view of the early medieval royal crannog at Coolure Demesne 1 beyond.

Fig. 2.20 Photograph of Donore 1 crannog, a cairn of stone now heavily overgrown by bushes and grass. In the 1960s (see volume 1, Fig. 6.16), this was exposed as the lake levels were lowered.

Fig. 2.21 Plan and section of Donore 1 crannog, Lough Derravarragh. This site was a high cairn of stones, pebbles and boulders, in shallow water at the northwest end of the lake, within the barony of Corkaree, immediately overlooking the barony boundaries of Moygoish and Fore. It was connected to the distant natural island of Clonava by a wooden causeway of posts, perhaps a ship barrier used to control riverine traffic on the River Inny.

Fig. 2.22 Photograph of Faughalstown 1 crannog. This enigmatic cairn of stone, situated in deep water, c. 70m from the land, has produced an early medieval silver ingot.

Fig. 2.23 Photograph of possible early medieval Kiltoom 5 crannog, perhaps occupied by people working the agricultural estates of the eighth to ninth century church at Cell Toma (beyond the trees). Viewed from the lake, this low-cairn crannog would have had a large, impressive kerb of stones and the possible entrance gap on lakeward side of the cairn might have been used a 'dock' for dugout boats.

Fig. 2.24 Plan and section of Kiltoom 6 crannog. The crannog was a small, low cairn of rounded pebbles placed within a kerb of stones, probably originally located in ankle or knee deep water. A low, narrow causeway of stones runs up to the original lake edge, only metres away. The fabric of the cairn hints at an architectural device designed to augment the appearance of the crannog from the water, where large heavy boulders present an impressive sight, while from the shore side, this is merely a low, level cairn of small stones.

Fig. 2.25 Plan and section of Kiltoom 7 crannog. The site was a low cairn of water-rolled pebbles and flat slabs, retained within a kerb of stones. A causeway of flat stones runs up to the dry ground, 8-10 metres to the east. The crannog probably was surrounded by shallow water, but would have been exposed to wind and waves from the west.

Fig. 2.26 Photograph of Kiltoom 8 crannog, constructed of quite massive limestone boulders, accessed by a narrow causeway (in foreground) and surrounded on three sides by a shallow, wide 'ditch'. It is possible that this 'ditch' provided the soils and gravels for an occupation floor, while also providing a deeper yet protected harbour for boats.

smaller univallate ringforts around the lakeshore, probably reflecting complex social and economic ties within this local landscape.

Fig. 3.10 Selection of personal objects recovered from floor deposits of mid-eighth century crannog on Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath.

**Fig. 1.1** An illustration from a medieval manuscript of *Nauigatio Sancti Brendani*, depicting Brendan and his companions landing on an 'island'. They discover when they light a fire that this is the whale Jasconius. The medieval legend of Saint Brendan the Navigator, popular throughout medieval Europe, tells of the saint's voyages around a series of fantastic and otherworldly islands and provides insights into the perception of islands in the medieval imagination. (Source: James Harpur, *Sacred tracks; 2000 years of Christian pilgrimage* (London, 2002), p. 41).

# Appendix 1:

# A select bibliography of early medieval references to crannogs, islands and lakes

## Introduction

This select bibliography is not intended as a comprehensive review of all early medieval historical references to crannogs, islands and lakes. Instead, it aims to provide a sense of the different ways that crannogs and islands are referred to in the annals, hagiographies and some of the sagas.

Many of these documentary entries have already been used in the main text of the thesis, however there are also several annalistic references that are not used there, which can be read below. There is rich early historical vein on the perception and role of Irish crannogs that would reward more detailed study. The bibliography is organised in the following manner.

**Section I** includes entries on crannogs, lakes and islands in the annals (including the *Annals of Ulster (A.U.)*, the *Annals of the Four Masters (A.F.M.)* and the *Annals of Connacht (Ann. Conn.)*, largely within the early medieval period. However, for interest's sake, some late medieval annalistic entries to crannogs up until AD 1602 are also included. The annals generally provide a chronological record of particular battles, raids, natural phenomena and other events, such as the deaths of abbots and kings. Despite their brief, laconic style, they have traditionally provided historians with extensive information on political history and genealogy, as well as on various places, territories and activities. It is useful that there are frequent annalistic references to deaths, battles and other events on crannogs, lakes, islands and other lake-fortresses. They certainly indicate that crannogs were used as royal residences, and by the late Middle Ages, that they were used as prisons and hospitals.[1] A more contextual approach, teasing out the local historical context of each entry is beyond the scope of this immediate study. However, such an approach would certainly enable a recognition of the

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[1] The main editions of the annals to be used here will be *A.U.*; Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill, *Annals of Ulster: Vol. i (to A.D. 1131)* (Dublin, 1983); and for subsequent years, W.M. Hennessy and B. Mac Carthy, *Annála Uladh, Annals of Ulster* 4 vols (Dublin, 1887-1901). The Annals of Connacht entries are referred to as *Ann.Conn.*, A.M. Freeman (ed.), *Annála Connacht. The Annals of Connacht* (AD 1224-1544), (Dublin, 1944; reprint 1970); The *Annals of the Four Masters* are referred to as *A.F.M*, John O'Donovan *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann. Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the*

threads that the annalist was attempting to weave together into a long-term narrative.[2] In this section, the year of the annals is given, followed by the entry (with significant phrase emboldened), followed by a brief note on the likely location of the island or lake named.

**Section II** of this select bibliography includes descriptions and anecdotes about islands and crannogs from the early medieval saints' lives or hagiographies, revealing insights into the role of islands as both signficant and liminal places on water.[3] Most hagiographies were originally composed between the seventh and the twelfth centuries AD, but they mostly survive in texts dated to the late Middle Irish/early modern period, when they were gathered into collections as the *Book of Lismore* (a fifteenth-century compilation).[4] However, it is possible to date many of the saints' lives, usually on the basis of Irish grammar or by cautious use of known historical or political events within the text.[5] The earliest saints' lives were written in Hiberno-Latin. Sharpe has proposed that a substantial proportion of these saints' lives, although held in late medieval collections, can be dated to the eighth to ninth century AD.[6] By the ninth century AD, there was a shift towards the use of Irish.[7] Thereafter, the bulk of the Irish lives were written between the ninth and the eleventh centuries AD, although there were important later texts. In this thesis, the dating evidence for each Life used has already been given. Thence, the Latin *Life* of Áed mac Bricc probably dates to the eighth century AD, the *Life* of Senán[8] and the *Life* of Mochua of Balla can be dated to the tenth century,[9] while the *Life* of Colmáin maicc Lúacháin dates to the twelfth century AD.[10] In this section, the name of the saints life is given, followed by the edition used here, with the actual entry either summarised or given in full.

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*Four Masters*, 7 vols (Dublin, 1848-51). These annals are also available on-line at the Celt website at http://www.ucc.ie/celt/

[2] Bernadette Cunningham and Raymond Gillespie, *Stories from Gaelic Ireland: microhistories from the sixteenth-century Irish annals* (Dublin, 2003), pp 134-54.

[3] Máire Herbert, 'Hagiography' in McCone and Simms (eds.), *Progress*, pp. 79-90; Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish saints' Lives. An introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford, 1991), pp 3-75; Charles Doherty, 'Some aspects of hagiography as a source for Irish economic history' in *Peritia*, 1 (1982), pp 300-28; A.S. MacShamhráin, *Church and polity in pre-Norman Ireland: the case of Glendalough* (Maynooth 1996), pp 1-35.

[4] Some edited collections of saint's lives include Charles Plummer (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford, 1910); Charles Plummer (ed. and trans.), *Bethada Náem nÉrenn: Lives of Irish Saints* (Oxford, 1922); Whitley Stokes (ed. and trans.), *Lives of the saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford, 1890).

[5] Herbert, 'Hagiography', pp 84-6.

[6] Sharpe, *Medieval Irish saints lives*, pp 384-5.

[7] Sharpe, *Medieval Irish saints lives*, pp 19-20.

[8] Doherty, 'Hagiography as a source for Irish economic history', p. 307.

[9] Doherty, Hagiography as a source for Irish economic history, p. 310.

[10] Sharpe, *Medieval Irish saints' lives*, p. 27.

**Section III** of this bibliography includes some accounts from the early medieval narrative literature, principally from the *echtrae* (adventure tales) and *immrama* (voyage tales). These provide intriguing insights into contemporary beliefs and *mentalités* relating to water, journeys and island encounters.[11] The voyage tales (*immrama*, 'rowings about') are particularly useful with their voyages around islands.[12] The best-known *immrama* is the eighth-century *Nauigatio Sancti Brendani abbatis* ('Voyage of St Brendan the Abbott', written *c*. AD 800), describing the travels of the sixth-century Brendan and some of his monks on a seven-year journey on the ocean, with its marvellous islands, sea creatures and other wonders.[13] It probably inspired, in the early ninth century, the compilation of a secularised derivative tale in Irish, *Immram curaig Máele Dúin* ('The Voyage of Máel Dúin's boat'), which also describes a hero's journey around islands.[14] Other notable voyage tales include the *Immram curaig Ua Corra* ('Voyage of the Uí Corra),[15] the *Immram Brain mac Febuil* ('Voyage of Bran son of Febul')[16] and the *Immram Snédgusa ocus Maic Riagla* ('Voyage of Snédgus and Mac Riagla').

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[11] The narrative literature is discussed by Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, 'Early Irish narrative literature' in McCone and Simms, *Progress*, pp 55-64; an anthology of narrative literature is provided by J.T. Koch and J. Carey (eds.), *The Celtic heroic age. Literary sources for ancient Celtic Europe and early Ireland and Wales* (Andover, Mass., 1994).

[12] For an anthology of the early medieval Irish voyage tales, see Wooding (ed.), *The otherworld voyage in early Irish literature*.

[13] Carl Selmer (ed.), *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* (Notre Dame, 1959; repr. Dublin 1989); J.J. O'Meara, (trans.) *The voyage of Saint Brendan* (Dublin 1976, reprint 1991); Thomas O'Loughlin, 'Distant islands', pp 1-20.

[14] H.P.A. Oskamp (ed. and trans.), *The voyage of Máel Dúin: A study in early Irish voyage literature* (Groningen, 1970).

[15] Whitley Stokes (ed. and trans.), 'The voyage of the Húi Corra' in *Revue Celtique* 14 (1893), pp 22-69.

[16] Séamus Mac Mathúna (ed. and trans.), *Immram Brain: Bran's journey to the Land of Women* (Tübingen, 1985).

4

# I. Annals

## *Annals of Ulster* (between AD 538 – AD 1364)

**AD 538** 'The battle of **Claenloch**, in which Maine son of Cerball fell.' (*A.U.* 538.2; probably a lake in the vicinity of Gort, Co. Galway).

**AD 604** 'The slaying of Aed Rón, king of Uí Failge, in Faithche Meic Meccnaen on the brink of **Loch Semdid** on the same day on which Áed Sláine was slain. Aed Gustan, foster-brother of Conall, and Baethgal Bile, killed him.' (*A.U.* 604.3: killing of the king of a Leinster king by ancestors of the Clann Cholmáin, on the shores of Lough Sewdy, Co. Westmeath).

**AD 634** 'The killing of two sons of Aed Sláine by Conall son of Suibne at **Loch Treitni** opposite Fremainn, i.e. Congal king of Brega, and Ailill the Harper, ancestor of Síl Dlúthaig.' (*A.U.* 634.1: Battle at Lough Drin, Co. Westmeath)

**AD 677** A battle between Fínnechta and the Laigin in a place near **Loch Gabor**, in which Fínnechta was victor. (*A.U.* 677.3; referring to a battle near Lagore crannog, Co. Meath, royal site of Síl nAédo Sláine of southern Brega)

**AD 678** The battle of **Dún Locha** and the battle of Lia Maeláin, and the oppression of Elend. (*A.U.* 678.5, probably Dunloe, Co. Kerry, not referring to a crannog)

**AD 684** '**Loch nEchach** was turned into blood this year.' (*A.U.* 684.5; referring to an algal bloom on a lake, a natural phenomenon which may have been taken to indicate divine providence).

**AD 703** 'The battle of Corann in which fell the king of Ireland, Loingsech son of Aengus son of Domnall son of Aed son of Ainmire, i.e. by **Cellach of Loch Cime** son of Ragallach, together with his three sons, and two sons of Colgu, and Dub Díberg son of Dúngal and Fergus Forcraid and Congal of Gabar, and many other leaders. On Saturday, the fourth of the Ides of July, at the sixth hour, this battle was fought.
The battle of Corann, in which fell Loingsech son of Aengus, king of Ireland, with his three sons, and also the king of Cairpre Droma Cliab, the king of Uí Chonaill Gabra, and ten other Irish kings. The battle was fought at Claenfhinn in Óenach Loga situate between Cenél Conaill and Connachta. Cellach of **Loch Cime** son of Ragallach son of Uata, king of Connacht. . .' (*A.U.* 703.2; referring to 'Cellach of Lough Cime', whose royal abode was a crannog on this lake, Lough Hackett, in north Co. Galway)

**AD 703** '**Ailén Daingen** is built.' *Ailén Daingen edificatur*; (*A.U.* 703.4, the construction of an unknown crannog)

**AD 714** '**Ailén Daingen** is destroyed'. *Alén Daingen distruitur*; (*A.U.* 714.3; the destruction of an unknown crannog)

**AD 719** 'The killing in **Loch Uaithne** of the two lords, i.e. two sons of Mael Fothartaig, with their kinsman, namely Cremthann Corrach.' (*A.U.* 719.8; The killing of two lords at the royal

site of the Uí Nad Slúaig kings of Fernmag, which was on *Loch Úaithne*, Lough Ooney, Co. Monaghan)

**AD 725** 'The **[fortified] island of Crach's son** is constructed.' *Ailen m. Craich construitur.* (*A.U.* 725.2; building of a crannog at an unknown location)

**AD 729** 'The battle of Monid Carno near **Loch Laegde** between the hosts of Nectan and the army of Aengus, and Nectan's exactors fell i.e. Biceot son of Monet, and his son, Finnguine son of Drostan, Feroth son of Finnguine, and many others; and the adherents of Aengus were triumphant.' (*A.U.* 729.2)

**AD 733** 'Dúngal son of Selbach profaned Torach when he forcibly removed Bruide from it, and on the same occasion he invaded **Inis Cuirenrigi**.' (*A.U.* 733.1)

**AD 743** 'The battle of Seredmag won by Domnall son of Murchad, i.e. in Cenannas, in which fell Aed Allán son of Fergal and Cumuscach son of Conchobor, king of Int Airthir, and Maenach son of Conlaech, king of Uí Chremthainn, and Muiredach son of Fergus Forcraidh, king of Uí Thuirtre.'
This was Aed Allan's last stanza;
If my dear God had spared me
On the shore of **Loch Sailchedáin**,
Were I to commit sin thereafter,
It would have been like giving valuables to a slave. (*A.U.* 743.4, a lake near Kells, Co. Meath?)

**AD 745** 'A battle between the Uí Thuirtri and Int Airthir. Congal son of Éicnech, was victor, and Cú Chongalt son of the grandson of Cathusach, escaped by flight; and Bóchaill son of Conchobor, and Ailill grandson of Cathusach fell. The battle was fought in **Inis eter dá Dabul**.' (*A.U.* 745.4).

**AD 784** 'A royal meeting between Donnchad son of Domnall and Fiachna son of Aed Rón at **Inis na Ríg** in eastern Brega.'
What is the meaning
Of the meeting at Inis na Ríg?
Donnchad cannot go on the sea
And Fiachna cannot come ashore. (*A.U.* 784.8; probably an island off Skerries, Co. Dublin)

**AD 785** 'Dúnchad grandson of Daiméne, king of Uí Maini, Mael Ochtraig son of Conall, abbot of Cell Chuilinn and Cell Manach, scribe, and Mael Dúin son of Fergus, **king of Loch Gabor**, and the learned Faelgus grandson of Roichlech, and the learned Mugthigern son of Cellach, abbot of Inis Celtra, and the learned Ioseph grandson of Foíléne, abbot of Biror, and Ruaidrí son of Faelán, king of all the Laigin, and Conchobor son of Colcu - all died.' (*A.U.* 785.1; reference to crannog of Lagore, Co. Meath).

**AD 786** 'The battle of Lia Finn i.e. Tuilén, Donnchad was victor, between Donnchad and the descendants of Aed Sláine, in which fell Fiachra son of Cathal and Fócartach son of Cumuscach, **king of Loch Gabor**, and two grandsons of Conaing, i.e. Conaing and Diarmait.' (*A.U.* 786.6; reference to crannog of Lagore, Co. Meath)

**AD 802** 'Destruction of the **fortress of Loch Riach** by Muirgius.' *Toghal Locha Riach la Muirghus* (*A.U.* 802.8)

**AD 803** 'Dúnchad son of Congal, **king of Loch Cal**, was killed by his kinsmen.' (*A.U.* 803.3; reference to the royal site of Uí Níalláin sept of the Airthir of the Airgialla, at Loughgall, north-west of Armagh).

**AD 803** 'Artgal son of Cathusach, king of **Inis Cuilenrigi**, of the Cenél Eógain, was killed.' (*A.U.* 803.4, possibly Inch, off Inisowen, Co. Donegal)

**AD 805** 'Cernach son of Fergus, **king of Loch Gabor**, dies.' (*A.U.* 805.6; reference to Lagore crannog, Co. Meath).

**AD 812** 'A slaughter of the heathens in Mumu, viz. by Cobthach son of Mael Dúin, **king of Loch Léin**.' (*A.U.* 812.11; reference to Lough Lene, Co. Kerry)

**AD 818** 'There was abnormal ice and much snow from the Epiphany to Shrovetide. The Bóinn and other rivers were crossed dry-footed; lakes likewise. Herds and hunting-parties were on **Loch nEchach**, and wild deer were hunted. The materials for an oratory were afterwards brought by a large company (?) from the lands of Connacht over Upper and **Lower Loch Éirne** into Tír Ua Crimthainn; and other unusual things were done in the frost and hail. (*A.U.* 818.2, unusual phenomena on lakes).

**AD 822** 'Abnormal ice; the seas, **lakes and rivers froze** and herds of horses and cattle, and loads, were brought across them. (*A.U.* 822.2; unusual weather phenomena on lakes)

**AD 823** '**Sechnasach of Loch Cendin**, bishop and anchorite, rested.' (*A.U.* 823.3; a reference to Lough Kinale, Co. Longford, implying that the crannogs on the lake were 'owned' by the church)

**AD 825** 'Fergal son of Cathrannach, **king of Loch Riach**, dies.' (*A.U.* 825.5; possible reference to early medieval crannogs on Loughrea, Co. Galway)

**AD 825** 'Aengus son of Mael Dúin, **king of Loch Gabor**, dies.' (*A.U.* 825.8; reference to Lagore crannog, Co. Meath)

**AD 833** '**Loch Bricrenn** was plundered to the detriment of Congalach son of Echaid, and he was killed afterwards at the ships.' (*A.U.* 833.12; Loughbrickland crannog, Co. Down)

**AD 836** 'Cairpre son of Mael Dúin, **king of Loch Gabor**, was killed by Mael Cerna, and Mael Cerna was killed by the Cairpri within the hour; and both died the same night. (*A.U.* 836.6; Lagore crannog, co. Meath)

**AD 838** 'Mael Crón, i.e. son of Cobthach, **king of Loch Léin**, dies.' (A.U. 838.5; Lough Lene, Co. Kerry)

**AD 845** 'Tuirgéis was taken prisoner by Mael Sechnaill and afterwards **drowned in Loch Uair**.' (A.U. 845.8; probably referring to ritual killing of Viking leader in waters of Lough Owel, Co. Westmeath)

**AD 847** 'Mael Sechnaill destroyed the **Island of Loch Muinremor**, overcoming there a large band of wicked men of Luigni and Gailenga, who had been plundering the territories in the manner of the heathens.' (*A.U.* 847.3; possible reference to fian-band on island in Lough Ramor, Co. Cavan)

**AD 849** 'Ailill son of Cumuscach, **king of Loch Cal**, dies.' (*A.U.* 849.4; probable reference to royal crannog at Loughgall, Co. Armagh)

**AD 850** 'Cinaed son of Conaing, king of Cianacht, rebelled against Mael Sechnaill with the support of the foreigners, and plundered the Uí Néill from the Sinann to the sea, both churches and states, and he deceitfully **sacked the island of Loch Gabor**, levelling it to the ground, and the oratory of Treóit, with seventy people in it, was burned by him'. (*A.U.* 850.3; reference to Lagore crannog, Co. Meath)

**AD 851** 'Cairell son of Ruaidrí, **king of Loch Uaithne**, was deceitfully killed by the Conaille of Fernmag before the oratory of Tigernach in Cluain Eóis.' (*A.U.* 851.6; reference to royal crannog on Lough Ooney, Co. Monaghan)

**AD 857 'A great windstorm** caused a destruction of trees and **ruined lake islands** (*comscar innsi locha*).' (*A.U.* 857.5; interesting reference to destruction of crannogs by storms, terming them, *innsi locha* 'lake islands')

**AD 865** 'Tigernach son of Fócarta, **king of Loch Gabor** and one of two kings of Brega, died.' (*A.U.* 865.3)

**AD 866 Loch Léibinn** was turned to blood, which gave rise to clots of blood like little lungs around its edge. (*A.U.* 866.5; reference to an algal bloom on Lough Lene, Co. Westmeath, the location of several early medieval crannogs and natural islands (e.g. Castle Island, Nuns Island, Turgesius Island)

**AD 868** 'Aed son of Niall won a battle at Cell Ua nDaigri against the Uí Néill of Brega, and the Laigin, and a large force of the foreigners, i.e. three hundred or more; and Flann son of Conaing, king of all Brega, and Diarmait son of Etarscéle, **king of Loch Gabor**, fell therein; and in this battle very many of the heathens were slaughtered; and Fachtna son of Mael Dúin, heir designate of the North, and many others, fell in the counter-attack of the battle. (*A.U.* 868.4; reference to Lagore crannog, Co. Meath)

**AD 908** 'Mael Ograi son of Congalach, **king of Loch Gabor**, was deceitfully killed by Fogartach son of Tolarg. (*A.U.* 908.6; reference to Lagore crannog, Co. Meath)

**AD 912** 'Cernachán son of Duiligén, heir designate of Int Airthir, **was put to death in Loch Cirr**'(?). (*A.U.* 912.3; referring to ritual killing or drowning of noble in water in Loch Cirr)

**AD 921** 'Ard Macha was invaded by the foreigners of Áth Cliath, i.e. by Gothfrith grandson of Ímar, with his army, on the fourth of the Ides 10th of November, the Saturday before the feast of Martin, and the prayer-houses with their complement of culdees and sick he spared from destruction, and also the monastery, save for a few dwellings which were burned through carelessness. They harried widely on all sides, westwards to **Inis Ua Labrada**, eastwards to the Banna, and northwards to Mag Ilesen. But Muirchertach son of Niall and Aignert son of Murchad came upon the force that had gone north, defeating them, and they left many dead behind, only a few escaping in the dim light of dusk. (*A.U.* 921.8)

**AD 924** 'A naval force of the foreigners went on Loch Éirne, and they ravaged the **islands of the lake** (*innsi ind Locha*) and the surrounding peoples, to and fro. They left Loch Éirne in the summer following. (*A.U.* 924.1)

**AD 928** 'Ailche's son went on **Loch nEchach** with a fleet of the foreigners, and he ravaged the **islands of the lake** and the territories bordering it'. (*A.U.* 928.5)

**AD 930** 'Foreigners on **Loch Bethrach** in Osraige.' (*A.U.* 930.3)

**AD 935** 'The **island of Loch Gabor** was sacked by Amlaíb grandson of Ímar. The cave of Cnogba was sacked in the same week.' (*A.U.* 935.4; reference to Lagore crannog, Co. Meath)

**AD 957** 'Mael Fothartaig, king of Caisel, Colmán son of Congal, successor of Mo-Laise, Eochu son of Anluan, **king of Loch gCal**, Scannal son of Luachdub, coarb of Liss Críst (?), die.' (*A.U.* 957.2; reference to Loughgall, Co. Armagh)

**AD 963** 'Domnall ua Néill brought ships from the Daball across Sliab Fuait to **Loch Aininne**, which had not been done since ancient times.—So in the Book of Dub dá Leithe.' (*A.U.* 963.1; attack on crannogs of Lough Ennell, Co. Westmeath)

**AD 969** 'Beollán son of Ciarmac, **king of Loch Gabor**, rested in Christ.' (*A.U.* 969.3; reference to Lagore crannog, Co. Meath)

**AD 985** 'Mael Sechnaill son of Domnall had an army in Connacht, and he reduced Mag Aí to ashes. The Connacht made a covert(?) foray to **Loch Aininn**, and they burned the country and killed the king of Fir Chell. (Mael Sechnall son of Domnall ravaged Connacht, **plundered its islands,** and killed its chiefs.) (*A.U.* 985.2; reference to raid on Lough Ennell, and retribution by Mael Sechnaill into Connacht, where crannogs were also burned)

**AD 1005** 'Aed ua Flannacán, superior of Maen Coluim Chille, Ragnall son of Gofraid, king of the Isles, Conchobor son of Domnall, **king of Loch Beithech**, Mael Brigte ua Rímeda, abbot of Í, and Domnall son of Maicnia, superior of Mainistir, rested in Christ. (*A.U.* 1005.1; reference to king of Loch Beithech, probably Gartan Lough, Co. Donegal)

**AD 1005.6** 'A rout of the Ulaid and of the Uí Echach at **Loch Bricrenn**, in which Artán, heir designate of Uí Echach, fell.' (*A.U.* 1005.6; reference to raid on Loughbrickland, Co Down, location of a known early medieval crannog)

**AD 1007** Tréinfher ua Baígelláin, king of Dartraige, was killed by the Cenél Conaill on **Loch Éirne**. (*A.U.* 1007.3; Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh)

**AD 1010** 'Mael Suthain ua Cerbaill, chief sage of Ireland, and **king of Eóganacht of Loch Léin**, Marcán son of Ceinnéitig, successor of Colum son of Cremthann and superior of Inis Celtra and Cell dá Lua, and Muiredach son of Mochloingse, superior of Mucnám, fell asleep in Christ. (*A.U.* 1010.2; Lough Lene, Co. Kerry)

**AD 1013** 'Many fortifications were built by Brian, i.e. the fort of Cenn Coradh, and **Inis Gaill Duib** and **Inis Locha Sainglenn**.' (*A.U.* 1013.11; reference to fortified islands or crannogs built by Brian Boraimhe, high-king of Ireland)

**AD 1015** 'Aed ua Ruairc, king of Bréifne, was wickedly slain by Tadc, king of Connacht, i.e. at **Loch Néill** in Mag Aí despite being under the safeguard of the Bachall Ísu. It was this which deprived his seed of kingship, save only his son Aed.' (*A.U.* 1015.7; reference to murder of king on a lake)

**AD 1021** 'Branacán ua Maeluidir, tributary king of Mide, was **drowned in Loch Ainnine** on May Day.' (*A.U.* 1021.4; possibly reference to ritual killing of king in waters of Lough Ennell, Co. Westmeath)

9

**AD 1025** 'Cathalán, king of Fernmag, made a raid on Fir Manach. The Fir Manach forthwith made a **raid to Loch Uaithne**, and burned the district and killed **seventeen men on the shore of the lake**.' (*A.U.* 1025.5; raid to shore of Lough Ooney, Co. Monaghan, where there was a royal crannog)

**AD 1026** 'Flaithbertach ua Néill led an expedition into Mide and took hostages, and crossed to **Inis Mochta over the thick ice and ravaged it**.' (*A.U.* 1026.2; possible reference to crannog at Inismoty, Co. Meath)

**AD 1053** 'Mac na hAidche ua Ruairc, heir designate of Connacht, was killed by Diarmait ua Cuinn on **Inis Locha Arbach**.' (*A.U.* 1053.1; unknown location)

**AD 1053** 'Lochlainn's son and the men of Mag Itha made a raid on the Cenél Binnig of **Loch Drochait**, and took away three hundred cows and killed Dub Emna son of Cinaed, prior of Cluain Fiachna, and Cú Macha son of Cleirchén, steward of the Dál Cais.' (AU1053.3; probably a lake in Tyrone)

**AD 1054** 'The **lake of Suide Odráin** (*Loch Suidhe Odran*) in Sliab Guaire stole away late at night on the feast of St Michael [29 Sept.] and its waters entered the Faball - something unheard of from ancient times.' (*A.U.* 1054.7; natural phenomenon, leading to the draining away of a lake in Seeoran, Co. Cavan)

**AD 1067** 'A hosting by Tairdelbach ua Briain to **Loch Cime**, and ua Conchobuir, king of Ciarraige Luachra, was killed on the hosting.' (*A.U.* 1067.2; attack on a crannog on Lough Hackett, north Co. Galway)

**AD 1108** '**Inis Uí Labrada** was stormed by the Fir Manach.' (*A.U.* 1108.10; lake west of Armagh)

**AD 1121** 'Cú Maigi son of Deorad ua Flaind, king of Derlas, was drowned in **Loch nEchach** after the Uí nEchach took **Inis Darcarcrenn** against him, in which forty-five fell.' (*A.U.* 1121.2; early medieval monastic site on Ram Island on Lough Neagh)

**AD 1122** 'An army was led by Tairdelbach ua Conchobuir to **Loch Silech** in Mide, and the son of Murchad, king of the Laigin and the foreigners, came into his house.' (*A.U.* 1122.3; probably Lough Sallagh, nr. Dunboyne, Co. Meath)

**AD 1125** 'Gilla Braite ua Ruairc was drowned in **Loch Aillinne**.' (*A.U.* 1125.2; either a deliberate or accidental drowning in Lough Allen, Co. Leitrim)

**AD 1129** 'Gilla Mo-Chonna ua Duibdírma was **killed by the Ulaid in Inis Taiti**.' (*A.U.* 1129.2; Church Island, in Lough Beg, Co. Derry)

**AD 1131** 'An army was brought by Conchobor ua Briain and the men of Mumu into Laigin and they took their hostages, and thence into Mide, and they plundered **Inis Locha Seimdide**, and their horsemen and the horsemen of Connacht met, and the horsemen of Connacht were defeated.' (*A.U.* 1131.2; probable royal island or crannog on Lough Sewdy, Co. Westmeath)

**AD 1155** '[Tigernan Ua Ruairc took Donnchadh Ua Cerbaill, lord of Oirghialla, prisoner, after Donnchadh had gone to meet him with a small force to Cenannus.] He **was carried upon [an island of] Loch-Sighlen and was a fortnight above a month therein, or something more and holy church and the favour of Patrick freed him and the guards that were guarding**

him **were killed**. (*A.U.* 1155.1; lengthy description of an island or crannog used as a prison on Lough Sheelin, Co. Cavan)

**AD 1165** 'Another hosting by Muircertach Ua Lochlainn along with the Cenel-Eogain to **Inis-lachain**, so that they **burned the Island [Inis-lachain]** and razed it. And all Ulidia gave their pledges to Ua Lochlainn. After that, the Cenel-Eogain around Ua Lochlainn come to their houses with great triumph and with many ships and numerous treasures beside. (*A.U.* 1165.10; possibly Loughan Island, 2km south of Coleraine on River Bann, Co. Antrim, see AD 1170 below)

**AD 1170** 'Diarmait Ua Ainbfheith, king of Ui-Meith and leader of the horse-host of the king of Ailech, was killed by a fleet that came from the Islands of Orcc to the **Island that was built by himself upon Loch-Ruidhe, namely, upon Inis-Lachain**.' (*A.U.* 1170.7; possibly Loughan Island, 2km south of Coleraine on River Bann, Co. Antrim)

**AD 1224** 'Mathgamain, son of Ceithernach Ua Ceirin, king of Ciaraidhe of **Loch-na-nairne,** died.' (*A.U.* 1224.2)

**AD 1225** 'A great hosting was made by Aedh Ua Neill into Connacht, by [invitation of] the sons of Ruaidhri Ua Conchobair and by invitation of all Sil-Muiredhaigh, save Mac Diarmata alone, namely, Cormac, son of Tomaltach, so that he went through the length of Connacht eastwards to the woods of Ath-luain, so that he was a night at the Heights of Uana. And they **pillaged Loch-nen** and he brought the treasures of Ua Conchobair with him therefrom. (*A.U.* 1225.4; reference to a probable royal late medieval crannog of O'Connors at Loughnaneane, Co. Roscommon(

**AD 1234** 'Great snow between the two Nativities [Dec. 25—Jan. 6] in that year. Great frost thereafter, so that persons and horses went under burdens upon the rivers and **lakes of Ireland**.' (*A.U.* 1234.4; freezing of lake waters in winter)

**AD 1245** '(Murchadh Ua hAnluain escaped from the **Island of Loch-an-Drochaid**, through miracles of [St.] Patrick.) (*A.U.* 1245.4; possible use of crannog as prison in Tyrone)

**AD 1282** 'Ruaidhri Ua Gadhra, king of Sliabh-Lugha, **was killed by Mac Fheorais on his own lake**.' (*A.U.* 1282.6; implying that king was actually killed on his own crannog in a lake)

**AD 1331** 'Ten of the people of Donnchadh the Swarthy, son of Mael[-Sh]echlainn Carrach Mac Diarmata, were **drowned on Loch-Teiched**.' (*A.U.* 1331.2; probably Lough Gara)

**AD 1339** 'The black Gillie Mag Uidhir was **drowned on Loch-Eirne** in the rear of a foray party.' (*A.U.* 1339.1; drowning during raid on Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh)

**AD 1340** 'Derbail, daughter of Ua Domnaill, the best woman that ever came of her own tribe, came on a visit to Conchobur Mac Diarmata to **Inis-Doighri** and the illness of her death seized her and she was buried in the Monastery of the Buill.' (*A.U.* 1340.2; possibly Inisterry, in River Boyle, Co. Roscommon)

**AD 1342** 'Toirdhelbach Ua Concobuir, king of Connacht and one fit to be king of Ireland and one who was of the greatest and noblest and best generosity and prowess that was in Ireland at the same time as he, went to assist Tadhg Mag Raghnaill, chief of Muinter-Eolu[i]s, to **Loch-Oirinn**, against the Clann-Muircertaigh. And the Clann-Muircertaigh and part of Muinter-Eolu[i]s with them attacked him and he was pursued by them to Fidh-Dorudha and one shot of

an arrow killed him there and it is not known who discharged it.' (*A.U.* 1342.2; Lough Rinn, near Mohill, Co. Leitrim)

**AD 1343** 'Four sons of Cathal, son of Mag Raghnaill the Blind[-eye], were taken prisoners on **Loch-in-sguir** by Concobur Mag Raghnaill. And Tomaltach Mag Raghnaill took them with him to Caisel-Coscraigh and they were killed there, the saddest tale that was done in that time.' (*A.U.* 1343.4; reference to raid on crannog in lake near Keshcerrigan, Co. Leitrim)

**AD 1364** 'Another raid was made by the Clann-Muircertaigh on the Fir-Manach and **Inis-mor** was pillaged by them and **Loch-Berraigh** (Lough Berry, upper Lough Erne) and the Senad were pillaged by them and an excessive amount of valuables was carried off with them by them and they came safe therefrom afterwards.' (*A.U.* 1364.11; raids on islands around Lough Erne)

# *Annals of the Four Masters* (to AD 1602)

**2532** 'The eruption of **Loch Con** and **Loch Techeat** in this year.' (*A.F.M.* 2532.1; explanation of the origins of Lough Conn and Lough Gara)

**2533** 'Also the eruption of **Loch Mesc** in the same year.' (*A.F.M.* 2533.2; explanation of the origins of Lough Mask)

**2535** 'Laighlinne, son of Parthalon, died in this year. When his grave was dug, **Loch Laighlinne** sprang forth in Ui Mac Uais, and from him it is named (*A.F.M.* 2535.1)

**2535** 'The eruption of **Loch Eachtra** also.' (*A.F.M.* 2535.2)

**2545** 'Rudhruidhe, son of Parthalon, was drowned in **Loch Rudhruidhe**, the lake having flowed over him; and from him the lake is called.' (*A.F.M.* 2545.1)

**2859** 'In this year **Loch Dairbhreach** and **Loch Ainninn** in Meath sprang forth.' (*A.F.M.* 2859.1; explanation of the origins of Lough Derravarragh and Lough Ennell)

**3506** 'Fulman and Mantan fell by the king in the battle of Breogan, in Feimhin; and the eruption of the following lakes took place in the same year: **Loch Cimbe**, **Loch Buadhaigh**, **Loch Baadh**, **Loch Ren**, **Loch Finnmhaighe**, **Loch Greine**, **Loch Riach**, **Loch Da Chaech**, in Leinster, and **Loch Laegh**, in Ulster.' (A.F.M. 3506.2)

**3581** 'The second year of the reign of Tighernmas, the eruption of these nine lakes occurred: **Loch Uair**, in Meath; **Loch nIairn**; **Loch Ce**, in Connaught; **Loch Saileann**; **Loch nAilleann**, in Connaught; **Loch Feabhail**; **Loch Gabhair**; Dubhloch; and **Loch Dabhall**, in Oirghialla. (A.F.M. 3581.1)

**3751** 'This was the twenty fourth year, the termination of the reign of Fiacha Labhrainne; and he fell by Eochaidh Mumho, of Munster, in the battle of Bealgadan. It was by this Fiacha Labhrainne the following battles were gained: the battle of Gathlach, in which fell Mofebis, son of Eochaidh Faebharghlas; the battle of Fairrge, against the race of Emhear; the battle of Sliabh Feimhin; a battle against the Ernai, a sept of the Firbolgs, on the plain where **Loch Erne** now is. After the battle was gained from them, the **lake flowed over them, so that it was from them the lake is named, that is, "a lake over the Ernai."** It was in the reign of the same Fiacha that the springing of these three rivers first took place, namely, the Fleasc, the Mand, and the Labhrann, from which last the surname Labhrainne clung to him. (A.F.M. 3751.1)

**3790** 'These are the lakes which burst forth in his time: **Loch Aenbheithe**, in Ui Cremhthainn; **Loch Saileach**; **Loch Na nGasan**, in Magh Luirg, in Connaught; and the eruption of the sea between Eabha and Ros Cette. (A.F.M. 3790.2)

**4694** 'Melghe Molbhthach, son of Cobhthach Cael Breagh, after having been seventeen years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell in the battle of Claire, by Modhcorb. When his grave was digging, **Loch Melghe** burst forth over the land in Cairbre, so that it was named from him. (A.F.M. 4694.1)

**AD 600** 'After Aedh Slaine, son of Diarmaid, and Colman Rimidh, son of Baedan, son of Muircheartach, son of Muireadhach, son of Eoghan, son of Niall, had been six years in the

sovereignty of Ireland, Colman Rimidh was slain by Lochan Dilmana, and Aedh Slaine was slain by Conall Guithbhinn, son of Suibhne, son of Colman Mor, or Beg, son of Diarmaid, son of Cearthall, at **Loch Semhedidhe**. Aedh Gustan, the foster brother of Conall, and Baethghal Bile, wounded him. Of their deaths was said:

1. What is reign, what is law,
what is power over chieftains?
Behold, Colman Rimhidh the King!
Lochan Dilmana slew him!

2. It was not a wise counsel
for the youths of Tuath Tuirbhe!
Conall slew Aedh Slaine,
Aedh Slaine slew Suibhne.' (*A.U.* 600.4)

**AD 606** 'Aedh, son of Colgan, chief of Oirghialla and of all the Airtheara, died on his pilgrimage, at Cluain Mic Nois. Of him was said:
1. There was a time
when **Loch Da Damh** was a pool of splendour,
The lake was *nothing else* but splendour
in the reign of Aedh, son of Colgan.
2. Indifferent to me who destroyed it;
my friend has abandoned it;
Though it was he that placed a **brilliant house**
**upon the island of Loch Da Damh.**' (AFM 606.4)

*Aodh, mac Colgan, toisech Airghiall 7 na n-Airther archena, d'écc, ina oilithre h-i c-Cluain Mic Nois. As dó do ráidheadh:*
*1. Ro bai tan*
*ba lind ordan Loch Da Damh*
*Ní bui an loch acht ba h-ordan*
*h-i flaith Aodha, mic Colgan.*
*2. Cuma damhnadh muir*
*cara ro-dam-cur*
*Cebé fo-cer trilis treabh*
*tré inis Locha Da Dam*

**AD 630** 'The two sons of Aedh Slaine were slain by Conall, son of Suibhne, at **Loch Trethin**, at Freamhain, namely, Congal, chief of Breagh, ancestor of the Ui Conaing, and Ailill Cruitire i.e. the Harper, ancestor of the Sil Dluthaigh. (*A.F.M.* 630.2; battle near Lough Drin, Co. Westmeath)

**AD 675** 'A battle was fought between Finnsneachta and the Leinstermen, by the side of **Loch Gabhair**; and the battle was gained over the Leinstermen. (*A.F.M.* 675.3; battle near Lagore crannog, Co. Meath)

**AD 682** '**Loch nEathach** was turned into blood.' (*A.F.M.* 682.3; probably referring to algal bloom)

**AD 701** 'After Loingseach, son of Aenghus, son of Domhnall, had been eight years in the sovereignty of Ireland, he was slain in the battle of Corann, by **Ceallach of Loch Cime**, the son of Raghallach, as Ceallach himself testifies in this quatrain:
1. For his deeds of ambition,

14

on the morning he was slain at Glais Chuilg;
I slew Loingseach there with a sword,
the monarch of all Ireland round.

There were slain also his three sons along with him, Artghal, Connachtach, and Flann Gearg. There were also slain there the two sons of Colcen, and Dubhdibhearg, son of Dunghal, and Fearghus Forcraith, and Conall Gabhra, and other noblemen besides them. Conall Meann, son of Cairbre, composed these quatrains, and that was the cause of the battle:
1. If Loingseach should come to the Banna,
with his thirty hundred about him,
To him would submit, though large his measure,
**Ceallach the Grey, of Loch Cime**.
2. Ceallach of the round stones was well trained;
a paling of spears was leaped over
by the Redhanded King of Loch Cime.  (*A.F.M.* 701.2; references to king of Connacht, associated with lake and crannog of Loch Cime, or Lough Hackett, north Co. Galway)

**AD 721** 'The battle of **Inis Breagain**, wherein were slain Edersgeoil, son of Ceallach Cualann, and Congal, son of Bran. (*A.F.M* 721.15)

**AD 738** 'Aedh Allan, son of Maelduin, fell in the battle of Magh Seirigh (i.e. Ceanannus), between the two Teabhthas, by Domhnall, son of Murchadh, after having been nine years in the sovereignty of Ireland. The last quatrain of Aedh Allan:
1. If my beloved God would look upon me
on the brink of **Loch Sailchedain**,
Afterwards if I should be found at guilt,
it would be wealth to a servant to save me.' (*A.F.M.* 738.4)

**AD 742** 'Fiachra, son of Gaphran, of Meath, was **drowned in Loch Ribh**.' (*A.F.M.* 742.17)

**AD 745** 'The battle of Inis Snaig, by Anmchaidh, son of Cucearca.' (*A.F.M.* 745.11)

**AD 751** 'The **shipwreck of the Dealbhna Nuadhat on Loch Ribh**, with their lord, Diumasach, of which was said:
1. Thrice nine vessels and three,
of the Gamhanraighe of **Loch Ribh**;
There escaped of them with life
except alone the crew of one vessel. (A.F.M. 751.9)

**AD 779** 'A royal meeting between Donnchadh, son of Domhnall, and Fiachna, son of Aedh Roin at **Inis-na-righ**, in the east of Breagh.
Of it was said
'Of what effect was the conference at Inis-na-righ?
Donnchadh would not come upon the sea,
iachna would not come upon the land.' (*A.F.M.* 779.7; Inis-na-righ, or 'island of the kings' is not identified, but is probably a small island off Skerries, Co. Dublin. This meeting is also noted *Annals of Ulster, s.a.* AD 784)

**AD 780** 'Maelduin, son of Fearghus, **lord of Loch Gobhair**;' (A.F.M. 780.12; crannog of Lagore, Co. Meath)

**AD 781** 'The battle of Ath Liacc Finn between Donnchadh, son of Murchadh, and the race of Aedh Slaine, wherein was slain Fiachra, son of Cathal, chief of Feara Cul; Fogartach, son of

15

Comasgach, **chief of Loch Gabhair**; and the two Ua Conaings, namely, Conaing and Diarmaid Doibil. (*A.F.M.* 781.9; Lagore crannog, Co. Meath)

**AD 797** 'The **demolition of Loch Riach** by Muirghius, son of Tomaltach.' (*A.F.M.* 797.13; probably destruction of crannog on Lough Rea, Co. Galway).

**AD 798** 'Dunchadh, son of Conghal, **lord of Loch Cal**, was slain by his brother.' (*A.F.M.* 798.8; crannog of Loughgall, Co. Armagh)

**AD 800** 'Cearnach, son of Fearghus, **lord of Loch Gabhair**, died.' (*A.F.M.* 800.14; Lagore crannog, Co. Meath).

**AD 807** 'A slaughter was made of the foreigners by Cobhthach, son of Maelduin, **lord of Loch Lein**.' (*A.F.M.* 807.15; lord of Lough Lene, Co. Kerry

**AD 821** '**Seachnasach of Loch-Cendin**; bishop and anchorite.' (*A.F.M.* 821.5; An interesting reference to the bishop and anchorite of Lough Kinale, 1km east of Abbeylara, Co. Longford. A ninth-century bookshrine was recovered from a crannog in Tonymore townland, on this lake).

**AD 821** 'Fearghal, son of Catharnach, **lord of Loch Riach**, died.' (*A.F.M.* 821.11; lordship of Lough Rea, Co. Galway)

**AD 823** 'Fearghal, son of Cathasach, **lord of Loch Riach**, died.' (*A.F.M.* 823.11; lordship of Lough Rea Co. Galway)

**AD 823** 'Aenghus, son of Maelduin, **lord of Loch Gabhar**, died.' (*A.F.M.* 823.12; lordship of Lagore crannog, Co. Meath.').

**AD 832** 'The **plundering of Loch-Bricrenn** (*Orgain Locha Bricrenn*), against Conghalach, son of Eochaidh [by the foreigners]; and he was taken prisoner and afterwards killed at their ships.' (*A.F.M.* 832.9; possibly referring to the destruction of crannog on Lough Brickland, Co. Down).

**AD 834** 'A defeat was given by Cathal, son of Ailill, to Feidhlimidh, son of Crimhthann, King of Caiseal, in Magh I, where many were slain; of which was said:
1. The Connaughtmen were mighty;
in Magh I they were not feeble;
Let any one inquire of Feidhlimidh,
whence **Loch na Calla** is named. (*A.F.M.* 831.14)

**AD 835** 'Cairbre, son of Maelduin, **lord of Loch Gabhar**, was slain by Maelcearnaigh.' (*A.F.M.* 835.13; lordship of Lagore, Co. Meath)

**AD 837** 'Maelcron, son of Cobhthach, **lord of Loch Lein**, died.' (*A.F.M.* 837.12)

**AD 843** 'An expedition by Tuirgeis, **lord of the foreigners, upon Loch Ribh**, so that they plundered Connaught and Meath, and burned Cluain Mic Nois, with its oratories, Cluain Fearta Brenainn, Tir Da Ghlas, Lothra, and many others in like manner. (*A.F.M.* 843.13; Viking fleet on Lough Ree)

**AD 843** 'Tuirgeis was taken prisoner by Maelseachlainn, son of Maelruainaidh; and he was afterwards **drowned in Loch Uair**, through the miracle of God and Ciaran, and the saints in general.' (*A.F.M.* 843.15; drowning of Viking leader in Lough Owel, Co. Westmeath)

**AD 845** 'The **demolition of the island of Loch Muinreamhar** by Maelseachlainn, son of Maelruanaidh, against a great crowd of sons of death (i.e. malefactors) of the Luigni and Gaileanga, who were plundering the districts at the instigation of the foreigners; and they were destroyed by him.' (*A.F.M.* 845.6; destruction of island of fian-band on Lough Ramor, Co. Cavan).

**AD 846** 'A victory was gained by Tighearnach, **lord of Loch Gabhar**, over the foreigners, at Daire Disirt Dachonna, where twelve score of them were slain by him.' (*A.F.M.* 846.9; lordship of Lagore, Co. Meath)

**AD 847** '... Ailill, son of Cumasgach, **lord of Loch Cal**, died.' (*A.F.M.* 847.13; lordship of Loughgall, Co. Armagh)

**AD 847** 'The plundering of Duibhlinn by Maelseachlainn, son of Maelruanaidh, and by Tighearnach, **lord of Loch Gabhar**.' (*A.F.M.* 847.16; lordship of Lagore, Co. Meath)

**AD 848** 'Cinaedh, son of Conaing, lord of Cianachta Breagh, rebelled against Maelseachlainn, son of Maelruanaidh, and went with a strong force of foreigners, and plundered the Ui Neill from the Sinnainn to the sea, both churches and territories; and he **plundered the island of Loch Gabhor**, and afterwards burned it, so that it was level with the ground. They also burned the oratory of Treoit, within which were three score and two hundred persons. (A.F.M. 848.10; raid through Brega, with destruction of crannog of Lagore, Co. Meath).

**AD 848** '**Loch Laeigh**, in the territory of Umhall, in Connaught, **migrated**.' (A.F.M. 848.11; natural phenomenon leading to the draining of a lake).

**AD 849** 'Cinaeth, son of Conaing, lord of Cianachta Breagh, was drowned in the Ainge by the people of the king, Maelseachlainn, and Tighearnach, **lord of Loch Gabhor**, to revenge upon him the evils he had committed against the laity and the Church.' (*A.F.M.* 849.8; revenge for raid through Brega, described in *A.F.M.* 848.10).

**AD 849** 'Caireall, son of Ruadhrach, **lord of Loch Uaithne**, was slain by the Conaille.' (*A.F.M.* 849.12)

**AD 853** 'The **plundering of Loch Cend** by the foreigners, after they had entered it on the ice; and one hundred and twenty persons were slain by them, together with Gorman. (*A.F.M.* 853.8; possible reference to destruction of crannog. Brian Boraimhe built a fortified island at Inis Loch Cend in 1012, possibly Loughkeen, Co. Tipperary or Lough Kent, Knockgraffon)

**AD 863** 'Tighearnach, son of Focarta, **lord of Loch Gabhar**, and the second chief who was over Breagh, died.' (*A.F.M.* 863.8; lordship of Lagore, Co. Meath).

**AD 864** '**Loch Lephinn** was turned into blood, so that it appeared to all that it was lumps of blood like the lights of animals externally. (*A.F.M.* 864.5; reference to natural algal bloom on Lough Lene, Co. Westmeath).

**AD 876** 'The plundering of Meath, as far as **Loch Ainninn**, by the Munstermen.' (*A.F.M.* 876.14; raid through Mide, as far as Lough Ennell, Co. Westmeath).

**AD 891** 'Flann, son of Lonan, the Virgil of the race of Scota, chief poet of all the Gaeidhil, the best poet that was in Ireland in his time, was secretly murdered by the sons of Corrbuidhe (who were of the Ui Fothaith), at **Loch Dachaech**, in Deisi Mumhan. (*A.F.M.* 891.14).

**AD 902** 'Another army was led by Cormac and Flaithbheartach against the Ui Neill of the South, and against the Connaughtmen; and they carried away the hostages of Connaught in their great fleets on the Shannon, and the **islands of Loch Ribh** were plundered by them.' (*A.F.M.* 902.7)

**AD 903** 'Maeloghrai, son of Conghalach, **lord of Loch-Gabhar**, was slain by Fogartach, son of Tolarg.' (*A.F.M.* 903.6; lordship of Lagore, Co. Meath

**AD 905** 'A fleet by Domhnall Ua Maeleachlainn, and by Innreachtach, son of Conchobhar, upon **Loch Deirgdherc**, so that they defeated the fleet of Munster; and great numbers were killed by them. (*A.F.M.* 905.5)

**AD 907** 'The violation of Ard-Macha by Cearnachan, son of Duilgen, i.e. a captive was taken from the church, and **drowned in Loch-Cirr**, to the west of Ard-Macha. Cearnachan was soon afterwards drowned by Niall, son of Aedh, King of the North, **in the same lake**, in revenge of the violation of Patrick. (*A.F.M.* 907.6; deliberate drowning in a lake)

**AD 913** 'The harassing of Flann Sinna by his sons, namely, Donnchadh and Conchobhar; and Meath was plundered by them as far as **Loch Ribh**. A hosting of the North was made by Niall, son of Aedh, King of Aileach, and, marching into Meath, he obtained the pledges of Donnchadh and Conchobhar, that they would obey their father; and he left peace between Meath and Breagh. (*A.F.M.* 913.6)

**AD 920** 'The plundering of Cluain-mic-Nois by the foreigners of Luimneach; and they came upon **Loch Ribh**, and **plundered all its islands**.' (AFM 920.19; these were probably the various natural islands on Lough Ree).

**AD 922** 'A fleet of foreigners upon **Loch Eirne**, so that they plundered the **islands and islets of the lake** (*innsedha, & oiléna an locha*) and the districts on every side of it; and they remained on the lake till the ensuing summer, and they left the country at the end of that time. (*A.F.M.* 922.7; an interesting distinction made between islands and islets on Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh).

**AD 927** 'The foreigners of Luimneach went upon Loch Oirbsen, and the **islands of the lake were plundered by them**. (*A.F.M.* 927.13; probably Lough Corrib, Co. Galway)

**AD 927** 'A new fleet was launched upon **Loch Ribh**, between Conmaicne and Tuath-nElla, where Cathal Ua Maele, and Flaithbheartach, son of Tuathghal, and some others along with them, were slain.' (*A.F.M.* 927.14).

**AD 928** 'A slaughter was made of the foreigners who were on **Loch Oirbsen** by the Connaughtmen.' (*A.F.M.* 928.10)

**AD 928** 'The foreigners, i.e. those under the command of Torolbh, took up their station at **Loch-Eathach**, and had their camp at Rubha-Mena. (*A.F.M.* 928.12)

**AD 929** 'The foreigners of Luimneach took up their station upon **Loch Ribh**.' (*A.F.M.* 929.10)

**AD 930** 'The crozier of Ciaran, i.e. the Oraineach was lost in **Loch Techet, now Loch-Ui-Ghadhra**, and twelve men along with it; but it was found immediately.' (*A.F.M.* 930.12)

**AD 931** 'The foreigners took up their station upon the **lakes of Erne**; and they spoiled and plundered many districts and churches, **as far as Loch Gamhna**.' (*A.F.M.* 931.11; )

**AD 933** 'The **islands of Loch Gabhar** and the Cave of Cnodhbha were attacked and plundered by the foreigners.' (*A.F.M.* 933.10, why does it say islands?)

**AD 934** 'Amhlaibh Ceannchairech, with the foreigners, came from **Loch Eirne across Breifne to Loch Ribh.** On the night of Great Christmas they reached the Sinainn, and they remained seven months there; and Magh-Aei was spoiled and plundered by them. (*A.F.M.* 934.6)

**AD 935** 'Amhlaeibh, son of Godfrey, lord of the foreigners, came at Lammas from Ath-cliath, and carried off as prisoners Amhlaeibh Ceanncairech from **Loch Ribh**, and the foreigners who were with him (i.e. with Cairech), after breaking their ships. (*A.F.M.* 935.16)

**AD 939** 'Unusual frost, so that the rivers and lakes were passable; and the foreigners plundered **Inis-Mochta** on the ice. (*A.F.M.* 939.11)

**AD 949** 'Conghalach, son of Maelmithigh, with the great fleet of Leath-Chuinn, upon Loch Deirgdherc. They **plundered all the islands of the lake**, and obtained the hostages of the Munstermen, over whom they obtained sway, after some opposition. (*A.F.M.* 949.8; probably the natural islands on Lough Derg, Co. Tipperary/Clare)

**AD 952** 'Niall Ua Tolairg, lord of Cuircne, and the person from whom is named Carn Ui Tholairg, on the **margin of Loch Ribh**, died. (*A.F.M.* 952.10)

**AD 953** 'A hosting by Domhnall, son of Muircheartach, with the boats of Tuaign-inbhir, which he convened on **Loch Eathach**, over the Dabhall, over the Airghialla, upon **Loch-Eirne**, and afterwards upon **Loch-Uachtair**; and he plundered and devastated Breifne, and carried off the hostages of O'Ruairc. (*A.F.M.* 953.14)

**AD 955** 'Eochaidh, **lord of Loch Cal**.' (*A.F.M.* 955.9; death of lord of Loughgall, Co. Armagh).

**AD 955 'The fleet of Fearghal, son of Art, upon Loch-Ce.'** (*A.F.M.* 955.11)

**AD 957** 'A plundering army was led to **Inis-Eanaigh** by Ferghal Ua Ruairc; and the battle of Magh-Itha was gained, wherein Aedh, son of Flaithbheartach, heir apparent of Cinel-Eoghain was slain (*A.F.M.* 957.11; Inchenny, Co. Tyrone).

**AD 960** '**Inis-mor in Loch-Ribh** was taken by Murchadh Ua Ceallaigh from Ceallach, son of Ruarc, lord of Feara-Cul Teathbha, i.e. lord of the Sil-Ronain; and he was carried as a prisoner with his fleet into Ui-Maine.' (*A.F.M.* 960.8)

**AD 961** 'An unusual thing was done by the King Domhnall, son of Muircheartach; namely he brought fleets over Dabhall, and across Sliabh Fuaid, to **Loch Ainninn**, so that the **islands of the lakes** were plundered by him' (*A.F.M.* 961.7; an attack upon the crannogs of Lough Ennell, Co. Westmeath).

**AD 961** 'Ua Canannain carried vessels with him on the **lakes of Erne, so that the islands thereof were plundered by him** (*A.F.M.* 961.9).

**AD 967** 'Beollan, son of Ciarmhac, **lord of Loch-Gabhar**, died.' (*A.F.M.* 967.9)

**AD 976** 'A naval victory was gained on **Loch Eirne** by the Airghialla, over the Cinel-Conaill, where many were slain, together with Niall Ua Canannain, and Ua Conghalaigh, and the son of Murchadh Glunillar, and other nobles. (*A.F.M* 976.6)

**AD 984** 'Maelseachlainn, son of Domhnall, plundered Connaught, **destroyed its islands, and killed its chieftains**, (*do thoghail a n-innsedh, & do mharbhadh a t-toiseach*) and reduced Magh-Aei to ashes. A depredation was committed by the Connaughtmen, in retaliation, as far as **Loch Ennell** (*A.F.M.* 984.6; raid involving destruction of crannogs in Connacht).

**AD 989** 'An army of the foreigners, Danes, and Leinstermen marched into Meath, and **they plundered as far as Loch Ainninn**.' (*A.F.M.* 989.6; raid as far as Lough Ennell).

**AD 990** 'The wind **sunk the island of Loch Cimbe** suddenly, with its *dreach* and rampart, i.e. thirty feet.' (*An ghaeth do shlucadh insi Locha Cimbe co h-oband i n-aon-uair, cona dreich & sonnach .i. trichat traighedh.*) (*A.F.M.* 990.7; destruction of a crannog, a royal site of king of Connacht, during a storm).

**AD 991** 'An army was led by Maelseachlainn into Connaught; and he brought from thence a prey of cattle, the greatest that a king had ever brought. After this, Brian came with the men of Munster and Connaught into Meath, **as far as Loch Ainninn**; and he did not take a cow or person, but went off from thence by secret flight. (*A.F.M.* 991.7)

**AD 992** 'A new fleet upon **Loch-Ribh** by Brian, son of Ceinneidigh, who plundered the men of Breifne.' (*A.F.M.* 992.16).

**AD 997** 'Oissine Ua Machainen, lord of Mughdhorna, was slain by Maelseachlainn on **Inis-Mocha**.' (*A.F.M.* 997.6).

**AD 1004** 'A battle was gained at **Loch-Bricrenn**, by Flaithbheartach, over the Ui-Eathach and the Ulidians, where Artan, royal heir of Ui-Eathach, was slain. (*A.F.M.* 1004.13)

**AD 1006** 'Trenfhear Ua Baigheallain, lord of Dartraighe, was slain by the Cinel-Conaill on **Loch-Eirne**.' (A.F.M. 1006.8).

**AD 1012** 'Many fortresses were erected by Brian, namely, Cathair-cinn-coradh, **Inis-gaill-duibh**, and **Inis-Locha-Saighleann**.' (*Inis locha saighlind*) (*A.F.M.* 1012.16; reference to building of fortified islands, possibly crannogs, at unknown locations in Munster)

**AD 1014** '**Aedh O'Ruairc**, i.e. the son of Sen-Fearghal, lord of Breifne, and royal heir of Connaught, **was slain** by Tadhg of the White Steed, son of Cathal, son of Conchobhar, King of Connaught, at **Loch Neill**, in Magh-Aei, in revenge of Domhnall, his brother.' (*A.F.M.* 1014.22)

**AD 1021** 'Branagan, son of Maeluidhir, a chief of Meath, was drowned on May-day, in **Loch-Ainninn**, and MacConailligh, chief lawgiver of Maelseachlainn, died, after the plundering of the shrine of Ciaran by them both; this happened at the end of nine days after the plundering.' (*A.F.M.* 1021.5; cautionary tale of consequences of plundering church, leading to drowning in Lough Ennell.).

**AD 1022** 'Maelseachlainn Mor, son of Domhnall, son of Donnchadh, pillar of the dignity and nobility of the west of the world, **died on Cro-inis Locha-Aininn**, after having been forty-three years in sovereignty over Ireland, according to the Book of Cluain-mic-Nois, which places the reign of Brian, son of Kennedy, in the enumeration, at the end of nine years after the battle of Cluain-tarbh, in the seventy-third year of his age, on the fourth of the Nones of September, on Sunday precisely, after intense penance for his sins and transgressions, after receiving the body of Christ and his blood, after being anointed by the hands of Amhalghaidh, successor of Patrick, for he and the successor of Colum Cille, and the successor of Ciaran, and most of the seniors of Ireland, were present at his death; and they sung masses, hymns, psalms, and canticles, for the welfare of his soul. Sorrowful to the poor of the Lord was the death of Maelseachlainn, as is evident from this quatrain:
1. Three hundred forts had the king, in which flesh and food were given,
Guests from the king of the elements were in each fort of these.

Of the year of Maelseachlainn's death was also said:
1. Two years, twice ten, and a thousand, from the birth of Christ, the head of every king,
Till the death of the descendant of Colman of preys, Maelseachlainn, the perfect, the memorable. (*A.F.M.* 1022.2)

**AD 1025** 'A predatory excursion was made by Cathalan, lord of Fearnmhagh, against the Feara-Manach. A predatory excursion was made by the Feara-Manach **to Loch-Uaithne**, and they burned and slew seventeen men on the **margin of the lake**. (*A.F.M.* 1025.14)

**AD 1026** 'An army was led by Flaithbheartach Ua Neill, and Maelseachlainn, son of Maelruanaidh, into Meath; and they obtained hostages, and **entered Inis-Mochta upon the ice, and plundered the island, then in the possession of the foreigners.** (*A.F.M.* 1026.4; probably Inismot, near Ardee, Co. Meath)

**AD 1029** 'Aedh Ua Ruairc, lord of Dartraighe; and the lord of Cairbre; and Aenghus Ua hAenghusa, airchinneach of Druim-cliabh; and three score persons along with them, were burned in **Inis-na-lainne**, in Cairbre-mor. (*A.F.M.* 1029.5).

**AD 1030** 'The kingdom of Meath was assumed by Ua Maeleachlainn, after he had been expelled up **Loch Ribh** by the Gott Ua Maeleachlainn.' (*A.F.M.* 1030.15).

**AD 1033** 'Aenghus Ua Cathail, **lord of Eoghanacht-Locha-Lein**, was killed.' (A.F.M. 1033.11)

**AD 1033** '**Murchadh Ua Maeleachlainn**, i.e. the son of Maeleachlainn Gott, **was treacherously slain** by Mac Iarnain, i.e. the chief of Cuircne, **on the island of Loch Semhdidhe** (*i ninis loca semdede*) (*A.F.M.* 1033.15; murder on island on Lough Sewdy, Co. Westmeath)

**AD 1053** 'A depredation was committed by Mac Lochlainn and the men of Magh-Itha upon the **Cinel-Binnigh, of Loch-Drochait**; and they carried off three hundred cows.' (*A.F.M* 1053.9)

**AD 1054** '**Loch Suidhe-Odhrain** in Sliabh-Guaire migrated in the end of the night of the festival of Michael, and went into the Feabhaill, which was a great wonder to all.' (*A.F.M.* 1054.11)

21

**AD 1061** 'The Muintir-Murchadha **invaded Loch Oirbsean**, and deposed Aedh Ua Conchobhair. (*A.F.M.* 1061.12)

**AD 1067** 'Muireadhach Ua Carthaigh was **drowned in Loch Calgaich**; he was the chief poet and chief ollamh of Connaught.' (*A.F.M.* 1067.6)

**AD 1074** 'Donnchadh Ua Ceallaigh, lord of the Ui-Maine, was killed by his brother, Tadhg, grandson of conchobhar Ua Ceallaigh, on the **island of Loch-Caelin** (*ninis Loca Caoláin*). (*A.F.M.* 1074.9; unknown location, probably in Connacht).

**AD 1074** 'Aedh Meranach, King of Ulidia, was drowned at Luimneach, or in **Loch-Eathach**.' (*A.F.M.* 1074.10).

**AD 1079** 'Toirdhealbhach Ua Briain went upon **Loch-Beannchair** and **Innsi-Modh**, and plundered the Cruach.' (*A.F.M.* 1079.11)

**AD 1082** 'A great number of the people of West Meath, Dealbhna, and Cuircne, was slain on **Loch-Ribh** by Domhnall, son of Flann Ua Maeleachlainn; and the battle in which they were defeated was called the "Breach of the Boats."' (*A.F.M.* 1082.10)

**AD 1086** 'The Sinnach Finn, i.e. Tadhg Ua Catharnaigh, lord of Teathbha, and Cinaedh, his son, and Ua Muireadhaigh, chief of Muintir-Tlamain, were treacherously slain by Maelseachlainn, son of Conchobhar, at **Loch Maighe Uatha**, in revenge of Murchadh, son of Conchobhar, having been slain by Ua Catharnaigh Sinnach. (*A.F.M.* 1086.11)

**AD 1088** 'Ruaidhri Ua Conchobhair, with the men of Connaught, took **Inis-Adharcach** (*Insi Adharcaigh*), before the men of Munster, to prevent their fleet from advancing further up.' (*A.F.M.* 1088.7; Seizing of the island of Incherky ('horned island'), on the River Shannon, Co. Offaly, upstream of Clonmacnoise).

**AD 1090** 'Muircheartach Ua Briain went **upon Loch-Riach**, by taking an unfair advantage.' (*A.F.M.* 1090.10)

**AD 1092** 'The Devotee, i.e. Fiachra Ua Follamhain, a priest of the Connaughtmen, was **drowned in Loch Cairrgin**.' (*A.F.M.* 1092.5)

**AD 1108** '**Inis-Labhradha** was demolished by the Feara-Manach.' (*A.F.M.* 1108.15; unknown location, see entry for AD 919).

**AD 1109** 'An army was led by Muircheartach Ua Briain, with the men of Munster, Meath, and Connaught, into Tir-Briuin-Breifne, to aid Murchadh Ua Maeleachlainn, whence they carried off many cows and prisoners; and they entered on the **islands of Loch Uachtair**, and took prisoners out of them. After this Ua Ruairc came, and Ua Maeleachlainn gave up his camp to them; and they killed Mac Gillafhulartaigh, and numbers along with him.' (*A.F.M.* 1109.4)

**AD 1121** 'Cumaighe, son of Deoraidh Ua Floinn, lord of Durlas, was drowned in **Loch-Eathach**, after the **island of Inis-Draicrenn** had been taken upon him by the Ui-Eathach, where forty-four persons were slain.' (*A.F.M.* 1121.4).

**AD 1122** 'An army was led by Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair to **Loch Saileach in Meath**, where Mac Murchadha, King of Leinster, came into his house.' (*A.F.M.* 1122.10)

**AD 1124** 'Gillabroide, son of Tighearnan Ua Ruairc, was slain by the Connaughtmen, **on Loch En**, and many others along with him.' (*A.F.M.* 1124.8).

**AD 1127** 'The great fleet of Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair, consisting of one hundred and ninety vessels, upon **Loch Deirgdheirc**; and he devastated the adjoining cantreds of Munster. The fight of two fleets at sea, namely, the Connaughtmen and the men of Munster; and the Connaughtmen gained the victory in that battle. (*A.F.M.* 1127.15)

**AD 1128** 'Muirgheas O'Nioc, successor of Iarlath of Tuaim-da-ghulann for a time, died on **Inis-na-Ghoill**.' (*A.F.M.* 1128.1; Inchaguile, Lough Corrib).

**AD 1131** 'An army was led by Conchobhar Ua Briain and the men of Munster into Leinster, and took its hostages. They afterwards proceeded into Meath, and **plundered the island of Loch Semhdighdhe** (*inis loca semdigde*). Their cavalry engaged the cavalry of Connaught. The cavalry of Connaught were defeated, and the son of Cuchonnacht Ua Conchobhair, and Feardana Ua Carthaigh, chief poet of Connaught, fell in the engagement. (*A.F.M.* 1131.4; Lough Sewdy, Co. Westmeath).

**AD 1133** 'The two sons of Cuchonnacht Ua Conchobhair were **drowned in Loch Ribh**.' (*A.F.M.* 1133.16)

**AD 1135** 'The fleet of Murchadh Ua Maeleachlainn on the Sinainn and **on Loch Ribh**; the Sil-Muireadhaigh, with their king, i.e. Conchobhar, son of Toirdhealbhach, and the Ui-Maine, with their lord, i.e. Tadhg Ua Ceallaigh, came, and both left hostages with Murchadh. (*A.F.M.* 1135.21).

**AD 1136** '**Loch Cairgin** was plundered by the men of Teathbha, and they burned the castle, and slaughtered its people.' (*A.F.M.* 1136.17)

**AD 1138** 'Maelpadraig Ua Drugain, paragon of the wisdom of the Irish, chief lector of Ard-Macha; head of council of the west of Europe in piety and devotion, died on his pilgrimage at the **Island of Loch Cre**, on the second of January. (*A.F.M.* 1138.2)

**AD 1138** 'Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair, with the Connaughtmen, Tighernan Ua Ruairc, with the men of Breifne, and Donnchadh Ua Cearbhaill, with the Airghialla, mustered their forces to contest unjustly his own lands with Ua Maeleachlainn. On the other side Murchadh Ua Maeleachlainn, with the men of Meath, and the foreigners, and Diarmaid Mac Murchadha, with the Leinster-men, came to oppose them, and both armies arrived at Craebh-Maighe Lorgaigh. The two camps were so near each other that there was only a pass through a small wood between them. They remained for the space of one week in this manner face to face, but at length God separated them without coming to battle, without one giving hostages to the other. The men of Meath afterwards destroyed the corn crops of the Ui-Briuin, and of the men of Fearnmhagh, so that an insufferable famine prevailed amongst them the year following. After this the Meath-men, Leinster-men, and the foreigners, proceeded to **Inis-Mochta to plunder it, and a countless number of them went on rafts, and by swimming, on the lake, to reach the island; and a party of them did reach the island. The people of the island afterwards came to them in vessels, and numbers of them the aggressors were drowned and slain by them; and the party who were on the island fled from thence, not having been able to burn the island,** through the miracles of God and the patron saint. On this occasion Cubruinne Ua Longairg, the son of Tadhg, the son of Mac Ualghairc, and the son of Mac Turgaill, were slain. (*A.F.M.* 1138.10)

**AD 1142** 'The son of Mac Conroi, **lord of Dealbhna-Thire-da-locha**, was killed.' (*A.F.M.* 1142.11)

**AD 1144** 'An army was led by Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair into Meath, to appoint its kings. He gave from **Loch-Aininn** eastwards to Murchadh Ua Maeleachlainn, and from **Loch Aininn** westwards to the son of Muircheartach Ua Maeleachlainn. And four hundred cows were given by the men of Meath to Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair, as eric for his son, Conchobhar.' (*A.F.M.* 1144.10)

**AD 1146** 'A predatory excursion was made by Tighearnan Ua Ruairc across Magh-nAei, to **Loch-Long** and Dun-Imghain; he destroyed and burned four ships, and slew the son of Ua Maeleachlainn, who was defending them, and many others. Gillabrighde, son of Dubhdara, chief of Muintir-Eolais, was wounded; and he afterwards died at his house, having plundered Cluain-Coirpthe some time before.' (*A.F.M.* 1146.5)

**AD 1150** 'Ua Ceallaigh, lord of Ui-Fiachrach of Ard-Sratha, was killed by the Ui-Comhaltain, on the **island of Loch-Laeghaire**.' (*A.F.M.* 1150:16; murder on royal crannog of Island MacHugh, Lough Catherine, Co. Tyrone).

**AD 1150** 'An army was led by Toirdhealbhach Ua Briain to **Loch Ua nGobhann, in Machaire-Gaileang**, and he plundered Slaine. Ua Cearbhaill and Ua Ruairc overtook them, and slew some of their people, among whom was the son of Ua Ifearnain. In the absence of the men of Munster, Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair marched with an army into Munster, and plundered the plain of Munster, and carried off many cows; but he lost some of his people, and among the rest Ua Rodhuibh. (*A.F.M.* 1150:18)

**AD 1153** 'An army was led by Muircheartach, son of Niall Mac Lochlainn, and the people of the north of Ireland, to relieve Toirdhealbhach Ua Briain, and restore him to the kingdom of Munster; and they came to Craebhteine. Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair assembled the Connaughtmen, and marched to Magh-Lice-Padraig against the Northerns. Tadhg Ua Briain arrived with his forces at Raithin-Ui-Shuanaigh, to assist the Connaughtmen, and both proceeded to Magh-Cisi. Ua Lochlainn then set out with two battalions of the flower of his army across Ath-Maighne, leaving the remainder of his army (all except these) at Craebh-teine; and he marched with this small force to attack the camp of Tadhg Ua Briain, and he defeated him, and made a slaughter of his people. He also defeated the cavalry of Leinster. He then returned to his own camp at Craebh-teine, carrying off many cows, after plundering some of the men of Teathbha. He set out thence to attack the Connaughtmen, and arrived at Iseal-Chiarain. Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair proceeded westwards across Ath-Luain. Ruaidhri, son of Toirdhealbhach, and the battalion of West Connaught, and the recruits of Sil-Muireadhaigh, came to Fordruim; but as they were pitching their camp there, the heroes of the North poured upon them without previous notice, and numbers of the Connaughtmen were slain by them, and among the rest Gillacheallaigh Ua hEidhin, lord of Aidhne, and his son, Aedh; Brian Ua Dubhda, lord of Ui-Fiachrach of the North; Muircheartach, son of Conchobhar (who was son of Toirdhealbhach) Ua Conchobhair; Domhnall Ua Birn; Domhnall, son of Cathal Ua Conchobhair; and Sitric Mac Dubhghaill. **After this Ua Lochlainn proceeded with his forces to Loch Aininn Lough Ennell, and Ua Maeleachlainn came into his house, and left him hostages**; and he Ua Lochlainn gave him all Meath, from the Sinainn to the sea, and also Ui-Faelain and Ui-Failghe. He gave Ui-Briuin and Conmhaicne to Tighearnan Ua Ruairc, and carried the hostages of both with him; and before Ua Lochlainn returned back to his house, he billeted the Munstermen upon the men of Meath, Breifne, Airghialla, Ulidia, Conaill, and Tir-Eoghain, for Toirdhealbhach Ua Briain was seized with a disease on that expedition, which prevented him from returning into Munster. (*A.F.M.* 1153.13)

24

**AD 1155** 'Tighearnan Ua Ruairc took Donnchadh Ua Cearbhaill, lord of Oirghialla, prisoner, after he had gone to meet him, to Ceanannus, with a small force; and **he incarcerated him on Loch Sileann**, where he was detained for a month and a fortnight, but he was ransomed, through the miracles of God, and of Patrick, and of the saints in general, by Godfrey Ua Raghallaigh, who slew the party who were keeping him; and Donnchadh assumed the lordship of Oirghialla again. (*A.F.M.* 1155.12)

**AD 1156** 'A fleet was brought by Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair upon **Loch-Deirg-dherc**; and Toirdhealbhach Ua Briain came into his house, and delivered him hostages for obtaining the half of Munster.' (*A.F.M.* 1156.7)

**AD 1160** 'A fleet was brought by Ruaidhri Ua Conchobhair upon the Sinainn, and upon **Loch-Dergdherc**; and he took the hostages of Toirdhealbhach Ua Briain and the DalgCais.' (*A.F.M.* 1160.23).

**AD 1165** 'Muircheartach Ua lochlainn proceeded with the Cinel-Eoghain to **Inis-Lochain, and burned and destroyed the island**.' (*A.F.M* 1165.5; in the footnotes O'Donovan noted that Inisloughan, Co. Antrim was referred to as Enishlaghlin by Fynes Moryson, who described an island in a bog with two deep ditches, strong palisades and very high thick rampart of earth and timber).

**AD 1170** 'Diarmaid Ua hAinbhfeth, lord of Ui Meith, and leader of the cavalry of the lord of Oileach, was slain on **Inis-lachain**, by a fleet which came from the Insi-hOrc (Orkney islands) AFM 1170.25; see entry for AD 1165).

**AD 1171** 'The fleet of Connaught, from Allhallowtide to May-day, upon the Sinainn and **Loch Deirgdheirc**.' (*A.F.M.* 1171.27)

**AD 1180** 'Carroon O'Gilla-Ultain, Chief of Muintir Maoil-t-Sionna, was killed by Hugh Mac Carroon, on **Inis Endaimh, in Mor-loch**.' (*A.F.M.* 1180.8)

**AD 1194** 'The English landed upon the **island of Inis-Ua-bh-Fionntain**, but were forcibly driven from it.' (*A.F.M.* 1194.3)

**AD 1225** 'As to O'Neill he made no delay until he arrived in the very centre of Sil-Murray, whence he marched to the Faes of Athlone; and he remained two nights at Muilleann Guanach, and totally **plundered Lough Nen**, from whence he carried off O'Conor's jewells. (*A.F.M.* 1225.7; Loughnaneane or *Loch-na-n-éan* ('lake of the birds') to the west of Roscommon castle, said originally to have been a deep lake; but now a callows. Crannogs have been identified in the lake).

**AD 1225** 'After this, Hugh [the son of Cathal Crovderg O'Conor], and the Lord Justice, with his English, set out for the port of **Inis Cremha**; and O'Flaherty was compelled to surrender the island of **Inis Cremha** and **Oilen na Circe**, and all the vessels (boats) on the lake, into the hands of Hugh (*A.F.M.* 1225.17; an impressive stone cashel on an island on Lough Corrib, near Castle of Cargins, Co. Galway).

**AD 1232** 'Hugh, the son of Auliffe, who was son of Donnell O'Farrell, chief of Annaly, was **burned on the island of Inis Locha Cuile** (*do losccad ar inis loca cúile*) by the sons of Hugh Ciabach. The son of Morogh O'Ferrell, having been nine years Chief of Annaly, from the death of his predecessor, Morrogh Carrach O'Ferrall. (*A.F.M.* 1232.4).

**AD 1244** 'Teige, the son of Hugh, son of Cathal Crovderg, was blinded and hanged by Cuconnaught O'Reilly, on the festival of St. Bearch, on **Inis-na-Canaire [an island] in Lough Allen, having been kept in confinement by him from the feast of St. Martin to that time**. (*A.F.M.* 1244.4; probably Big Island, at southern end of Lough Allen).

**AD 1247** '**Miles Mac costello took possession of Feadha Conmaicne, and expelled Cathal Mac Rannal from thence: the crannog of Claenlough** (*crannocc clainlocha do gabail*) was also taken for him, and he left those who had taken it to guard it for him. Hereupon Cathal and Turlough. Two sons of Hugh O'Conor, rose up to assist Mac Rannal in expelling Mac Costello from Feadha-Conmaicne. **They retook the crannog and the lake**, and demolished the castle of Leckderg on the Saturday before Whit-Sunday.' (*A.F.M.* 1247.6; possibly Belhavel Lough, Co. Leitrim).

**AD 1247** 'O'Dowda and O'Boyle brought a fleet to plunder Carbury; and the crew of one ship, under the command of Manus O'Boyle, were **drowned at Inis-Tuathrass**.' (*A.F.M.* 1247.11)

**AD 1247** 'Teige, the son of Conor Roe, **burned Inishmore in Claenlough**, on which occasion twenty-eight of the English were also burned.' (*A.F.M.* 1247.12).

**AD 1257** 'Con, son of Tiernan O'Rourke, went into the house of O'Conor and his son, and ratified a treaty of peace with them, and gave them as much of the land of Breifny as they desired to have, together with the **fortress of Cloch-inse-na-dtorc, in Lough Finvoy**, in which Hugh, son of Felim, placed guards. (*A.F.M.* 1257.6; probably Hog Island or Cherry Island, Garadice Lough, Co. Leitrim)

**AD 1257** '**Cloch-inse-na-dtorc, in Lough Finvoy**, was burned by O'Rourke, those who guarded it being first permitted to come out of it.' (*A.F.M.* 1257.9; see above)

**AD 1258** 'O'Donnell (Godfrey) had now, for the space of a year, after having fought the battle of Creadran, been lying on his **death-bed in an island in Loch-Beathach**. When O'Neill i.e. Brian obtained intelligence of this, he collected his forces together for the purpose of marching into Tirconnell, and sent messengers to O'Donnell to demand hostages, pledges, and submission, from the Kinel-Connell, as they had no capable chieftain since the disabling of Godfrey. When the messengers delivered their message to O'Donnell, they returned back with all the speed they could exert.' (*A.F.M.* 1258.8)

**AD 1282** Cathal, son of Gilla-na-naev O'Farrell, Lord of Annaly, **died on Inis-Cuan, an island in the river of Cluain-lis-Becc-mic-Conla**; and Geoffrey, son of Gilla-na-naev O'Farrell, assumed the lordship of Annaly after him. (*A.F.M.* 1282.5)

**AD 1334** Ten of the people of Donough, the son of Melaghlin Carragh Mac Dermot, were **drowned in Loch Techet**. (*A.F.M.* 1334.2; drownings in Lough Gara, Co. Sligo)

**AD 1345** Turlough, the son of Hugh, son of Owen O'Conor, King of Connaught, was killed in Autumn by one shot of an arrow, at Fidh doradha, in the territory of Muintir-Eolais, after he had gone to **Loch-Airinn** to aid Teige Mac Rannall against the descendants of Murtough Muimhneach O'Conor. (*A.F.M.* 1345.2)

**AD 1346** The four sons of Cathal, the son of the Caech Monoculus Mac Rannall, were taken prisoners on **Loch-an-Sguir** by Conor Mac Rannall. Tomaltagh Mac Rannall afterwards brought them to Caisiol Cosgraigh, where they were put to death by him. (*A.F.M.* 1346.2; possibly Lough Scur, Co. Leitrim.)

**AD 1367** The Clann-Murtough made an incursion into Fermanagh, and plundered **Inis-Mór, Loch Berraid**, and senad Mac Manus; and, after carrying off a great quantity of booty, returned home in safety (*A.F.M.* 1367.10; probably islands of Inishore, Lough Barry, on upper Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh).

**AD 1368** William Saxonagh, the son of Sir Emund burke, the heir of the Mac Williams, died of the small-pox on **Inis-Cua** (*A.F.M.* 1368.10; Iniscoe, a townland extending into Lough Conn, Co. Mayo).

**AD 1369** O'Muldoon (Donnell), Lord of the territory of Lurg was slain by the sons of Niall O'Donnell, who carried the spoils of his territory with them to **one of the islands of Lough Erne which is called Badhbha**. Philip Maguire, Lord of the Seven Tuathas, set out with a large fleet to take revenge upon the sons of O'Donnell for the death of his Oglach; and a naval engagement took place, in which Niall Oge, son of Niall Garv, the son of Hugh, son of Donnell Oge O'Donnell, was slain on Finn-loch, close to the island. (*A.F.M.* 1369.9)

**AD 1421** A nocturnal attack was made by Cathal O'Rourke and his sons upon Mac Clancy, on **Inis Caoin [an island] in Lough Melvin; and the guards of the lake, namely the Mag-Gollaighs**, delivered up the boats of the lake to Cathal and his sons. (*A.F.M* 1421, vol. iv, p. 851)

**AD 1435** O'Gara was slain by his own kinsmen, on **Inis bolg**, an island in Loch Techet (*A.F.M.* 1435; vol. IV, p. 905; probably the natural island of Inis, Inch).

**AD 1452** Loughlin Oge O'Hanly, Chief of Kinel-Dofa, was treacherously slain in the **crannog of Lough Leise** (*Do marbad in meabhail for crannóig locha lesi*) by the son of Murrough, son of Gilla-na-naev O'Hanly and the son of Owney, son of Gilla-na-naev, having been betrayed to them by his own people, namely by Donnell Carragh O'Maelbrighde, and his son, and by Thomas, the son of Gilla-Crossagh O'Maelbrighde. Rory Boy, the son of Gilla-na-naev, was then elected chieftain; and he hanged, for their evil deeds, these three stewards of his own people, who had acted treacherously towards Loughlin. (*A.F.M.* 1452: probably Muickenagh Lough (Muckanagh Lough or Kilglass Lough, Co. Roscommon; O'Donovan noted that this lough was not far from the old church of Kilglass, where there was a small island called *Príosún a'Dubhaltaigh* on which Dubhaltach O'Hanly was said to have kept a prison).

**AD 1499** Melaghlin, the son of Murrough, son of Teige Mac Rannall, was taken prisoner by Con Carragh, the son of Teige, son of Tiernan O'Rourke, and John, the son of Tiernan O'Rourke, and conveyed by them to **Inis-Ochta, an island on Lough-Mac-Nen**. Rury, the son of Turlough Maguire, attacked them on the lake...(*A.F.M.*1499; O'Donovan noted that Inis-Ochta, i.e. 'the island of the breast', on lower Lough MacNean, Co. Fermanagh appeared in a short manuscript description of Fermanagh, 'in the possession of Mr. Petrie', which stated that a King Aodh had a residence upon it. It was called Inis Aodha (Inishee), i.e. Hugh's Island).

**AD 1512** Philip, the son of Turlough Maguire, with his sons and the sons of Thomas, son of Manus Magauran, made an incursion into Teallach-Eachdhach [Tullyhaw], and took a prey from Turlough, the son of Hugh Magauran, tanist of the territory; and they slew Turlough himself [as he followed] in pursuit of the prey. From thence they proceeded to the **Crannog of Magauran**, which they took; and they also made a prisoner of Maguaran himself (*A.F.M.* 1512; vol., v, p. 1319).

**AD 1544** An army was lead by O'Donnell into the route, and took **Inis-an-Lochain**. Whereon Mac Quillin had a wooden castle and an impregnable fastness. O'Donnell took this castle, and gave it up to O'Kane. On this expedition O'Donnell also took the castle of Baile-an-lacha and obtained many spoils, consisting of weapons, armour, copper, iron, butter and provisions, in these towns. He afterwards took the island of **Loch-Burann**, and the island of **Loch-leithinnsi**, where he likewise obtained many spoils. (*A.F.M.* 1544; vol. v, p. 1487; these sites were probably Loughan Island (on a small lake in River Bann), Ballylough, Co. Antrim, Loughaverra, Co. Antrim and Lough Lynch, Co. Antrim).

**AD 1602** Rury himself then set out with all his forces, and arrived at the **island of Loch-Iasgach** (go hoilén loca hiasccaig), to the east side of Donegal, where O'Donnell's warders were, and where O'Conor Sligo was left in custody, since he had been taken by O'Donnell until the end of that summer. When he came to this castle (*baile*), his people there were much rejoiced at his arrival (*A.F.M.* 1602 vi, 2333; Lough Eske, Co. Donegal).

# *Annals of Connacht* (AD 1224-1544)

**AD 1224** 'Mathgamain O Cerin king of **Ciarraige Locha na nAirne** died this year.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1224.10)

**AD 1225** 'However, O Neill came with them to the middle of Sil Murray and thence to the Faes of Athlone, and they spent two nights at Mullach Uainide and **sacked Loch Nen**, carrying off the treasures of O Conchobair. Thence they proceeded to Carnfree and there instated Toirrdelbach son of Ruaidri'. (*Ann. Conn.* 1225.5)

**AD 1225** 'Now as to the sons of Ruaidri, they decided while at **Loch Mac Feradaig** to disband until the Galls of [Aed] mac Cathail Chrobdeirg should disband; they themselves, Toirrdelbach and Aed, with the son of Magnus, and Donn Oc to seek the protection of O Flaithbertaig, their sworn ally, while the son of Muirchertach [Muimnech] O Conchobair and Tigernach son of Cathal [Micuran O Conchobair] should go to protect their cows and folk and to make peace for the sake of these, until the Galls of the son of Cathal Crobderg should be disbanded.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1225.13).

**AD 1225** 'Muiredach O Finnachta, chieftain of Clann Murthaile, **died in a boat on Loch Corrib**, though in good health when he entered it. (*Ann. Conn.* 1225.31; possibly reference to a murder?)

**AD 1226** 'Aed son of Domnall O Ruairc was killed by Cathal O Raigillig and by Conchobar son of Cormac O Mailruanaid **on Loch Allen**.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1226.7)

**AD 1231** 'Domnall O Domnaill king of Tir Conaill and Aengus Mac Gilla Finnein raised an army against Cathal O Raigillig. They **brought ships to Loch Oughter** and plundered **Eanish**, where they slaughtered the best white steed in Ireland and carried off the precious objects and the wealth and treasure and good things there.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1231.8; reference to lake and natural island at Lough Oughter, Co. Cavan).

**AD 1232** 'Aed son of Amlaib son of Domnall son of Murchad son of Gilla na Naem son of Brian son of Senlaech son of Eochaid son of Fergal, from whom the name O Fergal is derived, was **burned on the island of Loch Cuile**, after holding for nine years the chieftainship of Annaly in succession to Murchad Carrach (the Scabby) O Fergail, by the sons of Aed Ciabach (Long-haired) son of Murchad son of Gilla na Naem O Fergail.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1232.2)

**AD 1234** 'Aengus Mac Gilla Finnein, **king of Loch Erne**, went to plunder Domnall O Domnaill king of Tir Conaill. O Domnaill overtook him and killed him.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1234.6)

**AD 1237** 'A hosting by Fedlim mac Cathail Chrobdeirg into Connacht, accompanied by Cu Chonnacht O Raigillig with all the Ui Briuin, Cathal Mag Ragnaill with all the Conmaicne, and the three sons of Aed mac Cathail Chrobdeirg, to attack the descendants of Ruaidri, that is, Brian son of Toirrdelbach son of Ruaidri and Muirchertach and Domnall sons of Diarmait son of Ruaidri, with whom was Conchobar son of Cormac Mac Diarmata, in the place where they were. They went after them northward through the Curlieu Hills and came to Drumrat. The descendants of Ruaidri sent the soldiers of the Justiciar, which they had with them, to encounter them; and Fedlim ordered his men not to shoot at them, but with bowed heads to have at them in a furious charge. The soldiers did not withstand this onset but broke and fell back on their own side, many of them, including Mac Mibric, being killed in the rout. When the sons of Ruaidri saw that fortune was against them and that the soldiers were breaking up in panic, they abandoned their position [and got away] without a man of them being killed. After

this defeat they were dispersed, so that they had no more habitation among the Sil Murray, and all their folk were plundered. They made great raids on Conchobar son of Cormac [Mac Diarmata] in Tirrerill, and after that **they put a fleet on Loch Key**, deposed Cormac Mac Diarmata king of Moylurg, plundered the whole of Moylurg and gave the **lordship of the whole lake and territory** to Donnchad son of Muirchertach Luathsuilech [Mac Diarmata]. (*Ann. Conn.* 1237.2)

**AD 1244** 'Tadc son of Aed mac Cathail Chrobdeirg was blinded and emasculated by Cu Chonnacht O Raigillig at the feast of St.Berach on **Inis na Connire in Loch Allen**, after having **been in custody** since the feast of St. Martin.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1244.2)

**AD 1246** 'Toirrdelbach son of Aed O Conchobair **escaped from the crannog of Loch Leisi** in the autumn. He drowned his warders, Cormac O Muiredaig and two of the Ui Ainmirech, and came away himself afterwards.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1246.7)

**AD 1247** 'Milid Mac Gosdelb took Feda Conmaicne and expelled Cathal Mag Ragnaill. **He took the crannog of Claenloch and left a garrison of his own men in it.** (*Ann. Conn.* 1247.5)

**AD 1247** 'Tadc son of Conchobar Ruad **burned the great island of Claenloch and twenty-eight Galls were burned there.**' (*Ann. Conn.* 1247.14)

**AD 1249** 'The Justiciar, however, assembled the Galls of Meath and Leinster, a great host, and came past Athlone into Sil Murray, on the other side whereof was Mac Muiris with the Galls of Munster and Connacht, and the two armies arrived at Elphin after ravaging Sil Murray all along their line of advance. And they took Toirrdelbach son of Aed mac Cathail Chrobdeirg and made him king instead of Fedlim mac Cathail Chrobdeirg. After this they raided Brefne, doing much damage in all directions and carrying off its herds. They were three weeks in Sil Murray, despoiling them, and **they raided Loch Key with its islands, including the Rock.** Then the Justiciar departed into Meath and Mac Muiris went to Sligo, and they left Toirrdelbach to guard Sil Murray. (*Ann. Conn.* 1249.8)

**AD 1254** 'Piers Ristubard, lord of Sil Mailruain, a noble baron, **was killed on Loch Ree** by Murchad O Mailsechlainn.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1254.6)

**AD 1256** 'After this battle, Fedlim O Conchobair and his son Aed na nGall, with the men of Connacht, and Tigernan O Ruairc, with the men of Brefne, made an **expedition to Loch in Trein**; and the two armies fell upon the churches of Brefne, all except Fenagh, and returned(?) to their homes with hostages of the Fir Brefne, that is, of Mac Fiachrach and Mac Tigernain and Mag Samradain and of the son of Art O Ruairc; and Fedlim gave the hostages of the chieftains into the custody of O Ruairc and handed over Mag Samradain to his own son, Aed na nGall. (*Ann. Conn.* 1256.8)

**AD 1256** 'The Ui Raigillig came to **Loch Allen, to Port na Cranne**, which is called Fuarchosach on Loch Allen, but the Galls did not come to meet them there for fear of Aed O Conchobair, who was then at Cell tSesin in Uachtar Tire, waiting upon the two armies to east and west of him, [till he could decide] which of them to attack.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1256.13)

**AD 1256** 'Aed son of Fedlim O Conchobair plundered the territory of Mac Richard Cusin to avenge the slaying of O Gadra on him. After that he broke down his castles, killing all the inmates, and **took possession of the whole of Loch Gara.**' (*Ann. Conn.* 1256.18)

**AD 1256** 'Macwilliam Burke made a great raid on Ruaidri O Flaithbertaig, plundering Gno Mor and Gno Bec and **taking possession of all Loch Corrib afterwards.**' (*Ann. Conn.*1256.20)

**AD 1257** 'Conchobar son of Tigernan O Ruairc submitted to O Conchobair and his son and made peace, offering them their own choice of the territory of Brefne. The **Stone-castle on Cherry Island in Loch Garradice was yielded to them**, and Aed mac Fedlim meic Cathail put a **garrison into it.**' (*Ann. Conn.*1257.2; this site was originally an early medieval crannog on Garadice Lough, Co. Leitrim)

**AD 1257** 'The **Stone-castle of Cherry Island on Garradice Loch** was burnt by O Ruairc, who allowed the garrison to depart under a promise. (*Ann. Conn.* 1257.5; a follow up to the previous reference, indicating the practice of garrisoning rival crannogs)

**AD 1259** 'A meeting between Aed O Conchobair and Brian O Neill was held at **Devenish on Loch Erne**, when peace was made with Aed for Domnall O Ruairc and the kingship of Brefne given [back] to him. (*Ann. Conn.*1259.8; royal meeting on monastic island of Devenish, Co. Fermanagh)

**AD 1264** 'Art O Mailsechlainn burned all the villages in Delbna and Brawnie and Calry, turned out the Galls and took hostages of all the chieftains of the district and **burned Loch Luatha.**' (*Ann. Conn.*1264.9; reference to raids on Anglo-Norman colonies by O'Melaghlins in western part of Westmeath and burning of Loughloe, northeast of Athlone)

**AD 1272** 'Aed O Conchobair put a **large fleet on Loch Ree**, where he burned much and did other damage.' (*Ann. Conn.*1272.10, nautical warfare on Lough Ree)

**AD 1293** '**Magnus son of Conchobar Ruad son of Muirchertach Muimnech son of Toirrdelbach Mor, king of Connacht** for five and a half years, as the poet testifies: 'O Conchobair of the fair skin, son of the son of Muirchertach Muimnech, five years and a half to tell was Magnus of the horsemen king,' **died this year** after a sickness of three months - one who was terrible and deadly in battles and forays, the most generous and valiant of all the kings of Ireland - **on Loch Caircin.**' (*Ann. Conn.*1293.2; death of king of Connacht on his royal crannog at Ardakillen Lough, Co. Roscommon)

**AD 1334** 'Ten of the people of Donnchad Riabach son of Maelsechlainn Carrach Mac Diarmata were **drowned on Loch Gara.**' (*Ann. Conn.*1334.3).

**AD 1342** 'Gilla Dub Mag Uidir was **drowned in Loch Erne** in the rear of a raid.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1342.2)

**AD 1346** 'Four sons of Cathal son of in Caech (Blind-eye) Mag Ragnaill were **captured on Loch Scur** by Conchobar Mag Ragnaill, and Tomaltach Mag Ragnaill carried them to Caisel Coscraig and killed them there afterwards.' (*Ann. Conn.*1346.3; capture of men on Lough Scur, Co. Leitrim, possibly from a crannog)

**AD 1384** 'Ualgarg O Ruairc, eligible for the kingship of Brefne, was **drowned in Loch Gowna.**' (*Ann. Conn.* 1384.17; drowning in Lough Gowna. Co. Longford)

**AD 1390** 'Magnus O Ruairc, who was kept in captivity in **Loch Oughter Castle**, escaped from it and went to the **castle of Loch Scur**; but he was betrayed to the Clan Murtagh and they killed him as he stepped out of his skiff.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1390.3; use of islands as prisons).

**AD 1393** 'Aed son of Conchobar Mac Diarmata, king of Moylurg, a man full of every good quality, died after a victory of repentance; and afterwards his son Cathal was drowned in **Loch Dorri.**' (*Ann. Conn.* 1393.2; possibly Inisterry, in Loch Cé).

**AD 1398** '**Loch Farbach** was captured by Ruaidri son of Aed Mac Diarmata, eligible prince of Moylurg, and it was impossible to count up the amount of **booty which was found on it.**' (*Ann. Conn.* 1398.6; reference to use of crannog (probably in Roscommon) as a storehouse for wealth)

**AD 1399** 'Aed O Donnchada, **king of the Eoganacht of Loch Lein**, rested.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1399.3)

**AD 1418** 'Eogan son of Tigernan Mor O Ruairc, eligible prince of Brefne, was **drowned in Garradice Loch on his way from Cherry Island** to visit his father, who was on his deathbed at the time. This was a 'fall on the assembly threshold,' his being drowned on the threshold of the kingship. (*Ann. Conn.* 1418.3)

**AD 1418** 'Risderd son of Tomas O Raigillig, king of Brefne East, was drowned in **Loch Sheelin**; and Eogan O Raigillig his young active well-beloved son, Barrdub daughter of Mag Findbairr and two masters of the followers of O Raigillig were also drowned.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1418.6, probably a boat accident on Lough Sheelin, Co. Cavan)

**AD 1421** 'A night-attack was made by Cathal O Ruairc and [his] sons against Mag Flannchaid on Iniskeen in **Loch Melvin, and the garrison of the lake,** the sons of [O] Gollain (?), betrayed Mag Flannchaid and surrendered its vessels to Cathal and his sons. They captured the younger Mag Flannchaid and **Loch Melvin with its castle** and killed a number of the Dartraigi, including five of Mag Flannchaid's sons. The **lake and its wealth** remained in the possession of Cathal and his sons and the sons of Mag Flannchaid sought refuge with the men of Carbury.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1421.8)

**AD 1422** 'Tomaltach Mac Donnchada and the sons of Conchobar Mac Donnchada afterwards [followed] on the track of the host and their own kinsmen gave them battle. Muirgius son of Cormac Mac Donnchada and Diarmait son of Maelruanaid Mac Donnchada were killed by them that day, and that night the host lay at the **castle of Loch Dargan** and next day they passed through Brefne with O Ruairc's consent.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1422.15)

**AD 1446** 'Domnall O Cobthaig and his two sons were treacherously killed by Maelsechlainn son of the son of Art O Mailsechlainn and by Feidlim son of the son of Fiacha Mag Eochacain on **Crowinis in Loch Ennell, in his own house**. He was a man of wide accomplishment and his house was an open guest-house.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1446.2; murders on Cróinis crannog, Lough Ennell, Co. Westmeath).

**AD 1452** 'Lochlainn Oc O hAinlige, chieftain of Cenel Dobtha, was **treacherously killed in the crannog of Loch Leise** by the son of Murchad son of Gilla na Naem O hAinlige and the son of Uaithne son of Gilla na Naem, having been given up [to his slayers] by the sons of O Mailbrigte his own steward, on the Sunday night after St. Michael's day. These traitors were afterwards hanged for their offence by Ruaidri Buide O hAinlige. (*Ann. Conn.* 1452.5)

**AD 1467** '**The islands of Loch Ardakillin were taken from the garrison** left there by Feidlim Finn by O Conchobair Donn and the posterity of [Aed] son of Feidlim.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1467.10)

**AD 1514** 'O Domnaill hauled a fleet of long **ships and boats to Loch Erne** and made his residence for a long time at Enniskillen. He **plundered and burnt the island of Cul na nOirer** and afterwards made peace with the inhabitants. After this he returned safely home. (*Ann. Conn.* 1514.16)

**AD 1523** 'Eogan son of Feidlim son of Donnchad son of Tigernan Oc O Ruairc was **drowned in Loch Glenade.**' (*Ann. Conn.* 1523.7)

**AD 1524** 'Two sons of O Domnaill, Niall Garb and Eogan, entered into a league to make war on O Domnaill, and so for some time they were troubling the country until it was put into their heads to turn against each other. Then **Eogan captured the residence of Niall Garb, the crannog of Loch Bethad**, which was under his protection. Niall left the country and made a long march against the place, remaining in concealment in its neighbourhood. Eogan came to know this and marched against Niall. They attacked each other and Eogan was killed in the fray, while Niall was hurt and died shortly afterwards of his wounds. And it is unlikely that there lived any of their years. (*Ann. Conn.* 1524.3)

**AD 1530** 'O Domnaill burned Mac Consnama's **wooden house on Loch Allen**, the best in Ireland, and ravaged Brefne west of the Mountain.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1530.5)

**AD 1540** 'O Domnaill encamped round the **crannog of Loch Veagh** at the beginning of summer, against the sons of [the late] O Domnaill, Donnchad and Rugraide, and made great exertions to overcome them; yet in the end the place was not won from them.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1540.6)

**AD 1540** 'The sons of [the late] O Domnaill, Donnchad Cairbrech and Sean Luirg, were at war with O Domnaill. They held the **crannog of Loch Veagh** and from it were greatly troubling the country. O Domnaill captured them both, and he captured Eicnechan son of [the late] O Domnaill in Conwall; Sean he hanged, and Eicnechan and Donnchad he thrust into captivity, in misery and evil plight; and **he destroyed the crannog of Loch Veagh.**' (*Ann. Conn.* 1540.11; follow-up to entry above)

**AD 1541** 'The **eastern crannog on Loch Glenna Dallain** was taken by the sons of Domnall son of Donnchad O Ruairc from Donnchad son of Donnchad O Ruairc, and shortly afterwards the sons of Donnchad O Ruairc, namely Domnall and Fer gan Ainm, **attacked the crannog and set it on fire without being discovered**. But [as they left] they were noticed and the sons of Domnall pursued and caught up with them; Fergan Ainm son of Donnchad was killed and drowned and Domnall was captured and afterwards hanged by the sons of Domnall O Ruairc. (*Ann. Conn.* 1541.6; possibly Glencar Lough, Co. Leitrim).

**AD 1541** 'Shortly after this O Domnaill went into Fermanagh, to the east of the Lake, devastating Cuil na nOirer and the eastern shore of [Upper] Loch [Erne]. [He attacked] both by land and water, for he had boats and ships **sacking their islands** while his own army devastated the land, so that he left them in great want of corn this year.' (*Ann. Conn.* 1541.8)

**AD 1541** 'Shortly after this O Domnaill led another expedition into Fermanagh, westward of [Lower] Loch Erne. He **sent his vessels upon the lake** and himself proceeded by land with his army, so that they ravaged the country in concert till they came to Enniskillen. (*Ann. Conn.* 1541.9; follow-up to previous entry).

**AD 1544** 'O Domnaill made an expedition into the Route and captured the **Loughan Islands**, where Mac Uigilin had a wooden fort and strong point. After taking it he left the place in the possession of O Cathain. On this expedition he captured also Ballylough Castle, where he

obtained much booty, and **Loughaverra Island** and **Loch Lynch Island**, whereon he likewise captured great booty. He burned the whole countryside and returned safely afterwards. (*Ann. Conn.* 1544).

# II. Hagiographies

## *Bethach Beraig: Life of Berach*

Edition: Charles Plummer, *Bethada Náem nÉrenn: Lives of Irish saints* (Oxford, 1922), § pp 22-43.

In the *Life* of Berach, the eponymous saint causes a miracle to occur, enabling a woman left by her husband (Laegachan) on a probable crannog on Lough Laegachan (Lough Lackagh, Co. Roscommon) to sustain herself and her new-born son during a famine. The incident recalls some aspects of the early medieval voyage tales, where an otter sustains a person on an island by bringing fish to them. The relevant passage reads as follows:

§ xxvi (78) *I naraile aimser dodeachaidh dochma mór in nÉrinn. Is annsin ro boi Laeghachan ar Loch Laeghacan ina inis fein, 7 ni raibhe biadh aicce. Doluidh dano d'iarraidh bidh cona ceithirn, 7 ro fhaccaibh a séitchi isin inis, 7 si torrach, 7 oen ben ina farradh; 7 ro raidh ria, dia mbeiredh lenamh dara a aeisi, a mharbadh, ar ni raibhe aca acfaing a lesaighthe. Ocus rucc an ben mac dar aeisi, 7 ro fiarfaigh an ben ro báoi ina farradh, creet do badh indeenta frisan mac; 7 ro raidh si: 'A mharbadh.' Ro raidh an ben ele: 'As cora a breith go cleirech na cille si thiar dia bhaisttedh. Ocus tabhar a mhancine dó a bethughadh.' (79) Deisidh dana leo an comhairle sin, 7 tuccadh go Berach; 7 ro bhaistt Berach an mac, 7 asé ainm tuccadh air, Ineirge, 7 ro hedhbradh mancine a bhei 7 a mhairbh, 7 mancine a seil 7 a seimen co breath do Berach, ara leasucchadh. Ocus ro raidh Berach: 'Berar an mac dochum a mhathar, 7 ticfadh cobair coda 7 máine dóibh.' Ruccadh an macan docum a mhathar la breithir an cleirigh. (80) Mar ro bhattar na mna ann co ccúalatar in fuaim isin osnadh. Doluidh an bhen dia fechain, 7 ni facagtair nach ní ann. An cualatar dano an tres feacht in fuaim, 7 docuaidh an ben an tres fecht dia dechain, 7 ro báoi brádan mor ann, 7 dobhrán aga tharraing in ttír. Ocus dochuaidh an bhen, 7 ro tarraing an bradán for tír, 7 nír cumhaing a iomchar ara mét, 7 ro gair an mnaoi ele, 7 ruccsat ina ndis ar eiccin leo an bradan, 7 ro urlamhaighsett, 7 ro tocaithsettar a ndáethain, 7 ro lionsatar focettoir ciche mathar an meic do loim, 7 ro saoradh am mac amlaidh sin.*

§ xxvi (78) Once upon a time great scarcity came to Erin. At that time, Laegachan was in his island on Loch Laegachan, and had no provisions. He went then with his kernes to seek for food, and left his wife, who was pregnant, on the island with a single woman in her company; and he told her, if she would bear a child after his departure, to kill it, as they had no means of rearing it. And the woman bore a male child afterwards, and the woman who was with her asked her what was to be done with the boy. And she said 'Kill it.' The other woman said: 'It is better to take it to the clerk of the church here to the west, to be baptized, and let his service be offered to him in return for his maintenance.' (79) This plan was agreed upon by them, and the child was taken to Berach, and he baptized it, and the name given to it was Ineirge, and its service in life and death, and the service of its seed and offspring till doom was offered to Berach in return for its nurture. And Berach said: 'Let the child be taken to its mother, and assistance of food and means will come to them.' The child was taken to its mother as the clerk said. (80) As the women were there they heard a noise in the house. The woman went to see, but could not perceive anything there. [The same thing happened a second time.] A third time they heard the noise, and a third time the woman went to see, and there was a great salmon there and an otter dragging it to the land. And the woman went and she called the other woman, and the two of them with difficulty carried the salmon, and they dressed it, and ate their fill, and the breasts of the mother of the child were filled with milk forthwith, and thus the child was saved.

35

### *Bethach Colmain Ela: Life of Colman Ela*

Edition: Charles Plummer, *Bethada Náem nÉrenn: Lives of Irish saints* (Oxford, 1922), § pp 162-176

In the *Life* of Colman Ela (whose church was within the early medieval kingdom of Mide, at Lynally, Co. Offaly), the saint confronts and restricts a monster in female form in a lake (Lough Ela) who had caused trouble in the land of Fir Cell. He does this for the king of Fir Cell, who had offered him a place for his church, as well as his own offspring, if he succeeded in killing the monster. He goes to the lake and binds the monster in reeds. Then, being surrounded by various saints and the king's sons, he asks that some of the saints kill it, and two of them Cuineda and Duinecha, went and killed the monster and bring the head to Colman. Thereafter Colman buries the monster at Land Ela, and builds a fortified house there (*Ocus doroine dún-árus innte*) (a crannog?), and builds a causeway out to it, it being evidently an island on a lake or marsh, where swans come to sing.

> (2) As to Colman Ela – when he came to Fir Cell, they did not welcome him, and no one was more hostile to him than Cuiniugán. And a trouble had arisen (or befallen) in the land at this time; to wit, there was a pestilent monster in Lough Ela, and no man or beast would venture to go near the lake for fear of it (*7 do bí cás 'ar neirge 'san tír an tan sin .i. Peist urcoidech do bí I lLoch Eala; oir ni lamhadh duine na ainmide dol a ngaire don loch ara hecla. Ocus ba hi so tuarusccbáil na peiste .i. fuad becc biorach bel-sgaeilte I ndeilb mna*). And this was the description of the monster – a small pointed gaping apparition in the shape of a woman. And Cuiniugán said to them then: 'It would be better for us to set yon holy man called Colman Ela to fight the monster, and it would be better still in our opinion that neither of them should return.'.....

> (7) And when Colman heard this, he set out towards the monster to the lake. And the name of the monster was Lainn, and this was the nature of it – a small pointed gaping apparition, and short bushy hair, unwashed and unkempt, all over its head. And the monster came to land. And Colman said: 'If God permits, I would permit the reeds of the lake to bind thee for me, that I may slay thee.' And as Colman said this, he looked up and the Righteous One answered him and all that he asked of Him he obtained.

> (9) Then said Colman Ela: 'Let some saint of you attack the monster and cut off its head.'....

### *Bethach Colmáin Maic Lúacháin: Life of Colmán son of Lúachan*

Edition: Kuno Meyer, *Bethach Colmáin Maic Lúacháin: Life of Colmán son of Lúachan* (Oxford, 1911).

The twelfth-century *Life*, the *Bethach Colmáin Maic Lúacháin* describes the society, politics and landscape of the early medieval kingdom of Mide in the late eleventh and early twelfth century, particularly in the environs of Lough Ennell. It principally aims to establish the pre-eminent role of the church of Lynn, at the northeast shore of the lake. It also details the actions of the Clann Chólmáin kings resident on their crannog at Cróinis, as well as the kings of Fir Tulach, resident on their own fortresses and islands at Carrick. The *Life* also attempts to establish the lands of the church and how they were free of taxes, as well as relationships the church had with other midland ecclesiastical centres.

There are several references to the islands (or probable islands) on the lake. There is one entry which describes an incident on the lakeshore at Carrick on the east side of the lake.

> § 50. So then Colman blessed the land of Dun na Cairrge. Thereupon the people of Carric asked him to leave a well of fresh water with them. So Colmán plants his staff in the meadow of Carric and twirls it about, and he said: 'This spot is permitted to have in it a famous well till Doom.' Forthwith a stream of water sprang forth there, so that henceforth its name has been Colman's Well, and it heals many diseases and pestilences of one fasts near it. This rock was ever a place of the kings of Fartullagh until the daughter of Conchubar's son came, viz., the wife of Conchubar ua Maelsechlainn whom the king carried off by force, as well as the queen of the king of Fartullagh, viz., CuChaile son of Dublaide, so that it was outraged, that is to say, its king was dethroned and the place forfeited to the queen of Meath; for she is the first woman that took it, and all the rest following her thence onward, and it is not subject to the king of Fartullagh. And Colman is entitled to tithes from it in the same way whoever be in it. For 'tis he who blessed it. And Colman is entitled to the tithes of the fortress outside Port na hInse, for 'tis he who traced a circle with his staff around it as he was blessing it. And there is luck of milk and ale and every othr food there ever, and triumph of conception and triumph of raid and triumph of hosting henceforward until Doom.

This entry appears to describe the natural island fortress of Cherry Island (otherwise known as Dún na Cairrge), situated out from a small harbour (Port na hInse). Colman is reckoned to have tithes from it, because he blessed it in a circle. The island was a royal site of the kings of Fartullagh, before it was taken over by the kings of Mide.

The island is also mentioned in another incident.

> § 64 At a certain time again the steward of the Ui Airmedaig, Maelodran son of Faillen, went and prostrated himself to Colman son to of Luachan; and he would bring him many alms of food and dress. And Conall was angry thereat and put Maelodran in fetters for it. However, when Colman heard that, he went with thirteen men to seek him. And when he had come to Port na hInse, Conall said that no boat should be brought out to him. And Colman said: 'The Lord is equally powerful upon water and land, and if He wills that we be drowned, His will is our will.' And Colman blessed the lake and struck it before him with his staff. And it seemed to them that it was shining mist, and they went across with dry feet as Moses the son of Amram went through the Red Sea with his people behind him.

At a later stage, Colman causes the island to sink down into the waves, angered that Maeodran had been killed by the king at Lann.

There are also references to the presence of the king of Mide on his royal crannog on Cróinis (and his ringfort at Ruba Conaill).

> §62 Then Colman went to Cell Bec, where he had again great welcome and food. And neither the Ui Gusan nor the Ui Thigernan are obliged to provision the King of Meath in Cró-inis, but only in Ruba Conaill; nor yet should troops be billeted upon them in Cró-inis, except what....out from Ruba Conaill.

> §101 The king of Meath is not entitled to demand a troop from Fartullagh to accompany him on his round, except a lad for his horses, when he is in Cró-inis for the purpose of (collecting) the troop to accompany him; and they are not obliged to join a battalion on a day of battle, except with the king, and strangers and mercenaries.

37

## Life of Cellach of Killala

Edition: Standish H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica (I.-XXXI)*. London, 1892, vol. 2, pp 55, p.60

In the *Life* of Cellach of Killala, there is a description of events on an island in Lough Conn. The saint was fleeing from Guaire, who had threatened to burn him in his church.

> Out of it he departed then and came into the borders of Loch Con, where he spent the night; next he gained the loch which men today call Claenloch, and gazed upon it until forth before him in the loch he saw an island (oilén Etgair is its name) over which it was revealed to him that much angelic ministration was performed. He drawing near enquired whether there [in the island] were any benediction of some saint; but they [of the country] said that never had saint conferred a blessing on it. Then Cellach said: 'even so, here it is that 'tis ordained for me to be a hermit'. His people jeering at him and, again, dissuading him from all project of abiding in the island, he rejoined: 'that I must stay here is decreed; but take ye your departure, for in my bishopric your [own appointed] places are many [and are various]'.

There is also a description of a monster in the lake (p. 60).

## Betha Shenáin meic Geirginn: Life of Senán, son of Gerrgenn

Edition: Whitley Stokes, *Lives of the saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford, 1890), § 1775-2500

The tenth century *Life* of Senán, a significant saint of the Uí Fidginte of west Limerick/Clare, describes several miraculous encounters with islands, principally to illustrate how the saint establishes links between the monastery of Scattery Island and several other islands. This included Inis Tuaiskert and the Great Blasket, off the Dingle Peninsula, as well as Mutton Island and Scattery Island, off the Clare coast. In an early incident, Saint Patrick discovers that Inis Cathaigh is inhabited by a monster, in his opinion so as to preserve its virginity for the resurrection of St. Senán:

> § 1826 ...And the island there in the west, in front of the sea', that is Inis Cathaigh, 'is there any dwelling in it?' Saith Patrick. "there is none', say they, 'for there is a terrible monster therein named Cathach, who doth not allow it to be inhabited.' Marvellous', saith Patrick 'is the diadem of dignity, and the precious stone, and the venerable servant specially lovable to God and to men, even the child that will be born with you. For it is for his sake that the soil of yon island is preserved in virginity, for it is there that his resurrection will be and the resurrection of a great host of saints along with him'.

Senán also resides on several other islands;

> § 2059 Thereafter Senán went to sea towards Ireland and he took up his abode in the **island of Ard Nemidh** in the district of Huí Liathain. And there he remains for the space of forty days and nights, until God manifested to him the place of his resurrection.

§ 2068 Senán left a portion of his household there, and went according to the angel's command til he came to **Inis Cara** beside Lua; and there he founded a church onto God.

§ 2155 Thence Senán went to **Inis Mór** in Irrus Descirt. The wind bears them past it so that they set up in **Inis Tuaiscirt**. So herein Senán stayed and founded a church to God in it, and he left in it a portion of his household

§ 2158 Thereafter Senán went and set up in **Inis Mór**, and therein he founded a church.

§ 2189 Senán leaves bishop Dalann, and bishop Seetna, and bishop Eirc, and Liern, the son of the Dall, and other holy men along with them in **Inis Mór**. And Senán went and set up in **Inis Caerach Céoil** (Mutton Island) and leaves a party of his household. Thence Senán went and set up in **Inis Connla**, in the district of Huí Sétna; and there he founded a church, and left therein two of his household, even bishop Fiannai and bishop Findein.

Finally, Senán is brought by an angel to Scattery Island, from where he has to banish a monster before he can establish his monastry there.

§ 2194 Then came Raphael the archangel to commune with Senán, and he said: 'Come with me, and I will shew thee the place in which thy resurrection will take place; for unto God it seems time for thee to reach it'...**Behold the island there**. Thy resurrection shall be therein, and the resurrection of a great host of saints with thee. In the west of the world there is no more sacred island. No outrage to God has ever been committed there. God sent an awful monster to keep it, so that neither sinners or sons of cursing shall dwell therein, but that it should remain in holiness awaiting thee. **Yonder monster shall be put forth from the island before thee**, so that the dwelling along with it may not annoy they community. For unto God it seemeth time for thee to go and build a **church in that island**.

Senán then goes to island and sends the monster away.

## Betha Bhrenainn meic Fhinnlogha: Life of Brenainn son of Finnlug
Edition: Whitley Stokes, *Lives of the saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford, 1890), § 3305-3915.

A medieval life, evidently influenced by the legends of Saint Brendan, in which the saint visits several islands, including a **'beautiful island'** (§3554), a **lofty island** on which it was impossible to land (§3691), **an island covered with mice-like sea-cats** (§3743), an **island filled with devils** (§3774), an **island where there were plentiful fish** and on which lived an old hermit and a monstrous sea-cat (§3787), before reaching the 'land of joy'.

## Betha Chiaráin Clúana meic Nois: Life of Ciarán of Clonmacnoise
Edition: Whitley Stokes, *Lives of the saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford, 1890), § 3916-4524.

An early medieval life of Ciarán of Clonmacnoise, where there are two accounts of islands. There is a brief description of an event whereby the saint imposes order on the low-status inhabitents of a probable crannog on a lake, possibly at Twyford Lough, Co. Westmeath.

39

'Now near Ísel there was a lake, and **heathens and rabble were living in the island** that was upon it. And the shouting and noise of that unprofitable folk used to disturb the clerics. Ciarán entreated the Lord that the island might be moved out of its place, and that thing was done; and still for remembrance of that miracle is seen the place wherein **the island was in the lake**.' § 4322.

There is also a description of events on **Inis Angin** (Hare Island, Lough Ree), where there are references to harbours (§4349), as well as the loss of a gospel book in the lake (§4356).

## *Betha Mochua Balla: Life of Mochua of Balla*
Edition: Whitley Stokes, *Lives of the saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford, 1890), § 4591-4864.

A tenth-century saint's *Life*, where there are several descriptions of events and incidents on islands. There is a description of an incident where the saint saves a warrior from a monster in the lake (§ 4709). It also includes a brief but significant incident where the saint drowns a king's island after he is ignored;

§ 4790 Yet another marvel! Mochua went to **Lough Cime**; and the attendants said to Cennfaelad, son of Colcu, for he was then king of Connaught' 'The soulfriend', say they, of Cellach, son of Ragallach is outside'. It is nothing to us', saith Cennfaelad, 'that he is a soulfriend of Cellach's: **he shall not enter this island**'. Then Mochua brought (the waters of) the lake over the island. The king went perforce in a boat after Mochua, and he surrendered himself and his son, and his grandson on bondage to him, and the island to be freed (from tribute); and afterwards it was freed.

The 'freeing' of the island refers to the granting of an island to the church free from tax or tribute to the secular authorities.

On another occasion, he causes the island of Inislee, Lough Conn, to be connected to the land;

§ 4823 This was another one of Mochua's miracles. Once he entered the district of Muad and came to **Inis Amalgaid**, and no boat was bought to him. 'It is not necessary now,' said Mochua, 'to seek a boat to go into it.' Then he raises up the earth, so that one fares on foot into the island from that time till to-day.'

This would appear to be an explanation for the formation of a promontory or spit of land connecting an island to the shore.

## *Betha Phátraic: Life of Patrick*
Edition: Whitley Stokes, *Lives of the saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford, 1890), § 1-645.

An early medieval *Life* of Patrick, which briefly describes how the saint blesses **Inis Cathaig** (Scattery Island, at the mouth of the Shannon estuary) so that Senán could establish his monastery there.

§ 502 Patrick did not go into the land; but he saw it from Luimnech, west and northward, and blessed the extent which he beheld.

§ 505 'The green island in the west', saith Patrick, 'in the mouth of the sea, a light of god's household will come into it, who shall be a chief of counsel for these tribes, even Senán of Inis Cathaigh.' After sixth or six score years, came Senán, son of Gerrgenn, son of Dubthach.

40

## *Betha Áed mac Bricc: Life of Áed mac Bricc*

Edition: W.W. Heist, *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae ex codice olim Salmanricensi nunc Bruxellensi* (Brussels, 1965), §176 para 31.

A ninth-century Latin *Life*, which in one incident relates how a man in the land of Connachta committed fratricide and was brought bound (*ligatus*) to the king of Uí Néill (*ad regem Neill*) to be executed. His parents went to Áed to plead for their son's life in fear of losing both their sons. Áed goes to the king to free the prisoner.

> 'However the king was on the island of Loch Lemdin and, reaching the harbour, Áed was not permitted to enter. There was an edict from the king that nobody should bring him to the island'
>
> *Rex autuem erat in insula stagni Lemdin et, ad portum veniens, Aidus in insulam non permitteretur intrare. Erat edictum a rege ne quis deduceret eum in insulam.*

...But Áed performed a miracle by walking on water and the king released the prisoner.

# III. Voyage tales and adventure tales

## *Nauigatio Sancti Brendani abbatis: The Voyage of St Brendan the Abbot*

Edition: J.J. O'Meara. (trans.). *The voyage of Saint Brendan*. Dublin 1976; reprint 1991.

Principal amongst the *immrama* is the eighth-century *Nauigatio Sancti Brendani abbatis* ('Voyage of St Brendan the Abbott', possibly written *c*. AD 800), which describes the travels of the sixth-century Brendan and some of his monks on a seven-year journey on the wide ocean, where they meet with marvellous islands, sea creatures and other wonders. The tale can be summarised as follows.

1. Saint Brendan, son of Finglug, was born among the Eoganacht of Loch Léin, in Munster. One day when Brendan was in Clonfert, one Bairrind comes to him. He tells a story of his own voyage to visit his son on a monastic island near Slieve League called the Delightful Island. His man and his son had sailed westwards in a boat, and has various adventures in the Promised Lands of the Saints
2. Brendan decides to go to the Promised Land of the Saints, along with his companions.
3. Brendan fasts for forty days. He then sets out for the Island of Enda, where he stays.
4. They pitch their tents by the sea, and build a boat covered in ox-hides.
5. While Brendan blesses the landing place, they are joined by three latecomers (a common motif in the voyage tales).
6. Brendan sets sail into the west. They reach an island defined by high rocky cliffs. After circling the island for three days and nights, they see a landing place. They go to a place where there is a great, uninhabited house, with beds, chairs and food laid out. They eat a meal there for three days and nights.
7. Brendan warns them not to take anything. But one man is possessed, and had stolen a bridle. He dies after being forgiven and is buried on the island.
8. A youth brings food before they set out.
9. They travel to an island of sheep.
10. They land on a whale (Jasconius) mistaking it for an island. When they light a fire on the island , the 'island' moves. The monks flee to the boat, where Brendan had remained. He explains that the island is the 'foremost' of all fish.
11. They arrive at an island which is a paradise of birds, but is actually the abode of otherworldly people.
12. They arrive on an island, which is the monastic island of Ailbhe.
13. They sail to an island whose water makes them sleep.
14. Sailing through a coagulated sea.
15. They meet with the island of sheep, Jasconius and the paradise of birds again.
16. They are followed by a beast in the ocean.
17. An island of anchorites, and one of the latecomers stays.
18. An island where there is an abundance of grapes.
19. They witness a fight between two monstrous birds.
20. They go to the island of Ailbhe again.
21. They sail across a clear sea.
22. They come to an island that is like a crystal pillar (an iceberg?)
23. They come to, and narrowly avoid danger, on an island of otherworldly blacksmiths.
24. They come to an island where there is a fiery mountain (a volcano?), where the demons take the third latecomer.
25. They come to a rock in the sea, wherein lives Judas, for eternity.

26. They come to an island (small and circular) where there lives a hermit.

27 The Island of sheep, Jasconius and the paradise of birds again.

28. The Promised Land of the Saints.

29 Return home and the death of Brendan

## *Immram curaig Máele Dúin: The voyage of the boat of Máel Dúin*

Edition: H. P. A. Oskamp, The voyage of Máel Dúin (Groningen, 1970), pp 99-181.

This ninth-century voyage tale relates the story of the voyage of one Máel Dúin and his crew, across the ocean, from island to island, before eventually they return to Ireland. In *Immram curaig Máele Dúin* the secular hero, Máel Dúin, is the son of a warrior and nun and goes on an *Odyssey*-like quest to avenge his father's murderers, visiting thirty-one islands before returning home The voyage tale can be summarised as follows.

1a This chapter explains the birth and upbringing of the hero, the son of warrior who had raped his mother, a nun. His father was killed shortly before his birth, and once upon being taunted of this, Máel Dúin decides to set out on a mission of vengeance. He sets out with a crew of seventeen.

1c The travellers reach **The Island of Murderers**, but are driven back into the ocean by a storm.

2. The journey continues to the **Island of the Enormous Ants**, which threaten to devour the boat and its crew.

3. They explore **The Island of Large Birds**. They are not dangerous and the crew kill many for provisions.

4. **The Island of the Horselike Monster**. An animal like a horse but with feet like a dog's tries to devour them and their boat; when they flee it throws pebbles after them.

5. **The Island of the Giant's Horse-race**. They find marks of hoofs as large as sails – when they flee they see a horse race on the shore and hear giants which they think are demons.

6. **The Island of the House of Salmon**. They enter an uninhabited house with food, liquor and beds ready for them. Through a valve in the door the sea throws many salmon into the house.

7. **The Island of Wondrous Fruits**. When the travellers coast an island with high cliffs Máel Dúin picks a branch hanging down. After three days they see a cluster of apples on it which satisfy them for forty days.

8. **The Island of the Revolving Beast**. A beast performs a strange trick: it tuns its bones while its skin is at rest, or vice versa; another time it turns its upper part while its lower part is at rest.

9. **The Island of the fighting horses**. Here are animals like horses tearing pieces out of each others sides. The island is running with the horses blood.

10. **The Island of the Fiery Swine, the Birds and the Golden Apples**. There is a wood with golden apples; during the day these are eaten by fiery swine living in underground caves. At night birds come to the island to eat the apples. The ground appears to be hot underfoot when the travellers disembark to collect some of the apples.

11. **The Island of the Guardian Cat**. They find an uninhabited house with food, liquor and beds ready for them. A little cat is playing on four pillars in the middle of the house. One of the fosterbrothers takes a necklet from the wall; then the cat leaps through him like a fiery arrow and he burns to ashes.

12. **The Island of the Conforming Sheep and Rods**. Another island, divided by a brazen rampart, with two herds of sheep, one white, the other black, watched by a herdsman. If one sheep is moved to the other herd, it changes colour to fit in.

13. **The Island of Swine, the Burning River and the Big Calves**. Island of huge swine, so large that even a small pig cannot be cooked whole. The island is divided by a burning river, across which the crew can see a giant watch a herd of enormous calves.

14. **The Island of the Mill**. They find an island with a mill.

15 **The Island of the Black Wailers**. One of the crew (the hero's fosterbrother) explores an island where there are people in black cloaks, wailing. He turns blacks and starts wailing, as do two sent to

43

rescue him. Four more land on the island, but do not breathe the air, rescue the couple, but not the fosterbrother.

16. **The Island with the Four Fences**. The island is divided by four fences of gold, silver, brass and crystal, within which are groups of kings, queens, warriors and maidens. One of the maidens brings the travellers food and liquor. After three days of being entertained they wake up in their boat on the ocean and see neither the girl nor the island.

17. **The Island of the Glass Bridge**. A glass bridge leads to a fortress with a net over its spikes; from a well under the bridge a girl fills a pail, but she does not invite the travellers to enter. Eventually, they ask her to sleep with Máel Dúin, but she refuses. When she finally agrees to give them an answer to their suggestion, they wake up on the ocean.

18. **The Island of the Chanting Birds**. An island with birds of various colours.

19. **The Island of the lonely pilgrim**. They find an island inhabited by a pilgrim clothed in his own hair. He is surrounded by trees in which are white birds, the souls of his kindred. He tells them that he has left Ireland floating on a sod which God established under him, and to which he adds a foot every year. They all receive food from the angels and liquor from a well, and then leave.

20. **The Island of the Wondrous Fountain**. A pilgrim lives on an island with a fountain that dispenses whey-water, milk, ale and wine.

21. **The Island of the Savage Smiths.** Giant smiths try to kill the travellers by throwing masses of glowing iron towards them, so that the sea burns and boils. They narrowly escape.

22. **The Sea of Glass.** They cross a part of the ocean which is so clear that they can se the bottom.

23. **The Sea of Cloud**. Ocean seems to be like a cloud. They are frightened, particularly as they see fortresses and herds on the bottom.

24. **The Island of the Prediction**. This island – below sea level – is surrounded by cliffs of water. The inhabitants throw nuts at them, fearing that they were a predicted invasion.

25 **The Island of the Water-arch**. On the island, a fountain spurts from the beach and comes down on the other side of the island.

26. **The Silver Column and the Silver Net**. From top of a silver column a silver net is spread out, the crew row through the mesh.

27. **The Island on the Pedestal**. Apart from a door in the pedestal on which the island stands, they find no entrance, so they do not disembark. On top of the island they see a plough.

28. **The Island of the Women.** They reach an island inhabited by a queen and seventeen daughters. After three months – it seemed three years to them – Máel Dúin's crew wishes to leave in spite of the pleasant life they are living, and in spite of the eternal youth that is promised to them. The queen, however, prevents them from leaving by throwing a clew that clings to Máel Dúin's hand. The same happens thrice, but the third time another member of the crew catches the clew and his hand is cut off.

29 **The Island of the Intoxicating Fruits**. Máel Dúin drinks the juice of berries and sleeps for twenty-four hours.

30 **The Island of the Monk of St. Brendan of Birr and the Eagle**. The meet a third pilgrim, the last survivor of fifteen pilgrims. On the island is a lake which renews youth.

31 **The Island of the Laughers**. Máel Dúin's third fosterbrother disembarks to explore an island inhabited by gay and happy people. When he becomes like them, they leave him there.

32. **The Island of the Revolving Rampart of Fire.** A small island surrounded by a rampart of fire. As the rampart revolves they are able to look into the island each time the opening passes them. They see happy and gay people and hear their drinking music.

33. **The Island of the Hermit of Tory**. They meet a pilgrim on an island, who explains that he had been kept alive by an otter who brings him a salmon every day for seven years. Now he is fed by the angels, and receives half a loaf and a morsel of fish daily. He warns Máel Dúin not to kill his father's murderers, but to make peace with them.

34. **The Island of the Murderers; return**. The travellers see a flacon, like the falcons of Ireland, and by following its flight they reach the island of the murderers. They are made welcome and make peace with the murderers. They return to Ireland, in peace.

## *Immram Brain mac Febuil: the Voyage of Bran son of Febul*

Edition: Séamus Mac Mathúna (ed. and trans.), *Immram Brain: Bran's journey to the Land of Women* (Tübingen, 1985).

In *Immram Brain mac Febuil*, Bran travels to the otherworld island of *Tír inna mBan* ('Land of women'), via another island named *Inis Subai* ('Island of Joy'). This voyage tale probably dates to the ninth century (probably being composed *c*. AD 850). The tale can be summarised as follows.

One day, Bran was in the neighbourhood of his fort when he heard sweet music to cause him to fall asleep. Upon wakening, he returns to his palace, where a woman sings fifty quatrains to him, in front of his host. She describes a wondrous land across the sea, 'thrice fifty islands far away/in the ocean to the west of us/each of them is twice or three times the size of Ireland' and entreats him to begin a voyage to the land of women.

The following day, Bran went to sea, with three groups of nine men, each led by one of Bran's fosterbrothers. When he had been at sea for two days and two nights, he saw a man coming towards him on a chariot across the sea. He names himself as Manannán son of Ler (i.e. the Irish god of the sea) and describes the undersea kingdom that they have sailed over in their coracle.

Bran then went from him until he saw an island (§ 61). He was rowing round about it and there was a large crowd gaping and laughing, as they look at Bran and his people. Bran sends one of his people onto the island. He stands with the crowd gaping out and laughing at Bran. The name of this island was the Island of Joy. They leave him there.

> (§62). 'They go then to the Land of Women. They see a band of women in the harbour. The leader of the women said: ' Come here on to the land, o Bran son of Febal. Your coming is welcome'. Bran did not dare go ashore. The woman throws a ball of thread to Bran, directly over his face. Bran puts his hand on the ball. The ball clung to his palm. The thread was in the woman's hand. She pulls the coracle towards the harbour. Then they went into a large house. They found a couch for every couple there .i. three times nine couches. The food which was brought on each dish did not diminish for them. It was a year (that) it seemed to them that they had been there. It really was many years. Every taste was not wanting to them.

One of the party becomes homesick and beseeches Bran to go home. They go home, until they reach Ireland. The people at home do not recognise them, but say that the story 'The Voyage of Bran' was in their 'ancient stories' revealing that Bran and his crew have been on the Island of Women for many years.

## *Echtra Laeghaire mheic Crimhthainn: the adventure of Laeghaire mac Crimhthainn*

Edition: Kenneth Jackson. (ed. and trans.) 'The adventure of Laeghaire mac Crimhthainn' in *Speculum* 17 (1942) pp 377-89.

This ninth-century *echtra* or adventure tale (probably dating from before AD 850) describes the adventures of Laeghaire mac Crimhthainn in the otherworld paradise of Magh Mell, which lies underneath a lake in Connacht.

One night, the men of Connacht are assembled at Énloch on Magh Aí.[17] In the morning, they see a man walking towards them through the mist. He identifies himself to Laeghaire as Fiachna son of Réda, of the fairy people. He tells them that his wife has been taken from him by enemies and asks for their help. Laeghaire gathers fifty warriors and follows him down under the lake, to the plain of Magh dhá Cheó, where they come to an encampment where there are two armies. The Connachtmen join the battle and defeat and massacre the enemy host. They then go to the place where the fairy queen is being held, and defeat another army, rescuing the woman. Laeghaire brings her back to Fiachna, and then sleeps with Dér Gréine, daughter of Fiachna, and 'fifty women were given to his fifty warriors'. They decide to go back to their own country for news. Fiachna gives them horses and warns that they not dismount from them. They arrive back in Connacht at the place of assembly and find that they have been missing for a year. The king welcomes him back, and offers him the kingdom, gold, silver, horses and their bridles, and fair women. Laeghaire, however, extols the wonders of the fairy kingdom, before returning to it (going into a fairy mound). He has not come out of it yet.

## *Echtra Thaidg mheic Chéin: the adventure of Cian's son Teigue*

Edition: Standish H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica (I.-XXXI)*. London, 1892, vol. 2, pp 385-401.

This adventure tale describes a voyage across the ocean, to various islands. During Taidg maic Céin's circuit through west Munster, his family is taken by raiders from across the sea. Gathering a force around him, Taidg makes a fleet of of hide-covered boats and sets forth into the ocean, until they reach an **island across the sea**. On the island there are human bones of huge size, as well as huge sheep, and the men fight with a large ram and kill it. They next reach an **island of peculiar birds**. When they eat the bird's eggs they burst forth themselves in plumage, the feathers of which can only be removed by bathing. The row through a storm to a beautiful island. They wander, refreshed, through its woodlands, to a great plain where there are three hills, on the sides of each is a great fortress. They meet an otherwordly woman at one of these. She tells them that this land is **Inis Locha or 'loch island'**. They go to the next fort, where they meet another woman. She tells them that the land is called

> 'Inis derglocha or 'red loch island' 'because of a red loch that is in it, containing
> an island that is surrounded with a palisade of gold, its name being Inis Patmos,
> in which are all saints and righteous that have served God. These latter, men's
> eyes never have beheld, for between radiance of the Divinity and the constant
> discourse which God and the Angels hold with them, our vision may not dwell
> nor even but impinge on them.' Then she sang a lay: - 'Red loch island...'

They go to the third fort, where they meet another woman. After some time, they set sail again from this paradise, until they reach the land of the raiders ('the land of Fresen'). After battles, Taidg brings his people home.

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[17] Énloch ('lake of the birds') was clearly a significant location for the kings of Connacht. Hogan, *Onomasticon Godelicum*, p. 503 identifies the lake as Loughnaneane, Co. Roscommon. Archaeological survey here has identified a significant and possibly royal crannog (of the O'Connors) in this lake; John Bradley and Noel Dunne, 'A crannog at Loughnaneane, Roscommon town' in *Roscommon Hist. Archaeol. Soc. Jn.* 3 (1990), pp 34-6.

# Appendix 2:

# Catalogue of crannogs in Westmeath

## Introduction

This catalogue of crannogs in Westmeath (Fig. 2.1) is primarily based on this author's archaeological surveys and site inspections carried out in June-September 2002, and July-August 2003. It is also based on previous, brief underwater archaeological surveys (using subaqua equipment and diving suits, typically to depths of 2-3 metres) conducted by the author on Lough Lene (August 1998), on Lough Ennell (October 1998) and on Lough Derravarragh (April 1999). Prior to the archaeological surveys, archival research was carried out in the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, in the National Museum of Ireland to establish a list of potential sites. This was augmented by cartographic research on first and second edition six-inch Ordnance Survey maps, based on maps available in Trinity College map library and in Westmeath R.M.P. A series of high-level, digital aerial photographs was also obtained from the Ordnance Survey of Ireland for the region surrounding Lough Derravarragh, and inspected on Geographical Information Systems, printed out and annotated.

The archaeological surveys were conducted in various seasons, from winter to summer, and many sites were re-visited on several occasions. Each crannog site was recorded by written descriptions, sketch plans and cross-sections, and photography. A select number of crannogs was also recorded by the preparation of detailed site plans, by laying out a grid across the sites and drawing them at 1:20 scale on permatrace paper. This traditional technique was used so as to record the fabric and surface appearance of the crannogs, arguably impossible with the use of modern survey equipment. On both Lough Ennell and Lough Derravarragh, it was possible to conduct the archaeological surveys with the use of a boat with an outboard engine (hired from local fishing guides and caravan parks). This enabled the sites and the landscapes to be explored from the water, bringing a unique perception of these places. The sites were also approached from the land, by walking through woodlands and across hills, bringing another perception of these sites to life.

Site distributions of crannogs in Westmeath are provided in Fig. 2.1. Site distributions of crannogs on Lough Derravarragh are provided in Fig. 2.12. Site distributions of crannogs on Lough Ennell are provided in Fig. 2.29.

The site catalogue is organised in the following manner.

**Lake and site name**

Each site is described within the context of its own lake (e.g. Ballinderry Lough, Lough Iron), presented on an alphabetical basis. Each site is then described according to its unique site name (either based on local townland name, the local name of the island or other means).

**RMP number**

This refers to the unique identifying number given to both monuments and places entered in the Westmeath Register of Monuments and Places. For instance, the RMP number of the Ballinderry No. 1 site (WM030-118) includes the two letter county identifying code (WM), the Ordnance Survey sheet number (30) and the site number (118).

**OS**

This provides information on the site's location in relation to Sheet Number/Plan/Trace. Each Ordnance Survey 6 Inch sheet is divided into sixteen equal parts known as Plans, and each of these plans is divided into six equal parts known as traces. The general position of a crannog can therefore be given by this system.

**NGR**

This refers to a site's National Grid Co-ordinates. The ten-figure co-ordinates given in this entry indicate the position of each monument or place with reference to the National Grid. In the case of some newly recorded sites, it was not possible to establish this NGR precisely.

**Site description**

This section provides the main description of the site, with comments on its local siting, morphology, fabric and composition. It also includes the main site dimensions, in terms of diameter/length and height.

**Previous finds**

This section describes the types and probable date of artefacts previously found on the site, based on archival research on the catalogues and topographical files held in the National Museum of Ireland. The individual accession number of each find, or each collection of finds, is also included.

**Site location**

This provides information on the landscape context of the site, its location on the lake, the nature of surrounding physical landscape (geology, soils, and geomorphology).

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

This describes the character, proximity and probable date of other archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity of the crannog. These sites are established from the Westmeath RMP and each is given its own RMP number.

**Previous publications**

This includes the A.S.I. file number and any published articles about the site, or collection of sites. Many sites are previously unpublished and this survey provides the first description and interpretation of them.

**Site interpretation**

This section provides interpretative comments, based on archaeological, historical and landscape evidence, thus offering some further additional thoughts not included in above sections.

**Figures.**

This refers to maps, site plans and photographs in this thesis ( see volume 1 for other site maps, plans and photographs).

# Site Catalogue

## Ballinderry Lough

**Ballinderry No. 1**     **Ballinderry Lough**

**RMP**: WM030-118     **OS** 30/12/5     **NGR** 22000 24022     **OD** 147ft

### Site description

This is the early medieval crannog Ballinderry No. 1, excavated in 1932 by the Harvard Archaeological Mission. The site was located in low-lying, marshy ground, but was probably enclosed by water towards the end of its occupation. It was a large, multi-phase crannog, evolving across time from a rectangular timber platform to a 'classic' palisaded crannog.

In Phase 1 (late 10$^{th}$ century), the site had a pre-crannog occupation phase consisting of a rectangular wooden house built on a platform ringed with piles. Artefactual finds included weaponry, tools, metalworking detritus, personal items and some distinctive Viking objects including an iron sword, longbow and gaming board. In Phase 2 (early to mid 11$^{th}$ century), the primary crannog (diameter 15m) consisted of a circular wooden house (5m diameter) surrounded by walkway of a horseshoe arrangement of timber, all retained within a palisade. Finds from its substructural layers included bronze pins, iron knives, stone hones, leather shoe, wooden buckets. Finds from its occupation layers included copper alloy pins, brooch, hones, antler, blue glass, a silver kite shaped brooch, ringed pins, bone combs, millstone, as well as iron tools, wooden buckets and ladles. In Phase 3 (early to mid 11$^{th}$ century), there was a crannog with a large pile palisade, entrance and quay. In Phase 4 (mid to late 11$^{th}$ century), the crannog was surrounded by a plank palisade, within which there were three possible houses represented by rectilinear mounds or hearths of ash. Finds included an iron knife, ringed-pin, bone pins and possibly a bronze hanging lamp. By Phase 5, the site had been abandoned, being covered by dark humus, but there may have been intermittent activity in the late middle ages (including the deposition of tools, coins, etc). The site's structures and material culture assemblage have attracted much comment over the years, largely because of the distinctively Hiberno-Norse character of many of the artefacts.

Site dimensions: 33m E/W     20m N/S     Height 2-3cm

### Site location

Located in boggy marsh, originally part of a much more extensive wetland that stretched between Moyvoughley and Ballinderry Lough. Geology is Dark Limestone and Old Red Sandstone. Soils to the north are dominated by raised bogs, fen peats and cut over bog. To the south, east and west are gleys, probably from former lake deposits. The nearest cultivable soils appear to be grey brown podzolics c.200m to the southeast.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is a probable early medieval church and graveyard at Kilnahinch (WM30-83), 220m to south. There are also earthworks at Ballinderry (WM30-84, 85), about 600m to the southeast. The nearest ringforts are on a ridge 2km across the bog to the northwest, at Cooleen (WM30-80), Shurack (WM30-78) and Shurack (WM30-79). The early medieval crannog at Ballinderry No. 2, Co. Offaly is across the county boundary about 2.5km to the southeast.

**Previous publications**: Hugh O'Neill Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannóg no. 1' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 43c, (1936), pp 103-239; Conor Newman, The archaeology of Ballinderry Lough, unpublished MA thesis, Dept. of Archaeology, UCD (Dublin, 1986), pp 81-119; Ruth Johnson, 'Ballinderry crannóg No. 1: a reinterpretation' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 99 c (1999), pp 23-71; A.S.I. files, Westmeath RMP: WM 30:118: Ballinderry.

**Site interpretation**

Ballinderry 1 is a distinctive early medieval crannog. It was originally located adjacent to an early medieval esker routeway through the southern part of early medieval Mide (i.e. running along the modern Westmeath/Offaly border). It may have originally been an early medieval marshland settlement that gradually was transformed into a 'classic' crannog. The cultural background of the site's inhabitants remains intriguing, suggesting that these were indeed a Hiberno-Norse group, but in its latter phases it was probably a Gaelic Irish crannog, whose owners had access to objects from Hiberno-Norse Dublin, as might be expected in the midlands of the tenth to eleventh century AD. It was probably also a high-status occupation site, given the impressive architecture of the houses, palisades, gateways and the richness of the finds.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.2, Fig. 2.3, Fig. 2.4, Fig. 2.5.

# Bishop's Lough

**Derrynagarragh**       **Bishop's Lough**

**RMP** WM007-99       **OS** 7/16/1       **NGR** 24809 26484       **OD** 251ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a large, oval platform situated today on marshy ground, but it would have originally been in middle of lake. It is flat-topped, irregular and has a possible small boulder (1m x 1m) kerb around its perimeter, with smaller stones packed in around them. The mound

is also made up of these small stones. There are at least 4 wooden piles at the northwest side. The site appears to be a modified natural island, refurbished and used as a crannog. There are also 2 smaller mounds nearby with possible stone kerbing. This is possibly an enhanced island platform, rather than a classic crannog.

Site dimensions: 80m NE/SW,   60m WSW/ESE          Height 2.5m.

**Previous finds**

Previous finds include three early medieval bronze pins (NMI 1988: 48-50) recovered from the west end of Bishop's Lough, in Derrynagarragh townland, possibly from this site. A hoard of early medieval coins is also known from this locality, although no details are available here.

**Site location**

Located at southeast end of the Bishop's Lough, about 200m from original shoreline to southwest. This was originally a much larger lake in a narrow drumlin valley at southeast end of Lough Derravarragh. The crannog is overlooked by steep drumlin slopes from the north and south. The local geology is Lucan formation dark limestones. The adjacent soils are all fen and fen peats, but the nearest neighbouring dryland soils are all of good quality grey-brown podzolics (Rathowen cherty phase, soil suitability class A 11).

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is an impressive bivallate ringfort at Froghanstown, (WM007-100), 300m to the southwest. Other nearby adjacent archaeological sites include a bivallate ringfort at Froghanstown (WM007-96), 570m to southwest and a bivallate ringfort at Froghanstown (WM007-105), 600m to southeast. There is also a barrow at Derrynagarragh (WM07-63), on the hilltop 800m to the north.

**Previous publications**:

None: A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P: 7:99: Derrynagarragh

**Site interpretation**

This is a probable early medieval crannog situated within a local early medieval settlement complex, with a possible pairing between the bivallate ringfort and the crannog.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.6.

# Doonis Lough

**Doonis**      **Doonis Lough**

**RMP**: WM015-03      **OS** 15/8/5      **NGR** 20987 25416      **OD** 125ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a small, low cairn of small stones, clay and timber in shallow water (1m depth), originally c.50m from the shoreline. The crannog was built by laying a primary platform of large (10-15cm diameter) roundwood alder, ash and birch logs directly on the lake muds (an organic-rich grey-brown silt or gytta soil). An upper platform of radially laid oak roundwoods (8-12cm diameter) was laid across this foundation. The cairn of stones was laid across these timber beams, retained by a vertical roundwood palisade that surrounds the site. The crannog's upper surface is level, with an even profile with sharply sloping sides. The cairn itself is built of small, angular fist-sized stones (6-8cm length), larger pebbles and some larger (60-80cm in length) irregular limestone slabs, all of which lie exposed on the surface and in the shallow water surrounding the island. The enclosing features include a possible irregular kerb on the south and east sides, while the vertical wooden palisade includes an inner row of slow-grown (60-80 years old) ash (*fraxinus excelsior*) roundwood poles (8-12cm diameter). There are also occasional vertical posts in the stones and muds 2-3m out from the island (apparently driven to depths of 1m. A single, loose vertical post (8cm diameter, 70cm in length) from the enclosing palisade was inspected on the east side of the crannog. This was a roundwood ash pole, sharpened to a chisel-shaped point, using a metal axe wielded at very shallow angles. The toolmarks on the worked end are small (3cm length, 4m width), slightly concave with clean junctions between each toolmark. These appear to have been made by a small bronze axe, possibly of Middle or Late Bronze Age type. Burnt bone fragments and unburned bone, (apparently mostly of bird) is visible in the eroded section of the crannog's cairn material on the west and east sides. A possible wooden artefact (a charred and carved piece of bucket or tub fragment) lies in the water on the east shore of the crannog. The crannog is now overgrown by young alder trees and rushes, and is surrounded by reedbeds.

Site dimensions: 17m NNE/SSW,      11m E/W, Height 1.6m (60cm above water level).

**Previous finds on the crannog**

| | |
|---|---|
| Iron spade | NMI IA/59/68 |
| Iron billhook | NMI IA/59/68 |
| Pointed iron object | NMI IA/59/68 |
| 3 portions of rotary quern | NMI IA/59/68 |
| Stone hone, perforated | NMI IA/59/68 |

**Site location**

Located towards eastern shore of Doonis Lough (reached today by wading for 20m from land, but was originally *c*.50m from the scarp of original shoreline). Doonis Lough is a small lake in the level, callow soils adjacent to the eastern shore of Lough Ree. Geology is Lucan formation limestone, the adjacent soils are mainly fen peats and raised bogs, being the callow wetlands of the River Shannon. There is also an 'island' of grey brown podzolics (Patrickswell series over limestone till) on a hillock 300m to the east.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

This crannog is located in an extensive wetland area of poorly drained, former river callow wetlands at the eastern edge of Lough Ree. This must originally have been a wide area of riverine wetlands and there are few known archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity (and drylands are located at some distance). The nearest archaeological sites are three ringforts on a hilltop at Doonis (WM15-6, WM 15-7, WM 15-8), 1.2km to the south-southeast. There are also early medieval monastic islands on Lough Ree to the north and west, including Inchbofin, Co. Westmeath and Saint's Island, Co. Longford.

**Previous publications**:

None: A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 15:3: Doonis

**Site interpretation**

This was probably originally a Bronze Age crannog, as indicated by the probable Middle Bronze to Late Bronze Age toolmarks on the vertical stake observed on the eastern side. Bronze Age crannogs, with small cairns built of small hand-sized stones enclosed within slight vertical roundwood palisade are known, notably at Knocknalappa, Co. Clare and on Lough Gara, Co. Sligo. It also evident that it was re-used in the early medieval period, as indicated by the presence of the rotary quern, perforated stone hone.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.7; Fig. 2.8.

## Dysart Lakes

**Johnstown 1**    **Johnstown Lough (Dysart Lakes group)**

**RMP:** WM013-27    **OS** 13/7/2  **NGR** 25610 26222  **OD** 270ft

**Site description**

The crannog was a low, circular mound of dark, peaty soil, with vertical wooden posts and numerous fragments of burnt bone scattered across the site. It is presently in a marshy field

and is heavily overgrown (by alder, willow and rushes) and inaccessible. The site must have been built on a natural, low shoal in the lake, as indicated by local presence of sands and gravels. This crannog was originally revealed during the digging of a drainage ditch for the River Deel, which is located *c*.20m to east.

Site dimensions: 22.8m N/S      23m E/W      Height 1.2m.

**Previous finds from the crannog**

Bronze pin (probably early medieval in date) may have been found on this site, although it was more likely to have been found on WM013-26.      NMI 1995:1586

Animal bone                                                                                      NMI 1975:259.

**Site location**

Probably originally located in marshy ground on the eastern side of shallow marshy wetlands, originally part of Dysart Lakes complex of ribbon lakes along the River Deel. Local geology is probably limestone, local soils are dominated by extensive areas of fen peats and raised bog, but on the drylands at a distance to west and east are Rathowen and Rathowen cherty phase grey brown podzolics.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The crannog is in an isolated location, as there are few archaeological sites in the vicinity. The nearest archaeological site is a second crannog at Johnstown (WM13-26), 500m to the west and an early medieval crannog at Dryderstown (WM13-28) 1km to the southeast. On the dryland, there is a standing stone at Battstown (WM13-025) and an earthwork at Battstown (WM13-029), both *c*.1.5km to southwest.

**Previous publications**:

None: A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 13:27: Johnstown

**Site interpretation**

This is a possible early medieval occupation platform in an isolated wetland location, although this cannot be ascertained.


**Johnstown 2**          **Johnstown Lough (Dysart Lakes group)**

**RMP**: WM013-26      **OS** 13/07/3      **NGR** 25666 26222      **OD** 270ft

**Site description**

This crannog was a circular mound of stone, earth, sand and charcoal, on the marshy eastern shore of Johnstown Lough. It is heavily overgrown by alders, willows and rushes today and is totally invisible. The middle of the crannog was constructed of small stones, within a perimeter of clay and soft, sandy silt. There were vertical wooden posts (birch and alder, 10-15cm diameter, spaced at 80cm intervals), on the southwest and south edges, These were in

two concentric rings, with the two rows 2-2.5m apart. There was no trace of horizontal planking. The mound was probably placed directly on soft silt and ringed with posts. It is situated on a marshy promontory in the lake, being surrounded by deep water to north, west and southwest. It is separated from the immediately adjacent dryland to the east and northeast by a marshy strip 10-15m wide.

Site dimensions: 23.8m N/S      22m E/W      Height 80cm.

**Previous finds from this crannog**

A bronze pin (probably early medieval in date)      NMI 1995:1586

as well as an early medieval mould fragment.

**Site location**

Located on a marshy promontory on the eastern shore of Johnstown Lough, a small lake in the Dysart Lake complex along the River Deel. It is overlooked by a low hillock 100m to the east, so would not have been part of a continuous lake. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are largely fen peats and raised bog, but the drylands to west and east are Rathowen and Rathowen cherty phase grey brown podzolics.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The crannog is in a quite isolated location, as there are few archaeological sites in the vicinity. The nearest site is a second crannog at Johnstown (WM13-27), 500m to the east and a third crannog at Dryderstown (WM13-028) 500m to the southeast. On the dryland, there are two ringforts at Clonyn (WM13-012) and Clonyn (WM13-013), both c.1.2km to northeast.

**Previous publications**:

None: A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 13:26: Johnstown.

**Site interpretation**

This is a possible early medieval occupation platform in an isolated wetland location, although this cannot be ascertained. Similar sites have also proven to be Bronze Age in date.


**Dryderstown**          **Lough Analla (Dysart Lakes group)**

**RMP:** WM013-28      **OS** 13/7/3      **NGR** 25703 26172      **OD** 265ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a low, circular, palisaded mound, situated 30m from southern marshy shoreline. It is located in fairly deep water, which is 2-3m depth, 3m out from the site. The crannog was built on a natural sandbank that extends to south and southeast of the island for some 3-5m as marshy ground before shelving off into deep water. The crannog is low, level

with gradually sloping sides, with an even profile, but is slightly higher to east. It has a palisade on the north west side, where there are vertical oak posts and stakes (6-16cm diameter, 60cm in height) visible, situated 30cm out from the edge of the island. The vertical posts appear to be in two rows, 10-20cm apart (possibly for post-and-wattle). There are also vertical oak posts in the internal surface, although these do not make a clear house plan. Between the palisade posts, the horizontal, radially laid beams of the primary construction phase of the crannog are visible.

Site dimensions: 16m N/S            15m E/W            3.4m (40cm above water level).

**Previous finds on the crannog**

| | |
|---|---|
| Copper alloy buckle | NMI 1988:43 |
| Copper alloy buckle | NMI 1988:44 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1988:54 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1988:55 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1988:56 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1988:57 |
| Copper alloy brooch | NMI 1988:58 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1988:59 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1988:60 |
| Copper alloy brooch | NMI 1988:61 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1988:62 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1988:63 |
| Copper alloy brooch | NMI 1988:64 |
| Copper alloy finger ring | NMI 1988:65 |
| Copper alloy buckle | NMI 1988:66 |
| Copper alloy harp peg | NMI 1988:67 |
| Silver object | NMI 1988:68 |
| Copper alloy strap tag | NMI 1988:69 |
| Copper alloy ingot | NMI 1988:70 |
| Copper alloy object | NMI 1988:71 |
| Copper alloy mount | NMI 1988:72 |

**Site location**

Located in southern end of Lough Analla, the middle lake of the Dysart Lakes group on the River Deel. The site is overlooked by low, rolling hillocks 100m to the east and south, with extensive low-lying bogs to north and northwest. To the south, the shore is initially marshy, but rises gradually to rolling grassland. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils mostly fen peats

and raised bogs, but drylands to west and east are grey brown podzolics (Rathowen and Rathowen cherty phase). The 'Ben of Fore' (hill) is clearly visible to the northwest.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

There are several archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity. The nearest are the crannog at Johnstown (WM13-27), 500m to the northwest and a crannog at Johnstown (WM13-026) 1km to the northwest. A church and graveyard is located at Dysart (WM13-030) 600m to the south. There are also early medieval ringforts at Clonyn (WM13-012) and Clonyn (WM13-013), both c.1.2km to north-northeast. There is also a natural island to the north, making the construction of a crannog more interesting. However, the site is relatively isolated.

**Previous publications**:

Robert Farrell and Victor Buckley, 'Preliminary examination of the potential of offshore and underwater sites in Loughs Ennell and Analla, Co. Westmeath, Ireland' in *I.J.N.A.U.E.* 13, no. 4, (1984), pp 281-5; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 13:28: Dryderstown.

**Site interpretation**:

This is evidently an early medieval crannog and previous finds made on the island by metal detectorists (NMI 1988:43, 44, 54-72) have been immensely rich and have included a wide range of early medieval artefacts, including buckles (3), pins (8), brooches (3), a mount, a strap end, a harp peg, a ring, objects, as well as a Viking silver ingot (probably tenth century AD). An early medieval bronze scabbard mount (NMI 1988:76) found at Dysart Lake may also derive from this crannog. The crannog is probably a high-status site, producing both impressive structural remains and a rich array of early medieval artefacts. It is probably a high-status or even 'royal' site. It is situated c.3km southwest of the known early medieval royal site or *caput* of the Delbna Mór (Delvin barony), which was situated at Telach Cail (Castletown Delvin), which was replaced by De Nugent's Anglo-Norman motte and castle. It may have been a lordly or defensive site.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.9; Fig. 2.10.

# Lough-a-Trim  (Knockaville )

| **Knockaville** | **(Lough-a-Trim crannog)** | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **RMP** WM27-30 | **OS** 27/05/4 | **NGR** 25066 24804 | **OD** 328ft |

### Site description

This crannog was recorded by the antiquarian Rev. William Falkiner in 1898, after it had been partially damaged by diggings to produce top-soil to spread over the old lakebed. The site apparently had a 'low, circular mound, 22ft in diameter', surrounded by, and studded over with black oak piles'. A 'rough floor of beams' was exposed at a depth of 4ft. It was possibly enclosed within a plank palisade or stockade of 'rough hewn planks, standing close together. These planks were '9ft long, 10inches wide and 3inches thick'. A possible midden of 'a great quantity of ashes, burnt wood and bones' was found near the 'outer portion of the stockade'. Lying on the ground was 'a quantity of bones, amongst others, those of wild swine - red deer and oxen' as well as 'several boar's jaws with large tusks still remaining. Also the horns of the ancient crumpled-horned ox.' Artefacts found on the mound included 2 'horn' combs (In Falkiner's opinion still bearing the greasy surface of the 'pomatum used by the ladies of Lough-a-Trim in the lake-dwelling times'), a comb fragment, 2 bone pins, a possible 'tracked stone', a hammerstone, 2 bronze pins, 1 iron object (a possible 'hold fast'), 1 amber ring fragment and 1 wooden ladle.

### Previous finds on the crannog

| | |
| --- | --- |
| Early medieval comb 'found on Lough-a-Trim crannog.' | NMI 1938:151 |
| Two bronze pins | UM A532:1-2:1937 |
| Bronze stick pin | UM A533:1937 |
| Bronze pennanular brooch | UM A535:1937. |

### Site location

Previously located in small 'bog-lake' known as 'Lough-a-Trim', near Knockaville, Co. Westmeath (east of Lough Ennell), about 150m from southern shore. The lake was drained about 1878, exposing this mound near the centre known as 'The Island'. The site is located on a bedrock geology of Lucan formation dark limestones and shales, at the southern edge of an extensive cut-over raised bog, adjacent to grey-brown podzolic soils.

### Adjacent archaeological sites

The early medieval crannog is located in a landscape rich in early medieval settlement sites. The nearest archaeological site is a ringfort at Knockaville (WM26-46), 1km to the west, with a ringfort at Knockaville (WM26-46) and earthwork at Knockaville (WM26-47) also

about 1km to the west. There are also several ringforts at Heathstown (WM27-39, WM 27-40) and Hightown (WM27-51) to the east.

**Previous publications**

W. Falkiner, 'Notice of a crannog at Lough-a-Trim, Killucan, County of Westmeath' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, 21 (1989-1900), pp 216-217; Mairead Dunleavy, 'A classification of early Irish combs', *R.I.A. Proc.*, 88C (1988), pp 341-422, at p.367, p. 401, Fig. 8; Howard Kilbride-Jones, *Zoomorphic pennanular brooches* (London, 1980). P. 146, Fig. 50; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 27:30: Knockaville.

**Site interpretation**

This is a probable early medieval crannog, as indicated by the early medieval bronze pins and an early medieval bone comb (datable to the ninth to twelfth century AD), although Kilbride-Jones dates the Type D bronze pennanular brooch to the sixth century AD.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.11


# Lough Bane

**Clonsura**             **Lough Bane**

**RMP** WM001-28      **OS** 1/13/2      **NGR** 24160 27748      **OD** 211ft

**Site description**

This possible crannog is a large, low, circular mound, located on marshy ground. It appears as a low, grassy island surrounded by bullrushes, surmounted with some trees and bushes. It appears to have an irregular surface and gradually sloping sides. It is a very isolated site, totally surrounded today by bogs and riverine marshes, all with very low agricultural potential. It is inaccessible today without a boat. However, the site may originally have been accessible by waterways from the River Inny, which flows through the bogs to the east, perhaps indicating a its role on a significant routeway. No known previous finds.

Site dimensions. c.35m E/W, 20m N/S, Height 1-2m

**Site location**

Located in the middle of Lough Bane, a small bog lake, about 100m from its south shoreline. Geology is Lucan formation dark limestones and shales. The adjacent soils are all raised of bog, which totally surround the lake to north, south, west and east. On the nearest dryland (a narrow spur of land about 400m to the northeast), grey-brown podzolic soils (Elton, soil suitability class A11) lie over a limestone till

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological sites are at some considerable distance, including three ringforts located on a ridge 2.6km to west; at Castletown Upper (WM001-18), Carlanstown (WM001-29) and Carlanstown (WM001-30).

**Previous publications**

None; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 1:28: Clonsura.

**Site interpretation**

This is not certainly a crannog, although it appears to be one. If it is an early medieval site, it is certainly strategically located close the navigable River Inny.


# Lough Derravarragh


**Ballynakill 1**                          **Crannog (low-cairn)**

**RMP** Previously unknown     **OS** 7/9/3        **NGR** -          **OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This crannog, a new site identified during the survey, is a low, circular cairn of sand, gravel and stones (c.8m in diameter E-W, 30cm above water levels). The islet is locally known as 'Gull Island'. It is located at the northern end of a broad, level shoal across the lakebed at the northwest end of the lake. The cairn is situated on a narrow, linear causeway of gravel and stones, running for 10-12m to the south. The cairn itself is circular and flat-topped, with a level upper surface and gently sloping sides. It is constructed of medium-sized, flat, limestone slabs (60cm length, 30cm width, 10cm thickness), stones and sand. Across the southwest end, the stones are smaller (8-1ocm in length). There are two vertical oak roundwood posts (with sapwood) at the eastern edge of the cairn. NMI topographical files (NMI IA/118/84) mention the presence of a possible wooden jetty at the northwest side of the cairn, and the presence of other wooden posts to the E and SE. A scatter of animal bone (probably of young cattle) lies on the surface at the southern edge of the cairn. The site is largely overgrown by reeds and small trees in the summer.

**Previous finds from crannog**

Early medieval ring-brooch                          NMI 1982:74

Early medieval bronze mount                        NMI 1984:143a

Early medieval bronze escutcheon (2-piece)     NMI 1984:143b

Early medieval iron spike or awl (identified 9th April 2003) lies in shallow water at the east edge of the cairn.

Site dimensions: Cairn 6-8m E-W, overall site including causeway (9.0m NE-SW, 10m NW-SE) 1.0m in height (30cm above water).

**Site location**

Located at the north end of a shoal on the lake-bed, off the western shoreline, in open, shallow water. It has very good views to the north, east and southeast. It is overlooked by the eastern slopes of a long ridge, 150m to WSW.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is an earthwork 200m to the west on the hill-slope at Ballynakill (WM07-38). There is also a univallate ringfort at Ballynakill (WM07-39), 300m to west, while the newly identified crannog at Faughalstown 1 (see above) is located 700m to northeast, across the lough.

**Previous publications**

None, previously unknown site.

**Site interpretation**

This crannog appears to be a small early medieval crannog, built on shallows on a shoal in the lake. The presence of early medieval metalwork (sixth to eighth century AD) and animal bone suggests its use for habitation, and the cairn and posts may represent a house platform.

**Ballynakill 2**          **Crannog (low-cairn)**

**RMP** 007-107          **OS** 7/9/3          **NGR** 24265/26639          **OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a low, oval-shaped cairn of stone, situated on the level, marshy foreshore. Originally, it would have been located in 1-2m water and is depicted as an islet in water on second edition OS maps. The cairn appears to be situated on a local, slightly raised natural ridge running NW/SE, parallel with the water's edge. The cairn has a flat, level upper surface. It slopes steeply down to the shore on east and west sides, and is more gradually sloping on north and south sides. There is a possible defining stone kerb of large boulders (50-60cm l.) at the northeast edge, facing out into the lake. The cairn is constructed of medium-sized, angular and water-rolled limestone blocks (50cm in length, 20cm thickness) and small stones. A well-constructed duck-hide is located in the northeast sector. The cairn is overgrown by weeds and brambles.

Site dimensions: 9.5m N-S, 7.5m E-W 1.0m in height.

**Site location**

Located mid-way down the lake, on the western shore. It has very good views to the north, east and southeast. It is overlooked by steeply rising slopes 70m to WSW. The present water's edge is 15m to the NE, the ancient shoreline is 51m to the SW.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is an earthwork, 150m to northwest at Ballynakill (WM07-38). There is also a ringfort at Ballynakill (WM07-39), 300m to the northwest.

**Previous publications**

None; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:107: Ballynakill

**Site interpretation**

This is an unusual site, being a small cairn, originally built in shallow water. Interestingly, there is a small, high-cairn crannog 800m to the northeast, directly across the lake at Faughalstown 1. It is possible that these two sites functioned as markers for a crossing point of the lake.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.13; Fig. 2.14.


**Coolure Demesne 1**                    **Crannog (high-cairn)**

**RMP** WM 007-004          **OS** 7/1/5      **NGR** 24172/26904      **OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This is a circular high-cairn crannog (32m (N-S), 36m (E-W), 3m in height (c.5m from lake bed). It is steep-sided on the N side, and slopes more gradually down to the SW, S and SE. It has a higher, level platform or mid-cairn in the N sector (9m N-S, 18m E-W). This overlooks a lower, level terrace across the S half of the site. The crannog is constructed of large, water-eroded angular boulders (1m l., 0.5m w, 0.3m in thickness), tightly packed smaller stones and pebbles and horizontal timbers. The stones on the N side are smaller. There are horizontal oak timbers beneath the surface in the site interior. There are both plank and roundwood palisade/revetments along the S and SW sides at the water's edge. The plank palisade extends for an arc of at least 5-6m, and is constructed of 4-5 cleft oak timbers 40cm in width, standing to heights of 50cm. There are also several smaller roundwood poles in same area, typically 15-20cm in diameter. The roundwood posts are located within, and outside, the plank palisade. There is a dense scatter of animal bone (cattle limb bones, sheep/goat mandibles) in the SW sector, spread over an area 3-4m N-S, 2m E-W. The bone was broken and butchered. Other stray bones can be seeing lying on the cairn off-shore. A small stone-built sub-circular hut structure is located on the platform on the N side of the cairn (3.7m N-S, 2.5m E-W), with an entrance on NE side (1m w.). A small duck-hide is

located in the NW sector. The crannog was extensively explored by metal detectorists in the 1980s, leading to the recovery of several early medieval bronze pins, hack-silver and other objects. The island is thickly overgrown with ash and birch trees, with a dense cover of brambles.

Site dimensions 32m (N-S), 36m (E-W), 3m in height (c.5m from lake bed).

**Previous archaeological finds from crannog**

| | |
|---|---|
| Early medieval enameled bronze mount (5th-7th century AD) | NMI 1988:73 |
| Early medieval bronze hand pin (6th-7th century AD) | NMI 1988:74 |
| Early medieval bronze stick-pin (9th-10th cent AD | NMI 1983:87 |
| Early medieval bronze stick-pin (9th-10th cent. AD) | NMI 1983:90 |
| Early medieval bronze ring-pin (9th-10th cent. AD | NMI 1983:92 |
| Early medieval bronze ring-pin (9th-10th cent. AD | NMI 1983:93 |
| Early medieval bronze mount (7th-10th cent. AD | NMI 1988:75 |
| Early medieval bronze ruler | NMI 1988:139 |
| Early medieval balance scale pans (2) (9th-10th cent. AD) | NMI 1989:22 |
| Early medieval (Viking) hoard of hack silver found in 1980 on southeast side of crannog, including | |
| Two Hiberno-Norse stamped armlets | NMI 1988:224a,b |
| A complete silver ingot | NMI 1988:224 c |
| Three silver ingots fragments | NMI 1988:224 d-f |
| Hiberno-Norse silver bracelet | NMI 1990:85 |
| Butchered cattle, pig, sheep/goat bone, unidentified bone fragments | NMI 1979:80 |

**Site location**

This site is located c.120m offshore in a broad bay at the N end of the lake. It is situated today in relatively deep water (c.2-3m max. in summer). The lakebed is a soft grey-brown marl over a stony subsoil with bedrock outcrops. It has excellent views to the SW, S and SE (all parts of the lake are visible). It is very exposed to SW winds, with a heavy wave impact on this side during storms. It is overlooked by a low ridge to the N, with low-lying marshy and wooded land to NW and E.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The crannog is overlooked by a large early medieval raised ringfort 150m to north at Coolure Demesne (WM007-003), while there are other crannog platforms and enhanced islets recently identified around this little bay.

**Previous publications**

The site is unpublished, see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:4: Coolure Demesne; The early medieval bronze enamalled plaque is referred to in, Judith Carroll, 'Millefiori in the development of early Irish enamelling' in Cormac Bourke (ed.), *From the Isles of the North: Early medieval art in Britain and Ireland* (Belfast, 1995), pp 49-57, at p. 53, Fig. 2; The hoard of Viking silver armlets is mentioned in John Sheehan, 'Early Viking Age silver hoards from Ireland and their Scandinavian elements' in H.B. Clarke, M. Ní Mhaonaigh and R. Ó Floinn (eds.), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), p. 201.

**Site interpretation**

The crannog's height, location, individual features (e.g. oak palisades) and association with a prominent raised ringfort probably indicate that it is a high-status site, possibly even an early medieval royal site. Medieval historical sources suggest that the Uí Fiachrach Cúile Fobair, (a minor sub-dynasty possibly related to the Cenél Laoghaire of Brega), had their royal seat here on the north shore of Lough Derravarragh. The presence of an early medieval bronze mount with red and yellow enamel, blue and white millefiori glass suggests some activity in the sixth-seventh century. There are also stick pins, ringed pins and hack silver hoard of probable ninth to tenth century date.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.15; Fig. 2.16; Fig. 2.17.

| Coolure Demesne 2 | Islet (low-cairn crannog) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RMP** Previously unknown | **OS** 7/1/5 | **NGR** - | **OD** 208ft |

**Site description**

This is a large, oval cairn at the water's edge, perhaps an enhanced natural feature. It is highest at its NE end. There is a level, kidney-shaped platform across the upper surface, 14m E-W, 8m N-S. The cairn slopes gradually off to the E and S sides, and more steeply to the W and N (towards the shore). The surface is largely composed of large, outcropping boulders (70cm l, 40cm w, 15cm th.), although there are smaller stones exposed to the SE. Although the cairn appears to be attached to the shore at its NE end by a platform (10m), there is also a stone causeway, 10m l., 50cm w. and 10cm in height from its mid-point to the shore, oriented NE-SW. There are also a number of smaller, rocky islets or platforms along the water's edge in the vicinity. The most prominent is situated in the water (15m from shore) to the WSW of this site, measuring 5m N-S, 4.3m E-W, 20cm height. These appear to be deliberately enhanced.

Site dimensions: 36m E-W, 27m N-S, 1.5m in height.

**Previous finds from island**

This site was discovered during fieldwork, no previous finds are known from its surface.

**Site location**

Located at the water's edge on the shore of the broad bay at the N of the lake. It has excellent views across the lake. In its immediate locality, it is situated at the base of a rocky, sloping foreshore, with the original shoreline c.8m to the N. It overlooks the Coolure Demesne crannog (WM007-004) out on the water 40m NNE. crannog. It is directly overlooked itself by the Coolure Demesne ringfort (WM007-003) c. 50m to the NW.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The site is overlooked by a large early medieval raised ringfort 90m to north at Coolure Demesne (WM007:003), while the early medieval crannog at Coolure Demesne is 150m to the south.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Site interpretation**

This appears to be a natural mound that has been enhanced by scarping around its edges, with a stone causeway constructed joining it to the land. It may have been occupied during the early medieval period, given its close proximity to an early medieval crannog and ringfort.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Coolure Demesne 3** | **Island** | | |
| **RMP** Previously unknown | **OS** 7/1/5 | **NGR** - | **OD** 208ft |

**Site description**

This is a large natural, but enhanced, island that is irregular in plan and profile. It has a straight west side, with a more irregular east and south shore. It has straight sides to the N, E and W and slopes gradually down to the water on the S side. There is natural bedrock visible in parts (with a spur running out into the water from the SE corner), while the surface is also covered with large boulders and stones. The island is masked under trees and bushes (pine, whitethorn, ash). There is a kerb of boulders along the N side, defining the island from the shore. An unusual causeway runs from the island to the shore, despite the fact that it is clearly joined anyway to the land by a natural spur. This causeway runs N-S out from the island, then turns to the E (5m out from the island). The causeway measures 18m l. 50cm in width, 25cm in height, and is constructed of a double row of boulders. A modern concrete

quay and steps are found on the SW side of the island, and it is dissected across its E-W width by a modern fieldwall.

Site dimensions: Length 45m N-S. Width 25m E-W. Height 2.0m

**Site location**

Located at the water's edge in the bay at the north end of the lake. It is overlooked by steeply rising ground to the north. It has good views to the west, south and east, with particularly clear views of the Coolure Demesne crannog (WM007-004) to the southwest.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The site is overlooked by a large early medieval raised ringfort 110m to northwest at Coolure Demesne (WM007:003), while the early medieval crannog at Coolure Demesne is 160m to the southwest.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Site interpretation**

Although this is clearly a natural island, it appears to have been enhanced in various ways. Its existence on the shore opposite the early medieval crannog at Coolure Demesne 1 may perhaps increase the social and ideological importance of that constructed island.


**Derrya 1**  **Rock platform**

**RMP** Previously unknown  **OS** 7/1/5  **NGR - OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This is small, circular, rock platform of stone and earth. It is composed of small stones, with a few medium-sized stones lying around on the surface, particularly at NNE end. It has a level surface (8m N-S, 5.5m E-W on top of the platform. It slopes gradually down to the E, S and W. It is slightly more steep to the NE (towards the shore). A lower, level platform (8m NE-SW, 7m NW-SE) is attached to the main platform at its ESE end. The platform is separated from the shore by a narrow, waterlogged ditch, c.25cm in depth. A neatly built, zig-zag stone causeway joins the platform with the shore, but it does not run out directly to it. It firstly leads out from the shore in an E-W direction, before turning slightly in an ENE-WSW towards the platform. For the latter part of its length, the causeway runs across the secondary platform described above. The causeway measures 9m in length, 70-80cm in width, by 15cm in height. There is no duck-hide on the crannog, suggesting that the causeway was not constructed in recent times. Previous finds. This site was discovered during fieldwork, no previous finds are known from its surface.

Site dimensions: 14m N-S, 13m E-W, 0.5m in height.

## Site location

Located on the west side of sheltered bay at the N of the lake, at the mouth of a narrower inlet to the N. The site is 100m W of Coolure Demesne crannog. It has excellent views to it across the lake, while the E shore is also all clearly visible down as far as Knockeyon. The site is quite protected from winds by the lakeshore to the SW. In its immediate locality, it is situated on a level area of marshy lakebed, 16m E of a steeply sloping, rocky foreshore, 26m to original shoreline. Beyond the shoreline, the site is overlooked by slightly rising ground to the NW.

## Adjacent archaeological sites

The nearest archaeological site is a large early medieval raised ringfort 220m to northwest at Coolure Demesne (WM007:03). There is also an early medieval crannog, 300m to west at Coolure Demesne (WM007-04). A wooden dugout boat (Derrya NMI 1968:225) was found on the lakeshore, 500m to the south-southwest.

## Previous publications

None, the site was previously unknown.

## Site interpretation

This is an interesting site, potentially a small early medieval lakeshore occupation platform constructed to provide good views of the early medieval royal settlement complex at Coolure Demesne to the west. Its proximity to the Coolure Demesne ringfort and crannog might suggest it is an early medieval low-status site, occupied seasonally at times of public gatherings on the lakeshore, although it may be an earlier, prehistoric lake platform.

## Figures

Fig. 2.18; Fig. 2.19.


**Donore 1 ('Castlewatty')**          **Crannog (high-cairn site)**

**RMP** WM 006-036      **OS** 6/12/3      **NGR** 23994/26634      **OD** 208ft

## Site description

This is a circular, high-cairn crannog. There is a level, circular platform (9m N-S), 8m (E-W) on the highest part of the cairn. The cairn sides slope gradually down to the edges, but it is slightly steeper to the south side (facing shore). The cairn is constructed of large angular limestone boulders (50cm l., 20cm w, 10cm th.). There is a roughly-built duck-hide on the NW side of the cairn. The NMI topographical files (NMI Clonava twd, see also notes and photos in NMI 1968:197-8, Derrya twd., Co. Westmeath) describe a double row of wooden

posts (c.7cm in diameter), oriented NW-SE, was noted in 1968 when lake levels dropped. It was suggested that this post row joined the crannog with the NW shore of the lake. Most of the posts were gone when the site was visited. These posts are not visible today. It is presently being overgrown by wetland vegetation (alders, reeds).

Site dimensions: 16m (N-S), 13.6m (E-W)        2.2m (height).

**Previous finds from crannog**

None known

**Site location**

Located in a broad bay at the west end of the lake. The site is depicted as "Castlewatty" on OS maps. In the past, it would have been located 250m from land, in shallow water (c.1.5m), the deepest part being 100m to SE (modern depth 1m, original 2.5m). In summer time, the local land is waterlogged with water depths of up to 40cm. In the 1960s, NMI files indicate that this was an area of freshly exposed mudflats. The crannog has excellent views in all directions, with particularly clear views to Coolure Demesne and Kiltoom across the lake to the E. The crannog is overlooked by a low hill to the ESE. To the W and N lie lowlying wetlands.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is a 'castle site' 950m across the lake on Clonava (WM006-26). There is also a significant early medieval church and graveyard at Lackan (WM006-29), on a hill 2.1km across the bog to the west. There are also several ringforts at Lackan (WM006-35), Lackan (WM006-52) and Lackan (WM006-55) near this church.

**Previous publications**

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 6:36: Donore.

**Site interpretation**

This is probably an early medieval crannog strategically located at the outlet of the River Inny, overlooked by early medieval church and ringforts to the west at Lackan. It is also possible that this is an outlying site of the Ui Maccu Uais Mide, whose territories may have included the northwest end of the lake, despite the fact that this is mostly bog.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.20; Fig. 2.21

**Faughalstown 1**  **Crannog (high-cairn)**

**RMP** Previously unknown  **OS** 7/10/1  **NGR \* OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a large, circular stony cairn built in deep water (3-4m depth). It consists of a large cairn of angular limestone blocks (50cm length, 20cm width, 10cm thickness) and smaller stones (15cm in length, 10cm width). The upper surface is a level, circular platform (measuring 8m (NW-SE), 6m (NE-SW). The cairn's sides slope gradually down to the lakebed on the south, west and north sides, but it is markedly steeper on its northeast side (facing towards the shore). There is no visible evidence for wooden posts, although these may be submerged underwater.

Site dimensions: 15m (N-S), 14m (E-W) 3.0m (height).

**Site location**

Located in deep water (c.3-4m), c.70m off the east shore of the lake. This previously unknown crannog is nevertheless a locally well-known islet, named "Cormorant Island". In summer time, it is barely visible above the lake, although the bulk of the submerged stone cairn is visible in the clear water. A small flock of cormorants is habitually present on the cairn through the summer time, making it highly visible from long distances. The crannog has excellent views in all directions, with good views across the lake to another small crannog at Ballynakill 2. The site is very exposed to wind and wave action and tends to be submerged during the winter.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The crannog is overlooked by a steep hill to the northeast, where there is an early medieval univallate ringfort at Faughalstown (WM007-.028), 400m to the northeast. There is also a large, late medieval rectangular earthwork castle at Faughalstown (WM007-44), 600m to the east. This latter site is known as 'Mortimer's Castle', and appears to be an Anglo-Norman timber castle with remains of a masonry tower at its northwest corner.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Site interpretation**

This is an unusual site, heavily exposed to wind and waves and situated in quite deep water. It is possibly a house platform, but the lake-levels would need to be lower to make it habitable. It is possibly an early medieval cairn built to mark a boundary, routeway or was used as an isolated islet for keeping safe objects or prisoners (a possible iron slave-collar was found on the island). It is also interesting in that on the opposite shoreline, at Ballynakil 2,

there is a quite similar small early medieval crannog. It is possible that these two sites marked a crossing-point of the lake.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.22

**Kiltoom 1**  **Crannog (low-cairn)**

**RMP** 007:21:1  **OS** 7/5/3  **NGR** 24245/26833  **OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This is a small circular cairn of stone on the lakeshore. It is essentially an undefined cairn of fist-sized pebbles, stones and larger boulders. It appears to have been disturbed in modern times, possibly to obtain building stone for a nearby wall. There is a well-repaired, duck-hide wall in the east sector, with plastic bottles scattered around its surface. It is overgrown with brambles and shrubs. There are three closely spaced mounds of stone, earth and modern rubbish (metal and plastic), possibly a dump or field-clearance cairn, 65m to the S (5m N of fence).

Site dimensions: 12m (N-S), 11m (E-W), 0.5m in height.

**Site location**

Located on a sloping (to SW) foreshore strewn with boulders and beach-rolled stone. The modern lake edge is 4m to SW, winter lake-edge 1m to NE, probable pre-drainage lake-edge is 6-8m to NE. The cairn is overlooked by gradually rising ground directly to the E, which crests at ridge about 80m to the NE. The site has extensive views to the NW, W and SW across the lake, and also to nearby crannogs to the NW along the shore. The modern fence line is c.70m to the south.

**Adjacent archaeological site**

The nearest archaeological site (Kiltoom 2, see above) is a small, low-cairn crannog, 60m to the northwest, with the rest of the complex of crannogs at Kiltoom further to the northwest. There is an early medieval church and graveyard 750m to northeast at Kiltoom (WM07-08).

**Previous publications**

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:21: Kiltoom.

**Site interpretation**

This appears to be a small crannog, originally built in shallow water, but now exposed on modern foreshore.

**Kiltoom 2**          **Crannog (low-cairn)**

**RMP** 7:21      **OS** 7/5/3          **NGR** 24245/26833      **OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This is a small, low-cairn crannog. It is an irregular-shaped cairn, highly disturbed and damaged by modern intrusion. The cairn is constructed of large numbers of closely packed, water-rolled stones (30-15cm length, 10-15cm width, 10-15cm thickness). Some large boulders, as well as modern concrete debris, are piled up on N side. There are some traces of a stone kerb at the SW edge. A low stone wall or jetty (2.3m l.) with adjacent ditch runs NW-SE down to the shore, 6m to the south. This feature, possibly of recent origin, may have been constructed out of the removed cairn material. There is a modern duck-hide wall at the water's edge, 4m to W.

Site dimensions: 11m (E-W), 11m (N-S), 1.2m in height.

**Site location**

Located on a sloping (to SW) foreshore strewn with boulders and beach-rolled stone. The modern lake edge is 4m to SW, winter lake-edge 2-3m to NE, probable pre-drainage lake-edge is 6-8m to NE. The cairn is overlooked by gradually rising ground directly to the E, which crests at ridge about 120m to the NE. The site has extensive views to the NW, W and SW across the lake, and also to nearby crannogs to the NW and SE along the shore.

**Adjacent archaeological site**

The nearest archaeological site (Kiltoom 3, see above) is a small, low-cairn crannog, 55m to the northwest, with the rest of the complex of crannogs at Kiltoom further to the northwest. There is also an early medieval church and graveyard at Kiltoom, 750m to northeast (WM07-08).

**Previous publications**

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:21: Kiltoom.

**Site interpretation**

This appears to be a small crannog, originally built in shallow water (1m depth), but now exposed on modern foreshore.

**Kiltoom 3**          **Crannog (low-cairn)**

**RMP** 7:21          **OS**: 7/5/3          **NGR** 24245/26833      **OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This is a small, circular, low-cairn crannog. Although grassed over, some eroded or disturbed areas reveal its structure. The cairn was constructed of closely-packed, water-

rolled stones (30-15cm l., 10-15cm w., 10-15cm th.). A kerb is visible from S, to SW to W sides. This is constructed of small boulders (40cm in l., 30cm w., 15cm th.) laid on their width surfaces across the lower cairn of stones. The cairn has been substantially disturbed by modern digging and the cairn has been denuded along SW and W sides. A large depression is located in the SE sector (5m NW-SE, 10cm in depth), which exposes the lower cairn material, with its small stones. A line of closely spaced boulders 3m in length, 50cm in height along its southwest side may be the remains of a duck-hide.

Site dimensions: 14m (E-W), 12m (N-S), 15cm – 1.0m in height.

**Site location**

Located on a sloping (to SW) foreshore strewn with boulders and beach-rolled stone. The modern lake edge is 7m to SW, winter lake-edge 2-3m to NE, probable pre-drainage lake-edge is 10m to NE. The cairn is overlooked by gradually rising ground directly to the E, which crests at ridge about 120m to the NE. There is a prominent hill to the SE. The site has extensive views to the NW, W and SW across the lake, and also to nearby crannogs to the NW and SE along the shore.

**Adjacent archaeological site**

The nearest archaeological site (Kiltoom 2, see above) is a small, low-cairn crannog, 55m to the south, with the rest of the complex of crannogs at Kiltoom further to the northwest. There is also an early medieval church and graveyard at Kiltoom (WM07-08), 750m to northeast.

**Previous publications**

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:21: Kiltoom.

**Site interpretation**

This appears to be a small crannog, originally built in shallow water (1m depth), but now exposed on the modern foreshore.


| Kiltoom 4 | Crannog (low-cairn) | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **RMP** 7:21 | **OS**: 7/5/3 | **NGR** 24245/26833 | **OD** 208ft |

**Site description**

This is a small, low-cairn crannog. It is built of a low, irregular cairn of stones and boulders, and is currently triangular in shape. There is an area of large boulders along the NE side, suggesting an irregular NW-SE oriented kerb there. The cairn has a more distinct kerb along its SW and S sides, consisting of boulders (1m in length, 60cm width) on their edges. There is a rubble mound on NW side, possibly due to cairn collapse. The site has been substantially

damaged by modern disturbance. The cairn is grassed over, with a bush growing on its N side.

Site dimensions: 11.5m (N-S), 13m (E-W), 0.5m (Height).

**Site location**

Located on a sloping (to W) foreshore strewn with boulders and beach-rolled stone. There are three in-situ boulders embedded in the ground 10m to the N. These have regular, water erosion grooves on their lakeward sides, 20-40cm above surface. This suggests that former lake-levels were at about this height. The cairn is overlooked by rising ground to the E, cresting at the top of a local ridge about 100m to the NE. There is a prominent hill to the SE. The lake edge is 5m to SW, former lake-edge 2m to NE. It has extensive views to the NW, W and SW across the lake, and also to nearby crannogs to the NW and SE along the shore.

**Adjacent archaeological site**

The nearest archaeological site (Kiltoom 5, see above) is a small, low-cairn crannog, 43m to the northwest (beyond a metal boundary fence), with the rest of the complex of crannogs at Kiltoom further to the northwest. There is also an early medieval church and graveyard at Kiltoom (WM07-08), 670m to northeast. Local reports of the discovery of a Late Bronze Age sword on the lakeshore about 40m to the north.

**Previous publications**

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:21: Kiltoom.

**Site interpretation**

This appears to be a small crannog, originally built in shallow water, but now exposed on modern foreshore.


**Kiltoom 5**  **Crannog (low-cairn)**

**RMP** 7:21  **OS**: 7/5/3  **NGR** 24245/26833  **OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This is a large, low-cairn crannog, presently D-shaped in plan, due to substantial modern disturbance along its east side. There is an iron boundary fence on a low stone wall immediately (i.e. 10m) to the south, suggesting that the crannog was robbed out for building materials for this boundary wall (which is probably 19th century in date).

The site is a low, level cairn of pebbles, stones and boulders, with a slight hollow towards the middle. The smaller stones are closely-packed and are mostly water-rolled, measuring 30-40cm in length, 15-20cm in width, 10m in thickness. There is a kerb of substantial boulders (1m in length, 80cm in width, 60cm in thickness) along the S and SW edges. The

kerb stones are laid on the mound. This kerb presents a view of a substantial wall when seen from the lake. There is a possible entrance ramp at W side, 1.8m in width, defined by an outward splaying alignment of slabs placed on their edges. There is also a possible outer ring of stones on the west, although this may be cairn collapse.

Site dimensions: 15m (NW-SE) 9.8m (NE-SW), 0.8m to 1.5m in height.

### Site location

This is a low-cairn crannog located on a sloping (to W) grassy foreshore. It is overlooked by rising ground to the E, with a prominent hill to the SE. The lake edge is 10 to W, former lake-edge 1m to E. It has extensive views to the NW, W and SW across the lake, and also to nearby crannogs to the NW and SE along the shore. Brambles growing on N side.

### Adjacent archaeological site

The nearest archaeological site (Kiltoom 6, see above) is a small, low-cairn crannog, 40m to the northwest, with the remainder of the complex of crannogs at Kiltoom further to the northwest. There is also an early medieval church and graveyard at Kiltoom (WM07-08), 750m to northeast. Local reports of the discovery of a Late Bronze Age sword on the foreshore about 30m to the south.

### Previous publications

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:21: Kiltoom.

### Site interpretation

This appears to be a small low-cairn crannog, originally built in shallow water, but now exposed on modern foreshore. The stone kerb and causewayed entrance present different views of the site, with possible access for a dugout boat.

### Figures

Fig. 2.23


**Kiltoom 6**          **Crannog (low-cairn)**

**RMP** 7:21      **OS** 7/5/3      **NGR** 24245/26833      **OD** 208ft

### Site description

This is a circular, low-cairn crannog, built of pebbles, medium stones, and large boulders. The cairn slopes gradually down to the west towards the lake. It has a generally level interior, particularly across the middle to the east sector, where the pebbles and stones (15-30cm in length) are closely packed together to form a regular surface. The cairn's edges are well-defined, particularly to the northeast, where they are steeply scarped. The edges are also defined to the south and northwest by an irregular kerb of large boulders (typically 0.7m, in

length, 0.4m in width, 20cm in thickness). The kerbstones are laid closely together end-to-end, on a base of rounded stones, as can be clearly seen at the SW eroding edge of the cairn. These boulders were previously eroded and weathered on a lake foreshore. There is a roughly built stone causeway running out from the northeast edge of the cairn. It measures 5m in length, by 60cm in width. It curves slightly to the northwest at its east end. It is constructed of pairs of limestone and sandstone slabs, then goes to single slabs spaced at 50cm intervals. At the W edge of the cairn, there is a 2m gap in the kerb, which is situated at the end of a sloping ramp defined by stones placed on their edge. This defines and protects (from the NW) a path oriented NNE/SSW, that it 1.5m in width, 3m in length. This 'path' appears to provide access into the interior from the water's edge. A roughly built duck-hide is located at the SW sector.

Site dimensions: 15.8m N-S      15.5m E-W. 80cm height (cairn), 1.3m (with boulders).

## Site location

Located on a level grassy foreshore that slopes gently to the W. It is 1m W to the modern lake-edge, and 5m E to former shoreline. The surrounding foreshore is level and occasionally stony. Modern lake erosion on the SW edge of the cairn, reveals that the cairn is sitting directly on a sandy, stony, orange-brown subsoil. The site has very good views to NW, W and SW, with clear views to Coolure Demesne crannog to the N. It is overlooked by rising ground to the E (where there is a modern forestry). It also has good views of adjacent crannog cairns to N and S. The site is very exposed to SW winds and waves.

## Adjacent archaeological site

The nearest archaeological site (Kiltoom 5, see above) is a small, low-cairn crannog, 40m to the southeast, with the remainder of the complex of crannogs at Kiltoom further to the south and north. There is also an early medieval church and graveyard at Kiltoom (WM07-08), 750m to northeast.

## Previous publications

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:21: Kiltoom.

## Site interpretation

This appears to be a small low-cairn crannog (early medieval or Bronze Age), originally built in shallow water, but now exposed on the modern foreshore. There is an interesting, stone kerb and a possible entrance ramp on the lakeward side.

## Figures

Fig. 2.24

**Kiltoom 7**           **Crannog (low-cairn)**

**RMP** 7:21     **OS**: 7/5/3     **NGR** 24245/26833     **OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This is a circular, low-cairn crannog. It is a level, low, cairn of small water-rolled pebbles and stones, with occasionally larger flagstones scattered about its upper surface, all retained within an irregular stone kerb. The sides of the cairn are sharply defined, differing from the grassy, stone-free surroundings. The cairn generally slopes down to the W and gradually to the edges, but there is a steeper edge to the cairn on E, S and W. The cairn is irregular in appearance. In the NE sector, it is more exposed (less grassy) and there it can be seen to consist of numerous closely-packed small stones (average size 20cm length, 15cm width, 10cm thickness) and larger pebbles (of limestone, sandstone and slate). In the SW sector, the cairn is dominated by larger, rounded boulders (average size, 1.7m in length, 60cm in width, 40cm in thickness). The cairn appears to be retained within a kerb of vertical limestone slabs along the NW, W and S edges (where it is exposed). There is also remnants of an internal 'wall' running across the outer edge of the SW and W sector, where large rectangular slabs lie end-to-end over the lower kerb. There is a small duckhide off-centre in SE sector. A stone causeway runs off from the ENE edge of the cairn, oriented ENE/WSW. This causeway runs up the shore towards the former lake-edge, but disappears into the soil. It is quite carefully built adjacent to the cairn. A single, large slab lies across the causeway, 1.8m out from the cairn. The causeway measures 6m in length, by 0.7m in width.

Site dimensions: 12.8m N/S, 12m E/W   Height: main cairn 0.8m, boulders up to 1.4m in height.

**Site location**

Located on level, gently sloping grassy foreshore, 8m from modern lake-edge (to W), 10m to the earlier shoreline (to E). The surrounding former foreshore is quite firm (with a heavy glacial-till subsoil immediately below the grass). It is relatively rocky, occasionally with outcropping, rain-weathered boulders. A broad, shallow (natural) depression runs NE/SW to the N of the cairn, and the foreshore slopes slightly more steeply to the lake to the W of the cairn. Local vegetation includes low grasses, buttercups, with a single whitethorn bush growing at the E edge. The site has good, unobstructed views to the SW, W and NW across the lake, with wide open skies to the W (including towards the Coolure crannogs). The site is quite exposed to W winds and waves. It is overlooked by rising ground to the E (where there is a modern forestry). It also has good views of adjacent crannog cairns to N and S.

**Adjacent archaeological site**

The nearest archaeological site (Kiltoom 8, see above) is a large low-cairn crannog, 60m to the north, with the remainder of the complex of crannogs at Kiltoom further to the south (Kiltoom 6 is 120m to south). An early medieval church and graveyard is located 800m to the west at Kiltoom (WM07-08).

**Previous publications**

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:21: Kiltoom.

**Site interpretation**

This is a possible early medieval low-cairn crannog, with a 19th or 20th century duckhide. The low height of the cairn, the level foreshore and the short length of the causeway running inland suggest it was located in shallow (i.e. thigh-deep) water. It would have been considerably exposed to prevailing winds and wave from the SW, and possibly would have been submerged during the winter lake-levels.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.25.

**Kiltoom 8**                       **Crannog (low-cairn)**
**RMP** 7:21              **OS** 7/5/3        **NGR** 24245/26833        **OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This is a large, low-cairn crannog on a level foreshore. It is irregular or sub-rectangular in shape, oriented E-W. In N-S profile, the cairn is almost straight-sided along both N and S sides. In its E-W profile, the cairn slopes gradually up from the W side, is relatively level across its upper surface and is steep-sided on E side. There are at least two holes or cavities in the upper cairn surface. Hole A in NE sector measures 1.5m NS, 1.1m E-W, 0.7m in depth. Hole B in W sector measures 2.1m NW-SE 0.4m in depth. These may be duck-hides.

The crannog is built of very large to massive limestone boulders, with particularly large stones situated around the edges. This has the appearance of a disturbed kerb, particularly on the W side. A boulder at the SE corner measures 0.73m in length, 0.53m in width, by 0.37m in thickness. The boulders on the cairn surface vary in appearance, ranging from angular rectangular blocks to slightly rounded boulders. Some of the boulders have pronounced regular grooving across some surfaces, clearly due to original wave-erosion when they were situated elsewhere. This suggests that rocks were gathered from the neighbouring shoreline for constructing the crannog.

Larger boulders were placed on the lake-bed as foundation and as a kerb. On top of this were laid smaller, rounded pebbles (average size, 20-30cm length), with some large boulders

scattered throughout. Throughout the upper cairn surface, in the interstices between the boulders and pebbles, were placed even smaller fist-sized stones (i.e. 10cm in length). These smaller stones were clearly water-rolled, possibly gathered from the shallows by the water's edge.

There is a stone-built causeway, 7m in length, 20-30cm in width, 10cm in height, running out from the NNE corner of the cairn. It is oriented NE/SW and runs up the foreshore to the modern winter water's edge. The causeway is a straight alignment of medium-sized limestone and sandstone flagstones laid horizontally on the lake-bed. The causeway runs right up to the edge of the cairn, where several large boulders provide a 'threshold' onto the site.

The crannog has very good views to N, W and S. The site is overlooked by a possible cairn (7:21:9) and by ground that rises steadily to the ENE. Although modern woodland obscures the view of the site today, it would have been visible from several hundred metres to the E.

Site dimensions:        10m E-W      8.3m N-S      Height:    1.4m    (slightly    E    of middle).

**Site location**

Located on a level, if rocky and irregular foreshore, 8m to west towards modern lake-edge (summer level), 12m to east to modern winter level, 27-30m to former, pre-drainage lake shore. The lake shore slopes gently down from E to W. There are also several, other man-made or natural, features along this shore. On the N side, a shallow linear depression, oriented NE/SW, runs for 30-40m to the NNW of the site to the water's edge. This may be a geological feature or a former stream course. On the S side, a shallow curvilinear ditch, 20cm in depth, 2-3m in width, 15m in length, partly encloses the cairn to its S and SE. This is possibly a man-made ditch dug into the lake-bed to provide raw material (e.g. stone and lake-marl) for its construction, to define the crannog or to provide a 'boat dock'. The cairn is therefore itself located on a level platform, with a marshy 'berm' 5m (N/S) by 11m (E/W) to the south of it. Local vegetation includes grasses and immature alder trees growing at E edge of cairn, and to NW of site.

**Adjacent archaeological site**

The nearest archaeological site (Kiltoom 7, see above) is a small, low-cairn crannog, 60m to the south, with the remainder of the complex of crannogs at Kiltoom 1-8 further to the southwest. There is also an early medieval church and graveyard at Kiltoom (WM007-8), 800m to the east.

**Previous publications**

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:21: Kiltoom.

**Site interpretation**

This appears to be a large, stone cairn, possibly a crannog, originally built in shallow water (c.1m in depth), but now exposed on the modern foreshore. The possible ditches around the site could have been dug to provide clay for the platform, to enhance its defensive properties or to provide a boat harbour.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.26.


**Kiltoom 10**  **Crannog (low-cairn)**

**RMP** 007-022  **OS** 7/5/6  **NGR** 24276/26749  **OD** 208ft

**Site description**

This crannog is an enhanced natural islet, with several cairns of stones spread across the surface of a prominent limestone bedrock outcrop. The bedrock is particularly raised above the water surface to the northwest. To the southeast, near the mid-point of the island, large boulders are spread over an area measuring 5m (N-S). There are also large stones and boulders laid against the SE side of the outcrop. The islet slopes steeply down to the shore on all sides, but particularly to the NE towards the land. There is a broad, low causeway of stone and earth leading to the shore, measuring c.30m in length, 10m in width (it appears to have been added to by modern land clearance). There are 3 duckhides on the island, to N, NE and S. The site description in the RMP files state that a Late Bronze Age sword was found on the adjacent shore, near the causeway, and that it was in the possession of Tom Pakenham at Tullynally House. I have inspected a sword in Tullynally House with marls adhering to its hilt, which presumably is this object.

Site dimensions: 26m (NW-SE) 24m (NE-SW), 2m (height).

**Site location**

The site is located at the NE end of the lake. It has excellent views to the NW, W and SW. It is overlooked by a steep slope to the NE. The ancient shoreline is 50m to the NE. The site is depicted on OS maps as a small island in the water with a causeway linking it to shore, where there is a broad, natural terrace. Today, it is at the water's edge, with depths of 1m off its W side.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The crannog is overlooked by four enclosures, all removed by agricultural improvements in the 1970s. The nearest archaeological site is an oval enclosure or 'earthwork, site of' at Kiltoom (WM07-20), 120m to the north. There was also a large, circular bivallate enclosure

on the break of slope on the hill overlooking the crannog, at Kiltoom (WM07-27), 180m to east. Two further enclosures (a bivallate site at WM07-19, a univallate site at WM07-23) are also situated on the low terrace overlooking the lake, c.200m to the north. These earthworks may have been Bronze Age ringbarrows, although they could have been early medieval ringforts (with the largest, bivallate enclosure commanding all from a height).

## Previous publications

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:22: Kiltoom.

## Site interpretation

This crannog (largely an enhanced natural bedrock outcrop) and its adjacent causeway are probably Bronze Age sites, potentially associated with Bronze Age ringbarrows and a bronze sword. Alternatively, they could have been a complex of early medieval crannogs and ringforts, similar to at Coolure Demesne, to the north.

**Monintown 1**                    **Crannog (high-cairn)**

**RMP** WM 007-087    **OS** 7/14/6    **NGR** 24523/26434    **OD** 208ft

## Site description

This crannog is an ovoid, high-cairn site at the southeast end of the lake. The site is located in shallow water, 1.2m in depth off the E edge of the cairn. It has a level, sub-rectangular platform on the highest part of cairn (12m N-S), 7m (E-W). The sides slope gradually down to the edges on N, E and SW sides, but it is steeper to the W side (facing shore). The cairn is sharply delimited from the lakebed on all sides. The cairn is constructed of medium to small boulders (50cm l., 20cm w, 10cm th.).

Site dimensions: 23m (N-S), 18m (E-W)2.0m (height).

## Site location

The crannog is located on the southwest shore, at the narrower end of the lake. It is depicted as an islet surrounded by water on the OS maps. In summer time today, it is separated from the dryland by a narrow (c.18m) stretch of marshy, waterlogged land, covered in willow trees and reeds. The crannog has relatively good views across the lake to the NE and E, but otherwise they are fairly restricted. It is overlooked by rising, steeply sloping ground to the SW, while Knockeyon Hill dominates the view to the east.

## Adjacent archaeological sites

The nearest archaeological site is an 'earthwork, site of' 500m to northeast, directly across the lake at Streamstown (WM07-89), with a nearby earthwork at Ringstown. There is also a ringfort 870m to northwest at Monintown (WM07084). There are also local reports (A.S.I.

Files) of a dugout boat being found at the mouth of the stream, 500m to northwest along the shore. Otherwise, the crannog is relatively isolated on this shoreline, being situated at the base of steep, possibly originally heavily wooded slopes.

**Previous publications**

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 7:87: Monintown.

**Site interpretation**

This appears to be a small early medieval crannog, situated in a relatively isolated location, at the base of steep slopes.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.27; Fig. 2.28.

# Lough Ennell

**Ash Island**          **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: no number     **OS** 26/12/2   **NGR -**        **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a low, oval cairn of stones, earth, with stones scattered around the site. It slopes down gradually to the edges. It is located in drained marshy land and is heavily overgrown by trees, but was originally in shallow, open water to the north of Dysart Island. Site dimensions: c.30m E/W, 30m N/S, Height c.2cm.

**Previous finds from crannog**

| | |
|---|---|
| Iron spearhead | NMI 1982:40 |
| Copper alloy sword pommel | NMI 1982:39 |
| Stone lamp | NMI 1983:97 |
| Copper alloy finger ring | NMI 1983:96 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1983:86 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1983:85 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1995:1577 |
| Copper alloy pin | NMI 1995:1576 |

**Site location**

Located on west side of lake, c.200m from the shore of Dysart townland, NNW of Dysart Island (see above). Geology is limestone, the nearest adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is an earthwork site at Dysart (WM26-102), on a prominence 220m to the northwest, overlooking the lake.

**Previous publications**

C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61; no references in A.S.I. files.

**Site interpretation**

This is a probable crannog, potentially of early medieval date. The presence of early medieval bronze pins, a bronze finger ring, a stone lamp and an iron spearhead probably indicates an early medieval occupation phase.

**Belvidere 1**       **Lough Ennell**
**RMP**: no number       **OS** 27/5/5       **NGR** -       **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This is a small, rocky, irregular islet lying in open, shallow water (c.1m depth). The site is located in 1m depth of water, 50m from the shoreline (c.60m from original shore). It is composed of large limestone blocks lying on possible bedrock outcrop. A second smaller islet (10m N/S) is located 30m to the south. These islets are not marked on maps, so may only have been exposed by the 1950s drainage scheme. The larger islet may be an enhanced natural islet, but this is not certain.

Previous finds:

Site dimensions: c.20m N/S, 20m N/S, Height c.2m.

**Site location**

Located at east side of lake, overlooked by steeply rising slopes to the east in Belvidere townland. Geology is limestone, nearest cultivable soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is an earthwork at Lynn (WM26-24), on the ridge 950m to the northwest, overlooking the lake.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Site interpretation**

This is a probable natural island, that may have been enhanced for use as a crannog.

**Bog Island**        **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: No number    **OS** 32/4/1    **NGR** -    **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a circular stone cairn, It is heavily overgrown by trees and surrounded by dense growth of rushes..

Site dimensions: c.20m N/S, 20m E/W, Height 3cm.

**Site location**

Located at southeast end of lake, 200m from shoreline of Friarstown townland, in 2m water depth. The site is opposite the outflow of River Brosna out of Lough Ennell to the south. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is an earthwork at Clonshingle (WM32-21), 1km to the southwest.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Cherry Island (in Gaddaghanstown twd)**    **Lough Ennell**

**RMP:** WM025-152    **OS** 25/01/6    **NGR** 23987 24505    **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

Cherry Island is a natural island (with outcropping bedrock visible) off Gaddaghanstown townland. It has a large, circular stone cashel on its northeast side. The cashel is defined by a stone-faced scarp (2m height, 4.4m in width, 1.2m depth), that is broad and markedly stepped in profile along its outer edge. The cashel's interior is clearly raised above the island's surface. There is a large, rectangular, stone-lined inlet (14m E/W, 8m N/S) on the eastern side of the cashel (opening out into the lake). This appears to be an impressive boat harbour or naust. The island is connected to the shoreline by marshy ground, but would have been surrounded by water prior to drainage.

Site dimensions: c.36m E/W, 33m N/S, Height 2m

**Site location**

Located off southeast shore of lake, in shallow (1m depth) water, 60m from shoreline. The site is overlooked by rising ground to east. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils grey brown podzolics (Patrickswell) over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is a ringfort at Gaddaghanstown (WM25-148), located on the slopes 420m to southwest. There are also two ringforts (WM25-25, 22) and an earthwork (WM25-23) on the higher ground beyond that site. The crannog of Cro-Inis (WM25-150) and the ringfort of Dun na Sciath (WM25-145) are clearly visible straight across the lake, 1.8km to the WNW.

**Previous publications**

A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 25:152: Cherry Island; E.P. Kelly, 'Observations on Irish lake-dwellings' in Catherine Karkov and Robert Farrell (eds.), *Studies in insular art and archaeology* American Early Medieval Studies 1, (Cornell, 1991), pp 81-98; C.E. Karkov and J. Ruffing 'The southern Uí Néill and the political landscape of Lough Ennell in *Peritia* 11 (1997), pp 336-358, at pp 339-40.

**Site interpretation**

This island cashel may be a place named in the twelfth-century hagiography, *Betha Colmáin maic Lúachain*, where there are mentions of such places as *Dún na Cairrge* ('the fort of the rock') or *Inis na Cairrge*, ('the island of the rock') both being royal seats of Onchú and Colman, successive kings of Fir Tulach. There is also a place named as *Port na Cairrge* ('harbour of the rock') in the life, indicating a landing place for boats.[1] The presence of a substantial stone boat harbour on the site and the natural bay adjacent and to the south of the island may be physical evidence for these harbours. The site of Dún na Cairrge was sufficiently important that it was subsequently appropriated by the king of Mide, Conchubar Ua Maelsechlainn (1030-74) in the late eleventh century.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.40

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[1] Kuno Meyer, (ed. and trans.), *Betha Colmáin maic Lúachain*, Todd Lect Ser 17 (Dublin 1911), § 46, l.21-25.

**Gaddaghanstown 1**   **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: No number  **OS** 32/4/1  **NGR** -  **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This is a large, oval island, even in profile, with gradually sloping edges. It is probably a natural island, connected to the shoreline by a low, broad causeway, c. 15m in length, by 5m in width. It is lightly covered in trees. There are at least three rock platforms in the vicinity, one in open water to the northeast, with two rock platforms on shoreline immediately overlooking the island. These rock platforms are low, irregular or oval in shape, typically 15-20m E-W, of closely packed limestone blocks.

Site dimensions: c.30m N/S, 20m E/W, Height 3cm.

**Site location**

Located at southeast end of lake, 80m from shoreline of Gaddaghanstown 1 townland, in 1m water depth. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is an earthwork at Gaddaghanstown (WM26-23), 600m to the southwest.


**Cro-Inis (Dysart 1)**  **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: WM025-150  **OS** 25/16/1  **NGR** 23815 24551  **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a large, circular, high-cairn site, built of large stones, horizontal timbers retained within multi-phase inner and outer palisades. It is a level, stony cairn, highest at the very centre, with an even profile and a gradual slope to the edges. Horizontal timbers are visible underwater in the cairn edge on the east and north sides. A midden of animal bone was previously identified off the west or landward side of the crannog. There is a natural sandbar to the west of the island. The cairn is retained at the water's edge by a large split oak plank palisade (dated to AD 1107 ± 9 years) around the southwest edge of the cairn, where there are also large limestone slabs that form an irregular kerb. There is also an outer roundwood palisade (radiocarbon dated to 1325±B.P., c.AD 825-850) in the water (visible at 1.5-2m water depth) of 150 closely-spaced posts (4-8cm diameter) that partly surrounded the site on its northwest, north and northwest sides, 7-10m out from the edge of the island. There

is a landing place (6.5m N/S, 1.5m E/W), defined by two stone walls, on the north side of the island (similar to known late medieval coastal landing places and possibly also of ancient design). There are also stoned-lined 'paths' on the northeast and east side, leading down into the water. On top of the centre of the island is the base of a mortared stone building, with walls measuring 8.5m in length, surviving to a height of 1m. This is probably the remains of a stone folly, erected on the site of a fifteenth-century towerhouse occupied by the O'Coffeys. Animal bones can be seen scattered around the island.

**Previous finds**: William Moran details the discovery of a 'copper axe recovered from the bottom of the lake in the immediate vicinity of the crannog some thirty years ago' (i.e. *c*.1925). The Crannog Archaeological Project also recovered three early medieval ringed pins from the inner palisade on the crannog, of types datable to 11th to 12th century AD.

Site dimensions:. c.50m E/W, 35m N/S, Height 3-4cm

### Site location

Located off the southwest shore of the lake. It is located 250m south of the original shoreline, in 2m water depth (3m originally). The site is overlooked by rising ground to northwest, and is overlooked by a raised ringfort (Dún na Sciath). Geology is limestone, adjacent soils grey brown podzolics (Patrickswell) over a limestone till. These soils are part of a narrow promontory of dryland that extends out southwards through areas of lake alluvium to east and west.

### Adjacent archaeological sites

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Dysart 2 (WM25-147), 220m to NNE and the raised ringfort of Dun na Sciath (WM25-145), which overlooks the crannog and is located on the ridge 200m to northwest.

### Previous publications

A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 25:150: Croincha; R.A.S. Macalister, 'On an excavation conducted at Cro-Inis, Loch Ennell' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, 44c (1938), pp 248-51; William Moran, 'Cro-inis', in *Ríocht na Mide*, 1, no. 1, (1955), pp 36-40; E.P. Kelly, 'Observations on Irish lake-dwellings' in Catherine Karkov and Robert Farrell (eds.), *Studies in insular art and archaeology* American Early Medieval Studies 1, (Cornell, 1991), pp 81-98; E.P. Kelly, 'Crannógs' in Michael Ryan (ed.), *The illustrated archaeology of Ireland*, (Dublin, 1991), pp 120-3; R.B. Warner, 'On crannógs and kings: (part 1)' in *U.J.A.*, 57 (1994), pp 61-9; C.E. Karkov and J. Ruffing 'The southern Uí Néill and the political landscape of Lough Ennell in *Peritia* 11 (1997), 336-358; Aidan O'Sullivan, *The archaeology of lake settlement in Ireland* (Dublin, 1998), pp 21, pp 129-31, pp 136-8

**Site interpretation**

This is the early medieval crannog of Cróinis, the historically attested royal seat of the Ua Maelsechlainn kings of the Clann Cholmáin dynasty of the southern Uí Néill. Archaeological and historical evidence suggests that the crannog was built prior to the ninth century (contemporary with the reign of Máel Sechnaill mac Máele Ruanaid, (Maelsechlainn I, obit 862). The saint's lives and annals also indicate that it was the royal site of Maél Sechnaill maic Domnaill (Maelsechlainn II), who died on this island in AD 1022. The site was re-fortified in the early twelfth century (i.e. AD 1107 ± 9) and was probably also occupied in the late medieval period. The crannog and ringfort are probably a royal settlement complex, strategically located out at the end of a promontory, thus manipulating how people would have approached the site. The site was also occupied in the fifteenth century, as the *Annals of Connacht* for 1446 claim that Domnaill Ua Cobthaig and his two sons were murdered 'on Crowinis in Loch Ennell, in his own house'. This was probably in a small towerhouse on the island.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.30; Fig. 2.31

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**Dysart 2**          **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: WM025-147      **OS** 25/16/1      **NGR** 23823 24574      **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a low, oval-shaped cairn, located at the water's edge (surrounded by 1m water prior to drainage) to the north of Cróinis. It appears as a low, stony island, with an even profile and a gradual slope to the edge. In recent times, when the island was being planted with trees, a platform of radially laid planks was found at depth of 20-30cm below surface. This covered a compact area 20m in diameter. The crannog is connected to the shoreline by a narrow, stony causeway, which is today surmounted by a modern concrete ramp.

Site dimensions: c.36m E/W, 35m N/S, Height 80cm

**Site location**

Located on southwest shore of Lough Ennell, in shallow (1m depth) water, 15m from shoreline (20-30m to original shoreline). The site is overlooked by rising ground to northwest. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils grey brown podzolics (Patrickswell) over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the raised ringfort of Dun na Sciath (WM25-145), which overlooks the crannog and is located on the ridge 200m to northwest. The crannog of Cróinis (WM25-150) is also clearly visible 220m to SSW.

**Previous publications**

None; see A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 25:147: Dysart Lough Ennell.

**Site interpretation**

This site appears to be a small, probably early medieval, crannog associated with this early medieval royal complex of Cróinis and Dún na Sciath.

**Dysart 3**  **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: No number  **OS** 25/16/1  **NGR** -  **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a low, circular platform, located at the original water's edge (surrounded by 1m water prior to drainage) and separated from shoreline by wet, marshy ground. It appears as a low, rocky platform, with a level upper surface, an even profile and a gradual slope to the edges. On its upper surface, angular and rounded boulders and medium-sized stones are visible in the grass. Two whitethorn bushes grow on the site. The edges of the platform are quite distinct, particularly on its east side.

Site dimensions: c.35m N/S, 30m E/W, Height 50cm.

**Site location**

Located on southwest shore of lake, on marshy ground, 60m out from original shoreline. The site is overlooked by rising ground to northwest. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are lake alluvium soils, with grey brown podzolics (Patrickswell) over a limestone till on the dryland ridge.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog of Dysart 2 (WM25-147), 320m to south. The raised ringfort of Dun na Sciath (WM25-145), which overlooks the site is located on the ridge 400m to southwest, while Cróinis crannog (WM25-150) is also clearly visible 380m to SSW.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Site interpretation**

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval royal settlement complex.


**Dysart 4**  **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: No number  **OS** 25/16/1  **NGR -**  **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a low, small circular platform, located at the original water's edge (surrounded by 1m water prior to drainage) and separated from shoreline by wet, marshy ground. It appears as a low, rocky platform, with a level upper surface, an even profile and a gradual slope to the edges. On its upper surface, angular and rounded boulders and medium-sized stones are visible in the grass. The edges of the platform are quite distinct, particularly on the east side.

Site dimensions: c.19m N/S, 30m E/W, Height 50cm.

**Site location**

Located on southwest shore of lake, on marshy ground, 60m out from original shoreline. It is situated 8m north of Dysart 3. The site is overlooked by rising ground to northwest. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are lake alluvium soils, with grey brown podzolics (Patrickswell) over a limestone till on the dryland ridge

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog of Dysart 2 (WM25-147), 330m to south. The raised ringfort of Dun na Sciath (WM25-145), which overlooks the site is located on the ridge 400m to southwest., while Cróinis crannog (WM25-150) is also clearly visible 380m to SSW.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Site interpretation**

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval royal settlement complex.

**Dysart 5**          **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: No number          **OS** 25/16/1          **NGR** -          **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This is a low, small irregular shaped platform, located almost at the original water's edge (surrounded by 1m water prior to drainage) and separated from original shoreline by wet, marshy ground. It appears as a rocky platform, sloping gradually to the south towards the lake.. Large angular and rounded limestone boulders are exposed on its surface. There is a particularly massive limestone block on the east side, by the water. This may be a natural geological feature.

Site dimensions:  c.35m N/S, 25m E/W, Height 50cm

**Site location**

Located on southwest shore of lake, on marshy ground, 40m out from original shoreline. It is situated at water's edge between Dun na Sciath and Cróinis. The site is overlooked by rising ground to northwest. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics (Patrickswell) over a limestone till on the dryland ridge

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the raised ringfort of Dun na Sciath (WM25-145), which overlooks the platform and is located on the ridge 130m to northwest. The crannog of Cróinis (WM25-150) is also clearly visible 200m to SSW.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Site interpretation**

This is not certainly an archaeological site, but it is certainly a quite distinctive feature along this level foreshore, strongly resembling a crannog.


**Dysart Island   1**          **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: No number          **OS** 26/12/5          **NGR** -          **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This crannog (locally known as 'Rocky Island') is a circular, high-cairn islet. It was built on a natural, rocky knoll in unusually deep water, up to 4.5m in depth standing. The crannog stands about 50cm above water levels (and would have been submerged prior to drainage). It is an oval stone cairn, with a level upper surface, an even profile and it slopes steeply into the water on all sides, particularly towards the south. The cairn is typically constructed of

medium to small sized stones, and there are vertical roundwood posts around the site on the lake-bed. There is a modern duck-hide or low stone kerb walls at the north end of the islet. Site dimensions: c.18m N/S, 15m E/W, Height 5m.

**Previous finds from the crannog**

There were 3 Viking silver hoards found on and close to the large, natural Dysart Island to the southwest. In particular, a hoard of three massive, boat-shaped Viking silver ingots (Dysart Hoard No. 2; NMI 1982: 29a, b) was found in 1966 in the centre of 'a now submerged crannog off the shore of Dysart townland'. The NMI files place this 'on the northern side of Dysart Island' (NMI Top. Files, Dysart townland, Co. Westmeath)'. It is possible that the crannog described is 'Rocky Island'.

**Site location**

Located on west side of lake, c.150m to the northeast of Dysart Island, in 4.5m water depth. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till on Dysart Island to southwest.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is an earthwork on Dysart Island (WM25-118), 400m to southwest. This is a seventeenth century star-shaped fort.

**Previous publications**

There are no entries on the site in the A.S.I. files; There is a general article about the Viking hoards at Dysart, but the 'Rocky Island' crannog is not specifically mentioned; M. Ryan, R. Ó Floinn, N. Lowick, M. Kenny and P. Cazalet, 'Six silver finds of the Viking period from the vicinity of Lough Ennell, Co. Westmeath' in *Peritia*, 3 (1984), pp 334-81.

**Site interpretation**

This is an unusual site, a small, stony crannog in an isolated location in deep water, off a large natural island (Dysart Island). It may be a prehistoric cairn, but it is likely that it was used for storing or hoarding silver ingots in the early medieval period, probably in the tenth century AD.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.32; Fig. 2.33; Fig. 2.34.

**Dysart Island 2**     **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: No number     **OS** 26/12/5     **NGR** -     **OD** 274ft

### Site description

This crannog is a circular cairn built on sandy lake marl, in c. 1.6m, standing 10cm above water levels. It is constructed of medium to small sized stones. It has a level surface, an even profile and slopes steeply into the water on all sides. It is almost completely submerged under the water.

Site dimensions: c.15m N/S, 15m E/W, Height 2m.

### Site location

Located on west side of lake, c.100m to the northeast of Dysart Island, west of Dysart Island 2 crannog (see above). Geology is limestone, the nearest adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till on Dysart Island to the southwest.

### Adjacent archaeological sites

The nearest archaeological site is an earthwork on Dysart Island (WM25-118), 400m to southwest. This is a seventeenth century star-shaped fort.

### Previous publications

None, the site was previously unknown.

### Site interpretation

This is an unusual site, a small stony islet in an isolated location, in deep water. The possible occurrence of early medieval silver hoard on the island might indicate its use for storing metalwork.


**Goose Island**     **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: No number     **OS** 26/9/2     **NGR** -     **OD** 274ft

### Site description

This crannog is a large, oval-shaped, high-cairn islet. It is built of large stones (20-25cm length) at the base and smaller stones piled up on the upper surface. Some of these stones are quite large angular blocks, that may have been quarried. The crannog has a level upper surface with a mid-cairn 10-15m diameter on the east side. The crannog slopes gradually down from that platform towards the west, north-west and southwest. It is quite steep sloped on the east side, facing the dryland shoreline. Horizontal and vertical timbers are visible at the water line on the west sides of the island. Underwater surveys have previously revealed an outer horse-shoe shaped palisade of 149 posts on the northwest, west and southwest sides of the island. This includes a double post row on the northwest side of the island, 10m out from the edge. There are two narrow gaps in the palisade opposite a stone jetty, 8m in

diameter. The palisade then comprises a complex triple palisade extending around the west and southwest sides of the island, c.20m out from the edge of the island. It then turns back towards the island, to form a double palisade c.10m out from the south side. This has produced a ninth-century radiocarbon date. There are also small submerged stone platforms in the water, 3 to the north and 3 to the south.

Site dimensions: 35m (50m) E/W, 25m N/S      Height 3.5cm.

**Site location**

Located at east side of lake. The site is located 260m from shoreline, in 1.2m water depth in a broad bay (Rochfort Bay) and is overlooked by steeply rising ground to the east. Geology is limestone, nearest cultivable soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till on the eastern shore.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 580m to southeast. There are also ringforts at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-49, 50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms nearer to hand around Rochfort Bay.

**Previous publications**

The site is not recorded in the A.S.I. files; E.P. Kelly, 'Observations on Irish lake-dwellings' in Catherine Karkov and Robert Farrell (eds.), *Studies in insular art and archaeology* American Early Medieval Studies 1, (Cornell, 1991), pp 81-98

**Site interpretation**

This is a probable early medieval crannog, with radiocarbon dating evidence for construction activity in the ninth century.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.37; Fig. 2.38

**Gosling Island**          **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: No number     **OS** 26/9/2     **NGR** -          **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This is a small, irregular, and elongated islet, possibly a crannog built on the natural bedrock outcrop at edge of shallows. It has a mid-cairn 5-10m diameter on top, slopes gradually down into the water. It is constructed of large angular blocks, that may have been quarried. There are several rocky outcrops beside it, particularly towards the east.

Site dimensions: 15m E/W, 15m N/S     Height 2cm.

**Site location**

Located at east side of lake in Rochfort Bay. The site is located 40m from shoreline (c.80m from original shore), in 1m water depth and is overlooked by steeply rising ground to the east. Geology is limestone, nearest cultivable soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till on the eastern shore.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is a crannog at Goose Island (see above), 180m to west, a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 580m to southeast. There are also ringforts at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-49, 50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms around Rochfort Bay.

**Previous publications**

The site is not recorded in the A.S.I. files

**Site interpretation**

This is a probable natural island, that may have been enhanced for use as a crannog.

**Rochfort Demesne 1**     **Lough Ennell**                     **Rock platform**
**RMP**: No number     **OS** 26/9/2     **NGR** -     **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This is a small, irregular rock platform, possibly a natural bedrock outcrop that has been enhanced or enlarged. It has an even profile, with large slabs exposed along the water edge. There are large angular limestone blocks lying on the surface.

Site dimensions: 18m N/S, 16m E/W     Height 1m.

**Site location**

Located at east shore, on water's edge in Rochfort Bay. The site would originally have been located c.10m from original shoreline. It is overlooked by steeply rising ground to the east. Geology is limestone, nearest cultivable soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till on the eastern shore.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Goose Island (see above), 220m to west, a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 350m to southeast. There are also ringforts at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-49, WM26-50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms around Rochfort Bay.

**Previous publications**

The site is not recorded in the A.S.I. files; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov

and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61.

**Site interpretation**

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval crannog at Goose Islands.


| **Rochfort Demesne 2** | **Lough Ennell** | | **Rock platform** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RMP**: No number | **OS** 26/9/2 | **NGR** - | **OD** 274ft |

**Site description**

This is a small, irregular rock platform (immediately south of Rochfort Demesne 2) possibly a small natural bedrock outcrop that has been enhanced or enlarged. It has an even profile, with large slabs exposed along the water edge. There are large angular limestone blocks lying on the surface.

Site dimensions: 22m N/S, 18m E/W     Height 1m.

**Site location**

Located at east shore, on water's edge in Rochfort Bay. The site would originally have been located c.10m from original shoreline. It is overlooked by steeply rising ground to the east. Geology is limestone, nearest cultivable soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till on the eastern shore.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Goose Island (see above), 220m to west, a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 350m to southeast. There are also ringforts at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-49, WM26-50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms around Rochfort Bay.

**Previous publications**

The site is not recorded in the A.S.I. files; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61.

**Site interpretation**

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval crannog at Goose Islands.

**Rochfort Demesne 3**   **Lough Ennell**                    **Rock platform**

**RMP**: No number      **OS** 26/9/4     **NGR -**     **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This is a small, oval rock platform on a natural bedrock outcrop on a small peninsula in the lake water. It has an even profile, with large irregular limestone slabs (1.3m length, 1m width) scattered across its surface. There is a particularly large limestone block on its surface, possibly a glacial erratic?

Site dimensions: 28m N/S, 24m E/W     Height 1m.

**Site location**

Located at east shore, on water's edge in a small inlet on the south side of Rochfort Bay. The site would originally have been located c.5-10m from original shoreline. It is overlooked by level ground rising to a ridge to the south. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Goose Island (see above), 400m to north, a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 550m to east. There are also ringforts at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-49, WM26-50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms around Rochfort Bay.

**Previous publications**

The site is not recorded in the A.S.I. files; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61.

**Site interpretation**

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval crannog at Goose Islands.


**Rochfort Demesne 4**   **Lough Ennell**                    **Rock platform**

**RMP**: No number      **OS** 26/9/4     **NGR -**     **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This is a small, irregular, almost rectilinear rock platform on marshy ground (former lakebed) to the south of Rochfort Demesne 3. It has an even profile, with large irregular limestone slabs (1.3m length, 1m width) scattered across its surface.

Site dimensions:  5m N/S, 6m E/W     Height 50cm

97

**Site location**

Located on dryland on southeast side of a small inlet on the south side of Rochfort Bay. The site would originally have been in 1m depth of water, located c.5m from original shoreline. It is overlooked by level ground rising to a ridge to the south. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Goose Island (see above), 420m to north, a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 550m to east. There are also ringforts at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-49, WM26-50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms around Rochfort Bay.

**Previous publications**

The site is not recorded in the A.S.I. files; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61.

**Site interpretation**

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval crannog at Goose Islands.


| **Rochfort Demesne 5** | **Lough Ennell** | | **Rock platform** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RMP**: No number | **OS** 26/9/4 | **NGR -** | **OD** 274ft |

**Site description**

This is a small, irregular, rock platform on marshy ground (former lakebed) to the south of Rochfort Demesne 3. It has an even profile, with large irregular limestone slabs (1.5m length, 80-90cm width) scattered across its surface.

Site dimensions: 3m N/S, 3m E/W      Height 50cm.

**Site location**

Located on dryland on southeast side of a small inlet on the south side of Rochfort Bay. The site would originally have been in 1m depth of water, located c.10m from original shoreline. It is overlooked by level ground rising to a ridge to the south. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Goose Island (see above), 420m to north, a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 550m to east. There are also ringforts at Rochfort

Demesne (WM26-49, WM26-50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms around Rochfort Bay.

**Previous publications**

The site is not recorded in the A.S.I. files; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61.

**Site interpretation**

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval crannog at Goose Islands.


**Rochfort Demesne 6    Lough Ennell            Rock platform**
**RMP**: No number     **OS** 26/9/4     **NGR -**     **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This is an oval rock platform on marshy ground (former lakebed) to the south of Rochfort Demesne 3. It has an even profile, with large irregular limestone slabs (1.5m length, 80-90cm width) scattered across its surface. A second smaller platform (Rochfort Demesne 7) is attached to the north side of the site.

Site dimensions: 13m N/S, 21m E/W     Height 50cm.

**Site location**

Located on dryland on south side of a small inlet on the south side of Rochfort Bay. The site would originally have been in 1m depth of water, located c.10m from original shoreline. It is overlooked by level ground rising to a ridge to the south. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Goose Island (see above), 420m to north, a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 550m to east. There are also ringforts at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-49, WM26-50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms around Rochfort Bay.

**Previous publications**

C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61.

**Site interpretation**

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval crannog at Goose Islands.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.39.

**Rochfort Demesne 7**  **Lough Ennell**                     **Rock platform**

**RMP:** No number    **OS** 26/9/4    **NGR** -        **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This is a small, oval rock platform situated on level, marshy ground (former lakebed alluviums). It is a low, level platform, even in profile and steep-sided at its edges. It is grassy surfaced with small irregular limestone slabs (80m length, 50cm width) scattered across its upper surface. It is attached to the north side of a larger platform (Rochfort Demesne 7).

Site dimensions:  9m N/S, 8m E/W       Height 50cm.

**Site location**

Located on dryland on south side of a small inlet on the south side of Rochfort Bay. The site would originally have been in 1m depth of water, located c.23m from original shoreline. It is overlooked by level ground rising to a ridge to the south. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Goose Island (see above), 420m to north, a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 550m to east. There are also ringforts at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-49, WM26-50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms around Rochfort Bay.

**Previous publications**

The site is not recorded in the A.S.I. files; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61.

**Site interpretation**

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval crannog at Goose Islands.

**Rochfort Demesne 8     Lough Ennell                    Rock platform**

**RMP**: No number        **OS** 26/9/4        **NGR** -        **OD** 274ft

### Site description

This is an oval rock platform in shallow water (50cm) at the edge of lakeshore. It would originally have been in 1m depth of water, located c.60m from original shoreline. It is a level platform, even in profile and steep-sided at its edges. It has small irregular limestone slabs (80m length, 50cm width) scattered around its upper surface. There are more massive angular slabs and boulders (2m length) along its northern edge, apparently deliberately arranged as a kerb at the water's edge. The site is connected to the modern shoreline by a broad, level causeway.

Site dimensions: 16m N/S, 27m E/W     Height 50-70m.

### Site location

Located at water's edge on southwest side of a small inlet on the south side of Rochfort Bay. It is overlooked by level ground rising to a ridge to the south. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

### Adjacent archaeological sites

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Goose Island (see above), 400m to north, a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 550m to east. There are also ringforts at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-49, WM26-50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms around Rochfort Bay.

### Previous publications

C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61.

### Site interpretation

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval crannog at Goose Islands.


**Rochfort Demesne 9     Lough Ennell                    Rock platform**

**RMP**: No number        **OS** 26/9/4        **NGR** -        **OD** 274ft

### Site description

This is an oval rock platform in shallow water (50cm) at the edge of lakeshore. It would originally have been in 1m depth of water, located c.70m from original shoreline. It is a level platform, even in profile with gradually sloping edges. Limestone slabs (1m length, 50cm

width) are scattered around its upper surface and large stones are exposed around the site in the water. The site is connected to the modern shoreline by a narrow, stone causeway, c.8-10m in length.

Site dimensions: 12m N/S, 20m E/W     Height 50cm.

**Site location**

Located at water's edge, west of a small inlet on the south side of Rochfort Bay. It is overlooked by level ground rising to a ridge to the south. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Goose Island (see above), 400m to north, a mound at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-48), 600m to east. There are also ringforts at Rochfort Demesne (WM26-49, WM26-50). There are also small crannogs and rock platforms around Rochfort Bay.

**Previous publications**

The site is not recorded in the A.S.I. files; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61.

**Site interpretation**

This site is a possible prehistoric or medieval rock platform, potentially associated with the early medieval crannog at Goose Islands.


**Rushy Island**          **Lough Ennell**                    **Crannog (high-cairn)**
**RMP**: WM026-103     **OS** 26/01/5     **NGR** 24135 24954     **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a low, oval mound located in drained marshy land. It is built of large stones and pebbles, which rise towards the centre of the mound. It was cut through on the western side by a modern drainage ditch in the 1960s, which revealed no structural timbers, but there was a large quantity of animal bone in a midden. A dugout boat was previously found on or near the east shore of the island and Viking hack silver has also been recovered from the site. Site dimensions: c.26m E/W, 35m N/S, Original height c.2cm.

**Site location**

Located at north end of lake, currently in marshy land (was originally 100-150m from shoreline). The site is beside a drain that marks original channel of River Brosna. Geology is

limestone, adjacent soils are all fen peats (improved) to north, northeast and west (part of bogs to north of lake), nearest cultivable soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till to the southwest.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at School Boy Island (WM26-102), 220m to the southeast.

**Previous publications**

A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 26:103: Rushy Island; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Riocht na Midhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Riocht na Midhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61.

**Site interpretation**

This is a probable early medieval crannog, and the discovery of Viking hack silver indicates activity in the ninth to tenth century.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.35


| School Boy Island | Lough Ennell | | | Crannog (high-cairn) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **RMP**: WM026-102 | **OS** 26/05/2 | **NGR** 24152 24930 | **OD** 274ft | |

**Site description**

This crannog is an oval, high-cairn site (possibly built on a natural, rocky knoll), 1m above water level. It is very regularly built, with an almost perfectly level surface, an even profile and a steep slope to the edge. It is constructed of medium to small sized stones. There is a distinct stone kerbing around the upper surface of the crannog at NW side. On the south and east side, a chain of large limestone blocks and boulders (50cm length, 30cm width) forms a 'inner' stone kerb on lower surface facing out into the lake. There is also an 'outer' kerb at the modern water's edge (submerged originally?) on the south side, 2m in length. On the north side of the island's upper surface, a possible hut structure is represented by two parallel stone alignments, 5m in length (NE/SW) by 2m in width, 20cm in height. There are possible duck-hides at east and west ends of island.

Site dimensions: c.26m NE/SW, 22m NW/SE, Height 2.5cm.

**Previous finds from the crannog**

Local folklore that the island was used by Owen Roe O'Neill's troops in the seventeenth century. A lead musketball was found on western shore. (A.S.I RMP files School Boy Island, Co. Westmeath):

Two early medieval iron handbells were also apparently found in the water off School Boy Island (not found in NMI files, but referred to in various publications).

**Site location**

Located at north end of lake, 200m from shoreline, in 1.5m water depth. The site is opposite outlet of River Brosna. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are fen peats (improved) to north, northeast and west (part of bogs to north of lake), nearest cultivable soils are grey brown podzolics over a limestone till on the eastern shore

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is a crannog at Rushy Island (WM26-103), 220m to the northwest, while the crannog also has good views towards an early medieval church and graveyard at Lynn (WM26-3) 800m to ENE. This is probably the early medieval monastic site of Lynn, described in the twelfth century Betha Colmáin maic Lúachain. There is also a castle at Lynn (WM26-2).

**Previous publications**

A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 26:102: School Boy Island; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The crannógs of Lough Ennell: a computer survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 105-13; C. Karkov and J. Ruffing, 'The settlement patterns of Lough Ennell: the 1992 survey' in *Ríocht na Mídhe* 8, no. 4, (1992-1993), pp 54-61, at p. 343.

**Site interpretation**

This is a probable early medieval crannog associated with the monastic site at Lann, possibly even used as a shrine island, while it is also strategically located on the mouth of the River Brosna. In local folklore, the name 'School Boy Island' derives from a story about a bog playing truant from school took a stone out there each day (Arch. Survey Ire. Files; School Boy Island, Co. Westmeath).

**Figures**

Fig. 2.35, Fig. 2.36.

**Shanoge Shallows**     **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: no number     **OS** 25/8/6     **NGR** -     **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This is a small, rocky, oval islet located in open, shallow water (c.1m depth). It is clearly marked as a small, circular island on OS maps. It is heavily overgrown by trees and has been enlarged by the post 1950s drop in water levels. This may be a crannog, but this cannot be ascertained.

Site dimensions:  c.20m E/W, 25m N/S, Height c.3.5cm

**Previous finds:**

None known

**Site location**

Located on northwest side of lake, c.60m from the natural islands off the original shore of Ladestown townland, 130m to the original shoreline. Geology is limestone, the nearest adjacent soils are Howardstown-Baggotstown soil complex.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is a castle site at Ladestown (WM25-74), on the ridge 750m to the northwest, overlooking the lake. There is also an 18th/19th century icehouse (WM25-72) and house (WM25-73) near that site.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Site interpretation**

This is a probable crannog, potentially of early medieval date.

**Lady Island**     **Lough Ennell**

**RMP**: No number     **OS** 32/3/3     **NGR** -     **OD** 274ft

**Site description**

This crannog is an oval, high-cairn site (possibly built on a natural, rocky knoll), 1m above water level. It is fairly regularly built, typically of small fist-sized stones (10-15cm in length). It has a level upper surface, an even profile and slopes gradually to the water. There is a stone kerb of large limestone blocks around the island at the water's edge. A modern concrete statue of the Goddess Minerva stands on the island in a rusty oil barrel.

Site dimensions: c.18m NE/SW, 14m NW/SE, Height 2.5cm.

**Previous finds**

None known

**Site location**

Located at south end of lake, 200m from shoreline of Nure/Liliput townland, in 1.5m water depth. The site is opposite the outflow of River Brosna out of Lough Ennell to the south. Geology is limestone, adjacent soils are Patrickswell-Baggotstown soil complex over a limestone till, a small island of cultivable land surrounded by lake to the north and raised bogs to the south.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is an earthwork at Clonshingle (WM32-21), 1km to the south.

**Previous publications**

None, the site was previously unknown.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.41

# Lough Iron

| **Cullenhugh 1** | **Lough Iron** | **Platform** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RMP**: WM011-5 | **OS** 11/02/2 | **NGR** 23462 26296 | **OD** 205ft |

**Site description**

The crannog is a small circular cairn of stone in marshy ground at northeast shore of Lough Iron. The cairn was laid directly on the sandy muds of the lakebed. It has a level upper surface, an even profile and gradually sloping sides. There is a partial kerb of limestone slabs (50cm length and width, 10cm thick) on the south and west side. There were also 3 small oak stakes, 30-40cm diameter, on west and southwest sides.

Site dimensions: 8m N/S 8m E/W Height 40cm.

**Previous finds**

None known

**Site location**

Located at water's edge on east shore of lake, south of the outlet of the River Inny. The geology is Lucan formation dark limestones and shale, while the site appears to be a soil boundary between alluvial gleys and grey-brown podzolics (Rathowen).

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Cullenhugh (WM011-10), immediately to the south, see below for other sites.

**Previous publications**

None; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 11:5: Cullenhugh.

**Site interpretation**

This is probably a small early medieval low-cairn crannog, similar to the sites at Kiltoom, Lough Derravarragh and at Sroove, on Lough Gara, Co. Sligo.

**Cullenhugh 2**       **Lough Iron**

**RMP:** WM011-10       **OS** 11/02/5       **NGR** 23470 26276       **OD** 205ft

**Site description**

This is a crannog complex of two conjoined cairns connected by a causeway. The main crannog cairn (25m N/S, 32m E/W, 50cm in height) is situated to the southwest. It is an oval cairn of stone, with a kerb of large limestone boulders all around its perimeter. The kerb is best preserved to the south, where six boulders protrude above the ground. The remains of a possible stone house structure (possibly a duckhide?) lies on the south side of the crannog, 2m from perimeter. This is comprised of a limestone blocks set to form a rough square, 3m in length. It has a possible entrance located at the north side. To the NNE is a short causeway 3m in length, of limestone blocks rising 30-40cm above marshy ground. This connects the crannog to an ancillary crannog.

This is a circular platform, 16m in diameter, with smaller limestone blocks at the perimeter, rising 50cm above surrounding land. Both crannogs are overgrown, but probing revealed that closely packed limestone rubble was overlain by habitation soil, dark humus and a mixture of charcoal. A bronze buckle or brooch was recovered from the crannog's surface. There are also traces of early prehistoric activity on this immediate shoreline, including Late Mesolithic Bann flakes, waste flakes, a polished stone axehead and a polished stone adzehead (NMI 1969:802-818) recovered from the foreshore north of the crannog, but definitely not from the surface of crannog itself. The Cullenhugh crannogs are probably early medieval in date, with evidence for late medieval activity upon them also.

Site dimensions: 25m N/S,       32m E/W,       Height 50cm.

**Previous finds from the crannog**

Early medieval or late medieval cast bronze mount/buckle       NMI 1969:819.

**Site location**

Located on northeast shore of Lough Iron, immediately adjacent to Cullenhugh townland and south of the outlet of the River Inny. The site lies on marshy ground, but would have originally been in shallow water, c.20m from the shoreline. Local geology is Lucan formation dark limestones and shale, adjacent soils are alluvial gleys and grey-brown podzolics (Rathowen), and the site sits on soil boundary between them. The lake is otherwise largely surrounded by fen peats, so this east shore is the only area suitable for agriculture.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is the crannog at Cullenhugh (WM011-5) immediately to the north. Other nearby archaeological sites are probably late medieval in origins, including a castle at Cullenhugh (WM 11:07), as well as undated earthworks at Cullenhugh (WM11:06) and Ballinalack (WM11:08, WM11:09). There is also a significant late medieval abbey with associated fish ponds, ice-houses, earthworks on the opposite west shore of the lake at Tristernagh Abbey (WM11:053).

**Previous publications**

None; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 11:10: Lough Iron.

**Site interpretation**

This is probably a small early medieval low-cairn crannog, similar to the sites at Kiltoom, Lough Derravarragh and at Sroove, on Lough Gara, Co. Sligo. It may also have been used as a lake platform in the late middle ages..

# Lough Lene

**Castle Island**          **Lough Lene**

**RMP:** Previously unknown     **OS** 8/5/02     **NGR -**          **OD** 313ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a large, low, circular cairn of large limestone slabs, stones and timber, built in unusually deep water (3-6m) between Turgesius Island and the western shore of Lough Lene (250m from shore). It is locally known as 'Castle Island' and is depicted as such on OS maps. The cairn has a level upper surface, is quite sharp and steep-sided on its north, east and southeast shores, but slopes more gradually towards the west (facing towards the mainland). There are horizontal oak beams (10cm diameter) visible within the stones of the cairn, particularly on the north and west sectors. These oak planks and beams are mortised and well-hewn. Intriguingly, there is also a large assemblage of 5-10 heavy oak timbers (5-6m in length, 30-40cm width), lying on the lakebed muds, in 5-6m water depth 10-12m to the northnortheast of the island. It is possible that this small cairn would once have

supported a much larger structure in wood. An early medieval bronze bell was found on the crannog in the 19th century. Castle Island was previously surveyed by the Crannog Archaeological Project and the site has produced a dendrochronology date of AD 855 ± 9 years.

Site dimensions: 20m E-W, 18m N-S, Height 4.5m

**Previous finds from water beside crannog**

Early medieval bronze ecclesiastical hand bell (early 9th century AD)    NMI 1881:535

Early medieval bronze basin (8th-9th century AD)    NMI 1993:38

Early medieval iron adze/axe head    NMI 1987:1

Site dimensions: c.20m E/W, 20m N/S, Height 4.5m.

**Site location**

Located in middle of Lough Lene, between the large natural Turgesius Island and the western shoreline of the lake. It is situated 250m from the shore, in 3-6m depth of water. The geology is Derravarragh cherts limestone. The adjacent soils are of Patrickswell-Rathowen mineral soil complex, which stretch all along the western shore.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological sites are 3 ringforts at Ranaghan (WM8-22, 23, 24), 550m to SSE. There is also a possible church site at Collinstown (WM8-25), 1.25km to the east. The adjacent islands at Turgesius Island have also produced early medieval finds (including coins, swords, cauldrons).

**Previous publications**

The site is not included in the A.S.I. files; Robert Farrell, 'The crannog archaeological project (CAP), Republic of Ireland II: Lough Lene - offshore island survey' *I.J.N.A.U.E.*, 18, no. 3, (1989), pp 221-8; the author of this thesis inspected the site in an underwater survey in 1998.

**Site interpretation**

This early medieval crannog (at least of mid-ninth century date), which although small, is substantially constructed using large slabs and timbers. It may have had a substantial timber superstructure, which would be unusual for such a relatively small site. The previous finds of hand bell and basin might indicate it was used as a shrine island, or a place for storing metalwork, perhaps of the early medieval churches at Fore or the local lakeshore.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.41; Fig. 2.42.

**Nun's Island**　　　　　**Lough Lene**

**RMP**: Previously unknown　　　**OS** 8/5/02　　**NGR -**　　　**OD** 313ft

**Site description**

This is a large oval, rocky island, partly natural in origins, in 4-5m water depth. It is a large cairn of medium to large limestone blocks (70cm length, 50cm in width) and smaller pebbles. There are large stones (1m in length) forming a stone kerb along the east shore. There are also 3 possible causeways running out from the island. A short causeway of very large stones (1.5m length) extends for 5m out from the north shore. There is also a causeway, extending for 20m from the northwest shore. The largest causeway, is a distinct linear arrangement of large stones (1m in length), running out from the southeast shore if the island, towards the neighbouring Turgesius Island, measuring 58m in length, 5-6m in width. It is overgrown with trees.

Site dimensions:  c.60m NW/SE, 30m NE/SW, Height 4m.

**Previous finds**

A number of medieval objects, including gaming pieces and a possible sword ('a crannog sword') were found in the water beside this island. Details are not available here.

**Site location**

'Nun's Island,' located in middle of Lough Lene, to northwest of Turgesius Island. It is situated 500m from the northeast shore, in 3-4 depth of water. The geology is Derravarragh cherts limestone. The adjacent soils are of Patrickswell-Rathowen mineral soil complex, which stretch all along the western shore.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological sites is a definite crannog at 'Castle Island' (see above), 550m to SE. There is also a ringfort on the dryland at Cummerstown (WM8-8), 1.4km to the north. The adjacent islands at Turgesius Island have also produced early medieval finds.

**Previous publications**

Robert Farrell, 'The crannog archaeological project (CAP), Republic of Ireland II: Lough Lene - offshore island survey' *I.J.N.A.U.E.*, 18, no. 3, (1989), pp 221-8; the author of this thesis inspected the site in an underwater survey in 1998.

**Site interpretation**

This crannog is based on an natural island that may have been enhanced and kerbed during the early medieval period. As with the nearby Turgesius Island and Castle Island, it is associated in local folklore with Vikings and its name also suggests an early ecclesiastical function.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.41; Fig. 2.42.


# Lough Sewdy

**Shinglis**            **Lough Sewdy**

**RMP:** WM024-2        **OS** 24/01/1     **NGR** 22170 25039      **OD** 260ft

**Site description**

This possible crannog is a low, oval-shaped mound on north shore of Lough Sewdy. The site is a low, grassy mound of earth and stone, in rushy, marshy land. The mound has an irregular, grassy surface, with large limestone blocks (1m in length, 40-50cm width) scattered about its surface. These limestone blocks also form a possible kerb around the edge of the mound, particularly along its northern edge (facing shoreline). The site is located right at the end of a narrow promontory running out from the shoreline to the north and is attached to the dry land by a long, narrow (10m in width) spit of ground. This is possibly a causeway, but may be natural in origin. There are also several other possible natural mounds along this shore, including a low oval mound 40m to the east.

Site dimensions:  15m N/S              19m E/W       Height 45cm

**Previous finds**

None known

**Site location**

Located in marshy ground on north shore of Lough Sewdy, a small lake in hilly country at Ballymore. Geology is Lucan formation dark limestones and cherts, and the soils immediately around lake are gleys and peaty lake alluviums, while there are grey brown podzolics (Patrickswell) on the land all around the lake.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is a small (25m E/W) rectilinear earthwork at Shinglis (WM24-1), immediately overlooking the site. This appears to be a medieval earthwork defined by a bank and external ditch. There are also earthworks at Shinglis (WM17-84, 85, 86), 600m to the north. There are 2 ringforts (WM24-6, 7) and an 'altar' and holy well (WM24-8) at Mullaghcloe 1.4km to the southeast across the lake. However, the archaeological complex that dominates the lake is the Anglo-Norman motte and bailey at Ballymore (WM24-179), 680m to southeast on the opposite shoreline.

**Previous publications**

None; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 24:2: Shinglis.


111

**Site interpretation**

This site is difficult to interpret as it may well be largely natural in origin and there is no dating evidence from it. There are several islands on Lough Sewdy, including Big Island (a natural island in the middle of the lake), Sallow Island, Corran Island and Green Island. Although not currently designated as crannogs, some of these islands have produced several early medieval and late medieval finds (including personal ornaments, gaming pieces. Coins and Viking silver). It is likely that some were early medieval island habitations, perhaps even royal sites. A significant Anglo-Norman manor was established at Ballymore, on the southern edge of the lake in the late twelfth century AD. The lake was also a significant venue for military operations in the seventeenth century wars.

# McEvoy's Lough

**Culleen Beg**          **McEvoy's Lough**

**RMP**: WM019-12     **OS** 19/02/3     **NGR** 24485 25680     **OD** 314ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a circular mound of earth, located in marshy ground about 18m from original shore (10m from present shore) at northwest end of McEvoy's Lough. The mound is overgrown and has an irregular surface, with a possible causeway leading towards the dryland to the north. There is a possible palisade on the southern edge, represented by two substantial wooden posts (20-30cm diameter) facing outwards towards the lake. The site was disturbed by the building on it of a 19<sup>th</sup> century pumphouse No previously known finds.

Site dimensions: 13m N/S          14m E/W          Height 90cm.

**Previous finds**

None known

**Site location**

Located on northwest shore of McEvoy's Lough, a small lake associated with the larger lakes, Lough Drin and Slevin's Lough to east and south. Geology is Lucan dark limestones and shales, while immediately adjacent soils include grey brown podzolics to the northwest, and fen peats are located around these lakes to the east and southeast.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological sites are an earthwork at Culleenbeg (WM19-11) 500m to west, a univallate ringfort at Quarry (WM12-174) 800m to north, and a univallate ringfort at Knockdrin (WM12-175) 900m to northnortheast. There are also barrows to the north. The early medieval royal *caput* or administrative centre of the Clann Cholmáin kings of Mide at

112

Ruba Chonaill was probably located at Rathconnell, 2.5km to the southwest. This was probably taken over by the Anglo-Normans, as indicated by the presence there of a motte, castle and parish church (WM19-40, WM19-41).

**Previous publications**

None; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 19:12: Culleenbeg

**Site interpretation**

This is an uncertain site. It may be an early medieval low-cairn crannog or platform, inhabited by a lower social class.


# Mount Dalton Lough

**Loughan**                    **Mount Dalton Lough**

**RMP**: WM018-123    **OS** 18/13/4    **NGR** 23088 25151    **OD** ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a circular low-cairn, built of small to medium-sized limestone slabs (20cm length, 20cm width), stones and pebbles. It has a flat upper surface and an even profile, with sharply sloping sides, and is defined all around its edge by a low kerb of stone slabs placed around the perimeter. There were also some vertical wooden stakes or piles at two locations at the site's edge. It is separated from the shoreline by c. 220m of water and marshy ground. The crannog is heavily overgrown by mature deciduous trees (oak, beech, alder)

Site dimensions: 27m N/S                31m E/W        Height 2.4m (1.45m from present water level)

**Previous finds**

None known

**Site location**

Located towards the southern end of Mount Dalton Lough (220m from southwest shoreline), a medium-sized (9ha) lough, southwest of Rathconrath. The site and the lake is overlooked by the steep slopes of a large, dome-shaped hill to the northeast, with lowlying reclaimed land to south rising gradually to gently rolling ridges. Geology is Walsortian limestone, soils to north, east and west are grey brown podzolics (Patrickswell series), while to the south the soils are of the Ballyshear/Patrickswell soil complex.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological sites are a castle at Loughan (WM18-122) and a souterrain at Loughan (WM18-123), 600m to NNE. The Hill of Uisneach, with its extensive prehistoric

113

and early medieval monuments is located 2.6km to southeast, but is not clearly visible from the lakeshore.

**Previous publications**

None; A.S.I. files. Westmeath R.M.P. 18:213: Loughan

**Site interpretation**

This architecture and local settlement landscape suggests that this is an early medieval crannog, situated in a densely settled early medieval landscape, close to a significant midland ceremonial centre at Uisnech. It is, however, quite isolated and may have been a defensive or strategically placed site.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.43

# Newtown Lough

**Kilrush Lower**           **Newtown Lough**

RMP: WM009-005       OS 9/6/5         NGR 26374 26789       OD 300ft

**Site description**

The crannog is a low, circular mound of small stones situated at the water's edge on the sandy shore of Newtown Lough. It has a level, grassy upper surface and is scarped on the shoreline side, over 1-2m, on north, east and west sides. There are no wooden posts visible, but there appears to be a slight kerb of stones along the north side.

Site dimensions: 29m E/W        19m N/S         Height 1-2m.

**Previous finds**

None known

**Site location**

Located on the southwest shore of a small lake (Newtown Lough) on the modern Meath/Westmeath border. The site is located on the end of a small promontory of marshy land extending out into the water. The geology is Lucan formation dark limestones, the adjacent soils are all fen peats around the lake which are then surrounded by soils of the Ladestown/Banagher/Rathowen mineral soil complex .

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is a 'Castle, site of', at Newtown (WM009-4), 400m to the west. There is also a ringfort at Carnybrogan (WM009-17), 1.1km to the southwest. Otherwise, there are few archaeological sites in the vicinity and it is quite isolated.

**Previous publications**

None; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 9:5: Kilrush Lower

**Site interpretation**

This is an uncertain site. It may be a Bronze Age or early medieval low cairn crannog.


# Newtownlow

**Newtownlow**          **No modern lake**

**RMP**: WM038-11          **OS** 38/03/6          **NGR** 23807 23699          **OD** 310ft

**Site description and finds**

This early medieval crannog was built of a cairn of stones, earth and timber in marshy ground at base of steep esker, probably occupied between *c*.AD 950-1200 (contemporary with Ballinderry no. 1, which is situated 16km to west). The site was destroyed during modern land reclamation and was partly excavated by Cormac Bourke in the 1980s.

The crannog was built on a wooden substructure on the underlying peat, of a platform of substantial trunks, across which were laid light timbers and brushwood, interlocked by notches. This was covered with substructural layers of clay, peat and stones, buttressed by heavy timbers at the edge. The occupation surface may be represented by an organic, midden layer found in different areas of the site. A possible house on the site was evident in a hearth set on a flat stone and two arcs of oak stakes (possibly remains of a wattle wall) from a subcircular structure 6x4m in diameter. The occupation layer appears to have been covered by a layer of red/orange soil, interpreted as the burnt remains of a house. Otherwise, the occupation layer was sealed under a buff-tan clay, incorporating charcoal, crucible fragments, pieces of slag and a possible furnace, but no structures were found in this upper layer. The site was enclosed within an irregular palisade, including a cleft oak palisade on the east side (including two rows of planks with horizontals lying between) and an irregular roundwood post and plank palisade (with scatters of roundwood outside it) on the west. Some bone objects and comb fragments, datable to the tenth century AD, were found in association with this palisade, probably dating its construction to c.AD 950. Finds from the machine disturbed layers in the middle and edge of the site included a hoard of tenth-century Anglo-Saxon pennies (ranging AD 924-55, probably deposited c.AD 950), 20 bronze stick pins, a square-sectioned whetstone with copper-alloy fittings (probably a ceremonial scepter). Finds from outside the palisade included two quernstones, a wooden bucket stave, wooden staves from a small waisted vessel, fragments of leather, a double-sided comb, a

shafthole iron axe, an iron pan or ladle. A great quantity of animal bone (including cattle, sheep, pig, goat, horse, red-deer, hare and fox) was also found outside the palisade.

Towards the end of the site's life-history (possibly after a period of abandonment as indicated by the rotten palisade planks), the palisade on the east and southeast was mantled under a layer of stones and the mound mantled under a sterile layer of clay. This uppermost layer produced late twelfth-century green-glazed pottery sherds, an eleventh to twelfth century stirrup ring, a ring brooch, a copper alloy plaque and cast crouching animal (twelfth century date) and a fine jet cross of eleventh to twelfth century date, found in peat to the west of the site.

Site dimensions: 17m E/W        17m N/S        Height 1.5m.

### Site location

Located in a small wet hollow, apparently formerly a small lake (c.250m N/S, 500m E/W) on a tributary of the River Brosna. The site is located 15-20m from the original gently sloping shoreline to the south, and 60-70m to the base of a steep esker (which runs east-west) to the north. Local geology is limestone, soils around the lake are Baggotstown soil complex, with fens to northwest, and Howardstown-Patrickswell soil complex along the large esker to north.

### Adjacent archaeological sites

The nearest archaeological site is a large univallate ringfort at Newtownlow (WM38-10), on slightly elevated ground, 150m immediately to the west at the narrow end of the lake. The crannog is also overlooked by a large, flat-topped earthen motte surmounted by a late medieval cylindrical tower ('Low's Castle') at Newtownlow (WM38-15), 300m to southeast, as well as a medieval parish church (probably a 16th-17th century church built on a 13th/14th century smaller church) and graveyard at Newtownlow (WM38-12), 320m to SSE. All sites are located south of a substantial esker that must have been an early medieval routeway.

**Previous publications**: Cormac Bourke, 'Newtownlow' in Claire Cotter (ed.) *Excavations 1985* (Dublin 1986), p. 40; Cormac Bourke, 'Newtownlow' in Claire Cotter (ed.) *Excavations 1986* (Dublin 1987), p. 37; Michael Kenny, 'A find of Anglo-Saxon pennies from Newtownlow' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, 7, no. 3 (1984), pp 37-43; M.B. Deevy, *Medieval ring brooches in Ireland* (Bray, 1998), p. 102; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 38:11: Newtownlow.

### Site interpretation

This appears to be an early medieval crannog (with adjacent ringfort) occupied alongside a significant early medieval routeway running east/west along the esker. The crannog was probably occupied in the tenth century and eleventh century AD. The site lies today in the

116

barony of Moycashel, a short distance from the boundary with the barony of Fartullagh, but it probably originally lay just within the western boundary of the early medieval territory of Fir Thulach. It seems likely that in the late twelfth/early thirteenth century this local power centre was appropriated by Anglo-Norman colonists, who built an earthen motte and timber castle (one of several constructed in the De Lacy Liberty of Meath) and medieval parish church, thus taking over from Gaelic Irish lordship. In the sixteenth or seventeenth century, a larger church may have been built on top of the medieval church.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.44; Fig. 2.45; Fig. 2.46.

## Twy Lough

**Twyford**          **Twy Lough**

**RMP**: WM029-5     **OS** 29/04/2     **NGR** 21024 24371     **OD** 147ft

**Site description**

This crannog is a low cairn of stone, earth and timber in shallow water at the east end of Twy Lough. The crannog is a low, level cairn, with gradually sloping sides, apart from the east side where it slopes steeply into the water. The cairn has been heavily eroded by wave action on the west side, revealing a palisade of vertical wooden posts, set in irregular concentric rows 3-4 deep. There was no evidence for horizontal timbers. Animal bone was also common here and across the surface of the site. The crannog is heavily overgrown today with large trees and bushes and is surrounded by reeds. The crannog was clearly used as a fishing station in the 18th-19th century. A small rectangular summer house (5.3m N/S, 3.6m E/W), with drystone walls, mortared and whitewashed interior walls and a possible fireplace at the east end sits in the middle of the island. There is also an old wooden jetty on the southwest side, 4m in length (in 1m depth of water), bound with rope and on stilts. This was probably associated with the summer house.

Site dimensions: 28m E/W          27m N/S          Height 1.3m (30cm above water).

**Previous finds**

None known

**Site location**

Originally located at east end of Twy Lough (a long, deep lake), formerly surrounded by water but now separated from the shoreline by marshes to east and southeast. The site was 130m from nearest original shoreline to south. Geology is Lucan formation dark limestones and shales. Adjacent soils quite complex, with lake partly enclosed by wetlands. Only

nearest southern shoreline soils are grey brown podzolics (Patrickswell), with fen peats to northeast, raised bog to north and fen peats to southwest. The lake is overlooked by low, rolling hill or ridge to south (location of motte) and there is an esker at the west end. The modern Athlone road passes along its north side.

**Adjacent archaeological sites**

The nearest archaeological site is a motte (WM29-5) at Twyford 250m to south. There is also a motte (WM29-6) at Twyford 900m to northeast. These could originally have been raised ringforts. There is also evidence for early medieval church settlement beyond the hill to the south, including a possible late medieval abbey at Twyford (WM29-9), while the early medieval (probably ninth century) high cross at Bealin (Twyford twd), is located on a hill-top, 900m to south. This cross is closely associated with the Clonmacnoise school, but is not clearly visible from the crannog.

**Previous publications**

None; A.S.I. files, Westmeath R.M.P. 29:5: Twyford.

**Site interpretation**

This is a possible early medieval crannog, located close to a significant early medieval monastic site, but there is no available dating evidence from the site. Local folklore has it that this lake (apparently formerly known as Loch Lochraighi, 'lake of the lake-folk') was the site of an event in the *Life* of Ciaran, when the saint cursed heathens and rabble on an island in lake that were disturbing the monastic community (see above, chapter 4).


# White Lough (Clonickilvant)


| **Clonickilvant** | **White Lough** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RMP**: WM020-62 | **OS** 20/09/3 | **NGR** 25201 25386 | **OD** 314ft |

**Site description**

This crannog was a low, oval mound of timber and earth in marshy ground at White Lough. The interior of the site was badly disturbed in the 19th century by both locals and antiquarians searching for 'Danes treasure'. The crannog is an oval mound. It was enclosed within two concentric rings of vertical posts, with 68 stakes and 8 split planks visible on the southeast, south and southwest sides, with a few horizontal beams lying between these vertical posts. There was also a stake palisade parallel to the mound on the south side. There were numerous fragments of animal bone, but no other finds. In the 19th century, the ashes

from a possible hearth were found at the centre of the mound. A portion of a large dugout canoe together with a bronze pin and a crucible and a stone axe was also found.

Site dimensions: 36m N/S        44m NE/SW    Height 2.4m. (1.4m from water level)

## Previous finds from the vicinity of the crannog

Previous antiquarian finds, mostly from the collections of Rev. Falkiner held within the NMI and Ulster Museum, said to be found on the surface of 'a crannog in White Lough, Killucan, Co. Westmeath' include:

| | |
|---|---|
| Crucible fragments with traces of copper, red and green vitreous stains | NMI 1889: 29 |
| A shale spindle whorl | NMI 1889: 29 |
| Horn | NMI 1889:30 |
| Flint blades and bronze pin? | NMI 1889 30a, b |
| Bone comb fragments | NMI 1900:34 |
| Clay moulds | NMI 1889:10a-d |
| Boars tusks | NMI 1889:30, 36 |
| A clay crucible with traces of red enamel and bronze globule | NMI 1935:6 |
| A stone axe | NMI 1934:491 |
| A stone axe | NMI 1991:69, |
| A stone axe | NMI 1991:70 |

## Site location

Located 200m from original northwest shore of White Lough (on barony boundary), a small lake within a drained former wetland system that includes Black Lough and the raised bogs around. Local geology is limestone, adjacent soils include raised bogs to north and south, with grey brown podzolics (Rathowen cherty phase) immediately to east.

## Adjacent archaeological sites

The nearest archaeological site is a mill at Clonickilvant (WM20-67) 850m to south across the lake. There are also numerous early medieval ringforts in the vicinity, as there are at least 12 ringforts within a 2km radius. In particular, there is a cluster of 4 ringforts at Clonickilvant (WM20-68, WM20-69, WM20-75, WM20-76), 850m to the southeast. There is also an unusually large ringfort at Aghadaugh (WM20-30) 1.8km to the northeast.

### Previous publications

P. Bardan, 'Lough-a-Trim crannoge, Co. Westmeath' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, 27 (1898), p. 276; P. Bardan, 'White Lough crannoge, Co. Westmeath' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, 27 (1898), pp 275-6; W.

Falkiner, 'Notice of a crannog at Loughatrim, Killucan, county of Westmeath' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 21, (1898-1900), pp. 216-7. A.S.I. Westmeath R.M.P. 20:62: Clonickilvant.

**Site interpretation**

This is early medieval crannog, potentially a high-status site, is located in a densely settled early medieval landscape of ringforts, churches and is located on the barony boundary.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.47

# Figures from Appendix 2
# Crannogs in Westmeath

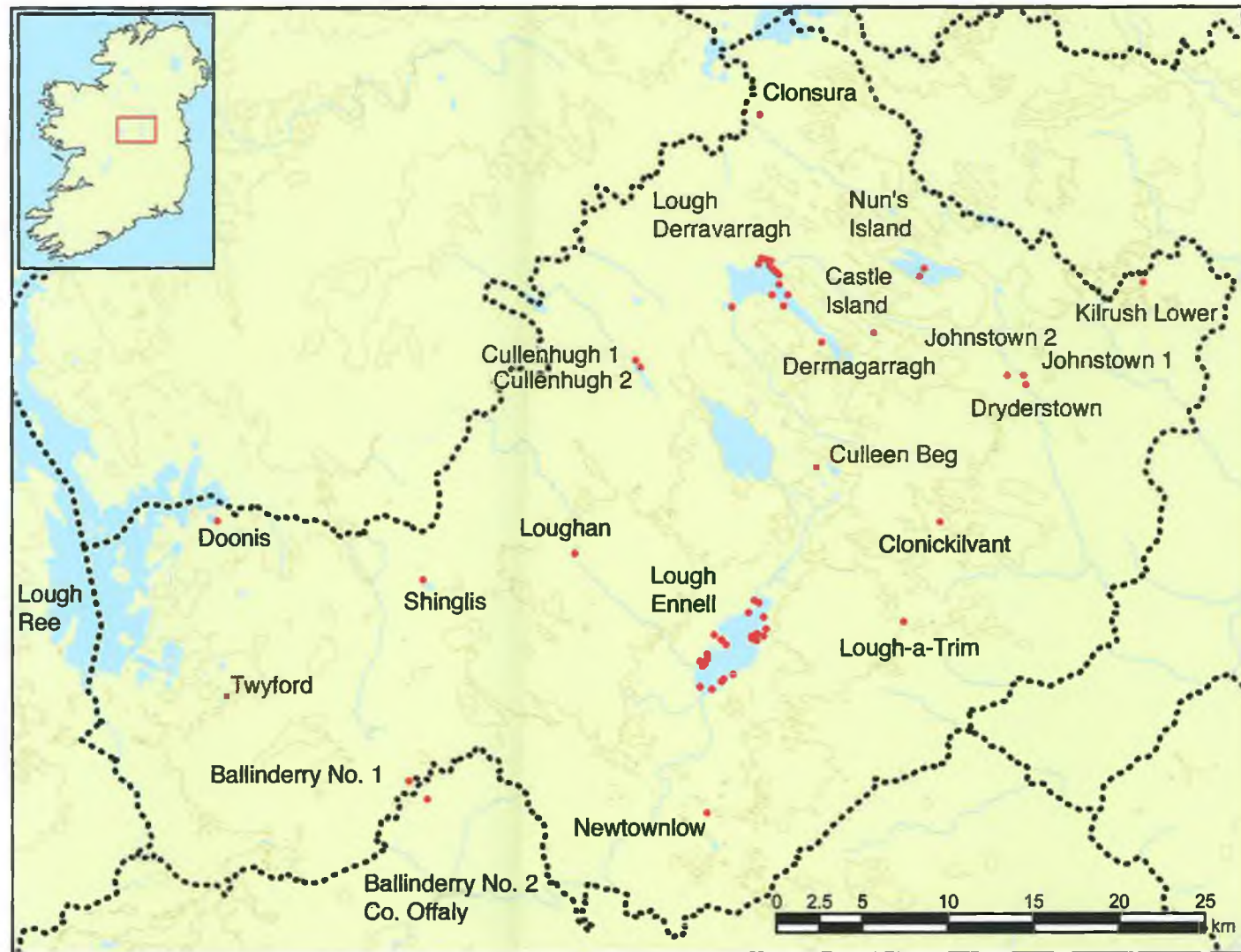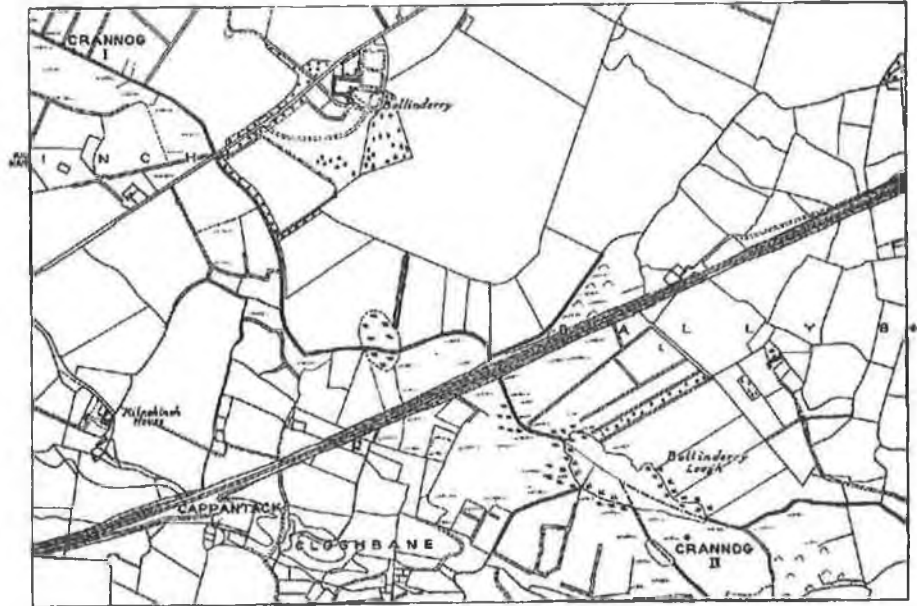Fig. 2.1. Distribution map of Westmeath's crannogs, illustrating location of sites named in Catalogue

**Fig. 2.2** Map showing local landscape of Ballinderry crannog, No. 1 (Source: Hugh O'Neill Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannóg no. 1' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 43c, (1936), Fig. 1).



**Fig. 2.3** Plan of Ballinderry crannog No. 1 (Source: Hugh O'Neill Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannóg no. 1' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 43c, (1936), Pl. XIII)

123

**Fig. 2.4** Hiberno-Norse wooden gaming board found on Ballinderry crannog No. 1 (Source: National Museum of Ireland)



**Fig. 2.5** Viking sword found on Ballinderry crannog No. 1 (Source: National Museum of Ireland)
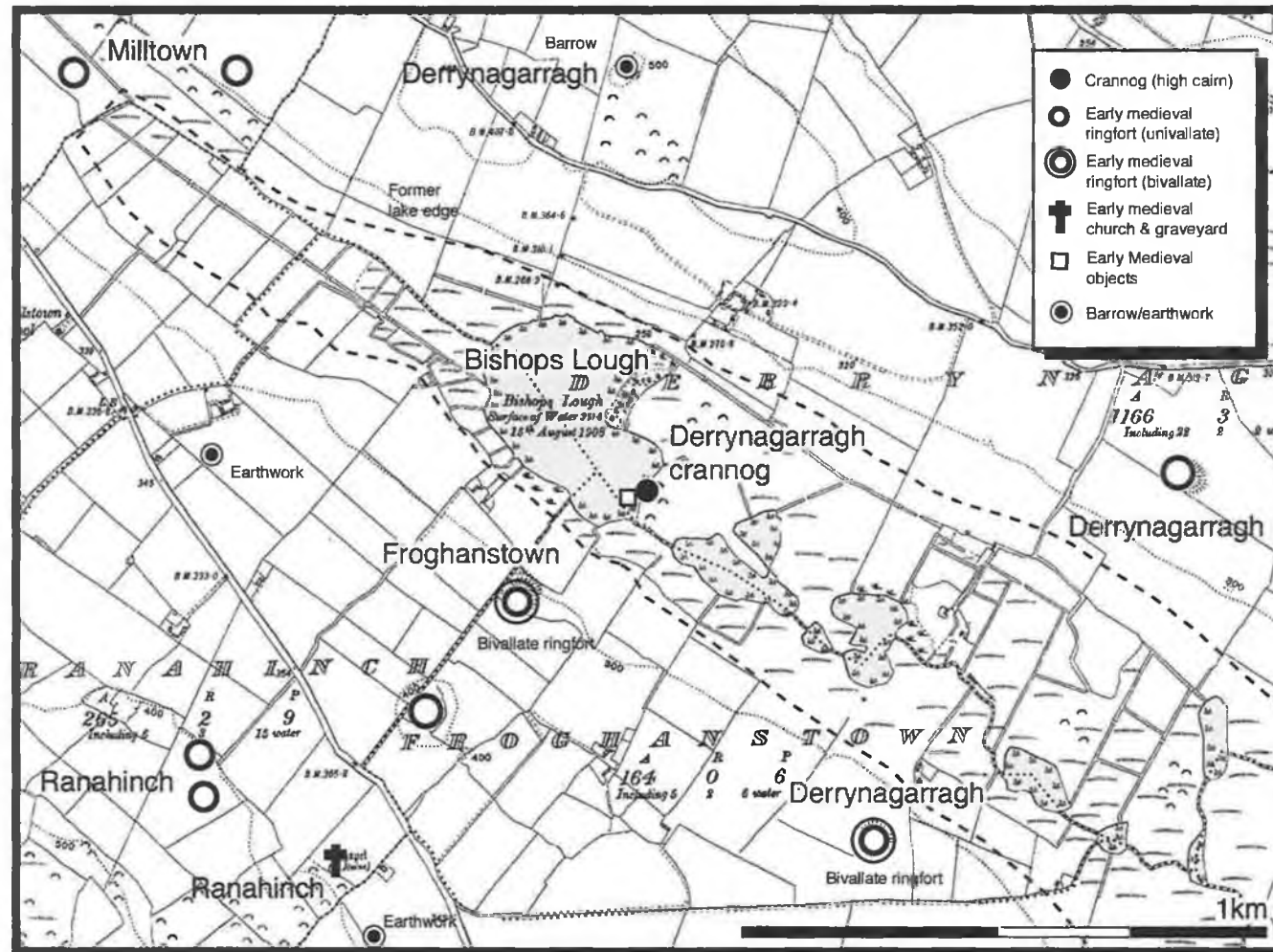
Fig. 2.6. Map showing location of Derrynagarragh crannog, on Bishop's Lough, Co. Westmeath, in relation to early medieval ringforts overlooking the lake. There are also early medieval finds from the site (e.g. bronze ringed pins, silver coins).
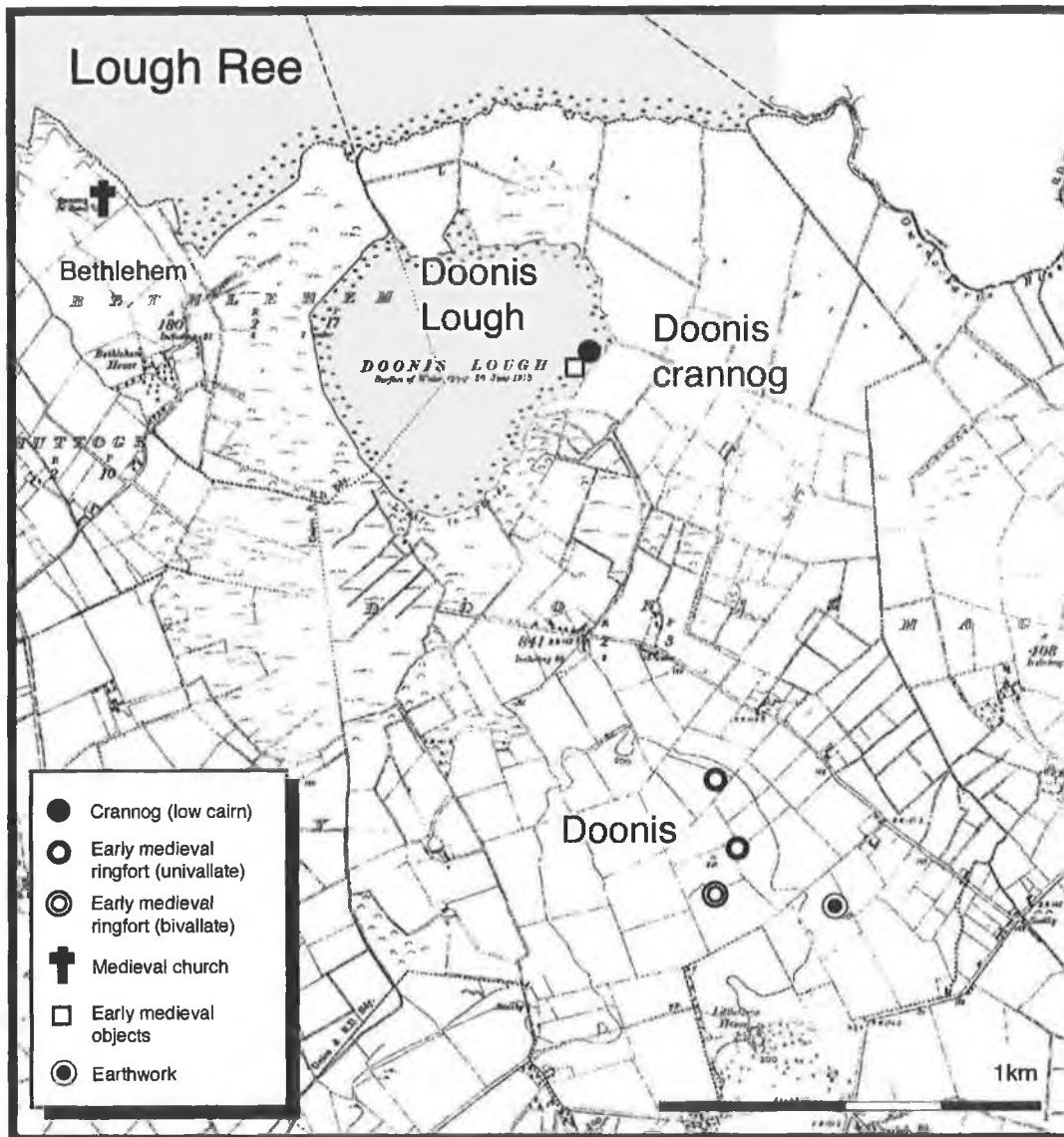
Fig. 2.7 Map showing location and landscape of Doonis crannog, on Doonis Lough,
Co. Westmeath. This remarkably isolated site was located in the river callows beside
Lough Ree, and appears to have been occupied in the Late Bronze Age and the early Middle Ages,
perhaps contemporary with the early medieval monastic islands on Lough Ree.

126

**Fig. 2.8** Photograph of Doonis crannog, on Doonis Lough, Co. Westmeath



**Fig. 2.9** Photograph of early medieval Dryderstown crannog, on Lough Annala, in the Dysart Lakes complex, Co. Westmeath
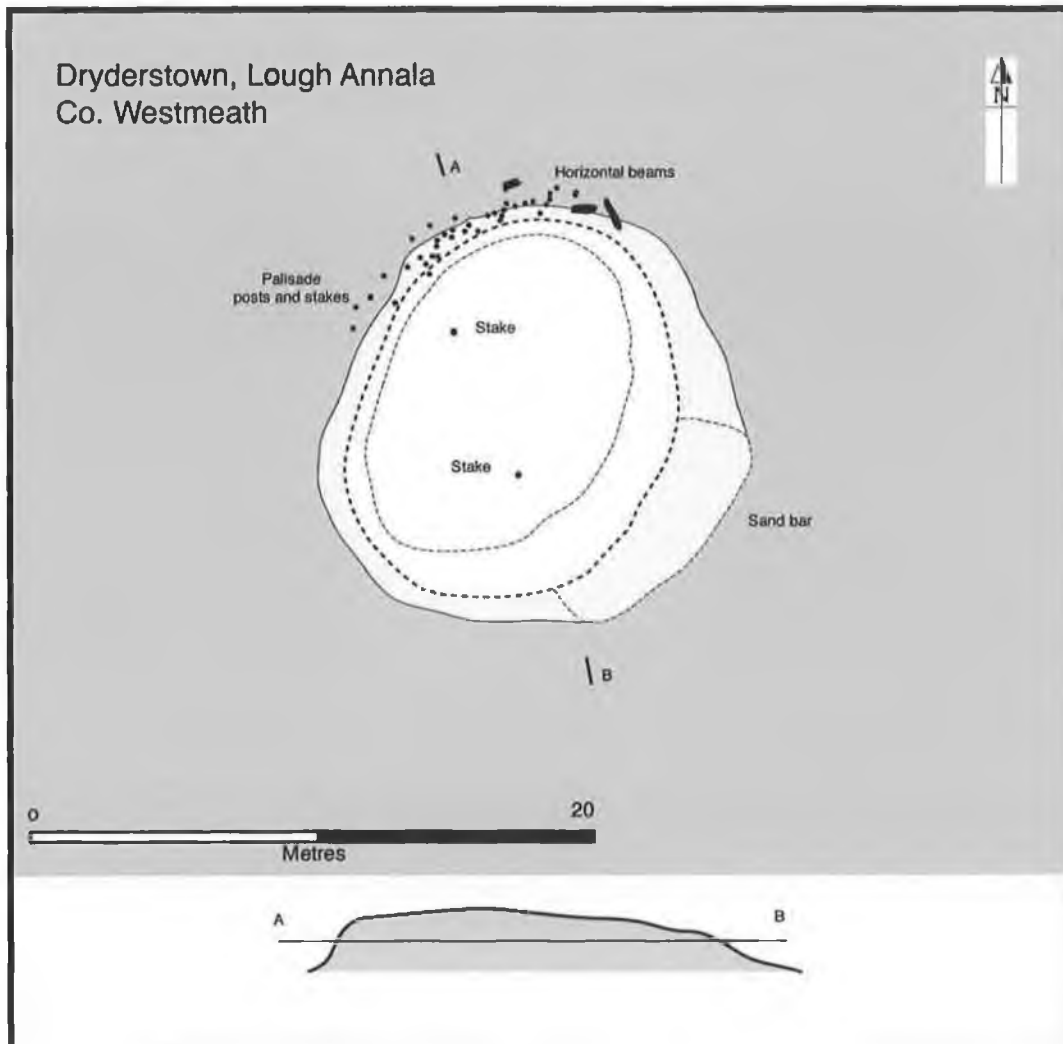
Fig. 2.10: Plan of Dryderstown crannog, on Lough Annala, in the Dysart Lakes complex on the River Deel, Co. Westmeath. The site is a cairn of stone and earth, enclosed within a palisade at the northwest side. The site has produced a rich early medieval artefact assemblage (including copper alloy brooches, pins, strap ends, as well as a tenth century Viking silver ingot.

Fig. 2.11 Map showing location and landscape of Lough-a-Trim (Knockaville) crannog, Co. Westmeath, located close to the barony boundary. The site was dug-into in the nineteenth century and produced a range of early medieval finds, including bone combs and a pennanular brooch.

Fig. 2.12. Distribution map of crannogs on Lough Derravarragh, Co. Westmeath

**Fig. 2.13** Photograph of Ballynakill 2 crannog on the west shore of Lough Derravarragh.

Fig. 2.14. Plan and section of Ballynakill 2 crannog, on the west shore of Lough Derravarragh, Co. Westmeath. This is a small cairn of stones on modern grassy shore. Prior to drainage, it would have been a low-cairn crannog in knee deep water, possibly (with its partner at Faughalstown 1 across the lake) controlling a crossing point on the lake.

132

**Fig. 2.15** Photograph of Coolure Demesne 1 crannog on the north shore of Lough Derravarragh.

**Coolure Demesne 1, Lough Derravarragh**

steeply
sloped into open
water

July 2003
water level

duck hide

Mid-cairn on landward side
of crannog

house

Plank
Palisade

general findspot of
Viking
silver armlet hoard

Roundwood
palisade

heavy
boulders

low-lying
level area of stones

Midden of
animal bone
(cattle, pig, horse)

0           10
metres
(1:250)
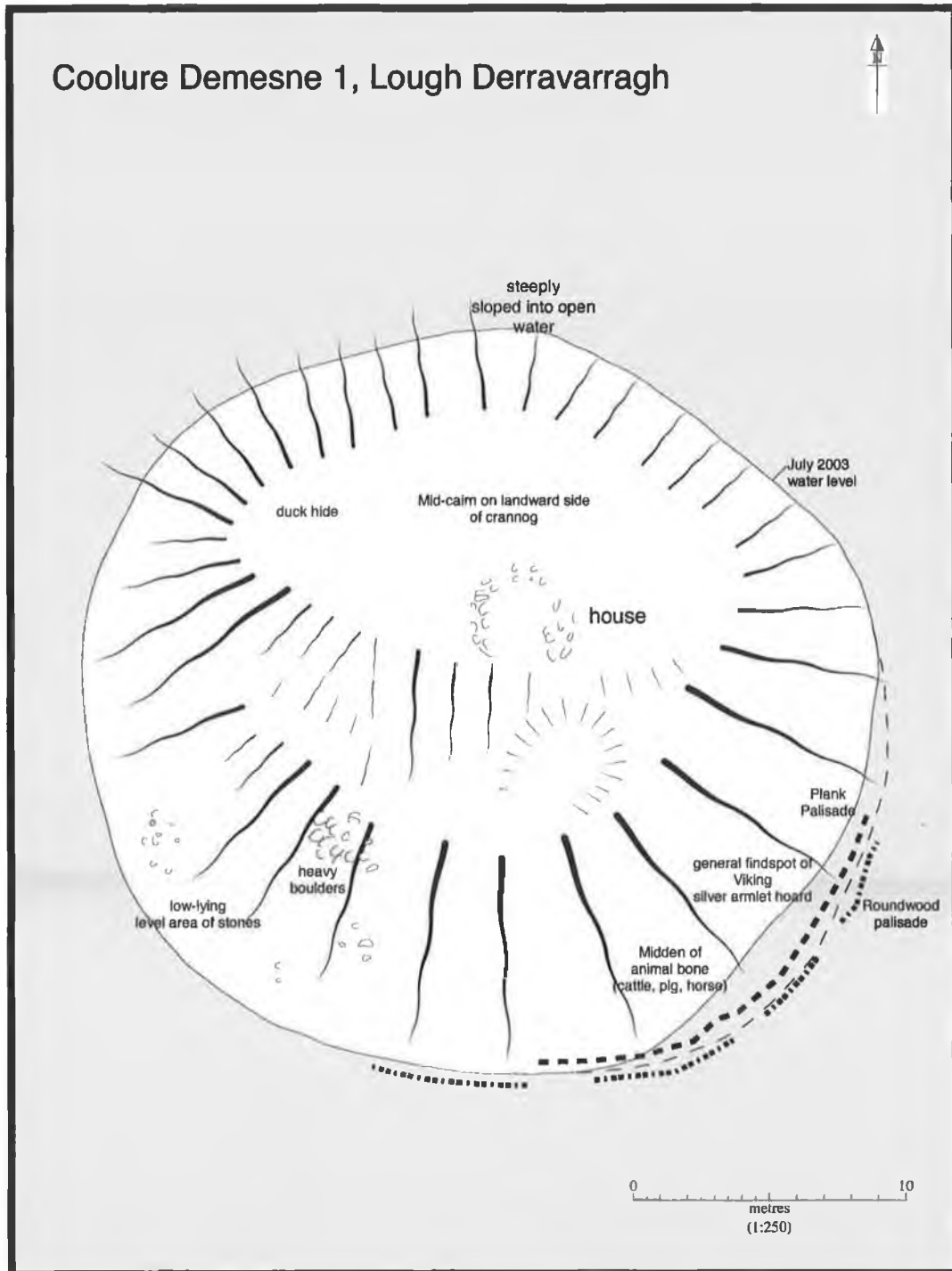
Fig. 2.16. Plan of Coolure Demesne 1 crannog, Lough Derravarragh, Co. Westmeath. The site
was a massive cairn of stone (with a mid-cairn overlooking a level terrace on the south side), enclosed
within a plank and roundwood palisade. Early medieval objects recovered from the site include a
fifth to seventh-century enamelled plaque, ninth to tenth-century ringed pins, and ninth to tenth-century
silver armlets, ingot fragments and balance scales. Its impressive architecture suggests a high-status role,
supported by historical evidence that suggests that the lordly or royal site of the Uí Fiachrach Cúile Fobair
was here on the north shore of Lough Derravarragh. so both the raised ringfort and crannog were probably
royal residences.

**Fig. 2.17** View of interior of Coolure Demesne 1 crannog, looking across the cairn's surface towards the midden, palisades and location of early medieval finds.



**Fig. 2.18** Photograph of Derrya 1 crannog, Lough Derravarragh. In the early Middle Ages, a person standing here would have known of the raised ringfort and crannog of the Uí Fiachrach Cúile Fobair on the lake, of the early medieval church and crannogs at Cell Toma in the distance, and perhaps also of the early medieval church and holy well at Knockeyon, the mountain rising above the skyline 7 miles to the southeast.

135
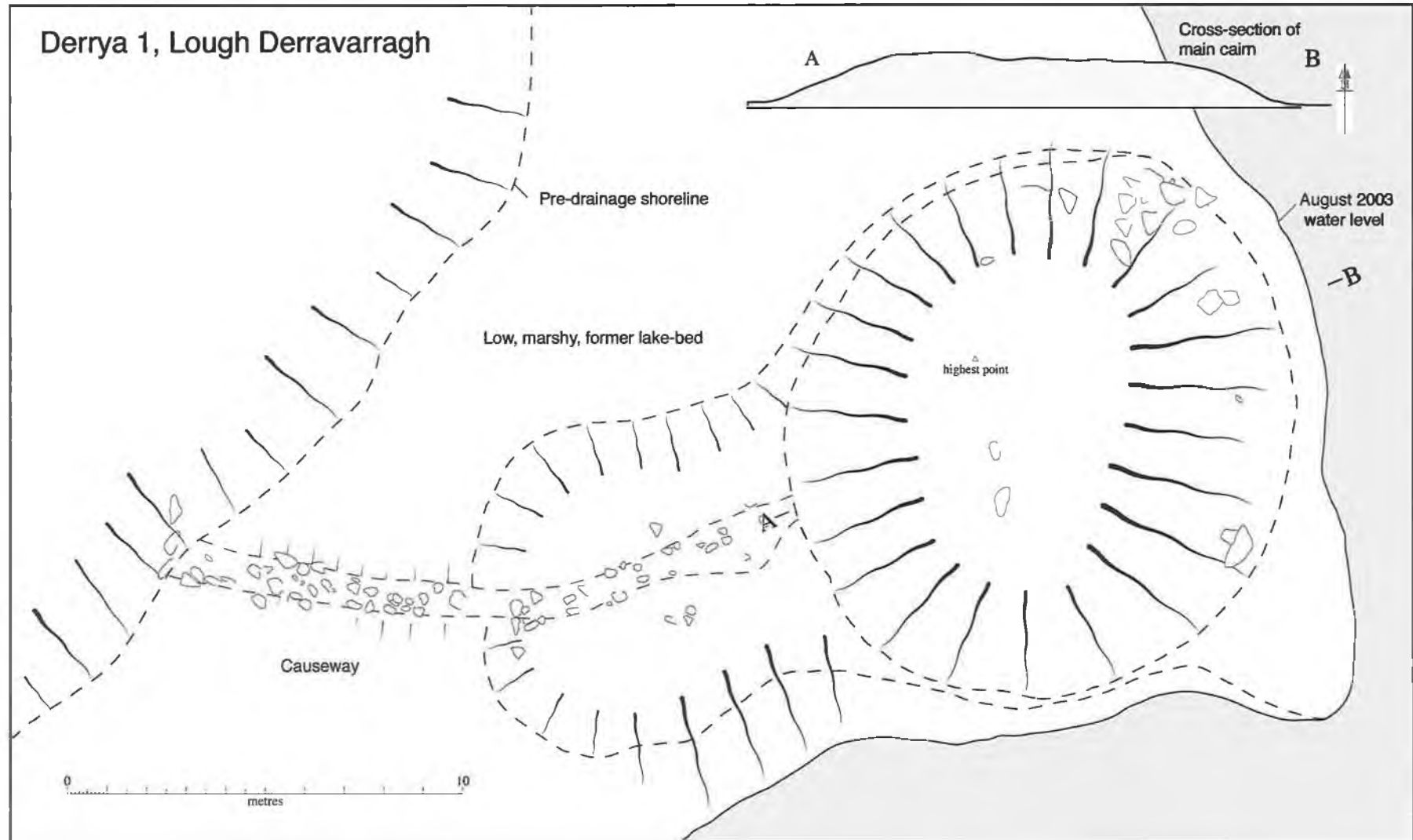
Fig. 2.19 Plan and cross-section of Derrya 1 crannog, Lough Derravarragh, Co. Westmeath. The crannog was a small, low platform of stones and earth in ankle deep water, accessible by a low, narrow causeway. This causeway provided a person walking out to the site with an excellent view of the early medieval royal crannog at Coolure Demesne 1 beyond.

**Fig. 2.20** Photograph of Donore 1 crannog, a cairn of stone now heavily overgrown by bushes and grass. In the 1960s (see volume 1, Fig. 6.16), this was exposed as the lake levels were lowered.

Fig. 2.21 Plan and section of Donore 1 crannog, Lough Derravarragh. This site was a high
cairn of stones, pebbles and boulders, in shallow water at the northwest end of the lake,
within the barony of Corkaree, immediately overlooking the barony boundaries of Moygoish
and Fore. It was connected to the distant natural island of Clonava by a wooden causeway of posts,
perhaps an early medieval ship barrier for controlling riverine traffic on the River Inny.

**Fig. 2.22** Photograph of Faughalstown 1 crannog. This enigmatic cairn of stone, situated in deep water, c. 70m from the land, has produced an early medieval silver ingot.



**Fig. 2.23** Photograph of possible early medieval Kiltoom 5 crannog, perhaps occupied by people working the agricultural estates of the eighth to ninth century church at Cell Toma (beyond the trees). Viewed from the lake, this low-cairn crannog would have had a large, impressive kerb of stones and the possible entrance gap on lakeward side of the cairn might have been used a 'dock' for dugout boats.

139

**Kiltoom 6, Lough Derravarragh**

grassy, level, lakeshore

Kerb

Causeway
— A

B

Entrance ramp?

duck hide

Lake beach

Kerb

B
West
limit of cairn

A
East
limit of cairn

lake

approximate level of adjacent lake shore

0                    5

metre

Fig. 2.24 Plan and section of Kiltoom 6 crannog. The crannog was a small, low cairn of rounded pebbles placed within a kerb of stones, probably originally located in ankle or knee-deep water. A low, narrow causeway of stones runs up to the original lake edge, only metres away. The fabric of the cairn hints at an architectural device designed to augment the appearance of the crannog from the water, where large, heavy boulders present an impressive sight, while from the shore side, this is merely a low, level cairn of small stones.

Fig. 2.25 Plan and section of Kiltoom 7 crannog. The site was a low cairn of water-rolled pebbles and flat slabs, retained within a kerb of stones. A causeway of flat stones runs up to the dry ground, 8-10m to the east. The crannog probably was surrounded by shallow water, but would have been exposed to wind and waves from the west.

141

**Fig. 2.26** Photograph of Kiltoom 8 crannog, constructed of quite massive limestone boulders, accessed by a narrow causeway (in foreground) and surrounded on three sides by a shallow, wide 'ditch'. It is possible that this 'ditch' provided the soils and gravels for an occupation floor, while also providing a deeper yet protected harbour for boats.



**Fig. 2.27** Photograph of Monintown crannog
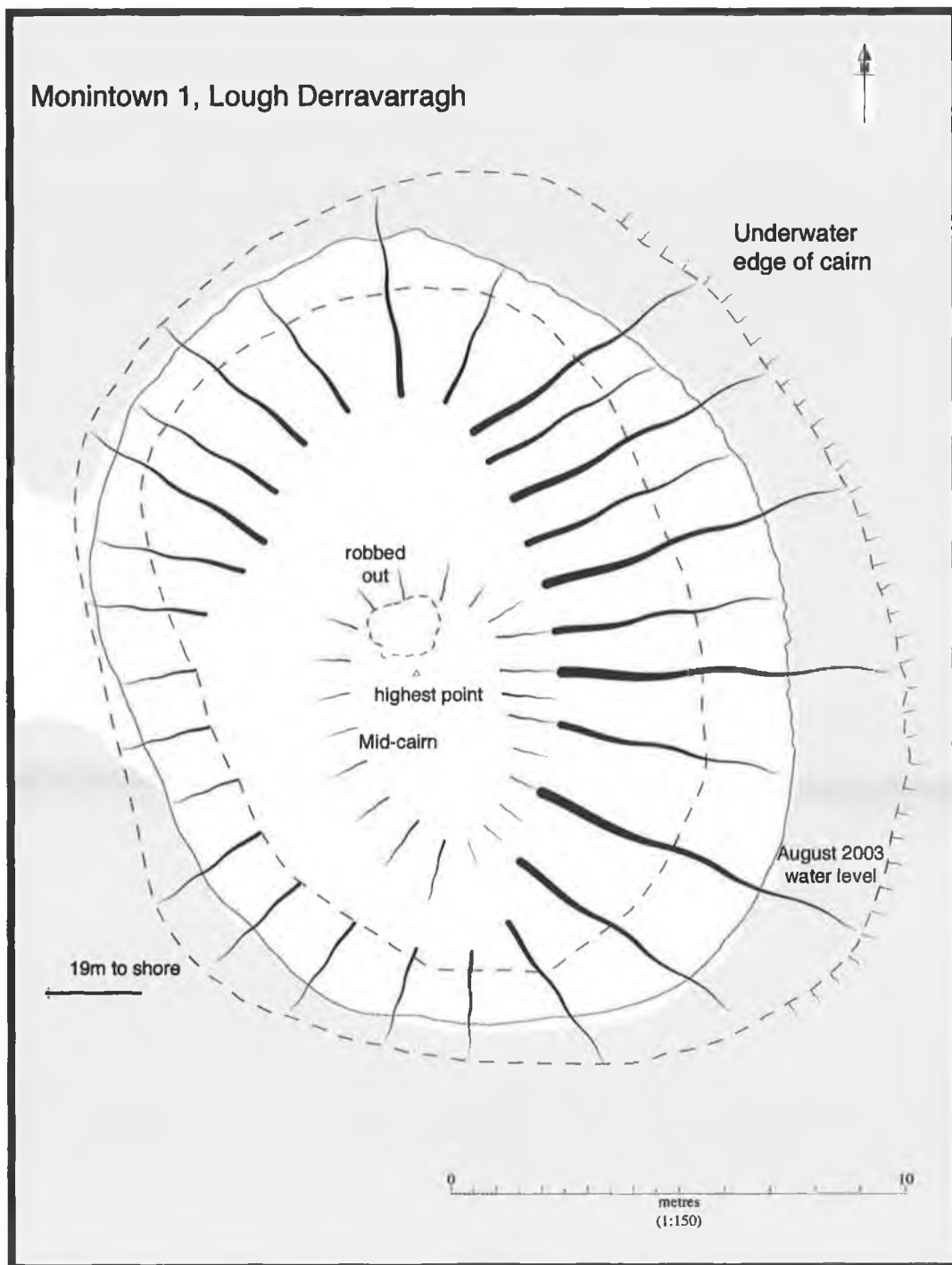
Fig. 2.28: Plan of Monintown crannog, on southwest shore of Lough Derravarragh, Co. Westmeath
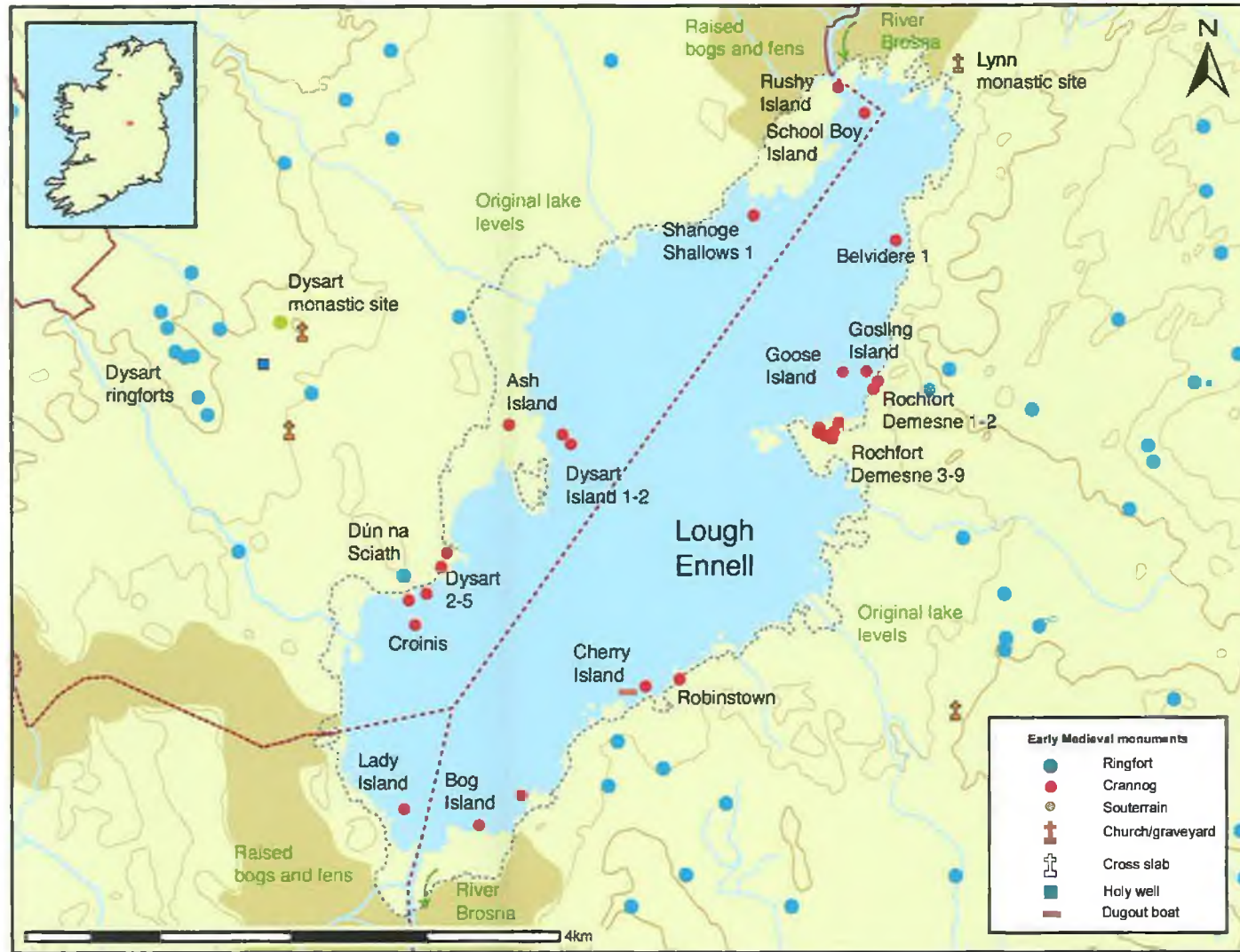
Fig. 2.29 Distribution map of crannogs on Lough Ennell, Co. Westmeath

**Fig. 2.30** Photograph of early medieval Cróinis crannog, Lough Ennell, viewed from the water. The early medieval ringfort of Dún na Sciath is on the ridge on the skyline. In the early Middle Ages, an observer at this point would still have been 'outside' an outer wooden palisade that enclosed a watery space around the island.
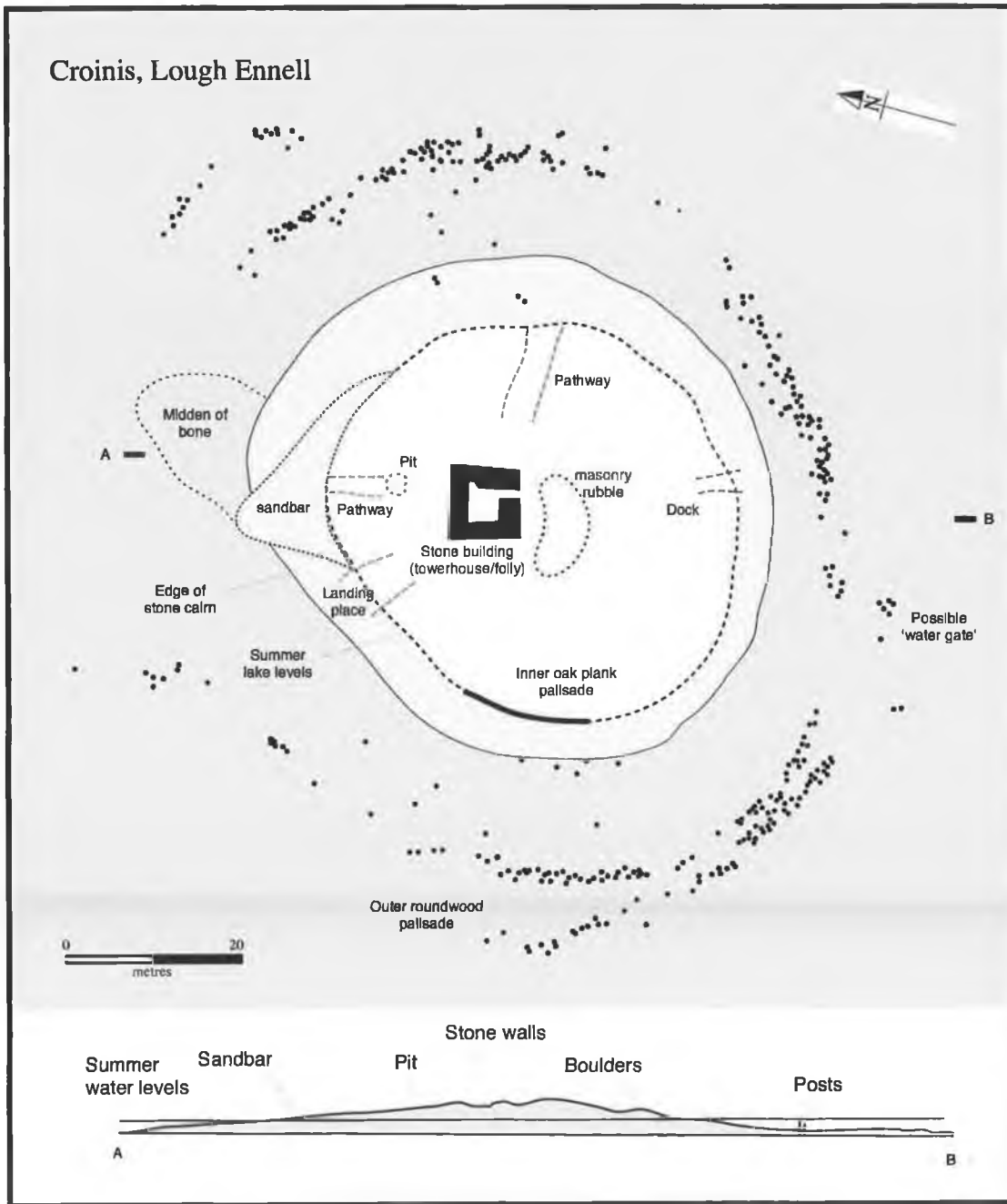
Fig. 2.31: Plan and cross-section of early medieval royal crannog of Croinis, on Lough Ennell, Co. Westmeath.

**Fig. 2.32** Photograph of early medieval crannog at Dysart Island 1, Lough Ennell. This crannog (locally known as Rocky Island) produced an early medieval silver ingot hoard (the Dysart 2 hoard of 3 ingots). The use of these small, wave washed islands for storing early medieval metalwork is an intriguing aspect of their use.



**Fig. 2.33** Viking hoard of three ingots found on Dysart Island 1, Lough Ennell (National Museum of Ireland)

**Fig. 2.34** The massive Viking coin, ingot and hack silver hoard (Dysart 4 hoard) found on the west shore of the natural island of Dysart Island, on Lough Ennell, to the north of Cróinis and Dún na Sciath. This hoard of ninth century metalwork testifies to the power and political influence of the Clann Chólmáin kings of the southern Uí Néill (Photo: National Museum of Ireland).

**Fig. 2.35** Aerial photograph of the early medieval crannogs of School Boy Island (the small, circular islet out on the water to the right) and Rushy Island (situated to the west (further to the right) at the north end of Lough Ennell, beside the inlet of the River Brosna. The early medieval monastic site of Colmáin maic Lúacháin at Lynn was located on the shore of the lake, at the bottom of the photograph (CUCAP AVH 10).



**Fig. 2.36.** Photograph of School Boy Island, Lough Ennell, with early medieval monastic site of Lynn on the dryland in the distance. Two early medieval bronze bells were recovered from the water beside the crannog, suggesting that this was a 'shrine island' or perhaps even an early medieval hermitage.

149
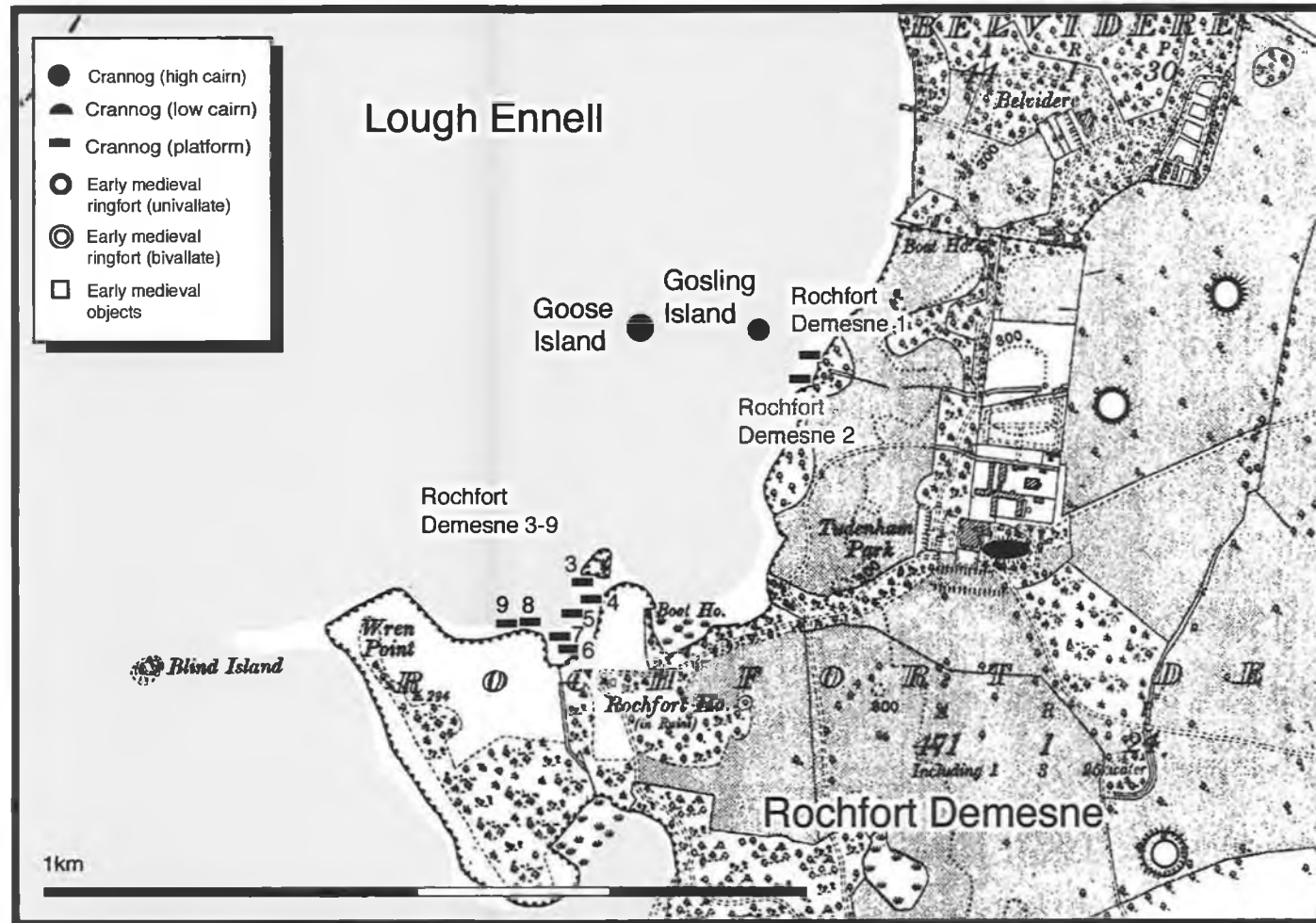
Fig. 2.37. Map of crannogs at Goose Island, Gosling Island and Rochfort Demesne, on the east shore of Lough Ennell, Co. Westmeath. The early medieval crannog at Goose Island (and the bivallate ringfort at Rochfort Demesne) may have been a lordly site, with the smaller cairns and platforms around the bay being the dwellings of lower social classes or labourers working on their lord's estate

**Fig. 2.38** Photograph of the 'distant' early medieval Goose Island, on the east shore of Lough Ennell.



**Fig. 2.39** Photograph of low-cairn crannog at Rochfort Demesne 6, to the south of Goose Island, Lough Ennell. These sites remain enigmatic and undated, but could well be early medieval lakeshore dwellings.

151

**Fig. 2.40** Photograph of Cherry Island (Gaddaghanstown townland), a natural island on which there is a large stone cashel, probably a royal site of the Fir Tulach in the tenth and eleventh centuries AD.



**Fig. 2.41** Photograph of goddess Minerva in an iron oil barrell, on Lady Island, a small crannog off Nure or Liliput townland, on south shore of Lough Ennell. Local folklore has it that Jonathan Swift saw people working far off in the distance across Lough Ennell, during a visit to a local house, and was thereby inspired to invent the kingdom of Liliput in his *Gulliver's Travels*.
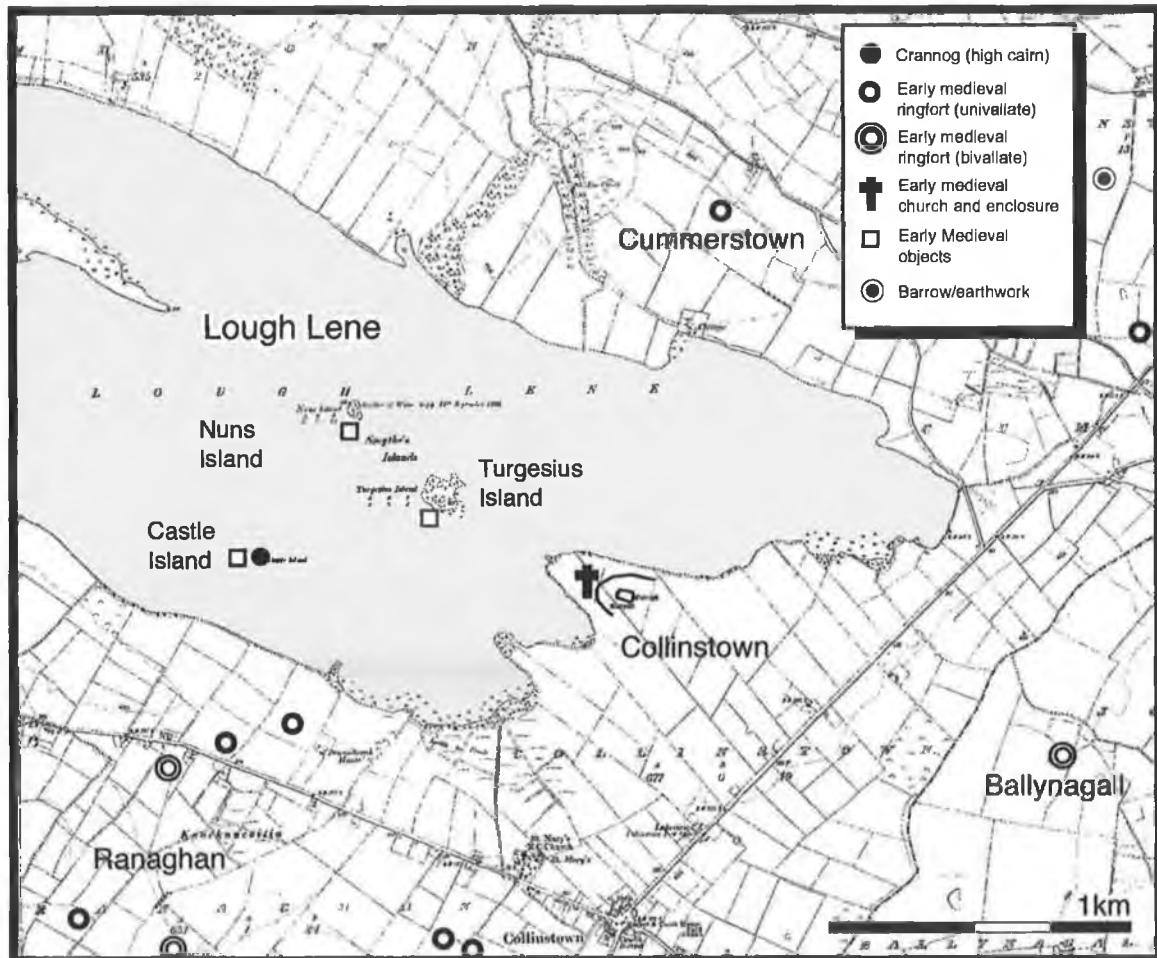
Fig. 2.42; Map showing landscapes of Lough Lene, with crannogs of Castle Island
and Nun's Island and the natural island of Turgesius Island. A Roman Iron Age boat was found
at the west end of the lake and Iron Age barrows are also known from Fore, on the north side
of the lake. The lake has a rich folklore association with Turgesius, the pseudo-historical,
uber-Viking defeated by the Clann Cholmáin king of Mide. Castle Island crannog has been dated
to the ninth-century AD, with finds including a bronze basin, a bronze hand-bell and
woodworking tools. There are also early medieval finds from the other islands.

153
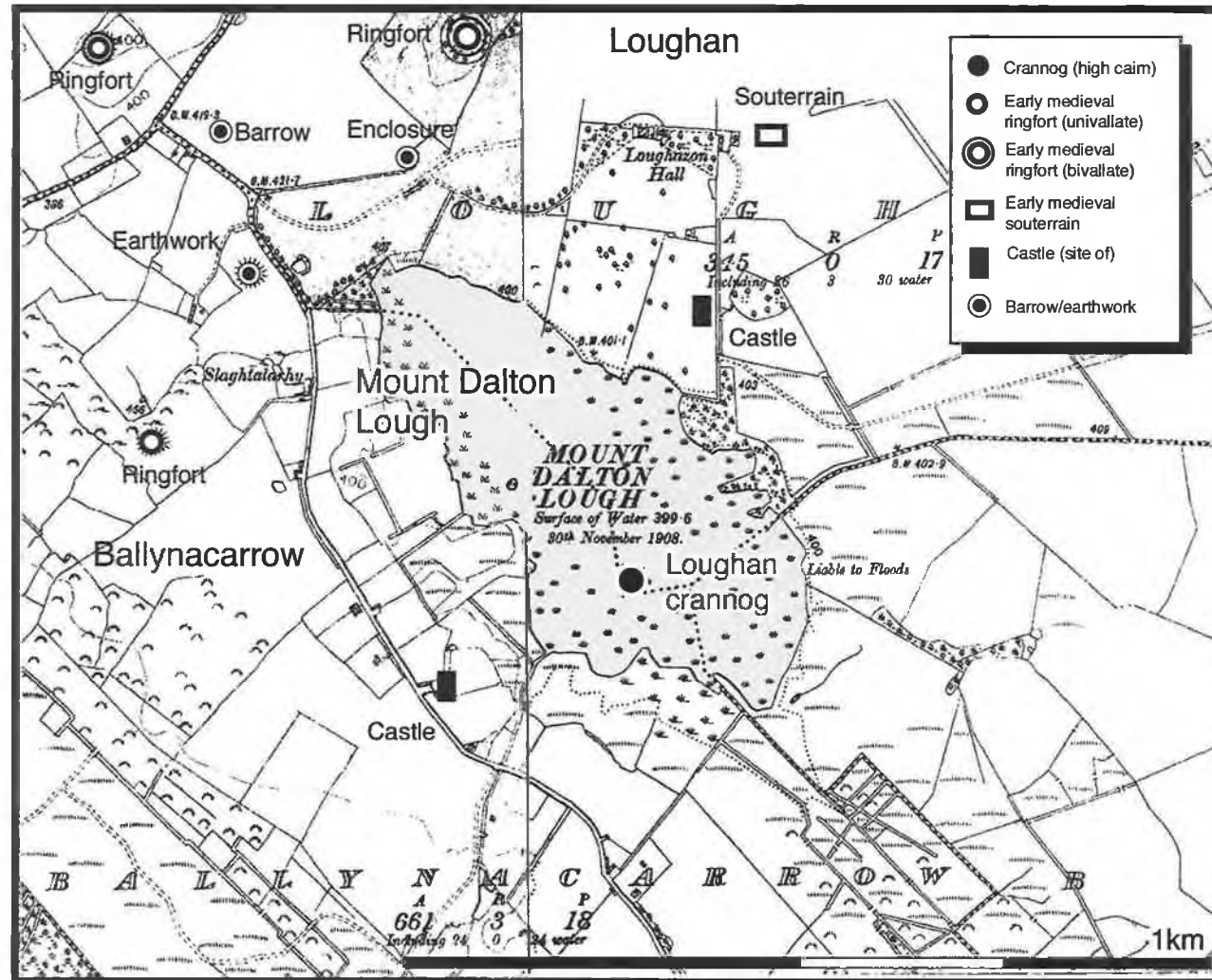
Fig. 2.43. Map showing location and landscapes of Loughan crannog, on Mount Dalton Lough, in the densely settled barony of Rathconrath, Co. Westmeath. The Hill of Uisnech lies some 3km to the southwest.
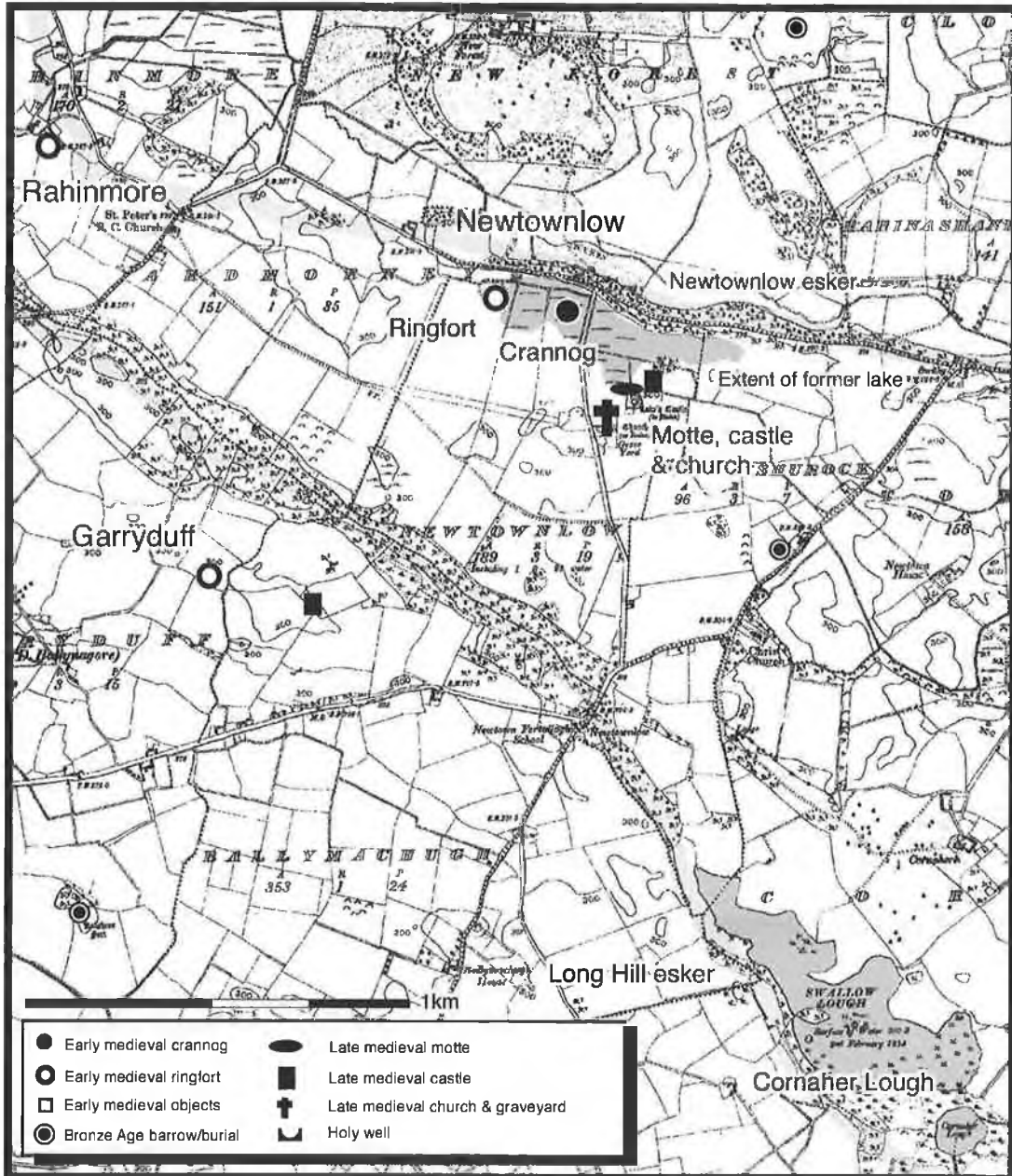
Fig. 2.44. Map showing location of early medieval crannog at Newtownlow, Co. Westmeath in relation to an adjacent early medieval ringfort and late medieval motte, castle and church. Significantly, the sites are located adjacent to a probable esker routeway. Recent pollen studies have been carried out on Cornaher Lough, to the southeast, where there is evidence for woodland clearance and an increase in agricultural indicators from the fifth century AD onwards.
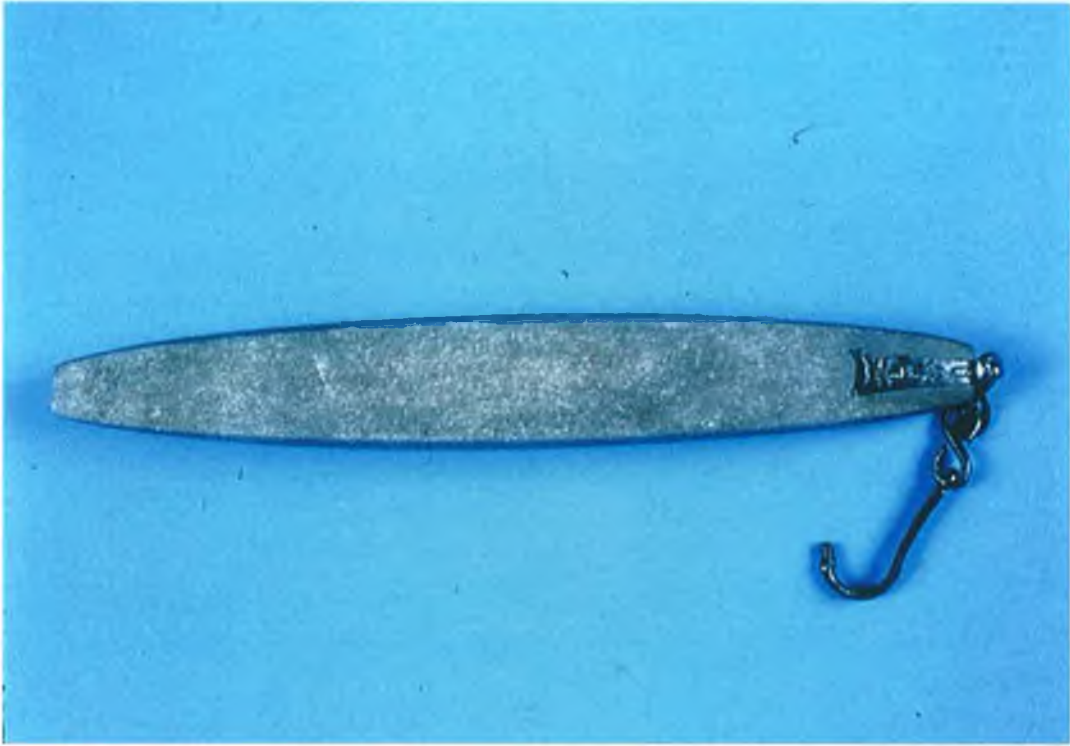
**Fig. 2.45** Early medieval whetstone with copper-alloy attachment found at Newtownlow crannog, Co. Westmeath (Source: National Museum of Ireland).



**Fig. 2.46** Early medieval iron pan (probably used in glass working) found at Newtownlow crannog, Co. Westmeath (Source: National Museum of Ireland).
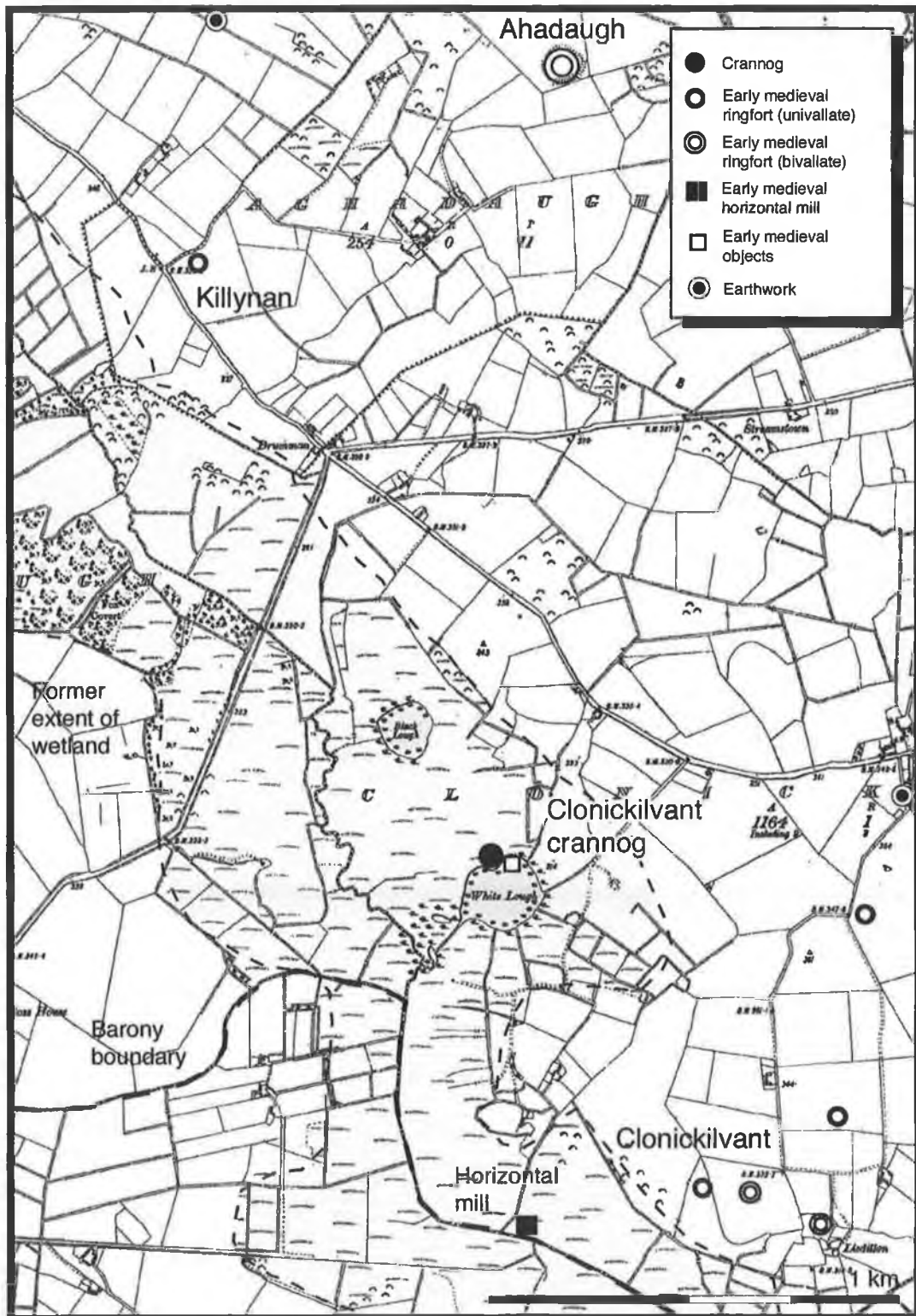
Fig. 2.47. Map showing location and landscape of Clonickilvant crannog, on White Lough
(evidently the remnants of a much larger lake), Co. Westmeath. The site was dug-into in the
nineteenth century, by antiquarians searching for 'Dane's treasure' and produced such
early medieval objects as clay moulds with red enamel, bronze pins, bone combs. It was located
at the edge of a densely settled early medieval landscape within the barony of
Moyashel & Magheradernon, close to the boundary of the barony of Farbill, suggesting that it had
some strategic or military role.

# Appendix 3:

# Gazetteer of early medieval crannog excavations in Ireland

## Introduction

This gazetteer describes the archaeologically derived evidence for the use, alteration and sequence of development of several early medieval crannogs. Although there are undoubtedly hundreds of crannogs of early medieval date in Ireland (as indicated by both artefact distributions, scientific dating (see volume 1, Table 6:2) and other evidence), there are actually very few crannogs that have been excavated to a good scientific standard. Many early antiquarian excavations (such as at Moylarg, Co. Monaghan) were essentially only diggings to recover objects, and little or no record was kept of their site plans, stratigraphy or internal features. Thereafter, with the honourable exception of Coffey's excavations at Craigywarren, Co. Antrim, it was not until the Harvard Archaeological Mission's work at Ballinderry No.1, Ballinderry No. 2 and Lagore that good evidence was recovered by archaeologists. Other significant excavations included those at Rathtinaun, Co. Sligo, Clea Lakes and Lough Faughan, Co. Down In recent years, there have also been several significant excavations of quite different sites; at Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath, Newtownlow, Co. Westmeath, Bofeenaun, Co. Mayo and at Sroove, Co. Sligo. However, in comparison the early medieval ringforts, much remains to be done in terms of exploring the archaeology of individual sites.

However, as will be shown in this section, it is still possible to re-visit these sites and to derive much useful information about site stratigraphy, occupation surfaces, entrances, palisades, houses, craft and industrial waste and palaeoecological data. This section describes the evidence from each site. It is based on a detailed, thorough re-reading of both original published and unpublished site reports, as well as the synthesis of more recent site and structural re-interpretations. This review is both substantive and comprehensive, with the use of virtually every publication available. The sites are discussed in terms of phases of activities, the evidence for on-site industry and crafts, the evidence for internal structures and finds. Brief comments on each site are also appended.

# Site 1: Ballinderry crannog No. 1, Co. Westmeath

## Site description

The early medieval crannog of Ballinderry no. 1, Co. Westmeath produced occupation evidence for the tenth and eleventh centuries AD, with intermittent activity on the site until the seventeenth century. The crannog survived as a large weed-covered hillock, measuring 33m by 20m, at the north-west end of an original lake that formerly lay between glacial moraines (close to the *Eiscir Ríada* routeway across the midlands). At the time of its investigation this had been drained to marshy and boggy land. The discovery of a Viking sword in 1928 had brought it to the attention of Adolf Maher of the National Museum. The site was excavated by the Harvard expedition in 1932.[1] The site has since been the subject of various re-important re-interpretations.[2] The following description will take account of each of these, before outlining the most likely sequence of occupation phases and structural features on the site (largely based on Newman's closely argued stratigraphical interpretation, modified by Johnson's detailed appraisal of the location of each find).

*Hencken's interpretation of Ballinderry No. 1*

Hencken interpreted the site as a large circular crannog built on a large raft-like central foundation, with phases of an internal plank palisade and an outer pile palisade, with a large entrance, a wooden quay and a series of three houses, the earliest of which occupied most of the island.[3] He believed that the archaeological evidence represented two main phases of occupation, in the latter part of the tenth century and through the eleventh century. The rectangular raft-like structure of thick oak logs which lay in the centre of the site, he took to be the foundation layer. It measured 6m square and was constructed of heavy logs laid directly on the lake-bed, probably during a dry period. The platform had raised sides and pegs driven deeply into the clays. The raft was enclosed by small posts describing a circular structure and timbers were laid radiating out from the centre. Many of these timbers had complex joints and peg-holes, suggesting they derived from a re-used wooden structure. Most of the artefacts associated with the raft-structure can be dated to the tenth or early eleventh century AD. The finds from the lowest layers associated with the raft structure

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[1] Hugh O'Neill Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannóg no. 1' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 43c, (1936), pp 103-239; Aidan O'Sullivan, 'The Harvard Archaeological Mission and the politics of the Irish Free State' in *Arch. Ire.*, 63 (2003), pp 20-3.

[2] C.J. Lynn, 'Lagore, County Meath and Ballinderry No. I, County Westmeath crannógs: some possible structural reinterpretations' in *J. Ir. Archaeol.*, 3 (1985-86), pp 69-73; Conor Newman, 'The archaeology of Ballinderry Lough'. Unpublished MA thesis, NUI, (University College, Dublin, 1986), pp 152-81; Ruth Johnson, 'Ballinderry crannóg No. 1: a reinterpretation' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 99 c (1999), pp 23-71.

included two iron socketed and riveted Viking spearheads, an iron bill-hook with a decorated socket, some nails, hones, a decorated bone comb plate, some wooden implements, a paddle and a large wooden tub. There was also a small carved and dowelled wooden 'knee', possibly from a plank-built boat. Finds from the next layers, also apparently below House 1 included a tenth-century bronze ring-headed pin, iron knives, some decorated wooden vessels, a possible wooden motif-piece and a possible pack-saddle. The most spectacular find was an ornately carved, yew-wood gaming board, decorated in a style now thought to reflect both Hiberno-Norse and Anglo-Scandinavian styles (although it was probably made in Dublin. This gaming board probably dates to the tenth-century.[4] A Viking battle axe was found outside the crannog and may have dated from these earliest layers. Human remains are also known from the site.

Hencken interpreted this raft-like platform (and the associated layer of peat, brushwood, animal bone and ash spreads which covered it) as the foundation for a subsequent large horseshoe shaped structure and indeed, the entire crannog. This horseshoe shaped structure was interpreted as the earliest house (House 1) for which the crannog was built. A large hearth was in use at its centre. The finds from the layers apparently comprising the floor of House 1 included a fine iron Viking sword, its handle decorated with silver and its blade inscribed with the letters *VLFBEHRT*. This sword is of a type produced in the ninth century in the Rhineland and exported throughout Europe. There was a yew-wood archer's self-bow, a type of weapon more typical of Viking warfare tactics than Irish.[5] There were some objects found at this level, but outside the house, which included an iron plough coulter, iron rings, objects of leather, lignite, bone and antler. There were also some wooden buckets and lathe-turned bowls.

Hencken believed that after a brief period of occupation, House I sank into the lakebed sediments and it was covered by more layers of peat and brushwood. He believed that there were two further houses (Houses II and III, probably one house in reality) were then constructed at one corner of the site, but the central hearth continued in use. Finds from these layers included a Viking silver kite-shaped brooch, bronze pins, iron chain links, a millstone, bone comb fragments, a wooden dug-out boat and wooden tubs and hoops. The only find from the floor of House II was an iron knife. House III produced a bronze pin, a bone needle

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[3] Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannóg no. 1', pp 107-108.
[4] Hugh O'Neill Hencken, 'A gaming board of the Viking Age' in *Acta Archaeologica* 4 (1933), pp 85-104.

and a wooden dugout boat. Finds from the central hearth included a bronze pennanular brooch and pin, bone, iron, glass, wood and antler objects. The wooden quay structure outside the crannog produced an iron woodworking axe and a wooden tub.

The excavator believed that House II and House III then fell out of use and were covered with a layer of clay, some planks on this surface may indicate the construction of a fourth house (House IV). There were two hearths and ash spreads at this level. Finds from these strata included various objects, such as bronze pins, buckles, querns, and a large iron side-axe or hewing axe (probably of a medieval date), hones and bone combs and pins, and objects of wood and leather. The site was covered by a layer of gravel and another deep layer of soil. A hearth was found in this top layer, with finds of coins indicating seventeenth-century occupation. Ballinderry crannog No. 1 produced an interesting range of seventeenth-century objects, such as pottery, several coins dating to about 1690, a brass-button, glass linen smoothers, lead bullets, some of which were probably being made there, and several fragments of clay pipes. There was also a range of metal and organic finds from unstratified deposits outside the palisade, the most important of which were a tenth-century copper-alloy hanging lamp and an array of wooden objects.

*Lynn's re-interpretation*

Chris Lynn's stratigraphical and structural re-interpretations of the early phases of the site were that it actually was comprised of two crannogs.[6] In his opinion, Hencken's 'House 1' was itself the primary crannog (Lynn's crannog 1), defined by the horseshoe-plan area of timbers strengthened by small piles with a smaller, roughly circular wicker house (Hencken's 'hearth surround', measuring 5m in diameter). The horseshoe timbers were actually the open-air decking around the circular house. Lynn believed that the outer pile palisade derived from a later period of occupation and was not contemporary with this early crannog. This later period of occupation involved the construction of a second, larger crannog (Lynn's 'crannog 2') directly over 'crannog 1. 'Crannog 2' had a larger palisade, two rectangular houses built near the edge of the site while a large open-air ash spread accumulated across the centre (although Newman interpreted this as a house floor). This enlargement could have come shortly after the construction of his 'crannog 1'.

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[5] Andy Halpin, pers. comm.
[6] C.J. Lynn, 'Lagore, County Meath and Ballinderry No. I, County Westmeath crannôgs', pp 69-73.

Newman came to a similar conclusion through his re-analysis of the site and the typological characteristics of its finds. He also proposed House 1 was itself a crannog and that the circular hearth was a roundhouse. In his opinion, the crannog had a pile palisade, which was later reinforced by plank palisade, at the same time as which one entrance was blocked up. Ruth Johnson has also recently carried out a detailed re-evaluation of the early layers of the site and has re-examined the finds, particularly in terms of their stratigraphical context. Ballinderry No. 1 will now be summarised in terms of its likely sequence of development.

*Phase 1 – Pre-crannog occupation (late tenth century AD)*

Phase 1 saw the building of a rectangular log platform (6m by 6m), defined at its edges by a circular palisade (7m in diameter) of posts. This earliest occupation was built on the lake *gyttas* at a time when lake levels were low, possibly during a dry period. The rectangular platform was constructed of planks and beams laid in a rectilinear and radial fashion, with layers of peat and brushwood (up to seven layers), consisting of a likely habitation deposit of accumulated bones and peats. It had a raised edge, of horizontal beams. There was a possible entrance to the north, represented by a gap in the post ring. There were two superimposed hearths (layers of grey clay and charcoal). It is possible that this was actually a rectangular house, as the timbers were quite complex and skillfully worked, perhaps similar to timber houses in Hiberno-Norse Dublin. There were enormous quantities of animal bone on the site. Finds from this phase included 2 socketed spearheads, a decorated iron bill-hook, an iron tub hoop, an iron staple, nails, knife-blade fragment, metalworking detritus, 2 stone hones, a decorated comb, wooden vessels, wooden carding comb, 2 wooden paddles. There was an assemblage of artefacts that were of a distinctively Viking character; including a Viking long bow, 2 iron Viking spearheads, an iron Viking sword, an iron Viking battle axe, 2 glass linen smoothers and an iron strike-a-light. There was also a collection of objects that could be described as Hiberno-Norse (with good parallels from tenth-century Dublin), including a decorated yew-wood gaming board, motif pieces, a kite brooch, ringed pins, a hanging lamp, a wooden zoomorphic terminal and a copper-alloy strap end. Interestingly, the artefacts could be both interpreted as male (i.e. weaponry) and female (i.e. carding comb, linen smoothers) in character.

*Phase 2 – Primary crannog (early to mid eleventh-century AD)*

Phase 2 sees the building and occupation of a 'classic', but modestly sized crannog, with a circular palisade (15m diameter), a house and a surrounding timber decking. A deposit of

sterile, black peat was laid over the previous occupation. At the centre of the crannog was a medium-sized, circular house (House 1), measuring 5m in diameter, constructed of vertical posts with a possible entrance facing towards the south. The house's floor was a brushwood layer, with a wattle screen and a thin layer of clay suggesting that it was renewed. The house was surrounded (and eccentrically placed within) by a pennanular area of timbers laid concentrically to it. This appears to have been a timber walkway or decking around the house (15m in diameter). Human bones were found in the substructure of Phase 2.

Finds from the *substructure* of Phase 2 included copper-alloy pin fragments, a plain-ringed, loop-headed pin, 2 tanged knives, a stone hone, a leather shoe and a pig-fibula pin, a decorated wooden motif piece, stave-built vessels, a wooden ladle, a boat fragment (probably a knee from a dugout boat) and paddle. Finds from the *occupation layer* of Phase 2 included a copper-alloy strip, a wooden tub, an iron plough coulter, a socketed pronged tool (probably used for leather working), 2 iron rings, a lignite bracelet fragment, a double-sided bone comb and a leather off-cut. Finds from the *earliest phase of the house* included a plain, copper-alloy, pennanular brooch (tenth century type), a bronze pin, hones, an antler tip and a blue glass bracelet. Finds from the *intermediate phase* of the house included a silver kite-shaped brooch, 3 ringed pins, 2 bone combs, a millstone, hones, wooden containers. Finds from the *final phase of the house* included an iron spearhead and a single-sided comb.

*Phase 3 – Primary crannog (mid eleventh-century AD)*
Phase 3 sees the construction of an enlarged crannog, with a massive pile palisade (26m diameter NW-SE, 32m NE-SW), a defined entrance to the southeast, a quay and a brushwood floor. The internal area of the crannog saw the deposition of a sterile peat layer over the whole area, burying the previous, abandoned house. A wattle screen was laid down and the site was enlarged to the east with layers of peat and brushwood. Indeed, the crannog was prone to slumping towards the east and many more layers were added there. The entrance was quite elaborate, with a passageway of posts lining the entrance area on either side. There was also a gatepost with a bar hole to the southwest, indicating the use of a gate.

*Phase 4 – Reconditioning of site (mid to late eleventh-century AD)*
Phase 4 saw the reconditioning of the crannog, with the use of two houses, the repair of the palisade, the blocking of the entrance and the growing importance of the quay (suggesting that the crannog was now surrounded by water). The interior of the site was levelled off with peat and branches. There were various hearths within the site which have been interpreted as

the floor of houses. There was a large, centrally placed 'hearth' of ashes that developed in two stages. This could have been a rectangular house floor. There was also two hearths at the northeast edge of the site (Hencken's House II and House III), with rectilinear plank floors and fireplaces. An oak plank palisade was inserted in those places where the pile palisade was in need of repair, particularly on the eastern side of the site (where the piles were tilting dramatically).[7] Finds from this phase included (Hencken's group 2, 3, 4) an iron knife, a crutch-head ringed pin, a boat fragment, a bone pin and a wooden tub. It is also possible that a bronze hanging lamp was lost outside the palisade at this stage.

*Phase5 – Site abandonment (late eleventh-century AD)*

Phase 5 sees the abandonment of the crannog, with a dark humus developing over the late hearths. There was a layer of gravel over this, which was succeeded by a thick superficial layer. There was some transitory activity on the site in the late middle ages, with a thirteenth-century axehead deposited outside the crannog near the quay.

**Comment**

The cultural associations of Ballinderry crannog No. 1 have attracted much attention. Hencken noted the amount of Viking tools and weapons on the site, but took them simply to mean that the crannog's Irish inhabitants were in contact with Scandinavian settlements of the period. It is also likely that Viking raiders in the Irish midlands would have had to rely on local alliances to spend the winter on Lough Ree. Most recently, Johnson has explored the cultural and chronological origins of the site. The quality of the carpentry and the assembly of the Phase 1 raft-like structure suggest that this was actually a house, not merely a foundation layer. It was constructed of tightly placed, half-split and hewn timbers, some of which have complex joints and notches. This 'raft' may be the remains of a Hiberno-Scandinavian rectangular house, possibly built in the 930s or 940s, perhaps using stave-building techniques. The range of Viking artefacts, such as the decorated items, the iron axe, the imported iron sword the wooden archer's bow, the gaming board and the ship's timber suggest the presence of a cultural grouping with profound contacts with the Scandinavian world. Johnson also suggests that the latter phases of the site represent a conventional Irish crannog, whose inhabitants remained in close contact with Hiberno-Norse Dublin.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.2; Fig. 2.3; Fig. 2.4; Fig. 2.5.

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[7] Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannóg no. 1', Pl. XXIV illustrates the close set nature of the planking.

## Site 2: Ballinderry crannog No. 2, Co. Offaly

### Site description

The Bronze Age and early medieval crannog of Ballinderry No. 2, Co. Offaly was situated in a marshy bog, on the Offaly/Westmeath border. The site was excavated by the Harvard expedition in 1933.[8] The site had been known since the nineteenth century, when it was dug into by treasure hunters and antiquarians searching for objects.[9] The site has since been the subject of significant and complex structural and chronological re-interpretations, which will be summarised below.[10] These re-interpretations indicate that the site was first used as a Late Bronze Age platform, perhaps with a ritual function (Phase 1). The early medieval site history included a sixth-century pre-crannog occupation phase (Phase 2) and a ninth-century crannog (Phase 3). The early medieval site was initially located on a naturally raised area in either shallow water or marshy, swampy ground, which progressively became wetter, becoming a open lake by the end of the early middle ages.

*Phase 1 – Late Bronze Age site*

In Phase 1, Hencken proposed that the Late Bronze Age settlement had a single large rectangular structure, several post clusters, a stone and brushwood feature and a number of circular wicker structures in a thin black deposit of lake muds. The finds from the Bronze Age lake settlement included bronze and stone artefacts and the sherds of several pottery vessels. The animal bone from the site included cattle, pig, sheep/goat, horse, red deer, badger, otter, crane, wild duck, scaup, duck and cat. The site was then partially covered by a subsequent layer of white marl, prior to its use in the early Middle Ages. However, Newman suggests, on the basis of a complex re-interpretation of the site stratigraphy, that the stone and brushwood feature and the circular wicker structures are later, intrusive features which derive from an early medieval (sixth century AD) pre-crannog occupation horizon. He also suggests that a second, substantial rectangular wooden structure can be traced in the grid-like

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[8] Hugh O'Neill Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannóg no. 2' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 47c (1942), pp 1-76.

[9] W.R. Wilde, *A descriptive catalogue of the antiquities of stone, earthen and vegetable materials in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin 1857), p. 223; J. Graves, 'Stone and bone antiquities, some with oghamic inscriptions, found at a crannóg in Ballinderry Lough' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.* 16, no. 6, (1883-1884), pp 196-202; J.F.M. Ffrench, 'Notes on three bone pins found at the bottom of the Ballinderry lake in the county Westmeath' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.* 32 (1902), pp 153-157

[10] Conor Newman, 'The archaeology of Ballinderry Lough'. Unpublished MA thesis, NUI, (University College, Dublin, 1986), pp 81-119, pp 120-164; Conor Newman, 'Ballinderry crannóg No. 2, Co. Offaly: the Later Bronze Age' in *J. Ir. Archaeol*, 8 (1997), 91-100; Conor Newman, 'Ballinderry crannóg No. 2, Co. Offaly: Pre-crannóg early medieval horizon' in *Jn. Ir. Archaeol.* 11 (2002), pp 99-124.

alignment, spacing and orientation of posts at the opposite side of the site. Indeed, the majority of the Late Bronze Age finds (i.e. most of the coarse ware pottery, all the amber beads and lignite bracelets) came from this area, suggesting it also was an area of intense activity around a former structure. This second timber structure may have rotted away or alternatively, it was disassembled, possibly because the wooden beams were better preserved on this higher part of the site (a knoll) and could be re-used elsewhere.

Newman's significant re-interpretation implies that the Late Bronze Age lake-settlement had two substantial wooden structures, a possible pathway linking them, with the build-up on the site of an occupation layer. Finds from the site included bronze knives, awls, a flesh hook and a possible sunflower pin shaft. Other finds included spindle whorls, a saddle quern, stone rubbers, wooden artefacts and leather. Three human skulls were found in the black layer beneath the wooden structures. While Hencken suggested that there were eight or nine pots amongst the three hundred plus sherds, Newman's recent examination of the rim profiles indicates that there may have been as many as seventeen pottery vessels. Late Bronze Age finds are also known from several places in the immediate vicinity of the Ballinderry 2 site. A hoard of bronze objects (including a socketed, looped spearhead, two socketed gouges, a socketed and tanged chisel, a socketed knife and three large rings) was found in 1944 at 2.5m depth in peat, possibly in Moyvoughly bog. A Late Bronze Age cup-headed pin and a bronze ring was also found, possibly in association with cremated bone, from a site 400m to the north of Ballinderry 2. Various other items of Late Bronze Age date including tools, weaponry and ornaments have also been reported from the site in the NMI files, although some of these may have been deliberately misprovenanced so as to increase their value.

*Phase 2 – early medieval pre-crannog occupation phase (sixth century AD)*
In the Phase 2 occupation (according to Newman's re-interpretation), probably dating to the late sixth century AD, the site had an early medieval occupation surface apparently used as an open-air site used for cooking, bathing and the processing of antler and deer bone, potentially associated with aristocratic red deer hunting.[11] The occupation surface was on the lake marls, overlying the Late Bronze Age site. There were also 11 circular wicker structures, clustered in groups, consisting of circular baskets, 1-2.2m in diameter, 95cm in height, set into the ground. There was also an 'outer hearth' on a small rise, with logs at the

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[11] Newman, The archaeology of Ballinderry Lough, pp 81-119; Conor Newman, 'Ballinderry crannóg No. 2, Co. Offaly: Pre-crannóg early medieval horizon', pp 99-124.

base, with stone, gravel, sand and ashes filling the pit. This pre-occupation surface produced a large amount of red deer bone (up to 30% of the site assemblage), consisting of at least 27 individuals, with eruption of antlers on skull indicating that they had been killed in the winter. Chronologically diagnostic finds from Phase 2 included a copper-alloy pin (sixth to seventh century date), sherds of E-ware (sixth to seventh century AD), a zoomorphic pennanular brooch (sixth century date, found under timber floor of later crannog). The outer hearth produced gaming pieces, bone dice, glass beads and a bronze drinking horn terminal. Finds from beneath the later crannog's house floor included the bronze pennanular brooch, a bronze armlet with twisted inlay, bone objects, whetstones, rubbing stones and a Type 3 pennanular brooch.

*Phase 3 – early medieval crannog (ninth century AD)*

In the Phase 3 occupation (dating to the ninth century AD), there was an early medieval crannog 'proper', with extensive evidence for domestic and industrial activity.[12] The early medieval crannog had a palisade with an entrance, a laid surface of stone and brushwood and some evidence for internal houses, although these were badly disturbed by nineteenth century treasure hunting and antiquarian diggings.

The early medieval crannog (22m in diameter, E-W, 15m N-S) was built of a stone and brushwood layer laid onto a small natural knoll at the centre of the crannog, with layers of peat, brushwood and general fill and debris making up the body of the mound. This stone and brushwood layer was defined at its edges by small stakes driven into the soft lake marls. The internal area was densely piled with smaller posts to consolidate the marshy ground. The crannog had a well-preserved timber floor on the southern side where there was a large hearth with several layers of ashes. The crannog was enclosed by an 'inner palisade' of a dense concentration of stakes and posts encircling the site, the tops of which lay below the level of the crannog's internal timber floor, implying that it was a revetment rather than a high enclosing fence. There was also an 'outer palisade' of oak posts with a possible berm outside it. The palisade was only partly surviving in the northern side, but it probably had a entrance or gate to the northeast, defined by two posts driven to 1.5m depth. Although generally considered a later feature, a brushwood trackway to the southeast may have been part of the early medieval crannog.[13] The crannog's internal area had a timber floor of horizontal oak and ash posts in the southeast quadrant. This was probably the floor of a

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[12] Newman, The archaeology of Ballinderry Lough, pp 120-64.

[13] Newman, The archaeology of Ballinderry Lough, p. 124.

house, but its plan has been lost due to nineteenth century disturbance. The timbers had been freshly cut and were not re-used, and were laid in 4 layers of logs, criss-crossing each other. Packed between the timbers were deposits of cut peat and brushwood. There were also numerous bones in this area, particularly between the inner and outer palisades, suggesting that this was the location of the site's midden.

The site's animal bones were primarily found immediately outside the crannog palisade, where there was an enormous accumulation of food bones, chips and fragments of wood, particularly abundant on the east and south sides of the site. There were also huge quantities of bone inside the palisade, while a refuse pit was filled with bones and gravel (where there were also flint blades, arrowhead, and scrapers). Elsewhere the natural lake muds were covered with a dark clay and thin layer of brushwood, in which animal bone was common. The animal bone was primarily of cattle (90%), with smaller amounts of pig, horse (some broken) and small amounts of hare, rabbit, badger, otter, dog and cat. There were also bones of jay, heron, duck, pintail duck, tufted duck, goose and fowl.

The early medieval crannog at Ballinderry No. 2 produced a large numbers of finds. A dugout boat was found beside the house area, between the inner and outer palisades. The site also produced such high-status items as pennanular brooches (ninth century types), 2 ringed pins (ninth to tenth century date) and stick pins. There were also many items of personal adornment, including beads, bone combs, pins and bone cylinders (and some bone gaming pieces). Clothing included leather shoes and textiles, found outside the palisade. Tools or agricultural equipment included knives, shears and spade (found outside the palisade), wooden spindles, mallets and wedges, as well as wooden buckets, lathe-turned vessels and wooden troughs. There were also fragments of 8 rotary querns and 2 whole lower stones from querns. Swords were found outside the palisade, spearheads were recovered from the lake muds and there was also an iron shield boss. Intriguingly, there were also some modern forgeries from the site, inspired by antiquarian interest in it in the nineteenth century and the presence of an iron ladle, iron anvil and a soldering iron suggests that some were even being produced on the site.

**Comment**

The early medieval crannog at Ballinderry crannog No. 2 was probably occupied by fairly wealthy inhabitants in both its sixth century and ninth century phases, people who had access to high-status metalwork, glass and amber and were themselves engaging in a small amount

of metalworking, woodworking and perhaps textile production. The crannog may not have been re-constructed many times before its abandonment. The economy of site was reconstructed from the faunal assemblages. There were several rotary querns, suggesting the importance of tillage and arable crops. A large assemblage of cattle bone was taken to indicate the importance of grazing, pig and horse bones were also plentiful. There may have been some limited hunting of wild animals, but there seems to have been relatively little exploitation of wildfowl or fish.

**Figures**

Fig. 3.1; Fig. 3.2.

## Site 3: Bofeenaun, Co. Mayo

### Site description

The early medieval crannog at Bofeenaun, Lough More, Co. Mayo is an interesting site, being an artificially constructed islet with enclosing wooden palisade, yet its small size, form and on-site activities contrast with other, larger high-status sites. The crannog was located on the east shore of a small lake in a mountainous valley below Glen Nephin, Co, Mayo, an isolated location today which has little other archaeological evidence.

The site was first discovered and recorded by local amateur archaeologists, Michael Flynn and Christy Lawless,[14] and thereafter investigated by the Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit over a two week period in October 1992.[15] The crannog was only one of a number of archaeological sites then exposed on the lakeshore, which included two *fulachta fiadh*, eighteen linear wooden structures (interpreted as deer traps), a submerged pine forest, quarries and a natural spring which emits iron ores. The crannog was situated on a natural knoll or promontory of peat jutting out into the water. There was a substantial depth of peat (over 6m) under the site and it stood only 46cm above the drained level of the lake. The crannog was situated 29m from the dryland shoreline by a stretch of swampy ground but a possible stone and wooden causeway may have provided access to the site. This causeway was constructed of an irregular, linear arrangement of stakes and slabs and may have been underwater at the time of the site's use.

The crannog was oval in plan, measuring 14.6m by 11.8m. The edges of the site were defined by an enclosing wooden palisade of 82 vertical posts. This palisade was gapped and irregular and was typically constructed of a single row of roundwood oak, birch, hazel and willow posts (typically 12-18cm diam.), but there was a double row of posts facing towards the shoreline. The palisade posts were quite short (65cm-1.0m), suggesting that the palisade merely defined or reveted the edge of the mound, not standing to any great height or serving as a defensive feature. There may also have been a low bank of peat along the perimeter of the site, along its southern edge. A dendrochronological date of AD 804 ± 9 was obtained from a single oak timber.

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[14] Lawless, C 1992 Lough More, Bofeenaun, Co. Mayo: crannog, fulachta fiadh, deer traps and associated archaeological sites. *Cathair Na Mart* 12, (1), 13-31.

[15] Margaret Keane, 'Lough More, Co. Mayo: the crannog' in *Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit Transactions, 4* (1995), pp 167-82.

The surface of the crannog was defined by a single layer of stone flags, which had been partly washed away. The stones were densest near the palisade at the northeast side. There was no evidence for any house or hearth. There was a small amount of bone on the site, including cattle, horse and pig, along with some shed antler. There was some burnt bone, but this may have been as the result of industrial activity. Finds from the surface of the crannog included two stone mortars, a grinding stone, a hammer stone and two iron objects. The site was covered in a large quantity of iron slag, with at least 1845 pieces identified during the survey. Scientific analysis of a sample (74kg) of iron slag indicated that it had been produced during primary iron production activities with such diagnostic forms as tapped slags and furnace lining fragments. There was evidence for ore processing, the smelting and bloom smithing of iron and the forging of objects.

There was some evidence for the spatial organisation of iron working on the site. Most of the iron slag was concentrated in an arc, just off the peak of the knoll, at the northeast side of the crannog, and it avoided the palisade on the south side. The furnace linings were all found at the northern end, just to the west of the main concentration of slag or waste.

In other words, most of the iron production activity was concentrated at the north and northeast side of the island, or in other words, to the right as one entered the crannog from the causeway. This is similar to the metalworking areas at Moynagh Lough crannog, Co. Meath, which appear to have been to the right as a person entered the crannog.

**Comment**

The crannog at Lough More is highly unusual in that it appears to have been entirely an iron working site. The only structural evidence is the palisade and stone paving while the only finds are related to iron working. There are no traces of occupation structures or any other forms of domestic or industrial activity. The heavy concentration of slag, the presence of possible furnaces and the hollowed stones used as crushers suggests its inhabitants were smelting iron from the ores found in the nearby bogs. The present lake is coloured rusty red in the spring, and small quarries in the gravel ridge to the west end of the lake may be evidence for early open cast mining. There is little other evidence for contemporary settlement in this immediate setting, although there are large numbers of ringforts and stone cashels in the landscape several miles to the northeast. Bofeenaun provides many contrasts with such larger sites as Moynagh Lough, Lagore and Ballinderry. It was entirely industrial in function, focused only on iron production from local ores. Furthermore, it seems to have

171

been occupied only for a short duration, as there was little evidence for long-term occupation. It is also possible that it was not occupied at all, being only a work-site for people living elsewhere in the wider landscape. It confirms that not all crannogs were domestic occupations, many of the crannog cairns and small sites may also be industrial sites.

## Site 4: Clea Lakes, Co. Down

### Site description

The early medieval crannog of Clea Lakes, Co. Down, was excavated in June 1956 as part of the County Down Archaeological Survey research programme.[16] The crannog had already been excavated in the nineteenth century, when finds including bronze pins, a stone disc and both early medieval souterrain ware and medieval coarse ware were found. Pat Collins and Bruce Proudfoot's excavations were limited to a narrow trench into the occupation deposits and down to lower surface. The crannog was located in a small lake lying in the drumlins to the west of Strangford Lough, two km north-west of the coastal town of Killyleagh, Co. Down.

The site was artificially constructed by depositing sub-soil, freshly quarried rock-chips and a thin layer of peat over the natural boulder clay. This was covered by a layer of occupation debris or topsoil, a peaty sealing layer, overlain by a 1m thick deposit of midden material. It was suggested that this midden material had been transported there from another settlement site in the vicinity.

The occupation surface was enclosed within a wall built in the manner of an early medieval stone cashel, although this wall may also have been a stone revetment, 80c in height. The occupation surface was within a brown loamy and stony layer, within which there was a built hearth with ashy material around it, all overlaid by sand and clay. The uppermost surface of the crannog was enclosed by a stone wall in the manner of a cashel.

Most of the finds were from the pre-occupation, substructural midden deposit, though some were from the sandy deposit above this. The artefacts were all of early medieval date. They included 61 sherds of early medieval souterrain ware, 2 crucibles used for bronze working as indicated by the reddish staining of bronze dross, a bronze sheet fragment, an iron socketed gouge (possible used in wood-turning), three bone pins (from pig fibulae), a glass bead, a lignite bracelet, a piece of rotary quern, a perforated stone loom weight, two spindle whorls, slate discs, 9 whetstones, 36 pieces of flint with steep edge-bruising used as strike-a-lights, (as well as a Neolithic thumbnail scraper and Late Mesolithic Bann flakes), a tracked stone and a stone pebble used as a 'linen polisher'. Previous or 'old' finds from the site included souterrain ware, a stone disc, a bronze pin and a bone pin.

**Comment**

The Clea Lakes crannog excavations were very limited in extent, but produced the typical range of early medieval artefacts found on other crannogs. Although the size and status of the original crannog is unknown, it is interesting that bronze working in some scale was being practiced on the site. The re-use of midden material in the building of the site is also interesting.

**Figures**

Fig. 3.3.

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[16] A.E.P. Collins and B. Proudfoot, 'A trial excavation at Clea Lakes crannog, Co. Down' in *U.J.A.*, 22 (1959), pp 92-101.

## Site 5: Craigywarren crannog, Co. Antrim

**Site description**

Craigywarren crannog, Co. Antrim, was a small early medieval crannog, formerly located at a depth of 2m in a bog, about eighty metres out from the former western shore of the original lake. About 500m to the north was Lisnacrogher crannog, the reputed nineteenth-century findspot of an assemblage of La Téne metalwork. The site was almost totally excavated by W.J. Knowles, George Coffey and a team of nine assistants over a two-week period in September-August 1901.[17]

The crannog was small and circular, measuring only about 14m in diameter. It was defined at its edge by a lightly built wooden palisade, of cleft oak planks and roundwood ash posts driven into the peat in a regular manner. There was a possible entrance at the north side. The site was constructed of a primary layer of heather and small branches lay on the underlying black mud. This was followed by a second layer of horizontal tree trunks and heavy branches, staked down by oak piles. These trunks were laid lengthways around the edge of the site. This was followed by another layer of heather, making a clean, even surface. The upper-most occupation surface was of hewn and mortised planks laid down, with the north side of the crannog consolidated by spreads of stones.

There was a possible house or hut at the north side of the crannog, represented by a scatter of planks covering an area 2.6m by 2.6m. These were small planks, occasionally drilled and pegged, partly overlying the palisade at one area. There was also a stone-lined hearth beside these planks, which consisted of a single flat stone (50cm diam.), surrounded by smaller stones, overlain by a layer of white ash. There was also a 'midden' of animal bone beside this house. It also produced most of the site's finds, including pottery, a concave scraper, a bronze brooch, a bronze pin and a finger ring and a bracelet. A sword was found beneath the timbers, and a spearbutt was found near it.

A midden on the north side (beside the house and possible entrance) produced bone of cattle, sheep, goat, pig, deer and horse, including three well-preserved horse skulls. The midden also produced some of the site's other finds, including an iron pan, an iron rod, a possible barrel padlock key and fragments of decorated, leather shoes.

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[17] George Coffey, 'Craigywarren crannog' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, 26c (1906), pp 109-18.

Craigywarren produced a range of lithic finds, including 50 flint flakes, 3 scrapers, a concave scraper, a lozenge-shaped arrowhead, three polishing stones, spindle whorls and a stone axe fragment. The excavators decided that the flints were not strike-a-lights (presumably because they were unbruised). However, because there were no cores to indicate on-site flint working, they suggested that the flints were introduced on to the site with stone and gravel during its construction. Alternatively, they may have been seen as exotic or magical items by the early medieval inhabitants of the site, being used to protect food or the house against fire.

Early medieval finds included a silvered, plain pennanular brooch, a brooch pin fragment, bracelet, disc and ring. An iron sword was found below the hut timbers and other iron finds included a possible spear butt, two billhooks, a chisel, an iron pan and an unknown object, which may have been a barrel-padlock key. Plain souterrain pottery and clay crucibles were recovered, one of the latter had red vitreous matter on its surface, possibly the remains of melted enamel. A bone trial piece and a bronze bracelet were also found. Portions of decorated leather shoes and a bag were recovered. The finds indicated to the excavators the presence of both craft-workers and relatively wealthy inhabitants and the site was dated, on the basis of the pennanular brooch, to the tenth century AD. It is likely that this date is much too late. The brooch, the plain souterrain pottery and the decorated leather shoes could be dated to as early as the sixth to seventh century AD.[18]

**Comment**

The early medieval crannog of Craigywarren Co. Antrim is an interesting site, apparently being a small, relatively lightly-defended lake dwelling, occupied for not a significantly long period of time (although this is obviously difficult to assess given the poor record of the site's stratigraphy). Its inhabitants were probably of some social status, given the presence of the pennanular brooch and sword. However, there is little clear evidence for a house structure, unless the entire palisade itself is the walling of a large house, although this is not unique to this site. The site was probably a domestic residence, producing such finds as pottery, shoes and tools, but was probably not a significant location for craft activities (i.e. such as metal-working). Craigywarren, was probably the wetlands equivalent of a wealthy farmer's ringfort, or perhaps of a lower noble or wealthy craftsman.

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[18] Michael Ryan, 'Native pottery in Early Medieval Ireland' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, 73c (1973), pp 619-45, at p. 625.

**Figures**

Fig. 3.4; Fig. 3.5.

## Site 6: Lagore, Co Meath

Lagore crannog, Co. Meath, was first discovered in 1839, when local labourers digging a drainage ditch exposed wooden structures, huge amounts of animal bone and numerous finds of metalwork at the site. The subsequent antiquarian investigations at Lagore can safely be considered to mark the beginnings of research on Irish crannogs.[19] The site was later excavated by the Harvard Archaeological Expedition between 1934 and 1936.[20] The stratigraphy of the crannog was complex and badly obscured by the earlier diggings, so that its dating and structures have been the subject of much re-interpretation.[21]

The crannog survived as a large mound measuring 41m across, consisting of 3m thickness of peat, brushwood and timber, located at the eastern end of a now drained lake. Lagore crannog was occupied between the seventh and early eleventh centuries AD and historical sources have traditionally been used to identify it as the actual historical site *Loch Gabor*, the early medieval residence of the kings of *Brega* of the southern Uí Néill.[22] Archaeologists have in the past attempted to put the date of the start of Lagore back before the fifth century AD, but most recent commentators have accepted the seventh-century origins for the site.

Lagore crannog was certainly occupied over a long period, re-constructed and re-built on several occasions. There is good evidence for some Late Bronze Age activity on the site, although this is difficult to clarify.[23] Hencken, strongly influenced by the constraints of the

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[19] The earliest antiquarian descriptions of the site include W.R. Wilde, 'Animal remains and antiquities found at Dunshaughlin' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, 1c (1836-41), pp 420-6; J. Talbot (de Malahide), 'Memoir on some ancient arms and implements found at Lagore, near Dunshaughlin, County of Meath; with a few remarks on the classification of northern antiquities' in *Arch. Jn.* 6 (1849), pp 101-9; Wood-Martin, *Lake dwellings*, pp 23-5; see also C.S. Briggs, 'A historiography of the Irish crannog: The discovery of Lagore as prologue to Wood-Martin's *Lake Dwellings of Ireland* of 1886' in *Antiquaries Journal*, 79 (1999), pp 347-377; Siobhan De hÓir, 'A letter from W.F. Wakeman to James Graves in 1882' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, 120 (1990), pp 112-9; G.F. Mitchell, 'Voices from the past; three antiquarian letters' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, 113 (1983), pp 47-52.

[20] Hugh O'Neill Hencken, 'Lagore crannóg: an Irish royal residence of the seventh to tenth century A.D' in *R.I.A. Proc.* 53c (1950), pp 1-248.

[21] Joseph Raftery, 'Concerning chronology' in D. Ó Corráin (ed.) *Irish Antiquity* (Cork, 1981), pp 173-204; C.J. Lynn, 'Lagore, County Meath and Ballinderry No. I, County Westmeath crannógs: some possible structural reinterpretations' in *J. Ir. Archaeol.*, 3 (1985-86), pp 69-73; R.B. Warner, 'The date of the start of Lagore' in *J. Ir. Archaeol*, 3 (1985-1986), pp 75-7; Michelle Comber, 'Lagore crannóg and non-ferrous metalworking in early historic Ireland' in *J. Ir. Archaeol.*, 8 (1997), pp 101-14.

[22] Liam Price, 'The history of Lagore, from the annals and other sources' in Hencken, *Lagore*, pp 18-34; George Eogan, 'Life and living at Lagore' in A.P. Smyth (ed.), *Seanchas: Studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin, 2000), pp 64-82.

[23] George Eogan, 'A bronze double-edged knife-dagger with openwork handle and ring terminal from Lagore, Co. Meath and its affinities' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, 96, (1966), pp 147-156..

historical references, identified three separate, chronological, consecutive palisades of firstly piles, then posts and finally planks. Lynn has suggested there were even more phases of occupation.[24] The palisades probably defined the outer defences of the crannog.

Hencken suggested that the crannog builders firstly placed a layer of animal bone, brushwood and peat on the lakebed, to use as a foundation to work from in building the main crannog. This layer he designated as his Period 1a, which he considered, preceded the use of the crannog proper. Lynn has suggested that the Period 1a material is itself evidence of a lake settlement, rather than the debris and working platform of crannog builders. This occupation phase, compacted and driven into the lakemuds by the weight of the later crannog, may have had houses, hearths, piles, wooden platforms, brushwood and wattle mats and occupation debris. This earliest phase of occupation produced some Roman pottery (including *Terra Sigilata*) and post-Roman material. The latter included seventh century pottery, an iron sword, a seventh-century gold ornament and a seventh to eighth-century horse bit. Period Ib was taken by Hencken to represent the first main phase of occupation, but it probably was just one of several successive phases after the first occupation. Period 1b produced Romano-British pottery, evidence for a seventh to eighth century work-shop for making glass studs and a seventh-eighth century bronze disc.

Liam Price's historical research was to strongly influence Hencken's interpretations of the chronology of the site. He believed that historical references to the destruction of the crannog could be identified in the archaeological record.[25] He thought that the Period I occupation was abandoned after the event referred to in the *Annals of Ulster* for AD 850, when Cinaed son of Conaing, King of Cianancht rebelled against Mael Sechnaill, plundered the Uí Néill and 'deceitfully sacked the island of *Loch Gabor*, levelling it to the ground' (*corro ort innsi Locha Gabur dolose corbo comardd fria lar*), while also burning the nearby church of Treóit. Period II and Period III produced few finds to enable close dating of the site. Hencken felt that the Period II occupation probably ended with the destruction by Lagore described by the Annals of Ulster for AD 934 when 'the island of Loch Gabor was sacked by Amlaíb, grandson of Imar' (*Inis Locha Gabhar do thogail la hAmlaibh h. nImair*). There are no historical references to the site after AD 969. The end of Period III and the probable abandonment of the site probably occurred in the late tenth or early eleventh

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[24] Lynn, 'Lagore, County Meath and Ballinderry No. I, County Westmeath crannógs', p. 75.
[25] Liam Price, 'The history of Lagore, from the annals and other sources' in Hencken, *Lagore*, pp 18-34.

century AD. Archaeologists have pointed out the circular arguments that lie behind Hencken's use of historical references to phase the various occupations, but accept his general dating of the site.[26] It is also worth pointing out that other potential phases of prehistoric and medieval occupation at Lagore have rarely been described. Later medieval artefacts from the site were largely ignored by the excavator and a wooden anthropomorphic figure from a sandy layer in the northwest part of the crannog has been dated to the Early Bronze Age.[27]

The Lagore excavations produced huge amounts of early medieval finds, described in detail in the original report, within which the nineteenth-century discoveries from the site are also incorporated. There was extensive evidence for bronze working at Lagore, particularly in the seventh-century and the tenth-century phases of occupation. The site produced pieces of copper ore, sandstone ingot moulds and moulds for bronze rings, clay crucibles, *tuyères*, spilt bronze waste and scrap pieces of sheet bronze. There were also bone and stone trial or motif pieces, indicating the preparation of designs on-site. Bronze artefacts from the site included bronze pennanular brooches, zoomorphic pennanular brooches, decorated bronze belt buckles and strap ends, bronze pins and ringed pins, bronze bowls and rings. There were also some on-site black smithing and iron-working, with large amounts of iron slag in the period II occupation and iron-working floors in the Period II and Period III phases. Iron pennanular brooches and pins may have been made there. Objects of finer metals included gold filigree ornament and silver bracelets. There was also evidence for glass-working, with moulds for glass studs occurring, but other finds included glass bracelets and armlets, glass rods, millefiori, enamel and a large number of glass beads. The glass beads were decorated in a range of ways, in blue, white, yellow, khaki and green. The beads varied in shape from annular, to segmented, dumb-bell and melon shaped. There were also large amounts of lignite bracelets. Imported European objects included Roman glass fragments, amber and E-ware pottery. Animal bones were used as motif-pieces to work out designs for metalworking.

There was also a range of other domestic crafts practiced on the site. Leather shoes, scraps of leather and a wooden shoe last probably indicate the manufacturing of shoes on-site, while an iron leather working tool, similar to an example from Ballinderry crannog No. 1 was also found. Wooden spindles, spindle-whorls, fleece and animal hair were found, along with

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[26] Warner, 'The date of the start of Lagore'.
[27] B.J. Coles, 'Anthropomorphic wooden figures from Britain and Ireland' in *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, 56 (1996), pp 315-333, at p. 326.

uncarded wool and numerous pieces of textiles. Spinning and possibly weaving on a simple loom were probably also carried out in the crannog. Bone working resulted in bone combs, pins, a possible nail cleaner, gaming pieces, bone dice and a possible dice-box. There was a wide range of woodworking equipment, including iron axes, an adze, a wooden mallet, knives, gouges, awls, a punch, two small saws, a draw-knife and iron nails as well as whetstones for sharpening them. Wooden artefacts produced on-site included stave-built buckets, lathe-turned bowls (including some which replicate E-ware pottery), ladles, spindles and various other domestic utensils.

It is clear from the historical record that Lagore was witness to several violent occasions, when people were killed in raids on the site. The excavations at Lagore produced 200 human bones from lower levels or the seventh-century Period 1a phase of occupation of the crannog, many were from headless bodies. Fourteen human skulls with cut occiputs indicated the beheading of victims, while other bodies were scattered about the edge of the site. It is possible that these were early medieval in date, but it is also possible that they are in fact prehistoric burials. Two iron collars with chains, a possible leg-iron and an iron trident have been interpreted as means of controlling hostages or slaves. Weaponry included a range of different types of iron swords. There were twelve iron spearheads, leaf-shaped and shouldered, including a Viking spearhead with an ornamented socket. There were also spearbutts, ferrules and iron shield bosses, while iron horse-bits were also found.

Lagore crannog produced huge amounts of animal bone, fifty thousand pounds of bone were recovered from the excavations and the nineteenth-century antiquarian accounts describe similar huge amounts being removed for fertiliser. Cattle easily predominated (much of it slaughtered) in the faunal assemblage, but pigs and sheep/goat were also kept. Horse was fairly infrequent, although certainly present in small numbers. Dog, cat and fowl were also present. There may have been some limited hunting of deer, hare, wild geese and wild duck. Hencken's impression was that meat-eating predominated over grain, although little attention was paid by him to the use of dairy products. Agricultural tools included iron plough shares, plough coulters, sickles, billhooks and a few rotary querns. Wheat straw (*Triticum* sp.) was identified in a mass of plant remains. There were also iron shears, although these may have been used for textile working. Other evidence for textile production included spindle whorls, fleece and goat hair and woven textiles.

**Comment**

The early medieval crannog of Lagore was the historical site *Loch Gabor*, the early medieval residence of the kings of *Brega* of the southern Uí Néill.[28] The richness of its archaeological deposits has meant that Lagore has provided the data for many debates on early medieval chronology, royalty, iron-working, artefactual assemblages, agriculture and economy.

**Figures**

Fig. 3.6; Fig. 3.7.

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[28] Liam Price, 'The history of Lagore, from the annals and other sources' in Hencken, *Lagore*, pp 18-34; George Eogan, 'Life and living at Lagore' in A.P. Smyth (ed.), *Seanchas: Studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin, 2000), pp 64-82.

## Site 7: Lough Faughan, Co. Down

### Site description

The early medieval crannog of Lough Faughan, Co. Down, was excavated in 1951-1952, as part of the County Down Archaeology Survey.[29] It was suspected that the site was late medieval in date, primarily because of the antiquarian discovery of an imported medieval green-glazed pottery jug on the site.[30] However, while the excavations produced some evidence for late medieval occupation in the form of pottery and a coin, they revealed that the site was mostly early medieval in date, occupied at some unknown period between the seventh and tenth centuries AD..

The early medieval crannog was a circular mound (36m in diameter, 1.2m in height) located in marshy ground. It apparently was constructed by laying down a sub-structural layer (5m thick) of brushwood (of hazel, alder, birch) and peat over a marshy deposit on the lakebed. The 'peat' was often composed of heather, bracken and scrub and there were several layers of bluish or yellowish clay and but there were no large timbers. The brushwood was occasionally pinned into position using stakes. The upper surface of this substructure was then covered with planks ('random groups of timber rafts') pinned into position and woven wattle panels, interpreted by the excavators as the beginning of the occupation layer. There was some domestic refuse found in these structural levels, as well as a single hearth (hearth 5) interpreted as a fireplace used by the crannog builders (although it is conceivable that this was an actual early occupation horizon). Finds from the structural layers included whetstones, 2 crucible sherds, a wooden object, sawn antler cuttings, an iron shield boss, a small circular iron pan, an iron shears, a barrel padlock key, an unfinished comb, with animal bones strewn through the brushwood and peat layers. Other items from the brushwood and peat layers included wooden cart fragments, a turned wheel hub, a yew-wood hoop from a large barrel, stave-bucket fragments and a turned wooden bowl.

The primary occupation surface was based on the wicker matting that had been laid across the site and the occupation deposits consisted of dark brown, peaty soil, merged with peat and brushwood, within which there were numerous clay spreads laid on damp patches and reddened by burning, interpreted as hearths surrounded by stone kerbing and associated with spreads of timbers. The site's largest hearth (hearth 4) was 4.5m in diameter, by 60cm in

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[29] A.E.P. Collins, 'Excavations at Lough Faughan crannog, Co. Down, 1950-51' in *U.J.A.*, 18 (1955), pp 45-82.

thickness, consisting of 7 superimposed layers of grey ash, with yellow clay and charcoal. Finds from this 'hearth' included a bone pin and a sherd of Roman Samian ware (often perceived as a magical or medicinal item in the early middle ages). It seems likely that this so-called hearth could be interpreted as an early medieval house floor, where the excavators did not recognise the walling. Hearth 6 had a sequence of firstly a circular kerb of stones, secondly a stone-lined hearth in yellow clay, followed by wooden post-bordered hearth in peat. Hearth 3 was a rectangular construction of stones. Hearth 7 was a circular stone kerb under the wall revetment. Some of the hearths were industrial rather than domestic, as iron and bronze slag, crucibles and a clay mould for casting bronze pins were the only objects found in them. Other evidence for iron-working included iron slag, ore and bloom.

The primary crannog occupation layers also produced souterrain ware pottery (230 sherds). The evidence for crafts included discs used in weaving, hand distaffs, 4 spindle whorls and an antler peg. Evidence for metalworking included crucibles (pyramidal with triangular mouth) and moulds for casting bronze pins. Items of personal adornment included a pennanular brooch, pin, needle, bone pins, lignite bracelets, finger rings, glass beads, glass vessels and a glass armlet. There were 3 fragments of rotary querns and perforated whetstones. There was also an iron shield boss (found at the base of the occupation levels) and an iron axe-hammer. Throughout the occupation layers there were deposits of animal bone, including mostly cattle, with some pig, sheep, red deer bone (1.2%) and domestic fowl (possibly from a fighting cock) and fish bones from cod. There were also upper occupation deposits that may date to the end of the early medieval period. These included thin spreads of gravel and some fire-reddened clay. The gravel covered an expanse of black, burnt material of charcoal, burnt straw, carbonised oats and barley.

The upper most occupation surface was enclosed within a stone revetment or wall, of 3 courses of stone with a straight outer face. This wall may only have been constructed on the north side of the crannog, perhaps to alleviate slumping. Within this enclosing feature was a dark soil of humus and occupation material, 30cm thick at the centre of the site. There were some relic early medieval objects within this occupation material, as well as some sherds of medieval pottery 9probably dated to the thirteenth century). An early thirteenth-century coin was also found on the crannog.

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[30] W.G. Wood-Martin, *The lake dwellings of Ireland or ancient lacustrine habitations of Erin commonly called crannogs* (Dublin, 1886), p. 92.

## Comment

The early medieval crannog at Lough Faughaun appears to have been a settlement site whose inhabitants were engaged in agriculture, domestic crafts and both bronze working and iron working. Like Clea Lakes, a midden from another settlement site was used to build the crannog. It is probable that at least one hearth (i.e. Hearth 4) was actually a circular house floor, potentially re-laid on several occasions. The various objects and finds recovered suggest domestic habitation, but the crannog was also clearly used for iron-working and bronze working, with several hearths devoted to this activity. The site economy was based on mixed farming in the surrounding landscape, with the slaughtering of cattle at a young age probably indicating a preponderance of dairying (see below). The site was also briefly re-activated in the later middle ages, like many other crannog sites, with a stone wall or revetment built around its edges.

## Figures

Fig. 3.8.

## Site 8: Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath

### Site description

Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath, is the most significant early medieval crannog excavated in Ireland in modern times, having been the subject of a long-term programme of excavations since the 1980s by John Bradley.[31] The site had been occupied in the Late Mesolithic, and in the Early and Late Bronze Age, followed by a hiatus in the Iron Age. In the early medieval period, there were several phases of occupation from the late sixth to the ninth century AD, with a sequence of palisades, circular houses and evidence for on-site metalworking, the trade of exotic goods, diet and economy.[32]

The early medieval crannog was situated at the southern edge of a former lake on the River Dee, overlooked by hills and slopes to the south and west. The site was sheltered from south-west winds and was snugly placed inside one corner of the lake with good views to the north and north-east. It seems that the muddy knolls and artificially constructed mounds of peat occupied in the Mesolithic and Bronze Age remained as lake shallows beside the deepest part of the lake, making it a good location for crannog construction. There are several substantial early medieval ringforts on the neighbouring drylands, notably those to the immediate west at Lissanard, Lissnacross and Cherbourg Wood. An Anglo-Norman motte at Nobber to the north may also have its origins in the early medieval period, perhaps being originally an early medieval raised ringfort. Other sites in the environs include several crannogs, an early medieval church site at Nobber, a potential unenclosed settlement at a souterrain at Ballynee, as well as possible horizontal mills on the River Dee.[33]

There were at least six phases of occupation in the early medieval period, each marked by a re-deposited layer of peat and possibly representing a generation of activity. The crannog

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[31] The site is described in a series of interim reports, published regularly across the project's life-span; John Bradley, 'Excavations at Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath 1980-81: interim report' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, 7, no. 2, (1982-1983), pp 12-32; J. Bradley, 'Excavations at Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath 1982-83: interim report' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, 7, no. 3 (1984), pp 86-93; J. Bradley 'Excavations at Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath 1984: a summary report' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, 7, no. 4 (1985-1986), pp 79-82; J. Bradley, 'Excavations at Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath, 1985 and 1987' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, 8, no. 3, (1990-1991), pp 21-35; J. Bradley, 'Excavations at Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, 9, no. 1, (1994-1995), pp 158-69; J. Bradley, 'Archaeological excavations at Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath 1995-96' in *Ríocht na Midhe* 9, no. 3 (1997), pp 50-61.

[32] The early medieval settlement and industry at Moynagh Lough crannog has been interpreted in; J. Bradley, 'Excavations at Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, 111 (1991), pp 5-26; J. Bradley, 'Moynagh Lough: an insular workshop of the second quarter of the 8th century' in R. Michael Spearman and J. Higgitt (eds.), *The age of migrating ideas* (Edinburgh, 1993), pp 74-81.

[33] George Eogan, 'Recent crannog discoveries in county Meath' in *Ríocht na Midhe* 1, no. 3, (1957), pp 50-54; George Eogan, 'Ballynee souterrains, county Meath' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, 120, (1990), pp 1-64.

varied in form through these five phases of occupation, but in general terms it measured 40m east-west and 32m north-south. The sub-structure consisted of stones, gravelly earth, timbers, brushwood and redeposited peat. Piles were driven into the ground both outside the crannog (to a distance of 10m out from the western side) and within to retain the foundation layers.

*Phase U (late sixth to seventh centuries AD)*

Phase U was the earliest phase in the early medieval period, probably dating to the late sixth to seventh centuries AD. It has produced an early medieval occupation horizon, with a hut and pathway, that apparently pre-dates the main palisade construction (as both are cut by it). There was a small circular hut (3m diam.), with an arc of post-and-wattles (2.9m by 1.9m), with a charcoal-rich floor and a spudstone to hold a door at the south side. There was also a pathway running away from the house, 4m in length, consisting of 32 flat timbers, some re-used. There were also gravel spreads on the east side of the crannog, potentially the earliest of the early medieval occupation layers. At the south side of the crannog, there was a stone hearth, with a C-shaped arc around it. Finds from the vicinity of the hut included E-ware (seventh century imported pottery), an iron shield boss, a rectangular bronze mount (similar to the escutcheons on the Sutton Hoo hanging bowl). Finds from the gravel spread included two Merovingian glass bottles and a bronze spatula for removing their contents, both being sixth to seventh century in date. At the south side, there were bone combs and amber beads.

*Phase V (mid to late seventh century AD)*

Phase V is represented by a group of refuse layers, but no structures are reported. The phase is interpreted as dating to the mid to late seventh-century AD. Finds included a rim-sherd of E-ware, a bronze disc-pendant pin, a bronze pennanular brooch with birds head terminals, double-sided bone combs, glass beads and a leather shoe.

*Phase W (late seventh to early eighth century AD)*

Phase W was occupied from *c.*AD 690-720. It had a small circular house (3m diam.) or workshop, with an entrance to the east and a hearth with rectangular stone settings was present within the foundation layers of the house. The occupation surface of the crannog was a thick layer of charcoal-flecked soil and ash, sometimes compact with charcoal and bones, sometimes grey and smooth with burnt bones, charcoal and iron flecks. A significant industrial feature included a pit, cut into the peat and filled with ash. A layer of gravel was spread over the pit and a stone-lined rectangular hearth was built upon it. The hearth was

surrounded by post-holes, probably from a spit with a pit to one side (in which was a large rotary quern fragment). There was also a bowl furnace, being a keyhole shaped pit set in gravel and lined with mud, while it had been carefully back-filled with sand. There were also a series of unphased middens outside the site's palisade 2 on the north, east and west sides. These layers of habitation debris were evidently the 'rubbish tip' of the crannog. They were rich in animal bones, and they also produced a large number of small finds, including a pennanular brooch, small pieces of gold filigree and objects of wood and leather, including a separate-bladed shovel.

*Phase X (early eighth to mid-eighth century AD)*

Phase X (probably dating to *c*.AD 720-748) was primarily significant for the evidence for metalworking and industrial production that it produced. The crannog's occupation surface was built of a basal layer of re-deposited peat laid on the site, on top of which there was a roundhouse located between two metalworking areas (1 and 2). There was also an entrance to the crannog on the northeast side, with a timber pathway laid on peat, one re-used timber providing a dendrochronological date of AD 625. The house was circular, with a double post-and-wattle wall and measured about 7.5m in diameter. Its floor surface was of redeposited peat and ashes, although this had mostly been removed. Metalworking Area 1 was situated between the house and the entrance and was defined by a spread of charcoal, 4.2m by 4m, 6cm in thickness, with thick chunks of charcoal, earth and ash mixed in. There was also a cesspit (1.7m by 1.3m) at the edge of the metalworking area, recut on two occasions, which produced layers of dung interspersed with layers of straw and leaves. Finds from metalworking area 1 included a pottery vessel, pieces of baked clay, crucible sherds, and fragments of two-piece clay moulds and motif-pieces. There was also an iron stake, used for beating metal. Metalworking Area 2 was larger and was found to the west of the house. It produced four major features, a furnace, a stone-lined area of clay, a spread of compacted pebbles and a dump of metalworking debris. These features were all clearly permanent, intended for re-use as the furnace was filled with sand and gravel, enabling people to return to work there. Finds from metalworking area 2 included slag, a whetstone, eight flints, a lump of yellow enamel, amber beads and chips, a bronze pin and button, two iron knives, a head of a bone pin and two cut pieces of horn. There were also 67 crucible sherds, 3 heating trays and 600 mould fragments (1.7 kg in total weight). They included 400 featureless mould fragments, 100 plain impressed pieces and 60 decorated pieces. The moulds were used for the production of brooches, mounts, studs (of types found on decorated shrines) and other decorated objects. Ingots were introduced onto the site, placed in crucibles, melted in the

188

furnace and poured into the moulds. The furnace was used on at least eight occasions. The moulds may have been cooled nearby on the pebbled area, post-casting work and mould making may have been carried out on a pink clay and cobbled spread. The spatial organisation of the metalworkers' areas can thus be recognised.

*Phase Y (mid eighth to late eighth century AD)*

In Phase Y, (dated to *c.* 748 - *c.*780), the crannog had two roundhouses, a large oak palisade and a furnace-pit, with finds including crucibles, a clay mould, clay nozzles and a bronze ingot. The palisade was of hewn and cleft oak tightly placed together in a U-shaped trench. The palisade construction dates to AD 748 and therefore comes at least 180 years after the first occupation of the site. The palisade revets a layer of redeposited peat upon which the houses were constructed. The largest house (Roundhouse 1) was a substantial circular structure, 11.2m in external diameter (10m internal diameter) with double walls and a pennanular-shaped, laid foundation of reddish-brown gravel internally and an external ridge 26cm in width, 15cm in thickness. There were at least 250 internal posts, representing internal partitions, beds and benches. There were several phases of hearths, and 20 spreads of ash and animal bone (rake-outs from the hearth) were scattered through the occupation layer. The floor deposits were thickest (up to 12cm in thickness) on the south side, near the hearths, and was thinnest on north side. The earliest hearth was substantial, being a stone-lined rectangular hearth and was followed by fireplaces added to the east. Most of the spreads of animal bone were usually found in the vicinity of these hearths. Finds from the large roundhouse included eight tanged iron knives, three iron key handles, a socketed iron spearhead, a bone spearpoint, stone hones, iron nails, spindle whorls. The house also produced such finds as a bronze pseudo-pennanular ring, a spiral headed bronze ring, two ringed iron pins, ball and spatula headed bone pins, two bronze finger rings, bone comb plates, glass beads, eight jet bracelet fragments, a bone gaming piece, 114 pieces of flint (many being strike-a-lights) and a bronze drinking horn terminal. The second house was smaller, approximately 5.2m in diameter and it also had a stone-lined hearth, but the occupation layer was less apparent. There was a bowl-shaped furnace to the west of the house, lined with lake marls. Finds associated with the furnace included three complete crucibles, fifty crucible sherds, three heating trays, a clay mould fragment, baked clay nozzles and a bronze ingot. Many of the crucibles bore evidence of being held by an iron tongs.

*Phase Z (late eighth to early ninth century AD)*

189

Phase Z (probably dating to *c*.AD 780 – 810) was the uppermost, surviving occupation surface, as it had been greatly disturbed by modern bulldozing during attempted land reclamation in the 1980s. There were the remains of an oak palisade, a foundation layer of re-deposited peat and a single charcoal spread. The palisade was constructed of young oak roundwood trunks. These posts probably had wattles woven around them where they stood above the ground. The crannog would have been 36-40m across. Finds from this layer included three tanged iron knives, two complete crucibles and sherds of others, part of a rotary quernstone, a bone comb fragment, a glass bead, a chunk of amber and four jet bracelet fragments.

**Comment**

Moynagh Lough is both a well-preserved multi-period archaeological site and a remarkable example of an early medieval Irish crannog. The archaeological evidence of a large house, fine metalwork and imported items suggest that Moynagh Lough was a high-status settlement, particularly by the mid-eighth century AD. Recent historical research suggests that Moynagh Lough itself may be identified as a place known as *Loch Dé Mundech* and that its crannog may well have been an aristocratic or lordly site of the Mugdorne.[34] Its long-term excavation has revealed several important things about Early Medieval settlement continuities, on-site domestic and industrial activities and the status and lives of its inhabitants. The crannog was apparently occupied continuously between *c*. AD 600 - 810, a period of some two hundred years. Although there may have been short phases of abandonment, it seems that every generation or so, the entire crannog was reconstructed and ever larger houses placed upon it.

The site seems to have been used both for domestic occupation and for various metalworking practices. The presence of furnaces, copper-ingots, crucibles, heating trays and baked clay nozzles strongly indicates on-site metal production (melting bronze and smelting copper and tin) and the numerous clay mould fragments indicate that a wide range of bronze artefacts were actually being made at Moynagh Lough. Amber, gold wire and enamel found on the site indicate the production of fine jewelry. There was also some iron working on the site since slag, a furnace base and hydrated ferric oxide were found within the large house. Other crafts practiced on-site include the working of wood, leather, bone and antler, while there may also have been glass working, as glass rods, a vitrified glass

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[34] Edel Bhreathnach, 'Topographical note: Moynagh Lough, Nobber, Co. Meath' in *Riocht na Midhe*, 9, no. 4, (1998), pp 16-9.

bracelet and an unfinished glass bead are known. The crannog dwellers obtained several other fine items through long-distance trade networks, such as the Merovingian glass vessels, jet bracelets, amber and tin.

The diet and economy of the site has been revealed by studies of the large faunal assemblage.[35] There were large numbers of cattle, pig and sheep, with smaller numbers of horse, red deer, cat and dog. Dairy cows predominated in the bovine bone record and were only killed when they had past their prime while male calves were slaughtered at a young age. Most of the cattle were slaughtered off-site and dressed meat taken on to it for feasting or normal daily food consumption. It is clear that the surrounding rolling hills were well populated with good grazing land for large herds of cattle. The presence of rotary querns on the crannog also suggests some measure of arable farming. It is likely that the crannog was being provisioned by the inhabitants of the ringforts and enclosed settlements found around the local lakeshore.

**Figures**

Fig. 3.9; Fig. 3.10

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[35] Finbar McCormick, Stockrearing in Early Christian Ireland. Unpublished PhD thesis, QUB, Belfast (Belfast, 1987), section 3.2; Finbar McCormick, 'Interim report on the animal bones from Moynagh Lough' in *Ríocht na Mídhe*, 7, no. 4 (1985-1986), pp 86-90; Finbar McCormick, 'Dairying and beef production in Early Christian Ireland, the faunal evidence' in T. Reeves-Smyth and F. Hammond (eds.), *Landscape archaeology in Ireland* (Oxford, 1983), pp 253-267.

## Site 9: Newtownlow, Co. Westmeath

### Site description

The early medieval crannog of Newtownlow, Co. Westmeath was located in a small, former lake (c.250m N/S, 500m E/W) on a tributary of the River Brosna. The site is located 15-20m from the original gently sloping shoreline to the south, and 60-70m to the base of a steep esker (which runs east-west) to the north. The site was exposed during modern land reclamation in the early 1980s, when a hoard of Anglo-Saxon pennies was recovered from the spoil. The site was subsequently partly excavated by Cormac Bourke in the 1980s, but remains largely unpublished.[36]

This was an early medieval crannog built of a cairn of stones, earth and timber in marshy ground at base of steep esker, probably occupied between c.AD 950-1200 (contemporary with Ballinderry no. 1, Co. Westmeath, which was 16km to the west). It is part of an early medieval settlement complex, along with a large, univallate ringfort at Newtownlow situated on slightly elevated ground, 150m to the west at the narrow end of the lake. The crannog is also overlooked by a large, flat-topped earthen motte surmounted by a late medieval cylindrical tower ('Low's Castle') at Newtownlow, 300m to southeast. This may originally have been an early medieval raised ringfort, appropriated by Anglo-Norman settlers in the late twelfth century. There is also a probable late medieval parish church beside the motte, surmounted by a probable seventeenth-century church built on the earlier site, with an adjacent graveyard at Newtownlow. Palaeoecological studies from nearby Cornaher Lough indicate early medieval agricultural activities and woodland clearance after c.AD 500.[37] All sites are located south of a substantial esker that must have been an early routeway.

The crannog (17m E-W, 17m, N-S, standing to a height of 1.5m) was built on a wooden substructure on the underlying peat, of a platform of substantial trunks, across which were laid light timbers and brushwood, interlocked by notches. This was covered with substructural layers of clay, peat and stones, buttressed by heavy timbers at the edge. The occupation surface may be represented by an organic, midden layer found in different areas of the site. A possible house on the site was evident in a hearth set on a flat stone and two

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[36] Cormac Bourke, 'Newtownlow' in Claire Cotter (ed.) *Excavations 1985* (Dublin 1986), p. 40; Cormac Bourke, 'Newtownlow' in Claire Cotter (ed.) *Excavations 1986* (Dublin 1987), p. 37; Michael Kenny, 'A find of Anglo-Saxon pennies from Newtownlow' in *Riocht na Midhe*, 7, no. 3 (1984), pp 37-43.

arcs of oak stakes (possibly remains of a wattle wall) from a subcircular structure 6x4m in diameter. The occupation layer appears to have been covered by a layer of red/orange soil, interpreted as the burnt remains of a house. Otherwise, the occupation layer was sealed under a buff-tan clay, incorporating charcoal, crucible fragments, pieces of slag and a possible furnace, but no structures were found in this upper layer. The site was enclosed within an irregular palisade, including a cleft oak palisade on the east side (including two rows of planks with horizontals lying between) and an irregular roundwood post and plank palisade (with scatters of roundwood outside it) on the west. Some bone objects and comb fragments, datable to the tenth century AD, were found in association with this palisade, probably dating its construction to *c.*AD 950. Finds from the machine-disturbed layers in the middle and edge of the site included a hoard of tenth-century Anglo-Saxon pennies (ranging AD 924-55, probably deposited *c.*AD 950), 20 bronze stick pins, a square-sectioned whetstone with copper-alloy fittings (probably a ceremonial scepter). Finds from outside the palisade included two quern stones, a wooden bucket stave, wooden staves from a small waisted vessel, fragments of leather, a double-sided comb, a shafthole iron axe, an iron pan or ladle. A great quantity of animal bone (including cattle, sheep, pig, goat, horse, red-deer, hare and fox) was also found outside the palisade.

Towards the end of the site's life history (possibly after a period of abandonment as indicated by the rotten palisade planks), the palisade on the east and southeast was buried under a large cairn of stones and the mound was covered under a sterile layer of clay. This uppermost layer produced late twelfth-century green-glazed pottery sherds, an eleventh to twelfth-century stirrup ring, a copper-alloy plaque and cast crouching animal (twelfth-century date) and a fine jet cross of eleventh to twelfth century date, found in peat to the west of the site.

**Comment**
Newtownlow appears to have been an early medieval crannog occupied (probably in the tenth and eleventh century AD), with nearby early medieval ringforts and a probable church site, adjacent to a significant early medieval routeway running east/west along part of the Long Hill esker. The sites lie in the barony of Moycashel, a short distance west of the boundary with the barony of Fartullagh, but it probably originally lay within the boundary of the early medieval territory of Fir Thulach. It seems likely that in the late twelfth to early

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[37] Alyson Heery, The vegetation history of the Irish midlands: Palaeoecological reconstructions of two lake sites adjacent to eskers. Unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College, University of Dublin (Dublin,

thirteenth century, this local power centre was appropriated by Anglo-Norman settlers, who built an earthen motte and timber castle (one of several constructed in the De Lacy Liberty of Meath) and a medieval parish church, thus taking over from local Gaelic lords. In the sixteenth or seventeenth century, a larger church may have been built on top of the medieval church, as part of renewed settlement here.

**Figures**

Fig. 2.44; Fig. 2.45; Fig. 2.46.

1998), pp 52-108.

## Site 10: Rathtinaun (Crannog 61), Co. Sligo

**Site description**

The Bronze Age and early medieval crannog of Rathtinaun, Co. Sligo (also commonly known as Crannog 61) was first recognised in 1952 after drainage led to the artificial lowering of the lake-levels of Lough Gara, Co. Sligo/Roscommon. The site appeared as a large stone cairn or mound, 36m by 29m and 2.5m in height, about 30m from the drylands in a sheltered bay or inlet on the eastern side of the lake. Prior to excavations, the discovery of Late Bronze Age artefacts on the site indicated its late prehistoric origin. The site was then totally excavated between 1953 and 1955 by Joseph Raftery, of the National Museum of Ireland.[38] The site remains unpublished, although the site plans, cross-sections, phase descriptions and finds catalogues exist, and Joseph Raftery's site description is coherent and well-structured. These archives have been assembled by Prof. Barry Raftery for a forthcoming publication. The site's chronology has not yet been established and there are no radiocarbon dates for the early medieval levels. The site description below is derived from this author's inspection of the excavation archive currently held in the Dept. of Archaeology, UCD.[39]

*Late Bronze Age crannog*

*Period I (Late Bronze Age)*

The site had two Late Bronze Age phases of occupation (Period I and Period II), followed by a period of abandonment and concealment by lake sands. Previously, it was thought that the site had an Iron Age phase, but recent radiocarbon dating indicates this is not the case. Period 1 probably dated to the Dowris period of the Late Bronze Age (*c.*900 BC). The site appeared as an oval mound of stones, 29m by 34m by 2.5m in height. Excavation indicated that a natural mound had been levelled and a central depression filled, by piling timbers and brushwood above it. The crannog was further raised with layers of timber and brushwood. A single possible hut, represented by vertical oak piles, 9m in diameter, was associated with a timber trackway. Several 'fire-baskets' were also found. These were circular, built of post and wattle and lined with a protective yellow clay. Finds from this lower level included coarse-ware pottery, a disc-headed pin, a pair of tweezers, several rings, a possible cauldron fragment and a gold 'hair-ring'. Clay mould fragments and wooden containers were also found. The site was then covered by lake-levels, sealing it under a layer of sand.

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[38] Joseph Raftery, 'Lake-dwellings in Ireland' in *Scientific Service*, 4, no. 3 (1957), pp 5-15; Joseph Raftery 'Drainage and the Past' in *Oibre*, 4 (1966), pp 11-3; Barry Raftery, *Pagan Celtic Ireland* (London, 1994), pp 32-5.

*Period II (Late Bronze Age)*

In Period II, the crannog was re-occupied. There was no great chronological gap between Period I and Period II and the finds from the latter were also of Late Bronze Age origin. Layers of brushwood were laid down around an area of central cobbling. There were no clear house structures, but there were six large hearths. These hearths were also in fire-baskets, 2.5m in diameter with hearthstones. One hearth re-used a fire-basket dating from Period I. Finds included two disc-headed pins, a pair of bronze tweezers, a bifid razor, a tanged chisel, a phalera, coarse-ware pottery and wooden vessels. A hoard of objects were found in a box, apparently in the floor of the Period II occupation. The hoard included a necklace of amber beads, rings of bronze, pure tin and three of lead with gold-foil cover. There was also a pair of tweezers, a bronze pin and unusually six boar's tusks. The hoard appears to have been marked by narrow vertical stakes. A number of iron objects were also found in the Period II level, including a pin, a possible sickle fragment, a fork-like implement, a shafthole axehead and a fragment of iron. Until recently this material was seen to represent the transition between bronze and iron tools and implements. Most recent radiocarbon dating indicates that this material is intrusive in Period II and dates to the early medieval phase of occupation. The Late Bronze Age lake structures at Rathtinaun appear to have been the permanent settlement site of a small community, engaged in metalworking on a large-scale. The finds from the Period I and Period II occupations are unusually rich, including bronze, gold, amber and other objects. It is likely that these finds indicate the high social status of Rathinaun's Bronze Age inhabitants or that alternatively it was some form of production or redistribution centre.

*The early medieval crannog*

*Period III (sixth to early seventh century AD?)*

The early medieval occupation began with the Period III occupation level. Period III was the richest period of activity, suggested by Joseph Raftery to date from between AD 600-750. However, the presence of a small Merovingian yellow glass bottle or phial (typologically datable to *c*.AD 500-650) probably indicates a slightly earlier sixth to seventh-century date,[40] and his time-span is also almost certainly too long. In Period III, a large mound of stones 11.5m in length, was placed on the sands and was retained by a wooden revetment. Peat,

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[39] Rathtinaun crannog excavations archive, Dept. of Archaeology, UCD.
[40] Edward Bourke, 'Glass vessels of the first nine centuries AD in Ireland' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, 124 (1994), pp 163-209, at p. 206.

logs and stone heaped against and around the sides of this mound which was in turn retained by a timber revetment, increasing the size of the crannog to 28.5m by 21m. A layer of brushwood, gritty yellow sand, flagstones and timber were laid over this at about the same time. The crannog was retained by a vertical pile palisade, probably built in two phases, partly enclosing the site on north and northeast sides (facing the shoreline). Raftery did not recognise any house posts, but a probable oval or circular house was probably represented by a large centrally placed hearth in use over an extended period with a layer of brushwood and peat that may have served as a house floor. The house floor was initially of peat sods, strewn with rushes, and as the sods settled into the stone core below the floor, it was levelled with sand. A hearth was laid down, initially being a simple unprotected hearth. The house had a floor of clay and subsequently of stone. Finds from the Period III occupation included various stone objects, including two polished stone axes, hammerstones, flint flakes and scrapers, numerous whetstones or hones, spindle whorls, a stone disc, stone beads and bracelets (presumably of lignite) and four rotary querns. There was also a bronze pennanular brooch, a bronze ringed-pin, a bronze pin, a bronze strip, rings, bracelets and an armlet. There was an iron spearhead, a shield-boss, iron ferrules, a tanged iron knife. There were iron pans (4), nails and straps, staple and rods. Other iron objects included an iron ring-brooch, a bill-hook, a socketed iron object and an iron barrel padlock fragment. There were numerous objects of bone, including bone pins (both plain and perforated), bone combs, bone beads, bone spindle whorls, antler handles. There were wooden staves, bases, barrel hoops, dishes or platters and handles, as well as leather shoes. There was also evidence for metalworking in the form of clay crucibles. Glass objects included a glass bracelet, a glass ribbed bead, a fragment of a Merovingian glass vessel, greenish-yellow in colour, an amber bead, a lignite object. A thin layer of sand may have indicated lake flooding and temporary abandonment of the crannog, which itself had slumped to the south (although a layer of sand may also have been laid across the site to 'clean' it).

*Period IV – (seventh century AD?)*

The Period IV occupation began with the levelling of the crannog surface by placing grassy turfs and stones over the Period III remains, which had sloped or tilted to the south. These turfs were obviously taken from the foreshore meadows, with grass, plants, rushes, roots and stones mixed in with them. This new body of material was held in position by a stout revetment of horizontal logs, held in position by two rows of squared oak posts running along the eastern side of the crannog. The solid revetment was not used on the western side, here only oaken piles were driven into the marls. It is interesting to note again that the

strongest defences faced towards the land, thus presenting an impressive palisade towards the shoreline.

The initial phase of occupation (IVa) in Period IV was an oval crannog, 25m N-S, by 15m E-W. It survived mostly as foundation material, but the Period III hearth continued in use with layer after layer of clay and ash being laid down. There was no protection for the hearth, but some postholes may represent a house. In the latter phase (IVb) of the Period IV occupation, there was a definite house structure. This was a large round house (10.5m in diameter, of carefully sharpened stout oak posts spaced at intervals of 20-35cm). The house walls were probably of wattle. There was a central hearth and spread of ash and the house had a possible entrance facing to the east, looking out at the water. The surviving posts formed the southern wall of the house, but they were cut off at the level where the Period IV ceased and the Period V began. The house may have been demolished on the north side, where no posts remained. In the final phase of the Period IV occupation (i.e. IVb), it was necessary to extend or strengthen the crannog, so sand, stones, vegetation and other materials were piled against the oak revetment and piles on the southwest side of the crannog. The soils were of a sooty, black texture and the Period IVb phase was sterile of artefacts. Finds from the Period IVa occupation included stone hammerstones, whetstones, flint scrapers, flakes, spindle whorls, discs and 1 rotary quern. There were also 2 iron pins, 2 iron ferrules, 3 iron knives, nails and a staple. Raftery also mentions a 'hoard consisting of a rotary quern, an iron horse-bit and a wooden pin', potentially a deliberate deposit. There were bone pins, antler handles, and wooden stave-built and lathe-turned wooden vessels, as well as a clay bead. There was also clay mould fragments for casting copper-alloy rings. Period IV occupation was ended by a lake flood which deposited water-washed sands over the site.

*Period V - (seventh to eighth century?)*
The Period V occupation began with the raising of the level of the Period IV surface, with a solid deposit of stone heaped over the whole site, to make a new crannog. This cairn or stone deposit was 1.5m thick, measuring 26m N-S and 20.5m E-W, forming a crannog with oval plan. There was also humus mixed through this cairn. However, the superficial features of the Period V occupation had all but disappeared. It did have a small stone setting, 10m in length, which may have been the curving arc of a wall, while a small concentration (2m by 1m) of fourteen narrow (5cm diam.) stakes may have formed some structure. A layer of clay and ash, speckled with charcoal, could have been a floor. The raising of a stone cairn over the crannogs in Lough Gara was also carried out on other sites, and at the small crannog at

Sroove, it dated to between the seventh and the tenth centuries AD. The Period V finds included the stone axes, pebbles, chert thumb-scrapers, hollow-scrapers, hones, flint strike-a-lights and discs. There were also 2 rotary querns. There were 5 bronze ringed-pins and a bronze strap end. There was an iron socketed spearhead, 1 iron shield-boss, iron knives, nails, san iron sickle. There were bone pins, double-sided combs, spindle whorls and bone and antler handles. Wooden vessels included stave-built buckets, bases, barrel hoops, carved tubs a spoon, a bowl and pins. There was also a glass ring bead and a lead ring-bead. The Period V crannog was then abandoned for a considerable period, allowing the build-up of a turf layer and natural vegetation across the site, forming a 10-15cm depth of dark soil.

*Period VI – (ninth to tenth century AD, or later?)*

The Period VI crannog saw re-occupation of the site after a period of considerable abandonment. The inhabitants of the local area evidently decided to re-use the old crannog site. They extended it by heaping small stones, twigs, peat and grassy sods on the existing mound and beyond it, particularly at the perimeter of its eastern side. Raftery interpreted this as a later crannog which availed of the earlier site as a foundation material. The crannog was supported along its eastern side by a palisade of wooden posts erected in two rows, strengthened on its outer side by a revetting bank of sandy and peaty material that sloped down to the water's edge. This may have been a high palisade, rather than a low revetment, the lines of posts ran for about 31m along the side of the site. The inner row of posts were of oak, the outer row of posts were of birch. The western side of the crannog had been largely washed away by wave erosion. Traces of occupation were meagre, apart from finds of artefacts and a layer of ash and clay on the northeast side of the site. A possible circular house was represented by 7 postholes, a rectangular pit and a layer of flat stones. Finds from Period VI included stone pebbles, flakes, scrapers and chert flakes, as well as whetstones, some with sharpening grooves. There were also stone rotary querns. Other finds included bronze decorated discs, bronze ringed-pins, an iron socketed spearheads, iron knives, iron nails, iron rings, iron slag, bone pins (some with ornamental heads), combs, bone 'spearheads', bone tops, antler pins and handles, wooden staves, bases, binding hoops, wooden beetles. There was also evidence for metalworking in the form of clay crucibles, as well as a glass stud and amber pieces.

*Period VII - (tenth to eleventh centuries AD?)*

The Period VII phase of occupation was the final one on the site. The Period VII phase was scanty and barely traceable. A small area on top of the mound had a thin layer of black soil

199

over it, which was covered by small, angular stones. Thereafter, rising lake levels submerged the crannog under a considerable depth of water, perhaps up to 4m above the site. The Period VII finds included stone axes, hammerstones, hones, chert flakes and stone discs. There were also bronze pennanular rings, bronze discs and pins, iron nails and rods, bone pins and combs, beads and a glass gaming piece.

**Comment**

The interpretation of the chronology, site history and economy of Rathtinaun crannog must await its publication. It was evidently an early medieval crannog that saw considerable change, with repair and reconstruction a long-running theme. However, there were also periods of abandonment, indicated by layers of clean sands and also by occasional deep deposits of natural humus. It is also evident that local communities saw it as a historically important site and there was also on-site continuity, particularly where the hearths were re-used between phases. The architecture of the crannog's palisades also indicates an interest in social display and management of the perception of the island by outsiders. The richest periods of early medieval occupation were the Period III and Period IV phases, when the island's inhabitants access to a range of both luxury or exotic goods, including glass, amber, bronze brooches, discs and pins, as well as iron weaponry (spearheads and shield bosses). There was also some evidence for metalworking (copper-alloys and iron), as well as glass manufacture (iron pans). There is on information on site's economy, as the animal bones from the crannog are not discussed in the archive report. The early medieval crannog at Rathtinaun was probably occupied between the sixth century and the ninth century AD, but there may also have been activity there in the late middle ages.

## Site 11: Sroove, Co. Sligo

### Site description

Sroove crannog, Co. Sligo was a small, multi-phase early medieval crannog, situated on the western shore of Lough Gara, Co. Sligo.[41] It was excavated over several seasons by Christina Fredengren, as part of the Lough Gara Crannogs Research Programme. The crannog was originally located in very shallow water (presently exposed as a water meadow due to modern drainage), on top of an earlier stone causeway. There was also a Bronze Age crannog cairn out in the water, with a similar, probably early medieval crannog, situated directly to the north on the shoreline. The early medieval crannog at Sroove was 15m in diameter, by 1.2m in height. Prior to excavation, it appeared as a cairn of loosely-set angular stones, with some kerbstones and a circle of stones beside it.

In Phase 1 there was stone-built causeway leading out into the lake, 18m in length. The causeway was built over blue lake clays, and a sandy surface produced by trampling lay on its upper surface. There were a few fragments of animal bone (cattle, pig and sheep) from its surface. Its date is unknown.

Phase 2 was an early medieval wooden crannog with a stone causeway, palisade and house. The phase's brushwood floor produced a radiocarbon date of AD 770-970. The site was enclosed within a circular palisade, measuring 17m in diameter, of double and single rows of ash-wood posts driven to a depth of 40cm into the clay. There was a possible rectangular jetty at the north side of the crannog. After the construction of the palisade, an oval to rectangular house with rounded corners was built on the crannog's surface. This house measured 6.5m by 8m internally, and was defined by closely-spaced posts and was protected by stones on the lake side. The house's floor was a thick (20cm) layer of hazel brushwood, intermixed with clay. The floor produced evidence for blackberries, raspberries and elder berries (suggesting a summer occupation) and grain (4 types), although there was relatively little evidence for animal bone. There were 1511 pieces of bone (8.82% of site total), representing at least 4 cattle (2 adults, 2 juveniles), 4 sheep/goat, 3 pig, 1 young horse, 1 deer. There was a possible entrance (1m wide) at the southwest wall of the house, effectively hidden from view from the probable crannog entrance (at the causeway). A possible hearth was represented by a fire-reddened stone at the centre of the house. Outside the house, the

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[41] Christina Fredengren, *Crannogs: A study of people's interaction with lakes, with particular reference to Lough Gara in the north-west of Ireland*, (Bray, 2002), pp 223-46; Christina Fredengren,

201

space between it and the palisade was narrow. Finds from phase 2 included a bone pin (found in stone packing at the house wall), a thumb-scraper of flint (a probable Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age type) near a post and a black chert arrowhead found in floor clays. These objects were probably carried onto the site.

Phase 3 was a stony-surfaced crannog, with radiocarbon dates from AD 600-900. The crannog surface was rebuilt with a floor of flagstones and smaller boulders, in 2-3 layers, with an outer deck of timbers laid around the edges of the site. Although there was no clear structural evidence for a house, palaeoecological and other studies suggest that there was a house on this floor. The hearth was re-used, suggesting a strong symbolic link with the previous phase's house. The palisade may have been pulled up towards the end of this phase. There were also large amounts of animal bone found, particularly in front of the door of the house and to the left towards the lake. This comprised a major proportion of the site's bone assemblage (56%), representing the remains of at least 16 cattle, 12 pig, 8 sheep, 6 horse, 1 deer, 1 wild duck, 1 hare. Finds from inside the house in this phase are more representative of personal possessions, including a lignite bracelet, a comb fragment from near the fireplace, bone beads, as well as iron nails and a bone pin towards the back of the house. There was also a small bone needle and knife found at the back of the house. There were also finds from outside the house, including iron nails, the head of a ringed pin and bronze studs from a leather strap.

Phase 4 was an open stony platform devoted to iron working, with radiocarbon dates between AD 600-900. The site had a uniform floor of stone and bone, and was covered with small, shattered and fire-cracked stones (10cm thick). The stones were mixed with animal bones, suggesting that this was a deliberate floor deposit. There was no house on the platform, which was probably open to the air. There was no palisade, suggesting a decreasing role of the island's boundary. There was a bowl-shaped depression in the southwest corner of the crannog, possibly in origins a furnace for iron-working, set in a floor of fire-cracked stones. There was some iron slag in this area, although there were not large amounts. A heavy stone may have been used as an anvil. There were deposits of animal bone all over the site (comprising 30% of the site assemblage), with large amounts comprising a floor at the eastern edge of the crannog. The bone was frequently fragmented, suggesting that it had been walked into the crannog's surface. The Phase 4 burned and unburnt bone

'Lough Gara through time' in *Arch. Ire.* 12, no. 1, (1998), pp 31-3; Christina Fredengren, 'Poor people's crannogs' in *Arch. Ire.*, 15, no. 4, (2001), pp 24-5.

included at least 20 cattle, 9 pig, 7 sheep, 4 horse, 1 deer and 1 dog. Finds from across the site included an antler ring, smooth white stones (possibly used in crafts), a tracked stone (for sharpening pins) and a lignite bracelet in the sand.

Phase 5 was the final phase of occupation in the early Middle Ages, probably no later than AD 1000. A stone cairn was constructed across the site, with angular stones and boulders laid on it, with a mid-cairn on the lakeward site. It is possible that it had a superstructure of planks or that it was unfinished.

Phase 6 sees the abandonment of the site, up to its modern use.

**Comment**

The early medieval crannog at Sroove, Co. Sligo is significant in that it might be interpreted as an ordinary household's dwelling place, although these people were hardly poor, with their access to building materials, meat and artefacts. It enables other small, low-cairn crannogs (such as those at Kiltoom, Lough Derravarragh) to be interpreted as early medieval sites. The site is also significant in the innovative interpretative approaches adopted during the excavation and in subsequent publication, emphasising how people re-interpreted and changed the use of the site across time, shifting from a 'domestic' to an 'industrial' function towards the end of the site.

# Figures from Appendix 3
# Early medieval crannogs

**Fig. 3.1** Plan of Ballinderry crannog No. 2, Co. Offaly (Source: Hencken, 'Ballinderry No. 2', pl. IX).
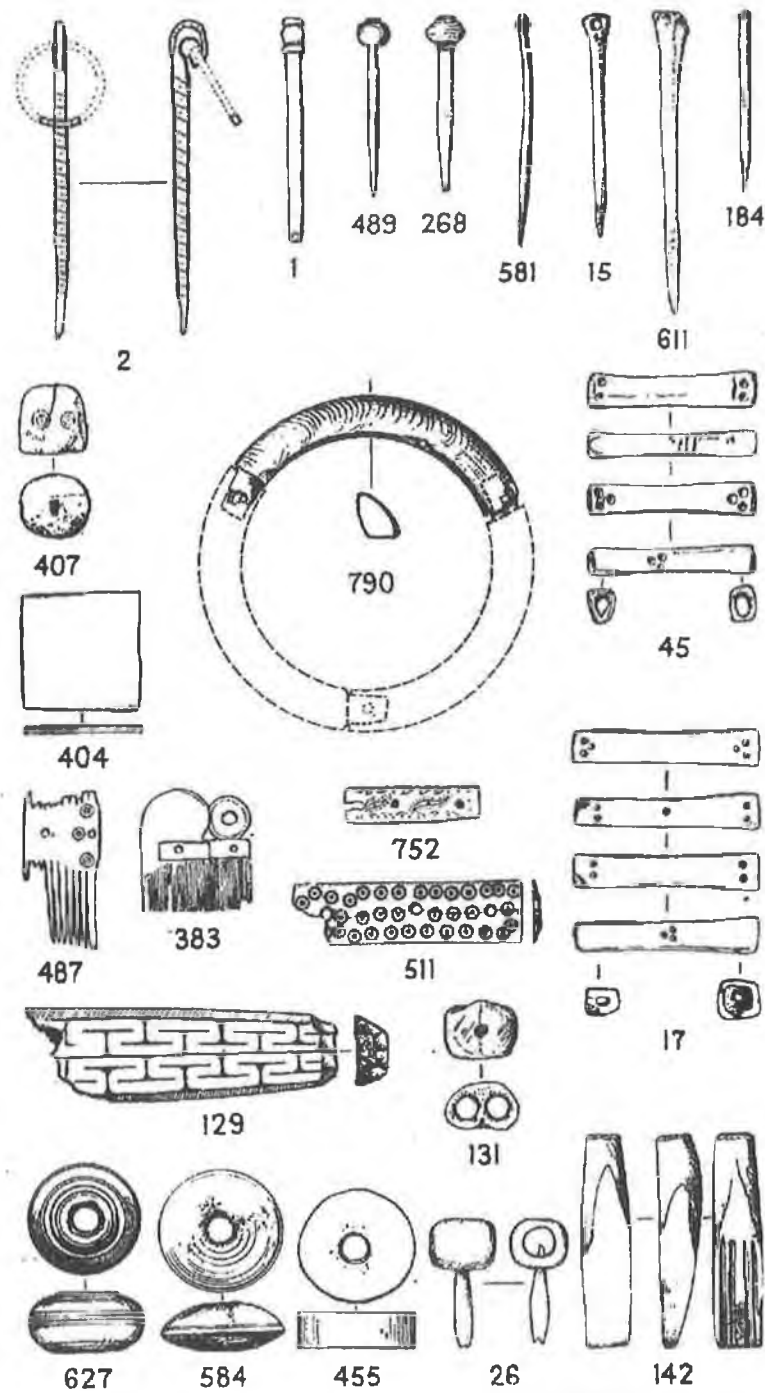
Fɪɢ. 22.—Early Christian Objects of Bone, etc. 1, 2, 15, 184, 268, 489, 581, 611, Bone Pins. 407, Gaming Piece. 404, Bone Square. 790, Boar Tusk Bracelet. 383, 487, 511, 752, Parts of Bone Combs. 17, 45, Bone Dice. 129, Decorated Bone. 455, 584, 627, Bone Spindle-whorls. 26, 131, Bone Cylinders. 142, Bone Wedge. (129, ½; others ⅓).

**Fig. 3.2** Early medieval bone objects (including bone pins, gaming pieces, bone disc, bone combs and bone spindle whorls) recovered from Ballinderry crannog No. 2, Co. Offaly. These ordinary objects testify to such diverse activities as personal grooming, recreation and weaving, all part of ordinary life on these islands (Source: Hencken, 'Ballinderry No. 2', Fig. 22).

**Fig. 3.3** Aerial photograph of early medieval crannog of Clea Lakes, Co. Down, the small island in the middle view. In the 1940s and 1950s, archaeological surveys in Northern Ireland gradually introduced the idea of studying such sites within their broader landscapes (Source: Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography, CUCAP ADK 93).
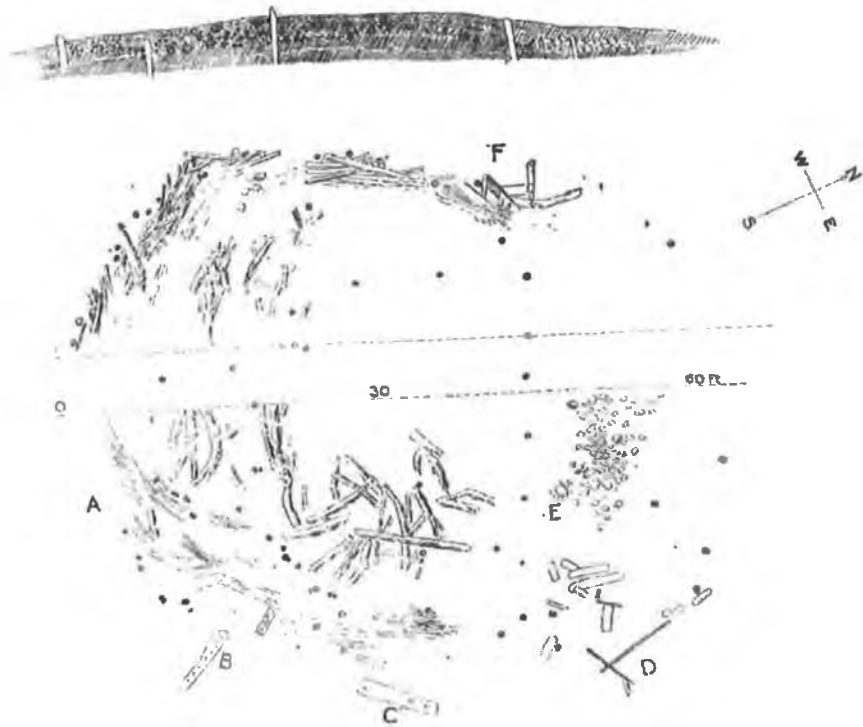
Fig. 3.4 Plan of Craigywarren crannog, Co. Antrim.
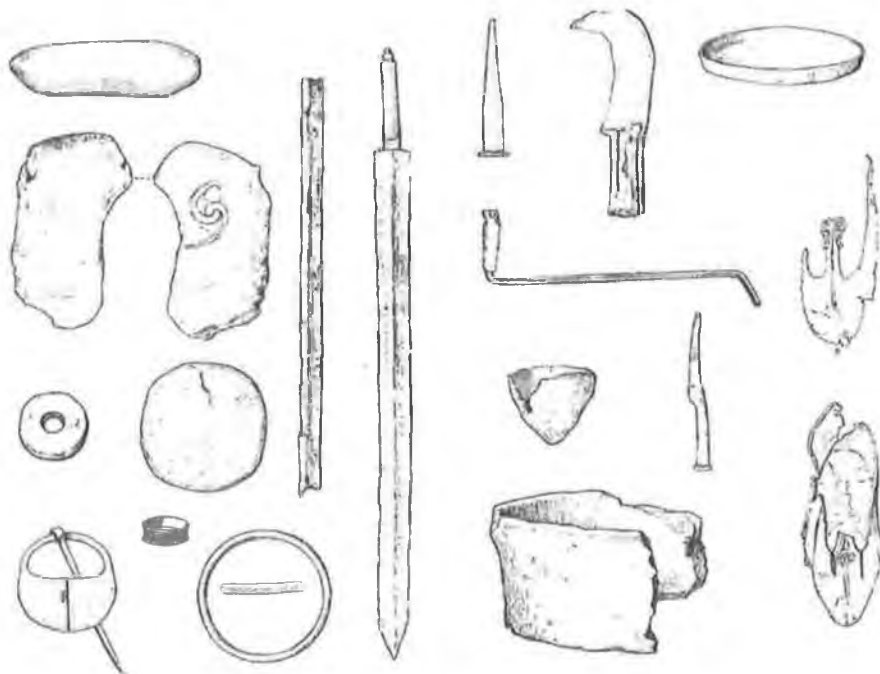


Fig. 3.5 Finds from Craigywarren crannog, Co. Antrim.

**Fig. 3.6** Plan of Lagore crannog, Co. Meath
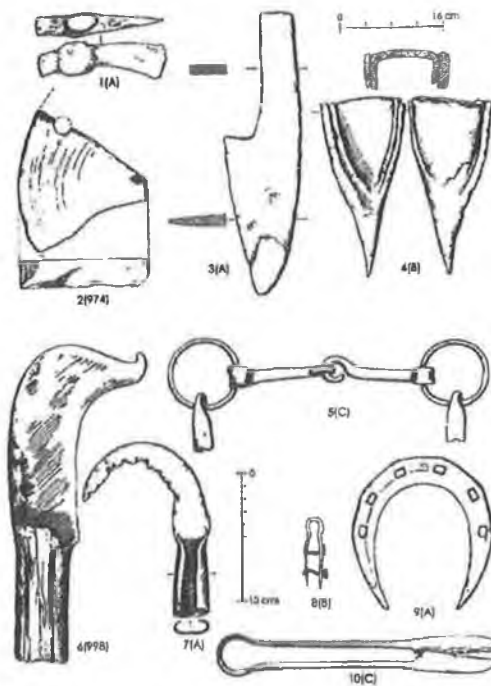


Farming equipment (from Hencken 1950)

**Fig. 3.7** Finds from Lagore crannog, Co. Meath.

209
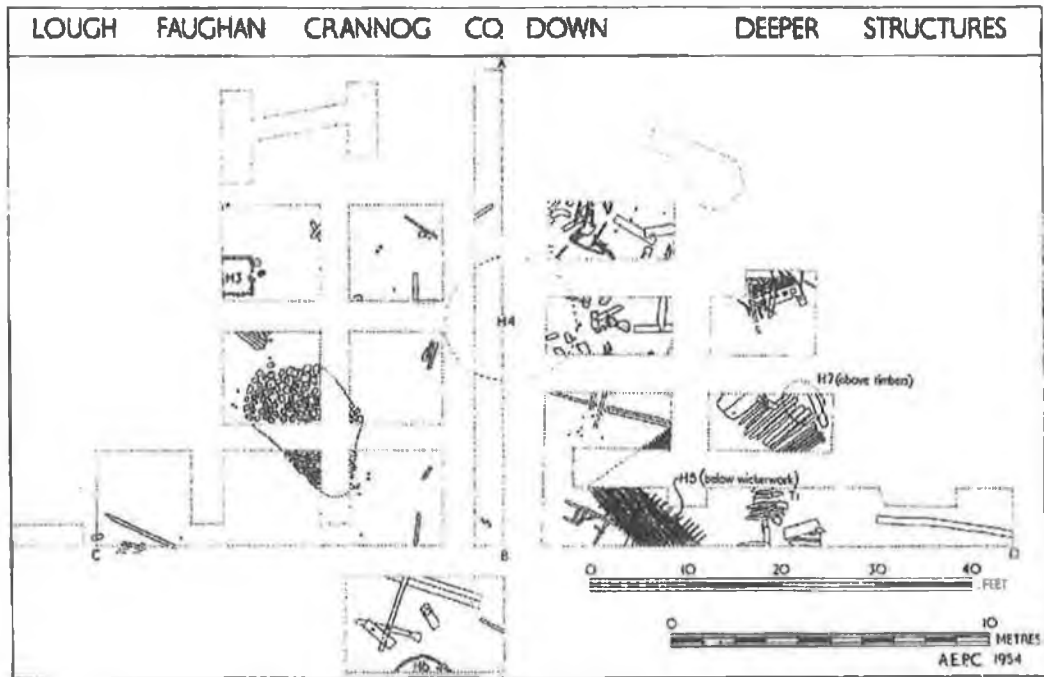
FIG. 3.  Deeper structures in the crannog. Hearths indicated as H3, H4, etc.

**Fig. 3.8** Plan of Lough Faughan crannog, Co. Down
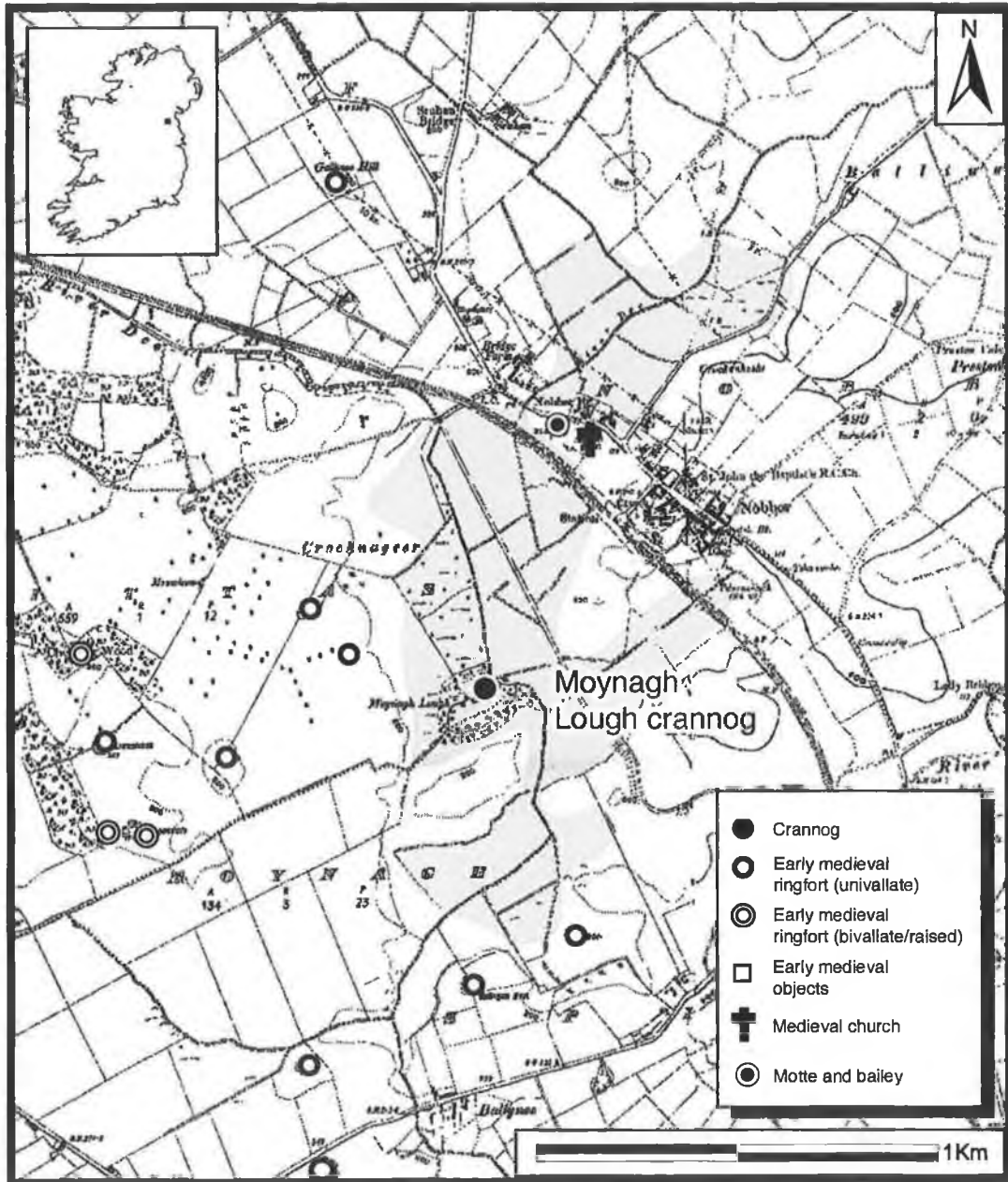
Fig. 3.9 Map showing location of early medieval crannog at Moynagh Lough, Nobber, Co. Meath.
The lake was drained in the nineteenth century, when the site was first discovered. John Bradley's
archaeological excavations have revealed that the site was occupied in the Mesolithic, Neolithic,
Bronze Age and early Middle Ages. The early medieval crannog (6th-9th century AD) was probably
a lordly site of the Mugdorne and is overlooked by raised and bivallate ringforts on the hilltop, and by
smaller univallate ringforts around the lakeshore, probably reflecting complex social and
economic ties within this local landscape (after Bradley, Excavations at Moynagh Lough, 1991).

Fig. 31. Early Christian round house: personal objects.

**Fig. 3.10 Selection of personal objects recovered from floor deposits of mid-eighth century crannog on Moynagh Lough, Co. Meath.**

# Abbreviations

This list of abbreviations has been compiled using the conventions and guidelines recommended by T.W. Moody in his 'Rules for contributors (2nd revised ed.)' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xix, no. 76 (Sept. 1975), pp 467-79.

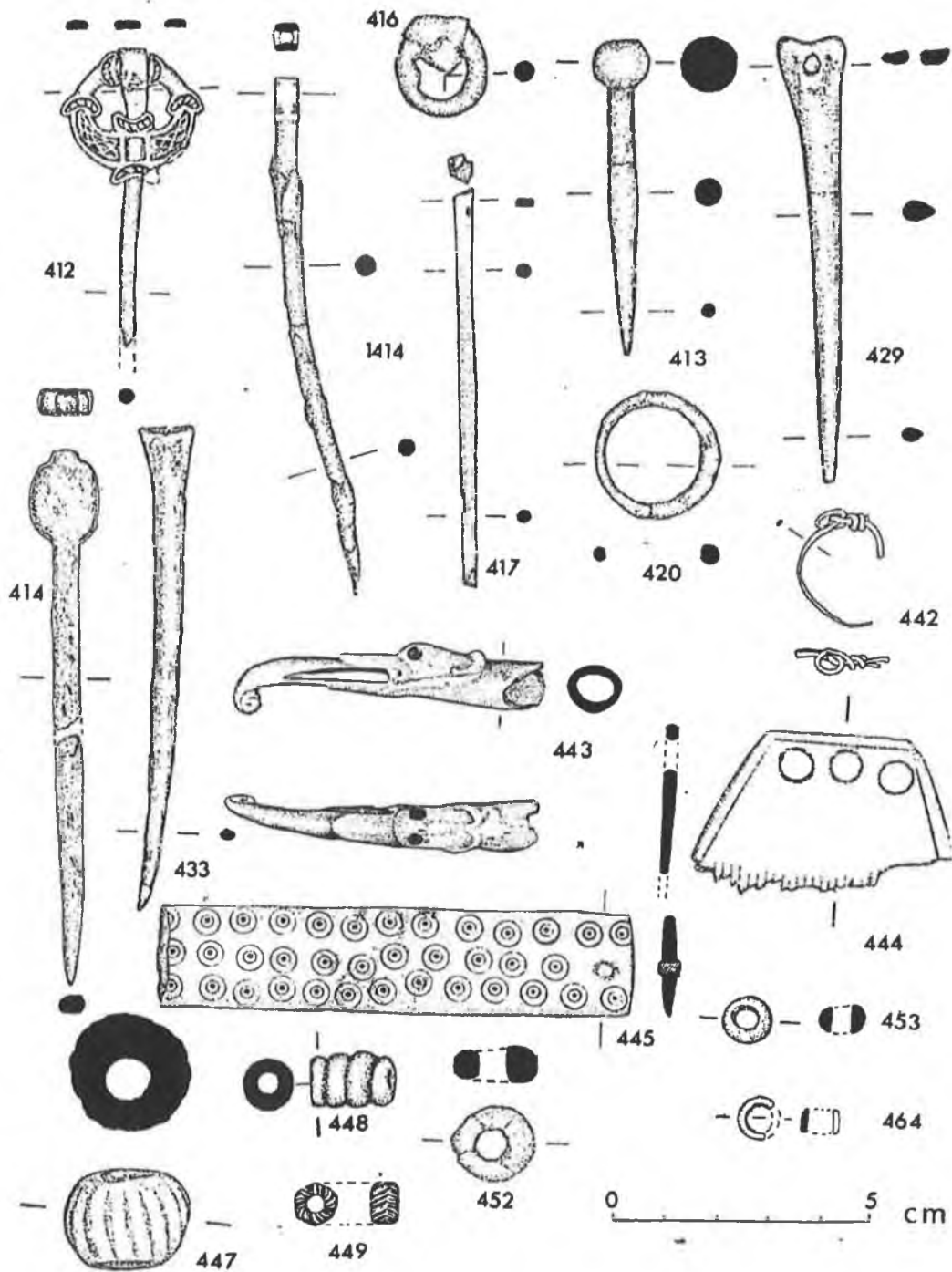| | |
|---|---|
| *A.F.M.* | *Annála ríoghachta Éireann: Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the earliest period to the year 1616*, ed. and trans. John O'Donovan (7 vols, Dublin, 1851; reprint, New York, 1966). |
| *A.L.C.* | *The Annals of Loch Cé*: a chronicle of Irish affairs, 1014-1690, ed. W. M. Hennessy (2 vols, London 1871). |
| *A.U.* | *The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)*, pt I, text and translation, ed. Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983). |
| *Ann. Clon.* | *The Annals of Clonmacnoise, being annals of Ireland from the earliest period to A.D. 1408, translated into English, A.D. 1627, by Conall Mageoghagan*, ed. Denis Murphy (R.S.A.I, Dublin, 1896). |
| *Ann. Conn.* | *Annála Connacht, ... (A.D. 1224-1544)*, ed. A. M. Freeman (D.I.A.S., 1944). |
| *Ann. Inisf.* | *The Annals of Inisfallen (MS Rawlinson B 503)*, ed. and trans. Seán Mac Airt (D.I.A.S., 1951) |
| *Ann. Tig.* | 'The Annals of Tigernach', ed. Whitley Stokes, in *Rev. Celt.*, xvi-xciii (1895-7); reprinted, 2 vols, Felinfach, 1993. |
| *Acta Archaeologica* | *Acta Archaeologica* (Copenhagen, 1930 - ) |
| *Antiquaries Journal* | *Antiquaries Journal: being the journal of the Society of Antiquaries of London* (London, 1921) |
| *Archaeologia* | *Archaeologia; or miscellaneous tracts relating to antiquity* (London, 1804- ) |
| *Arch. Ire.* | *Archaeology Ireland* (Bray, 1987-) |
| *Arch. Jn.* | *Archaeological Journal* (London, 1844-) |
| A.S.I. | Archaeological Survey of Ireland (National Monuments Section, Dept. of Environment and Local Government). |
| B.A.R. | British Archaeological Reports |
| *Béaloideas* | *Béaloideas: the journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society* (Dublin, 1927) |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* | *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* (Cardiff, 40 vols, 1921-1993) |
| *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* | *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* (Leamington Spa, 1981- ) |
| *Celtica* | *Celtica* (Dublin, 1950-) |
| *Chron. Scot.* | *Chronicum Scotorum: a chronicle of Irish affairs ... to 1135, and supplement ... 1141-1150*, ed. W. M. Hennessy (London, 1866). |
| *C.I.H.* | *Corpus Iuris Hibernii.* Ed. Daniel Binchy, vols. i-vi. (Dublin, 1978). |
| *Louth Arch. Soc. Jn.* | *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society* (Dundalk, 1904-) |
| *Cork Hist. Soc. Jn.* | *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* (Cork, 1892-) |
| *Chron. Scot.* | *Chronicum Scotorum: a chronicle of Irish affairs... to A.D. 1135, with a supplement... 1141 to 1150.* |
| C.U.C.A.P. | Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography |
| diam. | diameter |
| D.I.A.S. | Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies |
| ed. | editor(s); edition, edited by |
| *Éigse* | *Éigse: a journal of Irish studies* (Dublin, 1939- ) |
| *Eriú* | *Eriú: founded as the journal of the School of Irish Learning* (Dublin, 1904- ). |
| *Études Celtiques* | *Études Celtiques* (Paris, 1936- ) |
| *Galway. Archaeol Hist. Soc. Jn.* | *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* (Galway, 1900- ) |
| Hogan, *Onomasticon* Goedelicum | Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum locorum et tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae* (R.I.A. Dublin, 1910). |
| *I.E.R.* | *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (171 vols, Dublin, 1864-1968) |
| *I.H.S.* | *Irish Historical Studies: the joint journal of the Irish Historical Society and the Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies* (Dublin, 1938- ) |

214

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ir. Archaeol Research Forum* | *Irish Archaeological Research Forum* |
| *I.J.N.A.U.E.* | *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* (London, 1988- ) |
| *Jn. Ir. Archaeol* | *Journal of Irish Archaeology* (Dublin, 1983- ) |
| L. | length |
| *Medieval Archaeology* | *Medieval Archaeology* (London, 1957 -) |
| n.d. | no date |
| N.G.R. | National Grid Reference |
| *N. Munster Antiq. Jn* | *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* (Limerick, 1936-). |
| No vol, no. | no volume number |
| N.U.I. | National University of Ireland |
| N.M.I. | National Museum of Ireland (Dept. Of Antiquities, Kildare Street, Dublin 2). |
| *Peritia* | *Peritia: journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* (Turnhout, Belgium, 1982- ) |
| *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* | *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* (Harvard, 1981 - ) |
| *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* | *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* (London, 1935- ) |
| *Revue Celtique* | *Revue Celtique* (Paris and London, 1870-1924, 41 vols) |
| R.I.A. | Royal Irish Academy |
| *R.I.A. Proc.* | *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin, 1836-) |
| *R.I.A. Trans.* | *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* (33 vols, Dublin, 1786-1907) |
| *Ríocht na Midhe* | *Ríocht na Midhe: records of the Meath Archaeological and Historical Society* (Drogheda, [1955]-) |
| R.M.P. | Record of Monuments and Places |
| *Rosc. Archaeol. Hist. Jn.* | *Journal of the Roscommon Archaeological and Historical Society* |
| R.S.A.I. | Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland |
| *R.S.A.I. Jn.* | *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (Dublin 1892-) |

| | |
|---|---|
| *S.A.S. Proc.* | *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1851- ) |
| *Scott. Arch. Review* | *Scottish Archaeological Review* |
| S.M.R. | Sites and Monuments Record |
| Ser. | Series |
| *Studia Celtica* | *Studia Celtica* (Cardiff, 1966- ) |
| *Studia Hibernica* | *Studia Hibernica* (Dublin, 1961- ) |
| Supp. | Supplement, supplementary |
| T.C.D. | Trinity College, Dublin |
| *The Irish Builder* | *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (Dublin, 1867-) |
| Trans. | Translation; translated by |
| U.C.D. | University College, Dublin |
| *U.J.A.* | Ulster Journal of Archaeology (Belfast, 3 series: 1853-62, 9 vols; 1895-1911, 17 vols; 1938-) |
| W. | width |
| Z.C.P. | *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* (Halle, 1896-1943, 23 vols; Tübingen, 1953-) |

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This bibliography has been compiled after the recommendation of T.W. Moody in his 'Rules for contributors (2nd revised ed.)' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xix, no. 76 (Sept. 1975), pp 467-79, at p. 477, and thereafter following the conventions used in *A New History of Ireland*. (e.g. P.W.A. Asplin. Bibliography. In Art Cosgrove. *A New History of Ireland. Vol II: Medieval Ireland 1169-1534*. (Oxford, 1987, reprint 1993), pp 827-964.

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Environment and Heritage Service, Dept. of Environment, Northern Ireland
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### Dublin

National Museum of Ireland
N.M.I.. Top. Files, Co. Westmeath
= National Museum of Ireland Topographical Files
Individual files on objects handed in to Dept. of Antiquities, NMI, Kildare St., Dublin. Archived under townland and county names, with each find given a unique museum accession number (e.g. N.M.I. Top. Files, Derrya townland, Co. Westmeath: 1968:224.)

Archaeological Survey of Ireland
A.S.I. RMP Westmeath files
= Archaeological Survey of Ireland: Register of Monuments and Places for Co. Westmeath, archived in the National Monuments Service, Dúchas – the Heritage Service, 51 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.
The Archaeological Survey of Ireland archives provide information on all known (i.e. recorded) Monuments and Places. Each site is held within an individual RMP file, designated under its own unique RMP number and townland name (e.g. A.S.I. Files, Westmeath RMP WM 7:47, Ballinphort.). The files generally include a limited site description, sketches, plans and photographs and photocopies of relevant literature, newspaper cuttings, etc.

The Westmeath RMP *list* is also provided in a limited circulation report (i.e. National Monuments and Historic Properties Service, 'Record of Monuments and Places as established under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994: County Westmeath', Unpublished Report, Dublin, 1996), as a ring-bound volume to be used with annotated Ordnance Survey 6" maps.

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Collection of site plans, section drawings, artifact drawings and manuscript description of structures and site evolution, compiled by the excavtor Joseph Raftery, former Keeper of Antiquities in the National Museum of Ireland.

Dublin: University College, Dublin, Irish Schools Manuscripts Folklore Collection, 1936-37, Dept. of Folklore, UCD
Consulted as microfiches at Westmeath County Library, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, with reference to parishes of Mayne, Multyfarnham, Crookedwood and Coole.

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245

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