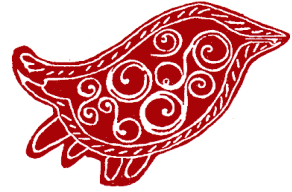


Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society



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Title: The castles of Ballincollig and Carrigrohane, Co. Cork
Author: J. C.
Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, 1910, Vol. 16, No. 85,
page(s) 1-8
Published by the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society
Digital file created: April 11, 2014

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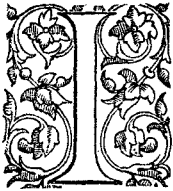
BALLINCOLLIG CASTLE FROM SOUTH-EAST.



BALLINCOLLIG CASTLE FROM SOUTH.

Journal of the Cork Historical and Archæological Society.

The Castles of Ballincollig and Carrigrohane, County Cork.



It is somewhat strange to find that no detailed account, nor even a view of Ballincollig Castle, standing as it does so close to Cork City, has as yet appeared in the "Journal," though it must be said that a brief description of it from the pen of the late John Henry Parker, a distinguished Oxford archæologist, was published in the number for January, 1895.

Ballincollig Castle is very summarily referred to in Dr. Smith's "Cork"; but in "Tuckey's Cork Remembrancer" (1837) there is a fairly good description of it, whilst Windele supplies a rather interesting and later account of it in his "Notices of Cork," first published about seventy years ago.

Tuckey's notice of Ballincollig Castle occurs in his Introductory Essay, p. xix., prefixed to the "Remembrancer"; and forms a part of his interesting general observations therein on the Castles of the County of Cork:—"The lords of both races (i.e., Celtic and Anglo-Norman) were, he writes, actors and abettors in the enormities that were (then) committed. Cattle were the great object of plunder; and as they were almost the only sort of movable property scarcely any other sort of theft was known. To protect their cattle, and probably also that of their tenants, seems to have been a principal object with the lords and gentry. A great castle with its ballium, like those of the Anglo-Normans, would not have answered this purpose, as it would afford refuge only to the cattle of its neighbourhood. Hence we find the whole country studded with castles of a small size. The Barony of Fermoy, formerly the property of the Lords Roche, is very full of them; and this was probably the reason why Sidney found it, in the reign of Elizabeth, the best inhabited part of the County Cork. These castles were said to be so placed that each is visible to those near it, forming a chain of signal towers. We have ourselves in passing through that district observed three to which this remark is applicable.

"The Castle of Ballincollig, about five miles westward of the City of Cork, is an interesting specimen of such castles. The ballium or bawn is of an irregular shape, adapted to the rocky elevation on which it stands; and consists of a strong wall nearly five feet thick and about fifteen feet high, enclosing a space of from seventy to a hundred feet across. The space on the top was defended by a parapet; there were flights of steps leading to it in different places, the wall near these steps being much thicker than elsewhere, to afford room to those passing on the top. At

I

the bottom of the parapet are small holes for shooting through, and larger ones nearer the ground. The use of flanking towers seems to have been hardly known to the builder; there is, however, one at the south-east corner, but weak and ill-adapted to the purpose, and a smaller one near it, whose use is not easily conjectured.

“In the north wall, which is on the top of a rock, are three handsome high cut-stone loopholes, one of them double. In his ‘Views in Ireland,’ Mr. R. O’Callaghan Newenham represents them as Gothic windows, and he also represents a high buttress at one of the corners of the tower, which never had existence. Through these loopholes it was probably intended to enjoy the prospect during intervals of quiet, as well as to annoy besiegers at other times. It is remarkable that this wall is so constructed in its whole extent as to incline and overhang somewhat towards the inside. The area within is in its natural state, rocky and very uneven.

“The tower or keep (if it deserves the name) stands at one side within the enclosure, and was built without any view towards strength, the chief reliance seeming to be placed in the strength of the outer wall. It is nearly square, about sixty feet high, and about fifteen in diameter. All the floors are of stone on solid arches as a preservative against fire. In order to support them the two walls on which they rest are much thicker than the others. The staircase is so narrow that it resembles a chimney; and the rooms are so small that it is hard to conceive how persons of any consideration could endure such a residence. They are wholly destitute of windows, even to the top, and the extremely narrow loopholes are hardly sufficient to admit air enough for breathing. There was evidently, however, a hexagonal structure near the tower, partly formed by a projection of the wall of the ballium, and furnished with a window. This may have been the hall where guests were entertained. A large mass of the wall of this latter building, about five or six feet thick, was lately overthrown, evidently by gunpowder. Other parts also were injured; but it was found more advantageous to procure stones from the adjacent rock.”

Barrett’s Castle of Ballincollig, Windele tells us, stands about a mile south-west of the village (near which there is now a station on the Macroom line, $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Cork).

“This building forms an irregular quadrangle. It is based on an isolated limestone rock, which rises to no very considerable height, in the midst of a gently undulated plain; and consists of a large fortified bawn or enclosure and a slender keep or tower about forty feet in height. This latter stands at the east side of the bawn; and is vaulted inside. The chambers are of uncommonly small dimensions, measuring in length five feet, and breadth four feet, each occupying the entire internal space. The ascent is by a narrow and difficult stone staircase, which, as it approaches the upper apartment, becomes spiral and more inconvenient. Of the enclosing walls of the bawn, that to the south was defended by a tower in the centre and another at the south-east angle¹—the latter being vaulted and lit by loops. A portion of the north wall is perforated by a range of

¹ In his account of Castlemore by Moviddy (“Journal” for October, 1892), the late Mr. H. W. Gillman notes that in the south-eastern tower at Ballincollig are two loopholes exactly similar in form and position to two in Castlemore by Moviddy; and this is not the only point in which Ballincollig resembles that of Castlemore by Moviddy.



TOWER OF KELP.
BALLINACOLLIG CASTLE.



NORTH WALL OF BAWN—INTERIOR.
BALLINACOLLIG CASTLE.

four windows of irregular dimensions; two are double-headed lancets, one a single lancet, and the fourth an oblong loop. The buildings which these lit have disappeared. In the bawn or area the cattle of the chief, as well as of the neighbouring serfs, were kept in times of danger, when invasion or a creach² or foray was threatened. Beneath the keep a dark natural cavern runs some distance in the solid rock; and around the whole lay a deep moat, part of which, much choked up, remains at the west side. This castle is said to have been built in the reign of Edward the Third. In 1612 Andrew Barrett was one of the County representatives in Parliament. In May, 1642, this castle was taken by the Lord President's forces, probably about the same time that Barrett's other castle, Carrigrohane, was taken. In the war of the Revolution it was garrisoned for James the Second.

In Lewis's "Topographical Dictionary of Ireland" it is stated that in the May of 1641 this castle was in the possession of the insurgents, who were dispossessed by Cromwell in 1645; and that after the flight of James II. in 1689 it fell into decay.

As Parker's description of this castle deals with it from another and later point of view, showing what its appearance was exactly fifty years ago, it is here reproduced:—

"Ballincollig, near Cork, appears to be of the 13th century. It consists of a very tall square tower on the summit of a rock, with considerable remains of the wall of enceinte (or enclosure), which has bastions and other buildings attached to it, enclosing the bailey. The ground room is vaulted, and had no entrance excepting by a trapdoor from above, so that it was probably the prison. The room on the first floor is also vaulted; the space within the walls is only ten feet by eight; the entrance was into this room with a sloping road up to it, carried on arches. The windows are all small single lights, mostly with pointed heads, some square-headed; one has a trefoil head, with various incised ornaments on the surface over it, apparently a stone taken from some ancient building and used again. The second storey is vaulted, and has seats in the jamb of the windows, a drain from a lavatory, and a small square cupboard in the wall over it. The upper room or chief chamber has windows on all four sides, with a socket for the iron rod of the casement to work upon. There is no fireplace in the whole tower, which was probably more of a Keep for

² CREACH.—In connection with one of these creachs there is a tragic story narrated by Windele in one of his manuscript volumes, now in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, whence the present writer has extracted it:—"The lady of Mac Carthy, lord of Kilcrea, a Geraldine of Leinster, lent Lieutenant Barrett, of Ballincolly, a body of men to go on a 'creach' to the Co. Limerick, he engaging for their safe return, and depositing the titles to his estate in her hands. The 'creach' over, he sent home the men, escorted by his trustiest captain, and arriving in view of the Abbey he left them, deeming all safe, after which the Lady MacCarthy had them set on and all slain. A wail came from her next day to Ballincolly for her men, and as they were no more this served as a pretext to withhold the deeds. The villainy, however, was too flagrant. The Guardian of Kilcrea Abbey adjudged her delict, and pronounced the malediction of the Church on her. The malison was productive. The curse of Cromwell followed, and her castle was battered and taken. In the disguise and rags of a beggar she escaped from the beleaguered tower and wandered in a state of pregnancy and want towards Dublin, in search of her kindred. Near that city, overcome with fatigue and suffering, she lay in at a roadside hut; but her statement respecting her quality was long disbelieved, nor could she prevail on anyone to convey a message to her people, until a more credulous physician, who succoured her with his leechcraft, undertook to do so. Upon its delivery she was waited on and borne away."

the last defence than a usual habitation; it has no bartizans or projections of any kind. The bastion towers in the wall of enceinte seem to be of the 15th century; the wall itself is very thick and has loopholes, on one side there are windows of two lights, as if of a hall, and there are a fire-place and chimney. This is part of the work of the 15th century, and seems to show that the buildings in the courtyard were inhabited that time."

Ballincollig Castle and Bawn as seen at the present day seem to have altered little or nothing since the time they were described by Windele and Parker. The windows, loopholes, and small circular holes, the southern tower, the site of the hexagonal room mentioned by Tuckey, and the other features specified, can still be easily recognised. The Central Keep, whose slenderness gives it more the appearance of a Franciscan abbey tower than that of a place of defence, looks as if it had received some sort of repairs; and over the window on the east side a shield has been inserted bearing the monogram W, the initial of Wise, the name of the family to whom this Castle now belongs, with the date 1857 placed beneath it.

Ballincollig Castle stands a little to the west of the Railway station, at the south side of the line to Macroom, which passes quite close to the base of the rock on which it is located. The portion of the rock nearest the railway presents a bold and precipitous appearance as seen from beneath it at its north side.

Of the Anglo-Norman Barretts, the founders of Ballincollig and other castles in our County, a good deal has been already written in the "Journal," notably in Colonel Grove-White's contribution in the number for April-June, 1909. Windele supplies a few further particulars respecting them, not, however, in connection with Ballincollig, but in his account of Carrigrohane Castle, which stands much nearer than Ballincollig to Cork City.

Following Windele's example, these and some other Barrett historic items are recorded later on in the subjoined notice of Carrigrohane Castle.

II.

Carrigrohane Castle, writes Windele, is on the south side of the Lee, and proudly, overhangs a steep precipitous crag,³ rising almost perpendicularly above the margin of the river.

"Seen from the western side, the Castle is a picturesque old structure. It consists of two ruinous piles of different eras, styles, and heights. That to the west is the lowest and the most ancient, it being noticed as the Castle of Corgroha in Edward the Fourth's Charter to Cork City, 1464, and as the boundary of the City Liberties.

"Its walls are massive, enclosing narrow and gloomy chambers, one or two of them being vaulted dungeons beneath the present surface of the adjacent ground. The larger building is the more modern, belonging to the style originating in the Tudor era, and forming the medium between the ancient castle and the modern mansion. Its form is oblong. The

³ Right beneath this rock there is now a station on the Muskerry Light Railway.



RUINS OF OLD CASTLE—STEPS IN WALL,
CARRIGROHANE CASTLE.



CARRIGROHANE CASTLE.

roof, floors and stairs are gone; and but three of the original four high-pitched gables, terminating in chimney shafts, remain. Machicolated projections occupy the midways of the north-east and south-west angles. The entire building was divided into three storeys, each floor being lighted through the north and south walls by four windows at each side, over the exteriors of which the Tudor label mouldings remain, whilst the mullions and greater part of the stone frame works have been removed. The door is in the south wall.

"The MacCarthys, according to tradition, were the founders of this Castle, doubtless, the older portion. Some derive its name from Rath-neach, the Irish word for fern, with which the steep abounds; whilst others derive it from the name of the founder, Teig Tumultaig MacCarthy, surnamed Rodhuin or Rohan, i.e., the nobleman.⁴ Of this personage all that is known is that in one of those changes of fortune so frequent in the Middle Ages, he found himself confined a prisoner within the walls of his own Castle; and that when one of his followers enquired of him under his window how he felt, received in reply the assurance that he was in the last extremity through want of food, fire and clothing—a fate common to captives of that period.

"The Barretts, an old Anglo-Irish family, who gave their name to the adjoining Barony, afterwards possessed this Castle, and probably erected the modern structure. The head of that family, who styled himself 'Chief of his Nacion,' resided principally at Ballincollig, about two miles to the west of Carrigrohane."

From Tuckey's "Cork Remembrancer" we find that in 1317, December 13th, in consequence of the service of Robert Baret against the King's enemies in all the marches under his authority the King granted to his son, William, the arrears of two parts of the lands of Gronagh (sic), in the Co. Cork, which had come into the hands of the King.

In 1359 the King having heard that William, son of John de Barry, and Milo, son of Milo de Courcy, had, on account of certain supposed grievances, invaded in a warlike manner the lands of Richard Oge Barrett and others and burnt their houses, commanded them to desist from perpetuating these enormous injuries and to seek for justice from the laws, to which he had promised to submit. A writ was, at the same time, directed to the Sheriff and Conservators of the Peace to seize those persons who had transgressed.

Commenting on this incident in the Introduction to his "Remembrancer," page xiii., Tuckey writes: "It was optional with the great men (of that time) whether they would be subjects of the King or not. If they formally agreed to submit to the authority of the law, they received such protection as the Government could afford; otherwise they were left to defend themselves as best they could. Richard Oge Barrett having agreed before the Lord Justice to abide by the law, and his enemies having, notwithstanding, taken the law into their own hands and assailed him with force, a mandate was issued by the Government ordering them to forbear, pro-

⁴ As all the old inhabitants of Cork pronounce the name of this Castle as if spelled Carrigrawn, it would appear as if the first derivation from Rahan (fern) was the correct one. Rohan is a surname still existing in the Co. Cork.

vided Barrett was ready to abide by the law, as he had promised. This plainly implied a permission to right themselves by force, in case Barrett should be as lawless as themselves."

1377. On the 6th of June this year 100 shillings was paid to Edward Perys as a recompense for a horse of the value of 20 marks which had been killed in an expedition against the Barretts, rebels in the County Cork.

On February 3rd, 1381, John Bryt and Richard Wynchedon were appointed to receive from Sir Philip Fitzwilliam De Barry and to dispose of for the advantage of the King 1,000 cows, which he was to receive from Richard Oge Barrett and William, his son, and others, as fines for different seditions. On the 9th of the same month the Mayor and Bailiffs of Cork were commanded to provide a sufficient number of horses to bring Richard Oge Barrett and others of the Barretts, who were in custody as hostages, to Waterford." What their ultimate fate was "Tuckey's Re-brancer" does not specify.

On the 30th of January, 1593-4, as recorded in the Egmont MSS. Report, vol. i., page 25, Katherine Barrett of Ballincollig having brought her case before the court at Dublin Castle against Cormock MacDermot MacCarthy, of Blarney Castle, Cormock was condemned to pay a fine of £10 with the plaintiff's charges, and to be imprisoned for fifteen days, for having besieged Castle ny hinch and threatened to cut off the heads of Katherine's servants if they would not yield the same, and prevented all egress and ingress for the space of two days.

The same Egmont MSS., vol. i., page 27, shows that the Barretts were quarrelling fiercely amongst themselves at this period, judging from the following paragraphs:—

"1594 [5], January 29. Edmund Barrett, of Mogolly (Mogeely?), Co. Cork, versus Sir Fyneen O'Driscoll, Sheriff of the County. Sir Fyneen O'Driscoll to pay a fine of £10, and to be imprisoned during pleasure, for 'extorciously' refusing to execute a writ of restitution against Andrew Barrett and others, who had seized the Castle and bawne of Ballencolly, the said writ being issued by Sir Thomas Norrrys, Knight, Vice-President of Munster, and delivered him by the plaintiff, until the said plaintiff delivered him 'two silver cups in pledge of £4 sterling, which being paid, the said Sir Fyneen most cautiously did, nevertheless, omit the execution of the said writ.

"1595, May 23. Edmund Barrett, of Ballencoly, Co. Cork, gent., versus Andrew and William Barrett, Meanis O'Sowlevan (Manus O'Sullivan?), and sixty others. The three defendants named to pay fines of £20, £5, and £3 6s. 8d., respectively, with costs, and to be imprisoned during pleasure, for riotously assaulting the Castle of Ballincoly in July, 1591, when 'with swords, guns, great sledges or hammers, skenes, stones and staves, one holie house then and there standing into to the gate of the said Castle [they] did remove, and then and there the iron grate and partly the wall of the said Castle by the said gate did riotously with a great hammer break, and unto (sic) the said Castle, town and lands did expulse the said Edmund Barrett, and did also levy a great cry, to the disturbance of her Majesty's subjects and to the grievous damage of the said Edmund.'"

Going back to Windele, we find that "Wm. Barrett of Ballincollig, 'a chief of a small country,' who had been in rebellion with the Earl of

Desmond, submitted to the Queen's mercy.⁵ In May, 1614, James the First made a grant by letters patent to Andrew Barrett of Ballincollig of all his estates in the County Cork. This, doubtless, was the Andrew Barrett of Ballincollig who was M.P. for the County in 1613. John Barrett, of Castlemore, was M.P. for Mallow in King James the Second's Parliament in 1689. Colonel John Barrett, another scion of this family, having been attainted at the Revolution for his adhesion to King James, forfeited his estates, and amongst others, the lands thereto belonging near Mallow, which were granted in 1703 to Sir John Meade of Ballintubber. "Tuckey's Remembrancer" mentions that Colonel Barrett's estates consisted of 12,000 acres in the Barony of Barretts, valued at £1,330 17s. 9d., but set at £1,112.⁶

The large number of members of this family indicted of treason, by the Earl of Cork and his sons, at the sessions held at Youghal on the 2nd of August, 1642, and outlawed in the King's Bench, as recorded in the "Council Book of Kinsale," page 329, shows not only how widespread and important they were at this momentous period, but also that they were politically in sympathy with the great majority of their class then in the County Cork. Their names were—Richard Barrett of Ballycoahina, William Barrett of Ballyally, Edmund Barrett of Ballymckow, John Barrett of Pluckans, Redmond FitzJames Barrett of Ballyshonyn East, James Oge Barrett of Carryleagh, James Barrett of Gurtine, Will. Barrett of Pluckanes, Richard Barrett of Curryleagh, Richard Barrett of Faha, Robert Barrett of Lissing, John Barrett of Ballyshonyne West, William Barrett of Knockanetindery, John FitzWilliam Barrett of Ballencolly (Ballincollig), and John Barrett of Ballyally, each of whom has got the affix gent., meaning gentleman, after his name. So far back as 1394, as recorded in the same "Council Book," page xii., the King commanded Philip Barry and Patrick Galvy of Kinsale to keep Andrew Baret, a felon and rebel, in custody, so that he should not escape without special order.

In the 17th century we find Sir Andrew Barrett⁷ named as one of the Co. Cork magnates, recorded by Bishop Bennett (in vol. i. of "Brady's Records"), as having laid hands on the Cloyne See lands at Inniscarra and Aghabullogue, for whose restitution Bishop Synge applied to the Council.

⁵ There appears to have been a later rebel, William Barrett, who similarly repented of his disloyalty, as shown by the memorandum on page 319 of the Council Book of Kinsale, that William Barrett, of Malacolocke (Ballincollig ?), Co. Cork, Esq.; Ellen Barrett, als. Carty, his wife; John Barrett, son of said W. and E.; Ellen and Ellyner Barrett, daughters of the said W., appeared before us, Sir Francis Arger, Knight, Master of the Rolls, and Thomas Owen, Justices of Assize, Co. Cork, holden before us at the King's Old Castle, March 10th, 13th of James I., and found sureties to keep His Majesty's gracious pardon, granted at Dublin, xi. February, in the year aforesaid.

⁶ When the "Breda" man-of-war blew up in Cork Harbour on the 12th of October, 1691, with 160 Irish troops on board, bound for France to join King Louis's army, there were some who asserted that this was done by Colonel Barrett on purpose; but, adds Gibson (page 162, "History of Cork"), of this there was no proof whatever, except that he and his servant escaped. The chief representative of this house, when Windele wrote, was Mr. Edward Barrett, of Carrigbuee, near Inchigeela.

⁷ Of Sir A. Barrett, Andrew and John Barrett, all three M.P.'s, information is given in Mr. C. M. Tenison's valuable paper in the "Journal" for January and February, 1895.

In his "Old Countess of Desmond," 1861, the late Mr. Richard Sainthill mentions, page 55, that he possessed a portrait of Oliver Cromwell which had descended to the gentleman who sold it to him from the Colonel Barrachia Wallis, who had wrested the Castle and lands of Carrigrohane from the Barretts of that day.

“In the great rebellion,” continues Windele, “Carrigrohane Castle was ruined. It was afterwards held for a season by a Captain Cope, who headed a gang of freebooters and committed much mischief in the neighbourhood. A noble sycamore stood near the door in the 18th century, and was much admired by strangers who visited that place. It was cut down somewhat over thirty years (now a century) ago. A small plantation has since been made near the Castle. At the foot of the limestone rock which constitutes the base of the building is a cave which the peasantry say extends several miles underground, and communicates with the Ovens caverns, four miles distant. Within one or two fields south of the Castle is the small church of Killogrohan, the oldest gravestone in whose burial ground is that of Cyprian Walker, bearing the date 1628. There is also a monument to the Murphy family.”

Windele does not recall the fact that the same memorable and distinguished figure in Irish history, Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, who is said to have so unmistakably expressed his hearty hatred of the Barretts and their kind, not, as Smith says, in connection with their Castlemore, near Mallow, but, as Crofton Croker states, with that other Castlemore by Moviddy, then also apparently in their possession in Queen Elizabeth's time, seems to have paid a flying visit to Carrigrohane. This we learn from Sir Henry Power's letter printed in the “Life and Letters of Florence MacCarthy More,” page 234, in which it is stated that the great Northern Chieftain “lodged at Carrigrohan” whilst on his southern campaign in February, 1599, then chiefly waged against David, Lord Barry, the year previous to his final disastrous defeat at Kinsale.

In the year 1649 this Castle was again garrisoned, as there can be little doubt that it was the Calligrohan which Lord Inchiquin then garrisoned, together with Blarney Castle, as recorded in the “Council Book of Youghal,” page liii.

It is rather curious to find that Tuckey's brief notice of Carrigrohane Castle agrees more with the later one from the pen of J. H. Parker, of Oxford, than it does with Windele's more detailed description of it, written but a short time after Tuckey's. On page xxii. of the “Remembrancer” Tuckey merely notes that “Carrigrohan Castle was a large house with four gables and large windows, defended at the top of two of the corners by projections perforated with round holes for small arms.”

Parker's equally brief notice, written in 1859, twenty years after Windele's description of it first appeared, shows that a considerable alterations must have been made in it during that interval:—“Carrigrohane Castle, near Cork, is an oblong tower house of the 16th century, much modernised, with bartizans at two of the corners, in which are small round holes for musketry, but carried on machicoulis. The face of the wall projects and overhangs about six inches in each of the upper storeys, perhaps for the purpose of throwing off the wet more effectually. There are remains of earthworks and a curtain wall.”

Carrigrohane Castle is now owned by the Hoare family.

Our illustrations are from photographs taken specially by our Council Member, Dr. Philip G. Lee.

J. C.