

The Muckross House Award for Kerry Folk Life Survey by Schools

(Incorporating the Dr. Hilliard Memorial Prize)

The Trustees of Muckross House are delighted to be able to introduce a scheme whereby awards will be provided for a Folklife Survey to be done by pupils of Primary Schools in Co. Kerry. They are seeking the help of primary teachers throughout the county, hoping that they, in turn, will encourage their pupils to enter. If the scheme is a success this year, it is hoped that it will be promoted annually for some years to come.

This scheme is designed to interest children, their parents and teachers in the collection and recording of all aspects of the traditional way of life and folklore of the people of their areas. Kerry is rich in folklore and in material objects traditionally used by its people in pursuit of their livelihood, of their pastimes, etc. Much of this has already been recorded by what is now the Department of Irish Folklore at University College, Dublin. One of the great schemes of collection was held in the 1937/38 period by the Department of Education and the then Irish Folklore Commission through schools all over the country. The result was a very valuable collection but it is now felt that a scheme like this could well be reintroduced and could be held each year. The Trustees of Muckross House, in conjunction with the widow of the late Dr. Frank Hilliard, are prepared to make awards to the schools from which the surveys, adjudged to be best, will come.

Three areas of enquiry are listed for 1982. These are, place-names, ancient crafts and industries, buildings, and from these, subjects may be chosen. It is envisaged that

the surveys done will include: collecting and recording information, names of people, places and things, with photographs, drawings, maps when possible; locating objects which may be added to the collections in the Folk Museum at Muckross House.

From the point of view of competing for the prizes there are two separate sections, one for individual entries and one for class or group entries and it is expected that all children will come from 5th and 6th classes in Primary schools.

In each section there will be four prizes. The first prize in the group section will be £200 worth of equipment or aids for the school. Second, third and fourth prizes will be Book Tokens of the value of £15 for each prize for the school library. The first prize in the individual section will be £100 worth of equipment or aids for the school and £25 worth of Book Tokens, being the Dr. Frank Hilliard Memorial prize, for the individual. Second, third and fourth prizes will be Book Tokens of the value of £15 for each prize for the school library.

The winning entries will be published in ROS.

AT MUCKROSS

R.T.E.'s Youngline Programme dealing with the Christmas story written by 12 year old Fiona Brennan, a school girl from Killorglin, was filmed in Muckross House and Park when the very fine group of children from Killorglin National School were the stars of the film. Declan Mangan, Jerome Conway and other teachers and parents helped immensely to organise the huge gathering of stars and extras.

ADULT EDUCATION

For the second year running our weaver, John Cahill, has been teaching hand-weaving to adults.

The length of the course was forty hours — two hours a week for twenty weeks between October 1981 and March 1982. The six who attended the course were, Margaret Cronin, Theresa Downing, Mona Looney, Mary Concannon, Jack Vissor and Gabriel Breen. During the course they produced scarves, stoles, table-mats, floor rugs and wall hangings. On the 19th and 20th of March their work was displayed, along with the rest of the craftwork produced by other Adult V.E.C. classes, in the Mount Brandon Hotel, Tralee. We are grateful to Mr. John Kennedy, Adult Education Officer; Mr. Pat Favier, Killarney Vocational School and the Kerry V.E.C. for the opportunity to cooperate with them in this way.

ROS

JOURNAL OF KERRY FOLK LIFE

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JOE SMITH

BUTCHER, CANDLE MAKER AND POET! by Ian O'Leary

The death of Joe Smith on November 28, 1953 caused a loss to the town of Killarney of one of its great characters. But Joe was more than a character, he was a friend and Dutch Uncle for every child that trod the wearisome journey to school each day at the Presentation Convent.

Joe was in his eightieth year when the call to depart this life came only a few short weeks before Christmas 1953. It was a pity that Joe did not live to see another Christmas in his beloved town. For Joe and Christmas were synonymous in Killarney because of the huge five feet high candles he made.

A retired butcher of New Street, Joe used a mould 120 years old which has been in his family for all that period. His claim that he had the biggest and longest burning Christmas Candles in Ireland was never seriously challenged; and is hardly likely to be—they weighed nine pounds.

The art or knack of making the candles was handed down to Joe from his mother, by boiling down sheep's fat to make tallow. With this he mixed a little wax for stiffening, added the wick and produced his candle. But there was little more to it than that. Joe said that you had to know when the tallow was right and a "feel" that the work would be a sure success.

Over the years many houses in Killarney were lit up by Joe's Christmas Candles, using them as a beacon of welcome to the Holy Family if they still required shelter. Even one of the candles was lighted in Listowel, for Joe sent one to Bryan McMahon famous author, who lit it for the boys of his school so that its golden glow could give them a flash back to the days of old.

Joe's biggest interest in life was making fun. He was an ardent follower of football and his interest in the game was still as keen as ever up to shortly before he died. In the old days, Joe captained the Deenagh Rangers for thirty years, and always led his boys to victory in thrilling struggles against other street teams. Joe's one ambition was to have his team sprinkled with plenty of "rushers" and those he always had.

Another side to Joe was his ability to make poetry as every child going to the Presentation Convent knew.

"Count us Joe", was the plaint of every child that ever went to the Nuns and Joe always obliged in rattling off a jingle. However, he was also the poet laureate of his own football team and how many of this generation can remember his lines on the Boys below the Bridge when they practised the game in the fields along the New Road.

*O'er hill and dale the Deenaghs fly,
Pursued by the monks and Mike the Boy,
Up the Nun's field they carried their load,
And over the wall to the Workhouse Road".*

Then back some more years and we find Joe leaving the old Temperance rooms at the top of High Street (now the site of O'Shea's garage) and going across the road to a shop opened by one Theobald Lyons, just back from the States, where he sold what he termed Washington pies.

"I have to say before I die
I put my tooth in Washington pie",
commented Joe. Retorted Theobald:
"And as you have and a judge you seem,
Is it anything sweeter than a sheep's drisheen?"

Another accomplishment of Joe's is that he was a great walker. This he developed from his younger days when he walked the roads of Kerry droving cattle in pursuance of his trade as butcher.

So the greatest feat of Joe's career was when he walked to Tralee over the old road a few years back to see Dick Fitzgeralds and the Legion play. Joe was a follower of the Legion, while his companion of the day was the late and well-known John Joe Fleming a supporter of the Dicks. They had to walk, as there were no cars or trains during the war years and Joe had to see his team *play* and this was when he was well over seventy years.

Today, Joe is but a memory in the older generation and unknown to those who now plod schoolwards down New Street to the Nuns. He was buried at Aghadoe where he now rests looking over his beloved lakes and waiting for the Angel to sound the trumpet on final judgement day. It is just possible he may be asked to coin a jingle for his "book of records".

EDITOR'S NOTE

This was one of the last articles that Ian wrote for ROS before his untimely death on 27th February 1981.

FOHER NA MANAGH

Foher na Managh (spelling of 6 inch Ordnance Map) or Fothrach na Manach, the Monk's Ruin, on the north cliffs of Mount Brandon in Kerry is perhaps Ireland's most isolated homestead. Yet it appears from local tradition that it was inhabited until the turn of the century.

Mount Brandon ends against the sea to the north in a wild and precipitous cliff which rises to a height of 2509 feet in Masatiopan. It is on a small green apron of grass, at the foot of this great cliff face, and a few hundred feet up from the sea, that Foher na Managh is sited. There appears to be no access from the sea. On land, there is an old cross country route over the mountain ridge from the area of Brandon Creek and Ballinknockane to Brandon bay north of Cloghane. A pillar stone stood on the summit of the ridge on this route. Today, on the Ballyknockane side, there is a good track up to turf cuttings, and beyond that a broad, wet "green road" that led to an old signal tower on this part of the mountain. To descend to Foher na Managh, it is necessary to leave the old track and peep over the cliff edge, to sight the ruins far below and then select a safe route down to them. When Paddy O'Leary, Lee Snodgrass and I visited the site on 9th June, 1980, we used my aerial photo by way of map, as the 6" Ordnance one does not supply enough detail. The descent is made from a height of about 1600 feet above sea level. When people lived there, they must have had a regular path tramped out, but all trace of this, except at the actual site, has now disappeared. So wet is the cliff face that sphagnum moss grows with the grass on almost sheer slopes near the top, and these mossy sections between the rocks can be very slippery. Technically this is easy climbing, but it is continuously dangerous in that a slip could result in a very long fall.

Foher na Managh itself is a delightful oasis of short green turf, ridged by old lazy beds and cropped by a few sheep and goats. All around rise the great cliffs and rocks of Brandon and down them cascade a whole series of streams – the place can never have gone short of water. Out to sea, one can watch small boats fishing and look northward towards Co. Clare. But the sea cliffs are high and sheer and we could find no trace of any likely landing place.

Nor could we find any object that would confirm the site as originally monastic. It consists of a circular enclosure with a cluster of ruined beehive huts, and a rectangular house ruin as well. I was reminded, in its general appearance, of the remains, definitely monastic in origin, on Inishtooskert in the Blasket Islands. The most peculiar feature is a ruined house with rounded gable ends, half inset into the hillside, and under which, running at an angle, is a kind of stone built underground passage or souterrain. A large slab with a small hole in the centre seems to have formed part of the roof of this souterrain.

Round about are stone walled old fields ridged with old lazy beds and together making up quite an extensive little farm. There are no signs of a ruined oratory as in so many early Celtic ruins in this part of Kerry, unless the rectangular house replaced it.

Readers of ROS may be able to supply more details of traditions of Foher na Managh and the last families who lived there. Curiously, in G.A. Little's "Brendan the Navigator" (Dublin 1945), a photograph by Rev. F. Browne, SJ, of Foher na Managh from the cliffs above, is titled "site of Brendan's oratory, *Sedes Brendani*" though

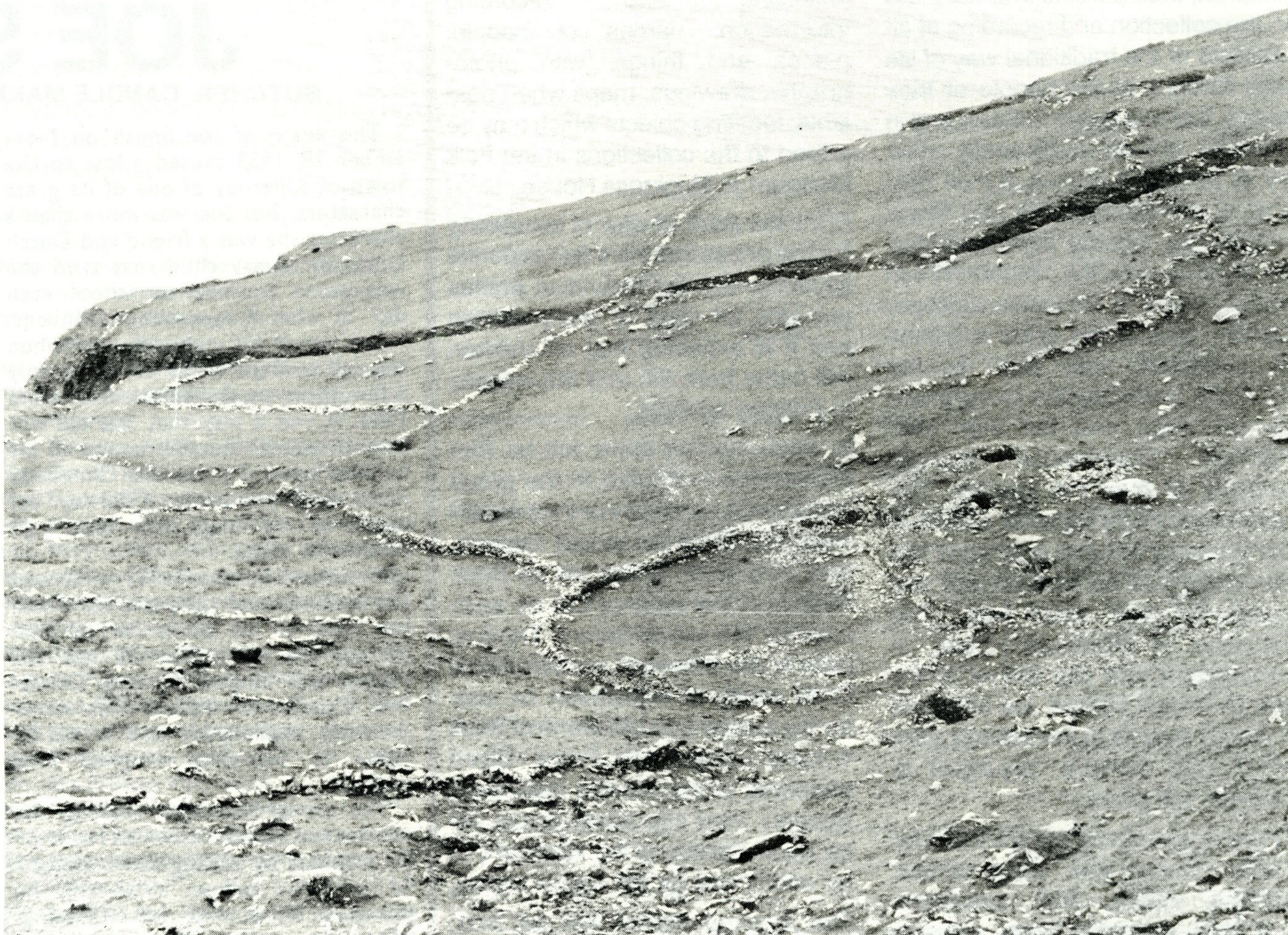
no further evidence is given in the text for this identification. The main St. Brendan site is, of course, on the very summit of Brandon with its ruined beehive type oratory.

Aerial photo by Daphne Pochin Mould.

Ground photographs by Lee Snodgrass.

Plan of site by Paddy O'Leary.

The expedition and the ruins were filmed by Daphne Pochin Mould on Super 8 cine film and this movie could be made available for showing to any interested groups.



Foher na Managh. General view of site with ruined beehives (clochans) and round-gabled house at foot of slope in foreground. Note old lazy-bed ridges, centre left. Photo: Lee Snodgrass.

CEIST?

We sought translation in English of the following words published in the last issue of ROS. Through the good offices of Máire Nic Mhaoláin, 105 Taobh an Chnoic, Deilginis, Co. Baile Atha Cliath; Dr. Kevin Danaher, Senior Lecturer, Department of Irish Folklore, U.C.D. and Mr. Oliver Snoddy of the National Museum, we now have got the following information:-

Bheist mhurailí – bheist mhuinchillí, sleeved vest.

Bounnlá – bandla, a bundle, which was a measure of about 30 inches, a cubit.

Cistí Steaimpí – "stampy", "boxty", a kind of bread made from a mixture of flour and grated raw potato.

Ag souráil – souring, i.e. seasoning.

Munairtlí (an t-saighne) – muinchillí na saighne, "sleeve", purse of seine net.

Gréasaithe galla – galla. i. gallda which implied neat or fashionable as in the line of a song:

Bróga deasa gallda is gan amhrasstocai.

Aidhléirithe – áiléirithe, lofts or galleries.

Drabhalai – dromhlach, wooden vessel, half-barrel, tub.

Oulhach – alltach, wild or strange, uncanny. Often as Ultach ("from Ulster").

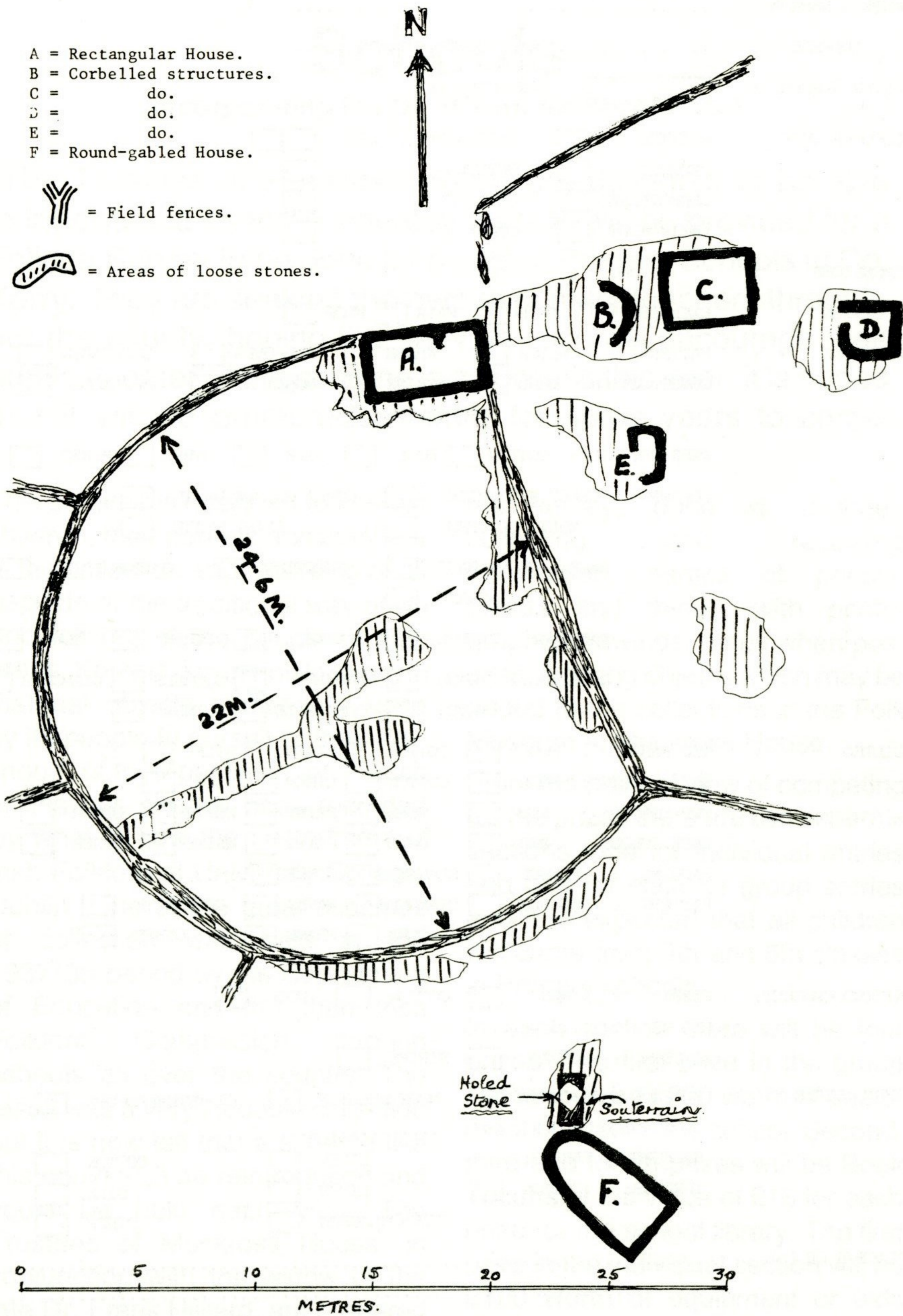
Garamain – garma, weaver's beam or might be from gormán, the blue flower of the flax.

Coirriughadh – ciorrú, disease caused by the evil eye.

Peirceanna – gutta-percha, soled shoes.

Rouch – brittle seaweed.

**FOTHRACH
NA MANACH.**



Editor's Note

A Rev. Professor Power, in an article on Fothar na Manach, Co. Kerry, which appeared in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record, Vol. XXI, January, 1923, 5th series, PP. 69-76, tells of visits there in 1918 and 1919. He reached it by the land route in 1918 but in 1919 hired a curragh and crew and managed to get ashore at "the only gap in the natural wall from Cuas Harbour to Sauce Bay - the somewhat equivocal opening at Fothar na Manach" where "there is neither strand nor landing-place and disembarkation is by no means easy or bereft of danger", where there is no safe mooring place and to carry even a canoe up the steep rocks would have been impossible". He concludes, therefore, that though the inhabitants may have fished from the foreshore they can hardly have owned a boat.

Fr. Power gives a detailed description of the ruins and attaches some importance to his discovery there of a mass (seven and a half inches by four) of quartz crystals embedded in their matrix. Quartz crystals, he tells us, were extensively used in the early Irish church decoration. He always looked for them on "cilleen" sites and frequently found them in such places when none were to be found outside the "cilleen" area. The name appears in Charles Smith's map of Kerry (1756) as Farryvanagh and as Farryhynanagh in the map of the Down Survey (1683).

The History of the ruins is unknown. There was a tradition in Ballynahow that three, or probably four, families occupied the settlement about 1820 but Fr. Power could find no recognisable remains of their dwellings. James Fitzgerald, an aged resident of Ballynahow, had a clear recollection of a Mrs. Griffin, who was the last person to live at Fotharnamanach. She abandoned the place about the time of the Famine because of the constant annoyance she suffered from cockroaches which abounded there. There was also a tradition of a half-outlaw named Walsh, who occupied the place previously to Mrs. Griffin, whose house the people of Ballynahow attacked and levelled because Walsh was stealing their sheep. Fr. Power attributes the present ruinous condition of the clochans to the early nineteenth-century dwellers.

Muckross House Folk Museum

This 19th century great house has many items of absorbing interest. Here visitors can see some fine hand-carved furniture, old prints and maps as well as exhibitions dealing with the natural history, political history and physical geography of Co. Kerry. The main exhibitions show the traditional way of life of the people of Kerry. Visitors can also see some craftworkers at their trades, weaving, basket-making and bookbinding. Walk around at your leisure or take a guided tour. All in all an opportunity not to be missed.

Hours of opening:-

Easter to 30th June and September to 31st October.

Open daily 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.

July and August:-

Open daily including Sundays 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Rest of the year:- Daily except Mondays, 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Admission:- Adults £1.00.

Children 40p.

Special group rates.

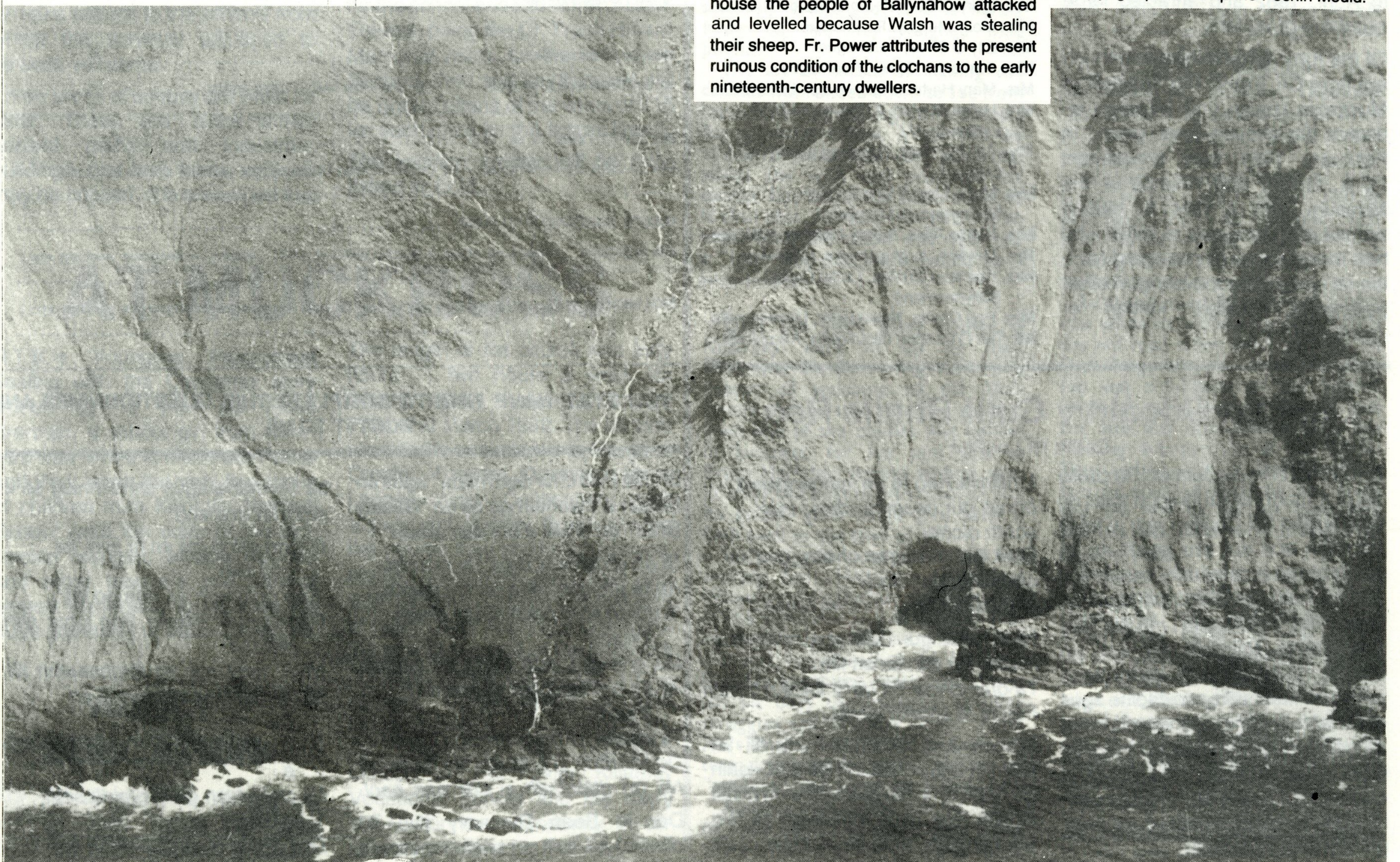
Free car park beside house.

Refreshments available in house.

FOHER NA MANAGH

Aerial photo of north cliffs of Mount Brandon. The ruins are seen to the left of the main stream, just above the sea cliff.

Copyright photo: Daphne Pochin Mould.



Exhibition of Irish Bedcovers

There was a major development in the Exhibitions area during 1981 when the Trustees, in a joint project with the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and the National Museum of Ireland, researched, prepared and set up an Exhibition of Traditional Irish Bed Covers, their techniques and traditions.

This was opened on the 25th September, 1981 by Michael Begley, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Trade, Tourism and Industry. The Exhibition was shown in Muckcross House for a month and subsequently was opened at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum on the 16th November.

The Chairman, Fr. O'Keeffe, together with Trustees, Mrs. Cameron, Fr. Luke O.F.M. and T. O'Sullivan were present for the official opening and were subsequently entertained to a full day visit to the Museum. The Chairman, Mr. J. MacQuitty, The Director, Mr. G. Thompson and other members of the Trustees and staff of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum extended the most marvellous welcome, hospitality and help. This visit has cemented the wonderful relationship that has always existed between our two Institutions.

The Exhibition went on display in the National Museum of Ireland, Merrion Row, Dublin from February to April, 1982 and attracted large numbers of visitors.

Of the forty items exhibited thirteen are from Co. Kerry. The Trustees of Muckcross House Folk Museum initiated the project here when, in February 1981 they circularised I.C.A. Guilds and Friends of the Museum with a view to getting names and addresses of those who had made, used or possessed traditional types of bedcovering whether patchwork, quilted, knitted or crocheted.

The response was most gratifying. Consequently Miss Margaret Healy and John McCarthy of Muckcross House had plenty material to record and photograph when they travelled about the county in April. Everywhere they went they received a most hearty welcome, marvellous co-operation and hospitality.

Traditional bedcovers belonging to the following were recorded and photographed:

Mrs. Olive Kells, 1 Mount Brandon, St. Luke's, Cork.
 Mrs. Maureen Kelly, The Towers, Sandhill Road, Ballybunion.
 Mrs. E. Talbot, Kilalee, Ballyvintner, Mallow.
 Mrs. Nora Cronin, The Square, Kilgarvan.
 Miss Julia May Callaghan, Lomanagh, Kilgarvan.
 Mrs. Catherine Hanley, Bell Height, Kenmare
 Mrs. Francis McCarthy, Derrynid, Tousist.
 Mrs. Mary O'Shea, Derrybrack, Tousist.
 Mrs. Bernie Hogan, New Street, Caherciveen
 Mrs. Mary O'Shea, Main Street, Waterville.
 Mrs. Kathleen Riordan, Lr. Stores, Waterville.
 Miss Brid O'Connell, Tooreens, Waterville.
 Mrs. Nora Murphy, Main St., Waterville.
 Mrs. Abby Clifford, Main St., Waterville.
 Mrs. P. O'Shea, Rathfield, Caherdaniel.
 Mrs. Una Murphy, Portmagee.
 Mrs. Mary O'Connell, Portmagee.
 Mrs. Molly Murphy, Portmagee.
 Mrs. Eily O'Shea, Portmagee.
 Mrs. Catherine Casey, Portmagee.
 Mrs. Mary Hartnett, Clieveragh, Listowel.
 Mrs. Helen Moylan, 2 Cherrytree Drive, Listowel.
 Mrs. Ita O'Connor, Rathoran, Kilmorna, Listowel.
 Mrs. Marie Leane, Knockenagh, Shronronoun, Listowel.
 Mrs. Sheila Allen, Aglish, Ballyhar, Killarney.
 Mrs. Devane, Aughacurreen, Killarney.
 Mrs. Kathleen Dunlea, Lacka Cross, Ballydesmond.
 Mrs. Peg Cronin, Newquarter, Gneeveguilla.
 Mr. Tim O'Connor, Glounonea, Kilcummin.

The following questionnaire was used to record information:-

M.H./N.M.I./U.F.T.M. BEDCOVER SURVEY 1981
 PRIMARY RECORD SHEET

OWNER'S NAME :

ADDRESS :

SURVEY NUMBER : CONTACTED PER

BEDCOVER TYPE : KNITTED PATCHWORK/QUILTED
 CROCHET QUILTED
 EMBROIDERED CHILD'S
 LAYING-OUT OTHER

DIMENSIONS : cm. x cm.

CONDITION : EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR POOR

PATCHWORK : PATTERN: BLOCK FRAME ALL-OVER LOG-CABIN
 CONSTRUCTION: HAND MACHINE MOSAIC APPLIQUE
 LOG-CABIN

FABRICS: TOP: COTTON WOOL SILK OTHER MIXED

COLOURS: TURKEY RED/WHITE OTHER COLOUR/WHITE
 MULTICOLOURED PRINT/WHITE

BACK: FLOUR BAGS SHEETING COTTON PRINT
 SCRAPS

PADDING: FLEECE BLANKET OTHER NONE

QUILTING: HAND MACHINE SQUARES DIAMONDS
 WAVES COMPOSITE OTHER

QUILTED : TOP FABRIC : WOOL COTTON LINEN SILK
 BACK FABRIC : WOOL COTTON LINEN SILK
 TOP COLOUR : RED GOLD PRINT WHITE OTHER
 BACK COLOUR : RED GOLD PRINT WHITE OTHER
 PADDING : FLEECE BLANKET OTHER
 PATTERN : SQUARES DIAMONDS WAVES COMPOSITE
 ALL-OVER FRAME OTHER

KNITTED/CROCHET: FIBRE : LINEN COTTON WOOL
 COLOUR :

PATTERN : SQUARES STRIPS

EMBROIDERED SURFACE EMBROIDERY MOUNTMELLICK DRAWNTHREADWORK
 BACKGROUND COLOUR :

BACKGROUND FABRIC: LINEN COTTON
 THREADS: COTTON LINEN SILK
 SELF-COLOURED OTHER

PLACE/S OF USE :

PLACE OF MANUFACTURE :

DATE OF MANUFACTURE :

IS SPECIMEN STILL IN USE? IF NOT WHEN WAS IT LAST USED?

WHY DID IT CEASE TO BE USED?

WAS IT USED ALL YEAR ROUND? AT CERTAIN TIMES OF YEAR, FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS, ETC.

MAKER'S RELATIONSHIP TO OWNER :

HOW ACQUIRED? (Inherited after a death, wedding gift, bought at emigrant auction etc.)

FROM WHOM ACQUIRED: (if wedding gift, was it from bride's or bridegroom's parents etc.)

Cuilt an Oileáin v Cuilt Bhaile Reo

Le - Cáitín Ní Laoithe

Is mó cuilt bhreá a cuireadh le chéile agus a fuadh ar an dtaobh thiar de Dhaingean (Uí Chúise) ach ní foláir ná raibh aon dul acu go dtí an dá chuilt bhreá a deineadh, ceann acu ar an Oilean (an Blascaod) agus an ceann eile a maisíodh i mBaile Reo i bparóiste Múrach. An am sin bhíodh filí ag cumadh dánta agus amhráin. Mholaidís seo daoine agus rudaí ach is minic a dheinidís ceap magaidh do dhuine nó do thárlúint éigin chomh maith. Pé scéal é chonaic file áirithe an "t-iontas seo" i mBaile Reo agus mhol sé an chuilt go h-árd na spéireach:

I mBaile Reo tá an leathantseod bhreá gur neamhandeis í mar scáth oiche:

*Cuilt leabthan gan cháim, gan chnaiste, gan chlár
 Is é tairricthe ar fhráma bínse.*

Níor foláir gur cuilt ana mhaisithe í siúd mar de réir an file:

*Tá diamonds 'na lár is tuilte d'órnáid
 Fuaite le snátha síoda.*

Bhíodh ana choimhlint idir filí an uair sin agus chulaidh file an Oileáin go raibh amhrán ceapaithe do chuilt Bhaile Reo agus thosnaigh sé féin ag cumadh amhráin "d'fonn cuilt

YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND POST IT TO US.

Bhaile Reo chur den mapa" agus an buadh a thabhairt go dtí an "Beauty Brea" do chuilt a bhí san oileán.

*Sí an ornament breá í le feiscint
 An té thuigfeadh a cúrsaí léamh,
 's doigh liom nach éinne dhein peaca*

*Do cheap í, ach fáidh nó naomh.
 Ar an bhfráma gur deineadh í tharrac*

*Tá deasa 'ci os comhair a'tsaoil
 Do stiúródh sí ártach 'on Turcaigh
 Nó go dtiocfadh sí arís gan baol.*

Dar le Sean Dunleavy (file an oileáin) b'í cuilt an oileáin an chuilt

ba bhreatha agus chríochnaig sé a amhrán mar seo:

D'fonn grinn ins an tír seo 'na bhfuilim

*'Sea ceapadh an dán go léir,
 D'fonn cuilt Bhaile Reo chur den mhapa*

*Nach fada mé ag foighneamh léi.
 Mo thuairim, a bhuacailli an Daingin,*

Bhúr gcluasa nuair a chuirfear díbh é

Le croí ghlán go líonfaidh sibh gloine

Don bhfile is gur fiú dhíbh é.