

A4

# National Monuments in State Care



Monument Name	Townland	Notes
Passage Grave & 2 Decorated Stones	Ardmulchan	
Ringfort	Ardmulchan	A motte having an oval platform surrounded by a ditch and bank; it occupies a dominant position overlooking the River Boyne. Its present function is to act as the partial support of a high voltage electricity pylon.
Cannistown Church or Ardsallagh Church	Ardsallagh	The first church on the site was founded by St Finian, but the present church dates from the late 12th or early 13th century, and it became the parish church dedicated to St Brigid. The property belonged to Hugh de Lacy when it was built, and later passed to the Nangles, the Prestons, the Ludlows, the Duke of Bedford and to Earl Russell in turn. The chancel is 13th century, and there is a fine chancel arch with foliage capitals, and above them, on the left, three dogs pouncing on a fox, and on the right, three figures with the central one holding a staff in his hand. In the wall above the arch, and also lying on the ground nearby, are other sculpted stones bearing grotesque animal masks and a rampant lion. In the 15th century the nave of the church was altered, and windows were inserted which are made of limestone, in contrast to the earlier ones made of sandstone.
Castle	Athcarne	
Castle	Athlumney	The castle was built in two periods. The tower at the southern end was built in the 15th century, and has four storeys. In the first floor there is a secret chamber in the wall, reachable down a small stairs. Beside the tower are the remains of a vaulted room, which was probably added later. The rest of the Castle is a Tudor mansion built around 1600 beside the older tower. It has a gabled roof, and still retains a number of its mullioned windows. A number of fireplaces and an oven can still be seen in the inside walls. There is also a fine oriel window in the south wall overlooking the road. When Cromwell was attacking Drogheda in 1649, the castle was held by the Maguires who set it on fire rather than let Cromwell capture it.
Wayside Cross	Balrath	A late 16th century wayside cross with the inscription ORATE-P-AIA JOHANIS BROIN (Pray for the Soul of John Broin). On the east face is a representation of the Pieta, on the west face there is a Crucifixion and Gothic decoration; the north face bears geometric designs and a head, and there is another head at the end of the south arm. The cross was presumably re-erected in 1727, as the following inscription which was added later suggests 'Sir Andrew Aylmer of Mountaylmer Bart and his Lady Catherine Aylmer had this cross beautified A.D. 1727.

Monument Name	Townland	Notes
Abbey (Cist.)	Bective	The abbey was founded in 1150 by Murchad O Maeil-Sheachlainn, King of Meath, for the Cistercians, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. It is one of the earliest Cistercian abbeys in Ireland. The Abbot sat in the Parliament of the Pale. Hugh de Lacy's body was buried here in 1195, but after a dispute it was later transferred to St Thomas's in Dublin. Of the original 12th century abbey only remnants of the south of the nave arcade, parts of the south transept, the chapter house, part of the west wing of the domestic buildings and some of the doorways in the south wing remain. In the 15th century, the buildings were fortified and great changes took place. The southern arcade of the nave was blocked up, the present cloister and many of the buildings around it (excluding the chapter house) were built. This cloister is the best feature of the abbey: one of the pillars bears a figure carrying a crozier. The tower, and the great hall in the south wing (probably the monks' refectory) were also added in this period. At some later period further alterations took place in the south transept; the oven between the south transept and the chapter house was inserted, and an external entrance to the south range was also added. The monastery was suppressed in 1536. In the following year, the abbey and its lands were leased to Thomas Agarde, and they were bought by Andrew Wyse in 1552. Subsequently it passed to the Dillons and then to the Boltons.
St. Columcille's Well	Calliaghstown	
Baronstown Cross	Carrickdexter	
Hill of Tara Earthworks	Castleboy / Castletown Tara	
Chapel, Crosses	Castlekeeran	The place is called Diseart Chiarain, the Hermitage of Ciaran, who was a monk of the monastery at Kells nearby, but who is not to be confused with the founder of Clonmacnoise. The monastery was plundered by the Vikings in 949, and by Dermot McMurrrough in 1170. In the 13th century it passed to the Knights Hospitallers and by the 16th century it was owned by the Plunketts. There are three High Crosses with moulding at the edges, but none of them bears figure sculpture. One has bosses at the centre of the arms and another has interlacing at the end of the arms. Beside the insignificant remains of a church there is also an Early Christian graveslab, and an Ogham stone with the inscription COVAGNI MAQI MUCOI LUGUNI. In the River Blackwater beside the monastery there is another High Cross; tradition says that it was dumped in the river by St Columba when St Ciaran caught him red-handed taking it to his nearby monastery at Kells.

Monument Name	Townland	Notes
Duleek Priory Church	Commons	The Augustinians may have been introduced to Duleek by 1150, but Hugh de Lacy founded an Augustinian house nearby in 1182. The present priory is possibly a part of that monastery. Parts of the arcade of the church may be 13th century and the south wall of the south aisle may be 14th century, but the tower is certainly 15th century. In the north aisle is the tomb of Dr Cusack, the Catholic Bishop of Meath from 1679 to 1688. In the centre of the nave is the altar tomb of the Prestons and Plunketts, with representations of SS Katherine, Patrick and Peter at the west end, the Crucifixion, angels and St Michael at the east end, the instruments of the Passion on the north side and the Bellew, Preston and Plunkett arms on the south. In the tower some Romanesque fragments are preserved. A Round Tower originally stood immediately to the north of the tower, and the square tower was built around it, but only the impression of the Round Tower remains in the wall of the square tower. To the north of the modern church stands a squat High Cross, probably of 10th century date. On the west face is the Crucifixion and some unidentifiable figures. The cross is decorated with bosses, interlacing and two Evangelists symbols-the eagle and the ox.
Slieve na Calliagh Group - Cairns N, P,Q,R1,R2,S,T,U,V & W.	Corstown	
Church, Cross	Cruicetown	A medieval parish church, consisting of nave and chancel, built around 1200. In the nave there is a double-effigy tomb of the Cruice family carved in 1688. In the north-western corner of the church there is an old but undecorated baptismal font. To the south of the church is a cross, also dating from 1688, with the Virgin and Child on the east face, and on the west a primitive but touching representation of the Crucifixion.
Ringfort	Danestown	A ring-fort about 150 feet in diameter and consisting of a central round raised platform surrounded by a concentric ditch and bank.
Church, Round Tower	Donaghmore	St Patrick is said to have founded the first monastery here. There is a well-preserved Round Tower, which lacks its top windows. It is to be suspected that these originally existed, but were not included in the restoration works when the conical cap was replaced about 150 years ago. The tower is unusual in that there is a Crucifixion above the round-headed doorway, and there are heads beside the arch. The nearby church from which a head is incorporated in the south wall of the bell-tower of the church. In the graveyard there are some Early Christian grave-slabs.
Castle	Donore	In 1429 King Henry VI promised a grant of 10 pounds to every one of his subjects who built a castle 20 feet long, 16 feet wide and 40 feet high before 1439 in counties Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Louth. As this castle roughly conforms to these measurements, it is quite probable that it is one of these '10 pound castles.' There are three storeys, of which the ground floor is vaulted. The corners of the castle are rounded, and a projecting tower at the south-western corner contained the spiral staircase.

Monument Name	Townland	Notes
Tumuli, Standing Stone, Inscribed Stone	Dowth	
Dowth Tumulus	Dowth	
Passage Grave	Dowth	Together with Knowth and Newgrange, this mound forms part of the great Passage-grave cemetery beside the lower stretches of the Boyne. The mound has a diameter of 280 feet and is 50 feet high. A number of the stones surrounding the bottom of the mound can still be seen, some of them bearing ornamentation. There are two prehistoric tombs in the western part of the mound, dating from about 2500 - 2000 B.C. One of these is reached by climbing down a ladder in an iron cage; it has a long passage, with a large ritual basin stone in the middle, and there are tomb niches at the back and on two sides of the burial chamber. A further burial chamber is annexed to the right hand tomb niche. At the entrance to the passage is an Early Christian soutterain which emerges to the north-east of the iron cage. Further to the south of the first Passage-Grave is a second one. This is approached by a short passage which leads to a round burial chamber (with modern roof), with one recess off to the right. A visit to the first tomb is only recommended to those who are in good physical condition, as a certain amount of crawling and climbing over stones is involved.
St. Cianan's Church	Duleek	
Dowdall Cross	Duleek	A wayside cross built by Dame Jennet Dowdall in 1601 and repaired in 1810. The two top pieces may have been added later. On the cross, there are a number of figures including an angel with a coat of arms, St Peter, St Patrick and St Keenane (Cianan) on the east face, St George and the Dragon, and angel, St Mary Magdalen, St James and St Thomas on the north face; St George, St Andrew, St Katherine and St Stephen on the south face, and an angel and the Bathe coat of arms and an inscription on the west face. The inscription reads This cross was build by Iennet Dowdall wife to William Bathe of Athcarn Justice of her Majesties Court of Common Pleas for him and her ano 1601. He deceased the 15 of Oct 1599 buried in the church of Duleek. Whose soules I pray god take to his mercie.
Castle	Dunmoe	Two sides of a four-storey castle which was square in shape with large rounded turrets at the four corners. The two lower storeys were vaulted. Although built in the style of the 13th century castles, it was probably not built till the 15th century. Cromwell is said to have fired on it from the opposite bank of the Boyne on his way from Drogheda to Athboy in 1649.

Monument Name	Townland	Notes
St. Nicholas' Church & Cross	Dunsany	The church was built by Nicholas Plunkett, first Baron Dunsany, in the middle of the 15th century on the site of an earlier church. It has a nave and a very slightly narrower chancel. There are towers at each corner, that on the north west being the sacristy. In a niche in the north wall is a fine double-effigy tomb, possibly representing Christopher, Lord Dunsany and his wife Anna Fitzgerald. It was they who had the very fine 15th century font in the church carved. This is one of the finest medieval fonts in Ireland, and has representations of the Crucifixion and of the Twelve Apostles on it. The east window of the church is the fragment of a 15th century cross with representations of the Apostles on it.
Lintel, Fragment of Medieval Church	Dunshaughlin	The insignificant remains of the aisle of a medieval church as well as a few 15th or 16th century architectural fragments. The main interest of the place is a slab mounted beside these remains with a representation of the Crucifixion on it. On Christ's right is a man holding a spear, and on his left a man offers him vinegar in a chalice on the end of a pole. It probably formed the lintel over the doorway of the church which has since disappeared. The lintel is probably 10th or 11th century in date.
Passage Grave	Fourknocks	This is a fine example of a Passage-Grave, differing from other Irish examples in having an inordinately large chamber which takes up most of the area of the mound. The chamber is reached by a passage, and has three side-niches. Stones bearing Passage-Grave art with zigzags etc. were found in the passage and on the stones above the tomb-niches off the main chamber. Two other decorated stones stand on the floor; one of these, on left near the passage, has a very amusing face engraved with a few simple lines - the clearest representation of the human face in prehistoric Irish art. Over 60 burials were found in the passage and the side niches, but none was found in the central chamber. Later burials were found in the mound itself. The central chamber is now covered by a cleverly designed concrete dome, with shafts letting in enough light to see by and creating a suitably eerie atmosphere inside. The original roof was probably of wood, carried on a central pole. The grave was built around 1800 B.C. 150 yards to the east of the Passage Grave is another mound, where the dead were cremated. Another mound, dating to about 1500 B.C., was found nearby.
Mound	Gaulstown	
Slieve Breagh Earthworks	Hoardstown	
Church & Cross	Killeen	A long 15th century church consisting of a nave and a slightly narrower chancel, with an entrance on the north side. There are towers at each corner, that on the north-east corner housing the sacristy and with sleeping quarters on the first floor. The church is mainly noteworthy because of the number of its well-preserved and similar traceried windows, and there is a good triple sedilia in the south wall of the church. There are also a considerable number of gravestones of the Plunkett family in the church, including two fine double-effigy tombs of the late 15th century. To the north of the church two fragments of a 15th century cross with six apostles on the bottom have been re-erected. The church is very similar to that at Dunsany.

Monument Name	Townland	Notes
Passage Grave / Tumulus	Knowth	In this great mound about 40 feet high and 220 feet in diameter two great Passage-Graves were discovered in 1967 and 1968. One of the chambers is corbelled, like that at Newgrange, and is round and has side chambers; the other has a flat roof and looks like little more than a widening of the passage. Both graves are richly decorated with megalithic art, as are also many of the kerbstones surrounding the base of the large mound. The entrances to the tombs were considerably disturbed in the Early Christian Period by the building of souterrains, which seem to penetrate into the mound like rabbit burrows. As the Passage Graves have not yet been excavated, no dating evidence has yet come to light, but it is likely that this great mound was raised between 2500 and 2000 B.C. Excavations during the last 8 years have uncovered 15 satellite tombs (smaller passage graves) and other ritual features dotted around the base of the mound. In the 9th and 10th centuries Knowth was the seat of the kings of Northern Brega, and the Normans used the mound as a motte at the end of the 12th century.
Habitation complex	Knowth	
Fort	Loughbracken	
Ring-Ditch, Tumulus & Hillfort	Mountfortescue	
Tumulus	Newgrange	

Monument Name	Townland	Notes
Newtown Trim Cathedral	Newtown	About a mile downstream from the castle stands the vast ruin of Newtown Trim , peacefully situated on the banks of the Boyne. The episcopal See of Meath was moved here from Clonard by John Cardinal in the late 12th century. Simon de Rochfort, Bishop of Meath (1194-1224) founded a priory here in 1206 for the Canons of the Augustinian Congregation of St Victor of Paris to serve the cathedral. An attempt to substitute secular priests for the canons was made in 1397, but was unsuccessful. The church dates from 1206, and must have been one of the largest churches in Ireland. It originally consisted of a nave, chancel and two transepts, with fine ribbed vaulting over the chancel. But when the nave and transepts fell into decay in the later Middle Ages, the nave was shortened by about 80 feet, and the present west wall was built, so that the original church was much longer than the present one. There were a number of graceful lancet windows in the church, but those in the east wall were later blocked up. In the north wall there is a round-headed sedilia. To the south of the original nave stood the domestic buildings. The refectory, retaining some of its original windows (though one towards the eastern end was added in the 15th century), stands at the south end of the quadrangle, and had a basement supporting the floor in order to keep it at the same level as the surrounding buildings. There are the remnants of a fine 13th century doorway near a stile at a point where the east wing of the cloister stood; it was the door to the chapter house. A kitchen was added to the western wing in the 15th or 16th century. To the east of this complex is another smaller 13th century parish church, with a north and south doorway, into which a 15th century window has been inserted. 15th century fragments have been built into the south wall of the church, and inside is a fine late 16th century double effigy tomb of Sir Luke Dillon and his wife. The buildings on the far side of the ancient bridge are the remnants of the 13th and 15th century Friary and Hospital of St John the Baptist. From a gate beside the road on the opposite side of the river to the refectory of the monastery mentioned above, there is a remarkable echo.
St. John's Priory	Newtown Trim	
Slieve na Calliagh Group – Cairns F, G, H, I, J, K, Mound M, Stone O and Tumulus B.	Newtown	
Barrow	Ninch	
Rathmaeve, Tara Hill	Odder	



Monument Name	Townland	Notes
Slieve na Calliagh Group – Cairn X, Cairn Za, Cross Yc, Fort Y, Megalithic Structure Yb and Rectangular Earthwork and Pillar Ya.	Patrickstown	
Church, Cross & Base	Rathmore	A church built probably by Sir Thomas Plunkett in the mid 15th century, and dedicated to St Lawrence. It remained in use until at least 1678. Though the nave and chancel were built separately, they were both built around the same time. At each corner there is a tower; that on the north east being a sacristy with living quarters overhead, while the belfry is at the south western corner. There is a fine sedilia and piscina, and a very good east window with sculptures of kings and queens on the outside. The altar has niches containing angels swinging censers, St Lawrence with the grid-iron, bishops, an abbess with a crozier, and the coat of arms of the Plunkett, Fitzgerald, Talbot, Fleming, Eustace, Bellew, Bermingham and Cusack families. There is also a double-effigy tomb of the founder and his wife erected around 1471, as well as a 15th century font. A cross to the north of the church was erected by Christopher Plunkett and his wife Catherine in 1519, and shows St Lawrence (again with grid-iron), St Patrick or an archbishop, an abbess and vine-leaves. The church resembles those at Dunsany and Killeen.
Ring Fort	Realtoge	A ring-fort with a diameter of about 120 feet and covered in gorse bushes. It consists of a round central area surrounded by a bank, a ditch and another bank. In the centre there are traces of hut foundations, and a souterrain is also said to exist.
Athcarne White Cross	Reask	A wayside cross erected by Dame Jennet Dowdall around 1600. On the east face is a Crucifixion, and on the west side an attractive Virgin and Child, and the arms of the Bathe and the Dowdall families. The cross may have been inserted into an earlier base, and the baroque cap may be later than the cross. Dame Jennet Dowdall erected a number of wayside crosses in memory of her third husband, William Bathe, who was created Justice of the Common Pleas by Sir John Perrot, the Lord Deputy, in 1581, and who died in 1599. She had previously been married to Oliver Plunket, Baron of Louth, and Nicholas St Lawrence, 21st Earl of Howth.
Castle	Robertstown	A three-storey castle with gabled roof built in the 17th century. The ground floor is a series of vaulted rooms; the first floor is divided into three rooms. Its most unusual features are the two projecting towers on the first floor, which have corbels at the bottom like those in Scottish castles.
Ringfort	Robertstown	
Sarsfieldstown Cross	Sarsfieldstown	

Monument Name	Townland	Notes
Church, 2 Crosses	Skreen	An older church existed on the site which was dedicated to St Columba, and there was once a shrine to him here (hence the name, from Latin <i>scrinium</i> - a shrine). Around 1175 Adam de Feipo was granted the land and built another church whose tithes he brought with him when he joined the Cistercian Abbey of St Marys in Dublin around 1185. The present church was founded around 1341. It has a nave and chancel, and a tower at the western end of the church. The north doorway retains some of its architectural decoration, while there is the representation of a bishop over the 14th or 15th century south doorway. The tower, which was probably built in the 15th century, houses the fragments of an undecorated baptismal font and a tomb slab. To the north-east of the church stands a medieval cross with a crude representation of the Crucifixion on its west face. Nearby is the decorative grave-slab of Walter Marward dated 1611.
Friary	Slane	The site is intimately associated with the lighting of the first Paschal Fire in Ireland by St Patrick in 433, thus symbolising the triumph of Christianity over paganism. St Erc founded a monastery here in Early Christian times, and there was also a medieval abbey here, but little is known about the history of the place until it was re-built in its present form in 1512 when Sir Christopher Flemmyng founded a small Franciscan friary here. Both it and the College beside it were surrendered in 1540, and in 1543 the lands were granted to Sir James Flemmyng. In 1631 the Capuchins were settled in the monastery, where they stayed until the advent of Cromwell. The church has a nave and chancel, and a short south aisle, as well as a tower at the western end. The window on the eastern face of the tower, just above the door, is earlier and is probably taken from an older church on the site. Nearby is the College which was founded by Sir Christopher Flemmyng for four priests, four lay-brothers and four choristers. It is built around an open quadrangle, with the priests' residence on the north side, and a tower on the south side. In the south wall there are some fine windows, forming part of what was probably a refectory or reading room. The use of the other rooms is not known, but most of them have fire-places. Built into the west wall of the southern wing is the representation of a dragon. To the east of the college are the remains of a gateway, possibly built after the College went out of use at the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1541.

Monument Name	Townland	Notes
Kells Round Tower and High Crosses	Townparks	<p>In the church yard on the top of the hill are found the Round Tower and a number of High Crosses. The Round Tower is about 100 feet high, and has five windows at the top, though the original conical cap is missing. The doorway has heads carved on it, but these have almost entirely weathered away. The tower must date to before 1076, for in that year Murchadh Mac Flainn, who was claiming the High Kindship of Ireland, was murdered in the tower. Near the Round Tower is the South Cross dedicated to Saints Patrick and Columba, which was possibly erected in the 9th century. On the base are interlacings, animals including a deer, and a chariot procession. On the south face are Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel, then the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace, above that Daniel in the Lions Den; on the left arm is the sacrifice of Isaac, on the right SS Paul and Anthony in the desert, while on top is David with his harp, and the Miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes. On the west side is the Crucifixion, and above that Christ in Judgement. On the end of the arm on the south side David can be seen killing the lion, while on the end of the north arm he kills the bear. The cross is also decorated with a number of ornamental panels, particularly interlacing, and a vine scroll in which animals and birds prance about. About 20 yards to the north west is the sturdy stump of what must have been a very fine and tall cross. On the base is an inscription OROIT DO ARTGAL- A Prayer for Artgal, but unfortunately we know nothing about the man in question. On the east side can be seen The Baptism of Christ in the Jordan (the flowing together of two rivers), The Marriage feast at Cana (or the Adoration of the Magi?), David with his harp, The Presentation in the Temple, an unidentified panel and above, the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem (or possibly the Flight into Egypt). On the west face can be seen Adam and Eve, an amusing representation of Noahs Ark and other unidentified panels. Both the narrow sides have various geometrically decorated panels. Beside the modern church is an unfinished Cross with a Crucifixion on one face. It is interesting as it shows the various stages involved in the carving of these High Crosses. To the north of the modern church is the tower of a medieval church, into which various fragments and grave-slabs have been inserted. Beside the tower is the rounded base of another High Cross. In the organ-loft of the modern church is a display of photographs of items associated with the ancient monastery, such as blow-ups of the Book of Kells etc..</p>
St. Columb's House, Kells	Townparks	<p>This is an ancient oratory with steep stone roof. The present entrance is modern; the vaulted room it leads to was originally divided into two levels, the present ground floor acting as a basement, and the original church proper was entered by a door (now blocked up) in the west wall, and was about 6 or 7 feet above present floor level. Above the vault is a small chamber (reachable by ladder) which also served the purpose of preventing the roof from collapsing. It is thought by some that this was the building erected shortly after 804 to commemorate the return of the monks from Iona, but it is likely to have been built a few centuries later than this.</p>

Monument Name	Townland	Notes
Yellow Steeple, St. Mary's Abbey (Aug.)	Trim	Situated close to the Sheep's Gate (469) is the Yellow Steeple, a very tall but battered tower of the 14th century which formed part of the Augustinian Abbey called St Marys, where the 'Idol of Trim'-a statue of the Blessed Virgin-was venerated. 125 feet high, it stood on the north side of the now demolished church.
King John's Castle	Trim	
Nangle Castle (East Wall)	Trim	Situated close to the Yellow Steeple (186) is a farm shed with corrugated iron roof which was once Nangle's Castle.
Part of Town Wall, Sheep Gate, Porchfield	Trim	The Sheep's Gate is the only remaining portion of the town walls erected in 1359 by Roger Mortimer, Earl of Ulster, and consisting of a two-storey tower.
Hill of Ward - Earthworks, Hill of Ward	Wardstown	The earthworks consist of a central raised enclosure surrounded by four banks and ditches, which were much disturbed in 1641. This is Tlachtga, an ancient site said to have been founded by the Celtic god Lug and a place dedicated to the cult of the sacred fire. It was the site of an important Oenach or gathering in pagan times which took place here at Samhain, the beginning of winter, and in which all of the men in Ireland took part. Tlachtga was said to be the daughter of a famous wizard Mug Roith who according to tradition is credited with having cut off the head of St John the Baptist.