

Those Halcyon Days of 'Souterraining' in County Cork in the mid 1970s.

In the photographs below the dry stone built site is at Kilclogh town-land [from **Cill Clog** i.e. cell (**cill**) of the bell... handbell...**note my references to souterrains and handbells in the files on this website above this file**... or was it actually **Cill Cloch** (i.e. cell built of stone / stones?) in the area of Blarney / Tower, Co. Cork i.e. what was once part of the **Muscraighe's** tribeland.

There was no immediate surface association evident (ploughed out in earlier times?) for this well built, pristine condition, souterrain but there was a local folk memory of a **cillín** (i.e. little cell) in the next field. Prior to discovery during ploughing there was nothing known of the site within recent living memory.

The Clay tunnelled site is **Carhoovauler** (Baldr's (Viking acquisition?) Land Quarter (Carhoo)?). It is situated in what was **Corca/ú Laoidhe** tribeland (Carbery heartland of it). The photo with the stone pillar and capstone is part of the entrance chamber immediately beneath the surface of the ringfort interior (the **lios** space). There are three ogham inscribed pillars in this chamber. Note that like several other Cork souterrains with ogham stones (e.g. Ballyknock North in East Cork) there is no dry walling present. Also, like the tunnelled souterrain at Underhill, also in West Cork, ogham inscribed stone slabs are used to construct an entrance area for what is otherwise a tunnelled souterrain. Does this indicate that the ogham inscribed stone slabs used were selected because of a sacred (eremetic?) association to act as protection at the entrances to these sites?

The inscriptions at Carhoovauler read 1. **Scamagni**, 2. **Conann M [aqi] S...**, 3. **Domngen** [derived from Domus, Dominus e.g. implying a lord or ruler perhaps but if so was it an ecclesiastical (abbot?) or secular association?].

Who were these people? What, if any, was their association locally, or with the ringfort specifically, and when and why were they they placed in an entrance chamber when a simple shaft from the surface would have sufficed as an entrance to the tunnelled area of the souterrain?

As a consequence of Viking raids along and south of the Bandon River and in this locality, did a Viking named Baldar acquire farm land to settle where a 'ringfort' based small hermitage existed? That univallate 'ringfort' i.e. **lios, was** in the civil parish of Desert Serges (i.e. the natural as well as monastic wilderness / wetlands named for saint of Pope Sergius and associated with that early **ecclesiastical See** focused on Kinneigh monastery). Kinneigh medieval (civil) parish abuts that of Desertserges. Kinneigh was a monastery with round tower (earlier one) which was founded by Saint Coleman in the early 7th century and which was destroyed by a Viking raid in the early 10th century AD...Laravoolta / **Laura Bhualite** i.e. a 'laura' hermitage which was beaten up, smashed ?). Consequently. the present monastic remains were constructed in the 11th century - including a new round tower (the present one) at a new location a short distance away.

The monastery at Kinneigh was under the protection of the local O'Mahony clan but one wonders, given the scenario which appears to have occurred at Peake (**an péic** i.e. a place where two ramparts intersect e.g. a good site location indicator?), in proximity to where Saint Olan once had his hermitage and **cluain** at Aghabullogue, and very close to that

great medieval monastic house at Donoughmore (Donaghmore) north of Dripsey, where a Viking settlement at a **Linn Dubh** near **Inis Luinge** on the River Lee, in O'Mahony lands there, and where **Brian Ború's** had his revenge, if alternatively, at Carhoovauler a Viking acquisition of farm-land and permanent settlement was successfully established unlike what happened at Peake / Donaghmore? See Charles Smith's History of Cork re Rev. Marmaduke Cox's report of the discovery in the mid 18th century of a souterrain at Peake County Cork [online] and though it may sound exaggerated, perhaps it is not so if what its content partly reflects was a mass deposition and burning of slaughtered bodies in the aftermath of Brian's vengeance in revenge for the murder of his brother King Mahon by Viking settlers because of local O'Mahony and as well as monastic relations with the settlers? How many other South Munster river-fronted or coastal monasteries in creeks or coves had trade and settlement relations with Viking settlers prior to Brian becoming High King and banning such associations...Gill Abbey at Cork, Molagga's Timoleague, Rosscarbery...?

Underhill (**Bun an Chnoic** (i.e. bottom of the hill ...but was this the actual place name or have both original place/ field name and sub-denomination name been long lost?) is located to the south west of Kinneigh. Was it part of its early medieval (i.e. pre-12th century reforms?) **Ecclesiastical See** and was Desert Serges (Sergis?) the 'Desert' (**Díseart**) lands / wilderness / Egyptian monastic tradition hermitages (**cluanna**) of that once large monastic demesne and its ecclesiastical **See**?

If so, does the placing of ogham inscribed slabs in the entrance areas of two clay tunnelled souterrains i.e. Underhill and Carhoovauler, imply that this type of action was not, at least uncommon, at some of the hermitages of the **See** lands of this early monastery and if so was this a trend evident at hermitages elsewhere and an explanation for other souterrains with ogham

inscribed slabs associated with known or no longer known hermitages in South Munster?



