



Recovering artefacts. Naul Community Dig 2019



A Parnell pipe. Photo: Nuala Quill



Digging Trench 1, Summer 2019



The Seamus Ennis Arts Centre. Photo: Chris White

The Cottage The Seamus Ennis Arts Centre

The cottage at the Seamus Ennis Arts Centre has been at the centre of life in Naul for the best part of a century. Around 1900 the cottage, the then home of the Colgan family, became the new village post office. The Naul Fife & Drum Band used the house as a band practice room in the early part of the twentieth century and in 2001 the Seamus Ennis Arts Centre and Café opened here. A music and arts venue dedicated to the support and development of traditional music, it was named in honour of Seamus Ennis, the renowned uilleann piper, folklore and music collector who lived nearby. Outside stood the 'Big Tree', a red chestnut planted as a marker between the estates of the Woods and Hussey families. It became diseased and was replaced with an oak tree in 2017.



Inn at Killian's. Photo: Roger Blackburn

Inn at Killian's

In days gone by Naul was an important village on the main road from Dublin to Drogheda and the mail coach stopped at Killians to change horses before going on to Drogheda. An iron loop remains fixed to the end gable of the pub from when horses were hitched here in more recent times. It is recorded that Daniel O'Connell, the Great Liberator, dined here during his Repeal Campaign. Many characters have frequented this establishment for a quiet pint, over the years, from Brendan Behan to actor Brendan Gleeson, who in recent years entertained locals with his fiddle and grá for traditional music.

Sources: Ian Lennon, Naul Community Council
Christine Baker, Fingal Community Archaeologist

www.fingal.ie

Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall
Fingal County Council



Naul An Aill

Naul Community Dig 2019

The Naul Community Dig 2019 took place during Heritage Week at the request of Naul Community Council, with the aim of engaging members of their growing community with the village's historic past. Almost 40 volunteers took part and included those of different generations from the immediate locality and the growing Fingal archaeology community.

Two trenches were excavated in the Sexton's field to the rear of Naul's historic graveyard. Glimpses of medieval Naul were evident in the recovery of a plough pebble and four sherds of medieval pottery from the excavation. All were datable to the thirteenth century which coincides the surviving historical record. In 1292 the land in the Naul was divided into two large fields-the carrot field containing 140 acres and the mill field containing 120 acres reflecting the arable nature



Local participants, Philip, Ian and Eoghan. Photo: Nuala Quill

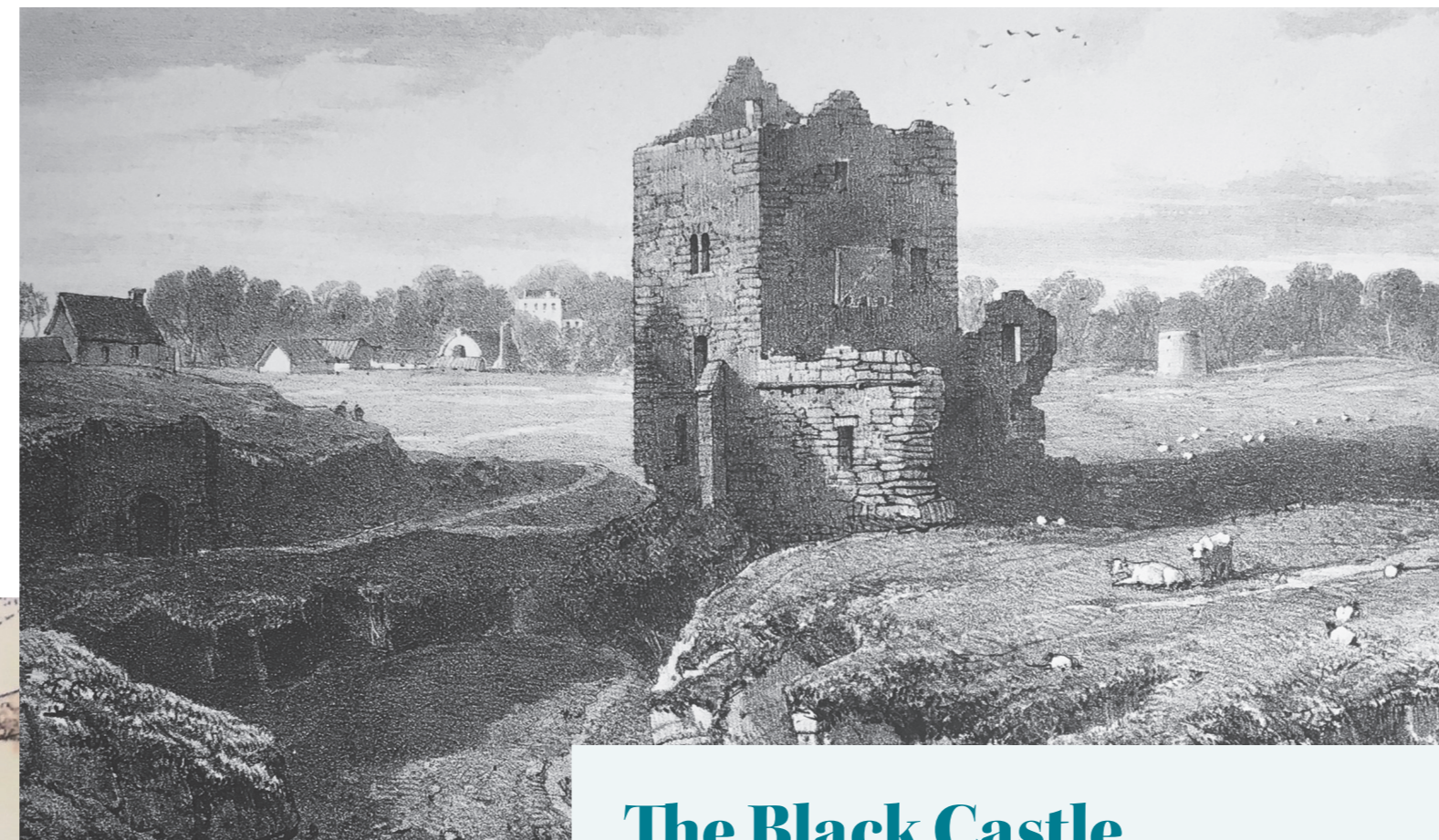
of land use. The archaeological evidence showed that the tradition of cultivation in this area continued into modern times with the remnants of nineteenth century furrows and cultivation soils. There were few personal items identified. However, the recovery of numerous clay pipe bowls and stem fragments gives an insight into some of the people of nineteenth century Naul. The number and diversity of clay pipes recovered is, perhaps, a reflection of the ubiquity of tobacco smoking. Despite being on the coach route from Dublin, the people of the Naul were not getting their pipes from there. Instead the pipes came from other Irish centres, such as Cork and were imported from Scotland and the Netherlands. The latter appear to have had the greatest desirability with both genuine imports and Irish-made copies of Dutch style pipes present in the assemblage. Also notable was the presence of pipes carrying nationalist slogans of the later nineteenth century. As a popular means of promoting a cause and expressing affiliation with a particular viewpoint or organisation the pipes recovered relating to Parnell and Home Rule, and the 1798 rebellion, can be seen to reflect political sentiments present in the Naul at the time.



The Chantry Chapel, Naul graveyard

Introduction

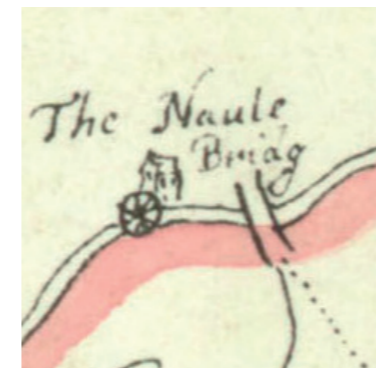
Naul derives its name from An Aill, meaning the cliff, which bounds the River Delvin. Located just south of the Dublin-Meath border Naul village is within a prehistoric landscape with the Neolithic ridge of Fourknocks passage tombs c.1.5km to the north-west and the Bronze/Iron Age Knockbrack hillfort and tumuli c.2km to the south-east. The area was apparently the location of a number of battles between the Irish and the Norse in the eleventh century. In the late twelfth century the Anglo-Norman manor was established at Naul with castles, church and mill at its core. Throughout the years the village was self-sustaining with its own forges, saddlers, bakery and barracks and remains a thriving rural community.



Naul Castle lithograph, by Robert O'Callaghan Newnham 1825. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

The Black Castle

Also known as 'Cruise's Castle', the castle was reputedly built by the De Geneville family in the late twelfth century before passing by marriage to Stephen de Cruces. However, the ivy shrouded structure that survives is a fifteenth century tower house. After the 1641 rebellion the Cruise family were dispossessed of the castle and their lands and in 1649 Cromwell attacked the castle putting forty of its defenders to the sword, with a lone female escaping. Legend has it that as she fled, Nellie Netterville placed a curse on the nearby White Castle that had been spared, and it is held locally that anyone who subsequently owned the White Castle did indeed suffer bad fortune. Oliver Plunkett, the last religious martyr to be hung drawn and quartered in England, is reputed to have been a frequent visitor to the Black Castle and is supposed to have been captured there.



Down Survey Map c.1655 depicting the mill and bridge

The Mills of Naul

There was a documented mill within the manor of the Naul from at least the thirteenth century and in the Civil Survey of 1656, the Naul has 'one corne mill & one tuck mill in use worth fifteen pounds'. An Arthur Mervyn was granted a sum of money from the Irish parliament in 1714 to erect granaries and mills at the Naul.

The eighteenth century flour mill replaced the earlier mill depicted on the Down Survey map. The Old Mill ceased operations between 1869 and 1906 and was roofless in 1934 when Oliver St. John Gogarty immortalized it in his poem To the Old Mill at the Naul.



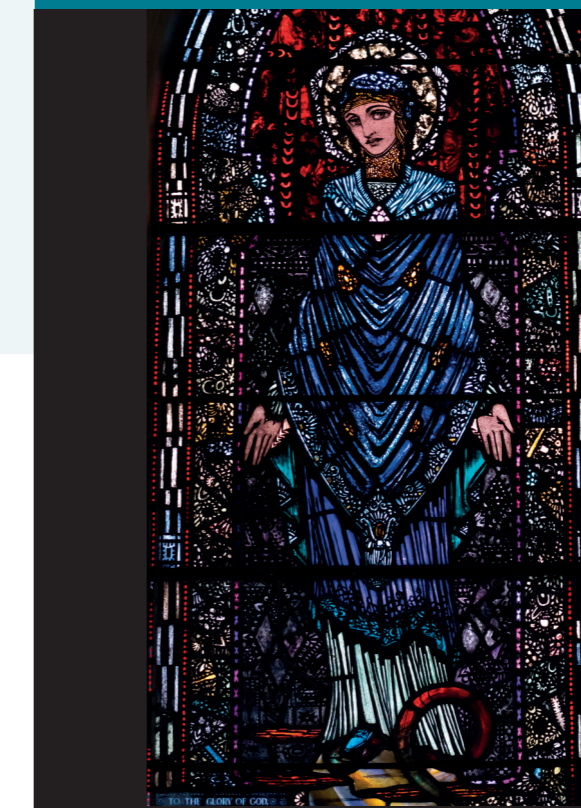
The Chantry Chapel, Naul graveyard

Naul Church

The medieval church of the Naul or Naul-Cruces as it was recorded in the extents was purportedly built on the site of an even older church. It formed part of the grant of lands by Archbishop John Comyn to the Priory of Llanthony in Wales.

The parish church was burnt down in the mid-sixteenth century and was recorded as being ruinous with only the walls standing in the Civil

Survey. The extant building was constructed as a chantry chapel in 1710 to house the remains of the Hussey family and features a wall plaque dedicated to them. Locals say that the missing north wall was never completed. Elements of the earlier church including an ogee-headed window have been reused and a nineteenth century cross is contained within the building.



Immaculate Conception figure. Courtesy of Helena Bergin.

Harry Clarke Windows

Harry Clarke (1889 - 1931) is deemed to be one of Ireland's greatest stained glass artists and is known internationally for his windows and illustrations. Fingal is privileged to have thirty-six windows designed by Harry Clarke in church buildings spread across the county, two of which are in the Church of the Nativity of Our Lady Queen in The Naul. These windows were commissioned in February 1926 at a cost of £115 each and depict the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Mr. Gilsean, a local carpenter and coffin maker was responsible for removing the old sash windows and preparing the openings for the new stained-glass windows that were installed after Clarke's death in August 1936.

“
That ruin on the naming Hill
Of Naul, with ivy on the keep
That looks down on a ruined Mill

”



Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1869 © 2019/OSI_NMA_05