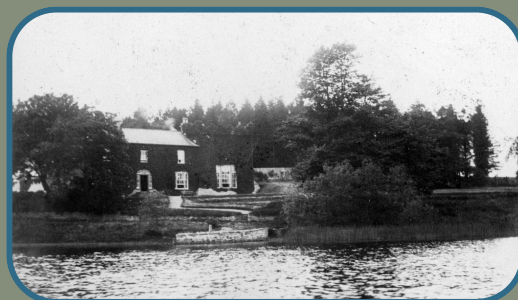


Davy's Island Fact Sheet



Background

Davy's Island is one of a chain of beautiful, wooded islands in Lower Lough Erne. Davy's Island, White Island and Inishmacsaint are rich in ecclesiastical history. The island lies in Castle Archdale Bay. It was originally called Inishmore (big island), while Inishbeg (little island), is the former name of Tom's Island which lies to the northeast of Davy's Island. By time of Pynnar in 1618/19 Inishmore was in the ownership of Sir John Davies as part of the Lisgoole estate and at this time assumed the name Davy's Island.



Island History

The origins of the ruined church are uncertain but may be associated with St. Constans. The church stands within an earthen enclosure, similar to the church boundary on White Island. The ruined 12th century church is a Romanesque building and is surrounded by a graveyard. The latest legible gravestone dates to 1762.

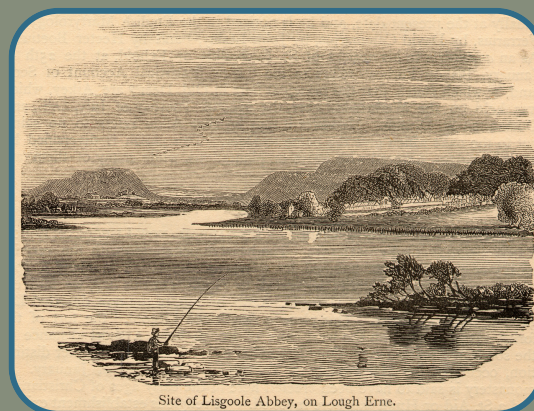
By the early 17th century, the island belonged to the Augustinian Canons at Lisgoole. Medieval coins found on the island support the theory that it once had a hostel for pilgrims en route to Lough Derg. Monks seemed to have chosen islands like Inishmore as they were good building sites, accessible when needed, remote when not, and sheltered from prevailing northwest winds.

The site was designated as an Abbey in Ruins by 1835, and in 1839 and 1905. Its place in the early Christian landscape of Fermanagh is significant. It was part of the nearby church lands of Ballymactaggart-where there was thought to be a chapel of ease. Close to the centre of the south wall of the church is a plain round headed doorway, re-erected in the 20th century. The arch and jambs are bevelled terminating at ground level in small pyramidal stops. Lady Dorothy Lowry Corry was of the opinion that the door arch and the outer face of the standing wall are original.



Lisgoole

Lisgoole, Lios Gabhail, the Fort of the Fork of the River, was home to three separate Christian monasteries between the 6th and the 16th century. In the 12th century a host of canons regular of St Augustine was established here, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. This monastery became the burial place of the Maguire lordship who were generous patrons. It flourished until the last quarter of the 16th century when it fell into decline. Subsequently Cuchonnacht Maguire established a Franciscan Abbey on the site in around 1583. The Abbey may not have been finished when the Abbey lands were confiscated, and the friars were forced to leave. In 1616 it is reported that John Davies had constructed a house for himself in the church.



Site of Lisgoole Abbey, on Lough Erne.



LOUGH ERNE — PILGRIM WAY —



Lough Erne is home to many religious sites, places of gathering, learning, worship, and burial. Today, we can trace these places along the lough as they quietly sit as timely reminders of a once thriving early Christian community.