Miscellanea

Excavation near Derrynane, Co. Kerry

(Interim Report)

A wedge-shaped megalithic tomb in the townland of Coomatluokane, overlooking Derrynane to the south of Waterville, Co. Kerry (O.S. 6-inch sheet 106), was excavated during March and April, 1967. This excavation continues the programme of excavation begun at Coom, near Ballinskelligs (see page 67), which is designed to provide further information on the structure and grave deposits of the wedge-shaped tombs of south-west Ireland, as a basis on which to examine their relationship with the 400 or so tombs of the same family elsewhere in Ireland and also with the presumed parent tombs in north-west France. It is hoped to continue the programme with further excavations of similar tombs in the area and of other sites of the same context.

The tomb at Coomatluokane faces West and is built on a ledge dug into the side of a hill which slopes steeply southwards. The gallery, 4 m. long, was enclosed in a tight cairn revetted by outer walling which averages somewhat less than one metre in height. This outer walling narrows from 3.60 m. in width at the western end to 2.10 m. in width at the eastern end, while the gallery narrows from 1.05 m. to 0.70 m. Very little cairn material was found outside the outer walling. A single large capstone roofed the eastern end of the gallery, on top of which a small amount of cairn was found under a light covering of peat, suggesting that the cairn originally covered the whole tomb. A large slab found lying in the gallery entrance may originally have segmented the gallery. A small quantity of cremated bone had been deposited in the centre of the gallery, but otherwise there were no finds.

The total area excavated in and around the tomb was 120 square metres. Exploratory trenches covering a further 50 square metres were excavated to investigate two terraces immediately below the tomb on its southern side, but no evidence of prehistoric occupation came to light there.

Michael Herity

Fulachta Fiacdh near Killinaboy, Co. Clare

In the parish of Killinaboy I have come across no less than twenty-three fulachta fiaidh or ancient cooking-places. They all have in common a kidney-shaped mound, showing two hollows, a position on the fringe of a marsh adjacent to freely flowing spring-water, and are usually in pairs from 50 to 100 yards apart. They are concentrated in the east of the parish where the limestone land is warm and more wooded, but on the west side, where the limestone merges with the Namurian shales and the land is cold and bare, I have found no traces of any such sites. Most of them are near obvious habitation sites, such as stone cahers, e.g. on the western shore of Shandangan
Lough, near Caherbullawn, and near Cahermore in Lackareagh, while others are near ancient population centres, such as Templepatrick in Poulalour townland, and Killinaboy itself. A particularly good example (Pl. VII: 3) is to be seen at Sghahard, immediately east of the boundary of Killinaboy parish. The most interesting location is one near what is locally called "The Druids' Rock" on the northern shore of a lake in Poulalour. On the Ordnance Survey map it is called Lough Avalla, but this is spelled Lough a Fulla by the natives and pronounced "loch-aw-fulla." This would seem to be translatable as "the lake of the two cooking-places," a fulacht being a variant of fulacht.

REVD. MARTIN RYAN

A Cross-inscribed Stone from Co. Tipperary

Recently, while examining a hillfort in North Co. Tipperary, the attention of the writer of this note and of Miss A. N. Sproule, B.A., was drawn, by Mrs Conn Ryan, Fantane N.S., Borrisoleigh, Thurles, to the existence of a cross-marked stone on the lands of Patrick Harrington, Cloghinch, Templederry, Nenagh. Mr. Harrington has generously presented the specimen to the National Museum (Reg. No. 1967:138).

When first noted, the stone lay with its decorated face downwards. It was on a slight rise in a field about one hundred yards from the right bank of the Nenagh River; beside it there was a bullaun stone, a roughly rectangular block of limestone, measuring 1.50m. long by 0.85m. wide and with a circular depression approximately in the centre of the flat upper surface, 15cm. in diameter and 7.5cm. deep.

The cross-slab is irregular in shape but roughly triangular in cross-section. On one face, which is flat and apparently prepared, there is a roughly equal-armed Greek cross enclosed in a double circle (Fig. 1). The internal diameters of the circles are 15.8cm. and 19.4cm. The ends of the cross are expanded as T-shaped terminals, each arm being approximately 7cm. in length. The work is executed by pecking. Outside the double circle, some letters, the remains of an inscription, are pecked on the surface of the stone. They read "NLAD." Before the "N" there are faint indications of another letter but it is not possible to state with certainty what it may have been, though it may be an "A."

The material from which the cross-slab is made is a medium-grained, ferruginous micaceous sandstone, which could be immediately local in origin.

The ornamentation, if such it may be called, of the Cloghinch stone is of the simplest—a Greek cross with expanded ends in a circle. The inscription is rudimentary and, as is usual with so many Early Christian monuments of stone on which letters are carved, of a low level of execution. It would appear, at first glance, that there is little which one can profitably say about the little monument.

1 Td. Cloghinch; Par. Templederry; Bar. Ormond; Co. Tipperary; O.S. 6° Sheet 35 (8mm. from the northern margin, 14.8cm. from the eastern margin).
2 For this identification the writer is grateful to Dr. J. S. Jackson, Keeper, Natural History Division, National Museum of Ireland.
Fig. I. Cross-inscribed stone, Cloghinch, Co. Tipperary.

Exact parallels to the ornament are rare, though the cross-in-circle motif is one of the commonest on Early Christian monuments in Ireland. The closest analogies, perhaps, are to be found on the well-known pillar-stone at Kilnasaggart, Co. Armagh. Here thirteen crosses are carved on the surface of the stone, twelve of them contained within circles. Of these twelve, five are almost identical with the design on the Cloghinch stone.

Lionard has pointed out that the cross with wedge-ends is "extremely common in Byzantine monuments of the sixth and seventh centuries and is likely to have been introduced into Ireland from Byzantine controlled areas." The validity, or otherwise, of the latter statement has yet to be conclusively demonstrated.

We are in no better position with regard to the date of the slab. The shapes of the letters and the treatment of the cross indicate clearly a date within the Early Christian centuries, but as Lionard has stated: "The fact that a particular form of cross was used in a particular year does not mean that this cross was not in use a century, or even five centuries, earlier or later." The Kilnasaggard stone may, perhaps, suggest a

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4 Lionard, P., PRIA, 61, C, 1930-1, 110.
5 Lionard, P., op. cit., p. 99.
closer dating. This was erected by one Ternoc Mac Ceran Bic to commemorate the dedication of the site to St. Peter. Ternoc died in 714 so that the pillar stone and its decoration may be dated to c. 700 A.D. Such a date is not unacceptable for the Cloghinch stone, though the evidence for it is tentative in the extreme.

Cloghinch is probably the site of some small early church or oratory about which history has left us no word. The writer was informed that at one time there had been several more cross-inscribed stones but that these had been rolled into the river by local children. Apart from the bullaun stone, there is no evidence of any former human activity on the site. The Annals do not mention the site and neither the Down Survey, nor the later Ordnance Survey memoirs refer to the existence of any ruins on the site. The Down Survey spells the name of the townland "Cloghinsie."

BARRY RAFTERY

*Annals of the Four Masters, A.D., 714.*

A Sheela-na-Gig at Clonlara, Co. Clare

Set into the parapet of the bridge across the canal at Clonlara, Co. Clare,¹ about five miles north-east of Limerick City, is a rectangular slab, 62 cm. high by 47 cm. wide, on which is carved a female figure of the type known as a Sheela-na-Gig,² and the date 1769 (Plate VIII). This carving was briefly noted by Westropp in 1899 who stated that it "was probably brought from one of the neighbouring towers of Aharinagh or Newtown."³ It was also included in a list of Irish Sheela-na-Gigs published in 1936, in which paper it was very inadequately illustrated.⁴ According to local tradition collected at the time, it was thought to have been removed from Newtown Castle "and to have been defaced by the land-owner about three generations ago."⁵ Only the head, shoulders, breasts, and upper portions of the arms are clearly discernable at present, the whole lower face of the stone having been hammered, thus effacing the legs and pelvic area of the figure. Sufficient can be traced, however, to indicate that the legs were splayed and that the right hand probably rested on the right thigh with the left hand on or close to the pubic region.

The outlined figure and the date are both deeply scored, with no immediately obvious difference in the technique of execution of either. Closer examination suggests

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¹ Td. Clonlara; Par. Kiltenanlea; Bar. Tulla Lower; Co. Clare; O.S. 6-inch sheet 53 (15.2 cm. from E. and 18.2 cm. from S.); Nat. Grid Ref. R.623.636.
² The exact meaning of the name is unknown, though it may originally have meant something such as "a hag"; the original Irish form is thought to have been Óighle na gcoth—E.M. Guest, JRSAI, 66 (1936), 127-8.
³ T. J. Westropp, PRIA, 21 (1898-1900), 356-7.
⁴ E. M. Guest, op. cit., pp. 107-129—the Clonlara figure is no. 51 in the list and is mistakenly located in Co. Limerick (pp. 117-8 and 123); the illustration is figure 25 on plate XIII.
⁵ Ibid., p. 118.
that the grooves forming the date are more angular than those delineating the figure, though this differentiation is uncertain due to recent re-scoring of the date, perhaps with a sharp stone, which may have falsified the evidence. The position of the figure closer to one edge of the slab than to the other, thus leaving a larger space at one side of the head for the reception of the date, may not be original: it would appear from the way in which the top of the head is now missing that the slab has been somewhat reduced in size since the figure was carved. This may have happened when the carving was being removed to its present site, presumably when the bridge was being built. The date 1769 probably commemorates this event, as the canal from Killaloe to Limerick was being constructed at that time. Work had begun on the canal in 1755, under the direction of Thomas Omer, but in 1767 an Act was passed setting up the Limerick Navigation Company to complete it. Though spending £25,000 between then and 1780 for this purpose, the Inland Navigation Commissioners had to take over the work in the latter year. Clonlara being some distance from either end of this stretch of canal, it would appear reasonable to believe that the bridge had not been built before the work was taken over by the Limerick Navigation Company, in which case the date 1769 would be quite acceptable for its construction. This, in turn, would clearly indicate that the date is secondary, being connected with the history of the bridge and not with that of any castle.

When the Sheela-na-Gig was carved is rather more difficult to estimate. These figures are most frequently found associated with medieval castles and churches, and the majority can apparently be safely assigned to that period. The weight of local tradition as recorded in 1899 and 1936 suggests that it was from Newtown Castle rather than from Aharinagh Castle that the carving was removed. Newtown Castle, now in ruins, is just over three-quarters of a mile south-west of the canal bridge. According to Westropp, this castle is called "Neadanura" and was founded "by Lochlain, son of Maccon, circa 1380." However, there are many later insertions in the existing structure, "implying need for considerable repairs about 1530," and it seems most likely, to the present writer, that the Sheela-na-Gig may belong to this period of renovation.

Enquiries made from people of the locality this year elicited no useful information about the carving, other than that some referred to it as "The Witch's Stone." The Right Reverend Monsignor Michael Hamilton, parish priest of Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, and a native of Clonlara, informs me, however, that as a boy in the early years of the century he had always heard it locally referred to as "Peadar Taithg Buidhe" or "Peadar Táille Bhuidhe," the origin of which names were unknown.

ETIENNE RYNNE

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7 T. J. Westropp, op. cit., p. 351.
8 Ibid., p. 352.
An Early Sixteenth-century Coin-Hoard from the Eastern Slopes of Mount Brandon

On page 495 of the first (1849-1851) volume of what was then the Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society (now the Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland) which appeared in 1853, Richard Hitchcock of Trinity College, Dublin, published a note on a small-find of silver coins "in the lands of Cloonsharragh near Cloghane, in the barony of Corkaguiny." The hoard is thought to have amounted to at least 35 coins, and Mr Hitchcock supplied the following description of three representative pieces which he submitted for exhibition at a meeting of the society:

"These appear to be in good preservation; the heads are in profile. The legends on the two large coins read: obverse, HENRIC. VIII. D.G.R. AGL. & FRANC.—reverse, POSVI. DEV. ADIVTORE. MEV.; that on the small one: obverse, HENRIC. VIII. D.G.R. AGL. & FR.—reverse much effaced, but not the same as that of the two large coins."

Elsewhere on the page the coins are identified as "two silver groats and a silver penny of Henry VIII," and we are also afforded the information that the coins were found when road-making in January 1847, at a time when Hitchcock was resident in Dingle Town, and that there was no trace of a container.

A further mention of the find occurs in Royal Irish Academy MS 24. E. 18, a Hitchcock notebook more usually consulted by students of Ogham but including towards the end a catalogue of his coins dated "Dublin 12th May 1848." The first three coins are described as "found with several others at Faha, near Dingle," and the map shows that Faha is in fact a locality a mile or two on the Dingle side of Cloghane. The road over the shoulder of Mount Brandon, however, is unsuitable for motor traffic and today is in places no more than a grass-covered track. The obverse legends of the groats are given as:

Henric VIII Dei. Grat. B.I.Z.F.

and:

Henric VIII D.G.R.Ag.I.Z.Fran

with the reverse legend in both cases:

Posui Dev adjutorem mev.

The obverse legend of the alleged "penny" is given as:

Henric VIII D.G.R.Ag.I.Z.Fr

and, significantly, no reverse legend is essayed. What is interesting is that this original record, for all its failure to recognize the contraction A(n)gl(lae), has preserved the 'Z' contraction mark which is characteristic of all three main coinages of Henry VIII. It seems clear, too, that the printed version of the obverse legend of the groats is an intelligent conflation and expansion of the variously terminated legends proper to the first and second coinages but not the third—after 1544 the Arabic numeral '8' was almost invariably substituted for the Roman 'VIII.'

Certainty is perhaps impossible, but the present writer's reconstruction of the forms of legend appearing on the two groats would be:

(a) HENRIC. VIII. D.I.G.R.AGL.Z.F

(b) HENRIC. VIII. D.G.R.AGL.Z.FRAN

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On this telling there can be little doubt but that the coins belong to the second or "Wolsey" coinage of Henry VIII which extended from 1526 until 1544. The first coinage seems precluded by the use of the contraction 'R' for REX, and we have already noted the Roman numeral as a decisive objection to the coins being placed later than the second coinage. The "Wolsey" coins of Henry VIII are, as it happens, very common, and with Mr W. A. Seaby, F.S.A., the writer has just published a note of a small find composed entirely of these second coinage groats which came to light some forty-five years ago at Ballyholme, just outside Bangor in Co. Down (Numismatic Chronicle, 1966, pp. 217-219).

The alleged "penny" presents certain difficulties. It is clear that the obverse legend is virtually the same as that of the groats. We are told, however, that the reverse is not the same as that of the larger pieces on which the legend can be reconstructed with fair confidence:

POSVI. DEIV. ADVIVTORE. MEV.

Second coinage pence, however, have an obverse legend H.D.G.ROSA SINE SPINA, and there is the further difficulty that Hitchcock's description infers a profile portrait whereas all Henry's pence prior to 1544 are of the so-called "sovereign" type with a seated, full-length likeness of the king. After 1544 a bust returns, but it is either facing or "three-quarter," while the legend remains the intractable H.D.G.ROSA SINE SPINA. Before 1526, on the other hand, there is not only the difficulty of the "sovereign" type, but the consideration that the obverse legend omits the numeral and seems never to read beyond HENRIC.DI. GRA. REX.AGL.Z whereas Hitchcock's readings clearly demand a legend HENRIC. VIII. D.G.R. A.G.L. Z.FR.

It is the submission of this note that the alleged "penny" in fact is a half-groat. Those of Canterbury and York of the second coinage qualify in every way, what with a profile portrait, a legend HENRIC. VIII. D.G.R.AGL.Z.FR., and reverse legends CIVITAS CANTOR or CIVITAS EBORACI which meet perfectly Hitchcock's requirement of one that is different from the POSVI legend of the groats. The half-groats, too, are relatively small, and could well be mistaken for pence by a non-specialist in the series, and particularly if clipped and worn. Useful, too, the half-groats of the two ecclesiastical mints are extremely common, so that the numismatist is not at all surprised by their occurrence in a context such as is afforded by the little hoard from the Dingle peninsula. In the 1552 hoard from Maidstone, halfway between London and Canterbury, there were 60 second-coinage half-groats from the ecclesiastical mints and only two struck at London, and for this hoard a date of concealment c. 1538 has been inferred.

It seems a safe assumption, then, that the hoard from Cloonsharragh consisted of groats and half-groats of Henry VIII's second or "Wolsey" coinage which ran from 1526 to 1544, and the probability must be that the coins were concealed within these limits. The half-groats are unlikely to be later than 1534, and the groats do not seem to be among the latest in that they eschew the Irish title adopted in 1542. It is possible that the occasion of the hoard was the major English debasement of 1544, but to be remarked is the apparent absence of the Anglo-Irish "harps" or harp-groats the issue of which began not later than 1535, and possibly but very doubtfully a year or so earlier. When the events in Ireland of 1534/1535 are taken into account, a date of concealment for the Cloonsharragh (Dingle) find c. 1535 ± 5 may seem very reasonable. We are thus afforded yet another instance of a hoard composed entirely of the so-called salfás money which was later to command a substantial premium—in a recent
Dr Gearóid MacNiocaill, M.R.I.A., and the present writer have suggested that the hitherto unexplained saljás represents English "half-face" (i.e. profile), the deceased coins which followed having a facing or three-quarters bust (Studia Celtica, 2 [1967], pp. 121-122).

Against the day, then, when we have an Inventory of Irish Coin-Hoards, it is hoped that the following summary of an unusual and interesting little find from the Dingle peninsula will be found convenient:

CLOONSHARRAGH, Faha, nr. Cloghane, Co. Kerry, January 1847.
35 (+?) AR English. Deposit: c. 1535 ± 5.
Three coins described by Hitchcock as representative of the hoard can be identified as being all of the second coinage of Henry VIII, two groats (regal) and one half-groat (ecclesiastical).
No container.

MICHAEL DOLLEY

The Kilmallock Raid, 1867

About thirty years ago I got a vivid account of the attack on Kilmallock barracks from one of the Fenians who participated in that affair. His name was Francis Hawthorne and he was then residing at Kilmallock. This account was substantiated and added to by Joseph Gaffney, of Kilmallock, whose father, Nicholas, had also taken part in the attack.

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John Clancy, of Grange, about four miles north of Bruff and about nine miles north of Kilmallock, was the local head of the Fenians in the Grange, Bruff and Fedamore area. (This is the same John Clancy who was the father of Seóirse Clancy, Lord Mayor of Limerick, who was brutally murdered one night many years later by Black and Tans.) In preparation for a rising, iron pikes (see following note) were made in a forge near the River Camogue and quite close to Clancy's homestead. Many days were fixed for the rising, but were cancelled again and again. At last, on the night of the 5th of March, 1867, the Fenians left their homes quietly, and in small parties assembled at appointed places. John Clancy and his men assembled near Bruff and it was their intention to capture the Bruff barracks, a well-nigh impregnable building. For some new unknown reason they by-passed Bruff. Near Kilmallock they captured a mounted R.I.C. orderly who had been sent by the police in Kilmallock to a Mr. Franks, the R.M. who lived a few miles from the town on the Bruff road. He had been sent to fetch instructions because the police in Kilmallock had sensed that something was wrong that night. When they read Mr. Franks instructions the Fenians knew that the E.I.C. in Kilmallock were ready for them.
All through the night the Fenians assembled in Gabbett’s Field, near Kilmallock Railway Station. Captain Dunne, an American Officer, had been previously appointed to take supreme command of the districts Kilmallock, Bruff, Grange and Charleville. The Fenians were badly armed and only a small number of them had shot-guns; others had the pikes forged near Grange.

The Bruree Fenians assembled in another field near Kilmallock. At 5.0 a.m. on the morning of Ash Wednesday, the 6th of March, the Fenians led by Dunne, O’Sullivan, Bradley and Walsh, advanced to the attack. They set fire to hay near the door of the barracks, but the alarm was sounded and the Fenians soon found that their old shot-guns and long-handled pikes were useless against such a formidable building and its trained occupants. After three hours fighting and with daylight coming, the Fenians were forced to withdraw as they had received word that Inspector Milling and a party of police were on their way from Kilfinane to assist their comrades besieged in Kilmallock. On the street lay two dead. One of them was Dr. Clery, of Kilmallock, who rode into the firing-line on his return from a sick call and who had been killed by a bullet fired from the barracks; the other was a Fenian from Bruree called Blake.

When the Fenians withdrew from the siege, one of their number remained faithful to his post near the river-bank and continued to pour shot at the reer of the barracks until he was surrounded and killed. We are not certain who this Fenian was, but he is now referred to as ‘The Unknown Fenian.’ He was buried in the graveyard at Kilmallock and on the stone over his grave is the inscription:

"Here lies one who loved his country well
And in her sacred cause untimely fell;
Let every honest heart who reads this scroll
Pray God save Ireland and his immortal soul."

THOMAS LYNCH

The Kilmallock Pikes

Not all of the pikes made near Grange, Co. Limerick, and used in the battle for the Kilmallock barracks (see previous note) fell into the hands of the enemy, at least nineteen of the pikeheads being hidden near the River Camogue, in Lower Grange, Lough Gur, on John Clancy’s farm. These were unearthed twenty-eight years ago by Thomas Bulfin, John Clancy’s son-in-law who now owns the land. Four of the pikeheads were so corroded as to be almost unrecognisable as such, but the remaining fifteen were in reasonably good condition. These were presented to Mr. Thomas Lynch, then teaching at Grange National School. Over the years Mr. Lynch gave away most of these to various people interested in such antiquities, and two years ago presented the last four to the Limerick City Museum where they are now placed on public exhibition.

The four pikeheads in the Limerick City Museum are all alike, having a relatively short leaf-shaped blade which is flatter on one face than on the other, two wing-like projections at the base of the blade, and a long socket with one nail-hole near its base (Fig. 2). Being hand-forged, none are identical and they vary slightly in size, the longest being 39.5 cm. and the shortest 35.4 cm. in length; the blades vary between 17 cm. and 15.7 cm. in length. Thirteen of the fifteen pikeheads received by Mr. Lynch
were of this type, the other two having a short sickle-shaped blade projecting from the base of the blade. The present whereabouts of the latter two pikeheads is uncertain, but Mr. Lynch recalls that he gave them, along with three of the others, to the late Revd. Professor J. Hynes of University College Galway.

Fig. 2. The Kilmallock pikeheads now in the Limerick Museum.

The pikeheads in the Limerick City Museum do not belong to any of the better-known types of Irish pikes as enumerated by G. A. Hayes-McCoy in a paper called "The Irish Pike," published in the Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society, 20 (1942-43), 99-128, and the Grange type would, therefore, appear to have been of local conception. Although it is clear to us looking back at it all now, that pikes were going to be as much a hindrance as an asset in 1867, it must be remembered that the pike was the characteristic weapon used in the majority of the many insurrections and revolutions which took place in 19th century Europe; besides, the Fenians may well have been thinking in terms of the almost successful insurrection of 1798 in which the pike played such an important role. Pikes were used in other Fenian engagements also, including the major battle at Tallaght, Co. Dublin (information from Prof. Hayes-McCoy). In other places, where no actual rising seems to have occurred though no doubt planned, pikes were being made and buried, much as at Grange. The following account of the seizure of pikes at Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary, as reported in The Irish Times of Friday, 3rd May, 1867, well illustrates this:

"Early on Saturday morning Sub-Inspector Maclaughlan, with a number of the police force, proceeded to the fields adjacent to the railway station in this town. The men were armed with spades, shovels, and spears, the latter about eight feet in length. They dug up the field, and about eleven o'clock fourteen elegantly finished pike heads were discovered carefully parcelled up. At this hour a large assemblage of persons had collected on the wooden bridge crossing the railway. The magistrates and many respectable persons also visited the place of discovery. The police continued their work, and about three o'clock succeeded in finding another large parcel of pikes. Several houses were searched by the officers and some of the men, and four persons were arrested. The police were followed towards the barracks by a crowd of men, women and children. Late in the evening a man named Elwood was accused by some of his own friends of giving information to the sub-inspector because he was seen in the same field, and was threatened. He was called an informer in the public street, by a man named Arragon. Complaints were made, and more arrests followed."

Etienne Rynne
3. Fulacht Fiadh at Sgahard, Co. Clare.
(Photo: E. Rymne)
Sheela-na-Gig at Clonlara, Co. Clare: outline of figure and date inked in.
(Photograph: E. Rynne).