

A Short History of Killannin Parish

Killannin parish is situated in South Connemara which was originally known as "Gnomore and Gnobeg". It stretched from the island of Inismhicatreer in Lough Corrib to Lettermore on the Atlantic. According to tradition the area was originally ruled by the McConroy's and the O'Heney's until the arrival of the O'Flaherty's and apparently they were forced to move west toward Clifden.

In the original (1839) ordnance map for Garrynagry you have what appears to be the markings of an old fort where the Father Ryan church stands. The area was known as "Lis Ard". The marriage certificate for Patrick Kelly and Bridget McDonagh of Goracarnaun in February, 1864 shows that the ceremony took place in the "Church of Lisard". Further North in the townland of Kylemore there appears to be a similar drawing. In the townland of Pullogh there is a hill listed as "Fairy Hill". Having regard to those markings we assume that this area has been populated for many centuries.

Old Killannin Church: There is no record of when this church was built, but having regard to the thickness of the walls and the large stones used, it is likely to be centuries old. Roderic O'Flaherty - 1629 - 1718 - in his writing of 1684 makes the following observations: The next parish of Gnomore is Kilanhin parish; but Kilanhin parish church is in Gnobeg, where the memory of St. Anhin, V; is celebrated the 18th January; and where her well is frequented on the north-east brink of Lough Lonan. This lake lies between Gnomore and Gnobeg, on an island wherof is the castle of Ohery; and where there is no recourse of water from it but underground.

Those writings were edited by James Hardiman of Galway and originally published in 1846 under the title "West or H-lar Connaught".

Other ancient churches are: Teampall Beag na Naomh, Boleyvaunaun; drawing by Doctor Willis c1860; St. Breacan's church and burial ground, Rosscahill East, Killaroon church, Laghtgannon, Old Wall in Killaguile, adjacent