

The Past In Your Pocket

ARDMORE CO. WATERFORD DIGITAL GRAVEYARD TRAIL

ARDMORE TIDY TOWNS 2024

Ardmore Tidy Towns is a voluntary group engaging in the enhancement and maintenance of Ardmore village, Co. Waterford. This guide is a heritage project for Ardmore Tidy Towns and has been written by local archaeologists Martha Hannon and John Tierney. The guide is based on the work of local historians such as Tommy Mooney, James Quain and Siobhán Lincoln (RIP), Richard Harrington agus Liam Suipéil.

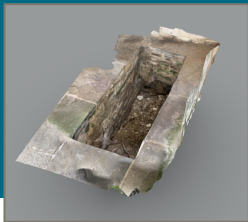
Recent research on Ardmore's archaeology has been carried out by Jacinta Kiely, Dr Paul MacCotter, Dr John Sunderland, Dave Pollock, John and Martha. The research was funded by various bodies primarily through the office of Bernadette Guest, Heritage Officer, Waterford Co. Council and the Community Monument Fund. Thanks to all who support Ardmore Tidy Towns.

MAP



In the following pages links can be activated using the QR codes or by clicking on the black boxes on those pages.

1. Fifth century grave



Probable original grave site for St. Declan of Ardmore. This is one of the oldest Christian graves in Ireland potentially dating to the 5th century AD. Situated within *An Beannacháin*, an 8th/9th century shrine chapel which was badly damaged and repaired after a 1642 Siege.



Traces of the oldest part of the shrine chapel are evident on the W side of the structure. Look for the lintel of the original low doorway at about shin height in the west gable.

<https://qrco.de/bfFMTI>

2. The oldest memorial



One of three Ogam stones associated with the Early Medieval monastic site. The ogam spells Amadu which translates as the Latin word *Amatus* meaning Beloved. As Ogam stones are almost exclusively dedicated to males, we take this stone to refer to the nearby burial of a man named Amatus/ Beloved. Names in that era were very different to nowadays. (Ogam and Ogham are interchangeable terms). The adjacent ogham stone refers to the *Nia Segamon* clan/sept, a local dominant dynasty in the 400s AD.



<https://qrco.de/bfFMTX>

3. The oldest church



The oldest stone church, dating to the 800s/900s AD, is evident when you examine the stones in the north wall of the chancel, both inside and outwith the church. The largest dressed stones are much bigger than the stone used in later modifications. This chancel eventually became the Church of Ireland church during the 1700s before St. Paul's, further down Chapel Hill, was built in the 1830s. So this was both the earliest stone church in the monastic site and the last consecrated church used here in the inner sanctum.



Web story

<https://qrco.de/bfFMTs>

4. The round tower



WEBPAGE

The 12th century round tower measures approximately 29 m in height and 5 m in diameter externally at the base. The only door is located 4.2 m above ground level. Round towers were built without deep foundations which is one reason why the doors were placed at a higher level, so as not to weaken the structure. Round towers were built as part of a European fashion for bell towers. In the 12th century elite families in the Ardmore (*Ó'Faoláin*) region were competing with Lismore (*McCarthaigh*) for political power but ultimately failed.

<https://qrco.de/bfFMTy>

5. The west gable



WEBSITE

The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland has a good description of



what is carved on the west gable (<https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/>) of Ardmore cathedral. We have summarised the information in our website post (QR). The panels mainly show scenes from the Old Testament and also, probably, some local clergy/bishops/saints. These figurative carvings are not in their original locations but were placed here following the reconstruction of the cathedral later in the 1600s after a century of turmoil and warfare.

<https://qrco.de/bfFMUB>

6. Mason's of Ardmore



Headstone Story

This headstone appears plain and unremarkable but in 2015 digital archaeologist Simon Dowling identified nine different figures carved on both sides of this grave marker.

The faint inscription is dedicated to DW and LW, masons of Ardmore, who died aged 50 and 24 respectively. The headstone probably dates to the mid-1700s. Walsh and Whelan are two possible surnames.



7. Fuges vault



Local historian Tommy Mooney tells us a team of German students cleaned up the interior of the cathedral in 1965/6. As part of that process the red sandstone graveslab was removed to reveal the Fuges' burial vault beneath. Tommy and Jim Rooney examined the vault along with Jimmy Flynn (RIP) and Donal O'Brien (RIP). The vault is over 3m deep as is shown in the photograph shown in the story link above. The Fuge/Fudge's buried their people here from at least 1711 onwards.



<https://qrco.de/bfFMUO>

8. Fox's grave



In 2016 local historian James Quain told us the story of John Fox's grave. Situated on the north side of the graveyard the gravestone inscription refers to John Fox who died in March 1877. John Fox was a missionary of the Protestant faith whose fluency in the Irish language made him notorious amongst local Catholics as he couldn't be easily fobbed off. Fox represents an interesting element in the competition between Catholics and Protestants in Ardmore.



Gravestone

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