

THE HISTORY OF THE BANTRY FRIARY AND THE ABBEY GRAVEYARD

BANTRY WALKIN

ICONS AND SIGNIFICANT BURIALS

The Bantry Abbey graveyard stands on the site of the old Franciscan Friary, founded around 1460, and situated on a headland to the west of Bantry. The Friary was nominally suppressed in Tudor times, although the Friars probably remained until the Friary was occupied by English forces in 1580. In 1582, the English contingent was defeated and the Friars presumably returned. In 1602, Donal Cam O'Sullivan demolished the Friary to prevent its use by English forces under Sir Thomas Carew. Donal Cam promised to rebuild it once the war was over, but his defeat at Dunboy Castle led to his exile to Spain.

The Abbey grounds have been used for over 400 years as the main graveyard for Bantry. The graveyard has been extended over the centuries and since 1909, has included the Protestant plot as the old burial ground at Garrymurchadha (Eng. Garryvurcha) in the town was full.



Above: Elizabethan Map c.1558 of Bantry Bay showing the Friary at Bantry. Courtesy of British National Archives, Kew

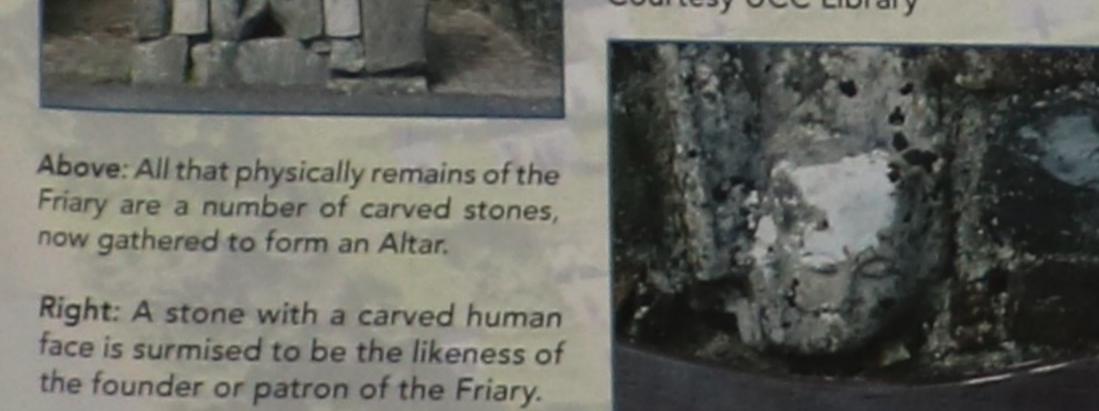
Right: This watercolour is included in

the Bantry Estate Papers now lodged



now gathered to form an Altar.

n the Special Collection and Archives f the UCC library. It is undated but is thought to be in the style of Richard White, (1767-1851) Viscount Berehaven and later 1st Earl of Bantry. Courtesy UCC Library















Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta

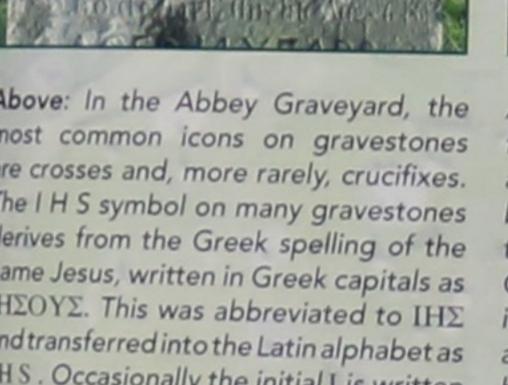


An tÚdarás Náisiúnta Forbartha Turasóireachta

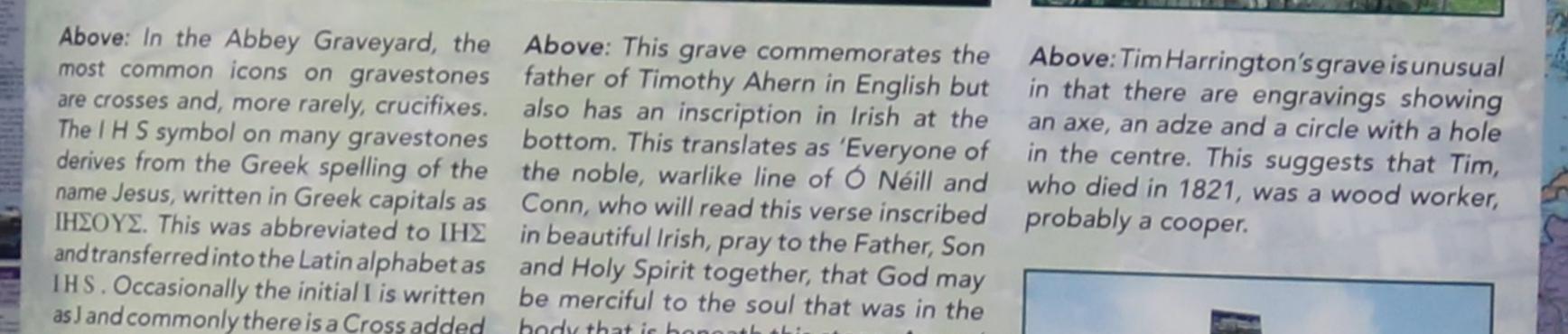
Humans have been carving and inscribing rock for at least 10,000 years. Indeed, it is now thought that our Neanderthal ancestors carved rocks at Gibraltar 39,000 years ago! Perhaps the most spectacular carvings in Ireland are the icons at the passage tomb of Newgrange. These were carved in the Neolithic Stone age around 5200 years ago.

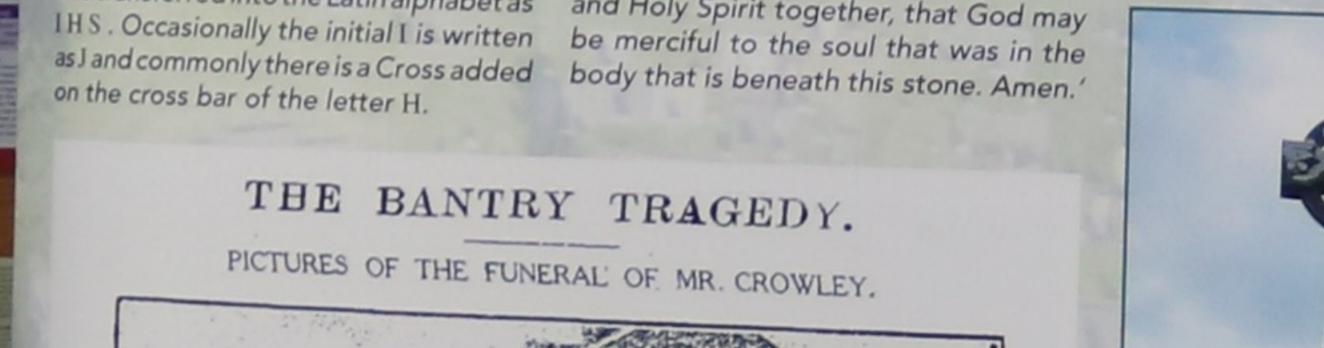
Today, the most the obvious stone carvings are on ancient monuments and gravestones. As well as the names and details of those commemorated, gravestones often contain icons; pictures and logos of a religious nature, although sometimes icons relate to the job or trade of the deceased person.

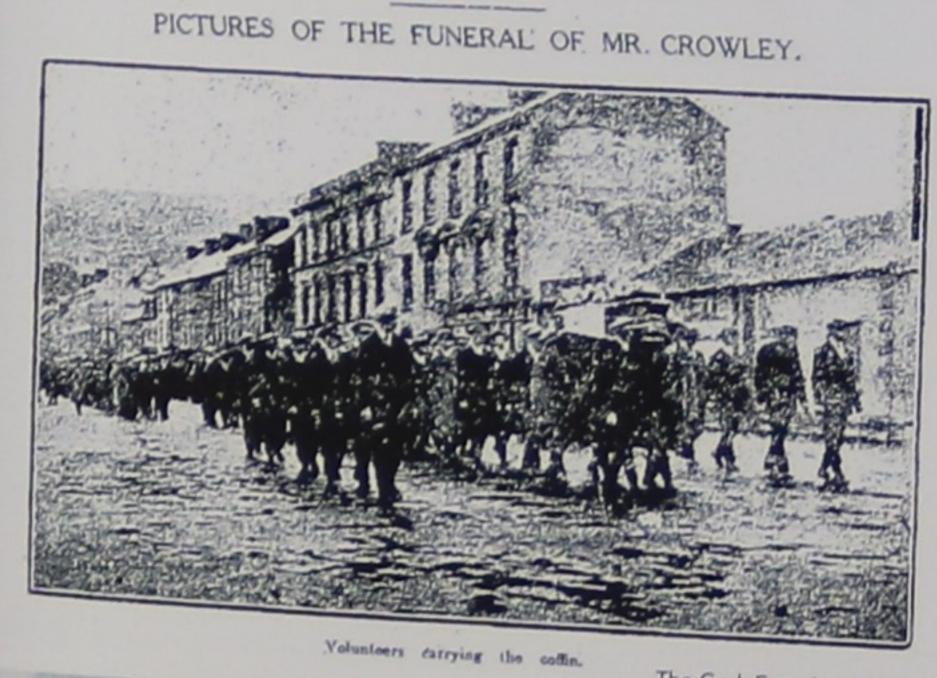




on the cross bar of the letter H.

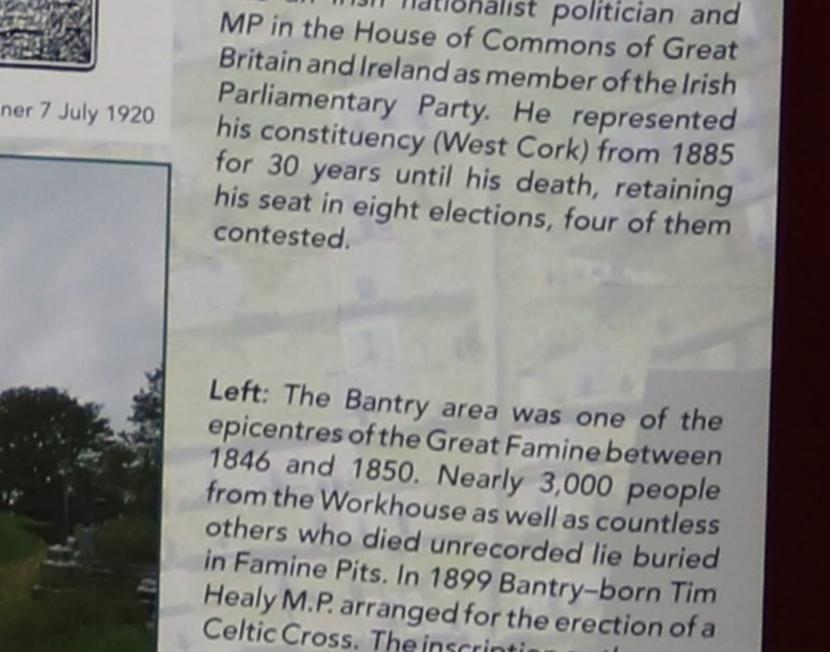






Above: On the night of 25-26 June 1920, four disguised members of the Crown Forces raided the Crowley home searching unsuccessfully for two of the sons, active in Sinn Fein and the War of Independence. A third son, Con, a cripple, who was in bed, was callously shot several times and killed. On the same night a number of homes were fire bombed by police as well as the store of Mr W.G. Biggs, a Protestant and Unionist. The store was saved by the prompt action of town residents. Courtesy the Irish News Archive website. Local Studies & Learning Department. Cork City Library.





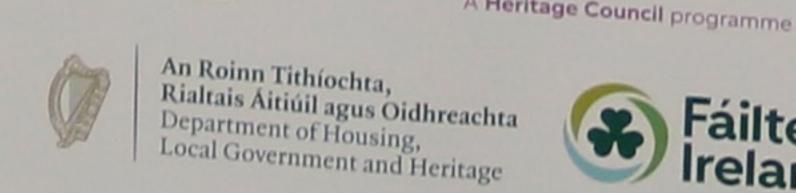
Left: The Bantry area was one of the epicentres of the Great Famine between 1846 and 1850. Nearly 3,000 people from the Workhouse as well as countless others who died unrecorded lie buried in Famine Pits. In 1899 Bantry-born Tim Healy M.P. arranged for the erection of a Celtic Cross. The inscription on the cross says "TO MARK THE FAMINE PITS OF 1846-8. MAY GOD GIVE REST TO THE SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED."

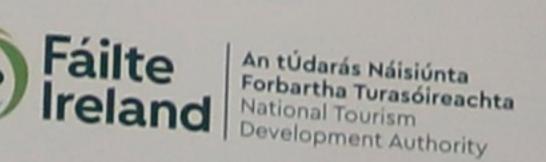
Above: James Gilhooly (1847-1916)

was an Irish nationalist politician and









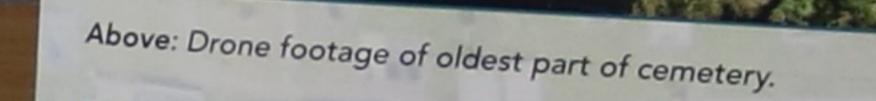


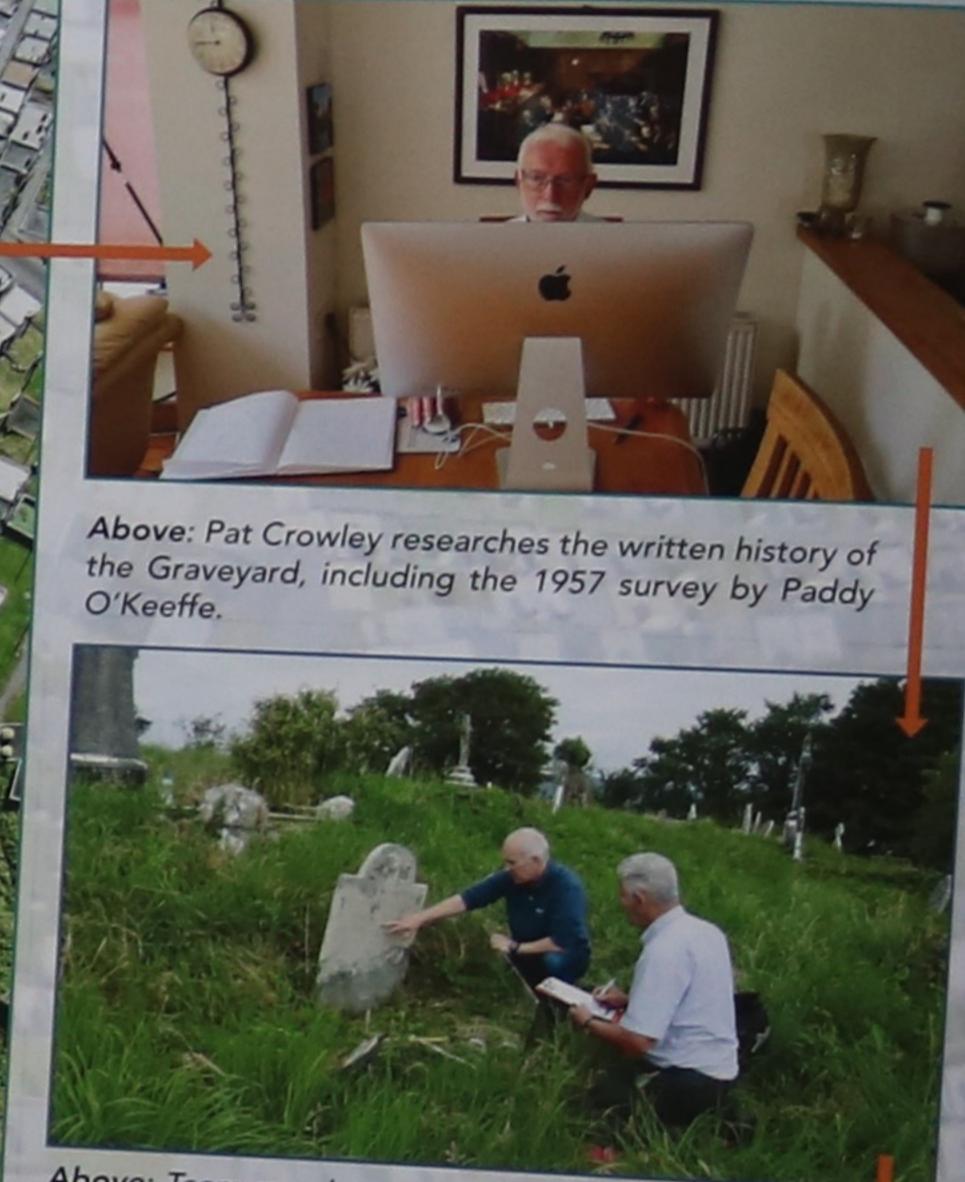
RECORDING THE GRAVES

The survey of the Abbey graveyard began in July 2021 and since then, members of the Bantry Historical and Archaeological Society have been recording the inscriptions on the headstones. At the start of the project, a drone survey of the graveyard was made. From this survey, the oldest part of the cemetery was identified and over 350 graves in this area have now been recorded.

Each grave was assigned a alpha-numeric identity code for the graveyard and the individual graves in it. Each grave was photographed with a camera which also recorded the GPS coordinates of the grave.







Above: Team members record the inscriptions on the grave adding a description of the memorial, its shape, condition and any icons visible onto record sheet. Lichen-encrusted headstones require close scrutiny!



Above: Members of the research team Above: Dorann Cafaro of the research meet with Jacinta Keily, from Eachtra team, transfers the gravestone progress and plan the next area to be computer spreadsheet. investigated. From right to left Jacinta



Archaeological Projects to review information and photographs to a

Keily, (Eachtra), Seamus O'Shea, Bernard

This information will be available in Above: A completed record sheet. and Teresa Moran. Missing is Geraldine historicgraves.com and findagrave.com.

N.B. Public input is an important aspect of our research in that family members may have more information than what is available in the inscribed words. Please contact us by e-mail at bantryabbeyproject@gmail.com, or write to Bantry Historical and Archaeological Society, The Bantry Museum, Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry, Co Cork.



