

Carrignamuck Castle

The Castle of Carrignamuck (now generally known as Dripsey Castle) stands on a solid rock near a bend of the river Dripsey, and about a mile from the village of that name. It has a striking appearance in the scenery of that locality, and forms one of a chain of such edifices extending from Blarney to beyond Macroom – all formerly in the hands of the Lords of Muskerry. The meaning of the name Carrignamuck is “Rock of Pigs”, and it is said to have been so called from a pass, by the river near it, where pigs used to be killed. This castle is in better preservation than other ruined castles in the county, which is doubtless due to the care taken of it by the Colthurst family since it came into their possession.

Externally the castle appears as a rectangular tower or keep, whose base measures 42 feet north to south, and 32 feet east to west, with a rectangular flanking tower or fore building projecting from the east wall at its north end, of dimensions 17 feet north to south, and 10 feet from the east to its junction with the wall of the keep. Within the tower

there are the two lowest floors, still more or less complete, and capable of being utilised and, above these, traces of two higher floors, making four in all, in addition to the basement of the castle. On the summit the castle has a ridged roof of slate, placed there by the late Mr Joseph Colthurst, for the preservation of the building. The Castle of Carrignamuck was erected by Cormac Mac Teige MacCarthy (known as “Cormac Laidir”), Lord of Muskerry (1448-1494) – the same person who built Blarney and Kilcrea Castles, from each of



which

Carrignamuck is about eight miles distant. It was the custom for the Lords of Countries to place some relative in each of the outlying castles within the Lordship, who was there as his Lieutenant, and headed the

Dermod Mór MacCarthy, a son of Cormac MacCarthy Mór, of the main line was born in the year 1310. In 1353 he was acknowledged and created the first Lord of Muskerry by the English administration. The lands passed down to the ninth Lord of Muskerry, Cormac McTeige MacCarthy Láidir, who succeeded in 1449. He was a great builder and financed the construction of the third (and present day) Blarney Castle, Carrignamuck in Dripsey and Kilcrea in Ovens. All are significant structures in their own way. These tower houses all marked access routes across undulating topography and in areas of tributary rivers. It was also the custom for the Lords of English lands to place some relative in each of their castles. Cormac Láidir’s own brother Eoghan, the chosen relative, was stationed at Carrignamuck. Being only just kilometres from the walled town of Cork, the MacCarthys had a significant role to play in playing political power games in the region, and knowing the potential of taxing goods travelling through their lands bound for export and offering security for the English administration.

“Rising Out” from the district under his charge when the Lord called out his muster. The Public Records show that while the Lord of Muskerry held Blarney as his residence, his tenant (successor presumptive) was always posted at Carrignamuck, and had a manor and demesne there, which thus followed the fortunes of the superior Lord. Cormac Laidir’s own brother, Eoghan, was stationed at Carrignamuck as tenant. Unfortunately, some quarrel arose at this castle between the two brothers, in the

course of which Cormac received a wound from which he died. By reason of this murder of his brother, Eoghan's claims as tanist were set aside, and he was debarred from succession. The custom of the tanist residing at Carrignamuck continued during many generations. On the death of Sir Cormac MacTeige, in 1583, his next brother Callaghan succeeded as Lord of Muskerry; but at the end of the year he made over the Lordship to his nephew, Cormac MacDermod, the next in succession by tanistry, and resumed his residency at Carrignamuck, where he remained as his nephew's Lieutenant. He continued to keep the lands and manors permanently, and became the founder of the branch called the MacCarthy's of Carrignamuck. His son Cormac enjoyed the estate, but

This county Cork family was a junior branch of the Colthurst family, baronets and were descended from James Colthurst, brother of the 1st Baronet. John Colthurst of Dripsey Castle married Jane, daughter of John Bowen of Oak Grove, county Cork. Three of their grandsons lived at houses in West Cork, John Henry at Dripsey Castle, George at Carhue House and Joseph succeeded Henry in 1865. Their granddaughter Peggy married Alfred Greer and this couple were living at Dripsey Castle in the 1870s. Alfred Greer appears to have purchased part of the Dripsey estate, which was advertised for sale in October 1851. It was comprised of over 1,900 acres in 1851. The Greer's daughter Georgina succeeded to Dripsey Castle. In 1878 she married Robert Walter Travers Bowen, who took the additional name of Colthurst in 1882. It was their son, John Bowen Colthurst, who ordered the shooting of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington in 1916. In the 1870s George Colthurst of Carhoo Lower and Joseph Colthurst of Carrignamuck, Coachford, owned 284 and 463 acres respectively in county Cork, while Alfred Greer of Dripsey owned 930 acres in county Cork and 244 acres in county Armagh.

forfeited it in 1641. The castle was besieged and captured by the Cromwellian troops about 1650. The besiegers placed their cannon on a low hill – there are still traces of the shelter trench – at the opposite side of the Dripsey river, and made a breach in the east face of the castle in the outer of the double walls on that side, still noticeable, though afterwards built up. The castle, town and lands of Carrignamuck were put up to sale at Chichester House Dublin on 6th November 1702, and were purchased by George Rogers Esq of Cork. Some years afterwards they passed

Georgina de Bellasis Bowen-Colthurst (1855 - 1921)

Georgina was born on 2nd March 1855 in Cork, Ireland. Her parents were Alfred Greer and Peggy Bowen-Colthurst. She married Robert Walter Travers Bowen-Colthurst on 15th August 1872 and the couple had four children: Mary, John, Peggy and Robert. They lived at Oakgrove and Dripsey Castle in Carrignamuck, Co. Cork, Ireland.

Georgina's WW1 Collection 'It is for Man to choose' was published by Elkin Mathews in 1920.



It was dedicated to the memory of her son, Robert Macgregor, who was born in 1883. He was a Captain in the 1st Battalion Leinster Regiment and was killed in action on The Western Front.

The inscription read: 'To my grandson, Patrick, in memory of his dearly-loved father, killed at St. Eloi, 15th March 1915, in the World War.' Captain Robert Macgregor Bowen-Colthurst is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial in France.

Georgina died in 1921.