



NENDRUM

Ulster-Scots Translation

NENDRUM

Tha Coontie Doon

Tha Steidin

Ye'll fin Nendrum sut at tha SW. enn o Mahee Isle, an isle tha shape o an L, jist aff tha W. shore o Strangfirt Lough. Theday it's got at awa doon a twustie road an oot owre causeys, but a hunnèr yeir bak ye wur gart wad oot or tak a boat. Some auld monastries on isles wur in hidlins an oot o tha wye, an richt eneuch Nendrum is jist noo a real beautie spot, but in tha days o tha Furst Christ-yins it wusnae oot o tha wye ava. It wus aisie got at owre tha wattèr frae tha shores o Airlann an frae mair far aff in noarth Britain.

Fowk Historie

Mahee Isle taks its name frae St Mochaoi. Tha scribevit Annals hae twathie accoonts o Mochaoi deein at differin dates in tha 490s, but tha Annals isnae tae be taen on trust that lang syne. Tha Thrie-pairt Life o Petherick, scribevit about 900, haes quhit-wye St Petherick convertit tha yound pig-mindèr, Mochaoi, an left him wi a gospel an cruik. Nendrum michtnae hae bin a monastrie in tha 4 hunnèrs; yin thocht is that Mochaoi wus a missionarie bischop wi his hame here. A weel-kent story micht hae cum oot o tha faa an rise o a gye an auld kirk. Mochaoi went oot fur tae cut timmer fur a kirk an slep throch a burd singin thrie tunes, fiftie yeir fur ilka sang. Eftèr this sleep o 150 yeir tha saint, no onie aulder ava, cum bak tae tha monastrie tae fin naethin but tha aff-spraing o tha monks he had kent.

Historie

Tha picthur's plain tae see in tha 6 hunnèrs. Naethin dug up wi tha archaeologists show that fowk leaved here afore tha 6 hunnèrs, an frae 639 forrit tha Annals gie accoonts o kirkmen o Nendrum dee'in brave an affen, some o thaim bischops, abbots an yin scribevit. Ye can tak frae this that tha monastrie wus hoochin wi fowk, an yin auld kirk-buik taaks o 'nine times fiftie monks unnèr tha yoke o Mochoe o Noendruim', maist likelie at Nendrum an aiblins 'dauchtèr' monastries. Viking fleets wus in an oot o Strangfirt Lough in tha 8 an 9 hunnèrs, an we lairn that in 976 Setna Ua Deman, abbot o Nendrum, wus burnt in his ain hoose. Tha Annals disnae say it wus daen wi tha Vikings, but nae doot it wus. Thangs dug up wud gar ye think that monks leaved here lang eftèr this bother.

Eftèr he cum an run owre Ulstèr in 1177, Jhone de Courcy set up a wheen o monastries, yin belangin tae tha Benedictines on tha auld site at Nendrum, wi its mither hoose bein tha Benedictine hoose o St Bee's in Cumbria an its ain mither-hoose, St Mary's in York. Apairt frae twathie grants o lann, there's no a big lot knowed about this biggin o tha middle ages: it micht hae aye bin wee an likelie niver lastit lang. Tha papal taix leets o 1306 gies Nedrum as a parish kirk, an tha haunfu o accoonts eftèr this taak jist o parish kirkmen, no o monastrie life. At tha bak enn o tha middle ages

tha parish kirk wus shiftit tae Tullynakill on tha mainlann an tha kirk biggins on tha isle left ahint.

Naeboadie had onie mind o tha quhaur-aboots o Nendrum tae 18&44, quhan Wulliam Reeves (effèr he wus Bischop o Doon an Connor) cum leukin fur tha kirks made mention o in tha 1306 taix leets. On Mahee Isle he wus showed a 'lime-kill' an seen straicht aff it wus tha fit o a roon touer frae a monastrie, wi waa-heids o a kirk nearhaun. Reeves pit tha site doon as tha Nedrum o tha taix leets, an as Oendruim o tha alder scribevins. Nendrum stayed rin doon an a dunnèrin-in tae 1922-4, quhan H.C. Lawlor an tha Bilfawst Natural Historie an Philosophical Societie daen big digs an rennyvations. Hooaniver, baith wurnae well pit doon on paper an theday it's haired tae mak oot quhit-wye tae mak fu uise o tha wittens. Tha steidin wus rin wi tha Doon Coontie Cooncil tae 19&73, an frae then it haes bin rin wi tha Männystrie o tha Kintraside.

Tha Monastrie

Tha steidin taks in thrie raing dykes inside yin anither. These dry-stane dykes wus yinst heich eneuch tae gie guid defence agin atteck. Frae tha car-pairk ye'r fit tae get intae tha ootmaist stane forth, its waas wud hae tuk in about 6 acre, but noo tha waas is jist staunin here an there. Jist a pairt o this ootmaist dyke is rin wi tha Männystrie, an its important bits wud be a kill an twathie bits o waa. No a big lot is kent frae tha digs about tha ootmaist forth, but there micht hae bin a gate-keeper's hut an a guest-hoose near at haun. Auld monastries wur apen hoose tae travellers but kep thaim oot o reach o tha benmaist pairts. Tha rest o tha outmaist dyke cud hae taen in hooses fur tenants o tha monks, an orchards, gairdens, meadas an labour't grunn forbye.

Tha middle cashel haes tha shape o a pletfoarm inside o a retainin waa. Here an there it's brave an thick, up tae 20 fit, aiblins cumin effèr some wrang-daen rennyvations in tha 19&20s. In tha SW. pairt o this raing is a clatter o roon pletfoarms that maun hae bin fur timmer huts abane. Thaings dug up here show these micht hae bin warkshaps, yin a smiddy fur bronze-wark. Twa o tha foonds is close thegither an near block aff a gap rinnin doon tae tha ootmaist cashel. This disnae cum unnèr tha Männystrie, but leukin doon frae tha middle cashel ye can fallae tha line o tha ootmaist cashel dyke by wye o a change o slope. A dig in 1922-4 brocht tae licht an ingaun that wus fair on tha middle cashel gap, lea'in apen a road doon tae a wee stane-biggit key.

Up tha brae abane tha huts is tha schuil, a fower-square stane biggin. A dig fun it had a timmer an theekit roof an wus burnt doon. Thaings fun, lake airn styluses (fur writin on waix tablets) an test-pieces (flet stanes wi designs an lettèrs scraip't on thaim) wud gar ye think his wus tha monastrie's warkshop or schuil. Quhit tha stane-lined hole unnèr its SE. waa wus fur naeboadie kens.

There's ingauns til tha benmaist cashel on tha W., SE. an NE. sides. In this benmaist raing wus tha maist important biggins, kirk, roon touer an buryin grunn, oor draa'in o quhit micht hae bin thonner shows tha abbot's hoose forbye. Tha roon-touer stump, spotted by Reeves, wus rennyvate't by Lawlor. At tha furst it micht hae stuid 50 tae 60 fit heich, aiblins bigged in tha 9 hunnèrs, an uised fur tha monastrie's belfry an hidlins-hole fur fowk an pruch in times o trouble. Aiblins tha bell, picthur't on tha cover, wus rung frae tha tap tae mairk tha times o meetins. Tha kirk is in laich ruins; tha wast gavel an dorr is Lawlor's rennyvaton. Tha wastren pairt, wi its side waas sittin oot (antae), micht date frae tha 9 or 10 hunnèrs, an baith tha extension on tha aist side an tha wee clap-til on tha noarth belongs tae tha days o tha Benedictines. Pit up new at tha SW. corner o tha kirk is a sindial, yin o tha wyes tha monks wur fit tae tell tha time. Tha thrie main rays point tae tha times o tha thrie main kirk meetins, terce, sext an nones, at 9.00, 12 heich noon an 3.00, an tha in-between line mairks oot 1_ oor lenth.

Tha wrocht free-stanes wus maistlie fun wi Lawlor in tha 19&20s. Tae keep thaim safe he pit thaim intae tha new-biggid rennyvatit W. waa o tha kirk, an thonner the' wur tae 19&85, but the' wur wore doon gettin an wur taen oot for pittin on display inside. Maist maun hae bin heid-stanes in tha monks buryin-grunn, an the'r thwathie yins wi tha cross athoot onie raing an scoop't oot

'oxters', tha soart aye fun at Nendrum an roon aboot in tha Co. Doon. The'r a stane forbye wi a compass-drawn 'marigowl' pattren, draa'ed wi a compass, an a stane moul fur makkin bait-oot mettle lamps.

Outside tha wast dorr o tha kirk wus tha monks buryin-grunn, rinnin oot forbye tae tha N. an S. A wheen o stane-biggid graves can be seen, an rinnin throch thaim is a stane-fleg pad, roadin oot tae tha dyke waa (quhaur it carries on alang tha waa is bury't). SE. o tha kirk is mouns quhaur Lawlor fun a clatter o corpses bury't thegither, maist likelie effèr some soart o a disastèr, an E. o tha kirk in a squared-aff bit wi a waa roon it is anither buryin-grunn, this yin belangin tae tha Benedictines.

Quhit a day-tripper can see theday is jist tha stane fittins o a late stage in a gye lang uise o tha site, lastin frae tha 6 hunnèrs (or afore) tae tha 14 or 15 hunnèrs. Fur tha furst days o tha monks, afore tha 9 hunnèrs, a hale wheen o timmer biggins haes tae be thocht o, fur yin tha timmer kirk, abbot's hoose, kitchen, aitin haw, dwallin huts, workshaps, guest-hoose, dorr-keeper's huts an tenant-hooses, aa makkin up a fair-sized monastrie 'toun'. Tha picthur wi tha draa'in o quhit-wye it micht hae leuk't in tha 9 hunnèrs shows: tha roon touer, kirk, schuil, an aitin haw biggid wi stane, but aa tha ither biggins is timmer.

Thaings Dug Up

Abane aa is tha weel-kent bell (cover picthur), fun near tha ootmaist cashel dyke. It wus made o airn, dunk't in bronze, lake ye wud affen fin in Airlann, baith uisefu an a badge, alang wi tha cruik, o tha abbot's position. Tha 1922-4 archaeologie digs brocht up an owre ocht clatter o pruch, mair nor haes bin fun at onie ither auld monastrie site scrievit aboot tae this day. It tuk in ilkaday han-nlin thaings lake knives, nails an delf, mair stuff frae workshaps lake crucible bouls an moults, an even decorate't thaings lake brooches an pins. Tha stane test-pieces wi scrape't pattrens, some weel wrocht an some brave an reuch, mak an intèrestin gaither-up. Maist o tha Nendum stuff is in tha Ulstèr Museum in Bilfawst.

Mair Buiks H.C. Lawlor's *The Monastery of Saint Mochaoi of Nendrum* (Belfast, 1925). Tak tent quhan uisin this fur he didnae aye get thaings richt. An *Archaeological Survey of County Down* (H.M.S.O. 1966) gies a far mair level-heidit accoont. A wean's story-buik, *The Bell of Nendrum* (London, 1969) is by J.S. Andrews.

Ither sites nearhaun rin wi tha Männystrie wud tak in Mahee Caissle, at tha N. enn o tha isle forenent tha brig, biggid in 1570, Sketrick Caissle, within sicht tae tha S., Tullynakill Auld Kirk on tha mainlann tae tha WNW., Newton Dominickan Friar-hoose, an Greba an Inch, baith Cistercian monastries an baith wi a big differins o lay-oot wi Nendrum.

Quhit-wye tae get at it 6 mile S. o Cummer, alang bak roads aff tha A22 throch Ballydrain an oot owre caussey (nae guid fur lang buses).