



THE EARL BISHOP TRAIL

Charismatic Cleric

St Aidan's Chapel Tamlaghtard



Frederick Augustus Hervey (1730-1803)
©National Trust Images



The Earl Bishop Coat of Arms detail from stained glass window inside Tamlaghtfinlagan Parish Church
Image courtesy of L. Blackwood

Frederick Augustus Hervey (1730-1803), Bishop of Derry and 4th Earl of Bristol (hence, the Earl Bishop) was one of the most charismatic individuals to have ever lived in the North West of Ireland. He was not only a bishop but a scientist, geologist, politician, builder, art collector, traveller and a powerful proponent of religious equality.



Ruins of medieval church at Tamlaghtard
Image courtesy of L. Blackwood

St Columcille founded a church at Tamlaghtard in the 6th century. No trace of the original church exists but a church, now in ruins, was built on its foundations in medieval times. The Protestant community was worshipping here when the Earl Bishop arrived in 1768 but he erected a new church, St Cadan's, in 1773 for his parishioners and bequeathed the medieval church to the Roman Catholic community. The Roman Catholics made use of it until 1826, when the present Church of St Aidan was built alongside it.



St Cadan's, Tamlaghtard
Image courtesy of J. Hunter



St Aidan's grave
Image courtesy of L. Blackwood

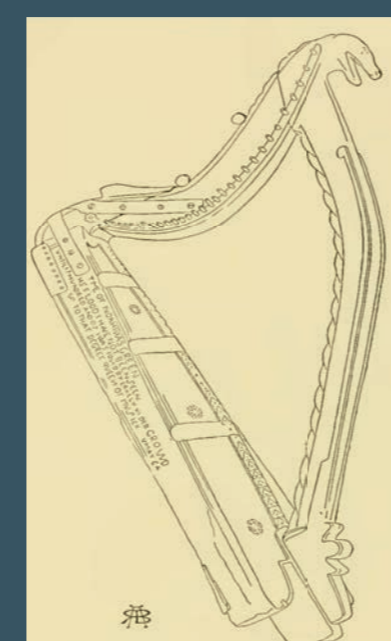


Denis O'Hampsey's grave
Image courtesy of L. Blackwood

Tradition connects St Aidan, some say St Cadan, with St Columcille's original church. The graves of St Aidan and of Denis O'Hampsey (1695-1807) stand alongside the ruins of the medieval church. Denis was one of Ireland's most distinguished harpers. The Earl Bishop was his patron and gave him land free of rent and funds to build his cottage.



Denis O'Hampsey
Image from Edward Bunting's book 'Volume 2: A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland', 1809



Downhill harp made by Cormac O'Kelly
Image from Robert Bruce Armstrong's book 'Musical Instruments - The Irish and the Highland Harps', 1904

O'Hampsey's harp bears the inscription:
*'In the time of Noah I was green,
Since his flood I had not been seen,
Until Seventeen hundred and two I was found
By Cormac O'Kelly underground:
He raised me up to that degree
That Queen of Musick you may call me.'*



The Allison family grave
Image courtesy of J. Hunter

The cemetery also has an interesting 17th century grave of the Allison's, an early Planter family. Joseph Allison set off for America in 1769; the family prospered and his grandson Charles became a rich banker and founded Mount Allison University, the first university in Canada. Near the church is a holy well, dedicated to St Aidan, which has its origins in pagan times.



Courtesy of Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

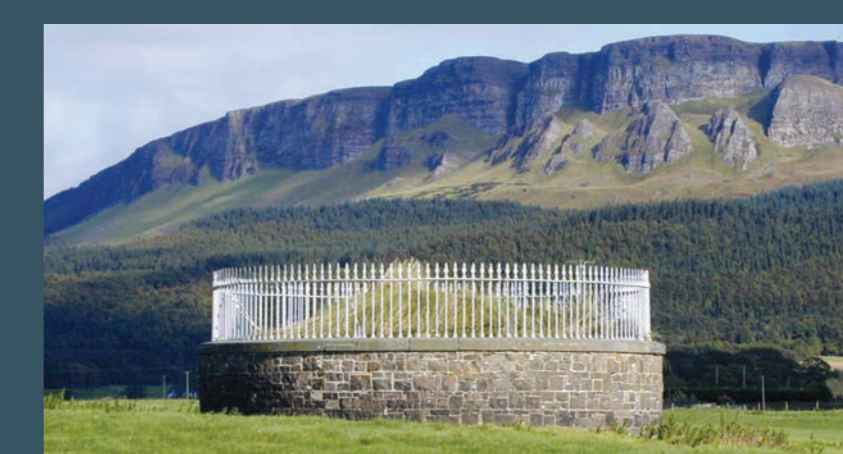
Places of interest in the area:



McPoyle thatched cottage
Image courtesy of J. Hunter



Bishop's Road
Image courtesy of J. Lueg



Minearney Base Line Tower, Magilligan
Image courtesy of J. Lueg

Places of interest nearby and visible from the road include McPoyle's thatched cottage where the Earl Bishop is alleged to have listened to Irish music; the Bishop's Road from Downhill to Limavady; and the site of Duncrun Abbey established around AD 450 by St Patrick.

In 1824, Thomas Colby selected the flat eastern shore of Lough Foyle to establish a baseline for the Ordnance Survey of Ireland. A series of Base Line Towers were established, including Magilligan and Ballykelly, and using a process of triangulation the first large-scale mapping of an entire country was completed by 1846.



Thomas Frederick Colby
Image courtesy of Ordnance Survey Ireland



Measuring the Base Line at Magilligan
Image courtesy of Ordnance Survey Ireland