

UNDERSTANDING THE ABBACY: AN EPISCOPAL MANOR AND ITS LANDSCAPE AT ARDQUIN, COUNTY DOWN

LIAM McQUILLAN

liam.mcquillan@communities-ni.gov.uk

In 2007 the ruins known as the Abbacy and elements of the surrounding landscape in Co Down were declared scheduled historic monuments (DOW 24:32, 24:33). The action was taken following re-evaluation of documentary sources and new discoveries on the site and in the immediate landscape. In 2008 the ruined walls which surround a red-brick farmhouse were conserved and a small-scale excavation within the nearby Church of Ireland graveyard was carried out. These processes prompted a continuing exploration of the site and facilitated re-examination of the historic structure, together enhancing the understanding of the building and its functional setting in the wider landscape.

INTRODUCTION

The Abbacy is located in the townland of Ardquin, some 4km north of Portaferry, Co Down. Four tall ruined gables are the most obvious antiquity at the location and these starkly frame a red-brick farmhouse constructed in 1904 (Pl 1). These upstanding masonry remains represent a T-shaped structure in plan (Fig 1) and are sited amid a functioning farmyard and garden on the northern part of the summit of a long, prominent drumlin. Towards the southern part of the drumlin summit stands the parish church of Ardquin, constructed in 1829, with an associated walled graveyard immediately to the north. The place-name Ardquin in its various manifestations is discussed by Hughes and Hannan (1992, 27) who suggest that its present form (the earliest attestation of ‘Ardquinn’ is in 1603) supports a translation as ‘Conn’s Height’. Other suggestions have included ‘Height over Loch

Cuan’ (Harris 1744, 47), and O’Lavery (1878, 402) has gone so far as to intimate that it may be derived from the ‘height of St Cowey’, an important saint in the locality who is associated with both St Cooley’s Wells and Lough Cowey. Importantly, the application of the term ‘Abbacy’ here as a place-name is unique in Ulster and it has been accorded to this site in documentary form since at least the 1700s (Harris 1744, 47; Hughes & Hannan 1992, 36–7).

The ruins received attention in *An Archaeological Survey of County Down* (hereafter ASCD) (Jope 1966, 255–56), wherein they are interpreted as including elements of the manor house completed by Bishop Echlin in 1620 (Duff 1979, 5), following his appointment as bishop of Down and Connor in 1613. When surveyed for ASCD by Dudley Waterman, upstanding remains further to those extant today were visible above ground. This evidence, along



Pl 1 The ruins known as the Abbacy.

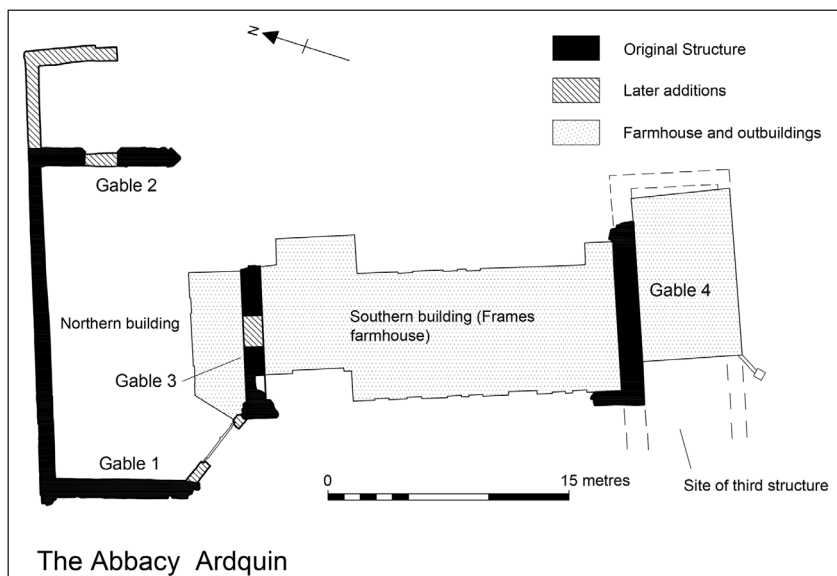


Fig 1 Plan of surviving ruins and farmhouse showing doorways at ground-floor level.

with plans from 19th-century maps, established that the ruins were once part of a building or complex of buildings which had in fact been more H-shaped in their layout, the remains of the southern block now completely gone. The northern part of the complex had functioned as byres and stables in the 1960s, and removal of the later additional walls associated with this activity in more recent times has allowed some further visual inspection. Although the ASCD account postulated that the ruins were largely of 17th-century date, there is a very long tradition of an abbey at this location, still held locally and clearly manifest in the labelling of the site as 'Ruins of Abbey' on Ordnance Survey (hereafter OS) maps during the 19th and 20th centuries. The author, in conjunction with Dr John O'Keeffe, who was conducting PhD research in the Ards at the time, considered that this description of the site merited further investigation.

DOCUMENTATION

The first documented reference to an abbey here can be found in the Montgomery manuscripts, in which the site is referred to in 1683 as 'ye old abby of Ardquin' (McKnight 1830, 303). However, when the sparse earlier documentation that refers to the location is considered, it is clear that this place played an important role in the management and evolution of the surrounding landscape and has had strong episcopal connections since at least the years following the Anglo-Norman incursions into Ulster. In those early years William le Sauvage, one of a small number of knights who had accompanied de Courcy into Ulster, was granted lands in the Upper

Ards, and established his manor centred on his castle on the strongly defended promontory at Ardkeen, a short distance north of Ardquin. Much of the early documentation is quite well covered by both Reeves (1847, 20–22) and O'Lavery (1878, 383, 402–05), but a short summary with some further documented evidence follows here.

A copied document in the *Calendar of Patent Rolls* of Edward III (copy dated 1342) (Isaacson 1900, 508–09) relates the granting of four carucates of land by Hugh de Lacy, earl of Ulster, to Thomas, bishop of Down, who is noted at this time as already having ownership of the lands at Ardquin. Thomas was bishop until the 1240s and possibly began his tenure as early as 1213 (Cotton 1849, 199). A close roll of Henry III, dated 1225, records that the same Thomas was granted two (additional) carucates of land which adjoined his manor in Ardquin for losses incurred in the king's war with Hugh de Lacy (Reeves 1847, 21–2, note p; O'Lavery 1878, 403).

The same document also makes clear that a lake (Lough Cowey, the largest freshwater lake in the Ards, being the only viable candidate in the immediate vicinity) is surrounded by the lands of the manor, and a demesne, which at least partially survives today as Demesne townland, less than 0.5km north of the site, is also recorded. Reeves (1847, 167) and O'Lavery (1878, 403–04; see also McErlean *et al* 2002, 93), cite an account of the receipts of the see of Down rendered on to the exchequer by Walter de la Hay between March and July 1305, which records the demesne, meadows and mills, and O'Lavery makes the important observation that the rents of the 'farms of Ardwyn' recorded in this document are very large indeed



Fig 2 Extract from James Kennedy's 1755 *Map of the County Downe*. The area of the Abbey is annotated with the symbol he ascribes to ruined monasteries.

(the rents for the year being £15 7s 8d). A single mill (very possibly in the position of that at nearby Bishops Mill to the north; there is a paucity of flowing water to power mills in the area) is also mentioned. The papal taxation of 1306 values the church here at 6 marks, 8s (Reeves 1847, 21).

August 1328 marks two relevant entries in the *Calendar of Patent Rolls* of Edward III (Isaacson *et al* 1891, 308–09), when royal assent is signified to the archbishop of Armagh to the election of Master John de Maliconingham, parson of the church of Arwhyn, to be bishop of Down, and instruction is then made for temporalities to be restored to him. Subsequently it is then made clear from an entry in the rolls in April 1329 that de Maliconingham was the choice of the prior and chapter of St Patrick's in Down, implying a continued strong connection between Ardquin and the see, and by association emphasising a linking between the Benedictine order in Downpatrick and the site. However, by this time in the same year the king has taken the fealty of the Franciscan Ralph de Kilmessan for the position instead, subject to 'his renouncing certain words in the papal bull prejudicial to the royal prerogative' (*ibid*, 381). De Maliconingham, in any case, ended up as bishop of Cork in 1330. Before Maliconingham, bishops of Down, including Nicholas le Blund (bishop 1277–1305) and Thomas

Bright (bishop 1314–1327) had served in office as prior of the Benedictine chapter of Down previous to their appointment (Rankin 1997, 56).

As observed by Reeves (1847, 22) and others, Harris (1744, 47) erroneously associates a 1411 reference to the alien priory at Blackabbey (Innes) with Ardquin. Nonetheless, Ardquin is clearly annotated on many maps throughout the 16th and 17th centuries and is sometimes displayed with the prefix 'Mo.', indicating a monastery (eg the Dartmouth map of c 1602; Speed's Antrim and Down map of 1610). This attribution is intriguing and reinforces the probability that some kind of monastery or monastic organisation was still recognised here in the late medieval period.

In 1605 the inquisition into church lands in Down was held at Ardquin, which in itself strongly suggests that the site retained a special importance, perhaps a judicial, or manorial court function. At the very least there must have been a significant roofed building at the location to facilitate the inquisition process. When Robert Echlin is appointed bishop of Down and Connor on his arrival from Scotland, he chooses not to live in Downpatrick but here at Ardquin, and this is also worthy of note.

When Harris (1744, 47) records the area he details Charles Echlin, a descendant of Robert, living in 'the House' which 'stands northward of a mountain',

and on account of the name Abbacy, suspects that an abbey stood here. He does not record any physical remains. It is suggested in this paper that Charles Echlin was more likely to have been based at Thomastown (recorded later on the first-edition OS map as Ardquin House), as members of the Echlin family are strongly associated with this building from at least the mid-18th century (Duff 1979, 1–10). Thomastown House is located across a field, and is almost immediately adjacent to, and 0.5km south-east of, the church and Abbacy ruins. It also fits the description as being north of the ‘mountain’, a 103m hill in the townland of Ballywhite, known locally by this name, which forms the highest point on the Ards Peninsula. Dr James Kennedy, who usefully supplies a key to represent antiquities on his map of Down 1755 (Fig 2) (Pyne 2008), clearly illustrates an important residence at Thomastown and annotates ruins of a monastery further north at the location of the Abbacy. It seems highly unlikely that the house that Robert Harris noted would not have been recorded on Kennedy’s map, dated only eleven years later than Harris, and which takes pains to depict the major residences and ruins in the landscape.

On the first- and second-edition OS maps the ruined structures we know today at Ardquin are depicted in plan, with a complete H-shaped layout. They appear to be ruinous, and more extensive (further ruins are also depicted on the first-edition map at nearby Thomastown, which is then notably called Ardquin House). In addition, Lewis (1837, 53) states that ‘[t]here are considerable remains of the monastery and episcopal palace,

which shew that the buildings were originally of very great extent’. The side walls of the southern (originally the middle) structure we know today were almost totally removed when the farmhouse was constructed between its gables in 1904. The northern structure fared better, with a long north wall being retained, connecting its two gables.

From the map and documentary evidence it is almost certain that Robert Echlin used as his house existing older structures following his arrival, and this would help explain the stylistic differences to the many fortified houses associated with the early plantation settlement. Later branches of the family established themselves at other locations including adjacent Thomastown and also Castleboy and Rubane (Echlinville), these latter two having been important medieval ecclesiastical foundations in their own right.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Archaeological evidence at Ardquin comes in the form of documented finds, excavations, and observations made at the time of the 2008 conservation work. A letter from James Carruthers to C R Smyth, dated April 1845, records an intriguing discovery at Ardquin. This letter is transcribed in the *Numismatic Chronicle*:

A few days ago, some labourers, who were sodding potatoes in the reclaimed fish-pond of the abbey of Ardquin in the Great Ards ... discovered a small box, which contained near five hundred silver coins (Carruthers 1846).



Pl 2 Exterior of gable 1. Note the sandstone sill in the window and the projecting masonry over what would have been the old road, inspiring the gateway in the reconstruction (Fig 4).



Pl 3 Exterior of gable 2 illustrating blocked doorway and window, both off-centre in the wall.

The letter describes the dates of these coins ranging from the reign of Edward I to Edward IV, taking in coins of the Scottish kings David II and Robert II. The range of dates here and the sheer quantity of coins suggest their accumulation over a considerable period of time and that they may be the product of rent or tax collection (perhaps from the farms of Ardquin cited in the 1305 reference). The circumstances of discovery, however, are integral to helping to better understand the site's history and function. These make clear that a fishpond was associated intimately with the ruins at Ardquin and the coins deposited therein would suggest that this feature dated, at the latest, to the 15th century.

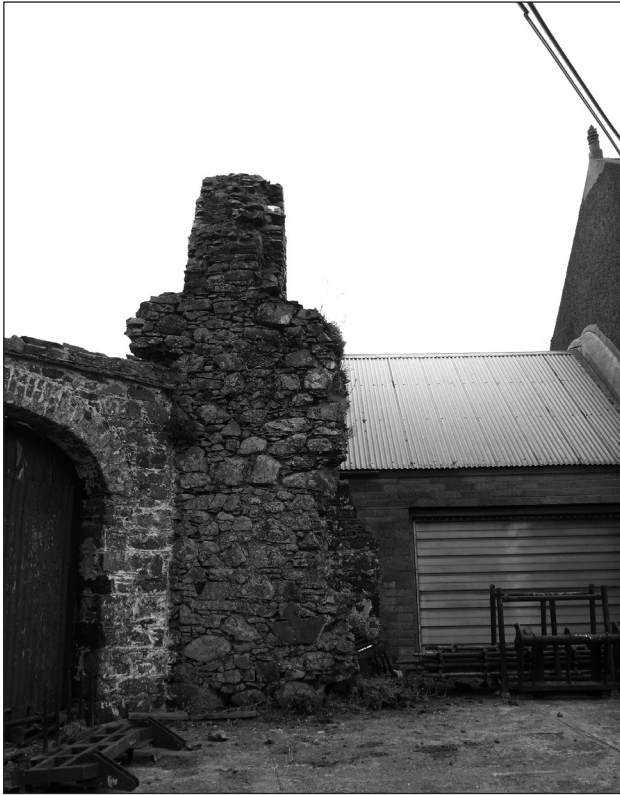
The ruins

The 2008 conservation work at the site was focused on consolidating and stabilising the surviving ruined elements, and therefore prioritised areas of greatest need in this respect. Later renders which adhere to parts of the ruin were not removed unless critical to urgent works, and these limited the readability of some areas such as the side wall of the northern building. Nevertheless, a great deal of information could be gleaned from the structures. One of the most striking elements of the ruined complex is the layout. Exploring the possibility of medieval monastic activity, the strong east/west layout of the northern building was very tempting as a good contender for a church, with a range of buildings attached to the south. However, some small-scale excavations conducted by John O'Keeffe in 2007 (unpublished) failed to find any certain evidence for this. Before and during conservation the structural remains were re-surveyed in great detail, using 3-D laser scanning, measured photography and drawn

survey, thus enhancing and informing a renewed understanding of the buildings further to the survey by Dudley Waterman.

The surviving splayed windows in the structure offer some limited information. Those on the northern building were clearly robbed of dressed stonework, as evidenced by the broken edges of the openings. Only that on the western gable (gable 1 in Pl 2) gives some indication of its original appearance. Here a sandstone sill with shutter-hole allows visualisation of an original narrow, but tall, aperture. The height at which the window in the opposing east gable (gable 2) is located, its size and off-centre location in the wall would argue against the northern structure having been a church, although the splay of the window would indicate that the wall was certainly at some time a final end to the building, at least on its upper part (there are further structural remains that are interpreted in ASCD (Jope 1966, 255–56) as contemporary, eastward of and adjoining this gable, but these are much lower and, if truly contemporary, may perhaps not have been roofed originally). An interesting, wide-arched and almost certainly original doorway at ground level on this east gable has been blocked (Pl 3) and is also very slightly off centre. Its presence in what seems to have been an east end wall reduces the likelihood that this is a church building. The off-centre location of both the window and the doorway in this wall suggests that it may have accommodated a stairway on its internal face allowing access to a first floor.

A now whitewashed blocked doorway of almost identical size and shape, again with intact voussoirs, is discernible at ground floor on the exterior of gable 3 and suggests contemporaneous



Pl 4 Side-on view of gable 3 showing evidence for roof bedded to either side and continuous masonry suggesting that the two structures were conjoined. The red-brick gateway is a 19th-century addition.

use of and interaction between the buildings. The style of stonework, the texture and makeup of the mortar, the roof pitches and even the identical uniform layout of putlogs in the alternate gables also argue for contemporary construction and use, and a projection of stonework at an upper level of this northern gable of the south building (Pl 4) would also strongly suggest that the structures were conjoined in some fashion.

During the course of conservation work it was possible to make closer inspection of the upper parts of the ruin. It was apparent that some of the chimney flues and fireplaces on the interior face of gable 3 had been roughly hewn into an earlier wall with no clear surviving evidence of an attempt to line or finish the edges of the flue. It is argued here that this activity may well be derived from Bishop Echlin's remodelling of the structure to function as his house. Traces of where the roof of the now removed southernmost structure met the exterior of gable 4 are still discernible. Gable 4 had evidence for one chimney located at the apex, though any fireplace or chimney-breast which related to it cannot now be discerned on the present dry-lined interior.

Knox (1875, 465) states that the structures were burnt by Cromwell's troops but, unfortunately,

does not cite the source of this information. During conservation, evidence was encountered on the upper inside face of gable 3, for an intense episode of heat which affected mortar in the wall fabric, making the mortar here more friable and loose, and also affecting some of the facework stones. If Knox is correct, one occasion when this event could conceivably have occurred would have been around 1661 when the Rev John Drysdale, minister of Ballyphilip (Templecraney church in Portaferry) (Killen 1886, 214) was arrested by Cromwell's officers for being nonconformist. Templecraney appears, by Echlin's arrival, to have taken over as the main church for the area, and it is here that he himself was interred.

Cross-slab

During initial re-examination of the site in 2007 a number of important carved stone fragments were identified in the graveyard which adjoins the modern Church of Ireland building at the Abbey. These consisted of architectural fragments of a window in the high Gothic style (c 14th century), an Anglo-Norman-style sandstone coffin lid with foliate cross (very similar to those at Movilla and Ballywalter) and, most pertinently, a quadrant of an early cross-slab (Pl 5). This last piece is extremely



Pl 5 The cross-slab fragment uncovered in the graveyard with (inset) a reconstruction of the principal motif.

significant in the context of Ardquin and implies an earlier date for ecclesiastical, or if manufactured here, possibly monastic activity prior to the earliest documentary sources. The fragment, like many of the others identified, had been reused as a burial marker, and excavation (McQuillan 2011) revealed the true extent of the decoration on the stone,

but nothing in terms of horizons or deposits. The decorative work on the slab represents the lower left quadrant of a ring-headed cross. The remains of two of the arms of the cross are clear and plain while the quadrant inside the ring between the arms is intricately decorated. The lower part of the stone, alongside where the shaft of a cross would extend, bears a swirling spiral volute. Thomas McErlean (pers comm) observes that the style of the arms of the cross and the incised line close to their edges is reminiscent of the Nendrum cross-slabs. Given the style of the decoration around the cross and the spiral volute alongside the cross-shaft, the author would argue that there may be some Manx influences at work here as well, not altogether unlikely given the location close to the mouth of Strangford Lough. These volutes are notably common on cross-slabs on the Isle of Man (eg Onchan (Cubbon, 1971, 13) and Lonan (Kermode, 1907, 28, 123, pl XV)). It is almost certain that the complete artwork was broken deliberately in the past, but the style of work on the stone would certainly push the probable date of ecclesiastical activity at the site back to the 9th or 10th century at least, some 300 years earlier than most documentation suggests.

THE LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

In order to better understand the site a re-examination of its position in the landscape is necessary. A large linear earthen bank, up to 1.8m high, situated downslope from the ruins to the south-west, appears to be part of a formal boundary layout which once enclosed the natural ridge on which the site is located, at least on this side. The formality of this layout, while quite clear on cartographic records from the 19th century onwards, is also striking in views from the surrounding landscape (Pl 6), and it remains fossilised in later hedge boundaries elsewhere.



Pl 6 The drumlin ridge in its landscape, showing the church, the ruined complex and the formal layout of the boundaries west of the site.

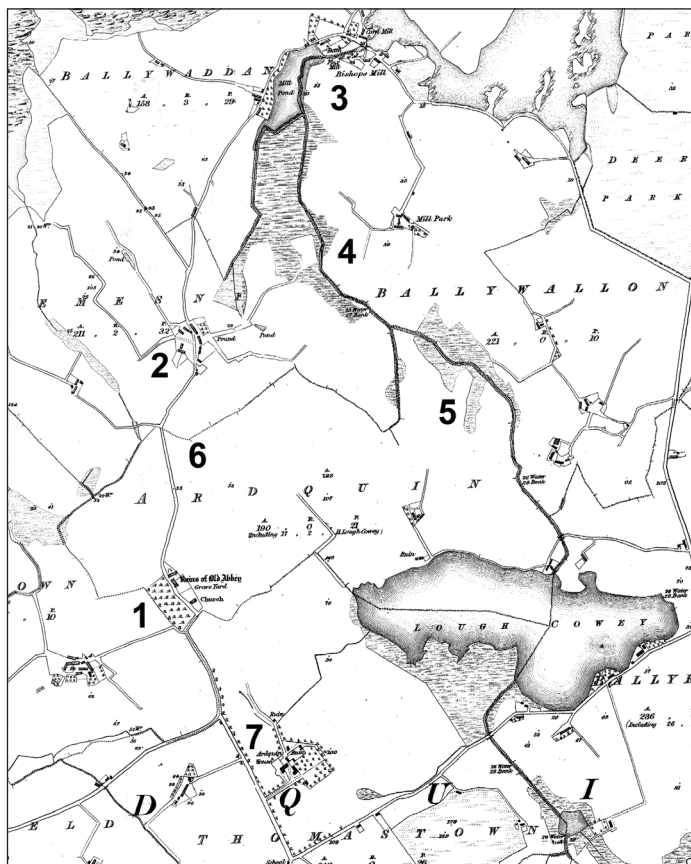
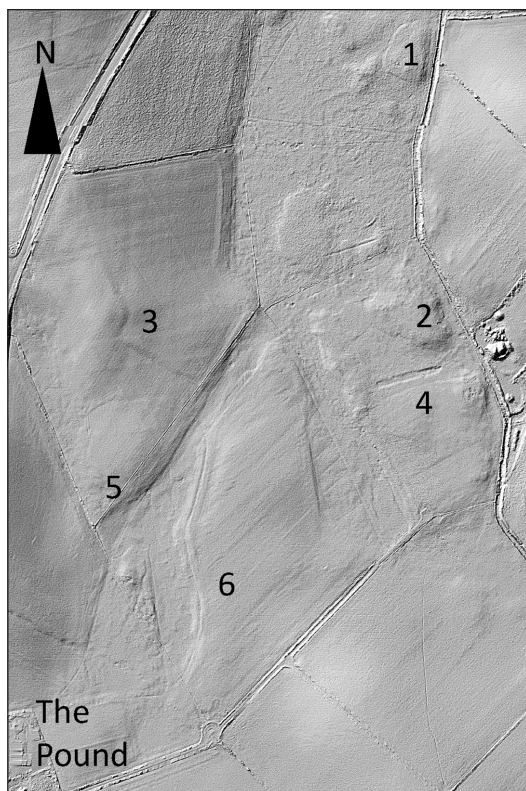


Fig 3 First-edition OS map with numbers added to identify key components of the manorial estate: 1 the Abbacy; 2 the Pound; 3 Bishops Mill; 4 possible mill site; 5 possible site of the fishery; 6 suggested site of the filled in fishpond; 7 Ardquin House.

An examination of the first- and second-edition OS maps (Fig 3) makes it clear that the farm lane, which runs up past the church and the farmyard, was the original primary road here, and that a new strip of road had been inserted between the 1830s and 1860s, presumably to divert the traffic from what was by then mainly a private working farmyard. That the original road once led directly to, and through, the site and immediately alongside its associated church lends weight to its importance in the medieval landscape. The townland of Demesne, the location known historically as the Pound, sited further along the road to the north (with its own sense of enclosure), and the nearby Bishops Mill are all important surviving components of the medieval landscape in which the Abbacy is located, which is cited in medieval references. Indeed the road continued through the site, traversing the Pound before proceeding to Bishops Mill, stressing the planned connectivity between these key components of the manorial estate. Adjacent townland names such as Thomastown and Priest Town may have resulted from their origins as part of the manorial landholdings (Hughes & Hannan 1992, 35). These hints in the landscape provide

the opportunity at Ardquin for interpretation of a medieval episcopal manor and its holdings and ongoing study of its wider surroundings, in turn furthering a better understanding of the potential original function of the Abbacy ruins themselves. Through the use of LiDAR survey results of the area, a more comprehensive deciphering of the landscape is becoming achievable. A potential site for the filled-in fishpond has already been identified in a field to north of the ruins, and south of the Pound (Pl 7), but other significant features are apparent, particularly with regard to further fishponds and probable milling activity in the landscape, this latter particularly intriguing in the light of the 1305 receipts.

The landscape in this part of the Ards has long been used for arable agriculture, particularly cultivation of barley and oats. Parts of the current (disused) mill structure at Bishops Mill could, arguably, date to the 17th century. The structure retains its thick stone walls and displays adze-dressed timbers still *in situ*, but in itself it is also very likely to be on a site of historic milling. The water source that supplies it plays a dual role and would have been a critical component of the



Pl 7 Extract from LiDAR data showing lands west of the Lade between the Pound and Bishops Mill:

1 probable mill site; 2 possible mill site; 3 relict earthworks; 4 linear pond; 5 site of pond; 6 historic track leading from pound toward the Lade.

medieval Ardquin manor estate, remaining vital in today's agricultural landscape. Identified as a Water Bank, one of three in the locality, on the first-edition OS map, this feature runs for some 2km from the northern edge of Lough Cowey, through a large area of low-lying flood-prone land, to Bishops Mill. This feature is known locally as the Lade, the term usually applied to millraces. Examination of this waterway, which also acts as an overflow outlet for the lake, both on the ground and on LiDAR, suggests that it has been cut and re-cut to formalise and control the movement of water in the area, alleviating flooding in the naturally flat parts of the landscape and maintaining a steady flow seaward. There also appear to have been cut ponds which were linked to it along its route through the low ground, perhaps formalising the distribution and collection of freshwater fish, perhaps together with further millponds of now vanished mills. The townland boundaries are laid out following along the line of the Water Bank and are offset from it, lending to

a greater sense of antiquity and importance for the feature. If not created in medieval times, it is almost certain that it has been harnessed and modified since then, both as a source of power for milling and as an integral land drain, maximising the productivity of the episcopal lands. Managed drainage has been, and remains, an important aspect of this landscape. An anomaly, identified from the LiDAR, which may represent an abandoned early mill site along the western side of this feature is shown in Pl 7, along with other features hinting at previous management of the landscape.

DISCUSSION

The cross-slab is the earliest identified evidence of Christian activity at Ardquin. Given the high quality of craftsmanship it is very likely that there was a significant ecclesiastical establishment here by the 9th or 10th century. One further source, hitherto unmentioned in this paper, is cited by O'Lavery (1878, 382–83); he refers to '[a]n ancient document relating to the See of Down', which states that in 1034 'There reigned in Ards (in Ardo) Cathalan M'Muriedaig, who gave to the bishop and the church of Down eighteen carucates in Ardgunne (Ardquin) along with a chapel in spiritualities'. The information that O'Lavery quotes from this document has some precision as to the landholding and, although the now unlocated document has been suggested to be a 12th-century copy, perhaps altered (Thomas McErlean, pers comm), the text does suggest that there was a reasonably significant Christian foundation and associated lands here by the 11th century, the appropriation of which by the church was later formalised in text. That the term monastery was attached to the site in the 16th and early 17th century remains pertinent, and the quality of the cross-slab fragment, particularly if manufactured here, seems to confirm early ecclesiastical activity

In the later medieval period the structural remains now referred to as the Abbey formed part of the core of an important and wealthy episcopal manor at Ardquin, to all intents and purposes functioning akin to a large grange farm, contributing supplies and probably selling goods for the see of Down. This held extensive lands from close to Portaferry at the south, was bounded by the lands of the Savage manor at Ardkeen to the north, and was set in the classic 'basket of eggs' drumlin landscape bounding this part of Strangford Lough. Something made this an attractive place in which to live for Robert Echlin in 1613, and it has been suggested (John O'Keefe, pers comm) that the site may have functioned as a retreat for the bishops (and titular abbots) of Down from the 1200s until Echlin established it as

his home. An ongoing but intermittent episcopal presence at the site could have reinforced the use of the name ‘Abbacy’. Echlin almost certainly chose this place because of its importance to the see of Down, its wealth in terms of productivity and land, and because there were buildings already suitable to accommodating him on his arrival. Prior to drainage in the 18th and 19th centuries around Downpatrick, it would have been feasible to travel by boat all the way into the town to the episcopal seat from along the coast of Strangford Lough not far from Ardquin. Affiliated closely to the see of Down (and consequently many former priors), the manor would almost certainly have received visits from Benedictine monks from the chapter of Down from time to time, and they may have taken a more direct role in management of the estate. It is possible that such an exceptional manor could have imitated elements of a monastic layout on a reduced scale, and this might explain the similarity of the layout and orientation of the ruins to components of nearby monastic foundations at Inch and Grey Abbey.

In conclusion, it is suggested that at one end of the ridge at Ardquin are the much-modified remains of the core medieval farm complex (Fig 4), consisting of the manor house and associated large barns and/or stables, with elements of the ruin — on account of their character, documentation and surrounding landscape evidence — taken to date to at least the 15th century. The northern building with its high, narrow windows, limited access and lack of chimneys, is tentatively suggested here to have been a large barn (the windows and the evidence for limited access to the structure are in some ways

reminiscent of tithe barns) for storing produce from surrounding lands. The middle building is suggested to have been the manor house proper. It is difficult to know what the now lost third southernmost building might have functioned as, though another barn, stable or accommodation block may not be unlikely. It must be noted that the presence of the early blocked doorways in two gables is a very unusual feature, more typically associated with ecclesiastical buildings, and this attribute does seem to set the structure apart from the secular. The original old church was almost certainly situated at the site of the present graveyard, close to the modern structure at the southern edge of the ridge. On the basis of topography and distribution of earlier graves, along with mortar-rich rubble encountered during investigations there, the author suggests a location at the northern end of the cemetery. The original road passed close to the church and through the manor complex, possibly through an impressive gate (this feature is suggested on the basis of projecting masonry from the exterior face of gable 1), and the setting of the site in the landscape was formalised by the building of the large earthen bank(s) and boundaries.

The maps of the late 1500s appear to illustrate a steepled church at Ardquin, sometimes with twin steeples. It is difficult to know how accurate these depictions are but the church, at one point, certainly had elaborate windows in the high Gothic style (as evidenced by the stones found in the graveyard).

While asserting the site’s importance as an important medieval manor with surviving landscape components, this work has also posed new questions. Research continues, using LiDAR

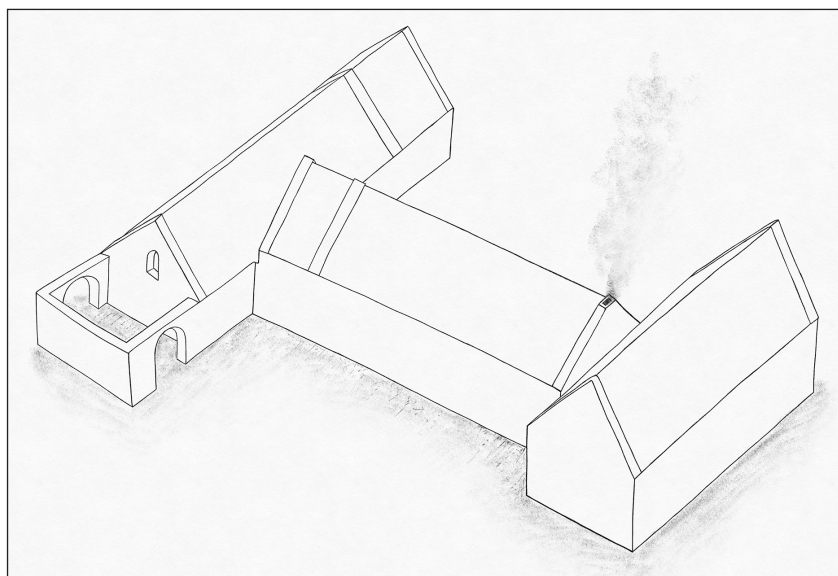


Fig 4 Basic conjectural reconstruction of the manor house complex, derived from visible evidence on the ruins.

survey results as part of the effort to further elucidate the landscape's functionality, with particular focus toward identifying 'the farms of Ardwhyn' and understanding activity around the Lade or Water Bank. While knowledge of the site has built much on the analysis in ASCD, it is clear that it requires consideration as a complete landscape entity, as the ruins, although quite possibly a unique survival in themselves, only characterise what would have been the administrative core of the larger functioning manorial farm. The Abbey has attributes of monastery, manor and grange, with strong affiliations to the see and probably to the abbey of Down, and therefore represents a valuable and very realistic opportunity to study and further characterise the evolution of a major ecclesiastical landholding in Anglo-Norman and later medieval Ulster.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Particular thanks must go to the following individuals in Historic Environment Division — James Patience, Tony Corey for help with site survey, images and LiDAR, and Dr John O'Keeffe. Also thanks to the owners of the Abbey — Oliver and Monica Savage, and Roderick Savage, and to Thomas McErlean of the Centre for Maritime Archaeology (University of Ulster, Coleraine) for helpful advice and discussion. The author is particularly grateful to Chris Lynn for pointing him in the direction of the coin hoard discovery in the 19th century at Ardquin.

The Calendar of Patent Rolls documentation was accessed via the University of Iowa Libraries website and have been scanned for research use by Professor G R Boynton.

REFERENCES

- Carruthers, J 1846 'Discovery of English and Scotch coins in Ireland', *Numismatic Chronicle* 8 (1845–46), 49.
- Cotton, H (ed) 1849 *Fasti Ecclesiae Hibernicae, The Succession of the Prelates and Members of the Cathedral Bodies of Ireland, Vol III, The Province of Ulster*. Dublin.
- Cubbon, A M 1971 *The Art of the Manx Crosses*. Douglas.
- Duff, F 1979 'The Echlin story', *J Upper Ards Historical Society* 3 (1979), 1–10.
- Harris, W 1744 *The Antient and Present State of the County of Down*. Dublin.
- Hughes, A J & Hannan, R J 1992 *Place-Names of Northern Ireland, Volume Two, County Down II, The Ards*. Belfast.
- Isaacson, R F (ed) 1900 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office ... Edward III. A.D. 1340–1343*. London.
- Isaacson, R F, Morris, G J & Lawrance, H E (ed) 1891 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office ... Edward III. A.D. 1327–1330*. London.
- Jope, E M (ed) 1966 *An Archaeological Survey of County Down*. Belfast.
- Kermode, P M C 1907 *Manx Crosses*. London.
- Killen, W D 1886 *History of Congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and Biographical Notices of Eminent Presbyterian Ministers and Laymen*. Belfast.
- Knox, A 1875 *A History of the County of Down from the Most Remote Period to the Present Day*. Dublin.
- Lewis, S 1837 *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, 2 vols. London.
- McErlean, T, McConkey, R, & Forsythe W 2002 *Strangford Lough, An Archaeological Survey of the Maritime Cultural Landscape*. Belfast.
- McKnight J (ed) 1830 *The Montgomery Manuscripts*. Belfast.
- McQuillan, L 2011 'The Abbey and Ardquin parish church, Abbey Road, Ardquin', in Bennett, I (ed), *Excavations 2008: Summary Accounts of Archaeological Excavations in Ireland*, 87. Dublin.
- O'Lavery, J 1878 *An Historical Account of the Diocese of Down and Connor, Ancient and Modern*, vol i. Dublin.
- Pyne, F 2008 'A rare map of County Down', *Lecale Review* 6 (2008), 45–9.
- Rankin, J F 1997 *Down Cathedral, The Church of Saint Patrick of Down*. Belfast.
- Reeves, W 1847 *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Down, Connor, and Dromore*. Dublin.