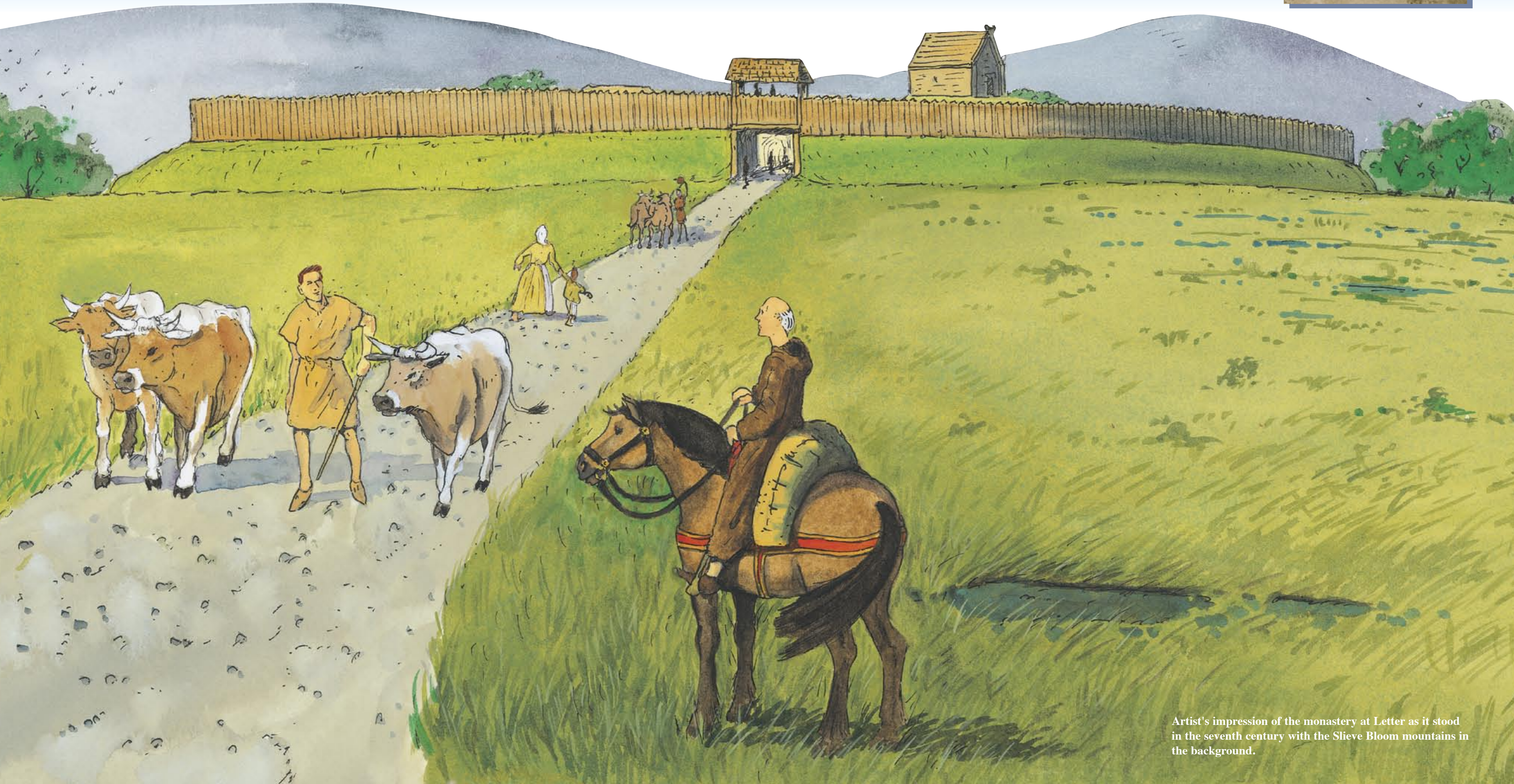


Letter Leitir

The stone head at Letter

Carved head of the twelfth century date, believed to be from Letter, is now located in the west gable of the Catholic church in Cadamstown.



Artist's impression of the monastery at Letter as it stood in the seventh century with the Slieve Bloom mountains in the background.

Bhunaigh Naomh Lugna mainistir anseo sa séú haois, suite ag an bpointe teagmhála idir dhá sheanbóthar, an “Slighe Mór” agus an “Slighe Dála” a bhí cuid de na bóithre is mó in Éirinn sna Meánaoiseanna. Ciallaíonn an logainm Leitir Lugna “cliathán cnoic fliuch de Lugna”, ainm a dhéanann cur síos maith ar shuíomh na mainistreach. Bhí Féile Naomh Lugna ar an 27ú Aibreán.

Faoi láthair níl ina seasamh ach iarsmaí séipéal paróiste meánaoiseach, tobar Naomh Lugna (atá athchóirithe le déanaí), agus imlíne an iaimh mhanachúil sna páirceanna lastuaidh agus lastoir den tséipéal. Tá sean-leac le crois Chríostaí inscríobhtha air, cloigeann duine meánaoiseach, agus cloigeann daimh le feiceáil faoi láthair i mbinn thiar an tséipéil Chaitliceach ins an mbaile beag, Baile Mhic Adáim. Tháinig na hiarsmaí sin ar fad ó shéipéal Leitir. Níl ina sheasamh de shéipéal Leitir ach seomra sagairt cruinnbhoghtach, áit inar mhair Conchobhar Ó hÓgáin, faoi a dúradh i 1473 nár thug sé aire do earraí luachmhara agus inbhogtha (“the precious moveable goods”) na séipéil agus gur dhíol sé iad. Cuireadh ina leith chomh maith gur choimeád sé “concubine” i dteach an tsagairt lena ghin sé mac níos déanaí.

A monastery was founded here by St Lugna in the sixth century, situated at the junction between two ancient roads, the Slighe Mór and the Slighe Dála which were two of the great roads in medieval Ireland. The placename Leitir Lugna means the ‘wet hillside of Lugna’ which aptly describes the setting for this monastery. The feast day of St Lugna is on 27 April.

All that survives today is the barrel vaulted priest’s chamber of the medieval parish church, the restored St Lugna’s holy well and the outline of the monastic enclosure in the field to the north and east of the church. This was the residence of Conchobar Ó hÓgáin who in 1473 was accused of both neglecting and selling ‘the precious moveable goods’ of the church and was also accused of keeping a concubine in the ‘priest’s house’ with whom he later fathered a son. An early Christian cross-inscribed slab, a carved medieval human head and ox head from this site can now be seen in the west gable of the Catholic Church at Cadamstown.

Early Christian Monastic Sites of Offaly



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