

# Seir Kieran Saighir Chiaráin



## St. Kieran's Bush

Whitethorn bush on which local people have attached pieces of cloth and other items belonging to them and are offered as votive offerings to St. Kieran. On March the 5th, the feast day of St. Kieran, local people visit the bush as part of the pilgrimage journey of that day. On this day after mass is celebrated, people visit the nearby holy well and then the holy bush and then onto the graveyard, at each stop a decade of the rosary is recited. Beside the bush buried in the ground is a stone upon which the impression of St. Kieran's knees and hands are visible.

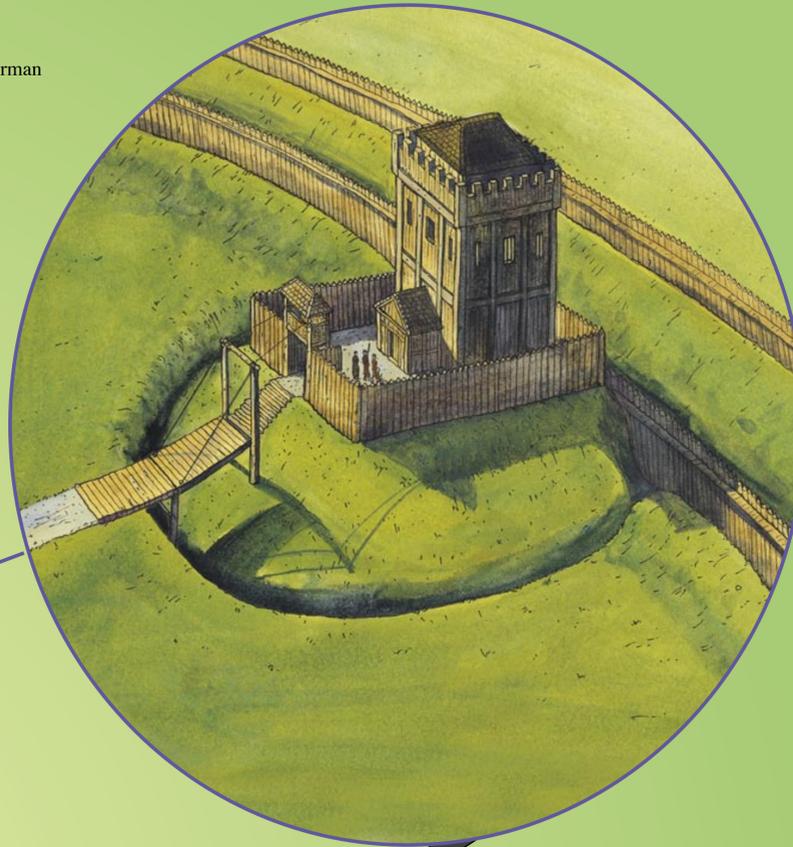


## High cross base

Ninth century high cross base which was unearthed in the graveyard in the late 1930s and placed in its current position. The base of the cross is decorated with scenes from the bible, such as the fall of Adam and Eve which is visible on the east face of the base in the lower right hand corner. On the north face there is scene which depicts a procession of figures carrying spears possibly an army marching towards a band of horsemen. The shaft and head of the cross have never been found and locals believe that the water which collects in the socket of the base acts as a cure for people with warts.

## Timber Castle

Between 1180-1220 the Anglo-Norman lords built a low mound on top of which they placed a timber castle known as a 'Bretesche' from which the modern placename Brittas is derived. These French speaking lords would have served as the new patrons of the church at Seir Kieran and were keen supporters of the parish church as opposed to the monastic church of Celtic Ireland.



## Round Tower

Only the base of the round tower survives built up against the outer face of the northwest angle of the Augustinian priory. This tower was probably built in the tenth or eleventh centuries as a bell tower for the monastery and acted as a place of refuge for the monks and their valuables when the monastery was under attack.

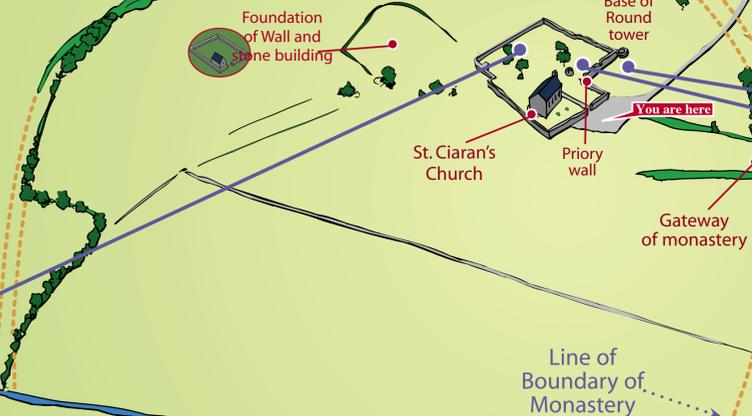


Fortification (17th century) and St Ciaran church (19th century)

## Double ditch fortification

This huge earthwork formed the boundary of the monastic site.

## Holy well



St. Ciarán the elder founded a monastery here in the fifth century, legend has it that St. Patrick told Ciarán to set up a monastery at 'Úarán' (little cold spring) from which the Fuarawn river may have been named. Located in the territory of Ely O'Carroll in Munster, Seir Kieran was the seat of the bishops of Ossory until it was moved to Aghaboe, Co. Laois around 1052 and finally to Kilkenny city in the twelfth century. In the fields surrounding the church one can see the extensive remains of a double banked earthen enclosure which supported a timber palisade enclosing an area of 10 acres. This timber palisade would have acted as the town wall for the monastic settlement or the 'Monastic Civitas' of Seir Kieran.

Visible in the field to the south of the graveyard there is a low motte on top of which a timber castle was built by the Anglo-Normans in the twelfth century. Inside the graveyard are the remains of the Augustinian priory, with a late medieval gun turret on its SE corner and the base of a Round Tower outside its NW corner. In the east gable of the Church of Ireland church there is a fine thirteenth century traceried window. The decorated base of a large high cross, the shaft and head of which are now missing can still be seen in the centre of the graveyard. The feast of St Kieran is on March the 5th when local people visit the nearby holy well, St Kierans holy bush and the church and graveyard.

Bhunaigh an Naomh Ciarán is sine mainistir anseo sa chúigiú haois. Deir finscéal go ndúirt Naomh Pádraig le Ciarán mainistir a bhunú ag Úarán (foinse beag fuar), óna bhfuair an abhainn, Fuarawn, a h-ainm. Suite i gceantar Ely Uí Chearúil i gCúige Mumhan, ba é Saighir Chiaráin suíochán easpag Ossory go dtí gur bogadh é go Achadh Buí, Co. Laoise thart ar 1052 agus faoi dheireadh go cathair Chill Chainnigh sa dara haois déag. Sna páirceanna timpeall an tséipéal is féidir iarsmaí fairsinge de iamh cré le dhá mhóta a fheiceáil. Choinnigh an iamh suas pailis adhmaid timpeall ar chlóis le achar deich n-akra. Bhéadh an pailis adhmaid sin ina balla baile do áitriú tíre na manaigh Saighir Chiaráin nó "Monastic Civitas" Seir Kieran.

Le feiceáil sa pháirc ó dheas den reilig tá "motte" íseal ar thóg na hAngla-Normannaigh caisleán adhmaid sa dara haois déag. Istigh ins an reilig tá iarsmaí príóireachta Agaistíneacha, le túirín gunna meánaoiseach ar a cúinne thoir theas agus bun Túr Cruinn taobh amuigh den chúinne thiar thuaidh. In oir-bhinn séipéal Eaglais na hÉireann tá fuinneog bhreá ón tríú haois déag le heangach uirthi. Tá bun maisithe ard-chrois mór, ag a bhfuil crann agus ceann in easnamh, le feiceáil go fóill i lár na reilige. Tá Féile Naomh Chiaráin ar an 5ú Márta nuair a thugann an pobal áitiúil cuairt ar an tobar naofa atá cóngarach, tor naofa Naomh Chiaráin, an séipéal agus an reilig.

## Early Christian Monastic Sites of Offaly

