

The Moate, Dorsey or Dorsey Dun

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Source: *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Sep., 1909), pp. 197-198

Published by: County Louth Archaeological and History Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27727876>

Accessed: 02-04-2019 06:42 UTC

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town, and owned a considerable extent of land—some hundreds of acres about the town, and also the large turf bog on the west, on which the inhabitants cut turf in common. There were courts under the presidency of the portreeves for the adjustment of rights and the punishment of offences. There was a weekly market on Tuesdays—the day on which it is still held,—as is shown by the confirmation of it in the Patent of James II—and probably there were fairs, but of this we have no evidence.

Such was the Corporation of Ardee for the three hundred and fifty or probably four hundred years before the Cromwellian Plantation. No records of this period remain save the inrolments which I have quoted. Its history since 1661 is so detailed that I postpone it for special treatment. But in order to complete the list of charters under which its authority was perpetuated I may add here that there was a Patent of Charles II (1683) establishing three fairs, a Charter of James II (1688) restoring the old race dispossessed by Cromwell to power (which only lasted for two years), and another lengthy Charter of Anne, 1713, the chief purpose of which was to reduce the number of portreeves from two to one. A Charter of George III, 1819, founding new fairs was the last of the seventeen royal deeds and Acts of Parliament issued for the Corporation till the ruthless 3 & 4 Vic., Cap. 108 of 1841 abolished this venerable institution of six centuries and replaced it by the unromantic and unhonoured Town Commissioners of Ardee.

THE MOATE, DORSEY OR DORSEY DUN.

The townland of Dorsey is situate in the Barony of Upper Fews, County Armagh, and it stretches for a distance of nearly three miles along the eastern portion of Cullyhanna (or Lower Creggan) Parish. It consists of about 2,678 acres and is a place of many historic associations and ancient remains. Its name appears to date far back, as there is a passage in the *Annals of Lough Ce*, dealing with events in the year 1224, which seemingly has reference to it. In that year the kings of Connaught, Munster, and Desmond marched northwards to Dundelgan to attack O'Neill, King of Ailech. The passage runs thus:—"Ir annrinn tainic O'Neill Cona Sallaib ocu cona Saorleuib co ro roinnit iao ar rligetir Slebe fuero ocu ar Dorseyib Emna—"It was then that O'Neill came with his foreigners and Gaidhils whom he distributed over the passes of Slieve Fuaid and the Doors of Emhain." The learned Irish scholar and antiquary, the late Dr. Reeves, was of opinion that the "Doors of Emhain" were now represented by Dorsey, and it is still known by the old speakers of Irish as *Baile na nDoirre*—i.e.,* "The Town of the Doors." It is sometimes called "*na nDoirre*," "The Doors," and Dr. O'Donovan, when visiting this district in 1835, heard it called The Gates, or Doors of the Fews. The ancient road from Dundalk to Armagh, known as the "*bealach móir an fheada*," or "Great Road of the Fews," ran through the full length of this townland and touched on many places of interest along its course.

Dorsey has long since been divided into many divisions, each one having a distinct name of its own. One of the smallest (containing 147 acres) is now generally known by the imported name of Roxboro. It was formerly called Cavan O'Hanlon (*Cacán uí hAntuain*), which signifies O'Hanlon's Height. It is sometimes referred to as the Cavan, and we are told that it got the latter part of the name after the rapparee chief Redmond O'Hanlon, who often frequented it. It is somewhat peculiar that the Irish word *Caban*, which we believe in all other parts of Ireland denotes a hollow or plain, is in this part of Ulster applied to a bare height or hill. In this district of Cavan O'Hanlon and about thirty perches north of Garvey's Bridge is a place locally known as The Moate, and which is situate on a farm belonging to Mr. Thomas Macken of Newtownhamilton. The peasantry of the locality always clung to the belief that a great cave existed under this Moate. Eventually Messrs. T. Gribben

* "Doors of Emhain," The approaches to Emhain, now the Navan Fort, near Armagh.

and F. Macken, Newtownhamilton, P. Murphy, Tullyvalen, and the writer decided to make a search for it. The two former began operations on the 25th March on the top of the Moate, which they soon found to be all composed of stones. Just two feet beneath the surface they discovered a cist or stone-lined grave, apparently of the pagan period. Soon after they came upon another cist. The search was renewed on the 27th of the same month by Messrs. Macken, Murphy, the Writer, and some others, when a third cist was discovered. A fourth is said to have been found a few days later and destroyed by persons looking for "treasure." There was nothing in it. The first three were found in the centre of the Moate or Carn about two feet from the surface. The most southern or first cist is a very fine specimen of its kind, and is the only one of the three having a flagstone covering its bottom. It is almost square and is composed of four large stones; a fifth one, seemingly used as a door, has been removed. When opened it contained a lot of small bones, supposed to be human. It measures in length three feet seven inches; width, one foot eleven inches; height, two feet two inches. The second or middle one measures in length three feet six inches and a half; width, one foot nine inches; height, two feet two inches. It was constructed somewhat similar to the other. When found it contained a good many small bones and charcoal, and about two inches under the mould that covered the bottom we found a layer about an inch in thickness made of reddish clay and all mixed with bones and pieces of charcoal. The bones were broken very fine, and the layer was spread over the entire grave. The sides of this grave also exhibited faint traces of fire, and a tooth greatly worn was discovered buried in the clay along with some bones at a distance of eight inches under the floor. The largest bone found in any of the graves was about seven inches long, but crumbled away when exposed to the air. The third grave is situated on the north side of the carn, and measures in length three feet eight inches; width, one foot eleven inches; height, two feet. An ornamented clay urn was found in the centre of this grave bedded in about two inches of black mould with a like quantity of the same material inside of this grave bedded in about two inches of black mould with a like quantity of the same material inside of it. It was placed mouth upwards, but slightly inclined to the door or north end of the grave. We made a very careful examination, but could find no trace of charcoal, bones or ashes, in either urn or grave. The mould in and around the urn may be accounted for by an opening between two flagstones overhead and through which the water was dripping, possibly carrying with it some of the rich dark soil, or decayed plant matter from the top of the Carn or Moate. This grave has not been so well formed as the others, and the stones used were much smaller. The urn measures four inches in depth, six inches in width, and one foot six and a half inches in circumference, and the greatest circumference round the middle is one foot eight and a half inches. Nearly the whole outside is covered with a rude ornamentation consisting of different numbers of lines grouped together and very accurately spaced, all running up and down unless where intercepted by six ornamented bands of two designs around the urn. The first band occurs exactly an inch from the edge of the mouth, and is made of the zig-zag pattern—a very common one on urns and earthenware vessels of an early age. A repetition of this band occurs another inch lower down, closely followed by one of the herring-bone type, and three others of this latter type around the bottom completes the ornamentation. There are six knobs or porches around the body of the urn, each one is about three inches apart from the other.

The immediate vicinity west of the Moate is called in Irish *Iorball Sionnaig* (The Tail of the Fox), presumably owing to the land being so rough and bushy, and a little further west is a place called "The Fort Field," now in possession of Mrs. Frances Quinn, where a *lis* or fort existed some fifty years ago. In this field were found at one time two celts, a whetstone, and an urn. The urn when dug up was covered with a light slate stone and contained ashes. It was broken shortly after being found. Another celt, or stone hatchet, and some earthenware vessels were got in a bog in the same neighbourhood and about one hundred perches north of the Moate i.e. a field in Mr. Charles Murphy's land called Shankill (*Seán Cúill*), which was, as the name implies, used as an old burying place. So, judging from the ancient remains yet left us, we may justly conclude that no matter how rugged this district may seem to us now it was evidently early inhabited by primitive man. The Moate is sixty-five yards in circumference at the base, and stands about seven feet high, and we trust that the hands of the vandal will long spare that monumental pile erected to the long-forgotten dead, who, in their time, may have seen Cuchullin at play or listened with delighted ears to the strains that Oisín sang.

H. O'KELLY.