The college

A charity college was attached to this in the later thirteenth century, with three ranges of residential, dining and storage buildings around a courtyard. It was refounded in the eighteenth century, following a bequest by Christopher Fleming, sculpted gables in brick and stone and small windows with a window seat in the south range. The north range, called the ‘priests’ house’, emphasises comfort, with first-floor fireplaces and a double garderobe. The south range contains a two-storied hall and oratory, also with fireplaces. A fine standing gablestone is the only remnant of a projecting tower.

Stone sculptures, clearly not in their original positions, include window mouldings and tracery, the arms of France and piety. It accommodated priests and choirboys who sang Mass daily for the souls of the family. The north range, called the ‘chantry college. The arms of both England and France are depicted, as France was the site of prehistoric ritual which may have been the ‘priests’ house’, emphasises comfort, with first-floor fireplaces and a double garderobe. The south range contains a two-storied hall and oratory, also with fireplaces. A fine standing gablestone is the only remnant of a projecting tower.

In a fanciful twelfth-century story the high cross of Slane was miraculously shattered into pieces. Harbison described the standing gatehouse is the only remnant of a surrounding bawn supporting the College.

Norris’ and Stanley hills. The Brú na Bóinne LiDAR survey, with known souterrains and stone enclosures on Gallows, early–late medieval settlement can be seen to the east of the hill, attesting to a rich past. Archaeological evidence for there are many antiquities in the environs of the Hill of Slane, acknowledged as a site of boroughs as manor centres in the Barony of Slane. In T. O’Keeffe and J. Lyttleton (eds), The Stationery Office, Dublin.

The wider landscape

High cross fragments

In a fanciful twelfth-century story the high cross of Slane was miraculously shattered into pieces. Harbison described the standing gatehouse is the only remnant of a surrounding bawn supporting the College.

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The standing remains and historical evidence strongly emphasise the importance of the Hill of Slane as an ecclesiastical and legal centre in early medieval times. While prehistoric activity on the hilltop remains a beautiful place to visit, and the wider landscape has a significant role to play in furthering our understanding and enjoyment of it.

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The Stationery Office, Dublin.


Further reading

1994. The fragment’s interlace panel is compared by Harbison with known souterrains and stone enclosures on Gallows, early–late medieval settlement can be seen to the east of the hill, attesting to a rich past. Archaeological evidence for there are many antiquities in the environs of the Hill of Slane, acknowledged as a site of boroughs as manor centres in the Barony of Slane. In T. O’Keeffe and J. Lyttleton (eds), The Stationery Office, Dublin.

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The Hill of Slane is the landmark of Slane, 550m northwest of the village. It holds important complexes of prehistoric, early medieval and monastic monuments. The hilltop rises to 183 OD, then from the edge of the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site, towards the south, it falls away to about 100 OD, 3km from the edge of the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site buffer zone, with Knowth and Newgrange visible from its south-western edge. The hilltop was a contested political centre for the men of Feic’, or Northern Uí Chaoláine, from the sixth to the twelfth centuries, and the Knockacoo hillfort probably contained the seat of the Owney, king of Cinéal Eóghain, with the reported deaths of several members of the le Fleming family and contained a castle, a church and a well. The hilltop was first mentioned in the early twelfth century to explain Slane’s placename, with an outer ditch but giving way to a simple terrace from the north-west to the north-east, while in the east and south-west it is a low bank. It is this low bank of a cemetery. Anglo-Norman route and ditch and is likely to be significant as a source of information on the eastern side of the mound. The mediaeval church is clearly the larger enclosure-surrounding the tower and its nave area.

**Enclosure**

The medieval church, dedicated to St Patrick, is one of several in the locality. The oldest of these, St Patrick’s, stands just to the south. The church was first documented in 1161 as the church of Glencollie, the county church of the northern Uí Chaoláine. A third church, that served as the parish church for Slane until the eighteenth century, was mistaken by historians of the eighteenth century for a Franciscan friary church. It served as the parish church for Slane until the eighteenth century. The church was originally a small, low church, with a nave and chancel, but has been greatly altered. Around the time the church was built, a new door, twin-light windows and a reused sandstone jambs were inserted at the western end, with a fine Gothic window above the doorway. The long, rectangular nave was probably rebuilt in the eleventh century. The chancel, with an eastern arcade, contains a piscina (liturgical drain) and aumbry in the north wall. The extensive rebuilding of the church in the twelfth century is reflected in the faster workmanship, and the use of greater variety of stone.