

### 5.9. Folklore & Memories

Folklore tales can often contain kernels of truth and information from long past generations. An examination of the *Schools Manuscript Collection 1937-38* led to a tale of 'Hidden Treasure' by Kathleen Clarke of Main Street Rush, who obtained her account from her mother.

'The Drumanagh is a headland about a mile along the coastline north of the town of Rush. It was the scene of a pitched battle between the Irish and the Danes. At present there is a dyke lying across the headland which was probably part of the Irish defence. Some years ago an old head-gear like a helmet and also some bones were dug up. A Martello Tower also stands on the Drumanagh' (Roll Number 16125, p.176).....'Another underground passage lies from Baldongan to the Dane's hole, the mouth of which is some yards from the Drumanagh. Here a priest is said to have been murdered. There still remains an oblong piece of stone on which his corpse was burnt' (Roll Number 16125, p.178).



*Plate 27: 'Drumanagh Fort Co. Dublin 1921'  
Lantern Slide from the collection of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*

Loughshinny local woman and member of the Rush & Loughshinny Historical society, Mrs Cepta Butler shared her memories of Drumanagh;

'I don't know a lot about Drumanagh except that Larry McGuinness of Carn Hill acquired the land when the Kenure estate was broken up. Before that the people of the area used to pay a small rent to the Palmers to be allowed graze cattle on the site and I remember, as a child of about nine or ten in the 1940s, walking over the cliffs with a local girl, Mary Kavanagh, to milk their two cows on Drumanagh. Also it was a great place to pick mushrooms! As far back as I can remember, people of the area always walked around Drumanagh.

As far as I know the ruin at Loughshinny cliffs is the remains of the house of a caretaker of Drumanagh but it looks very old with the earth built up behind it. In about the early 1930s some man fell over the cliffs there and was killed. There used to be a white cross painted on the rocks jutting out underneath when I was young but this is long gone. The Palmers built another house further back for the caretaker and there is not much of this left either. Up to the 1960s the caretaker was one of the Nicell family and the last one to live there was Pat Nicell who, in 1964, unfortunately also fell over the cliff (at the opposite corner) and was not discovered until the following morning, the tide having come in over the body. He used to come by the cliff path every evening to buy some items in the local shop and would always stay for a cup of tea with the Ferguson family before returning home using a lamp. His mother was the local 'handywoman' (or midwife) and her name appears on most of the birth certificates of Loughshinny locals from the second half of the nineteenth century' (Cepta Butler, 2017).

It is interesting to note that the nomenclature 'Old Danish forts' on Rocque's 1760 map of Drumanagh is mirrored in Kathleen Clarke's description of Drumanagh as having been the 'scene of a pitched battle between the Irish and the Danes'. The idea of Danish fort origins had been inherited from seventeenth and eighteenth century antiquarianism which relied on a quasi-historical vision of the 'Danes' as the pre-eminent monument builders of ancient Ireland. The idea of the Danes as ancient invaders, from Scandinavia, who had won the land of Ireland by force of arms remained constant and proved extremely difficult to dislodge. As William Wilde rather testily put it in 1864 'Owing to some stupid ignorant opinions published about 170 years ago, the literate lower order of Irish Shannaghees now assign a Danish origin to these raths; but when pressed for some further information as to the date of their erection, they say "They were made by them ould Danes that came over with Julius Caesar."'