

# DUNGANNON CASTLE: ITS HISTORY, ARCHITECTURE & ARCHAEOLOGY



A report prepared by  
*Dr Colm J. Donnelly, Dr Emily V. Murray & Ronan McHugh*



**School of Geography, Archaeology & Palaeoecology  
Queen's University Belfast**

**on behalf of**

**Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council**

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## **Section 1: Introduction**

There is no better place to understand the history of Ulster – and, latterly, Northern Ireland – than Castle Hill, Dungannon, for it is the events that occur between the 20 year period of AD 1590 to AD 1610 that forged the Early Modern period in the north of Ireland, and Dungannon was at the epicentre. In addition, the site is associated with two of the most famous figures in the history of Ulster – Hugh O’Neill, the 2<sup>nd</sup> earl of Tyrone (born *circa* 1550 – died 1616), and Sir Arthur Chichester (born 1563 – died 1625). O’Neill was the embodiment of the old Gaelic order, known throughout continental Europe as the defender of Ulster against the English army during the Nine Years’ War, and particularly for his major victory at the Yellow Ford in 1598. Chichester, a veteran of the English army, rose to prominence as a consequence of his military activity under Lord Mountjoy during the conflict and he was to become one of the principal architects for the Ulster Plantation. Architectural heritage associated with both men was encountered on Castle Hill during the archaeological excavation undertaken in October 2007, when Channel 4’s Time Team, working in association with the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) and the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork (CAF) at Queen’s University Belfast, undertook a three-day evaluation on the site.

An archaeological investigation had been carried out by Robert Chapple for Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd in 2003 in advance of the construction of a new security fence around a telecommunications mast located on the hilltop close to the remains of a late 18<sup>th</sup>-century residence, the Knox Hannyngton house, itself now a ruin. This work necessitated the excavation of a series of 31 small trenches, each measuring 1.5 m X 2.1 m in scale. Although the investigation was keyhole in nature, Chapple demonstrated the survival of structural remains of possible Medieval and Post-Medieval date on the site. Following the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent by EHS, the excavation by the Time Team enabled a larger area, 36 m<sup>2</sup> in size (Trench 1) to be opened on the summit of the hill to further investigate the potential of Chapple’s findings. The results obtained during this second investigation were beyond expectation. The wall of the O’Neill’s Medieval tower house were encountered, surrounded by a section of the wall and a spear-shaped bastion belonging to the military fort that was constructed by Chichester when he had gained possession of the hilltop in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The excavation in 2007 has provided a range of new information on the site, its development through time, and how crucial Castle Hill was to both the Gaelic Confederacy and the English army during a tumultuous period in our shared past. The importance of the site can further be gauged by the fact that staff from the CAF and Queen's students are currently committed to a range of projects designed to raise awareness of the quality of the resource that exists on Castle Hill and its surrounding landscape.

- Gary McCabe has completed a study of the social and political organisation of the Dungannon region during the Late Medieval period and has reconstructed the estates of the O'Neills and their supporting families on the modern landscape. It is intended that this work will provide the basis for a published map which will enable the modern population of the Dungannon area to identify what estate their own homes would have been located in during Medieval times.
- A Heritage Guidecard will be completed later this year for publication by *Archaeology Ireland* in their established guidecard series, providing visitors to Ranfurly House and Castle Hill with a colourful and informative overview of the history and archaeology of the site and its place in Ulster's history.
- A comprehensive Data Structure Report (DSR) detailing the results of the excavation programme from 2007 and setting the findings into their historical context is currently in its second draft. When completed, the DSR will be placed on the CAF's website in pdf format and will be available to be downloaded by people across the world.
- Dr Colm Donnelly and Dr Emily Murray intend to produce an academic monograph on Castle Hill which will detail the history of the site and the results obtained during the excavation of 2007.

The following report provides an overview of the main discoveries made during the 2007 excavation and places those findings into their historical and architectural context.



**Plate 1: The architectural features uncovered in Trench 1 during the *Time Team* excavation in October 2007.**

- Phase 1:** Rubble core foundation of the O'Neill's Medieval tower house.
- Phase 2:** The remains of the spear-shaped bastion and associated section of curtain wall belonging to Chichester's military fort of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- Phase 3a:** A revetment of stone placed against the interior wall of the tower house
- Phase 3b:** Clay brought in to fill the interior of the tower house and the interior of the spear-shaped bastion.

Both Phase 3a and Phase 3b belong to the last phase of the castle's use in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century when the old castle foundations appears to have been re-used as the footing for an artillery fort.

## **Section 2: The O’Neills and *Tír Eoghain***

During the course of the *Time Team* excavation a small flint scraper was discovered in Trench 1 on the summit of the hill. The artefact is not of a particularly high quality; however, it was a very important discovery since it provides definitive proof of prehistoric activity on the hilltop and that people were here during the Neolithic (*circa* 4000 to 2000 BC). Given its prominent location on the landscape, visible for miles around, it would be hard to envisage that the hilltop was not used as a centre for some form of settlement during prehistoric times. The placename Dungannon is an anglicisation of the Irish *Dún Geanainn*, or “the Fort of Geanann”, a mythical individual supposedly the son of Cathbadh, a druid who features prominently in the Ulster Cycle of Early Irish tales. The element *dún* (fort) implies that this was a site of some importance from early historic times and would certainly suggest that some form of fort was located on the hilltop in the Early Christian period. As such, Castle Hill was probably a centre of political importance at the start of the Medieval period, and this would explain the decision of the O’Neills to take up occupation of the hilltop when they established themselves on this landscape in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The late 12<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a period of political change in Ulster with the arrival in AD 1177 of John de Courcy, an Anglo-Norman adventurer, accompanied by 22 knights and 300 soldiers. Establishing himself in the kingdom of *Uladh*, in an area that now corresponds to County Antrim and County Down, de Courcy erected his main castle at Carrickfergus, and made land grants to his followers. As a result, these two eastern counties became the primary centre for Anglo-Norman activity in Ulster and the archaeological evidence of their presence on the landscape today are the earthen mounds or mottes upon which they constructed their timber castles. There was, however, political change also afoot elsewhere in Ulster at this time. The most important political group in the north of Ireland was the *Cinéal Eóghain*, whose territory extended from Inishowen to the River Blackwater. In the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and early 13<sup>th</sup> century there was a power struggle raging between two of the major families within this political unit – the MacLoughlins and the O’Neills – which only ended with the utter defeat of the former family at the Battle of Caimirghe in 1241. Following this event, power within the *Cinéal Eóghain* and its territory was firmly held by the O’Neills and this would remain the case until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century; the O’Neills also acted as a strong bulwark against

any further extension of Anglo-Norman power in Ulster and, as a result, the land to the west of the River Bann remained in Gaelic control.



**Plate 2: The north of Ireland *circa* AD 1534, showing the central location of *Tír Eoghain*, the lordship of the O'Neills (based on Nicholls' map of 1976; modified by P. Barratt, CAF, 2008 ).**

The rise of the O'Neills also witnesses a change in the location of political power within *Tír Eóghain*, from the area around Strabane where the MacLoughlins had been located, to the area around what is now south-east Tyrone. The O'Neills made Dungannon their primary settlement and the surrounding landscape was divided out into estates, with their most loyal supporters, the *lucht tighe*, or household families, each receiving their own parcel of land. These families included the O'Quinns, the O'Donnellys, the McCauls, the O'Devlins and the MacDonnells, the O'Neill gallowglass (*gallóglach*, “warrior from Innse Gall”), originally from the Hebrides of Scotland. Tullaghoge (*Tulach Óg*, “the hillock of the youths or warriors”) had probably been the inauguration site for the *Uí Thuirtre*, the political grouping that had previously held control over this area, but the site now became the inauguration place for the O'Neills. On the hillslope to the outside of the earthwork enclosure was the *Leac na Ríogh* (“the flagstone of the kings”) – an inauguration chair where the coronation of each new O'Neill was undertaken. The

O'Hagan family had been stewards of Tullaghoge since at least AD 1024, and they continued to perform this hereditary function under the O'Neills.

Dungannon became the centre of power for a dynasty that ruled *Tír Eóghain* for some 350 years. Often in competition with the O'Donnells of *Tír Connail* for overall control of power in the north of Ireland, and on occasion subject to damaging internal feuds over the succession, the O'Neills provided stable and secure political control over their lands. Our understanding of the period, however, is somewhat restricted for – as Cunningham and Gillespie have stated – the Gaelic world was an “underdocumented world”. Undoubtedly historical records were destroyed during periods of war, but in Gaelic society there was no centralised legal authority or chancery and hence many of the types of document that exist in France or England for the period do not exist for Gaelic Ireland. In addition, in Gaelic society the learned families (*aes dána*) were responsible for the collection and preservation of information and they relied on oral tradition to do so, passing down information from one generation to the next in story and verse recited at banquets and feasts. We do, however, have political poems, genealogies and the annal collections that provide us with some insight into how society was structured between the ruling lords, their supporting families, their hereditary professional learned classes – the jurists, historians, physicians, harpers and poets – and the Church. We are also very fortunate to have an important document for the O'Neill lordship, the *Ceart Uí Neill*, which sets out the customary rights and entitlements that the O'Neill overlord placed upon his minor lords and household families.

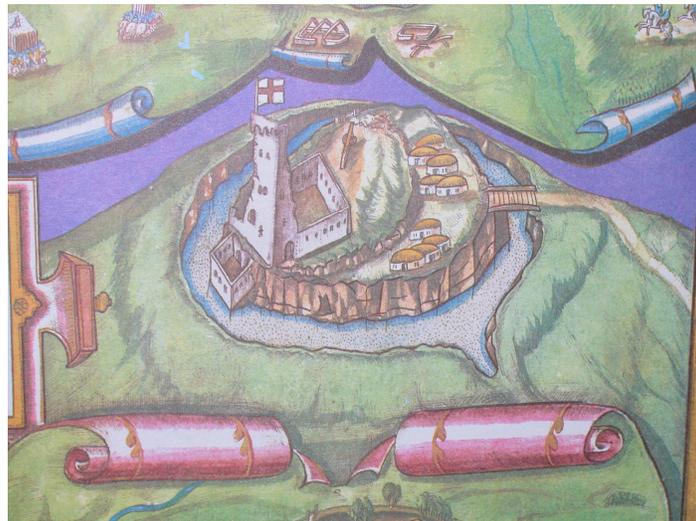
The document indicates the importance of pastoral farming in Medieval Gaelic Ulster, with cattle the primary unit of financial assessment. For example, the O'Neill's claimed overlordship of the Maguires in Fermanagh and in the text we are told that: “Two hundred men is the buannacht [tax] on Fermanagh and the same number of beeves or of the King's money: and two hundred on a hosting, and if those two hundred should not come, a cow against every single man who is missing, and two springing cows is the fine for every one of those cows that is not forthcoming willingly. And should Maguire himself come to the hosting without his people, he gets half the fine”.

Despite having such documents, however, it remains the case that our understanding of Medieval Gaelic society and its economy in the north of Ireland is not as full as that of

their Anglo-Norman counterparts. To gain further insights we have to make recourse to an archaeological agenda, for it is only through the excavation of sites belonging to the people and the period in question that will provide us with examples of their material culture and architecture. It is for this reason that the excavation at one of these sites – Castle Hill – has been of such significance.

### **Section 3: The O'Neill tower house at Dungannon**

As stated previously, south-east Tyrone became the centre for the O'Neill lordship following the successful conclusion of their power struggle with the MacLoughlins in the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century, and their settlement at Dungannon lay at the heart of that lordship. This is reflected in the number of documentary references in the annal collections that associate the O'Neills with Dungannon, with a range of recorded incidents of intrigue and conflict that involved the settlement and its castle. In 1498 the castle was taken by the Earl of Kildare, and two years later what is described as the "old castle" was demolished by O'Donnells. In 1505, the castle was taken from Donnell O'Neill by Teige O'Hagen, but it was almost immediately recovered by O'Neill, who exacted lethal vengeance on his rival. In 1518, Dungannon Castle was in the hands of Art O'Neill, when it was again destroyed, this time by the Lord Justice, William Skeffington, and again in 1532 by the combined forces of *Tír Connaill* and the Maguires of Fermanagh. The information in the annals would have us believe, therefore, that the castle was repeatedly captured, destroyed, re-occupied and rebuilt during the period from 1498 to 1532. A degree of caution, however, needs to be exercised on this issue. What the annals may be indicating is the fact that the castle was damaged during these incidents, but that it was never truly destroyed. On each occasion, once the emergency had passed, the O'Neills took up occupation again.



**Plate 3: Richard Bartlett's depiction of the ruined tower house at Dungannon, 1602.**

None of these sources, however, provide us with a description of the castle and no mention is made of its form or layout. We are fortunate, however, to have the pictorial map executed by the English cartographer Richard Bartlett in 1602. In Bartlett's illustration, the castle is shown as a damaged tower house, probably left in this condition by its retreating owner, Hugh O'Neill, to prevent it from being of use to the English army during the last phases of the Nine Years' War. Bartlett depicts the tower house set at one corner of a rectangular bawn (defended enclosure) towards the end of a scarped mound. The tower house has an entrance at the ground floor and the building is four stories in height with a machicolation visible at parapet level. A second, enigmatic rectangular stone structure with windows and apparently two openings is set into the side of the rock-cut moat at the base of the tower house. At the opposite end of the scarped mound is a series of nine houses, single storied with rounded corners and yellow roofs (perhaps indicating the use of corn-straw thatch) and similar in detail to those depicted in Bartlett's maps of Inisloughlin and Armagh. The entire complex is surrounded by a rock-cut moat crossed by a wooden bridge. The illustration does not include any indication of scale or orientation and it may be that instead of depicting the town of Dungannon as represented by the cluster of cabins at the base of the scarped mound, the cartographer is instead showing the inner and outer wards of the castle, here defined by a rock-cut ditch and a moat respectively.

Tower houses were the defended homes of the wealthy landowning classes in Medieval Ireland and were erected by both Anglo-Irish and Gaelic families during the period from *circa* 1400 to *circa* 1650. The buildings functioned as self-contained units with the chambers inside stacked vertically, one over the other, and with access gained between floor levels via a spiral staircase. Where the concept for the tower house originated remains a moot point. It may have been the great towers at Anglo-Norman castles such as Carrickfergus, or it may have been an idea imported from England, Scotland or the Continent; alternatively, they may have developed as the secular equivalent of the belfry towers raised at Irish abbeys and monasteries, or the transfer from an ecclesiastical setting to a secular one of priest's towers and fortified churches. Whichever we choose, clearly the idea was readily adopted within Medieval Irish society; there is an estimated figure of 2,900 Medieval castellated sites in Ireland and of this corpus the vast majority are or were tower houses. The highest density of tower houses, however, is to be found in the southern half of the island. There is, for example, historical documentation to

suggest that there were over 400 castles in County Limerick, of which 74 tower houses survive, while the sites for a further 102 demolished castles can still be located on the Limerick landscape today. In comparison, Tyrone can only boast evidence for having nine secular Medieval masonry buildings, with standing remains at Harry Avery's Castle and the tower house on Island McHugh.



**Plate 4: Rockfleet Castle, Co. Mayo, is an example of a tower house from a Gaelic region. The building has similarities to a depiction of the Maguire tower house at Enniskillen from 1594.**

In the earl of Desmond's estates in Limerick we would find minor lords such as those of O'Neill's *lucht tigh*e living in masonry tower houses. This was not the case in Gaelic Ulster. There is evidence, however, to suggest that large timber buildings, often associated with crannogs, may have served such a purpose in the north of Ireland. Bartlett's maps depict a number of major timber buildings, such as the large cruciform-

roofed house on a Monaghan crannog, while at Tullaghoge, within the earthen enclosure, he depicted a large, rectangular timber house with a thatched roof. Bartlett, however, was not alone in his depictions of these large timber buildings. A map of 1598 of the third Blackwater Fort in 1598 also shows a crannog occupied by a large house in the middle of Lough Curran, County Tyrone, while another example is included in a map of 1591, probably the work of Browne and Bapiste, where a crannog is depicted near to Monaghan: “Macmahouns (McMahon) house in the lough (lough) of Mounachin (Monaghan)”. Although generally viewed as a monument associated with the Early Christian period (AD 500 to AD 1169), scientific dating evidence from County Fermanagh indicates that many crannogs in the Maguire lordship were being used during the Medieval period, from *circa* AD 1400 onwards. Given the elaborate nature of the houses depicted on the cartographic sources it can therefore be suggested that crannogs were in use as the permanently occupied lordly residences for minor lords in Gaelic Ulster.

While they too may have used crannogs, it would seem that the leaders of the great Gaelic lordships, such as the Maguire, the O'Donnell and the O'Neill, did invest in the construction of tower houses for their own personal use, perhaps as a means of physically demonstrating their status within society to their followers. The foundation levels of the Maguire tower house survive today as part of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century barrack in Enniskillen Castle, while the O'Donnell tower house at Donegal was modified and reused by the English planter Sir Basil Brooke in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century; the building still stands and is now a National Monument in the Republic of Ireland. Overall, however, the numbers of tower houses in Gaelic Ulster were few and far between in Late Medieval times; the tower houses that survive today in Northern Ireland are largely restricted to what had been Anglo-Norman areas, such as the Lecale region in County Down. Most of their Gaelic counterparts are now demolished, including the building that once stood on Castle Hill. Prior to 2007 our primary source of information on the castle at Dungannon had been Bartlett's depiction from 1602. Even the exact location of the tower house was not known. Given the importance of this structure in the history of Ulster, it is the authors' opinion that the identification and investigation of the O'Neill's tower house in 2007 can be judged as having been one of the most significant discoveries made by modern archaeologists in the province.

#### **Section 4: The Nine Years' War (1594 to 1603)**

Throughout the majority of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the paramount consideration among the Tudor administrators in Ireland was the defence of the Pale, the region around Dublin where royal authority still remained in place. Gradually, however, it became apparent that stability would be achieved only by the extension of English authority throughout the country. Thus, by a mixture of military might and more subtle plantation, would peace and fealty to the English Crown be guaranteed. By the early 1590s the English had progressed through the south and west of the country and were ready to proceed into Ulster to further this process of anglicisation. In 1590 Hugh Roe MacMahon in Monaghan had been dispossessed of his lands, executed as a traitor, and his lordship divided up under the Monaghan Plantation, while in 1591 Sir Brian O'Rourke, lord of Leitrim, was arrested in Scotland, extradited to England on treason charges and executed. The effect of these actions by the Crown created great consternation, anger and fear among the other major Gaelic lordships in Ulster. In particular, the Maguires watched and waited, and in 1593 entered into rebellion after an English sheriff was appointed to Fermanagh.

Despite his obvious connections with the Tudor government, Hugh O'Neill, the 2<sup>nd</sup> earl of Tyrone, clearly also feared for his own position, with potential Crown interference in his lordship bound to threaten his income and authority. In one of his letters he wrote of the Monaghan plantation that "every peddling merchant and other men of no account had a share of the land", and presumably he foresaw the same situation would soon be occurring in Tyrone, with similar types of people using English law – and the threat of English military force – as a means of making good their claims to what he viewed as his land.

O'Neill had gained the trust of Elizabeth I and of the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Sir William Fitzwilliam, and, despite mounting suspicions about his loyalty in the late 1580s, was considered central to the peaceful settlement of Ulster; to reform Ulster, the English needed his help. Initially he supported the Tudor military enterprise against his son-in-law, Hugh Maguire, in 1593, but – as the leading Gaelic magnate in Ulster – it became obvious that he could not maintain this position for long, and in 1595 he sanctioned a successful attack on the English fort at the Blackwater, and became the leader of a successful Gaelic Ulster confederacy whose initial aim was to return to the political

*status quo* of pre 1590. O'Neill was politically astute and added to this was his kinship connections with the main leaders of the confederates. He was the son-in-law to Hugh Maguire, and he was the brother-in-law of Red Hugh O'Donnell, and both young men clearly respected him and abided by his decisions.

The second element of his success was his ability as a military leader. Having served with the English army, O'Neill knew how to manage, organize and equip his own forces, and he knew what tactics were to be used to conduct the war in a modern way. He had clearly realized that the Gaelic confederate army had to match fire with fire if they were to withstand the onslaught of the English, and his judgment and tactics proved effective time after time. The war dragged on for the English and it has been estimated that it cost the Crown some £2 million – a colossal amount for the period. By fighting a defensive war the Gaelic confederacy successfully kept the English out of Ulster, with some spectacular victories along the way. It was actually the arrival of foreign aid from Spain that led to the downfall of the confederates. A small Spanish force had landed at Kinsale in Cork, and the Ulster army had to make its way down the length of Ireland to relieve their new allies who were being besieged by the English under Lord Mountjoy. A pitched battle was fought on Christmas Eve 1601 – the Battle of Kinsale – which the confederates lost. They retreated back to Ulster but were followed by the English who had finally turned the tide of the war in their favour. The end of Gaelic Ulster can be epitomised by the actions of the Queen's army when they arrived at Tullaghoge; the great inauguration chair of the O'Neills – the *Leac na Ríogh* – was smashed to pieces, thereby symbolising the destruction of Gaelic lordship in the region.

During the conflict the castle at Dungannon was slighted on two occasions – not, however, through the actions of the English army, but by Hugh O'Neill himself to prevent the building being of use to his enemy. In 1595 the English reported that the castle “stood very stately high in the sight of all our army,” when the crown forces under Russell approached “but, by noon the next day, it was so low that it could scarcely be discerned”, while, as mentioned previously, in 1602 O'Neill set fire to the castle in advance of Dungannon being taken by Lord Mountjoy's forces.

The earliest cartographic depictions of the castle date to this period. As previously highlighted, the most well-known and informative of these is Bartlett's birds'-eye view

dating to 1602. In most cases, however, the castle is simply shown as a tower, an image we should view as a generic motif, with any variations accountable to the cartographers' style and imagination, and it is doubtful if any of these depictions bear any resemblance to the reality on the ground. For example, Boazio's map of 1599 shows the castle as having multiple towers with pointed roofs, while an even more fanciful building is shown on Vrient's map of 1606. Such multi-towered castles certainly bear no resemblance to known Gaelic castles of the Medieval period. These maps, however, are not important for the detail that they provide on the form of the castle that existed at Dungannon, but for what they tell us about Dungannon as a place at this time, for this was the primary Gaelic settlement in Ulster, the centre of the great O'Neill lordship and, in particular, the home of Hugh O'Neill. It is for these reasons that the castle is repeatedly marked on the maps of the period.

## **Section 5: The Flight of the Earls and the Ulster Plantation**

On 29<sup>th</sup> July 1609 the English surveyor Sir Josias Bodley and William Parsons, the surveyor-general in Ireland, commenced a survey of the baronies of Ulster that had been confiscated from their native Gaelic lords by the government in London as a consequence of the Flight of the Earls on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1607. The decision of Hugh O'Neill and Rory O'Donnell (the earl of Tyrconnell) to flee to the continent with some 100 followers was taken as a sign of their complicity in plots to bring about renewed Spanish intervention in Ireland, thereby reigniting the devastating conflict that had ended in 1603. Despite initial concerns that the earls might be successful in their efforts, their departure also now provided a new opportunity for the Crown to bring the north of Ireland to heel through the plantation of English and Scottish settlers in six Ulster counties – Tyrone, Fermanagh, Tyrconnell (now Donegal), Coleraine (now Londonderry), Cavan and Armagh. While trusted Gaelic lords were to be exempt from the planned plantation, the majority of the earls' confiscated land was destined for British undertakers and servitors.

Richard Bartlett (see above) had accompanied Lord Mountjoy and the advancing English army into Ulster in the last stages of the Nine Years' War following the defeat of O'Neill's Confederate forces at Kinsale on Christmas Eve, 1601. Bartlett executed a number of map-paintings during this time, and the level of detail included in his work provides an incredibly valuable source of visual information on Gaelic Ulster, although as Smyth has noted: "There is an eerie quality to Bartlett's maps, as he rides beside 'his lordship' and records for posterity the defeat of an Ulster realm never defeated before and the march of a conquering English army where no such army had marched before". The map-paintings are complimented by Bartlett's regional maps which provide overviews of how the newly conquered territories of southern Ulster had been held by their former lords. The area around Dungannon, the centre of O'Neill's power, is given particular attention, with the cartographer depicting the general location of the lands held by the *lucht tighe*, and O'Neill's own demesne land at Dungannon.

The lands of Dungannon, including the castle, were granted to Sir Arthur Chichester in 1610. In the government survey of 1611 Carew wrote of Dungannon that; "Sir Arthur Chichester, now Lord Deputy, has 600 acres about Dongannon, as a servitor, where he intends to build a castle or strong house of lime and stone and to environ the same with a good and substantial stone wall and a deep ditch, with a counter scarfe of stone to

hold up the earth. Has now masons and workmen, to take down such remains of the decayed ruins of the old castle as are yet standing. Is preparing limestone, freestone etc. against nest spring". In 1619 another government survey – carried out by Nicolas Pynnar – reported that "a fort of lime and stone, 120 feet square with four half Bulwarks and a deep ditch about it 20 feet broad, and counter-scarped" stood on the site. Three years later, in 1622, a survey of the plantation counties of Armagh and Tyrone included a similar description of Chichester's fort though there are some discrepancies between it and Pynnar's account: "Arthur, Lord Chichester hath 1,640 acres, called Dungannon. Upon this there is built a fort or bawn of stone and lime, 100 foot square, 14 foot high, with a strong ditch about it. The fort hath 5 half bulwarkes and in it a good dwelling house, containing 14 rooms and lodgings, wherein Captain Perkins with his wife and family now dwell".



**Plate 5: Pynnar's depiction of the settlement at Dungannon, drawn on his map of Lough Neagh and undertaken as part of his survey of the forts of Ireland in 1624.**

In 1624 Pynnar produced a report on the "State of the Forts in Ireland" which included a pictorial map of Lough Neagh depicting Chichester's fort at Dungannon. Marshall reproduced a poor sketch that he had made from the original illustration in 1929 in his *History of Dungannon*. It is more prudent, however, to review the original drawing of Pynnar since Marshall's sketch contains a number of errors in its detail. Like the image produced by Bartlett two decades earlier, the fort is dominated by a single tower set towards the centre of broadly square enclosure and with spear-shaped bastions at each

of the four corners (presumably the half bulwarks referred to by Pynnar in 1619) overlooking the new town that had grown up under its protective shadow. Pynnar's survey of 1619 had stated that Chichester's fort was surrounded by a deep ditch but this is not included in his 1624 illustration of the site. The most significant element of the drawing, however, is the depiction of the tall tower in the centre of the fort. The building is strikingly similar to a tower house and we can suggest that Chichester did not, as stated in 1611, "take down such remains of the decayed ruins of the old castle as are yet standing".

It is worthwhile to remember at this point that, although undoubtedly a large landowner, Chichester was not a particularly wealthy man. Indeed, this had been the case for most of his life. If he had been from a rich background it is unlikely that he would have been soldiering in Ireland during the Nine Years' War. He was the second son in a family of 14 from a minor gentry family from near Barnstaple in Devon, forced to make his own way in the world and – as Roebuck has noted – when he arrived in Ulster in 1599 he was 36, unmarried, with no land, and with nothing to his name beyond his pay and expenses as a soldier in the Queen's army. Even when he benefited from his service with huge land grants in the period after 1609 his financial situation did not improve and he was heavily in debt by the time of his death in 1625, largely because he had let his lands on long leases and for uneconomical returns. As such, while he may have wished to have constructed a fine new house on Castle Hill, as befitted his new-found status as a major magnate, he may not have had the financial ability to do so. Rather, it can be suggested that he actually had the old tower house at Dungannon refurbished as the centerpiece of his new fort. This conclusion is certainly supported by the discoveries made in Trench 1 during the excavation in 2007. The remains of one of the spear-shaped bastions from Chichester's fort was identified, together with a section of its enclosing curtain wall. Both elements of the early 17<sup>th</sup>-century fortification, however, surround and respect the foundation courses of the O'Neill tower house which was also identified during the excavation. The archaeological evidence would strongly suggest that Pynnar's depiction of the complex from 1624 is an accurate one and that the old Medieval tower house had continued in service under its new owner.

## **Section 6: Castle Hill in Early Modern times**

The 2007 excavation revealed that the Medieval tower house had had a revetment of stones placed in its interior, with the revetment banking up a thick layer of orange subsoil clay that filled the inside of the building. A similar action had been undertaken within the interior of the early 17<sup>th</sup>-century spear-bastion which was also infilled with orange subsoil clay. It can be suggested that this work had been undertaken to transform the castle for use as an artillery platform, but when was this redevelopment of the site undertaken? Information relating to the castle in the decades post-dating Pynnar's illustration of 1624 are limited, but we can assume that it continued in use as a garrison point in the years leading up to 1641 when the Irish rebels in Tyrone, led by Sir Phelim O'Neill, targeted the fort as one of the first centres of British rule in the county that they wished to capture.

On the evening of 23<sup>rd</sup> October Patrick Modder O'Donnelly and three accomplices arrived at the castle and asked for a warrant from the governor of the fort, Captain John Perkins, to search for sheep that they claimed had been stolen. While the governor was writing the warrant one of the visitors withdrew from the party and made his way to the fort's gate which he then opened to allow Randall McDonnell and a gang of 18 men to enter the complex, which soon fell to them. The castle and town remained in the hands of the rebels until the June 1642, when it was recaptured by a force under the command of Lord Mountgomery, only to be retaken by the Sir Phelim O'Neill on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1642. The castle and town remained thereafter in the hands of the Confederate Army until the arrival of Oliver Cromwell and the New Model Army in 1649, after which the castle was dismantled by order of the Parliament in London.

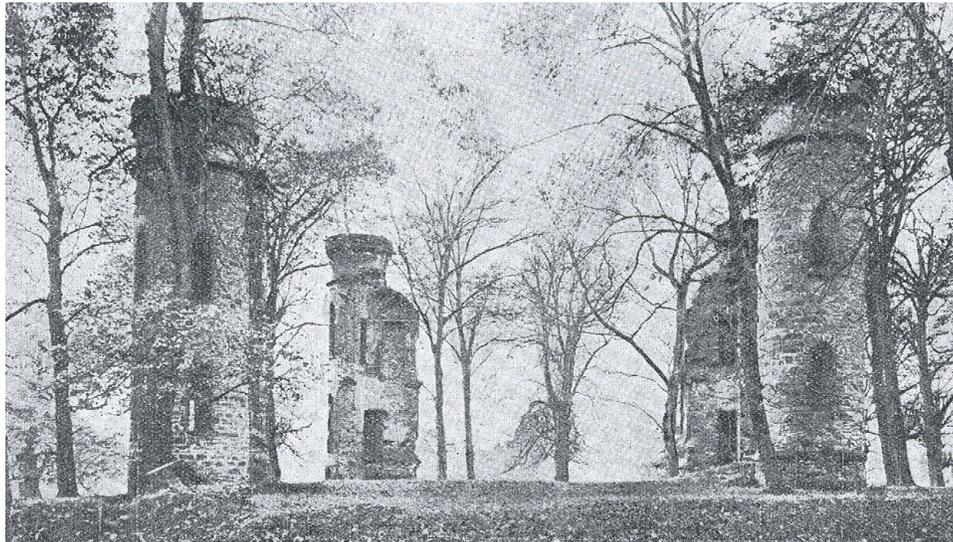
Some form of fortification remained in use on Castle Hill during the later 17<sup>th</sup> century, however, since the castle was garrisoned in 1688 by Rev. George Walker (known to history for his contemporary account of the Siege of Derry) and Colonel Stewart for the Williamite cause. The Williamite force controlled the town and held off Jacobite forces until they received orders in March 1689 from Colonel Lundy to abandon their position in order to reinforce the Williamite garrisons in Coleraine and Derry. As a consequence, the town and its castle were quickly occupied by a Jacobite garrison and on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1689 the settlement is reputed to have been host to King James II on his way to Derry. Following the raising of the siege of Derry on 30<sup>th</sup> July the Jacobite garrison at

Dungannon was evacuated, and the northern half of the island came under the control of the Williamites.

It can be suggested that it was at this time that the old castle complex received its final modifications and that either the Williamite garrison of 1688 or the Jacobite forces stationed on the hilltop in 1689 were responsible for its modification for use as an artillery fort. Perhaps the walls of the castle and fort had been demolished to their foundation levels by the Cromwellians in the 1650s but, given its prominent location overlooking the town, it may still have retained sufficient strength to warrant the investment of labour required to transform its ruins into a gun platform.

In 1692 the Chichester family disposed of their lands around Dungannon to Thomas Knox and it would seem that the Knox family rented out Castle Hill during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1770 the estate of Thomas Knox III, the 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Northland of Dungannon, was surveyed by John Barker. The maps do not give any indication of surface topography and in the townland map of Town Parks, or Drumcoo, the only buildings depicted apart from those lining the four or five streets of the town are those on Castle Hill. These comprise a collection of four randomly arranged rectangular buildings on or close to the hilltop and two additional buildings located at the edge of the grounds. The scale of the map, 16 statute perches to an inch, indicates that the footprints for these buildings each measured approximately 12.9m x 3.2m. The buildings must represent structures built on the hill after the old castle and military fort had been abandoned but before the Knox-Hannington house was built in the late 1780s or 1790s. Other than informing us that Castle Hill remained occupied during the 18<sup>th</sup> century there are no other records describing the form or function of these buildings. In addition, there is no obvious representation of any of the structural remains of the Medieval castle or Plantation-period fort on the hilltop, although the site continued to be known as the "castle"; a rental of 1774-75 shows that one of the late Thomas Knox II's sons-in-law was then tenant of the "castle" and its demesne. The yearly rent for this property was considerably lower than for the Dungannon mills and this suggests that either the tenant was given a grace-in-favour tenancy to maintain a family presence in the town, or that the estate was much less valuable than the mills.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, *circa* 1780-90, Thomas Knox-Hannyngton built a fine new house on the hilltop. There are no contemporary descriptions of this house and the earliest known representation is its outline in plan on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map sheet of the area from 1834, approximately 20 years before the reported abandonment of the residence in 1856. The house is shown marked as “Castle” and the outline of the structure is well defined. It is broadly rectangular in shape with three circular towers, one each at the northern, southern and western corners. There are semi-circular ‘apsidal’ projections midway along both end walls and two additional projections along the north-western side wall which represent either additional towers or, more probably, bay-windows. The excavation in 2007 revealed that the rear of the house was positioned over where the tower house and Chichester’s fort were located. Huge amounts of spoil and rubble (the latter perhaps obtained from the houses depicted as being on the hilltop on the 1770 map) had been deliberately dumped over the old fortification to level up the ground and provide secure foundations for the construction of the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century house.



**Plate 6: Photograph of the Knox-Hannyngton house, published in 1909 by McGuffin in his guide to Dungannon.**

By the 1935 edition of the six-inch Ordnance Survey map sheet the site had undergone significant change. The Knox-Hannyngton house was marked as a ruin, although, at this stage, there were four extant corner towers, suggesting perhaps that the residence was modified in the 22 years between the publication of the first edition maps and the

reported abandonment of the dwelling in 1856. There was now a north-eastern tower where none was depicted on the first edition map, enclosing a building somewhat smaller in plan (about half the size) than the house previously depicted. Whether this is the result of an episode of rebuilding or is simply the result of an inaccuracy of recording on the first edition map remains a moot point. Richard Oram, in a description of the architecture of the building, dated some of the surviving fabric in 1971 to around 1790, but intimated that the towers might have been a later addition. The cartographic evidence would seem to support his contention. A linear feature marked with a double dotted line, extending from the north-east of the ruined house appears to be the remnants of a servants tunnel that was encountered by Chapple during his excavation in 2003. In 1907 Latimer had noted the presence of the tunnel which was revealed upon the collapse “of part of a wall which divides the upper barrack yard from the site of the castle”. The description given by Latimer is almost identical to the length of tunnel uncovered by Chapple, although Latimer mistakenly ascribed it as being part of Chichester’s defensive works.

The 1935 map also indicates that an area of the previous castle-grounds at the southern end had been partitioned off, possibly to accommodate an RUC barracks and/or a Fire Engine Station, while a ruined chapel is marked to the north-east of the location of the castle. This latter feature is probably the remnants of the L-shaped structure shown on the first edition map which marked the northernmost point of the castle grounds. In 1940 Oliver Davies stated that this building was traditionally regarded as the O’Neill’s chapel but that both the use of brick and the plan of the building questioned this claim.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the main street of Dungannon was Market Square but in 1941 Thomas Street was constructed to replace the steep road over Castle Hill. A larger scale map based on the 1935 edition was also published in 1965 and includes revisions based on air photography conducted in the early 1960s and depicts a road running around the mound where the ruins of the Knox Hannington house are located. In the location where the church ruins had been depicted in 1935 there are instead two new rectangular buildings belonging to the Territorial Army. By this time only three of the Knox-Hannington towers survived, while the area where the building’s rear wall had stood, positioned over the hidden foundations of the castle and early 17<sup>th</sup>-century fort, was now in use as a helicopter landing-pad by the British Army.

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