

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

CLANE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



THE “BIRD BATH”

As one approaches the entrance to the Catholic Church in Clane from the Main Street one is struck by the presence of a large stone bowl-like basin mounted on a rectangular block of granite and situated to the right of the forecourt on the Convent side. Many parishioners are puzzled by its presence and are unaware of its history.

In 1935 Miss Caroline Aylmer, the last resident of Donadea Castle, died. In June 1936 the contents of the castle were auctioned. Fr. Keogh the Parish Priest of Clane attended the public auction at Donadea Castle. Fr. Keogh bought the basin for two pounds. It was listed in the auction catalogue as a “bird bath”. However, Fr Keogh believed it was originally a baptismal font from the private Catholic chapel that was in the castle since its construction. The chapel was located in the oldest part of the castle which pre-dated the Donadea Aylmers conforming to the Established Church.

The “bird bath” is oval in shape and the date on the base is 1625. Fr Keogh had it erected outside the front door of the Catholic Church in Clane, filled it with water and blessed it. It remained there until the early 1970’s, when due to an upgrade of the forecourt it was moved to the right where it still stands