

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

CLANE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



EFFIGY OF GERALD FITZMAURICE FITZGERALD

Few locals from the village of Clane are aware of the existence of a small stone fragment in the ruins of the 13th Century, ivy-clad, Franciscan Friary located on the Sallins Road.

It appears to be the remains of a statue of a torso carved in limestone without its upper chest and legs. Even though most of the figure is missing it is recognizable as a piece of an effigy. It consists of just the waist of the figure with the tops of the thighs covered by a small piece of mail and the outline of a diagonal sword scabbard. Evidently the effigy lay in a recess in the Friary wall for many years. Unfortunately, in modern times it's leaning against the base of the opposite wall and is open to the elements and is in danger of being vandalised.

Most historians are of the opinion that the figure is the remains of the effigy of Gerald Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, 4th Baron of Offaly, who founded the Friary in 1258 AD and who died in 1287A.D.

One wonders what will become of such a historical piece of sculpture if it's left exposed to the vagaries of the Irish weather much longer. Would it be too much to ask the local Council to bring it indoors and to save it for posterity?.