

## Lime Kilns.

### A simple description of a Lime Kiln:

Limestone was broken into small, fist sized, lumps. It was set up with layers of wood, turf and limestone. When it was lit turf and limestone were added in more or less equal quantities. It would be kept burning overnight. The burnt lime was recovered through the small opening at the bottom. Bottom accessed through "inverted" stairway structure. This is to allow burnt lime to be extracted by use of long poled "shovel" to prevent the user getting too close to the intense heat of the kiln. Note how thick the wall is and that it was built against bank, top being level with road to facilitate loading into Kiln.

### USES OF LIMESTONE:

Lime was used primarily for putting on the land to reduce the acidity of the soil. Lime is alkaline. It was also used for white wash and when mixed with sand it was used as building mortar. With a smaller proportion of sand it made a fine plaster. Lime is a mild fungicide and was used to keep buildings "clean" and to prevent illnesses. It could even be used, because of its caustic nature, as a deterrent to slugs around plants.

### 1. McGovern/McGourty Lime Kiln

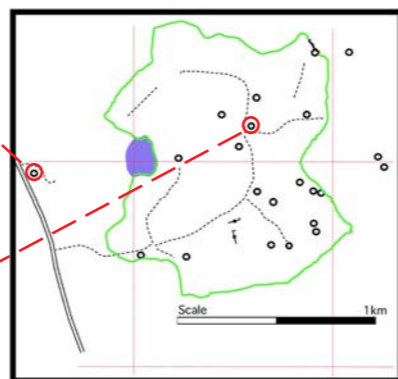
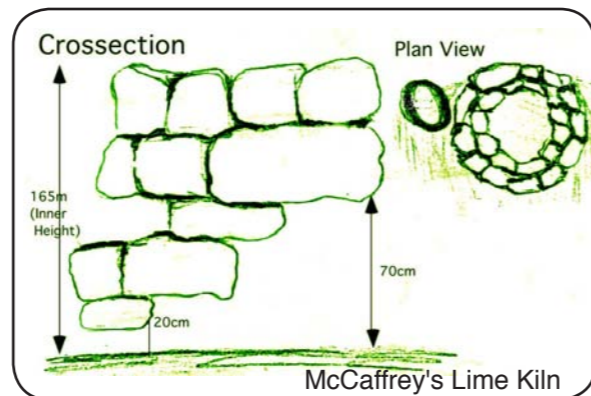
Note use of "cut sandstone" and size of rectangular structure. Lime Kilns are usually round and smaller, as at site 7. This Kiln was built in the 1930s as a "commercial" kiln. There was a government grant for building this kiln and the farmers received a subsidy to buy the lime. These kilns would be kept burning, night and day, for months on end. It would have been a 24 hour job to keep them stacked up. They would usually be raked out in the mornings.

### 7. McCaffrey Lime Kiln, Burren.

This Lime Kiln would have been for use by the adjacent farmhouse. The farmhouse would have been abandoned 50 years ago but the limekiln might not have been used in 100 years. There are no people alive today who recall these old lime kilns being used. The only ones remembered are the "commercial" ones built in the 30s.

### Local History:

The man who built this kiln lives down the road, his name is Tommy McGourty. (brother of Farrell McGourty.) It was operated over the course of a single winter by two brothers, John and Terry (young Phil) McManus, of Edenmore. Terry had a lorry, which was unusual in the 30s, and they used culm, a type of coal/slack, instead of turf. John told me it was too cold to operate it as it was built in a very exposed place. There were three other, long established, Lime Kilns in Burren so the competition was probably too much. The burnt materials would tend to cake up and form a sort of roof within the kiln, if this was not broken up by poking a long pole into the middle of the kiln the material in the top couldn't ignite and burn. There was a very large kiln at Carson's Quarry. There is a story that a man was trying to break up the caked up material by jumping on top of it. It collapsed and he fell to his death into the burning kiln.



# THE CAVAN BURREN

## Illustrated Guide 2006

by  
Gaby Burns

### CONTENTS

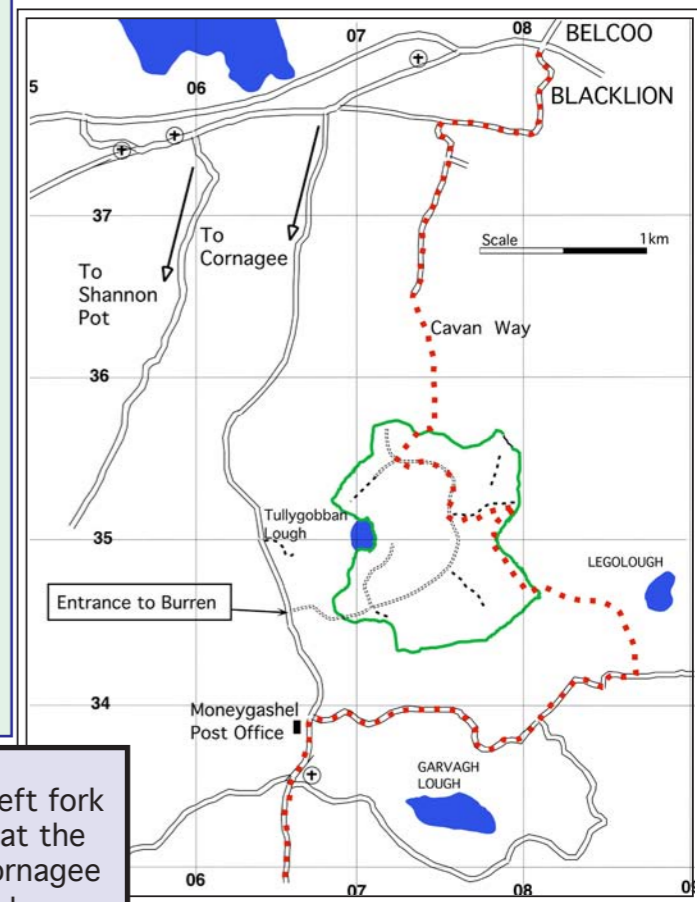
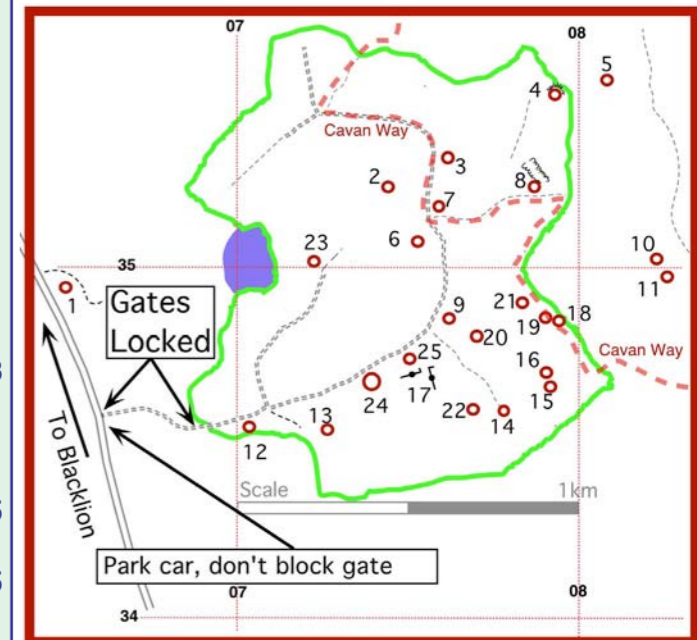
- |     |   |        |
|-----|---|--------|
| 1.  | McGourty/McGovern Lime Kiln,<br>[On Private Property] | P16    |
| 2.  | Tullygobban Hill Wedge Tomb<br>& Ring Cairn           | P10    |
| 3.  | Boulder Tomb  | P7     |
| 4.  | Promontory Fort                                       | P3     |
| 5.  | Lanliss "Giant's Table",<br>[On Private Property]     | P15    |
| 6.  | The Burren Dolmen, "Calf House"                       | P12/13 |
| 7.  | McCaffrey's Lime Kiln                                 | P16    |
| 8.  | Wedge Tomb "Giant's Leap",                            | P6/7   |
| 9.  | New Portal Tomb                                       | P4     |
| 10. | Wedge Tomb, Legolough,<br>[On Private property]       | P14/15 |
| 11. | Legolough Court Tomb<br>[On Private property]         | P14/15 |
| 12. | The Haggard   | P2     |
| 13. | Cairn Dolmen  | P11    |
| 14. | The Rocking Stone                                     | P4     |
| 15. | Limekiln beside Sandy's bog                           | P15    |
| 16. | Sandy's Bog   | P15    |
| 17. | Two shelter walls                                     | P15    |
| 18. | Lightning Stone                                       | P4     |
| 19. | Druid's Chair   | P4     |
| 20. | Bog Bank  | P15    |
| 21. | Druid's Alt   | P3     |
| 22. | Haggard   | P2     |
| 23. | Smith's walls - ruin                                  | P12    |
| 24. | Round Enclosure & Huts 1 + 2                          | P2     |
| 25. | Huts 5 - 13   | P2     |

Those sites marked  
"[On Private property]"  
should only be visited by  
special arrangement

### HOW TO GET THERE:

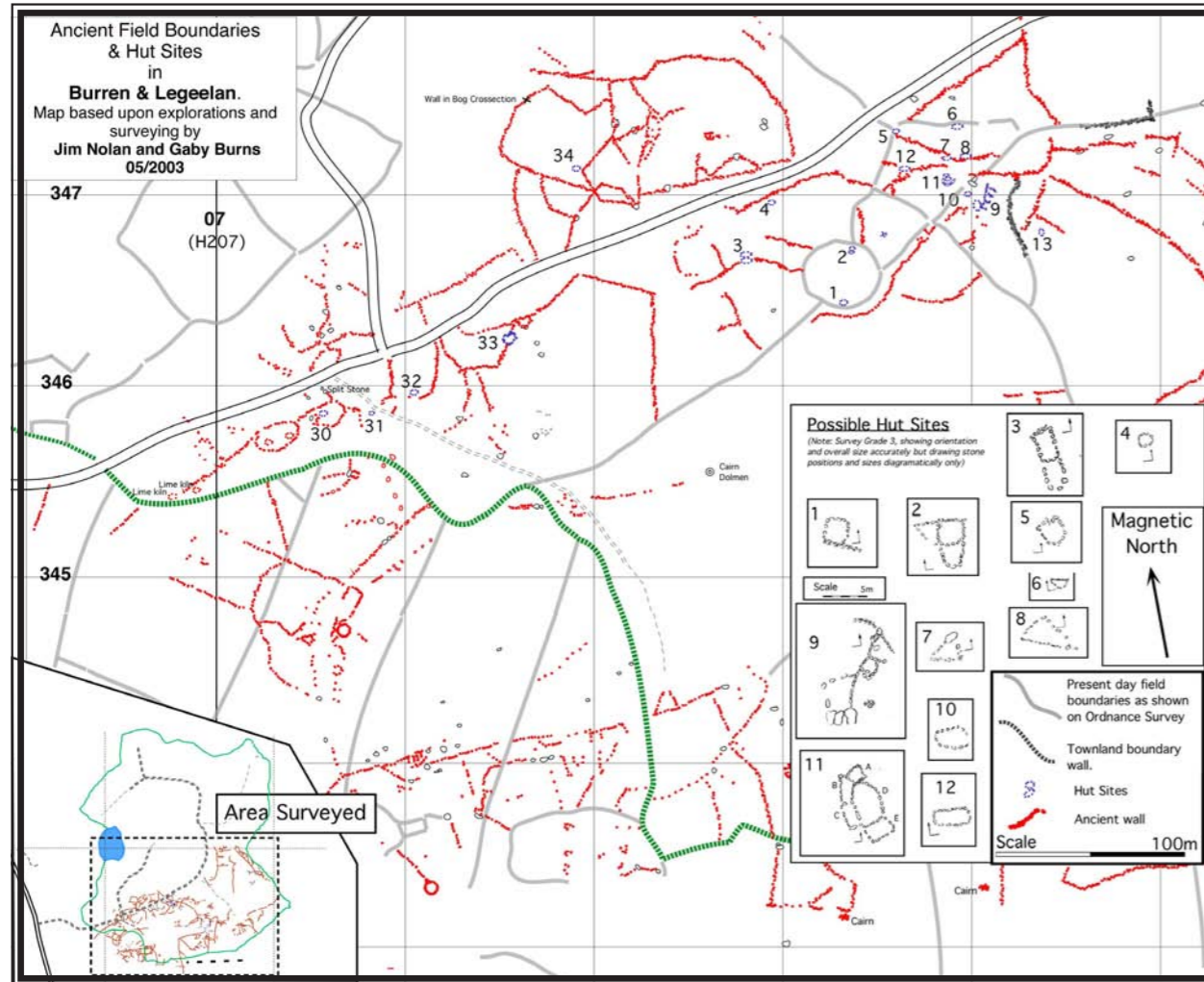
**By Car.** Leaving Blacklion on the Sligo road take the left fork after 400m, signposted Cavan/Glangevlin. Turn left at the next junction 1km along the road, (signposted for Cornagee & Burren). Travel 3 1/2km to the forestry entrance layby. (Signposted) You can park here taking care not to obstruct the gate.

**Walking.** Follow the Cavan Way signs starting up the lane at The Olde Blacklion Inn.



One of the most significant features of this area are the old field systems and hut sites. These have only recently been recognised as a result of the survey work done by Jim Nolan & Gaby Burns.

At this stage of our survey it is clear that there is overwhelming evidence of ancient stone working. We have found that practically every stone in the area has been either broken, used, modified or moved in some way. Those few large significant stones that appear to be isolated and not interfered with merely reinforces the theory by posing the question "Why were they left alone in their own isolated prominence?"



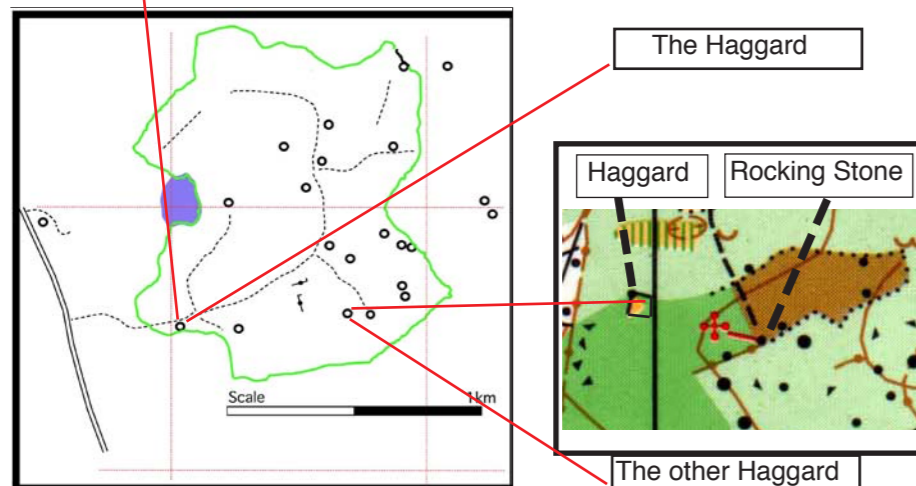
**22. Haggard.**

This feature was only recently "rediscovered". For some time this feature was a mystery. It is a circular enclosure with two smaller circles of kerbstones, 12 - 14 ft diameter within. The mystery of the function of these was solved by simply asking some local people. Philip McManus of the Post Office was able to remember this as a haggard. The Nixons drew hay from as far away as Loopagh near Garvagh lough. The stone base would have been covered by hazel branches and the hay was stacked up on it. A **Stack** of hay, 14ft diameter, would hold 30 - 40 rucks of hay.

Another, smaller, haggard can be found close to the "Rocking Stone".

[Haggard: Icelandic heygarthr (hey, hay; garthr, yard)]

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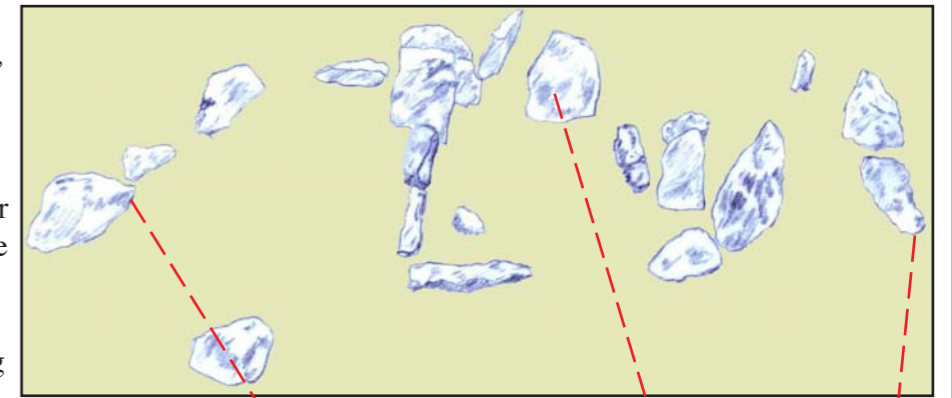


**LEGOLOUGH WEDGE TOMB**

[Note: Legolough is pronounced "Legola"]

**10. Legolough Wedge Tomb**

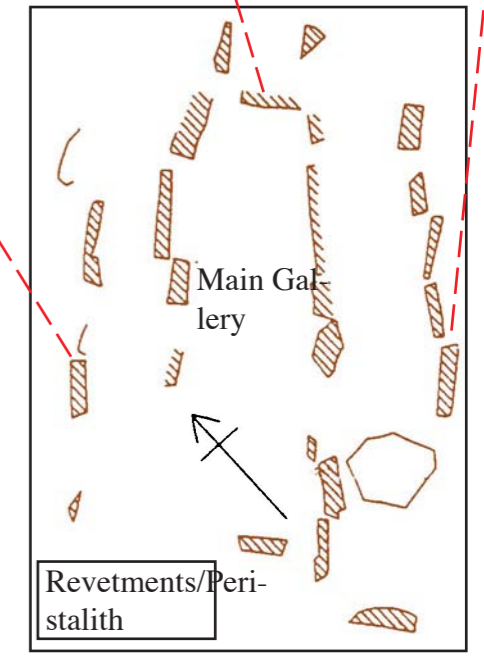
This is a small wedge shaped tomb, only 6m (20 ft) compared to the Giant's Leap Wedge Tomb which is 14.6m (48 ft) long. None of the roofing stones are in place, however enough of the grave remains to give an idea of its original structure. It lies in a N.E. to S.W. direction and the outer ring of stones surrounding the main gallery (Peristalith) are clearly visible. Wedge Tombs date from after 2000BC, Bronze Age.



**Note: This site is on Private property and should only be visited by special arrangement**

**Legolough Round Cairn**

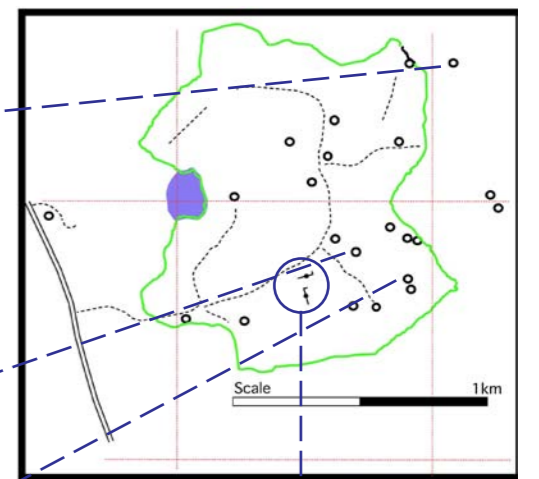
Lowry Corry refers to the foundations of a **Round Cairn** although there is only one upright stone. She remarks that this round cairn's location, beside the Wedge Tomb, is strangely similar to the Hilltop one at Tullygobban.



**5. Lanliss "Giant's Table"** this is a spectacular Erratic, probably a purely natural feature. It is most likely to have had some local significance in past folklore. For instance it was the setting for a May Eve fairy tale told by a local senachie, the late Philip Dolan. **Note: This site is on Private Property and should only be visited by special arrangement**

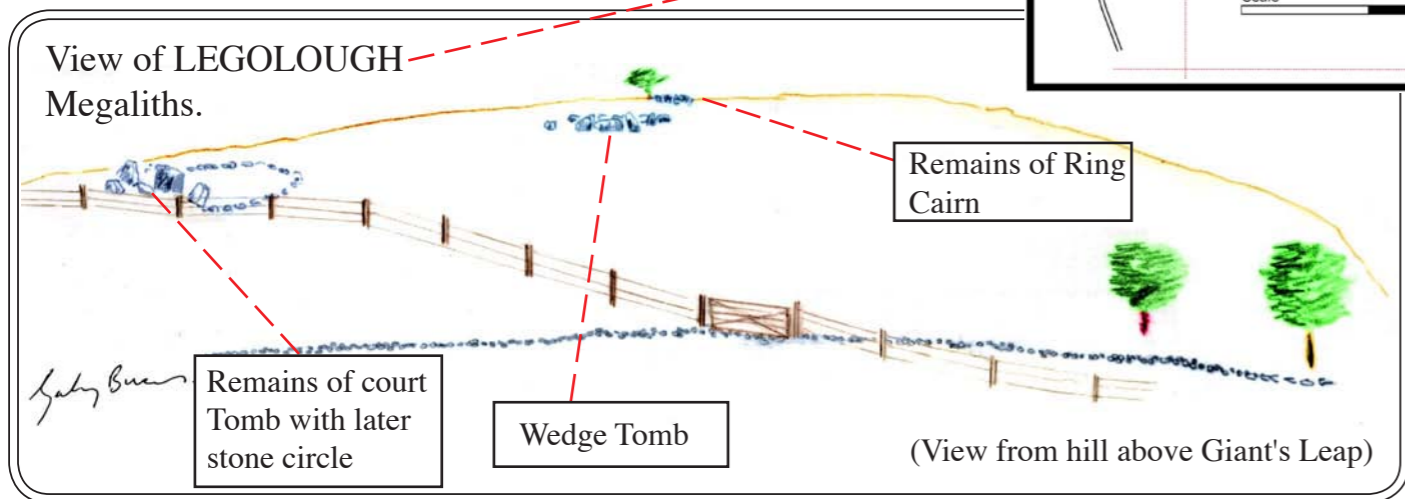
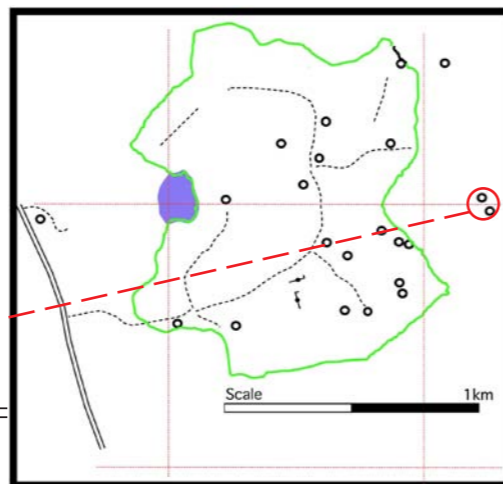
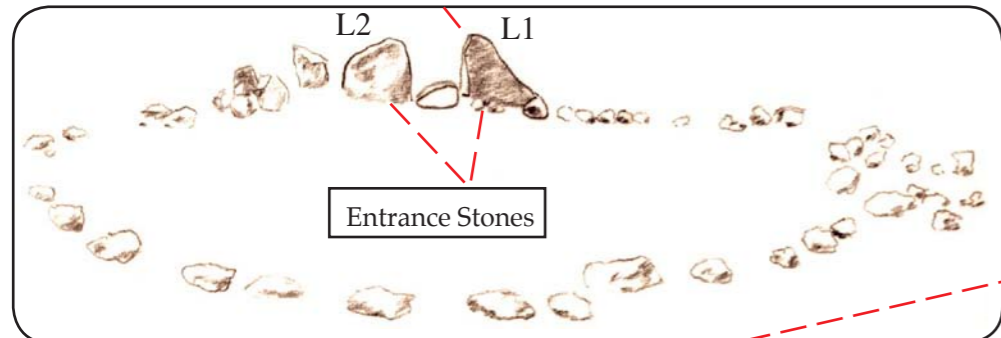
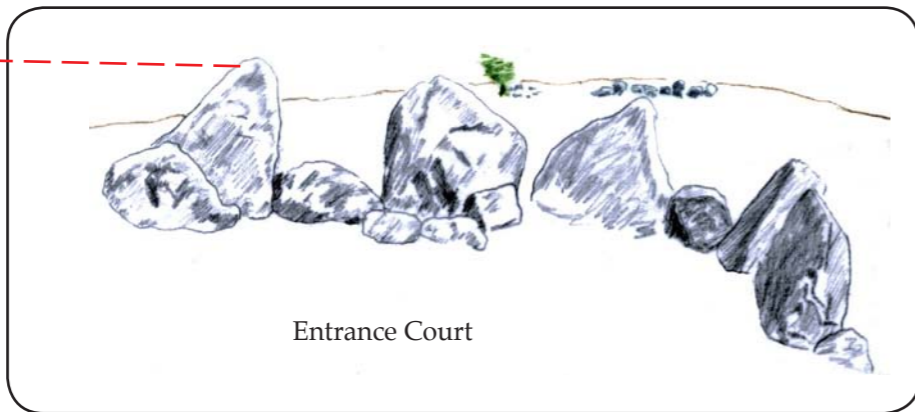
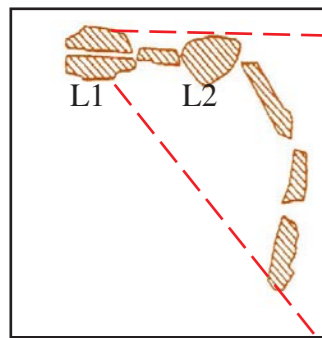
**20. Bog Bank.** There are a number of well preserved bog banks inside the forest. These were abandoned 45 years ago when the forest was planted and have been protected from any further development since then, in a sense they have been "fossilised".

**16. Sandy's bog bank** was used by George Sheridan's uncle Sandy. He didn't own the bog but had an exchange arrangement with the Bracken's who used his bog at Aghoo as it was closer to them while this bog suited Sandy Sheridan. When the McCaffrey's got the land they objected to him using it and after a long dispute they eventually became great friends and he was able to use it again. There is the remains of a limekiln beside it.



**17. Shelter walls.** Philip McManus pointed out a number of shelter walls built at the end of the last century. They are unique as they are not enclosures and while one runs North - South the other is East - West so the cattle can choose either, according to the weather blowing! Just beside the north wall 15 house/hut sites have just been discovered!

LEGOLOUGH COURT TOMB



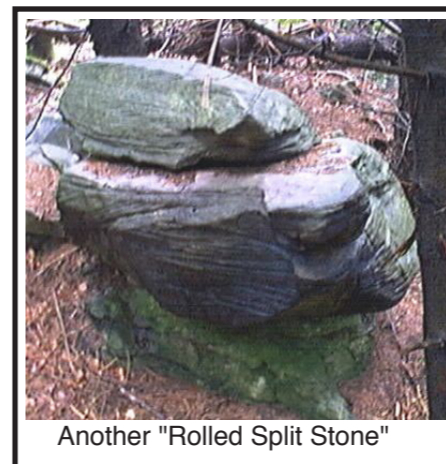
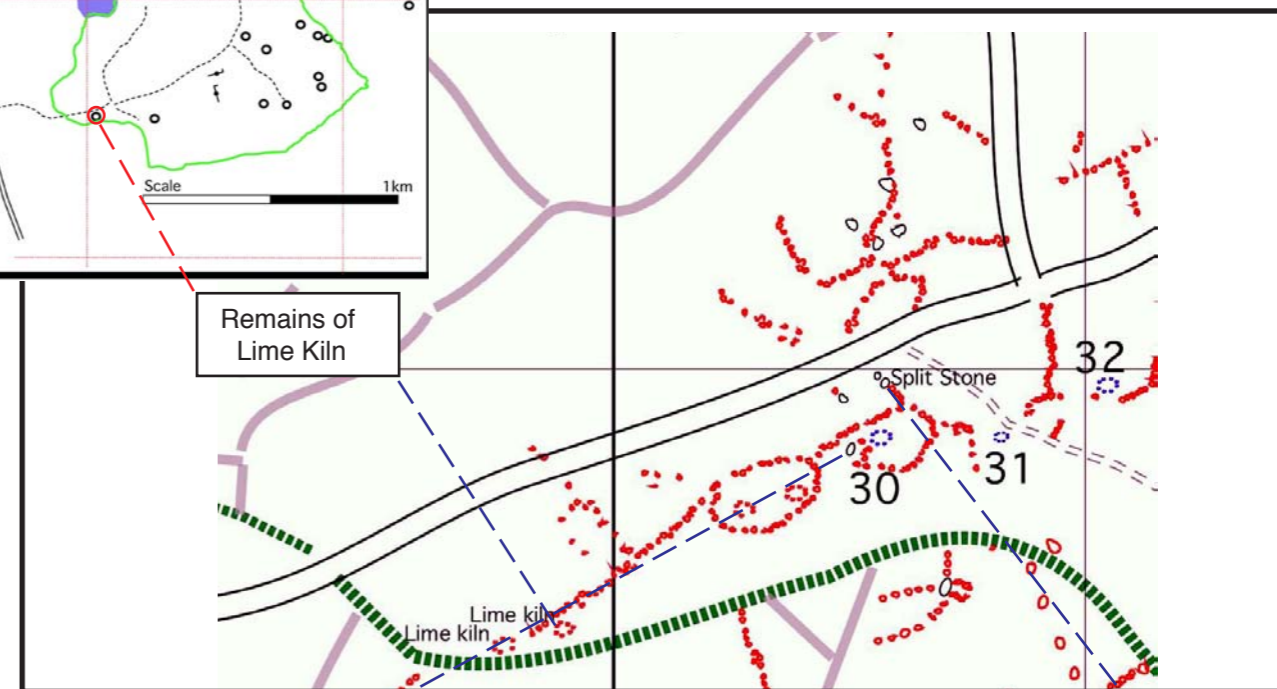
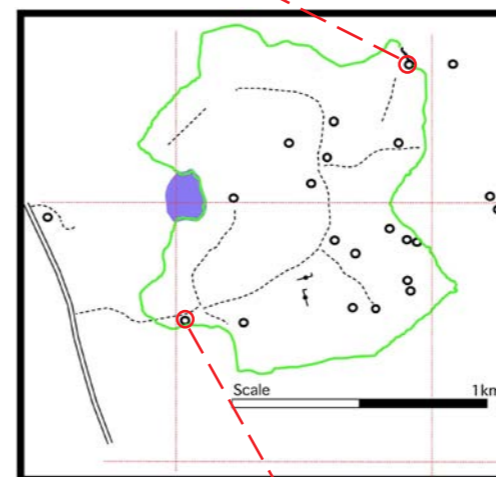
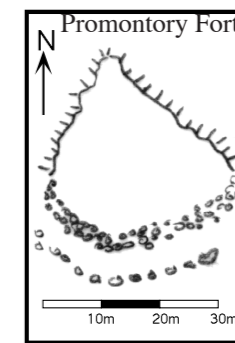
This site is most unusual as it has three tombs on the same hill. There is a **Court Tomb**, a **Wedge Tomb** and a possible **Ring Cairn**. What is hard to realise is the fact that there may be a 1000 years of difference between the first and second tombs!

**11. Legolough Court Tomb**

All that remains of the original **Court Tomb** is a few of the court stones. The rest of the grave, the gallery, is missing. However the entrance stones are clearly to be seen and the remains of one side of the court can be made out, this was enough for the archaeologists to define it as a **Court Tomb**. The small circular enclosure is clearly a later addition and although it is shown as a "Fort" on earlier OS maps it would not have even been a fort. The Court faces west. Court Tombs date from before 3000BC.

These sites are **On Private property** and should only be visited by special arrangement

**4. Promontory fort.** Another feature recently identified was a small Promontory fort. A mere 30m at its widest point; it is triangular in shape with a 20m high cliff on two sides and on its landward side there is the remains of a substantial wall with the suggestion of a surrounding fosse and outer wall.



Another "Rolled Split Stone"

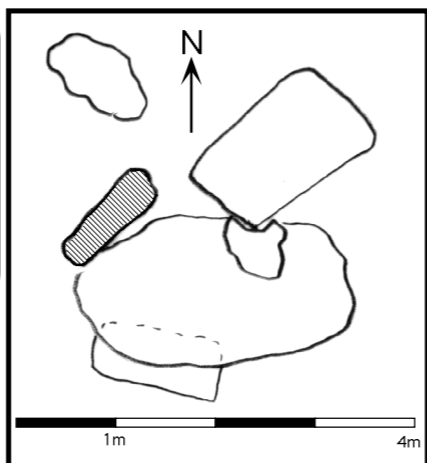
**Split Erratic**, smaller section was pushed off top rotating 90° in the process. This "tossed" stone has been lying in place for a very long time as can be seen by examining the amount of limestone bedrock remaining under the stone where it has been protected from weathering.



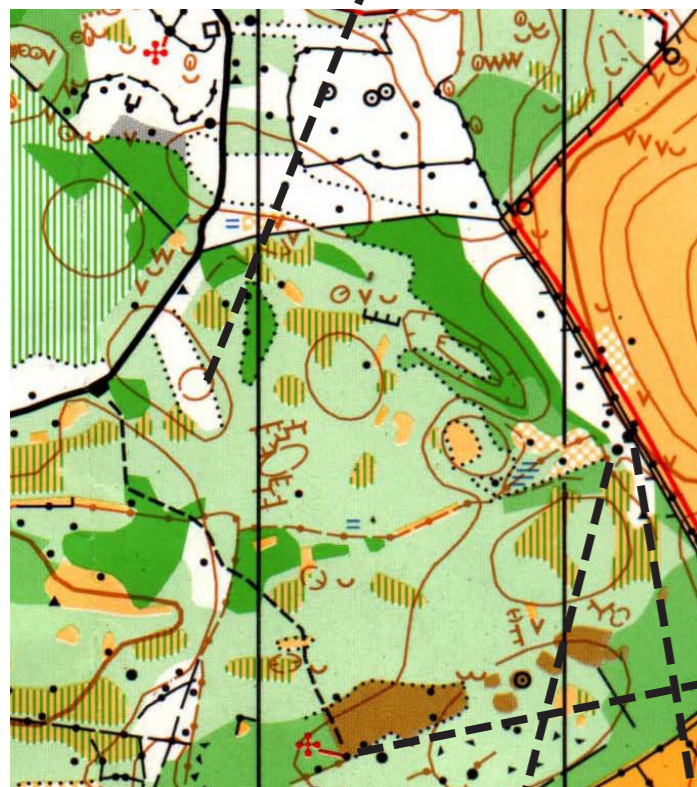
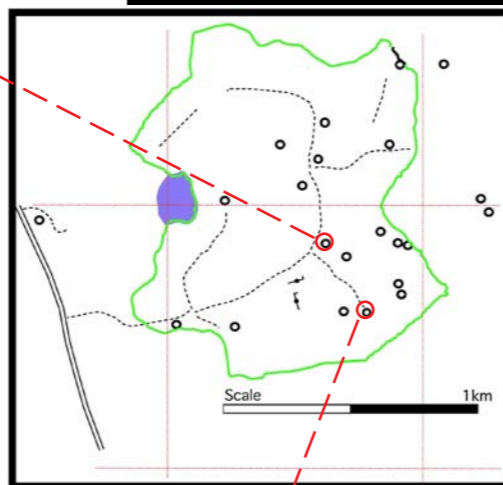
**21. The Druid's Alt.** This is a small gorge that Harold Johnston tells us is known locally as the Druid's Alt. It must have had some great significance in the past.

# This is how things looked in 1937!

A very fine tomb has been recently uncovered in the Burren Forest by Jim Nolan and Gaby Burns. The collapsed tomb was buried under a thin covering of peat and moss. All that can be seen at present is a fine capstone, 2.5m x 1.6m, with three obvious portal stones each 1.25m in height. The portal stones are amazingly similar in proportion. It is too early, yet, to say whether it is on a cairn or whether there is a set of surrounding kerb stones. It would seem to be a small wedgel tomb.



New Tomb



Map reproduced with permission from WELB



**14. The Rocking Stone** - This is a massive erratic which moves with the slightest touch. Folklore suggests that wishes can be granted by rocking the stone. There are many large glacial Erratics in the forest, They make an impressive sight sitting on their own, self preserved, pedestals of limestone.



**19. The Druid's Chair** -Harold Johnston provides us with information on this stone. There was probably some significant, but lost, folklore associated with this stone. It was originally broken artificially.



**18. Lightning Stone** - So named as it looks like it was hit by lightning, though this is not possible. This is a massive stone which has most likely been broken artificially.



FIG. 1.—BURREN DOLMEN : CAPSTONE S.W. SIDE.

JRSAI Vol LXVII, 1937, Lowry-Corry & Richardson.

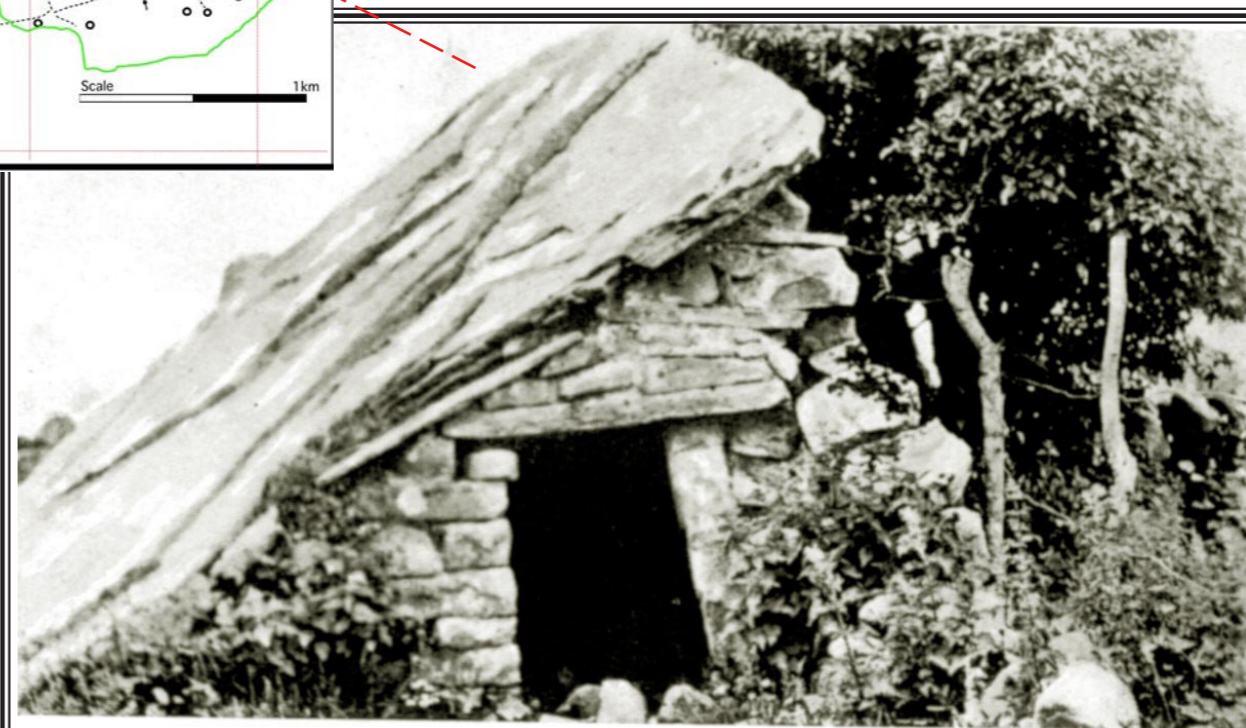
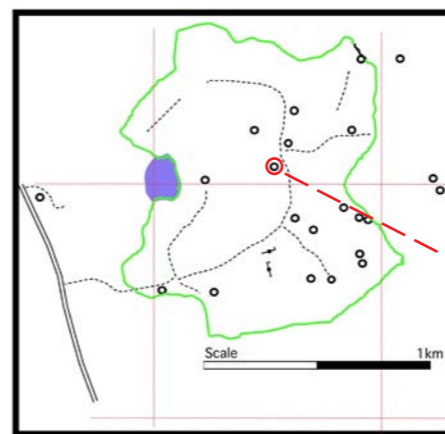
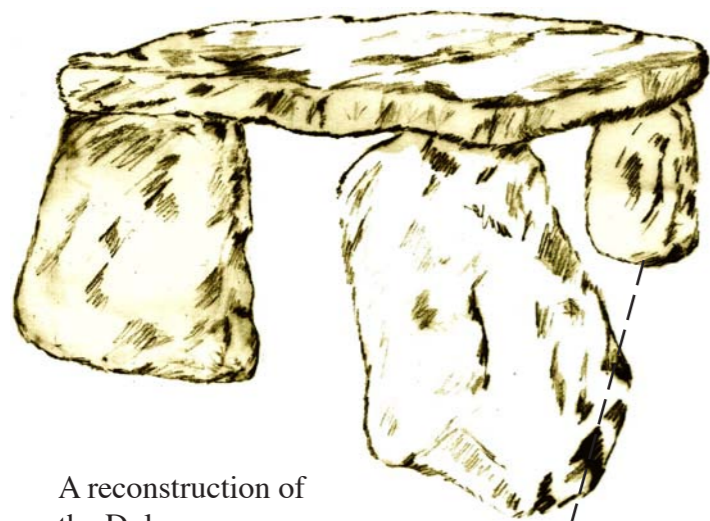


FIG. 2.—BURREN DOLMEN : CAPSTONE N.E. SIDE.

## 6. Burren Dolmen/ Portal Tomb



Note:  
The small stone walls and the built up sections around the tomb are recent additions to the structure.



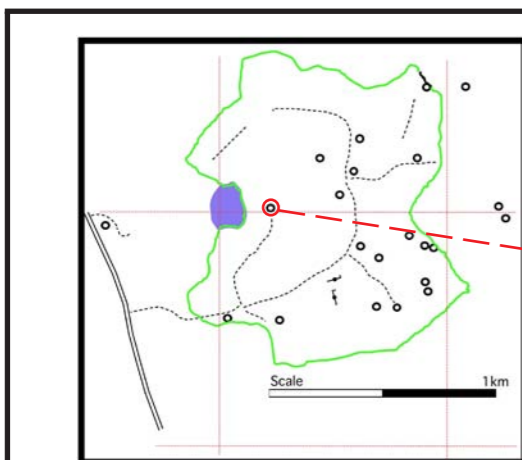
A reconstruction of the Dolmen

The Third Portal Stone

Portal graves are thought to have descended from court cairns and passage graves; they are single chambered graves. The word Dolmen comes from Breton word for stone table and in the past dolmens have been thought to be Druid's Altars. They usually consist of two or three standing stones covered by one large capstone which can weigh up to 100 tons. It is a wonder how the builders managed to raise these enormous stones. It is thought that a mound of earth was placed around the standing stones and the capstone was hauled up.

The Burren structure, which is known both as "Druid's altar" and as the "Calf House", has a massive capstone lying at an angle and has been built up in recent times to shelter animals hence its name.

(See additional notes page 5.)



**23. Smith's walls.** This is the remains of a two room dwelling. Although there is no *internal* doorway between the two rooms of the dwelling there is a curious peep hole between the two rooms. There is hearth/jamb wall - instead of a stone chimney there would have been a wattled smoke-canopy. .

## Burren Wedge Tomb

### Giant's Leap Reconstruction

Cairn, built with stones or soil

South West

Ring Marks

Main Gallery

North East

Revetments

Portico/West Chamber

*Gaby Burren*

### Megalithic Tombs of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age

By about the middle of the fourth millennium B.C. a group of people were living in Ireland, utilizing agriculture and stock-raising as a means of controlling their food supply. This was the beginning of the Neolithic period which was to usher in a number of other cultural innovations. Amongst these was the practice of collective inhumation and cremation in great monuments of rough unhewn stone, known as megalithic tombs.

3500 - 2000 BC  
NEOLITHIC - (New / Late Stone Age)

These people polished stone axes to prepare the land for grazing or crops. They cleared forests by tree ring-barking. They continued to hunt red deer and to fish while their cattle fed on grass, hazel scrub and the regenerating shoots of the ring-barked elms. They grew wheat and barley. There remains no traces of their wooden structures though some wooden tool handles have been discovered preserved in peat bogs. About 500 years after the arrival of these first farmers the mere subsistence level had been passed giving them the time to raise their megalith (big stone) monuments. The goods left with the dead, pottery jewellery etc, indicates their belief in an after life.

2000-300 BC - BRONZE AGE

The first metal prospectors arrived before 2000 BC and they were called the Beaker Folk after the S shaped drinking vessel found in some of their tombs. Our interest in them is their fine wedge-shaped gallery graves and their single burial stone cists. These people also left Cinerary Urns which were large upturned delph pots filled with the cremated remains and quite often left within stone circles or at standing stones. Many of their fine gold and bronze artifacts have been found in their graves and can be seen in museums.

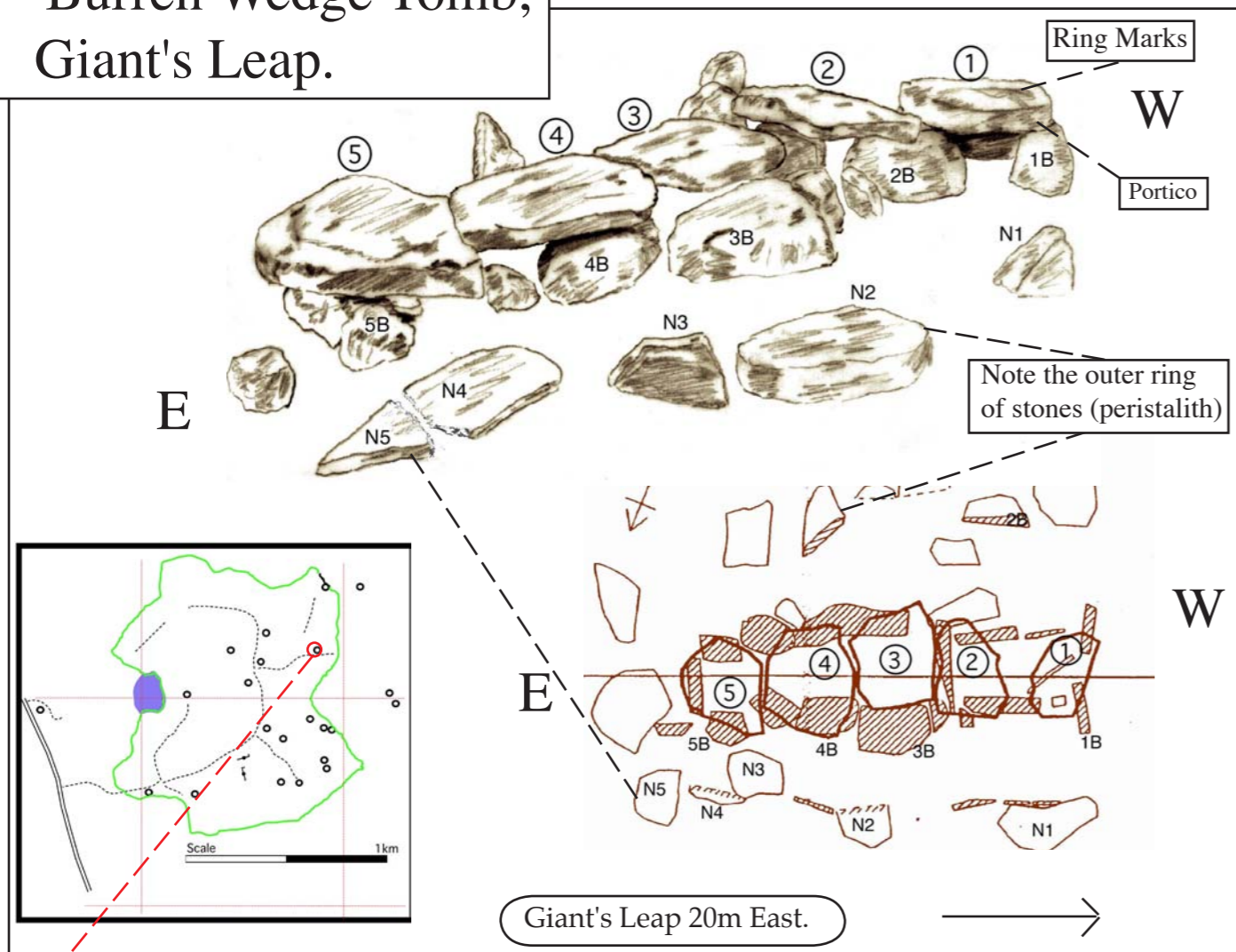
### Portal-tombs

Portal-tombs appear to be closely related to the Court-tombs. They usually consist of a massive roofstone resting on two tall uprights, known as portals, and a backstone, the three supporting elements being set in sockets to take the weight of the roof. The entrance through the portals may be closed by a doorstone but occasionally a low sillstone is placed there instead. The sides of the chamber so formed consist of slabs resting against the portals and backstone. The heavier end of the roofstone usually rests on the portals and slopes down towards the back. The cairns of Portal-tombs are poorly preserved and in many cases there are no surface indications at all. There is also evidence to suggest that at least some Portal-tombs had courts.

### Wedge-tombs

Unlike the other classes of megalithic tombs which are assigned to the Neolithic, Wedge-tombs are generally believed to belong to the Early Bronze Age. In contrast to the earlier megalithic tombs, Wedge tombs are of a relatively simple character. They consist of a main burial chamber frequently having a short 'portico' at the front and occasionally a small end-chamber at the rear. Less frequently both a portico and an end-chamber are found in the same tomb. The main chamber usually *decreases in height and width from the front* which consistently faces in a generally **south-westerly** direction. Slabs or jambs are used to divide the portico from the main chamber and the roof is formed of slabs resting directly on the chamber orthostats. The cairn which covered the monument can be delimited by a kerb of set stones.

# Burren Wedge Tomb, Giant's Leap.



## 8. Giant's Leap Wedge Tomb.

This is a very spectacular site with the main tomb largely intact with five large lintel stones still in place. There are ring marks on one of the lintels

Both of the Wedge Tombs in the Burren are regarded as Bronze Age. (2000-300 BC). They are called wedge Tombs because the main chamber usually *decreases in height and width from the front*. There are two chambers, the **Portico** is the first **small** chamber and the **Gallery** or **Main Chamber** is the next one. Both of them can be seen clearly at the Giant's Leap Tomb. Both Tombs also face West/East with the **Portico** in the west.

(See reconstruction on page 5)

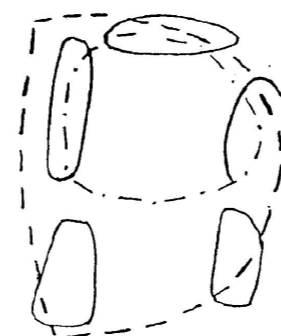
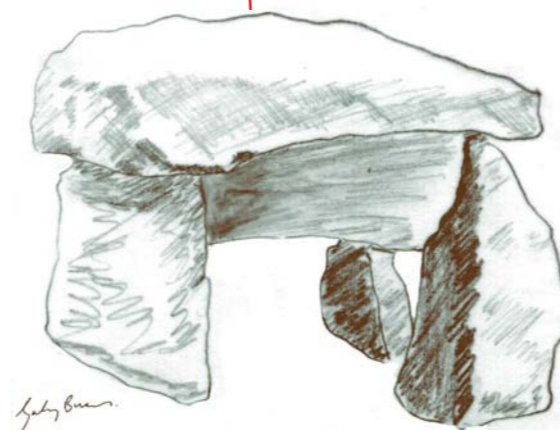
The tomb is built with large **sandstone** blocks. Although there are a large number of sandstone boulders, **glacial erratics**, in the area it would have been quite a large undertaking to transport all these to this one site. The trees have only been planted in the last 45 years or so. It is a great pity because if they were not here we could see for miles around and the other wedge tomb would be visible. The whole tomb would originally have been covered by a mound, soil probably in this case as there is no sign of stone banks. There would have been an outer ring of stones to contain the mound, some of these outer stones, **revetments** can be seen at both site. There is also evidence of a second, outer ring, at both sites, but you have to look for these stones.

Ring Marks →

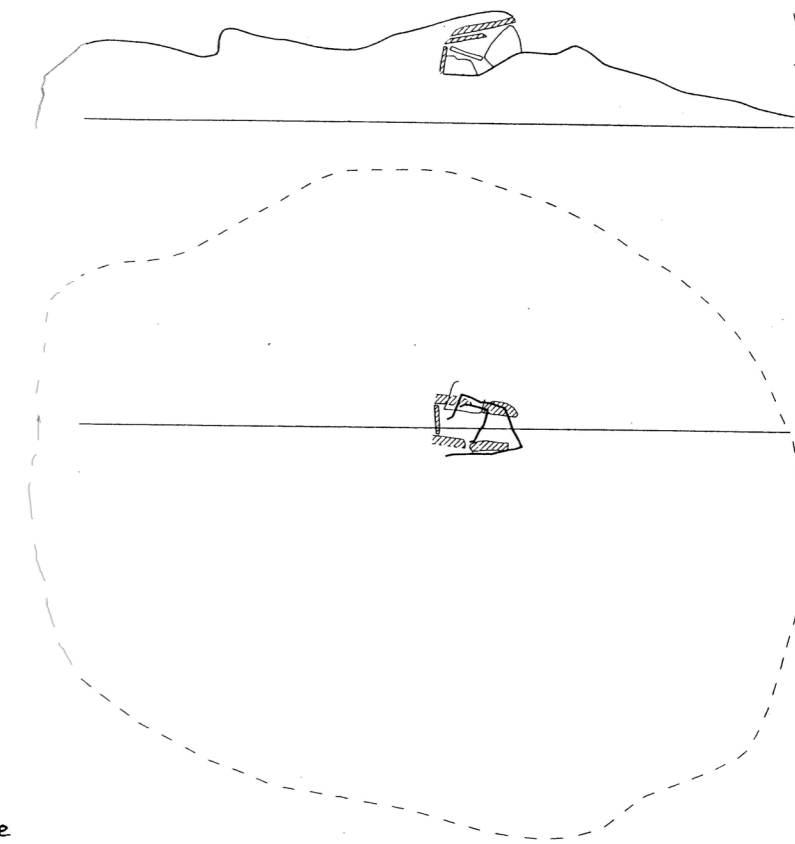
# 13. Cairn Dolmen



The main part of the monument is a large cairn, 20m x 16m with a prominent, but small, portal tomb incorporated into it. The portal tomb has a well preserved rectangular chamber and two overlapping roofstones. Wakeman reported a "fine urn" found in the chamber. There are several holes in the cairn thought to be as a result of "robbing". The tomb is thought to date to the Neolithic period, 4000-2000 BC.

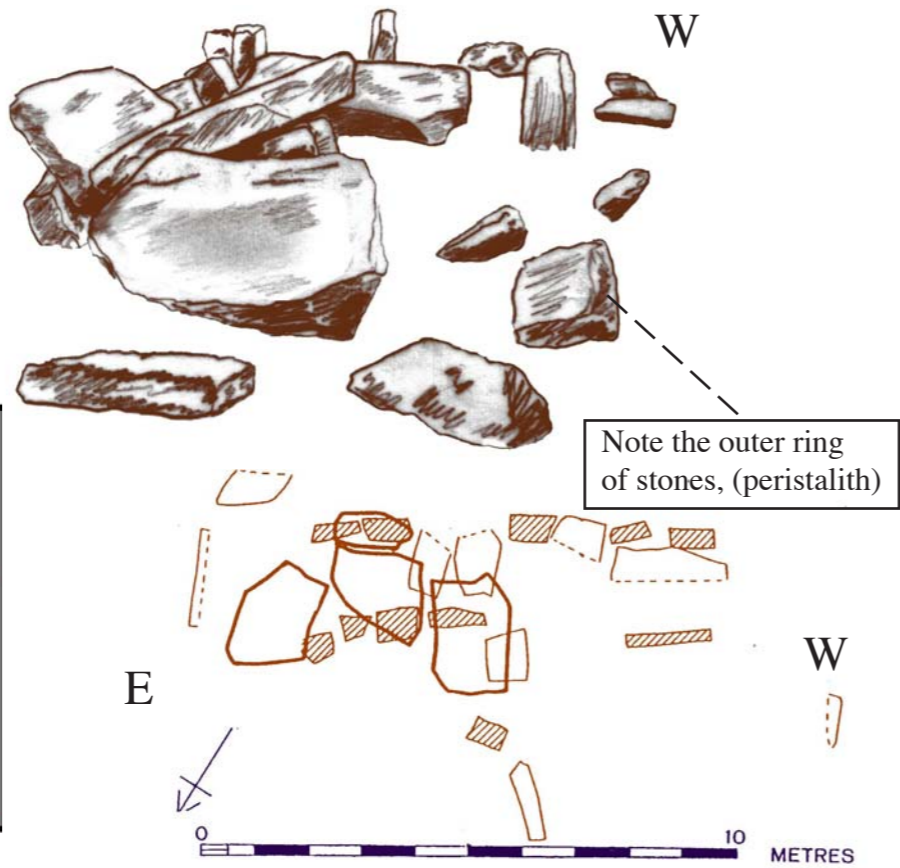
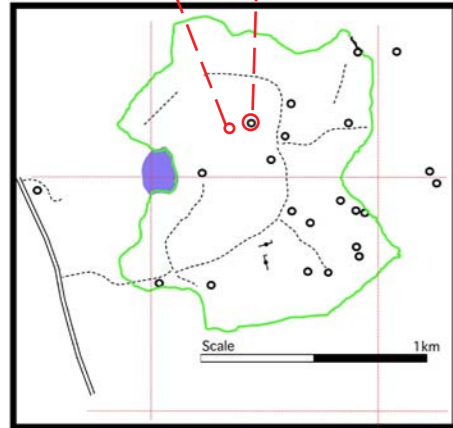


--- Capstone  
 ..... Subsidiary Capstone  
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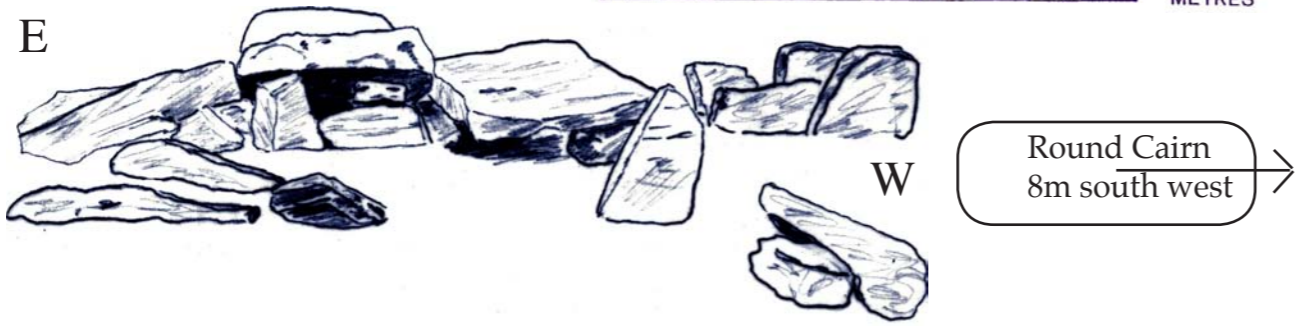


Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 10 15 METRE

Burren  
Tullygobban Hill  
Wedge Tomb



Note the outer ring of stones, (peristalith)



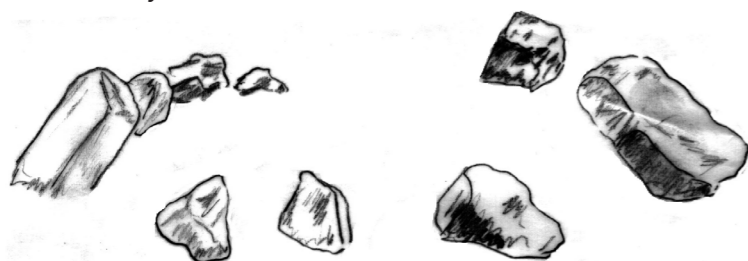
The Tullygobban wedge tomb is very similar to the one at the Giant's Leap but is in a somewhat ruined state. Whereas all five roofstones remain on the latter this tomb has only three remaining and these are partly displaced. Likewise the few remaining orthostats are either leaning or fallen. A considerable number of the stones of the peristalith remain but the recent growth since the forestry cleared the trees around the grave is obscuring these.

This is how things looked in 1937!

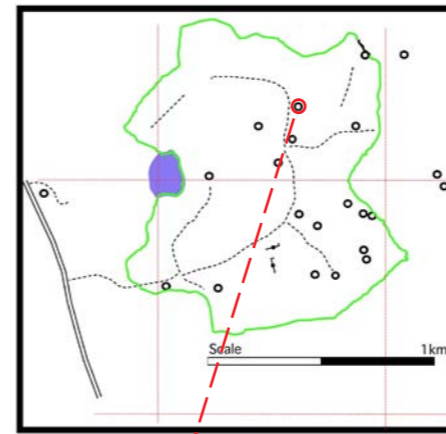
JRSAI Vol LXVII, 1937, Lowry-Corry & Richarson.



There is a strange round cairn, 8m to the south west. It is a stony circle about 5m in diameter.

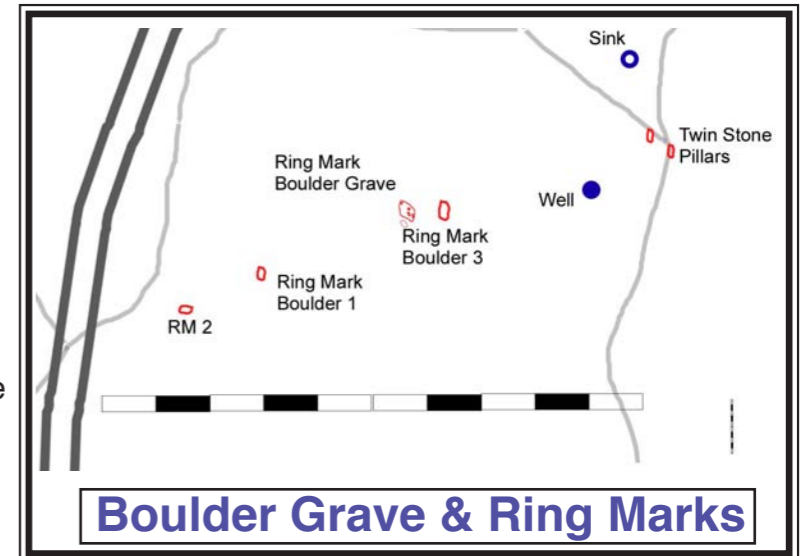


Round Cairn  
This is how things looked in 1937!



**7. Boulder Grave** This spectacular Erratic has recently been identified as a Tomb. The whole structure has been raised, leveled and held in place by chock stones and a burial chamber has been carved out of the limestone.

Jim Nolan, more recently, found Ring Marks on a boulder on the way down to the Tomb. Further searching uncovered more Ring Marks on the Boulder Grave itself. The whole complex is now a very significant, integrated, burial site with the Twin Pillar Stones, the Well, the Tomb and the Ring Mark Boulder forming a distinct alignment.



Boulder Grave & Ring Marks

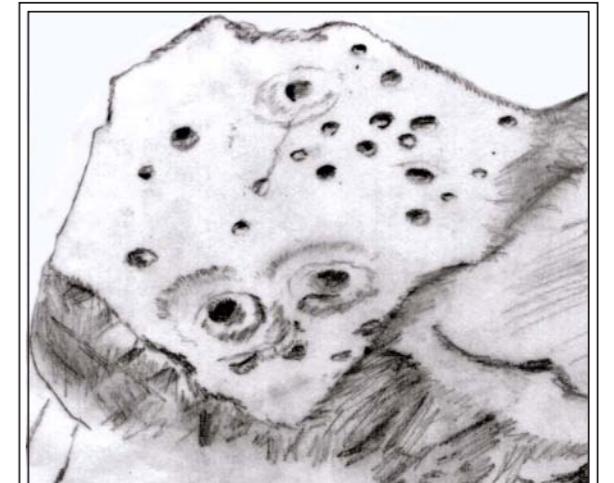
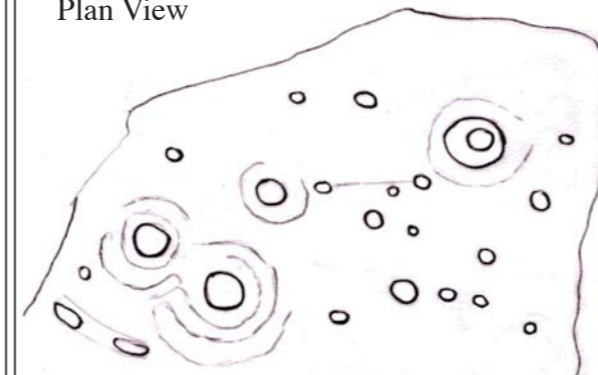


Boulder Grave Ring Marks



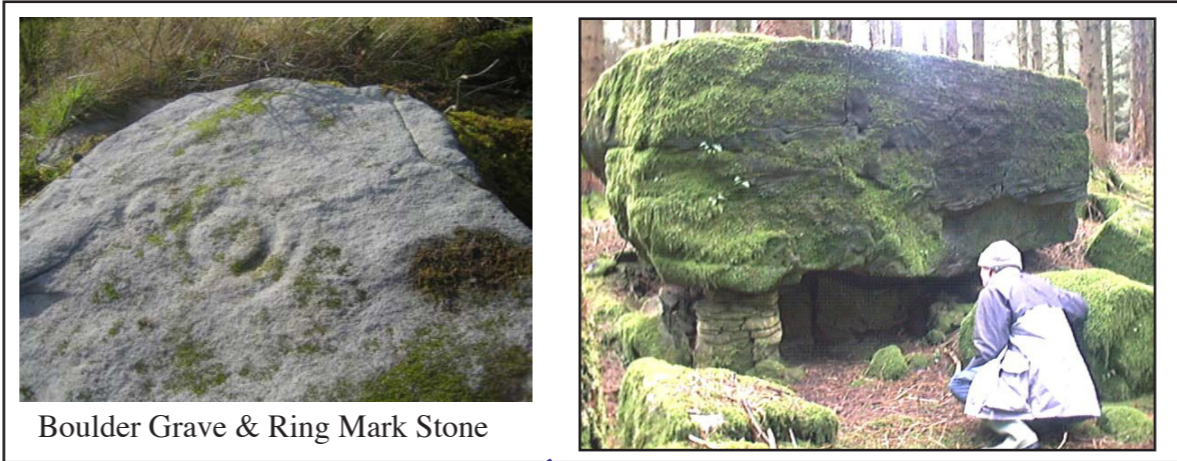
Boulder with Ring Marks

Ring Marks Giant's Leap Wedge Tomb  
Plan View

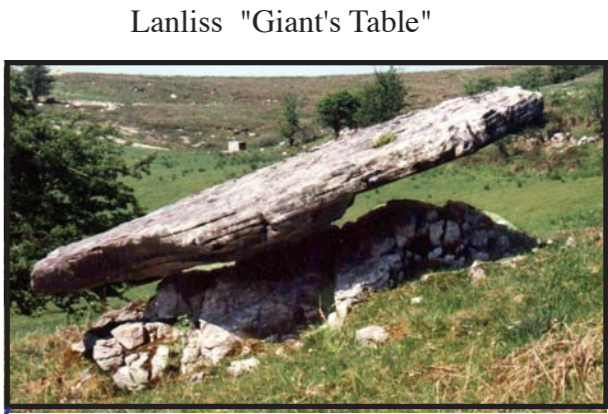


# The Cavan Burren

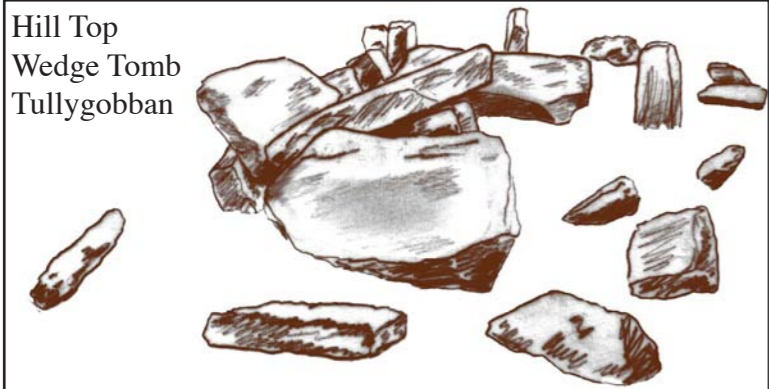
*Illustrated Historical Sites*  
by Gaby Burns



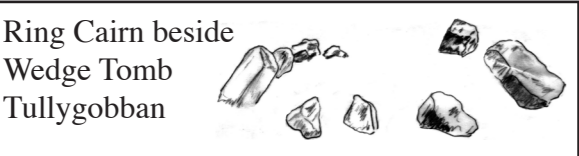
Boulder Grave & Ring Mark Stone



Lanliss "Giant's Table"



Hill Top  
Wedge Tomb  
Tullygobban



Ring Cairn beside  
Wedge Tomb  
Tullygobban

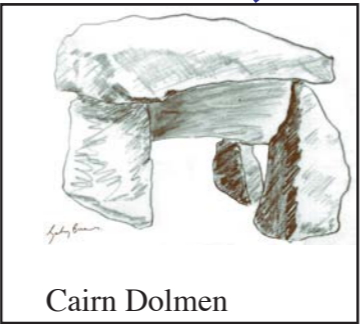


McGourty/McGovern  
Lime Kiln



The Burren  
Dolmen  
"Calf House"

**Note:** Many of these sites are on Private property and should only be visited by special arrangement



Cairn Dolmen



McCaffrey's Lime Kiln



New Portal Tomb



The Rocking  
Stone



Legolaough  
Wedge Tomb



Wedge Tomb  
"Giant's Leap"

