

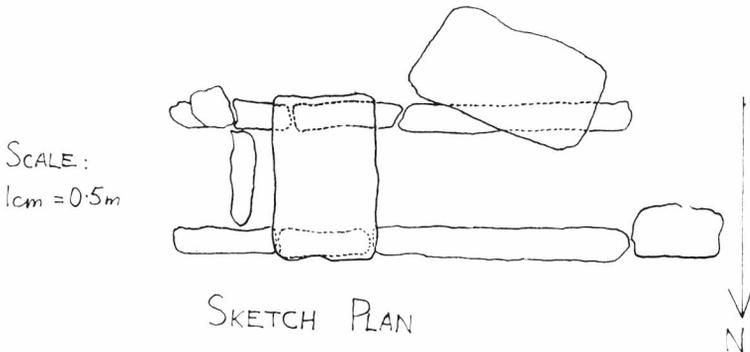
## Two Ancient Sites at Boolyglass, in South Co. Kilkenny.

John Ryan

In the townland of Boolyglass, near Templeorum, Co. Kilkenny, there is a megalithic tomb which is not marked on the O.S. 6" map, and which appears to have been overlooked during the compilation recently by the O.P.W. of the Sites and Monuments Record for Co. Kilkenny. Its position is: O.S. 6" sheet 35, Barony of Knocktopher, townland of Boolyglass, 30.3 cms from S. margin, 39.8 cms from W. margin. It lies at an altitude of 875' approximately, the highest point in the vicinity being Carricktriss, 1034' high.

This is presumably the tomb referred to in Tighe's *Statistical Survey*, p.625, and may be the one mentioned by Borlase in his *Dolmens of Ireland*, where however it is said to be in Mullenbeg townland (immediately south of Boolyglass).

It resembles a gallery grave, but as it forms part of a field-fence and has a sceaich growing in the centre of it, it is difficult to be certain. The stone used is conglomerate.



The megalithic tomb is on land owned by Mr. James Dalton, and it was he who showed me its location. Not far from it, and on the same owner's land, is another probable ancient site, an enclosure, perhaps medieval. Its position is : O.S. 6" sheet 35, Barony of Knocktopher, townland of Boolyglass, 32.9 cms from S. margin, 39.6 cms from W.

margin. The enclosure is not included in the Sites and Monuments Record. It is known to the people of this area as The Rath, the tomb as Conn's Grave and the field beside the tomb as The Giant's Field.

I must mention the enthusiastic interest in these sites shown by everyone I met in Boolyglass, especially the members of the Dalton family, and also Mr. Dick Aylward and Mr. Martin Aylward. Mr. James Dalton deserves our thanks for his keen interest in these sites and his care for them. During recent improvements to his farm, he went to considerable trouble to make sure neither site was damaged. I was glad to note that the people who live here do not say Boolyglass, but pronounce the old name Buaile in the correct way. Mr. Martin Aylward, when asked about Conn's Grave, recited two verses of Rolleston's lovely poem which begins:

In a quiet watered land, a land of roses,  
Stands St. Kieran's city fair,

and said that he learned it when a pupil at Boolyglass National School (now closed). How many children of to-day will remember in seventy years time the poetry they learned in primary school?

There beneath the dewy hillside sleep the noblest  
Of the clan of Conn

Each below his stone with name in branching Ogham  
And the sacred knot thereon.

### NOTES:

My attention was first directed to the Boolyglass area in 1989 by Miss Nell Prendergast, who had learned that work being done there might endanger an archaeological site. I wish to thank her for her generous help in preparing this article. My thanks also to Mr. Con Manning of the O.P.W.

Tighe, William: *Statistical Observations relative to the County of Kilkenny made in 1800 and 1801*. Dublin 1802.

Borlase, William C.: *Dolmens of Ireland*. 3 Vols. London 1897.