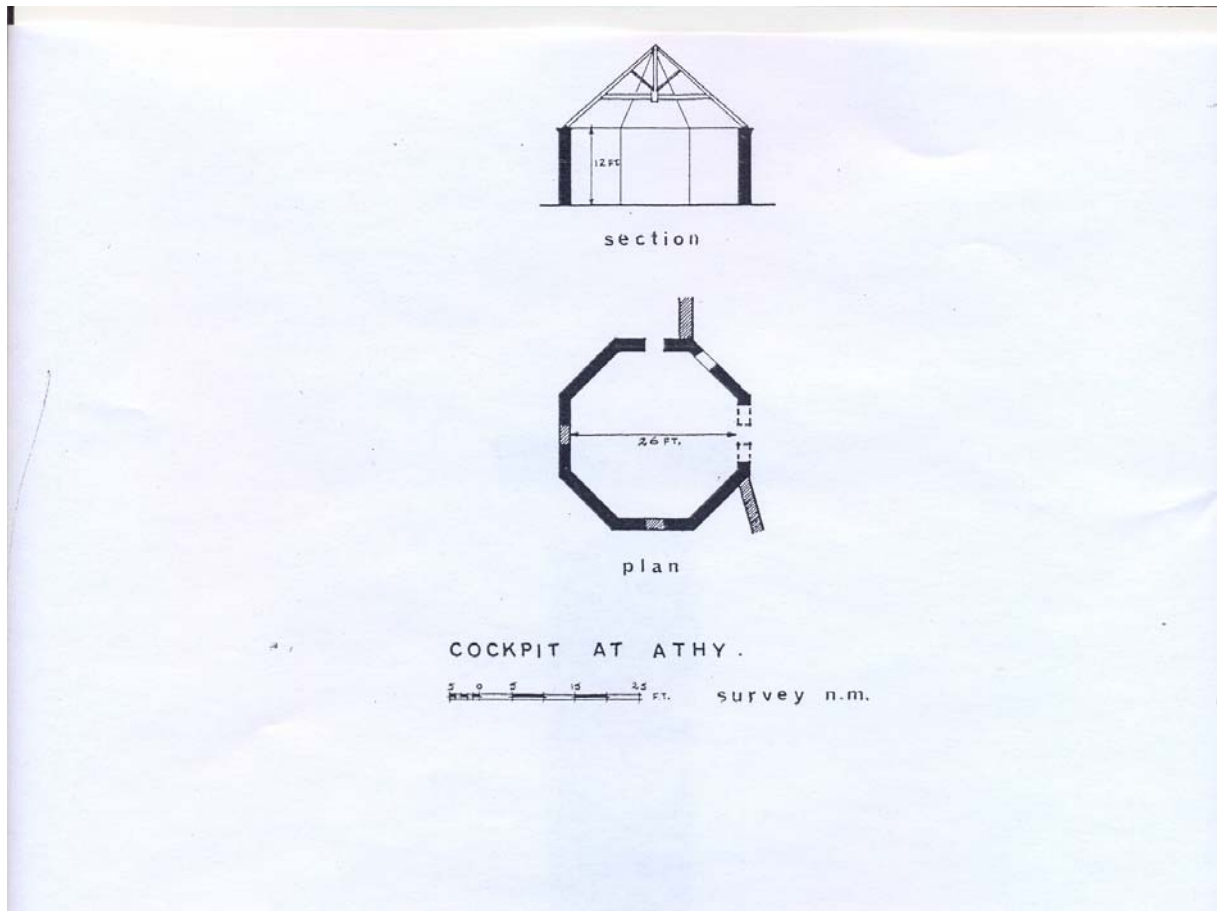


HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE.

ATHY MUSEUM SOCIETY



ATHY'S COCKPIT

The popularity of cock fighting in 17th and 18th century Ireland led to the building of cockpits in many Irish towns. The nearby Quaker village of Ballitore had a cockpit in 1827, while one was erected just off the main street of Athy sometime in the 18th century. The octagonal shaped building now forms part of the hardware premises of Griffin and Hawe situated in Duke Street. It is 26 feet wide and 12 foot high to the wallplate, with a further 12 feet to the apex of the roof. A door above ground level suggests the existence of a gallery around the walls to accommodate spectators. It is likely that spectators were also accommodated at ground level as the area provided for the fighting cocks was generally 13 feet in diameter.

The indoor venue fell into disuse after the passing of the Cruelty to Animals Act 1849, after which cock fighting became an outdoor rural pursuit.