

Martello Tower

Clochlann Hill

Beara-Breifne Way
Slí Bhéara-Breifne



The Martello Tower, here, on Clochlann Hill was one of a series of towers constructed by the British in a rush to defend Bantry Bay following the attempted French invasion of 1796. Ironically, the construction is based on a French design encountered by the British just a few years earlier in Corsica at Cape Mortella. The Corsican tower, armed with three artillery pieces and a tiny garrison, had enabled the French to ward off a British naval attack of 106 artillery pieces for a protracted period of time and to inflict heavy losses on the British. Learning from their misfortune in Corsica, the British quickly copied this design.

Local accounts suggest that work on the island's Martello Towers began in 1798. At Clochlann, most of the stone was quarried on site where evidence of a rock-cut moat and a quarry may still be seen. The limestone blocks are believed to have been brought from Ballintemple in Cork City and landed at Laurence Cove from where they were hauled to the site. The remains of an associated gun battery are situated about one hundred metres east of the tower and command an impressive, panoramic view of the bay.

The tower itself is in relatively good condition on the outside but is now dangerous on the inside as the original internal timber floors have long since disappeared. The road leading to this tower is one of the earliest to have been constructed on the island and is still very much in its original state.



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