

The Holy Wells of County Monaghan

By

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HISTORIC GRAVEYARDS
HOLY WELLS AND
CHURCH RUINS



MONAGHAN
HERITAGE
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An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



WICKLOW WILLOW
HANDMADE IN GLENDALOUGH

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Introduction:

In 2001, Elizabeth Healy wrote in her book 'In Search of Ireland's Holy Wells' that her aim was to '*prompt the discoverer to 'adopt' a well and care for it if it appears to be in danger of becoming forgotten or neglected*'.

Sadly, two decades later, little has changed in the way we look after these ancient, fragile and vulnerable remnants of our shared heritage. Too few of these features are afforded the full protection they deserve.

In recent years, the Local Authority Heritage Officer Network, with the support of their respective County Councils and the Heritage Council, have begun to record Holy Wells in many counties with the aim of working toward a national coverage dataset and inventory of Holy Wells – a project that will take a number of years to complete.

In September of 2021 Monaghan County Council's Heritage Office commissioned Pat Reid (t/a Wicklow Willow) to undertake the production of a permanent database and inventory of known Holy Wells for the County of Monaghan, recording their associated saints, beliefs and practices, local knowledge of these wells, their current conditions and associated recommendations.

The information gathered as part of this report has been made available to the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, the National Folklore Collection, the Heritage Council's HeritageMaps.ie and the report is published on the Monaghan County Council and Heritage Office websites.

The objectives of this survey of Monaghan's Holy Wells are to:

- facilitate the development of guidance for best practice for conserving these places, and their tangible and intangible values
- facilitate and inform best practise planning decisions and county and national level
- raise awareness of these disappearing elements of Ireland's water-based religious and health-associated heritage features
- ensure they are afforded the best available level of statutory protection at county and national level
- create a baseline dataset of the current state, known locations, level of activity, local awareness, physical conditions and remains at each feature site

The outputs from this survey include:

- this written report, in pdf format, containing information of all the known surviving Holy Wells; any potential Holy Wells; information on the location of lost Holy Wells; information on recorded Holy Wells with lost or incorrect locations; wells with health associations but not proven to be Holy Wells
- a baseline database of the Holy Wells of County Monaghan

- a map of these Holy wells, based on the database, publicly accessible via HeritageMaps.ie
- an annotated photographic record of the Holy Wells and well sites that were accessed during this survey
- Public dissemination of these results via local radio and public presentations in County Monaghan

Ireland's Holy Wells appear in all across the island of Ireland. These venerated water sources owe their origins to geological processes rather than purpose built resourcing.

There is long tradition of worship, veneration and deposition of offerings associated with water in Ireland. Valuable objects, weapons and important people have all been deposited in watery realms, and evidence of such practices in the archaeological record stretches back to the late Bronze Age. The archaeological record does not necessarily reflect the importance of Holy Wells as few of these features have been excavated, such is the depth of superstition still protecting these features to this day.

Holy Wells in Ireland have a long association with Christianity and a large number of these wells carry the names of Christian saints. There is written evidence in various Saint's Lives discussing the use of Holy Wells for baptisms in the early Christian period, including use by St. Patrick in baptizing different generations of one family in Naas, Co. Kildare.

As the churches grew in size, as the Anglo-Normans altered the political landscapes and brought European religious houses to Ireland, and as the methods for practicing Christianity changed in the Medieval period, the use of Ireland's Holy Wells changed drastically.

Pattern days became the most important celebration of Holy Wells, some surviving strongly into modern times, others resigned to history by local clergy owing to faction fighting and other bad practices in living memory. The Dúchas Schools Collection of the 1930's records the patterns, cures and devotions associated with many wells throughout the country.

Few of the numerous Holy Wells nationwide are still in continued use. Those that remain used for spiritual or ritual purposes are generally maintained by the landowner or on public lands. Many wells have been closed (filled) by landowners through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to deter visitors.

County Monaghan has a relatively low number of Holy Wells, with only eight entries on the National Monument Service's Historic Environment Viewer (HEV). This compares poorly to near neighbours Cavan with 37 such Holy Wells, Louth having 51 and Meath with 54.

Some larger counties have even more dense concentrations of known Holy Well sites on the HEV, such as Donegal at 165 and Galway with 320. Information on neighbouring Northern Irish counties is difficult to obtain, and the N.I. Sites and Monuments Record show just one well for County Armagh and two for Tyrone. On average, the number of Holy Wells per county is close to 100.

It is also worth noting that many Holy Well sites are not recorded by the National Monuments Service - usually owing to there being no proof of antiquity at the well site – so many more Holy Wells have never been recorded in any official capacity.

The reason for this low number of Holy Wells in County Monaghan is not clear. There are probably numerous reasons - with geography, geology, religious diversity and agriculture playing large parts.

Monaghan is a glacial landscape crisscrossed with some of the world's largest drumlinised ribbed moraines, underlain by sandstone greywackes and Silurian rocks in south and central Monaghan, while the north of the county is predominantly carboniferous limestone, very conducive to springwells, with a large outcrop of this around Carrickmacross.

Another potential reason for the dearth of Holy Wells in Monaghan is historic and societal. The number of Holy Wells may have been affected as population and settlement patterns were modified by different religions and the ancient appreciation of these wells was not recognised or understood.

Agricultural practices will have played their part in the disappearance of once prominent well sites as fields were cleared and subsequently enlarged, deep-sunk drains changed water tables, and the removal of rocks and hedgerows may have closed springwells.

Despite the low recorded number of Holy Well sites, this survey sought to record all the existing, unrecorded, lost and possible Holy Well sites and those with recorded, health-associated heritage.

Methodology:

In 2020 the Heritage Office of Monaghan County Council put out a call to the public, via local press and radio, seeking information on the existing Holy Wells within the county. This was answered with a good number of replies detailing locations and customs of some of the wells featured in this report.

Other correspondence, including personal letters, magazine cuttings and church pamphlets, was also submitted at this time.

Due to Covid restrictions, it was not possible to begin the physical element of the survey, so this did not begin until September 2021.

The first element of the survey involves collating the submitted documents, transferring their information into a spreadsheet that would form the basis for this report.

The next element involved adding the Holy Well sites recorded by the National Monuments Service (NMS). Accessing their data using HeritageMaps.ie, the relevant information was extracted into the working spreadsheet, including the NMS co-ordinates and description for each featured site.

The Dúchas Schools Collection was the next important source of information to be added to the spreadsheet. This important collection records the oral history of the Holy Wells in certain

areas of the county. Some areas are better represented than others, owing to individual schools or teachers interest at the time of this project, 1937 to 1939.

The Schools Collection recorded a large number of wells, particularly in two specific areas, and this has led to confusion over well names and locations. The author hopes to have sorted these overlapping entries in this report.

A visual trawl of the early Ordnance Survey of Ireland first and second edition maps was undertaken next. This revealed the location of a number of wells not previously mentioned, though these were mainly wells with associated health benefits rather than Holy Wells specifically.

In the last week of September 2021, the field visit phase of this report was begun. This involved a physical visit to each feature to inspect, photograph and record the Holy Well as it currently exists.

Field visits were arranged by clusters where convenient. The well locations and co-ordinates were available for about 70% of the 41 well sites identified initially. The easiest way to navigate to these sites was to identify the nearest Eircode to the well site. This provided a Google maps guide right to the location, also providing a starting point for making enquiries about the site locally.

This Eircode navigation worked extremely well, even for sites with no co-ordinate and just a townland location, provided by the Dúchas Schools Collection. Over a period of three full weeks, each site was sought and, in most cases, located.

It quickly became evident that a categorisation system for the well types would be required and this worked as follows:

- Holy Wells with Extant Remains
- Possible Holy Wells
- Lost Holy Wells - Known Locations
- Lost Holy Wells – No Location
- Location Incorrect
- Wells on Early Maps – Not Holy Wells

Site visits were conducted with the permission of landowners when possible. Permission to enter well sites was denied several times owing mainly to the presence of livestock and insurance concerns, though this only concerned some farmers and other were very happy to accommodate and accompany.

While on site, the condition of the well was noted, photographs were taken, measurements of height, width and depth were ascertained. Casual conversation with the landowner usually supplied the supplementary information regarding patterns, cures, recollections etc. In many cases, neighbours provided information before the landowner was located. Several landowners did not live locally.

No names or addresses of those interviewed were recorded as this would be in breach of newly introduced GDPR rules. In this instance, GDPR regulations are hindering the accurate recording of important information for verification purposes, and knowledge in particular family lines etc.

Following an on site visit, notes were written on site context sheets to be added to the spreadsheet each evening while details were fresh.

Some days an elusive well could hold the surveyor to just two site visits. Some wells required several attempts to locate landowner or to gain access to a particular site. On better days, as many as five site visits were possible. Three of the sites could not be visited owing to flooding in the third week of field visits.

Two particular Holy Well sites were inaccessible owing to modern activity – one fenced for a windfarm and the other forming part of a large poultry farm.

A number of wells have been closed in living memory to prevent accident.

A number of Holy Wells entries, recorded by one particular school in the Dúchas Schools Collection, appear to all relate to one well that straddles three townlands. It is named as being in these three townlands, as well as being in a sub-townland and being located in the overarching parish. These entries have caused much confusion over the years, but this report aims to clarify the situation by recording them all as Aghauark Holy Well.

Following the field visits a trawl of local resources was conducted in Monaghan Town Library, with particularly valuable information being found in the Carn to Clonfad journals of the Killeevin Heritage Group (special thanks are due to Ann Corley of the Cassandra Hand Centre, Clones for supplying copies).

All this information was added to the working spreadsheet, which formed the basis of this report and facilitated the direct mapping of this resource, via excel/CSV into Geographic Information System (GIS) shapefiles for mapping into HeritageMaps.ie.

Finally, recommendations were made regarding statutory protection and raising local awareness to assist in the protection of the Holy Well sites.

The annotated photographic archive, along with this report, will form a baseline inventory of these Holy Wells, allowing the Heritage Office to track the decline or improvement of these Holy Wells over time. It will allow the council to make better informed planning decisions in areas near to, or encroaching on Holy Well sites, and it will facilitate the creation of guidance for the care of these sites, raising awareness locally of their existence and importance.

Holy Wells with Extant Remains



Fig. 1: Entrance stone at St. Mellan's Well

1. St. Muadain's Well or St. Mellan's Well

Appearing on 2nd Edition Osi map in gothic script as St. Muadain's Well, this well is located in Mullanderg townland on the southwest bank of a small stream, and North of the medieval Errigal Trough Church ruins (MO003-018002-) and graveyard in Mullanacross townland.

The well can be accessed from the roadside marked by a well-carved headstone-type waymarker with 'St. Mellans Holy Well' inscribed on it.

Proceeding down the stepped, gravelled path, the well is located at the base of a Northeast-facing rock-outcrop rising to about 2m above the well-spring. The well is about 40cm deep forming a d-shaped basin approx. 75cm wide by 45cm deep.

There is no evidence of current use as a Holy Well or as a water source and no associated Rag Tree.

An entry in the Schools Collection records the well closing, or falling out of use, in the early 19th C. It also describes a two-day pattern based on the harvest festival and that 'St. Malin's Day was on the 30th August'.

The well is surrounded by low level riverine growth and overhung by mature hedgerow.

This Holy Well is well tended and appears to be under no threat from development or change of use, and will benefit from the statutory protection offered by being a registered National Monument.

Townland name: Mullanderg	Logainm Link: Mullanderg
Civil Parish: Errigal Trough	Barony:Trough
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: Not evident	Associated Cures: Unknown
Co-ordinates (ITM): 666003, 849202	SMR No: MO003-018001-
<p>SMR Description: Situated at the base of a NE-facing rock-face (H c. 2m), which is on the SW bank of a small stream. The well is across the road to the NE of the graveyard (MO003-018003-) and is accessible by a path down from the road to a rock outcrop platform. The well (D 0.3m) is in a D-shaped recess (dims 0.8m WNW-ESE; 0.5m NNE-SSW; H 0.5m) and it overflows across the platform to the stream. There is no evidence of veneration now but in the folk memory there was a two day pattern held at the well around August 30 until the well was closed in 1836.</p>	
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection	Volume 0959, Page 252

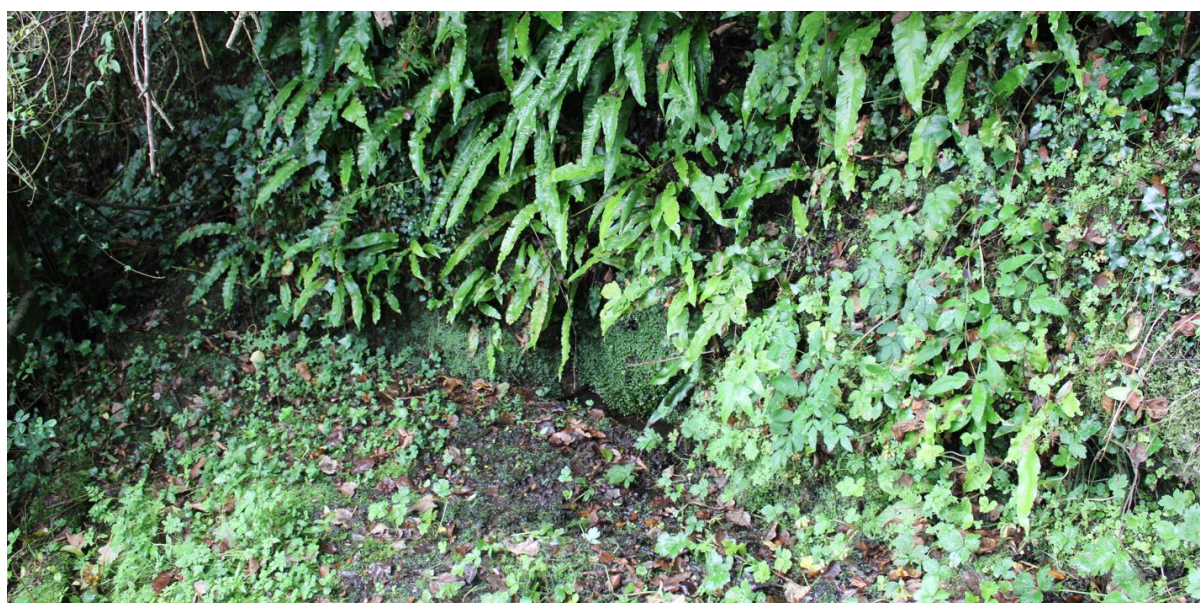


Fig. 2: St. Mellan's Well

2. Tobair Patruic

The Dúchas Schools Collection records a Holy Well located in the Townland of Derryveagh that is associated with St Patrick, having been blessed by the Saint.

It is said to contain a cure for skin diseases and never runs dry.

The present location of this well is not clear, though it is may possibly be in either Derryveagh or Tonintlieve townlands. The well is now part of a large poultry farm and the well is within a compound of chainlink fencing, though there are extant remains.

The landowner said the well consists of 'a small rockface with a hole containing water, but you'd need an eggcup to get the water out of it'.

This Holy Well is well known locally and said to have a cure for skin diseases, but there is no memory of the well being used. There is supposed to be an associated Mass Rock nearby, though there is no record for this on the SMR.

This well is not afforded any protection presently, and may be under direct threat from development or change of use, it would definitely benefit from some form of statutory protection and an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.

Townland name: Derryveagh	Logainm Link: Derryveagh
Civil Parish: Errigal Trough	Barony: Trough
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: Unknown	Associated Cures: Skin Diseases
Co-ordinates (ITM): 663115, 845580	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0959, Page 051	

3. St. Davnet's Well or St. Dymphna's Well



Fig. 3: Locational Signage for St Davnet's Well

Located near to a hilltop, in mixed, wet, low forest, this well is signposted on approach and access is at the end of a long, rough (though well-tended) private lane. There is parking for about 3 cars at the end of the lane and visitors must continue on foot through a kissing gate and along a pebbled pathway.

The west-facing well itself consists of a 60 x 60cm pool, at least 50cm deep. It is partially covered by a cemented stone and brick arch and surround. This is topped by an altar-type stone of marble/limestone.

Devotional items, incl. Holy Medals have recently been placed in or about the well.

To the right of the well, set in concrete, stands a Holy Statue of what must be presumed to represent St. Dymphna. Further to the right, and across the entrance path, there is a rag tree containing socks, rosary beads and baby items.

Bench seating has been provided for visitors. Older 1990s images of the well show a large wrought iron name plate to 'Saint Dympnas Well' above the well, and an altar and Marian Shrine behind the well. These are no longer extant, though it is likely that the altar stone is now the piece atop the well covering.

St Dymphna is the patron saint of those suffering from mental illnesses, epilepsy and other nervous system disorders in Ireland. She was reputedly the daughter of a pagan king from Clogherhead on the coast in Louth. St Dymphna's feast day is May 15th and St. Davnet's feast day is June 14th. The well is still well attended on this day.

There is a St. Dymphna interred in Gheel in Belgium - there is doubt as to whether this is the same St. Dymphna as the Franciscan scholars have claimed - this was later disputed by both George Petrie and John O'Donovan.

This Holy Well is well tended and appears to be under no threat from development or change of use.

Townland name: Caldavnet	Logainm Link: Caldavnet
Civil Parish: Tedavnet	Barony: Monaghan
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: Yes	Associated Cures: Mental Health
Co-ordinates (ITM): 661529, 842544	SMR No. MO006-033----
<p>SMR Description: Located on a N-facing slope. A well, which is known locally as St Dympna's Well or St Davnet's Well, has a cement canopy that was provided in the 1950s. It is connected with St Dympna of Tedavnet, whose church (MO006-022001-) is c. 4km to the SSE but the well is not recorded in antiquarian descriptions.</p>	
Link: Ireland's Holy Wells	Link: Catholic Ireland
Link: Balliali image 2009	Link: Tydavnet.com
Link: Catholic Ireland	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0956, Page 329



Fig. 4: An offering at St. Davnet's Well



Fig. 5: St. Davnet's Rag Tree



Fig. 6: St. Davnet's Well

4. Planxty Well

The Planxty Well is simply marked as a well on the OSI 2nd Edition map. This well lies in the bottom of a boggy depression.

Accessed from the road to the Southwest, the visitor must cross an uneven, rushy field and locate an entry point in the hedgerow where the barbed wire can be untied to facilitate entry into the lower field.

The Planxty Well is located in the centre of this field and can be difficult to spot as the surrounding fence has been trampled by cattle and the structure is low in the field. The well, at time of visit, was in good repair, encased in a concrete surround on three sides, open to the Northwest and topped with a concrete lintel. The area around the well had been fenced but cattle have flattened this to reach the wellspring water. The well measures 50cm across the front, 60cm front to back and depth is unknown.

While the origin of the word is unclear, Planxty may mean 'good health', making this the Well of Good Health - it may also be related to musical terms for jigs or laments.

This well is still visited on St. John's Eve, the 23rd of June each year, having seen a large resurgence of popularity in recent years.

The well is said to provide cures for headaches, hayfevers, sinus trouble and other head complaints. The visitor must traverse the well three times saying the associated prayers and then drink the water. The water can also be bottled for use another time, but must never be brought inside the home.

This Holy Well would definitely benefit from some form of statutory protection and an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.



Fig. 7: Planxty Well

Townland name: Gortmore South	Logainm Link: Gortmore South
Civil Parish: Drumsnat	Barony: Monaghan
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: Yes	Associated Cures: Head Ailments
Co-ordinates (ITM): 660234, 829936	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0951, Page 319	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0945, Page 247
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection	Volume 0953, Page 381



Fig. 8: Planxty Well

5. The Jaunty Well or Jaundice Well

The Jaundy (or Jaundice) Well is on the Eastern side of a beautifully landscaped but overgrown stream with small tiered dams of cut stone upstream.

Surrounded by native trees incl. whitethorn, hazel, willow and ash, a series of stepping stones leads visitors through the stream from access in a now private yard that was previously part of a public road before re-alignment works.

Immediately alongside a small stream, a shallow pool of water forms the spring-well, lined by karstic stones and overhung by a well-used ragtree, containing larger items of clothing incl. scarves, ties, socks, face-masks and childrens clothing.

A statue of the Virgin Mary overlooks the well and a cherub statue pokes from the ground immediately above the well.

The well is noted for its curative power for Jaundice and skin complaints. The person seeking a cure for jaundice would remove their shirt and wash it in the spring-well water, then immediately drink their fill of the well water (to the point of vomiting) - they would then recover in nine days.

As with other wells in the county, there is an association with St. Patrick, whereby he is said to have knelt beside the well and his knee prints can be seen in the (karstic) rock lining the well on the streamward side.

The stream forms the townland boundary and the well is on Drumcru (Renwick) townland side.

This well is not afforded any protection presently, though it is not under direct threat from development or change of use, it would definitely benefit from some form of statutory protection and an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.

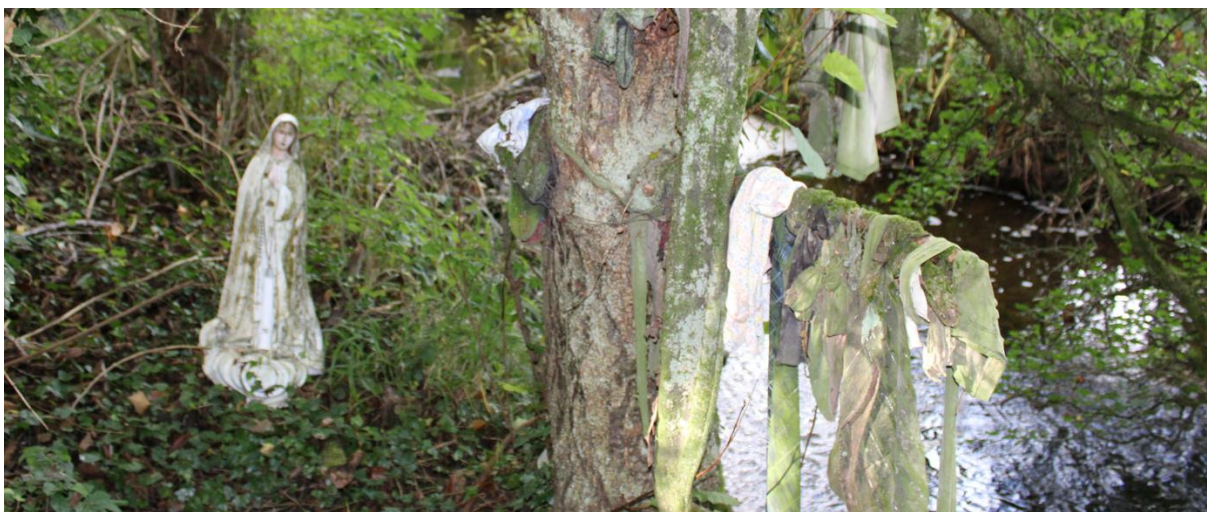


Fig. 9: The Virgin Mary statue behind the Rag Tree at the Jaundy Well

Townland name: Drumcru (Renwick)	Logainm Link: Drumcru (Renwick)
Civil Parish: Clones	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: Yes	Associated Cures: Jaundice
Co-ordinates (ITM): 655145, 828936	SMR No. N/A
Link: Ireland's Holy Wells	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0956, Page 213
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0946, Page 253	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0945, Page 153
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0956, Page 254	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0937, Page 220
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0945, Page 182	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0958, Page 360



Fig. 10: The Jaundy Well

6. St. Tighernach's Well

St. Tighernach's Well is located in a field on the western edge of Clones Town. It is not marked on the 1st or 2nd editions of the OSI maps. St. Tighernach's Well is difficult to access, situated on private land with livestock present.

The well is now just a small wellspring and at the time of visit it was filled with broken fence posts and barbed wire, possibly by the landowner to prevent injury to cattle. The simple stone-lined well is measures approx. 60cm by 60cm and is at least 60cm deep. The well had been cordoned off from livestock but all fencing around was in very poor repair.

This well is on boggy, rushy ground close to a stream and open drains. The lintels once roofing the well have been removed.

There is confusion over the location of the well, with some questions raised over two other possible well sites in the same field on the west-facing slope up to the motte and bailey site (MO011-008001-) overlooking the well.

St. Tiarnach's 'Clacker', his copper bell, was supposedly hidden at the nearby ringfort (MO011-007----) following the destruction of Clones Abbey, and the well is said to be made up of nine springs (O'Connor, *From Carn to Clonfad*, Vol. 3, 2019, p.88).

The Duchás Schools Collection records that the well's water ensured safe return to those travelling abroad. The traditional veneration day was St. Tiernach's Day April 4th and patterns continued until the 1950s.

While currently not under direct pressure from development, with the location on the town's edge this could change in the near future, so this Holy Well would definitely benefit from some form of statutory protection and an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.



Fig. 11: St. Tighernach's Well is difficult to locate



Fig. 12: St. Tighernach's Well with old stakes in wellspring

Townland name: Crossmoyle	Logainm Link: Crossmoyle
Civil Parish: Clones	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: A Safe Return
Co-ordinates (ITM): 649733, 825863	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0946, Page 252	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0946, Page 159
Link: St. Tigernach	
Reference: <i>From Carn to Clonfad</i> , Vol. 1, Killeevin Heritage Group, 2001	Reference: <i>From Carn to Clonfad</i> , Vol. 3, Killeevin Heritage Group, 2019

7. Aghauark Well or St. Patrick's Well

Aghauark Holy Well is situated in the townland of Liscumasky, almost right at the point where it meets Calliagh and Tattinlieve townlands.

This well is accessed through a long, South-sloping, rushy field. Towards the Southeast corner of this field there is a small iron gate that provides access into native, mature woodland.

A stile leads over a small stream and Aghauark Well lies, overgrown by briars and mosses, on the Southern bank of this stream 5m immediately West of the stile. The well is topped with a section of concrete pipe laying slightly at an angle at the streamside.

A Rag Tree stands over the well, though neither Well nor Rag Tree look to have been visited very recently.

This well is traditionally associated with St. Mary and had a pattern day on August 15th. The well was visited more actively each year before sunrise on December 8th and it is said that the water would rise up in the well that morning and disappear at midnight.

This well saw a resurgence in popularity in the 1930s when a local schoolteacher at Tattenclave, a Miss Cronin, rediscovered the well. As a result, this well is recorded several times in the Dúchas Schools Collection, with confusion over which townland it is in.

The well has fallen out of use over the last 15 years.

There is an association with St. Patrick, as he apparently stopped here to wash his feet when passing through the area.

The well is reputed to offer a cure for skin complaints and the water is said to remain fresh however long it is stored.

An octegenarian in Stranoodan townland (1km East) tells how, before he was married, he had to take cows to market when he discovered one of them was gravely ill 'with the scour'.

He knew he wouldn't be back until very late that night, and having no help, he resigned himself to the loss of the cow.

Before he left he took a bottle of wellwater and poured a little into the sick cow's mouth. He then blessed himself with the water and said goodbye to the cow.

When he returned from market 16 hours later, the cow was up and looking for feed.

This well is not afforded any protection presently, and though it is not under direct threat from development or change of use, it would definitely benefit from some form of statutory protection and an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.

Townland name: Liscumasky	Logainm Link: Liscumasky
Civil Parish: Aghabog	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: Yes	Associated Cures: Skin complaints
Co-ordinates (ITM): 663774, 825852	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0949, Page 181	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0953, Page 052
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0944, Page 379	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0948, Page 285
Reference: <i>From Carn to Clonfad</i> , Vol. 1, Killeevin Heritage Group, 2001, p.3	



Fig. 13: Aghauark Well

8. St. John's Well

St. John's Well (also known as St. Anne's Well) is at the bottom of a west facing sloping field on boggy, rushy ground.

The well is beneath a number of collapsed trees making access impossible. The trees include whitethorn, rowan and alder growing from the fallen trees.

The Eastern boundary of the field contains a Mass Rock (MO012-064----) and the site is overlooked from another field, directly to the South, containing the ruins of Ahaghkilly church and graveyard (MO012-063001-) of which little remains of the church with no visible remains of the graveyard behind.

The landowner recalls no pattern or attendance but said it was renowned for a cure for headaches.

The pattern at this well was traditionally held on St. John's Eve, June 23rd, and visitors should arrive before sunrise or after sunset to receive the cure.

This site is currently protected by the fallen trees and the landowner respects the traditions associated with the well - nevertheless, this Holy Well would definitely benefit from some form of statutory protection and an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.



Fig. 14: St. John's Well facing East

Townland name: Annaghkilly	Logainm Link: Annaghkilly
Civil Parish: Clones	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Head Complaints
Co-ordinates (ITM): 653422, 825778	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0945, Page 257	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0956, Page 213
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0946, Page 253	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0946, Page 410
Link: Ireland's Holy Wells	



Fig. 15: St. John's Well facing West

9. St. Patrick's Well or the Wart Well

Noted on 1st and 2nd edition OSI maps as a Holy Well in gothic lettering, this well lies 100m Southeast of the large Clonfad ecclesiastical enclosure (MO021-001----) named as a fort on the 1st Ed. Map. No dedication is given on the OSI maps, though the well is known as St. Patrick's Well or the Wart/Warty Well. The Black Pig's Dyke passes the well 160m to the Northeast.

Accessible through a broken pedestrian gate from roadside into a farmyard, the well lies at the bottom of a field 60m ESE of the farm buildings, 12m from an adjacent stream.

The well itself is covered by large mature native trees and bushes. Access is difficult though possible by walking around the cluster of trees to the roadside edge and entering under the canopy. There is barbed wire fencing preventing entry into the well itself.

The well was dry at time of visit and recent roadworks associated with the adjacent bridge may have undercut the water source to the well. The well consists of a mud, stone-lined shallow basin measuring 2-2.5m across and up to 40cm deep. A Bullaun stone associated with the well (MO021-012002-) now lies 60m to the Northwest in the farmyard (at co-ordinates 645555, 818357 approx.).

The well is known for cures for warts, rickets, pains and double joints (O'Connor, From Carn to Clonfad, Vol. 3, 2019, p.88).

Two very large boulders lie in the trees surrounding the well. Local knowledge informs us that they are the Roman Catholic Stations referred to in the OSI early mapping and that they were moved here as part of field clearance sometime in the last century.

This site is currently protected by the fallen trees and the landowner appears to respect the traditions associated with the well, despite the moving of the Bullaun in recent times - nevertheless, this Holy Well will benefit from the statutory protection offered by being a registered National Monument. It would also benefit from an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.



Fig. 16: Large boulders at St. Patrick's Well known to be former Prayer Stations

Townland name: Clonfad	Logainm Link: Clonfad
Civil Parish: Killeevan	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: Yes	Associated Cures: Warts, Rickets, Joint Pain
Co-ordinates (ITM): 645597, 818317	SMR No. MO021-012001-
<p>SMR Description: Situated at the bottom of a S and E-facing slope and c. 10m N of a SW-NE stream close to a point where the stream turns NW. It is described as a 'Holy Well' in gothic lettering on the 1834 and 1907 editions of the OS 6-inch map and it is known locally as St. Patrick's Well of the Wart Well. A rectangular pool (dims 2.6m NE-SW; c. 1m NW-SE; D 0.6m) has an arm (dims 3.5m NW-SE) extending NW from its NE end. It is partly defined by small stones.</p> <p>A bullaun stone (MO021-012002-), which had a cure for warts is now thought to be in the floor of the well. The ecclesiastical enclosure (MO21-001----) is c. 100m to the NW.</p>	
Reference: <i>From Carn to Clonfad</i> , Vol. 3, Killeevin Heritage Group, 2020	Reference: <i>From Carn to Clonfad</i> , Vol. 1, Killeevin Heritage Group, 2001, p.6,7.



Fig. 17: St. Patrick's Well

10. Toberreendowney

Appearing on the 2nd edition OSI map as Toberreendowney, this well is still extant. The well is located towards the bottom of a field of rich grass and faces East overlooking a disused railway embankment and the River Fane that forms the border with Northern Ireland.

The well itself is in a boggy section of the field, overgrown by rushes and brambles, and overhung by a young Ash tree. The remains of fence posts indicate that the well was closed in to prevent cattle ingress.

The well is a strong spring of clear water, flowing down the hillside. The well appears to measure 60cm wide by 80cm and was at least 70cm deep at time of visit.

The name Toberreendowney, according to the NMS description, relates to 'the little well of the church' though an entry in the Dúchas Schools Collection suggests it possibly means Sunday's Well.

The landowner lives in Northern Ireland. Locals have no knowledge of it ever being referred to as a Holy Well and there are no known patterns, cures or saintly devotions associated with the well in living memory.

This Holy Well will benefit from the statutory protection offered by being a registered National Monument. It would also benefit from an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.



Fig. 18: Toberreendowney facing East

Townland name: Maghernakill	Logainm Link: Maghernakill
Civil Parish: Donaghmoyme	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Unclear
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Unknown
Co-ordinates (ITM): 687037, 814557	SMR No. MO025-050----
<p>SMR Description: Located towards the bottom of the SE-facing slope of a NW-SE drumlin ridge and c. 65m W of a N-S section of the Fane River. A N-S section of disused railway embankment is just to the E. It is marked only on the 1907 edition of the OS 6-inch map where it is described in gothic lettering as 'Toberreendowney' - the little well of the church.</p>	
<p>Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0931, Page 375</p>	



Fig. 19: Toberreendowney from the Northeast

11. Tober na Braher (The Brothers' Well)

The well of Tober na Braher is located on a spectacular vista overlooking Lough Egish at the end of a peninsula.

The well name means the Well of the Brothers, likely pertaining to the presence of Franciscan Brothers here until the early 19th C. (Moore, NMS, 2018).

The well is now in the courtyard area of the newly refurbished house and outbuildings surrounding it. The current landowner, having small children, has taken reasonable steps to protect the children and the well. The well is located in a well-kept, pretty garden, surrounded by a low hedge on three sides, with the top completely covered with ivy.

The well itself now has a stout wooden door kept padlocked by the landowner. The landowner is happy to open the well for visitors, though admitted to this being the first such request in the several years since he moved here.

The front of the well, facing to the Southwest, is flagged with limestone. The stonework of the well walls and the roof lintels cannot be seen currently, though the masonry is evident on looking inside the well. The well is approx. 1.4m by 1m and rises to 60cm above ground level. The depth inside is lower and the well is over 1m deep according to landowner.

The landowner knows of no known religious associations, cures or devotions associated with the well and claims the well was used for local drinking water up to about 2000.

The well will benefit from the statutory protection afforded it as a registered National Monument, and it is currently being sensitively and respectfully cared for by the current landowner with plans to remove the ivy and bushes surrounding the well. Moore (NMS, 2018) states categorically that this is not a Holy Well.



Fig.20: Tober na Braher

Townland name: Lattonfasky	Logainm Link: Lattonfasky
Civil Parish: Aghnamullen	Barony: Cremorne
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Unclear
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Not known
Co-ordinates (ITM): 678731, 813700	SMR No. MO024-039
<p>SMR Description: Situated on a gentle SE-facing slope of a peninsula on the NE side of Lough Egish. When the Franciscans finally left their friary in Monaghan town (MO009-060002-) c. 1690 they probably maintained a presence in the county, although evidence of them is elusive. A report on the state of Popery in 1731 states categorically there were no Franciscans in Monaghan, although they were represented at Chapters of the Order held in Dublin in 1717 and 1729 (McKenna 1922, vol. 1, 13-14).</p> <p>In 1775 a bequest was made to the Franciscans of Lough Egish, and a farmhouse at Lattonfasky was called the Friars Garden while the well was known as the Brothers' Well (ibid. 1, 369. McKenna (ibid. 1, 356) further records that 'within living memory' the eccentric ex-friar named Martin, disowned by his Order and the Bishop, led a congregation at Lattonfasky, so a Franciscan presence was maintained at Lough Egish into the late nineteenth century. The well is depicted only on the 1907 edition of the OS 6-inch map where it is described in gothic lettering as 'Tober na Braher' – the brothers' well.</p> <p>The field in which it is situated is attached to a small farmstead that is the only dwelling on the peninsula depicted on the 1834 edition of the OS 6-inch map and was probably occupied by friars in the eighteenth century. The well is an oval structure (dims 1.5m x 0.9m) defined by a masonry wall (H 1.3m) and roofed with four lintels. There is an opening (Wth 0.5m) at W, but it is not a holy well.</p>	



Fig. 21: Tober na Braher can be opened by landowner

12. Tober Bridget

Called Tober Bridget on both the 1st and 2nd edition Osi maps, this well is set in mature native woodland adjacent to the landowners home, with the path to the well slightly overgrown with nettles and briars in places. The landowner keeps the well in good condition and encourages visitors, though the number is rapidly in decline.

The well used to supply water for the locality, and a hand pump is still to be seen near the wellspring, surrounded by overgrown, antiquated farm machinery.

The well is dedicated to Saint Bridget and had a pattern day associated with St. Brigid's Day, February 1st each year. The landowner did not know of any specific cures associated with the well, though another submission discusses a possible cure for eye complaints.

The wellspring is bounded by an internally stone-lined concrete enclosure with a heavy concrete cap, on which is inset 'St Bridgid' using small stones set in the concrete facing. The well is approx. 100cm by 100cm with water to a depth of at least 60cm.

The setting is particularly peaceful and has great potential for tourism, biodiversity and the encouragement of wellness.

This Holy Well is well tended and appears to be under no threat from development or change of use currently - nevertheless, this Holy Well will benefit from the statutory protection offered by being a registered National Monument. It would also benefit from an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.



Fig. 22: St. Brigid's Well with name on lintel

Townland name: Donaghmoyne	Logainm Link: Donaghmoyne
Civil Parish: Donaghmoyne	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Eye Complaints
Co-ordinates (ITM): 685862, 807141	SMR No. MO028-121----
<p>SMR Description: Located in woodland on a level, low-lying landscape. It is marked on the 1834 and 1907 editions of the OS 6-inch map where it is described in gothic lettering as 'Tober Bridget'. It now supplies water to local houses and there is no evidence of any antiquity. It is noted in the local folklore (IFC Schools manuscripts, 931, 30) but there is no pattern associated with it.</p>	
<p>Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0931, Page 030</p>	



Fig. 23: St. Brigid's Well

13. Tober Lasair or Tobair Lastra

Named Tober Lasair in gothic script on both the 1st and 2nd edition Osi maps, this well is still strongly attended in early May each year.

Also known as Tobair Lastra, the well is located at the bottom of two steep hillsides, on level pasture, surrounded by mature, native trees and adjacent to a stream. Access is from the N2 road, through a neighbouring farm, across a small bridge and through a gate.

The current landowner does not encourage visits outside of the pattern days as livestock is present, but prepares the well for the pattern day and is happy to accommodate visitors to the well at these times.

At the time of visit, the well was overgrown with grass and the ground was very wet and boggy. The stones lining the well, referred to in the NMS description were not visible. The wellspring measures approx. 60cm by 60cm and 55cm deep.

The well is visited on the first Sunday of May and would also have been visited on the first Sunday of August historically.

Saint Lastra was a female saint associated with the Donaghmoyne Parish area. She is one of 14 known Holy Virgins of this name with Irish origins.

This Holy Well is well tended and appears to be under no threat from development or change of use. This Holy Well will benefit from the statutory protection offered by being a registered National Monument. It would also benefit from an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.



Fig. 24: Tober Lastra

Townland name: Aghavilla	Logainm Link: Aghavilla
Civil Parish: Donaghmoyne	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Skin and Eye Complaints
Co-ordinates (ITM): 684678, 806686	SMR No. MO028-114----
<p>SMR Description: Situated on a level low-lying landscape. It is described as 'Tober Lasair' in gothic script on the 1834 and 1907 editions of the OS 6-inch map. It survives as a natural spring surrounded by stones with the foundations of a small structure (dims c. 1m square) immediately to the W.</p> <p>St. Lasair was a female saint about whom little is known but whose pattern was held on 18th of April (Ó Riain 2011, 392). In the folk tradition Lasair has become masculine. Pilgrimages were still taking place here on the first Sundays of May and August in 1937.</p>	
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0932, Page 258	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0935, Page 013
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0942, Page 230	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0930, Page 208
Link: Omnium Sanctorum Hiberniae	Link: Life of St. Lasair



Fig. 25: Tober Lastra covered in grass

Possible Holy Wells

14. The Warty Well

The Warty Well is not marked on the OSI maps and is accessed from the roadside through an old singlewidth, wrought iron gate, down through a small, overgrown field to the streambank.

There is a small waterfall here about 2.5m high, in the middle of which there is a small basin in the limestone rock. This basin looks very like a Bullaun Stone, which are usually associated with ecclesiastical sites, though there are no such sites in the immediate vicinity. This basin is known as the Warty Well. The water in the basin is used as a cure for warts and other skin conditions. While not a springwell, this basin is still used on occasion by people in the locality, though the landowner informed us that this was increasingly rare nowadays.

The basin is in a beautiful natural setting, located in mid-stream on the waterfall, overhung by mature native trees incl. hazel, ash and holly. It is quite possible this basin is an actual Bullaun and the National Monuments Service have been notified. The Warty Well is not under direct threat from development or change of use, but this site would definitely benefit from some form of statutory protection and an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.



Fig. 26: The Warty Well in the waterfall

Townland name: Naghill / Carnbane	Logainm Link: Naghill / Carnbane
Civil Parish: Drumsnat	Barony: Monaghan
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Unclear
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Warts
Co-ordinates (ITM): 661010, 829278	SMR No. N/A (pending)
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0956, Page 254	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0945, Page 251



Fig. 27: The Warty Well

15. Stonebridge Church Well

Beneath a tree in the grounds of Stonebridge Presbyterian Church lies a well or spring. There is no known religious significance associated with the well directly.

The well is beautifully kept, overhung by fully mature native trees, enclosed by masonry and topped with a limestone slab. It is approx. 70cm wide in a rough semi-circle and at least 80cm deep. It borders a small, stone-lined stream that flows into the nearby river.

The well is open to the road, so visitors do not have to enter the church property to attend the well and this may point to some ancient right of way being maintained. The adjoining Church, with a datestone of 1700, is built atop a Ringfort (MO012-093----).

There is evidence of possible veneration at the well in the form of wreaths, flowers and jars, though this may be debris from the graveyard.

The site is well tended and appears to be under no threat from development or change of use.



Fig. 28: Stonebridge Church Well

Townland name: Gransha More	Logainm Link: Gransha More
Civil Parish: Clones	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Unclear
Offerings Present: Possibly	Associated Cures: Not known
Co-ordinates (ITM): 654284, 828367	SMR No. N/A



Fig. 29: Stonebridge Church Well from the N54 road

Lost Holy Wells - Known Locations

16. St. Patrick's Well

St. Patrick's Well in Letloonigan townland, one mile Northwest of Glaslough village, is no longer extant.

The Holy Well was popular up to the 1970s and was noted as a site where St. Patrick baptised local children.

The well, and it's associated Rag Tree, stood on the Northeast bank of Mountain Stream river and was closed in a number of years ago. A house now stands on the site of the well.

There is local awareness of the well site and the location is cited as part of a heritage cycle trail locally.



Fig. 30: Site of St. Patrick's Well (now lost)

Townland name: Letloonigan	Logainm Link: Letloonigan
Civil Parish: Donagh	Barony: Trough
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Not Known
Co-ordinates (ITM): 670460, 842309	SMR No. N/A
Link: DrumlinTrails.com	

17. Un-named Well, Provincial Bank, Monaghan Town

Prominently located in Monaghan Town, the former Provincial bank office, now a financial consultancy, sits on the site of a Holy Well. This was a well visited site with an associated Rag Tree according to entries in the Dúchas Schools Collection and 'they sometimes said the rosary and sometimes they said prayers. Everytime they were leaving the holy well it was a custom to leave rags on the bushes overhanging it'.

There are no remains or local knowledge of this Holy Well.



Fig. 31: Provincial Bank on site of a lost Holy Well

Townland name: Mullaghmonaghan	Logainm Link: Mullaghmonaghan
Civil Parish: Monaghan	Barony: Monaghan
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: Unknown
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Not Known
Co-ordinates (ITM): 667010, 833912	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0956, Page 285	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0956, Page 313

18. Tubberdoany

Not mapped on the 1st or 2nd edition OSI maps, this well is no longer extant.

The NMS record its location in the north end of a small pasture, alongside a lane leading to a disused farmhouse and outbuildings. Lane is now little used and there is no visible remains of this well in field or hedgerow.

Interviews with three local people (landowner not present) revealed no knowledge of the well in living memory, though the NMS found local knowledge of wellsite in 2013.



Fig. 32: Tubberdoany well site now lost



Fig. 33: Tubberdoany well site from South

Townland name: Sheetrim	Logainm Link: Sheetrim
Civil Parish: Monaghan	Barony: Monaghan
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Not known
Co-ordinates (ITM): 667417, 830766	SMR No. MO013-043----
<p>SMR Description: Located on a S facing hillock with good views. A well called Tubberdoany in Monaghan parish and its attendant rag-tree was resorted to for cures according to a manuscript of c. 1815 quoted by John O'Donovan (Herity 2012, 175), and the well is also mentioned by Coote (1801, 181). 'Tober Domhnaig' at Sheetrim is also known in the folk record (IFC Schools' MSS: (958) 43-4: https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes). The location is known locally and is said to have been closed in the 1800's. The remaining bushes and stones associated with it were removed in the mid 1990's.</p>	
<p>Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0958, Page 043</p>	

19. Carraigarellan

In Carrickatee townland, there is reportedly a Holy Well called Carraigarellan. This well was once accessed by entering the grounds of Cremorne RC Church in Annahaia (Cremorne By) townland and, at the back of the churchyard, crossing a footbridge and proceeding up Bunnannima Hill (Monaghan's highest summit) until you meet a cluster of large rocks in a clearing with a springwell in it. This entrance is no longer in use.

The Holy Well fell out of use many years ago and the previous landowner told how she had never attended the well in her fifty years living on the land. She also said there was never a visitor to the well in her recollection. Another account of the well states that it was long out of use fifty years ago and even then was nothing more than a muddy watering hole for cattle.

A personal account submitted as part of this project records: *'along the trail you will come upon a cluster of large boulders in a woody glade of small trees – here is an open spring. In my boyhood, its well waters were drunk and cloths soaked in the well water and applied to the head, thereafter been tied to a twig or branch of an overhanging tree – it had the cure of head pain or headaches'*.

The hillside the well stands on is now inaccessible as the new owner has stoutly fenced the area to prevent access to the windfarm recently built on the hill.

There was no local knowledge of any associated saint or pattern day. There is reputed to be a Mass Rock nearby though this is not recorded by the National Monuments Service. A Holy Well is not recorded on any of the OSI mapping, though a springwell is recorded on the 2nd Edition.

The evidence strongly suggests the remains of a Holy Well are extant on this hillside and while not currently under pressure from development or change of use, we would recommend further investigation into the feature's current state of repair to ascertain if it would benefit from statutory protection and an increase of awareness locally of this site and its associated heritage.



Fig. 34: Cremone Roman Catholic Church – traditional entrance to Carraigarellan Holy Well

Townland name: Carrickatee	Logainm Link: Carrickatee
Civil Parish: Aghnamullen	Barony: Cremorne
Extant Remains: Unclear	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: Not known	Associated Cures: Head Complaints
Co-ordinates (ITM): 674207, 815675	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0941, Page 191	

20. Tubbergubboch

In the graveyard of St. Oliver's Cemetery, known locally as the Bully's Acre, in Carrickmacross, there was once located a Holy Well called Tubbergubboch.

Tubbergubboch translates as the Well of the Rags, from the Gaelic word 'giobóg' which is an old torn or shredded cloth, indicating that a Rag Tree once stood near this well.

The well was lost in antiquity, presumably as the ground became a graveyard. The location today consists of a disused graveyard sloping gently to the west.

At its westernmost end stands a memorial garden built by a local priest, Brother Serenius, to honour Padre Pio and now very well maintained by a voluntary caretaker(s).

The graveyard contains 14 large oak trees representing the Stations of the Cross. There are few upstanding gravemarkers and the site has been subject to vandalism in recent times.

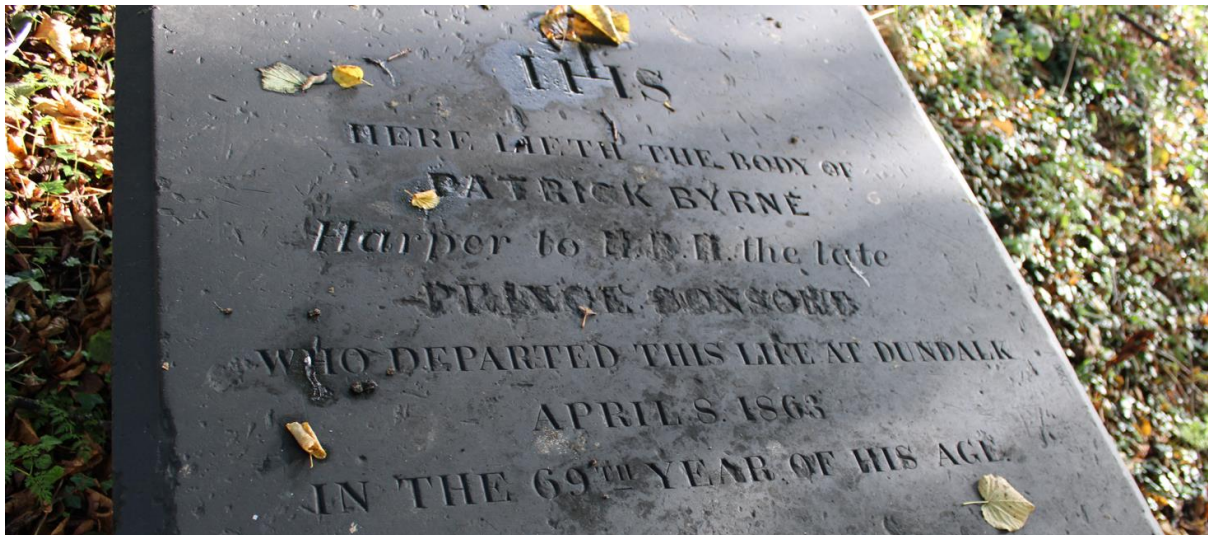


Fig.35: Memorial to blind harper Patrick O'Brien showing damage

There is one very wet depression in the graveyard, surrounded by stones, that appears to have a natural water channel emerging from it to run down the hillside. This may be the site of the original wellspring, though it is hard to be certain.

The graveyard is not currently being maintained and there is low scrub to waist high through most of the area.

The graveyard would benefit from County council intervention to manage the graveyard's biodiversity and surviving important funerary monuments, including that of Patrick O'Brien, a local blind man that became personal Harper to Prince Albert. The graveyard is also the final resting place of thousands of people that perished during the Famine.

There is little local knowledge of the Holy Well that once stood here, with information on this well coming largely from the staff of the Inishkeen Kavanagh Centre.

Townland name: Cloghvally Upper	Logainm Link: Cloghvally Upper
Civil Parish: Magheross	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Not known
Co-ordinates (ITM): 684546, 803825	SMR No. N/A



Fig. 36: Possible site of Tubbergubboch, this wellspring rises in Bully's Acre

21. Tobergisthara

Marked only on the 2nd edition of the OSI maps, this well is named Tobergisthara in gothic lettering. The landowner refused entry to the field owing to the presence of livestock, but did point out the location from the field boundary wall. The well is located on a gentle South sloping hillside.

The wellspring still rises at the hedgeline in a corner of the field just above the point where the well was filled in, possibly in the 1920s. There is no local knowledge of this having been a Holy Well.

Townland name: Barndonagh	Logainm Link: Barndonagh
Civil Parish: Magheross	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Not known
Co-ordinates (ITM): 681580, 803547	SMR No. MO031-109
SMR Description: Situated in a small NE-SW valley, at the source of a small stream and on the boundary between Barndonagh townland to the NW and Derrylavan to the SE. It is marked only on the 1907 edition of the OS 6-inch map where it is described in gothic lettering as 'Tobergisthara'.	



Fig. 37: Location of the wellspring known as Tobergisthara

22. Tobar Inver

The location of a well called Tobar Inver was recorded on both the 1st and 2nd edition of the OSI maps.

This well is now gone, having been lost possibly as part of the redevelopment of the site for a shopping plaza and carpark.

The well site is now stood over by an art work representing the Tree of Life, set into a cutstone lined flowerbed reminiscent of a well.

The well was noted by Shirley in 1845, ascribing it's name to St. Fionnbharr, though Moore (NMS) thinks the name more likely to refer to St. Finnian of Co. Down.

The well was located 50m Southeast of the bridge (MO031-105----) and 150m South of the site of Essex Castle (MO031-034----).

There is a Marian Grotto alongside the bridge, carrying on the religious tradition in the well's immediate vicinity.

Interviews with local people found no awareness of this Holy Well in living memory.



Fig. 38: The location of Tobar Inver

Townland name: Magheross	Logainm Link: Magheross
Civil Parish: Magheross	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: Unknown
Offerings Present: no	Associated Cures: not known
Co-ordinates (ITM): 684072, 803349	SMR No. MO031-138----
<p>SMR Description: Situated in a small NE-SW valley, at the source of a small stream and on the boundary between Barndonagh townland to the NW and Derrylavan to the SE. It is marked only on the 1907 edition of the OS 6-inch map where it is described in gothic lettering as 'Tobergisthara'.</p>	



Fig. 39: The Marian Shrine close to the site of Tobar Inver

23. St. Patrick's Well

Marked only on the 1st Edition OSI map, St. Patrick's Well was located 220m Southwest of Coolderry House. The well had disappeared by the time of the 2nd edition map. The landowner informed me that the well was closed long before his time.

There are some stones still sitting proud in the field at the location but owing to cattle in the field they declined to allow a visit.

The landowners told of the well's association with St. Patrick. Apparently on his way to Slane, St. Patrick passed through this valley and blessed the well site.

There is no knowledge of patterns, cures or devotions associated with the well. Unfortunately little remains of the well today.

Townland name: Coolderry	Logainm Link: Coolderry
Civil Parish: Magheracloone	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Not known
Co-ordinates (ITM): 686135, 796656	SMR No. N/A



Fig. 40: Probable location of St. Patrick's Well looking Southeast

Lost Holy Wells – No Location

24. St. Macarten's Well

The Dúchas Schools Collection records a Holy Well as having been located in a glen, in Corleck (Dartree By) townland, surrounded by three bushes.

It was dedicated to St. Macarten who is said to have spent three days in prayer at this well site. It cured skin complaints and visitors could bathe in the waters of the well.

Little is known about this well locally and there is no local knowledge of its location or traditions.

This record of the well could date from the 1860's, handed down to the School's Collection.

*Co-ordinates are representative - no exact location known.

Townland name: Corleck (Dartree By)	Logainm Link: Corleck (Dartree By)
Civil Parish: Aghabog	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: no	Associated Cures: Skin Complaints
*Co-ordinates (ITM): 662288, 824049	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0948, Page 283	

25. St. Columbanus Well

The Dúchas Schools Collection records a Holy Well associated with St. Columbanus, located in the Townland of Drumbrein.

It is possible the author was referring to Aghauark Holy Well less than 3km to the Northeast in nearby Liscumasky townland.

This was suggested by a local landowner in Drumbrein, claiming 'in his 70 years on this land, the only well I knew of around Aghabog was St. Mary's (Aghauare Well).

See also number 26. Aghabog Churchyard.

*Co-ordinates are representative - no exact location known.

Townland name: Drumbrein	Logainm Link: Drumbrein
Civil Parish: Aghabog	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: Yes
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Not known
*Co-ordinates (ITM): 661400, 824000	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0948, Page 286	

26. Aghabog Churchyard

The Dúchas Schools Collection records a Holy Well in 'the trunk of a tree' in Aghabog Churchyard.

There is no record of a well on the OSI first or second edition maps.

There is no local knowledge of this well.

See also number 25. St. Columbanus Well.

Townland name: Aghabog	Logainm Link: Aghabog
Civil Parish: Aghabog	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: Unclear
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Warts
Co-ordinates (ITM): 658329, 822252	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0948, Page 286	

Incorrect Locations

27. Unnamed Well – Stranoodan Townland

There is no local knowledge of a Holy Well in Stranoodan townland. It is recorded in the Dúchas Schools Collection as containing a 'cure for pains' and that the visitor 'had to rub it on three times and then they would get better'.

It is possible the author was referring to Aghauark Holy Well 1km to the West in nearby Liscumasky townland.

This is further strengthened by an account given from an octegenarian in Stranoodan that claimed the only such Holy Well was at St. Mary's Well (Aghauark Well in Limcumisky).

*Co-ordinates are representative - no exact location known.

Townland name: Stranoodan	Logainm Link: Stranoodan
Civil Parish: Kilmore	Barony: Monaghan
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: Unknown
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Cure for Pains
*Co-ordinates (ITM): 664786, 826251	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0948, Page 285	

28. Unnamed Well – Drollagh Townland

The Dúchas Schools Collection records a Holy Well located in the Townland of Drollagh that was out of use by the 1930s.

A local landowner said he knew of 'a number of springs where you'd get tae (sic) water from, but never heard of a Holy Well and I'm over 70 years in Drollagh'.

*Co-ordinates are representative - no exact location known.

Townland name: Drollagh	Logainm Link: Drollagh
Civil Parish: Muckno	Barony: Cremorne
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: No
*Co-ordinates (ITM): 684400, 825700	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0948, Page 287	

29. Unnamed Well – Loyst Townland

There is no local knowledge of a Holy Well in Loyst towland.

It is recorded in the Dúchas Schools Collection but it is possible the author was referring to Aghauark Holy Well 3km to the Northwest in nearby Liscumasky townland.

*Co-ordinates are representative - no exact location known.

Townland name: Loyst	Logainm Link: Loyst
Civil Parish: Kilmore	Barony: Monaghan
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: No
*Co-ordinates (ITM): 666584, 824342	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0948, Page 285	

30. Unnamed Well – Descart (Dartree By) Townland

The Dúchas Schools Collection refer to a Holy Well, located in the Townland of Descart (Dartree By) that held a cure for rheumatism.

The well was apparently closed when rocks fell into the well and has not been found since.

Little is known about this well and there is no local knowledge of its location or traditions.

It was apparently closed and lost pre-1930s.

*Co-ordinates are representative - no exact location known.

Townland name: Descart (Dartree By)	Logainm Link: Descart (Dartree By)
Civil Parish: Aghabog	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Rheumatism
*Co-ordinates (ITM): 662200, 823490	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0948, Page 283	

31. Unnamed Well – Aghabog Townland

Aghabog townland is attributed as having a Holy Well in two Dúchas Schools Collection records. Both records discuss how the well water rises on a day in December, though the dates differ slightly.

It is likely both of these records refer to the well being located in the Parish of Aghabog, as opposed to the townland of Aghabog itself.

These records almost certainly refer to Aghauark Holy Well to be found in Liscumasky townland 5km to the Northeast.

Townland name: Aghabog	Logainm Link: Aghabog
Civil Parish: Aghabog	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: No
Co-ordinates (ITM): 658327 822251	SMR No. N/A
Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0953, Page 052	Link: Dúchas Schools Collection Volume 0944, Page 379

Wells on Early Maps – Not Holy Wells

32. Spa Well (Sulphureous)

Marked only on the 2nd edition map. A local landowner of an adjoining property informed the author that this well was not known to be a Holy Well.

It was known for its Sulphureous properties and there had apparently been health benefits associated with it many years ago, but he did not recall any specific conditions or cures associated with the well. The well was on adjoining property, owned by a relative, but now overgrown and flooded at time of visit.

He said it would be very difficult to locate and he himself had not visited it in forty years. He said that wells sunk for houses in the area often returned sulphureous water. This well is right beside a field boundary that forms the North-South border. While providing associated health benefits, this is not a Holy Well.

Townland name: Liskeabrick	Logainm Link: Liskeabrick
Civil Parish: Clones	Barony: Monaghan
Extant Remains: Possibly	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: General Health
Co-ordinates (ITM): 655742, 834535	SMR No. N/A



Fig. 41: Site of Spawell

33. Chalybeate Well or Spawell

This well is not a Holy Well. It is marked only on the 2nd edition map.

There are no extant remains of the well as the well head was recently lost when the lane it is on was widened by the landowner.

The exact location of wellspring is now difficult to pinpoint, though water still bubbles up in a new drainage ditch and flows strongly.

There was no definite religious association attributed to the well according to its near neighbour, an elderly lady that recalls their being a cure for Mumps associated with the well.

To perform this cure, as a child she was brought to the well where a horse or donkey halter was placed on her shoulders and 'she passed over the well three times' while the adults said prayers.

This peculiar statement of no religious association, yet then recalling the use of prayer as part of the cure does not offer enough evidence to suggest a Holy Well.

Townland name: Latnamard	Logainm Link: Latnamard
Civil Parish: Aghabog	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: Yes	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: Mumps
Co-ordinates (ITM): 662576, 825578	SMR No. N/A

34. Hospital Well

Marked only on the 2nd edition map, this well is no longer extant.

A recent housing development has completely covered any trace of a well here.

There is no evidence to suggest this well was associated with any curatives properties as its name tentatively suggests.

It may have provided water to the Fever Hospital and Workhouse 1km and 800m respectively downhill to the North West.

Townland name: Connabury	Logainm Link: Connabury
Civil Parish: Muckno	Barony: Cremorne
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: No
Co-ordinates (ITM): 682727, 819004	SMR No. N/A



Fig. 42: Site of the Hospital Well

35. Chalybeate Well

This well is not a Holy Well. One of two Chalybeate Wells marked in this townland on the OSI first edition map, but the only one on the second edition.

Chalybeate wells are noted for the high mineral content of their waters, particularly Iron.

They were, for a time, fashionable as tonic waters, providing health benefits to those that regularly drank the water from such wells.

This well could not be located at time of site visit owing to overgrowth and flooding from the adjacent stream.

Townland name: Corrinshigo	Logainm Link: Corrinshigo
Civil Parish: Currin	Barony: Dartree
Extant Remains: Possibly	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: General Health
Co-ordinates (ITM): 652868, 817749	SMR No. N/A

36. Tobernagalliagh

This is not a Holy Well. It is marked on the 2nd edition OSI map.

There is no local knowledge of a Holy Well existing here and no visible remains on this gently sloping NNE facing hillside.

There is a large Ash tree with a tyre swing lolling gently on the exact location of the well.

There is no local knowledge of Tobernagalliagh with a local resident stating that there was 'no well there for the last 80 years that I'm here'.

Townland name: Corleck	Logainm Link: Corleck
Civil Parish: Donaghmoyne	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains:	Religious Association:
Offerings Present:	Associated Cures:
Co-ordinates (ITM): 683401, 808784	SMR No. N/A

37. Unnamed Well – Lacklom Townland

Marked only on 2nd edition OSI map as a well 45m to the North of Inishkeen Church, which was built in 1820 to replace a thatched church.

It is simply marked as a well and was investigated simply because of its proximity to the church.

There is no local knowledge or evidence to point to this being a Holy Well.

Townland name: Lacklom	Logainm Link: Lacklom
Civil Parish: Inishkeen	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: No
Co-ordinates (ITM): 693321, 806814	SMR No. N/A



Fig. 43: Site of Well at Lacklom Townland, Inishkeen

38. Cummoge Well

Cummoge Well is marked on the 2nd edition OSI map.

There is no local knowledge of a Holy Well existing here.

The well was originally used to supply water for the houses nearby, associated with Longfield house.

The well was closed, covered and securely fenced by the current absentee landowner.

This is not a Holy Well.

Townland name: Killabrick	Logainm Link: Killabrick
Civil Parish: Donaghmoyne	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: No
Co-ordinates (ITM): 685441, 805226	SMR No. N/A

39. Tobersheals

Tobersheals is marked on the 2nd edition OSI map.

There is no local knowledge of a Holy Well existing here.

The landowner is currently in a nursing home so no permission could be obtained to visit this well site.

This well appears to be a small pool adjoining a linear drainage network.

Likely a small natural spring deliberately clipped by a drainage channel.

This is not a Holy Well.

Townland name: Corcuilloge	Logainm Link: Corcuilloge
Civil Parish: Magheross	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: No
Co-ordinates (ITM): 685464, 804801	SMR No. N/A

40. Tobernashellita

Tobernashellita is recorded on the 2nd Edition OSI map.

There is no local knowledge of this being used as a holy well.

Locals are aware of this well but it was 'used to supply water to half of Carrick at one time' with people drawing by bucket into living memory.

The well was maintained and kept clear by County Council staff until Irish Water took over in recent years. It is now covered and overgrown.

Situated very close to the Blind Well, 100m directly South.

This is not a Holy Well.

Townland name: Nafarty	Logainm Link: Nafarty
Civil Parish: Magheross	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: No
Co-ordinates (ITM): 683555, 804477	SMR No. N/A

41. The Blind Well

The Blind Well is recorded on the 2nd Edition OSI map.

Locals are aware of this well but there is no memory of it in use.

The well was maintained and kept clear by County Council staff until Irish Water took over in recent years. It is now covered and overgrown.

It was suggested that the name may come from the well's location behind a 'blind' of trees, or that the it may refer to a disappearing well.

It is situated very close to Tobernashellita, 100m to the North.

This well is not a Holy Well.

Townland name: Nafarty	Logainm Link: Nafarty
Civil Parish: Magheross	Barony: Farney
Extant Remains: No	Religious Association: No
Offerings Present: No	Associated Cures: No
Co-ordinates (ITM): 683564, 804358	SMR No. N/A

Further Reading:

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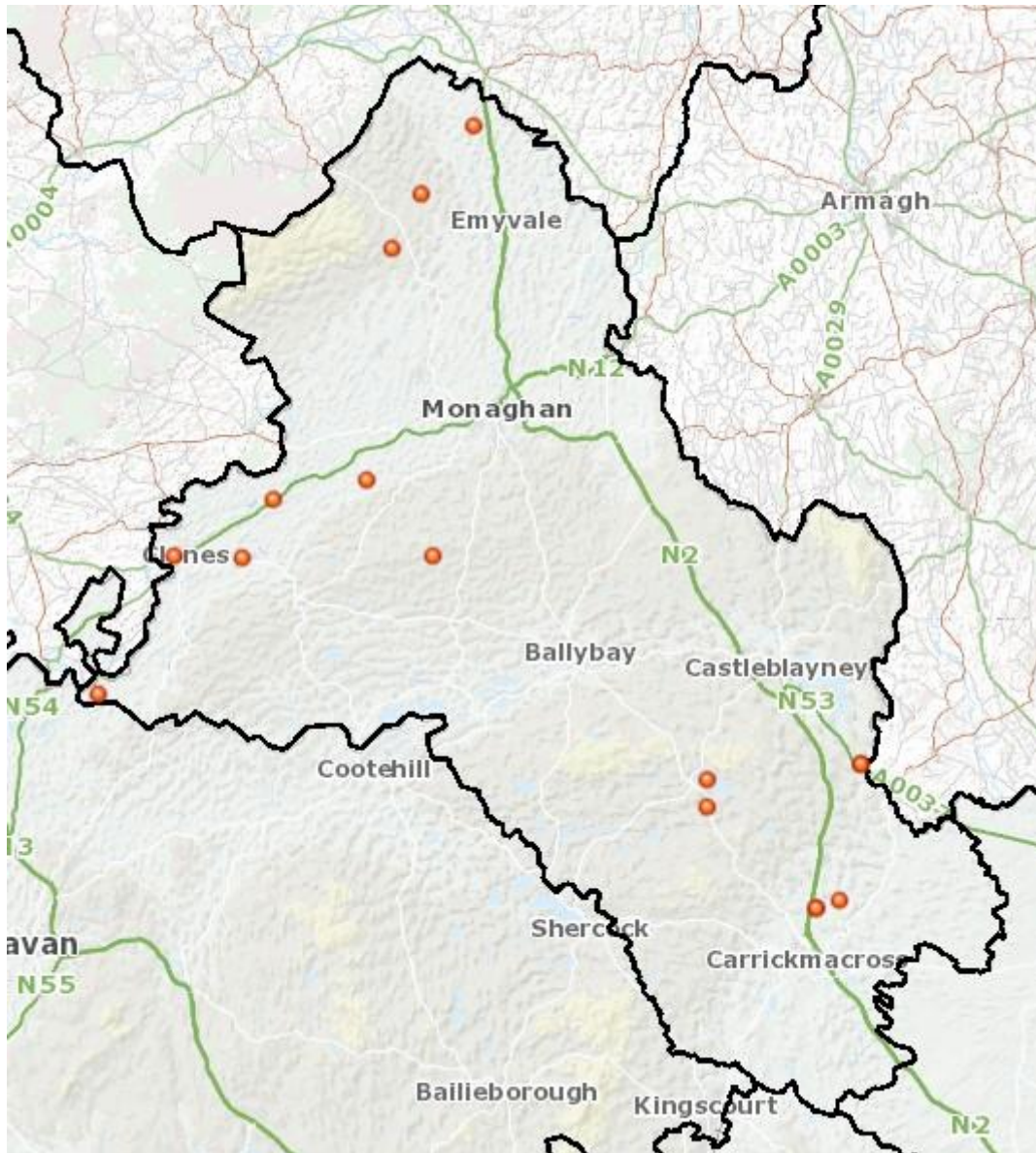
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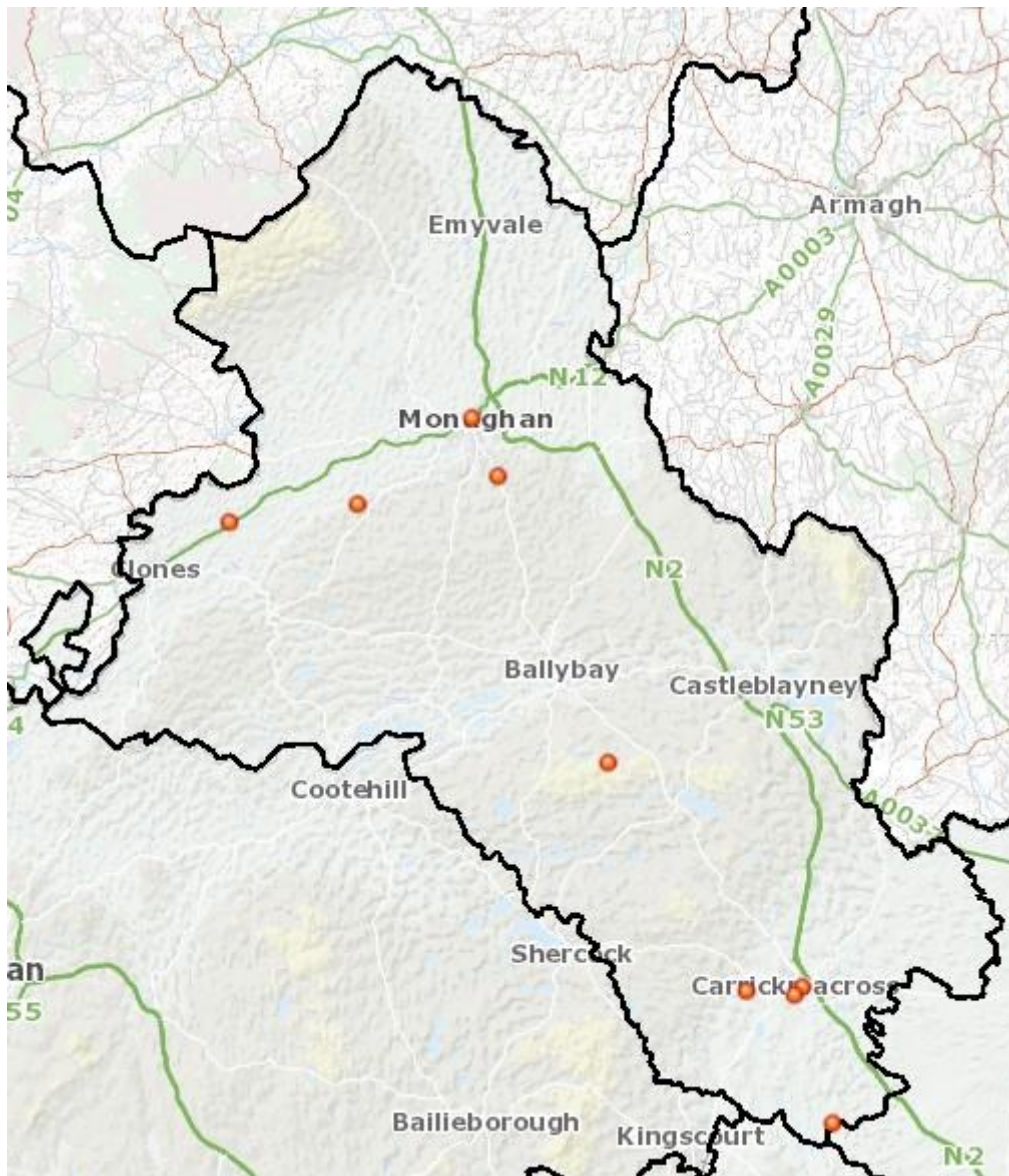
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Map 1: Holy Wells with Extant Remains



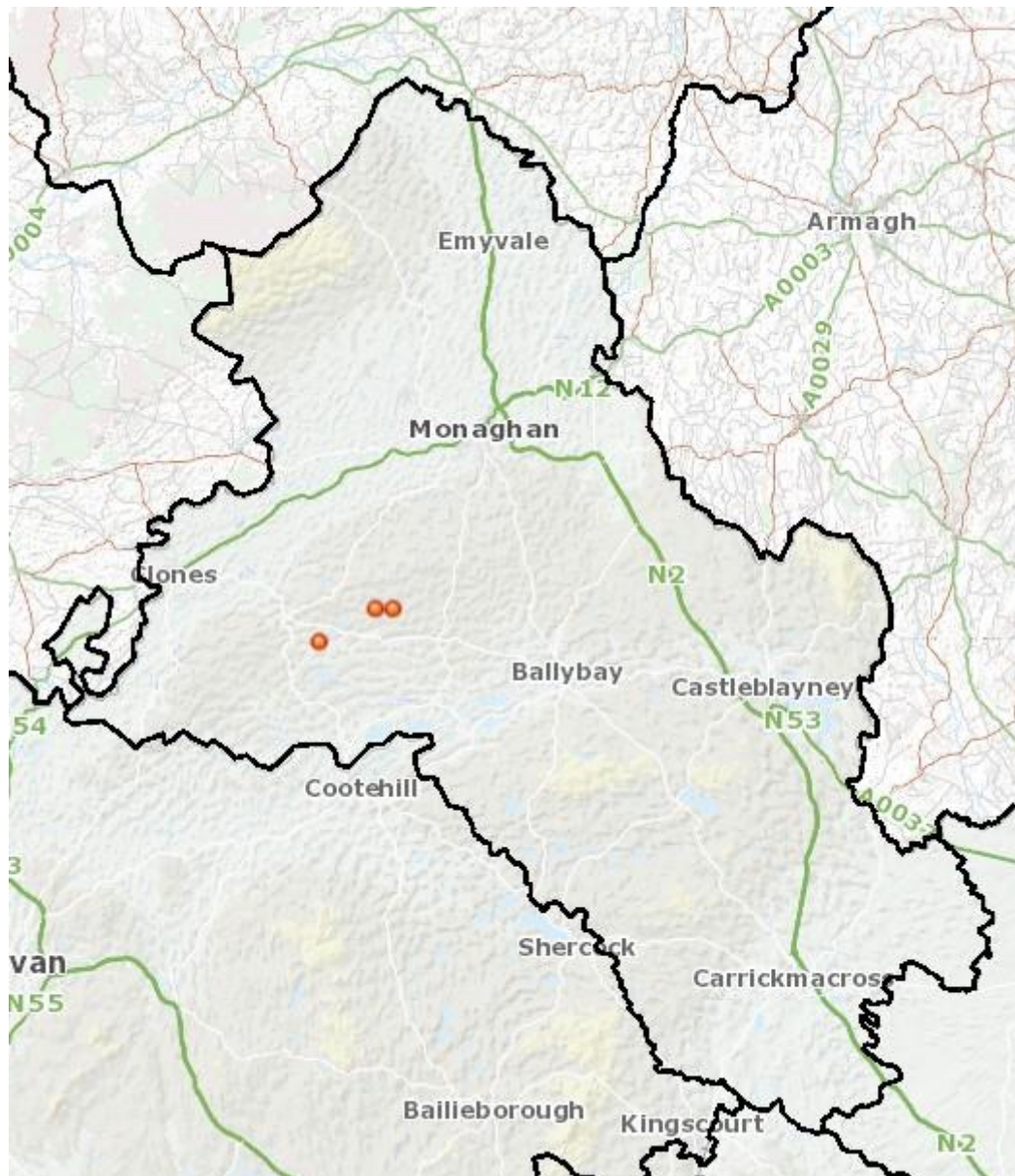
Map appears courtesy of OSi & HeritageMaps.ie

Map 2: Lost Holy Wells with Known Locations



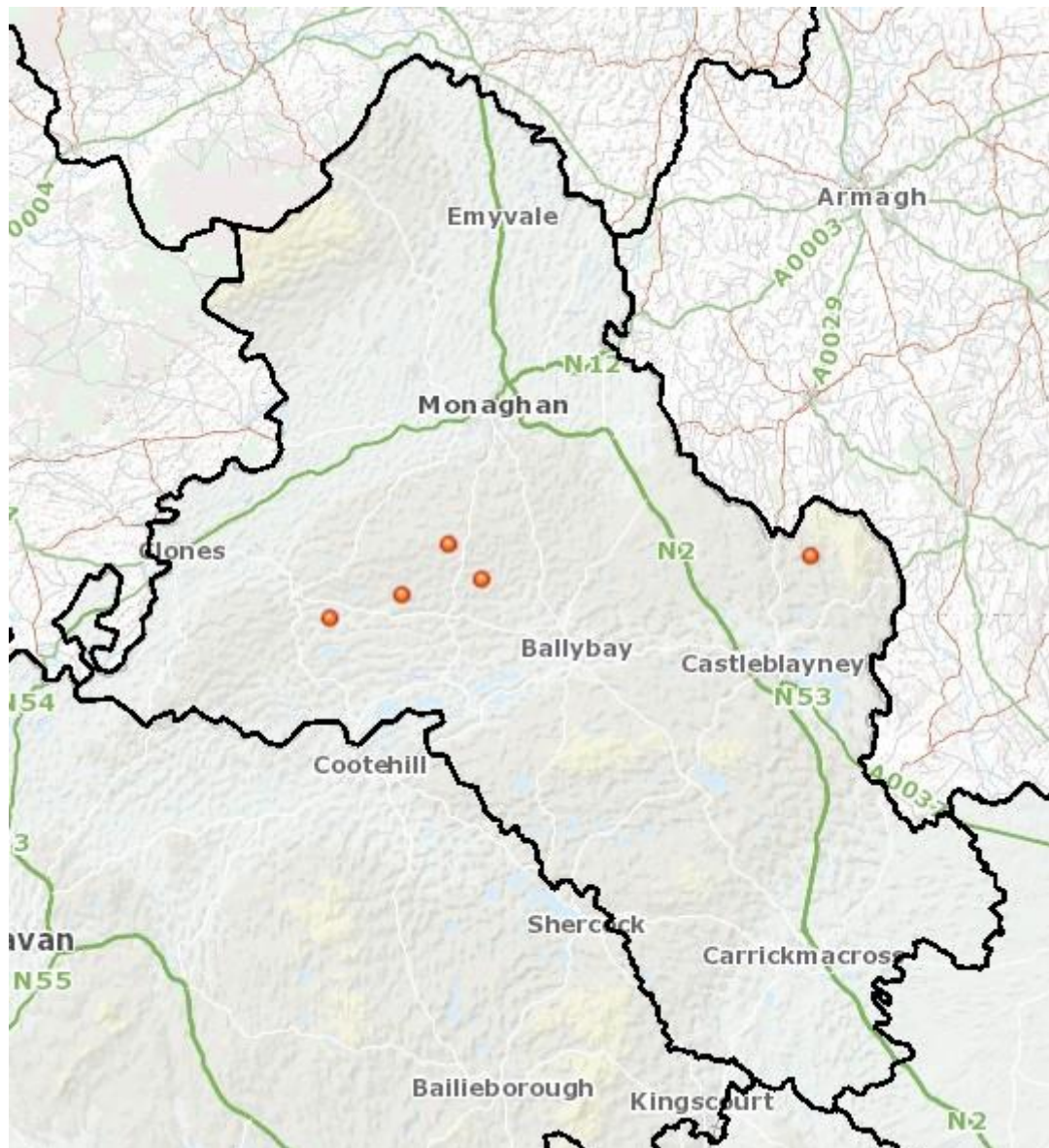
Map appears courtesy of OSi & HeritageMaps.ie

Map 3: Lost Holy Wells with Approximate Locations



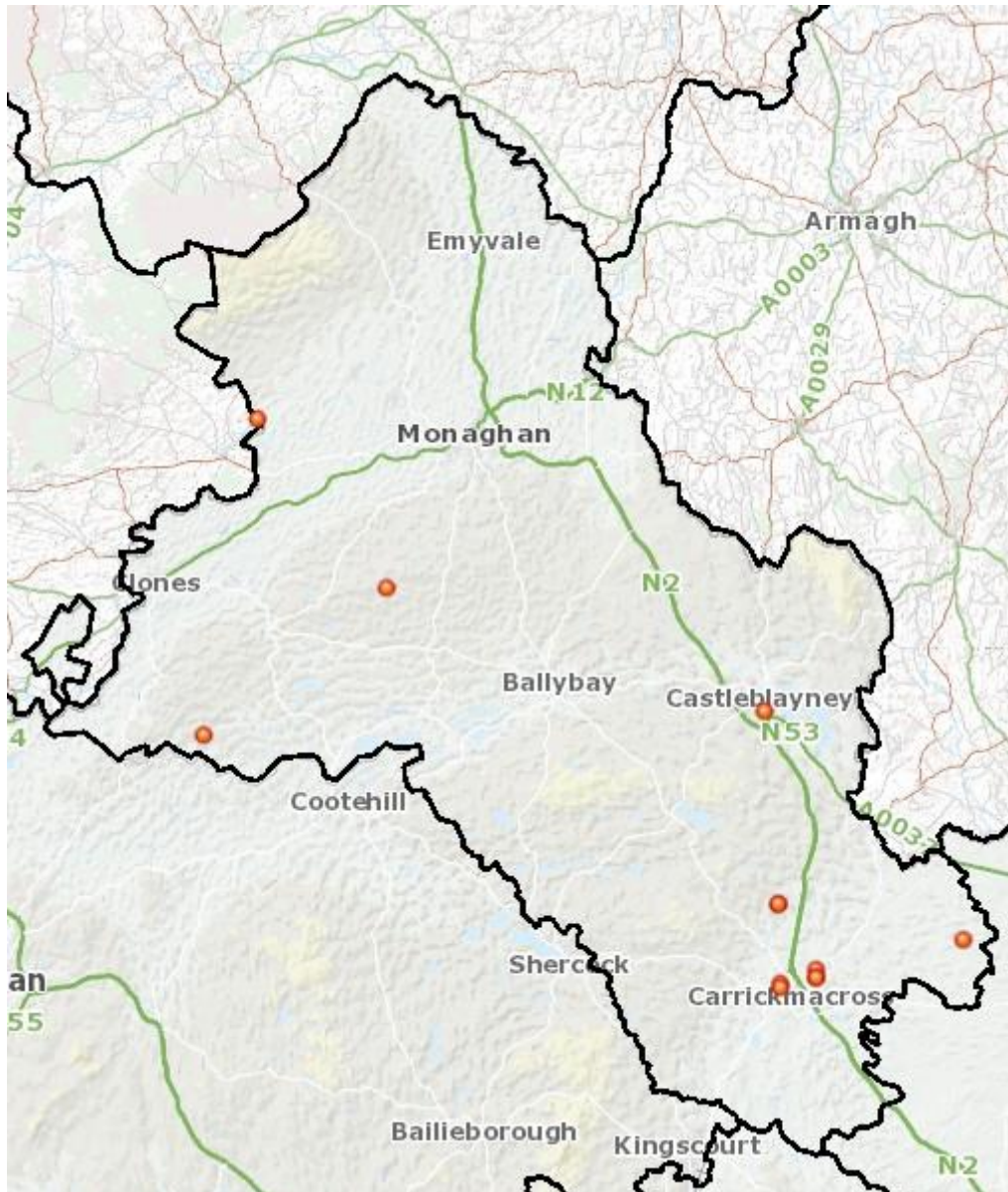
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Map 4: Wells with Incorrect locations



Map appears courtesy of OSi & HeritageMaps.ie

Map 5: Wells with Known Health Associations – not Holy Wells



Map appears courtesy of OSi & HeritageMaps.ie