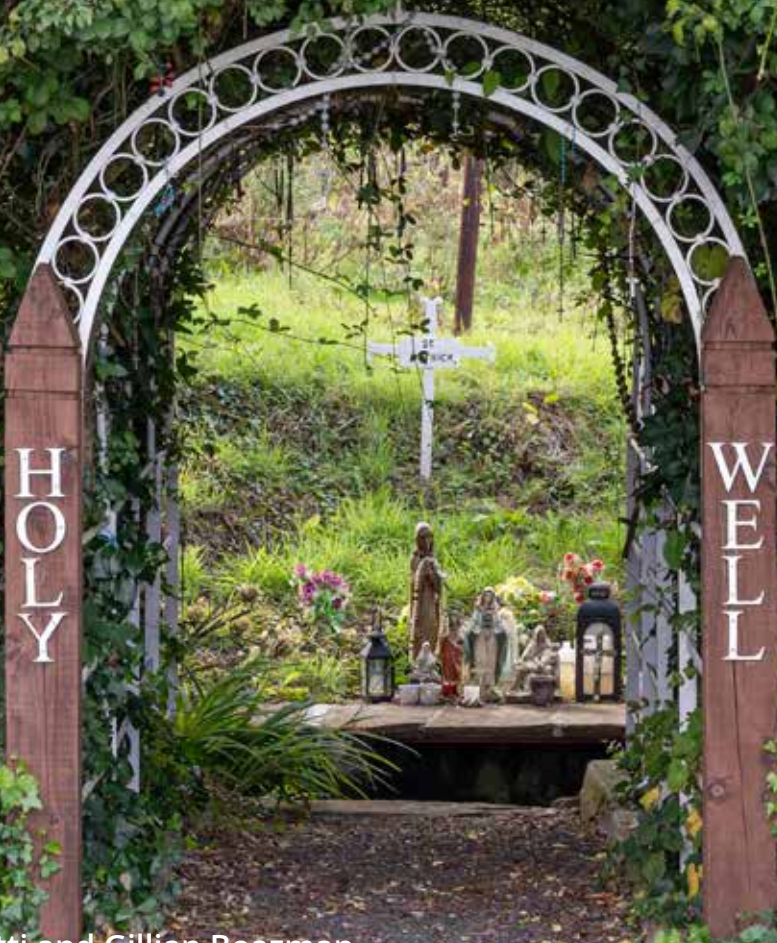




Kildare County Council  
Comhairle Contae Chill Dara

# Holy Wells of County Kildare

A pilgrimage to the sacred sites of County Kildare 2023



Antoine Giacometti and Gillian Boazman

An Action in the County Kildare Heritage Plan 2019-2026

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**Project Initiator:**

Kildare Heritage Forum

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# Holy Wells of County Kildare

By Antoine Giacometti and Gillian Boazman

Edited by Caroline O'Donnell, Kildare County Council



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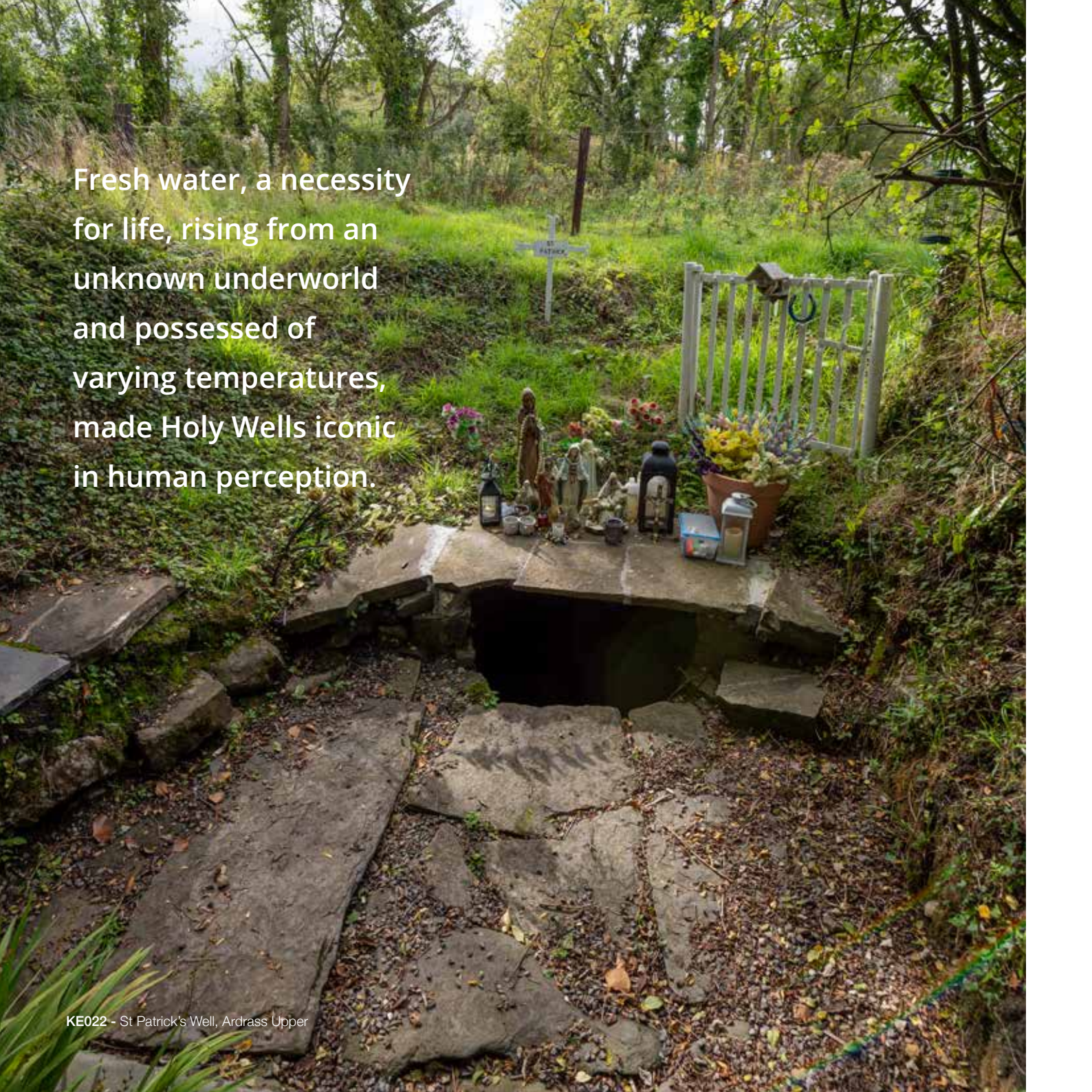
Clár Eise Blianta  
Coimisiún  
Foghlaim



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council

An Action in the County Kildare Heritage Plan 2019-2026

Fresh water, a necessity for life, rising from an unknown underworld and possessed of varying temperatures, made Holy Wells iconic in human perception.





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## Section 1 Introduction

**Kildare is part of an area of Ireland where underlying rock formations have produced warm springs, recording temperatures of 17 to 24 degrees Celsius. Fresh water, a necessity for life, rising from an unknown underworld and possessed of varying temperatures, made Holy Wells iconic in human perception'. So, we have sayings like 'founts of inspiration' or 'founts of knowledge', from the Latin for spring fons. As well as symbolising the human imagination, their purity and their undiluted mineral contents were, from a very early period, seen as therapeutic: a holistic healing of mind and body.**

This could be applicable to all natural springs but the present report is concerned only with those springs that are designated 'holy'. In Ireland this designation signifies a very specific connection. This connection is with saints or religious terms, pertaining to Christianity. This was seen to amplify their powers of healing. They were, though, always a devotion of the people, running parallel to 'organised' Christianity, intersecting at some points and at some points deviating. Devotion at wells constructed an alternative reality in which those excluded from the elite in each historical period could practice and control their own form of Christianity.

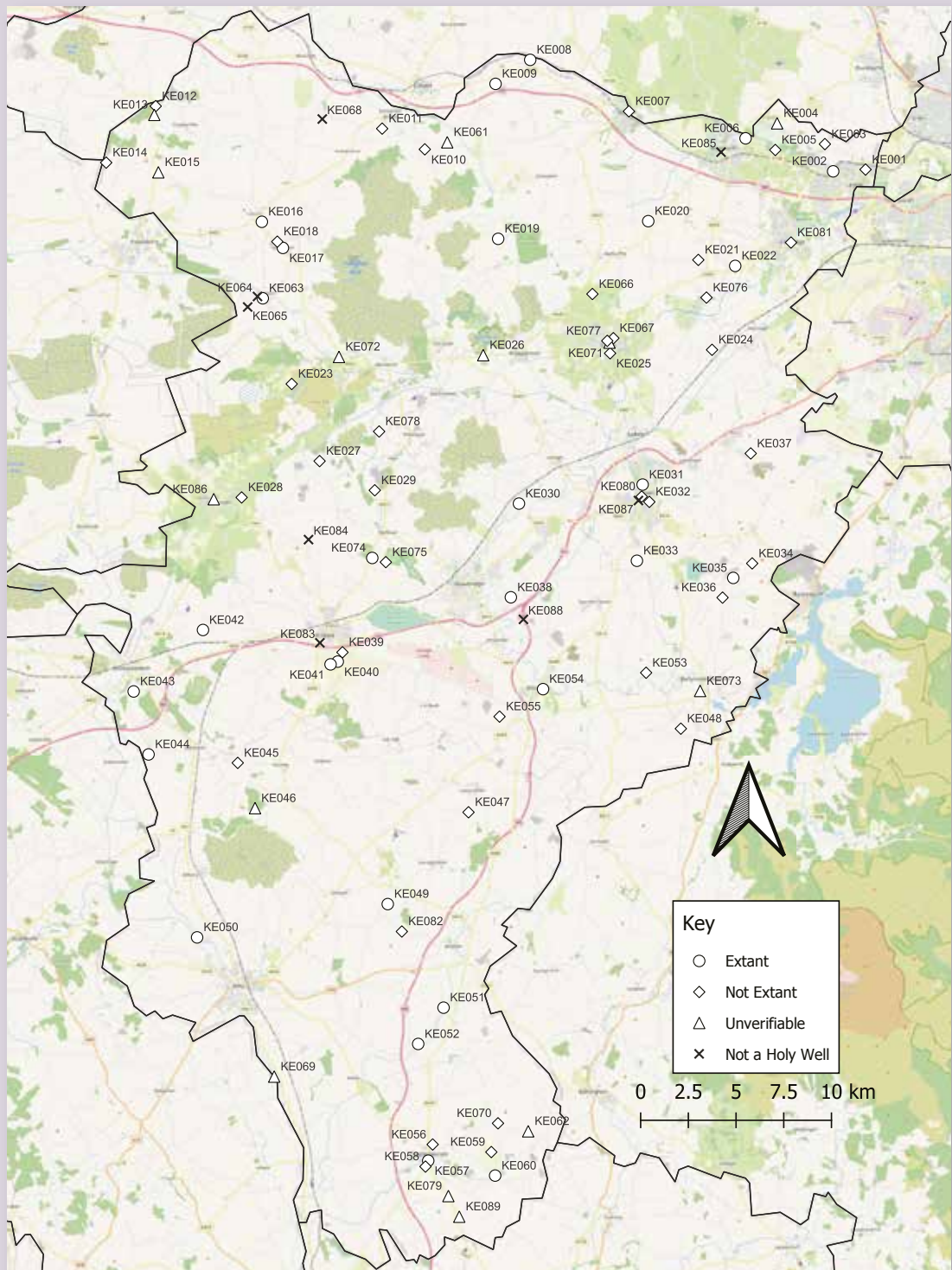
The Report first describes the method by which the researchers collected and analysed data on the Holy Wells of Kildare. Then some facts and figures about the wells in 2021, for example how many still exist, are they accessible to the public and are they maintained. A survey of saints' names associated with wells leads into a section of the meaning of the wells over roughly three historical periods. These are the early medieval, from conversion c. 430 to the coming of the Normans in 1169, the later medieval, up to the Reformation c. 1540 and the post Reformation and penal period. As this was the last period when devotions at holy wells were at their height the next section focuses on the rituals and traditions associated with the wells.



**KE052** - St Patrick's Well, Belan

The final section considers the decline of holy well worship through the nineteenth century and examines the place of those wells still active in the twenty-first century with particular emphasis on Kildare's most famous well, Father Moore's.

An appended Gazetteer provides details for each of the wells surveyed.



**Figure 1:**  
Distribution map of  
Holy Wells  
of Kildare



**KE022** - St Patrick's Well, Ardrass Upper

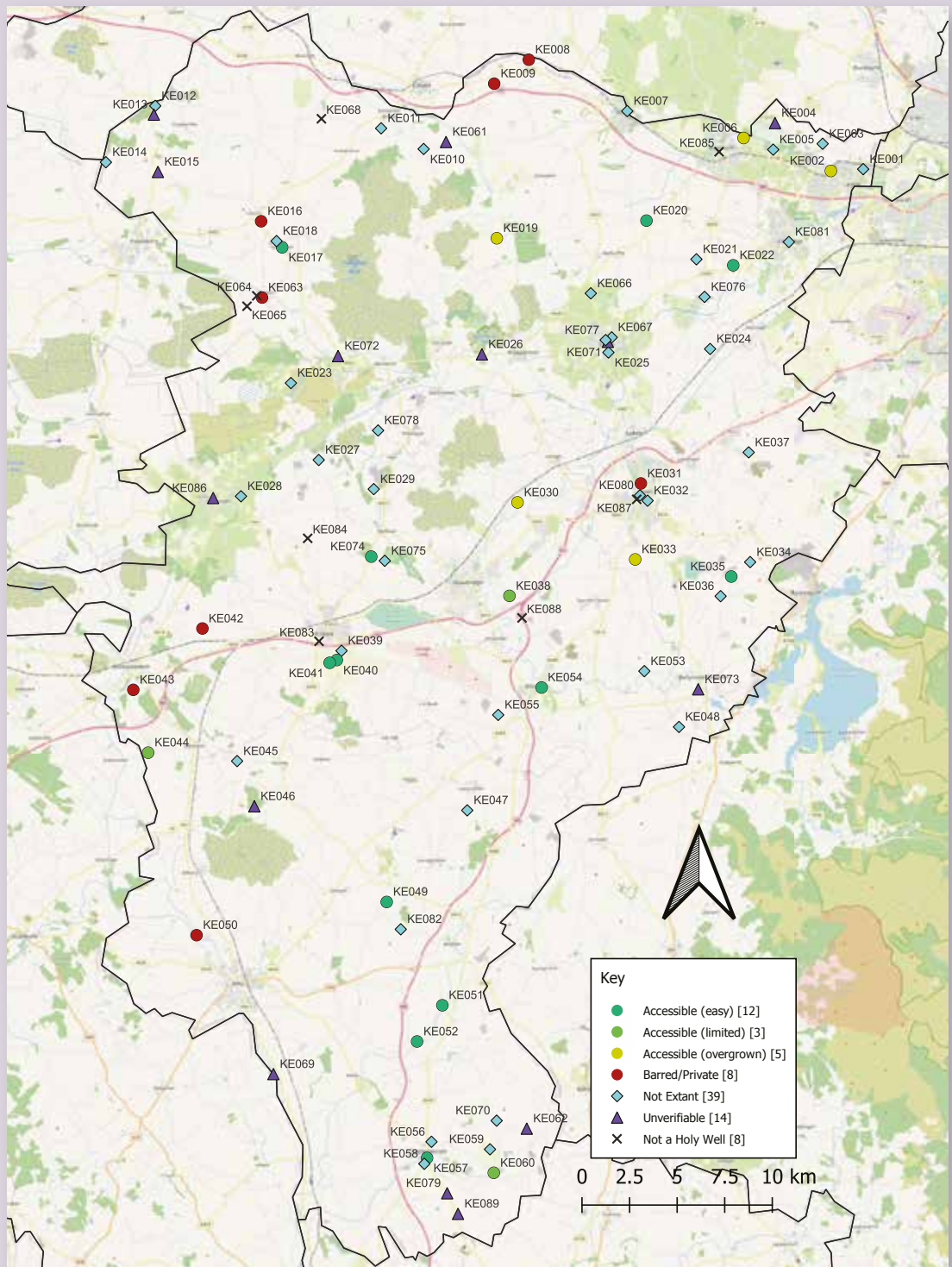
## Methodology

Initially a desktop survey was carried out of all the known wells in Co Kildare based on the Sites and Monuments Record of the county, now online ([www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)). Many wells are non-extant so the cartographic evidence of the historic maps (First Edition six-inch c. 1837, Second Edition 25-inch c. 1899 and Final Edition 6-inch, Cassini reprint, c. 1902-1944) was used to locate them. This account of wells was supplemented by two comprehensive surveys of wells in Co. Kildare (Jackson 1979-80 & Pegley 2008) and a detailed study of five wells in the Kilcock area by O'Donoghue (1999). The OS Letters for Kildare (Herity 2002) and the Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society were checked for references to Kildare Wells. These two sources were particularly useful for assessing the condition of individual wells in c. 1837 and around the turn of the twentieth century. The Schools' Collection, compiled in the 1930s, was a rich source of information on rituals and lore attached to many of the wells. To aid future researchers each well is given a comprehensive bibliography. This Survey is an Appendix to this Report.

Utilising the co-ordinates supplied in the Survey for each well, thirty-eight wells were visited, photographed and assessed as to condition and ease of access. Finally, a geographical information system was generated by first constructing a database and inputting information gathered into the categories of the Kildare County Council template. This enabled both analysis of the database by query and the production of accurate mapping of the results of these queries.

The site visits were conducted in two ways. The first was by an archaeologist, who systematically recorded each well based on a form created for the purpose containing fields for a database. The second was by a Defence Force Veteran, Desmond Travers, who lives in Kildare and has an active interest in surveying monuments. This project was a pilot to assess if Defence Force retired personnel could be involved in other surveys of monument types in Kildare and other counties.





**Figure 2:**  
Accessibility of Holy Wells in Kildare

The Defence Force Veterans have active organisations across Ireland, and based on conversations with Desmond Travers, have an interest in contributing towards monument surveys, especially in their local areas. They have the skills required to track down features from co-ordinate information, and in this case we supplied Desmond with a handheld GPS device (a Garmin GPSMAP 66s). Desmond's survey information complemented the systematic recording from the archaeological site inspections, in particular in terms of local knowledge, dedication to find hidden wells, and conversations with local people. This allowed us to involve more of the local community in the process of recording Kildare's Holy Wells, which was an important aspect of the project.

Finally, a social media campaign was mounted to gather information on wells and in addition, local history societies were contacted. The project received content on six wells, all of which was detailed and most useful, with an article on Downings North and a 2018 report on the possibility of resuscitating Sunday's Well at Clane, now buried. By far the most information received was on Father Moore's Well, which included a link to a black and white RTE video, interviewing those living close to the well at the time and a large collection of documents, videos and photographs from the Father Moore's Well Memorial Committee. However, the minimal uptake on the request for information overall may reflect a low profile for holy wells as a monument in the public perception.

### ***Overview of results***

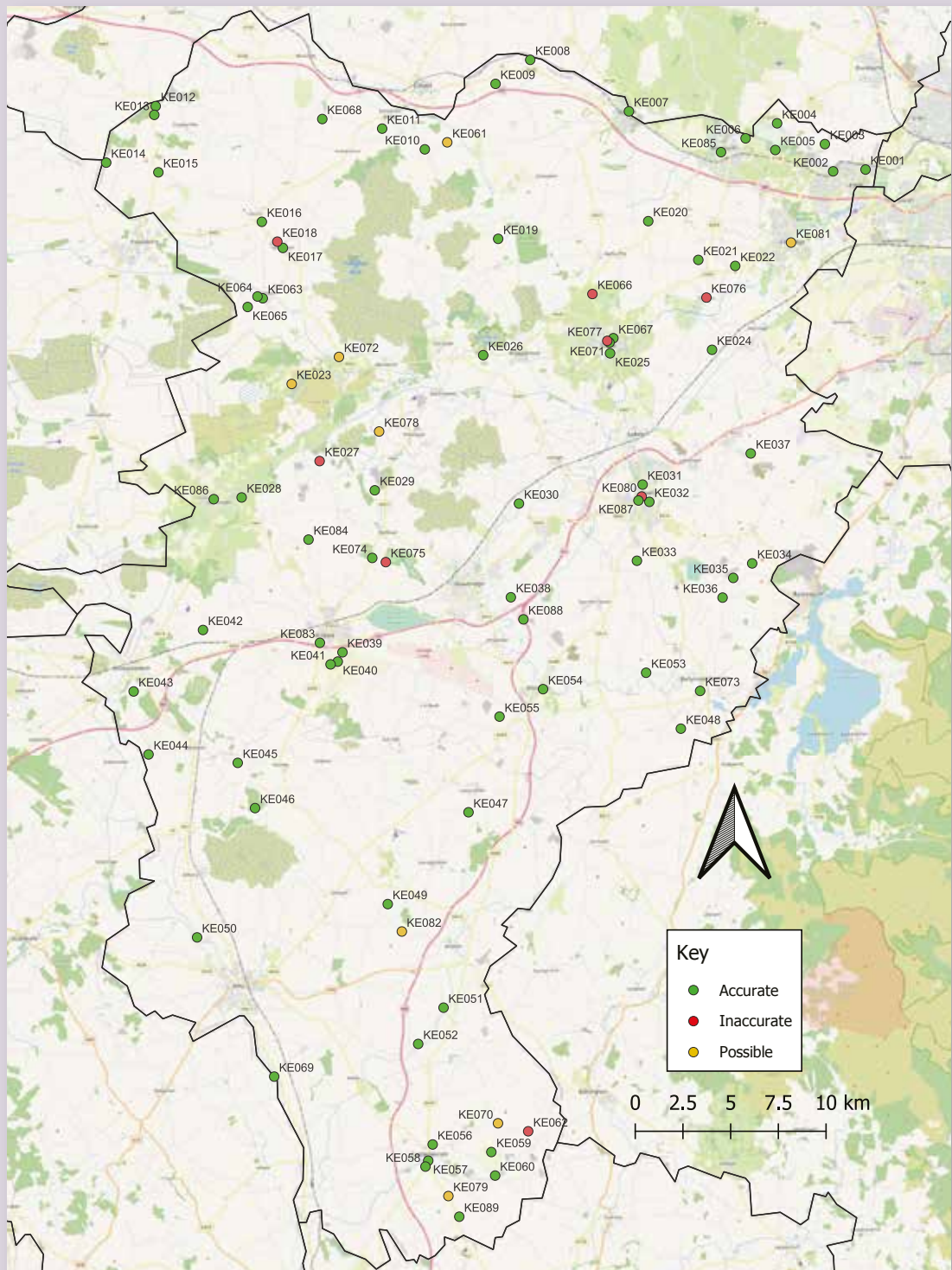
#### **Extant or non-extant**

The two sections of the Sites and Monuments Record: 'Ritual site - Holy well' and 'Well' with additions from the previous Surveys yielded a list of eighty-nine possible Holy Wells which are listed in the desk top Survey Appendix. Nine of these were rejected as springs with no 'holy' connotations or were later medieval water supplies. Out of the eighty wells remaining, twenty-eight were extant, 35% just over

one third. Of the other fifty-two, thirty-nine were recorded by various sources as non-extant, in two cases they were extant but dry and in eleven cases the access to water was impeded mostly by piping and conversion into domestic water supplies. In one case, Kilcock, the well of St Cóch, was covered in the nineteenth century and recently uncovered when a manhole was lifted during maintenance works. The last thirteen are recorded as 'unverifiable', either lacking precise co-ordinates or lying deep in undergrowth.

#### **Access**

The fieldworkers carried out thirty-eight site visits. On these visits eleven of the wells were considered to have easy access, being near roads or with maintained paths. Six were overgrown to various degrees, one, St Columba's at Moone, requiring the help of the farmer with a slasher to clear just a view of the well, totally immersed in ivy, briars and other weeds. At eight wells, access was denied, often by substantial metal fencing. Interestingly, in Pegley's 2008 survey, seven of these ten wells were accessible. Most of these wells are on private land and the closing of access reflects changing attitudes to land control and trespass in twenty-first century Ireland. Two of the wells lie on the land attached to large eighteenth- or nineteenth-century country houses, which have been bought and restored in the years between 2008 and 2021; one has access only on the pattern day and at the other future access is uncertain. A further two had limited access. The growth of Ireland's population and the pressure on rural venues engendered by urban dwellers seeking the advantages of outside activity, perhaps emphasised by the Covid pandemic, has no doubt contributed to this denial of access. However, it is probably also to do with the increase of affluence in the population, in that statements of privacy have replaced the more relaxed communal attitudes of a pre-boom Ireland. A further ten wells were verified not extant.



**Figure 3:**  
Accuracy of SMR  
grid co-ordinates

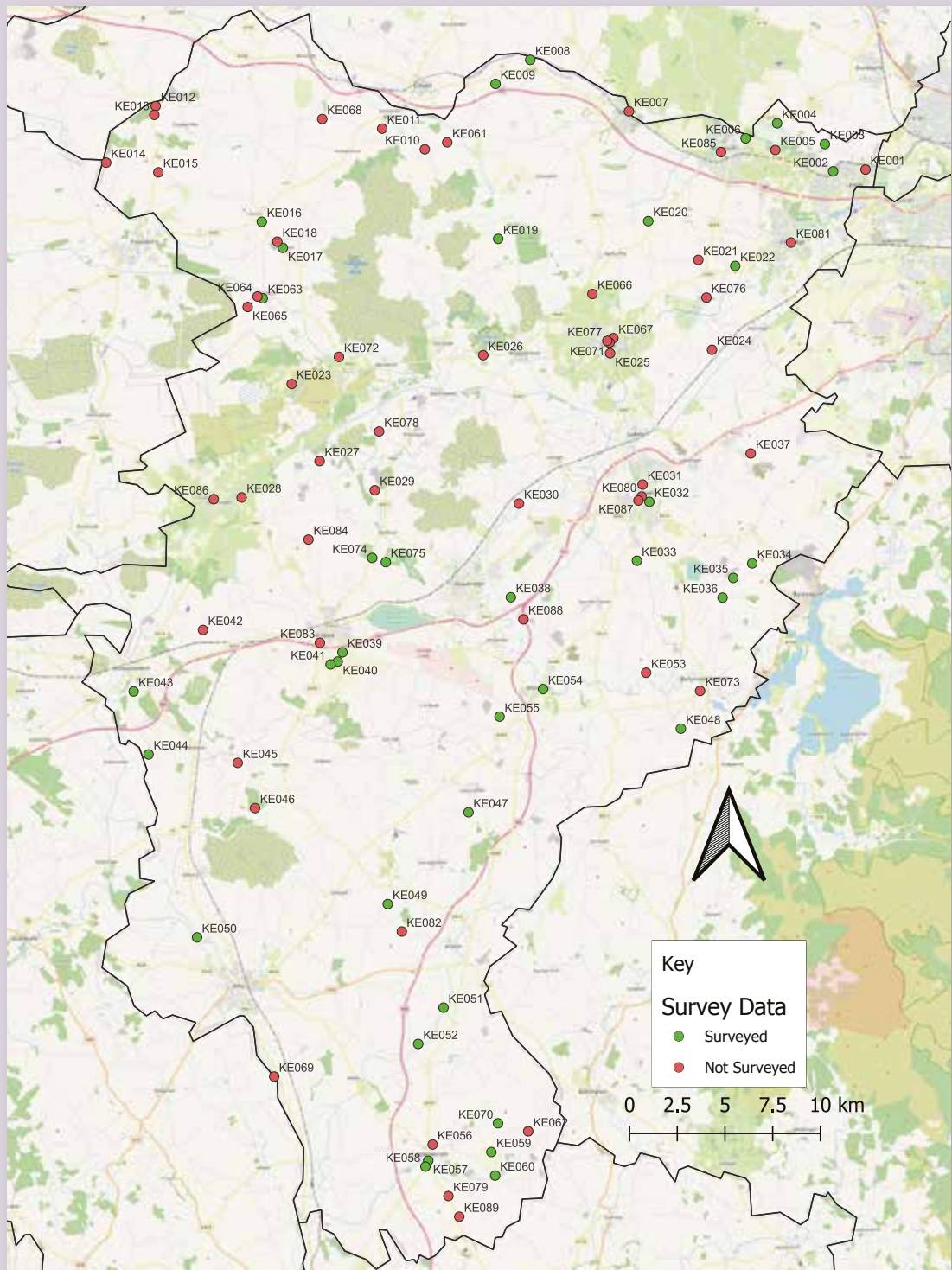
## Condition

The fieldworkers also assessed the condition of the wells. Eleven were deemed to be in good condition. Of these eleven, two were in graveyards, Derrinturn and Cowanstown, thus maintained by the relevant church and one in the vicinity of the Franciscan friary church at Castledermot, maintained by the OPW. One is in the Japanese Gardens of the National Stud, in Tully East, south of Kildare. The well at Kilcullen Bridge was refurbished in 1977, probably in consort with the building of a new Catholic church and is in a public park. The remaining six are maintained by groups or individuals: Brallistown Commons, Newtown, Glassely and at Rathbride, Father Moore's Well, by committees and Belan by those living close by. Killeighter, to which access was denied, is also maintained by a committee who have a Facebook page. Although several people contacted the project about Ardrass Upper, it was not clear who maintained the well to a high standard. These groups and individuals demonstrate that local pride of place and community participation can maintain these neglected monuments, even on private land, which Glassely is. Six wells visited were located but were in poor condition, mostly overgrown.

Not surprisingly the two wells with contemplative gardens surrounding them, Brallistown Commons and Glassely, were maintained by committees. Only six wells of the thirty-two extant visited have signage and only three have all-ability access. These three are Father Moore's Well, Rathbride, Father Byrne's or Trinity Well at Derrinturn and St Brigid's Well at the National Stud, Japanese Gardens.

KE074 - Father Moore's Well, Rathbride





**Figure 4:**  
Well surveyed as part  
of Holy Wells  
of Kildare 2021



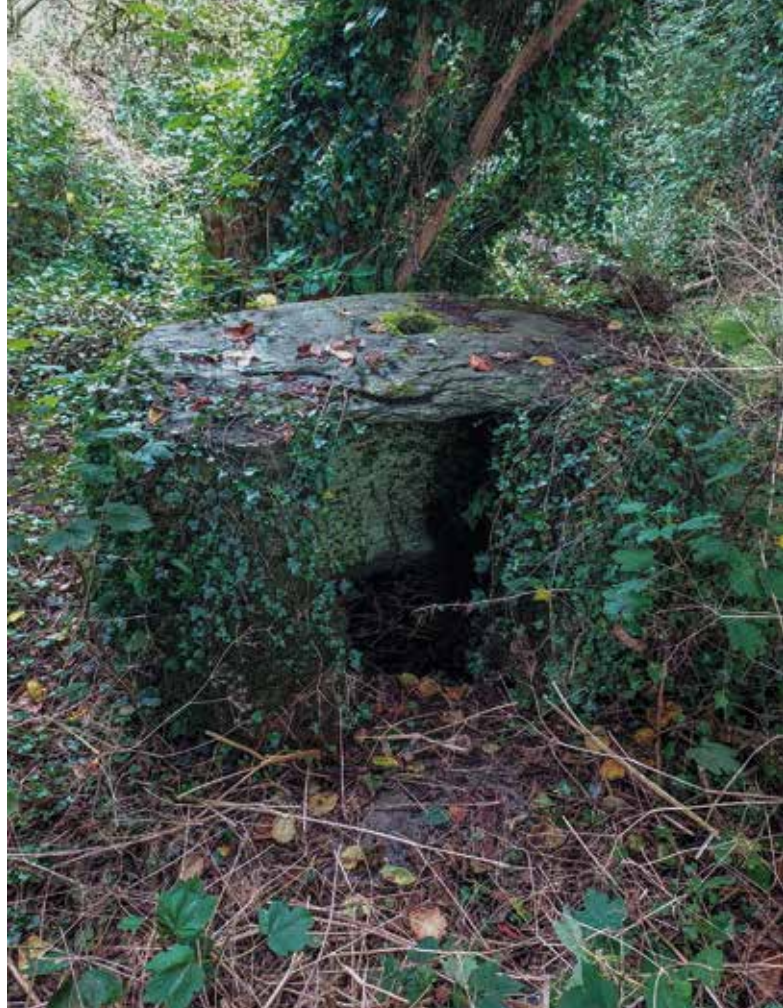
## Section 2 Historical Background

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**Fifty-seven of the wells carry the names of saints or are associated with a saint by documentary references, eight refer to religious doctrines or later clergy and fifteen have descriptive names. Out of the fifty-seven wells with a saintly association, twenty-four are named after the national saints: Brigid, Patrick and Columba, although Columba with just two wells is a poor third to Brigid with twelve and Patrick with ten. Seventeen are named after universal saints: Mary, mother of Jesus and apostles. One is a Welsh saint, St Winifred, who also has a well dedicated to her in Dublin. There are five wells recalling the Tridentine doctrines promoted by the Counter-Reformation, such as Trinity or Sunday.**

Fifteen are named for or are associated with local early Irish saints, the best-known being Cóemgen of Glendalough. Cóch occurs twice, at Kilcock and Tobercocka. There are three references to later clergy: Father Moore (Rathbride) and Father Batty (Clane), both nineteenth-century priests, and a 'Nuns' Well' at Carton Demesne, almost certainly connected to a late medieval foundation nearby. At Derrinturn, Trinity Well is also known as Father Byrne's well in honour of a nineteenth-century priest who blessed it.

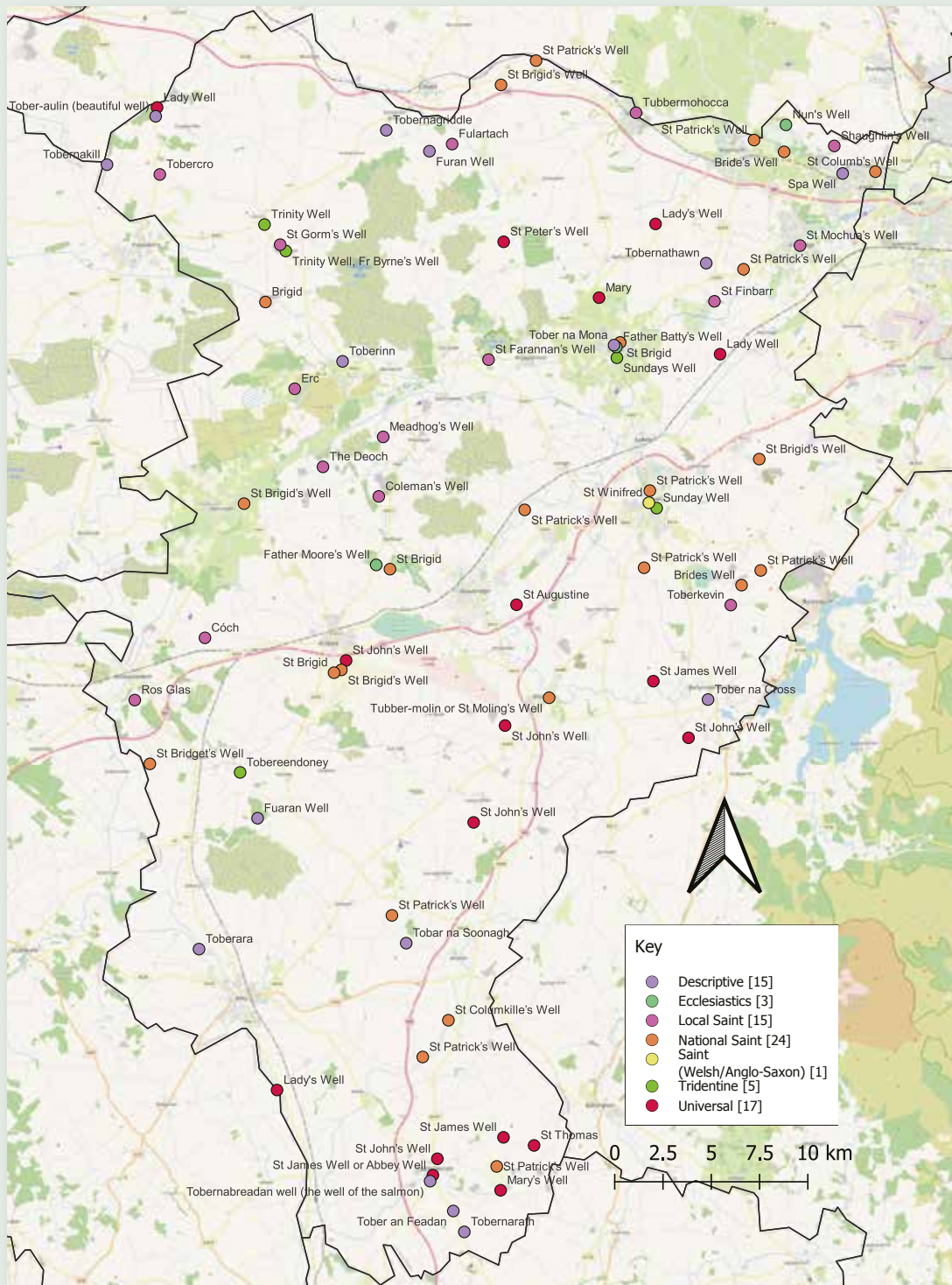
Fifteen wells have names descriptive of their location or associated stories. There are two wells (Boghall, Dunfiirth) called 'Fuaran' from the Irish fuar: cold. This is probably to distinguish them from the warm thermal spring wells. Tobernakill (Grange West) refers to a now non-extant church. Two mention the long-established story of fish appearing in wells: Toberabreada (Abbeyland) and Toberanfedan (Ballyvannon) (both non-extant) are from bradá, the Irish for salmon and almost certainly reference the connections between springs and the Salmon of Knowledge (Brenneman & Brenneman 1995, 31).



KE051 - St Columba's, Moone

Tobernasoonagh (Mullamast) indicates the cure of sore eyes, súil in Irish, often associated with Brigid (Connolly 1989, 18) Perhaps the most poignant name is Toberall (Brackagh). This was described by Wilde as 'Tober-aulin': the beautiful well (1850, 46). All that remains is a short section of dilapidated wall (Jackson 1979-80, 141).

Holy wells are hard to date empirically as they are very seldom excavated. None of the wells designated 'holy' in this project have been excavated. However, the saints' names combined with historical evidence can help to construct a chronology.



**Figure 5:**  
Kildare Holy  
Well names





### Early medieval wells and baptism

Although it is possible that wells were used in Iron Age ritual, the Iron Age period, extending roughly from around 800 BC to AD 400, has produced little excavated indication of holy well use in Ireland, although ritual can be a difficult area of evidence to detect in archaeology (Hawkes 1954, 161). There are many instances of deposition of weapons and other prestige objects, such as the Loughnashade trumpets, in watery places, from the Late Bronze Age through to the Iron Age in Ireland. This type of votive object deposition seems different from the links with Romano-British cults illustrated by antiquarian finds at holy wells, for example an oculist's stamp at Golden, Tipperary which would seem to indicate some connection with healing (Daffy 2002, 9). The early first-century finds at holy wells in Kelly's article seems to be more personal than prestige, not dissimilar from articles found on rag trees above wells to this day (2002, 26-7).

These scattered incidences are one of several influences on Ireland from the late-Roman world but perhaps the most significant and far-reaching was that of Christianity. Whitfield suggests an early Christian ritual function for holy wells (2009). She considers that because of Ireland not possessing 'a grand tradition of architecture' like that of the Roman world, Christian missionaries utilised springs as baptismal fonts. As stated above, the word 'font', fons in Latin, refers to a spring.

**KE048** - Bullaun stone, Ballybought:  
close to site of St John's Well

The first Christian churches, built of wood, were small in area, and this minimalisation of ritual space was continued into later stone structures (Ó Carragáin 2010a, 18-26, 230). It would not be surprising then to find certain rituals like baptism externalised in the early medieval period. Stone baptismal fonts intended for the interior of larger later medieval Anglo-Norman parish churches, date probably to after the Synod of Cashel in 1172. One of the legacies of Christianity to the early medieval period was literacy, and Whitfield cites many references from saints' Lives which describe baptism in wells. One of these, in the Tripartite Life of Patrick dated to the mid-tenth century, is local to Kildare and refers to Naas:

***The site of Patrick's tent is in the green of the fort, to the east of the road, and to the north of the fort is his well wherein he baptised Dunling's two sons, Aillil and illam, and Aillil's two daughters, Morgan and Fidelm (Stokes 1887, 184-5)***

As it says north of the fort (of Naas) it could be St Patrick's Well at Oldtown Demesne. Whitfield suggests that the references in Saints' Lives to pure water have a basis in the New Testament where Christ is baptised by John in the River Jordan. Regarding Kildare's premier saint and, indeed, the saint with the most named holy wells in the Project, Brigid is associated with digging wells to slake the thirst of a family without water, and perhaps competitively, for the familia of Patrick and Bishop Erc, a disciple of Patrick and associated with Lullymore in Kildare (Connolly 1989, 21,34). Lordan suggests these incidences in the First Life of Brigid are to prove her direct connection with the source of the faith in Rome, and her apostolic status, despite the slight drawback of being a woman (2013, 105-6).

What archaeological evidence exists for this association of holy wells and conversion rituals of early Christianity? There are eighty holy wells listed in the Project and twenty-four of them are within or close to (less than 600m) of an ecclesiastical site with early medieval evidence. This is 30%, which is significant. There are ten within ecclesiastical enclosures and fourteen within 600m of an ecclesiastical site. Criteria



**KE048** - Tempeall Chronáin, Co. Clare: diminutive early medieval church

for categorising an ecclesiastical site as early medieval are one or more of the following: enclosure, a mortared stone church with early medieval attributes such as a western doorway, a round tower, toponomy (a townland name beginning with 'kil'), sculpture: high crosses, cross-inscribed stones and bullaun stones and documentary evidence (Boazman 2014, 32-3). Of the fifteen wells named for local saints, ten are in this category. It seems then on this associative evidence that Whitfield could be right that holy wells close to early ecclesiastical sites had a baptismal function in the early medieval period. Even those that are at a distance from an ecclesiastical site could have been part of a ritual whereby the newly baptised and thus sanctified, preceded over church land to the ecclesiastical centre.

## The Kildare and Armagh rivalry

In the analysis of well names Brigid's name had twelve instances and Patrick's nine. Brigid, whose central place was Kildare, is understandable but why does Patrick occur so often, so far from his Armagh base? Supposedly, he, or his alter ego Palladius, did first land on the coast of Wicklow and the story of the baptism at Naas (see above) indicates a presence in Leinster (Nicholls 1984, 544; Gleeson & Ó Carragáin 2016, 81). However, the mention of the sons of Dunling (Uí Dúnlainge) is anachronistic as presumably Patrick was carrying out baptisms on his arrival in the mid-fifth century and the Uí Dúnlainge rose to power in the late seventh century. From the conversion period to the seventh century, two of the main groups ruling Leinster were the Uí Bairrche and the Dál Messin Corb (ibid, 80). A bishop of the Dál Messin Corb, Conlaed, jointly ruled Kildare with Brigid, and according to Cogitosus they were buried together at Kildare (Connolly & Picard 1987, 25-6).

The rise of the powerful Uí Néill family was partly predicated on their control of Armagh and its associated saint, Patrick. The Uí Néill dislodged Leinster groups such as the Uí Bairrche and the Dál Messin Corb from the plain of Meath in the fifth to seventh century period (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 57-65). Meanwhile, the Kildare area witnessed the rise of another dynasty in the late seventh century, the Uí Dúnlainge, a branch of which came to control Brigid's Kildare. In this period, Armagh was promoting itself as the archdiocese of the whole of Ireland but recognising the power of Kildare and its saint Brigid, indulged in various carefully worded statements to allow room for a limited jurisdiction for Brigid (Swift 2006, 105-7).

The baptism of the sons of Dunlaing at Naas in the tenth-century Tripartite life of Patrick is thus a statement of Armagh power over Kildare. Patrick, the Uí Néill saint, is portrayed as playing the premier role in conversion of the Uí Dúnlainge at that group's central place at Naas. There are two other striking instances of statements of Armagh supremacy which are at sites in Kildare with holy wells. The first is the well of St Patrick at Killashee. Killashee was an important early

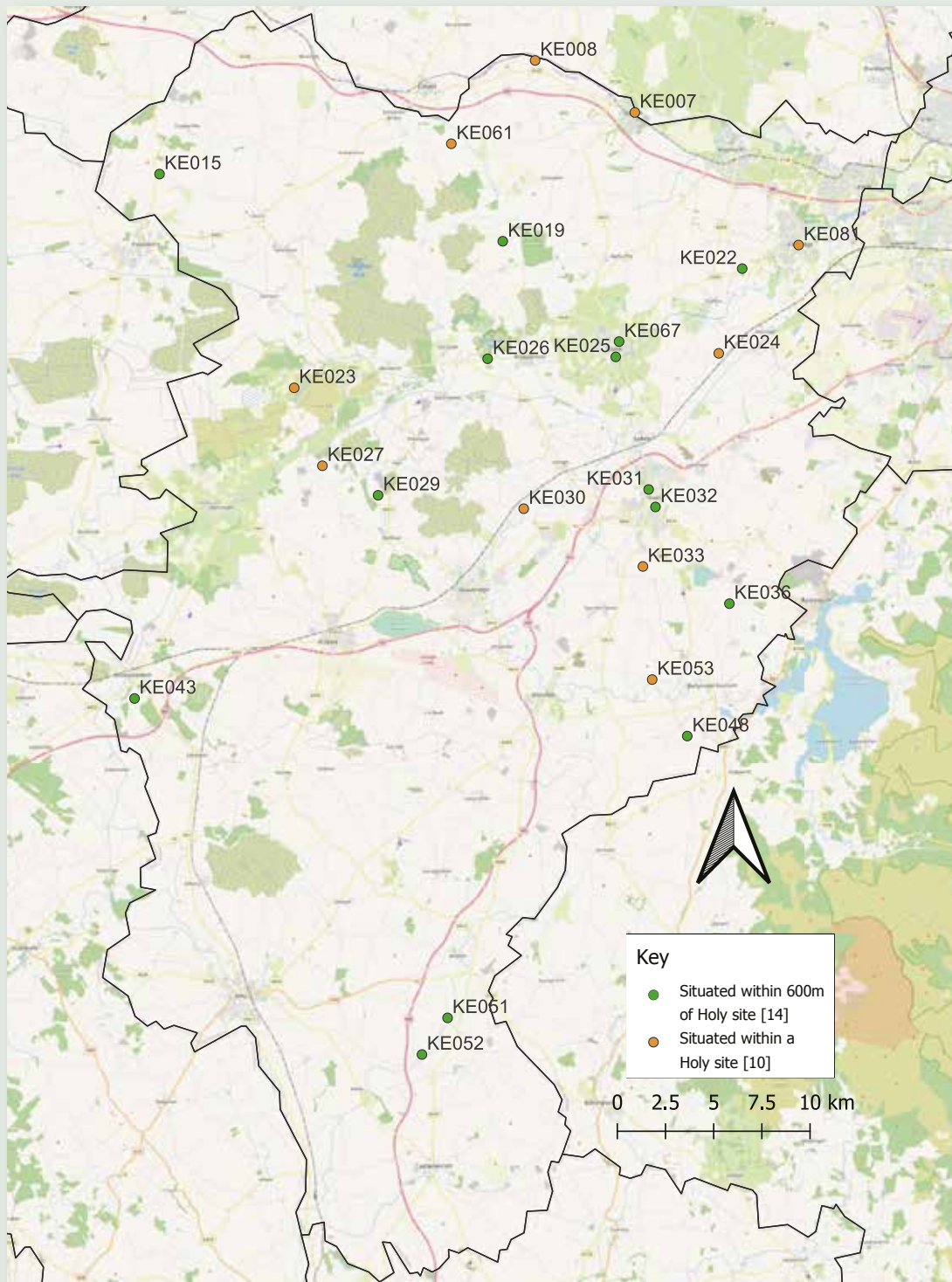


KE006 - St Patrick's Well, Carton Demesne

medieval site of the Uí Bairrche, one of the groups dislodged from overall power by the Uí Dúnlainge. It was also likely to have been a foundation of Auxilius, a companion of Patrick/Palladius. The Uí Bairrche were naturally happy to have Uí Néill support against the dominant Uí Dúnlainge (Swift 2006, 104; Gleeson & Ó Carragáin 2016, 83-4).

The second instance concerns the unusual naming of the well at Dunmurraghill for St Peter, apostle and first pope. One of the problems for Armagh of promoting Patrick as archbishop of Ireland was that his burial place was unknown therefore there were no corporeal relics. Thus, in the early eighth century, Armagh imported relics of St Peter and Paul from Rome (Charles-Edwards 2000, 564). The Uí Néill used these relics as a bargaining tool to persuade churches to remain within their jurisdiction. Again, the Uí Bairrche were happy to accept this honour and it seems from Tirechán's Collectanea that relics were presented to Dunmurraghill where a Domus Martyrum (elsewhere Martar Tech, in Irish) is recorded. Teach (house) is the word used in connection to a holding shrine for a saint's relics. Just to emphasise the connection, a Stone of Patrick (Petra Patricii) was also mentioned by Tirechán as part of the devotional complex at Dunmurraghill (Swift 2006, 108; Bieler 1979, pt 51:2).

These instances of Kildare versus Armagh rivalry explain the high number of Patrician wells in Brigid's kingdom but also indicate the importance of holy wells and ecclesiastical sites as part of early medieval politics.



**Figure 6:**  
 Distribution map  
 of Holy Wells of  
 Kildare that are  
 within 600m of a  
 known early medieval  
 ecclesiastical site



KE057 - St James's Well, Abbeyland  
(Castledermot) Franciscan Friary

KE057 - St James's Well, Abbeyland (castledermot) Franciscan Friary

### Later medieval

In the twelfth century and after the coming of the Anglo-Normans there was a tendency for a change from devotions to local Irish saints to universal saints: Mary and the apostles. This was mostly influenced by the influx of Continental orders into Ireland which began by the patronage of such orders by Irish kings in the twelfth century (Flanagan 1980, 224). There are several examples of wells connected to continental orders in the Project. The holy well at Greatconnell, is named for St Augustine and there is an Augustinian foundation of 1202 nearby. St James's well at Castledermot is attached to a Franciscan friary founded in 1247 and north of the same town St John's Well is associated with the Priory of and Hospital of

St John the Baptist, 1284. St John's Well at Tully East is 1.2km from the Franciscan Grey Abbey, 1260 which is an example of the new order instigated by the Anglo-Normans, as this site was previously associated with the Westmeath Irish saint, Fechin of Fore. At Graney East, the well named for Mary is close to a nunnery of the Augustinian nuns founded by Walter de Riddlesford in the early thirteenth century. Several Augustinian foundations have Mary as a patron, for example, St Mary's Louth and St Mary de Hogges in Dublin. Finally, Lady's (Mary) well at Grangemellon is associated with land of the prioress of Timolin, another Augustinian foundation (Weldon 1892, 97).

It is difficult to understand to what extent holy well ritual continued through the later medieval period in Ireland as there appear to be few documentary references to the use of holy wells in this period. So far in this report the evidence for their function in the early medieval period has been described as both sacramental and healing. The combination of these was in holy water which produced both rebirth as a Christian and consequent rejuvenation at baptism. A later development of the early medieval period, relevant to holy wells, took place with the promotion of pilgrimage to Irish sites around 650-850, fuelled by the production of Martyrologies in the 830s, which listed the feastdays of the saints (Ó Riain 2006, 173). Irish saints were buried within the central area of ecclesiastical sites and as such their

bodies sanctified the site (Ó Carragáin 2003, 147). Elite ecclesiastics of the Irish church saw it as a more controllable situation to have pilgrimages, within the island, rather than peregrinatio throughout Europe (O'Sullivan & Ó Carragáin 2008, 318). The most famous description of this is Cogitosus' account of the feastday of Brigid at Kildare (Connolly & Picard 1987, 27) but the investment of secular royalty in ecclesiastical sites, for example Muichertach Ua Briain at Glendalough in the eleventh century and the Maelsechlainn kings of the Clann Colmán in Clonmacnoise in the ninth century no doubt increased pilgrimage numbers (Ó Carragáin 2010b, 264; Swift 2006, 98-9).



KE040 - St Brigid's Well, Tully East

It is surmise, but it seems likely that the holy wells formed part of the process of pilgrimage before the coming of the Anglo-Normans. Early medieval sites like Dunmurraghill bare this out, with references to a relic-house, a church building and a holy well in one complex. Of course, pilgrimage to these smaller sites was a local affair rather than the high-profile centres such as Kildare, Glendalough and Clonmacnoise.

After the coming of the Anglo-Normans, it appears that many of these pilgrimage destinations fell into disrepair. This was certainly the case with Glendalough and an archaeological survey of Iniscealtra, a prominent site on the Shannon, indicates a steep drop in habitation evidence in the thirteenth century ( Mac Shamhráin 1996, 165; McCarthy, O'Leary & Wallace 2016,19-20). This was partly because of the incoming continental orders and partly because of the complete change in ecclesiastical organisation that took place with the imposition of the parish system. This would almost certainly have affected the use of the holy wells on these older sites, large and small. Baptism had moved to the parish church and the feastdays of Irish saints were replaced by devotions to Mary and the apostles, patrons of the monastic orders. It is telling that no patterns are recorded at the six holy wells, listed above, that were attached to foundations of these orders.

A further reason for the fall off in devotion at wells in the late medieval period could be the displacement of Irish kin-groups from their traditional areas by the Anglo-Norman land grants of the post-Invasion period as demonstrated in the case of Fuaran Well (Boghall):

The O'Tooles, on the border of whose principality the well lay, in their forced emigration from Co Kildare carried with them to their new home the knowledge of the healing powers of the well. This tradition has been handed down through their descendants of seven hundred years (Fitzgerald 1897, 272)



**KE049 - St Patrick's Well, Glassely**

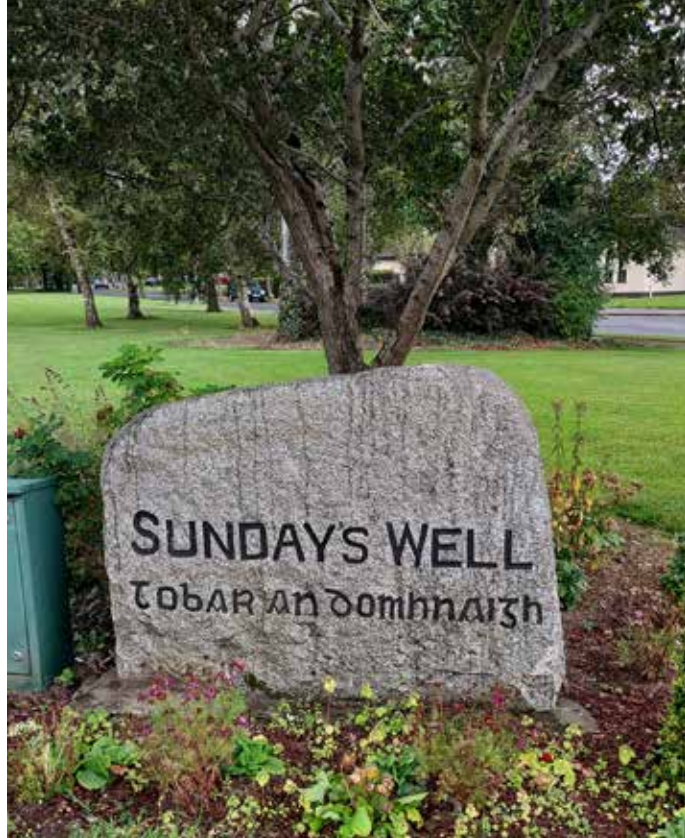
This refers to the Ua Tuathail line of the Uí Muiredaig (branch of the Uí Dúnlainge) who had taken a considerable part of South Kildare in the ninth century but were displaced into the mountains of Wicklow by the Anglo-Normans at the end of the twelfth century from which, with the O'Byrnes, they harried the new order through the later medieval period (O'Byrne 2002, 236-7). St Laurence O' Toole (Lorcán Ua Tuathail), abbot of Glendalough and subsequently Archbishop of Dublin (1162 AFM) was one of this kingroup. The account describes large numbers of pilgrims travelling to Fuaran well on the pattern days from Wicklow and Wexford (Jackson 1979-80, 158).

## Post-Reformation holy wells

Two documents of the post-Reformation period indicate that if devotion at early medieval sites went into hiatus between 1169 and the mid sixteenth century, their past glory was not forgotten. In 1541, George Dowdall, primate of Armagh, sent a man who had killed his son, to do penance by visiting fifteen early medieval sites, including Glendalough (Murray 1926, 152). In 1607 Pope Paul VII offered a papal indulgence to those who visited twelve sites: including Iniscealtra, mentioned above and, of interest to this project, Clane (Harbison 1991, 54). Clane was Cluain Damh, founded by Ailbe, in the early medieval period, and has three holy wells, Sunday's Well, Father Batty's Well and Tobernaimona. The naming of the first two is probably post-Reformation in that they do not have Irish saints' names although there is always the possibility that names were changed.

From 1536 to the end of Elizabeth's reign in 1603, although the monastic orders had been disbanded and their property and lands confiscated, the line between Catholic and Protestant was blurred. George Dowdall exemplifies this being a Catholic, but taking the role of Primate of Armagh, now the head office of the Established church (Protestant) (Carroll 1999, 137-8). When James I came to the throne, despite Catholic hopes that his Catholic wife might advance their cause, the gulf between the two sides became more obvious. Fines were introduced for recusancy (refusing to attend Protestant services), and the services in the churches followed Protestant doctrines (Canny 2001, 174). Protestant prelates noted a huge drop in attendance at services, Bishop Lyons in Rosscarbery noting five hundred communicants drop to three, after two years (Carroll 1999, 140).

In 1610 the first documentary reference was made to Dubliners attending holy wells in large numbers on feastdays, and in 1614 the first reference was made to the secular celebrations that followed the religious practices of such events (Carroll 1999, 22). The doctrine of the Counter Reformation began to filter through to influence Irish Catholicism and is represented by the naming or re-naming



KE032 - Sunday's Well, Naas: plaque for housing estate named after well now inaccessible

of wells as Trinity Well or Sunday's Well. Attending church regularly on a Sunday and the indivisible nature of the Holy Trinity were cornerstones of Counter-Reformation teaching. Irish Catholicism became, through the sixteenth century and the Penal period of the eighteenth century, an alternative form of devotion to that of the ruling classes. This outsider status enabled a blend of two seemingly opposing influences. The first was that of the tighter organisation of Tridentine precepts, brought into Ireland by priests who were sons of Catholic Gaelic society and the old English Catholic Anglo-Norman society, trained in Europe. The second was a home-grown, looser interpretation of Christianity, based on remembered devotion of feastdays and relics and a sense of community that no longer existed. These two influences were combined in the holy well rituals which were anchored in Catholicism by the presence of priests and often the celebration of the Mass, but which also carried an undercurrent of repressed rebellion in the faction fighting and communal revelry.



## Section 3 Rituals of the Holy Wells

### PATTERNS AND ROUNDS

**Twenty-five of the holy wells listed in the Project are recorded as having patterns in the post-Reformation period. These records come from the Ordnance Survey Letters (c.1837) and the Schools' Collection (gathered from 1937 to 1939). A pattern is another name for 'patron', meaning that the celebration took place on the feastday of the saint to whom the well was dedicated.**

This, as described above, is a tradition going back to the early medieval period when the local saints, by their burial in an ecclesiastical site associated with a kin-group, sanctified and protected that group. This became associated with healing, both spiritual and physical thus penance and cures. It was assumed that the power of the saint was greatest on their feastday, attendance at which increased the efficacy of the healing. It is probably an

indication of post-Reformation social changes that some of the largest patterns of this period: Demesne, Spa Well Leixlip, Knockaulin and Glassely broke the tradition of association with early medieval ecclesiastical sites and seemed to be established at new sites. Three however: Demesne, Knockaulin and Glassely are on, or close to, important secular early medieval and Iron Age sites. Demesne, is the source of the Boyne and close to Carbury Hill, Knockaulin (Dún Ailinne) is an excavated hill fort with Iron Age and early medieval evidence and Glassely is near to Mullaghmast, inauguration site of the Uí Dúnlainge. On the other hand, it is also likely that smaller patterns continued at local early medieval ecclesiastical sites which had not become parish churches and may have been deserted. In the post-Reformation climate, the holding of patterns at an Established church would have been disallowed thus these alternative celebrations had to take place at new sites or sites outside the official system.



KE020 - Holy Well of Our Lady, Cowanstown



KE074 - Father Moore's Cottage, station on round at Father Moore's Well , Rathbride

The overall structure of a pattern day was loose but was divided into two parts. The first part was a devotional experience focused on the well but also involving procession of the participants around 'stations', points of religious reference, at some distance from the well at which either decades of the rosary or other prayers were repeated. This was known as rounding. Although in most cases only the well remains, there is some evidence of stations at a few wells. An example of this is Ardrass Upper, with a well dedicated to St Patrick. The well lies at the bottom of a hill, named on historic maps as 'St Patrick's Hill'. On the hill is a bramble-filled depression named as 'St Patrick's Bed' on historic maps. Saints' beds often formed part of ritual rounds, such as St Kevin's bed at Glendalough or the beds of the saints at Lough Derg (Carroll 1999, 91-2). Just to the east of the well is St Patrick's Chapel. Although there is no record as such, a round could be envisaged that involved climbing the hill to the saint's bed, returning to the church and then continuing back to the holy well. A similar round was probably undertaken at St Peter's Well, Dunmurraghill, where the church (which was perhaps the remains of the relic-house mentioned above), lay to the south of the well and to the south again, St Peter's Hill. Maybe the Stone of St Patrick was a further station. The climbing of hills for devotional purposes has a

parallel at Croagh Patrick. At Father Moore's well (Rathbride), the site of Father Moore's cottage is a station in the round.

The influences that produced this practice are diverse. The Stations of the Cross, were introduced into Europe in reference to the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, by the Franciscans in the fifteenth and sixteenth century (Carroll 1999, 96-7). Earlier influences could be seen in rituals to sanctify the outer enclosures of ecclesiastical sites in the circumambulatory 'rounds' mentioned in Saints' Lives (Herbert & Ó Riain 1988, 55, 76). A further characteristic of rounds is that they are always performed following the path of the sun, deiseal, which conveyed purity, following the path of Christ and warding off the chaos engendered by taking the path sinister or tuathail, left (Aitcheson 1994, 268-9). Rounds at large ecclesiastical sites such as Glendalough and Inishmurray were able to utilise existing ecclesiastical monuments as stations (Harney 2011, 133-4; O'Sullivan & Ó Carragáin 2008) However, the practice at rural holy wells in Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, circumscribed by their 'outsider' status, had to be creative, lending sanctity to natural features such as hills and earth depressions.

Another feature of the holy well sites, which could have functioned as a station, was a stone, believed to carry imprints of the saint. There are nine examples of these extant in Kildare. There are four imprints of feet or knees at St Kevin's Well, Commons, St Patrick's Wells at Glassely and Knockpatrick and Tobereendoney. The most unusual prints belong to Brigid at Brallistown Commons, where the well water flows through two stone cylinders known as Brigid's slippers. It has been suggested that they are symbolic of the penstocks of horizontal mills and may refer to Brigid's association with providing food (Ó Carragáin 2010, 204). The final example is at Ticknevin where the depression in a bullaun stone is said to be that of the hoof of Brigid's horse. Foley suggests that these stones are part of the physical participation of pilgrims in rounds. Kneeling in them produces discomfort, as do practices of performing rounds barefoot where both directly connect the participant with the healing process. This recalls the suffering of Jesus before Resurrection. Making the rounds and reciting the mantra of prayer are all part of what Foley terms the performative act in which pilgrims are involved through the senses providing an intensification of the spiritual experience (Foley 2014, 2, 5).

Sadly, very little knowledge has come down to modern times of the nature of the rounds, the stations and the prayers recited. At Father Moore's and Brallistown Commons the rounds are remembered but that is because they are still functioning as focuses of devotion. Perhaps this project will encourage people to search communal memories to retrieve some of this forgotten ritual.

### Faction-fighting

Although priests were often involved in the first part of the pattern experience in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, leading prayers and saying masses, the second component of the pattern was not as popular with the ecclesiastics. After the religious rounding a festive atmosphere prevailed. At Trinity Well, Demesne 'people went to the 'pattern cross' where there was music and dancing and games' (Jackson 1979-80, 145-6). The Schools' Collection indicates

that this was a match-making occasion: 'If a boy and a girl went to the pattern together and were seen dancing, the old people said they would surely be married before the next Trinity Sunday' (0771: 091). The festivities were fuelled by sales of alcohol from tents set up in the vicinity and towards the end of the evening fights broke out between local groups: at Demesne 'The faction fights were between the people of Carbury and the northwest and the people of Allen and Allenwood' (Jackson, 1979-80, 145-6). At two other wells in the project: Brallistown Commons and Glassely, patterns were banned by local clergy (Jackson 1979-80, 156-6). Rivalry between neighbouring areas in Ireland is common to this day, but it is possible that the physical violence of the faction-fighting was partly caused by misdirected aggression, arising from the stress of exclusion from formal religion and political process during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.



KE041 - St Brigid's slippers, St Brigid's Well, Brallistown Commons

## Cures and rag trees

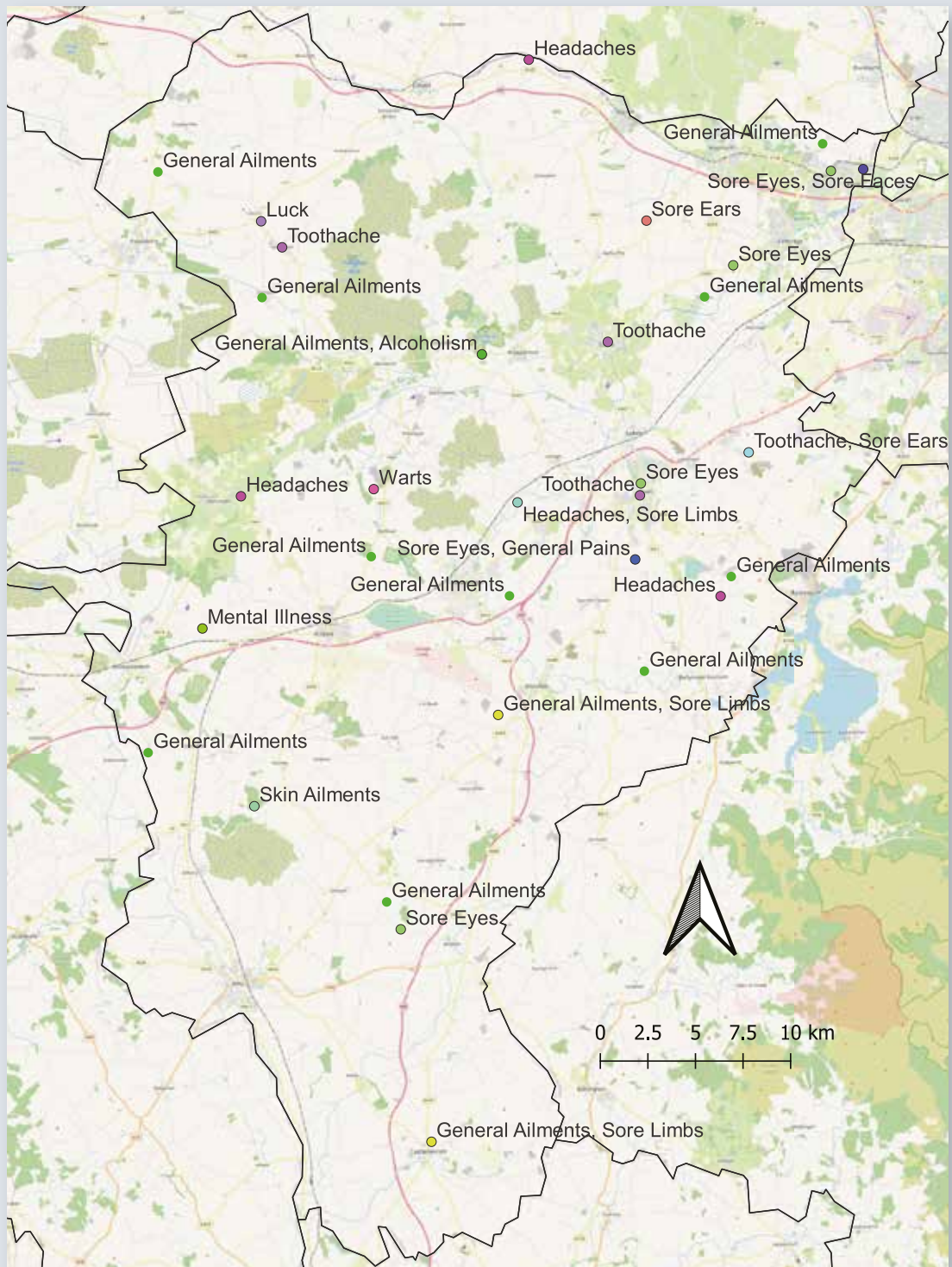
Although both spiritual and physical healing were part of the pilgrimage experience at the premier sites, such as Lough Derg, the emphasis at the local holy wells seems to be more on physical cures. This is not to present an opposition between the spiritual and physical. Performing the holy well rituals in company with others must have strengthened belief and helped create a Catholic identity. This promotion of self-belief may very well have assuaged or at least abated physical symptoms.

Eighteen of the Kildare wells are directly associated with a cure for a specific part of the body and nine more with 'cures' or 'miracles'. It may be significant that fifteen of these are for the cure of problems of parts of the head. Seven for eyes, five for toothache, one for headache and one for mental health. Killeighter was known for cures of headache and ears. Two were concerned with skin diseases, one of these specifically warts. Barretstown was known for the cure of

headaches and for the relief of sore limbs. Father Moore's was mostly for the cure of sore limbs but also the associated relic of his hat cured headaches. The prevalence of headaches and mental health amongst the problems cured would suggest a possible intersection of mental and physical health as suggested above. Toothache and eye problems would be particularly prevalent in a period with underdeveloped and unaffordable healthcare. It is possible that sore limbs could refer to arthritis or even hip or knee problems, all endemic in a labouring population living in under-heated houses. Returning to earlier influences in the holy well tradition, Brigid was associated with eye wells, partly from a legend where she plucked out her eye to deter a persistent suitor (Connolly 1989, 18) and also perhaps because of her association with creativity, referring to an inner eye. Regarding the evening entertainments at patterns perhaps a visit to Downings North might have been useful. Water from this well would cause the partaker to lose all taste for alcohol (Jackson 1979-80, 148).



KE041 - Rag tree, St Brigid's Well, Brallistown Commons



**Figure 7:**  
Cures associated with  
Holy Wells in Kildare  
(see Gazetteer  
for full details)

Although the rounding and prayer and drinking from the well were the major parts of the cure, a further ritual was undertaken to guarantee lasting relief from the complaint. This was the rag-tree. This was a tree or bush, close to the well on which pilgrims left small personal items, often pieces of their clothing (hence rag-tree), pins or hair ornaments. Twenty-one of the holy wells had evidence of a rag-tree; fourteen previously, according to the Ordnance Survey and Schools' Collection, and seven extant. Brallistown Commons has five trees. A very convincing interpretation of this practice is given by Carroll:

*'...that devotees felt they were detaching themselves from their physical or spiritual ailments probably explains the particular nature of the objects they left behind at holy wells. ...the emphasis on 'detachment' or 'unfastening' could be represented by leaving behind objects that would normally be removed during a process of unfastening - like nails, pins, buttons' (1999, 34)*

Pieces of clothing were also 'detached' from the pilgrim's bodywear thus setting up an invisible connection between the curative well and the wearer, which persisted after leaving the sacred site (Foley 2014, 3). It is possible that the crutches and sticks, left behind by pilgrims after a cure (Fitzgerald 1914, 329), were not only an attestation of the healing powers of the well but perhaps an insurance of continued health.

## Desecration

As mentioned earlier, a spring, coming out of the ground is quintessentially pure and this is crucial to the efficacy of rituals and cures connected with holy wells. A considerable amount of lore has built up around the desecration of holy wells. Using the well for material purposes is a prominent theme. Wells at Feighcullen, Tobercocka and Allenwood North moved because women washed clothes in them and Toberdoney dried up for the same reason (Schools' Collection 0777: 106; Jackson 1979-80, 159; Schools 0774: 276; Fitzgerald 1897, 272). Another activity that materialised wells was using the water to boil food. However, this activity was so

unsuccessful it was unlikely to be tried again: at Downings North the potatoes turned to stones and at Straffan, strangers who obviously knew no better, tried to boil water but failed (Schools' Collection 0773: 458, 0772: 026). An unfortunate farmer at Rathangan Demesne was blinded by God for using the well for his cattle (Schools' Collection 0778: 002-3). The landscape situation of all wells and the spiritual investment of the pilgrims in them meant they were open to access. Some landowners saw this as trespass and attempted to block access to the wells. This had the unexpected result that the well sprung up in the landlord's house as at Demesne:

*'There is a legend that the landlord closed up the well not wanting to allow the people free access to the well. As a result of this the well came up in the drawing room of the big house. Eventually the well had to be opened and ever since the people are allowed to go to it any time of year to pray and get water' (Jackson 1979-80, 145-6)*

A similar inconvenient upsurge happened in the kitchens near the wells of Downings North and Greatconnell (Schools' Collection 0773: 458; Fitzgerald 1898, 313), forcing landlords to provide access. Perhaps the unluckiest landowner was Haddaway who owned the land on which Knockpatrick well was situated. He blocked the well with clay and boulders. As a result, he grew a tail and as he liked to hunt, had to have a special saddlebag made to accommodate the tail (Fitzgerald 1896. 324-5; Jackson 1979-80, 152). It was also considered desecration to cut down the sacred tree, at Newtown, Leixlip the man who attempted this, subsequently hanged himself (Jackson 1979-80, 16). At Corballis, a man trying to cut down the tree, saw his house on fire, but this turned out to be a mirage. He returned to his task and the second time his house was firewood instead of the tree (Schools' Collection: 0781: 292-4). Removing objects left at the well was also unwise. In an unlikely story the nuns from the convent near Killashee stole coin offerings from the well which promptly dried. They returned them and the well flowed again (Schools' Collection 0776: 310-311).



KE017 - Trinity Well of Father Batty's Well, Derrinstown

## Section 4 Contraction and Continuity

### NINETEENTH CENTURY TO PRESENT DAY

**By the end of the eighteenth century the hold of the Penal Laws was loosened and 1829 saw the Catholic Emancipation Act. The Ordnance Survey Letters in 1837 mention wells that are deserted or were formerly used. There are fourteen of these therefore it can be assumed that with the building of Catholic churches after emancipation, worship in the main moved to an indoor ritual space.**

For clergy this was an infinitely more controllable situation than the volatile devotions at holy wells. Certain wells continued to function, Comerford writing in 1886, records patterns at Kilbrook and Tobercro and Clarke records a pattern at Carrick, Rathernan until the 1880s (1886, 71; 1944-5, 454). The Schools' Collection records activity at Rathangan Demesne, Barretstown, Oldtown Demesne, Naas and Newtown, Leixlip in the 1930s. None of these wells are in use today.

Some wells have a chequered career. Kevin's well at Commons (Tipperkevin, the saint's proposed birthplace) was renovated in 1903 but site visits in 2008 and 2021 found it used as a dumping ground. Ardrass Upper was found to be dirty in 1979 but is now well maintained. Shaughlin's Well, Sion was renovated in 2000, having a new well to Brigid built downhill from it but is now barred to public access. The form of devotion in the surviving wells often just consists of a visit on the saint's feastday. Local information reveals that people walk down to Belan Well on St Patrick's day. The well at Demesne whose patterns are described above, is still visited on Trinity Sunday: in 1979 games and dances that used to take place at the crossroads were re-located to the parish hall. The rebuilt wells of Brallistown and Glassely are surrounded by gardens, which lend a contemplative atmosphere which also pervades the well at Newtown East where Mass is said on feastdays. Killeighter has been maintained by a committee from the 1970s and has a prayer service on St Patrick's Day. It is almost as if these ritual places are adapting themselves to the twenty-first century by providing a quiet meditative space amongst turbulence.

### Father Moore's Well

This well represents all the traditional features of holy wells but in some ways diverges from the trajectory of most wells. This diversion is in two major areas. It is not dedicated to a saint but to a priest, who had some of the attributes of a saint and it was founded in the 1820s when as indicated above there was a return to church worship and holy wells were being abandoned. It is also still considered a curative well, to this day and possesses a secondary relic, Father Moore's hat, which is involved in the healing process.



KE074 - Teasie O'Brien, Rathbride

Father Moore's Well KE035, historic photograph 1930s or 1940s from Betty O'Shea, who recalls that the photo depicts 'Teasie Ryan, Rathbride. It may be her sister Kate in background'.





**KE074** - Father Moore's Well, Rathbride: rag tree and votives

Father Moore was born in 1779 in the townland of the well, Rathbride. He trained as a priest at Maynooth and was ordained in 1804. He was buried at Allen church in 1826. He was appointed curate to the parish of Allen after ordination. He seemed to be an independent thinker, who interpreted his role as a healer rather than a provider of pastoral care in the accepted form of traditional doctrines. Hence, he came into conflict with his parish priest, who accused him of neglecting his parish duties by going out at night to visit the sick (Schools' Collection 0776: 312). In another story he came into conflict with the bishop probably on the same charge and the bishop silenced him in one account and exiled him in another (Jackson 1979-80, 142-3). This gentle rebellion in the face of the hierarchy must have resonated with the people of Rathbride, both in the nineteenth century, living under British rule and in the twentieth century, after Irish independence when the hierarchy of the church was exerting a certain amount of control. Also, the well is very popular with the Travelling community, who would also have sympathy with an outsider.

Father Moore shows his saintly powers in stories, not only as a healer but as a performer of miracles. He disproves the parish priest and the bishop by spontaneously igniting the candles in the church, and in another version on an altar he constructs in a field near the well (Schools' Collection 0776: 277; 0778: 015). This references the Holy Spirit with tongues of fire on Whit Sunday and perhaps Patrick igniting his own fire rivalling that of the King Loegaire's druid (Bieler 1979, 96). Although in these stories the bishop and priest are convinced, as mentioned above, in another story he is exiled. So that the invalids who came to the house for healing might still avail of his powers, he went out into the garden and blessed a sally tree. Immediately the well sprang up at the foot of the tree (Jackson 1979-80, 142-3) recalling many stories of saints causing the emergence of spring wells, such as Kevin at the well of Tipperkevin.

A further saintly attribute are the healing powers associated with a secondary relic of Father Moore. Primary relics are corporeal parts of the saint, secondary are objects associated with the saint. In this case it is his hat, a silk chimney hat, whose custodians are the Forde family. The Fordes, now resident in Westmeath, previously lived at Rathbride where their great grandfather had a forge. One day he had a bad headache and sent a message to Father Moore. Father Moore was away that day but donated his hat which the forge owner placed on his head and was immediately cured. Although the forge owner tried to return the hat, Father Moore said he could keep it to enable future cures. While the Fordes lived at Rathbride, those suffering with headaches would perform their devotions at the well and then proceed to the forge, where after more prayers they would put the hat on to be cured. In 2000 the Milltown Prayer Group, formed in 1995, invited the Forde family to come down from Westmeath with the hat and this has become a September pilgrimage to Rathbride up to the present (The Project is grateful to Betty O'Shea, Chairperson of the Father Moore's Well Memorial Committee and Committee members for providing this and much more information on Father Moore's well).

Ritual at the well follows the traditions already described. Three visits to the well were required to effect a cure, three being a sacred number, perhaps representing the Trinity; Ticknevin wart well required three visits for a cure. Formerly the round consisted of prayers at the well first then pilgrims walked clockwise (deiseal) around four stone posts in a neighbouring field said to be Father Moore's house although other traditions suggest it was a parochial house, maybe where he was curate. They touched each post and made the sign of the Cross before returning to the well which they circled three times, bathing the afflicted part in the well the third time. On the third visit they left an offering, perhaps holy medals or rosary beads (Local information: Betty O'Shea). Now pilgrims cross three stones in the centre of the well and attach their offerings to a rag tree. In the past crutches were left at the well and Fitzgerald (1914, pg 379) describes these as being stuck in earth around the well.

There are many stories of desecration attached to the well, whereby landowners attempted to re-dig the well for cattle, which was not successful and put a bull there to deter pilgrims (Schools' Collection 0780: 28). As at other wells, a spring burst out in the kitchen of someone who attempted to restrict access (Schools' Collection 0777: 192). A fire on the Curragh could not be quenched by the well water (Schools' Collection 0777: 190). There is an interesting corollary to this. Michael Forde went to get water from the Black Well that is the outflow for the spring. As it was not the main spring, this was probably deemed acceptable, but a vision of a tall figure dressed in black persuaded him not to repeat the action, as Father Moore appeared as a warning (Local information: Betty O'Shea). The three stones in the well are said to have come from Father Moore's house, demolished by the landowner and consequently used to build stables. The stones persistently jumped out of the wall, causing the horses within to rear up and finally causing the perpetrator to kill himself. His family returned them to the well (Jackson 1979-80, 142-3).

The well was re-furbished in 1952 and a shrine to the Virgin Mary was added. The area was walled and paved. Devotions at the well follow parallel paths of attachment to the official church with Mass being said there since 1980 and the prayer group and pilgrimage as mentioned above. However, Foley mentions possible clashes that occur amongst groups using the well where some do not conform to expected norms. Travellers have their own unique practice at Father Moore's, 'bathing their children as a preventative early life cure' (2014, 8), which is reminiscent of the early use of wells for baptism, ensuring re-birth and spiritual health. Notes found at the well asking for healing, indicate the very personal emotional investment of individual pilgrims but also financial investment exists in donations which are used for maintenance with the residue being sent to charities by the committee, thus extending the meaning



**KE074** - Father Moore's Well, Rathbride: pilgrims Christy Downey, Lily Downey and Seamus Heffernan making the round

## Section 5 Conclusions

**Holy wells, as demonstrated by Father Moore's, are an example of living ritual. This ritual, although using forms of prayer and supplication to supernatural beings that emanate from traditional Christianity, are not limited by the walls of buildings, but are practised in natural landscape settings.**

The acts of ritual are sensory: walking, chanting, touching stations, drinking or rubbing on the well water. The process is embodied, and by its very nature becomes curative by lowering stress levels. Although the basic rituals of rounding and rag trees are universal to holy wells, there are infinite differences in detail which are very much dependent on the grassroots input of pilgrims themselves.

Whether perceived as integral to an early medieval sacrament, an essential part of maintaining Catholic identity during the post-Reformation period of exclusion, or a more recent interpretation of a therapeutic landscape, holy wells have flowed through Ireland's spiritual history for seventeen hundred years. The final quote is from an appreciation of Father Moore's Well by Ronán Foley, c. 2008, but it could equally apply to any one of Kildare's Holy Wells and it is to be hoped that this Project will encourage the people of Kildare to gather the stories of their own wells:

While history often seems to be written about and for famous or wealthy people, it is lived and experienced by much larger numbers of ordinary people, who to me seem to be just as, if not more, important. In Ireland and in settings like holy wells in particular, it is precisely the stories of the well, the legends, the cures, the pisreógs and dinnseanchas (place myths) which make them what they are and which deepen the significance of a place in people's lives.

 <http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/2988>



KE033 - St Patrick's Well, Killashee

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**Swift, C.**, 'Brigid, Patrick, and the kings of Kildare, A.D.640-850', **W. Nolan & T. McGrath (eds)**, Kildare History and Society (Dublin: 2006) 97-127.

**Weldon, A. A.**, 'A slight sketch of Grangemellon and the story of St Leger's castle', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, I (1892) 95-101.

**Whitfield, N.**, 'A suggested function for the holy well', **A. Minnis & J. Roberts (eds)**, Text, image interpretation: studies in Anglo-Saxon literature and its insular context: in honour of Eamonn Ó Carragáin (Turnhout: 2009) 495-513.

**Wilde, W.** The beauties of the Boyne and its tributary the Blackwater (Dublin: 1850).

**Schools collection accessed at:**  
<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes> (13.10.2021).

**National Monuments service:**  
<https://www.archaeology.ie/monuments-survey-ireland/historic-environment-viewer-application>.

**AFM:** Annals of the Four Masters



## ST COLUMB'S WELL (KE001)



**SMR number:**  
KD011-003

**Townland:**  
Newtown (Leixlip)

**Barony:**  
North Salt

**Co-ordinates:**  
701090 736749

**Parish:**  
Leixlip

**Extant:**  
No/Cartographic

**Description of site:**

SMR: The well was situated 'in a big field called the 'Sileacain , a rill' (Jackson 1979-80, 160; Schools' Collection: Volume 0773 Page 209) but was subsequently flooded and was no longer visited. It lay near the bottom of a short, steep, east-facing valley slope, now overgrown with briar and thorn, through which a small stream flows S and across which a modern bridge has been erected immediately to the N of the site.

**Form of well:**

No visible trace remains.

**Saint:**

Colum Cille

**Pattern day:**

August (although Colum Cille's feast 9th June,)

**Cure:**

Sore eyes and faces

**Custom:**

Tying a scapular medal to a nearby tree.

Long ago a man tried to burn down the bush beside the well but as he began, lights began to flash around, so he hanged himself on another tree beside the well and no one is supposed to take a stick from that tree (Jackson 1979-80, 160, No 69).

**Associated sites:**

'On the townland called Newtown...there is a holy well, dedicated to St Columkill; the church of St Columb may have formerly stood in its vicinity' (Fitzgerald 1899, 396). The church has not been located. A holy tree to which above medals were tied, is no longer extant (KD011-003001).

**Cartography:**

All historic maps: 'St Columb's well'

**History:**

'1463. In this year it was enacted by parliament that the church of St Columb...should be annexed to the monastery of the Blessed virgin (KD011-034), near Leixlip' (Fitzgerald 1899, 395).

**Relationship to boundaries:**

On parish boundary, Leixlip and Confey. Close to barony boundary to W, North Salt and Newcastle.

**Access, Signage and Maintenance:**

Non-extant

**References:**

Fitzgerald, F. (ed.), 'Leixlip Castle', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 2,7 (1899) 393-406; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## SPA WELL (KE002)



**SMR number:**  
KD011-007

**Townland:**  
Leixlip

**Barony:**  
North Salt

**Co-ordinates:**  
699392 736655

**Parish:**  
Leixlip

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

At the N foot of a short, moderately steep slope on the W bank of the Royal Canal.

**Survey:**

Was used as a halting site, old electricity cables still visible. Local Tidy Towns committee clear site regularly.

**Form of well:**

SMR: A large, square, water-filled pool (L 9m, W 9m) is open towards the NW and NE but is enclosed by well-built, mortared stone walling on SE and SW. According to Le Chéile (2001) it is a warm spring. Survey (Pegley 2008-9) recorded 17°C.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

W c.6m, 3.6m high straight brick wall on east side. Rest of wall semi-circular. Water depth, 0.4-0.5m. Not safe to venture in. Wall rusty colour above water level, water very dirty looking a lot of rubbish strewn about very neglected area. This survey has separate water-filled pool with no measurements. A bathing area with stone steps.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

Located off the main canal pathway, onto a rough trackway and set into slight hollow, with high stone walls SE and SW of well. Water still flowing, rusty red in colour. Well is hexagonal in shape, with cut stone edges and below the edges a cut-stone gently sloping surround three courses deep. Has run-off to S. No evidence of second bathing pool.

**Saint:**

Not associated with any saint.

**Pattern day:**

August. According to Anthologia Hibernia 1794, 1,200 people visited the well on patron day (Jackson 1979-80, 160, No 68).

**Cure:**

It is associated with a cure for sore eyes.

**Custom:**

Rags are sometimes left on the bushes and briars around it.

Site visit, September 2021: No signs of offerings or rag trees. Not in use as holy well.

**Schools' Collection:**

Volume 0773, Page 210:

The monks and the students from the monastery used to pray at the well. One of the students had sore eyes and he prayed at the well that his eyes might get better. He put some of the water on his eyes and by the time he reached the monastery he could see perfectly.

Jackson 1979-80, 160, No. 68:

A small worm lived in the scum on the top of the pond and people used to put it between two pieces of cloth and rub it to their eyes as a cure for weak eyes. Some people left the pieces of cloth on the briars beside the well, but others didn't as there was no saint associated with the well.



**Associated sites:**

Holy bushes as above and supposedly a monastery near it. Neither located.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Spa Well', 25 in 'Spa Well (Chalybeate)', Third Ed: 'Spa Well (Chalybeate)'

**Relationship with boundaries:**

300m S of parish border between Leixlip and Confey.

**Access, Signage and Maintenance:**

Accessible to public but overgrown and no clear path. Sign on canal path. Moderately good condition, but drink cans and litter around.

**Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 22 September 2021.

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161;  
Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## SHAUGHLIN'S WELL (KE003)



**SMR number:**  
KD006-001

**Co-ordinates:**  
698959 738083 (These are co-ordinates for Shaughlin's Well on modern OSI and for dot on Second Edition. SMR has given co-ordinates for the more modern St Brigid's Well which are 698865 738061)

**Townland:** Sion  
**Barony:** North Salt

**Parish:** Laraghbryan  
**Extant:** Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: On a W-facing slope in undulating tillage. Jackson (1979-80, 160, No 67) says the well is situated in a large earthwork. This author: There is no earthwork on the historic maps, but she may be referring to a ring ditch, 9m dia (KD006-021), 100m to the NW of Shaughlin's Well.

**Form of well:**

SMR: The well is dry, its location defined by an overgrown, circular area (dia 5m, enclosed by iron railings). Site visit, September 2021: No public access. Strong metal fences barring way.

**Name:**

'There is a well called Shaughlin's well...(which) was formerly frequented' (Herity 2002, 1-2)

**Saint:**

Sechnaill (Sechnaill)

**Pattern day:**

St Sechnaill (possibly) 27th November.

**Cure:**

'Many miraculous cures effected' (Herity 2002, 1-2).

**Custom:**

Local tradition of it being named after Maelsechlainn, the Clann Colmán king who drowned the viking leader, Tuirgeis (845 AU). Fitzgerald makes the suggestion that it is named after St Sechnaill (as in Dunsoughlin, Co Meath) (1903, 28) Near Shaughlin's Castle and Shaughlin's Glen. There was an iron hoop appended to a chain at it for the use of those who frequented it (Jackson 1979-80, 159-60).

**Associated sites:**

Holy tree

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Shaughlin's Well', 25 in: 'Shaughlin's Well' shown on stream, Third Ed: 'Shaughlin's Well'.

Modern OSI map records both St Brigid's Well and Shaughlin's Well, but SMR gives co-ordinates for the more recent St Brigid's Well. Shaughlin's Well 100m to NE of Brigid's Well.

History: Fitzgerald (1903, 28) says the well was named in a County Dublin Exchequer inquisition of 1557 as being 'in the possession of Thomas Luttrell, of Luttrellstown.'

**Relationship to boundaries:**

Laraghbryan and Confey parish border is 200m to E.

**Access, Signage and Maintenance:**

No public access. Private land with formidable barriers.

**Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 22 September 2021.

**References:**

Fitzgerald, W., 'Carton', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, Vol 4, No 1 (1903, 28) 1-34; Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9)

The Survey (Pegley 2008-9) describes a St Brigid's Well (all description in this section from Pegley 2008-9)

**Co-ordinates:**

698880 738056 (inventory author: These are the SMR co-ordinates given for Shaughlin's Well which lies 100m to the NE and has co-ordinates as above, based on Third Edition and modern OSI map)

'newly-created, beside Shaughlin's Well' which is 100m to NE.

**Form of well:**

New, small, round, basin (made in China) is c. 1.3m off the ground. Water in basin hand deep and divided in half. Water is brought to the basin by pump. Name plaque on north wall of site. Well newly relocated from field lying to the north of present Well, ca 1997/8 and work finished in 2000. Gravel walkway down to well with railings around new wall.

**Cures:**

Possible cures in the past were for headaches & sore throats.

**Custom:**

West of Shaughlin's Well, farmer found a kind of 'sleeper beam' in field, when he took up beam old coins and metals were stuck to it (which are gone now), and under beam was the spring/holy well, which was piped to present site (This author: I think this story refers to the original Shaughlin's well which would have had coins and mementoes)

**Other information:**

'On top of hill was an old windmill' (This author: I believe this is the 'windpump', referring to the SW dot on Third Edition: 698023 738079) 'Well water was pumped up from the original well (ie Shaughlin's) & gravity fed down. Original well probably artisan. Original well in field now covered. Also known as Shaughlin's Glen' (This author: Shaughlin's Glen appears to be to the south on historic maps)



## NUN'S WELL (KE004)



**SMR number:**  
KD006-011

**Townland:**  
Carton Demesne

**Barony:**  
North Salt

**Co-ordinates:**  
696451 759173

**Parish:**  
Laraghbryan

**Extant:**  
Unknown

**Description of site:**

SMR: Dense vegetation cover, could not be located 1985.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

On gated housing estate, with no access.

**Associated sites:**

Possible nunnery 240m to NNE. The OSL (Herity 2002, 18) records it as 'an old well which belonged to a Nunnery (KD006-007003) that was there formerly'. Three holy wells (see KE005 and KD 006 below) are in this townland and there are two ecclesiastical enclosures south of the River Rye and Canal: Donaghmore (KD006-005002) and Kilmacredock Upper (KD011-002) 3.2km to the SE.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: Not marked, 25in and Third Ed: 'Nun's Well'.

**Relationship with boundaries:**

The whole of Carton Demesne, is on the border between North Salt and Deese Upper baronies which is also the boundary between Kildare and Meath.

**Access, Signage and Maintenance:**

No public access. On housing estate with locked gates.

**Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 22 September 2021.

**References:**

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002).

## BRIDE'S WELL (KE005)



**SMR number:**  
KD006-015

**Townland:**  
Carton Demesne

**Barony:**  
North Salt

**Co-ordinates:**  
696361 737775

**Parish:**  
Laraghbryan

**Extant:**  
Covered

**Description of site:**

SMR: In gently undulating deciduous woodland on Carton Demesne near the S bank of the Rye Water River.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Area maintained as a golf course with wild grasses towards the nearby river.

**Form of well:**

SMR: The site of the well is occupied by a large, covered sump (dia 6m).

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Large pond recently cleaned out. May have been an ornamental pond, stones in water look like river stones. Large pipe pumps water elsewhere.

**Saint:**

Brigid

**Associated sites:**

500m N of Donaghmore Church with ecclesiastical enclosure where an ogham stone found (KD006-005002). The inscription was NETTAVRECC [KOI] MAQI MUCCOI TRENALUGGO (Macalister 1945, 130-1). McManus (1991, 66, 79) suggested that there was enough room for a more likely NETTAVROICC or NETTAVROEC and that Macalister's KOI was doubtful. An ecclesiastical enclosure was revealed by AP at Kilmacredock (KD011-002001), the neighbouring townland to Donaghmore.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Bride's Well', 25 in: 'Bride's Well', Third Ed: 'Bride's Well'.

**Relationship to boundaries:**

400m N of boundary of Donaghmore parish and close to it Kilmacredock parish. The whole extent of Carton Demesne is on the border between North Salt and Deese Upper which is also the boundary between Kildare and Meath.

**References:**

Macalister, R.A.S. Corpus inscriptionum insularum celticarum (Dublin: 1945); McManus, D., A guide to ogam (Maynooth: 1991); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

## ST PATRICK'S WELL (KE006)



**SMR number:**  
KD006-013

**Townland:**  
Carton Demesne

**Barony:**  
North Salt

**Co-ordinates:**  
694802 738385

**Parish:**  
Laraghbryan

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: In a slight hollow on a gentle W-facing pasture slope at the W edge of Carton Demesne.

**Site visit:**

September 2021. Located north of the 'Lime Walk' trackway running through Carton Demesne golf course. Access is only possible by walking downhill through overgrown, rough area along edge of golf greens – caution advised.

**Form of well:**

SMR: A spring well is enclosed by a small, square, tent-like structure (L1.75m N-S; W 1.7m; H 1.5m) Of well-built mortared stone, with a pointed arched opening (W 0.7m) facing N. Three stone steps lead down to the water surface.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Well-built in Gothic style in good condition. Four stone steps leading down to well.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

Well in good condition overall, although structure is covered in ivy, and set within overgrowth. Water still visible in base of well

**Saint:**

St Patrick

**Pattern day:**

17th March

**Associated sites:**

Not in use, no rag trees or offerings (2021)

**Cartography:**

First Ed: not marked, 25 in: 'St Patrick's Well', Third Ed: 'St Patrick's Well'.

**Relationship to boundaries:**

The whole of Carton Demesne, is on the border between North Salt and Deese Upper which is also the boundary between Kildare and Meath.

**Access, Signage and Maintenance:**

There is no signage and no trackway to well. Well in good condition but overgrown with ivy and not maintained. Staff of the hotel were generally unaware of presence of well.

**Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 22 September 2021.

**References:**

Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

## TUBBERMOHOCCA (KE007)



**SMR number:**  
KD005-022

**Townland:**  
Kilcock

**Barony:**  
Ikeathy and Oughterary

**Co-ordinates:**  
688688 739800

**Parish:**  
Kilcock

**Extant:**  
Covered/dry.

### **Description of site:**

Located NE of the square in Kilcock village.

### **Form of well:**

SMR: The well was apparently covered in the mid-nineteenth century (O'Donoghue 1999, 170-71). It was re-discovered recently when a man-hole cover was lifted to reveal a circular well (dia. c. 0.8m), several metres deep and lined with small, undressed mortared stone walling. The well was dry on day inspected.

### **Saint:**

Possibly dedicated to the sixth century Coga/Cocca, a hypocoristic (pet name, the 'Mo' in the well name is similar: 'My Cocca') form of Cóch, perhaps uterine sister of Cóemgen of Glendalough (Shearman 1879, 47, 150 Note 2). However, Ó Riain does not mention this relationship to Cóemgen but does refer to a tradition that she was Cóch, the foster mother of Ciaráin of Saigher (2011, 178). Cóch was Cóch of Kilcoe, of the Corcu Loígde of West Cork. Although this Munster connection seems distant there are several Corcu Loígde saints in the neighbouring South Dublin/ North Wicklow area (Boazman 2014, 442; MacShramháin 1996, 121).

### **Pattern Day:**

Local tradition recalls a pattern day at the well on the 6th of June (pers. comm. Mr Michael Durkan). Ó Riain (2011, 178) gives this as the feastday of Coga/Cocca.

### **Associated sites:**

'Cell-choca, the monastery of the sixth century virgin, Cocha (Chuacha)' was located at Kilcock (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 389). No visible surface trace of the monument survives, but a later medieval church (KD005-002001) may occupy its site. The Martyrology of Donegal mentions a teampall related to the saint (Todd & Reeves 1864, 378). This was a word used of stone churches in the tenth-century annals.

### **Cartography:**

Not named on historic maps.

### **History:**

AFM 774: 'The battle of Cell Coic in which Fearghal son of Dunghal son of Faelchu, lord of Fortuatha Laigen was slain by the king Donnchadh'. Fearghal was of the Uí Garrchon, a branch of the Dál Messin Corb, who occupied this area in the fifth century (Mac Shamhráin 2011, 193).

### **Relationship to boundaries:**

Kilcock next to barony border, Ikeathy and Oughterary with Deese Upper. Also, boundary between Kildare and Meath (this is in the cantred of Offelan, Uí Fáeláin)

### **References:**

Boazman, G. Theme and Variations, Christianity and regional landscapes in early medieval Ireland (Unpublished PhD thesis, University College Cork: 2014); Gwynn, A. & Hadcock, R. N., Medieval religious houses: Ireland (Harlow:1970); Mac Shamhráin, A., 'Uí Máil and Glendalough', C. Doherty, L. Doran, M. Kelly (eds), Glendalough, City of God (Dublin: 2011) 183-210; Ó Riain, P., A dictionary of Irish saints (Dublin: 2011); O'Donoghue, C., 'Holy Wells', S. Cullen (ed.), Unity in division: a history of Christianity in Kilcock & Newtown (1999) 169-175; Shearman, J.F., Loca Patriciana. An identification of localities, chiefly in Leinster, visited by St Patrick (Dublin: 1879); Todd, J.H. & Reeves, J. (eds), The Martyrology of Donegal: a calendar of the saints of Ireland (Dublin: 1864).

## ST PATRICK'S WELL (KE008)



**SMR number:**  
KD 004-031004

**Townland:**  
Killeighter

**Barony:**  
Ikeathy and Oughterary

**Co-ordinates:**  
683514 742499

**Parish:**  
Cloncurry

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: Located 6m to the S of a church (KD004-031002) at the N end of a graveyard (KD004-031003).

**Form of Well:**

SMR: The spring well occupies an oval area (int. dia. 2.8m EW; 1.9m NS; 0.4m D) defined by a mortared stone wall which does not rise above ground level, with three shallow stone steps leading down from the N. A culverted pipe runs N to feed a stock watering trough abutting the external face of the graveyard wall. It was re-furbished in 1993, using 'dressed stone from the nearby church' (O'Donoghue 1999, 171).

**Site visit, September 2021:**

Access point to graveyard closed.

**Name:**

Mentioned in OSL (Herity 2002, 30)

**Saint:**

St Patrick (Jackson 1979-80, 150) says St Brigid, but the seventeenth-century list calls it S. Patricii (see History below)

**Pattern Day:**

It was visited traditionally on St Patrick's Day and the custom was revived in the 1970s when a pilgrimage to the ecclesiastical site and the well took place (O'Donoghue 1999, 171).

**September 2021:**

According to the Killeighter Graveyard Group on Facebook a prayer service takes place on St Patrick's Day.

**Cure:**

it was visited for headache cures (Jackson 1979-80, 150, No 22) and eye ailments (O'Donoghue 1999, 171). For headaches the water is applied to the forehead and the Our Father recited and the headache will go away.

**Associated sites:**

Within an ecclesiastical enclosure, which has ruins of later medieval church. A holy tree (KD004-031005) stands immediately to the S.

**Cartography:**

Not marked on the historic maps.

**History:**

'ó Chillin íchtar Thire' (Gwynn 1906, 242); 1629-44: 'Capella de S. Patricii de Killieghtherhyr' (d hÓir 1966-67. 33)

**Relationship to boundaries:**

Next to barony border of Ikeathy and Oughterary and Deece Upper and county border of Kildare /Meath.

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

On private land and not accessible to the public. Killeighter Graveyard Group (Facebook page) receive funding from Kildare County Council to carry out maintenance.





**Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 22 September 2021.

**References:**

d hÓir, É, 'Bhuire Cill sheanchas faci Fhairche cill Dara', *Dinnseanchas* 2, 29-30; Gwynn, E.D., *The Metrical Dindseanchas*, Vol. 4 (Dublin: 1906); Herity, M. (ed.), *Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare* (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; O'Donoghue, C., 'Holy Wells', S. Cullen (ed.), *Unity in Division: a history of Christianity in Kilcock and Newtown* (1999) 169-175.

## ST BRIGID'S WELL (KE009)



**SMR number:**  
KD004-024

**Townland:**  
Kilbrook

**Barony:**  
Ikeathy and Oughterary

**Co-ordinates:**  
681699 741246

**Parish:**  
Cloncurry

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: On a very gentle W slope in tillage and marked by the stump of an elm tree.

**Form of well:**

SMR: In 1985 a small, square, unploughed area (2m x 2m) contained the well which occupied a small square water-filled area (1m x 1m) defined by stone walling below ground level (SMR file). By 1995 it had been covered by wire mesh and light timbers According to Le Chéile (2001) it is a warm spring and a temperature of 23°C was recorded.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Depth 0.18m at edges and for 1m in. A large shallow pond in a gravel bowl, with a run-off stream, c. 1m wide, narrowing to 0.50m and widening again to 1m. Eventually reached a large pond, covered in duck weed with bullrushes of which at the far end was another run-off stream.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

on private land with no clear right of way.

**Name:**

By 1886, it was known as '' (Comerford 1886 II, 162)

**Saint:**

Brigid

**Associated sites:**

Townland to south, Ballynakill, with possible AP ecclesiastical enclosure KD004-037, unproven by trial trenching but no other church in townland. There is a cartographic enclosure, a sub circular field division, possibly 400m dia. Logainm has it as Coill in Irish (ie wood, in a few cases the 'kil' toponym is 'wood' and not 'church') but translates it as 'church'.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: not marked, 25 in: 'St Brigid's Well', Final Edition: 'St Brigid's Well'.

**History:**

Logainm.ie: Coill Bhaile na Airiún (Kilbrook) which is referred to in the 1540 reference 'Archdeacontown in Cloncurry' (White 1943, 37). This seems to suggest it was ecclesiastical land perhaps belonging to a now non-extant foundation at Ballynakill.

**Relationship to boundaries:**

Borders on barony boundary between Ikeathy and Oughterary and Moyfenrath Lower. Also, on county boundary of Meath/Kildare.

**Access, signage, and maintenance:**

no public access, private land. No signage

**Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 22 September 2021.

**References:**

Comerford, M., Collections relating to the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin, Vol. II (Dublin: 1886); McEvoy, T., (ed.), 'Hot springs and holy wells' (2001), Historical Extracts from Le Chéile, 1974-2001 (Clane Local History Group); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); White, N., Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions, 1540-41 (London: 1943).

## FURAN WELL (KE010)



**SMR number:**  
KD004-023

**Co-ordinates:**  
677989 737808

**Townland:**  
Dunfiirth (listed incorrectly by  
Jackson as Clonagh)

**Parish:**  
Dunfiirth

**Barony:**  
Carbury

**Extant:**  
No

**Form of well:**

SMR: No longer visible at ground level, but the ground in this area is wet underfoot. A small fenced-off area at the S corner of the moated site may be the location of the covered well or spring.

**Name:**

'Furan Well': the name being derived from 'fuar' (cold). See also 'Fuaran' holy well in Boghall townland (KD031-001; KE046 this catalogue).

**Saint:**

This site was regarded locally as a holy well (Jackson 1979-80, 147, No 8).

**Associated sites:**

Dunfiirth church, 700m to NW (KD004-005001). Well lies on W corner of moated site (KD004-12), other moated site 120m to SW (KD004-30).

**Cartography:**

First ed: 'Furan Well', not on 25 in or Final Edition.

**History:**

1302 Dún Firchirt (Sweetnam 1886), 'Dunfitherid' (Mills, Wood & Langdon (eds), Vol I, 413); 1629 'Ecclesia de Dunfeart' (d hÓir).

**References:**

d hÓir, É, 'Bhuire Cill sheanchas faci Fhairche cill Dara', Dinnseanchas 2, 29-30; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Mills, Wood & Langman (eds), Calendar of Justiciary Rolls Ireland, 1295-1307, Vol 1 (London: 1905-c.1958); Sweetnam, H. S. (ed.), Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1302-1307 (London:1886).



## TOBERNAGRIDDLE (KE011)



**SMR number:**  
KD004-007

**Townland:**  
Gorteen

**Barony:**  
Carbury

**Co-ordinates:**  
675754 738894

**Parish:**  
Dunferth

**Extant:**  
No

**Description of site:**

SMR: On the E bank of the NE flowing Fear English River in improved pastureland.

**Form of well:**

SMR: No longer visible at ground-level and not remembered locally as a holy well.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Too wet to get close. Possibly 3m in diameter, roughly recently re-dug, earth piled round. Artesian spring in rough gorse field close to esker and gravel drumlins. Previously quarried.

Not convinced that what I was shown was the SMR. Will need to look at other maps to confirm. Landowner is convinced but he arrived there in the 1970s. Students from NUIM were brought to see the 'well' and stream in the past I was told.

**Associated sites:**

Burial (KD004-042) exhumed by digger, 500m NE. May have been others present. Cemetery settlement of Johnstown, 461 burials, 1.9km to NE (Clarke & Carlin 2008).

**Cartography:**

First Ed, 25 in, Third Ed: 'Tobernagriddle'. However, annotation on First Edition to SW of SMR co-ordinates and to annotation on 25 in and Third Ed.

**Relationship to boundaries:**

Directly on parish boundary Dunfeith/Johnstown. 1.5km SW of barony and county boundary, Kildare/Carbery and Meath/Moyfenrath.

**References:**

Clarke, L., and Carlin, N., 'Living with the dead at Johnstown 1: an enclosed burial, settlement and industrial site', Carlin, Clarke & Walsh (eds) *The archaeology of life and death in the Boyne floodplain* (Dublin: 2008); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

## LADY WELL (KE012)



**SMR number:**  
KD002-002

**Townland:**  
Brackagh

**Barony:**  
Carbury

**Co-ordinates:**  
663884 740073

**Parish:**  
Carrick

**Extant:**  
Yes

### **Description of site:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): Very close to roadside of R 140. Between Ballyboggan Bridge, over Boyne River and Glynn crossroads. Below the level of the road but overgrown and difficult to access.

### **Form of well:**

SMR: The well is contained in a circular (int. diam 1.5m), semi-subterranean, stone-built well house (H 2.4m) which has a flat, concrete roof. A plain, lintelled doorway (W 0.8m, H 1.3m) and steps at W give access. The well was dry on the day of the visit.

### **Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Semi-circular roof, c.1.9m x 2.1m, surround 0.35m H. there are 2 to 3 steps down to the well. Well building 2.17m x 1.6m. The well was dry.

### **Name:**

Lady Well (Herity 2002)

### **Saint:**

Mary

### **Pattern day:**

'...at which stations were performed on Lady-Day in Harvest' (Herity 2002, 34). Pattern held there in August (Jackson 1979-80, 145, No 6; Comerford 1886, II,71).

### **Custom:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9) Woman living nearby was told spirits/ghosts of those who died trying to cross the river are seen/felt around well.

### **Associated sites:**

A second holy well (KD002-003; KE013) c. 500m to the SSW.

### **Cartography:**

All historic maps: 'Lady Well'

### **Relationship to boundaries:**

Just 200m S of barony and county boundary, Carbery and Moyfenrath, Kildare and Meath.

### **References:**

Comerford, M., Collections relating to the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin, Vol. II (Dublin: 1886); Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).



## TOBER-AULIN (KE013)



**SMR number:**  
KD02-003

**Townland:**  
Brackagh

**Barony:**  
Carbury

**Co-ordinates:**  
663810 739615

**Parish:**  
Carrick

**Extant:**  
Unknown

**Description of site:**

SMR: On the NE bank of a small, NW flowing tributary of the River Boyne.

**Form of well:**

A small bridge (built 1849) immediately to the W contains a short, curved section of wall which is believed locally to define the limits of the well (Jackson 1979-80, 145, No 3).

**Name:**

Tober-aulin (beautiful well) (Wilde 1850, 46)

**Associated sites:**

Lady well (KD002-004; KE012 this catalogue) c. 500m to the NNE. Burial ground 200m to SE (KD002-004)

**Cartography:**

'Toberall' on all historic maps.

**Relationship to boundaries:**

600m S of barony and county boundary, Kildare/Carbery and Meath/Moyfenrath.

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80)133-161;  
Wilde, W. The beauties of the Boyne and its tributary the Blackwater (Dublin: 1850).

## TOBERNAKILL (KE014)



**SMR number:**  
KD002-006

**Townland:**  
Grange West

**Barony:**  
Carbury

**Co-ordinates:**  
661289 737111

**Parish:**  
Carrick

**Extant:**  
Covered

**Description of site:**

SMR: At the W foot of a low rise, this overgrown, unenclosed spring well is the source of a small tributary which flows c. 180m NW to join the River Boyne. On Digital Globe is now in reclaimed field and small tributary not evident.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Local man said that the well had been covered when the Boyne was dredged and piped to the river.

**Form of well:**

Overgrown, unenclosed spring well.

**Pattern day:**

The monument was formerly the focus of a pattern on June 24th (Jackson 1979-80, No 4, p.145; Herity 2002).

**Associated sites:**

The 'kill' element of the well's name, suggests the presence of an ecclesiastical site, but none is recorded in the vicinity (see History).

**Cartography:**

All historic maps 'Tobernakill'

**History:**

1620: 'Killballigihie' (Inquisitions Lagen 37 J 1)

**Relationship to boundaries:**

200m S of barony and county boundary, Carbury and Moyfenrath Upper, Kildare and Meath. 200m from where the Yellow River flows into the Boyne (Comerford 1886, 71).

**References:**

Comerford, M., Collections relating to the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin, Vol. II (Dublin:1886); Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); Inquisitionum in officio rotulorum cancellariae Hiberniae asservatarum repertorium Vol.1 Laigen.

## TOBERCRO (KE015)



**SMR number:**  
KD002008

**Townland:**  
Carrick

**Barony:**  
Carbury

**Co-ordinates:**  
664024 736603

**Parish:**  
Carrick

**Extant:**  
No

**Description of site:**

SMR: On a completely overgrown roadside, near the foot of Carrick Hill. According to local information was culverted as a domestic water source in the 1960s.

**Form of well:**

'In the angle formed by the roads leading to Edenderry and Carbury, we find the Holy Well of Tober-Cro or Tober-cro-Neeve: the Well of the Holy Cross – a beautiful spring, shaded with flowering briars and wild white roses' (Comerford 1886, 71).

**Name:**

Tobercro (Comerford 1886, 71)

**Saint:**

Could be Cronán mac Cóemloga (hypochoristic Mo Chua) possible brother/half-brother Cóemgen Glendalough.

**Pattern day:**

If Cronán then Martyrology of Donegal gives feastday as 3 June the same as Cóemgen's dormitatio (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 215, Note 11, 116; O'Donovan 1864).

**Cure:**

There was a local tradition of veneration and cures at this well (Comerford 1886, 71; Jackson 1979-80, 145, No 5). Associated sites: Carrick medieval church and possible early medieval ecclesiastical enclosure 200m to N.

**Cartography:**

All historic maps name it as 'Tobercro'. On the 25in and Second Edition there appears to be a small rectangular shape, which must represent the well-housing.

**References:**

Comerford, M., History of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, Vol II (Dublin:1886); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80), 133-161; ); Mac Shamhráin, A., Church and polity in pre-Norman Ireland. The case of Glendalough (Maynooth: 1996); O'Donovan, J., (trans), Henthorn Todd, J.H., & Reeves, W., (eds), A calendar of the saints of Ireland (Dublin: 1864).



## TRINITY WELL (KE016)



**SMR number:**  
KD008-012

**Townland:**  
Demesne

**Barony:**  
Carbury

**Co-ordinates:**  
669448 734010

**Parish:**  
Ardkill/Carbury

**Extant:**  
Yes

### **Description of site:**

On level pasture c. 30m W of a small S-flowing stream.

### **Form of well:**

SMR: This spring well (D 0.6m) is enclosed by a small rectangular structure (L 2m N/S; W 1.8m) built of mortared stone with a vaulted roof (int H 1.8m), entered through an arched doorway (W 0.8m; H 1.8m) with red-brick jambs. The roof is unstable, and the surrounding area heavily poached by livestock.

### **Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Interior: Door opening, 0.8m x 1.8m. Well 1.54m x 1.42m. Depth (0.6m front to back 2.0m x 1.8m. Height of vaulted ceiling 1.8m.

The water is clear and still. In the well are some large rocks on a white sandy bottom where two used votive candles can be seen. The well itself, inside the stone structure, is beside the river which is lower.

### **Pattern day:**

Described by OSL (Herity 2002, 31) as 'frequented always on Trinity Sunday' ie the eighth Sunday after Easter. Jackson records a pattern on that day (1979-80, 145-6, No 7). 'Formerly people gathered at the well and the rosary was recited. After that everyone took a drink of water from the well. One person was handing out to the others. After this the people went to the 'pattern Cross' where there was music and dancing and games. The cross-roads at the entrance to Newberry Demesne is the 'Pattern Cross'. 'During the nineteenth century the pattern came in for some criticism for drunkenness and faction fighting' (ibid).

### **Schools':**

Volume 0771, Page 091

Faction fights used to take place and games of every sort. If a boy and a girl went to the pattern together and were seen dancing the old people said they would surely be married before the next Trinity Sunday. The cross where the road to Dublin branches off from the Carbury and Edenderry roads is called the pattern cross. All the dancing fighting and wrestling used to take place there.

'The faction fights were between the people of Carbury and the northwest and the people of Allen and Allenwood' (Jackson 1979-80. 145).

### **Cure:**

Pilgrims drink water which is said to be lucky.

### **Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Well maintained by a local group committed to its continued use. A mass was recently held there. Cure for eyes.

### **Custom:**

The well is said to be the source of the River Boyne (Fitzgerald 1917, 369), 'There is a legend that the landlord closed up the well not wanting to allow the people free access to the well. As a result of this the well came up in the drawing room of the big house. Eventually the well had to be opened and ever since the people are allowed to go to it any time of year to pray and get water' (Jackson 1979-80)

Another legend associated with the well is hidden treasure, although the treasure is not hidden at the well.

**Schools' collection:**

Volume 771, page 88:

There was a fair held in Carbury may and October, many years ago, Dancing used to take place on the street outside the present guards barracks. The door of Dunne;s public house used to be taken off the hinges for the step dancers, a man called Cooney who lived beyond the hill of Carbury was the best dancer.

The music was supplied by a piper called Myles O'Gorman who met his end in a very queer way. On Trinity Sunday he played his pipes for the boys and girls who were step dancing, someone in the crowd told about a crock of gold that was buried in the Hill of Carbury under a flat stone, myles said he would go and dig it up: he did so and when he had a big hole made, the ground opened up and swallowed him up and he was never heard of after.

Trinity Well is of pagan origin. The River Boyne rises in Trinity Well. It is said that the name Boyne or Boinne was also the name of a pagan queen who lived in a palace that stood on the site of Newberry Hall. Cairbre was the king's name and he would not allow anyone but himself and his three cup-bearers to get water from the well. Boinne went in spite of all warnings to the well, it overflowed and carried her on its waters to the sea'.

In 1979 the pattern still took place but the games were on the sports field and the dancing in the village hall (Jackson 1979-80, 146-7).

**Associated sites:**

Templedoath (the black church, KD00800-6001) lies one km WNW of Trinity Well and Carbury Hill, 150m in height (KD008-004), excavated in the 1930s, with three barrows, yielding cremations and subsequent inhumation burials facing SW, and thought to be Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age. It lies 1.2km NW of the well. A further possibly late medieval parish church lies 1.4km to the NNW, containing many early modern memorials to the Colley family, landlords of the Newberry demesne.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Trinity Well'; 'source of the River Boyne'; 25 in and Final Edition: 'Trinity Well'

**History:**

1305: Calendar of Justiciary Rolls Ireland, Vol II, 29: 'Ballymain'. Became Demesne between 1660 and 1744. Survey (Pegley 2008-9): The site, beside the river Boyne, is within the Newbury Demesne which formerly part of the Carbury Castle lands which incorporated the village of Carbury and the church. The owner is concerned that the house and demesne does not have a protection order. See separate short history. Richard Robinson farmer and owner of the demesne in 2008. Blind and aged 88. House sold c 2010 and completely restored to a very high standard.

**Relationship to boundaries:**

The demesne area adjoins the parish border between Carbury and Ardkill.

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

Researcher contacted owner through gate-phone. Not prepared to let anyone in to see the well without prior appointment. Local Information says well in good order and visits allowed on pattern day.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, September 2021

**References:**

Calendar of Justiciary Rolls Ireland (Dublin: 1905); Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## TRINITY WELL (KE017)



**SMR number:**  
KD008-034

**Townland:**  
Derrinturn (Doire an  
Soirn: the oakwood  
of the furnace)

**Parish:**  
Ardkill  
**Barony:**  
Carbury

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Co-ordinates:**  
670550 732640

### Description of site:

In a graveyard immediately N of a nineteenth-century church (built 1809)  
Survey (Pegley 2008-9): Situated within a highly maintained area beside the chapel with the graveyard behind.

### Form of well:

SMR: A small, circular well (int. dia. 0.9m) is enclosed below ground level by a well-built limestone wall with six steps at W leading down to the water (d 1.2m) and is roofed by a single stone slab at ground level. A plaque records its restoration in 1999.

### Survey (Pegley 2008-9):

Well 1m wide. Depth of water 30-35cm. The water is still and clear with stones and leaf litter in the bottom.

### Site visit, September 2021:

Found well as described in SMR and 2008 Survey.

### Name:

Trinity Well, Fr Byrne's Well, nineteenth-century priest who blessed the well (Jackson 1979-80, 144-5, No 1).

### Pattern day:

Traditionally visited on Trinity Sunday (eight weeks after Easter)

### Cure:

Toothache

### Custom:

Schools' Collection: Volume 0771 Page 091:

There is a well in the chapel yard called Father Byrne's well. It is supposed to have been blessed by that holy priest and its water cures toothache. Father Byrne's remains lie interred under the floor of the present Catholic Church, his hat is in the possession of a local family and it is said to cure headache.

### Associated sites:

Demesne Trinity Well 1.7km to NW (KE016 this catalogue).

### Cartography:

First Ed: Not marked, 'RC Chapel', 25in: 'Well', 'Trinity R C Church', Third Ed: 'Trinity R.C. church'.

### Access, signage, maintenance:

In graveyard so access easy. The well has a plaque: 'Father Byrne's Well' and is well-maintained.

### Site visit:

Desmond Travers, 20 September 2021

### References:

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161;  
Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>



## ST GORM'S WELL (KE018)



**SMR number:**  
KD008-035

**Townland:**  
Derrinturn (Doire an  
Soirn: the oakwood  
of the furnace)

**Parish:**  
Ardkill  
**Barony:**  
Carbury

**Extant:**  
No

**Co-ordinates:**  
Unknown

**Description of site:**

The exact location of this monument is unknown (Jackson 1979-80, 145, No 2; Schools' Collection: Volume 0771 Page 091):

St. Gorm's well is in a field near the church. Its water is icy cold even on the hottest day in summer. Bubbles are seen on the surface of the well where the spring comes up like a spa. I never heard if its water cured any disease.

**Saint:**  
St Gorm

**Custom:**  
The well was reputed to never run dry.

**Cartography:**  
Not marked on historic maps.

**References:**  
Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161;  
The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## ST PETER'S WELL (KE019)



**SMR number:**  
KD009-024

**Townland:**  
Dunmurraghill (Dún Urchaille)

**Barony:**  
Ikeathy and Oughterany

**Co-ordinates:**  
681834 733117

**Parish:**  
Dunmurraghill

**Extant:**  
Yes

### **Description of site:**

On wet ground at the bottom of a pasture spur from which gravel was extracted in 1993 (SMR file). According to Le Chéile (2001) it is a warm spring.

### **Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Medium depression c. 4m x 5m size pond overgrown with watercress and duck weed leads to outflow stream. Flow evident but not measurable. Pond in a field cordoned off by wire between stakes.

### **Site visit, September 2021:**

The well is located along western base of hill (known as the Green Hill according to signage NE of the gate).

### **Form of well:**

(Pegley 2008-9) A poorly preserved, partially-collapsed, roughly triangular, stone-lined spring (L 1.2m, W1.1m, d 1.2m).

### **Site visit, September 2021:**

The well is surrounded by steel fencing and blocked by a low locked gate. It is very overgrown, therefore difficult to see form of well: it is possibly circular. Ivy covers the stonework of the well, although the stone may be in good condition below. The well is infilled with rubbish and three large, rounded stones are located around the eastern periphery of the well.

### **Name:**

Locally known as 'St Peter's Well'

### **Saint:**

St Peter

### **Pattern day:**

Probably 29 June (see St Peter's church below)

### **Cure:**

Apparently used as a domestic well not associated with cures. This author: The huge steep-sided enclosure, church, metalworking site and church also called St Peter's in next townland plus documentary evidence below indicate the importance of this site. Even if not associated with cures in living memory, then venerated as part of an Armagh complex (Swift 2006, 108).

### **Custom:**

Poor maintenance and overgrowth suggests not in use or visited.

### **Associated sites:**

Very substantial steep-sided enclosure (c. 70m ext diameter) about 40m E of well (KD009-023). Recorded by Fitzgerald (1912, 125): 'now being demolished by the road contractors for the sake of the gravel and named by the peasantry as Dún mBrochail'. 600m SW of the well is a graveyard called 'Reilicín'. This contained a church (KD009-011001). 'An old church stood here, the walls of which have been entirely pulled down' (Herity 2002, 25). No visible surface trace 1981 (SMR file). A metalworking site (KD009-012) lies 100m to the SE of previous church: furnace bottom, iron slag turned up in ploughing. 500m to ENE is another burial ground, labelled on 25in and Third Edition map but not in SMR. Fitzgerald refers to the Stone of Patrick, mentioned in the Book of Armagh (1912, 125).

1.6km to E is an early modern church and late medieval ruined church (KD009-014001), dedicated to St Peter, with pattern day 29 June. This is in Donadea (Domhnach Dhéa) townland in Donadea parish, By Ikeathy and Oughterary. Jackson places a well here (1979-80, 150) on the evidence of the Schools' Collection, Volume 074 Page 003-004:

Near Donadea Co Kildare there is a well called after St Patrick. It is at the bottom of the Green Hill. At this well Patrick baptised the people. Over the well hangs a haw bush and it is surrounded by stones. It is said many years ago that a woman lived near the well and prayed constantly and voices would answer her.

As the paragraph says near Donadea, it could very well refer to Dunmurraghill, which is at the bottom of a hill which Donadea is not. As for the saint, the informant would be much more familiar with St Patrick than St Peter.

#### **Cartography:**

First Ed: Not marked, 25 in: 'St Peter's Well' and the hill to SE 'St Peter's Hill', Third Ed: 'St Peter's Well' and the hill to SE 'St Peter's Hill'.

#### **History:**

AFM 837 Obit Domhnall son of Aedh, abbot of Druim Urchaille; Book of Armagh: 'perrexit ad fines Lageniensium hUrchaille, et posuit ibi Domum Martyrum quae sic vocatur; quae sita est super Viam Magnam in Valle, et est ibi Petra Patricii in via. Exit ad campum Lifi' 'The Domus Martyrum called elsewhere in the Book of Armagh a Martar Tech or Relic-House is still called the Reliceen' Fitzgerald (1912, 125; Bieler 1979, pt 51:2)).

#### **Relationship to boundaries:**

Very close to barony boundary of Clane and Ikeathy and Oughterary and parish boundary Dunmurraghill and Ballynafagh.

#### **Access, signage, maintenance:**

There is a public access gate located next to the farm gate with signage for St Peter's Well. However, a 'Beware of the Bull' sign does not encourage access. Overgrown and not maintained.

#### **Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 29 September 2021.

#### **References:**

Bieler, L., The Patrician texts in the Book of Armagh (Dublin: 1979); Fitzgerald, W., 'Miscellanea: Dunmurraghill', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 7,2 (1912) 125; Herity, M., (ed.) Ordnance Survey letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); McEvoy, T., (ed.), 'Hot springs and holy wells' (2001), Historical Extracts from Le Chéile, 1974-2001 (Clane Local History Group); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); Swift, C., 'Brigid, Patrick, and the kings of Kildare, A.D.640-850', W. Nolan & T. McGrath (eds), Kildare History and Society (Dublin: 2006) 97-127.; The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## LADY'S WELL (KE020)



**SMR number:**  
KD010-013001

**Townland:**  
Cowanstown

**Barony:**  
North Salt

**Co-ordinates:**  
689700 734043

**Parish:**  
Taghadoo

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: Lies in a graveyard (KD010-013002), 2m E of the E gable of the church (KD010-013).

**Form of well:**

SMR: A deep (D 1.95m), circular (dia 2m), stone-lined well of coursed, well-dressed stones has steps leading down to the water and is enclosed by a modern wall (h1.5m) with a piered gate and plaque commemorating its restoration which began in 1989.

**Survey: (Pegley 2008-9):**

Well measures 3m x 3.5m. Water is 1m deep but appears from the stain on the wall is at times deeper. Situated within a graveyard, this recently restored well (1989) is made of roughly cut stone. The top is castelled. It has an iron gate as well as a grill that sits approximately 1.50m below the top of the wall. Five steps lead from the gate to the water curving along the side of the wall.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

The circular stone-lined well is covered with a metal grate. A number of stone steps set into the inner W wall of the well lead down to the waterline, these are blocked by a small, locked metal gate.

**Saint:**

Blessed Virgin Mary

**Pattern day:**

15 August, Assumption (Herity 2002, 11)

**Cure:**

Survey: The cure ascribed to this well is for ears.

**Custom: Site visit, September 2021:**

No clear signs of use, no offerings or rag tree present.

**Associated sites:**

'This ruin is called by the people Lady's chapel' (Herity 2002,11). There appears to be a later church and 'Lady's Chapel' only occurs on the First Ed, suggesting that 'Lady's Chapel' might have been the remains of a previous church.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Holy Well', 'Lady's Chapel', 'Church', 25in and Third Ed: 'Holy Well', 'Church (in ruins)'

**History:**

Inquisitions James 1: mentioned in connection with Taghaboe: 'one other free chapel, chapel of ease, near Taghtoo, called Our Lady's Chapel'.

**Relationship to boundaries:**

Close to barony boundary between North Salt and Ikeathy and Oughterany which is also parish boundary between Taghadoo and Balraheen.

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

The well is accessible to the public who can enter the churchyard by ascending a number of stone steps. There are no paths leading through the graveyard to the well. There is a sign for Ladychapel cemetery on the main road but no sign for the holy well. The well is in good condition and maintained.

**Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 29 September 2021.

**References:**

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Inquisitionum in officio rotulorum cancellariae Hiberniae asservatarum, repertorium 1 (Dublin: 1826); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).



## UNNAMED (KE021)



**SMR number:**  
KD010-019

**Townland:**  
Newtownmacabe

**Barony:**  
North Salt

**Co-ordinates:**  
692325 732012

**Parish:**  
Taghadoe

**Extant:**  
No: pumphouse

**Description of site:**  
SMR: At the NW foot of an esker.

**Form of well:**  
SMR: Now a domestic water source, contained in a concrete pump house

**Associated sites:**  
Cist burial (KD010-020) and possible further inhumations 200m to E of well. Food bowl vessel found with cist, but no descriptions of other burials.

**Cartography:**  
First Ed: Not marked, 25 in: 'Toberanthawn', Third Ed: 'Toberanthawn'

**Relationship to boundaries:**  
100m from parish boundary of Taghadoe and Straffan

## ST PATRICK'S WELL (KE022)



**SMR number:**  
KD010-024

**Townland:**  
Ardrass Upper

**Barony:**  
North Salt

**Co-ordinates:**  
694259 731697

**Parish:**  
Killadoon

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: The well lies in a small thicket on the S-roadside at the N foot of St Patrick's Hill (OD 308ft). The area is flooded perhaps by the spring well itself.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Well roughly round 1m in diameter. Slab over the top creates a 1m interior space. Water depth is 0.45m.

Natural looking site with large stone slabs placed around the well at the end of a 3m path pebbled. Bottom sandy at the sides but black mud in the centre which bubbled on disturbance.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

A small metal arch topped with a cross sits on two wooden posts with the words 'Holy Well' attached and a metal structure forms a small, covered walkway into the well area.

**Form of well:**

A square area, (L 2m; W 2m) defined by ivy-covered dry-stone walls, open to the S, is visible under the water's surface and a large flag/lintel along the S may be part of a roof structure.

Omurethi (1911, 411) visited it in 1899 and described it as: 'circular, built round with masonry and partially covered by a large flagstone'.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

Two small stone steps lead down to the small circular well, making it unsuitable for all access. Water clearly visible and clean. A rectangular lintel stone sits over the SW edge of well

**Name:**

St Patrick's Well (Herity 2002, 14).

**Saint:**

St Patrick

**Pattern day:**

17 March (Jackson 1979-80, 159, No 65)

**Cure:**

Sore eyes (ibid)


**Custom:**

Place of pilgrimage: 'still frequented by pilgrims who hang up votive offerings of rags on an ancient thorn which overhangs the well' (Jackson 1979-80, 159). Although Jackson in 1979 describes it as dirty and unused with no rags.

Omurethi (1911, 413) 'The only tradition I heard on the spot was that it was built in a single night by our national saint and that next morning an evil-disposed pagan attempted to demolish it. He commenced by making a hole in the middle of the roof through which he fell and broke his neck. The remainder of the building escaped. The damage referred to was made good at the restoration'. This refers to the nearby St Patrick's Chapel (see associated sites).

**Schools' Collection:**

Volume 0774 Page 478 (Jackson references 0772, 38-9 but that is incorrect):



At Ardrass near Straffan there is a holy well named Saint Patrick's well. Old tradition says if you pay three visits to the well you get cured of your illness. Some leave medals, pennies and even pieces of string in thanksgiving. These can be seen hanging on the bushes over the well even to the present day.

Nearby is St. Patrick's Church which is supposed to have been built in one night. It is a remarkable piece of workmanship with its carved stone roof and is now protected by an iron railing. It is one of the smallest churches in Ireland.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

A small madonna was on the covering slab surrounded by votive candles.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

On passage into well, rosary beads hang from over-arching trees. On the stone lintel there are fresh flowers, holy statues and votive candles atop, indicating regular and recent use. A rag tree is located to the W of the well with a small number of ribbons attached.

**Associated sites:**

Holy tree (KD010-024001). 2011 SMR reports no trees with votive offerings. 'St Patrick's Bed' (KD010-036): although designated a natural feature on the SMR and thus not to be included, this bramble-filled hollow on the summit of St Patrick's Hill (93m), 200m S of the well, could represent part of a ritual round carried out by pilgrims. Saints' 'beds', originally representing the asceticism of the early Irish saints (eg Kevin's Bed at Glendalough), were a popular feature of pilgrimage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Carroll 1999). To the SE of the well 400m and 300m to the east of the 'bed' lies a fifteenth-century church, restored in 1888 (Omurethi 1911, 411) with a flagstone roof. This is surrounded by an extant ecclesiastical enclosure (KD011-015002), marked by a curving scarp, 0.5/0.3 in height, of c.100m diameter. Burials were discovered during the erection of iron railings round the church in the 1888 restoration (Ibid 413).

**Cartography:**

First Ed: Well and hill not marked, church 'St Patrick's Chapel', 25 in and Third Ed: 'St Patrick's Well', 'St Patrick's Chapel', 'St Patrick's Bed' in Gothic, 'St Patrick's Hill' in normal font.

**History:**

1328 Ardras (McNeill 1950, 198)

**Relationship to borders:**

The River Liffey, 700m to S, forms the barony border between North and South Salt and the parish boundary between Killadoon and Castledillon.

**Access, signage and maintenance:**

Access easy from main road through metal arch. Signage is 'Holy Well' attached to entrance metal structure. Well-maintained.

**Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 29 September 2021.

**References:**

Carroll, M.P., Irish pilgrimage: Irish wells and popular Catholic devotion (Baltimore: 1999); Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80), 133-161; McNeill, C. (ed.), Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register, 1172-1534 (Dublin: 1950); Omurethi, 'The stone roofed church at Ardrass', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 6,5 (1911), 410-4; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## UNNAMED (KE023)



**SMR number:**  
KD006-008

**Townland:**  
Lullymore East

**Barony:**  
Offaly East

**Co-ordinates:**  
Unknown

**Parish:**  
Lullymore

**Extant:**  
No

**Description of site:**

O'Leary (1907, 199): 'A Holy Well is stated to have been here (at the early ecclesiastical site KD012-006), formerly but it is no longer to be seen'. Ecclesiastical site at the E tip of Lullymore Island, a sub circular area (est. dia. 1700m) of higher ground in a broad expanse of bog, previously connected to higher ground to the N and S by two toghers (KD012-004001 and KD 012-007). The ecclesiastical enclosure is extant from W to N to E and had a diameter of c.200m. An inner enclosure of 25m contained the church now non-extant. Ten cross inscribed stones were found on site and a bullaun.

**Saint:**  
St Earc

**Pattern day:**  
Feast of St Earc, 2nd November (Ó Riain 2011, 286)

**History:**

St Earc, bishop of Lilach (Lullymore) and Slane, died 513 (AU). He was supposedly Patrick's judge and was based at Slane in Co Meath where his feast day, 2nd November, may echo previous rituals associated with Samhain and Newgrange. His association with Lullymore could be to do with the rivalry between Armagh and Kildare (Ó Riain 2011, 286). The Gall from Lilach died 730 (AU): he was Gall Cráibhtheach. Supposedly Áed Allen of the Northern Uí Néill, fleeing from defeat at the battle of the hill of Allen (c.728), took refuge at Lullymore and disguised as a cleric, dug the enclosure at for Gall Cráibhtheach which makes a further connection with Armagh. 748 (AT) records the obit of Cuan the anchorite of Lilach. By the seventeenth century Lullymore's patron was Patrick (Ó Riain 2011, 360).

**Relationship with boundaries:**

on parish and barony boundary: Lullymore/Kilmeage, Offaly West/Connell.

**References:**

Ó Riain, P., A Dictionary of Irish saints (Dublin: 2011); O'Leary, E., 'Notes on the place of King Laoghaire's death', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 5 (1907) 193-199.

## LADY WELL (KE024)



**SMR number:**  
KD014-022004

**Townland:**  
Whitechurch

**Barony:**  
Naas North

**Co-ordinates:**  
693044 727299

**Parish:**  
Whitechurch

**Extant:**  
No

### Description of site:

'About 50 perches (250m) from the old church (KD014-022001) to the West there was a holy well, which bore the name 'Lady Well' or 'Sunday Well' (I could not learn exactly what was the name it being nearly forgotten, as the well has not this long time been frequented, partly because a limestone quarry being opened near it exhausted almost all its waters. Within four yards of that part of the ruin called 'the Castle' (KD014-022001), there is another 'well' the denomination of which, if it ever had any, is now forgotten' (Herity 2002, 46). On the 25in and First Ed maps there is a quarry marked about 100m S of the church which could represent one well but the First Edition marks 'Lady Well' 20m to W of NW corner of graveyard.

### Form of well:

No visible surface trace.

### Saint:

Blessed Virgin Mary

### Associated sites:

A ruined later medieval church (KD014-022001) stands in NW corner of graveyard. It has a later tower attached to the W end (designated 'castle' on historic maps). Possible ecclesiastical enclosure (KD014-022002) illustrated cartographically on First Ed, c.100m diameter, and can be seen on AP (CUCAP BGM 76) as well as possibly associated field system to NW (KD014-022003). Large ringfort (70m) (KD014-024) on First Ed, 800 m to SW, non-extant.

### Cartography:

First Ed: 'Lady Well' 20m to W of NW corner of graveyard, 'Castle and Church'; 25in and Third Ed: Well not marked, 'Castle and church (in ruins)'.

### History:

1302 'Toolaghtyper' (Sweetnam 1886, 246); 1540 (White 1943, 156). Whitechurch is a name associated with the Cistercian order, recalling their white habits, so possibly this church was a possession of St Mary's, Dublin, refounded by the Cistercians in 1147.

### Relationship to boundaries:

Central to Whitechurch parish.

### References:

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Sweetnam, H. S. (ed.), Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1302-1307 (London, 1886); White, N., Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions, 1540-41 (London: 1943).

**SUNDAY'S WELL (KE025)**

**SMR number:**  
KD014-026009

**Townland:**  
Carrigeen

**Barony:**  
Clane

**Co-ordinates:**  
687700 727116

**Parish:**  
Clane

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: The well lies in level pasture c. 3m to the W of Clane motte (KD014- 026004)

**Form of well:**

SMR: It was enclosed in a concrete-roofed, rectangular structure (l 1.8m, w 0.8m, h 1m) of concrete blocks, open at the N end, from which a pipe draws water off for domestic use. This spring may have once fed the outer fosse of the adjoining motte. Unlawful work was carried out with a digger in 1980 and the concrete structure was flattened to level the ground (McEvoy 2014). According to Le Chéile (2001) it is a warm spring.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

At the base of the moat. Closed piped to nearby stream.

**Pattern day:**

As Sunday is a day of devotion, patterns not held at Sunday's wells? Palm Sunday (Le Chéile, 2001, 59)

**Custom:**

'This was formerly frequented as a holy well', (Herity 2002, 42). There is a nineteenth-century reference to a procession and pattern held at the well up to the late 1830s (Jackson 1979-80, 147, No 11)

**Associated sites:**

De Hereford motte (KD 014-026003), controlled crossing place of Liffey. Franciscan priory (KD014-0260035) 200m to NNE, founded 1258, rebuilt 1433. Megalithic monument destroyed nineteenth century in disused quarry to S: known as St Brigid's Chair and Thimble (KD014-026016). To the N 300m is the possible ecclesiastical site of Cluain Damh (Clane)(KD014-026017) and 120m to the N a bullaun stone (KD014-026003).

**Cartography:**

First ed, 25 in, Third Ed: 'Sunday's Well'.

**History:**

Ecclesiastical site of Cluain Damh (Clane). Synod held there 1162 (AFM).

**Relationship to boundaries:**

Barony boundary Clane/Naas North and parish boundary Clane/Whitechurch formed by the Liffey and 200m from well.

**Additional information:**

In 2016 Clane Community Council commissioned a Heritage Consultancy Report which recommended uncovering the well and restoring it as a heritage attraction (Crowley 2016).

**References:**

Crowley, C. 'Cultural Heritage Report and assessment of Sunday's Well, Clane (Unpublished report: Courtney/Deery Heritage Consultancy: 2016); Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80),133-161; McEvoy, T., 'The name Clane and related issues', Le Chéile, Community Magazine (2014) 9-12; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

## ST FARANNAN'S WELL (KE026)



**SMR number:**  
KD013-009

**Townland:**  
Downings North

**Barony:**  
Clane

**Co-ordinates:**  
681050 727018

**Parish:**  
Downings

**Extant:**  
Unknown

### **Description of site:**

The well is located on level pasture c.100m S of a broad expanse of bog.

### **Form of well:**

SMR: No obvious surface trace. However local information suggests that it may be still extant but is hard to find.

### **Survey (Pegley 2008):**

Pond in a small field with grasses, appeared to have been recently dredged or scooped out with a digger. Definitely a spring but looking very raw. Outflow short leading into a small stream not measurable. Pointed out by landowner who knew nothing of the history.

### **Saint:**

St Forannán alias Mothoiréan, of the Dál Riada and reputedly from Scotland (Ó Riain 1985, pt 209; Ó Riain 2011, 501). However, he is also seen as an alias for Palladius (Stokes 1905, 148)

### **Pattern day:**

12th June (Ó Riain 2011, 501)

### **Cure:**

Various, anyone drinking the water would lose the desire for intoxicating liquor.

### **Custom:**

Stations performed.

Jackson 1979-80, 148, No 17; Schools' Collection: Volume 0773, page 458:

Between Blackwood and Robertstown there is a well called St Farannan's Well. Once it was barred and the water sprang up in the kitchen of the man who had barred it. The well had to be opened again and then the water vanished from the kitchen. The people were told it was a blessed well. The woman of the house said it was only fit for boiling potatoes. She went out and got a pail of water. When she began to boil them the potatoes turned into stones'

### **Associated sites:**

Possible ecclesiastical enclosure with later medieval church, St Farnan (KD013-008001)500m to NE. 200m NE of ecclesiastical enclosure ringfort 40m (non-extant, cartographic) (KD013-007)

### **Cartography:**

All historic maps: 'St Farnan's Well'

### **History:**

Downing, the ecclesiastical site of Faranáin, is part of the familia of Brigid in a seventeenth-century list (d hÓir 1966-67, 33). It is mentioned in pre- and post-Norman documentary evidence: Ó Riain 1985, pt 209); 'Downing' c.1210 (Gilbert 1889,102); 'Dunig' 1212 (Sheehy 1965, Vol 1, 150); 'Dunnai' 1250 (Gilbert 1897, 69); Dunnyng 1302-6, (Sweetnam 1886, 246).

**Relationship to boundaries:**

Central to Downings parish.

**References:**

de hÓir, É, 'Blúire Cillsheanchais faoi Fhairche Chill Dara', *Dinnseanchas* 2 (1966-67)29-39; Gilbert, J.T., *Crede Mihi*, the most ancient record book of the archbishops of Dublin before the Reformation (Dublin, 1897); Gilbert, J.T. (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin* (London, 1889); Ó Riain, P., *Corpus Genalogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin: 1985); Ó Riain, P., *A dictionary of Irish saints* (Dublin: 2011); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); Sheehy, M.P. (ed.), *Pontifica Hibernica. Medieval Papal Chancery documents concerning Ireland 640-1261* (Dublin: 1965); Stokes, W., *Féilire Óengusso, céili Dé: the Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee* (London: 1905); Sweetnam, H.S.(ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1302-1307* (London, 1886); The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>



## THE DEOCH (KE027)



**SMR number:**  
KD017-009006

**Townland:**  
Feighcullen

**Barony:**  
Connell

**Co-ordinates:**  
Unknown

**Parish:**  
Feighcullen

**Extant:**  
No

### Description of site:

According to a local tradition, there was a well in this townland which was believed to be on the site of a monastery (Jackson 1979-80, 157). A possible ecclesiastical enclosure and church (See associated sites this entry below) have been identified in Feighcullen and although these may be associated with the holy well, the well itself has not been located.

### Form of well:

#### Name:

The Deoch (Jackson 1979-80, 157)

#### Saint:

Beoán of Feighcullen

#### Pattern day:

Beoán's feastday is the 8th August (Ó Riain 2011, 104).

#### Custom:

The well moved from another field because a woman who had no washtub, washed her husband's shirt in it. An oak cross grew out of the well on account of this (Schools' Collection: Volume 077 page 106; Jackson 1979-80, 157, No. 54)

#### Associated sites:

A location for the well could be at a possible ecclesiastical enclosure (KD017-009004). A large and poorly preserved, roughly circular area (est dia 250m) is defined by a shallow fosse (W 4-6m, D 0.2m) NE-E-SW and could be the remains of the enclosing element. The 'Parochial church (KD017- 009003) stands on the site of the old church' (Herity 2002, 201-2).

#### History:

'...in the calendar we read, "Beon Mac Neasain Espog ó Fiodhchuilinn in uibh Faoláin" (Mac Neasain the bishop from Feighcullen lives in Uí Fáeláin) (ibid). The calendar referred to is the Martyrology of Oengus (Stokes 1905, 184). Neasain was attached to the Uí Faeláin branch of Uí Dúnlainge who were overlords of most of the modern county of Kildare from the seventh to the twelfth century. The church of Feighcullen was listed in the seventeenth century as being part of the familia of Brigit of Kildare (d hÓir 1966-67, 31)

#### Relationship with boundaries:

The parish of Feighcullen borders the parish of Kildare.

#### References:

de hÓir, É, 'Blúire Cillsheanchais faoi Fhairche Chill Dara', *Dinnseanchas* 2 (1966-67)29-39; Herity, M. (ed.) *Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare* (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Ó Riain, P., *A dictionary of Irish saints* (Dublin: 2011); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); Stokes, W., *Féilire Óengusso, céli Dé: the Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee* (London: 1905); *The Schools' Collection*: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## ST BRIGID'S WELL (KE028)



**SMR number:**  
KD017012

**Townland:**  
Rathangan Demesne

**Barony:**  
Offaly East

**Co-ordinates:**  
668388 719559

**Parish:**  
Rathangan

**Extant:**  
No

**Description of site:**

In an area of pasture, Fitzgerald (1907, 160) identifies an area as 'St Brigid's well field' but gives no precise location for the well within the field.

**Form of well:**

St Brigid's Well being surrounded by a paling, with religious emblems (Ibid).

**Saint:**

St Brigid

**Cure:**

Known for its cures. Headaches 'one man, Patrick Kelly, suffered greatly from pains and by making the stations he was almost cured' (Jackson 1979-80, 157; Schools' Collection: 0778, 002-003)

**Custom:**

from Schools' Collection: Volume 0778 page 002-003:

The well is called St Brigid's well possibly because St Brigid blessed it or visited it during her life. The field where the well is, is called St Brigid's field by some of the inhabitants of Bonaghmore. About forty years ago there was a paling surrounding the well but the cattle knocked it down and the religious emblems that were there were crushed into the ground. People who had diseases made stations around the well and the majority of them were cured. A farmer named Mick Mullen, Rathangan, tried to turn the well into a pond for his cattle but God would not permit this and as punishment he left him blind for the remainder of his days. There is a little hawthorn bush growing over the well.

**Associated sites:**

To NE, 300m, is possible church (KD017-039), marked on Noble and Keenan's 1752 map as 'Tamplesonagh'. Low mound 40m dia and 1m high is enclosed by stone wall but no trace of church. Donaghmore next townland.

**Cartography:**

Not marked on historic maps

**References:**

Fitzgerald, W. Lord, 'Rathangan' Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 5,3 (1907), 137-165; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80), 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9) The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## COLEMAN'S WELL (KE029)



**SMR number:**  
KD018-015

**Townland:**  
Carrick

**Barony:**  
Connell

**Co-ordinates:**  
675366 719935

**Parish:**  
Rathernan

**Extant:**  
No

### Description of site:

SMR: On the lower, moderately steep, SW-facing slope of the Hill of Allen (OD 219m). Area now completely overgrown with whitethorn and briars. 'a short distance from the well a large stone juts out of the ground and it is from this stone that the townland takes its name' (Clarke 1944-5. 454).

### Form of well:

Over it grew several old trees and bushes (Herity 2002, 101)

### Saint:

Colmán? Peter?

### Pattern day:

June 29th, St Peter's Day (Herity 2002, 101). Pattern held up to 1880s (Clarke 1944-5, 454).

### Cure:

Warts (Jackson 1979-80, 149)

### Associated sites:

Possible ecclesiastical enclosure, 90m diameter marked Glebe (KD018-014) 100m to NW

### Cartography:

First ed: 'Coleman's Well'; not marked on 25in or Third Ed.

### History:

1629 Capella de Carrickmore (d hÓir 1966-67)

### References:

Clarke, T.P., 'Old placenames not recorded on OS maps', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 12 (1944-5), 453-6; de hÓir, É, 'Blúire Cillsheanchais faoi Fhairche Chill Dara' in Dinnseanchas 2, 29-39; Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

## ST PATRICK'S WELL (KE030)



**SMR number:**  
KD018-019002

**Townland:**  
Barrettstown

**Barony:**  
Oldconnell

**Co-ordinates:**  
682923 719238

**Parish:**  
Connell

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: Amongst trees and bushes in N sector of graveyard (KD018-019003). A spring well feeds a small channel which flows E (L c. 20m) to join a small tributary flowing SE to join the nearby River Liffey.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Set within a well-maintained graveyard. Outflow from well below grotto (4-foot X 6 foot) into small stream. Steps lead down from grotto level to well.

**Form of well:**

The well is contained in a concrete well-house surmounted with a mortared stone shrine containing a statue of St Patrick.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Well in hexagonal shape each side with superstructure containing statue of St Patrick.

**Saint:**

St Patrick

**Pattern day:**

March 17th. Formerly the people assembled in the town and walked in procession 3 miles to the well where they recited the rosary. Now they assemble at the well.

**Cure:**

Headaches and sore limbs. The suppliant takes three sips of water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost and the complaint will be cured. People left sticks and crutches after them; Jackson 1979-80, 149, No 21; Schools' Collection: Volume 773, page 420:

St Patrick's Well is situated at Barrettstown near Newbridge. Cures are obtained at this well. declared incurable by doctors have been cured at this well. Crutches and other supports used by the people in their sickness have been left at its brink.

**Custom:**

SMR: Numerous votive offerings adorn the site: miniature statues of Christ and BVM, rosary beads, religious pamphlets, written supplications, bibs, hair-slides, grips and scrunchies.

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): A large amount of various types of votive offerings from spectacles to rosary beads.

**Associated sites:**

Low bank to N and E of graveyard, W 7.5m, H int 0.4m, H ext 1.2m, marks possible ecclesiastical enclosure (KD018-019004). Contains church site marked by rectangular, grass-covered mound (KD018-019003).

**Cartography:**

First Ed: Not marked, 'Church', 25in: 'St Patrick's Well', 'Church (in ruins)', Third Ed: 'St Patrick's Well', 'Church (site of)'. 25 in and Third Ed mark 'Church ford' across the Liffey.

**History:**

Logainm.ie: 'The development from Barry/Barrett in this placename is late, probably influenced by other examples of the surname Barrett in the area. This is the place referred to in entries 1540 Barreston, 1619 Barriston and 1654 Ballivary. It also seems to be the place which Colgan calls 'Baile Barrigh' in Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae (1645)', 'ad Cellam Bairrigh: Hodie vulgo Baile Barrigh vocatus; iacetque ad ripam fluminis Liffe in comitatem & Diacesi Kil-darensi' (Colgan 1643, 710), Vita S Endei: 'ad cellam, Barrig nomine...in campo Liphi' (Plummer 1910, I, 65)

**Relationship to boundaries:**

Close to barony and parish border, Connell/ Clane, Oldconnell/Carragh

**References:**

Colgan, J. Acta Sanctorum veteris et maioris Scotiae, seu Hiberniae sanctorum insulae (Louvain: 1645); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80), pp 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); Plummer, C. (ed.), Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae partim hactenus: ineditae ad fidem codicum manusccriptorum recognovit pro Vol 1 (Oxford: 1910); The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## ST PATRICK'S WELL (KE031)



**SMR number:**  
KD019-020

**Townland:**  
Oldtown Demesne

**Barony:**  
Naas North

**Co-ordinates:**  
689405 720234

**Parish:**  
Naas

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: In a small area of enclosed woodland bordering the W side of the Naas-Sallins Road. Form of well: Modern stone surround.

**Saint:**  
St Patrick

**Pattern day:**  
March 17th but custom ceased in recent years (Jackson 1979-80, 153, No. 37)

**Cure:**  
Sore eyes

**Custom:**  
Still in use (Bradley et al 1986, vol. 4, 372-3). 'This was the scene of the baptism of the two sons of Dunlaing' (by St Patrick) (Comerford 1886, 269).

**Schools' Collection: 0776, 349:**  
There is a holy well in the parish of Naas. It is situated in Capt De Burg's wood about half a mile outside the town. People visit it annually on St Patrick's Day. They pray at it, I don't know whether they have been cures or not. It is famous for a cure for sore eyes. People drink the water and they rub it to the afflicted part. I heard of people making an offering, money and cups are usually left. The well is surrounded by trees.

**Cartography:**  
All historic maps: 'St Patrick's Well'

**References:**  
Bradley, J., Halpin, A., & King, H., Urban archaeological Survey of County Kildare, 4 Vols (Unpublished report, OPW: 1986), Vol 4; Comerford, M., Collections relating to the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin, Vol. II (Dublin: 1886); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## SUNDAY WELL (KE032)



**SMR number:**  
KD019-031

**Townland:**  
Naas East

**Barony:**  
Naas North

**Co-ordinates:**  
689758 719328

**Parish:**  
Naas

**Extant:**  
No

**Description of site:**

SMR: Level, poorly drained pasture.

**Form of well:**

SMR: 1972, covered with a concrete cap housing an iron cover and enclosed by iron railings. 'The well is not remembered in the area...' (Jackson 1979-80, 153, No 38)

**Pattern day:**

'...Sunday Well...was formerly frequented and a pattern was held at certain periods' (Herity 2002, 56)

**Custom:**

'at Millbrook, on the eastern side of the town is another holy well called Sunday Well where St Patrick baptised some of his converts on this or a subsequent occasion' (Comerford 1886, 269).

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Sunday Well'; 25 in and Third Ed: 'Sunday's Well (covered)'. Interestingly the modern development on the recent OSI map is called Sunday's Well

**History:**

863 AU rex Naas. 'The first religious foundation at Naas of which there is any record was a monastery, founded in the seventh century by St Fechin of Fobhair (Fore, Co Westmeath) at Tulach Fobhair.....This monastery was built on a tract of land given for the purpose by the king of Leinster'. (Comerford 1886, 270).

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

Site visit found well non-extant.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, September 2021.

**References:**

Comerford, M., Collections relating to the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin, Vol. II (Dublin:1886); Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161.

## ST PATRICK'S WELL (KE033)



**SMR number:**  
KD024-004

**Townland:**  
Killashee

**Barony:**  
Naas South

**Co-ordinates:**  
689107 716240

**Parish:**  
Killashee

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: In level pasture near the W foot of a low spur.

**Form of well:**

A small rectangular, partially roofed dry-stone structure (L3.4m, NW-SW, W 1.4m) contains the spring well (Murphy 1891-95, 18).

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Small basin. Depth of interior space 1.3m Width 0.90m Water depth c.0.9m. Water still. The well is enclosed by a construction of field stones. A wall to the left connects with a small wooden gate. The right wall may have been destroyed by the growth of a hawthorn tree.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

It is as described and partly covered but is overgrown and no longer has a gate.

**Saint:**

St Patrick

**Pattern day:**

March 17th (Jackson 1979-80, 155, No 45)

**Cure:**

Pains and sore eyes.

**Custom:**

Jackson (ibid) Money and medals were left at the well. Schools' Collection: Volume776 page 310-311: St Patrick's Well is situated next to Killashee Convent. On St Patrick's Day a lot of people from around Naas go there. People leave money and medals there. Once the nuns took the money and the well dried. They had to replace the money and the well flowed once again. People bring home a small supply of water with them from the well and drink it. They use up this water during the year.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Immediately beside the well at the base of the tree was a small shrine to St Patrick enclosed in perspex. In the water was an aluminium tea pot. There were no relics.

**Site visit: 8.9. 2021:**

The shrine is still there but tipped backward and overgrown. The well does not appear to be visited any more.

**Associated sites:**

Ecclesiastical site (KD 024-003005) c. 300m to the W with eighteenth-century church possibly on nave of medieval church with attached tower: latter still extant (KD024-003002). Curving boundary on all maps, still visible on AP, suggests holy well was original position of church as it would be central to this circular boundary if it were at full extent. This would give a diameter of 80-90m for the enclosure. According to (Dowling 1948-9, 83) there was a mill at Killashee in 1315: there is a 'mill in ruins' marked on First Ed (KD024-003006) and a large enclosure on a Lidar image, 80m E of it (KD024070).



**Cartography:**

First Ed: Not marked, 25in and Third Ed: 'St Patrick's Well'.

**History:**

The church founded by the associate bishop of Palladius who came to Ireland in 431 (AU). AFM 456, 'S. Usaile Espucc a Chill Usaille ', AFM 827 Cille Usaille, AU 829 Cille Ausaile, c. 900 'do Chill Auxili' Bethu Phátraic. Relationship to boundaries: Close to barony /parish border Naas South/Naas North, Killashee/Naas.

**Access, signage and maintenance:**

Access is restricted by agriculture and a development to the north. In addition, access to the traditional 'nuns' route' is prohibited by the Killashee hotel authorities (the hotel was previously a convent). Alternative routes from the south are closed.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers 8.9.2021

**References:**

Dowling, M.G. (ed.), 'Ordnance Survey Letters for Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 13 (1948-9), 80-91; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Murphy, D., 'Killashee church', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 1,1 (1891), 13-18; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## ST PATRICK'S WELL (KE034)



**SMR number:**  
KD025-013

**Townland:**  
Athgarrett

**Barony:**  
North Naas

**Co-ordinates:**  
695148 716102

**Parish:**  
Rathmore

**Extant:**  
No

**Description of site:**

SMR says local people know tradition of a well here.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Not known by local people.

**Name:**

St Patrick's Well (local information)

**Saint:**

St Patrick

**Pattern day:**

March 17th

**Associated sites:**

To NE a large hilltop enclosure (KD025006), 58m in dia. Across the county and barony border 1.4km to the SE is an imposing platform ringfort (WI005-012) 58m x 36m which is named 'Rath Turtle Mote' on 25in and Second Ed. This is not a motte as it has a causeway, and it has been suggested that it is a ringfort refortified by the Hiberno-Scandinavian Meic Torcaill family (Etchingham 1994, 123)

**Cartography:**

Not marked on historic maps

**History:**

1529 Archbishop Alen's Register refers to a 1220 entry, in early ecclesiastical documents, of 'Agarrat' which mentions Maurice, son of Gerard...Radmore (Rathmore) (McNeill 1950, 43). Logainm.ie translates Athgarrett as 'Achadh Gearóid' (the fields of Gerard). As the register concerns itself with the possessions of the archbishop of Dublin, then this suggests ecclesiastical ownership. It is also mentioned twice in Reportium Viride, another register of archepiscopal holdings, 'Tachwarreche' and 'Agaret' 1530 (White 1941, 200).

**Relationship with boundaries:**

the site lies 1.3km from the parish, barony and county boundary to the east. Parish: Rathmore/Blessington, barony: North Naas/Talbotstown Lower and county: Kildare and Wicklow.

**Access, signage and maintenance:**

The area of the well is on private land with no freedom of access. A track leading to it is unsurfaced, is used for farm machinery and vehicular use and is not advised.

The Well, if such exists, is close to that track but there is no visible access to it

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 18 September 2021

**References:**

Etchingham, C., 'Evidence of Scandinavian settlement in Wicklow', K. Hannigan & W. Nolan (eds), Wicklow: history and society (Dublin: 1994), 113-138; McNeill, C. (ed.), Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register, 1172-1534 (Dublin: 1950); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); White, N.(ed.), 'The Reportorium Viride of John Alen, archbishop of Dublin, 1533', Analecta Hibernica 10 (1941), 171-222.

## BRIDES WELL (KE035)



**SMR number:**  
KD024-035

**Townland:**  
Newtown Great

**Barony:**  
North Naas

**Co-ordinates:**  
694156 715341

**Parish:**  
Rathmore

**Extant:**  
Yes

### **Description of site:**

At the N foot of an EW esker.

### **Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

The entire site is roughly fenced the best maintained being further up the hill. Very wet and boggy area but the soil cover is very shallow. The emerging stream of the well shows evidence of having been pumped and ruins of a sluice can be seen. The water stored up to use for washing the gravel at the nearby gravel quarry, now owned by CPI.

### **Form of well:**

A natural spring (D 0.2m) is enclosed by a D-shaped mortared stone wall (int. dia 1.3m EW) with a straight N side (int. L 0.6m). the wall (H 1m; W 0.7m) has a gap at N (W 0.6m) and carries a small statue of the Blessed virgin Mary at S. A small rectangular mortared stone altar (L 1.4m NS; W 0.8m; H 0.85m) stands 0.6m to the NNE (Jackson 1979-80, 153).

### **Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

U shaped built structure 1.77m across, 1.49m high. Interior space 1.11m front to back, 0.83m side to side. Water depth 0.27m. Stone built roofless enclosure surrounds the well with its back into the side of the hill. The water is clear and still and typical fluff indicates chalybeate. One small medal remains stuck to the back beside a cup shaped stone. These are below a small shrine with a brown robed female possibly St Bridget. An enamelled cup hangs on an iron hook on the right side of the enclosure.

Second 'well' shown on the map just a puddle of very orange water partially surrounded by a hawthorn hedge (GB: I think this is a misunderstanding of the 25 in map which records 'spring' and 'Brides Well')

To one side an altar has been constructed of rough-cut stone for the patterns.

### **Site visit, September 2021:**

The U-shaped surround is still extant and the shrine with statue of St Brigid. There is an altar structure and two timber benches facing the altar

### **Saint:**

Brigid. 'Formerly frequented as a holy well' (Herity 2002, 56).

### **Pattern day:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): Altar for patterns that occurred regularly in the past and began again in the recent past.

### **Cure:**

Survey: Cures are for everyday sicknesses.

### **Associated sites:**

Lies 1.2m SW of Athgarrett possible holy well (KE031 this catalogue). A ringbarrow 14m dia (KD025-008) lies 1.4km to the E. Blackhill church and circular graveyard (KD024-013001/2) are 900m ENE of well.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Brides Well'; 25in: 'Brides Well', 'Spring'; Third Ed: 'Brides Well'.

**Relationship with boundaries:**

500m from parish and barony boundary to S: Rathmore/ Tipperkevin and North Naas/South Naas. (I did wonder whether Newtown Great and Athgarrett were once one townland and this was the well that could not be located in Athgarrett above (KE034), but not in seventeenth century anyway, as the Down Survey shows them separate).

**Access, signage and maintenance:**

The well is signposted 'Eadestown tidy towns@stbrigid's well' written with felt pen on a wooden board. Access is along an enclosed grassy path and the two benches and the altar plus the sign suggest the well is being locally maintained and used.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 18 September 2021.

**References:**

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

## TOBERKEVIN (KE036)



**SMR number:**  
KD024-021

**Townland:**  
Commons

**Barony:**  
South Naas.

**Co-ordinates:**  
693596 714309

**Parish:**  
Tipperkevin

**Description of site:**

In a slight hollow on a N facing pasture slope.

**Form of well:**

A clear spring well is surrounded by flagstones and enclosed by a low stone wall.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Overall size 4.57m x 1.95m. Inner wall: H 0.63m, outer 0.73m high, 0.38m thick. Water depth 0.43m.

Overgrown well surround covered in fine lichen. Constructed of red brick with concrete cap. Interior incorporates a large natural erratic. Interior comprises two parts one 0.91m X 0.73m with a flat bottom and the second 0.81m x 0.73m with a scooped bottom. The two parts are divided by a low raised area 0.38m wide. The second part contains the outflow. The outflow was blocked and by clearing the area outside the surround the water flowed out of the second to be replaced by water from the first.

The area around the well had in the past been cared for: the natural depression was surrounded by a fence and trees now quite large had been planted. Examination of this well was hampered by the fact it was so overgrown. It has also been appropriated as a dumping ground.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

On private land. Impossible to access due to dumped farm machinery and heavy vegetation.

**Saint:**

Cóemgen (St Kevin of Glendalough)

**Pattern day:**

No formal pattern day. Cóemgen's (Kevin of Glendalough) feastday 3 June, 11 May and 16 October.

**Cure:**

Miraculous cures reputed to have been obtained from its waters (Jackson 1979-80, 155). Survey: Cure for headaches.

**Custom:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): St Kevin when he was passing needed water to drink and struck the ground and a spring appeared. A stone on which St Kevin's footprint is appears was placed outside the well at the outlet. The well, as seen today, was constructed by a Protestant contractor in 1903.

**Associated sites:**

Tipperkevin church 150m ESE (KD024-020). Late medieval but in 1985 contained three cross slabs (KD024020002/3/4) two published by Healy (2009, 101,104). Only one remains in situ. They recall similar cross slabs at Glendalough (Harney 2011, 121). Also, on possible pilgrimage road from Naas to Glendalough.

**Cartography:**

All historic maps: 'Toberkevin'.

**History:**

Reputed birthplace of Cóemgen of Glendalough, said to be of the Dál Messin Corb, who, previous to Uí Dúnlainge incursions, were established throughout the modern county of Kildare (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 46). Papal Taxation 1306 (Sweetnam 1886, 242).

**Relationship with boundaries:**

Holy well is 600m S of a parish border, between Tipperkevin and Rathmore and a barony border between North Naas and South Naas.

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

Appears to be on private land. Access barred by overgrowth and dumped farm machinery. No signage and no longer used or maintained.

**Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 29 September 2021.

**References:**

Harney, L. 'Medieval burial and pilgrimage within the landscape of Glendalough', C. Doherty, L. Doran & M. Kelly (eds), *Glendalough, city of God* (Dublin: 2011), 112-136; Healy, P., *Pre-Norman graveslabs and cross-inscribed stones in the Dublin region* (Dublin: 2009); Mac Shamhráin, A., *Church and polity in pre-Norman Ireland: the case of Glendalough* (Maynooth: 1996); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); Sweetnam, H. S. (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1302-1307* (London:1886).

## ST BRIGID'S WELL (KE037)



**SMR number:**  
KD020-004

**Townland:**  
Hartwell Lower

**Barony:**  
South Salt

**Co-ordinates:**  
695072 721866

**Parish:**  
Kill

**Extant:**  
Covered.

### **Description of site:**

'St Bridget's Well on Mr Lyon's farm (as) ...now sadly neglected; it is unenclosed and trodden around with cattle. Though a strong flow of water boils up in it, yet from its position by the side of a gripe, it would require a native of the locality to point it out' (Fitzgerald 1915-17, 494).

### **Form of well:**

Now covered with a pumphouse. Visible on a 2005 aerial photo (OSI orthophoto) with a very large drainage channel leading NNE from the well-house.

### **Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Round 1.4m across 0.38m deep. Artesian well that rises at the head of a stream leading to the Kill River. No offerings were seen. The well was re-dug many years ago and a cement pipe (1.4m) was placed into the hole and filled with gravel. Above and to one side sits a small electric pumping shed that takes the water to the yard nearby.

### **Saint:**

Brigid

### **Pattern day:**

Not associated with a pattern

### **Cure:**

Toothache and earache (Jackson 1979-80, 161, No 72)

### **Custom:**

Tokens left at well. Situated on Bótharín Bride which possibly connected the church and the well and on which it was believed St Brigid used to walk on her way to the well.

### **Associated sites:**

A holy tree once stood nearby (KD020-004001) (Herity 2002, 23). Perhaps linked with Brigid's church at Kill (KD019-008002) by Bótharín Bride. Burial dated to c. 935 AD (KD020-010) found 400m S with bullaun stone (KD020-028) (Cahill and Sikora 2011, vol.1, 218-21). Kill church, 1.4km to the NW of the well, now St John's, was SS Mary and Brigid, a possession of St Thomas, at the dissolution (White 1943). Test trenching revealed evidence of an ecclesiastical enclosure (KD020-008007).

### **Cartography:**

First ed: Not marked, 25in and Third Ed: 'St Bridget's Well'.

### **History:**

1540 'Hertwell' (White 1943, 91, 41, 39).

### **Relationship with boundaries:**

1.3km from parish and barony boundary South Salt/Naas North, Kill/Rathmore.

### **References:**

Cahill, M. & Sikora, M., (eds) Breaking ground, finding graves: reports on excavations of burial by the National Museum of Ireland, 1927-2006, Vol. 1 (Dublin: 2011); Fitzgerald, W., 'Notes on Hartwell castle in the parish of Kill', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 8,6 (1917) 489-494; Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); White, N., Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions, 1540-41 (London: 1943)



## ST AUGUSTINE (KE038)



**SMR number:**  
KD023-017

**Townland:**  
Greatconnell

**Barony:**  
Connell

**Co-ordinates:**  
682499 714326

**Parish:**  
Greatconnell

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

On Baroda Stud Farm, c.450m ENE of Connellmore House. The well surrounded by some half dozen trees and having been dry for the last thirty years 'was restored to use and blessed' in 1968 (Clarke 1968, 341).

**Name:**

St Augustine (Herity 2002, 73).

**Saint:**

Augustine

**Pattern day:**

No pattern associated with this well (Jackson 1979-80, 148-9, No 18)

**Cure:**

The well was visited on Sundays and resorted to for cures

**Custom:**

Tokens left: medals, rosary beads, key rings. Fitzgerald 1898, 324-5, writing about this well, tells a story about the proprietor of the land who tried to prevent pilgrims visiting the well by building a wall round it. The water sprang up beside the fire in the owner's kitchen and remained there until the well was re-opened.

**Associated sites:**

Greatconnell Augustinian abbey (KD023-016001), founded thirteenth century, lies 800m to WSW: hence unusual name associated with well.

**Cartography:**

Not marked on historic maps.

**History:**

722 'conige Condaill' (Radner 1978, 72), c.1125 hi Connull (O'Brien 1962, 118b 29)

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

The approach to the well by vehicle from the entrance is of some 400m length. It would be necessary to move on foot from there in dense undergrowth for about 30m.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 20 September 2021

**References:**

Clarke, J.K., 'St Austin's holy well, Newbridge', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 14 (1968), 494; Fitzgerald, W., 'Great Connell Abbey', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society* 2,5 (1898) 304-313; Herity, M. (ed.), *Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare* (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80), 133-161; O'Brien, M. A. (ed.), *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin: 1962); Radner, J.N., (ed. and trans.) *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (Dublin: 1978).



## ST JOHN'S WELL (KE039)



**SMR number:**  
KD022033

**Townland:**  
Tully East

**Barony:**  
Offaly East

**Co-ordinates:**  
673673 711441

**Parish:**  
Tully

**Extant:**  
Yes

### **Description of site:**

The well dried up after Kildare water works were established nearby to the NW (Fitzgerald 1903, 130-1)

### **Form of well:**

Site visit 11.09.2021. Using the SMR co-ordinates the well spring appeared to be part of a pool chain extending through the Japanese Gardens from NW to SE. There was also a structure and pipe system, although these could have been part of the above waterworks

### **Saint:**

St John

### **Associated sites:**

Whitethorn bush and large stone previously marked site (Fitzgerald 1905, 130-1). Church 500m to SW (KD022034) granted by Innocent III to Knight's Hospitaliers of Jerusalem (The order of the hospital of St John of Jerusalem) in 1212 (Gwynn & Hadcock 1970, 338-9). Pre-Norman association of this ecclesiastical site, Tulach fobhar, with St Féichín of Fore (Fobhar), one of whose genealogies links him to the Fothairt, the family of St Brigid (Ó Riain 2011, 309). The association with St John of Jerusalem, could explain the name of the well, on the other hand there are many St John's wells in Ireland, associated with a pattern on St John's Eve, 23rd June, close to the solstice 21st June. The well is 1.3km SE of Kildare and 500m northeast of a further well, St Brigid's close to the church described (KE040 this catalogue below).

### **Cartography:**

First Ed: 'St John's Well', 25in and Third Ed: 'St John's Well (covered)'

### **History:**

1297 reference to church and grange belonging to the preceptory of Tully and of Brother Robert, the abbot (Mills 1905, Vol I, 1295-1303, 174, 202, 203).

### **Access, signage and maintenance:**

An employee and a guide, in the Japanese Gardens, were unaware of the presence of a well, so there was no signage and the pool chain was overgrown and not maintained.

### **Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 11 September 2021

### **References:**

Fitzgerald, W., 'Patrick Sarsfield, Lord of Lucan with an account of his family and their connection with Lucan and Tully', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 4,2 (1903) 114-47; Ó Riain, P. A dictionary of Irish saints (Dublin: 2011); Gwynn, A & Hadcock, R.N., Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland (Harlow: 1970); Mills, J (ed.), Calendar of Justiciary Rolls. Vol 1, 1295-1303 (Dublin: 1905-).

## ST BRIGID'S WELL (KE040)



**SMR number:**  
KE022-035

**Townland:**  
Tully East

**Barony:**  
Offaly East

**Co-ordinates:**  
673427 710955

**Parish:**  
Tully

**Description of site:**

145m SSW of Tully House and 150m SSE of Tully graveyard (KD022-034001) containing the preceptory of the Knights Hospitaliers (KD022-034) (see KE036 above, this catalogue).

**Form of well:**

Site described as a 'well or basin built of cut stone, the work of the Board of Works, which by some people is called St Brigid's Well' (Fitzgerald 1903-5, 130). The stone surround of the well was built in the 1840s as a source of local employment (Jackson 1979-80, 157). A small circular well (dia. 1.3m) is now a pool of stagnant water, enclosed by a low stone wall accessed from a modern paved area.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

The well is as described, but with a plaque on the inner wall which reads in Irish script: 'A brigid Naomra/ A Muire nGaedel/ guid orainn: 'Saint Brigid, Mary of the Gaels, guide us'. Under the script is the date 1953. There was a rag tree beside the well.

**Saint:**  
Brigid

**Pattern day:**  
February 1st

**Custom:**

Ribbons and other votive offerings have been tied to the branches of a tree overhanging the well.

**Associated sites:**

It has been suggested that this is called St Brigid's Well in error and that 'the real St Brigid's Well (KD027010001) is situated, in a neglected state on a bit of commons called the Grallach (a miry place) in the townland of Brallistown' (Fitzgerald 1903-5, 130; KE041 this appendix)). However, this is arguable, see additional information below. This well is the middle one of three wells running north to south, in the same vicinity: St John's Well (KE039, this catalogue, above), 500m to the NE and Brallistown, 400m to the SW, also known but not marked as St Brigid's Well on the map. For notes on the preceptory of the Hospitaliers (KD022-034) see KE036 (this catalogue) above.

**Cartography:**

'St Bridget's Well' on all historic maps.

**History:**

It is possible that the townland name 'Tully' (tulach) meaning a mound, could refer to an ancient assembly place (Fitzpatrick 2004, 32-3).

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

The well is located at the southern end of the Japanese Gardens car park. The pedestrian entrance here is from the main road outside the gardens. All-ability access.

Site visit: Desmond Travers 10.9.2021.

**References:**

Fitzgerald, Lord W., 'Patrick Sarsfield, Lord of Lucan with an account of his family and their connection with Lucan and Tully', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 4,2 (1903) 114-47; Fitzpatrick, E., *Royal Inauguration in Gaelic Ireland c. 1100-1600: a cultural landscape study* (Woodbridge: 2004); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161.

## ST BRIGID'S WELL AND GARDEN (KE041)



**SMR number:**  
KD027-010001

**Townland:**  
Brallistown Commons

**Barony:**  
Offaly East

**Co-ordinates:**  
673049 710809

**Parish:**  
Kildare

**Extant:**  
Yes

### Description of site:

According to Fitzgerald this well is the 'real St Brigid's Well' and the other (KD022-035; this catalogue KE037) was mistakenly identified as St Brigid's Well by the Ordnance Survey in 1837. He describes the well in a neglected state (1903, 130). The Brallistown Commons St Brigid's Well or Tobar Bríde, today stands midway along a gentle E-facing slope, now landscaped to form the W-limits of a long narrow, rectangular, contemplative garden (L 58m E-W; W 8m).

### Form of well:

SMR: The spring well at the W end of the landscaped garden is enclosed by a low, circular, mortared stone wall (dia. 1.2m) with a narrow, gently splaying gap at E (W0.45-0.65m). A low stone cross (H0.75m; W of arms 0.5m) stands on the wall at W and scapulars and St Brigid's crosses hang from it. An overflow pipe runs under the entrance gap sill stone and feeds water down to a stone arch over a second well and the 'Kneeling stones' (KD027-010002) 30m to the E, with a date stone of 1952 on the arch. A marble plaque commemorates the construction of the stone surround around the holy well. The inscription on the plaque reads 'In memory of the Murphy and Fitzgerald families and their neighbours who built this well under the direction of Fr Peadar Swayne.'

### Survey (Pegley 2008-9):

The water appears still however some 20 feet (6m) away a small stream emerges from above an arch through which it passes to join a larger stream called Tully stream. To one side is a Venetian arch and statue of St Brigid. At the entrance to the site is another built object that houses a statue of the BVM and numerous candles.

### Site visit, 10.9.2021:

The well is as described in the SMR and the 2008 survey. The water comes from the western well which is of circular construction with an opening in the eastern side. A small stone cross on a stepped base is mounted on the western side of the well. There is a sill stone at the entrance and the water flows under this, 28 m to the second well. The second well is a half-circle with an arch across the eastern line of the half circle base. The arch has a cross with expanded terminals at the keystone. The two 'kneeling stones' lie under the arch and the water flows through them into a shallow channel with three steps on each side before flowing past the statue of St Brigid to join the Tully stream. The statue stands in front of a three-arched stone wall, the larger central round-headed arch being flanked by two smaller ones. The commemoration plaque is at the bottom right-hand corner of this structure. At the entrance to the garden is a round-headed arched shrine with a statue of Mary and holy pictures.

### Saint:

St Brigid

### Pattern day:

Jackson 1979-80, 156, No 50; Schools' Collection: Volume 468 page 40

There was a famous pattern held at this spot over 150 years ago, but the pattern fell into disrepute for want of piety. The parish priest of Kildare had it abolished. There are also seven stations beside the well.

### Custom:

In the SW corner of the garden, a pine tree has been transformed into a 'rag bush' carrying, amongst other things, cloth strips, rosaries, baby socks, soothers, scrunchies, shoelaces and peat briquettes. There are seven stations beside the well, it took three hours to complete the stations but the format has now been forgotten (Jackson 1979-80, 156).

Site visit identified five rag trees on site.

**Associated sites:**

Fitzgerald (1903, 130) describes the two stones which form part of the devotional landscape of the well. 'A strong clear flow of water issues from it, and flows into the gripe of the neighbouring ditch, in which, side by side, lie two stones known as 'St Brigid's kneeling stones', through which the water passes. These stones have been interpreted as a couple of water-shoot stones from either the top of the church walls (KD022-034) or from the top of the former castle, lying previously just below the battlements; they measure 32 in (0.91m) in length, 12 in (0.3m) in breadth, with a groove or channel 3 in (0.08m) wide running down their length, except for the last 10in(0.25m), where it is bored through the stones.' This seems an unlikely provenance as the two stones are unlike water chute stones. It has been suggested that they were stone flumes or penstocks from an early medieval horizontal mill, usually of wood. Rynne (2007) and Ó Carragáin (2010) think this unlikely as the boreholes would not permit the flow of water to drive a mill although there is a later cornmill and mill race on the First Edition map 300m to the SE of the well. However, the stones could represent an adaption of milling technology for ritual purposes such as baptism which has been associated with holy wells (Ó Carragáin 2010, 204; Whitfield 2007). The fact that the water passes from the spring (the western well) through the two stones and then becomes a stream which finally amalgamates with the stream feeding the later mill would support this interpretation as the water flowing to the mill could be perceived as blessed.

**Cartography:**

The holy well is not marked on the historic maps.

**History:**

The preceptory of the Knights Hospitaliers have a watermill listed in their forfeited possessions at the Dissolution (White 1943, 96). This later medieval mill may have preceded the corn mill (KD027-049) in Tully West marked on the First Edition.

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

There is a sign at the roadside. Access is directly off the road and the wells and garden are carefully maintained.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 11 September 2021

**References:**

Fitzgerald, W., 'Patrick Sarsfield, Lord of Lucan with an account of his family and their connection with Lucan and Tully', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 4,2 (1903) 114-47; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Ó Carragáin, T., *Churches in early medieval Ireland* (Yale: 2010); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); Rynne, C., 'How Irish early medieval horizontal-wheeled mills really worked', *Archaeology Ireland* 21 (3) (2007) 21-3; White, N. (ed.), *Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions, 1540-41* (London: 1943); Whitfield, N. 'A suggested function for the holy well?', A. Minnis & J. Roberts (eds) *Text, image and interpretation: studies in Anglo-Saxon literature in its insular context in honour of Eamonn Ó Carragáin* (2007) 495-516; The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## UNNAMED (KE042)



**SMR number:**  
KD022-015

**Townland:**  
Tobercocka

**Barony:**  
Offaly West

**Co-ordinates:**  
666362 712612

**Parish:**  
Lackagh

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**  
SMR: In a roadside garden.

**Form of well:**  
SMR: Now a fenced-off oval pond (4m NS; 2m EW; D 0.8m) with some stone lining visible at the S end.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**  
There is an oval pond of about 2.4m x 1.5m of 0.55m in depth.

It is separated from the house by about 3m. Surrounded by a formerly white picket fence with gate. The well never empties and there was no movement or outfall. Appeared to be 'fresh' water. To reach the pond 3-5 steps made of concrete slabs descended to the water edge with some rock edging hidden under foliage.

**Saint:**  
Although Logainm.ie gives Corcra for the Irish form, is it possible that this is another reference to St Coch of Kilcoe, possibly commemorated at Kilcock (KE007 this catalogue above)

**Pattern day:**  
March 8th (Jackson 1979-80, 158, No. 62).

**Cure:**  
'Though not now resorted to for cures, this is a Blessed well' (Fitzgerald 1919, 258). Cure for mental illness (Jackson 1979-80, 158).

**Custom:**  
It moved from the other side of the road because a woman washed clothes in it (Jackson 1979-80, 159).

**Associated sites:**  
A church, modern, but with medieval architectural fragments, lie 1.3km to the E and just to the N of the holy well is marked 'Glebe' land.

**Cartography:**  
First Ed: Not marked, 25 in: 'Well', Third Ed: 'Tober Chochoa'

**References:**  
Fitzgerald, W., 'Notes: Lackagh, Tobercocka and Crossmorris', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 9 (1919) 258; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

## ROS GLAS (KE043)



**SMR number:**  
KD026-013

**Townland:**  
Mooreabbey Demesne

**Barony:**  
Offaly West

**Co-ordinates:**  
662728 709389

**Parish:**  
Monasterevin

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: at the W foot of a moderately steep pasture slope, some 35m E of a small SW-flowing stream which feeds the river Barrow to the W.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Situated at the bottom of a low hill that rises to 122m. Outflow enters a holding pond which flows on to a small stream that follows the line of the haaha.

**Form of well:**

SMR: According to O'Donovan writing in the OSL in 1837: 'the well near the site of the monastery (KD026-001), and which, in all probability, anciently bore the name of St Evin, is now called Lord Henry Moore's Well, because it was enclosed by him' (Herity 2002,127). The Moores were from Drogheda. The location indicated on the OS 6-inch mapping is a large rectangular sunken area (30m NE SW); 20m NW-Se; D 1-1.8m), the perimeter of which is overgrown with ash and briar and partly enclosed on the east and west sides by a low, denuded earthen bank (Ext H 0.2m-0.4m; w 2-2.5m). The interior is waterlogged and heavily poached by livestock and there is no obvious trace of a spring/well.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Vaulted well low in the ground roof covered in grass. Vault brick with stone facing. 3 stone steps lower under water. Water clear with a white sand bottom some small stones. Outflow built into wall near open end.

**Name:**

Logainm: Ros Glas

**Saint:**

Émin of Ros Glas

**Cartography:**

First Ed: not marked, 25 in and Third Ed: 'Lord Henry's Well'

**History:**

c 1100, I Rus Glaisi (Ó Riain 1985, 287.2); c 1100 mathair Émin ruis Glais (Ibid, 697.2). 1176 refounded as Cistercian abbey. It remains Ros Glas up to 1783 where it appears on Taylor's map as 'Moor Aby'

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

Access from woods managed by Coillte barred by electric fence around fields planted with crops and from the Mooreabbey side, the boundary of the Abbey property had notices on gates prohibiting access or exit. The lands south of there were heavily fenced with barbed wire. There is no access to the well.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 14 September 2021

**References:**

Map of Kildare by Alex Taylor of His Majesty's 81st Regt: 1783; Herity M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Ó Riain, P., Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae (Dublin: 1985); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

## ST BRIDGET'S WELL (KE044)



**SMR number:**  
KD026-011

**Townland:**  
Riverstown

**Barony:**  
Offaly West

**Co-ordinates:**  
663509 706087

**Parish:**  
Ballybracken

**Extant:**  
Yes

### **Description of site:**

In a farmyard c. 85m N of Riverstown House. River Barrow 200m to W.

### **Form of well:**

There are six upright stone posts in the centre of the well on which is placed a wooden cross. A stone with indentations beside the well is said to be the imprints of the saint's knees (Jackson 1979-80, 158, No 59).

### **Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

12m diameter with 1.25m high round enclosure wall. Gate 1m w, 1.3m high, water depth 0.20m. Within the walled enclosure the whole area is filled with water. Six 'stone' posts, held together with rough wire, hold up a wooden cross bolted together. Too overgrown to see the saint's knees in stone as indicated in JKAS.

### **Site visit, September 2021:**

Construction work going on at Riverstown House. Well area previously overgrown, had been cleared and supposedly drained. Area surrounded by stone wall. In centre of area appear to be four stone posts, wired together so the central space formed could support a wooden cross. It seems that the wire has been replaced at some time as there is an impression of a previous wire tie further down the posts. The area was dry although the workers on the site said it got waterlogged in wet weather. The stone with imprint of saint's knees was not found and as those clearing the site had retrieved what appears to be a pottery vessel from the undergrowth, it seems they would have preserved any unusual finds.

### **Saint:**

St Brigid

### **Pattern day:**

No known pattern day (ibid).

### **Survey:**

Two local men indicated that once a year mass is said at the well which has been done for many years.

### **Cure:**

The well is still visited for cures (ibid)

### **Cartography:**

All historic maps 'St Bridget's Well'

### **History:**

Logainm.ie: Acts of Settlement and Explanation: 'Gurteene alias Gurtineshancloane alias Gurtinecon laine alias Riverstown'. Gurteen/goirtin: small field, shan/sean: old, cloane/cluain: river meadow. Cluain often associated with ecclesiastical site (ie Clonmacnoise), but no evidence of site here although to the east there are three townlands within the parish with 'kil' toponyms: Killeen West and East, Kilbeg and Kilpatrick.

### **Relationship with boundaries:**

River Barrow forms county, barony and parish border: Kildare/Laois, Offaly West/Portnahinch, Ballybracken/Lea.



**Access, signage, maintenance:**

Access easy now but on private land with house being renovated so future access unknown.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 22 September 2021.

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161;  
Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9)



## TOBEREENDONEY (KE045)



**SMR number:**  
KD027-021

**Townland:**  
Rickardstown Upper.

**Barony:**  
Offaly West.

**Co-ordinates:**  
668184 705645

**Parish:**  
Harristown.

**Extant:**  
No

**Form of well:**

Well had dried up by 1837 (Jackson 1879-80, 158, No 61).

**Name:**

Tobereendoney

'Well of the king of Sunday'. Sunday's Well (Fitzgerald 1896, 158)

**Custom:**

It had previously been very popular but the reason for its drying up had been a woman washing dirty linen in the well (Fitzgerald 1897, 272).

**Associated sites:**

There was a hawthorn bush over the well which was covered in rags. There was also a stone with the mark of a knee beside the well. Remains of Harristown medieval church 700m to east.

**Cartography:**

'Tobereendoney' on all historic maps.

**Relationship with boundaries:**

400m from parish border with Kildangan to north.

**References:**

Fitzgerald, W., 'Queries', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 2,2 (1896) 158; Fitzgerald, W., 'Archaeological Jottings', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 2,4 (1897), 272; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161.

## FUARAN WELL (KE046)



**SMR number:**  
KD031-001

**Townland:**  
Boghall

**Barony:**  
Offaly West

**Co-ordinates:**  
669091 703274

**Parish:**  
Harristown

**Extant:**  
Yes: inaccessible

**Description of site:**

SMR: In a small clearing in a broadleaf plantation, some 90m N of the W-flowing Finnerly River. There appears to be the remains of a track on the Digital Globe but access would be difficult because of the river. In 1837, O'Connor, who co-compiled the OSL for Co Kildare, recorded '...there is a well called Fuaran Well at which a patron was formerly held on the 29th June and on the 15th August' (Herity 2002, 146).

**Form of well:**

SMR: An unenclosed oval hollow (5m EW; 3m NS; D 1m) with no visible evidence of veneration or use as a holy well.

**Pattern day:**

29th June and 15th August (Herity 2002, 146). September 29th and August 15th (Jackson 1979-80, 158). 15th August probably represents a later medieval Marian devotion. 29 June is the Feastday of SS Peter and Paul. The 29th of June is also the feastday of Coch of Kilcoe, mentioned above at KE007, Kilcock and KE039, Tobercocka. The 29 September has no direct associations, but the 29 December is the feastday of Méanog of Glenealy, barony of Newcastle, Co Wicklow and Rosminogue, barony of Gorey, Co Wexford. In view of the traditional information of pilgrims coming from Wicklow and Wexford (Custom: below), it seems to be too much of a coincidence so perhaps the pattern day was 29th December. Meanóg was part of the company of saints associated with Cóemgen of Glendalough supposedly born in Tipperkevin (KE033 above) (Ó Riain 2011, 452).

'The O'Tooles on the border of whose principality the well lay, in their forced emigration from Co Kildare carried with them to their new home the knowledge of the healing powers of the well and this tradition has been handed down through their descendants of seven hundred years' (Fitzgerald 1897, 272). This refers to the Ua Tuathail line of the Uí Muiredaig (Uí Dúnlainge) who had taken a considerable part of South Kildare in the ninth century but were displaced into the mountains of Wicklow by the land grab of the Cambro-Normans at the end of the twelfth century. St Laurence O' Toole (Lorcán Ua Tuathail), abbot of Glendalough and subsequently Archbishop of Dublin (1162) was one of this kingroup.

**Cure:**

Skin ailments (Jackson 1979-80, 158)

**Custom:**

Large numbers of pilgrims travelled from Wicklow and Wexford (Jackson 1979-80, 158). Local tradition that monks fleeing from Ros Glas in Monasterevin from Henry VII's (sic: must be Henry VIII) soldiers were killed here. Evidently, they were carrying a bag of meal with a hole in it and the soldiers followed the trail of meal. In 1897 there were still old people who attended but the last pattern ended in a faction fight.

**Cartography:**

'Fuaran Well' on all historic maps

**References:**

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Fitzgerald, W., 'Archaeological Jottings', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 2,4 (1897), 272; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Ó Riain, P., A dictionary of Irish saints (Dublin: 2011).

## ST JOHN'S WELL (KE047)



**SMR number:**  
KD032-006

**Townland:**  
Davidstown

**Barony:**  
Narragh and Rebane East.

**Co-ordinates:**  
680280 703056

**Parish:**  
Davidstown

**Extant:**  
Yes but inaccessible

### Description of site:

SMR: In a small clearing in a coniferous plantation on moderately steep E-facing slope. Appears to be close to dirt track racing to S. Mentioned in Ordnance Survey Letters (Herity 2002, 96). Examination of aerial photos between 2000 and 2005, showed the field in which the well lies was planted with coniferous trees. This explains why Jackson could access it in 1979 but recent attempts have failed. Aerial photo of 2005 shows a distinct space clear of trees around the well which would lead to the conclusion that it is still extant.

### Form of well:

A wooden post and plastic trellis fence encloses an oval well (2.4m NW-SE; 2.1m NE-SW; D 0.9m) which is retained by a mortared stone wall which does not rise above ground level. A circular concrete cistern and feed pipe abuts the well at NE and a modern cross slab (H0.6m; W0.45m; T 0.05m) is erected on its NE edge (Jackson 1979-80, 155).

### Saint:

St John

### Pattern day:

23rd June

### Associated sites:

175m SE of two remaining walls of a late medieval church (KD032-005). It was noted by the Ordnance Survey in 1837 and a further small church was built there later in the century.

### Cartography:

All historic maps: 'St John's Well'

### History:

1367 'Danystoun' (McNeill 1950, 219)

### Relationship with boundaries:

### Access, signage and maintenance:

Progress around the church and graveyard was difficult as very overgrown. The route to the well via the church became impassable 48m from the well, which lay in trees. Has not been accessed for a long time.

### Site visit:

Desmond Travers, 13 September 2021.

### References:

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; McNeill, C. (ed.), Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register, 1172-1534 (Dublin: 1950).

## ST JOHN'S WELL (KE048)



**SMR number:**  
KD029-034

**Townland:**  
Ballybought

**Barony:**  
Naas South

**Co-ordinates:**  
691355 707200

**Parish:**  
Ballybought

**Extant:**  
No

**Description of site:**

SMR: On a W-facing pasture slope and the source of a small W-flowing stream. Ordnance Survey Letters report it as blocked up (Herity 2002, 199).

**Site visit, September 2021:**

The SMR co-ordinates marked a spot on a dried-up stream by a line of trees, but the well was non-extant. The bullaun stone, situated at 200m NNE from the well co-ordinates, further confirmed the location of the former well.

**Saint:**  
St John

**Pattern day:**  
24th June

**Custom:**  
Regarded as holy but no evidence of enclosure or veneration (Jackson 1979-80, 154)

**Associated sites:**

The church, 300m to the SE of the well (KD029-022) was repaired in 1615 (Ronan 1941a) but the chancel had fallen by 1630 (Ronan 1941b). References to the church recorded by Archbishop Alen span the period from the thirteenth century to the mid sixteenth. A bullaun stone (KD029-050) lies 200m SSW of the well. It is known as 'wart well' and is still extant.

**Cartography:**  
'St John's Well' on all historic maps.

**History:**  
1256-71 'Ballybought' (McNeill 1950, 137), 1302-6 'Ballybouth' (Sweetnam 1886, 242).

**Access, signage and maintenance:**  
No trace of the well survives.

**Site visit:**  
Desmond Travers, 13 September 2021

**Relationship with boundaries:**  
The county, barony and parish boundary lies one kilometre to the E in Ballybought townland. This is between Kildare and Wicklow, Naas South and Talbotstown Lower and Ballybought and Hollywood.

**Access, signage and maintenance:**  
Access over one field and electric fences from road but appears to be non-extant.

**Site visit:**  
Desmond Travers, September 2021.

**References:**  
Herity, M., Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare, (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; McNeill, C. (ed.), Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register, 1172-1534 (Dublin: 1950); Ronan, M.V., 'Royal Visitation of Dublin 1615', Archivium Hibernicum 8 (1941a), 1-55; Ronan, M.V., 'Archbishop Bulkeley's Visitation of Dublin, 1630', Archivium Hibernicum 8 (1941b), 56-98; Sweetnam, H. S. (ed.), Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1302-1307 (London, 1886).

## ST PATRICK'S WELL (KE049)



**SMR number:**  
KD032-038

**Townland:**  
Glassely

**Barony:**  
Narragh and Reban West

**Co-ordinates:**  
676047 698242

**Parish:**  
Narraghmore

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

Near the S end of a narrow N-S valley or glen.

**Form of well:**

At the foot of a low rock outcrop, large slabs have been cemented together to form a roughly rectangular surround to a natural spring (2m EW; 0.8m NS; D of water 0.5m). Two mature ash trees stand to the NE and ESE and beside the latter a low thorn bush has a metal hook in it from which three mugs hang. The surrounding area has been landscaped with plants and shrubs and a fine statue of St Patrick stands nearby (Fitzgerald 1912, 99, photo early twentieth century; Jackson 1979-80, 155-6).

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Too flooded to measure lowest point. Outer area 4m square. Water still but at bottom left water flows out and begins to descend to the larger stream. Going partially underground it emerges from between the rocks 1.95m wide and 0.75m deep.

During what was radical reconstruction the limestone pavement was exposed, and the imprint of the saint lifted into a more exposed position. This imprint was not observed. Sculpture of St Patrick created by Richard Joint.

**Site visit. September 2021:**

The garden area surrounding the well is accessed by a footbridge and a gravelled path runs from here to a central gravelled area. On either side of the path there is a grass lawn with trees and bushes planted at the edges. A memorial plaque to Marigold Susan Plewman, a member of the landowner's family is set in the lawn, near the entrance. The central gravelled area is walled in stone and contains the well. The statue of St Patrick stands in a raised area.

**Saint:**

St Patrick

**Pattern day:**

March 17

**Cure:**

Cures are not specific, and the water can be taken away for use.

**Custom:**

Jackson (1979-80, p.156, no 48) gathered local information from John O'Brien, 1979:

Tradition has it that on St Patrick's way to Tara after landing at Co Wicklow he camped at the foot of Mullaghmast. Some of the local chieftains were converted to Christianity and asked St Patrick to bless the nearest well as was the custom – this being Glashealy Well. From that time up to the nineteenth century a pattern was held celebrating this event. The well became celebrated for numerous cures. Crowds of people came from the surrounding areas to pray and look for cures. In the early nineteenth century faction fights developed at this pattern and it was then discontinued. In recent years it has been revived. It shows the strength of the Patrick tradition that this well is still venerated.

**Associated sites:**

Glassely church (KD031-037001) late medieval church (see history). A cornmill is marked 300m SW of the church and 500m W of the holy well. The 25in map shows a mill race descending from the spring of the well to the mill. Glassely House (1760-1800) is described by the NIAH as a miller's house and has a millstone outside. Although this is later than the medieval period the association of ecclesiastical sites and mills is known from the early medieval period and it has also been observed that waterpower was drawn in many cases from the springs which also formed holy wells (Rynne 2009, 93, 88).

Directly to the south of the barony boundary (700m SW of the well) is the townland of Mullamast, a ritual site possibly dating to the Iron Age, consisting of a large hilltop enclosure 56m dia (KD036008) and a barrow complex now partially non-extant (Fitzgerald 1895, 379-89). It was from here that the Mullamast Stone with late Iron Age carvings, originated (now in NMI). Slice marks on the stone suggest its use as an inauguration stone, perhaps of the Uí Murchada kings of the Uí Dúnlainge group who took this area around the eighth century (Newman 2009, 428-9)

**Cartography:**

'St Patrick's Well' on all historic maps.

**History:**

The church of Glassely was dedicated to St Patrick and in the late medieval period the tithes of Glassely formed a portion of those of the rectory of Norrach, now Narraghmore, which belonged to the nunnery of Tymolynbegg (Timolin) (KD036-025002) (Fitzgerald 1912, 83). 1160 'ic Glais Eille' 'Glass Éille' (glais: stream) (O'Sullivan 1983, Line 46575, Ó Riain 1985, Index), 1212-1228 'Glassely' (Gilbert 1897, 148), 1302-6 Glassely (Sweetnam 1886, 243)

**Relationship with boundaries:**

The well lies 700m NW of the barony border with Kilkea and Moone, however the parish of Narraghmore extends across this boundary.

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

The gate, 400m from the well, is padlocked, but local information suggests that visitors are allowed into the well garden on pattern day. The well and surrounding garden are carefully maintained.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 22 September 2021.

**References:**

Fitzgerald, W., 'Mullaghmast: its history and traditions', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society* 1,6 (1895), 379-90; Fitzgerald, W., 'Glassely and its tenants', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 7,2 (1912), 83-108; Gilbert, J. T., *Crede Mihi, the most ancient record book of the archbishops of Dublin before the Reformation* (Dublin, 1897); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Newman, C. 'The sword in the stone, previously unrecognised archaeological evidence of ceremonies of the Late Iron Age and the early medieval period', Cooney et al (eds), *Relics of old decency: a festschrift for Barry Raftery* (Dublin:2009), 425-36; Ó Riain, P. *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin: 1985); O'Sullivan, A. (ed.), *The book of Leinster, Vol. VI* (Dublin: 1983); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); Rynne, C. 2009, 'Water-power as a factor of industrial location in early medieval Ireland: the environment of the early Irish water mill', *The association for industrial archaeology* (2009), 86-95; Sweetnam, H. S. (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1302-1307* (London, 1886).

## UNNAMED (KE050)



**SMR number:**  
KD035-003002

**Townland:**  
Tyrrellstown

**Barony:**  
Narragh and Reban West

**Co-ordinates:**  
666055 696497

**Parish:**  
Kilberry

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: In a graveyard (KD035-003003), c 14m S of a church (KD035-003001), close to the E bank of the River Barrow.

**Form of well:**

SMR: A natural spring lies in a hollow (dia 10m, D 1.6m) which is defined by a loosely built dry stone wall.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

In a shallow depression 10-12 feet in circumference. Depth at edge 12" in centre 22". The small pond was overgrown but under the grass loose field stones surrounded the pond which had a few stones to access the centre. Sandy bottom obscured by mossy growth. Possibly shallower in summer. There was a run-off stream that passed through the graveyard wall and into the River Barrow immediately over the wall. The run-off was not apparent, but the stream was full.

**Pattern day:**

'There was formerly a pattern held there on St John's Day, 24th June' (Herity 2002, 70). Although the pattern day is mentioned as St John's Day, the name of the well 'Toberara' does not suggest this.

**Custom:**

The well is mostly visited on Sundays. The pilgrims say their own prayers but must tie a piece of cloth to the bushes surrounding the well for a request to be granted or a cure obtained (Jackson 1979-80, 156, No 49).

**Survey:**

Two coins could be seen in the mossy growth. Beside the well was a large tree used as a rag tree. Votive offerings included rosary beads.

**Associated sites:**

A holy tree (KD035-003004) lies at the SW edge of the well (Jackson 1979-80, 156). Just grass-covered remains of church walls which appear to be orientated NS instead of the normal EW. The SMR suggests because church lies on narrow NS ridge in flood plain.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Toberara Well', 25 in: 'Toberara', Third Ed: 'Toberara'

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

Inaccessible from public road. Access across several fields with no path. Local people did not know of well.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, September 2021.

**References:**

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

## ST COLUMKILLE'S WELL (KE051)



**SMR number:**  
KD036-043

**Townland:**  
Moone

**Barony:**  
Kilkea & Moone

**Co-ordinates:**  
678971 692813

**Parish:**  
Moone

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

Incorrectly, Jackson places the well 'in the hollow beneath the ruins of the old church at Moone' and states that the well was supposedly filled in, in the nineteenth century (Jackson 1979-80, 152, No 34). The well lies 109m NE of the church ruin.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Sitting beside a very busy farmyard with modern buildings behind a barbed wire fence out of range of the activity.

**Form of well:**

Surrounded by corbelled structure, but now neglected and overgrown with weeds.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Water depth 0.75m. Internal diameter 1m. Surround wall 0.30m thick. Height 3.25m with domed roof adding another 0.30m. Run off emerged 0.75m from front of well to create a stream. Oval /round well capped with a slab of sedimentary rock greenish tinge. Sat in a grove of trees. The outflow stream leads to the River Greese very close by. Flow is evident when the vegetation was cleared to free the exit but too slow to measure.

The Well is below the level of the farmyard. In the leaf litter 4 slab steps lead down to the well. To the right is a platform, some 3m away levelled with fieldstones with concrete. A small beech grows out of the area.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

The well was completely overgrown, and the landowner had to clear vegetation, so we could photograph it. The features of the well were hidden still under vegetation.

**Saint:**

St Colum Cille

**Pattern day:**

9th June (feast day of Colum Cille)

**Associated sites:**

The well is situated 100m NE of the medieval church.

**Cartography:**

All historic maps 'St Columkille's Well'. 25 in labels 'spring' to the east of the well

**History:**

The Irish name for this site, Maen Colum Cille, shows its original affiliation with the family of Columba. Towards the end of the ninth century the Uí Muiredaig line of Uí Dúnlainge added control of the abbacy of Glendalough to their political ascendancy and asserted Glendalough patronage over sites in south Kildare. Hence Maen Colum Cille appears as a dependency of Glendalough in charters of the later twelfth century (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 148, McNeill 1950, 5). 1040 AFM plundered by Diarmait Máel na mBó in an attack by the Uí Chennselaig on Uí Muiredaig ascendancy.





**Relationship with boundaries:**

Lies 600m W of parish and barony border: Kilkea and Moone and Narragh and Reban West, Moone and Timolin.  
Access, signage, maintenance: The well is on privately owned land and is completely inaccessible without clearing undergrowth. The well is not maintained or visited.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 14 September 2021

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161;  
McNeill, C. (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register, 1172-1534* (Dublin: 1950); Mac Shamhráin, A., *Church and polity in pre-Norman Ireland; the case of Glendalough* (Maynooth: 1996); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).



## ST PATRICK'S WELL (KE052)



**SMR number:**  
KD038-003

**Townland:**  
Belan

**Barony:**  
Kilkea and Moone

**Co-ordinates:**  
677642 690911

**Parish:**  
Belan

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): In very marshy ground. Well stream flows into River Greese. The site was so wet underfoot that it was difficult to find a firm footing.

**Form of well:**

The corbelled structure covering the well may be ornamental in origin and part of the landscaping of Belan Demesne.

**Survey (ibid):**

Oval /round well capped with a domed roof. White sandy bottom. Made of rough cut and round field stone. Flat slabs covered the ground at the front from under which emerged outflow.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

Well in good condition, and as described above. Protected from animals

**Saint:**

St Patrick

**Pattern day:**

No tradition of patterns but local people still visit the well on St Patrick's Day.

**Cure:**

No tradition of cures

**Custom:**

Local tradition that St Patrick baptised people at this well (Jackson 1979-80, 151, No. 26)

**Associated sites:**

Grass-covered wall outline of church (KD038001) 600m to SW. Google Maps shows crop mark of triple ecclesiastical enclosure. On 25in map two mills run off water complex to south of well. The well is 2.3km SW of St Columba's Well at Moone

**Cartography:**

All historic maps: 'St Patrick's Well'

**History:**

975 AU Cath Bithainde. A victory for the Hiberno-Scandinavians of Dublin over the Uí Muiredaig (Uí Dúnlainge); 1540 'Balam' (White 1943, 160).

**Relationship with boundaries:**

Near parish boundaries with Moone and Kildare.

**Access, signage and maintenance:**

Easy to access and can be seen from the road. Well maintained by local people with fence to prevent animal damage.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 14 September 2021

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); White, N., Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions, 1540-41 (London: 1943)

## ST JAMES WELL (KE053)



**SMR number:**  
KD029-005003

**Townland:**  
Coughlanstown West

**Barony:**  
South Naas

**Co-ordinates:**  
689588 710370

**Parish:**  
Coughlanstown

**Extant:**  
Unknown

**Description of site:**

On the edge of a dried-up watercourse, 100m N of the Liffey.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

Area overgrown and blocked by fallen trees. Landowner, aged approximately 40/50, said the well never held water in his lifetime. Not found.

**Saint:**  
St James

**Cure:**  
Famous for cures (Jackson 1979-80, 154, No. 43)

**Custom:**  
The well was a pilgrim destination.

**Schools' Collection:**  
Volume 0776 Page 486-7:

In Coughlanstown graveyard two miles from Ballymore Eustace. It is supposed to have healing powers. There used to be a pilgrimage from the stone cross near Dwyer's cottage to the well – there was a special day for the pilgrimage. No living person remembers the actual pilgrimage. A few still visit the well for cures. Visits: three on different days. Pray and leave some religious object at the well. An old resident says that this stone was being brought by cart to the graveyard at Coughlanstown and the cart broke down at this spot and the stone was left at the side of the road. It is also said that the abbot of the monastery at Coughlanstown used to walk to the spot which was afterwards marked by the stone.

Jackson 1979-80, 154:

'1786 letter from Father Devoy, PP of Ballymore Eustace to the Archbishop of Dublin, concerning Coughlanstown church (Ballymore Eustace Echo, Vol. 11, January 1976):

The site is along the Liffey, West of Ballymore, and is marked by a cemetery and the ruins of a substantial late medieval church.....The pedestal of a memorial cross blazoned with the arms of Eustace, Lord Portlester, 1462 and the base of a large cross, the shaft of which now stands in the roadway, some distance nearer Ballymore. The church was built around 1173 and one hundred years later assigned to the nuns at Graney.

Fr Devoy goes on to report that St James' Well was famous for its cures and there were several springs at the foot of the mound at the West of the church. The local tradition says that the church was founded by monks from Santiago de Compostella in Spain. They are also said to have given their name to the townland of Yago which is nearby'.

**Associated sites:**

The well is within an ecclesiastical enclosure (KD029-005003) which appears to be partly formed by the dried riverbed in cartographic evidence. A late medieval church (KD029-005001) is to the NE of the well. The crossbase with mortice (KD025-005005) lies to the NNE of the NE corner of the church and the shaft with Eustace, Lord Portlester (KD025-005007) is set in a possible font in the blocked S doorway of the church. 800m to the E at the side of the road stands a plain granite cross (KD029-006), H 1.33m.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: not named, 25in and Final Edition: 'St James Well'

**History:**

c 1172-6 Ballicutlane (McNeill 1950, 2), affiliated to Glendalough.

**Relationship with boundaries:**

A parish of two townlands: borders Ballymore Eustace and Carnalway

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161;  
McNeill, C. (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register, 1172-1534* (Dublin: 1950); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## TUBBER-MOLIN OR ST MOLING'S WELL (KE054)



**SMR number:**  
KD028-025

**Co-ordinates:**  
684186 709510

**Description of site:**

SMR: In narrow, landscaped public park along the S bank of the River Liffey.

**Form of well:**

SMR: A small spring well issues from beneath a modern limestone sculpture by Fr Henry Flanagan. An adjoining plaque commemorates the reconstruction of the well and the unveiling of the sculpture in 1977.

**Survey (Pegley 2008-9):**

First well: water emerges from a rock and flows down into a shallow basin which does not collect the water which then flows across a paved area. Second well: another rock out of which flows either the water from the first well or fresh water into a shallow pool. This water flows into a small stream and into the Liffey. The whole riverside area was restored in 1977. At the first split rock 'well' a sculpture was created by Fr. Henry Flanagan and depicts St Brigid feeding the poor with bread.

**Site visit: September 2021:**

Well as described in SMR and 2008-9 Survey (Pegley).

**Name:**

'Went by the name of Tubber-molin or St Moling's Well (Fitzgerald 1901, 317). Also attributed to St Brigid (Jackson 1979-80, 151, No 24).

**Saint:**

Moling or Brigid

**Pattern day:**

February 1st, the feastday of Brigit (Jackson 1979-80, 151).

**Cure:**

Survey: There are no cures associated with the well.

**Custom:**

Site visit, September 2021: There was a Mass card at the well so it is still venerated.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: not marked, 25in and Third Ed: 'Holy Well'

**History:**

St Moling is associated with Ferns: there is a St Moling's well at Kilmalin, Powerscourt in Co Dublin. On the First Edition the Catholic chapel is to the SE of the well but by the time of the 25in map (around 1899) the more recent Catholic church (St Brigid's) is just to the W of the well. Perhaps it was at the time of the construction of the late nineteenth-century Catholic church that the attribution of the well changed to Brigid.

**Access, signage, maintenance:**

Access very easy as in a public park and carefully maintained.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 13 September 2021

**References:**

Fitzgerald, W., 'New abbey of Kilcullen', 3,5 (1901), 301-317; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).



## ST JOHN'S WELL (KE055)



**SMR number:**  
KD028-038022

**Townland:**  
Knockaulin

**Barony:**  
Kilcullen

**Co-ordinates:**  
681906 708071

**Parish:**  
Kilcullen

**Extant:**  
No

**Description of site:**

On a N-facing pasture slope in the NW sector of Dun Ailinne, a ceremonial enclosure (KD028-038001).

**Form of well:**

Ordnance Survey Letters (1837) the well 'was formerly frequented as a holy well, but is now dry' (Herity 2002, 67). A later account recalls 'Unfortunately, as this is the only water supply on the hill, and the well is unprotected, cattle resort to it and have turned it into a muddy lough' (Omurethi 1905, 363). It now survives as a small dry hollow (Jackson 1979-80, 150, No.25).

**Site visit, September 2021:**

All that remains of the well is a muddy hollow in the field with unworked stones beside it and no trace of water.

**Saint:**

St John

**Pattern day:**

24th June

**Cure:**

(Omurethi 1905, 362):

This well to be resorted to for cures and that he has seen rags tied to the briers overhanging it and sticks and crutches lying about, left there by people who had been cured of the rheumatism after performing stations at the well.

The Schools' Collection, Volume 0780, Page 229:

St. John's well is situated on Knockaulinn. It is said anyone who goes there, on St. John's Eve and dips his face into the water, shall never get a disease

**Associated sites:**

The well is on the slope of Knockaulin (Cnoc Ailinne), an early assembly place of the Leinster kings. The site was excavated and provided radiocarbon dates of 320 BC to AD 400 for the main ceremonial phase although there was Neolithic and Bronze Age evidence (Wailes and Johnston 2007). Kilcullen ecclesiastical site lies 1.4km to the SE. The curve of the townland may represent the previous enclosure. A medieval church, two high cross shafts and a round tower are witness to the importance of the site.

**Cartography:**

'St John's Well' on all historic maps.

**History:**

Kilcullen is associated in the Tripartite life of Patrick with Mac Tail, possibly one of Patrick's three smiths. Mac Tail is of the Uí Bairrche and is also recorded as the anmchara (soulfriend) of Brigid thus appealing to both Armagh and Kildare.



**Access, signage, maintenance:**

Access relatively easy across fields. Dried up so therefore no maintenance

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 13 September 2021.

**References:**

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Johnston, S. and Wailes, B. *Dun Ailinne: Excavations at an Irish Royal Site, 1968-75* (Philadelphia: 2007); Omurethi, 'Knockaulin', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 4,5 (1905) 359-365; The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## ST JOHN'S WELL (KE056)



**SMR number:**  
KD038-053

**Townland:**  
Saintjohns

**Barony:**  
Kilkea and Moone

**Co-ordinates:**  
678401 685641

**Parish:**  
Castledermot

**Extant:**  
No

**Description of site:**

Covered for two years in 1979 (Jackson 1979-80, 151, No.30)

**Survey:**

Appears to have been built over by new housing estate called St John.

**Saint:**

St John

**Pattern day:**

24th June

**Associated sites:**

The well lies 300m NE of the remaining tower associated with the Priory and Hospital of St John the Baptist (KD038-045001). Possibly influence on name of well.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'St John's Well', 25in: 'St John's Well' and 'Spring', Third Ed: 'St John's Well'

**History:**

The earliest reference to the Priory is 1284 (Sweetnam 1875-86, ii, no 2340). The townland name refers to the land of the Priory.

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Sweetnam, H. S. (ed.), Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1252-1284 (London, 1883).



## ST JAMES WELL OR ABBEY WELL (KE057)



**SMR number:**  
KD040-002006

**Townland:**  
Abbeyland

**Barony:**  
Kilkea and Moone

**Co-ordinates:**  
678168 684791

**Parish:**  
Castledermot

**Extant:**  
Yes

### **Description of site:**

SMR: Neglected and no longer visited. Site visit in September 2021, describes well as dry but in good structural order.

### **Form of well:**

Mortared stone walls and below ground level accessed by steps.

### **Saint:**

St James

### **Custom:**

No traditions associated with the well (Jackson 1979-80, 150)

### **Associated sites:**

In grounds of Franciscan friary church (KD040-002005)

### **Cartography:**

First ed: 'St James Well or Abbey Well', 25in: 'Well', Third Ed: 'Well'

### **Access, signage, maintenance:**

At this time, entrance to the Abbey and therefore the well, is prohibited. This is due to Board of Works renovation processes commenced this year and which are ongoing. Access to the Abbey and therefore the holy well is by arrangement to collect key to entrance gate from a neighbour who lives next door to the Abbey. He is a Mr. Horgan.

### **Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 18 September 2021.

### **References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161.



## TOBERNABREADAN (KE058)



**SMR number:**  
KD040-005

**Townland:**  
Abbeyland

**Barony:**  
Kilkea and Moone

**Co-ordinates:**  
678024 684483

**Parish:**  
Castledermot

**Extant:**  
No

**Description of site:**

The field is now drained and there are no surface traces of the well.

**Name:**

'Tobernabreadan well' (the well of the salmon)

**Custom:**

No tradition of a fish living in the well. Tradition that water used by monks in Franciscan Priory 400m to NW (KD040-005002). Seems unlikely as river intervenes (Jackson 1979-80, 152)

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Tobernabreadan Well', 25in 'Tobernabreadan Well (site of)', Third Ed: 'Tobernabreadan Well (site of)

**Access, Signage, Maintenance:**

The well no longer exists and no trace of it was seen.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, September 2021

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161.

## ST PATRICK'S WELL (KE059)



**SMR number:**  
KD040-01002

**Townland:**  
Knockpatrick

**Barony:**  
Kilkea and Moone

**Co-ordinates:**  
681476 685244

**Parish:**  
Graney

**Extant:**  
No: covered.

**Description of site:**

In graveyard, now covered over but still visible (Jackson 1979-80, 152, No 32).

**Site visit, September 2021:**

Graveyard SE summit slope of Knockpatrick with views from that aspect.

**Form of well:**

Site visit, September 2021: The graveyard was carefully maintained and frequently visited. A local person maintaining the area informed researcher that Mass was said there every June in honour of Mary. There is a shelter for the altar which also contains pews. The GPS co-ordinates led to a small square patch of ground marked by a low white chain and posts. This seems likely to be the position of the well although, according to the local informant, the locals had not heard of it despite their families being buried there for two generations. The earthfast boulder with imprints was not located.

**Saint:**

St Patrick

**Pattern day:**

17th March

**Custom:**

'Traditionally the person who choked up the well is called Haddaway. He was the proprietor and objected to the concourse of people across his lands. He filled in the well with clay and boulders. As a result of this he grew a tail. This caused him much discomfort as he was fond of hunting and had to have a special bag made, attached to his saddle, to accommodate the tail' (Fitzgerald 1896. 324-5; Jackson 1979-80, 152).

**Associated sites:**

The well is in a graveyard (KD040-010002) which also contained an earthfast boulder with supposed imprints of Patrick's feet (not on SMR). This boulder, with Knockpatrick hill to the north could suggest rounds. A large enclosure (KD040-008), 55m dia, lies 100m to the NNW of the graveyard and a further, roughly triangular, enclosure (KD040-009) c.70m dia, just 78 m to the W. A kidney shaped enclosure (KD040-073), c. 80 x 45m dia, is 155m to the S. This last was identified on Google earth aerial imagery, 14.7.2018. The presence of these large, subcircular enclosures very close to a hill dedicated to Patrick could suggest an early ritual landscape, perhaps associated with assembly.

**Cartography:**

Not marked on historic maps

**Relationship with boundaries:**

the graveyard lies 2.3km from the county boundary of Kildare with Carlow and Wicklow.

**Access, signage and maintenance:**

Graveyard accessible by maintained path. On private agricultural land but owner allows access. Carefully maintained by local group.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 22 September 2021.

**References:**

Fitzgerald, W., 'Miscellanea: Knockpatrick', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 2,1 (1896) 324-5; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-16.

## MARY'S WELL (KE060)



**SMR number:**  
KD040-014

**Townland:**  
Graney East

**Barony:**  
Kilkea and Moone

**Co-ordinates:**  
681676 684010

**Parish:**  
Graney

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Description of site:**

SMR: In a corner of the owner's garden.

**Form of well:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): S shaped depression at the head of which is a large lintel like stone 1.21m long approximately 0.25m deep. Water was 0.18m deep. Dry in summer. Filled with dead vegetation and surrounded by common field grasses. Gravel bottom with two large rocks on either side. No run-off.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

The well was overgrown, and owner not interested in clearing growth or allowing visitation beyond once a year.

**Name:**

Known locally as 'Mary's Well'

**Saint:**

Mary

**Custom:**

Still visited and kept clean: OSL, 1837 (Herity 2002)

**Associated sites:**

Situated close to site of nunnery (KD040-015). Excavation at the nunnery site revealed female skeletons (KD040-051: note that this is wrongly placed on the SMR, it should lie in the vicinity of KD040-015 and is placed 200m SW of it. There is a millrace marked on the First Edition map and a flour mill in ruins (KD040-043). This mill contains both architectural remnants perhaps from the nunnery and also evidence of an earlier mill, perhaps that mentioned in the Civil Survey 1654. This earlier mill may well have replaced a mill operated by the nunnery, indicating the relationship between holy wells and mills, as the millrace leaves the Graney River 50m upstream from the holy well.

**Cartography:**

The well is not marked on First Edition and Final Edition maps but is marked 'Well' on 25in map. The nunnery is marked 'Site of nunnery and graveyard' on First Edition and 'Nunnery (in ruins) on 25in and Final Edition.

**History:**

Supposedly a carved stone, known as the 'Greek Stone' at well till 1875. Destroyed with sledgehammer by local blacksmith who went insane (Fitzgerald 1891, 42). The nunnery, St Mary's of Graney, was founded by Walter de Riddlesford I c. 1200 (Brooks 1951, 117).

**Survey:**

Rather neglected looking. The family who have lived in the house since 1902 say it has not been used as a holy well in that time.



**Access, signage and maintenance:**

The well is overgrown. Access not encouraged by owner.

**Site visit:**

24 September 2021, Desmond Travers.

**References:**

Fitzgerald, W., 'Notes and queries: Graney', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 1, 1 (1891) 42; Herity, M. (ed.), *Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare* (Dublin: 2002); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); St John Brooks, E., 'The De Ridelsfords', *Journal of the Royal Irish Society of Antiquaries* (1951), 115-138.

## UNNAMED (KE061)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR

**Parish:**

Dunfierth

**Extant:**

Yes

**Townland:**

Dysart

**Barony:**

Carbury

**Description of site:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): The field slopes and the spring emerges on the lower end facing north discharging into the ditch but it appears from the soil to have contributed to a lake which has now become semi dry. to the east it is marshy and to the right dry enough to plough. Physically the land is divided into a brown clay and a black peat like soil. According to Le Chéile (2001) it is a warm spring and the 2008-9 Survey recorded 14°C.

**Form of well:**

Stream emerging from steel well head.

**Saint:**

Fulartach of Dysart (Ó Riain 2011, 356)

**Pattern day:**

29th March or 21st December (ibid.)

**Cartography:**

'Water' marked Third Ed, 175 m NW of Dysart House. 25in 'Spring', 679165 738177: 400m NW of Dysart House; 'Spring', 678943 737985: 500m W of Dysart House.

**History:**

Fulartach is mentioned in the Martyrologies (Martyrology of Gorman, 64, 242) and in the notes to 29th March, associated with the non-extant ecclesiastical site: Dysart (Ó Dísert Fulartaig). The toponym dísert is associated with asceticism referencing the retreats of the Desert Fathers (Ó Riain 2011, 356). Fulartach or a namesake was also, evidently, a bishop of Clonfad in Co Meath.

**References:**

McEvoy, T., (ed.), 'Hot springs and holy wells' (2001), Historical Extracts from Le Chéile, 1974-2001 (Clane Local History Group); Ó Riain, P., Dictionary of Irish saints (Dublin: 2011); Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9); Stokes, W. (ed. and trans.) Féilire hUí Ghormáin (London: 1895).

## ST THOMAS (KE062)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR Jackson  
1979-80, 153, No 36)

**Parish:**

Kineagh (Jackson  
has this incorrectly as  
Tankardstown)

**Barony:**

Kilkea and Moone

**Extant:**

No

**Townland:**

Tankardstown

**Description of site:**

Mentioned in OSL letters as being a holy well (Herity 2002; Jackson 1979-80, 153, No 36)

**Saint:**

St Thomas

**Pattern day:**

Feastday of St Thomas the apostle is July 3rd.

**Associated sites:**

There is a sub-circular field boundary on all historic maps, which could possibly represent a non-extant ecclesiastical site. On the 25in map there is a spring marked 32m to the NW of this, which may represent the well.

**Cartography:**

Not on historic maps

**Relationship with boundaries:**

The townland of Tankardstown is not close to the Offaly border as stated in the Survey. The closest county boundary, to the south, is Carlow. It is adjacent to the townland of Corballis, where there was well of St James (KE069, this catalogue).

**References:**

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161.

## UNNAMED (KE063)

**SMR number:**

KD012-008 (listed as  
Bullaun stone)

**Co-ordinates:**

669495 729999

**Parish:**

Kilpatrick

**Extant:**

Yes

**Townland:**

Ticknevin

**Barony:**

Carbury

**Description of site:**

SMR: On level pasture c. 110m NW of a ruined medieval church (KD012-012001)

**Form of well:**

SMR: A circular hollow (dia 0.4m; D 0.25m) in a natural rock outcrop is known locally as the 'Wart Well'.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

On private land, not accessible to the public.

**Saint:**

Brigid

**Cure:**

It must be visited three times; a pin is left at the first and second visits and at the third visit the pins and warts will have disappeared (Jackson 1979-80, 147, No 9). An interpretive explanation of the pin is that visits to holy wells were for cure or penitence and 'that devotees felt they were detaching themselves from their physical or spiritual ailments probably explains the particular nature of the objects they left behind at holy wells. ...the emphasis on 'detachment' or 'unfastening' could be represented by leaving behind objects that would normally be removed during a process of unfastening – like nails, pins, buttons' (Carroll 1999, 34)

**Custom:**

Traditionally the well appeared after St Brigid's horse left a hoofmark in the stone.

**Associated sites:**

'Roman Catholic chapel' (KD012012001)

**History:**

Logainm.ie translates Ticknevin as Tighe Mhic Neamháin. Tighe or Teach can represent a church which keeps relics of a saint and the name indicates the saint is the son of Neamháin. The Life of Colmán of Lynn mentions the church as Teach Mochua, so Mochua is the saint's name (Meyer 1911, 34 line 35, Ó Riain 2011, 470). It is mentioned around 1200 in Acallamh na Senorach: 'Fúath thighe Mhic Caémhain' (Ní Sneadghna 1942-5, III, 163). Fúath is a spectre. Éidchéan of Clonfad is also attached to Ticknevin, which is noteworthy as there is an association between Fulartach of Dysart and Clonfad. It is a chapel of Brigid in the seventeenth century (de hÓir 1966-67, 33). Relationship with boundaries: The townland of Ticknevin is adjacent to the county border between Kildare and Offaly and the barony boundary between Carbury and Coolestown.

**Access, signage and maintenance:**

On private land, no public access. No signage.

**Site visit:**

Louise Callan, 29 September 2021.

**References:**

Carroll, M.P., Irish pilgrimage: holy wells and popular Catholic devotion (Baltimore: 1999); de hÓir, É, 'Blúire Cillsheanchais faoi Fhairche Chill Dara', Dinnseanchas 2 (1966-67) 29-39; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Meyer, K., Betha Colmán maic Lúacháin; the life of Colmán son of Lúacháin (London; 1911); Ó Riain, P., Dictionary of Irish saints (Dublin: 2011); Ní Sneadghna N. (ed.), Acallamh na Senórach (Dublin: 1942-45).



## UNNAMED (KE064)



The Survey (Pegley 2008-9) records two further wells in this townland but gives the same co-ordinates for all three. This well and KE065, below are probably spa wells rather than holy wells.

**Co-ordinates:**  
669220 730094

**Parish:**  
Kilpatrick

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Townland:**  
Ticknevin

**Barony:**  
Carbury

### **Description of site:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): Second 'well' site was in approximately the area indicated by the map. It was under a hawthorn tree. Several large rocks were located at the base of the tree from which the water seems to flow.

### **Form of well:**

One metre diameter puddle of water. No water higher up in the ditch like depression but may be hidden underground

### **Associated sites:**

The spring is 300m WNW of the wart well (KE063 this catalogue)

### **Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Mineral Spring', 25in, Third Ed: not marked

### **Relationship with boundaries:**

Ticknevin next to county and barony boundary between Offaly and Kildare and Carbery and Coolestown

### **References:**

Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

**DERRYMILLER WELL (KE065)**

The Survey records two further wells in this townland but gives the same co-ordinates for all three. This well and KE064 above, are probably spa wells rather than holy wells.

**Co-ordinates:**  
668705 729544

**Parish:**  
Kilpatrick

**Extant:**  
Yes

**Townland:**  
Ticknevin

**Barony:**  
Carbury

**Description of site:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): The third possible site was closer to the river was also very much what one would expect from a holy well. It had the appearance of a sacred grove with three hawthorn trees surrounding an arrangement of stones. Water flowed out of the stones. Between the trees and the river there was a natural flat area.

**Form of well:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): Semi-circular area of trees. Rocks piled up creating a bank with the rocky pool at the base of approximately one metre in diameter.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: 'Derrymiller Well, Mineral Spring', 25in and Third Ed: 'Derrymiller Well (Chalybeate)'

**References:**

Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).

## UNNAMED (KE066)



This well is not recorded by Jackson and there is no record of a well in Mainham townland on the SMR. However, Jackson does record a well in the neighbouring townland of Castlebrowne or Clongowes (1979-80, 147, No 12). This was known as 'The Boiling Well' but local people said it was not known for cures and had been covered by reclamation. It sounds like a spa well from this description There is a spring marked on the 25in which could be it 686248 729090. Perhaps the Survey (Pegley 2008-9) was confusing the two townlands.

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR

**Parish:**

Mainham

**Extant:**

No

**Townland:**

Mainham

**Barony:**

lkeathy and Oughterany

**Description of site:**

Survey (Pegley 2008-9): Only a depression remains at the base of the moat (this is the fosse surrounding the motte in Mainham: KD014-007001).

**Associated sites:**

There is a motte and bailey (KD014-007001) and a medieval church with two towers, one later (KD014-006003).

**Cartography:**

No well is marked on historic maps

**History:**

There is a reference to the church 'ecclesia Sanctae Mariae de Moynau' in the seventeenth century list of churches associated with Brigid (de hÓir 1966-67, 33). O'Donovan in the OSL opines that the townland name is an Irish saint's name, but the associated sites and the name of the church suggest no earlier than Anglo-Norman.

**Relationship with boundaries:**

On barony and parish boundary, lkeathy and Oughterany and Clane and Mainham and Clane

**References:**

de hÓir, É, 'Blúire Cillsheanchais faoi Fhairche Chill Dara', Dinnseanchas 2 (1966-67)29-39; Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9).



## ST BRIGID (KE067)



**SMR number:**  
KD014-020  
(Categorised as  
'Well')

**Co-ordinates:**  
687872 727908

**Townland:**  
Capdoo Commons

**Parish:**  
Clane

**Barony:**  
Clane

**Extant:**  
No, covered

### Description of site:

SMR: Located in a field on the Dublin Road, just outside the village (Jackson gives no map reference and identifies the townland incorrectly as Clane). It is not associated with any pattern or tradition and is disused (Jackson 1979-80, 148, No. 14). The Digital Globe map on Archaeology.ie shows it in wooded green area between two housing complexes.

### Survey (2008-9):

Locals who were familiar with the well reported no cures but that the well was frequented by people until its closure. Neighbours pointed out where it was once located now built over by a large housing estate c.1995.

### Saint:

St Brigid (Jackson 1979-80, 148)

### Associated sites:

The ecclesiastical site of Cluain Damh, also known as Claenadh and Claenath (KD014-026017), was founded by Ailbe of Emly but also associated with Senchill (obit 549), lies 400m to the SW (Comerford 1886, 98)

### Cartography:

First Ed: Not marked, 25in: 'Spring', Third Ed: 'St Brigid's'

### References:

Comerford, M., Collections relating to the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin, Vol. II (Dublin: 1886); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Pegley, S. 'Survey of the holy wells and thermal springs of counties Kildare and Meath' (Unpublished report for Kildare and Meath County Councils: 2008-9)

## UNNAMED (KE068)



In the townland of Clonagh there are six wells marked on the First Edition map: these are spa wells as they appear not to be associated with any ecclesiastical site and are not categorised as holy wells by SMR or Jackson (see below in History)

### Co-ordinates:

In the north of the townland Bealane Well 672615 739397

To the west of the townland two very close Sallow Wells 671774 738803 and 671779 738793 and a further one Rock Well marked on First Edition 671769 738824 but on 25in and Third 671886 738666

To the southeast of the townland Ballinwall Well 673216 738353 and Largan Well 673507 738193

### Townland:

Clonagh

### Parish:

Cadamstown

### Barony:

Carbury

### Extant:

No

### Associated sites:

There was possibly an ecclesiastical site (KD003-020) in the townland dedicated to St Fiontain. An Inquisition of 1608 at Naas records: 'John Lye of Rathbride, gent., being seized of diverse lands in the townland of Clonagh, levelled the tenements, bounds and limits of said religious house, threw down the cross and trees and erected a tower or small castle (KD003-017) with other buildings' (O'Leary 1896, 135-38). The precise locations of the religious house, cross and burial ground are unknown, but it seems logical that they would be near the towerhouse. However, with a dedication to St Fiontain, an Irish saint it seems likely it was an ecclesiastical site rather than a foundation of the continental orders. The wells are 700m distanced from the towerhouse.

### Cartography:

First Ed: 'Bealane Well', 'Rockwell', 'Sallow Wells', 'Ballinwall Well', 'Largan Well'

25in: 'Spring' 'Rock Well' 'Sallow Wells', Not marked, 'Largan Well'

Third Ed: Not marked, Rock Well', 'Sallow Wells', Not marked, 'Largan Well'

### History:

Jackson lists 'Tober an Urnaighe' (Jackson 1979-80, p. 148, No. 16) in the townland of Clonagh but says 'no longer regarded as a holy well' (Le Chéile, 1979). It is possible that one of the wells listed above is this well.

### References:

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Le Chéile, 1979, Clane Parish Magazine; O'Leary, E., 'John Lye of Clonaugh, Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 2, 2 (1896) 133-150.

## UNNAMED (KE069)



**SMR number:**  
KD037-020  
(categorised 'Well')

**Co-ordinates:**  
670095 689200

**Townland:**  
Grangemellon

**Parish:**  
Tankardstown  
(part of)

**Barony:**  
Kilkea and Moone

**Extant:**  
Unknown

**Form of well:**

'a swampy piece of ground with a dangerous boghole or quicksand at its centre' (Weldon 1891-6, 99).

**Survey:**

Well in a flooded area not accessible.

**Associated sites:**

St Leger's castle was levelled in 1840 and its Jacobean gatehouse (KD 037-010) in 1971. The gatehouse was said to mirror the house and had two octagonal towers, so the house may have been fortified (Weldon 1891-5, 96). Only visible remains brick faced orchard and garden walls.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: Not marked, 25in and Third Ed: 'Lady's Well' and pond outlined.

**History:**

The SMR suggests it may have been part of the pleasure gardens of St Leger's Castle (non-extant) (KD037-011). However, it is marked 'Lady's Well' on the 25in and Third Ed. Also, the area is titled 'Kilmorony Demesne' on the 25in and Third Ed but this refers to the estate of Sir Anthony Walden, descended from the St Legers, which extended to both sides of the river. The possibility of this being a monastic farm (grange) is borne out by a reference to the prioress of Timolin being seized of land in Grangemellon in 1538 at the time of the suppression of the monasteries and also the Dominican abbey of Athy (Weldon 1892, 97). Land possessed by the continental orders was often previously part of the estates of early medieval ecclesiastical sites (Flanagan 2010, 132). Unfortunately, centuries as a landed secular estate have erased all evidence of an early ecclesiastical site in Grangemellon.

**References:**

Flanagan, M.T., The transformation of the Irish church in the twelfth century (Suffolk: 2010); Weldon, A. A., 'A slight sketch of Grangemellon and the story of St Leger's castle', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 1, 2 (1892), 95-101.

## ST JAMES WELL (KE070)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR (Jackson 1979-80, 152, No 33).

**Townland:**

Corballis

**Barony:**

Kilkea and Moone

**Parish:**

Kineagh

**Extant:**

No

**Description of site:**

The well lies on the road to Corballis Castle, no longer extant. It was still used in 1837 but was no longer considered holy (Jackson 1979-80, 152, No 33). On the 25in there is a spring marked 100m NW of the castle (681825 686751); perhaps this was the well.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

Despite consultations with the parish priest, locals and local historians it was not possible to find any evidence of the holy well at Corballis.

**Saint:**

St James

**Pattern day:**

Fraughan Sunday (last Sunday in July, fraughan: bilberry), there was a Lughnasa festival on Fraughan Hill (Corballis Hill). The informant to OSL does not mention the well so it is not known if it played a role in this festival (Herity 2002). It may be relevant that the feastday of St James is July 25th.

The Schools' Collection, Volume 0781 Page 292-4; Fitzgerald 1905, 370-1:

There is a well beyond the so-called castle ruins, and a quarter of a mile from Peter Nolan's house, called Cashin's Well and sometimes St James's Well, which, though not now held in veneration, was once a Blessed Well. A predecessor of the Nolans (who were in Corbally long before '98) and tenant of the farm, wanted to cut down a large white-thorn bush which grew beside the well, for firing. For this purpose, he left his house which is round the shoulder of the hill, and not visible from the well, and came to the bush. Just as he was about to use the hatchet on it, he saw a bright glare where his house stood, and, thinking it was on fire, threw down the hatchet, and ran back to the house, which, however, he discovered to be safe, and without a sound or smell of fire about it. Wondering to himself at this strange occurrence, he returned to the bush, and on taking up the hatchet again the same glare occurred. Exclaiming, "Be the living tinker, fire or no fire, I'll have ye down" he did not stop working till he had felled the thorn. When next he got back to his house, he found it and his haggard a smouldering greeshach, with nothing but the cracked walls standing.

**Associated sites:**

There are the foundations of a small church 12m x 6m (KD038-048, 682199 686563) separated from the graveyard by a road. The graveyard (KD 038-048001) appears to have the remains of a circular enclosure. It is described as a burial ground for unbaptised children at the beginning of the twentieth century (Fitzgerald 1905, 370). This is 400m SE of the spring mentioned above.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: Not marked, 25in and Third Ed: 'Church (in ruins)' and 'Burial ground'

**History:**

1285: 'Corbally' (McNeill 1950), 1302-6: 'Corbaly (Chapel of)' (Sweetnam 1886, 243).

**Access, signage and maintenance:**

No information from local people.

**Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 26 September 2021.

**References:**

Fitzgerald, W., 'Miscellaneous: Corbally Hill', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 4, 5 (1905), 370-1; Herity, M. (ed.), *Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare* (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; McNeill, C. (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register, 1172-1534* (Dublin: 1950); Sweetnam, H. S. (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1302-1307* (London:1886); The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>





## FATHER BATTY'S WELL (KE071)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR (Jackson 1979-80, 147: No 13)

**Co-ordinates:**

687669 727675

**Townland:**

Clane

**Parish:**

Clane

**Barony:**

Clane

**Extant:**

No

**Description of site:**

'...part of the stream in the convent field' (ibid).

**Form of well:**

'Rather overgrown but still visible'(ibid). On Digital Globe aerial photo, the convent field appears to be still undeveloped.

**Pattern day:**

No longer visited

**Cure:**

Toothache

**Cartography:**

First Ed: Not marked, 25in: 'Well', Third Ed: Not marked

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161.

## TOBERINN (KE072)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR (Jackson 1979-80, 147: No 19)

**Co-ordinates:**

673490 726927 (see 'Description of site' below)

**Townland:**

Allenwood North

**Parish:**

Kilmeague

**Barony:**

Connell

**Extant:**

No

**Description of site:**

'The well is situated in a field known as Toberinn field'. The Digital Globe aerial photo shows the area marked 'Well' on 25in map to be undeveloped rough pasture. A considerable amount of the northern part of the townland of Allenwood North is now cutover bog.

**Custom:**

'Moved location because a woman washed dirty clothes in it' (The Schools' Collection: Volume 774 page 276-277).

**Cartography:**

First Ed: not marked, 25in: 'Well', Third Ed: not marked. The area surrounding the well is marked 'The Doon' on 25in and Final Edition.

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## TOBER NA CROSS (KE073)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR (Jackson 1979-80, 155: No 44)

**Co-ordinates:**

692419 709417

**Townland:**

Ballymore Eustace West

**Parish:**

Ballymore Eustace

**Barony:**

Naas South

**Description of site:**

'One passing reference in the Ordnance Survey Letters 1837' (ibid)

**Associated sites:**

There was a bullaun stone situated previously 259m to the NW which now appears to be an ornament in a front yard about 80m W of the well.

**Cartography:**

First Ed: not marked, 25in and Third Ed: 'Tobernagross'

**References:**

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161.

## FATHER MOORE'S WELL (KE074)



**SMR number:**  
Not on SMR

**Townland:**  
Rathbride

**Barony:**  
Offaly East

**Co-ordinates:**  
675235 716388

**Parish:**  
Tully

**Extant:**  
Yes

### Description of site:

Surrounded by trees, there are two wells, Father Moore's Well and the Black Well. The Black Well is the outflow from the spring at the main well and lies c.10m NW of the main well.

### Form of well:

Site visit, September 2021: The well is round with three flat stones across its diameter. It is surrounded by a white wall about a metre high with pale blue capstones. The well complex is entered by a pale blue wrought iron gate and a short path leads to a shrine of Mary with Jesus in her arms.

### Cure:

Local information: To effect a cure people visit the well three times, usually on Fridays and Sundays, although the visits can be made on any day. In former times pilgrims made the rounds by first going to the well and praying there for a while, they then went across the field to his house and went around it clockwise, praying at each of the four corners of the house. While praying they rubbed the corner stones of the house, usually making the sign of the cross on the stones. They then returned to the well and went three times round the well from North to South, bathing the afflicted part in the water the third time. On the third visit an offering of some sort was left at the well. Sometimes crutches or walking sticks were left behind, or, more usually, holy medals, rosary beads or small statues.

In the short RTE film about the well pilgrims put their fingers in the water, made the sign of the cross and then proceeded across the three flat stones in the well.

A local family keep Fr Moore's hat which is a black silk chimney hat. Those suffering from headaches may put it on and say a few prayers and the headache will be cured (Local information: see full account of this in section of Report: 'Father Moore's Well').

### Custom:

According to legend Father Moore became famous for his curative powers during his lifetime and this caused a confrontation with the bishop and other clergy in his diocese. In some versions he remains in the parish as a healer and in others he is exiled. One version of how the well originated is:

Father Moore's mother who was a widow was very sad at the prospect of her son leaving the district. He promised her that people would always call to the house even though he was gone. He went out into the garden and blessed a sally tree. Immediately the well sprang up at the foot of the tree. Fr. Moore said that people who visited the well and the house three times would be cured on condition that they prayed for his parents and that people should visit the well when passing (Fitzgerald 1914, 329; Mrs Ella Jackson pers. comm)

A further explanation of the appearance of the well is from the Schools' Collection, Volume 0778, page 15: Fr Moore was a curate someplace near the Curragh and he lived with an old parish priest. There was always some disagreement between the priests and on one occasion the old priest told the younger one that he had heard he was very negligent in his priestly duties. Fr Moore was very annoyed at this accusation and told the old priest that he would prove his innocence the next day.

When morning arrived, the young curate went out into a small field and erected a small wooden altar in the corner next the road. The parish priest and two acolytes were present and before he commenced to say holy Mass Fr. Moore requested of the acolytes that they should not light the candles. On going up to the altar he breathed on them and they ignited immediately. When holy Mass was over he breathed on them again and quenched them.



After the old parish priest told Fr Moore that he had proved to him that the accusations which he had received were entirely false and from that day onwards a mutual friendship existed between the two of them.

A blessed well now marks the field in which holy Mass was celebrated and it is called Fr. Moore's well.

A different version is in the Schools' Collection, Volume 0776 page 277:

The bishop of the diocese ordered Fr. Moore to be silenced so that before doing so Fr. Moore asked for one favour which the bishop granted him. At any rate, he went up to the altar and lit all the candles on it. He then said that the person who could put out the candles with one blow could silence him and he was saved.

He was a great man to help those who were sick and he oftentimes performed wonderful cures. The parish priest did not like him to do this and forbade him to do it. Still, he continued to go on foot, late at night and perform his cures.

Jackson 1979-80, 143 gives a story of desecration of the well and explanation of the three stones in it:

After the house was knocked down by the then owner of the land there is a story that the stones from the house were used in the building of nearby stables. The owner of the stables was a protestant and had no respect for the well. After the stables were built, three stones from the building used to jump out of the wall every night. The owner insisted on their being replaced and as a result the horses in the stable went mad. When the owner persisted in keeping the stones, he went mad himself and cut his throat. After this his family returned the stones to the well. They now form three stepping-stones across the well.

The well is still visited several times a day and a member of the Father Moore's Well Memorial Committee, indicated to the Project researcher that this was normal practice. Many cures are attested, up to the present day.

#### **Associated sites:**

There is a rag tree, very well-maintained with flowers in pots around it about 10m from the well. Also in a nearby field are four stone uprights which mark the position of Fr Moore's homeplace.

#### **Cartography:**

First Ed: not marked, 25in: 'Father Moore's Well', Third Ed: not marked

#### **History:**

Father Moore was a curate in parish of Allen during the latter part of the eighteenth century.....He died in 1803 and is buried in the graveyard at Allen (Jackson 1979-80, 143). See KE075 below for a possible predecessor to Father Moore's well.

#### **Access, signage, maintenance:**

Very good access from the road with a tarmac road leading to the well. It is signposted 'Father Moore's Well'. The well site is carefully maintained by a local group. All-ability access.

#### **Site visit:**

Desmond Travers, 9 September 2021

#### **References:**

Fitzgerald, W., 'Father Moore's Well at Rathbride, Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society 7,5 (1914) 329-331; Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## ST BRIGID (KE075)



**SMR number:**  
Not on SMR.

**Townland:**  
Rathbride

**Barony:**  
Naas South

**Co-ordinates:**  
675945 716168

**Parish:**  
Tully

**Description of site:**

The well is supposed to lie 'in the fields to the East of Fr. Moore's well' (Jackson 1979-80, 155: No 44). There are twelve springs marked on the 25in map, starting 524m E of Fr Moore's well and extending E for c. 500m. The co-ordinates are for the middle of the first three, which seem to be the major ones.

**Site visit, September 2021:**

The committee members maintaining Fr Moore's Well (KE074) had no knowledge of a well dedicated to St Brigid in the vicinity.

**Saint:**  
Brigid

**Cartography:**  
Not marked on historic maps

**History:**  
It is possible that this well preceded Father Moore's Well (KE074 this Appendix):

Schools' Collection: Volume 0779 page 063:

At Rathbride there is a Well, esteemed holy. It was formerly named from St. Brigid, but is now generally known as Fr. Moore's Well... The former name of the Well was Black Well or Brigid's Well. It is said that Mass used to be celebrated in the Dark Grove in this townland between the years 1580 and 1598.

The Black Well is the outflow for the present Father Moore's Well, being to the northwest of the main well (see KE074 above).

**Access, signage and maintenance:**

This well was impossible to access on a site visit, all routes being on private land with electric fences.

**Site visit:**  
Desmond Travers, 9 September 2021

**References:**  
Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161;  
<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## ST FINBARR (KE076)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR (Jackson 1979-80, p. 160: No 70).

**Townland:**

Straffan

**Barony:**

North Salt

**Parish:**

Straffan

**Description of site:**

This well is situated near the town of Straffan (ibid).

**Saint:**

Finbarr

**Pattern day:**

St Finbarr's feastday is the 25th September.

**Cure:**

Water is only supposed to be taken from the well twice a year, but the times have been forgotten (Schools' Collection, Volume 0772, page 026).

**Custom:**

Once strangers tried to boil water from the well but without success (ibid).

**Cartography:**

Not marked on historic maps

**History:**

Lumman Tige Srafáin; Tech Strafáin; Lumman Tige Strafain: Book of Leinster, Volume IV, 26125· Metrical Dindseanchas, Volume IV, 328

St Srafáin is from Granard, Co Longford and associated with Brigid of Kildare. His church, Coolcor, was taken over by Armagh in the seventh century. The name of the town Straffan, suggests he is a patron here and is connected to Naas known also as Ceall Chorbáin (Gwynn 1906, 340). The saint is probably the same as the Srafán who is said to have brought his sister's son a Laighnibh: 'out of Leinster', to the Cork church of Dromdaleague where he married locally and became ceann cinidh: ancestor of a family' (Ó Donnchada 1940, 176, 184, 530-1). A holy well and road were named after him at Dromdaleague, according to local tradition (Ó Riain 2011, 567-8). These appear on the First Edition map as Shruvane Well and Shruvane Cross Roads. The link with St Finbarr of the well in Kildare is that Dromdaleague was in the diocese of Cork: Finbarr's diocese.

**References:**

Gwynn, E. J. (ed & trans), The Metrical Dindseanchas, Vol 4 (1906: Dublin); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Ó Donnchada, T. (Ed.), An Leabhar Muimhneach (Dublin: 1940); Ó Riain, P., Dictionary of Irish saints (Dublin: 2011); The Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>



## TOBER NA MONA (KE077)



**SMR number:**

Not on SMR.

**Townland:**

Clane

**Parish:**

Clane

**Barony:**

Clane

**Description of site:**

'No information about this well. Covered by drainage work about one year ago' ie 1978 (Jackson 1979-80, p. 148: No 15).

**Cartography:**

No marked on historic maps

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161



## MEADHOG'S WELL (KE078)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR (Jackson 1979-80, 147, No.10).

**Co-ordinates:**

675595 723017 (co-ordinates of spring in Ballyteigue South, given by this author)

**Townland:**

Ballyteigue South (Jackson has 'Ballyteague')

**Parish:**

Kilmeague (Jackson has 'Carragh': there is no townland in Carragh called Ballyteague but there is a townland Ballyteigue in Kilmeague parish. Kilmeague is Cill Meadhog, the name of the well).

**Barony:**

Connell (Jackson has 'Clane')

**Description of site:**

In the SE corner of Ballyteigue South there is a spring which appears to be the only one in the Ballyteigue North and South townlands. This could be the well.

**Saint:**

Meadhog

**Custom:**

'No traditions. No longer remembered as holy well in the area' (Jackson 1979-80, 147)

**Cartography:**

First Ed: not marked, 25in : 'Spring'; Third Ed: not marked.

**History:**

Meadhog of Ferns was a saint of the Uí Chennselaig. Another saint of Ferns, Moling, was commemorated at Kilcullen Bridge (this catalogue KE054).

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161



## TOBER AN FEADAN (KE079)



**SMR number:**

Not on SMR (Jackson 1979-80, 147, No. 29)

**Co-ordinates:**

629225 682937 (Spring in S of townland)

**Townland:**

Ballyvannan

**Parish:**

Castledermot

**Barony:**

Kilkea & Moone

**Description of site:**

'This well has been forgotten locally as a holy well. It is in good condition with fresh water in it' (Jackson 1979-80, 147).

**Custom:**

'No traditions associated with the well' (ibid).

**Cartography:**

First Ed: not marked, 25in: 'Spring', Third Ed: not marked.

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-16.

The last three wells in Jackson's catalogue have incorrect or imprecise location details

## ST WINIFRED (KE080)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR (Jackson 1979-80, 154, No. 41)

**Townland:**

Unknown

**Parish:**

Unknown

**Barony:**

Naas North

**Description of site:**

'St Winifred's Well is situated four miles from Naas' (Jackson 1979-80, 154; Schools' Collection: Volume 0776 page 348)

**Saint:**

Winifred

**Cure:**

'Many people drink the water of this well to cure toothaches' (ibid).

**History:**

There is a St Winifred's Well in Eustace Street in Temple Bar and at the Glen, Ballycastle, Co Mayo (The Schools' Collection, Volume 0140 Page 318). St Winifred was a Welsh saint, supposedly of the seventh century, associated with Holywell in North Wales. Rather like the legend of St Brigid casting out her eye to deter a suitor, Winifred's head was cut off by her would be suitor when she defended her virginity. A well sprang up at the place of the assault and Winifred was miraculously restored to life and lived a nun for 22 years (Farmer 1978, 441-2). From the translation of her relics to Shrewsbury in 1138 and the writing of her first Life, her well was a major pilgrimage site. The devotion to her probably travelled to Ireland with the Cambro-Norman knights of the invasion.

**References:**

Farmer, D. H. (ed.), The Oxford dictionary of Saints (Oxford: 1978); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; the Schools' Collection: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/>

## ST MOCHUA'S WELL (KE081)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR (Jackson 1979-80, 159, No. 64)

**Townland:**

Celbridge (Jackson gives 'Donoughmore'. The townland of Donoughmore in the parish of Donoughmore is 4.4km N of the town of Celbridge that the OSL associates with this well )

**Parish:**

Celbridge (Jackson gives 'Donoughmore')

**Barony:**

Salt North

**Description of site:**

'When the surveyors toured the county in 1836, the well had already been turned into a pump in the street of Celbridge beside the old mill' (Jackson 1979-80, 159).

**Form of well:**

'There was a water trough bearing the name of the saint under the pump. The trough and the pump are gone. A water point on the street marks the site of the well' (ibid).

**Saint:**

Mochua of Clondalkin probably. Clondalkin is 9.6km to the ESE (Ó Riain 2011, 232, 470)

**Pattern day:**

6th of August (ibid).

**History:**

It seems most likely to be Mochua (Cronán) of Clondalkin as he is of the Uí Chetig whose kingdom was Celbridge (Ceall Droichet) and N of it (Ó Riain 2011, 233; Mac Cotter 2016, 59, 62)

**References:**

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; Mac Cotter, P., 'Reconstructing the territorial framework of Uí Fáeláin', Ó Carragáin, T. & Turner, S., *Making Christian Landscapes in Atlantic Europe* (Cork: 2016), 56-73; Ó Riain, P., *Dictionary of Irish saints* (Dublin: 2011).

## TOBAR NA SOONAGH (KE082)

**SMR number:**

Not on SMR (Jackson 1979-80, 152, No. 35)

**Townland:**

Mullamast

**Parish:**

Narraghmore

**Barony:**

Kilkea & Moone

**Extant:**

No

**Pattern day:**

'Forgotten' (ibid)

**Cure:**

'Still resorted to as a cure for sore eyes' (ibid).

**Cartography:**

Not named on historic maps but 'Well' marked on 25in (676786 696805) next to 'Lodge' of Rathside.

**History:**

A large ringfort and previously Iron Age site in Mullamast was known as the inauguration site of the Uí Muiredaig kings, a branch of the Uí Dúnlainge, whose three branches controlled much of the modern counties of Kildare, Dublin and Wicklow from the early eighth to the twelfth century (see KE049 above). The well, which is marked on the 25in map, lies 700m NE of this important site.

**References:**

Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 16 (1979-80) 133-161.

**FRIAR'S WELL (KE083)****SMR number:**

KD022-030 (categorised 'Well')

**Co-ordinates:**

672490 711938

**Townland:**

Kildare

**Parish:**

Kildare

**Barony:**

Offaly East

**Extant:**

Yes

**Description of site:**

Lies 400m to the west of Grey Abbey, a Cistercian abbey (KD022-029006) founded in the mid-thirteenth century.

**Form of well:**

Excavation in 2004/5 (04E0233 and 04E0233ext) revealed Friars Well to be not a well but a pool at the end of dry stream bed with westerly stone wall to assist in the retention of water in dry periods.

**Pattern day:**

This was no longer regarded as a holy well in 1837 (Herity 2002; Jackson 1979-80, 156, No 51). It seems likely given the excavation details that it was a water retention feature rather than a holy well.

**Cartography:**

All historic maps 'Friar's Well'. It is marked as a small body of water on all maps which bears out the findings of the excavation.

**References:**

Herity, M. (ed.), Ordnance Survey Letters: Kildare (Dublin: 2002); Jackson, P., 'The holy wells of Co Kildare', Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, 16 (1979-80) 133-161; <https://excavations.ie/report/2004/Kildare/0011955/>



## THE EARL'S WELL (KE084)

**SMR number:**

KD017-028003 (Categorised as 'Well')

**Co-ordinates:**

671894 717350

**Townland:**

Carricknaearla

**Parish:**

Dunmurry

**Barony:**

Offaly East

**Description of site:**

Immediately downslope to the SW of a mound

**Form of well:**

A spring emerges from the base of a low rock outcrop and fills a shallow circular pool (dia 2m depth 0.3m) which is retained along the NE side by a short length of partially collapsed drystone walling.

**Associated sites:**

Close to mound (KD017-028001) with possible castle (KD017-028002). Local tradition of being the inauguration site of the earls of Kildare (Fitzgeralds).

**Cartography:**

All historic maps: 'The Earl's Well'; 'Chair of Kildare',

**History:**

This is, by its name, a well attached to some type of secular ritual function and not holy.



## UNNAMED (KE085)



**SMR number:**  
KD005-015005/006

**Co-ordinates:**  
693515 737661

**Townland:**  
Maynooth

**Parish:**  
Laraghbryan

**Barony:**  
Salt North

**Description of site:**  
On ground floor of Anglo-Norman castle: water source for castle. 1996, archaeological excavation (License No 96E0391 ext)

**Form of well:**  
There were two wells, one c 1180, infilled when castle refurbished in early fifteenth century and replaced by second well.

**Cartography:**  
Uncovered by excavation.

**History:**  
Both wells were water sources for the castle and had no ritual use as holy wells.

**References:**  
<https://excavations.ie/report/1996/Kildare/0002324/>  
<https://excavations.ie/report/1999/Kildare/0004297/>



## UNNAMED (KE086)



**SMR number:**  
KD017-011006

**Co-ordinates:**  
666927 719469

**Townland:**  
Rathangan

**Parish:**  
Rathangan

**Barony:**  
Offaly East

**Description of site:**  
SMR File: domestic well for eighteenth-century house: not holy.

**Form of well:**  
No description in SMR

**Cartography:**  
Not marked on historic maps



## UNNAMED (KE087)



**SMR number:**  
KD019-030052

**Co-ordinates:**  
689187 719399

**Townland:**  
Naas West

**Parish:**  
Naas

**Barony:**  
Naas North

**Description of site:**  
Well revealed by excavation (1998:331 Mullins)

**Associated sites:**  
Seventeenth-century position of Dominican friary (KD019-030039) 64m to SW.

**Cartography:**  
Not marked on historic maps

**History:**  
As no tradition or cartographic evidence of holy well probably domestic use or perhaps for the nearby friary.

**References:**  
<https://excavations.ie/report/1998/Kildare/0003508/>



## ST AUGUSTINE'S WELL (KE088)



**SMR number:**  
KD023-025

**Co-ordinates:**  
683158 713168

**Townland:**  
Hillsborough

**Parish:**  
Greatconnell

**Barony:**  
Connell

**Description of site:**  
at NW of gravel ridge

**Form of well:**  
Uncovered by excavation: stone settings surrounding natural spring (Keeley 1988-34). Two narrow brick channels extended towards the house site from the well.

**Cartography:**  
All historic maps: 'St Augustine's Well'

**History:**  
The excavator considered it a domestic well supplying water to Hillsborough House which appears on the First ed. map but not on the 25in. However, it seems odd that it should be named for a saint and in addition, when the house disappeared, part of the house drive is mapped leading to the well.

**References:**  
<https://excavations.ie/report/1988/Kildare/0000801/>



## TOBERNARATH (KE089)



**SMR number:**

KD040-033002 categorised 'Well'. No record of ritual use as holy well.

**Co-ordinates:**

679796 681855

**Townland:**

Knocknacree

**Parish:**

Castledermot/Graney

**Barony:**

Kilkea and Moone

**Description of site:**

Non-extant

**Cartography:**

First Ed: Not marked, 25in and Third Ed: 'Tobernarath'

**History:**

Glebe land just to the south





## Kildare County Council

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