INIS CEALTRA

Appendix 2
Detailed Support Material

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1 INTRODUCTION

This appendix contains in-depth research that is referred to within the main Plan. This Appendix includes detail on archaeology, tourism, and engineering.

In separate documents Volume 2 provides the environmental report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Volume 3 provides the Natura Impact assessment (Appropriate Assessment) report.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

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This chapter provides an overview of the history surrounding Inis Cealtra which will help to form a better understanding of the archaeology, as well as a deeper appreciation of the origins, development, organisation, and decline of the site; it concludes with a summary of some of the stories, legends, and traditions associated with the island and a list of pre-1850 historical sources referring to Inis Cealtra.

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO INIS CEALTRAS ARCHAEOLOGY

Inis Cealtra (National Monument no. 5) is an island of approximately 20 hectares of rich land situated near the west shore of Lough Derg, Co. Clare, close to the Tipperary and Galway borders, within the civil parish also named Inis Cealtra. It hosts a major medieval ecclesiastical complex as well as evidence for post-medieval and modern pilgrimage and burial. It is one of a number of major ecclesiastical sites dating to the early medieval period (c.400–c.1200) located on the Shannon, Ireland's premier waterway, including Clonmacnoise and Clonfert further upriver, Tuamgraney and Killaloe downriver, and Terryglass, Lorrha, Birr, and Roscrea to the east across the lake. The site was prominent in its early stages, though little is visible above ground from this period. By the 11th century, the site had become particularly powerful on a regional level, supporting a relatively large and diverse community as a powerhouse of prayer, learning, industrial activity, and political intrigue. The corpus of sculptural remains from this period is of an exceptional size and level of preservation, while most of the visible stone buildings date from the 11th–12th centuries, when the local Dál Cais, and specifically the Uí Briain, strategically invested in the site.

At the dawn of the late medieval period (c.1200–c.1500) Inis Cealtra was still at the apex of its wealth and power, but like many other early ecclesiastical sites its political importance dwindled with shifting power structures, predominantly as a result of the decline in Uí Briain dominance, that led to its gradually became more of a focus for local pastoral care. During this period, however, and certainly by the dawn of the post-medieval period (c.1500–present) Inis Cealtra compounded its reputation as a pilgrimage destination of not only regional but European-wide renown. The 17th century brought a hiatus to ecclesiastical life on Inis Cealtra and other sites, but from the 18th century the island continued to be of importance on a regional level as a pilgrimage site while also continuing to be used for burial by locals into the modern period. The island also sustained limited habitation during this period.

The monuments are focused on the eastern side of the island (Fig. 1) and include four pre-1200 churches, a round tower, an exceptionally large corpus of early medieval cross-slabs and grave-slabs (much of which is still *in situ*), high crosses and cross fragments, cross-bases, small crosses, sundials, bullaun stones, a shrine complex, a holy well, a range of earthworks and routeways dating from the early medieval period onwards, a post-medieval church and children's burial ground on a probable early medieval church site, three graveyards with some rare 17th- and 18th-century grave memorials, and other post-medieval and modern grave monuments. In addition to this rich array of surviving monuments, the site was partially excavated as part of a research project under Liam de Paor in the 1970s (de Paor 1997; 2013), contributing to our potential to understand life on Inis Cealtra over the millennia and showing that a wealth of settlement archaeology remains below the surface on the island. A comprehensive analysis of the material record from the excavation is currently underway (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015).
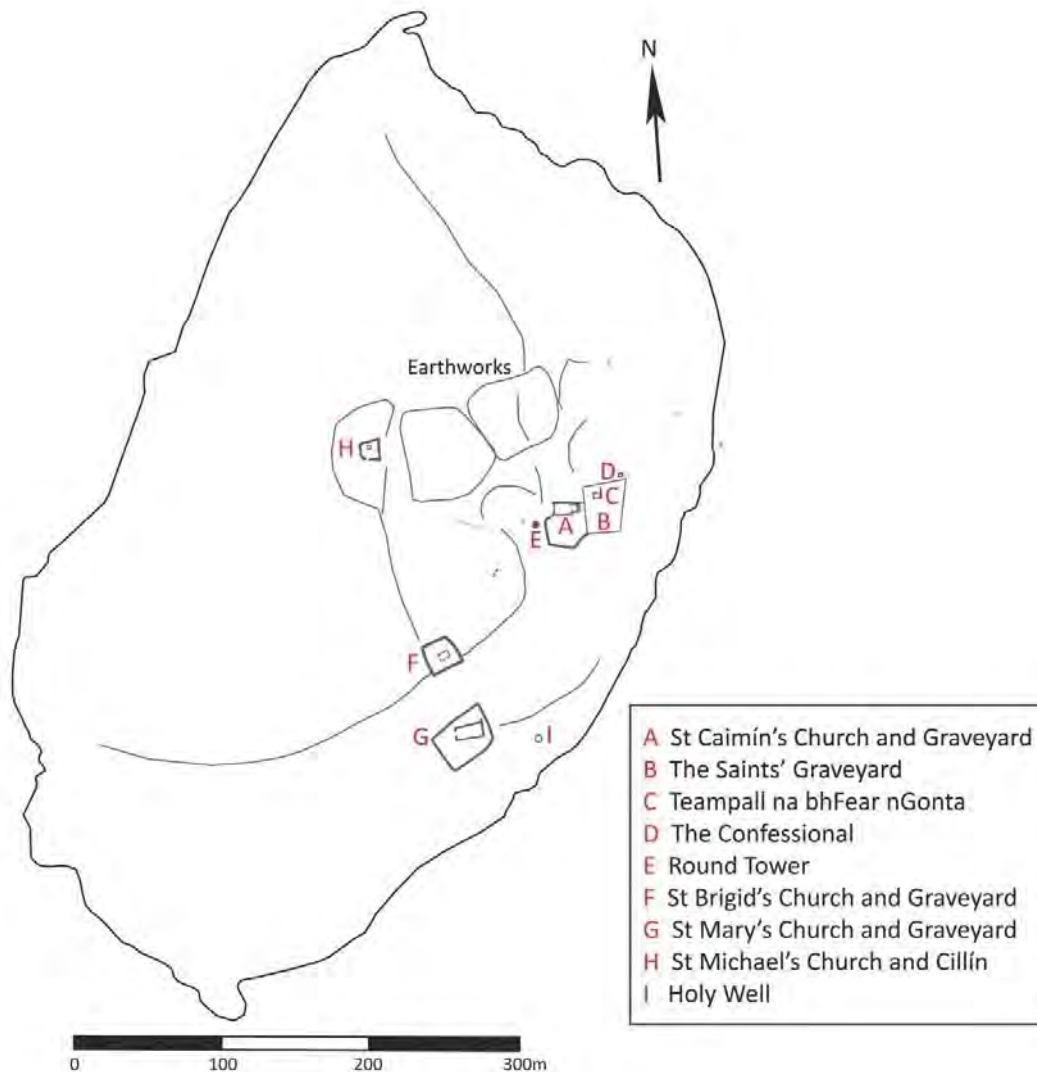
Fig. 1: Plan of Inis Cealtra showing main features. Redrawn by C. O'Leary (2015, fig. 5.2) from de Paor 1997, fig. 2 and Macalister 1916–17, pl. VII.

2.2   UNDERSTANDING INIS CEALTRA

The following sections provide an interpretative and chronological context for the site's monuments and excavation evidence outlined in chapter 2 of this appendix and recommendations in chapter 4 of this appendix, and it informs the statement of significance (chapter 4 of the main Plan). An overall site chronology is provided, followed by archaeological discussion of the prehistoric, early medieval, late medieval, and post-medieval periods in Inis Cealtra. Because so much of the site's material culture and history dates to the early medieval period, of necessity discussion of this period is more in-depth than for the other periods considered, but it is important to emphasise that all aspects of the site's archaeology and history, from prehistoric to modern, contribute to its overall significance as a heritage site.

2.2.1   Inis Cealtra in the Prehistoric Period

Prehistoric activity on Inis Cealtra was evident from finds of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint arrowheads and axes north of St Brigid's Church, and likely reflect sporadic use of the site by hunting and fishing groups. Flint is not found naturally in the Inis Cealtra region and likely originated from Co. Antrim. These were therefore portable objects, moving across the country through networks of trade and/or nomadic use of the landscape. At this time it is likely that Inis Cealtra and much of the surrounding shore was wooded. A bone awl found on the site is of a distinctive type dating predominantly to the Late Bronze Age but may be a residual find (Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski 2015, 64). Logboats, types of canoe created by carving out and shaping whole logs, are known to have been used at this time to travel on inland waterways. A number of logboats have been identified near Inis Cealtra's northeast shoreline, about 40m offshore (Karl Brady pers. comm.); an array of prehistoric logboats were also identified nearby, in recent years, during a survey of Lough Corrib, Co. Galway (O'Sullivan and Downey 2014, 22).

2.2.2   Early Medieval Inis Cealtra (c.400 –c.1200)

Foundation

The early medieval period is generally defined as beginning around 400 with the introduction of Christianity in the early 5th century, and concluding around 1200 following the arrival of the Normans. With the spread of Christianity, a large number of ecclesiastical sites were founded throughout Ireland. At least 5,500 ecclesiastical sites dating to the early medieval period are known to have existed based on archaeological or historical evidence. It can be expected that further ecclesiastical sites would have left no obvious archaeological or historical trace. An early ecclesiastical site is generally defined as such if it is thought to have had an early medieval church, but churches only occasionally survive above ground. Curvilinear enclosures, pre-Romanesque or Romanesque churches, historical evidence, placename evidence, crosses, carved stones, bullaun stones, *leachta*, and round towers can individually or in their entirety allow identification of a site as early ecclesiastical.

On the basis of historical and archaeological evidence Inis Cealtra was likely founded in the 6th century AD. The earliest radiocarbon date obtained from a feature excavated to the west of St Caimín's Church was a date of 551–639 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 35). This ties in with evidence from the rest of Ireland that suggests that the majority of early ecclesiastical sites were founded from the 5th–7th centuries. This was therefore a time of great social, spiritual, and economic change. A rise in arable agriculture and growth in population as well as contacts with the Roman world fuelled the conversion. In many cases, a charismatic holy man or woman, subsequently venerated as the patron saint, established contact with an aristocratic family who would donate land for a Christian foundation. Often this land tended to be in boundary areas (McCarthy 2015, 460-61); in a location suited to trade and travel, as boundaries tended to be located on routeways such as roads and rivers in early medieval Ireland. This is true of Inis Cealtra, on the borders of the modern counties of Clare, Galway, and Tipperary and on the north border of the *trícha cét* of Ua mBlait and the overkingdom of Thomond (MacCotter 2008, 192). Its inter-territorial water location meant that Inis Cealtra was a place of power and a natural gathering space, which could accommodate communications between different kin-groups (O'Leary 2016). Ó Riain (1972) has highlighted that meetings between rival kin-groups often took place at ecclesiastical sites on borders in early medieval Ireland.

The fact that three different saints are associated with the foundation of the site (see chapter 2) likely reflects the interests of varying kin-groups who were vying to become patrons of the island and gain access to its economic and spiritual resources. The provision of having a religious community praying for the good of the kingdom on its vulnerable borders was an appealing one to newly converted patrons. The liminal location of Inis Cealtra would also have had theological importance for the religious community itself. Islands in general were seen as ideal locations for ecclesiastical settlement in early medieval Ireland and such foundations tend to be high status (McCarthy 2015, 460). Islands were envisioned as 'deserts', places of mediation between this world and the divine. These considerations must have influenced the location of this site, along with other vital factors such as the good will of a patron, the easy availability of water, and the quality of the land.

Situated in a visually arresting position on the River Shannon, which led to the symbolic centre of Ireland, the new community could avail of one of the most important trade routes of the early medieval period. Amongst the finds from Inis Cealtra were sherds of a type of pottery known as Late Roman Amphorae 1, or Bii-ware, made in modern Syria or possibly Greece, probably in the 5th/6th century. These amphorae have been found on coastal sites in Ireland as well as Britain, west France, Spain, and North Africa. The amphorae, probably filled with wine, oil, or preserved foods, would have been carried by traders from this region along with other objects on a route that passed through the Mediterranean and up the Atlantic coast of Iberia and France before reaching Britain and Ireland, with the goods being transported up the Shannon subsequently. Some amphorae pottery was stamped with early Christian symbols, such as the *chi-rho*, which are actually replicated on early Irish cross-slabs (Diamanti 2010; Sheehan 1994); one such *chi-rho* occurs on a slab from Inis Cealtra. This shows how new ideas relating to Christian culture were being shared in the wake of the trade of such goods as wine, pottery, and books. Ireland was open to cultural influence at this time which paved the way for Christianity and new ideas regarding Christian living, as well as new forms of settlement. E-ware, which originated from 7th/8th-century France, was also found on Inis Cealtra.

Layout

A wide range of early ecclesiastical sites survive in Ireland. Some, such as Inis Cealtra and Clonmacnoise, are large complexes with multiple churches as well as monuments such as round towers and high crosses. On the other end of the scale there are small single-church sites that tend to survive in the west of Ireland such as Illaunloughan, Co. Kerry. All of these sites, however, are similar in their general layout. Early Irish ecclesiastical sites are usually delimited by a series of concentric curvilinear enclosures which exhibit a hierarchy of sanctity

(Ó Carragáin 2010, 57-60); in general the main ritual focus (including the principal church, most of the subsidiary churches, cemeteries, shrines, etc.) are sited within the innermost enclosure or sacred core. On Inis Cealtra there is no clear evidence, however, for a perimeter enclosure but shelving in the eastern part of the island, close to the shoreline – visible on aerial photographs – may represent the outer enclosure (de Paor 1997, 44; 2013, 28); however all drumlins have a steep and shallow side depending on ice movement with the steep side of Inis Cealtra to the east (Mary Tubridy pers. comm.). A section of rough drystone walling comprising large undressed stones also survives close to the extant eastern pier that may represent part of an enclosure, but it is too short to definitely say it is part of an enclosure or even medieval in date; it may potentially be a penitential station. Nevertheless, it is possible that the island's shoreline may itself have functioned as a symbolic boundary demarcating a place of sanctuary.

Much of the island was sub-divided, in an early period, by a series of complex earthworks that are still apparent in the landscape. Radiocarbon dating and other excavation evidence verify this early date in a number of cases: the enclosure around St Brigid's Church may have been first constructed in the 9th century; a ditch running south from St Michael's to St Brigid's was likely built in the late 8th or 9th centuries; the D-shaped outer enclosure around St Michael's was likely built in the 10th or early 11th centuries (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2010, 13, fig. 4). Various curvilinear and quadrangular enclosures were excavated across the site that appear to date to the early medieval period, though radiocarbon dates have not been sought for all of these. Many of the other earthworks and enclosures on the island that still survive are also likely to be early medieval in date.

It is possible that rather than adopting the more common system of concentric curvilinear enclosure, Inis Cealtra followed a system apparent on a number of other sites in the west of Ireland, including Scattery Island, Co. Clare, Rathlin O'Birne Island, Co. Donegal, Killeany on Inishmore, Co. Galway, Inishmurray, Co. Sligo, and Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry, whereby space was divided into a multiplicity of small enclosures or terraces. This system was also followed further east at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. Overall it is clear that there was always a concern with delineating space on the island. The enclosures had little, if any, defensive value, except perhaps against domestic livestock: they were rather designed to set boundaries around sacred space.

The extant archaeological remains are concentrated towards the eastern quadrant of the island, with the main church on the easternmost side, mirroring a number of other ecclesiastical sites including Reask and Illaunloughan both in County Kerry and Scattery Island, County Clare, where the monuments radiate out from an eastern core. It is also possible that a series of crosses, penitential stations, and bullaun stones may have delimited certain areas of sanctity on Inis Cealtra. While the layout of the monuments on the island may seem haphazard, Ó Carragáin (2010, 58-65) has made the convincing argument that the topography of Irish ecclesiastical sites was heavily influenced by the archetypes of Jerusalem, Rome, and the 'cities of refuge' of the Levites, as well as evoking various Biblical schema and cosmological factors. On Inis Cealtra the eastern locational bias of the monuments may relate to a cosmological desire to be located closer to Jerusalem (O'Leary forthcoming). Inis Cealtra's 'space' was not static, however, but was continually adapted for the changing needs of its community as evidenced by the erection of new structures in the late and post-medieval periods; that being said excavation also revealed a high degree of continuity predominantly in the form of rebuilding.

In the earliest centuries of the community, the area close to the excavated earthen church, and west of the later round tower, appears to have been an important focus for burial while there were various signs of occupation excavated close by including metalworking activity radiocarbon dated to before the 10th century in the area southwest of St Caimín's Church. A shrine near the later Confessional was also a focus for burial from an early period while the linear ditch leading from St Michael's to St Brigid's was in place by the 9th/10th century, and so too probably was the enclosure ditch north of the later St Brigid's Church. Pits in enclosures excavated northeast of St Caimín's show activity here dating to before the 10th/11th centuries. The outer enclosure around St Michael's was built at some point prior to the 11th century. St Caimín's Church was likely built in the late 10th/early 11th century and became the heart of the community (though there was possibly an earlier church in this location), at which point the earthen church appears to have been forgotten as a house was built over its former location in the 12th century.

The round tower was generally built south/southwest of the principal church of an early ecclesiastical community, as was the case on Inis Cealtra in the late 11th/early 12th century. As de Paor's excavation and recent post-excavation analysis indicate (de Paor 1997; O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015) the area to the north of St Caimín's and near the round tower was a focus for high-status burial, mainly of male adults, in c.1000–c.1200 AD while the Saints' Graveyard with its highly decorative grave-slabs is also located close to St Caimín's and was also undoubtedly reserved for use by high-ranking individuals during this period (O'Leary 2015). There is also evidence of intense habitation as well as craft-working in various areas northeast, west, and southwest of the church. Simultaneously the area around St Brigid's was a focus for habitation from the 10th–13th centuries and at

some point the church was used for burial (including of women and infants) while at least one burial occurred in the vicinity of the later St Michael's Church in the 11th or 12th century. From the late 12th century attention probably shifted to St Mary's parish church, near the southeast end of the island, though the whole island continued to evolve in terms of layout as many sites continued to be used for burial and the whole island landscape was included in pilgrimage rounds.

Communal Religious Life

Thirty years ago most Irish archaeologists would have simply described all early ecclesiastical sites as 'monasteries', but both archaeologists and historians are now more cautious about using this term without qualification, and prefer the more neutral term 'early ecclesiastical site' (McCarthy 2015, 456-8). Apart from the emerging Viking port towns, such as Dublin, large ecclesiastical sites were the most complex and well-populated places in the Irish landscape. Large early Irish ecclesiastical sites had diverse communities, and not all of those who lived on these sites may necessarily fit definitions of monasticism. Monks and/or nuns in an early medieval context can be loosely defined as individuals who lived a coenobitic (communal) life under the rule of an authority such as an abbot; whose daily life is regulated by prayer and a code of conduct, whether written or unwritten; who distinguish themselves from lay society, for example in terms of settlement and dress; and who are dedicated, at least in theory, to the pursuit of salvation (McCarthy 2013, 49). While the communities of some early ecclesiastical sites may have fitted this definition, it would be a mistake to assume that large ecclesiastical sites were exclusively monastic. Certainly, surviving monastic rules emphasise the importance of celibacy, discipline, fasting, and prayer, all practised within a communal setting, but these may not necessarily have been followed by the entire community but rather an ascetic community within a more diverse community setting (McCarthy 2015, 459-60). Nevertheless, everyone who lived on an ecclesiastical site would likely have been expected to practise a stricter form of Christian living than the laity. It is also certain that the idea of so many people living together around a church was influenced by the growth of monasticism in the Mediterranean region and in Europe.

Whatever their lifestyle, all the members of the community would have seen themselves as part of a *familia*, a distinct religious community living under the protection of the patron saint(s) (*ibid.*, 459).Inis Cealtra certainly supported a religious community throughout the early medieval period who were united by their dedication to a religious lifestyle. Recent reassessment of burial evidence from Inis Cealtra indicates that where sex can be identified, many of the early burials, mainly from the area north of St Caimín's Church, are male (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 16).[1] This could be taken to suggest that those men were members of a single-sex celibate monastic sub-community. Similar evidence has been found in relation to Skellig Michael and High Island, also high-status island communities that were powerhouses of scholarship as well as sculpture (McCarthy 2015, 471-2). This evidence, however, does not indicate that the all those that were living on the island at that time were part of that community. Nevertheless, the historical sources clearly reflect that there was an elite male element to the community who included some high-ranking religious and abbots such as Diarmait who died in 762 (AI) and Muchtigern son of Cellach who died in 785 (AU). Some abbots may have lived a strictly monastic lifestyle and they may have resided in a particular section of the island, though on many sites high-status clerics were not celibate but could father sons who would inherit their office, a practice that occurred in the late medieval period in Inis Cealtra. In some communities at least, the families and/or servants of high-status clerics may also have constituted part of the population. The large house excavated between St Caimín's Church and the round tower where the coin hoard was found may potentially represent one such high-status household.

There was a thin line between a secular prince and an abbot as the equivalent of a spiritual prince, however strict he may have been in terms of personal asceticism. Marcán son of Cennétig, brother of Brian Boru, is recorded in his obit in 1010 (AU) as 'comarba Coluim m.Cremhthainn' of the churches of Inis Cealtra and Killaloe. A 'comarba' or coarb was an authority figure with control over the wealth of an ecclesiastical site. Marcán's authority, and by extension that of Brian Boru, was validated by the fact that he was known as the successor of St Colum himself, one of Inis Cealtra's founding saints.

Excavation shows a high degree of industrial and agricultural activity on large ecclesiastical sites, and it is possible that the resident population included workers and their families, such as metalworkers or farmworkers; these individuals may well have lived as coenobitic religious but this is uncertain. Servants would also have formed part of the community of an ecclesiastical site who may or may not have taken monastic vows, while bishops and priests, as well as 'true' monks and nuns, inhabited such sites. Women have been identified on Inis Cealtra, as in the case of an early medieval burial in the vicinity of St Michael's (discussed below) while a pregnant female was identified in the vicinity of St Brigid's during de Paor's excavation

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[1] It should be noted that the skeletal assemblage from Inis Cealtra in general was 'characterized by poor preservation, poor and confusing labelling and in some cases unwashed skeletons' all of which made sexing difficult (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 16).

(O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 19; Lynch 2015, 155). In early medieval Ireland, children went to ecclesiastical sites to be fostered and educated, and royal patrons, pilgrims, and penitents often inhabited ecclesiastical sites for long periods.

In 898, according to AFM, an anchorite known as Coscrach Truaghán (the miserable) died on Inis Cealtra. The term 'anchorite' as used in early medieval Ireland did not necessarily refer to a hermit living in solitude, as would be the usual translation of the term, but seems to have referred rather to high-status ecclesiastical officials responsible for members of a community 'living a life of more advanced ascetic discipline' (MacDonald 1981, 316), though the term could be quite flexible. Etchingham (1999, 357) points out how Mael-Díthruib and Elair, both presiding over communities of *Céli Dé* (literally 'clients of God', religious who put a particular emphasis on charity, pastoral care, self-discipline, poverty, and prayer) at Terryglass and Loch Cré respectively, were termed 'anchorites' in the annals, and it is likely that Coscrach fulfilled a similar role. The term 'truaghán' ('miserable') also suggests that he was a figure known for practicing strict asceticism. *Céli Dé* and other strict ascetics often referred to themselves in self-deprecating terms in order to show humility (McCarthy 2013, 359-60).

The sick in particular may have been attracted to the island for its curative properties. The remains of a juvenile, identified north of St Caimín's, suffered with a serious infection of the bone marrow and a developmental disorder of the hips, and would have required extra attention (Lynch 2015, 154); the sick child may have been afforded especial bodily and spiritual care in this ecclesiastical setting. Care of the sick was an important component of strict monastic regimes and the duties of ascetic communities, especially the *Céli Dé*, and served to emulate Christ as part of their journey to salvation (McCarthy 2015, 356-70). The sick may also have lived a monastic lifestyle within the community. The 12th-century *Lebor na hUidre* recalls how St Caimín of Inis Cealtra wished for pain and sickness to be delivered to him (Stokes 1901, 212), while Macalister (1916–17, 119) noted that St Michael's was known as 'The Black Church' and that it may have been visited by people suffering from cholera and other diseases; this possible association with the sick is interesting given a potential link between St Michael's and the *Célí Dé.*

Habitation Evidence

Excavation suggests that there was intensive and successive occupation on the outskirts of the main ritual focus between St Caimín's Church and the round tower throughout the early medieval period, starting before these two structures were built. Amongst this habitation evidence were two large round structures, the better preserved of the two measuring over 10m in diameter. Most known early medieval houses generally do not exceed 10m in diameter (Lynn 1994, 91) and so this structure can be deemed relatively large. The evidence for partitions subdividing this house is mirrored by the description in the late 11th/12th-century tale *Aisling Meic Con Glinne*. In the ecclesiastical community of Cork, the guesthouse is said to have had 'beds and couches and screens' (Meyer 1892, 10). A high-status early medieval house excavated on a crannóg in Moynagh Lough measured 10m in diameter internally and had been subdivided into partitions with bedding and bench areas within (Bradley 1991, 16). The house on Inis Cealtra possibly served as some form of communal sleeping-quarters for religious, while alternatively it accommodated a high-status family, or pilgrims and guests. It could also possibly represent the household of an elite figure in the community such as an abbot, coarb, royal patron, or senior cleric, located at the heart of the sacred site. A large hoard of coins was found in the house, which may suggest that it was a point of financial administration (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 14), while this may also indicate it was the household of a wealthy cleric; both functions may have been combined if this was the house of the coarb, the cleric in charge of temporal resources. The hoard had been deposited under the ashes of a burning fire in the central hearth, probably in the 12th century, presumably for safekeeping during a period of tension (de Paor 1997, 80).

The various enclosures with their different churches were likely the focus for differing sub-groups in the community. For example, excavation showed evidence for occupation in the enclosure around St Brigid's; this enclosure had probably been first constructed by the 9th century and while the current church was erected in the 12th century, it is possible that an earlier structure existed. It is possible that St Brigid's, dedicated to a female saint, housed a female religious community; St Mary's in Glendalough and the Nuns' Church at Clonmacnoise, both, like Inis Cealtra, at a distance from the main focus of activity on the sites, are examples of such (McCarthy 2013, 407-24). Excavation records from St Brigid's indicate that among those buried in the church was a woman who had died in childbirth which may reflect a special association of the church with women. *The Martyrology of Tallaght* tells us that seven daughters of Fergus who are in Inis Cealtra are commemorated on 24th May along with Stellán (Best and Lawlor 1931). By the 11th century industrial activity including iron-working, bronze-working, and bone-working was taking place in and around the enclosure surrounding St Brigid's, which may not tie in with traditional views of the sort of activities nuns engaged in, though female craft-workers did exist in early medieval Ireland (Comber 2004, 97), and significantly the skeletal remains of three out of four females from the area north and west of the round tower presented

with joint degeneration compared with just over one in ten males suggesting different work practices between the sexes with more intensive labour undertaken by females (Lynch 2015, 152).[2] St Michael's, which appears to be a post-medieval structure in an early medieval enclosure at the highest point of the island, may have been the location of a stricter or more contemplative ascetic community in the early medieval period. For example, in 12th-century Armagh there was an enclosure located outside the main ecclesiastical site where high-status *Céli Dé*, who emphasised prayer and asceticism in their practice, cared for the sick (McCarthy 2013, 271), while at Monaincha, Co. Tipperary, *Céli Dé* inhabited a bog-island west of the main island with the principal church. On Scattery Island, a church dedicated to an 'angel' is located 250m west of the cathedral on a hill known as '*Cnoc na nAingeal*' and in the 12th-century *Life* of Senan, it is noted that *Ard na nAingeal* will be the place of the saint's resurrection; angels gave saints their friendship because they were similar in their capacity to serve God and in their pure state. *Céli Dé,* who often lived as a sub-community in their own enclosure (McCarthy forthcoming), had a particular role in developing the cult of Michael the Archangel (Picard 2007, 137). It is therefore possible that St Michael's on Inis Cealtra was the location of a more ascetic element of the island community in its early stages, dedicated to St Michael, and perhaps led by an anchorite, such as Coscrach Truaghán.

Daily Life

Daily life for at least some of the community would have involved the singing of prayers and psalms at various points of the day as part of the divine office, while Mass would have been celebrated at least once a week as well as on special feast-days by the whole community and possibly local laity. The 9th-century Stowe Missal from Lorrha, Co. Tipperary, on the eastern bank of Lough Derg, suggests that men, women, and children attended Mass together at Lorrha, which would have included monastics, penitents, married laity, priests, and children (Warner 1906–15, 42). Two sundials are recorded on Inis Cealtra, which would have been used to tell the hours of prayer; one, now in the OPW depot at Athenry, features a hole in which a gnomon would have been inserted, which would have cast a shadow on the slab below it. Its four-fold division represented what can be designated four periods from roughly 6am–6pm, though of course the length of the hours would have varied according to the time of year. Hand-bells would also have been used to alert the community to the times of prayer, while from the late 11th/early 12th century bells would have been rung from the top of the round tower, so that not only the community but even those on the nearby shore would have been alerted to prayer times.

For those living on the site, the monumentality of their built environment would have perpetuated their awareness that they were living in a sacred space. The cross-inscribed stones, crosses, and other mortuary monuments found around the site would have been constant visual reminders that not only the living but the dead inhabited the site, and may have formed an important part of daily prayer routines on the island, whether this involved group processions to crosses or individual prayer (O'Leary 2015). The physical environment and topography of the monuments within the Saints' Graveyard manipulated the sacred space of the cemetery by regulating movement within it. The inscriptions on some of the grave-slabs would have operated as perpetual prompts for performance, motivating the onlooker to pray for the deceased (*ibid*.; discussed below). The high crosses would also have been important points of prayer. Those passing these points may have felt the need to genuflect or recite a prayer. The church enclosures, shrine, and the Saints' Graveyard were spaces that may not have been accessible to many only under controlled circumstances due to their sacred nature. The iron bolts found near the doorway of the round tower suggest that the door was kept locked. Round towers are known to have been used as treasuries for storing relics, books, and precious objects as well as for bell-ringing (Stalley 2000; discussed further below). The large corpus of bullaun stones may have served a number of uses: they may have been used for the pounding of herbs and grains, as perhaps the discovery of the stone pestle suggests, or they may have had a ritual function and served as penitential stations to be rounded (O'Leary 2016) or perhaps they were used during outdoor Masses to hold the water and wine; it is interesting to note that the *Life* of Mac Creiche (one of Inis Cealtra's founding saints, says that when the saint was undergoing a vigil in his stone chamber (location not given) a doe would come and drop her milk 'into a stone bowl or hollow which was at the door-post of the hermitage in which he was' (Plummer 1925, 53); a number of door-posts also occur on the site.

Work would have formed part of the daily life of all, but the type of work carried out would have differed according to the rank of the individual. Monks, nuns, and high-status clerics in general would have likely devoted much of their time to prayer. The *Rule of Ailbe* enjoins monks to spend the morning hours in prayer, reading, and work such as sewing and washing (O'Neill 1907). However, as discussed below, a great deal of physical labour would also have been carried out in the site in the form of craft-working and agriculture. It is

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[2] It should be noted that the remains in the area north and west of the tower were very poorly preserved and it is also possible that those with no evidence of skeletal pathologies succumbed more quickly to disease stresses and died before the bones could be affected (Lynch 2015, 152), and so conclusions regarding different work practices between men and women cannot be made with any certainty.

likely that religious under vows carried out at least some of this work, in particular manuscript production and fine metalworking, but heavier physical labour is more likely to have been carried out by individuals who ranked low in the social and spiritual hierarchy. Some of these people may have taken monastic vows such as celibacy and lived coenobitically, but it is unlikely that they would have had the time to carry out the intense programme of private and collective prayer enjoined by early medieval monastic rules such as the *Rule of Ailbe* (O'Neill 1907) and the *Rule of the Céli Dé* (Ó Maidín 1996). It was not all work and prayer at Inis Cealtra though; the discovery of an unfinished 12th-century bone gaming-piece from de Paor's excavation Area V (St Caimín's Church and vicinity) indicates that games were enjoyed on Inis Cealtra (de Paor 1997, 317-18; O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 14; Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski 2015, 73); significantly gaming tended to have been an aristocratic preserve in early medieval Ireland (McCarthy 2013, 489).

Agriculture

Inis Cealtra comprises well drained, prime agricultural land, while it is also likely that the community included lands on the shores of Lough Derg in its estate, much of which may have become the late medieval parish of Inis Cealtra. This land would have enabled the community to be economically independent. Tenants known as '*manaig*' would have had a contractual relationship with the ecclesiastical site, farming the lands in exchange for pastoral care, use of the land, and in some cases cattle (Etchingham 1999, 408), while members of the religious community would also have engaged in agricultural work. Hagiography indicates that physical labour was seen as having spiritual benefits for monastic life, but in general heavy agricultural labour appears to have been carried out by a lower class of dependents and tenants (Kelly 1997, 453-4).

Dairying was central to life on early medieval sites, particularly before c.900 AD, after which date cattle appear to lose their dominant role in the faunal record (McCormick and Murray 2007, 108-11). Dairy products would have formed a major part of the diet judging by surviving monastic rules, and including a range of milk products such as butter, various cheeses, cottage cheese, buttermilk, and cultured milk dishes (Sexton 1998, 82). While many animal bones were found on Inis Cealtra, the results of their study were never published. Sheep, goats, pigs, and chickens have all been recorded on other Irish early ecclesiastical sites (McCarthy 2013, 438-49), and may have featured on Inis Cealtra.[3] Tenants on the ecclesiastical estate may have paid dues of young animals known as 'first fruits' to the ecclesiastical site, as has been recorded elsewhere (*ibid.*, 457). The relatively large volume of finds of sawn antler from the site may suggest that venison was also eaten; red deer may have been caught in traps in wild wooded territory on the lakeshore. A greater preference for venison has been noted among some early ecclesiastical communities, which may be attributed to their liminal location as well as a preference for wild meats on fast days (McCormick and Murray 2007, 261; McCarthy 2013, 444). Charcoal samples of pomaceous fruitwood probably suggest that fruits such as wild pear and crab apple were available on the island (O'Donnell 2015, 99), and undoubtedly, the lake would have been fished by the community. Recent osteoarchaeological analysis has demonstrated that the adult males buried in the area north of St Caimín's were taller than many of their contemporaries which suggests that they could access good nutrition during their growth periods, though there were real variations in diet between females and males in the group buried to the north/west of the round tower, as evident by varying prevalence rates of calcified plaque, calculus deposits, and carious lesions on their teeth (Lynch 2015, 153).

Charcoal samples from the excavation identified 14 native Irish wood taxa and indicate that oak, ash, and hazel dominated Inis Cealtra's landscape with oak, birch, elm, and small amounts of pine growing in the vicinity of the shoreline indicative of a tall canopy woodland surviving until the 8th–10th centuries (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 10; O'Donnell 2015, 99). During the 11th and 12th centuries oak declined on the island, followed by an increase in ash, suggesting deforestation, an expansion of grassland, and presumably more intensive farming and industrial activities. Oak and ash in particular would have been used for metalworking purposes and were found mainly in pit features, while alder and willow were used as kindling despite making for poor firewood which indicates that foraging for wood rather than importation was taking place (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 10; O'Donnell 2015, 100-107). Brehon Laws categorised various native species of trees: oak, ash, hazel, and holly – all found during the sampling process on Inis Cealtra – were designated nobles of the wood and would have been considered valuable (*ibid.*, 103). The variety of species of trees present is characteristic of moist, fertile soil favourable for arable farming, while the presence of alder, willow, and birch is evidence for wetland areas around the island.

The arable economy was of great importance to early ecclesiastical communities, and bread was of central importance to the monastic diet (Sexton 1998, 82). The good quality land of Inis Cealtra as well as the lakeshore would have been suitable for the growing of wheat. Some of the cereals cultivated in early medieval Ireland,

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[3] Interestingly three bone needles and three needles/pins found during the excavation on Inis Cealtra were made from pig fibulae, while a motif-piece was made from a cattle metatarsus (Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski 2015, 68-9).

and their associated social status, are outlined at the beginning of *Bretha Déin Chécht*. Wheat and rye are compared to the highest levels of society, while oats and barley are assigned a lower status (Monk *et al.* 1998, 73). Though it made better bread, wheat needed sunshine and deep mineral-rich soils and would have been relatively difficult to grow, though rye could have been grown here more easily and oats and barley were easier to grow in poor soil and damp conditions (*ibid.*; Pearson 1997, 4). Bread was central to the Eucharist, and the wheat used to make the host would have likely been a fine flour reserved for special occasions (Sexton 1998, 79).

Rotary quernstones are common finds from early medieval sites, used for the small-scale grinding of cereals into flour. A large number of quernstones and fragments of quernstones were found during the excavation. One group was found in contexts north of St Brigid's, which may reflect production on site, perhaps for exportation elsewhere. Unusually, one of the querns is cross-decorated; it is possible that this stone may have been reserved for grinding the wheat for the Eucharistic bread (McCarthy 2013, 454; O'Leary forthcoming).It is interesting to note that one individual buried north of St Caimín's Church had five separate dental abscesses which relates to excessive wear on the teeth which may have been caused by consuming grains that would have contained tiny particles of grit deriving from the grinding process (Lynch 2015, 154). Tillage activity marked by furrows was also discovered during excavation in the vicinity of St Brigid's, and is thought to date to the early medieval period.

Craft Activities

The excavation revealed extensive industrial activity on Inis Cealtra during the early medieval period. This included iron-working, bronze-working, bone-working, antler-working, and stone-working. Craftspeople were well-respected in early medieval Ireland. Iron-smiths, copper-smiths, and silver-smiths were of high status in early Irish law (Kelly 1988, 62-3). These craftworkers may well have been religious under monastic vows. High-status ascetic religious depicted as metalworkers in hagiography include St Ciarán of Saigir and St Conleth of Kildare (Comber 2004, 14), and craftwork, particularly that which involved the creation of fine ecclesiastical objects, could form an important part of monastic discipline (McCarthy 2015, 476).

The metalwork assemblage from Inis Cealtra is exceptionally large for a rural site, and is currently being catalogued and analysed (O'Sullivan and Seaver forthcoming). Bronze-working was carried out within the oval enclosure north of the Confessional (de Paor's excavation Area V). Finds here included bronze waste, scraps of bronze with 11th/12th-century Ringerike-type ornament, and motif-pieces/trial-pieces. A number of flimsy shelters were erected in this area, probably to act as windbreaks for the metalworkers. Pits found north of the Confessional yielded radiocarbon dates of 775–962 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 33). A high-status bronze needle was found in Area V, while finer bronze stick pins were also recovered on Inis Cealtra, perhaps worn by prestigious clerics. Iron-working appears to have occurred to the west of the round tower while copper-working also took place in the area of the bullaun stones southwest of the tower; a metalworking pit in this area yielded a radiocarbon date of 727–886 AD (*ibid.*, 35). Iron-working took place north of St Brigid's enclosure, while a copper-working furnace was identified west of St Brigid's; pits from the area to the west of the church yielded radiocarbon dates of 1031–1155 AD and 1034–1205 AD (*ibid.*, 33-4).

Motif-pieces and trial-pieces were recovered in Area V (St Caimín's and vicinity), as well as in Area IV (St Michael's). These comprised stones or pieces of bone sketched with patterns and may have been used by bronze-workers, stone sculptors, wood-carvers, leather-workers, bone-workers, and/or scribes to practice sketching before carrying out the final design on the chosen material. Students or apprentices may also have used these pieces of stone and bone to learn how to draw and write. Given the quantity of cross-inscribed stones from Inis Cealtra, it is interesting to note that a bone motif-piece (de Paor 1997, fig. 53; 2013, illus. 24) found on the island was inscribed with a simple interlaced saltire cross dated by Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski (2015, 69) to the 10th to 12th centuries based on comparisons with motif-pieces from Dublin. A whetstone found on the island had been reused as a motif-piece, with crosses sketched on it, dating to the late 9th–11th centuries in style (de Paor 1997, fig. 98). A stone with dot, concentric circle, and spiral ornamentation from Area V (*ibid.*, fig. 96) resembles the ornament found on many bone or antler combs (Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski 2015, 65), as well as ornamentation found on cross-slabs in the Dublin region (Healy 2009). An object interpreted as a mason's punch was also recovered from Area V.

A number of well-known scholars are associated with the site, and a number of the cross-slabs and grave-slabs have inscriptions indicating a high level of literacy among some of the religious. Manuscript production evidently also took place on the site. Some of the bronze pins found in the excavation (de Paor 1997, figs 87-8) may well have doubled as styli for writing on wax tablets. The trial-pieces/motif-pieces may have been used by scribes and illuminators or their students to practice before writing on vellum. One stone trial-piece from Area V was marked possibly with letters of the alphabet as well as patterns and drawings, including crosses (de Paor

1997, fig. 101). The *Psalter of Caimín*, dating to c.1100, may have been produced on the site. Only powerful and wealthy ecclesiastical sites such as Inis Cealtra could support the large herd of cattle necessary in order to obtain the vellum needed for fine manuscripts.

Bone and antler needles, pins used for garments/shrouds, picks, combs, pegs, awls, a gaming piece, a motif-piece, and a perforated wedge probably related to textile production, as well as other bone/antler fragments, were recovered from excavation Areas III (St Brigid's), IV (St Michael's), and V (St Caimín's and vicinity); three of the antler combs can be identified by type and date to the mid-11th to mid-12th centuries and the gaming piece is a 12th-century type (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 7, 58; Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski 2015, 63-73). With 23 fragments, it is noteworthy that the excavation revealed one of the largest early medieval collections of red deer antler – outside of the urban Hiberno-Norse port towns – with the majority uncovered in Area V. The assemblage reflects the various different production or processing stages in antler-working, and the evidence for the methods of dismemberment and particularly knife-working techniques did not identify a single individual craftsman but rather various crafting practices in different workshops on the site (*ibid.*, 58-64); there is also some evidence for comb manufacturing on the site. Most of the craftwork that took place on Inis Cealtra appears to date predominantly to the 12th century, at a vibrant time in the island's history when it was receiving considerable patronage as evidenced by the erection of most of its stone buildings.

Earthen Church

Prior to the 10th century, the vast majority of churches would have been made using a combination of materials such as sod, earth, clay, turf, wattle, and most frequently wood, often oak (Sheehan 1982, 38; Wallace 1982; Ó Carragáin 2010, 15-17). One of the earliest and most important features excavated on the island was an earthen church, one of only a few excavated in Ireland from this period despite their likely dominance on early ecclesiastical sites before the 10th century. Tirechán in the 7th century wrote of St Patrick's earthen churches (Bieler 1979, 144-5, 158-9). The Inis Cealtra example had turf or mud walls supported by posts and close-set wattles, and a doorway in the west wall. It was not radiocarbon dated but the earliest church excavated in Ireland, a rectangular wooden post-hole structure at Caherlehillan, Co. Kerry, dates to the later 5th or 6th century (Sheehan 2009, 196) while the example on Church Island, Co. Kerry, was maintained from the 7th/8th century to the 10th/11th century (Hayden 2008, 3); a similar date range could be proposed for Inis Cealtra, especially given the erection of the stone church of St Caimín in the late 10th/early 11th century, though it is also possible that a wooden church predated St Caimín's and that the current stone structure is not the first church built on that particular site.

A possible wooden altar was identified on the east side of the earthen church while a shallow pit was identified in the northeast corner which possibly represents an ablution drain for the ritual disposal of ablutions into the earth after the Mass. Excavation revealed that the church was rebuilt at least three times over a long period (de Paor 1997, 85; 2013, 40); this is in keeping with Ó Carragáin's theory that rebuildings of early medieval churches served to construct a social memory that connected the present congregation to the founding saint (2010, 149-52, 165). However, it is interesting to note that the orientation of the building on Inis Cealtra changed slightly and during an early phase occupied a northeast/southwest orientation (de Paor 1997, 85). This orientation, while rare, is not unique among early medieval churches; for example, one of the earliest stone churches in Ireland, Temple Ciarán, a shrine chapel at Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, maintained a northeast/southwest orientation (Ó Carragáin 2010, 68-9). There are also prehistoric antecedents and contemporary secular parallels, for example on the crannógs at Lagore and Moynagh Lough, both in Co. Meath, the northeast/southwest axis is a recurrent motif of deposition and movement, which on Lagore largely faded away after the 8th century (Gleeson 2009, 58, 69-70).

Gleeson (2009, 112-18) argued that the northeast/southwest axis was considered sacred in native Irish cosmology and that it was somewhat prevalent on sites with royal associations. It is also interesting to note that, probably in the 12th century, a large round house was built over the area occupied by the earthen church (de Paor 1997, 85; 2013, 40); indicating that the memory of this church had well vanished by then. In 836 (AFM) we are told that the church of Inis Cealtra was burned by 'the foreigners' or Vikings; this structure and other buildings on the site may have suffered great damage during this period and evidence of trauma, such as healed fractures, on the remains of individuals buried north of St Caimín's may represent violent encounters such as these though accidents could have also caused such injuries (Lynch 2015, 154). The excavation of the earthen church has made a significant contribution to our understanding of such buildings and of the landscape of early ecclesiastical sites in the period prior to the erection of stone architecture.

St Caimín's Church

From about the 10th/11th centuries onwards churches in stone masonry replaced timber, wattle, and turf throughout the country. It was from this period that the monumental landscape that we see today on Inis Cealtra emerged, including St Caimín's Church, the principal church on the island during the latter centuries of the early medieval period. Most mortared stone churches were built after 900 AD and on many sites stone churches remained uncommon until the beginning of the 13th century (Ó Carragáin 2010, 15, 57). While St Caimín's is a multi-period development, in its earliest phase it was a pre-Romanesque, unicameral building, probably erected in c.1000 and may well have been built on the footprint of a wooden church. It is one of only about 140 extant examples of pre-Romanesque churches in Ireland (*ibid*., 87) and still exhibits some of its early features, including its four extant antae and a pair of decorated butterfly finials, now *ex situ*, were also probably associated with the church.[4]

Both antae and finials are usually interpreted as skeumorphic features which serve no structural function for stone buildings but had symbolic and iconographical significance, evoking their wooden precedents. Antae are 'square-sectioned projections of the side walls beyond the end walls' (Ó Carragáin 2010, 26); they represent wooden corner posts that would have supported the end rafters of the roof of a wooden church (*ibid*., 27-9, 87 and fig. 1). St Caimín's would have had a wood-framed roof and the sculpted butterfly finials would have been attached to the front of the terminals of the end rafters, thereby adorning the apexes of the building. Only about a dozen examples of butterfly finials are known in Ireland (*ibid*., 42-5 and fig. 41). One of the Inis Cealtra finials displays a cross-carving and possibly a serpent; such Christological iconography is symbolic of the Resurrection (*ibid*., 43).

Two of the windows in the pre-Romanesque section are worthy of note. A totally unique feature is a very small triangular light high up in the west gable which may have lit a loft but whether or not it is an original feature remains unclear (Ó Carragáin 2010, 99, 309). A window located midway along the south wall is one of only six recorded south trabeate windows in pre-Romanesque Irish churches (*ibid*., 101). It has been entirely rebuilt and enlarged but displays a rebate surrounding the aperture at the exterior which, according to Ó Carragáin (2010, fig. 113), is the best example in Ireland of a pre-Romanesque window with exterior rebate. Rebates may have been designed to accommodate shutters but only on St Caimín's are holes visible at the exterior though they seem too shallow to secure nails or pintles (*ibid*., 104). The location of this window suggests that it was designed to illuminate an altar positioned about two-thirds of the way from the west wall. Ó Carragáin (2009, 136-9) has noted a trend for churches at prominent ecclesiastical sites such as Inis Cealtra to have their windows halfway or two-thirds of the way along the south wall distant from their east walls, suggesting that this is because significant presbytery space was needed to accommodate religious behind the altar.

As noted, the excavation revealed evidence of an earthen church near St Caimín's and so the decision taken in c.1000 AD to build a stone church signals that this church was special. In early medieval Ireland, the principal church was usually conceived of as the creation of the founding saint, and this is reflected on Inis Cealtra, St Caimín's being the only church on the island specifically linked by its name with a local saint. The erection of a stone church – possibly on the footings of an earlier wooden church and certainly near an earlier earthen chapel – served to enshrine the memory of St Caimín and permanently cement the link between him and the ecclesiastical foundation of Inis Cealtra (see Ó Carragáin 2010, 121). During the 11th century, annalistic references suggest an acceleration of the trend towards building churches in stone and this may in part reflect the perceived link between mortared stone and *Romanitas* but it is also indicative of royal patronage (*ibid*. 2005, 30; 2010, 75, 87). St Caimín's is one of a distinct concentration of churches dating to pre-1050 located in northern Munster and southern Connacht (*ibid*. 2010, 123-7, 135-9); this area was then dominated by the Dál Cais. Brian Boru and his successor Donnchad pursued a policy of taking control of important early ecclesiastical sites as a way of extending their authority through the provision of economical and architectural sponsorship (Ó Corráin 1973; O'Leary 2015, 129). St Caimín's is traditionally associated with Brian himself: the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib* states, 'By him [Brian] was erected the church (*tempull*) of Killaloe, and the church (*tempull*) of Inis Cealtra, and the bell tower of Tuamgraney, and many other works in like manner' (Todd 1867, 138-40). The *Cogad* was written in the early 12th century by Muirchertach Uí Briain, and this statement may be a product of propaganda but it is nonetheless likely that the Uí Briain were responsible for the wave of stone building in that region in the 11th century.

In the 12th century, a number of alterations were made to the church. A second window was inserted in the south wall, perhaps to allow for the movement of the altar eastwards to accommodate liturgical change in this

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[4] A fragment of one is now stored in St Caimín's Church, the other is in the OPW depot in Athenry, Co. Galway. Another butterfly finial, now lost, was previously recorded on Inis Cealtra (Macalister 1916–17, pl. XXIV); it is rather plain and may have been associated with a subsidiary church, for example an early church may have existed in St Michael's enclosure.

period (Ó Carragáin 2010, 195). Soon after, probably in the mid-12th century, a Romanesque doorway was inserted in the west wall and a Romanesque chancel was added at the east end of the building making it a bicameral, nave-and-chancel structure; this would have resulted in the movement of the altar again further east. In the late 12th century, a stone altar was erected in the chancel, one of only eight stone altars surviving in early medieval churches in Ireland and probably the best preserved example (Murray 2010, table 1).

The addition of the chancel surely reflects the increased emphasis on separating the clergy from the laity and on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist (see Murray 2010, 101-102; Ó Carragáin 2010, 213), which can only be fully understood in the context of the Gregorian Reform. In 1111, following the Munster Synod of *Ráith Bressail*, Gille of Limerick, wrote:

The bishop also dedicates the porch, the sanctuary, the altar and the table of the altar. For to dedicate means to offer the place to God, to bless and to sanctify it. The bishop consecrates things used in the church, almost all of which are commonly used by the priest; that is pontifical and priestly vestments, altar cloths, the chalice, the paten and corporal, the communion vessel, the chrism, the oil and the vessel for chrism, the incense and thurible, the baptistry, the shrine for the relics, the ciborium, that is the canopy over the altar, the cross, the bell and the rod for judging (Fleming 2001, 161).

This passage highlights the sacred significance of the altar and the various elements associated with it. The reform was actively endorsed by Muirchertach Uí Briain and so the alterations to St Caimín's, which are a direct physical manifestation of reformatory actions, were probably sanctioned and supported by the Uí Briain. Remarkably, the chancel is sometimes referred to as St Colum's Chapel (O'Flanagan 1928, 196; de Paor 199, 31-2), indicating a desire to forge a link with yet another of Inis Cealtra's earliest saints and this was perhaps used to justify altering the original layout of the church (O'Leary forthcoming).

The Confessional, wooden shrine, and the cult of relics

The Confessional is a unique and curious structure which, in terms of its potential function, can be compared to various types of early medieval shrines, including gable shrines, corner-post shrines, and shrine chapels, though the structure in its present form dates most likely to the 17th century. The cult of corporeal relics in Ireland was at its height between the mid-7th and mid-9th century, when structures for enshrinement were often constructed over what was believed to be the founding saint's original grave, while portable reliquaries also existed (Ó Carragáin 2010, 66-7). Documentary and toponymical evidence indicates that Inis Cealtra had a long-standing reputation for possessing relics both of early Irish and international saints. According to the *Life* of Colum of Terryglass, the saint had acquired the relics of Ss Peter and Paul in Rome and St Martin of Tours (de Paor 1997, 15; Ó Riain 2011, 210). The 12th-century *Lebor na hUidre* recalls the legend of St Caimín and the three wishes, and uses the term *basilica* to describe a church on the island (Best and O'Bergin 1929, 289-90); in the medieval period in Ireland, the term 'basilica' may have been confined to churches that housed relics brought from Rome (Doherty 1984; Harbison 1991, 157). The 12th-century *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* informs us that the Vikings threw Inis Cealtra's reliquaries into the lake in the 10th century (Todd 1867, 38). A small enamelled object found near St Brigid's may be part of a 7th/8th-century reliquary shrine that may have been displayed in a church and possibly taken on a circuit around the ecclesiastical estate on the mainland when collecting dues.

Ó Carragáin (2010, 85) has demonstrated that there is a correlation between the development of the cult of relics and architectural innovation; radiocarbon dates would appear to confirm this theory: most shrine chapels were constructed between the 8th and 10th centuries, gable shrines in the 8th and 9th centuries, and the corner-post shrine in Caherlehillan dates to the 7th or 8th century (*ibid.*, 66-67, 70; Sheehan 2009, 196). While the Confessional was rebuilt several times, the earliest phase probably dates to the 10th century (de Paor 1997, 94; 2013, 38-9) and so it is slightly later than the high point of the cult of relics but undoubtedly the earlier wooden shrine would have been in place during the cult's formative period, and on the basis of excavation results, de Paor (1997, 75, 77, 93; 2013, 38-9) linked the shrine to a very early stage of the site's ecclesiastical history. A pit located close to the Confessional returned a radiocarbon date of 775–961 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 33). A date in the 10th century seems reasonable for the erection of the stone shrine considering that just to the east of its doorway, on roughly the same axis as the building, sits a recumbent slab with a cross-carving of probable 10th-century type that also features an empty socket to accommodate an upright slab, and slightly further east again is an empty base for a cross; it is likely that these three components were set up at roughly the same time to create a ceremonial microcosm.

Shrine chapels occur on a small number of sites and are always the smallest church on a given site but are otherwise similar to other pre-Romanesque churches (Ó Carragáin 2010, 66). While the Confessional is the smallest surviving building on the island, it does not conform to church architecture despite its east/west orientation. In a church the east end is always occupied by the altar whereas the Confessional is entered at the east end; this may relate to Judaeo–Christian and Irish cosmological models where the east often represents

the beginning and the west the end (see *ibid.*, 80). As with many gable shrines, its stone setting rivets the stone platform on which it sits. Undoubtedly, the presence of the inclining, unwrought pillar stones, which occupy most of the space within the building, is relatively unusual and has often been compared to prehistoric monuments (see Westropp 1906–07, 453-4; Macalister 1916–17, 94, 134; de Paor 1997, 76-7, 92; 2013, 38-9); however, given its ecclesiastical context and diminutive size, it is far more likely that it was modelled on Christ's rock-cut tomb 'hewed out of a rock' (Mark 15:46; O'Leary forthcoming). In addition, it is not unlike the slabs of a gable shrine which incline towards one another to form an inverted V-shape (Harbison 1991, 153). Furthermore, the walls of the Confessional are reminiscent of the Aedicule which was built over Christ's sepulchre (O'Leary forthcoming). It is equally plausible that the inspiration came from the cave chapel cut into the natural rockface of Golgotha (*ibid.*). Also comparable is St Kevin's Bed in Glendalough, a small, manmade cave in the rock-face over the lake, just large enough for an adult to lie down in, and reportedly used penitentially by St Laurence O'Toole during Lent in the 12th century (McCarthy 2015, 478).

While there is no definitive excavation evidence that either the wooden shrine or the Confessional marked a 'special' grave, circumstantial evidence certainly supports the possibility. The shallow, cist-like construction of thin stone flags may represent a repository for relics and excavation revealed that it contained fragments of animal and human bone (de Paor 1997, 73, 78, fig. 23; 2013, 37, 39). However, de Paor (1997, 78; 2013, 39) recognised that if the Confessional had ever housed relics, 'these had long given way to a notional replacement'. As such it is also important to highlight that the early skeletal remains recovered nearby were very poorly preserved (de Paor 1997, 75, 78; 2013, 38). Translations of corporeal relics are known to have taken place at two sites with shrine-chapels, Clonmacnoise and Iona (Ó Carragáin 2010, 69). It is possible that the building of the Confessional in the 10th century was linked to the translation of relics from the wooden shrine to the more permanent stone shrine. Such a monumentalisation of the reliquary focus and pilgrimage landscape of the island may relate to the stone building campaign practiced by the Dál Cais and specifically the Uí Briain from the 10th century. On the Continent there was a tendency to exhume special relics from the gravesite to a portable, jewel-encrusted shrine which was then displayed in a prominent position in the principal church (Parker Pearson 2003, 60; Ó Carragáin 2010, 71). In contrast, the construction of semi-permanent stone shrines in Ireland ensured that the relics remained in the cemetery away from the main liturgical space (Ó Carragáin 2003; 2010, 70, 72), and as such emulated the Christological model in Jerusalem and the graves of St Peter and St Paul in Rome.

Macalister (1916–17, 132-5) likened the Confessional to the hermit cell described in the fantastical *Life* of St Mac Reithe: 'four stones; to wit, a stone at the back, a stone at either side, and a stone in front' (Plummer 1925, 53), and it seems to have become known popularly as an 'anchorite's cell'. It has been argued that ascetic communities, such as the *Céli Dé*, guarded access to relics and protected the periphery of some ecclesiastical settlements (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 237; McCarthy 2013, 267-8, 574). The separation of the Confessional from the principal liturgical and burial spaces is also appropriate in the context of asceticism. This is reinforced by the discovery, during the excavation, of a number of very flimsy, tent-like structures in the general vicinity of the shrines, which probably date to the latter centuries of the early medieval period (de Paor 1997, 99; 2013, 39). It must be emphasised, however, that if the Confessional was indeed associated with a particular 'anchorite' or a small ascetic community, total social segregation from the rest of the community on the island should be viewed as incongruent with the inclusive ethos characteristic of the religious community and impractical given the physical clustering of monuments on the eastern part of the island. Nonetheless, the arrangement of the Confessional, the socketed cross-slab, and cross would certainly have been a locus for contemplative and penitential rituals. However, it is odd that so much metalworking, particularly bronze-working, was taking place nearby, albeit within an enclosed space (*ibid.*, 78-9; 2013, 39).

It is reasonable to assume that the wooden shrine and then the Confessional were intrinsically linked to one or more special individuals or saints, and that this attachment was reinforced through successive reconstructions of the buildings. The individual(s) would have been considered the guardian(s) of the salvation of the community – both living and buried on the island. The reliquary focus on Inis Cealtra would have boosted the prestige and economic vitality of the site by attracting pilgrims (Harbison 1991, 126-7). In its present form de Paor (1997, 74; 2013, 38) demonstrated that the Confessional was probably erected in c.1700; this is testament to the continued veneration of the monument and devotion to the relics into the post-medieval period. The numerous rebuildings would have reinforced the miraculous perpetual powers of the relics. Like a number of the churches on the island, excavation revealed paving around the Confessional (de Paor 1997, 73-4, 98; 2013, 37); this would have accommodated pilgrimage rounds of the monument (O'Leary 2015, 134). The layout of the Confessional would have encouraged penitential activity: the penitent or pilgrim would have been forced to crawl on bended knee between the stones, where they could then communicate directly with the saint, potentially by touching the relics directly, and in turn the saint could then act as a spiritual intercessor to enable healing miracles. This is reminiscent of some gable shrines which feature a small perforated hole to allow access

to the corporeal remains inside, for example Killabuonia, Co. Kerry and Ceathrú an Lisín, Inis Meain, Co. Galway (Thomas 1971, 141; Hughes and Hamlin 1997, 77-78; McCarthy 2013, 590).

Round Tower

Round towers are unique to Ireland, with a few similar towers found in areas of Irish influence in Britain. The well-preserved Inis Cealtra round tower is an iconic example of only c.50 surviving. Built from c.950 to c.1240 (Stalley 2001, 30), round towers were very impressive monuments in the medieval landscape. Only wealthy sites could afford to build a round tower and they were thus a symbol of prestige. The Inis Cealtra tower is another manifestation of the royal investment in this site in the late 11th/early 12th century, to which period the tower can be architecturally dated. Round towers are built of mortared stone, and the excavation of the tower at Inis Cealtra shows that this example had quite shallow foundations though careful preparations of the site were undertaken in advance by the builders. The tower displays typical features of the monument type, tapering from base to top, having a high doorway, and having a small window for each floor (Barrow 1979, 26-9; Stalley 2001, 33). It would likely have had four windows at the top facing the cardinal points as well as a conical cap, which may have been knocked off by lightning at some point. The tower's location southwest of the principal church is also typical of this monument type, and the doorway also faces east towards the doorway of St Caimín's. The tower may have formed part of a symbolic cross combined with the church and the now mainly *ex-situ* high crosses, marking the space in front of the church as sacred, as has been noted for other sites such as Kells (Herity 1995, 108). The great height of a round tower was also symbolic in rising towards Heaven, and in an era when people lived in small turf, wattle-and-daub or drystone houses, the verticality of the towers must have made an enormous impression on them.

The towers were therefore symbols of spiritual and economic prestige, but another of their primary functions was bell-ringing, as noted above (Stalley 2001, 40-42). References to a '*cloigtheach*' (bell-house) in documentary sources are numerous. An entry in AU for 1020 tells us that Armagh was burned, including 'the bellhouse with its bells'. Large bells are not found in excavation, but may have been reused in the late medieval period as their metal was valuable, while hand-bells may also have been potentially rung from the top of round towers, and the AU 1020 reference implies there were a number of bells in the tower at Armagh. Another possible function of round towers is their use as treasuries and libraries, for example, an entry in AU for 1097 tells us that the 'bell-tower' of Monasterboice 'with its books and many treasures was burned'. The raised doorway of a round tower could have prevented easy access, keeping thieves out. However, postholes found during excavation suggest that there was a wooden structure outside the doorway of the Inis Cealtra tower, probably a timber ladder or staircase although they could also represent scaffolding used during the building process (de Paor 1997, 88; 2013, 41-2). Iron hangings recorded near the doorway in the OS letters and the presence of a bolthole imply that the tower was kept locked (O'Flanagan 1928, 190-91; see also Macalister 1916–17, 138).

Traditionally, round towers are thought to have been places the occupants of the ecclesiastical site took refuge in when a site was under attack. However, an annalistic reference from AU dating to 1126 tells how the people of the 'North of Ireland' burnt the 'bell-house and church' of Trim, which were 'full of people'. This implies that while people did take refuge in both the church and the tower, the towers could be easily burnt by determined enemies. As the Inis Cealtra excavation suggests, the ladders or staircases were semi-permanent structures that could not be quickly removed or pulled up into the tower, and raiders may have easily accessed the first floor (Stalley 2001, 29). It would also have been easy to set a tower on fire by throwing a torch at the wooden doorway (*ibid.*, 29). Once alight, all the timber inside the tower forming the various floors as well as its chimney-like structure would have made the tower a raging inferno. The use of towers for refuge therefore appears to be a secondary function, and not necessarily a very effective one. Nonetheless, the survival of the Inis Cealtra tower is testament to the skills of its masons. It still serves today, as it did over the centuries, as a beacon for travellers and pilgrims approaching the site, continuing to dominate the local landscape.

Pilgrimage

Inis Cealtra as an island where a number of saints were buried and their relics could be visited would have been attractive to pilgrims. Irish pilgrimage traffic seems to have taken off from the 10th century, and the massive building project engaged in by the Uí Briain would have added to an already charged sacred landscape. Large early ecclesiastical sites could provide the infrastructure needed by pilgrims, such as guesthouses, and pilgrims provided an important source of revenue. Many early medieval Irish pilgrims were themselves likely to be monks or clerics (Ó Riain-Raedel 1998, 18). Rome, with its plethora of churches and martyrs' tombs, was the ultimate early medieval pilgrimage destination, but the journey was an arduous one from which many never returned due to illness, accident, attack, or perhaps the decision to simply stay put in a new-found home. Towards 900 AD, the Irish Church encouraged potential pilgrims to visit sacred sites in Ireland that were

promoted as being on a par with Rome and Jerusalem, leading to a rise in the creation of sacred monuments as well as pilgrimage infrastructure (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 316-18).

Arriving in Inis Cealtra from the 10th century, with its array of monuments, the pilgrim could not have been anything other than impressed, enhancing their belief that they were on a threshold between Heaven and Earth. The various monuments would have marked points of prayer, while pilgrims could study the rich symbolism of the high crosses and cross-inscribed stones, and perhaps touch the relics in the Confessional. Pilgrimage must have been an overwhelming sensory experience, the potentially long and arduous journey to reach the site being followed by the relief and excitement of arriving on the shore, during which process the pilgrim experienced the dazzling visual array of monuments, the sound of chanting and bells, and the physical contact with monuments and relics. Possibly, 12th-century pilgrims were accommodated in a guesthouse identical with or similar to the large house over 10m wide discussed above. The various paths and paved areas on the island were probably first erected in the early medieval period, and would have served to accommodate and restrict the movement of pilgrims.

Burials

One of Inis Cealtra's principal functions during the early medieval period was as a burial place; burials have continued there to the present day. As part of a recent post-excavation project the skeletal remains of 58 individuals have been osteoarchaeologically examined,[5] as well as the disarticulated assemblage which represents a minimum of 25 further individuals (Lynch 2015, 126).[6] The remains, which were in general very poorly preserved, were recovered from five areas: north and west of the round tower (Area V, Sites 7 and 9), north of St Caimín's Church (Area V, Site 7), the ditch of the outer D-shaped enclosure around St Michael's Church (Area IV, Site 12), within the inner quadrangular enclosure surrounding St Michael's Church (Area IV, Site 4), and within St Brigid's Church (Area III, Site 1). Of the 58 sets of articulated remains analysed, 38 have been identified as adults of which strikingly 27 were categorised as male, probable male, or possible male. Five radiocarbon dates have been obtained all of which date from the early medieval period, although none relate to burials in St Brigid's.

Excavation records indicate that the burials from north and west of the round tower (Area V, Sites 7 and 9) were laid out in distinct rows and that at least 36 individuals were originally interred here. During the post-excavation project 28 individuals from this area were examined; all were adults and of those that could be sexed 19 were male/probable male/possible male and four were possible females (Lynch 2015, 141, 162). In addition, at least five adults and two juveniles were identified in the disarticulated assemblage from this area of which mostly males were identified in the adult assemblage but at least one female adult was also represented (*ibid.*, 143, 149). When it was possible to determine the age of those buried here, the adults were between 25 and 45 years, and one of the juveniles was approximately aged one at time of death, while the remains of an older child were also present. Radiocarbon dates have been obtained from two individuals from this area; one adult male found west of the round tower returned a date of 725–979 AD and another adult male also from west of the tower returned a date of 777–992 AD, making them the earliest dated burials from Inis Cealtra.

During the post-excavation project 11 burials from north of St Caimín's Church were examined (Area V, Site 7), although 16 were originally identified here. Of the 11, nine were adult males/possible males all under 45 years of age, another was an adolescent, possibly a female, aged 15–17 years and one was a juvenile aged 7–8 years (Lynch 2015, 143, 149, 180); both adult and juvenile disarticulated remains were also recovered from this area, including four adults, two of whom were male and one young female, and at least five juvenile individuals ranging in age between one and possibly adolescence. Radiocarbon dates have been obtained from two individuals from this area: one male, found beyond the north wall of the church, returned a date of 995–1202 AD, another male from the same area returned a date of 1030–1205 AD. Burials found immediately west of St Caimín's Church were not removed from the island but Máire Delaney's on-site records indicate that there were at least ten (or possibly twelve) adults buried here of whom two were sexed as 'male or male?' (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 16-18); the disarticulated fragments from this area were examined during the post-excavation project and three adults were identified, as well as a young infant and a juvenile aged 1–6 years (Lynch 2015, 146-7, 150). Thirteen burials were revealed in the vicinity of the Confessional (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 18); these were very poorly preserved but it is thought that they may belong to an early phase of the site's occupation (de Paor 1997, 75, 78; 2013, 38).

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[5] More burials were identified during the excavation but the remains have not yet been located or were never removed from the island.
[6] It is important to note that the disarticulated bone may not necessarily represent contemporaneous activity with burials identified *in situ* in the same areas.

During the post-excavation project a single individual was examined whose remains overlaid a ditch to the north of St Michael's Church (Area IV, Site 12) which formed part of the outer D-shaped enclosure surrounding the church. This burial was identified as an adolescent, possibly female, aged 13–15 years, and a radiocarbon date was returned of 1024–1163 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 35). A further 14 burials recovered from the inner enclosure surrounding St Michael's Church (Area IV, Site 4) were also analysed; although these have not yet been radiocarbon dated, it is likely that they belong to the late medieval or post-medieval use of the site as a *cillín*, and so will be discussed further below. The apparent singular occurrence of a burial of a woman in the outer ditch of St Michael's in the early medieval period marks this interment out as 'deviant'.

Excavation records indicate that 15 burials were identified inside St Brigid's Church (Area III, Site 1) and at least nine of those were adults. During the post-excavation project four burials from this area were examined, one of whom was a 35–45 year old female. Field notes record a 'foetus' in her pelvis but this individual was actually an infant aged 3–6 months who had been placed on her abdomen and its head rested on her left arm (Lynch 2015, 148, 155); they possibly represent a mother/grandmother with her child/grandchild. Two neonates were also examined from this area and it is possible that they represent twins though this has not been substantiated (*ibid.*, 155).[7] They were apparently buried with a pregnant female whose burial was unusually orientated north/south; her remains were not available to examine as part of the post-excavation project. The unusual orientation may have been an attempt to mark her out as different or deviant. Multiple occupants of single graves also presented themselves at a number of early medieval cemetery settlements,[8] including Johnstown (Clarke 2010, 64), Claristown (Buckley 2010, 43), and Ninch II (McConway 2010, 159), all in Co. Meath, and at the ecclesiastical site at Lusk, Co. Dublin, while the large base for a high cross in the Saints' Graveyard in Inis Cealtra is inscribed with '*ilad i(n) dechenboir*' ('tomb of the ten persons'). A decorated metal mounting, possibly part of an armlet, dated to the late 11th/early 12th century was found in association with one burial in this area (de Paor 1997, 59), and may suggest that burial commenced in the early medieval period here though it could be a residual find; however, the presence of females and infants in this area may equally suggest that the site continued to be used in the late medieval/post-medieval period as a *cillín*. The intention to obtain radiocarbon dates from the burials in this area as part of the 2016 session of the post-excavation project should shed more light on burial practices specific to this part of the island (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 15).

The Saints' Graveyard, located just east of St Caimín's Church, also provides valuable information about early medieval burial practices on Inis Cealtra; however, the cemetery was not excavated as it was still in use up to very recently. Nevertheless, the presence of over 75 grave-slabs within the graveyard which probably date to the 11th and 12th centuries, as well as other carved stones and sculpture, is very informative regarding interments and ritual activities. The carved stones occur *in situ* in their original recumbent settings, are aligned west/east, are positioned in strict rows, respect the enclosing wall which had been erected by at least the 12th century, and roughly follow its alignment (O'Leary 2015, 126). The sculpture can also tell us a lot about the type of people who were buried in the graveyard (discussed further below). *Teampall na bhFear nGonta* (Church of the Wounded Men), located in the northeastern quadrant of the cemetery, was possibly originally constructed as a Romanesque mortuary chapel in the 12th century, but has undergone significant changes up to c.1700 (CRSBI; de Paor 1997, 95); its erection at this time may signal changes in funerary rites concerning specific groups, such as warriors or martyrs as indicated by its name (O'Leary 2015, 140-41).

Any analysis of the burial record on Inis Cealtra should bear in mind that while the excavation was extensive for an early medieval site, only a portion of the island was excavated; in particular it is noteworthy that the Saints' Graveyard was not investigated. It has been suggested that the results of the recent post-excavation osteoarchaeological analysis, with its high identification of males, are indicative of an early medieval 'monastic community' (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 16; Lynch 2015). Most major ecclesiastical sites in Ireland have not undergone largescale excavation due to ongoing use but the ratio of male to female burials at other early medieval sites such as minor ecclesiastical sites and cemetery settlements indicates that male and female burials are approximately equally represented within the burial record (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 16). The apparent dominance of male burials on Inis Cealtra may relate to the presence of a male celibate religious community there.

Nevertheless, documentary evidence for the burial of Gormlaith, wife of Tairdelbach Ua Briain and 'queen' of Munster, on Inis Cealtra in 1076 (AI) demonstrates that prominent females were also deemed worthy of burial there; it is also noteworthy that regardless of the high proportion of males identified, females and usually also children were represented in the skeletal assemblages in all of the areas recently re-examined by Linda Lynch, and these sectors of society were probably not only buried on the island but also perhaps resided there. Some

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[7] It is also possible that one of the neonates was found in St Michael's *cillín* and was subsequently mislabelled (Lynch 2015, 155-56).
[8] Cemetery settlements are large curvilinear enclosures dating from the early medieval period with evidence for habitation and burial but without observable ecclesiastical features (see various contributions in Corlett and Potterton 2010).

males on Inis Cealtra may have had families who constituted part of the burial record but others who lived a monastic lifestyle were probably physically segregated – potentially in both life and death – from the rest of the island's community; the many earthworks which criss-cross the island may have served to restrict contact between certain sub-groups within the wider community, while perhaps only high-ranking religious were permitted access to important spaces within the site's sacred core such as the wooden shrine and Saints' Graveyard. The regimented rows of burials in the area north and west of the later tower and the rows of grave-slabs within the Saints' Graveyard indicate strict control of burial practices on a grassroots level, and may indicate that above-ground markers, such as cross-slabs or wooden markers, were also used near the tower.

Carved Stones: Cross-Slabs, Grave-Slabs, and Crosses

Inis Cealtra boasts one of the largest collections of early medieval carved stones, 'cross-sculpture', and other mortuary monuments not just in Ireland but in the North Atlantic, while the Saints' Graveyard also showcases one of largest collections of early medieval grave-slabs surviving *in situ*. Inis Cealtra's sandstone corpus has long remained an underutilised archaeological resource. There are two main groups of carved stones on the island: O'Leary's Group 1 consisting of c.20 small pre-10th-century cross-slabs and O'Leary's Group 2 comprising over 100 large 11th- and 12th-century grave-slabs (O'Leary 2015). Two sundials and a large quantity of quernstones, some decorated, likely date to the 11th–13th centuries, and most of the crosses, cross fragments, and a collection of c.15 cross-bases and socket stones[9] also predominantly date to this period.

Group 1 is a fairly disparate group exhibiting a diversity of cross-types (most commonly the equal-armed Greek cross and cross-of-arcs), motifs, and technical ability from rough, simple carvings to intricate stone-work. None have been recorded *in situ*. In most instances only a very broad date range can be provided for the various isolated examples in the group but some cross-types can provide more definitive dates, some of which are briefly discussed here. Probably the earliest dated carving is a rare *chi-rho* monogram cross, which may have derived from a scribal, or less likely metalwork, tradition and likely pre-dates the 8th century (de Paor 1977, 99). Three slabs bear an equal-armed cross framed in a square/rectangle and accompanied by a single personal name inscription;[10] they resemble Ó Floinn's (1995) Type A from Clonmacnoise dating to c.750–c.900 and Northumbrian name stones dating from the mid-7th to early 9th centuries. Five slabs – one, a fragment now lost – each displaying a compass-drawn cross-of-arcs probably date to the 8th/9th century.

A broad chronological correlation exists between Group 1 cross-slabs and the development and rise in the practice of praying for the dead in Ireland (O'Leary 2015, 117, 125). From the 7th century a debate had arisen concerning the interim location for souls after death: a foundation for the philosophy of purgatory. Hence, the idea that the living could intercede for the dead through prayer was encouraged, as indicated by the advocacy of '*oratione pro mortuis*' in the 8th-century *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* (Wasserschleben 1885, 43-4). Group 1 cross-slabs probably marked graves, perhaps those found north and west of the round tower which were laid out in clear rows indicating that they were originally marked in some way and which are among the earliest dated burials from Inis Cealtra; the range of radiocarbon dates from these burials which span the early 8th to late 10th century ties in relatively well with the dating of the Group 1 cross-slabs. Their carved crosses expressed the transcendence of death and salvation while the inscriptions may represent 'special' individuals, and prayers were made both for and to these individuals; therefore, through the power of mediation their authority was enriched in death. This should be understood in tandem with the 7th-century rise in the cult of relics of the saints and the 'very special dead' which found expression on Inis Cealtra in the erection of the wooden shrine and later Confessional. The moderate quantity of Group 1 cross-slabs implies that they were limited almost exclusively to a 'special' minority of emphatically religious and zealous clerics: the Christian élite (O'Leary 2015, 123, 125).

Most Group 2 grave-slabs are rectangular in shape some tapering towards the foot; the majority (>75) remain *in situ* in their original recumbent settings aligned west/east and positioned in rows in the Saints' Graveyard, which had been enclosed by at least the 12th century (de Paor 1997, 76, 95; 2013, 44; O'Leary 2015, 126). Over 50% are cross-inscribed, generally with an outline Latin cross (most commonly of hollow-angled form or plain); the remainder are apparently undecorated but their carvings may have been eroded away and some artwork or inscriptions were probably applied in paint.

The remarkably large quantity of 11th- and 12th-century sculpture from Inis Cealtra demonstrates both local socio-political circumstances, specifically the increased resources of the Dál Cais, and wider transformations in the nature of remembering the dead. Group 2 grave-slabs are larger than their Group 1 counterparts and their monumental size would have ensured their visibility and the likelihood of preserving the physical integrity and

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[9] Two cross-carved slabs also exhibit sockets.
[10] Another Group 1 cross-slab, now lost, was also inscribed with a name (Petrie 1878, 42 and pl. XXVI, fig. 55; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 93-5).

memory of the grave (O'Leary 2015, 133). Their production broadly coincides with a period of heightened apprehension over the ever-increasing burden of remembering all the accumulating dead Christians. At this time the Irish clergy placed emphasis on the resurrection of the body on the Last Day, as indicated by the 11th/12th-century *Lebor na hUidre* which states: '*All those will arise ... and each of them will take his own soul into union with his proper body*' (Stokes 1904, 237); the long slabs therefore served to protect the bodies beneath. The Uí Briain were principal advocates of the 12th-century reform movement and the Irish-provenanced reformist text, *De Statu Ecclesiae* (Fleming 2001), illustrates that it was only from the time of the reform that the concept of the ecclesiastical community cemetery where all 'worthy' Christians from all segments of society should be interred was fully formed. Therefore, in the context of the growing frequency of burial at church sites a larger slab prevented the intercutting of the grave but naturally only high-status groups had the resources to commission such pieces (O'Leary 2015, 134).

Fifteen Group 2 slabs carry inscriptions; 14 articulate prayer requests in the form of '*or(óit) do*' ('a prayer for') and abbreviated to '*or do*'. This form indicates an elevated interest in praying for the dead. A prayer request also occurs on a kerbstone in the Saints' Graveyard and one on each narrow face of Cathasach's high cross. Ten Group 2 inscriptions are horizontally disposed, each facing west in the opposite direction to the accompanying cross; such arrangements are unusual but would have ensured that the prayer-giver faced east towards Jerusalem (O'Leary 2015, 137). All of these inscriptions, and that on a large cross-base, are most conveniently read while kneeling thereby displaying a demeanour of humble veneration (Higgitt 1986, 127–43). The increased emphasis on praying for the dead partly stems from the reform movement. *De Statu Ecclesiae* warns of purgatorial suffering but clarifies that '*The purification of the dead should be done here in prayer and almsgiving. These advance them to purification, since the sweat of the living is the rest of the dead*' (Fleming 2001, 159). Most of the grave-slabs do not bear inscriptions and many are undecorated (though perhaps some were painted); however, in a predominantly oral culture the large size of a slab communicated its ideological significance and encouraged veneration but overtime the plain slabs may have been appropriated by 'new' descendants, who reworked the memories and meanings associated with the slabs (O'Leary 2015, 138).

Statements of status, occupation, and ethnicity are exceptional in the Irish corpus of early medieval sculpture but on Inis Cealtra a Group 2 grave-slab commemorates 'Domnall the priest', another 'Gillu-Críst bishop', and three bear the epithet '*máel*' ('tonsured') occasionally indicating a clerical identity (O'Leary 2015, 138-9). An unusual Group 2 grave-slab incised with two shoe-prints remembers 'Coscrach the Leinsterman'; Coscrach has often been considered a pilgrim but given the episcopal obsession with footwear he may have been a bishop (*ibid.*, 139-40). The high cross inscription describes the Armagh cleric Cathasach as 'the chief elder of Ireland' who died on Inis Cealtra in 1111 (AI), the year of the Munster Synod of *Ráith Bressail*. The epitaphs should be considered in light of reformist efforts to redefine the hierarchy of the Church (Fleming 2001, 149-63). The Inis Cealtra inscriptions cannot be linked conclusively with specific secular individuals but important ecclesiastical offices were frequently occupied by members of the Uí Briain and the Dál Cais; in addition these monuments symbolically conveyed familial identity and status, and supported communal acts of remembrance (O'Leary 2015, 141). The name of the cemetery may hint at the religious background of some of those buried within and equally suggests that it would have attracted many both in life, as pilgrims and penitents, and in death, as burial with the saints was seen as elevating the possibility of attaining salvation.

Some of the grave-slabs in the Saints' Graveyard are bounded with stones, kerbing, and sockets at their head, feet, or sides. Cross-bases/socket stones now *ex situ* probably occupied similar positions in the cemetery and would have held wooden crosses or small stone crosses (some of which have survived or fragments thereof); such additions would have made the graves yet more visibly striking. Also in the graveyard, a compartmentalised burial plot containing multiple grave-slabs framed on all edges by kerbstones would have required significant investment and was confined for use by high-ranking persons including, among others, a bishop (O'Leary 2015, 135-6). The largest cross-base in the graveyard, with an inscription reading 'tomb of the ten persons', is surrounded by kerbing formerly covered by an earthen cairn; like the composite plot it was better able to preserve the remains and memory of the dead. As one of the largest collections of *in-situ* early medieval sculpture, Inis Cealtra provides an unparalleled insight into how these monuments manipulated sacred space, negotiated ritual activities, and regulated movement, as is evident from the statement in the late medieval *Life* of St Caimín that people make 'rounds of the cross and the noble vast cemetery' on Inis Cealtra (*ibid.*, 134, 136).

The two ringless high crosses (Cathasach's Cross and the West Cross), now in St Caimín's, also necessitated considerable investment and are fine products of early 12th-century sculpture – a time when relatively few high crosses were commissioned in Ireland. Cathasach's Cross with its intricate interlace designs depicts a human leg hanging from the mouth of a beast and is undoubtedly a rare Irish portrayal in stone of hellmouth (O'Leary 2015, 133-4). The excavation discovery of a unique Romanesque carving of the slightly drooping head of Christ

which probably derived from a high cross draws some comparisons to the Market Cross, Glendalough, the Market Cross, Tuam, the Liathmore slab, Mochoemog, Co. Tipperary, and a head from Tomregan, Co. Cavan (McNab 1997; Ní Ghrádaigh 2009). The piece is notable as only a small amount of 12th-century figure sculpture endures in Ireland but 'what has survived is of extremely high quality and bears comparison with the best work anywhere else in Europe' (McNab 1997, 32).

Some of Inis Cealtra's early medieval cross-inscribed stones and other carved stones cannot be classified confidently within either of the groups or the chronological frameworks outlined, and some pieces may have been created during the apparent hiatus between Group 1 and Group 2. For example, a diamond-shaped slab stored in St Caimín's Church bearing an outline Latin cross with a central interlace-filled circular expansion and semicircular terminals, closely resembles Ó Floinn's Type B from Clonmacnoise which date from the late 9th century to the end of the 10th century (1995, 254), although similar cross-types occur on slabs from High Island, Co. Galway, which post-date this range (White Marshall and Rourke 2000, 166-9). Also, the cross-carved socket stone near the Confessional does not fit comfortably into Group 2 and may date to the 10th century. The ringed cross, the head of which is stored in St Caimín's and the shaft of which is set up in a base west of the tower, probably pre-dates the other high crosses on the island. Excavation under the base revealed a posthole, not unlike the rare discovery of the postholes beneath the high crosses at Clonmacnoise. The ringed cross with its intricate interlace is notable within the Inis Cealtra corpus as the only piece depicting Biblical scenes: Samuel anointing Saul/David and Samuel kissing Saul/David (Harbison 1992, 98-9).

Romanesque Sculpture

During the 12th century, a great quantity of fine Romanesque sculpture and architecture was produced on Inis Cealtra (see chapter 2: St Caimín's (including altar), round tower, St Brigid's, Saints' Graveyard entranceway, and *Teampall na bhFear nGonta*). It is likely that the major Romanesque building campaign on the island was initiated by Muirchertach Uí Briain (d. 1119) and subsequently sponsored by Turlough Uí Briain, who became King of Munster in 1142 and died in 1167. The finely wrought sculpture on the island bears a resemblance to that at Clonkeen, also in the diocese of Killaloe, and both sites resemble sculpture at Aghadoe near Killarney that can be dated to c.1150 (O'Keeffe 2003, 198). St Brigid's also resembles the church on Inisfallen island near Killarney (*ibid.*, 199). It is likely that this work was carried out by a group of Anglo-Norman masons working within the Romanesque tradition who were commissioned by the local Uí Briain patrons (*ibid.*, 281). During this building campaign changes in line with the Gregorian reforms were being implemented; the use of Romanesque sculpture brought the churches of Inis Cealtra up to what were then modern standards and showed that it was a site at the height of its powers. The influence of the reform can be seen in particular in the addition of a Romanesque chancel on St Caimín's and a new altar which served to physically separate the clergy from the laity. The finely wrought head, showing Christ bearded with head drooping as if dead or on the point of death, also dates to this period and likely originated from a destroyed high cross (McNab 1997).

Ecclesiastical Reform

Ecclesiastical reforms were initiated in the 12th century at the synods of *Ráith Bressail* (1111) and Kells (1152) that commenced to restructure the early Irish church on a territorial diocesan and parochial system headed by bishops, in which abbots and coarbs would lose their former importance. Inis Cealtra was granted parochial status, and a new parish church was built in the late 12th century, St Mary's. A decision was taken not to alter the other churches on the site; whether this was due to a veneration for the older fabric of the buildings as equivalent to relics, or whether it was because the patrons believed that a new church large enough for a big congregation would adequately signal a change in the old order is uncertain.

2.2.3   Late Medieval Inis Cealtra (c.1200–c.1500)

Changes on Inis Cealtra

In the late medieval period, Inis Cealtra appears to have lost some of its functions. The excavation evidence suggests that habitation and craft-working continued into the 13th century, but it does not seem that a religious community inhabited the site after this period. At this time, some old ecclesiastical sites were granted to new monastic orders from the Continent or existing communities joined an order, such as the Augustinian canons. However, this does not seem to have occurred on Inis Cealtra. As ecclesiastical power consolidated across Ireland, Inis Cealtra moved into a period of decline. Nevertheless, its spiritual functions as an elite place of burial and an important pilgrimage destination visited by people near and far continued, while as the centre of the medieval parish of Inis Cealtra Mass would have been celebrated in St Mary's.

Inis Cealtra as a Late Medieval Parochial Centre

St Mary's appears to have been built in the late 12th century, judging by its transitional or late Romanesque-style doorway, a slightly pointed arch that seems to fall between the Romanesque and Gothic styles. It is interesting that the church is quite early in date, dating to the late 12th century, as few parish churches appear to have been built at this time (O'Keeffe 2006, 135), though Ní Ghabhláin (2006, 167) studied the Clare diocese of Kilfenora (also at times under the influence of the Uí Briain), and found that there was a surge in building of new churches on old sites in the late 12th/early 13th centuries in this area. Often, existing churches were simply modified for use in the late medieval period. The building of a new church in this sense was a strong statement of a change in the way the site operated and could only have been carried out with local patronage. The church may have been commissioned by Dónal Mór O'Briain, who reigned until 1194, or his son Donagh Cairbreach O'Briain, who reigned from 1198–1242. While Inis Cealtra had been granted parochial status and a new parish church had been erected, it is likely that the parish system in the region was not fully in place until well into the 13th century (Nicholls 1971). The Normans, who were responsible for the building of new parish churches in many areas, did not gain power in this region until the mid-13th century. Therefore Inis Cealtra continued to be a place of importance at this time, though not quite to the same extent as Killaloe, where a massive cathedral in the elaborate style of the 'School of the West' was constructed. Subsequently, in St Mary's a south door was inserted at some point between the 13th–15th centuries bringing the church up to date with practice in all Norman churches.

Burial

Burial probably continued in the late medieval period in St Brigid's Church while burials may also have taken place in the area north of St Caimín's Church if the upper limits of the radiocarbon dates are taken into account. Elite burials on Inis Cealtra are indicated by the presence of finely crafted grave-slabs of which there are two 14th/15th-century examples that may have originated from St Mary's.

Habitation

As in the 12th century, Inis Cealtra probably had a substantial community in the 13th century, as indicated by the wide range of artefacts that can be dated to this period; occupation and craft-working probably continued in the vicinity of St Brigid's Church and west of St Caimín's well into the 13th century.

By the 14th century, excavation suggests habitation had declined on the island and it is uncertain to what degree the island was inhabited. Certainly, Inis Cealtra was in the possession of various hereditary priests throughout the late medieval period, who may have lived on the island, though they may also have lived on the nearby mainland. The basis of the parochial system was the provision of a resident parish priest, financially supported by payment of tithes, who served the needs of the local community. The lands of the old ecclesiastical site became a diocesan parish of which the coarb became the rector and to some extent there was continuity (Gwynn and Gleeson 1962, 309). Proportions of tithes were allocated for the maintenance of the church, while the remainder was divided between the bishop, clergy, and the poor. Rectors were at first the priests in charge of a church, but as the late medieval period wore on the prevalence of granting churches to absentee clergy and laymen led to the appointment of vicars by rectors, who lived at or near the church and were paid a portion of the tithes (Nicholls 1971). The priest/vicar would have been given glebeland at or in the vicinity of the church (Swanson 2015, 26-7), and it is likely that the priest and his family therefore farmed at least part of the lands on Inis Cealtra during this period.

As a Papal Letter from 1423 shows (Calendar of Papal Registers Vol. VII, 265), the then priest associated with Inis Cealtra was the son of the former priest and an unmarried woman, showing that the office of priest was treated as one that could be inherited. This tendency towards nepotism was common on early Irish ecclesiastical sites in the late medieval period (McInerney 2014, 181). Over 500 papal dispensations were granted to the sons of priests to enter holy orders from 1447 to 1492 in Britain and Ireland, and only eight of these were English clerics. The papal curia tended to turn a blind eye, balancing local custom with the importance of the benefices; at any rate all professions were generally transmitted by hereditary means in Gaelic society (*ibid.*, 181-2).

2.2.4   Post-medieval Inis Cealtra (c.1500–present)

Children's burial ground and St Michael's Church

De Paor (1997, 51) dated the activity in the quadrangular enclosure around St Michael's Church (Area IV, Site 4) to c.1500 onwards, based on finds of 'coins and other objects', while recently obtained radiocarbon dates indicate that activity involving the outer D-shaped enclosure had commenced much earlier (see above); de

Paor's finds register also shows that a number of early medieval artefacts originated from the general vicinity of St Michael's (*ibid.*, 197-224).

The inner quadrangular enclosure contains an example of a so-called *cillín* or children's burial ground. Two clear phases of burial were identified here: the majority of burials predate the 'cell' or church known as St Michael's and do not follow its alignment, while the later phase of burials is aligned with the church (Lynch 2015, 154). The excavation records indicate 44 burials were identified here but during the recent post-excavation project only 14 were examined: all were juveniles, half were infants (<1 year), five were aged 1–6 years, and two were aged 7–12 years (*ibid.*, 147, 155); among the seven infants four were neonates. The disarticulated bone recovered from this area belonged to at least three juveniles: a neonate, an infant aged 6 months, and a child aged 5–8 years (*ibid.*, 147, 151); an adult has also been tentatively identified. *Cillíní* tended to be used for the burial of unbaptised infants, but could also be used for very young children generally, and this wide age range is reflected in the assemblage from St Michael's, while *cillíní* were also used for the burial of strangers, suicide victims, unchurched women, and the poor amongst others (O'Sullivan and Downey 2013, 22) and so the possible adult identified from the disarticulated bone may represent one such individual who was considered an 'outsider'. Therefore *cillíní* burial grounds accommodated those who were perceived as being excluded from normative society in some way, whether because they were unbaptised, extremely young, a stranger, or had broken some social taboo, though they could also be used for famine victims in times of crisis. While most burials were oriented west/east, with head to the west, following the usual Roman Catholic orientation, one burial in this area had its head to the east and another to the north but this is not unusual among *cillíní* burials (Lynch 2015, 154-55). *Cillíní* burials are often associated with quartz (O'Sullivan and Downey 2013, 22), and indeed the graves at St Michael's were described by de Paor (1997, 70) as each containing a handful of quartz and a long pebble.

It is not clear when burial began within the quadrangular enclosure, though it was probably sometime after the deviant burial of the possible female adolescent that cut through the outer D-shaped enclosure in the 11th/12th century. Evidence for early medieval *cillíní* is fairly limited, although an abnormally high percentage of non-adult burials from phases prior to the mid-12th century were noted in the cemetery settlement at Carrowkeel, Co. Galway (Wilkins and Lalonde 2008).[11] While most children's burial grounds are generally thought to date from the 17th century onwards (Murphy 2011, 409), that at Inis Cealtra may be earlier and this is mirrored by the evidence from Reask, Co. Kerry, where Fanning (1981, 74) uncovered evidence for a late medieval children's burial ground in a rectangular enclosure containing cist-like burials that included concentrations of quartz and sea pebbles, while a *cillín* at Owenbristy, Co. Galway, was also probably in use in the late medieval period. De Paor (1997, 97) noted that burials continued to a 'late' period within the inner enclosure, and there is evidence of a continuation of this burial practice in Ireland until at least the 1960s (Donnelly *et al.* 1999, 109).

While the separate burial of children may seem strange by modern standards, it by no means indicates a lack of grief on the part of the children's families. The use of quartz and pebbles in each grave shows the care that was taken in burying the children. Quartz, a gleaming white stone, may have been associated with the innocence and purity of the children. Many children's burial grounds occur at sites that were perceived as holy places of old, such as abandoned early ecclesiastical sites. Although this burial ground was at a distance from the parish church of St Mary's or the burial area around St Caimín's, its location within an early medieval enclosure reflects that it was believed that this was old consecrated ground. Stones were used to mark the individual graves. While these stones are uninscribed, memorials such as headstones inscribed with the names of the deceased were not generally in use until the 18th century, and even then it was not until the early 20th century that they became common for all levels of society. The families of the deceased would remember where the grave was and could pass this information on to the next generation. Unfortunately, following de Paor's excavation the grave-markers were never returned to their original positions.

At some point in the history of the burial ground, the structure known as St Michael's Church was built. De Paor (1997, 70) believed this occurred between the 16th and 19th century, as a coin dating to c.1500 came from below the flags. He suggested the finds of coins dating within this period found on the site generally were associated with pilgrimage activity. The church, a diminutive drystone structure, is in fact very similar to small early medieval churches occurring on other sites, being roughly square in plan with a west doorway. It could be suggested that there was originally a small church here that was rebuilt or repaved in the 16th century or afterwards, just as the Confessional was rebuilt on the site of an earlier stone shrine and nearby an earlier

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[11] Given that only a portion of the site at Carrowkeel was excavated, this may not necessarily be evidence for an early *cillín* as such because a greater quantity of adult burials may have occurred in the unexcavated zone which would instead imply spatial zoning or segregation of burials. That said, the advent of *cillín* burial probably lies in the sentiments of the 12th-century church reformers who sought to regulate the implementation of the rite of infant baptism and deny all 'unworthy' individuals *proper* Christian burial (O'Leary 2015, 131).

wooden shrine; however, if an earlier structure did exist it may have been aligned slightly differently to the current structure which would account for the difference in orientation between the two phases of burials (before and after the erection of the extant church). The function of the small, poorly preserved structure is unclear, but it may have been a chapel for pilgrims.

Other Burials

Inis Cealtra continued to be a place of burial for elite local Catholic families in the post-medieval period. At the beginning of the 17th century, the main memorial monuments in use in Ireland were the wall monument, the ledger slab, and the altar tomb, the headstone only emerging at the end of the century (Cockerham 2009, 245). The wall monument of Turlough O'Brien and his wife who respectively died in 1626 and 1625, built by Turlough's mother Lady Slaney, signals that local Catholic families were willing to invest in monumental graves on the site despite the fact that Bishop Rider reported that there was no functioning church on Inis Cealtra in 1615 (de Paor 1995, 30). However, an extract from Turlough's will, 1626, suggests that St Mary's may still have been in occasional use: 'I bequeath my soul onto Almightye God my Saviour and Redeemer, and my bodie to be buried in a chapell to be made for me near our Ladyes Church in Inishkealtrye' and he leaves his largest cup of plate to our Lady's Church (St Mary's) on Inis Cealtra from which a chalice could be made, 'there to remain for his soule' (Dwyer 1878, 480). Again c.1700, despite the pressures of the Penal Laws, an O'Grady monument was erected, a plaque from which survives in St Caimín's Church. Both monuments incorporate heraldry, a sign of family honour and status. The learned ecclesiastical family of Meic Bhruaideadha of Moynoe who were chroniclers of O'Brien history were said to have their burial 'vault' at Inis Cealtra (McInnerney 2014, 43). It is possible that this 'vault' involved a reuse of *Teampall na bhFear nGonta*. From the 18th century modern grave-slabs and headstones became more common on Inis Cealtra as throughout Ireland with the rise of the middle class. The attraction to be buried with the saints continues right to this day.

Post-Medieval Pilgrimage

Inis Cealtra likely functioned as a pilgrimage site in the early medieval period judging by the importance of the cult of relics on the island and the construction of some of the earthworks during this period. However, its pilgrimage function is not described historically until the 17th century. From about 1500 Inis Cealtra would have suffered the effects of the Reformation and by at least the turn of the 17th century all the churches appear to have fallen into ruin. By this time the regular celebration of Mass had ceased on the site and it is possible that some of the high crosses may have been purposely smashed later in the Cromwellian period, as occurred on other sites such as Killeaney, Inishmore, Co. Galway. The historical evidence outlined below indicates that pilgrimage to the site was well-established by this point; the Papal indulgence granted to the site in 1607 implies that large volumes of pilgrim traffic were already coming through the site in this period. Inis Cealtra was popularly known as 'Seven Churches': although the island probably never had seven churches, this was a common appellation for well-known pilgrimage sites in Ireland including Clonmacnoise and Glendalough, mirroring the fact that pilgrims to Rome visited seven churches while there (Harbison 1991, 180). Visiting a site such as Inis Cealtra, therefore, was akin to visiting Rome, and its promotion as a landscape of many saints would have contributed to its reputation as a pilgrimage destination. The rebuilding of the Confessional in the 17th/18th century is a manifestation of how popular this monument continued to be with pilgrims in this era. The Bishop of Ossory remarked in 1611 on 'the fervour with which the faithful had begun of late years to visit the sanctuaries and hallowed pilgrimages frequented of old by their fathers' (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 317); with the Reformation and the Penal Laws, foci for popular devotion such as old pilgrimage sites, holy wells, and Mass rocks would have continued to operate at grass-roots level in the absence of a working Catholic infrastructure, which would have contributed further to the popularity of the island as a pilgrimage destination.

The historical evidence indicates large gatherings were engaging in penitential rounds on Good Friday and Whitsunday, while 19th-century evidence suggests that there was also major pilgrimage on St Caimín's feastday, 24th March, the day of the 'pattern', or devotions to the patron of the parish. The sequence of the pilgrimage was outlined variously by 19th-century commentators and the stations included a range of monuments across the island, including the medieval churches, the enclosures, holy well, and so-called 'penitential stations' which often comprise mounds probably originally cairns of stone that became overgrown. At each 'station' of the pilgrimage, 'rounds' were made. The carrying out of 'rounds' as part of the station meant walking around a monument, such as a church or the well, in a clockwise direction for a specified number of times (usually three, seven, nine, or fifteen) while reciting specific prayers, most commonly, set numbers of Our Fathers, Hail Marys, Creeds, and Glorias (Carroll 1999, 30). These circumambulatory rituals were also practised on other early ecclesiastical sites (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 318).

Pilgrims often commonly scratched crosses on stones, while it was also common to gather pebbles and 'count off' rounds by dropping the pebbles on a pile near the station, hence the creation of many so-called 'penitential stations' or cairns (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 30). These penitential stations may also have been used as

stopping-points for prayer during funeral processions when a coffin was being carried to the church (O'Dowd 1998). De Paor also suggested that a number of the earthworks on the island were constructed from the early medieval period in order to lead pilgrims around the sacred space, such as the path leading from St Caimín's towards St Mary's, which he dated to the late medieval period, though doubtless this path was also used by those attending Mass in the parish church. Over 30 glass beads recovered during the island's excavation, particularly the large assemblages found in Area V (St Caimín's and vicinity) and St Michael's burial ground, probably relate to late medieval and post-medieval pilgrimage activities and are likely evidence of the increased popularity of the rosary from the mid-16th century (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 8-9; Mannion 2015, 84, 88, 93). A small crucifix and two small medals, identified as pilgrims' tokens, now located in the National Museum of Country Life, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, were also recovered from Inis Cealtra and relate to post-medieval pilgrimage activity.

Physical pain was seen as heightening the penitential power of the pattern (Carroll 1999, 31), and the rounds were reportedly carried out barefoot on Inis Cealtra according to 19th-century evidence. Yet these major communal gatherings not only involved penance and prayer, but were also occasions for great festivities as well as such events as the sealing of bargains and marriage contracts, probably using the bargaining stone. Ultimately, the pattern seems to have died out in the later 19th century, probably due to pressure from the Catholic Church hierarchy, who generally disapproved of the boisterous nature of patterns, which existed outside the established liturgy (O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, 336).

Habitation

By 1615, Bishop Rider reported that there was one house on the island, but that none of the churches were in use (de Paor 1997, 31). It is uncertain what this structure was, and it perhaps represents the home of the former ecclesiastical family of the island. A two-room cottage with back-to-back fireplaces located near the eastern landing stage was likely 18th/19th century in date (de Paor 2013, 30-31), and its plan is typical of vernacular houses of the period. Those who inhabited the cottage likely engaged in fishing activities and grazed animals on the island, while traces of cultivation in the area likely reflect the growing of potatoes. It is possible that the inhabitants of these dwellings only lived on Inis Cealtra seasonally, grazing cattle in the summer months.

A pigsty in one of the churches (possibly St Brigid's, which Macalister notes in 1916 was known as the 'Piggery') is recorded in 1863 (de Paor 1997, 35), while accounts by Brash (1866) and Dunraven (1877) suggest that St Brigid's was converted into a makeshift habitation, built up with masonry, thatched, and divided into two rooms. In the 18th and 19th centuries, many of the Irish rural poor re-inhabited marginal land that in many cases had only previously been inhabited by early medieval religious communities, such as on Inishvickillane island, Co. Kerry, and Caher Island, Co. Mayo. This was likely due to economic pressure and attempts to escape the rental system. Those living on Inis Cealtra at this time may essentially have been 'squatting', and may previously have been evicted from elsewhere in the region.

Holy Well

The Lady's Well on the south-eastern shore of the island was in existence by the 19th century, judging by the evidence of the OS Letters, though finds at the site dated from the late 19th century onwards. Holy wells appear to have been venerated from the early medieval period and perhaps earlier (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 316). They were part and parcel of the fabric of local Catholic devotion from the 17th–19th centuries, at a time when Catholic infrastructure was poor due to the Reformation and subsequently the Penal Laws. Devotions at holy wells were lessened to some extent by the influence of the Catholic hierarchy as they grew more powerful in the late 19th century, but many holy wells still continued to be foci of Catholic devotion in modern Ireland throughout the 20th century and up to the present. Holy wells are generally believed to have curative properties if their water is drunk. They are also seen as holy places that can be visited in order to carry out penance or obtain an indulgence. As such, rounds around Lady's Well constituted an important part of the post-medieval pattern on Inis Cealtra.

2.3 OVERALL SITE CHRONOLOGY

2.3.1 Prehistoric Activity

- Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint arrowheads and axeheads found north of St Brigid's Church reflect at least occasional visits to the island in this period.
- Logboats found off the northeastern shore of the island may also be associated with prehistoric activity on Inis Cealtra.

2.3.2   Early Medieval Activity: C.400–C.1000

For the purpose of this chronology, the early medieval period has been divided into two phases: c.400–c.1000 and c.1000–c.1200. A partial view of features associated with the earlier phase of the ecclesiastical site can be gained from some of the surviving features, a number of excavated features, and early artefacts mostly recovered from secondary contexts. Following its foundation, a community grew that was associated with notable scholars and clerics, availing of trade via the River Shannon. There was an earthen church and associated graveyard west of the later round tower, earthworks were built on site, and metalworking and stone-carving also took place.

- Bii-ware from the Levant dating to the 5th–7th centuries was found on the site, as well as E-ware from France dating to the 7th/8th centuries.

- A feature excavated west of St Caimín's Church provided a radiocarbon date of 551–639 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 11, 35).

- A stone incised with a *chi-rho* cross found near St Brigid's likely pre-dates the 8th century.

- An enamelled object also found near St Brigid's may have derived from a 7th/8th-century reliquary.

- An openwork brooch dated to c.700–800 AD was found in the primary silt of an enclosure ditch north of St Brigid's Church, suggesting that the first phase of the enclosure may have been constructed in the 9th century, though this could be a residual find. It is possible that an earlier church pre-dating the current structure at St Brigid's was built during this time.

- The earthen church located west of the later tower, discussed below, pre-dated a 12th-century house in its final phase but likely dates to quite early in the site's chronology.

- A small number of burials west of the later St Caimín's Church and the round tower and east of the excavated earthen church were thought by de Paor to have been contemporary with the earthen church. Radiocarbon dating yielded a date of 725–979 AD for one burial and 777–992 AD for another burial (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 34).

- The timber shrine west of the later Confessional was likely contemporary with this phase. It was located within a rectangular enclosure in which there were at least 16 burials, 12 of which were aligned with the shrine.

- A metalworking pit near a bullaun southwest of St Caimín's Church provided a radiocarbon date of 727–886 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 35).

- A pit in the area north of the Saints' Graveyard, near the Confessional, yielded a radiocarbon date of 775–961 AD, while another pit to the north of this yielded a date of 775–962 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 13, 33).

- Most of O'Leary's Group 1 cross-slabs date to before the 10th century; the group contains fewer than 20 small slabs displaying a variety of cross-types (O'Leary 2015, 116). The pillar stone lying against the graveyard wall in St Caimín's cemetery may date to this period and would have stood upright.

- Many of the enclosures and earthworks on the island may potentially date to this phase. A long ditch extending south from the D-shaped enclosure around St Michael's to the bank incorporating the enclosure around St Brigid's yielded a bronze hinged pin dated to the late 8th or early 9th century suggesting the linear ditch had been built around this time, as confirmed by the secondary fill of the ditch which yielded a radiocarbon date of 778–985 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 11-13). A sample of charcoal from the base of the ditch of the D-shaped enclosure provided a radiocarbon date of 905–1023 AD.

- In the 9th and early 10th centuries the site suffered Viking attacks that would have had a negative impact on the site. However, the fact that it was targeted for major raids demonstrates that Inis Cealtra had by then grown into a prosperous site.

Like many early Irish ecclesiastical sites, Inis Cealtra was probably founded in the 6th century. Documentary coverage concerning the island is scant during the pre-Viking period and tells us little of the political situation at that time. Nonetheless, annalistic references and hagiographical sources provide us with some information regarding its early saints. The history of its foundation is somewhat obscure with, unusually, three saints associated with its establishment: St Mac Reithe/Mac Creiche (Ó Riain 2011, 420-23), St Colum of Terryglass (AFM 548; AU 549; Ó Riain 2011, 209-211), and St Caimín (AI 654; Ó Riain 2011, 136-7). Caution must be exercised in the use of the saints' *Lives*, which are difficult to date and tell us more about the period in which they were composed than the period in which the saints lived; nevertheless, the confusion surrounding the founding of the site probably reflects a political tug-of-war with various groups attempting to appropriate Inis Cealtra, with its liminal river location, as part of their territory. Before the rise of Killaloe in the 10th century (see below), the

two most illustrious establishments in east Clare were Inis Cealtra and Tuamgraney, and so the prevalent desire to control Inis Cealtra and manipulate its early history makes sense.

Caimín's death is recorded in AI in 654. In the corpus of early medieval saints' genealogies, he is given three conflicting pedigrees associated with south Leinster, southwest Munster, and northeast Connaught kin-groups (Ó Riain 1985, 290.1-3; 700.1-3; 722.8), likely reflecting the appropriation of the saint by differing kin-groups attempting to gain control over Inis Cealtra. The partly historical, partly mythological text *Carn Conaill* also reveals inter-territorial struggles in the Inis Cealtra region in which the cult of the saint became implicated. Diarmait son of Aedh Slaine comes from Leinster stopping en route at Clonmacnoise to undergo penance and receive a blessing. Guaire, king of Uí Fiachrach Aidhne, who is aligned with various Munster and Connacht factions, has displeased St Caimín and therefore loses the war to Diarmait. Nevertheless, Guaire undergoes penance on Inis Cealtra in the 'great church' built by Caimín along with St Cummian Fota. Caimín wishes for pain and sickness to be delivered to him, and subsequently 'no bone of him came to another earth, but it had dissolved and decayed with the anguish of every illness and every tribulation' (Stokes 1901, 212), a fact which may have been used to explain an absence of any primary relics associated with the saint. The 17th-century *Martyrology of Donegal* tells us that 'A very ancient old vellum book' compared Caimín to Pachomius, one of the first founders of Christian monasteries in Egypt (O'Donovan, Todd, and Reeves 1864, 24th March). The principal church of the site continues to bear the saint's name, reflecting that his cult remained strongly associated with the site over the centuries. A Papal Letter of 1405 refers to the church of 'St Camin'. By the end of the late medieval period his name had made its way into the Continental *Martyrology of Usuard*, perhaps due to the travels of Irish monks to Cologne, but at any rate reflecting that the saint was being venerated outside of Ireland and that Inis Cealtra may have become well-known as a pilgrimage destination, as discussed further below and above. In 1794 Caimín is praised by the scribe Ó Braonáin as 'a prince who was courageous, put/seven churches and a high belltower by sheer strength/in Iniscaltra in the middle of Lough Derg' (de Paor 1996, 31; 1997, 32).

St Colum of Terryglass was also associated with Inis Cealtra from an early period, though at times Colum or Mocholmóg of Inis Cealtra appears to be distinguished from him as a distinct saint. It is possible that Mocholmóg was a historic individual, whose cult became subsumed by that of his more illustrious namesake Colum of Terryglass; however, the two may simply be different manifestations of the same saint. AU records the death of Colum in 549 along with a number of other saints due to plague, including Colam, descendant of Crimthann. The latter individual is synonymous with Colum of Inis Cealtra in later sources; abbots of Inis Cealtra such as Marcán (AU 1010) being known by the title of coarb of Mac Crimthann. The 8th-century text known as the *Old Irish Table of Penitential Commutations* records that a particular penitential vigil was favoured by not only Colum mac Crimthain but also 'Mocholmóc of Inis Celtra' (Binchy 1962, 65). *Conall Corc and the Corcu Luigde*, a 7th-century text, records that Enda is named along with Colmán mac Leneni and Mochammóc of Inis Cealtra as one of the 'tri h-aithlaich Eirenn' ('three ex-soldiers of Ireland') (Meyer 1910, 60); this text has been dated to the reign of the most powerful king of the Eoghancht sect of the Síl Cathail (721–42 AD) (MacCotter 2008, 34). The term *áth-laech* generally denoted a secular warrior, usually an aristocratic figure, who had become a cleric later in *Life*, possibly upon conversion to Christianity (Sharpe 1979, 75-92; MacCotter 2004, 34).

Colum of Terryglass, whose name is preserved on the site in relation to the chancel of St Caimín's, known as St Colum's Chapel, is depicted as the founder of Inis Cealtra in his late medieval *Life* (Ó Riain 2014). According to the *Life*, Colum is instructed by an angel to found the community on Keltra, or Inis Cealtra. An old man called 'Maccrihe' lives on the island but is told to leave by the angel. It would therefore seem that this *Life* reflects an attempt to discredit the cult of Mac Creiche, another saint traditionally associated with the island, whose late medieval *Life* survives but makes no mention of Inis Cealtra. Mac Creiche's *Life* records how the saint, who is said to be of the Éoganacht Ninussa, a kin-group associated with northwest Clare and the Aran Islands, would spend Lent in a structure built of four stones (not located) that evokes the Confessional on Inis Cealtra. Though the text of the *Life* is late medieval, this story can be shown to have early medieval origins by the fact that the early medieval *Cuimmín's Poem on the Saints of Ireland* records how Mac Creiche 'of the (ascetic) devotion loved/a hard but pure prison' (Stokes 1897). The story may reflect a devotional use of the stone shrine that preceded the later Confessional as a space for penitential vigils from the early medieval period onwards. Other saints associated with Inis Cealtra commemorated in the 9th-century *Martyrology of Tallaght* are Coelán and Stellán. Stellán seems to disappear entirely from known historical records after this period, but Coelán's cult continued into the late medieval period, as he is also recorded in the 17th-century *Martyrology of Donegal*. His holy well was venerated in nearby Youghalarra parish. In the 17th century, Colgan (1647, 594) attributed a metrical *Life* of Brigid to the saint, associating him with Inis Cealtra.

From the 8th century, there are a series of annalistic references to abbots and clerics associated with Inis Cealtra (AI 762; AU 785; AFM 898). The *Old Irish Table of Penitential Commutations* describes a vigil favoured by 'Patrick

… and Colum Cille and Maedoc of Ferns and Molacca Menn and Brénainn Moccu Altae and *Colum mac Crimthain and Mocholmóc of Inis Celtra* and Énda of Aran' (italics added for emphasis; Binchy 1962, 63-5). This 8th-century text is closely associated with the development of the *Céli Dé* (Follett 2006), who practised a strictly disciplined coenobitic lifestyle, implying that Inis Cealtra was viewed at this time as a centre of ascetic and spiritual authority. Mugthigern son of Cellach, abbot of Inis Celtra, is described as 'learned' in AU 785, also implying that Inis Cealtra was a centre of scholarship at this time. The Annals also indicate that the island was raided at least twice by the Vikings, once in the 9th century (AFM 836; AU 837) and once in the 10th (AI 922); such references are indications of the economic prosperity of the site and its ability to subsequently recover, as well as its ease of access and strategic location in the River Shannon.

2.3.3   Early medieval activity: c.1000–c.1200

This appears to have been a high point in activity on the site. Extensive occupation evidence and industrial activity is associated with this period, and there was a major phase of construction funded by the Dál Cais, specifically the Uí Briain (O'Briens), during which the extant stone churches and the round tower were built, while a large corpus of grave-slabs and the high crosses were created. It is likely that pilgrimage to the site increased at this time.

- The wooden shrine was replaced by a mortared stone structure over a shallow cist burial on the site of the present-day Confessional.
- The pre-Romanesque phase of St Caimín's Church was built in the late 10th/early 11th century. Romanesque additions were made in the 12th century.
- The round tower was built in the late 11th/early 12th century.
- Burials were taking place in the vicinity of St Caimín's Church and the round tower in this period. Two burials north of St Caimín's Church were radiocarbon dated to 995–1202 and 1030–1205 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 34-5); many of the identifiable burials in this area were male.
- St Brigid's Church was built in the 12th century, as was probably *Teampall na bhFear nGonta*.
- The Saint's Graveyard was in use by the 11th/12th century, when it was enclosed.
- O'Leary's Group 2 date to this period. This group comprises c.100 cross-inscribed and plain grave-slabs, mostly 11th–12th century in date, most of which are *in situ* within the Saints' Graveyard (O'Leary 2015, 116). Two large recumbent cross-slabs do not conform to Group 2 and may date to the 10th century.
- Most of the high crosses likely date to the early 12th century, as do other miscellaneous pieces of sculpture. The ringed high cross is likely earlier.
- The two sundials recorded from the site probably date to this period. The sundial with a semicircle below the hole for the gnomon probably dates to the 11th/12th century, possibly earlier, while the sundial with a complete circle around the hole for the gnomon probably dates to the 12th, or possibly 13th century.
- The large corpus of bullauns may date to this period, though they are possibly earlier.
- The D-shaped ditch around St Michael's Church had filled up at this time and a burial was cut into it that was radiocarbon dated to 1024–1163 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 11). An 11th/12th-century kidney ringed pin was also found in the upper fill of the ditch.
- There were rectangular and circular wooden structures within an oval enclosure north of the Confessional. Here there was evidence for bronze-working as well as tillage activity, the majority of which appears to date to the 11th century.
- Fill from the ditch around St Brigid's Church yielded a radiocarbon date of 992–1150 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 33); we know that the ditch was filling up in the 11th–12th centuries because comb fragments found in the fill have been dated to this time (*ibid.*, 13).
- Charcoal from a pit just west of the church's enclosure was radiocarbon dated to 1031–1155 AD, while a posthole in close proximity was radiocarbon dated to 1034–1205 AD (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 11).
- Bone and antler artefacts were recovered near St Brigid's Church, while quernstones and iron-working debris were found north of the enclosure and probably relate to activity in the 11th–13th centuries, and bronze-working occurred immediately west of the church during the same period.
- Burial, apparently including at least one female who died in childbirth as well as infants, took place in St Brigid's Church probably from the 12th/13th centuries.

- There were circular wooden and earthen structures in the vicinity of the round tower and St Caimín's Church, some of which were earlier than the tower. These included a large circular house later than the earthen church, with evidence for internal divisions.

- Iron-working occurred in the area west and southwest of the round tower in the 11th–13th centuries.

- Some of the burials in the rectangular enclosure that had been built near the Confessional at an earlier period date to this phase.

- St Mary's parish church was built in the late 12th century.

- The *Psalter of Caimín*, which is associated with Inis Cealtra, is thought to date to c.1100 (MacNamara 2009, 42).

- Charcoal evidence indicated that oak had declined in the area by the 11th or 12th century with an expansion in ash indicating an increase in grassland (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 10).

- A sizeable collection of 11th–12th-century artefacts were recovered on the island which is relatively unusual outside of the Hiberno-Norse port towns of the period. A number of coins were found dating to this period in the area southwest of St Caimín's Church and the round tower, including an Anglo-Saxon coin of King Cnut dating from 1035, a Hiberno-Norse Phase III Sitric-type penny, three 12th-century half Denier French coins, and a 12th-century hoard of 22 coins dating to the 1160s (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 9-10, 14). The collection of antler picks from the site as well as comb fragments from St Brigid's Church dated to c.1050–c.1125 and also from the area around St Caimín's represent one of the larger collections of antler from a site outside the Hiberno-Norse port towns, while most of the worked bone artefacts from Inis Cealtra also likely date to the 12th century (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 7, 13-14). A kidney ringed pin from the upper fills of the ditch of the D-shaped enclosure around St Michael's probably dates to the 11th or 12th century (*ibid.*, 14)

From at least the 10th century, Inis Cealtra's history was dominated by the Dál Cais who had moved into east Clare in the 8th or 9th century after side-lining the Eóganacht and the Uí Néill (Ó Corráin 1973). Two clerics from collateral branches of the Dál Cais were made coarbs of Inis Cealtra in the later 10th century (AFM 951; AFM 967; Ó Corráin 1973, 54), coarbs being abbot-like figures who could be laymen as well as clerics, with control over the temporal resources of a religious community. By this time the Dál Cais, led by Brian Boru (reigned 976–1014), arguably became the most powerful political force in the southern portion of Ireland; their royal residence and ecclesiastical centre was then located at Kincora–Killaloe, just 12km south of Inis Cealtra. Brian asserted direct control over Inis Cealtra by installing his brother, Marcán, as coarb; in his obit he is entitled 'coarb of Colum' (AU 1010), an authoritative title linking him with the man perceived to be one of the founding saints at this time. Although Brian and some of his successors bore the title 'High King of Ireland', their rule was far from absolute; nevertheless, Inis Cealtra was at the heart of their kingdom and the influence of the Uí Briain on the physical and architectural evolution of the island was profound and has been discussed in more detail above.

By the latter centuries of the early medieval period, there is more substantial annalistic coverage of Inis Cealtra (see AI 1033; AI 1076; AI 1111) and this can be explained in part by the fact that the *Annals of Inishfallen* – a Munster chronicle, compiled c.1092, which probably represents contemporary records dating from the late 6th century onwards – was possibly maintained in Killaloe for some time (Gwynn 1958, 29-31). Notably, in the 11th century, Gormlaith, wife of Tairdelbach Ua Briain and 'queen' of Munster was buried on Inis Cealtra (AI 1076), thereby illustrating that the island was deemed a worthy setting for royal burial (O'Leary 2015, 129-30).

In the 12th century, Muirchertach Uí Briain spearheaded a nationwide campaign of ecclesiastical reform as part of the pan-European Gregorian Reform (O'Leary 2015, 130). A series of synods introduced major church reforms creating an overarching hierarchical structure with a national church in Armagh and establishing a comprehensive territorial diocesan structure for the first time in Ireland (Flanagan 2010). The Munster Synod of Ráith Bressail in 1111, presided over by Muirchertach Uí Briain, had declared Killaloe a diocese, one of the largest dioceses in the country. Not surprisingly Inis Cealtra formed part of this diocese. Muirchertach's actions and the new reforms would have had major impacts on the day-to-day management of the religious affairs on Inis Cealtra and on its architectural landscape (discussed above). Interestingly, 'Cathasach, the most pious man in Ireland' and a high-ranking cleric from Armagh died on Inis Cealtra in 1111 (AI); the year of his death is notably the year of the Synod of Ráith Bressail and Cathasach, who is commemorated on a high cross on the island, probably died while in attendance. His interment on Inis Cealtra emphasises the continuing importance of the island as a place of burial for high-status clerics (O'Leary 2015, 139). The 12th-century *Chronicle of Marianus Scottus* records the existence of an anchorite called Anmchad in Fulda, Germany, who was banished from Inis Cealtra by his abbot 'Corcram' for disobedience (MacCarthy 1892, 31-2). While the nature of Anmchad's difference with his abbot is unknown, he must have been a prominent cleric in order to be able to travel to Fulda from Ireland and gain admittance there. For the remainder of his life, reportedly he lived as an *inclusus* within a small purpose-built chamber.

Following Muirchertach's death in 1119, Uí Briain power was somewhat checked and their kingdom retracted to include only Thomond (roughly modern-day Co. Clare) but their grip remained particularly tight in the area which encompassed the 12th-century diocese of Killaloe and as such the Uí Briain, and subsidiary branches of the Dál Cais, continued to have a substantial impact on Inis Cealtra well into the late medieval period. By this time Inis Cealtra was in the kingdom of Trícha Cét Ua mBlait, a subkingdom of Thomond (MacCotter 2008). By the late 12th century Inis Cealtra was entering a period of decline; as elsewhere in Ireland, a new parochial system, influenced by the Gregorian reforms, was taking hold. The diocese of Killaloe lost territory with the Synod of Kells in 1152, presided over by Tairdelbach O'Conor, reflecting the declining power of the Uí Briain. Around this time also, a new Continental monastic order, the Cistercians, were founding monasteries in Ireland. Other orders would follow and the monastic life would undergo major reorganisation across Ireland, with the diverse, communal type of religious living that occurred in sites such as Inis Cealtra disappearing.

2.3.4   Late medieval activity: c.1200–c.1500

The excavated areas reveal a decline in activity from this period but the site would have continued to function as the parish centre and also continued to have important burial and pilgrimage functions:

- Industrial activities such as stone-working and metalworking probably continued north and west of St Brigid's Church enclosure and south and southwest of the round tower into the 13th century.
- Burial north of St Caimín's Church may have continued into the 13th century according to radiocarbon dates, and probably also continued within St Brigid's Church.
- Historic evidence shows that the site was in possession of various hereditary clerical families. There was likely an incumbent priest who lived on or near the site with his household.
- St Mary's, which was not excavated, was the parish centre. Masses likely took place here on a weekly basis. The sacraments, such as baptism, would have been given to laity in this church.
- The area surrounding St Mary's would have been used for burial. A large, elaborately carved cross-inscribed grave-slab, now in St Caimín's Church but originally associated with St Mary's, and portions of another carved slab displaying elaborate floral patterns probably both date to the 14th/15th century.
- Either during this period or early in the post-medieval period a buttress was built against the northeast corner of St Mary's Church. Doorways in the north and south walls were blocked up.
- A mass of chain mail dating to the late medieval period was found within St Brigid's.

With the centralisation and rationalisation of ecclesiastical power, many of the old ecclesiastical sites disappeared or were given the status of parish churches. Some new monasteries were founded on pre-existing early ecclesiastical sites, and in some cases early ecclesiastical communities reformed themselves and adopted a Continental Rule, such as that of the Augustinian canons, allowing their continuing existence, as at Monaincha, Co. Tipperary. This does not seem to have occurred at Inis Cealtra; Dónal Mór Ó Briain, King of Thomond from 1168 to 1194, was associated with new religious foundations at Clareabbey, Inchicronan, Canon's Island, Killone, and Corcomroe, but did not seem to have an incentive to refound Inis Cealtra, though he can perhaps be linked to new construction on the site at this time, as discussed above. The parish system took some time to fully develop in the western dioceses (Nicholls 1971), but at any rate Inis Cealtra is listed in the Papal Taxation of 1302–06, where it is valued at 3 marks (Sweetman 1886). This was a troubled time in the region, with shifts in local power structures and the threat of Norman incursions. *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh* describes the late 13th-century wars of the Normans and Irish, and describes how Brian Bán Mac Domhnaill Ó Briain, defeated by Muirchertach Ó Briain, makes for Inis Cealtra in his retreat (O'Grady 1929, 83), implying that the battle must have taken place on the Connacht/Munster border in the region of the site. In 1287 Toirdhealbhach Ó Briain held seven cantreds in Thomond including the cantred of 'Triucha Cead O mBloid', equivalent to the early medieval kingdom of Trícha Cét Ua mBlait, which included Killaloe and Inis Cealtra (MacCotter 2008).

While the parish system was clearly established by the dawn of the 14th century, it would appear that in Inis Cealtra, as in many other western parishes, the old system of coarbial control of ecclesiastical lands continued in a different guise (Nicholls 1971; McInnerney 2014). A number of clerics associated with 15th- and 16th-century Inis Cealtra are listed in the Papal Annates and Letters (*ibid.*, 245); families which pop up over and over again include the Uí Mhaolanfaidh, the Uí hÓgain, and the Uí hUrthuile. A Papal Letter of 1423 is a dispensation for Thomas, illegitimate son of Donatus, one of the Uí hUrthuile, to become vicar in his father's stead (Calendar of Papal Registers VII, 265). The right to receive ecclesiastical revenues was often passed from father to son in late medieval Ireland despite celibacy being enjoined of clerics by the Church. Appointees to benefices were

required to be of legitimate birth and good reputation but many clerics had secular 'wives' or were the product of such a union. A father would get himself declared unworthy to continue in his role due to the fact of his having broken the vow of celibacy. Once his role was void, a special dispensation would be sought for his son who would subsequently fill the vacancy in the parish. Another three Uí hUrthuile clerics are associated with Inis Cealtra in the years following, two in 1426 and another in 1472. Representatives of an old ecclesiastical kindred, it would seem that they controlled ecclesiastical appointments at Inis Cealtra throughout the 15th century (McInnerney 2014, 40, 245). The Uí Ógáin, a Dál gCais ecclesiastical family, also had appointments in the parish later in the 15th century (*ibid*. 40). Papal Letters from 1405 indicate that Castletownarra, described as having 'no bounds of its own, nor bell-tower, bells, nor other parochial insignia, except that in a small cemetery near it the poor and children who die within the bounds of the said church about the said lake or outside it are wont to be buried', had clerics living there that also served Inis Cealtra (Calendar of Papal Registers VI, 68; McInnerney 2014, 40).

2.3.5   Post-medieval activity: c.1500–present

From about 1500 Inis Cealtra would have suffered the effects of the Reformation and by at least the turn of the 17th century all the churches appear to have fallen into ruin. However, a major rise in pilgrimage appears to have taken place by the 17th century and historical evidence suggests that Good Friday, Whitsunday, and St Caimín's feastday, 24th March, were occasions on which large groups congregated on the island to carry out the station or pattern. As visitors began to take an interest in the island as a heritage as well as pilgrimage destination from the mid-19th century, repairs to preserve the monuments took place:

- During this phase, or possibly earlier, burial began within the quadrangular enclosure around St Michael's Church; it was used for the burial of infants and 42 burials were uncovered. St Michael's Church was built within the children's burial ground after burial had commenced.
- By the turn of the 17th century, historical evidence suggests that the regular celebration of Mass had ceased on the site. Some high crosses may have been purposely smashed later in the Cromwellian period, as occurred on other sites.
- Burial, including burials of some elite individuals, continued to take place across the island throughout this period, and two very early wall monuments of high-status Catholic families can be found on the island dating to c.1625 and 1703. From the late 18th century, post-medieval grave memorials such as headstones, ledgers, table tombs, and neo-Celtic crosses appear on the island. Burial continues to the present day.
- *Teampall na bhFear nGonta* was possibly altered to serve as a mausoleum during this period.
- The Confessional was built in its current form c.1700 on the site of an earlier stone shrine.
- Penitential stations around the island were part of a well-established system of rounds by the 1830s.
- The holy well had been built by the 19th century, and a landing stage (pier) had also been erected by this time on the eastern shore.
- The site was used for limited domestic habitation in the 18th/19th centuries. A vernacular cottage was built near the eastern landing stage. In the 19th century St Brigid's was adapted for habitation.
- The bargaining stone was being used to seal promises by locals.
- Around 1700 St Caimín's Church and perhaps other monuments underwent repairs commissioned by the O'Gradys.
- The Board of Works carried out repairs across the site from 1879–80.
- Further repairs were carried out in the 20th century and particularly at various points from the 1970s onwards.

By 1607, if not throughout the late medieval period, Inis Cealtra was a major pilgrimage destination, one of 12 Irish 'shrines' granted a plenary indulgence by Pope Paul V (Harbison 1991, 54). In 1609 Arthur Chichester, Lord Deputy of Ireland, complained of priests who flocked to Inis Cealtra and other sites on a seasonal basis, noting, probably with some exaggeration, that '[a]t a place called Minahinche [Monaincha], in the borders of the county of Tipperary, the week before Easter last, and since at another place called Inishgaltaghe [Inis Cealtra] in Connaught, an island near the Shannon side, there were gathered together in each place to the number of at least 15,000 persons, and some say there were many more'. However, in 1615 the church on Inis Cealtra is described as being in a ruinous condition by Bishop Rider on his royal visitation to the site and the vicarage of the parish vacant (Murphy and Ormond 1914). It is uncertain whether the church had only recently been ruined or whether it had been in this condition for some time. From the mid-16th century onwards, many late medieval ecclesiastical sites suffered destruction and the infrastructure of the Catholic Church gradually collapsed throughout the country. Nevertheless, the void was filled by an increase in folk religious practices such as

pilgrimage to holy sites, while ruined churches or unconsecrated buildings could be adopted for worship if a priest was available. Therefore, despite the decimation of the Catholic Church in Ireland in the 17th century, pilgrimage to Inis Cealtra seems to have flourished. In 1622 Bishop Rider complains in a letter that 'many ffriars and Priests doe ordinarily resort [to old churches] and sometimes in ye yeare great concourse of people publickely: as in…Inishgealtragh or ye Iland of Seven Altars…' (Dwyer 1878, 101). Despite the fact that it was ruined in 1615 and is again described as being in ruins in 1633 (*ibid.*, 160), Catholic services appear to have been taking place on Inis Cealtra: in his 1626 will, Turlough O'Brien, whose grave memorial in St Mary's Church is discussed above, left his largest cup of plate to Our Lady's Church (St Mary's), Inis Cealtra (*ibid.*, 480).

The site continued to be a noted place of pilgrimage and burial as the century wore on. The c.1680 account of Dynely's visit to Ireland records that Inis Cealtra is also known as 'Seven Churches' or 'Seven Churches of Asia' and that there is 'a great concourse of both sexes' to the island annually, where people do rounds bare-footed or hire someone else to do them for them. In a 1794 Irish poem by Ó Braonáin, the site is again called 'Seven Churches' (de Paor 1996, 31). Around 1796 a Frenchman touring Ireland noted that Inis Cealtra formerly had 'seven churches' and that '[t]he Catholics of the country have taken exclusive possession of the cemetery, and will not permit that the bones of a Protestant should there be deposited' (Stevenson 1984). In 1837 the site was noted as being 'a favourite burial-place and is much visited by pilgrims' (Lewis 1837, 18). However, the following year, an OS letter by O'Conor notes that the pilgrimage had not been allowed the past few years due to debauchery and a particularly unsavoury incident of abduction, discussed further below (O'Flanagan 1928, 196). O'Conor also reports an account he has obtained of the rounds, outlining the route around the station monuments:

The Station was commenced at Lady Well and the performers went round the extremity of the island, one mile in the circuit, seven times, equal seven miles. The short rounds were commenced at a station monument (a little mound of earth and stones) lying thirty five yards to the west of the round tower. They went round this monument seven times and proceeded through the door on the west gable of St Caimin's Church and as far as the altar in Saint Columb's Chapel. They went this length seven times from the monument just mentioned, and at the commencement of every seven times of these they went round the monument itself seven times. They went round Saint Caimin's Church fourteen times; the tower and all the churches around it being included on the rounds. They went round a station monument at the end of St. Caimin's Church, either the one (a little mound of earth) immediately at the southwest corner or the one (also a little mound of earth) within a few yards of the northwest corner of it. They also went seven times round Garaidh Mhicheail; St Michael's Garden, and seven times round the bank of earth about St Michael's Church; and seven times round the Church itself and seven times round a large flag stone lying at it, on which stone they finally (i.e., after having gone round it seven times) impressed kisses. They went seven times round St Mary's Church and seven times round the Baptism Church. They finished at the well and drank of its water (*ibid.*, 196-7).

The island attracted attention from both tourists and antiquarians throughout the Victorian period. A guidebook printed 'for the Railway Companies' in 1853 describes Inis Cealtra for the interested traveller (de Paor 1996, 34), and a group of tourists visited the island in 1861 who subsequently complained of the state of the monuments, reporting that one of the churches had been converted into a rough habitation (*ibid.*, 31). Subsequently Rev. M. J. Kenny, P.P., Scarriff, obtained the cooperation of the landlord, Philip Reade, to undertake repairs and build walls on the site. The ruins and other monuments came into the care of the State as a result of the Church Disestablishment Act of 1869 (*ibid.*, 35), and from 1878 to 1880 the site underwent repairs by the Board of Works (Deane 1880).

Folklore and Traditions

The following is a brief account of some of the stories, legends, and traditions associated with Inis Cealtra. The majority arise from antiquarian sources, while some derive from more recent accounts. Often several versions of the tales are known, and the folklore concerning the island is constantly being adapted and recreated.

There is a tradition that the site was founded by a community of 12 (Macalister 1916–17, 162-3, 172) and the OS letters, c.1838, mark on a rough sketch the supposed location of 'the grave of the saints – founders of the place' where O'Connor states 'the twelve Saints are interred' (O'Flanagan 1928, 194).

According to Dunraven (1877, 4) the round tower on Inis Cealtra was built by St Senanas (i.e. Senan of Scattery Island), while Westropp (1912, 206-7; 1913a, 210-11) stated that 'St Caimeen of Iniscaltra' (i.e. Caimín) was remembered for building the round tower, a tradition which may stem from a poem about the Shannon written by Ó Braonáin in 1794:

> '…S an seachtmhadh céad don achair Chríostamhail
>
> Do chuir Naomh Caimín, triath be meisneamhail

Seacht dTeampla s's Clogás árd le coimhneart

A n-Inis Cealtrach a meódhan Loch Deirgeart...'

Translation:

'... In the seventh century of the Christian era

Saint Caimín, a prince who was courageous, put

seven churches and a high belltower by sheer strength

in Inis Cealtra in the middle of Lough Derg...'   (de Paor 1996, 31; 1997, 32).

The conical cap of the tower is now missing and local tradition holds that it was never completed because of the curse of a witch, the *cailleach na sioghbhruidheacht* or fairy hag (O'Flanagan 1928, 190-91; Lenihan 1889, 162-3; Westropp 1913a, 210-11; Macalister 1916–17, 137, 170-71; de Paor 1997, 42; 2013, 28). Several versions of the tale are known but the earliest surviving in print seems to have been recorded in the OS letters c.1838 which states that the witch scoffed at the stonemason building the tower and became so infuriated that he leapt from the tower and with his hammer transformed her into stone (O'Flanagan 1928, 198); this stone is believed to be that of the base of a high cross located a few metres from the tower. By 1889 the tale had altered slightly and it was said that a woman had forgotten to bless the work of the builders bringing the construction to a standstill (Lenihan 1889, 163), and in 1916 Macalister stated that the tale of the witch was still told but 'without the mad leap of the architect from the top of the tower; the witch is not now said to have scoffed, but to have omitted the benediction on the work expected from the passer-by' (1916–17, 170). A more recent version claims that a red-headed woman failed to give the customary salutation '*Bail o Dhia ar an obair*' ('God bless the work') which angered the mason to such an extent that he threw his hammer at her resulting in her transformation into stone (Madden 2008, 31); some versions claim that soon after the stonemason/architect became so ill due to the witch's curse that he was unable to finish the tower.

The *cailleach na sioghbhruidheacht* is also associated with tales concerning the early ecclesiastical island site of Illaunmore, also on the Shannon, just north of Inis Cealtra. There is a tradition, recorded in the OS letters, that on Illaunmore 'there is standing a rude stone, 8 or 9 feet high' which was apparently erected by saints to commemorate their departure from Illaunmore to Inis Cealtra, and there was a tradition, also recorded in the letters, of a road or causeway leading from Inis Cealtra north to Illaunmore, 'constructed with stones of great size and weight' (Macalister 1916–17, 170). Indeed a standing stone has been recorded on Illaunmore (RMP: CL021A004----) on the southern shore, sometimes referred to as the '*leacht*' and measuring almost 3m in height (Madden n.d.) but these traditions concerning the relationship between Inis Cealtra and Illaunmore seem to have vanished by Macalister's time while traditions concerning other roads and causeways prevailed. Folklore has it that a causeway once linked Inis Cealtra to the mainland. The OS letters dated c.1838 state:

'... *the principle [sic] road is still observable leading from the lake to the churches in a Southern direction. It is said that there is a road (or causeway) extending opposite or near the Western extremity of this road, a distance of some perches from the island into the lake. A person could safely walk on it in summer time when the weather is dry. It is supposed that this road formerly connected the island with the mainland*' (O'Flanagan 1928).

Tradition also holds that underground passages exist connecting various locations on the island of Inis Cealtra (Macalister 1916–17, 173), a tradition which is commonly held in connection with many medieval sites throughout Ireland. Souterrains commonly occur on early medieval ecclesiastical sites and secular sites such as ringforts; however, excavation revealed no such evidence on Inis Cealtra. One underground passageway was said to lead to a point on the shoreline, another to Tuamgraney, and yet another was said to lead from the round tower south to Scattery Island in the Shannon Estuary (Lenihan 1889, 167; Macalister 1916–17, 173; Madden 2008, 30).

Local lore holds that the supposed belfry on the east gable of the nave of St Caimín's Church housed a bell that would toll spontaneously on St Caimín's feastday, 24th March. The memory of a bell in this location had survived when the OS letters were being composed, c.1838 (O'Flanagan 1928). A slightly altered version of the tale says that the bell was located in the round tower and that it rung spontaneously everyday but no one was seen ringing it (Lenihan 1889, 163). The bell was brought to Killaloe but 'they could make no use of it, for it would not ring. It was shortly afterwards buried in the ground' (Macalister 1916–17, 171).

Brash (1866, 20) records a tradition that all women who enter *Teampall na bhFear nGonta* will be cursed with barrenness, while the OS letters c.1838 claim that the building was reserved for the burial of men slain in battle (O'Flanagan 1928; see also Macalister 1916–17, 172). Macalister (1916–17, 119) stated that a confused tale existed concerning the bringing of people with cholera or suffering from other deadly diseases to St Michael's Church (or the 'Black Church') and that it had healing properties. It is said that once an attempt was made to remove a

cross-inscribed grave-slab from the Saints' Graveyard in order to bring it to Clonrush but that 'no human power could take it up to place it in the boat' (O'Flanagan 1928; see also Lenihan 1889, 164). The tomb in St Mary's – which formed part of an O'Brien wall monument – was removed to Whitegate church in the 17th century for use as an altar there, but had been returned to the site by 1880; it is said that the person who removed the altar suffered misfortune (de Paor 1997, 35-6).

Westropp (1913b, 365-66) noted that a retainer of the Morelands of Raheen on the edge of Lough Derg and an old fisherman in 1877 told him that no one would damage the fences around the churches because 'the Danes made them' but that people were more likely to injure the actual churches because they were made by the saints and 'the saints are in heaven and will not come back, but who knows where the Danes are'; in the 1870s it was reputed that the Danes had tails.

There are a number of accounts of acts of debauchery, desecration, and other outrages associated with pilgrimage activities on Inis Cealtra (Hardy 1836; O'Flanagan 1928, 196; Lenihan 1889, 163; Westropp 1911, 333-34; 1913a, 211; 1913c, 501; Macalister 1916–17, 172); such stories are commonly associated with other early Irish church sites in the 18th and 19th centuries. The OS letters in c.1838 record an incident involving an O'Brien man living in the locality who, when attending the pattern, carried off a young girl by force, who later bore three children by him (O'Flanagan 1928, 196). The OS letters explain that the pattern was no longer permitted due to this incident. A similar story concerning the misconduct of a wild young squire attending the pattern was recorded by Westropp (1911, 333-34; 1913a, 211; see also Macalister 1916–17, 173, fn. 2), the incident apparently having taken place about a century prior. It was said that the squire struck holes in the boats on Inis Cealtra to prevent pursuit as he attempted to carry off a country girl by force from the island. However, his boat was overtaken by a terrible storm raised by St Caimín. The boat was upset by a squall, and the squire and his accomplice (a foster-brother) were drowned; the girl and the boatman clung to the keel and floated ashore unharmed. The squire was waked in the 'big house' and the foster-brother in an outhouse or barn. The bodies were left unattended and on the following morning when the barn was opened 'the bare skeleton of the instigator of the outrage was covered with rats and *keerogues* (black-beetles)'. According to Westropp (1911, 333-34) the squire was a member of the Brady family but misconduct concerning the Bourke family of Meelick was also recorded and that 'evil befell them in consequence' (Lenihan 1889, 163; Macalister 1916–17, 172). Regarding the pattern on Inis Cealtra, in 1877 an old boatman told Westropp (1911, 333-4) that he had 'heard from old people of the flotillas of boats from every side of the great lake, the villages of tents, and the crowds of beggars, devotees, and merrymakers'.

The bargaining stone is a unique monument that reflects a wealth of traditions and folklore where people joined hands through its channel to seal a bargain, promise, or a marriage contract; this tradition continued until the mid-20th century. Madden (2008, 6) believes that a poem called *Inis Cealtra* apparently written by Charlotte Elizabeth Johnson, probably in the early 20th century, refers to both the well and the bargaining stone:

> *'But of its waters taste not, 'til they grasp their foeman's hand again in friendship's clasp!*

With the increase in tourism to the site over the past three decades, the stone is again being used to seal deals and renew vows.

A more recent tale concerns a chest tomb in the Saints' Graveyard, dedicated to Thaddeus O'Callaghan, a barrister and notorious landlord who owned an estate in Whitegate, a few kilometres northeast of Inis Cealtra, and was murdered in 1856. No one was arrested for the murder although the responsible party was well known. It is said that O'Callaghan was originally buried in Clonrush (Whitegate) but that his coffin was exhumed and sent floating down the Shannon to Inis Cealtra (Madden 2008, 20). In 1887 Michael Davitt, founder of the Irish National Land League, visited Inis Cealtra with a group of priests; on entering the Saints' Graveyard the group was startled by the scene of Davitt standing on his head on O'Callaghan's tomb (*ibid.*, 20-21). Davitt had only one arm by this time, having lost the other in an accident as a child.

2.3.6   Conclusion

As the above discussion shows, Inis Cealtra is a site of major archaeological and historical significance. The rich tapestry of monuments developed from the foundation of the illustrious site, consolidated by royal patronage from the 10th–12th centuries, as attested by both excavation and the wealth of early medieval buildings and sculpture still surviving on the island. In the late medieval period, the site became a parish centre but lost its former economic status; nonetheless, Inis Cealtra continued to be a sought-after place of burial for high-status families while separate but careful burial of children occurred elsewhere on the island.

The early medieval structures continued to function as part of a sacred pilgrimage landscape, while the early medieval earthworks were altered and added to. The post-medieval period witnessed a surge in pilgrimage and popular devotion on the island and the island was remodelled further to accommodate this activity, while new types of grave memorial appeared, complementing the early medieval sculpture.

Overall, Inis Cealtra is a multi-faceted landscape that can prove highly informative in relation to Christian practice, popular devotion, royal and ecclesiastical power, ecclesiastical and secular domestic habitation, land use, and pilgrimage.

Compiled by Dr Bernadette McCarthy and Clíodhna O'Leary

Translations are given rather than original Latin or Irish in most cases below.

2.4.1   Early Medieval Annalistic Entries:

Source	Date given in source	Entry
AU	549	A great mortality in which these rested: Finnia moccu Telduib, Colam, descendant of Crimthann, Mac Táil of Cell Cuilinn, Sinchell son of Cenannán, abbot of Cell Achaid Druimfhata, and Colum of Inis Celtra. [*AFM 548*: St. Colam, of Inis Cealtra, died. Of the mortality which was called the Cron Chonaill…] [AT 550]
AI	654	Repose of Camíne of Inis Celtra, and of Mael Aithgein, abbot of Tír dá Glas. [AT 652]
AFM	662	Guaire (i.e. Aidhne), son of Colman, King of Connaught, died. Guaire and Caimin, of Inis Cealtra, had the same mother, as is said: Cumman, daughter of Dallbronach, was the mother of Caimin and Guaire; Seven and seventy was the number born of her.
AI	762	Diarmait, abbot of Inis Celtra, died.
AU	785	Dúnchad grandson of Daiméne, king of Uí Maini, Mael Ochtraig son of Conall, abbot of Cell Chuilinn and Cell Manach, scribe, and Mael Dúin son of Fergus, king of Loch Gabor, and the learned Faelgus grandson of Roichlech, and the learned Mugthigern son of Cellach, abbot of Inis Celtra, and the learned Ioseph grandson of Foíléne, abbot of Biror, and Ruaidrí son of Faelán, king of all the Laigin, and Conchobor son of Colcu—all died.
AU	837	Inis Celtra was plundered by the heathens. [*AFM 836*: The churches of Laichtene, Inis Cealtra, and Cill Finnche, were burned by the foreigners.]
AFM	898	Cosgrach, who was called Truaghan, anchorite of Inis Cealtra; died.
AI	922	Tomrair son of Elgi, a Jarl of the foreigners, on Luimnech (the Lower Shannon), and he proceeded and plundered Inis Celtra and Muicinis, and burned Cluain Moccu Nóis; and he went on Loch Rí and plundered all its islands, and he ravaged Mide.
AFM	949	Conghalach, son of Maelmithigh, with the great fleet of Leath-Chuinn, upon Loch-Deirgdherc. They plundered all the islands of the lake, and obtained the hostages of the Munstermen, over whom they obtained sway, after some opposition.
AFM	951	Diarmaid, son of Caicher, Bishop of Inis-Cealtra… died. [*AI 953*: Repose of Diarmait son of Aicher, bishop of Tuad Mumu.]
AFM	967	Maelgorm, son of Maelcheallaigh, Abbot of Inis-Cealtra… died.
AU	1010	Mael Suthain ua Cerbaill, chief sage of Ireland, and king of Eóganacht of Loch Léin, Marcán son of Ceinnéitig, coarb of Colum son of Cremthann and Inis Celtra and Cell dá Lua, and Muiredach son of Mochloingse, erenagh of Mucnám, fell asleep in Christ. [AFM 1009]
AI	1033	Conn Ua Sinnaig, anchorite of Ireland, rested in Inis Celtra.
AI	1076	Gormlaith, daughter of Ua Fócarta, queen of Munster [and] wife of Tairdelbach Ua Briain, rested in Cell Dá Lua and was buried in Inis Celtra.
AI	1111	Cathasach, head of the piety of Ireland, rested in Christ in Inis Celtra.

2.4.2 Hagiography, Martyrologies, And Other Religious Texts

Source	Date of source (if known)	Content
Old Irish Table of Penitential Commutations (Binchy 1962, 63-65)	8th century	*It is said that a particular type of vigil was recommended by 'Patrick… and Colum Cille and Maedoc of Ferns and Molacca Menn and Brénainn Moccu Altae and Colum mac Crimthain and Mocholmóc of Inis Celtra and Énda of Aran.'*
Martyrology of Oengus Notes for March 25th (Stokes 1905)	9th century but glosses are Middle Irish, probably 12th century	A gloss for March 25th notes the feastday of 'Caimín of Inis celtra'
Martyrology of Tallaght, May 24th (Best and Lawlor 1931)	9th century (Ó Riain 2006)	Stellain i nInis Celtra
Martyrology of Tallaght, May 24th (Best and Lawlor 1931)	9th century (Ó Riain 2006)	Secht ningena Fergusa in Inis Cealtra [Seven daughters of Fergus in Inis Cealtra]
Martyrology of Tallaght, 29th July (Best and Lawlor 1931)	9th century (Ó Riain 2006)	Coelain Insi Celtra
Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae (Ó Riain 1985, 290.1-3; 700.1-3; 722.8)	Various early medieval sources	St Caimín is given three different pedigrees: the Uí Cheinsealaigh of South Leinster, the Ciarraighe of south-west Munster, and the Uí Bhriúin of north-east Connacht. The saint's mother is said to have been Cuman, maternal aunt of Brighid of Kildare.
Chronicle of Marianus Scottus (MacCarthy 1892, 31-32)	12th century	Notes how the inclusus Anmchad, a monk of Inis Cealtra, had been banished by his superior Corcram to Fulda for an offence against monastic obedience.
RIA MS 23. L. 11, 263 (Ó Riain 2011, 137)	1200–1500	Caimín is called upon together with other saints, generally of Munster, to assist in delivering Ireland's southern half from a bondage imposed on it by the northern half championed by Finnian of Clonard.
Note in Yellow Book of Lecan (p. 240, col. 2, l. 29; Macalister 1916–17, 100)	Late medieval manuscript, but possibly based on earlier sources	Cormac mac Cuilleanáin, King of Munster, is said to have brought an alder tree to Inis Cealtra that miraculously grew apples.
The Miracles of Senan (Plummer 1914)	14th century	Caimín is one of the saints invoked by Senan in this poem of prophecy.
Martyrology of Donegal, 24th March (O'Donovan, Todd, and Reeves 1864)	17th century, but based on earlier sources	Caimin, of Inis-cealtra in Loch Deirgdheric, near unto Magh-neó n-Orbruighe, and to Tuaim Gréine, the town of Cronan. He was of the race of Cathaoir Mór of Leinster. A very ancient old vellum book states, that Caimin of Inis Cealtra was, in his manners and life, like unto Panchomius [Pachomius], the monk.

Martyrology of Donegal, 29th July (O'Donovan, Todd, and Reeves 1864)	17th century, but based on earlier sources	Caelán, of Inis Cealtra.
Martyrology of Donegal, 13th December (O'Donovan, Todd, and Reeves 1864)	17th century, but based on earlier sources	Colum, of Tir-dá-glas, son of Ninnidh, of the race of Cathaoir Mór…Him Aenghus calls Colum Mac Crimhthainn. It was he that gave the sacrifice to Finnen, or Cluain-Eraird; and he was a disciple of Finnen. Macaoimhe, of Tir-da-ghlas, and Oghran brought his relics to Inis Cealtra, as Ciaran of Saighir had foretold in his own *Life*, chap. 6, and as Mochaemhog had foretold when he was baptizing Odhran.
Martyrology of Usuard	In an addition made by Grevenus of Cologne c.1521	Records feastday of St Caimín according to Ó Riain (2011)
Betha Meic Creiche (Plummer 1925)	Probably late medieval. In a manuscript transcribed by Michael O'Clery in 1634 from a copy made by Maelechlann Ó Callanáin in 1528 at Killoran, Co. Tipperary, for the coarb of Mac Creiche.	The Life makes no explicit mention of Inis Cealtra but is of relevance in understanding the use of the Confessional and the importance of the saint's cult in the region. Mac Creiche is said to be of the Éoganacht Ninussa, a kin-group associated with the Aran Islands (Byrne 1958). At Cluain Í (Cloonee) as a child he devoted himself to asceticism: This was the size of the structure, viz. four stones; to wit, a stone at the back, a stone at either side, and a stone in front. There Mac Creiche began to keep Lent, for the fear and dread of hell. And he took no food with him into the hermitage, except one single loaf and four sprigs of cress; and of them he ate nothing except on Sunday only. And when Lent was over, he took no food on Easter Sunday, except bread and thin drink. There his relatives found him afterwards in the hermitage… Another time he went in a doe would come and drop her milk for him 'into a stone bowl or hollow which was at the door-post of the hermitage in which he was'. He is granted land on which he founds Cell Meic Creiche, or Kilmacreehy, Co. Clare. He travels around various sites in Clare and to the Aran Islands. It is said that his first name was Mac croide Ailbe, i.e. son of St Ailbe's heart, and that the name Mac Creiche as given him when he obtained 'the restitution of the northern prey from Aed son of Eochaid'. The gospels of Meic Creiche are referred to as well as a bell from Rome known as Finnfaidech (the melodious) and the staff of St Luchtigern. There is a lengthy account of the saint's negotiations on behalf of the Ciarraige following a raid and hostage-taking as well as the tributes due to the saint and his folllowers. Finally Meic Creiche defeats a monster in another lengthy episode. Michael O' Clery adds another story about Meic Creiche following the Life, nothing how a man named Thomas O Godain in great and extraordinary suffering owing to the plague of boils was cured by water in which Meic Creiche's bell had been washed.
Life of St Colum of Terryglass (Ó Riain 2014)	Late medieval, but probably based on earlier materials	Colum, son of Ninnidh, studies under Colman of Cluain Cain (prob. Clonkeen) and Finnian of Clonard. He goes to Rome to get relics of Peter and Paul and visits the monastery of Tours on his way home, obtaining the staff and chrismal of St Martin. He is then granted land in Echargabul where he places Cronán as head of the community. After a year at

		Clonenagh he founds a site at Tír Snama near Lough Derg in Uí Maine territory. Having founded other churches near the lake an angel tells him to go to Keltra, or Inis Cealtra. An old man called Maccrihe lives on the island but is told to leave by the angel. Colum remains a long time on Inis Cealtra, sustained by liquor from a '*tallia*' or '*tilia*' (lime) tree and befriends the birds. He sees Terryglass on the other side of Lough Derg and wishes that his resurrection will take plae there. Tiring of the crowds of pilgrims coming to Inis Cealtra he leaves to found a new site on 'Inis Erci' in the Shannon. He then travels to Meath to visit Finnian, who is dying of plague, and catches the disease himself and dies. His student carries the body back from the Uí Néill territory secretly. He stops at Inis Cealtra, where it lies buried for seven years, and finally takes it to Terryglass. At each translation of the relics the surface of Lough Derg was illuminated for three days and three nights.
Metrical Life of St Caimín (Bibliotheque Royale, Brussels, MS 2324-40)	Probably 16th century (Ó Riain, pers. comm.)	This is a poem praising the saint, his church, and burial ground.
Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae (Colgan 1645, 746)	1645, compiling a range of medieval sources	Colgan gives a Life of St Caimín. He notes that the saint retired to Inis Cealtra to seek solitude, mortified his flesh with fasts and vigils, fought with demons while there, and became so renowned that he attracted followers and a community was thus founded.
Acta Triadis Thaumaturgae (Colgan 1647, 594)	1647, compiling a range of medieval sources	Colgan gives a metrical Life of Brigid that he claims was written by Colean of Inis Cealtra. It contains the following lines referring to the island: Altere ualde mihi uirtus miranda uidetur/Quae fuit in magna Sinaani fluminis unda:/Intra quam Keltra est conuentus rite uirorum/Prudentum sacro Benedicti dogmate florens It can be roughly translated as 'Truly indeed an excellence that seems to me to require admiration: Which was in the great waves of the Shannon. Among which is [Inis] Keltrs, a monastery of wise men, flourishing under the holy rule of Benedict.'

2.4.3 Other early medieval sources

Source	Date of source (if known)	Content
Conall Corc and the Corcu Luigde (Meyer 1910, Hull 1947)	c.700 (Paul MacCotter pers. comm.)	King Óengus mac nad Fraích, 5th-century Christian king of Munster, granted Aran to Enda. Enda is named along with Colmán mac Leneni and Mochammóc of Inishcealtra as one of the tri h-aithlaich Eirenn, 'three ex-soldiers of Ireland'.
The Battle of Carn Conaill (MS: Lebor na hUidre; Stokes 1901, 205-212)	12th century or earlier	Carn Conaill relates the tale of the Battle of c.645 between armies from Connaught, led by Guaire Aidhne and aligned with armies from Munster, against Diarmaid son of Aedh Slaine who stopped on his way to the battle to do penance at Clonmacnoise. According to the text: St. Cammine of Inis Celtra, 'tis he that had set a curse on Guare, that he should not withstand warriors. For Cammine had been for three

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>days fasting upon him concerning a guarantee which the saint had made him give; for Guare had outraged him. 'If God see fit', says Cammine, 'the man who is stubborn against me shall not stand fast against (his) foes.' Whereupon the angel declared this to Cammine, saying: 'The battle in Inis-celtra which the weakling fights against strengths, 'tis the weakling that shall be strong, 'tis the strong that shall be put to flight.' Guare went to entreat Cammine, and kneels to him. 'Thy cast·hath been hurled', says Cammine: 'I cannot help to stay it. But this is as swift as that', says Cammine, 'and those that shall inflict a defeat upon thee will straightway give thee thy desire.' Thereof said Cammine: When edges shall be against edges and shields against shield, thou wilt be penitent, O Guare, as to the poor cleric to whom thou hast shewn stiffness. According to (His) will God's Son in the change of a single hour has brought Guaire's heart under gentle ones, the strong ones under Guare. 'Fast with me then', says Guare to Cammine,'unto God, that He may grant my prayer.'

The tale then relates an episode involving King Guaire, St Caimín and St Cummian Fota in the church of Inis Cealtra:

Then the three of them entered the church, to wit, Cammine and Guare and St. Cummine the Tall. A great church built by Cammine, therein they were. Then the clerics were causing Guare to confess. 'Well, O Guare', say they, 'with what wouldst thou like to fill this church wherein we stand?' 'I should like its fill of gold and of silver; and not for worldly greed, but to bestow it for my soul's sake on the saints and the churches and the poor of the world.' 'May God give thee help, O Guare!' say they. 'The earth which thou wouldst bestow for thy soul's sake shall be given to thee, and thou shalt (after death) be a dweller in heaven.' 'We are thankful', saith Guare. 'And thou, O Cammine', saith Guare, 'with what wouldst thou like it to be filled?' 'I should like to fill it with pain and sickness and every ailment that is worst to man, so that all of them might be inflicted on my body.' 'And thou, O Cummine', saith Guare, 'with what wouldst thou fain have it filled?' 'Fain would I have its fill of books, for students to repair to them, and (then) to sow God's word in the ears of every one, so as to bring him to heaven out of the troop of the Devil.' Now all their musings came to pass. The earth was given to Guare. Wisdom was given to Cummin. Pains and sicknesses were inflicted on Cammine, so that no bone of him came to another earth, but it had dissolved and decayed with the anguish of every illness and every tribulation. So they all went to heaven according to their musings.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cogadh Gaedhelre Gallaibh (Todd 1867)</td><td>Probably 12th century and commissioned by Muirchertach Ó Briain</td><td>p. 38: After that came Tamar … There came after that a fleet on Loch Dergderc, and they plundered Inis Celtra, and they drowned its shrines, and its relicks, and its books …

p. 139-41: By him [Brian] were erected the church of Cell Dálua, and the church of Inis Cealtra, and the bell tower of Tuam Greine…</td></tr>
</table>

2.4.4 Other late medieval sources

Source	Date	Content
Papal Taxation (Sweetman 1886)	1302–06	Inis Cealtra is listed as being in Killaloe diocese and valued at 3 marks
Papal Annates and	1404–1511	'Inishcaltra' vicarage: list of clerics:

Letters (McInnerney 2014, 245)		1404: Cornelius Omlapaylls
		1423: Tiee Oflaferthaych
		1423: Eneas Oflaferthaych
		1423: Donald Macnesbuch
		1423: Donatus Ohurryle
		1423: Thomas Ohurrle, son of Donatus
		1426: Donati Ohurhuly
		1426: Dermicius Ohurthuly
		1472: Donald Ohorul
		1479: Wilhelmi Ohogan
		1479: Cornelius [alias Cunaa] Tathei Macnamara
		1481: David Ocrormachan
		1481: John Yogayn
		1481: Denis Ohogayn
		1493: Laurentius Macomarra
		1493: John Ocormaccayn
		1493: Odo Mickada
		1511: Odo Macsyda
		1511: Theoderic Obriyan
Calendar of Papal Registers Vol. VI, p. 33	1405	Letter regarding chapel on mainland opposite Inis Cealtra:
		7 Id. May. To the prior of the monastery of St Augustine, Monaincha (de Insula Vivencium), in the diocese of Killaloe. Mandate as below. Lately Boniface IX, upon learning that the parish church of Baleincayssleayn and Ara in the said diocese was void because Cornelius Omlampaylls, its sometimes rector, had held it for a year and more without having himself ordained priest and without dispensation, ordered certain judges to collate and assign it to Donald Ogradi, clerk, of the said diocese. The recent petition of the said Cornelius contained that he has never held and does not hold, and that neither within the memory of man nor at present has there been, nor is there, a parish church so called; that he holds a certain chapel without cure so called within the bounds of the parish church of Inyskealtra in the said diocese, the patronage of which belongs to a layman; and that he fears molestation by Donald under pretext of the said letters with respect to his said chapel. The pope therefore orders the prior to summon and inform himself as in the preceding, and to declare that the said letters do not apply to the said chapel.
Calendar of Papal Reg Vol VI p. 68	1405	Letter regarding chapel on mainland opposite Inis Cealtra:
		Declaration as below. The recent petition of Cornelius Ymulaapayll, rector of the chapel of Balynikasslean and Ara, in the diocese of Killaloe, contained that although the said chapel--which is of the patronage of a layman, and which lies on one side of the lake (lacus sive stagni) called Dergert, and within the bounds of the parish church, situate on the island called Yni[s]kealtra in the said lake, of St Camin--from its foundation, and from time immemorial has had, and has, no bounds of its own, nor bell-tower, bells, nor other parochial insignia, except that in a small

		cemetery near it the poor and children who die within the bounds of the said church about the said lake or outside it are wont to be buried; that it has never been ordained that it ought to have cure; that the perpetual vicar, past and present, of the said church, which the preceptor and brethren of the Hospitallers' house of Ane, in the diocese of Elphin, claim to hold to their uses, has of old been wont to exercise, and does exercise, on account of his perpetual vicarage, the cure of the parishioners of the said church who dwell round about the said chapel on the same side of the same lake, so that both in fact and by repute the chapel is without cure; and that Cornelius, who is poor and execrates litigation, fears lest by persons falsely asserting that the chapel is parochial or has cure he may be molested. The pope therefore declares that the chapel has been and is a simple benefice without cure, and that Cornelius is not on its account in anywise liable to exercise the cure of souls.
Calendar of Papal Registers Vol VII p. 265	1423	Papal dispensation for son of priest to obtain vicarage of Inis Cealtra: 4 Kal. Feb. To the prior of the priory of St John, Naenach, in the diocese of Killaloe, the chancellor of Killaloe, and Edmund de Burgo, canon of Tuam. Mandate to collate and assign to Thomas Ohurryle, clerk, of the diocese of Killaloe (who lately received papal dispensation, as the son of Donatus Ohurryle, priest, and an unmarried woman, to be promoted etc. as above f. 10d), the perpetual vicarage of Iniskealltra in the said diocese to which a number of chapels are subject, and whose value does not exceed 8 marks, void by the death of Eneas Oflaferthaych, the above Donatus Ohurryle, priest, who unlawfully detains possession, being removed; whether it became void as stated, or because Donald Macnesbuchb held it for more than a year without having himself ordained priest and without dispensation.
Caithreim Thoirdhealbhaigh (O'Grady 1929, 83)	Written in 1509 using 14th-century materials	Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh notes how in 1313 Brian Bane Mac Donall marched into Corcomroe to oppose Murtough O'Brien, who had deposed his brother. Murtough mustered a host again him and he retreated, advising his men to flee into Connacht, himself seeking refuge on Inis Cealtra.
Papal Indulgence of Paul V ('Notable Shrines') Harbison 1991, 54	1607	Twelve Irish pilgrimages were assigned indulgences including Inis Cealtra.
Letter from Arthur Chichester to Privy Council (Calendar of State Papers 1603–1625, p. 240)	4 July 1609	[t]he Jesuits and priests from abroad have flocked hither of late in greater numbers than has at any time heretofore been observed. The most eager and stirring of them usually come and go with the swallow, making a yearly revenue here of poor and rich with their indulgences, pardons, and other Romish illusions ... [they are] very dangerous to the state, that they can at any time assemble together an incredible number of people to receive absolutions and pardons, specially the idle sort of malefactors. There is not one, from the murderer of his brother to him that steals a goat, but believes in them, and flocks to them, and will make a conscience to cherish and protect them from officers, if any be so honest and dutiful as to offer to attach them. At a place called Minahinche, in the borders of the county of Tipperary, the week before Easter last, and since at another place called Inishgaltaghe in Connaught, an island near the Shannon side, there were

		gathered together in each place to the number of at least 15,000 persons, and some say there were many more.
Royal Visitation of Diocese of Killaloe (Murphy and Ormond 1914)	1615	Inishgealtra is listed as being the property of Richard Boyle. The church is in ruins and the vicarage is vacant.
Letter from Bishop Rider (Dwyer 1878, 101)	1622	The prebend of Enniskalty to which the rectory of the island belonged was valued at £40 and belonged to Thomas Edens, minister and scholar, who, however, was being prevented from gaining the profits of the rectory from the Mayor and Corporation of Limerick. The rectory of the island was valued at £2 and impropriated, patron being the Earl of Cork. The vicarage was vacant and cure was not being served, and there was only one house on the island. The Bishop complains in the letter that: … there are divers Abbies or Monasteries dissolved in my Dioces, wherein yet ye people do bury theyr dead out of ye ordinary place of christian buriall to ye contempt of religion and maintenance of theyr superstition. And besides that, to these places many ffriars and Priests doe ordinarily resort and sometimes in ye yeare great concourse of people publickely: as in… Inishgealtragh or ye Iland of Seven Altars…
Will of Sir Turlough O'Brien (Dwyer 1878, 480)	1626	I bequeath my soul onto Almightye God my Saviour and Redeemer, and my bodie to be buried in a chapell to be made for me near our Ladyes Church in Inishkealtrye. He leaves his largest cup of plate to our Lady's Church in Inis Cealtra to be made a chalice of, there to remain for his soule.
Royal Visitation of Diocese of Killaloe (Dwyer 1878, 160)	1633	Inis Cealtra is listed as the property of Richard Boyle. The vicarage is vacant and the island is valued at £1.
Foras Feasa ar Éirinn by Geoffrey Keating (Comyn 1902)	c.1634	Repeats tale of Guaire and two saints in church, and also gives a tale related to Carn Conaill in which a nun came to Diarmait because Guaire had taken her only cow. In the subsequent war Caimín took sides against Guaire, fasting on him so that Diarmait's side won.
1659 Census of Clare (Pender 1939)		11 people are listed as living in the townland of Clonty West in Inishgaltragh and 19 in Dromarty. Titled people in the parish are The 'Poore Lord' of Killmallock and George Thorneton Esq.
Dynely's Visit to Ireland (Macalister 1916–17, 111)	1680–81	Ennish Caltra: This is two small miles about in the Shannon river, in which are seen the remaines of Seven Churches called ye Seven Churches of Asia. Here one a year the superstitious Irish go to do penance, and are enjoined to walk round barefooted seven times, and they who fear hurting their feet hire others to do it: here is a great concourse of both sexes. This island is called by some Insula Sanctorum.
Will of James O'Grady	1706	
Long poem by Ó Braonáin, a scribe for O'Conor of Celnagare (de Paor 1996, 31; 1997, 32)	1794	In the seventh century of the Christian era/Saint Caimín, a prince who was courageous, put/seven churches and a high belltower by sheer strength/in Inis Cealtra in the middle of Lough Derg …

Monsieur de Latocnaye on his walk through Ireland 1796–7 (Stevenson 1984)	1796–7	I passed that day at Mr Henry Brady's Tomgraney … From it can be seen many of the islands in the lake, among others one which is called Inis Cealtra, which has a high round tower and where formerly were seven churches, the inhabitants still going, with great devotion, to make their pilgrimages around the ruins. The Catholics of the country have taken exclusive possession of the cemetery, and will not permit that the bones of a Protestant should there be deposited. A rich man of the parish threatened to send a labourer out of it. 'All right' said the other, 'but I have more right in the parish tan you, for you can't take me from my six feet of earth in Inis Cealtra, and with all your riches you will never have that'.
Lewis's Topography of Ireland 1837, 18		In this work Lewis notes the island is still 'a favourite burial-place and is much visited by pilgrims'.
OS Letter by O'Conor (Galway volume, 1838; O'Flanagan 1928 ed., 196-7)	November 19th, 1838	O'Conor gives a description of the monuments on the island and also the following account of the pattern: A patron used to be held here annually four days, Friday and Saturday before Whitsunday, on which day and the following Monday it was continued. No assemblage of persons was allowed here those years past on this occasion in consequence of the outrageous conduct of some ill-behaved young rascals who were wont to seize the opportunity of providing for themselves fresh consorts for the ensuing year by carrying ·off by open force from, the island young girls, in spite of all their friends and relations. Three brothers of a family of the O'Briens who resided in the County of Clare, within view of the island, used to frequent the Patron, at which they conducted themselves, it is said in a most disgraceful manner. On one occasion one of them carried off a young girl by force from it, whom he afterwards detained till he had three children by her. The neighbours state that no law corrected such detestable behaviour at the time. The Station was commenced at Lady Well arid the performers went round the extremity of the island, one mile in the circuit, seven times, equal seven miles. The short rounds were commenced at a station monument (a little mound of earth and stones) lying thirty five yards to the west of the round tower. They went round this monument seven times and proceeded through the door on the west gable of St Caimin's Church and as far as the altar in Saint Columb's Chapel. They went this length seven times from the monument just mentioned, and at the commencement of every seven times of these they went round the monument itself seven times. They went round Saint Caimin's Church fourteen times; the tower and all the churches around it being included on the rounds. They went round a station monument at the end of St. Caimin's Church, either the one (a little mound of earth) immediately at the southwest corner or the one (also a little mound of earth) within a few yards of the northwest corner of it. They also went seven times round Garaidh Mhicheul; St Michael's Garden, and' seven times round the bank of earth about St Michael's Church; and seven times round the Church itself and seven times round a large flag stone lying at it, on which stone they finally (i.e., after having gone round it seven times) impressed kisses. They went seven times round St Mary's Church and seven times round the Baptism Church. They finished at the well and drank of its water. This is the most accurate description I could get of the mode in which the

		Station on the island was performed. I could not get a minute description which would detail the number of prayers repeated during the process of the rounds. Nor am I certain that the description I have given here affords a correct view of the order of the process. I introduced it here merely to show what Station monuments were made use of.

3 INVENTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Dr Bernadette McCarthy, Clíodhna O'Leary, and Dr Pat Wallace

The following inventory is based on survey work undertaken by the authors and desktop research; it refers to de Paor's excavation discoveries which have greatly enhanced our understanding of the above- and below-ground archaeological features (1997; 2013). Permission was kindly granted to include recent post-excavation findings by a team in UCD led by Professor O'Sullivan and Dr Seaver (2015) which included the procurement of 14 radiocarbon dates and detailed artefact analysis; this post-excavation project is ongoing and any future plans relating to communicating Inis Cealtra's narrative to the wider public should take their work into account, as well as ongoing doctoral research by O'Leary.

3.1 ST CAIMÍN'S CHURCH AND VICINITY

3.1.1 St Caimín's Church

St Caimín's Church (RMP: CL029-009011-), also known as Teampall Caimín (Fullarton 1845) is a multi-period church of early medieval origin, located close to the island's E shore. It was the principal church of the early medieval settlement prior to the building of St Mary's in c.1200 and comprises a pre-Romanesque nave and a Romanesque chancel. Some modern burials occur within and associated cemeteries of multi-period date are located immediately to the S (St Caimín's Cemetery) and E (the Saints' Graveyard).

Pre-Romanesque features

The church was originally single-celled, consisting of the nave only (9.22m E/W x 6.1m N–S) which architecturally dates to the late 10th/early 11th-century period and, judging by historical evidence, was probably commissioned by Brian Boru (Todd 1867, 139-141). The church has antae (side-wall projections beyond the gable corners) on its E and W gables, which are generally considered to be skeumorphic features mirroring the cornerposts in earlier wooden pre-Romanesque churches (Fig. 1). The W gable is steeply pitched, also a typical pre-Romanesque feature (Ó Carragáin 2010). Roughly midway along the S wall of the nave/pre-Romanesque church, there is a trabeate window with inclining jambs and an exterior rebate that possibly accommodated a wooden shutter (Macalister 1916–17, 124; Ó Carragáin 2010, 101, 104). The location of this window suggests that it was designed to illuminate an altar positioned about two-thirds of the way from the W wall. The W gable has a tiny triangular window (Fig. 1), which, if original, is the only known example in a pre-Romanesque church (Ó Carragáin 2010, 99, 309); it is described by Petrie (1845, 284), and therefore pre-dates the Board of Works repairs in 1879–80. Two highly decorated heart-shaped finials originate from the site (Macalister 1916–17, 126), one or both of which may have topped the gables of the church; one is in the OPW depot in Athenry, Co. Galway (RMP: CL029-009036- / GA084-151010) and a fragment of the other is stored in St Caimín's nave. A plain heart-shaped finial, now lost, was also previously recorded and was probably associated with one of the subsidiary churches on the island (Macalister 1916–17, 168, no. 98 and pl. XXIV).[12]

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[12] The missing plain finial and the fragment of the finial located inside St Caimín's have not been designated RMP numbers as the NMS no longer create individual records for items deemed architectural fragments if the fragments are located anywhere within their original ecclesiastical site (Mary Tunney pers. comm.).

Romanesque features

The church underwent a series of changes in the Romanesque period in line with 12th-century reforms in the Irish Church. At some point in the early-to-mid 12th century a second window was added further E along the S wall, which has a semicircular head and is framed by a moulding consisting of a broad fillet between two narrow rolls. It was likely inserted when the altar was moved eastwards to accommodate liturgical change in this period (Ó Carragáin 2010, 195). Later in the mid-12th century, a Romanesque chancel (sometimes known as St Colum's Chapel), measuring 3.8m N/S x 4.4m E–W, was added E of the church (Fig. 2), with a chancel arch inserted between the antae of the original E gable, and a Romanesque doorway replacing what would have been a trabeate doorway in the W gable.

Fig. 2: SE profile of St Caimín's nave and chancel (Photo: C. O'Leary)

The chancel arch is of three orders facing the nave and of two orders facing the chancel. The inner order comprises paired attached shafts on double bases, with a large torus moulding above four rows of alternate beading and torus mouldings, and large rounded spurs. The neckings are plain, while the capitals are decorated with large oval leaves at the angles and foliage patterns in between. The arch is plain. The second order on the E face has nook shafts while the bases and capitals are as the first order; the second and third orders on the W face are identical except that the keystone of the arch is decorated with a human head (CRSBI). The arch was illustrated by Petrie (1845), where it is shown partially obscured by ivy, and Brash (1866, 14), who did not indicate the human head on the keystone. The arch was rebuilt by the Board of Works in 1879–80 (Deane 1880, 73).

There is an aumbry in the S wall of the chancel, which would have been used for storing vessels and other materials for the Eucharist. The chancel also has a plain, round-headed S window with continuous recessed moulding; its archstone has a beaded moulding along the upper edge, forming part of the chancel corbel table that ran along the upper edge of the capping stones (CRSBI). This window was repaired by the Board of Works in 1879–80 during their re-erection of the chancel walls (Deane 1880, 73; Macalister 1916–17, 113). The window would have illuminated the Romanesque altar (Fig. 3), a rare survival, also re-erected by the Board of Works at this time (Deane 1880, 73; de Paor 1997, 40). It comprises a four-course high block of masonry with a projecting base and top and engaged columns or rolls on its front two corners, topped by small-leaf foliate capitals and can be dated to the late 12th century (Murray 2010, 101, 105-6).

Fig. 3: Romanesque altar, St Caimín's chancel (Photo: C. O'Leary)

The W doorway of the church had been robbed out for gravemarkers by the time Brash visited (1866, 12). It was rebuilt as an arch of three orders in 1879–80 by the Board of Works using original stones found in the interior of the church, but due to errors in their reconstruction the doorway was again dismantled and re-erected in the 1970s under the supervision of de Paor in accordance with an informed study of its probable original design (de Paor and Glenn 1995). The inner order has narrow 'hour-glass' bases, incorporating human heads; the jambs have human heads on top of angle rolls flanked by fillets, while the impost blocks are modern restorations. The arch has frontal chevrons on the face and two rolls separated by a fillet. The second order has similar bases, jambs, and imposts to the first, while the face of the arch is decorated with three rows of lateral chevrons separated by fillets interlocking with lateral chevron decoration on the underside of the arch to form a cogwheel edge. The bases, jambs, and imposts of the third order are again similar to the other two, while the arch has 16 voussoirs decorated with human heads set under a square moulding (CRSBI; de Paor and Glenn 1995).

Post-1200 features and burials

According to Macalister (1916–17, 124) and de Paor (1997, 42; 2013, 27-8) a bell-cote was erected in the E gable of the nave but had fallen by the time of Macalister's visit. The triangular projection on the S slope of the E gable apparently represents the base of the former bellcote. The building was extensively restored by the Board of Works in 1879–80 (Deane 1880) and according to local information, the W gable may have again been rebuilt in c.1954. The nave was roofed by the OPW in the 1990s. The interior of the nave was used for burial in the post-medieval and modern period, the last interment having taken place in 1979; three short recumbent slabs mark 19th- and 20th-century graves in the SW section of the nave, two marking Geoghegan graves and one marking a Minogue grave.

Ex-situ **sculpture**

Over 20 cross-slabs, cross-inscribed grave-slabs, crosses, and other memorials are mounted on the wall of the nave of St Caimín's Church using cement and metal brackets; while some were located within the church at the time of Deane's report in 1880, others were removed to the church – most commonly from the Saints' Graveyard – between 1880 and 1916, when Macalister conducted his survey. There are also over a dozen loose sculptural pieces stored in the nave, most of which were previously in the chancel at the time of Macalister's survey. There are 11 early medieval small cross-slabs or portions thereof (RMPs: CL029-009057-; CL029-009058-; CL029-009059-; CL029-009060-; CL029-009062-; CL029-009063-; CL029-009064-; CL029-009118-; CL029-009196-; CL029-009198-; CL029-009200-; see Figs 4 and 5). They occur in a variety of shapes and sizes (max. l./w. c.0.7m),

and exhibit a diversity of motifs and cross-types (predominantly equal-armed forms or the cross-of-arcs) and a wide range in technical ability. Three bear inscriptions in the form of a personal name: 'Muir[–]aith', 'Derm–' (probably Dermait), and 'Flaithbertach' (RMPs: CL029-009059-; CL029-009064-; CL029-009198-; see Figs 6 and 7); these three stones can be most accurately dated due to their resemblance to Ó Floinn's (1995) Type A cross-slabs from Clonmacnoise which were probably produced from c.750–c.900 and to Northumbrian name stones which date from the mid-7th to the early 9th century (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 100-101). Despite the broad variances between the individual small cross-slabs in St Caimín's, most pre-date the 10th century (O'Leary 2015).

Figs 4 and 5: Cross-slabs, St Caimín's Church, note cross-of-arcs on left (Photos: C. O'Leary)
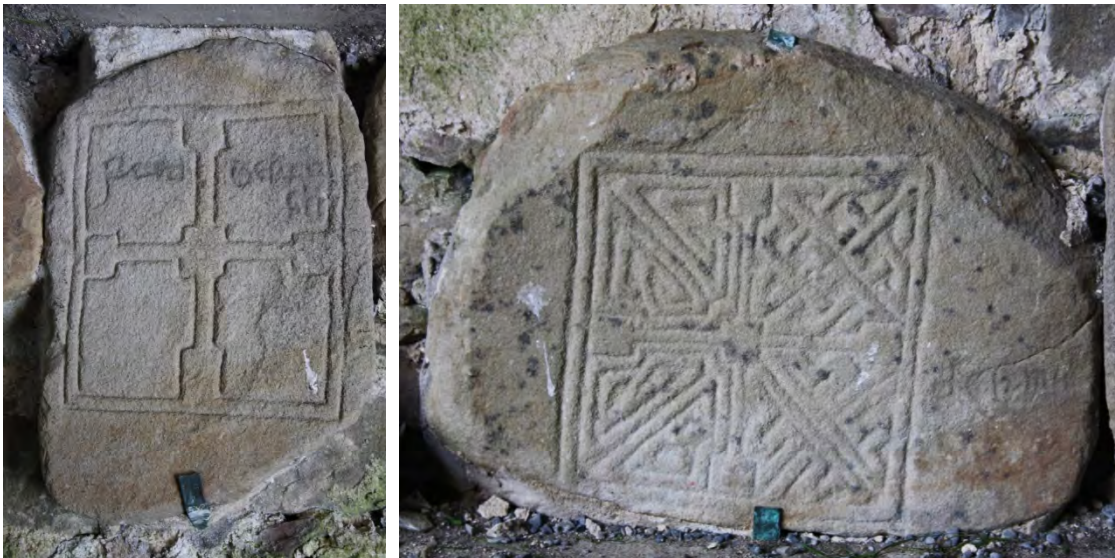
Figs 6 and 7: Inscribed cross-slabs, St Caimín's Church, note inscriptions (Photos: C. O'Leary)

There are eight large early medieval cross-inscribed grave-slabs within the church (RMPs: CL029-009066-; CL029-009067-; CL029-009072-; CL029-009078-; CL029-009083-; CL029-009088-; CL029-009098-; CL029-009106-; see Figs 8-10) which would have originally been positioned recumbently, presumably in the Saints' Graveyard. Most are rectangular/trapezoidal in shape and display long Latin outline crosses; three bear inverted inscriptions in Irish: 'or(óit) do Murchad', 'or(óit) do (F)laithbertach', 'or(óit) do Diarmait macc Delbaid' (RMPs: CL029-009067-; CL029-009088-; CL029-009098-). They date to the 11th/12th century (O'Leary 2015), though a couple of the slightly smaller slabs may be of the late 10th century. One particularly large example (RMP: CL029-009072-) displays a socket which may have held an upright wooden cross or served as a niche for a small reliquary (Fig. 9; O'Leary forthcoming). A truncated diamond-shaped slab differs from the other large grave-slabs stored in the church in its irregular shape and the depiction of an outline Latin cross with a central interlace-filled circular expansion and semicircular terminals filled with key patterns (Fig. 11); it closely resembles Ó Floinn's Type B from Clonmacnoise which date from the late 9th century to the end of the 10th century (1995, 254) and later slabs from High Island, Co. Galway (White Marshall and Rourke 2000, 166-9).

Figs 8 and 9: Cross-inscribed grave-slabs, St Caimín's Church, note inverted inscription on left and socket on right (Photos: C. O'Leary)

Figs 10 and 11: Cross-inscribed grave-slabs, St Caimín's Church, note inverted inscription on left (Photos: C. O'Leary)

Also mounted on the walls of St Caimín's Church is the head of a 9th/10th-century ringed high cross (RMP: CL029-009014-; Fig. 12), the shaft of which is located W of the round tower in a modern base (discussed below), and two freestanding early 12[th]-century ringless high crosses (RMPs: CL029-009054-; CL029-009055-; see Figs 13 and 14), one of which bears two inscriptions: 'or(óit) do ardse[n]óir hErenn i(d est) do Cathas[ach]', 'or(óit) do Thor[n]oc do rigni i(n) croiss' (RMP: CL029-009055-). There are also two smaller crosses, one with a solid ring (RMP: CL029-009056-; see Fig. 15), the other probably a gable cross for St Mary's W gable socket (Fig. 16),[13] as well as a number of fragments which may have formed part of a cross/es (RMPs: CL029-009199-; CL029-009114-) and a socket stone (RMP: CL029-009201-), recently removed from the Saints' Graveyard (James O'Brien pers. comm.), which may have supported a wooden cross. The church also houses a fragment of an 11th-century butterfly finial (discussed above).

Fig. 12: Head of ringed high cross, St Caimín's Church (Photo: C. O'Leary)

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[13] This cross was recently removed from St Mary's and brought to St Caimín's Church (James O'Brien pers. comm.). Macalister (1916–17, 132) states the following regarding a cross in St Mary's: 'There is a small cross marking a grave close to the west door. It was thought it might have been a gable finial, which it much resembles, but Delany indicated it was quite modern, and made specially for the grave it marks.'. Delany was probably mistaken and the possibility remains that it was indeed a gable cross and that it may have medieval origins. This cross has not been designated an RMP number as the NMS no longer create individual records for items deemed architectural fragments if the fragments are located anywhere within their original ecclesiastical site (Mary Tunney pers. comm.).

Figs 13 and 14: High crosses (left: 'West Cross'; right: 'Cathasach's Cross' or 'East Cross'), St Caimín's Church (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Figs 15 and 16: Small crosses, St Caimín's Church (Photos: C. O'Leary)

Also within St Caimín's is a large and exquisitely carved late medieval cross-inscribed grave-slab (RMP: CL029-009122-; see Fig. 17), originally associated with St Mary's, and the lower portion of an elaborately carved slab displaying floral patterns (RMP: CL029-009121-), a smaller fragment of which is mounted on the wall of the Saints' Graveyard (discussed below); both probably date to the 14th/15th century. There are three post-medieval memorials mounted on the walls, including a wall monument plaque (RMP: CL029-009124-) which is inscribed with '1703 ULNERATUS NON VICTUS IA GRADY REPAIRED THOS CHVRCHES AND MOWMENT [sic] TO THE GRACEC [sic] AND GLORIE OF GOD' (Fig. 18); it indicates that repairs were made to the church in c.1700 by the O'Gradys. Another 17th/18th-century slab from a chest-tomb is inscribed with the letters 'IHS' (RMP: CL029-009125-). There are also a few fragments of carved or dressed stone lying loose in the church, whose purpose remains unclear and which are perhaps in danger of becoming lost as they are *ex situ*.

Fig. 17: Late medieval grave-slab, St Caimín's Church (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Fig. 18: O'Grady plaque with inscription and three lions, St Caimín's Church (Photo: C. O'Leary)

3.1.2 Graveyard

This graveyard (RMP: CL029-009012-; Fig. 19) is located S of St Caimín's Church. It is enclosed by a mortared wall of roughly coursed blocks capped with slabs. The graveyard is irregular in plan, measuring c.25m E/W x c.27m N–S, and its E wall is shared with the adjoining Saints' Graveyard. It is entered through a gate near the SW corner of St Caimín's Church or a stile on the W side. The graveyard wall is not indicated on the 1st Ed. OS map (c.1838) but is outlined in its present form on the 2nd Ed. OS map (c.1893). Macalister (1916–17, 112-13) suggests that it was built by the Scarriff Board of Guardians in 1875, due to complaints about the unprotected nature of the cemetery. However, its erection may have been somewhat later as in 1878 Thomas Deane reported on the necessity to enclose the cemetery (de Paor 1997, 37-9).

Fig. 19: View of St Caimín's cemetery from the E, note in background 19th-century 'neo-Celtic' cross marking Flannery grave (Photo: C. O'Leary)

The extant memorials date predominantly from the Victorian period to the present,[14] however, it is likely that this general area has been used for burial since the medieval period due to its proximity to St Caimín's. This is also suggested by the presence of a possible cross-inscribed upright stone (RMP: CL029-009195-) located in the E section of the cemetery, just S of the entrance to the Saints' Graveyard; the top of the stone has broken off and apparently missing (Fig. 20). There are also a small number of uninscribed, rough, upright gravemarkers which could be medieval or post-medieval in date. One particularly well-carved modern 'Celtic' cross commemorating the Flannery family dates to the early-to-mid 19th century (Fig. 19). A later, smaller 'Celtic' cross commemorates 'Captain Michael Cleary, who met his death accidentally on 14th March 1923 aged 28 yrs faithfully serving his country under the Free State flag'. Burial continues in the cemetery, albeit in a restricted form.

Fig. 20: Possible cross-inscribed stone, St Caimín's cemetery (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Possible pillar stone

A possible pillar stone (RMP: CL029-009209-; Fig. 21) is lying loose against the W wall of the graveyard. It is a tall, narrow, slightly tapering stone with a sloping top (l. 1.1m; w. 0.19m max.) and one smooth face bearing five small depressions (diam. 0.02m to 0.04m), which resemble large fingerprints. These monuments are generally found on early ecclesiastical sites.

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[14] Eugene O'Brien's transcriptions are available for public view online at
http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/don_tran/graves/saint_caimins_graveyard_Iniscaltra.htm

Fig. 21: Possible pillar stone, St Caimín's cemetery (Photo: C. O'Leary)

3.1.3   The Saints' Graveyard and *Teampall na bhFear nGonta*

Graveyard walls and *ex-situ* sculpture

The Saints' Graveyard (RMP: CL029-009030-), measuring c.30m N/S x c.26m E–W, is located E of the St Caimín's Church and is enclosed by a rectilinear stone wall and entered via an archway in the W wall (Fig. 22). The wall originated in the late 11th–12th century and its original masonry is preserved in the lower courses (de Paor 1997, 76, 95; 2013, 44; O'Leary 2015, 126). The wall was described as being in ruins with surviving portions 2–4 feet high in 1865 (Brash 1866, 19). It underwent repairs by the Board of Works from 1879–80 who coped the wall and repaired the arch (Deane 1880, 73). It was probably at this time that a moulded voussoir from the gateway of the wall surrounding St Brigid's Church was built into the arch (de Paor 1997, 53). According to local information, parts of the W wall were again rebuilt in the early 2000s.

Fig. 22: The external face of the arched entranceway of the Saints' Graveyard, view from the W (Photo: C. O'Leary)

A fragment of a possible cross-inscribed stone (RMP: CL029-009113-) and a fragment of a late medieval elaborately carved grave-slab with floral patterns (RMP: CL029-009121-) are mounted on the outer face of the W wall of the graveyard (i.e. facing St Caimín's cemetery); a larger portion of the slab with floral patterns is lying loose in St Caimín's Church (discussed above).

Teampall na bhFear nGonta and associated grave-slab

Teampall na bhFear nGonta (Church of the Wounded Men; RMP: CL029-009015-; Fig. 23) is located on the N side of the Saints' Graveyard. It is named as 'Baptism Church' on the 1st Ed. OS map (c.1838). It comprises a rectangular structure (ext. 5.8m E/W x 4.3m N–S) of large, roughly coursed squared blocks, built on a plinth. It has square quoin-shafts and appears to date to the Romanesque period (CRSBI; de Paor 1997, 94-5; 2013, 28). However, the structure has been extensively rebuilt over the centuries, perhaps to serve as a mausoleum (*ibid*. 1997, 95; 2013, 28; see also Talbot 1990). It now has three opes or entrances, one at W (possibly the original), one at S, and another in the N wall. A masonry altar (h. 1m; w. 1.7m; projecting 0.7m) of about four courses capped with large flagstones stands against the E wall. A section of wall extends for just over 3m from the NE outer corner of the church. Three sections of corbel table with pellet or beaded moulding are re-set on the W wall and may have originated from St Caimín's Church (CRSBI). *Teampall na bhFear nGonta* was interpreted by Ó Carragáin (2010, 223) as a 12th-century mortuary chapel in origin (see also Petrie 1878, 41; O'Leary 2015, 140-41). During repairs in 1879–80 a large whitethorn was uprooted and removed from the centre of the church (Macalister 1916–17, 113); this may possibly have represented a 'bile' or holy tree venerated by pilgrims.

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Fig. 23: NW profile of Teampall na bhFear nGonta (Photo: C. O'Leary)

A 12th-century cross-inscribed grave-slab forms part of the floor surface within the church (RMP: CL029-009104-; see Fig. 24); it is similar in style and form to the other slabs within the Saints' Graveyard (discussed below), although it is one of the more ornate examples and resembles most closely RMP: CL029-009105-. Three plain grave-slabs are also part of the floor surface of the church (RMPs: CL029-009160-; CL029-009161-; CL029-009162) and the remaining area is covered with pebbles.

Fig. 24: Cross-inscribed grave-slab, Teampall na bhFear nGonta (Photo: C. O'Leary)

In-situ sculpture

The Saints' Graveyard holds an exceptionally large collection of *in-situ* early medieval grave-slabs, cross-bases, and socket stones, as well as kerbstones. Over 75 recumbent grave-slabs are visible in the graveyard (Figs 23,

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25, 27);[15] six others were previously recorded as being in the graveyard (Macalister 1916–17, pl. XV) and are now probably sodded over (incl. RMPs: CL029-009154-; CL029-009175-; CL029-009181-; CL029-009092-), or have been removed for safe keeping (discussed below). The slabs are aligned W–E and have been positioned in orderly rows; all but one (RMP: CL029-009081-) have their heads to the W. The majority are long and rectangular in shape (the longest being c.1.9m), some tapering towards the foot. They have been dated to the 11th and 12th centuries on the basis of size, form, decoration, and epigraphical/textual evidence (O'Leary 2015). Thirty-five of the slabs currently visible are cross-inscribed (RMPs: CL029-009068-; CL029-009069-; CL029-009070-; CL029-009073-; CL029-009074-; CL029-009075-; CL029-009076-; CL029-009077-; CL029-009080-; CL029-009081-; CL029-009082-; CL029-009084-; CL029-009085-; CL029-009086-; CL029-009087-; CL029-009089-; CL029-009090-; CL029-009091-; CL029-009093-; CL029-009095-; CL029-009096-; CL029-009097-; CL029-009099-; CL029-009101-; CL029-009102-; CL029-009103-; CL029-009105-; CL029-009107-; CL029-009109-; CL029-009110-; CL029-009111-; CL029-009112-; CL029-009168-; CL029-009169-; CL029-009193-).[16] Most display long Latin outline crosses (Fig. 26); the majority by far bearing hollowed angles at the crossing, while others display plain forms, with over 60% of the cross-shafts terminating in some form of a cross-base. A small number exhibit elaborate interlace designs and geometric stepped motifs. Nine of the cross-inscribed slabs bear inscriptions in Irish which read: 'or(óit) do Chellach'; '[o]r(óit) do Ca[th]gal'; 'or(óit) do (F)ingane'; '[or(óit)] do Gillu[Cristi] episco(po)'; 'or(óit) do Máe–'; 'or(óit) [do] Domnall [s]acart'; 'or(óit) [do] Domnall'; '[or(óit)] do Máel Sechnaill'; 'or(óit) –' (RMPs: CL029-009077-; CL029-009081-; CL029-009089-; CL029-009094-; CL029-009095-; CL029-009096-; CL029-009101-; CL029-009102-; CL029-009109-). One apparently crossless slab also bears an inscription which reads: 'or(óit) do Maccu–' (RMP: CL029-009068-). An unfinished cross (RMP: CL029-009079-) lies recumbently and it too functions as a grave-slab.
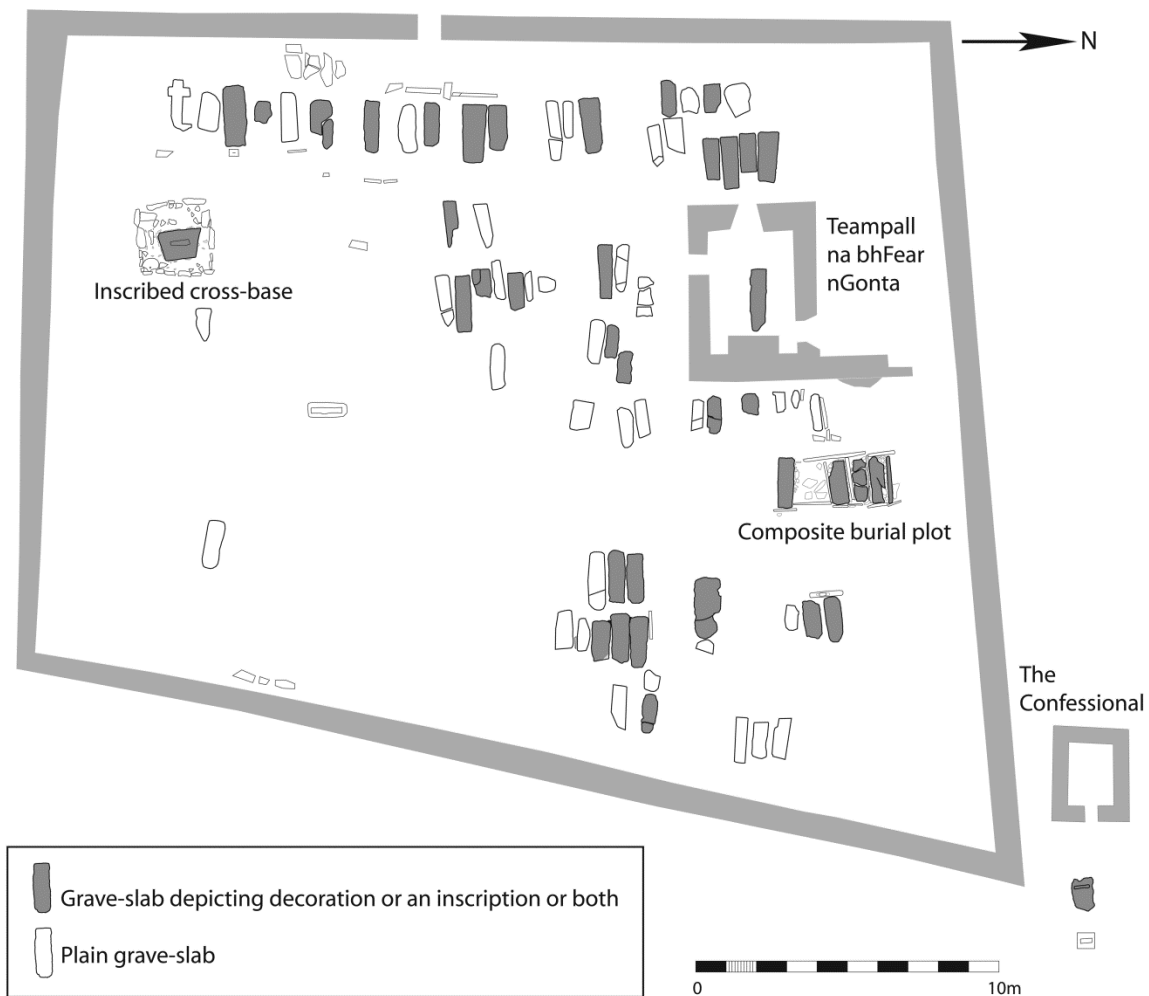

Fig. 25: Plan of the Saints' Graveyard (modern monuments are not illustrated). Drawn by C. O'Leary (2015, fig. 5.6)

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[15] In some instances it is not always clear if some of the smaller slabs constitute complete slabs or are fragments of larger slabs.
[16] This does not include the cross-inscribed slab in *Teampall na bhFear nGonta* (see above).
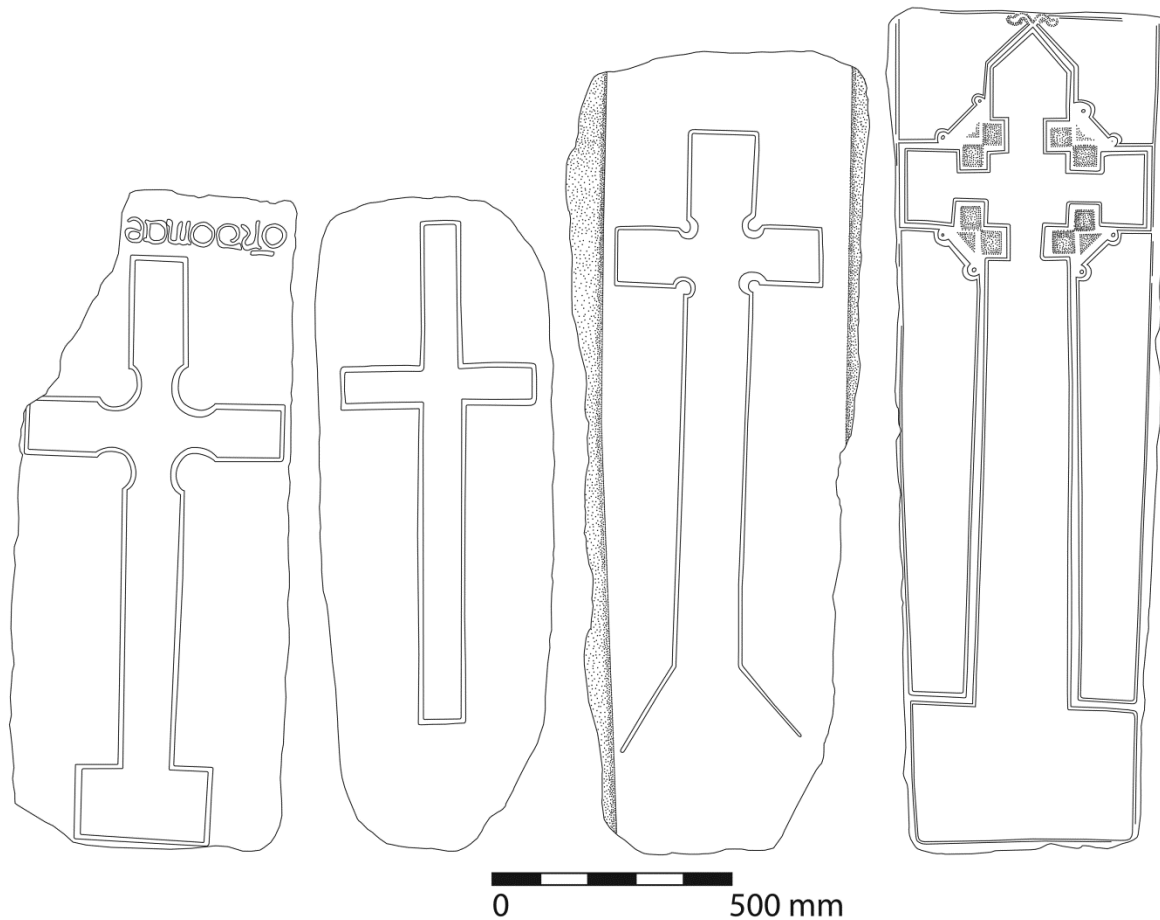
Fig. 26: Sample of cross-inscribed grave-slabs, Saints' Graveyard. Drawn by C. O'Leary (2015, fig. 5.4)

About 40 of the grave-slabs appear to be plain and do not display any decoration or inscriptions (RMPs: CL029-009142-; CL029-009143-; CL029-009144-; CL029-009145-; CL029-009146-; CL029-009147-; CL029-009148-; CL029-009149-; CL029-009150-; CL029-009151-; CL029-009152-; CL029-009153-; CL029-009155-; CL029-009156-; CL029-009157-; CL029-009158-; CL029-009159-; CL029-009163-; CL029-009164-; CL029-009165-; CL029-009166-; CL029-009167-; CL029-009170-;CL029-009171-;[17] CL029-009172-; CL029-009174-; CL029-009176-; CL029-009177-; CL029-009178-; CL029-009179-; CL029-009180-; CL029-009182-; CL029-009183-; CL029-009184-; CL029-009188-; CL029-009189-; CL029-009190-; CL029-009191-; CL029-009192-; CL029-009194-; see Fig. 25).[18] In some instances the carvings were probably removed through the effects of weathering, but it is equally possible that some artwork was applied in paint to otherwise plain surfaces (O'Leary 2015, 138). In other instances the use of a plain slab may have been a deliberate choice.

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[17] Either RMP CL029-009170- or CL029-009171- is possibly cross-inscribed according to de Paor's drawings (OPW file) and www.archaeology.ie; however, rubbings of these slabs have produced no evidence of ornamentation.
[18] It is possible that the four small broken slabs nearest to the W wall, S of the entrance, are not early medieval.

Fig. 27: View of the Saints' Graveyard from SW, note rows of grave-slabs and large cross-base in foreground to the right (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Some of the grave-slabs are flanked with upright stones and sockets at their head, feet, and sides. In a somewhat confused report in c.1838, it was stated that a grave (RMP: CL029-009120-), lying a few yards from the SE corner of St Caimín's Church, marked the burials of 'the twelve saints' who founded the churches on the island (O'Flanagan 1928, 226); it comprised an uninscribed upright stone marking the location of a horizontal one that covered the grave. It is impossible to identify this grave with any certainty.

A composite burial plot (RMP: CL029-009210-; Fig. 28), is positioned E of *Teampall na bhFear nGonta*, and now comprises three grave-slabs (RMPs: CL029-009068-; CL029-009094-; CL029-009095-), two of which are cross-inscribed (RMP: CL029-009094-; CL029-009095-), which are divided by long, low slabs placed on edge forming individual compartments with kerbing stones also defining the heads and feet of the grave-slabs (O'Leary 2015, 135-6); one of the kerbstones (RMP: CL029-009173-) bears an inscription which reads '+ or(óit) do Thressach +' and displays a mortice-like recess (Tunney and Manning 2015); the three grave-slabs also bear inscriptions: 'or(óit) do Maccu–'; '[or(óit)] do Gillu[Cristi] episco(po)'; 'or(óit) do Máe–'.

Fig. 28: View of composite burial plot from N (Photo: C. O'Leary)

There are four cross-bases/socket stones *in situ* in the Saints' Graveyard (incl. RMPs: CL029-009016-; CL029-009051-; CL029-009053-); at least two others were located there in Macalister's time (1916–17, pl. XV) but they have since been removed, one recently to St Caimín's Church (discussed above). The larger examples (e.g. RMP: CL029-009016-; CL029-009053-) probably supported stone crosses while the smaller sockets may held wooden crosses. The largest base (RMP: CL029-009016-; Fig. 29) in the graveyard, which is defined by low kerbing, bears an inscription: '+ ilad i(n) dechenboir' (+tomb of the ten persons).

Fig. 29: Cross-base inscribed with 'tomb of the ten persons' (Photo: C. O'Leary)

There are a small number of uninscribed, upright gravemarkers in the graveyard which could be medieval or post-medieval in date (incl. RMP: CL029-009127-), some of which are dressed. There are also 15 post-medieval and modern memorials, which date from the mid-19th century to 2009,[19] including the chest tomb erected in the memory of Thadeus O'Callighan who died in 1856. Burial has essentially ceased in the graveyard.

3.1.4   The Confessional

This structure (RMP: CL029-009017-; Fig. 30), known in some sources as the 'Anchorite's Cell', is situated NE of the Saints' Graveyard and was formerly enclosed by a small oval enclosure defined by a stony bank (RMP: CL029-009132-), depicted on the 1st Ed. OS map (c.1838; see also de Paor 1997, 73, fig. 22; 2013, 37). It is surrounded by stone pavement to E and S. The structure has roughly coursed mortared walls (ext. 3.1m E/W x 2.45m N–S) built on a stone platform of different widths and aligned E–W. A narrow entrance on its E side (w. 0.6m) leads to the interior which is divided by two rows of two inclining standing stones; the four stones occupy most of the floor space within the building. Daphne Pochin Mould (1955, 28) noted that the structure had 'two chambers, entry from one to other being by wriggling between two inclined unhewn monoliths. In each chamber there is a ledge along the wall of which one can sit.'.

In-situ **sculpture**

A large recumbent early medieval cross-slab with an empty slot (RMP: CL029-009065-; Figs 30 and 31), probably for an upright slab, is located immediately E of the Confessional, while E of this again there is an empty cross-base (RMP: CL029-009050; Fig. 30), also probably of early medieval origin.

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[19] Eugene O'Brien's transcriptions are available for public view online at
http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/don_tran/graves/saints_graveyard_inishcaltra_transcriptions.htm

Fig. 30: View of the Confessional from the E, with recumbent cross-inscribed stone and cross-base to the foreground (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Fig. 31: Socketed cross-slab near Confessional (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Excavation evidence

Excavation by de Paor (1997, 73-8; 2013, 37-9) revealed a shallow cist-like construction of limestone flags within the interior of the Confessional and surrounded by the standing stones; it contained fragments of human and animal bone. The stone platform upon which the structure stands had been rebuilt at least twice, while part of a 17th-century clay pipe was found under the foundation of the outer structure, suggesting that the Confessional in its present form dates to this period, but that its history could go back much farther, as supported by the fact that its axis is more or less aligned with that of an early medieval cross-slab and cross-base to the E (*ibid*. 1997, 74, 94; 2013, 38). The enclosure around the Confessional had been defined by a drystone wall apparently at a 'late date' and paving was found inside the perimeter of the wall (*ibid*. 1997, 74; 2013, 37).

Traces of a timber rectangular structure (RMP: CL029-009134-) of similar dimensions to the Confessional but on a N/S axis were identified to the W, suggesting that the Confessional replaced an earlier wooden shrine (de Paor 1997, 75, 77; 2013, 38-9). It had also been rebuilt a number of times and had a pillared portico on its S end; it was aligned within a rectangular fenced enclosure (RMP: CL029-009135-). Only the N section of this enclosure was excavated, the S passing under the wall of the Saints' Graveyard, which remained unexcavated (de Paor 1997, 76; 2013, 38). The enclosure appeared to pre-date an oval enclosure (discussed below) excavated to the N which according to de Paor yielded material from the 11th century but a radiocarbon date spanning the late 8th– mid-10th-century obtained from a pit within the enclosure relates to earlier activity in that area. According to excavation notes, 13 burials were identified in the area around the Confessional, within the rectangular enclosure which surrounded the wooden shrine (Area V, Site 5); these were very poorly preserved and none were removed from the island (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 18).

3.1.5   Round Tower

The round tower (RMP: CL029-009010; Fig. 32) is located 11m SW of St Caimín's Church, a typical location for this monument type. In the 1970s the height was recorded as 22.3m from ground level and it is likely that the tower originally stood 10m higher (Barrow 1979, 61). It is built of well-coursed stonework and the base contains some very large stones. The wall is offset 10cm at the base and 30cm above the ground. A doorway is located approximately 2.5m from exterior ground level at ENE, facing towards the doorway of the church. It is round-headed, which dates the tower to the late 11th/12th century (Lalor 2005). There is a small hole for a bolt with a rectangular raised panel immediately above it on the N jamb of the doorway (Barrow 1979, 62). Iron hangings for a door were reported in the Ordnance Survey letters dated c.1838 (O'Flanagan 1928). There is a large angle-headed window on the N side above second-floor level and three more square-headed windows face ENE, SSW, and NW respectively as the tower rises. There is an offset internally for what would have been a wooden floor about 2m above ground level, while the second floor is formed by a number of large corbels and flagstones projecting from the wall 4.4m above this. Higher still there are three more offsets, giving a total of five floors (Barrow 1979, 62). The conical cap of the tower is now missing although local tradition holds that it was never completed (Macalister 1916–17, 137, 170-71; de Paor 1997, 42; 2013, 28). The tower was repointed by the Board of Works in 1879–80 (Deane 1880, 73) and according to local information work was also undertaken on the building in c.1949.

Fig. 32: View of the round tower from the SE (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Excavation Evidence and High Cross

Excavation of the round tower showed that it has an offset or plinth near its base but the foundations are quite shallow and the builders were relying on its circular plan and thickness of wall for stability (de Paor 1997, 87-9, 93; 2013, 41-2). Nonetheless, there was careful advance preparation of a flat, hard, dry surface upon which the tower could be built, involving the laying down of a stone-studded disc of clay that was ringed by small drainage trenches. A sequence of post-holes to the NW of the tower was suggested as having supported the end of a timber stairway that rose to the doorway (*ibid*.). A narrow continuous slot skirted the platform separating it from the area to the SW and NW, possibly a trench that supported a fence separating off the round tower from the area to the W. This slot passed under the modern base of a high cross (Figs 33 and 34). Removal of the foundation for a cattle grid under the cross-base revealed a pit directly underneath the base, probably designed to receive some form of tenon, which pre-dated the slot (de Paor 1997, 87-9, 93; 2013, 41-2). The modern base holds the shaft of 9th/10th-century high cross (RMP: CL029-009014-; Figs 33 and 34); its ringed head is stored in St Caimín's Church (discussed above).

Figs 33 and 34: Shaft of high cross W of round tower (Photos: C. O'Leary)

3.1.6   Possible Penitential Stations

A mound (RMP: CL029-009208-) that possibly formed a focus for pilgrimage rounds is situated c.15m N of St Caimín's and comprises a sub-circular, grass-covered mound with a flattish top, 4.6m in width E/W (Fig. 35). A stone, possibly used to rivet the mound in place, is set along the perimeter at the N side and another at the S side. The OS letters dating to c.1838 indicate that pilgrims went 'round a station monument at the end of St. Caimín's Church, either the one (a little mound of earth) immediately at the southwest corner or the one (also a little mound of earth) within a few yards of the northwest corner of it' as part of the sequence of rounds on the site (O'Flanagan 1928, 196). The RMP suggests that this mound is the one referred to in the quoted passage (www.archeology.ie); however, Macalister (1916–17, 174, fn. 2) stated that the mounds had been trampled by cattle and were no longer traceable in 1916. In addition, this mound is not located at the W end of the church, and so this identification is not at all certain. The date of the mound also remains uncertain but the stones forming such stations often accumulated in the post-medieval period.

Fig. 35: Mound constituting possible penitential station located N of St Caimín's Church (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Another station (RMP: CL029-009187-) is recorded in the OS letters of c.1828 as being '35 yards to the west of the round tower' (O'Flanagan 1928, 196). The letters state that the 'short rounds' began at this station (*ibid.*). Pilgrims went around this mound seven times before heading towards St Caimín's Church. Macalister (1916–17, 173, fn. 2 and pl. 1) noted that the mound still existed but that its purpose had been long forgotten (Fig. 36; see also Madden 2008, front cover and 11, bottom fig.).

Fig. 36: Mound constituting possible penitential station located W of the round tower (Photo: C. O'Leary).

3.1.7 Further Excavation Evidence from de Paor's Excavation Area V (St Caimín's and Vicinity)

An extensive area numbered Area V that included the monuments in the vicinity of St Caimín's Church discussed above was excavated by de Paor. Further evidence from this area is highlighted below.

Earthen Church

A rectangular structure (RMP: CL029-009139-) that had undergone various rebuildings was identified c.18m WSW of the round tower (de Paor 1997, 85-6; 2013, 40-41). The various phases had differing orientations but were generally aligned E/W. In its earliest phase the structure had a trodden clay floor and measured approximately 5.5m x 4.1m internally. Its earthen walls were c.2.5m thick and defined by rows of wattle or stakeholes and it had an entrance at its W end, as typical for pre-Romanesque churches. A possible wooden altar was identified on the E side while a shallow pit pre-dating the slot of the E wall was identified in the NE corner (possibly an ablution drain). An earthen church revetted by wattle excavated at Illaunloughan, Co. Kerry, was dated to the 7th century (White Marshall and Walsh 2005), and it is likely that this church dates to an early period in the site's history. There was also evidence for later building in this area in the form of ephemeral earthen and wooden structures, thought to date to the 12th/13th century (de Paor 1997, 80; 2013, 40-41). The church was cut by one of these structures: a medieval round house (discussed below).

Burial Evidence

Numerous burials (RMP: CL029-009140-) were revealed N and W of St Caimín's Church (Area V, Sites 7 and 9) and NE of the round tower (de Paor 1997, 86-7; 2013, 38), with at least 11 occurring N of the church (Area V, Site 7, Sq. I), at least a dozen recorded W of the church (Area V, Site 7, Sq. II), and 36 burials recorded N and W of the tower of which 28 were recently re-examined (Area V, Site 7, Sq. III and Site 9, Sq. IV; O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 18; Lynch 2015, 141, 162). The burials were shallow and much of the bone was disturbed. The burials north of the church were considered to post-date the construction of St Caimín's and the tower; radiocarbon dates have been obtained from two individuals from this area: one male returned a date of 995–1202 AD cal. 2, and another returned a date of 1030–1205 AD cal. 2 (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 33-4). However, a small number of burials a short distance SW of St Caimín's and E of the excavated earthen church were thought by de Paor to be of an earlier date than the stone buildings and possibly contemporary with the earthen church (de Paor 1997, 92; 2013, 41) and significantly radiocarbon dating yielded a date of AD 725–979 cal. 2 for one burial NW of the later round tower and AD 777–992 cal. 2 for another burial in that area (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 34). These are the earliest dated burials from Inis Cealtra. As mentioned above, 13 burials were revealed in the vicinity of the Confessional (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 18); these were very poorly preserved and it is thought that they may also belong to an early phase of the site's occupation (de Paor 1997, 75, 78; 2013, 38). Habitation evidence

Excavation of an extensive area around the round tower and a small cutting N of St Caimín's Church revealed a 'maze' of habitation evidence, comprising stakeholes, wattleholes, postholes, and timber stains amongst other features. These appeared to reflect many rebuildings of structures that were deemed 'flimsy and ephemeral' in nature over a long period. There appeared to have been a curvilinear fenced enclosure (RMP: CL029-009136-) c.30m SW of the round tower that had a lean-to structure externally on the NE (de Paor 1997, 80; 2013, 40). Within the enclosure too there was evidence for a large round structure (RMP: CL029-009137-) over 10m in diam., internally sub-divided by straight partitions and with a porch-like structure on the SW side; this was considered, however, to be unrelated to the enclosure (de Paor 1997, 80; 2013, 40). According to de Paor (*ibid.*) the house 'was not built with posts dug into the ground: there was an outer tegument which showed as a dark brown stain, with some wattle-holes, as from the light base timbers of a wattle or boarded structure, and within this slot, which defined the shape of the building, there were traces of massive posts (perhaps of 30cm diam.) which were not sunk in the earth but rested on pads of some kind.'. A hoard of 22 early Norman coins of Stephen and Henry II were discovered under the central hearth of this house (*ibid.* 1997, 83; 2013, 40); with most probably dating to c. 1163–67 (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 10), this is among the earliest Norman coin hoard known in Ireland. A similar round house was identified (RMP: CL029-009138-) outside of the enclosure, c.25m S of the round tower (de Paor 1997, 80; 2013, 40) and partially overlying the earthen church.

Oval enclosure N of the Confessional

An ovoid fenced enclosure (RMP: CL029-009133-), c.23m in diam., with extensive occupational evidence was excavated N of the Confessional, revealing material which de Paor dated to the 11th century and after (1997, 78-80, 94; 2013, 38) but some of which may be earlier. Material from a pit located within the oval enclosure yielded a radiocarbon date of AD 775–962 cal. 2, while another pit N of the Confessional yielded a date of AD 775–961 cal. 2 (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 13). One or more huts and several hearths were revealed within the enclosure (de Paor 1997, 78-80, 94; 2013, 38). Stone motif pieces were found, as well as bronze waste and scraps of

bronze with Ringerike ornament. This material overlay three phases of cultivation evidence (*ibid*. 1997, 75; 2013, 38), which itself post-dated the burials in the rectangular enclosure with the wooden shrine (discussed above).

Two Bullaun Stones and Nearby Metalworking Site

A large limestone bullaun (RMP: CL029-009029-) is located c.35m SW of the round tower (Fig. 37); it measures h. 0.32m; l. 1.8m; w. 1.1m, and has a roughly circular depression with diam. 0.51m; d. 0.25m. Excavation around the bullaun revealed a second bullaun stone (RMP: CL029-009028-), 0.8m to the S. It is rather flat and flush with the ground (Fig. 38); it measures l. 1.9m; w. 0.9m, and has a water-filled depression with diam. 0.6m; d. 0.21m. Excavation in the area also revealed cupric slag and a number of pits filled with stones at surface level (de Paor 1997, 89-91, fig. 35; 2013, 42-3); the area was evidently a metalworking site (RMP: CL029-009141-). A metalworking pit near the bullauns yielded a radiocarbon date of AD 727–886 cal. 2 (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 11-13, 35). Finds from the area included whetstones or whetstone fragments, iron bolts, knifeblades, nails, clay pipe fragments, fragments of roofing slates, burnt bone, mortar, slag, and chert chippings. A worked stone was interpreted as part of a stone pestle that fits into the hollows of the bullaun stones. Both bullaun stones were moved; the soil underneath contained some slag and bones and was flecked with charcoal (de Paor 1997, 89-91; 2013, 42-3).

Fig. 37: Bullaun stone SW of the round tower (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Fig. 38: Bullaun stone revealed during the excavation, note other bullaun in background (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Other Areas

Other areas, generally W of the round tower, contained numerous pits and hollows. Iron nails were extremely numerous, and there was rich evidence of iron bloom and slag, associated with iron-working (de Paor 1997, 91; 2013, 43). Eighteen fragments of red deer antler came from Area V (Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski 2015, 59); nine, including one piece of comb-manufacturing waste, came from a feature labelled 'Sigma' in the excavation report and described as a 'very deep trench or pit' (de Paor 1997, 91; 2013, 43), with the other nine fragments coming from a path in the eastern part of what was designated 'Trench 9' in the excavation report. The assemblages reflect different stages in antler-working. Artefacts from these areas of activity probably indicated dates in the latter centuries of the early medieval period, but there were some earlier finds. A feature excavated W of St Caimín's Church and N of the round tower provided a radiocarbon date of AD 551–639 cal. 2 (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 11, 35). Sherds of amphorae of a type known as Bii-ware or Late Roman Amphorae 1 (LRA1) were found in the area N of St Caimín's Church (Doyle 2009; de Paor 1997, 434). Bii-ware was widely produced along the S coast of Turkey, in Rhodes and Cyprus, and in Syria from the 4th–7th centuries AD with maximum production in the 5th and 6th centuries. A few sherds of E-ware were also found in Area V (de Paor 1997, 93-4, 434); E-ware originates in Gaul and dates from the 7th–8th centuries, and its presence on Inis Cealtra indicates that the island was connected with a trade-network stretching from the Mediterranean to Ireland, probably via the Shannon.

3.1.8 Other *ex-situ* Sculpture in Vicinity of St Caimín's

OPW Shed and Vicinity

There are numerous pieces of medieval sculpture stored in and around the OPW shed; some were brought to this part of the site during the excavations of the 1970s, while others have been collected in more recent times (James O'Brien pers. comm.). There is a small cross-slab (RMP: CL029-009185-), of probable early medieval date, stored in the OPW shed. A cross-inscribed grave-slab (RMP: CL029-009092-) is located just S of the shed; it is of the same style as the 11th/12th-century slabs in the Saints' Graveyard and probably originated there. There are nine cross-bases/socket stones stored in the shed (RMPs: CL029-009043-; CL029-009044-; CL029-009045-; CL029-009046-; CL029-009047-; CL029-009049-; CL029-009186-; CL029-009203-; see Figs 39 and 40), most of which were previously recorded in the nave of St Caimín's (Macalister 1916–17, 145-6). At least one displays incised decoration but most are rather crudely carved. The largest example is c.0.34m in h. and a few of the sockets are rather shallow and could not have sustained a cross (socket depths range from c.0.01m–c.0.1m); the stones with shallow sockets may have been metalworking moulds (regardless of the fact that they are designated 'cross' by the RMP), while some other socket stones on the island were doorway sockets. There are also lots of loose architectural pieces immediately to the N and S of the shed.

Figs 39 and 40: Socket stones, OPW shed (Photos: C. O'Leary)

There is a bullaun stone (RMP: CL029-009013-) positioned *ex situ* SW of the shed, near wooden fencing (Fig. 41). It features a sub-circular stone (l. 0.64m; w. 0.56m; h. 0.3m), with a circular basin (diam. 0.36m; d. 0.18m). It was previously at the W gable of St Caimín's Church (Dunraven 1877, 56; Macalister 1916–17, 143) and a 'round blue sandstone', weighing 5kg, was previously recorded in the basin but is no longer present (Mary Tunney, www.archaeology.ie).

3.2   ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH AND ENVIRONS

This site is located within an enclosure on the highest ridge of the island (a rather low crest), N of St Brigid's, and is dedicated to St Michael the Archangel, who is often associated with sites in high locations (Picard 2007).

Medieval and Post-Medieval Features

While excavation suggested that the structure (RMP: CL029-009003-) at the centre of the burial ground is post-medieval and possibly too small to be a church, its foundations, a small associated enclosure containing a children's burial ground (RMP: CL029-009004-) and a penitential station ('the kissing stone' with RMP: CL029-009052-) are all contained within a large D-shaped enclosure (RMP: CL029-009131-) of early medieval date (c.70m NE–SW x c.47m NW–SE) comprising a bank and external ditch (Fig. 42). The existence of this enclosure combined with the dedication to Michael imply that there was once a medieval church here, though de Paor did not locate any trace of it. The OS letters note that the enclosure was known as '*Garraidh Mhicheail*' (St Michael's Garden) (O'Flanagan 1928, 228). A stone step providing access to the SE part of the burial ground appears to be part of a wall of the church but due to the level of overgrowth it is difficult to fully examine the feature. Macalister (1916–17, 118) noted a small fragment of moulded stone *ex situ* in the post-medieval structure that may be medieval.

The medieval enclosure contains a smaller enclosure of stone and earth just under 15m in diam. that was entered in a gap on its S side. This quadrangular enclosure contains a *cillín* or children's burial-ground. Visiting the site in 1865, Brash (1866, 21) noted that many stones were being taken from the remains of the church to be used as gravemarkers. Macalister (1916–17, 117-18) later described the church as a 'small building, ruined almost to its foundations' built of small, flat stones roughly coursed in drystone masonry with a W doorway (typical of early medieval structures). In the SE part of the burial ground there is a large flat sandstone block used as a penitential station (RMP: CL029-009052-; see Fig. 43) during pilgrimage rounds according to the OS letters: 'They also went seven times round *Garraidh Mhicheail*, St Michael's Garden, and seven times round the bank of earth about St Michael's Church; and seven times round the Church itself and seven times round a large flag stone lying at it, on which stone they finally (i.e, after having gone round it seven times) impressed kisses.' (O'Flanagan 1928, 228). The monument is still known locally as the 'kissing stone' (Ger Madden pers. comm.). A 'thorn' noted by Macalister (1916–17, 118) as growing in the NE corner of the site appears to be a whitethorn *in situ*, and may have been treated as a *bile* or holy tree by pilgrims. Macalister (*ibid*., 118) noted an area of paving in the entrance to the burial ground. Many of the simple, uninscribed gravemarkers were removed during de Paor's excavation. The area is rather overgrown and there are a few architectural pieces and other stones lying loose within the smaller enclosure. Ger Madden (pers. comm.) reports that gravemarkers were left loose following de Paor's excavation and became lost in the growth.

Fig. 43: Large flat sandstone block (the 'kissing stone') in burial ground in St Michael's (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Excavation Evidence: de Paor's Area IV

The smaller quadrangular enclosure was found to have two phases of construction. In the first phase it was defined by an earthen bank and external ditch; five pieces of red deer antler were recovered from the fill of the W part of the ditch (Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski 2015, 59). Later a drystone wall was added on top of the bank. Remains of stone paving were identified along the inside of the wall (de Paor 1997, 70; 2013, 36). The enclosure was thought to have been used from the late medieval period onwards based on finds of 'coins and other objects' (de Paor 1997, 51) and contained 42–44 burials, most of whom were neonates or infants with the majority pre-dating the erection of the church (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 18; Lynch 2015, 154). Many of the graves contained a handful of quartz pebbles and a long stone pebble or sometimes a whetstone, often broken (de Paor 1997, 70-72; 2013, 36-7). A diminutive mortared structure oriented WNW–ESE was constructed in the centre of the enclosure after burial had commenced (ext. 2.8m x 2.7m), which de Paor considered a church or 'cell'. The structure had no foundations but was paved internally with flags. It was noted that a coin of about 1500 came from below the paving (*ibid*. 1997, 72; 2013, 37). The later phase of burials is aligned with the church (Lynch 2015, 154) and de Paor (1997, 97) noted that burials continued to a 'late' period within the inner enclosure. Most of the finds were post-medieval in date (some dating to as recent as the late 19th century) but this may largely reflect pilgrimage activity in the area.

Excavation of the larger D-shaped enclosure revealed that its construction was typical of early medieval raths and the assumption was made that it belonged to an 'early phase of activity on the island' (de Paor 1997, 71, 97; 2013, 36-7). A charcoal sample from the base of the eastern section of the northern ditch demarcating the enclosure was recently radiocarbon dated to AD 905–1023 cal. 2 (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 11, 14). The ditch filled up and a burial was cut into it which was radiocarbon dated to AD 1024–1163 cal. 2 while an 11th/12th-century kidney ringed pin was found in the upper fill of the ditch confirming the early date of the enclosure (ibid.). Despite its similarities to a ringfort or 'rath', given its context, the occurrence of burials in the area, and its relationship with a later church dedicated to St Michael, it is more likely an ecclesiastical enclosure. The discovery of a fragment of a cross-slab (RMP: CL029-009197-) in the area of St Michael's may also relate to early medieval activity here, while some of the beads found in the area may also date from the early medieval period, though most were probably products of the late or post-medieval period (Mannion 2015, 86).

3.3   ST BRIGID'S CHURCH AND ENVIRONS

This church (RMP: CL029-009006-; Fig. 44) was named, apparently mistakenly, St Michael's Church on the 1st and 2nd Ed. OS maps (c.1838; c.1893) but according to other sources, it is properly known as St Brigid's Church or the Baptism House/Church (O'Flanagan 1928; Macalister 1916–17, 121; de Paor 1997; 2013). It stands within an enclosure (ext. c.21m x c.20m) c.90m SW of the round tower on a S-facing slope. The enclosure is listed in the RMP as a 'graveyard' (CL029-009007-) but as noted below no burials were found within it except inside the church. The enclosure comprises roughly coursed masonry incorporating medieval masonry in the S wall, which contains the entrance, a plain round-headed arch (Fig. 45). Macalister (1916–17, 119) highlighted how one of the arch's stones has a shallow moulding on its inside face mirroring another built into the arch of the Saints' Graveyard (discussed above), and he suggests the latter originated from here. The other walls of the enclosure he reported to be of rough stone and earth.

Fig. 44: SW profile of St Brigid's Church, with St Caimín's and round tower in background (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Fig. 45: The exterior face of the arched entranceway of the enclosure surrounding St Brigid's, view from the S (Photo: C. O'Leary)

The church is single-celled (int. 5.9m x 3.6m) with a round-headed W doorway, an arch of three orders dating to the Romanesque but rebuilt in 1879–80 (Deane 1880, 73). There is a square-headed, widely-splayed E window probably dating to the Romanesque, as well as a partially ruined window at the E side of the S wall, which de Paor (1997, 52; 2013, 31) considered to be an 'inserted window of the sixteenth century' but it seems to be 12th century in style; if it is later, it still seems likely that there was always a window in this location in order to illuminate the altar. The OS letters note that the W gable was in ruins in 1838, while much of the E gable was destroyed by a storm on 6th January 1839 (O'Flanagan 1928, 196). When Westropp visited in 1877 all that remained was its 'foundation' and 'low north wall' (1900, 157). The repairs made by the Board of Works in 1879–80 included a total re-erection of the W gable and the Romanesque doorway, as well as a major 'cleaning-up' of 'rubbish' that probably lowered the ground level in the enclosure (Macalister 1916–17, 113; see also Deane 1880, 73; de Paor 1997, 54; 2013, 32). According to CRSBI, the re-erection of the doorway was inaccurate. The chevron designs are similar to those on the W doorway of St Caimín's, and the sculptural decoration appears to be contemporary with the work at St Caimín's, dating the doorway to the mid-12th century. Five sections of pellet or beaded moulding similar to the label of the W doorway are set into the W gable above the doorway (CRSBI). There is a socket stone beside the exterior NW corner of the church.

Post-Medieval Use

By c.1838 the church had been incorporated into the pilgrimage round (O'Flanagan 1928, 196-7) but some time later it appears to have been adapted as a habitation. In 1863 a group of tourists noted that it housed a pigsty (de Paor 1997, 35). Macalister (1916–17, 121) stated that one of the names that the church was known by in the early 20th century was 'the Piggery'. By at least 1878 the pigsty had been removed (de Paor 1997, 35). Brash in 1866 (mistakenly terming the church 'St Michael's') noted that 'a portion of the east end has been raised in wretched masonry, roofed in, and thatched as a sheeling' (1866, 21), while Dunraven (1877, 58) noted that the church was being used as a habitation, divided into two rooms.

Excavation Evidence: de Paor's Area III

The interior of the church, the enclosure, and the area surrounding it were excavated by de Paor; this area equates to Area III of de Paor's excavation. Hollow-based flint arrowheads and stone axeheads thought to date to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age were recovered N of the church (de Paor 1997, 92; 2013, 35), and are now stored in the NMI. These artefacts are the earliest dated finds from the island and may indicate that small hunting/fishing parties occasionally visited the island, using the Shannon to navigate what would then have been a wooded landscape.

To the N of the enclosure a deep V-shaped ditch running E/W was excavated, where an openwork bronze brooch-head with animal ornament in 8th/9th-century style was found (de Paor 1997, 60-61, 92; 2013, 33, 35). The ditch was certainly filling up by the latter centuries of the early medieval period as indicated by a radiocarbon

date of AD 992–1150 cal. 2, and by the dating of comb fragments from two different red deer antler combs found within the fill N of the enclosure which date to c.1050–1125 (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 13, 33).[20] A shallower ditch was excavated E of the enclosure. These ditches relate to an early phase of activity on the island and it is possible that an earlier church pre-dating the current structure was also built during this time, though there is no excavation evidence to suggest this.

Excavation revealed that the enclosure wall on the W, N, and E sides had undergone successive rebuildings. At the time the church was built in the 12th century the enclosure would have comprised earthen banks. The S wall of the enclosure was shown to be of better quality masonry and pre-dated the later drystone wall. According to de Paor, occupation material dating to the 12th or 13th centuries was found underneath the S wall of the enclosure and was identified as part of a larger enclosure built around St Mary's in the late 12th/early 13th century that would have involved a remodelling of the enclosure around St Brigid's (1997, 68; 2013, 36).

There was evidence for the trimming of roof slates, of the Killaloe variety, in the SW part of the enclosure, while fragments of red paving tiles were also discovered (de Paor 1997, 54, 56, 62, 68; 2013, 32-3, 36); these would have been used to roof the church.

No burials were found within the enclosure, but the interior of the church had been used for burial from at least the 13th century (de Paor 1997, 59-68, 96; 2013, 34, 36). Fourteen burials were revealed, four of which were examined during the recent post-excavation analysis. According to the original excavation records two of the burials constituted women who had died in childbirth, but recent post-excavation evidence reveals that one of those females was not pregnant but had a deformed pelvis and was actually buried with an infant aged 3–6 months while the other pregnant female was not examined because she could not be located (Lynch 2015, 148, 155); two neonates were also examined as part of the post-excavation project. According to de Paor adult males and juveniles were also represented in this assemblage. A decorated copper alloy/bronze mounting dated to the late 11th/early 12th century was found in association with one burial (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 19), and may suggest that burial commenced in the early medieval period in this area though this has yet to be corroborated by radiocarbon dates and it is possible that this mount is in fact a residual deposit.

Around the period when the church was being used for burial, the enclosure was being used for industrial activity, at which time the church was still roofed (de Paor 1997, 68; 2013, 36). Within the enclosure W of the church doorway, a copper-working furnace was identified (RMP: CL029-009128-), comprising an oval pit containing a clay structure that bore traces of intense heat and was stained with small splashes of copper (de Paor 1997, 55-6; 2013, 33). There was evidence for an area dedicated to iron-working (RMP: CL029-009129) just N of the church within the enclosure; finds included clinker, bloom, and fragments of a furnace bottom (de Paor 1997, 58; 2013, 34, 51). A large cess-pit NE of the enclosure related to occupation at this time (*ibid*. 1997, 68; 2013, 36), while habitation evidence in the form of postholes, hearths, and gullies occurred to the N and W of St Brigid's Church.

There was an area of intense metalworking activity W of the enclosure (RMP: CL029-009130-) that included evidence for iron-working; numerous pits, as well as clinker and slag, were found. Two pits just W of the NW corner of the enclosure produced radiocarbon dates of 1031–1155 AD cal. 2 and 1034–1205 AD cal. 2 (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 11-12, 33-4). Two decorated querns and a quern that had been broken in the course of manufacturing were also found in the area W of the enclosure (de Paor 1997, 58, 61-6; 2013, 34, 51; NMI: E180:988; Fig. 46). Quernstone fragments were numerous around St Brigid's indicating that the area may have been used for stoneworking. Bone toggle/s, needles, and pins were also found in the wider vicinity of the church, as well as bronze stick-pins and coins (de Paor 1997, 58, 65-7, 96; 2013, 34).

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[20] As noted by Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski (2015, 59), de Paor (1997, 58; 2013, 34) stated that 'Fragments of complete and unfinished combs … as well as fragments of red deer antler from which comb blanks had been sawn' were recovered from Area III. However, recent post-excavation analysis by Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski revealed that two finished combs were found but no unfinished combs; also the archive records do not refer to any antler from Area III and therefore it is concluded that de Paor may have confused the evidence from Area V with Area III. Thus, we cannot suggest that bone-/antler-working was undertaken in this area, as previously argued by de Paor.

Fig. 46: Decorated quernstone, now displayed in Clare County Museum, Ennis (Photo: C. O'Leary)

A number of significant finds recovered in secondary positions in the area included a small enamelled fragment (possibly from a 7th/8th-century reliquary shrine) and a stone incised with a *chi-rho* cross (now in Clare County Museum, NMI E180:989; Fig. 47), that had been reused in the drystone wall of the enclosure (de Paor 1997, 61, 67, 92; 2013, 35); they represent the site's pre-Viking history and are among the earliest medieval finds recovered on Inis Cealtra. Some pieces of 12th-century Romanesque sculpture were also found, including a carved head interpreted as the head of the crucified Christ (now in the NMI), which possibly formed part of a high cross (McNab 1997). A mass of chain mail dating to the late medieval period was also found within the core of the boundary wall (de Paor 1997, 61; 2013, 35). Other finds included an animal-head carving (now in Clare County Museum), an abacus, and part of an altar base (de Paor 1997, 60-63). Three beads found in Area III were considered to relate to medieval activity in the area (Mannion 2015, 91).

Fig. 47: Chi rho-inscribed stone, now displayed in Clare County Museum, Ennis (Photo: C. O'Leary)

A poorly constructed drystone enclosure wall was erected in the final phase. Drystone paving was identified internally along the base of the wall, and de Paor suggested this phase was linked to pilgrimage rounds. A paved path was also identified that de Paor considered to date to the 17th or 18th century. It ran from the N side of the enclosure close to the W doorway of the church and on towards the gateway in the S wall (de Paor 1997, 56-7, 63; 2013, 33). An interesting 20th-century find is a number of cartridge cases manufactured by Kynoch's of

Arklow in 1919, perhaps indicating use of the area by the East Clare Brigade of the IRA during the War of Independence (*ibid*. 1997, 59; 2013, 34).

3.4   ST MARY'S CHURCH AND ENVIRONS

3.4.1   St Mary's Church

This structure (RMP: CL029-009008-; Fig. 48), the largest church on the island (ext. 18.55m x 8.72m), is located c.43m S of St Brigid's Church and was the late medieval parish church of Inis Cealtra. The site was not excavated.

Late Medieval Features

The church likely dates to the late 12th century. It has a W doorway with a slightly pointed arch, spanned by a flat-headed arch inside, and an external moulding. A later doorway was inserted in the S wall at some point in the late medieval period (on the exterior a corbel carved with a head is positioned high up over the doorway), while another doorway, less typically, was inserted in the N wall, but both have been blocked up, perhaps by the Board of Works in 1879–80. The lower part of what was a tall lancet E window with a deeply splayed embrasure survives as well as a single round-headed lancet with a deeply splayed embrasure at the E side of the S wall; both are late 12th century in style. An offset in the S wall suggests that the wall may have been thickened at some stage (Macalister 1916–17, 131). Aumbries survive internally in the S wall near the altar and in the N wall at the E end. There is a rectangular gable socket on the apex of the W gable; it probably held a cross now stored in St Caimín's Church (discussed above).

Fig. 48: SW profile of St Mary's Church (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Post-medieval features

A buttress stands against the N wall, at the E end, that is not bonded with the earlier masonry; it is pierced by a channel that Macalister termed a 'water-channel' (Macalister 1916–17, 131), although its exact function remains unclear. This buttress is of uncertain date but may be post-medieval, possibly dating to the 17th century though it may also be a late medieval feature. The water-channel may have functioned as a *piscine* or ablution drain for washing the sacred vessels (Ger Madden pers. comm.). Possibly there was a lean-to vestry against the buttress wall and N wall of church, consisting of organic material or other material that no longer survives. There are a couple of small, uninscribed, rough, upright gravemarkers located *in situ* within the church; these could be

medieval or post-medieval in date. There are also a small number of inscribed memorials marking 19th- and 20th-century graves.[21]

Ex-Situ Sculpture and Architectural Fragments

Three *ex-situ* cross-inscribed grave-slabs and a large fragment thereof (RMPs: CL029-009071-; CL029-009100-; CL029-009108-; CL029-009202-; see Figs 49 and 50) are mounted on the interior N and S walls of the church using cement and metal brackets. They are long and rectangular in shape, and would have originally been positioned recumbently. They bear long Latin crosses: two display outline crosses with hollowed angles, one displays a plain outline cross, and the large fragment displays only the shaft of an outline cross. They can be dated to the 11th–13th centuries on the basis of size, form, and decoration but given that their association with St Mary's may relate to their original use, a date in the late 12th or early 13th century is perhaps more accurate. In Macalister's time, one of the slabs marked a grave outside the W end of St Mary's (1916–17, 158, no. 65), while another formed part of a sedilla in the church (*ibid.*, 154, no. 35).

Figs 49 and 50: Cross-inscribed grave-slabs, St Mary's Church (Photos: C. O'Leary)

There is an altar carved with a scene of the crucifixion at the E end of the church (Fig. 51). This formed an O'Brien wall monument along with a triangular pediment now mounted on the S wall (RMP: CL029-009123-; Fig. 52). The pediment has an inscription reading: 'THIS M(ONUME)NT W(AS ERECTED) BY THE LADY S(LANEY) BRIEN (MOTH)ER TO (SR TER)LAGH(MC I BRIEN) HERE LYE THE BODIES OF THE NOBLE KNOGHT SR T(ERL)AGH M I BRIEN ARA BARONETT WHO DIED THE 28 OF MARCH ANNO DNI 1626 AND HIS LADY (elys) BUTLER DAUGHTER TO THE RIGHT HONNORAGLE WALTER EARLE OF ORMOND WHO DIED THE X OF FEB. 1625 PRAY FOR THEIR SOULES MEMENTO MORI.'. Turlough O'Brien, who would appear to have remained Catholic, was the son of the first Protestant Bishop of Killaloe who himself was the second son of Turlough Mac I Brien Arra who submitted to Queen Elizabeth in 1567. The altar part of the tomb was removed to Whitegate church in the 17th century (de Paor 1997, 35-6) but had been returned to the site by 1880 (Deane 1880, 73; Madden 2008, 25). The final fragment of the O'Brien tomb was found during the excavation in the lake below the well (de Paor 1997, 154).

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[21] Eugene O'Brien's transcriptions are available for public view online at
http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/don_tran/graves/saint_marys_graveyard_Iniscaltra.htm

The oldest inscribed headstone in the church is now *ex situ* and has been mounted on the N wall of the church; it dates to 1839 and commemorates the death of James Bouchier.

The top of an ogee-headed window is mounted inside the blocked-up S doorway while part of a window is on the ground beneath. Parts of *ex-situ* medieval architectural fragments and/or sculpture are stacked in the NW corner of the church.

3.4.2   Enclosure

The church is situated in a quadrangular enclosure (c.37m NE–SW x 26m NW–SE) which contains a graveyard (RMP: CL029-009009-; Fig. 53) and is defined by a roughly coursed mortared wall. The date of this enclosure is uncertain and it may be post-medieval.[22] Earthworks running W/E are visible N and S of the enclosure which de Paor (2013, 36) suggested originally enclosed the site, and included the S section of mortared stone wall with the arched gateway in the enclosure of St Brigid's Church.

The graveyard is entered by a gate adjacent to the NW corner of the church on the N wall or by a style further NE in the N wall. As the late medieval parish church, St Mary's is likely to have been a focus for burial for centuries. This is suggested by the presence of an apparently plain, uninscribed grave-slab (RMP: CL029-009213-) near the external face of the S wall of the church; it is similar to the plain slabs in the Saints' Graveyard and may date to the 12th century but unusually it is aligned N/S which may indicate that it is not in its original location (O'Leary forthcoming). In addition, the surface of the slab is more uneven (almost humped in shape) than the slabs in the Saints' Graveyard and thus its early date is questionable. There are numerous uninscribed, rough, upright gravemarkers which could be medieval or post-medieval in date. The inscribed headstones are of 19th–21st-century date, the earliest of which appears to be a ledger slab dedicated to 'Ann McCarthy, otherwise Seymour' who died in 1807.[23] A 19th-century headstone is lying loose against the graveyard wall. In c.1838 St Mary's was rounded as part of the pilgrimage round (O'Flanagan 1928, 196-7). The graveyard continues to be used for burial today and is under the care of Clare County Council.

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[22] Some confused 19th-century reports make reference to the building/repair of St Mary's enclosure (see de Paor 1997, 35, 39).
[23] Eugene O'Brien's transcriptions are available for public view online at
http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/don_tran/graves/saint_marys_graveyard_Iniscaltra.htm

Fig. 53: St Mary's graveyard, view from the N (Photo: C. O'Leary)

3.4.3   Holy Well

This holy well (RMP: CL029-009023-; Fig. 54) is located c.30m E of St Mary's and a few metres from the lake's edge. It was named 'Lady Well' (a common appellation indicating dedication to Mary) on the 1st Ed. and 2nd Ed. OS maps (c.1838; c.1893). It comprises a circular structure (int. diam. 1.8m) of mortared limestone masonry set into the base of a steep slope leading to the shore, with a lintelled opening. There is a recess with a slate soffit for offerings in the S side of the well (Fig. 55). There are a couple of steps down to the well on the lakeside. It was visited at the beginning and end of rounds on the site according to the OS letters dated c.1838 (O'Flanagan 1928, 196-7). In the early 20th century, Westropp (1911a, 210) claimed it was dedicated to St Caimín. De Paor (1997, 46; 2013, 29) noted that few traditions surrounding the well had survived into the 1970s. The spring feeding the well from limestone rock is still active, and the water is of good quality with lots of calcium and magnesium (Mary Tubridy pers. comm.).

Fig. 54: Holy well, view from the N (Photos: C. O'Leary)

Fig. 55: Recess in S side of holy well (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Excavation Evidence: de Paor's Area I

Excavation of the well indicated that, while there was a weak spring feeding it, the main water came from seepage through the wall; the well therefore served as something of a pool for collecting water flowing downslope. The approach to the well was excavated revealing objects including a rosary bead, pennies, and buttons probably dating from the late 19th to 20th centuries (de Paor 1997, 47-8; 2013, 29-30; Mannion 2015, 91). There was no evidence for medieval usage.

3.4.4 The Bargaining Stone

This monument (termed a 'penitential station' in RMP: CL029-009022-) is located close to the SE shore c.40m SE of St Mary's Church in a marshy area. It is formed of three stones (Fig. 56). A conglomerate boulder c.0.95m long aligned NW–SE forms the base, and features a round-bottomed channel running along its long axis (diam. c.0.22m). Two limestones slabs are placed on top, their edges meeting over the channel. Traditionally, people joined hands through the channel to seal a bargain or promise. The date of the monument is not known, but it could be of medieval or post-medieval origin; holed stones are common on early medieval ecclesiastical sites but do not closely resemble this composite structure.

Fig. 56: Bargaining stone (Photo: C. O'Leary)

3.4.5 Lime Kiln

According to Macalister (1916–17, 141) an 'old' lime kiln was located between St Mary's and the holy well which was, in his time, filled up and overgrown. This monument has not been identified and it has not been designated an RMP number.

3.5 THE COTTAGE AND ENVIRONS

3.5.1 The Cottage

As it was inaccessible due to overgrowth, this description is based on the surveys by Macalister (1916–17), de Paor (1997; 2013), and Tunney (www.archaeology.ie).

This monument (RMP: CL029-009031-) comprises the foundations of a small stone structure near the E shore of the island, about 25m N of the Confessional, now much overgrown. Traces of ridge-and-furrow cultivation are visible in the area.

Excavation Evidence: de Paor's Area II

De Paor's excavation revealed the structure to be a two-room cottage with back-to-back fireplaces, typical of 18th- and 19th-century vernacular houses. The cottage had been built directly on the ground without foundations and its floor had sloped steeply. Due to the disturbed nature of the ground within the cottage, which appears to have been used as a rubbish dump post-habitation, finds could not be reliably dated, but included fragments of a number of quernstones, a whetsone, glass, pottery sherds, and slates (de Paor 1997, 49-50; 2013, 30-31).

3.5.2 Landing Stages/Piers

A landing stage, described as a slipway in the RMP (CL029-009026-), was located on the E shore of the island. Macalister (1916–17, 139) described it as a 'boat-pier of large undressed blocks of stone … now some distance from the water's edge'. He noted that it was 57 feet long and rectangular in plan. The landing stage was marked on the Cassini 6 inch map, but did not appear on any of the later OS maps. This area is now completely overgrown and the monument was not identified during the course of this survey; the NMS likewise were unable to locate it. However, a line of rough boulders running perpendicular to the shoreline among the overgrowth may be the remnants of this landing stage but this is purely speculative.

There is a post-medieval/modern pier located on the E shore (Fig. 57) and also one on the NW shore (Fig. 58), neither of which was marked on historic maps and they are not designated RMPs. They are both formed by a length of undressed large stones topped by concrete. A cattle pier is located beside the NW pier as well as a small building, now in urgent need of repair, known as the 'Fisherman's Hut' which was built in the 1960s with support from the ESB (Ger Madden pers. comm.; Fig. 59). The N pier is also extant, and is located just E of the N tip of the island in a silted up area; it is considered to date from the later twentieth century (c.1970s).
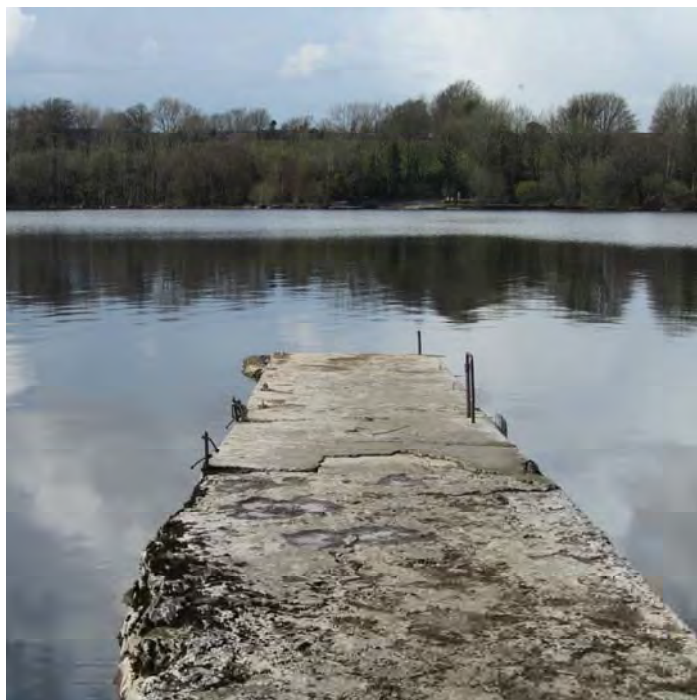

Fig. 57: E pier (Photo: B. McCarthy)

Fig. 58: NW pier (Photo: B. McCarthy)

Fig. 59: Fisherman's Hut (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Figs 60 and 61: Interior of Fisherman's Hut (Photos: C. O'Leary)

3.5.3   Possible Penitential Station/Remains of a Wall

Macalister (1916–17, 139) noted 'a carn of stones' (RMP: CL029-009018-) on the inner end of the eastern landing stage. It was marked 'Station' on the Cassini 6 inch map, but did not appear on any of the later OS maps. This area is now completely overgrown and the monument was not conclusively identified during the course of this survey; the NMS likewise were unable to locate it. However, a short length of drystone wall (Fig. 60) roughly aligned N/S and comprising undressed boulders and rubble is apparent on the shore just NE of the modern E pier. Its dating is uncertain; it could be part of a medieval enclosure but its differential style may suggest it is post-medieval and perhaps related to domestic habitation, or it may have served a penitential function. It cannot be argued with any certainty that this monument equates with the 'Station' marked on the Cassini map nor Macalister's penitential station.

Fig. 62: Possible penitential station or remains of a wall (Photo: B. McCarthy)

3.5.4 Bullaun Stones

A bullaun stone (RMP: CL029-009025-; Fig. 63) is now situated 10m from the E shore in the lake due to a rise in water levels in the early 20th century connected with the Shannon hydro-electric scheme. It comprises a sub-rectangular, moss-covered boulder (c.1.5m x 0.85m) with a circular basin on its SE side (Macalister 1916–17, 143).

Fig. 63: Bullaun in lake near E shore of Inis Cealtra (Photo: C. O'Leary)

A bullaun stone (RMP: CL029-009024-; Fig. 62) is situated near the lakeshore, c.100m N of the Confessional, under bushes in an overgrown area. It comprises an ivy-covered boulder (c.1.1m x c.0.8m) with an oval basin of diam. 0.42m (Macalister 1916–17, 143).

A bullaun stone (RMP: CL029-009019-; Fig. 63) is situated in an overgrown area, roughly N of the previously recorded bullaun (but further inland and E of the earthworks). It comprises a moss- and ivy-covered boulder (c.0.8m x c.0.67m) with a basin of diam. 0.45m and d. c.3m; there is no water in the basin.

A bullaun stone (CL029-009020-) was said to be situated at the N end of the island (Macalister 1916–17, pl. VII). It comprises a stone (c.1.2m x .0.7m) with a circular basin of diam. 0.5m. The bullaun, which is in an overgrown area, was not located during the survey. There are also a number of large stones, on the NE shore, displaying hollows but most, if not all, of these appear to be natural.

3.6   EARTHWORKS

A range of earthworks survive on the island that date from the early medieval to post-medieval period. RMP no. CL029-009002- is applied to most of the field systems/earthworks extending throughout the entire island. In particular between St Caimín's Church and the D-shaped enclosure (RMP: CL029-009131-) surrounding St Michael's, there are a number of subrectangular areas, as well as a pathway defined by double banks. The most defined path (often regarded as a 'pilgrims' path') leads from St Caimín's to St Michael's and is c.100m long (Fig. 66). A broad paved 'road' also connects St Caimín's Church with St Mary's, and another pathway connects the northern tip of the island near the extant NW pier with the main ecclesiastical complex; this path appears to have been a right of way and is marked on both the 1st Ed. and 2nd Ed. OS maps and on Macalister's plan (1916–

17, pl. VII), although he was unable to identify it (*ibid*., 142). Part of this path was apparently reinstated c.2001 in order to provide a visitors' trail; the start of the original path passes by a large ash tree near the NW pier but because of the amount of overgrowth in this area a diversion was created at this point and so the initial 50m or so of the modern track does not follow the original route (Ger Madden pers. comm.). Some of the earthen banks are very pronounced, especially the one running E/W and meeting the S wall of St Brigid's enclosure (Fig. 65) and the bank running N/S from St Michael's to St Brigid's N boundary (Fig. 66). There are traces of ridge and furrow cultivation throughout the island (Bing image http://binged.it/1LSeFWo accessed 4 May 2016). Many of these earthworks likely relate to early medieval enclosure concerned with controlling access to certain spaces, in particular, sacred space. Others may relate to control of animals in fields while others again, particularly from the late medieval/post-medieval period, may represent efforts to organise space on the site to accommodate pilgrimage traffic. According to the OS letters dated c.1838: 'The old walks which were formerly gravelled over, on this island, are now covered with grass' and prior to the time of the writing of the letters there used to be trees planted along the sides of them (O'Flanagan 1928, 169). There is no clear evidence for a perimeter enclosure of the island but shelving to the E, close to the shoreline, visible on aerial photographs, may represent an outer enclosure (de Paor 1997, 44; 2013, 28).[24] The various enclosures, and often the associated internal paving, surrounding some of the buildings on Inis Cealtra have been discussed above.

Fig. 66: Pilgrim's path leading from St Michael's to St Caimín's (Photo: C. O'Leary)

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[24] This may also be natural as all drumlins have a steep and shallow side depending on ice movement with the steep side of Inis Cealtra to the E (Mary Tubridy pers. comm.); nevertheless, this natural feature may have been enhanced to serve as a boundary.

Fig. 67: Bank running roughly E/W which incorporates S wall of St Brigid's enclosure, view from the S (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Fig. 68: Bank running roughly N/S from D-shaped enclosure surrounding St Michael's to NW corner of St Brigid's enclosure (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Excavation Evidence

Excavation revealed that a radial bank-and-ditch system, which extended S from the D-shaped enclosure around St Michael's to St Brigid's (Fig. 66), and a bank (Fig. 65) incorporating the S wall of the enclosure around St Brigid's date to an early phase in the history of the site (de Paor 1997, 67-8; 2013, 35-6). The long curvilinear ditch running N/S down the island from St Michael's to St Brigid's yielded a bronze hinged pin in its primary fill likely to date to the late 8th to early 9th century while the secondary fill contained samples radiocarbon dated to AD 778–985 cal. 2 (O'Sullivan and Seaver 2015, 13). As stated above, the ditch to the N of the D-shaped enclosure contained charcoal dated to 905–1023 AD cal. 2, while fill from the N ditch of the enclosure around St Brigid's yielded a radiocarbon date of 992–1150 AD cal. 2 (*ibid*. 14).

3.7   POSSIBLE FULACHT FIA

A possible fulacht fia was listed in the RMP (1996) on Inis Cealtra but its precise location is unknown. Such features date primarily to the Bronze Age (c.2400–500 BC).

3.8   LOGBOATS AND OTHER WRECKS

According to the Underwater Archaeology Unit (UAU), a number of logboats – boats made from hollowed-out logs – were found off the NE shore of the island, about 40m offshore (GPS: N52 55.036, W08 26.788; Karl Brady

pers. comm.); they were probably associated with prehistoric activity on Inis Cealtra. The Wreck Inventory of Ireland database lists four known wrecks in the waters adjacent to Inis Cealtra and a number of other wrecks in the general Lough Derg area (including *Mountaineer*, probably the first steamer on Lough Derg, wrecked in 1827; *Lady Lansdowne*, wrecked in 1855 and lying under the jetty at Killaloe Hotel; *Mary* described as a 'canoe' or fishing boat, wrecked at Balderrig in 1897; Roy Stokes, irishwrecks.com, pers. comm.).

3.9   MISCELLANEA

A number of miscellaneous pieces of sculpture and architectural fragments are scattered throughout the site; often their function is unclear. There are a number of door-posts occurring on the site both in the vicinity of St Brigid's Church and near the OPW cabin.

3.10   SCULPTURE REMOVED FROM THE ISLAND

Numerous pieces of early medieval sculpture, especially those of which were uncovered during the excavation, have been removed from the island. Some are stored in the NMI while others, including the *chi-rho*-inscribed stone, have been loaned to Clare County Museum, Ennis (RMPs: CL029-009038- / CL033-181----; CL029-009039- / CL033-182----; CL029-009040- / CL033-183---; CL029-009041- / CL033-185----), and are exhibited there. There are also a small number of pieces stored in the OPW depot, Athenry, Co. Galway (RMPs: CL029-009032-/ GA084-151006-; CL029-009033- / GA084-151007-; CL029-009034-/ GA084-151008-; CL029-009035- / GA084-151009-; CL029-009036- / GA084-151010-); this includes a small cross-slab displaying a cross-of-arcs (RMP: CL029-009032-), a cross-inscribed butterfly gable finial (RMP: CL029-009036-; discussed above), two cross-inscribed grave-slabs, both of which bear inscriptions ('Coscrach Laignech' and 'or(óit) do Mael Patraic'; RMPs: CL029-009033-; CL029-009035-) and one, unusually, displays two shod feet, as well as a recumbent sundial with a hole for a gnomon near its top above a semicircle with five rays (RMP: CL029-009034-; Fig. 67). Also stored in the OPW depot is a carved head which may be one of the heads referred to by Macalister (1916–17, 126, fig. 4) as being incorrectly incorporated into a window then located *ex situ* in St Caimín's nave. The locations of other pieces of early medieval sculpture remain unknown (incl. RMPs: CL029-009115-; CL029-009116-; CL029-009117-; CL029-009126-; CL029-009061-), including another sundial (RMP: CL029-009126-).

Fig. 67: Sundial, OPW depot, Athenry, Co. Galway (Photo: C. O'Leary)

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4 CONDITION REVIEW AND PROTECTION ISSUES

4.1 ST CAIMÍN'S CHURCH

This church was developed in a number of phases from the early medieval period single cell structure. The structure was extensively restored by the OPW in 1879-1880. During excavations in the 1970s the Romanesque doorway in the west gable was rebuilt replacing the three orders to the arch of the 1880s with a four ordered arch. The building was roofed by the OPW in the 1990s. The structure has been well maintained but the following concerns should be noted:

- Saturated band of masonry to west wall to church which is likely to be the result of cementitious pointing and perhaps bedding material carried out in the 1970s.
- Loose stone to the wall tops of the chancel to the east of the structure.
- Open joints and lost flashing to the walls of the chancel.
- Loose stones to the base of the church walls.

Image taken from south showing St Caimín's with round tower and enclosed graveyard.

Image showing south elevation of St Caimín's church. The Romanesque chancel to the right of the building is sometimes known as St Columb's chapel.

St Caimín's Church image taken from the east.

North and east elevation to St Caimín's Church.
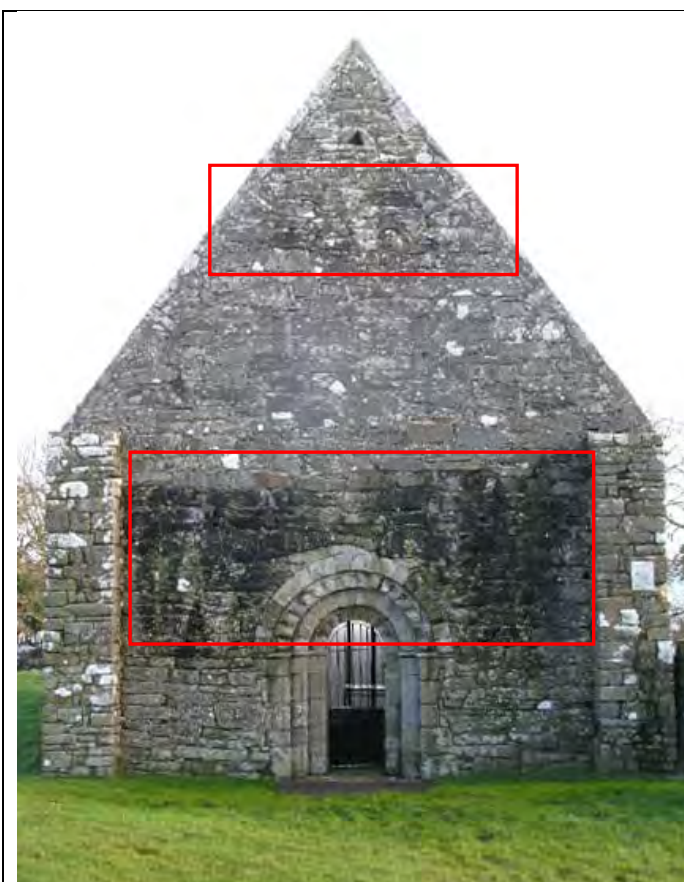
St Caimín's west elevation. The Romanesque doorway was rebuilt in 4 orders in the 1970s. Note the dark saturated band to the wall indicating the repointing of this section in cementitious mortar.

Image showing north elevation to chancel.
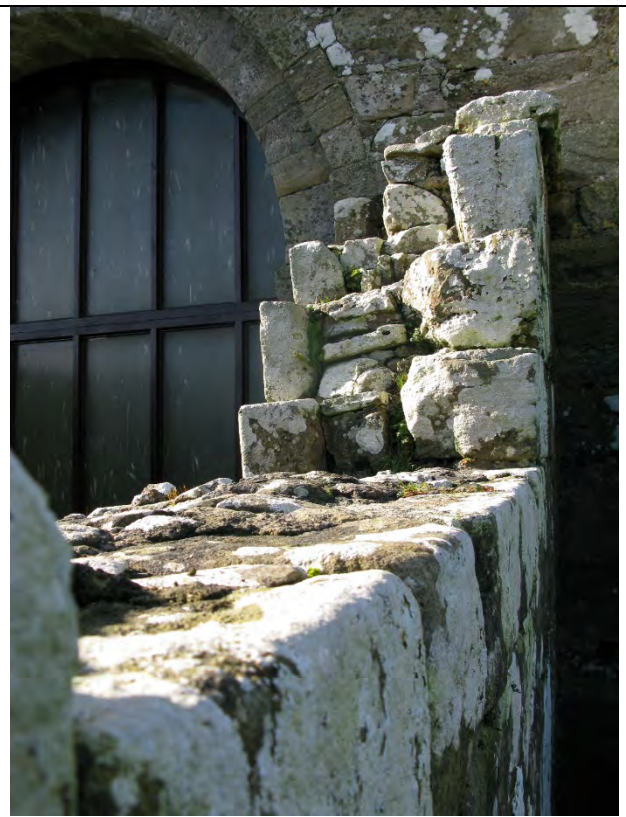
Image showing poor condition of flaunching to chancel wall tops.

Image showing south elevation to chancel. Note open joints throughout, failure of flashing, ashlar missing (located at base) and vegetation to wall top and grass growing in open joints.

Loose stone to base of wall between north chancel and enclosing wall.

Grass growing from base of north cancel wall.

4.2 THE ROUND TOWER

Built in the 11th/early 12th century mid-10th century and rising now to 24.4 meters the round tower is well built having coursed stonework and exceptionally large stones to the base with stone corbelled and flagged stone floors corresponding with the windows on each level. The structure has been well maintained but the following concerns are noted:

- The tree growth to the top of the tower is of serious concern.

- Open joints to the flaunching allowing moisture ingress.
- Loose stone to the parapet wall where the pointing has been eroded.
- Stone appears to have been dislodged by root systems.
- There is also concern regarding the mass of dried stick rook nests which may constitute a fire hazard in the event of a lightning strike.

Image from south	*Image from east*

Image from north	*Image from west*

North opening to tower. Note the large quantity of nesting material to opening.

Image showing base to west elevation.

Note tree growth to tower top with loose stone indicating a developing a root mass.

Image showing tree growth in tower and dislodged stone. (Image taken by Eoin O'Hagan)

Note poor condition of the stone flaunching to the tower top.

4.3   ST CAIMÍN'S CEMETERY WALL

St Caimín's cemetery is located to the south elevation of St Caimín's Church. It is comprised of a west and south wall connected to the church on the north and Saint's Graveyard to the east. An image from the Lawrence collection taken c.1865 show the present wall abutting the south west of the church in place but does not include the surrounding wall. This is a roughly coursed wall capped with slabs and was probably built during the 1878-1880 works on the island. It is generally in good condition but with the following conditions noted:

The structural integrity of the section of wall that is built up to the south elevation of the church shows a strong lean towards the graveyard.

- Widespread open joints and loose slabs to the wall tops.
- Incidents of dislodged stone and vegetative growth.
- The timber fence surrounding the complex is rotting in places.

Image showing outer elevation to north wall of St Caimín's cemetery

Enclosed graveyard from west.

Image showing south wall to enclosed graveyard note ivy growth and loose stone to base of wall.

Image showing the leaning wall to the south west of St Caimín's church. Note open joints and vegetation to section of wall to the fore. This section of the wall is present in Robert French's photographic image c.1865

West wall to enclosed graveyard showing displaced stone.	*Detail showing displaced stone to external west elevation*
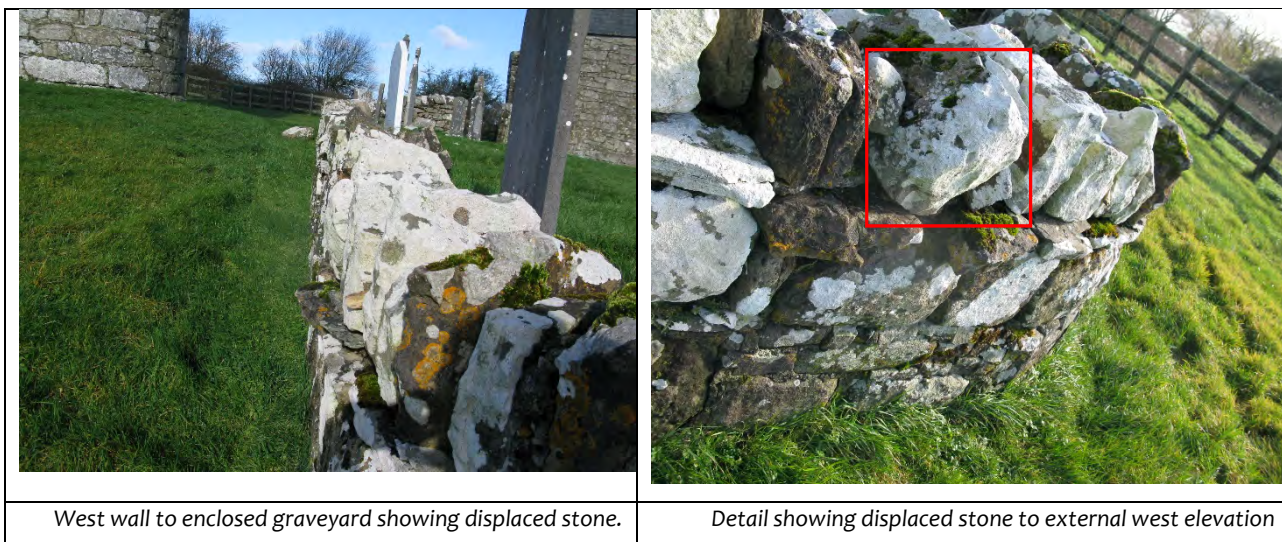
4.4   SAINTS' GRAVEYARD

This graveyard is located to the east of St Caimín's church and enclosed by what is thought to be an 11th-12th century wall with original masonry preserved in the lower courses[25]. The wall and arch were repaired in 1897-90 and it is reported locally that the west wall was repaired c.2000s. Concerns regarding the condition of the wall are as follows:

- Exposed ledge and serious leaning to west wall at northern end.
- Open joints and vegetative growth to arch.
- Raised area to south west corner with significant ivy growth at this location.
- Some displaced stone to the North West corner of the wall where it joins the church wall.
- Collapsed section of wall to the east section with significant turf growth to top.
- Tree growth in graveyard which may disturb below ground archaeology.

Image showing west wall to Saints' graveyard with arched through to St Caimín's Graveyard.

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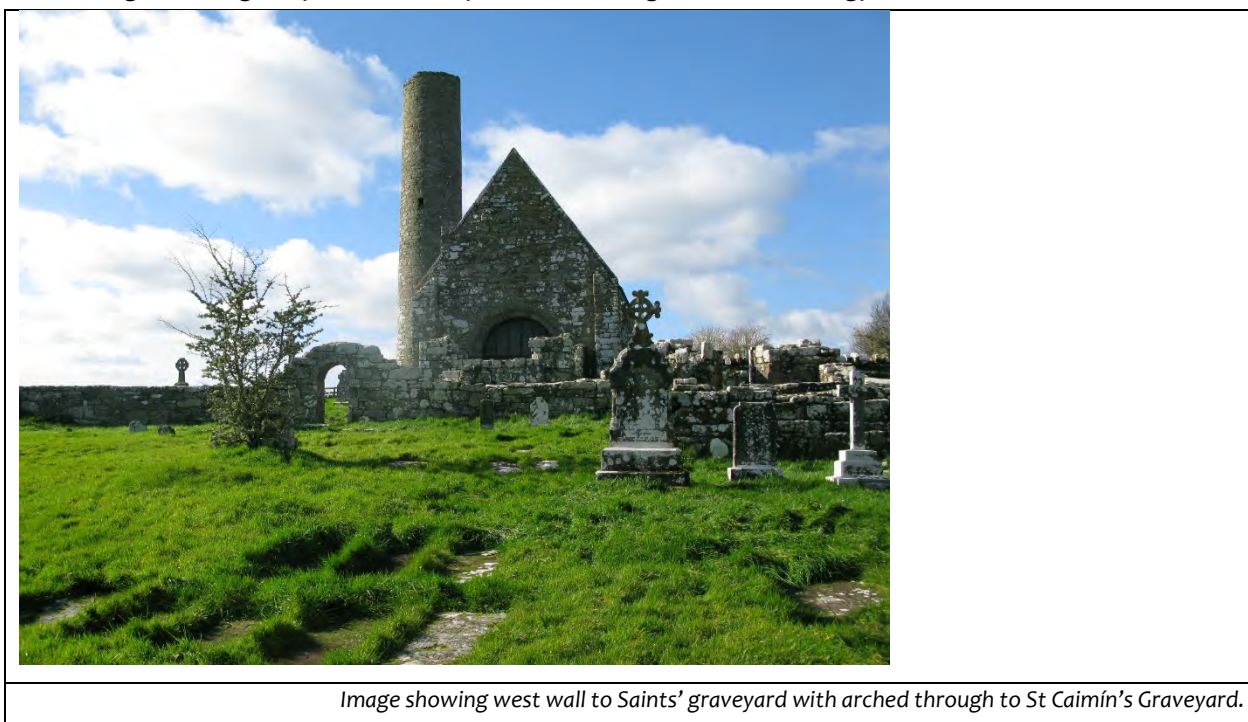
[25] de Paor 1997, 76, 95; 2013, 44; O'Leary 2015, 126

External view to entrance arch to Saints' graveyard within main churchyard.

View showing internal elevation to west wall Saints' graveyard.

Image detailing exposed ledge and serious leaning to west wall at northern end. Note loose stone to base of the wall and ivy growth.

Image showing open joints with vegetative growth including the deeply rooting Rubus fruticosus (blackberry).

Image showing mound to south west corner of Saint's graveyard wall with extensive ivy growth to wall (possible grass cutting pile).

Wall to north was it slopes to meet the church wall. Note dislodged stone.

Image showing eastern wall to Saint's graveyard with decayed flashing and vegetative growth. Bulge in wall indicated by red highlight.

Image showing eastern enclosure to Saint's graveyard. Note the displaced stone and bulge with turf growth to the wall top holding moisture within the wall. Also note extensive vegetation to the outer side of the wall.

4.4.1.1.1.1   *Detail of external north wall showing plinth ledge to base. Not moss growth.*

Detail showing cementitious pointing to north outer wall with vegetative growth.

4.4.1.1.1.2   *Tree growth to Saint's graveyard.*

Poorly located signage to external north wall.

4.5   TEAMPALL NA BHFEAR NGONTA

This structure has been extensively rebuilt over the centuries but is interpreted as being from the Romanesque period. The principal concerns here relate to:

- Open joints with vegetative growth to the plinth stones.
- Cementitious flashing to the projecting wall to the west elevation.

Image showing west elevation to Teampall na bhFear nGonta. Note grass to plinth joints.

Image showing Teampall na bhFear nGonta from the north west.

Image showing west wall to Teampall na bhFear nGonta. Loss of flashing to skyward surface.

Teampall na bhFear nGonta from the south west.

Interior floor to Teampall na bhFear nGonta.

4.6   THE CONFESSIONAL

This small structure was re-built in its current phase c.1700 but was constructed on the site of an early medieval shrine and possibly incorporates medieval stone. It was formerly enclosed by a drystone wall. It has traces of paving to the south side of the structure. According to de Paor a stone by stone survey was made prior to the taking down of this structure for excavations in 1974. It appears that cementitious mortar was used in the re-instatement of the structure.

The main condition noted in this structure is the failure of the flashing and pointing to the upper structure which is allowing moisture to penetrate the wall which in turn will give rise to freeze thaw action and the development of plant life which will further exacerbate the problem.

| *Image showing the entrance to the Confessional from the east.* | *Image showing the paving to the south.* |
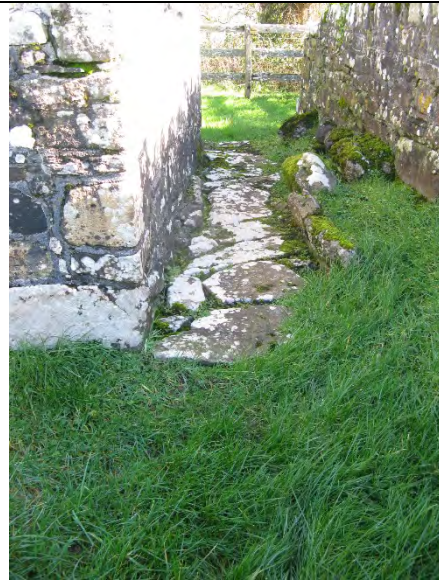
Image showing the Confessional from the west.

4.7   ST BRIGID'S CHURCH

This ruin is of a small 12th century single celled church which was restored by the Board of Works in late 19th century which included the rebuilding of the west wall and Romanesque entrance arch. However according to dePaor the east wall subsequently collapsed. In 1970 fallen masonry from the ruin was re-built including the majority of the east elevation.

St Brigid's Church is enclosed within a stone wall. The south wall, with arched entrance and returns to the north is largely original. The remaining walls were constructed in the 1972 following the line of a stone and mud wall to the top of an earlier earthen bank using stone gathered in the vicinity. These re-built stone walls, with filled core, were brought to a height that would prevent cattle encroaching the area.

The foremost concerns to the condition of the structure are listed below:

- Cementitious pointing and flashing used in the repair and re-building in the 1970s is now problematic.
- This mortar has cracked and come away from the stone allowing moisture to penetrate the substructure and consequently allowing plant growth.
- In some instances the stone itself has cracked due to the strength of the mortar which prevent natural movement in the structure.
- Damage to the north west of the north wall is shored with timber.

The area surrounding the south wall is badly flooded.

Image of St Brigid's Church and enclosure taken from the East.

St Brigid's Enclosure showing south elevation.

Internal south wall to St Brigid's enclosure.

Image of St Brigid's church taken form the south west.

4.7.1.1.1.1   Detail showing west elevation to St Brigid's Church.

Image showing external north wall to St Brigid's Church.

Image showing east elevation to St Brigid's Church which was reconstructed in the 1970s. Note grass growth in the lower joints.

Interior west wall to St Brigid's Church.

Interior east wall to St Brigid's Church.

Open joints, grass to joints and cracked stone relating to the use of cementitious mortar.

Detail showing loss of bond between stone and cementitious pointing.

Detail showing cracked flashing and ivy growth.

Open joints and fern growth to internal walls at St Brigid's Church.

Detail showing cementitious flashing and pointing to south elevation St Brigid's Church.

Image showing external west enclosure.

Image showing protection to North West corner of St Brigid's enclosure.
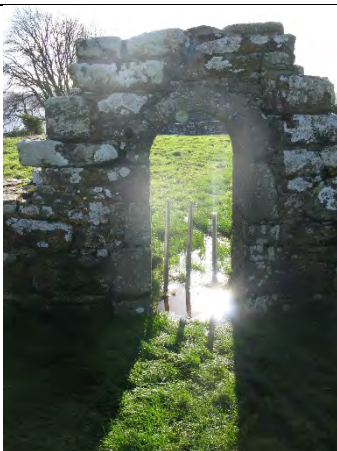
Arched entrance to St Brigid's enclosure. Note the flooding to the external area.

Image showing south wall to St Brigid's enclosure. Note the extensive vegetative growth to the skyward surface of the wall.

4.8   ST MARY'S CHURCH

St Mary's, the largest church on the island dated to the late 12th century. It is set within an enclosure of roughly coursed stone. The following conditions to St Mary's church are of concern:

- Bulge to east section of south wall.
- Loose stone is evident to the east gable top.
- Loose stone is evident to the internal ledge to the south wall.
- Loose stone is noted to the east end of the south wall.
- Cementitious mortar has been used to fix grave slabs and historic carved stone to the internal walls.
- Cementitious mortar has been used to re-instate the tomb to the east end of the church.
- Vegetation is taking root in the wall tops.
- Cementitious flashing to the enclosure wall is cracked and hollow beneath.

West elevation and entrance to St Mary's Church.

Detail showing door surround to entrance to St Mary's Church.

Image showing south elevation to St Mary's Church.

East elevation to St Mary's Church.

Image showing south elevation to St Mary's Church.

Image showing south east elevation to St Mary's Church.

Bulge to east end of south wall.

Detail showing south east corner of church.

Image showing interior of St Mary's Church taken from the east.

Image showing interior of St Mary's Church taken from the west.

Image showing interior of St Mary's south wall.

Image showing the tomb to the east wall.

Detail showing carving to tomb.

Image showing condition of stone to tomb top.

Detail showing chipped and broken stone.

Image showing cracking and crazing to stone.

Detail showing ambry to south east wall.

Detail showing splayed window opening to St Mary's Church south wall. Note pilaster rising to right of image.

Side view showing grave slab cemented into place on south wall.

Front view showing grave slab fixed to south wall of St Mary's Church.

Plaque fragment fixed to south wall.

Image detailing side view of tomb plaque.

Detail showing apex of plaque. Note rusting wire used to secure item.

Detail showing chipped and damaged stone with poor repairs.

Carved figures to internal south wall

Image showing blocked up door opening to south wall with various carved stone pieces.

Image showing corresponding door opening to the external wall.

Image showing carved stone to south wall.
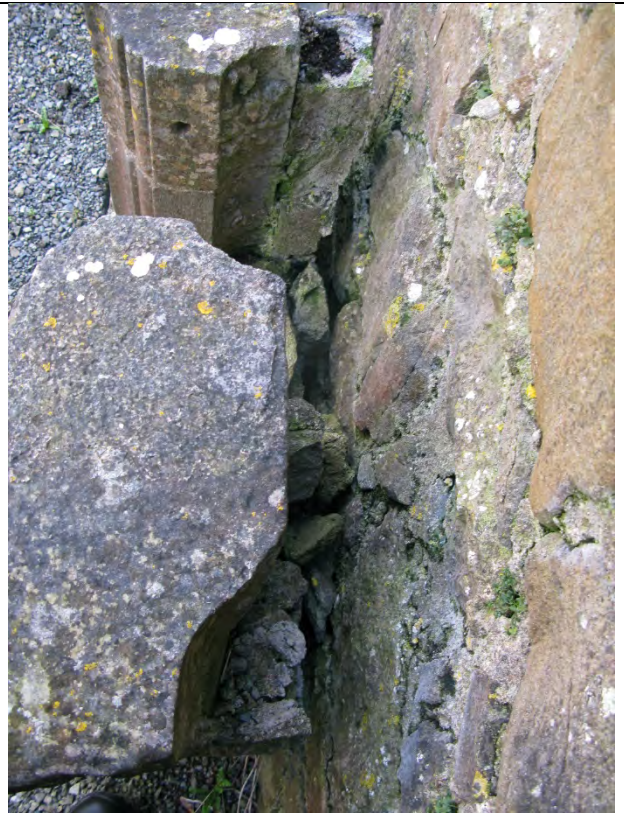
Image showing carved stone to south wall.

Grave slab to south west corner of nave.

Carved stone with detritus to north west corner of nave.
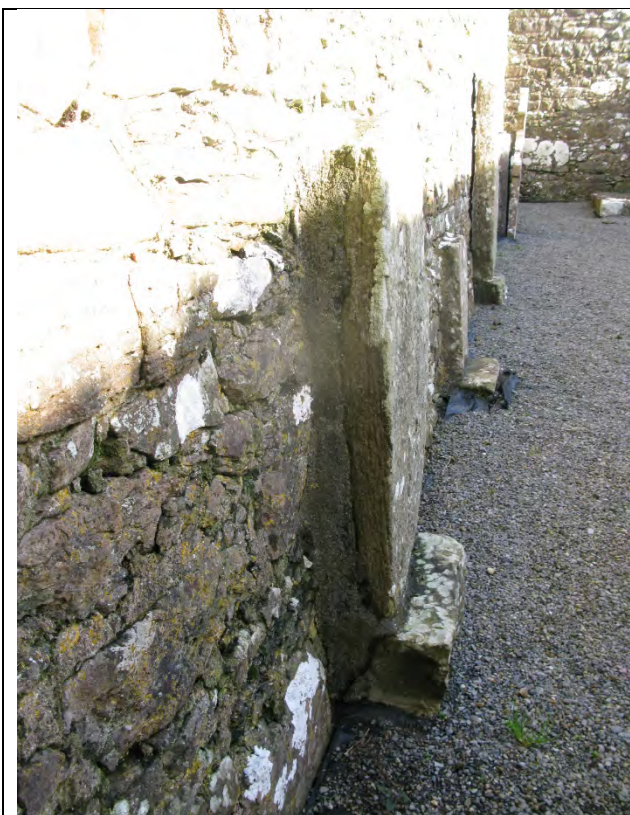
Image showing grave slabs secured to north wall using cementitious mortar.

Detail showing cement bound grave slabs.

Grave slabs secured to north wall.

Cross mounted headstone leaning out of position on north wall of St Mary's Church.

Internal north wall of St Mary's Church.

Image showing west elevation to enclosing wall to St Mary's Church and graveyard.

Image showing enclosure wall to north of St Mary's Church.

Image showing poured concrete piers to graveyard entrance.

Image showing detail of hollow cementitious flashing to wall top.

Image showing entrance gate to St Mary's churchyard.

Image showing east enclosure wall to St Mary's graveyard.

Image showing south enclosure wall. Note vegetation and failed flashing.

Image showing corner to south east enclosure wall.

Detail showing failed flashing to wall top with ivy growth.

Image showing continuation of south enclosure wall. Not the overgrowth against the external face of the wall along with the moss and ivy growth to the top and side.

Detail showing shoring and loss of stone to the north west corner of the enclosure wall.

Headstone resting against the west wall. Note the exposed rusting armature.

4.9   THE HOLY WELL

As no evidence of medieval use was discovered during excavations of the circular holy well is thought to date from the late 19th century (de Paor1970). It features a lintelled opening to the south east wall having drainage channels at ground level with the intention of keeping the path surrounding the well dry.

- The upper wall surface has been treated with cementitious flashing which is cracking.
- Stone has been dislodges to the outer west wall of the well.
- Cracking is noted to the internal wall of the well adjacent to the area of stone loss.

Image showing the well in relation to the lake.

Image showing drainage hole at ground level.

Image showing lintelled opening to the well.

Image detail showing loss of stone to the well wall.

Note cracking along mortar joints to internal wall of well. Wall would appear to have been pointed with cementitious mortar.

4.10   PIERS AND JETTIES

The main access to the island is from the pier to the north. There is both a pedestrian and animal pier at this location. The pedestrian landing has be repaired over the years but shows erosion to the prevailing west and cracking to the surface which may be a trip hazard.

The animal pier is a re-enforced concrete pier with gated sides.

North Pier, note cracking and erosion to west side.

Surface to outer section of pier. Note horse shoes for mooring boats.

Cattle pier

Possible penitential station up- hill from north pier.

East pier adjacent to St Caimín's

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL VULNERABILITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr Bernadette McCarthy, Clíodhna O'Leary, and Dr Pat Wallace

The results of the survey described in Chapter 2 of this appendix and consideration of the island's significance have identified the following archaeological vulnerabilities; associated recommendations also follow. In addition this section identifies the potential impact on the archaeology caused by increased tourist numbers and proposed works to facilitate those greater numbers.

In accordance with the Burra Charter, which advocates a cautious approach to change, a phased approach should be adopted and changes made on an incremental basis in order to accommodate increased numbers of tourists in such a manner that their impact on the archaeology can be assessed gradually. There is a need to balance the provision of facilities for visitors and guides (e.g. structures, signage, and toilets) with their impact on the setting and archaeology of the island.

If any works are to be carried out, measured surveys and photographic surveys should be undertaken before any works commence; in particular it is recommended that a geophysical archaeological survey should be carried out particularly in the vicinity of the earthworks in order to reveal their true extent and complexity, as well as in the vicinity of the shore; the results of this survey should inform any decisions regarding the provision of facilities for increased visitor numbers.

All proposed development and strategies should be in compliance with the National Monuments Acts, 1930–2004, and with the national policy on the protection of archaeological heritage: 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' (1999) by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. Please note that many of the recommendations made below are subject to approval by the Planning and Heritage Section of the Department of the Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

5.1 HUMAN DAMAGE: VISITORS

Vulnerabilities

- On various visits to the island, it was observed that some visitors were climbing the upstanding remains and hanging off the Romanesque archways.
- Some of the smaller, more portable monuments such as the carved stones are at risk of theft.

Recommendations

- Although some monuments are at risk of theft, in line with the Burra Charter (article 9.1), these should not be moved from their original *in-situ* locations.
- It is recommended that there be a steward/caretaker acting in a supervisory capacity on the island in daylight hours, at least seasonally, in order to minimise the risk of vandalism and theft.
- Overnight camping on the island should be discouraged.

5.2 HUMAN DAMAGE: MANAGEMENT OF SITE

5.2.1 Vulnerabilities

- Lack of awareness of best practice threatens the archaeology of the island.
- Some of the less 'visible' archaeology of the island, such as the foundations of St Michael's Church and the surrounding area as well as the post-medieval 'cottage' would be vulnerable to damage if cutting back of overgrowth was undertaken by someone who did not understand their archaeological value. Loose, *ex-situ* stone is also vulnerable to being moved or lost.
- Lack of cohesion and communication between the two bodies who own the island (Clare County Council and the Office of Public Works) threatens the archaeology. Less 'visible' archaeology, such as the earthworks and below-ground archaeology, is particularly at risk of being neglected.

5.2.2 Recommendations

- Works on Inis Cealtra, a National Monument, cannot be undertaken without ministerial consent under section 14 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act (2004), and should only be undertaken with archaeological consultation.

- Those undertaking care and maintenance of the island should be fully informed of best practice and should also avoid ground disturbance or movement of stone.
- The management of the archaeological heritage on the island is in the remit of the Office of Public Works (OPW). Archaeological input regarding the conservation and recording of the site is provided by the National Monuments Service (NMS). When required, experts from the private sector should be commissioned to undertake specialist work.
- The responsibilities of both Clare County Council and the OPW to the archaeology should be clarified in writing to ensure a cohesive strategy for the protection of the whole island, including the less visible archaeology such as the areas containing the earthworks which are utilised by the Council for grazing purposes (see below); each body should be aware not only of their own responsibilities to the island but also those of the other body.
- We recommend the appointment of a site management team to efficiently co-ordinate the day-to-day management of Inis Cealtra and to liaise with interest groups.
- We recommend that a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) be drawn up with input from Clare County Council, OPW, and NMS. The CMP should ensure the long-term conservation and preservation, to international best practice, of Inis Cealtra with the appropriate guidance from the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre, and advisory bodies such as ICOMOS. The management plan should detail:
  ➢ regular monitoring of the archaeological and cultural heritage of the site;
  ➢ periodic reporting of the condition of the archaeological remains;
  ➢ improving public awareness and appreciation of Inis Cealtra;
  ➢ liaising with community and local interest groups;
  ➢ establishing a research framework strategy;
  ➢ regular reviewing of the management plan.
- The CMP should not be a finite plan but a living document that will evolve over time and will require regular reviews, with the support of the relevant bodies and experts.

5.3 PROPOSAL TO INCREASE VISITOR NUMBERS-ARCHAELOGICAL VULNERABILITIES

5.3.1 Vulnerabilities
- Ensuring sustainable tourism is dependent on the continued pristine condition of the island and the survival of the archaeological remains but overcrowding could be detrimental to the conservation of the site.
- Greater visitor numbers increases the risk of damage to the monuments on the island.
- Sheer footfall on the site will impact the ground causing wear and tear. This type of erosion tends to occur on specific routes e.g. paths or tracks, at specific focal points e.g. monuments, and at pinch points where there is a constriction in flow e.g. gates or gaps.
- The Saints' Graveyard is at particular risk; here there are a large number of early medieval recumbent grave-slabs, many incised with crosses and inscriptions that will suffer wear and damage if walked upon.
- Other historic graveyards on the island, associated with St Caimín's and St Mary's are also vulnerable in that many of the graves have risen above ground level and should not be walked upon out of respect for archaeological material as well as the deceased.
- The earthworks are vulnerable to damage from footfall.
- Increased boat traffic in and around the island could negatively impact upon known and unknown underwater archaeology in the area, such as the shipwrecks and logboats, due to increased propeller wash action from repeat boat trips or an increase in boat engine size.

Fig. 68: Graves which have risen, St Caimín's Cemetery (Photo: B. McCarthy)

5.3.2   Recommendations

- A balance must be established between the preservation of the island and the socio-economic benefits that tourism can bring to the area. It is important to recognise and support cultural tourism insofar as it is compatible with the primary obligation of the conservation, maintenance, protection, and perpetuity of Inis Cealtra. The maximum number of visitors to the island must be actively managed and continually reviewed so that it is compatible with site protection.

- All physical changes to facilitate an increase of tourists visiting the island should, as directed by the Burra Charter (article 8), retain 'the visual and sensory setting, as well as the retention of spiritual and other cultural relationships that contribute to the cultural significance of the place'. Inis Cealtra is a complex site that is significant for a variety of reasons, as outlined above in the Statement of Significance. The unique, culturally significant 'unspoiled' character of the island should be preserved as much as possible. This will in turn enhance visitor experience.

- Monuments must be monitored on a continual basis for larger visitor numbers to be sustainable. Efforts should also be made to protect the ground, at least in particularly sensitive areas. The OPW and Clare County Council must continually monitor the archaeology on the island not only to protect it but to ensure the negative impacts of tourism are mitigated; in order to do so a management plan needs to be drawn up by the two authorities working together.

- The role of monitoring ground damage could be combined with that of a tour-guide: impacts on the ground can be lessened by preventing congregation at sensitive points such as the Saints' Graveyard, the round tower, and the churches.

- There should also be a steward/caretaker on the island, at least seasonally, with responsibility for wider supervision of the entire island as a whole.

- The Saints' Graveyard should be supervised during times of higher visitor numbers at least (e.g. April–September) to prevent visitors walking on the monuments while looking at them.

- Other historic graveyards on the island should also be monitored by tour guides or stewards to prevent the graves suffering damage. However, locals should not be made to feel unwelcome when visiting the graveyards.

- Any physical changes to the island to facilitate an increase of visitors should be carried out in accordance with section 14 of the National Monuments Act. Ministerial consent must be sought for any works that involve altering a National Monument, disturbing the ground, or restoring any part of a National Monument. This includes archaeological material of all periods, from prehistoric to post-medieval.

- It is recommended that the proposed ferry path be restricted to a single route. As part of the SEA, an underwater archaeological assessment should be carried out to ensure that no wrecks are located along the ferry route.

- The amount of visitors to the island should be capped and visitor access restricted to certain areas to ensure protection of the archaeological remains. In accordance with article 27.1 of the Burra Charter the proposed incremental increase in tourists to the site should be continually assessed with reference to the Statement of Significance, as well as the recommendations made here; if the increase in tourists to the site appears to be impacting the site in a negative way, 'it may be necessary to modify proposed changes to better retain cultural significance'.

- Visitor statistics should be collected for each season and detailed assessments of visitor impacts and trends should be carried out on a regular basis.

- It is policy to provide the greatest possible level of visitor access to all built heritage sites in the care of the OPW. At Inis Cealtra, however, its lake location and its topography mean universal access is not feasible. Due to weather and water conditions it is not always possible for boats to reach the island during adverse weather especially in the winter months.

- On Skellig Michael, access to the island is controlled by a permit system and its visitor season is dependent on weather conditions and the availability of the guide service; in the interest of its continued protection, to prevent damage to the monuments and for reasons of health and safety, access to Skellig Michael outside of the defined period is not permitted and access by private craft is also discouraged. In addition, an agreement was put in place with local boatmen to limit the daily number of visitors. We recommend that a similar system be put in place for Inis Cealtra in order to control the number of boats and people visiting the island.

- A primary objective for managing heritage is to communicate its significance and the need for its conservation to the local community and to visitors; sustainable tourism on Inis Cealtra and the island's conservation are dependent on the recognition of the importance of its cultural heritage.

- Modern interventions relating to increased visitor numbers (e.g. toilets, piers, etc.) should be located close to each other and should avoid the main group of upstanding monuments; ideally such new additions should not be visible from the monuments.

5.4 DAMAGE BY CATTLE AND GRAZING

5.4.1 Vulnerabilities

- Cattle were brought to the island in March 2016 and it was noted in April that trampling by cattle had denuded and damaged the earthworks in various places as well as generally rendering the ground uneven across the island. The ground was then very wet due to heavy rainfall and the erosion was considerable. In May it was noted that the ground was dry and so the condition of the earthworks had marginally improved, a small amount of regrowth had begun in places. The most problematic area is the D-shaped enclosure surrounding St Michael's, as well as various other earthworks around the island. The cattle have also done extensive damage to the ground externally around the perimeter of St Brigid's and St Mary's enclosures due to their tendency to follow the line of the walls.

- Heavy stocking can damage the below ground archaeology through erosion and other physical damage.

Figs 69 and 70: Damage to outer enclosure of St Michael's caused by cattle (Photos: B. McCarthy)

Fig. 71: Damage to earthwork west of round tower caused by cattle (Photo: C. O'Leary)

5.4.2   Recommendations

- If there is further heavy rainfall, the condition of the earthworks will certainly deteriorate further and so their condition should be continually monitored. It is not recommended to bring more cattle to the island as it is likely that they will cause further damage.

- A more sustainable grazing scheme is needed in order to protect the archaeology of the island e.g. not bringing cattle to the island until later in the year; choosing a breed of grazing animal that will have less ground impact. If cattle are to be grazed on the island again we recommend that they are not brought to the island until the summer season when the land is drier and there is less likelihood of heavy rainfall (e.g. May).

- The Cotswold AONB Partnership archaeology and farming guide notes that 'the best stocking regime for archaeological sites is sheep … [as] Sheep rarely cause problems unless they are overstocked' (Russell 2003, 7). Cattle have a greater weight than sheep and therefore have more impact on archaeological features, both above and below ground. Sheep usually cause less damage than cattle to earthwork banks and other historic pathways.

- The number of domestic animals on the island (no matter what the breed) should be capped to ensure minimum damage in terms of erosion of archaeological features.

- If sheep/goats are introduced to the island, caution must be exercised that they do not enter particularly archaeologically vulnerable locations that cattle cannot normally access, such as the Saints' Graveyard, where there are a large number of early medieval recumbent grave-slabs with carvings.

- Grazing should be restricted during particularly wet or dry periods due to the greater potential for ground disturbance.

- Supplementary feeding and badly located water troughs can cause ground damage and should be avoided.

5.5   GENERAL GUIDELINES ON PROTECTING INIS CEALTRA'S ARCHAEOLOGY

5.5.1   General Recommendations

- All aspects of Inis Cealtra's archaeological heritage should be protected, including immovable cultural heritage and upstanding remains e.g., monuments and earthworks; movable cultural heritage e.g., loose carved stones; underwater cultural heritage e.g., shipwrecks and submerged piers. The various aspects will be discussed individually in more detail below.

- Specialist archaeologists should be consulted throughout the process of developing the island as a tourist attraction from design through to implementation.

- Detailed archaeological surveys should be carried out throughout the process; these must be of a high standard in order to allow informed decisions to be taken.

- All impacts which may impinge on the archaeological heritage should be appropriately assessed by a suitably qualified archaeologist, including ground disturbance, impacts on the setting of the monuments and visual impacts; these should consider direct, indirect, temporary and cumulative impacts.

- Mitigation of impacts should be attempted at the earliest possible stage. Various approaches should be considered, such as avoidance, design modification and relocation where appropriate.

- Where there are apparently no archaeological monuments present but the development is large in scale, i.e. over 0.5 hectares in area and over 1km in length, it is recommended that an archaeological assessment should be undertaken as part of an EIA (see section 3.6.6 in 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage', 1999).

- Any proposed works that involve the shoreline of the island or the lake itself should account for the fact that these are zones of archaeological potential. It is recommended that an underwater archaeological assessment should be carried out by archaeologists specialising in underwater archaeology.

- It is recommended that all proposed works within proximity to any of the archaeological monuments, both on the island and in the surrounding waters, should be subject to appropriate consultation, at the earliest possible stage, with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

5.6   PROTECTION OF UPSTANDING REMAINS

As outlined below, some of the upstanding remains have been deemed in need of conservation and their vulnerabilities are described in detail below.

5.6.1   General Recommendations

- All proposed development within proximity to any of the archaeological monuments should be subject to appropriate consultation, at the earliest possible stage, with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

- All conservation works regarding masonry on the island should be undertaken in consultation with an archaeological expert in care of historic buildings.

- A full photographic record should be made throughout the process of conservation works.

- Conservation of historic masonry involving repointing and repairs to treat the problems described in the Condition Report (chapter 3 of this report) should ensure that a historically appropriate mortar is used. The existing historic mortar in each structure to be conserved should be examined in order to determine the choice of mortar. It should be borne in mind that existing historic mortar is of major value in terms of radiocarbon dating, and if such mortar is found during the course of conservation works, attempts should be made to obtain radiocarbon dates.

- It has been noted that the Romanesque sculpture in the churches is suffering due to weathering and possibly human damage. In particular spalling was noted in the doorway to St Brigid's Church. This requires conservation undertaken in consultation with an archaeological expert in care of architectural sculpture.

- Loose masonry located *ex situ* around the site should not be moved without prior permission from the NMS and OPW. It is preferable to retain such masonry in or near its current location. If it is to be moved temporarily for safekeeping while consideration is being given to its treatment, its location should be photographed and recorded prior to any movement. Archaeological consultation should be sought in regard to the treatment of such masonry.

- The arrangement and volume of rubble around the ruined buildings, enclosure walls, and other structures on Inis Cealtra is significant. The rubble in most instances has resulted from a small partial collapse. Valuable information about the building/wall/structure can be gathered from the archaeological investigation of the rubble. Rubble should not be cleared except under the direction of an archaeologist.

- Information should be provided in the associated interpretive centre on the mainland and by tour guides on the island, advising visitors not to climb or clamber on masonry while on the island.

5.6.2   St Michael's Church and Environs

In addition to the threats to upstanding remains noted in the Condition Report the following vulnerabilities are identified for the less archaeologically visible site of St Michael's Church and environs:

Vulnerabilities

- Following excavation in the 1970s, a number of gravemarkers from the children's burial ground (*cillín*) associated with St Michael's Church were left lying *ex situ* in the area. The area has since become very overgrown. Many locals are upset about this.

- The ground in the vicinity of St Michael's Church and the outer D-shaped enclosure has been eroded.

- The remains of St Michael's Church and the banks and earthworks surrounding the site are quite vulnerable to further damage from footfall, particularly as to the untrained eye they might not be easily distinguished in the landscape.

- Currently the track that enters into the *cillín* where the 'kissing stone' is located appears to incorporate the ruins of the church as a step. Masonry from the church may also be loose in the vicinity.

Fig. 72: Track that enters into the *cillín* where the 'kissing stone' (foreground) is located appears to incorporate the ruins of part of a structure as a step, likely part of St Michael's Church (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Recommendations

- A limited programme of works could be put in place with the involvement of the local community whereby any identifiable grave-markers from the overgrowth could be restored to the burial ground. These should be returned to their original location if possible, utilising any available excavation notes and with the involvement of local knowledge (see Madden 2008, 23, B&W fig.). Ground disturbance could be avoided if stones were simply placed on the ground surface, though this may not be possible depending on the character of the stones. Some of the *ex-situ* stones may derive from the church and therefore a cautious approach utilising any available records is needed if restoration of the burial ground is being undertaken. Any proposed works of this kind would require ministerial consent under section 14 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004. In undertaking any works it should be ensured that monuments such as the remains of the church itself or the 'kissing stone' are not disturbed or moved from their original locations.

- At other sites, where *cillín* burials have been recovered (e.g. Toureen Peakaun, Co. Tipperary) a Mass was held to remember the children buried in the *cillín*; a memorial service could be carried out in consultation with the local community.

- The heavy overgrowth should also be reduced in the area as it is difficult to access at present. This will necessitate archaeological monitoring in case of ground disturbance or disturbance of the monuments.

- When new paths are being developed on site, the path leading into the burial ground/'kissing stone' should not be upgraded or altered as this will involve damage to the ruins of the church that have apparently been inadvertently incorporated in the track.

5.6.3   Earthworks

Vulnerabilities

- The ground in the vicinity of St Michael's Church and the outer D-shaped enclosure has suffered erosion, as has the linear bank running north/south from St Michael's St Brigid's.
- The earthworks are vulnerable to damage from domestic animals, particularly heavy animals such as cattle (see above).
- The earthworks are vulnerable to increased footfall, especially if new paths follow the course of earthworks or if pinch points are created.
- Inappropriate grounds management may result in earthworks being damaged.

Recommendations

- The earthworks (including banks, ditches, paths, mounds, etc.) are archaeological monuments which are protected RMPs (RMP: CL029-009002-), and should be preserved and treated with the same respect as the more visually impressive stone monuments on the island.
- As noted above, it should be ensured that the number of grazing animals is capped. Sheep are preferable to cattle in terms of protecting earthworks.
- Ground should never be 'landscaped' and undulating ground should never be smoothened out.
- New paths should avoid earthworks wherever possible.
- The so-called 'pilgrims' paths' should not be used to accommodate the movement of tourists; walking on these paths should be discouraged by tour guides or visitor centre information.
- New paths should not be laid over the pilgrims' path running between two linear earthworks south of St Michael's Church. The earthworks will suffer erosion if this is the case.

Fig. 73: Pilgrims' path running east/west from St Michael's to St Caimín's (Photo: C. O'Leary)

- If new paths cross earthworks, they should be monitored regularly, particularly during busy periods or periods of drier or wetter weather.
- Given the complex nature of the earthworks, we recommend that a geophysical survey is undertaken by an archaeologist to determine the true extent and complexity of the earthworks, both above and below ground, before any works involving the earthworks are undertaken.

5.6.4 Carved Stone[26] : General Considerations

The particularly large corpus of carved stone associated with Inis Cealtra is vulnerable to greater visitor numbers and therefore requires especial care in its future management.

Vulnerabilities

- Carved stones, particularly those displaying incised decoration and inscriptions, are highly vulnerable to weathering, human and animal impact, and other factors. The carved stones on Inis Cealtra are predominantly sandstone which is subject to a range of decay mechanisms and weather-induced problems. The decoration and inscriptions on Inis Cealtra's grave-slabs and other carved stones have deteriorated somewhat since they were recorded by Macalister in 1916, and delamination (including exfoliation and flaking) is now evident on many of the slabs, especially those in the Saints' Graveyard. Delamination is a detachment process whereby the stone becomes physically separated into one or several layers; in the case of the Inis Cealtra grave-slabs this may have occurred due to freeze-thaw action.

Figs 74-6: Cross-inscribed grave-slabs suffering from delamination: left and centre in the Saints' Graveyard, with RMPs CL029-009096- and CL029-009101-; right in St Caimín's Church with RMP CL029-009106- (Photos: C. O'Leary)

- Most of the carved stones display surface cracks, while many also have deeper cracks and some are broken into two or more pieces; the broken pieces of grave-slabs in the Saints' Graveyard are being pushed some distance from each other due to the growth of grass between the breaks.

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[26] For the purpose of this section 'carved stone' refers to carved or dressed grave-slabs, plain grave-slabs, cross-slabs, cross-inscribed stones, crosses, cross-bases, Romanesque architectural fragments, and other types of stone sculpture.

Fig.77: Broken cross-inscribed grave-slab (RMP: CL029-009086-) with grass growth between the breaks, Saints' Graveyard (Photos: C. O'Leary)

- Many of the grave-slabs in the Saints' Graveyard as well as carved stones elsewhere on the island (especially the cross-slab near the Confessional) are covered in moss. This is an indication that there is excess moisture in or around the stones. This will attract more moisture to the stone surface and hold it there, which can lead to freeze-thaw action and also encourage the growth of organisms; moss also produces oxalic acid which furthers decay.

Fig. 78 Moss-covered cross-slab and cross-base east of Confessional (Photo: C. O'Leary)

- Many of the carved stones on Inis Cealtra, especially those *in situ*, are covered in lichens which can distort the view of the carved decoration/inscription by their acidic secretions, differential thermal movements between lichen and stone, or by inducing stresses into the stone as a result of dehydration and re-hydration of the lichen; these factors depend on the lichen species and the extent of cover.

Fig. 79: Cross-slab, Saints' Graveyard, with heavy covering of lichen (Photo: C. O'Leary)

- Many of the stones, especially those in St Caimín's Church, are now covered in green algae suggesting that they have been damp for a prolonged period of time; this indication of saturation should not be ignored.

- Bird (and possibly bat) faeces and uric acid are threatening some of the carved stones, especially those in St Caimín's Church. Organisms and fungi live on and in the excrement. Acids released from excrement, and the associated organisms, can encourage biological activity which causes irreversible damage and scarring to the stone; this process can also increase the porosity of the stone allowing moisture into the pores which can cause further damage if freeze-thaw action takes place. Even if the faeces are removed, the corrosive effects can continue for a long time after contamination.

Fig. 80: Cross-slabs, south wall of St Caimín's Church, note bird faeces and green algae (Photo: C. O'Leary)

- Stones are vulnerable to inappropriate management techniques e.g. use of weedkiller, moving them from their original location, and inappropriate cleaning techniques.

- Stones are vulnerable to being touched, kicked, or knocked by visitors.

Recommendations

- Any carved stones that are *in situ*, which is in their original location, should not be moved; this applies in particular to the grave-slabs in the Saints' Graveyard. All of these stones are not just 'monuments in their own right, but part of a larger monument' (see Foster 2005, 3); while their carvings have deteriorated over the past century, retaining one of the largest collections of early medieval grave-slabs *in situ* is paramount in order to better understand rituals surrounding funerary and pilgrimage activities by studying their typographical arrangement. Historic headstones and gravemarkers are also of archaeological value and should be retained *in situ*. Once any stone is removed from its original location, it loses its social and landscape context and therefore much of its cultural value (Carver 2005, 13).

- Avoid cleaning the surface of crosses, cross-slabs, grave-slabs, historic headstones and gravemarkers, or any other type of carved stones, as this will damage the carvings. Chalk, crayon, charcoal, or paint should never be used to 'bring out' inscriptions/decoration. Do not take rubbings or presses from carved stones. Do not re-carve any inscriptions or carvings.

- Many of the grave-slabs in the Saints' Graveyard have become partially or fully turfed over; this overlay may be beneficial to the preservation of the carvings and no attempts should be made to deturf the grave-slabs as this can cause damage by exposing it to the effects of weathering and footfall, as well as other potential sources of damage.

- Report any new discoveries or previously lost carvings to NMS, OPW, and the Clare County Council archaeologist. Photograph, locate its position, record, and assess its condition; returf until a decision has been made as to its future.

- Moss could be removed from those grave-slabs covered in moss, as it attracts moisture and encourages the growth of organisms. Removal of moss should be done by hand if possible or using a soft, dry brush if suitable and should only be carried out in consultation with an expert in care of sculpture. The removal process may cause further damage if the stone is particularly sensitive (e.g. if delamination has occurred) but allowing the moss to continue to grow may perpetuate the problems.

- Some lichen growth can be damaging to stonework and expert advice should be sought on their removal. However, lichens should only be removed in extreme cases since their removal will damage the surface of the stones and because some species are protected under the Floral Protection Order. If removal is deemed necessary, it should be noted that the removal process may cause more harm than the lichens are capable of causing and re-colonisation can result in a deeper level of damage.

- Some algae growth can be damaging to stone as it attracts further moisture which can result in freeze-thaw action; the algae can be removed using a soft dry brush, however, it should be noted that regrowth may accelerate following cleaning. Cleaning should only be carried out in consultation with an expert in care of sculpture.

- Biocides, including weedkiller, may harm stone; do not apply them directly to the stone or use them where they might splash onto stone surfaces.

- Removal of bird faeces from the stones in St Caimín's Church should be undertaken using a soft, dry brush and should only be carried out in consultation with an expert in care of sculpture; for health and safety reasons, protective clothing and equipment is essential. Do not use any form of water or water and pressure during the removal process as this will force the acids further into the stone and because uric acid is not readily dissolved in water.

- Never use bleach to clean the carved stones, and do not undertake regular cleaning.

- All carved stones on the island should be recorded and photographed; 3-D laser scanning and photogrammetry should also be considered to supplement surveys undertaken by Macalister (1916–17), de Paor (OPW files), O'Leary, etc. 3-D recording can allow for monitoring of decay as well as allowing the production of highly accurate replicas, perhaps for display in the interpretive centre on the mainland. Latex rubber skin replicas should not be considered as these make the stones friable.

- While it is recommended that all stones are retained in their original *in-situ* locations, if any stone is removed from its setting for emergency conservation reasons as directed by an archaeologist specialising in stone sculpture, a replica of the stone could be placed in its original location. Consideration could also be given to the creation of a replica of the unusual cross-inscribed grave-slab removed from the Saints' Graveyard by the OPW in 1982 – with inscription reading '*Coscrach Laignech*'

and displaying carvings of shoeprints, now stored in their depot in Athenry – and its placement in the slab's original recorded location.

- The Saints' Graveyard is a particularly vulnerable area and access to this area should be controlled and limited.
- Information should be provided in the associated interpretive centre on the mainland and provided by tour guides on the island, advising visitors not to rub or touch carved stones while on the island.

5.6.5   Carved Stone Set in Cementitious Material

Vulnerabilities

- *Ex-situ* carved stones have been fixed to the walls of St Caimín's Church, St Mary's Church, and the west wall surrounding the Saints' Graveyard using cementitious material and metal brackets; some of the carved stones are in several pieces (e.g. the wheeled cross-head in St Caimín's, and the cementitious material is also binding the pieces together. Also, the shaft of a high cross has been mounted using cementitious material and metal brackets west of St Caimín's Church As the condition report highlights, cement threatens the survival of the stones, causing problems such as cracking, stone decay, and powdering of the stone.
- Ferrous metal supports, bird faeces, dampness, freeze-thaw action, and algae and lichen growth (see above) are also threatening the stones set in cementitious material, particularly those in St Caimín's Church. Because the metal brackets have gotten wet, the subsequent rusting and expansion is potentially harmful to the stonework.

Fig. 81: Wheeled cross-head, south wall of St Caimín's Church, note breaks, metal supports, and cementitious material (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Recommendations

- Potentially, removal of the cement mortar could be undertaken to prevent further deterioration of the stones; however, the stones should first be assessed by an archaeological expert in care of sculpture to determine whether this is necessary to their preservation as the process of removal in itself may threaten the stones physically. The decision whether or not to remove the stones should be made cautiously and carefully, and be guided by expert advice; if removal is deemed necessary a phased approach should be adopted.
- Prior to removal of any *ex-situ* carved stone from cementitious material, a plan must be put in place for their treatment post-removal. This plan should be formulated with archaeological consultation. Scotland is the only country with a governmental policy exclusively for carved stones, published by

Historic Scotland (2005).[27] This policy includes an explicit presumption in favour of the retention, where feasible, of the physical association of a carved stone with its locality and setting; in accordance with this policy and with the Burra Charter (section 9.2 and article 10), it is advised that the carved stones on Inis Cealtra, even those *ex situ*, be retained on the island and should only be removed from the island if deemed absolutely necessary to their preservation and security. In the long term, their removal from Inis Cealtra is unacceptable; however, on a temporary basis they could be removed for treatment or exhibition locally but should be returned to the island if circumstances permit. All transportation procedures should be cognisant of the sensitive physical nature of the stones.

- Special consideration should be given to the removal of cementitious material from the carved stones that are broken into several pieces. Individual pieces may be lost if the sculpture is not reassembled following removal of cement. A report by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Quinlan *et al.* 2010, 22) opposes conjectural reconstruction but recommends that techniques be used that can be easily reversed which allows for any unforeseen problems to be easily remedied in the future. It is possible that pinpointing – using a fine mortar mix to infill the open edge of a fracture – could be used for some stones with breaks to prevent rainwater penetrating the split thus eliminating the risks associated with freeze-thaw action. Holes should not be drilled into the stones as it will result in a permanent physical disfigurement; however, in some cases it is worth considering inserting high-strength stainless-steel dowels to reconnect the pieces as these will not disfigure the outer carved faces (the 'hidden' cemented faces of Cathasach's Cross, the so-called 'West Cross', and the wheeled cross-head may be concealing and damaging carvings); for this to be effective the broken stone pieces must be at least 150mm thick so that there is sufficient strength left in the stone on either side of the inserted dowel. In general such drastic and irreversible measures should be cautiously considered.

- Never drill holes in the stones and if metal supports are to be used non-ferrous material such as phosphor bronze, stainless steel, or carbon fibre should be used as iron can rust, expand, and exert additional pressures that could fracture stone.

- Consideration could be given to constructing a shelter on the island in which *ex-situ* stone could be kept if removed from cementitious material. However, this may in itself threaten the survival of the stones if the shelter creates a microclimate (the 'greenhouse' effect) and it should be ensured that the correct environment is created for the stones and that the temperature is equal to exterior levels (Muir 2005, 185). In addition, shelters using transparent material often create reflections which can make it hard for the public to view the monuments. It should be noted that the construction of a shelter may cause ground disturbance. It should be ensured that any shelter designed is not out of keeping with the historic character of the site. In accordance with the Burra Charter, the design of the new shelter should not be to the detriment of the cultural significance of the site. The location of this shelter should be carefully considered.

5.6.6   Loose Carved Stones and Other Architectural Fragments

Vulnerabilities

- There is a wide range of *ex-situ* archaeological stone material on the island that is loose and vulnerable to damage by footfall, loss, and theft amongst other factors. In particular there are examples of such stone in St Caimín's Church and St Mary's Church.

- At present, there is also a wide range of *ex-situ* loose stones being stored in and around the OPW shed including an early medieval cross-inscribed grave-slab which is moss-covered and beginning to become turfed over; to the untrained eye it appears plain.

- A historic gravemarker is lying loose against the wall of St Mary's burial ground.

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[27] The government body responsible for safeguarding the historic environment of Scotland in general.

Figs 82 and 83: Loose masonry and a cross-inscribed grave-slab (right) to south side of OPW shed (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Fig. 84: Loose masonry to north side of OPW shed (Photo: C. O'Leary)

Recommendations

- If consideration is given to opening St Caimín's Church to the public, a plan must first be put in place (with archaeological consultation) for the appropriate treatment of these stones.
- If consideration is given to removing the OPW shed from the site, a plan must first be put in place (with archaeological consultation) for the appropriate treatment of the stones stored within and in its vicinity.
- All loose carved stones should be retained, where feasible, on the island. If any of the loose stones are moved from one location to another on the island, the previous location must be logged. As identified in the Burra Charter (section 9.3) the new location must be 'an appropriate location'. As noted above consideration could be given to constructing a shelter on site for storage of these loose stones but this in itself may threaten the stones if it creates a microclimate so any shelter designed should create the correct environment for the stones as well as having due regard for the overall character of the site.
- Removal of stone from the island is not advised unless absolutely necessary to its preservation and security.
- The historic gravemarker lying loose in St Mary's burial ground should be re-erected in this graveyard, if its original location if known.

If a decision is taken to remove any carved stones or masonry from their current contexts, the following considerations should be made:

- Stones should not be moved without the prior approval of the NMS and OPW, and ministerial consent should be sought.

- Prior to removal they should be photographed, current condition described in detail, and their location carefully recorded.
- Prior to removal, a plan must be put in place for their treatment post-removal.
- Following their removal, they may be stored in a safe place while consideration is given as to their treatment.
- It is preferable to re-locate the stones on Inis Cealtra and retain them in or near their previous locations, perhaps in a shelter as noted above.
- It may be desirable to create replicas of the carved stones for the interpretive centre on the mainland.

5.7   BURIAL PRACTICES

5.7.1   Vulnerabilities
- Unsupervised digging of graves can lead to archaeological material being damaged.
- Inappropriate styles of grave monument can visually impact the historic integrity of the site.
- Headstones are of historic value but are vulnerable to damage by people.
- There is a risk of destabilising a ruin by digging graves too close to the walls.
- As noted above, many of the graves in the cemeteries associated with St Caimín's and St Mary's have risen above ground level.

5.7.2   Recommendations
See chapter 7 (Mitigation) of the Plan for archaeological recommendations on this aspect

5.8   SHORELINE

5.8.1   Vulnerabilities
- According to the Underwater Archaeology Unit (UAU), a number of logboats have been identified near Inis Cealtra's northeast shoreline, about 40m offshore (GPS: N52 55.036, W08 26.788; Karl Brady pers. comm.); the Wreck Inventory of Ireland database lists four known wrecks in the waters adjacent to Inis Cealtra and a number of other wrecks in the general Lough Derg area. These wrecks are protected under the National Monuments Acts, 1930-2014.
- There has yet to be a detailed underwater archaeological survey of the waters around Inis Cealtra but there are likely to be more logboats located in and around the island, as well as the possibility of other vessel types and vernacular craft surviving in the surrounding waters, and possibly other archaeological sites such as jetties, waterfronts, and piers, and artefacts such as anchors and fish traps.
- Due to changes in water level, some of Inis Cealtra's monuments are now located offshore or very close to the edge of the shore as outlined in the inventory, such as a bullaun (RMP: CL029-009025-) now offshore while the 'bargaining stone' (RMP: CL029-009022-) is located very close to the southeast shoreline. The remains of a post-medieval landing stage (RMP: CL029-009026-) was located some distance inland from the water's edge on the east side of the island in Macalister's time (1916); this was not identified during the current survey but it demonstrates that the island's water levels have changed considerably overtime, even prior to the building of Ardnacrusha dam.
- Continuing changing water levels may have an impact on these and other monuments.
- The sloped ground surrounding the possible penitential station near the shoreline just north of the extant eastern pier is heavily eroded possibly due to flooding.
- Any planned works off the shore of the island or on its shore threaten an area of archaeological potential.
- Increased boat traffic, increased propeller wash action from repeat boat trips, and larger boat engines could negatively impact upon known and unknown underwater archaeology.

5.8.2   Recommendations
- The shoreline should be regarded as an archaeologically sensitive area as not only the monuments noted above but other monuments and features now unknown may be located underwater.

- The piers to the northwest and east are examples of post-medieval vernacular archaeology. Therefore any works aimed at upgrading the infrastructure of the island in terms of landing boats must treat these features with respect.
- In general any proposed works that involve the shoreline of the island or the lake itself should account for the fact that these are zones of archaeological potential. Archaeologists, including underwater archaeologists, should be consulted accordingly in any proposed works involving not only the island but the lake itself.
- It is recommended that as part of the SEA, an underwater archaeological assessment should be carried out by archaeologists experienced in both terrestrial and underwater archaeology.
- It is recommended that the proposed ferry path be restricted to a single route.

5.9   NEW AND EXISTING TOURIST PATHS

5.9.1   Vulnerabilities

- If not planned with due consideration for the layout of the archaeological monuments and potential impact caused by footfall, archaeological material may suffer damage while new paths may also impact negatively on the historic and aesthetic integrity of the site.
- Creation of new paths can cause ground disturbance, which is not permitted without ministerial consent.
- New paths which run along or over earthworks can cause damage to these features.
- The initial 50m or so of a path which was gravelled in c.2001 and which connects the northern tip of the island near the northwest pier with the main ecclesiastical complex is often very wet and mucky, and has suffered from erosion; the stretch further on, which is part of an old 'road' marked on both the 1st Ed. and 2nd Ed. OS maps and Macalister's plan (1916–17, pl. VII), generally remains dry. The path leading from the east shore to the main complex of monuments is also often wet and quite eroded.

Fig. 85: Path laid down c.2001 leading from the northwest pier to the main cluster of archaeological monuments (Photo: B. McCarthy)

Fig. 86: Existing tourist track (right) leading from northwest pier to monuments in the eastern part of the island, earthwork (left) (Photo: B. McCarthy)

5.9.2　Recommendations

Please see main recommendations regarding mitigation of effect of new paths in Chapter 7 (Mitigation) of the Plan and:

- The existing path leading into St Michael's burial ground/'kissing stone' should not be upgraded or altered as this will involve damage to the probable ruins of the church that have inadvertently been incorporated in the track.
- Section 22 of the Burra Charter identifies that any new work 'should be readily identifiable as such', and so the paths should be visually distinctive from the medieval and post-medieval pilgrims' paths and other earthworks on the island, and should not attempt to mimic them.
- Paths should be monitored for ground erosion on a regular basis, especially during periods of very wet or dry weather as well as peak visitor periods.

5.10　PIERS

5.10.1　Vulnerabilities

- Both the northwest and east piers are an integral part of the post-medieval, vernacular archaeology of the island, and may have earlier origins. Both piers have suffered the effects of weathering and are in need of repair. The north pier is also extant but is considered to date from the later twentieth century; it is now some metres from the water's edge due to silting in that area.
- The removal of the northwest and east piers would negatively impact the island's archaeology.
- Because Inis Cealtra is a National Monument, legal protection also extends to other structures and features within the curtilage of the National Monument (in this instance it may include any part of the shoreline which is submerged and the piers).
- Any construction of new piers or alteration of existing piers may cause damage to underwater archaeological features. A number of logboats and other wrecks have been discovered along the shore of the island, to the northeast, and also features have become submerged due to the rising level of the lake.
- In particular, an increase in visitors and potentially the building or upgrading of a pier on the east shore of the island may negatively impact this archaeologically dense zone where the majority of the upstanding remains are located.

5.10.2　Recommendations

Please see recommendations for mitigation of impacts due to creating new landing facilities in Chapter 7 (Mitigation) of the Plan, and:

- If an extant pier is being upgraded on the island, archaeologically speaking reuse of the modern north pier is the best choice; however due to silting this is probably not practical. The northwest pier could also be upgraded but this must be carried out in a manner that respects the historical integrity of the

monument. A new pier could also be built on the northern side of the island though this will necessitate underwater archaeological survey. In particular, the east pier is in an especially rich archaeological zone and works here should be avoided. Removal of the northwest and east piers should by no means be considered.

- Proposed new pier on north east –has been moved slightly east to avoid disturbance to existing reedbeds.

Fig. 87: North pier, erected c.1970s, in silted up area (Photo: C. O'Leary)

- In order to act in accordance with the Burra Charter, which advocates a cautious approach to change, it would be more advantageous to restore and improve the northwest pier, than to remove it. Section 15.3 of the Burra Charter states, 'Demolition of significant fabric of a place is generally not acceptable. However, in some cases minor demolition may be appropriate as part of conservation. Removed significant fabric should be reinstated when circumstances permit'.

- If the northwest and east piers are to be altered in any way planning permission, ministerial consent, and archaeological advice must be sought. Ministerial consent must also be sought for any modifications to the north pier or any construction of a new pier due to the National Monument status of Inis Cealtra.

- Section 22 of the Burra Charter advocates that any new work 'should be readily identifiable as such', and should respect and have minimal impact on the cultural significance of the site.

- Underwater archaeological survey will be required in regard to any works as the shore of Inis Cealtra, as a National Monument, is included in its curtilage.

- Any plans regarding new landing facilities in the northeast quadrant of the island may be impeded or prevented by logboat discoveries about 40m off the northeast shore and by the potential for further discoveries of historic vessels along the shoreline.

- If new access is being provided for from the northeast shore of the island, it should be ensured that any new paths leading from this new pier avoid crossing earthworks and other archaeological features and that any removal of vegetation is carried out with archaeological consultation.

5.11 MEADOW AND GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

5.11.1 General Recommendations

- In a few places, overgrowth could be addressed for the sake of public access, such as in the area of St Michael's Church and in the vicinity of the post-medieval 'cottage'. However, attempts should not be made to remove growth without consulting an archaeologist or heritage officer.

- Even small trees and shrubs can be firmly bound by their roots to material of archaeological interest. Grubbing out roots can cause serious damage, and should only be considered in special circumstances and carried out with archaeological monitoring.

  - Particular care should be taken to avoid loss of soil cover in the meadows on the island. Grazing and human footfall will impact this while weather conditions will also be a factor.

  - Existing grass cover should be maintained to protect the archaeology from erosion damage.

- Where erosion has taken place and the protective cover of soil has been broken, re-seeding may be necessary. Any necessary re-seeding of native grasses and other grassland improvement should not include soil disturbance of any kind.
- No landscaping should be undertaken: uneven/undulating ground should not be smoothened out.
- An archaeologically informed programme for such activities as grass-cutting should be put in place
- Burning should not be undertaken.
- Burrowing activities of animals such as rabbits should be monitored.

5.11.2   Tree and Scrub Management

General Recommendations

- Active management and monitoring of trees and scrub is necessary.
- The growth and spread of trees and scrub can disturb and damage buried archaeological deposits and undermine aboveground remains.
- Where necessary, trees should be cut off at ground level and the stumps treated to prevent re-growth; the stumps should be left to rot rather than dug out.
- Windblown trees can uproot soil, disturbing and destroying archaeological contexts; if possible, their trunks should be cut and the root-plate eased back into place.
- In some areas (e.g. St Michael's) saplings and woody plants should be removed by cutting off the stems close to the ground and treating them, while scrub and bracken should also be controlled.
- Some archaeological monuments, for example the bullauns in the northeastern sector of the island, are hidden in overgrowth; any works to manage tree and scrub growth on the island should be cognisant of the possibility of archaeological monuments being located and hidden in the overgrowth.
- Loose branches should be removed from the site as they can encourage rabbit colonisation.
- If new trees are being planted, ministerial consent must be sought and if granted, ground disturbance must be archaeologically monitored. In general, planting of trees should be avoided; natural regeneration is preferable.

5.12   CONSERVATION OF UPSTANDING REMAINS

On 22nd of February 2016 a condition survey was carried out to the remaining upstanding structures on the island. The weather was dry and sunny but following a number of months of very heavy rain the ground remained waterlogged in places particularly around St Michael's Church and Cillín, the Pilgrim's path leading from the pier at the north side of the island to St Caimín's Church and to the south wall and entrance to St Brigid's enclosure.

Of particular concern is the tree growth to the top of the round tower. The drone image (courtesy of Eoin O'Hagan) shows the tree/vegetation filling the opening to the top of the tower possibly growing from the south wall. We estimate that the diameter of the opening is circa 2.5m with at least 1.5m height from the top floor to the parapet of the wall. Vegetation on this scale is likely to have implications for the structure. Also of concern is the complete breakdown of pointing mortar to the flaunching on the skyward surface of the tower wall with the dislodged stones to the north east.

A further issue of grave concern is the structural integrity of the section of wall that is built up to the south elevation of Saint Caimín's church. This shows a strong lean towards the graveyard. This lean would appear to be recent. Further structural concerns are found in the bulge to the east end of the south wall to St Mary's Church and to the north west corners of both St Brigid's and St Mary's Graveyard enclosure where temporary shoring is in place.

The most widespread condition noted throughout the site was the deterioration of masonry caused by the use of cementitious material used in conservation work during the 1960s and 70s. At this time the incompatibility of the hard setting, impermeable cementitious material with softer absorbent traditional masonry was not understood. The resulting action of this incompatibility is evident in the broken bonding between the stone and mortar, open joints, failed flashing, cracked stone and displaced stone, all of which is allowing moisture to access the internal structure of the wall.

This access of moisture to the internal wall causes the washing out of smaller components of the bedding material which can lead to voids which trap larger amounts of water. When temperatures drop the water caught within the structure freezes and expands pushing stone and bedding material out of place and subsequently leading to the loss of structural integrity and the dislodgement of individual stones. This expansion also causes the loss of bond between the stone and the cementitious pointing. The exposed pockets and voids in the masonry allow greater penetration of moisture. Furthermore the structure is then vulnerable to colonisation by vegetation such as mosses which hold large amounts of moisture. Another serious issues relating to the use of cementitious material is its rigid nature which bonds the wall into a single rigid unit unlike a lime mortared structure which facilitates the shrinking, expansion and movement of each individual stone. The restricted cementitious bound stone structure can then fail across a large area which can often lead to the collapse of sections of wall.

Open joints provide a micro climate for the development of mosses and lichens. Once established they cause moisture retention problems and provide the conditions for higher order plants such ferns and ivy whose root systems to thrive.

The ferns, mosses and grass hold water in the structure, catch dust in the wind which along with decomposing vegetative material produce nutrients and a growing medium for further plant development. Ivy (Hedera helix), blackberry (Rubus fruticosus), ferns and grass are noted to the surviving structures. The roots of the ivy and blackberry travel deep within the wall structures to access moisture. This growth causes damage by pushing its way between joints eventually expanding the joint and pushing masonry out of place which in turn allows further ingress of moisture.

The survey notes the following areas of high concern for the long term survival of the remaining structures on the island.

The conditions outlined above are evident to the walls of St Brigid's church where the pointing/flashing has lost its bond with the stone, in St Mary's Graveyard where the flashing to the surrounding wall are hollow beneath, to the vergers of the church and to St Caimín's where the entire lower half of the west façade appears to be saturated. There is also bellying and leaning to some sections of the enclosing wall to the graveyard.

Furthermore, here within the walls of St Mary's and St Caimín's, cementitious material has been used to secure the medieval crosses and carved stone the walls of the churches. Those in St Mary's are particularly vulnerable to freeze thaw action as it is unroofed and the flashing to the wall tops may be compromised. Any shift or movement in the walls may result in cracking of the mortar.

Ferrous metal supports were also noted to some of the gravemarkers in St Mary's and St Caimín's. Exposure of this metal to the elements will eventually lead to corrosion. With corrosion the metal expands to such a degree and with such force that it causes cracking to the material in which it is bedded, be that cement or stone.

It is certainly advisable to remove cementitious material and clamps from cross-slabs, crosses and masonry secured to walls, but consideration must also be given to whether they will be retained on the island or transported to a new visitor centre. Usually it is best to avoid removing monuments from their context of course, the question is then how to protect them as well as display them without building anything new on the island. There are also pieces of masonry and sculpture lying loose in St Mary's church and stacked in the southwest corner as well as elsewhere around the site. One possibility might be just to retain them on-site in a way that is non-invasive and will not damage the monument, possibly using clamps as on the ogham stones in UCC. However, this may be visually displeasing and may involve drilling holes in the church walls. Another option would be to display the stones in the new visitor centre though this involves removing them from the site. Putting them into storage such as in the OPW depot in Athenry where they may never be seen by the public again should probably be avoided. However, it must be remembered that they are in the care of the OPW. Note also that some of the pieces, like Cathasach's high cross, have been shattered into several pieces which have been cemented back together, if the cement is removed will this cross remain in pieces? I think all of this needs to be addressed and a policy put in place as the sculpture on the island is one of its most exceptional aspects. Note in St Caimín's they are also susceptible to dampness, bird faeces, etc.

Another issue is that a historic grave-marker is lying loose against the wall of St Mary's burial ground and should be re-erected safely. Finally, grave-markers from the children's burial ground in the vicinity of St Michael's Church are lying loose in an overgrown area. They were never replaced after the excavation of the 1970s ended, upsetting many locals. These should be put back in place utilising de Paor's excavation notes and possibly with the involvement of the local community. The heavy overgrowth should also be reduced in the area as it is difficult of access at present.

There should be a piece in this section addressing the vulnerabilities of the *in situ* grave-slabs and other pieces of *in situ* sculpture located (predominantly) in the Saints' Graveyard. The surfaces of the stones, and their carvings, are highly vulnerable. The carvings are already deteriorating due to weathering, and foot traffic will cause further deterioration. Potential threats should be addressed, i.e.: climatic and environmental considerations (weathering, lichen/moss growth, etc.), human interference (intentional: vandalism, theft; unintentional: foot traffic, lack of awareness of best practice, etc.), etc.

Another issue relating to vegetation is the nesting material placed by the rooks in the openings to the round tower. It is not known if there is further material within the tower. In the event of a lightning strike this dry decayed material is a fire hazard.

A more detailed description of the conditions may be found in chapter 3 of this report.

In Ground and Underwater Protection

It is an overriding principle of the Plan, that in any physical changes, interventions, adjustments developments on Inis Cealtra that no ground will be disturbed unless absolutely necessary, and on a once off and limited basis. Where deemed absolutely necessary such work will only be carried out with the required ministerial and other consents and permissions, following a detailed method statements being approved and the only actioned in the presence of a qualified archaeologist who shall have authority to halt work at any time. This includes any development work carried out off near shore or offshore where underwater archaeologists must be present.

5.12.1 Protecting Inis Cealtras Character, Integrity and Authenticity.

Policy should be created which outlines how to protect Inis Cealtra. The Policy needs to first address vulnerabilities, sensitives and potential threats to archaeology, i.e.: climatic and environmental considerations (weathering, wind damage, rising lake levels, etc.), human interference (intentional: climbing walls, vandalism, theft; unintentional: foot traffic, lack of awareness of best practice, etc.).

The shoreline also needs to be regularly assessed, especially near holy well the bargaining stone.

➢ An archaeologically informed programme to regularly monitor and preserve the condition of all the archaeological monuments should be put in place.

➢ All aspects of the island's history must be protected and promoted, from prehistoric to modern times. All archaeological fabric is of importance and material from later periods as well as medieval periods must be maintained.

➢ Nothing should be removed from Inis Cealtra or changed unless absolutely necessary to its maintenance/survival.

➢ If in doubt about how to proceed with any work on the island, contact a conservation/heritage officer; OPW should also be informed.

➢ Any changes that involve removing, demolishing or changing any aspect of the site require ministerial consent.

➢ Conservation work must conform with international standards of conservation practice.

➢ Keep intervention to a minimum: conservation and reconstruction to be limited to the minimum required to achieve structural integrity and public safety.

➢ If monuments are to be removed from modern settings such as cementitious material, their treatment post-removal should first be planned.

➢ Attention should be given to loose masonry and sculpture stacked in churches.

➢ All intervention needs to consider the setting, spirit and feeling of the site and have a thorough knowledge of historic building methods and use of authentic building materials.

➢ Effective monitoring and periodic reporting of the state of conservation of the site. All features should be monitored regularly to identify environmental decay, mechanical and applied decay.

➢ Discovery of artefacts and portable objects: It is a legal requirement for any person who finds any object to report this find within 4 days of their discovery to the Director of the National Museum of Ireland.

Related to preserving and maintaining the sculpture (cross-slabs, grave-slabs, crosses, etc.):

➢ No attempt should be made to clean any of the sculpture.

➢ No chalk or paint should be applied to the sculpture.

- Should be monitored regularly to identify environmental decay, mechanical and applied decay.
- Buried stones: do not attempt to deturf.
- Control foot traffic in Saints' Graveyard.
- Possibility of putting hay over *in-situ* slabs in winter to stop frost damage (economical).
- Consider laser scanning or photogrammetry (unintrusive) for inventory purposes.

Related to preserving and maintaining the historic graveyards:

- This includes: Saints' Graveyard, St Caimín's Cemetery and St Mary's Graveyard.
- Should be monitored regularly.
- Headstones must not be moved or interfered with in any way.
- Headstones should not be cleaned, nor chalk/paint applied.
- Photographic inventory should be maintained.
- New headstones should be sensitive to the historic character of the graveyard so as not to impair the visual integrity of the site.

5.12.2   Ongoing Monument Protection

Consideration should be given to introduction of some kind of keep back (beyond touching distance) approach to discourage touching of the monuments -whether by subtle knee wires (as used in an art gallery) or simple indication regime-using simple ground treatment (to delineate a no step (and no touching) zone being introduced in proximity to the more vulnerable, most visited monuments on the island. Any system must avoid ground disturbance.

5.13   PRE DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES

The entire island of Inis Cealtra (and its immediate marine border) is as a sensitive archaeological zone and a designated National Monument. Therefore before any physical works are undertaken or steps to increase numbers of tourists are implemented, the pre project procedures set out below must be followed.

- A geophysical survey of the entire island should be undertaken by an archaeologist to determine the true extent and complexity of the earthworks, as well as other underground features. For the protection of the earthworks and underground archaeology, active management and monitoring of trees, scrub, and overgrowth is necessary; an archaeologically informed landscape management plan should be developed.
- An underwater archaeological survey of the shoreline and in the general vicinity of the island should be carried out by archaeologists specialising in underwater archaeology paying particular attention to the logboats, piers, bullaun stone located offshore and any submerged features (see Chapter 7 of the main Plan, Section SP for further recommendations).
- Any changes that involve removing, demolishing, or changing any aspect of Inis Cealtra will require ministerial consent and should not be carried out without archaeological consultation.
- Each proposed alteration on Inis Cealtra would be subject to a series of procedures that would be largely dictated by the nature of the specific development and by Ministerial consent at project stage. It is important that time b built into any project timeline to allow these procedures be followed assiduously
- It should also be noted that the designation of Inis Cealtra as, inclusion within a possible serial World Heritage Site would bring with it certain additional obligations in terms of planning and environmental policies.
- In the case of future developments, the following may have to be undertaken but the discretionary system is not bound to any rigid guidelines/process:
- Identify the location of areas of known archaeological deposits and other areas of potential interest. Geophysical surveys may be necessary.
- Draft a full pre-works archaeological survey – an Archaeological Assessment which will include an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) – and a detailed specification for each phase of works in advance of any work commencing on the site.
- Any major developments will be subject to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) in accordance with the relevant EU directives. This requires a developer to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement setting out details of the project and the likely significant effects on the environment,

including archaeology. It will set out any measures to be taken to avoid or moderate any adverse effects.

➢ Every effort should be made during the planning process (and later during construction) to avoid direct impact on known archaeological features.

➢ Planning applications should be accompanied by sufficient plans, drawings, and particulars to show how the proposed development would affect the character of the site.

➢ The Planning and Licensing Unit of the National Monuments Service can provide general advice on planning applications.

➢ Apply for Ministerial consent from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs as required under National Monuments legislation.

➢ The National Monuments Service will advise the Minister and the planning authorities on planning developments; the Monument Protection Unit of the NMS deals with notices given of proposed work. In the case of underwater archaeology, the Underwater Archaeology Unit (UAU) advises on development applications.

➢ The Minister can recommend archaeological conditions be attached to grants of planning permission or recommend refusal of permission by the planning authority.

➢ No work shall commence unless and until the Minister has issued consent under Section 14 of the National Monuments Act 1930, as amended.

➢ If consent is granted, all works will be archaeologically monitored by formally licensed archaeologists. For underwater archaeology, a dive and/or detection device licence is required if diving on or surveying for underwater archaeology. The developer bears the cost of all archaeological investigations.

➢ Conditions of planning permission requiring a monitoring presence ensure that if remains of archaeological significance are disturbed during the work, they can be recorded and any necessary emergency action taken. The archaeologist will have the authority to suspend or direct work.

➢ Where avoidance of archaeological features cannot reasonably be achieved, an appropriate programme for archaeological mitigation and/or test trenching and a system for excavations should be drawn up. Excavations are regulated through formal licensing and consent systems. Excavation can only be carried out by licensed archaeologists under Section 26 of the National Monuments Act 1930, as amended.

➢ All known monuments and archaeological features, or parts of, which will be affected should be excavated and recorded in accordance with agreed methodologies.

➢ The Minister should be made aware of any previously unknown monument discovered during works.

➢ In the case of unforeseen circumstances, plans may need adjustment and further licences may be required.

➢ The archaeologist should inform the developer of the likely condition of the site at the end of excavation, and about any special requirements for backfilling the excavations so that the developer may plan accordingly. The archaeologist may need to prepare an archaeological appraisal of techniques to be used in construction operations.

➢ The necessary finance should be available to fulfil the post-excavation requirements of the Minister including the conservation of archaeological artefacts and the provision of scientific analyses and dating as well as the production of archaeological reports.

5.14   URGENT WORKS

The following section is referred to in the main VSTDP Document Also

5.14.1   Summary

Of most urgent concern is the tree/shrub growth to the top of the round tower. Drone imagery (courtesy of Eoin O'Hagan) shows the tree/vegetation filling the opening to the top of the tower possibly growing from the south wall. We estimate that the diameter of the opening is circa 2.5m with at least 1.5m height from the top floor to the parapet of the wall. Vegetation on this scale is likely to have implications for the structure. Also of concern is the complete breakdown of pointing mortar to the flaunching on the skyward surface of the tower wall with the dislodged stone to the north east.

It is strongly advised that the top of the tower is accessed with a view to removing the plant-life and carrying out rebedding of the top courses where necessary and re-flaunching the exposed wall top.

Also of concern is the structural integrity of the section of wall built up to the south elevation of St Caimín's Church which shows a strong lean towards the graveyard. This would appear to be a recent condition and should be addressed in the immediate future. Other structural issues noted is a bulge to the east end of the south wall of St Mary's Church and some problems with the north west corners of the enclosure walls to St Brigid's and St Mary's Churches.

The other main issue to the structures on the island is that a significant amount of repairs have been carried out using cementitious mortar in the 1970s and that these repairs are now problematic leading to water ingress to the internal wall, trapped moisture open joints, vegetative growth within the structure with the ensuing associated problems. Cementitious mortar has also been used to secure medieval carved crosses and stones to the sides of St Caimín's and St Mary's churches. For the long-term survival of the structures it is recommended that if possible, without causing damage to the stone, that these inappropriate repairs be removed and replaced with repairs in lime-based mortar.

The following conditions to the upstanding remains are in need of immediate attention and require Ministerial Consent and should be carried out to best international conservation practice:

➢ A tree/shrub growth fills the opening to the top of the tower which is possibly growing from the south wall and is compromising the wall structure. There is a complete breakdown of pointing mortar to the flaunching on the skyward surface of the tower wall with dislodged stone to the north east. In the interest of health and safety and the conservation of the monument the situation needs to be addressed in the immediate future. In the meantime it is recommended that a 2 metre setback (demarcated by mowing, ground markers and signage be imposed immediately to ensure members of the public do not encroach near to the wall where falling stones my present a danger.

➢ The structural integrity of the section of wall built up to the south elevation of the St Caimín's Church needs to be examined. There is a strong lean towards the graveyard. This would appear to be a recent condition. A bulge to the external south wall of St Mary's Church east end is noted as needing examination as is the enclosure walls to St Caimín's, St Brigid's and St Mary's where it is thought that cattle may be responsible for the damage to the corners.

➢ The historic grave marker resting against the wall of St Mary's should be re-erected.

➢ An archaeologically informed decision should be made regarding the loose cross sculpture and architectural fragments in St Mary's Church.

➢ An archaeologically informed decision should be made regarding the loose cross sculpture and architectural fragments in St Caimín's Church.

➢ All monuments require active management to control the colonisation by vegetation. This should involve bi-annual treatment and in the case of ivy a more direct approach may be needed involving the cutting of the stem and injecting of herbicide into the root. No plant should be forcibly removed from the upstanding remains or from anywhere on the island.

5.14.2 Works Required To Monuments

The following is a list of monuments on Inis Cealtra most in need of immediate attention, protection and conservation. Some general suggestions are made; however, it is recommended that, given the unique nature of every monument, a customised conservation plan should be drawn up by specialist archaeologists and conservationists for each individual monument/group of monuments before any conservation work is undertaken and especially before any changes are made to the island to accommodate a greater number of visitors. Detailed archaeological surveys should be undertaken prior to the commencement of any conservation work; these must be of a high standard in order to allow informed decisions to be taken. A full photographic record should also be made throughout the process of conservation works.

Earthworks and Pilgrims' Paths: An emergency conservation plan for the earthworks, historical paths, and penitential stations should be developed immediately by archaeologists. The monuments are being eroded by cattle and visitors to the island, as well as climatic factors, and a rise in visitor numbers threatens the monuments further. The most problematic area is the D-shaped enclosure surrounding St Michael's and the bank running north/south from St Michael's to St Brigid's. Cattle have also done extensive damage to the ground externally around the perimeter of St Brigid's and St Mary's enclosures. Efforts should be made to protect the ground: the cattle should be removed from the island immediately; the earthworks should be monitored on a continual basis; some native grass reseeding may be necessary but should not involve soil

disturbance. An archaeologically informed sustainable and restrictive grazing scheme should be formulated immediately (see Chapter 7 of the main Plan, Section GR for further recommendations).

Medieval Carved Stones: An emergency conservation plan for the carved stones should be developed immediately by an archaeologist specialising in stone conservation, taking into consideration the different forms, locations, current states, etc. Many of the carved stones are suffering the effects of erosion, dampness, freeze-thaw action, footfall, and delamination, especially the in situ grave-slabs in the Saints' Graveyard. Some bear cracks and breaks, and some are moss-, algae- and lichen-covered. Elsewhere cementitious material, ferrous metal brackets, and bird/bat faeces and uric acid threaten their survival, especially those in St Caimín's Church and St Mary's Church. All carved stones should be recorded and photographed immediately in their current state. Sculpture which is located in situ should be retained in their original locations. Regarding the ex-situ stones, potentially, removal of the cementitious material could be undertaken; however, the stones should first be assessed by an archaeological expert to determine whether this is necessary to their preservation. Prior to removal of any ex-situ carved stone from cementitious material, an archeologically informed plan must be put in place for their treatment post-removal (see Chapter 7 of the main Plan, Section CS for further recommendations).

Carved Stones In and Around OPW Hut: The ex-situ stones in and around the OPW hut are at risk of being damaged or lost when the OPW hut is removed. Archaeological consultation should be sought in regards to their treatment. They should not be moved without prior permission from the NMS and OPW. It is preferable to retain them in or near their current location. If any stone is moved from one location to another on the island, its current location must be logged and photographed prior to any movement (see Chapter 7 of the main Plan, Section CS for further recommendations).

Round Tower (Walls): Any conservation works involving the round tower, churches, or enclosure walls should be undertaken in consultation with an archaeological expert in care of masonry and historic buildings.

5.15   MEDIUM-TERM WORKS

Medium term should not be longer than 2-3 years.

Upstanding Monuments

➢ **Saints' Graveyard:** As part of its Conservation Plan, entry into the graveyard should be supervised and controlled, and walking on the medieval grave-slabs prevented (see chapter 2and Chapter 7 of the main Plan, Section CS for further recommendations).

➢ **St Michael's Church and Environs:** The foundations of St Michael's Church and the surrounding area are vulnerable to damage by overgrowth. A number of grave-markers from the children's burial ground (cillín) were left lying ex situ in the overgrown area. As part of its Conservation Plan, the heavy overgrowth should be reduced. This would require ministerial consent under section 14 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004 and would necessitate archaeological monitoring in case of ground disturbance or disturbance of the monuments. Any identifiable grave-markers could be restored to their original locations if possible using a cautious approach and avoiding ground disturbance (see section 1.1 of chapter 1 for further recommendations). In association with any such reinstatement of grave-markers a suitably solemn and respectful ceremony of respect should be convened on the island for those interred in the cillín.

➢ **Cottage:** The remains of the post-medieval 'cottage' are vulnerable to damage by overgrowth. As part of its conservation plan, the heavy overgrowth should be reduced. This would require ministerial consent and would necessitate archaeological monitoring.

➢ **Romanesque Sculpture:** The Romanesque sculpture in the churches is suffering due to weathering and possibly human damage (e.g. spalling in the doorway to St Brigid's Church). This requires conservation undertaken in consultation with an archaeological expert in care of architectural sculpture.

➢ **Loose Historic Headstones:** A historic gravemarker lying loose against the wall of St Mary's cemetery should be re-erected safely. Other loose post-medieval gravemarkers, or pieces thereof, in St Caimín's and St Mary's cemeteries should be addressed, as should the possible pillar stone lying loose in St Caimín's cemetery.

➢ **Rising graves:** Some graves in Inis Cealtra's cemeteries have risen above ground level and entry into all of the cemeteries should be restricted. These graves should be continually monitored to ensure that their surfaces do not become worn exposing archaeological material.

Piers

All extant piers are in need of repair. If they are to be altered in any way planning permission, ministerial consent, and archaeological advice must be sought (see Chapter 8, Section SP for further recommendations).

Fences enclosing/protecting Monuments

Replacement of existing wooden fences, now rotted, should be considered in order to continue to protect the monuments which they enclose. This would require ministerial consent and would necessitate archaeological monitoring. If erosion has taken place in the vicinity of the fences, it may be necessary to reposition the new fencing (see section 1.8 of chapter 1 for further recommendations).

6 ACCESS TO INIS CEALTRA - ENGINEERS REPORT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Inis Cealtra is an archaeologically preserved site located on Lough Derg, within the watercourse of the River Shannon. At present, visitors reach the island by boat from Mountshannon using the small pier which is located close to the northern tip of the island. However, the prevailing winds often make it difficult and unsafe for the vessel to use this berth throughout the year. Another small pier is located on the eastern side of the island, but this is often unreachable due to shallow waters.

6.2 SCOPE

This technical note reflects on the feasibility of building a sustainable and safe pier for waterway access to the island as part of the overall study being undertaken for the development of the site. A number of options are examined and presented with respect to the location and the pier structure, taking into account the site restrictions and the archaeological importance of the island to be discussed with the stakeholders.
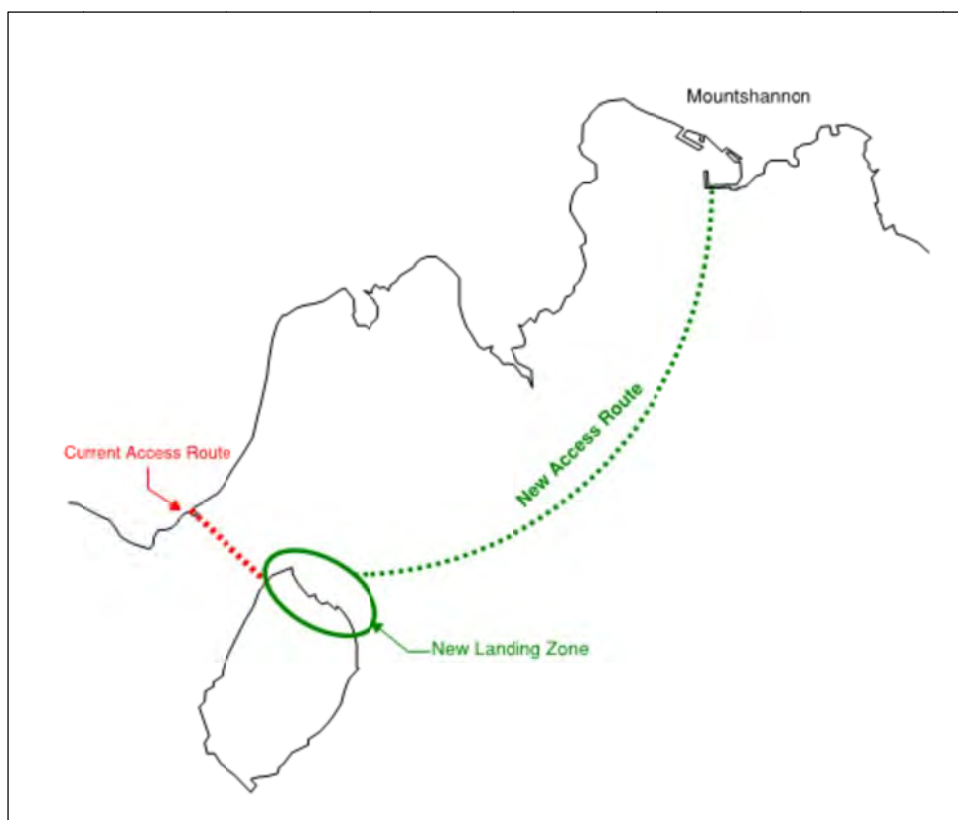

Figure. Current and Proposed Access Routes to Inis Cealtra

6.2.1 Embarkation

Mountshannon is a village in East County Clare which lies on the western shore of Lough Derg. It is well served by both national and regional roads which connect it to a number of motorways – the M6 to the North, the M18 to the West and the M7 to the South East. Public transport links are already in operation with a bus route in service from Limerick. Further bus and rail connections operate between Limerick and various locations throughout the country, including (but not limited to) Dublin, Galway and Cork. The existing infrastructure in the area has sufficient capacity to cater for any additional traffic generated by the creation of a new visitor's centre and redevelopment of the island.

The village of Mountshannon itself has a sizeable extant walled harbour that has been developed over recent years and contains a sizeable car park capable of catering for a number of cars and coaches simultaneously. This harbour is the primary launchpad for existing tours to the island, with a couple of independent boat services currently transporting people across the lough. The largest boat currently in operation is a 50PAX vessel, which takes ca. 20mins to traverse the 2km from Mountshannon to Inis Cealtra. Targeted consultation conducted on the market potential estimates that once the island has been developed, visitor numbers could reach up to 70-80,000 per annum. In the likelihood that the majority of these visitors will visit over the summer months (May – August), a similar vessel making ca. 6-8 trips would be capable of catering for the expected number of daily visitors.

6.2.2 Restrictions

The landing/embarkation and crossing restrictions are mainly related to the meteorological conditions, the water levels and the bathymetry around the island.

According to the historical data recorded from Met Eireann's meteorological station at Shannon Airport (closest station to the site), the prevailing winds come from the South-West and West. Therefore, the eastern side of the island is more suitable for accommodating a pier as the need for additional works to protect the berthing area is minimised.

With regard to the water levels, a previous study for a marina development in the wider area (Flood Risk Desk Study, Ballina Marina, Arup 2008) indicates a highest flood level of 35.2m OD Poolbeg (32.5 OD Malin). This level allows for 700 mm due to climate change and 500 mm of freeboard. This level can be used as the preliminary design crest level for any new access structure.

Furthermore, there is no detailed bathymetric data available for this area. Data extracted from a very old bathymetric map of Lough Derg, however, shows that there are shallower waters on the north-eastern side of the island. A site specific bathymetric survey would be required to be undertaken once the project has progressed beyond the feasibility stage.

The new waterway access will be designed to accommodate a design vessel with a capacity of 50 - 60 passengers which is considered sufficient for the needs of the local touristic market. A typical river cruise boat of similar capacity is shown in Figure 2.

The main characteristics of a typical boat for which the access has been designed (see also Figure below) are as follows:

- <u>Length:</u> 14 m
- <u>Width:</u> 4.50 m
- <u>Draft:</u> 1.15 m
- <u>Pax;</u> 50-70

Pax Cat. 4	70
Pax Cat. 3	50
Hull Type	Mono
Hull Length	13.85 m
Hull Beam	4.50 m
Freeboard at boarding	0.79 m
Loaded Draft	1.15 m
Light Air Draft(mast folded)	3.35 m
Material	Aluminium
Light displacement	13 T
Fresh water capacity	100 L
Black water capacity	2*70 L
Certification	223B

Figure. Main Characteristics of typical design vessel – Mono 70pax (ODCmarine.com)

6.2.3   Locations- Landing On Inis Cealtra

A number of locations were considered from an engineering point of view

North West Shore

The existing pier which is currently used by visitors as the main access is located on the NW shore (see Figure 3) and is the point at which the main path to the archaeological site starts (see Figure 4). This pier has a length of approximately 20m and consists of mass concrete. Although the pier has been repaired over the years, it is visibly damaged on the exposed SW side while the crest is cracked. This would present a hazard for potential visitors.

Figure. Current Primary Access to Holy Island on North West Shore

East Shore

The existing pier on the eastern coast is rarely used by the current tour boats due to water depth constraints, given the shallow waters surrounding the pier. We understand it s used by the OPW boats for access and work. This area is immediately adjacent to the historical preserved monuments of the island.

Due to the proximity to the archaeological area, the risk of damages during construction to any potential immersed archaeological remains should carefully be assessed.

Figure. Existing Pier Access on East Shore

North East Shore

A suitable new location for the pier has been identified to the SE of the northern tip of the island as shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7.

The main advantage of this location is that it is sheltered from the prevalent South-West and West winds which would facilitate the safe navigation of boats arriving to the island. Additionally, this option presents the shortest navigation route to Mountshannon port.

In the absence of bathymetric data, it has been suggested that the most suitable location is at the eastern extent of the proposed zone. This is based on satellite images from Google Earth which show vegetated sandbanks in the vicinity of the northern tip. As noted elsewhere the reed beds associated with these shallows are significant from an ecological (Natura impact) point of view and avoiding them has meant the selection of a a location for the proposed landing point at a safe distance from them. It is reasonable to assume that the river bed is steeper moving southwards considering the prevailing current circulation pattern which is from SW to NE. The increased water depths here thus allow for a pier of optimal dimension.

The presence of immersed archaeological elements in the area should also be carefully assessed.
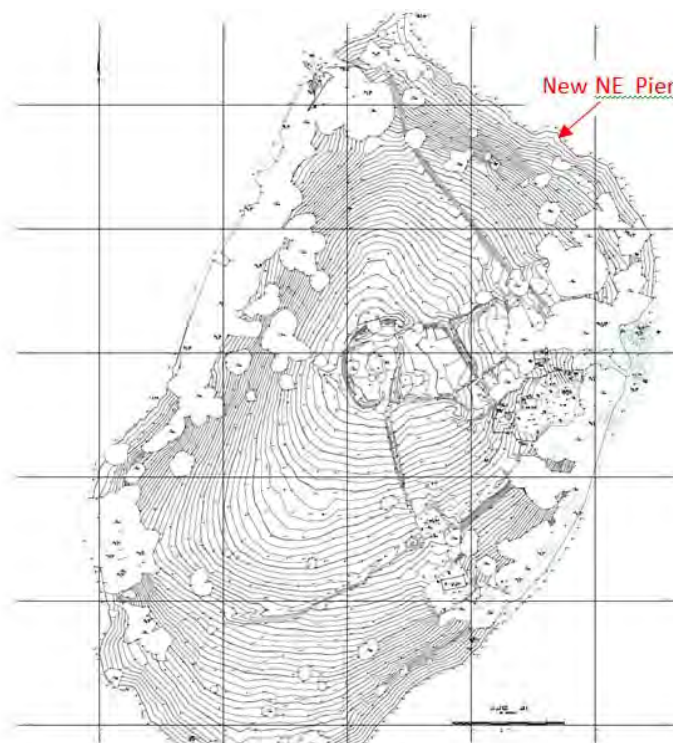

Figure. Proposed New Pier Access Location on North East Coast

6.3   DESIGN OPTIONS

Three different design options for the structure of the pier have been considered at high level. These are as follows:

6.3.1   Regenerate and Use Existing North West Pier

This option entails the refurbishment of the existing pier. The deck level could be raised up to 35.2 m OD using the existing structure as a base. This refurbished pier would have to be protected on its SW side from wave overtopping and scour by a rock revetment of appropriate size.

On the NE side a floating pontoon and an aluminium gangway would be installed. For protection from prevailing winds it is likely however that a landing facility here would require installation of rock revetment. By extending the pier and installing additional pontoons new berthing areas could be created in the future as further discussed in the following section. However, upgrading the pier would not be an ideal solution as it would remain exposed to the prevailing winds resulting in rough water conditions. This would have a negative impact on the usability and safety of the structure.

6.3.2   Upgrade Access at Existing East Pier

Although this location is more sheltered against South-West wind action, the existing pier at this location is rarely used by boats. This solid structure is approximately 8.8 m long and 1.3 m wide.

In this option, the pier would need to be extended to allow for the design boat to berth. Some proposed options for the extension of this structure are:

- Concrete block extension
- Groyne extension
- Timber pile pier extension

Due to the shallow water in this area and the proximity to the archaeological centre of the island this option could be seen to have fewer advantages. Access to the structure from land is also constrained due to the steep slope of 1:6 and the sequence of approach from this pier could be considered less interesting than from the other two locations proposed.

6.3.3   Create a New Landing Point on the North East Shore

In this option, it is proposed to design a new access on the North East shore of the island. The new access would require additional design of a short path on land to link to the existing path which leads to the archaeological site. The new connection should take into consideration the landscape. Thus, natural materials (such as stones, rocks and timber) could be used to minimise any potential visual and environmental impact. In addition as described elsewhere new low woodland planting would reduce the impact of the landing point and disembarkation of visitors from the monuments.

In terms of the structure, the first option to consider would be the installation of floating pontoons connected to the mainland using an extended gangway. The advantage of the floating pontoons is that they can facilitate vessel berthing under the full range of water levels (provided that there is sufficient water depth). The feasibility of using a gangway connection would primarily depend on the combination of the near-shore bathymetry and the range of water levels. Low water levels might restrict the functionality of the pontoons or even damage them. Therefore, bathymetric data is necessary to determine whether it would be feasible to install the pontoons at an appropriate distance from the shore, i.e., in a distance not exceeding 10-12m so that a gangway could be used. Pontoons of 3m x 25m (total length) would be the minimum required in order to accommodate the design vessel and provide safe pedestrian access to the shore

In the instance that the near-shore water depths are not sufficient, it would be necessary to build a structure perpendicular to the shoreline which would be connected to the pontoons via a gangway. This structure would enable sufficient depths to be achieved in order for the floating pontoons to function properly. The pontoons could either be installed as an extension to the structure or in parallel with an overlap, with the gangway connected to the side of the structure as shown in Figures 8 and 9. The latter arrangement would reduce the overall length of the scheme.

In order to minimise the visual impact, it is proposed that materials such as timber and natural rocks would be used for building the structure. The structure would have a minimum width of 3m at the crest level of 35.2 m OD for both safe access and construction purposes while its length would be dependent on the bathymetric data and the water depths required for the floating pontoons to function properly.

Two structural options, which would run perpendicular to the shoreline, have been considered:

6.3.4   Rock Groyne

The crest of the groyne could accommodate a timber deck with a concrete slab used as a base. In the case of parallel arrangement, the level of wave protection on the lee side of the groyne would be improved.
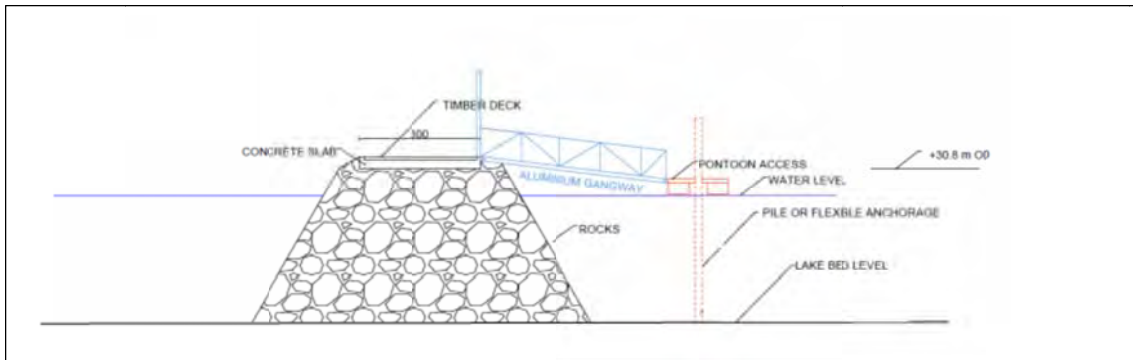
Figure. Rock Groyne Structure Option

6.3.5   Timber Frame and Piles

An alternative option could be a pier structure using timber deck and frame, piled on the river bed. Suitable ground conditions would be required for piling so geotechnical data provided by site investigations would be needed in this case. This option would be less intrusive than the groyne considering that it has a minor footprint and does not interfere with the water currents and the associated sediment transport. It must however be noted that this lack of intrusion means that this option could be considered less safe than the rock groyne alternative as it offers little to no wave protection and, possibly, a less stable disembarkation process.
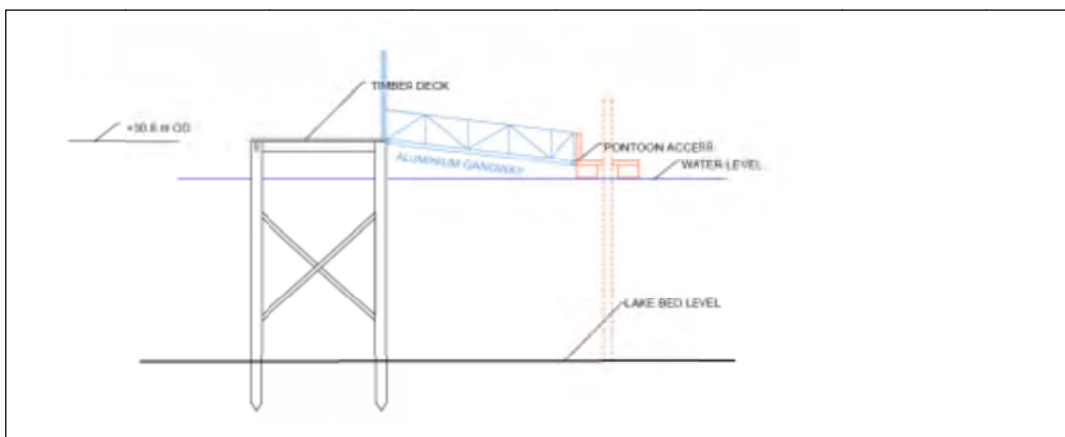
Figure. Timber Frame Structure Option

6.4   APPRAISAL OF LANDING/ EMBARKATION OPTIONS

	Cost		Technical		Impact	
Option 1. Maintain & Refurbish Existing North-	● ●	Reduced costs by making use of existing ? Revetment	–	Location is suitable, but not safe	● ●	Less impact unless wind sheltering can be achieved without extensive works (eg

West Access		cost not considered here				revetment).
Option 2. Upgrade access at East pier	● ●	Intermediate costs- some reuse of existing ?	-	Location is safer. It would require regrading to introduce a pathway from shore to monuments area.	●	Worst impact of all 3 options on archaeology - and visitor experience ?
Option 3. New structure on North-East shore	●	Totally new structure. More costly?	● ●	Location is safer from wind and viable from draft & depth P O V.	●	More intrusive than option 1, but could be designed to minimise impact and screened with planting.

● ●	Good	●	Neutral	-	Possible negative

6.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the options presented above and requirements described in previous sections, creation of a new access on the NE shore of the island is recommended. The new structure should have sufficient length to allow the berthing of the ferry.

6.5.1   Preparatory Studies

All works on or near Inis Cealtra will need to be designed in accordance with requirements for site that are National Monuments and protected structures in advance of onsite surveys, design or construction.

The required minimum water depth for this development is 3.5 meters below the low water level for a return period of 1 in 1 years which would have to be assessed in the subsequent studies.

7 MARKETING AND PROMOTION DETAIL

7.1 GLOBAL MARKET SEGMENTATION

7.1.1 Culturally Curious

Who are they?

They choose their holiday destinations carefully and are independent 'active sightseers' looking to visit new places. They want to 'do a place' and are unlikely to return for some time once they have visited it. They travel as couples or on their own. If they have children, they have grown up or have left home. Higher proportion of single adults and couples, fewer family groups, slightly biased towards females.

Typically Culturally Curious travellers are out to broaden their minds and expand their experience by exploring new landscapes, history and culture. They are curious about everything and are delighted to discover the world for themselves once again. Most Culturally Curious are around 40 or over.

What they want from a holiday

They're interested in all that a place has to offer and they want it to be authentic. They won't choose a brand or visit a place just to follow the herd. This is their own exploration and they really want to cover everything, to 'do' a place. The Culturally Curious love to discover history and always find ways of getting real insight. They are looking to encounter new places and experiences that are out of the ordinary. The Culturally Curious like to feel that they have not only broadened their mind but also immersed themselves in a place, giving their senses a holiday too - the sights, the sounds, the smells, the tastes. They enjoy connecting with nature and getting off the beaten track. They like people to show an interest and educate them - to feel they've connected. They really appreciate personal guides.

What they don't want

To party, to see things they've seen before, to do packages or 'laid on' activities, to be told what to do.

Most likely to be seen doing

- Exploring landscapes - Megalithic or early Christian relics
- Castles, gardens, museums, country houses and art galleries
- Literary tour, UNESCO site, visitor centre, browsing for books to deepen their experience
- Enjoying good food and wine, particularly local specialities
- Unique local festivals and events
- Gentle exploration of the place - walking, cycling, pleasure boating

Holiday behaviour - how long and where?

Culturally Curious are most likely to stay in a hotel, self-catering accommodation or a B&B as long as there's a lot to see. They will usually choose somewhere with access to scenery and good walks. They are three times more likely to take long breaks than average but they also take more short breaks than average, both at home and overseas. They are unlikely to return for a while unless a destination is truly diverse, preferring to move on to new discoveries.

What are they likely to pay more for?

- Something that is out of the ordinary
- Superior service - "people recognise me by name"
- Interested - "knows me, knows what I want"
- A human guide that offers real insight into the history of a place
- Environmentally friendly features

What makes a great food and drink experience?

- Get the best table and be well looked after
- Peace and quiet with good wine and food
- Classic Irish menu with a twist
- Good quality food because "I'm looking after my health"

- Personalised service where people call me "Mr……"
- Mid morning breakfast "so I can sleep in…"

Media habits

- Their use of social media is growing
- Medium to heavy TV which drives some online search
- Lighter internet usage - preference for search rather than social media
- Newspapers are prominent
- Radio is important.

Culturally Curious: Subtle differences between the markets

Across the four main markets, patterns and key motivations for the Culturally Curious segment are more alike than different.

- GB Culturally Curious like authenticity, are independent and want to immerse themselves in a place. They like connecting with people, nature, exploring cultural sites and having fun. Won't choose a place to visit to just follow the crowd.
- The US Culturally Curious are significantly more interested in things that are new to them, mind broadening and knowledge building. Will have done research and selected their preferred experiences. While U.S. Culturally Curious are more likely to be interested in feeling special or spoiled, this is still well below 50% of them.
- German Culturally Curious are slightly more likely to be interested in peace and quiet, active outdoor and coastal areas. They have less need for the 'wow' factor, so less superlatives are needed, and a greater focus on broadening the mind. There is also less focus on gourmet food. They, along with the French, have absolutely no interest in meeting and having fun with other tourists.
- French Culturally Curious show slightly less motivation for "fun and laughter" and "soaking up the atmosphere" - suggesting a very slightly more serious traveller than the global average. They are more into breath-taking wild beauty of the landscape and are also a little more likely to want to have heard something about a place before they go. They are slightly less likely to want to be physically healthier. Like the German Culturally Curious, they have no absolutely interest in meeting and having fun with other tourists.[28]

7.1.2 Great Escapers

Who are they?

They are often couples, approximately 30 years old, some with babies or quite young children. Most are in serious need of time out from busy lives and careers. They are specifically interested in rural holidays and travel very much as a couple or family. Great Escapers are on holiday for a break, to get physical with nature, and to reconnect with their partner. More likely to take part in slightly more strenuous, but not extreme, exploration. More interested than other segments in getting connected to nature especially the more remote and exciting places.

What they want from a holiday

To connect with the landscape, to feel the earth beneath their feet, to soak up the beauty. A sense of history, of their place in the vastness of nature - they want to feel part of it. Against this kind of backdrop Great Escapers can spend real quality time bonding with those closest to them. They can rebalance themselves and take stock of their lives, concentrating on what's important to them. They appreciate peace and quiet between activities… the point is the trip itself. It's 'down time', it's being off the beaten track, it's a great escape. But it's important that getting away from it all is easy enough - they want the 'wow' factor without too much effort. Most importantly, Great Escapers want to come home refreshed and revitalised, their batteries recharged.

What they don't want

To make connections with other people - locals or others on holiday - they don't need to, they're there to be with each other. They don't like crowded places.

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[28] Fáilte Ireland, Growing International Sales, Global Segmentation Toolkit

Most likely to be seen doing

- Escaping to breath-taking landscapes
- Actively exploring more remote and exciting places, on foot or by bicycle
- Standing enveloped in each other's company on the top of a mountain or cliff
- Visiting a castle or a landmark
- Gentle exploration of the place - walking, cycling, pleasure boating
- Relaxed meal of fresh local produce, or a fun evening in an authentic pub

Holiday behaviour - how long and where?

They are likely to take more short breaks than the average visitor. Ireland offers plenty of what they're looking for.

What are they more likely to pay more for?

- Superior service - "people recognise me by name"
- Interested - "knows me, knows what I want"
- Something that is out of the ordinary
- Things that take the hassle away

What makes a great food and drink experience?

- An authentic experience in a local hotel or pub
- Great quality local food at a value price
- A good food quality children's menu
- A high energy breakfast and the option of bringing a picnic lunch
- A quiet room so I can unwind from my hectic schedule
- An Irish cheese board by the fire at night

Media habits

- Light to medium TV users, due to busy schedule and young children. Programmes choice often dictated by children
- Internet is key source of information for work and leisure
- Light-medium users of social media
- Light-medium use of newspapers; catching up on news online is popular
- Cinema visit every 2-3 months, often with children

Great Escapers: Subtle differences between the markets

A very similar pattern is visible across countries, with feeling connected to nature and spending time with my other half as 'classic' Great Escaper traits.

- GB Great Escapers like connecting with landscape, having quality time together and more likely to stay in self-catering accommodation in rural Ireland. Want 'wow' moments without effort and enjoying downtime off the beaten track.
- US Great Escapers value flexibility and freedom to change plans. They prefer to move at their own pace in an unrestricted way.
- German Great Escapers have an even greater focus on nature and getting rural than Great Escapers from other markets. They have less need for the 'wow' factor - they are more interested than others in simple nature and rural Ireland. The most marked difference from their global counterparts is the lack of importance of 'gourmet' food.
- French Great Escapers are less active when outdoors than Great Escapers from other countries. To balance that, they want more culture. They are less exploration focussed. French Great Escapers are less motivated than their US counterparts on a site being famous. [29]

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[29] Fáilte Ireland, Growing International Sales, Global Segmentation Toolkit

7.1.3 Nature Lovers

Who are they?

The oldest of the segments, the majority of Nature Lovers are over 55. A typical Nature Spotter would be about 60, retired, and on holiday with their partner. It's all about taking it easy, getting some peace and quiet, and maybe doing a little gentle exploring.

What they want from a holiday

Simple pleasures make Nature Lovers happy. A quiet rural retreat is perfect, offering natural beauty for miles around, in an environment of peace and tranquillity. They like to explore their surroundings gently, at a relaxed pace and in their own time. Nature Lovers are comfortable with the familiar, so their holiday is about getting away from the house, to somewhere that replenishes their souls.

A desire for peace and quiet is grounded in the need to connect with nature and with those they care about. They are looking for contentment and together-alone time. For this Nature Lovers will go off the beaten track to experience the beauty of a stunning landscape firsthand. They also appreciate a no-hassle, efficient and knowledgeable personal service when they travel. They like being recognised and valued in a local shop or restaurant.

What they do not want

The out-of-the-ordinary has limited appeal for Nature Lovers, unless it's a surprisingly lovely vista. They also don't tend to go for lots of all-inclusive opportunities. Nature Lovers aren't highly social, preferring to stay away from large groups, noise or laid-on entertainment.

Most likely to be seen doing

- The gentler pursuits, where beauty is accessible,
- A gentle walk in the countryside,
- Sightseeing around the local country house and gardens,
- Taking advantage of their accommodation and all it offers at no extra cost,
- Browsing in local craft shops, and
- Relaxing, sitting in the garden or in a tea room.

How long and where?

Nature Lovers are more likely to stay in a range of accommodation depending on the kind of holiday they're on. These include hotels, self-catering, camping and B&B's. They are more likely to take longer breaks, as they have the time to do so. In particular they go away for four to seven nights, but also take holidays of eight or more nights. Nature Lovers tend to want to stay closer to their home country. They are less likely to travel overseas and will need a strong reason to travel outside their comfort zone or to take on the hassle of overseas travel.[30]

7.2 SWOT ANALYSIS (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES)

The Life at the Lake – A Roadmap for Experience Development and Destination Marketing 2014-2017 plan included a SWOT for the whole of the Lough Derg area[31]. Those which are of particular relevance to Inis Cealtra & the Mountshannon area from this document are highlighted in italics below with others identified specifically in relation to Inis Cealtra also included under each heading.

Further detail on the Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats pertinent to Inis Cealtra are set out in the main THE PLAN.

7.3 CASE STUDIES

This section profiles visitor attractions that provide examples of best practice relevant to Inis Cealtra. Attractions have been included where these have a particular innovative aspect that is of relevance to Inis Cealtra, including:

- Clonmacnoise, County Offaly
- Bru na Boinne, County Meath

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[30] Life at the Lake – A Roadmap for Experience Development and Destination Marketing 2014-2017, page 39
[31] Life at the Lake – A Roadmap for Experience Development and Destination Marketing 2014-2017, page 7

- Innisfallen Island, County Kerry
- Scattery Island, County Clare
- Garnish Island, County Cork
- Blasket Centre, County Kerry
- Skellig Experience, County Kerry
- Mashowe, Orkney Islands, Scotland

7.3.1   Clonmacnoise, Shannonbridge, County Offaly

Clonmacnoise (*Cluain Mhic Nois*) was founded by St. Ciarán in the mid-6th century. The site includes the ruins of a cathedral, seven churches (10th -13th century), two round towers, three high crosses and the largest collection of Early Christian graveslabs in Western Europe. It is thought the site had a population of 1,500 to 2,000 by the 11th Century.

The site, which is managed by the OPW, is located 21km from Athlone on the N62 or 20km from Ballinasloe on the R357. The attraction includes a visitor centre with an audio-visual display on the history of the Clonmacnoise and archaeological artefacts (including the original stone crosses brought indoors for preservation), information on the people who would have lived and worked there, and a section on the ecology of the Shannon and the flora and fauna of the wetland bogs. The visitor centre is open all year with the average visit lasting 1.5-2 hours and last admission 45mins before closing.

Opening hours:
- November - Mid March: Daily 10:00 - 17:30.
- Mid-March - May: Daily 10:00 - 18:00.
- June - August: Daily 09:00 - 18.30.
- September - October: Daily 10:00 - 18:00.
- Closed 25th & 26th December.

Admission Fee:
- Adult : €7.00
- Group / Senior : €5.00
- Child / Student : €3.00
- Family : €17.00

The visitor centre includes toilets, car & coach park and restaurant/tea-rooms for 30-40 people. The café is run as a concession by a company with a café in Athlone.

Guided tours are offered with a duration of 30-45 minutes and a maximum number of 55-60.

Visitors do not have to tour the site on a guided tour and are free to walk around.

There is no cap on visitor numbers or coach numbers at Clonmacnoise. The visitor centre would be roughly aware of the numbers of coaches arriving as they are pre-booked through the Tour Operator scheme; however if a coach arrived unannounced and the site was deemed to be at capacity by the visitor centre staff then they would be asked to wait until the site was quieter. [32]

The audio-visual presentation lasts for 24 minutes, with seating for 55 and is presented in Irish, English, German, Italian, Spanish and French. Interpretation would be limited to the visitor centre with no signage placed through the site.

Seasonal Events include the Annual Church of Ireland Open-Air service on the last Sunday in July and the Annual St. Ciarán's Pattern Day on the third Sunday in September.

The Shop at Clonmacnoise offers a range of heritage gifts and visitor information.

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[32] Telephone conversation with Michael Lacken, Visitor Services, OPW, 12.04.16

Ownership and Management

Clonmacnoise is owned by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and is managed by the Office of Public Works (OPW).

Finance & staffing

Clonmacnoise operate with four full-time staff and up to 15 in the summer season. Guides are employed by OPW Heritage Services.

Marketing and Promotion

Visitor numbers have been gradually increasing from around 138,000 in 2010 to 149,000 in 2014 and 153,000 in 2015.

Many visitors come from France (15%) and Germany (15%) with other large numbers from America (15%), Ireland (15%), Britain (10%) and other Mainland Europe countries (30%), particularly Spain, Holland and Switzerland. Coach tours make up a high proportion of the overall visitor numbers.[33]

The primary coach tour company would be Abbey Tours with a variety of nationalities, followed by CIE Tours who bring predominantly American visitors. Other operators include Service Reisen (German), Hotels and More (UK plus Japanese), All About Travel (bring special interest markets e.g. Japanese who have a strong interest in monastic culture), Irish Welcome, and Limerick Travel (mainly German).

Clonmacnoise is promoted on many websites including: Heritage Ireland site[34], Discover Ireland[35], Offaly Tourism[36], Sacred Destinations[37], Monastic Ireland[38], roundtowers.org[39], Ireland.com[40], Megalithic Ireland[41], and Lonely Planet[42].

The visitor centre is also promoted on Facebook[43].

Figure 1: Clonmacnoise

Source www.iwai.ie

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[33] Conversation with Joy, Clonmacnoise, 3rd February 2016
[34] http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/midlandseastcoast/clonmacnoise/
[35] http://www.discoverireland.ie/Arts-Culture-Heritage/clonmacnoise-monastic-site/16281
[36] http://www.offalytourism.com/businessdirectory/http-www-heritageireland-ie
[37] http://www.sacred-destinations.com/ireland/clonmacnoise
[38] http://www.monasticireland.com/historicsites/clonmacnoise.htm
[39] http://roundtowers.org/clonmacnoise/index.htm
[40] http://www.ireland.com/what-is-available/attractions-built-heritage/churches-abbeys-and-monasteries/destinations/republic-of-ireland/offaly/articles/clonmacnoise/
[41] http://www.megalithicireland.com/High%20Cross%20Clonmacnois.htm
[42] http://www.lonelyplanet.com/ireland/county-offaly/clonmacnoise/history
[43] https://www.facebook.com/visitclonmacnoise

Figure 2: Clonmacnoise

7.3.2   Brú na Bóinne, County Meath

Brú na Bóinne[44], which means the 'palace' or the 'mansion' of the Boyne, refers to the area within the bend of the River Boyne which contains one of the world's most important prehistoric landscapes. All the monuments are situated in rural settings in Co Meath where people live, farm, work and play. It is located close to the east coast of Ireland approximately 40 km north of Dublin city and about 8km west of Drogheda.

Brú na Bóinne Visitor centre is situated on the opposite side of the river from the monument and visitors are shuttled by bus from the Centre to the monuments. The Centre enjoys a wonderful vista of the River Boyne overlooking the core of the World Heritage Site.

The archaeological landscape within Brú na Bóinne is dominated by the three well-known large passage tombs, Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth, built some 5,000 years ago in the Neolithic or Late Stone Age. An additional ninety monuments have been recorded in the area giving rise to one of the most significant archaeological complexes in terms of scale and density of monuments anywhere in the world. The Brú na Bóinne tombs, in particular Knowth, contain the largest and best preserved assemblage of megalithic art in Western Europe.

In the mid 1980's, pressures on Newgrange from visitor numbers was such that closing the site to access by the public was being considered due to concerns about the integrity and security of the monument. Tourism to the site and in the area around Newgrange had created problems not only in terms of wear and tear on the monument but also in terms of traffic congestion, litter, illegal trading and the need for increased security, parking and toilet facilities.

In 1985 The Royal Irish Academy called together an ad hoc committee to consider what was to be done. The key element of the group's strategy was the provision of a Visitor Centre as a means of focussing and controlling

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[44] Conversation with Clare Tuffy, Manager Bru Na Boinne World Heritage Site, 15.04.16

visitors. Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre opened in 1997 with its primary purpose being the control of numbers and flow of visitors to Newgrange and Knowth. Bus Éireann provides a twice daily bus service from Drogheda to the Visitor Centre making it accessible by public transport.

Since the opening of the Visitor Centre, the monuments have been returned to a rural setting, the number of jobs for the local community has dramatically increased and the monuments have become a year round attraction, extending the season in the area.

Opening Hours

Newgrange is open all year round except for December 24th, 25th, 26th, and 27th. Knowth is open from Easter to 16th October.

Average Length of Visit:

- A Exhibition: 1 hour.
- B Exhibition and Newgrange: 2 hours.
- C Exhibition and Knowth: 2 hours.
- D Exhibition and Newgrange and Knowth: 3 hours.

Opening Times:

- Feb - April; Daily 09.30 - 17.30.
- May: Daily 09.00 - 18.30.
- June - Mid Sept: Daily 09.00 - 19.00.
- Mid - End Sept: Daily 09.00 - 18.30.
- October: Daily 09.30 - 17.30.
- Nov - Jan: Daily 09.00 - 17.00.

Admission Fee:

- A   Adult: €3.00, Sen/Group: €2.00, Child/Student: €2.00, Family: €8.00
- B   Adult: €6.00, Sen/Group: €5.00, Child/Student €3.00, Family: €15.00
- C   Adult: €5.00, Sen/Group: €3.00, Child/Student: €3.00, Family: €13.00
- D   Adult: €11.00, Sen/Group: €8.00, Child/Student: €6.00, Family: €28.00

Tickets

- All groups of 15 or more must be pre-booked.
- Tickets for individuals and small groups are sold on a first come first served basis and cannot be reserved in advance.
- It is advisable to arrive as early in the day as possible to avoid the disappointment of finding all the tours for that day sold out.
- Last admission to the Visitor Centre is 45 minutes before closing.

Leaflet/Guide book is available in English, Irish, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese.

The Centre offers facilities for visitors such as tourist information, shop, a restaurant with seating for 110, picnic area and parking.

The audio-visual presentation lasts for 7 minutes, with seating for 30 and is presented in Irish, English, German, Italian, Spanish and French.

Guided tours are offered with a duration of 1hr15 minutes at Newgrange and a maximum of 24 people; 1hr 15 minutes at Knowth with a maximum number of 48 people.

All admission to Newgrange and Knowth is through the Visitor Centre, there is no direct access to these monuments. Visitors are brought from the Visitor Centre to the monuments by shuttle bus.

Ownership and Management

The site is managed on a day to day basis by the Office of Public Works. A Senior Conservation Architect and staff, based at OPW Headquarters in Trim, are responsible for conserving and maintaining the fabric of the monuments and their setting. The National Monuments Service of OPW manages the operating budget as well as marketing and recruitment. The National Monuments Service of the Dept. of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht deals with policy decisions, liaises with UNESCO and co-ordinates the Management plan for the World Heritage Site.

Finance & staffing

All access to the monuments is by guided tour. OPW staff at Brú na Bóinne include a Visitor Services Manager and administration staff, supervisory and tour guides at the monuments and in the Centre, bus drivers, office and grounds maintenance staff. There are 30 full time workers employed by OPW at Brú na Bóinne with an additional 12 people employed in high season. There are also 37 permanent and 37 seasonal staff altogether including the people who work for the Shop/Tourist Office, Tearooms and for the cleaning contractor.

Marketing and Promotion

Table A2.2-1: Visitors to Brú na Bóinne

	2009	2010*	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre Only	40,406	37,071	43,820	42,483	44,990	48,735	44,705
Knowth	51,941	49,414	51,962	54,350	51,138	58,883	69,057
Newgrange	130,083	122,785	132,760	132,649	133,616	139,173	150,125
Complimentary Ticket Holders	(7,238)	(7,187)	(12,069)	(11,103)	(11,211)	(13,101)	(14,842)
OPW Free for Schools Scheme	(7,504)	(7,775)	(8,624)	(8,847)	(7,915)	(9,343)	(9,144)
Heritage Card Users	(11,196)	(9,271)	(9,700)	(8,448)	(10,854)	(10,646)	(13,171)
Total Number of Visitors	222,430	209,270	228,542	229,482	229,744	246,791	263,838

Source: Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre

In 2014, 263,838 visitors came to Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre including over 9,144 school children under the 'Free Admission for Schools' scheme operated by the OPW as shown in Table 1 above. Of these visitors, 150,125 went to Newgrange, 69,057 went to Knowth and the rest (44,705 or 17%) remained in the Centre only.

School tours are free entry.

Around 60% of visitors are independent travellers and 60% coach tours.

The visitors are roughly 50% domestic and 50% overseas with the overseas market being mainly North America and UK plus Germany and Italy with lots of French school tours too.

The primary coach tour company would be Abbey Tours with a variety of nationalities, followed by CIE Tours who bring predominantly American visitors. Other operators include Golbal Gateway, Mary Gibbons Tours and Dualway.

Coach tours are limited to 4 per day for Newgrange and 5 per day for Knowth – this is the principal means of limiting numbers to the sites and to reduce impacts.

Clonmacnoise is promoted on many websites including: Heritage Ireland site Discover Ireland, Ireland.com and Lonely Planet. The visitor centre is also promoted on Facebook.

Inisfallen Island, Killarney, County Kerry

Home to Innisfallen Abbey, Innisfallen Island is located within and is part of Killarney National Park at the northern end of Lough Leane and 1.5km from Ross Castle. The monastery was founded in 850 by St. Finian the Leper and occupied for around 850 years during which the Annals of Innisfallen were written detailing the early history of Ireland. Brian Boru traditionally was said to have been educated at Innisfallen. The site was in use until 1594 when Elizabeth I took possession of the abbey. The oldest of the structures on the site dates to around the 10th Century with the majority dating to the 10th Century.

Innisfallen Island (21 acres/8.5 ha) is accessed by boat from Ross Castle which is located approximately 1.5km from Killarney, the nearest large settlement and a significant visitor destination.

Fifteen boats are licenced by DAHG to take passengers onto the lakes in Killarney with most travelling to Innisfallen however only five boats stop on the island with four operating from Ross Castle and one from Ring Pier. The boats operate from 1st March to the end of October. They have a capacity of 12 passengers. The journey takes around 10 minutes with the skippers acting as guides to the national park and island. They would normally wait at the island for a return journey with most visitors staying for around 30 minutes. Some visitors would take a picnic and stay for 1.5-2 hours. There are no official visitor numbers or indicative annual ones as numbers vary from year to year. Some days between March and May could only have 2-3 on each boat with some days in the summer seeing 150+ visitors going to the island.[45]

There is no entrance fee to the island. There is a fee of €10 per adult or €25 per family of 2 adults/2 children for the return boat trip. If a coach party wishes to visit the island the boatmen would require two hours' notice but can accommodate a group. Schools and groups would be charged €60 per boat.

Visitor infrastructure on the island is restricted to the landing stage/pier and one interpretative panel providing information about the history of the island as a monastic site. There is no formal pathway or trail – a rough woodland path enables visitors to walk around the island. The surface is not maintained aside from strimming of overhanging brambles as required.

Ownership and Management

Innisfallen Island is owned by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and is managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the department. The monastic ruins on the island are a national monument in the care of the Office of Public Works (OPW).

Vegetation on the island is maintained by the presence of deer. Many visitors have left positive comments on TripAdvisor in relation to the deer who would appear to be an attraction in their own right.

Guiding services are provided by the boatmen.

Finance and staffing

There are no specific costs associated with Innisfallen as it is a low maintenance site.

Marketing and Promotion

The USP of Innisfallen is as a quiet, undisturbed, peaceful setting in the middle of Lough Leane with important monastic ruins.

While no specific data is kept regarding visitor profile anecdotally visitors are split between Irish (30%), British (30%), German, Dutch & USA (30%) and the remainder from other countries.[46]

The island is promoted through the Discover Ireland website[47]; the Killarney National Park website[48]; and the Killarney town website[49].

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[45] Telephone conversation with Charlie Fleming, Lough Leane boatman, 28.01.16
[46] [46] Telephone conversation with Charlie Fleming, Lough Leane boatman, 28.01.16
[47] http://www.discoverireland.ie/Arts-Culture-Heritage/innisfallen-island/70955
[48] http://www.killarneynationalpark.ie/Innisfallen/Innisfallen%20Island.htm
[49] http://www.killarney.ie/brief-history/inisfallen-island-amp-monastery/

Lessons for Inis Cealtra

The Regional NPWS Manager, Pat Dawson, said of Innisfallen:

'The beauty of Innisfallen Island is that it is protected within the boundaries of Killarney National Park, has Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation, with a protected National Monument in the care of OPW. It does not attract huge numbers and is never overly-crowded. We would be careful to ensure that it will retain its current status and we would not encourage mass-tourism.'[50]

Figure 3: Innisfallen

7.3.4   Scattery Island, Kilrush, County Clare

Scattery Island (*Inis Cathaigh*), located 1.5km from Kilrush in County Clare, is a monastic settlement that was founded by St Senan in the 6th Century. There are ruined churches and one of the highest round towers (37m/120ft) in Ireland. While the island was captured several times in 9th Century Viking raids it was later recaptured by Brian Boru. The remains of the monastery consist of six churches including Teampall Naomh Mhuire (Cathedral of Saint Mary), situated next to the round tower. Visitors can also view the ruins of O'Cahane castle, an 18th Century battery built to defend against a French invasion, and the ruins of the island village – home to the island community, the last of whom left in 1978. The islanders were river pilots and expert currach handlers.

Kilrush is located on the Loop Head Peninsula and is on the Wild Atlantic Way. The popular seaside destination of Kilkee is approximately 13 km away and the county town of Ennis is 43 km away.

Scattery Island (72ha/180acres) is open to the public from 28th May to 2nd September every day from 10.00 to 18.00. Last visitor admission is 45minutes before closing with the average visit lasting 1-2 hours. Access to the island is via a 2.5km boat trip from Kilrush Marina which takes around 10-15 minutes. Visitors can avail of guided walking tours and birdwatching. A cottage on the island provides visitors with information on the history, flora and fauna of the island.

There are gravel pathways and signage on the island which is maintained by a full-time caretaker employed by the OPW.

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[50] Email response from Pat Dawson, Regional Manager NPWS, 27.01.16

The ferry is operated by Griffins Boat Hire (www.dolphindiscovery.ie) who also offer dolphin watching, with the boat able to accommodate 32 passengers. Ferry price €12 adult, €7 child. There is currently one ferry service provider. The average stay on the island would be around 45 minutes.

Ownership and Management

The majority of the Island was purchased by the state in 1991 and is held in trust for the state by the Minister for Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The OPW's National Monuments Service is responsible for the care and maintenance of the monastic archaeology on the island while guided tours of the island and visitor services are provided by OPW Heritage Services. Development works undertaken by Dúchas, funded under the National Development Plan 2000-2006, included:

- upgrading of landing facilities to improve access for ferry operators,
- conversion of a cottage on the island for use as an information centre,
- provision of toilet facilities,
- maintenance workshop,
- pathways, and
- conservation work on the built heritage.

Dúchas also developed the Scattery Island Centre at Merchants Quay in Kilrush which provides visitors with an exhibition about the buildings on Scattery and the wildlife in the area.

Guides are available on the island throughout the season and are employed by OPW Heritage Services. School tours from Ireland, UK or Mainland Europe are welcomed free of charge.

Finance & staffing

Given the relatively low numbers of visitors (2,000 p.a.) and the cost of providing guides and caretaking services the site is thought to operate at a loss however this is underwritten by the OPW. There is no admission fee to the island.

The current visitor centre in a cottage on the island is being upgraded with a new exhibition being designed and installed.

Marketing and Promotion

Visitor numbers are thought to be in the region of 2,000 a year which are dependent on tides and weather. The attraction has benefited from the association with the Wild Atlantic Way destination brand. Visitors are thought to be majority Irish (60%) with overseas visitors from North America (20%), Britain (10%), Germany (5%), Other Mainland Europe (4%), Other (1%).

Scattery Island is promoted through the Heritage Ireland website[51], Discover Ireland website[52], Clare Tourism website[53], as well as the ferry operator's website[54].

The island is also promoted on Facebook[55].

Lessons for Inis Cealtra

Anti-social behaviour is deterred by guides on the island. Camping is prohibited as it is a National Monument.

Figure 4: Scattery Island

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[51] http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/shannonregion/scatteryislandcentre/
[52] http://www.discoverireland.ie/Arts-Culture-Heritage/scattery-island/62090
[53] http://www.clare.ie/attractions/view/islands-16/scattery_island-17.html
[54] http://www.discoverdolphins.ie/scattery.html
[55] https://www.facebook.com/scatteryislandvisitorcentre

7.3.5 Garnish Island, Glengarriff, County Cork

Garnish Island was purchased and transformed by John Annan Bryce who purchased the island from the War Office in 1910. The Gardens of Illnacullin on the island were designed by Harold Peto and continued by Murdo Mackenzie in the 1920's. The island was donated to the state in 1953. In addition to Bryce House, which has been restored in 2015 and is open to the public, structures on the island include the Martello Tower (an original feature of the Island dating from the 1805), a Grecian Temple on the western side, the clock tower adjacent to the walled gardens and the Italian Temple and Italian Tea House (or Casita) which are in the famed Italian Gardens.

Visitor facilities include tea-rooms (capacity 40 inside and 20 outside), wheelchair accessible toilets and pathways on the island. The island is accessed by ferry from Glengarriff where there is free visitor parking. Access to the ferries is via a wheelchair accessible ramp.

Figure 5: Garnish Island Gardens

The ferry service to the island is provided by three companies. The last ferry landing is one hour before closing time. The average length of visit is 1-2 hours. The 1.5km trip takes around 10-15 minutes.

- Harbour Queen Ferries[56], established in 1970, who provide a service every 30mins from Glengarriff Pier between April 1st and October 31st. The company operates three ferries which are purpose built enclosed waterbuses, see Figure 14 below. All vessels are licensed by the Department of Marine and carry life-jackets and safety equipment. All crew are trained in first-aid and safety procedures. The trip includes a visit to Seal Island to view the seal colony. The three ferries are licensed to carry 45, 50 and 56 passengers. Competitive rates are available to larger groups and there are discounts for families, students and OAP's. Special times can be arranged for coach groups of private parties.
- Blue Pool Ferries[57] – operate two 33 seater ferries and one 12-seater outboard. They charge €10 per person and leave every 30 minutes.

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[56] www.harbourqueenferry.com
[57] www.bluepoolferry.com

- Lade Ellen – operated by Ellen's Rock Boat Service

Opening hours for the island are:

April:	Mon-Sat 10.00 – 17.30 & Sun 13.00 – 18.00
May-September:	Mon-Sat 10.00 – 18.00 & Sun 12.00 – 18.00
June:	Mon-Sat 10.00 – 18.00 & Sun 11.00 – 18.00
July & August:	Mon – Sat 09.30 – 18.00 & Sun 11.00 – 18.00
October:	Mon-Sat 10.00 – 16.00 & Sun 13.00 – 17.00

Figure 6: Harbour Queen Ferries

Ownership and Management

Garnish Island is owned by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and the OPW's National Monuments Service is responsible for the care and maintenance of the site.

Finance & Staffing

In addition to the manager of the island, employed by OPW, there would be one person employed to run the tea-rooms from April to October, 2 additional people in the tea-rooms from June-August, and 6 gardeners. Additional people will need to be employed for the 2016 season to manage the restored Bryce house. [58] Guides are employed by OPW Heritage Services.

Ferry Fee (Harbour Queen)

- Adults   €12
- Seniors   €11
- Students   €10
- Children   €6
- Children under 5 Free

Ferry Fee (Blue Pool Ferry)

- Adults   €10
- Children (under 16)   €5
- Children under 6 Free

Island Admission

- Adults   €4
- Groups of 20+ & seniors   €3
- Family (2+2)   €10

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[58] Telephone conversation with Finbar O'Sullivan, Manager, 29.01.16

- Children   €2

Cost to replace one of the ferries €1.5-2m

Marketing and Promotion

Visitor numbers for Garnish Island were around 60,000 in 2015. This is up from 55,000 in 2014 and 49,000 in 2013[59]. Visitor numbers are weather dependent and due to the poor summer in 2015 numbers for 2016 are expected to show a significant rise. Busy summer days can see 6-800 people visit the island.

Visitor source are estimated to be 35% Irish, 40% French/German/Dutch, 10% UK, 10% other Mainland Europe, 10% North America. However this can vary from year to year. In terms of demographics there is thought be a wide spread of ages with, as can be expected, more children during the summer and more retired people in September.

A few school groups come to the island but this has been decreasing in recent years due to concerns over insurance.

The island is promoted on its own website www.garnishisland.com, the Heritage Ireland site[60], the Glengarriff site[61], and the ferry company sites. The island is also promoted on Facebook[62].

Lessons for Inis Cealtra

The best way to address anti-social behaviour is through passive surveillance by local people. In addition Garnish Island use motion sensor alarms within the buildings to alert the caretaker if anyone breaks in.

Figure 7: Map of Garnish Island

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[59] Source Fáilte Ireland
[60] www.heritageireland.ie/en/south-west/ilnacullin-garinishisland/
[61] www.glengarriff.ie/amenities/garinish-island
[62] https://www.facebook.com/visitgarnishisland

7.3.6 Blasket Centre, Dingle, County Kerry

OPW *Ionad an Bhlascaoid*/The OPW Great Blasket Centre tells the story of the people, history, heritage and culture of the Blasket Islands, which were inhabited until 1953. The centre aims to promote and preserve the heritage of the islands for future generations through:

- an audio-visual presentation 'Blasket Heritage' with seating for 100 and lasting for 22 minutes
- exhibitions on daily life & traditional fishing and farming methods, the Irish language and Blasket literature
- interactive displays and features to enable visitors to feel, listen and experience the sounds and images of the way of life for islanders

The centre, which is also one of two Kerry Signature Points on the Wild Atlantic Way, also includes:

- Self-guided or scheduled guided tours
- Free translations of the AV in English, Irish, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Welsh, Gáidhlig
- Guidebooks available in English, Irish, German, French, Spanish, Italian
- Various touring art and photographic exhibitions throughout the season
- Information and access to the National Loop Walk 'Siúlóid na Cille'
- Free bicycle, individual & coach Parking
- Free Wifi in Restaurant
- Toilet & Baby Changing facilities
- Full wheelchair access
- Tour-guide service on the Great Blasket Island
- Bookshop – open 7 days and offering a massive selection of book on many aspects of Irish life
- 'An tIascaire' Restaurant with huge picture windows overlooking the Blasket Island and offering homebaked snacks, lunches (served all day), afternoon teas and cakes and packed lunches. Individuals, groups and family friendly
- 'The Seal-Cam' – live streaming views of the largest seal colony in Ireland
- A calendar of heritage and cultural events available throughout the year

The centre is open from 24th March to 2nd November and from 10am to 6pm. Entrance fee to the centre is Adult: €4.00, Sen/Group: €3.00, Child/Student: €2.00, Family: €10.00. The average length of visit is 1.5 hours and the last visit is 45mins before closing.

The centre is located in Dingle, Co. Kerry, 50km south-west of Tralee and 65km west of Killarney.

Access from the Great Blasket Centre to the island is by ferry which are separate from the Blasket Centre. There are several different ferry operators including:

- Blasket Island Ferries - Their twin engine 50 passenger vessel operating from Dunquin Harbour to the Great Blasket Island was purpose designed and built as an inshore Island ferry (includes life rafts, life jackets, smoke life rings, engine room fire suppression system, echo sounder, electronic charts, distress safety system, global positioning system, emergency positioning beacon, etc). The journey takes around 15-20 minutes. Prices are c.€25 for adults return.
- Dingle Bay Charters – operate a fast (50 minute) ferry from Dingle Yacht Marina that departs each day at 11am. The fee is €40 Adult and €20 for children under 12. 0876726100
- www.marinetours.ie operate a day tour to the Blasket Islands from Ventry

Ownership and Management

The focus for this case study is on the visitor centre rather than the islands themselves. The Centre is State-Owned- it is operated by the Historic Properties section of the Office of Public Works.

Finance & staffing

The local staff compliment is three full-time and, eight seasonal OPW employees, and another eight seasonal staff between the bookshop and restaurant.

Marketing and Promotion

Visitor numbers for the centre have increased from around 42,000 in 2010 to 44,074 in 2014 with a high of 47,003 in 2012.

The centre is promoted on the Heritage Ireland website[63], the Discover Ireland site[64], the GoKerry site[65], the Dingle Peninsula site[66], as well as Lonely Planet[67] and Rough Guide sites[68].

The centre is also promoted on Facebook[69] and Twitter[70].

Lessons for Inis Cealtra

The visitor centre is promoted as '*The next best thing to a visit to the Island!*'[71] and is designed to be an alternative or a compliment to a visit to the island by ferry. There are no figures available for the numbers of visitors who go on to the island after visiting the centre as the commercial operators are separate businesses from the OPW visitor centre.

The architecture of the centre is designed so that the islands can be viewed from within the exhibitions area and from the café.

Figure 8: Great Blasket Centre

Figure 9: Great Blasket Centre
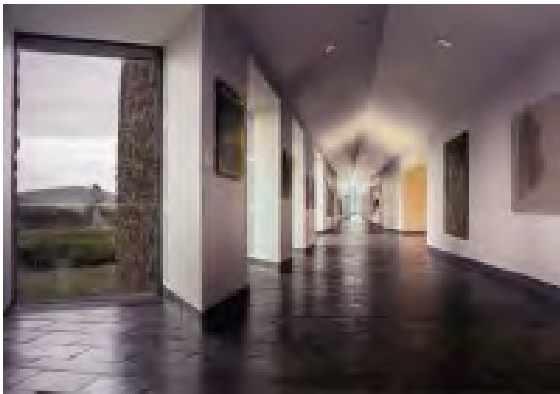
7.3.7   Skellig Michael, County Kerry

Skellig Michael (*Sceilig Mhichíl*) is located 11.6km off the Iveragh Peninsula, County Kerry. Previously thought to be uninhabited a monastery was established on the island, the larger of the two Skellig islands, between the 6th

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[63] http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/blascaod/
[64] http://www.discoverireland.ie/Arts-Culture-Heritage/ionad-an-bhlascaoid-mhoir-the-blasket-centre/381
[65] http://www.gokerry.ie/blasket-centre/
[66] http://www.dingle-peninsula.ie/home/the-blasket-islands.html
[67] http://www.lonelyplanet.com/ireland/dunquin/sights/arts-culture-literary/blasket-centre
[68] http://www.roughguides.com/destinations/europe/ireland/kerry/dingle-peninsula/the-blasket-islands/
[69] https://www.facebook.com/ionadanbhlascaoidtheblasketcentre/
[70] https://twitter.com/blasketcentre
[71] http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/blascaod/

and 8th Centuries. The island was continuously occupied until changes in the climate and changes to the structure of the Irish church encouraged the community to move to the mainland in the 12th Century. Ownership passed from the Order of St. Augustine to the Butler family following dissolution, and then to the Corporation for Preserving and Improving the Port of Dublin (the predecessor to the Commissioners of Irish Lights) who had built two lighthouses by 1826. The OPW became guardians of the site in 1880 before buying the island from the Commissioners of Irish Lights.

Skellig Michael was made a World Heritage Site in 1996 as a unique example of an early religious settlement. The monastery has six corbelled stone beehive huts and two boat-shaped oratories, as well as the stone built terraces, retaining walls and stairways.

Small Skellig is also famous for ornithology as the home of some 27,000 pairs of gannets – the second largest colony of such seabirds in the world.

Thirteen boat licences are granted annually to tour operators for the summer season (April to October). Boats depart between 10.00am & 10.30am. Boats return between 2.30pm & 4.30pm, price €60.00 per person.

The Skellig Experience Visitor Centre[72] is based at Valentia and is promoted as a place 'where you can experience many aspects of those offshore Skellig islands while remaining on the dry land, in a custom built, stone clad, grass roofed, prize winning building…'. This suits many visitors with access to the monastic buildings on the island via 650 steps without a handrail.

The visitor centre offers visitors:

- A 14 minute film presentation 'Skellig Michael – Island on the edge of the world'
- The recreation of a lighthouse and the history behind the lighthouse service
- The underwater life of Skellig presented through still photographs from divers and a video of the undersea environment
- Restaurant, with seating for 48
- Craft shop

Visitors can avail of the exhibition, craft shop of restaurant without visiting one or both of the other elements of the Skellig Experience.

Opening hours are:

- March, April & October, November - 10.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. 5 days a week
- May, June & September - 10.00 am – 6.00 p.m. 7 days a week
- July & August - 10.00 a.m. 7.00 p.m. 7 days a week

Visitor centre admission fees are:

- Adults €5
- Child €3
- Senior/Student €4
- Family (2 adults and up to 4 children) €14

Visitor centre admission fee and cruise around Skellig Michael (2 hours, without landing on the island)

- Adults €30
- Child €17.50
- Senior/Student €27.50
- Family (2 adults and up to 2 children) €85
- Additional child under 12 €10

Exhibition and Mini-Cruise (within Valentia Harbour, 45 minutes)

- Adults €22
- Child €11
- Senior/Student €19.50

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[72] www.skelligexperience.com

- Family (2 adults and up to 2 children) €60
- Additional child under 12 €7

Ownership and Management

Skellig Michael is owned and managed by the OPW, the Skellig Experience visitor centre, which opened in 1992 was owned and operated by Fáilte Ireland until 2010 when they issued a public tender for the operation of the centre. Fáilte Ireland now retain ownership of the centre which is now operated and maintained by a private limited company.

While the centre offers cruises around the islands and within the harbour these services are contracted to the boatmen who are licenced by OPW to take visitors to Skellig Michael.

Finance & staffing

The visitor centre employs one person full-time and one part time throughout the year. From the start of the season, which starts in March, the centre employs 6 people which increases to 14 during June to September. The staff are employed to work in the reception (which also operates as a tourist information office, restaurant and shop[73].

Marketing and Promotion

Visitor numbers to the Skellig Experience increasing over the last few years – from 27,500 in 2010 to 39,825 in 2014 however this dropped to around 35,000 in 2015 due to poor weather[74]. The OPW also provides data to Fáilte Ireland about the number of visitors who travel to the island. This has increased from 12,343 in 2010 to 15,315 in 2014.

While no detailed visitor information is retained it is thought that 65% of visitors come to the attraction on a coach tour with the majority of these tours organised by CIE and 90% of visitors on those tours from the USA. Abbey Tours also bring some visitors to Skellig Experience with the majority of their visitors from France and Germany. It is thought that the record numbers in 2014 were the result of increased numbers of domestic visitors to fine weather and increased 'staycations'.

The Skellig Experience is promoted through its own website[75], Ireland.com[76], Valentia Island[77], askaboutireland[78], ringofkerry[79], Discover Ireland[80], Ireland-Guide.com[81], and Lonely Planet[82]. The attraction is also promoted on Facebook[83].

Lessons for Inis Cealtra

This case study, like the previous ones, indicates the importance of coach tours to the overall visitor numbers. While the visitor centres in the other case studies are operated by OPW in this case the centre if a private operation with the centre in public ownership and operated and maintained through contract. This case study is interesting in that, perhaps more so than the other case studies, the visitor centre is the primary attraction with 10% or less of visitors to the visitor centre visiting the islands or taking a cruise[84].

Figure 10: The Skellig Experience Visitor Centre

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[73] Telephone conversation with John O'Sullivan, Manager, Skellig Experience, 3rd February 2016
[74] Fáilte Ireland
[75] http://www.skelligexperience.com/
[76] http://www.ireland.com/en-us/what-is-available/attractions-built-heritage/museums-and-attractions/destinations/republic-of-ireland/kerry/valentia-island/all/1-387/
[77] http://www.valentiaisland.ie/explore-valentia/skellig-experience/
[78] http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/culturenet/landscape-heritage/kerry/skellig-experience-visito-2/
[79] http://www.theringofkerry.com/skellig-experience-valentia
[80] http://www.discoverireland.ie/Arts-Culture-Heritage/the-skellig-experience/387
[81] http://www.ireland-guide.com/tourist-attractions/skellig-experience-visitor-centre.10418.html
[82] http://www.lonelyplanet.com/ireland/county-kerry/valentia-island/sights/museums-galleries/skellig-experience
[83] https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Skellig-Experience-Visitor-Centre/145140392310038
[84] Indicative figure provided by John O'Sullivan which is weather dependent

Figure 11: Skellig Michael

7.3.8 Maeshowe/ Skara Brae – Orkney Island, Scotland

Maeshowe[85] is said to be the finest chambered tomb in north-west Europe and is over 5000 years old. It was broken into in the mid-twelfth century by Viking crusaders who carved graffiti runes on the walls of the main chamber. In 1999, Maeshowe was designated part of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site, along with Skara Brae, Ring of Brodgar and the Stones of Stenness. It is aligned so that the rear wall of its central chamber held up by a bracketed wall, is illuminated on the winter solstice, similar to the solstice display that occurs in Newgrange.

The Orkney Islands are located off the north-east coast of Scotland. Maeshowe is located on Mainland. The site is accessed through Tormiston Mill which is now the visitor centre with interpretation information on the tomb and a shop selling local crafts, books and cards. There is a restaurant upstairs.

All tours are hosted by a Historic Environment Scotland steward and the average time allocated inside Maeshowe is twenty minutes.

Opening arrangements:

- Summer - 1 April - 30 September , Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun, 9.30am to 5pm. Booking in advance is required.
- Winter - 1 October - 31 March , Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun, 10am to 4pm. Booking in advance is required.

Admission prices: Adult £5.50, Child £3.30, Concession £4.40

Tour times:

- Between 1 October and 31 March - 9:30 am to 4. pm. First tour commences at 10. am. 11 am. 12. am. 1 pm. 2 pm. 3 pm. Last tour starts at 3 pm. Site closed at 4 pm
- Between 1 April and 31 September - 9.30 am to 5 pm. First tour commences at 10 am. 11. am. 12. am. 1 pm. 2. pm. 3 pm. 4 pm. Last tour starts at 4. pm
- Visitor Centre closed at 5. pm
- Special Twilight Tours in June July and August, pre- paid and booked in advance only: only: 6. pm. 7. pm . 8. pm.

There is a maximum tour limit of: 20 for 'standard' visitors and 25 for coach parties. Visitors who have not booked in advance are advised to arrive early with bookings on a First Come, First Served basis. This includes all holders of tickets purchased elsewhere including Friends of Historic Environment Scotland Members, Explorer Passes etc. There is no direct access to Maeshowe.

All entry is through the Tormiston Mill Visitor Centre and by guided tour only. Individual visitors and organised groups must also book in advance or on arrival at the visitor centre. Large coach parties will be split into two groups – with the aim being to deliver both tours within 60 minutes. One group will leave first and the other group has approximately 20 minutes to explore the Visitor Centre before departing to Maeshowe.

Reserved places on a tour will be held until 10 minutes before the designated time. If visitors have not arrived by then, their places may be sold on. Tour leaders are advised to contact the Visitor Centre should they be delayed.

Ownership and Management

Tormiston Mill now belongs to Historic Environment Scotland who manage the visitor centre, guiding services and the maintenance of the site.

Finance & staffing

Staffing levels vary through the season from 8 full-time through the winter to 15 between April and September.

Marketing and Promotion

Visitor numbers are in the region of 24,000 p.a. with the majority from Britain and Ireland with others from USA, Canada, and northern Mainland Europe. Around 80% of visitors come during June, July August. Due to the

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[85] http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/managedproperties/propertyoverview.htm?PropID=PL_205&PropName=Maeshowe%20Chambered%20Cairn

expense and difficulty of getting to the Orkney Islands many visitors would come to Maeshowe as part of the overall tourism offer of the Orkneys rather than the sole attraction. Many visitors come to Maeshowe having seen the site on TV programmes (e.g. Neil Oliver) and magazine articles (e.g. National Geographic).

Due to the timed booking system around 5,000 potential visitors are turned away each year. These visitors are told that the information is available on the website and that all tours must be pre-booked. [86]

The attraction is promoted through the Historic Scotland website[87], Visit Scotland site[88], orkneyjar.com[89], undiscovered Scotland[90], Lonely Planet[91], and the UNESCO site[92].

Lessons for Inis Cealtra

Maeshowe is of interest as a case study in that it shows how visitor numbers can be limited to an attraction through use of a timed booking system used in combination with a separate visitor centre.

Figure 12: Maeshowe

7.3.9   Pilgrimage in Ireland

What is Pilgrimage?

The Heritage Council define pilgrimage as: 'originally a journey that combined prayer, sacrifice and devotion - with an element of physical discomfort - by which the pilgrim could become closer to God. It also fulfilled many of the functions of a modern holiday - a change of scene and a time to make room for something above and beyond the daily grind'[93].

The Pilgrim Paths website indicate that pilgrimage has been defined as *'a meaningful journey to a place of spiritual significance'* with the pilgrim journey in Ireland having strong connections with sites such as Clonmacnoise, Lough Derg, Holycross and Glendalough, Skellig Michael and Croagh Patrick.

Sites

Modern day pilgrimage sites in Ireland include:

- Croagh Patrick, Co. Mayo
- Knock Shrine, Co. Mayo – which attracts 1.5 million visitors each year
- Lough Derg, Co. Donegal
- Faughart, County Armagh – birthplace of St Brigid
- Monasterboice, County Louth
- Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly
- Glendalough, Co. Wicklow
- Ardmore, Co. Wexford

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[86] Conversation with Jerry Cannon, Maeshowe, 3rd February 2016
[87] http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/propertyresults/propertyoverview.htm?PropID=PL_205
[88] http://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/maeshowe-chambered-cairn-p299611
[89] http://www.orkneyjar.com/history/maeshowe/
[90] http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/westmainland/maeshowe/
[91] http://www.lonelyplanet.com/scotland/highlands-and-northern-islands/west-and-north-mainland/sights/historic/maes-howe
[92] http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/514
[93] http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/landscape/our-initiatives/the-pilgrim-paths/

- Our Lady's Island, Co. Waterford
- Tubrid Holy Well, Co. Cork
- St Colmán's well/ Tobar Cholmáin, Co Clare
- St Brigids Holy Well, Liscannor, Co. Clare
- Scattery island, Co Clare

Pilgrim Paths Project

Despite the long history of spiritual journeys to pilgrimage sites in Ireland the tradition of walking the pilgrim paths to the sites had faded away. To address this the Heritage Council developed the Pilgrim Paths Project in 1997 to identify and develop a network of walking routes along medieval pilgrimage paths[94]. These include:

- St Kevin's Way - from Hollywood to Glendalough, Co. Wicklow (30km)
- Cosán na Naomh - on the Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry (18km)
- Lough Derg - a route to the shore opposite Saints Island, Co. Donegal (12km)
- Turas - within the valley of Glencholmcille, Co. Donegal (5.4/7.2km)
- Pilgrim Path Cycle Route - from Ballycumber to Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly
- Tóchar Phádraig - from Ballintubber to the foot of Croagh Patrick, Co. Mayo (35km)
- St Declan's Way - from Ardmore to Lismore, Co. Waterford (works not yet started)

Pilgrim Paths Ireland, the national representative body for Ireland's pilgrim paths, was founded in 2013 at a meeting in Nenagh representing eleven community groups associated with Ireland's principal penitential paths. The objective of this association is to promote greater awareness and use of Ireland's historic pilgrim routes. The number of location was extended in tandem with the development of the first National Pilgrim's Path Day in 2014 which saw 1,800 participants. The second took place on April 4th 2015. The success of these events has led to the development of a week-long Pilgrim Paths Festival for 2016 running from 22nd-29th March.[95]

Figure 11: Irish Pilgrim Paths

The walks now include:

- St Kevin's Way, Co. Wicklow
- Cosán na Naomh, Co. Kerry
- Lough Derg, Co. Donegal
- Turas Cholmcille, Co. Donegal
- Pilgrim Path Cycle Route, Co. Offaly
- Tóchar Phádraig, Co. Mayo
- St Declan's Way, Co. Waterford
- St Finbars Pilgrim Path, Co. Cork
- Cnoc Na DTobar, Co. Kerry
- Kilcommon Pilgrim Loop, Co. Tipperary
- Rath/Dysert Pilgrim Path, Co. Clare
- Sli Mór, Co. Offaly

Pilgrimage to/on Inis Cealtra

Inis Cealtra was a place of pilgrimage and venerated for the location of relics on the island. An earlier wooden shrine existed prior to the construction of the Confessional, fragments of an early medieval reliquary were found on the island, and during a Viking raid relics from a shrine were thrown into the lake. Excavation of the Confessional near the Saints Graveyard showed it contained relics and was venerated from

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[94] http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/landscape/our-initiatives/the-pilgrim-paths/
[95] www.pilgrimpaths.ie

the early medieval to modern periods. This would all have contributed to the island being a focus for pilgrimage activity.

7.4   INTERPRETATION- BRIEF

The following points would form a central part of any brief to develop an interpretation scheme for Inis Cealtra.

7.4.1   Visitor Centre

Summary: Interpretation of the stories of the island using a mix of modern and traditional techniques, to include:

- **High quality AV show** – to use 3D modelling, innovative means of explaining the story of the island in a captivating manner including use of recreated sounds from the island and evocative music. The presentation which will be presented in a range of languages including English, Irish, German, French, Spanish and Italian with multilingual earphones provided to allow simultaneous presentation.
- **High quality interpretive panels** based on a chronological use of the stories of the island. These could incorporate content from the panels used in the current Aistear Park exhibition and include:

➢ In the beginning - geo-morphology
➢ Prehistoric era e.g. flints, arrow heads
➢ Era of St Caiman
➢ The Brian Boru connection
➢ Buildings of Inis Cealtra
➢ Island under attack - impact of the Vikings and how islanders protected themselves
➢ Island life - Craft & trade
➢ Island life - Agriculture
➢ Reformation & confiscation
➢ Spirituality, pilgrimage & tradition
➢ Folklore
➢ Natural heritage
➢ Archaeology & Conservation
➢ Community connections
➢ Mountshannon history
➢ Shannon Navigation & linkages

Panels to be interspersed with:

- **Replica finds and real finds** – to be sourced from OPW collection at Athenry
- **Physical replica** of the hey-day of the island
- Peak season recreation of island scenes e.g. craft-working
- **Stories from the local community** about their experiences of the island told through mix of media e.g. speakers, screens, there should also be a facility for the local community to continue to contribute these

Notes

- Archaeologists should be involved in all aspects of interpretative design and content preparation
- Interpretation drawings should be age and gender aware.
- Use of capital intensive technology such as interactive touch screens and augmented reality not to be employed at this stage – this could be considered at a future phase.
- The Fáilte Ireland publication 'Sharing Our Stories' should be used in developing interpretation.

7.4.2   Inis Cealtra

The interpretive approach for the island is to have minimal intervention with the majority of interpretative information to be provided by guides and audio-guides. This includes:

- Orientation and code of conduct (Leave No Trace) signage at a visitor shelter and at pier access
- Script for guides
- **Multi-lingual audio guides to enable self-guiding** – this should include detail on the built heritage, stories, archaeology and natural heritage of the island.

7.5   OPERATOR SURVEY

An online survey of tour operators was undertaken in March to gauge their views on a potential visitor attraction at Inis Cealtra. These included tour operators such as Maloney & Kelly, CIE Tours, Irish Welcome Tours, Abbey Tours, Custom Ireland, Go West and others.

Does your company currently bring visitors to the Lough Derg area?

- ➤ Yes   87.5%
- ➤ No   12.5%

Comment: Some come to the Ballina/Killaloe area, several pass through on the way to Cliffs of Moher. Several cited a tight schedule.

Should Inis Cealtra be developed as a visitor attraction?

- ➤ Yes   75%
- ➤ No   0
- ➤ Don't know   25%

Would a Inis Cealtra attraction with a visitor centre on the main shore appeal to your clients?

- ➤ Yes   8
- ➤ No   0
- ➤ Comment: attraction must be high quality to justify stop

What visitor centres elements would be of interest to your clients?

- ➤ Exhibition about the island   87.5%
- ➤ Audio-visual presentation   75%
- ➤ Reconstruction of some of the monuments/ruins   75%
- ➤ Display of real& replica finds from the islands   75%
- ➤ Café   87.5%
- ➤ Toilets   87.5%
- ➤ Shop   87.5%
- ➤ Art & craft gallery   87.5%
- ➤ Comment: look at use of holograms in Smithwicks Brewery in Kilkenny and in new CHQ attraction; Café should seat min 50 and have in-house bakery.

Would you visitors be interested in:

- ➤ Inis Cealtra visitor centre on the main shore   12.5%
- ➤ Boat trip to Inis Cealtra only   0
- ➤ Visitor centre AND boat trip   87.5%
- ➤ Comment: visitor centre could be an intro to island for those who don't want to make boat trip.

What facilities on the island would appeal to your visitors?

- ➤ Better pathways   87.5%
- ➤ Better interpretative signage   62.5%
- ➤ Toilets   50%
- ➤ Shelter   62.5%

- ➤ Other
- ➤ Comment: shelter should be located at the pier; guides on island would be important; perhaps an orientation shelter.

Do you think visitor numbers should be limited on the island?

➤ Yes	12.5%
➤ No	25%
➤ Don't know	62.5%

- ➤ Comment: needs to be a balance, restrict using an online booking system with discounted rates for groups.

Do you think boat trips to the island should be restricted to guided visits?

➤ Yes	50%
➤ No	32.5%
➤ Don't know	12.5%

- ➤ Comment: give visitors option but don't restrict, can be English only but better if multi lingual; an explanation on the boat would be good; a local guide is important.

Where are your clients mainly from?

➤ UK	12.5%
➤ North America	62.5%
➤ Mainland Europe	25% (mainly Germany, France)
➤ Ireland	

- ➤ Other, please specify: religious groups from Germany, France & USA (Abbey Tours)

What age range are your clients

➤ **60+**	50%
➤ **40-59**	25%
➤ **20-39**	25%

- ➤ Comment: Abbey – 45-65 and some student groups, 40+ CIE, 60+groups/40-59indiv

Any other comments:

- • Abbey Tours could bring 5-10,000 people p.a. within 3 years if the experience was of sufficient quality
- • Boat should cater for 55+
- • Would combine a visit to Inis Cealtra with Cliffs of Moher from Dublin
- • Would stay for 90 minutes
- • Signal fam trips for tour operators (Abbey Tours)
- • 'great idea that would appeal to many, not just those interested in religious tours'
- • CIE wouldn't stop at Inis Cealtra as they run from Galway to Killarney via the west coast – Cliffs of Moher is one stop in Clare.
- • Pricing should be based on OPW prices e.g. 3.50-5.50 for groups, under 8 if over needs to be something very special
- • There should be a variety of options for ticketing e.g. visitor centre only/visitor centre + boat trip bit like Blasket Centre
- ➤ Interest will come down to time and money.

8   CONSULTATION

8.1   PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

It was recognised from the outset that achieving a successful Plan depended on involving the local community businesses and other key stakeholders (locally, regionally and nationally) in a meaningful way throughout the Plans development.   Inis Cealtra forms an important part of the cultural and social life of the local community, who have a strong sense of ownership of it and have carefully protected it over many decades. Additionally the local community are a great repository of knowledge on the island and its history and heritage

Community consultation was structured as a series of local in person meetings and workshops, involving the Plan team and members of the local community, held in the town of Mountshannon. The events were arranged with support from Mountshannon Community Council and were announced on local media and via parish newsletters and announcements. A Facebook page and web site were also set up to disseminate proposals and receive submissions from the community. A total of over 150 local people have been substantively involved in the consultation process

An initial information gathering evening was held in November (2015). The aims of that evening was to listen to all views, to clarify the process being undertaken and to build relationships. Strong local interest was evident with approximately 75 people attending, completing surveys and illustrating the strong sense of connection between the local community and the Island. This connection manifested in different ways for different people; some valued the island simply as a special tranquil place, for some the connection was more spiritual, for some it was explicitly a religious place.

Many people clearly enjoyed recommending the Island to others. There was a clear consensus that any development on the Island should be kept to a minimum and support for the idea that any visitor centre should be in Mountshannon and help support the local economy. Continuing access to the island for local people was an important issue. This initial consultation proved extremely useful for helping to establish some fundamental goal, limits and guiding principles for the project. Many individual conversations with stakeholders were followed up to feed into detailed aspects of the developing process.

A second consultation evening was held at the end of April 2016 to consider emerging options. This time over 70 people attended, with a further 30 local people submitting views via a written survey distributed afterwards via the Community Council. There was widespread support for continuing to progress the project, slowly and steadily with consultation at each stage. Whilst opinions expressed were not conclusive at this time, the general thrust of views expressed (limiting development on the Island, maximising economic benefit for Mountshannon and maintaining a broad appeal) have served to underpin the recommendations of this report.

The detailed research that supports this plan continued through the rest of 2016, with bilateral conversations with stakeholders continuing to be crucial in all aspects. A further feedback and confirmation session is envisaged for early spring 2017 prior to the finalisation of the Plan. This will coincide with the draft version of the Plan being on public exhibition (online) as part of the statutory Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) process.

8.2   CONSULTATION WITH SCHEDULED ORGANISATIONS AND AGENCIES

Consultation and review by statutory and other agencies and authorities having an interest in Inis Cealtra also took place throughout the Plan making process. These agencies and bodies (listed below) were consulted both formally and during the course of inspections, meetings, reviews and surveys by the Plan team.

Scheduled and Statutory Consultees;

- Clare County Council
- Office of Public Works
- Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- National Monuments Service
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Waterways Ireland
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Birdwatch Ireland
- National Heritage Council
- Environment Protection Agency
- ICOMOS
- Clare County Museum
- Archaeology Department UCD
- University of Glasgow & Stirling University, Scotland
- Irishwrecks.com
- See Also; Tour Operator Survey in main Plan (chapter 4- Tourism and Marketing

9   ABBREVIATIONS AND SOURCES

Abbreviations Used in the Plan

AFM Annals of the Four Masters

AI Annals of Inisfallen

AONB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

AT Annals of Tigernach

AU Annals of Ulster

c. circa

CELT Corpus of Electronic Texts

CRSBI Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture of Britain and Ireland

diam. diameter

ed. editor

eds editors

ext. external

int. internal

km kilometre(/s)

LRA Late Roman Amphorae

m metre(/s)

MS manuscript

NMI National Museum of Ireland

NMS National Monuments Service

OPW Office of Public Works

OS Ordnance Survey

OSL Ordnance Survey Letters

RIA Royal Irish Academy

RMP Record of Monuments and Places

trans. translator

transcr. transcriber

UCC University College, Cork

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

VSH Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae

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11   THE PLAN TEAM

Overview and Team Leadership/Coordination

Solearth Architecture – Brian T O Brien Architect.
Solearth is an architecture practice specialising in the design of bespoke, delightful and sustainable building in the non-commercial sector in Ireland and further afield. They also carry out research and consultancy on the built environment and sustainable design areas. Brian O Brien has designed some of Ireland's landmark green buildings. A late convert to the wonder of Inis Cealtra he was honoured to be appointed to lead the The PLAN team.

Archaeology:

Dr Pat Wallace, Dr Bernadette McCarthy, Clíodhna O'Leary: Dr Pat Wallace is one of the most renowned archaeologists in Ireland, and a noted expert on the early medieval and Viking periods. Former director of the National Museum of Ireland for over two decades, he is also a pioneer of novel ways of engaging visitors with history and archaeology. Bernadette McCarthy holds a PhD in archaeology which focuses on early medieval Irish monasticism, while she also has a research interest in post-medieval religious and pilgrimage practice. Clíodhna O'Leary is a PhD candidate whose doctorate is focused on the early medieval cross-sculpture and mortuary sculpture from Inis Cealtra and the wider region. She brings with her an intimate knowledge of the archaeology and history of the site and the wider area.

Conservation, Heritage and Historic Fabric Consultation

Carrig Conservation; Peter Cox is a noted expert on building conservation, and care of historic fabric and masonry. He is the current Vice President of ICOMOS Ireland. Through both of these roles, Peter brings a wealth of knowledge and serves as a conduit to a wide range of experts through his international connections. Recent experience at the ecclesiastical and island sites of Boyle Abbey and the All Saints Priory, Saints' Island, Lough Ree, and on many masonry ruins, both protected and national monuments, up and down the country were informative for the Plan also. Carrig represented the area of heritage conservation, visitor management at Inis Cealtra, and aspects relating to ICOMOS charters and the overlap with areas of pertinence to UNESCO ensuring the Plan's proposal are grounded in best international practice.

Ecology and Natural Heritage

Dr Mary Tubridy, Pat Doherty

Mary Tubridy is a leading ecologist and expert on biodiversity and habitat in Ireland. She has extensive experience of sustainable tourism processes and developments, which seek to integrate heritage (particularly natural heritage) and recreation/tourism. Pat Doherty of Doherty Enviornmental is an ecologist and carried out Natura Impact assessment (appropriate assessments) and similar evaluations as necessary to enable best ecological practises be brought to bear in the Plan.

Strategic Impact Assessment

Minogue and Associates: Ruth Minogue has been a practicing Environmental Consultant since 1999 in the fields of environmental, ecological and planning consultancy. She has particular expertise in SEA and Landscape character assessment and has worked on a wide range of environmental studies for both public and private sector clients based in Ireland and elsewhere in the EU.

Ruth was responsible for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the plan.

Tourism and Marketing

Rethink Tourism; James Chilton is a Dublin-based tourism planner specialising in rural tourism, trail development, destination development and strategic planning. James is a Chartered Town Planner with an MSc in Tourism, Conservation and Sustainable Development. James established the Irish Responsible

Tourism Awards in 2015 and is a member of the national Blue Flag Beach jury. James has provided advice in relation to planning and responsible tourism to Fáilte Ireland and works with a wide variety of other tourism, planning consultancies as well as local communities, local authorities, visitor attractions and destination management agencies.

Consultation

The Change Exploratory; Chris Chapman is one of the leading facilitators of community engagement in Ireland. Chris's background is in community development. As well as having his own company 'The Change Exploratory', Chris is regularly employed to lead facilitation processes for the Cloughjordan Ecovillage in Co. Tipperary and the Burren College of Art and Burrenbeo Trust in Co. Clare. He designed and led the public consultation process which formed a crucial part of the Plan's development

Planning Consultants:

John Spain Associates; John Spain is one of Ireland's leading planning consultants with extensive experience in both the public and private worlds, and over the last 20 years has helped guide complex and unusual projects through the planning system. They will be available to the study team to advise on issues of planning and legislation as needed.

Landscape Architecture:

Mitchell Associates: Mitchell & Associates are one of the country's leading landscape architecture practices with unparalleled expertise in all aspects of landscape from period properties to private and commercial developments, and from urban design to master planning. They will be available to the study team to advise on issues of landscape as needed.

Engineering

ARUP Consulting Engineers: Arup is one of the world's leading engineering practices. With expertise spanning every engineering discipline (including archaeological monuments and heritage places) and many countries of the world, they bring unrivalled access to knowledge and experience necessary to advance the study to a successful conclusion. **JBA Consultants** carried out the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

Brian O Brien Architect Solearth Architecture. Carrig Conservation. Dr Pat Wallace. Dr Mary Tubridy.   Rethink Tourism.   Change Exploratory. ARUP.   Mitchell Associates.   Dr Bernadette McCarthy. Clíodhna O Leary. Minogue Associates. Doherty Environmental. John Spain Associates.

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