

LEMANAGHAN
COUNTY OFFALY





LEMANAGHAN COUNTY OFFALY

CONSERVATION PLAN

Margaret Quinlan and Rachel Moss

AN
CHOMHAIRLE
OIDHREACHTA



THE
HERITAGE
COUNCIL

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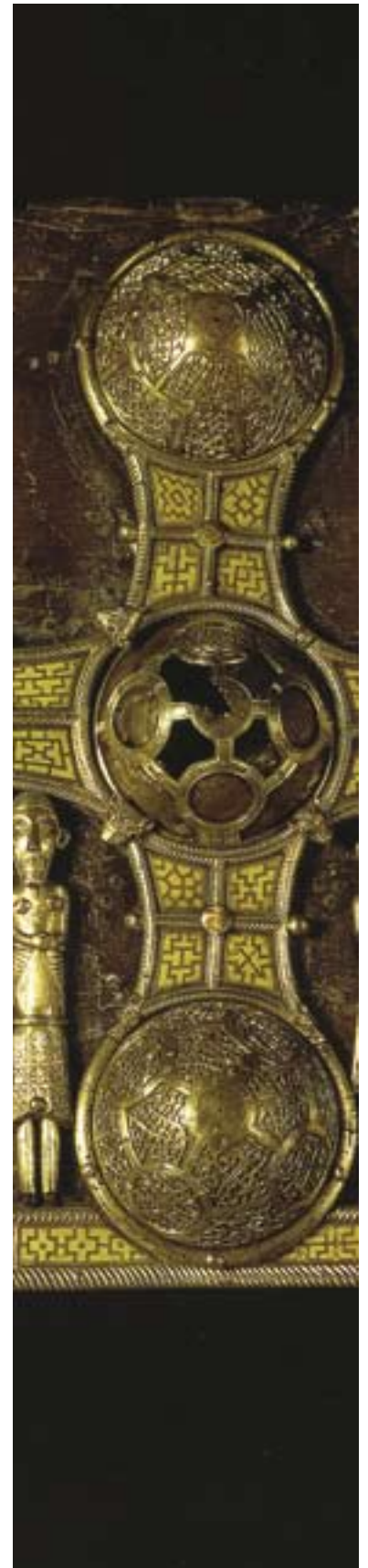
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THIS CONSERVATION PLAN IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE REPORTS WHICH MAY BE EXAMINED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE HERITAGE COUNCIL.

- A. BIBLIOGRAPHY
- B. BUILDING RECORD
 - DESCRIPTION
 - PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD
 - SURVEY DRAWINGS
- C. CONDITION ASSESSMENT
- D. DOCUMENTARY HISTORY: 7TH – 17TH CENTURIES
- E. ARCHAEOLOGY
 - WETLANDS
 - UPLAND
- F. ECOLOGY
- G. ARTEFACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE
- H. ST MANAGHAN'S POEM
- I. THE PILGRIM PATH
- J. MAPS, DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS
- K. THE BURRA CHARTER

FOREWORD

In 1997, the Heritage Council set up a millennium project, the Pilgrim Paths Project, which involved the establishment of walking routes along authenticated medieval pilgrimage routes, including the pilgrim way to Clonmacnoise. Two starting points were proposed for the walking route, Lemanaghan and Boher. As part of the initial stages (1999), the vulnerability of the heritage along the route was assessed by a team led by Mary Tubridy. One of the main recommendations was that the sites at Lemanaghan were too fragile to withstand the number of visitors that might be expected.

Freda Rountree, the first chairperson of the Heritage Council, urged us to work with the local community, local authorities and Dúchas (now the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government) to find an imaginative solution to the situation at Lemanaghan.

The Heritage Council had been working with a number of groups on Conservation Plans as a way to manage complex heritage sites. The aim of such a plan is to find the best way to preserve a site for the future, with the agreement of all involved. The process is dependent on the cooperation of all those with an interest in the site, in particular the local community, land owners, State heritage agencies, and local authorities.

Following discussions with the local community at Lemanaghan and Offaly County Council, it was agreed that a Conservation Plan be carried out for all the sites in Lemanaghan: St Managhan's church and associated monuments, St Mella's Cell (known locally as Kell), the Holy Well and Tree, the togher, the schoolhouse. This would be done in partnership with Offaly County Council and the local community.

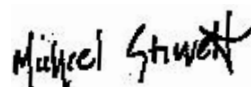
Margaret Quinlan Architects was commissioned by the Heritage Council and Offaly County Council to carry out the plan in May 2001; the plan was finalised in November of that year. The success of this plan owes much to their team in researching the site, and discussing the findings with a range of people — from land owners, Garda Síochána, Dúchas (now the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government), and the National Museum of Ireland.

This plan was a starting point, setting out the framework for work needed, and this has been demonstrated by the works carried out on the sites since 2001. These include five years of conservation works on St Managhan's Church and on St Mella's Cell/Kell. The efforts of Offaly County Council in accessing funding to allow these works to take place must be acknowledged.

The Heritage Council would like to thank the members of the local community who took part in the project steering group, and the representatives of Offaly County Council whose dedication to this project has ensured its success. The development and agreement of this plan demonstrates the ability of local communities to work with local authorities, State agencies and State departments in planning for the future of our heritage. We hope the continuing implementation of this Conservation Plan will see the sustained cooperation of all involved.



Dr Tom O'Dwyer
Chairperson



Michael Starrett
Chief Executive



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all members of the Steering Group — Beatrice Kelly, Amanda Pedlow, Gerry Doolin and Seamus Corcoran — for their help and support.

The members of the Project Team who contributed to the report also deserve our thanks: Dr John Feehan, Dr Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Prof. Loughlin Kealy, Ellen O’Carroll and Aidan Smith,

For their help in compiling various aspects of the report, thanks are due to Dr Conor McDermott and staff of the Irish Wetlands Unit, UCD Department of Archaeology;. Ragnall Ó Floinn of the National Museum; Conleth Manning, Willie Cumming, Dr Ann Lynch and Tony Roche of Dúchas The Heritage Service; Donal Wynne of Bord na Móna; Stephen J. MacNeill of Offaly Historical Society; Sgt Oliver Duggan of the Banagher Gardaí; Tom Shanahan, Vincent Hussey of Offaly County Council, Council outdoor staff, Pat Joe Bermingham, Sean Halligan, Pat Kilmartin and the people of Lemanaghan; Susan Minet, Brigid Tiernan, and finally, Rudiger Liedtke and Phelim Manning who surveyed and made the drawings on behalf of Margaret Quinlan Architects.

Margaret Quinlan and Rachel Moss

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Conservation Plan for Lemanaghan, County Offaly, provides a framework for the conservation of the historic place. It has gathered and summarised a body of knowledge leading to an understanding of the significance of the complex. It sets out principles and formulates appropriate policies to protect that significance.

The Plan has established that Lemanaghan is:

- A sacred place of great antiquity
- A place containing buildings of architectural significance
- A place rich in documentary history and archaeological potential
- A place where there is a long tradition of devotional practice
- A place 'apart', possessing a strong sense of being untouched by the modern world

The Lemanaghan Conservation Plan recommends actions to maintain the layers of significance embodied in the place, within the context of the delicate physical state of buildings and archaeology, and the strong local traditions of continued devotion.

Policies are set out for the care and management of the historic place within its setting. These may be summarised as follows:

- Clarify ownerships and responsibilities.
- Protect the surviving monuments and provide guidance on their conservation.
- Foster greater understanding and awareness of the significance of the historic place.
- Ensure that other initiatives relating to historic Lemanaghan are compatible with the preservation of its significance.
- Provide a framework for decision-making on future developments to infrastructure and land use.
- The Plan, as presented in the following pages, was completed in 2001. Since then, a number of the recommendations and policies have been implemented. These are summarised in the End Notes of the report.



1 BACKGROUND

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC SITE

The historic complex at Lemanaghan, with its focus at the early monastic site dedicated to St Managhan, is located at the crossroads between the main Ferbane-to-Ballycumber road, and the Lemanaghan-to-Pollagh road. Close by are a holy well and tree. Linked to these by a medieval trackway or *togher* is a further Early Christian site known locally as ‘Kell’, or St Mella’s Cell. (St Mella is said to be the mother of St Managhan.) These monuments occupy an upland area in Lemanaghan Bog which is bordered to the south by the callows of the River Brosna. Surrounding them is an exceptional number of archaeological find sites, many relating to a complex infrastructure of trackways or *toghers* which were built and repaired over several centuries. Dating evidence suggests that the greatest concentration of track construction coincides with the foundation of the monastery, indicating the importance of the site in the context of the monastic infrastructure of County Offaly, particularly Lemanaghan’s links with Clonmacnoise and other monasteries along the River Shannon and its tributaries.



Figure 1: Map showing the location of Lemanaghan [Courtesy Ordnance Survey]



Plate 1: Approach to the Lemanaghan Complex [Project Team May 2001 – January 2002]

1.2 WHY THE PLAN WAS COMMISSIONED

In 1995, a report was commissioned by St Managhan's Rural Development Association to develop the tourism potential of the site, principally by converting Lemanaghan schoolhouse into an interpretative facility. Four years later, the Heritage Council commissioned an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) to be carried out along the proposed route of the Pilgrim Path from Ballycumber/Lemanaghan to Clonmacnoise. The findings of the EIS suggested: prior to publicising the route, the poor condition of the standing structures should be addressed; and the impact on the delicate archaeology of the bog linking St Mella's Cell to the road should be further investigated. In the light of these reports, the Heritage Council and Offaly County Council commissioned a Conservation Plan for the historic complex. This was accomplished in partnership with other stakeholders, including the local community and Dúchas The Heritage Service.

1.3 THE STEERING GROUP

The Steering Group was formed of representatives from these major stakeholders.

Beatrice Kelly, Chair	The Heritage Council
Amanda Pedlow	Offaly County Council
Seamus Corcoran	Lemanaghan Rural Development Association
Gerry Doolin	Pilgrim Paths steering committee
Representative	Dúchas The Heritage Service

1.4 THE PROJECT TEAM

The consultants appointed to prepare the Conservation Plan were Margaret Quinlan Architects. In recognition of the broad range of issues relating to the site, the full Project Team assembled by the consultants is as follows:

Margaret Quinlan	Architect, <i>project leader</i>
Dr Rachel Moss	Architectural Historian, <i>project manager</i>
Prof. Loughlin Kealy	Architect
Dr John Feehan	Ecologist
Dr Elizabeth Fitzpatrick	Archaeologist
Ellen O'Carroll	Archaeologist
Aidan Smith	Structural Consultant

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This Conservation Plan will assist the stakeholders to do the following:

- Prepare management proposals.
- Plan a programme of conservation.
- Plan new developments.
- Manage a programme of regular maintenance for the site and its setting.
- Provide a framework for supporting action by others and build on the existing statutory protection as set out in Section 1.6. The overall aim of all the policies and conservation actions embodied in the Plan is the retention of the cultural significance of Lemanaghan and the provision of security and maintenance in the future.

1.6 STATUTORY PROTECTION¹

The existing statutory framework for the protection of the architectural heritage is provided by the following:

- National Monuments Acts, 1930-2004, and as subsequently amended
- Record of Monuments and Places established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994
- Register of Historic Monuments
- Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000 - 2002

¹ This section refers to 2001. Statutory protection for the monuments has since been updated.

- Heritage Act, 1995
- The Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999

Existing statutory protection extended to the monuments, site and setting is as follows:

- Sites listed on the Record of Monuments and Places and on the Register of Historic Monuments are afforded notification protection under the National Monuments Acts. At present, no structure in Lemanaghan is protected by a Preservation Order.
- No structures in the immediate vicinity of Lemanaghan were listed for preservation or 'considered for preservation' in the 1996 Offaly County Council Development Plan.
- Looking to the future, when the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage is compiled for County Offaly, additions to the Record of Protected Structures may be made.²

In commissioning this Conservation Plan, the Heritage Council and Offaly County Council have indicated, in principle, their continuing support for the safeguarding of the Lemanaghan complex



² This was completed in 2004.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The preparation of this Conservation Plan has been guided by the definitions and principles of the ICOMOS *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* (Burra Charter), 1988 amendment.

Article 5 of the Burra Charter states that conservation of a place should take into consideration all aspects of its cultural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one aspect at the expense of others.

Definitions provided by the Charter have been adopted for the purposes of this Conservation Plan.

Conservation is defined as all of the processes of looking after a place in order to retain its cultural significance. The term includes maintenance and may, according to circumstance, include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation. It will commonly be a combination of two or more of these.

Cultural significance is defined as the aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations.

Place is defined as a site, area, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, together with associated contents and surrounds.

The full text of the Burra Charter is included in the Appendix K and is available, by arrangement, from the Heritage Council.

2.2 RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

The holistic approach to understanding the historic place was achieved through the research and analysis of the different aspects that define or affect its cultural significance. In the case of Lemanaghan, these were understood as the documentary history of the site, the archaeology, the art/architectural history, the devotional and folkloric aspects of the place, and the ecology in terms of flora, fauna and geology.

Research and analysis were carried out through deskwork and fieldwork. A wide range of historical documents was consulted to establish the history and folklore of the place. Interviews with local people informed a further understanding of the extent to which folklore and the devotional use of the site continue to thrive.

Survey work was carried out on the standing fabric of St Managhan's Church and St Mella's Cell. Detailed examination and analysis of the fabric enabled the verification of the evolution of the structures, phases of development and condition. The removal of heavy vegetation during the preparation of the plan revealed much of the surviving masonry for the first time in many years. Field walking was undertaken in order to clarify both the ecological and archaeological development of the site.

2.3 CONSULTATION

The consultation process took place at two principal levels: through the Steering Group and the local community. The members of the Steering Group represent most of the major stakeholders and have contributed their views to the consultants at various stages. Consultation occurred separately with other stakeholders, including owners of monuments or lands giving access to monuments, as well as Bord na Móna and the National Museum of Ireland.

Consultation with the local community has been ongoing. Information explaining the principles of the Conservation Plan was circulated in the local area and submissions were invited.

At a public meeting, the process of the Conservation Plan was explained and the issues outlined by the consultants. A discussion followed on various issues affecting the site that might influence the policies to be decided. There was a broad consensus on the basic principles of protection of the site and its setting.

2.4 PLACENAMES

A number of different names and spellings are in current use for the places referred to in this Plan. The spelling of Lemanaghan itself, and of places within Lemanaghan, has been based on the Ordnance Survey. This is in recognition of the OS as the source of standardised Irish placename spellings and of the readership of this Plan beyond local level. However, the importance of spelling and placenames in current local usage is recognised and is dealt with in Sections 3.9 and 5.7.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE

The accounts provided in this section are summaries of fuller information provided in the Appendices which may be examined by arrangement with the Heritage Council.

3.1 SHORT HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Archaeological remains in Lemanaghan Bog date back over 5,500 years. It is not until the 7th century AD, however, that the history of the area began to be documented. In AD 645, land at Tuaim na nErc was given to the monks at Clonmacnoise by Diarmuid, son of Aedh Slaine, as a reward for their prayers for victory in a battle against Guaire, king of Connaught. There the monks founded a cell, known as Leith.

The death of Abbot Managhan, probably the first abbot of the monastery, is recorded in AD 664-5. The deaths of several more abbots are recorded up to the beginning of the 13th century, suggesting that Lemanaghan was a monastery of some standing during that period, possibly due to its connections with Clonmacnoise. The close links with Clonmacnoise appear to be confirmed by a reference (AD 1039) to the ‘prey[ing] and spoil[ing]’ of Lemanaghan by ‘those of Imaine’ (Meath) in revenge for a fray that had arisen between the Meath men and the men from Delvin McCoughlan (the area roughly corresponding to the modern barony of Garrycastle) on St Ciaran’s Day at Clonmacnoise the year before. The evidence of artefacts, buildings and archaeology associated with the site during this time suggests further links to Clonmacnoise.



Figure 2: 1687 map of King's County by Petty & Lambe

The last reference to the site as a monastery comes in 1205 when the death of the coarb, (a type of administrator), Gillebrenyn O' Bichollye, is recorded. Although the exact date of its conversion to parish church status (within the diocese of Clonmacnoise) is unknown, it had certainly taken place by 1302-6 when the papal taxation records record no return from the vicarage of Lemanaghan which had been 'laid to waste by the ravages of war'.

Throughout the 14th century, the fortunes of the vicarage do not appear to have improved, although repairs to the trackways around the site of this date, as well as a find of coins from the period beside one of the trackways, suggest that it still occupied a relatively prominent place within the infrastructure of the area.

By the 15th century, its fortunes were in further decline. In 1410, the perpetual vicarage had been vacant for so long that it was granted to the prior of St Mary Gallen. In 1489, the vicarage had been unlawfully seized by Philip O Buachalla and then in 1508, it was granted to Maurice Macohclayn, a canon of the church of Clonmacnoise. Close ties with the Augustinians at Gallen appear to have continued. In 1531, Murtough, son of Conor Mac Coughlan, Prior of Gallen and Vicar of Liath-Manachain, was 'treacherously slain' by Turlogh Oge O'Melaghin.

The earliest known map of the area, drawn up for a survey of the barony of Garrycastle which was carried out in 1620, no longer exists. Thus we have no way of knowing where the principal secular settlement was during this period. The castle, only demolished in 1959, was certainly in place by this time, as it is described by de Renzi in 1620 and mentioned in the Foreword to the English translation of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* as the place where the translation was carried out in 1627. The poll tax survey, carried out in 1659, records a population of only 26 people in the parish of Lemanaghan, all of them Irish.

St Managhan's Church at Lemanaghan continued in use probably until the 1641 rebellion. It is mentioned in the *Martyrology of Donegal*, compiled in 1630, because of the shrine kept on its altar, thereby implying that at the very least it still had a roof. However, by 1682-5, the church was recorded as being in a ruinous condition, with church services being held in a nearby house.

Archaeological evidence in the form of a large number of timber platforms built in the surrounding bogs suggests widespread activity in the Lemanaghan area between the 15th and 17th centuries.



Plate 2: Wooden platforms in Derrynagun Bog. Radiocarbon dated by UCD from AD 1411 – 1654

3.2 SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC PLACE

Lemanaghan is situated on the R436 between Ballycumber and Ferbane at the junction of the road to Pollagh. It consists of a two-room, 19th-century schoolhouse, now redundant, and a cluster of relatively small dwellings, the largest of which, Lemanaghan House, is to the south-west of the monastic site. Settlement on the upland area is concentrated in a number of small clusters. The first is in the vicinity of the old castle and schoolhouse, and along the road in the direction of Ferbane. Comparison between first edition Ordnance Survey (1837) and more recent OS maps reveals that the density of building in this area has decreased over the past 160 years. Two clachan-type settlements close to the southern 'shore' of the upland are denoted as *Srah* and *Camwerth* on the OS maps, although Camwerth has always been known locally as 'Convert'. These settlements have apparently changed little in terms of building density since the publication of the first edition OS. More isolated settlements also occur along the road to the south-east of St Mella's Cell and on the hillock to the north of the cell known locally as 'Townagh'. There is now no trace of settlement on the latter site. Lewis records the population of the village of Lemanaghan as 290 in 1837. A marked decrease in the population of the townland took place over the ten years between 1841 and 1851 when census returns record populations of 597 and 367 respectively.

The Ballycumber-Ferbane road appears to be the oldest still in use in the area and is marked on the earliest map of the area drawn up for the Commissioners of the Bogs in 1811. It is difficult to establish when this road was constructed. It does not appear to have been in place in the 17th century, when de Renzi wrote in relation to Lemanaghan Castle that 'many wicked members are harboured there about and are transported there over the river Brosnagh', implying that during this period it was the river, not the road, which was the main means of transport to the site. Smaller roads serving the settlement around the castle and at Srah and Camwerth are marked on the first edition OS (1837) and were presumably in existence as long as the settlements. Other roads around Lemanaghan are more recent. Both the road from Lemanaghan to Healy's in Ballycumber and the Pollagh-Lemanaghan road were only built in the 20th century, the latter constructed in 1928.

The slow development of the infrastructure of metalled roads in the area may be attributable to the recommendations of Thomas Townsend in 1811 who advised against the construction of roads across the bogs because they would obstruct and interfere with the principal drains.

The Clara-Banagher railway line also passes through the townland. It opened in 1884 and closed in 1963.

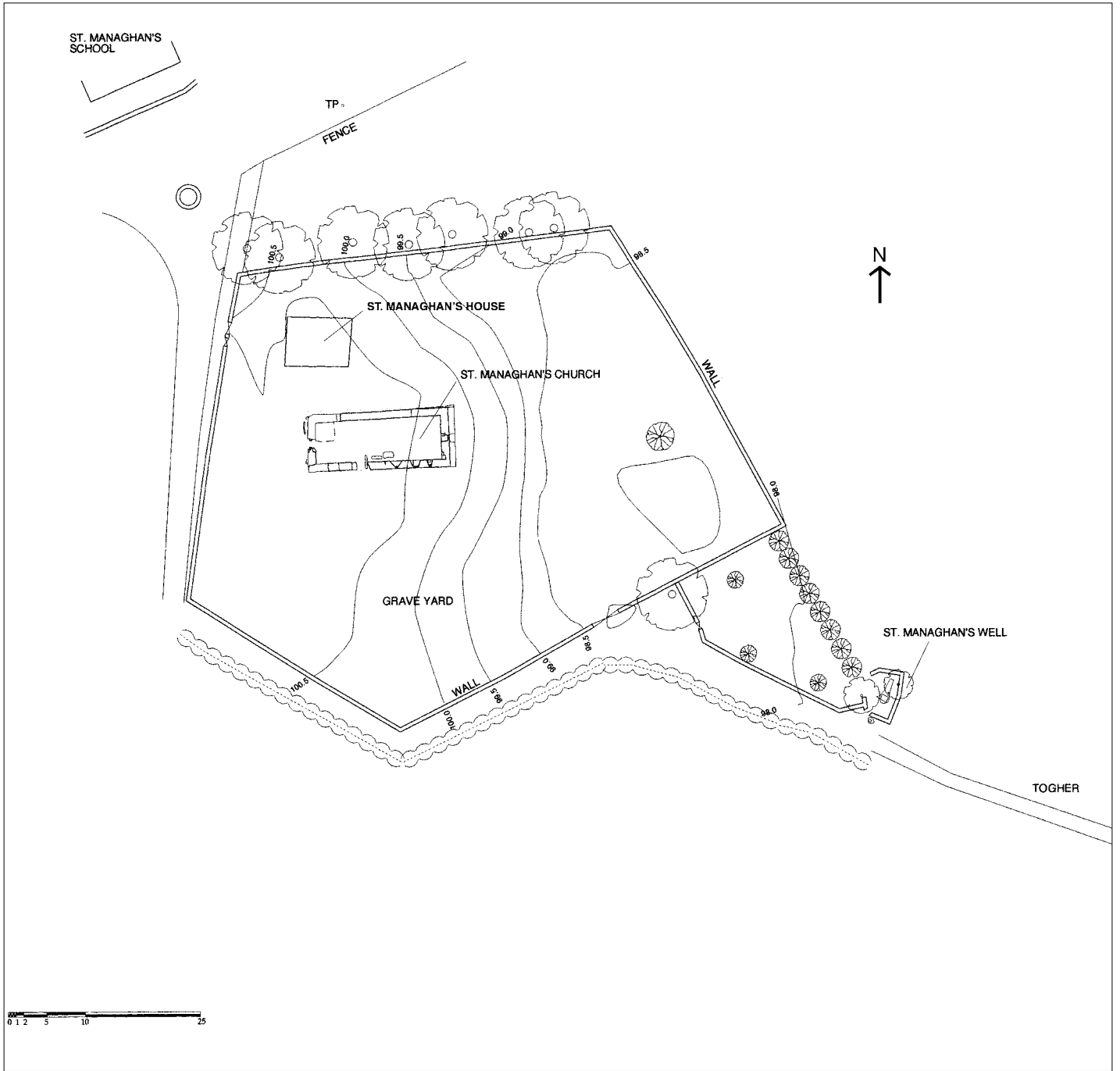


Figure 3: Site Map

THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Lemanaghan schoolhouse was built in the late 19th century and consisted of two rooms with fireplaces. An extension was added to the rear of the building in the late 1950s, at the same time as dry toilets were built at the rear of the building. The school was closed in 1972 and left unused for approximately 20 years, during which time it fell into disrepair. In the early 1990s, the school was restored by St Managhan's Restoration and Development Association with the ultimate aim of using the building as a visitor centre. Works carried out at this time included replacement of rafters and slates, installation of new floorboards, installation of a new timber-sheeted ceiling, and the replastering of walls. Since this time, the building has remained vacant and is used occasionally for special events in the locality such as the Pattern Day on 24 January.



Plate 3: The Schoolhouse

THE RIVER BROSNA AND ITS CALLOWS

As intimated by de Renzi, the River Brosna would have played an important role in the infrastructure of the Lemanaghan area, forming a well-drained passage through the extensive surrounding bogland. It linked Lemanaghan with a number of adjacent ecclesiastical sites including Gallen Priory, Kilreaghan, Wheery and Tisaran, and ultimately to the Shannon. On the Geological Survey map of c. 1840, the flood line and callows of the Brosna are shown as extending quite close to the line of the southern 'shore' of the 'island'. This situation would have continued until the 1940s when the river was drained to reclaim land for agricultural purposes.

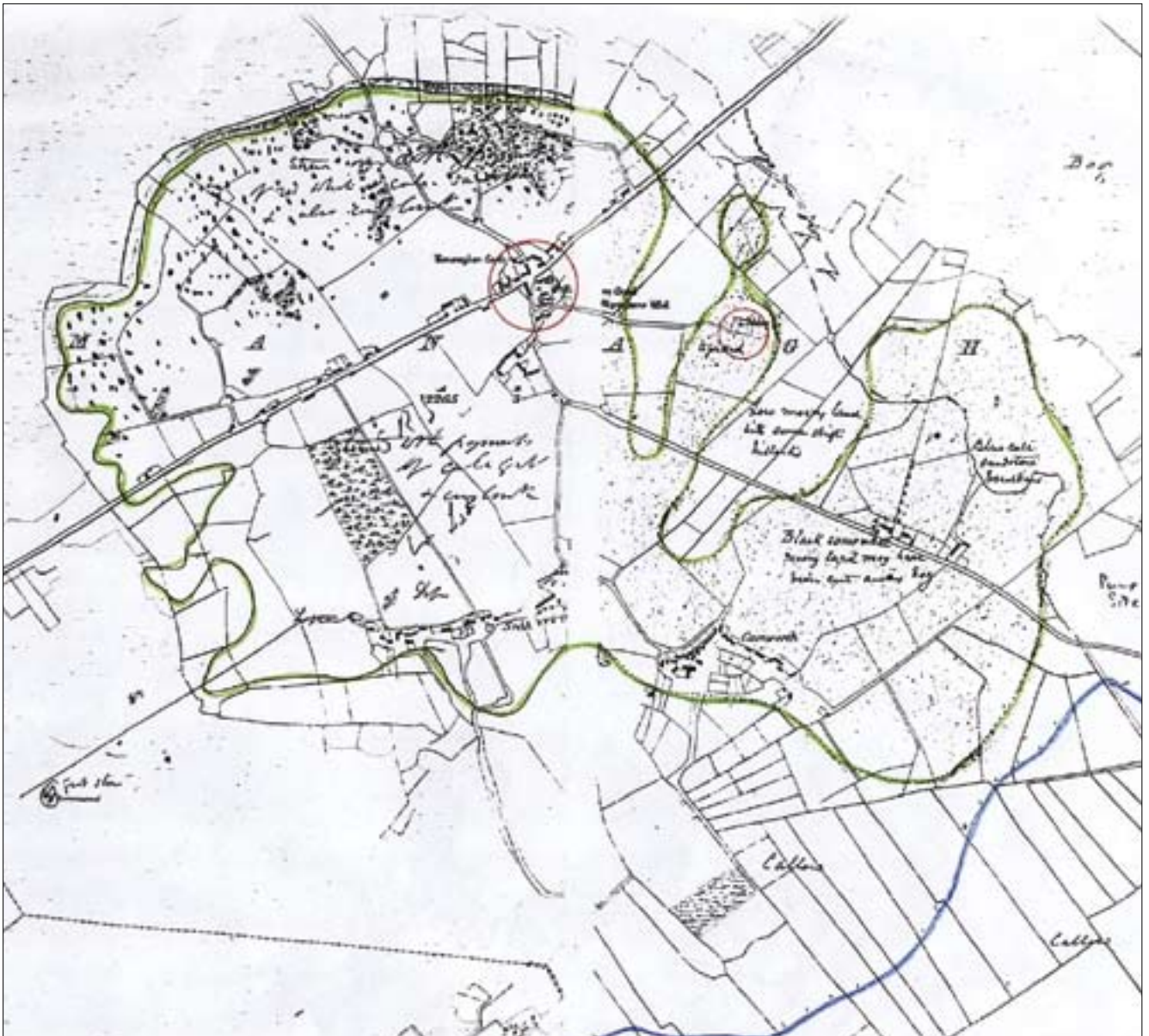


Figure 4: Geological Survey Map, c.1840. The Lemnaghan complex is marked in red. The 'island' is marked in green. The floodline is marked in blue.

LEMANAGHAN BOGS

The Lemnaghan Bogs are located to the north of the River Brosna, surrounding Lemnaghan 'island' on its three northern sides. The group of bogs comprises Lemnaghan Bog, Corhill Bog, Tumbeagh Bog, Kilnagarnagh Bog, Killaghintoher Bog, Castletown Bog and Derrynagun Bog, with one further island known as Broder's island or Derrevan.

An 1811 description of the bog made for the Commissioners for the Bogs records that it then covered an area of 2,961 Irish or 4,797 English acres (1992 hectares), with the surface of the bog from 43 to 86 feet (13.1 – 26.2m) above the River Shannon, and with the borings from 15 to 32 feet (8.57 – 9.664m) deep.

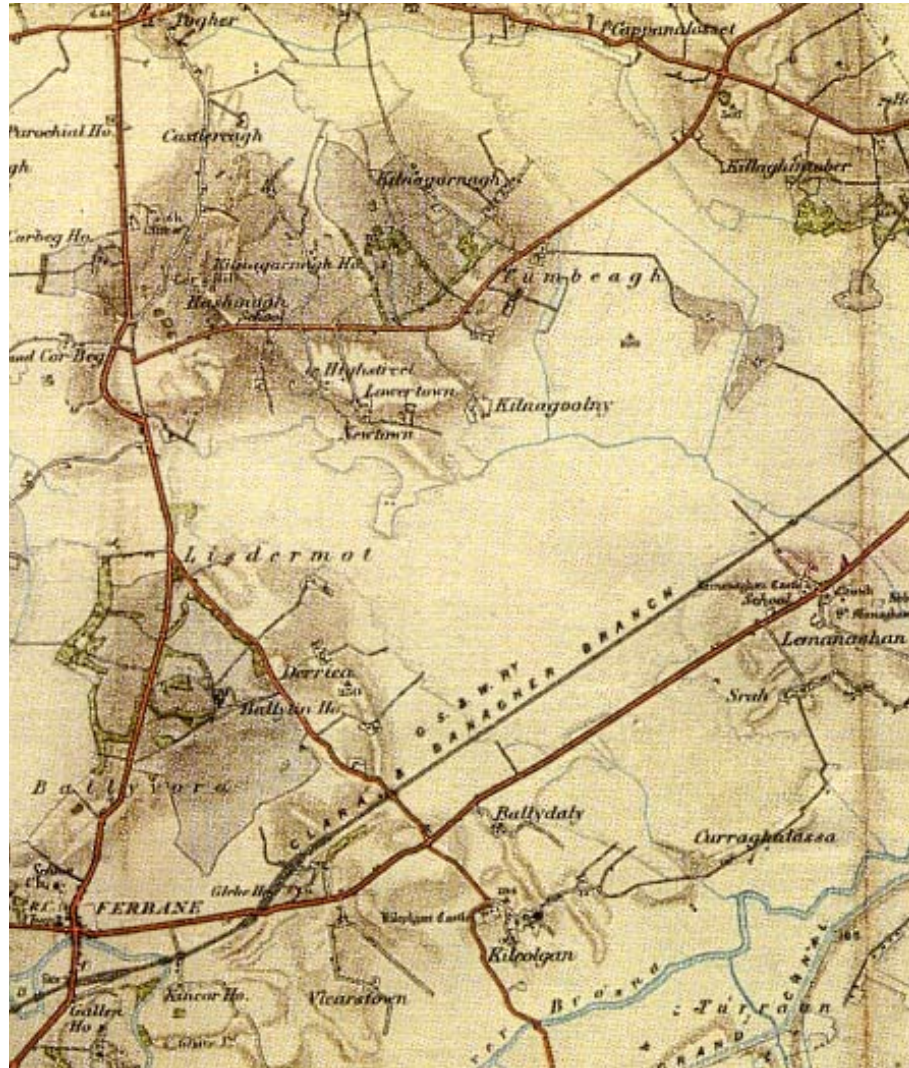


Figure 5: Detail from maps drawn up for the Commissioners for the Bogs, 1811

Bord na Móna acquired Lemnaghan Bog in 1949, attracting a number of new families to the area (pers. comm. Seamus Corcoran). Following a number of developmental stages, the bog began to be utilised for the production of sod peat as fuel. A German bagger machine which removed the top 2m (6'8") of sod was used. Between 1959 and 1980, the Lemnaghan works produced 378,000 tonnes of sod peat. In 1980, most of the peat had been extracted and the Lemnaghan sod works was closed and amalgamated with the Boora Works. The remaining peat is harvested as milled peat for conversion into electricity at Ferrane Power Station.

Since 1993, Bord na Móna, in consultation with Dúchas, has funded a programme of survey and excavation in the bog. It is as a result of this programme that the extent of the trackway network around Lemnaghan island has come to light (see Appendix E).

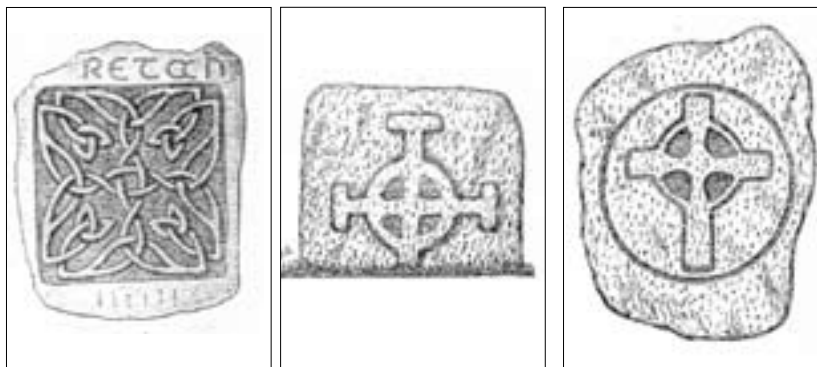


Plates 4 and 5: A general view of a trackway across the bog, with a close-up view following excavation [Courtesy Ellen O'Carroll]

In 1994, faced with the pending closure of Ferbane Power Station, Lemanaghan and Boora were linked to Shannonbridge by rail. The milled peat will eventually fuel the proposed Shannonbridge ESB Power Station which was scheduled for completion by 2004.³

THE MONASTIC COMPLEX

The monastic complex comprises two principal sites. The first is enclosed by a modern graveyard wall and contains St Managhan's Church and house. The second is marked by a rectangular medieval enclosure containing (above ground) a single oratory, St Mella's Cell. The two sites are linked by a medieval togher. In addition to these two elements are a holy well and tree, two bullauns⁴, a collection of early Christian grave slabs and carved stones (now housed in the schoolhouse), and a number of more remote associated archaeological sites and artefacts.



Plates 6, 7 and 8: Drawings of stone slabs at Lemanaghan by Henry Crawford (1911)

³ Shannonbridge Power Station started production on 30 June 2005

⁴ A bullaun is a stone with one or more circular depressions



Plates 9 and 10: Two views of the monastic complex [Project Team May 2001 – January 2002]

ST MANAGHAN'S CHURCH

As it now stands, the church is rectangular, measuring 19.4m x 7.5m. (63'6" x 24'6") It is roofless, and by 2001 had a vigorous ivy growth on all walls. This was cleared during the summer of 2001. The fabric consists mainly of roughly coursed limestone and sandstone, with dressed limestone details. There are some traces of render on the internal walls.

West Gable

This survives only to a height of 4.5m. (14'9"). It is pierced at the centre by a late 12th-century doorway that survives to only two courses in height. The doorway has squat bulbous bases with leaf spurs and three-quarter engaged shafts. All are of finely tooled limestone. Some further sections of the doorway are lying close by in the north-west angle of the church and in the schoolhouse. The angle quoins of this gable were apparently also dressed but some robbing of stone has occurred.



Plate 11: The West end of St Managhan's Church [Project Team May 2001 – January 2002]

North Wall

The north wall is completely devoid of opes. The only features of note are two clear vertical breaks in the fabric referred to below.



Plate 12: The North Wall [Project Team May 2001 – January 2002]

East Gable

This is built up on a prominent sloping plinth with fine dressed angle quoins. The gable is centrally pierced by a two-light ogee-headed window with squared hood mould, probably dating to the late 15th or early 16th century. There is a large breach in the wall directly above the east window. Internally, there is a small rectangular ambry to the south of the window.



Plates 13 and 14: The East Gable and East Window [Project Team May 2001 – January 2002]

South Wall

The south wall is pierced by three windows in its eastern end. From east to west, the first is a single light with a cusped trefoil head. The central window was originally a twin light with cusped trefoil heads. The west jamb survives to springer height and the east jamb to three-quarters of its original height. On the west side there is a hood stop with an elaborate vine and rosette motif. The corresponding eastern stop is carved with an amphisbaena⁵ and a man; it is stored in the schoolhouse. A section of cusped trefoil with foliate ornamentation and a section of mullion, both probably from this window, are also stored in the schoolhouse. The third window is a tall round-headed ope, probably dating to the late 12th century. Internally, the south wall has a niche with a two-centred arch with a piscina. An ambry is situated immediately below the twin light window.



Plates 15 and 16: The South Wall — close up and as seen from the graveyard [Project Team May 2001 – January 2002]

A large breach in the wall closer to the west end marks the position usually occupied by a door in later medieval parish churches. It is likely that a 15th/16th-century doorway has been robbed from this position.

St Managhan's 'House'

To the north-west of the church are the remains of a rectangular building which measures 6.8m x 8.4m. (22'4" x 27'6") Only the south-west angle of the building is upstanding, although the wall footings are still visible. The masonry is similar to the east end of the church, suggesting a 15th/early 16th-century date for the building. Sections of dressed stonework similar to those found in nearby Lemanaghan Castle were removed from the structure some years ago (pers. comm. S. Corcoran). The proportions and apparent date of this structure suggest that it may have functioned as a priest's residence similar to (although smaller than) St Brendan's house at Kilmalkedar, County Kerry.

⁵ An amphisbaena is a twin-headed mythical beast.

The Graveyard Enclosure

A relatively modern wall surrounds the graveyard. Although the date of this is uncertain, it is marked in its present form on the first edition OS map (1837). There is a coffin shelf on the western perimeter of the wall, gates opening onto the Pollagh road, and a track which leads to the well and togher.



Plate 17: The togher as it leads from the St Managhan's site to the Holy Well and St Mella's Cell

One early medieval stone which has been reused as a grave marker remains in the graveyard. It is decorated with a sophisticated fret and spiral pattern similar to forms found on 10th-century high crosses (see Appendix G). Apart from this, the majority of grave markers date to the 19th and 20th centuries. The ground in the graveyard falls quite steeply to the east of the church.



Plates 18 and 19: The early medieval spiral-pattern stone

The Togher

The togher is located to the south-east of the church and now appears to link the church and oratory. It is 368m (402 yards) in length with an average width of 4m (13'). Its surface is composed of outcropping limestone and sandstone flagstones. The word *togher* is generally used to describe a causeway. At most, however, this land would have been marshy, so it is perhaps not a togher in the usual sense. There are several large sandstone blocks in the vicinity of the togher that were probably pushed into the edges of the fields in which they originally stood. Until the 1980s, there were two large upright stones about mid-way along the togher. These were allegedly dislodged during drainage works and are now in the ditch beside the togher.

St Mella's Cell (Kell) and Enclosure

The enclosure is rectangular, measuring 41.7m x 30.7m (136'9" x 100'6") and delineated by an earthen bank faced with large slabs of limestone to a maximum thickness of 1.6m (5'3"). It is orientated east-north-east. The vegetation and condition of the enclosure wall make it difficult to ascertain the original location of the entrance. The first edition OS, which denotes the building and enclosure as 'the abbey', shows the togher meeting the enclosure wall to the west, while later editions show it twisting around the enclosure to just beyond the south-west corner. With the possible exception of a section in the north-east corner, it appears that the enclosure wall was never rebuilt and may be contemporary with the cell. There is no trace of the foundations of other buildings or of burial within the enclosure.



Plate 20: The wooded area around St Mella's Cell [Project Team May 2001 – January 2002]

The 'Kell', 'Kyle' or 'St Mella's Cell' is single-cell oratory, the only unaltered early Christian oratory in County Offaly. It is rectangular and measures 5.5m x 3.1m internally. The walls are 0.8m thick and are constructed from large blocks of mortared masonry, randomly coursed. The doorway, located in the west/north-west end of the building, is square-headed and inclined. The lintel and one of

the jambstones pass through the thickness of the wall. There is evidence of an iron door fixing in the north jamb of the ope. The east gable has fallen, and there is some indication of minor repair works. There is no indication remaining of the original form of the east window, and there are no windows in the side walls of the building. The oratory is orientated east/north-east.



Plate 21: The doorway of St Mella's Cell [Project Team May 2001 – January 2002]

St Managhan's Well

The holy well lies to the north of the togher. When it was renovated during the 1930s, four grave slabs in upright positions were revealed, set out in a cruciform pattern.



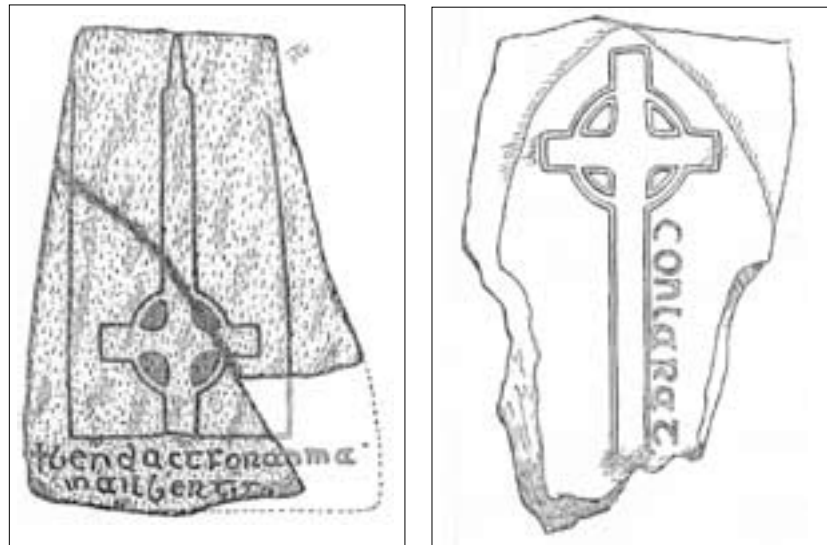
Plates 22 and 23: The Holy Well. Left: Note bullaun stone in the foreground [Project Team]

Bullauns

Two bullauns of local sandstone are associated with the site. One is located at the junction between the Clara-Ferbane road and the Lemanaghan-Pollagh road; the other is located at the entrance to the holy well.

Cross Slabs

There are 12 cross slabs from the site (described in greater detail in the Appendix G). Most are quite crudely carved and therefore difficult to date. However, they are probably early Christian, dating from the 8th to the 10th centuries. The majority are now stored in the nearby schoolhouse, and two are affixed to the wall of St Managhan's Church.



Plates 24 and 25: Drawings of two slabs from an article by Henry Crawford (1911)

LEMANAGHAN CASTLE

The castle was demolished in 1959. Only the south-west angle survives, with 5.8m (19 feet) lengths of west wall and 4.3m of south wall, both standing to a height of 2.5m (8.2 feet). The surviving wall portions are 0.96m thick and show evidence of a slight base batter. One-half of a two-centred punch-dressed doorway of late medieval date was recorded in the Dúchas Offaly Archaeological Survey as lying on the ground to the south. Attempts to locate this in 1999 and 2001 failed. A Sheela-na-Gig, recorded by Cooke in 1875 but now lost, is thought to have belonged to the castle



Plate 26: Lemanaghan Castle
[The Dúchas Collection]

3.3 ARTEFACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE

A number of significant artefacts is related to the site but are now remote from it.

- St Managhan's Shrine — a 12th-century gilt bronze, enamel and yew wood reliquary casket, now on display in the Roman Catholic parish church at Boher.



Plate 27: St Managhan's Shrine [Courtesy National Museum of Ireland]

The following artefacts are in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin:

- The Lemanaghan Crozier — an 11th-century crozier of gilt bronze and wood discovered in two parts in Lemanaghan Bog.
- The Wooden Staff — a blackthorn staff discovered stuck upright in Lemanaghan Bog adjacent to a medieval trackway.
- Polished stone axe-head — discovered in Corhill Bog to the north-west of Lemanaghan Island.
- Stone axe-head — polished stone axe-head, discovered in Straduff townland in 1996.
- Flint scraper — Neolithic flint scraper, found during excavation by the IAWU a little to the west of the find place of the stone axe-head.
- Spearhead — discovered in Leabeg townland during commercial turf-cutting operations. The blade is oval. The socket, now misshapen, is of circular cross-section and extended to the tip of the weapon, forming a very pronounced midrib on both faces of the blade.
- Shoes — One well-made leather shoe and fragments of another were recovered from Curraghalassa Bog. One is post-medieval and the other medieval.

- Wooden Finds — Wooden finds from Curragalassa Bog include the lid and base of a stave-built wooden vessel, probably Late Iron Age, and a number of perforated and dowelled shafts. Parts of an ash-wood turned bowl were found associated with one of the shoes.
- A hoard of silver coins, the only find of coins in an Irish bog, was discovered in Curragalassa Bog. There are 20 coins in all, dating to the reign of King Edward 1 (1279-1301). Nineteen were minted in London and one in Waterford.

These artefacts are described in greater detail in Appendix G.



Plates 28 and 29: Above: Polished stone axe-head found in Corhill Bog; Below: a shoe found on the site dating from the medieval period

3.4 THE EVOLUTION OF THE SITE

In the early Christian period, Lemanaghan occupied a fertile island of mineral land surrounded by bog on all sides. The island nature of Lemanaghan is less apparent today, however. In the centuries since the monastery was established, an aureole of land around the mineral island was drained and reclaimed. By reclaiming the bog fringes (edges) in the north-west, north-east and south-west quadrants, as well as the fen and callows on the banks of the Brosna to the south-east, new clachan-type (cluster of small farmsteads/homesteads) settlements grew up in places such as Srah and Camwerth. These developments were greatly facilitated, not only by the cutting of the Grand Canal in the 18th century, but also by the removal of Turraun Bog to the south-east of the canal. They may, however, reflect earlier settlement patterns, as excavations at Lisheen in County Tipperary have exposed areas of relatively dense occupation on the fringes of the bogs (Appendix E1).

The relationship between the two monastic sites and the way in which they evolved in relation to one another is far from clear. TL Cooke, a local 19th-century historian, asserted that the St Mella's Cell site represented the original hermetic site, known as 'Kyle', and that the St Managhan's site was relatively 'modern'. Parallels for this type of settlement pattern can be found at other early Irish monastic sites such as Glendalough, where the original monastery, located close to the hermitage of St Kevin, moved to a larger site nearby as the population of the monastery expanded.



Plate 30: An 1874 drawing of the doorway into St Mella's Cell

Certainly, there is little visible evidence of development of the St Mella's Cell site after the period of its construction, which may date to anything from the 10th to the 12th centuries. As there are no historical documentary references that distinguish this site specifically from the other, one can only surmise that probably by the 13th century, the church had all but fallen out of use. The site would not have been fully abandoned, however, as it lay on the routeway from Derrynagun Bog which was still in use to the 14th century when it underwent repairs.

The development of the principal 'St Managhan's' site is a little easier to trace. As stated above, the earliest remains from the site are probably the cross-inscribed grave slabs. Several of these are comparable to forms found at Clonmacnoise, usually dated to the 8th-10th centuries. Although moveable, the find context for most of these was the St Managhan's site. At the time when some of them were carved, there may have been wooden church buildings on the site.

The central portion of the church represents the earliest surviving building on the site. This is constructed from large rectangular blocks with bevelled edges, evenly coursed. It was roughly 9m (30 feet) in length; its original width was 7.5m (25 feet). This proportion of 1 : 1.2 suggests a church of 10th or 11th-century construction.

The next phase of building revealed following the removal of ivy from the fabric of the church comprises the westward extension of the church by about 3.4m (11 feet). This includes a fine western Romanesque doorway, and the insertion of a round-headed Romanesque window slightly to the east of an earlier one in the south wall of the nave. The fabric of this extension comprises a mixture of roughly coursed, relatively sizeable blocks of limestone and sandstone. Stylistically, the detailing of the door and window place this phase at the end of the 12th century. This coincides quite closely with the period during which the building may have become a parish rather than a monastic church. The need to extend westwards may have arisen from the need to accommodate a greater volume of lay parishioners.

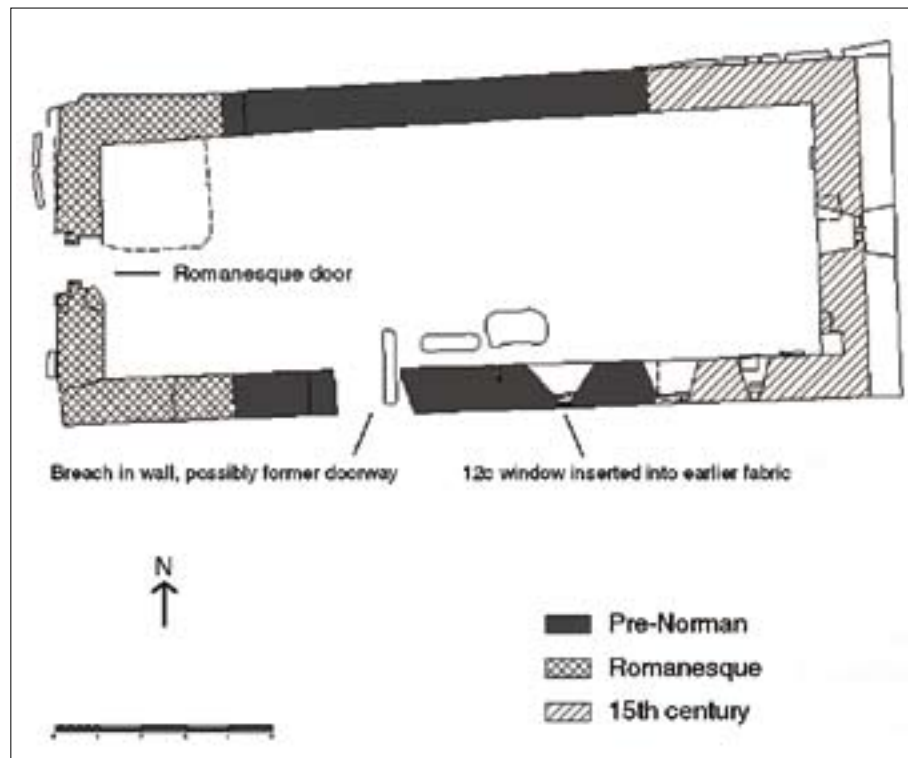


Figure 6: Phases of development of the church [Margaret Quinlan Architects]

The final phase of building in the church was the extension to the east by 5.5m (18 feet). This is constructed from smaller roughly coursed rubble limestone, with finely dressed quoins and a distinctive battered plinth at the east end, 2m (6.5 feet) in height. The quality of the windows incorporated during this time is good, suggesting that whoever patronised the extension had some wealth at his or her disposal. Documentary references to the vicarage at Lemanaghan during the 15th century suggest that, if anything, the vicarage was in decline during this period. In the early 16th century, the parish was temporarily unified with Clonmacnoise for the lifetime of Maurice Macohclayn who also held the cure of Clonmacnoise. While impossible to confirm with any certainty, the alterations may be attributable to him.

3.5 GEOLOGICAL SETTING

The geological situation of Lemanaghan is within a faulted syncline of muddy limestone of Lower Carboniferous age; the syncline is surrounded by Waulsortian mudbank ('reef') limestone, and further to the east by a pure fine limestone (one of the Irish 'grey marbles'). Large drift blocks of sandstone also abound in the area, especially in the wooded area, known locally as 'The Rocks', about 2km (1.25 miles) to the north-east of the monastic settlement. These come from the Basal Sandstone unit of the Lower Carboniferous which is encountered in boreholes rather than in outcrop in the Ferbane area.

Stonework

Most of the stone used in the buildings at Lemanaghan is of local drift origin; numerous very large blocks of limestone are characteristic of the local hummocky drift. The sandstone seems to be of more directly local provenance; drift-derived boulders of sandstone are generally less rounded but some of the material may derive from sub-outcrop in the wood to the north-east of the site.

All except the most recent tombstones in the graveyard are limestone, sourced by local headstone makers outside the immediate area. The early carved slab in the graveyard is sandstone, as are the few stones that seem to have been footstones. The cut limestone in the windows and elsewhere in the church is not of immediately local origin.

3.6 ECOLOGY

Hedgerows

There is very little out of the ordinary in the ecological heritage of the immediate site. The hedges by the toghar at the side of the St Managhan's site and along the Lemanaghan/Pollagh road are of little interest, being predominantly blackthorn and bramble, with a little elder and birch. The herbaceous vegetation is mainly weedy species: cleavers, creeping buttercup, couch grass, dandelion, white clover, perennial rye grass, broad-leaved plantain, ribwort plantain, nettle, common bent, red fescue, ivy, butterbur, creeping thistle and broad-leaved dock.

Grassland

There are two grassland communities in the graveyard: one of improved grassland in the graveyard proper, and a semi-natural grassland at the lower end dominated by false oat-grass.

The species in the hedge along the togher include sycamore, blackthorn, whitethorn, elder and privet, with a flora similar to that around the graveyard.

The ditch along the side of the togher has the usual common species for this type of habitat: wild iris, fool's water parsley, water horsetail etc. The most interesting plants are the few specimens of bay willow to the side of the togher just where it heads across the field.

A noteworthy feature of St Mella's Cell is the abundance of hemlock, a poisonous plant that has been widely used in herbal medicine. However, there is nothing to suggest that its presence here has anything to do with the archaeological context.

Trees

There is an attractive Scots pine in the graveyard, and a poor coppiced ash nearby. The fringe of beech outside the graveyard wall (with a few younger ash at the lower end) is attractive, if somewhat out of scale.

There are a number of large Scots pine in the St Mella's Cell enclosure. The large grey poplar beside St Mella's Cell is an attractive feature, although it threatens the integrity of the structure. The enclosure wall has some very old hawthorns in poor condition, with some elder and a little grey poplar. The holy tree at the well is an aged ash.

3.7 FOLKLORE

A particularly vibrant folklore continues to be preserved in the locality. Much of this relates to features in the landscape, both man-made and natural, which still survive today.

The Holy Well

Folklore relating to the well suggests that it was formed when St Managhan struck a rock. Another version says that it was blessed by him. Tradition states that nearly every ailment is cured at the well, but particularly neuralgia, cancer and warts. The folklore suggests that the person to be cured must apply water to the affected part and walk three times around the well. According to the Schools Manuscripts⁶, toothache is cured by going to St Managhan's well, praying, and putting some of the water on the tooth. Warts are cured in the same manner, but only on Fridays. The same source also records the use of water from the well for drinking and cooking. Gifts are still brought to the well, and it is a focal point on 24 January, Pattern Day.



Plate 31: The Holy Well and tree from the Mangan Collection

The Holy Tree

Near the well is a misshapen ash tree with a hollow trunk. The Schools Manuscripts record that people removed parts of the tree and put them in their houses. The lower branches continue to be festooned with rags and other devotional offerings.



Plate 32: The Holy Tree [Project Team May 2001 – January 2002]

St Managhan's Church

Another story relates that it was necessary to visit the well on three consecutive Fridays at three o'clock. Each Friday, water should be taken from the well and put into the font (the piscina) of the ruined church. The penitent must bless himself and say a *Pater* and three *Aves* to St Managhan. On the third visit, he must come through the window in the end of the ruin and, by believing in the saint, he will be cured. In return, the penitent must leave something like a button, pin or penny (*Catholic Yearbook for Ballynahowen Parish, 1939*).



Plate 33: Votive offerings are left at the font or piscina [Project Team May 2001 – January 2002]

St Managhan's Cow

The most famous story about St Managhan involves his cow, the milk from which was never to be sold but given away. Because the cow was so prolific, she was stolen by jealous farmers in Kilnamanaghan. As she objected to being taken from Lemanaghan, she marked her route by leaving the tracks of her hooves and tail on the stones. The saint followed the trail, but by the time he found her, she had been killed and was being cooked. Such were the powers of St Managhan that he brought the cow back to life by picking the pieces out of the pot and putting them back together again. Even though she lived to a ripe old age, the cow suffered a lame step because she had lost part of her thigh bone during her ordeal. In the 19th century, tradition claimed that a draught of milk was to be given free to wayfarers by the farmer's wife as milk was not to be sold there. The tradition of not producing milk for sale within the townland continues to the present day.

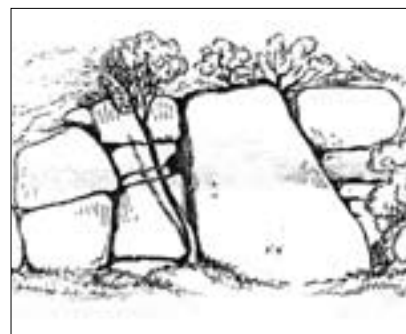
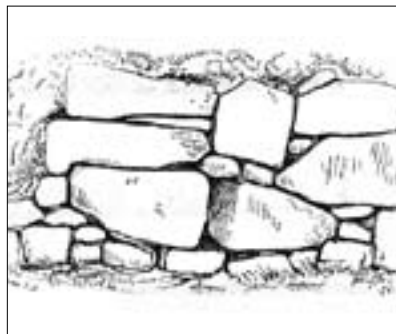
St Managhan and St Ciaran

Another commonly told story relates to St Managhan and St Ciaran.

'St Ciaran and St Managhan wanted to decide the boundary line between one another's territories. It was decided that they would rise early one morning and start walking toward one another's territories, and where they met would mark the boundary. On the appointed day, St Managhan arose early. He walked all the way to Clonmacnoise where he discovered that St Ciaran had slept in. Being a fair man, Managhan gave Ciaran another opportunity to claim his territory and told him that he could throw his cap and where it landed would mark the boundary. Ciaran threw his cap and as he did so, a great wind got up and carried the cap as far as Ballinahowen. On 9 September, there is always a great wind known as "St Ciaran's Wind".'

St Managhan and his Mother

St Managhan had taken a vow that he would never look at a woman. As a consequence, he and his mother (St Mella) had to meet at two upright slabs along the togher. In order to converse, they would sit back-to-back on either side of the slabs. These stones were dislodged during the 1980s, reputedly falling into a modern drain beside the togher.



Plates 34 and 35: The enclosure walls around St Mella's Cell (1874)

St Managhan's Burial Place

There is some confusion regarding where St Managhan is buried. The Schools Manuscripts tells the following story.

'On the death of St Managhan, there was a dispute between the people of Lemanaghan and Kilnamanaghan as to who had the right to the saint's remains. When the coffin came out of the church for burial, a fight started between the two communities. Suddenly an old grey-haired man appeared and told the people to put the coffin down and turn their backs to it. When the people turned around again, the old man was gone and there were two coffins, one facing towards Lemanaghan and the other towards Kilnamanaghan. To this day, it is not known who holds the saint's true remains.'

According to another school child, St Managhan's remains are buried under a flat inscribed stone that formerly lay to the east side of the church. Local tradition states that Managhan is buried under the 16th or 17th-century O'Buachalla grave slab at Boher. The O'Buachallas were traditionally the 'herdsmen' of Managhan.

St Mella's Cell (Kell)

Local tradition says that this building is thought to have been the house of St Managhan's mother, St Mella. Another tradition recounts that a witch lived there. In the earlier part of the 20th century, there was a story that treasure was buried under the threshold of the door. There is no tradition in the local folklore of devotional practices or burials taking place around St Mella's Cell or the enclosure.

3.8 ST MANAGHAN'S POEM

A 10th-century poem attributed to St Managhan is important in its description of the early Irish concept of the perfect monastery, the imitation of Christ and his apostles — the abbot and his twelve brethren. St Managhan is represented as setting down the criteria for such a monastery. The poem describes the perfect church, 'sweet with hangings', which accommodates six men standing on each side of the central aisle — it is tempting to picture St Mella's Cell in this description, a building just big enough to accommodate a community of this size. Fertile soil for plants is also seen as a necessity, with the choice provision being 'good fragrant leeks, hens, speckled salmon and bees' (see Appendix H).

3.9 PLACENAMES

Until AD 645, the area now known as Lemanaghan was called *Tuaim na nErc* (Toymanercke) — the mound of Erc. The use of the word *Tuaim* is often associated with a tumulus or pre-Christian burial mound and can imply usage as a place of pre-Christian ritual. Pre-Christian ritual usage is also implied by the number of places incorporating this name which later became colonised by the early Christian church — as Tuam, County Galway. Pre-Christian worship at Lemanaghan may be reflected in the presence of the holy well, typically situated at the periphery of the monastery enclosure.

Annalistic references to the foundation of the monastery ‘in honour of St Ciaran’ refer to the name of the place both as Leith and Liavanchan. Given that Managhan did not die until c. AD 665, presumably the place was initially named Leith or ‘grey place’, with the Managhan suffix, making ‘the grey place of Managhan’, being added at a later time. The use of the term Leith implies that the naturally occurring limestone of the island may have been more visible in the 7th century than it is now.



Figure 7: Petty's Barony map of 1685

Historically, the spelling and form of the name varies hugely, often varying within the same source. For example, the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, transcribed at Lemanaghan, use the forms *Liath Manachan*, *Leyuanchan*, *Liavanahan* and *Leith-mancan*, probably within the space of the same year. Various spellings of the name, together with the year in which the spelling was used, are listed below:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Leith (1302-6) | Lyevanaghin (1602) |
| Lecmankan (1400) | Lemanaghan in Druinn (1620) |
| Lyachmanachan (1410) | Leith-mancan (1627) |
| Lyach (1438) | Leyuanchan (1627) |
| Liachmanthayn (1489) | Liath-Manchan (1627, 1615) |
| Leyanantha (1497) | Liavanachan (1627) |
| Liathmanchayn (1508) | Lamonahan (1911) |
| Liath-Manchain (1531) | Leamonaghan (current) |
| Levanaghan (1587, 1687) | Lemanaghan (current) |
| Lethmanaghan (1571) | |

Matthew de Renzi, in his description of the McCoughlan castles (1620), refers to Lemanaghan Castle twice: once as 'Leamonaghan Castle in Druinn', and once simply as 'Druinn' (in a list of McCoughlan possessions). This is the only instance known where the place is referred to as Druinn. It may derive from *drum*, meaning ridge, as at this time the island may still have stood out from the lower, flatter bog and the callows around it.

Writing in 1837, Lewis refers to the village of Lemanaghan (as opposed to the parish) as also being known as Mealin. Following the destruction of the church at Lemanaghan, worship was transferred to a thatched chapel which stood on higher ground on the esker road between Boher and the Doon at Mealin or Millane ('brow', or 'brow of the hill'). Although this chapel had been destroyed by fire several decades prior to 1837, the two names may have become interchangeable as the focus of worship for the area.

Within the island are a number of more localised placenames. The principal monastic site located close to Lemanaghan village is known simply as St Managhan's or Lemanaghan. The second site is now known locally as Kell. In 1853, it is referred to as Kyle and marked on the 1910 OS map as 'abbey', with later editions denoting it 'St Mella's Cell'. *Cell* and *Kell* are obvious derivations of *cill*, meaning church. Kyle is usually either a derivation of *cill* or *Choill*, meaning 'wood'. When derived from *cill*, it is often a relatively modern application used to denote the use of an early Christian site as a burial place for unbaptised children, particularly in the south of the country (Joyce, Vol. I, 316).

The first edition OS map (1837) shows a small area of raised land to the north-east of the cell site with two structures marked on it. This area is known locally as Townagh, meaning 'the field'. There are two further settlements to the south of the village. Srah, located on the edge of the island, derives its name from *An tsraith*, meaning 'the riverside meadow'. The other settlement is marked on OS maps as 'Camwerth', although it is known locally as 'Convert'. No satisfactory source for this name has been found. It was formerly known as 'The Crooked Cornfield'.

LEMANAGHAN — EARLY CHRONOLOGY

3500BC	Earliest traces of human activity in Lemanaghan Bog. Stone axe head found in Corhill Bog (1996).
1500 BC	Trackways built at the northern end of Derrynagun bog, and at Kilnagarnagh bog.
900 BC	Trackway sites built across Corhill and Lemanaghan bogs.
c.AD 500-700	Dated archaeological sites from Castletown, Derrynagun and Curragalassa bogs indicate considerable human activity around this period.
AD 645	Monastery of Lemanaghan founded at ‘Tuaim na nErc’ by the Abbots of Clonmacnoise in ‘honour of God and St Ciaran’.
AD 663/665	Death of St Managhan, first Abbot of Lemanaghan.
717	Death of Managhan, Abbot of Leith.
851	Death of Flann, son of Reachtabhra, abbot of Liath.
767- 893	Recorded deaths of four further abbots of Lemanaghan.
c. 900-1100	Construction of earliest section of St Managhan’s Church and St Mella’s Cell and enclosure.
c. 1000-1100	Manufacture of the Lemanaghan crozier.
c. 1100-1200	Manufacture of St Managhan’s shrine.
c.1200	Extension westward of St Managhan’s Church.
1205	Death of Gillebrenyn O’ Bichollye, Abbot of Lemanaghan.
1302-6	The Papal taxation notes that nothing is received from the vicar at Leith as ‘the vicarage is devastated by war’.
c. 1301	A hoard of 20 silver coins, all dating to the reign of King Edward I (1279-1301) placed in Curragalassa Bog.
1400	Vicarage of ‘Lecmanikin’ recorded as vacant following the death of Cristinus O Buachala. It is valued as not exceeding 8 marks.
1410	Vicarage of ‘Lyachmanachan’ is granted to the Augustinian prior of St Mary Galynne (Gallen). It is valued at 6 marks.
1411 – 1654	Construction of wooden platforms in Derrynagun Bog.
1426	Vicarage and parish church granted to Mattheo Ochemyghi. It is valued at 5 marks.
1489	Robert Macadagayn is granted the perpetual vicarage of the parish church of Liachmanthayn. He is given permission to remove Philip O Buachalla who had claimed the vicarage without any lawful title to it.
1497	Vicarage and parish church of Lemanaghan granted to Nemeas O Dalachayn. It is valued at ‘not exceeding 8 marks’.

1508	Maurice Macohclayn, canon of the church of Clonmacnoise, is granted the vicarage and parish church of Liathmanchayn. He holds this jointly with the vicarage to the canonry and prebend of the church of Clonmacnoise. The union between the two was dissolved on his death.
c. 1500-1600	Extension eastwards of St Managhan's Church. Construction of 'St Managhan's house'— probably as a priests' residence.
1531	Murtough, the son of Conor Mac Coughlan, Prior of Gallen and vicar of Liath-Manachain was treacherously slain by Turlough Oge O'Melaghlin and Rory.
1571-1602	Royal pardons granted to Donell McCoughlan, Feardrge McEdmond and Cohergry McCoughlin, husbandmen all from Lemanaghan.
1615	Description of the old church of Lemanaghan as situated in the middle of a bog impassable in the time of winter.
1620	Earliest known survey of the barony of Garrycastle is carried out. Description by Matthew de Renzi of Lemanaghan castle.
1627	<i>Annals of Clonmacnoise</i> are translated in the castle by Conell MacGeoghagan and dedicated to Terence McCoghlin.
1630	<i>Martyrology of Donegal</i> refers to a great shrine kept on the altar of the church of Liath-Manachan in Dealbna-Mhec-Cochlain.
1641	Church at Lemanaghan probably destroyed during the rebellion, Lemanaghan castle passes into the hands of the Duke of Buckingham.
1659	The census of Ireland records a population of 26 people in 'Leaghmanagh' in the barony of Garrycastle, all of them Irish.
1682-5	Visitation of Bishop Dopping — The church at Lemanaghan is recorded as being in a ruinous condition, with church services being held in a nearby house.



4. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The examination of each element of the historic place contributes to a perspective of the whole. The assessment of those elements which single out Lemanaghan as a special place have been arrived at through an examination of the ways in which these various elements combine.

4.2 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Lemanaghan is a sacred place of great antiquity.

The site was an important centre of Christian worship throughout the Middle Ages. There is also evidence to suggest that it may have provided a focus for pagan ritual before the establishment of the monastery. The place retains a sense of peace and tranquillity, and is relatively untouched by modern life.

The site is of national archaeological significance.

Lemanaghan is exceptional in the survival of a range of both ecclesiastical and secular features, along with sections of associated infrastructure. These enable the compilation of a chronology and a narrative of the occupation of the site and its setting over c. 1,000 years that is without parallel.

The setting of Lemanaghan is significant in the context of early Christian monasticism.

The monastery at Lemanaghan was founded on an isolated upland area surrounded by inhospitable bog, an area which may once have been a centre of pagan worship. This follows the pattern of many early Irish monasteries. It was founded as a cell of nearby Clonmacnoise, one of the most powerful monasteries in early Christian Ireland. Close links between the two monasteries throughout their histories are confirmed by archaeological, art historical and documentary evidence.

The structures associated with the site are all of architectural significance.

St Managhan's Church incorporates fabric from three of the most important phases of church building in the Middle Ages and as such, it documents the fortunes of the monastery through this period. The late 15th or 16th-century work in the east end is of particularly high quality. St Mella's Cell is a rare example of a pre-Romanesque oratory which does not appear to have undergone any major alteration or repair since it was constructed. It is the only unaltered example of its type in County Offaly.

St Mella's Cell and Enclosure are of national archaeological importance.

The enclosure in which St Mella's Cell is located is exceptional in its rectangular form and method of construction. The choice of a rectangular enclosure, as opposed to the more commonplace circular or D-shaped forms, is difficult to explain, suggesting that when it was built, the oratory may have served a very particular function. The lack of any evidence of modern burial/disturbance of the ground within the enclosure and the cell is very unusual in the context of early Christian buildings.

The number and quality of artefacts associated with the site are of archaeological and art historical significance.

St Managhan's shrine, the wooden staff and the metalwork crozier are items of national importance. St Managhan's shrine is unique both in artistic accomplishment, and in the fact that it is still associated with the locality for which it was made. The number and range of items found in the bogs around Lemanaghan provide a rare insight into the material culture of the settlement.

The documented history of Lemanaghan is rich for a site of this type and ties in particularly closely with the archaeological evidence.

This applies to both the earlier and later periods of its history, first as a monastic site and later as a parish church. Seventeenth-century documentation of the secular occupation of the parish is also quite rich and is included in a number of early surveys and census returns. The castle was of significance as being the location where the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* were translated.

The site is significant in its continued use for devotional practices.

Although the church at Lemanaghan fell out of use in 1641, the holy well, holy tree and the piscina in St Managhan's church all continue to provide a focus for worship, as evidenced by an ever-changing array of offerings.

There is a vibrant folklore associated with the place.

Continuity of worship is mirrored in the vibrant folklore which, linked directly to the monuments in many instances, has contributed to keeping the history of the site very much alive.



5. DEFINING THE ISSUES AND ASSESSING VULNERABILITY

This section describes the factors that impact on the monuments and surrounding area, along with the degree to which the significance of the place is now affected by them or may be in the future.

The order in which these issues are treated is not a reflection of their relative importance, as each is significant in its own way. To a certain extent, however, the order does reflect the sequence in which policies designed to deal with these issues will require implementation, as dealt with in Sections 6 and 7.

Factors which have impacted on the significance of the monument in the past, or which are likely to affect its significance in the future, are:

- Ownerships and responsibilities
- Vulnerability of surviving monuments
- Appropriate route for the Pilgrim Path
- Proper understanding of the place
- Levels of protection
- Land use
- Continuation of traditional practices
- Infrastructure
- Potential future conflicts

5.1 OWNERSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The various elements which make up the area under consideration in this Conservation Plan are in a number of different ownerships. St Managhan's Church and graveyard are in the ownership of the local authority. St Managhan's Well, the togher leading from it to St Mella's Cell, the cell itself and the castle are in four different private ownerships. Prior to the promotion and development of these different aspects of the site, it is crucial that consensus be reached with the owners in terms of public access and the integrated long-term management of the different elements.
- In the early 1990s, St Managhan's Restoration and Development Association took possession of the schoolhouse and carried out various works. Although they are the current key holders, title to the building is unclear. Before any development of visitor facilities in this location is progressed or permission applied for, legal title must be formally established.
- During the 1990s, the collection of Early Christian slabs and some carved stone, currently stored in the schoolhouse, was brought in from the site for safekeeping. This was done without the approval of Dúchas (then the Office of Public Works) or any other statutory body; the original locations of the slabs were not recorded. As *ex situ* archaeological artefacts, they

come under the legal protection of the National Museum of Ireland and, in accordance with the National Monuments Acts, should be housed in a 'Place of Designated Safety', i.e. either the National Museum itself or a county museum. The artefacts are now housed in a place and in a manner which is not in accordance with legislation. In order to keep the stones associated with the site, ownership must be formally established and responsibility for their long-term care taken in a manner approved by the National Museum of Ireland.

- There is local evidence that two slabs were removed from the site by a private individual during the 1960s. The whereabouts of these artefacts is known, and their return to the main collection would be favourable.

5.2 VULNERABILITY OF SURVIVING MONUMENTS

- The condition survey carried out on both St Mella's Cell and St Managhan's Church revealed that the fabric will continue to deteriorate unless corrected. Excessive ivy growth on both structures has led to the dislodgement of masonry. In some cases, fabric is held in place only by ivy stems. Old photographs reveal that decay has accelerated over the past few decades, and much of the fallen masonry around the structures has only recently become dislodged.
- St Mella's Cell has also suffered damage caused by livestock and the removal of stone. In addition, it is suffering from the threat of adjacent mature trees whose condition and proximity to the structure pose a potential danger to its integrity. There is evidence of the occasional use of the building as a gathering place, with the lighting of campfires and discarded bottles and wrappers within the structure.
- In the case of St Managhan's Church, there is concern for the future security of some of the higher quality carved stone associated with the site.
- The two early Christian slabs attached to the wall of St Managhan's Church are at risk of theft and should be made more secure. As these are not in their original location, it would be desirable to remove them and store them with the rest of the collection of slabs from the site. Similarly, while the slabs and other worked stone currently stored in the schoolhouse are safe from the threat of casual theft, their long-term storage in this location is unsatisfactory and must be regularised.
- The potential of increased visitors to the site poses the risk of additional wear and tear to the structures, and perhaps to the togher.
- Vegetation growth on the togher is strong. While at present this has the beneficial effect of discouraging all but the most interested of visitors from using it, a method of vegetation control will be required in the longer term.

5.3 APPROPRIATE ROUTE FOR THE PILGRIM PATH

The route for the Pilgrim Path, as proposed in the 1999 report, passes through the graveyard of St Managhan's Church, past the holy well, and up the medieval togher to St Mella's Cell. It then progresses north-west to meet the line of the Derrynagun Bog trackway and proceeds on to Boher. The findings of the current Conservation Plan suggest that there are a number of significant difficulties with the route from Lemanaghan to Boher in its present form. In summary, these difficulties are as follows:

- The fabric of St Mella's Cell is very fragile. Without consolidation, an increase of visitors to the site would be dangerous both to visitors and the building.
- Sections of the trackway in Derrynagun Bog have been exposed by drainage ditches across the bog. While these are of great interest in terms of the stratification of the road, providing a tangible link for modern walkers to their medieval counterparts, the track is extremely vulnerable in this state and highly susceptible to damage.
- The structure of the togher which leads from the holy well to St Mella's Cell is unknown. If, as is likely, the togher is of similar construction to the trackway in Derrynagun Bog, the surface slabs may lie on vulnerable, preserved timbers.
- Without a proper survey of the togher, there would be no means of monitoring damage or subsidence to the togher caused by an increase in visitors.
- Large numbers of non-cultural/day-tripper tourists could have a detrimental effect on the devotional use of St Managhan's Church and Well.
- The number of moveable carved stones stored in St Managhan's Church would be at an increased risk of theft.

The combination of these issues suggests the need to adopt, in the short term at least, the proposed, alternative Pilgrim Path route from Lemanaghan to Boher. This is shown in Figure 8 and dealt with in Section 6.3 and in Appendix I.

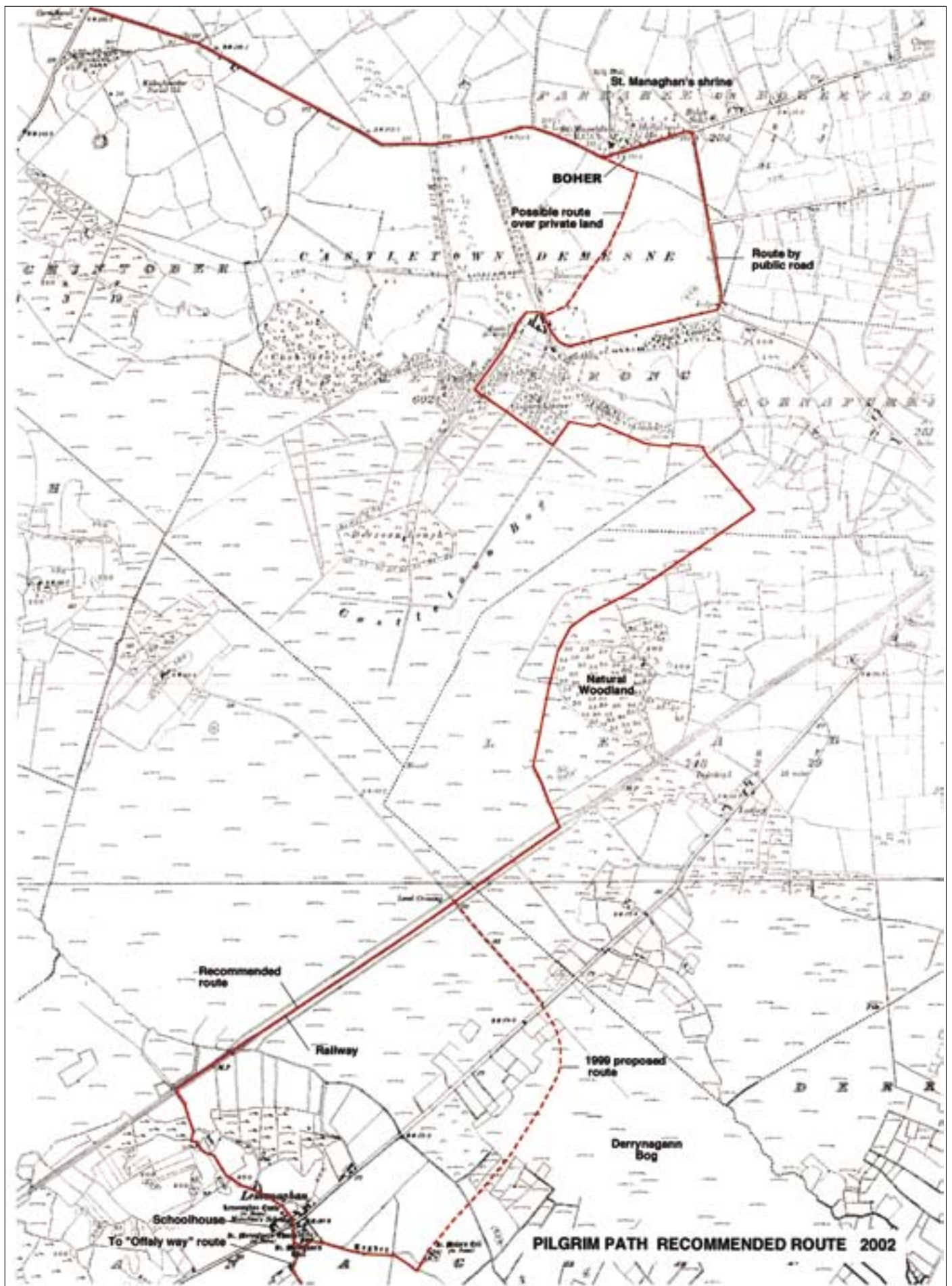


Figure 8: A map of the Pilgrim Path.

FIGURE 8 NOTE: The recommended route is on a line which has been agreed in principle with Bord na Móna. It is not intended to imply that, in its present state, the surface and terrain are necessarily suitable for visitors.

5.4 PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PLACE

- Until now, the importance of Lemanaghan has been recognised only at local and specialist levels. Recent archaeological work carried out by the Irish Archaeological Wetlands Unit (IAWU) and Archaeological Developments Services (ADS) Ltd has revealed an important but delicate archaeology in the immediate environs of the site. The number of tracks leading to the island across the surrounding bogland highlights the archaeological importance of the entire upland area. Knowledge of the evolution of upland settlement, both ecclesiastical and secular, is scant. Potentially, all parts of the upland area could yield important archaeology; thus care will be required to identify potential archaeology in any future developments.
- Investigation of the fabric of St Managhan's Church, and more generally of the archaeology and documentary history of Lemanaghan, has revealed something of the evolution of the historical complex. The relationship between St Mella's Cell and the principal section of the site remains obscure. There is need for further investigation, in particular in the vicinity of St Mella's Cell where features may lay hidden below ground.
- The area has a diverse flora and fauna from a variety of different habitats, comprising bogland, upland, bog and bog fringes, and including some natural woodland. Although a survey of the ecology along the route of the Pilgrim Path was carried out in 1999, the area would benefit from a more far-reaching study.
- With regard to interpretation, some limited information is available locally in the form of road signage and interpretative panels in Boher Church. The recent publication on the archaeology of the bog has also done much to increase local knowledge and awareness. However, a coherent presentation on the site as a whole which encompasses the history, archaeology, industrial archaeology and natural history is lacking.

5.5 LEVELS OF PROTECTION

- At present, St Managhan's Church and graveyard, the tower and St Mella's Cell are recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places. As such they are afforded notification protection under the National Monuments Acts.
- The upland area of Lemanaghan is one of archaeological potential. At present it is afforded protection only through its context as a curtilage for the monuments (see Section 5.9).
- Local pride in the history and archaeology of Lemanaghan is strong. However, an increased awareness of the national significance of the site would be of benefit in terms of providing further protection. This is particularly true of educational projects at school levels which will ensure understanding and protection by future generations.

5.6 LAND USE

- The landscape setting of Lemanaghan has changed beyond recognition from the period when the first monastery was established. Changing agricultural practices, the commercial working of the bog, and drainage work to the River Brosna are just some of the factors that have had perhaps the most profound effect, altering the very island nature of the site. As agricultural practices continue to change, and exploitation of the bog is planned for at least a further 20 years, the natural setting of Lemanaghan is set to evolve further.
- Against this background, there is a need for a sensitive approach to landscape management and development in the area, in addition to the preservation of areas of natural significance which have benefited from a lesser degree of intervention. This would include changes to hedgerows, in particular those which appear well-established around Srah and Camwerth, and the excavation of new drains which might affect the archaeology of the area.
- Lemanaghan Bog will continue to be worked for at least another 20 years. At present, Bord na Móna policy supports sustainable re-use of cutaway bog. Recently published guidelines (*Cutaway Bog Rehabilitation: Condition 10 Integrated Pollution Control Licence*) outline various options considered for bog rehabilitation, including coniferous and hardwood plantation forestry, agricultural farmland, or wetland rehabilitation; also listed are primary and secondary factors used to identify the appropriate after-use. Primary factors that may influence the post-industrial use of the bog will depend on physical characteristics such as peat type, peat depth, drainage, sub-surface contours and subsoil type. Secondary influencing factors will be accessibility, adjacent land use, proximity to NHAs and SACs, archaeological interest and community imperatives. Currently, it is not possible to forecast what after-use might be proposed for Lemanaghan Bog, but it is likely that secondary factors may supersede primary ones. It is important that the options considered for the post-industrial use of the bog are sympathetic to the significance of the site.
- At present, St Managhan's Church is shielded from traffic on the R436 Ballycumber/Ferbane road by a strip of land and a row of beech trees, providing a more peaceful aspect to the site than would otherwise be the case. It is important that this, and the clear view of the church from the approaches, be maintained.

5.7 CONTINUATION OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

- The annual Pattern Day on 24 January is always well attended, and the range of coins, rags and other devotional items left both in the piscina of St Managhan's Church and around the well is constantly changing. This highlights the manner in which local people still view the site as a holy place. Should visitor numbers increase, in particular numbers of day-trippers as opposed to cultural/educational visitors, this traditional use of the site could be compromised.

- The holy tree and holy well may represent the continuity of devotional practices at the site extending back to the pre-Christian era. The holy tree, an ash, is now old, and although still alive, is in a poor state.
- There is a particularly vibrant folklore attached to Lemanaghan. It is important that this be kept alive and that its particularly strong relationship to the landscape be preserved.
- A number of local placenames differ from those names recorded on the OS map. Examples of these include ‘Kell’, recorded on OS maps as ‘the abbey’, and ‘St Mella’s Cell’ and ‘Camwerth’, known locally as ‘Convert’. Should publicity around the site increase and utilise OS names, it is likely that the local names will die out.

5.8 INFRASTRUCTURE

- The schoolhouse and St Managhan’s site are situated at a busy crossroads. Until recently, there were no advance warning signs. There are no speed restrictions. Blind corners at the crossroads, coupled with speeding vehicles, pose a risk to both drivers and pedestrians visiting the site.
- While space would be available at the rear of the schoolhouse for car-parking, the promotion of the site for educational purposes will necessitate provision for coach set-down and turning points.
- At present, the schoolhouse is serviced by neither electricity nor water. Both would need to be provided prior to its use as a visitor facility.
- Large tracts of Lemanaghan Bog, adjacent to the upland area, are currently being worked by Bord na Móna, and this will continue to be the case for approximately 20 years. There are no established walking routes across the bogs, which are potentially hazardous in terms of working machinery, deep drainage ditches, and the general instability of the bog surface. In the summer months, opening the bogs to the public also poses the threat of fire. Without the provision of a designated boardwalk/track, it would be unsafe to allow visitors to walk across the bog.

5.9 POTENTIAL FUTURE CONFLICTS

- As the significance of the monument becomes more widely known, an increase in visitor numbers is to be expected. The essential character of the site and its archaeological integrity will be threatened by a substantial increase in visitor numbers.
- Any developments in the immediate vicinity of the site would need to be sensitive to the site and its setting.
- Changes to the infrastructure or development in the locality could have adverse environmental effects, ultimately affecting the monuments.
- The continuing practice of burial both inside and around the church could, if not managed in an appropriate manner, adversely affect the substructure.

6. CONSERVATION POLICIES

Policy Statement: The Overview

The group of monuments at Lemanaghan within their setting is of national significance. The range and extent of survival of the monuments and their associated artefacts are practically unequalled in the country. Their history represents a microcosm of the rise and fall of many rural Irish settlements, embodying the evolution of a probable pagan site to an important Early Christian monastery, to a secular parish and on to a modern-day small settlement.

The objective of this Conservation Plan is to recommend actions to maintain the layers of significance embodied in the place, the monuments and their setting, in the context of the delicate physical state of the buildings and archaeology, and the strong local traditions of continued devotion at the site.

Following the original brief, policies are set out for:

- The structures
- The provision of a route for the Pilgrim Path from Lemanaghan to Boher
- For the provision of visitor facilities at the Schoolhouse, including parking and toilet facilities

As these elements are inextricably linked, they are dealt with in an integrated manner below.

Section 5 identifies nine key issues that affect, or have the potential to affect, the significance of the site. These are:

- Ownerships and responsibilities
- Vulnerability of surviving monuments
- Appropriate route for the Pilgrim Path
- Proper understanding of the place
- Levels of protection
- Land use
- Continuation of traditional practices
- Infrastructure
- Potential future conflicts

Policies to deal with each of these are presented below.

The implementation of policies will require the setting up of two groups – an initial working group to establish ownerships and responsibilities, and a management group to look after the site (see Section 7.2).

6.1 OWNERSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy 1: Establish ownerships and clarify responsibilities.

- Establish ownerships of and responsibilities for the monuments, the adjoining lands which give access, the schoolhouse, and the collection of early Christian slabs and carved stone currently stored in the schoolhouse.
- Take St Mella's Cell into State care and establish a way leave to the site.
- Establish proper title to and agree future responsibility for the schoolhouse and curtilage.
- Agree ownership of and responsibility for the collection of medieval stone currently in the schoolhouse, and agree a location and form of secure storage for the slabs (see 6.2).

6.2 VULNERABILITY OF SURVIVING MONUMENTS

Policy 2: The owners of St Managhan's Church, St Mella's Cell and enclosure, the holy well and the togher should ensure that the appropriate expertise is brought to bear on all matters impacting on the fabric and usage of the historic place.

Policy 3: To retain the full authenticity and integrity of the place, the evidence of various stages of evolution should maintain in situ.

Policy 4: Halt the deterioration of the fabric and prevent further deterioration by putting a range of conservation measures in place. This would be aimed at retaining material integrity and countering adverse conditions brought about by the excessive vegetative intrusion on standing structures.

- Carry out urgent temporary works to structures to prevent rapid deterioration (see Section 7.3 and Appendix C).
- In consultation with appropriate bodies, establish a methodology for the removal of ivy and stabilisation of the masonry at St Managhan's Church and St Mella's Cell and enclosure.
- Based on the agreed methodology, a conservation programme for the fabric of the church should be implemented by Offaly County Council, the owners of the church and graveyard.
- As prospective owners or guardians of St Mella's Cell and enclosure, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should establish a conservation programme.
- In conjunction with Dúchas, investigate the possibility of reassembling the loose stone at both St Managhan's Church and St Mella's Cell. This should be based on documentary evidence and by a trial dry assembly.
- Following agreement on ownership, construct secure housing for the slabs. This should offer protection against the natural elements, damage and theft, as well as allowing for a visitors' display which does not require the attendance of a caretaker. This storage/display area will be close to, but distinct from, the schoolhouse. Depending on decisions of the working group, it may be necessary to reserve part of the schoolhouse site and vest or lease to the statutory body responsible for the collection of slabs.

- On a quinquennial basis, complete and maintain a full record of the fabric of St Managhan's Church, St Mella's Cell and graveyard. This could form part of the Pilgrim Path monitoring regime.

6.3 APPROPRIATE ROUTE FOR THE PILGRIM PATH

Policy 5: Adopt the proposed alternative route for the Pilgrim Path between Lemanaghan and Boher.

This will allow the visitor to experience the historical and natural significance of the place in a manner which will minimise detrimental effects to the monuments and their surroundings (see Appendix I). This will be managed by the management group which will include a representative from the local authority.

- Make an electronic record of the togher and monitor it on an agreed basis to check whether any subsidence is taking place. A test archaeological trench could be cut to establish construction and discover whether timbers underlie the stone flags.
- Pending conservation and survey works, discourage access to St Mella's Cell, the togher and the Derrynagun trackway.

6.3 PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PLACE

Policy 6: Put measures in place which improve knowledge and awareness of the significance of the place.

Where appropriate, the management group will liaise with the established Pilgrim Path steering committee, owners and appropriate statutory bodies, and will *inter alia* be responsible for initiating the following measures.

- Develop a design brief for a visitor centre to be housed in the schoolhouse. Include a display area for information panels, models etc. (no original artefacts to be displayed). Allow space for an audio-visual presentation. The exhibition should include information on the buildings, artefacts associated with the site, the archaeology of the bog, the industrial archaeology of the bog, folklore, and information on the local flora and fauna.
- Promote the schoolhouse and site as an educational resource for schools from its historical, art historical, archaeological, geographical and natural perspectives.
- Produce a 'Schools Pack' to complement the exhibition material, and the man-made and natural heritage of the area.
- Produce a publication that deals with all aspects of the area in an accessible and coherent manner.
- Erect appropriate signage and information panels.
- Conduct a geophysical survey. Dig a trial archaeological trench on the togher. Conduct a geophysical survey of the area within the St Mella's Cell enclosure.
- Conduct a natural history survey of the area, and along any revised sections of the Pilgrim Path route. This could be a parish heritage survey based on the lines of the proposal for a rural Heritage Survey for County Offaly.

6.5 LEVELS OF PROTECTION

Policy 7: Promote complementary actions by the statutory bodies with responsibility for heritage and the community for the protection of the site.

- The historic complex at Lemanaghan is already afforded statutory protection under the National Monuments Acts, 1930-2004, and the Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts, 2000. The Planning Authority, in conjunction with Dúchas (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government), should establish measures which will raise awareness of the existing protections in the local community. In addition, the community should be informed of the facilities offered for preparing consultation with the Planning Authorities and with Dúchas. The benefits involved in availing of this service should be made clear.
- Dúchas should develop guidelines which will assist developers and property owners in avoiding or minimising disturbance to archaeological material.
- The owners of the monuments and the management group should promote knowledge of the area, as outlined in Section 6.4, in order to strengthen its protection.

6.6 LAND USE

Policy 8: Put measures in place to ensure land use that is sensitive to the significance of the place.

- In order to retain the setting of the site, the management group will liaise, where appropriate, with local farmers to ensure that current land use practices are continued, or that any changes to current usage would not negatively affect the setting.
- The management group will also liaise with Bord na Móna and ensure that the continued working of the bog and its use when work ceases are sensitive to the significance of the place.
- Ensure that the piece of land immediately to the north of St Managhan's graveyard continues to act as an effective natural buffer between the road and church site, and that the line of beech trees along the boundary wall is maintained.
- Ensure that the view of St Managhan's Church, from approximately 300m (984 feet) on the southern and western approaches, is not obscured by large-scale agricultural or commercial development. Small-scale, single-storey building on the existing building line will not affect sightlines. It is preferable that any boundaries in the vicinity be kept to a height which would not obstruct the view of the church.

6.7 CONTINUATION OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

Policy 9: Protect the continued devotional use of St Managhan's Church and well.

- Publicity for the site should discourage all but devotional/cultural/educational visitors from visiting the well. It should emphasise the importance of continuity of devotion at Lemanaghan.
- The management group should ensure a proper understanding of the manner in which the well and piscina are used so that offerings are not disturbed.
- The holy tree should be propagated so that, in the event of damage or destruction, a new tree from the same source can replace it.
- Support the annual Pattern Day (24 January) by ensuring that facilities at the schoolhouse are made available to those attending on a regular basis.
- Support the survival of traditional placenames by including them in signage and educational material.

6.8 INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy 10: Establish improvements to the area's infrastructure which will increase visitor safety and facilitate an appropriate increase in visitor numbers.

- Address the problem of road traffic at Lemanaghan crossroads in consultation with Offaly County Council and Gardaí. This could be dealt with by the introduction of traffic-calming measures, allowing pedestrian traffic to move between the schoolhouse and church site, with cars entering and leaving the schoolhouse site without adding to existing hazards.
- In agreement with Offaly County Council, provide a bus drop-off point at the front of the schoolhouse. This could be achieved by rebuilding the low road boundary wall closer to the building. Provide turn-around points a short distance from the schoolhouse along the R436 Ballycumber/Ferbane road.
- Install those amenities associated with the visitor facility at the schoolhouse to include items mentioned below.
- Provide a limited number of car-parking spaces (maximum 10) at the rear of the schoolhouse.
- Provide toilet facilities within the 1950s extension, with associated sewage treatment at the rear of schoolhouse, in a manner that minimises interference with potential archaeology.
- Provide water and electricity to the schoolhouse.
- Obtain planning permission for the above.
- Discourage visitors from leaving the Pilgrim Path route and walking on the bog.

6.9 POTENTIAL FUTURE CONFLICTS

Policy 11: Establish procedures to anticipate and resolve future conflicts.

- At regular intervals, the management group should review the various issues outlined above which have the potential to affect the significance of the place. The various conflicts are listed under appropriate headings and include land use, inappropriate development, increased visitor numbers etc.



7. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The successful implementation of the Conservation Plan depends on several factors:

- The major stakeholders should adopt the general and specific policies in the Plan.
- Resolve the issues of ownership and responsibility.
- Establish complementary policies and co-ordinate stakeholders' implementation procedures.
- Provide adequate resources.
- Conduct a periodic review of the Conservation Plan and implementation measures.

7.1 ADOPT THE CONSERVATION PLAN

The production of a Conservation Plan is only the first stage of the process. It is the end result of a process of investigation, analysis and consultation among the principal stakeholders, culminating in agreed actions which should be taken to conserve the historic place. The principal stakeholders in the case of Lemanaghan are Offaly County Council, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Heritage Council, Bord na Móna, other landowners, and the local community in which the monuments are situated.

The next step involves the stakeholders' acceptance of the significance of the studies' findings, followed by the endorsement of the policies developed to protect the historic place.

The stakeholders, whose responsibilities towards the monuments vary, must then determine those procedures which are required for the implementation of the Plan.

7.2 RESOLVE THE ISSUES OF OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

As co-sponsors of the Conservation Plan, the Heritage Council and Offaly County Council should establish a working group, formed by representatives of the stakeholders and the National Museum of Ireland, to clarify ownerships and responsibilities. The remit of this group should encompass the following:

- Take St Mella's Cell and enclosure into State care.
- Establish ownership of the *ex situ* carved slabs and agree on the manner of their protection.
- Establish ownership of the schoolhouse.
- Agree on responsibility for establishing the visitor centre and the continuing maintenance of the schoolhouse.

- Agree the revised route for the Pilgrim Path with Bord na Móna, other local landowners and the Pilgrim Path committee. This forum should also agree management procedures for the path.

An early resolution of the issues of ownership and responsibility is a prerequisite for any future action. The working group's terms of reference will be confined to resolving those issues which enable the handover of a package of clear and well-defined elements to a management group.

7.3 ESTABLISH COMPLEMENTARY POLICIES AND CO-ORDINATE THE STAKEHOLDERS' IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

As co-sponsors of the Conservation Plan, the Heritage Council and Offaly County Council should initiate a management group, comprised of stakeholders' representatives, to oversee the implementation of the Conservation Plan. This group will act as a channel for communication and coordination with regard to the implementation of complementary policies and procedures by each of the stakeholders.

The group will be responsible for the following:

- Prepare management proposals
- Establish a programme of conservation
- Plan new developments
- Manage a programme of maintenance and repair
- Provide a framework for supporting action by others

The group will also establish and coordinate the following urgent works in consultation with appropriate bodies.

Short term

- Erect a temporary electric fence to exclude livestock from the immediate area of St Mella's Cell.
- Assess the condition of trees at St Mella's Cell. Remove any trees or branches which are causing an immediate threat to St Mella's Cell.
- Establish a methodology and initiate the removal of ivy from St Mella's Cell and St Managhan's Church, along with stabilising the masonry.
- The slabs currently fixed to the wall of St Managhan's Church and the worked stone currently in the north-west corner should be moved to a place of secure storage.
- Propagate the holy tree.



Medium to longer term

Prepare a management plan which allocates resources to a programme of continuing conservation, development works, repair and maintenance in accordance with the provisions of the Conservation Plan. These include *inter alia*:

- Establish a conservation programme based on the agreed methodology (see Section 6.2).
- Carry out a geophysical survey of St Mella's Cell enclosure and the togher.
- Produce a design brief for the schoolhouse/visitor centre project and appoint a design team.
- Arrange secure housing for slabs.
- Obtain statutory permissions and carry out all necessary conservation work.
- Commission a natural history survey of the area.
- Arrange the design and production of an exhibition, educational material, signage etc.
- Organise a system of light grazing to control vegetation along the togher.

7.4 RESOURCES

The Conservation Plan allows the stakeholders to identify and agree priorities and to allocate resources on the basis of these priorities.

The allocation of resources will, to a large degree, be related to a resolution of the issues of ownership and responsibility, particularly in relation to St Mella's Cell, the secure store for carved stone, the schoolhouse building and the togher.

Initial work to the buildings should be exploratory. It should first establish knowledge of the specific construction and characteristics of the masonry before proceeding further.

The first season's work should be regarded as a pilot project that would address all aspects of the problems faced in applying the agreed methodology, after which the remaining work may be quantified in a more realistic way.

The most effective and economical approach to the stabilising works is to appoint a contractor with experience of working with historic fabric who would deploy a small team of two/three operatives on an annual basis for the summer months. Depending on the outcome of the pilot stage, the number of phases necessary may be estimated.

Grant Aid

Grant aid is available for some of the works under the DoELG/NDP/EU for Urban and Village Renewal, Regional Operational Programmes, 2000–2006, operated by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Under this scheme, grants are provided for the restoration and conservation of the architectural heritage involving buildings, which are in public ownership or open to the public generally, and which are considered to be of considerable architectural merit.

Temporary works to St Managhan's Church to prevent collapse were funded under the Urban and Village Renewal, Regional Operational Programme in 2001; a further application was made for 2002. This programme continues until 2006 and application for grant aid phased work may be made each year.

7.5 **REVIEW**

The Conservation Plan will be subject to ongoing review by the management group until completion of the works to stabilise the fabric. Thereafter, the Plan should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

END NOTES

A Conservation Plan is generally adopted before any action is taken on the policies recommended within it. However, in this case, the following necessary actions were taken prior to adoption:

- In order to facilitate survey work on the structures, ivy was cut back and the methodology for ivy removal was agreed with Dúchas.
- Temporary works were put in place at both gables of St Managhan's Church to prevent collapse. The wall around the east window was supported by planks bolted through the ope. At the west end, the surviving part of the gable, almost completely freestanding, was supported by scaffolding poles tied back to a concrete base.
- Arising from consultation on issues affecting road safety, the Gardaí visited the site, and liaised with Offaly County Council who erected advance warning signs on the Ferbane/Ballycumber approaches to Lemanaghan crossroads.

Between adoption of the Plan and its publication, much progress was made in implementing recommendations. Repair work to the building fabric was carried out under the direction of Margaret Quinlan Architects. Archaeological consultancy and monitoring was by Martin Fitzpatrick. The geophysical study was carried out by Dr Paul Gibson of NUI Maynooth.

The work carried out between 2002 and the publication of the Conservation Plan is summarised below.

ST MANAGHAN'S CHURCH

Work to the church has been carried out by Offaly County Council over a four-year period with the assistance of grants from the Urban and Village Renewal Measures of the Regional Operational Programmes, 2000–2006, operated by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government.

2002

- Removal of ivy and stabilisation of the masonry. This included removal of humus, root systems and other vegetation, and the flaunching of wall tops with mortar.
- Some concrete blockwork was introduced to secure unstable masonry pending proper repair.
- Preparation of rectified photography (the condition of masonry was so poor when ivy died back that the record was made in case of a partial collapse).

RECTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHS OF ELEVATIONS [ARC Survey Photographic]



North wall external



North wall internal



East wall external



Part west wall external showing surviving part of doorway



South wall internal



South wall external

2003

- Stabilisation of the masonry to east gable.
- Rebedding displaced stones from base batter. Quoins from south were located and rebedded. Those on north are of new stone as the originals were not located.
- Stabilisation at the southwest corner was carried out by rebuilding the core of the wall reinforced to provide adequate support to surviving gable.
- Repointing to walls generally.



East gable with ivy growth



East gable following repairs

2004

- Trial assembly of west portal. Statutory consents sought for reassembly.
- Repointing to north and south nave walls.
- Repairs to windows, including the rebedding of the carved hood stops at central window in south wall.



Carved hood stops (James Fraher)

2005/6

- Assembly of Romanesque doorway. Removal of all temporary blockwork and completion of stabilisation at west end.
- Semi-permanent reversible propping at breach in south wall (work in progress).
- Removal of ivy, stabilisation and soft capping to north-west corner (work in progress).



West gable before and after repair



Ivy root system removed from Northwest corner NW corner following removal of ivy

ST MELLA'S CELL (KELL)

Work was carried out to Kell under the auspices of Offaly County Council, with the consent of the owner and with the aid of grants from the Heritage Council and Bord Fáilte.

2003

- The site was fenced against livestock.
- A gate installed at the boundary between the defined together and the field before the enclosure to Kell.
- The tree overhanging the building was taken down.

2006

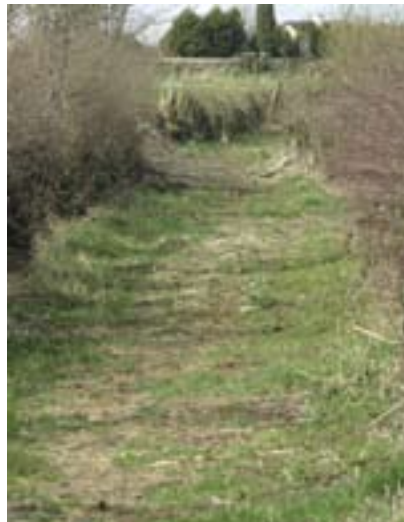
- Removal of ivy and stabilisation of masonry to south and west walls .
- Resetting of stones in doorway and introduction of some new stone, date-marked 2006.
- Stabilisation and soft capping to north and east walls (work in progress).



Doorway before and after repair

TOGHER, KELL ENCLOSURE AND GRAVEYARD

Heavy vegetation was cleared from the togher and Kell enclosure by the local community, with the assistance from the local FÁS programme who continue to keep growth under control and to maintain the graveyard.



Togher heading towards church



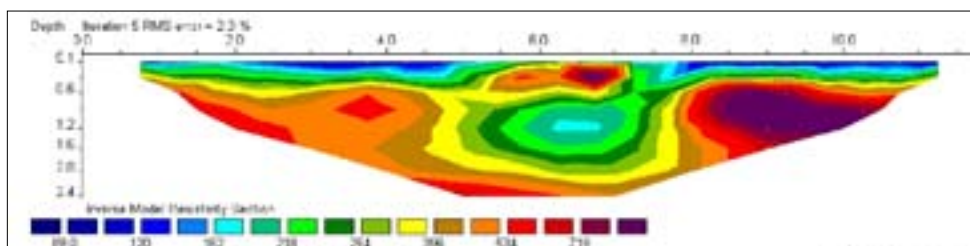
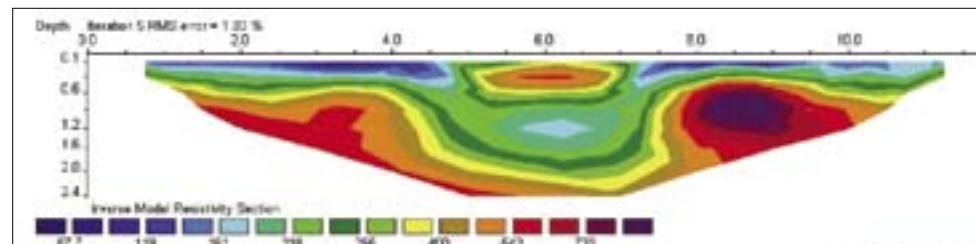
Togher heading towards Kell [James Fraher]

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

In 2004, a geophysical study of the area was undertaken by Dr Paul Gibson. The probable outline of the Early Christian enclosure was established with clear delineation in two sections. A clear profile of the form of the togher emerged, outlining the concealed layers of foundations. It appears that the togher was built later than the enclosure as it cuts across it. No evidence of burial was found in the enclosure at Kell



Aerial view of church site showing probable outline of enclosure to north-east and south-west.
(Dr Paul Gibson)



Profiles of Togher (Dr Paul Gibson)

CARVED STONE

In the course of the works, some worked stones were uncovered including a small fragment with a cross in relief; a large boulder with a dressed face bearing a carved geometric pattern, also in relief; and a large stone with an incised cross.



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