

Holy Wells
of
Connemara

Dedication

To the 100+ generations of Connemara people who have valued, preserved and protected our holy wells.

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About Holy Wells

A Holy Well is a natural spring or other small body of water venerated in pre-Christian times but then Christianised.

They are most often found in close proximity to an early Christian church, graveyard or monastic settlement.

Many wells are attributed with having healing qualities due to the presence of a guardian spirit or link to a Christian saint.

Holy Wells have a specific day of visit or pilgrimage. These are usually on a day of significance to the well's saint.

On the Saints day various religious celebrations are held. Mass or "Rounds" are the most common forms of veneration.

Rounds are where the pilgrim circles the well a number of times, usually bare foot. Rounds may also be made on ones knees.

The water from the well is used to ward off evil. It is taken away by pilgrims and those leaving to live abroad.

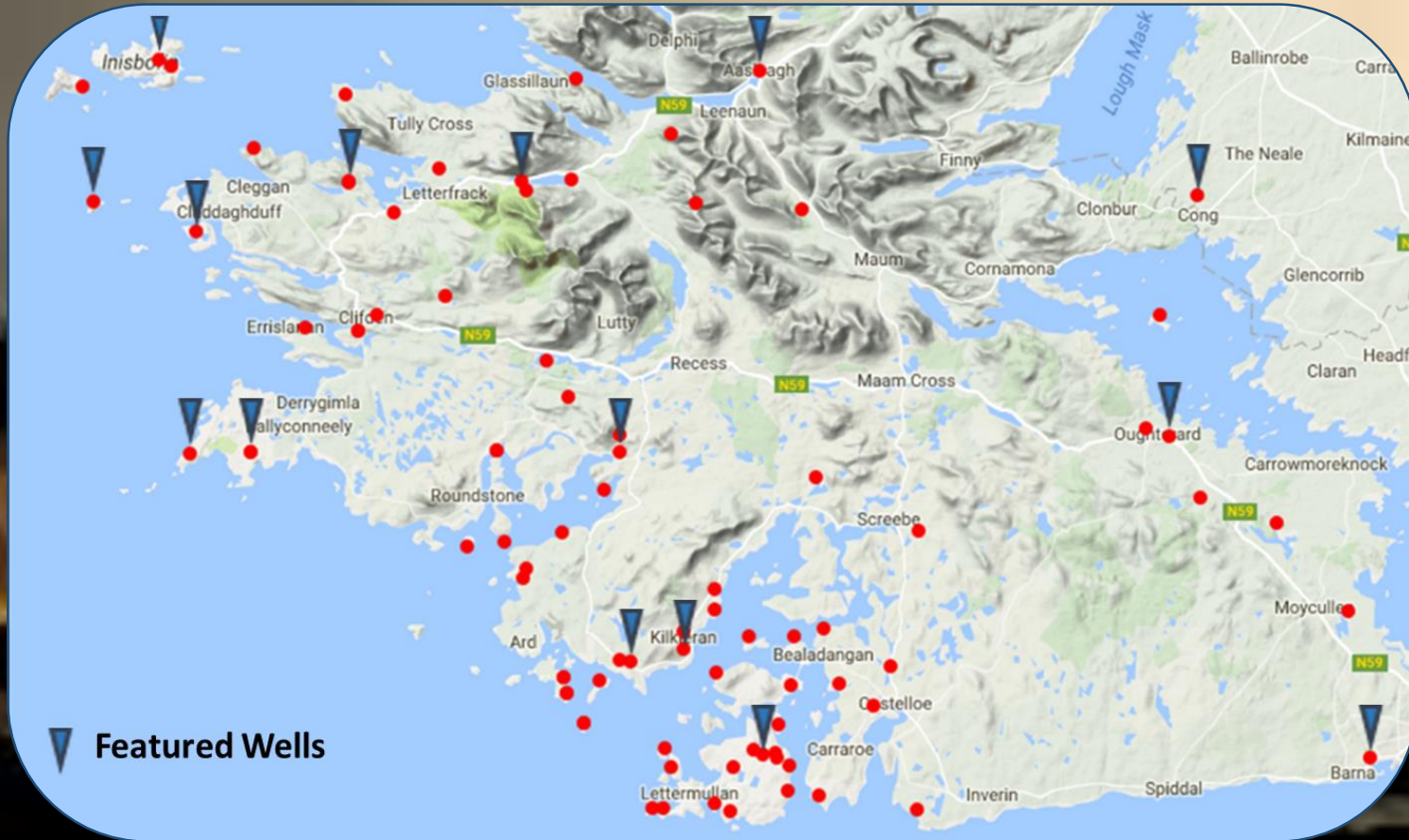
Votive offerings are left at the well by pilgrims or visitors. Offerings are usually religious items or personal possessions.

Many wells were destroyed under the Penal Laws. Pilgrims also faced a fine of 10 shillings or a public flogging.

Holy wells are not always fresh water. In Connemara there are holy wells that are on the sea shore and are tidal.



Connemara's Holy Wells



Holy Wells are a key part of Connemara's 8000 year old heritage. Noted for their curative powers and spiritual significance, Connemara's Holy wells remain a core element of the areas deep traditional and religious beliefs. Most are maintained by the local communities and have a Saints day associated with them. Many holy wells are on private land so permission may be needed to visit them.

Holy Well of the 7 Sisters, Doon Hill, Ballyconneely



Location: Doon Hill, Ballyconneely Latitude : 53.41 Longitude: -10.11
Satellite: <https://goo.gl/BlxCsl>
Attribution: 7 Sisters (Gospel Preachers and Missionaries)
Saints Day: Unknown
Celebration: Pilgrimage
Offerings: Various religious items
Curative Powers: Unknown

The Seven Sisters, (or Daughters), preached the Gospel in Connemara in the early Christian period. The holy well of the 7 Sisters is located at the base of Doon Hill, across from the Golf Course turn off after Ballyconneely village. It is located in a field 200 metres from the main road - east of the red roofed shed. There are several holy wells and other religious sites in west and south Connemara which are dedicated to the 7 sisters.



Saint Caillin Holy Well, Aillebrack, Ballyconneely



Location: Aillebrack, Ballyconneely. Latitude : 53.41 Longitude: -10.17
Satellite: <https://goo.gl/Fvgch9>
Attribution: Saint Caillin
Saints Day: November 13
Celebration: Pilgrimage, Stations of the Cross
Offerings: Religious and Personal Items
Curative Powers: Eyesight, Warts

The well is associated with St. Caillin who was a local saint and a patron saint for fishermen.
The well is visited regularly.

Surrounding the well are a number of penitential stations, one of which is known as Saint Caillin's Bed.

Access to this holy well is by foot only. It is on private land. Please request permission from the house at the gates that close off the road.



Saint Enda's Holy Well, Silver Strand, Barna



Location: Silver Strand, Barna Latitude : 53.25 Longitude: -9.13
Street View: <https://goo.gl/yVSrNS>
Attribution: Saint Enda
Saints Day: Last Sunday in July
Celebration: Pilgrimage
Offerings: Coins are thrown in the well by departing pilgrims
Curative Powers: Eye and Ear ailments

Saint Enda's Holy Well is located on the Silver Strand beach road, 50 metres from the Handball Alley. It is reputed to help with eye and ear ailments. In the 5th century Tobar Eanna (Enda) is reputed to have been a place of rest for St Enda on his way to the Aran Islands and that one day a well sprang up as he prayed.

The main pilgrimage is the last Sunday in July. It is the custom for departing pilgrims to throw coins in the water.



St Chonail's Holy Well, Cashel

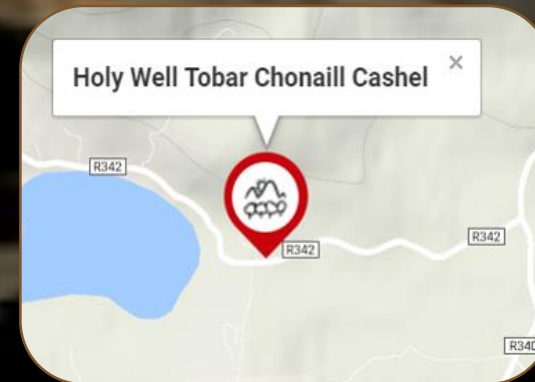


Location: Cashel Graveyard Latitude : 53.41 Longitude: -9.79
Street View: <https://goo.gl/0qtZYF>
Attribution: St Chonail
Saints Day: Unknown
Celebration: Unknown
Offerings: Personal and religious items
Curative Powers: Unknown

Tobar Chonail Holy Well is located 20 metres to the east of Cashel Graveyard, through the gate opposite the main entrance.

It is likely that the well was part of an early Christian settlement, parts of which are overgrown in the south of the graveyard.

The road to the graveyard is accessible by car or on foot. Please close any farm gates that you may encounter.



St Feichin' Holy Well, Cong



Location: Cong Latitude: 53.54 Longitude: -9.28
Street View: <https://goo.gl/sfQ4MQ>
Attribution: St Feichin
Saints Day: January 14
Celebration: Unknown
Offerings: Unknown
Curative Powers: Unknown

Saint Feichin's Well Cong is located north of Cong village.
It is 25 metres along a short path, on the banks of a small river.
The well is in poor condition and visited infrequently



Saint Anna's Holy Well, Teeranea, Gorumna



Location: Gorumna Island, Latitude : 53.25 Longitude: -9.65
Street View: <https://goo.gl/vggAof>
Attribution: Saint Anna
Saints Day: July 26
Celebration: Pilgrimage
Offerings: Various religious items
Curative Powers: Various ailments

Saint Ann's Holy Well (Tobar Naomh Anna) is located on Loch Tan.
It is a 5 minute drive from the sports centre in Gorumna.
The side road to the well is narrow, with parking for 2-3 cars.
The annual pilgrimage day for St. Anne's Holy Well in Teeranea is the 26th of July.



St Brian Brou's Holy Well, High Island



Location: High Island, Claddaghduff. Latitude : 53.54 Longitude: -10.25
Satellite: <https://goo.gl/D72VG9>
Attribution: Brian Boru (St Brian Boru)
Saints Day: Unknown
Celebration: Unknown
Offerings: Unknown
Curative Powers: Unknown

This well, situated close to the church ruins is popularly called St Brian Boru well. Brian Boru was the High King of Ireland who defeated the Vikings at the battle of Clontarf in 1014. He is said to have visited St Gormgal because of his sanctity in order to make his confession. St Gormgal died on the island in 1017. Access to the island is by boat only.

Photos: Anthony Previte A Guide to Connemara's Early Christian Sites Oldchapel press 2008



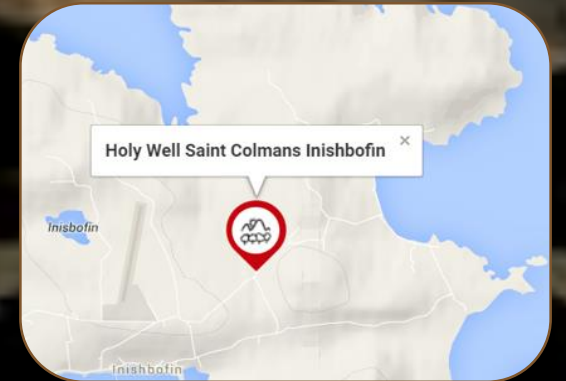
St Colman's Holy Well, Inishbofin Island



Location: Inishbofin Island. Latitude : 53.61 Longitude: -10.19
Satellite: <https://goo.gl/VWJmV4>
Attribution: St Colman
Saints Day: Unknown
Celebration: Rarely Visited
Offerings: Unknown
Curative Powers: Unknown

The Holy Well is in the top right hand corner of the graveyard.
It is badly overgrown and rarely visited.

Saint Colman (and 60 monks) from Lindisfarne in Northumbria founded the monastery on the island in 667 AD. There is now a medieval church on site, 2 cross slabs and the holy well.
There is also a bullaun stone, (an ancient 'curse' Stone) close to the well.



Tobar Mhuire Holy Well, Ail na Bron, Kilkieran



Location: Ail na Bron, Kilkieran. Latitude : 53.31 Longitude: -9.73
Street View: <https://goo.gl/mgbPqF>
Attribution: Virgin Mary
Saints Day: September 8
Celebration: Regularly Visited
Offerings: Flowers, Religious items
Curative Powers: Eye sight, Joint pains, various other ailments

Tobar Mhuire, Kilkieran, is located in Ail na Bron. It is also known locally as Ail na Bron Holy Well. It is a 1 km drive from Kilkieran village and is located high on a hillside. The annual pilgrimage date to the well is the 8th September. It is reputed to cure many ailments.



Tobar Mhuire Holy Well, Ardmore, Kilkieran



Location: Ardmore, Kilkieran. Latitude : 53.30 Longitude: -10.19
Street View: <https://goo.gl/CZ9WDV>
Attribution: Virgin Mary
Saints Day: Unknown
Celebration: Regularly Visited
Offerings: Flowers, Religious items
Curative Powers: Eye sight, Joint pains

Tobar Mhuire Holy Well is a frequently visited holy well that is a 5 minute drive from either Kilkieran or Carna.

It is located on a small narrow lane leading to Feenish Beach.
It has limited road side parking.

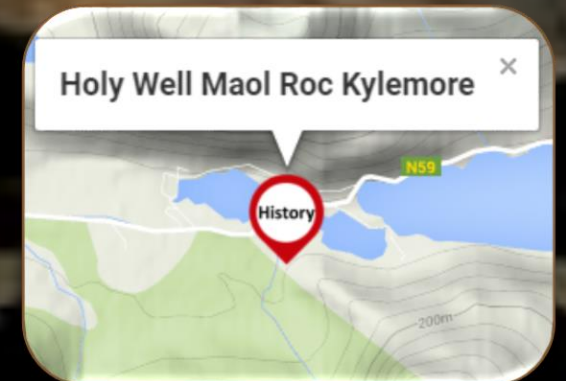


Maol Roc Holy Well, Kylemore



Location: Mweelin, Kylemore. Latitude : 53.55 Longitude: -9.88
Satellite: <https://goo.gl/HSgxNM>
Attribution: Maol Roc
Saints Day: June 12
Celebration: Pilgrimage and Mass
Offerings: Votive offerings
Curative Powers: Eyesight, Warts

Also known as the 'Nuns Well', Maol Roc's Holy Well is located on Connemara National Parks lands. The well is in excellent condition with brick walls and limestone slabs for roofing. The well was used in the past as a water source for the Abbey. The well is 400 metres off the main road (past the lime-kiln). Parking: limited, so best to walk from the Abbey grounds (250 metres)



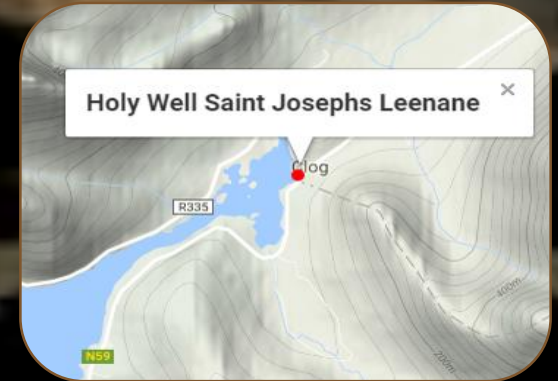
St Joseph's Holy Well, Leenane



Location: Leenane Latitude: 53.61 Longitude: -9.66
Street View: <https://goo.gl/OWxj9Q>
Attribution: St Joseph
Saints Day: March 19
Celebration: Pilgrimage
Offerings: Religious and Personal items
Curative Powers: Eye ailments

Saint Joseph's Holy Well is a 4 minute drive from Leenane village on the Westport road. The site is well maintained and has easy access from the road. Parking is available at the Carraig Bar which is close to the well.

It is surrounded by a low dry stone wall and there is a small concrete cross marking the well. The well is now dry but long ago the water was said to cure problems with the eyes.



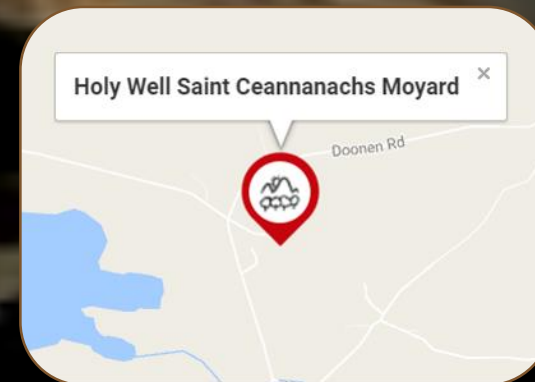
Saint Ceannannach's Holy Well, Moyard



Location: Moyard. Latitude : 53.55 Longitude: -10.03
Street View: <https://goo.gl/9C32gK>
Attribution: Saint Ceannannach
Saints Day: March 12
Celebration: Stations of the Cross
Offerings: Flowers, Religious items
Curative Powers: Various Ailments

St. Ceannannachs (Gregorys) Well lies at the end of the lane to a quarry. It is a 7 minute drive from Moyard Post office on the way to Cleggan.

St. Ceannannach was beheaded by a local chieftain and the stone on he was beheaded kept its blood stained colour. St. Ceannannach is reputed to have walked to this well and washed his head in the water and was able to re-attach it to his body.



St Feichin's Holy Well, Omey Island



Location: Omey Island, Claddaghduff . Latitude: 53.52 Longitude: -10.16
Satellite: <https://goo.gl/g5kdif>
Attribution: St Feichin
Saints Day: January 14
Celebration: Pilgrimage
Offerings: Personal and religious items
Curative Powers: Various ailments

St Feichin was born around 580 AD in Co Sligo and died in 664 AD in Fore Co West Meath.

Pilgrims to St Feichin's well circle it clockwise direction 7 times bare foot and once on their knees. Pebbles are used to count the "Rounds".

Water from the well is collected to take home. Fishermen and those leaving to live abroad used to take a bottle of water as protection from harm.

Offerings are left in the niche found on the back wall of the well.



Saint Cummin's Holy Well, Oughterard



Location: Lemonfield, Oughterard. Latitude : 53.42 Longitude: -9.30
Street View: <https://goo.gl/wl8grF>
Attribution: Saint Cummin
Saints Day: October 15
Celebration: Pilgrimage
Offerings: Religious Items
Curative Powers: Unknown

Saint Cummins holy well is located in Lemonfield. The well would indicate that the area was of great significance inhabitants of the region. Records show that local people would take off their hats and make a slight bow to it.

During the Cholera epidemic in 1832 people living near the well peeled off the bark of ancient ash trees which grew over it, in order to use it as a remedy for cholera.



About the Connemara Programme

The self funded Connemara Programme was established in 2012 to help Connemara recover from the recession, reduce emigration and to assist businesses and organisations to prepare for and benefit from the deployment of rural broadband.

About Myconnemara.com

Myconnemara is a cloud based, online directory of the Connemara's 50 communities, their businesses, community organisations, landscape, history, heritage, wildlife, events and culture. It now has over 45,000 records and over 85,000 new photographs of Connemara. Connepedia, the growing encyclopaedia of Connemara is also found on myconnemara.com.

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