

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

Substitute Consent Application SU19.323676

Section 177E, Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) relating to development at Lemnaghan Bog, Co. Offaly

OBSERVATIONS ON FURTHER INFORMATION

Slí Mór Pilgrimage Route and Access Interests

Observer:

Alan & Anne O'Shea

Thumbbeagh

Ballinahown

Athlone

Co. Westmeath

N37 YD79

AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	_____
ACP-	_____
16 FEB 2026	
Fee: €	Type: _____
Time: 9:15	By: Reg post

1. Purpose of These Observations

These observations are submitted in response to the further information furnished by the applicant.

They are limited in scope and procedural in nature. They do not seek a determination of access rights, public rights of way, or land ownership.

Their purpose is to assist the Commission in considering whether the applicant has demonstrated the clarity of legal interest and procedural completeness required to invoke the exceptional jurisdiction under Section 177E, having regard to the existence of an established historic and continuing route of passage across the application lands.

2. Slí Mór and the Lemnaghan Landscape

Slí Mór is a historically documented pilgrimage route associated with movement through Lemnaghan Bog to Boher and onward to Clonmacnoise.

The route forms part of the cultural and historic landscape of the area and has been recorded in mapping and heritage sources. Importantly, it is not a purely historic or theoretical route: it continues to be actively used.

In summer 2025, Clara Heritage Society organised a guided pilgrimage walk along Slí Mór through Lemnaghan Bog to Boher and onward to Clonmacnoise, confirming that the route remains a living and functioning path of passage.

3. Interaction with the Application Lands

Sections of Slí Mór pass through lands included within the red-line boundary of the substitute consent application.

This indicates that the application lands are subject to an established route of passage with historic origins and contemporary use.

While these observations do not assert the legal status of Slí Mór as a public right of way, they demonstrate the existence of an access interest capable of constraining exclusive control of the land.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
1100 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637
TEL: 773-936-3000

4. Relevance to Legal Interest under Section 177E

The further information relies on a Landowner Letter of Consent asserting freehold and beneficial ownership of the application lands.

No material accompanying that letter identifies, acknowledges, or reconciles the presence of Slí Mór or any associated access interest crossing the lands.

In a substitute consent context, where the Commission must be satisfied as a threshold matter that the applicant has demonstrated a clear and reconcilable legal interest, the existence of an established route of passage is relevant to whether the ownership interest relied upon is unqualified.

5. Conclusion

These observations do not invite the Commission to determine the status of Slí Mór or to adjudicate on access rights.

They are submitted solely to **highlight that an established and actively used pilgrimage route crosses parts of the application lands**, and that its omission from the material relied upon to demonstrate legal interest is relevant to the procedural completeness of the application under Section 177E.

I trust these observations are of assistance to the commission.

Thanking you for the opportunity to submit.

Regards



Alan & Anne O'Shea



Slí Mhór Baseline Study

The Heritage Council Pilgrim Path Project

**Mary Tubridy and Associates
Dublin**

June 1999

Appendix A – Slí Mór: Mapping and Contextual Material

This Appendix is submitted for **contextual and corroborative purposes only**.

It is provided to assist the Commission in understanding the location, alignment, and historic context of Slí Mór as it passes through Lemanaghan Bog, including sections within the red-line boundary of the substitute consent application.

The material is not submitted to establish or prove legal rights of access, nor to introduce new evidence on land ownership.

Its purpose is solely to **illustrate the existence of a long-established and actively used route of passage** relevant to the assessment of whether access interests have been acknowledged and reconciled in the ownership material relied upon by the applicant.

CONTENTS

Summary	1
1 Aims and Methodology	
1.1 Aims	2
1.2 Methodology	
1.2.1 The Baseline Study	2
1.2.2 Recreational Impact	3
2 Results	
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 The Baseline Study	6
2.3 Development Guidelines	7
2.3.1 Lemanaghan Spur	5
2.3.2 Ballycumber to Clonmacnoise	12
2.4 Monitoring Programme	15
3 Conclusions	17

Appendix 1 Preliminary Bibliography	
Appendix 2 Sites of Archaeological, Ecological and Geological Interest	
Appendix 3 Record Cards for Baseline Sites	
Appendix 4 Guidelines for the Management of Semi-natural Vegetation	

SUMMARY

The report contains an account of the important heritage sites and features associated with the Slí Mhór Pilgrim Path. It reviews the current impact of recreation on these sites, describes features which will be re-examined when the route is operational and provides guidelines for development. The baseline description, monitoring programme and guidelines have been developed as a result of desk research, consultations and field work.

The proposed route is particularly rich in both Early Christian and Medieval Ecclesiastical remains. While the built heritage along the route (with the exception of Clonmacnoise) is less directly related to the function of pilgrimage it includes monuments spanning a range of several thousand years.

Except at the Nun's Church, pressure on Clonmacnoise from the Pilgrim Path will be insignificant. In contrast to Clonmacnoise, St Manchan's church and St Mella's Cell at Lemanaghan will be exposed to significant visitor pressures for the first time. As these sites are vulnerable to the impacts of visitor use it is recommended that a conservation study be carried out to examine the most cost effective ways of securing the integrity of the monuments and portable artifacts at this location. The consultants recommend that the spur to Lemanaghan should be omitted from the route until this study is carried out and its recommendations implemented.

1 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Aims

The study has two aims:

1 To prepare an account of the heritage along the route, particularly that associated with pilgrimage.

2 To develop a monitoring system to record the impact of recreational use at sensitive sites and features.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Baseline Study

The research programme included consultations, desk research and field work. A meeting with the steering group on the 3rd of August 1999 provided information on local publications and expertise and involved a preliminary discussion on environmental impact. Desk research included an examination of maps, Ordnance Survey aerial photographs, Dúchas files on archaeological sites (Sites and Monuments Record) and natural history sites (Natural Heritage Areas and Special Areas of Conservation), specialist articles, inventories prepared by An Fóras Forbartha and the most recent County Development Plan.

An initial report was prepared for the Heritage Council in August 1999 which included a preliminary bibliography (Appendix 1) and showed the location of sites and features of potential interest on 1" maps. Consultations were held with Dúchas (monuments and wildlife sections) including Tom M. Tubridy and Associates

Final Report

Moore manager of Visitor Services at Clonmacnoise, and with local representatives of BirdWatch Ireland. On the 9th and 10th of August 1999 the survey team walked the route and examined all sites and features identified in the preliminary report. They were assisted by the following members of the local steering group: Gerry Doolin, Tom Longworth and the Moony family.

On field work, SMR and 1" maps were used. Notes and photographs were taken of all features of interest. Follow up visits were made by individual members of the study team in September and October.

1.2.2 Recreational Impact

Carrying capacity can be defined as "the level of use that a site can support for a period of time or indefinitely, without resulting in unacceptable change".

While carrying capacity can be examined at all sites subject to recreational impact it is particularly important at sensitive sites. These are sites of high intrinsic interest, or/and where the intrinsic interest of the site is vulnerable to direct or indirect recreational impacts. Desk research and local consultations provided an initial list of potentially vulnerable sites and features. The possible direct and indirect impacts which could result from recreation were clarified through local consultations, consultations with the overall steering group for the project, a review of programmes elsewhere and field work.

This review led to 1) the identification of Baseline Sites which would be examined in a follow-up monitoring programme and 2) the production of guidelines for route development which would minimise environmental damage.

Two categories of guidelines were developed. These are contained in this report and are principally directed at the local Steering Group. The consultants recommend that the guidelines categorised as *essential* should be followed by developers. *Advisory* guidelines are to be implemented at the discretion of developers.

Baseline Sites were selected from among the list of potentially vulnerable sites. All these sites were visited and the nature of their vulnerable features was examined. At Baseline Sites two *indicators* of equal value were identified. *Indicators* are features or changes which will be re-examined in a follow-up monitoring programme.

Indicator 1 was defined as a type of change, level of change or unacceptable change which would directly affect the key heritage feature.

The Church and Graveyard were defined as "vulnerable" by desk research and field work as 1) they contain valuable portable stone and 2) damage has occurred to features in the recent past indirectly associated with recreational use. It was deduced that the development could only go ahead if certain initiatives were taken to provide security for the site, under the guidance of a conservation archaeologist/architect. Therefore, the production and implementation of a report on the condition of the monuments was identified as an *indicator* of sustainable development at this site.

This indicator will be used in follow up monitoring to judge the sustainability of the route at this location.

Indicator 2 covered indirect impacts of recreation. During the field visit to Lemanaghan the baseline condition of the following impacts was recorded on

a three point scale on a specially designed site record card. The impacts and scales were as follows:

Graffiti on a heritage feature *either* present, not present or not relevant

Graffiti on a site notice *either* present, not present or not relevant

Use of area for overnight camping *either* present, not present or not relevant

Interference with management/interpretative infrastructure
either present, not present or not relevant

Use of area for picnicking *either* readily seen, have to search, not obvious

Litter *either* readily seen, have to search, not obvious after search

Condition of access paths (applies to sites associated with the built environment).
either needs management now, adequate, not relevant

Field work at Lemanaghan Church and Graveyard showed that none of these impacts were present. The maintenance of this level of impact was then recorded as the standard to be maintained by the development. At each Baseline Site two indicators were clarified following this procedure.

2 RESULTS

2.1 Introduction

The route is shown on Fig. 1. Sites of heritage interest are shown on Figs. 2-4. Appendix 2 contains summary accounts of the sites shown on these maps. Completed record cards for Baseline Sites are in Appendix 3.

2.2 The Baseline Study

The Slí Mhór is an easy walk of c. 27km. Most of the route runs along roads, particularly between Ballycumber and Doon. Off-road walking is concentrated at Lemanaghan and Doon (details of the route are summarised in Table 1).

TABLE 1
Slí Mhór: Route Details

	Route	
	Length (km)	% Route
Secondary Road	1	3
Regional Road	1	3
Third Class	16	60
Fourth Class	2	9
Track	2	6
Other	5	19

While the route is an easy one for the walker, it offers good views of the landscape. This landscape provides insights into how the esker ridges and raised bogs were formed and the evidence for remnants of an ancient (pre-Ice Age) landscape dating from the Tertiary (c. 60 – 10 million years ago).

The ecology of the route is significant as it provides access to a raised bog, unintensively managed farmland and the colourful and diverse flora of eskers.

While the built heritage along the route (except for Clonmacnoise) is less directly related to the function of pilgrimage than other proposed Pilgrim Paths, it contains monuments spanning a range of several thousand years. It

is particularly rich in both Early Christian and Medieval Ecclesiastical remains. The most significant features are at either end which also contrast in their degree of development for visitors. Devotional practices associated with ancient sites are obvious at Lemanaghan.

In the boglands hundreds of artefacts and trackways made from timber, stone and gravel, have been discovered in recent years, increasing the known number of archaeological sites. The principal trackway leading to Lemanaghan has been dated to c. 590-600 AD, just before the foundation of the monastery in 645 AD (Conor McDermott, pers. comm.). The Moony Estate through which the route passes is of interest as it contains a range of high status monuments linked by the Pilgrim Road and dating to the Early Christian period. The estate itself is a rare survival of a Gaelic big house.

2. 3 Development Guidelines

In this account the route is divided into two sections: the spur to Lemanaghan and the main route between Ballycumber and Clonmacnoise.

2. 3.1 Lemanaghan Spur

2. 3.1.1 Features of Interest

Highlights of this section are:

- * **St Mella's Cell and its environs**

The complex includes the togher from the church and graveyard and the cross section of a togher in the field north-east of Mella's. St Mella's Cell is set

within a rare rectangular enclosure and is a key site for the study of monasteries in the midlands.

- * Other sites and features associated with the Early Christian period

Of significant interest are:

- * St Manchan's Church
- * Evidence for continued devotion to Manchan as shown by the presence of devotional objects at the Well and surviving local traditions
- * Flora on edge of bog drain
- * Relationship between landscape and settlement history
- * Continuity of settlement at Lemanaghan
- * Contrast between development of Clonmacnoise and Lemanaghan
- * On-going excavations in the BNM bogs around Lemanaghan

2. 3.1.2 Current Impacts of Recreation

Current recreational/devotional use of this part of the route area is confined to St Manchan's Church, graveyard and Holy Well. The site is visited for devotional purposes by the local community who come for burials, to pray at the well, but particularly on Manchan's feast day, the 24th of January. Numbers of visitors each year are probably less than 1,000 and include specialists who may have read about the site or who have been redirected to the site from Clonmacnoise. According to the staff in the tourist office in Clonmacnoise, most enquiries come from French tourists (Tubridy, 1995).

Such use has had no direct negative impacts on the Church and graveyard. The churchyard can be entered either through a gate or over a stone stile. The graveyard is well maintained with a cut grass covering. There are no signs of path wear or obvious vandalism.

Direct impacts of recreation are confined to the Holy Well where there is some littering.

The principal negative impacts are associated with an unsupervised "graveyard clean up" c. 10 years ago. Areas adjacent to the main entrance have been cleared of unmarked graves. A good deal of stone appears to have been dumped in the northern and lower part of the graveyard. At least some cut stone was used in constructing the wall around a picnic area adjacent to the path to the Well. Grave slabs (4) revealed in the well (1930s) and more recently during the "clean up" (6) were removed without archaeological supervision and are now stored in the locked schoolhouse opposite the Church and graveyard.

2. 3.1.3 Guidelines for Route Development

The development of the walking route in the vicinity of Lemanaghan will result in a significant increase in visitor numbers and the appearance of visitors to sites which are currently not visited such as St Mella's Cell and the toghers. Associated with route development will be the installation of map boards, signage and vegetation clearance. In contrast to the Lemanaghan area the route between the main public road and the railway crossing is not sensitive to development.

Essential guidelines for this section are:

- The installation of a security system in the schoolhouse at Lemanaghan which currently stores a collection of Early Christian grave-slabs.

- The removal under archaeological supervision of the two grave-slabs loosely attached to St Manchan's Church and the cut stone associated with the late Romanesque portal of St Manchan's Church to the schoolhouse.

- The preparation and implementation of a conservation study on St Mella's Cell and St Manchan's Church. Both sites are unstable and may suffer further damage due to visitors. The doorway of St Mella's Cell is particularly vulnerable.

- The installation of all stiles, mapboards and signage in the vicinity of Lemanaghan under archaeological supervision.

- Installation of the mapboard at a specific location in the picnic area adjacent to the Holy Well.

- The installation of a wooden causeway over the enclosure at St Mella's Cell to channel visitors and protect stonework.

- The provision of a barrier to prevent visitors from interfering directly with the exposed section of the togher in the field north-east of St Mella's Cell.

- Liaison with Conor McDermott, of the Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit when developing the route on cut-over bog between St Mella's Cell and the road.

- Adherence to guidelines for vegetation clearance particularly on the togher between the Holy Well and St Mella's Cell. These are contained in Appendix 4.

Desirable measures include:

- A conservation report on the environmental conditions in the schoolhouse at Lemanaghan.

- Conservation/archaeological field work on site to 1) locate other pieces of cut stone in the graveyard and vicinity of schoolhouse; 2) consider the re-erection of the Romanesque arch on site; 3) locate the so called St Mella's Stone (possibly a Standing Stone) near the togher and an aerial survey in the vicinity of Lemanaghan Castle.

- Registration of the bullaun at Lemanaghan junction and newly discovered toghers in surrounding bogs.

2.3.2 Ballycumber to Clonmacnoise

2.3.2.1 Features of Interest

Highlights of this section are:

- * Clonmacnoise, particularly as it is approached from the less developed side
- * St Manchan's Shrine at Boher
- * Views from the eskers over intact and cut-over bogs and the River Shannon
- * The raised bog between forestry and public road
- * The abundance and variety of features associated with the quaternary i.e. bogs and eskers.

Of significant interest are:

- * Complex of sites at Doon indicating continuity of settlement by Irish Gaelic family. Features include the Tower House, ringfort, souterrain and possible? section of Pilgrim's Road on wooded esker behind the house.
- * Traces of tertiary landscape.

2.3.2.2 Current Impacts of Recreation

With the exception of Clonmacnoise and Doon Castle there is little recreational use along this section of the route. At the Castle in Doon there are signs of path wear on the steeper paths and some stones have been

loosened from the fabric of the building. The ivy surrounding the Sheela-na-Gig on the exterior wall is actively managed so that it is not obscured.

Clonmacnoise is an exceptional site which is under considerable pressure from visitors. The Pilgrim Path will not significantly affect visitor numbers at the main site. Pressure is likely to increase at the Nun's Church where there are already signs of an informal path in the grass between the west door and road.

2. 3.2.3 Route Development

Sensitive sites along this route include Doon Castle, the ringfort and souterrain on the esker behind Mooney's house, esker woodlands particularly within the NHA, the raised bog and Nun's Church.

Essential measures for this section are:

- Development of a path on the raised bog to control visitor impacts on the vulnerable vegetation and bog surface.
- Archaeological supervision if re-opening of St Bridget's well is attempted.
- Adherence to guidelines in Appendix 4 if vegetation is being cleared.

Desirable measures are:

- Rerouting the path off the public road between Doon and Boher in the interests of public safety. If it is not possible to reroute the path, then warning signs? could be erected to alert motorists to the use of the road as a walking route.

•The cessation of grazing in all esker woodlands particularly those on the Pilgrim's Road, near the ringfort and souterrain. This would significantly increase the interest of these woods to visitors and their prospects for regeneration.

•The installation of a barrier at the narrower entrance to the Souterrain to prevent visitors from entering it. This should be carried out under archaeological supervision.

•A policy of trimming verges of the Pilgrim's Road between September and February. Verge cutting should be minimised in high summer to maintain the esker flora.

2.4 Monitoring Programme

Baseline Sites and indicators are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Slí Mhór Baseline Sites and Indicators

Vulnerable Feature	Indicator 1 Intrinsic interest of the site	Indicator 2 Recreation
Lemanaghan graveyard and church	Development of route after providing a secure location for cross-slabs and conservation report on the condition of the church	No impact
Togher between Church and St Mella's Cell, Lemanaghan	Adherence to guidelines for management of semi-natural vegetation	No impact
Lemanaghan Holy Well and Bullaun	Maintenance of the two shrines at the Well	Litter readily seen
St Mella's enclosure and Cell	Development of access after a conservation report	No impact
Doon Castle and Bawn	Preservation of features photographed including Sheila-na-gig	Litter (have to search)
Doon Ringfort and Souterrain	Development of one access path across ringfort to souterrain	No impact
Path through Doon Esker Woodland (NHA 1830)	No evidence of paths in woodland adjacent to track	No impact
Bogland between Doon Lemesne and public road	Lack of damage to intact bogland adjacent to defined access track	No impact
The Nun's Church, Clannacnoise	Exposure of soil along track between stile and church	No impact

These sites will be examined in a follow-up monitoring programme. Monitoring will occur in Year 1 and Year 3.

Monitoring in Year 1 will effectively monitor the impact of route development.

Monitoring in Year 3, two full seasons after development, is more likely to measure the impacts of recreational use.

Members of the local steering group will be invited to join the monitoring team during site inspections which will be carried out by either Dr Mary Tubridy, Rachel Moss or Michael Gibbons, members of the baseline survey team. Dr Mary Tubridy will manage and report on the process.

During the visit the condition of each indicator will be reviewed and recorded on a site card and by fixed point photography. An amended Baseline Site which has been developed to support the monitoring programme will be used to record data. This will be later inputted into an ACCESS database.

Change at sites will be quantified using a simple scoring system. Under this system each Baseline Site has been given a zero score representing its baseline condition. A deterioration in the condition of sites will lead to a reduction of its "score". The addition of all "scores" will provide a "score" for the route. A yearly summary report will be produced for the local steering group and the overall steering group on the condition of the sites and routes.

If the indicators reveal undesirable changes, research will be carried out to detail the nature of the pressures which have affected change and recommendations will be made for management initiatives to reduce the vulnerability of the site or feature.

3 CONCLUSIONS

The route provides an insight into a varied and diverse landscape and access to monuments spanning thousands of years.

Once the conservation study is complete and its findings implemented access will be possible to sites at Lemanaghan which will significantly increase a visitor's understanding of the Early Christian and medieval heritage of West Offaly.

The vulnerability of sites and features at Lemanaghan implies that extra care is needed with the development of the Pilgrim Path in this area. The conservation study is an essential requirement to ensure that the Pilgrim Path will not reduce the value of the heritage at Lemanaghan.

Monitoring will commence as soon as the route is operational. Initially the Heritage Council will be responsible for monitoring but ultimately this will become the responsibility of the local steering group. This suggests that the local group should carefully scrutinise the indicators suggested as these will be the key features examined during long term follow-up monitoring.

APPENDIX 1

PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boland, D., Breen C. and O'Sullivan A. (?) "Clonmacnoise bridge project":

Report of Disturbance Survey Typscript OCL.

Bourke, C. A. (1986) "Panel on the north cross, Clonmacnoise" *Journal of the*

Royal Society of Antiquaries 116 116-21.

Craig, M. (1973) "Preliminary report of surveys of areas and sites of historical
and architectural interest in co. Offaly". Typscript, An Fóras Forbartha.

Crawford, H.S. (1911) "Notes on several of the Clonmacnoise slabs" *Journal*
of the Royal Society of Antiquaries 41 51-7.

Crawford, H.S. (1911) "The early slabs at Lemanaghan, Kings County" *Journal*
of the Royal Society of Antiquaries 41 151-56.

Crawford, H.S. (1910) "A sepulchral slab lately found at Clonmacnoise"
Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries 40 235-7.

Dornan, A. (1975) "A study of oratories" Unpublished M.A. thesis. Dept of Archaeology, UCD.

Edwards, N. (1984) "Two sculptured fragments from Clonmacnoise" *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries* 114 57-62.

Fitzpatrick, E. and O'Brien, C. (1998) "Medieval churches of county Offaly" The Stationary Office, Dublin.

Foot, C.H. (1861) "An account of the exploration of a remarkable series of subterranean chambers situated on the estate of Robert J.E. Mooney Esq" *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries* ser 2, 3 222-9.

Martin, C. (1994) "Lemanaghan, Co Offaly." Archaeological report compiled by County Offaly Archaeological Survey.

Garner, W. (1985) "Churches and Houses of Architectural Interest in Co. Offaly" Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society, Typescript with photographs.

Graves, J. (1865) "Repairs to Clonmacnoise Church" *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries* ser 2, 7 364-72.

Graves, J. (1874) "The church and shrine of St Manachan" *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries* 13 134-50.

Harbison, P. (1979) "The inscriptions on the cross of the scriptures at Clonmacnoise, co. Offaly" *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* Sec. C no. 7 177-88.

Healy, T. (1991) "St Manchan's shrine, Boher, co Offaly". Unpublished undergraduate thesis, Dept of the History of Art and Architecture, TCD.

Henry, F. (1980) "Around an inscription; the cross of the scriptures Clonmacnoise" *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries* 110 36-46.

Hicks, C. A. (1980) "Clonmacnoise workshop in stone" *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries* 110 5-35.

Kehnel, A. (1998) "Clonmacnois, the church and lands of St Ciaran; change and continuity in an Irish Monastic Foundation 6th to 16th Century." Munster.

King, H. (1992) "Excavations at Clonmacnoise" *Archaeology Ireland* vi, no.3 12-14.

King, H. ed. (1998) "Clonmacnoise studies" Vol. 1.

King, H. (1992) "Moving crosses" *Archaeology Ireland* vi, no.4 22-23.

MacAlister, R. A. S. (1916) "Chluain Maccu Nois" *Pamphlet no. 441*

Manning, C. (1991) "Clonmacnoise cathedral, the oldest church in Ireland?"
Archaeology Ireland ix, no.4 10-11.

Manning, C. (1992) "The base of the north cross at Clonmacnoise"
Archaeology Ireland vi, no.28-9.

Manning, C. (1997) "The date of the round tower at Clonmacnoise"
Archaeology Ireland xi, no.2 12-13.

Manning, C. (1998) "The very earliest plan of Clonmacnoise" *Archaeology*
Ireland xii, no.1 16-17.

Manning, C. and Moore, F. (1991) "An ogham stone from Clonmacnoise"
Archaeology Ireland, v, no.4 10-11.

McGowan, K. Clonmacnoise (Dublin, 1985).

Moore, F. (1996) "Ireland's oldest bridge at Clonmacnoise" *Archaeology*

Ireland x no.4 24-7.

Nolan, W. and O'Neill, T.P. eds (1998) "Offaly History and Society"

Geography Publications, Dublin.

O'Murchada, D. (1980) "Rubblings taken of the inscriptions of the Cross of the

Scriptures, Clonmacnoise" *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries*

110 47-51.

O'Brien, C. and Sweetman, D. (eds) (1997) "Archaeological inventory of

county Offaly" The Stationary Office, Dublin.

Sheehy, M. (1964-5) "Architecture in Offaly." *Journal of the Kildare*

Archaeological Society . xiv, no.1 1-28.

Stout, G., Fitzpatrick, E., Daly, K. and Dunford, P. (1988) "Sites and

monuments record for Co. Offaly" Typescript, OPW.

The Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit (1997) "Filling in the blanks; an

archaeological survey of the Lemanaghan bogs" *Archaeology Ireland* xi

no.2 22-5.

Tubridy, M. (1987) "The heritage of Clonmacnoise." Environmental Sciences Unit, TCD in association with Offaly Vocational Education Committee.

Tubridy, M. (1995). "Leamonaghan archaeological complex, Co Offaly Outline Development Plan" Unpublished Report prepared for LEADER.

APPENDIX 2

**SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL, ECOLOGICAL
AND GEOLOGICAL INTEREST**

1 LEMANAGHAN SPUR

Baseline Sites*

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

1 Lemanaghan Castle (SMR 15:4 (01/02): (GIS Nos. 348 and 347)

Situated directly behind the schoolhouse in the centre of Lemanaghan are the remains of Lemanaghan Castle. Lemanaghan Castle and Manchan's Church were once part of an integrated medieval settlement. While the castle has some interesting folklore attached to it- it was here that the translation of the Annals of Clonmacnoise was supposedly completed- the standing remains would require substantial interpretation to be of interest to anyone but the specialist walker. Only the south-west angle remains, standing untidily in the corner of a grain field, surrounded by vegetation covered rubble thus making the terrain unsafe. The only two pieces of worked stone recorded in the county inventory in 1993 were not located.

2 Lemanaghan Schoolhouse

Backing on to the Castle and opposite to the church is Lemanaghan school. Inside the schoolhouse are 10 early Christian slabs and a number of architectural fragments. The slabs were discovered following vegetation clearance in the graveyard during the early 1970s, and have been moved indoors for security. At present the schoolhouse can be opened on request, and the slabs are kept on the floor of one of the smaller rooms. Photo (1995)

3 Bullaun at Lemanaghan

Directly opposite the school set in a wall under the tree at the T junction is a good example of a Bullaun. A date stone on the wall above it, inscribed PLD 1890, would suggest that the stone is not in its original location. Photo (1995)

4 St Manchan's Church and Graveyard (SMR 15: 4 (03/04/05/08/09): GIS nos 354, 355, 353, 350 and 352)*

To the northern end of the present graveyard enclosure (there seems to be no trace of the early enclosure) are the remains of St Manachan's Church. Although the east and south walls are almost completely obscured by ivy and the west wall and portal are in a partial state of collapse, the church holds

interest for the visitor. Three bases and some sections of shaft of the late 12th century doorway remain to a height of roughly 1m. Immediately inside, to the north of the door, is a pile of roughly 20 worked stones, ranging in date from the 12th to the 19th century. These are currently partially obscured by organic debris from the graveyard. Also of interest within the church are a 15th/16th century piscina, which contains a collection of 20th century devotional objects, and two wall-mounted cross inscribed slabs.

Also within the modern graveyard enclosure are the foundations of another ?church, and an impressive (?)10th-11th century carved stone with a fret and spiral design re-used as a modern gravemarker. This is firmly fixed to the ground.

The graveyard can be exited either through a gate or over a stone stile in the south wall, onto a laneway signposted for St. Manachan's well. Proceeding down the lane there is a modern picnic area enclosed by a low stone wall which incorporates a medieval voussoir in its fabric.

5 Holy Well, Sacred Tree and Bullaun (SMR 15:4 (07): GIS no.357)*

St Manchan's well is a fine example of a site type that may have its origin in ancient pagan Ireland. At the entrance to the well enclosure is another fine example of a bullaun stone with a perfectly circular basin. The area around the well is paved, and the keyhole shaped well mouth is protected by a railing. The well mouth itself is accessible down a series of steps. According to local tradition this is one of three local holy wells. On the west side of the well is a holy tree with bandae and other devotional objects. On the day of our visit the water level was quite low and the water appeared dirty. A further shrine has been set up in the south-west corner of the enclosure.

6 Togher between Church and Cell (SMR 15 (4 (11) : GIS no. 359)

An overgrown flagged causeway links the Well and St Mella's Cell. Difficult to date but its associations with St Mella's Cell and church provide a suitable Early Christian time frame. Some large stone flags are easily visible on its surface which is partly flanked by drainage ditches. Here it is still possible to see the section of the road surface.

Local sources indicate that some years ago Mella's stone, at the side of the togher, fell into a flanking ditch. The area where it is said to be, is now completely overgrown and the stone was not identified on our visit.

After about 290m the straight section of togher kinks, and moves into a field. It is possible to trace the line of the routeway in the vegetation, where it can be seen curving around, presumably in order to provide a western entrance to the enclosure of Mella's cell.

7 St Mella's Cell and Enclosure (SMR 15 4(06): GIS no. 360)*

St. Mella's Cell and enclosure are set within a wooded area. The enclosure is extremely unusual in an early Irish context in being rectangular rather than the more usual circular or D-shaped form. The enclosure wall is mainly constructed from large, flattish slabs of local sandstone, set on their sides and back-filled with rubble. A small section at the north-east corner is constructed from coursed, dressed blocks similar to the masonry of the church building. A breach in the western side appears to represent the original entrance. There are no visible grave-stones on site but there is a high possibility of good early deposits on site.

The cell itself is a small single cell rectangular church constructed from roughly coursed, dressed sandstone, probably dating to the 11th century. There is a trabeated door in the western wall, but no antae as one might expect in a church of this form. No windows remain. At present the fabric of the structure is in a perilous condition. A large section of the southern jamb of the door has collapsed leaving little to support the lintel, and hence the substantial wall above.

8 Toghers between Mella's Cell and Castle Armstrong

Proceeding across fields to the north of Mella's cell and a drainage ditch, one comes to an exposed cross section of a togher. Within this section are visible flags, gravel and marl and the preserved remains of some wooden hurdles (C-14 date c. 540AD). This site was excavated by Ellen O' Carroll while working for the Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit.

A little further on, in Castletown bog, the path of the togher is discernible as a barely raised track across the bog. Sections of the trackway are visible in the regular transverse drain cuttings. Roughly midway across the bog an excavation pit which has not been back filled allows some of the structure of the togher to be viewed.

9 Castle Armstrong (SMR 7:37: GIS no. 287)

On the edge of the bog the route goes on to an old farm track. Some way along this is a network of demesne walls, late 18th century farm buildings and a 17th century fortified house situated on a hill overlooking the track. The 18th /19th century home which replaced it has been demolished. The fortified home is an excellent example of its type, now in a dangerous condition. The carved fireplace panel and wooden floors mentioned in the county inventory were not found.

Ecology

1 Holy Well

Ash at site, probably ancient as it has resprouted after being damaged. Therefore it is a descendent of a tree which grew at the site hundreds of years ago.

2 Togher*

Dense herb dominated vegetation has invaded the togher since cattle no longer use it as an access route.

3 St Mella's Cell

Planted trees in the enclosure. Church threatened by an overhanging branch of a Poplar.

4 Natural Wildflower Meadow

On the far side of the drain there is a remarkably colourful flora, growing on rock and limestone drift excavated from the drain. Plants include Yellow Rattle, Flax, White and Gold Dog Daisy, Knapweed and Quaking Grass. As a result of the diversity of plants insects are abundant. The Tortoiseshell butterfly is common.

5 Cutaway Bog

Abandoned cut over bog is slowly being vegetated by acid-loving plants. If this area remains dry it will probably be a dense scrub in 10 years. The dominant plant is now the tiny Sorrel which is known to gardeners as a persistent weed in heather beds. Other plants include the Bog Cotton (many flowered), Bell Heather and Birch. Bog Moss only grows in wet drains. If this basin floods once peat exploitation ceases, Bog Moss and bog-forming plants would spread in this area and the site could eventually resume its development as a raised bog.

6 Fossil Bog Timber

Dumped at side of cutaway bog, after being removed from drains. Local sculptor uses bog timber as a raw material.

7 Birch thicket

On the edge of the bog on the side of the access track is a thicket dominated by Birch with Blackberry, Guelder Rose, Holly, Ash and Hazel.

Geology

1 Lemanaghan Church

The decorated grave slabs are all made from the local basal Carboniferous sandstone which is exposed just north of the village. The column fragments are made of Carboniferous limestone, comparable limestone is seen as bedrock in a nearby drainage ditch.

2 St Mella's Cell

All the stone used for this building is the local basal Carboniferous sandstone available as loose blocks lying at the surface within 2km of the site.

3 Limestone Bedrock

Beds of limestone inclined to the south are seen in the drainage ditch here. Northwards along the ditch, these beds can be seen to overly sandstones which form the base of the succession of Carboniferous rocks.

4 Mineral Exploration

During the 1970s a mineral exploration company drilled boreholes here, in a search for lead and zinc minerals in limestone adjacent to a major NE-SW trending fault in the underlying bedrock.

5 Local Well

A 6ft deep well in the deltaic sands (immediately adjacent to the route) provides the main water supply for the area. The undulating ground to the west here is underlain by major sheets of sand which were deposited c. 14,000 years ago by rivers flowing eastwards from under an ice sheet out into a large lake which is now a raised bog.

6 Deltaic Sand and Gravels

There is a small pit below the castle which shows the sand and gravel which formed the delta in this area and which locally provides a good near-surface water supply.

14 Quarry

The area here is strewn with very large boulders and crags of sandstone and conglomerate. These are sedimentary rocks lying at the base of the Carboniferous succession. Some of them have veins filled with quartz crystals. The veins were probably open cracks formed during movement on a major fault in the bedrock near here. Rocks in this area could have provided a plentiful resource of good building material for the Lemonaghan area.

2 Sites of Interest Between Ballycumber and Clonmacnoise

Archaeology

10 St Manchan's Shrine

Boher Church contains one of the finest shrines in the country and should be a major attraction to the area in its own right. Pilgrims of old would have visited the church to view the shrine. It is highly appropriate that such a shrine can be viewed so close to its original setting, thus providing one of the highlights of the route.

11 Medieval Cross Slab at Boher

Built into the base of a shrine to Our Lady is a late medieval slab with floriated arms and *fleur de lis* terminals. Slabs like this are common in the south Midlands, in St Canice's and St Mary's, Kilkenny, Kells, and at Kilcoolly Abbey, date range 1480-1620. This is said to have been moved from Lemanaghan in about 1971.

12 Coachhouse near Boher Church

Immediately to the west of the church, an 18th century stable building, said to have been built by British troops during 1798, retains very fine interior fittings. However, in its present condition it would be unsuitable to open to the public.

13 Ringfort, (SMR 7:34 GIS no 253) and Killeen (SMR 7: 33: GIS no.?) in Killaghintober townland*

Proceeding along the road towards Doon, one passes a ringfort (visible from the road) and a Killeen (not visible from the road) in the townland of Killaghintober. The ringfort is very overgrown and only small sections of bank are visible, making it of little interest to the visitor. The Killeen,

approached through a private garden, is quite large, and retains a single 18th century inscribed slab and a large number of upright stones. A little distance from the site is a boulder said to show the hoof prints of St Manchan's cow. By the side of the road adjacent to the Killeen is a well with nine steps. It is possible that the Killeen site represents an early Christian settlement, and that the well gave the townland its name, but in their current condition they would not be suitable to highlight for visitors.

14 St Bridget's Holy Well (SMR 7: 31) Delisted

Pilgrims Road continues on the main road passing near a closed up Holy Well associated with Bridget.

15 Doon Castle (SMR 6:31 (01): GIS no. 156)*

Approaching Doon, are the remains of Doon fortified house and bawn. Substantial remnants of the bawn structures survive, but are quite overgrown. The fortified house itself is in relatively stable condition, although there is quite a large quantity of masonry debris in the interior. There are a number of high quality dressed stones incorporated in the fabric, as well as some evidence of re-use, suggesting an earlier stone structure on the site. The stairway retains extremely well preserved wicker centering marks on its ceiling. Of particular interest to the visitor is the Sheela na gig situated on the south-west quoin at first floor level (SMR 6:31 (02): GIS No. 157). Photos.

From here the original pilgrim's route followed the line of the avenue to Doon demesne which is overlooked by a small ringfort. From the rocky outcrop on which Doon castle is situated, there is an excellent view of the 17th-19th century house and surrounding parkland.

16 Togher near Doon Demesne

Proceeding up the back avenue of Doon demesne (and thus providing greater security and privacy to the house itself) the walker meets the traditional route close to the back of the farmyard. Here a wooded track follows the top of esker curving up towards Doon ringfort and souterrain. The track itself varies in width between 4.2m and 3m, and is defined as a hollow closest to the farm buildings but develops a single flanking bank further along. This track has been used until recent times for farm traffic. Tradition and the first edition Ordnance Survey maps, which identify it as the togher are the principal authority for its antiquity. It is possible that a further bank, at the base of the esker ridge might relate to the togher. However it may also represent a later, demesne landscape feature.

17 Doon Ringfort (SMR 6:29(01): GIS no. 144) and Souterrain (SMR 6:29 (02): GIS no. 143)*

The path of the togher apparently passes close to the south side of Doon ringfort where a bank and ditch feature may represent a section of the original togher. The banks of the fort itself are only obvious in a couple of sections, and thus the main features of interest within the fort are the view of the surrounding countryside through the trees and the centrally positioned souterrain. At present two chambers of the souterrain can be accessed through the collapsed roof of a third. The entrance to the other chamber is quite broad and the chamber itself provides a good example of a souterrain construction.

Crossing another couple of fields, one enters Coillte forestry and picks up the track of the original togher once more. Again, the identification of the track as ancient togher is traditional and not archaeological.

18 The Nun's Church (SMR 5:29: GIS No. 199)*

Emerging from the forestry, crossing a section of bog and meeting the Clonmacnoise road, the final stretch of the route follows the esker toward Clonmacnoise. A short distance from the monastic enclosure is the Nun's Church. Although largely rebuilt during the 1860s, it provides a fine example of Romanesque sculpture at its peak, and can be dated by a reference to its completion in the Annals of the Four Masters in 1167. The church structure is solid.

19 Cairn of the Three Crosses SMR 5:28: GIS No. 205)

Level with the stile leading into the Nun's Church enclosure is a raised, flat topped bank, possibly representing the original line of the togher. Beside this is the Cairn of the Three Crosses, which, being clearly visible from the road below, should not suffer damage from visitors.

20 Clonmacnoise Bullaun (SMR 5:28 (05) : GIS No. 206)

Before entering the modern burial ground, there is a large ?bullaun on the side of the road. The stone has already been partially covered by tarmacadam, and is more at risk from traffic and hedge cutting than from visitors.

21 Section of Toghher SMR 5:28 (04): GIS no. 202)

Entering the modern grave-yard there is a flagged section of pathway, which apparently leads directly to Teach Chiaran, the small church reputed to hold the remains of the patron saint. Photos.

Ecology

8 Esker Woodland east of Doon Castle

A surviving band of semi natural woodland is found east of Doon Castle. It has Ash, Hazel, Elder, Sycamore, Crab apple, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Beech and Holly. However, the understorey is very poor as a result of cattle grazing.

9 Esker Woodland in Doon Demesne

The narrow esker ridge on which runs the Pilgrim's Road and contains the ringfort and souterrain behind Mooney's house is covered in semi-natural woodland. Of particular interest are some youngish specimens of Yew and other native trees such as Hazel, Oak, Holly and Ash. Beech and Sycamore were planted particularly on the edge of the woodland at the base of the ridge. Unfortunately the ground flora is very poor due to sheep and cattle grazing.

10 Esker Woodland in NHA 1830*

Old managed wood belonging to Mooney was purchased by Coillte and underplanted in early 50's after the owners removed almost all of the good trees. Good diversity of plant and animal species found in the woodland as it was developed on esker and wet bog margin. Plants include Red Dead-nettle, Tutsan, Ash, Hazel (and seedlings), Geum, Hawthorn, Wild Strawberry, Honeysuckle, Violets, Ivy, Ajuga, Herb-robert, Wood Sorrel, Primrose, Laurel, Oak, Tree fern and Bracken. Blackberries are abundant on the side of the track where there is more light.

11 Bogland Vegetation in Fire Break

Coillte forestry was also established on the bog which grew up to the base of the esker. In the fire break of the woodland there is an opportunity to see many shrubby bog plants growing abundantly, due to better drainage and the absence of fire and grazing. They include Bog Rosemary which is the Offaly County flower and Ling Heather.

12 Bogland Vegetation*

Remaining section of a raised bog contains lawns and hummocks. Missing are deep pools as bog hydrology has been affected by turf cutting and forestry.

13 Layby on the Pilgrim's Road Esker

Uncut layby offers an opportunity to see a very good example of esker flora including Knapweed, Ox-eye daisy, Carline Thistle, Quaking Grass, Wild Carrot, Lady's Bedstraw, Ling Heather, Euphrasia and Bird's-foot trefoil.

14 Hanging Hill

Colourful esker flora

Geology

7 Topography

The gentle hummocky landscape between Boher and Ballycumber is part of a large delta deposited c. 14,000 years ago by rivers flowing eastwards from under an ice sheet out into a large lake which is now a raised bog.

8 Fossil Landscape

The grey crags on the south side of the road here are bedrock exposures of Waulsortian Reef Limestone. This is the remnant of a landscape of isolated rock hills (hums) and depressions (dolins) created by solution of the underlying limestones under sem-tropical climate conditions c. 20-60 million years ago. All the higher semicircular hills in this region represent parts of this ancient tropical landscape.

9 Esker Deposits

A pit has been cut into a deposit of very large round boulders of limestone set in a matrix of sand and gravel. This is a typical example of the composition of the esker ridge which the route follows. The ridge was formed by a powerful river which was flowing eastwards under high pressure through tunnels in an overlying ice sheet.

10 Esker Topography

There is a good view westwards from here of an esker ridge tapering out in a fan shape. This represents where a river beneath an ice sheet flowed out into standing water of a lake or large cave beneath the ice. Photo

11 Esker Margin

A closer view of the fan-shaped termination of an esker ridge.

12 Kame at west of Mongan Bog

The small conical hill to the south of the road here is a kame formed by a river emerging from an ice sheet into a lake and rapidly dumping its load of sand and gravel. Mongan's Bog was formed by vegetation subsequently growing out to fill in the old lake.

APPENDIX 3

RECORD CARDS FOR BASELINE SITES

Baseline Site	Page No.
Lemanaghan Graveyard and Church	36
Lemanaghan Holy Well and Bullaun	38
Togher to St Mella's	40
St Mella's Enclosure and Cell	42
Doon Castle	44
Doon Ringfort and Souterrain	46
Path through Doon Esker Woodland	48
Bogland near Esker Woodland	50
The Nun's Church, Clonmacnoise	52

Lemanaghan Graveyard and Church

Route Name Slí Mhór Code
Date 9/8/99 Weather Overcast but dry
Surveyor(s) MG and RM

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE/FEATURE

Summary description of site/feature
Lemanaghan Ecclesiastical Complex

Nearest settlement on 1" map Ballycumber Grid
County Offaly Barony Garrycastle Townland Lemanaghan

References/ (max 2)

Designation status (nationally or locally) and reference no's
Registered Monument in care of Offaly County Council

Risk associated with present use (tick high, medium or low and elaborate)

Farming (l)

Recreation (m)

Development (h) Burials and unsupervised graveyard clearance could threaten the site.

Future condition (h,m,l) if these pressures are maintained.

No major change to condition of the site

VULNERABLE FEATURE: DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE CONDITION

Summary description of feature/site
Loose medieval stones to N and W of door of church
Cross-slabs affixed to wall of church

Account of rationale for choosing this feature as indicator of site quality

Valuable cut stones could be removed or damaged as a result of increased visitor usage of the site.

Written description of baseline state of vulnerable feature (cross referenced to photos)

Photos taken of 1 and 2. As some of the loose stones are currently covered in vegetation they could not all be photographed.

Film and frame number of photo(s)

Level of acceptable change (text)

Creation of more formalised gravel paths into complex

Level of unacceptable change (text) = INDICATOR 1

Promotion as part of the Pilgrim Path without implementing all essential guidelines relating to security and condition of buildings.

BASELINE CONDITION: INDICATORS OF INDIRECT IMPACTS

(tick which condition is appropriate)

Graffiti on a heritage feature not relevant

Graffiti on a site notice not present

Use of area for overnight camping not present

Interference with management/interpretative infrastructure not present

Use of area for picnicing not obvious

Litter not obvious after search

Condition of access paths (applies to sites associated with the built environment). needs management now

List other impacts here
Assess on three point scale

Manchan's Well, Bullaun and Holy Tree

Route Name Slí Mhór Code
Date 9/8/99 Weather Overcast but dry
Surveyor(s) MG and RM

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE/FEATURE

Summary description of site/feature
Manchan's Well, Bullaun and Holy Tree

Nearest settlement on 1" map Lemanaghan Grid
County Offaly Barony Garrycastle Townland Lemanaghan

References/ (max 2)

Designation status (nationally or locally) and reference no's
Registered monument

Risk associated with present use (tick high, medium or low and elaborate)

Farming (l)

Recreation (m)

Development (l)

Future condition (h,m,l) if these pressures are maintained.

Site is prone to littering. Well water not very clear. Condition unlikely to change significantly.

VULNERABLE FEATURE: DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE CONDITION

Summary description of feature/site
Keyhole shaped Holy Well. Walled area. Surrounds are paved. There are two shrines, one under an large ash tree.

Account of rationale for choosing this feature as indicator of site quality
Development as part of the Pilgrim Path should lead to an improvement in environmental quality, through better control of littering.

Written description of baseline state of vulnerable feature (cross referenced to photos)

Photographs taken

Film and frame number of photo(s)

Level of acceptable change (text)

Level of unacceptable change (text)

No effort to control littering

Vandalism to shrines = INDICATOR 1

BASELINE CONDITION: INDICATORS OF INDIRECT IMPACTS
(tick which condition is appropriate)

Graffiti on a heritage feature not present

Graffiti on a site notice not relevant

Use of area for overnight camping not present

Interference with management/interpretative infrastructure
not relevant

Use of area for picnicing not obvious

Litter readily seen

Condition of access paths (applies to sites associated with the built environment).
adequate

List other impacts here
Assess on three point scale

Togher between Church and St Mella's Cell, Lemanaghan

Route Name Slí Mhór Code
Date 28th August 1999 Weather Good
Surveyor(s) MT

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE/FEATURE

Summary description of site/feature

Overgrown togher between Holy Well and Mella's Cell

Nearest settlement on 1" map Ballycumber Grid
County Offaly Barony Garrycastle Townland Lemanaghan

References/ (max 2)

Designation status (nationally or locally) and reference no's
Registered Monument

Risk associated with present use (tick high, medium or low and elaborate)

Farming (l)

Recreation (m)

Development (l)

Future condition (h,m,l) if these pressures are maintained.

Some visitors may try to access the togher near the Well.

VULNERABLE FEATURE: DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE CONDITION

Summary description of feature/site

Vegetation along the togher which has to be cleared to allow for visitor access to Mella's Cell

Account of rationale for choosing this feature as indicator of site quality
Vegetation clearance is required. It must be carried out sympathetically to preserve atmosphere and prevent damage to togher. The condition of vegetation after development of the route will be an indicator of sustainable development.

M. Tubridy and Associates

Final Report

Written description of baseline state of vulnerable feature (cross referenced to photos)

Area photographed and described is situated 20m from Holy Well and measures 10mX 10m. Species currently present are Blackberry, Nettle, Cocksfoot grass, Robin run the hedge, Hogweed and Ivy.

Film and frame number of photo(s)

(1) 23/24

Level of acceptable change (text)

Development of path according to guidelines set out in Appendix 3

Level of unacceptable change (text)

Vegetation clearance carried out without following guidelines= INDICATOR 1

BASELINE CONDITION: INDICATORS OF INDIRECT IMPACTS

(tick which condition is appropriate)

Graffiti on a heritage feature not relevant

Graffiti on a site notice not relevant

Use of area for overnight camping not present

Interference with management/interpretative infrastructure not relevant

Use of area for picnicing not obvious

Litter have to search

Condition of access paths (applies to sites associated with the built environment).

needs management now (as vegetation is overgrown)

List other impacts here

Assess on three point scale

St Mella's Cell and Enclosure

Route Name Slí Mhór Code
Date 9/8/99 Weather Good, overcast but dry
Surveyor(s) MG and RM

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE/FEATURE

Summary description of site/feature
St Mella's Cell (single cell church) and Enclosure

Nearest settlement on 1" map Ballycumber Grid
County Offaly Barony Garrycastle Townland Lemanaghan

References/ (max 2)

Designation status (nationally or locally) and reference no's
Registered Monument

Risk associated with present use (tick high, medium or low and elaborate)
Farming (m)
Recreation (l)
Development (l)
Future condition (h,m,l) if these pressures are maintained.

Present condition likely to be maintained under current land uses.

VULNERABLE FEATURE: DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE CONDITION

Summary description of feature/site

Masonry of church

Account of rationale for choosing this feature as indicator of site quality
The masonry of the entire building is unstable especially the west and south walls. There is a lot of vegetation on them and the door is on the verge of collapse. Visitors will be attracted to explore the site and enter the church

M. Tubridy and Associates

Final Report

through narrow doorway. This increases the risk of disturbance to the fabric of the building and particularly to the door.

Written description of baseline state of vulnerable feature (cross referenced to photos)

Photographed wall and doorway

Film and frame number of photo(s)

Level of acceptable change (text)

Some tidying up of site and trimming of vegetation to accommodate existing levels of use

Level of unacceptable change (text)

Promotion as part of the Pilgrim Path project without implementing essential guidelines = INDICATOR 1

Extensive clearance of vegetation from around church without supervision.

BASELINE CONDITION: INDICATORS OF INDIRECT IMPACTS

(tick which condition is appropriate)

Graffiti on a heritage feature not relevant

Graffiti on a site notice not relevant (graffiti on nearby trees)

Use of area for overnight camping not present

Interference with management/interpretative infrastructure not relevant

Use of area for picnicing not obvious

Litter not obvious after search

Condition of access paths (applies to sites associated with the built environment). adequate

List other impacts here
Assess on three point scale

Doon Castle

Route Name Slí Mhór Code
Date 9/8/99 Weather Fair
Surveyor(s) MG and RM

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE/FEATURE

Summary description of site/feature
Doon Castle and Bawn

Nearest settlement on 1" map Doon Grid
County Offaly Barony Garrycastle Townland Doon

References/ (max 2)

Designation status (nationally or locally) and reference no's
Registered Monument in private ownership

Risk associated with present use (tick high, medium or low and elaborate)
Farming (l)
Recreation (m)
Development (l)
Future condition (h,m,l) if these pressures are maintained.

As castle is obvious and near the public road, it is visited regularly. There are signs of path wear, graffiti inside and loosened stones.

VULNERABLE FEATURE: DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE CONDITION

Summary description of feature/site
Cut stone on Castle

Account of rationale for choosing this feature as indicator of site quality
Cut stone is valuable, it is easily recorded and it is vulnerable to theft.

Written description of baseline state of vulnerable feature (cross referenced to photos)

Photographes taken of vulnerable features.

Film and frame number of photo(s)

Level of acceptable change (text)

Some clearance of vegetation and consolidation of fabric

Level of unacceptable change (text)

Removal or damage to features photographed = INDICATOR 1

Unsupervised changes to structure and associated curtilage

BASELINE CONDITION: INDICATORS OF INDIRECT IMPACTS

(tick which condition is appropriate)

Graffiti on a heritage feature present

Graffiti on a site notice not relevant

Use of area for overnight camping not present

Interference with management/interpretative infrastructure
not relevant

Use of area for picnicking not obvious

Litter have to search

Condition of access paths (applies to sites associated with the built environment).

adequate

List other impacts here

Fires lit inside the castle (bonfires for Hallow'een, victory fires??) as the castle is in a prominent location.

Doon Ringfort and Souterrain

Route Name Slí Mhór Code
Date 9/8/99 Weather Good
Surveyor(s) MG and RM

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE/FEATURE

Summary description of site/feature
Doon Ringfort and Souterrain

Nearest settlement on 1" map Doon Grid
County Offaly Barony Garrycastle Townland Doon Demesne

References/ (max 2)

Designation status (nationally or locally) and reference no's
Registered monument

Risk associated with present use (tick high, medium or low and elaborate)
Farming (m)
Recreation (m)
Development (l)
Future condition (h,m,l) if these pressures are maintained.

No significant change anticipated in the condition of the site.

VULNERABLE FEATURE: DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE CONDITION

Summary description of feature/site
Earthen banked ringfort

Account of rationale for choosing this feature as indicator of site quality
Once promoted as being a feature along the route, more visitors will wish to explore the souterrain and ringfort. A path will appear to the souterrain. The banks may become more eroded.

Written description of baseline state of vulnerable feature (cross referenced to photos)

Photos taken of relevant section of earthen bank of the ringfort.

Film and frame number of photo(s)

Level of acceptable change (text)

Some indication of preferred route should be provided.

Narrower entrance to souterrain should be blocked (under archaeological supervision)

Level of unacceptable change (text)

Consolidation/ change to souterrain without archaeological supervision

Development of several access routes = INDICATOR 1

Excessive path wear leading to soil erosion.

BASELINE CONDITION: INDICATORS OF INDIRECT IMPACTS
(tick which condition is appropriate)

Graffiti on a heritage feature not relevant

Graffiti on a site notice not relevant

Use of area for overnight camping not present

Interference with management/interpretative infrastructure
not relevant

Use of area for picnicing not obvious

Litter not obvious after search

Condition of access paths (applies to sites associated with the built environment).
adequate

List other impacts here
Assess on three point scale

Doon Esker Woodland (NHA No 1830)

Route Name Slí Mhór Code
Date 10/8/99 Weather Good
Surveyor(s) MT/ZH

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE/FEATURE

Summary description of site/feature
Access route through designated esker woodland

Nearest settlement on 1" map Doon Grid
County Offaly Barony Garrycastle Townland Doon Demesne

References/ (max 2)
NHA site file

Designation status (nationally or locally) and reference no's
pNHA no 1830

Risk associated with present use (tick high, medium or low and elaborate)

Farming (l)

Recreation (l)

Development (m)

Future condition (h,m,l) if these pressures are maintained.

As the woodland is managed solely for commercial forestry there is a danger that management practises could lead to removal or damage to the native esker flora, trees and understorey. Very little sign of active management now. Access route into woodland is part of the Pilgrim Path.

VULNERABLE FEATURE: DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE CONDITION

Summary description of feature/site
Defined area on the access track and adjacent woodland.

Account of rationale for choosing this feature as indicator of site quality
Monitoring at this point will reveal 1) if vegetation clearance followed recommendations in the guidelines and 2) if the impacts of walkers are confined to the track.

Written description of baseline state of vulnerable feature (cross referenced to photos)

Survey site is that section of the track within 20 and 30 m of the boundary with private farmland. On the track is some dead wood, Ivy, Wood violets, Ash seedling, blackberry stems and Lady's fern. There are no paths into the wood.

Film and frame number of photo(s)

Level of acceptable change (text)

Some removal of litter due to walking.

Level of unacceptable change (text) =

Clearance of all vegetation from the track

Appearance of paths in the adjacent woodland= INDICATOR 1

BASELINE CONDITION: INDICATORS OF INDIRECT IMPACTS
(tick which condition is appropriate)

Graffiti on a heritage feature not present (such as a tree)

Graffiti on a site notice not relevant

Use of area for overnight camping not present

Interference with management/interpretative infrastructure not relevant

Use of area for picnicing not obvious

Litter not obvious after search

Condition of access paths (applies to sites associated with the built environment).
adequate

List other impacts here

Assess on three point scale

Bogland near Esker Woodland

Route Name Slí Mhór Code
Date 9/8/99 Weather Excellent
Surveyor(s) MT and ZH

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE/FEATURE

Summary description of site/feature
Bogland north of Esker Woodland

Nearest settlement on 1" map Ballynahown Grid
County Offaly Barony Garrycastle Townland Doon Demesne

References/ (max 2)
Designation status (nationally or locally) and reference no's
None

Risk associated with present use (tick high, medium or low and elaborate)
Farming (l)
Recreation (l)
Development (m)
Future condition (h,m,l) if these pressures are maintained.

Bogland has dried as a result of forestry. Conifers are seeding onto the bog.

VULNERABLE FEATURE: DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE CONDITION

Summary description of feature/site
Vegetation beside the track of the proposed route which will run along a boardwalk from the forest to the edge of the bog. The boardwalk will be inserted between two self seeded pines in the direction of public road. The Baseline Site is adjacent to the boardwalk 5mX5m to the west.

Account of rationale for choosing this feature as indicator of site quality
Monitoring of the vegetation near the boardwalk will confirm that the impact of the walk has been confined to the boardwalk, therefore preserving the vegetation and habitat elsewhere. As bog vegetation is vulnerable to trampling the effect of walking will be easily monitored.

Written description of baseline state of vulnerable feature (cross referenced to photos)

Photos taken. Species now present include Cladonia (lichen), Ling heather, Bell heather, Deer sedge, Bog moss. No erosion due to walkers. No path visible in sample area.

Film and frame number of photo(s)

Level of acceptable change (text)

Damage to bog surface due to boardwalk development

Level of unacceptable change (text)

Random paths on unprotected bog surface

Appearance of bare peat in Baseline Site = INDICATOR 1

BASELINE CONDITION: INDICATORS OF INDIRECT IMPACTS
(tick which condition is appropriate)

Graffiti on a heritage feature not relevant

Graffiti on a site notice not relevant

Use of area for overnight camping not present

Interference with management/interpretative infrastructure
not relevant

Use of area for picnicing not obvious

Litter not obvious after search

Condition of access paths (applies to sites associated with the built environment).
adequate

List other impacts here
Assess on three point scale

The Nun's Church, Clonmacnoise

Route Name Slí Mhór Code
Date Weather
Surveyor(s) MG and RM

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE/FEATURE

Summary description of site/feature
The Nun's Church, Clonmacnoise

Nearest settlement on 1" map Clonmacnoise Grid
County Offaly Barony Garrycastle Townland Clonmacnoise

References/ (max 2)

Designation status (nationally or locally) and reference no's
State guardianship, privately owned

Risk associated with present use (tick high, medium or low and elaborate)

Farming (h)
Recreation (m)
Development (l)

Future condition (h,m,l) if these pressures are maintained.

Livestock, land improvement and development practises threaten integrity of surrounding walls. Recreation pressure is under control as site is actively managed.

VULNERABLE FEATURE: DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE CONDITION

Summary description of feature/site
Ground around church

Account of rationale for choosing this feature as indicator of site quality
Increased promotion of the Nun's Church through the Pilgrim Path will result in increased numbers to this site. Such pressure could result in the appearance of bare ground along access track to the church.

Written description of baseline state of vulnerable feature (cross referenced to photos)

Photographs taken

Film and frame number of photo(s)

Level of acceptable change (text)

Creation of gravel path to mitigate for increased wear and tear

Level of unacceptable change (text)= INDICATOR 1

Exposure of bare soil as a result of increased pressure

BASELINE CONDITION: INDICATORS OF INDIRECT IMPACTS
(tick which condition is appropriate)

Graffiti on a heritage feature not present

Graffiti on a site notice not present

Use of area for overnight camping not present

Interference with management/interpretative infrastructure
not present

Use of area for picnicing not obvious

Litter not obvious after search

Condition of access paths (applies to sites associated with the built environment).
adequate

List other impacts here
Assess on three point scale

Appendix 4

Guidelines for Management of Semi-natural Vegetation

Introduction

The guidelines will provide for the retention of the nature conservation interest of the route. They apply to areas which are likely to support wild plants and animals such as rough scrub in fields, deciduous woodland, hedgerows, drains, open mountain and overgrown tracks. They do not apply to enclosed farmland which is used for grazing or tillage, as these areas have less wildlife interest. The objective is to retain the conservation interest of these semi-natural areas along each route. They act as reservoirs for wildlife in otherwise intensively managed countryside. The presence of wild plants and animals will add to enjoyment of walkers and the uniqueness of each route. The guidelines are based on long established environmentally management practises which should allow a balance between route development and conservation. By integrating these at an early stage with other aspects of planning and implementation, the route will increase the diversity of plants and animals and no conflicts should arise between route development and wildlife values.

Planning

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with the route report to reveal the specific areas to which they apply. The implications of the

guidelines should be considered by the local steering groups and communicated to everyone involved in route management work.

The local Dúchas ranger should be contacted if work is being carried out in a designated area (mapped in the route reports). Contact could be established with active locally based members of Crann, or BirdWatch Ireland (through the local ranger) who may have local knowledge of particular semi natural areas or experience of environmentally friendly management practises.

Timing

All major vegetation clearance work should be carried out between September 1st and February 1st. If possible work should not be carried out between February and August (inclusive) as this is the main feeding, growing and nesting time for wild plants and animals. By confining work to the winter when animals and plants are hibernating, birds will raise broods without significance disturbance and most plants will be able to flower and set seed.

It will necessary to carry out clearance work regularly. It is more environmentally friendly to prune occasionally (1-2 per year) rather than carry out more drastic clearance work less frequently. Monitor plant growth during the first two years to determine the optimum regime.

Scale of Vegetation Clearance

When clearing semi-natural vegetation always minimise the area affected. This policy will protect the diversity of habitats and greatest number of species. Only clear a path which comfortably allows walkers to pass two

abreast or only remove vegetation which will allow the principal features of an overgrown area to be appreciated. Vegetation should not be removed from a designated archaeological site without archaeological supervision.

Chemicals

Do not use weedkillers to clear vegetation. This practise will maintain the chemical free status of these areas and avoid the risk of air or water pollution.

Machinery

Maximise the use of hand held tools such as strimmers, electric hedge clippers, slash hooks etc. This will serve to target efforts more effectively and should protect trees. Where possible avoid the use of heavy machinery on soft ground as it will remove areas of habitat and result in a permanent scar on the landscape.

Protection of Native Trees

Do not remove any trees and shrubs unless they are threatening walkers safety. This approach will ensure the preservation of semi natural woodlands and scrub which add significantly to the enjoyment of routes and are important habitats for large numbers of animals. Prune overhanging branches if they threaten walkers or views.

Protection of Ecosystems

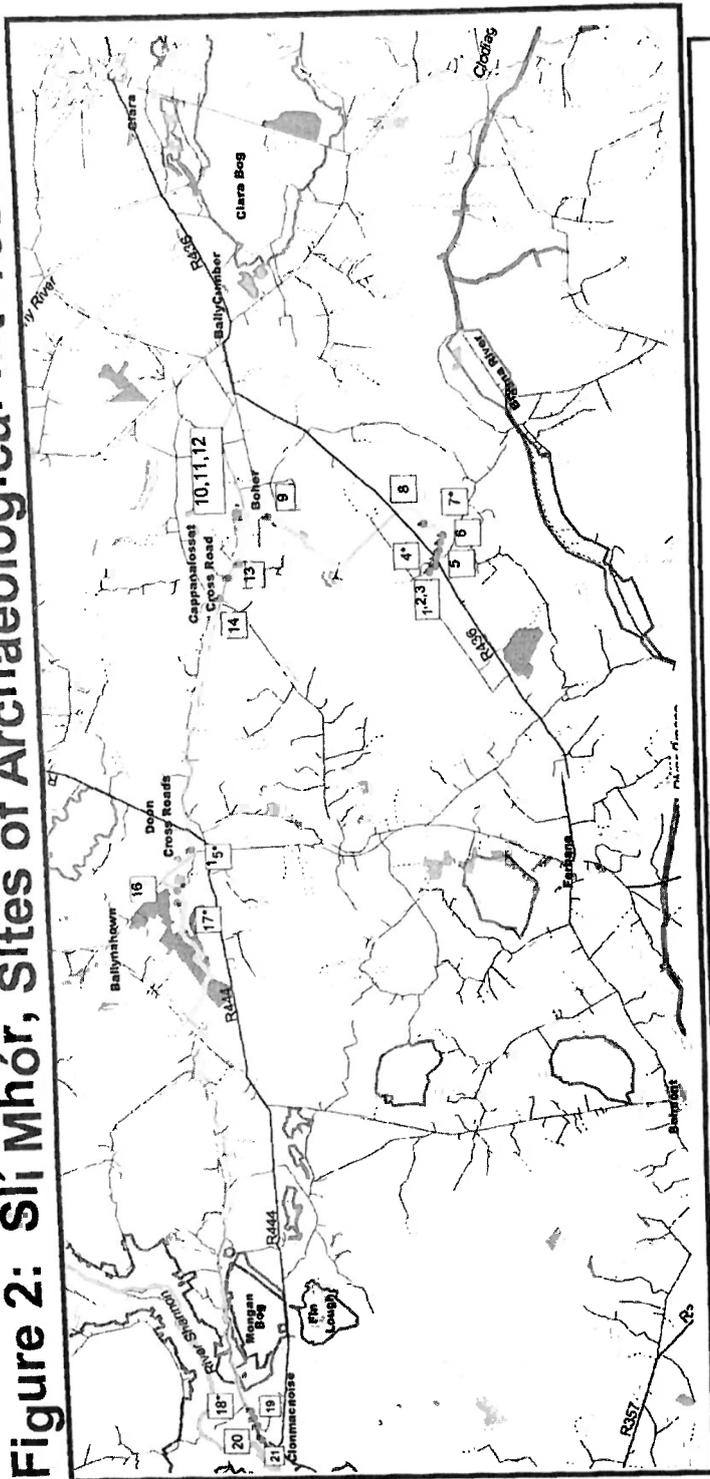
Where possible leave pruned material to rot on site (at the side of the route) to allow their nutrients to be recycled naturally in the system and thus maintain populations of invertebrates, birds and fungi. If the material is to be

removed allow it to rest on site for a few days to allow populations of animals return to the soil.

Vegetation Re-establishment

If reseeding is required after vegetation clearance either leave the area to revegetate naturally (this will happen quickly if the soil is fertile) or spread a mix of locally collected grass and wildflower seeds, in Spring, which have been collected by hand at a similar location the previous August/September. This will preserve the naturalness of grasslands and the populations of native species. If it is not possible to obtain seeds or plants locally, an Irish produced wildflower mix should be used.

Figure 2: Slí Mhór, Sites of Archaeological Interest

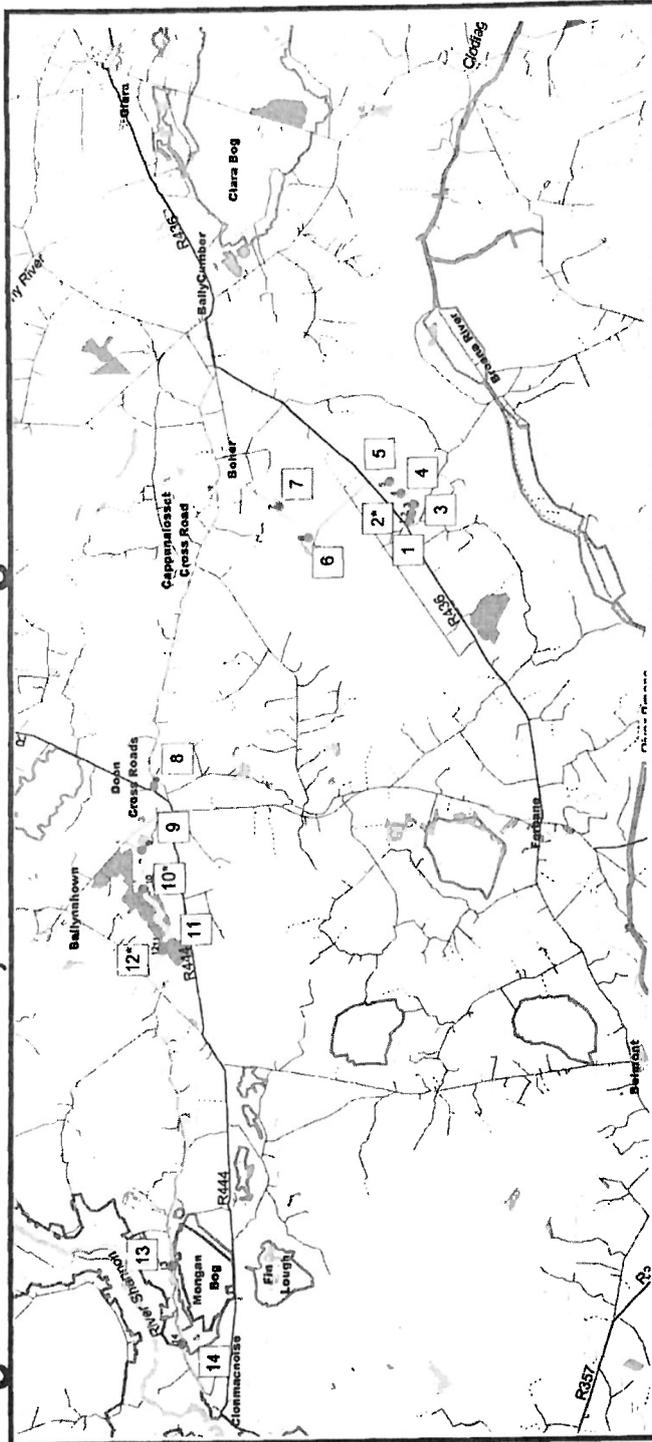


Key to Features

	Regional and primary roads		Waterways		Tracks		Slí Mhór
	Other roads		Waterbodies		National Heritage Area		Archaeological Sites
	Tracks		Towns		Special Protection Area		4*, 7*, 15*, 17*, 18* Baseline Sites
	Ceriferous forest		Deciduous forest				



Figure 3: Slí Mhór, Sites of Ecological Interest



Key to Features

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| — Regional and primary roads | Waterways | Coniferous forest | National Heritage Area | Slí Mhór |
| — Other roads | Waterbodies | Deciduous forest | Special Protection Area | ● Ecological Sites |
| Tracks | Towns | | | ● Baseline Sites |



