

STEPHEN MILLER

SAINT PATRICK  
IN THE ISLE OF MAN

A FOLKLORE SAMPLER



St. Patrick's pillow.  
Ballafreer.

CHIOLLAGH BOOKS  
FOR  
CULTURE VANNIN  
2019

SAINT PATRICK IN THE ISLAND OF MAN  
A FOLKLORE SAMPLER

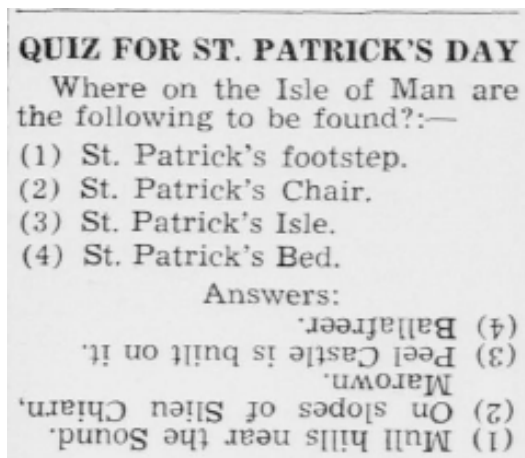
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## SAINT PATRICK IN THE ISLE OF MAN



The *Isle of Man Weekly Times* ran this quiz in its issue for 15 March 1957, and for those who either do not know the answers nor can read upside down, they are:

- (1) Mull Hill near the Sound.
- (2) On slopes of Slieu Chiarn, Marown
- (3) Peel Castle is built on it.
- (4) Ballaforeer.

In the Isle of Man, St Patrick left behind more of a mark than this, and so the number of questions could be easily extended. A parish is named after him, there is a church dedicated to his memory, a number of *keels* bear his name, as do wells, two of which mark where he first landed on his horse. His bed is matched by two chairs, he cursed a field at Ballaforeer, and changed the way the Manx eat their pudding. He features in proverbs and is called upon in prayers. Christianity was brought to the Island by him, he fought both Manannan and the Devil, and in one encounter with the latter, the Isle of Man was created....

Gathered here is a sampler of the folklore connected with St Patrick found in the Island. No doubt there is more to be uncovered, the story of St Patrick and Pudding was a chance find, and so hopefully there will be scope soon for another folklore sampler dedicated to this most important of saints connected with the Island.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2019

SAINT PATRICK  
IN THE ISLE OF MAN  
A FOLKLORE SAMPLER



(1)  
ST PATRICK AND HIS COMING TO THE ISLAND

(1)

WILLIAM CASHEN (1912)

When Parick Noo, St Patrick, first came to the Isle of Man, he came across on horseback. The Island was under a dense mist, and all the powers of darkness were arrayed against him, and, being hard pressed by a sea-monster of great size that was following to devour him, he put the horse up the steepest place in Peel Hill, and where the horse stood still on the top on firm ground, a beautiful spring of pure water sprang out of the ground, whereby the saint and the horse were both refreshed. The well is called the Holy Well unto this day. And looking down the cliff he saw the monster that had followed him. The saint cursed the monster, and there and then he was turned into a solid rock. The monster can be seen there now with his great big fin upon his back, a warning to all evil-doers that they shall not prevail against the good. Before St Patrick landed he heard the shrill shout of the curlew and the bleating of a goat whose kid had fallen down the rocks, and he blessed them both. No man was ever to find the curlew's nest, nor to see the goat bring forth its young. The print of the horse's feet is in the cliffs, they say, still, and can be seen still by anyone venture-some enough to go there to see it.

William Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Sophia Morrison (Douglas: Manx Language Society, 1912).

(2)

SOPHIA MORRISON (1903)

Wells     Patrick.  
S. Patrick's Well. w. Peel Hill.

This well is shaped like a huge horse shoe. Tradition said that S. Patrick came on horse back from Ireland to the Island, & that when the horse first touched form ground, a beautiful spring of pure water burst forth. It was also called the "Holy Well" for its waters were said to have healing powers, but it is better known as "The Silver Well." so called from the numerous silver coins dropped into its depths in ages past by those who came to it for cure. There are people still alive who remember in their more materialistic age, bright new pins taking the place of the small silver coin. All the virtues of its waters were destroyed about 50 years ago by a scabby sheep's being drowned in it. There is a tradition too that the wells of Peel & Maughold are much alike in every way, for it is said that when S. Patrick came from Ireland, the first time he was in a great hurry, & his horse just took a flying leap over the Island—first alighting on Peel Hill & then on Maughold Head, & in proof of this

Holy Wells are at both places to this day. When he went over Greeba Mountain, the horse unfortunately brushed against it, & broke the leg of the Saint, who expressed a wish in Manx to the effect no man might ever be very rich, or very poor that should live there

Gob Greeba ny clagh

Raadnagh rieau dooinney bee berchagh, er boght

“Manx Folk Lore | Collected by self 1903”. Notebook compiled by Sophia Morrison. MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 8.

(3)

SOPHIA MORRISON (2) (1911)

[20] It was the time that Saint Patrick was coming on horseback to Mann, over the sea from Ireland. When he drew near to the land, Manannan Mac y Leirr, that great wizard that was ruler of Mann, put a charm out of him that made the air round the island thick with mist, so that neither sun nor sky nor land could be seen. Patrick rode into the thick of the mist, but try as he would he could find no way out of it, and behind him there was a great sea-beast waiting to swallow him up. He didn't know in his seven senses where he was—east, or west—and was for turning back, when there came to his ears the cry of a curlew, calling:

“Come you, come you, come you!”

Then he said to himself:

“The curlew will be down feeding among the rocks; she will be calling to her young.”

[21] After that he heard the bleat of a goat:

“Beware, beware, beware!”

And he said to himself:

“Where the goat bleats for the fall of her kid there will be a steep bit of a hill.”

Last of all he heard the crow of a cock:

“Come to us—come, come!”

Then Patrick said:

“I believe on me sowl I'm back of Peel Hill.”

And with that he took one leap on to the little island and put his horse up the sheer rock. Soon he stood, sure enough, at the top of Peel Hill. As he stood there he cried out:

“Me blessing on the curlew. No man afther this is to find her nest!”

“Me blessing on the goat, an' no man is to see her bring forth her young!”

“Me blessing on the cock, an' he shall crow at dawn ever afther at this same hour!”

He cursed the sea beast and turned him into a solid rock and there he lies now with his great fin on his back.

Where the horse's hoofs struck the top of the hill there sprang a well of pure [22] water, of which man and horse drank, and it is called the Holy Well of Saint Patrick to this day. If you go down to the ledges of the rock, which were made by the horse's hoofs as he clambered up, you may see the footprints still.

When Patrick looked about him the mist was lifting, and he saw a great host of warriors round Manannan's Faery Mound, with the first rays of the rising sun shining on their spears. But the saint knew that they were phantoms raised by Manannan's magic power and he bade them be gone.

And, behold, they and their master, in the shape of three-legged men, whirled round and round like wheels before the swift wind, which could not overtake them, till they came to Spanish Head. There they whirled over the houghs so quickly and lightly that the gulls on the ledges below were not disturbed, then on over the rough, grey Irish Sea till they came to the enchanted island, fifteen miles south-west of the Calf. Once there Manannan dropped the isle to the bottom of the sea, and he and his company were seen no more.

[23] Saint Patrick on his snow-white horse stood still on Peel Hill and blessed the island where he had touched land, and blessed it has been to this day. Then he leapt on to the little islet that he saw below him. Ever since it has been called Saint Patrick's Isle, and from the rocks on its northern side he watched the fierce storm which Manannan's going had made. Just then a brave ship, with foresail and mainsail gone, was driving straight for the terrible rocks. Saint Patrick raised his mailed hand and the tempest was calmed. The good ship righted herself again, and those on board were saved. They looked up with awe and thankfulness at the rider in his shining armour on the snow-white steed, standing bright against the blackness of the rocks. And ever since that day the fisherman, as he sails past the Horse Rock, has offed with his cap and put up this bit of a prayer to good Saint Patrick:

"Saint Patrick, who blessed our Island, bless us and our boat,

Going out well, coming in better,

With living and dead in the boat."

Sophia Morrison, *Manx Fairy Tales* (London: David Nutt, 1911), 20–23.

(4)

MANX LEGENDS: THE COMING OF ST PATRICK (1957)

[4a] St Patrick, having heard that the inhabitants of the Isle of Man were heathen, decided to go and convert them to Christianity and so he travelled on his snow-white horse over the sea from Ireland. When he drew near to the land Manannan Mac y Leirr, the great magician who was the ruler of Mann, caused the mist to come down and cover the Island so that neither sun nor sky nor sea nor land could be seen.

St Patrick rode into the thick of the mist, but try as he would he was unable to find a way out of it, and behind him there was a great sea-beast waiting to swallow

him up. He had given up hope of ever finding the Island when he heard the cry of the curlew, calling, "Come you, come you, come you!" And he thought to himself "the curlew will be down there feeding among the rocks, she will be calling to her young.

[4b] And then he heard the bleat of a goat: "Beware, beware, beware!" And St Patrick realised that there was a steep bit of hill below.

Last of all he heard the crow of a cock: "Come to us—come, come!" And St Patrick said, "I believe I'm back of Peel Hill." And he took a leap on to the little island and put his horse up the sheer rock, and soon he stood on the top of Peel Hill and blessed the curlew that no man should find her nest, the goat that no man should see her bring forth her young, and the cock that he should crow at dawn ever after.

He cursed the sea-beast and turned him into solid rock.

A well of pure water sprang from the top of the hill where the horse's hooves struck and it is known as the Holy Well of St Patrick. If you look carefully at the ledges of the rock which were made by the horse's hooves as he clambered up, you may see the hoofprints yet.

Suddenly the mist lifted and St Patrick saw a great host of warriors gathered round Manannan's Faery Mound, but St. Patrick knew that they were only phantoms [4c] raised by Manannan's magic and he bade them be gone—and immediately they and their master, in the shape of three-legged men, whirled round and round like wheels before the wind until they came to Spanish Head, and they were going so fast that they shot straight over the edge and landed on the enchanted island, 15 miles south-west of the Calf. Once there Manannan caused the isle to drop to the bottom of the sea, and he and his company have not been seen since.

St. Patrick stood on the top of Peel Hill and blessed the Island—then he leapt on to the little islet that he saw below him—ever since it has been known as St Patrick's Isle—and from there watched the fierce storm that Manannan's going had made. He saw a fine ship being driven straight for the terrible rocks, and he raised his hand and calmed the sea. The ship righted itself and those on board were saved. They looked up with thankfulness at St Patrick, and ever since that day the fishermen have doffed their caps and offered a prayer to St Patrick as they sail past the Horse Rock.

"[Young Folks Page] Manx Legends: The Coming of St Patrick," *Isle of Man Weekly Times* (15 March 1957), 4a–c.



## ST PATRICK AND HIS COMING TO THE ISLAND HIS LANDING AT PORT ERIN

(I)

J.J. KNEEN (1924)

[4c] Cronk y doonee means the Hill of Church. The church was Keeill Pharick ('St Patrick's Church'), which also gave its name to Ballakilpheric.

There is a legend current in the district that St Patrick landed at Raclay, which, judging from its appearance at the cliff-top, was not a very healthy place to land at, especially if the wind was in a playful mood like it often is in Port Erin. We must suppose, however, that St Patrick was endowed with superhuman powers, and that the scaling of a cliff in him had as little terror as walking up stairs to bed has to an ordinary individual; otherwise he would surely have sought a more comfortable landing-place.

On the hills called the Carnanes, above Raclay, is a small peak of rock called to this day Speeikeen Pharick ('Patrick's Little Spire'), for Patrick, being a man of diminutive stature, climbed to the top of this to spy out the land. He discovered that the people of Kirk Christ [Rushen] were not quite so good as they might be, and probably they were not singular in this respect in comparison with the rest of the Island.

They had never heard of Christianity, but set up huge stones and worshipped them, which you will still find scattered up and down the country. They also practised magic, which Patrick abhorred, so he began to convert them to Christianity; and built churches for them to worship in, and no doubt the one he, or his disciples built at Ballakilpheric, was visited by pilgrims from many parts of the Island, and was a place of veneration for many centuries. Unfortunately it has now totally disappeared, and only the names remain to tell us that here Patrick's disciples laboured and suffered for the sake of converting the heathen to Christianity.

He also built one at Lag ny Killey (the Hollow of the Church), the remains of which may still be seen. There was one of these primitive churches at Port Erin, Keeill Catreeny (St Catherine's Church); and one at Port St Mary, Keeill Moirrey (St Mary's Church), which gave its name to Port St Mary or Port Noo Moirrey.

\*

[4c] But at the Sound we find a much lower eminence arrogantly styled a mountain, Slieau Ynnnyd ny Cassyn, the Mountain of the Footprint. A mark in a boulder like the impression of a foot gave the name to the Mountain of the Footprint. Some say it a giant who made the footprint, but if this was the case, his pedal extremities could not have been larger than those of any ordinary mortal. Others say that Saint Patrick was responsible for the footprint, and in support of their theory point to the fact that

the impression is that of a club-foot, and tradition certainly does assert that St Patrick was deformed in this manner.

J.J. Kneen, "The Place Names of Rushen," *Isle of Man Examiner*, 3 October 1924, 4b–d.

(2)

ISLE OF MAN TIMES (1955)

Information has been sought by a correspondent about a place called "St Patrick's footprints," on the way to the Sound.

We now find that there was a legend that St Patrick, visiting the Island, left his footprints in the rock at this place. There are other places where, it is said, his horse made a mark in the rock or in the grass, and immediately there gushed out a holy well.

"[At Random...] Information has been ...." *Isle of Man Times* 2 December 1955: 3c.



(2)  
THE TRADITIONARY BALLAD

LITTLE MANNANAN, SON OF LEIRR,  
OR AN ACCOUNT OF THE ISLE OF MAN;

Showing what rent the Manx inhabitants paid to Mannanan; and how St Patrick banished him and his company away; and how St Patrick established Christianity first in the island.

- 9    Then came Patrick into the midst of them;  
      He was a saint, and full of virtue;  
      He banished Mannanan on the wave.  
      And his evil servants all dispersed.
- 10   And of all those that were evil,  
      He showed no favour nor Idndness,  
      That were of the seed of the conjurors.  
      But what he destroyed or put to death.
- 11   He blessed the country from end to end,  
      And never left a beggar in it;  
      And also cleared off all those  
      That refused or denied to become Christians.
- 12   Thus it was that Christianity first came to Man,  
      By Saint Patrick planted in,  
      And to establish Christ in us,  
      And also in our children.
- 13   He then blessed Saint German,  
      And left him a bishop in it.  
      To strengthen the faith more and more,  
      And faithfully built chapels in it.

Joseph Train, *An Historical and Statistical Account of the Isle of Man*, vol. i, 2 vols (Douglas: Mary A. Quiggin, 1845). The Traditionary Ballad appears in full on pp. 50–55; the verses reproduced here are on p. 51.



(3)  
ST PATRICK AND MANANNAN

(1)  
MANANNAN DRIVING ST PATRICK  
FROM THE ISLAND

[136] An old man told me that Manannan drove away St Patrick from the Island, and chased him to Ireland, and overtook him in a place in the County Down, and killed him with a blow, and said, “Down Patrick!” and he fell there, and was buried there, and the town built in that place is called Down Patrick.

Karl Roeder, “Contributions to the Folk Lore of the Isle of Man,” *Yn Lioar Manninagh* iii.iv (1897), 129–91.

(2)  
ST PATRICK BREAKING MANANNAN’S  
HOLD OVER THE ISLAND

[137] St Patrick came on horseback; he took some fancy that there was land near, and broke the charm that Manannan Mac Lir had on the Island. At Peel Head the impress of his horse’s feet is to be seen yet. The first bird he heard (a whistling bird) was the *collyoo* (the curlew), and ever since nobody would find the bird’s nest in the Isle of Man.

Karl Roeder, “Contributions to the Folk Lore of the Isle of Man,” *Yn Lioar Manninagh* iii.iv (1897), 129–91.



(4)  
ST PATRICK AND THE DEVIL

(1)  
ST PATRICK MEETS THE DEVIL  
AND CREATES THE ISLE OF MAN

[141] The Devil dug up a bit of land in Ireland for himself, and was carrying it over the sea, with all its inhabitants, when he was met by St Patrick, who threw holy water at him. The “old boy” dropped his burden and it formed the Isle of Man. The place whence it was dug, filled up by the rivers, became Lough Neagh, and you will find that the size and general shape of the two are the same today. The Devil has never been able to learn the Manx language since this encounter.

Cyril I. Paton, *Manx Calendar Customs*. Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, vol. cx (London: Folk-Lore Society, 1942). See, Addenda, 140–42. Paton adds: “Told to me as a child.”

(2)  
SAINT PATRICK AND THE DEVIL

[140] There is a church near St John’s, Keill Pharick-y-Drummagh, and there was a foul spirit brought the timber across from Ireland, and he rode on it, and he was asking them: “What did the woman say when they were going to milk?” and they told him: “No matter to it *markee, jouyll, markee*” (‘ride, devil, ride’). Saint Patrick was the man who made the devil ride across from Ireland. When the timber was brought across for the roof, and the walls made, and the timber put up, it was down again before it was finished. At last, it appears, the people made an agreement with a tailor to make a pair of breeches in the church, to see if the church would go on as long as he made a pair of breeches. The tailor went on as far as he could, and while he was at work the old chap made his appearance. The first part he said: “Vaikoo my chione mooar?” (‘Do you see my big head?’) “Heem, hemm,” the tailor replied. “Vaikoo my mair mooar?” (‘Do you see my big finger?’) The tailor went working as hard as he could. “Vaikoo my cass mooar, mooar?” (‘Do you see my big, big foot?’) “Heem, heem,” and the tailor just finished the breeches and run out of the church, and down it went, and the ruins can be seen yet. So the old chap was mad, and he pulled his *kione* [head] off, and whirled it after him in mighty rage, and there it burst like a crash, but my tailor was safe, and off like a shot, before it reached him—that was a clevar tailor!”

Karl Roeder, "Contributions to the Folk Lore of the Isle of Man," *Yn Lioar Manninagh* iii.iv (1897), 129–91.



(5)  
ST PATRICK'S CURSE ON BALLAFREER

(1)

BALLAFREER COMMONPLACE BOOK [LATE 18TH CENTURY]

‘Tradition’ An Old Saying Concerning St Patrick  
As Saint ‘Patrick’ Pass’d through the fflat of Our ffarm East Side of the Haggard it is said that a Briar caught hold of his foot and tore some of the foot and Stocking, so that he was a little passionate and said. Let not this Field produce any kind of Grain that will make a man Drunk That he may be sober to avoid thy Briars and to take Care to keep his feet from thy Dented Prickles. This was about the year 444 He at that Time was going with Disciple Saint Jerman to appoint a place to build a Chappel Therein which s<sup>d</sup> Chappel was built There and the Ruins of it Remains to This Day

Ballafreer Commonplace Book, undated (but late 18th century), MNHL, MS 37 A.

(2)

ISLE OF MAN TIMES (1877)

[3c] *Treen Chapel (Keeill Pharic) at Ballafreer*.—An old tradition respecting this chapel says: “St Patrick and St Germans passing over this spot, a briar tore St Patrick’s foot, lacerating it considerably, whereupon the saint pronounced the following anathema: ‘Let this place be accursed, and let it never produce any kind of grain fit for man, but only briars and thorns, as a warning to keep off this wilderness.’” Upon this spot the chapel is supposed to have been built. In former times the vicar of the parish used to read prayers in this chapel on Ascension Day. In Ordnance Survey it is situate to the south of Old Ballafreer House. It is 21 feet long by six feet wide, and lies in a south-east and north-west direction the entrance being from the north-west. The walls are about three to five feet high, formed of earth and stones On the south-east side of the chapel lies the stone font, 2½ feet long.

“Archæological Commission.” *Isle of Man Times* 17 March 1877: 3d–f.



(6)  
ST PATRICK'S BED AT BALLAFREER



(1)

JOURNAL OF THE MANX MUSEUM (1936)

The leader took the party to see what is traditionally known as Leabba Pheric, or “St Patrick’s Bed,” a huge flat stone upon which it is said the saint had slept; and also the Chybbier Pheric, the “holy well of St Patrick,” near by.

“[The British Association Visit, September 17–20, 1936] Sunday, 20th September, 1936: The Keeils of Kirk Marown,” *Journal of the Manx Museum* iii.49 (1936), 153. Notes: (1) Whilst the photograph above does not appear in the article itself, it is likely that it dates from this visit. What does appear is a photograph of Keeil Pherick at Ballafreer taken by H.M. Rogers (see caption on Plate 100, inserted between pp. 152–53).



(2)

ISLE OF MAN EXAMINER (1953)

[6c] Later St Parrick repented for his hasty words and did penance by spending the night on a stone slab with another stone for a pillow. Both the slab—St Parick's Bed—and the pillow, are at Ballafreer now.

"[Know Your Island Better] No Barley Grows Here—By Order of St Patrick," *Isle of Man Examiner* (21 August 1953), 6b–d.

(3)

ISLE OF MAN WEEKLY TIMES (1957)

Where on the Isle of Man are the following to be found?:

[...]

(4) St Patrick's Bed.

Answers:

(4) Ballafreer.

"[Young Folks Page] Quiz for St Patrick's Day," *Isle of Man Weekly Times* (15 March 1957), 4e.

(4)

RAMSEY COURIER (1959)

There is a keeill in Ballafreer dedicated to St Patrick, "Keeill Pheric," also a baptismal well. "Chibbyr Pheric," a long trench named "St Patrick's Bed" [...].

"Braddan and Marown Excursion: Interesting Historical Features," *Ramsey Courier* (24 July 1959), [7]d.

(5)

HOLIDAY NEWS (1966)

The stone upon which St Parick rested when on the Isle of Man in 444 AD is still in its original position at Ballafreer.

"St Patrick's Bed," *Holiday News* (16 July 1966), 6b.

(6)

MAROWN PARISH (1986)

[16] Not far from Keeil Pherick is a huge flat surfaced stone, known as *Lhiabee Pherick* or ‘Saint Patrick’s Bed,’ where it is said that Saint Patrick spent the night as a penance after he had shown such passion as a result of catching his foot on a briar.

Norman Kneen, *Marown Parish* (n.p.: Privately, By the Author, n.d. [1986]).



(7)  
ST PATRICK AND WHY THE MANX EAT  
THEIR PUDDING FIRST

JOHN CALLISTER (1904)

[5f] In the rural districts it is yet customary for many families to eat the pudding before the meat and vegetables. The order of the dinner courses is as follows: Soup, pudding, and last meat, with vegetables. The children in the home are often told by the parent who serves that whoever eats the most pudding gets the most meat. The little ones are sometimes caught by this means of Manx craft, so that the meat course, out of necessity, has to be deferred until the next meal. But why do you eat the pudding before the meat? many have asked. The following explanation invented by someone is still current: St Patrick on one occasion was passing a farmhouse when the inmates were at dinner. The pudding was put, outside to cool. When the good housewife went to get the pudding she found it appropriated by the missionary from Ireland. She asserted that hereafter they should eat the pudding before the meat. Others, fearing they might meet with a similar fate, followed her example.

Joseph Callister, "St Patrick and Manxland," *Isle of Man Examiner* (19 March 1904), 5f–g. While the farmhouse is not mentioned, St Patrick's association with Ballafrere suggests that this legend is localised there.



(8)  
ST PATRICK'S CHAIR

FINDING THE REAL "ST PATRICK'S CHAIR"



Finding a site clearly labelled on a map would seem like a “no brainer” to most, but St Patrick’s Chair is one of the sites that is complex and shows how traditions change and develop through time.<sup>1</sup> The “current” St Patrick’s Chair, which stands in a field called Magher y Chairn (‘Field of the Lord’) on the Garth in Marown (SC3165577946), has long baffled Manx archaeologists and antiquarians. For those who have not visited the monument it is formed from a mass of earth and stones into which a series of stone slabs have been set on edge.\* While the monument has been heavily damaged by later activities, the keen observer will notice that the mound hides evidence of a roughly rectangular structure constructed from dry-stone into which three slabs have been placed vertically. The earliest description comes from a local antiquarian Joseph Cumming who reports:

[...] near the Garth in Marown (the central parish of the Island), occur five upright stones of a gneissose rock or metamorphic schist, standing on a platform of blue clay schist. The two tallest stones are inscribed with crosses deeply cut, like the British crosses in Cornwall and Wales. [...] The lengths and breadths of the shaft and arms of the inscribed crosses are fourteen inches by twelve, and twelve inches by nine respectively. The length of the platform of the crosses is eight feet six inches, and the breadth four feet. The height of the erect stones from three feet to five feet six inches. The whole pile is known by the natives as St. Patrick’s chair [...].<sup>2</sup>

That two of these slabs are carved with simple, roughly cut crosses provide something of a hint as to the Christian function of this monument, but the form is something unique in the Isle of Man. Some have interpreted the remains as a prehistoric burial, probably dating from the Bronze Age, from which much of the original mound had been removed and which was later transformed into a Christian monument during the Early Medieval by the placement of Christian cross slabs. Unfortunately there is little physical evidence to substantiate this claim. What currently survives has often born comparison with the *leachta*, a fairly common monument found throughout Ireland and western Britain. The *leacht* functioned as a

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<sup>1</sup> Anon, “Ancient Baronies in the Isle of Man,” *Isle of Man Weekly Times* 21 September 1940.

\* See various figures and photographs accompanying this piece.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. J.G. Cumming, *The Runic and Other Monumental Remains of the Isle of Man* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1857) 41.

memorial to those saints or holy people regarded as important to the early church and are typically found at important religious sites, or placed on routes of pilgrimage where they functioned as an “open air” altars or prayer stations for passing pilgrims. Certainly the relative proximity of the modern Millennium Way, a route believed to follow a medieval roadway between northern and southern parts of the island known as the *Via Regia* may lend some credence to the this suggestion.<sup>3</sup>

A further interpretation comes as result of the earliest description of the site offered by Robert Patterson. He reported that “an abundant spring of pure water gushes from the ground at the one side of it.”<sup>4</sup> Such natural springs were widely venerated by the early church, adopted from earlier traditions, and were often marked or augmented through the use of formal markers. Certainly the Manx landscape is littered with many similar “holy springs” and “holy wells,” now largely forgotten but recorded by keen antiquarians and folklorists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, the spring noted by Patterson has now disappeared, disturbed by the drainage and deep ploughing techniques of modern agriculture, but after a particularly heavy storm water certainly rises to the surface in this area. At the same time the ephemeral remains of another well can still be traced in the south-east corner of the field (called *Chibber y Chiarn*, ‘The Lord’s Well’).

The second St. Patrick’s Chair is noted in earlier eighteenth-century sources and is positioned on the slopes of Greeba Mountain (c. SC31328070). Located close to the boundary between the parishes of Marown and German it is first recorded by Rev. Thomas Christian (1754–1828), vicar of Kirk Marown, in his account of the parish boundaries during the 1780s. Unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to examine the original document so cannot quote the exact description, but is recorded in secondary literature as “St Patrick’s Chair.”<sup>6</sup> Much later, the formation was photographed by antiquarian William Cubbon in the 1930s, and described by P.M.C. Kermodé:

Mr W. Cubbon has recently identified this with a large boulder of local slate, 5-6ft. long by 3-4 ft. high, weighing some 8 tons, having a flat top, and built into

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<sup>3</sup> See, <[www.gov.im/lib/docs/highways/themillenniumwaytext.pdf](http://www.gov.im/lib/docs/highways/themillenniumwaytext.pdf)>; also, William Cubbon, “The Royal Way,” *Proceedings of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society* iii.3 (1934 [for 1930–32]).

<sup>4</sup> Robert Patterson, *Manx Antiquities* (Cupar, Fife: Printed at the Office of the St Andrews University Magazine, 1863).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, W.W. Gill, *A Manx Scrapbook* (London & Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1929).

<sup>6</sup> William Cubbon, “The Boundary between Kirk Marown and Kirk German,” *Proceedings of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society* iii.5 (1934 [for 1930–32]). If anyone has the time and the wherewithal to search out this document in the Manx National Heritage Library a transcript would be most appreciated.

position with upright stones at the back of it. On the W. side of the stream passing on to Pear tree Cottage, and about 100 yards N. of the highroad.<sup>7 8</sup>

By the mid nineteenth century it seems to have been largely forgotten as the formation was not recorded by the Ordnance Survey, and is entirely absent from the First Edition (1868–70). The site is certainly illustrative of the modern reliance on maps for recording locations and boundaries, highlighting how the creation of these documents involved “editing” the landscape and the loss of many other landmarks, places and traditions. At the same time while mapping these spaces serves to preserve the physical situation and extent of these names, they invariably ignore the social production of places.

Having two monuments identified by the same name, particularly when they are so close together, certainly fosters some confusion. Significantly the name “St Patrick’s Chair,” in its present location, seems to a fairly recent name with little documentary evidence of it before the mid nineteenth century (1850s), but once placed on the Ordnance Survey map (1868–70) the name became fossilised and written into the landscape in its present location. Certainly local place name specialist J.J. Kneen agreed on its current location.<sup>9</sup> Tellingly neither field, nor the associated holy well, make reference to the saint, perhaps lending weight to the supposition that this may be a recent imposition. These may also support the notion that some of the traditions associated with the Irish saint are similarly modern first documented in the mid-nineteenth century. Again Patterson is one of the first to record that this was the place where:

the [...] Patron Saint of Ireland is said to have sat in this chair to bless the people. It is not unlikely that he may have rested here during some of his missionary excursions through the island, and have taken advantage of the crystal fountain at his feet to administer to his early converts the sacrament of baptism.<sup>10</sup>

We tend to think that such traditions are the remains of some ancient genuine custom, but St Patrick’s Chair certainly reveals traces of embellishment and elaboration of its traditions by successive generation. More recently some sources have even claimed this as the location where Patrick first preached the gospel to the local population.<sup>11</sup> Pragmatic antiquarians long ago recognized that the association with the saint was almost certainly false; some even went as far as to claim the

<sup>7</sup> P.M.C. Kermode, *List of Manx Antiquities* (n.p.: [Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society], 1930) 1.

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, I have not been able to ascertain the ownership and gain permission to search out the forgotten rock formation.

<sup>9</sup> J.J. Kneen records the name as being “probably a modern name.” J.J. Kneen, *The Place-Names of the Isle of Man* (Douglas: Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh, 1925) 168.

<sup>10</sup> Patterson, *Manx Antiquities*.

<sup>11</sup> Most recently <[www.iomguide.com/historical-sites/st-patricks-chair.php](http://www.iomguide.com/historical-sites/st-patricks-chair.php)> and <[thejournalofantiquities.com/2013/06/02/st-patricks-chair-marown-isle-of-man](http://thejournalofantiquities.com/2013/06/02/st-patricks-chair-marown-isle-of-man)> [accessed 29 January 2014].

monument a modern fabrication.<sup>12</sup> Confusingly, many of the traditions associated with the modern St Patrick’s Chair are also associated with the Greeba rock formation.<sup>13</sup>

So, which is the “real” St Patrick’s Chair? We will probably never know unless some long lost historical record comes to light. Certainly the origin of both sites was a principal concern for nineteenth and twentieth century antiquarians, while some followed Thomas Christian and identified the monument as the natural formation above Greeba as the “real” St Patrick’s Chair, others preferred the archaeological site. It is, perhaps, easy to see why tradition and archaeological remains became linked; with a Christian monument with no associated tradition, and seemingly “lost” place name and tradition, the connection may have seemed obvious to early scholars. Of course the association could have been unintentional, as before modern maps describing geographical locations was often problematic. That the earliest documentary reference to the name comes from the natural rock formation above Greeba certainly lends support to the notion that this is the original St Patrick’s Chair. Yet, when considering the fact that the association with Irish saint is probably equally spurious in this location, does pinpointing the “real” St Patrick’s Chair really matter?

RAY MOORE, 2014

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<sup>12</sup> Rev. E.L. Barnwell, “Notes on the Stone Monuments in the Isle of Man,” *Antiquitates Manniæ: or, a Collection of Memoirs on the Antiquities of the Isle of Man*, ed. Rev. J.G. Cumming (Douglas: Manx Society, 1868) 106.

<sup>13</sup> See note 1.

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## ST PATRICK'S CHAIR

### I. REV. J.G. CUMMING, THE RUNIC AND OTHER MONUMENTAL REMAINS OF THE ISLE OF MAN (1857)

In a field called "Magher y Chairn," or the "Lord's Field," near the Garth in Marown (the central parish of the Island), occur five upright stones of a gneissose rock or metamorphic schist, standing on a platform of blue clay schist. The two tallest stones are inscribed with crosses deeply cut, like the British crosses in Cornwall and Wales. (See *Archaeological Journal*, vol. ii. page 77, &c. and vol. iv. page 303, &c. and Westwood in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, vol. i. third series.)

The lengths and breadths of the shaft and arms of the inscribed crosses are fourteen inches by twelve, and twelve inches by nine respectively. The length of the platform of the crosses is eight feet six inches, and the breadth four feet. The height of the erect stones from three feet to five feet six inches. The whole pile is known by the natives as St Patrick's chair, and he is traditionally said to have sat there to bless the people.

The stones may have been originally set up in a heathen period, and subsequently christianized by the inscription of the two crosses upon them. The inscribed faces of the crosses are towards the west. I am not aware that they have been previously noticed. The valley just below them is called Glen Darragh, or the Vale of Oaks, and on the opposite side of it are the remains of two fine stone circles.

Rev. J.G. Cumming, *The Runic and Other Monumental Remains of the Isle of Man* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1857). Caption to Figure 45 on Plate xiv.

### 2. LETTERS TO THE MANX SUN BY "TYRO" AND REV. J.G. CUMMING (1858)

(1)

SIR,—As some of our antiquarian friends may be unaware of a curious old relic at Kirk Marown, it may be well to bring it before their notice.

It is a stone chair, known in the neighbourhood as St Patrick's chair, and situated on the Garth estate, belonging to Thos. Clucas, Esq. It about six feet high by nine feet broad and the seat is two feet from the ground.

From these unusual dimensions it seems to have been intended for men of loftier stature than the present race of islanders. But be this as it may, however, there it stands, solitary and empty, an impressive memorial of the remote past, and of mighty men who have passed away as a forgotten dream.



If any zealous archæologist will perform a pilgrimage to the empty chair of St Patrick, and fill the vacuum with a learned response, he will confer a favour on an enquiring

TYRO

Pseud [signed as "Tyro"]. "[Letter to the Editor] St Patrick's Chair." *Manx Sun* 16 January 1858: 4e.

(2)

SIR,—If "Tyro" who writes in your last Saturday's impression on the subject of St Patrick's Chair, at the Garth, Marown, will refer to my "Runic and other Monumental remains of the Isle of Man," he will find a drawing and full account of this the most remarkable and probably most ancient Christian monumental relic in the Isle of Man.

I remain remain, Sir, your obdt. servt.

J.G. CUMMING

Lichfield, Jan. 20, 1858.

(3)

SIR,—Will you allow me through the medium of your journal to express my thanks to Mr Cumming for his courteous reply to my enquiry?

I have since had the pleasure of consulting his valuable "Work on the Runic Monuments of this Island," and there I found a clear account and an admirable drawing of the remarkable old relic which had excited my curiosity.

Mr Cumming seems to be the only modern author who has noticed St Patrick's Chair.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

TYRO

### 3. ROBERT PATTERSON, MANX ANTIQUITIES (1863)

Not far beyond, in the same direction, and on a farm revelling in the truly Scandinavian name of "Gart"—which means a garden—is a curious hagiological relic, "St Patrick's Chair." This consists of the remains of a long flat stone, which had been used for a seat, and five upright stones behind, from 3 feet to 5 feet 6 inches high—the two tallest being inscribed with the cross, deeply incised. The inscribed faces are towards the west, and an abundant spring of pure water gushes from the ground at the one side of it. The chairs of favourite saints are common in Scotland and elsewhere, and this early relic of monastic times owes its origin, like the others, to having been erected as a resting-place between sacred edifices. The Patron Saint of Ireland is said to have sat in this chair to bless the people. It is not unlikely that he may have rested here during some of his missionary excursions through the island,

and have taken advantage of the crystal fountain at his feet to administer to his early converts the sacrament of baptism.

Robert Patterson, *Manx Antiquities* (Cupar, Fife: Printed at the Office of the St Andrews University Magazine, 1863).

4. REV. E.L. BARNWELL, "NOTES ON THE STONE MONUMENTS IN THE ISLE OF MAN" (1868)

[106] The other stone remains which exist throughout the island will be probably found to be similar to one or other of the classes here briefly touched upon. St Patrick's chair, at Magher-y-Chiarn, in Marown Parish, of a somewhat different character, may, perhaps, have been the modern fabrication of a neighbouring farmer, who may have found (if he did not manufacture them) these stones in different spots, and grouped them thus together, either from some whim, or to prevent their interference with his plough. They were, not, however, seen by the members of the [Cambrian Archæological] Association during their visit to the island [in 1865]; so their real history must be left for Manx archæologists.

Rev. E.L. Barnwell, "Notes on the Stone Monuments in the Isle of Man," *Antiquitates Manniæ: or, a Collection of Memoirs on the Antiquities of the Isle of Man*, ed. Rev. J.G. Cumming (Douglas: Manx Society, 1868), 92–106.

5. "ARCHÆOLOGICAL COMMISSION," ISLE OF MAN TIMES (1877)

[3f] *St Patrick's Chair*.—In a field on The Garth estate called Magher-y-Chiarn (the Field of the Lord), about a mile from the old parish church turning up an occupation road on the right, will which St Patrick is traditionally said to have sat and from which he gave his benediction to the people of the Isle of Man. The lower portion is a platform of stones and sods, seven feet six inches in length, by three feet six inches in depth. On this platform stand, at the present time, two upright slabs of native blue slate, the western faces of which are inscribed with an incised cross. There appears to have been at one time another upright stone, but it is now wanting. It is probably a cairn. The site is marked in the Ordnance Survey.

"Archæological Commission." *Isle of Man Times* 17 March 1877: 3d–f.

6. "ANCIENT BARONIES IN THE ISLE OF MAN," ISLE OF MAN WEEKLY TIMES (1940)  
THE REAL "ST PATRICK'S CHAIR"

On the Greeba slopes overlooking St Trinian's church is an outcrop of rock shaped like a chair. This, and not the ancient group of stones, clearly a prehistoric monument, on the Garth farm on the opposite side of the valley, is claimed to be the genuine "St Patrick's Chair." A vicar of Marown who set out in writing the boundary of the parishes of Marown and German, stated that it ran "westward of St Patrick's Chair." The saint is said to have sat in it and given his blessing to the Manx people.

“Ancient Baronies in the Isle of Man,” *Isle of Man Weekly Times* (21 September 1940), 7d.

7. **GARRY HOGG, THE ROAD BEFORE ME (1948)**

[*On the way to St Patrick’s Chair*] [194] “Wud thim be the stones Patrick the Giant threw one time at his wife, she nagging him the day long, Misther!”

Garry Hogg, *The Road Before Me*. (London: Phonenix House, 1948).



(8)  
ST PATRICK'S CHAIR  
(MAROWN)

1857



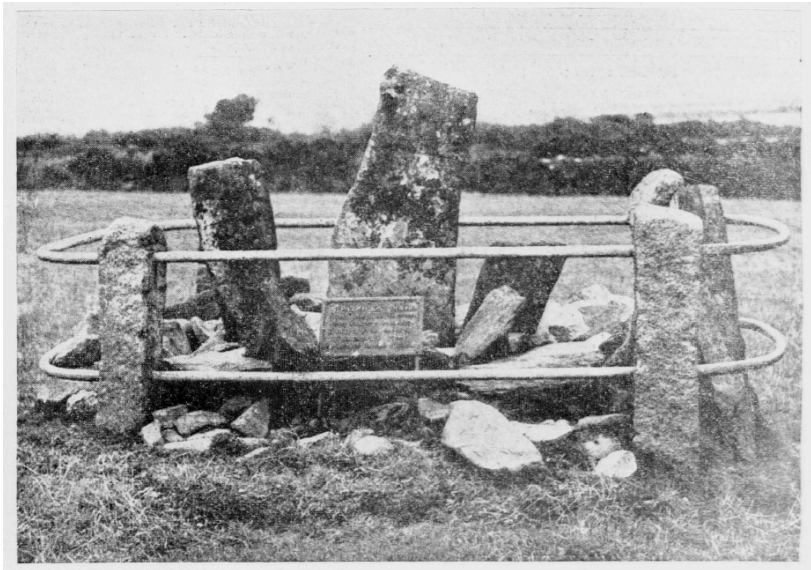
Rev. J.G. Cumming, *The Runic and Other Monumental Remains of the Isle of Man* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1857). Figure 45 on Plate xiv.

1863



Robert Patterson, *Manx Antiquities* (Cupar, Fife: Printed at the Office of the St Andrews University Magazine, 1863). [This is a photograph, the image here is low resolution.]

1941



“News in Pictures.” *Isle of Man Weekly Times* 20 September 1941: 8.

ST PATRICK'S CHAIR  
(GREEBA)



Reproduced in William Cubbon, "The Boundary between Kirk Marown and Kirk German," *Proceedings of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society* iii.5 (1934 [for 1930–32]), 438–43.

(9)  
ST PATRICK'S FOOTPRINTS

(1)

J.J. KNEEN (1924)

[4c] But at the Sound we find a much lower eminence arrogantly styled a mountain, Slieau Ynnyd ny Cassyn, the Mountain of the Footprint. A mark in a boulder like the impression of a foot gave the name to the Mountain of the Footprint. Some say it a giant who made the footprint, but if this was the case, his pedal extremities could not have been larger than those of any ordinary mortal. Others say that Saint Patrick was responsible for the footprint, and in support of their theory point to the fact that the impression is that of a club-foot, and tradition certainly does assert that St Patrick was deformed in this manner.

J.J. Kneen, "The Place Names of Rushen," *Isle of Man Examiner*, 3 October 1924, 4b–d.

(2)

ISLE OF MAN EXAMINER (1926)

[10d] Other sights to be seen about here are St Patrick's footprints [...].

Pseud [signed as "Uncle Jack"]. "Our Children's Corner." *Isle of Man Examiner* 13 August 1926: 10b–d. See, letter from Isabel Kermode, 10c–d.

(3)

MONA DOUGLAS (1928)

[4b] [...] on to Port Erin by Aldrick and the tumbled medley of rocks known as Patrick's Footprints.

Mona Douglas, "Manx Coast Walks," *Isle of Man Examiner* (11 May 1928), 4b–c.

(4)

ISLE OF MAN EXAMINER (1931)

Patrick walked across the sea—for you must remember that he has been endowed with divine power and landed on a headland near the Sound, which divides the Calf of Mann from the mainland. The headland is still called Slieau Ynnyd ny Cassyn—the Mountain of the Footprints, and the footprints may be seen there to this day, firmly impressed in the rock on the hillside. It is needless to say, that this rock reveals the fact that his left foot was deformed, for one print is exactly the shape of an ordinary foot, while the other is the impression of a club foot.

Pseud [signed as “Uncle Jack”], “[‘Isle of Man Examiner’ Children’s Club] Why the Curlew’s Nest is Never Found,” *Isle of Man Examiner* (18 September 1931), 7d.

(5)

ISLE OF MAN TIMES (1955)

Information has been sought by a correspondent about a place called “St Patrick’s footprints,” on the way to the Sound.

We now find that there was a legend that St Patrick, visiting the Island, left his footprints in the rock at this place. There are other places where, it is said, his horse made a mark in the rock or in the grass, and immediately there gushed out a holy well.

“[At Random...] Information has been ....,” *Isle of Man Times* (2 December 1955), 3c.





# “ST PATRICK COMMERCIALISED” (1939)



Pseud [signed as “Dusty”]. “‘Manx Tail Pieces,’ No. 14.” *Isle of Man Weekly Times* 14 January 1939, 11d–g. See top-left panel, “St Patrick Commercialised.”

No contemporary photographs are presently known, nor, surprisingly was its opening announced or reported on in the Manx press. It was clearly in place by 1939 for it to appear in this illustration. Now in a derelict condition as can be seen in the following photograph.

\*

## ST PATRICK'S FOOTPRINTS TODAY

(1)



Photograph courtesy of James Franklin.

(2)



Photograph courtesy of Katie Newton.

(10)  
ST PATRICK'S WELL  
(PEEL)

(1)

SAMUEL HAINING (1822)

[151] Marvellous tales are still related by the inhabitants [152] of the origin of St Patrick's Well at Peel [...].

Samuel Haining, *A Historical Sketch and Descriptive View of the Isle of Man*. (Douglas: Printed and Sold by G. Jefferson, 1822).

(2)

JOSEPH TRAIN (1845)

[121] Many a wonderful cure is said to have been effected by the water of Saint Catherine's well at Port Erin; by the Chibbyr Parick or well of Saint Patrick on the west end of the hill of Lhargey-graue; by Lord Henry's well on the south beach of Laxey, and by the well at Peel, also dedicated to Saint Patrick, which, says the tradition, first sprung forth where Saint Patrick was prompted by divine instinct to impress the sign of the cross on the ground.

Joseph Train, *An Historical and Statistical Account of the Isle of Man*, vol. ii, 2 vols (Douglas: Mary A. Quiggin, 1845).

(3)

WILLIAM CASHEN (1912)

[49] The Holy Well is said to be the first well, or water, where the first Christian was baptized in the Island, and was for ages resorted to as a healing well, and latterly it was called the Silver Well on account of the small silver coins that were left there by persons seeking to be cured of some disease.

There used to be another Holy Well at the top of Peel Harbour, near the railway station. It was closed about forty years ago; Mrs Caley's house now stands over it. Chibbyr Parick, Patrick's Well, was better known as the Big Well. Before the days of the waterworks company, it was this well which supplied the fishing fleet with water. Place names form a valuable record, for, even when the name of Chibbyr Parick will soon be forgotten, the Well-brow, the old place-name of the hill which led down to it would have perpetuated its situation; unfortunately, some years ago, this hill was renamed Station Road, thus losing another link with the old history of Peel.

William Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Sophia Morrison (Douglas: Manx Language Society, 1912).

(4)

SOPHIA MORRISON (1903)

Wells Patrick.

S. Patrick's Well. w. Peel Hill.

This well is shaped like a huge horse shoe. Tradition said that S. Patrick came on horse back from Ireland to the Island, & that when the horse first touched form ground, a beautiful spring of pure water burst forth. It was also called the "Holy Well" for its waters were said to have healing powers, but it is better known as "The Silver Well." so called from the numerous silver coins dropped into its depths in ages past by those who came to it for cure. There are people still alive who remember in their more materialistic age, bright new pins taking the place of the small silver coin. All the virtues of its waters were destroyed about 50 years ago by a scabby sheep's being drowned in it. There is a tradition too that the wells of Peel & Maughold are much alike in every way, for it is said that when S. Patrick came from Ireland, the first time he was in a great hurry, & his horse just took a flying leap over the Island—first alighting on Peel Hill & then on Maughold Head, & in proof of this Holy Wells are at both places to this day.

"Manx Folk Lore | Collected by self 1903". Notebook compiled by Sophia Morrison. MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 8.

(5)

RAMSEY COURIER (1960)

CHIBBYR PHERICK (PEEL)

[6d] On Corrin's Hill to the South of Peel, is Chibbyr Noo Pherick (St Patrick's Well) which is said to have first sprung forth where St Patrick was prompted by divine inspiration to impress the sign of the Cross on the ground.

He blessed the well and this water too was supposed to be efficacious in all sorts of diseases.

"[Peeps into the Past] The Sacred Wells of Manxland," *Ramsey Courier* (7 October 1960) 6a-d.



(11)  
ST PATRICK'S WELL  
(MAUGHOLD)



(1)

MANX SUN (1839)

Away above St Patrick's well, from Maughold's tangled brow

Pseud [signed as "A Stranger"], "*A Ramble on May-Eve*," *Manx Sun* (10 May 1839),  
2a.

(2)

## MONA'S HERALD (1852)

Near Ramsey, in the Isle of Man, is a neat little country church, Kirk Maughold. From the burial ground you have a commanding view of the rocky coast and the beautiful bay. Beneath you on some of the rocks, is a green bank, with a well, shaped like a horse-shoe. Tradition tells that the patron Saint of Ireland came on horseback from St Bee's Head to the Isle of Man at a single leap, (his horse must have been a Pegasus,) and the print of the horse's hoof was left where he lighted, and up sprung the clear fresh water from the rock, which has been a well to this day! On the first three Sundays in August the Manx people gather round the well of St Patrick, and esteem it a good omen to drink of the clear water, but there is danger in approaching. The grass may be slippery, and then you might fall into the waves of the sea underneath, or upon the craggy rocks. Some of the young people take off their shoes, that they may walk securely along the newly mown grass; and the observance of drinking the water of St Patrick's Well is generally enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Isle of Man, which originated, no doubt, in the days when the Roman Catholic religion flourished.—*Liverpool paper*.—[We can assure our English contemporary that there are many thousands of the inhabitants of this island who never heard of this well.]

"[Local Intelligence] St Patrick's Well," *Mona' Herald* (1 September 1852), 3a.



(12)  
W.W. GILL  
A MANX SCRAPBOOK  
(1929)

(1)

WELL NAMES

CHIBBER PHERICK (1)

[52] **Chibber Pherick**, on Slieu Curn, Ballaugh. See **St Patrick's Well**, Ballaugh.

CHIBBER PHERICK (2)

[52] **Chibber Pherick**, on Lhergey Grawe, East side of Glen Roy, Lonan. St Patrick's horse, stumbling at this spot, dislodged a turf with its hoof and so created the well, which the Saint inaugurated by taking a drink of its water. [...] As with certain English and Scottish wells, whosoever slakes his thirst at Chibber Pherick, Lonan, without leaving an offering will be punished for his stinginess or negligence. In this case, he will be sure to lose his way afterwards [...].

Chibber Pherick Fair used to be held here every 12th May. Like many other Manx country fairs it dwindled and vanished, and its well is following it for want of a little attention.

CHIBBER PHERICK (3)

[52] **Chibber Pherick**, under Corrin's Hill, Patrick. It sprang forth to commemorate the spot where the Saint first planted the sign of the Cross on Manx soil, and was endowed with every benefit for the use of the faithful who came to prove its properties.—(See *Mona Miscellany*, i, 196.) Additionally, and with equal authenticity, St Patrick when crossing from Ireland on horseback was pursued by a sea-monster which must have been opposed to the conversion of the Island; to escape [53] it the horse made a leap up the cliff-side, and at the place where it landed the well gushed out. The (petrified) monster may be seen at the foot of the gully below. A similar legend pertains to St Maughold's Well, minus the monster.

This well has also borne the names of *Chibber Noo Pherick* (Saint Patrick's Well), *Chibber Sheeant* (Holy Well), and *Chibber yn Argid* (Well of the Silver), according to A.W. Moore. It is now in a poor state, like its Lonan namesake and many other Manx Holy Wells.

[22] **Chibber yn Argid**, an alternative name for **Chibber Pherick**, Patrick, *q.v.*—"Well of the Silver" presumably from coins formerly dropped into it or paid to its human custodian, if it had one.



CHIBBER PHERICK (4)

**Chibber Pherick**, Jurby. See **St Patrick's Well**, Jurby.

(2)

WELLS DEDICATED TO SAINTS

TO SAINT PATRICK

[63] **St Patrick's Well**, or **Chibber Pherick**, or The Big Well, above the Railway Station, Peel. Closed and built over about half a century ago. "It was this well which supplied the fishing fleet with water."—(Cashen, *Manx Folk-lore*, page 49.)

**St Patrick's Well**, Jurby. "About 250 yards West of St Patrick's Chapel; visited for sore eyes and other affections." Now filled and drained.—(*Archl. Survey Report*, 1911.)

**St Patrick's Well**, Slieu Curn, Ballaugh. It is reputed to be, or to have been, a cure-well, and was one of the mountain wells visited on the first Sunday in August. See also

**Chibber Pherick**, Lonan; and

**Chibber Pherick**, Patrick.

W.W. Gill, *A Manx Scrapbook* (London & Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1929). See, Chapter i, "Well-Names and Well-Lore," 3–86.



(13)  
C.I. PATON  
MANX CALENDAR CUSTOMS  
(1942)

CYRIL I. PATON, MANX CALENDAR CUSTOMS (1942)

Çhibbyr Pharick 1 BALLAUGH (on Slieu Curn)

—— 2 BRIDE

—— 3 JURBY \*

—— 4 LONAN \*

—— 5 PATRICK (1) \*

—— 6 PATRICK (2) \*

\* Known to be “sacred” wells. Patrick (1) also known as Çhibbyr Argid; Patrick (2), Station Road, Peel—formerly.

Cyril I. Paton, *Manx Calendar Customs*. Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, vol. cx (London: Folk-Lore Society, 1942). See, “Wells,” 110–23, here 121.



(14)

ST PATRICK IN PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

(1)

Laa'l Parick arree yn dow gys e staik as y dooinney gys e lhiabbee  
St Patrick's Day in Spring the ox to his stake and the man to his bed

ARCHIBALD CREGEEN, *A DICTIONARY OF THE MANKS LANGUAGE* (1835)

LAA'L PARICK, *s. m.* St Patrick's day or Patrick-mas day, the festival of St Patrick, kept on the 17th day of March. "Laa'l Parick arree yn dow gys e staik as y dooinney gys e lhiabbee." ['St Patrick's Day in Spring the ox to his stake and the man to his bed.']

Archibald Cregeen, *A Dictionary of the Manks Language* (Douglas & London & Liverpool: J. Quiggin & Whittaker, Treacher, and Arnot & Evans, Chegwin, and Hall, 1835 [but 1837]), 103b. The translation appears only later in the 1910 edition: Archibald Cregeen, *Cregeen's Manx Dictionary*, ed. J.J. Kneen (Douglas: Brown & Sons, 1910).

A.W. MOORE, *THE FOLK-LORE OF THE ISLE OF MAN* (1891)

There is an old saying: Laa'l Pharick arree, yn dow gys e staik as y doomey ass e liabbee. 'Patrick's spring Feast-day, the ox to his stake, and the man from his bed.' It thus seems to indicate the time when active farming operations (March 17) should begin. Seed-sowing is usually begun in the Isle of Man about this time.

A.W. Moore, *The Folk-lore of the Isle of Man* (Douglas & London: David and Son & David Nutt, 1891), 109.

WILLIAM CASHEN, *WILLIAM CASHEN'S MANX FOLK-LORE* (1912)

On St Patrick's Day the ox was supposed to be tied to the stake, and the man to his bed at dark. No light was expected to be lighted after St Patrick's Day. It was supper at dark, and then to bed, both man and beast.

William Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Sophia Morrison (Douglas: Manx Language Society, 1912), 10.

(2)

My nee yn ushag gherrym er laa Breeshey, nee ee keayney roish laa Parick  
If the bird crow on Bride's day, she will cry before St Patrick's Day

William Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Sophia Morrison  
(Douglas: Manx Language Society, 1912), 9.



(15)  
PRAYERS TO ST PATRICK

(1)

Dy bannee Parick Noo shin as nyn maatey  
'May St Patrick bless us and our boat'

(2)

Parick Noo bannee yn Ellan ain, dy bannee eh shin as yn baatey, goll magh dy mie, çheet stiagh ny share lesh bio as marroo 'sy vaatey

'St Patrick, who blessed our Island, may he bless us and our boat, going out well, coming in better with living and dead in the boat.'

\*

[35] In putting out to sea, once clear of the harbour, all hands on board the boat, at an intimation from the skipper, took their hats off and had silent prayer. One of their prayers was as follows:

Dy bannee Parick Noo shin as nyn maatey,  
'(May St Patrick bless us and our boat)'

or

Parick Noo bannee yn Ellan ain, dy bannee eh shin as yn baatey, goll magh dy mie, çheet stiagh ny share lesh bio as marroo 'sy vaatey,

'(St Patrick, who blessed our Island, may he bless us and our boat, going out well, coming in better with living and dead in the boat.)'

William Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Sophia Morrison (Douglas: Manx Language Society, 1912).

(3)

Jeeagh Parick orrin!  
'Patrick look upon us!'

[10] The following prayer, "Jeeagh Parick orrin!"—"Patrick look upon us!" I have heard said hundreds of times, it has probably been handed down to us from prereformation times.

William Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Sophia Morrison (Douglas: Manx Language Society, 1912).



(16)

## HIRING FAIR AT PEEL ON ST PATRICK'S DAY

[181] Servants always hired on Saint Patrick's Day, the 17th March, in the town of Peel. I have been at that fair a few times myself. It was a great sport for young women and men, and a fine place to find a sweetheart.

Karl Roeder, "Contributions to the Folk Lore of the Isle of Man," *Yn Lioar Manninagh* iii.iv (1897), 129–91.

