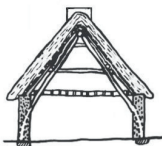


SWEENEY ASTRAY



WORKBOOK



CRAIGAVON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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BUILE SUIBHNE & SAINT RÓNÁN

The name **Magheralin** is an English version/pronunciation of the original Irish place name **Machaire Laine**, which means 'The plain of the church'.

The church referred to in the placename is the church or monastery founded by St. Rónán.

An earlier name for Magheralin was **Lann Rónáin Fhinn**, 'Church of St. Rónán the fair haired'.

The Calendar of the Saints in Ireland records St. Rónán's death as occurring on 22 May 637.

St. Rónán features in a famous medieval Irish mythological tale, **Buile Suibhne or Mad Sweeney**; a story which has been told for over 1000 years.

The story goes that while St. Rónán was marking out the boundaries of his new church, the sound of his bell reached Sweeney's ear.

Sweeney, a pagan chief in the area, upon learning that St. Rónán was building a church on his lands, rushed out to chase Rónán away. Sweeney confronted Rónán and threw his book of psalms into the lake.

Sweeney was interrupted by a messenger from the King of Ulster, requesting his help in a war he was fighting against the High King of Ireland.

St Rónán and his followers followed Sweeney to bless the soldiers; this angered Sweeney who threw his spear piercing the bell that hung around Rónán's neck.

An angry Rónán cursed Sweeney to spend the rest of his life as a bird. Sweeney spent the rest many years wandering Ireland and Scotland, jumping from tree to tree before finally accepting help and settling in County Carlow.



Saint Rónán

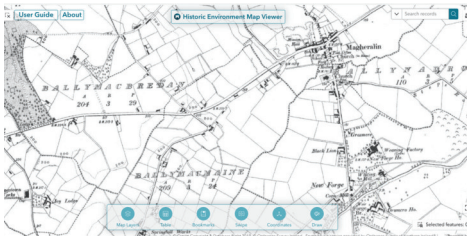


Mad Sweeney by Brian Bourke

SWEENEY LANDSCAPE

Create your own Magheralin set in the time of Sweeney & St Rónán.

You can use any materials to make your landscape - here are some ideas:



Maps - you can use old or modern maps of the area



Landscape - look around your area, is it flat or hilly, wooded or fields, are there lakes and rivers? What would the landscape look like in the time of Rónán and Sweeney?

Sculptures - you can make sculpture from lots of different materials like clay, play-doh, paper, cardboard or recycling.



Natural elements - what natural elements are in the story? You could use rocks, feathers or twigs.

Characters & Props - what do you need to tell the story of Rónán and Sweeney?



WORD SEARCH

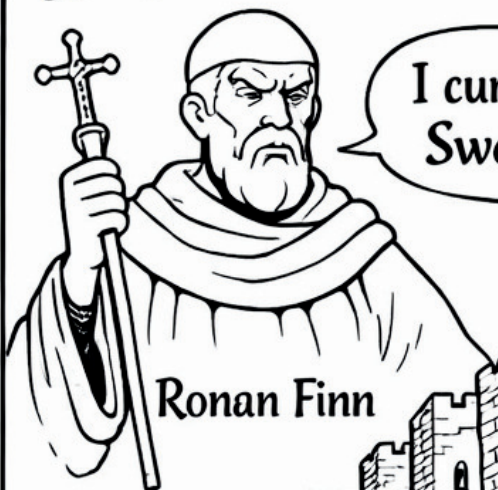
Find these words hidden in the grid:

SWEENEY RONAN MAGHERALIN

BELL BIRD PSALM IRELAND SPEAR

S	P	E	A	R	V	R	L	O	C
P	J	B	C	H	P	Y	Z	Y	J
G	B	Z	I	J	E	W	F	C	Q
X	E	T	I	R	J	D	L	I	B
T	L	E	I	J	D	O	B	W	P
A	L	S	Y	E	X	F	I	Y	S
L	Y	J	R	O	N	A	N	R	A
V	S	W	E	E	N	E	Y	B	L
B	R	W	N	V	P	A	P	R	M
J	A	J	E	Y	L	T	D	K	H

The Story of Mad Sweeney



Ronan Finn

Half Man, Half Bird!



King of Dal Arie



Always on the Move!



DUCKS OF MAGHERALIN

The nickname 'Ducks' has existed in Magheralin for years. There are different explanations about how this nickname came to be. One is that it refers to the ducks who would come waddling up the road from the River Lagan and the other comes from the weavers who lived and worked in the area who used duck grease to oil their looms.

Duck Street was demolished many years ago to make way for new housing at New Forge Park and Regent's Wood. However, the name 'Duck Street' is still used today by longtime residents to describe the New Forge Road. The association of Ducks and Magheralin was immortalised in the song 'The Ducks of Magheralin'.



DUCKS OF MAGHERALIN



**Oh it is a famous city in the fine old ancient style,
A credit to sweet County Down and the pride of Éireann's Isle,
It had a spacious harbour for the bread carts to sail in,
And if ever you go to Ireland you'll sail through Magheralin.**

You have heard of great Napoleon, Napoleon Bonaparte,
He conquered half of Europe and many another part
He tried to conquer Ireland but we never would give in
And he died in St Helena when he thought of Magheralin.

You have heard of Great King William, King William crossed the Boyne,
With a hundred balls of sealing wax and a thousand yards of twine
And then he gave his orders for the cobblers to begin
To make a thousand pairs of boots for the ducks of Magheralin.

You have heard of Mussolini, the great Italian Bum
And how his troops in Africa were always on the run
You have heard of Winston Churchill, he always wore a grin,
For he knew the Ulster Rifles were all born in Magheralin.

It is just about a year ago I went to see the queen
She decked me out with medals, the trimmings they were green
She decked me out with medals, but they were made of tin.
"Oh, go home," says she, "ye skitter ye, you're the mayor of Magheralin"

DRAGON OF THE LAGAN

Magheralin is located near one of the lowest crossing points of the River Lagan, which perhaps also influenced St. Rónán's decision to found his church there. Today the New Forge bridge and Steps Bridge provide crossing points over the Lagan.

A legend associated with the Lagan and the local area is the tale of the '**Saint and the Serpent**'.

As the story goes, a young lady was washing her clothes by the Lagan, before a huge dragon-like serpent called **Duachail** emerged from the Lagan and swallowed her.

But before she entered the beast's stomach, she managed to call for help from **Saint Colman**, a saint who founded a church at nearby Dromore. St. Colman came and prayed and forced the serpent to release her, while forcing the serpent to retreat.

The origins of this story could be in Viking times when the Viking raiders sailed their dragon-headed long boats to attack and raid church sites.

The Irish word **Dubhgall**, meaning foreigner, was sometimes used to describe the Vikings and is similar to the name of the serpent **Duachail**.

DESIGN YOUR OWN DRAGON



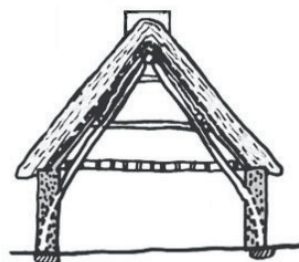
River Lagan from Steps Bridge

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