

NAAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



ST. PATRICK'S WELL, KILLASHEE

Just south of Naas, off the old Kilcullen road, is the town land of Killashee. These days it is probably best known for the luxury Killashee House Hotel (formerly a prestigious boarding school) but it is also the site of a much older ecclesiastical foundation dating from the earliest Christian times.

The foundation here was reputedly set up by Saint Patrick himself when he visited the area and when he departed, he left his nephew, Auxilius, in charge. It is from this individual (referred to as Saint Auxilius) that the place takes its name – Kill Auxille or Killossy. The foundation would seem to have flourished, even after Auxilius' death, and the names of two further Abbots of Killashee are known from the annals. By the ninth century however, the foundation – like other religious sites in Ireland – became subject to the depredations of Viking marauders and there is an account of its destruction in 824 and, indeed, again in 1035.

Today, all that remains on the site is the shell of a church of Ireland church (closed in 1965) which may contain some elements of an earlier medieval church and having an intriguing 'Round Tower' attached to its west end, a surrounding ancient graveyard and a nearby 'Holy Well' dedicated to St Patrick. In line with this dedication, there is a long tradition of having a procession to the well on St Patrick's Day, 17th March. This long tradition, which had ceased in recent years, has now been revived by the parish of Two-mile-house, which has now been amalgamated with the parish of Naas.