

SOUTH KILKENNY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



St. Moling's Cave

St. Moling, whose father was called Oilain, was born in the month of November 614AD in a place called Brosna, near Castleisland in Co. Kerry. An Angel of the Lord assuming human form appeared to those present and immediately blessed the infant in the hands of its mother and made the sign of the Cross on the child and told his parents "from this day until the end of the world, there will not be anyone from this island of Ireland greater than this little boy in sanctity in justice and in truth before God and Men".

St. Moling spent part of his life in the Parish of Rosbercon. He came to Listerlin, Co. Kilkenny and settled in a field called the Fiddawn (the Rill or Streamlet). There is situated to this day the Holy Well of St.Moling. Beside the well are three rough stones that were held in veneration like the well itself. One of the stones is unmarked, another is channelled in the centre as if to form a spout (supposed to aid in curing ulcerated legs). The third has a round bowl on the top surface twelve inches in diameter and two to three inches deep (this stone was reputed to cure headaches). St. Moling lived for some time in Listerlin and contemplated building a monastery there till ill luck befell him. Some of the neighbours stole his cow.

He left Listerlin disgruntled saying "that the place would never be without a rogue".

He then removed to a cave in Coolnahaw, where he was supposed to live for a time as a hermit. It is known as St. Moling's Cave. A little north of the cave is St. Moling's Well. The well traditionally connected to the saint is still held in great veneration by the people of a wide area, who often come here to pray for help and consolation in their trials. Beside the well itself is an ancient baptismal font removed from Mullinakill Church. It is square on the outside and un-ornamented. The bowl is one foot five inches in diameter and nine and a half inches deep. Beside the well is a very large and ancient alder tree still in full bloom which is said to have been planted by the saint himself.

In Irish its name is Tubber-Chrown-Mulleeng or the Well of St.Mulling's Tree. At the base of the tree is a rudely built stone bench on which it is said the monks of Jerpoint Abbey used to celebrate Mass of old on Pattern Days.

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