



— LOUGH ERNE — PILGRIM WAY

Devenish Island - Teacher's Pack



Devenish Island (Damhinis, Island of Oxen).

Devenish Island is the most important of Lough Erne's many island churches. Devenish was active from the C6th until C16th & still later for burials.

Described c.800 AD as "multitudinous Devenish" the island hosts a group of ruined ecclesiastical buildings unique in Ireland.

These include a C12th church, 2 round towers, graveyards, a C15th abbey a high cross, cross carved stones & other architectural fragments.

There is also an enclosure, other earthworks & the site of a holy well.

- **St. Molaise**, whose death is recorded in the *Annals of Ulster* in both 563 and 570 A.D., founded the monastery on Devenish Island in the sixth century. He was one of the early missionaries in Fermanagh, converting the locals to the new Christian faith.
- The monastery on Devenish was to become a place of great religious and spiritual importance for the next 1000 years.
- September 12th is the feast day for St. Molaise
- As early as 650, the poet Cuimin of Conor described Devenish as a "house of hospitality for everyone in Erin."



- In the monasteries, sacred and secular manuscripts were continually copied and illuminated. The most important relic from Devenish is the Soiscel Molaise, or book shrine of St. Molaise, now in The National Museum of Ireland. Unfortunately, the gospel contained in the case was lost. There is a replica of the book shrine in Fermanagh County Museum.
- The monasteries were not only for adults; children were educated and fostered in monasteries. Children went to school at the age of seven.
- Monastic settlements also served as “towns” in Ireland at this time. In addition to the monastery, church, and refectory, monastic sites often had a guesthouse, school, mud huts and a dairy.

The Vikings

- Lough Erne was vulnerable to Viking attacks. The *Annals of Ulster* record that in 836, "all the churches of Loch Erne, together with Cluain Eois and Daimhinis (Devenish Island) were destroyed by the gentiles." In 923, the Annals note: "a fleet of foreigners on Loch Erne and they plundered the islands of the lake and the territories round it to and fro."
- The monastery was rebuilt after these invasions. Its churches were burned in 1157. This event led to a new building programme, this time at least partly in stone. The ‘lost church’, St Molaise’s House and the round tower were all built in the second half of the 12th century.



Round Towers (Irish *cloicthech*, bell house)

- These are a feature of Irish monasteries rebuilt after the Viking invasions. The tower served as a watchtower, a belfry and as a place of refuge for people and valued treasures and books. The tower on Devenish was repaired in 1835 and 1896.
- Round towers were also symbols of prestige and reflected the wealth of the monastery.
- They were generally built in the vicinity of a church or a monastery.
- The **Devenish tower** is one of the finest in Ireland, reflecting the wealth of the monastery. The tower was either built soon after the 1157 fire or after 1176 when the tower was involved (unsuccessfully) in a local struggle.
- *Domnall son of Amhlaobh O Maoil Ruanaidh, King of Fir Mhanach, was burned by his own kinsmen in the round tower of Daimhinis.*
- The tower is beautifully built with closely jointed stones and carefully worked details like the door, raised for security. Inside are 5 floors each with a window, above an unlit basement, and projecting stone 'hooks', which may have held bags or leather satchels for special objects. It is the only tower in Ireland to have a decorated cornice at the base of the cap. Four heads are linked by bands of pellets and spirals. Traditionally the heads show Molaise with Patrick, Columba (Colum Cille) and Brigit.

- In 1972, the foundation of a second round tower was found nearby.
- It is uncertain whether it preceded the standing tower or was a 'false start', never completed.





The History of Devenish:

Major reforms during the 12th century sought to bring Ireland into line with European practice. These changes brought about a new organisational structure; dioceses were fixed, parishes were created and new orders introduced. For the first time Cistercian monks (Assaroe, Co. Donegal) and Augustinian Canons Regular, as on Devenish were established in Ireland.

By the 11th and 12th centuries Devenish was a large, busy community. Written sources let us glimpse the scholar, Gilla Mo-Dutu O Caiside, finishing his text on the woman of Ireland on Devenish in 1147. The abbot of Drumlane in County Cavan had a house and a garden on Devenish set aside for his personal use around this time.

By the 15th and 16th centuries there were two communities living on Devenish: The Canons Regular in St. Mary's Priory and the secular canons, called Culdees in the lower church. These Culdees lived their lives separately from the community on the island.

St Molaise's House is a small church dating from the twelfth century.

- The present stone building was built to replace a wooden church burned in the 1157 fire. The massive walls and the decoration at its angles, show that St Molaise's House was a very special building.
- The name, St Molaise's 'House', suggests that remains of the founding saint were buried in the church. The house is a tomb or shrine. The church would have been used for individual prayer by the monks of Devenish.
- A stained glass portrait of St. Molaise was created in 1968. The portrait is inside the Church of St. Molaise (Church of Ireland) in Monea, County Fermanagh. The window is within a stone window frame which is over 450 years old, originally from St. Mary's Priory on Devenish Island.



- **Teampull Mór, or the lower church**, dates from the early 13th century with a beautifully moulded south window. It was later extended to include a residential wing to the north and the Maguire Chapel to the south. As the nave of St. Mary's church was relatively small, Teampull Mor was used as the parish church.
- **St Mary's Augustinian Priory or Abbey** is on the highest ground on the island and is built outside the original monastic settlement. It was begun by Augustinian Canons in the 12th century but the early abbey was destroyed by fire. Matthew O'Duggan reconstructed it in 1449. The priory was extended to include a refectory, cloister walk and other rooms, while the west doorway was rebuilt, the tower added and windows were replaced.

The **Culdees** (Celi de, clients or servants of God) were prominent in the Irish church in the late 8th and 9th centuries. Reacting against the old established churches, the culdees introduced a stricter regime and a series of reforms. It is possible that a group of Culdees existed at Devenish in the Early Christian period, but the word Culdee does not appear in Devenish sources until the 15th century.

Ballaun Stone.

This stone on which St Molaise crossed the sea and where pagan priests mixed blood – this two-sided balllaun was actually used for grinding food or other materials.



Stone Coffin.

This medieval coffin once formed part of 'St Molaise's Bed', a small structure on the hillside north of St Molaise's house. Sick people would seek a cure by lying in it.

Graveyards on Devenish. A Place of Burial.

Devenish was an important burial place for at least 1,300 years, from the mid 6th century to the later 19th century. The lower graveyard's boundary wall was attached to Teampull Mor. The latest tombstone is dated 1867. There are at least two stones from the Middle Ages in the upper graveyard. There is a variety of gravestones from the 18th and 19th centuries. Two stones carved with the armorial bearings of the Maguire's of Tempo are built into the chapel on the south side of Teampull Mór which was the Maguire burial vault (until about 1865).

Devenish Island has been uninhabited since 1922

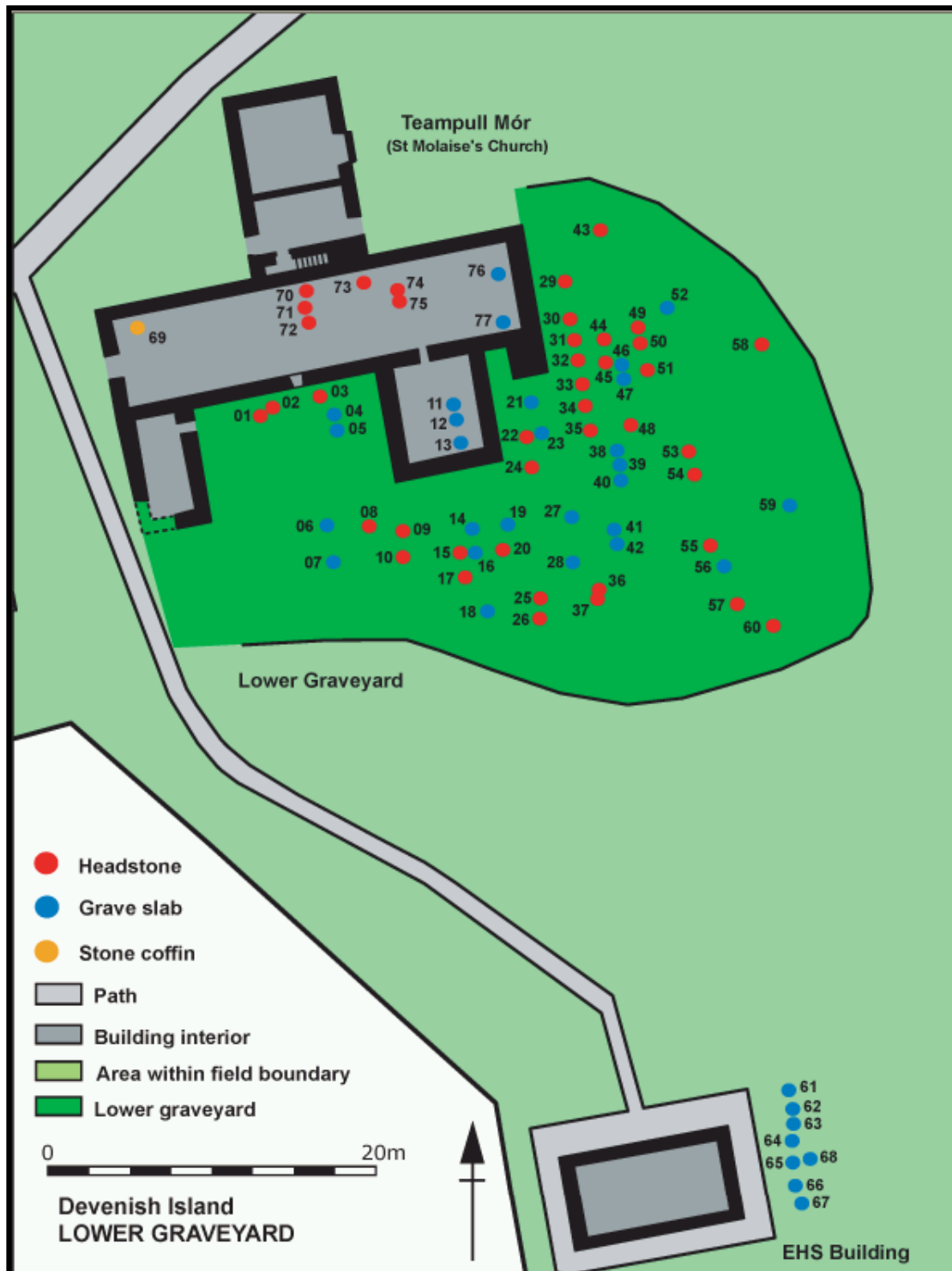
The Maguire Chapel

Devenish Island's lower graveyard contains the grave of one "Thomas Maguire, who died May ye 25th, 1772. Aged 74 years", on which are recorded "Maguire Arms". McKenna (1897) defines the arms thus - "Upon waves of sea an ancient three-mast galley, sails set and flags flotant; in vase a fish, facing all to the sinister; over the shield a royal crown, surrounded by the crest; upon a wreath a stag couchant; mantling pendant from the wreath".

The inclusion of the three-masted galley has given rise to possible associations with Philip (The Maguire, 1365-1395), who in the fourteenth century is reputed to have maintained mastery over the waters of Lough Erne with a very large fleet of vessels.

Graveyard Survey

The EHS (now NIEA) commissioned a survey of the two graveyards to produce a database of the headstones and their inscriptions. This database collects the inscription catalogue, graveyard maps and headstone photographs together and makes them easily available for anyone who wants access to a complete visual record of the Devenish graveyards. The survey was conducted in May 2004.



Devenish Island

Lower Graveyard Inscription Catalogue

Listed below are all of the headstone inscriptions which currently are located within the Lower Graveyard beside St. Molaise's Church. Since Bigger and Mckenna (1897) recorded the headstones, several have now disappeared or were so worn that they could not be identified.

Here, the headstones are listed by catalogue number, which corresponds to the map of the Lower Graveyard.

The lower graveyard at Devenish contains 41 headstones, 35 graveslabs and a stone coffin.

L01

Miner – Here lyth the | Body of Mary | Miner who | Died September | 17, 1751. Aged 6 | years.

L02

Sweeny – This stone was | erected by Michael | Sweeny in memory | of his father Jam | Sweeny who de | parted this life August | ye 13th 1801. Aged 75 years.

L03

Maguire – Here lieth the body | of James Maguire | the eighth son of | Terence FitzHugh | Fitz Philip, who de | parted this life | the 3rd Oct., 1757. Aged 26 years.

L04

Maguire – This stone erected by | Captain Dennis | Maguire of His Imperial | Majesty's service in | memory of his father | Bryan Maguire late of | Roseheath who departed this life | November ye 7, | 1790. Aged 72 years.

L05

Maguire – Erected in memory of the | late Most Rev. Dr. Dennis Maguire | Catholic Bishop of Dromore | who was translated to Kilmore | who departed this life on the 23rd day of December in the year of | Our Lord 1798. Aged 77 years. | During which period he lived | a most exemplary life with | indefatigable zeal and charity | to mankind. He was indeed | the good Shepard. A true | and real follower of his Master | and a most affectionate and | sincere friend.

L06

Maguire – Erected by Eliza Maguire | in memory of her husband | Denis Maguire Departed this life Feby. Ye 15th 1795 . Aged 63 |

+

I.H.S

Has the monogram I.H.S immediately after the date of death, separating it from the Latin laudation below

Hoc bonus Hoc justus | simplex generosus honestus | Mortuus ecce--et meni | ori Dionisius-- | Pauperis Auxilium Maguiræ | gloira gentis | Beneath this stone, Thy bones just Denis lie | With goodness fraught, fraught with simplicity | Of poor friend, the glory of thy name | Thy generous soul. Thy virtues who can blame.

L07

Kerr – Erected by Patk. Krr of | Enniskillen in memory | of his father Cormick | Kerr of Shankill who dept | this life Oct. the 6th 1832 | Aged 76 years. Also his mother Mary | Kerr who departed this | life April 22nd 1835. Aged 70 years.

L08

Greanger – Here lieth the | body of Dav | id Greanger who | departed this | life April the | 22 1778. Aged | 84 years.

L09

Boyd – Here lyeth | the Body of | John Boyd wh | o Dyed January | the 6 1736. Aged | xxv.

A relief carving of a cross is situated at the top of the headstone

L12

Situated inside the Maguire Mausoleum. Inscription illegible.

L13

Situated inside the Maguire Mausoleum. Inscription illegible.

L14

Inscription illegible.

L15

Carved cross with incised cross and I.H.S.

L16

Inscription illegible.

L17

Velden – This mon | ument is erected | by Mr. John | Velden in memory of | his well-beloved fath | er Mr. Patrick Velden who dyed | the year | 1684.

Bigger & McKenna (1897; 132) list the name as Weldon

L18

Maguire – Here lyeth the body of | Thomas Maguire who died | May ye 25th 1772. Aged 74 years | Also his daughter Ann died | May 1772. Agd 17 Years.

The Maguire arms are carved in relief on the headstone. A three-masted gally with sails and flags above a large fish are situated under a royal crown which is surmounted a wreath and a couchant stag.

L19

Inscription illegible.

L20

IHS | Here lieth the | Body of Catherine | ---IDY ALI – S | who departed this life August the |

L21

Stone slab. Relief decoration that is illegible.

L22

Cassidy – Here | lieth | the Bo | dy of | Doctor | Patrick Cassidy who di | ed September 27 1720 | Reverendus Pater Mauri | tius | Cassidy.

L23

Cassidy – The Reverend Edmond Cassidy | died 1702 | The Reverend Maurice Cassidy | died July 6 7, 1722. Aged | 58 years | The Reverend Phelim Cassidy | died August 4th 1735. Aged 57 years | Doctor Patrick Cassidy, brother | to the Rev. Maurice had four sons | Henry Phelim Patrick and the | Reverend Andrew Cassidy Pastor of | Davunis qui hoc opus fieri fecit anno Dom., 1744 | Then aged 38 years | Deo Honor et Gloria.

Carved in relief on this stone are two hands breaking host over a chalice, surmounted by a crucifix and the words "Te Deum laudamus mement. morti."

N.B: The Cassidy's were physicians to the Maguires from 1304 – 1504.

N.B: In 1704 the Rev Edmund Cassidy was parish priest of Devenish and resided at Auhucheerin.

L24

Cassidy – Patrick Cassidy has three | children interred here | Magaret Phelim and Catherine | 1744.

L25

McManus – This burying pla | ce belongeth to | James McManus | Here lyeth hos Gr | and child Márgaret | McManus.

L26

Brannon – Here lieth the Body of | William Browning | who departed this | life October the 10th | 1819. Aged 65 years.

L27

Forde – This monument erect | ^dIn memory of the Rev | ^dHenry Forde D.D and P.P | of Enniskillen who | departed this life the 14th | day of June in the year | of our Lord 1793. Aged | 45 years | By his affectionate sister | Eliz. Meadden. If unaffected | Piety and a Benevolent | Heart could insure | a length of days his | numerous friends would | not have to lament | his Irreparable loss | Richard Robert Madden | restored this inscription | *the 14th May 1851.*

L28

Beatty – Erected | by James Beatty of | Doon in memory of his | Uncle John Bell of | Gortaloughan who | departed this life 12th | February 1852. Aged 45 years | Also in memory of his | Uncle Richard Bell of | Gourtaloughan who | departed this life 20th | September 1867. Aged 82 | years.

L29

Magrath – In memory of Cecily | Magrath who died | Jan 1769. Aged 56 years | by John McGrath.

L30

Magrath – Here lies ye body of James | Magrath who departed th | is life | 10 ye 18^{br}th 1754. Aged | 54 years. Also ye body of | Chas. Brady who departed | this life March ye 30th 1758. Ag | ed 60 years.

L31

Kerneghan – this stone erected by | James Kerreghan for | his daughter C----- | who died Feb. 17 | 1774. Aged 17 years.

L32

Loughran – Here lyeth ye body | of James Loug ran | who depart this life | March ye 17th | 1735. Aged 61 years.

L33

Here lyieth the body of H-----

L34

Brad – Here lies the bo | dy of Patrick Brad | who departed this | life May ye 22 1758 | Aged 32 years.

L35

Macalees – Erected by Jam | Macalees for his Father | Hugh Macalees who | departed this life | Feb., 1797. Aged 69 years.

L36

Gallagher – Here lieth | the body of | Hugh Gallaghe | er who departed | this life November | ye 6 1756. Aged 71 | years.

L37

Hoes – Here | lieth | the Bo | dys of | Mary and Catherine | Hoes daughters | to C. H. who dy | ed the | year 1718 and | 1724. Aged 16, 21.

L38

McCusker – This stone was cut by Thomas | McCusker for his wife Catherin | McCusker who died Sept. 29 1792 | Aged 61 years.

L39

Kelly – This stone erected by Edward | Kelly of Enniskillen mercht. | in memory of his 2 daughters | Catherine Kelly who died Jan. | 1793 Aged 21 years. And Mary Kelly | who died June 23rd 1793 Aged 19 years.

The Kelly arms are carved on the stone. Two lions either side of a tower with a standing grayhound mount. The motto “Turris fortis mihi Deus” is on a fluttering banner beneath the crest

L40

Reilly - Erected in memory of John | Reilly of Enniskillen who died | August 2 1757. Aged 30 years.
The Reilly arms are carved on the stone. Two lions (combattant) supporting a dexter hand and two mullets. The crest is on a helmet - a griffin’s head has been erased (Bigger & McKenna, 1897, 132).

L41

Keenan – Here lyeth the Body of | terence Keenan | who departed this | Life March the 18th | 1742. Aged 32 years. Also his children | Denis John | Bridget and Sarah | Dyed 9 bry 1740 | Also the body of | Sarah Keenan | otherwise married | Wife of Terence Keirnan who departed | This life the 23rd July | 1773 Aged 57 years.

L42

Keenan – This stone erected by | James Keenan in memory | of his father Edward | Keenan of Enniskillen | merchant whose Body here | lieth and depart this life the 9th | day of Decr, 1785 Aged 66 years. His virtues through this life | always rendered him | the | noblest and best of characters | that of an honest man. | Also four of his children | Mary Felix Edward and Sally.

L43

McCusker – In memory of | J. A. McCusker | who departed this life | Dec. 25th 1818 | Aged 72 years | And his wife | Mary McCusker | who departed this life Aug. 10 1832 | aged 76 years | erected by their affectionate son | John mcCusker | of Gartelaughan.

L44

Inscription illegible.

L45

O'Flaherty – This stone was erected | by Hugh O'Flaherty | in memory of his | father mother and | posterity and also | of his son Edwd | O'Flaherty who was | born ye 1st of Jan | 1786 and Departed this | life ye 14 of July 1792 | Aged 6 years and 6 | months.

L46

O'Flaherty – Here lieth the body of | Hugh O'Flaherty | who departed this life | the 2nd day of June 1798 | Aged 55 years.

L47

Flaherty – This monument and | burial place belonged | to Edward Flaherty | and his wife Margaret | Flaherty of Enniskillen.

L48

McCaffery – Here ly | eth the | Bodies | of Ed | mond McCafery and | his wife Eleinor. He | dyed ye year 1726 | and she | 1732 | Aged – 56 & 60.

L49

The headstone is half buried and the inscription illegible.

L50

Inscription illegible.

L51

Gallagher – This stone was ere | cted by Patrick Galla | gher in memory of | his father | Charles Gallagher w | ho departed this | life November the | 10th 1772. Aged 61 ye | ars.

L52

MacVe – Erected by Terence MacVe | in memory of Rev | Michael MacVe who de | ceased August 12th 1780 Aged | 56 years. Also the Rev | John MacVe who deceased | March 12th 1800. Aged 39 years | Terence MacVe died | Feb 7th 1815 | Aged 94 years | Also his son Patrick MacVe | died March 6th 1840 | Aged 55 years.

L53

Daugherty – Here lies ye body | of Owen Daugh | ert who died Dec. ye | 13th 1761. Aged 58 years.
The monogram on this headstone is crushed onto the top left-hand corner. Also note the relief coffin, cross-bones and bell at the base of the headstone.

L54

O'Donnell – Here lies ye body of John | O'Donnell who died Nov. | ye 22 1776 Aged 79 years | Also ye body of Margaret | Griffin who died June ye 20 | 1742 Aged 78 years. Also ye | body of Mary M'Aleher | who died July ye 5 1766 | Aged 56 years.

L55

Inscription illegible.

L56

Hackett – This stone erected by John | Hackett in memory of his fath | William Hackett who departed | this life Dec the 7th 1796 | Aged 48 years^{br}. Also his mother | Honor Hackett who | departed this life the 20th July | 1796. Agd. 69 years. And his Brother | James Hackett who departed | this life 10th May 1795 | Aged 14 years.

L57

Aegan – Here Lyeth | the Body of | Farrell Aegan who | departed this life | January the tewntyynth | 1730 | Aged 60 years.

L58

McEvoy – Erected | in memory of his son | Terence McEvoy | who departed this life | Feb . 2nd 1809. Agd 16 | Also his grandmother | Maty Busby. | James McEvoy dep | Oct. 21st 1816.

L59

Relief cross decoration down the length of the stone.

L60

Inscription illegible.

L61

Inscription illegible.

L62

Decorated stone (possibly medieval).

L63

In two parts. Part One: Cross decoration in relief.
Part Two: Incised cross decoration.

L64

Inscription illegible.

L65

Inscription illegible.

L67

Inscription illegible.

L68

Here | Lyeth | Body of | Magrat-----

Decoration also present in the top left-hand corner.

L69

Stone coffin currently located in the north-west corner of St Molaise church.

L70

Inscription illegible.

L71

---NSO | Brother Hugh | Dep^d this life | ---20th 1781

L72

Inscription illegible.

L73

Inscription illegible.

L74

Maguire – This stone erect | ed by John Ma | guire in memory | of his mother | Jane Gragg who | died
December | the 5th 1774. Aged | 61 years.

L75

Inscription illegible.

L76

Inscription illegible.

L77

Inscription illegible.

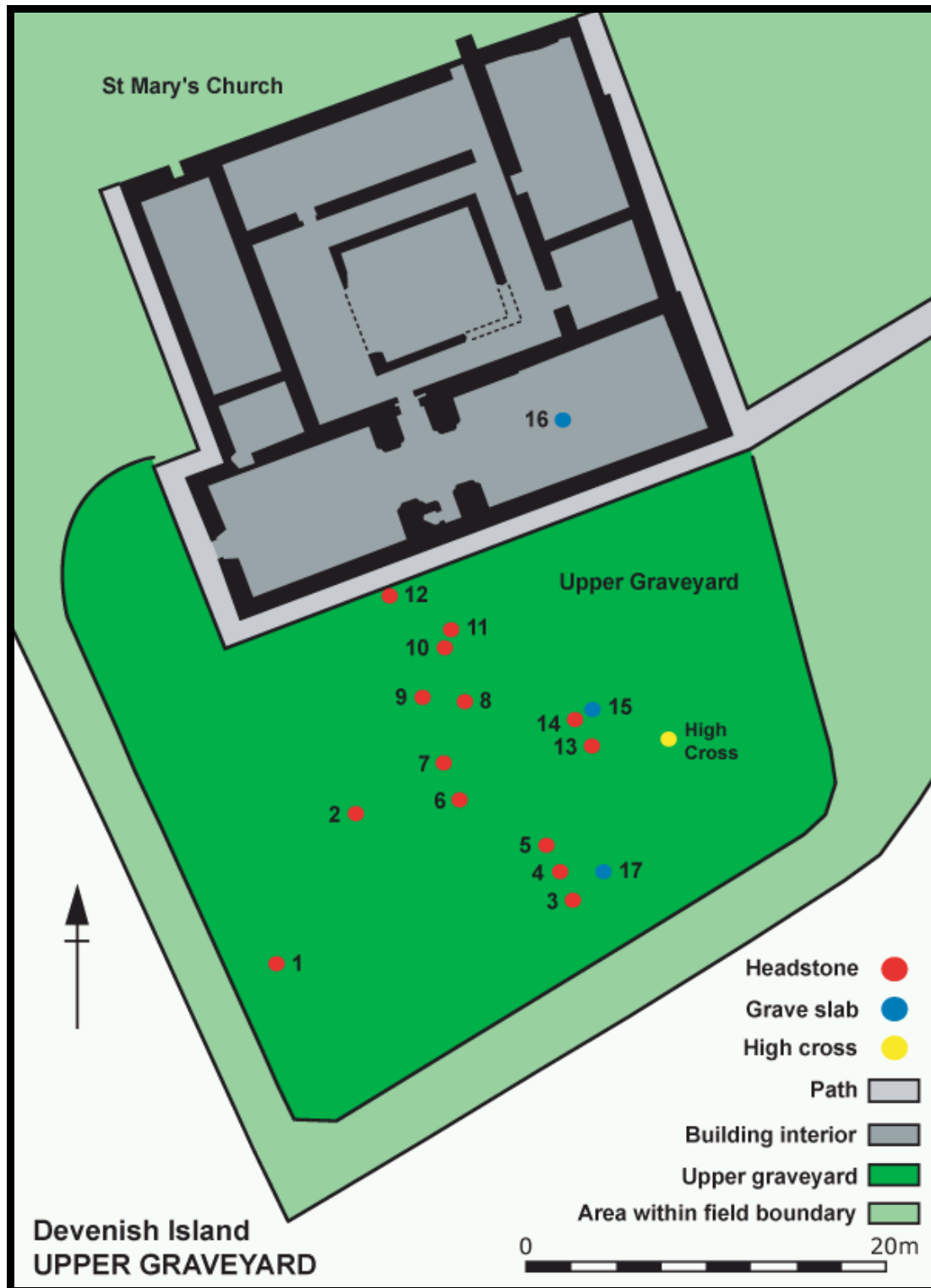
Source:

McKenna, J.E. and Bigger, F.E. “**Devenish: St. Molaise's & Devinish Abbey**”. *Devinish, it's History, Antiquities and Traditions*. 1897.

Upper Graveyard Inscription Catalogue

Listed below are all of the headstone inscriptions which currently are located within the Upper Graveyard beside St. Mary's Friary. Since Bigger and Mckenna (1897) recorded the headstones, several have now disappeared or were so worn that they could not be identified.

Here, the headstones are listed by catalogue number, which corresponds to the map of the Upper Graveyard. The upper graveyard at Devenish contains 14 headstones, 3 graveslabs and a High Cross.



U01

McGoldric – This stone was | erected by James | McGoldric in mem | ory of his daughter | Rose who died Jany. | 16, 1816. Aged 19 years.

U02

IHS | Erected by Dennis | Monaghan in mem | of his son John | Monaghan who de |

U03

Murray – Here lyeth ye body of | Gerald Murray who | died May ye 14th, 1762. | Aged 65 years.
Carved on the centre top of this headstone is an angel with extended wings

U04

Murphy – Here lyeth the | Body of Ann | Murphy who | departed this | life May th 26th | in the year of 1779.

U05

Maguire – This stone | is erected by | H. M’G. and his | posterity in me | mory of Elon | Macguire who | departed this life | January the 1 in the | year of 1786. Aged 16.

U06

McAlroy – God have mercy | on the soul of | Terence McAlroy | who dep this^dlife | July 30th, 1779 | Aged 36 years.

U07

Seery – Erected by | Edward Seery | to the memory | of his father Jas. Who | died 8th Sept | 1818. Aged 66 years.^r | Also to the memory | of his mother | Mary Serry *alies* | Boyle who died | 4th April, 1829. | Aged 72 years.

U08

McManus – Here lyeth ye body of | Ann McManus wife | to Laury McGaharin | who died June 22nd,1782 | Aged 36 years. *An angel with extended wings is on the top of the headstone*

U09

Brady – Here lye thR. E. Brady | Died Nov. | 25, 1725. | Aged 77 | years.

U10

Upstanding stone with an incised cross decoration.

U11

McGee – This monument was | erected by Pat ^kMc | Gee in memory of | his wife Catherine | who died febr y 23rd | 1756. Aged ^y46 years. | Also eight of his | children.

U12

Magrath – This stone was erected | by Jon Magrath in | memory of his mother | Anna Magrath *alias* Fla | nagan who departed | this life April th 18th, 1778 | Aged 68 years.
A relief carving of Christ with extended arms (crucifixion) is situated on the top of the headstone. However, there is no cross behind the figure.

U13

Inscription illegible.

U14

A human figure is carved in relief. Some of the facial features are still visible.

U15

Possible coffin lid. Relief decoration. Possible a cross topped with a coat of arms.

U16

Stone fragment situated in the nave of St Mary's. It is possible that these do not represent headstone fragments.

U17

Maguire – Here lyeth the | Body of Patrick | Maguire who dep | this life October | the 28th 1782 Aged | 56 years.

Source:

McKenna, J.E. and Bigger, F.E. **“Devenish: St. Molaise's & Devinish Abbey”**. *Devinish, it's History, Antiquities and Traditions*. 1897.