

OGHAM STONE, CURROWER

One of only eight examples known in Co. Mayo this Ogham stone, located on Padraic Walshe's farm, Currower, stands 11 feet high. An examination of markings in the **Celtic Ogham script** have been translated as "Mac Uí Riaghan". Local tradition says Mac Uí Riaghan was a chieftain in Attymass & that the Ogham stone marks his grave.

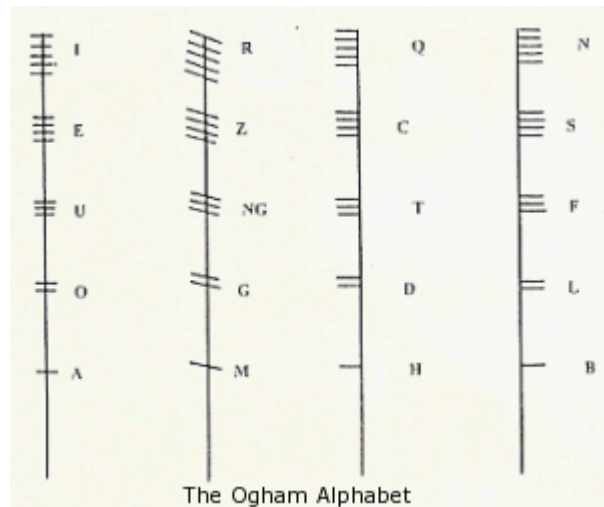


In the year 2000 a previously unknown Ogham stone was discovered in a cemetery in Kigarvan, Bonnyconnellan [Kilgarvan was part of the Parish until 1835] by archaeologist Gerry Walsh.¹ Like the stone in Currower it is inscribed with a name & seems to mark the grave of an important individual or chieftain.

The barony of Gallen in which the stones stand preserves the name of the Gailenga Tribe who together with the Luigni would have been the major tribes in the area up until the rise of the Connachta in the 6th century. It seems likely that these two Ogham stones commemorate important chieftains of the Gailenga.

What is Ogham?

Ogham [pronounced "OH-ehm"] is a 25 letter alphabet that was used in Celtic/Early Christian Ireland from approximately the 4th to the 7th Century. When inscribed on stone monuments the alphabet consists of a series of carved lines, normally cut across the sharp edge/corner [arris] of the stone & designed to be read from bottom to top. [See right]



Consonants are represented by lines on either side of the arris and vowels by notches along the edge. Not all of the symbols have been associated with sounds.

Current understanding is that the names of the main twenty letters are also the names of 20 trees sacred to the druids.

Ogham stones are most common in the lands of the Déisi of Munster and also occur in lands occupied by the Déisi in Wales. Here translations are often found in Latin Roman characters alongside the Ogham.

Virtually all the Ogham inscriptions that still exist are found on burial monuments, property divisions, or landmarks.

Beithe birch b	Luis blaze/herb l	Fern alder f	Sail willow s	Nion fork/loft n	Uath fear(?) h	Dair oak d	Tinne rod/metal t	Coll hazel c	Ceirt bush q
Muin neck m	Gort field g	nGéatal wounding(?) ng	Straif sulphur z	Ruis red(ness) r	Ailm ? a	Onn ash-tree o	Úr earth u	Eadhadh ? e	Iodhadh ? i
Éabhadh ? ea	Ór gold oi	Uilleann elbow ui	Ifín pine ia	Eamhancholl double c ae	Peith soft birch p	Eite feather	Spás space	Eite thuathail reversed feather	

Image from <http://www.omniglot.com>

The "feathers" above are used to mark the start/end of sentences.

NOTES/WEB RESOURCES:

¹ Archaeology Today Spring 2001

Every Ogham thing on the Web! <http://www.evertype.com/standards/og/ogmharc.html>

Curtis Clark's introduction to Ogham: <http://www.csupomona.edu/~jcclark/ogham/>

ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2/WG2 decision on Ogham:
<http://www.evertype.com/standards/og/n037.html>

<http://ogham.lyberty.com>