



Brigid's Way – Faughart to Kildare:

How does the Form and Function of the Pilgrimage compare with Pilgrim Practice from the Middle Ages and Modern Era?

What Is Brigid's Way?

- Brigid's Way – 2012 till present day
- St Brigid – 5th century Irish woman
- Pilgrimage – cultural phenomenon
spiritual practice
- Cygnus alignment – sacred sites



Why This Subject?

- **Investigation –** Older pilgrim route between Faughart and Kildare?
Is Brigid's Way a valid representation?
- **Documentation –** Fragmented local traditions and hearsay
Continuity of tradition
- **Timely –** Brigid's Way seeking official signage
Increased popularity despite increased secularity
- **Contribution –** Modern veneration of St Brigid
Secular pilgrim practice regarding Brigid

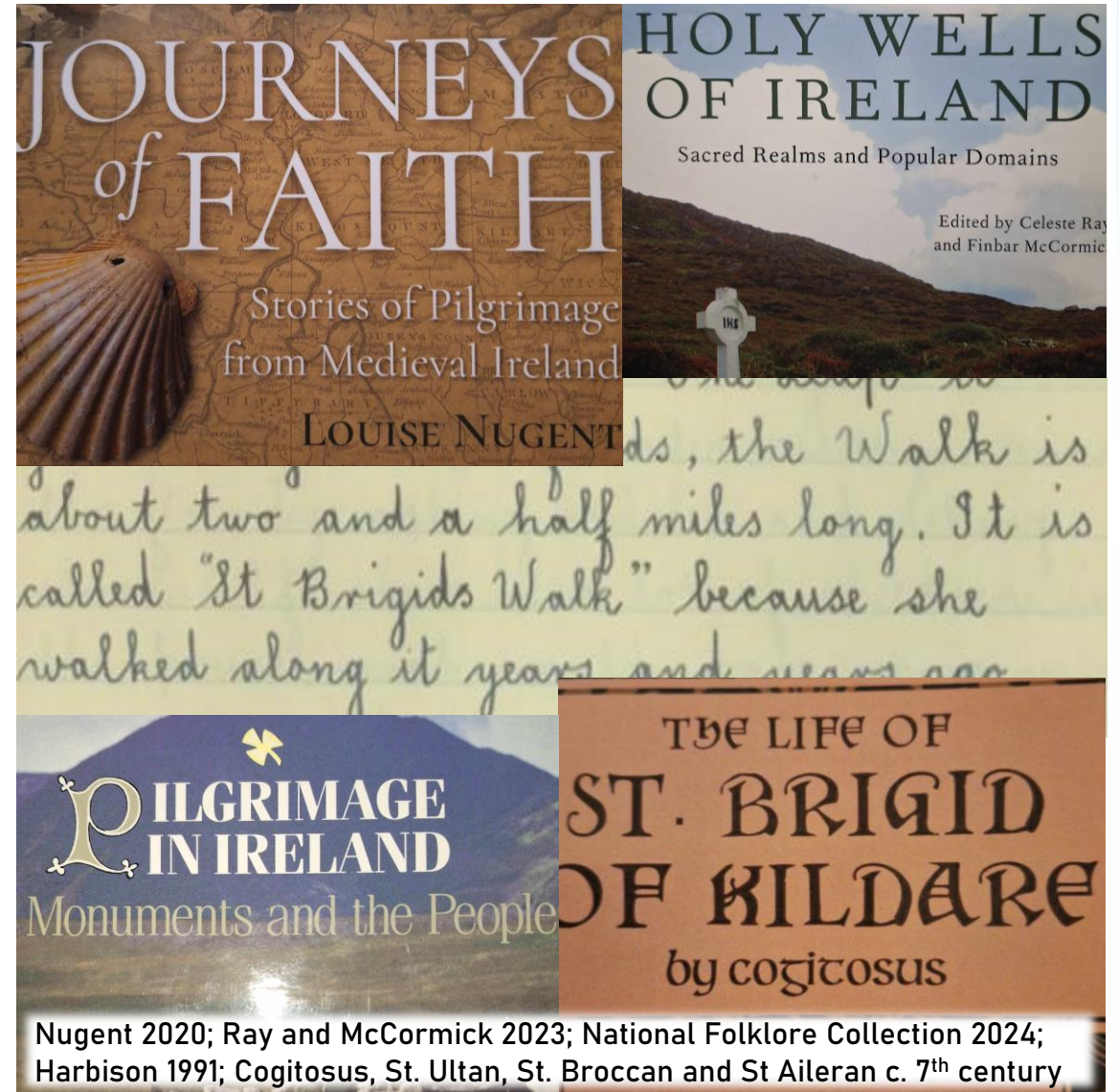
What Is The Focus?

- Form – route; place; practice
outer expression
- Function – why; what; purpose
inner operation
- Past – Medieval and Modern
6th C to 20th C
- Present – Brigid's Way
2013 – 2024



Researching the Form

- Brigid's Way website
- Walking the route
- Talking to the founders
- Hagiography
- Folklore
- Local societies
- Academic research



Nugent 2020; Ray and McCormick 2023; National Folklore Collection 2024; Harbison 1991; Cogitosus, St. Ultan, St. Broccan and St Aileran c. 7th century

Researching the Function

Past:

- secondary sources
- academic assessment
- contemporary accounts

Present:

- founders of Brigid's Way
- pilgrim questionnaire
- contemporary accounts
- informal observation



Anticipated Results:

- Kildare - Christian settlement from 5th century
Pilgrimage destination from 6th century – usage till present day
- Faughart - Christian settlement from 6th century
Pilgrimage destination by 12th century – present day use
- Pilgrim practice - Local wells and churches – early modern
Possible pilgrim paths at Lisnawilly, Donadea Forest and Allen
- Brigid's Way - Joins two historic points of worship and pilgrim practice
Absence of evidence for pilgrim path between Faughart and Kildare
- Pilgrim purpose & experience - Medieval – penitential; salvific; spiritual; devotional; sacrificial
Early modern – salvific; repentant; devotional; healing;
Brigid's Way – spiritual; personal growth; health; historic; ancestry
- Brigid's Way - Apt representation of evolving tradition and collation of practice
Not a revival of ancient pilgrim path

Schedule for Completion (based on Differentiated Deadline):

TIME FRAME	GOAL
March 14 th – 29 th	Collate and write up Kildare – past and local lore informing present
April 1 st – 6 th	Collate and write up Faughart – past and local lore informing present
April 8 th – 13 th	Write up sections of Brigid's Way route and comparison
April 15 th – 25 th	Write up pilgrim experience and comparison – functionality
April 26 th – May 3 rd	Write pieces together; conclusion; appendices and abstract
May 3 rd – 13 th	Rewrites; proof reading; referencing and bibliography

Questions for Future Research

- Can the local historical and archaeological societies provide more information?
- What is the history and age of Brigid Holy Wells across Ireland, including re-dedications?
- What are the pros and cons of official signage for Brigid's Way?
- Is the spiritual focus on Brigid being lost via increased tourism and commercialism?
- Is Saint Brigid a useful figure for a church in decline?
- What need is Brigid fulfilling in an increasingly secular Ireland?

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