

AN ECOLOGICAL AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE SURVEY OF THE MOUNTMELICK CANAL



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An action of the Laois Heritage Plan 2002-2006



for
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PREFACE

This report focuses on the built heritage and ecology of the Mountmellick Canal which runs between Monasterevin, Co Kildare, and Mountmellick, Co Laois. It was commissioned by Laois County Council as an action of the Laois Heritage Plan 2002-2006 and was jointly funded by the Heritage Council and Laois CC; the support of Kildare CC is also acknowledged.

The objective of the study is to provide a comprehensive baseline database which will inform future strategies regarding the understanding, appreciation and conservation of the canal's built and natural heritage.

The project brief was to carry out a survey of all canal-related features along the line of the canal and also record all significant buildings and structures within a 500m zone either side of it. A land use and habitat survey along the line of the canal was also required. Fred Hamond dealt with the built heritage element of the project and John Feehan was responsible for its ecological aspects.

We should like to thank the following individuals for their assistance: Colin Becker (Inland Waterways Association of Ireland), Michael Bracken (GIS Officer, Laois CC), Catherine Casey (Heritage Officer, Laois CC), Ruth Delany, Niall Galway (IWAI), Beatrice Kelly (Inland Waterways, Marine and Walkways Officer with the Heritage Council), Bridget Loughlin (Heritage Officer, Kildare CC), Fergal O'Donovan (GIS Officer, Kildare CC), Nick Spalding (IWAI), and finally, but by no means least, Rosemary Whelan (Mountmellick Town Council).

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the results of a survey of features along the Mountmellick Canal and within a zone of 500m either side of it.
- 1.2 A variety of published sources, notably past editions of Ordnance Survey maps, were used to identify its line and features along it.

2. History

- 2.1 The canal runs from the Athy Branch of the Grand Canal at Monasterevin (Co Kildare) to Mountmellick (Co Laois), a distance of 18.6km.
- 2.2 It was constructed by the Grand Canal Company between 1827 and 1831 primarily to convey bulky low-value items such as grain, meal, beer, coal and timber. Malt from Mountmellick and flour from Portarlinton were its two mainstays.
- 2.3 Coras Iompair Éireann took over the canal's operation in 1950. Traffic dwindled to such an extent that the canal was officially abandoned in 1960. Most of its line is now in private ownership and Waterways Ireland, CIE's eventual successor, retains just over 3km.

3. Canal survival

- 3.1 Almost 11km of the canal has been infilled or removed. Just over 5km is still open, but dewatered. Almost 2.5km is still opened and watered.
- 3.2 There are three locks along the canal. The first reach, from the canal's junction with the Grand Canal to the first lock at Coughlan's Bridge, survives in an open and watered state. From the first to second lock at Portarlinton is open and infilled in equal measure. The next reach, from Portarlinton to Tinnakill lock, has been infilled to create a by-pass around Portarlinton. Most of the final section to the Mountmellick terminus has also been infilled.
- 3.3 The most significant stretches of surviving canal are:
 - The entire 1.8km stretch lying within Co Kildare. This is open water as far as the first lock, then open but dewatered through Coolnafearagh Bog.
 - A 1.8km stretch along the north side of the main road between Lea Castle and the former lock at Portarlinton Lock. This includes a 1km section at Lea Castle which is the longest continuously open/dewatered stretch on the entire canal.
 - A 1.2km long open/ watered section north-west of Woodbrook Bridge. This is the longest continuous such stretch now surviving.
 - A 1.7km long open but dewatered stretch north-west of Dangans Bridge.

4. Flora and fauna

- 4.1 In spite of the changes that have taken place since it was decommissioned, the line of the Mountmellick Canal remains an important and unique strand in the ecological network of County Laois.
- 4.2 The open and wooded stretches of the canal are of particular ecological interest, together with the embankment at Clonterry.
- 4.3 Ivy brookrape is the most interesting plant species that has developed a particular association with the wooded stretches along the canal.
- 4.4 The area east of Dangans Bridge is accorded SAC status on account of the occurrence here of the rare snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*.

4.5 Two habitats of high nature value were identified within 500m of the canal, albeit both independent of it. These are Coolnafearagh Bog in the Kildare stretch of the canal west of the first lock, and an area of fen and wet grassland north-west of Dangans Bridge.

5. Canal-related built heritage features

5.1 Fifty-three canal-related features were identified along the canal and its two feeders. These include basins, houses and stores, bridges, locks, overflows and quays.

5.2 Of the above total, 27 were bridges. Most carried roads over the canal, but there were also a significant number of culverts which conveyed steams and drains under it. The road bridges are all virtually identical in terms of their design, materials and span. The Mountmellick Aqueduct over the Triogue River is the most significant aqueduct.

5.3 The first lock survives, but the other two have been infilled. All three lock-keepers' houses survive in varying states of repair.

5.4 Only 27 of the 53 recorded features survive intact; nine are incomplete and the remaining 17 have disappeared.

5.5 Twenty of the surviving features were evaluated as being of regional heritage significance. However, only four features are currently in the Record of Protected Structures. The remaining sites are therefore proposed for inclusion in the Co Laois and Co Kildare Records of Protected Structures. Seven of these recommendations are bridges, and a further eight relate to lock complexes (locks, keepers' houses, quays and stores). The canal junction at the Grand Canal end and former agent's house at the Mountmellick end also merit protection.

6. Other built heritage features

6.1 Sixty features not related to the canal, but lying within 500m of it, were also identified and surveyed. These include 11 features relating to the Athy Branch of the Grand Canal at Monasterevin (notably the Barrow Aqueduct) and 11 features at Portarlinton Railway Station. Prehistoric earthworks and medieval castles and churches were also noted.

6.2 Twenty-five of these features are currently protected – five in the Record of Monuments and Places, and 20 in the Record of Protected Structures.

6.3 Ten sites adjudged to be of regional heritage significance are proposed for statutory protection.

7. Issues

7.1 Conservation of canal

Most of the canal is now in private hands and the bulk of the privately-owned stretches have been infilled or otherwise destroyed. The challenge is therefore to encourage private landholders not to infill any surviving open stretches in their ownership.

Many of these sections of the canal are likely to belong to farms participating in the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS). The preservation of these stretches might therefore be effected through the implementation of REPS 4.

7.2 Ecology

Any ecological management strategy should endeavour to maintain the canal corridor in its present state.

REPS and the Code of Good Farm Practice are important mechanisms for the conservation of the both the natural and cultural heritage features of the canal on farmland.

7.3 Built heritage

Statutory protection is a mechanism for ensuring that any features of heritage significance are given due cognisance in the planning process. However, such protection does not guarantee their long-term preservation, particularly those in private ownership which are no longer in service.

All stakeholders in the canal's built heritage should therefore be involved in the formulation of a long-term strategy for the conservation of its significant features.

7.4 Access

Unimpeded public access to the canal is presently only possible between Mountmellick Junction and the first lock. Elsewhere, it is generally restricted by the towpath being in private ownership and/or impenetrable due to dense vegetation overgrowth.

7.5 Awareness

There is little published specifically on the Mountmellick Canal. Most people are therefore unaware of its past significance to the region and of what still survives.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Line of canal

It is recommended that all open stretches of canal be considered for statutory protection by including them in the Records of Protected Structures for counties Laois and Kildare and/or the Record of Monuments & Places.

8.2 Flora and fauna

The possibility of the statutory designation of Coolnafearagh Bog as a Natural Heritage Area and/or Special Area of Conservation and the development of access along its associated stretch of the canal should be investigated.

8.3 Built heritage features

Five canal-related features are recommended for inclusion in the Co Kildare Record of Protected Structures, and 12 for the Co Laois RPS.

One non-canal related feature is recommended for inclusion in the Record of Monuments & Places, and nine for the Record of Protected Structures (six in Kildare and three in Laois).

8.4 Access

Consideration should be given to the provision of public access to key stretches of the canal where circumstances allow, e.g. the stretch between Dangans Bridge and Skeagh Bridge).

8.5 Awareness

Consideration should be given to the publication of a booklet outlining for a popular audience the significance and importance of the canal.

1. METHODOLOGY

1.1 Paper survey

The principal source of information on the built heritage sites within the study area was the Laois Industrial Archaeology Record (Hamond, 2003). This contains data culled from Ordnance Survey six-inch maps, the 1:10,560 scale of which is sufficiently detailed for small features such as culverts under the canal to be identified in addition to the major ones such as locks and bridges. The following maps were used to identify sites along and in the vicinity of the canal:

County	Sheet	Survey dates
Kildare	21	1837, 1871, 1939
	26	1838, 1871, 1939
Laois	04	1839, 1888, 1907
	05	1838, 1888, 1907
	08	1839, 1888, 1907

The first edition maps were particularly useful in the identification of features along the canal (fig 1.1); these are reproduced in Appendix 1.



Fig 1.1 Lock 3 at Tinnakill, as depicted on 1839 OS six-inch map (rescaled to 1:2500). Note also the uncaptioned lock house and bridge at its north-east end.

Ruth Delany's *Ireland's Inland Waterways: A Celebration of 250 years of Ireland's Inland Waterways* (1986) and *The Grand Canal of Ireland* (1995) provided background historical information on the canal, whilst local history publications gave additional details on some of its features.

The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for Monasterevin and counties Kildare and Laois enabled identification of those features which have statutory protection within their respective Development Plans. These records are based on fieldwork carried out by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and also provide outline descriptions of each protected site. The Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) was also used to identify protected archaeological sites within 500m of the canal.

The canal database maintained by the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland was also consulted. It contains the results of a survey of the Mountmellick Canal carried out by Nick Spalding in 2003.

There is no significant published information on the habitats along the canal apart from the brief note accompanying the designation of the stretch between Skeagh Bridge and Dangans Bridge as a Special Area of Conservation under the European Habitats Directive. For the ecological aspects, therefore, we have had to rely on the original field work carried out for this project.

1.2 Field survey

The built and natural aspects of the canal were surveyed by both authors during the summer of 2006.

The built heritage survey entailed locating and recording all the features noted in the paper survey as well as the identification of sites not previously recorded. The methodology of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (2004) was followed for the description of buildings and structures (roofs, walls, doors/windows, interiors where accessible). Representative photographs were also taken; colour film was used for permanency of record, but the images were also digitised during processing.

Plant species lists were compiled along the full length of the canal. In the few instances where adjacent land cover was of significant conservation interest, this is also described in some detail, and cross-referenced with the Heritage Council's habitats' classification (Fossitt, 2000; Heritage Council, 2002) where this was considered useful.

1.3 Computer databases

To facilitate analysis, the data collected on each built heritage site was recorded in a Microsoft Access database. Print-outs of each site record are given in Appendix 5 of this report. *MapInfo Professional* (version 7.5) was also used to record the data's spatial attributes. Copies of the maps generated by this program are reproduced throughout this report.

The digitised data are contained in the CD version of this report. Note, however, that it will be necessary to have both *Access* and *MapInfo* in order to utilize the data in these formats.

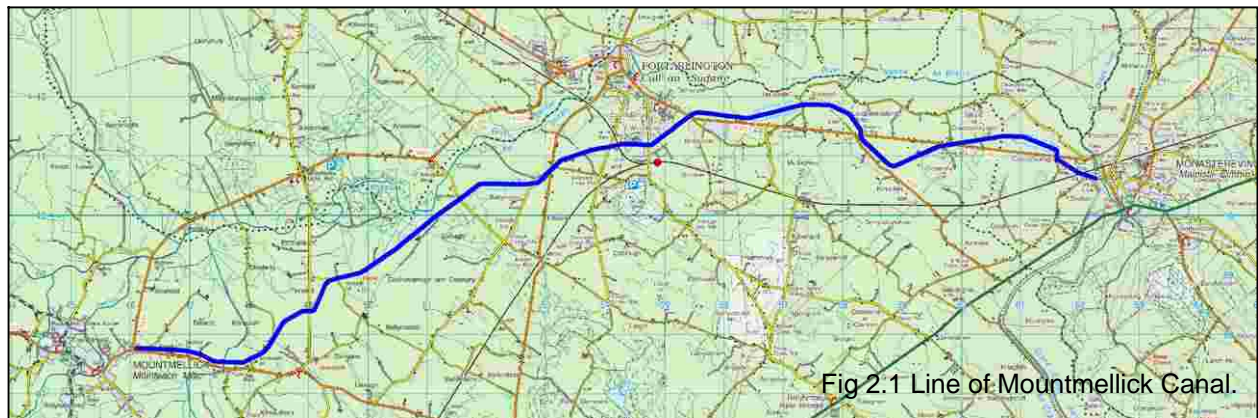
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References to specific sites will be found in the gazetteers in appendices 5 and 6.

2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Mountmellick Canal runs from Monasterevin to Mountmellick, a distance of 18.6km. It starts at Mountmellick Junction, on the Grand Canal just west of the Barrow Aqueduct, runs westwards around Portarlinton, and terminates on the east side of Mountmellick (fig 2.1). Ten percent (1.8km) of the canal's length lies within Co Kildare and the rest in Co Laois.



The Mountmellick Canal owes its existence to the Grand Canal. The latter initially ran from Dublin to Lowtown, Co Kildare (opened 1783), and from there to Athy (opened 1791) where it met up with the River Barrow. By 1804, it had been extended from Lowtown to the Shannon. In 1800, the Queen's County Canal Company was formed with the intention of linking the Athy line with the Castlecomer coalfields on the border of counties Kilkenny and Laois. However, this plan came to nothing and no further progress was made for another two decades.

In the mid 1820s, the Grand Canal Company secured a loan from the government to construct a canal between Monasterevin, on the Athy Branch, to Mountmellick. Messrs Henry, Mullins and McMahon, who had been responsible for cutting most of the Grand Canal, were engaged as contractors under the supervision of Hamilton Killaly, the company's engineer (his father John had also served in this role).

Work started in March 1827 and the canal was ready to receive water all the way to Mountmellick by July 1829. This equates to an average construction rate of 25 metres per day. However, because of its permeable gravelly-loam bed, watering proved to be extremely problematic and it was not until March 1831 that it was finally handed over, at a cost of £33,416.

For its first 16 years of its operational life, the canal enjoyed a near monopoly on passenger and goods traffic. In 1847 the Great Southern & Western Railway Company's line from Dublin arrived in Portarlinton. It was not until 1885, however, that the GSWR opened a branch line from Portlaoise to Mountmellick. The railways captured all the previous passenger traffic from the canal and it was to be the carriage of bulky low value items such as meal, grain, beer, coal and timber which was to sustain it, albeit never very profitably.

Traffic to Mountmellick ceased in 1939 with the last load of malt from Codd's Maltings but grain barges to Odlum's Mill from Dublin kept the section to Portarlinton open. In 1950, the Grand Canal Company merged with Coras Iompair Éireann, the new transport authority set up by the government. Thereafter, goods traffic was sent by road and the canal trade dwindled to nothing.

The canal officially closed in 1960 and was subsequently offered for sale to the various landowners through whose land it ran (fig 2.2). A large section at Portarlinton was infilled in 1970 to create a bypass around the town. Responsibility for those sections of canal which were remained unsold was eventually transferred to the Office of Public Works and now rests with Waterways Ireland.



Fig 2.2 Abandoned Mountmellick Terminus, 1960s.

3. CANAL REACHES

For the purposes of description, the canal has been divided into four reaches, each demarcated by a lock at one or both ends and numbered from east to west in the same direction as the canal was constructed (fig 3.1).



Fig 3.1 Course of Mountmellick Canal and numbering of reaches.

The fact that there are so few locks along the canal reflects the fact that it generally follows the floodplain of the River Barrow and therefore does not need to negotiate undulating ground which might otherwise have required additional locks.

For the purposes of describing the canal and its ecology, each reach has been subdivided into sections, each defined according to its state of survival – open and watered, open but dewatered, and infilled, e.g. S102 is the second section along reach 1 (as measured from the Monasterevin end), and S313 is section 13 in reach 3. Descriptions and photographs of each reach and its constituent sections are given in Appendix 2.

3.1 Canal survival

When originally built, the canal comprised the watered bed, a bank on both sides and a drainage ditch along the outer base of each bank. Since closure, 58% of the canal bed (10.7km) has been infilled, although one or other of the banks and associated ditches may occasionally survive. Twenty-nine percent of its length (5.4km) remains open but dewatered. The remaining 13% (2.4km) is open and watered. The survival of the canal within each reach is as follows:

Reach	Infilled (m)	Open, dewatered (m)	Open, watered (m)	Total length (m)
0	15	0	785	800
1	3,318	3,099	491	6,908
2	4,381	0	1168	5,549
3	3,015	2,342	0	5,357
Total length (m)	10,729	5,441	2,444	18,614

Reach 0 is the shortest reach but contains the highest proportion of open water; all but 15m of its 800m length being maintained in this state by Waterways Ireland. It lies wholly in Co Kildare. Reach 1 is the longest, at 6.9km. It is all within Co Laois except for the first 0.8km above Lock 1. It is mostly infilled or open/dewatered in equal measure; less than 10% is open water. One stretch, north-west of Bergin's Bridge, has been entirely removed as a result of quarrying. Most of Reach 2 is infilled, notably the section from the 2nd lock to Blackhall Bridge, which is now the Portarlington ring road (created 1969-71). At just over 3km, this is the longest continuously infilled section on the entire canal. The remainder of this reach comprises a 1.2km stretch of

open water, the longest such stretch on the canal. There is no open water along Reach 3, most of which is infilled. However, a good open/dewatered stretch survives north-east of Dangans Bridge (fig 3.2).

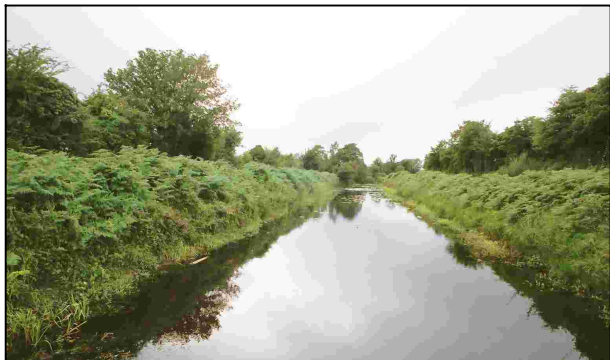


Fig 3.2a Reach 0 – open/watered section south of Coughlan’s Bridge.



Fig 3.2b Reach 1 - open/dewatered section east of Poartarlinton Lock.



Fig 3.2c Reach 2 – Portarlinton ring road, west of Odlum’s Mill.



Fig 3.2d Reach 3: open/dewatered section east of Dangans Bridge.

3.2 Canal ownership

The ownership of the canal since its abandonment has been a determining factor in its survival. Following closure, it was offered for sale to the various owners of the lands through which it ran. Sixty-one percent is now in private hands and the remainder in public ownership; Waterways Ireland retain only 18% of its original length.

As the following table shows, most of the infilled canal sections are in private ownership (this table is based on the analysis of an ownership map in the possession of the Heritage Council). Many farmers have bulldozed the banks into the bed to level the ground and reclaim it for agriculture (generally grazing). In some instances, houses and agricultural buildings have also been erected across the infilled line.

	Infilled (m)	Open, dewatered (m)	Open, watered (m)	Total length (m)
Private	7,111	2,867	1,321	11,299
Public (Dept Agriculture & Food)	0	0	338	338
Public (Laois CC)	3,380	151	0	3,531
Public (Waterways Ireland)	238	2,423	785	3,446
Total length (m)	10,729	5,441	2,444	18,614

Laois County Council also owns a sizeable chunk of infilled canal. Its activity has generally been of a piecemeal nature, short lengths being infilled to allow new sections of road to bypass the original hump-backed road bridges. As already noted, the Council also owns the 3.1km stretch

between the 2nd lock and Blackhall Bridge which it infilled to create a bypass around Portarlington (S201).

Slightly over half of the open/dewatered sections are also in private ownership. The 1.0km stretch over Coolnafearagh Bog (S102) is the longest continuous stretch of this type. Waterways Ireland owns good stretches of open/dewatered canal to the west of Lea Castle (S114) and between Tinnakill Lock and Dangans Bridge (S302, S304).

Waterways Ireland maintain the reach between Mountmellick Junction and the 1st lock in a watered state. Its continuity is interrupted only by two small earthen dams inserted to maintain water levels. The Department of Agriculture & Food also own a stretch of open water north-east of Woodbrook Bridge.

Surprisingly, given the tendency to infill, most of the open/watered stretches are in private rather than public ownership. The longest such stretch is 830m and is a continuation of the Department of Agriculture & Food's stretch at Woodbrook Bridge. There is also a 300m watered stretch to the west of Wheelahan's Bridge (S104). The 190m stretch just west of the quarry in Loughmansland Townland (S110) is possibly a temporary aberration, the canal being used to discharge water from pumping operations.

3.3 Vulnerability to degradation

Although some canal features are in the Record of Protected Structures, the actual bed and banks are not protected, nor are they included in the Record of Monuments & Places.

The privately owned sections of open canal, particularly those not permanently watered, are especially vulnerable to infilling. Fly tipping is particularly detrimental as it both degrades the canal's amenity value and encourages more dumping (fig 3.3).



Trampling of the banks by livestock, where they have access, also has a pernicious effect, accelerating erosion and infilling.

Fig 3.3 Fly tipping near Dangans Bridge.

3.4 Sections of special interest

The most significant surviving open stretches, in terms of their structural intactness, are as follows:

Sections 001-102

The entire 1.8km stretch lying within Co Kildare, i.e. from Mountmellick Junction to the county boundary (fig 3.4). The first 800m to the 1st lock is open water and the remainder is an open/dewatered stretch through Coolnafearagh Bog. Only 30m of the entire length is infilled (in three places).

Sections 114-118

A 1.8km stretch along the north side of the main road between Lea Castle and the former Portarlington Lock. There are two infilled sections along it (32m and 194m long), but it is otherwise open and dewatered. The first section (S114) at Lea Castle is 1.0km long and is now the longest continuously open/dewatered stretch on the entire canal.

Section 202

A 1.2km long open/ watered section north-west of Woodbrook Bridge. This is the longest continuous stretch of its type now surviving on the canal.

Sections 302-304

A 1.7km long stretch north-west of Dangans Bridge, all of which is open but dewatered except for a 41m infilled stretch at Skeagh Bridge.

It is recommended that all open stretches of canal, and the above sections in particular, be considered for statutory protection by including them in the Records of Protected Structures for counties Laois and Kildare and/or the Record of Monuments & Places. This will ensure that the surviving sections of canal are embodied in the statutory planning process. Such a designation should, in theory, provide a mechanism for managing any development proposals along its line (including infilling).

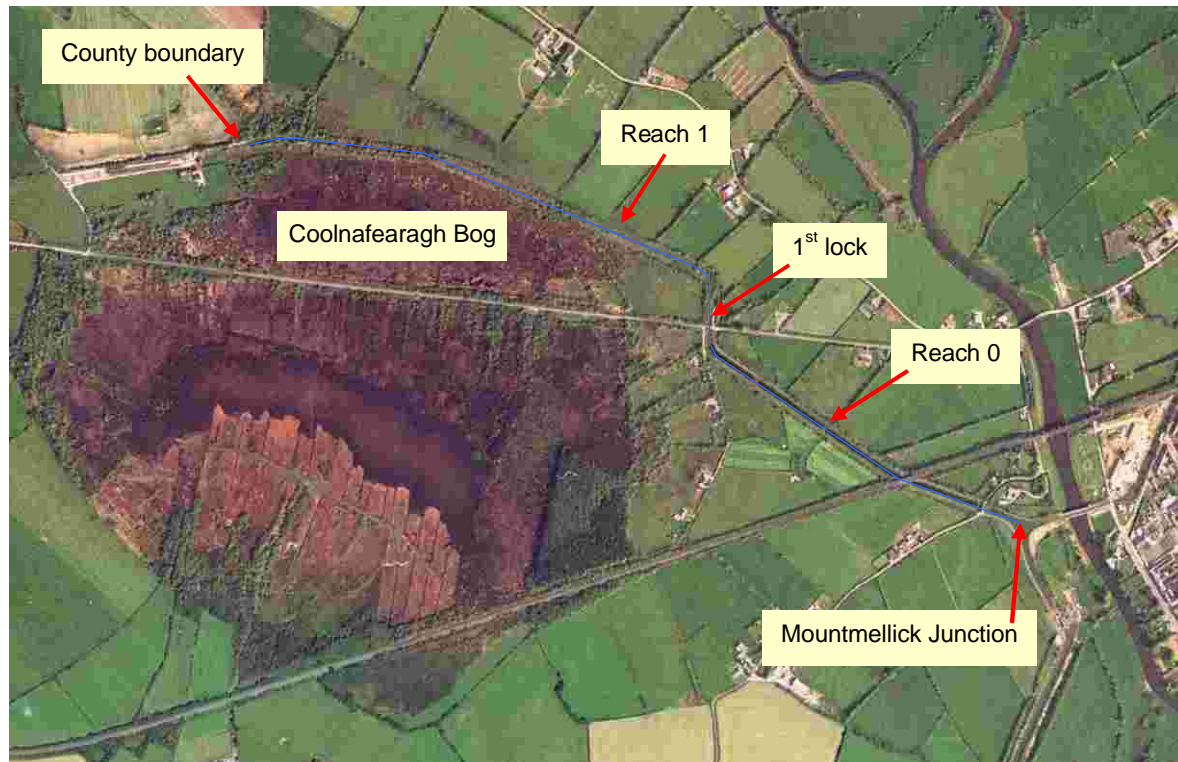


Fig 3.4 Aerial view of sections 001-102. Monasterevin is at bottom right. The canal is highlighted in blue.

4. FLORA AND FAUNA

An overview of the ecological character of each section is presented in here, with the emphasis on the dominant vegetation species along each stretch. A full species list, with both scientific and English names, is presented in Appendix 3. The numbering of the sections described below is as the preceding chapter.

4.1 Detailed description of sections

Sections 001 to 005 (Mountmellick Junction to 1st lock)

The flora along the towpath includes burnet saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*) and rough hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*).

Sections 101 to 103 (1st lock - Wheelahan's Bridge)

The canal is blocked for a short distance at the 1st lock, but this is followed by a long open stretch as far as the county boundary. At first the channel is entirely choked and overgrown, grey willow dominant, with great hairy willowherb and yellow flag; the field in the angle of the bend is wet rushy pasture with meadowsweet.

Horses have access to the canal all along this stretch. This has caused poaching and severe erosion to the banks so that it has almost lost its profile in places, but on the other hand it has kept it open and made it possible to walk the entire length of this stretch (fig 4.1). For much of it, the banks are covered with dense bracken, but in places (especially towards the east) it has the character of limestone grassland, with many species of interest (it would be much clearer in winter). These include lady's bedstraw, marjoram, red bartsia, wild carrot, eyebright, fairy flax, black knapweed, yellow centaury, quaking grass, self-heal, red clover, ribwort plantain, bird's-foot trefoil, greater hawkbit, cat's-ear, common agrimony, cinquefoil. A striking feature is the great profusion of yellow rattle in places, a plant of less intensively managed grassland which has declined greatly over the last 50 years or so.



Fig 4.1 Looking north-west along dewatered canal (S102) from just north of 1st lock.

In the wetter sections meadowsweet, yellow flag, great hairy willowherb and often hard rush remain dominant, with silverweed, marsh woundwort, angelica, redshank, marsh thistle, devil's-bit scabious, water mint, hemp agrimony, marsh bedstraw. Gipsywort, fleabane and lesser fox sedge occur in a number of places.

Grey willow and tall hawthorn dominate the edges of the banks, with hazel, ash and the occasional black poplar. Guelder rose is scattered here and there. There are some fine individual birch trees on the north side near the county boundary. A curtain of furze separates the canal from the bog on the south and often invades the bank.

Coolnafearagh Bog

The area of cutover bog between S102 of the canal and the road is of exceptional interest (fig 4.2). A list of vascular plant species recorded during two visits is presented in Appendix 4.

There is a belt of fen, with irregular pools, running parallel to the road (dominated by black bog-rush, purple moor-grass and devil's-bit scabious), and separated from the road by a screen of grey willow, birch etc. There are substantial stands of great fen sedge *Cladium mariscus*. (It should be noted that *Cladium* fen is a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive). Crack willow (with very numerous *Pontania* sawfly galls) is of frequent occurrence in the margins.

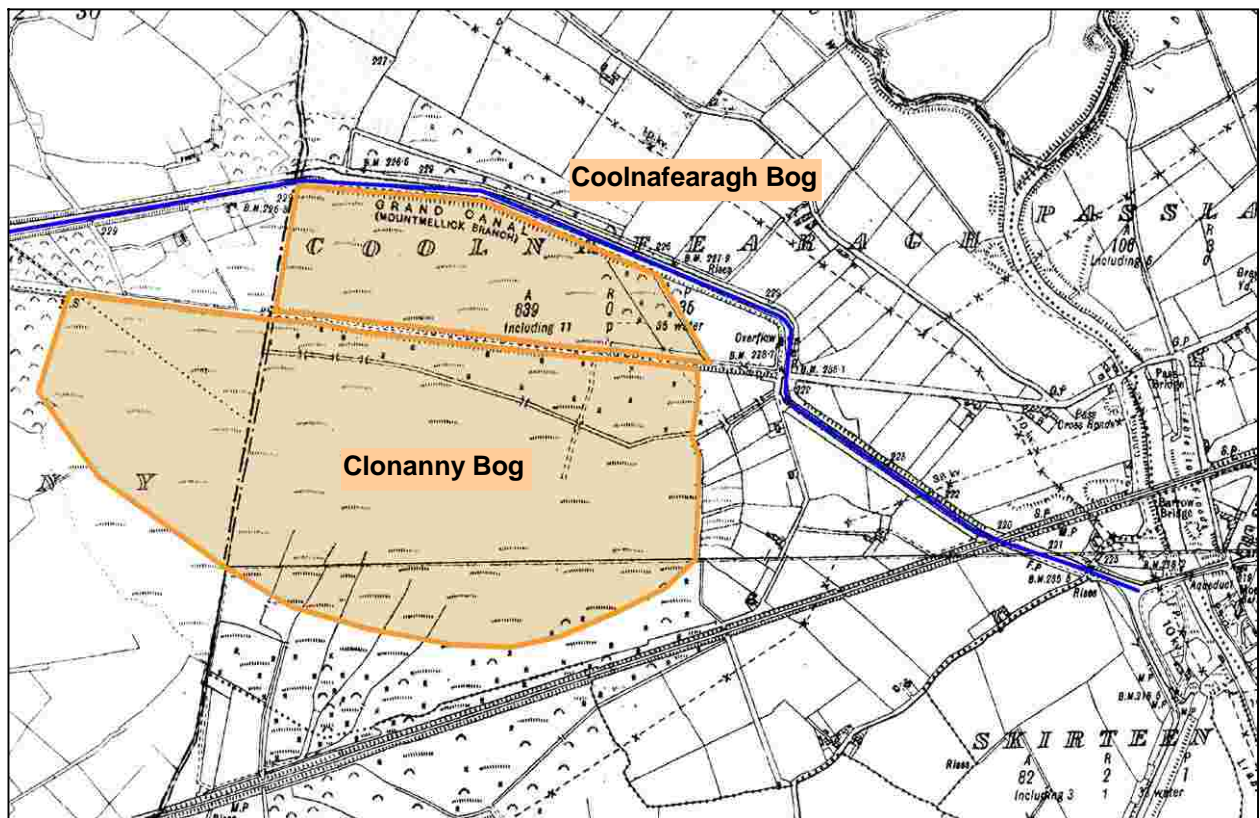


Fig 4.2 Approximate extents of Coolnafearagh and Clonanny bogs.

Many of the drains and recolonised pools have an abundance of bog cinquefoil, marsh bedstraw, greater stitchwort; milfoil is abundant in many holes, together with horsetail, cotton grass, stonewort, bogbean, several species of sedges, and bladderwort. The non-flowering plants include royal fern, several species of *Cladonia* and several of *Sphagnum*.

The fauna on the site includes frog and newt, and there is a very diverse invertebrate fauna, both terrestrial and aquatic. This includes the marsh fritillary (an Annex 2 species under the Habitats Directive and the habitat of which is therefore protected under European law) and also the fen spider *Dolomedes fimbriatus*. There is a conspicuous and abundant fauna of large hymenoptera, hoverflies, beetles, dragonflies and several butterfly species.

At the bottom of the slope at the roadside the scrub is dominated by grey willow, with ash, hawthorn, hazel, white willow, with some field rose and bramble and the uncommon wild hop. The grassy verge is dominated by false oat, along with cock's-foot, *Festuca* sp., annual meadow-grass. The common herbs present include yellow rattle, meadow vetchling, ragwort, creeping buttercup, silverweed, nettle, great bindweed, field horsetail, lamb's-tongue plantain, black knapweed, dandelion, creeping thistle, common dock. There are deep bogholes at the northern edge; there are excavations scattered over the surface with little in the way of an obvious pattern. There are a numerous regenerating pools; these have much bog asphodel, with some *Sphagnum*, including *cuspidatum* and *fuscum*.

Clonanny Bog

This is located on the opposite side of the road from Coolnafearagh Bog (fig 4.2). It is mainly cutover raised bog, with a small area of dry high bog remaining: this is being actively cut from the south side. The remaining areas of high bog are dry, often dominated by cross-leaved heath rather than *Calluna*; mountain everlasting and deer sedge occur in this area, with some black bog rush. Lousewort, few-flowered spikewort, common butterwort, pale butterwort, marsh helleborine and twayblade are common. Spotted orchid is locally abundant. There is a fairly diverse moss flora, and an abundance of several species of *Cladonia*, especially *C. floerkeana*.

The canal disappears at the county boundary, the line running into open farmland, though generally marked by hedges and a laneway leading to the yellow house at the county boundary beyond which it again appears. There is an attractive belt of birchwood fringing the north bank where the canal disappears.

The channel has been filled in and landscaped at Wheelahan's Bridge, with amenity planting of *Sorbus* and other species. The grassland around the bridge is dominated by false oat, with much silverweed, red fescue, timothy, cock's-foot, Yorkshire fog, and includes among the more interesting species yellow pea, meadowsweet, creeping fescue, common valerian, hard rush, cinquefoil, black knapweed, tufted vetch, red clover, perforated St. John's wort, quaking grass, hogweed, fairy flax, bramble, grey willow, nettle, great bindweed, reed grass, dock, tussock grass, lady's bedstraw, bush vetch, ribwort plantain, wild carrot, ragwort, spear thistle.

Sections 104 to 109 (Wheelahan's Bridge - Bergin's Bridge)

East of Wheelahan's Bridge tarred roads have been laid down on both sides of the channel; the road on the south side is overarched with tall hazel hedges. The canal here contains open water: but it is stagnant, completely overgrown with woody vegetation (principally grey willow and ash), inaccessible and of little ecological interest. Away from the canal, hedge banks contain much false brome, and tutsan was noted. Further on in this direction the canal has been entirely fenced in at first, then levelled, only a hedged bank plus ditch (with a step drop down to the ditch on the south side, but the hedge, as usual, much overgrown and unmanaged.

Opposite the new house at the end of the new road on the north side there has been so much dumping in the channel that it is completely blocked; crack willow, tall white willow and black poplar occur at this point. South-west of this point the channel is completely filled with aquatic vegetation, reed sweet-grass and great hairy willowherb being especially prominent (fig 4.3). From this point south-west to the infilled section towards the bend is one of the most impenetrable sections of the entire canal.



Fig 4.3 Looking north-east from south-west end of dewatered section 106.

Land quality in the vicinity is generally improved, but there is a patch of neglected grassland north of this infilled section of some interest, with much red fescue, bartsia, silverweed, meadow fescue, cock's-foot, tussock grass, hairy sedge, cinquefoil, black knapweed, lady's bedstraw, hard rush, bird's-foot trefoil, lots of bindweed, some rosebay willowherb. Along the line of the infilled canal in one place some interesting species have colonised the grassland in the open field on the north bank: eyebright, self heal, autumnal hawkbit, yellowwort, milkwort, quaking grass, red fescue are all well represented.

The canal is open for a short way behind the houses along the road that runs north-west towards Lea Cross Roads (S108), but it is dry and almost totally overgrown and almost inaccessible (and often used as a dump). There has been an attempt to clear all the vegetation in the canal behind one of the new houses, and this is the only bit of this stretch that is accessible. There is an interesting patch of willow scrub in the corner of the field beside the canal where the latter re-appears: with much tussock grass, black knapweed, tall white willow, crack willow, goat willow, bit of white poplar nearby, hawthorn etc. The hedge running back into the field from here has a short stretch that is just lilac; there is an active badger sett in the bank here.

The only feature of ecological interest at Bergin's Bridge is the profusion of ivy broomrape on the slope leading from the road down to the canal on the south side.

Sections 109 to 113 (Bergin's Bridge - Lea Castle)

Although it is fringed with the usual tree and shrub species, the water in the canal at Section 112 – which is sometimes wet – is eutrophic, dominated by nettle, with hardly any of the characteristic aquatic plants seen everywhere else. The reason for this becomes apparent further east, where water from the limestone quarry north of Lea Cross Roads (in S110) is being fed into it (fig 4.4). Where the track from the Church crossed the canal the latter has again been levelled for a short distance (S111), and this causes this drainage water to fill the channel. At the boundary of the quarry the canal itself is again lost, and is not seen again until some way south-east of Bergin's Bridge.



Fig 4.4 Looking west along watered section 110 from just west of bend in canal.

The small triangular field between the line of the canal (S112) and this track (surrounded on two sides by invading damson and blackthorn) is species-diverse pasture. The species present include the following: common bent, Yorkshire fog, red fescue, sweet-vernal grass, black knapweed, red clover, red bartsia, meadow buttercup, germander speedwell, meadow vetchling, marjoram, yarrow, spotted orchid, lady's bedstraw, ribwort plantain, meadow vetchling and hogweed

The species present include the following: common bent, Yorkshire fog, red fescue, sweet-vernal grass, black knapweed, red clover, red bartsia, meadow buttercup, germander speedwell, meadow vetchling, marjoram, yarrow, spotted orchid, lady's bedstraw, ribwort plantain, meadow vetchling and hogweed

There is an extraordinary abundance of ivy broomrape in Lea Church graveyard, in the laneway on either side of it, and in places on the canal banks. Wild clematis is a prominent feature of the hedges in this area. In the fields around Lea Castle House mugwort is very abundant. There is a large open pasture bordering the north canal bank opposite and north-west of the quarry; on one side of this is an exceptionally fine damson hedge.

The infilled canal runs through a field of maize, and re-appears where the track from Lea Church once crossed (S112); there is a good deal of dumping in the channel. The canal banks and their cover of scrub are generally poached and degraded in this section, and much overgrown. The canal has been levelled for a short distance east of where the road to Lea Castle crosses (S113).

Sections 114 to 119 (Lea Castle - Portarlinton Lock)

The canal is open for most of the way between Lea Castle and Portarlinton. At the lane that leads to Lea Castle the channel is dry and there is some grass, but for most of the time it is encroached upon by the usual canal bushes: grey willow, blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel, holly and always much bramble. In addition the bounding hedges contain much privet, ash, dog rose, honeysuckle: and spindle and guelder rose occasionally.



Westwards from Lea lane, the channel gets wet and muddy, and at times carries pools of standing water. The channel community is dominated as usual by reed sweet-grass, horsetail, wild iris, hard rush, water mint, creeping bent, with mare's-tail, flowering rush, brooklime, lesser and greater hairy willowherb, angelica, brooklime, lesser spearwort, water forget-me-not, marsh bedstraw and bur-reed (fig 4.5). Several water hens were seen in the canal here.

Along the towpath in the stretch south-west of Lea Castle House there is old hazel coppice for much of the way. In adjacent hedges (always overgrown) there are some nice beech and ash. For much of the time (though not always: it is

Fig 4.5 The dewatered canal at Lea (S114) showing reed sweet-grass and yellow flag, lightly grazed.

locally impassable) the path is open and easy to walk, with little ground vegetation. This is because cattle have free access to most of the canal from the north side and this has resulted in much erosion of bank and slopes. Many common woodland plants occur, including primrose, bluebell, herb bennett, wood sanicle, wild arum, common dog violet, cow parsley, hogweed, wood anemone, even cowslip. In less grazed sections on the south bank false brome appears more widespread, as is wood sedge and wood sorrel. An interesting bolete provisionally identified as *Boletus radicans* occurs here and there in the wood (as does *Amanita virosa*).

Locally there are patches of grazed grassland on the banks, and these have many of the species characteristic of limestone grassland: lady's bedstraw, bird's-foot trefoil, eyebright, fairy flax, yellow rattle, meadow vetchling, perforated St. John's wort, tufted vetch. Meadow ant occurs here.

West of the field of unimproved grassland described below the field is separated from the canal by barbed wire, and the bank is more overgrown and less easy to walk. Between these two fields there is a small hazel coppice (really just an extension of the coppiced bank). This is the side from which animals enter, so the wood and banks etc. are more degraded on this side; primrose and cow parsley seem to survive well though locally. The stretch of coppiced hazel on the north bank immediately west of Lea Castle lane though is almost bare ground. There is a prominent black poplar just here. The curved hedge south-west of Lea Castle House is a superb example of what happens when a hedge 'escapes' through lack of maintenance: it is now in ecological terms a line of hawthorn and no longer a hedgerow.

There is a nice aspen grove where the track to the sewage works crosses the canal, which is infilled at this point (S115). There is extensive growth of water cress in the drain leading to the canal across the barley field from the direction of the Sewage Plant. There is a partial infilling of the channel where this drain reaches the canal, and dumping has reduced the channel to a ditch in places. Locally there is much crack willow, and some white willow and white poplar.

The open canal comes to an end just north-east of Lock Bridge. It is greatly overgrown in Sections 116 to 118, but is wet and has the usual complement of species - reed sweet-grass, yellow flag etc (fig 4.6). The margins and banks are extensively overgrown (principally by grey willow, hazel, ash and hawthorn) and in very poor condition, and there is none of the hazel coppice or woodland ground flora seen further east towards Lea Castle. Sometimes the bank is just a strip of grassland of little interest (as it is between the canal and the barley field south of the Sewage Plant). This strip is a continuation of the lane that runs beside the canal on the north side from Lock Bridge; for the length of the lane the boundary between it and the canal is a maintained hawthorn hedge.



Fig 4.6 West along section 118.

Between the west end of the barley field and the river there is a small patch of fen set in calcareous wet grassland that would merit a closer look. The grassland between the barley and the river (and running all the way back to Lea Castle House) is sometimes species diverse, and has some of the features of unimproved wet grassland (GS4 in the Heritage Council's classification), but it is often rushy pasture and locally more improved and drained.

There is a minimum of management: some attempt to maintain the drains, but no external nutrient inputs. The co-dominance of autumnal hawkbit in the drier parts of the pasture is striking at this time of year.

Section 201 (Portarlington Lock - Lansdowne Park)

The only feature of ecological interest in this long stretch is a wonderful corner of wet callow-type flooded grassland (GS4) that survives in the triangular area of land immediately west of Ballymorris crossroads where the bridge once stood (fig 4.7). This is dominated by meadow-sweet, tussock grass, purple moor-grass and purple loosestrife, with timothy, cock's-foot, tall

fescue, meadow vetchling, creeping bent, hard rush, yellow flag, other rush, sweet vernal grass, Yorkshire fog, meadow buttercup, common valerian, tormentil, red fescue, water mint, reed sweet-grass, marsh woundwort, tufted vetch, black knapweed, water horsetail, and in the adjacent ditches rough-stalked meadow grass, and *Glyceria notata*. Grey willow is encroaching, and on the margins are abundant guelder rose, some ash, white willow, goat willow, and some more weedy species such as great bindweed. In the corner there is a fine black poplar. This corner of wet grassland has probably developed as a result of the demolition of Ballymorris Bridge, and is a glimpse of a habitat that might have become more widespread with greater ecological foresight fifty years ago.

North-east of Blackhall Bridge nothing survives of the canal. Its course is marked by a bank and wet ditches that often flood in winter. Broomrape is seen along here in places. There are houses all along the line, and on the town side of the railway bridge much of it built over by industrial development etc. The railway viaduct over the dry canal is almost the only physical trace.

There is no trace of the canal in the fields south-west of Blackhall Bridge. This section ends at the entrance to Lansdowne Park. At the bridge itself there has been a certain amount of development for amenity purposes, but nothing of interest survives except the bridge itself.

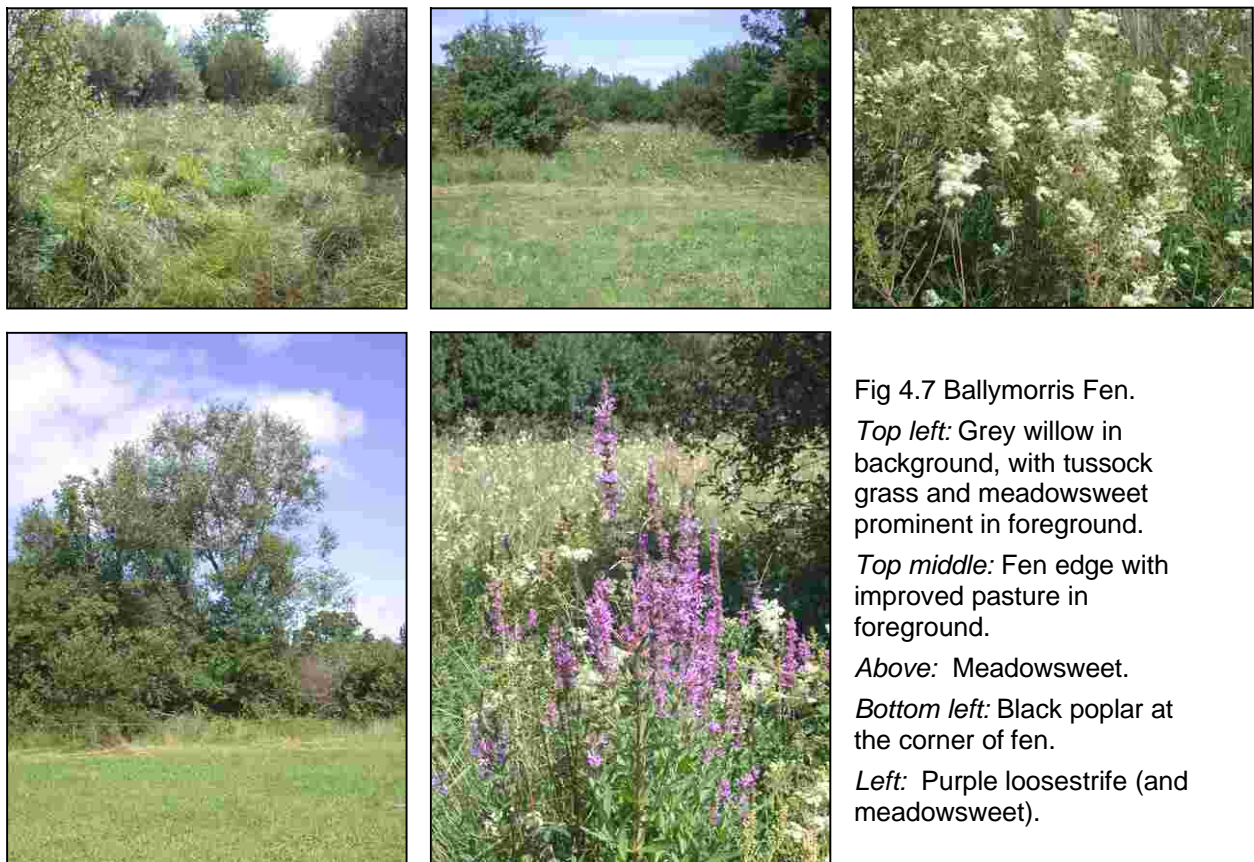


Fig 4.7 Ballymorris Fen.

Top left: Grey willow in background, with tussock grass and meadowsweet prominent in foreground.

Top middle: Fen edge with improved pasture in foreground.

Above: Meadowsweet.

Bottom left: Black poplar at the corner of fen.

Left: Purple loosestrife (and meadowsweet).

Section 202 to 203 (Lansdowne Park - Woodbrook Bridge)

The canal is open, well-preserved and often wet along all of this stretch, which ends at Woodbrook Bridge. The bridge itself was demolished after the decommissioning of the canal for reasons of safety. The channel is often very shaded, with scant vegetation; it is frequently filled with fallen trees and branches (fig 4.8a). The main species are yellow flag, horsetail, reed sweet-grass, lesser water-parsnip.

At the eastern end of this section, a belt of woodland belt on the south bank that runs most of the way to Woodbrook Bridge ends. There is just a dense overgrown bank with a cattle path through the scrub (fig 4.8b). Towards the end of the open section of canal (south of the Lodge) the towpath has been levelled and is now covered with rank weedy vegetation. At this point there has been extensive dumping of rubbish in the channel.

There is hazel coppice on the north bank, and there has been an unsuccessful attempt to interplant with Sitka spruce. Much of the floor is dominated by false brome and ivy, with wood avens, wood sanicle, bluebell, common dog violet, wood sedge, burdock, primrose. A notable feature is the great abundance of ivy broomrape all the way along the north bank in particular. Cattle have had access to the bank here, which has been a main factor. A white *Amanita* species (*Amanita virosa* var. *alba*: but cf. *strobiliformis*) was recorded here (and at several other locations in the canal-bank woods). Dryad's saddle also occurs in a few places.



Fig 4.8a Watered section 202 east of Woodbrook Bridge



Fig 4.8b Cattle track through scrub along south bank east of Woodbrook Bridge.

The bank along the northern side of the canal is obstructed and much more difficult to negotiate along the edge of the area of barley, and there is no animal access from here – which is largely why it is so overgrown. There are badger latrines and paths here and there may well be a sett.

There are some fine trees along the boundary with the adjacent farmland on this side (mainly beech and ash) though many others have been cut.

The towpath side is still more open (east of the bridge anyway), again because cattle grazing the adjacent fields have access. Most of the species seen on the opposite bank occur here also, but not – interestingly – ivy broomrape. By contrast, the bit of the towpath that lies within the Coillte property, just east of the bridge, is much poorer in species. Here also there has been a failed attempt to plant Sitka spruce among the hazel.

Section 203 (Woodbrook Bridge – Tinnakill Lock)

The line of the infilled canal runs north-east through open fields on either side of Tinnakill Lock. Looking south-west from Woodbrook Bridge almost nothing remains to show the original canal (fig 4.9). The wood on the south-east side of the road that runs parallel to the vanished canal is considerably rich in species, especially the boundary, which is a high bank with ditch on either side, similar to that seen at Clonterry (S306) and elsewhere. This is the edge of the old demesne woodland of Woodbrook.

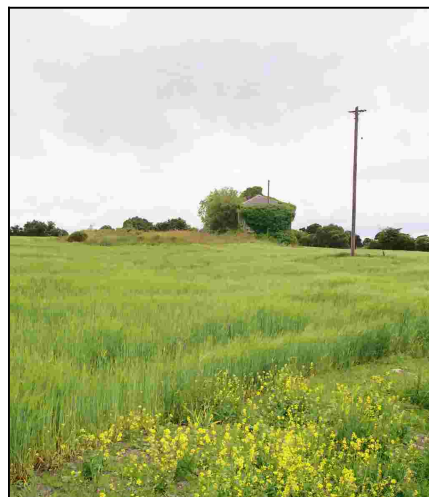


Fig 4.9 *Far left*: Looking south-west from Woodbrook Bridge in the direction of Tinnakill Lock. The canal ran down the field away from the camera but is now entirely infilled.

Left: Looking south-west along infilled canal towards Tinnakill Lock.

The following species were noted along this section:

Oak	Guelder rose	Meadowsweet	Eyebright
Ash	Privet	Bird's-foot trefoil	Autumnal hawkbit
Elm	Furze	White clover	Yarrow
Scots pine	Honeysuckle	Heather	Cowslip
White poplar	Tussock grass	Tormentil	Herb Robert
Grey willow	Cock's-foot	Red clover	Purple loosestrife
Goat willow	False brome	Creeping thistle	Perforated St. John's wort
Holly	Wood brome	Black knapweed	Marsh bedstraw
Beech	Red fescue	Hogweed	Angelica
Hazel	False oat	Figwort	Water mint
Birch	Quaking grass	Yellow pimpernel	Common valerian
Yew	Creeping bent	Great bindweed	Meadow vetchling
Rowan	Yorkshire fog	Rosebay willowherb	Marsh woundwort
Bramble	Carnation sedge	Great hairy willowherb	Hemp agrimony
Blackthorn	Glaucous sedge	Hoary willowherb	Creeping buttercup
Alder	Soft rush	Nettle	Meadow buttercup
Hawthorn	Hard rush	Meadowsweet	Marsh thistle
Field rose	Field horsetail	Bush vetch	Ribwort plantain
Spindle	Water horsetail	Tufted vetch	Bracken
Dog rose	Ivy	Cinquefoil	
Snowberry	Red bartsia	Bittersweet	

Section 301 (Tinnakill Lock)

What remains of Tinnakill Lock and the lock house is now an island enclosed on all sides by barley. A stand of marsh woundwort in the corner of the field carries an echo of the canal vegetation. West of the barley field the canal survives as a raised bank with an overgrown ash and beech hedge on the outside: then it disappears.

On what remains of the stonework of the lock an isolated patch of limestone grassland remains, though it is being encroached on by bramble, field horsetail, creeping thistle, ragwort etc. This is dominated by red fescue and black knapweed; other species surviving here are yarrow, pignut, cowslip, fairy flax, lady's bedstraw, glaucous sedge, false oat, cat's ear, bird's-foot trefoil, red clover, mouse-ear chickweed, mullein.

The house is derelict though not beyond repair; swallows are nesting inside. Some of the old ornamental plants survive: old roses, French marigold, bridewort and most notably Duke of Argyll's tealplant. White stonecrop grows on the stonework.

Section 302 (Tinnakill - Skeagh Bridge)

The channel is open but choked with herbaceous and locally more scrubby vegetation east of Skeagh Bridge (fig 4.10). A tarred road runs along the north bank almost all the way along this section. Young beech trees have been planted between this and the open channel; the grass is mown along this road and encroachment by scrub prevented. The channel east of the bridge has the usual wetland community, though weedy species are more in evidence because of the character of bank management on this side. Great hairy willowherb, reed sweet-grass, reed

grass, meadowsweet are dominant, along with square-stemmed St. John's wort, woody nightshade and some tufted hair grass and hoary willowherb and common reed very locally; more weedy encroaching species include scutch grass, creeping buttercup, large bindweed, cleavers, hogweed, creeping bent, herb Robert, hedge parsley, bush vetch etc. There is a line of alder along either edge of the channel in places. Woody species are hawthorn, ash, blackthorn, grey willow, elder, much briar and bramble. Towards and around the bend the channel becomes quite dry. The quality of the channel vegetation becomes more impoverished to the north-east, in the direction of Tinnakill Lock.



Fig 4.10 Looking east along S302 from Skeagh Bridge.

Conditions are very different on the opposite side. Here the channel is bounded by a high wooded bank that is completely cut off from the adjacent farmland in the usual manner by a tall hedge that has not been cut since it was planted (it is over 10m high in places). There is little vegetation along the bank under these tall trees; often there is little except ivy. The usual mixture of tree and shrub species occurs, along with an occasional whitebeam.

Section 303 (Skeagh Bridge)

The canal channel has been filled in at the crossroads, on the far side of Skeagh Bridge itself and briefly beyond. The bridge stands isolated on the edge of a small patch of amenity grassland which is acquiring its own interesting mixture of species with the passage of time (autumnal hawkbit was attractively prominent at the time of visiting).

Section 304 (Skeagh Bridge - Dangan's Bridge)

This is one of the most interesting remaining sections of the canal and has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive (fig 4.11). The channel is open almost all the way between Skeagh Bridge and Dangan's Bridge apart from the short section 303. The curved section at the end, immediately east of Dangan's Bridge, is one of the few places where there is a real sense of the canal as it once was: it is wet, open and there is little woody vegetation (fig 4.12).

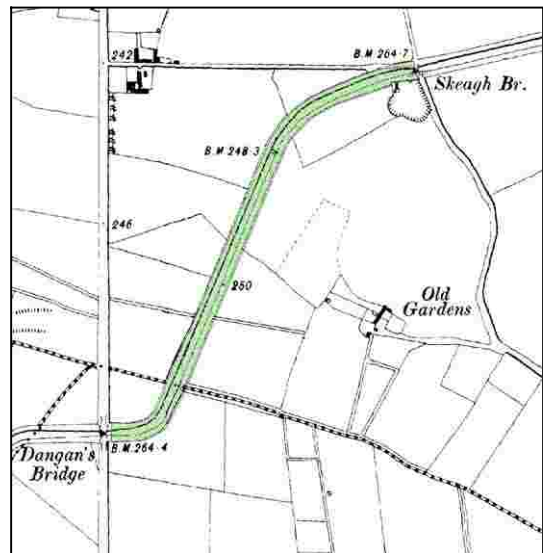


Fig 4.11 Extent of SAC.

The channel itself is choked with reed sweet-grass, yellow flag and horsetail, great hairy willowherb and purple loosestrife; fleabane and hoary willowherb occur locally and there is abundant marsh bedstraw. It is from this stretch that the protected snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* has been recorded (see below). The tow path on the south side at this end of the section has most of the species found on the dry bank slightly further on in Clonterry (S306; meadow vetchling, self-heal and tufted vetch appear especially prominent), as well as golden oat grass and yellow oat grass. The tow path is separated from the farmland adjacent on the south side by a wet ditch and a neglected 'escaped' hedge of hawthorn, blackthorn, ash, alder, white poplar, holly and much privet. There is a solitary yew tree and one whitebeam. Towards the townland boundary bramble and furze begin to encroach on the bank.

On the far side there is a derelict hedge between the canal and the fields (largely hazel), but there is access from the field on the east of the road to the channel (which is very unusual where the latter is open). There has been a small amount of dumping in the canal at the bend,

On the far side there is a derelict hedge between the canal and the fields (largely hazel), but there is access from the field on the east of the road to the channel (which is very unusual where the latter is open). There has been a small amount of dumping in the canal at the bend,



Fig 4.12 Looking south-west along S304, east of Dangans Bridge.

where there is a fragment of the hazel coppice so characteristic of the bank elsewhere. There is some aspen on the west bank beyond the bend. The field north of the townland boundary is (unusually) separated from the canal by a well-maintained hedge. North of this the hedge has simply been left to itself since the canal was cut off - as has happened generally wherever the channel remained open.

The open section of bank comes to an end at the first cross-ditch north of the townland boundary. From here all the way back to Skeagh Bridge it is wooded. False brome becomes dominant on the shaded bank, with tall carnation sedge and primrose prominent in some places, and local wood sedge. Where there is least light ivy often takes over the ground cover. Sweet-grass continues to be locally dominant in the channel but as the woody vegetation closes in this disappears and the channel becomes dry and choked with growing and fallen trees. The tall young trees are as usual ash, hawthorn and beech, with grey willow, hazel and holly, occasional elm, and in the shrub layer privet and (locally) guelder rose. There is considerable badger activity (paths, latrines, possible sett nearby).

Very different though it is in character, and a good example of a stretch of the canal that was hedged off and essentially simply forgotten about – so that it has gone its own way in terms of vegetation development – this is a very attractive stretch of the line, with a sense of wilderness about it, and of great interest in the basic ecological lessons it teaches.

Section 305 (west of Dangans Bridge)

The canal is infilled across the triangular field immediately to the west of the bridge. There is a line of fine beech in the hedge that runs north-westwards from the canal just west of the townland boundary.

North-west of this infilled section there is an exceptionally interesting mosaic of variably wet grassland and fen (fig 4.13). There have been unsuccessful attempts in the past (repeated recently) to drain this area. The vegetation here includes black bog rush, bog thistle, purple moor-grass, meadowsweet, heather, common bent, devil's-bit scabious, fleabane, common



Fig 4.13 Fen to north-west of Dangans Bridge.

valerian, purple loosestrife, marsh thistle, *Juncus acutiflorus*, and *Juncus subnodulosus*. The new drains contain much water plantain and stonewort, New Zealand willowherb and bog pimpernel. This area should be preserved and would well repay fuller survey.

Section 306 (Clonerry embankment)

The section that runs along the line of the canal through Clonerry townland is one of the most interesting along its entire length. Although the canal bed has been infilled and is in the same state as sections 305 and 307, it has been highlighted on account of its ecology.

Compared with other sections of bank, this one is relatively high and has a prominent ditch on either side. Whether it is the original size or has been heightened using spoil from the canal is difficult to determine now. The ditches themselves are species-diverse in places, but the main interest is in the bank itself, which has remained open for the most part, although there is some invasion by the occasional hawthorn and holly mainly. Although not grazed, the vegetation here would be classified as GS1 (dry calcareous and neutral grasslands). The community includes the following species – and a more detailed survey would certainly increase this:

Bird's-foot trefoil	Cowslip	Mouse-ear chickweed	Ribwort plantain
Black knapweed	Creeping bent	Mouse-ear hawkweed	False brome
Bladder campion	Dandelion	Oxeye daisy	Slender St. John's wort
Bush vetch	Devil-s bit scabious	Pignut	Smooth hawk's-beard
Cat's-ear	False oat	Primrose	Sweet vernal grass
Cinquefoil	Glaucous sedge	Pyramidal orchid	Tufted vetch
Cock's-foot	Greater hawkbit	Quaking grass	Tussock grass
Common bent	Hogweed	Red bartsia	Yarrow
Common spotted orchid	Lady's bedstraw	Red clover	Yellow rattle
	Meadow vetchling	Red fescue	Yorkshire fog

There are several old nests of the yellow meadow ant (*Lasius flavus*) along the bank. In places the bank is wooded but still open. It becomes more wooded towards the north-east end. The wooded section is mainly hazel coppice, with ash, beech and hawthorn, grey willow and (more rarely) white willow, with false brome dominating the ground flora where the ground is not covered with ivy. There are several wild apple just before the bank becomes choked up at the north-east end.

The north-eastern end of the embankment terminates a short way to the west of Dangans Bridge, just at the townland boundary. Towards the end it becomes wooded over but remains

easy enough to walk. Ivy broomrape occurs again in this section, and there is a great profusion of the species along the main road north of Dangans Bridge.

Section 307 (north-east of Kilnacash Bridge)

Towards Kilnacash Bridge the canal has been replaced by a high wooded bank fringed with trees and with a variably wet ditch on either side: mainly beech, ash, goat willow and hawthorn, with damson, elm, blackthorn, alder, holly, elder, hazel and the ubiquitous bramble (one copper beech). There is occasional sycamore and snowberry. Some of the ash trees are tall and well grown.

At the south-western end of this section the bank is very shaded and often easy to walk along, with scant ground cover: often dominated by false brome; primrose, wild arum, hogweed, pignut, wood avens and common dog violet are all common. On the south-east side of the canal (behind the new house) there is a line of old beech in poor conditions, at least one of which has dryad's saddle (*Polyporus squamosus*) growing on it. Where the boundary ditches are wetter and well lit there is meadowsweet, reed sweet-grass etc.

Immediately north-east of Kilnacash Bridge the canal line is bounded by a strip of rank wet grassland and scrub dominated by false oat with much great hairy willowherb, bramble, creeping thistle etc., occasional St. John's wort and common figwort. There is a small clump of Japanese knotweed which shows little sign (so far anyway) of spreading.

Along the edge of the canal opposite the farmhouse by the roadside is a grove of aspen, and close by an active badger sett (there is badger activity along most of the wooded sections of the canal). There is more aspen a short way to the north-east.

The bank has been leveled for a short distance just north-east of the benchmarked culvert. This temporarily open section has a considerable variety of herbaceous species of interest – black knapweed, perforated St. John's wort, water mint, angelica, giant fescue, wild carrot, great hairy willowherb, field agrimony, meadow vetchling, cowslip, white clover, carnation sedge, red bartsia, mouse-ear chickweed, false brome, timothy, creeping bent, meadow buttercup, broad-leaved dock – but there is also much weedy vegetation and invading scrub on the edges (the invaders including grey willow, blackthorn, bramble, nettle, Yorkshire fog, creeping buttercup – and aspen). The overgrown ditch on the north-west edge here is dominated by reed sweet-grass, reed grass, great hairy willowherb.

For a short distance north-east of this levelled section the wooded bank is impenetrable before opening up again.

The ditch on the south-east side is particularly interesting here, with purple loosestrife, angelica, water mint, bittersweet, meadowsweet, locally dominant lesser water-parsnip and water-cress, with much marsh bedstraw, and common valerian.

Section 308 (south-west of Kilnacash Bridge)

The open canal is bounded within degraded hawthorn hedges, with much privet, occasional crab apple, sycamore and holly. There is a small amount of dumping at the bridge itself. The channel is edged with tall young trees, mainly beech, ash, hawthorn, elm, holly occasional damson and rowan (fig 4.14). In places the ground is more or less completely covered with creeping ivy. The trees have been cut in the past, but not recently.

The canal banks are very shaded, the vegetation on the banks under the trees dominated by rough-stalked meadow grass, cock's-foot, creeping thistle,

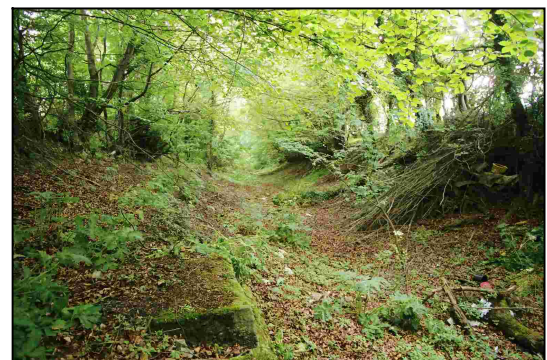


Fig 4.14 Looking south-west from Kilnacash Bridge.

perennial ryegrass, bramble, broad-leaved dock; herb Robert, cleavers, hogweed, nipplewort, herb Bennett, small chickweed, primrose, wild arum, nettle, male fern, ragwort, spear thistle.

There is very little vegetation in the dry channel itself along this stretch. There is slurry spreading in the field on the north side of the canal south-west of the bridge. Further away from the bridge (in the direction of Mountmellick), where there is more light, the channel is densely filled with bramble, briar, nettle, blackthorn, making it more or less inaccessible.

Section 309

This is a very short infilled section, with nothing of significant interest: weedy GA1 (improved agricultural grassland), largely overgrown with creeping thistle, ragwort, broad-leaved dock.

Section 310

The open, dewatered canal is bounded within degraded hedges, with houses backing onto it on the south side towards the eastern end. There are tall beech trees along the bank, and much tall overgrown hawthorn (fig 4.15). The bank is dominated to a great extent by coppiced hazel, and there is much ivy carpeting the ground under these, with some false brome. This section is open, and easy to walk through along a path on the bank under the hazel. The most interesting feature is the presence here of abundant ivy broomrape. Guelder rose occurs here and there.

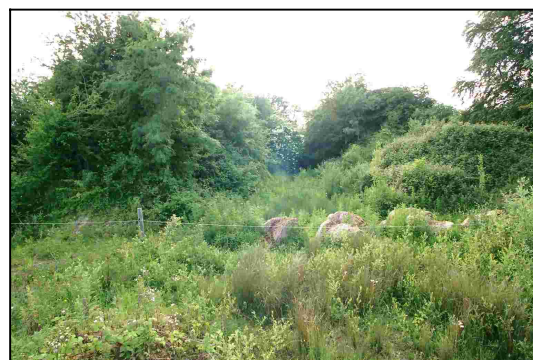


Fig 4.15 Looking west along S310.

There is a great deal of cleavers and nettle about, especially in the channel, and a lot of creeping thistle, creeping buttercup, rough-stalked meadow-grass, some broad-leaved willowherb and meadowsweet and broad-leaved dock. There is a great deal of grey willow in the channel, which is largely inaccessible in places, with frequent bramble thickets. A wet ditch runs along the southern edge which also has much broad-leaved willowherb. Marsh woundwort occurs occasionally.

Where conditions are more open, small patches of limestone grassland occur on the bank, with species such as black knapweed, bird's-foot trefoil, cinquefoil, Yorkshire fog, yarrow, sweet vernal grass, meadow fescue, red clover, ribwort, field agrimony, timothy, mouse-ear chickweed, tufted vetch, germander speedwell, common dog violet and hedge parsley. Where there is plenty of knapweed, there is much butterfly activity.

Wet grassland GM4 beside canal on north side

On the north side of the canal at this point is an area of wet grassland (GM4) that grades away from the canal into drier but very rough grassland. This is dominated by creeping bent, marsh thistle, meadow buttercup, meadowsweet (forming almost pure stands in places) and great hairy willowherb, with silverweed, redshank, common reed, hard rush, horsetail, with some patches of saw sedge. Meadow rue is present here, but rare.

Mountmellick Aqueduct over Triogue stream

The stream here is eutrophic, with dense growth of *Cladophora*, but with a diverse fauna nonetheless. Waterhen and kingfisher were observed during a brief visit. The marginal vegetation is dominated by flote grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), and great hairy willowherb, together with bur-reed (both species), reed grass water crowfoot, creeping bent, water starwort, water forget-me-not, Canadian pondweed, water dock. Small bindweed is common, and back from the water red bartsia.

On the bridge itself are one or two very small patches of limestone grassland, with lady's bedstraw and red fescue, meadow vetchling, wild carrot, field scabious, cinquefoil, lesser hawkbit, fairy flax, self-heal and mouse-ear chickweed (fig 4.16). The bridge is extensively overgrown with ivy, blackthorn and bramble, with tall ash, hawthorn and grey willow on the bank.



Fig 4.16 Looking east across the aqueduct.

Section 311

No trace of the canal remains along this short section, which is marked by a barbed wire fence, then picks up as a line of overgrown hawthorn, ash and hazel behind the new house opposite the football field. There are several oak and white willow in hedges northwards away from the canal. There is much cow parsley in evidence here (and in the canal woods more locally).

West of the house the line of the former canal is reflected in a line of tall young white willow and a hedge of alder adjacent. Between these two there is a short belt of grassland dominated by Yorkshire fog, with abundant wild carrot, sweet vernal grass. The west end of this has been used for the dumping of grass and other vegetable debris. In the field between this and the road there is an abundance of poppy.

Section 312

This section of the canal is dewatered but still wet. It would normally contain some water, but was dry underfoot when surveyed because of a recent exceptionally long spell of dry weather. To either side tall young trees screen the channel on either side: hazel, grey willow, alder, ash, privet. The normally wetter sections of the channel itself is dominated by reed sweet-grass, with some angelica, yellow flag, redshank, meadowsweet, and a line of saw sedge locally along the edge. Marsh bedstraw is prominent and gipsywort occurs locally. Where it is not so wet creeping buttercut and creeping bent tend to dominate.

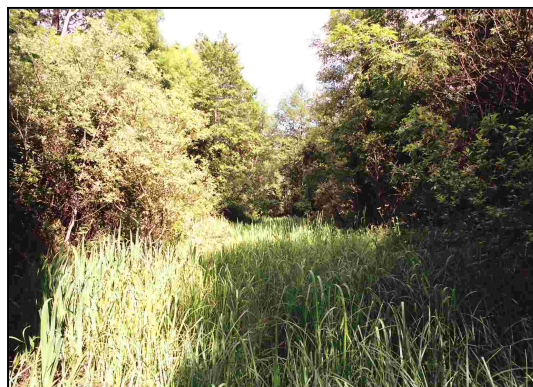


Fig 4.17 Looking east from half-way along open/dewatered section 312.

The bank on either side is much overgrown, giving the vegetation something of a woodland character, with abundant false-brome, primrose, cow parsley and wood avens, along with hart's-tongue. Goutweed, surprisingly, and snowberry have invaded at the western end of this section. A single large fruiting body of the destroying angel toadstool (*Amanita virosa* var. *alba*) was noted. Down at the edge of the channel where it is wetter there is much alder and grey willow, and occasional white willow. There is an active badger sett here.

In the patch of wood at the western end of this section of the canal there is an unusual diversity of species: hawthorn, ash, beech, grey willow, blackthorn, hazel, elder, bramble, wild rose and ivy: but also crab apple, white willow, lilac, elm, honeysuckle, damson, oak and snowberry (some of these invading from adjacent hedges).

Section 313 (Debicot Bridge – canal terminus)

The open section ends just before Debicot bridge. The bridge itself is fenced off from surrounding land, and the vegetation retains something of its original limestone grassland character, although there has been extensive encroachment by scrub (some of this recently cleared but advancing again). Among the species occurring here are quaking grass, sweet

vernal grass, red fescue, Yorkshire fog, false oat, cock's-foot, lady's bedstraw, black knapweed, bird's-foot trefoil, cowslip, pyramidal orchid, red clover, mouse-ear hawkweed, smooth hawk's-beard, cat's-ear, bladder campion, tufted vetch, yarrow, cinquefoil, glaucous sedge, hogweed, with creeping bent prominent in the more weedy vegetation away from the bridge, along with plenty of bramble and creeping thistle. There is a small patch of rosebay willowherb along the fence. A small sycamore bush is densely covered with tar spot fungus *Rhytisma acerina* (an indicator of clean air).

4.2 Fauna

The main emphasis in the ecological aspect of this study is on vegetation and general habitat quality. Faunal observations were limited to chance encounter during the relatively rapid 18km transit required for the survey and further restricted by seasonal limitations.

Mammals

The line of the canal is clearly of importance to badgers, which are active along several sections and use the canal as a corridor in otherwise generally open farmland. Foxes were observed on two occasions.

Birds

Many farmland birds use the refuge provided by the line of the canal for feeding, shelter and nesting, but no significant observations were made during the time of survey (except for the swallows nesting in Tinnakill Lock House).

Invertebrates

The marsh fritillary was observed in the bog south of the stretch of the canal west of the first lock in County Kildare on a previous visit. This butterfly is not on the wing in August, and for it to be discovered the caterpillars would have to be deliberately searched for on their food plant (devil's-bit scabious). This serves to underline the fact that particular species of invertebrates often need to be looked for specifically.

In 1971 the rare, tiny Des Moulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* was found between Dangans Bridge and Skeagh Bridge, in the marsh vegetation characteristic of wetter stretches of the canal; it was recorded again in 1997. The species is likely to occur in other places along the canal where comparable habitat conditions prevail, and not only along the canal but more widely. *Vertigo moulinsiana* is listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive; this imposes upon Government the obligation to protect the habitat of the species wherever it is found, and is the ground for the designation of this stretch of the canal as a Special Area of Conservation.

Maintenance of the marsh vegetation is essential to the continued welfare of this species, which means that attention needs to be paid to the natural scrub encroachment that will inevitably accompany the long-term evolution of the marsh vegetation unless this is prevented. Reflooding would also lead to its disappearance from any particular stretch.

Des Moulin's whorl snail has clearly migrated into the canal since its decommissioning. It is interesting to consider the question of where it lived prior to the abandonment of the canal, indeed prior to its construction. Suitable habitat exists in fen areas at either end of the canal (both highlighted earlier); a specific search of these areas for the species would be valuable.

4.3 An overview of the canal's ecological development since 1960

Since the official closure of the canal in 1960 different stretches of the canal have developed in different ways, following one of four ecological scenarios. Adjacent landowners were given the

option of buying the strip of canal that ran through their properties; this was taken up in most cases, but only in a few instances was the canal actually filled in and the banks levelled. The two most significant stretches where this happened were the stretch through Tinnakill as far as Woodbrook Bridge, and on either side of Blackhall Bridge. In these cases the canal has been lost in its entirety, with the exception of the lock house at Tinnakill.

The second option was to replace the potentially dangerous open canal by a bank and double ditch. This happened along the stretch of canal between Kilnacash Bridge through Clonterry almost as far as Dangans Bridge (section 306). Here, a high bank, flanked by a ditch on either side was created, either by the expedient of simply leaving the bank [towpath?] on one side or heightening it with spoil from the infilled canal. Under this arrangement, the deep ditch and steep bank are normally a sufficient barrier to cattle and most other farm animals, though sometimes where vegetation has filled in the ditch and the bank been eroded, a barbed wire fence is needed along the edge of the field to prevent access by animals. In the course of time the ditches have been colonised by many of the plants that survived the dewatering of the canal but they have little of outstanding ecological value.

The bank subsequently developed in two ways. In some areas it has become a strip of broadleaved woodland – most notably east of Kilnacash bridge: while further east it has remained essentially free of trees and become a strip of limestone grassland of considerable interest. This bank is an important element in the ecological network and would make an interesting linear walk, but such a walk would be of ecological interest only: the canal has gone. And of course there is no right of way along the high bank.

In the third scenario – the commonest one – the canal was simply fenced off by a hedge and reinforcing fence, and left to itself. The boundary hedges were not maintained and have in time come to exclude much of the light from the canal. Meanwhile the trees and bushes on the banks and in due course in the channel have grown unchecked so that the line of the canal is now a strip of wild woodland: quite inaccessible at times but often easy enough to make a way through, especially where a path has been kept open or where little light reaches the ground so that it is more or less free of obstructing vegetation. There may be limited access by animals, which keeps the canal more open and accessible.

These are interesting areas because the canal itself still survives here, and because they are interesting places ecologically. Among the best examples are the stretch between Dangans Bridge and Skeagh Bridge, the stretch west of Woodbrook Bridge, and shorter stretches west of Kilnacash Bridge and through Tinnakill on the towpath side only.

The fourth scenario is where the dewatered canal still remains but there is no hedge barrier to access by animals. In this case there will have been more severe degradation of the bank and of the canal profile generally, especially on the side that is open, but the mosaic of woodland and open bank is interesting and accessible. The most significant stretches where this has happened are at Lea Castle and the first part of the canal beyond the first lock at Monasterevin. In the former case a right of way presumably still exists along the line of the canal, but adjacent landowners can also presumably claim continued right of use because they have enjoyed the use of the canal without challenge for perhaps several decades.

4.4 Elements of special ecological value

The Mountmellick Canal is a feature of great cultural significance in the history of Laois. Ecologically it is an almost unbroken thread of natural habitats that are scarce and of value: broadleaved woodland, calcareous grassland and marsh. No part of it could however be described as outstanding in terms of habitat value.

Adjacent land use affects the canal habitats only in the sense discussed earlier: the main factor being whether or not the canal has been fenced off and is or is not used by animals.

In two areas there are habitats of high nature value within 500m of the canal, but both are essentially independent of the canal. These are the bog in the Kildare stretch of the canal west of the first lock (fig 4.2) and the area of fen and wet grassland north-west of Dangans bridge (fig

4.13). Both of these merit further study and attention. In each case the ownership situation should be clarified with a view to ensuring their conservation. The Kildare bog is of particular interest, especially because it abuts the canal and there is the possibility of enhancing this stretch of the canal in a way that would at the same time highlight the importance of the bog and make it more accessible for further study.

Not many 'good' plants in Praeger's sense occur along the canal: but this is the specialist botanist's perspective. In a broader ecological and aesthetic sense bird's-foot trefoil (for example) is as 'good' a plant as any rarity, and it should be remembered that all species that occur naturally have value in terms of their biodiversity support and many have broader aesthetic appeal. A number of species listed as 'rare or occasional' in the 2005 Laois Habitats Survey occur along the line of the canal: mugwort, golden oat grass, yellow oat grass, marsh helleborine, marjoram, butterfly orchid, fleabane, white beak sedge, and several of the 'additional' species recorded by the Botanical Society of the British Isles. There is some overlap between this and the 'rare or occasional' list (this list does not take account of species recorded only in Co Kildare).

The single most interesting species however is ivy broomrape, for which the canal appears to be the principal habitat – certainly in this part of the county (fig 4.18). Along many stretches of the canal it is abundant, but rarely seen elsewhere, although it does sometimes occur in habitats adjacent to the canal, from which it probably originally colonised the ivy-clad woodland banks that developed subsequently. Webb's *An Irish Flora* describes it as 'frequent in the South half [of Ireland], rare in the North.'



Fig 4.18 Ivy broomrape

5. CANAL-RELATED BUILT HERITAGE FEATURES

For the purposes of description and analysis, all canal-related features are numbered according to the reach within which they lie (but independently of the sections described in chapters 3 and 4). Thus feature F002 is feature 2 within Reach 0 and feature F311 is feature 11 on Reach 3. In some instances, as at locks, related features have been grouped and sub-numbered, e.g. F301a, F301b and F301c for the lock, bridge and house at Tinnakill. Photographs also follow the same numbering system and are suffixed sequentially, e.g. F101a_01 is image 1 of feature F101a, F101a_02 is image 2 etc. Detailed descriptions and photographs of all features are presented in Appendix 5.

5.1 Canal features

A total of 53 canal-related features were recorded, 44 of which were on the line of the canal and the remainder on its feeders; seven are in Co Kildare and the remainder in Co Laois (fig 5.1).

Canal features			
Basin			1
Building	Agent's house	1	
	Lock house	3	
	Store	2	6
Bridge	Canal/river	10	
	Foot/canal	1	
	Rail/canal	2	
	Road/canal	14	27
Feeder			2
Junction			1
Lock			3
Overflow			2
Quay			2
		<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>44</i>

Feeder features			
Bridge	Feeder/river	1	
	Rail/feeder	1	
	Road/feeder	6	8
Weir			1
		<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>9</i>

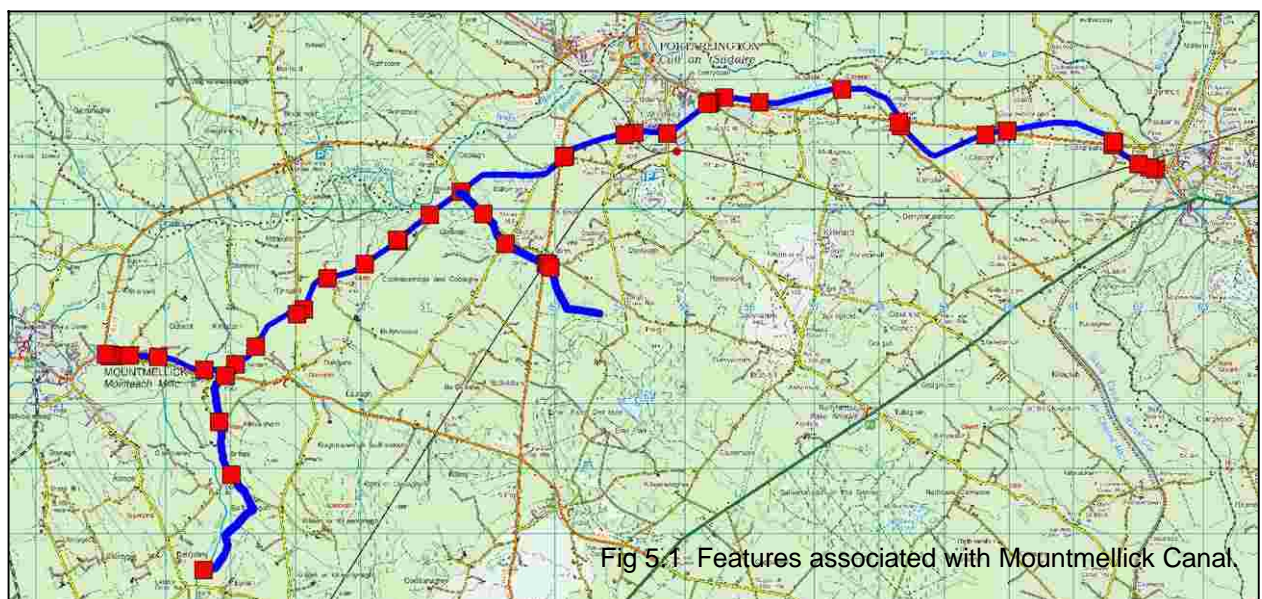


Fig 5.1 Features associated with Mountmellick Canal

Basins

There was a basin at the Mountmellick terminus, now infilled.

Buildings

There are three lock keeper's houses, each associated with a lock. These are very similar in design, being three bay buildings cut into the canal bank, with their principal facades facing the lock and with full or partial semi-basements. The house at the 1st lock is still inhabited (fig 5.2a), as was the one at Portarlinton until recently. The one at the 3rd lock is unoccupied and falling into dereliction.

There is a well-maintained and occupied former canal agent's house at the Mountmellick terminus (fig 5.2b). An intact two-storey store survives at the quay adjoining Portarlinton Lock (fig 5.2c). Only vestiges of the once-substantial stores at the terminus survive.

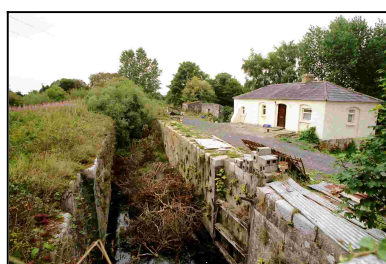


Fig 5.2a 1st lock and house. Fig 5.2b Canal agent's house, Mountmellick Fig 5.2c Store at 2nd lock.

Bridges

Bridges were the commonest type of structure on the canal, accounting for almost two-thirds of all the features along the canal.

Fourteen of the 27 recorded bridges carried roads over the canal and all are named. Over half of them are named after their respective locations, generally their townland (e.g. Kilnacash Bridge), but sometimes their locality (e.g. Lock Bridge in the case of the bridge at the 2nd lock). Most of the others are personal names (e.g. Coughlan's Bridge), a topic which would merit further investigation. One – the Swing Bridge at Portarlinton - is named after its method of operation and is the only bridge of this type on the branch (it swung horizontally to one side to let the barges through).

Name class	Bridge	Name
Location	F106	Lea Bridge
	F201b	Lock Bridge
	F204	Ballymorris Bridge
	F206	Blackhall Bridge; {Moore's Bridge}
	F207	Woodbrook Bridge
	F303	Skeagh Bridge
	F305	Dangans Bridge
	F307	Kilnacash Bridge
	F310	Debicot Bridge
	Personal	F002
F101b		Coughlan's Bridge
F103		Wheelahan's Bridge
F105		Bergin's Bridge
Type	F202	Swing Bridge

Five of these road bridges have been demolished, generally to make way for new sections of road across the infilled canal. With one exception, the nine surviving examples are virtually identical, being built with randomly laid squared limestone blocks, and having semicircular arches, humped carriageways and a towpath through the span (fig 5.3a). Interestingly, the towpath under Dunne’s Bridge, on Reach 0, is on the right-hand side of the canal (as viewed going towards Mountmellick), whereas it is on the left side of in all other cases. The horses crossed over at Coughlan’s Bridge at the south end of lock 1 whilst the barges were in the lock.

The exception this typical design is Coughlan's Bridge, which carries a public road across the south end of the 1st lock (fig 5.3b). Its abutments are a continuation of the sides of the lock chamber and are of regularly laid limestone blocks. The arch has a segmental profile instead of the usual half-circle and there is no towpath through the span.

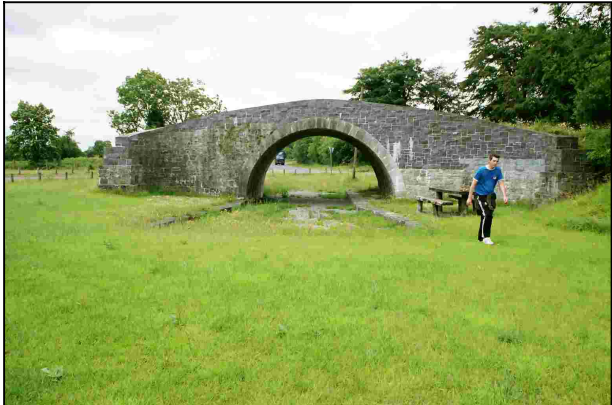


Fig 5.3a Blackhall Bridge, Portarlington.



Fig 5.3b Coughlan's Bridge at Lock 1.

One of the demolished bridges – on the Station Road, Portarlington, is named on the OS maps as a ‘swing’ bridge. This suggests that it was a metal or wooden girder bridge, pivoted at one end so that it could be manually turned through 90 degrees about its vertical axis to allow barges to pass through.

The masonry bridges were remarkably consistent in terms of their size. As the following table shows, the spans of all but the bridge without the towpath (at the 1st lock) are within 5cm of 6.71m (22ft) and their channel widths are within 10cm of 4.88m (16ft).

Unsurprisingly, the bridges on public roads are almost twice as wide as those carrying accommodation tracks to fields and dwellings. All but one of the former is 6.2-6.5m between the parapets (c.20-21ft). The exception is Dunne’s Bridge (F002) which is only 4.28m wide (14ft) and which would originally have been on a very minor road. The two accommodation bridges are, by contrast, only some 3.35m wide (11ft).

Bridge	Type of road carried	Total span (m)	Channel width (m)	Towpath width (m)	Parapet spacing (m)
F002	Public	6.70	4.97	1.73	4.28
F101b	Public	4.48	4.48	n/a	6.50
F103	Public	6.69	4.95	1.74	6.37
F105	Public	6.68	4.98	1.70	6.42
F206	Public	6.69	4.98	1.71	6.16
F303	Accommodation				3.32
F305	Public	6.70	4.96	1.74	6.50
F307	Accommodation	6.75	4.74	2.01	
F310	Accommodation	6.74			3.46

There were 10 aqueducts which carried the canal over natural watercourses or artificial drains. Seven of these survive and continue to serve their original function even though the canal is long defunct.

All but one are culverts spanning 0.9-1.2m (3-4ft) and are of similar build, i.e. with dressed stone faces, segmental arches at both ends, and flat stones heads within the actual culverts.

The most significant aqueduct, in architectural terms, is the Mountmellick Aqueduct, a substantial triple-arch structure which carries the canal over the Triogue River just north of Triogue Bridge (fig 5.4).



One footbridge is recorded, at Tinnakill Lock, but it is long demolished and no further details are known.

Fig 5.4 Mountmellick Aqueduct.

The canal is crossed in two places by railway bridges. The Monasterevin-Portlaoise line, opened in 1847, crosses Reach 0 as a skew triple girder span (fig 5.5a). The stone abutments and piers are original, but the actual spans are reinforced-concrete replacements of the originals.

South-west of Portarlinton, the Portarlinton-Tullamore line of 1854 crossed Reach 2 as a triple girder span (fig 5.5b). The stone abutments and piers date to 1854, when the line was opened, but the metal spans are later replacements. Because the canal has been infilled hereabouts, the only physical indication that this bridge originally spanned the canal are the towrope marks on one of the piers of the middle span.



Fig 5.5a Railway bridge west of Monasterevin.



Fig 5.5 Railway bridge over canal at Portarlinton.

Feeders

Because water was lost from a reach every time the lock gate at its lower end was opened, it was necessary to keep the upper reaches topped up so that there was sufficient depth for the barges to operate. On some canals, this was achieved by diverting streams and rivers but on the Mountmellick Canal two artificial channels or feeders were dug. The first is a 3.1km long feeder originating in boggy ground at Kilbride Wood and supplying Reach 2 at Woodbrook Bridge. The second is a 3.8km feeder supplied by the Triogue River and entering Reach 3 at Kilnacash. The various features along these feeders will be described below.

Junctions

The confluence of the Mountmellick Canal with the Barrow Branch of the Grand Canal is known as Mountmellick Junction.

Locks

There are three locks on the canal, all single chambered and constructed with finely dressed limestone blocks. They were built to a minimum size of 21.44m long by 4.29m wide by 1.60m cill depth (70ft 4in x 14ft 1in x 5ft 3in).

The 1st lock is still largely open and watered, with vestiges of its gates (fig 5.3a). Only one of the side walls of the 2nd lock survives, the other having been removed to make way for the Portarlinton ring road. The 3rd lock, at Tinnakill, probably survives largely intact but has been infilled.

Overflows

In order to prevent the canal banks overflowing at times of high rainfall, excess water was discharged by means of small overflows built into the banks. Two such overflows were noted on the OS maps. Both are on Reach 1 - just above the 1st lock and south of Bergin's Bridge. Neither survives.

Quays

Two quays were noted on the OS maps – one at Portarlinton Lock, the wall of which still survives, and the other at the Mountmellick Terminus, now buried.

Feeder features

Eight out of the nine features identified along the two feeders are bridges. Six carried roads, one a railway, and another a feeder over a stream. Most of these features are now demolished or buried. However, a culvert dating from the construction of the Portarlinton-Portlaoise railway in 1847 survives intact, as does a twin culvert under the public road at Kilbride Cross Roads (fig 5.6).

Apart from bridges, the only other type of feeder feature is the weir which diverted water off the Triogue River just north of Eyne Bridge. No traces of it survive.



Fig 5.6 Culvert at Kilbride.

5.2 Survival and condition

Of the 53 features identified, just over half (27) survive in a complete state, six have substantial remains and three have some remains. Seventeen features have disappeared.

Although most of the lost sites are bridges, this type is also the biggest category still in use - 23 are used as culverts, road and railway bridges. Two canal-related houses are in use as well.

Unsurprisingly, those features still in use for their original purpose – road bridges and houses – are in the best condition. Although many culverts are still in use, they are not so well maintained and are generally overgrown and silted up. Unsurprisingly, most of the disused features are not maintained and consequently are in poor condition. Although Blackhall Bridge is disused, it is maintained as an ornamental feature on the south-west approach to Portarlinton.

Those road bridges which are still in use are particularly vulnerable to replacement because of their relatively narrow widths and humped decks. Coughlan's Bridge (F101b), Wheelahan's Bridge (F103) and Bergin's Bridge (F105), all on the main Monasterevin-Portarlinton road, are especially susceptible to replacement as they all have dogleg approaches and carry high volumes of fast-moving traffic. Although Dunne's Bridge (F002) is on a less busy road, it is likewise vulnerable because of its narrowness (fig 5.7).



Fig 5.7 Dunne's Bridge.

5.3 Features of special interest

Some of the surviving features are of special industrial heritage significance on account of what they tell us about the past

Evaluation criteria

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage use a number of criteria to evaluate the heritage significance of buildings and structures. Those of particular relevance here are architecture, history, setting and group value. On the basis of these criteria, the features are then rated according to whether they are of no interest ('record only'), or of local, regional or national significance.

Of the 53 recorded features along the canal, 18 are of no heritage merit (largely because there are no surviving upstanding remains, or they are modern sites), 15 are of local significance, and 20 are of regional significance; none is of national importance.

Protected sites

No features associated with the Mountmellick Canal are on the Co Kildare Record of Protected Structures and only four are in the Co Laois RPS (fig 5.8):

Feature	Name	Type	Completeness	Condition	Current use	Ownership	Statutory protection	Significance
F103	Wheelahan's Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Complete	Good	Road bridge	Laois CC	LA RPS 547	Regional
F206	Blackhall Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Substantial remains	Good	Ornamental feature	Laois CC	LA RPS 542	Regional
F309	Mountmellick Aqueduct	Bridge (canal/river)	Complete	Fair	Culvert	Private	LA RPS 531	Regional
F312c		Canal store	Some remains	Good	Scrap yard	Private	LA RPS 687	Local

Three of the above sites have been rated during this current survey as being of regional merit. The store at the Mountmellick terminus is regarded here as being of local rather than regional significance as most of it has been demolished.



Fig 5.8 Protected canal-related sites (orange circles) and those proposed for protection (red squares).

Recommendations for statutory protection

It is evident from the above table that relatively few of the surviving canal features have statutory protection and that those which are protected have been selected in a piecemeal fashion rather than on the basis of a comprehensive database.

The following 17 sites are recommended for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures on account of their regional heritage significance – five for Co Kildare and 12 for Co Laois (fig 5.8; full details of each site, along with grid references, will be found in Appendix 5).

Feature	Name	Type	County	Completeness	Condition	Current use	Ownership
F001	Mountmellick Junction	Canal junction	Kildare	Complete	Excellent	Canal junction	Waterways Ireland
F002	Johnny Dunne's Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Kildare	Complete	Good	Road bridge	Kildare CC
F101a	Coughlan's Lock; 1st lock	Lock	Kildare	Substantial remains	Fair	Disused	Private
F101b	Coughlan's Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Kildare	Complete	Good	Road bridge	Kildare CC
F101c	Coughlan's Lock House	Lock keeper's house	Kildare	Complete	Good	Dwelling	Private
F105	Bergin's Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Laois	Complete	Good	Road bridge	Laois CC
F201a	Portarlington Lock; 2nd lock	Lock	Laois	Some remains	Fair	Disused	Private
F201c	Portarlington Lock House	Lock keeper's house	Laois	Complete	Fair	Disused	Private
F201d		Quay	Laois	Complete	Fair	Disused	Private
F201e		Canal store	Laois	Complete	Fair	Disused	Private
F301a	Tinnakill Lock; 3rd lock	Lock	Laois	Substantial remains	Poor	Disused	Private
F301c	Tinnakill Lock House	Lock keeper's house	Laois	Complete	Poor	Disused	Private
F303	Skeagh Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Laois	Complete	Fair	Disused	Private
F305	Dangans Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Laois	Complete	Good	Road bridge	Laois CC
F307	Kilnacash Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Laois	Complete	Fair	Disused	Private
F310	Debicot Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Laois	Complete	Fair	Disused	Private
F312d	Canal House	Canal related house	Laois	Complete	Excellent	Dwelling	Private

Most of the features are in reasonable condition and some are in public ownership. Seven of the recommendations are bridges, and a further eight relate to lock complexes (locks, keepers' houses, quays and stores). The canal junction at the Grand Canal end and former agent's house at the Mountmellick end also merit protection.

6. OTHER BUILT HERITAGE FEATURES

All significant buildings and structures which were not related to the canal but which lay within a 500m zone either side of the canal were also investigated, as were industrial heritage features at the Monasterevin end (fig 6.1). To distinguish them from the canal-related features discussed in the previous chapter, their numbering runs from F901 at the east end. As before, some sites are sub-divided into their component elements, e.g. F916a, F916b etc. Photographs follow the same numbering system as before, e.g. F915_01 is image 1 of feature F915. Details of each site are given in Appendix 6.

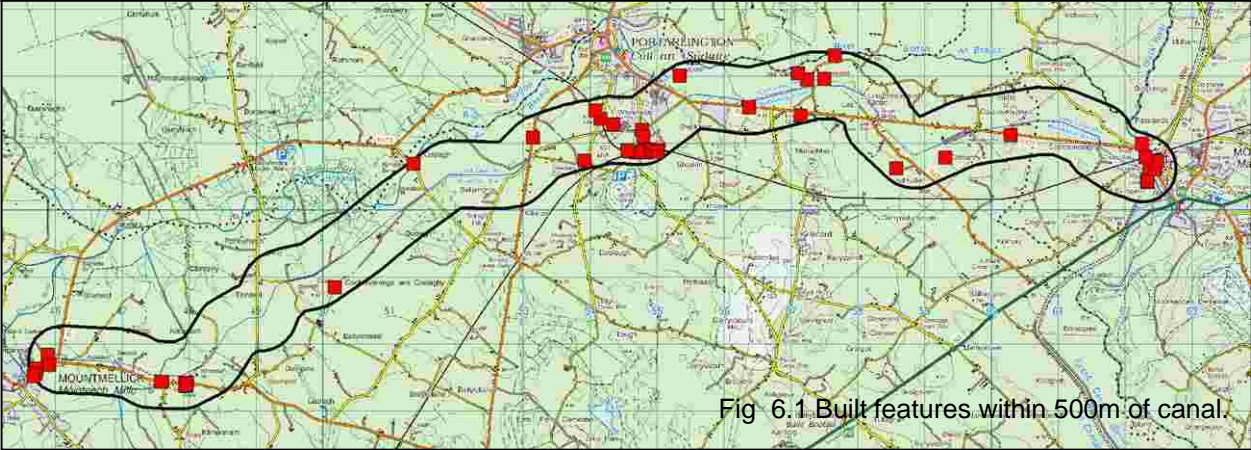


Fig 6.1 Built features within 500m of canal.

6.1 Features associated with Grand Canal (Athy Branch)

A total of 60 features were identified, of which 11 were in Co Kildare. Nine of these were associated with the Athy Branch of the Grand Canal at Monasterevin (fig 6.2).



Fig 6.2 Canal features at Monasterevin.

Buildings

The former Grand Canal Company's office at Monasterevin has been refurbished and integrated into a new housing development along the east side of the canal quay (fig 6.3). The lock house at the 25th lock survives but has been refurbished out of all recognition.

Fig 6.3 Canal house at Monasterevin Quay.



Bridges

The magnificent triple-arch Barrow Aqueduct carries the Grand Canal over the River Barrow (fig 6.4). This structure was opened in 1826 and replaced an earlier system by which vessels descended through locks down one side of the river, crossed it and then ascended a further set of locks on the far side. This is undoubtedly the most significant canal-related feature in the entire region.

Although both sets of locks are long gone, the original line of the canal is still evident in the form of Moore's Bridge which carried the road over it on the east bank of the river. The road was carried over the new line of canal by means of a draw bridge, one of the few such bridges on the system.

There is also a footbridge of conventional design over the canal at the 25th lock.



Fig 6.4 Barrow Aqueduct.

Canals

As already noted, the Athy Branch of the Grand Canal was constructed by the Grand Canal Company between 1783 and 1791 in order to link up the main Dublin-Shannon line with the River Barrow. The section from Lowtown, on the main line, to Monasterevin was opened in 1785 and is still in everyday use by recreational craft.

Locks

The 25th lock is 200m south of Mountmellick Junction and is a single chamber of similar construction to the locks on the Mountmellick Branch. There is a foot bridge at its south end and a replacement lock house to its east (fig 6.5).

Fig 6.5 Looking north along 25th lock, south of Mountmellick Junction.



Quays

The extensive quay along the west side of the canal just above the draw bridge at Monasterevin originally had a warehouse at either end (fig 6.6). These were demolished when the area was redeveloped for housing.



Fig 6.6 Warehouses at Monasterevin Quay (now demolished). After Kevin Dwyer (2000), *Ireland - the Inner Island: A Journey through Ireland's Waterways*, p.48 (Cork: Collins Press).

6.2 Miscellaneous built heritage features

Fifty-three features of built heritage interest within 500m of the canal were identified and surveyed; two are in Co Kildare and the rest in Co Laois.

Castle/ tower house			2
Church/ graveyard			1
Earthwork			2
Electricity generator			1
Gas works			1
Grain mill			2
House			6
Post box			1
Quarry-related	Quarry	4	
	Lime kiln	2	6
Railway-related	Bridges (foot/rail, rail/river, rail/road, road/rail)	5	
	Station buildings and structures	9	
	Lines, junctions and sidings	4	18
Road-related	Bridges (road/river)	3	
	Mile markers	4	7
Salt pan			2
Saw mill			1
Water pump			2
		<i>Total</i>	<i>52</i>

Castles and tower houses

Lea Castle (F910) is the oldest surviving building in the study area. Constructed in the early 1200s, it comprises substantial bastioned outer and inner keeps, all now ruinous and overgrown.

Tinnakill Castle (F929) was constructed as a four-storey tower house around 1700 (fig 6.7). Although now ruinous and overgrown it retains many of its original features such as its dressed stone doorway and intramural stairs.



Fig 6.7 Tinnakill Castle.

Churches and graveyards

Lea Church (F908) was already ruinous by 1838 and it is uncertain whether the surviving fragmentary stone walls belong to the church or to another building. The surrounding graveyard contains numerous 18th and 19th century memorial slabs. Its tree-lined approach from the south-east was cut off by the canal.

Earthworks

Two earthworks are cited on the 1838 OS map at Clonanny (F905) and Cooltedery (F913). They are probably of Early Christian date (i.e. 500-1000AD), but both have been levelled as a result of agricultural cultivation since the map was compiled.

Gas works

Portarlington was served by a gasworks situated beside the Portarlington-Tullamore railway, west of the station (F921). It was erected in the mid 1800s and was obviously located to facilitate the importation of coal which was the raw material for gas at that time. No traces of it survive.

Grain mills

A corn mill is marked on the left bank of the River Barrow in Lea townland on the 1838 map (F907). It would have ground oats into oatmeal. It went out of use sometime during the mid 1800s, probably as a result of a drainage scheme along the river.

Odlum's Mill (F914) was established on the north side of the canal at Station Road, Portarlington in 1876 (fig 6.8). In contrast to Lea corn mill, this was a very much larger enterprise which focused on the grinding of wheat into flour.



Fig 6.8 Odlum's Mill, Portarlington.

The proximity of the canal and railway were undoubtedly important determinants in its location. In contrast to most mills in the county, it was powered by a steam engine and therefore did not depend on water power and a riverbank location.

The mill was burnt in 1900 and rebuilt in 1903. Its millstones were subsequently superseded by rollers, a more efficient method of grinding wheat than stones. A new roller mill was erected in 1978; by now the canal was long disused, but lorries had become the chief means of bringing in grain and distributing the flour. Now owned by Greencore and IAWS, this is the only grain mill still at work in Co Laois.

Houses

Of the six houses identified in the study area, three are of similar design (two to five bays, two-storeys and hipped roofs) and date from the late 1700s/ early 1800s: Kilmullen House (F906), Lea Castle House (F909) and Ballymorris House (F923). All typical gentlemen farmers' houses and are set in their own grounds and are associated with agricultural outbuildings. With the exception of the house at Lea Castle, all are still occupied.



Fig 6.9 Council houses at Mountmellick.

Grange Lodge, a four-bay/ three-storey house on the eastern outskirts of Mountmellick (F936), is said to date from 1686. Beside it is a semi-detached pair of three-bay, two-storey houses of earlier 19th century date (F937). On the opposite side of the road is a curved terrace of 22 houses built by Laois County Council in the early 1950s (F935; fig 6.9).

Post boxes

On the platform side of Portarlinton Station is a Victorian pillar box, complete with its maker's name (F916h; fig 6.10). However, it may not be in its original position.

Quarries and related features

Four quarries were identified in the study area, but with the exception of Rock Quarry at Kilnacash (F930), all were small and probably served very localised areas. Rock Quarry is known to have had a lime kiln, where the quarried limestone was transformed into powdered lime which was used in mortar, whitewash and fertilizer. There are also remnants of a wind-powered electricity generator at this quarry which charged batteries for the adjoining house.



Fig 6.10 Pillar box at Portarlinton Station.

Railway-related features

The main double-track Dublin-Cork line runs through the study area (F918) at Portarlinton. The section to Portlaoise was opened by the Great Southern & Western Railway Company (GSR) in 1847. The line reached Cork two years later.

Just west of Portarlinton Station, a single-track line diverges towards Tullamore (F919). This section, also by the GSR, opened in 1854 and reached Athlone in 1859. In 1973 it became part of the Dublin-Galway route.

There was once a siding towards Odlum's Mill on the east side of Portarlinton Station, but little trace of this now remains.

Portarlinton Station (F916) contains an impressive array of buildings and structures, most of which date to circa 1850, several years after the actual line opened (fig 6.11). Designed by Sancton Wood, the complex comprises two large station buildings, one on either side of the line), goods shed, store, and lattice girder footbridge. The engine shed and turntable have, however, been demolished.



Fig 6.11 Portarlington Station.

Five railway-related bridges are noted (including the above footbridge, but excluding the two bridges over the Mountmellick Canal which were noted in section 5.1). The most impressive of these is the Barrow Bridge which carries the Dublin-Cork line over the river at Monasterevin (F902; fig 6.12). Each of its nine girder spans, which are mid 20th century replacements, is supported on the original rock-faced ashlar stonework.

Just west of Portarlington Station, the public road is carried over the same line (F917). Again, the deck is a mid 20th century replacement of the original span.

Just west of Portarlington, two bridges carry the Galway line in quick succession over a public road (F924) and field accommodation track (F925). Again, both decks are replacements.

Interestingly, the width of both bridges' abutments indicates that they were designed for two tracks, but only one was ever laid.



Fig 6.12 Barrow Bridge.

Road-related features

Three road bridges were identified. Pass Bridge is a five-arch masonry bridge which carries a minor road over the Barrow north of Monasterevin (F903; fig 6.13a). It is probably of 18th century date. Its arches increase in height towards the middle, giving rise to a strongly humped deck which is also relatively narrow to such an extent that traffic lights are now required to regulate the flow of traffic.

Kilnahown Bridge also carries a public road over the Barrow west of Portarlinton (F928; fig 6.13b). It is also of 18th century date, but is wider and less markedly humped than Pass Bridge.

Triogue Bridge is a small twin-arch span which carries the Mountmellick-Emo road over the river of the same name (F932).



Fig 6.13a Pass Bridge, Monasterevin.



Fig 6.13b Kilnahown Bridge.

Four milestones are recorded on the OS maps – two on the Monasterevin-Portarlinton road (F904 and F912), one on the Mountmellick-Emo road at Triogue Bridge (F931), and one on the south-western approach to Portarlinton road (F927). Only the latter now survives, complete with inscriptions on its three faces: Portarlinton – 1 mile, Mountmellick – 5 miles, and Dublin 36 miles (fig 6.14).

Salt works

Salt manufacturing was carried on at The Rock (F930c) and on Salthouse Lane, near the Mountmellick terminus (F933). Rock salt was dissolved into a brine concentrate and then reduced to crystalline salt in a pan over a lime kiln. Both enterprises originated in the 1850s and the one at the Rock was still going in the 1920s. No traces survive at either site.

Saw mill

A saw mill operated on the opposite side of the canal to Odium's Mill at Portarlinton in the early 1900s. Apart from the manager's house, nothing of this enterprise survives.

Water pumps

A complete, but disused multi-vented windmill survives behind Kilnacash House (F930e; fig 6.15a). It pumped water from the nearby canal feeder into a cistern in the house.

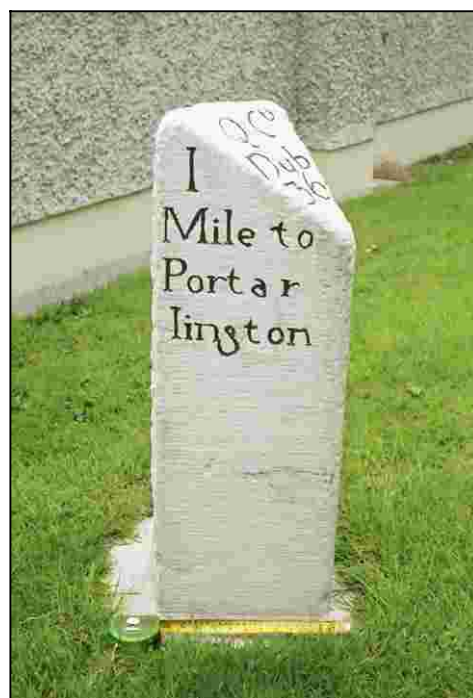


Fig 6.14 Milestone at Portarlinton.

On the south side of Harbour Street, Mountmellick, near the canal's terminus, is a cast-iron water pump, complete with cow-tail handle (F934; fig 6.15b). Still in working order, it was probably installed by the Town Council in the mid 1900s.



Fig 6.15a (left) Windpump at Kilnacash House.

Fig 6.15b (right) Water pump at Mountmellick.

6.3 Features of special interest

Protected sites

A total of 25 sites in proximity to the canal are currently protected (fig 6.16). Five are in the Record of Monuments & Places, as follows:

Feature	Name	Type	Completeness	Condition	Current use	Ownership	Statutory protection	Significance
F905	Balladoogara Fort	Earthwork	No visible remains	N/A	N/A	Private	RMP LA005-008---	Regional
F908	Lea Church	Church; Graveyard	Substantial remains	Poor	Disused	Unknown	RMP LA005-007---	Regional
F910	Lea Castle	Castle	Substantial remains	Poor	Disused	Private	RMP LA005-006---;	Regional
F913		Earthwork	No visible remains	N/A	N/A	Private	RMP LA005-005---	Regional
F929	Tinnakill Castle	Tower house	Substantial remains	Poor	Disused	Private	RMP LA008-00101-, -00102-	Regional

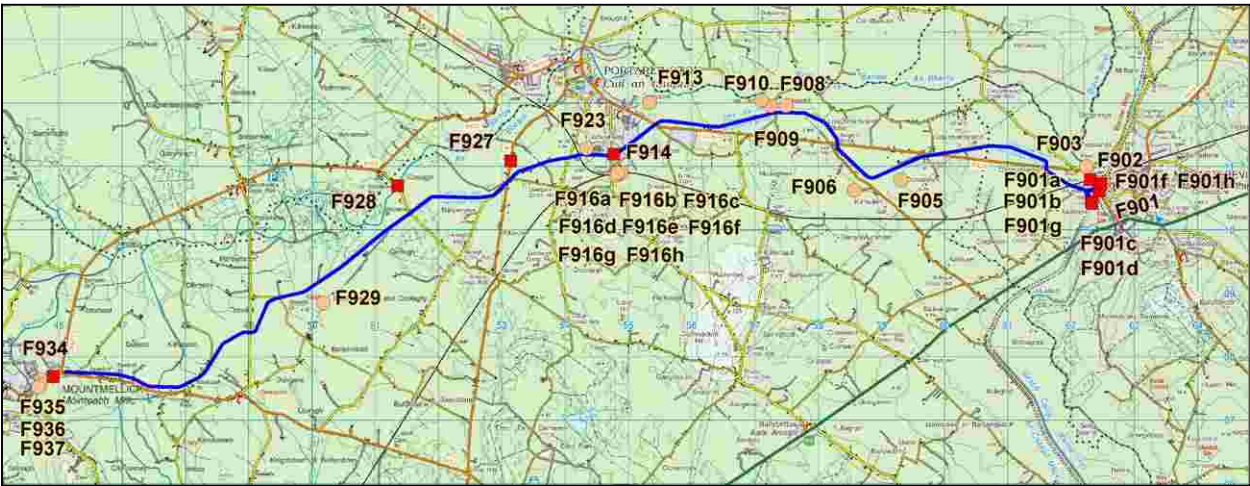


Fig 6.16 Protected non-canal sites (orange circles) and those proposed for protection (red squares).

Twenty sites are in the Record of Protected Structures – four in Monasterevin and 16 in the Co Laois Record:

Feature	Name	Type	Completeness	Condition	Current use	Ownership	Statutory protection	Significance
F901a	Draw Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Substantial remains	Good	Road bridge	Kildare CC	RPS M'evin 22	Local
F901b	Barrow Aqueduct	Bridge (canal/river)	Complete	Good	Canal aqueduct	Waterways Ireland	RPS M'evin 48	National
F901g		House (canal related)	Complete	Excellent	Apartments	Private	RPS M'evin 23	Regional
F903	Pass Bridge	Bridge (road/river)	Complete	Good	Road bridge	Kildare CC	RPS M'evin 47	Regional
F906	Kilmullen House	House	Complete	Excellent	Dwelling	Private	RPS LA 550	Regional
F909	Lea Castle House	House	Complete	Poor	Disused	Private	RPS LA 549	Local
F910	Lea Castle	Castle	Substantial remains	Poor	Disused	Private	RPS LA 403	Regional
F916a	Portarlinton Station	Station building	Complete	Good	Railway station	Iarnród Éireann	RPS LA 143	Regional
F916b	Portarlinton Station	Bridge (foot/rail)	Complete	Good	Disused	Iarnród Éireann	RPS LA 143_A	Regional
F916c	Portarlinton Station	Station building	Complete	Good/Fair	Station building	Iarnród Éireann	RPS LA 143	Regional
F916d	Portarlinton Station	Platform	Complete	Good	Platform	Iarnród Éireann	RPS LA 143	Regional
F916e	Portarlinton Station	Water tank	Complete	Good	Disused	Iarnród Éireann	RPS LA 143	Regional
F916f	Portarlinton Station	Goods shed	Complete	Good	Disused	Iarnród Éireann	RPS LA 143	Regional
F916g	Portarlinton Station	Canteen	Complete	Good	Store	Iarnród Éireann	RPS LA 143	Regional
F916h	Portarlinton Station	Post box	Complete	Excellent	Post box	Iarnród Éireann	RPS LA 143_B	Regional
F923	Ballymorris House	House	Complete	Fair	Dwelling	Private	RPS LA 674	Local
F929	Tinnakill Castle	Tower house	Substantial remains	Poor	Disused	Private	RPS LA 398	Regional
F935		House	Complete	Excellent	Dwelling	Private	RPS LA 688	Local
F936	Grange Lodge	House	Complete	Excellent	Dwelling	Private	RPS LA 689	Local
F937		House	Complete	Excellent	Dwelling	Private	RPS LA 690	Local

Six of the above sites are rated here as being of local significance and 18 of regional merit. The Barrow Aqueduct (F901b) is the sole protected site which is rated as being of national significance.

Two of the above sites, both upstanding archaeological monuments - Lea Castle (F910) and Tinnakill Castle (F929) – are in the RMP *and* RPS.

Recommendations for statutory protection

Ten 10 unprotected sites are recommended for statutory protection (fig 6.16). Of these, one is recommended for inclusion in the Record of Monuments & Places:

Feature	Type	County	Completeness	Condition	Current use	Ownership
F927	Mile marker	Laois	Complete	Excellent	Ornamental feature	Private

The remaining nine are proposed for inclusion in the Co Kildare and Co Laois Records of Protected Structures :

Feature	Name	Type	County	Completeness	Condition	Current use	Ownership
F901	Grand Canal (Athy Branch)	Canal	Kildare	Complete	Excellent	Canal	Waterways Ireland
F901c		Lock	Kildare	Complete	Good	Lock	Waterways Ireland
F901d		Bridge (foot/canal)	Kildare	Complete	Good	Foot bridge	Waterways Ireland
F901f	Moore's Bridge	Bridge (road/canal)	Kildare	Complete	Good	Road bridge	Kildare CC
F901h	Monasterevin Quay	Quay	Kildare	Complete	Excellent	Quay	Private
F902	Barrow Bridge	Bridge (rail/river)	Kildare	Complete	Good	Rail bridge	Iarnród Éireann
F914	Odlum's Mill	Grain mill (steam)	Laois	Complete	Good	Grain mill	Private
F928	Kilnahown Bridge	Bridge (road/river)	Laois	Complete	Good	Road bridge	Laois CC; Offaly CC
F934		Water pump	Laois	Complete	Excellent	Water pump	Private

7. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is in general a lack of awareness among the general public of the story of the canal, and of the important part it played in the economic and social life of the districts through which it ran and indeed of the county in general. Even to those who do know the story, it often comes as something of a surprise that so much of the canal survives.

The passage of time, however, will see the continued erosion and degradation of the fabric of the canal and its features unless steps are taken to heighten public awareness in the first instance, and then to harness whatever measures and resources can be brought to bear in support of the concern that this heightened awareness generates.

7.1 Conservation of canal

It was noted in section 1 that almost 11km of the 18.6km long canal has been destroyed through infilling or cutting away. Much of the reclaimed land has been used for agriculture or, in the case of the stretch around Portarlinton, as a road. Buildings have also been built across its line here and there. Over half of the surviving open stretches are in private ownership and only 2.5km is still watered (of which most is also privately owned).

Given that so much of the canal has already been infilled, it would obviously be very expensive to reopen it all the way to Mountmellick, or indeed even as far as Portarlinton. Should this ever be contemplated, there would also be physical and legal issues to be resolved, such as the excavation or bypassing of the infilled and destroyed sections, and the acquisition of land in private ownership.

At the moment, the reopening of the Mountmellick Canal is not a priority of Waterways Ireland, the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland, or of Laois CC. Preservation of what currently exists in an open state is therefore a more pertinent issue than the entire line's possible restoration at some future date.

As already recommended, all open stretches should be considered for statutory protection through inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures or Record of Monuments & Places. This will ensure that any proposals for infilling must go through the planning process and that steps can be taken to reverse any unauthorised infilling.

As noted in section 2, the best surviving stretches are 001-102, 114-118, 202 and 302-304. Sections 001-005 and 202 are of particular note in that they are still watered. Some of these stretches are still in public ownership: Waterways Ireland owns sections 001-005, some of 114 and all of 302-304, whilst the Department of Agriculture & Food owns some of 202. The rest is in private ownership.

As noted in section 3.2, many of the privately owned stretches have been infilled for agricultural reclamation. The tendency to infill is less marked with publicly owned stretches. The challenge is therefore to encourage private landholders not to infill any open stretches in their ownership.

Many of the sections of the canal in private ownership are likely to belong to farms participating in the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS). The preservation of the canal – both its physical structure and any accompanying features and the ecological character – should be identified and authorised planners informed in advance of the implementation of REPS 4.

7.2 Ecology

The line of the canal is a relatively continuous strip of semi-natural land running through an area of Laois and Kildare that is relatively low in terms of its ecological value. Although it has few species of significant conservation interest or concern, it provides a habitat for a surprisingly high percentage of the vascular flora (some 206 species).

Management should endeavour to maintain the corridor as far as possible in its present state (except for sections 101-103: see below). Stretches of the canal that run through farmland

should be treated as natural habitats in REPS management plans or under the broader umbrella of the Code of Good Farm Practice. Stretches covered by dense scrub provide habitat and shelter for numerous species and are probably best left in this state, except where opportunity and resources allow consideration of a measure of rehabilitation.

Two areas of more significant ecological value have been identified - the peatlands adjacent to sections 101-103 and the fen near S305 (see above). These are independent of the canal, but their ownership should be established with a view to ensuring their conservation. Coolnafearagh Bog is of sufficient importance to merit its designation as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA). If ownership considerations permit this, it could become a Local Nature Reserve to which access might be provided along the line of the canal, from which furze and bracken should ideally be cleared.

The occurrence of the rare snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* in the area between Dangans Bridge and Skeagh Bridge has been noted earlier, and is the basis for its designation as a Special Area of Conservation (see section 304 above). *Vertigo moulinsiana* may occur in other stretches of the canal also, although few offer so favourable a habitat as the open area east of Dangans Bridge. Care needs to be taken to maintain this in its present state. If the suggestion of developing a walk along this stretch is followed through, it will bring a focus to bear on the NHA that will ensure that the condition of the canal here is monitored.

To promote awareness of the ecological value of the canals, these aspects could be highlighted in the publication proposed in section 7.4 below.

7.3 Built heritage

A number of features of the canal have been recommended for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures and Record of Monuments & Places. With the exception of those at the Monasterevin end, most of them are located on infilled sections of canal. Because they have lost their functional context, the heritage interest of such features is obviously diminished. However, it is all the more important that such features be protected as they are now the only tangible evidence of the canal at those localities.

Where a site has statutory protection, any development which will potentially affect its special character will require planning permission. The owners of such sites included in the Record of Protected Structures are also eligible to apply to their respective county council for conservation grants.

All the road bridges which are still in use are owned by their respective county councils and receive a modicum of routine maintenance. It is important, however, that any repairs are carried out sympathetically so as not to diminish their architectural character.

All the privately owned bridges are defunct. Their sustainability is more problematic than with publicly-owned bridges still in use. Rampant ivy overgrowth is particularly problematic as the roots dislodge stones and destabilise the structures. Unfortunately, the expense of maintenance and repair is likely to be perceived by owners as outweighing any conservation benefits.

The lock house at Tinnakill is particularly problematic to reuse owing to its relatively small size and difficulty of access. Nevertheless, it is worth preserving and the owner should be encouraged to remove the ivy and maintain the roof.

Statutory protection should be viewed not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end, namely the conservation of buildings and structures of special interest. Clearly there is a need to involve all stakeholders in the formulation of a long-term strategy for the conservation of the canal's significant built heritage.

7.4 Access

Thanks to the efforts of Waterways Ireland, the public has unimpeded access along the canal from Mountmellick Junction to the 1st lock. Elsewhere, public access is generally informal and dependent on the penetrability of the vegetation along the towpath and goodwill of the landowner.

If consideration is ever given to providing walking access to sections of the canal, the stretch between Skeagh Bridge and Dangans Bridge would be among the easiest to open up. Skeagh Bridge is partly buried, but Dangans Bridge remains unblocked. Access to the towpath along the south side of the canal could be provided here. There is a walkable path along the bank and through much of the wooded section. Although it does become impenetrable for a short distance west of Skeagh Bridge it would not be difficult to open and maintain a walking route through here. The fact that this entire stretch is still owned by Waterways Ireland would make such a proposal easier to implement than might otherwise be the case.

It will obviously take time to assess the feasibility of any proposals to provide physical access to sections of the canal, and then to implement such proposals.

7.5 Awareness

Many people doubtless have memories of the canal when it was working and photographs of people, barges etc probably exist as well. A future project would be to identify and collate these oral and documentary records to put flesh on the built heritage record presented here.

It is important to widen and deepen awareness of the important role played by the canal historically in the economy and culture of the county, among the community in general and in particular among young people.

To this end, we suggest that Laois and Kildare County Councils consider publication of a booklet outlining the history and heritage of the canal. Its aim would be to promote the view that the line of the canal is worth preserving, and that physical features and habitats of significance along it should be preserved. It would also strengthen popular support for any further initiatives that might be considered.

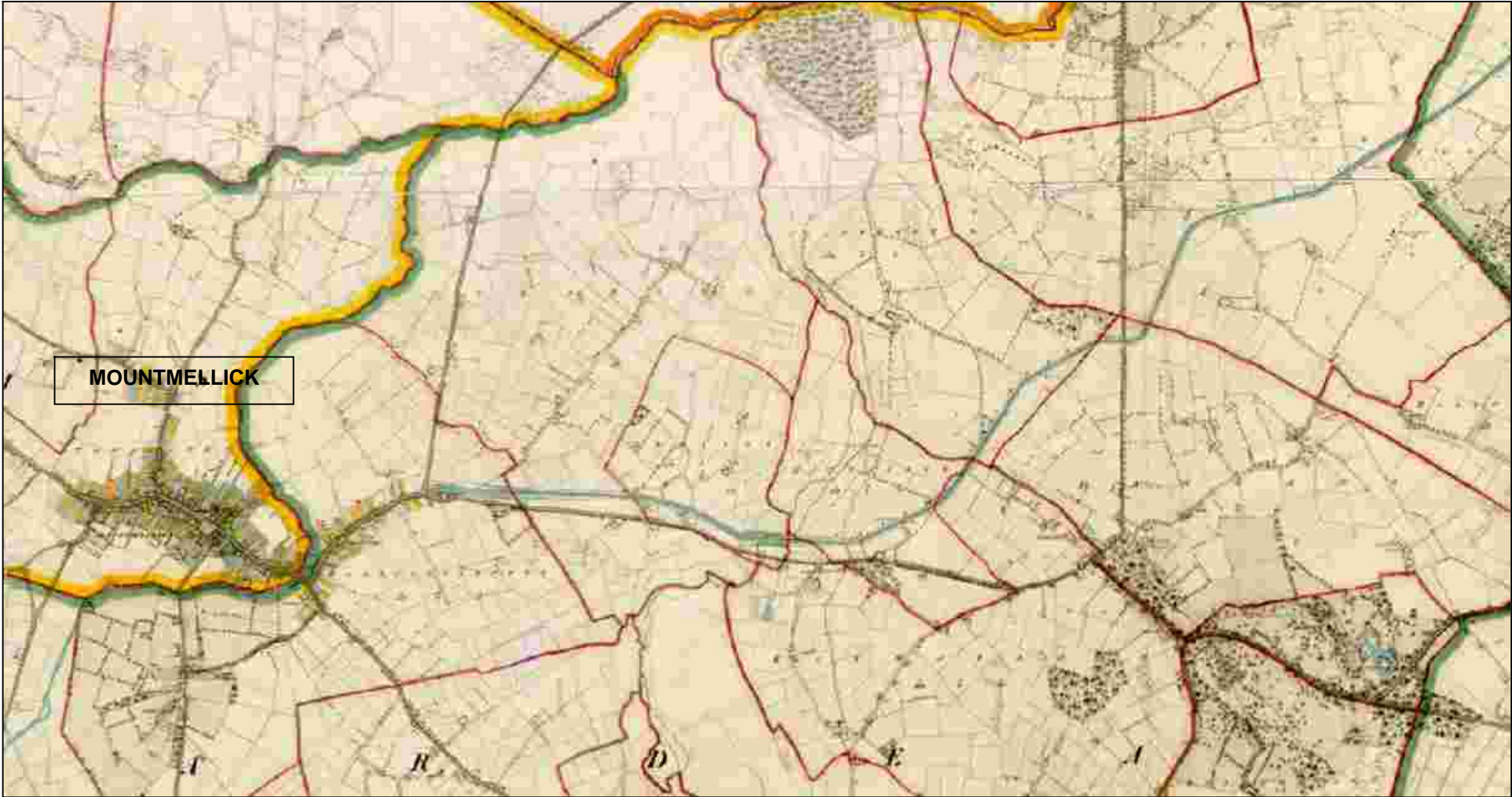
With the closure of the canal almost 50 years ago, an important chapter in the industrial and cultural life of Laois came to an end. No thought was given at that time to the preservation of the canal, its function being seen as a purely economic one. Over this last half century, however, an awareness of other values served by the canal has grown. It is likely that if the canal's closure were being considered today, an overwhelming argument would be made for its preservation. Apart from the ecological and cultural heritage aspects, there would be its potential for tourism. However, after its decommissioning the canal was dewatered and much of it sold into private hands, closing the option of preservation forever.

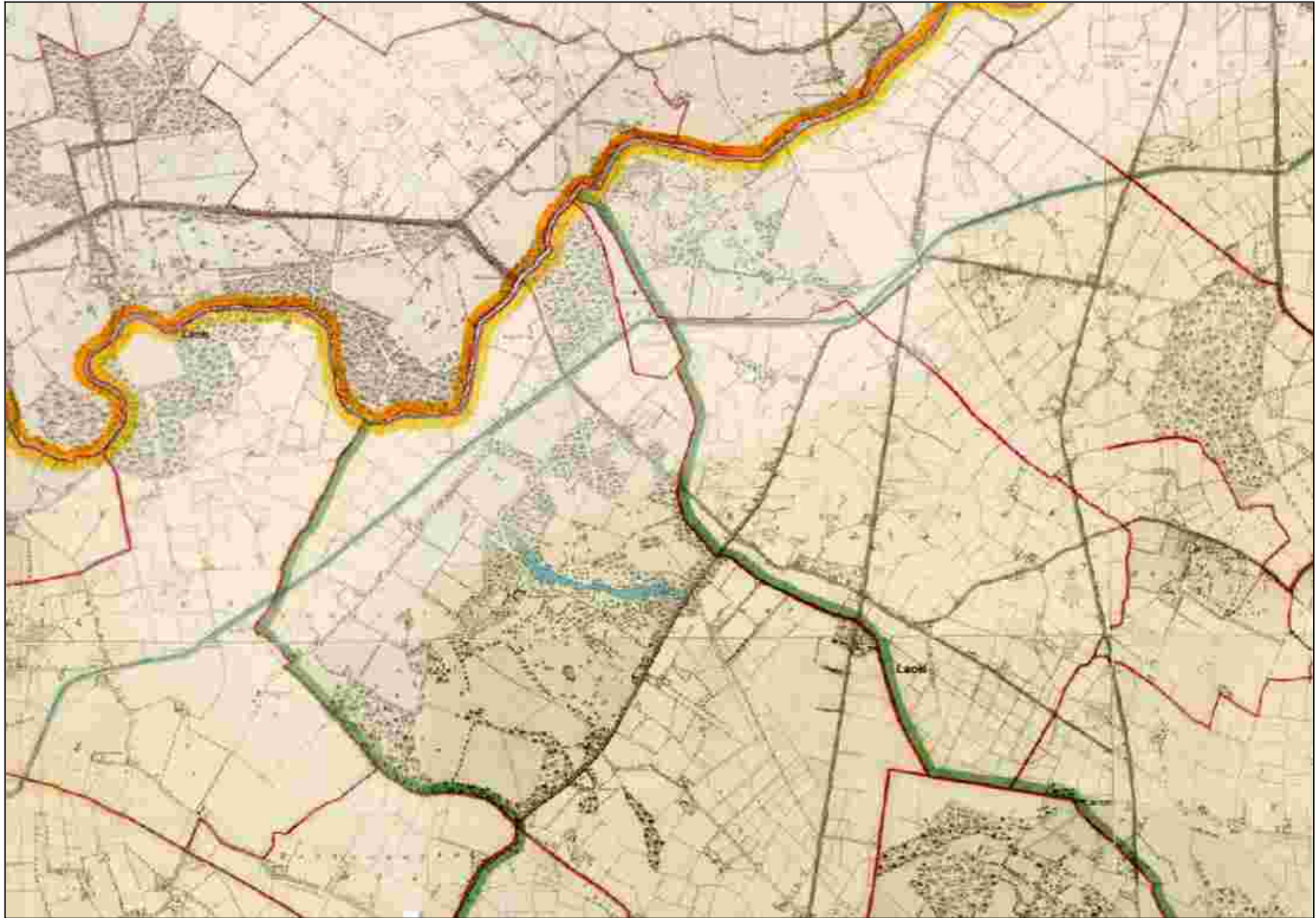
In spite of many decades of neglect and deterioration, much remains that is of ecological value and of industrial archaeological interest. These remains have been detailed and evaluated in the earlier sections of the report, and the main issues that need to be addressed have been outlined in the preceding section. The incorporation of these considerations in future local authority plans should go a long way to ensuring that the Mountmellick Canal is given the attention it merits as a key element of the natural and cultural heritage of Laois.

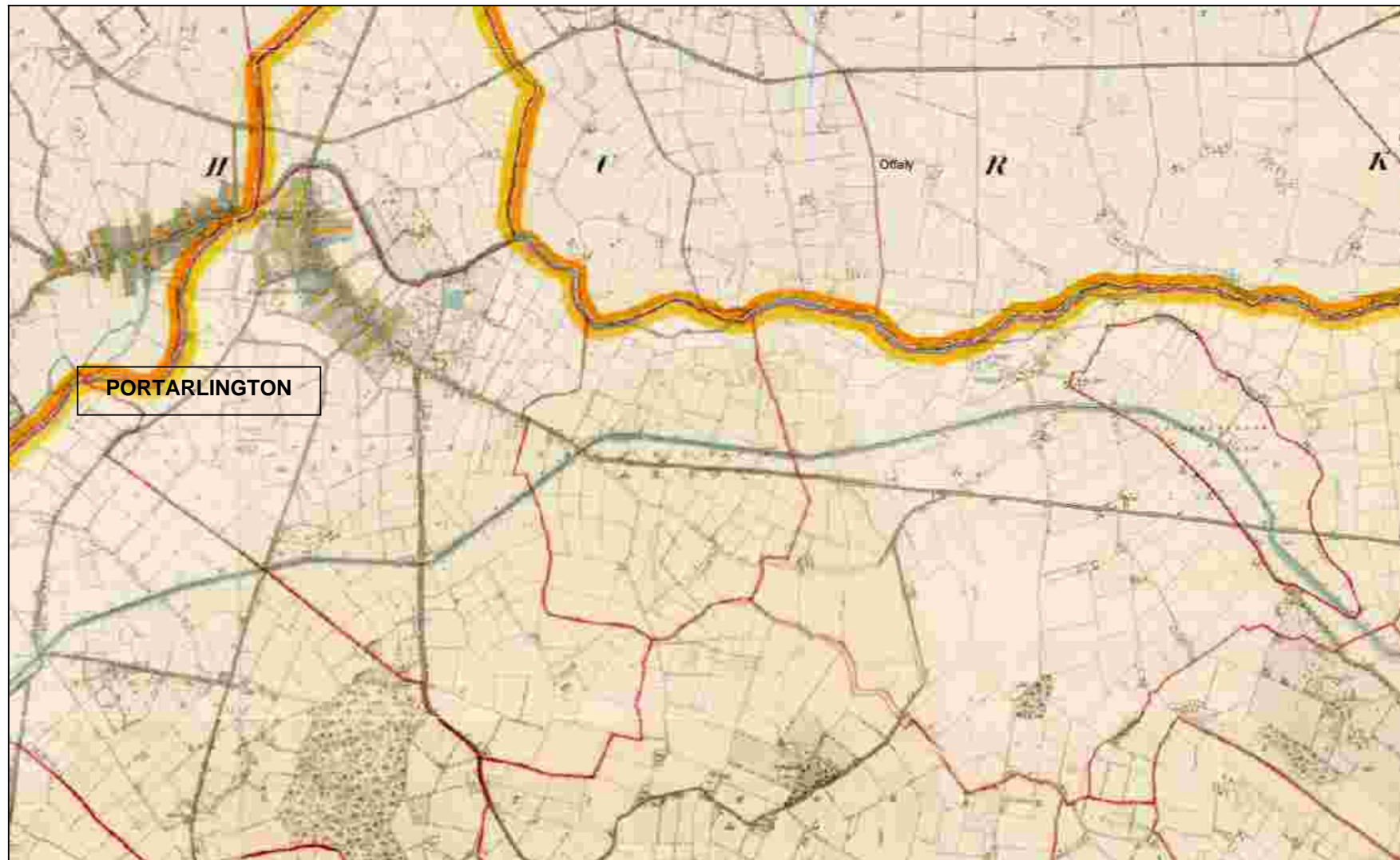
APPENDIX 1: MAP OF MOUNTMELICK CANAL, 1837-39

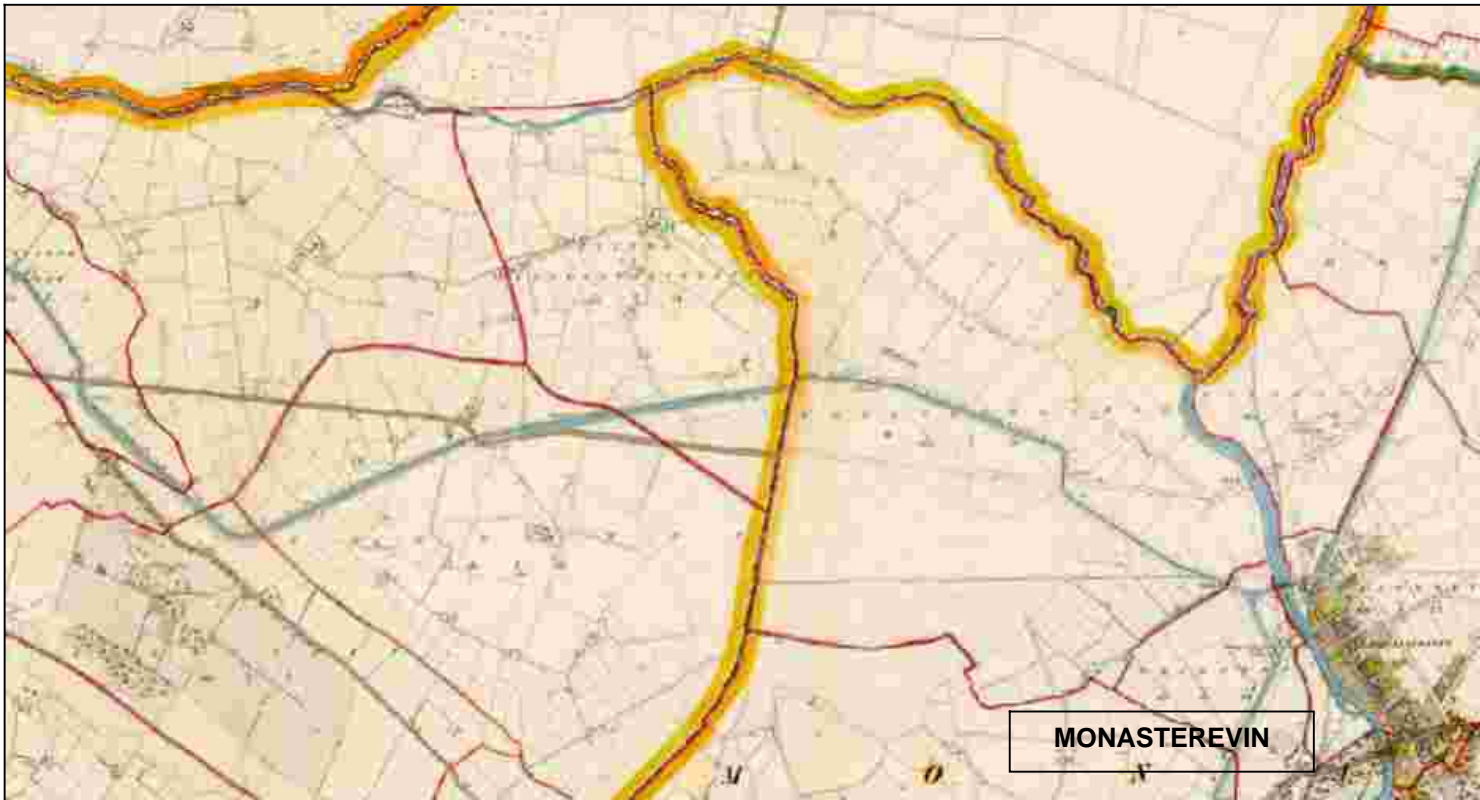
Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 maps, Co Laois sheets 4, 5 and 9 (rescaled)
Co Kildare section not shown

The maps are arranged from west to east









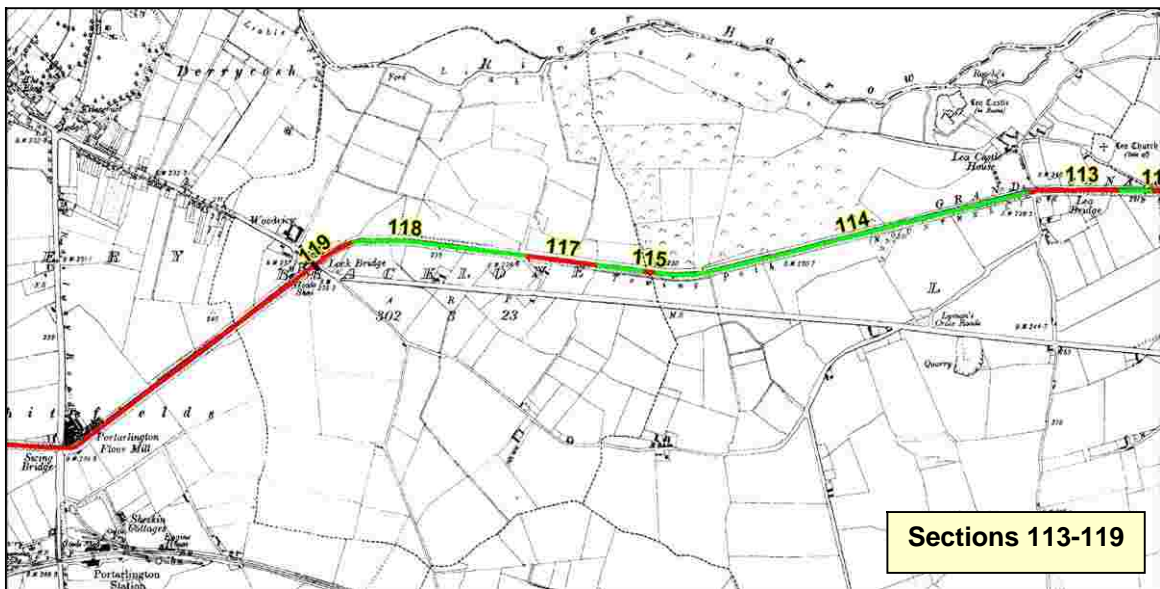
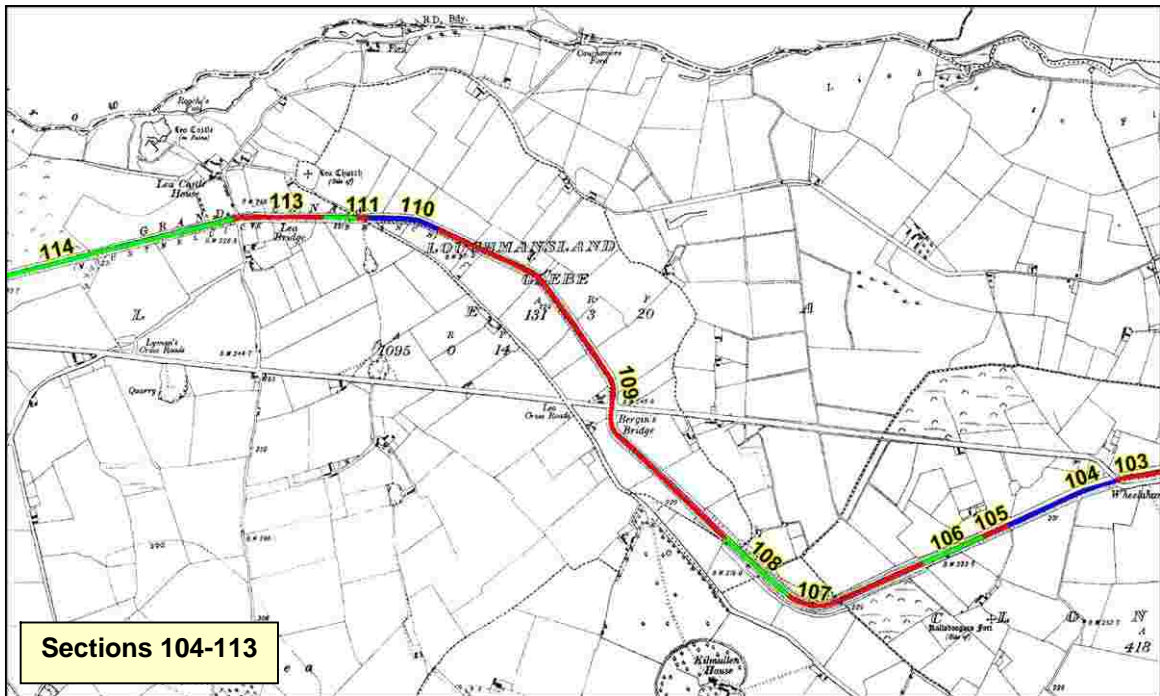
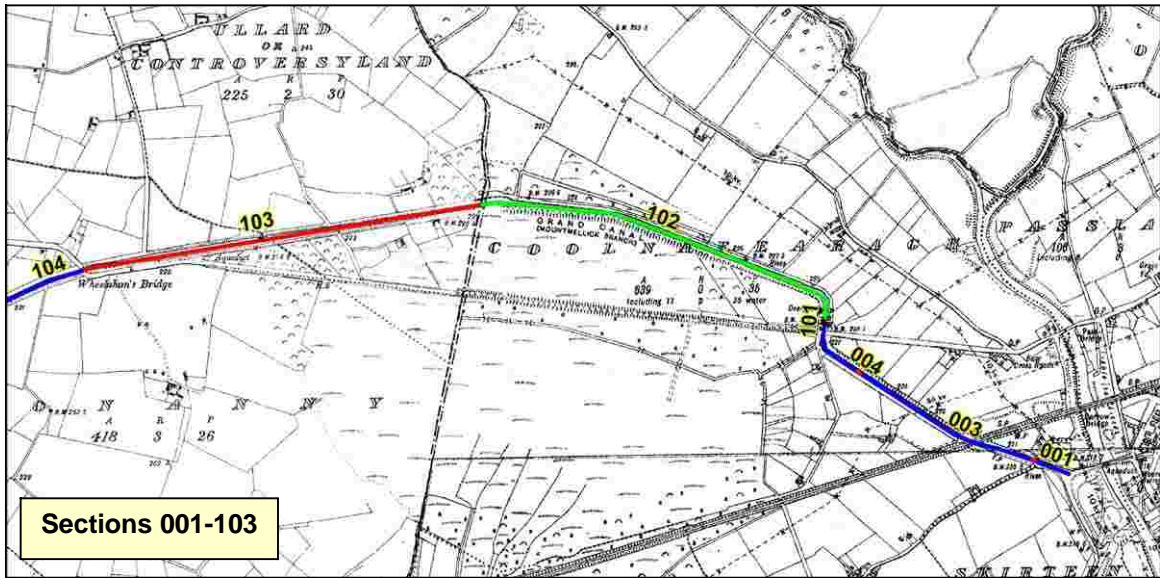
APPENDIX 2: REACH DESCRIPTIONS

Each reach has been divided into sections according to their state at the time of survey (summer 2006). It should be noted that some open/dewatered sections may become temporarily watered during the winter months and at times of high rainfall. Each section is numbered from east to west within its reach. Thus S107 is section 07 within reach 1, S312 is section 12 within reach 3 etc.

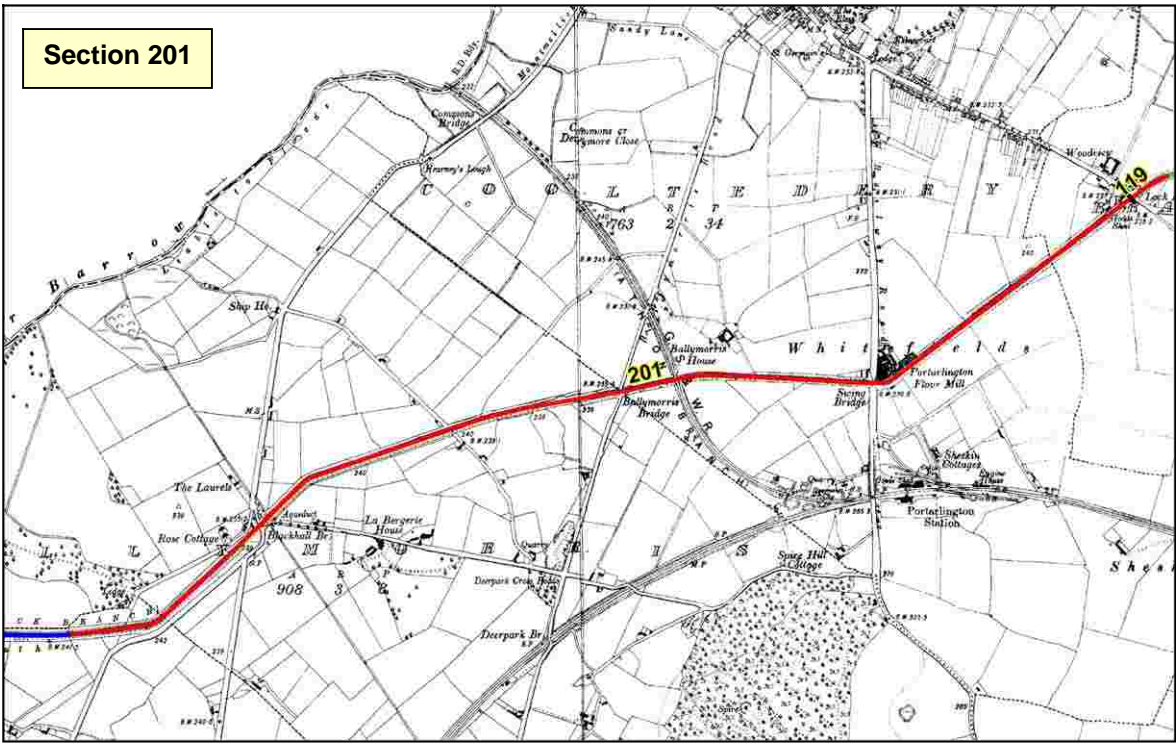
The canal sections are superimposed on the 1909 OS 1:10,560 (six-inch) maps, rescaled to 1:20,000.

The colours of each section represent:

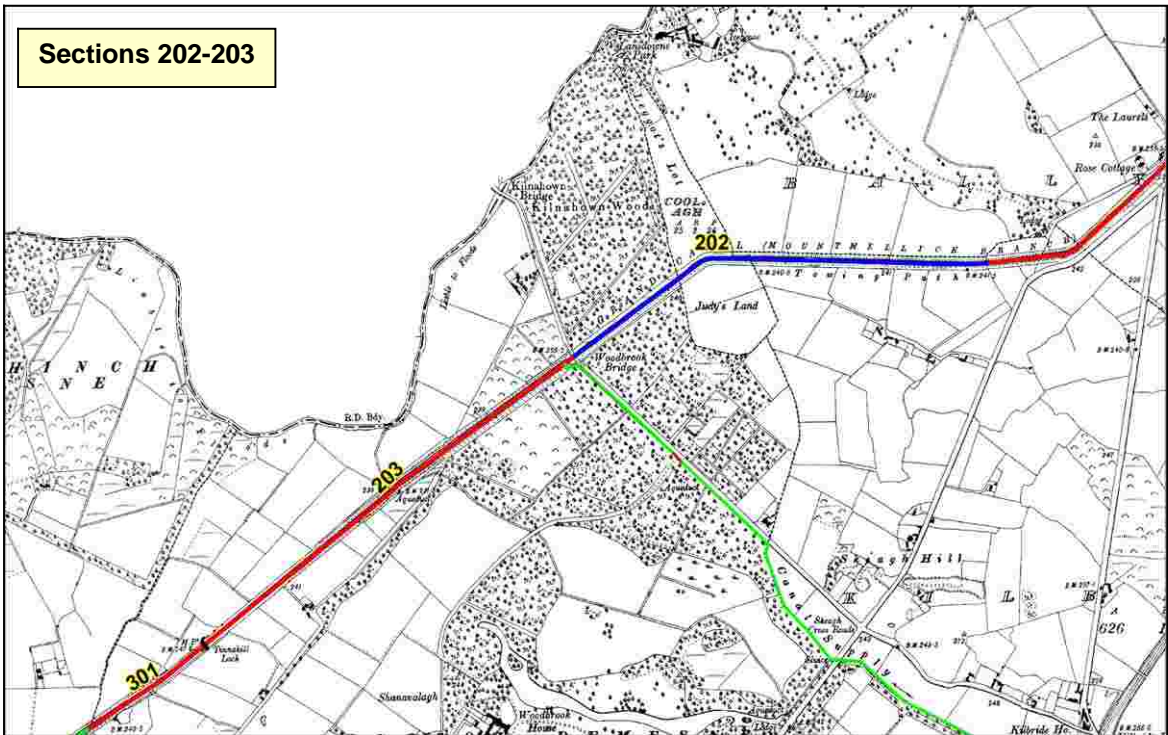
- Red – Infilled
- Green – Open, dewatered
- Blue – Open, watered

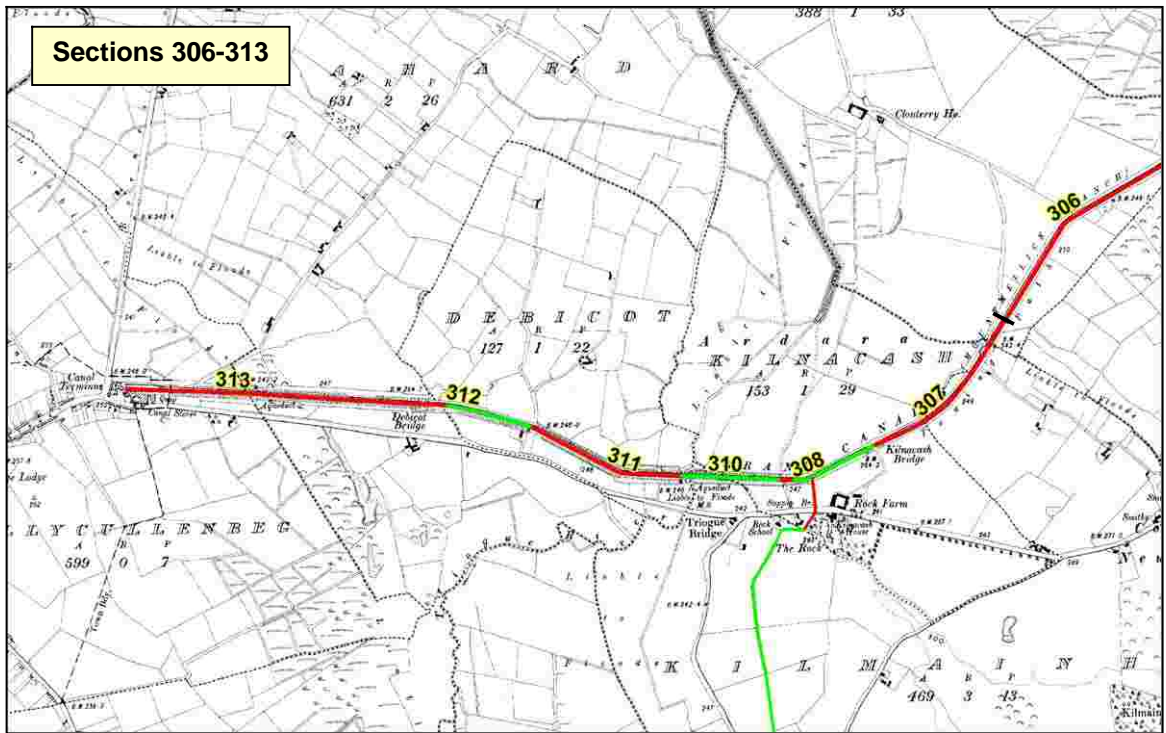
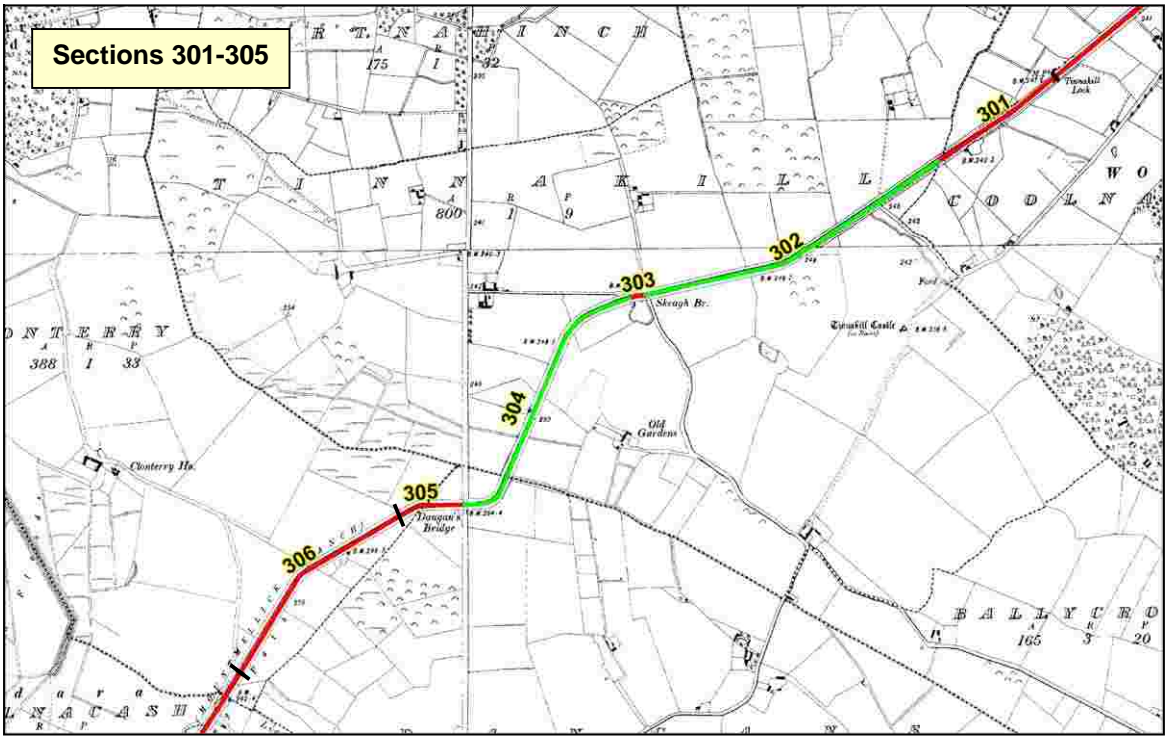


Section 201



Sections 202-203





Section	Survival	Length (m)	Description
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REACH 0			
S001	Open, watered	98	Metalled track along west side; walkable grassy bank along east side.



S001_01 Looking north-west across canal junction to first section of Mountmellick Canal.

S002	Infilled	7	Earth impounding dam.
S003	Open, watered	514	Walkable grassy bank along both sides.

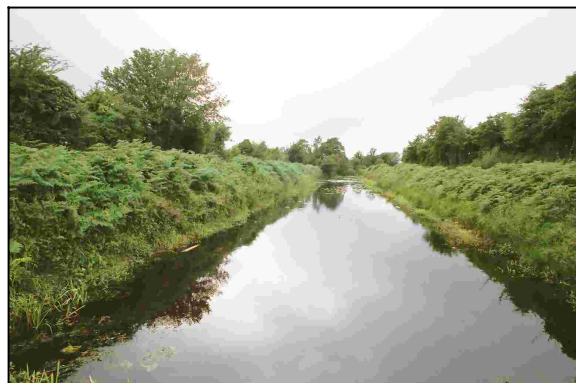


S003_01 Looking north-west from road bridge (feature 001).



S003_02 Looking south-east from impounding dam at NW end.

S004	Infilled	8	Earth impounding dam.
S005	Open, watered	173	Walkable grassy bank along both sides.



S005_01 Looking NW along section 005 from impounding dam at SE end.

REACH 1

S101	Infilled	15	Top section of lock infilled.
S102	Open, dewatered	1002	Line cuts across bog. Some slumping of banks has occurred.



S102_01 Looking north-west along dewatered canal from just north of lock 1 (feature 101a).



S102_02 Looking north-west along dewatered canal from just north of lock 1 (feature 101a).

S103	Infilled	1076	Main road realigned across west end of section to avoid Wheelahan's Bridge.
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S103_01 Looking west along infilled section from just east of feature 102.



S103_02 Looking east from Wheelahan's Bridge (feature 103) along infilled section.

S104	Open, watered	301	Very overgrown.
S105	Infilled	75	
S106	Open, dewatered	180	Overgrown channel.



S106_01 Looking north-east from south-west end of dewatered section.

S107	Infilled	390	Mostly reclaimed for agriculture
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S107_01 Looking south-west from east end. Hedge marks infilled line of canal.

S108	Open, dewatered	223	Very overgrown.
S109	Infilled	1167	The last 200m of this section (at west) has been quarried away.



S109_01 Looking north along infilled section from Bergin's Bridge (feature 105).



S109_02 Looking south-east across quarry at west end of section. The hedge at left marks the canal's former line.

S110	Open, watered	190	Used as settlement tank for water pumped up from adjoining quarry.
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S110_01 Water pump at east end of watered section.



S110_02 Looking west along watered section from just west of bend in canal.

S111	Infilled	36	Recent infill to impound water in section 108.
S112	Open, dewatered	86	Overgrown channel.
S113	Infilled	231	Partly reclaimed for agriculture to east of relatively recent road across line.
S114	Open, dewatered	1025	Open, dewatered



S114_01 Looking west from east end of section (road crossing at Lea Castle House).



S114_02 Looking east from near west end of section (access track to sewage works).

S115	Infilled	32	Road into sewage works crosses line.
S116	Open, dewatered	117	Overgrown channel.
S117	Infilled	194	Infilled behind small industrial enterprise along road.
S118	Open, dewatered	466	Overgrown channel.



S118-01 Looking west along overgrown channel from feature 108.

S119	Infilled	102	Reclaimed as gardens for adjoining houses.
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Reach 2			
S201	Infilled	3135	Public road runs along infilled line from 2nd lock to Blackhall Bridge. Infilling continues to west thereof.



S201_01 Looking south-west from lock (feature 201a).



S201_02 Looking north-east from Odlum's Mill (feature 914).



S201_03 Looking west from Odlum's Mill (feature 914).



S201_04 Looking west from site of Ballymorris Bridge (feature 204).



Left: S201_05 Looking north-east along infilled canal from Blackhall Bridge (feature 206).



Right: S201_06 Looking south-west along infilled canal from Blackhall Bridge (feature 206).



S201_07 Looking north-east along infilled canal towards Blackhall Bridge (feature 206).

S202	Open, watered	1168	Stagnant open water. Wide towpath on south side. Shrubby trees along corridor.
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S202_01 Looking west from just east of junction with section 201. Note demolished bank.



S202_02 Looking east at bend in canal east of Woodbrook Bridge (feature 207).



S202_03 Looking south-west at bend in canal east of Woodbrook Bridge (feature 207). Note trees along bank edge.

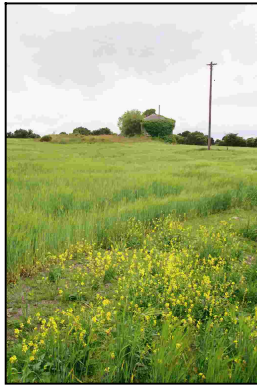
S203	Infilled	1246	Drainage ditch survives in part on south side. Accommodation road runs along former towpath SW of Woodbrook Bridge.
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S203_01 Looking north-east along line of road towards Woodbrook Bridge (feature 207).



S203_02 Looking south-west along infilled canal from culvert (feature 209). The trees at foreground left and right mark the ends of the culvert; the canal has been obliterated.



S203_03 Looking south-west along infilled canal toward Tinnakill lock (feature 301a).

Reach 3			
S301	Infilled	375	Part of north bank survives.
S302	Open, dewatered	865	Metalled road runs along north side. Ornamental trees planted along side of road on north bank.



S302_01 Looking south-west from aqueduct (feature 302).



S302_02 Looking west to Skeagh Bridge (feature 303) from bend in towpath to east of bridge.



S302_03 View east from Skeagh Bridge (feature 303).

S303	Infilled	41	Metalled road to west of Skeagh Bridge.
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S303_01 'No dumping' sign just west of Skeagh Bridge (feature 303).

S304	Open, dewatered	755	Wide banks; towpath on south side.
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S304_01 General view to south-west to east of Dangans Bridge (feature 305).



S304_02 Fly tipping east of Dangans Bridge (feature 305).



S304_03 Looking east from Dangans Bridge (feature 305).

S305	Infilled	167	Banks demolished and bed infilled.
S306	Infilled	616	North-west bank bulldozed into bed but south-east bank survives intact.
S307	Infilled	493	Banks demolished and bed infilled.
S308	Open, dewatered	235	Very overgrown.



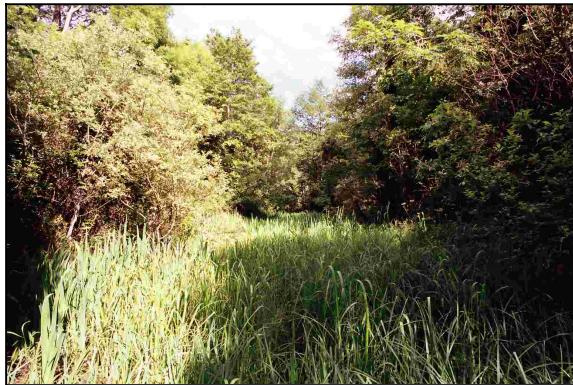
S308_01 Looking south-west from Kilnacash Bridge (feature 307).

S309	Infilled	43	Banks demolished and bed infilled.
S310	Open, dewatered	254	Very overgrown.



S310_01 Looking west from east end of section.

S311	Infilled	425	Banks demolished and bed infilled.
S312	Open, dewatered	233	Overgrown.



S312_01 Looking east from half-way along open/dewatered section.

S313	Infilled	855	Banks demolished and bed infilled.
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S313_01 Looking west along infilled canal from Debicot Bridge (feature 310).



S313_02 Looking east along infilled canal from site of former aqueduct (feature 311).



S313_03 Looking west towards terminus along infilled canal from site of former aqueduct (feature 311).

APPENDIX 3: NAMES OF PLANT SPECIES RECORDED

Agrimony	<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>
Agrimony, hemp	<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
Angelica	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>
Apple, crab	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>
Arum, wild	<i>Malus domestica</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>
Asphodel, bog	<i>Narthecium ossifragum</i>
Avens, wood	<i>Geum urbanum</i>
Bedstraw, lady's	<i>Galium verum</i>
Bedstraw, marsh	<i>Galium palustre</i>
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Bennet, herb	<i>Geum urbanum</i>
Bent, common	<i>Agrostis canina</i>
Bent, creeping	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>
Bindweed, large	<i>Calystegia sepium</i>
Bindweed, small	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>
Bird's-foot trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
Bittersweet	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>
Black bog-rush	<i>Schoenus nigricans</i>
Black knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
Bladderwort	<i>Utricularia minor</i>
Bogbean	<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
Bridewort	<i>Spiraea</i> sp.
Broomrape, ivy	<i>Orobanche hederaceae</i>
Bur-reed, branched	<i>Sparganium erectum</i>
Bur-reed, least	<i>Sparganium natans</i>
Buttercup, creeping	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Buttercup, meadow	<i>Ranunculus arvensis</i>
Butterfly orchid	<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>
Butterwort, common	<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>
Butterwort, pale	<i>Pinguicula lusitanica</i>
Campion, bladder	<i>Silene vulgaris</i>
Carrot, wild	<i>Daucus carota</i>

Cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>
Centaury, yellow	<i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>
Chickweed, mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>
Chickweed, small	<i>Stellaria media</i>
Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Clover, red	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>
Clover, white	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Common cotton-grass	<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>
Common reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>
Cowslip	<i>Primula veris</i>
Cross-leaved heath	<i>Erica tetralix</i>
Crowfoot, water	<i>Ranunculus aquatilis</i>
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
Daisy, ox-eye	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>
Damson	<i>Prunus insititia</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
Deer-sedge	<i>Trichophorum caespitosum</i>
Destroying angel	<i>Amanita virosa</i> var. <i>Alba</i>
Devil's-bit scabious	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>
Dock, broad-leaved	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>
Dock, water	<i>Rumex hydrolapathum</i>
Dock, wood	<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>
Dryad's saddle	<i>Polyporus squamosus</i>
Elm	<i>Ulmus procera</i>
Eyebright	<i>Euphrasia</i> sp.
False-brome	<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>
Fern, hart's-tongue	<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>
Fern, male	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
Fescue, meadow	<i>Festuca arvensis</i>
Fescue, red	<i>Festuca rubra</i>
Fescue, tall	<i>Festuca arundinacea</i>
Figwort	<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>
Flag, yellow	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>
Flax, fairy	<i>Linum catharticum</i>
Fleabane	<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>
Fog, Yorkshire	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>

Forget-me-not, water	<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>
Furze	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
Gipsywort	<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>
Goutweed	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>
Grass, flote	<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>
Grass, quaking	<i>Briza media</i>
Grass, reed	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>
Grass, scutch	<i>Agropyron repens</i>
Grass, tussock	<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>
Grass-reed sweet	<i>Glyceria maxima</i>
Hawk's-beard, smooth	<i>Crepis capillaris</i>
Hawkbit, autumnal	<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>
Hawkbit, greater	<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>
Hawkbit, lesser	<i>Leontodon saxatilis</i>
Hawkweed, mouse-ear	<i>Hieracium pilosella</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Hazel	<i>Coryllus avellana</i>
Heather	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>
Helleborine, marsh	<i>Epipactis palustris</i>
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>
Hop, wild	<i>Humulus lupulus</i>
Horsetail, water	<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>
Horsetail, field	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>
Horsetail, hybrid	<i>Equisetum x littorale</i>
Horsetail, marsh	<i>Equisetum palustre</i>
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
Knapweed, black	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>
Knotweed, Japanese	<i>Reynoutria japonica</i>
Lilac	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>
Loosestrife, purple	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>
Marigold, French	<i>Kerria japonica</i>
Meadow-grass, rough-stalked	<i>Poa trivialis</i>
Meadow-rue	<i>Thalictrum flavum</i>
Meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>
Milkwort, common	<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>
Milkwort, heath	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>
Mint, water	<i>Mentha aquatica</i>

Mountain everlasting	<i>Antennaria dioica</i>
Mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>
Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Nightshade, woody	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>
Nipplewort	<i>Lapsana communis</i>
Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Oat, false	<i>Arrhenaterum elatius</i>
Oat, golden	<i>Avenula pubescens</i>
Oat, yellow	<i>Trisetum flavescens</i>
Orchid, common spotted	<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i>
Orchid, pyramidal	<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>
Parsley, cow	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>
Parsley, hedge	<i>Torilis japonica</i>
Pennywort, marsh	<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>
Pignut	<i>Conopodium majus</i>
Plantain, ribwort	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton</i> sp.
Pondweed, Canadian	<i>Elodea</i> sp.
Poplar, white	<i>Populus alba</i>
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Privet	<i>Ligustrum</i> sp.
Purple moor grass	<i>Molinia caerulea</i>
Ragwort	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>
Ragwort, marsh	<i>Senecio aquaticus</i>
Rattle, yellow	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>
Redshank	<i>Polygonum persicaria</i>
Reed, common	<i>Phragmites australis</i>
Robert, herb	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
Rose, Guelder	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>
Rose, dog	<i>Rosa canina</i>
Rose, wild	<i>Rosa arvensis</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Rush, hard	<i>Juncus inflexus</i>
Rush, heath	<i>Juncus squarrosus</i>
Ryegrass, perennial	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Scabious, devil's-bit	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>
Scabious, field	<i>Knautia arvensis</i>
Sedge, bottle	<i>Carex rostrata</i>
Sedge, carnation	<i>Carex panicea</i>

Sedge, glaucous	<i>Carex flacca</i>
Sedge, great fen	<i>Cladium mariscus</i>
Sedge, lesser fox	<i>Carex otrubae</i>
Sedge, wood	<i>Carex sylvatica</i>
Sedges	<i>Carex</i> spp.
Self-heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
Silverweed	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpus albus</i>
Speedwell, germander	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>
Spike rush, few-flowered	<i>Eliocharis</i> sp.
St. John's wort, perforated	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
St. John's wort, slender	<i>Hypericum pulchrum</i>
Starwort, water	<i>Callitriche stagnalis</i>
Stonecrop, white	<i>Sedum album</i>
Sundew, intermediate	<i>Drosera intermedia</i>
Sundew, long-leaved	<i>Drosera longifolia</i>
Sundew, round-leaved	<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>
Sweet-grass, reed	<i>Glyceria maxima</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Tar spot fungus	<i>Rhytisma acerina</i>
Teaplant, Duke of Argyll's	<i>Lycium barbarum</i>
Thistle, bog (meadow)	<i>Cirsium dissectum</i>
Thistle, creeping	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Thistle, marsh	<i>Cirsium palustre</i>
Thistle, spear	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
Timothy	<i>Phleum pratense</i>
Tormentil	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>
Trefoil, bird's-foot	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
Twayblade	<i>Listera ovata</i>
Valerian, common	<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>
Vernal grass, sweet	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>
Vetch, bush	<i>Vicia sepium</i>
Vetch, tufted	<i>Vicia cracca</i>
Vetchling, meadow	<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>
Violet, common dog	<i>Viola riviniana</i>
Watercress	<i>Nasturtium officinale</i>
Water-milfoil, alternate	<i>Myriophyllum alterniflorum</i>
Water-parsnip, lesser	<i>Berula erecta</i>
Water-plantain, lesser	<i>Baldellia ranunculoides</i>

White beak sedge	<i>Rhynchospora alba</i>
Whitebeam, Irish	<i>Sorbus hibernica</i>
Willow, crack	<i>Salix fragilis</i>
Willow, eared	<i>Salix aurita</i>
Willow, goat	<i>Salix capraea</i>
Willow, grey	<i>Salix cinerea</i>
Willow, white	<i>Salix alba</i>
Willowherb, broad-leaved	<i>Epilobium montanum</i>
Willowherb, great hairy	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>
Willowherb, hoary	<i>Epilobium parviflorum</i>
Willowherb, rosebay	<i>Epilobium angustifolium</i>
Woody nightshade:	See bittersweet
Woundwort, marsh	<i>Stachys palustris</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>

APPENDIX 4: VASCULAR PLANTS IN COOLNAFEARAGH BOG

Angelica	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>
Asphodel, bog	<i>Narthecium ossifragum</i>
Beak-sedge, white	<i>Rhynchospora alba</i>
Birch, downy	<i>Betula pubescens</i>
Black Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>
Bladderwort	<i>Utricularia minor</i>
Bogbean	<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>
Bog-rush, black	<i>Schoenus nigricans</i>
Bur-reed, least	<i>Sparganium minimum</i>
Butterwort, common	<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>
Butterwort, pale	<i>Pinguicula lusitanica</i>
Cotton, bog	<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>
Deer-grass	<i>Scirpus caespitosus</i>
False oat	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>
Fescue species	<i>Festuca sp.</i>
Grass, purple moor	<i>Molinia caerulea</i>
Grass, sweet vernal	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>
Heath, cross-leaved	<i>Erica tetralix</i>
Heather, ling	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>
Helleborine, marsh	<i>Epipactis palustris</i>
Hemp-agrimony	<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>
Horsetail, common	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>
Horsetail, marsh	<i>Equisetum palustre</i>
Horsetail, water	<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>
Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>
Meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>
Milkwort, heath	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>
Mountain everlasting	<i>Antennaria dioica</i>
Orchid, common spotted	<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>
Orchid, lesser butterfly	<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>
Orchid, marsh	<i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i>
Pennywort, marsh	<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>
Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton natans</i>
Reed, common	<i>Phragmites australis</i>
Rush, heath	<i>Juncus squarrosus</i>
Saint John's wort, perforate	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>

Saint John's wort, square-stemmed	<i>Hypericum tetrapterum</i>
Saint John's wort, slender	<i>Hypericum pulchrum</i>
Scabious, devil's-bit	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>
Sedge , great fen	<i>Cladium mariscus</i>
Sedge, bottle	<i>Carex rostrata</i>
Sedge, carnation	<i>Carex panicea</i>
Sedge, glaucous	<i>Carex flacca</i>
Sedge, lesser tussock (locally extensive stands)	<i>Carex diandra</i>
Spearwort, lesser	<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>
Spike rush, few-flowered	<i>Eliocharis</i> sp.
Stonewort	<i>Chara</i> sp.
Sundew, intermediate	<i>Drosera intermedia</i>
Sundew, long-leaved	<i>Drosera longifolia</i>
Sundew, round-leaved	<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>
Thistle, bog	<i>Cirsium dissectum</i>
Tormentil	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>
Trefoil, bird's-foot	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
Twayblade	<i>Listera ovata</i>
Valerian, marsh	<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>
Vetch, bush	<i>Vicia sepium</i>
Vetch, tufted	<i>Vicia cracca</i>
Water plantain, lesser	<i>Baldellia ranunculoides</i>
Water-milfoil, alternate	<i>Myriophyllum alterniflorum</i>
Willow , crack	<i>Salix fragilis</i>
Willow, eared	<i>Salix aurita</i>
Willow, grey	<i>Salix cinerea</i>
Woodrush, greater	<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>

APPENDIX 5:
CANAL-RELATED BUILT HERITAGE FEATURES

Feature F001 Mountmellick Junction

Site type	Canal junction		
County	Co Kildare	Townland	Skirteen
Town	Monasterevin	Address	
Grid	262252 210610	OS six-inch sheet	KL 026
History	Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown, but not captioned on all editions of the OS six-inch map from 1838 onwards (Kildare sheet 26).		
Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership	Public (Waterways Ireland)		
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Excellent
		Current use	Canal junction
Description	Junction of Mountmellick Canal with Athy Branch of Grand Canal. From this junction, the Barrow line runs east to the Barrow Aqueduct, and south towards 25th lock. The Mountmellick section is watered as far as the first road bridge (feature 002).		
Evaluation	Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Kildare CC Record of Protected Structures.		
Significance	Regional		
Statutory protection		Action	Include in RPS
Other databases	IWAI MMC 005		

Feature F002 Johnny Dunne's Bridge

Site type Bridge (road/canal)
 County Co Kildare Townland Coolnafearagh; Skirteen
 Town Monasterevin Address
 Grid 262167 210644 OS six-inch sheet KL 026

History Shown on 1838 OS six-inch map (Kildare sheet 26) and subsequent editions.

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Kildare CC)

Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Road bridge

Description Masonry arch bridge carries public road over watered section of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal. Of randomly coursed squared limestone rubble except for the parapet, which is of random rubble throughout. The arch is of semicircular profile and spans 6.70m (the actual channel is 4.97m wide and the towpath 1.73m wide). Its soffit is of squared limestone blocks and its voussoirs of finely dressed stone. A towpath runs through the north-east side. Both faces of the bridge curve outwards and are embellished with a finely dressed string course under each parapet. The parapets are spaced at 4.28m and are coped with finely dressed limestone blocks. Pronounced hump to deck. No datestones. A pipe is carried across the outside face of the north-west parapet. Ivy overgrowth.

Evaluation Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Kildare CC Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 010; NIAH 11816005

Photographs
 F002_01 22/08/2006 South-east elevation of road bridge.





Feature F003

Site type	Bridge (rail/canal)		
County	Co Kildare	Townland	Coolnafearagh
Town	Monasterevin	Address	
Grid	261994 210696	OS six-inch sheet	KL 021
History	This line was opened as far as Portlaoise by the Great Southern & Western Railway in 1847 (it reached Cork in 1849). The stonework is original, but the deck is a mid/late 20th century replacement. The 1871 OS six-inch map (Kildare sheet 21) captions it as "wooden bridge", indicating that the original was a timber truss span.		
Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership	Public (Iarnród Éireann)		
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Good
		Current use	Rail bridge
Description	A highly skewed triple-span bridge carries the twin-track Dublin-Cork railway over the Mountmellick Canal, here watered. The abutments and piers are original, but the deck has been replaced. The former are of quarry-faced limestone blocks, laid to regular courses and with tooled arrises. The wing walls, which curve outwards and downwards, are of random squared limestone rubble and are coped with limestone blocks. The main span over the canal is 9.82m wide (measured orthogonally) and comprises two reinforced-concrete beams, between which are set eight RSJs, all running parallel with one another. The two end sections span the grassed canal banks and are of pre-cast reinforced concrete slabs. The east span is 3.61m wide (again measured orthogonally); the west span is probably similar. All the spans are laid on concrete pillow blocks over the string courses. Steel railings to either side of the lines.		
Evaluation	The stonework on this bridge is of high quality. However, the replacement of the deck has diminished the historical interest. It is a prominent local landmark. Overall, of local heritage significance.		
Significance	Local		
Statutory protection	Action		
Other databases	IWAI MMC 020; NIAH 11816105		

Photographs

F003_01 22/08/2006 South-east elevation of rail bridge.



F003_02 22/08/2006 South-east elevation of rail bridge.



F003_03 22/08/2006 North-west elevation of rail bridge.



F003_04 22/08/2006 Underside of main span showing RSJs.



Feature F101a Coughlan's Lock; 1st lock

Site type Lock
County Co Kildare Townland Coolnafearagh
Town Address
Grid 261604 211007 OS six-inch sheet KL 021

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Captioned as "25th lock" on the 1837 and 1871 OS six-inch maps (Kildare sheet 21). This is also the number of the lock on the Athy Branch of the Grand Canal, just south of Mountmellick Junction, so this caption may be an error.

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
Ownership Private
Completeness Substantial remains Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Single lock chamber, open except for infilled top section (at cill). Side walls constructed of finely dressed limestone blocks, laid to courses and coped with large granite blocks. Vestiges of timber gates at south end. This end is also crossed by a road bridge (feature 101b). The chamber is 4.48m wide. Some vegetation growth on walls.

Evaluation Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Kildare CC Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional
Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 040

Photographs
F101_01 22/08/2006 Road bridge and lock house, from south.



F101_02 22/08/2006 Lock and lock house from road bridge.



F101a_01 22/08/2006 Looking north along chamber from road bridge (feature 101b).



F101a_02 22/08/2006 Looking south along chamber from infilled north end.



F101a_03 22/08/2006 Gate detail at south-west end of lock chamber.



Feature F101b Coughlan's Bridge

Site type Bridge (road/canal)
 County Co Kildare Townland Coolnafearagh
 Town Address
 Grid 261601 210986 OS six-inch sheet KL 021

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on the 1837 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 21).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Kildare CC)

Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Road bridge

Description Masonry arch bridge carries public road over watered section of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal at south end of first lock (feature 101a). The abutments are a continuation of the lock chamber and are of finely dressed limestone blocks, laid to courses. The voussoirs and spandrels are likewise constructed. The arch is of segmental profile and spans 4.48m (the same as the lock). Its soffit is of squared limestone blocks. Both faces of the bridge curve outwards and are embellished with a finely dressed string course along the base of each parapet. The outsides of the parapets are of dressed stonework, whereas their road faces are of random rubble; they are spaced at 6.50m and are coped with limestone blocks. There is no towpath through the arch. The deck is humped. No datestones. Ivy overgrowth.

Evaluation Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Kildare CC Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 030

Photographs
 F101b_01 22/08/2006 North elevation.





Feature F101c Coughlan's Lock House

Site type	Lock keeper's house		
County	Co Kildare	Townland	Coolnafearagh
Town	Address		
Grid	261622 211025	OS six-inch sheet	KL 021
History	Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on the 1837 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 21).		
Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership	Private		
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Good
		Current use	Dwelling
Description	<p>Detached four-bay, single-storey former lock keeper's house aligned north-south at east end of lock 1 on Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal. The building was possibly three bays wide originally, but was extended by a single bay to its north end (there is a join mark on the rear wall). Hipped natural slate roof with off-centre brick chimney. No rainwater goods. Lime rendered random rubble walls (painted to front and sides) with advanced eaves course. The principal elevation faces west to the lock. Square-headed openings. The doorway and window to each side thereof are set in segmental-headed recesses. The door is a modern replacement, as are the uPVC windows. Concrete supporting abutment at north end of this elevation. There is a square-headed replacement window set in a segmental-headed recess on the south gable. There is a semi-basement to the rear elevation, accessed by a door on the north gable. Two square-headed window openings to the rear elevation, again with replacement windows. The house is still inhabited. To its north is a derelict single-storey shed with monopitched corrugated metal roof and random rubble walls.</p>		
Evaluation	This is one of three lock houses on the Mountmellick Canal and the only inhabited at the time of this survey. Although its character is diminished by the modern windows, these are reversible. Overall, the building is of regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Kildare CC Record of Protected Structures.		
Significance	Regional		
Statutory protection		Action	Include in RPS
Other databases	IWAI MMC 040		

Photographs

F101c_01 22/08/2006 Lock house from south-west.



F101c_02 22/08/2006 Lock house from north-west.



Feature	F101d				
Site type	Canal overflow				
County	Co Kildare	Townland	Coolnafearagh		
Town	Address				
Grid	261596	211042	OS six-inch sheet	KL 021	
History	Not shown on the 1837 or 1871 OS six-inch maps (Kildare sheet 21). Captioned 'overflow' on the 1939 edition.				
Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond		
Ownership					
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A	Current use	N/A
Description	There are no obvious traces of this overflow. It may still survive, buried under infill and vegetation overgrowth.				
Evaluation	No industrial heritage significance.				
Significance	Record only				
Statutory protection	Action				
Other databases					

Feature F102

Site type Bridge (canal/river)

County Co Laois Townland Clonanny

Town Address

Grid 259973 211205 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'aqueduct' on 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description Site of culvert which formerly carried drainage channel under now-demolished section of canal.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-018

Feature F103 Wheelahan's Bridge

Site type	Bridge (road/canal)		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Clonanny
Town	Address		
Grid	259638 211148	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005
History	Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'Wheelahan's Bridge' on 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 5).		
Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership	Private		
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Good
		Current use	Road bridge
Description	<p>Masonry arch bridge carries public road over now-infilled section of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal. Of randomly coursed squared limestone rubble. The slightly skew arch is of semicircular profile and spans 6.69m. Its soffit is of squared rubble (laid orthogonally) and its voussoirs are of finely dressed stone. A 1.74m wide towpath runs through its south side (the channel is 4.95m wide). There are towrope marks at both ends of the arch on this side. Both faces of the bridge curve outwards and are embellished with a finely dressed string course which continues under the outsides of the parapets. The parapets are coped with dressed limestone blocks and their inside faces are of random rubble; they are spaced at 6.37m. Humped deck. No datestones. Ivy overgrowth on south face. Dogleg approach roads. Now bypassed to north by new road and used for access only.</p>		
Evaluation	This unaltered bridge is of typical design for this section of canal and is of architectural and historical interest. Its current status as a Protected Structure (LA 547) is merited because of its regional heritage significance.		
Significance	Regional		
Statutory protection	RPS LA 547	Action	
Other databases	IWAI MMC 050; LAIAR-005-017; NIAH 12800551		

Photographs

F103_01 22/08/2006 North elevation of Wheelahan's Bridge.



F103_02 22/08/2006 North elevation of Wheelahan's Bridge.



References Survey of the Architectural Heritage of County Laois (Dublin: NIAH, 2002).

Feature F104

Site type Canal overflow

County Co Laois Townland Loughmansland Glebe

Town Address

Grid 258333 211276 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'overflow' on 1838 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description Site of canal overflow. Canal cleared hereabouts.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-012

Feature F105 Bergin's Bridge

Site type Bridge (road/canal)
 County Co Laois Townland Loughmansland Glebe
 Town Address
 Grid 258303 211345 OS six-inch sheet LA 005
 History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'Bergin's Bridge' on 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Public (Laois CC)
 Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Road bridge

Description Masonry arch bridge carries public road over now-infilled section of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal. Of randomly coursed squared limestone rubble. The arch is of semicircular profile and spans 6.68m. Its soffit is of squared rubble and its voussoirs are of finely dressed stone. A 1.70m wide towpath runs through its west side (the channel is 4.98m wide). Both faces of the bridge curve outwards and are embellished with a finely dressed string course which continues under the outsides of the parapets. The parapets are coped with dressed limestone blocks and their inside faces are of random rubble; they are spaced at 6.42m. Humped deck. No datestones. Ivy overgrowth.

Evaluation This unaltered bridge is of architectural and historical interest, being typical of the bridges along this branch of the Grand Canal. It also has group value in the context of the overall canal. It is of regional heritage significance and merits inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional
 Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 060; LAIAR-005-016

Photographs
 F105_01 22/08/2006 North face of Bergin's Bridge.





Feature F106 **Lea Bridge**

Site type Bridge (road/canal)

County Co Laois Townland Lea

Town Address

Grid 257419 211843 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'Lea Bridge' on 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description Site of bridge carrying public road over canal. Demolished c.20 years ago and canal infilled hereabouts for agricultural use. Superseded by road over the infilled bed a short distance west of this former bridge.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases IWAI MMC 070; LAIAR-005-014

Feature F107

Site type Bridge (canal/river)

County Co Laois Townland Bracklone

Town Address

Grid 256152 211648 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'aqueduct' on 1838 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description Site of culvert carrying drainage channel under canal.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-041

Feature F108

Site type Bridge (canal/river)

County Co Laois Townland Bridge (canal/river)

Town Address

Grid 255609 211713 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'aqueduct' on 1838 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Culvert

Description Culvert carries drainage channel under canal, here dewatered. Arch is of segmental-headed profile and c.1.2m wide. It and the spandrels are of dressed limestone blocks laid to courses. The wing walls are of similarly dressed stone, but laid randomly. No parapet. Drainage channel heavily silted but still functioning.

Evaluation Group association with canal. Of local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-040

Photographs
F108_01 22/08/2006 South elevation of culvert.



Feature F201a Portarlington Lock; 2nd lock

Site type Lock
 County Co Laois Townland Bracklone
 Town Portarlington Address
 Grid 255395 211642 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Private
 Completeness Some remains Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Only part of the north-west side wall of this single chamber lock, the 2nd on this branch line, now survives. Three courses of dressed limestone blocks are visible above the footpath which runs alongside the main road down the infilled canal bed. At the SW end of this wall is the recess for the upper gate. Recessed into this recess is an emplacement for a vertical sluice gate; this was presumably to drain the upper reach.

Evaluation On its own, this feature would be of local industrial heritage significance. However, the juxtaposition of quay, lock house and goods store gives it a group value which raises its significance to regional level. Merits inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional
 Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 090; LAIAR-005-011

Photographs
 F201_01 22/08/2006 General view of complex from north-east.



F201_02 22/08/2006 General view of complex from south.



F201a_01 22/08/2006 Lock wall.



Feature	F201b	Lock Bridge
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Site type	Bridge (road/canal)		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Bracklone
Town	Portarlinton	Address	
Grid	255411 211652	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'bridge' on 1838 and 1888 OS six-inch maps and as 'Lock Bridge' on 1907 edition (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
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Ownership

Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A	Current use	N/A
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Description This bridge carried a public road over the north-east end of the 2nd lock (201a). Demolished to make way for a new road running directly across the infilled canal bed.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection	Action
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Other databases	IWAI MMC 080; LAIAR-005-011
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Feature	F201c	Portarlinton Lock House
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Site type	Lock keeper's house
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County	Co Laois	Townland	Bracklone
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Town	Portarlinton	Address	
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Grid	255381 211652	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005
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History	Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5) and explicitly cited as 'Lock house' on 1888 edition.
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Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
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Ownership	Private
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Completeness	Complete	Condition	Fair	Current use	Disused
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Description	Detached double-pile, three-bay, single-storey over semi-basement former lock keeper's house. Aligned NE-SW with its principal elevation facing towards the lock (feature 201a). Hipped natural slate roof with rendered chimney to each pile, boxed eaves and plastic gutters. Painted cement-rendered walls over random rubble. Principal façade is symmetrical, with semicircular-headed doorway to centre. Flanked by semicircular-headed windows to each end bay, set in segmental-headed recesses. All openings now sheeted over' the windows have sandstone cills. The SW elevation has two semicircular-headed window openings; the right-hand one is set in a segmental-headed recess. The NW and NE elevations are abutted by a modern flat-roofed extensions.
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Evaluation	Although the modern extension and refurbishment detract from the architectural character of this house, it is essentially complete and still of historical interest. It also has ground value with the adjoining lock, quay and goods store and is of regional heritage significance. Merits inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures.
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Significance	Regional
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Statutory protection		Action	Include in RPS
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Other databases	LAIAR-005-011
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Photographs

F201c_01 22/08/2006 SE façade of lock house.



F201c_02 22/08/2006 NW elevation of lock house, from south-west.



Feature F201d

Site type Quay
County Co Laois Townland Bracklone
Town Portarlington Address
Grid 255361 211628 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Quay at south-west end of 2nd lock. The bed has been infilled, but upper section of wall still visible. The top two courses are of dressed limestone blocks, regularly laid; the lower courses are of squared rubble, laid randomly. Small sections of brick admixture denote later repairs. Goods store (feature 204) is located directly on SW end of quay wall.

Evaluation Although the canal basin has been infilled, this quay is a reminder of the canal's former commercial importance. It has group value with the lock, lock house and canal store and merits inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures because of its regional heritage significance.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 095; LAIAR-005-011

Photographs
F201d_01 22/08/2006 Quay from south.



Feature F201e

Site type Canal store

County Co Laois Townland Bracklone

Town Portarlinton Address

Grid 255345 211620 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Not shown on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5). Cited as 'goods store' on 1888 and 1907 editions.

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Detached three-bay, two-storey former goods store aligned NE-SW at south end of quay, just above 2nd lock. Pitched natural slate roof with raised dressed limestone verges. Chimney pot to NE gable. Vestiges of metal gutters. Random rubble walls with dressed limestone eaves and dressed quoins. The principal façade faces SE on to the former canal, here infilled. This elevation has a large segmental headed loading door to the middle of the ground floor; dressed jambs and head. Between the ground and first floors are the timber socket holes for a canopy which formerly ran across the façade. The SW gable is devoid of openings. The NW elevation has a segmental-headed door to ground floor centre (dressed jambs and head) and a square-headed loading door above (dressed jambs). Both doors are flanked by single square-headed windows, all with brick heads and jambs, and stone cills. The ground floor openings have metal-framed casement windows. The first floor openings have timber shutters and vertical metal security bars. The NE gable is abutted by a three-bay, single-storey shed. There is an original square-headed internal doorway between the two buildings. The latter has a pitched corrugated metal roof and similarly-clad timber framed walls (but with concrete blockwork to the road elevation). Doors to front and rear elevations. No internal access to main building.

Evaluation Although disused, this building is complete and the only surviving goods store on this branch canal. Although architecturally plain, it is nevertheless typical of the design of such utilitarian buildings. It also has historical interest in its association with the canal, and streetscape value. It also has group value with the adjoining lock, lock house and quay. It merits inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures on account of its regional heritage interest.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 097; LAIAR-005-011

Photographs

F201e_01 22/08/2006 Goods store from north-east.



F201e_02 22/08/2006 Goods store from south.



F201e_03 22/08/2006 Goods store from north.



F201e_04 22/08/2006 Goods store from north.



Feature	F202	Swing Bridge
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Site type Bridge (road/canal)

County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery

Town Portarlinton Address Station Road, Portarlinton

Grid 254733 211165 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'Draw bridge' on 1838 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 5), and as 'Swing bridge' on 1907 edition. Removed c.1970 when the Portarlinton Relief Road was built. According to Mr Ronnie Mathews, a Portarlinton-based local historian, it swung horizontally on a pivot mounted on the town side of the canal bank to let the barges through. It was manually operated.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description Bridge carrying public road over canal has been completely cleared to make way for a wider road over the infilled canal.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases IWAI MMC 100; LAIAR-005-009

Feature F203

Site type	Bridge (rail/canal); Bridge (rail/road)		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Cooltedery
Town	Portarlinton	Address	
Grid	254218 211175	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005
History	Portarlinton to Tullamore section of line opened 1854 (extended to Athlone 1859). First shown on 1888 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5). Now in use as the Dublin-Galway line. Deck probably replaced in 20th century (but before 1953 as shown in present form in photograph of this date).		
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership	Public (Iarnród Éireann)		
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Excellent
		Current use	Railway bridge
Description	A slightly skew triple-span girder bridge carries a single-track railway from Portarlinton to Tullamore over the former canal, now infilled to create a by-pass road around Portarlinton. The abutments and piers are of rock-faced limestone blocks laid to courses and embellished with tooled arrises. The towpath which formerly ran through the south side of the middle span has been removed and the pier faced with cement. Tow rope marks are still visible at both ends. The decks comprise plate girders along each side, with metal troughing between. The north span runs over a field accommodation track. The south span is partly infilled with soil. The north, middle and south spans measure 9.91m, 3.66m and 3.65m respectively (all measured orthogonally). Although the deck is only 4.30m in depth, the abutments are 9.45m (on the skew); in other words, the bridge was built to accommodate two tracks, but only one was laid. Curved wing walls of squared random rubble coped with dressed stones and terminating in square piers. Iarnród Éireann bridge number 551.		
Evaluation	Only the abutments and piers are original, the deck having been replaced. The bridge is of some interest in being the only example of a railway bridge over this branch of the Grand Canal. This is now only evident in the rope marks on the quoins. It is also a prominent landscape feature along the infilled canal. Of local industrial heritage significance.		
Significance	Local		
Statutory protection		Action	IHAI photos
Other databases	IWAI MMC 110; LAIAR-005-006		
References	Orford, D. Those Were the Days: Memories of Portarlinton, 1900 to 1999, p.99. Portarlinton: Portarlinton Historical Society. N.D.		

Photographs

F203_01 29/06/2006 General view from west.



F203_02 29/06/2006 General view from east.



F203_03 29/06/2006 Tow rope marks on south-east pier of middle span.



F203_04 29/06/2006 Deck underside. Note transverse metal troughing.



Feature F204 Ballymorris Bridge

Site type	Bridge (road/canal)		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Ballymorris; Cooltedery
Town	Portarlinton	Address	
Grid	254076 211145	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005
History	Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1838 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 5), but explicitly named until 1907 edition.		
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership			
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A
		Current use	N/A
Description	Bridge carrying public road over canal demolished when canal infilled to create road by-pass around Portarlinton.		
Evaluation	No industrial heritage significance.		
Significance	Record only		
Statutory protection	Action		
Other databases	IWAI MMC 120; LAIAR-005-008		

Feature F205

Site type Bridge (canal/river)

County Co Laois Townland Ballymorris

Town Address

Grid 253152 210818 OS six-inch sheet LA 004

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'aqueduct' on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 4).

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Laois CC)

Completeness Complete Condition Poor Current use Culvert

Description A twin-arched culvert carries a stream under the now-demolished bed of the Mountmellick Canal. Of squared random limestone construction. Arches are of segment profile with dressed voussoirs; each spans 90cm. Cutwaters are squared, not angled. Most of south-east face has collapsed. Channels now heavily choked with silt and heavily overgrown.

Evaluation Primarily of historical interest due to canal association. Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-004-011

Photographs

F205_01 29/06/2006 Decayed south-east face of culvert.



Feature	F206	Blackhall Bridge; {Moore's Bridge}			
Site type	Bridge (road/canal)				
County	Co Laois	Townland	Ballymorris		
Town	Address				
Grid	253129 210796	OS six-inch sheet	LA 004		
History	Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'Moore's Bridge' on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps, and as 'Blackhall Bridge' on 1907 edition (Laois sheet 4). Attempts to demolish the bridge after the canal closed in 1960 were abandoned and what remained was restored by a local community committee as a millennium project in 2000.				
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond		
Ownership	Public (Laois CC)				
Completeness	Substantial remains	Condition	Good	Current use	Ornamental feature
Description	<p>Masonry arch bridge formerly carried public road over now-infilled section of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal. Now by-passed by a new section of road to its south-west. Although the bed of the canal under the bridge has been infilled to within 30cm of the tops of the side walls, the bridge was restored in 2000 and is now a distinctive landmark on the way into Portarlinton from the south. Of randomly coursed squared limestone rubble. The arch is slightly skew and of semicircular profile, with finely dressed voussoirs. It spans 6.69m (22ft) measured orthogonally, and 7.00m (23ft) on the skew. Although skew, the squared soffit blocks are laid orthogonally. A 1.71m wide (5ft 7in) towpath runs through its south-east side; the channel is 4.98m wide (16ft 4in) at this point; its edge is coped with large blocks of limestone. Both spandrels and the curved wing walls have been largely rebuilt in squared limestone rubble (of slightly darker colour than the original). The tops of the out-stepped terminal piers have been removed along with the decorative string course which originally ran under the parapets; much of the north wing and pier have been removed entirely. The parapets have been rebuilt in concrete blockwork, faced with stone, and coped with concrete; they are 6.16m (20ft 3in) apart. Humped deck. No datestones. The approach road has been removed at the north end.</p>				
Evaluation	The architectural interest of this bridge is diminished somewhat by the introduced stone (necessitated by its partial demolition in 1970) and use of concrete blockwork in its refurbishment. Nevertheless it is still of historical interest and a well-known landmark hereabouts. It is of regional industrial heritage significance and its current inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures is justified (RPS LA 542).				
Significance	Regional				
Statutory protection	RPS LA 542	Action			
Other databases	IWAI MMC 130; LAIAR-004-010; NIAH 12800401				

Photographs

F206_01 29/06/2006 Plaque commemorating restoration of bridge.



F206_02 29/06/2006 Blackhall Bridge from south-west.



F206_03 29/06/2006 Blackhall Bridge from north.



F206_04 29/06/2006 Blackhall Bridge from east.



F206_05 29/06/2006 Soffit detail.



F206_06 29/06/2006 Tow rope marks on east quoin.



- References
- Orford, D. Those Were the Days: Memories of Portarlinton, 1900 to 1999, p.249. Portarlinton: Portarlinton Historical Society. N.D.
 - Orford, D. Those Were the Days: Memories of Portarlinton, 1900 to 1999, p.76. Portarlinton: Portarlinton Historical Society. N.D.
 - Somers, P. 'Major initiative planned for former Portarlinton canal bridge'. In The Leinster Express, 3 July 1999.
 - Survey of the Architectural Heritage of County Laois (Dublin: NIAH, 2002).

Feature F207 Woodbrook Bridge

Site type	Bridge (road/canal)		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Coolnavarnoge and Coolaghy
Town	Address		
Grid	251545 210266	OS six-inch sheet	LA 004
History	Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Although shown on the 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps, not explicitly named until 1907 edition (Laois sheet 4). Old photographs show it to have been a standard masonry arch bridge, similar to those elsewhere on the canal.		
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership			
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A
		Current use	N/A
Description	The bridge carrying a public road over the canal has been demolished and a wider road constructed across this now-infilled section of canal.		
Evaluation	No industrial heritage significance.		
Significance	Record only		
Statutory protection	Action		
Other databases	IWAI MMC 140; LAIAR-004-009		
References	Orford, D. Those Were the Days: Memories of Portarlinton, 1900 to 1999, p.244. Portarlinton: Portarlinton Historical Society. N.D.		

Feature F208

Site type Canal feeder

County Co Laois Townland Various

Town Address

Grid 253033 208757 OS six-inch sheet LA 004; LA 008

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as "Canal supply" on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheets 4 and 8).

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Substantial remains Condition Poor Current use Disused

Description Now-dry feeder channel, runs along south-west side of road. Approximately 2m wide and up to 2m deep. Heavily overgrown. Infilled where crossed by track into Woodbrook Forest and again between railway embankment and new line of road. Although not inspected in detail outside the study area, presumed to be open on basis of aerial photographs.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-004-018; LAIAR-008-006

Photographs

F208_01 29/06/2006 Looking south from north end inside overgrown channel.





Map of feeder showing associated features.

Feature F208a

Site type Bridge (canal feeder/river)

County Co Laois Townland Coolnavarnoge and Coolaghy

Grid 251889 209924 OS six-inch sheet LA 004

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps and cited as 'aqueduct on 1907 edition (Laois sheet 4).

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Substantial remains Condition Poor Current use Culvert

Description An arched culvert carries a stream under a now-dry canal feed immediately SW of a minor road. Of random rubble construction. Arch is of semicircular profile, with brick voussoirs; 76cm span. The soffit directly under the feeder has been breached so that any water in the latter now drains into the stream. The stream is carried under the road north-east of the aqueduct as a 30cm wide random rubble culvert; its north-east end has been removed.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-004-024

Photographs
F208a_01 29/06/2006 South-west elevation of canal culvert.



Feature F208b

Site type Bridge (road/canal feeder)

County Co Laois Townland Coolnavarnoge and Coolaghy

Town Address

Grid 252236 209468 OS six-inch sheet LA 004

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 4).

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Laois CC)

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Road bridge

Description A highly skew two-arch culvert carries a public road over a canal feeder south-west of Skeagh Crossroads. Of random rubble construction. Arches are of segmental profile and have finely dressed voussoirs. Pier is square-cut, not angled. Each arch is 90cm wide (measured orthogonally). Parapet is coped with limestone blocks; some mass-concrete repairs. The intake at the upstream end of the south-west arch has been infilled during landscaping of the garden of an adjoining house. Heavily vegetated on upstream face.

Evaluation Primarily of historical interest due to canal association. Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases

Photographs

F208b_01 29/06/2006 Downstream (north-west) elevation.





Feature F208c

Site type Bridge (rail/canal feeder)
County Co Laois Townland Coolaghy; Kilbride
Town Address
Grid 252855 209161 OS six-inch sheet LA 004

History Shown on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 4) as a culvert under a road. When the Portarlinton-Portlaoise line was built by the Great Southern & Western Railway Cot in 1847, the road was realigned and a culvert constructed under the new embankment.

Survey date 30/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
Ownership Private
Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Culvert

Description A culvert conveys the canal feed under the railway embankment. Arch is of segmental profile and spans 1.52m. Voussoirs are of dressed masonry but otherwise of random rubble throughout. Dressed string course runs across the crown. No parapet. Slightly curved as it runs under the embankment.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases

Photographs
F208c_01 30/08/2006 South-east face of culvert under railway embankment.



Feature	F208d				
Site type	Bridge (road/canal feeder)				
County	Co Laois	Townland	Coolaghy; Kilbride		
Town	Address				
Grid	252878	209148	OS six-inch sheet	LA 004	
History	This culvert was not built until the railway was constructed in 1847 and the road realigned.				
Survey date	30/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond		
Ownership					
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A	Current use	N/A
Description	The road has been realigned and the earlier stretch removed along with this culvert.				
Evaluation	No industrial heritage significance.				
Significance	Record only				
Statutory protection	Action				
Other databases					

Feature F208e

Site type Bridge (road/canal feeder)
County Co Laois Townland Coolaghy; Kilbride
Town Address
Grid 252920 209101 OS six-inch sheet LA 004

History Constructed in connection with a late 1900s realignment of the road.

Survey date 30/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
Ownership Public (Laois CC)
Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Culvert
Description A concrete pipe conveys a new line of road over the canal feeder.

Evaluation No special industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases

Photographs
F208e_01 30/08/2006 South-west face of pipe culvert under road.



Feature F209

Site type Bridge (canal/river)

County Co Laois Townland Coolnavarnoge and Coolaghy

Town Address

Grid 251065 209914 OS six-inch sheet LA 004

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'aqueduct' on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 4).

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Culvert

Description Arched culvert carries stream under bed of now-filled canal. Constructed in squared limestone rubble brought to courses. Arch is of segmental profile and has dressed voussoirs; 90cm span. Heavily vegetated at SE end.

Evaluation Still serves original purpose and marks line of now-gone section of canal. Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-004-008

Photographs

F209_01 29/06/2006 General view of culvert from north-west.





Feature F301a Tinnakill Lock; 3rd lock

Site type Lock
 County Co Laois Townland Coolnavarnoge and Coolaghy
 Town Address
 Grid 250570 209508 OS six-inch sheet LA 004

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 4) and explicitly named as 'Tinnakill Lock' on 1907 edition.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Substantial remains Condition Poor Current use Disused

Description Lock chamber infilled to near ground level and vestiges of squared limestone rubble side walls now only visible at north-east end. Copings have been removed along with north-east end of walling. The walls are spaced at 4.57m (15ft).

Evaluation Primarily of historical interest. Also has group value in context of adjacent lock house and canal in general. Regional industrial heritage significance, meriting inclusion in Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 150; LAIAR-004-007

Photographs

F301_01 29/06/2006 Lock house and lock remains, from north-east.





Feature F301b Tinnakill Lock Bridge

Site type Bridge (foot/canal)

County Co Laois Townland Coolnavarnoge and Coolaghy

Town Address

Grid 250587 209521 OS six-inch sheet LA 004

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'bridge' on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps; not named on any edition (Laois sheet 4).

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description All traces of this bridge, at the NE end of the lock chamber, have been removed.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-004-007

Feature	F301c	Tinnakill Lock House			
Site type	Lock keeper's house				
County	Co Laois	Townland	Coolnavarnoge and Coolaghy		
Town	Address				
Grid	250567 209524	OS six-inch sheet	LA 004		
History	Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'lock house' on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 4).				
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond		
Ownership	Private				
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Poor	Current use	Disused
Description	<p>Detached three-bay, two-storey disused lock keeper's house. Aligned NE-SW on NW side of now-infilled lock chamber. Hipped natural slate roof with central brick chimney. Rainwater goods missing. Lime-rendered random rubble walls with projecting dressed masonry eaves and dressed quoins. Square-headed openings. Principal façade faces SE towards lock chamber. Doorway to centre of this façade with replacement partly glazed timber door. Flanked by window opening to each side, both set in segment-headed recesses. The windows are 2/2 sliding sashes with stone cills. Small window to SW gable and rear elevation of NE bay. NE gable abutted by single-bay annexe over semi-basement. This section has monopitched natural slate roof and walls detailed as main block. Possibly contemporary with same, even though distinct wall break. Two-over-two window on façade elevation and on NE gable. Internally, the floor is of timber, stone flags and concrete and the walls are painted and plastered. Original tongue-and-groove doors survive. NE bay contains kitchen. Replacement suspended ceiling. Cast-iron stove in party wall with SW bay. Door leads through to (bedroom) annexe on NE gable. SW bay contains former bedroom. Original plaster-and-lathe ceiling. Fireplace on party wall with NE bay, complete with timber surround and bracketed timber mantelpiece. Annex has remains of stove (pipe runs up outside of wall) on ground floor and storeroom in semi-basement. Despite distance from public road, has been electrified.</p>				
Evaluation	Of architectural interest as an example of a former lock house. Also of historical interest due to association with canal. Group value with adjoining lock and the canal in general. Of regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Record of Protected Structures.				
Significance	Regional				
Statutory protection			Action	Include in RPS	
Other databases	IWAI MMC 150; LAIAR-004-007				

Photographs

F301c_01 29/06/2006 Lock house from east.



F301c_02 29/06/2006 Lock house from north.



F301c_03 29/06/2006 NE bay of house (kitchen), looking south.



F301c_04 29/06/2006 SW bay of house (bedroom), looking east.



Feature F302

Site type Bridge (canal/river)

County Co Laois Townland Tinnakill (Po. By.)

Town Address

Grid 250062 209149 OS six-inch sheet LA 004

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'aqueduct' on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 4).

Survey date 30/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Culvert

Description Culvert carries drainage channel under canal. Measures 60cm wide by c.90cm high. Comprises flat stone lintels over abutments. The first two metres at the SE end comprise a slightly higher shallow segmental arch. Spandrels and wing walls are of regularly coursed squared limestone rubble.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-004-023

Photographs
F302_01 30/08/2006 South-east face of culvert under canal.



Feature	F303	Skeagh Bridge
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Site type Bridge (road/canal)

County Co Laois Townland Tinnakill (Po. By.)

Town Address

Grid 249488 208931 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'Skeagh Bridge' on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Masonry arch bridge formerly carried accommodation road over now-disused section of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal. Of randomly coursed squared limestone rubble. The arch is of semicircular profile but has been largely buried under later infill, along with most of the west face from beneath the arch crown. The arch's soffit is of squared rubble and its voussoirs are of finely dressed stone. A now-buried towpath runs through its south side. Both faces of the bridge curve outwards to terminate in out-projecting piers embellished with finely dressed string course which continues around outside base of parapets. Some stone has been illegally removed from the south-west pier. The parapets are coped with finely dressed limestone blocks and their inside faces are spaced at 3.32m. Humped deck. No datestones. Heavy ivy overgrowth on east face. The approach roads have been removed at both ends and the bridge has been superseded to its west by a metalled road across an infilled section of the canal.

Evaluation Of architectural and historical merit. Also enhances local landscape. Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 160; LAIAR-008-030

Photographs

F303_01 29/06/2006 Skeagh Bridge from south-east. Note damaged pier at right and removed approach road.



F303_02 29/06/2006 West elevation of Skeagh Bridge.



F303_03 29/06/2006 Skeagh Bridge from north-west.



F303_04 29/06/2006 South-west terminal pier detail.



Feature F304

Site type Bridge (canal/river)

County Co Laois Townland Dangans; Tinnakill (Po. By.)

Town Address

Grid 249120 208452 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Culvert

Description Pipe culvert carries stream under canal bed. North-west elevation inspected. Metal pipe, c.60cm diameter (2ft). Mass concrete spandrel without parapet. Channel now very silted up.

Evaluation The north-west end at least is undoubtedly a replacement of the original culvert (parts of which may still survive under the canal). Group value in context of canal, but of local industrial heritage significance only.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases

Photographs

F304_01 29/06/2006 North-west elevation of culvert.



Feature F305 Dangans Bridge

Site type Bridge (road/canal)
 County Co Laois Townland Dangans
 Town Address
 Grid 249013 208376 OS six-inch sheet LA 008
 History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'Dangans Bridge' on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Public (Laois CC)
 Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Road bridge

Description Masonry arch bridge carries public road over now-disused section of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal. Of randomly coursed squared limestone rubble. The arch is of semicircular profile measures 6.70m in span by 7.26m in depth. Its soffit is of squared rubble and the voussoirs and quoins are of finely dressed stone. A 1.74m wide towpath runs through the south side (the channel is 4.96m wide). Both faces of the bridge curve outwards to terminate in out-projecting piers embellished with finely dressed string course which continues around outside base of parapets. The inside faces of the parapets are of random rubble and are spaced at 6.50m; they are coped with finely dressed limestone blocks. Humped deck. No datestones. Heavy ivy overgrowth.

Evaluation Of architectural and historical merit. Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 170; LAIAR-008-029

Photographs
 F305_01 14/06/2006 Dangans Bridge: east elevation.



F305_02 14/06/2006 Dangans Bridge: inside of arch, from west.



F305_03 14/06/2006 Towpath underneath Dangans Bridge.



Feature F306

Site type Bridge (canal/river)

County Co Laois Townland Clonterry; Kilnacash

Town Address

Grid 248379 207876 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Culvert

Description Culvert carries 1.2m wide drainage channel under now-disused Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal. North-west face inspected - only squared random rubble spandrel now visible; probably a flat head. Overgrown.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-028

Photographs
F306_01 14/06/2006 North-west elevation of culvert.



Feature F307 Kilnacash Bridge

Site type Bridge (road/canal)
 County Co Laois Townland Kilnacash
 Town Address
 Grid 248071 207602 OS six-inch sheet LA 008
 History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'Kilnacash Bridge' on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Private
 Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Masonry arch bridge carries now-abandoned accommodation road over defunct Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal. Of randomly coursed squared limestone rubble. The arch is of semicircular profile measures 6.75m in span by 4.12m in depth. Its soffit is of squared rubble and the voussoirs and quoins are of finely dressed stone. A 2.01m wide towpath runs through the south side (the channel is 4.74m wide). Towrope marks visible on south-west quoin. Both faces of the bridge curve outwards to terminate in out-projecting piers embellished with finely dressed string course which continues around outside base of parapets. The inside faces of the parapets are of random rubble. Parapet on west side now partly missing. Surviving sections are coped with finely dressed limestone blocks. Humped deck. No datestones. Now bypassed to east by a road across the infilled bed. Heavy ivy overgrowth.

Evaluation Of architectural and historical merit. Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases IWAI MMC 180; LAIAR-008-027

Photographs
 F307_01 14/06/2006 Kilnacash Bridge from west.



F307_02

14/06/2006

Quoin detail at south-west corner of Kilnacash Bridge. Note towrope marks.



Feature F308

Site type Canal feeder

County Co Laois Townland Kilnacash

Town Address

Grid 248274 205323 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Captioned "Canal supply" on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Substantial remains Condition Poor Current use Disused

Description Canal feeder survives as dry ditch along field boundaries. Formerly fed off Triogue River. Measures 2-4m wide by 1-1.5m deep. Infilled on either side of Supply Bridge (MMC 12) and at intervals thereafter.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-046

Photographs

F308_01 14/06/2006 Looking north along section of canal feeder to south of Rock School (follows hedge line).





Map of feeder showing associated features.

Feature F308a Supply Bridge

Site type Bridge (road/canal feeder)

County Co Laois Townland Kilnacash

Town Address

Grid 247914 207432 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 8). Explicitly cited as "Supply Bridge" on 1907 edition.

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Laois CC)

Completeness Some remains Condition Good Current use Road bridge

Description Single arch bridge carries main road over canal feeder. Now infilled and faces buried except for top of arch on north side. This appears to be of semicircular profile and 1.0-1.2m wide, with finely dressed limestone voussoirs. Random rubble parapet wall over. Otherwise marked by slight bump in road.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-026

Photographs
 F308a_01 14/06/2006 North elevation of Supply Bridge.



Feature F308b

Site type Bridge (road/canal feeder)

County Co Laois Townland Kilmainham

Town Address

Grid 247821 206717 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Shown on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 30/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description Line of feeder infilled to both sides. No visible traces of culvert which formerly carried the canal feeder under a minor road. May possibly be buried.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases

Feature F308c

Site type Bridge (road/canal feeder)

County Co Laois Townland Brittas

Town Address

Grid 248004 205904 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Shown on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 30/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description The original culvert which carried the canal feeder under a minor road has been replaced in the relatively recent past by a concrete pipe.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases

Feature	F308d				
Site type	Weir (canal feeder)				
County	Co Laois	Townland	Eyne		
Town	Address				
Grid	247574	204433	OS six-inch sheet	LA 008	
History	Shown on 1839 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 8). Explicitly cited as 'dam' on 1907 edition.				
Survey date	30/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond		
Ownership					
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A	Current use	N/A
Description	The weir which formerly diverted water off the Triogue River has been removed and the river dredged.				
Evaluation	No industrial heritage significance.				
Significance	Record only				
Statutory protection	Action				
Other databases					

Feature F309 Mountmellick Aqueduct

Site type Bridge (canal/river)
 County Co Laois Townland Debicot; Kilmainham
 Town Address
 Grid 247585 207521 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1839 OS six-inch map and cited as 'aqueduct' on 1888 and 1907 editions (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Private
 Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Culvert

Description Triple-arch bridge carries former Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal over Triogue River. Ashlar limestone abutments and piers. Equi-sized spans (each about 2.5-3m across) are of segmental profile and embellished with vee-jointed voussoirs (not limestone). Rounded cutwaters at both ends, embellished with finely dressed limestone string courses. Random rubble spandrels. Ashlar string course over crowns, surmounted by ashlar limestone parapet. Approximately 20m deep. Heavy ivy overgrown. Tree roots now dislodging facing stones.

Evaluation Of architectural and historical merit. Regional industrial heritage significance. Current inclusion in Record of Protected Structures merited (RPS LA 531).

Significance Regional
 Statutory protection RPS LA 531 Action

Other databases IWAI MMC 190; LAIAR-008-023; NIAH 12800839

Photographs
 F309_01 14/06/2006 Mountmellick Aqueduct from south.



F309_02 14/06/2006 Mountmellick Aqueduct from upstream (south) side.



F309_03 14/06/2006 Mountmellick Aqueduct from downstream (north) side.



F309_04 14/06/2006 Looking east across Mountmellick Aqueduct.



References Survey of the Architectural Heritage of County Laois (Dublin: NIAH, 2002).

Feature	F310	Debicot Bridge
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Site type Bridge (road/canal)

County Co Laois Townland Strahard

Town Address

Grid 246876 207715 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'Debicot Bridge' on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Masonry arch bridge formerly carried accommodation road over now-infilled section of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal. Of randomly coursed squared limestone rubble. The arch is of semicircular profile and spans c.6.74m. Its soffit is of squared rubble and the voussoirs and quoins are of finely dressed stone. A towpath runs through the south side (now buried along with bed of canal). Both faces of the bridge curve outwards to terminate in out-projecting piers embellished with finely dressed string course which continues around outside base of parapets. The inside faces of the parapets are of random rubble and are spaced at 3.46m; they are coped with finely dressed limestone blocks. Humped deck. No datestones. The approach roads have been removed at both ends and the bridge is now bypassed to east by a track across the infilled bed. Heavy ivy overgrowth.

Evaluation Of architectural and historical merit. Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection	Action	Include in RPS
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Other databases IWAI MMC 200; LAIAR-008-022

Photographs

F310_01 14/06/2006 Debicot Bridge, from south-west.



F310_02 14/06/2006 Debicot Bridge, from north-east.



F310_03 14/06/2006 Debicot Bridge: north-east terminal pier detail.



Feature F311

Site type Bridge (canal/river)

County Co Laois Townland Strahard

Town Address

Grid 246436 207739 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Associated with Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'aqueduct' on 1839 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Laois sheet 8). Still extant in 1976.

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description The canal banks have been demolished and its bed infilled. No visible traces of former aqueduct which carried canal over drainage ditch.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-021

Feature F312a

Site type Canal basin
County Co Laois Townland Ballycullenbeg
Town Mountmellick Address Harbour Street
Grid 246135 207751 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Terminus of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 8); cited as 'canal terminus' on 1907 edition. It was infilled prior to 1976.

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description Basin infilled. Site now used as scrap yard and waste recycling depot.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases IWAI MMC 210; LAIAR-008-020

Photographs
F312_01 14/06/2006 Canal basin and stores (from D'Arcy book).



Feature	F312b				
Site type	Quay				
County	Co Laois	Townland	Ballycullenbeg		
Town	Mountmellick	Address	Harbour Street		
Grid	246183	207733	OS six-inch sheet	LA 008	
History	Associated with terminus of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 8); cited as 'quay' on 1907 edition.				
Survey date	14/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond		
Ownership					
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A	Current use	N/A
Description	Basin infilled and no visible remains of quay. Site now used as scrap yard and waste recycling depot.				
Evaluation	No industrial heritage significance.				
Significance	Record only				
Statutory protection	Action				
Other databases	IWAI MMC 210; LAIAR-008-020				

Feature F312c

Site type Canal store
County Co Laois Townland Ballycullenbeg
Town Mountmellick Address Harbour Street
Grid 246125 207733 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Associated with terminus of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Shown on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 8); cited as 'canal stores' in 1907 edition. Demolished sometime after 1985. Old photographs shows four buildings along the south edge of the basin (two-, three- and four-storeys high).

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
Ownership Private (MSM Recycling Ltd).
Completeness Some remains Condition Good Current use Scrap yard

Description Remains of former canal stores along south side of canal basin. Demolished save for truncated remains of east, south and west walls. Random rubble limestone walls with ashlar limestone quoin (with string course) at south-west corner. The walls have been lowered and are now coped with concrete blocks. Segmental- and square-headed brick-trimmed doors and windows discernible, but all now infilled with concrete blocks; one of the window openings has a sandstone cill. A new vehicle entrance has been cut through the west wall. The walls have been extended in concrete blockwork to enclose the scarp yard which now occupies the site.

Evaluation The significance of this building is diminished by its incompleteness and it is now only of local industrial heritage significance. Already included in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 687).

Significance Local
Statutory protection RPS LA 687 Action

Other databases IWAI MMC 210; LAIAR-008-020; NIAH 12800801

Photographs
F312c_01 14/06/2006 Canal stores, from south-east.





Feature	F312d	Canal House		
Site type	House (canal related)			
County	Co Laois	Townland	Ballycullenbeg	
Town	Mountmellick	Address	Harbour Street	
Grid	246075 207757	OS six-inch sheet	LA 008	
History	Associated with terminus of Mountmellick Branch of Grand Canal (opened 1831; closed 1960). Cited as 'Collector's Office' on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 4) and as 'Harbour House' on 1907 edition. Its current owner, Mr Bill Lawlor, is the son of the last canal agent.			
Survey date	14/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond	
Ownership	Private (Mr Bill Lawlor)			
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Excellent	Current use Dwelling
Description	Detached three-bay, two-storey former Grand Canal agent's house, with single-bay, two-storey return, to which a matching three-bay, two-storey extension has been added in recent times. The construction of the latter entailed the demolition of a single-storey lean-to on the west gable of the return. Original section is aligned north-south at east end of block and formerly overlooked west end of canal basin. It is now separated from the basin by a modern concrete wall and is in different ownership. Hipped replacement artificial slate roof and over-sailing bracketed eaves to all sections. The original house has an ashlar limestone chimney, and the extension a concrete one. Half-round metal rainwater goods. Walls were originally lime washed, but all are now cement harled (over masonry in the case of the original sections). Smooth-rendered basal course and ashlar limestone string course at first floor level (replicated in concrete in the extension). Square-headed openings. The main doorway is in the corner of the return. Replacement uPVC windows. Stone cills to original section and concrete ones to extension. Ashlar gate piers at north end of house into rear yard.			
Evaluation	One of the most intact buildings on the Mountmellick Branch of the Grand Canal. Excepting the replacement windows, all modifications are sympathetic to the building's original character. Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Record of Protected Structures.			
Significance	Regional			
Statutory protection		Action	Include in RPS	
Other databases	LAIAR-008-020			

Photographs

F312d_01 14/06/2006 Canal House, from south-east. The right-hand block is original, that at left the modern extension.



F312d_02 14/06/2006 Canal House, from north-east. Note gate into yard.



F312d_03 14/06/2006 Canal House before extension (courtesy Mr Bill Lawlor).



APPENDIX 6:
OTHER BUILT HERITAGE FEATURES

Feature F901 Grand Canal (Athy Branch)

Site type Canal
 County Co Kildare Townland Monasterevin; Skirteen
 Town Monasterevin Address
 Grid 262252 210610 OS six-inch sheet KL 021; KL 026

History The Athy Branch (also called the Barrow Line) of the Grand Canal was constructed by the Grand Canal Company between 1783 and 1791 in order to link up the main Dublin-Shannon line with the River Barrow. The section from Lowtown, on the main line, to Monasterevin was opened in 1785. However, the Barrow was found to be too shallow for navigation, so the canal was continued on to Athy, from where the river was made navigable. At Monasterevin, barges descended through a lock to the river, crossed it and ascended up through another lock to the canal on the opposite bank. This system was made redundant with the opening of the Barrow Aqueduct in 1826.

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Public (Waterways Ireland)
 Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Canal

Description The Athy Branch of the Grand Canal runs from Lowtown, on the main Dublin-Shannon line, to Athy. The section in the vicinity of Mountmellick Junction is in recreational use, with towpaths on either side.

Evaluation Of national industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Kildare CC Record of Protected Structures.

Significance National

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases

Photographs
 F901_01 22/08/2006 Looking east along Grand Canal from Mountmellick Junction.



F901_02 22/08/2006 Looking south along Grand Canal from Mountmellick Junction.



F901_03 22/08/2006 Looking south-west along Grand Canal from bridge (feature 901d).



Feature	F901a	Draw Bridge
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Site type	Bridge (road/canal)		
County	Co Kildare	Townland	Monasterevin
Town	Monasterevin	Address	
Grid	262425 210656	OS six-inch sheet	KL 026
History	<p>According to Samuel Lewis (Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, 1837, vol.2, page 386), the original bridge was erected in 1829. He describes it as "an elegant cast-iron drawbridge over the canal". This cast iron bridge has evidently been replaced with a steel structure, probably in the mid 1900s. Marked on the 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 26).</p>		
Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership	Public (Kildare CC)		
Completeness	Substantial remains	Condition	Good
		Current use	Road bridge
Description	<p>Metal girder bridge carries road over Athy Branch of Grand Canal immediately east of Barrow Aqueduct. Comprises a metal girder span which is raised by two electrically-operated pulleys running over steel uprights on north side. Originally the bridge was raised manually, with a hinged counterweight on top to facilitate its raising. This was been removed on safety grounds when the bridge was electrified.</p>		
Evaluation	<p>Local industrial heritage significance. Interest has been diminished by removal of overhead counterbalance. Is included in the Monasterevin Record of Protected Structures (IP 22).</p>		
Significance	Local		
Statutory protection	RPS Monasterevin IP 22	Action	
Other databases	NIAH 11816003		

Photographs

F901a_01 22/08/2006 Draw bridge from east.



F901a_02 22/08/2006 Draw bridge, from west.



Feature F901b Barrow Aqueduct

Site type Bridge (canal/river)
 County Co Kildare Townland Monasterevin; Skirteen
 Town Monasterevin Address
 Grid 262359 210639 OS six-inch sheet KL 026

History Opened 1826. Superseded the locking system down to and up from the Barrow. Marked on the 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 26).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Public (Waterways Ireland)
 Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Canal aqueduct

Description This three-arch aqueduct carries the Athy Branch of the Grand Canal over the River Barrow. Abutments, piers, spandrels and wing walls are of ashlar limestone. The arches are of shallow segmental profile and have vee-jointed dressed stone voussoirs. Rounded cutwaters. A platband runs across the crown of the arches and is surmounted by a cantilevered footpath on both sides of the canal. Wrought-iron railings.

Evaluation National industrial heritage significance. Merits its current inclusion in the Monasterevin Record of Protected Structures (IP 48).

Significance National

Statutory protection RPS Monasterevin IP 48 Action

Other databases NIAH 11816004

Photographs
 F901b_01 22/08/2006 Barrow Aqueduct, from south-east.



F901b_02 22/08/2006 Barrow Aqueduct, from south-west.



F901b_03 22/08/2006 Looking east across Barrow Aqueduct.



Feature F901c

Site type Lock

County Co Kildare Townland Skirteen

Town Monasterevin Address

Grid 262318 210430 OS six-inch sheet KL 026

History Built by the Grand Canal Company c.1785. Marked on the 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 26).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Waterways Ireland)

Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Lock

Description This lock, no.25 on the system (as measured from Dublin), is a short distance downstream from Mountmellick Junction. It comprises a single chamber faced with regularly coursed ashlar limestone. Both pairs of gates are steel replacements, with a sluice and timber lever to each gate. An accommodation bridge crosses the south end of the chamber (feature 901d).

Evaluation Group value with bridge. Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Kildare CC Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

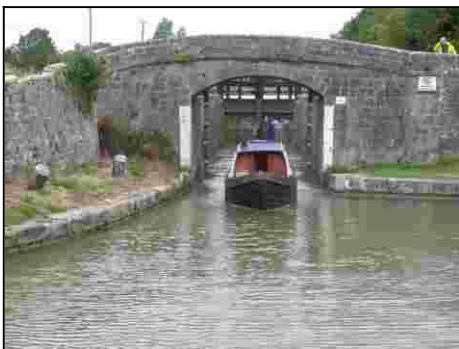
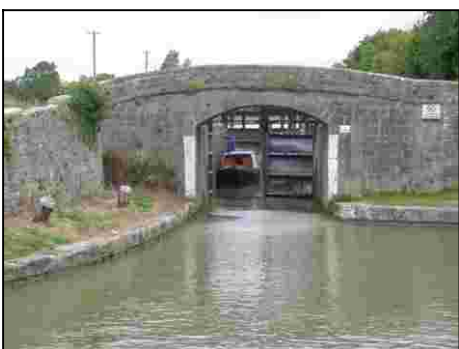
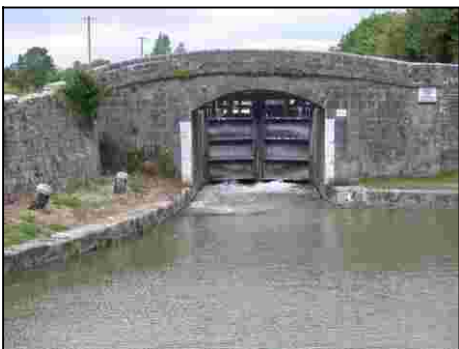
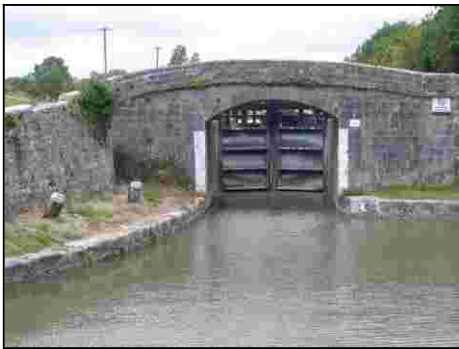
Other databases NIAH 11816102

Photographs

F901c_01 22/08/2006 Looking north along lock chamber.



Passage of barge through lock (photographs by John Feehan, 2006)



Feature F901d

Site type Bridge (foot/canal)

County Co Kildare Townland Skirteen

Town Monasterevin Address

Grid 262328 210413 OS six-inch sheet KL 026

History Built by the Grand Canal Company c.1785. Marked on the 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 26).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Waterways Ireland)

Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Foot bridge

Description A single arch bridge carries an accommodation track over the south end of the lock (feature 901c). Its abutments are a continuation of the side of the lock chamber and are of regularly coursed ashlar limestone. The voussoirs of the arch, which is of segmental profile, spandrels, parapets and their copings are similarly constructed. A dressed stone string course runs across the outside faces of the parapets. The walls curve outwards to terminate in plain piers. Deck is humped.

Evaluation Group value with lock. Regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in Kildare CC Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases NIAH 11816101

Photographs

F901d_01 22/08/2006 Bridge at lock, from south-west. Note lock house at right.





Feature F901e

Site type Lock keeper's house
County Co Kildare Townland Skirteen
Town Monasterevin Address
Grid 262326 210433 OS six-inch sheet KL 026

History The lock house was originally built by the Grand Canal Company c.1785. It is marked on the 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 26). This is probably a later 20th century replacement.

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
Ownership Public (Waterways Ireland)
Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Dwelling

Description Four-bay, single-storey former lock keeper's house on east side of lock. Aligned north-south with principal elevation facing west to chamber. Replacement pitched tiled roof with two rendered chimneys. Cement-harled walls. Square-headed openings; replacement uPVC windows. At the time of survey a single-storey extension was being added to the rear elevation.

Evaluation No special industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases

Photographs
F901e_01 22/08/2006 Lock-keeper's house, from south-west.



Feature F901f Moore's Bridge

Site type Bridge (road/canal)
 County Co Kildare Townland Monasterevin
 Town Monasterevin Address
 Grid 262444 210605 OS six-inch sheet KL 026

History Erected 1784. When the Barrow Aqueduct was opened in 1826, this section of canal down to the Barrow became redundant. However, the bridge was retained rather than demolished. Marked as "Moore's Br." on the 1838 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 26).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Public (Kildare CC)
 Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Road bridge

Description A single masonry span carries the road over a now-infilled section of the Athy Branch of the Grand Canal a short distance south-east of the Barrow Aqueduct. It is of random rubble construction. On the east side, only the top of the dressed stone arch is visible. Above the crown is an inscribed stone reading "Moore's Bridge 1784". The west side is partly open and used as a store by the occupant of the adjoining house. There is now no trace of the line of the canal and associated lock down to the Barrow.

Evaluation This survival is now the only tangible evidence of the line of the canal prior to the construction of the Barrow Aqueduct. It survives complete, albeit partly buried and has an attested date. It is of regional industrial heritage significance and merits inclusion in the Monasterevin Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional
 Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases NIAH 11816006

Photographs
 F901f_01 22/08/2006 East face of Moore's Bridge (canal infilled).



Feature F901g

Site type	House (canal related)				
County	Co Kildare	Townland	Monasterevin		
Town	Monasterevin	Address			
Grid	262441	210741	OS six-inch sheet	KL 021	
History	Built by the Grand Canal Company, probably in the 1780s. Marked on the 1837 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 21).				
Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond		
Ownership	Private				
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Excellent	Current use	Apartments
Description	A modern housing development on the west side of the Athy Branch of the Grand Canal incorporates a three-storey, three-bay building formerly belonging to the agent of the Grand Canal Company. This building is aligned north-south on the west side of the canal. Pitched slate roof with raised verges and cement-rendered chimneys. Random rubble walls. Square-headed openings. The principal elevation faces east on to the canal and is symmetrical with a semicircular-headed doorway to ground floor centre (with spoked overlight) and replacement 1/1 sliding sash windows to the two end bays and the floor above.				
Evaluation	Regional industrial heritage significance. Included in the Monasterevin Record of Protected Structures (IP 23).				
Significance	Regional				
Statutory protection	RPS Monasterevin IP 23	Action			
Other databases	NIAH 11816002				
Photographs					
F901g_01	22/08/2006	General view of canal-related house and quay, from south-east.			





Feature F901h Monasterevin Quay

Site type Quay
 County Co Kildare Townland Monasterevin
 Town Monasterevin Address
 Grid 262471 210727 OS six-inch sheet KL 021

History Built by the Grand Canal Company, probably in the 1780s. Marked on the 1837 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 21).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Quay

Description Random-rubble quay along west side of canal. There were originally two rubble stone warehouses, one at either end of the quay. They were demolished in 2000 to make way for new apartments.

Evaluation Of regional industrial heritage merit. Merits inclusion in Monasterevin RPS.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases NIAH 11816002

Photographs

F901h_01 Warehouses. After Kevin Dwyer (2000), *Ireland - the Inner Island: a Journey through Ireland's Waterways*, p.48 (Cork: Collins Press).



Feature F902 Barrow Bridge

Site type Bridge (rail/river)
 County Co Kildare Townland Coolnafearagh; Passland
 Town Monasterevin Address
 Grid 262300 210789 OS six-inch sheet KL 021

History This line was opened as far as Portlaoise by the Great Southern & Western Railway in 1847 (it reached Cork in 1849). The stonework is original, but the deck is a mid/late 20th century replacement. Cited as "Iron Br." on the 1837 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 21).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)
 Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Rail bridge

Description A nine-span metal girder bridge carries the Dublin-Cork line over the River Barrow. The abutments and tapered piers are of rock-faced limestone blocks laid to regular courses and embellished with tooled arrises. The tops of the abutments and piers are embellished with a moulded string course over which concrete pillow blocks have been case to carry the ends of the spans. Both end sections span public roads; sections 6, 7 and 8 (as measured from the east end) span the river. Each section is made up of four RSJs with cantilevered footplates; these have replaced the original structure. The wing walls, which curve outwards and downwards, are of coursed finely dressed limestone blocks. Iarnród Éireann bridge number 398.

Evaluation This is a significant landmark hereabouts and of regional industrial heritage significance. Merits inclusion in the Monasterevin Record of Protected Structures.

Significance Regional
 Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases NIAH 11816001

Photographs
 F902_01 22/08/2006 Barrow Railway Bridge, from north (upstream elevation).



F902_02 22/08/2006 Pier detail at west end of Barrow Bridge.



F902_03 22/08/2006 Abutment detail at west end of Barrow Bridge.



Feature F903 Pass Bridge

Site type Bridge (road/river)

County Co Kildare Townland Coolnafearagh; Passland

Town Monasterevin Address

Grid 262243 210993 OS six-inch sheet KL 021

History Probably of 18th century construction. Cited as "Pass Br." on the 1837 OS six-inch map and subsequent editions (Kildare sheet 21).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Kildare CC)

Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Road bridge

Description A five-arch bridge carries a road over the River Barrow. Of random rubble throughout, the arches are of semicircular profile. They have dressed voussoirs and rise in height to the middle of the bridge, thus creating a strongly humped deck. Angled cutwaters underpinned with concrete. The narrowness of the bridge and its blind hump have necessitated the introduction of traffic lights for safety reasons.

Evaluation A good example of an 18th or early 19th century road-over-river bridge and a prominent local landmark. Of regional industrial heritage significance. Merits current inclusion in Monasterevin Record of Protected Structures (IP 47).

Significance Regional

Statutory protection RPS Monasterevin IP 47 Action

Other databases NIAH 11816100

Photographs
 F903_01 22/08/2006 Pass Bridge from south-east (downstream elevation).



Feature F904

Site type Mile marker

County Co Laois Townland Clonanny

Town Address

Grid 260278 211122 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History First cited on 1907 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5), but probably of 19th century date.

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description Site of milestone on Monasterevin-Portarlinton road.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-019

Feature F905 Balladoogara Fort

Site type Earthwork
 County Co Laois Townland Clonanny
 Town Address
 Grid 259307 210782 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Cited as 'Balladoogara Fort' on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description No upstanding remains of earthwork are now visible.

Evaluation A Recorded Monument (RMP LA005-008---)

Significance Regional

Statutory protection RMP LA005-008--- Action

Other databases SMR LA005-008---

References Sweetman, P.D., Alcock, O. and Moran, B. Archaeological Inventory of County Laois, p.63 (entry 611). Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995.

Feature F906**Kilmullen House**

Site type	House		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Kilmullen
Town	Address		
Grid	258570 210622	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005
History	Cited as 'Kilmullen House' on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5).		
Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership	Private		
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Excellent
		Current use	Dwelling
Description	<p>Detached two-storey house; five bays to ground floor and six to first floor. Aligned NW-SE with its principal elevation facing NW towards the road. Hipped natural slate roof with two rendered chimneys and half-round metal gutters. Painted cement-rendered walls. Square-headed openings (except main entrance). The front elevation is symmetrical. Entrance door to centre (four raised and fielded panels), set in semicircular opening with timber doorcase, aproned sidelights and overlight. The side- and overlights are embellished with decorative lead tracery. All windows to this elevation are 6/6 timber sliding sashes. There is a two-bay, two-storey return to the middle of the rear elevation. Farnyard to south-east of house. Set in landscaped grounds.</p>		
Evaluation	An imposing, well-maintained house. Entrance doorway of particular note. Its status as a Protected Structure (LA 550) is merited.		
Significance	Regional		
Statutory protection	RPS LA 550	Action	
Other databases	NIAH 12800556		
Photographs			
F906_01	22/08/2006	Principal elevation of Kilmullen House.	





Feature	F907					Lea Mill
Site type	Grain mill (water)					
County	Co Laois	Townland	Lea			
Town	Address					
Grid	257655 212308	OS six-inch sheet		LA 005		
History	Cited as 'Corn mill' on 1838 OS six-inch map but not shown on 1888 or 1907 editions (Laois sheet 5).					
Survey date	28/07/2005	Surveyor	Fred Hamond			
Ownership						
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A	Current use	N/A	
Description	No traces of mill survive.					
Evaluation	No industrial heritage significance					
Significance	Record only					
Statutory protection	Action					
Other databases	LAIAR-005-035					

Feature F908 **Lea Church**

Site type Church; Graveyard
 County Co Laois Townland Loughmansland Glebe
 Town Address
 Grid 257490 211957 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Cited as 'Lea Church (in ruins)' on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Unknown

Completeness Substantial remains Condition Poor Current use Disused

Description Disused graveyard of square plan, enclosed by low random rubble wall. Approached from west through semicircular masonry arch (with wrought-iron gate). Various 18th and 19th century grave slabs, laid horizontally and vertically. In middle of graveyard is random rubble fragment of building. Too little now survives to be certain that once part of the former church. Now neglected and overgrown.

Evaluation This site is included in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP LA005-007---).

Significance Regional

Statutory protection RMP LA005-007--- Action

Other databases SMR LA005-007---

Photographs
 F908_01 22/08/2006 Entrance to Lea Graveyard.



F908_02 22/08/2006 Surviving fragment of Lea Church.



F908_03 22/08/2006 Gravestones In Lea Graveyard.



References Sweetman, P.D., Alcock, O. and Moran, B. Archaeological Inventory of County Laois, p.86
(entry 777). Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995.

Feature F909**Lea Castle House**

Site type House
 County Co Laois Townland Lea
 Town Address
 Grid 257243 211955 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Shown on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Poor Current use Disused

Description Detached three-bay, two-storey house aligned east-west, with principal façade facing south. Hipped natural slate roof, two rendered chimneys and vestiges of half-round metal gutters. Cement rendered random rubble walls with advanced eaves. Square-headed openings (except main doorway). Façade is symmetrical and has main entrance doorway to centre, set in a semicircular opening. The door is sheeted over. Flanked by a window to each end bay, with three windows to first floor; those which survive are 6/6 timber sliding sashes with internal shutters. All have stone cills. At centre of rear (north) elevation is a two-bay, two-storey return, similarly detailed and with rendered brick chimney to north gable. No internal access.

Evaluation Although derelict, this building is of local heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection RPS LA 549 Action

Other databases NIAH 12800555

Photographs
 F909_01 22/08/2006 Lea Castle House, from south-west.





Feature F910 **Lea Castle**

Site type Castle
 County Co Laois Townland Lea
 Town Address
 Grid 257101 212041 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Cited as 'Lea Castle (in ruins)' on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5). According to Archaeological Survey, probably built in first quarter of 13th century. Samuel Lewis (Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, 1837) notes that it was the main administrative centre for this region prior to the inception of Portarlinton in the reign of Charles II.

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Private
 Completeness Substantial remains Condition Poor Current use Disused

Description Ruinous remains of a once substantial castle. At west is a four-storey keep, now roofless. Random rubble walls, in excess of 1.7m thick. Two circular bastions to east elevation. The west and south walls have collapsed. Two barrel-vaulted rooms to ground floor. Upper floors have collapsed. Intramural staircase. Outer ward, to east, is three storeys high. Also roofless and with random rubble walls. Two circular bastions to south elevation flanking a high semicircular-arched entrance between (formerly with portcullis). East wall of this structure survives, but north and west walls have collapsed, as have internal floors. Now all heavily overgrown with ivy.

Evaluation This impressive site is both a Recorded Monument (LA005-006---) and Protected Structure (LA 403).

Significance Regional
 Statutory protection RMP LA005-006---; RPS LA 403 Action

Other databases SMR LA005-006---

Photographs
 F910_01 22/08/2006 General view of complex from south-east.



F910_02

22/08/2006

East section, from north-west.



F910_03

22/08/2006

East elevation of west section, from south-east.



F910_04

22/08/2006

West section, from north.



F910_05

22/08/2006

Barrel-vaulted ground floor room in west section.



References

Sweetman, P.D., Alcock, O. and Moran, B. Archaeological Inventory of County Laois, pp 108-109 (entry 936). Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995.

Feature F911

Site type Quarry (limestone)

County Co Laois Townland Lea

Town Address

Grid 257139 211412 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Small quarry shown along side of road on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5). Not explicitly cited as a quarry until 1907 edition.

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Small limestone quarry on south side of road. Exposed vertical quarry face c.8m high at south end. Some infilling at north-east corner.

Evaluation No special industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-015

Photographs
F911_01 22/08/2006 Quarry face from north-west.



Feature F912

Site type Mile marker

County Co Laois Townland Lea

Town Address

Grid 256368 211531 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History First cited on 1907 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5), but probably of 19th century date.

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description Site of milestone on south side of Monasterevin-Portarlinton road.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-013

Feature F913

Site type Earthwork

County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery

Town Portarlinton Address

Grid 255331 212002 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Circular earthwork shown on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description No upstanding traces of earthwork survive. The field has been reclaimed for agricultural use.

Evaluation This site is of archaeological interest and a Recorded Monument (RMP LA005-005---)

Significance Regional

Statutory protection RMP LA005-005--- Action

Other databases SMR LA005-005---

References Sweetman, P.D., Alcock, O. and Moran, B. Archaeological Inventory of County Laois, p.43 (entry 374). Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995.

Feature F914 Odlum's Mill; Portarlington Mill

Site type Grain mill (steam)
 County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
 Town Portarlington Address Station Road, Portarlington
 Grid 254763 211194 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History In 1876, Messrs Odlum opened a large double-pile multi-storey flour mill on the north bank of the Mountmellick branch of the Grand Canal at Portarlington. Cited on 1888 OS six-inch map as 'flour mill', and on 1907 edition as 'Portarlington flour mill'. According to Mr Loftus Odlum, the 1870s mill was destroyed by fire in 1900 and rebuilt in 1903. The extent of this destruction is uncertain. Roller mills (by Messrs Turners) had replaced millstones by 1913, if not before. A sketch in Milling magazine of Oct 1924 shows a large chimney, indicating that it was steam powered. Superseded by a producer gas engine until connected to ESB mains electricity supply in 1934. Twenty-one riveted steel grain bins (by Miag) were erected in 1935-37. The mill stopped in June 1977, to be replaced by a concrete-framed flour mill which started in November 1978. The remains of the original mill were incorporated in a new ancillary building. The new mill contains 12 Simon roller mills and produces bagged flour for the retail trade and bulk soft flour to Jacobs (for biscuit making). Although the mill operates under the Odlum name, the family sold their interest in 1989. The Odlum empire is now owned by Greencore and IAWS.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Private
 Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Grain mill

Description Remains of an 1876 steam-powered flour mill incorporated in buildings behind a working flour mill of 1978. Site also encompasses ancillary 19th century buildings and also mid/late 20th century buildings and structures associated with grain intake, screening and storage, and flour bulk out-loading. See file 005-010 in Laois Industrial Archaeology Record for further details.

Evaluation The flour mills and grain silos are of architectural interest on account of their scale and range of materials. The site is also of historical interest in illustrating over a century of flour milling from the 1860s to 1970s and range of associated structures (e.g. silos). The complex is of technical interest as the only working flour mill left in the county, and one of the few still at work in Ireland. The assemblage of buildings is also a significant feature of the landscape hereabouts. Overall, the complex is of national industrial heritage interest and merits inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures. A more detailed descriptive and photographic survey of its internal features would also be warranted.

Significance National
 Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases LAIAR-005-010

Photographs

F914_01 29/06/2006 Odlum's Mill from south-west.



F914_02 29/06/2006 Odlum's Mill from south-east.



- References
- Feehan, J. Laois: an Environmental History, p.363-364. Stradbally: Ballykilcavan Press, 1983.
- Feehan, J. Laois: an Environmental History, p.365. Stradbally: Ballykilcavan Press, 1983.
- Meehan, P.F. The Laois Millennium Year Book, p.20. 2000.
- Milling, Oct 1924. Reproduced in A. Bielenberg (ed), Irish Flour Milling, p.131. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003.
- Orford, D. Those Were the Days: Memories of Portarlinton, 1900 to 1999, p.101. Portarlinton: Portarlinton Historical Society. N.D.
- Orford, D. Those Were the Days: Memories of Portarlinton, 1900 to 1999, p.224. Portarlinton: Portarlinton Historical Society. N.D.
- Orford, D. Those Were the Days: Memories of Portarlinton, 1900 to 1999, p.226. Portarlinton: Portarlinton Historical Society. N.D.
- Orford, D. Those Were the Days: Memories of Portarlinton, 1900 to 1999, p.43. Portarlinton: Portarlinton Historical Society. N.D.
- Portarlinton Heritage Foundation. 1996 Calendar (Making the Past Work for the Future).
- Redmond Photographic Collection, Laois County Library (Local Studies Dept), Portlaoise.
- Takei, A. 'The political economy of the Irish flour-milling industry 1922 -1945'. In A. Bielenberg (ed), Irish Flour Milling, p.145. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003.

Feature F915**Russell's Saw Mill**

Site type Saw mill (steam)

County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery

Town Portarlinton Address Station Road, Portarlinton

Grid 254785 211100 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Not cited on 1907 OS six-inch map or previous editions. Probably built in 1910s - a photograph shows mill in operation in early 1920s.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Some remains Condition Fair Current use Store

Description The only surviving trace of this complex is the two-bay, three-storey former mill manager's house fronting Station Road.

Evaluation No special industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-046

Photographs
 F915_01 29/06/2006 McMahan premises from south-west.





References Orford, D. Those Were the Days: Memories of Portarlinton, 1900 to 1999, p.39.
Portarlinton: Portarlinton Historical Society. N.D.

Orford, D. Those Were the Days: Memories of Portarlinton, 1900 to 1999, p.73.
Portarlinton: Portarlinton Historical Society. N.D.

Feature F916a Portarlington Station

Site type Station building
 County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
 Town Portarlington Address Station Road, Portarlington
 Grid 254812 210898 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Although the railway line opened in 1847, this building was not completed until c.1850. Built by the Great Southern & Western Railway Co to design by Sancton Wood. Refurbished by Iarnród Éireann in 1995.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)
 Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Railway station

Description Multi-bay, one- and two-storey station building on north side of line, incorporating ticket office, waiting room and station master's former house. Pitched natural slate roofs, brick and limestone chimneys, and decorative bargeboards and over-sailing eaves. Walls of dressed limestone blocks laid randomly. Square- and two-centred headed openings. Windows are fixed, 1/1 and 3/3 sliding sashes. Ornamental tower on platform side at west end. Open-sided waiting area on platform side.

Evaluation Of architectural, historical and social merit and of regional industrial heritage significance. Merits current inclusion in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 143).

Significance Regional
 Statutory protection RPS LA 143 Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-028; NIAH 12800502

Photographs
 F916_01 29/06/2006 Station complex from west.



F916_02 29/06/2006 Station complex from west.



F916_03 29/06/2006 Structures on north side of platform, from south-east.



F916_04 29/06/2006 Structures on south side of platform, from north-east.



F916a_01 29/06/2006 Station building (north), from north-west.





Feature F916b Portarlington Station

Site type Bridge (foot/rail)
 County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
 Town Portarlington Address Station Road, Portarlington
 Grid 254820 210881 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Probably of earlier 20th century date.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)

Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Disused

Description A single-span metal lattice footbridge over double-track railway line at Portarlington Station. Span comprises T-section top and bottom strings between which is lattice bracing. Metal plates are laid across the bottom members to form the deck. The girders curve downwards at both ends to platforms supported on cast-iron columns, from which cast-iron steps lead down to the platforms. No longer in use, having been superseded by a modern footbridge to its east.

Evaluation Primarily of technical interest as a typical example of a station footbridge. Group value with rest of complex. Merits present inclusion in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 143_A).

Significance Regional

Statutory protection RPS LA 143_A Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-028; NIAH 12800502

Photographs
 F916b_01 29/06/2006 Foot bridge from south-west.



Feature F916c Portarlington Station

Site type Station building
 County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
 Town Portarlington Address Station Road, Portarlington
 Grid 254814 210863 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Although the main station building opened in c.1850, this building was not completed until 1861. Closed 1937.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)

Completeness Complete Condition Good/Fair Current use Station building

Description Detached multi-bay one- and two-storey building along platform on south side of line, incorporating waiting room and former refreshment rooms and staff accommodation. Roof, walls and openings detailed as station building on opposite platform. Small metal water tank at north-west corner. Restaurant section characterised by deep hipped roof, but is now derelict.

Evaluation Of architectural merit. Group value with rest of station complex. Regional heritage interest. Merits current inclusion in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 143).

Significance Regional

Statutory protection RPS LA 143 Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-028; NIAH 12800502

Photographs

F916c_01 29/06/2006 Station building (south), from north-west.



Feature F916d Portarlington Station

Site type	Platform		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Cooltedery
Town	Portarlington	Address	Station Road, Portarlington
Grid	254832 210884	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005
History	Opened 1847 by the Great Southern & Western Railway Co. There was originally a third line between those along each platform. This was used to hold the Athlone train whilst awaiting the main line trains. It was removed in 1976.		
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership	Public (Iarnród Éireann)		
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Good
		Current use	Platform
Description	Platforms on both sides of line, here doubled. Faced with random rubble and concrete blocks, with concrete copings.		
Evaluation	Group value with rest of station complex. Regional heritage interest. Merits current inclusion in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 143).		
Significance	Regional		
Statutory protection	RPS LA 143	Action	
Other databases	LAIAR-005-028; NIAH 12800502		

Feature F916e Portarlington Station

Site type Water tank
 County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
 Town Portarlington Address Station Road, Portarlington
 Grid 254796 210856 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Of 20th century date.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)

Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Disused

Description Freestanding raised water tank to west of station building on south side of line. Of welded steel and resting on RSJs supported on diagonally braced cast-iron columns. Probably no longer in use.

Evaluation Group value with rest of station complex. Regional heritage interest. Merits current inclusion in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 143).

Significance Regional

Statutory protection RPS LA 143 Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-028; NIAH 12800502

Photographs
 F916e_01 29/06/2006 Water tower from south-west.



Feature F916f Portarlington Station

Site type Goods shed
 County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
 Town Portarlington Address Station Road, Portarlington
 Grid 254852 210904 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Opened c.1850 by the Great Southern & Western Railway Co. Probably designed by Sancton Wood, the station's architect. Goods services were discontinued in 1975 with the exception of sugar beet traffic.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)
 Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Disused

Description Detached three-bay, single-storey goods shed aligned east-west to east of station building on north side of track. Pitched natural slate roof (on king-post trusses). Squared random rubble walls. Brick segmental-headed loco doors on each gable. Sliding doors to north elevation. Openings on platform side have been infilled. Raised loading platform internally. Small office annex on west gable. No longer in use but survives in good condition (evidence of roof repairs).

Evaluation Of architectural merit. Group value with rest of station complex. Regional heritage interest. Merits current inclusion in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 143).

Significance Regional
 Statutory protection RPS LA 143 Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-028; NIAH 12800502

Photographs
 F916f_01 29/06/2006 Goods shed from north-west.





Feature F916g Portarlington Station

Site type Canteen
 County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
 Town Portarlington Address Station Road, Portarlington
 Grid 254877 210898 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Opened c.1850 by the Great Southern & Western Railway Co. Probably designed by Sancton Wood, the station's architect.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)

Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Store

Description Detached three-bay, single-storey store at east end of station complex, on north side of track. Pitched natural slate roof with limestone and brick chimneys. Square-headed openings with margined 1/1 sliding sash windows. Still in use as mess roof for station staff.

Evaluation Of architectural merit. Group value with rest of station complex. Regional heritage interest. Merits current inclusion in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 143).

Significance Regional

Statutory protection RPS LA 143 Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-028; NIAH 12800502

Photographs

F916g_01 29/06/2006 Canteen at east end of complex, from south-east.



Feature F916h Portarlington Station

Site type Post box
 County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
 Town Portarlington Address Station Road, Portarlington
 Grid 254825 210892 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History 19th century pillar box.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)

Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Post box

Description Freestanding cast-iron pillar box on platform side of station building on north side of line. Ornate "VR" [=Victoria Regina] cast on front. At base is makers name - A. Handyside & Co Ltd/ Derby & London. Still in use.

Evaluation A well preserved Victorian pillar box with an attested maker. Of regional heritage significance. Merits current inclusion in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 143_B).

Significance Regional

Statutory protection RPS LA 143_B Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-028; NIAH 12800502

Photographs
 F916h_01 29/06/2006 Pillar box on north platform.



Feature	F916i	Portarlington Station	
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Site type	Locomotive shed		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Cooltedery
Town	Portarlington	Address	Station Road, Portarlington
Grid	255013 210899	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005
History	Probably an original feature of the station (i.e. dating to 1850s). Shown on 1888 OS six-inch map and explicitly cited as 'engine house' on 1907 edition (Laois sheet 5).		
Survey date	22/08/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership			
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A
		Current use	N/A
Description	Site of engine shed.		
Evaluation	No industrial heritage significance.		
Significance	Record only		
Statutory protection	Action		
Other databases	LAIAR-005-028		

Feature F916j Portarlington Station

Site type Turntable
County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
Town Portarlington Address Station Road, Portarlington
Grid 254992 210868 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Cited as turntable on 1888 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description No traces of turntable, or siding thereto, survive.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-028

Feature F916k Odlum's Mill siding

Site type Railway siding

County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery

Town Portarlinton Address Station Road, Portarlinton

Grid 254833 210933 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History First shown on the 1907 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)

Completeness Some remains Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Siding serving Odalum's Mill survives at east end, at junction with main line. Comprises a single track with loading bank along north side. North end of siding cleared.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-010

Photographs
F916k_01 29/06/2006 Looking north-west along former Odalum's Siding from junction with main line.



Feature F917

Site type Bridge (road/rail)
County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
Town Portarlinton Address Station Road, Portarlinton
Grid 254729 210867 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History This railway line was opened as far as Portlaoise by the Great Southern & Western Railway in 1847 (it reached Cork in 1849). The stonework is original, but the deck is a mid/late 20th century replacement.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
Ownership Public (Laois CC)
Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Road bridge

Description A twin-span reinforced-concrete girder bridge carries a public road over the Dublin-Cork railway immediately west of Portarlinton Station. Abutments are of rock-faced limestone blocks with tooled arrises. Pier is of squared limestone laid randomly. Dressed masonry string course along line of original arch springing on main (north) span. Original spans replaced with pre-cast reinforced-concrete beams. Parapets of cast-in-situ concrete. Squared limestone rubble wing walls with masonry copings. Road ramped up to both ends. Iarnród Éireann bridge number 119.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.
Significance Record only
Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-027

Photographs
F917_01 29/06/2006 Road bridge from east.





Feature F918

Site type Railway
County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
Town Portarlinton Address
Grid 254702 210863 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History This railway line was opened as far as Portlaoise by the Great Southern & Western Railway in 1847 (it reached Cork in 1849). At Ballybrophy, there is a branch line to Limerick, opened in 1864.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)
Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Railway
Description Double track railway line from Dublin to Cork in use by Iarnród Éireann.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-023

Photographs
F918_01 22/08/2006 Looking west along railway line from road bridge just west of Portarlinton Station. Cork line at left; Galway line at right.



- References Callaghan, S. 'The rise and fall of railways in Laois'. In Laois Association Yearbook, 1996-97. p.29.
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- Walsh, H. Borris-in-Ossory, Co Laois, pp 134-137. Kilkenny: Kilkenny Journal, 1969.

Feature	F919				
Site type	Railway				
County	Co Laois	Townland	Cooltedery		
Town	Portarlinton	Address			
Grid	254262	211061	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005	
History	Portarlinton to Tullamore section of railway line opened 1854 (extended to Athlone 1859). Since 1973, has been used as the main line from Dublin to Galway.				
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond		
Ownership	Public (Iarnród Éireann)				
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Excellent	Current use	Railway
Description	Embanked single-track railway line runs from Portarlinton Station to Tullamore and onwards to Athlone and Galway.				
Evaluation	Local industrial heritage significance.				
Significance	Local				
Statutory protection	Action				
Other databases	LAIAR-005-003				
References	Johnson, S. Johnson's Atlas & Gazetteer of the Railways of Ireland, p.69. Leicester: Midland Publishing, 1997.				

Feature F920a

Site type Railway junction

County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery

Town Portarlinton Address Station Road, Portarlinton

Grid 254673 210860 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Portarlinton to Tullamore section of railway line opened 1854 (extended to Athlone 1859). Since 1973, has been used as the main line from Dublin to Galway.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)

Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Railway junction

Description Single track line diverges north-west to Tullamore and Athlone from double track Dublin-Cork line just west of road-over-railway bridge at Portarlinton Station.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases

Photographs

F920a_01 29/06/2006 Railway junction from road bridge (feature 917).



Feature F920b

Site type Signal box

County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery

Town Portarlinton Address Station Road, Portarlinton

Grid 254697 210875 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Probably erected c.1854 when branch to Tullamore opened. Apparently the tallest signal box ever built in Ireland. Became obsolete when new signalling system introduced in 1976.

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description The signal box has been completely removed.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-028

Feature F921 Portarlington Gasworks

Site type	Gas Works		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Cooltedery
Town	Portarlington	Address	Station Road, Portarlington
Grid	254585 210876	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005
History	First shown on 1888 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5); captioned as "Gas ho". On the 1907 edition, a gasometer and chimney are captioned.		
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership			
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A
		Current use	N/A
Description	Site cleared and no visible remains survive.		
Evaluation	No industrial heritage significance.		
Significance	Record only		
Statutory protection	Action		
Other databases	LAIAR-005-026		

Feature F922

Site type Quarry

County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery

Town Portarlinton Address Station Road, Portarlinton

Grid 254551 210891 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Shown on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5), but not explicitly captioned as a quarry until the 1907 edition.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description Quarry has been infilled and no visible traces remain.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-025

Feature F923 Ballymorris House

Site type House
 County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery
 Town Portarlinton Address
 Grid 254335 211281 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Shown on 1838 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 5).

Survey date 22/08/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Dwelling

Description Detached three-bay, two-storey house set in own grounds on east side of road. Aligned NW-SE with principal elevation facing SW. Hipped natural slate roof with two rendered chimneys and half-round metal gutters. Cement-harled random rubble walls with ashlar base course and string course at first floor level (on front façade). The frontage is symmetrical with a semicircular-headed doorway to ground floor middle. Timber door has eight raised panels, aproned sidelights and semicircular-headed overlight, all with decorative leadwork tracery. The end bays have 9/6 sliding sash windows to the ground floor, both with narrow 3/2 flanking windows, none of which have cills. Above the door is a semicircular window opening with three 2/2 sashes. The end bays have 6/6 sashes, both with 2/2 flankers. The first floor windows have concrete cills. Metal-framed casement windows to gables. Two-storey 20th century extension to rear elevation, with earlier outbuildings behind. No internal access. Entrance from main road comprises cast-iron railings on curved dwarf ashlar limestone wall which terminates in square cast-concrete piers. Vehicle gates to centre are flanked by pedestrian gates to both sides. The handles to the gates are in the style of a duck's beak.

Evaluation Although modest in scale, this house has sufficient architectural character to make it of local heritage significance. It is already included in the Record of Protected Structures (LA 674).

Significance Local

Statutory protection RPS LA 674 Action

Other databases NIAH 12800554

Photographs

F923_01 22/08/2006 Front façade of Ballymorris House, from south-east.



F923_02 22/08/2006 Front door detail.



F923_03 22/08/2006 Entrance screen at main road.



F923_04 22/08/2006 Duck's beak detail on gate handle.



Feature F924

Site type	Bridge (rail/road)		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Cooltedery
Town	Portarlinton	Address	
Grid	254143 211361	OS six-inch sheet	LA 005
History	Portarlinton to Tullamore section of railway line opened 1854 (extended to Athlone 1859). Now in use as the Dublin-Galway line. Deck replaced in mid/ate 1900s.		
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership	Public (Iarnród Éireann)		
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Excellent
		Current use	Railway bridge
Description	A skew single-span girder bridge carries a single-track railway from Portarlinton to Tullamore over a public road. The abutments are of rock-faced limestone blocks laid to courses and embellished with tooled arrises. The deck is a replacement and comprises plate girders along each side, with metal troughing between. Both ends rest on concrete pillow blocks. Cantilevered footplates and handrails across each side. The span measures 7.51m orthogonally, and 10.92m on the skew. The abutments are approximately twice the depth of the deck - the bridge was built to accommodate two tracks, but only one was laid. Curved wing walls of squared random rubble coped with dressed stones and terminating in square piers. Iarnród Éireann bridge number 406.		
Evaluation	Of local industrial heritage significance only.		
Significance	Local		
Statutory protection			Action
Other databases	LAIAR-005-005		
Photographs			
F924_01	29/06/2006	South-west elevation of railway bridge.	



F924_02

29/06/2006

South-east abutment of railway bridge. Note width compared with that of deck.



Feature F925

Site type Bridge (rail/road)

County Co Laois Townland Cooltedery

Town Portarlington Address

Grid 254068 211489 OS six-inch sheet LA 005

History Portarlington to Tullamore section of railway line opened 1854 (extended to Athlone 1859). Now in use as the Dublin-Galway line. Deck replaced in 1900s.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Public (Iarnród Éireann)

Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Railway bridge

Description A single-span reinforced-concrete bridge carries a single-track railway from Portarlington to Tullamore over a field accommodation track. The abutments are of squared limestone rubble brought to courses and embellished with rock-faced quoins with tooled arrises. The original flat span has been replaced with a reinforced-concrete deck and parapets of 3.62m span. A timber footplates runs across the east face of the bridge. The abutments are 8.67m deep, but the deck is only 4.67m - it was obviously built for two tracks, but only one was laid. Curved wing walls of squared random rubble coped with dressed stones. Iarnród Éireann bridge number 406.

Evaluation Of local industrial heritage significance only.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-005-004

Photographs

F925_01 29/06/2006 West elevation.



Feature	F926				
Site type	Quarry				
County	Co Laois	Townland	Ballymorris		
Town	Address				
Grid	253913	210735	OS six-inch sheet	LA 004	
History	Shown on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 4). Explicitly cited as 'quarry' on 1907 edition.				
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond		
Ownership					
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A	Current use	N/A
Description	Quarry completely infilled and no visible traces.				
Evaluation	No industrial heritage significance.				
Significance	Record only				
Statutory protection	Action				
Other databases	LAIAR-004-012				

Feature F927

Site type Mile marker

County Co Laois Townland Ballymorris

Town Address

Grid 253135 211085 OS six-inch sheet LA 004

History Although first cited on 1907 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 4), undoubtedly of earlier date.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Ornamental feature

Description Freestanding masonry milestone on west side of public road into Portarlinton. Possibly slightly relocated, it is now embedded in concrete in a grass verge in front of a modern bungalow. It stands 80cm high and is of triangular cross section. Its two road faces and canted top surface are finely dressed. The south-facing side is inscribed "1/ Mile to/ Portar/ linton". The north face reads "5/ Miles/ to Mount/ melick". The top reads "Qcty/ Dub/ 36" [= Queen's County].

Evaluation This is a rare example of an 18th or early 19th century milestone. It is well maintained and a prominent roadside feature. Of regional significance, it merits inclusion in the Record of Monuments & Places.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RMP

Other databases LAIAR-004-025

Photographs

F927_01 29/06/2006 Milepost from south, showing roadside context.



F927_02

29/06/2006

Milepost from south (scale is 30cm long).



F927_03

29/06/2006

Milepost from north (scale is 30cm long).



Feature F928 Kilnahown Bridge

Site type	Bridge (road/river)		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Coolnavarnoge and Coolaghy; Co Offaly
Town	Address		
Grid	251346 210693	OS six-inch sheet	LA 004; OF 033
History	Cited as 'Kilnahown Bridge' on 1838, 1884 and 1910 OS maps for Co Offaly. Probably erected in second half of 18th century.		
Survey date	29/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
Ownership	Public (Laois CC; Offaly CC)		
Completeness	Complete	Condition	Good
		Current use	Road bridge
Description	Four-arch masonry bridge carries minor road over River Barrow at county boundary. Of random rubble construction throughout. Originally there were angled cutwaters on the upstream (west) ends of the piers only, rising to above arch spring level. Mass concrete cutwaters were added on the downstream side and rise to spring level only. The bases of the abutments and piers are underpinned with concrete. The arches are of semicircular profile and have squared rubble voussoirs. From east (Offaly) to west (Laois), the spans are: 6.08m, 4.78m, 5.41m and 4.82m. There is also a small flood arch (now dry) on the Laois side. The parapets are 6.54m apart. Slight hump to deck.		
Evaluation	Architecturally, this bridge is of interest in terms of its scale, unadorned style typical of an 18th century Grand Jury construction. It also enhances the riverscape hereabouts. It is of regional heritage significance and merits inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures.		
Significance	Regional		
Statutory protection		Action	Include in RPS
Other databases	LAIAR-004-006; OFIAR-033-006		
Photographs			
F928_01	29/06/2006	Upstream (south-west) elevation of bridge.	



F928_02 17/06/2004 South (upstream) elevation, from left bank.



F928_03 17/06/2004 North (downstream) elevation, from right bank.



Feature	F929	Tinnakill Castle
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Site type Sheela-na-gig; Tower house

County Co Laois Townland Tinnakill

Town Address

Grid 250170 208842 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Cited as 'Tinnakill Castle' on 1839 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 8). Thought by Archaeological Survey to be of late 16th or early 17th century date. One of two sheela-na-gigs built into a nearby farmyard wall are thought to be from the castle. However, they were removed from this wall and their whereabouts is unknown.

Survey date 29/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Substantial remains Condition Poor Current use Disused

Description Ruinous remains of four-storey tower house. Of random rubble throughout, with dressed stone openings. Walls are partly collapsed above second storey. Remains of roof parapet. Door on south elevation has two-centred head. Intramural spiral staircase at south corner has slit windows with splayed internal reveals. Flat-headed windows to upper floors. All internal floors now missing with exception of vaulted ceiling to second floor. Commands good views of flat ground on all sides. Not maintained. Ivy overgrowth will eventually dislodge stones, causing further collapse.

Evaluation Regional heritage significance. Current inclusion in RMP (LA008-00101-; LA008-00102-) and RPS (RPS LA 398) justified on ground of architectural, archaeological, historical and landscape merits.

Significance Regional

Statutory protection RMP LA008-00101-; RMP LA008-00102-; RPS LA 398 Action

Other databases SMR LA008-00101-; SMR LA008-00102-

Photographs

F929_01 29/06/2006 Tinnakill Castle from north-west.



F929_02 29/06/2006 Doorway on south elevation.



References Sweetman, P.D., Alcock, O. and Moran, B. Archaeological Inventory of County Laois, p.116 (entry 968). Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995.

Feature F930a Rock Quarry

Site type Quarry (limestone)

County Co Laois Townland Kilnacash

Town Address The Rock, Kilnacash

Grid 247950 207364 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Not shown on 1839 or 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 8). First shown on 1907 edition. Still in use in 1920s.

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Substantial remains Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Substantial remains of disused limestone quarry to south of Kilnacash House. Exposed rock faces stand 10-15m high.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-071

Photographs
F930a_01 14/06/2006 Rock Quarry from south.





Feature	F930b	Rock Quarry		
Site type	Lime kiln			
County	Co Laois	Townland	Kilnacash	
Town		Address	The Rock, Kilnacash	
Grid	247934	207416	OS six-inch sheet	LA 008

History According to the valuation revision books, a salt and lime house were erected by Jonathan Pim in 1859. William Pim took over operations in the mid 1860s. The premises is noted as "salt and lime factory" from the late 1870s onwards (although both were probably being manufactured since 1859). William Robinson took over from Pim in 1903. The factory disappears from the valuations in 1942 (although it may have been out of use before then). The limestone was probably derived initially from a small quarry shown in the adjoining townland of Kilmainham (shown on the 1888 OS six-inch map, Laois sheet 8), and then from the existing quarry (F930a). Neither the kiln nor salt pan is on any of the six-inch maps.

Survey date	14/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond	
Ownership				
Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A	Current use N/A

Description No traces of lime kiln survive.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-071

Feature	F930c	Rock Quarry
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Site type	Salt pan		
County	Co Laois	Townland	Kilnacash
Town		Address	The Rock, Kilnacash
Grid	247934 207416	OS six-inch sheet	LA 008

History Rock salt imported from Carrickfergus via Mountmellick Canal. Processed into usable salt at this site. The pan, in which the rock salt was dissolved, apparently sat on top of lime kiln. According to the valuation revision books, a salt and lime house were erected by Jonathan Pim in 1859. William Pim took over operations in the mid 1860s. The premises is noted as "salt and lime factory" from the late 1870s onwards (although both were probably being manufactured since 1859). William Robinson took over from Pim in 1903. The factory disappears from the valuations in 1942 (although it may have been out of use before then). Neither the kiln nor salt pan is on any of the six-inch maps.

Survey date	14/06/2006	Surveyor	Fred Hamond
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Ownership

Completeness	No visible remains	Condition	N/A	Current use	N/A
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Description No visible traces of former salt pan.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection	Action
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Other databases	LAIAR-008-071
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Feature F930d Rock Quarry

Site type Electricity generator (wind)

County Co Laois Townland Kilnacash

Town Address The Rock, Kilnacash

Grid 247937 207379 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History According to Mr Phillip Stewart, the owner, this was a home-made wind-powered device for charging batteries, installed in 1940s. It comprised a twin-bladed propeller on a metal post.

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Traces Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description At south-west corner of quarry is rocky eminence surmounted by 2m high concrete pillar, on top of which is steel pole which supported the rotor. On north face of pillar is remnant of ratchet pulley for reefing tail vane.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

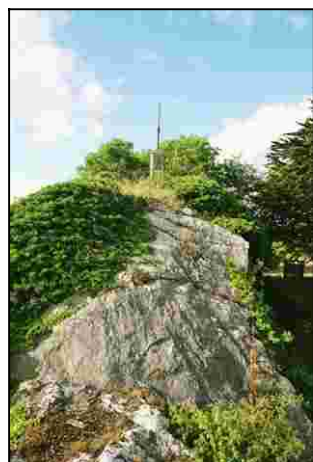
Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-071

Photographs

F930d_01 14/06/2006 Base of wind-powered electricity generator at Rock Quarry.



Feature F930e

Site type Water pump (wind)

County Co Laois Townland Kilnacash

Town Address Kilnacash House, Kilnacash

Grid 247958 207403 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Pumped up water from canal feeder to header tank which supplied Kilnacash House. Mr Phillip Stewart, the owner, states that imported from America in 1941. In use until canal closed in 1960 (when feeder dried up).

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Fair Current use Disused

Description Freestanding wind pump located immediately south-west of Kilnacash House. Constructed of galvanised angle-iron and situated on a square random rubble base tower. Multi-vaned sails and triangular tailpole. The pump raised water into a cement-rendered brick cistern on top of the tower. This was used for domestic purposes in the adjoining house. Both the windpump and cistern are now defunct.

Evaluation Local industrial heritage significance.

Significance Local

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-071

Photographs

F930e_01 14/06/2006 Domestic windpump at Kilnacash House, from west.



F930e_02 30/08/2006

Domestic windpump at Kilnacash House, from north-east.



F930e_03 30/08/2006

Domestic windpump at Kilnacash House, from south.



F930e_04 14/06/2006

Domestic windpump at Kilnacash House, from north-east.



Feature F931

Site type Mile marker

County Co Laois Townland Kilmainham

Town Address

Grid 247589 207432 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Although not shown on OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 8) until 1907 edition, undoubtedly of earlier date.

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description No visible remains of former milestone.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-025

Feature F932 Triogue Bridge

Site type Bridge (road/river)
 County Co Laois Townland Debicot; Kilmainham
 Town Address
 Grid 247574 207432 OS six-inch sheet LA 008
 History Shown on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 8). Explicitly cited as 'Triogue Bridge' on 1907 edition.

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Public (Laois CC)
 Completeness Complete Condition Good Current use Road bridge

Description Twin-arch bridge carries main road over Triogue River. Of random rubble limestone. Arches are of segmental profile with dressed limestone voussoirs. Angled cutwater to upstream (south) ; squared to north side. Downstream (north) parapet partly replaced with mass concrete. Abutments and soffits have been gunited. Pipe carried across outside face of north parapet.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.
 Significance Record only
 Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-024

Photographs
 F932_01 14/06/2006 Triogue Bridge from upstream (south) side.





Feature F933

Site type Lime kiln; Salt pan

County Co Laois Townland Ballycullenbeg

Town Mountmellick Address Salthouse Lane

Grid 245882 207831 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Cited as "salt ho." on 1839 and 1888 OS six-inch maps (Laois sheet 8). Griffith valuation book notes that "offices, salt works, lime kiln" were owned by George Penrose in 1850s. This suggests that salt was being manufactured (probably a salt pan on top of the lime kiln), as well as being stored. In the 1866 valuation revision book entry, George is replaced by Jane Penrose and the saltworks and kiln are crossed out, indicating that they were no longer in use. The salt store is shown as a roofless shell on the 1907 OS map. According to the valuations, the store was replaced by a dwelling house in 1914.

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership

Completeness No visible remains Condition N/A Current use N/A

Description The site of the salt store has been redeveloped and incorporated in a modern house. The street name - Salthouse Lane - recalls its former presence.

Evaluation No industrial heritage significance.

Significance Record only

Statutory protection Action

Other databases LAIAR-008-078

Photographs

F933_01 14/06/2006 Road sign near junction with main road.



References O'Keeffe, R. The Quakers of Mountmellick, p.31 (Mountmellick: Mountmellick Development Association, 1994).

Feature F934

Site type Water pump

County Co Laois Townland Ballycullenbeg

Town Mountmellick Address Harbour Street

Grid 245902 207678 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History Probably installed by Mountmellick UDC in mid 1900s.

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Water pump

Description Freestanding cast-iron water pump on south side of main road. Plain banded column with fluted top and oak finial to cap. Cow tail handle. Bracket on spout from which to hand bucket. Mounted on concrete base over well. Still in working order.

Evaluation A rare example of a still-working pump. Local heritage significance is raised to regional interest on account of rarity and fact that still working. .

Significance Regional

Statutory protection Action Include in RPS

Other databases

Photographs
F934_01 14/06/2006 General view of water pump.



Feature F935

Site type House
County Co Laois Townland Ballycullenbeg
Town Mountmellick Address Harbour Street
Grid 245709 207626 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History According to the valuation revision books for Mountmellick Urban Electoral Division, these houses were erected by Laois County Council in 1953. Each had the same rateable valuation of STG£7.

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
Ownership Private
Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Dwelling

Description Terrace of 22 two-bay, two-storey houses arranged as shallow crescent on north side of main road. Pitched terracotta roofs, rendered chimneys and cement-harled walls. Square-headed openings with replacement doors and windows. The line is broken by two symmetrically arranged timber-clad gables incorporating first-floor bedrooms. Small gardens to front. Strong streetscape character.

Evaluation Local heritage significance. Already included in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 688).

Significance Local

Statutory protection RPS LA 688 Action

Other databases NIAH 12900302

Photographs

F935_01 14/06/2006 Terrace from west.



Feature F936 Grange Lodge

Site type House
 County Co Laois Townland Ballycullenbeg
 Town Mountmellick Address Harbour Street
 Grid 245700 207551 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History According to the Mountmellick Development Association, this is the oldest surviving house in Mountmellick. It was built in 1686 by John Pim and remained in his family's ownership until 1840. However, the NIAH dates the house to c.1835, but the basis of this assignation is not given. Cited as 'Grange Lodge' on 1839 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond
 Ownership Private
 Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Dwelling

Description Detached four-bay, three-storey house on south side of main road. Hipped natural slate roof, rendered chimneys, and cement-rendered walls. Multi-panel door set in semicircular-headed opening with overlight. Square-headed window openings with replacement uPVC windows.

Evaluation Local heritage significance. Already included in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 689).

Significance Local

Statutory protection RPS LA 689 Action

Other databases NIAH 12900303

Photographs
 F936_01 14/06/2006 Grange Lodge from north.



Feature F937

Site type House
County Co Laois Townland Ballycullenbeg
Town Mountmellick Address Harbour Street
Grid 245661 207511 OS six-inch sheet LA 008

History NIAH dates houses to c.1840. Shown on 1839 OS six-inch map (Laois sheet 8).

Survey date 14/06/2006 Surveyor Fred Hamond

Ownership Private

Completeness Complete Condition Excellent Current use Dwelling

Description Pair of semi-detached three-bay, two-storey houses on south side of main road. Pitched artificial slate roofs, rendered chimneys and cement-harled walls. Each façade is symmetrical, with door to ground floor centre and flanking windows. Six-panel door is set in semicircular-headed opening, with timber surround and spider's web overlight. All windows are square-headed - 6/6 to east house, and 1/1 to west house. Wall and railings to front of each house.

Evaluation Local heritage significance. Already included in Record of Protected Structures (RPS LA 690).

Significance Local

Statutory protection RPS LA 690 Action

Other databases NIAH 12900304

Photographs

F937_01 14/06/2006 Houses from north-west.



