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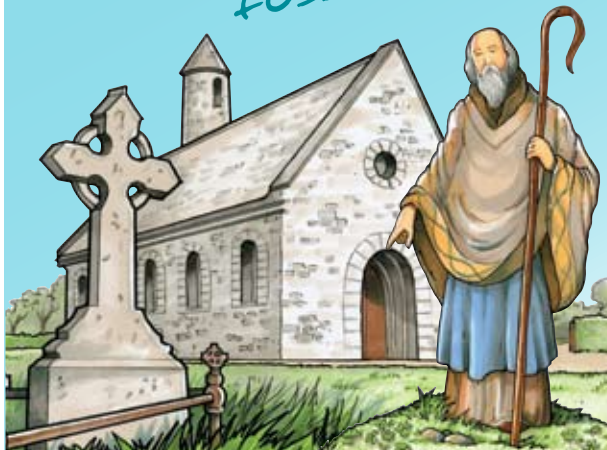
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**Ulster-Scots Agency**  
Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch

# PATRICK

*What's all the  
fuss about?*





Patrick wasn't from Ireland, he was born in Roman Britain towards the end of the 4th century. His family had been Christian for at least two generations, his grandfather Potitus had been a priest and his father Calpurnius was a deacon. Calpurnius was also a civil servant and owned a lot of land.

## EARLY LIFE

Growing up, Patrick had a privileged upbringing and enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. Patrick tells us that his father's estate was near a place called 'Bannavem Taburniae'. We don't know exactly where this was, however it must have been close to the west coast of Britain as it was frequently attacked by Irish raiders.



## SLAVERY

As a result of one of these raids, at the age of 16 Patrick was kidnapped and sold into slavery by his captors. He was bought as a slave by an Ulster chieftain called Milchu. Patrick would spend the next six years looking after Milchu's sheep on the slopes of Slemish, near Ballymena in County Antrim.

## STUDYING FOR CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Patrick began to study scripture and decided to become a Christian minister. He entered the British Church and eventually became a Bishop. Then, in obedience to God's call, he decided it was time to return to Ulster.

## BACK IN BRITAIN

Now in his early twenties, Patrick returned home to his family. He had another dream in which he heard the people of Ulster urging him to return to them. Patrick understood this to be God's call.

## ESCAPE

One night Patrick had a dream in which he saw a ship waiting to bring him home. Patrick believed this was a message from God. He escaped from Slemish, travelled 200 miles to a port where a ship, as the dream had promised, was waiting to bring him back to Britain.

## CONVERSION

As a teenager enjoying a privileged lifestyle, Patrick had ignored God but the loneliness of captivity caused him to return to God. Patrick began to pray – sometimes as often as a hundred times a day. Patrick's faith grew stronger and stronger.

## A PAGAN COUNTRY

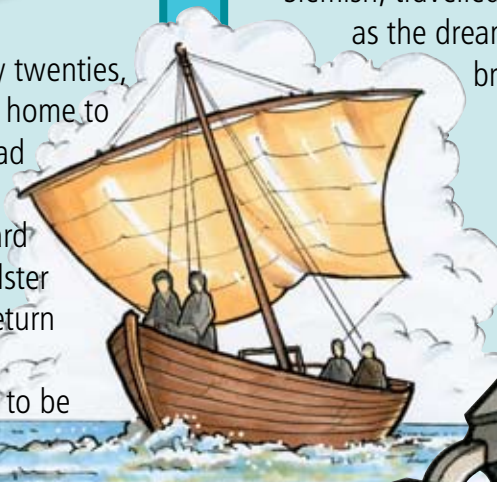
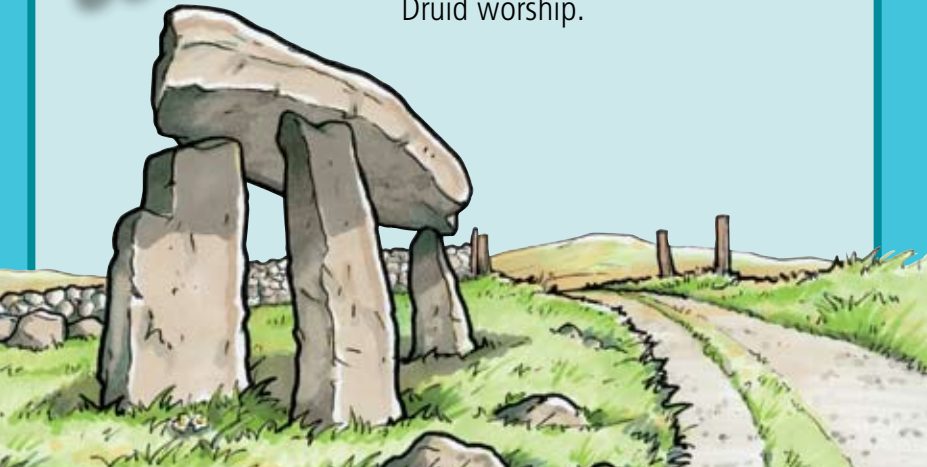
At that time, the religion of Ulster was Druidism. People worshipped the sun, the moon and various natural objects. Sacrifice often played an important part in Druid worship.

## PATRICK'S ARRIVAL

Patrick returned to Ulster, landing near the mouth of Strangford Lough. He met and converted Dichu, a local chieftain, to Christianity. Dichu gave Patrick a barn in which to hold services. The Gaelic word for barn is 'sabhall' and the place near Downpatrick where Patrick founded his first church is now known as Saul.

## PATRICK'S MISSION

Patrick wished to bring the message of Christ to those who had no knowledge of God. When people believed the message Patrick preached and became Christians, they needed to be taught the Bible. To help him, Patrick ordained other ministers to teach new Christians.





## PATRICK'S GREAT SUCCESS

Although Patrick faced fierce opposition and great danger, he continued to preach the gospel to the people of Ulster. He was very successful. Over a period of 30 years he converted many thousands of people to Christianity. Most of the sites associated with Patrick's ministry like Downpatrick and Saul are in Ulster, and specifically County Down.

## THE REAL PATRICK

The image of Patrick with which we are so familiar is the creation of myth, legend and tradition. There is no evidence that he wore a mitre or carried a staff like a medieval bishop.

He did not banish snakes from Ireland – there never were any snakes in Ireland.

## PATRICK'S BURIAL PLACE

Patrick died around 493 AD. He is reputedly buried in the grounds of the Church of Ireland Cathedral at Downpatrick. A boulder was placed on the traditional site in 1900.

## PATRICK'S BIBLE-BASED FAITH

Patrick's faith was based on the Bible. He attached great significance to the importance of Bible teaching and his writings are full of references to the Bible.

## THE TRINITY

Legend states that Patrick taught the doctrine of the Trinity using a shamrock (a three-leaved clover) to highlight the Christian belief of 'three divine persons in the one God': the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

## PATRICK'S WRITINGS

Over the years there has been much added to the mythology and legend of Patrick. The only hard evidence of Patrick's life and work is contained in his own writings – Latin texts which he wrote in old age: the so-called *Confessio* his testimony, and the *Letter to Coroticus*.

## CHRIST, SALVATION AND GRACE

Throughout his writings Patrick repeatedly refers to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Master. Patrick believed that God had saved him from a life of sin. God had done this for him out of compassion and not because he deserved or had earned the privilege. This is what the Bible calls 'grace'.

## THE CROSS OF SAINT PATRICK

This flag is known as 'the Cross of Saint Patrick' and is a red saltire on a white background. Although it is difficult to identify the origin of this design, it has been associated with Patrick for many centuries.

Together, 'The Cross of Saint Patrick', 'the Cross of Saint George' and 'the Cross of Saint Andrew' form the Union Flag.