

Placenames in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

dlr LexIcon in association with Blackrock Education Centre

Compiled by Séamus Cannon and Ríonach O Callaghan

LESSON PLAN 1:

Origin of Dún Laoghaire

Focus:

- Origin of Dún Laoghaire
- 'Dún' in placenames

1. Resources

1. Teacher background information
2. Aerial photograph of Dún Laoghaire today
3. Location of the original 'dún'
4. Commemorative plaque of Laoghaire
5. Image of iron age fort
6. St. Patrick meeting Laoghaire
7. King Laoghaire text
8. Student activity sheets

2. Introduction:

1. Show 2, photograph of Dún Laoghaire today
2. Discuss Dún Laoghaire, its location, how to get there, what students already know about Dún Laoghaire

3. Development:

1. Show 3, map of Dún Laoghaire with location of Dún marked
2. What is unusual about its name? (Irish form used in English)
3. What does 'dún' mean?
4. Laoghaire had a fort (dún) in this place. Show 4, plaque marking location of Dún, and 5, diagram of iron-age fort. For further images of iron age forts google 'iron age fort Ireland'
5. For further information on iron age forts and Celts check also <http://colaistecoissiuire.blogspot.com>

4. Show 7: Information on Laoghaire (Text slide)

Laoghaire was High King of Ireland in the fifth century. At the time there were five provinces in Ireland: Ulster, Munster, Leinster, Connacht and Meath, each with its own king. The king of Meath was the High King. His throne was in Tara in county Meath and he was the most important king. Laoghaire's father has also been a very powerful high king called Niall of the Nine Hostages. He often raided the coast of Britain and carried off slaves. This was how St. Patrick was taken to Ireland as a boy. When St. Patrick met Laoghaire, the miracles he performed convinced Laoghaire that he had been sent by God. There is a stained glass window in St. Patrick's RC church in Monkstown showing St. Patrick baptising Laoghaire. Show 6.

5. Why do you think Laoghaire built a fort on the east coast?

6. Conclusion

1. Student activities: see attached sheet

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Resource 1

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

LESSON 1

King Laoghaire

Died 461. The year of his birth is unknown.

King Laoghaire was High King of Ireland in the fifth century. At that time there were five provinces in Ireland, Ulster, Munster, Leinster, Connacht and Meath, each with its own king. The word for province in Irish is 'Cúige', meaning a fifth part of something. The king of Meath was the High King whose throne was in Tara in County Meath. The High King was the most important king and other kings had to pay him homage and taxes. When he was High King, Laoghaire built a fort beside a small estuary on the south side of Dublin Bay, near the location of the Purty Kitchen nowadays. It was called Dún Laoghaire after him. At that time, it was commonplace for Irish kings to raid the coast of Britain and carry off slaves. This was how the boy Patrick was taken to Ireland, quite possibly captured by Laoghaire's father Niall of the Nine Hostages.

King Laoghaire normally resided at Tara. When St. Patrick came to Ireland to convert the pagans to Christianity, he landed at the mouth of the Boyne and went to the hill of Slane. It was Easter time and the practice was for the High King to light a fire at Tara. Anyone who would light a fire before the king would be put to death. St. Patrick lit an Easter fire on the nearby hill of Slane before Laoghaire. Laoghaire was furious and with his soldiers and druids he rushed off to punish him. Patrick was asked to explain himself and he argued with the druids: using miraculous powers he raised one druid in the air and dashed him to the ground, killing him against a rock. When Laoghaire and his men tried to seize Patrick, he caused darkness to fall and the ground to shake, confusing the soldiers. Other miracles followed, convincing Laoghaire that Patrick was indeed sent by God and he consented to being baptized. There is an image of St. Patrick baptizing Laoghaire in St. Patrick's church in Monkstown.

Laoghaire reigned until 461. He died in battle against the king of Leinster who was refusing to pay the tax Laoghaire believed he was due. At that time the tax was paid in cattle and he was collecting his cattle when he was attacked. Some time before he had been captured by the Leinstermen and had agreed that he would no longer collect the tax. However, he went back on his word and died in battle. He was buried facing towards his enemies. This was a practice of the times: even in death you faced your enemy.

Laoghaire's father, Niall of the Nine Hostages had been a very powerful High King. He got his name from the fact that he held power over other kings by having one of their sons as a hostage. From Niall were descended a long line of kings, who were known as the O'Neills. Niall was famous for his raiding abroad and it may well have been on one of these raids that the boy Patrick was abducted and brought to Ireland.

A story is told of Niall when his father was choosing his heir from among his five sons. The five were set to work in a forge, making iron implements. On the king's orders the forge was set on fire by a druid. He who would salvage the most valuable implement would be a worthy successor. Niall emerged with the anvil, the most valuable implement in the forge and he was proclaimed the winner. There are many legends of his travels to Scotland, Britain and even Brittany!



Scale: 1: 25,000

■ Easting: 718548 Northing: 724493

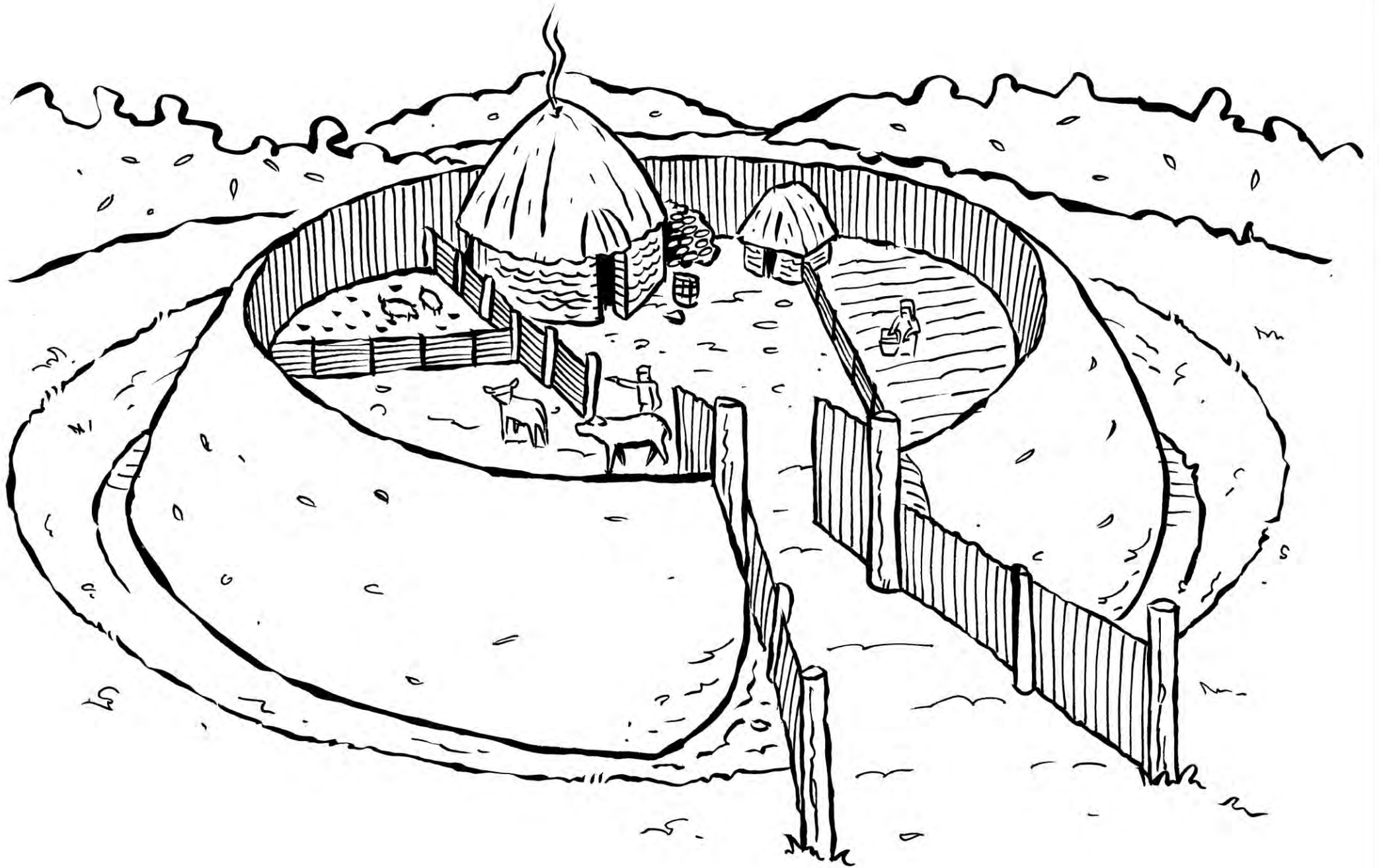


Scale: 1: 10,000

■ Easting: 721674 Northing: 728303

Resource 4







King Laoghaire

Laoghaire was High King of Ireland in the fifth century. At the time there were five provinces in Ireland: Ulster, Munster, Leinster, Connacht and Meath, each with its own king. The king of Meath was the High King. His throne was in Tara in county Meath and he was the most important king. Laoghaire's father has also been a very powerful high king called Niall of the Nine Hostages. He often raided the coast of Britain and carried off slaves. This was how St. Patrick was taken to Ireland as a boy. When St. Patrick met Laoghaire, the miracles he performed convinced Laoghaire that he had been sent by God. There is a stained glass window in St. Patrick's RC church in Monkstown showing St. Patrick baptising Laoghaire. Laoghaire died in 461

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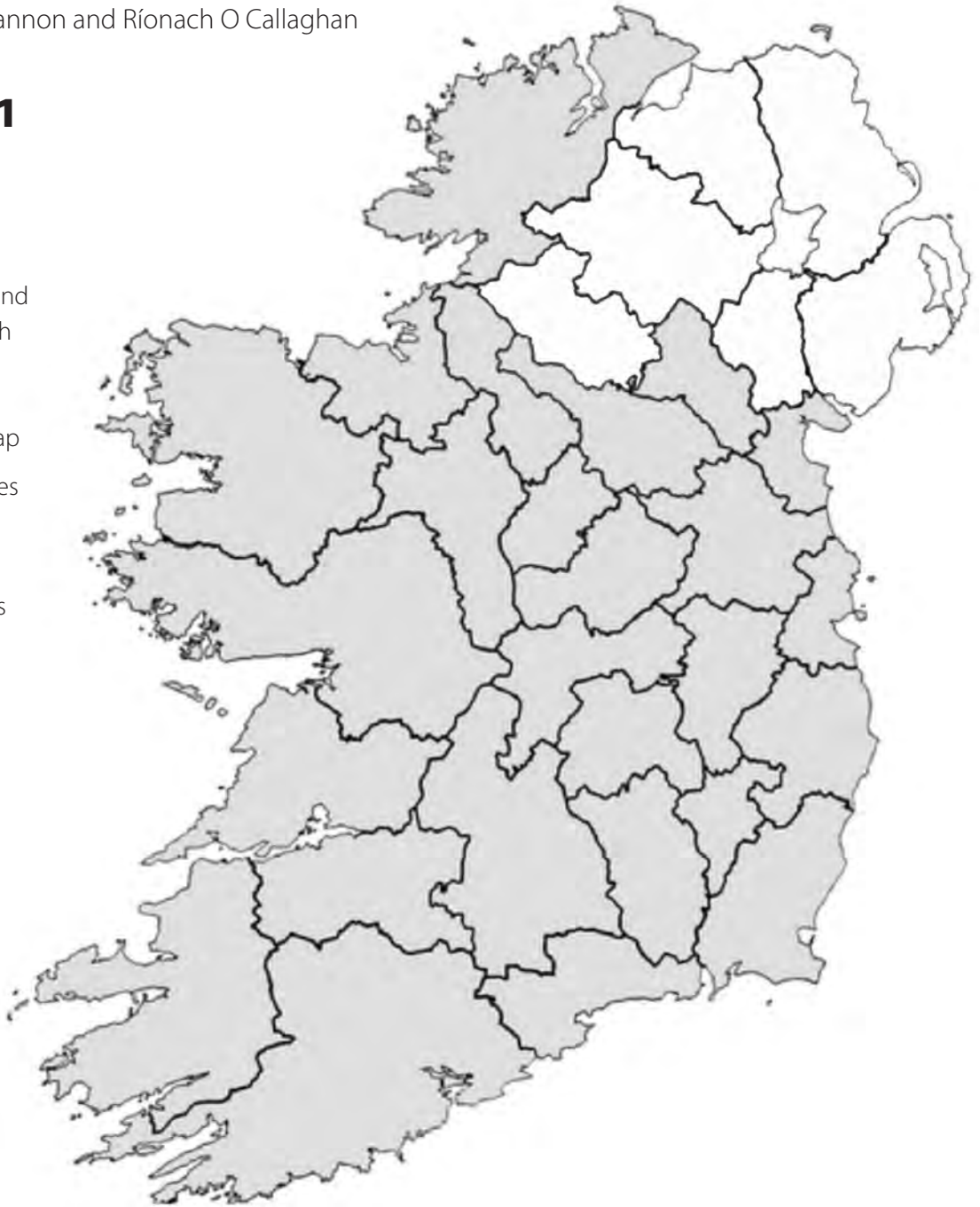
Resource 8.1

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WORKSHEET 1 LESSON 1

Using your atlas can you find other places in Ireland with 'dún' in their names?

- Mark them on the map
- What information does 'dún' give you about that place?
- Record your thoughts in the box



1.

2.

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Resource 8.2

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WORKSHEET 2

LESSON 1

- Colour the stained glass window showing St. Patrick meeting Laoghaire

