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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Snails, Water in a Stone, and Holy Wells: An Examination of Wart Cures from the Irish Schools' Folklore Collection, 1937–38

Carol Barron  & Tiziana Soverino 

Abstract

The Schools' Scheme was a systematic national survey of folklore conducted in the Republic of Ireland in 1937–38 and is now part of the National Folklore Collection (NFC) at University College Dublin. Medical folklore and the curative powers of holy wells were prominent in the Schools' Scheme, and in the ensuing Schools' Collection (NFCS). A representative sample of cures from the NFCS was examined in this study, which included a total of 6,843 separate cures for various ailments. This article focuses specifically on wart cures—by far the most common ailment nationally for which a cure was collected. There are 749 separate wart cures, coming from every county in the Republic of Ireland.

Introduction

The aim of this article is to examine and analyse traditional Irish cures for warts from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The primary source drawn upon is the Schools' Collection (NFCS), which is now part of the National Folklore Collection (NFC) at University College Dublin. The NFC is one of the largest folklore archives in Europe. It is renowned especially for its manuscript collection, which includes two principal sections: the Main Collection and the Schools' Collection. This article focuses on material within the Schools' Collection.

The Schools' collecting scheme, initiated by the Irish Folklore Commission (IFC), ran predominantly from 1937 to 1938, with specific cases extended to 1939. In a country which had just gained independence, folklore collecting was an important way to claim identity and played a crucial role in Irish nation-building (Ó Giolláin 2000); it still serves this function internationally (Lysaght 2019; Stark, Mikkola, and Olsson 2019). As the collecting occurred in primary schools, the Department of Education and the Irish National Teachers' Organization were heavily involved. Over fifty thousand schoolchildren in their final year of primary school were invited to collect local folklore. They came from five thousand schools in the twenty-six counties of the Republic of Ireland; the scheme was not extended to Northern Ireland. The pupils' ages ranged from ten to fourteen years (Barron 2015). The IFC's

archivist, Seán Ó Súilleabháin, developed a booklet containing guidelines for the collection of folklore entitled 'Irish Folklore and Tradition', which was distributed to all schools prior to the commencement of collecting. One of the fifty-five topics identified in the booklet was 'Local Cures'. A second topic was 'Holy Wells', many of which have supposed curative properties. This resulted in one of the largest collections of medical folklore in Europe. The material was recorded first into the children's homework copybooks, then 'corrected' by teachers and re-written into larger official notebooks (usually by children with the best handwriting), which combined became the NFCS manuscripts. The entire NFCS is now digitized and available online (www.duchas.ie). There are approximately 740,000 handwritten pages of local tradition compiled by the children themselves and their parents, grandparents, other family members, and neighbours (Ó Catháin 1988, 22). This large-scale, systematic survey at a national level resulted in 1,128 manuscript volumes, with a further forty thousand copybooks stored at the NFC.

Strengths and Limitations of the Collection

The majority of informants in folklore collections internationally are adults. The Schools' Collection is almost unique in giving a voice to the younger strata of society, although the pupils often collected the material from older informants. Also, the sheer volume of commonality of the cures within counties and across the country lends weight to the collection. Furthermore, as remarked by the founder of the IFC, Seamus Ó Duilearga, the Schools' Collection covered parts of the Irish Republic not covered by collectors previously (Briody 2008, 68) and this was the first major folklore collection conducted predominantly in English (Lysaght 2019, 17). It is important to note that no archive is neutral, and the Schools' Collection is no exception. Even when straight from the dusty archive, the evidence always pre-exists within narrative structures and is freighted with cultural meanings: 'Who put the archives together, why, and what did they include or exclude?' (Munslow 2006, 7). Specific guidance was given in the 'Irish Folklore and Tradition' booklet, as mentioned. By today's standards, the following instruction given within the section 'Local Cures' (page 13) would be considered leading:

In what ways did people seek remedies for their ailments in former times? Take each ailment as it occurs and note down the remedy applied: e.g. to cure toothache use was made in a certain way of a frog; of a goose or gander to cure thrush; of food left behind by a ferret to cure other complaints, etc. [...]. The more local and detailed the account is, the more valuable it is.

Nevertheless, while acknowledging that no archive is neutral, and no information given is without bias, the specific condition of 'warts' is never mentioned, nor are any sample 'cures' for warts given in the booklet. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that the narrative material collected by the schoolchildren on wart cures was not influenced by the booklet and reflects the folk knowledge and practice of the children's informants at that time.

There is a strong rural bias within the Schools' Collection, reflecting the commonly held belief at the time that urban areas no longer possessed folklore worth collecting.

This emphasis on rural areas is not limited to the Schools' Collection, but is found in the NFC material as a whole (Beiner, cited in Bishop 2018, 21). Thus, many urban areas in the 1930s were allowed to opt out of the survey. This practice did lead to an under-representation of cure narratives from urban settings within the Collection. Despite the acknowledged limitations created by this bias, the cure narratives are nevertheless a highly credible source of folk medicine, beliefs, behaviours, and practices in rural 1930s Ireland.

Warts

The seemingly insignificant wart has been afflicting humanity for millennia (Burns 1992, 37). In Hippocratic writings, warts are mentioned in connection with children specifically:

As they grow older tonsillitis, deflections of the vertebrae of the neck, asthma, stone, infection with round worms and ascaris, pedunculated warts, priapism, scrofulous swellings in the cervical glands and other tumours are seen. (Hippocrates 1988, 131)

Warts are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV) and can spread from one individual to another by direct contact or via the environment (Sterling et al. 2014, 696). Warts are more common in childhood and it is thus unsurprising that cures for them are very common in the Schools' Collection, which was assembled by children, although they were collected mainly from adults. Spontaneous remission of the virus with no treatment can and does occur. In children this spontaneous remission can occur after only a few months, with half clear at one year and about two-thirds by two years (Sterling et al. 2014, 696). This well-known spontaneous remission of warts gives support to one of the arguments put forward for the popularity of wart cures: that they are based on warts' somewhat mysterious appearance and disappearance.

Within the realm of folklore and particularly folk medicine, cures for warts must be one of the leading topics explored. In the journal *Folklore* itself, 109 articles mentioning the word 'wart' have been published between 1878 and 2018. The articles range from Davies and White's (2015) examination of witchcraft in Walter Raymond's novel *Love and Quiet Life*, where Raymond briefly describes the character Josiah as being able to cure warts by burying a piece of bacon, to James Hardy's (1878) detailed examinations of wart and wen cures occurring in the very first issue of the journal, at the time called *The Folk-Lore Record*—where he cites numerous cures still found in the NFCS, such as the use of a snail, water in a stone, or the white sap from specific plants. Why were, and indeed are, wart cures so popular? Gabrielle Hatfield, who conducted surveys on wart cures circulated among members of The Folklore Society in Britain, suggests that the popularity of wart cures may be due to the unexplained appearance and subsequent disappearance of warts when the virus goes into spontaneous remission. Another possible reason behind the popularity of cures for warts is because they 'represent a slight social stigma' (Hatfield 1999, 147), with adverse psychological effects. The idea that individuals affected by warts are conscious of their physical appearance is reiterated by Ave Tupits (2006, 46). What one can say with certainty is that wart cures are varied and numerous, and that this

study found that cures for warts were the most common cure recorded in the representative sample from the NFCS by a significant margin.

Sampling from the Schools' Collection

At the time of the Schools' Scheme, each of the twenty-six counties in the Republic of Ireland was subdivided into areas called baronies. Some counties, such as Cork, had twenty-four baronies while others, such as Leitrim, had as few as five. This land distribution tended to reflect total land areas, although historical factors also came into play in the number of baronies found in each county. Folklore material was collected from numerous schools in each barony. To mirror the Schools' Collection and to ensure that the study sample was representative of the original survey, the primary author selected from each barony a school which provided narratives on 'local cures', for which the handwriting was legible, and which had a minimum of ten cures (see [Figure 1](#) for the geographical distribution of the schools sampled). In total, 273 schools are included in the sample. The medical folklore covers the period 1865-1938, if one assumes the informants knew the cures by the time they reached adulthood. A coding system based on illness/disease/symptom generated from the emerging dataset gave 131 separate codes, from abscess to wrinkles. However, 70% of all cures recorded were for nineteen specific illnesses. The top three were warts, whooping cough, and toothache. In total 7,207 cures were collected, of which 6,843 were included in the larger study, while 364 were excluded as they did not meet the inclusion criteria (e.g. cure narratives which did not identify a specific ailment). Of the 6,843 separate cures, 749 or just under 11% are wart cures. Thus, warts were the most common ailment for which cures were recorded nationally. Individual cures ranged from one-liners to several-page narratives. There are wart cures from all twenty-six counties in the Republic of Ireland.

Classifying Folk Medicine

Folk cures for warts, as for other ailments, are situated in the field of folk medicine. The most common interpretation of folk medicine, in both popular and professional thought, mainly among physicians, but occasionally also among folklorists and anthropologists, is summarized concisely by Bonnie O'Connor and David Hufford: it represents a body of belief and practice isolated from the social and cultural mainstream and intriguingly unaffected by 'modern' knowledge, with which it is frequently compared on the apparent presumption that 'folk' and 'modern' are mutually exclusive classifications. Folk medicine is therefore theorized within a hierarchical model of knowledge, in which it is habitually positioned below official, scientific medicine at the hierarchical pinnacle and slightly above 'primitive' medicine on the bottom stratum. This view of folk medicine as non-modern is clearly strongly influenced by the Anglo-European theory of cultural evolution, according to which medicine is presumed to advance or evolve from the 'primitive' to sophisticated modern medicine. During this process, the most effective healing techniques were supposedly retained and improved upon, while other practices were discarded and

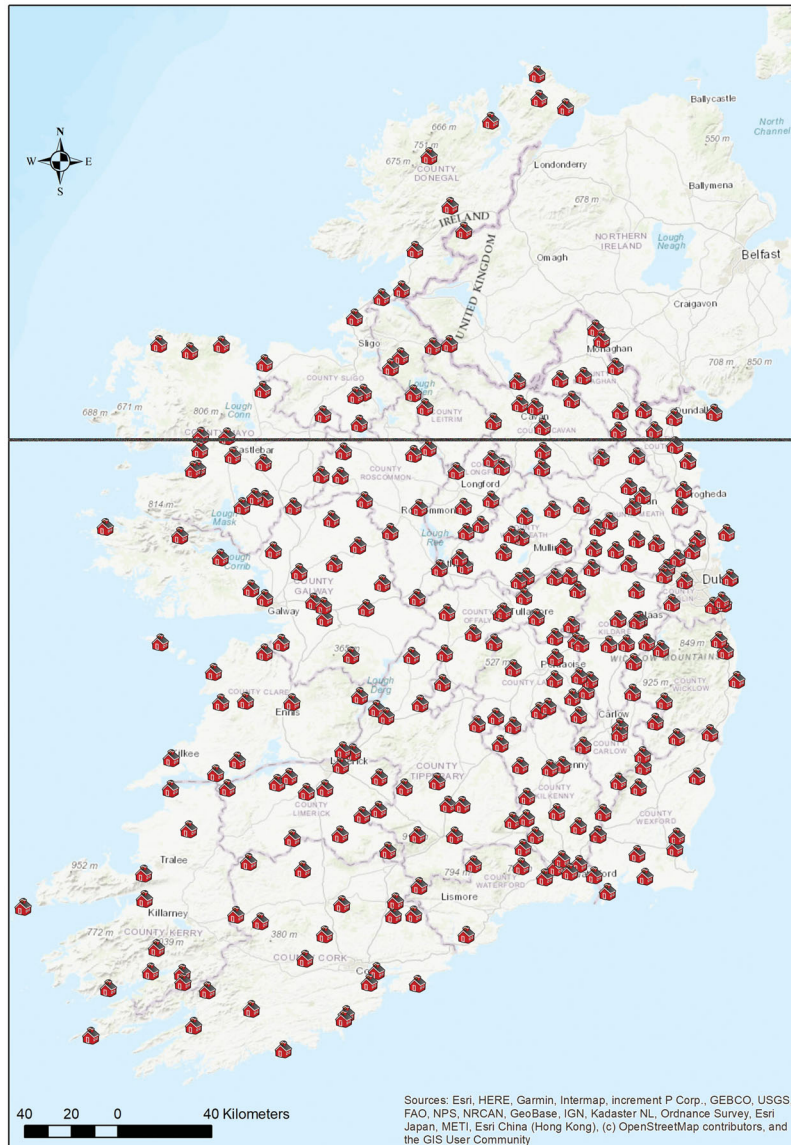


Figure 1. Schools sampled from the Schools' Collection of 1937-38.

became obsolete (O'Connor and Hufford 2001, 13). Folk medicine would have represented the process of 'improving on' so-called primitive medicine. There are obvious problems with this interpretation of folk medicine. If medical folklore truly represented a fixed body of beliefs and practices unaffected by 'modern' knowledge and socio-culturally isolated, then we would see no change in folk cures over time. Both Hufford and Ronnie Moore and Stuart McClean appear to concur that folk healing is not about the vestiges of pre-modern medical thought (Hufford 1992, 15; Moore and McClean 2010, 2); rather, folk medicine can be modern, contemporary, rooted in the everyday life and communities, and is concerned with the here and now.






















	Animal	Plant	Mineral	Magico-religious
	Lick of a dog	Spurge	Pin cures  	Moon
	Fish	Milkwort	Blue stone	Funerals & clay 
Transference component present 	Strand of hair cure	Seven sisters	Water on a tombstone	Religious charm
	Fasting spit 	Wortweed	Other water sources	Healers  Prayer
Chance component present 	Meat cures  	Potato 	Holy water	
	Snail cures  	Straw / rush  	Ink cures	
		Dandelion	Water in a tree	
		Multiple others (Plants)	Match cures 	
			Caustic soda / washing powder	
			Forge water	
			Stone at a crossroads 	
Secondary religious component present 			Holy wells  Water in a stone   Buy & selling cures 	

Table 1. Classificatory system for cures. Only the plants with the highest frequency of cures are named here. Forty-two cures have a secondary religious/prayer component to them, normally in the form of ‘say a few prayers’ or making the sign of the cross and reciting ‘In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost’. These secondary religious/prayer components are predominantly in holy well or water cures.

The term folk medicine encompasses a broad category. Don Yoder submits that there are two varieties of folk medicine: first, natural folk medicine, which ‘represents one of man’s earliest reactions to his natural environment, and involves the seeking of cures for his ills in the herbs, plants, minerals, and animal substances of nature’; and second, magico-religious folk medicine, which he defines as the ‘attempts to use charms, holy words, and holy actions to cure disease’ (Yoder 1972, 192). Yoder views

knowledge from folk medicine as being incorporated into scientific medical knowledge, and vice versa (Yoder 1972, 191–92). Hatfield, in contrast, suggests that folk medicine should be regarded as ‘the origin of all types of medical practice’, as it predates official medicine and includes self-treatment as well as treatment conducted by community healers (Hatfield 2004, xvii). An ‘animal, plant, mineral’ system for dividing up folk medicine is widely used by scholars worldwide; for example, in north-east Asia (Han et al. 2001, xiii) and Italy (Guarrera, Lucchese, and Medori 2008). This classificatory system is ultimately based on Linnaeus’s classification of the entire material world into three kingdoms: animal, plant, and mineral (Markov 2012). There are difficulties with using the ‘animal, plant, mineral’ and magico-religious classificatory system, especially with very large datasets. Nevertheless, we have adhered to this system with the addition of subcategories: transference, chance, and secondary religious components (see Table 1 for this altered classification system of cures). These additional subcategories are discussed in the next section.

Hatfield (1998) undertook a questionnaire survey of wart cures among members of The Folklore Society in Britain, for which she received sixty-five responses. She also attempted to compare these results to the record of nearly five hundred wart cures collected in the 1960s in another survey conducted by The Folklore Society itself, but unfortunately no publications had arisen from that survey. However, it is striking that the most commonly occurring cures in the 1960s collection were raw meat rubbed onto the wart, bacon, broad beans, dandelions, and washing soda (Hatfield 1998, 10–16)—a combination of animal, plant, and mineral cures. Remarkably, James Hardy (1878) recounts very similar cures to these over eighty years previously. It appears that cures involving water sources were much less common in Britain than in Ireland.

Transference, Chance, and Religion

A significant number of wart cures in the representative sample have a transference component (274 cures), while eighty-three have a chance element; thirty-six have both a chance and a transference component. It is therefore worth discussing both chance and transference to avoid repetition. A common cure cited in the NFCS makes use of a snail: ‘To find a snail without looking for it and rub it on the warts and then put the snail in a skewer to die’ (NFCS 904: 255, Carlow). The idea behind this cure appears to be that the warts are sympathetically transferred to the snail and that, as the snail decays, the warts will accordingly die or disappear. Wayland Hand has defined the principle of transference as an attempt, on the part of the sufferer, to rid himself or herself of a disease by transferring it through direct or indirect contact with the person, animal, plant, or object to which the disease is to be communicated (Hand 1980, 17).

The belief that an illness can be passed to another being or object has been recorded since the distant past. William Black was the author of the earliest published book on folk medicine in Britain, dating to 1883 (Hatfield 2004, 32). Black postulates that transference may have evolved from the observation of disease

spreading from one individual to another: 'If a man could without conscious act on his part infect his neighbours, why might he not of purpose transfer his complaint to something of a lower order which should suffer the disease in his place?' (Black 1883, 34). To support his argument, Black cites Pliny the Elder's discussion of stomach pains in humans being cured by transferring the ailment into a puppy or a duck. Instances of rituals for transferring diseases from humans to animals have been attested from various parts of the world, from Pliny's Roman Empire to, for instance, Texas (Anderson 1968, 191).

Chance also figures prominently in folk medicine, and especially in cures for warts. The 'water in a stone' cure is specifically linked to chance: it is frequently spelled out or implied that the water must be found accidentally. For example: 'If you found water on a rock and not to be searching for it, it would cure a wart' (NFCS 606: 431, Clare). The religious aspect of wart cures in Irish tradition should be understood in terms of the definitions of 'folk religion' proposed by Yoder. He states, 'Folk religion is the totality of all those views and practices of religion that exist among the people apart from and alongside the strictly theological and liturgical forms of the official religion' (Yoder 1974, 14). Along the same lines, 'Rationalistic attitudes, orthodox religious opinions, and folk religious reactions can coexist in the same person' (Yoder 1974, 15).

Analysis of Wart Cures from the Representative Sample

The different categories of wart cures which emerged from the Schools' Collection—animal, plant, mineral, and magico-religious—will be individually examined in detail. Macroanalysis of the 749 wart cures demonstrates that mineral cures constitute 37% (277 cures), animal cures 28.2% (211), plant cures 27.8% (208), magico-religious 4.9% (thirty-seven), and 'other' 2.1% (sixteen). Almost identical cures for warts appear time and again within the international literature, and the medical folklore in the NFCS is very similar (see Table 2).

While there are numerous different wart cures within the representative sample from the NFCS, a total of 525 of the 749 cures, or 70.1%, fall under ten specific wart cures, albeit with some variations (see Table 3).

Mineral Cures

Mineral cures are the largest single category, accounting for 37% of the representative sample (277 cures). The most widespread cure utilizes water: water in a rock/stone (ninety-five cures), followed in descending order by holy wells (fifty-two), forge water (twenty-two), water in a tree (eleven), holy water (four), water on a tombstone (two), and other water sources (four). See Table 1 for a breakdown of all mineral cures.

Water in a Stone

There are ninety-five separate cures which involve finding water in a stone. This usually denotes rainwater lodging in the hollows of rocks and stones. Informants

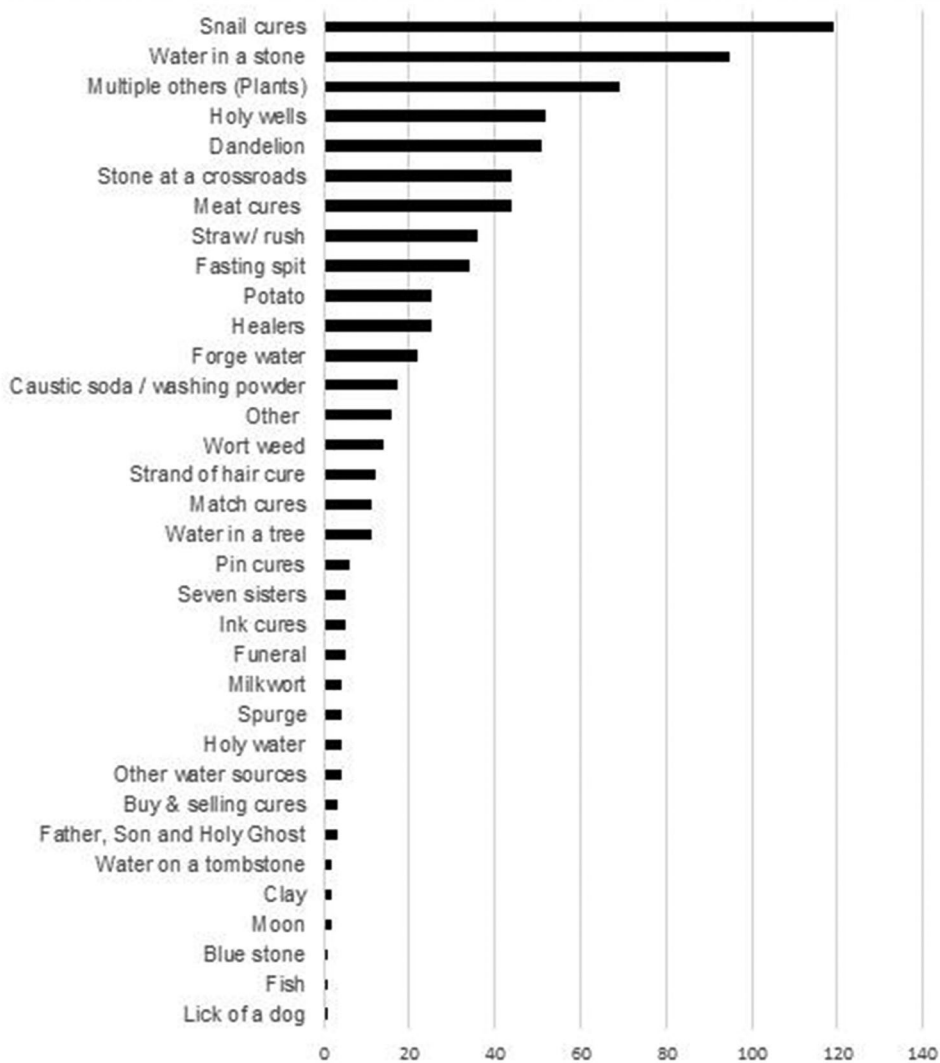


Table 2. All cures from the representative sample from the NFCS.

often did not supply specific details about what exactly the sufferer must do with the water. At times, a general statement is given, such as: ‘A cure for warts is to wash them in the water of a rock’ (NFCS 104: 306, Mayo). More elaborate rituals were sometimes mentioned: washing the affected part in the water had to be repeated a set number of times, usually three (NFCS 628: 142, Clare) or nine (NFCS 77: 62, Galway). Prayers were occasionally said while engaging in the cure: ‘If a person is going on a journey and s[e]es water on a stone, if he has a wart, to dip it in it, and to say a prayer, and it will go’ (NFCS 22: 512, Galway). The cure was rendered more effective by fasting: ‘The people cured warts by washing their hand in a small, deep well three mornings fasting’ (NFCS 932: 334, Monaghan). An example of a very complex ‘water in a stone’ cure is this:

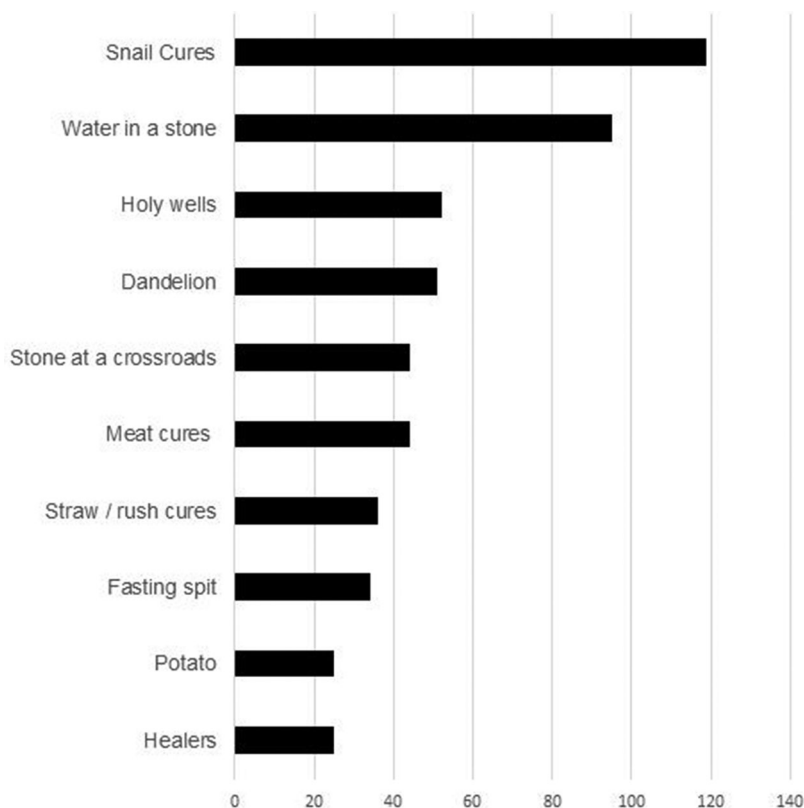


Table 3. Top ten wart cures from the representative sample from the NFCS.

The Rock of the warts ... It is said the 'rounds' are 'paid' there for curing warts. The person affected must go round the rock seven times, in the tuathal [anti-clockwise] direction, contrary to the path of the sun. He must say Our Father and Hail Mary, at each of the basins, dip his finger into the water under the stone, rub the water on the warts making the Sign of the Cross on them, and in two months they will be gone. (NFCS 461: 31, Kerry)

Usually, it was the water in stones and rocks that was used for warts; occasionally, however, small pebbles called 'wart stones' were instead utilized, by rubbing them on the warts (Figure 2).

In connection with this cure, hollowed stones or 'bullauns' might have been intended, at least sometimes. Common throughout the country, including early church sites—for instance, over thirty are found at Glendalough, Wicklow—bullauns are usually unworked boulders, with hollows between eighteen and thirty-eight centimetres and roughly circular in shape (Hamlin and Hughes 2004, 99–100). This cure is not unique to Ireland. It also occurs in Sweden (Hugoson 2014, 269), Estonia (Tupits 2006, 41), and Britain ('Notes and News' 1897, 57). While the dates, origins, and functions of bullauns remain largely uncertain, over a thousand are attested across Ireland (Dolan 2012–13, 42). They are thought to be hollowed out artificially, and they frequently occur at ecclesiastical sites, near holy wells, or at ringforts. Scholars from historical and archaeological fields date them between the Iron Age

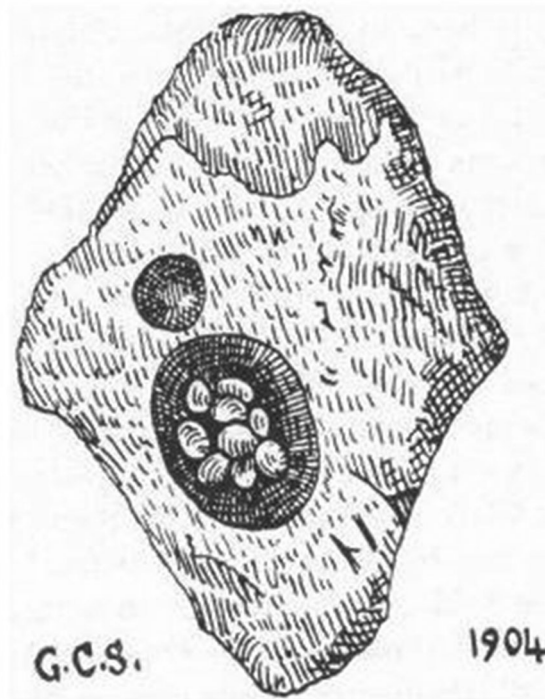


Figure 2. Sketch by Miss G. C. Stacpoole of wart stones from Doughnambragher, Co. Clare, 1904 (Westropp 1911, plate IV, facing page 54).

and the time of early Christianity (Zucchelli 2016, 162) and suggest they may have been used as grinding stones for cereals, as curative aids in local pilgrimages, or as stone basins to produce metal; for example, bullauns were found in conjunction with iron smithing at Lowpark, Co. Mayo (Dolan 2012–13, 47–51). In later folklore, they are described as stones of natural origin which were imprinted by some part of a saint's body and thus ascribed healing powers. Beliefs in the curative properties of stones said to have been touched by saints may be claimed to fall into the same category as the cult of relics, which was very popular from late antique to early modern times, in a Catholic context (Brown 2014, 88–92). We can go a step further, and argue that the 'magical' use of relics for healing falls under the broad umbrella of contagious magic, which refers to the belief that things once associated with each other are able to affect one another when separated. The sufferer would normally immerse the affected body part into the basin to obtain a cure. Bullaun stones are especially renowned for treating skin conditions, including warts (Price 1959, 171).

Holy Wells

There are fifty-two wart cures invoking the use of holy wells in our representative sample. In some cases, the well was known as 'The Warty Well', an indication that it was renowned for curing warts: 'There is a well in Killallon. It was called the Warty Well. When you dip your hand into the well the warts fall off your hand' (NFCS 725:

109, Westmeath). The National Monuments Service has recorded 3,047 holy wells in Ireland (Foley 2010, 16), a large number for an island that only covers 84,421 square kilometres. Although holy wells are not unique to Ireland, the tradition seems to be particularly strong here and they maintain their healing reputation into the twenty-first century (Foley 2010, 20). The origin of Irish holy wells is contested. Celeste Ray in her examination of this very point contends that the evidence for Ireland is that 'sacred wells and pools have been venerated since pagan times' (Ray 2014, 111), despite the numerous conflicting origin arguments. Nowadays, most holy wells are associated with saints, from whom they often take their name: 'There is a well in Kellistown called St Patrick's well. People visit it to get warts cured' (NFCS 907: 366, Carlow).

Recent scholarship has applied the concept of 'therapeutic landscapes' to holy wells. The term was first coined by Wilbert Gesler in the 1990s to explore why certain environments seem to contribute to a 'healing sense of place'. More recently, emphasis has been placed on the relational nature of people's therapeutic landscapes. Such places have material, social, spiritual, and symbolic dimensions; they do not seem to be intrinsically therapeutic, but rather they become so through socio-natural engagements (Bell et al. 2018). Similarly, 'Healing waters are the product of a range of cultural narratives and performances, from the religio-magical to the pseudo-scientific, wherein healing is expressed through words and feelings as much as in physiological outcomes' (Foley 2010, 10). As noted by both Healy and Foley, holy wells have survived because they fulfil deep human needs and there is a strong emotional tie between places and healing. These wells belong to ordinary people, and they can bring peace of mind, acting as catalysts for self-healing (Foley 2010, 19). Landscape archaeologists, including Conor Newman, have analysed the role of sacred landscapes such as holy wells throughout the centuries, and Newman has emphasized their complexity and power through the prism of religion and myth (Newman 2011, 22). Clearly, holy wells have long been considered 'places apart'. For instance:

St Brendan's Well. St. Brendon [*sic*] was a great Irish saint who travelled all Ireland visiting the schools and monasteries. He told the people of Fisher street that he had made this well and anyone that would be suffering from warts would be cured there if they would visit it three times and say five our Fathers, five Hail Mary's [*sic*] and five Glorias. (NFCS 617: 51, Clare)

Forge Water

Forge water, used by smiths to cool their tools, accounts for twenty-two cures. Usually, the person with warts had to dip them into the forge water: 'If the sufferer dips the affected parts in forge water three times a day for three days the warts will disappear' (NFCS 773: 330, Kildare). Other forge water cures invoked the Blessed Virgin:

Another cure was to wash your hands in forge water to cure warts. Because when the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph were going up to Bethlehem to be enrolled, the Blessed Virgin lost the brooch of her cloak. When she was passing by a forge, she asked the blacksmith to make a pin to put in her cloak and he made the pin for her. He dipped it in the water to cool it and the Blessed Virgin said that the water would cure the warts he had on his hands. (NFCS 917: 58-59, Wicklow)

There appears to be a religious association in this apocryphal legend connected with Mary. The legend includes the folk motif Q42.3, ‘Generosity to saint (God) in disguise rewarded’ (Ó Súilleabháin 2012, 25–26 and 252), since the forge water is said to possess healing qualities by virtue of the smith’s generosity to the Virgin. The legend is common in Irish oral tradition. It is usually part of a longer narrative, which contrasts the greed or indifference of a tinker or cowherd with the generosity of a smith (Ó Héalaí 1985), and it is known as ‘The Tinker and the Blacksmith’ (Ó Súilleabháin 2012, 25). (‘Tinker’ is now an extremely derogatory term, but it was in common usage in the twentieth century.) Fifty-five variants of the legend have been attested from Ireland (Ó Héalaí 1985, 99–101 and 128). This specific apocryphal legend does not seem to be attested outside Ireland (Ó Héalaí 1985, 128). On the other hand, smiths and forge water are endowed with supernatural powers in many other European countries (Ó Héalaí 1985, 101) and in North America (Shoemaker 1951).

However, this cure can also be interpreted differently. In early medieval Ireland, smiths were associated with the supernatural, as indicated by an eighth-century hymn protecting against spells cast by smiths. They were also more specifically linked to healing, as the smith-god Goibhniu was invoked in an Old Irish charm for the removal of a thorn. Goibhniu features in the mythological tale *The Battle of Moytura*, as a divine smith who made supernaturally lethal weapons (Mac Cana 1983, 34–35); he was also said to be the host of a supernatural feast (the Feast of Goibhniu) and one of the three *áes dána* (craft-gods) (Williams 2016, 207 and 163). The figure of the divine smith is widespread in Indo-European contexts, with examples ranging from Roman Vulcan to Ossetic Waergon. In early modern times, smiths were still considered men of extraordinary powers in Ireland, by virtue of the material they worked with, iron (Ó Súilleabháin 1967, 20), and because they manipulated a powerful and dangerous element, fire.

Stones at Crossroads

There are forty-four separate cures focused on stones at a crossroads. The cure consists of the sufferer collecting stones or pebbles—the same number as there are warts in many cases—in a bag or in paper. The stones are taken to a road, or most commonly a crossroads, and left there. The person who picks up the bag or paper is then supposed to get the warts: ‘If a person had a wart that person would fill a bag with stones and leave it on the road, and the person who would get the bag would take the wart and the other person would lo(o)se it. This is an ugly cure’ (NFCS 747: 366, Westmeath). This cure, while known internationally, calls to mind the Irish ‘Banshee’s Comb’ legend. The legend, common in parts of Leinster, discouraged children and adults from picking up used combs on the road, because they could contain infectious matter. The narrative tells that the person who picked up the comb on the road got a serious fright when the banshee, a supernatural death messenger, put her claw inside his house and shouted, demanding her comb back (Lysaght 1986, 180).

Crossroads have played a very important role in the folklore of many cultures, including Ireland. As intersections of two or more roads, they are viewed as liminal spaces (Gennep 1960, 15–25; Turner 1964) where normal rules do not apply. They

were used as burial places for unbaptized children, murderers, executed criminals, and suicides (Halliday 1997). Black reports a cure from Lancashire where a wart was rubbed with a cinder, and this tied up in paper and dropped where four roads meet (crossroads). The wart then was supposed to transfer to whomever opened the paper (Black 1883, 41).

Washing Powder and Caustic Soda

There are only seventeen cures using washing powder and caustic soda; for example, 'People in the olden days used to say that when a person wants to cure warts they should rub washing soda to them' (NFCS 367: 34, Cork). However, they are noteworthy, since both products were relative newcomers in Irish households in the 1930s. The first commercially available laundry detergent, Persil, was launched in 1909 (<https://www.unilever.uk/brands/our-brands/persil.html>). Sodium hydroxide (caustic soda) was developed by soapmakers in the thirteenth century, but its mass production dates to the nineteenth century (Aftalion 2001, 57–62). It can thus be claimed that both washing powder and caustic soda, or at least their commercially available varieties, were not accessible to Irish households before the late nineteenth century. The fact that both were used to treat warts indicates that folk medicine is a living tradition which incorporates new knowledge.

Animal Cures

There are 211 (28.2%) animal wart cures within the representative sample from the NFCS. The two most common animal cures for warts involve the use of snails (119 separate cures) and raw meat (44 cures), typically bacon. In both cases, the meat or snail which has been in contact with the warts is left to rot; the underlying principle seems to be that, as the animal or meat rots, so the warts will also decay and disappear from the sufferer. This can also be considered an example of transference: as the ailment is passed to a lower life form, the human being affected by warts will get rid of them. 'Fasting spit'—spit produced after a period of fasting, before any food is consumed—is also classified under animal cures because it is a substance from a human animal, and thirty-four fasting spit cures were recorded.

Snails

There are 119 wart cures using snails (rarely slugs). This cure occurs in twenty-five of the twenty-six counties of Ireland, the exception being Kerry. The sufferer procures a snail—rarely the snail must be black and/or found by chance. The slime from the snail is rubbed onto the warts, with some cures specifying the number of times this must be done: 'Go out and meet a snail by chance, rub it on the warts for nine mornings and throw it on a blackthorn bush. When the snail would be withered the warts would be gone' (NFCS 983: 2, Cavan). As noted, the snail is placed on some form of thorny bush, normally gooseberry, blackthorn, or whitethorn. Much less frequently, the snail may be buried: 'Rub a snail to the wart and then bury the snail. It is said that by the time the snail has rotted the wart will have disappeared' (NFCS 503: 452, Limerick). Religious ritual is also undertaken in some snail cures, the most common being to invoke the names of

the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: 'If you are walking along the road and see a snail, take it up and rub it to the warts and say "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost". Clean off all the warts. Then throw him in some running stream between two townlands and it will cure the warts' (NFCS 993: 121, Cavan). Interestingly, this last cure is the only one which instructs the sufferer to throw the snail in running water and between two townlands. The space between townlands is liminal and thus powerful. Arnold van Gennep famously described the special significance of borderlands in magico-religious situations (Gennep 1960, 15–25). As transitional places, borders and crossroads can be viewed as having supernatural power and, additionally, streams and rivers are typically liminal in Irish tradition; for example, in medieval tales (Nagy 1981–82).

Another practice observed with the snail cure that may be considered religious is fasting by the sufferer: 'A slug or snail in his shell or house was found. The slug was rubbed to the wart and then put on the thorn of an *sceach geal* [whitethorn] and left there. The fasting sufferer visited the slug for nine mornings in succession' (NFCS 322: 277, Cork). All informants give or imply a transference rationale to explain how this cure works: transference commences when the snail comes into physical contact with the warts. After the snail's death on a thorn, the transference continues with the snail's decay and the decay of the sufferer's wart happening simultaneously. Only a handful of cures stipulate that the snail dies before it is rubbed to the wart and thus the transference commences after the demise of the snail; for example:

There are several methods for curing warts. One way was to find a snail with his house on. Then procure a gooseberry thorn and puncture the snail until he froths and rub the froth on the warts three times in succession. Then place the snail on the point of a 'sgeough' [whitethorn] and as the snail would wither so also would the warts. (NFCS 892: 304, Wexford)

This cure is also well known internationally (for the United States, see Halpert 1949; for France and Italy, see Bartoli et al. 1997). Ireland's nearest geographical neighbour, Britain, also records numerous examples of snail cures for warts:

Take one of the large black snails which are to be found during summer in every hedgerow, rub it over the wart, and then hang it on a thorn. This must be done nine nights consecutively, at the end of which time the wart will completely disappear. For as the snail, exposed to such cruel treatment, will gradually wither away, so it is believed that the wart, being impregnated with its matter will slowly do the same. (Burns 1992, 38)

Physical evidence of this practice can be found in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. In a glass specimen jar filled with alcohol there is a slug impaled on a thorn and the label reads, 'Go out alone and find a large black slug. Secretly rub the underside on the warts and impale the slug on the thorn. As the slug dies the warts will go'. The artefact was purchased by the museum in 1898 from Thomas James Carter, a former brickmaker, who spent decades collecting fossils and folklore in the countryside surrounding Oxford (Manning 1902, 288–89). Today, snail slime as a treatment for dermatological conditions such as aging skin and warts has become hugely popular: Holland and Barrett is a chain of health food shops with over 1,300 stores in sixteen countries which sells organic snail creams and gel.

The popularity of the snail cure is likely due in part to the wide availability of the common snail throughout the country, linked of course to the wet climate, which highlights the importance of the geographical as well as the socio-cultural context of folk medicine. Snails, which play such an important part in folk cures for warts, were not only used in Irish folk medicine, but also in divination practices. More specifically, on Halloween or Samhain eve, one of the quarter days of Irish tradition, snails were used to foretell the future. For instance, flour was spread on a dish, and a snail put on it. The shape made by the snail on the flour was supposed to reveal the marital future of the person who engaged in the activity (Danaher 1972, 223; unfortunately, Danaher does not specify the provenance or date of the custom).

Meat

There are forty-four cures involving the burying of meat, overwhelmingly bacon, spread across twenty out of twenty-six counties. The cure consists of acquiring bacon, often by stealing it or taking it without the owner knowing (twenty-three of the cures), rubbing the bacon on the wart, and then burying it: 'Rub the wart with a small piece of fat bacon stolen from a neighbour's house and then bury the meat' (NFCS 584: 10, Tipperary). Some cures stipulate the number of times the meat must be rubbed onto the warts; some say it must be buried in animal excrement instead of soil: 'Warts were cured by stealing a piece of meat and rubbing it to the warts for nine mornings. The meat was then hidden in manure where no one could find it. The warts were supposed to be disappearing as the meat rotted' (NFCS 408: 162, Kerry).

Religious rituals are again used in this sympathetic magic cure, specifically making the sign of the cross: 'The cure for the wart is to ... steal a piece of beef out of the butcher's shop and make the sign of the cross three times on the wart with the beef. Then bury the beef and when the beef rots the wart will rot also' (NFCS 1028: 112, Donegal); or the saying of a prayer as opposed to a charm: 'Eight pieces of fat rubbed onto a wart and a prayer said each time will cure the wart. Bury the fat after and the warts will disappear' (NFCS 740: 100, Westmeath). The importance of belief in the power of the cure was also acknowledged: 'Cure for warts. Piece of fat bacon rubbed to the warts and prayers recited, must have faith in the cure otherwise useless' (NFCS 800: 17, Offaly).

While the majority of the cures state that the bacon must be buried in soil or sometimes dung, this was not always the case; it could also be left on the road: 'If warts are rubbed with fat bacon and the fat bacon afterwards left along the road they will disappear' (NFCS 962: 167, Cavan), presumably because animals would come along and eat it. Or it could be left in a parcel, similar to the stones at a crossroads cure, whereupon the person who picks up the parcel will acquire the warts: 'Warts: Rub a piece of fat bacon on the warts. Put the piece of bacon in a parcel and leave it on the road. The first person to handle the bacon will take the warts and the original is cured' (NFCS 776: 490, Kildare). This cure is well known internationally (Hardy 1878; Saintyves 1913, 39; Hatfield 1998).

As Allen and Hatfield emphasize, people use indigenous plants for their cures (Allen and Hatfield 2004); the same can also be said of animals. The place of the pig is well established in Irish topography. The words *torc*, boar, and *muc*, pig, are common

elements in Irish place names, from Kanturk (boar's head) in West Cork to Ros Muc (headland of pigs) in West Galway. An indication of the importance of pigs in the Irish diet is the frequency with which swineherds are mentioned in the early literature. For example, the Annals of Clonmacnoise for the year 1038 report, 'There was such an abundance of ackorns this yeare that it fattened the piggeso^ [runts] of pigges' (Murphy 1896, 176, citing an English translation of 1627). Within medieval literature, pigs feature heavily as a high-status food of warriors during feasts, as indicated, for instance, in the medieval Irish tale *Scéla Mucce meic Dathó*, 'The Tale of Macc Da Thó's Pig' (Gantz 1981, 179–87). Recently, it has been estimated that people in Ireland eat more pork per capita than any other meat (Mac Con Iomaire 2003, 207).

Fasting Spit

There are thirty-four separate cures using fasting spit for warts: 'Your fasting spittle for nine mornings cures warts' (NFCS 877: 35, Wexford). No rationale for how this cure is effective is given by any of the informants. Comparable cures from Britain appear in the works of Hardy (1878, 226), Black (1883, 184), and Hatfield (2003, 328). The supposed healing properties of saliva are documented by Pliny and Galen (Chowdharay-Best 1975, 195). In the Bible, Jesus is said to have used saliva to cure a deaf and dumb man (Mark 7:32). However, it must be noted that these ancient sources do not mention the use of saliva to treat warts specifically (Chowdharay-Best 1975, 195). Spit was also included in the theory of bodily humours, which was current in official medicine for centuries, as well as in folk medicine (Selare 1939, 349). It is impossible to say with certainty if elite pre-modern humoral medicine filtered down to the rural population, or whether this is a case of polygenesis of similar ideas—arising with the 'folk' on the one hand and being transmitted in writing from antiquity among the elite on the other. The fact that only fasting saliva, rather than regular spit, is recommended in the Irish wart cures is possibly due to the ceremonial/religious connotations of fasting, which has long been a penitential practice to get closer to the divine. For instance, traditionally, Christians used to fast on Good Friday, in penance for and commemoration of the Crucifixion.

Plant Cures

There are 208 plant cures (27.8%) within this representative sample. Plant cures consist of vegetables, fruit, herbs, weeds, trees, bushes, and grasses. Prior to the advent and spread of modern health care practices, the Irish population, like many others, was dependent upon traditional folk medicine. The latter was a combination of experiential knowledge and inherited lore, much of which focused on the medicinal properties of specific plants. Susan Drury highlights the significant point about these cures as being 'their eclecticism, drawing as they did upon whatever traditions or medicaments appeared both relevant and accessible at the time' (Drury 1991, 97). The informants within the NFCS acknowledge the significant role of herbs in healing: 'There were different herbs used for curing different ailments' (NFCS 546: 127, Tipperary). There are thirty-seven identifiable plants within the representative sample and more that use

Irish or English local names which cannot be accurately linked to a specific plant at this time. The three most common plants used in cures for warts are dandelion (fifty-one cures), straw/rushes (thirty-six), and the potato (twenty-five).

Most plant cures are fairly straightforward; for example, 'The dandelion weed is a very good cure for warts. The stems of the dandelion are full of a kind of milk and when this milk is put on the wart for about a week the wart will disappear' (NFCS 786: 114, Dublin) and 'The juice of potatoes if rubbed on warts will remove them' (NFCS 773: 330, Kildare). Apart from identifying the plant needed, specific instructions on how to use the plant are often given: 'The w[*o*]artweed is found in potato ridges and it is a cure for warts. The stalk is broken in two and there is stuff inside like milk and it is rubbed on the warts' (NFCS 740: 110, Westmeath).

Within the category of plant cures, thirty-six focus on straw. The cure predominantly consists of: 'Get a straw and rub it on the wart. Bury the straw and as it rots the wart will rot' (NFCS 821: 5, Offaly). A similar cure was collected by Norlin (1918) in western Illinois and Hardy (1878) recounts this cure from an Irishman in Britain. Clearly, this is another cure using transference; in some cures, the sufferer's spit was added: 'Get a piece of straw and tie it in a knot, spit on the knot; rub it on the wart and it will disappear' (NFCS 926: 161, Wicklow). In some cases, it is not necessary for the straw to come into contact with the sufferer: 'The remedy for warts was to get the straws and point them to the wart. Then tie a string on the straw and throw them on the road who ever picked up the straws would take away the warts' (NFCS 983: 2, Cavan). Several straw cures are highly complex:

Warts—The cure for warts is made thus: a piece of straw is procured and sprinkled with holy water, it is then rubbed on the wart, certain prayers are said, the straw is buried and when it is rotten the wart is gone. This remedy is performed on Mondays and Thursdays between sunrise and sunset. (NFCS 229: 267, Leitrim)

This cure involves religion and ritual with holy water and 'certain' prayers, transference of the wart to the straw; the cure must be performed on set days and between set times.

The use of the potato can also involve a transference and ritual component: 'Dá mbeadh fáiríní ort agus fata fuar a chur leó san oidhche agus é a tógáilt de arís agus a cur san talamh é roimh fáinne an lae d'imtheochadh na fáirthíní' (If you had warts and were to put a cold potato to them at night, and to take it from them and put it in the ground before sunrise, the warts would go) (NFCS 74: 338, Galway). Or they have a transference and secondary religious component: 'Cut a potato in two, rub the cut part to the wart in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Put the potato away in an old wall and when it shrivels up the wart will disappear' (NFCS 993: 120, Cavan). The overwhelming majority of the plant cures with a transference or ritual component include the potato, ivy leaves, branches from an alder tree, or elder sticks. The humble potato was introduced into Ireland in the late sixteenth century and became the dietary staple of about eight million people by the early nineteenth century. It is thus unsurprising that potatoes were used in multiple traditional medical cures in Ireland. For instance, carrying a potato pecked by a crow in your pocket was used as an amulet to prevent toothache (Barron and Soverino 2018). Potatoes also figured in seasonal dishes such as colcannon, which was consumed at special times of the year, such as All Hallows' Eve.

Magico-Religious Cures

Existence of magico-religious cures is evidenced within the sample, but it is the smallest category numerically by a significant margin (thirty-seven cures or 4.9% of the representative sample). As previously indicated, Yoder argues that magico-religious cures entail the use of charms, holy words, and holy actions to cure ailments (Yoder 1972, 192). This category comprises healers, funerals and clay, the moon, and prayers.

There were twenty-five cures for warts which were attributed to healers. Healers specializing in wart treatment were widespread, in Ireland and elsewhere. Hand (1971) identified three ways 'the gift' or 'cure' is acquired by individuals. First, a gift may be specifically conferred; for example, a couple with the same surname before their marriage have the cure for ringworm. Second, a gift may be innate in the healer; for example, the seventh son or daughter has the power to cure ringworm and Saint Anthony's fire, while a posthumous child (born after the death of the father) has the cure for thrush. Finally, a gift resulting from a unique condition; for example, a parent would ask a man on a white horse for a cure for whooping cough and the parent supposedly complied with the cure given. In the representative sample from The Schools' Collection (1937-38), the acquisition of the gift/cure appears to be strongly associated with position in the birth order, or with a person's name. The overwhelming majority of the healers were described as local people, as opposed to a posthumous child, couple with the same surname, or seventh son. For instance, 'Patrick Murray, Moymett, Trim has the cure of the warts. He asks how many warts is on the person. He says a few prayers and the warts fall off. He cured several people' (NFCS 695: 16-17, Meath). While there is a religious link with many of the healers, the narrative does not specify why healers were endowed with the gifts and we do not have a definitive explanation for why local healers are the dominant group within this category; perhaps warts were viewed as a minor ailment which could be treated domestically, or mainstream medicine in the 1930s did not have antiviral wart treatments available.

Clay and funerals play a role too (seven cures): 'When a funeral would pass to lift clay three times from under the right foot and rub it on the warts. Then throw it after the funeral. As the corpse wastes away the warts will die away' (NFCS 1116: 367-68, Donegal). The idea seems to be that the warts are sent to the world of the dead, and thus thought to leave the sufferer. Although clay can be categorized as a mineral, it is not the clay itself that wields the power; rather, it is the magico-religious aspect of death, liminality, and transference.

Only two cures predominantly involving the moon were found in the representative sample. There are differing perspectives on the role of the moon in wart cures. Chandler suggests that perhaps moonlight is an example of colour symbolism at work; that is, whiteness being equated to cleanliness (Chandler 1994, 101).

Conclusions and Comparative Discussion

The Schools' Collection was a systematic national survey of folklore conducted in the Republic of Ireland in the late 1930s, which examined folk medicine and holy wells amongst many other topics. The present study has analysed a representative sample

of folk medical 'cures', including 749 wart cures, the most frequently recorded ailment, accounting for 11% of the 6,843 cures sampled. Because of the large size of the representative sample, we have used descriptive statistics to analyse the data.

Many of the cures for warts are imbued with notions of transference (snails, bacon, straw, stones at a crossroads) which account for 274 out of 749 separate cures, or 37% of all wart cures. The idea of getting rid of disease by transferring it to an object, animal, or other person is attested elsewhere; for example, in the writings of Pliny the Elder, as well as in the nineteenth-century works of William Black. Chance also occurs, albeit less frequently, especially in the 'water in a stone' cure. Applying the commonly utilized categorization system of animal, plant, mineral, and magico-religious, we found that mineral cures make up 37%, animal 28.2%, plant 27.8%, magico-religious 4.9%, and 'other' 2.1%. However, the figure cited for magico-religious cures is misleading, as numerous cures in other categories involved some element of magico-religious ritual (say a few prayers; make the sign of the cross; say 'in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost'). Forty-two cures have a secondary religious/prayer component. These secondary religious/prayer components are predominantly in holy well or water cures (nineteen cures), and then evenly spread across animal, plant, and magico-religious cures. Hatfield (1998) rightly comments on the overlap when coding and classifying wart cures using the animal, plant, mineral, and magico-religious classification system. We concur and argue that, in itself, this is unsatisfactory. Thus, we included subcategories of transference, chance, and secondary religious component (see [Table 1](#)).

We have found that transference occurs in animal cures (meat, snails, fasting spit), plant cures (straw/rushes), mineral cures (stone at crossroads, pins; buying and selling with a penny), and magico-religious cures (funerals and clay). The element of chance occurs in mineral cures (specifically, water in a stone cures) and some snail cures. This new knowledge clearly identifies that transference is present within all four major categories, but is more predominant in the animal and mineral categories. The component of chance is identified primarily within the mineral class for wart cures. Plant cures tend to be more straightforward and pragmatic, with the exception of straw cures.

It is well known that there are numerous cures for warts, and we do not specifically seek to add previously unknown cures; rather, we have identified the most common cures in an Irish context in the 1930s. Of the 749 wart cures, 525 (or 70.4% of the sample) belong to ten specific varieties: snails, water in a stone, holy wells, the dandelion, meat, stones at crossroads, fasting spit, straw and knots, healers, and the potato. The ten most popular cures were reported many times throughout Ireland. It is thus very possible that at least some people believed in their effectiveness. As put by a tradition-bearer: 'Must have faith in the cure otherwise useless' (NFCS 800: 17, Offaly).

Allen and Hatfield (2004) demonstrate that people use indigenous plants for their cures; we suggest that the same is reflected in animal and mineral cures for warts. Most of the cures for warts were performed using animals, plants, and minerals which were widespread, and thus easily accessible. While this is obvious, it is nevertheless worth stating explicitly. People used whatever was available to them. The common dandelion has the highest number of cures within the sample. This weed remains prolific throughout the country and can be found in every garden and

field. The potato, introduced into Ireland in the late sixteenth century and then quickly becoming the dietary staple, was used in multiple traditional medical cures. It is reasonable to suggest then that none of the potato cures could have been more than 350 years old at the time of the survey in 1937–38. Ireland can trace the importance of pigs back to very early literature, and pigs were also common nationally during the lifetime of the children who did the collecting and their adult informants. The most prevalent single cure nationally was the snail cure. The common snail is native to the Mediterranean area and the whole of Western Europe, including Ireland. The snail is considered a pest in gardens and thus a classic lower order life form, to which warts can be passed via transference (Hand 1980).

Many of the most common cures are not unique to Ireland: they also occurred in Black's work on British folklore, which dates to the 1880s. This is significant, for three main reasons: first, the 1880s was within the lifetime of many informants of the NFCS and the same cures with some variations were recorded in both countries; second, Ireland and Britain have similar flora, fauna, and climate, as emphasized in Allen and Hatfield's *Medical Plants in Folk Tradition: An Ethnobotany of Britain and Ireland* (2004); and third, Britain ruled Ireland for eight hundred years and there was undoubtedly transmission of folkloric beliefs and practices during that time period. All of these factors are likely to have had a strong bearing on the similarities of wart cures found in Britain and Ireland.

These cures, and folk medicine in general, did not exist in a vacuum. In fact, they were embedded in a well-defined community and way of life, and they make complete sense only when placed within the socio-historical background of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland. Ireland at the time was very different from today: its population in 1936 was merely 2,968,420 (Central Statistics Office 1938). The country had a largely agrarian economy and the Schools' Scheme occurred during a time of high poverty and emigration rates. The power of the Catholic Church was very strong, as evidenced when the early independent Irish governments formed an alliance with the Catholic Church (Coogan 2003, xii–xiii; Fuller 2005, 41). The influence of religion, specifically Roman Catholicism, is evident in the abundance of cures which invoke religious ritual or prayer—making the sign of the cross; invoking the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This last ritual was so common within the entirety of The Schools' Collection that it was often written just as an acronym 'F, S, H.G'. Leonard Primiano writes: 'Vernacular religion is, by definition, religion as it is lived: as human beings encounter, understand, interpret, and practice it' (Primiano 1995, 44). Irish cures for warts are a testament to the versatility of folk medicine. Just like the human psyche, folk medicine often resists strict categorizations: religious and secular, straightforward and supernatural cures can all co-exist in the tradition-bearers' worldviews, without any contradictions being perceived.

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Archival Sources

Cures in the National Folklore Collection, Schools' Collection

Some manuscripts give the exact date when the material was recorded, others give a range of months and the year while others give no date. This is reflected in the dating patterns below.

NFCS 22: 512; Thomas Roche (54), Omaun More, Co. Galway. Collector: Rita Roche, Cathair Loisgreáin Girls School, Caherlustraun, Co. Galway. January 1938. Teacher: Máire Nic Aodha [in English].

NFCS 74: 338; Eilís Ní Mháille (72), Kilmeelickin, Co. Galway. Collector: Máire Ní Stancháird, Coill Maolacáin School, Kilmeelickin, Co. Galway. 21 January–22 December 1938. Teacher: Anna M. Ní Loingsigh [in Irish].

NFCS 77: 62; Philip Dignan (86), Ballygar, Galway. Collector: Terry Dignan, Mionloch Girls' School, Menlough, Co. Galway. 19 May 1938. Teacher: Bean Uí Oisín, Bean Uí Dhubhagáin [in English].

NFC S 104: 306; [informant unknown]. Collector unknown. Sruth Nua School, Ardnacally, Co. Mayo. Teacher: Tomás de Brún [in English].

NFCS 229: 267; [informant unknown]. Collector unknown. Gortermone School, Gortermone, Co. Leitrim. Teacher: Mrs A. O'Reilly [in English].

NFCS 322: 277; [informant unknown]. Collector: Joan Desmond, Cnoc an Bhile School, Upton, Co. Cork. October 1937–December 1938. Teachers: D. Ó Donnchadha, S. Ní Liatháin [in English].

NFCS 367: 34; Mrs. Justice (45), Liscarroll, Co. Cork. Collector: George Justice, Lios Uí Chearbhaill Boys' School, Liscarroll, Co. Cork. Teacher: Conchobhar Ó Murchadha [in English].

NFCS 408: 162; Michael Costello (78), Ballyhorgan East, Co. Kerry. Collector: Mrs Norah Costello (assistant teacher), An Drom Clochach Boys School, Dromclogh, Co. Kerry. November 1937–January 1939. Teacher: Pártholán Ó Ruadhacháin [in English].

NFCS 461: 31; Mícheál Ó Tuama (76), Kenmare, Co. Kerry. Collector: unknown. Siolbhraín (Shelbourne) School, Gortrooskagh, Co. Kerry. 6 May 1937. Teacher: Síghle, Bean Uí Thuama [in English].

NFCS 503: 452; [informant unknown]. Collector: Thomas Lynch, Dromlohan, Kilcornan School, Dromlohan, Co. Limerick. Teacher: Rebecca Nic Gabhann [in English].

NFCS 546: 127; Denis Doherty (65), Tipperary. Collector: unknown. Teampoll Tuaithe, Teampoll Mór Boys School, Templetouhy, Co. Tipperary. 14 August 1938–10 January 1939. Teacher: Seán Ó Meadhra [in English].

NFCS 584: 10; Thomas O'Dea, Marlow, Co. Tipperary. Collector: Alice Ryan, Clonoulty School, Clonoulty, Co. Tipperary. Teacher: Timothy Gleeson [in English].

NFCS 606: 431; James Brown, Lanna, Co. Clare. Collector: unknown. Fergus View School, Lissycasey, Caherea, Co. Clare. September 1937–30 June 1938. Teacher: Pádraig Mac Gearaidh [in English].

NFCS 617: 51; Seamus Maoldhomhnaigh. Collector: Agustín Maoldhomhnaigh, Ballycullaun, Co. Clare. Dubhlinn Boys School, Doolin, Co. Clare. 10 November 1937–31 December 1938. Teacher: Tadhg Ó Seasnáin [in English].

NFCS 628: 142; Martin Galvin, Pound Street, Co. Clare. Collector: Nora Galvin, Clochar na Trócaire, Cill Chaoi School, Kilkee, Co. Clare, 19 November 1938–11 January 1939. Teacher: Máire Gromail [in English].

NFCS 695: 16–17; [informant unknown]. Collector: unknown. Kildalkey Boys' School, Kildalkey, Co. Meath. 15 January 1938. Teacher: Muiris Ó Fearghail [in English].

NFCS 725: 109; [informant unknown]. Collector: Tomás Mach Domhnaill, Clonmellon Boys' School, Delvin, Westmeath. Teacher: P. Ó Droighneáin [in English].

NFC S 740: 110; [informant unknown]. Collector: Kate Donegan, Sonna School (roll number 1422), Kildallan, Co. Westmeath. Teacher: Mrs O' Connell [in English].

NFCS 747: 366; [informant unknown]. Collector: Rose Mears, Ardnagrath School, Ardnagrath, Co. Westmeath. 7 January 1937–18 June 1938. Teacher: M. Ní Mhaoldhomhnaigh [in English].

NFCS 773: 330; Mr Kenny (83), Celbridge, Co. Kildare. Collector: Pádraig Mac Áirt, Abbey Boys' School, Celbridge, Co. Kildare. Teacher: P. J. McManus [in English].

NFCS 776: 490; [informant unknown]. Collector: unknown. Ballymore-Eustace Boys' School, Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare. Teacher: Jas. Byrne [in English].

NFCS 786: 114; John Christie, Curkeen Hill, Co. Dublin. Collector: unknown. Loughshinny School, Loughshinny, Co. Dublin. 18 November 1937–30 June 1938. Teacher: James Monks [in English].

NFCS 800: 17; [informant unknown]. Collector: unknown. Bracknagh (1) School, Bracknagh, Co. Offaly. Teacher: Isabella Graham [in English].

NFCS 821: 5; Thomas Reddin, Crinkill, Co. Offaly. Collector: D. Tooher, Birr (St. Brendan's) School, Birr or Parsonstown, Co. Offaly. 3 October 2017–25 November 1938. Teachers: S. Ó Conchobhair, R. Ó Huigín [in English].

NFCS 877: 35; [informant unknown]. Collector: Philip Murphy, Duncormick School, Duncormick, Co. Wexford. 9 April 1938. Teacher: P. S. Ó hEachthigheirn [in English].

NFCS 892: 304; Mark Doyle, Monbeg, Co. Wexford. Collector: unknown. Baile an Daingin School, Ballindaggan, Co. Wexford. Teacher: A. Ó Cruachlaoich [in English].

NFCS 904: 255; Eugene Brennan (53). Collector: Michael Brennan, Rathanna School, Borris, Rathanna, Co. Carlow. Teacher: D. Eustace [in English].

NFCS 907: 366; [informant unknown]. Collector: Lilly Byrne, Bennekerry School, Bennekerry, Co. carlow. 21 June 1938. Teacher: Liam Ó hAodha.

NFCS 917: 58–59; Mrs J. Quinn (45), Valleymount, Co. Wicklow. Collector: May Quinn, Valleymount School, Valleymount, Co. Wicklow. February 1938–January 1939. Teacher: Dll. Ó Cochláin [in English].

NFCS 926: 161; [informant unknown]. Collector: Andrew Devlin (14), Wicklow Boys' School, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow. Teacher: An Br. P. Ó Maolchalláin [in English]

NFCS 932: 334; [informant unknown]. Collector: Roisin Ni Miodcain (13), Magoney Primary School, Magoney, Co. Monaghan. 4 December 1938–June 1939. Teacher: M. Ní Mhaolchraoibhe [in English].

NFCS 962: 167; Mrs Elliott, Mullaghbane, Cavan. Collector: Rupert Elliot, Blacklion School, Blacklion, Co. Cavan. October 1937–May 1938. Teacher: F. Johnston [in English].

NFCS 983: 2; Annie Luby (17), Drumhart, Co. Cavan. Collector: Bridie Luby, Portlongfield School, Portlongfield, Co. Cavan. 15 November 1937. Teacher: S. Ní Chuilinn [in English].

NFCS 993: 120; Mr Wilson, Drumbee, Cavan. Collector: Daisy Wilson, Kiffa School, Kiffagh, Co. Cavan. Teacher: Helen Dinneen [in English].

NFCS 993: 121; [informant unknown]. Collector: Wilfred Lowry, Kiffa School, Kiffagh, Co. Cavan. Teacher: Helen Dinneen [in English].

NFCS 1028: 112; [informant unknown]. Collector: Neil Doherty (14), Seosamh Naomhtha School, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal. Teacher: An Bráthair Naiti [in English].

NFCS 1116: 367–68; Mrs Bridget Mc Elhinney, Cooly, Co. Donegal. Collector: Maria Mc Elhinney, Cooley National School, Cooly, Co. Donegal. 1937–1938. Teacher: Eoghan Ó Beoláin [in English].

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