

0. BIRTHPLACE OF ST. PATRICK - Story Preface

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No one is sure where St. Patrick was born. The lad—whose birth name was Maewyn Succatt—was kidnapped by Irish raiders. This leads some scholars to believe that he must have been living near the western coast of today's United Kingdom. One such place could have been in Scotland, "between the mouth of the Severn and Clyde" rivers. This image, online via the BBC, depicts the Firth of Clyde as seen from space.

So much, about St. Patrick, is based on legend that we can't even be sure when, and where, he was born. He writes (in Latin) about his birthplace, but passing centuries have blurred the true meaning of his words. He says he was from

*...the settlement [vicus] of Bannavem Taburniae. (See *The Confession of St. Patrick*, [point 1.](#))*

Where is that?

- *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (by David Hugh Farmer) says it is "somewhere in the west between the mouth of the Severn and the Clyde." That could put Patrick's birthplace in the country we know as Scotland.
- Or ... Maybe his home was "near St. David's in South Wales," as suggested by Oliver St. John Gogarty.
- On the other hand ... since his father was both a cleric and a Roman official in Britain, maybe scholars who think the future saint was born near the Birdoswald section of Hadrian's Wall are right. If so, he spent his early years in Cumbria, part of England's now-famous Lake District.
- Then, again ... what about the viewpoint (expressed, among others, by David Bercot, in *Let Me Die in Ireland, The True Story of Patrick*) that Patrick's village "was probably situated near the southwestern coast of Britain." (Bercot, [footnote 1](#), [page 4.](#))

Why is the location of St. Patrick's birthplace so confusing? In short ... It's a matter of history.

Even in the seventh century, as evidenced by the Book of Armagh (a treasure now maintained at Trinity College, Dublin), no one really knew where Bannavem Taburniae was located.

What we do know, within a reasonable degree of certainty, is that *Ireland's* patron saint was born somewhere in *Britain* (probably near the end of the fourth century).

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BIRTHPLACE-OF-ST.-PATRICK-St.-Patrick-of-St.-Patrick-s-Day>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BIRTHPLACE-OF-ST.-PATRICK-St.-Patrick-of-St.-Patrick-s-Day>



Clyde - A Major River in Scotland

Map online, courtesy Graphic Maps.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Clyde-A-Major-River-in-Scotland>



Scotland - Land of Beauty

Photo online, courtesy Institute for Study Abroad at [Butler University](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Scotland-Land-of-Beauty>



St. David's - A Welsh Cathedral Town

Image online, courtesy the cwttraveller website.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/St.-David-s-A-Welsh-Cathedral-Town>



Oliver Gogarty, age 21, in 1899. Courtesy of Oliver D. Gogarty

Oliver St. John Gogarty

Photo online, courtesy The National Archives of Ireland.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Oliver-St.-John-Gogarty>

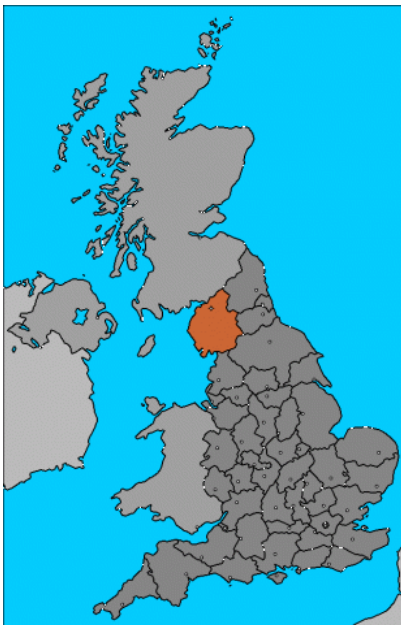


Birdoswald - A Fort at Hadrian's Wall

Photo of Birdoswald remains, online courtesy VisitCumbria.

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Cumbria - Its Location in Britain

Map online, courtesy Visit Cumbria.

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