

THE BURIAL HISTORY OF BESSBOROUGH MOTHER AND BABY HOME, 1922-98
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Introduction

Institutional burial is a practical question but grief is not. This report is about the stuff of burial – cemetery registers, invoices, shrouds, coffins and graves – not about emotional responses to death. Many will find it distressing to read because terms like ‘unclaimed bodies’ reproduce the language of administration not emotion or human dignity. I acknowledge that this cold bureaucratic language creates horror, revulsion, anger and pain. Unfortunately, burial places were often determined by administrator’s definitions of the claimed and unclaimed dead. Exploring institutional responses to death is the only way to identify the burial places of women and children associated with Bessborough Mother and Baby Home (MBH). This report does not explore causes of death, or mortality rates relating to individuals associated with Bessborough. There is no evidence that the burial places of adults and children were affected by cause of death.

The story of burial and Bessborough concerns two inter-twined institutions: the mother and baby home and the workhouse. Renamed the County Home and later St Finbarr’s Hospital, this public welfare and health institution founded Bessborough mother and baby home in 1921. The South Cork County Board, the administering body, oversaw many admissions of women and children to Bessborough and provided the home’s Medical Officer. People moved between the two institutions throughout the time period. Of the 921 child deaths associated with Bessborough, 129 occurred in the St Finbarr’s hospital.¹ The MBCHI stated that child mortality in Bessborough was low from the 1960s because ‘most deaths’ were associated with St Finbarr’s hospital.² The General Registry Office (GRO) list of dead associated with Bessborough shows that of the 79 deaths between 1960 and 1998, 55 occurred in St Finbarr’s hospital.³ Since the place of death is important to burial arrangements, it is essential to understand the bureaucratic relationship between Bessborough and St Finbarr’s hospital.

In the 1930s, the South Cork Board received monthly admission and discharge returns, including deaths, from the Mother Superior at Bessborough. Those returns were forwarded to the Minister for Local Government who occasionally asked for specific medical reports on named deceased children.⁴ Bessborough was

¹ *Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation Final Report*, (Dublin, 30 October 2020) Chapter 18a, p 38.

² *Final report* Chapter 18a. p 35.

³ The GRO list may not reflect all deaths. Cross referencing with institutional registers is impossible.

⁴ Minutes of meeting 23 October 35, page 704, CBPA/SO/M/13; Minutes of meeting 23 March 1936, Page 241, CBPA/SO/M/14; Minutes of meeting 2 April 1937, Page 257

overseen by state health and welfare authorities, who closely monitored the comings and goings of women and children, sometimes detaining women against her family's will.⁵ Local authority minutes described the women as 'inmates' and referred to unmarried mothers sent to Bessborough as 'first offenders'.⁶ The maternity hospital opened in Bessborough in 1930 because the Minister, the South Cork board and the nuns worked together to secure funding.⁷ Politicians protecting the ratepayer's interests often argued over the amount of public money spent on maintaining women and children in Bessborough. Strangely, burial costs were never debated in the surviving records. The arrangements between the two institutions regarding burial were never explicitly stated. This report attempts to reconstruct the financial and burial relationships between Bessborough and the hospital from fragmentary records.

While the local hospital authorities played a significant role in Bessborough, the mother and baby home was a privately run institution. The congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary owned the buildings and the lands around it. They admitted women and children who had no ties to the South Cork County Board, entering into contractual relationships with other local welfare authorities and private adoption societies. The congregation ran its own adoption society after 1953. Most aspects of institutional life were determined by the religious staff working there; there is no evidence local politicians visited the home regularly, as happened in Tuam.⁸ The religious staff also made judgements about the abilities of women to live outside the institution.⁹

Reflecting the poor survival of institutional records in Ireland, there is a severe shortage of death and burial records from Bessborough and the St Finbarr's hospital. Many hospital records extant in the late 1980s have since disappeared.¹⁰ This report is based on the minutes of the health and welfare authority – the South Cork board – hospital records, city cemetery registers and legislative provisions. This is supplemented by central government records and newspapers. Since the

CBPA/SO/M/15; Minutes of meeting 10 May 1937, page 339, CBPA/SO/M/15. All Cork County and County Archives (CCCA).

⁵ Minutes of meeting 27 February 1935 Page 148, CBPA/SO/M/13, CCCA.

⁶ Secretary's Report on Bessboro' Home, 10 June 1937, page 434, CBPA/SO/M/15; 27 November 1930, CBPA/SO/M/8, CCCA.

⁷ Secretary's Report on Bessboro' Home, 10 June 1937, page 434, CBPA/SO/M/15, CCCA.

⁸ *Connacht Tribune*, 27 August 1955 reports that councillors were paid expenses for 'visiting committee' meetings in the Children's Home, Tuam.

⁹ Mother Martina told the board that some women were 'too weak willed to take care of themselves'. Minutes of meeting 28 August 1930, CBPA/SO/M/8, CCCA. In 1930, 'weak willed' could be a moral judgement or a statement about intellectual disability.

¹⁰ In December 1985, the hospital held 'records of burial' dated 1954 to 1971 (see M. Emmanuel Browne, *A Tale of Two Hospitals: St Finbarr's Hospital, Regional Hospital* (Cork 1989) p 107). None of those records were recovered by the MBCHI.

MBHCI had unparalleled access to closed records, its statistical findings will be cited.

Note

It is a condition of access to sensitive archives that individuals are not clearly identified in this report. The list of dead associated with Bessborough produced by the GRO is now widely available, appearing in art installations and in newspapers. This list, and another of deceased adults, are the basis of this report but I cannot name individuals and their burial places.

Name changes

The most important public hospital in the city is intimately tied to the history of Bessborough MBH. From 1922 to 1998, its name was changed twice:

- Cork Union Workhouse (1840-1925), which contained the Cork District Hospital (1898-1925)
- Cork County Home (1925-1953?) which also contained a separate hospital (1925-53?)
- St Finbarr's Hospital (1953?-1998)

The name changes reflect a greater specialisation of medical function, as welfare services became less institutionalised.

Burials associated with Bessborough, 1922-1998

Infants and children

The public is uneasy about the interment of deceased children associated with Bessborough because burial locations cannot be verified using documentary evidence. The numbers are stark. The chart below has been compiled using death statistics from the MBHCI final report and my own research into burial locations. It shows that only a tiny minority of child deaths associated with Bessborough, 73, have identifiable burial places.

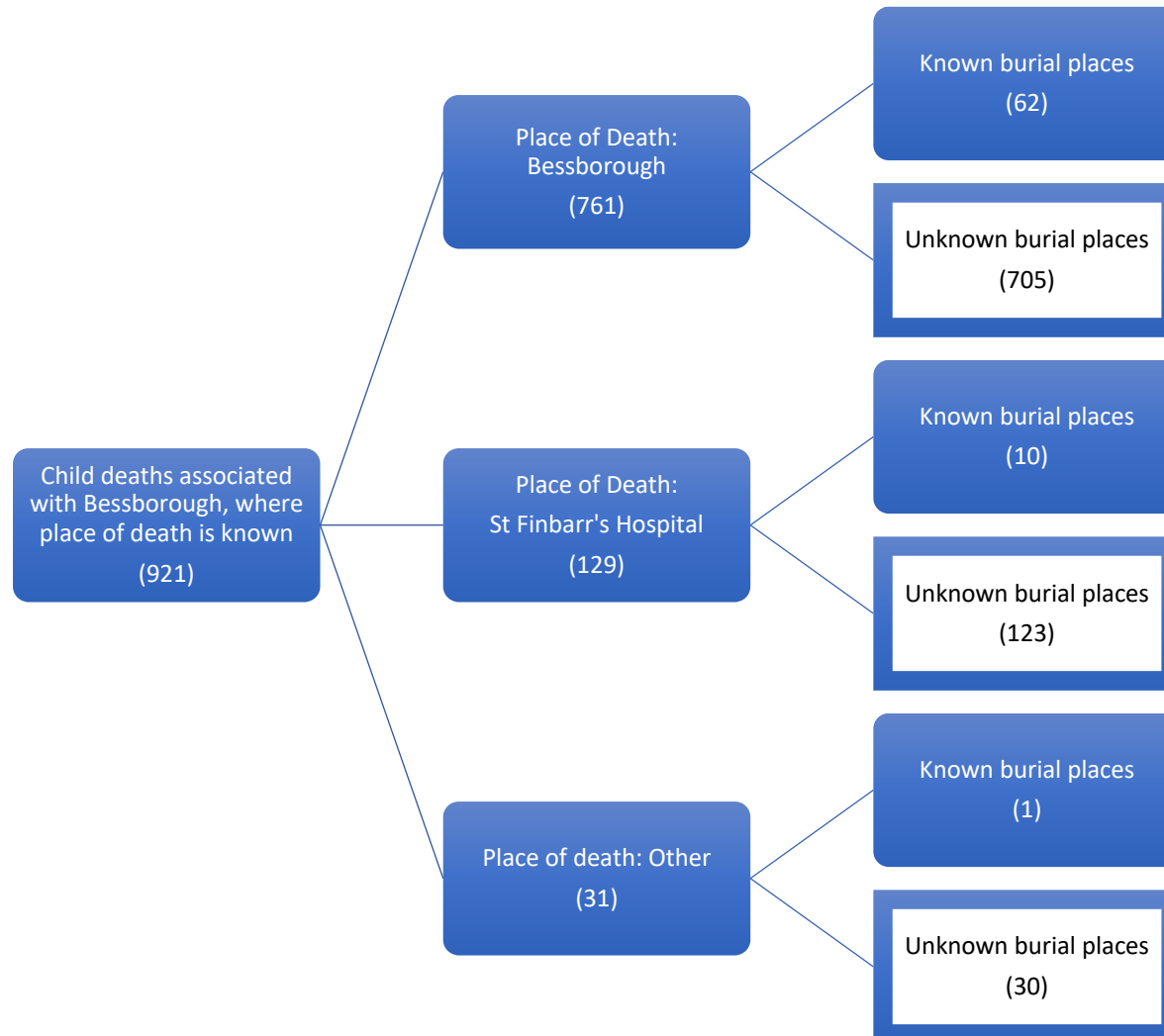


Figure 1 Child deaths associated with Bessborough

(Sources: Death statistics from MBHCI Final Report, Chapter 18a p 38; author's own burial research)

Regardless of whether children died in Bessborough, St Finbarr's Hospital or elsewhere, there is very little evidence of their burial in Cork city's graveyards. Out of a total of 921, 848 children have no verifiable burial place. This disturbing fact has been interpreted as evidence of disrespectful burial, a post-mortem expression of the social stigma borne by children born outside marriage. Tuam MBH, where infant remains were placed in a concrete structure believed to be a sewerage system, casts a long shadow over institutional burial. There is an assumption that all undocumented burials in other MBHs conceal transgressive, culturally repugnant burial practices. To determine if this is true, this report will outline how and where children associated with Bessborough were buried. It shows how deceased young children were sometimes treated differently in death to adults and that marital birth status affected institutional burial practices.

Adults

Adult deaths associated with Bessborough have attracted much less public opprobrium, perhaps because the numbers are not newsworthy. The MBCHI found 31 maternal deaths and made no finding of shocking maternal mortality rates. The chart below also shows that the problem of unidentified burial places is less acute in relation to adults.

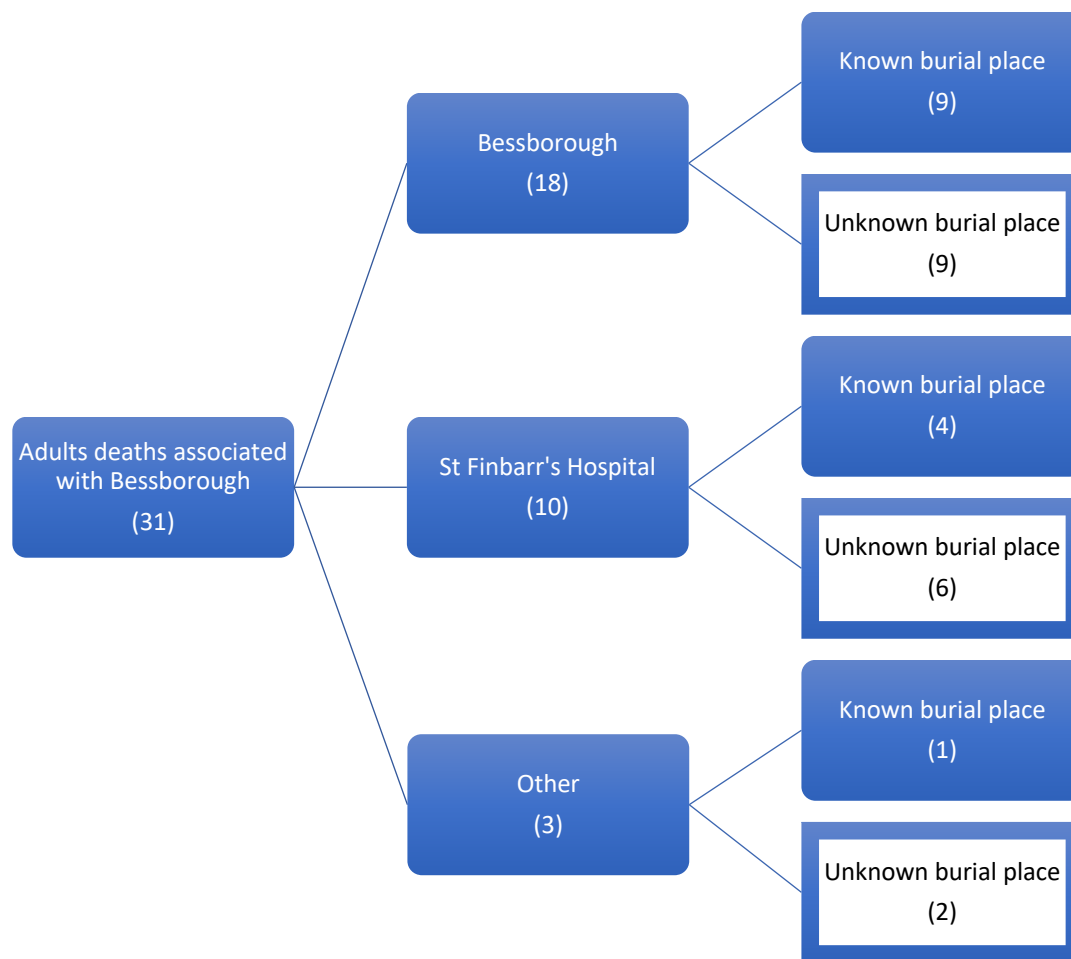


Figure 2 Adult deaths associated with Bessborough, where place of death is known
(Death statistics MBHCI Final Report, Chapter 18a, p 11; author's own burial research)

The burial places of 14 adults appear in cemetery registers. This sizeable minority contrasts the near-complete absence of documented burials for children. It appears that deceased adults and children were treated differently in death.

To understand the interment of people associated with Bessborough, this report will examine the burial practices of health institutions in Cork city. It is a complicated history, that discusses the nineteenth-century legislation alongside cultural attitudes to poverty and specifically, the burial of the very poorest.

The Workhouse and the foundation of Bessborough MBH

A mother and baby home was established in Bessborough in 1922 as part of the Sinn Féin reforms of Cork workhouse. Sinn Féin Vice-Guardians had been running the workhouse from November 1920 when they replaced the elected board of guardians. By 1921, Vice Guardian, Séamus Lankford was effectively running the institution alone. His reform programme was concerned with children and particularly single women and their children. Those aims were later summarised thus:

- To remove from the precincts of the Workhouse as many of the children as possible
- To improve the moral tone of the Institution
- To put unmarried mothers, before and after confinement, under the care of nuns
- To prevent, if possible, the contact and communication of this and other classes of inmates, with persons outside, likely to obstruct their moral recovery
- To provide better care for the infants of the institution¹¹

Lankford's reforms sought to remove single mothers from the workhouse altogether, while isolating the inmates, including single mothers, from 'persons outside'. This reform programme had its roots in long-standing complaints about the evils of the 'mixed' workhouse where different 'classes' of poor lived together. Commentators also believed that it was contradictory to provide medical care and welfare support under the same roof.¹²

With Lankford's help, the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary bought the Bessborough estate.¹³ In July 1922, the first women and children are transferred from Cork workhouse to Bessborough. The women were single

¹¹ Cork Union: Inspector's report and findings 6 July 1923, reproduced in full in Browne, *A Tale of Two Hospitals*, p 66.

¹² Donnacha Sean Lucey, *The End of the Irish Poor Law?: Welfare and Healthcare Reform in Revolutionary and Independent Ireland* (Manchester, 2015), p 24.

¹³ Lucey, p 24 and Siobhán Lankford, *The Hope and the Sadness: personal recollections on an Irish intelligence network, 1916-23* (New edition, Cork, 2020) p 332.

mothers of one child because it was believed specialist institutions could rehabilitate such cases. Women resident in the workhouse with more than one extra-marital child were not sent to Bessborough. All residents of Bessborough supported by the public funds were assessed as deserving both morally and financially. Those women paid for by boards of public assistance could not afford maternity, fostering and adoption services provided by private individuals or societies.¹⁴

Although there were later complaints about the Vice Guardians high-handed management style, their successors did not reverse this restructuring of the workhouse.¹⁵ The foundation of Bessborough was seen as a ‘real effort’ to deal with a ‘large and intricate problem’.¹⁶ In 1924, Bessborough mother and baby home was integrated into the welfare and medical system of the new South Cork County Board under the Cork Joint County Scheme Order. The workhouse, renamed the County Home, was to accommodate ‘aged and infirm persons, chronic invalids, idiots and epileptics’. Bessborough was an ‘Auxiliary Home’ ‘for such unmarried mothers and their children as the Board may select.’¹⁷

The Workhouse/County Home and burial

There is no evidence that the Vice Guardians or the South Cork County Board reformed the burial practices of the workhouse in the 1920s. The surviving burial records for Cork County Home are identical to a register created in Belfast Workhouse in 1908.¹⁸ It seems there was little change in administrative practices around burial after independence. The burial practices of the workhouse and its successors are expressed in the following diagram:

¹⁴ In Cork such nursing homes included Dunscombe, St Kevin’s and Mrs Grant’s. See *Final Report*, Chapter 2, 2.12 for a list of private and public maternity facilities.

¹⁵ Inspector’s report and findings 1923, in Browne, *A Tale of Two Hospitals*, p 66-67.

¹⁶ Inspector’s report and findings 1923, in Browne, *A Tale of Two Hospitals*, p 68.

¹⁷ Schedule III Cork Joint County Scheme Order

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1924/sro/927/made/en/>

¹⁸ This register covers 1908-11, BG/7/KA/11, PRONI.

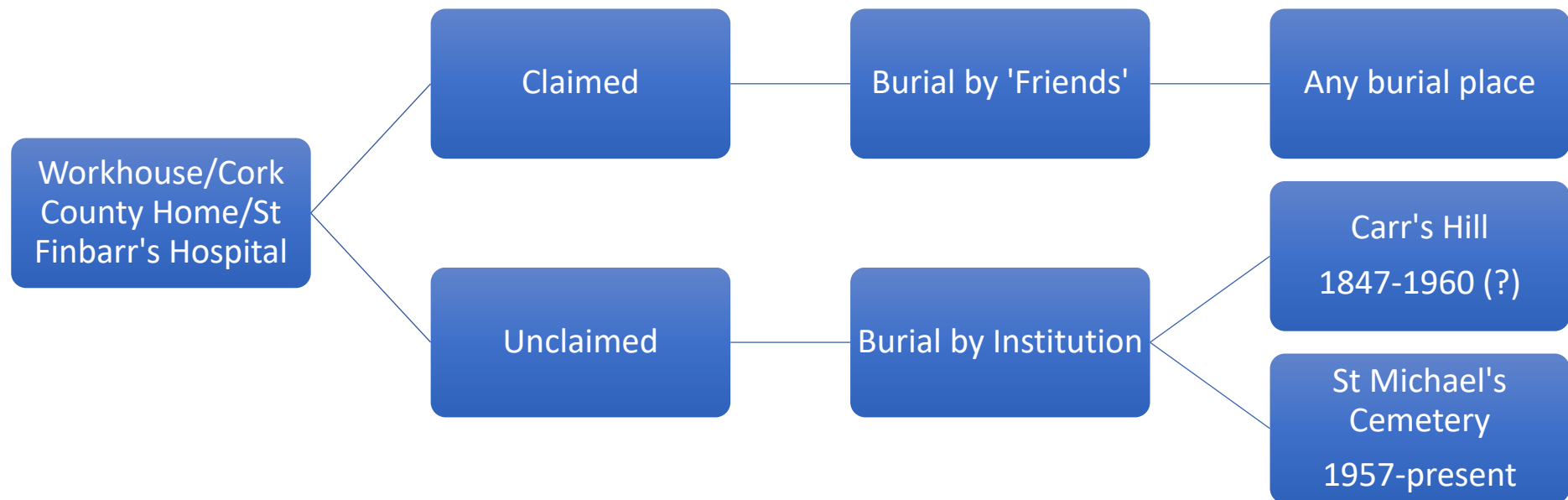


Figure 3 Burial arrangements in Cork Union workhouse and it's successors

Like the workhouse, the burial of those who died in the County Home depended on whether they were claimed by friends or not. Anyone who wished to pay for a private burial could claim a body from an institution: those people were 'friends' a term that included but was not restricted to family. Claimed bodies could be buried privately in any cemetery or churchyard at the expense of 'friends', while the burial of the unclaimed dead was the responsibility of the County Home.

The County Home also interred unclaimed unburied bodies found in the sea, in rivers or on roadsides. This burial function dated from the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act of 1862, which obliged welfare authorities to bury all unclaimed bodies, regardless of location of death:

Be it enacted, that the guardians of each union in Ireland shall provide for the burial of the dead body of every such person dying or found dead within such union whose family or connexions shall not be known, and whose body shall not be claimed by any person for the purpose of burial, and shall charge the expenses of such burial on the poor rates of the union¹⁹

This burial function was expanded in 1879 to include burials of those without means.²⁰ Burying unclaimed bodies was a routine function of the workhouse and later, the County Home. A 'Record of Death' compiled by the Home between 1931 and 1940 shows that individuals who died outside the Home were buried by the institution.²¹ Unidentified bodies, both adult and infant, found in rivers, fields or at the side of the road were brought to the County Home for burial. Occasionally, named destitute people were brought to the hospital because no one would pay for their burial. The register proves the South Cork board buried unclaimed bodies where death occurred outside the institution. However, not all the unclaimed dead were buried by the welfare authorities. Some of the 'friendless' dead were sent to the School of Anatomy in UCC where their bodies were dissected by staff and students. Those remains were subsequently buried in Curraghkippane graveyard.

The County Home/St Finbarr's hospital: death and burial records

Claimed and unclaimed dead: Carr's Hill

The records of the County Home/St Finbarr's Hospital relating to death and burial are poor, with substantial losses occurring since the 1980s.²² It is a challenge to determine who was claimed by 'friends' and who was buried by the institution.

¹⁹ Poor Relief (Ireland) Act 1862, 39 & 40 Vict. c 50 s 3, Section 23.

²⁰ Section 3, Public Health act (amendment) 1879

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1879/act/57/enacted/en/print.html>

²¹ Record of Deaths, 1 April 1931 to 3 August 1940, CCH/KA/2, CCCA.

²² Browne, *A Tale of Two Hospitals*, p 107 are no longer extant.

Local authority minutes imply that deaths of extra-marital children were treated differently to all other deaths. When the child of a single mother died in the institution, the authorities in the 1930s chose not to inform their families outside, as was customary for other deaths. In 1931, the Board was told:

that in consideration of the families concerned, no notification of the death of an illegitimate child whose mothers are in the house is sent out, but the mother herself is notified, and her wishes ascertained.²³

The families were not informed out of ‘consideration’ because the board believed they were anxious to conceal such children at all costs. This practice would have made it almost impossible for mothers admitted on the basis of their poverty to organise private burial. Administrator’s deliberately obstructed single mothers who needed ‘friends’ to help with burial. They also claimed that staff respected a mother’s expressed wishes but did not say what happened if her wishes conflicted with official policy. Mothers rare attempts to challenge the normative culture of secrecy and shame were likely resisted by administrators. It is impossible to know how many years this policy was in place.

A policy of not informing ‘friends’ contradicted standard practice in the public hospital and ensured the hospital buried the majority of extra-marital children who died there. As diagram 1 shows, the hospital buried unclaimed infants in Carr’s Hill until at least 1960. This institutional burial place dated from February 1847 and was named All Saint’s Cemetery in the early twentieth century.²⁴ There is no surviving register for this burial ground. The board’s failure to keep a register for Carr’s Hill breached their statutory obligations under the Public Health (Ireland) Act 1878.²⁵ The hospital may have kept other burial records: in 1985 the hospital possessed a ‘Record of Burials’ series that dated from 1954 to 1971.²⁶ None of those have survived. The best evidence for Carr’s Hill as an active burial ground appears in the minutes and reported meetings of the Cork County Board.

In 1930, there is unambiguous documentary evidence that the institution inherited the burial arrangements of Cork Union workhouse. The board appointed the son of the late caretaker to oversee its cemetery.²⁷ In 1935, the board discussed an engineer’s report on the burial ground. He had stated,

²³ Minutes of meeting 25 March 1931, p.132, CBPA/SO/M/9, CCCA FIX

²⁴ It was also known variously as Carr’s Hole, Laplands or Moneygourney burial ground, the District Hospital Cemetery and All Saint’s Cemetery. See Daniel Hegarty and Brian Hickey, ‘The Famine Graveyard on Carr’s Hill near Cork’ *Journal of Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 101 (1996) 9-14; Emily Mark Fitzgerald, *Commemorating the Irish Famine: Memory and the Monument* (Liverpool, 2013), p 108.

²⁵ Section 191, Public Health (Ireland) Act 1878

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1878/act/52/enacted/en/print.html>

²⁶ Browne, p 107.

²⁷ Minutes of meeting 14 May 1930, CBPA/SO/M/8, CCCA.

the interments seemed to have been made indiscriminately, no regard being paid to position or sequence of any kind. The Engineer suggested that the portion of the cemetery, which had not yet been used should be laid out in plots, with approach paths.²⁸

Haphazard burials strongly suggest there was no gravedigger in charge of interments and no burial register with plot allocations. Board minutes describe how 'inmate labour' was used to dig graves in the cemetery.²⁹ After the engineer reported how difficult it was to dig deep graves in rocky soil, the board instructed him to 'look for an alternative burial ground' proving that Carr's Hill was only burial site for the unclaimed dead.³⁰

Efforts to secure alternative burial sites were not successful. The owners of St Joseph's cemetery, the SMA Fathers, refused to countenance the entry of those 'who troubled institutions such as yours, and are a burden on the rates'.³¹ The stigma of 'pauperism' was so powerful that the dead poor were unworthy of burial alongside those with means to purchase grave space. Rebuffed by the SMA Fathers, the board wrote to the City Manager requesting an acre of burial space in the municipal cemetery, St Finbarr's. The Manager refused but the board persisted, asking how much ground he could allocate.³² There is no evidence in this cemetery of burials by the South Cork board so we must assume board continued to inter in Carr's Hill.³³

That the hospital provided the unclaimed dead with a shroud, coffin and grave is attested to in the 'Record of Deaths' register. From 1931 to 1940, a register reveals how many dead people were buried by the board.³⁴ This register detailed 'If not buried at sole cost of Friends, state whether supplied with Shroud, Coffin, Grave'. Below this heading there were three columns for the burial necessities of shroud, coffin and grave. The record keepers in the hospital diligently completed this register.³⁵ An entry where the hospital provided all three burial necessities

²⁸ *Cork Examiner*, 10 January 1935, p 4.

²⁹ Minutes of meeting, 2 February 1927, CBPA/SO/M/5, CCCA.

³⁰ *Cork Examiner*, 14, February 1935 p 4; See also, Minutes of meeting, 13 February 1935, CBPA/SO/M/13, CCCA.

³¹ *Cork Examiner*, 13 June 1935.

³² Extract from Minutes of the South Cork Board of Public Assistance 20 November 1935, ENV 2014/16/857, NAI.

³³ The registers of St Finbarr's cemetery after 1896 are not open to researchers. The MBHCI surveyed the burial registers but found no evidence that the public hospital buried the unclaimed dead in St Finbarr's.

³⁴ Record of Deaths, 1 April 1931 to 3 August 1940, CCH/KA/2, CCCA. The next volume in the series, CCH/KA/3 does not contain information on shrouds, coffins and graves – the practice of completing the register changed.

³⁵ An identical register for Loughrea County Home held in NAI was not thoroughly completed.

indicated an unclaimed body. Every dead body was shrouded by the institution, some were also coffined but very few were also provided with graves.³⁶

The commission has interpreted this register thus

Although many adults who died in the institution during this period were allotted burial plots, none was allotted to 'illegitimate' infants and children who died in the institution in this period. This volume recorded that 50 deceased 'illegitimate' infants and children were allotted shrouds: nine of these were also allotted coffins. It appears that those who were allotted coffins were children over one year old.³⁷

This argues that the burial of 'illegitimate' dead children differed from all other people, including 'legitimate' children of the same age, but the register does not support this interpretation. In 1931, 13 children were given a coffin, shroud and grave by the hospital. Three were born within marriage while 9 were born outside wedlock. The burial of these children, regardless of age or 'legitimacy', was organised by the hospital. The hospital provided the same burial necessities to 'illegitimate' children as to other children and adults. This register also recorded the deaths of children associated with Bessborough. Two children whose last place of residence on their death certificates was Bessborough died in St Finbarr's in the 1930s. According to this register, both were provided with a shroud, coffin and grave, proving the hospital organised their burial. This register reveals the public hospital in the 1930s did coffin the deceased infants it buried and that marital status was not an important consideration.

Unclaimed dead: UCC's School of Anatomy plot, Curraghkippane

The Commission states that it 'has found no evidence that children were used for anatomical studies in Cork Medical School'.³⁸ There is no evidence of child subjects in UCC Anatomy School because the university lost the relevant registers, which it was obliged to keep under the Anatomy Act.³⁹ It is not possible to state if

³⁶ Between Oct 1939 and Jun 1940, 311 people died in the hospital. All 311 were shrouded by the hospital: 38 were also coffined but just 28 people received a shroud, coffin and grave. Not even one percent of the people who died in this half-year were buried by the institution. In earlier periods, the numbers unclaimed were higher. Between April and October 1941 203 people died, of whom 23 or 11% were unclaimed. According to this register, the hospital buried up to 50 unclaimed dead a year. Some of the dead could have been taken to the anatomy school but the register does not indicate this. 1 October 1939 to 31 March 1940, in Record of Deaths, 1 April 1931 to 3 August 1940, CCH/KA/2, CCCA. The financial year ran from 1 April to 31 March.

³⁷ *Final Report*, Chapter 31, 28.77.

³⁸ *Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation 5th Interim Report* (Dublin, 15 March 2019) 7.36, p 56.

³⁹ Section 11, Anatomy Act (1832)

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1832/act/75/enacted/en/print.html>

infant and child bodies were or sent for anatomical study in UCC or not. However, the Commission ascertained that Dublin's medical schools claimed infant bodies for anatomical study from public welfare institutions, including a mother and baby home, from 1920 to 1977. The majority of those infant anatomical subjects were 'illegitimate'.⁴⁰ While there are no documents to prove UCC behaved similarly, it is highly likely that Cork's medical school sought child subjects at the same time and in the same manner as other medical schools. UCC was teaching paediatrics in the 1950s, when Dr Richard Barry worked in both St Finbarr's and the university. He was also voluntary physician to St Anne's Adoption Society from 1954.⁴¹

Burial records show that UCC claimed adults from the County Home/St Finbarr's Hospital for anatomical study in the mid twentieth century. Between June 1948 and May 1961, 31 of 162 adults buried by UCC anatomy school died in the County Home.⁴² There were no infant or child burials by UCC during this period but it was not necessary to notify burial when bodies were acquired outside the Anatomy Act,. There will never be documentary proof that the School of Anatomy buried children associated with Bessborough in Curraghkippane but it is extremely likely this happened.

Unclaimed dead: St Michael's cemetery

The MBCHI revealed that St Finbarr's Hospital purchased burial plots in St Michael's Cemetery after it opened in 1957.⁴³ This is the first documentary evidence of burials organised by the hospital/welfare authorities outside of Carr's Hill. For the first time in the history of the institution, St Finbarr's hospital had to pay for grave plots as well as shrouds and coffins. The MBCHI found that burial of infants by the hospital was not straight-forward even though the cemetery has both a register and a map. There were just two recorded burials – in 1958 and 1986 - of children associated with Bessborough in St Michael's.⁴⁴ Carr's Hill was still in use in 1960, when an infant associated with Bessborough who died in St Finbarr's was buried there.⁴⁵ This haphazard burial pattern suggests that children were buried in Carr's Hill after the board buried in St Michael's. It is possible the infant dead, particularly the extra-marital infant dead, were not buried by the institution in the same manner as other people.

⁴⁰ 5th *Interim Report* 7.12-13.

⁴¹ Obituary of Professor Richard Barry: <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/prof-richard-barry-1.277344> (Accessed 10 October 2019).

⁴² See Curraghkippane register online in the Cork City and County Archives <https://publications.corkarchives.ie/view/542622377/> The burial register before 1946 was completed in a very haphazard fashion. It was so poorly kept that there are no recorded burials in the anatomy school's plot before 1946.

⁴³ 5th *Interim Report*, 4.39.

⁴⁴ 5th *Interim Report*, 4.39.

⁴⁵ 5th *Interim Report*, 4.41

Between 1968 and 1985, the MBCHI found strong evidence that the hospital treated deceased infants differently to adults. The MBCHI discovered 26 infants and 11 stillborn infants associated with Bessborough in the mortuary/burial index cards of St Finbarr's hospital.⁴⁶ The cards identified St Michael's cemetery as the burial place for extra-marital infants but the Commission did not say whether this category was confined to individuals associated with Bessborough or included all such children. Disturbingly, the records also showed that deceased infants were not given individual coffins but placed alongside unrelated adults or amputated limbs.⁴⁷ The MBCHI did not state how many of the 26 live births and 11 stillbirths associated with Bessborough were buried in St Michael's cemetery. There is no record of those infant burials in the cemetery registers because it is likely that the caretakers were not told by the hospital of the precise coffin contents. Burying more than one person in a coffin violates the Burial Rules and Regulations (1888), which organise all publicly owned burial places.⁴⁸ Research by the MBCHI revealed that Cork's maternity hospitals buried infants in the same coffin as unrelated adults until the late 1980s.⁴⁹ By not informing caretakers that there were two bodies in one coffin, the hospitals guaranteed infant burials would never be identified. Under these circumstances, the role of St Finbarr's hospital in burying children associated with Bessborough will be impossible to document.

The Cork Regional Hospital and burial

The Regional Hospital replaced St Finbarr's Hospital as the most important public hospital in the city after 1978. While public maternity care remained in St Finbarr's, specialist paediatric services moved to the Regional. The MBHCI located an infant burial associated with Bessborough that was organised by the Cork Regional Hospital. The hospital used a Southern Health Board plot in St Michael's

⁴⁶ The MBCHI consulted burial records relating to St Finbarr's Hospital in Cork University Maternity Hospital. (Final Report, Chapter 38, 38.18) Those records remain in the care of the HSE and will not be available to researchers in the foreseeable future. Two sets of mortuary records related to St Finbarr's Hospital in the period 1968-85. (Final Report, Chapter 38, 38.19-20) The third collection was created as part of the institutional response to the Inquiry into the Post-Mortem Practices and Retention (2000 to 2005). (Final Report, Chapter 38, 38.20)

⁴⁷ *Final report*, chapter 38, 38.20

⁴⁸ Sections V and VI, Rules applicable to Burial Grounds provided under the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, Appendix C, p 91, *Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Ireland 1889* [C.5769].

⁴⁹ *Final Report*, chapter 38, 38.21-22. The maternity hospitals in Cork at this time were St Finbarr's, the Erinville, the Victoria hospital and the Bon Secours.

cemetery.⁵⁰ The records relating to burial of infants and foetal remains from this hospital are poor until the 1990s.⁵¹

Conclusion: burial and the County Home/St Finbarr's hospital

The following chart shows where dead children associated with Bessborough who died in this public hospital were buried. It brings together data from the MBCHI, published journalism and this researcher's work.

⁵⁰ *5th Interim Report*, 4.39.

⁵¹ See *Final report*, chapter 38, 38.22-38.25.

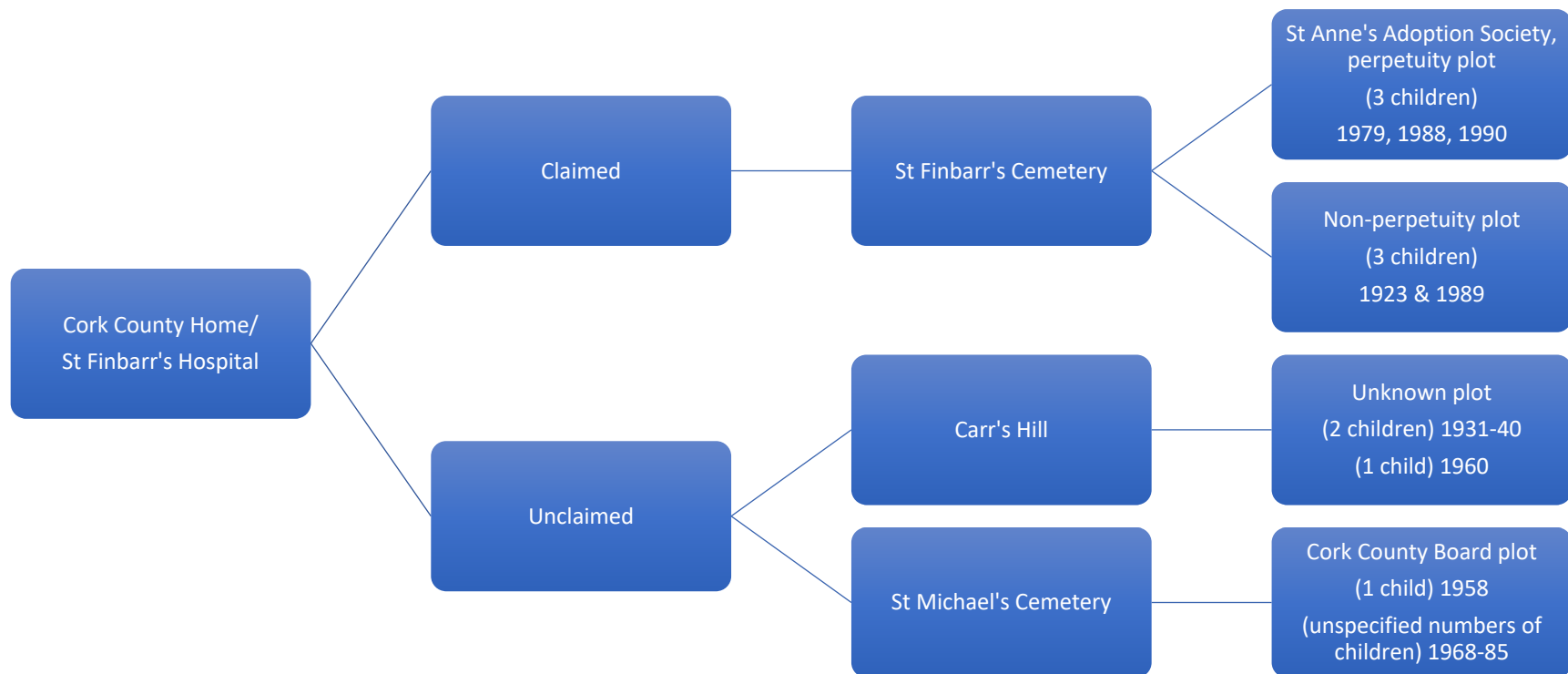


Figure 4 Known burial places of children who died in St Finbarr's Hospital

(Sources: *5th Interim report*, 4.36, 4.39, 4.41, 4.48; *Final Report*, Chapter 38, 38.21; Record of Deaths, 1 April 1931 to 3 August 1940, CCH/KA/2, CCCA; Conall Ó Fátharta, Blogpost, 15 July 2019 <https://conallofatharta.wordpress.com/2019/07/05/burial-of-a-bessborough-child-in-1989-not-included-in-commission-report/>

It is clear that until 1957 the hospital buried the unclaimed dead, in individual coffins, in its own burial ground on Carr's Hill. A burial of an infant associated with Bessborough here in 1960 suggests that the hospital may have buried extra-marital infants differently after 1957. Infants associated with Bessborough who died in St Finbarr's hospital were also buried in St Michael's cemetery after its opening in 1957. Unfortunately, hospital burial practices – placing infants in the same coffin as deceased adults or amputated limbs – obscured infant burials, which were subsequently not recorded by cemetery caretakers. This timeline suggests that the hospital changed its burial practices after it moved from free plots in Carr's Hill to perpetuity plots in St Michael's cemetery. Unclaimed deceased infants were buried in Carr's Hill even after the hospital acquired plots in a municipal cemetery. When evidence of infant burials organised by the hospital in 1968 appears, those interments show extra-marital infants were buried inappropriately.

However, Cork hospitals have a poor history of recording infant and foetal burials, whether marital or extra-marital. Documents gathered to address the Inquiry into the Post-Mortem Practices and Retention (2000-05), revealed that officials and doctors did not know where Cork hospitals, including St Finbarr's, buried infant and foetal remains.⁵² Before 1992, there is no evidence from city or county burial registers that hospitals buried any foetal and infant remains. The conclusion that hospitals buried remains in St Finbarr's cemetery is based on 'anecdotal' rather than documentary evidence.⁵³ The history of burials organised by Cork's public hospitals is not straight forward because there are very few surviving records that preserve institutional burial practices. Unfortunately, the lack of documentary evidence for the burial of children associated with Bessborough is part of a wider problem relating to infant interments organised by hospitals.

The claimed dead

Infants and children:

So far, this report has focused on the burial places of the unclaimed dead. However, as the diagram above shows, not all extra-marital infants and children who died in St Finbarr's hospital were buried by that institution. Journalist Conall Ó Fátharta located children associated with Bessborough in St Finbarr's cemetery, in a plot owned by St Anne's Adoption Society. These interments occurred

⁵² *Final Report*, Chapter 38, 38.22

⁵³ *Final Report*, Chapter 38, 38.24

between 1979 and 1990.⁵⁴ Whether these burials were organised at the request of mothers, ‘friends’ or the society alone is not clear. Apart from the St Anne’s plot, there is another interment of an infant associated with Bessborough in St Finbarr’s cemetery.

In another part of the cemetery, another little girl in the care of Bessborough who died in 1989 is buried in another unmarked grave. This is recorded as a non-perpetuity plot indicating that it does not have an owner.⁵⁵

Ó Fátharta describes this as a ‘pauper’s grave’, an antique stigmatising term for an event that happened in 1989. It is not clear that it was a ‘pauper’ burial, which is defined as one arranged by an institution in the absence of ‘friends’. Cemetery registers show that many private burials were organised in this non-perpetuity section of St Finbarr’s.⁵⁶ St Finbarr’s hospital did not bury the unclaimed dead in this cemetery in 1989 so the burial was most likely arranged by ‘friends’ or the child’s mother. It is unlikely any of the interments in this cemetery were institutional burials of unclaimed dead organised by either St Finbarr’s hospital or Bessborough. The mortuary records uncovered by the MBCHI show the hospital buried the unclaimed dead in St Michael’s cemetery. The congregation owned a perpetuity plot in St Joseph’s cemetery where children and women associated with Bessborough were buried. There is no evidence the congregation owned a perpetuity plot or organised burials in non-perpetuity plots in St Finbarr’s cemetery as they did in St Joseph’s.

Adults

The city cemetery records prove that a large proportion of adults were claimed for private burial. The chart below illustrates how a significant minority of all adults who died in Bessborough and St Finbarr’s have identified burial places.

⁵⁴ Conall Ó Fátharta, ‘Focus of Mother and Baby Homes investigation has moved onto headline-grabbing institutions’ Irish Examiner 17 April 2019 <https://www.irishexaminer.com/opinion/commentanalysis/arid-30918332.html>

⁵⁵ Conall Ó Fátharta, ‘Focus of Mother and Baby Homes investigation has moved onto headline-grabbing institutions’ Irish Examiner 17 April 2019 <https://www.irishexaminer.com/opinion/commentanalysis/arid-30918332.html>; Conall Ó Fátharta, Blogpost, 15 July 2019 <https://conallofatharta.wordpress.com/2019/07/05/burial-of-a-bessborough-child-in-1989-not-included-in-commission-report/>

⁵⁶ St Finbarr’s cemetery register 23 February 1868-14 June 1896, CP/CY/FI/R/1, CCCA.

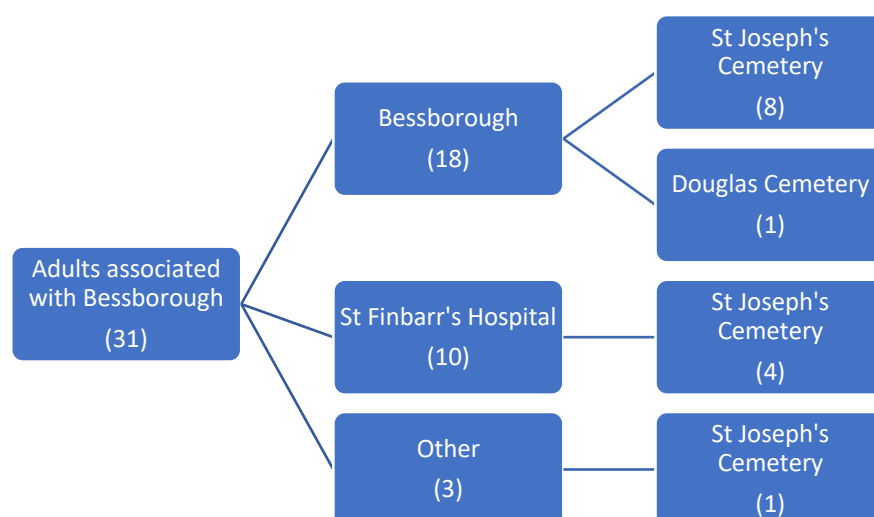


Figure 5 Known burial places for adults associated with Bessborough

(Source: death statistics MBCHI final report Chapter 18a, p 11; author's own research)

St Joseph's cemetery is important to the burial history of Bessborough because the congregation interred a number of adults in its own perpetuity plot. The congregation buried 12 adults in this plot in St Joseph's: 8 died in Bessborough, 3 in St Finbarr's and another in St Patrick's hospital.⁵⁷ Their burial in St Joseph's proves that the congregation could act as a 'friend' in a burial context, ensuring they were not buried by the hospital/welfare authorities. We cannot know whether families of the deceased asked the congregation to arrange those burials or whether the sisters acted on their own initiative.

Another adult who died in St Finbarr's hospital was buried in Poor Ground section of St Joseph's. This burial could have been organised by the congregation, but it is seems more likely it was by 'friends' outside the institution. The burial records do not state who arranged the interment. In addition, an adult who died in Bessborough was buried by 'friends' in Douglas cemetery.

The remaining 17 adults do not appear in burial registers of graveyards around the city.⁵⁸ Those individuals who died before 1957 may have been 'unclaimed dead' and buried in Carr's Hill but there are no burial registers or maps for this burial ground. It is also possible that some were claimed by 'friends', who arranged burial in places remote from Cork city. Women came to Bessborough from other counties; they may have been buried in their home places.

⁵⁷ St Patrick's hospital was later renamed Marymount Hospice.

⁵⁸ St Finbarr's and St Joseph's were the only burial space within city boundaries until St Michael's opened in 1957. County cemeteries that were effectively city burial places were Douglas, Curraghkippane, Rathcooney and Kilcully.

Bessborough and burial

St Joseph's cemetery

The congregation played a role in burying the unclaimed dead between December 1922 and March 1928. At the same time and up to 1985, the sisters organised private burials of claimed women and children. It is important to examine the 56 burials of deceased infant children in St Joseph's who died in Bessborough between 1922 and 1928.

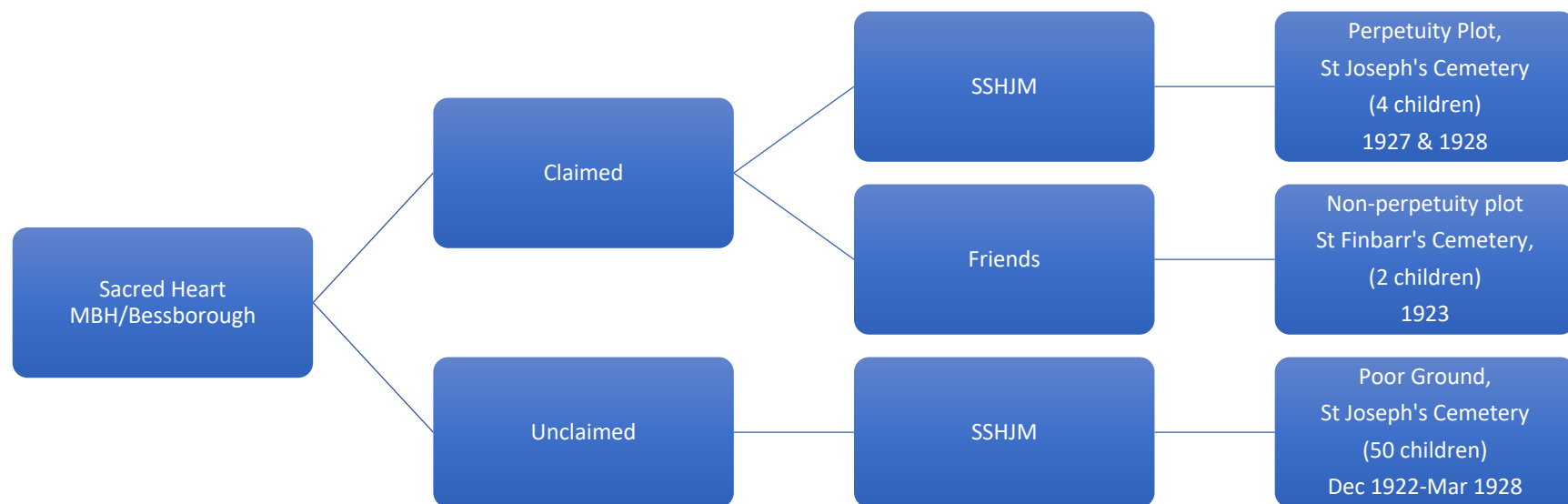


Figure 6 Burial places of children who died in Bessborough 1922-1928.
(Source: St Joseph's cemetery records, Cork City and County Archives; *5th Interim report* 4.36.)

Most of the burials in St Joseph's were in the non-perpetuity 'Poor Ground', where unrelated individuals were buried in common graves owned by the cemetery. Ascribing these burials to the congregation is partly an assumption because the records do not state who organised or paid for an interment. Cemetery records show that many people from private addresses were buried in the 'Poor Ground'. However, the numbers of burials involved and the consistent use of the same cemetery section suggests institutional burial. Other institutions, including the Greenmount and Good Shepherds Industrial Schools, also buried in the Poor Ground.⁵⁹ It is also clear that the hospital/welfare authorities were not burying in this cemetery at this time. It is a reasonable interpretation of documentary evidence to ascribe those burials from Bessborough to the congregation.

I believe that the children interred in the perpetuity plot represent private burials organised by 'friends'. It is unlikely the congregation would incur extra expense when it had previously organised burials in the cheaper, non-perpetuity plots. Relatives of those children paid for burial in the congregational plot, apart from the general institutional dead. The last child buried in the Poor Ground in March 1928 was the last institutional burial of an unclaimed body. From that date, the congregation either buried the unclaimed dead elsewhere or they ceased to organise burial. An intervention by Bishop Daniel Cohalan in March 1928 could explain this sudden shift in burial practices. Congregational records note an important change in the administration of Bessborough at this time:

When this House (Bessboro') was first opened, it was understood that the Sisters would undertake the charge of the unmarried mothers before the birth of the child, there was a certain reluctance to do so, but at a Council Meeting on 23 March 1924, owing to the pressure of the Bishop and the (South) Cork Board, the council agreed to accept this work under certain conditions. The matter then dropped until March 1928. The numbers in Bessboro' were gradually going down and the Bishop brought up the question again and almost insisted on the adoption of this work. Other nuns were doing it and the Council then agreed to fall in with the Bishop's wish, as the Workhouses were closed to these cases.⁶⁰

The South Cork board claimed in 1927 that 'the bishop looks after the place very closely and takes a great interest in it.'⁶¹ Since the board's minutes from 1928 to 1929 did not survive, we cannot cross reference this evidence in welfare authority records.⁶² If the mother and baby home expanded to include pregnant women in 1928, the congregation could have renegotiated its arrangement with the South

⁵⁹ See 1879 and 1904 St Joseph's Cemetery Registers held in Cork City Archives.

⁶⁰ Report to Congregational Chapter Meeting for the years, 1927-1933 cited in Dr Ann Matthews, Submission: Entry and Exit Pathways.

⁶¹ Lucey, *The End of the Irish Poor Law*, p 84.

⁶² There is no identifiable reason for the gap in the records.

Cork board. In 1930, the board was given ministerial permission to place ante-natal cases in Bessborough but congregational records suggest a new relationship was formed in 1928.⁶³ Burial functions may have been renegotiated under this new agreement.

If the congregation no longer paid for burial, the South Cork board may have assumed responsibility for the unclaimed dead. There are no records to prove this but the board's role as burial authority for those without any means was long standing, as outlined above. Since most women in Bessborough were admitted due to poverty, their lack of means was already established. The cost-conscious board maintained an uncharacteristic silence on burial expenses associated with Bessborough. Of course, burial was not expensive for the board who owned a burial ground and required male residents of St Finbarr's Hospital to dig graves. Apart from coffin costs, it did not spend much money on burying the unclaimed dead. I cannot determine if coffins were made in the institution or purchased since the board's coffin tender advertisements between 1924 and 1958 do not include St Finbarr's hospital.

It is important to state that many of the women and children in Bessborough were not maintained by the South Cork board. The two other Cork boards – west and north – sent women to Bessborough as did Kilkenny, Limerick and Kerry boards. Those boards paid the same capitation fee as South Cork: £1.1.0 per week for mother and child.⁶⁴ In addition, these boards were charged burial expenses by the congregation. There is one reference to burial fees in Kilkenny County Council records. In 1947, Kilkenny county manager agreed to pay the congregation £1.5.0 for the burial of a child maintained by the county. The fee covered the cost of a coffin.⁶⁵ This suggests that burial of unclaimed children from other counties was the same as burial of children, and the unclaimed poor, from Cork. I would argue that the Cork board interred children associated with Bessborough in Carr's Hill, a cemetery where burial did not cost money. If other counties paid for coffins, the Cork board did not need to worry about burdening the ratepayers.

⁶³ Letter 12 March No, P.14043/30, CBPA/SO/M/8, CCCA.

⁶⁴ Secretary's Report on Bessboro' Home, 10 June 1937, page 434, CBPA/SO/M/15, CCCA.

⁶⁵ The same amount of money was paid to coffin children who died in Sean Ross Abbey, Kilkenny Manager's Order No 4793, signed 6 August 1947, Kilkenny County Archive.

Bessborough estate

Another possibility is that burials after March 1928 took place on the Bessborough estate. The OSI survey revision dated 1949 placed a new label 'Children's Burial Ground' in the demesne. This was a new label for a new feature that did exist in previous revisions, dated 1926-27.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ See John Tierney, *Archaeological Assessment of Bessborough Burial Ground, Co. Cork* (January 2022), p 13.

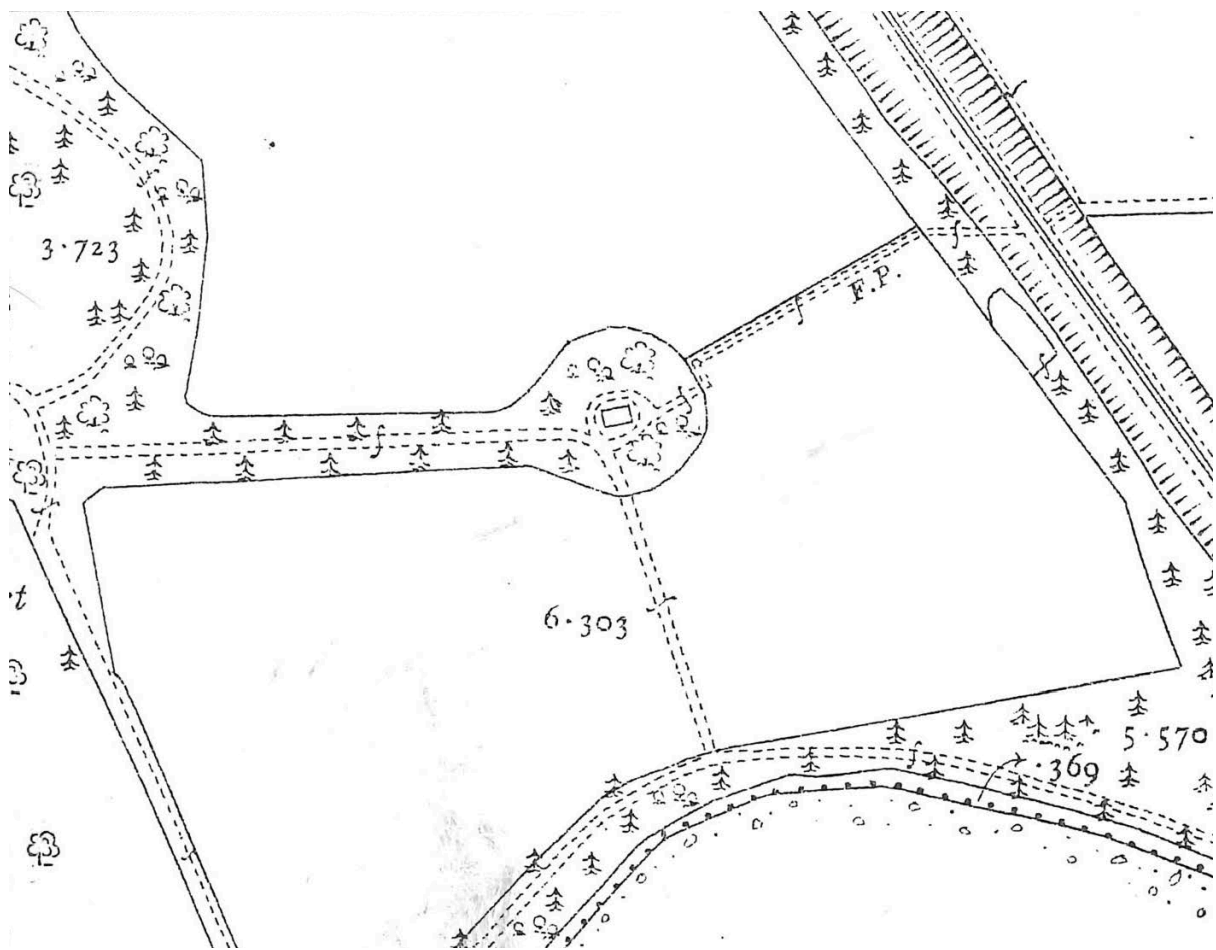


Figure 7 Bessborough Folly area, Sheet 74, 1926 Revision, TCD Map Library

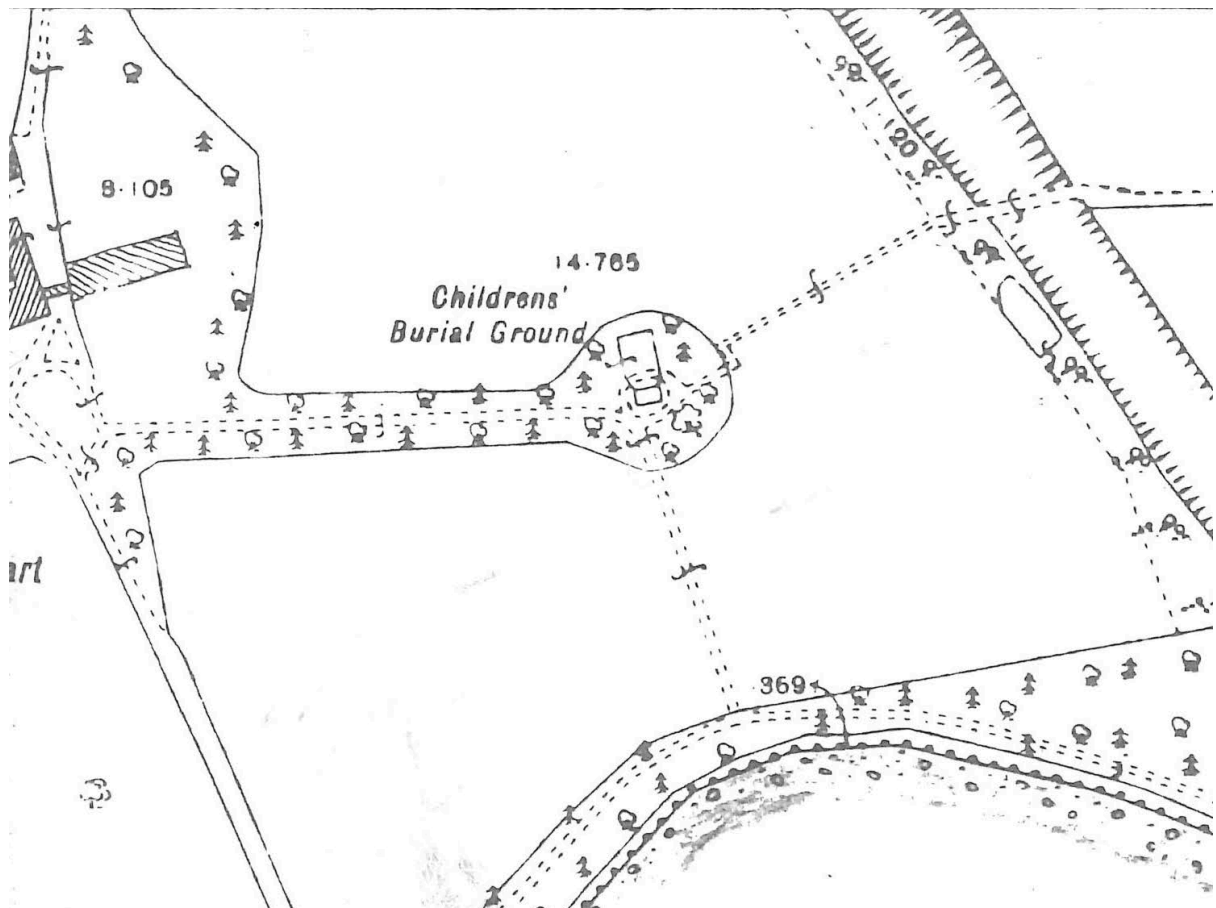


Figure 8 Bessborough Folly Area, Sheet 74, 1950 Revision, TCD Map Library.

This ‘Children’s Burial Ground’ should not be confused with a cillín, a liminal burial place on marginal land created to bury anomalous categories of people such as the unbaptised and suicides.⁶⁷ There is no evidence of cillíní in Cork city or its hinterland and institutional burial practices often diverge sharply from folk custom. There has been much debate over what part of the landscape the label refers to, with trace maps made by surveyors being cited as superior to the final published 25” version.⁶⁸ However, it is odd to argue that experienced surveyors responsible for the trace would have been happy with a final published map that so profoundly distorted their data. I argue the map refers to the Folly area rather than the farmland on which the label is placed. Admittedly, the OSI preferred to place ‘Burial Ground’ labels within a defined space but it wasn’t always possible to do this.⁶⁹ Labels were placed inside features where possible but also around them. The ‘Children’s Burial ground’ label is almost touching the boundary of the Folly area, suggesting it applies to a feature within the space, rather than outside it. The other addition to the 1947 revision that supports this interpretation is an enclosure, three times the size of the Folly footprint. This was not present when the cartographers last visited Bessborough. Verifiable burials in this space are of 25 women religious (buried 1956-2010) and one infant who died in Bessborough (buried 1994). There was no legal requirement to keep a burial register or map for this private burial ground.

If the ‘Children’s Burial Ground’ label in Bessborough applies to the enclosed area next to the Folly, this is the only documentary evidence that points to the burial of children here. Its use from 1956 as a congregational burial suggests that the congregation interred their deceased members in the same space as deceased children from the institution. It is unusual that the congregation were buried in the same place as unclaimed deceased children. The institutional dead were often segregated in death, with the religious staff buried in community, separate to all other residents.⁷⁰ In Sean Ross MBH, also run by the Sacred Heart Sisters, the

⁶⁷ See for example, Emer Dennehy, ‘Placeless Dead?: finding evidence for children in the Irish landscape’, *The Journal of Childhood and Youth* 9,2 (Spring 2016), pp 216-31.

⁶⁸ Cork Survivors and Supporters Alliance submission to an Bord Pleanála and Cork City Council, 12 January 2021, filed under 2039705, accessible online at <https://www.corkcity.ie/en/council-services/services/planning/search-for-a-planning-application/>

⁶⁹ For example, the burial ground label next to St Mary’s Home in Montenotte referred to a small rectangular enclosure in the corner of the property rather than the large adjoining field. The Little Sisters of the Poor buried here were exhumed in the 1980s and archaeologists re-excavated the site in 2004. They excavated a ‘rectangular enclosure’ depicted on the OS map, <https://excavations.ie/report/2004/Cork/0011372/>.

⁷⁰ ‘Little Nellie of Holy God’, buried alongside the religious in the Good Shepherds convent in Cork, is a notable exception. Nellie was an ‘inmate’ of the industrial school run by the congregation <https://www.mysticsofthechurch.com/2011/03/nellie-organ-little-nellie-of-holy-god.html>

women religious were buried apart from children who died there. However, in the congregation's other MBH, Castlepollard, sisters were buried in an enclosure immediately next to children and infants. Burial of staff and residents in the same space upends our preconceptions about institutional burial geographies in nineteenth and twentieth century Ireland. The pattern observed in Dublin's St Mary's Asylum, where the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity who died in the convent were buried apart from the women who died in the institution, is popularly understood to be typical. In lay-run lunatic asylums, staff were not buried alongside the unclaimed institutional dead in the burial grounds. Clearly, more studies of institutional burial grounds are needed to place the Bessborough site in a national context.

If children were buried here, it may have been a short-term, or temporary, measure. This enclosure could have been an emergency burial ground, created in response to the exceptionally high mortality during the 1940s. This table shows the deaths per month over the period of 'the Emergency' as the Second World War was known in Ireland.

| Year | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Annual Total |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|
| 1939 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 20 |
| 1940 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 45 |
| 1941 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 41 |
| 1942 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 76 |
| 1943 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 16 | 7 | 12 | 12 | 15 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 99 |
| 1944 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 68 |
| 1945 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 38 |

Figure 9 Child deaths in Bessborough 1939-45, where burial places are unknown.

Unprecedented numbers died per month in 1942 and 1943. The government and congregational responses to these deaths has been thoroughly narrated in MBHCI final report.⁷¹ In 1943, the monthly death tolls were very high, with 16 infants dying in April alone. Existing burial practices may have collapsed under the combined weight of high mortality and war-time shortages.

In 1956, between the OS revisions of 1949 and 1973, the congregation began to bury its members in the enclosure. The 1973 revision identified a 'Burial Ground' not a 'Children's Burial Ground' but no physical features were altered. Those who argue that the 'Children's Burial Ground' label referred to areas outside the Folly have not explained the relationship between the 1949 and 1973 revisions. If the label refers to the adjoining pastureland, the OS believed it was no longer a child-

⁷¹ MBHCI Final Report, Chapter 18.

specific burial place in 1973. If the label refers to an enclosure that was built as a burial place for children but was subsequently used by the congregation, the sequence of labelling by the OS is more coherent. At the moment, we do not know whether children, other than one acknowledged burial in 1994, were interred alongside nuns after this date.

Conclusion

There were many organisations and institutions involved in Bessborough, making it difficult to determine who organised burial. As already established, the ‘friends’ who organised burial could include adoption societies and the congregation. However, the most salient point about burials associated with Bessborough is how few were claimed for private burial. Hospital policies that prioritised secrecy impeded a mother’s ability to contact family outside the institutions. It seems likely a mother’s wishes were a secondary consideration in St Finbarr’s hospital. Similar practices probably prevailed in Bessborough, where the majority of deaths occurred. Many families may have welcomed this overwhelming desire for secrecy but we cannot find documents to prove this. Significantly more adults who died in Bessborough were privately buried than infants though the organiser of those burials was usually the congregation. Were those women with no known burial place interred as unclaimed or taken many miles home for burial? It is impossible to determine degrees of social ostracization or familial abandonment from the limited information we have on burial practices.

The MBCHI attempted to document all the deaths of extra-marital infants and children who were associated with both Bessborough and the County Home/St Finbarr’s Hospital from 1922 to 1998. The diagram below summarises their findings

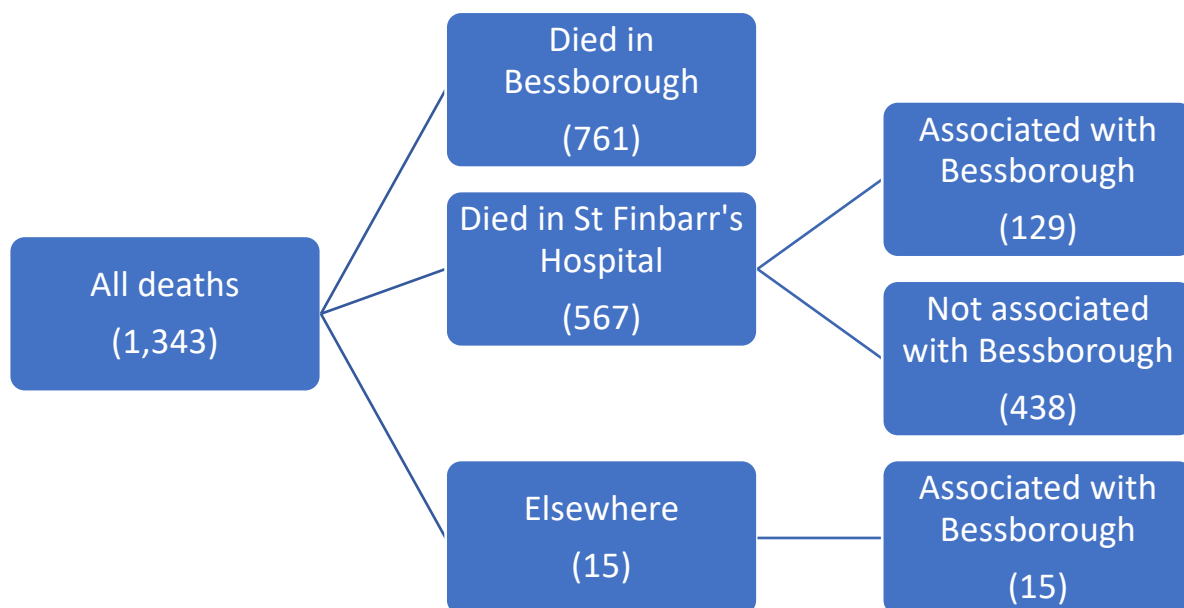


Figure 10 MBCHI data on all extra-marital infant deaths in St Finbarr's and Bessborough 1922-98

(Sources: 5th Interim report, 4A.1; MBHCI final report, Chapter 18A, p 38.)

Out of 1,343 infant and child deaths, just 73 have a verifiable burial location. The problem of missing burials goes beyond those children associated with Bessborough. A third of all extra-marital deaths in the diagram above had no connection to Bessborough MBH at all. Evidence gathered by Cork hospitals for the inquiry into post-mortem retention suggests that many infant and foetal burials were never recorded until the 1990s. While extra-marital children were stigmatised in life, institutional burial practices did not necessarily distinguish between them and other deceased infants. The most important explanation for the absence of burial information lies in the stigma of being an unclaimed body in a public welfare institution. The distinction between claimed and unclaimed was formalised in the Anatomy Act of 1832, an act that allowed medical schools to claim the 'friendless' dead. The poorest were most likely to be without means – friends or money – to arrange their own burial. The bodies of the disposable anonymous poor could come to ignominious end on a dissection table because nobody that mattered cared. Institutions that treated the most marginal with indifference, often disdain reflected a legislative and cultural bias in favour of those with 'friends'. Anyone buried by hospitals were, in the eyes of the administration, 'friendless'. It was not important to record their burials because it was not anticipated anyone would come looking for them. There are no known burial locations for adult poor interred by St Finbarr's hospital in Carr's Hill before 1957.

Proposed burial sites

Based on my research, I wish to propose likely burial sites. These burial sites, with indicative timelines, are outlined in the following diagram:

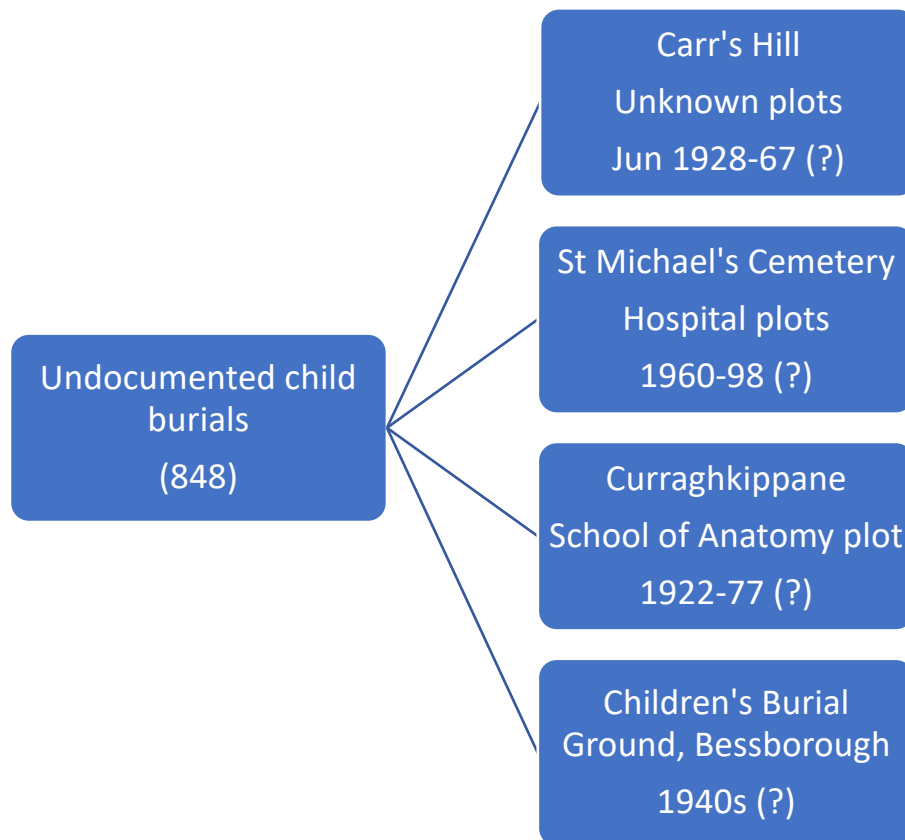


Figure 11 Proposed, potential burial sites for deceased children associated with Bessborough

Of the four proposed burial sites, only School of Anatomy plot in Curraghkippane does not contain documented burials of infants associated with Bessborough. There is some evidence of burial in Carr's Hill and St Michael's though it is extremely patchy. As the diagram shows, there was considerable overlap in the dates when those sites were in use. Between 1957 and 1967, Carr's Hill may have been a burial place for deceased extra-marital infants. Or St Finbarr's hospital were interring infants in St Michael's cemetery from 1957 but failing to register the burials, as was their practice from 1968 to 1985. Following the model of Dublin medical schools, UCC was potentially burying infant anatomical subjects in Curraghkippane from 1922 to 1977. The congregation may have buried some deceased infants on the Bessborough estate in the outlined graveyard. The history of burial associated with Bessborough is very complicated, resisting straightforward explanations and simple timelines. The few burials I have identified were located in more than one burial place, organised by a combination of friends and institutions. There was no single burial place for all children or all adults that covered the lifetime of Bessborough MBH. Patchy surviving records combined with breaches of burial regulations by hospitals and the university make it impossible to create a definitive chronology of burial.