



SOCIETY

No record of 'lost' baby burial plots in Limerick

by Bernie English
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IN THE aftermath of the Tuam babies burial scandal, it has been confirmed that there are little or no records to identify stillborn or unbaptised babies buried in Limerick.

Information released to the Limerick Post this week from the Limerick City archives follows reports from the Department of Arts and Heritage that there are three children's burial grounds and seven burial mounds in the Limerick area.

As part of a national report

which shows that there are 1,424 babies buried in unmarked graves, it was revealed that there are two paupers graves near Watchhouse Cross in Kileely. St Brigid's graveyard opened in 1894 as a burial ground for the poorest people in Limerick and where it is estimated that 5,000 paupers are buried there.

The plot was used to bury people from the Limerick Workhouse, including children and is known locally as the 'yellow hole'.

A larger paupers' plot is situated in Mount St Lawrence cemetery with names and burial locations included in records held by the cemetery.

While some burials were recorded, city archivist Jacqui Hayes said it's impossible to know if there are burial grounds like the site discovered in Tuam in the city or county.

"This is because of a lack of records and a societal tendency to secrecy surrounding women who gave birth outside of marriage," she explained.

While Limerick did not have a mother and baby home as such during the last century, women and girls were sent to places such as the Good Shepherd Magdalene laundry in Pennywell; the City Home or the County Homes in

Newcastle West, Rathkeale and Croom.

There are some records from the former City Home at Shelbourne Road, now St Camillus Hospital, but there are no proper records relating to admissions, discharges or births.

Some babies who died there are buried in the Angels Plot in Mount St Lawrence Cemetery, but there are no details of cause of death or numbers buried.

"Deaths not recorded were those of babies born through stillbirth or who weren't baptised as they generally weren't registered," Ms Hayes said.

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I deeply regret that there is no exact record of the burial of these children.



Paul and Phil Walsh at the memorial in Mount St Lawrence cemetery. Photo: Keith Wiseman

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