

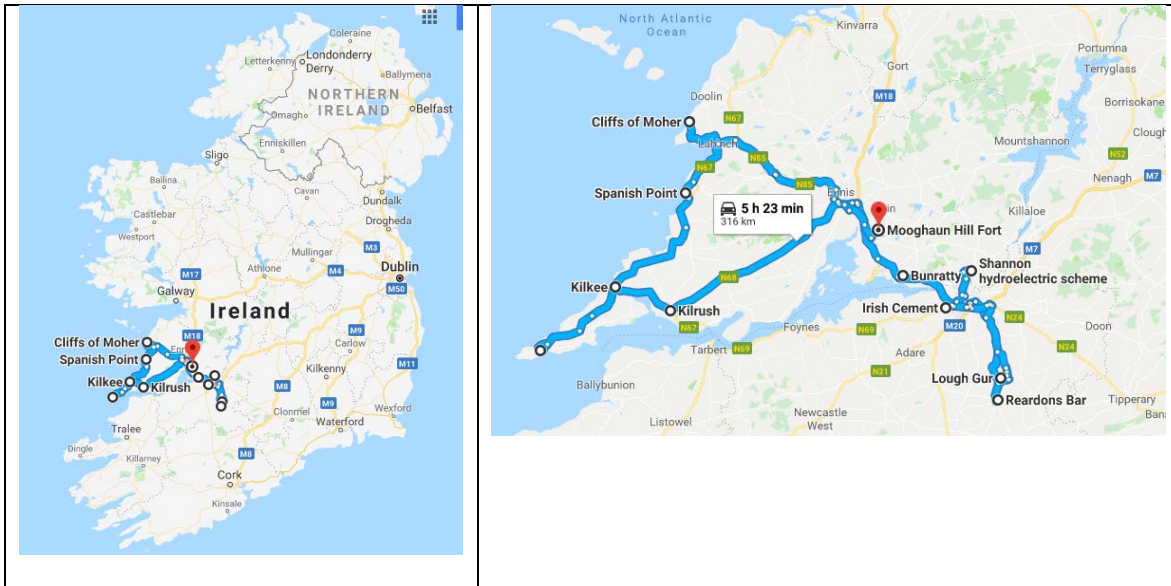
**Post-Congress Excursion XX. Pst:HL-1**  
**Quaternary sites in the Shannon Estuary region and along the Wild Atlantic Way**  
1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> August 2019

**Leaders:**

Catherine Dalton (Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick) and  
Ellen O'Carroll (TCD & Archaeology Consultant)

**Fieldtrip Location**

<https://goo.gl/maps/v7ktsAQCPbx>



**INQUA website description**

**Primary Focus: Holocene/Anthropocene**

The fieldtrip will explore the lower river and estuarine reaches of the Shannon and sites along the Wild Atlantic Way. Day 1 will visit a hydroelectric power station on the Shannon River and a quarry and cement processing plant, both of which played crucial roles in the region since the 1920s. The afternoon will take us back in time to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods where we will visit the remains of Grange Stone Circle and the Lough Gur archaeological landscape. The first night will be spent in Bunratty Co. Clare where delegates will attend a medieval banquet. Day 2 will tour sites along the Wild Atlantic Way from the Cliffs of Moher to Loop Head. On Day 3 participants will take to the Shannon River via a boat visiting Scattery Island. Here we will be provided with an overview of ongoing and historic land reclamation around the Shannon estuary and a very well preserved Early Christian Landscape. The Island also contains large areas of salt marshes used for reconstructing sea levels. The return leg will tour Mooghaun hillfort built in 950BC by a workforce of over 3,500 people.

## Trip Summary

The fieldtrip will explore the Wild Atlantic Way and the lower river and estuarine reaches of the Shannon. The field site visits examine the geological, Quaternary, hydrological, vegetation and human (archaeological and industrial) history in the area. The fieldtrip will start and end in Colbert train and bus station, Limerick (<https://binged.it/2MK1PPg>).

### Day 1 Thursday August 1<sup>st</sup> 2019

Day 1 will include a varied agenda exploring industrial and archaeological heritage. In the morning we will visit Ardnacrusha Hydroelectric Power Station (<https://binged.it/2MKlWgz>) on the Shannon River. The Shannon River is the longest river in Ireland. The power station was built in the 1920s by 5000 people and once powered all of Ireland's electricity needs. The second site is Mungret Limestone Quarry and Cement Processing Plant (<https://binged.it/2MILPNH>), which played a crucial role since the 1930s taking advantage of easy access to shale, clay, and limestone in the Shannon estuary region.

The afternoon will take us back in time to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods where we will visit the remains of Grange Stone Circle ( ) and the Lough Gur (<https://binged.it/2sXNICB>) archaeological landscape. Lough Gur is a shallow groundwater fed lake. Frank Mitchell sampled the lake basin sediments in 1948 and reconstructed prehistoric occupation and vegetation dynamics from sediment pollen records.

The first night will be spent at the Bunratty Manor Hotel in Bunratty Co. Clare. Delegates will attend a medieval banquet in Bunratty Castle (a 15<sup>th</sup> Century Towerhouse) (<https://binged.it/2sVVbg5>)

### Day 2 Friday August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019

Day 2 will visit the Cliffs of Moher (<https://binged.it/2MKQDID>) on the Wild Atlantic Way. These sea cliffs reach a maximum height of 214 metres above the Atlantic Ocean and are the most visited site in Ireland. An optional 2 hour cliff walk will be possible. The remainder of the day will tour the Wild Atlantic Way to Loop Head Lighthouse (<https://binged.it/2sVKEpW>) and its southerly tip in County Clare. This is the mouth of the River Shannon and the area is a haven for wildlife with thousands of sea birds and an estimated 160 bottlenose dolphins. We will stay in Kilkee (<https://binged.it/2MGPOpb>) at the Stella Maris Hotel for the 2<sup>nd</sup> night and resume our journey up the River Shannon on Day 3.

### Day 3 Saturday August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019

Participants will take to the Shannon River via a ferry boat from Kilrush (<https://binged.it/2MIZULc>) to visit Scattery Island (<https://binged.it/2MJNtyS>). Here we will be provided with an overview of ongoing and historic land reclamation around the Shannon estuary and a very well preserved Early Christian Landscape. The Island also contains large areas of salt marshes used for reconstructing sea levels. On the return leg to Limerick, we will tour Mooghaun (<https://binged.it/2MGPIYZ>) in south east Clare which is a famous and expansive hillfort built in 950BC over a time span of 16 years with a workforce of over 3,500 people. Palaeoenvironmental work details the local vegetation change of the region since late-glacial times.

## Provisional Timetable

	Distance (Km)	Time
<b>Day 1 Aut 1st</b>		
Meet at Limerick City Railway/Bus Station (Colbert)		09.00
Ardnacrusha Hydroelectric Power Station	7	09.30
Irish Cement, Mungret, Limerick	13	11.00
Lunch: Reardons Pub	32	13.00
Grange Stone Circle & Lough Gur (pm)		14.30
Bunratty Manor Hotel	38	18.00
Dinner: Medieval Banquet Bunratty Castle		20.45
<b>Aug 2<sup>nd</sup> Day 2</b>		
Cliffs of Moher	66	10.00-12.00
Lunch: Spanish Point/Doonbeg	30?	13.00
Loop Head Lighthouse	27	15.00-17.00
Dinner: Stella Maris Hotel, Kilkee	27	18.00
<b>Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> Day 3</b>		
Kilrush	13	09.00
Scattery Island Ferry		09.30-12.00
Lunch Crottys Pub Kilrush		13.00
Mooghaun Hillfort, Newmarket on Fergus	54	14.00
Limerick Colbert Station	32	17.00

Note Shannon Airport is the closest Airport (<https://www.shannonairport.ie/>)

Excursion fee includes: 3x morning coffee, 3x lunches, 2x dinners (incl. Bunratty banquet), 3x entry fees, 1 ferry fee, 2 nights hotel accommodation and breakfast).

**Fieldtrip Pictures**

**DAY 1**



Photo: **Ardnacrusha**



Photo: **Irish Cement Mungret**



Photo: **Grange Stone Circle**



Photo: **Lough Gur**



Photo: **Bunratty Castle**



Photo: **Bunratty Castle Banquet**

**DAY 2**



Photo: **Cliffs of Moher**



Photo: **Loop Head**



**DAY 3**



Photo: **Kilrush & Scatterry Island**



Photo: **Shannon Estuary**



Photo: **Scatterry Island, archaeological sites**



Photo: **Mooghaun Hillfort**

**Current Fieldguide Papers**

- Geological and Quaternary History of Limerick and the Shannon Estuary Region (*Margaret Browne*)
- Mungret Quarry and Irish Cement (*Catherine Dalton & Pat Robinson*)
- The Geography of Lough Gur (*Catherine Dalton & Richard Langford*)
- Archaeological Remains and Geophysical surveys at Lough Gur and Grange Stone Circle (*Rose Cleary and James O'Driscoll*)
- Glacial Sediments on Scatterry Island and their Deformation (*Michael Philcox & Pete Coxon*)
- Sea Levels in the Shannon (*Kieran Craven*)
- River Shannon - Reclamation, tsunamis and rising sea levels (*Kieran Hickey*)
- Scatterry Island and the archaeological remains (*Ellen OCarroll*)
- Mooghaun, south east Clare: archaeology, landscape change and early farming (*Karen Molloy*)