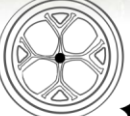


The inspirational Island of Inishmurray: Archaeology



 Friends of
Inishmurray

Information & Fundraising Event
27th September, 2025

The inspirational Island of Inishmurray: Archaeology

Overview:

- Timelines
- Background to
Excavations & Surveys
- Findings
- Linkages



The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

Archaeology

- **Timelines:**

- Prehistory

- Neolithic

- from around 4,000 before common era (BCE)

- Bronze Age

- from around 2,500 - 500 BCE

- Iron Age

- from around 500 - 400 CE

- Historic Era

- Early Medieval 400 – 1150 CE

- Later Medieval 1150 - 1500 CE



Bronze Age Bowl

The inspirational Island of Inishmurray: Archaeology

- **Background:**

- Beranger and Bigari – 1779
- Board of Works restorations – 1880
- Wakeman's Survey – 1885
- Rainer Berger – 1995
- Jerry O'Sullivan & John Corcoran
OPW – 1997-2000



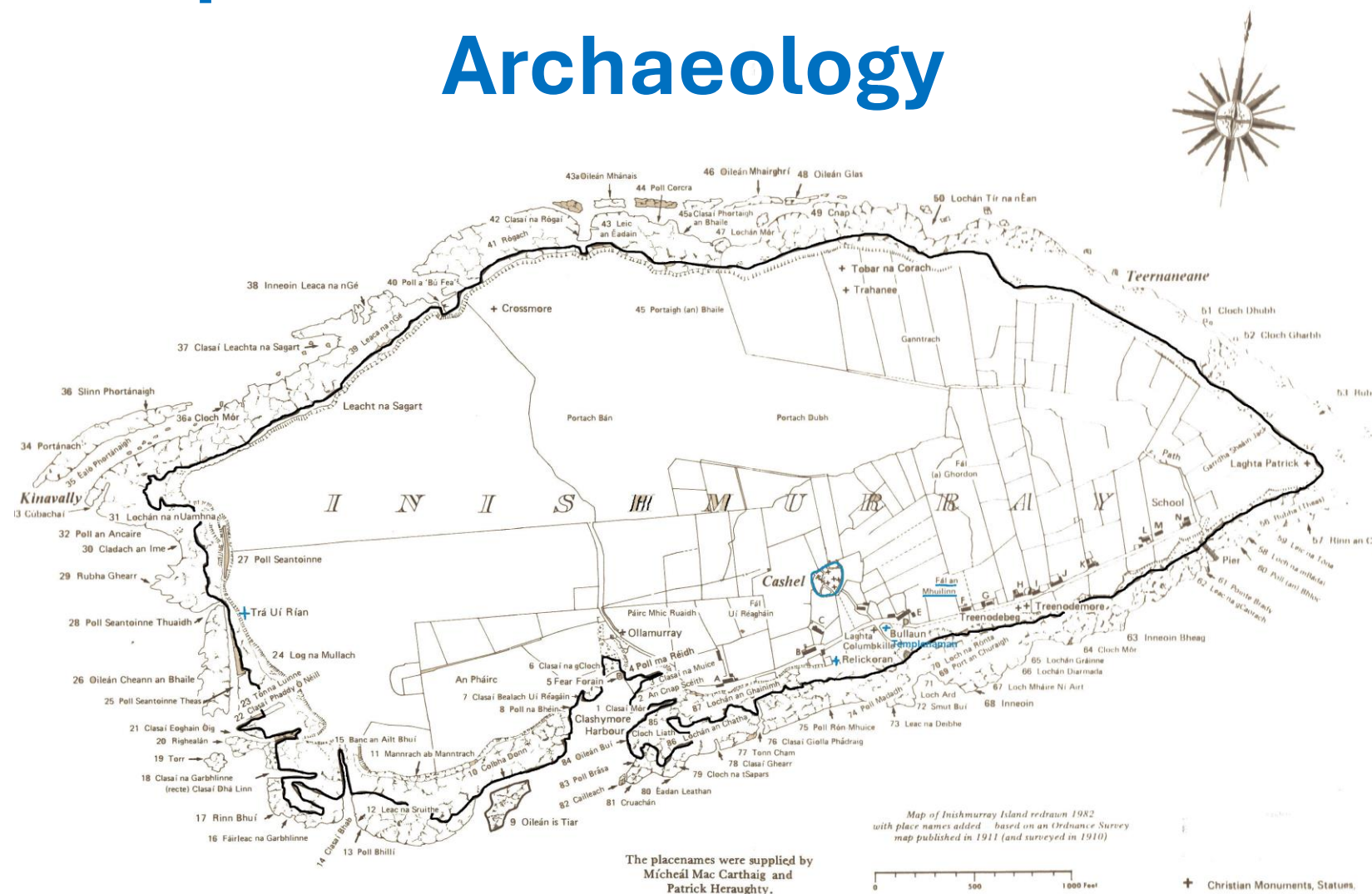
W. Wakeman (1885), Cashel

The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

Archaeology

- **Background (1997-2000):**
 - Identification of damage to Trahanareear Leacht
 - Rescue Excavation and reassembly of Leacht – work led by Jerry O’Sullivan, Archaeologist and John Corcoran OPW
 - Survey and Condition Report commissioned by National Monuments Service

The inspirational Island of Inishmurray: Archaeology



Adapted from Patrick Héraughty's Inishmurray Ancient Monastic Island

The inspirational Island of Inishmurray: Archaeology

- **Findings:**

- Neolithic/Bronze Age
 - Fragment of flint arrowhead.
Also worked chert and flint.
 - Two small pits – possible storage
or shelter related.



The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

Archaeology

- **Findings:**
 - Bronze Age
 - Cist Burial – containing decorated food vessel found by James Harte in 1938. Probably Bronze Age.
 - Possible Barrow Mounds at Northern end of Island.



The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

Archaeology

- **Findings:**

- Iron Age

- Possible Promontory Fort on Western headland –
had been recorded in Sites and Monuments Record
– no clear remains in 2000 CE

The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

Archaeology

- **Findings:**

- Early Medieval

- Cashel:

- Teach Molaise: possibly founder's shrine chapel and oldest building on island. Evidence suggests earliest date built c. 690 CE.
 - Replacing older wooden structure built at the time of the foundation of the monastery in 520 CE?

Survey



The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

Archaeology

- **Findings:**

Survey & Excavation

- Medieval
 - Temple na mBan
 - Dating of Mortar – indicates built in c. 1400's
 - Mill Bank (Fál an Mhuilinn)
 - Remains of Horizontal Mill
 - No tradition of mechanical milling on island in 'modern' history



Millstone located in Cashel

The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

Archaeology

- **Findings:**

Excavation

- Trahanareear
 - One of 16 Pilgram Stations on Island
 - Three phases of activity:
 - Cell – Hermitage?
 - Construction of Leacht
 - Maintenance of Leacht
 - Post hole indicates ‘typical’ pattern: wooden version - stone
 - Artifacts include piece of 17th/18th C glass jar (or earlier)

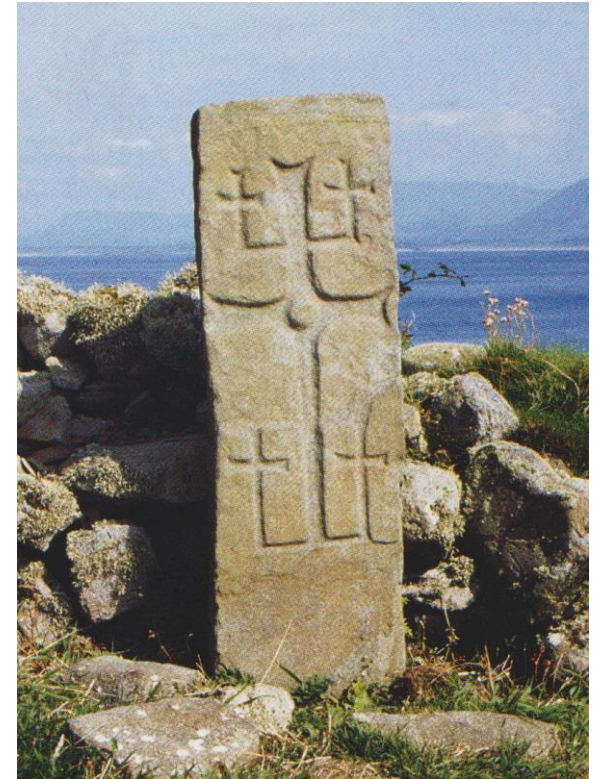
The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

Archaeology

• Findings:

Excavation

- Relickoran: two drystone enclosures each containing a leacht
- Human Skeletal Remains, yet no visible grave markers and no tradition of burial in 'modern' times
- Early NE/SW graves similar orientation to Teach Molaise
- Datable remains (both male and female): 711 to 1663 CE



The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

Archaeology

- **Linkages:**

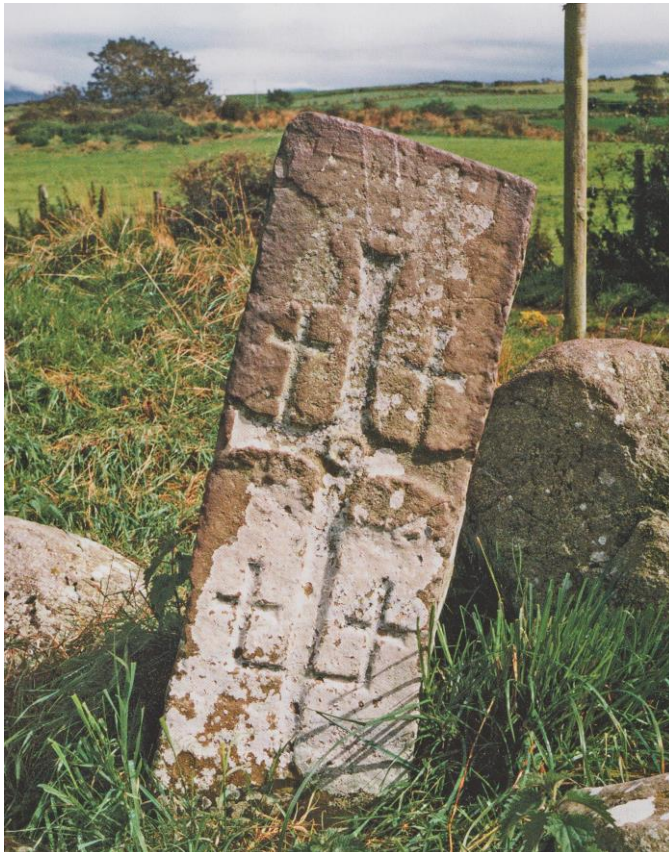
- Kilmacannon: Cross Inscribed Slab
- Staad Abbey: Spanish Armada

The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

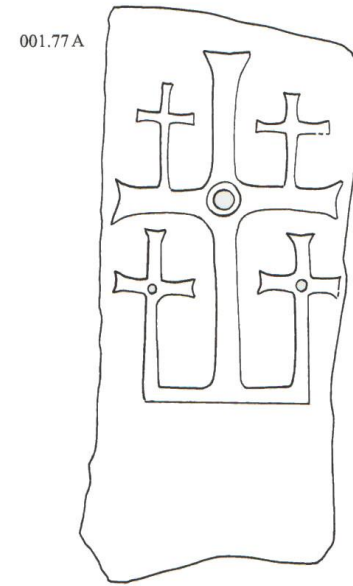
Archaeology

- **Linkages:**

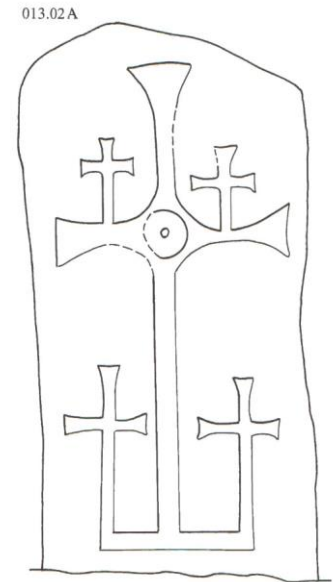
- Kilmacannon Cross Inscribed Slab



Located in Cashel
Ref. 001.77A



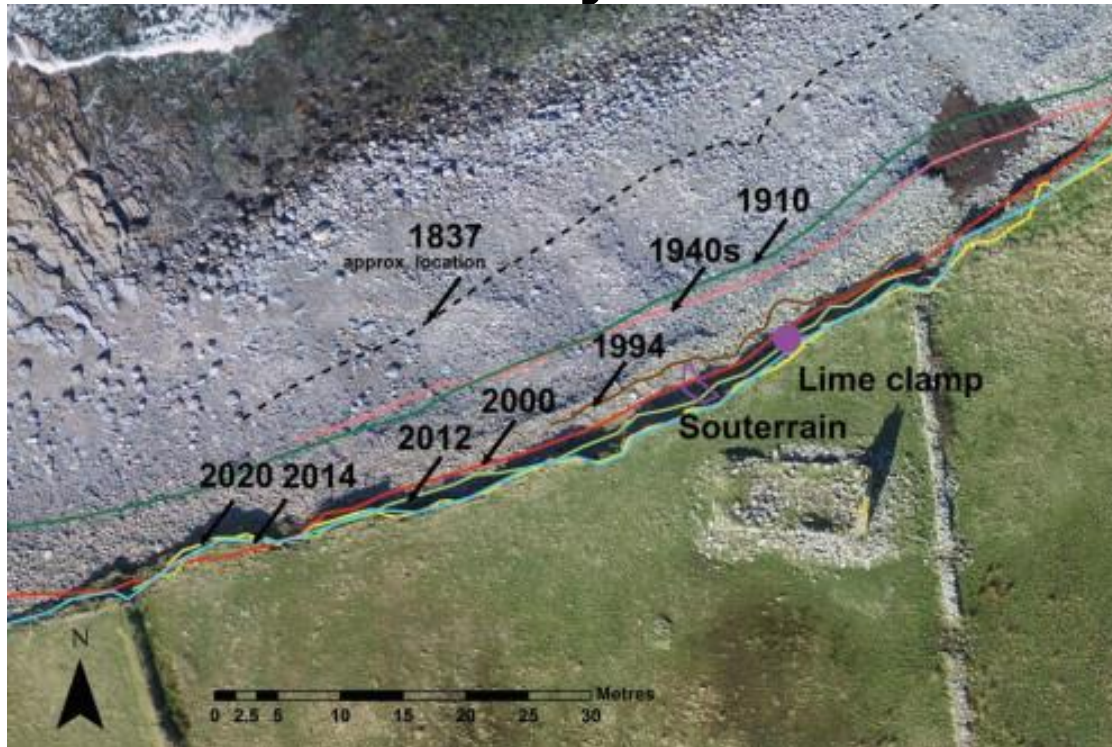
Located at Treenode More
Ref. 013.02A



Source: O'Sullivan, J., Ó Carragáin, T., (2008)

The inspirational Island of Inishmurray: Archaeology

- **Linkages:**
 - Staad Abbey:



The inspirational Island of Inishmurray:

Archaeology

Acknowledgements:

- Tru Lomax: many thanks Tru for your recollections and photographs

Sources and Further Information:

- Berger, R (1995) Radiocarbon Dating of Early Medieval Irish Monuments. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy
- Heraughty, P., (1982) *Inishmurray: Ancient Monastic Island*. Dublin: The O'Brien Press
- O'Sullivan, J., & Ó Carragáin, T., (2008) *Inishmurray: Monks and Pilgrims in an Atlantic Landscape*. Cork: The Collins Press
- <https://voicesfromthedawn.com>